

# Only a Woman

*a short story*



"I am sick and tired of this waiting," she shouted. Her voice echoed back at her. The pots rattled as she took out her frustration of the day in her washing. Outside the children played. They had been waiting a long time. "Mummy, mummy, can we go now?" "In a while my loves," she had told them, "Your father will be here just now and then we can go."

She looked at the clock on the kitchen table. Four thirty. If only he would hurry back. It was partly her fault. She had forgotten to tell him. She had met her aunty on the bus yesterday. "Come and visit tomorrow," her aunty had said, "Your cousin Shantha is visiting with her children." The children had danced about with joy when she told them.

"How big is the baby?"

"Can she talk?"

"Will Suren be there?"

"Yes, yes, lets go to visit them mummy."

If only she had remembered to tell him. They could have gone at least two hours ago. She had spent this day cleaning up, washing clothes, ironing, catching up on the housework from the working week of rushing mornings and evenings.



The children had been good. They had stayed out of the way. She had kept them going with promises of: "We are going out in the afternoon - remember - so be good." She had bathed them, and dressed them and now she too was ready to go. But where was he! She dried her hands on her apron. She sat down watching the children outside. Should she just go out with the children and explain to him later? But then she would have to face his anger. Maybe even his hands if he'd had a few

drinks. No! It wasn't worth it. She didn't have the energy to fight him. She had learnt early in their marriage what the rules were. It had only been a trip to the shop. But he had arrived home to find her out. He had shouted and almost hit her in his anger. He accused her of going with other men. His anger had trapped her. From that day on she knew the rules. He was the boss. She was only a woman. She couldn't fight him. She needed him. Her children needed him. She heard the door. The children were shouting, "Daddy, daddy," jumping all over him. He had kisses and sweets for them.

Her anger, her frustration melted a little. She looked at them. Her family. No point in her being angry. She would just spoil their moment of happiness.

"Come, children," she said, "Have you told your father where we want to visit today."

