Chapter – 3

Magnetic Bonding Despite
The Conflicting Journey :
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3.1 Introduction :-

Shashi Deshpande through her novels explores the simplicity as well as the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship which works and effects in various ways because it is a predominant and foremost relationship in the intricate web of familial relationships. At a times it is only mother, who stands as a refuge for daughters in various consequences or she emerges as an entity from which the daughter is expecting to emancipate herself. The role of the mother in the house as far as her daughter is concerned is a vital one in spite of the patriarchal system. The overall responsibilities of making her daughter familiar with the social obligations, rules and regulations, restrictions lie on mother. It is the mother who moulds her daughter as per the expectations of the father. As Jasbir Jain points out –

Mother – daughter relationship is not a one –to- one relationship.
It is governed and shaped by the male presence, the husband or the son, in its finer nuances.\(^{(1)}\)

The personality development of daughters is only depending upon the mother, who is prepared her daughter as per male’s rules and regulation in the family. In this regard Simone De Beauvoir aptly comments that-
Little by little she realizes that if the father’s authority is not that which is most often felt in daily affairs, it is actually supreme; it only takes on more dignity from not being degraded to daily use; and even it is in fact the mother who rules as the mistress of the household, she is commonly clever enough to see to it that the father’s wishes comes first; in important matters the mother demands, rewards and punishes in his name and through his authority.\(^2\)

The patriarchal socialization and the gender based restrictions end up in generating a conflict between the mother and daughter. At times, it is the mother only, who prepares her daughter for the confrontation with harsh realities and various consequences of her future life ending up in a direct conflict in between them. A mother have to behave as per to the expectations of Indian society set-up. On one hand, aims at satisfaction and completeness, “Purnatva”, through her children and on the other, she is recognized as an agent passing on the patriarchal ideals. Daughters are aspiring to be free they are eager to be themselves; the mother stands as a barrier. Motherhood is an offshoot of wife hood and so the relationship with the husband may also affect the one with the children. Deshpande through her novels presents the process of forming a gender identity and the vital role played by the mother in the process of moulds her girl-child. One of the researcher remarks about mother-daughter’s bonding is –

*The adolescent girl feels to be different from her mother in her taste and entertainment and art, in politics in educational and occupational choices, etc. The mother uses the authority and sometimes even arbitrarily irritate the feeling of stress in the adolescent girl who is increasing in size, strength and knowledge*
about the world. She even turns out rebellion in continuation with the unconscious parent child rivalry of early childhood. The daughter is now no more a child she has an adult sized body, adult instincts and adult anger.\textsuperscript{(3)}

Shashi Deshpande delineates a magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey of the relationship of mother-daughter through her fiction. Some of them are analyzed in this peculiar chapter is as follows-

\subsection*{3.2 Mukta- Nilima Relationship in \textit{That Long Silence}:-}

The protagonist Jaya’s neighbor is Mukta, who lost her husband in a train accident when she was pregnant. After the death of Arun, Mukta’s husband, she gave birth to Nilima, who is a restless child. Nilima’s very presence was disturbing. She has always a disturbing and hateful factor with herself, a fatherless child since her birth, a dark baby. She is compared with a crow in a family of fair skinned swans. The remark related to this is as follows-

\begin{quote}
Her eyes light coloured, almost grey, making a piquant contrast to her dark complexion, were as sharp and piercing as a crow’s.\textsuperscript{(4)}
\end{quote}

Nilima and Mukta both stays with Mukta’s parent-in-law, Mai and Aba and her brother–in-law Satish. The relationship between Mai and Nilima is not maintained properly because they do not get along very peacefully with each other. Nilima’s grandmother, Mai keeps on nagging her about her dark complexion, her habits, looks and all mannerism. So naturally Nilima waits to keep away from her home, due to Mai’s cursing and abusing nature, when Mukta is not at home because she works as a teacher after Arun’s death. Almost everybody in that house wishes to keep away from Mai, who exerts the sole authority in the house seems to be a nagging wife, mother, Mother-in-law and
grandmother. But with Nilima—her grand daughter, her clash seems to be very obvious. These contradictions of family set-up, Nilima sarcastically considers as their beautiful and peaceful family life. In spite of that this family provides an emotional support for a fatherless child like Nilima. Every family member Aba, Satish—Uncle, Nalu-auntie even Mai have a place in her mind. All of they are the family and she belongs to them along with her loving mother. Her mother, Mukta experiences and recognizes this necessity of Nilima.

As a mother Mukta knows her daughter Nilima very well along with her nature, expectations and necessities. Jaya, the protagonist expresses her concern for Nilima and asks Mukta that whether it is a right and proper decision to stay here with Mai and others as Nilima was talking of suicide one morning. To this question Mukta’s answer is that—

*She often does. That’s just talk. I know she’ll never do it. She’s too curious about life; she’ll always want to know what happens next.*

*But this constant hostility at home, this thing she has about Mai ……..*

*She’s tough, she can stand it, I’ve thought of it often, Jaya, don’t think I haven’t. And I know Nila needs a family. Just a mother would never be enough for her. Why else do you think I’ve stayed on here?*  

This is an orthodox and conventional Indian family where a daughter—law stays with her husband’s family after the death of her husband. Yet she has to face a nagging and abusing mother—in-law here, though the child feels protected in its unique ways, feels surrounded by love, affection, warmth and care, not by all the members of the family, but from many of them. Nilima might experiences cornered by the hostility of a family—members, but that is compensated by the affection of other family members. If Nilima deprived of
this love, warmth, sharing might become a problem child with her kind of restlessness and intelligence characteristic of her own sensitive, emotional and particular age.

From the Jaya’s point of view, Mukta seems to be a person having an air of holding back something. Jaya is often had a fanciful image of Mukta in her mind. She becomes as a dancer, who stands stock still while the accompanying singer phrases out the song which she has to transform into dance, Mukta is a very good dancer hold all those ideas, emotions and feeling contained in the song in her mute body. But everything comes to an end after Mukta’s husband’s accidental death. Mukta is having very caring and loving nature. She looks after Jaya and takes care of her during Jaya’s illness. She accompanies Jaya, when Jaya is on the verge of unconsciousness.

Almost in all the days of week Mukta keeps fasts on. Sometimes Nilima taunt and scold with this apparent affection. Nilima though does not always obey her mother’s instruction and suggestion she loves her mother from the bottom of heart. It is very nice and beautiful bonding which is sharing between Mukta and Nilima.

*Listening to Nilima talk to Mukta, one would have imagined her hostile to her mother; but the musical cadences of Nilima’s voice as she called out to her, using innumerable, unexpected variations, told a different story.*

Nilima was such a restless child. Due to her teenage that Mukta seem and experienced that-

*Too seemed perpetually bewildered by the creature she had spawned. I suppose when Arun died they had tried to comfort her with the thought of the child who would be born; a son, possibly,*
who would be both her solace and her support. Instead there was Nilima, proud of her birth.

‘I was born after my father died,’ I’d heard her bragging. (7)

At times, Nilima is a difficult and complex nature child to deal with. Her restless, rebellious nature, seems to come from the situation she is in. She is born as a daughter, having dark complexion unwanted by the family because that was expecting a son, after the death of her father. Though Nilima is a teenager, she is a girl with a strong sense of individualism. She represents todays modern woman. She feels proud of being born a girl, with her own physical qualities like black colour which is defiled by no one but her own family members. She is labeled a ‘black crow’ in the family of fair skinned people, and she is not feels ashamed instead of that she welcomes the concept using for her because she likes the bird crow as it is very sharp and intelligent.

On this account it is clear that Nilima is a confident and self asserting girl. Self assertion is her weapon to keep the accusations away from her. At the times others defile her existence on the basis of her bodily qualities, female sex then she asserts with them boldly. As a girl she has two options in this social context. Either she needs to be passive, meek, defenseless, diffident and cease to live, as a female or she expects to be assertive, confident, expressive at defense of her own self and thus a woman demanding, commanding and exerting her basic right to live obviously as per the nature of Nilima, she chooses the second option confidently and whole heartedly and lives by it, at the same time sharing a nice and loveble bonding with her womanhood and her mother. Nilima’s way of behaviour is an unconscious act of defense of her own existence as a girl child of that orthodox family. In her own way she is trying to live with the open hostility showed to her by some of the family members like Mai and Nalu-auntie.
Nilima has every right to live on this planet with a girl of dark complexion and sharp intelligence. She is combating for her rights in her family for this assertion no one but her mother, Mukta is only source of strength to her, so naturally they both are performs the role of supporter to each other and their bonding of love becomes stronger and stronger day by day.

The next most interesting aspect to note about Nilima is that the hostility does not lead her towards hatred and bitterness. All of they are still one family living with and accepting both contradictory views that knows, understanding and blaming one another for their good deeds and flaws and having a proper understanding for it. Aba, Mukta, Satish, even Nilima know and in a way understand and try to keep proper space with Mai’s nagging and authority.

3.3 Kamala-Saru Relationship in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* :-

Shashi Deshpande’s one of the important novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is predominantly deals with mother-daughter bonding. The protagonist, Sarita’s story narrates through this novel. Opening of the novel is from the Saru’s returning after a span of fifteen years to her father’s house due to the rescue from the sexual neutrality and sadism of her husband Manohar.

As the novel unfolds it is in her father’s house, a place which she had decided never to visit. Due to her stay at her father’s house gives her a chance to review her embittered relationship with her mother, her husband and other family members. Saru is a doctor by profession and disassociated for fifteen years from her father and mother and has been spent a married life with her husband Manu, who works as a lecturer in English. Saru and Manu have two child- Renu and Abhi. It is with this lovely family she decides to forget her past because her past is filled with the painful and bitter memories of the perpetual conflict in between her mother and herself with her father, who is just a passive learner.
The very first memory related with Saru’s mother comes as violent as an assault which she rejects angrily. Due to Kamala, Saru’s mother, she remind her past which is full of hatred, lack of love, hostility and gender discrimination generating in her an absence of belongingness. The main cause of conflict in between mother and daughter i.e. Kamala and Saru is that joining the medical course was an act of rebellion against the set traditional conduct of Saru’s mother. The absence of belongingness and rebellion against mother’s expectations force Saru to take one step ahead and marry with Manohar. In relation with this issue Ashok Borse remarks that–

*In later adolescent years, such rivalry often comes right up, on to surface and help her to break free from the barriers of the family, where she fiercely wishes to be free, or she wants to give outlet to her rivalry with her mother in quiet form is depending on several psycho-social factors. She may criticize her mother’s appearance and behavior or may even become argumentative about trivial matters or show indifference and may even decline to follow instructions from the mother authority.* (8)

As time passes she is distanced from her husband due to her profession and social status. Due to the remark of female journalist on the secondary status of Saru’s husband hurts Manohar’s male ego and it changing him into a brutal and sadist being, ruining Saru physically as well as psychologically. In such a disturbed plight, one of the patients conveys to her the news of her mother’s death. As for the past fifteen years for Saru, her mother did not exist; even she never had asked nor cared for her. Saru’s mother was a “past” for her which she had deliberately forgotten. Sarcastically Saru remarks that-
We had lived fifteen years without mentioning her. Why should she matter dead when she has never mattered alive? (9)

When she heard the news of her mother’s death marks the end of her battle and conflict with her mother taking away the victory with herself and leaving Saru deserted and defeated. In this conflict the abrupt defeat generates anger rather than sorrow and sympathy in her mind.

Saru decides to escape and seek a temporary refuge in her parental house because she is unable to bear the brutal nocturnal attacks of her husband, Manohar. At this point Saru explores the darker spaces, the inner spaces of her mind. Her contemplation and introspection slowly reveals the reasons of her psychological fears dwelling in her mind through her memories and events of past.

An enhancement of the novel is with Saru’s active rejection of her husband moreover, by revealing her past, Saru emerges as a victim of the sad effects of gender discriminations. Saru’s younger brother, Dhruva, being a son, has the additional advantages of love, care and attention. Therefore Dhruva becomes her first target, and she spares no occasion to assert her superiority to him. Unfortunately Dhruva drowns in a pit which is full of muddy water; it makes matter too worst for her. Kamala, her mother holds only to Saru is responsible for her brother’s death. In a painful condition. Kamala curses and blames to Saru-

And then it began. The hysteria, the screaming, the words that followed me for days, months, years, all my life. “You killed him, why didn’t you die? Why are you alive, when he’s dead? (10)

These perpetual allegations, these bad events alienate and makes isolate her from her family and marks a guilty consciousness permanently in her
psyche. The main cause of mother-daughter conflict is the death of Dhruva, which brings their conflict to the forefront. This isolation and alienation, guilty consciousness generates in Saru’s mind a severe hatred against her mother. Mostly gender discrimination done by Saru’s mother, adds more hatred in Saru’s approach towards her mother Kamala. Saru got importance only once in a whole year and that it is on her birthday at the time of Puja. She was more important than Dhruva. There were no more celebrations in the house after Dhruva’s death. Saru was continuously cursed and accused by her mother for Dhruva’s death. For Kamala, Saru was only a responsibility which was to be carried out till she got married. All these events generated in Saru’s mind a sense of belongingness, unfortunately with no one around her to fill this void of isolation and loneliness. This generated a feeling of desolation forcing her to think that nobody likes and cares for her and even wants her company.

Saru becomes more aggressive and desolate due to the strict code of conduct, the do’s and don’ts prescribed by her dominating mother Kamala. Obviously at a very early age she realizes that it is only economic independence could help her to escape from all these various atrocities. Saru nurtures the ambition of to become a doctor and maintains a silence in the house. From that moment Saru aims only for the fulfillment of her desire and ambition by sacrificing all her pleasures. With the death of Dhruva, both of three are existing in the house were like the three points of a triangle, which are linked eternally and separated forever.

To escape from this dreadful situation, her success a first class in Inter – Science, comes as a passport. Here at this point once again her mother Kamala emerges as an obstacle, a hindrance in her way. For Saru, education is the only mean for a step towards autonomy, a step toward liberating herself from the clutches of her mother. The oppose and denial of Saru’s mother for this liberation adds more to the rivalry between them. The relationship in between these two mother-daughters is like two rivals. Due to the opposition of Kamala,
Saru develops a sense of hatred towards her mother, who always comes in the way of her progress imposing restrictions, rules and regulations on Saru rather than understanding the ideas of her generation passing through a transitional period. The following lines explains the contradictions in between them in detail –

‘Shall I send in my application, Baba?’ ‘No, I said Didn’t you hear me? No in a hostel? What do you think...........your father’s a millionaire?’

Now, for the first time I looked at her.

*I’m not talking to you I’m not asking you for anything. I know what your answer will be. No, forever a “no” to anything I want. You don’t want me to have anything. You don’t want me to do anything. You don’t even want me to live.’ *(11)*

As per the view of Saru her mother Kamala is like a rogue, who bound with old traditions and rituals, a dictatorship posing a threat to her individuality and expectations, distorting her growth as a woman. But instead of this sever opposition and resistance; Saru succeeds in encashment of this nice opportunity and she became a doctor.

The second shock by Saru is given to her mother is related with her decision of marriage with Manohar, who belong to a lower caste. But for Saru, he is a savior, an ideal and romantic hero, who fulfills her sense of belongingness and fills the void in her life. Kamala is totally against her decision because she thinks it is against an orthodox conventions, the reason is only he belongs from lower caste.

Saru becomes the representative of the younger generation who are more anxious to liberate themselves from the bondage of old customs and traditions.
On the other hand accommodate themselves in the developing modernity. They want to live a life of their own giving them an identity of a rebel and cast off their age from old identity as “girl, a responsibility”.

Saru’s marriage with Manohar creates a permanent and very deep rift between the relationship of mother and daughter. The enmity in between these two goes to such an extent that Kamala disowns Saru. She leaves not any chance to curse and condemn her.

*Daughter? I don’t have any daughter. I had a son and he died. No I am childless.........I will pray to God for her unhappiness. Let her know more sorrow than she has given me.*

The decisions of Saru about her education and marriage are steps towards her liberation and autonomy. Due to Saru’s decision to marry a boy from lower caste clearly indicates the rejection of the conventional ways and maxims which her orthodox mother adheres to. She keeps in store the archetypal image of her mother because those memories hurts her mentally. Related with this plight of Saru’s mind Premila Paul comments that –

*The archetypal Terrible Mother sees Saru only as a burden to be eased, a problem to be solved, a responsibility to be dispensed with and a person who has no right to any choice in life. The hatred is deep rooted.*

Saru is able to review her relationship with everyone, giving her a better understanding of herself and others due to the help of her stay at her father’s house. Saru’s come back helps her to liberate herself from the fear of the darkness that she has stored in her mind. Kamala, her mother has left, leaving for her not any chance of reconciliation. Saru is well aware of the effects of
these agonizing and haunting memories. She always is under the tension and threat of the afraidness of getting ignored and rejected by her daughter Renu. Saru said that her daughter Renu stares at her critically. There is an objective and shrewd observer behind those little girl’s eyes. Renu does not much talkative in nature, so Saru becomes uncertain and nervous about that Renu always closed herself in a room. She expressed herself neither in her joy nor in her sorrow, one type of lack of sensitivity and feeling in her experience by Saru. All these circumstances make her realize that she is trying to perceive her relationship with Renu under the shadow of her relationship with her mother. Saru’s own memories of the past had forced her to decide that she will always understands her children and love them true heartedly, she will never fail that task not similar with her mother. Due to that she tries to be all that her mother had not been to her.

The conflict between Saru’s children Abhi and Renu reminds her about her own past in spite of all her firm decisions. It is through this conflict and sibling jealousy, she realizes the stark reality of human beings lives-

\[\text{Do we travel, not in straight lines, but in circles? Do we come to the same point again and again? Dhruva and I, Renu and Abhi......... is life an endless repetition of the same pattern?}^{(14)}\]

From Saru’s father she receives comfort, who advises her to forget about her role in the death incidents of both her brother and her mother, who accused her for the Dhruva’s death. He also insists on her to combat with adversities and prepare herself to confront with the problems that must be always come in life. On the basis of all these Saru’s father advices, she tackles the fear that she has been continuously encountering in her life.

With the help of all these advices and understandings of the endless repetition of the same pattern, she views and experiences her mother a new. Due
to all these things and incidents Saru understands and experience the much more similarities between herself and her mother Kamala. This sense of similarity bringing her closed to her mother. From this turning point instead of rescuing the darker memories and the self imposed exile, she lights up means remind past memories related with her mother, Kamala and reach to the conclusion that the dark now holds no terrors for her. It is in this stark realization that her mother acquires a new identity. The following lines clarifies this controversy in brief –

_Something quickened in her at Virginia woolf’s mention of a woman’s right to a ‘room of her own’. She immediately related the phrase to her own life and thought.........my mother had no room of her own. She retreated into the kitchen to dress up, she sat in this dingy room to comb her hair and apply her kumkum, she slept in her bed like any overnight guest in a strange place. An I have so much my mother lacked. But neither she nor I have that thing ‘a room of our own’._ (15)

Saru’s stark realization that she and her mother, Kamala are devoid of ‘a room of their own’, brings her close to her mother. It is the new bond that develops in between these two women due to their womanhood. The bond of predicament, sorrow, sufferings which Saru had ignored until now that help her to remove the hatred and jealousy that she had for her mother. Now she is ready to accepts the unuttered remark of her father and her Mai, Kaki that amazingly she looks like her mother.

In the whole life of Saru, all her strong efforts were aimed at escaping from the archetypal image of her mother. But now after confronting the ‘darkness’ she is neither pleased nor annoyed. She admits and accepts the reality devoid of any fear. Due to Saru’s father insistence the reconciliation is complete about the confronting things rather than running away from them. The mother-
daughter relationship of this novel has evolved from vengeance and hatred throughout the novel, at last, ends on a note of perfect reconciliatory understanding, due to truly woman bonding with womanhood.

3.4.1 Manorama – Kalyani Relationship in *A Matter of Time* :-

Shashi Deshpande explores the mother-daughter relationships of three generations in her novel-*A Matter of Time*. The first generation represented by Manorama – Kalyani, the second by Kalyani – Sumi and third generation by Sumi-Aru. Shashi Deshpande presents a vista of complexities and assurances that the human relationship offers through the linkage and bonding of these three generations of mother-daughter.

The first generation of mother-daughter relationship is Manorama – Kalyani. Their anger and hatred is an extension of the hostile relationship existing in between Kamala-Saru of the novel-*The Dark Holds No Terrors* the hostility which is dealt at large whereas in the novel – *A Matter of Time* it placed in a nutshell. The hatred directed towards Saru is because Kamala, her mother held Saru is only responsible for the Dhruva’s death. In the novel *A Matter of Time* the anger and hatred is directed towards the daughter Kalyani because the mother has failed to deliver a male child. Kalyani always reminds Manorama about her inability to provide an heir to their property. Manorama is a typical conventional orthodox woman and it is great defeat that she is unable to produce male child. So Manorama holds Kalyani responsible and reminiscent to Kalyani dies without forgiving her daughter.

Manorama is an elder daughter of poor parents. She is well noticed due to her self-assurance, confidence and intelligence. She was married with a person named Vithalrao, he is having sense of humor and known as a warm affectionate man, Manorama detached herself for her fate –
To blot out the stigma of poverty, Manorama had ruthlessly detached herself from her family members. She had a soft corner only for her youngest brother, “a boy left motherless at the age of one.” Kalyani’s birth to Manorama comes as a disappointment for she craved for a son and so Kalyani for her always remained a visible symbol of their failure to have a son.\(^{(16)}\)

In every sense Kalyani turned out a disappointment for her mother. Kalyani did not turn out to be as beautiful and accomplished as Manorama had expected, it makes the matters worst. For Manorama, the marriage of Kalyani was an opportunity to triumph on all those women who treated her in contempt for being a daughter of a poor man, too turned out just an adjustment made to keep hold of her property. When Kalyani gave birth to a son, only that one time great rejoicing was happen but the enjoyment of this rejoicing was experiencing within a short time. Kalyani returns to parent’s home being a deserted wife with her two daughters due to the lost of her mentally retarded son. At Kalyani’s parental home the treatment given by her mother being a rejected wife to Kalyani brings a breach between Vithalrao and Manorama. Soon Vithalrao suffers from a stroke and Manorama holds Kalyani responsible for this and tries to keep her away from Vithalrao. His health deteriorates and during his last days he whispers something which no any family member understand except Kalyani. His wish was to put him down so as to prepare himself for death that was to come. Manorama becomes terrified with his last wish and refuses to accept this and orders no one to move him from bed. The sorrowful plight is as follows-

\[ Kalyani,\text{ unable to bear her father’s agonized pleas, had him removed from the bed and placed on the floor when Manorama was away. She was rewarded by the peaceful look on his face. He }\]
died in a short while and to Manorama, it was as if Kalyani had killed him.\(^{(17)}\)

As per the opinion of Manorama her daughter Kalyani was ‘a visible symbol of the failure to have a son’ and now she also becomes a cause of her father’s death too. Kalyani is held responsible for all the miseries and consequences that Manorama had to face in her life. She treated as and said Kalyani is her only enemy and she took birth to make her life sorrowful.

Kalyani was left no more with her caring father. At the days of Manorama, she became suspicious and fearful and charged Kalyani for trying to kill her. Manorama had lived all her life with an enormous pride due to her husband’s position with the support of Vithalrao. She had instituted a school for girls. It was only due to Kalyani, a deserted wife, defeat and disgrace was brought to the family. Manorama’s hatred for Kalyani emanates from the defeat inducted on her by her daughter Manorama completes her vengeance on Kalyani before her death by bringing back Shripati, the husband of Kalyani, who had deserted her.

The protagonist, Saru of the novel- *The Dark Holds No Terrors* reminds her mother the death of her son. She stands as an emblem of loss and death. Here for Manorama, her daughter, Kalyani stands as a symbol of her own defeat on social as well as personal grounds. Kamala and Manorama both mothers carry their hatred for their daughters to their graves, dying without forgiving them. The predicament and hatred in bonding of mother–daughter in both the novels is only overshadowed by a son.

3.4.2 Kalyani- Sumi Relationship in *A Matter of Time* –

In Kalyani-Sumi relationship though there is an absconding male-child but surprisingly Kalyani never allows it to overshadow it in the mother daughter relationship. As per the opinion of Kalyani, her daughter, Sumi is only her
daughter and not an emblem reminding her of any loss or death. A stoic poise is maintains by Kalyani about her absconding child and her estranged relationship with her husband. Only on one weird incident of Kalyani behaving strangely otherwise Sumi does not carry with her any unpleasant and troublesome memory with herself. The following lines highlights that exceptional incident –

*There is one fearful memory of Kalyani standing in the centre of that room, striking herself on her face with both her hands, the muscles of her neck rigid like taut ropes, the veins on her temples standing out. And shrieking out to the child who stood in the door way, as if hypnotized by this frightful sight. ‘Go away, go, just go.*

(18)

Conveniently Sumi has placed this memory aside and never allowed it to come in between her relationship with her mother Kalyani rather than making anyone a victim or responsible for all her sorrows and miseries, she attributes everything to ‘fate’. It is due to this Kalyani has a very cordial relationship with every one, though on the individual account she suffers at large. The relationship of Kalyani-Sumi truly develops against the backdrop of Gopal’s departure, deserting Sumi and her daughters. The desertion of Gopal reminds Kalyani of her estranged relationship with her husband and she breaks down and crying. After Gopal’s desertion Kalyani, happens to be the first to meet her daughter Sumi. She “burst” out at the moment of their meeting and curses to Gopal that’s why he left alone to her daughters. Kalyani holds herself responsible for her daughter’s failure. She blames herself rather than blaming their daughters alike Kamala and Manorama.

When Kalyani meets Gopal, she tries to convince him in every way. For the sake of Sumi by offering Gopal her own property, money, making emotional appeals, forcing him to think about his own daughters but every thing becomes
useless and she fail in her efforts to save the married life of her daughter Sumi. Kalyani supports in every way by sharing Sumi’s problems and taking care of her daughters during Sumi’s period of crisis and bad patch of life. Beyond that it is only Kalyani who shares Sumi’s burden of mothering girls and pacifies Seema, one of daughter of Sumi when she gets disturbed and depressed due to her first period. Sumi creates a very perfect understanding with Aru, who due to Gopal’s desertion is in an utterly confused state of mind. Truly Kalyani performs a job of a protective shield against all odds and atrocities which comes in the life of Sumi and her daughters.

In the novel – *The Dark Holds No Terrors* Saru hates to be like her mother, Manorama to find the culmination of her success only in her daughter, Kalyani. But surprisingly Kalyani tries to take up all the responsibilities of her daughter’s failure on herself. She standing apart exceptionally from like other mother figures and never tries to mould her daughter like herself. But unfortunately destiny brings all the consequences in Sumi’s life, Kalyani tries on her level best to bring the reconciliation between the husband and wife and tries to save the married life of her daughter.

**3.4.3 Sumi- Aru Relationship in *A Matter of Time:*-**

The relationship between Sumi - Aru gets affected due to the desertion of Gopal to a large extent. Just before few days of the seventeenth birthday of Aru, she comes to know about the stark reality that her father, Gopal had walked out by deserting their whole family.

After Gopal’s desertion, Sumi’s calmness and her normal behavior makes Aru realizes that her mother is totally different. On one side the normal attitude adopted by Sumi disturbs Aru mentally While on another side it also makes realize the responsibility that she will have to share now. Aru, who is panic due to the normal treatment of her mother, can also understand the typical phase through which her mother is passing isolatedly.
But for the fact that Sumi, despite her facade of normality has a quality about her a kind of blankness – that makes them uneasy. The two older girls feels that they should do something, but they do not know what it is they can do. They are waiting for a lead from their mother but she gives them none.(19)

The young age of Aru is refuses to accept the dependency that comes due to her father’s act. She realizes very well that her father’s desertion is created both the things that is shame and disgrace for their whole family, which generates in her the fear of losing face. The absence of Aru’s father and a kind of blankness maintained by her mother makes disturb and uneasy to Aru. So she decides to take initiative to do something and that is to call her aunt- Premi. It helps the entire family to confront the reality.

Sumi’s main problem is that she cannot express her feelings and emotions whereas she fails to converse. Sumi’s inability to converse with her daughters depresses her more. She suffers from a very different problem and that a wrong interpretation of her silence by her daughters who holding Sumi is only responsible for what their father has done. Due to the stoic pose maintained by Sumi; her family members are unable to understand the right way of dealing with her. Aru continuously doing strong efforts to break this wall created by her mother, Sumi around herself because Aru knows very well that behind this hard wall of unexpressed feelings and emotions there lies a good human being, a woman craving for mutual and emotional comfort. So the change in Sumi’s attitude is only notices by her daughter Aru and that is –

She shows no outward sign of distress, but the girls notice a new habit in her, of touching them, holding their hands, smoothing their
This intense emotion within the mind of Sumi is clearly understood by Aru, and is always there to aid her in all problems. Moreover, a metamorphosis in Aru is brought through this understanding to her mother Sumi. According to Aru’s opinion, her mother is a victim of various consequences that occur in her married life. Therefore, on one hand, Aru tries to fill up an empty place of her father by taking his duties and responsibilities. On the other hand, she defends and protects her mother and always remains with Sumi, whenever she needs her. During these eighteen years, Aru attains a perfect understanding of her mother. So she strongly defends and asserts for the place of her mother in their family. Aru expressed her opinion that only just because of her father has left her mother it doesn’t give to the right of all family members to be rude towards Sumi and it doesn’t mean that her mother is worthless.

Aru’s mother, Sumi too, is well aware of the efforts taken by her daughter, Aru for the sake of their family. The awareness of duties and responsibilities is not new for Aru because it began at an early age of six. When Aru took care of Seema. Now after Aru’s father desertion, she willingly submits herself to shoulder the responsibility. It clears from the following lines-

*She wants to be the man of the family; Sumi thinks when Aru insists on accompanying her mother to the dentist. She wants to take Gopal’s place, she want to fill the blank Gopal has left in our lives.*

There is true magnetic bonding in spite of conflicting journey among the Sumi and Aru. A difference of opinion exists in the mother and daughter is due to Sumi’s attitude towards Gopal. Aru has no intention of forgetting, nor does
she wants her mother to forget what her husband had done to her. While Sumi carries a different attitude. She intends to accept the stark reality silently, whatever has happened. Aru’s request and insistence makes no effect on her.

An everlasting effect of Gopal’s desertion on Aru is well aware by Sumi. She notices Aru’s hatred towards marriage institution, having love and searching a victim in every woman. Sumi is anxious and also worried about the attitude adopted by Aru. Sumi contemplates that –

Will Aru learn that love, however brief, however unsatisfactory, however tragic, is necessary? will she realize that without that kind of a companionship some part of us wither and dies? (22)

Sumi and Aru stands in spite of their differences related with opinion about Gopal close to each other sharing the duties and responsibilities and take caring each other shown their magnetic bonding in spite of the conflicting journey and also their bonding with womanhood. It is with this warmth that Sumi gathers courage to fight against all odds and atrocities that life has offered. In such critical incidents Aru elevates herself to that extent that at times it appears as if Aru is performing the mother’s role and Sumi is her daughter.

Deshpande’s novel- A Matter of Time elaborately explores the bonding between Sumi as a mother and Aru as a daughter and sometimes vice-versa. It traces the slowly evolvement of Aru from the age of seventeen onwards confused and baffled; who after her father’s desertion has a sense of having lost her footing in the world and who knows no way of getting it back, yet she makes strong efforts to support her mother by sharing her responsibilities, filling the void created by Gopal, her father. Shashi Deshpande points out toward the strength and the stronghold that a magnetic bonding can offers despite the conflicting journey through Sumi- Aru relationship as a mother and daughter. It highlights their bonding with their womanhood also.
3.5.1 Urmi- Anu Relationship in *The Binding Vine* :

Shashi Deshpande delineates very finely that human being cannot be seen in isolation through her novel – *The Binding Vine*. At the opening of this novel the protagonist, Urmi is trying to bear the sufferings of her daughter named Anu’s death. Urmi has lost Anu, a girl child of two and half years old all of a sudden which comes as a severe shock for Urmi. It’s very impossible for Urmi to live in this pain and agony. At present every moment of her life becomes painful and still she knows very well that ‘there can be no vaulting over time.’ It is the suffering only which is left for her of Anu, her dearest daughter In Urmi’s own words she expressed her painful plight-

*There can be no vaulting over time. We have to walk every step of the way however difficult or painful it is; we can avoid nothing. And I have no desire to leap into the future, either, to project myself into a time when all this pain will be a thing of the past, healed and forgotten. This pain is all that’s left to me of Anu. Without it there will be nothing. And I have no desire to leap into the future, either, to project myself into a time when all this pain will be a thing of the past, healed and forgotten. This pain is all that’s left to me of Anu. Without it there will be nothing left to me of her; I will lose her entirely.*

Urmi expects to hold back to this pain and agony, at least in this way, she thinks that she can hold back to Anu. In spite of this there is the feeling of being trapped in the present. Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists posses the quality to face their lives with honesty, sincerity and straight-forwardness. Urmi is a woman who does not even expect to spare herself of any pain and agony. She wishes to walk ahead every step with the sense of loss and hurt, whatever her dear one has endowed with her. Urmi don’t wish to leap into
future, where this pain will be a thing of past. She experiences and understands a sense of happiness in the past, a feeling of being trapped in the present and a sense of horror toward the future, That is–

As if the horror of the future of crouching somewhere in a dark corner\(^{(24)}\)

A Similarity between Urmi and Sumi in *A Matter of Time* emerges, when it comes to bearing the pain or hurt alone and not allowing their own selves to share it even with the closer ones- family or friends. Sumi’s only friend, Devaki asks the question to Sumi that why she does not cry and give an outlet to her pain, hurt and humiliation? And Sumi’s answer is that she is not one of those who can cry easily. After the death of Anu the close friends of Urmi voices the same concern about when she burst out. They asked that–

‘Talk! say something ! why don’t you say something?’

‘What?’

‘Anything. Just speak. Don’t keep it bottled within you. Why don’t you cry, Urmi? It’s unnatural not to cry.’\(^{(25)}\)

According to this it becomes clear that Urmi nurtures the feelings of pain and agony of the death of her daughter, Anu in her heart for the whole life time. It means this magnetic bonding of mother and daughter becomes related with sorrow, pain and a sense of loss and hurts of all those feelings of love, pride, relation, association, and a sense of continuation. It shows Urmi’s close attachment with her little daughter, Anu.

3.5.2 Inni – Urmi Relationship in *The Binding Vine*:-
Shashi Deshpande portrays another mother-daughter bonding in the same novel, the bonding of Inni and Urmi. It is also having very different shade. Inni is Urmi’s mother. Her name is Yamini. She is a person known for her distinct beauty and she is very well aware about it. Inni loves to make her beauty distinct. The reaction of Urmi towards her beauty as child and as a young woman is totally different. In her own words Urmi says that –

As a child, her beauty had embarrassed me; it set her apart from the others, made her look as much a luxury object as the bottles on her dressing table. But now, when I see her losing it; her waist thickening, her upper arms flabby, her skin dry, it saddens me. (26)

Inni truly loved her husband, but after his death, she had paid her concentration towards her children Amrut and Urmi. Inni’s son, Amrut is preparing for his IAS exams in Delhi, so Inni stays with Urmi, Kartik and Anu-her grand children in Bombay. It is difficult for Inni to accept and adjust with the reality and to maintain the calmness after the death of her grand – daughter Anu because Anu is always with Inni with a servant girl to look after her. Obviously now in the absence of Anu, she feels much isolated.

In an isolated condition Inni needs somebody to talk at home, sometimes, she feels a sense of being a burden on Urmi. This burden revealed once, when Urmi brings a picture wrapped with a paper. Inni expects that whether this is a picture of Anu and asked about it to Urmi. But Urmi, who is also still carries an intense sorrow of Anu’s death in her mind, suddenly gets angry on Inni’s question she explodes even though after some time Urmi realizes her mistake and apologies to Inni.

During the whole day Urmi and Kartik are out for their work. Inni stays alone at home, and she is dependent on them; but this emotional dependence nagging about time and constant waiting and Urmi and Kartik’s coming back to
home all these things irritates Urmi, because she madly waits for them due to
she wants to talk with them. Inni muses –

_I don’t like to think of Inni waiting for the sound of my key in the
latch, the sound of Kartik’s bus She seemed so self-reliant once,
how did she come to this state? Sometimes she seems almost
humbler in her dependence; it gives me the same pang her loss of
beauty does._(27)

Urmi wishes to give comfort to Inni, she is considerate towards Inni.
Even Urmi expects that all of the family members stay together- Inni, Akka,
Balkaka, Kishore and Kartik. But it is her deeply rooted dream, because she
knows very well that it is not easy to keep all these people together. Urmi
strongly to be all of with them, and enjoy the warmth of togetherness and wish
to care for and look after them. But it is only her dream.

Inni’s probing sometimes makes disturb to Urmi. Inni also preserves an
attitude to look at certain thing differently from that of Urmi’s point of view. On
one side money-matter incident both Inni and Urmi differs from one another.
Inni becomes confused and doesn’t understand why Urmi cannot use the money
which send by Kishore for daily expenditure. Inni is used to spend the money
lavishly and gets angry when Urmi doesn’t give her consent because Urmi has
an interesting thought that Inni enjoys these little skirmishes, as she thinks that
all these little skirmishes add some excitement to her life. Further, Urmi reaches
at one more interesting observation about her mother Inni, that makes Urmi’s
mother more aggressive related with Urmi’s dressing. When Urmi is in perfect
dressing, make up, wearing reading glasses that are too huge for Urmi’s face
that time Inni looks at Urmi somehow vulnerable. Urmi gets enjoyed by this
little bit irritation of her mother because she thinks it keeps aliveness in their
relationship.
Inni is truly loved by another person and that is Urmi’s younger brother Amrut. He loved his mother more than his father. Due to this after his father’s death Amrut sacrificed his wish for going abroad only for the sake of her mother, Inni. Laterly he decided to prepare for IAS and Inni also gets delighted by his decision.

The personalities of Urmi and Amrut are quite different. Urmi is assertive straight forward, out-spoken and does not spare anybody when she feels she should talk about. On the contrary Amrut avoids conflicts as far as possible and is much concerned about others. He loves truly his mother, father, sister and also Radha, a Tamil girl. He is a loving boy, who loved by others and he loves others; while Urmi considers it a total madness to sacrifice one’s own career and concerns for life of others. It means Amrut is emotional person while Urmi’s personality is having a practical touch.

The bonding of Inni and Urmi is also very close and affiliated. Inni expected everything good for her only daughter Urmi, a life of ‘chiffon and Pearls,’ but Urmi disappointed Inni by marrying a middle class man, Kishore, a boy of next door, whose father only interested in eating paan and mother is a school teacher. It was totally contrary with what Inni had dreamt for her daughter. Urmi realized this harsh reality latterly.

But now I realize Inni had her dreams for me too. She saw me vaulting out of the middle class with marriage, making the kind of marriage that would let me live the life that was her ideal, a ‘pearl and chiffons’ sort of existence.........Instead, I married the boy next door, ‘whose father, Inni sobbed out, ‘eats paan’ and whose mother is a school teacher’. I had laughed then at the pettiness of the Inni’s objections, but does that make her pain less real? (28)
There are much controversies among mother-daughter, Inni and Urmi. Mother Inni is very systematic and much conscious about clothes, appearance and mannerism, obviously she willing from her daughter the same. But Urmi’s nature is exact opposite she never careful about the pattern, color and suitability of her clothes, she craved only for comfort yet there is a magnetic bonding in between these mother-daughter. Inni’s love, pride and concern about Urmi as a mother is revealed through various events like Urmi’s insistence to wear Sari as per her choice, Urmi also experience her warmth, love in that insistence. Inni’s every expression and words reveal a bond, a sense of belongingness and pride towards her daughter Urmi. There seems both of their bonding with womanhood; it shows a sense of continuation. The nature of their relationship is revealed through mother’s expectations towards her daughter’s life and an understanding of those wishes and expectations on the part of a daughter and drifting away from those expectations with a conviction. Even thought the love, care, responsibilities and a complete understanding are the pillar of this unbreakable mother-daughter bonding.

Being a daughter Urmi shoulders all responsibilities and duties and provides comfort to her mother Inni as much as possible. Urmi loves Inni, her mother and Akka, her mother-in-law equally and expects to provide comfort to both of them. Even though it is noticeable that Inni is not the whole source of support and guidance for Urmi because she does not share her grief and other deeply felt emotions with Inni because Urmi does not consider her mother strong enough to share her problems, Inni subtly complains about Urmi’s getting lonely into the problem of Kalpana and Shakutai.

Another issue about their controversy is related with Inni’s disapproval about the friendship of Urmi with Dr. Bhaskar Jain because as per Inni’s expectations she likes to maintain the relationships with those people who belonging to a certain social strata. She likes to live a luxurious life with luxurious people while Urmi is not careful about all these things; Urmi’s
approach is totally different towards ways of living life. She likes people and their straightforwardness that being true to life, their real bonding with life and other people. Mostly truth and love these two factors bind human beings together matters much for the sake of Urmi.

These different approaches of Inni and Urmi sometimes create a tussle between them. But the factors love and consideration which prevail between them helps to maintain the balance of their magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey.

3.5.3 Akka-Vanaa Relationship in *The Binding Vine* :

Akka is the mother-in-law of Urmi, the protagonist of *The Binding Vine*, she is having two children Vanaa and Kishore, she has brought up Kishore. Nothing much is started about the relationship between both of them. But it seems to be comfortable because Akka is a person, who interested in caring for and loves everyone. Vanaa loves and respects her mother much. At a point she admits that, she is not able to handle the situation as strictly with Mandira as Akka has done with her. Vanaa wanted to get married to a boy of her choice and likes to live become a complete housewife do not wish to develop her career, But it was Akka who told Vanna not to give up completely on the career front. As a child, Vanna has accepted Akka as a working mother. She did not have any problem of Akka’s going out, as Vanna’s daughter Mandira has.

As a mother Akka was always strong and caring. She was a bit worried about Vanna, due to not having a sister. It was Akka’s own experience that girls could share their feelings a lot with their sisters than brothers because brothers do not understands their sister often. So she was very happy when she experiences the friendship evolving between Vanna and Urmi.

When Vanna going out on work leaving her children behind, then Mandira gets very angry with her mother on that point Vanna remembers about how she felt when Akka was going out for work.
Akka went to work, it was the part of my life that my mother was a teacher. I never thought she wronged me by going out. I was proud of her. And I’d never have dare to talk to her the way this child talks to me. I remember once I was angry with Akka, I stopped speaking to her. She said nothing for a day, but the next day she took me into the bathroom and whacked me properly. Imagine me doing that to Mandira! I’d never dare. (29)

Vanna blames Akka, her mother for filling Vanna’s head with the ideas of a career due to the disturbances by Mandira’s tantrums.

When Akka and Vanna talks to each other it revealed Akka’s attention and warmth and Vanna’s love and caring. Though, Vanna, a grown-up woman and a mother of two daughters is still like a child for the sake of Akka. Their bonding is closely related with caring, loving and affectionate one. Vanna respects and loves her mother much, and worries for her staying alone in Ranidurg. Not only Akka loves and cares for Vanna, but also she is a source of guidance and support for her. At the same time Akka is a constant source of love and affection to her grand-children. Akka and Vanna’s bonding is different from the bonding of Inni and Urmi. In the relationship of Inni- Urmi, though love exists, it lacks a sense of sharing and total understanding of emotions and feelings. This relationship even lacks the bond and warmth shared by Akka and Vanna.

The magnetic bonding of Akka and Vanna shares a comforting, warm, supporting and sharing relationship. Both of them giving the space to each other wherever need for growing and evolving as a good person.

3.5.4 Mira and Her Mother Relationship in The Binding Vine:-
Shashi Deshpande delineates a very different character that is never presents directly named Mira through *The Binding Vine*. This is one of the important character and is dead long back but still she is living in the memories of all family members through her poems and diaries. Most prominently she is present in Urmi’s thought, who is her daughter-in-law. Mira died while giving birth to Kishore naturally Kishore doesn’t have any live memories related with her.

As a person Mira performed different roles in a family as a daughter, a wife and a mother which are revealed through her diaries and poems. As Mira’s poems and diaries are complementary to each other. When Urmi reads them, she learns more and more about the various aspects of Mira’s nature, her aspirations and dreams. She is the eldest daughter of her parents. Urmi gets all over idea about Mira’s parental family with a glimpse of her family photographs, which Urmi found in her trunk, and tries to notice the various things about all family members.

*The mother, a bulky woman, dressed for the occasion, looks uneasy, sitting, slumped awkwardly in her chair, as if she’s unused to being centre-stage and would be more comfortable being in the background. But the father, a trim, spare man, sits erect, looking eager and alive. There’s something jaunty about him that even the solemnity of the occasion hasn’t been able to smother. I have a feeling Mira was closer to her father. I imagine that she, his only daughter, was his favorite child. I guess he was proud of her, of her intelligence.*

Mira gets married to the man, who passionately and desperately wanted to marry with her, but Mira is not happy with this marriage due to his obsessive love and lust towards her. Mira is feeling burdened and distressed by the
wifehood bestowed on her against her will and the sign of it seems all over her body. She is too much unhappy with a man who tried to possess her licentiously against her wish. Mira knows it very well that all these consequences of married life she faces only due to her mother, who wanted her to get married and enjoy wifehood, which is fruitful and green as per her mother’s opinion. But on the contrary Mira is totally unhappy and feels trapped and conveys her unhappiness, her confusion and sense of burden through her poems. As follow-

_Silver toe-rings twinkle on my toes, silver anklets tinkle as I walk
but, oh mother, I stumble, I fall my arms sink heavily by my sides._

(31)

Mira also recalls the various advices given to her by her mother to be always happy. But Mira is not satisfied mentally by her mother’s advice. She knew very well that her mother also have an idea about her unhappiness. Obviously she never asked her daughter honestly whether she is happy, contented in her married life. She became afraid that perhaps Mira might reveal her sorrowful plight and predicaments and then what next? She was not having a daring to face it boldly. Mira’s mother knew it very well that nobody can change the situation for a married daughter who is caught in predicament and unhappiness. Mira’s mother had clear idea that marriage brings subordination, suffocation and unhappiness in the life of women. After marriage when Mira is pregnant, her mother is died. Mira expressed her feelings that her mother is dead and may be feels happy because her expectation is completed that is to saw her daughter married and pregnant. But Mira felt uncomfortable due to her mother’s death. Event though Mira has a satisfaction that she told nothing truly about her married life’s predicaments. Yet Mira’s mother knew the reality of Mira’s married life.
Mira is not only surprised but also frightened by the way her mother totally annihilates and sacrifices her own wishes, desires and expectations. This incident verified when astrologer comes at their home, who read all of family member’s horoscopes except her mother. Mira asked about it to her mother. Then her mother said that there is nothing important than her children’s future for her sake. She finds her happiness only through her children’s happiness. Mira had a question that did she really means that? It shows her mother’s neutrality towards her married life. Which yet now Mira experienced.

There is vast difference in between Mira and her mother’s way of thinking. Mira is not at all like her mother and does not ever want to be like her. Mira frightens due to the self-annihilation of her mother, yet there is one question looming in her mind to large extent. Which she has not asked to her mother, till her death. She thinks she might have asked the question to her mother. And the question is why her mother wants from Mira to repeat her history; even she felt so despair of her own? But her mother died and Mira also not found the answer.

Above mentioned question by Mira is addressed to all mothers who wants their daughters to be like them. Mira expresses the same feelings through the lines of her poem-

*Whose face is this I see in the Mirror, unsmiling, grave, bedewed\with fear? The daughter? No, mother, I am now your shadow.*

On this account it is highlighted the typical married India woman of the early days. That is represented through the character of Mira’s mother. Who has no right to take decisions about her children, their education and future, and all other important matters of her family. To give birth and to look after the children, to take care of husband and household all these are only her ultimate duties. This is the real picture in an orthodox and traditional Hindu household.
Besides the marriage of Mira, her mother cannot think of anything. Actually she knows in her heart that marriage subordinates the place of woman. Marriage expects so much from a woman, and in return, gives her social security along with personal subordination. She cannot have any right to think of any other alternative for her daughter. Actually Mira wants to have totally different expectations for herself—a free and frank world where she and her reactions are respected as an individual’s and where she is considered as important as another human being is.

Thus through the bonding of Mira and her mother, a subtle conflict emerges between a mother’s expectations for her daughter’s future and the expectations of daughter of her own are totally different towards future. It also focused on the magnetic bonding between Mira and her mother despite the conflicting journey of both their married lives.

3.6 Conclusion :-

Thus, this chapter dealt with in detail the magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey among the relationship of mother-daughter portrayed by Shashi Deshpande through her various novels. Her delineation of this relationship is touching highly sensitive issues with new modes of interpretations. Therefore, it becomes interesting to analyze how the bond between mother and daughter becomes strained and psychologically complex in her selected novels. Deshpande expected to highlight how the values and maxims which a mother tries to instil in her daughter and restrictions which she put on her are merely the modes of survival in patriarchy. Perhaps mother believes in the simple dictum that it’s difficult to cover the whole earth with carpet but it’s easy to protect one’s feet with slipper. So, with a woman as the central figure, Shashi Deshpande probes the universally relevant issues of human relationship with the help of her fictional work.
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