Chandralekha

Karunakaran

Translation: E. Madhavan
with his wife. He stumbled once on his way… it was the cry of an old man or a youth. Light from the memory of a sacred place, enveloped him. Minar felt should not happen…” will remember not the face of the girl you marry but ing blinded? If you are not made blindfold now, you not seen at all. Do you know why your eyes are be-

”Only one out of us will present that gift to you. Oth-
said “Ha!” Then she draped the sari over Minar's eyes giving a present, how can we allow you to leave? That going to marry the first girl you meet. But without

“I am not going to ask you to say whom you want out

The young woman who sat at Minar's feet stood up and

"Tell whether what all was in that letter was narrated for the Veshya was summoned to the police station. But what triggered the present series of agita-

TV channels across the whole nation?”

The policeman looked down and said “Sorry.” Bharati smiled looking at the policeman. “I shall pre-

Second policemen then looked at the first and laughed.

his lips without lighting. Now the second policeman

"Yes, do you know who she is?"

letter itself has been leaked!

Minar felt crestfallen that the covenant he adhered to the previous day. "Did you write this?,” he asked. Mi-

police men arrived. One of them showed Minar a pho-

Bharati's voice now stopped her son from continuing. 

"I am a Veshya and my daughter is the daughter

sons threatened Minar that night over telephone that leading to clamping of curfew in the city. Three per-

stories from different streams merging into the main

"This letter also you must write and keep secret.” Say-

ter she also will be named Chandralekha.” Minar shook 

his head. "You always drive me crazy!” he said.

The young women in one voice shouted “Hoi.” Chan-

"May I tell you a secret which I had not shared with

Chandralekha blinked her eyes to him as if to reassure 

Minar and witness the action, but Vikas stopped him. Instead 

"They gave

Minar held Bharati's hands. Bharati sat in the sofa as

"You always drive me crazy!” he said.

General Post Office. As usual, the road was deserted

itself; or as if the day was contaminated with that dream. 

self across the bed to open the window panes, saying,

Minar remembered that a horde of doves descended

General Post Office. As usual, the road was deserted

by writing their letters for a fee. They usually had four
ten, with no less attraction that he had felt towards her

along. Before that he shut the balcony door which was

Minar searched for Chandralekha in that crowd.

"I will blow out the lamp after some

This first ever letter you write could be a love letter!

"Tell whether what all was in that letter was narrated

minister. Minar wanted to see who was there but

Bharati's name itself, Chandralekha." Minar shook 

"Minar, you must write a letter for me.” Chandralekha

 dralekha. Along with my fee she used to buy special 

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E. Madhavan

E. Madhavan was born to Malayalam poet Edasseri Govindan Nair and E Janaki Amma in Ponani, Malappuram district, Kerala on 9th November 1950. After graduation, he went to New Delhi as a job seeker. After undertaking short assignments as tuition teacher and assistant in a textile research laboratory, he joined the Reserve Bank in September 1973 and served in all the four major cities apart from Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. Post-retirement he has been acting as Secretary of the Edasseri Smaraka Samithi while pursuing his interest in literary translations, financial literacy etc.

Wife: Susheela.
Daughter: Sreedevi.

Illustration: V. P. Sunil Kumar
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