Joseph’s biblical coat of multi-coloured hues could never hold a candle to this elegant raincoat. Wild as a field of many splendoured flowers, it radiated exuberance.

On a dark and gloomy rainy night it literally glowed in the dark, casting a protective field around the wearer who weaved a perilous route through the maize of rain-blinded motorists.

Buttons complex enough to befuddle an engineering genius, the pattern gave a military elegance to the garment. The wearer was sealed tight in protective armour against the most tumultuous winds.

It was a gift left unwrapped till the advent of a fierce, cruel monsoon. On the great day of the great cyclone, needing to venture out into the wilderness because of a show that had to, must go on, she mounted her scooter, taking courage from this protective armour.

A gift of a loving and a beloved student, the raincoat radiated the safety of strong, unselfish love. She rode out the storm successfully.

Successfully, the three hour dance drama was staged, full house of warriors who braved the elements to view the glorious feats of Muruga on the very holy day of his victory over the demon Asuras.

That raincoat became her second skin during that difficult monsoon season, as she rode day after day, night after night, in oceans of turbulent waters.

The love – care with which the coat had been selected made the plastic garment alive and warm. Love makes all things organic.

One day, suddenly, a whole sleeve fell off, just like that! How could this be, she wondered. It was so well – made! So thick. The sleeve so firmly attached. The tailorsaid: I cannot stitch plastic. So, she wore it without one sleeve. Only her left arm got wet. Rest was dry as toast. Two days later, the shoulder seam gave way and the back de-attached from the front. The coat became a cape and she flew like superman through the rains, only suffering partial wetness.

A few days later, the front tore down the middle and the coat metamorphosed into a three piece vest – shirt, which if carefully buttoned was held in place by the right sleeve, which was still intact. It became a large plastic shawl which could be wrapped around the torso.

Strange, she mused, ever alert to mystic signs and omens, physical symbols of unseen realities, what can all this mean?
It was as though arrows were being fired at her from all directions, seeking an opening in the Kavacha (protective armour) that was the raincoat. She with her innate warrior instinct (for the core of her being she knew was a Kshattrian) seeking the attacker, senses on high alert. The attack, invisible, came from all directions. The coat had been taking all the blows valiantly, deflecting the arrows, but falling apart in the onslaught.

Yes! There was a great Drishti rising from innumerable minds, low minds, who seeing another’s success, in jealous rage rose violently to harm. Those jealous hateful thoughts were poisonous arrows, which could harm and maim unwary, innocent souls, helpless as a child. All sages-Rishis counseled: protect yourself from ignorant viciousness with Prarthana (prayer) and positive thoughts.

Yes, she thought, I have allowed negativity to creep into my mind space, making me vulnerable to Drishti. I must be more careful of what I think. But Shalini’s “gift of love” that raincoat, protected me! Yes! We can also protect others with our love.

Was she correct in her analysis of the situation? Or, was the sudden disintegration of a new, expensive, well-made raincoat simply a manufacturing defect?

Who knows? She sighed and she thought of the old Upanishadic seer who exclaimed: “Who knows? Only God knows! And perhaps, even He does not!”

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1 Drishti: The power of negative minds filled with hatred, jealousy, anger and ignorance, to harm others by merely seeing their beauty, success and happiness.
2 Kshattrian: The warrior caste of Hindu society, the kings, the rulers
3 Kavacha: Protective armour worn by warriors in battle, especially over the chest.
4 Prarthana: Prayer as in concentrated thought.