

## AND RAZIA DIED

Pages with reference to book, From 167 To 168

She was my friend from times remembered. We went to the same school and then on to college and later joined the university where we were labelled as inseparables. In a way we grew up together and crossed the horizons of childhood to matured adulthood. Razia had always been a very enterprising girl. She was full of energy wanting to try out something new every moment. It came as a bomb shell when! got the news of her death.! was stunned. Razia is no longer there in this world! I could not believe it. What had gone wrong with her life? My mind started wandering in the valleys and lanes of the past. It was a few weeks back when I met her at her place. She looked pale and seemed to have lost the glow of life. "I don't feel like living any longer, Shaina, you may even hear the news of my death soon," she had added very confidently. It had made me shudder tried to joke, "You always talked about living it 100 years, Razia. And even at that age you would be attending a course or preparing for a diploma exam." She was unusually quiet as though her thoughts were wandering in another world. It was worrying to see her in these bouts of depression. She had always been so bright and had achieved so much inclusive of foreign languages and courses of cooking, baking, sewing and embroidery. She had always wanted to acquire more and more knowledge never being contented with what experience she had gained. Why was she talking about death now? She seemed to have grown in years overnight. It reminded me of J.W Still's theory which states that a large number of people grow old prematurely. This psychological old age destroys the capabilities of the individuals. Razia was inflicted with a similar malady. She was receding from her friends and dwindling away like a sand castle being washed away by the sea waves. I was taken aback when I went to see her again. She was thin and weak and was walling to her bed being supported by her mother. Tears started streaming down my face. Razia smiled with an effort and said softly, "What is upsetting you, Shama? I am allright" She had perhaps not seen her image in the mirror for weeks. I controlled myself and said in a complaining tone, "Why didn't you come over for such a long time?" "So this is the reason for the tears. Cheer up my friend, I promise I'll come first to you as soon as I am well again," She said consoling me. "That is a promise," I said as I held her hand. The next day! got the news that Razia had died. I lost a part of myself. I prayed for her soul and said to myself, "My childhood friend is gone forever. She did not want to live any longer and went away in a minor illness." I tried to analyze Razia's life. My friend belonged to an affluent family of high society. She was the eldest of four children. Her birth was celebrated by her parents and family for days together. Her father who was in business was achieving success after success and this was attributed to Razia's star. Papa got so involved in his affairs that he had no time for the family. To overcome her loneliness, mother also started participating in multifarious social activities. She was out for most part of the day and this left the children at the hands of the maid servant. Razia mothered her younger siblings but she herself was left wanting in love. She never developed a close, normal relationship with her parents of whom she saw so little. She had never expressed a wish to her mother as other children do. As she grew older she kept herself busy in academics. But her inner self was lonely with an unquenched thirst. Apparently the family was enjoying all the luxuries that life can offer but Razia was a lonely girl and I noticed her emotions whenever she came over to our place for an overnight stay. She enjoyed the dinner when the entire family would be seated together and topics would be discussed from college activities to the maid servant's sick child. She had often envied our very close family ties. This very large deficiency in Razia's life eventually made her so depressed that she lost the will to live and a minor illness took her to the other world. I very often remember Razia. I also wonder how many such deprived children are present in this world-deprived of the parents care and attention due to lack of time. The fast revolving life of today has snatched away our little pleasures and dreams which are treasures of tomorrow. We

miss the wonders and miracles of nature which would relax our minds and souls. Razia turned away to the 'other universe in search of the blessings she missed here.

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