

ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT

written by .

Payal Kapadia

A black screen.

The old air conditioner rumbles in time to a rhythmic 'beep - beep' sound from a heart monitor.

The skyline of Mumbai city, with tall buildings, shrouded by the gloomy grey sky, reflects on PRABHA's (36) face. She is a nurse with dark skin, hair parted in the middle, tied neatly in a braid and wearing a crisp- blue sari uniform. Her large eyes watch the nearby construction site where tall, red cranes, that move slowly.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA (O.S.)
(quietly)
The heart is fragile.

Prabha turns to the room.

It is a shabby hospital room with a hospital bed and green, faded curtains that form a make-shift partition.

KAKI, a frail old woman in her eighties, wearing a flimsy pink hospital gown is perched like a child on the bed. A mop of white hair is like a cloud over her head.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA (50s), a buxom middle aged woman, towers over Kaki. A pair of reading glasses dangle around her neck as she bends with a stethoscope, pressing it against Kaki's chest.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA (CONT'D)
(soft, but firm)
Take a deep breath.

KAKI
(breathing in)
Aaaah.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA
Breathe out.

KAKI
Haaaaaa.

Dr. Supriya takes off her stethoscope.

SUPRIYA

Nurse Prabha tells me that you have been making trouble... is it true?

Kaki does not reply. She dangles her feet like a petulant child.

PRABHA

(to Kaki)

Tell Dr. Supriya... Why did you hide your medication under your pillow?

Dr Supriya & Prabha looks at Kaki waiting for some explanation.

KAKI

I won't take them!

Kaki defiantly crosses her arms over her stomach. She glares at the doctor.

KAKI (CONT'D)

(mutters again)

I won't take them... any more.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA

(concerned)

What is wrong?

Kaki does not answer. She looks down at her feet.

PRABHA

She told me that the pills are giving her bad dreams.

Kaki turns to Prabha and gives her a dirty look.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA

I'll give you something for your sleep...

(taking the chart, writing another prescription)

Ok?

KAKI

NO! Not ok!

Dr Supriya stops writing.

DOCTOR SUPRIYA

What is the matter?

Kaki's shoulders slump - giving up. Nervously, she fiddles with the string around her gown.

KAKI

(plaintive)

Please doctor... I want to go home... please...

(warming up again)

Every night he comes, just after dinner when I watch TV .

DOCTOR SUPRIYA

Who comes?

KAKI

Jairam! My husband! ...I was watching *kaun banega karodpati* (Who wants to be a millionaire) I started to hear some sounds... I didn't see anything at first. Mr Bacchan was talking on the show - you know his voice always calms me down? .. And ... and that horrible smell... of tobacco. I turned and Jairam! He was sitting on that chair...

Kaki indicates the chair that Dr. Supriya sits on.

KAKI (CONT'D)

Well... one can't really call it sitting. He was... ummm... hovering. You see doctor... he had no legs! He was only a torso!

(nodding her head in dismay)

Prabha turns to Kaki, concerned.

KAKI (CONT'D)

What torture has fallen on me at this age?

On a side table in the Hospital reception, an instrument sterilisation machine hums as it spews clouds of vapour. A calendar above has an image of a baby with rosy cheeks that gapes, mouth ajar.

Three middle-aged women wearing Burqas sit on a sofa in the waiting room, sweating and fanning themselves from the unbearable monsoon heat.

A YOUNG WOMAN (early 20s), a patient, sitting across the reception table, is answering questions, as if it is an interview. She has a petit frame and covers her head with her sari. Her olive skin has small red blotches caused by sun burn. A child in her arms plays with an auspicious black thread around her neck.

ANU (O.S.)

And the older one, how old is he?

YOUNG WOMAN

Ummm...He is this much
(indicating the child's height)

Anu (23), a nurse on the other side of the reception desk, is filling a form on a clipboard. She is dressed in the same blue sari uniform as Prabha. She is an attractive woman, with a sharp chin, and full lips and long curly hair.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

There is one more child... I had her last month.

ANU

Oh...So three children in total?

The Young Woman nods and the cloth on her head slips off. She adjusts it in a childish gesture, her adult image suddenly falling apart, and making her seem a child in a woman's body.

ANU (CONT'D)

How old are you?

The Young Woman is silent. She bites her lower lip.

YOUNG WOMAN

Maybe 25... or 24... ummm...

Anu, stops writing on her clipboard and looks up at the Young Woman.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(hesitant)

22... yes... I am sure...

Anu rolls her eyes, bored with this mundane activity she has done many times.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(hesitant)

Nurse...??

(low voice)

Nurse, the girls told me there is a prize?

Curious, Anu looks up, raising her eyebrows.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

(leaning in to be closer to Anu)

Prize for the...you know?

She makes a pair of scissors with her index and middle finger and snips at the air.

ANU

(thinks about it)

Vasectomy?

The Young Woman nods.

Anu brings her chair forward, as if she is giving some classified information.

ANU (CONT'D)

The government will give you ration for one month and a plastic bucket if he agrees to the vasectomy...

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

(cutting her short)

I told my husband..but he is scared. He says he won't be able to lift heavy things if he gets it done. You know he is a brick layer? It makes them lose their strength!

Anu leans back in her chair and contemplates what to do. She gets up. She goes to the side of the room to the shelf. She quickly takes out some pills and folds her palm around them.

Sitting back down on the chair, she thrusts the pills into the Young Woman's hand in a way that it is a secret operation - like a drug dealer.

ANU

Take it every day. If you want another child, stop taking it one month in -

YOUNG WOMAN
(shaking her head)
No NO! I'll die before I have one more.

The Young Woman examines the contraceptive pills. Anu takes out the form again and starts filling it as before.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
How much for this?

Anu waves her hand as if to say 'nothing'.

ANU
When did you get your period last?

3

INT. HOSPITAL, STAFF ROOM - DAY

3

The staffroom is covered in white tiles and large panelled old fashioned glass windows. Dark green curtains are kept open. Through them, the large construction site is visible across the street with its red cranes. A short, Maharashtrian woman, PARVATY (60s) wearing a neatly pinned ochre yellow uniform sari watches patiently as a pot of milky chai boils on the stovetop.

Three nurses, in their early 20, sit around a long wooden table in the staffroom. All of them are dressed in the same blue uniform. NURSE 1 has the newspaper opened in front of her as she casually goes through the movie listings.

NURSES 2
Please lets not go for a crime film this
time!...I can't sleep at night!! ...I want to go
for a romantic movie!

NURSE 3
Ooh! There is the one with that dreamy actor,
whats his name?

NURSE 1
(scanning the paper)
Shane Nigam! He is... so cute!

NURSE 2
Nurse Prabha, which movie do you want to
watch?!

Sitting by herself at the other end of the staffroom table, Prabha hurriedly eats her lunch from a small plastic lunchbox. She looks at the nurse.

NURSE 1 (O.S.)
Yes Nurse Prabha, you pick!!

NURSE 3 (O.S.)
She won't come with us... Nurse Prabha
doesn't like movies.

NURSE 1 (O.S.)
Please Nurse! You must come!

PRABHA
(smiling)
You girls go ahead....

A murmur of disappointment.

The nurses continue their chatter. Prabha finishes her lunch and hastily packs her box. She turns to look at Parvaty, the cook.

Parvaty is still watching the tea boil. Prabha goes over to her.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
(softly so only she can hear)
I had a word with doctor Supriya. She has
spoken to her lawyer friend... He said he will
have a look at your case!

Not responding, Parvaty takes the tea off the stove.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
He won't even charge a penny!

Parvaty pours the chai into small porcelain cups, not responding.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
I thought... I thought it would make you
happy.

Parvaty turns to Prabha. She puts her hands into her ochre sari blouse and takes out a small newspaper packet. She unfurls it and it has some red herbal powder inside. She scoops some into her mouth and start chewing it.

PARVATY

It won't do much good..

(chewing)

Last night... the builders sent a goon to my house, isn't it? Rascal started to threaten me!

Prabha gasps.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

(soft and dramatic)

He said he was there to give me a warning...
If I didn't leave the house by the end of the month....

PRABHA

My god !

Parvaty nods slowly. Frowning, Prabha thinks about what to do.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

You better stay at my place...its too dangerous!

PARVATY

Don't worry nurse... that goon won't show his face to me any time soon

Parvaty looks up at Prabha and grins.

PRABHA

Oh no Parvaty, what did you do?

Parvaty, still grinning, swings her arm in the air and chuckles as if to indicate that she took a swing at the goon! Prabha stares at her wide eyed but then breaks into a smile in admiration.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Talk to the lawyer... it can't go on like this.

NURSE 2 (O.S.)

Parvaty Mausi (Aunt), when will the tea be ready?

Parvaty turns to them and lifts the tray with the porcelain tea cups. She offers one to Prabha.

PARVATY

Sit for a bit...have some tea and go.

Prabha looks at her watch. She nods.

4

INT. STAFFROOM - DAY

4

Parvaty keeps cups of tea in front of each of the seated nurses. Leaning against the counter, Prabha also drinks the tea.

Offscreen someone enters the staffroom.

NURSE 1 (O.S.)

Come in Dr. Manoj. Have some sweets...

Prabha looks up and her expression softens. A smile appears on her lips.

DOCTOR MANOJ, a young Malayali sonographer , is in the middle of the room. He is of medium height, and a thick, tidy mop of hair, brown-rimmed glasses and eyes with long curly eyelashes. His small moustache is trimmed neatly. He is not conventionally handsome but is pleasant looking and a little overweight. He wears a white doctor's coat.

DR. MANOJ

From home?

NURSE 1

Uh huh..

He takes one sweet politely from the box on the table and pops it into his mouth.

DR. MANOJ

Oh very nice!

(munching)

I miss the food from home.

NURSE 1

Doctor, it is time you get a wife who can cook all the specialities for you!

The other nurses giggle.

DR. MANOJ

You don't have to worry, my mother has made this her life mission!

Dr Manoj walks to the counter close to where Parvaty is now chopping onions. He picks up a cup of tea from the tray. He takes a few steps towards Prabha.

DR. MANOJ.

(leaning in a bit so only she can hear)

My cooking lessons are not going as planned, Nurse.

PRABHA

(kindly)

You have to work hard at it!

NURSE 2 (O.S.)

(interrupting)

Doctor, have you got your horoscope checked?

Dr. Manoj shakes his head smiling mildly.

DR. MANOJ

I don't believe in the stars.

NURSE 2

It is not a matter of belief Doctor! It is fate!

NURSE 1

You don't want to make a mistake do you? A lifetime is a long time.

The nurses turn to the doctor for a response.

Dr. Manoj, now sniffing and has tears streaming down his face. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes them, his eyes are red.

NURSE 3

You don't have to cry doctor, we will find someone for you.

Helplessly, Dr. Manoj points at Parvaty's onions. Everyone turns to her.

NURSE 3 (CONT'D)

Seems like Parvaty has put a spell on you!

All the Nurses surround Dr Manoj. Unseen to them, in the door at the back, Kaki hobbles by slowly. No one notices her.

Poor Dr. Manoj's face has become red. He moves as far away from the onions as possible. He pats his face. He smiles apologetically. Prabha takes a nearby stool and makes him sit on it. She looks at the helpless doctor and smiles kindly.

DOCTOR MANOJ
(still wiping)
Thanks nurse.

Suddenly, a YOUNG NURSE (20s) comes to the staffroom door and peers inside. She is worried and out of breath.

YOUNG NURSE
Nurse Prabha?

Prabha turns to the Young Nurse.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)
Nurse Prabha....come fast! Your.. patient has
fallen!

5

INT. HOSPITAL, CORRIDOR - DAY

5

Many nurses - male and female, in identical uniforms, look at what is happening off screen, in a well-arranged corridor.

Prabha's shoes tik-tok on the red clay tiled floor as she runs towards them.

The entire gathered crowd turns in sync to looks at her approaching. No one speaks. Prabha joins them and they all unanimously shift their attention to Kaki who is offscreen on the floor.

Sounds of struggle.

KAKI (O.S.)
(struggling)
Let me go!

A big built, thin-haired handsome MALE NURSE holds the fragile Kaki under her arms, trying to lift her like a sack of sand, but the wiggling old woman keeps slipping out of his hold. The poor man looks exasperated. It is a comical sight.

KAKI (CONT'D)

Don't touch me... Don't...Don't you dare!! Let me go! I am going home!

The nurses stand around watching nervously, but unable to do anything.

MALE NURSE (O.S.)

Ouch!

The Male Nurse recoils backwards, holding his forearm.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)

(defeated)

She bit me.

Prabha turns back to Kaki sternly. She has had enough.

She marches towards the older woman. She stares down at her. Kaki is now lying flat on the floor, and has spread out her arms as if she is holding on to it. Kaki looks up at Prabha. Kaki's expression softens.

KAKI

Nurse.... What took you so long? Tell all these people that I want to go home.

(sadly)

I don't want to die here...Please!

PRABHA

No one is dying Kaki. Come... let me take you back.

Kaki stares at Prabha and then finally gives in. She lifts her arms. Prabha holds her gently, lifting her up. She indicates to the others to bring nearer the wheel chair and carefully manoeuvres Kaki into it.

Kaki is wheeled away.

Prabha looks sternly at the other nurses.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Don't you'll have somewhere to be?

Embarrassed, they go back to work.

6

INT. RECEPTION - LATE AFTERNOON

6

The reception waiting area that was filled with patients earlier, is now empty. A man in a hospital uniform leans against his mopping stick and nonchalantly watches the TV hung from the ceiling. A news anchor on TV warns of a severe Monsoon storm that is about to hit the city.

Anu rests her head on the reception table, absently watching the empty room. She notices a stethoscope next to her. She slips it on her ears.

A dull hum all around smothers the other sounds.

Taking the other end of the stethoscope, she places it on the flower vase in front of her, listening to its 'heartbeat'.

The dull hum continues.

She then places it on the paperweight, 'listening' to it. But there is no change in sound. With a slow, deliberate movement, she turns the stethoscope and listens to her own heart.

Instead of the heartbeat, the sound of large ocean waves crashing on the beach resonates through it.

Anu closes her eyes.

7

EXT. HOSPITAL TERRACE - LATE AFTERNOON

7

The sound of a whipping sail of a small boat on waves.

Track left to right on the terrace over pink identical hospital gowns hung on a wire until it stops to frame two of them fluttering in the wind.

On this, TEXT messages appear in yellow between Anu and SHIAZ.

ANU

R U gng 2 pick me up 2day?

SHIAZ

Ya.. same spot.

ANU

:(IMA So bored

It starts to drizzle. Footsteps are heard running. A nurse rushes in and pulls down the gowns before they get wet. Mumbai city is revealed behind them - tall skyscrapers, covered in a sheet of blue-grey rain! On it, more text appears.

SHIAZ

Cnt talk now, boss is giving dirty looks

ANU

I'll send U somthng to cheer U up :p

Slow track on the terrace towards the tall buildings that are slightly out of focus as if they are merging with the rain.

Text:

MP3 AUDIO SENT FROM ANU TO SHIAZ.

ANU (V.O.)

(recorded voice on the
microphone adjusts)

*oh wondrous rain clouds...don't thunder too
loudly... my lover is sleeping ...*

Her sweet voice flows over the sheets of rain on the city - cascading all over the skyline and the clouds.

The work in the construction site has stopped and the men sit below it.

ANU (V.O.)

(singing)

*Clouds with your naughty ways, are only
causing a flutter in my heart. My lover is far
away and maybe you can carry this message
to him.*

8

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

8

Anu's singing continues.

The rain is comes down relentlessly in torrential sheets seen through a frosted window of an empty corridor of the hospital. A fish tank with a small red scuba diver stuck inside a plastic shark. Other fish swim around.

Thunder cracks.

Parvaty pushes a tray with food and stops briefly to look at the rain as it comes down on the construction site.

CUT TO:

Three young nurses look at their phones, the light illuminating their faces. Behind them, in a window, the sky has turned a brilliant blue in the monsoon evening.

Anu's song comes to an end.

9

INT. HOSPITAL, KAKI'S ROOM - EVENING

9

Prabha inspects Kaki's open mouth to make sure she has swallowed her medication.

PRABHA

Are you hiding them under your tongue?

Kaki sticks out her tongue. Prabha straightens up. Kaki closes her mouth.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Good.

The door opens and Anu looks inside.

ANU

Prabha, I am going. Do yo need anything?

PRABHA (O.S.)

No..... you go ahead. I'll see you at home.

Anu nods and leaves.

Prabha helps Kaki lay down. She neatens her pillow. On the TV offscreen the sound of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire' is playing.

KAKI

Oh I think this contestant is going lose big!

PRABHA

How do you know?

KAKI

She looks too ugly!

Prabha smiles at Kaki's disdain. Kaki looks up at Prabha.

KAKI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Nurse... I don't want to sleep alone.

PRABHA
Don't worry, I will be here till you fall asleep.

10 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 10

Gingerly Prabha closes Kaki's room door. The corridor is empty and many of the lights have been turned off.

Prabha walks down the staircase with her purse. She walks past the reception where a nurse is casually looking at her phone. Seeing Prabha the nurse straightens up and hides a yawn.

11 INT. HOSPITAL, FOYER - NIGHT 11

Prabha holding up her sari with one hand and her red umbrella with the other, walks out of the Hospital gate.

Dr. Manoj, dressed in a full-body, yellow plastic rain protected pant and jacket, waits under the hospital awning. He smiles as Prabha comes out, as if he was expecting her.

DR. MANOJ
Nurse Prabha.

She watches him approach.

PRABHA
Sorry doctor. I lost track of time.

DR. MANOJ
Its ok... I was not in a hurry.

12 I/E. SKYWALK - NIGHT 12

Prabha and Dr. Manoj walk on the deserted skywalk towards the railway station. Tube-lights illuminate the metal skywalk, creating pools of white light in the darkness.

The rain falls gently on the plastic roof.

DR. MANOJ

Nurse, I think I should return your recipe books. I tried many dishes but none of them turned out very well...

PRABHA

With some practice you will improve.

DR. MANOJ

You don't have to be polite, Nurse.

PRABHA

Well, maybe I will have to try them to know if you are exaggerating!

DR. MANOJ

I think cooking has less to do with recipes than the hand that makes them... mine are like the tentacles of an octopus!

He spreads his hands and shows them to her. She looks down at them and smiles. Light from nearby hoarding creates a soft red reflection on her face.

Some nurses in uniform walk past them.

Prabha looks up at them, stepping a few steps away from Dr. Manoj. They continue walking ahead in silence. They stop as they reach a fork in the skywalk.

PRABHA

I will see you tomorrow doctor. Don't forget to get me something to taste!

DR. MANOJ

Umm... Nurse, I have something, I wanted to show you.

He rummages through his yellow raincoat pants, the plastic making an odd sound. He pulls down his plastic pants in an odd gesture and rummages through his cotton trousers below. She is mildly amused at his endearing action. He pulls out a little book and hands it to her. She looks at it, turning it in her hand.

It is imprinted with a design of yellow roses. She is about to open it when he stops her -

DR. MANOJ (CONT'D)

No no Nurse! Don't open it now.

(hesitant)

Its a ... a poem...

PRABHA

Poem?

DR. MANOJ

(sheepishly)

There is a writing competition in our monthly journal. I thought I will give it a shot.

PRABHA

Oh! I didn't know you are also a writer!

DR. MANOJ

(shyly)

It is just a hobby.

Prabha nods and puts it in her purse.

The sound of the train again.

Prabha looks towards it and then back at Dr. Manoj

DR. MANOJ.

See you tomorrow Nurse

She walks away, smiling to herself. Dr. Manoj watches her go.

13

EXT. STATION - NIGHT

13

A desolate station with only a few lights. A train approaches from below the skywalk, the headlights illuminates the empty, glistening tracks.

Prabha stands at the platform, the light from the approaching train illuminates her face with a soft golden haze.

14

INT. LOCAL TRAIN - NIGHT

14

The city passes by through the window of a train. Prabha sits near the window, Dr. Manoj's poetry book on her lap.

Prabha gazes out the train window at the city passing by in a swirl of lights sparkling in the rain. The city lights illuminate his tired but happy face.

The lights from the windows flash over other girls too who sit in the female-only coach of the train- some dozing, some listening to their earphones, one of them is cutting vegetables on her laptop bag, many of them wear uniform or work clothes.

15

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

15

Prabha makes her way through the shabby apartment building. The walls are painted bright pink. She holds her sari to avoid getting it wet from the water that is dripping down the staircase.

She stops at the landing.

PRABHA

(softly)

What are you doing here?

KOSHU, her black cat, is huddled in the basket of a child's green bicycle in the corridor. Prabha scoops Koshu up in her arms. The cat is visibly pregnant. Lovingly, Prabha carries her in her arms.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

How did you get out?

She climbs up to the floor above, to her own apartment.

16

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

16

The apartment is dimly lit with a single tungsten bulb hung from the ceiling. The kitchen is full of steel utensils neatly arranged on the wall. The tiles are chipped and been replaced by mismatched ones.

Prabha leans against the kitchen counter to shut the window that has come undone. She puts on a small latch at the bottom and makes sure that the window is securely closed. Koshu, the black cat, watches her.

PRABHA

Don't try to run off again, my princess!

Koshu meows.

Prabha sits on the chair along the tiny dining-table. She takes off her pumps, releasing her tired feet. She leans against the wall, briefly closing her eyes. Koshu hops on the table and rubs herself against Prabha's arm. Prabha lovingly caresses Koshu.

17

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

17

The radio plays an old movie song which mixes with the sound of the rain.

Prabha stands besides the stove and massages a fish with turmeric. The grey shiny scales turn a vibrant shade of yellow. The oil boils in the pan as Prabha prepares dinner.

Sound of a key turning.

The front door opens and Anu comes in. Her clothes are dripping wet from the rain! Prabha turns to look. Before she can say anything, Anu quickly rushes to the bedroom.

PRABHA

Did you lose your umbrella again?

ANU (O.S.)

uh huh!

Prabha continues to cook while in the distance, through the door, Anu is seen wiping herself.

PRABHA

You left so early...what happened?

ANU

(lying)

Nothing happened... I went all the way to pay the electricity bill and just as my turn came, the lady closed the counter! To top that, it started pouring!!

Anu disappears behind the cupboard.

PRABHA

Oh I didn't know they had the office open so late!

ANU (O.S.)

I will try another day...

After a few moments, Anu emerges from the room, having changed into a flimsy white nightie. She ties her wet hair with a towel and walks to the kitchen table. She picks up Koshu and carries her like a baby.

ANU (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)

She is getting so big!

PRABHA

I found her loitering in the corridor outside Kulkarni's flat

Anu frowns and turns to Koshu in her arms. Anu sits down and puts the cat on her lap, turning her upside down.

ANU

I asked Doctor Manoj if he will have a look at her...

Anu touches Koshu's pregnant belly, her red nails shine against the cat's black hair.

PRABHA

What did he say? We shouldn't bother him with such things.

ANU

Don't worry, he will do it...he is a nice guy.

Prabha nods, a slight smile on her face.

Outside, the thunder crackles in the sky. The soft radio continues.

RADIO

And the monsoon is going to hit the city with a cyclone bringing in strong winds from the Arabian Sea.. Expect heavy rain...

(fade)

The doorbell buzzes

Prabha turns to Anu and they exchange a puzzled glance.

It rings again.

Anu puts Koshu down and opens the front door.

MRS KULKARNI (O.S.)

(in a meek voice)

This is for you. It came in the afternoon. you were at work so I took it. It is so big. What is in it?

ANU

I don't know Aunty.

Anu holds a large box, standing at the door as Mrs Kulkarni, a scrawny middle aged lady also holds on to it. Anu looks down at the box in her hand. Prabha joins her at the front door...

PRABHA

What is it?

Mrs Kulkarni stares at the box, curious, not letting go of it.

MRS KULKARNI

(muttering)

Such a big box... so nice...

ANU

Mrs Kulkarni...

Anu stares Mrs Kulkarni down and finally Mrs Kulkarni reluctantly lets go of the box. She drops her arms. She walks back to her apartment but keeps glancing at the box.

PRABHA

Is it from your mother?

Anu shrugs. She examines the box, noticing a name.

ANU

Prabha, it is for you!

PRABHA

Eh? For me?

She takes the box and looks at it, she reads the label.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Smt. Prabha Ponappa. You are right...

(turning it around)

Who sent it?

Anu also examines the box.

ANU

(looking under it)

Doesn't say...

18

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

18

A red rice cooker sits pretty on the floral formica dining table - an elegant piece of equipment, in a deep ruby red with two golden swans. The cardboard box lies at the back with some bubble wrap on the table.

For a while, neither speaks.

ANU (O.S.)

It is beautiful, isn't it?

Prabha and Anu stare at the red rice cooker.

ANU (CONT'D)

I am sure whatever we make in this will be very good.

Anu touches the shiny surface with her painted red fingernails.

ANU (CONT'D)

We used to have a rice cooker at home... but not like this...this one is really international.

(turning to Prabha)

Looks expensive, no?

PRABHA

(troubled)

Who would have sent this?

Anu picks it up and turns it in her hands, looking for a label.

ANU
Sorry...There is nothing written.

Anu turns it around and looks at the bottom of the cooker.

ANU (CONT'D)
(reading the label in German)
D-I-c-h-t-u-n-g....the label is some foreign
language.

A flash of recognition on Prabha's face. Distressed, she takes a step back, with a look of worry.

Oblivious to Prabha's reaction, Anu's eyes widen with recognition.

ANU (CONT'D)
Prabha! Doesn't your husband live there?

Prabha has picked up the plastic from the wrapping and is vigorously making it into a large ball.

Anu looks up, concerned. She watches Prabha helplessly re-fold the plastic.

19

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

19

Prabha and Anu eat dinner silently. Anu looks once at the rice cooker sitting on the table top, as if it is a third person who has joined them for dinner!

Prabha briefly glances at it.

ANU
Maybe your husband got a bonus or
something... that is why he has sent it...?

No response from Prabha.

ANU (CONT'D)
Or maybe he misses you! It is quite romantic-

PRABHA
(cutting her short)
There must be some mistake

Silent beat.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

We should not use it...

Anu looks awkwardly at Prabha, not knowing what to say.

20

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

20

Prabha lies in bed. She stares at the ceiling. Her face is dimly lit by the light from the window above her. The floral pattern of the mosquito net which hangs above her seems imprinted on her skin.

She remains like this for some time, unable to sleep.

The monotonous sound of the falling rain is interrupted by a soft sound of the window banging.

Prabha turns towards the sound.

She sits up in bed. Anu is fast asleep on the bed next to hers.

21

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

21

A circular beam of light moves through the kitchen. Prabha stops at the kitchen window. Once again, it has come undone. The curtain flutters in the wind. Partially hidden behind the curtain sits the red rice cooker. The torch goes off. Hold on the window

Prabha turns off the torch and walks to the window. She closes it. For a brief moment, she observes the buildings on the other side of the road.

In one window, a woman puts her baby to sleep, while in another, a girl talks on her phone. In a third, a shirtless old man stands alone, smoking a cigarette watching the rain.

22

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

22

Sitting on a chair in the dark of her kitchen, Prabha goes through her purse. She pulls out Dr. Manoj's poem book.

DOCTOR MANOJ (V.O.)

(gentle and sad)

*My dreams are made of everyday things,
Small and scattered that I left behind,
My hope is just another casket of things,
I carry with me wherever I go,
and now,
You are here like a burning lamp,
In a neighbour's house,
Whose glow I watch to keep me warm at
night.*

23

EXT. HOSPITAL, CORRIDORS - NIGHT

23

There is constant rain. Lightning strikes but not threatening.

The HALF GHOST of Kaki's husband smokes in the hospital corridor. He is a man in his 60s, dressed in a suit, and with a thin, pencil moustache. He has a ghostly-translucent feel. And only his torso hovers in the corridor. He takes another drag of his cigarette.

The ghost slowly fades away. The empty corridor of the hospital looks forlorn

CUT TO:

Kaki sleeps soundly.

24

INT. HOSPITAL, ELEVATOR- DAY

24

Prabha is in the elevator with three guys in PPE suits.

Elevator music plays.

When the lift stops, Dr. Manoj enters. He spots Prabha and nods. Separated by the men in the PPE suits, Dr. Manoj glances at her but is silent. The elevator stops again and the men leave, Prabha and Dr. Manoj are now alone. The door shuts.

Momentary silence, filled with the elevator music.

Dr. Manoj looks at Prabha, gathering the courage to talk

DR. MANOJ

Nurse... I wanted to ask you if - you managed to glance at my poem?

PRABHA

Oh.. I am sorry I have not had the time Doctor

DR. MANOJ

(visibly disappointed)

Oh... ok... sure...I understand

25

INT. KAKI'S ROOM - DAY

25

Dr. Supriya presses the stethoscope on Kaki's chest. Kaki looks pensive, her shoulders droop as the hospital gown has slipped off.

KAKI

Doctor...He came again last night. He says he wants to go hunting...like the old days..

Dr. Supriya turns to Prabha. She is standing behind Kaki.

DR. SUPRIYA

She does not look good at all.

(taking off the stethoscope)

Nurse, get the blood pressure machine.

Prabha does not move. She stares absently, lost in thought.

DR. SUPRIYA (CONT'D)

Prabha! The blood pressure machine, please!

Prabha is jolted back to reality. She rushes to the table and gets a box, handing it to the doctor

KAKI

(softly)

Is the age for hunting?

Dr. Supriya looks at what is in her hand. She turns back to Prabha

DR. SUPRIYA

Nurse Prabha, if I wanted a nebuliser, I would have asked for one wouldn't I?

Prabha realises she has made a mistake. Embarrassed, she looks at the nebuliser she has just handed to Dr. Supriya.

PRABHA

Sorry doctor

Prabha quickly takes back the nebuliser and returns with the blood pressure machine.

DR. SUPRIYA

(sternly)

Looks like you too have your head in the clouds today!

26

INT. HOSPITAL CHANGING AREA - DAY

26

Many trainee nurses are getting dressed in a small changing room. They are putting on their green surgical uniforms and caps. Nurse 1 helps Nurse 2 tie her mask. On the wall behind them, text messages between Anu and Shiaz appear.

SHIAZ

Whats up?

ANU

Same ol

SHIAZ

I am thinking of U...wen do I C U

ANU

Same time :) But we better not get late today. Prabha is getting suspicious

Anu looks at her phone as a Young Nurse is washing her hands in the sink. Anu looks up and sees Young Nurse looking at her in the glass mirror above the sink. They exchange a glance.

27

INT. HOSPITAL, STORAGE ROOM - DAY

27

The storage room is lined with many bell jars filled with formaldehyde and nursing supplies. Anu enters.

ANU

Prabha, everyone is ready.

Prabha is bending over a metal tray. She looks up and nods, turning back to the table. Nurse Shanet (30s), a chubby nurse leans on the counter, keenly watching Anu leave.

SHANET
(cautiously)
Have you noticed anything about your new roommate?

Preoccupied, Prabha shakes her head.

NURSE SHANET
(warming up)
All the girls are talking about her..

Prabha looks up.

SHANET
She has a boyfriend... and he is... he is...
(hesitant for effect)
How to say it?
(whispering)
'M'!

PRABHA
(takes a breath, whispering)
Muslim???

Nurse Shanet nods deliberately.

Prabha thinks about this for a moment.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
No...can't be. Shanet, she is a good girl.

SHANET
(matter of fact)
All the girls are talking about it.

Prabha turns firmly to Nurse Shanet.

PRABHA
Hospital is not a place for idle gossip. You are a senior nurse.

28

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

28

Nurse Shanet lies uncomfortably on the maroon hospital bed. She has her legs up in a birthing posture. Prabha holds up a pair of forceps and a plastic baby in her gloved hands, looking down at Nurse Shanet's spread legs. Seven - eight nurses, including Young Nurse and Anu, are huddled together watching the demonstration.

PRABHA

Umbilical scissor

Prabha shows it to the trainee nurses and passes it on to them. They look at it carefully, passing it around. She picks up another instrument.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

What is this?

The nurses mumble together.

NURSES

Vaginal forceps.

Prabha nods. Nurse Shanet puts down her legs and stretches. Prabha leans over and takes out a metal box, opening it.

PRABHA

Girls, this is the placenta. You have to get used to the smell.

The placenta is passed from one to the other. The stench is clearly awful and the nurses hold their breath. When it reaches Anu, she holds back, trying hard not to react. Prabha glances at Anu.

29

INT. STORAGE ROOM - LATER

29

Prabha is in the storage room, putting away the tools from the demonstration. The plastic baby used earlier is lying on the table next to her. She picks it up and looks at it. She touches its chubby plastic cheeks. She holds it briefly.

30

INT. STAFFROOM - DAY

30

Prabha sits at a table in the staffroom, a tea cup next to her. Sitting across her is Parvaty, wearing a pink hairnet, watches her with concern.

PARVATY

A rice cooker?

Prabha nods.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Why would he send you that?

Prabha shrugs.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Are you sure it was your husband who sent it?

PRABHA

The box...it said it was from Germany. Who else could it be?

Parvaty agrees. She shoves her hand into her blouse and takes out her herbal medicine packet. She chews it.

PARVATY

But when did he speak to you last?

Prabha thinks for a while before answering.

PRABHA

Maybe... last year... or I think a little bit more. He called to wish me for Onam.

Parvaty gets up and goes to the stove where she is cooking a large pot of lentils. She stirs the cauldron of yellow liquid.

PARVATY

You know Nurse, when people live abroad for a long time, they can lose their mind or memory. It happens like that.

Parvaty turns to Prabha.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

What are you going to do?

Prabha shrugs.

PRABHA

What should I do?

PARVATY

Call him up and give him a piece of your mind!

Prabha gives this a thought.

PRABHA

(hesitant)

Call him?

Prabha looks confused. She gets up abruptly and goes to the window.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

He is very busy there... He works very hard

PARVATY

You work hard too isn't it?

Parvaty stirs the lentils again.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Here taste it for the salt

Prabha worried, does not respond. Parvaty gives a ladle with lentil for to taste. Prabha nods to say its fine. She looks back to the window.

Outside on the construction site, the working men are moving up and down the huge building. Prabha watches.

Parvaty continues to mutter at the back

PARVATY (CONT'D)

If I meet that husband of yours... Im gonna box his ears, isn't it?

PRABHA

(changing the subject)

Did the builders come again?

Parvaty shakes her head.

PARVATY

No... but they cut off the electricity, isn't it!

Prabha turns, concerned.

PRABHA
Why didn't you tell me!?

Parvaty is silent.

31

INT. BUS - EVENING

31

Traveling through the city in the bus, Prabha and Parvaty sit silently. Parvaty holds a pink file in her hands. The landscape of the city changes as the bus enters a very posh area of Mumbai.

32

INT. LAWYER'S HOUSE - EVENING

32

ADVOCATE DESAI (60s) looks through some documents in his apartment in a upper class Dadar neighbourhood. He has reading glasses perched on his nose. The house is brightly lit with large, abstract paintings that look like a cheap copies of Jackson pollock. His wife MRS DESAI, walks around in the back, looking busy with a MAID.

ADVOCATE DESAI
Supriya told me you have lived in your place
for 22 years...it's a real shame.

Prabha and Parvaty are sitting across the table from him. Cups of tea and snacks lay in front of them. Parvaty nods.

ADVOCATE DESAI (CONT'D)
Are there others who are in the same
situation, or is it just you?

Parvaty looks nervous and she turns to Prabha.

PRABHA
Sir, most others have received compensatory
flats...whoever had papers.

ADVOCATE DESAI
Hmm

PARVATY
(mustering the courage to speak)
Sir, my husband got the place as compensation
from the government after the mills shut
down.

ADVOCATE

Then there must be papers somewhere!

Parvaty shakes her head.

PARVATY

Sir, he never told me where he put them...and
.. I can't ask a dead man, isn't it?

PRABHA

Sir, isn't there something you can do for her?

The advocate is lost in thought. He keeps looking at the papers in his hands

ADVOCATE DESAI

The problem is... you don't really have a
case. There is no proof that you have lived
here, Parvaty...

PARVATY

But you can ask my neighbours...

ADVOCATE DESAI

That won't hold up in court, Parvaty...If you
can find any proof...? Something with your
name on it?

Prabha turns to Parvaty but Parvaty does not know what to say.

33

INT. PARVATY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

33

Parvaty lights a candle. She has already lit a few more and placed them
around. It is a very small shanty room piled with many useless things that
Parvaty has hoarded over the years - old saris, pots and pans.

PARVATY

They do everything to chase you out, these
rascals.

Prabha looks through the documents that Parvaty has kept in front of her. She
examines them.

PRABHA

These are all receipts and medical papers of
your husband....

She looks through them again. She finds a passport photo of a young man. He is dressed in a t-shirt.

PARVATY (O.S.)

That's Suresh...my son.

The flickering light of the flame shines on the young man's face. Prabha looks back at Parvaty in the darkness. The candle now flickers in her eyes. She looks tired and vulnerable for the first time.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Good for nothing lout...drunkard, like his father, isn't it?

(swears in Marathi)

Its good you don't have kids, nurse... they are more of a burden than any help.

Prabha puts the photo away. She looks a bit sad at Parvaty's words.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Sorry... I didn't mean it like that.

Prabha nods.

That is when the light also comes back on. Both Prabha and Parvaty look around and squint in the new bright light. But the light quickly goes off again.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Well.

34

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

34

Anu walks out of the hospital with Young Nurse. The rain has stopped but the area outside the hospital is still wet and reflects the streetlights.

ANU

Go ahead... I have to go to the market.

Young Nurse nods and leaves in one direction

YOUNG NURSE

See you tomorrow Anu

Anu nods and waits for a few moments before walking off in the opposite direction.

She walks along the hospital building and to the left is the train track. The road is pretty isolated. A YOUNG MAN emerges from the alley way and starts walking behind Anu. She glances at him and walks faster. He follows. She looks nervous.

They turn the corner, the hospital out of sight, Anu and the Young Man now hold hands.

35

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

35

Anu and the YOUNG MAN travel in a bus together. He is Shiaz. He is a handsome Malayali man, with curly black hair. He wears a small silver earring. He wears a formal stripped shirt.

ANU

Sorry it got late

SHIAZ

Its ok... I don't mind waiting...

ANU

Were you bored?

Shiaz shakes his head. He takes out a wooden duck and hands it to Anu

SHIAZ

There was an order for 50 of these today... I took one for you

She holds the little toy in her palm.

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

I know you had that pet duck as a kid!

Anu looks delighted! She grins and admires the wooden toy. She winds the key and the duck moves forward with a mechanical sound. She places it on the seat and they both watch it move.

ANU

Won't your boss mind... that you took one?

SHIAZ

I don't care what he thinks...he is really getting on my nerves!

Anu lofts the duck and puts it away.

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

He got some 4 likes on tiktok and now he wants to put up new songs every week. That fucker... he saw my t shirt and forced me to swap with him. He said it was more 'youtube appropriate' Then when I asked him for it back he started abusing me... !

ANU

Well..you do have nice clothes.. He must be jealous of you!

36

EXT. MARKET - NIGHT

36

A market with a row of shops having fake brand t-shirts. the shops are covered in blue plastic tarpaulin sheets as rain protection. The sky is also illuminated with the same blue colour.

Anu looks through the many clothes on the rack of a roadside shop. She takes out different t-shirts, examines them and keeps them back. A potbellied, young shopkeeper watches her keenly. Finally she selects a blue tie- dye T shirt with a large print of a tiger's face. She holds it up against Shiaz.. She examines it again.

SHOPKEEPER

Fixed price. 500.

Anu rolls her eyes and reluctantly puts it back on the rack.

37

EXT. STREET MARKET- NIGHT

37

They walk in the market, meandering through the crowd. The sounds of street hawkers waft in and out as a cool breeze.

ANU (V.O.)

Feels like I have not seen you in many days.

There are moving LED lights in the shape of Ganesh God, twinkling in multicolours.

SHIAZ (V.O.)

You see me now..

ANU (V.O.)

If you don't see someone for a long time,
would you forget their face?

SHIAZ (V.O.)

What is the matter?

Halogen bulbs illuminate glass-covered displays of samosas and confectionery.

38

EXT. MARKET - NIGHT

38

On a black screen a series of still photographs appear.

First is a YOUNG MAN wearing a checked office shirt and glasses.

Anu giggles.

Another photo appears. This time a TRADITIONAL MAN with a holy white dot on his forehead worn by very religious people.

A third photograph, a MAN with a cap and a handlebar moustache.

SHIAZ (O.S.)

(in a fake deep voice)

I have a farm and two elephants and I go
hunting for pigeons in my free time.

The picture changes to a BALD MAN who looks much older than Anu.

SHIAZ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(changing his voice to a meek
one)

Oh.. Yes...myself... MSC Physics. I expect a
Bajaj scooter and two cows for dowry!

ANU (O.S.)

(imitating her father's voice)

No no. I can only give a microwave and one
cow only!

SHIAZ (O.S.)

(same voice)

Marrying your daughter for so cheap? No way!

Anu laughs.

The picture changes to a HANDSOME MAN with a polo t-shirt.

ANU (O.S.)

This guy is handsome!

SHIAZ (O.S.)

Very handsome.

(pause)

If I make a fake profile on this marriage site...
and change my name to some Hindu fellow...
your father might send you my photo...?

Shiaz's photo appears wearing the tie- dye t shirt they didn't buy earlier. Many pictures of Shiaz appear in different poses.

ANU (O.S.)

What would be your fake name?

SHIAZ

Let's say 'Ajayan'!

ANU (O.S.)

(teasing)

Even if he did... I will reject them.

39

EXT. MARKET - NIGHT

39

Anu and Shiaz are sitting at small roadside shack sharing a rose coloured ice cream. They are both looking at her phone, swiping through images. Behind them, a man is preparing elaborate ice cream sundaes.

SHIAZ

You are very hard to please!

40

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

40

Anu and Shiaz kiss passionately behind a tree. They are in the dark, sitting in a park where a cricket match is taking place. Occasionally, their kiss is punctuated by the sound of a ball being hit by a bat.

ANU

I feel your heartbeat.

SHIAZ
It is beating very fast...

Anu nods.

ANU
Can you feel mine?

SHIAZ
Yea....

Behind them a young player goes to retrieve a lost ball. He does not notice them.

41 INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

41

It is raining heavily outside the window. The kitchen window in the apartment has once again come undone. Rain water has wet the kitchen counter and made a small puddle on the floor. Prabha pulls the window shut, trying hard to put on the small lever. She manages to close it. She looks at the window.

Prabha is perched on the kitchen counter. With a hammer in her hand, she bangs the window to realign it. Water from the window makes her drenched.

Partly soaked, Prabha now attempts to tie the window with a large cloth. She has a hard time closing it.

42 INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

42

The window is covered with a large floral cloth. Wet from the rain, Prabha stands in the middle of her wet kitchen, watching it.

43 INT. APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

43

Exhausted, Prabha heads to her bed. She sits down. Slowly, she lets her body fall onto it. She gazes up at the ceiling.

Behind her, through the window, it is still pouring rain. Lightning regularly splits the sky. Prabha lays there like that for some time.

She closes her eyes.

An image of Dr. Manoj running his hands through his hair appears.

She opens her eyes. She lays still.

44

EXT. STREET- NIGHT

44

The rain comes down heavily.

The entire cricket team from the park dressed in white uniforms is huddled under a bus stop. Under the same bus stop Anu and Shiaz also take refuge. For a long time they watch the rain, not knowing what to do.

ANU

It's not fair!

Shiaz chuckles but notices that Anu looks pissed

SHIAZ

Its ok... cheer up...

Anu notices something in the distance. Her expression changes.

ANU

Shiaz look there!

There is a sign for 'Sri Krishna Hotel' in the distance across the road.

ANU (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Should we go?

SHIAZ (O.S.)

I don't have enough cash

ANU (O.S.)

I got some...

Shiaz turns to Anu, slightly concerned.

SHIAZ

Uh... Anu... maybe its not a good idea..

(hesitant)

They won't allow us if they find out.

ANU

If they find out.

45

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

45

A middle-aged, bald MANAGER is completely engrossed in the cricket match on TV, while also fanning himself with an electric fan.

ANU (O.S.)

We would like a room for two.

MANAGER

(not looking)

Pittu ... get the key and register.

PITTU, the bellboy gets up, a sour expression on his face. He hands the register to the Manager. The Manager starts looking through the registry.

ANU (O.S.)

We are here for our honeymoon you see, and
our train got very late so...

MANAGER

(cutting her short, not interested)
Name?

ANU

Mr and Mrs Aadat.

MANAGER

(looking up)

Anupama Aadat?

Anu is surprised that he knows her name.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

It's on your name tag.

She looks at the name tag.

ANU

Right.

MANAGER

Husband's name?

ANU

Umm.. Ajayan (Hindu name) Aadat

The Manager finishes filling up the form and hands her the key.

MANAGER

Pittu will show you the room. That will be 500 rupees.

Anu smiles gleefully. She takes out a small purse and counts the money. She has some hidden money in her blouse too. She rummages and takes that out, adding to the pile of notes.

Pittu get up lazily and indicates they should follow him.

MANAGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(counting the money)

I need to take a copy of your IDs.

Anu's smile vanishes.

She looks through her bag and takes out her ID and hands it to him. He looks at it and then looks at Shiaz. He raises his eyebrows.

ANU

Umm... he forgot his wallet. Mine should be enough, isn't it?

MANAGER

I need his too.. Government rules.

ANU

Can't you make an exception? It is our honeymoon after all?

The Manager looks at both of them, evaluating the situation. Then he shrugs his shoulders. He indicates to Pittu to put away the key and Anu follows him with her eyes, totally helpless.

MANAGER

No miss...can't take a chance...Now days you can't tell who is a terrorist...People dress normally... but then turn out to be terrorists... who can tell anything any more?

46

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

46

Neon lights make colourful patterns on the wet tar road. Sitting on a staircase of a public library, Shiaz smokes a *beedi* (cheap cigarette).

SHIAZ

This place is shit.

Anu nods.

47

INT. HOSPITAL, SONOGRAPHY ROOM - DAY

47

Koshu, the pregnant cat, is laid on a pink towel. Anu's hands with pink finger nails, carefully shave the cat's belly.

ANU (O.S.)

Hold her legs

Prabha's hands carefully hold the cat's legs, allowing Anu to shave further down. Now there is a perfect bald rectangle on the cat's stomach.

DOCTOR MANOJ (O.S.)

Ready?

CUT TO:

The sonography monitor shows the inside of the cat's belly in black and white. Slowly, images of the babies inside start to appear.

DOCTOR MANOJ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

One... two... three...

ANU

Four heartbeats!

Dr. Manoj is holding the cat down with the sonography machine. All three of them stand there for a moment looking down at Koshu. Anu touches Koshu's head and face, the cat licks her finger. Dr. Manoj looks hesitant to touch her. He reaches out tentatively. He doesn't touch her.

ANU (CONT'D)

She doesn't bite.

Dr. Manoj touches Koshu reluctantly and then realises that it is quite nice. He smiles as if he has achieved something. He looks up for Prabha's approval but gets none. Koshu jerks her head and Dr. Manoj quickly withdraws his hands.

ANU (O.S.) (CONT'D)

They say that people who are afraid of cats
have a chance of being an animal in their past
life...

Prabha glances at Anu

ANU (CONT'D)

Do you want to touch her again?

DR. MANOJ

No... Its alright

ANU

Oh come on doctor... its easy.

She holds his palm to make him touch Koshu.

Prabha glares at Anu. Dr. Manoj looks awkward and conscious. He turns once more to Prabha, but she still does not respond to him. A tension lingers between them, to which Anu remains oblivious.

PRABHA

Don't mind her doctor, she talks more than
she should.

The atmosphere is tense.

48

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

48

Anu holds the rice cooker box with Koshu inside.

Prabha and her walk in the corridor silently. They reach the elevator.

PRABHA

Why did you have to talk like
that?

ANU

Talk like what?

PRABHA

(angrily)

The way you did! To doctor Manoj... you can't do that! You can't do whatever you want! If you behave like a slut, people will never give you any respect! Everyone is talking about you!

Prabha grabs the box from Anu and carries it away.

Anu is left by the elevator, not knowing what she did wrong. The door opens and shuts.

49

INT. TRAIN - EVENING

49

Anu and Shiaz travel in the train.

ANU

She is getting on my nerves.

SHIAZ

Maybe she is frustrated.

ANU

Why is taking it out on me? She snapped at me today, totally out of the blue!

SHIAZ

Forget about all that... I have some news that will cheer you up!

ANU

Nothing can cheer me up....

SHIAZ

Fine! Then I won't tell you.

Anu turns to Shiaz, nudging him.

ANU

Tell me!

Shiaz shakes his head.

ANU (CONT'D)

Please tell me!

Shiaz shrugs, playing hard to get

ANU (CONT'D)

Come on!

She pinches him playfully.

SHIAZ

Ok ok! So.... Do you have a burqa?

ANU

Why would I have a burqa, Shiaz!

SHIAZ

Well... you will need a burqa if we need to be successful at our plan.

ANU

What is it?

SHIAZ

Aunty and Uncle are going to a wedding tomorrow night.

Anu frowns, confused.

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

No need to scrunch up your pretty face, detective.

Anu's expression becomes one of recognition.

ANU

So your place will be free!?

Shiaz shakes his head deliberately.

Anu squeals with excitement. All the passengers look at her.

SHIAZ

(to the passenger)

Sorry sorry... my wife just realised she is pregnant.

All the passengers smile and congratulate them. Anu sits back down and laughs happily.

OLD LADY

You two make a very good couple

Shiaz nods.

SHIAZ

We know... everyone tells us that.

Anu looks at Shiaz, unbelieving.

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

(to Anu)

You have not seen my neighbourhood! If they see you sneaking into my place... in this uniform... people are going to talk. Its very conservative!

Anu nods and grins

ANU

I will find a burqa... don't worry...

50 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

50

Holding her bag on her head, Anu runs into her apartment building.

51 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

51

Anu opens the front door. She sees Prabha sitting by herself at the table. Prabha turns to look at Anu. She clearly wants to say something. But Anu does not want to engage. She is in a very good mood and she does not want Prabha to spoil it.

Anu rushes into the bedroom.

Prabha is left, staring at her.

52 INT. APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

52

Anu takes off her sari and lets it slip on the floor. She takes off her blouse too.

Prabha enters the room behind her.

She looks at Anu's back.

Anu realises Prabha has entered the room. She takes off all her clothes. She glances to the back to see if her nudity has embarrassed Prabha, as she intended. Prabha looks at Anu's naked body and turns away awkwardly. She faces the wall, unable to look at her, summoning the courage to speak.

PRABHA
Anu... Are you hungry?

Anu wipes her hair.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
(desperate, still facing away)
I..I.. prepared your favourite dish...

Anu slips on her white nightie.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
Coconut fish curry.

Anu ties her hair in her towel and turns to look at Prabha who still awkwardly faces the wall.

PRABHA (CONT'D)
Listen... I don't know what came over me
today... I don't know why I said all that. I... I
am sorry Anu...

Wiping her hair, Anu looks at Prabha who looks defeated and vulnerable.

53

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

53

Anu and Prabha eat dinner together. Anu looks up at Prabha with a half-smile, enjoying the curry that Prabha has prepared.

ANU
It is very good...

Prabha looks satisfied.

54

INT. APARTMENT, - NIGHT

54

Prabha's uniform Sari is hung out in the kitchen. A small rotating fan is kept near it to dry it. The fan turns its face left and right and makes the sari move. The shadows of the rain leaves streaks across the apartment, as if it is submerged in water.

Prabha and Anu lie in bed, cocooned in their floral mosquito nets. The window above them has the city lights against the sky. The dull hum of the fan and the rain create a dream - like feel.

ANU

Prabha? Did you know him from before?

PRABHA

Who?

ANU

Your husband?

Prabha does not answer immediately.

PRABHA

(sigh)

No. Not at all.

One day my father called me and said, come home. When I got there, they had already fixed my marriage. That's the way it went.

ANU

You didn't try to find out about him?

PRABHA

I did. I tried to meet him.

ANU

It must have been romantic!

PRABHA

No. Not romantic. I got scared and did not end up going.

Anu laughs a little.

ANU

Did you find him handsome?

PRABHA

I thought he was... Good looking.

They are both silent for some time.

Koshu wanders into the room and walks into the open cupboard, tumbling down freshly kept clothes.

The sound of her bell around her neck.

ANU (O.S.)

Prabha, are you asleep?

PRABHA (O.S.)

No.

ANU (O.S.)

Can I ask you something else?

PRABHA (O.S.)

Go on...

ANU (O.S.)

How can you marry a stranger? I don't think I could do it.

PRABHA (O.S.)

You might think you know someone but they can also become strangers...

ANU (O.S.)

How is that?

PRABHA (O.S.)

They can go away and come back as different people maybe... Or simply change over time. And then they are as good as strangers. No?

The window above the bed is open and bangs softly in the wind. Prabha sits up and shuts it, briefly watching the night rain. Outside, the framed sky is covered in purple clouds. A small light of an airplane moves between the clouds. Prabha exits.

A simple line drawings appear on this image...as if doodled - of a child-like figure of a woman sitting naked in front of a fully clothed man who looks the least bit interested in her as he reads a book.

The window rattles a bit more.

The drawing disappears.

PRABHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Anu are you asleep?

ANU (O.S.)

Yes, but you can go on...

The sound has a transcendental quality...becoming increasingly dream-like.

PRABHA (O.S.)

After the marriage...he left soon... to Germany. Once he was gone, I hardly heard from him again. We spoke a few times... But it became difficult, to talk.

(pause)

Maybe we didn't have anything left to say any more.

Another drawing appears. This time, a half naked woman holds a oversized lotus, but its centre looks like innards. A long silence follows. Anu breaks it.

ANU (O.S)

(whisper)

Do you miss him?

PRABHA (O.S.)

(whisper)

I don't know. Can you miss someone you don't even know?

Prabha looks up at the ceiling.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

(whispering, almost to herself.)

I try to imagine his life in this far away country. Everything must be different there. I think of him in this large warehouse. It all seems so faraway.

55

INT. HOSPITAL, STAFFROOM - DAY

55

Parvaty looks out of the window.

PARVATY

What a dismal day.

Sitting on the stool, Prabha has covered her face with her palms. Parvaty approaches her with a concerned look. Prabha uncovers her face.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

You don't look well.

PRABHA

I have not been able to sleep.

PARVATY

(nodding)

I have something for that...

From a shelf, Parvaty takes out a glass. She rummages inside her sari blouse and from it appears a small newspaper packet. Parvaty unfurls it and pours some powder into the glass. She pours water into it. As she stirs it, the water turns crimson.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Nurse, I have some news....I am moving back to my village.

Prabha looks up at Parvaty

PARVATY (CONT'D)

There is nothing more I can do...isn't it?

PRABHA

What ? Of course there is Parvaty..We can still--

PARVATY

I already spoke to Dr. Supriya.. and she found me a job there.

PRABHA

At a hospital?

PARVATY

No... there are some rich people who have built bungalow near by... they need a cook.

PRABHA

But-

PARVATY

At least no one can throw me out.

Parvaty shakes her head. She looks out at the construction site

PARVATY (CONT'D)

You see that building there... it is the same builders... They are building everywhere nurse... building their tall towers that reach up to the sky... they think they have replaced god.

The construction site has many people walking around.

Prabha looks worried.

PRABHA

How will you manage there?

PARVATY

These knees are still strong nurse... I will manage!

She brings the glass to Prabha and sits down next to her on the stool. She places the crimson drink on the table between them. Prabha looks down, seeming defeated.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Nurse, drink this.
(handing her the drink)
It will make you feel better.

Prabha takes the glass reluctantly.

Parvaty gets up and goes back to the table. She drops some more powder into a glass, and pours water into it. Behind her, Prabha looks down at the glass in her hand and takes a sip. She cringes at the taste.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

It can happen sometimes...

56

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

56

Dr. Manoj walks in the corridor, looking around for someone.

PARVATY (V.O.)

...That the head and the heart get out of alignment.

Dr. Manoj opens a door to a room which is dark, turns on the light, sees no one. He turns off the light and exits.

PARVATY (V.O.)

Then you cannot use your Western medicine... because they don't have a cure for it...

Dr. Manoj walks in the corridor again, looking into another room.

PARVATY (V.O.)

Or even the words to say what is the illness from which you suffer.

57

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY

57

PARVATY

Isn't that how you feel?

Prabha is still sitting at the table. Parvaty faces away from her, mixing the same red drink in another glass for herself. Prabha notices Dr. Manoj and in a smooth motion, slinks under the table and hides. Dr. Manoj enters the staffroom and looks around.

DR. MANOJ

Nurse Prabha?

Parvaty turns and looks at Dr. Manoj awkwardly. She scratches her head and turns to where Prabha was seated but cannot see Prabha who is crouching below. Parvaty looks at the red drink in her hand.

PARVATY

(mumbles in Marathi)

Wow...This stuff is strong...

58 EXT. MARKET - EVENING 58

A pink neon light of a brightly lit burqa shop sparkles across the street. Several mannequins wearing stylish burqa stand in different postures outside. Anu can be seen through the glass.

59 INT. STATION BATHROOM - EVENING 59

In a dingy bathroom of the station. Anu is already dressed in a black burqa. She is looking in the mirror, trying to fix the veil. Only her kohl laden eyes are now visible.

60 INT. METRO - EVENING 60

Wearing the burqa, Anu travels in the metro, leaning against the door through which the city can be seen. The windows are covered in streaks of water.

Text messages appear in yellow:

SHIAZ
Hey... have U left?

ANU
Yea

SHIAZ
U can't come here!

SHIAZ (CONT'D)
I am sorry!!

SHIAZ (CONT'D)
Everyone came back early..Nikah cancelled....
the Harbour Metro Line is flooded... :(Dnt b
mad.

Her shoulders droop with disappointment

61 INT. METRO STATION - NIGHT 61

Standing on the platform, Anu struggles to take off her burqa. She pulls it off throws it into the dustbin. She pats down her dishevelled hair.

The metro station has only a few commuters who stare at her.

The lights from the LED train time table shine across the metal railings as Anu walks slowly, not knowing what to do.

62 INT. METRO STATION - NIGHT 62

Anu glides up the deserted escalator. She walks on to the skywalk which is lit with red and blue lights. Anu walks near the railing. She notices some shady guys staring at her from the end of the skywalk. She turns away and walks off.

She goes to a desolate platform and sits on the lonesome bench, waiting for another train to take her back home

63 I/E. HOSPITAL FOYER. NIGHT 63

Dr. Manoj waits outside the hospital at the same spot he had met Prabha before. He stands under a lone tube light.

64 INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT 64

Prabha stares at the rice cooker on the dining table. There is no light in the room, only the faint light from the street lamps outside. The rain has picked up and lightening occasionally brightens the sky.

Prabha puts a handful of rice into the cooker. She pours in some water. The red light of the rice cooker comes on.

65 INT . APARTMENT - NIGHT 65

The rice boils in the rice cooker. Slowly, steam starts to float out, forming a cloud.

Prabha rests her head on the table next to it. The red light from the cooker casts a glow on her face. The steam trickles out, clouding her face.

The steam meanders through the small apartment, making its way to the bedroom.

It floats past Prabha's bed and floral mosquito net, hanging in the air.

The smoke has an unreal quality and settles like a dream on Prabha. She lies on her bed, covered in smoke as if inside a dream

The steam escapes from the open window.

66

EXT. TREETOP LEVEL - NIGHT

66

The steam leaves the window and joins the monsoon clouds outside. The thick clouds crawl over the dark city, gradually covering the skyscrapers.

A drawing appears of a naked woman floating in the sky on a cloud.

PRABHA (V.O.)

I keep having these thoughts... that he will come back.. And he will say he wants to live with me... and be with me... and all this absence was just some misunderstanding... maybe we will start a family. That would be nice, wouldn't it... ?

The clouds move rapidly, revealing for a brief moment, the moon. But soon it is covered. The drawing disappears.

PRABHA (V.O.)

After all he is my husband...

Prabha holds Koshu in her hand. The steam has cleared.

PRABHA

Should I call him? What do you think, my princess?

67

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

67

Prabha carefully presses the buttons of a mobile phone, looking at a piece of paper in her hand. She puts it to her ear.

The phone rings for a long time. She waits for an answer.

PRABHA

Hello? Hello?

AUTOMATED VOICE OF A FEMALE
*Die Nummer, die Sie anrufen, ist außerhalb
 der Reichweite*

It is an automatic message from the German service provider. Not understanding, she waits till the message finishes. The line goes off.

PRABHA
 (feeble)
 Hello?

She looks at the phone, disappointed.

She lets her head lean against the wall behind her. In the dark, everything is motionless.

68

INT. CINEMA THEATRE - DAY

68

Some twenty nurses, all in blue uniforms, sit in a movie theatre, their keenly absorbed faces flickering with the light of the screen.

A romantic song plays in the Malayalam movie.

The camera tracks past the nurses who are engrossed in the film. It stops at Prabha who has tears stream down her eyes. She wipes her eyes but can't stop the tears.

69

EXT. ROAD NEAR HOSPITAL - NIGHT

69

At the construction site, some workers watch a a film off a shared mobile phone, huddled close together inside a pink mosquito net. Their yellow helmets hang on the wall.

A Bollywood song plays from a speaker in an outdoor Chinese restaurant set up on the pavement. Red plastic chairs and tables are partially occupied. A cook tosses noodles in a large wok. His assistant washes plastic plates in a tub on the floor, throwing extra bits of food to a white dog. A waiter wearing a 'Bob Marley' T shirt, leans against the wall and smokes a cigarette.

On one table, Prabha and Parvaty are seated. They are eating chicken soup. Parvaty looks up and smiles at Prabha.

PARVATY
 Its quite good, isn't it?

PRABHA
I prefer your cooking.

Parvaty chuckles.

PARVATY
Good, now I won't have any regrets.

Parvaty's smile vanishes briefly and she eats quietly.

PARVATY (CONT'D)
If you have regrets in this life... you have to
carry them on to the next.

Parvaty looks contemplative as she sips her soup. Prabha watches her.

PARVATY (CONT'D)
You only seem to be real if you have some
papers... otherwise you could just vanish into
thin air and no one will even know...

PRABHA
We would know.... If you vanished... all of us
at the hospital. We will miss you.

Parvaty smiles.

PARVATY
You are a very good lady, Nurse.

70

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

70

Prabha and Parvaty look up at the large half made building

PARVATY
I am going to do it.

Prabha nods

Prabha and Parvaty look once at the large sign board that says 'Harishchandra Builders'. Parvaty hands a brick to Prabha. She has another brick in her hand. Parvaty and Prabha take a big swing and hit the board. It makes a loud sound but nothing happens. After a few moments the board begins to creak. It comes crashing down with a thud sound!

All around dust flies and sounds of workers running towards them. Parvaty and Prabha make a run for it.

71

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

71

Prabha and Parvaty giggle as they walk past the hospital gate. They are a little out of breath. They make their way towards the railway station.

A voice calls out to Prabha from inside the gate.

DOCTOR MANOJ (O.S)
Nurse Prabha?

Prabha and Parvaty stop. They turn and watch as the gates open. Dr. Manoj steps out. He holds a small blue plastic bag. He takes a few steps towards them.

DOCTOR MANOJ (CONT'D)
Nurse Prabha... When did your shift end? I didn't see you around.

Parvaty looks at them and knows she needs to leave

PARVATY
Nurse, I am getting late

Prabha nods and Parvaty leaves. Dr. Manoj waits till she is gone.

Awkward silence.

DOCTOR MANOJ
I made you some Unniyappam (sweetmeat).

He hands her the blue plastic bag.

DOCTOR MANOJ (CONT'D)
Don't open it now...
(looking at his feet)
I won't be able to face you if it is too bad.

PRABHA
(kindly)
It will be good I am sure.

Another awkward pause.

DOCTOR MANOJ

My contract here will be over soon... and I am thinking of not renewing it.

PRABHA

Oh... you too are going to be leaving us then... Where do you plan to go?

DOCTOR MANOJ

I was thinking...somewhere close to home.

PRABHA

(hiding her disappointment)

That might be a good idea.

Dr. Manoj looks at her. He wants to say something but stops himself. He looks around. He holds Prabha's arm and leads her away from the busy road. She feels embarrassed that he is touching her.

They come to the empty children's park by the side of the road. The park has empty swings and plastic life size figurines of wild animals. They stop between a tiger and a penguin. He lets go of her arm. They face one another, standing under a lone light. Prabha waits for him to speak.

DOCTOR MANOJ

(not looking at her directly)

It was nice here, in Bombay. But difficult...
And I have a problem with the language too...

PRABHA

You will pick up Hindi... It is not so hard...

DOCTOR MANOJ

I never got used to it here... Even today, after so many months, I forgot to get off at my train station... I reached all the way to the end of the line....

Dr. Manoj jams his hands inside his pockets.

The old empty metal swings nearby sway and make a metallic sound.

Prabha turns to look at them. She turns back to Dr. Manoj who is watching her intently.

DOCTOR MANOJ (CONT'D)

Prabha... I... before I go I wanted to ask you... I wanted to see if... there was a reason if... If I should continue to stay here....If there was some reason for me to stay back.

Prabha understands the pleading in his voice. She remains silent. She looks away. She looks sad.

PRABHA ~

But doctor... I am married...

Prabha doesn't look up.

DR. MANOJ.

I know...but...

PRABHA

(without facing him)

I must go Doctor. I will miss my train.

Dr. Manoj looks disappointed. He watches as Prabha turns and starts to walk away. After a few steps she stops.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

(turning around)

Where did you say... your train took you to?

Dr. Manoj looks up.

DOCTOR MANOJ

Nowhere... To the end of the line. Where the last tip of Bombay meets the sea.

PRABHA

Is it nice?

DOCTOR MANOJ

(accepting things with a mild smile)

Yes. It was very nice.

PRABHA

I should go... To see it then?

DOCTOR MANOJ

Yes... I think you will like it... Just keep sitting on the bus and don't get off till you reach the end of the line.

She starts walking away leaving Dr. Manoj, his hands in his pockets. All around there is darkness.

He stands in the sole pool of light.

72

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

72

Prabha walks at a swift pace on the dark road. The street lights illuminate the road in small circular pools of light. Prabha keeps walking, emerging from the light and disappearing into the darkness. She does not stop, she keeps walking till there is no longer any light, just darkness all around. She does not stop.

73

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

73

The wet sari is hung from the ceiling, suspended over the entire room like ocean waves.

The dull hum of the fan and the rain increases in volume and turns into the sound of the ocean.

The camera tracks into it. The ocean-sari moves in a sensual and dreamy manner.

BLACK

74

I/E. BUS - DAY

74

A rumbling hum of the bus engine is a dull and continuous sound.

The view from a traveling bus passes over the outskirts of the city, leaving behind the suburban shanty towns. The industrial outskirts pass by with giant telephone towers dotting the empty fields. Slowly, the hills of the Western Ghats appear, with their rocky cliffs and dried waterfalls.

The road flattens as it passes by sparse village houses that lay in between the freshly sown paddy fields. Men and women in colourful clothes bend to sow the rice, their feet submerged in water. Occasionally they look up towards the bus as it passes them by.

Sitting inside the bus, Prabha looks out. It is for the first time that she is not wearing her stiff sari uniform but a casual lavender salwar-kameez. A loose duppata hangs over her. She opens the window, letting the cool wind touch her face.

The sound of the rumbling bus turns into a moan of the wind.

Anu, is wearing a casual ochre yellow blouse, sitting next to Prabha in the bus.

Parvathy is on the seat across the aisle from Anu. She has a large maroon canvas bag on her lap. She looks out of the other window. A few of her bags are also on the floor.

PARVATHY

(softly)

It feels as if the distance has increased.

ANU

Is it far from here.... your village?

PARVATHY

Do you see that hill?

(pause)

It is behind it.

They look out of the window.

ANU

That isn't far...

PARVATHY

It may look close... but the road is long.

At the front of the bus, many men and women, wearing traditional Maharashtrian clothes sit in a cramped space near the driver. Some of them hold baskets with fruits and vegetables. The front windshield of the bus, covered in a thin layer of dust, shows the road that lays ahead.

Text messages between Anu and Shiaz appear in Yellow:

SHIAZ

I wish I could sit with U.

ANU

me 2

SHIAZ

I like your yellow dress!

ANU

Don't stare at me or someone will get suspicious.

SHIAZ

You should have thought of that before looking so beautiful.

The bus halts. A man sitting in the middle seat of the bus gets up to get off. When he moves away, a familiar face is seen at the back - it is Shiaz! Since neither Parvaty nor Prabha have met him, he travels with them unnoticed. He looks out of the window. The bus moves on.

The back window of the bus, half covered with a flapping yellow tarpaulin moves on the dusty road. As it turns a corner, a sliver of the shimmering blue ocean is revealed.

75

EXT. FOREST - DAY

75

The sun shines through the canopy of tropical trees.

ANU (O.S.)

Cooo!

A bird somewhere responds with the same sound. Coo!

The camera tilts down and stops at Anu who is looking up at the trees.

ANU (CONT'D)

Coo!

She pauses to listen for the bird.

Prabha follows Anu and Parvaty through the leaves on a barely present path. She carries the small maroon suitcase in one hand and pushes aside the leaves with another. The women look small in the large expanse of the forest. First time seen fully in her casual, loose Kurta, Prabha looks more at ease with her body, walking casually.

ANU (CONT'D)

I am sure there are a lot of wild animals.

Thick mangroves appear on the side. They are tall and cover the entire surface of the water.

Insect sounds emerge to create a hypnotic atmosphere.

ANU (CONT'D)

Are there any?

She stops to look at Parvaty who has also stopped to look at the mangroves. Parvaty looks around.

PARVATY

It is this way.

She takes a turn behind a huge tree. Prabha and Anu follow. They disappear behind the mangroves. There is a stillness all around. Only the cicadas buzz.

76

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

76

The sounds of the forest picks up.

Slow track along a thick mangrove forest.

PARVATY (O.S.)

There is a story about these mangroves. They would say that a spirit from the water would come and roam in the forest at night, devouring souls of the weak hearted.

A bush shakes behind Prabha.

She stops, and turns around to look behind her. But there is no one there.

The bush does not move any more.

She thinks she is mistaken and walks on.

Parvaty and Anu have walked ahead and Prabha joins them.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

As kids we used to play a game. Just to get thrills.

(chuckles)

I was really quite good at it... I would always win.

(MORE)

PARVATY (CONT'D)

We would take turns to stand at night in the forest alone... whoever stood the longest was the winner.

The women emerge from a thick bush and walk almost bending as they do.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

Once I stayed out so late, they all thought I got eaten by the spirit! No one had lasted more than ten minutes before!

ANU (O.S.)

(curious)

Did you see it?

PARVATY (O.S.)

No. I thought it was my bad luck... but maybe it is only when you are afraid of something that you see it. If you are not afraid, it seizes to exist!

Once again there is a shuffling sound between two of Peepul trees. This time it is quite loud but only Prabha hears. She turns and walks to the spot. She waits. Once again nothing moves.

Suddenly the wind comes and all the trees come alive!

Behind the bushes, Shiaz is crouching on all fours like an animal!

The forest feels mystical, as if with a life of its own.

77

EXT. BEACH - DAY

77

An enormous expanse of the ocean lies ahead. The large waves froth as they hit the beach.

PARVATY (O.S.)

I think as we grow old we become more fearful... I have forgotten what it feels like to be young.

Parvaty's house is amongst a few houses in a tribal settlement, tucked away between the beach and the forest. The houses have thatched roofs and are made from mud and bamboo.

Her house is painted off white and has a small courtyard in the front with overgrown shrubs. Nearby are other mud houses part of the tribal settlement.

A rooster strolls in the courtyard. A small bell tied to the thatched roof tinkles in the wind.

78 INT. PARVATY'S HOUSE - DAY

78

Parvaty opens the windows of her old-fashioned house letting the light in. The sparse pieces of furniture are covered in dust. Anu carries Parvaty's bag and keeps it near the window.

79 INT. PARVATY'S HOUSE - DAY

79

Prabha and Anu unpack Parvaty's things. Prabha sits on the bed and hands Anu clothes from the bag which she arranged on a shelf.

PRABHA

I can't

ANU

Its easy!

PRABHA

I don't know how to lie.

ANU

I will start...Number 1 - When I was 15, I won the Miss Ernakulam Contest. Number 2- I have seen Mammootty with my own eyes.

Prabha looks up, getting interested.

ANU (CONT'D)

And number 3.... I ran away from home once because my mother wanted me to cut my hair!

PRABHA

You saw Mammootty? That is a lie. How would you see a big star like him?

Anu shakes her head.

ANU

You lose. I saw him!

Anu takes the last of the clothes and sits on the bed next to Prabha.

ANU (CONT'D)

I did participate in the Miss Ernakulam
Contest...but I lost.

(disappointed)

I didn't even make it through the first round!

PRABHA

It can happen...that the judges have bad
taste.

ANU

My mother said the same thing!

(warming up again)

Your turn.

PRABHA

No no... You go again.

ANU

One sided game?

Prabha is silent.

ANU (CONT'D)

Please?

PRABHA

(reluctant)

Ok... uh...

(pause)

Number 1, I always wanted to be a nurse.
Since I was a small kid. Its all I ever dreamt
of.

ANU

Number two?

PRABHA

Umm... Two... My parents once forgot me at a
temple. Maybe because I was always so
quiet...

ANU
Number three?

PRABHA
Umm..... Uh...
(lying)
Number 3, my husband invited me to come to
stay with him.

ANU
(hint of jealousy)
To Germany?

Prabha blushes and nods.

ANU (CONT'D)
(softly)
Oh... thats great..! You didn't tell me that you
called him.

Prabha does not respond.

ANU (CONT'D)
So which statement is a lie?
The second one?

PRABHA
(lying again)
Yea... sure.

Prabha looks dazed, as if in her own world.

ANU
(hesitant)
Prabha... Can I tell you something? My parents
are also looking for a guy...for me to marry.

Prabha looks up.

ANU (CONT'D)
But I don't want to.

PRABHA
Why don't you talk to them?

ANU

As if it is possible to speak to my father.

PRABHA

What will you do?

Anu shakes her head.

ANU

I don't know what to do.

(smiles sadly)

Maybe run away...?

Prabha thinks about this.

PRABHA

(as if she is telling herself)

You can't escape your fate...by running away.

Anu is surprised, her smile fades.

80

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

80

Anu leans against the kitchen counter.

ANU

I am very tired... I want to rest for a bit.

PARVATY

You are the youngest, isn't it!

Anu looks at Prabha.

PRABHA

(in Malayalam)

Are you sure? I thought you loved the sea!

Anu nods.

ANU

(Malayalam)

I'm very tired.

PRABHA
 (to Parvaty)
 Let her be...She did carry the big bag.

Anu watches as Prabha and Parvaty leave. They are seen through the window, walking towards the beach. Closing one eye, Anu raises her index finger. She covers Prabha entirely with it.

81

EXT. BEACH - DAY

81

Pine and eucalyptus trees, bend in the wind

Sound of the waves hitting the beach.

A group of six, bare-chested fishermen push a large yellow fishing boat into the water. Tanned in the top sun, their dark bodies glisten as the waves crash against their muscular legs. The boat is heavy, and they struggle to get it into the water. They heave their bodies forward in synchronised and sensuous unity.

Prabha, standing at the edge of the sea, watches them.

PARVATY (O.S.)
 Oye!

Parvaty is submerged in the water in her sari in the distance. She waves her hand, encouraging Prabha to come into the ocean.

Prabha raises her hand and declines the invitation. She turns once more to the men. They have managed to thrust the boat into the water.

She looks down, the water encircles her feet, frothing and submerging them. As the water recedes, her feet have sunk into the sand.

CUT TO:

Prabha is hesitant but goes slowly into the water.

Cautious at first, Prabha adjusts to her new surroundings. Now she too is submerged up to her waist. She turns and looks in the distance.

The fishing boat with the men, moves away from Prabha towards the vast ocean.

All other sounds have vanished, only the motor hum of the boat remains, as it mixes with the wind. The sound of Prabha's breath

Suddenly, a waves hits her! Losing her balance, she slips into the water. The wave recedes. She resurfaces, completely wet! She regains control of her body. She stays floating, tilting her neck backwards, giving into the movement of the waves.

All sounds are submerged.

Prabha stares at the sky.

Reddish-brown cloud of smoke rises languorously from the engine of the fishing boat and floats in the sky like a snake.

Slowly, it eclipses the sun.

82

EXT. FOREST NEAR PARVATY'S HOUSE - DAY

82

In her wet outfit, Prabha crouches and pees. She is surrounded by tall trees.

She stands up, a solitary figure. She tries to move her wet clothes such that they doesn't cling to her body. She runs her hands over her breasts, touching her wet body, as if looking at it anew.

She looks up again, towards the sun.

Through the canopy of trees, the sun sparkles.

83

EXT. FOREST NEAR PARVATY'S HOUSE- DAY

83

Prabha makes her way back, walking through the forest. In her wet dress she looks less stiff. For the first time, she looks as if she is at ease in the jungle. She moves aside branches and shrubs as she makes her way back. All around the forest sounds rise. She stops for a moment. Water glistens on her dark skin.

84

EXT. FOREST NEAR PARVATY'S HOUSE- DAY

84

Prabha comes to a clearing. She hears something. She stops abruptly. She hears some voices emerging from the nearby bushes. She stays absolutely still, trying to listen. She takes a few steps towards the bushes. She bends, bringing her ear closer to them. She moves a few leaves aside. She look in.

Voices in Malayalam waft out from behind. Crouching, Prabha listens with a look of surprise.

ANU (O.S.)
I should get back now

SHIAZ (O.S.)
Will you be long?

ANU (O.S.)
No..not long

SHIAZ (O.S.)
Kiss me again...

Prabha raises herself to get a better view.

Through the leaves, she sees Anu and Shiaz kiss.

ANU
Ok save some for later!

Prabha, still crouching, looks on, her eyes wide open.

Sound of Anu and Shiaz walking away.

Prabha continues to crouch. She looks awkward, not quite knowing what to do with herself. She stands up carefully. She seems stunned. She walks back as if in a daze.

85 EXT. PETHA VILLAGE - DAY

85

A farmer burns the dried leaves in his field. The smoke rises slowly

The sound becomes distant, and only the dull hum of the burning leaves interspersed with the crackling fire can be heard.

86 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

86

Prabha's wet clothes hang on the line in the courtyard. A gust of wind makes wave-like ripples on the floral surface.

87

INT. PARVATY'S HOUSE - DAY

87

Sitting on the floor, Prabha, Parvati and Anu eat lunch. Prabha has changed into one of Parvati's local style Maharashtrian saris. She watches them, barely touching her food.

ANU

The fish is excellent Parvati

PARVATY

You can take me to the city but I won't forget my traditional dishes.

PRABHA

How long will you be gone for?

PARVATY

The bungalow is an hour away from here. If I leave now, I can be back by 5...I only need to tell them I'm here for the job...

ANU

I could take a long nap after this meal !

PRABHA

I think we should leave then...it will become late.

Parvati and Anu look up at Prabha

PARVATY

No come on Prabha! You stay till the evening...

Anu looks nervous.

PARVATY (CONT'D)

We can get some crabs for dinner too... then you can take the night bus back.

ANU

You are spoiling us !

PARVATY

It is the least I can do! You came all the way

ANU

I don't mind. It was a holiday for us! As if Dr.
Supriya ever gives leave

Prabha looks at Anu, visibly unsettled. But she remains silent, quietly eating her food.

88 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 88

The smoke from the fields wafts past Prabha's sari which is still drying on the line outside the house.

89 INT. PARVATY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 89

The smoke meanders past the window of the kitchen. The utensils that were used to prepare the meal are still on the table.

90 INT. PARVATY'S HOUSE - DAY 90

Prabha and Anu lie next to each other on the bed in Parvati's room. In the door to the backyard, the smoke passes. Unseen to Anu, Prabha's eyes are open. After a while, Anu turns and looks up at the window and then down at Prabha. Prabha quickly closes her eyes. Slowly, Anu tip-toes over Prabha.

Anu reaches the outer door and puts on his shoes. She sneaks out, checks that no one has seen her. She leaves.

Prabha watches the door, then turns around. She decides to let Anu go. She closes her eyes.

91 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 91

Anu walks away in the distance, crossing a large meadow. She walks into a line of trees, disappearing behind them.

She walks quickly through the trees as the forest around her gets thicker.

92 EXT. FOREST - DAY 92

The forest, seen from above, stretches on till the eyes can see. Smoke rises slowly, making its way through the thick canopy.

SHIAZ (V.O.)

(calm, levelled voice)

I heard someone coming into the jungle...and my first thought was, it is you?... I got up and looked around. There, I saw a group of soldiers coming towards me. And they started shouting, catch him catch him.

93

EXT. FOREST - DAY

93

In the forest, a SOLDIER is eating a small orange, peeling it and putting the pulp in his mouth. Another SOLDIER is cleaning his gun nearby while a third SOLDIER walks at the back, feeding a brown dog.

There is no sound from the scene. Only the sounds of crickets chirping and a dull hum, lingering on from the smoke.

SHIAZ (V.O.)

Amongst them, I saw a large, older man. And when I looked close, I saw that he had your father's face... but he too was a soldier!

Track forward into the dog as it vanishes behind a bush, the sound of its feet on the dried leaves. The Soldier follows.

SHIAZ (V.O.)

They started shouting... there is the terrorist... catch him, catch him! Don't let him go.....I ran as fast as I could...
(genuinely scared)
I was shit scared...

The Soldier stops, takes a few cautious steps forward, sensing something ahead of him. He peers, looking behind the bushes.

CUT TO:

Anu sits in a clearing in the forest. She listens to the dream with a pensive look.

SHIAZ (O.S.)

(more matter of fact)

I ran as fast as I could. I didn't look back but. I could hear their voices behind me.

(MORE)

SHIAZ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And their footsteps...it felt as if there were hundreds of them and if they would catch me, they would kill me for sure.

Anu is silent, visibly affected by the dream. She gets up and takes a few steps away from Shiaz.

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

Anyway...It was only a dream...

Anu nods.

ANU

Yea...

Shiaz comes close to her. He kisses her neck. She turns to look back down the path on which she came

SHIAZ

Come, I want to show you a place I found.

He takes his small bag and they walk deeper into the forest. Anu watches Shiaz's back.

94

I/E. SHRINE - DAY

94

They walk along an old shrine with broken stone walls and cave like structures. There are several arches made from stones, through which grow Banyan tree roots and moss.

95

INT. SHRINE - DAY

95

The shrine is very dark. The faint outlines of the walls and statues are visible in the dim light.

Their footsteps echo. Somewhere inside, the sound of dripping water.

Anu's cell phone torch comes on and the light falls on statues on the wall of voluptuous figures- gods, goddesses and other celestial beings. As the torchlight passes on them, the statues are revealed and then vanish. Their face and eyes have a delicate look but the bodies have broken over time. Their beautiful almond shaped eyes look down on the couple and the celestial beings have delicate smiles on their lips.

The light and shadow of the passing torch creates a a sense of movement, like characters in a film. It looks animated, even though they are still.

ANU

How did you find this place?

Anu's torchlight stops on a particularly beautiful statue of a female. It vaguely resembles Anu. The torchlight swings left and right over the face.

ANU (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Doesn't it look like her eyes are following me?

Anu walks ahead along the wall, moving the torchlight as she goes. The circular light passes now over a jagged rock wall till it comes to a curved, smooth wall. The wall is covered in modern day graffiti written in Hindi, Marathi and English. Couples have scratched their names into the wall with hearts or 'I love you', 'U and me 4Ever'.

Anu is fascinated by her discovery. She looks closely at the marks, touching them and reading them under her breath.

ANU (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Renu is only for Minesh.... Pappu and Shalu... forever.

Her eyes widen as she discovers the graffiti spread all over. The torch moves over some graffiti:

'love conquers all...'

Anu keeps looking at it.

ANU (CONT'D)

I like this place...it has an another-worldly feeling about it.

(sigh)

As if only you and I can see it... no one else...

She walks and turns a corner, entering an even darker part of the cave. It is almost pitch dark here. As she walks, her expression becomes serious. Her face moves in and out of the shadowy lights.

ANU (CONT'D)

Shiaz

SHIAZ (O.S.)

Hmm?

Anu sits down on a rock and leans against the wall. She turns off her torch.

ANU

Do you ever think about... what things will be like in the future?

Shiaz's voice floats in from another part of the cave

SHIAZ (O.S.)

What do you mean?

ANU

I mean like... the future...like in ten years time... or twenty years time... What will your life be like?

SHIAZ (O.S.)

I think about it sometimes

ANU

Am I there... with you?

SHIAZ (O.S.)

What has come over you?

ANU

I don't know... I never used to really think about the future, you know... but now I feel as if the future has arrived and I am not prepared for it...

Anu closes her eyes for a moment. Shiaz comes close to her and sits down next to her. He is smoking a *beedi*. He takes a puff. They are both silent. Anu looks down.

ANU (CONT'D)

I remember there was this boy I liked in school...I was 12 years old... We used to take the school bus together.

(MORE)

ANU (CONT'D)

At that time...the height of romance was to be sitting next to each other in the school bus. I did.. one time.I had been waiting for that day for so long, but when it actually happened, I felt terrified I felt like... if my father found out, he would take me out of school.

(pause)

I feel like that now... like that 12 year old girl.

SHIAZ

He was very strict with you wasn't he?

Anu nods

ANU

Why don't my parents understand what I want?...

SHIAZ

Maybe we can talk to them... make them understand. You never know...people can surprise you.

ANU

I am afraid that...If I tell them about you... they will never let me see you again...

(pause)

Shiaz, I am scared

She rests her head on his shoulder.

SHIAZ

I have been scared since I met you.

He has a nervous smile as he blows out the smoke. Then he becomes serious again as he takes a few more puffs

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

I used to ask myself many times... if I was doing the right thing being with you....or it would have been best to stay apart.

She looks up at him

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

But then ...when I am with you... I don't know what it is... I feel not afraid at all.. As if this is the most natural way for us to be.

He takes another puff

SHIAZ (CONT'D)

Its all too heavy for me sometimes..

Anu looks at Shiaz. She takes his hands and puts it in hers. Shiaz looks melancholic.

Sound of cicadas picks up slowly as Anu and Shiaz sit quietly.

CUT TO:

Anu walks along the walls of the cave, making her way out carefully.

Sound of the cicadas buzz creating a strange hum.

She notices something and stops

ANU

Shiaz... look... there is graffiti here in Malayalam...

She reads it.

ANU (CONT'D)

Our love is endless like the sea..
We shall flow with it wherever it takes us...

Anu reads it again, but this time in her mind. She looks around. In the far distance, she sees Shiaz, looking at her.

ANU (CONT'D)

You wrote it... didn't you?

Shiaz does not speak. He looks at her from the distance, the gentle beam of the sun illuminates his curly hair with. They stand there, caught in each others gaze.

96

INT. CAVE - DAY

96

Lying on a blue blanket, Shiaz and Anu kiss each other. Shiaz begins to kiss Anu's neck. Slowly, he raises her up a bit and she helps him take off her yellow blouse. Her curls cascade over her dark skin. Shiaz lays her back down again and he kisses her body. He kisses her breasts.. She lifts his face and he moves up again, once again they kiss passionately.

Shiaz is now on top of Anu and they are making love. His body moves over her gently, the shadowy canopy of leaves makes shifting patters on his back. She holds his back, her pink nails glistening against his skin.

97

I/E. BEACH SHACK - DAY

97

In a make-shift bamboo beach shack, A GIRL (15-years- old) , takes out a coke from a small glass fridge. She has short hair and a thin moustache that give her an androgynous look. She wears a t-shirt and jeans. She shuts the door with her foot and clinks open the bottle.

Music plays from the phone in her pocket. It moves with her wherever she moves.

She walks past the few people in the shack and stops at one table where Prabha has her head bent down. She looks at Prabha for a moment. She places the coke on the table.

THE GIRL
(in Marathi)
You want anything else?

Prabha looks up, confused not understanding.

THE GIRL (CONT'D)
(in Hindi)
Is there anything else you want?

Prabha shakes her head.

The Girl walks to the cashier's counter where her FATHER is the cashier. He is reading a newspaper. She leans against the counter. She sways a bit, moving to the music. She puts her face near the rotating fan and cools herself.

FATHER (O.S.)
How many times do I have to tell you? Turn it off.

The Girl reluctantly turns the music off. Lazily, she walks to the bamboo pole and looks out at the beach.

Some loud shouting is heard from the beach. People are heard running and shouting from one end to the other.

FATHER (CONT'D)
(not turning from the paper)
Check what it is?

The Girl walks to the beach and looks.

Others also come out to see.

Offscreen, shouting gets louder.

Prabha sits up. She cranes her neck to see. She gets up and looks at the beach, and then walks out of the shack.

She joins the Girl and the others who have stood up to look.

In the distance, men from the yellow fishing boat are pulling out a large creature, wrapped up in a blue fishing net. They haul the net over their shoulders and carry it out on to the beach, to a dry spot.

98

EXT. BEACH - DAY

98

Prabha walks swiftly in the direction of the boat. People run past her. Prabha looks around. She walks very fast, and then she too breaks into a run, making her way towards the commotion.

99

EXT. BEACH - DAY

99

Several of the tourists and locals have all collected to see what the net holds. They stand together, watching with worried expressions. Pushing the crowd aside, Prabha emerges. She looks down.

Covered by the blue net, a tall, well built, DROWNED MAN is entangled with mud and seaweed. He is on his belly, motionless.

Prabha sits down next to the Drowned Man. Then she swings into action and turns his body. People around obediently help her as she is the only one who seems to know what to do.

She shifts the net delicately off of his face. He is in his late 30s, and had deep lines in his face. His hair is curly and stuck close to his head. He has a broad chest and a tattoo on his arm. He is not breathing.

The crowd has swelled.

FISHER WOMAN 1

Is he one of ours?

FISHER WOMAN 2

Does not look familiar.

FISHER WOMAN 1

No. Never seen him before.

Prabha waves her hand, indicating that the crowd should fall back. Everyone quietyens down. Prabha starts to pump his chest vigorously. She listens to his heartbeat once every few moments and then continues with the pumping. Her arms begin to get slower with every move. No change in his condition. She thinks for a moment and then bends down and breathes into his mouth.

People around murmur.

She keeps breathing, holding his face and nose. Suddenly Drowned Man coughs up water.

People around start talking. Some even clap. Others pat Prabha on her back.

Drowned Man opens his eyes and looks up at Prabha.

Prabha too looks at him.

Before she can say anything, he has already slumped back, unconscious. Prabha touches his shoulder trying to reawaken him but his body is limp.

PRABHA

He needs to see a doctor.

The crowd murmurs and talk amongst themselves in the local dialect. The head fisherman looks apologetically.

FISHERMAN

Madam, the closest doctor is 80 KM away... It will be a while before he can reach here.

100

EXT. BEACH - DAY

100

The Drowned Man is carried by the fishermen on their shoulders. He looks as if he is floating against the sky, his bare, mud covered body, against the swaying trees. His movement is like waves or the movement of a camel.

The long procession of people take the man along the beach. Prabha walks with the procession of people. Everyone is curious to see what will happen. She is one of them, in a mass of humans, carrying this Drowned Man on their heads.

101

I/E. FRONT PORCH OF VILLAGE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

101

Prabha waits on the porch of an old village house. It is much larger, more affluent than Parvaty's hut, with red clay flooring, a tiled roof and strong wooden beams. It is clearly an 'upper-caste' house.

The sound of evening cicadas and a small wind chime tinkling on the window of the house.

An OLD WOMAN wearing a traditional white short sari comes out from inside, her back bent. Her bare shoulders are dark and wrinkled and she is missing a few teeth.

OLD WOMAN

(Marathi)

Miss... You can sit inside with your husband.

PRABHA

Oh...

Prabha stands up.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

(Hindi)

No... He is not my husband.

OLD WOMAN

(not understanding Hindi)

Come come... You don't have to be shy.

The Old Woman hobbles into the house.

102

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

102

Prabha sees the Drowned Man laying on a large bed. All the windows of the room are open. Outside, a beetle-nut plantation can be seen.

A mosquito net has been put over the bed, tied up on top, and he lays in bed without moving. He is shirtless and covered up to his waist with a light quilt. The contours of his body can be seen.

OLD WOMAN

Don't worry... my dear... Will you have some tea?

Prabha shakes her head.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Don't be shy...

The woman leaves. Prabha watches her, feeling terribly awkward.

Prabha comes and sits on the chair near him. She sees that there is still mud on his body. She takes out her handkerchief from her purse, pours water on it from the jug nearby, and starts wiping his bare chest.

After a long while, he opens his eyes. He turns his head and looks at her. Seeing him see herself, she feels shy and withdraws her hand. They don't speak. He looks tired. He closes his eyes again.

He is still for a long time. Prabha hesitates but then resumes her duties as his nurse.

She sees a bruise under his right nipple. She applies some medicine made from turmeric on the wound. At first there is no reaction from him. Suddenly, he flinches. His face grimaces and he holds her wrist, as if asking her to stop, his eyes still shut

PRABHA

(apologetic)

Sorry...

He stays like that for a moment and they are both suspended in this awkward gesture. She doesn't know what to do. She can't move much. Then he opens his eyes, and looks up at her. A weak smile appears on his lips and he gently lets go of her wrist. She hastily puts away the turmeric.

He looks at her silently and then nods his head ever so slightly, still in a daze

DROWNED MAN (O.S.)
(in Malayalam)
it pains...

Prabha is surprised. She looks at him, confused, then does not know how to respond.

PRABHA
Oh...
(in Malayalam)
Yes, it will pain but soon you will be ok...

DROWNED MAN (O.S.)
What happened?

He tries to sit up but is unable to.

PRABHA
(Smiling kindly)
Just lay back...

He slumps back down.

DROWNED MAN
(breathing)
I can't remember.

Someone knocks on the door and Prabha stops being so friendly and looks towards it. She moves her hands back to her lap.

The Old Woman walks in carrying with her a tray with some tea and biscuits. Prabha takes it from her and lays them on the table. Old Woman looks at the Drowned Man and then hobbles to close the curtains of the room.

OLD WOMAN
Dear, he will catch a chill with the
draft...cover him nicely, dear.

The two watch silently as the Old Woman shuts the curtains. The light on their faces changes into a shadow diffused light.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What does he do?

Prabha looks at him but he does not respond. He just stares at Prabha. It is unclear whether he can't understand the language or if he can't remember what he does. Prabha feels strange that she is being asked this question.

PRABHA

(Hindi)

I think there is some misunderstanding...

OLD WOMAN

(broken Hindi)

Where does your husband work?

Prabha looks back at the Old Woman and then decides to answer truthfully about her own husband.

PRABHA

He, umm, works in Germany, in a factory.

The Old Woman turns to look at her, visibly impressed.

OLD WOMAN

You too?

Prabha shakes her head.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Then you must not be seeing each other often.

PRABHA

No...

OLD WOMAN

It's a pity your holiday was ruined....

She walks away from them and stands at the door.

Prabha looks at the lady, blushing, she looks down.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Nothing to feel shy... your tea will be cold.

Prabha waits till she hears the door shutting. She turns back to the Drowned Man and is a little flushed.

DROWNED MAN
(Malayalam)
What did she say?

Prabha shakes her head.

PRABHA
Nothing...that you might catch a chill.

103

INT. HOUSE - LATER

103

Prabha makes him sit up, with his legs off the bed on the side such that they sit side by side. He towers over her. She pours some tea into the saucer and hands it to him. He is barely able to lift his arm but holds on to the saucer. It shakes a little in his hand. She stabilises it with her own. He takes a sip. But some of the tea falls on him.

Prabha automatically takes her handkerchief and starts to wipe it. He watches her and she realises it is a bit odd what she is doing so she stops and looks sheepishly at him. He smiles at her awkwardness. Garnering some strength, he takes the hanky from her and wipes himself.

For a moment, they sit in silence and drink tea. The wind picks up outside.

DROWNED MAN
What is your name?

PRABHA
Prabha...

DROWNED MAN
(repeats)
Prabha...

He tries to put the saucer away. She helps him.

PRABHA
You should rest more.

DROWNED MAN
I feel I have been sleeping for very long.
How long has it been?

PRABHA
A few hours... maybe.

He looks down at the little bit of mud that still remains on his body and tries to pull it off with his hand.

DROWNED MAN

What is this?

PRABHA

It is mud from the sea. They pulled you out of the water.

DROWNED MAN

What was I doing there?

She smiles at his helplessness, and looks at him kindly.

PRABHA

You don't remember?

He shakes his head 'no'

The wind is blowing, the curtains on the opposite wall flutter, the camera moves slowly tracking into them, in slow motion. The movement of the curtains feel as if they dancing in the wind. It is a magical atmosphere that surrounds them.

PRABHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You've changed so much in these years...

DROWNED MAN (O.S.)

(whisper)

Have I?

PRABHA (O.S.)

(whisper)

Hmmm

The spell still remains in the sound.

The Drowned Man looks down at Prabha's hands. He turns to her for a moment.

DROWNED MAN

There would be days in the factory where I would be stuck for long. I wouldn't know if it was day or night... I would come out after 3-4 days... as if from a daze...

Prabha looks up at him.

DROWNED MAN (CONT'D)

I was blinded by the light... You try to imagine light, but in the darkness, you cannot... I thought about you...

PRABHA

What did you think of?

DROWNED MAN

Sitting next to you like this. The light on your face. I wanted to reach out and touch you, but...

Prabha looks down at her hands and breathes a little. She turns away. He reaches out and touches her hand, turning over her palm. He moves his finger over it.

PRABHA

You never told me this before.

DROWNED MAN

I didn't know it myself...

Prabha looks up at him. He lifts her palm and kisses it right in the centre. He keeps kissing her palm and her finger. She sits there, looking at him. Prabha smiles shyly.

He continues to kiss her palm, and then he kisses her whole arm. Her expression changes. A tear runs down her face. He continues to kiss her. Through her tears, she starts to smile. Her smile is beautiful, in the dull light of the room.

104 EXT. FOREST - LATE EVENING

104

Evening light dances on the treetops. The trees look like dark shapes against the magic light in the sky.

Mist has settled on the canopy of the forest.

105 EXT. BEACH - LATE EVENING

105

Sound of the ocean waves unfurling on the sandy beach, create a soft rhythm.

The waves move gently over the sand, catching only a hint of light.

106

EXT. BEACH SHACK - LATE EVENING

106

Under a lonesome tube light, blue and red crates are stacked up against the back wall of the make-shift bamboo shack. Pushing past the curtain of the back door, the same androgynous Girl seen before, carries a red crate filled with empty glass bottles that clink as she walks. She stacks up the crate. Through the fluttering curtain, her Father is searching for something at his counter.

FATHER

Where is my torch?

Returning inside, she leans over the counter and hands him his torch.

107

INT. BEACH SHACK- LATE EVENING

107

The Girl wipes the glass fridge with a cloth. The pink fairy lights above the counter blink off and on in a slow rhythm. Her Father closes the drawer and goes to the front door. Not looking up, she continues to work.

FATHER (O.S.)

Shut it when they leave.

She turns to look in his direction.

108

EXT. BEACH SHACK - LATE EVENING

108

The Girl comes to the front door, putting the napkin on her shoulder, she watches the beach. In the distance, the torchlight in her Father's hand diminishes as he walks further away.

Prabha and Parvaty drink tea and Anu drinks coke.

PARVATY

(in Marathi)

Are you shutting ?

The Girl shakes her head.

GIRL

(in Marathi)

You can sit as long as you like.

Parvathy nods. The Girl goes back in.

PARVATHY

It's beautiful isn't it? Aren't you glad you stayed?

Prabha nods. They watch the sun setting in front of them.

From behind a boat kept upside down in the distance on the beach, Shiaz bends down as he picks up a matchbox he has dropped. Prabha notices him.

PARVATHY (CONT'D)

Will you have anything else?

Anu shakes her head.

PARVATHY (CONT'D)

Prabha?

Prabha is still looking in the direction of Shiaz. Parvathy also turns to look. Anu notices that Prabha is looking at Shiaz.

PARVATHY (CONT'D)

What is it?

Prabha turns to Anu.

PRABHA

Anu has her mind here but her heart is somewhere else

Anu freezes.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

(in Malayalam)

Isn't it so?

Anu looks unsure of what to do. Prabha looks back at Shiaz and then at Anu.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Its ok, call him here.

Anu looks hesitant, Prabha gives her a reassuring look.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

Call him...

Anu, still a little unsure, stands up and walks towards Shiaz.

PARVATY

Who is that?

PRABHA

Anu's boyfriend.

Parvaty chuckles

PARVATY

She should hold on to him if he followed her
this far.

Prabha smiles. The couple join them and Prabha brings nearer a chair for Shiaz to sit

PRABHA

Where are you from?

SHIAZ

Wayanad

Prabha nods

PRABHA

I have been there once... its very beautiful
there

Shiaz nods.

PRABHA (CONT'D)

It is very beautiful here too

She turns to look at the ocean. The waves crash against the shore.

CUT TO:

109

INT. BEACH SHACK - NIGHT

109

The Girl takes her mobile phone and sticks in the cord of the speakers. She puts on the song that her Father had made her turn off before.

A Konkani pop song plays.

FEMALE SINGER

*Life is a fleeting wisp of the wind,
And I try to hold it in the palm of my hand.
But the more closely my fists close,
The more easily it slips away...
But I am happy that the wind,
Still dances in the trees,
And before me, I can say with delight,
There is only life, life, life.*

110

EXT. BEACH SHACK - NIGHT

110

The Girl turns off one light outside.

FEMALE SINGER

*Mother called me, "look a song bird sings in
the trees!"
She said, 'hold it in the palm of your hand',
But the more close I went to catch it,
The more swiftly it flew to the branches of
trees,
But I am happy that the trees still dance to
its song
And before me, I can say with delight,
There is only life, life, life!*

The beach shack is an oasis of light in the dark blue beach. Through the window on another wall, the interiors of the shack are seen, illuminated in the blinking pink light. And in the light, the Girl moves her body to the rhythm. She mouths the words. The ease of her body movement increases gradually as she gives herself in to the music, dancing alone in the beach shack.

The sound of the music fills the darkness.

FEMALE SINGER (CONT'D)

*Father called me, 'look at the waves in the
sea'
He said, 'hold them in the palm of your
hand',
But the more I tried to catch them
The more they took me with them.
And now I float away from you...
To where the waves and the wind take me
And I can say with delight...
There is only life, life, life.*