

JINXED
(FIRST DRAFT)

BY

BARBARA ROHRER

CONTACT :
B.ROHRER

BA.ROHRER@BLUEWIN.CH

INT. JINENDRA'S SLEEPING ROOM - MORNING

JINENDRA, end thirties, sleeps. On the bedside table the alarm clock shows 6:59:27. As the seconds skip to 6:59:30 Jinendra sighs, turns, blinks at the alarm clock and hits the button on the alarm clock before it can go off. He rolls back, stares a moment at the ceiling then throws the cover back and gets up.

He pads into the bathroom.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

VISHAL, late forties, Jinendra's manservant, cuts up a fruit. He listens as the SLOSHING of water is audible then puts the knife down and sedately walks towards the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Jinendra, soaked, sniffs the soap and frowns.

JINENDRA

Vishal!

Vishal enters before Jinendra has finished calling.

JINENDRA

Vishal... what's this? That's not my usual soap!

VISHAL

No, Sir. The producer consider the product no longer marketable. I was told only a few old-fashioned customers still bought it. This soap

(recites)

with its fresh, dynamic scent is a businessman's choice.

(coughs)

unfortunately I wasn't advised, or I would have made sure to secure a sufficient supply in advance.

Jinendra sniffs the soap then grumbles.

JINENDRA

Well...I'll just have to make do with this one then.

Vishal leaves the bathroom. As he turns away he smiles faintly.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Jinendra enters, wearing a business suit.

On the table waits his breakfast, a plate with neatly diced fruit pieces, and a glass of juice. Next to the plate is a sheet of paper.

Jinendra sits and eats, chewing carefully but without much pleasure. Once finished he picks up the paper and studies it.

Vishal appears silently on the other side of the table.

JINENDRA

Vishal? Didn't you buy a uniform just three months ago?

VISHAL

Yes. But I've given the old one to my nephew. He needed it to get a job.

Jinendra taps the sheet with a finger.

JINENDRA

I wasn't aware that your nephew's career was any concern of mine.

VISHAL

(quite unabashed)

It's not. But it's a concern of mine. Sir will remember that the accounts are always well inside the allowance.

Jinendra gets up and buttons his jacket.

JINENDRA

You are aware that your skills at haggling are part of the reason I keep you in my service?

VISHAL

Indeed, Sir. But I think that my skills are worth an occasional, shall we say, recompense?

Jinendra picks up his briefcase and walks towards the door. There he turns

JINENDRA

Don't think you can get that past me
again though, Vishal.

Vishal thanks Jinendra with palms together

VISHAL

No, Sir.

Vishal watches Jinendra leave with a fine smile. It is precisely seven thirty.

Vishal takes a cloth and starts dusting on the bookshelf. Jinendra's father scowls at him as Vishal twitches the flower wreath on the big picture in its silver frame.

Next to it the small sepia picture of a young woman is set back a little. The picture once was torn apart but carefully put together again. Vishal takes it and dusts it carefully, studies the picture a moment, then sets it back at equal height to the big one.

EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - MORNING.

Jinendra's car stops smoothly. The driver gets out right as the doorman opens the door smartly to let Jinendra out. The driver has the back seat door open by the time Jinendra reaches the car. The whole creates the impression of a dance where every step is well rehearsed.

Jinendra gets in the car. The driver hurries around the car as the woman from the picture, SANGEETA, now end 50ies, pallu over her greying hair, walks hesitantly towards the car. The car drives off. She looks after it with an expression of hopeless indecision.

MONTAGE

Inner city Mumbai. Jinendra gets out at one of the new high rises and walks briskly into the building. People gently drift out of his way as he hurries through the lobby.

Jinendra enters his office. On the door is his Name JINENDRA PREETA. It is precisely 8:30.

In the outer office MRS. COELHO, the secretary, looks at the clock. It is 8:45. She takes a folder and pads to the door to the office where she waits.

Jinendra presses the buzzer of his intercom. Mrs. Coelho enters before he can remove his hand from the buzzer.

10:58. Jinendra gets up from his desk and leaves.

Board room. Jinendra enters. His execs are already seated. It is precisely 11:00. He takes his seat. The door opens again and a young man hurries in. The execs as one turn their eyes to the clock: 11:01. Jinendra drums his fingers disapprovingly as the young man takes his seat.

17:30. Jinendra closes his laptop, unplugs it and puts it into his briefcase.

Jinendra's car glides smoothly to a stop at the entrance of the office building just as Jinendra comes out.

Jinendra works on his laptop as the driver navigates through the rush hour traffic.

19:00. The driver stops in front of a restaurant. Jinendra slips the laptop back into the briefcase, while the driver hurries around the car to open the door. Jinendra gets out, leaving the briefcase in the car.

END OF MONTAGE

Jinendra walks towards the restaurant.

ARPANA (27), with RANI(5) on her hand, crosses Jinendra's way as she hurries towards the bus. Jinendra stops in his tracks, annoyed.

ARPANA

Hurry up, Rani, or we'll miss the bus. Your mother must already be waiting.

Rani drags her feet a little in reluctance.

RANI

Ma...

Arpana bends down to stroke Rani's cheek.

ARPANA

You're a good girl.

Rani sighs and then hurries up. The bus stops and disgorges a number of people. Arpana pushes Rani ahead and squeezes into the bus while Jinendra enters the restaurant.

EXT. SHANTI HOSPITAL - EVENING

Arpana looks up at the entrance of the hospital and sighs. She gives Rani a quick smile and then walks in.

INT. WARD - EVENING

Arpana enters as a nurse comes out, pushing a trolley which trundles from side to side as a wheel twists wildly around on a wonky bearing. The nurse gives her a friendly smile but hurries on.

The long room has large windows on both sides and the beds are situated next to the windows. In the first bed a wizened old woman, MRS. NAIR perks up and smiles.

MRS. NAIR

Arpana. How nice of you to visit me.

Arpana bends down to Rani and whispers

ARPANA

Go to your mother, darling. Ok?

Rani nods and idles down past the beds, stopping occasionally to chat with a patient.

Arpana goes to Mrs. Nair. The old woman clasps Arpana's hand and gives her a toothless smile.

ARPANA

Mrs. Nair. You're looking good tonight.

MRS. NAIR

(winking)

That's nice of you, Arpana but I can see the mirror from here.

ARPANA

And how are you feeling?

MRS. NAIR

I'm feeling fine. You know why? My daughter is coming to see me tomorrow.

ARPANA

That's great news, Mrs. Nair. But if you will excuse me. Geeta is waiting.

Mrs. Nair releases Arpana's hand reluctantly. Arpana walks past a nearby nurse. She hesitates a moment.

ARPANA

Every time Mrs. Nair tells me her daughter is coming...

NURSE

She never comes. But for Mrs. Nair it's always tomorrow that her daughter comes, so she's never disappointed.

(looks along the aisle)

Your sister is lucky to have such a devoted family.

Arpana's smile falls a little flat as she turns away to go to her sister.

GEETA(28), looking wasted and way older than her years, sits propped up against a stack of pillows. The curtain is pulled across the window.

Rani sits on a chair next to Geeta, her legs dangling. Geeta looks disinterested. As Arpana comes near she closes her eyes.

RANI

I got best marks today. That makes six stars. Rafi says I am stupid because I collect the stars but...

Rani falters as she notices Geeta's disinterest. Arpana hands her a packet.

ARPANA

Here, give your mother the laddos.

Rani takes the box and then holds it out to Geeta. Forced to acknowledge the gift Geeta opens her eyes and raises a limp hand to take the box. She drops it onto the bedside table without a glance.

ARPANA

Rani, why don't you go and say hello to Assunta?

Rani nods in relief and then skips away towards the bed of a small girl. Arpana sits down on the chair Rani has vacated. There is a lengthy silence as Geeta looks straight ahead.

ARPANA

You're looking better today.

GEETA

I certainly don't feel better.

ARPANA

I'm sorry.

Another silence ensues. Arpana looks over to Rani who has climbed onto the bed of Assunta. The two girls play a game of cards together. Arpana realises she is twiddling her thumbs and stops herself from doing so.

ARPANA

I've got the new job.

GEETA

How much are you making?

ARPANA

You know I didn't change for the money. I wanted to have more responsibilities, more challenges.

GEETA

So what you're saying is that you don't get more money. Nice. The least you could have tried for is a better salary. I've been stuck in this ward for ages. They
(a sweeping gesture)
just don't see that I need some peace and quiet.

ARPANA

Geeta, Rani is soon entering school. I'll need every rupee to make sure she gets a good education. We can be lucky the hospital doesn't charge us too much.

GEETA

Why waste money on her? She'll marry and then her husband can care for her.

Arpana notices her hand clenching into the fabric of her skirt. She carefully smooths out the creases.

ARPANA

Husbands die - or may be otherwise
unable to care for their families.

GEETA

You don't need to rub it in that my
husband divorced me for a healthy
wife and left me to fend for myself!

Arpana opens her mouth then glances over to Rani and presses her
lips together. The little girl notices the look and folds her
cards.

ARPANA

Let's not talk about your husband
and his money grubbing family.

Rani appears beside Arpana.

RANI

Ma?

Geeta seems to push further back into her pillows

GEETA

I'm getting tired

Arpana gets up and leans forward to kiss her sister, but Geeta
turns her head away slightly. Arpana withdraws

ARPANA

We'll come again next week.

Geeta closes her eyes. Rani pulls at Arpana's hand. After a
moment Arpana turns away and leaves.

Geeta opens her eyes again and watches Arpana go. Then she turns
her back to her sister and curls up.

EXT. IN FRONT OF JINENDRA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

SANGEETA pulls the pallu a little more over her head and begins
the perilous crossing of the road.

Jinendra's car rolls to a stop just as Sangeeta reaches the
other side. Jinendra comes out of the house.

Sangeeta walks towards the car. Jinendra gets in without paying
her any notice. The driver gives her a quick glance and then
closes the door after Jinendra. He hurries around the car.

Sangeeta watches the car drive off. After a moment she sighs and then turns to go.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD - MORNING

Sangeeta walks slowly, head low. A BELL rings. Sangeeta looks up and stops.

The doors of a small temple are thrown wide, light reflects on mirror mosaics depicting the elephant-headed god.

Sangeeta looks up at the small temple. After a moment she walks up the few steps and enters. Ganesha smiles at her with compassion and a mischievous twinkle in his eyes.

She kneels in prayer but her hands are wet with tears.

PRIEST

Daughter?

Sangeeta looks up. A PRIEST smiles kindly down at her. There is an uncanny likeness in expression between him and Ganesha

PRIEST

You've been praying for more than an hour now. I'm sure Lord Ganesha is listening. But sometimes a human ear may be better. Come.

Sangeeta dries her face and gets up. She follows the priest into a small yard behind the temple.

He sits down on a stone bench and pats the seat next to him. Sangeeta sits. For a moment she wrings her hands. The priest looks and waits.

SANGEETA

My son. I've been praying to Ganesha for my son, Jinendra.

The priest nods and waits.

Sangeeta worries the cloth of her saree.

SANGEETA

(smiles)

As a child my son got himself into more than one scrape because he stormed ahead in his attempt to catch the wind. His laughter rode on the breeze and his hair danced after him in his headlong chase.

(sobering)

Today my son walks without looking
left or right, and he is so tense
iron would bend around him.
The wind would not even dare to
ruffle his hair.

Sangeeta wipes a tear away.

SANGEETA

He has forgotten how to live, and he
doesn't even know it.

(sighs)

I've lost my son many years ago

(shakes her head)

but I've never given him up. When he
was a small boy I was weak. That
weakness robbed me of my son, and my
son of his mother.

I'll never forgive myself that I
wasn't there when his father turned
him into that clockwork creature.

(looks from her hands

up into the priest's

face)

But I'm sure, my son can yet be
saved. I've prayed to Lord Ganesha
to forgive my weakness and to show
me a way.

Sangeeta starts crying again silently.

PRIEST

Sangeeta, you don't need forgiveness
from Lord Ganpati, you need to
forgive yourself.

And then you need to ask your son to
forgive you.

Still. You did well to pray to
Ganesha.

Change may be coming soon.

(more sternly)

But be warned. Change is not always
perceived as a blessing - it can
cause pain too. Are you willing to
risk that hurt?

Sangeeta looks at the priest then she nods firmly.

SANGEETA

If it's for my son I'm willing to
risk pain.

PRIEST

Even by hurting your son?

Sangeeta hesitates a moment.

SANGEETA

A surgeon's knife will hurt too when
removing the cancer.

The priest nods. He takes an old bronze oil lamp from a niche
and hands it to Sangeeta

She turns it over, puzzled. It looks like a kind of a teapot,
pulled long between spout and handle. Around the cover dances a
chain of rats and the spout has the semblance of an elephant's
trunk

PRIEST

This is a gift for you and for your
son.

SANGEETA

How will this help my son?

PRIEST

It will be revealed in time. Just
give it to your son, and things will
follow from there.

INT. JINENDRA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Vishal stands by the window and looks down at the street. Below
Sangeeta, clutching a parcel against her chest, after some
hesitation walks towards the entrance of the apartment house.

Vishal steps away from the window. He walks out of the room.
Jinendra is eating breakfast in his usual slow way. Vishal
leaves the flat.

EXT. IN FRONT OF JINENDRA'S APARTMENT HOUSE - MORNING

Vishal walks past the guard, MOHAN, at the door.

VISHAL

Morning, Mohan. How's the wife, and
the children?

MOHAN

They are fine, I can't complain. My youngest has just begun school.

Vishal nods and looks around searchingly. Finally he sees Sangeeta across the street.

VISHAL

Mohan. That woman over there; I saw her talk to you. What did she want?

MOHAN

Asking questions about your employer. Naturally I didn't tell her anything. I've seen her standing here for several days now. I've already been wondering whether to call the police.

VISHAL

Hm. I'll see what she wants.

Vishal crosses the road.

A sign proclaims that dogs must be led on a leash. A cur with a green collar trots unconcernedly past.

Sangeeta gives Vishal a fleeting glance. As Vishal walks directly towards her, she quickly pulls the pallu a little over her head and turns to walk away.

VISHAL

Madam?

Sangeeta hesitates.

VISHAL

Madam? Excuse me, but I've noticed you standing here several times.

Sangeeta clutches the newspaper wrapped bundle against her chest in indecision

VISHAL

I am Jinendraji's manservant.

Sangeeta hesitates then folds the newspaper away from the lamp and holds it out to Vishal

SANGEETA

Would you - would you give this to
my... to your master?

Vishal takes the parcel.

VISHAL

I'll give this to your son, madam.

SANGEETA

How did you...?

VISHAL

There's a photograph of you in your
son's apartment, Sangeetaji.

Vishal folds the paper back over the lamp.

Sangeeta nods gratefully then claps Vishal's hand..

SANGEETA

Lord Ganesha's blessing is on this
lamp. Jinendra must accept it.

VISHAL

He will.

INT. JINENDRA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Vishal enters the living room. Jinendra gets up from the table.

JINENDRA

Where have you been?

VISHAL

Somebody delivered a parcel for you.

He hands Jinendra the barely wrapped lamp. Jinendra folds back
the newspaper

JINENDRA'S

What' that? It's ugly! Who is it
from?

VISHAL

Your mother

Jinendra drops the lamp onto the table and walks away. After two
steps he turns to Vishal

JINENDRA

My mother is dead. Get rid of it.

He leaves quickly.

INT. RESTAURANT IN JINENDRA'S OFFICE BUILDING - NOON

Arpana enters. SHEELA, her plump 25 year old friend winks her over to a table.

SHEELA

Come over here, Arpana.

ARPANA

Hi Sheela. Hi there.

Arpana greets NEESHA, a fat girl and BEPASA, a birdlike woman, also seated at the table, pulls a chair out and sits down next to Sheela

Neesha picks at a strip of naan und subjects Arpana to a close scrutiny. Bepasa gives Arpana the look of a chicken considering a worm

BEPASA

So you are Arpana, Sheela's friend?
I'm Bepasa and that is Neesha.
And how do you like it here?

Neesha chews on her naan absentmindedly.

NEESHA

You better not answer that question.
If you say the truth, you're a fool,
if you lie, how are we going to
trust you?

SHEELA

Neesha! You're terrible. It's
Arpana's first day here. Don't scare
her like that!

Neesha and Bepasa giggle. Neesha points a piece of naan at Sheela

NEESHA

If I can scare her that easily she
won't last long here. Iceman will
just look once at her and she'll run
away, crying.

ARPANA

I don't think so. I'm not that easily scared. It will need more than a look to make me cry

The three other women look at each other and then smile meaningfully

NEESHA

Well. You haven't met HIM yet.

She suddenly straightens and peers over Sheela's head.

NEESHA

Talk about the devil! here he is! What happened? This isn't his usual lunch hour!

Bepasa titters and cranes her head.

BEPASA

What do you mean?

NEESHA

He! In here! You know Mr. Preeta always eats at twelve thirty. That's why I see that I get lunch break before. I don't want his cold eyes in my back during mealtime.

SHEELA

(lamely)

Oh come on. It's not that bad.

NEESHA

(snorts)

Is too.

The other three women throw furtive glances in the direction Neesha indicates.

At a small table Jinendra studies the menu, unaware of the waiter nervously hovering by his shoulder. Around him the neighbouring tables are suspiciously empty and the noise level has dropped considerably.

Arpana watches him order. The waiter rushes off. Arpana turns and notices the other three women watching her.

ARPANA

Something wrong?

The three women titter

SHEELA

Say it. You had that look. Say...

All three women chorus then giggle

ALL

He looks like Shahrukh Khan

ARPANA

Who? Oh...that actor. Does he? I
wouldn't know

There is a moment of stunned silence. Finally Sheela shakes her head. Arpana swivels unobtrusively to give Jinendra a close look.

SHEELA

Don't you ever go to the cinema?

ARPANA

I don't have the time or the money
to waste on movies.

SHEELA

Then what do you do to have some
fun, relax, get your mind off
things?

Arpana shrugs. Sheela's eyes drift to the side. She frowns a little.

RANI

Ma?

Arpana turns sharply. Rani smiles at her apologetically. Behind her an older woman, MRS. KAPOOR walks up. Behind her Jinendra raises his head and looks at the little girl in surprise.

ARPANA

Rani? What are you doing here? I
told you I'd show you where I work
one of these days. Today is not a
good day.

MRS. KAPPOR

We haven't come to visit. I'm sorry,
Arpana, but I'm forced to leave even
now to go to Delhi. I don't know
when I'll be back.

Arpana exchanges a dismayed look with Sheela. The other two women lean forward a little.

ARPANA

Where am I going to find somebody else to look after Rani so quickly?

SHEELA

What about your parents?

ARPANA

Maybe for a day or two at most. Mother is not well.

RANI

I don't need somebody to look after me.

ARPANA

Oh yes, you do. I won't have you alone at home.

Mrs. Kapoor rummages around in her voluminous bag, hands Arpana a folded piece of paper.

MRS. KAPOOR

That's a good friend of mine, Sangeeta. She might be interested in taking care of Rani. She sure can use the money. I'm sorry, but I've got to hurry.

Mrs. Kapoor nods to Arpana and turns to leave.

Arpana unfolds the paper, reads it, frowns a little then smiles wanly and pulls Rani to her.

ARPANA

Break's over. Have you eaten?

The four women get up and collect their odds and ends. Sheela, Bipasa and Neesha hurry off.

Arpana takes a rest of naan and dips it into some sauce then hands it to Rani.

On the other table Jinendra gets up and walks briskly towards the exit. Arpana leans down to admonish Rani while walking

ARPANA

You'll have to be very quiet and stay with me. No walking around or talking. Understood?

RANI

Yes, Ma. I'll draw you a beautiful picture. I'll be as quiet as a mouse, promise.

Arpana pats Rani's cheek

ARPANA

You're my girl, Rani. I know you will.

There is a sharp cough. Arpana straightens, manages to avoid bumping into Jinendra. She smiles

ARPANA

Good afternoon, Mr. Preeta.

Jinendra's nostrils flare a little as he draws in a breath.

FLASHBACK

A young Sangeeta dabs perfume at her neck.
A small boy runs into her arms and buries his nose in her neck.
He closes his eyes in pleasure at the smell.
END OF FLASHBACK

Jinendra looks at Arpana then Rani with a frown, then gives a curt nod and walks stiffly past. Rani whispers audibly

RANI

That's a strange man, Ma.

Arpana quickly puts her hand over Rani's mouth, checks Jinendra's reaction. There's just the slightest tensing to indicate he might have heard the words.

INT. FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT - DAY

Jinendra enters the office, passes the small cubicles, without acknowledging the sudden hush and hurried greetings. He abruptly stops at the one closest to Mehra's segregated office.

Arpana, busy typing, doesn't notice Jinendra. Rani, perched on three boxes of printer paper, a cover on her knees, looks up from her drawing and smiles.

RANI

Hello

Jinendra scowls at her

Rani sobers and pulls the cover with her drawing protectively against her chest. Arpana swivels her chair.

Arpana notice Rani's defensive stance. She gets up

ARPANA

What can I do for you, Sir?

JINENDRA

Is this your child?

ARPANA

This is Rani. Rani, please say Hello to Mr. Preeta

Rani slips from her makeshift stool and performs a namaste. Jinendra acknowledges it with hardly a nod. He frowns at Arpana, waiting. Arpana looks all helpful interest.

JINENDRA

I can understand that you wish to show your daughter where you work. But I don't like them to stay. This is not a playground.

ARPANA

I'm sorry, but I had no choice in the matter. My neighbour normally takes care of Rani, but she had to leave urgently, so she brought Rani here. I can't leave her -

JINENDRA

(impatiently)

- If you can't organize your private life and work then why don't you stay with your child and make a home for your husband?

ARPANA

(angrily)

Of all the ...

(stops and draws a
breath to calm down)

My family relies on my salary, like many other family relies on the money the mother earns. Do you really think I want Rani to sit here like a little mouse, instead of being outside, playing with friends of her age?

RANI

Ma?

Rani stands protectively in front of Arpana and scowls angrily at Jinendra.

Arpana puts her arms around Rani. The two face Jinendra with an expression of mutual protection.

Jinendra looks at the united front for a moment, lost for words. He is about to rally his forces when Arpana relaxes her hold on Rani and smiles professionally.

ARPANA

Sir, is there anything I can do for you? These stats ... Mr. Mehra asked me to work out these figures for you. I think you're expecting them?

JINENDRA

Well, I'll wait a little longer.

Jinendra withdraws, the loser in a battle he didn't even know he had fought.

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Jinendra sits at his desk, laptop open in front of him, a statistic on the screen. He reads but then his eyes lose focus and he looks with an empty expression past the screen.

SONG

Arpana's face as she laughs.

MALE SINGER

Why does your face hurt my heart?
What is this stirring in my chest?

Arpana's face fades and is replaced by flashes of memory of Jinendra's childhood. The mango tree, little Jinendra running across the lawn, falling. Arms pick him up, dry his tears. A face which is unrecognisable.

MALE SINGER

I know you but you're face
is a stranger's face.

The figure gets up, spreads her arms but recedes into the distance. The boy runs after her but the figure disappears in a fog. Another figure coalesces. Jinendra's father, looking stern. The little boy stops. The father walks past without a look at his child. Little Jinendra falls in step beside him. He looks back but the fog is grey and impenetrable.

Jinendra shakes his head, gets up from the desk. He walks to the window, looks down at the traffic choked street, the jostling people. The SOUND of the city is barely audible.

In the glass Arpana's reflection appears for a moment. Jinendra puts his hand against the window. The face changes and is quickly recognisable as Sangeeta before fading. Jinendra pulls his hand from the glass as the buzzer on his desk sounds. He takes a deep breath and returns to his desk.

TRANSITION

INT. BIG OFFICE - ARPANA'S CUBICLE - DAY

Arpana sits at her computer, looking idly at the screen.

FLASHBACK

Jinendra sits in his small isle of loneliness in the restaurant. He looks up at the laughter.

FEMALE SINGER

Why did your eyes touch my soul?
What is that sadness in your self?

Sheela walks into the cubicle. Arpana snaps out of her reverie, gives Sheela some papers. Sheela leaves. Arpana taps a few words then drifts off again.

FEMALE SINGER

Why does your face hurt my heart?

MEHRA pokes his head out of his office and calls for Arpana. She quickly collects some papers and gets up.

END OF SONG

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

The place is one of the more conservative ones that cater to businessmen during the week and to families on weekends.

The middle aged HEADWAITER snatches the dishes from a table, and presents the little bowl with aniseed and the bill with an air of urgency. The customer looks a little put out by the hurry.

A younger WAITER mutters to the headwaiter

WAITER

What's the hurry? I'm sure he would have ordered something else. You've just spoilt yourself the tip.

HEADWAITER

No matter. It's more important that the table is vacant by seven thirty.

The headwaiter collects the money and compliments the disgruntled guest out. As he returns to the young waiter he pockets a coin and shrugs.

WAITER

Do we have a reservation for it?

The headwaiter readies the table while he explains

HEADWAITER

No need for that. It's your first day here, so remember this well. This table must be vacant every day at seven thirty if you want a good tip. Jinendraji has been a regular for years.

(checks the clock)

He always sits at this table. He will be here within the next five minutes, and expects a new Times and his drink immediately.

(pulls a new Times
from under the bar)

No need to ask. He always takes a Bagpiper.

(pours the drink)

He'll read the Times three quarter of an hour and will then eat. No need to bring him the menu - he'll take the day's special.

(pats the newspaper)

Just see that his routine is not bothered and you can count on a good tip. Oh!

The headwaiter zooms in on a couple heading for the empty table and steers them deftly to another table.

The young waiter watches the priest enter, head straight for the vacant table and sits down.

The headwaiter turns and discovers the table occupied. He hurries over, and snaps his finger at the young waiter to see to the other guests

HEADWAITER

Welcome, sir. Sir.. If I might propose another table? You might find it a little drafty here.

The headwaiter almost physically tries to urge the priest out of his chair, without success

PRIEST

Thank you for your consideration, son, but I am fine here. If you'd bring me a glass of chai?

The headwaiter leaves to fulfil the order.

Jinendra enters, heads for his table but falters at the sight of the priest. He looks around for another free table but every single table is occupied.

PRIEST

Why don't you sit down here? There's enough space for two. I would be delighted to have company.

Jinendra sits reluctantly. A moment later the headwaiter brings the tea, Jinendra's drink and the Times. Jinendra looks at the drink but doesn't touch it. His fingers rub over the newspaper.

The priest takes a sip from his tea

PRIEST

Do you come here often?

JINENDRA

Sorry? Yes. Yes. I come here every day.

Jinendra drums his fingers and furtively studies the headline of the newspaper.

PRIEST

Doesn't your wife cook for you?

JINENDRA

I'm not married

PRIEST

Oh. I'm sorry for your loss

JINENDRA

Loss? What loss?

PRIEST

You said you weren't married so I assumed you were a widower.

JINENDRA

I've never been married

Jinendra turns a little away from the priest but the old man cheerfully goes on

PRIEST

That must be very difficult for you then

JINENDRA

(slightly hostile)

I work all day. When I come home I enjoy the peace and quiet of my apartment.

The priest nods and studies Jinendra's turned head. Jinendra takes up the newspaper, unfolds it.

PRIEST

What for do you work all day, without a wife or children?

Jinendra throws the newspaper down. He takes a deep breath, then a second one.

JINENDRA

I work to have my own place, a car and a good position. There's nothing I want.

PRIEST

Careless trifles. They haven't made you happy

Jinendra's hand clutches the newspaper so it crumbles and tears

JINENDRA

My happiness is none of your
business!

A few heads turn at his angry voice. Jinendra controls himself with difficulty. To cover his embarrassment he smooths out the newspaper.

PRIEST

Everybody thinks money or things
make them free. But you're nothing
but a Jinnie, holding some power,
but in the end without substance.
You're at the beck and call of the
one who holds the lamp, or your pay
check.
What kind of life is that?

Jinendra briskly gets up and throws a few bills onto the table

JINENDRA

I have to go

He stalks past the stunned waiter.

The door of the restaurant opens just as Jinendra reaches it. Sangeeta enters, looks around.

Jinendra stops in his tracks. Sangeeta sees Jinendra and her hand flies to her throat. Mother and son look at each other for a long moment. Jinendra finally draws a deep breath, then looks past his mother and leaves.

As he passes Sangeeta she reaches out to brush against his sleeve lightly

There is hardly a flicker in Jinendra's eyes as he walks out.

INT. JINENDRA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Vishal turns the priest's lamp on the shelf a little, considers a moment and positions Sangeeta's picture a little more prominently.

The SOUND OF THE DOOR opening

Vishal turns, surprised, checks the clock. It's only eight. Vishal walks towards the hall. Jinendra walks stiffly past him.

VISHAL

Good evening, Sir.

Jinendra pulls impatiently at his tie as he walks past the shelf. He stops sharply at the sight of the lamp

In Jinendra's impersonal designer living room the lamp's archaic incongruity screams out to be noticed.

Jinendra points an accusing finger at the lamp

JINENDRA

Didn't I tell you to get rid of it?!

VISHAL

It's a gift from your mother.

Jinendra scowls at him. Vishal ignores the scowl with a stony expression. Jinendra looks at the lamp with revulsion and stomps out of the room.

INT. JINENDRA'S BED ROOM - EVENING

Jinendra opens his shirt cuffs and loosens the restricting tie impatiently. He throws it on the bed. He catches sight of himself in a big mirror and grows still. He stands a moment lost in the middle of his bedroom, arms hanging. In the reflection he sees the big, old wardrobe.

FLASHBACK

JINENDRA'S FATHER opens the big wardrobe and takes a small wooden box from a top shelf.

LITTLE JINENDRA watches furtively around the door jamb as his father slips an unopened letter from his pocket. He turns it over a few times and then puts it on top of several other letters in the box.

The father closes the box and deposits it back on the top shelf. As he turns towards the door Jinendra scurries away.

TRANSITION

Jinendra, in his twenties, walks past the wreathed picture of his father and towards the wardrobe. He opens it. It is practically empty. From the top shelf he takes the wooden box.

He puts it on his father's desk, opens it. It is full of letters. Jinendra shuffles through them. They are all unopened. He takes one, looks at it. The sender is Sangeeta, addressed all to Jinendra's father. The dates on the stamps range from 1973 to 1988.

END OF FLASHBACK

Jinendra, on his bed, shuffles through the letters, searching. The letter he picks from the stack is thick and in a still unopened, light blue envelope. It is dated 1989 and addressed to Jinendra.

Jinendra turns it over and over. Finally he puts it back into the box, closes the box with some force.

He walks into

THE LIVING ROOM

grabs the lamp and heads out of the apartment

EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - EVENING

Jinendra stalks across the road and clammers over the separating wall to the promenade. A grass board slopes down to a rocky shore and the dirty waves of the Arabian Ocean.

Jinendra looks a moment at the lamp, then he throws it with all his power out into the sea. He watches it splash, then sink out of view. He takes a deep breath then turns away

INT. JINENDRA'S SLEEPING ROOM - EVENING

Jinendra goes to bed. He tosses and turns a bit, bashes his pillow into submission, finds his position on his back.

He stares up at the ceiling. Passing cars create fleeting patterns of light and shadow on the ceiling.

VFX

The shadow pattern turns into a circle of rats running after each other. The lamp coalesces around the rats, turns until the spout points at Jinendra. It expands and swallows Jinendra with the SOUND OF THE LAST LIQUID BEING SUCKED UP FROM A GLASS WITH A STRAW

EXT. DHOW - MORNING

Bird's eye vision, zooming across the glittering waves of the sea, towards a tiny speck. A rickety dhow grows rapidly larger.

A seagull settles quickly on the bow, snatches a fish from the meshes of the net and flies off again.

AHMED, a scrawny, tanned man of indeterminable age works hard to pull in the fishing net. He wipes his sweaty forehead, glares at the rising sun, gives the net another pull.

The catch is disappointingly small. Hardly a fish wiggles in the meshes. A final haul and the net ends up in the bottom of the dhow. Ahmed shakes out the meshes. A tangle of seaweed drops onto the planks. He is about to throw the whole clump back into the sea but hesitates. He scratches at the clump, discovers metal. He rips with growing haste at the seaweed, then washes the dirt off.

His face falls as he looks at the blackened, encrusted lamp in his hand.

AHMED

Oh Allah! Why do others fish golden treasures from the sea and all I get is a dirty old lamp?

He sighs, but then shrugs

AHMED

Well, maybe it's silver? In the worst case I'll get a few copper for scrap metal. Anything to calm Fatma's evil temper

He shudders a little, then bends to scrub at the blackened surface of the lamp

The lamp begins to vibrate, then bluish smoke pours from the spout and coalesces.

Ahmed yelps, drops the lamp and scrambles as far away as the boat will allow him.

There is a COUGH from the smoke then the smoke disperses as a hand waves it away, revealing a man sitting on the deck.

Jinendra blinks and coughs again. He looks around, takes in the fraying sail, the few fish in the baskets, finally Ahmed cowering in the boat's stern.

He looks down. His nightclothes have changed to a finely embroidered churidar kurta and matching pajami with fine leather jutti. On his wrists are brass bracelets and around his neck a similar collar.

Jinendra closes his eyes, shakes his head in confusion, opens them again.

Ahmed's expression changes from fear to puzzlement and then to a growing realisation. He looks at the lamp on the planks

AHMED

A Jinn! I've found a magic lamp!

He scrambles forward and snatches the lamp up then retreats back into the stern.

Jinendra slowly gets up, rubbing his butt.

JINENDRA

What kind of dream is this?

Ahmed scrambles to his feet and flourishes the lamp

AHMED

Jinn!

JINENDRA

Hm? Where is this place? Who are you? And how do you know my name?

Jinendra indicates the boat, the sea, and Ahmed.

Ahmed puffs himself up a little

AHMED

Jinn! I am your master! You are my Jinn now.

Jinendra looks the scrawny man up and down and then laughs.

Ahmed frowns at the lamp doubtfully then back at Jinendra who inspects the boat with an expression of disapproval.

Ahmed puffs up his chest and points the lamp at Jinendra

AHMED

Jinn! I command you to... to raise your left leg!

JINENDRA

Don't be ridiculous, man! I certainly won't...

Jinendra's left leg jerks up as if pulled by a string. Jinendra mills with his arms but loses against gravity and ends up on his butt, his left leg still in the air. After a moment it drops as if released

Jinendra narrows his eyes, scrambles back on his feet and advances on Ahmed.

Ahmed SQUEAKS and flees back into the stern.

AHMED

Stop!

Jinendra rebounds as if he has walked into a wall and ends on his butt again.

JINENDRA

What the ...?! What's going on here?

He clutches his head, closes his eyes and takes a deep breath Ahmed leans closer. Jinendra opens his eyes and recoils. Ahmed recoils too then looks up at the sky

AHMED

Oh Allah! Finally it seems luck is smiling at me - and what do I get? A crazy Jinn!

(mutters)

Well, as long as he obeys

Jinendra gives Ahmed a dirty look and gets back to his feet

AHMED

Jinn! Bow to your master!

JINENDRA

That's going too far now!

Jinendra moves threateningly towards Ahmed then stiffens. He clutches at his collar, tries to tear it off. The collar and bracelets glow a moment and then discharge. Jinendra groans and sags to his knees and into a prostrate position. That HURT.

Ahmed looks at the prostrate Jinendra and jiggles happily. He hugs the lamp to his chest.

AHMED

Jinn, magic me a chest of gold!

Jinendra straightens up then touches his collar gingerly - nothing.

JINENDRA

You're a real joker. How am I supposed to do that?

AHMED

You're the Jinn. You must know!

Jinendra pats himself down and then spreads his empty hands dramatically

JINENDRA

Sorry. Whoever made me Jinn forgot to hand out the manual.

Jinendra settles comfortably on a coil of rope. Ahmed turns the lamp over doubtfully but then shakes his head.

AHMED

Well, cross your arms and nod your head!

JINENDRA

I'd look a right fool doing that!

Jinendra entwines his fingers and twiddles his thumbs. Ahmed pouts. After a moment Jinendra's jaws clench and there is a tiny twitch under his eye.

With a muttered curse Jinendra caves in. He crosses his arms and nods. A chest of gold fails to appear. Jinendra shrugs his shoulders

JINENDRA

Any more suggestions?

Ahmed tilts his head.

AHMED

Well, try - clapping? Slapping? Turning? Snipping your finger? Tap your foot?

Jinendra yawns, increasingly bored

JINENDRA

(under his breath)

I wish I could disappear. This is getting annoying.

Jinendra wipes his hand up in front of himself. Ahmed SQUEALS and turns around, searching.

AHMED

Jinn? Where are you? Jinn?

Jinendra looks down at his hands. They are almost completely transparent. Jinendra picks up the end of a piece of rope and moves it like a snake.

Ahmed squeaks and hops onto a coil of rope. Jinendra drops the rope and stealthily advances towards Ahmed. Ahmed looks around wildly.

AHMED

Jinn! Show yourself!

Jinendra reappears with an air of resignation. Ahmed grins and hugs the lamp again

AHMED

Well. You DO have magical powers.
With a bit of time we're sure to
discover more of them. But for now
(gives Jinendra a
calculating look)
you'll give me your clothes.

JINENDRA

I'll do no such thing!

LATER

Ahmed prances around in Jinendra's clothes while Jinendra looks embarrassed and furious in Ahmed's dirty loincloth.

Ahmed cradles the lamp and then makes a lazy gesture

AHMED

These clothes aren't made for
working in. Jinn! You can do the
fishing for me.

Jinendra's neck stiffens in fury. There is a small spark from the collar. Jinendra slaps his neck then bends to pick up the fishing net.

EXT. HARBOUR - NOON - ESTABLISHING

The harbour is protected by two towers at the entrance (think Muskat); behind the town jagged mountains create a hostile guard. There is not a sign of modern life to be seen. People dressed in Arabic fashion work on the stone jetty and the dhows in the harbour.

EXT. DOWH - NOON

Ahmed's little dhow glides into the harbour. Jinendra slumps on a coil of rope, baskets of fish around him. Ahmed beams as the boat glides towards the pier

AHMED

You're lucky, Genie. I've not caught a fish in three days and the moment you appear they almost jump into my boat.

Jinendra works himself with a pained expression out of his coil of rope

JINENDRA

Jump into the boat, my foot! My back will never be the same again.

Jinendra looks at the town.

JINENDRA

Oh my God! I thought I had to worry WHERE I was. Now I wonder WHEN this is!

Ahmed throws a rope to a man on the jetty and then clambers up.

He peers down at Jinendra

AHMED

Get the fish off the boat. I'll go and talk to Jussuf, the fish merchant.

Ahmed swaggers off. Jinendra glowers after him.

There is a small flash from the collar. Jinendra hurriedly starts to unload.

LATER

Ahmed throws a small leather bag up into the air. It TINKLES as he catches it again. Several men carry the baskets away. Jinendra leans against a bale of goods, watching.

SAID, Ahmed's friend appears and claps Ahmed on the shoulder

SAID

Ahmed? What's that? You look like a prince! Fancy way to go fishing!

(nodding at Jinendra)
And who's that?

Ahmed hums and haws a little. Around them several men drift closer to listen. Seeing the general interest Ahmed puffs up his chest a little and swaggers a few steps.

AHMED
Had a stroke of luck today, Said.
This poor soul - I found him out at
sea, holding on to a chest. I saved
him and when I opened that chest,
these clothes were inside. Finders,
keepers.

Said turns to Jinendra to say something but Ahmed intercepts him.

AHMED
He doesn't speak our language. I've
taken him into service; can't leave
the poor soul all alone. Who knows
what would happen to him?

JINENDRA
(sounding like
gibberish)
What rubbish!

Everybody, including Jinendra looks puzzled at the words. Ahmed puts an arm around Said

AHMED
Said, my friend, you've been winning
money from me for weeks when playing
shatranj. How about a game now? I
feel that today my luck has turned.

SAID
Ahmed, playing shatranj has nothing
to do with luck. You're just not
good enough. I would be a bad friend
if I continue to take your money.
Fatm...

Ahmed spreads his arms

AHMED
Fatma will kiss my feet even if I
lose!

This causes general laughter

AHMED

You laugh, my friends! But believe me, I have such a gift for my wife that it'll turn her into a tame kitten!

This causes more raucous laughter.

SAID

Well. I won't stand in the way of my fortune. So let's play shatranj.

EXT. AHMED'S HUT - AFTERNOON

Ahmed and Said with Jinendra trailing behind stop in front of the hut.

AHMED

Just need to drop something here.
(to Jinendra)
Come with me.

Ahmed motions to Jinendra to follow him into the hut.

INT. AHMET'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Ahmed and Jinendra enter. Jinendra looks around, takes in the small kitchen space, the earthen floor, a simple hearth. Pots, pans and bags with food dangle from the rafters.

AHMED

Jinendra, while I am away I want you to get something nice for Fatma, something special. Maybe from Chini.

Ahmed looks around the hut, finally puts the lamp into a niche. Jinendra frowns a moment.

JINENDRA

Chini? Do you mean China?

AHMED

Whatever...

Jinendra sighs exaggeratedly.

JINENDRA

I thought you got that off your chest? I can't just snip my finger and go to -
(snips)

EXT. PLACE OF HEAVENLY PEACE - CONTINUOUS

JINENDRA

-China?

Jinendra looks shocked at the surrounding. A wizened Chinese grandfather in front of him looks equally shocked. He points to a broken pot on the ground and starts yelling at Jinendra in Chinese.

Jinendra looks at his fingers and his puzzlement changes to a grin. He gives the Chinese grandfather an excusing smile and snips again.

INT. AHMED'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Ahmed waves his hand through the empty air, looks around.

AHMED

Jinn? I don't like you to go
invisible! Jinn? Show yourself!

Jinendra appears, stumbling, with snow on his shoulders. He brushes it off. Ahmed bends to touch the snow, frowns confused as it melts. He looks at Jinendra

AHMED

What's that?

Jinendra looks a moment annoyed, flinches.

JINENDRA

That's snow. It comes from high up
in the mountains where it is always
cold.

Ahmed's puzzlement changes to a grin. He waggles his finger at Jinendra.

AHMED

So you do have other magic than just
going invisible. I want to-

SAID (O.S)

Ahmed! Are you coming or not?

AHMED

Coming!

(to Jinendra)

You... er... you go back into the
lamp!

Ahmed hurries out of the hut. Jinendra blinks

JINENDRA

Back into the lamp? What do you mean, back into the laaAAAH-?

Bluish smoke wells up around Jinendra then streams towards the lamp's spout.

INT. LAMP - CONTINUOUS

JINENDRA

-aaaaAAAAH!!

Jinendra rolls through the spout hole, screaming, and ends up on his butt with a grunt. He looks around, notices the curved walls, the spout hole which is now far too small for him to get out again. He groans and covers his face with his hands.

After a moment he gets up, checks the walls with his knuckles, tests the spout hole, jumps to get hold of the rim of the cover, hangs there for a moment then drops. Sits. Twiddles thumbs. Finally he nods off

LATER

FATMA (O.S)

What has he brought in now? What does he think I am? A scrap metal collector?

Jinendra jerks awake as his prison suddenly shakes and tilts. He rolls down the slop, ends up hard against the opposite wall. There is some more shaking and he holds to keep himself from rattling around like a pea in a pod.

Fatma speaks again, her voice booming through the lamp

FATMA (O.S)

Ali... how much will you give me for this beautiful lamp?

ALI (O.S)

Beautiful? Fatma, you must be joking! Look at all that dirt on it? It's hardly worth the metal it is made of! I'll give you five coppers for it.

The sound fades as Jinendra sighs and covers his ears. He drops off to sleep again.

LATER

Jinendra jerks up once more as voices fill his confines.

ABD AL LATIF (O.S)
It's scrap metal! Paying 20 coppers
for it is far too much! I'll give
you 15... or you can leave it!

EXT. SOUK - AFTERNOON

ABD AL LATIF, in his seventies, turns over the lamp. ALI, a wiry 40, grins toothily at Abd al Latif.

ALI
You drive a hard bargain, Abd al
Latif. But I am just too good
hearted. Give me 18 and it is yours.

ABD AL LATIF
Good hearted, Ali? You're better at
turning base metals into gold than I
am. That's why you live in a fine
house and I, despite my alchemy
still live in a hut. 15 coppers Ali,
and that's already paying too much.

Abd al Latif looks sternly at Ali and hands him a few coins. Ali quickly counts them, drops them into his pouch and smiles at Abd al Latif.

ALI
It's a pleasure dealing with you,
Abd al Latif.

ABD AL LATIF
Oh yes, I know! Next time I'll send
Rafiqua. She won't be that easily
duped out of her money.

Ali's expression sours a little. Abd al Latif notices it and laughs then stoves the lamp away somewhere under his djallabah.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - AFTERNOON

Abd al Latif sets the lamp on a table crammed full with parchments, scrolls, an astrolabe, and twisted glassware with multi coloured fluids. The walls of the hut are pigeon-holed, the holes filled with more scrolls. Herbs hang from the rafters

and a chest is filled with numerous small and large phials, each in its own compartment.

Abd al Latif goes to the chest and takes a phial, pours a few drops of some fluid on a scrap of cloth, rubs the lamp.

Bluish smoke pours out of the lamp. Abd al Latif exclaims and drops the lamp onto the table.

The smoke expands as it flows across the table. There is the sound of breaking glass.

JINENDRA

Ouch!

Abd al Latif gets up from his stool and peers over the table and down at Jinendra who coughs and waves away the smoke.

Jinendra's efforts slow as he becomes aware of the old man peering down at him. He takes a quick look around, closes his eyes and groans then gets up quickly.

JINENDRA

Excuse my unheralded appearance.
I didn't mean to intrude.
I...must have taken a wrong turn at
the last transdimensional
intersection. I actually meant to go
to Machu Picchu.

(takes a few steps
back)

You didn't by any chance see my
flying saucer? No? Well, then I
better be gone. It's a long way back
to ... to ... Alpha Centauri.

Jinendra looks at the lamp by Abd al Latif's hand then gives a false smile and nonchalantly walks out of the room.

EXT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Outside Jinendra starts running.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Abd al Latif looks at the lamp then after the retreating Jinendra.

ABD AL LATIF

Wait! Please come back!

EXT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Outside Jinendra bounces to a stop then swivels around as if somebody had turned him.

JINENDRA

No! Damn it!

Jinendra clenches his teeth as his body overturns his will and walks back into the hut with jerky movements.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra stumbles back into the hut trying to look as if he was coming back on his own free will.

JINENDRA

Yes? What do you want?

ABD AL LATIF

Pardon me, but I have some questions. I must apologize for my curiosity, but I did not understand what you said. Please tell me - who are you?

JINENDRA

(grudgingly)

My name is Jinendra

Abd al Latif raises the lamp

ABD AL LATIF

Well, maybe I'd better ask - WHAT are you?

JINENDRA

You're asking me what I am? I am a human! Obviously

Abd al Latif rubs a little mud off the lamp. Jinendra flinches

ABD AL LATIF

Hm. And what is your link to this object?

JINENDRA

(pretending ignorance)

Link? There is no l... urkh!

He claws at the collar for a moment and fights for breath. Finally he throws up his hands in a gesture of defeat

JINENDRA

I am the Jinn of this lamp!

Abd al Latif turns the lamp over and over then shakes his head. He places the lamp carefully on the table, walks around the table and studies Jinendra. Jinendra glowers back at him

ABD AL LATIF

You seem to dislike me? Or is it your situation?

Jinendra throws his hands up

JINENDRA

This is ridiculous!

Abd al Latif sits down on a stool

ABD AL LATIF

I don't understand. You better tell me all I need to know. And please, do sit down. If you tower over me like that I get a crick in my neck.

JINENDRA

As you command, Master

ABD AL LATIF

Please don't call me Master. My name is Abd al Latif.

Jinendra prostrates himself in front of the old man.

JINENDRA

I am the slave of whoever holds the lamp. I have to obey their command. Saying please and thank you doesn't change that.

There is a small frown of irritation in Abd al Latif's face as he looks at the defiantly kneeling Jinendra.

ABD AL LATIF

Obeys orders you may have to, but how you obey is up to you. I did not ask you to humiliate yourself in front of me. I offer you a seat. Whether you take it or not is your decision.

Abd al Latif pulls a second stool closer and nods at it. After a moment Jinendra gets up and sits on the stool. He twists his fingers together

JINENDRA

My name is Jinendra, and this...
this must be a dream.

LATER

Abd al Latif turns the lamp over wondering. Jinendra watches him from the other side of the hut.

ABD AL LATIF

You tell a strange tale. But I don't
feel like a dream.

Abd al Latif pinches himself then winces

ABD AL LATIF

That definitely hurt. No. I'm sure
I'm not a dream.

(wistfully)

How I wish I could see those carts
faster than horses and the big
flying iron birds.

All my life I've looked for
knowledge. But all I have are these.

(indicates scrolls)

You could show me all these things
for real.

Abd al Latif puts the lamp onto the table and sighs.

There is the sound of RUNNING FEET and then MASOOD (8) enters.
He stops at the sight of Jinendra

MASOOD

Who's this?!

ABD AL LATIF

Masood! Mind your manners! Please
excuse my grandson's impetuosity.
He has little opportunity to educate
his social graces.

Masood, this is Jinendra from the
far away country of Bharat. He's our
guest.

Masood salaams to Jinendra and then turns to his grandfather.

MASOOD

Mother says the evening meal is ready.

ABD AL LATIF

(to Jinendra)

Well, it's time you get to know the rest of the family, Jinendra.

EXT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Abd al Latif's hut is situated in a palm grove some distance from the town. There is a second, slightly bigger hut close by.

Jinendra looks at the surroundings curiously then his expression changes to disgust. He looks down. A small, naked and very grubby toddler clutches his leg. He grins toothlessly and then presses his face to Jinendra's leg, leaving a liberal quantity of snot on it.

Jinendra bends and picks the toddler up by the upper arms. He holds him at arm's length away.

JINENDRA

What... is that?

MASOOD

That's just Ali. My brother.

Masood shrugs. Jinendra puts the child down and steps away from him. He grabs some sand to clean his leg.

Ali plonks onto his behind and starts screaming.

JINENDRA

Ah. Ah what's the matter with it?!

NAJLA (O.S)

He wants up.

Jinendra turns then frowns at the sight of the little girl, his memory teased. NAJLA, an avatar of Rani, clutches a wooden horse against her chest. She sticks a finger into her mouth and eyes Jinendra seriously. Finally she removes the finger with a PLOP

NAJLA

I'm Najla. And who are you?

Masood pokes her in the side

MASOOD

You're not supposed to ask that!

Najla sticks her tongue out at him.

RAFIQUA rushes past Jinendra and gets down beside Ali. She picks him up and turns accusingly to Jinendra. Rafiqua is an avatar of Arpana.

RAFIQUA

What have you done to him?!

JINENDRA

Me? Nothing! He cleaned his nose on my leg. I put him away from me and the little monster started screaming.

RAFIQUA

Don't you dare calling Ali a monster!

Jinendra sticks a finger into his ear and wiggles it

JINENDRA

He's a sticky, grubby little brat. And he's loud! I'm sure my ears will never be the same again.

Rafiqua fluffs up like an enraged mother hen. Abd al Latif intervenes, chuckling

ABD AL LATIF

Peace my children. Rafiqua, please welcome Jinendra. Jinendra - my granddaughter Rafiqua and the mother of these three beautiful children.

Jinendra gives the three beautiful children another once over. He pulls a face. Ali laughs and stretches his arms out to Abd al Latif. The old man gives the boy a glance and then steps back a little. Rafiqua huffs and stalks off with Ali on her arms.

ABD AL LATIF

Rafiqua, you'd better add more sorghum for tonight.

(to Jinendra)

You do eat?

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - LATE AFTERNOON

Jinendra enters after Abd al Latif.

JINENDRA

Your daughter is a good cook

ABD AL LATIF

Yes, especially considering with how little she has to make do.

Abd al Latif picks up a scroll from the table. It slips from his grasp and unrolls, showing a picture of the pyramids. Abd al Latif looks at them.

ABD AL LATIF

Do they really exist?

Jinendra nods. Abd al Latif sits down heavily on a stool and puts his face into his hands.

ABD AL LATIF

I am weak, Jinendra. I cannot refuse the gift Allah has given me.

(looking up)

I promise you I will seek for a way to free you from your slavery but in the meantime...

Abd al Latif's hand fingers the lamp while his eyes plead with Jinendra. Jinendra takes hold of Abd al Latif's hand.

JINENDRA

What would you like to see first?

LATER

Jinendra appears, holding Abd al Latif. The old man sways a little. Jinendra supports him to a stool

ABD AL LATIF

Goodness. All that jumping around certainly takes it out of you.

JINENDRA

That's jetlag

ABD AL LATIF

Another of your strange words. Whatever it means, I need a nap now.

Abd al Latif gets up to go to his rope frame bed but sways again. Jinendra helps him over. Abd al Latif lays down, then holds Jinendra's hand for a moment

ABD AL LATIF

You cannot imagine how much this means to me. Thank you.

He closes his eyes and almost immediately starts snoring.

Jinendra pulls the blanket over Abd al Latif and then looks at the lamp on the shelf. He goes over, tries to take it. There is a discharge and Jinendra reels back. He shakes his hand and mutters a curse.

Resigned he looks for a place to sleep. Finally he curls up next to Abd al Latif's bed, slipping some of Abd al Latif's blanket over himself.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - MORNING

Jinendra wakes up. Abd al Latif's blanket is covering him fully. He looks around. The rope bed is empty. Jinendra gets up.

EXT. PALM GROVE - DAY

Jinendra comes out of Abd al Latif's hut, yawns, moves sore muscles and groans. He straightens, stops, looks around.

Somebody is CRYING. Jinendra walks towards the sound and finds Najla sitting under a date tree, crying bitterly. Jinendra frowns, withdraws a few steps. Stops. Finally he sighs, goes to Najla, hunkers down beside her.

JINENDRA

What's the matter, Najla?

Najla hiccups something unintelligible and holds out her horse.

Jinendra takes the horse, turns it over. It lacks a front leg

JINENDRA

Oh... I see. Maybe it can be repaired. Where is the leg?

Najla cries harder and shakes her head.

JINENDRA

You've lost it?

Najla nods. Jinendra turns the horse over and over and scratches his chin.

JINENDRA

Tell you what, Najla. I'll get you a new horse, with a real saddle with tassels all in gold.

Najla snatches her horse back. Through her sobs she manages

NAJLA

I don't want another horse. Papa made it for me. And now it's broken!

Jinendra sighs. Rafiqua passes by with a pot. He gives her a helpless look but she just smiles at Jinendra. Jinendra bites his lips then leans forward and cleans Najla's tears away awkwardly.

JINENDRA

Don't cry, Najla. I will try to mend it. Maybe I can make a new leg for your horse.

Najla's sobs still and she holds out her horse to Jinendra. He takes it.

Jinendra sits under the date tree, whittling away at a piece of wood. He measures it against the horse - the leg is too long. He continues whittling, measures again - the leg is too short. He makes a new start, measures again, the leg looks all crooked.

Jinendra sighs and rubs his eyes. He drops the leg, looks up and sees Najla watching him with a trusting expression. He smiles weakly and takes another bit of wood.

EXT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - MORNING

Jinendra sketches on a piece of parchment, Abd al Latif looking over his shoulder.

Najla comes running into the hut, clutching her horse. It has again four legs, mane and tail are restored and it is newly painted.

Najla throws her arms around Jinendra's neck and hugs him, then turns to Abd al Latif.

NAJLA

Look. My horse looks like when papa made it for me!

Abd al Latif admires it duly. Jinendra bites his lips and turns his face away. Najla gives Jinendra another hug then holds out her hand. Jinendra takes what she is offering him. Najla runs out again. Jinendra looks at his hand. A small, polished pebble with an interesting patten is nestled in his palm.

ABD AL LATIF

You've made Najla very happy. That's her lucky stone. So why the dissatisfied face?

JINENDRA

Because I cheated. I've tried and tried. It just wouldn't look right! Finally I went to a toymaker!

ABD AL LATIF

Well, that's what toy makers are for.
Najla doesn't care whether you did it yourself or somebody else. For her the horse is all that counts.

JINENDRA

But I couldn't do it.

ABD AL LATIF

You're not used to failure, are you? Well, there will always be somebody better than you in whatever you do. But that is of no importance as long as you always give your best. You don't need to measure up to others. Only to yourself.

Jinendra shakes his head. Abd al Latif pats him on the shoulder and goes outside.

EXT. OASIS - DAY

Jinendra hands Masood a roll of string.

JINENDRA

Move over there and when I say you start running.

Masood walks away from Jinendra. Jinendra holds up the kite

JINENDRA

Run!

Masood starts running. The kite rises up into the air. Masood laughs and then plays out the string. Najla runs after Masood

ABD AL LATIF

Jinendra?

Jinendra turns to Abd al Latif. The old man watches Masood and Najla for a moment then turns to Jinendra

ABD AL LATIF

I need to talk to you, Jinendra.

Abd al Latif sits down in the sand and pats the spot next to him. Jinendra sits and looks questioningly at Abd al Latif.

ABD AL LATIF

I promised you to find a way to free you from your curse, but I've failed. Now the only thing I can think of is to hide the lamp.

Jinendra frowns a little

ABD AL LATIF

We need to do it soon. I can feel my time running out.

Jinendra scrambles to his feet

JINENDRA

What are you saying there?

ABD AL LATIF

I feel death is approaching.

JINENDRA

What rubbish. You won't die yet!

ABD AL LATIF

Dear boy. That's not ours to decide. But there's no reason to fear death.

Jinendra shakes his head in denial. Abd al Latif takes his hand

ABD AL LATIF

Don't be sad

Jinendra snatches his hand away

JINENDRA

Everybody leaves, eventually. It doesn't matter.

ABD AL LATIF

You shouldn't fear love either.

Jinendra breaks off a dry branch and begins to strip it of its twigs.

JINENDRA

Love is a weakness. My father taught me to be strong.

ABD AL LATIF

To love is no weakness. It needs a strong heart and an unselfish one. True love never asks anything in return.

Abd al Latif watches Jinendra tear another twig off and snap it in two between his fingers.

ABD AL LATIF

To deny love is not a sign of strength. It's the security the faint hearted gains behind the walls of a prison. That's what your father taught you.

Jinendra whirls around

JINENDRA

You know nothing about my father!

ABD AL LATIF

Maybe not. But I have come to know you.

(beat)

So tell me, what did your mother teach you?

Jinendra freezes. The branch in his hands snaps. Jinendra looks at the pieces then at Abd al Latif. He throws the pieces at Abd al Latif's feet

JINENDRA

(flatly)

My mother wasn't there to teach me anything.

He disappears

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

Jinendra stands on top of a snow blown mountain. The wind whips around him, ice crystals hang on his eyelashes like frozen tears.

Jinendra leans against the wind above the abyss. He opens his mouth and screams against the howling of the wind.

He screams until there is no air left in his lungs. He falls forward on his knees and looks down into the abyss, sucking in air. The abyss seems to beckon.

A moment everything hangs in the balance, then there is a spark on Jinendra's collar. Jinendra jerks back and disappears.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S - EVENING

Ahmed holds the lamp raised above his head dramatically. Jinendra appears.

AHMED

Tataa. There he is, Fatma. You see?
It was no hashish dream!

JINENDRA

You? What...
(looks around)
Where is Abd al Latif?

From the darkness FATMA emerges. She would be comely except for the sour expression on her face.

FATMA

Once in your life luck is smiling on you, but you have no idea how to make use of it. Give me that lamp!

Ahmed looks rebellious and clutches the lamp against his chest.

ABD AL LATIF (O.S)

Good evening. What brings you here?

They all turn to see Abd al Latif enter. The old man smiles then sees the lamp in Ahmed's hand and frowns.

Fatma snatches the lamp from Ahmed's grip. Two steps bring her to Abd al Latif. She gets hold of the old man from behind, slaps her free hand on his mouth before he can shout.

JINENDRA

What are you doing?

He starts forward. Fatma points the lamp at him, Jinendra rebounds, flies backwards and slaps into the wall. Parchments rain down around him.

FATMA

You! You will not speak unless
ordered by me!

(as an afterthought)

Or Ahmed.

Abd al Latif struggles feebly in Fatma's grip. The tall woman has no problem controlling the old man. She looks at him, then at Jinendra on the floor.

FATMA

Bring this old man to some desolate
spot and kill him there. And then
you come back and take his family
away as well. I don't want anybody
to know about the lamp.

Jinendra shakes his head in shock, opens his mouth but he cannot speak. There is a strong discharge from the collar. Jinendra stumbles up, across the room. He gets hold of Abd al Latif and disappears with the old man.

EXT. WINDSWEPT CLIFF - EVENING

Jinendra and Abd al Latif appear. Jinendra releases the old man and steps away. Abd al Latif takes in the desolate coast then he turns to Jinendra and spreads his arms a little.

ABD AL LATIF

Don't worry. I am ready.

Jinendra tries to say something, makes a face, shakes his head, then bends down to touch the soil next to Abd al Latif's feet then his heart. He disappears. A moment later he reappears with Rafiqua, asleep, then with Masood and Najla. He mouths 'I'm sorry' and is gone.

INT. AHMED'S HUT - MORNING

Fatma stands in the middle of the room, tapping her foot impatiently, the lamp in her hands. Ahmed almost dances around her in his eagerness to get his hands on the lamp.

AHMED

You should give it to me. I found it.

FATMA

Give it to you? What a waste that would be. You have no vision.

Jinendra appears with a basket of food. Ahmed immediately starts gobbling but Fatma looks at it distainfully.

FATMA

There. What did I say. So easily satisfied.
Jinn. I want what they're eating at the palace!

Jinendra turns to Ahmed, shaking his head.

AHMED

Fatma. He can't magic food.

Fatma pushes Ahmed out of the way and looks at Jinendra

FATMA

Jinn, you will get me what I want.
By fair means or foul!

Jinendra disappears.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A. The palace. A tray disappears from the middle of the table. At the cottage Jinendra offers the tray with delicacies to Fatma. Fatma turns her back at them.

B. Jinendra steals a dress from a cloth merchant. At the cottage Fatma scoffs at it

C. Around the town pillows, carpets, furniture disappear to reappear in Fatma's room. In the end Fatma sits in a pile of precious things looking annoyed.

Jinendra huddles in a dark corner of the hut, covering his ears with his hands. He looks quite bedraggled.

Fatma eyes the helter-skelter array of things with dissatisfaction

FATMA

What good are all these things in a hovel like this! I want a proper palace!

Jinendra clutches his head a moment then snips his fingers and disappears.

Ahmed sidles up to his wife

AHMED

Don't you think we should be a little more careful? Maybe we could go somewhere else where nobody is going to ask questions.

FATMA

Gobbledygook! We tell them we've inherited. You'll see, everybody wants to be friends with such affluent people. What use is all that to me if my 'friends' won't be there to envy me!

(looking around)

So. Where is that lazy Jinn!

She snatches the lamp up

FATMA

Jinn!

Jinendra appears in mid run and stumbles to a stop. He turns resignedly to Fatma who smiles thinly

FATMA

There's an old palace up in the hills. People say it's haunted, for everybody who goes too close to it disappears or is found dead.

AHMED

You can't be serious! The place is cursed. We would all die within the night!

FATMA

I don't think so. A Jinn ought to be able to get rid of a few spooks. So get off your lazy butt. I want that palace by tomorrow.

EXT. HILLS ABOVE THE TOWN - NIGHT

Jinendra leans against a palm tree and looks at the palace on the hill. The place looks deserted but not in ruins.

As he studies it there is a sudden eerie greenish glow above the building.

Jinendra turns invisible and enters the palace. He passes a guard, dozing in a niche and finally reaches the central court. A fire burns close to the entrance. A scruffy man throws a handful of powder into the flames. They flare up green.

On another fire in the centre of the yard a carcass turns on a spit.

About eight men lounge around the fire, dressed in precious but scruffy clothes, armed to the teeth with knives and sabres. Bundles, crates, chests and cloth rolls are stacked all around.

One outlaw, Ibrahim, pokes a knife into a cage. A small, black monkey screams and jumps around in the small cage.

The heavy set, swarthy CHIEF of the outlaws gives Ibrahim a ding around the ears.

CHIEF

Stop pestering it, Ibrahim! It's supposed to come back once it has opened the windows. That's not going to happen if you keep harrying it.

Ibrahim gives the Chief a dark look but puts the cage away.

By the fire a ladle disappears. Moments later an outlaw yelps and jumps. The men look at him, he turns around in confusion. Another man shouts then a third man jumps up and dances around, shaking his hand wildly. Within moments the men around the fire are on their feet, shouting at each other, drawing their sabres and looking around wildly.

The monkey's cage vanishes.

Monkey appears out of mid-air, smacks into the face of its tormentor and bites him. Ibrahim screams, Monkey jumps down and scuttles away.

CHIEF

Calm down you lot! Stop screaming like virgins!

But the men are quite unnerved as stuff materialises out of mid-air and smacks into them. The chief grabs a man by the collar and shakes him

CHIEF

What are you afraid of, you yellow livered son of a dog?!

He swipes a pillow away with his sabre

CHIEF

A bit of pillow fighting?

A ripe peach appears and flies at the Chief's face. He skewers it with his sabre.

A sabre levitates up from the ground and takes a stab at the Chief.

The Chief is no coward and fights the sword and soon looks like winning. He takes a swipe. Blood stains the sabre and blood drops appear on the ground.

CHIEF

Haaah! Whatever this is, it bleeds, so it can die!

The 'magic' sabre drops to the ground. The Chief crouches and turns, waves his sabre a little.

The men watch from a safe distance. Finally the Chief relaxes... and his sabre jerks up and flies from his hand. There is a "WHACK" and a bloody hand print appears on the Chief's cheek.

The outlaws turn tail and run. The chief looks around wildly. Another peach appears and smacks into his chest. The Chief withdraws after his men.

Jinendra appears, a piece of cloth pressed against his chest and stumbles towards a box. He sits down heavily and then pulls the pad away. He touches the wound on his chest, looks scared

From the darkness Monkey comes trotting. It sits down in front of Jinendra. Jinendra tries to speak, gives up, makes shooing off motions with his hands. Monkey jumps onto the box and holds out a hand. Jinendra leans away

He snatches a fruit from the ground and throws it at Monkey. It catches it and eats it.

Jinendra looks around at the palace and sighs.

TRANSITION

INT. YARD PALACE- MORNING

FATMA

Do you really expect me to live here? Get it cleaned first!

Fatma puts her arms akimbo and turns around herself. Ahmed rummages through the goods, cracks open boxes and rips into bales.

AHMED

Spices! Silks! Silver vessels! This is a treasure trove!

Monkey chatters from a perch down at Fatma. She frowns

FATMA

What's that filthy beast? Jinendra. Get rid of it. And then start cleaning this goatshed!

LATER

Jinendra stumbles and leans against the wall, limp with exhaustion

Fatma looks around the yard. It has been cleaned up, water gushes in the fountain, lamps adorn it, giving it back its former glory.

FATMA

Some improvement. But there's still a lot to do.

Jinendra tries to speak, chokes. Fatma notices it

FATMA

Speak

JINENDRA

Give me a break, Fatma! I haven't had any rest for 36 hours. I've done everything possible in one day.

FATMA

Very well. Rest.

Jinendra watches her disappear before he allows his exhaustion to take over. He practically collapses onto a bench against a

wall and rubs his grubby face. Monkey scampers down from the roof and clambers onto Jinendra's shoulder. He looks at it for a moment, then smiles evilly.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Jinendra, dressed in a clean kaftan and sirwaal walks towards the well.

A gaggle of women draw water and gossip there. GHAZAL elbows AZZAH and then smiles at Jinendra.

AZZAH

That's Fatma's slave!

GHAZAL

I know. Is he any less handsome for that, Azzah?

They giggle. An older woman, BADRA, hisses

BADRA

Shameless! If your mothers knew!

GHAZAL

You won't tell her, Badra!? Or have your saps already dried up?

Under the tittering of the other women she evades a half-hearted slap from Badra and grins

GHAZAL

He's a strange one.

(pours water into her
pot)

And don't you think it's funny how Ahmed and Fatma's fortunes have changes since he's appeared?

Every head turns to look at Jinendra and then nods.

Jinendra walks towards the women

JINENDRA

Could I beg a drink of you?

The women hiss and turn their heads away. Ghazal takes her pot and pours water into Jinendra's cupped hands.

JINENDRA

Your charity is balm for the wounded
soul of a man. Your eyes are like
thieves in the night, who steal the
treasure of my heart.

Jinendra performs a namaste and walks away. Ghazal sighs and
then yips as Badra pokes her in the ribs. In the distance
Jinendra vanishes.

BADRA

Ghazal! Your shamelessness will be
your undoing!

Another woman, IFTIKAR, pipes up

IFTIKAR

He IS a strange one. How did Fatma
ever get the money to buy him in the
first place?

There is a moment of thoughtful silence

IFTIKAR

You know, I don't believe Ahmed and
Fatma inherited. I've known Fatma
all my life, my mother has know her
family - there was never any money
there.
There's something fishy about all
this!

BEDA

What are you suggesting, Iftikar!
That they stole it?

Beda laughs but the other women shake their heads thoughtfully.

JINENDRA (O.S)

(murmurs)

Good woman

(in a higher pitch)

Well, there certainly have been a
lot of mysterious thefts recently!

The women nod and murmur.

NAJLA

True. Myself am missing a pair of
silver goblets. They disappeared out

of a locked room. My husband swore he hadn't taken them, but I didn't believe him. Maybe I was wrong!

Jinendra appears a little further away and watches as the women discuss heatedly, with many glances and gestures towards the old palace on the hill.

INT. FATMA'S ROOM - DAY

Fatma sits in front of a silver mirror, decking herself with jewellery. Ahmed reclines on soft pillows, balancing a plate of food, stuffing himself.

Fatma throws a necklace into the jewel box

FATMA

Here I have jewels worthy of a queen
and I can't even wear them outside
the house!

She rummages around in the big box. Her hands suddenly hesitate.

FATMA

Jinn!

In the mirror Fatma sees Jinendra materialise behind her.

JINENDRA

What now?!

Fatma raises her hands to her head and places a jewel bedecked cap on her head. Admiring herself in the mirror she catches Jinendra's dismayed expression and smiles evilly.

INT. FATMA'S SLEEPING ROOM - NIGHT

Fatma snores softly, the lamp chained to her belt with a fine chain.

Jinendra hunkers down beside her, Monkey on his shoulder. The animal smacks its lips until Jinendra gives it a date.

JINENDRA

So you want to be queen, no, sultan!
And what's next? Replacing Allah?

Jinendra sets monkey down beside Fatma and gives the animal a skeleton key. It sets to work on the small lock. After a moment it opens with a click, gives the lamp free. Jinendra tries to take it but a spark from it has him withdraw his hand.

Fatma sighs and turns, her hand falls onto the lamp. Monkey flees up onto Jinendra's shoulder. Jinendra holds Monkey close to the lamp.

JINENDRA

Take it. Be a good boy

Hesitantly Monkey plucks at the lamp. Fatma grunts and shifts. Monkey and Jinendra freeze. Fatma withdraws her hand. The lamp free, Jinendra disappears together with Monkey.

INT. CAVE

A huge cavern, lit by a single shaft of light through a crack in the roof.

Jinendra and Monkey appear. Jinendra looks around, nods. He walks to the broken off remains of a drip stone, faintly illuminated by the light. He coaxes Monkey to places the lamp on it, satisfied.

They disappear.

EXT. SOUK - MORNING

Jinendra studies the merchandise of a goldsmith. He stuffs a big golden chain into his kaftan. The goldsmith notices it

GOLDSMITH

Heh! What are you doing?!

Jinendra salutes mockingly and trots off. The goldsmith shouts 'Guards!' and gallops after Jinendra.

They reach the town square. The women are drawing water. Jinendra stops, bows and blows them a kiss, then disappears.

INT. FATMA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra appears and places the golden necklace around the still sleeping Fatma's throat

He disappears as the pounding at the gate wakes Fatma up

INT. GATES - CONTINUOUS

Fatma hurries to the gate. The goldsmith sees the necklace around her throat. Behind him the townspeople press forward.

The guards make ready to break open the gates.

Fatma turns and flees into the yard

FATMA

Jinn!!

Jinendra appears on a terrace and watches as Fatma is chased around the fountain.

FATMA

Jiiiinn!! Help me!

Catching Fatma's eyes Jinendra blows her a kiss and disappears.

EXT. DESOLATE CLIFF - DAY

Jinendra appears on the cliff, looks around. There is nobody in sight.

JINENDRA

Abd al Latif! Abd al Latif!

He searches the cliff

INT. OVERHANG IN THE CLIFF - DAY

Jinendra ducks in under the overhang. Rafiqua looks up. Her face darkens at Jinendra's sight. She looks back down.

Abd al Latif lies on a bed of bracken, eyes closed, breathing shallowly. Masood, Ali and Najla sleep, huddled together on another nest of bracken.

Jinendra kneels down beside Abd al Latif, opposite Rafiqua. Rafiqua looks at him then she slaps him, hard, knocking his head to the side. Jinendra closes his eyes for a moment, then looks back.

JINENDRA

I'm sorry. I had no choice.

Rafiqua presses her lips together then looks down at Abd al Latif.

The old man sighs, opens his eyes, smiles at Jinendra. Jinendra takes the old man's hand, presses it.

JINENDRA

I'm free now. Everything will be alright.

Abd al Latif shakes his head.

ABD AL LATIF

It will be for me.

(sighs)

And you, dear boy, remember. Freedom is the liberty to choose. But some choices are so hard to make that most people like to pretend they have no choice at all.

JINENDRA

I don't understand.

Abd al Latif smiles again and dies.

JINENDRA

Abd al Latif?

Jinendra looks up at Rafiqua. She quickly raises her head but drops it again to hide her tears.

RAFIQUA

Leave.

Jinendra doesn't react.

RAFIQUA

Go away! You have no right to be here.

Jinendra carefully places Abd al Latif's hand on his chest, slowly gets up and leaves.

EXT. OVERHANG - DAY

Jinendra stands, arms dangling, eyes looking empty out onto the sea. His cheek muscles clench and unclench, his breathing is irregular.

RAFIQUA (O.S)

I'm sorry.

Jinendra slowly turns his head to look at Rafiqua.

RAFIQUA

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. Grandfather liked you.

Jinendra quickly closes his eyes, shakes his head faintly. He looks at Rafiqua then turns as she steps forward, into each others arms. Rafiqua starts crying. Jinendra looks into the sky then wipes a single tear away on Rafiqua's hair.

INT. ABD AL LATIF'S HUT - DAY

Jinendra closes a small box, pushes it over to Rafiqua.

JINENDRA

That will be enough for you and the children.

RAFIQUA

Can't you stay?

Jinendra tidies a vial away

JINENDRA

This is not my real life.

RAFIQUA

But, maybe your other life is the dream?

Jinendra hesitates, looks at Rafiqua

JINENDRA

I... I don't think so.

Najla comes in, followed by Masood. She looks from Rafiqua to Jinendra.

NAJLA

Ma?

RAFIQUA

Najla, Masood, Jinendra is going away.

NAJLA

When are you coming back?

JINENDRA

I'm sorry. I'll... I...

Jinendra gives Rafiqua a beseeching look.

RAFIQUA

Jinendra is going on a very very long travel and he won't come back.

NAJLA

Not ever?

RAFIQUA

No, honey. Not ever.

Najla hesitates a moment, then goes to Jinendra, hugs him around the belly, turns away and leaves. Masood looks seriously at Jinendra.

JINENDRA

Take care of your mother, ok?

Masood nods solemnly. Rafiqua kisses Jinendra on the cheek, turns and leaves briskly. Masood follows his mother. The door closes behind them. Jinendra sighs, snips his finger and disappears.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra looks at the lamp on the pedestal for a long time. Finally he takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and hesitantly touches the lamp. There is a flash

INT. JINENDRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jinendra wakes with a start and shoots from his pillow. He looks around, confused.

The ALARMCLOCK RINGS

Jinendra slaps down on it, silencing it. He swings his legs out of bed but then sits a moment, rubs his face. Finally he shakes his head, pads into the bathroom

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Jinendra sits down at the table, looks at the plate with neatly diced fruit, at the glass of juice. He gets up, heads for the kitchen

JINENDRA

Vishal, is there any tea in the house?

Vishal almost drops the knife he is drying.

VISHAL

Tea?! You never drink...

(coughs)

Tea will take a moment, Sir. I'm sorry I didn't think of asking whether you'd prefer something else this morning.

Jinendra raises an eyebrow

JINENDRA

I've been drinking juice for years, without variation. Your attempt at precognition is a bit presumptuous, don't you think, Vishal?

VISHAL

I'm sorry, Sir. Tea will be ready shortly.

He turns away as a wide grin spreads on his face.

Jinendra eyes Vishal's back suspiciously.

INT. LOBBY OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Jinendra walks towards the lift. From the other side Arpana hurries up, rummaging in her bag while walking. In front of the lift she narrowly avoids colliding with Jinendra.

ARPANA

Oops, sorry. Oh Mr. Preeta. Good morning.

The lift arrives, everybody enters. The press is enough to get Jinendra close to Arpana

INT. LIFT - CONTINUOUS

Arpana's rummaging continues. Jinendra, slightly behind her to the left, watches her. He catches a whiff of her perfume, turns his head away. The lift stops, people leave. Jinendra steps a little away as the lift doors close again and it continues up

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jinendra on the phone

JINENDRA

Sir, this is just a momentary weakness in the stock market. People tend to panic.

There is some unpleasant static from the phone. Jinendra frowns, removes the receiver a little. Once the shouting is over he puts it back

JINENDRA

I don't think that would be sending the right signal, Sir.

(statics)

Sir, that's a short term strategy
that will not pay out in the long
run!

More barking then abrupt silence.

JINENDRA

And a good morning to you, sir!

He carefully replaces the receiver and presses the bridge of his nose. He starts typing rapidly but soon his typing slows. He frowns a little, shakes his head, returns to typing.

Finally he pushes himself away from the desk, walks to the window, looks down at the bustling city. After a moment he crosses the room, opens a hidden wardrobe, checks in the mirror his chest. There is a faint red line running across it. He looks a long time at it, then buttons his shirt with a shake of his head.

He sits back down at his desk, opens drawers, raises files finally gets up to a filing cabinet. Nothing

He walks to the door, opens it, stops.

SHEELA (O.S)

Arpana's sister is in regress again
and needs more expensive medication.
I don't know how Arpana does it -
working all day, caring for a child
that's not her own, and then her
sister.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Coelho 'hm's and 'tsktsktsks' while she shuffles through a pile of paper. Sheela leans a little closer

SHEELA

Don't get me wrong, but that sister
of hers doesn't have a grateful bone
in her body! Ok, so she's got some
reason. I'd be angry too if my
husband dropped me just because I
got sick. But it's as if she minds
everything that Arpana does for her.

Mrs. Coelho puts the papers into an envelope.

MRS. COELHO

There you are.

(pointedly)

Mrs. Neelam must be waiting for them.

SHEELA

Yes. I better run now.

Sheela takes the envelope and hurries out.

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra stands inside the door with a faraway expression. Finally he blinks and opens the door fully.

JINENDRA

Mrs. Coelho. I can't find the Malhotra file.

Mrs. Coelho quickly pulls a file from a stack on her desk.

MRS. COELHO

It's here, Sir. I'm sorry, Sir. I forgot to -

Jinendra takes the file, smiles at Mrs. Coelho.

JINENDRA

No problem. Thank you

He returns into his office. Mrs. Coelho looks after him, flabbergasted.

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Jinendra picks up the phone

JINENDRA

Mehra. I'm waiting for the stats.

MEHRA (FILTERED)

We've just finished them. I'll have them sent directly.

JINENDRA

Your new assistant - let her bring them. I'd like to, hm, hear what she has to tell me about them.

Jinendra replaces the receiver, folds his fingers together, twiddles his thumbs, notices the gesture and picks up a file, opens it, closes it again, shuffles it away.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Arpana hurries in.

ARPANA

Mr. Preeta wants the statistics

Mrs. Coelho presses the intercom.

MRS. COELHO

Sir, Arpana is here.

There's some UNINTELLIGIBLE NOISE from the intercom. Mrs. Coelho nods to Arpana. Arpana takes a deep breath, knocks at the door.

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Arpana enters. Jinendra continues to type a few more words then he looks up, gets up, points to a table and walks over.

Arpana follows, sits down on the indicated chair, Jinendra sits over edge.

JINENDRA

Show me your calculations

Arpana opens the file, spreads out a few sheets.

ARPANA

We've worked with three different parameters. On this chart here you can see the elaborated curves if we just change one parameter.

Jinendra looks a moment at the chart, follows Arpana's finger as she points out the intersection. His eyes travel up her arm, fix a moment on her lips. He extends his hand, pulls a pin from Arpana's hair knot. The hair cascades down her back. She stops, looks at him. He pushes a loose strand back behind her ear. Her lips open slightly as he leans a little forward.

ARPANA

Do you agree?

Jinendra jerks back out of his daydream. Arpana, hair still in a knot, looks at him expectantly.

Jinendra throws a slightly panicky look at the tables and chart then smiles, and shuffles everything together.

JINENDRA

I'll have (coughs) I'll have to look at it a bit more carefully. But your calculations look promising.

Arpana nods, waits.

ARPANA

Do you have any questions?

JINENDRA

What? No. Yes. What do you do in the evening?

ARPANA

Sorry?

Jinendra looks surprised at his own question, rallies, smiles.

JINENDRA

I was wondering whether you'd be willing to accompany me to an invitation, tonight. A business associate.

Arpana looks surprised, then slightly cautious

JINENDRA

It'd be a chance to network, get to know people.

(hastens to add)

Strictly business.

Arpana hesitates, bites her lips, finally shakes her head.

ARPANA

I'm sorry, I can't.

(apologetic smile)

I've got nothing to wear

Jinendra looks for a moment nonplussed. Brightens.

JINENDRA

I'll give you the afternoon off. Go shopping.

Arpana hesitates, finally takes a breath, squares her shoulders.

ARPANA

When should I be ready?

JINENDRA

My driver will pick you up at eight.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Arpana hurries across the room, heads for Sheela's cubicle, grabs her and drags her out of the office

INT. FEMALE POWDER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arpana pushes Sheela into the room. Sheela turns.

SHEELA

What's the matter with you?!

ARPANA

I need your help! I've got to get a dress. For tonight! And I don't know what to buy, where to buy and how to pay for it!

SHEELA

You're going out? Who with?

Arpana entwines her fingers a moment, takes a breath.

ARPANA

With Mr. Preeta.

Sheela blinks a moment then squeaks

SHEELA

With Iceman?

Arpana puts her hand on Sheela's mouth to stifle her excited exclamations.

ARPANA

It's a business dinner! It's a chance for me to make contacts so I need something... well, I don't know!

Sheela looks at Arpana then starts grinning.

SHEELA

Don't worry. You'll blow them away.

EXT. MERIOTTS - EVENING

Arpana gets out of the car, looks around. She wears a dress that manages to be stunningly sexy and sever at the same time.

Jinendra comes around the car. For a moment they look at each other, Arpana somewhat out of her depth, Jinendra unsure what to say. Finally he smiles and extends his arm

JINENDRA

Shall we go in?

SONG

SERIES OF SHOTS

Arpana and Jinendra enter the banquet hall, greet people. Several female heads turn, eyebrows raise, heads bob together and watch Jinendra escort Arpana to a table.

They circulate

The older generation of gentlemen shows courteous. Arpana smiles, answers, causes smiles and chuckles.

The younger generation of gentlemen starts to stalk their prey. A young man manages to isolate Arpana from Jinendra. She listens while her eyes seek out Jinendra.

Another young man appears, claims Arpana's attention. Arpana smiles, nods, entertains but keeps the men at bay. Jinendra appears, escorts her to a table of four already occupied by an elderly couple.

The atmosphere is light. Arpana and the elderly couple chat, Jinendra watches, talks occasionally. With time he opens up. A remark of him causes general laughter. There is a fleeting grin on his face. Arpana looks at him as if seeing him for the first time.

They dance.

They go home.

Arpana gets out of the car, darts back to get her purse, hurries to the door, looks back. The car is already driving away. Arpana looks a moment after the car, gives a shake and a faint smile. Goes in.

Undresses, hangs the dress on a coat hanger, hangs it way back into her wardrobe. The shoes go in under it. Arpana closes the

wardrobe slowly then with a final decisive push. Cinderella's party is over.

INT. JINENDRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jinendra walks in, whistling off key. He walks past the bookshelf, stops. He takes his mother's picture out, looks at it. With the picture in hand he walks into his sleeping room.

SLEEPING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He heads for the wardrobe, takes the box out, sits on the bed, takes the letter addressed to him out of the box. He turns it a moment, then slits it open with his thumb.

He hesitates, then takes out the letter, unfolds it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

An older Sangeeta sits at a table, writing. She stops, takes a small photograph of a smiling boy, looks at it, sighs and smiles sadly

SANGEETA (V.O)

My dear Son

I know I have long ago lost the right to call you so.

Sangeeta looks through her mail hopefully, then sits down in disappointment.

I am writing despite the knowledge that this letter will probably never reach you. To all the letters I sent over the years your father answered not even once.

A young Sangeeta kicks over the bowl of rice and enters the house. Her husband smiles at her.

Your father had a right to be angry with me. I hurt him. But I don't think he ever understood the reason for it.

I deserted you at a time when you needed me most. I thought I did the best for all of us then.

Sangeeta pregnant. Her husband looks thrilled

Your father loved me very much.

Too much maybe.

Sangeeta with her baby on her arms. Her husband looks proud.

When you were born he was very happy

Sangeeta's husband takes the baby from her arms and hands it to a nurse. Sangeeta looks after her child as the nurse leaves the room. Her husband tries to seduce her, but she responds coldly

But as time went on he seemed to
mind the time I spent with you and
wanted others to care for you.

The husband grows angry

But you were my child. What else
should I do at home if not play with
you, care for you, love you, while
your father was away, making more
and more money?

A small boy cries as husband and wife quarrel. Sangeeta picks up her distressed son. The child holds on tight to her neck.

We had fights over you. The more I
loved you, the more harshly your
father seemed to treat you.
The tension caused you to suffer
too.

The husband forcibly takes the boy from her arms and hands him back to the nurse. The boy reaches for his mother, crying.

You started to have nightmares, and
didn't want to go outside again.

A slightly older boy watches his mother cry from the cover of a blanket.

You lost your laughter... and I felt
it was because of the tension
between me and your father.

Sangeeta stands on a bridge, looks down, suddenly topples over.

I felt it was my fault and in a dark
moment my despair was such that I
tried to make an end to myself.

A priest pulls her from the sea.

By the grace of God I failed in my endeavour, but after that I was barred from returning back to my husband and my child.

Old Sangeeta sighs and returns to writing. She finishes the letter, puts it into the envelope, writes the address. She hesitates, takes the letter out, crumbles up the envelope. Hesitates again and puts it into another envelope, closes it with determination.

My dear Son, I would like to explain more fully to you, so that you might at least understand, if not forgive me.

Give me just one chance to talk to you, face to face. You may then decide to strike me from your life again.

At the post office. The letter is stamped and taken away. Sangeeta closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

But that one chance you should give yourself and me.

Your loving

Mother

INT. JINENDRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jinendra looks into the void while he mechanically folds the letter. Finally he looks at the envelope. There is an address on it.

He puts the letter back into the box and returns it to its place on the shelf in the wardrobe.

INT. JINENDRA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Vishal places the last slice of mango on the plate. Jinendra pokes his head in.

JINENDRA

Vishal. My mother. Did you see her lately?

The slippery slice escapes and slithers across the table. Vishal catches it.

VISHAL

Your mother? No sir. She hasn't returned since she sent you the lamp.

JINENDRA

In that case call the office. I'll be late. Ask Mrs. Coelho to reschedule my morning appointments.

He walks out, leaving a flabbergasted Vishal. After a moment Vishal cleans his hands and goes to the phone in the hall.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - DAY

The driver passes slowly through pedestrians on the road since stalls of merchandise have taken over the sidewalks. He stops, calls out to a passer-by to get directions. He continues, stops again, points to a small break in the house front

DRIVER

Through there. Sir, do you really want to go there alone?

Jinendra gets out of the car

JINENDRA

You just wait here.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Jinendra enters a space among the houses and looks around. An old man watched him incuriously

JINENDRA

Excuse me. I am looking for Sangeeta
Preeta

The old man spits a stream of red juice onto the ground

OLD MAN

Sangeeta? The Sangeeta who lived with the Pradeeps? She isn't here anymore.

JINENDRA

And were is she now?

OLD MAN

Kavita might know. That's her over there.

A woman is scrubbing vessels in a bucket. Jinendra walks over, talks to her. She looks up, shakes her head.

Jinendra asks some more, Kavita shakes her head with more emphasis. Jinendra thanks her and leaves, walking a bit more stiffly than before.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jinendra at his desk, takes the letter from its envelope, scans it, then crumbles it up and fires it into the waste-paper basket.

He gets up, walks to the window and stares unseeingly out

INT. ARPANA'S CUBICLE - AFTERNOON

Sheela huddles in Arpana's cubicle. She peers over the partition to check for observers then dives down again

SHEELA

He really did?

Arpana nods. Sheela giggles

ARPANA

He's quite charming when he loosens up

SHEELA

Oh! What's that? Your softening!
What about him being a jerk?

ARPANA

First impression can be wrong. But you're going on and on. It was just a business dinner.

Arpana checks her watch (16:12) just as the phone on her desk rings.

MRS. COELHO (FILTERED)

Mr. Preeta wants to see you.

Arpana gives the receiver a surprised look. Sheela mouths to Arpana 'Just a business dinner?'. Arpana scowls at her.

ARPANA

Now?

(checks watch again)
Very well... I'll be right there.

Arpana replaces the receiver, then roots around for her cell phone in her bag. She dials and listens to the ring tone, finally sighs and disconnects.

ARPANA

I hope he's not taking too long. I promised Rani to go to the beach with her.

INT. JINENDRA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Arpana and Jinendra sit at the table again.

JINENDRA

I think you could take over that project.

ARPANA

Sounds interesting.

JINENDRA

I'd like you to present me with a draft as soon as possible

Arpana checks her watch furtively. Jinendra notices

JINENDRA

Is something the matter? You seem a little distracted.

ARPANA

I'm sorry. I think we've discussed everything or is there anything else?

Jinendra frowns a little, then shakes his head.

JINENDRA

We've covered the basics. But what's the hurry? I thought we could discuss the finer details over dinner.

Arpana looks a moment surprised then uneasy.

ARPANA

Rani is waiting for me. I promised her to go with her to Juhu Beach.

Jinendra looks a moment annoyed then shrugs his shoulders

JINENDRA

Call that you'll be later.

ARPANA

No. She's been looking forward to it for days. I cannot disappoint her again.

JINENDRA

Children will have to learn that things are not always going their way.

Arpana gets up, collects the scattered papers on the table.

ARPANA

And adults must know that a promise is a promise. Rani is only a child. But I take her serious enough to break a promise only in an emergency. This one isn't.

Arpana walks towards the door, turns

ARPANA

You'll get an initial plan of action by day after tomorrow.

Jinendra watches Arpana leave with a mixture of anger and surprise. He sits back at his desk, tries to work some more. Finally he closes his laptop decisively. He grabs his jacket.

EXT. NEAR RAMADA HOTEL - EVENING

Jinendra's car stops in front of the snack stalls. Jinendra gets out, leaving his jacket and briefcase inside. Leans back in to the driver

JINENDRA

I won't need you any more tonight.

The car drives off

Jinendra looks around at the bustling stalls of bhel puri vendors, the people thronging around the stalls. He pushes his way through the crowd and towards the steps down to the beach.

He stands, watching. Wherever he seems to look there are couples walking, talking. Jinendra looks lost among all those fun seekers and his white shirt stands out like a beacon.

Jinendra shakes his head, turns to walk back up to the road, then hesitates at a bhel puri stall. Finally he orders bhel puri.

As he waits Rani steps next to him. She looks fixedly at him, with a small frown.

Jinendra pays, turns to leave and notices Rani. He blinks a moment, unable to place her then recognizes her, smiles

Rani continues to frown at him. Jinendra's smile falters, he looks away from the girl, scanning the crowd. Arpana appears behind him.

ARPANA

There you are, Rani! I told you to stay with me! I was already getting worried!

Arpana suddenly notices Rani's look, then Jinendra.

ARPANA

Mr. Preeta! I'm sorry, I didn't notice you.

Rani still fixes Jinendra. Arpana bends down, whispers

ARPANA

Stop that. It's impolite to stare at people.

Rani looks at Arpana

RANI

That's the Jinn.

Arpana looks puzzled, Jinendra a moment shocked.

ARPANA

I'm sorry, sir. It's your name.

(to Rani)

You're hungry. What do you want to eat?

Rani smiles at Jinendra. Arpana orders bhel puri, hands Rani a paper plate.

ARPANA

Good evening, sir.

Arpana tries to hustle Rani down to the beach, but the little girl turns around, smiles at Jinendra and says

RANI

You can eat with us. We have a mat to sit on.

ARPANA

Rani. I'm sure Mr. Preeta doesn't want to eat with us. He's a busy man.

JINENDRA

Not too busy to accept the invitation of such a charming lady.

Rani giggles and runs ahead, down to the beach.

LATER

Arpana rolls up the mat. Rani chases the lazy waves at the waterline.

JINENDRA

I don't know when I've last eaten bhel puri. I'm not even sure I ever ate them. I enjoyed it.

Rani comes running up.

RANI

Come, walk with us along the beach.

She skips ahead. Arpana looks at Jinendra. There is an expression of great loneliness in his eyes. Arpana smiles

ARPANA

Well, if you want to chase after a will-o'-wisp then you're welcome.

Jinendra and Arpana follow Rani along the beach. The little girl chases around them, splashes through the waves.

JINENDRA

Is she always like this?

ARPANA

Yes. She's a proper whirlwind. Always chasing after the wind. One day she...(fade out)

EXT. ARPANA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Arpana stops, looks at Jinendra

ARPANA

Well... here we are.

JINENDRA

Yes

Awkward pause

ARPANA

I better go in

JINENDRA

Okay

Arpana digs for the key to the door. Rani skips up, stops in front of Jinendra.

RANI

Here. That's for you.

Jinendra automatically takes what she is offering him. Arpana opens the door, enters, turns

ARPANA

Come on, Rani. Good night Mr. Preeti.

Jinendra opens his palm, looks at the polished, colourful pebble in his hand then at Rani. She smiles then runs inside.

In the dark hallway

SANGEEETA

Arpana? You're late.

Jinendra turns to look just as the door closes. He hesitates a moment then looks at the pebble, puts it into his pocket.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Jinendra enters, wearing jeans and a white shirt with open collar and rolled up sleeves.

Vishal almost drops the teapot at the sight. Jinendra raises an eyebrow at Vishal who pretends that all is as usual.

Jinendra takes his cell phone and calls

JINENDRA

Mrs. Coelho? Please cancel all meetings today. I won't be coming in.

MRS. COELHO (FILTERED)

Not coming in? What did the doctor say? Is it serious?

JINENDRA

Doctor? What doctor?

MRS. COELHO (FILTERED)

You didn't call a doctor? Sir, I'll immediately ring one up for you.

JINENDRA

Mrs. Coelho! Calm down. Why should I need a doctor?

MRS. COELHO (FILTERED)

Sir! If you won't come to the office you must be seriously ill.

JINENDRA

Thank you for your concern, Mrs. Coelho, but I'm not ill. I just need time to attend to some personal matters.

Jinendra disconnected.

INT. BUS - MORNING

Mrs. Coelho snaps her cell close. To the world in general

MRS. COELHO

He doesn't come to work and he thinks he's not ill?

EXT. JINENDRA'S APARTMENT HOUSE - MORNING

The driver stands beside the car, throws the keys from hand to hand. He checks the watch, then returns to his jiggling.

Jinendra appears, passes the driver and snatches the keys out of the air, gets in on the driver's side. Through the window.

JINENDRA

Take the day off. I'm driving myself.

The driver watches him drive off, perplexed.

INT. ARPANA'S OFFICE - DAY

Arpana sits at her computer looking at nothing. Sheela appears behind her, looks for a moment then coughs. Arpana jerks out of her absent-mindedness.

SHEELA

Problems?

ARPANA

What? No. Why?

SHEELA

You seem preoccupied with something.

ARPANA

It's nothing.

SHEELA

Well, what did Iceman want yesterday?

Arpana suddenly starts typing furiously on her keyboard.

ARPANA

Erm, sorry. I'll tell you later. I really don't have time now.

Sheela raises an eyebrow but then shrugs.

SHEELA

Okay, later then.

Arpana gives her a weak smile.

EXT. ARPANA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jinendra stops the car, waits. He drums his fingers, checks his watch, returns to drumming his fingers on the steering wheel.

Sangeeta comes out of the house, Rani skipping beside her, swinging a bag. They head down the road.

Jinendra gets out of the car, follows. He watches Sangeeta buy groceries, Rani carrying part of the purchases in her bag.

They return home.

Jinendra takes up position across the road in front of a food stall. He buys two samosas and waits, eating.

After some time he changes position as the stall owner starts to give him strange looks.

Sangeeta and Rani come out again. Jinendra casually crosses the road and follows them.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

Jinendra watches Sangeeta head for a bench, sit next to another elderly matron. They begin to chat, obviously no strangers to each other.

Rani skips off to a group of children at play

Jinendra rubs his palms dry on his pants, then enters the playground as if it was enemy territory.

In front of Sangeeta's bench he stops. Sangeeta gives him a passing glance then stops in mid sentence. She turns to face him fully. Her hand flies to her mouth.

Beside her the other woman looks a moment from one to the other, then she collects her bag and leaves, discreetly.

Sangeeta gets up slowly.

Song

MALE SINGER

There she is, what am I going to say?

FEMALE SINGER

here he is, what to say?

TOGETHER

How to cross the gap of years

MALE SINGER

I was so angry at you, can you forgive me?

FEMALE SINGER

I was so faint-hearted, can you forgive me?

BOTH

What is this feeling within me? I don't know...

Sangeeta breaks the spell first. She steps forward, raises her hand but drops it again without touching Jinendra

SANGEETA

Jinendra

Jinendra swallows hard, clears his throat. Holds out the crumbled, but carefully folded letter.

JINENDRA

I finally read your letter. I...
I've had it for years, but I only
opened it day before yesterday.

(beat)

I'm sorry. Mother.

Sangeeta's eyes fill with tears but she smiles at the name. Again each is at a loss for words.

SANGEETA

Come. Sit.

They both sit with the polite distance of strangers. Sangeeta twists her fingers together.

SANGEETA

I'd given up hoping.

Jinendra rubs his palms across his thighs

JINENDRA

I went to look for you at the
address on the letter.

SANGEETA

(nods)

I finally left last year.

Another silence.

JINENDRA

Why didn't you come back?

Sangeeta closes her eyes

SANGEETA

Your father wouldn't let me.

Jinendra hesitantly takes Sangeeta's hand.

SANGEETA

He never understood what made me do it. Nor do I, in retrospect. It was a cowardly thing to do.
HE considered it a betrayal.

Sangeeta puts her hand on Jinendra's and looks at him.

SANGEETA

I hope you'll never have reason to regret a moment of cowardice the way I do.

The high voices of the playing children suddenly turn to SCREAMS.

Sangeeta looks up in alarm. In the middle of the group two children are fighting

The guardians rise as one and head for the agitated children. Jinendra follows Sangeeta more slowly.

RANI

You're a liar! Say you're a liar, Rafi!

RAFI

Won't. I'm not! Auauau!

Sangeeta pushes through the watching kids. Rani sits on top of Rafi, pinning his arms with her knees to the ground.

SANGEETA

Rani! What is the meaning of this!

RANI

He said mean things about Ma!

Sangeeta puts her hand on Rani's shoulder

SANGEETA

Leave him, Rani. You're not doing any good by using violence.

The little girl reluctantly gets up. Rafi scrambles to his feet, then sticks his tongue out at her and runs away. Rani makes to go after him.

SANGEETA

Rani.

Rani stops, sulking.

RANI

He says Ma isn't married and everybody knows what that means. I don't know what it means, but Rafi laughed so mean so I hit him.

Sangeeta looks after Rafi.

SANGEETA

Don't hold it against him. He only repeats what stupid adults say and not many know that Arpana is your aunt, taking care of you because your mother is ill.

RANI

Rafi wouldn't dare laughing about Ma if my dad was here! But he didn't want me.

Sangeeta sighs and gives Jinendra a look. She crouches down in front of Rani and wipes a tear from her cheek then hugs her.

SANGEETA

Arpana loves you very much. You know that, Rani. Would you really prefer to live with your father and his new wife?

Rani considers a moment then shakes her head against Sangeeta's neck.

SANGEETA

Well then. And now go and make up with Rafi. It wasn't right to hit him.

Rani nods and walks towards the group of children. The slump to her shoulders soon disappears as she is drawn back into play.

Sangeeta sighs and shakes her head.

SANGEETA

It's not right. Arpana has shouldered the responsibilities of bringing up Rani, and is sacrificing her own happiness for it.

JINENDRA

Rani doesn't seem to be a difficult child.

SANGEETA

I'm talking about Arpana's chances of finding a husband. What man is going to saddle himself with a child that is not even his wife's?

Sangeeta looks at Jinendra expectantly but Jinendra just scuffs the gravel with his shoe. Finally he looks at his mother

JINENDRA

What happens now?

Sangeeta smiles, and points to the bench.

SANGEETA

Let's just talk for now.

LATER

SANGEETA

You were such a reckless little boy! How many times did you graze your knees because you fell in your headlong chase after the wind!

Jinendra shakes his head

JINENDRA

Me? I don't remember that.

SANGEETA

You've changed.

Sudden tears spring into Sangeeta's eyes. Jinendra turns his eyes away in embarrassment and encounters Rani's eyes who look accusingly at him.

RANI

You've made Sangeeta cry!

Sangeeta dries her tears and pulls Rani to her for a hug.

SANGEETA

No need to be angry. I was crying from happiness. You remember I told you about my lost boy? Well, I've found him again.

Look, this is Jinendra, my son.

Rani looks at Jinendra then Sangeeta

RANI

But - he's OLD!

SANGEETA

(laughing)

Yes, darling. He has grown a bit since I saw him last.

Rani considers the matter then brightens.

RANI

He can still play with me, though

SANGEETA

(winks at Jinendra)

He sure can. He used to know many games. I'm sure he still remembers some. Why don't you go and find out?

JINENDRA

Mother. I don't think -

SANGEETA

Exactly. Don't think. Go and play. You've got some catching up to do!

Rani smiles, grabs Jinendra's hand and drags him towards the swings.

RANI

I bet you can't swing higher than me.

Jinendra throws Sangeeta a pleading look. She smiles.

EXT/INT. ARPANA'S HOUSE - DAY

Arpana, at the front door, fishes for the keys in her bag. The cell rings. Juggling keys, bag and phone she opens the door

ARPANA

Yes?

HAMESH (FILTERED)

Hello Arpana. This is Hamesh speaking.

Arpana enters the flat and drops her bag

ARPANA

Hello Hamesh

Rani comes running from the kitchen. Arpana gets down and hugs Rani

ARPANA

No ...you're not disturbing me.
I've just come home.

She listens to Hamesh as she follows Rani into the kitchen. At Jinendra's sight at the kitchen table she stops in her tracks.

Sangeeta, busy preparing dinner, gives Arpana a smile but ignores her questioning look

ARPANA

Sorry? No... I'm still here. The connection broke up for a moment there. Could you repeat that?

INT. SOME BAR - CONTINUOUS

Hamesh looks at a flyer in his hand.

HAMESH

There's a new place up in Bandra. I was wondering, would you like to check it out with me?

Hamesh puts all his puppy dog charm into it

INT. ARPANA'S KITCHEN - INTERCHANGING

Arpana gives Jinendra a false smile and turns her back to him.

ARPANA

Going out with you? Hamesh...

HAMESH

Look. I know you didn't like to play favourites when we were still working together. But the situation is changed now.. C'mon, gimme a chance.

Arpana turns to catch Jinendra listening unashamedly. She scowls at him and walks out into the

HALL - CONTINUOUS

ARPANA

(about to refuse)

I don't know. It's...

Jinendra comes out of the kitchen. Arpana gives him an annoyed look. He waggles his little finger at her and smiles innocently. Arpana points to the bathroom at the end of the hall.

ARPANA

(bright smile)

Hamesh? Sorry. Nono... I think that's a great idea. It's been ages that I've been out. At eight? Ok. Great. See you then

Jinendra closes the door to the bathroom pointedly.

Arpana scowls at the door then stalks back to the kitchen.

ARPANA

(hissing at Sangeeta)

What's HE doing here!?

Sangeeta looks at Arpana, tears welling up again. She hugs Arpana spontaneously, then pulls back and wipes her tears.

SANGEETA

It's Jinendra. My son! My son. And he came to find me!

ARPANA

He? Mr. Preeta? HE is your son?

Sangeeta nods. Arpana looks back out the kitchen with a disbelieving expression

ARPANA

Your son.

(weakly)

Sangeeta I'm very happy for you.

The door of the bathroom goes.

ARPANA

Well, it's a good thing then that I'm going out this evening. That leaves you and your son time to talk

SANGEETA

You're going out? But, you never go out!

Jinendra comes back into the kitchen and leans against the door jamb

ARPANA

He's a colleague from my old job. If I'm going to be on time I better get ready.

She quickly leaves the kitchen. Sangeeta looks disappointed.

LATER

Jinendra, Rani and Sangeeta finish dinner. Rani starts clearing the table. Arpana appears, made up nicely.

ARPANA

I'm going. Rani, I'll be late. You go to bed and no fussing, okay?

RANI

Yes Ma

Arpana leaves. Sangeeta looks at Jinendra. Rani looks at Jinendra. Jinendra looks after Arpana, frown, looks back at Sangeeta

JINENDRA

Mother. I have to go.

Sangeeta nods. As Jinendra hurries out she pulls Rani to her. The two females look at each other then after Jinendra and smile.

EXT. ARPANA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jinendra hurries outside, catches sight of Arpana hailing a tuctuc, runs to his car, follows the tuctuc.

EXT. BAR - EVENING

A throng of people wait under the gaudy neon sign to be admitted into the bar.

Arpana gets out, pays the driver and looks around.

Jinendra slows and watches as a young man detaches himself from the line and hurries towards Arpana. They talk a little then Hamesh nods and he and Arpana head away from the bar.

Jinendra locks the car and follows.

EXT. BANDSTAND - EVENING

Hamesh and Arpana sit in a small European style café.

Jinendra, half hidden by a steady stream of promenading people, leans against the low wall across the street watching Hamesh trying to make headway with Arpana. Arpana laughs. Hamesh puts his hand on Arpana's.

Jinendra frowns, crosses the street.

JINENDRA

Arpana? What are you doing here?
I've been waiting for you at the
little park. Did you mistake our
meeting place?

Pretends to notice Hamesh only now while Arpana is still shocked into silence.

JINENDRA

Oh, hello, I'm Jinendra.

HAMESH

Hi, I'm Hamesh.

JINENDRA

Nice to meet you. You will excuse
us, but I've got a reservation for
dinner. Arpana? Can we go?

Arpana looks a moment speechless then her eyes narrow at Jinendra. Jinendra leans down to her ear

JINENDRA

(whispering)

Do you really want to go out with
him? If you honestly do so, I'll
leave.

Jinendra straightens, waits. Finally Arpana sighs and takes her purse.

ARPANA

I'm sorry, Hamesh. It was a mistake.

Arpana gets up, heads out of the restaurant, across the road, Jinendra on her heels. At the stonewall she stops, turns

ARPANA

You're the most arrogant man I know!

JINENDRA

I'm not arrogant. I'm just... I don't know. I don't know how to do these things normally. I just had to do something!

ARPANA

Well. You've successfully interrupted my date. So what now?

JINENDRA

Let's just find out what the night has to offer.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Jinendra heads for a bar. Arpana shakes her head, pulls him away.

She buys some snacks from a food vendor, offers them to Jinendra. He tries tentatively, finds it tasty. They walk, talk, snack.

Arpana hops across the rocks on the beach, waves at Jinendra to follow. He shakes his head, she goes on. He follows, carefully, then more daring

Arpana takes her shoes off, splashes in the water. Jinendra shakes his head, Arpana rolls her eyes. He finally gives in, wades with rolled up pants, but little enthusiasm. Arpana sighs at him.

Jinendra buys Arpana an ugly plastic rose.

They sit on the promenade wall, drink chai.

Arpana looks across the sea, a crescent moon. Twirls the rose, shakes her head

ARPANA

(Still watching the moon)

You have no idea how to have a good time.

Jinendra turns his head, looks at Arpana. She puts her head back, smiles.

JINENDRA

I'm learning.
(beat)
Will you marry me?

Arpana almost falls off the wall.

INT. ARPANA'S CUBICLE - OFFICE - DAY

Arpana works, humming faintly. The rose is stuck to her computer.

Sheela pokes her head around the partition.

SHEELA

I've heard you hum all morning.
What's the matter?

Arpana gives a secret smile, then turns to Sheela and shrugs.

ARPANA

It's a nice day

Sheela narrows her eyes at Arpana. Finally she shrugs.

SHEELA

I'll find out anyway.

The phone rings. Arpana picks it up.

ARPANA

Sir?

MEHRA (FILTERED)

I've got an urgent job. Mr. Preeta
wants it done by evening.

ARPANA

Yes, sir.

She gives Sheela a frown. Her friend withdraws. Arpana turns to the computer, opens a folder, reads the document. Her happy expression fades. Finally she looks up, anger in her eyes.

INT. ARPANA'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Arpana, Rani, Jinendra and Sangeeta are having dinner. While Jinendra, Rani and Sangeeta enjoy their food Arpana just picks at hers. Sangeeta loads another helping onto Jinendra's plate. He tries to stop her

JINENDRA

As delicious as it is, that's really
enough, mother.

Sangeeta smiles at this.

SANGEETA

I'm sure there is some room left.

RANI

Does he still need to grow?

SANGEETA

Why do you say that?

RANI

You always tell me to eat up because
I need to grow.

Sangeeta and Jinendra laugh. Jinendra pats his belly.

JINENDRA

I'd prefer not to grow, really.

Arpana gives Jinendra an annoyed look and pushes her plate away.

ARPANA

You'll excuse me.

Arpana gets up and leaves the kitchen. Sangeeta frowns, Rani
looks unconcerned, Jinendra puzzled. He looks to his mother for
help. She shrugs. Jinendra gets up, follows Arpana out into the

HALL

Arpana grabs her purse and her keys and heads for the door.
Jinendra follows her.

JINENDRA

Arpana, wait! What's the matter?

EXT. ARPANA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Arpana storms out of the house, Jinendra on her heels. He barely
avoids smacking into the door, squeezes through, out after
Arpana. She tries to slip away in the crowd outside but Jinendra
keeps up with her, finally overtakes her, steps in front of her.
She tries to walk around him but he holds her at the shoulders.

JINENDRA

Arpana! You're angry with me. And I have no idea why!

Arpana steps back to break the contact with him.

ARPANA

You got the papers you asked me for.

Arpana tries to step around him but he stops her again.

JINENDRA

That is the problem? You're angry about an urgent job? I thought I had done something wrong.

Arpana looks at Jinendra, frowns

ARPANA

You ARE doing something wrong. That recalculation. You're going to fire people!

Jinendra grows silent, business like.

JINENDRA

This is no place to discuss business.

ARPANA

Oh yes. It's the best place! Look around. Look at those dirty kids over there! That beggar in the gutter! This is about having a job, some means to feed your kids!

JINENDRA

Firing people is part of the business. You know that as well as I do.

ARPANA

Not this way! You fire them for a bit of short term cosmetics! To calm down the nerves of jittery stockholders.

JINENDRA

Arpana

ARPANA

These are people! Not pebbles in an abacus! What you're proposing to do is not only callous, it's stupid! Where is your responsibility towards your employees?

JINENDRA

Arpana! This is a business. We're meant to make money, not engage in maudlin social theories.

ARPANA

You forget WHO is making your money for you.

JINENDRA

And you are forgetting your place. I may have asked you to marry me. That doesn't give you the right to interfere in my job.

Arpana, shocked, looks at Jinendra as if reassessing him. Shakes her head.

ARPANA

I have a right to ask who the man is who proposes to marry me. I have a right to wonder whether he might dismiss me with as little consideration as he does those who earn his money for him.

She turns away from him. Jinendra catches Arpana by the shoulder. More warmly

JINENDRA

My private life has nothing to do with my business life. Sometimes we have to do things because we just don't have a choice.

ARPANA

There is always a choice. Some choices we're just not prepared to make. I know that firing these people is unnecessary. Don't do it.

JINENDRA

(more intensely)

Arpana. This has nothing to do with you or me.

ARPANA

I can't do an immoral thing at work
and still believe I am a good
person.

JINENDRA

That's nonsense!

ARPANA

Not for me.

Arpana looks at Jinendra, waiting. His expression turns stony.
Arpana sighs.

ARPANA

I'm sorry.

She disengages from him, walks back towards her house. Jinendra
watches, arms hanging.

INT. JINENDRA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jinendra stomps into the room, impatiently pulls his collar
open. In front of the bookshelf he stops. He takes a tumbler,
fills in a liberal dose of Bagpiper. He knocks the drink back,
refills the glass. The picture of his father stares disapproving
at him. He raises the glass in an ironic salute to his father,
downs the drink too. He turns and throws the glass across the
room.

Vishal appears at a run. He notices the stain on the wall, the
glass shards, Jinendra's thunderous expression. Without a word
he goes to the wall and begins to pick up the shards.

Jinendra takes a deep breath then walks out of the room again. A
moment later Vishal looks up at the sound of the FRONT DOOR.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

Jinendra walks rapidly down the road, blind to the people then
crosses after a quick glance at the traffic.

The tuctuc appears out of nowhere, wings him. He rolls across
the road, hits his head against the wall of the walkway.

EXT. RIVERBED - DAY

The white courser clatters across the rocks of the riverbed,
splashes into the water.

ALA'UD'DIN, sword in hand, in the armour of a 15th century general, looks back. Across the river FOUR HORSEMEN reach the river shore.

The courser struggles up the opposite bank, slips on the steep, rocky underground. It goes down, squealing. Ala'ud'din slips his feet out of the stirrups and gets away from the thrashing horse. The animal has broken a leg. Ala'ud'din mutters a curse and continues up the steep slope on foot.

Behind him the pursuers get off their own horses and head after Ala'ud'din. One of the soldiers stops at the injured horse and slashes its throat.

Ala'ud'din continues climbing then disappears around a boulder.

EXT/INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The pursuers pant around the cliff. They stop, look around

FIRST SOLDIER

Where'd he go?

SECOND SOLDIER

There. There's a cave. Ala'ud'din must be in there.

Inside the cave Ala'ud'din steps carefully further back into the darkness.

The THIRD SOLDIER makes a few cautious steps inside then retreats

THIRD SOLDIER

It's too dark inside. No use following

FIRST SOLDIER

Let's block the entrance. That should take care of him

Ala'ud'din grits his teeth at the NOISE OF ROCKS BEING MOVED. He curses as the light from the entrance dims. Finally the NOISE and the VOICES fade away.

Ala'ud'din returns to the entrance. It is barred by a huge boulder. He tries to push it away. It doesn't budge.

Ala'ud'din picks up a little sand and lets it fall. It is blown towards the entrance. Ala'ud'din considers and then heads for the back of the cave.

Darkness. The SOUND OF HESITANT FOOTSTEPS. CURSING.

The outline of tunnel mouth. Ala'ud'din emerges into a huge cavern, lit by a single beam coming through a crack in the roof.

On the broken off drip stone the lamp glitters like one huge jewel.

Ala'ud'din goes over, picks up the lamp. He looks up at the crack in the cavern. It is far above and much too small.

Ala'ud'din picks up the lamp, tips it and listens. He rubs it against his sleeve to clean the rock dust from it.

Bluish smoke starts pouring out of the spout.

Ala'ud'din puts the lamp back on the pedestal and raises his sword as he retreats a cautious step.

Jinendra coalesces out of the smoke with a GROAN. He touches his head, where he bumped it.

JINENDRA

Ouuuw!

He blinks, notices the lamp on the pedestal

JINENDRA

Not again! Will this never end!

(peering into the
dark)

Okay. Where are you?

Ala'ud'din, still in semi-darkness, lightning fast points his sword at Jinendra's throat.

ALA'UD'DIN

Who are you?

Jinendra snaps his fingers and disappears.

JINENDRA (O.S)

Don't do that

He reappears behind Ala'ud'din. Ala'ud'din whirls and points his sword again at Jinendra.

Jinendra sighs

JINENDRA

I'm the Jinn of the lamp, okay? And to cut matters short, I can do just two things - make myself and anything I touch invisible and I can go instantly from one place to another. I can't magic things out of thin air and I can't build palaces in one night. Understood?

Ala'ud'din picks up the lamp. He steps forward, into the light. Jinendra takes in the rich armour, the sword, the dark expression. Ala'ud'din is a younger version of Jinendra's father. Jinendra stares in shock

ALA'UD'DIN

I'm Ala'ud'din, master over ten thousand warriors! You will answer me with due respect!
On your knees, slave!

Jinendra's knees buckle and he falls forward as if hit by a giant fist.

JINENDRA

I hear and obey, Master.

He coughs and slowly looks up. Ala'ud'din considers the lamp, then looks down at Jinendra. He fastens it to his belt

ALA'UD'DIN

You don't seem much of a jinn. But Allah in his mercy has sent you to me in my hour of need.
I was separated from my troupes during battle. I need to get back to them.
Convey me there. Now!

Jinendra stumbles to his feet, marionette like. He catches hold of Ala'ud'din and disappears with him.

EXT. AN OUTCROP - DAY

Ala'ud'din and Jinendra materialise

ALA'UD'DIN

Where are we? Where are my troupes?

JINENDRA

I need to see them.

Ala'ud'din looks around for a moment, then points to another hill

ALA'UD'DIN

Get me over there.

EXT. A HILLOCK - CONTINUOUS

They appear on the next hill. Below on the plain two armies are engaged, one of them in disarray, breaking up.

ALA'UD'DIN

The dogs! Without me they are nothing!

Get me to the flag!

EXT. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Ala'ud'din appears out of mid air. There are frightened and joyous shouts as the soldiers recognize Ala'ud'din.

Ala'ud'din grabs the bridle of a horse.

ALA'UD'DIN

Your horse, soldier!

Ala'ud'din mounts, snatches the flag, whirls it over his head and urges his horse forward.

EXT. HILLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra appears on the hillock. Below the soldiers gather around the flag. For a moment there seems to be a standstill. Then from the dust on the enemy side grey shapes start to emerge.

Jinendra jerks and slaps his hand to his collar. He disappears.

EXT. DEVAGIRI SIDE OF THE BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

The Devagiri general high on top of a war elephant extends his hand forward to attack

The horse and rider appear out of nowhere, stop. The horse rears. Ala'ud'din raises his bow and shots.

The Devagiri general collapses, as an arrow pierces his chain mail and throat.

Ala'ud'din wheels his horse, it rears again and then disappears.

EXT. HILLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra appears on the little hillock. Below, the Devagiri forces break up and flee, followed by the Muslim army.

Jinendra sinks to the ground and watches the slaughter with fascinated shock.

INT. ALA'UD'DIN'S TENT - NIGHT

Ala'ud'din sleeps. The lamp stands on a low table next to his bed.

Jinendra appears, looks around, touches the lamp. There is a spark. He pulls his hand back and shakes it.

The silken sound of a SWORD BEING DRAWN. Ala'ud'din, still in bed, swings the blade against Jinendra's throat, stopping it a hair's breadth from his skin.

ALA'UD'DIN

I don't know whether you can be killed. But never, ever again enter my sleeping quarters without being called!

Jinendra folds together in a deep bow.

JINENDRA

I hear and ... obey, master.

EXT. FORT OF KARA - DAY

Ala'ud'din watches from a terrace a column of dust draw closer to the city.

His wife comes out to him and waits demurely behind him

ALA'UD'DIN

Jalal'ud'din is quite in a hurry to inspect the hoard I brought back from Devagiri.
Go. Get dressed to greet your father. And make sure to look happy. Your sour face is spoiling my day.

He gives her a rough push. She stumbles and falls.

ALA'UD'DIN

Try not to embarrass me in front of your father.

The wife cringes. Jinendra steps out from the shadow and kneels down beside her to help her up.

ALA'UD'DIN

You'll entertain my guests tonight
as a juggler, Jinn.

JINENDRA

I can't juggle. Master.

Ala'ud'din walks towards the door. He turns and smiles.

ALA'UD'DIN

I know.

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

Jalal'ud'din and Ala'ud'din recline, feasting, surrounded by courtiers, notables and officers. Guards in red and black watch motionlessly.

Some performers jump, bound and wheel around in the centre.

Ala'ud'din claps his hands. The performers withdraw, leaving Jinendra in the middle, alone. He juggles, badly, under the laughter of the guests.

One man throws a bone at Jinendra. Jinendra grits his teeth. He snatches a silken cloth and throws it over himself. The cloth falls away from him as he becomes invisible.

Murmurs and scattered applause greet the trick. He lets some more things disappear, juggles with two objects, then he throws a ripe peach at the bone thrower. As the fruit splatters against his chest there is uproarious laughter.

Jinendra reappears again from under the silken cloth.

Ala'ud'din smiles thinly as Jinendra exits under applause.

INT. OUTSIDE JALAL'UD'DIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ala'ud'din escorts his uncle to his rooms. Two of Jalal's red guards take up position in front of the door.

INT. ALA'UD'DIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Ala'ud'din paces in annoyance

ALA'UD'DIN

Jinn!

Jinendra appears behind Ala'ud'din. Ala'ud'din wheels, picks up a handy riding crop and smacks Jinendra across the shoulder.

ALA'UD'DIN

I told you not to appear behind me!

He walks away from Jinendra.

ALA'UD'DIN

A skilled fakir would have done better than you, and he hasn't got any magic.

JINENDRA

You knew I wouldn't be any good. So why insist, Master?

ALA'UD'DIN

Because you resent it.
You've got so much power, but I am the one who controls you. I find that amusing.

Ala'ud'din throws the riding crop onto a side table.

ALA'UD'DIN

And tonight I have a special use for you.

INT. JALAL'UD'DIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jalal snores faintly. There is a rustling and Ala'ud'din emerges from the shadow. He walks towards the bed.

Jalal's jewel encrusted sword hangs by the bed. Ala'ud'din takes the scabbard, looks at it.

Jalal opens his eyes. There is a sleep clouded moment of incomprehension then he opens his mouth to yell.

Ala'ud'din draws the blade from the scabbard and swings it down. Jinendra hurls himself forward

JINENDRA

NO!

Ala'ud'din whips around and swings the sabre at Jinendra's neck. The blood dripping blade stops a fraction away from Jinendra's skin as he bounces against the invisible protective wall.

ALA'UD'DIN

Bow before the new Sultan of Delhi!

Jinendra goes to his knees like an axed bull. A drop of blood falls from Ala'ud'din's sabre onto Jinendra's hand.

There is a POUNDING on the door. Ala'ud'din flings them open. Two guards hurry in, stop.

Ala'ud'din extends his saber towards them. One of the guards stops to consider, the other attacks with a shout. Ala'ud'din dispatches him with a skilful thrust.

Black guards surround the second guard. He goes down on his knees.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS

- A) Ala'ud'din in front of the gates of Delhi. Jinendra and two black guards appear. While the guards fight off defenders, Jinendra opens the gates unseen.
- B) Ala'ud'din on the throne. A woman and two young men are led before him, thrown to their knees
- C) The two men are blinded.
- D) Ala'ud'din hands Jinendra a scroll. Jinendra disappears. Ala'ud'din writes. Jinendra reappears, hands Ala'ud'din a message.
- E) A man furtively enters a building. Jinendra, now sporting a stubble, appears quickly, then disappears again. Inside the building men discuss heatedly, shake their fists. Jinendra watches from a hidden corner, then disappears again.
- F) Jinendra talks to Ala'ud'din. Ala'ud'din dispatches his black guards
- G) Black guards storming a house. Fire. People try to escape, an old man is thrown back into the flames. On a horse Jinendra watches. He disappears. Moments later he reappears, the old man on his arms. He puts him down. The old man is dead.
- H) Jinendra (beard already longer) observes as a young girl being dragged by two soldiers behind a wall, screaming. Jinendra turns away.

INT. PALACE IN DELHI - DAY

Ala'ud'din, visibly older, looks at a scroll RAGHVAN, a councillor presents to him

RAGHVAN

The news from Chittorgarh. The fort is still holding out. The siege has been dragging on for almost a year

now and unrest is spreading among
the soldiers.

Ala'ud'din whips on his toes then throws a glance at a figure in
the shadow. Jinendra, bearded and in the uniform of a guard,
lowers his gaze.

Ala'ud'din returns his attention to Raghvan.

ALA'UD'DIN

If it was only for the Rana it
wouldn't be a problem to get rid of
him. But these Rajputs would surely
continue fighting. We must find a
way to break their spirit.

RAGHVAN

Sire?

ALA'UD'DIN

Yes, Raghvan?

The councillor scuttles closer

RAGHVAN

They say the Rana of Chittorgarh's
wife is very beautiful.

ALA'UD'DIN

So it is said.

Ala'ud'din considers a moment and then smiles slowly. He snaps
his fingers.

ALA'UD'DIN

Jinn! I have use of you

Jinendra steps closer and bows.

INT. AUDIENCE CHAMBER - CHITTORGARH - DAY

RATTAN SINGH, THE RANA OF CHITTORGARH studies a letter, looks in
surprise at the messenger, reads the letter again

RATTAN SINGH

Ala'ud'din sends me his brotherly
greetings and expresses his desire
to meet his sister as he has heard
of the great beauty of Rani Padmini.

(to councillor)

Should we concede to this he will
withdraw his troupes. What do you
think of that?

COUNCILLOR

An unusual proposition. The situation in Chittorgarh is becoming desperate. We might want to consider the request.

RATTAN SINGH

I need to think about this more deeply.

The messenger bows and withdraws. Rattan Singh gets up and leaves the audience chamber. As he passes through a curtain it moves again after his passing.

INT. HALLWAYS - CHITTORGARH - DAY

Rattan Singh makes his way through the narrow, twisting hallways of the fort. At one stage he turns around to look behind, but the hallway is empty. He shakes his head and continues.

INT. RANI PADMINI'S QUARTERS - CHITTORGARH - DAY

Rattan Singh enters.

Rani Padmini, surrounded by her women, sits on a pile of pillows, playing the sitar by the window. At the Rana's entry she looks around then gets up and greets him with a smile.

A SHARP INDRAW OF BREATH

The Rani is another avatar of Arpana

PADMINI

My husband. What brings you here at such a time?

RATTAN SINGH

Send your women away, please. I wish to discuss something in private.

Padmini claps her hand. The women leave.

PADMINI

What's the matter?

Rattan Singh takes her hand and kisses it. Padmini looks surprised at the tender gesture. Behind her the leaves of a plant move without any wind.

Rattan Singh hands Padmini the letter. She reads then smiles without humour

PADMINI

Brotherly love. Is that supposed to reassure us? Seven years ago he killed his own uncle to become sultan, he blinded his nephews and ruthlessly pruned out any opposition. He's laid siege to Chittorgarh and now he wants us to believe he would just up and go if he can catch a glimpse of my face?

She hands her husband the letter and walks towards the window. Beside her a pillow momentarily is squashed but neither of them notices.

PADMINI

Ala'ud'din is said to be a lecher and a womanizer. But even he wouldn't give up Chittorgarh for a woman. I'm sure he intends some treachery.

She considers and then smiles

PADMINI

But if he is willing to come here, to Chittorgarh to see me, we should make use of it. He would walk right into our hands, husband!

The Rana shakes his head.

RATTAN SINGH

It would be dishonourable to break faith like this.

Padmini wants to protest but then she smiles.

PADMINI

Treachery and meanness are beneath you, my husband, and for that I love you. I will abide by your wishes. But let me set a few conditions.

The sitar TWANGS dissonantly and both look at it, but at that moment the door opens and a boy and a girl come running in followed by an older attendant. They are avatars of Rani, Masood, Sangeeta.

ATTENDANT

Forgive me, Rana! They escaped my guard when they heard you were here.

The Rana bends down to tussle the hair of his son, then picks up the girl.

The still open door moves

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jinendra appears and leans against the wall, breathing as if he'd just run a race. He turns his face to the open door through which he can hear the HAPPY CHATTER OF THE CHILDREN AND THE LAUGHTER of Padmini. Jinendra closes his eyes and disappears.

A moment later a servant comes around a corner and walks down the hall.

INT/EXT. PADMINI'S QUARTERS - CHITTORGARH - EVENING

Padmini steps into the small oriel overlooking the pool with its small pavilion in the middle.

A noise makes her turn. Jinendra stands in the doorway to her apartment.

PADMINI

Who are you? How dare you enter here!

She tries to scream but Jinendra gets hold of her and puts his hand over her mouth. Padmini struggles wildly.

JINENDRA

Don't be afraid! I won't hurt you. Ouch! Listen! You've got to listen to me. OUCH! Stop it! I've got to warn you! Ala'ud'din ...

Jinendra reels back and clutches at his collar. Padmini runs after Jinendra as he stumbles back into her apartment. Inside she stops, looks wildly at the empty room. She runs to the door, opens it. A servant walking past, bows.

PADMINI

Where'd he go?

SERVANT

Rani?

PADMINI

There was a m... monkey in my room. You didn't see it?

The servant shakes his head. Padmini closes the door into his face. She searches her room, looks behind a screen, into chests, finally behind a few pillows as if Jinendra could be hiding there.

INT. ALA'UD'DIN'S TENT - EVENING

Ala'ud'din, in the middle of the tent taps his foot impatiently. Jinendra appears, stumbling. He rights himself, turns slowly.

ALA'UD'DIN

The messenger has been back for some time with the Rana's response. What do YOU have to report?

JINENDRA

Nothing.

ALA'UD'DIN

You've had the whole afternoon to explore the fortification. Now tell me what you found out!

JINENDRA

No.

ALA'UD'DIN

You're trying to oppose me?
(mockingly)
Now? Of all the times? Why?

Jinendra looks stonily through Ala'ud'din

Ala'ud'din snatches the lamp and extends it like a weapon.

Jinendra looks Ala'ud'din straight in the eyes and shakes his head.

ALA'UD'DIN

Talk!

Jinendra clutches at the collar, convulses and groans. He fights to stay on his feet but finally sags to his knees. The collar visible discharges. Jinendra throws his head and arms back in a silent scream. As the discharge ends he collapses forward.

Ala'ud'din looks on in interest. He taps Jinendra with a foot.

Jinendra raises his head

JINENDRA

I ... will... not... obey...

Another discharge results. Jinendra screams as shock after shock discharges

There is a backlash from the collar to the lamp. Ala'ud'din drops the lamp.

Jinendra fights for breath then pushes himself to his feet.

JINENDRA

I... won't... obey. Never... again.

A METALLIC, CRACKING SOUND

The collar and bracelets break apart and fall to the ground.

Ala'ud'din picks up the lamp which looks scorched and smokes slightly

ALA'UD'DIN

Interesting. It seems you've cast off your curse. But are you now a free Jinn, or a mortal human? Shall we find out?

Dropping the lamp Ala'ud'din draws his sword and swings it at Jinendra. Jinendra stumbles back awkwardly then jumps aside to avoid a second swing. He collides with a side table

It collapses with a loud CLATTER

Jinendra snips his fingers then freezes as Ala'ud'din' presses the tip of his sword into his throat.

Two guards come hurrying in, then stop.

FIRST GUARD

Sire?

Ala'ud'din withdraws his sword

ALA'UD'DIN

So it seems you're human now. Weak, powerless, and at my mercy. Stupid. Stupid!
What use are you now to me?

Ala'ud'din snips his finger. The two guards hurry to Jinendra, grab him and beat him to his knees.

Ala'ud'din sheaths his sword, grabs Jinendra's hair and forces his head back. Jinendra looks straight at Ala'ud'din

ALA'UD'DIN

I don't like being opposed. You of all people should know it. Haven't you been the one to spy out conspiracies against me? You know best what happened to those traitors.

Jinendra closes his eyes, shaking under the memory

FLASHBACK

Jinendra outside a burning house. A guard throws a baby out of the window. Jinendra hides his face

END OF FLASHBACK

Ala'ud'din presses a dagger against Jinendra's cheek, the tip close to Jinendra's eye. Jinendra looks at him, a mixture of fear and anger in his eyes.

JINENDRA

I've obeyed because I was a coward.
But I won't be part of the
destruction of this town.

Ala'ud'din withdraws his dagger a little

ALA'UD'DIN

But why now? Why here?

The dagger glides down from the cheek to the throat.

ALA'UD'DIN

Is Padmini as beautiful as people
say?

There is a tiny flicker in Jinendra's eyes. Ala'ud'din hesitates and then laughs

ALA'UD'DIN

This is too precious! You've fallen
in love! With Padmini? THAT's why
you suddenly don't want to obey any
more? What for? She's a married
woman. What is there for you if you
protect her?

(casually)

Not that your disobedience makes any difference, really.

JINENDRA

It makes a difference to me. I thought I was the slave of the lamp. But truly I was only the slave of my own fear to take on the responsibility for my actions. There is no excuse for obeying an order one knows is wrong.

Ala'ud'din smiles cruelly

ALA'UD'DIN

Waxing philosophical?

Well. Your 'freedom' comes at a price. And that price is death.

(to the guards)

Take him away. I'll deal with him later.

The guards nod and drag Jinendra out of the tent. Ala'ud'din picks up the lamp. He looks a moment at it, then shrugs and throws it out of the tent.

EXT. IN FRONT OF ALA'UD'DIN'S TENT - DUSK

Cook fires glow, horses snort, men gather for a game and a few stories.

In front of Ala'ud'din's tent Jinendra kneels, his hands tied behind his back to a pole. He is bruised and battered. Blood seeps from small wounds on arms and chest. Horse apples, small rocks and rotten fruit are scattered around him.

Jinendra's view goes straight along the central road of the camp and to the looming hill on which Chittorgarh is built.

A line of lights is making its way up to the Suraj gate.

A small STABLE BOY drags a heavy bucket past. He puts his bucket down, picks up a horse apple and throws with with accuracy at Jinendra's face. He picks up another one

Jinendra cleans his cheek on his shoulder then clicks his tongue

JINENDRA

Boy. Give me some water and I'll tell you what is happening up there.

The boy hesitates then drops the second horse apple.

BOY

Can you really do that?

JINENDRA

A drink first.

The boy inches closer, offers Jinendra the bucket. Jinendra drinks deeply then leans his head back against the pole. He closes his eyes

JINENDRA

They say the Rani Padmini is the most beautiful women of this age. Soon the Rana of Chittorgarh will admit Ala'ud'din Khilji inside the Suraj Gate and escort him to the palace of Rani Padmini

EXT. SURAJ POL - DUSK

The gate opens, admitting Ala'ud'din and a small following of guards in. Inside the Rana awaits him, surrounded by his rajputs.

The train passes a baori, then comes to the pond at Rani Padmini's palace.

EXT. RANI PADMINI'S PALACE - DUSK

A boat carries Ala'ud'din and the Rana across to the small pavilion in the middle of the pond.

On a terrace stands a huge silver mirror, facing the Oriel of Rani Padmini's palace across the pond. Innumerable small lamps glow within the oriel.

Ala'ud'din sits, facing the mirror. In its reflection he can see a veiled figure step into the oriel.

Padmini removes the pallu and looks across the pond

Ala'ud'din makes a move to turn but the Rana puts his hand on Ala'ud'din's shoulder and two guards place their hands on the sword hilts.

After a time Padmini withddraws

EXT. SURAJ POL - NIGHT

The parade returns to the Suraj pol. The Rana escorts Ala'ud'din to the outer defence.

There is a sudden flurry of activity as Ala'ud'din's black guards surround the Rana, cutting him off from his guards. More black guards appear from nowhere.

Fighting ensues. After a moment the rajputs manage to close the gate. Archers appear on the walls, but Ala'ud'din and his prisoner are already galloping out of reach.

EXT. IN FRONT OF ALA'UD'DIN'S TENT - NIGHT

JINENDRA

Thus Ala'ud'din tricked the Rana and the Rajputs. Tomorrow he's going to demand Rani Padmini in exchange for Rattan Singh.

The little stable boy looks wide eyed down the lane at the looming rock in the distance

BOY

Is that true?

JINENDRA

Who knows? What is history, and what is story?
Chittorgarh will fall.

He turns his head away from the boy to hide the anguish in his eyes.

EXT. IN FRONT OF ALA'UD'DIN'S TENT - MORNING

Ala'ud'din emerges from his tent. He looks over to Chittorgarh.

Two guards cut Jinendra from the pole and tie his hands in his back again, then drag him over to Ala'ud'din. They push him roughly down to his knees.

Ala'ud'din continues to look at Chittorgarh.

ALA'UD'DIN

I got what I wanted without your help, Jinn.

JINENDRA

You'll never have her!

Ala'ud'din finally looks down at Jinendra

ALA'UD'DIN

You think I went to all this trouble for a woman? No woman is worth that much. And you waste your life for something you can't have, you fool.

Ala'ud'din nods at a tall, burly black guard with a huge blade. The guard comes over.

ALA'UD'DIN

I'll give you another chance, Jinn. Swear allegiance to me and you'll live. If not...

Jinendra looks at the black guard who grins at him. He swallows hard and closes his eyes.

JINENDRA

I don't want to die.

Ala'ud'din smiles. Jinendra takes a deep breath and looks at Ala'ud'din

JINENDRA

But the price you're asking is too high.

ALA'UD'DIN

(snarling with anger)

Then die, you fool!

A soldier throws a leather noose around Jinendra's neck, pulling his head forwards. The big black guard takes aim with his huge blade

Jinendra's breathing quickens and he closes his eyes firmly.

Above him the big soldier raises his blade.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sangeeta pulls the blanket a little higher over Jinendra's motionless form. She gives Arpana, on the other side of the bed, an anguished look.

The DOCTOR checks a chart. The steady BEEP BEEP from a live sign monitor is the only sound

Sangeeta sobs and looks at the doctor

SANGEETA

Why won't he wake up? You said there's nothing wrong with him. So why doesn't he wake up?

DOCTOR

We couldn't find anything organically wrong. He's got a nasty bump and a bit of a concussion. There is no apparent reason for his continued unconsciousness. But the body has its own reasons. Although, the longer the coma continues the lower are his chances to wake up again.

SANGEETA

So he might die, without you knowing why?

DOCTOR

There is no reason to believe that. Time will tell. But while you're here, do talk to him. Research has shown that people in coma can still hear what is said to them.

The doctor leaves.

Arpana gets up and puts her arms around the sobbing Sangeeta

ARPANA

You should go home. You've been here almost four days without a break. It's making you sick. You need to be fit when Jinendra wakes up.

SANGEETA

God can't be so cruel and take him away from me now. Just when I found him again!

(sobs)

I can't leave him, Arpana

Sangeeta gets hold of Arpana's hands.

SANGEETA

The doctor said to talk to him. Tell him everything is fine. Tell him you're going to marry him! Please, Arpana

Arpana gently pulls her hands from Sangeeta's grip.

ARPANA

Sangeeta. It would be a lie.

SANGEETA

You're cruel. Can't you compromise a little for the sake of my son?

ARPANA

That's not a compromise, Sangeeta. A lie won't help Jinendra.

SANGEETA

But you could change him. Give him a chance.

ARPANA

Only he can change himself.

Arpana holds Sangeeta gently by the shoulders

ARPANA

Sangeeta. I need to make a clean cut. Everything else would hurt too much, me, you, Rani - and him. And now go and rest a little. You're not deserting him.

Sangeeta, propelled out by Arpana, hesitantly leaves with a last backward glance.

Arpana returns to the bed, sits, takes out a novel. For a moment she tries to read, then she snaps the book close again.

She gets up, stands beside the bed. She leans a little forward to push a strand of Jinendra's hair out of his face.

ARPANA

I'm sorry. I can't. I don't want to become like my father, die slowly from loss of self respect. I hope you'll understand some day.

Jinendra remains motionless. Arpana looks down. A tear falls on Jinendra's hand.

The steady BEEP BEEP suddenly turns to a constant buzz. Arpana starts, looks at the monitor. Flatline. She hits Jinendra's chest with her fist, once, twice. She slaps his face, hard.

ARPANA

Don't you dare dying now!

She leans over to grab for the buzzer on the bed, just as Jinendra surges up, gasping for breath like a drowning man.

He holds on to her reflexively, pants a moment until his eyes focus on Arpana. Arpana struggles to get out of his grip but he holds on tight.

JINENDRA

You're alive!

(looking down at
himself)

I'm alive!

Jinendra gives a short laugh of relief. Arpana stops struggling out of pure confusion.

ARPANA

Yes. You're definitely alive. Now if
you don't mind, let go of me!

Arpana's frosty tone sobers Jinendra. He reluctantly releases her. Arpana slips down off the bed.

Jinendra takes stock of his surroundings.

JINENDRA

I'm in hospital? What happened?

ARPANA

You got hit by a car and were
unconscious for four days.

JINENDRA

Four days? Only? It felt like seven
years of hell.

ARPANA

What do you mean?

JINENDRA

Just...a dream.

Arpana goes to the door.

ARPANA

I'll call your mother. I promised her to tell her the moment you wake up.

JINENDRA

Wait! Please! I need to talk to you!

ARPANA

I think everything has already been said.

Arpana turns away. Jinendra grits his teeth, swings his legs out of bed, rips the contact from the finger. The machine emits a shrill ALARM. He manages to take two steps, then wobbles and falls.

ARPANA

What are you doing, you fool!

Jinendra smiles at that and nods.

Arpana with a muttered exclamation goes to help him back up onto the bed.

Jinendra gets hold of Arpana's hand again. Arpana tries to pull away.

ARPANA

Let me go. What's the use of it?

JINENDRA

Please hear me out

ARPANA

What for? There are certain things I swore to myself not to compromise about.

JINENDRA

Even if it means to forsake love?

Arpana makes a half hearted attempt to get out of Jinendra's grip

ARPANA

What chance would love stand? My father compromised and the end result was a catastrophe. Everybody

told him he wasn't responsible, but he knew that that wasn't the truth. The knowledge poisoned his whole life and ultimately his love. I don't want to... I can't...

Her voice breaks. She twists her hand out of Jinendra's grip and briskly hurries out of the room.

JINENDRA

Arpana!

The door closes behind her. Jinendra gets off the bed and hurries on wobbly legs after her.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - CONTINUOUS

Arpana avoids a nurse pushing a trolley. Jinendra stumbles out of the room.

JINENDRA

Arpana!

Arpana turns, frowns. Jinendra sways, catches himself then gives an exaggerated wobble.

Arpana hesitates a moment then turns away and continues walking. Jinendra, steadying himself along the wall, pads after her, gets hold of her arm. Arpana turns.

ARPANA

Jinendra.

JINENDRA

Please. Please listen to me. I can't do anything about the dismissal, I'm not my own boss.

Arpana tries to pull away but he grasps her

JINENDRA

I could change that, though!

(pauses)

Do you know about a good financial analyst with a well developed social sense? She'd have to be a bit mad though.

Arpana looks at Jinendra with big eyes.

A NURSE comes hurrying down the hallway.

NURSE

Sir. What are you doing out here?
Please return to your room!

She tries to urge Jinendra back to his room. He finally shakes her off.

JINENDRA

Can't you see I'm trying to tell
this woman that I love her?!

The nurse starts back, then rallies

NURSE

Fine. You tell her that later. Now
you go back to your room!

Arpana steps around the two and heads back towards Jinendra's room.

Jinendra growls at the nurse

JINENDRA

If she walks out of here without
becoming my wife I will NEVER
forgive you!

The nurse steps back a little then gives a snort and stalks down the hallway.

JINENDRA

Arpana! Please, don't you
understand? Life gives us only one
chance. If you leave now we might
regret it for the rest of our lives!
I surely will!

Arpana continues. Behind her Jinendra sways and leans heavily against the wall.

JINENDRA

Arpana!

Still she continues. On her face doubt, hope, confusion chase each other.

Jinendra turns his face against the wall and slaps it with his palm.

JINENDRA

(in despair)

Damn it! Why won't you understand!
I'll resign!

He closed his eyes in frustration.

Arpana stops just a step away from Jinendra's room, but doesn't turn to him

ARPANA

You... you'll resign? For me?

Jinendra turns towards Arpana, shakes his head.

JINENDRA

No. Not for you.

Jinendra continues towards Arpana

JINENDRA

I don't want to disappoint you, but
I'm not doing this for you, but for
myself.

He stops behind her and rubs his neck.

JINENDRA

It has taken me some time to
understand. Seven years in hell. And
my love.

Arpana closes her eyes, suppressing a tear, then smiles and slips into the hospital room.

Jinendra sags

Arpana pokes her head out again.

ARPANA

You better get back to your room.
Your scrawny butt... erm legs might
scare people.

JINENDRA

Scrawny... legs?

Jinendra turns around and looks down his back, then pulls the hospital nighty together and down. Arpana disappears into the room.

Jinendra pushes the door open

JINENDRA

My legs aren't scrawny - nor is anything else for that matter!

ARPANA (O.S)

Really? That remains to be seen.

The door closes

CREDITS

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Jinendra and Arpana walk past a shop with brass ornaments. Arpana stops and looks at a lamp. Jinendra turns to see what she is looking at. It is the lamp in its ornamented state.

ARPANA

That's a pretty piece. I think it would look good on the bookshelf.

Jinendra gets hold of Arpana's arm and pulls.

JINENDRA

No! Under no circumstances, absolutely and definitively no! It's ugly, ugly and tasteless, there's no way we will buy this. That thing doesn't come near me! I won't allow it!

ARPANA

Really? That remains to be seen.