



ATTACK OF THE ALIENS

Sequel to Professor's Cousin

ANNE REPORTER

ATTACK OF THE ALIENS

Sequel to Professor's Cousin

by

Anne Reporter

&

Ravi Kumar Paramkusam

Prologue

The skies over Earth's atmosphere shimmered faintly as the Mars Surveillance Centre reported the unthinkable: an unidentified spacecraft was heading towards Earth. Despite repeated attempts, there had been **no response to standard communication protocols**. The entire global defense and space network shifted to high alert.

At ISRO's Earth Station, a cluster of specialists worked around the clock, scanning radiation signatures and magnetic distortions. The spaceship's **design bore resemblance to Future India Ltd's technology**, but the AI codes embedded in its trajectory were alien.

In Hyderabad, **Rashmi Kumar** stood in Rao's Hospital's executive suite, staring at the screen showing the unidentified ship's trajectory. She had just received a secure message from New York: **Reyansh Kumar**, her father, and other timeline migrants were en route to India. The timing was far too coincidental.

She immediately reached out to **Leena**, her sister onboard the Mars mission.

"Leena, are you seeing this transmission from Mars Command? An unregistered ship is on approach. Any clue?"

Leena's voice came through the encrypted comms, calm but firm.

"That's not one of ours. But Stephany intercepted something strange. She believes it might be from the **alternate colony**—the one that never registered with Earth Command after the Timelines Merged."

Rashmi felt a chill run through her.

At Future India Ltd Headquarters

Kumar had returned to Hyderabad, escorted with the highest secrecy. With him were members from various timelines—all who had fled to New York following the timeline collapse. He immediately convened an emergency strategy meeting.

"If this ship is from the rogue Mars faction, they may have developed their own bio-weapons. We need to be prepared not just for contact—but for confrontation."

He looked to **Sakshi**, now an influential humanitarian coordinator.

"I want shelters prepared in Manali and Hyderabad. Civilian safety first. Disha will continue coordinating with Mars."

Meanwhile, in the Brothel in Hyderabad

Suchitra, possessed by two souls, was being held in a brothel run by one of the most elusive criminal rings in India. Her **unusual psychic phenomena** had caught the attention of the underground. She was considered both dangerous and sacred—a “split vessel.”

But that very trait had caused unrest among her captors. Strange dreams, ghostly whispers, and inexplicable malfunctions of surveillance systems began spreading fear.

Back at Rao’s Hospital, **Rachana**, now a key manager in operations, intercepted a coded message flagged by Rashmi’s AI scanner. It was traced back to Kolkata, tagged with Raaj’s biometric ID—one of the escaped convicts. She and Rashmi immediately alerted the special task force.

Mike’s Observation

Back at ISB, **Professor Mike** had just finished a guest lecture on **Interplanetary Conflict Management** when the news broke. As a seasoned advisor to Future India Ltd, he was pulled into the strategic think tank.

Nancy and Stephany, now living on Mars, confirmed through ship AI that **the approaching craft had known life signs**.

“This could be a decoy,” Stephany warned. “Or a probe for invasion.”

With Reyansh Kumar back, the Unified Earth Response Task Force (UERTF) convened. Rashmi sat with him, briefing the room.

“We may be looking at a rogue faction with access to Mars tech and corrupted AI. The question is: do we intercept or make contact?”

Reyansh stood.

“We do both. Prepare the intercept. But keep the Peace Protocols live. And bring Suchitra back. If this ship is from the Forbidden Zone, she may be the key.”

What secrets does the unidentified spaceship carry?

Will Suchitra’s dual souls unlock an ancient secret?

Can Earth prevent another planetary war?

Chapter 1

Rashmi rushed to her mother, Anita, beaming with excitement. “Mom, Dad is coming back from abroad! I just got a message from him.”

Anita looked up, surprised and delighted. “Oh, that’s such good news! When is he coming?”

“He should be here in a day or two.”

“Has he finished his work there?”

“I suppose so,” Rashmi replied. “I’ll go and get Nandini Aunt’s house ready for guests.”

“Nandini’s house? Are guests coming too? How many?”

“I’m not sure. Dad just said, ‘We’re all coming back.’ It seems a lot of people went abroad with him.”

Rashmi didn’t mention her visit to New York or that she had already met everyone there. Her father had instructed her to keep their stay in New York confidential for security reasons. It had been two long years since she last saw him.

At Nandini’s Bungalow

Rashmi hurried to Nandini’s bungalow and rang the bell. A servant named Padma opened the door.

“Padma, please start getting the house ready for guests. They’ll be arriving from New York. Possibly even Nandini madam might be coming.”

“Madam is coming? Where has she been all this time?”

“I just told you—they’re coming from New York. Oh, right, maybe you don’t know where that is. It’s in America.”

“Okay, ma’am. I’ll get help from the others and begin preparations. How many guests are we expecting?”

“Including children, probably around 15. But honestly, I’m not sure how many are actually returning.”

“Returning, ma’am? What do you mean?”

“I mean I don’t know how many of them are coming back permanently.”

“Alright, ma’am. I’ll start right away,” Padma said, before hurrying off to gather the cleaning staff.

Rashmi walked to the hidden room where the **transporter** was kept. She activated it, ensuring her father, Reyansh, and the others could use it to return to India.

Afterwards, she returned home and switched on the transporter there as well, readying everything for their arrival.

Chapter: Reyansh Returns

Two days later, **Reyansh Kumar** stepped out of the transporter into the familiar surroundings of his home, carrying his luggage. After two years away, everything looked the same, yet subtly different.

Anita immediately began updating him, her voice filled with both eagerness and curiosity.

“Leena’s gone to Mars, and Rashmi has taken over the hospital. So much has changed...”

Before she could continue, **Rashmi** interrupted gently, “Mom, Dad already knows everything. He was monitoring everything from New York. He’s been kept in the loop the entire time.”

Anita turned toward her daughter, a trace of hurt in her voice. “You didn’t tell me your father was aware of what was happening all along.”

“Let Dad sit down first,” Rashmi replied calmly. “He’ll explain everything. Dad, would you like some tea?”

Reyansh nodded. He understood Anita’s emotions and didn’t want to interrupt. Quietly, he picked up the day’s newspaper from the table and began reading. Seeing him engrossed, Anita went to the kitchen to make tea.

Family Conversations and Hidden Truths

After tea, Reyansh stood up.

“I’ll go and check on the guests at Nandini’s bungalow—make sure they’re comfortable.”

“I’ll come too,” Rashmi said. “It’s been two years since I saw them.”

Anita, catching the implication, said accusingly, “You’ve already met them? And didn’t tell me?”

“I was told to keep it confidential, Mom. It was for their safety—they were hiding in America.”

Anita turned to Reyansh with narrowed eyes. “So you’ve been hiding all these years? And didn’t think about us?”

“For your own safety,” Reyansh replied. “Do you remember the men who came looking for me at our flat? They even followed Rashmi to Nandini’s place. Our associates caught them, and we learned a lot from that.”

Rashmi added, “Mom, Phani even recorded them in the Srisailam Forest house. They kidnapped a man and shot him in the head when he refused to give information about Dad.”

Anita shivered. “I’m coming with you to see the guests.”

Rashmi grabbed the house keys, and the three of them locked the door and walked together to **Nandini’s bungalow**.

The Reunion at Nandini’s Bungalow

As they approached the bungalow, Rashmi opened the gate and led them through the garden. The front doors were wide open. Two children, around nine or ten years old, ran out excitedly.

“**Akka!**” they shouted in unison.

Rashmi hugged both of them tightly. Anita looked puzzled. “Who are they?”

“These are **Nandini’s twins—Atul and Reena**,” Rashmi explained.

Just then, **Dhruv** appeared.

“How are you doing, Rashmi?” he asked, then turned to Anita. “And who is she?”

“She’s my mother, Anita.”

“Nice to meet you, Aunt,” Dhruv greeted politely.

Following him were **Revathi and Shravani**. Anita’s eyes widened. “Vadina? What are you doing here?”

Revathi smiled.

“I’ve been staying with Annayya. This is **Shravani**, my daughter. You haven’t met her, have you?”

Anita turned sharply to Reyansh. “You just keep dropping bombshells. I didn’t even know Revathi had a daughter.”

Dhruv began pointing out people one by one: “This is my mom, **Loveleen**. And this is **Joy**, my stepsister.” “That’s **Sunitha Aunt**, and her daughter **Anjali**.”

Anita, overwhelmed, asked, “Is that everyone, or are there more surprises?”

“You’ve already met Nandini,” Reyansh said. “She should be in her room. Atul, where’s your mother?”

“She said she had a headache and went to rest,” Atul replied.

“Shall I check on her?” Reena asked.

“No, let her rest,” Reyansh said gently.

Rashmi turned to Reena. “When did you last see your dad?”

Atul answered, “One year ago. He brought a lady and left her with us.”

Reena looked at Reyansh, who explained, “That woman was **Monica Bajaj**. He left her in our care because she was in a bad state. He came back later and took her away.”

Atul sighed. “But he’s changed. We saw the real dad in 2021. Now, he just hugged us and left, barely said anything.”

“He’s under pressure,” Reyansh said. “He wouldn’t have left Monica with you unless someone powerful was after her.”

“But we miss him,” Reena said softly.

“We all have to be strong now,” Reyansh replied. “We don’t know what this incoming spaceship means—whether it’s friendly or hostile.”

The Threat from Space and Revelations from the Past

Anita asked, “You think it’s really aliens? You must know something. Someone must.”

“No one knows for sure,” Reyansh said. “Those who do aren’t talking. That’s why we were asked to return.”

Sunitha added, “Do you think this has to do with the **operation Kumar** was working on?”

Anita turned, startled. “What operation?”

Reyansh clarified, “It wasn’t me. Kumar was trying to identify **Rakshasas**—demons from ancient lore. As part of that mission, he had to bring Monica Bajaj to New York. That led to **Mahima Khan** being exposed. But even then, he wasn’t certain if she was linked to the **Asur**.”

Anita looked confused.

“So what did Kumar actually tell you?”

“Only the critical details. Like why Monica had to be hidden, or why he stayed back during the Mars launch. But... he didn’t even invite us to his wedding.”

“He got married?” Anita gasped.

“To whom?”

“**Loveleen Khanna**.”

Revathi interrupted, clearly upset. “But he promised to marry my daughter, Shravani. Why did he change his mind?”

“That wasn’t the same Kumar,” Reyansh said. “Timelines have merged. It may have been a necessity. Just like Ram had to marry Sita, or Krishna married Rukmini. We can’t always explain fate.”

“Oh... so it was like that,” Revathi murmured.

Reena, curious, asked Shravani, “Did you and Kumar date?”

“We never dated,” Shravani replied. “But we worked closely. He trusted me, took me everywhere. I believed he wanted to marry me.”

“Did he ever say he loved you?”

Shravani hesitated.

“No... not in words. But I thought he’d speak to Mom. But after **January 2021**, everything changed. He became distant, sent us to the US, and only visited a couple of times.”

Reyansh's Journey: A Personal Downfall

Rashmi looked at her father. “Dad, you were doing well at the hospital. Why did you leave?”

Reyansh sighed, and began narrating:

Chapter: The Weight of the Past

Reyansh leaned back, his voice slightly hoarse, eyes distant, as he began to recount a story buried in frustration, betrayal, and bitter resignation.

“It wasn’t a decision I made on a whim. It had been building up for years. Before joining the hospital, I worked with a software firm that installed systems for hospitals. A marketing manager there—someone I trusted—got a posting as a director at a hospital and convinced me to join him. But it wasn’t an invitation—it was more like pressure.”

Reyansh’s tone hardened slightly.

“He manipulated the hospital’s IT department, moved the in-charge elsewhere, and brought in my nephew, probably to ensure loyalty. Then, he got me appointed as the hospital’s IT Manager. But after a year, he left for a better offer at Apollo Hospitals, leaving me behind—exposed and unsupported. The management lacked direction, and worse, the hospital, being a Muslim-run institution, showed clear preference. The Medical Superintendent (a Hindu himself) told me directly he couldn’t offer preference to Hindus.”

The Internal Collapse

“When the original director returned, he came into conflict with a new MS who eventually staged a coup and had him removed for corruption. That MS later asked me to hand over the pharmacy software source code to someone he knew. I refused. Soon after, he too left. Another MS took over. The cycle of chaos just continued. By then, I was fed up with politics and religious bias in management.”

“During that period, I recovered from heart surgery and decided to pursue an MBA to shift my career direction. Meanwhile, the hospital gave everyone increments—except me. When I asked, there was no satisfactory answer. So I resigned and requested my two months of accumulated leave.”

Promises and Deceit

“The board secretary called and asked me why I was resigning. I told him about the unfair treatment. He promised me an increment if I withdrew my resignation and even gave me a letter. But it was all lies. He kept delaying, saying the board hadn’t met yet. This dragged on for a year.”

“I eventually wrote to the Chairman, requesting either my increment or to be released. Two board members met me and offered only half of what was promised. I stood my ground and gave them my final notice—25th March 2014. I walked out.”

The Final Blow

“By 31st March, the software needed to be updated for the new financial year. The secretary called me, requesting the update. I asked for my gratuity and a new maintenance contract. They reluctantly agreed, but paid only half the gratuity and stopped the maintenance fees. I disabled the software and sent them a legal notice.”

“Then, in **August 2014**, I lost not just this hospital’s contract—but two others. It felt orchestrated. That’s when everything began to collapse.”

The Noida Chapter and the Arrival of Anne

“Eventually, I found another job, and then one in Noida by **March 2015**. I went, came back, then returned again by train. That’s when I met **Anne, a reporter**. Around that time, I began having vivid dreams—full stories would come to me at night. I’d wake up, write them down as outlines, sometimes with titles and prologues. Anne and I exchanged numbers and met often near her university to discuss the stories. She was inspired to write her own book based on one of them.”

“Then I returned to Hyderabad for a week, and when I went back to Noida... everything changed.”

“I was diagnosed with diabetes. I’d left my wedding ring at home. I was mentally drained. Our offices shifted to Sector 2, which made commuting easier, but I had stopped meeting Anne regularly.”

Reyansh paused for a long moment, lost in thought.

“Anita was still in Hyderabad. Then the company cancelled my contract with the US firm, and I had no choice but to return. That was the last job I ever held. After that... everything evaporated, like water under the hot sun.”

The Shadow of Sugandha

Rashmi asked softly, “What does all of this have to do with Aunt Sugandha?” Reyansh’s expression changed. There was no anger—just weariness.

“I suspect your grandmother—Anita’s mother—and **Sugandha** were involved in sabotaging my job in Noida. After I collapsed, **Nandini** took me in, treated me, and helped me rebuild myself. But then Sugandha’s younger daughter had a minor accident. She visited their spiritual guru, and he told her the truth: her mother needed to **atone for her wrongdoings against me and my family.**”

Anita’s voice was barely a whisper, “What wrongdoing?”

Reyansh looked her in the eye.

“They were stealing from me. Whatever I earned, I only received half. The rest was being siphoned. Somehow—by manipulation, maybe spiritual binding—they were diverting my earnings, our stability. While I struggled, they thrived without lifting a finger. And when my health failed, it was Nandini who helped me recover.”

The Confrontation

“Sugandha’s guru told her to return what she had taken and to apologize. So she called you, Anita, and asked to meet me. At first, you didn’t understand. But you brought her.”

Reyansh’s face darkened slightly.

“But when she came, she changed her tune completely. Instead of apologizing, she **laughed maniacally**, flung a bunch of newspaper scraps and blank sheets at my face, and shouted, ‘What do you think? I’ll give away all my life’s earnings like that? I’d rather spend every rupee than give you a single paisa!’”

“You asked her, ‘What did we do to deserve this?’ And she screamed, ‘I hate you! And I hate your husband!’ before storming out.”

“Minutes later, she was in an accident. She survived—but slipped into a coma. When she woke up, **she had lost her voice. She still can’t speak.**”

A Heavy Silence

The room fell quiet.

Everyone stood still—absorbing the gravity of Reyansh’s journey. A story of betrayal by family, loss of livelihood, and inexplicable spiritual sabotage. His survival, rebuilt from the ground up, was nothing short of remarkable.

And yet, it was clear: the scars still remained.

Scene: Rashmi’s Question Unravels a Hidden Chapter

Rashmi turned to Anjali, her curiosity piqued. **“Anjali, what did you do in the USA?”**

Anjali smiled wryly. **“To answer that, I have to tell you a story.”**

The Tale of Fareach Technologies

“There once was a couple—**Samyuktha and Buchibabu**—who ran a recruitment firm called *Fareach Technologies*. Initially, they provided staffing support for a vendor company with contracts across various tech giants. They mostly supplied software engineers.

Buchibabu was kind-hearted and too trusting—he lent money easily and always tried to help others, often without caution. Samyuktha didn’t approve of his leniency. Their frequent arguments nearly ended in divorce, but their families intervened and reconciled them. As part of the compromise, Samyuktha took over the business, and Buchibabu stepped back.

As they were preparing to acquire direct vendor contracts, they opened a **branch in Hyderabad**. Buchibabu appointed his friend **Nagaraju** as the Operations Head. Nagaraju, who had previously worked as a clerk handling office logistics, was tasked with launching and leading the Hyderabad operations.

He brought a couple of people from his former company, hired others, and got things going. But Nagaraju lacked leadership. Having never held a managerial position, he resorted to controlling and verbally abusing the recruiters under him. Despite his incompetence, he acted with unchecked authority.”

A Turning Point

“One day during office hours, Samyuktha and Buchibabu spotted Nagaraju running personal errands in his car, buying supplies for a house he was building. When they called the office, the receptionist lied—on Nagaraju’s instruction—that he had just stepped out.

That was the final straw. Samyuktha relieved Nagaraju of his operational role and handed control to the **team leader**, who had been managing the employees responsibly. However, they didn't fire Nagaraju and continued paying him a salary. Humiliated, he eventually stopped coming to work—but harbored a grudge, particularly toward the team leader.

Meanwhile, the team had become like a close-knit family. They celebrated birthdays, attended weddings together, and maintained a warm camaraderie. This only fueled Nagaraju's envy."

The Smear Campaign

“Driven by resentment, Nagaraju fabricated a story accusing the **team leader of cheating the company**. Samyuktha, unfortunately, believed him without proper verification and **suspended the team leader**, demanding a written confession.

The team leader refused, instead requesting that her parents be called. Samyuktha escalated the matter by threatening legal action, to which the team leader's father firmly responded: *'Go ahead—we know she hasn't done anything wrong.'*

Before her father arrived, Samyuktha snatched the team leader's phone—perhaps afraid of evidence contradicting her claims—and fled the scene.

The issue escalated to the **police**, with both parties filing complaints. Samyuktha tried to influence the investigation using her contacts in the department, but the situation reached a **stalemate**.”

The Legal Unraveling of Fareeach

“Meanwhile, authorities began probing *Fareach Technologies* for **multiple labor law violations**—no appointment letters, no PF or ESIC benefits, falsified tax records, and inflated expenses.

The **Labour Commissioner** informed other departments. Eventually, the company was **sealed and placed under investigation**.

Moral of the story: Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. And criminals can't silence the innocent forever."

Anjali's Revelation

Rashmi blinked. **"Wait... when I asked what you did before coming to India, you told me this story. What's the relevance to you?"**

Anjali nodded solemnly. **"Because the team leader in that story... is me. And the father who defended me—that was your dad."**

Rashmi was stunned. **"But you were in the USA?"**

Anjali smiled. **"I was in India for two years, working by day and teleporting back to New York at night."**

Rashmi chuckled, then said thoughtfully, **"There's a saying: *Look before you leap*. I guess now it's *research a company before you accept a job*."**

"Exactly," Anjali said. **"We always think about *our* future—not the company's track record."**

"Don't worry," Rashmi said warmly. **"You can help me at the hospital. I'll put you on the board too."**

Nandini's Entry

Just then, **Nandini** emerged from her room, calling out, **"Kavitha, bring me a cup of coffee, please!"**

Noticing everyone around, she paused, brushing her hair back. **"Sorry—I didn't see you all. This time zone change is killing me. Hi, Rashmi! How are you? Namaste, Anita."**

"Namaste, Nandini," Anita replied. **"Have you returned permanently, or will you need to go back and forth?"**

"We've set up the company to be run by managers now," Nandini said, sipping the coffee Kavitha brought her. **"I don't think we need to travel anymore."**

Rashmi asked, **"Will you take the hospital back under your control?"**

Nandini shook her head. **"No need. You've taken over and are running it well. Besides, I think Kumar has something bigger in mind for us. He wouldn't have called us all back otherwise."**

Rashmi glanced at the young woman who had brought the coffee. **"Who's this? Did she come with you?"**

"Yes," Nandini said. **"This is Kavitha. She was with us in New York. You remember Kumar—he arrived from 1983 to 2017 with two girls. One of them, *Payal*, died. Kavitha took care of him after that."**

Anita looked confused. **"What is she talking about?"**

Rashmi sighed. **“To explain that, Mom, I’d have to tell you the *whole* story. But you never listen when I try.”**

Anita threw her hands up. **“Okay, okay. No explanations now. Let’s just go home. Thank you, Nandini—we’ll visit again later.”**

Scene: Anita and Reyansh’s Walk Back Home

As they walked home in the quiet aftermath of an emotionally intense day, Anita finally voiced the question that had been weighing on her mind.

“What’s this story about Kavitha coming with Kumar from 1983 to 2017?”

Rashmi responded carefully. **“That was one of Kumar’s time-travel experiences. Actually, another version of Kumar travelled from 1987 to the year 2000. But that version of him didn’t survive—he died in a skirmish.”**

Anita frowned. **“Died? What do you mean?”**

“He was murdered,” Rashmi said solemnly. **“Joy’s husband was about to attack her. Kumar stepped in to protect her, and the blow meant for her hit him instead. He was rushed to the hospital, but... Sahithi made a critical error. He didn’t make it.”**

Anita’s eyes widened. **“Has anyone else time-travelled?”**

“You already know Nandini did. And there’s Sneha—one of the other Kumars’ wives. She time-travelled too, but for medical treatment.”

The Source of Time Travel

Anita’s voice lowered, almost skeptical. **“Where are they getting this time-travel technology? Do they have a machine or something?”**

“No,” Rashmi replied. **“It’s not a machine. It’s all managed by a man named Bob. He has the ability to manipulate time and hop between timelines.”**

Anita stopped walking. **“Bob? Who is he really?”**

“From what I’ve gathered, Bob is the representative of the Gods. When the divine beings left Earth, they entrusted its protection and balance to a few select agents. Bob is one of them.”

Rashmi continued, **“One version of Kumar actually met Indrasen, the current ruler among the gods. Indrasen instructed Bob to provide Kumar with wealth and resources to carry out his work on Earth. That’s how Kumar was able to build spaceships, lead Future India Ltd, and fund so many projects.”**

The Missing Kumar

Anita's brows furrowed, clearly overwhelmed. **"You speak so highly of this Kumar... but where is he? When can we meet him? Or will he just brush us off?"**

"Right now, he's in hiding," Rashmi said. **"He called all of us back to India for a reason, but I don't know when he'll gather everyone. I expect he'll contact us when the time is right."**

"But why is he hiding?"

"He's hunting for Rakshasas," Rashmi replied. **"He believes they've infiltrated human society. Until he identifies them, none of us were supposed to be exposed. But the appearance of the alien ship forced our hand."**

At Home: A Quiet Reunion

They reached home, and Anita unlocked the door. They entered and sank into the living room sofas, fatigue and reflection heavy in the air.

Anita looked at Reyansh and whispered, **"At least you're back. I honestly didn't know where you'd gone. I never imagined I'd see you again."**

Reyansh smiled softly. **"I've been keeping tabs on all of you. In fact, Rashmi visited us once in New York—she came to purchase medical equipment. She didn't know we were there until she walked into our offices."**

Anita turned sharply. **"Rashmi never told me that. She never even hinted she had seen you."**

"We swore her to secrecy," Reyansh admitted. **"We had good reason to believe someone was watching you closely—maybe even bugging our flat. Do you remember the men who came looking for me? They followed Rashmi too. If you had been home then..."**

He didn't finish the sentence.

Anita, visibly shaken, simply nodded. The air between them hung heavy, filled with unsaid fears, relief, and the echoes of an unraveling mystery.

Chapter 2

Scene: Return to the Familiar, Changed

It was the year **2020** when **Shyam** returned to India after working abroad as a software developer. Landing at **Vizag Airport**, he booked a cab and headed straight to his hometown.

The place where he had grown up had transformed over the years. Once a quiet village, the establishment of a **bus depot** during his childhood had spurred development. Now it was a bustling **small town**, with modern facilities and a growing population.

The Family Setup

Shyam's father ran a **Suzuki bike showroom** on the main road. Above the showroom were the **family's living quarters**. Years ago, his father had sold their old house and land inside a residential lane and used the proceeds to purchase this more prominent plot. Around **15 years ago**, he constructed the **showroom with a residence above it**—a smart business and residential move.

Shyam's **uncle**—his father's younger brother—had married about **five years ago**, and it was around the time of that wedding that Shyam had originally planned to leave for the USA. Out of family obligation, he had postponed his trip to attend the wedding. However, he **never really had the opportunity to get to know his aunt** afterwards, as he left for the U.S. soon after.

A Changed Household

Upon his return, Shyam immediately noticed that the **household dynamics had changed**. The residence above the showroom had been divided into **two separate living spaces**.

- His father's portion was located near the **main staircase**.
- His uncle's unit had a **side-door entrance**.
- Though there was a **connecting door** between the two sections, it was usually kept locked and opened only on **special occasions**, such as family functions or when relatives visited.

The **bathroom arrangement** was uniquely Indian:

- One **shared bathroom** at the back, facing the road.
- Two **attached bathrooms** inside bedrooms.
- Another small **bathroom under the stairs** leading to the terrace, where they had installed a **washing machine**.

The first floor contained **six rooms**, cleverly divided so that both families had:

- One **hall**
- One **bedroom**
- One **kitchen**

His uncle's side had converted one of their rooms into a kitchen, with both kitchens having backdoor access to the **shared veranda**. If anyone needed something—like a pinch of salt or a cup of sugar—it was customary to simply walk over to the other side through the **back entrance** and ask, as is typical in many Indian joint families.

Grandmother and the Penthouse Life

Shyam's **grandmother**, his father's mother, also lived with them. She generally stayed in **his father's portion**. Though she and Shyam's aunt had limited interaction, his aunt would occasionally bring her some snacks or food items—a quiet, respectful coexistence.

Above the first floor, on the terrace, there was a **single-room penthouse**. This became Shyam's sanctuary.

Due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, he couldn't return to the USA and was working **remotely** from India. To make the space comfortable, he had an **air conditioner installed** in the penthouse. From there, he worked in peace and quiet.

During his free time, he would **watch movies, English web series**, or simply relax, appreciating the mix of comfort and isolation that came with being home, yet still apart.

Scene: New Responsibilities After Quarantine

After the first quarantine in India was lifted, **Sumithra**, Shyam's aunt, was confirmed to be **three months pregnant**—news that subtly altered the household's rhythm. Likely a consequence of the extended lockdown, when Shyam's uncle had spent more time at home, the pregnancy had brought a fresh sense of urgency to family life.

Shyam's father and uncle, who co-managed their **Suzuki bike showroom**, were now busier than ever—racing to revive the business and mitigate financial losses caused by months of inactivity. Their long working hours meant that **Shyam, still working remotely from home**, became the de facto caregiver for Sumithra.

Her **morning sickness**, combined with the early fatigue of pregnancy, required daily attention. Shyam, previously working out of the **penthouse** on the terrace, moved his workspace to the **first floor**, specifically into **his uncle's hall**, to be closer and more accessible.

This change prompted the opening of the usually shut **connecting door** between the two households—an event reserved typically for family functions. It also reignited dynamics that had previously cooled: **his grandmother** began frequent visits to Sumithra's section and started issuing small instructions to Shyam.

Although she was over **65 years old**, with a chronic back problem that made her walk stooped, she was determined to be involved. She couldn't contribute physically, but she offered **emotional support and company**. Initially, Sumithra had **resented her mother-in-law's authoritative nature**, which had been one reason behind separating the house. But now, in need of elder guidance, she allowed her in, albeit reluctantly.

Shyam's New Routine and Emotional Evolution

As travel restrictions persisted and airfares soared, **Shyam's father**—ever the frugal man—**forbade his return to the USA**, arguing it wasn't safe or practical. Fortunately, Shyam's company allowed him to continue **working from home**, so financially, things were stable.

However, his work schedule changed. While earlier he had the flexibility to work at his convenience, now he was required to **synchronize with U.S. hours**, meaning he worked **through the night** and slept during the day. His **grandmother watched over Sumithra during the day**, while Shyam spent time with her in the evenings and stayed in the bedroom until his uncle returned.

Through this shared time, **Shyam and Sumithra grew emotionally close**. Their bond strengthened as they shared long conversations—he spoke of his experiences in America, and she opened up about her **college life**, her **rebellious years**, and **youthful dreams**. Though she was **only five years older**, their rapport felt easy and natural.

Sumithra, now excused from household chores, spent most of her time either resting or engaging with family. Meals were prepared by **Shyam's mother**, assisted by a **common household help**.

Enter Soumya: A New Presence

In **November**, **Soumya**, Sumithra's younger sister, entered the household. Having recently completed her degree, she was sent by her father to live with her married sister—to **gain work experience** and **offer companionship** during pregnancy.

Though **younger than Shyam**, Soumya was technically his **aunt** by relation. In Indian social norms, such relationships often carry boundaries, though **romantic dynamics with paternal or maternal cousins were more culturally acknowledged**.

Soumya's family had previously visited, but Shyam had been away in **Chennai**, working on visa documentation. As a result, they hadn't interacted before.

Soumya's Role in the Household

Soumya was given the **hall to sleep in**, as the household had only **two rooms**. With Shyam now working nights again, he initially shifted back to the penthouse. In the evenings, **Soumya would often sit with him**, showing curiosity about his work, and sometimes assisting.

By day, she worked at the **showroom as a salesgirl**. With her **vibrant energy**, she quickly became popular among customers. In the evenings, she returned home, checked on Sumithra, and if her sister was resting, she would **spend time with Shyam**, helping him with documentation or sorting files.

Seeing how her presence helped manage household needs, Shyam eventually shifted his workspace **back to the hall**—a strategic move that made Soumya accessible to her sister when needed.

Judgment and Silent Observers

Everyone in the family accepted this arrangement—except for **Shyam's grandmother**. As with many elderly people, she viewed such male-female friendships through a **conservative lens**, perhaps uncomfortable with the evolving dynamics and proximity between the two.

Still, the two continued working together. **Soumya stayed up late into the night**, then rose early to prepare for her job at the showroom. She returned for lunch but usually found Shyam asleep. After helping Sumithra, she'd return to the showroom, allowing her **brother-in-law** to take his lunch break.

Scene: The Web of Relations

Now, you might be wondering—**what does Shyam have to do with the larger story?**

Well, **Shyam's father is a cousin of Reyansh Kumar.**

Let's trace the family lineage:

- **Reyansh's uncle** (his father's brother) had two sons:
 - **Venkata Ramana** (the elder)
 - **Ramana Murthy** (the younger)
- **Venkata Ramana**, often just called **Ramana**, is **Shyam's father.**
- **Ramana Murthy**, or simply **Murthy**, is **Sumithra's husband.**

That makes **Shyam and Reyansh second cousins**, sharing a deep-rooted family connection that ties the **village past to the interplanetary present.**

Scene: New Affections and Shifting Emotions

With time, **Soumya began to eclipse Sumithra** in Shyam's eyes. While Sumithra had once captivated him with her maturity and warmth, the emotional lines he had drawn for himself—respecting her as elder and married—had always kept his feelings contained.

But **Soumya was different.**

She was **younger, more vibrant**, and carried a free-spirited charm that stirred something deeper in him. She was not only more accessible in terms of age but also brought a **liveliness** that Sumithra lacked under the weight of pregnancy and domestic expectations.

Shyam found himself **drawn to her**, day by day. And though **technically she was his aunt by relation**, neither of them paid much attention to such formalities, especially considering their closeness in age and comfort with one another.

Isolation and a Rare Opportunity

Living in a semi-rural town with few close friends around, Shyam had no one to confide in about his growing feelings. His friends had moved away—some to Vizag, some even farther. Conversations with them were occasional and surface-level. **This internal dilemma was his alone.**

Then came a rare moment of **unsupervised freedom.**

Soumya needed to be dropped off at her native village to attend her **close friend Monica's wedding**, and Shyam was asked to drive her. It was the first time the two had **been alone together for an extended stretch.**

On the way, they stopped to enjoy **coconut water** and paused at a **mango grove** owned by Shyam's father. They plucked a few **custard apples**, ate two, and packed the rest for Soumya's family. Upon reaching the village,

Soumya's mother, worried about the delay, started to scold her—but mellowed upon seeing the fresh fruit they brought.

The Wedding Eve

Soumya was thrilled to be reunited with her friends, many of whom had studied with her in Vizag. Unlike her sister, she had spent her college years in a **more urban, hostel-like environment** and was far more socially expressive.

Shyam, with no work scheduled for Saturday night, was convinced by Soumya and her family to **stay back and help** with logistics—especially with the car.

They reached the **makeshift wedding venue**—an open field beautifully arranged with tents and lights. After dropping the rest of the family, **Soumya took Shyam to Monica's house**, where the bride-to-be was getting ready.

Inside, the energy was electric.

A group of **young, modern, energetic women** were preparing Monica. Soumya introduced Shyam to them. The moment they learned he was from the **USA, unmarried, and Soumya's nephew**, several of the women became curious.

Enter Taniya – The Bold One

Among them was **Taniya**, from the same caste as Shyam. She was **confident, assertive**, and hailed from a **politically influential family**. When the others showed interest in Shyam, **Taniya subtly laid claim**, warning the others: **"He's mine. Don't even try."**

Everyone knew not to cross Taniya. She had a way of **getting what she wanted**.

Oblivious to the whispers behind his back, Shyam was **cordial and friendly**, enjoying the attention but unaware of the silent competition brewing around him.

The Beer Run and the Toddy Stop

The girls, emboldened by their hostel lifestyle, began jokingly demanding **beer** for the party. Monica protested, saying she had no way of procuring it.

Shyam, ever helpful, offered to go get it.

Taniya insisted on joining him, and the two set off in the car. On the way, she spotted a local toddy seller and **asked him to pull over**. Shyam bought

several bottles of fresh toddy, then drove them to the **wine shop**, and returned to Monica's house with the stash.

They **smuggled the alcohol in through the back entrance**, careful not to attract attention.

With the wedding muhurta set for **4:18 AM**, they weren't concerned about being caught. Soon, the bride herself was **coaxed into drinking**, and even **Soumya joined in**, sipping from a bottle like the rest of them.

They had a servant bring dinner, and after eating, everyone **crashed on makeshift beds** arranged inside the house.

A Private Return and Morning Prep

As the night wore on, **Soumya whispered to Shyam, "Let's go home and come back in the morning."**

So the two quietly slipped away. At **3:30 AM**, **Soumya's father woke Shyam**, urging him to get ready for the ceremony.

After the wedding, the entire group of friends prepared to head back to Vizag. But before leaving, they stopped by **Sumithra's house** to congratulate her.

A Surprise Visit

After their visit with Sumithra, a few of **Soumya's friends decided to visit Shyam's room**. He was checking emails when they **barged in**, laughing and chatting freely.

With minimal furniture, they settled on his bed and began asking about his life in the USA. Of them all, **Monica seemed the most curious**, bombarding him with personal questions.

"How many girlfriends have you had?"

"What kind of experiences?"

Shyam, a little flustered, answered honestly—**hinting at his lack of physical experience**. Monica picked up on it and believed him, especially from the **modest and shy way he interacted**.

Before leaving, Monica took his number and **promised to stay in touch**.

The Quiet After the Storm

After they left to catch their bus, Shyam **closed his laptop and lay down**, feeling strangely emptied yet stirred.

Just then, **Soumya came upstairs**, saw him preparing to sleep, and quietly **went downstairs** to help her sister.

Chapter 3

Scene: A New Life in the House

January 30, 2021 – A joyful day for the household.

On this day, **Sumithra gave birth to a baby girl.**

The atmosphere at home shifted instantly. The challenges of lockdown, the emotional complexities of living under one roof, and the blurred lines of affection all gave way to a **singular, beautiful focus**—the newborn.

Shyam and His Bond with the Baby

Among everyone, **Shyam became deeply attached** to the baby from the very beginning.

He took to her as if she were his own. Whenever she was awake, Shyam was with her. If she cried, he would **soothe her in his arms**, rocking her gently on his shoulder until she fell asleep. He would often **cradle her on his lap** while working through the night. If she dozed off, he'd place her beside him on the bed, careful not to disturb her light breathing.

Shyam's life adjusted itself around the infant's rhythms:

- **He slept only when she did.**
- **He changed her diapers, massaged her gently, and kept her warm.**
- **He had little time to rest but never complained.**

What began as casual support for his aunt became a **full emotional investment**. The baby brought out something tender, patient, and fiercely protective in him.

Sumithra's New Phase

Sumithra, now a mother, cherished this shared journey. With Shyam stepping in so naturally, her own recovery became easier. She wasn't alone in this new phase—**Shyam was with her every step**, anticipating needs before she even asked.

For a young man working remote nights, the role he took on was beyond anyone's expectation. But it felt right to him. It was not obligation—it was love.

A Name is Chosen

When it came time to name the baby, the entire family gathered, emotionally overwhelmed and joyful.

They named her **Dristi**.

A name that reflected **clarity, grace, and a new beginning**.

For Shyam, Dristi wasn't just his baby cousin—**she became a symbol of grounding**, a silent force of purpose in the ever-shifting narrative of his life.

Scene: The Funeral and an Unseen Companion

It was the **end of March** when tragedy struck close to home—**Ramana's best friend passed away** from a sudden **heart attack**. He was a **Muslim**, and his last rites were conducted in accordance with **Islamic customs**.

Although **Ramana's mother** chose not to attend the funeral—likely due to religious reservations—Ramana couldn't stay away. This man had not only been his **closest friend**, but also a **key business partner**. In fact, it was through his early encouragement and support that **Ramana had grown his business** to what it was today.

Though they had a falling out in recent years—perhaps due to shifting interests or the friend's desire to pursue a different path—he had withdrawn from their partnership gracefully, leaving the business entirely in Ramana's hands.

Out of both **respect and deep personal loss**, **Ramana and Shyam** attended the funeral together. It was a **quiet, dignified** affair, filled with grief and sincere prayers.

But **unknown to them**, something **unseen** came back with them that day.

An Ominous Presence

Later that evening, the house felt different. Still, no one noticed anything overtly strange.

Not yet.

But what neither Ramana nor Shyam realized was that **a spirit had followed them home**—the **ghost of a Muslim woman**, possibly connected to the friend who had passed away.

Why she followed them, and what she wanted, remained a mystery. But her presence would slowly begin to **disrupt the delicate balance** of life in the house—already bustling with a newborn, emotional complexities, and shifting relationships.

The ghost named Fatima became attached to Shyam. Fatima had died during childbirth and never experienced the love of a child. When she saw Shyam's

affection for Dristi, she grew emotionally attached to him. Wanting to remain unnoticed, she simply found comfort in holding the baby and caring for it quietly.

A few days later, Ramana's mother passed away in her sleep due to a heart attack. Her death, while saddening, was not deeply mourned, as she had been suffering from chronic back pain and passed away peacefully. The family informed all the relatives. Since Reyansh was missing, Anita attended the post-funeral ceremonies with her father.

Everyone kept asking about Reyansh, but Anita couldn't give them a satisfactory answer. Eventually, she claimed he was engaged in confidential government work. Whether they believed her or not didn't matter to her.

Shyam's grandmother's soul didn't linger long and departed after the funeral rites. During these few days, Fatima hid in the penthouse room, as several religious rituals (pujas) were being performed in the house.

Later, Fatima shifted her attachment to Soumya, who had begun caring for the baby, as Shyam became preoccupied with work.

However, this arrangement didn't last long. Shyam received a call from the United States to resume his duties. Reluctantly, he booked a ticket and returned to America. There, he moved back into a rented flat he shared with a few coworkers. He had continued paying rent for this flat during his time in India, keeping it secret from his father.

A few days later, an opportunity arose at his office, and he recommended Soumya for a job. Her parents did not object to her moving to the USA since Shyam would be there to support her. Though she was originally supposed to shift to a different city, Shyam's transfer was delayed, and she ended up staying with him.

As they were already comfortable with each other, they had no hesitation about sharing a single room. However, living together in a small space in a foreign country felt quite different from life in their village home.

They began commuting to work together, returning together, cooking meals, and chatting in the evenings—this deepened their bond.

One evening, after attending an office party, they returned home slightly intoxicated. What began as playful flirting soon escalated into spontaneous sex. That night marked the beginning of a physical relationship between them. Despite being aunt and nephew, they were of the same age group and had shared a close bond since they first met, which gradually led to intimacy.

From that point onward, they continued their sexual relationship and started using protection.

Thus, their life in the United States took a significant turn.

Chapter 4

A week after returning from New York, Reyansh received a sealed envelope via courier. Inside was a software contract from the Indian Navy, instructing him to report immediately to their Logistics Software Division in Mumbai to take over a new project.

He booked a flight for the following Monday morning and arrived in Mumbai by 8 a.m. From the airport, he took a cab to a guesthouse owned by Kumar's International. After dropping off his luggage, he proceeded to the Ghatkopar Navy Yard—home to warehouses that supply materials to the Navy's ship fleet stationed in the Mumbai region.

At the gate, Reyansh waited at the visitors' centre while his entry pass was prepared. Upon calling the contact number provided in the contract, a staff member was sent to assist him with the formalities. Once he received his pass, Reyansh made his way to the Software Division, where he was introduced to Lieutenant Commander Archana.

Lt. Cdr. Archana introduced him to three team members currently working on the project: two senior Stores Superintendents and a Stores Clerk—all civilians. Another developer, a young woman, had joined under a contract-to-hire arrangement. Archana informed Reyansh that more developers would be joining soon and that Kumar had assigned him to lead the project's new development requirements.

Reyansh inquired whether they would need more computers for the growing team. Archana assured him that a nearby training cell had a development setup with around 10 workstations, and advised him to go there and evaluate the current status of the project.

Following her instructions, Reyansh walked to the training cell, asking for directions along the way. After about 15 minutes, he found the building, climbed to the first floor, and was guided by a peon to the development area. There, he met several developers—some permanent staff and others on contract—working on different modules. The permanent employees, as typical in many government roles, appeared indifferent, while the contractual hires were enthusiastic and eager to contribute.

Reyansh began interacting with the team, offering support using his advanced software development knowledge.

Two days later, Archana called him to her office and asked, "Reyansh, where did you disappear?"

He replied, "You asked me to go to the training cell and work from there."

“That’s fine, but I’d prefer you to work from here. Go meet Vishal—he’ll explain the project details.”

Reyansh agreed and went in search of Vishal, whom he found seated at the head of a table in the Software Group’s cabin, surrounded by six computers. One by one, team members were approaching Vishal with software bugs and updates, which he was diligently resolving. It took about half an hour before he could attend to Reyansh.

When Reyansh asked about the project, Vishal directed him to a computer and told him to familiarize himself with the system.

Two days later, the department head returned from leave. Through Archana, Reyansh learned that her name was Jenny. She had joined the Navy at a young age, initially working in Vizag. After marrying and spending five years there, she was transferred to Mumbai, where she had been working ever since. Vishal worked under her supervision.

Vishal assigned Reyansh to a specific project and then left to the training cell to work on another task. Reyansh continued developing code and also assisted Jessica with maintenance work.

One day, a Stores In-Charge approached Archana with a problem, and she asked Reyansh to investigate. The issue was that the stock levels shown in the system didn’t match the physical inventory.

Reyansh accompanied the officer to the storehouse and performed a physical stock check. They found discrepancies between the system and the actual inventory. However, the physical records contained no documentation indicating that items had been issued or dispatched.

Given that the materials were related to national security, Reyansh promptly reported the issue to Archana. She escalated the matter to her superior, and soon the issue reached the Military Secretary (MS). An inquiry committee was formed, and a formal investigation was initiated.

Chapter 5

It was a Friday when the Military Secretary (MS) instructed Archana to visit the Dockyard along with Reyansh. However, since Reyansh was feeling unwell due to an infection, Abhijit was asked to accompany them instead.

The three of them traveled to the Dockyard in Archana's car and completed their assigned tasks—checking the software systems and conducting user training. After wrapping up their scheduled work, they were invited to board a ship docked nearby to assist users who were experiencing issues with the onboard software.

Once onboard, they went below deck to inspect the computer systems. While troubleshooting, the connection to the central system was lost. As they returned to the deck, they realized that the ship had started moving out to sea.

Surprised, Archana approached a passing sailor to ask why the ship was leaving the dock. The sailor explained that due to unforeseen issues at the Dockyard, the ship had been temporarily ordered to head out to sea.

Since the departure was only for a short duration, the group decided to visit the ship's canteen for some tea and snacks. After their break, they returned to the deck, gazing at the distant Dockyard and wondering when they would be able to return to shore.

Reyansh and Abhijit awoke to the sound of Archana's voice calling them.

Abhijit opened his eyes and asked groggily, "What happened, ma'am?"

"Look around you," she replied calmly.

Abhijit turned his head and was stunned to see nothing but water stretching in every direction—no land in sight. By now, Reyansh had stirred. He squinted and briefly shut his eyes again as the harsh evening sunlight hit his face. After blinking a few times, he sat up, disoriented, and looked around with concern.

Seeing only endless sea, he turned to Archana. "What's going on, ma'am? Where are we?"

Archana responded bluntly, "We're in the middle of the sea."

Abhijit, bewildered, asked, "How did we get here?"

"Obviously, someone threw us overboard," Archana said.

Reyansh looked puzzled. "But who would do such a thing?"

“Who else?” she replied. “The people who were threatened by our investigation into the missing stock. Unfortunately, Abhijit got caught in the crossfire, though he had nothing to do with it.”

“It’s okay, ma’am,” Abhijit said. “I’ve been trained to handle situations like this.”

“What do you mean by trained?” Archana asked, raising an eyebrow.

“I was trained in the Merchant Navy. Survival techniques were part of the curriculum.”

“You never mentioned that.”

“Well, I joined here for software development, so I didn’t think it was necessary to bring up.”

“Can you tell where we are?”

“We’re far from the coast,” Archana said, scanning the horizon. “From the sun’s position, I’d guess we’re a considerable distance from Mumbai. We have nothing to paddle with, no food, and darkness will fall in less than thirty minutes.”

Reyansh asked, “Do you think the sea might carry us to land?”

Archana shook her head. “Look at the water—it’s completely calm. There’s no wind, and even if there were, we have no sails or means to catch it.”

Despite the situation, Reyansh remained composed. He had faced far more dangerous circumstances before and had faith that someone would come looking for him—someone with access to technologies more advanced than the world could imagine.

Archana, for her part, had been trained not to panic. Her mind was focused, calm, and analytical, ready to assess their circumstances and formulate a plan.

As for Abhijit, he drew strength from watching Archana. Her steady presence was like a rock amidst the uncertainty, giving him the courage to remain hopeful.

Chapter 6

Kumar woke up and looked around. He had been sleeping in a park—a place that felt familiar. The broken water fountain and old features like the low boundary walls lined with iron spikes were unchanged. There were gaps in the wall where the spikes were bent or missing, allowing people to slip in and out without using the locked gates.

He had been coming to this park for as long as he could remember. Beside him was a tote bag, which he had used as a pillow. Picking it up, he began walking toward his home, which was just a five-minute walk away.

As he passed the local police station—now freshly painted—he turned right at the next narrow lane. The area looked somewhat changed. An open ground he remembered had shrunk, partially overtaken by new buildings. At the end of the road, he turned right again and paused. The two-storey house where his family once lived had been replaced by a modern five-storey apartment building. His family used to occupy the ground floor, while his grandfather's family lived on the first floor. Though his immediate family had moved out two years ago, his grandfather had continued living upstairs.

But now, the new building featured a parking area on the ground floor and a small room at the far end. He approached the room. A man inside looked out and asked, "Whom do you want to meet?"

Kumar replied, "My grandfather used to live here. Do you know where they moved?"

"What's your grandfather's name?"

Kumar told him.

"No one by that name lives here now. The owners stay on the first floor. I'll take you to them—they might know something. I'm new here."

The man led Kumar up the stairs to the first floor, which was fully occupied by the building's owners. The watchman rang the doorbell and stepped back.

An elderly woman, around sixty, opened the door and looked at the watchman questioningly. He mentioned Kumar's grandfather's name and explained that this boy was looking for his grandparents.

The woman squinted at Kumar and said, "He passed away a long time ago. After that, his wife and sister vacated the house. His sister moved in with her brother, and his wife went to live with her daughters. You look familiar. Who are you?"

"I'm Kumar, aunty. You look older than when I last saw you. We've only been gone for a year."

"Are you Surya? But you look so young! Where are you coming from?"

"I went to the village to collect my SSC certificates."

"Come, have some breakfast."

She led him to the dining table and served him a plate of idlis with chutney. As he began eating, he realized just how hungry he was. After finishing, he asked for another serving. She obliged and commented, "These days, youngsters don't care for idlis—they only want fast food."

He washed his hands and stood aside, unsure of where to go next.

The old woman reminded him, "Your grandfather's brother still lives nearby. Why don't you check there?"

"Thanks, aunty. I'll do that."

Kumar came downstairs, thanked the watchman, and headed toward his small grandfather's house, near Panja Centre. It would take him around ten minutes to get there.

He reached the road that led to the house, located on Gandhi Hill, opposite the railway station. The house stood on a slope, and he had to climb the small hill to reach it. As he walked, he noticed a large, gated bungalow—grand and imposing, like something from a movie. He was surprised; it hadn't been there the last time he visited.

He had hoped someone from the family would still be living in their old home. But when he turned sharply into the lane and approached what used to be their house, he found it replaced by a five-storey apartment block. Stunned, unsure of what to do, he looked around and spotted a cement bench opposite the new bungalow. He sat down there.

He was lost in thought. He didn't have the address of his parents, who had recently moved to Bombay. Everything in Vijayawada had changed in his absence.

Then, he remembered his small grandfather's shop in the market. It was a bit far—about a 20-minute walk—but he decided to go there.

Just as he stood up to leave, a watchman from the bungalow approached him.

"What are you doing here?" the watchman asked.

Kumar replied, "My grandparents used to live next door. But now the building is gone. I was just about to go look for them at their shop."

The watchman nodded. "Madam is calling you. Go meet her before you leave."

Kumar followed the watchman into the bungalow. Although the door was open, the watchman rang the bell. A maid-like girl answered and gestured for Kumar to follow her. She led him down a hallway, stopped at a room, and said, "Wait here," before going inside. Moments later, she returned and told him he could enter.

Inside the room sat a woman, perhaps in her mid-twenties, on a padded chair. She looked him over and asked, "What's your name?"

"Kumar, madam," he replied.

"What kind of name is that? Just Kumar?"

"No, madam. Everyone just calls me Kumar."

"Whose house were you looking for?"

"My grandfather's. But now there's an apartment block where their house used to be."

"So you came to the Gunturu house. But they sold that property long ago. After your grandfather passed away, his son sold it and moved to Hyderabad."

"I've only been gone a year... and all this has changed."

"Where have you been?"

"I was studying for my 10th in our village. I just collected my SSC certificates and came here, only to find everything different."

"Show me your certificates."

Kumar pulled out a plastic folder from his tote bag and handed it to her.

She read aloud, "Name: Surya Kumar. Passed: 2022. This photo matches you."

"What year did you say, madam?"

"Your SSC certificate says 2022. Is something wrong?"

"What year is it now?"

"It's June 2022. You're acting like you've come from another world. And what's with your hair—some new trend?"

"I haven't had a haircut in six months. There was no barber in the village, and I was focused on my exams."

"Where are your parents?"

"They've already moved to Bombay. I stayed behind to collect my certificates. I was supposed to get their new address from my grandfather. Now I don't know what to do."

"You mentioned checking the shop—go ahead. Take a cycle from the watchman, check if they're there, and come back."

She pressed a button and the maid appeared. "Take him to the watchman and get him a cycle."

Kumar stretched his hands toward his folder. The lady stopped him.

"Leave the certificates here—they'll be safe with me. Go check about your family and come back. Then we'll see what to do."

Reluctantly, Kumar left the folder and followed the maid outside. She showed him a cycle and told him to use it.

Kumar pedaled briskly to the market, noting how much everything had changed. When he arrived, he parked the cycle and entered a narrow lane leading to his grandfather's shop. But at the counter stood a stranger.

He asked about his uncle.

The man replied, "He sold the shop and moved to Hyderabad. I don't have any contact details."

Disheartened, Kumar cycled back to the bungalow, parked the bicycle, and rang the bell. The maid answered and took him back to the lady.

He explained that he couldn't find his uncle or the shop. Everything was gone. "Now where do I go?" he asked helplessly.

The lady looked at him kindly. "Stay here with us until you find some information about your parents. I'll keep your certificates safe."

She called the maid. "Give him lunch."

In the kitchen, Kumar said, "I need to bathe before I eat. I never eat without a morning bath."

The girl gave him a strange look. "Are you a Brahmin or something?"

"No, nothing like that. I just have this habit."

She led him to a bathroom. "You can bathe here," she said and left.

Kumar took out fresh clothes and a towel from his tote bag, went inside, and locked the door. After bathing, he came out wearing a towel and walked to the prayer room. He lit a lamp, incense sticks, and a piece of camphor. Then, he rang the bell and performed aarti to the gods.

When the girl served lunch, he took the plate to the prayer room, placed it before the gods, and said a small prayer, offering the meal as prasadam. Then he returned to the kitchen, sat on a wooden plank, and ate his lunch quietly.

After finishing, he washed the plate and set it aside. The girl came in and said, "Madam is calling you."

He followed her to the lady's room.

"Did you perform pooja?" she asked.

"Yes, madam. I do it every day at home."

"Then do it here as well, every day while you stay with us. Do you want to join college?"

"I don't know what to do. I couldn't find my family... I feel like an orphan."

She smiled warmly. "As long as I'm alive, you'll never be an orphan. Tomorrow, you'll join college."

Kumar looked at her, puzzled. "Why are you doing all this for me? What's our relation?"

"My grandmother used to say that a man named Kumar once helped her when she was young. Because of him, our entire lineage was saved."

"What was your grandmother's name?"

"Nimisha. And my grandfather was Zamindar Purushotham."

"And your name, madam?"

"I was born after my grandmother passed away, so my father—Harshith—named me Nimisha."

"Can I call you *Akka*?"

"Of course. I don't have any siblings. I'd love that."

"Where are your parents?"

"They passed away last year in an accident."

"I'm sorry, Akka. From now on, I'll be your younger brother. Tell me more about this Kumar."

"He helped our family during a very difficult time. I might still have a photo of him in my grandmother's things. Come, let's look."

She led Kumar to a locked room and opened it. Inside was an old trunk. She rummaged through it, eventually pulling out a bundle of photographs. She flipped through them until she found a black-and-white photo and compared it to Kumar.

The resemblance was uncanny.

She looked at him with wide eyes, kissed him on the cheek, and showed him the photo. "This is you. Or someone who looked exactly like you. I think God sent you to me to fill the void of a sibling I never had."

Chapter 7

Reyansh woke up with a jolt. Everything around him was dark and still. Looking up, he saw a clear, cloudless sky studded with stars. As he scanned the heavens, he tried to recall the names of the constellations.

A faint streak of light was rising on one side of the horizon. *That must be the east*, he thought. He turned to wake Abhijit, but he was still fast asleep. Then he gently called out, “Archana Ma’am.”

Archana opened her eyes and looked toward the silhouette of Reyansh in the dim pre-dawn light.

“Yes? What is it?” she asked sleepily.

“It’ll be daylight soon. What should we do?”

“There’s not much we can do except wait and hope a ship passes by,” she replied.

“But nothing has passed us since we woke up on this boat. Maybe we’re not in a regular shipping route.”

“I know,” she said. “I’m from the Navy, remember? We should try to look for land. If we don’t find an island soon, we’ll die of thirst—hunger we can bear, but not dehydration.”

“Can you see anything on the horizon?”

“Yes,” she said after squinting into the distance. “There might be a small island. Let’s try steering the boat in that direction.”

“But how do we steer it?”

“Use your hands to paddle—we’ll let the sea do the rest.”

It took them nearly two hours of slow paddling to reach close enough to make out the outline of an island. During that time, Abhijit woke up and immediately joined Reyansh in paddling.

“There’s a building on the island, ma’am!” Abhijit said excitedly. “Looks like a bungalow!”

With renewed hope, the three of them pushed harder, guiding the boat toward the shore. Another two hours later, they finally reached the island and dragged the boat onto the sand. Ahead of them was a flight of stone steps leading toward the bungalow.

They climbed briskly and reached the front door within fifteen minutes. Archana approached first, trying to locate a handle. Instead, she found a small panel and pulled it open to reveal a hand scanner. She placed her palm on it, but nothing happened. Abhijit tried next—still, no response.

Reyansh suddenly remembered something. "Wait," he said, stepping forward. "My daughters once had an experience with this type of scanner." He placed his hand on the panel. A thumb scanner emerged. Without hesitation, he rubbed some saliva on his thumb and pressed it onto the scanner.

A mechanical click sounded—the bolt released, and the door slowly swung open.

Abhijit looked at him in astonishment. "How did you know to do that?"

Reyansh shrugged. "My daughters encountered the same system once."

Archana hesitated. "Is it safe to enter? What if the owners object?"

"Nothing to worry about," Reyansh assured her. "This building belongs to our relatives. It's one of the most secure places in the world. Only those with similar DNA can access it. Let's explore inside."

He flicked a switch near the doorway, and a row of soft lights blinked on, illuminating the room in a warm glow.

"Wow... what a place," Abhijit murmured, stepping inside.

The room was filled with antiques—gleaming, dust-free, and clearly well-maintained. It was obvious someone visited regularly to clean and preserve the collection.

"Someone's taking care of this place," Reyansh said. "We're not alone here. I'm sure someone will arrive soon. Maybe we'll even find a way off this island."

Abhijit, stomach rumbling, said, "First, let's find something to eat. I'm starving."

They made their way to the kitchen, which was surprisingly well-stocked. From the refrigerator, they took three bottles of water and quenched their thirst. Then they found packaged food items that could be heated in the microwave. While the food was warming, they settled into a comfortable sofa in the main hall.

As they waited, Abhijit wandered over to a polished silver vase. A small note beside it explained its significance and date. Intrigued, he began exploring the room, marveling at the various antiques.

"Is this some kind of museum?" he asked in wonder.

Reyansh shook his head. "No, I don't think so."

They both turned toward him, curious. "How do you know?"

"I've heard of this place. I know a little about how it came to exist. And I believe there's a way out from here too."

He stood and returned to the kitchen. Soon, he emerged carrying two plates of food, handed them to Archana and Abhijit, and went back to fetch his own. He sat with them and ate in silence.

After finishing, he took his plate to the kitchen, washed it, and placed it on the drying rack. When he returned, Archana and Abhijit were still eating.

"I'm going to look around," he said. "There may be a room here that reveals the path back to the outside world."

And with that, Reyansh began his quiet search through the mysterious, hidden bungalow.

Chapter 8

Suchitra's Story

In another part of India, Suchitra—who harbored two souls within her—was kidnapped and sold to a madam by Raaj and Suresh. These two men, who had a history of trafficking girls in their past lives, had served life sentences and were recently released.

Suchitra, by nature, was a mild-mannered girl. However, when subjected to unbearable situations, the boy's soul within her would emerge to protect her. This made her strangely resilient to the harsh realities of life in the madam's house. Even the madam's henchmen feared her due to her erratic "blow-hot, blow-cold" demeanor. They never knew when she might snap. When the boy's soul took over, she became unbelievably strong—once even breaking a goon's arm with a single twist. From that moment on, they left her alone, vowing to take revenge only once she came of age.

Island Surveillance

Far away, in a secure island bunker in the Indian Ocean, a group of operatives monitored satellite feeds. One operative noticed activity on a screen and called out, "Prasad, someone just entered the island bungalow."

Prasad approached the screen. "That man looks like Atul's grandfather."

Another operative nodded. "Let's notify Atul."

A message was sent to Atul, who replied: *Find out what they're doing in the middle of the sea.*

Reyansh's Discovery

Meanwhile, Reyansh wandered through the bungalow, searching for a secret room—specifically, a transporter. Based on what he had learned from Rashmi and others, he suspected that one of the locked rooms might hide it. Eventually, he found a door secured by biometric authentication. Repeating the same DNA-based process he used at the entrance, the door unlocked. Inside was a room full of boxes, and in the corner stood a lift-like transporter. It was powered on and fully functional.

Not wanting Archana and Abhijit to discover the boxes just yet, Reyansh discreetly turned off the transporter. He located a box labeled "**Mind Communication Devices**", opened it, and fitted himself with an advanced communication earpiece. After providing his name and contact details, the device configured itself.

He quickly sent a secure message requesting help and mentioned that he had disabled the transporter to prevent unauthorized use.

Mobilization and Rescue

Atul received the message and immediately contacted Kumar.

“Reyansh needs help. He disabled the transporter and appears stranded on the island.”

Kumar replied, “I’ll handle it. You continue surveillance.”

Kumar then contacted a high-ranking Navy official and explained the situation.

“There’s a leak in the Ministry of Operations,” the officer admitted. “Apparently, the MS received a phishing email posing as official orders, instructing them to send a team to inspect software at the dockyard. The order didn’t come from higher command. The trio has gone missing in the Arabian Sea. I’m dispatching a search ship immediately.”

Kumar relayed this to Atul and instructed, “Send a helicopter with replacements—one female, two males. If someone comes looking for the trio with harmful intentions, they’ll be misled. Ensure they’re monitored.”

Atul complied, dispatching the team to the island.

Evacuation to Safety

Soon, a helicopter approached the island. Hearing the sound, Archana and Abhijit stepped outside to see it descending on an open patch of land. From it emerged a woman in Army camouflage and two men in civilian clothes.

The woman saluted Archana. “Lieutenant Sainetra reporting, ma’am. We’ve been ordered to escort you to safety. Please board the helicopter.”

The trio boarded and were flown to Juhu, where they landed in an open plot and were then escorted to a secure bungalow.

Inside, they were asked to rest. A woman named Sravanthi introduced herself as Kumar Sir’s personal assistant and led them to a cabin.

Shortly after, Kumar entered.

Archana and Abhijit stared, surprised at his resemblance to Reyansh.

“You must be wondering why I look like Reyansh,” Kumar said. “We share the same bloodline, in a way.”

Archana asked, “Why are we here?”

Kumar replied, "To explain that, I need to go back a bit. I was called by the Defence Ministry to investigate suspected leakages of sensitive materials from the three armed forces. We began with the Navy. Our cover was a software audit project that embedded our agents within naval facilities.

Reyansh noticed discrepancies in inventory and reported them not only to Archana, but also to us. We escalated the matter to the Defence Ministry. Unfortunately, the report leaked, and those involved in the theft tried to eliminate you three by abandoning you at sea.

Luckily, you made it to our secured storage facility on the island. When Reyansh contacted us, even we were shocked at the extent of their desperation. The Ministry has been informed of your safe return. We're waiting for their next move."

Archana asked, "Do you suspect someone high up is involved in this?"

"It appears that way. Someone within the Ministry's communication line might be facilitating these thefts. Until the situation is under control, you will be our guests."

Kumar called Sravanthi and asked her to show Archana and Abhijit to their rooms. Then he turned to Reyansh.

A Deeper Conspiracy

"What's happening, Reyansh?" Kumar asked.

"There seems to be internal sabotage. People inside the depot may be aiding the thefts. We couldn't identify them, but now that this incident occurred, they might slip up."

Kumar leaned forward. "You brought us in from New York. What about the alien signals? Have we heard anything more?"

"Not yet. No confirmation from Mars or from government intercepts. We don't know if the incoming are allies or enemies. We're preparing for the worst, just in case."

"What kind of preparations?"

"We expect them to land on Indian soil. Drones are on standby to track their movements. The U.S. is involved too, monitoring via satellite. Our priority is to secure all critical installations."

"What about EM (Electromagnetic) warfare?"

"We've deployed global electronic countermeasures. Our goal is planetary safety first—whether they're friend or foe will be determined later."

"Did you get any advanced info from Bob?"

"He hasn't contacted us since the merger. He might have gone to meet his superior."

"Do you think he went to Mars?"

"Maybe not. He likely bypassed Mars to go directly to his superior's location. He used Mars as an intermediary last time only because he didn't want to reveal his base."

"What about Asur?"

"No progress yet. We're investigating Ananth, the antagonist in our film project. Nirmala is undercover as his assistant, and Atul is tracking that lead."

"You think Ananth fits the profile?"

"He does. He's secretive, over six feet tall, and physically imposing. South Indian by appearance, but fair-skinned. He avoids the press and never allows photographs. Atul suspects he has even kidnapped Nirmala to keep her under control."

"Why not confront him now?"

"We'll wait until filming wraps. After that, we'll confront him directly."

"What if he disappears?"

"We're tracking him. He was recently injured during a shoot and had rods placed in his knees. We embedded a tracker in his leg. He can't vanish."

"And if he's not Asur?"

"We're still searching. We won't stop just because he fits the profile."

"I hope you find Asur soon. It's hard to work with the fear of being targeted."

Kumar nodded. "Do you think abandoning you in the sea was a move to eliminate you?"

"I can't say for sure. Until we have all the facts, we can't assume anything."

"What will you do now?"

"I'll head to Hyderabad for a while. Lay low. Think things through."

Suchitra, who housed two souls within her, had been force-fed female hormones ever since she was brought into the madam's lair. Now nearing the age of ten, the madam and her henchmen were closely watching her, waiting for her to reach puberty—a milestone that, in their twisted trade, would significantly raise her "value."

However, the madam began to grow suspicious. She suspected that Suchitra might be hiding signs of puberty and discreetly questioned the other girls in

the house about her condition. The girls, protecting her, feigned ignorance and claimed that she had not yet started puberty.

Reassured by their responses, the madam decided to let the matter rest—for the moment.

But her goons weren't convinced. They began pressuring the madam to sell Suchitra to a VIP client, convinced that hiding her any longer would be a loss in business. The madam, however, was adamant. Selling a girl who hadn't reached puberty could destroy her reputation. If word got out, she would lose her standing in the underworld and no longer be able to command premium prices for the girls in her control.

Frustrated but obedient, the goons continued to monitor Suchitra's activities. At one point, they even took her to a lady doctor, under the pretense of checking her developmental progress.

But the doctor, sensing the truth and disgusted by their intentions, took matters into her own hands. She scolded the men and, unbeknownst to them, prescribed anti-puberty medication disguised as puberty-inducing hormones. The result was the exact opposite of what they had hoped for—delaying Suchitra's puberty even further and shielding her, for a time, from the fate that awaited her.

Chapter 9

Surya Kumar began living with Nimisha Madam and soon enrolled in a local college. Nimisha provided him with a bicycle for his commute and ensured he had quality clothes, shoes, and accessories to project the image of someone from an affluent family.

One day, Surya developed a slight fever but insisted on attending college because he had an exam. Concerned for his health and dedication, Nimisha arranged for a car and driver to take him. From that day forward, she regularly sent him to college by car.

His arrival at college in a chauffeur-driven car drew attention, particularly from some of the girls, who soon befriended him and occasionally asked for rides home. This new visibility quickly made him popular among students. In his spare time, Surya began learning to drive. Eventually, Nimisha gifted him a moped, instructing him to use it until he reached the legal age for driving.

Despite his popularity, Surya did not cultivate many friendships with boys. A few attempted to befriend him, mostly intrigued by the group of girls around him, but Surya quickly saw through their motives and kept his distance. Instead, he formed a close circle with a few intellectually inclined boys who shared his interest in academics. Nimisha supported this group by providing a study room in her bungalow and instructed the housemaid, Deepa, to offer them snacks.

Initially, Deepa disrupted their study sessions by frequently checking in under the pretext of offering help. Surya brought it to Nimisha's attention, and she advised Deepa not to disturb them unless called. Impressed by their discipline and academic performance, Nimisha reiterated the importance of letting them study in peace.

Over time, a few girls also joined the study group. To maintain decorum, Nimisha installed CCTV cameras in the study room. Surya didn't object, as his sole focus was on studies, and he didn't want anyone to misuse the opportunity they were given.

The College Trip

One day, the college announced a privately organized picnic. Although the college itself did not sponsor the event, some of the lecturers took the initiative. They approached Nimisha for financial support. She generously donated enough to cover the bus and accommodation, while the students covered the remaining costs.

The trip began in Vijayawada, and the group toured temples across southwestern Andhra Pradesh, finally reaching the sacred Sri Sailam Temple. After taking a holy bath and visiting the Mallikarjuna Swamy temple, they returned to their rooms to rest and discuss what to do next.

One student suggested visiting the Ista Kameshwari Devi Temple, a smaller shrine located deep within the jungle. His uncle had once visited the temple and told him that the path could only be traversed by jeep, as the terrain was rough and the road damaged.

Some students were intrigued and expressed interest in joining the visit. Others preferred to rest or explore local temples. The group wanting to visit the Devi temple inquired about hiring a jeep, but no drivers were willing to take them there due to the dangerous roads. Instead, locals advised them to walk, mentioning that many pilgrims made the journey on foot.

Taking their advice, the group began walking behind another group of devotees headed in the same direction. The trek to the temple took about four and a half hours. When they arrived, they found the temple to be small and located below ground level. They had to descend a flight of steps to reach the sanctum. Devotees advised them to gently press on a particular spot on the deity's sculpture, which was said to feel like a sponge. A small niche on the idol's body indeed gave a soft sensation when touched.

After spending time at the temple, they opened the food they had brought and shared a simple meal. By the time they began their return journey, it was already close to 5 p.m.

While returning, one of the boys noticed a fruit tree and the group stopped briefly to pluck some fruits. When they returned to the path, the original group they had been following had already moved ahead and was out of sight.

Confident they could find their way back, they continued walking, but as dusk settled and darkness crept in, they had to rely on mobile phone flashlights to light the way. Without the original group to guide them, they missed a crucial turn and lost their way.

After wandering for some time, they stumbled upon a small hamlet with a few huts. They approached the villagers, explained that they had gotten lost, and asked if they could spend the night.

The villagers welcomed them warmly, offered food, and gave them a place to rest. Exhausted from hours of walking, the students fell into a deep sleep almost immediately.

Surya awoke to find a girl from the hamlet sitting quietly beside his bed. She was the same girl who had served them dinner the night before.

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he sat up and asked, "What happened?"

She replied simply, "Come with me."

"Where?"

"Don't ask questions. Just come. I want to show you something."

Curious, Surya got up and followed her. She took his hand and led the way, lighting their path with a small hurricane lantern. They walked in silence for about twenty minutes, making their way to a small hillock nestled at the edge of the forest.

There, hidden among the rocks, was a modest cave housing a shrine—the sacred abode of the tribal goddess.

She turned to him and said softly, "Pray to the goddess. Ask her for a boon."

Obediently, Surya folded his hands before the idol, closed his eyes, and prayed with all his heart, asking the goddess to reveal information about his parents and siblings.

As he finished his prayer, the oil lamp in front of the goddess suddenly flared brighter, then gradually returned to its normal glow.

The girl whispered, "The goddess has accepted your prayer. Your request will be fulfilled."

Surya gave one more respectful *namaste* to the goddess and stepped outside with her.

She looked at him with a knowing smile and said, "You must be a *Karanajanmudu*—someone born with a divine purpose. Otherwise, the Devi wouldn't have granted your wish on your very first visit."

Surya shook his head. "What purpose could I possibly have? I was left an orphan. I'm living under someone's kindness. Nimisha only took me in because I reminded her of someone who helped her grandmother. I'm still completely dependent on her."

The girl held his hand, looked directly into his eyes, and said gently, "You gave her life. That's why she's helping you. She sees you as someone special—as family. She's like a granddaughter to you."

Surya frowned. "She's not much older than me. How can she be like a granddaughter?"

"I said *like* a granddaughter," she smiled. "Not literally. She treats you like a brother—and you mean more to her than you realize. You are destined to

do great things, and the Devi's blessings will always be with you. Come, let's go back to the hamlet."

She escorted him back to the hut and left quietly. Surya lay down, but sleep evaded him. His mind kept replaying the encounter, filled with questions. *What exactly had the Devi shown him with the flickering flame? Would he truly find out about his family? Who would tell him?* His mind raced with uncertainty, and only in the early hours of the morning did he finally drift off to sleep.

The Next Morning

Surya awoke when the same girl came to wake him.

He sat up and said, "Thank you—for everything you did for me. I don't even know your name."

"My name is Pravalika," she replied with a smile, "but everyone here calls me Chitti."

"Okay, Chitti. Thank you again. You've opened my eyes."

She shook her head. "I didn't do anything. Everything is guided by the Devi. I was just a medium. You truly are a *Karanajanmudu*. I hope your wish comes true soon. Your friends are ready to leave. I hope I get to see you again when it does."

"I'll come back when it's fulfilled," he promised. "Just to thank you."

With that, he took his leave and joined his friends, who were following a local resident guiding them back to the temple town. Surya kept the events of the night to himself. It was something too personal to share.

Back in Town

By the time they returned from the trip, Nimisha had left for Vizag. Her uncle, Prathap, had suffered a stroke and had to be hospitalized. She had taken Deepa with her to assist.

Surya returned to an empty house.

It was around 11 a.m. on a Sunday. Feeling tired from the journey and his late night at the hamlet, he had slept in.

Around this time, Puja and Nisha—two girls who lived nearby and were regular visitors at the bungalow—dropped by. They planned to go out for a movie and came to call him.

Since the watchman recognized them and knew of their frequent visits, he allowed them inside without hesitation.

He was dreaming something and he had an erection. Seeing him sleeping, they were about to go back, but Puja saw his erection and showed it to Nisha. They stood over him for a few minutes watching him and decided to help him out.

They both closed the door locked from inside and sat on either side of him on the bed. Puja took the initiative and opened his zipper on the shorts. As he was not wearing underwear his dick flung out. Puja took his dick in her mouth and started to give him a blow job. Surya was in his dreams enjoying the sex. As it happened at the exact same time Kumar was enjoying his honeymoon. Being on the same timeline, his actions and thoughts flowed to Surya and he was enjoying the thoughts passed on to him. That is the reason for his erection.

Now due to a blow job given to him by Puja, he ejaculated in his sleep. They adjusted his zip, opened the door and went away to sit in the study room.

Then, Surya's mind was suddenly overwhelmed by a flood of memories—starting with Kumar's and continuing with recollections from multiple timelines embedded within Kumar's experiences. The torrent of information left his consciousness swirling in confusion and awe.

Meanwhile, in the Living Room

A short while later, Puja and Nisha dropped by to check on Surya. Seeing him still asleep, they tiptoed into the room.

"He's still sleeping," Puja whispered. "Let's not wake him up."

Just as they were about to leave, Nisha paused. She leaned in closer, observing his closed eyes.

"Look at his eyelids," she said. "They're moving rapidly. He must be in REM sleep."

"So that's what REM looks like?" Puja said, intrigued. "I wonder what kind of dream he's having!"

Nisha replied, "Must be your blowjob."

They giggled softly and slipped out of the room.

In the Hallway

Their friend Natasha arrived just as they exited the bedroom, still chuckling.

"What's so funny?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

“We were watching Surya sleep,” Nisha explained with a grin. “His eyes were twitching—classic REM sleep. Must be dreaming something wild.”

Natasha smirked. “Let him dream in peace. Now give me your physics record—I need to copy from it before class tomorrow.”

The three girls headed to the study room to continue their work.

Surya, Trapped in the Past and Future

Surya could faintly hear their voices echoing through the house, but he was paralyzed—locked in a mental avalanche of memories. He couldn’t respond, couldn’t move. The flood of recollections, spanning lifetimes and identities, kept looping in his mind. Kumar’s memories blended with his own, revealing images and emotions he had never experienced but somehow knew.

This continued for nearly two hours.

Eventually, as the REM stage passed, Surya slipped into deep sleep once more, allowing his brain a moment of recovery. Two hours later, he slowly woke up.

Waking Moments and Silent Questions

Feeling drained but hungry, Surya shuffled to the kitchen. With Deepa away in Vizag with Nimisha, no meals had been prepared. He opened the fridge, found some milk, and heated it. Spotting a loaf of bread, he took a few slices and sat at the dining table, having a quiet, simple supper of bread and warm milk.

Hearing the faint murmurs and laughter from the study room, he decided to check in on his friends.

As he stepped inside, Puja and Nisha burst into laughter again, though this time they tried to hide it behind their hands.

Surya frowned. “Is something wrong with my face? Why are you laughing like that?”

They shook their heads quickly, eyes twinkling with amusement.

He pulled out a chair and sat down, trying to ignore their cryptic behavior. But when he noticed Puja glancing under the table, he asked, “Is there something down there?”

Again, she shook her head silently, still suppressing a grin.

Natasha, puzzled by the odd behavior, looked under the table herself. Finding nothing unusual, she looked at the other two with a confused expression.

Finally, Puja and Nisha stood up. “We’ll go have dinner and come back,” one said.

“I’ll join you,” Natasha added, still bemused.

Surya nodded slowly, unable to understand what was going on. The laughter, the glances—it all made no sense. On top of that, his mind was still clouded, overwhelmed with memories and images from multiple timelines that he didn’t fully comprehend.

He sat quietly, the study room now silent, trying to process the flood of information still ricocheting through his mind.

.

Chapter 10

After spending a day with his family, Reyansh returned to Mumbai. One of his first stops was Kumar's office. There, Kumar updated him on the Navy Yard investigation.

"The matter's been resolved," Kumar said. "The missing materials were located at another storehouse. Apparently, someone shifted them without proper authorization and forgot to update the inventory system. There was no actual theft—just a procedural oversight."

With the issue cleared, Kumar informed Reyansh that he and the others could now return to their division. He arranged for a car to drop them off at the Ghatkopar office, where they reported back and resumed their duties.

GEM Integration Assignment

A week later, after contributing to several ongoing software projects, Reyansh received a new assignment. He was invited to work on the software integration with **GEM (Government e-Marketplace)**—a digital procurement platform used for all purchases made by the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The project involved creating seamless data connectivity between their existing Navy logistics application and the GEM portal. This meant designing processes to both export Navy procurement data to GEM and import approved orders from GEM back into their system—a critical task for ensuring smooth, compliant defense procurement.

Suchitra's Delayed Development

Elsewhere, in a darker corner of the country, Suchitra's madam had grown increasingly concerned. Girls younger than Suchitra had already reached puberty, yet she showed no signs of physical development. Suspicious, the madam took her to a different lady doctor for an evaluation.

The doctor discovered that someone had been secretly switching Suchitra's medication. Instead of receiving the prescribed puberty-inducing hormones, she had been administered a counteracting drug—one that delayed her development.

Furious at the discovery, the madam was beside herself with rage. However, there was little she could do. The damage was already done, and she couldn't risk drawing attention to the situation by making it public.

Chapter 11

Nimisha and Deepa returned home to find Surya sitting silently, looking disoriented and withdrawn. He hadn't touched any food, and his face was marked with confusion and fatigue.

Worried, Nimisha looked at him and then turned to Deepa. "Something's wrong. Clear any evil eye that may have fallen on him."

Deepa nodded, fetched a piece of white cloth, soaked it in oil, and muttered protective words while circling it around Surya. Then she lit the cloth. It burned with a strong flame, and drops of oil sizzled as they fell. Interpreting the flame and oil drops as signs, she nodded.

"I think the black eye has been cleared," she said.

Relieved, Nimisha sat in front of Surya and gently asked, "What happened, Surya? Tell me everything."

Surya slowly lifted his head, still looking dazed. "It started after we returned from the trip to Srisailem," he began. "That night, at a small tribal hamlet near the forest, a girl took me to a cave temple to pray to their goddess. I asked the goddess for information about my family."

He paused, searching for the words.

"And something... something happened. It felt like the Devi linked my mind to someone who looks just like me. It's like I became connected to him—and then to many others. He claimed I was one of several like him, part of a group of people living in different lives and timelines. He sent me their memories."

Nimisha frowned, confused. "What do you mean, 'like him'? I don't understand any of this."

Surya looked overwhelmed. "It's hard to explain. But the man I connected with—his name is Reyansh. He said I'm one of his alter egos or alternate versions. According to him, there are more than seven of us across the world. And now... my mind is filled with all their memories. I can't even tell who I really am anymore. I just wanted to know about my parents... but now it feels like I've inherited an entire extended family."

He took a deep breath, trying to organize the rush of images and names in his head.

"Reyansh lives in Mumbai. That's where my family went. He said my parents passed away. I have a brother in Mumbai and a sister in Hyderabad. Reyansh has a wife named Anita and two daughters, Rashmi and Leena. Rashmi runs a hospital in Hyderabad, and Leena is on a spaceship heading to Mars.

"Then there's another couple—Kumar and Loveleen—with a son named Dhruv. They're also on the spaceship. The Kumar I received memories from

is about my age—25—and just got married. They're honeymooning at a Swiss resort.

"And there are more: Sunitha, Sahithi, Nandini, and their children. Atul, his wife Molly, and their daughter. Atul's girlfriend Nirmala. Kathy and Shravani work at their company and are connected in some way. Sravanthi is supposedly my niece—my aunt's son's daughter who moved to Madras. It's a lot to take in... I'm still trying to understand how I'm related to all of them." He lowered his head, clearly overwhelmed.

Nimisha gently hugged him. "At least you've found some clues about your family—and more. But for now, you need to focus. Your exams are coming up. Let's think about this later, during the holidays. Right now, your priority is your studies."

Surya nodded silently, taking comfort in her words. He got up slowly and made his way to the study room to join his friends for their group study session, still carrying the weight of a thousand memories he couldn't yet process.

It's a Saturday and Puja rang Surya up and invited him to share prasadam. She said, "My mom prepared Pongal with jaggery and she put lots of cashew nuts, especially for you. Come and have it before it cools down."

Surya took permission from Nimisha and went to Puja's house which is close by.

He went and sat down at the dining table. Puja brought a utensil full of Pongal and put it in front of him.

He had it and asked her for a second serving. After having that too, Puja said, let us study for some time.

Surya asked, "Where is your mom, I have not seen her after coming to your house."

Puja replied, "Mom went to a relative's house in Guntur where some function is there, she will return by evening."

Ok, and he followed her to her bedroom.

There sitting on the bed is Nisha and he feels as if she is waiting for them to come. He looked at Puja, she was bolting the bedroom door. Then he understood her intentions and looked at Nisha and then at Puja and nodded his head.

Puja said, "She also wants that experience."

Surya went and sat beside Nisha leaving a place on his other side for puja and patted on the empty place for Puja to sit down.

Puja came and sat beside him. On his one side Nisha and other side Puja were sitting.

First, he kissed Puja on the cheeks and turned to Nisha, by the time his kiss landed on her cheeks, Nisha turned towards him and his kiss landed on her lips. Nisha kissed back and he turned towards Puja and turned her face towards him and kissed her on the mouth and Puja kissed him back.

Then he put his hands on both of them behind them and pulled their faces together and made them kiss each other and kissed their mouths from the other side in a triangle.

As it is the first time for the girls and all the knowledge flowed to Surya from Kumar including sexual knowledge and also knowledge of threesomes and foursomes, Surya took the initiative and pulled them back to their positions and started to press their small boobs by placing his hands inside their dresses.

They gave different reactions, Nisha shivered with pleasure and Puja moaned with pleasure.

Surya removed his hands from inside their dresses pulled down the zips and touched their backs with his bare hands. They both pulled their dresses over their heads and were in their innerwear.

Now Surya turned the other side and faced them sitting in between them. He concentrated on Puja first. He pulled down her bra by pulling her straps and exposing her small-sized boobs. He kissed Puja's boobs and changed his attention to Nisha. He looked into her eyes, and there is the expectation of what he will do in her eyes. He did not want to disappoint her, so he did the same to Nisha too exposing her boobs. Nisha's boobs are a little bigger than Puja, they are round and shapely. He pressed his mouth on her nipples and milked them with his lips.

He sat back and looked at them one after the other trying to ascertain what he should do next. His mind is running at 100 miles per hour giving him multiple options on how to follow up. For the first time, his mind failed him with overexposure. Now Puja and Nisha took the initiative and kissed him from both sides. This brought him back to the earth and something moved in his loins. He removed his shirt and flung it aside. With his bare chest, he hugged Puja and started kissing her passionately. Nisha from the side is nibbling on his ears. Nisha came behind him and hugged him pressing her boobs on his back. With that action, something moved inside his heart.

Surya released Puja and Nisha released him from her hug. He got down from the bed and stood in front of Puja eying her navel and coming down to her cunt area, then looked at Nisha with her better-formed boobs and coming

down to her navel and her cunt area. He looked at both of them trying to decide whom to start with. At last, he felt Nisha is the better choice with her better-formed boobs and her cunt area seemed promising.

But first, he pulled Puja's panties and then Nisha's. He eyed them both and started his mouth on Nisha's pussy.

With both hands, he parted the lips of her pussy and put his tongue inside. Her pussy smelled nice with the release of fluids. He licked Nisha until she was asking for more, and then Surya removed his pants and dropped them with his underwear. His dick stood up in its place. Puja had a taste of his dick earlier. Now it is the turn of Nisha to actually feel him inside her vagina.

Surya pulled Nisha towards him and put his dick in Nisha's pussy and started pumping her standing. When he was about to ejaculate, he removed it from her vagina and ejaculated on the floor.

Tired of the action Surya sat back on the bed and eyed Puja turning his head. She looked like the Greek goddess lying on the bed one hand supporting her head and she turned a little sideways. He eyed her cunt area and a smile spread on his face. He remembered about Kumar and how he used to satisfy four girls at a time. Then thought two is not that much difficult.

Puja looked coyly at him as if inviting him to fulfil her desire. With that look, blood started pumping in his body and reached his penis, and Surya is ready for action.

Surya got up and turned Puja, face up and lay on her face down and kissed her on the mouth. With his bare chest touching her boobs, Puja felt the desire reaching her brain and she arched backwards in pleasure and a moan escaped from her mouth. His hardened dick is touching Puja's cunt area and she was ready for him to enter her. But instead of entering her he got up and sat between her legs. Pulled Puja towards him and with his tongue he licked her pussy from top to bottom. Puja shivered with pleasure from his licking. Now he put his tongue inside the vagina and started moving the tongue from side to side and up and down. With that action, she started to orgasm and sent out a liquid from her vagina into Surya's face. With the unexpected action, he moved his face aside and put his hand on her cunt. When he thought she stopped releasing the liquid, he turned her around and made her sit on her knees pushed her down and entered her from behind. He started to fuck her in doggy style. As he had already ejaculated once, he was able to perform better and he thought he could go on and on. He is pumping her from behind and Puja is moaning with pleasure and Nisha is sitting on

the bed and seeing Puja getting fucked doggy style. Maybe she is thinking about how it would be to be fucked that way.

What felt to him like an eternity at last he felt he is going to ejaculate and removed his dick from her vagina and gave it a little jab, again releasing the semen on the floor.

Nisha got up and put on her dress, found a cloth rubbed off the semen from the floor went into the bathroom washed the cloth, put it on the clothesline there and returned.

Puja flopped on the bed face down and Surya was lying on the bed face up with a pillow under his head and his eyes closed. Seeing him like that Nisha went and kissed him on the mouth and lay beside him.

Puja suddenly woke up and glanced at the clock—it was nearing 4 p.m. She quickly nudged Surya awake.

“Get up,” she said. “It’s almost 4. Your sister might be looking for you. Get dressed and go home.”

She then woke Nisha, asking her to get dressed as well so she could return to sleep peacefully. Surya grabbed his books, opened the bedroom door, and quietly stepped out. Puja followed him to the door, closed it behind him, and went back inside.

Surya walked back home, entered through the gate, and stepped into the house through the main door. He dropped his books on the sofa and sat down, looking a little tired.

It seemed Deepa had already informed Nimisha of his return. Nimisha entered the living room, sat beside him, and asked gently, “Where were you all this time?”

Surya looked at her with mild surprise, as though she was accusing him. “I told you I was going to Puja’s house to study. Her mom made Pongal—sweet Pongal with jaggery—and I had two bowls of it.”

Nimisha studied his face. “Your face looks a bit puffy.”

“I told you, Akka—Puja’s mom made Pongal. I had two bowls. After eating, I felt sleepy and must’ve dozed off on their living room sofa.”

She nodded slowly. “Okay. Did you at least finish your studies?”

“Yes, Akka. I did. I could write the exam right now if you gave it to me.”

Nimisha smiled. “Good. Then let’s take a break. All studies and no play is making you look dull. Let’s go catch a movie. A little relaxation will help.”

“Alright, I’ll get ready. Just give me five minutes.”

He got up and went to his room to change. By the time he returned, Deepa was also ready to join them. It was the first time she was accompanying them for an outing, but Surya didn't object.

They left in the car and headed to the mall where the movie theatre was located. After collecting the tickets, they visited the food court and shared a pizza. Soon, it was time for the movie, and they made their way to their seats. Surya sat in the middle, with Nimisha on one side and Deepa on the other. On the far side of Deepa sat a group of girl students, probably classmates. Everything felt casual, and Surya quietly settled into his seat, focusing on the screen as the lights dimmed and the movie began.

By the time he returns from his room, Deepa is also ready to accompany them. This is the first time she is coming with them and he did not say anything to that. They went in the car to the mall where the theatres are located. They collected the tickets and went to the restaurant, where they had pizza and by the time the movie started, they were sitting on the seats. On one side of Surya Nimisha sat and on the other side Deepa sat and, on her side, there were some girl students. So, he did not say anything to that too.

The lights were switched off and the movie started. He put his both hands on the armrests on each side. Deepa was keeping her hands in her lap and Nimisha held Surya's hand on one side and on her other side she could freely put her hand on the armrest as it is the corner seat.

After a few minutes, Deepa put her hand on the armrest touching Surya's hand. Surya moved his hand a little to give Deepa space to put her hand on the armrest. But Deepa linked her fingers to Surya's fingers and locked them. Surya let it ride and concentrated on watching the movie. But Deepa did not stop at that and took Surya's hand and put it on her thigh. He did not know what to do and looked at Nimisha, she was immersed in watching the movie. He looked at Deepa she was also watching the movie, but there was a smile on her face. He looked beyond Deepa and the girl sitting beside Deepa was looking at him. He turned his head and looked at the screen. Nothing is going on in his mind. Now Deepa pulled his hand to her groin area. He touched her bushy area. It seems she is not wearing underwear. She seemed to have planned this from the time of Nimisha calling for watching the movie.

Surya inserted his fingers over her frock into her pussy and fingered her. Then Surya pulled her frock up placed his hand inside her frock and reached to her pubic area. He parted the lips of her pussy and fingered her and when

the half time is announced he pulled his hand and put it in his lap. Before the lights came, Deepa adjusted her frock and sat as if nothing happened there. Nimisha gave him money and told him to bring some snacks. He went out and brought popcorn and cool drinks and handed them.

After a few minutes, the movie continued running. This time Surya kept his hand on his lap and did not give Deepa any chance to put his hand on her lap.

When the movie was completed they all came and sat in the car. First Surya sat and moved aside to give Nimisha a place. Deepa instead of sitting in the front came to the other side and told Surya to move inside and sat down.

While the car is moving Deepa puts her hand on his thigh and Nimisha does not seem to notice it. When they reached home, Deepa got out of the car and knocked on the gate. The watchman looked out the window and opened the gate and the driver drove the car into the parking. Nimisha and Surya got down and reached the door, by this time Deepa reached the main door and opened it. Surya and Nimisha went to their rooms and Deepa went into the kitchen.

Surya sat on his bed and read a book. Deepa came in with a glass of milk and placed it on the nightstand. Deepa came and stood before him. Surya looked up from the book and lifted his eyes at her as if asking what she wanted.

Deepa said, "I want what you gave to Puja and Nisha."

"what did I give them?"

"I watched everything you did to Puja and Nisha."

"That is what I am asking what did I do to them?"

"You licked their boobs and pussies and you fucked them. I want you to fuck me too."

"They are my friends and my age too. What is your age."

"I am 20. I am older than them."

"You don't look twenty. It seems your boobs are also not developed fully, you might have some hair there though."

"What do you think, I flatten my boobs by wearing flat bras. My boobs are better than Nisha's."

"Then show me your boobs, I might believe your words."

Deepa stood there looking at the floor.

"If you are shy of showing your boobs, how can you expect me to give you those pleasures."

Deepa pulled up her top and pulled up her bra exposing her boobs. They are really bigger than Nisha's.

"Ok, you close the kitchen and inform Akka that you are going to sleep and come over here."

Deepa nodded her head and went away, Surya closed the door but not locked and came back to the bed sat down and continued with his book.

He did not expect Deepa to come back, but when she opened the door and locked it from inside, he was surprised.

Surya put aside the book and got up from the bed. He was in two minds, whether she wanted to have a genuine interest in having sex or just wanted to blackmail him.

So, he took the initiative and went over to where she was standing. Deepa is looking down at the floor. Surya went to her and lifted her head and looked into her eyes. There is lust and expectation to have sex can be seen in her eyes. So, he caught her by the shoulder brought her to the bed and sat her down.

Surya sat beside Deepa on the bed and turned her face towards him and kissed her hard on the mouth. Deepa responded by kissing back. His hands are on her back rubbing her. He pulled her up and she was standing in front of him. He caught her by the ass and pulled her closer and started to kiss her passionately with tongues and all.

This lasted for a few minutes and he lifted her frock and pulled down her undies. It seemed like she just had a bath and came, and the smell of soap came from her.

So, without another thought, he sat down and put his face on her cunt. Deepa flinched from his touch and Surya pushed her onto the bed. With his push, she sat on the bed. He put his head between her legs and pushed his tongue on her pussy. He started to explore her pussy and Deepa moaned with pleasure.

Then he heard knocking on the door. He waited a minute and told Deepa to hide in the bathroom and went and opened the door. Nimisha stood at the door, he asked what happened Akka?

"I heard a sound from your room, is there some problem?"

"I had a stomach upset and could not pass the gas, I might have made a sound."

"Do you want to have some medicine?"

"I took medicine and now it seems ok."

"OK, you go to sleep, don't keep awake for long."

“Ok, Akka, good night.”

She went away, looking at her going back to her room on the first floor, he closed the door and locked the door.

Surya returned to the bathroom and opened the door, finding Deepa fully naked and he turned the shower on.

Deepa shivered from the cold water hitting her body.

Surya also removed his clothes put them on the clothesline and joined her in the shower.

Surya made it an experience to remember for life for Deepa. Completing his bath, he towelled and wore the dress and came out and sat on the bed.

Deepa came out of the bathroom with the towel around her body and carried the dress in her hand. She placed the dress on the bed and towelled herself naked standing in front of Surya.

Surya looked at her casually and sat with the headboard behind him.

Deepa put on her dress, unlocked the door, looked outside to see if anyone was present, and went to her room.

Surya picked up the book and read for some time and when he felt sleepy switched off the lights lay on the bed and closed his eyes.

Surya had a bath and went to the dining room for breakfast. Deepa made breakfast as per his likes. By the time he completed his breakfast, she had brought his tea and placed it in front of him. Daily he had to ask her for tea and had to wait 10 to 15 minutes, today it is there in front of him without even asking.

Surya picked up his books and went to the car to be driven to the college. Already Puja, Natasha and Nisha were sitting in the backseat and the driver put some packets on the front seat to be delivered to some known persons. So, Surya had to sit in the backseat between girls. He sat between Nisha and Natasha in the forward. He sat a little forward as to give them enough space for their asses. Now by the movement of the car his back is touching the boobs of Nisha and Natasha and he is getting erection because of that. Natasha put her hand on his thigh else she might hit the front seat.

As the driver applied a sudden break, she moved her hand forward and backwards. When she moved her hand backwards her hand touched his hardened dick. She removed her hand as if she had an electric shock.

They reached college went to their seats and sat down.

In the break, Surya saw Puja, Nisha and Natasha discussing something seriously. In fact, they were discussing their time with Surya at Puja's house. After hearing them Natasha also wanted to have the experience. But whose house will be available is the dilemma. At last, they decided to wait for the right time.

Chapter 12

Reyansh updated Kumar on his progress with the GEM project. In response, Kumar contacted the Defence Ministry and arranged for Reyansh to receive a secure login ID and password, allowing him access to the procurement data across all three defence wings—Army, Navy, and Air Force.

With credentials in hand, Reyansh began downloading datasets and initiated a detailed audit, focusing on identifying procedural loopholes, inconsistencies, and potential areas of misuse across the departments. His work was methodical, aimed at improving transparency and plugging the gaps in the procurement system.

Suchitra's Puberty and the Madam's Decision

Elsewhere, one day brought a turning point in Suchitra's life. She had finally reached puberty. As per the customs of the household, a traditional ceremony was held to mark the occasion.

Following the completion of her second menstrual cycle, the madam decided it was time to auction her off—an event she had long planned, believing Suchitra to be a valuable asset due to her looks and mystique. Preparations for the auction began quietly but deliberately.

Soumya's Parents Visit the USA — and a Ghost Tags Along

In another part of the world, Soumya's parents had decided to visit her in the United States. After obtaining passports and arranging for a three-month visit visa with Soumya's help, they prepared for their journey.

Unbeknownst to them, Fatima—the lingering spirit who had once been attached to Shyam—overheard their plans while they were visiting Ramana's house to share news of their travel. Fatima, who had remained behind in the village due to the protective charm placed on baby Dristi, saw this as her opportunity to reunite with Shyam.

She hid herself in their luggage and made the journey with them to the USA. Shyam's mother had also packed some homemade food items for Soumya, which Fatima used as cover.

Upon arrival, Shyam and Soumya went to the airport to receive her parents and brought them home. Soumya had already shifted to the spare room to make it appear as though she lived separately. The guests placed their luggage in "Soumya's room" and settled in the living area.

Once the house quieted down, Fatima emerged from the luggage and began exploring. The moment she saw Shyam, her ghostly face lit up. She had

deeply missed him after being separated due to the divine pendant placed on Dristi's neck—a Hanuman locket that repelled her presence. Since then, she had lingered quietly in the penthouse, waiting for Shyam's return.

Seeing Shyam and Soumya together, and sensing the bond between them, Fatima decided to stay with them silently, now feeling accepted by the energy of their new life.

After two peaceful months, Soumya's parents completed their visit and returned to India, unaware that their journey had included a supernatural passenger.

Being separated by their visit they could not sleep together. Once they left them at the airport and returned, they hugged and started to kiss. Now seeing them like that Fatima got excited and entered the body of Soumya in an unintrusive way so that Soumya will not feel her presence and started to enjoy their sex. Now Fatima's life turned a new leaf.

After enjoying her life in the USA, she wanted to have a child. She could not give birth to one, so she decided Soumya and Shyam should have one, so she could enjoy the child. In the beginning, they were using multiple kinds of birth control and they settled on pills. Now Fatima made Shoumya to forget to take the pills and subsequently Soumya became pregnant. Now the rules in the USA have toughened to have an abortion, they decided to marry secretly without informing their parents.

Soumya and Shyam's Secret Marriage and the Coming of a Child

One day, with the help of a few close colleagues, Soumya and Shyam quietly got married at a local temple in the USA and registered the marriage legally in court.

As time passed, Soumya realized that giving birth alone in a foreign country would be emotionally and practically challenging. She decided to call her parents for support. Before doing so, she cautiously revealed the truth to her mother—that she and Shyam had married some time ago and that she was now pregnant.

Her mother was shocked and reacted emotionally, scolding Soumya for hiding the relationship and worrying about how the extended family and relatives would react.

To calm her down, Soumya lied, saying they had married only to secure a green card. This softened her mother's anger slightly. Her mother then informed her father, who responded more philosophically: "If they've already taken this step, what can we do? We'll support her."

Now they faced another dilemma—whether or not to inform Shyam’s parents.

Eventually, Soumya’s parents decided to visit Ramana’s house and inform Shyam’s family. Shyam’s mother initially reacted with anger, likely more out of hurt than disapproval—disappointed that she wasn’t informed first. However, once she learned that Soumya was pregnant, her anger subsided. In a slip of the tongue, Soumya’s mother admitted that the pregnancy was the main reason behind their marriage, unintentionally revealing the full truth.

Fatima’s Silent Return and the Arrival of a Child

Back in the USA, the spirit of Fatima continued to linger quietly. She had journeyed with Soumya’s parents from India, hidden in their luggage. Having been unable to be near Dristi (due to a protective Hanuman locket), Fatima had waited patiently in the penthouse. Now reunited with Shyam and sensing a growing bond between him and Soumya, she quietly embraced her place in the household.

Two months after Soumya’s parents arrived, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy. The moment was joyful for the entire family—and even more so for Fatima. In her own way, she believed the baby belonged to her, that Soumya was simply a medium, a vessel through whom he had arrived.

When Soumya breastfed her son, Fatima would silently enter her body and feel as though *she* was nurturing him. When the baby’s grandmother bathed him, Fatima would merge with her as well, experiencing the tender joy of caring for a child. When Shyam played with the baby, Fatima would drift into his body and revel in the innocent affection.

Except for the hours when the baby was asleep, Fatima was always with him. When he did sleep, she would lie beside him, gently patting him until he dozed off again.

The home’s atmosphere changed gradually—but in an unexplainable, almost magical way. No one could put a finger on what felt different, but the air around them seemed charged with warmth, safety, and calm. Soumya’s mother had a subtle suspicion that something paranormal might be at play, but even she found it hard to believe that such things could happen in a modern country like the United States.

A Guardian Spirit Revealed

After two months, Soumya's parents returned to India. Shortly after, Shyam's parents visited the USA to see their grandson. They, too, experienced the same uncanny sense of peace and protection in the home.

Ordinarily, the presence of a spirit might be associated with negative energy, but Fatima brought nothing but positivity. Whenever the couple faced challenges—whether financial, professional, or domestic—Fatima's invisible hand seemed to help.

On one occasion, a thief broke into their home while they were away. Fatima confronted him in her spirit form, terrifying him to the point that he fled empty-handed. When the couple returned, they found the front door forced open but nothing missing. Believing it to be divine intervention, they thanked God—unaware that Fatima had protected them.

They began to believe that their child had a guardian angel watching over him, and out of growing faith, they began offering prayers before lunch and dinner, thanking the invisible presence that seemed to bless their lives.

They became so confident in this belief that they felt comfortable leaving the baby asleep while they did housework, trusting that “someone” would alert them if needed. And often, they were indeed alerted—like the time the baby began to roll toward the edge of the bed. Fatima quickly stirred Soumya, who rushed in just in time.

These experiences deepened their conviction that the baby was divinely protected.

Fatima's Interaction Begins

Emboldened by their unspoken gratitude, Fatima began interacting directly with the baby after his first birthday. At the child's birthday party, hosted at their home with many of their colleagues in attendance, the boy smiled and giggled at seemingly empty spaces. Those close to him assumed he was just playing or reacting to shadows—but Fatima knew he was recognizing her presence.

A Call from Home

One day, they received a message from India—Soumya's grandmother was gravely ill and not expected to live long. Without hesitation, both Soumya and Shyam applied for leave from their respective offices and began preparing for their journey back to India.

Chapter 13

Nisha's family had planned to attend a wedding in Hyderabad and would be away for at least a week. Although they insisted that Nisha come along, she firmly refused, saying that she couldn't afford to miss her upcoming exams.

When her parents suggested leaving her younger brother behind to keep her company, Nisha assured them she'd be staying with her close friend Puja and would be fine. Reluctantly, they agreed and left for Hyderabad.

Once they were gone, Nisha invited Puja, Natasha, and Surya to her house under the pretext of doing combined study sessions. Surya arrived to find that Puja and Natasha were already there, books spread out, and conversations already in motion.

They began studying together and managed to focus for about an hour, working through notes and solving practice questions. After a while, Nisha stood up and said, "I'll go bring some snacks for everyone."

Puja chimed in, "I'll help you carry them back."

The two girls headed to the kitchen while Surya and Natasha stayed behind, continuing to review their notes.

The four of them sat in a circle and Natasha was sitting on Surya's left. Natasha moved a little closer to Surya and their knees were touching. Surya looked up from the book to see what Natasha was up to.

Surya's eyes fell on Natasha's top. From the slit on her dress, he could see the top of her breasts. Natasha stretched her hand to pick up a book and by her action, he could see better into her dress.

Seeing her like that his blood came to his face. Natasha acted as if she did not notice him, and sat back adjusting her top. While sitting back her knee touched Surya's knee. He felt like a shock ran through him with her touch.

Natasha said, "I will just be back", and put her hand on Surya's thigh and got up. While getting up she flicked her hand on Surya's groin. As he was getting worked up, his dick started hardening. She felt that and went over to the bathroom, and closed the door ajar.

Surya could hear her urinating, she completed urinating came and sat beside him, this time putting her leg on top of Surya's. Surya didn't know how to react to that. He wanted to push aside her leg, but could not bring courage to do so.

His leg started cramping from the weight of Natasha's leg on top of his. He was about to remove her leg from his leg, put his hand on her thigh, and his hand touched cool skin. He did not see her frock move up while she sat down.

Natasha took his hand and touched her cunt with it. It felt bushy there and he felt her pubic hair touch his hand. Natasha on the pretext of urinating, left her underwear in the bathroom.

Now the blood started to pump into his loins and his dick hardened from the touch of her pubic hair.

Natasha rubbed his hand on her pussy indicating she want to have sex with him.

She got up and sat on the bed and looked coyly at Surya.

He did not know whether to lock the door or else Puja and Nisha would come with snacks or wait for them to come over.

Unknown to them they were standing outside the door and watching what they would do.

Not seeing him moving, Natasha called him in a husky voice, "Come to me."

Seeing her waiting for him, he got up and went over to him. Natasha said, "They told me what you did to them, I also want the same experience."

Seeing her inviting him, he sat in front of her and put his face in between her thighs. Seeing her nodding, he looked back seeing Puja and Nisha tip-toeing into the room.

Puja said, "Carry on, we will have our turn later."

So, Surya resumed his action and started licking Natasha's pussy. She arched back with pleasure. Puja pulled Natasha's frock's zip down and Nisha pulled her frock up and exposed her naked body. Puja and Nisha sat on both sides of Natasha and started using their mouths on Natasha's boobs. With that action, Natasha had an orgasm and pushed her cunt into Surya's face in an upward motion.

Surya dropped his shorts down and entered her standing. On either side Puja and Nisha were handling her boobs. Surya bent and kissed on her boobs and gave a kiss to Puja and Nisha.

Puja and Nisha got up from the bed and started to undress. Then they came and lay on both sides of Natasha.

While thrusting into Natasha, he caressed Puja and Nisha's pussies with each hand and bent over and touched each on boobs. While doing this he did not stop his thrust into Natasha. With each thrust, Natasha is moaning, and Surya is getting more energy to push himself to the limits.

At last, he felt he would ejaculate, so he pulled back from Natasha and ejaculated on her thighs.

Tired of all the action, he fell on the bed beside Puja.

Seeing Surya tired, they started to play among themselves. After some time, they changed their attention to Surya.

Surya closed his eyes and took a rest. He is still naked, and his limp penis is visible to them. So, they put their attention on that and Puja took his dick in her mouth and started giving him a blow job. With that, his penis sprang into action and stood up in its position. Surya opened his eyes with difficulty and looked at what was happening.

Puja and Nisha were sitting on both sides and Puja is giving him a blow job. Maybe Nisha has reservations about keeping his penis in her mouth and did not try it. Puja is already experienced at giving Surya a blow job.

Surya sat up on the bed and eyed both of them and decided to start with Puja as she was the one who woke him up and also gave him a blow job.

Surya turned towards Puja and started kissing her on the boobs alternately. From there he came down and explored her navel and came down to her pussy. It seems she recently shaved there as the bush disappeared and her pussy is clearly visible.

Surya started exploring her pussy and went deep with his tongue giving her maximum pleasure. When she touched his face with her hand, he looked up and found Puja releasing her fluids in force. He put his hand on her cunt to stop the flow onto his face. When the flow subsided, he inserted his penis in her pussy and started pumping her. Puja moaned with pleasure and Nisha on her part kissed Puja's breasts. Puja whispered faster and Surya tried to pump faster and when the time to ejaculate came he could not remove it from inside her vagina, and released it in her.

Surya flopped on the bed and said to Nisha your turn will come later and closed his eyes.

When Surya opened his eyes, the room was dark and quiet. Disoriented for a moment, he looked around but didn't see anyone nearby. He got up, went to the bathroom to freshen up, and then slipped into a pair of shorts.

Curious about where everyone had gone, he stepped out of the room. Following the faint sounds and aroma of frying, he found the girls in the kitchen, preparing snacks.

Without a word, he picked up a hot bajji from the plate, took a bite, and began chewing as he wandered back to the hall. He switched on the television and settled onto the sofa.

A few minutes later, Nisha walked in carrying a plate of bajjis. She sat beside Surya, smiling, and offered him another piece.

Surya looked at her with mild amusement and accepted it, continuing to eat as she handed him one after another, enjoying the comfortable silence and the warmth of their casual friendship.

Finished eating, Surya stood up and stretched. Nisha looked at him, he sat back and just pressed her left boob. Nisha released a moan and Surya sat back and looked at the TV. Nisha put her hands around Surya and her boobs are pressing onto his hand. With that, even after two rounds, he is getting an erection. He looked at Nisha, she was looking at him in anticipation. He thought he should wait a few minutes.

After a few minutes, Puja brought tea and put the cup in front of him. Surya picked up the cup and started to sip.

While holding the cup in his right hand, he put his left hand on Nisha's thigh. Surya finished his tea, put the cup on the table and looked at Nisha. He could see the lust in her eyes. He moved his hand up and touched her cunt. There is instant reaction from Nisha. She moaned silently in his ear. He looked at the door and windows. Everything is closed and secure. There is no fear someone will watch from outside.

So, Surya kissed Nisha on the mouth. He kissed her until she was out of breath and pushed him. He smiled at her and started kissing behind her ears. From there he came to her neck. His one hand was on her cunt fingering her and his other hand on her breasts pressing. With his actions, Nisha was feeling out of this world. There was some magic in his touch and Nisha was feeling drowsy with feeling and closed her eyes. Puja and Natasha were standing at the kitchen door watching the goings on.

Natasha was getting itch on her vagina. She started to touch her pussy over her underwear. Puja was pressing her own boobs and looking at Surya and Nisha having sex. Natasha could not stop herself and came over to Surya sat on her knees and opened his pants zip.

His dick came out like a snake and Natasha started handling his dick. Seeing her, Nisha pushed her aside and came and sat on his lap. She started kissing him sitting on his lap. His dick is pressing on her vagina over her underwear. Nisha stood up removed her panties threw them aside and sat back. Now his dick is touching her vagina and she started to move front and back to rub his penis on her pussy.

Unable to wait any longer, she adjusted herself and inserted his dick into her vagina and started to move up and down rhythm having sex of her lifetime.

When she had enough, she stopped and flopped on Surya. Surya caught her in a hug, and let her rest for a minute.

His dick moved inside her for a few seconds and cooled down.

Surya pushed Nisha onto the sofa, stood up adjusted his zipper and sat back. Nisha closed her eyes and was in her moment.

Surya walked into the house carrying his books, visibly exhausted. His shoulders drooped, and his eyes looked heavy from concentration.

Seeing his worn-out expression, Deepa asked casually, "What were you doing there for so long?"

Surya, clearly on edge, snapped, "What else would I be doing? Studying, obviously. Just get me a cup of tea, I've got a headache from all this."

Noticing his irritation, Nimisha stepped in gently. "Why are you troubling him, Deepa? Go get him a cup of tea."

Deepa pursed her lips silently and headed to the kitchen without saying a word..

It was around 8:00 p.m. when Nimisha's cousin, Pravalika, arrived for a visit. She was the daughter of Pranitha and Prathap, and the younger sister of Tania. Nimisha welcomed her warmly and asked Deepa to prepare dinner for them while she took Pravalika to her room to catch up in private.

Deepa, however, had been waiting for a chance to speak with Surya. She had growing doubts about what he was doing during his so-called study sessions. From his recent behaviour, she strongly suspected that he had been spending time with the girls—especially Puja and Nisha—and wanted to confirm her suspicions. But Nimisha, perhaps unknowingly, interrupted that opportunity by assigning her extra work in the kitchen, especially since their guest would be expecting a full dinner, including non-vegetarian dishes.

Preparing the meal took longer than usual, and it wasn't until 9:30 p.m. that Deepa finally called everyone to dinner. After the meal, Nimisha and Pravalika retired to Nimisha's room, chatting late into the evening.

Deepa quietly cleaned the kitchen, finished up her chores, and finally approached Surya's room. She found the door locked from the inside. Wanting an excuse to interact with him, she poured a glass of milk and knocked gently.

Surya, exhausted from the long day, was already fast asleep and didn't respond.

At that moment, Pravalika, stepping out to get water, noticed Deepa standing by Surya's door. She raised an eyebrow and asked calmly, "What are you doing here, Deepa?"

Caught off guard, Deepa hesitated and lifted the glass of milk as a cover. “I just brought him some milk. That’s all.”

But Pravalika, wise and experienced in such matters, was not convinced by the weak excuse. She beckoned Deepa to follow her to her room and closed the door behind them.

Once inside, she calmly but firmly questioned her. Under pressure and unable to hold back, Deepa eventually confessed everything she knew—what she had seen at Puja’s house and what she suspected had occurred at Nisha’s house earlier that day.

Pravalika listened intently, asked a few more clarifying questions, and remained composed throughout.

“Alright,” she said finally, her voice thoughtful. “You should go and get some rest now.”

Deepa left the room quietly, feeling lighter after unburdening herself.

Alone, Pravalika sat in silence for a while, piecing together everything she had just learned from Deepa with what Nimisha had shared earlier about Surya—his background, his intelligence, and his recent changes in behaviour. Slowly, the dots began to connect in her mind. By the time she turned out the lights, she had arrived at a quiet, firm decision.

That morning, Surya was getting ready for college. It was an important day—his final exam was scheduled for today, marking the end of a hectic exam season.

As he picked up his bag and looked around for the driver, it became apparent that the driver was running late. He turned to Nimisha and said, “I think I’ll just take the moped. I don’t want to be late.”

Before Nimisha could respond, Pravalika stepped in. “Why take the stress of driving on your exam day?” she said with a calm smile. “I’ll drop you off at college. And if the driver still hasn’t returned by afternoon, I’ll come pick you up too.”

Surya hesitated for a second but nodded, appreciating her support on an already stressful morning.

Two things she wants to achieve by that, one to keep him away from the girls and second to divert his mind from girls and sex with the girls.

Pravalika had Surya sit in the front passenger seat while Puja, Nisha, and Natasha sat in the back. On the way to college, she kept the conversation minimal, not speaking much due to the presence of the other girls.

However, after Surya finished his exam, she returned alone to pick him up, telling the others she wouldn't be heading straight home and couldn't give them a ride. Instead, she took Surya shopping. They visited a few stores where she bought him a set of new clothes, a pair of modern shoes, and even a brand-new mobile phone.

By the time they reached home, Surya was both surprised and excited by the sudden attention and gifts.

Later that evening, Pravalika spoke to Nimisha. "I'd like to take Surya to Vizag for the holidays," she said.

Nimisha looked at her with mild surprise. "I can't leave for Vizag at such short notice," she replied.

"That's fine," Pravalika said casually. "You can come later if you're free. I'll take him with me now. I also want to introduce him to a few aspects of business while we're there."

Nimisha raised an eyebrow. "What's the need for him to learn business now?"

"Well, what will he do sitting idle in Vijayawada? Let him explore a new city. He can see Vizag, and I'll take him to Araku as well."

Nimisha thought for a moment and then agreed. "Alright, you can take him. But wait for me before you go to Araku—I've always wanted to visit."

"Deal," Pravalika said with a smile. Then she turned to Surya. "Go pack your bags. We're taking the night flight—I've already booked the tickets."

Surya, who had never flown before, lit up with excitement. A flight, a trip, new clothes—it all felt like a dream. More importantly, Pravalika's plan to put some distance between Surya and the group of girls had worked out perfectly.

Pravalika asked the driver to drop them off at Gannavaram Airport. Once they arrived, the driver helped them unload the luggage and drove off.

Surya placed their bags on a trolley and walked with Pravalika to the ticket counter. She handed over their tickets and collected the boarding passes. Surya followed her through security and toward the boarding gate, his eyes filled with wonder. He looked around the airport in amazement—this was his first time flying, and it was happening much sooner than he'd ever imagined.

The flight to Vizag was short, lasting just about thirty minutes. After landing, they collected their luggage and stepped outside, where Pravalika's local driver was already waiting for them.

They got into the car, and the driver took them to a sprawling bungalow situated along the seashore. Surya was stunned. He had thought Nimisha's bungalow was grand, but this one far surpassed it. The estate looked like it spread across at least two acres. There was a large swimming pool, a badminton court, and a fully equipped indoor gym.

"Such a big bungalow," Surya remarked in awe. "And a swimming pool too? Who lives here?"

"Who else but us?" Pravalika replied casually.

"For just the two of us?" Surya asked, surprised.

"We're not the only ones here. We have several staff members, and occasionally we have guests—my sister, my father when he's well, and some other relatives."

Surya shrugged. "Alright. It's not really my business."

"Come on," she said with a grin. "Let's change and go for a swim."

"I don't know how to swim."

"You don't need to," she said. "You'll manage."

"Okay," he said. "Just show me my room. I'll change and come."

Pravalika called one of the staff members and asked her to guide Surya to the guest room. Surya followed her down the corridor. She opened a spacious, well-furnished room for him and quietly left.

He set his bag down, took out a pair of shorts, changed quickly, and made his way to the pool. He sat by the edge, dipping his feet into the cool water, soaking in the peaceful, luxurious atmosphere.

Pravalika came after changing into a two-piece swimsuit. Surya stopped a whistle escaping his mouth and stayed gaping at her.

Pravalika is five foot five inches in height. She is very fair and not thin but endowed with curves. Her weight would be around 55 to 60 kgs, and with a perfect figure and a beautiful face. Her walk, there is a royalty in her gait. With her features, she just proved that she belonged to the Zamindar family.

Pravalika came and handed Surya her hand and catching it Surya stood up. She guided him to the low-depth area of the pool. He got down and the water came up to his waist. He stood in the water and Pravalika also got down and started to swim to the other side.

Surya stood there watching her swim.

Surya walked into the water and put his head in the water and tried to swim a little.

Pravalika made a few rounds of the pool came out picked a towel dried herself and lay on the poolside chair under the shade of an umbrella.

Surya also came out of the pool took another towel and went and lay on the chair beside the one she was occupying.

Surya kept looking at her and Pravalika closed her eyes and must be taking a rest.

Surya remembered a movie he had seen a few years back. The picture's name is Seetha aur Geetha and in that, Sanjeev Kumar was a doctor and he slips a girl's panties and shows her pussy.

Surya wanted to see Pravalika's pussy. He had seen other girls he had sex with, but he wanted to have a look at older girls like Pravalika.

He stood up and sat beside her legs on the chair. He touched her on the thigh, but there was no reaction from her. Unknown to him, Pravalika wanted to see what Surya would do and feigned sleeping. Surya took a little courage put his hand on her panty and slipped a little at her cunt area. Her cunt area is cleanly shaved and he could see her pussy clearly. He touched the lips of her pussy and retrieved his hand and slipped back her panty and went and lay on the chair.

Pravalika opened her eyes after 10 minutes. She stood up and said to Surya, "Come on let us go to our room."

Surya looked into her eyes for any sign of anger in her eyes for the action he did. As he did not find anything, he followed her.

Pravalika stopped at her door opened the door and invited Surya in. When he entered the room, she closed the door behind him and locked it from inside. "Sit down" and showed him a chair and went to the inner room leaving the door open.

Surya stretched his head and tried to look into the room. Pravalika removed her swimming suit changed into a nightgown gown and came out.

By the time Pravalika came out he sat back and sat looking at his hands.

Pravalika came and stood before him. Surya can see her boobs shape from her nightgown. It seems she is not wearing any underwear.

He was surprised by her standing before him. He wanted to stand up, but there was no place to stand up. So, he fixated his eyes on her chest, trying to measure her figure by his looks.

Pravalika caught his face and pressed into her bosom. In a few seconds, he was breathless and pulled back and looked into her eyes. Surya caught her by the neck pulled her face down and kissed her hard on her mouth.

Pravalika moved a little back stood up Surya, and continued to kiss him. Both kissed with tongues and mouths.

After kissing for a few minutes, Pravalika released Surya and led him to the bed.

As she heard about his escapades from Deepa, she let him take the lead. Pravalika sat on the bed and Surya stood before her and started kissing her on the mouth and came to her ear and started to kiss behind her ear. From there he came to her neck and pushed her to the bed and climbed onto the bed. He started to kiss her from above the night dress and came to her cunt and then to the legs. He climbed down from the bed and put his head under her dress and started to go up to her cunt while kissing her on the thigh. He gave a big kiss on her pussy and with his tongue he pushed aside her lips and went in to explore her. Pravalika moaned with pleasure. Surya's confidence increased with her moaning and he continued to explore her. When she started to beg him to enter her, Surya got up from between her legs and lay on her and kissed her boobs alternately.

Pravalika could not contain her impatience and pulled Surya over her body adjusting his dick over her cunt and inserted it into her vagina.

Surya started moving with rhythm and Pravalika moaned with each thrust. Surya continued his thrust for 10 minutes released his semen and flopped on her.

Pravalika let him for a minute to let her body absorb his semen in her ovaries and slowly pushed him aside and got up from bed put on her nightgown and sat back.

Surya closed his eyes and in his own world absorbed the feeling of his last action.

Pravalika woke him up and told him to have a bath and come, we will have breakfast.

Surya went into the bathroom, by the time he finished his bath, Pravalika got his dresses brought from his room and put them aside for his wearing.

Surya put on his dress and Pravalika went to have her bath and returned after a few minutes and changed into a dress in front of him.

Both of them went to the dining room and had breakfast.

After breakfast, Pravalika took him shopping.

They came back from shopping and Pravalika fixed a trip to Manali.

Pravalika booked tickets and they flew to Manali and took a room there in a five-star hotel.

They went over for sightseeing and returned in the night, had dinner and retired to their room.

Surya changed and lay on the bed.

Pravalika is having a bath, and Surya could hear the sound of water from the bathroom.

Surya was waiting in anticipation of what was coming up next. With his knowledge of many Kumars memories, he wanted to experiment with Pravalika his techniques.

But she dressed came back lay on the bed with her back to Surya. He was disappointed but did not show it to her. He turned to the other side and slept.

In the middle of the night, Surya felt someone awakening him. He opened his eyes finding Pravalika trying to raise him. She was in semi-nude and ready for action.

He started by kissing her and then on her boobs and came to her cunt, and started to explore her pussy. When he thought she was ready and mounted her and started his rhythmic movement and Pravalika matched his.

When he was satisfied, he rolled aside and lay on the bed.

After an hour or two, Pravalika woke him again and he performed his action and went back to sleep.

When he opened his eyes, it was already 8 am. He brushed, had his bath and came into the hall. Pravalika poured him coffee and handed it to him.

Surya while sipping coffee looked Pravalika over. She is wearing a dress and sat on the sofa. By looking at her he could understand why she was the daughter of Zamindar.

There is something in her that sets her apart from the ordinary women he has seen. She is stunningly beautiful with clear skin and just had fat at the correct places making her curvaceous. She had a wide ass and her chest size would be 38. He had seen those boobs and he is wonderstruck. But the way she sits makes her woman apart. There is that royalty in the way she acts.

Seeing him looking her over, Pravalika smiled at him and said, "Let us go for a tour, and then we can resume our play."

Surya is already planning how to spend the night with her. His mind is overworking with the details.

They returned from the tour and found Nimisha there, Pravalika surprisingly asked her, "What are you doing here?"

"I told you to wait for me before going on tour, you did not even inform me and also you took Surya with you."

Pravalika said, "Surya go to the reception and get another room for Nimisha." Her intention seemed to be to send Surya away and speak with Nimisha alone.

When Surya went away, Pravalika closed the door and said, "What do you think I brought him here for? I wanted to get pregnant with him. From your story about him, I understood why you kept him with you. I took a little freedom and used him before you could put your claws into him. What I can't understand is why you let him call you Akka?"

"So, what if he calls me Akka, we don't have any blood relation to him. He is not my brother, anything he would be my grandfather."

"So, you kept him with you with the same thought."

"I wanted him to grow up a little before using him, you have spoiled my plans."

Pravalika asked, "Don't you want to know why I did what I did, he was having affairs with his classmates, I wanted to use him before he threw his seeds away. So, what do you want to do now?"

"What do I want to do now? What else can I do except join you in the fun."

They were talking all this thinking Surya had gone to the reception, but he was standing outside the door trying to catch up on their conversation. Seeing a waiter approach, he went over to the lift to go down to the reception.

There he picked up the keys to Nimisha's room and returned to their room. He knocked opened the door and entered finding them having liquor, he sat beside Nimisha on the sofa and asked her to pour him a drink.

After having a peg, he started to act drunk and kissed Nimisha on the cheeks. "I love you Akka, from the time I lay my eyes on you I loved you. I can't live without you." He caught Nimisha across her bosom and kissed her again on her cheeks. Nimisha did not say anything and looked at Pravalika triumphantly.

Two things Surya achieved with this, one he said he loved Nimisha over Pravalika and second, he had feelings for Nimisha. Pravalika poured him a

small peg and handed it to him. He sipped the peg, in between having the chicken 65 they ordered.

Completing his peg, he slumped on the sofa and acted as if he was sleeping. Pravalika said, "I received a message from the Chief Minister that some guests are arriving and we have to host them at our bungalow in Vizag."

"Who are they?"

"He did not specify, but said they are VVIPs and hosting them is a privilege for us."

"Did they give any names?"

"None, but from his talks they seem to be coming from abroad."

"Ok, let us go and have dinner and come."

"What about Surya."

"He is sleeping, let him sleep, we will pack something for him to eat later", and squinted one eye in a sign.

Pravalika picked up the keys went out and closed the door behind them. Surya waited for a minute got up and sat down.

Now who are the guests coming? Pravalika said VVIPs were sent by CM. Are they coming to help him in the coming elections?

He picked a fag on the table and lit it and smoked and waited for them to return after dinner.

Chapter 14

Arrival of the Spaceship and Global Response

In another part of the world, NASA was closely monitoring the approach of an unidentified spaceship. Similar efforts were underway at ISRO and other space agencies across the globe. All teams were working in coordination, tracking the object's trajectory as it neared Earth.

But just before entry, the spaceship suddenly vanished from all sensors. Despite international efforts to triangulate its location, it simply disappeared—causing widespread confusion among space monitoring stations.

In reality, the spacecraft had landed undetected on the far side of the Moon, at a concealed facility built specifically for covert landings and personnel transfers to Earth. From there, its crew was transported to various regions of the world without alerting the public or authorities.

Makrasura's Infiltration and Political Takeover

Unbeknownst to the general population, Makrasura—a shape-shifting alien being—had already infiltrated Indian politics. Using advanced disguise technology, he had assumed the identity of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The real Chief Minister had been secretly imprisoned in a hidden facility, with no one aware of his replacement.

When Makrasura received a covert message from the spaceship confirming their arrival, he sprang into action. He contacted Pravalika, the daughter of the Zamindar, requesting accommodation for the alien delegates. Trusting him and unaware of the broader plan, she agreed.

Makrasura arranged for a high-level teleportation device to be installed at Pravalika's Vizag bungalow. Through this, the alien leader and her escort team were safely transported to Earth.

The Arrival of Surpanaka and Strategic Deployment

The spaceship's commander, Surpanaka, arrived with her ten-member elite security team. Simultaneously, her brother Indrajit, leading his own security team, was dispatched to China using a similar covert system.

The rest of the alien expedition team was strategically placed in different countries across the globe, assisted by local allies or manipulated officials who had been compromised.

Their goal: to quietly prepare for something far larger.

Suchitra's Fate and Alien Exploitation

Meanwhile, in a grim part of India, a faction of the alien group began acquiring human labor—specifically, women and girls. They contacted Manemma Madam, known for trafficking young girls, and purchased a group from her.

Among the girls sold was Suchitra.

The group distributed these girls among different alien factions worldwide, assigning them roles as workers, caretakers, and in some cases, unwilling aides. Due to her young age and unusual composure, Suchitra was placed directly under Surpanaka's care, where she served as a personal maid—unaware of the true identity and intentions of her new mistress.

Kumar and Team Remain in the Dark

At the same time, Kumar and his team continued their global mission, searching for Asur—a mysterious and powerful figure they believed was connected to future events. Despite their growing intelligence network, they remained unaware of Makrasura's political coup, Surpanaka's arrival, or Suchitra's transfer into alien custody.

For now, they were chasing shadows, while a larger game was already unfolding around them.

Soumya and Shyam returned to their village with their one-year-old son, whom they had named Steven. Wanting to avoid ridicule from locals for an English name, they decided to call him "Chanti" at home while keeping "Steve" for outside use. But after settling back in India, they eventually began using "Chanti" even in public.

Unseen to anyone except Chanti, Fatima—the ghost who had followed them from the USA—had also returned with them. Only the child could see her. When the family observed him talking, laughing, and playing with someone invisible, they assumed he had an imaginary friend or, more sentimentally, a guardian angel.

However, Shyam's mother grew suspicious. She called a **tantrik** to cleanse the house. When Fatima sensed his arrival, she quickly hid in Shyam's room. The tantrik attempted to inspect the entire house, but Shyam firmly blocked his entry to his own room. The rest of the home was sprayed with holy water, and the tantrik eventually left. Shyam's mother believed whatever was

haunting the boy had now gone. But in truth, Fatima continued to quietly interact with Chanti from Shyam's room.

Shyam wasn't disturbed by her presence. In fact, he remained oblivious. When he failed to respond to a message from his boss one day, a response was still sent—written perfectly. Surprised, Shyam assumed it was an automatic reply. He didn't suspect Fatima had sent the message herself.

Family Celebration and Unexpected Discovery

A few weeks later, Ramana organized a celebratory function to mark Shyam and Soumya's wedding and the birth of their child. He invited the extended family—including Sakshi's side, Reyansh's family, and other close relatives.

Among the guests were **Phani**, **Bunti**, and **Ravali**, who had moved on from YouTube to professional videography. While the preparations were underway, Ravali went to the terrace to take a phone call. There, she saw a woman quietly sweeping the floor, tidying the bed, and caring for the baby. Initially, she assumed the woman was a servant.

But when Shyam and Soumya came to check on the baby, they seemed unaware of Fatima's presence. That's when Ravali's instincts kicked in.

After finishing her call, she returned to the room. Shyam and Soumya, having heard about Ravali's unusual ability to perceive spirits, asked her directly, "We heard you can see ghosts. Is that true?"

"I wouldn't say ghosts," Ravali replied. "But I can interact with souls. I help them if I can."

Hearing this, Fatima—who had been watching silently—felt reassured. She approached Ravali, touched her feet, and begged, "Please don't reveal my presence."

Ravali looked at her curiously. "You don't feel like a regular soul. Are you a ghost?"

"Yes," Fatima replied softly, "but a good one. I don't harm anyone. I'm here to care for Steve and his family."

A Ghost's Story

"How did you end up here?" Ravali asked.

"I followed Ramana when he attended a funeral. I quietly slipped in and stayed. Ever since, I've looked after the babies here. I died during childbirth, never got to hold my baby... that pain kept me bound to this world."

"What do you expect from me?" Ravali asked.

"Just don't tell them. I can't live without Steve."

"I'll keep quiet for now. But if I sense you're trying to harm anyone, I won't hesitate to act."

"I understand. But I'd never hurt them. Steve is the son I never had. I even... influenced things so he would be born."

"In what way?"

"Shyam and Soumya were in a physical relationship for over two years. They used protection. I made them forget to take birth control once, so Soumya got pregnant. That led them to marry and have Steve."

"So you're saying you did all this just so he could be born?"

"Yes, and to ensure they got married. They were living in secrecy and fear. This way, they could embrace their relationship openly."

"Well," Ravali admitted, "given their family dynamic and social complications, maybe that was the only way. It forced them to be honest and take responsibility."

"That's what I thought too," Fatima said. "Now they're together, the baby's here, and I get to care for him."

"But don't you worry they'll discover you one day and try to get rid of you?"

"They won't. They think I'm some kind of protective spirit. They even thank the 'guardian angel' they believe is watching over Steve."

"Still, remember what Shyam's mother did. She called a tantrik."

"And Shyam stopped him. That tantrik is dangerous—he captures souls and forces them to reveal secrets. It weakens us."

"What kind of secrets?"

"We know things... about the world, time, events. But if we reveal too much, we lose our strength. He manipulates that."

"I see. I might visit this tantrik sometime. I have a team of YouTubers—we expose frauds like him. Thanks for the information."

"No, thank you for listening. Most people either fear or try to banish us."

Just then, Steve stirred in his sleep.

"He's waking up," Ravali said. "I'll take him to Soumya. Time for his feeding."

Fatima smiled, silently grateful.

Reyansh transported to Vizag and from there took a car to reach the village. As he entered the front yard, he saw Phani and Bunti arranging the decorative lighting for the evening function.

He approached them with a smile and asked, "Phani, did you both come here just to shoot the event?"

Phani replied, "No, Ravali came along with us as well."

"I'd like to meet her," Reyansh said. "Rashmi has spoken highly of her."

"She's up on the terrace taking a call," Phani said, then pointed toward the stairs. "Oh, here she comes now."

Reyansh turned and saw a young woman descending the staircase, cradling a baby on her shoulder. She looked around twenty-two years old, fair, and stood about five feet tall, weighing close to 50 kilograms. She walked confidently, her eyes focused on the baby, not yet aware of Reyansh watching her.

She approached Phani and said, "I'll just hand the baby over to Soumya and be right back."

Phani nodded, "Sure. By the way, this is Mr. Reyansh—Rashmi's father. He said he'd like to meet you."

"I'll be back in a minute," she replied politely.

She disappeared into the house. By the time she returned, Reyansh was no longer there.

"Where did Reyansh uncle go?" she asked Phani.

"His brother came and took him to the terrace," Phani replied. "He told me to send you there."

Ravali headed back up to the terrace. When she arrived, she saw Reyansh in serious conversation with Ramana and Murthy. Respectfully, she stood at a distance, not wanting to interrupt.

Reyansh noticed her and waved her over. "Come, Ravali," he said warmly. "Let me introduce you properly."

He turned to his brothers and said, "This is Ravali. She has a special ability—she can see and speak to souls. She gained this ability after being possessed by a spirit. When the ghost left her, something changed."

Murthy looked at her, curious. "And how does that help us?"

Reyansh explained, "Souls often approach her for help. In return, they give her information—nothing harmful, but often useful."

Ramana leaned in. "What kind of information are we talking about?"

"Things from the past, hidden truths, or unresolved matters," Reyansh said. "Souls are often aware of things we aren't."

Ramana asked Ravali directly, "Can you see any souls around us now?"

She shook her head. "Not during the day. For some reason, they only appear to me after 7 p.m. I don't know why—it's just how it's always been."

Murthy asked, "So how can she help us?"

Reyansh smiled. "Remember you were wondering about what happened to our mother's gold? Whether she hid it or gave it to someone? If her soul visits during the ceremony tonight, Ravali might be able to ask her."

"But what if she doesn't come?" Murthy asked skeptically.

"In that case," Reyansh said, "Ravali might be able to contact another soul—someone who knows the answer."

Ravali nodded quietly. "That's true. Sometimes, other souls can speak on behalf of those who don't appear."

Murthy sighed. "Let's see. If she appears, maybe we'll finally get some answers."

Nimisha and Pravalika returned to their room and found Surya sitting on the sofa smoking.

Nimisha asked with a surprise in her voice, "When did you start smoking?"

Surya replied, "Just now, as I had my first drink today."

Nimisha pursed her mouth and said, "Go wash your mouth and come."

Surya went to the bathroom, brushed and washed his face and came back to the room.

By the time Surya came out of the bathroom, both Nimisha and Pravalika were semi-nude only in underwear. As he already heard their conversation, he feigned his ignorance and asked Nimisha, you are also ready for action.

Nimisha replied, "What did you think, I kept you in my house and arranged for your studies so you would act as my brother. I had no such intentions, I had the same ideas as Pravalika, the only thing she acted before I could think about it."

"I did not understand, what is my speciality? Why you both are acting like this?"

"Who do you think you are? You are a special person. You are born for some special purpose. When I laid my eyes on you, I understood that."

Surya was a little confused with her words and asked, "So you did all that, so I could serve your purpose?"

"Yes, whatever I have done, keeping in mind your future usage for me, but Pravalika took the initiative and used you before I could think about it."

Surya asked, "Akka, what you wanted is that I should serve your purpose, which is to have sex with you. Ok, come on then, what are you waiting for."

Surya went to Nimisha, kissed her on the lips and removed her innerwear. Then he went to Pravalika and did the same to her. Now both the ladies were standing naked in front of Surya. He looked them over, shook his head and said "Akka, I don't feel like doing this to you", opened the door and went outside.

Pravalika and Nimisha looked at each other and if they wanted to follow and call him, both of them were standing naked.

The function had concluded, and all the guests had departed—except for a few who had traveled from far and were staying the night. As the house settled into quiet, Reyansh, Ravali, Ramana, and Murthy gathered on the terrace under the night sky.

Ravali closed her eyes briefly, sensing the atmosphere. "There are no souls around," she said softly.

She turned her gaze toward Fatima, who stood quietly in the shadows. Fatima whispered, so only Ravali could hear, *"Their mother won't come back. She's already crossed over."*

Ravali looked at her questioningly, silently asking, *"What should I do?"*

Fatima replied calmly, *"She gave all her gold to her daughters. She didn't trust her sons to be fair, so she made sure her daughters got their share before she passed on."*

Understanding Fatima's message, Ravali turned to the brothers and said gently, "Your mother hasn't come. It seems she has already crossed over. Souls who cross rarely return—unless summoned with great intent. Let me try and see if someone else might speak on her behalf."

She closed her eyes again and pretended to call for another soul, giving the illusion of channeling. Then, she quietly asked Fatima, *"Can I speak as you? Will that be alright?"*

Fatima shook her head slightly, silently mouthing, *"No. Don't expose me."*

Ravali nodded subtly and continued the performance. "There is a presence here," she said, then paused for dramatic effect. "She says your mother distributed the gold among her daughters. She feared it might not be shared fairly after her passing, so she gave it away before her death."

Ramana and Murthy exchanged glances. "Are you certain?" Murthy asked.

Ravali acted as if startled. “She seems upset that you’re questioning her. She’s leaving now.” Ravali turned toward the space beside her and spoke as though to a fading soul, “Thank you for your message.”

She turned back to the brothers. “She’s gone. There are no more souls present tonight.”

Fatima offered a quiet *namaste* of gratitude to Ravali before slipping away, returning to Steve’s side in the house.

Arrival of the VVIP Guests

Pravalika received an urgent message: the VVIP guests had arrived at the Vizag bungalow.

Turning to Nimisha, she said, “We have to go to Vizag immediately. Some very important guests have arrived, and we need to make arrangements for their stay. Pack your things—we’re leaving soon.”

The three of them—Pravalika, Nimisha, and Surya—returned to the Vizag bungalow.

When they arrived, the atmosphere was noticeably different. Security was tight. Police officers were stationed outside the main gate, and inside, personal bodyguards were conducting thorough checks.

After confirming their identities, the three were finally allowed inside.

Surya looked around, slightly irritated. “This is our own house, and we still have to prove who we are?”

Soon after, the Chief Minister’s Personal Assistant came over to formally introduce the guests. He pointed to a woman in her early thirties and said, “This is Ms. Surpanaka.” He then gestured to a tall, composed man beside her. “And this is Mr. Indrajit. These are their personal bodyguards.”

Pravalika raised an eyebrow. “Bodyguards? What’s the need for all this?”

The PA replied, “They’re extremely security-conscious. That’s why the CM personally arranged for their stay here—your bungalow is one of the most secure and discreet locations available.”

“And have they been settled into their rooms?” Pravalika asked.

“Yes,” the PA confirmed. “Your household staff has already shown them to their rooms and ensured their needs are being looked after.”

In the night with constant movement of bodyguards, they could not have a night.

Nimisha said, "What is this disturbance", and went back to Vijayawada.

Pravalika said, "Good riddance, otherwise she is coming to competition with me."

After two days, police from Vijayawada came to enquire about Surya being kidnapped and kept in Vizag. The police security outside spoke to them and sent them back.

Surya went to Surpanaka to enquire about what they would have for dinner. Suchitra came to the door and gave a list of non-veg items to be prepared. At this time Surya's eyes fell on Suchitra.

He felt like he saw her someplace. He enquired with the security personnel and learned they bought her from some madam. He felt something odd about her. When no one was present he approached her and started chatting with her. He asked her personal details, which she could not tell. The girl's soul only answered his questions and the boy's soul hid behind the girl's soul. But Surya felt his presence. As Suchitra does not remember her parents, the boy's soul is aware of her whole details. But he is not forthcoming.

The Chief Minister was holding a cabinet meeting at his residence near Vijayawada. In the conference room, a large screen displayed a photo of a man.

"This is Kumar," the CM said to his ministers. "We need to gather more intel on him. He's interfering with our operations and may pose a threat to our plans."

At that moment, his daughter, Shraddha, walked into the room, saying, "Dad, I want—" She suddenly stopped, her eyes fixed on the image on the screen.

Suppressing the irritation that surged within him at being interrupted, the CM asked, "What do you want?"

Shraddha, still staring at the photo, replied slowly, "I came to ask for a lakh of rupees for my expenses... but wait— I know him."

Makrasura's eyes narrowed. "You know this man?"

Shraddha nodded, pointing to the screen. "Yes, he's studying in our college. His name is Surya. And honestly, he's a total Casanova," she added bitterly, clearly still stung by some personal grudge. "But he looks a little older in this photo—maybe it's the moustache. Could it be a future version of him? Some kind of age manipulation?"

Makrasura quickly led her out of the room and into the corridor to speak privately.

“No, Shraddha,” he said calmly, “his name is Kumar. He’s an industrialist. But who is this Surya you’re talking about?”

“He’s Surya Kumar. He just finished his second-year intermediate exams. He’s from a Zamindar family, and currently, he’s in Vizag with his relatives.”

Makrasura’s expression tightened. *Surya Kumar... Kumar... same face, same location... And now he’s at the same Vizag bungalow where Surpanaka is staying. Coincidence? Unlikely.*

“Where exactly is he staying in Vizag?” he asked.

“They have a bungalow on the seashore,” Shraddha replied. “I’m sure he’s staying there.”

The CM—Makrasura in disguise—grew suspicious. *If both Surpanaka and Surya are under the same roof, something isn’t right. Could he be monitoring her? Or is this accidental? Either way, I need to alert her.*

Makrasura immediately used his mind-controlled communication device to contact Surpanaka.

“There’s a boy named Surya Kumar staying in your bungalow. He might be more than he appears. Find out who he is—and fast.”

Surpanaka responded without alarm. “Understood. Make further inquiries and keep me informed.”

Makrasura ordered his aides to dig deeper. The background checks revealed that Kumar had appeared in Vijayawada two years earlier and was taken in by Nimisha, who introduced him to society as her brother.

But the real mystery began after his return from a recent trip. His behavior had changed. At college, he earned the nickname “Casanova,” surrounded by a group of girls and no close male friends. It was as if he no longer belonged in the world of ordinary students.

Makrasura relayed all this information to Surpanaka, who now realized Surya might not be who he claimed to be.

Makrasura called Surpanaka on his mind-controlled communications device and informed her of Surya possibly staying in the same bungalow.

She told him to make more inquiries about Surya and inform her.

When Markasura made enquiries about Kumar, he came to know he came to Vijayawada 2 years back and Nimisha took him in as her brother and provided for him.

From the time of his return from the trip, he started to behave weirdly. In college, he earned the nickname of Casanova. He had a few girlfriends and no friends as boys.

Makrasura relayed everything to Surpanaka.

After learning from Makrasura about Surya, Surpanaka wanted to check him out and called him to her room.

Surya knocked on the door opened it and entered the room. He eyed Suchitra and looked at Surpanaka and asked, "What can I do madam?"

Surpanaka told him to sit down on a chair in front of her and eyed him for a few minutes.

Surya did not flinch at her gaze and looked her up and down. She looked every inch like a soldier. She looked manlier than a woman. With her bulging biceps and she was wearing a blouse just covering her boobs and midriff open. He can see her six-pack on her stomach. She wore a kind of dhoti and her calf is visible and it seems she kind of exercises daily.

At last, Surpanaka asked him who are you?

Surya replied, "I am Surya Kumar, I am doing my Intermediate and I don't have anybody and I am an orphan."

"But Nimisha says you are her brother and looks after you."

Surya remembered the talks Nimisha had with Pravalika and said, "She is just helping me out studying. She is no one to me."

"Can you join our team? We will be making rounds of the world. You can also visit foreign countries."

Pointing at Suchitra Surya asked, "Who is she?"

"She is my personal maid, you will not be like her, I will appoint you as my companion."

Surya thought for a minute, from his memories, he understood Kumar was searching for her. It seems he found her and Kumar had no idea she was here in the flesh. But what do I have to do about her? To inform Kumar about her presence or wait and see what is their play. Is she really part of the Asur group? They came over to destroy the world or do what? The best thing would be to be part of their group, learn about their activities and inform Kumar at the appropriate time. That would be the correct action.

Surpanaka asked, "What is your reply?"

"I am ready to be in your group, but I also want to continue my studies, that is what I was thinking."

"I will look into your studies if you agree to be my companion."

"Ok, if you say so."

Surpanaka called Pravalika and ordered her Surya would be with their group for the time being.

Pravalika could not say anything to that and nodded her head.

Surpanaka took their team to Vijayawada and they were housed in a bungalow of CM.

Surpanaka and her team went for a tournament and returned around 8 pm.

She called Surya and asked him to massage her. He asked Suchitra to help out and they both together massaged her. Surya sent Suchitra to prepare tea and closed the door. Then he started to show Surpanaka his magic touch. Within minutes she had an orgasm and asked him to ride her. Surya made her nude and started handling her boobs and kissed her on the nipples and alternately kissed her on her boobs and came down to her cunt. He opened her vagina and inserted his tongue inside her pussy. It smelled differently than other women. He thought it must be what she eats and drinks. Continued with his act. When she started to plead with him to ride her, he removed his dress and lay on her, inserted his dick in her vagina and started to pound. She was moaning with pleasure and asking him for more. He fucked her this way for around 15 minutes and released his semen in her and rolled aside.

Surpanaka closed her eyes and was in her own world.

Then there was a knock on the door asking her to come outside immediately.

Surya went to the door and opened it and asked what happened.

The security guard outside said, "We have to leave there is a warning that the Nagarjuna Sagar dam broke and water may enter the city."

"How it can break?"

"There is a talk of sabotage or someone bombing the dam."

Surya looked at Surpanaka, there was a smile on her face as if she expected that to happen.

She said from the bed, "Then start sending our people to various places. I will be coming in a minute."

She wanted to reminisce about the sex she had, but there was no time, they had to go to some other place, so she decided to go to Vizag again.

By the time they reached the transporter, all the people left only Surpanaka's personal security were left.

They took the transporter and landed in Vizag.

Surya sat down in the living room and switched on the news channel. The broadcast was showing live visuals of the river swelling near the Durga Hills. Water had entered parts of the city, though thankfully, not at a dangerously high level. However, several low-lying areas were reported to be flooded.

The news anchor explained that excess water was being released into the sea from the Prakasam Barrage, and it would take around 12 hours for the situation to normalize. Fortunately, Nimisha's bungalow, being situated on higher ground along the hillside, was unaffected by the flooding.

No official details were released about a related incident or any possible accident linked to the current situation.

Surya sat back, troubled—not by the water, but by something far more unsettling.

He still wasn't sure what to do about what he had learned regarding Surpanaka and her group. Their intentions were unclear, but something about them felt calculated and covert. The way they operated, the tight security, and the complete secrecy surrounding their arrival all pointed to something more than just "VVIP visitors."

He felt a growing urgency to inform someone who could act, someone who could investigate.

Kumar.

The name echoed in his mind again. He was certain Kumar could help or at least know what to do. From the memories he'd been receiving, Surya knew Kumar was deeply involved in the bigger picture, perhaps even leading efforts to stop whatever Surpanaka and her allies were planning.

But there was one major problem—he didn't have Kumar's contact information.

He leaned back in the chair, frustrated. *How do I reach someone I know only through fragmented memories?*

Surya knew time was running out, and the more he delayed, the harder it would become to stop whatever was unfolding right under their noses.

Surpanaka called Surya to her room. He went there and Suchitra was not there in the room.

Surpanaka was in her innerwear and Surya started massaging her. He built up the sexual tension in her with his massaging. At last unable to bear the tension, she caught Surya and kissed him on the mouth. It was the first time

she kissed him. There was passion in her kiss and Surya continued with his magic touch. After the completion of their coupling, Surpanaka told him this was the best time I had in my whole life. Surya thought it was the best compliment he had received and that too from a lady like Surpanaka. He did not know what kind of men she might have had sex with, but they would not be weaklings.

Now he had to enter her inner circle and find out their plans, and when the time comes he could try to reach out to Kumar and inform him of their plans.

Surpanaka accepted Surya as her companion and as per their traditions she gave him a ring accepting him as one of them. After that they fitted him with a mind-communicating device, using which he can communicate with anyone.

Surya shifted to Surpanaka's room with his luggage. Now he does not need to massage her. But he took it as a sexual activity to arouse her.

Chapter 15

Surya and Surpanaka stepped out of the transporter, finding themselves on the top floor of Dubai's tallest building. A large man greeted Surpanaka with a hug, then introduced two men behind him as **Mama Ali** and **Kwon Cho**, referring to Surpanaka as his sister.

Mama Ali and Kwon Cho shook Surpanaka's hand, then glanced at Surya, clearly wondering who he was. Surpanaka introduced him as **Surya Kumar**, **her companion**, and then introduced **Makrasura** to Surya as her brother. Mama Ali and Kwon Cho exchanged a look, puzzled by the term "companion," unfamiliar with their customs.

They left Surya in the hall and entered a separate room to continue their discussion. Surya moved to the door, attempting to eavesdrop, but couldn't hear a thing.

Two hours later, the meeting concluded. The three men departed via the transporter, leaving only Surpanaka and Surya. "Let's sit on the balcony for a while," Surpanaka suggested to Surya. They settled in, enjoying tea and gazing out at the Dubai cityscape. Unbeknownst to them, a satellite detected their presence and relayed it to an Island bunker. Half an hour later, a servant approached Surpanaka. "Madam, your room is ready," the servant announced. "You may retire." Surpanaka beckoned Surya to follow her, and they both headed to the room the servant indicated.

After some time Surpanaka asked Surya to massage her.

Surya in his signature style, started to massage her and raised her sexual tension. Unable to contain herself, Surpanaka opened Surya's pant zip and started to ride him and when she was satisfied moved away from him.

Surya tried to get his breath back from her onslaught closed his eyes and lay on the bed.

After a few days, there was a video circulating on social media of the sexapades of Kumar and Surpanaka. It was alleged that Businessman Kumar, in his younger days acted as a masseur and gigolo.

On their part, Kumar's publicists released a statement that the video was either a deepfake or the person in the video was not younger Kumar as alleged but someone else, as Kumar sir was on his way to Mars with the other travellers.

When the press reporters asked for any proof that the person in the photo was not younger Kumar, they released the photo taken by Satellite while they were lounging on the Dubai sky scrapper.

Now the press started to look into Surpanaka. Who is the lady in the video? They could not find anything on her and wrote that this video and the photo were both a deepfake.

But the identity of Surpanaka is only known to a few people.

As the new academic year began, Surya enrolled in the degree college affiliated with their junior college. His time spent constantly traveling with Surpanaka had cost him the opportunity to sit for the NEET exams, derailing his plans of pursuing engineering.

Upon returning from the trip, things had noticeably shifted. Nimisha and Deepa began to keep their distance, making no effort to engage him. They had seen the viral video and recognized Surpanaka in it—realizing it was best to avoid any association.

Pravalika, too, stayed silent. Her intentions had already played out as planned. Now three months pregnant, she publicly stated that she had conceived through a sperm bank and claimed to have no knowledge of the child's biological father.

Chapter 16

Ravali's Return and a Hidden Truth

On the occasion of the opening of the new cancer ward at the hospital, Rashmi hosted a celebration and invited close friends and colleagues.

Among the guests were Mike, Vicky, and Justin. Baby attended with Himanshu and Indira. Phani, Bunti, and Ravali were also present. Ravali had made the trip from her village specifically to attend the event.

Since returning to her village, Ravali had attempted to leave behind her unusual ability to communicate with souls. She feared the villagers might label her as mad. However, when an elderly woman came to her with disturbing news about her arranged fiancé, she was forced to act. Upon investigating, Ravali learned that the man was already married and had a child—prompting her to call off the engagement.

This incident reaffirmed her resolve, and she decided to return to Hyderabad to resume her work.

During the event, Ravali enquired about Suchitra. Baby told her that Suchitra had been kidnapped some time ago, and despite their best efforts, no clues had been found about her location.

As Ravali glanced around the room, her eyes fell on Baby's mother—who had returned to the family home after hearing about her daughter's disappearance. Though she had been unable to communicate effectively with the family, she now recognized Ravali's gaze. She realized that Ravali had the ability to see her—the very person who had helped guide her spirit back from the hamlet to her daughter's home.

Seizing the opportunity, Baby's mother approached Ravali and quietly relayed what she knew: the condition and approximate whereabouts of Suchitra.

Ravali was shaken. She couldn't immediately share this revelation with Baby's family—not without knowing more, and not without a concrete plan.

Later, when she spoke with Phani about it in private, he advised, "Let's wait and see what more we can find out. We can't go to them with only half the story."

After the party, they approached Rashmi and requested a private meeting the following day to discuss an urgent matter.

The hospital boardroom was quiet as everyone gathered around the long table. All eyes turned to Ravali as she began to speak.

She recounted the harrowing story of Suchitra's kidnapping—something Mike had known about but hadn't had the bandwidth to focus on, distracted as he was by Vicky and Justin. When the police failed to produce any leads, most had reluctantly begun to accept that Suchitra might never return.

But Ravali had uncovered the truth. "She was abducted and taken to Tandur," she said solemnly. "There, she was sold to a brothel, raised until puberty, and then sold again—to a woman named Surpanaka."

"Surpanaka?" Rashmi frowned. "As in the character from the Ramayana?"

Ravali nodded. "Yes. According to what Baby's mother told me, Surpanaka isn't from this Earth. She arrived in a spaceship."

Rashmi leaned forward, stunned. "That makes sense. When my father and his group heard about a spaceship approaching Earth, they left hiding in New York and came back. It seems Asur couldn't defeat Kumar on his own... so he called for reinforcements."

"Exactly," Ravali continued. "Surpanaka is apparently their leader—Makrasura's sister. They don't use traditional transportation. They move using something called a transporter—instantaneous travel from one place to another. Right now, she's in Dubai, and Suchitra is with her."

Rashmi's brow furrowed. "If she's in Dubai, how do we reach her?"

"Baby's mother had an idea," Ravali said. "There's a young man named Surya in Vijayawada. He's about nineteen and believed to be Kumar's replica. He lives in a bungalow beyond Gandhi Hill—you can't miss the place. His sister Nimisha and cousin Pravalika are known to have ties with the Asur. If we can reach out to Surya, he might be our way in."

Rashmi hesitated for a moment, then said, "I think we should involve my father. He can explain everything to Surya better than we can. Though we've never heard about Surya from any of our sources, my dad might know what to say. But he's in Mumbai at the moment, working with the Navy on software audits."

"Then have him take some leave and come here," Ravali urged. "We need to explore this angle."

Without wasting time, Rashmi picked up her phone and called her father, Reyansh. She briefed him on everything she'd learned and asked him to come without delay.

INT. STRATEGIC OPERATIONS HUB – NIGHT

The room hummed with faint electronics and distant murmurs. Fluorescent lights flickered overhead as *Reyansh* stepped into the glass-walled office where *Kumar*, head of Earth Defense Surveillance, stood poring over holographic maps.

REYANSH (purposeful) We have a development. A possible link between Surya and Surpanaka.

Kumar's expression tightened. He turned, hands clasped behind his back.

KUMAR (grave) We've been watching Surpanaka. She was spotted in Dubai—met with Makrasura, Mama Ali, and Kwon Cho. Surya was present nearby... though from what we gathered, he wasn't invited into the meeting. Doesn't look like they fully trust him.

REYANSH That matches what our side's picking up. According to intercepted comms, Surpanaka didn't land on Earth—she landed on the dark side of the moon and used a shuttle from there. Total stealth.

Kumar gave a short nod, tapping a control panel that brought up satellite images—pinpoints of energy flaring with unusual transporter signatures.

KUMAR She's cunning. They're using transporters—makes them almost impossible to track in real-time. But we believe she's anchored herself in Dubai. With Suchitra.

A heavy silence fell.

KUMAR (CONT'D) We need to extract Suchitra. Fast. If you've got a way in, I want it on the table now. We're looking into approaching Surya—he might not be part of their plan, but he could be our only thread.

REYANSH (firm) I'll go. If anyone can pull him in, it's me.

Kumar met his gaze, steel meeting resolve.

KUMAR Then go. And if this kid is anything like Kumar, he won't stay on the sidelines for long.

Reyansh called Rashmi and instructed her to head to Vijayawada with the transporter. He told her to book a hotel room, install the device there, and inform him once it was done. He planned to travel directly from the Mumbai office to join them.

Rashmi, along with Phani, Ravali, Mike, and Himanshu (Suchitra's father), loaded the transporter into Phani's van and drove to Vijayawada. Upon

arrival, they booked rooms at a hotel, set up the transporter, and updated Reyansh.

Meanwhile, Reyansh used the transporter at Kumar's office to reach Vijayawada. Kumar provided him with the frequency used by Surpanaka's gang. Using a tool from Kumar, Reyansh adjusted their transporter to match the gang's frequency.

With an invisibility cloak retrieved from their godown, Phani transported himself to Dubai. Finding the place deserted, he quietly retrieved DNA samples from a security guard's room and returned to Vijayawada.

The team then used the DNA to configure their shape-shifting devices, lying in wait for intel on Surpanaka's whereabouts.

In the meantime, Reyansh and Rashmi set off to locate Surya's bungalow. Reyansh had a rough idea of its location, and they took a couple of invisibility cloaks with them, just in case.

In a shadowy corner of New York City, Surpanaka, Indrajit, and Markasura convened with a cadre of international terrorists. The dimly lit room buzzed with tension as maps and encrypted blueprints were spread across the table. Their conversation swirled around one goal: unleashing global anarchy.

As the meeting intensified, Surpanaka casually ordered Suchitra to fetch tea—her tone icy, her eyes never leaving the schematics. It was a quiet moment that underscored the unsettling normalcy with which they plotted chaos.

Through Reyansh's Eyes

Reyansh and Rashmi arrived at Nimisha's bungalow and knocked at the gate. A watchman peeked through and asked, "What do you want?"

"I'm Surya's uncle. We've come to meet him," Reyansh responded.

The watchman narrowed his eyes. "Where were you all this time?"

"I only recently found out he's here. We've been searching for him everywhere," Reyansh explained.

"Where are you coming from?"

"Mumbai—we've been living there for the past 25 years."

After a pause, the watchman relented. "Alright, come in. I'll inform Madam." He called over Deepa at the main door.

Deepa opened it cautiously. "Yes?"

"These people say they're Surya's relatives," he said. "This gentleman claims to be his uncle, and the girl, possibly his daughter."

"Come in," Deepa replied. "I'll take you to Madam."

They followed her to Nimisha's room. Deepa knocked, entered, and quietly explained the situation. Moments later, she returned and ushered them in.

Reyansh stepped forward, recognition dawning. "Namaste, Nimisha. I'm Surya's uncle, and this is my daughter, Rashmi. She learned about Surya through certain channels and informed me. I rushed here from Mumbai."

"What were you doing in Mumbai?" Nimisha asked.

"I was engaged in a project with the Indian Navy."

"And now?"

"We just want to see Surya, check on him, and offer support if he needs it."

Nimisha's tone sharpened. "Where were you all this while? He's been distraught, completely alone. And his parents?"

"They died in an accident. After his exams, we lost all contact with him. But something happened in the world... something strange. Didn't you feel it too? We've been trying to make sense of everything. I had to go into hiding in the U.S. because of enemies hunting us. We only returned to India after hearing reports of aliens arriving."

Her eyes widened. "Aliens? You're saying they're here?"

"They've already landed—first on the moon, and now on Earth."

"Where exactly?"

"We thought you might've met them—Surpanaka and Indrajit. We've received intel that they interacted with Surya."

Reyansh noticed fear flicker across Nimisha's face. He pressed on.

"I'm with an intelligence agency, investigating Surpanaka and her network. Currently, she's in New York, meeting with known terrorist figures like Mama Ali and Kwon Chow. Mama Ali is with the world's largest terror group, and Kwon Chow... well, little is known about him, except he has ties to North Korea."

Nimisha, stunned, could barely find her voice. "I only know of them through my cousin, Pravalika. She claimed the Chief Minister himself requested her to host them."

"What's the CM's connection to them?"

"She said she once heard Surpanaka call him 'Bayya'..."

"Interesting. Most call him 'Anna.' Sounds like there might be a personal link."

"I'm just repeating what I was told. I never met them together."

Reyansh leaned in. "Tell me more about Surpanaka."

Nimisha hesitated. "From what Surya said... she's incredibly strong. Trains in sword fighting and shooting. He once saw her defeat Indrajit in a fight within minutes." She paused, glancing at Rashmi.

Reyansh offered reassurance. "Don't worry—Rashmi works in healthcare. She's heard it all."

Nimisha continued. "Surya mentioned she's aroused by massage—clearly a sensitive trigger. Also, applying pressure near her shoulder nerve causes extreme pain instead of relief. That could be another vulnerability."

Reyansh nodded thoughtfully. "That nerve sensitivity—it's rare but real."

"What about Indrajit?"

"Surya didn't know him well. Thought he might be gay, though."

"And anything else unusual?"

"Yes. Surpanaka can alter her appearance—sometimes fair and graceful, sometimes rugged and menacing. She transforms based on situation—charming in private, fierce in meetings. Surya said she even shows all nine emotions—*Nava Rasas*—during intimacy. Almost like she's performing."

"A true chameleon then."

"She's unmatched. No actress from the past comes close."

Reyansh mused privately about this Nimisha, recalling her grandmother of the same name. In alternate timelines, she'd played wildly different roles—both selfish and selfless. And now, this version seemed equally layered. He also remembered Surya's memories of Nimisha and Pravalika attempting to seduce him in a hotel, only to be coldly rebuffed. Her innocence might just be an illusion.

Deciding she didn't require their protection from the Rakshasas, Reyansh said, "Call Surya. Let's hear from him directly."

Deepa, who had been listening silently, nodded and left. She returned a few minutes later.

"He'll be here in two minutes."

"Bring him here."

Surya soon entered the room. "What is it, Akka?" he asked, then spotted Reyansh. "Hello Mr. Reyansh. And you must be Rashmi. I've read about you."

"You've read about us?" Nimisha asked, surprised.

"He's a writer, isn't he?" Surya said. "I found his books recently and have been reading them."

“So, what brings you here, Mr. Reyansh?”

“We’re here about Suchitra. She was kidnapped years ago, and now we’ve traced her to Surpanaka. We want to rescue her and reunite her with her family.”

“I’ve seen her,” said Surya. “She works as a maid now. Very quiet, but... something about her feels off.”

Reyansh nodded. “According to Ravali, she hosts two souls—her own, and that of a boy placed there by her grandmother through black magic.”

“That’s dark,” Surya said.

“She broke an attacker’s arm once,” Reyansh continued. “The guards laughed off the warning but clearly had no idea who she really was.”

“Tees Mar Khan style,” Surya quipped.

“Exactly. Now, our plan: we infiltrate Dubai disguised as guards, retrieve Suchitra, bring her back here, deactivate and reprogram the transporter, then move to Hyderabad and return her to her family.”

“Will it work?”

“We adapt on the move. Nothing in this line of work is foolproof.”

They left Nimisha’s house and returned to the hotel, where they changed appearances using shape-shifting devices and donned invisibility cloaks. Rashmi stayed behind to manage the transporter. Reyansh, Surya, and the others shifted first to Vizag—and from there, into the lion’s den: Dubai.

Would you like me to continue from Dubai or polish earlier chapters for consistency in tone and pacing?

Upon arrival, we found only the household staff—no sign of Surpanaka or her companions. Surya discreetly asked a servant, who admitted overhearing a mention of “going to New York.”

Without delay, we activated the transporter. Cloaked in invisibility, Surya and the team shifted to New York.

Inside the target location, Surya spotted Suchitra in the kitchen brewing tea. He quietly told her he’d come to take her home—to reunite her with her parents. Handing her a vial, he instructed her to mix it into the tea. It would render everyone unconscious without lasting harm.

Suchitra moved efficiently. She served the drugged tea first to the group in the meeting, then to the guards and the CCTV operators.

Once the guards were unconscious, the cloaked team sprang into action. They secured the guards, transported them to Vizag, locked them in a holding room, and swiftly returned to New York.

Re-entering the meeting chamber, they found Surpanaka, Indrajit, and Markasura slumped in their chairs—unconscious.

I contacted Kumar and provided him with the transporter's frequency. Within fifteen minutes, Atul arrived with a contingent of military personnel. The enemy leaders were zip-tied and taken into custody without resistance.

The mission was a resounding success—more complete than we had dared to imagine. Capturing Markasura and his associates was beyond our initial scope, but fortune had favored boldness.

We returned to Vizag and handed over the subdued guards to the military. Rashmi reactivated the transporter, and we journeyed to Vijayawada.

Surya returned to his home. We dismantled the transporter, packed it into the van, and set off for Hyderabad.

Mission accomplished. Suchitra was safe—and in our eyes, that made all the risk worthwhile.

.

Chapter 17

Reyansh

After dropping Suchitra safely at her home, everyone dispersed to their respective cities. I returned to Mumbai, where I resumed work at the Navy office—only to find the whole landscape had shifted.

Abhijit had left for Delhi to prepare for his wedding. In his absence, a new developer from the .NET team had been reassigned to our group—a sharp-looking Maharashtrian girl named **Sonali Raut**. Around the same time, **Dinesh** from the Python team received an offer from Google: 35 lakhs per annum. Impressive. Then there was **Vineesh Raaj**, a Rajasthani guy from the .NET team, always with his trademark ponytail and polished manner. Sonali, being amicable, connected easily with both.

Soon another player entered the scene: **Ujjwal**, a Kannada-speaking man who replaced Abhijit on a temporary basis. He claimed to have worked in Hyderabad, said he was married with a young daughter, and looking for stability in Mumbai. I took his sincerity at face value and recommended him to Archana.

What I hadn't anticipated was the quiet war brewing around Sonali.

Dinesh and Vineesh clearly saw each other as rivals. Sonali, tall and petite—about 5'5"—seemed friendly with both. Dinesh, at 95 kilos, leaned on charm and his Google package, while Vineesh, taller and leaner, relied on quiet consistency and subtle digs about Dinesh's weight. Sonali balanced her time with each of them but never gave anything away.

The clock was ticking for Dinesh—his new job started soon. Pressed for time, he tried a desperate play: he whispered to the boss, attempting to get Sonali removed from her post, planning to find her another job and maintain control over their dynamic.

What he didn't know was that I, completely unaware of his intentions, had already arranged for Sonali to join our team. That move dismantled his plan in one swift stroke.

Meanwhile, I overheard Ujjwal casually telling someone he wasn't married. Odd, considering what he'd told me earlier. His work ethic didn't inspire confidence—his grasp of software and SQL was, at best, average—but he had something the others didn't: height, a casual flair, and now, an eye on Sonali.

So the love triangle quietly evolved into a square. With Sonali now part of our team, access to her became limited. The lunchtime break was their only window, and even then, she seemed more cordial than romantic—with less warmth toward Ujjwal, perhaps because he was still new.

She appeared blissfully unaware of the rivalry playing out behind her back. But I saw it all, unfolding like a slow-burning subplot to the bigger mission that had just ended.

Shadows and Ghosts

The morning began on an awkward note. The usual car didn't show up. After waiting in vain, I flagged down an auto and asked the driver to take me to the Navy Yard. He opted for the inner roads to avoid the expected traffic snarls. I let him choose his path—I just needed to get to work.

We were halfway there when the auto sputtered to a stop. The driver stepped out, inspected the tires, and declared he needed to restart the engine. I joined him, watching as he fiddled with the ignition. To my shock, once it roared back to life... he drove off, leaving me stranded in the middle of a deserted lane.

As I stood there puzzled, a van rolled to a stop beside me. Out stepped Archana and a security team. One of them—towering, well over seven feet—caught my eye immediately. He didn't look standard issue.

"How come you're here?" I asked, bewildered.

"We found some software engineers missing," Archana replied. "I contacted Kumar. He told me *you* were standing at this precise location and sent us."

"How does he always know?"

"Seems like he's keeping close tabs on you ever since the incident at sea," she said with a raised brow.

"Well, the auto driver bailed on me. Looks like Kumar knew that before I did."

We didn't waste more time speculating—we headed to the office.

Back at work, I dove into a new project while the soap opera around Sonali played out with renewed intensity.

Ujjwal, still riding his charm offensive, invited her to a movie. She refused politely, citing it was a weekday. Unfazed, he reportedly went alone.

Meanwhile, Dinesh bid farewell with flair. His farewell party was grand—complete with gifts for staff and even Navy personnel. After the photo sessions and handshakes, he walked off into his future at Google.

But Ujjwal didn't drop the movie narrative. He brought up those two tickets again, spinning stories about a cancelled show, a theatre switch, and the whole evening falling apart. He was clearly hoping the mention of an "extra ticket" would've lured Sonali. It didn't.

Elsewhere, the admin staff had started raising eyebrows at Sonali and Vineesh arriving together to sign the muster. They were asked to come separately from then on. Yet whispers persisted—jealousy, speculation, and a few side-eyes from veterans who weren't particularly subtle.

There was a quiet contest unfolding around Sonali. And she, blissfully or tactfully, floated above it all.

Then, something real pulled me away from office politics.

Kumar called.

"We've located a ghost house," he said. "I want you to look into it."

"Send me the coordinates," I replied. "I'll assemble a team."

Plenty of volunteers offered. In the end, I put together a crew I trusted:

- **Vineesh**, steady and sharp
- **Ujjwal**, unpredictable but curious
- **Shafiq Ahmed**, a solid all-rounder
- **Sonali**, precise and perceptive
- **Manoj**, a Navy man, dependable
- **Raavi**, the new addition to our dev team, eager and observant

Two days later, we received the location.

Manoj went ahead to scope it out and arrange our stay. Shortly after, I was informed that an external operative would be joining us: **Acharya**, an agent known only by name.

Once I finalized the travel plan and logistics, I forwarded everything to Kumar so he could brief Mr. Acharya.

Something told me this wouldn't be just a routine check.

We took two SUVs from Kumar's motor pool to head out to the ghost house. We had already packed and were loading the vehicles when we realized we'd have to wait — Acharya was running late. Two hours passed before he finally reached us.

At the last minute, I got a confirmation: Ravali wanted to join us on the ghost hunt. Phani and Bunty would be coming along with her.

Acharya, on the other hand, was making excuses. He said he had a meeting with the director about the missing terrorists and had to convince him that he was doing everything possible to track them down. I figured, by joining us on a ghost hunt, he was doing *everything* he could.

We went to the airport to pick up Ravali, who was accompanied by Phani and Bunty. To my surprise, Mike was walking just behind them. At the last minute, he'd insisted on coming along.

From there, we hit the Western Express Highway toward Gujarat. After crossing Vasai Creek, I got a call from Rashmi. She had spoken to my brother Ram, who suggested we stay at a farmhouse nearby — one that belonged to his friends.

"I'll check it out," I told her before ending the call.

We drove for another three hours and finally reached the location. Manoj was waiting for us. He explained the eerie history of the place. Apparently, in 2021, a building had suddenly appeared there — seemingly out of nowhere. On either side of the structure were Christian graveyards and Hindu cremation grounds. A little farther away was a Muslim graveyard. The Hindu cremation ground had a caretaker who claimed to have heard laughter coming from the mysterious building at night.

Since it was nearing evening, we decided not to explore the building just yet. Instead, we headed toward my brother's recommended farmhouse, following the map location Rashmi had sent.

We reached the farmhouse gates, where we were greeted by a watchman and caretaker named Ramu. He led us to the house, which was built on raised ground. Ramu explained it was designed that way to avoid flooding during the rains — the area beneath the house would turn into a stream, water flowing like a small river.

He showed us our rooms, and we dropped off our luggage. Then he left, saying he'd return with dinner.

An hour later, one by one, everyone gathered in the lounge and settled onto the sofas and chairs.

Ravali broke the silence. "How could there be a building like that, surrounded by graveyards, in the middle of nowhere?"

I replied, "From what I've heard, it was once a mental hospital. One of the patients — deeply disturbed — killed other patients during a psychotic episode. He should have been restrained and locked in his room, but the doctors had taken him out for testing. They administered electric shocks to him, which worsened his condition. In a frenzy, he killed a nurse, severely injured a doctor, and escaped. He murdered a few patients before being shot by a guard while attempting to attack him as well."

The hospital authorities had concealed the true number of deaths from the incident, but soon after, patients began reporting sightings of ghosts during

the night. The rumors became so persistent that the hospital was eventually shut down, and the remaining patients were relocated to other facilities.

Back in 2008, during CA Kumar's timeline, his daughter Leena and her friends embarked on a ghost-hunting expedition. They didn't encounter any apparitions at the time — or so they thought. Instead, they were trapped inside the building by a group of terrorists, who had disguised themselves as ghosts to scare off intruders. Leena had managed to call her father on his mobile phone. Kumar rushed there with his friends and rescued them from the locked rooms.

Since no ghosts had shown up during that encounter, and the building appeared to be a hideout for terrorists, they all dismissed the idea of any supernatural presence. The videos Leena had taken during their investigation — including full 360-degree footage — were forgotten.

Recently, while our team was reviewing those old recordings, we discovered something chilling. In one of the 360-degree videos, a ghostly figure — a woman — could be seen trailing behind Leena. It appeared in the footage only when she panned the camera over her shoulder. Leena herself had no idea she had recorded it. Maybe because she had been chanting a protective mantra before entering the hospital, the spirit couldn't touch her.

As strange as it sounds, that hospital — once in the heart of Mumbai — seems to have relocated to this remote spot after the timeline merger. Perhaps the graveyards here accepted the building into their midst. No one can truly explain how such a thing could happen.

Manoj furrowed his brow and asked, "How do you know all this?"

"Because I wrote about it myself," I replied calmly.

"Are you sure there are ghosts in the building?" he continued. "Couldn't it just be more terrorists hiding out again?"

"That's exactly what we came to find out. It could be either... or both."

"But the cremation ground caretaker told me he never saw anyone go in or come out of that building."

"There are many ways someone could enter or leave unseen," I said. "Secret tunnels, back entrances, maybe even illusions."

"What kind of ghost was seen in the video?" he asked.

"It was a woman. She stood just behind Leena — visible only when Leena turned the camera in that direction. Maybe the ghost didn't know it was being recorded. Leena definitely wasn't aware — and since they were convinced the place was ghost-free, they never even checked the footage."

Just then, the caretaker arrived to announce that dinner was ready. One by one, we rose from our seats in the lounge and headed to the dining room.

The table was laid with chapatis, aloo bhaji, rice, and dal. We quietly served ourselves. Conversation was minimal — only the occasional request to pass a dish broke the silence. Everyone seemed lost in their own thoughts.

After dinner, we moved to the veranda. Some of us sat on the chairs placed around, others chose the cool stone steps. The night air was calm, the stars bright above us.

I turned to Ravali. “Do you see any souls around?”

She looked around slowly, eyes half-closed in concentration. “None seem to be nearby. Maybe they’re wandering elsewhere tonight.”

“Yeah,” I nodded. “I was hoping at least one might show up — someone we could question about the hospital building.”

Our conversation shifted to Ravali’s experiences with spirits. She recounted tales of previous encounters and how she’d handled them. Everyone listened intently, hanging on her every word, the eerie atmosphere lending gravity to her stories.

I checked the time. It was well past midnight. “Alright, everyone,” I said, “Let’s get some rest. We’ll need our energy tomorrow.”

Mike and I headed to our room. He took the other bed. I realized I hadn’t had a proper conversation with him yet — I only knew of him through what Anne had written in her books. As we settled in, I asked about his past.

We were talking quietly when suddenly, a shout pierced the silence.

“Help!”

We jumped out of bed and rushed outside. Manoj was standing at the girls’ door, pounding on it in panic.

“What happened?” I demanded.

Manoj replied, his voice tense, “The shout came from their room. I was just checking if everything’s alright.”

Just then, Ravali opened the door. “It was Sonali,” she said. “She shouted in her sleep.”

We followed her inside. Sonali was sitting up on the bed, eyes wide, her face pale as if she had just seen a ghost. She looked around the room, visibly shaken.

Maybe Ravali’s stories had taken a toll on her. I walked over and gently placed my hand on her head, murmuring a calming mantra under my breath.

Gradually, her breathing slowed, and the panic drained from her face. She began to relax.

Ravali looked around again. "I still don't sense anything," she said softly.

"Maybe it was just the fear triggered by your stories," I suggested. "But sometimes, there *is* dark energy around. It doesn't always show itself — but it can influence the mind, especially when someone's vulnerable."

With Sonali settled, everyone quietly returned to their rooms.

Back in ours, Mike — who had been silently observing everything — finally spoke. "What did you do when you placed your hand on her head?"

"I was transferring energy to her," I explained. "To calm her down. To neutralize whatever was affecting her."

"I've never read about that in your books," he said, curious.

"This technique isn't used by many. Only Pujari Kumar practiced it. He once treated Loveleen the same way."

"Oh, right," Mike nodded. "That time her energy center was disturbed... after Sunitha kept asking about her. Swamy had to recite a mantra for her too, didn't he?"

"Yes, that's the one," I said. "It's not something widely shared. Most people wouldn't understand."

There was a pause as the weight of the night settled in.

"It's okay," I added. "Try to sleep. We've got to be up early tomorrow — we're finally checking out that hospital."

By 8:00 a.m., everyone was ready for the adventure. I wasn't sure how much *adventure* we could truly expect, but the energy was palpable. Excitement buzzed through the group as we loaded up the SUVs and drove toward the mysterious hospital building.

As we approached, the crematorium caretaker walked over to greet us. Manoj handed him a packet of biscuits and some chocolates.

"These are for my children," the caretaker said with a small smile, tucking them into his bag. Then, lowering his voice, he added, "Last night, there was laughing — for a long time. But this time... it sounded strange. Like a record being played over and over again."

We exchanged looks — the kind of silent understanding that comes when everyone hears the same thing but is afraid to say it aloud.

I turned to Ravali. "You don't see souls or ghosts during the day, right?"

"No," she said. "They usually appear after 7 p.m."

"Alright then. First, let's check out the building. Then we'll figure out where to place the cameras. Phani and Buntty can handle that part — they're the experts."

We entered the building and began moving room to room, recording everything. I kept a close eye on both Ravali and Sonali, watching for any changes in behavior or energy, occasionally filming them with my camera for reference.

The place was eerily empty — no visible people, no immediate signs of danger — but there were subtle traces that someone had been there recently. Scuff marks on the floor, a disturbed layer of dust. Some rooms were locked.

"Phani, set up cameras outside all locked rooms," I instructed. "Let's see if anyone visits them."

We finished surveying the first floor and made our way up to the second. Most of the rooms here were also locked, with a few open but clearly unused. Dust lay undisturbed in thick layers.

Then we reached the third floor — and stumbled upon something none of us expected.

An open room had been transformed into a small temple. In the center stood a statue of a Devi, surrounded by signs of recent rituals. Burnt incense sticks, smeared kumkum, flowers now wilted. Someone had clearly been performing *puja* here.

Ravali stepped in, took one look at the statue, and froze. "I'm getting scared," she said.

"Why?" I asked.

She hesitated. "It feels like... there's a demon spirit inside the statue. It's like it's staring at me."

"It might just be your imagination," I offered gently. "None of us felt anything like that. Or... is this like the time you saw the dual soul in Suchitra?"

"I don't know. It's different. But I felt dread the moment I saw it."

"Phani, set up a camera facing this altar," I said quietly.

We continued our search and came upon another door — this one outfitted with modern security features. I tried opening it, but it didn't respond to my access code.

"Looks like the security system's been updated," I said. "Could be someone doesn't want this door opened."

“Setting up a camera here too,” Phani said, already unpacking his gear.

With the third floor explored, we exited the building. I turned to Phani. “How long will it take to set up the perimeter cameras? You need to finish before nightfall.”

“About two hours,” he replied. “But we’ll need the van to start monitoring the live feeds. It should arrive by this evening.”

“Even if it doesn’t, the cameras record, right?”

“Yes, they have memory chips for offline storage. We’ll review the footage later if needed.”

“We flew in, but the van’s being driven down. The driver left last night — he’s using the GPS location we gave him,” he added.

Until now, Acharya had been observing everything silently. He nodded in approval as Phani continued prepping.

Then, a quiet chime in my earbuds interrupted me — a message from our tech team: *The software upgrade is complete. You can now transmit video through your neural transmitters.*

Curious, I asked, *Can we send our thoughts as videos too?*

We’re looking into it, came the reply.

An hour later, Phani and Bunty returned after setting up all the CCTV cameras. We got into the SUVs and waited.

Finally, after two hours, the van arrived. The driver looked exhausted.

“GPS kept misdirecting me,” he explained. “We ended up circling the area until Phani guided us in manually.”

But now the monitoring van was here. The setup was complete. As the sun climbed higher in the sky, tension mounted — the calm before the storm.

By 8:00 p.m., after dinner, we arrived at the hospital building. We parked the van outside the gates and stepped out, scanning the surroundings under the dim glow of the streetlights.

I asked, “Ravali, do you see any souls around?”

She looked around, focusing intensely. “No... There’s nothing. Normally, ghosts avoid graveyards, but this place feels... empty. Like something is keeping even spirits away.”

“What could scare ghosts? You think there could be sorcerers practicing here?”

“Possibly,” she said. “Sorcerers sometimes trap ghosts and souls for their own use. They usually imprison them in bottles or enchanted objects. But here—” she glanced toward the building, “—it seems they’ve imprisoned an evil presence inside that Devi statue. That’s not normal. Someone powerful is behind this.”

“Then we’re not dealing with ordinary people,” I said grimly. “I heard there were aliens captured and handed to the government... but rumors say they’ve escaped.”

“Could someone in the government have helped them escape?” Ravali asked. “Or maybe they never reported them captured at all.”

Acharya, who had been quietly listening, interjected. “None of your assumptions are accurate. I reviewed the surveillance footage personally. They used advanced equipment — technology that lets them change appearance and escape undetected.”

“I know,” I nodded. “We used similar tech to capture them.”

Sonali, who had been standing nearby, leaned closer. “Reyansh, was it really you who caught the aliens? What do they look like? Anything we should look out for?”

“They appear human. But they’re built like warriors. Their leader, Surpanaka, is like a female bodybuilder — strong, fast, and skilled. I’ve heard she can defeat anyone in sword combat. Even her brother Indrajit didn’t stand a chance.”

“Who told you this?” Sonali asked.

“Surya Kumar,” I replied. “He’s a close observer and looks like a younger version of Pujari Kumar. He said Surpanaka’s group had close ties with the Chief Minister. I even suspect that Makrasura, one of the aliens we caught, might be impersonating the CM.”

I paused, then added, “There was confusion when the CM went missing right after the gang was captured. The man who replaced him was strangely calm... until the aliens escaped. Then, he became more aggressive — sanctioning questionable loans and facing pressure from the opposition for accountability.”

Acharya gave me a sharp look. “You seem unusually well-informed. Has Kumar been feeding you intel?”

“In a way,” I admitted. “I have a direct link to him. That’s how I’ve been able to write their stories in such detail.”

Just then, Phani came running, breathless. “The cameras picked up movement! But... there’s no one visible on the footage!”

"They must be using invisibility cloaks," I said. "Let's check the monitors."

We rushed into the van and crowded around the screens.

Bunty pointed, "There — who's that woman?"

"That's Surpanaka!" I gasped. "And with her — that's Indrajit. Behind him is Makrasura. The Asian guy is Kwon Cho, and the bearded man is Mama Ali. Looks like they're holding a meeting here."

More figures followed them, all entering a room and shutting the door.

"Cut that video clip and send it to Kumar immediately," I instructed. "He'll decide the next move."

Turning to Acharya, I asked, "What should we do now? If we alert the police or army, they might use the transporter and vanish. We won't be able to trace them."

"Then we wait," Acharya said. "But they must not discover our presence. If they do, they won't come back."

"The only way to trap them," I said, "is to disable the transporter while they're inside. Cutting power won't help — these transporters have backups. We need to unplug it. Once unplugged, it disables itself until reconnected."

"So," Sonali reasoned, "we wait until they're inside that room, disable the transporter, and then call in the army."

"Exactly. But the army must be on standby — ready to act instantly."

"How do we bring them here quickly?" Ravali asked.

Phani jumped in. "We brought our own transporter and a backup power source. We just need five minutes to assemble it."

"Good," I said. "Prepare it, and I'll alert the forces when the time is right."

"Will the operation happen tonight?" Bunty asked.

"Not tonight. We'll wait for their next visit. We can't afford mistakes."

"Should we stay?" Sonali asked.

"No. Once your tasks are done, you can return. We'll establish a command post and monitor their movements. This time, we can't let them escape."

Phani suddenly called from the monitor room, "They're leaving now! They went back into the same room they came from. That must be where the transporter is."

I turned to Acharya. "Can we get that room open?"

"It has a keypad lock. A regular keymaker won't help. I'll call an IT expert skilled in bypassing digital locks."

"Do it. I don't care who — just get someone who can open that door."

Acharya stepped aside, made a few quick calls, then returned. “He’ll be here in 2–3 hours. He’s coming in the company car — no transporter. I don’t want him using one.”

I didn’t understand why Acharya was so cautious, but I let it go for now.

I relayed everything to Kumar via my communicator. He responded swiftly: *I’m sending Atul to assist. He’ll take command of the situation.*

I was skeptical. I knew Atul had special abilities, but I wasn’t sure how effective they’d be here.

But I was wrong — as I would soon learn.

When Atul arrived, I took him straight to the room with the suspected transporter. On the way, we passed the Devi statue.

“Wait,” I said, pausing. “You need to see this...”

Then we reached the door. Atul took out a screwdriver, removed the panel of the keypad scanner, and used a specialized tool to reconfigure the system. With a few precise moves, he placed his hand on the scanner and reset the access — effectively locking out anyone else from opening it.

After that, we proceeded to the room where the UPS and generator were housed. Atul disconnected the UPS power supply to ensure the backup batteries would drain. “We’ll reconnect everything later,” he said.

Once our tasks were done, we returned to the guest house in our SUVs. On the way back, Atul sat beside Sonali, chatting casually.

Even after we arrived, they continued their conversation, now seated on the veranda, completely engrossed in their discussion. I chose not to interrupt and focused on my own work instead.

When dinner was ready, I stepped out to call them. They were still talking animatedly. The conversation spilled into dinner, and I finally had to ask them to eat quietly.

It was clear they had connected. I’d heard Atul was interested in a doctor doing her MS — the same one who acted in their movie *Kaliyuga Bharatham*. Apparently, that movie would soon be streamed through their communication devices, as part of a push to expand their subscriber base. I hadn’t realized those devices were already being marketed.

After dinner, they returned to the veranda and resumed their conversation. I didn’t eavesdrop, but from a few words here and there, it seemed they had moved on to movies and entertainment.

I figured they must’ve found common ground — the way young people often do. So, I took out my laptop and got to work on my auditing tasks.

By the time I finished and stepped out for some fresh air, it was well past 12:30 a.m. They were still sitting there, chatting as if time didn't exist.

I finally said, "It's getting late. You both should get some sleep," and headed to my room.

Inside, Mike was still awake, reading on his bed. I told him good night and reminded him to switch off the lights before sleeping.

When I awoke, it was already 7:00 a.m. I brushed my teeth, headed to the kitchen, and prepared myself a strong cup of coffee. Stepping out onto the veranda, I was surprised to find Atul and Sonali fast asleep, sitting on the chairs.

I gently nudged Atul awake. "Go and sleep properly inside," I said. He blinked a few times, then turned to wake Sonali. The two of them quietly headed to their bedrooms. I took the chair they'd vacated, sipping my coffee while flipping through a newspaper lying nearby.

After finishing the paper, I placed the empty cup in the kitchen and went for a quick bath.

Later, I called Phani to get an update on the building where his team was camped.

"No movement," he reported. "Not even the weird sounds the graveyard keeper mentioned. Everything's quiet."

"Okay," I said. "We'll come over shortly and go through the building."

Atul and I took a vehicle and drove to the mental hospital. Once there, he checked the UPS — its batteries were fully drained, as expected. He reconnected them to the main power supply to let them charge.

We explored the accessible rooms, but nothing stood out — just old beds, rusty cabinets, and some broken-down hospital equipment.

Meanwhile, Acharya had summoned a regular locksmith to begin work on the locked doors. Since the more sophisticated keypad systems had already been handled by Atul, Acharya instructed the locksmith to begin with the harder mechanical locks. We left them to their work and returned to the van, where Phani and Bunty were stationed.

Atul helped transfer the surveillance recordings to our data centre.

Once everything was taken care of, we headed back to the guest house.

Sonali was already waiting there for Atul, and as expected, the two of them quickly picked up where they left off, deep in conversation. I left them alone and went to my room.

Mike was working on his laptop. I picked up mine and began going through the latest orders.

Just then, my phone rang — it was Nandini.

I hadn't spoken to her since returning from New York.

I stepped outside to take the call. From where I stood, I could still hear Sonali and Atul laughing together on the veranda.

"Hello, how are you doing?" I asked.

"I'm fine. Where are you these days? We're neighbours, but I haven't seen you since you returned to India."

"I'm in Mumbai right now," I replied, careful not to reveal too much. "That's why I haven't been around."

"What are you doing in Mumbai?"

"I'm working with the Navy. Software auditing."

Technically true, though I avoided mentioning the classified defence accounting work.

"I miss you," she said gently. "Why don't you come meet me sometime? Rashmi told me you were in Hyderabad briefly, but you didn't stop by."

"I was helping a friend rescue a kidnapped girl. I only got one day in Hyderabad before heading back."

"So... when are you coming back?"

"What are *you* doing these days?" I asked.

"I've been helping Rashmi with the hospital, but honestly, there's not much for me to do. They run it pretty smoothly."

"Why don't you come visit us here in Mumbai for a few days?"

"How can I just leave the kids like that?"

"Well, we're not in the city right now — we're staying at a guest house outside Mumbai. But if you want to come, there's a transporter installed at Rashmi's place. Ask her to send you through. We have one here too, so I can pick you up as soon as you arrive."

"Okay, I'll speak to Rashmi. The kids can stay with the servants for a few days."

"Perfect. Just give me a call before you leave home."

After I hung up, I stood there for a while, wondering what had prompted Nandini to reach out after so long.

Maybe she was just looking for companionship. Her husband, Kumar, was now on Mars with Loveleen and seemed to have forgotten her entirely. She was left with no role in his organization — he had given the finance portfolio to the other Nandini. Even after the timelines merged, he hadn't really acknowledged her. She'd always loved him deeply, but now she was alone, unsupported, and possibly overlooked even by her own children.

My phone rang again. It was Nandini.

"I spoke with Rashmi," she said. "They *do* have a transporter set up at home. I'll be leaving in a minute. You'd better head over to pick me up from the terminal."

"Okay, I'm just leaving now. It'll take me ten minutes. If you reach there before me, just wait in the van," Nandini said.

I ended the call, grabbed the car keys, and drove to the spot where our van was stationed.

As soon as she saw the car pulling up, Nandini came running toward me and got in, settling into the seat beside me.

On the way back to the guest house, she glanced at me and said with a smile, "Mumbai water seems to suit you. You're looking better."

I pulled up outside the guest house and parked. Just before stepping out, she leaned over and kissed me on the cheek, opened the door, and stepped out. I got down, locked the car, and followed her.

Atul noticed her arrival and immediately got up. He smiled and hugged her. "How are you, Aunty?"

"I'm fine, Atul. What are you doing here?"

"We're here on an operation with Reyansh uncle."

"You remember why everyone had to return from New York?" she asked.

"We were expecting alien activity—and now they've arrived. We're trying to catch them. They slipped away once, but we're not giving up."

"Really?" Atul's eyes widened. "Who are they? What are they doing here?"

"They're family members from the Asur gang," she replied. "Apparently, Asur called them in as reinforcements. Have you seen *Kaliyuga Bharatham*—the film Kumar bankrolled?"

"Yes, I did."

"Well, they're connected to that story."

"But how did Kumar get the story for that movie?" Atul asked, puzzled.

"That's what Kumar can't figure out. He found the manuscript among his old notes, but he doesn't remember writing it—or giving the idea to anyone. It's as if someone planted the story among his belongings when he visited Mars to meet Indrasen."

"I read about that—Indrasen gave him a \$10 billion grant, right?"

"Yes. And when Monica chose *Kaliyuga Bharatham* for production, Kumar went ahead with it. But when he tried to track down Nirmala—the vamp from the movie—he uncovered something odd. She was supposedly the great-granddaughter of Acharya, the one who helped Bhavani conceive. Now Kumar suspects that Suyesh Acharya, a RAW agent, might also be related to him. Same surname, and suspicious behavior."

Nandini turned to me. "So how come you're here?"

"I came to meet Reyansh. We haven't seen each other since New York," she said softly.

Atul stood up and stretched. "Good night," he said with a yawn, and went inside. Sonali quietly followed him.

Nandini and I sat down on the now-vacant chairs on the veranda.

After a pause, she said, "I recently came across your autobiography. I didn't know you had so many... breakups."

I gave a small, rueful smile. "It was my mistake—thinking every close relationship would turn into something romantic. Until Nandini came into my life, I never truly felt that way about anyone. Even Dhani—I never saw her romantically. But when Nandini believed a mad woman over me, it broke my heart."

I sighed. "After that, I didn't want to see any woman in a romantic light. Then Padmini entered my life—forcefully. I didn't know how to react to her. Maybe that ruined my chances with Sahithi. And then there was Joyce from the office... When she asked me to the movies, I thought maybe she had feelings for me. But it turned out she just wanted someone to accompany her friend—our colleague."

I leaned back. "Still, I used to visit her after moving to the Kandivali branch. But one day she asked me to stop—her boss had told her not to entertain me. I stopped going. Later, he transferred her to the Raman House branch to keep her away from me."

Nandini frowned. "That's harsh. What did her boss have against you?"

“They thought I was some sort of Casanova,” I said, shaking my head. “I have no idea how that label stuck. Sure, I spoke to a few girls at work—they came to me for advice. That’s all.”

“Then what happened?” she asked.

“When Balachander resigned, Shakeela was posted to our branch as the Marketing Executive. We used to visit customers together. I never really understood her feelings toward me, so I didn’t make any moves. One day, we went to resolve an issue with a client, and suddenly, they asked her to resign. To this day, I don’t know what their problem was.”

“She took me to Nashik to help start a new branch. She stayed with some people she knew, while I stayed at a hotel. Some colleagues even suggested I propose to her—not necessarily for romance, but even casually, for a physical relationship. But I didn’t feel right about it.”

“Once, while returning from Nashik by bus with another colleague, she made me sit in the middle. She and the other man kept switching seats to get the window spot. Another time, we returned together, sat side by side up to Kasara, and then took a local train. On the train, she scolded me for not sitting properly. I never really understood her mindset.”

“She gave off mixed signals. For instance, on our first trip to Nashik in a shared cab, a couple with a baby sat in the back. She sat beside the woman, who had her legs folded under her. I was sitting slightly forward, and maybe when her chest brushed my back, she asked me to lean back and then shifted forward herself. She always kept these ambiguous boundaries.”

“During meals, she always ordered roti or chapati. I once asked her why. She said that if she ordered rice, we’d end up eating without etiquette. That’s the kind of person she was—controlled, image-conscious.”

“There was even a time she hinted that Tony, who had moved to Saudi, was jealous about us starting the office. But when her ex-boyfriend came visiting—promising to quit drugs—she accepted him back. I saw her sitting with him, her hand on his shoulder, chest touching his back. That’s when I decided—she wasn’t for me. I stopped visiting her, and later, after we shifted to Wadala, she disappeared from my life.”

Nandini asked softly, “Did you have any other relationships after that?”

“Nothing romantic. By that time, my self-esteem had hit rock bottom. Even when Sahithi returned to the typing institute, she’d transformed—short hair, modern clothes, working for a big company. I might have felt too small in her eyes. Though we started speaking again, it didn’t last. After we moved to Wadala, the interactions faded.”

“So that was your last close relationship?”

"You could say that. Until you picked me up, I hadn't thought of any other woman—except my wife. And she left me over a misunderstanding."

"Did you ever have a crush—maybe on a teacher?"

"Well... in 9th class, we moved to Vizag. There, our English teacher was a beautiful, unmarried woman. Sometimes I walked to school alone, and once I saw her waiting on the road, looking around. When she saw me, she called me over and asked me to deliver her leave letter to the office. That moment felt special—like she'd noticed me."

"Later, we moved closer to the school, and I didn't see her outside again."

"Anyone else?" she asked, curious.

"There's one more incident I never told anyone..."

"What was it?"

"It was 1991. I was working for a paints company. Earlier, while at the courier company, I'd joined ICWA, but had to quit my job to attend classes. When I joined the paints company, I continued my Final ICWA. We had two evening classes, and the second was Accounts, taught by a new teacher—Jessica. She was a CA by profession, and she taught in the evenings."

"After class, I would walk to Vile Parle station. We lived in Wadala then. One day, Jessica was walking a few paces ahead of me. I was in my own world, smoking a cigarette on a street corner. I didn't notice her until I got on the Harbour Line train. Even at Wadala station, she was still ahead of me, walking home."

"Our house was nearby, and as I turned into our lane, she caught up and called, 'Mister!' I turned and said, 'Yes, madam?' She asked if I lived there—maybe she thought I was following her. I explained we stayed in the P&T quarters. When she asked if I knew Mr. Nair, I told her they lived on the 3rd floor and had been our neighbors before. That seemed to reassure her."

"So she did think you were a stalker," Nandini said.

"Initially, yes. But after that, she started commuting with me. I'd walk her to her house and then return to mine. Because of her, I had to give up smoking—but I didn't mind."

"What did she look like?"

"She was a little dark, about five-foot-two, very pretty—around 25 years old. From Kerala. Since she knew Nair's family, she'd occasionally visit our home too. I introduced her as my teacher."

"She became close to my dad, called him 'uncle,' and even helped him with office paperwork. He used to bring files home sometimes. She spent more

time with him than with me. I never knew her feelings for me—she never said anything, and neither did I.”

“My mom was jealous. She’d ask why Jessica kept visiting. I told her Jessica missed her family in Kerala. Jessica and I often sat together on the train. The trains weren’t very crowded in the evenings.”

“This went on for six months. After our course ended, I was thinking of proposing. I hinted at it once—she smiled as if she already knew. But then I got busy with exams and software projects. When I got my results, I went to her house—but was told she’d gone to Kerala due to a family issue. She hadn’t even informed me. My dad said she had mentioned it to him casually, but I was deeply affected. She never came back. I failed my second group due to the distraction.”

“Did her absence really affect your exams that badly?”

“Yes. These are tough exams. In the first group, she’d helped me a lot—even sat beside me while I studied. My mother didn’t like her much. Later, when my dad proposed Anita’s match, I agreed passively. Then came the Babri Masjid demolition, riots, bomb blasts... and shortly after, my dad passed away while I was in Madras installing the software.”

“What really happened with Jessica? Did you ever find out?”

“Yes, much later. My brother-in-law told me. My mom had spoken harshly to Jessica—accused her of having a relationship with my dad. She linked them in her mind and told Jessica not to come home again.”

“That’s awful,” Nandini said, eyes wide. “She actually believed Jessica and your dad—?”

“Yes. Jessica saw him as a father figure. But my mom’s suspicions and harsh words wounded her. One day, my mom was talking to my sister on the phone, thinking no one else was home. She mentioned Jessica and the alleged affair. But my dad had just returned from an errand and overheard everything. He suffered a heart attack soon after.”

“I think I remember reading something about your mom having mental health issues,” she said. “Didn’t she refuse to get treatment?”

“She did. She was cruel to my dad, despite all he did. He was widely respected, active in the employee union, and known for his public service. Even your father respected him, right?”

“Yes. That’s why he asked me to help with your sister’s marriage,” she said with a faint smile.

“You certainly made the most of that opportunity—bringing Kumar to your house and seducing him.”

“He was vulnerable,” she said, shrugging playfully. “I’d been waiting for that moment for a long time.”

Then, her voice softened. “Can we spend some time alone?”

“I think all the rooms are taken.”

“What about the SUV? They’re spacious,” she said with a sly smile.

“If you say so. I have the keys.”

After our quiet time in the SUV, I let her sleep in the girls’ room and returned to my room with Mike.

Mike stirred and asked, “Where did you go?”

“My friend Nandini came from Hyderabad. We were just catching up.”

“I came out to the veranda... you weren’t there.”

“We just went for a walk,” I said. “Okay, good night.”

I woke up early and took Nandini to the transporter so she could return. She didn’t say much—just smiled faintly before boarding. I headed to check on the surveillance van.

Phani was already there. We sat together and reviewed the previous night’s recordings. Nothing suspicious—just the usual quiet, uneventful footage.

After chatting with Phani for a while, I made my way back to the guest house.

Around mid-morning, Manoj received a message from the Navy. He was required to attend a trekking expedition being organized in Karjat. He left almost immediately, and the others followed suit—everyone except Sonali. Clearly, she hadn’t had enough of Atul yet. That’s the kind of personality he has—charismatic, unpredictable.

Now, the only ones left at the farmhouse were Phani, Mike, Bunty, Ravali, and me. Acharya had left earlier to attend to something important.

Even after four days, Surpanaka’s team hadn’t returned. It seemed obvious now—they had been warned.

After thinking it through, I decided to inform Acharya: “We’re dismantling the surveillance team at the old hospital.”

He replied without hesitation, “You better do that. Looks like they’re not coming back.”

The way he said it... calm, detached—I could tell he had been the one to tip them off.

I didn't press him. Instead, I instructed the team to leave a few hidden cameras in place, but to shift the main monitoring to the graveyard attender's cabin. That way, nobody would suspect we were still watching.

Atul left with Sonali, probably heading to his place. What his intentions were, I didn't ask. I wasn't even sure I wanted to know.

The rest of us stayed at the farmhouse. Phani and Bunty took turns operating from the graveyard cabin. The driver would drop one of them off, pick the other up, and shuttle food and supplies as needed. Quiet efficiency had taken over now. We were in watchful waiting.

At last, we were ready to investigate the ghost residing within the Devi statue. I had spent days practicing the mantra Pujari Kumar once used to release spirits—like he had done at Sunitha's house.

The four of us arrived at the mental hospital around 6:45 p.m., just before Raval's window of spiritual perception typically opened. We approached the old, moss-covered statue of Devi in the courtyard, dimly lit under the fading sky. I turned to Raval.

"Can you see it?"

She closed her eyes briefly, focusing. "No... but I can feel its presence. It's here."

I filled a small vessel with water and began to chant the mantra I had committed to heart. Slowly, methodically, I poured the water over the statue, the sacred syllables resonating through the still air.

At exactly 7 p.m., Raval gasped softly. "She's here," she whispered. "Standing right in front of us."

The ghost—a pale, ethereal figure—looked not with rage, but with gratitude. "Thank you," she said, her voice almost a breath. "You've freed me from them. I've been trapped here ever since the murders in this hospital. Months ago, demons came... they bound me to this statue and forced me to give them information. If I didn't, they tortured me... using ancient mantras. With every secret I revealed, I grew weaker. To survive, I had to draw energy from the victims they brought me—people they wanted to punish."

Her voice trembled with relief. "But now... I can go in peace."

I turned to Raval. "So they're using spirits like this—binding them to objects, draining them for knowledge, torturing them when they resist."

Raval asked quietly, "How is that even possible? How can they torture the dead?"

“Mantras,” I replied. “Dark ones. Just as I used sacred ones to release her.”
Ravali stared at the statue, awed. “Are mantras really that powerful?”
“You saw it for yourself.”

The ghost nodded her thanks, gave one final glance at us—and then, with a swirl of light, vanished into the ether.

We quickly set up a relay system to transmit the CCTV footage via satellite. Then, with our mission complete, we packed our equipment, left the hospital grounds, and drove back to Mumbai.

Two days later, I was back at the Navy Yard. I walked into the training cell, placed my laptop on the table, and prepared to dive back into work. But something was off.

Sonali was gone.

In her place sat a new girl—someone unfamiliar. She was from Kerala and had recently left a job in Bangalore to come here. As we talked, she shared pieces of her story. Her husband had returned to Kerala, possibly after losing his job. Now, it seemed she had taken up this higher-paying role while he tried to find his footing again, maybe even return to Dubai, where he’d worked before.

Still, her story didn’t sit right with me. The reasons felt too neat, too conveniently explained. Maybe it was just about the money—or maybe something deeper was pulling the strings.

Then, during our conversation, she mentioned Jessica.

What she said left me frozen. It was the kind of news that changes how you see the past. Something I never expected. I couldn’t even begin to process it. Before I could gather my thoughts, another change came—a new hire. A 26-year-old Maharashtrian woman had joined, replacing one of the developers. She wasn’t familiar with PowerBuilder, but I guessed she was brought on for GeM administration.

With that, everything around me seemed to shift. The room, once familiar, now felt different. The people, the tone, the energy—it all had changed.

.

To be continued

