

Marooned

Submitted for [Contest #59](#) in response to: *Write a story that feels lonely, despite being set in a packed city...* [view prompt](#)



Chandrika Radhakrishnan

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Sep 12, 2020

ADVENTURE

DRAMA

Nalini was horrified to see the water level rise and touch the borders of the brand new **Kanchipuram** silk Sari. She had worn it for just an hour on the occasion of **Diwali, the festival of lights,** a couple of days back. She had aired it out and meant to put it back inside her **Godrej** steel **almirah** but now was upset with herself and blamed her lethargy in postponing the task.

With her back to the bedroom, she wasn't to know that the damage has already been done to the saris and other valuable items stored in the lower shelf of the **almirah**. The swirling, murky water mixed with the unspeakable from the roads and drainage had the ability to seep in through every crack and crevice leaving behind a

er did it cross her mind that
more worried about her own
placed on top of the dining



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Watching the Sari for she really did not have much to do, she remembered the trip that she made to **Nalli Chinnaswamy Chetty,** a veritable treasure as far as clothes were concerned, to buy herself an inexpensive Sari. Buying one for festivals was more to do with tradition rather than real need. The beautiful pink Sari with its blue border with mango motif had literally called out to her. She had never possessed this shade of sari ever before. Yet, she had walked away from the counter when her quick check at the price tag made her realize that it was way above her budget. After a couple of hours of looking around that a lifetime of frugality expected of her, she returned to the counter to make her final choice. She once again trampled down her conscience when it was time to pay the bill.

Nalini had not yet comprehended the enormity of her plight. Home alone after losing her husband a couple of years back, she managed life reasonably well pottering around at her own pace. Her children who lived abroad did ask her to make home with them. But she was happy in her own apartment situated bang in the middle of a busy metropolis of Chennai. Just like many others who pretty much kept to themselves, she was friendly enough with neighbours but not overtly so.

The city of Chennai rarely experiences such torrential rain. Most often than not, there is water scarcity thanks to deficit rainfall.

Hence, it had never crossed her mind that the flood water would

After the authorities had
nt electrocution from
er from the third floor had
with food. It never crossed
e to the top floors like many



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school of thought which refused to be under any obligation to another. Moreover, leaving her own house untended without adequate security measures was something she couldn't accept.


Sitting atop the table, the sexagenarian was tired. The wall clock showed the time as four in the afternoon. Her time for the afternoon cup of coffee was long gone. She waited for the water to recede.

The mobile phone had slipped into the water as she had been fumbling with it to make a call. She was not to know that the situation was so bad that her children were frantically trying to contact her. They also realized that they had no way of contacting their mother as they did not have any neighbour's contact details. The relatives they managed to contact said that they would check on her when situation improved as they too were in the same boat caught in this unprecedented misery. The children tried to get in touch with the authorities but to no avail. Using social media to connect with multiple volunteers who were trying to help people in distress also had grave news about the situation particularly regarding life at certain low-lying areas. Sitting across oceans, the children were were not to know that their mother was in danger.

Nalini was as unaware of all this as she was of her own vulnerable state. She was more dismayed seeing her silk sari completely

reached the top of the table and
led to keep her eyes open
chair if need be. She had tried
screams of people rushing
s. She wept for she realized

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man is an island. No one remembered to check on her and the sharp pang of being alone was like any other physical pain.

The great south Indian floods of 2015 would be passionately debated on the prime time in various channels on national Television. The experts would be putting their vocal cords to test to make their viewpoint known and their presence felt. The catastrophe of unprecedented rain resulting in extensive damage to life and property would be attributed to the archaic drainage facility and the crumbling infrastructure of the city. The opposition would milk the delay in opening the sluice gates at the *Chembarambakkam* Lake to their advantage and proclaim that things would have been managed better if they had been in power. Heads would roll for indiscriminate housing construction over reclaimed lake. There would be heated discussion about the inadequate interim fund.

Meanwhile, for the Nalinis living in the city of Chennai on that fateful day, only time would tell if they survived or met the end in the watery grave standing atop the chair on top of the dining table.



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19:37 Dec 10, 2020

Amazing story! Very well written, your words just flowed. Do you happen to know the language of Telugu? □

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04:59 Sep 25, 2020

...rse in chennai and unexpected
et strong madras vibes while

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22:16 Sep 26, 2020

Thank you Keerthan. Will definitely read yours and thanks for taking time to read mine.

Reply

 ▲ ▼ 1 points [Vasan S.s.](#)

17:40 Oct 05, 2020

Oh, bringing back memories of Ola boats in those flood hit areas in Chennai and the social service by the voluntary relief workers. Thank god the issue did not become a big political debate like what we have been seeing on TV these days, though discussions did happen to fix JJ . Good one , cannot take out the "Kanchi pattu" from our south Indian women folk. Cheers

Reply

 ▲ ▼ 1 points [Nagarajan Sripad](#)

08:35 Sep 26, 2020

Wow! The real story of 2015 chennai floods and almost all the difficulties faced by people nicely narrated in a short story. Wonderful!

Reply

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22:17 Sep 26, 2020

Thank you Nagaraj.

Reply

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11:09 Sep 22, 2020

Nicely written loved it

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14:05 Sep 22, 2020

08:59 Sep 22, 2020

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▲▼ 1 points [Chandrika Radhakrishnan](#)

10:54 Sep 22, 2020

Thank you Hannah

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▲▼ 1 points [Bindu Rani](#)

08:53 Sep 22, 2020

Wow Chandrika this is fantastic.

Reply



▲▼ 1 points [Chandrika Radhakrishnan](#)

10:54 Sep 22, 2020

Thank you Bindu

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▲▼ 1 points [Maria Veeresh](#)

08:42 Sep 22, 2020

Subtle, simple and yet so powerful it touches the right strings of the heart... Beautiful

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▲▼ 1 points [Chandrika Radhakrishnan](#)

08:48 Sep 22, 2020

Thank you Maria

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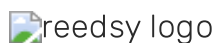


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