

Sauda / Deal

Scene 1

Balkeshwar Temple / exterior - morning

Clad in brocade hem dhoti, a kerchief on his shoulder, a plain scarf tied around his forehead and wearing nothing except the sacred thread across his chest. Raja Ravi Verma was coming out of the temple's alley.

Suddenly he got stranded in the courtyard in the middle of the temple. His eyes were locked on the doorway. The beauty Sugandha was approaching.

The nine-inch green brocade saree was brightening the elegance of her body. Her enormous black eyes were bewitching. Ravi Verma was trapped in that vigorous pull.

Two women with prayer things were coming after Sugandha. For a moment her eyes met with Ravi Verma. As soon as the awaking of a man staring back struck her, she disentangled herself and went inside leaving Ravi Verma behind.

Scene 2

Balkeshwar Temple / interior - morning

Inside - crowd of various pilgrims- the ceremonious chants of the priest -the sound of the conch shell - flickering flames in the lamps.

Sugandha and her attendants turn to leave after offering their prayers.

Scene 3

Balkeshwar temple/ exterior - morning

Ravi Verma was still in the same place when the women returned after the offerings.

They went as they came.

Mild and composed he also walked out.

Scene 4

Outside the temple/ carriage - road - morning

Ravi Verma boarded the carriage parked outside the entrance. The carriage started, but Ravi Verma was possessed by the unforgettable charm of Sugandha.

Scene 5

Transition montage - Ravi Verma's studio/ Balkeshwar Temple.

Anytime

Ravi Verma could not erase the memory of that beauty. He began tracing it on his easel. She appeared in different ideas on it. But he was not satisfied.

Waiting for Sugandha on the Balkeshwar Temple steps became his daily activity.

Sugandha was perturbed with a man scrutinizing her everyday. She soon fell prey to anger.

Scene 6

Balkeshwar Temple / exterior- morning

One day as Sugandha came outside the temple after the offerings; one of her attendants came and stood before Ravi Verma. She was fuming.

Attendant

This doesn't befit you...

Ravi Verma kept his calm.

Ravi

What doesn't befit me?

Attendant

Your staring at our Sugandha Bai everyday...

Ravi

Really?

There was a peculiar smile on Ravi Verma's face. His eyes were beaming with laughter. Sensing this the attendant got even more furious

Attendant

Our Sugandha Bai is capable of buying hundreds like you. She has asked to warn you if this continues then... you'll be given to the police...understood?

Ravi

I did, now you may leave.

Scene 7

Outside the temple/ carriage- morning

Sugandha and her sister Kamala were seated at the back of the carriage. The attendant, Keshar came and sat in the front. Coachman latched on the door. Sugandha curiously asked Keshar

Sugandha

So, what happened?

Keshar

Gave him a good bashing and also warned him if he continues the police will take his case. Looked like some Brahmin from south, but look at the nerve, skimpy, pathetic and such arrogance!

Sugandha

Perhaps he's just beseeching a small token...

Kamala

What are you saying? Haven't you seen how he ogles? And what audacity with such a repulsive face!

Sugandha kept pondering over it. She was smiling unknowingly. She couldn't take him off her thoughts. That dark complexion had some strange charisma.

Scene 8

Balakeshwar Temple/ exterior - morning

The next day when Sugandha went to the temple, for a moment she couldn't see that man. But soon her probing gaze met his on the first step of the temple. She gave him an incensed look and started to go, while he came towards her.

Ravi

I got your message yesterday; can you give me a moment?

Containing her anger Sugandha said

Sugandha

This is against our norms.

Ravi

But my intention was harmless... I am a painter.

She sneered and said

Sugandha

And I am aware of such a sham

Without clearing her way Ravi Verma called out

Ravi

Paachan!

Paachan came running after the call.

Without taking his eyes off Sugandha he ordered him.

Ravi

Go! Get the painting from the carriage.

Sugandha was in a bizarre state of mind. She was amazed with Ravi Verma's obstinacy.

Soon Paachan was back with the painting. Ravi Verma presented the painting to Sugandha. It was her portrait in oil paint.

Sugandha was dumb found. Ravi Verma's words resonated around her.

Ravi

I saw you and couldn't contain myself. Musing and painting you in different ideas became my daily struggle

Sugandha whispered to one of the attendants. She went out.

Sugandha came to senses with Ravi Verma's question.

Ravi

You didn't like the painting?

Sugandha involuntarily gave a nod.

Ravi

God has bestowed you with an unusual charm. Your poise and beauty can never be obsolete. In time this image will give you the spirit to keep on breathing, to keep on living.

With these words Ravi Verma left

Sugandha got transfixed, as if hypnotized. She woke up with her attendant saying

Attendant

Madam he was Raja Ravi Verma!

Scene 9

Sugandha's bedroom/ interior- afternoon

With Ravi Verma's painting in front of her, Sugandha was lying on her bed ruminating.

At the same time Kamala entered and without sensing the mood, said

Kamala

How do they make the picture with sole imagination?
Really! It seems so lively!

Sugandha gave a glance towards Kamala and without saying a thing went out of the bedroom.

Scene 10

Balkeshwar temple/ exterior – morning

Agile and delightful Sugandha became a stone from that day. Ravi Verma was nowhere. She looked for him among thousands of faces, but could never find him. Perplexed she used to return home.

Scene 11

Sugandha's house/ interior – afternoon

Bakabai, plump with chubby round face was sitting in the rear porch to pick the rice. Kamala came and sat near the doorsill. Wiping her sweat with her white saree, she cast a glance on Kamala and said.

Bakabai

What is Sugandha doing?

Kamala

She's sleeping.

Bakabai

Let her sleep, that painting seems to be hexed. Since that painting came in the house, Sugandha has been struck with lightening it seems.

Kamala

But what can a painting do?

Bakabai

This is witchcraft. Look at her, such a nimble damsel! Look at what the painting has done to her!

Kamala

You are weird, how can a painting cast any spell?

Bakabai

You are naïve, you will not understand. There used to be a great merchant near my place. Lakshmi was filling the vessel when a sage came in and gave a black stone idol of Vishnu to him. Within a year he was completely devastated.

Kamala got totally shaken up.

Kamala

Really?

Bakabai

Swear to soul. God knows where that sage is absconding. Only he knows the cure for this spell.

Scene 12

Sugandha's bedroom/ interior – morning

Sugandha changed her clothes. While going out she noticed the oblique painting kept beside the cupboard. She went near to correct it when she got stunned to see five needles smeared with vermilion strung below the painting.

Keshar and Kamala were also in the room. In a moment is got extremely furious.

Sugandha

Mausi!!!

Wiping her hands with the end of her saree, Bakabai came up the stairs wheezing.

Bakabai

What is it?

Sugandha

Who came in my room?

Bakabai got scared seeing Sugandha in that state. Mustering some courage she said.

Bakabai

Who will come here? I cannot climb these stairs.

Sugandha lifted the painting to show Bakabai those needles strung below it.

Sugandha

Then who did this?

Bakabai was trembling with fear; her eyes were fixed on the needles, she was just on the brink of tears.

Sugandha

Don't try to fool me! Nobody else can do it except you.

Bakabai

Because I live on your scrapes doesn't mean I'll please you.
I'll live on little in Goa but I cannot stomach this accusation.

Sugandha was aware of the threat but she wasn't intimidated

Sugandha

Ok, you go to Goa if you wish.

Bakabai wiped her tears with the end of her saree. With a heavy throat she said.

Bakabai

I know! This is how benevolence pays you. Nagnath told me you are under a spell, then how could I rest in peace!

Sugandha's anger instantly vanished; she burst into peals of laughter.

Sugandha

O ho! So that's what made you do this.

Without removing the end of the saree from her face, she gave a nod. Sugandha took out those needles and gave it to Bakabai.

Sugandha

Throw it and don't ever do all this in the house again..

Scene 13

Sugandha's bedroom / interior – morning

Sugandha was sitting in front of the daintily engraved sesame dressing table coiffuring her elaborate hair. With her face in the fore she could also see her painting at the back staring stern at her from the mirror. The painting seemed more beautiful to her.

At that moment she heard loud thump of somebody climbing up the stairs. Sugandha turned to find puffed Keshar entering. Before Sugandha could say anything Keshar hastily said.

Keshar

Madam I found him!

Sugandha

Whom?

Keshar

— The one who gave you the painting in the temple.

Sugandha's eyes dazzled with the news. With immense pleasure she asked

Sugandha

You met him?

Keshar

No, I went to the souk for vegetables and found his attendant Paachan. He lives in the neighborhood, across the church.

Gleefully Sugandha opened one of the closets of her dressing table, took out a bracelet and gave it to Keshar. After she left Sugandha started admiring herself in the mirror.

Scene 13

Raja Ravi Verma's bungalow / interior/ exterior- evening

Sugandha's carriage moved into the vicinity. The two-story bungalow with highly wrought surrounding, fashioned garden and the adjoining stable. Sugandha's eyes were examining everything. She was welcomed by Ravi Verma's attendants at the entrance and was led to the grandiose Diwan Khana or the sitting hall.

The Diwan Khana adorned with red colored meticulously woven carpets, shiny black sesame couches and a chandelier hung to the ceiling was enchanting. The tune of a lute was resonating coming somewhere from inside.

Sugandha got up when she saw Ravi Verma descending from the spiral staircase on the left side.

Ravi

Sorry for having you wait for long.

Sugandha

No, it's ok

Looking at Keshar Ravi Verma said.

Ravi

Hope you have not got the police!

With a smile Sugandha said

Sugandha

Not the police, but I got this

Sugandha gave the painting from Keshar's hand to Ravi Verma. That was Sugandha's portrait. Ravi got startled for a moment.

Ravi

What happened? You didn't like it?

Sugandha

I like it that's why I am returning it

Ravi Verma felt discomfited in Keshar's presence

Ravi

Let's go upstairs to my studio.

With the painting in his arms he started climbing the stairs with Sugandha proceeding after.

Scene 15

Raja Ravi Verma's Studio / interior- late afternoon

There was an unfinished painting on the easel. Pointing to the bedstead he asked Sugandha

Ravi

Make yourself comfortable

Sugandha sat on the bedstead. Ravi Verma was inadvertently marveling her face. Impulsively he asked her.

Ravi

Where did this portrait fail? Do you think it lacks something?

Sugandha

No, it's not that

Ravi

Then why are you returning it?

Sugandha

There has to be a deal for this painting. What price should I pay for it?

Ravi

What deal are you talking about?

Sugandha

I have never accepted anything complimentary in my life.

Ravi Verma was taken aback with Sugandha's obstinacy. Instead of getting angry he could feel fervor of excitement inside. But he retained his thoughts.

Ravi

Sure, this painting has its price. But...I don't think you can make that deal.

Adamant Sugandha accepted Ravi's challenge.

Sugandha

If the price is beyond my spread then I will leave this painting here.

Sugandha kept admiring the paintings in the studio._

Ravi

Madam, I am an unfulfilled painter. This is my conjured painting of Shakuntala. If I would have seen you before making it then...

Sugandha

What are you implying?

Ravi

I was brought up in an affluent family. The embellishment I got through my parents have a great influence on me. I grew up listening to the Vedic chants. I am enthralled with the images of Draupadi, Hans Damyanti, Nal Damyanti and Sairendheri. But all these imaginations are amorphous. God has bestowed you with brilliance and charm. You can be the answer to my questions and the contour of my imagination. Can you pay me my price? Can you make this deal with me?

Sugandha was engrossed in the paintings of beautiful women in form of goddesses. She turned from a Nair girl's painting and said.

Sugandha

I need some time to think.

Sugandha left the studio leaving the painting behind.

Scene 16

A dream (Urvashi and Puruva)

Ravi was sleeping. The enchanting Sugandha in the garb of Urvashi was lying beside him on the bedstead, as if perched in the air. The window revealed the full moon night, with a fleet of sheep in its spread, seemed as if the gandharvas from the heaven itself had loosened them. In naked state Ravi got up as the lightening smashed in the sky. In that flash of light Sugandha saw Ravi and quivering flew from the patio vanishing in the sky. Ravi as Puru kept staring helplessly at her maligning in the firmament. He woke up from the dream but the aura of the last vista was still embossed in his psyche. He advanced towards the easel but the brush wouldn't trace the image.

Scene 17

Ravi Verma's studio/

The stir of the dream remained with him; as a result Ravi Verma couldn't hide the

disbelief as he saw Sugandha entering the studio.

Ravi

You came back?

With an inexplicable laugh Sugandha said

Sugandha

Came to take back my picture.

And without giving a second look she started to climb the stairs to the studio.

Scene 18

Ravi Verma's bungalow/ studio/ exterior – interior/ evening

Two carriages with white horses pulled in the vicinity of the bungalow. As the carriages stopped coachman hurriedly released the latch. Ravi Verma and Rammiya got off and in an instant Ravi's eyes levered open around the area. The hazy light of the evening couldn't hide Sugandha's carriage parked in one corner.

As Ravi Verma advanced the steps the servants ran towards him. Ravi removed his shoes and religiously washed his feet with the water in the brass vessel. Servants wiped his feet with a cloth and he went inside the Diwan Khana.

The candles were gleaming in the chandelier. As soon as Ravi Verma came inside his son Ram Verma and brother Goda Verma got to their feet in respect. Various string instruments, tanpura, veena and the like were scattered all around the place.

Ravi

Has somebody come?

In jest Goda said

Goda

Not here but I don't know if somebody has come to visit
Your studio!

Headgear on his forehead, prince coat on with a clean white dhoti and playing with his silver hood wooden stick he was looking at Goda. The glittery diamond loops in his ears were nothing in front of his arresting gaze; they seemed to say a lot. Goda couldn't hide his smile underneath his bushy black mustache. Ravi started climbing the spiral stairs to the studio without saying anything.

But he got wedged near the threshold of the studio. His eyes were locked on the chandelier hung to the roof right in the middle of the studio. The glistening candels were thinning out its soft blink around. All the paintings were arranged in a row.

Ravi

I know you are somewhere here...Sugandha!

And with in an instant the rustle of the folds of the sari resounded in Ravi's ears.

Adorned in a pink silk sari, mesmerizing Sugandha appeared from behind the curtain in front of Ravi. Then looking at the chandelier he asked.

Ravi

I guess you got this chandelier?

Sugandha

I just thought it would look nice here.

Ravi

The stream of light from the north serves the aim for a painter. The beauty of this glow is for the bedrooms.

Ravi Verma's attitude bought a streak of gloom on Sugandha's face. She couldn't hide it. Looking at her Ravi slung the silver hood of the stick to the chandelier, in a way to pull it down. In the midst of tinkling glass he proposed.

Ravi

What if I strike down the whole thing in a flash? How will you feel seeing it
In tiny little pieces?

The strange poignant remark terrified Sugandha; she immediately bought her right hand to support her incessantly beating heart.

Ravi

But I will not do anything. This chandelier has five candels, but the brightness of its gleam is spread all around. This is due to it's flickering Flames. Our lives are also like this, if you get the right companion then the life shines but if an artist only gets to face adversity then...

Embarrassed Sugandha said.

Sugandha

I thought you'd like it.

Ravi

This chandelier reminds me of an incident.

Sugandha

What incident?

Ravi

Let's leave that for later, but did you especially buy this for me?

Sugandha

No, some beautiful things are bound in storehouses. This chandelier shares the same story.

Sugandha was lost in her own thoughts.

Sugandha

My sister and I were brought up in Goa. Mother left us when we were kids and there was no scope of knowing our father. Mausi was the only anchor. One fine day she gave me away to an affluent Parsi merchant. He came in my life as lightening on a stormy night. He went as he came. But made sure to fulfill all my requirements. He got this beautiful chandelier for me. He was rich and had no sense of the excessive. There was no place for it in the house and it found its place in one of the coops. It was small so I thought...

Sugandha fought with her tears from falling.

Ravi

I like this chandelier but I don't like prodding into people's lives.

With a soft smile Sugandha said.

Sugandha

You wanted to say something about the chandelier.

Scene 19

Flashback

Once while coming back from Bombay I bought one chandelier and took it to my wife's place in Mevilkira. I got it fixed with a help of a servant in the bedroom. The light Of the candles through the cut glass glistened on the walls. My wife came inside the bedroom and got really surprised. She called out to the servant and asked him

Who bought this here?

I was avidly listening to everything. My curiosity was mounting up. That very moment she asked the servant to get a stick. She smashed the whole thing with it. The whole room was soon strewn with tiny little pieces of glass. Horrified with the sight I couldn't help shrieking.

Ravi
PURU!!!...

She ran in to the bathroom and closed the door from inside when she heard my voice.

Ravi
Open the door Puru!

I could hear her snuffle from outside.

Puru
Will you hit me?

Ravi
No Puru, open the door. I will not do anything!

After a few minutes she opened the door, came out and fell at my feet. I fiercely tried to pull her up. She clung to me and said.

Puru
I neither want trinkets nor I want this beautiful shimmer of lights in the bedroom. You are the inevitability... I want you.

That was the single and simple factor.

Scene 19
Ravi Verma's studio/ interior- evening

Suddenly Ravi Verma became aware of Sugandha. Tears were trickling down her cheeks.

Ravi
Sugandha!!!

With a morose smile Sugandha wiped her tears and said

Sugandha
It's impossible...men can never understand a woman's spirit.

Emotionally stirred Ravi was going to say something when he heard somebody climb up the studio stairs.

Raja Verma came inside. His face was gleaming.

Raja

Brother, there's good news.

Ravi

What?

Raja

Diwan Madhavarao has sent a telegram. You've got gold medal from Baroda Maharaj for your Nair girl painting in the Pune exhibition.

Sugandha

Can you show me that painting?

Ravi went near that painting hung on the wall. Sugandha eyes fell on it and for an instant she got rapt.

Ravi

What are you so absorbed in?

Sugandha

It's beautiful!!

And she burst into peals of laughter. Ravi Verma was also smiling.

Scene 20

Ravi Verma's studio/ interior- morning

There was a sloping panel on the easel. Ravi was perfecting his painting of Usha Swapan on it. He came a little back to look at the painting from an angle.

Ravi

Today is Thursday and it's auspicious. Sugandha should come today.
... But she'll not come.

Rammaiya

But I don't understand, why are you painting a sleeping woman.

Ravi

Rammaiya, you are a Sanskrit scholar & my friend from the early days, you

should understand! This is not simply a sleeping woman, she is Usha. The bare part of the panel will illustrate her dream where she sees Anirudh. Do you remember eight days back Goda sang the Usha Swapan? Rammaiya, send Goda, I want to hear Usha Sukta again. Ask him to get his Veena also.

Rammaiya left. Ravi was looking intently at the painting with the palate in his hand. But his fingers went feeble to lift the brush. Goda Verma came inside the studio after Rammaiya.

Ravi

Goda, where's your veena?

Goda

Excuse me for that, Madhavarao is waiting for you in the downstairs.

Ravi hung the palate in his right hand to the one of the tacks on the easel. Wiping his hands with a cloth he started descending the studio stairs.

Scene 21

Diwan Khana/ interior- afternoon

Madhavarao was sitting on the couch he got to his feet when he saw Ravi approaching. He took out a small velvet pack from his pocket. The gold medal was there shining inside.

Madhavarao

I present you this medal on the behalf of the assembly where I reside as a Diwan.

Ravi

In all the certainties you are the one who deserves the merit.

Madhavarao

I don't know about the merit or loss. I know you'll always prevail but I am afraid of the loss.

Ravi

What loss?

Madhavarao

We are mere Diwans and we definitely have hierarchies. You gave me that as a memento...but anyway Governor Sir James Ferguson saw that painting and asked for it. I couldn't give it away considering your affection. We discussed it in our correspondence and he asked for a

replica.

Ravi

Let's go to the studio.

Scene 22

Ravi's studio / interior- afternoon

Madhavarao was looking at the unfinished Usha Swapan on the easel.

Ravi Verma untied the wrapped paintings. There were two other paintings of the Nair girl.

Ravi

Take whichever you like from the two.

Madhavarao

What is the price of this?

Ravi

Your blessings...

Madhavarao

Baroda Maharaja Sayajirao is getting coronated as the heir. Being the Diwan I
Take pleasure in inviting you for the occasion.

Scene 23

Montage sequence

A map of the kingdoms in India----- The suggestion of the train hushing through the
Baroda kingdom on the map-----preparation for coronation of Sayajirao-----

The jubilation and celebration in Baroda on the occasion----

Madhavarao

Rajaji, I know you did not like this environment. Fortunately this boy will
Be the inheritor tomorrow. I am being appointed as his benefactor and the
Diwan of this state. I'll do anything for its interests.

Scene 24

Photomontage stills

Kings of different states are invited for the occasion. They gather in the assembly.

Cannons confer salutations.

Scene 25

Baroda railway station

Ravi Verma's luggage is getting tacked in the first class compartment.

Raja Verma

Diwan Madhavarao is coming...

Madhavarao is approaching the compartment along with his servants

Ravi

You shouldn't have bothered.

Madhavarao

I went to your place and came to know that you had already left.
I've got a message for you... _

Ravi

— What is it?

Madhavarao

The Maharaja of Travancore will be in Bombay when you reach. He'll stay near Girgaon in Wadia's bungalow. You should go and meet him.

Ravi

And what is the purpose of the meeting?

Madhavarao

In this life if you can't make friends then don't even initiate animosity. Today maharaja of Trivandrum is well regarded. To value him you should pay him a visit.

Ravi

You are a father figure. I am owed to you in all respects. I will obey you and pay this visit. But the pleasure I got in honoring Sayaji in spite of the age I am not sure I'll get the same pleasure meeting the maharaja of Taravancore.

The engine came and the coaches were assembled. With a heavy throat they bid farewell to each other.

Scene 25

Ravi Verma's studio

Sugandha

How was your journey? Did you like Baroda?

Ravi

On visiting Baroda I realized that the age doesn't count in Terms of insight. He is an adolescent king, but is very meticulous. I had a great sense of gratification in associating with him.

Sugandha kept staring at Ravi Verma's content face.

Ravi

We shouldn't waste anymore time now. Let's get started from tomorrow.

Sugandha

...From tomorrow? Aren't you tired?

Ravi

I don't have leisure time now. I have accepted the invitation from Pudukot And then I'll head towards Kilimanoor to meet my maternal uncle.

The news bought a streak of gloom on Sugandha 's face, which troubled Ravi.

Scene 26

Wadia's bungalow / exterior/interior – evening

Taking his shoes off Ravi Verma came inside the house. Maharaja Vikram was sitting on a dais in the middle porch. Ravi modestly gave his greetings.

Vikram

Welcome, Raja Ravi Verma! I must say I am surprised.

Ravi

Surprised? Why?

Vikram

You remembered me suddenly. Is this a small thing?

Ravi

Am I at fault in anyway?_

Vikram

Absolutely not, now you're a prominent painter and that too with Baroda. News is all around and I've been hearing all this.

Ravi suppressed his anger.

Ravi

The credit goes to your friend Maharaja Ailiyam.

Vikram

The fact that you acknowledge this is enough. I have one claim though.

Ravi

What is it?_

Vikram

When I return from Kashi, I want you to come to Trivandrum and complete the pictures of my noble family. I'll pay the expenses.

Ravi Verma chose not to say anything. Maharaja Vikram got intimidated.

Ravi

Pardon me Maharaj; I've already accepted various royal invitations in this regard.

Vikram

How much are they paying you?

Ravi

These are friendly invitations, not claims or orders.

Vikram

Are you overlooking Trivandrum?

Ravi

I'll be there when Trivandrum wants me.

Vikram

And what if it doesn't want you ever?

Ravi

Then I would choose not to come, ever.

Vikram

You may leave now.

With immense perseverance Ravi Verma took his leave.

Scene 27

Ravi Verma's bungalow / interior

Madhavarao

Rajaji, your encounter with Baroda maharaj was brief. But the traditional paintings you presented him during this acquaintance have become really popular in Baroda. Though he is still in his prime age he exudes incalculable sharpness, also in terms of art. He shows your paintings to all his honored guests. _

Ravi

I definitely take it as an honor. Even Trivandrum Maharaj considers me Only Sayajirao doesn't remember me.

Madhavarao

What are you implying? I didn't understand.

Ravi

According to your advice I went and met Maharaja Vikram as soon as I reached Bombay. Leave being convivial, I had to deal with his severe antagonism. The royal accolade I got from raja Ailiyam is being seized and all my connections with the Trivandrum will be withdrawn. I don't care about the accolade but breaking ties with Trivandrum will be a setback.

Madhavarao

Is it so prized?_

Scene 28

Ravi Verma's studio/ interior- afternoon

There was an oblique panel on the easel. Ravi Verma was sketching Urvashi and Puruva

with charcoal. He was so engrossed in outlining that he didn't notice Sugandha, when she came and stood behind him. Sensing the same Sugandha suddenly said.

Sugandha

What are you sketching?

Ravi got startled with the voice, he turned and saw Sugandha and got really surprised.

Ravi

You were not going to come today?

Sugandha

Was not going to come but thought would just give some prashad from
The ceremony at home.

The painting then caught Ravi Verma's eyes and in haste he picked the panel and placed it inverted by the wall.

Sugandha

But what kind of sketch was that?

Ravi

Nothing, it's nothing was just tracing out something arbitrarily.

Before Ravi could say anything, she had already picked the panel by the wall.

Sugandha

What kind of image is this?

Ravi

Leave it; I'll never be able to complete it.

Sugandha

But... at least tell me the truth...

Ravi

Was reflecting on Urvashi and Puruva episode...thought of tracing it out.

Sugandha

Urvashi-Puruva?

Ravi

Yes, the nymph Urvashi who comes in Puruva's life, but she has a precondition, she'll fly back to heaven if she sees Puruva naked.

Sugandha

And then?

Ravi

The Devtas wanted Urvashi back. They tried ensnaring them and planned a hoax. They both were sleeping naked on the bed. The fleet of sheep opened and there were sounds of pilfering. Forgetting everything Puruva got up and ran towards the patio swayed by the sound. Urvashi was behind him. Suddenly a lightning flashed in the sky and Urvashi saw Puruva in that light. According to the precondition she started to fly towards heaven. Distressed with the thought of heartbreak Puruva is trying to grab the end of her sari. This is the imagination. This image has been chasing me for a long time now.

There are innumerable devout forces in life, which comes through
As imagination for an artist. But if his will is not chaste then the
Imagination itself gets diluted. An artist endures this curse.

Ensnared with Ravi's expressions Sugandha said.

Sugandha

Then why don't you paint it?

Ravi

Memory of the bliss and the face of melancholy, where should I
Find such a woman? I have lost the nerve to ask for it.

With an air Sugandha asked.

Sugandha

Why?

Ravi

You'll have to stand unclothed in front of me for that. I don't want to
put you into any kind of dilemma.

Scene 29

Ravi Verma's studio/ interior-

There was a blank panel on the easel._

Ravi

I haven't decided what to paint.

Sugandha

Then why don't you complete that picture?

Ravi

Which one?

Sugandha

That Urvashi Puruva image, I know you, you'll definitely accomplish it

Ravi

Nobody has ever had such a belief in me, Sugandha. I don't think I'll be able to paint today. You come tomorrow and come alone...

Scene 30

Ravi Verma's studio/ interior

Sugandha saw a big canvas on the easel. Ravi closed the door behind him.

Ravi

Sugandha, you get ready now.

Sugandha's eyes fell with discomfit. She started getting cold sweat. She turned back and in a moment the blouse fell off on the floor. Ravi Verma's eyes were fixed on her bareback.

Ravi Verma was standing near the easel.

Sugandha turned, her breasts were covered with the sari, Ravi slowly went towards her and removed the sari. He kept the sharpened charcoal on the table.

Ravi

Sugandha, get the panel I was sketching on yesterday.

Adjusting her sari on her bare chest she started to look for the panel.

Ravi

Leave the sari like that. I just want that sketch.

On some or the other pretext Ravi was making Sugandha move around the studio in that state, placidly watching her moves and curves. But Sugandha couldn't meet her gaze with Ravi.

Time elapsed

Sugandha was getting aggravated; Ravi had not drawn a streak on the panel.

On the third day Sugandha gave away her patience.

She went to the easel and cuffed the panel with her right hand saying.

Sugandha

Will you do something or I'll be squirming around this place forever?

Sugandha raised her right hand and said.

Sugandha

Your Urvashi would have gone to the heavens but where will I go

In this state?

Sugandha's face was red with anger, she was not even aware of her bare body. Ravi was admiring the elegance of her act, as she stood there with her right hand raised in rage.

Ravi

Wait don't move, Sugandha! This is the guise I was looking for.

Amused she glanced at Ravi and the next moment burst out laughing. The unease with nakedness had vanished.

Ravi was tracing her in half naked state. More than the bareness it was the splendor of her persona, the exact temper that he was trying to bring out.

Scene 31

Ravi's Studio/ interior

With every passing day Sugandha was getting flustered. While adjusting her clothes sometimes she felt the blood gushing down her facial veins. After Ravi finished for the day, he would ask Sugandha.

Ravi

That's enough for the day; you can wear your clothes.

She would look at Ravi while wearing her clothes, but Ravi used to be occupied with his brushes and paints, fiddling and keeping it in order.

Scene 32

Studio/ montage

Time and again Ravi visited the studio to appraise the painting in the gleam of the candlelight.

Once in a while Sugandha also visited the studio with Kamala.

Ravi sent her on carriage ride around the town so she wouldn't get bored.

Scene 33

Studio/ interior

And one day Ravi finished the painting.

Ravi

Sugandha, the picture is complete. Now you can wear your clothes.

And Ravi started cleaning his brush. Sugandha was looking at him helplessly.

Ravi

What happened?

Sugandha

Nothing.

Ravi

Sugandha!

Sugandha

You are only a painter, but did you ever realize that I have a soul?

Anyway it's not your fault it's mine. A mortal shouldn't love anybody.

Shouldn't stand unclothed demeaning itself.

Ravi kept the brush down. Surprised he said

Ravi

Sugandha!

Sugandha didn't look at him. She ran and slumped on her stomach on the pulpit of the studio and started crying. Her sob enthused the movement of her bareback. The end of her sari sprawled down the pulpit. Wiping her tears Ravi said.

Ravi

Sugandha! Look at me once.

Ravi took her into an embrace.

Ravi

No Sugandha! I am not valiant enough to hold the radiance of this
Charisma.

And Ravi stood with his back to Sugandha. In a moment he sensed her bare body on his
back and heard her murmur ---- “Ravi!”

This made him defenseless, he turned and the time dissolved in their embrace.

Scene 34

Road / exterior – night

The oil lamps were almost out on the way to Kelwari. The road was deserted and
immobile. As Sugandha’s carriage gushed through the silence, the dogs started barking
and nervously followed the carriage.

The noise kindled Sugandha in slumber, and made her grin at the sound of barking.

Scene 35

Kelwari/ Sugandha’s house/ exterior- interior / night

The carriage was parked outside the gate. Ibrahim loosened the latch and Sugandha got
off. She got startled when Bakabai answered the knock. She didn’t say a word. The oil
lamps were still glistening inside.

Sugandha

You are still awake?

Closing the door Bakabai replied

Bakabai

I have girls like you to kill my sleep.

Sugandha

Why are you saying such things?

Bakabai started flaming in anger, oil lamps were enhancing her tawny fuming face.

Bakabai

What is all this song and dance Sugandha?

Sugandha

Will you stop these riddles and tell me what song and dance you are talking about?

Bakabai

Ah! Look at that! You ask me what's going on? Ask the people around, whole Kelwari

Is talking about it. Initially it was only day, but does he also paints in the night?

Sugandha

No.

Bakabai

Then why were you slouched there?

Sugandha

You will not understand.

Bakabai

That's true, why will I understand? You have fulfilled all my ambitions dear. I hoped I'd not see this day, that is why I gave you to that Parsi merchant. He's Sanctified you for your seven lives ahead, and you are trying to worm around In the rut?

Sugandha shrieked in anger.

Sugandha

Mausi!!!!

Bakabai

Don't peer your eyes on me. This is no way, when a demure woman steps

Out of the house and doesn't care about night and day, it is viable for People to hearsay.

Sugandha couldn't help stammering.

Sugandha

But I only went there for that...

Bakabai

Don't give me any niceties. I have also spent some time in this world. I got Widowed in the sixteenth year of my life, but till date no one is audacious enough

To point fingers at me.

Sugandha

But Bapu Kaka.... You've put him behind or what?

Bakabai

Don't take his name; he was a sage. His blessing were stream of light in the Darkness.

Sugandha

How many times did it confer on you?

Bakabai yelled at Sugandha

Bakabai

Debauched woman! It's better to live on scrapes than to live in such a dissolute Order.

Sugandha

Without any doubt leave, but you'll have no privilege to say such things in this house.

Scene 36

Sugandha's room/interior-night

Taking the staircase Sugandha progressed towards her bedroom. She closed the door behind her and after a loud yawn started to untie her clothes. Suddenly the reflection of herself in the mirror discerned on her. She mischievously picked the untied clothes around her feet and covered herself. The gauzy cloth couldn't veil her beauty. Unknowingly she dropped the clothes again and sprawled on the bed and kept staring at her picture kept near the cupboard.

Ravi's turns of phrase were deep around her.

“Aren't these the same intense eyes on whose bearing mortals live and die? Aren't these the same eyes with the fear of which a child becomes amenable? This magnetism is as lethal as it is enlivening, a touch can precipitate all the heat inside.”

Scene 37

Ravi's studio/interior-morning

In the morning when Sugandha came to the studio she was surprised to see the furor. Studio things were all tacked up.

Sugandha

What is going on?

Ravi

I have to go..

Sugandha

Have to go! Where?

Ravi

I am going to Kilimanoor tomorrow.

Sugandha

And you are telling me now?

Ravi Verma ran and took her in to an embrace. Kissing her tearful eyes, he started to say something.

Sugandha

Please don't say anything!

Ravi

Tomorrow evening I got a letter from Kilimanoor saying my uncle is ailing
He is consecrated with god. He taught me my art, he's my mentor.

Sugandha

Couldn't you have told me this earlier?

Ravi

When did you give me the way in?

Looking at the stacked paintings she asked

Sugandha

Are you are taking these along?

Ravi

Kilimanoor
These are the only reminiscences of you that I am taking along. After
I'll go and meet my wife and children in Mevilkira, if I find time I'll
Complete them there.

Sugandha

—
And wouldn't she feel bad?

Ravi

Probably she will have some worth for art.

Sugandha

Woman's insight is not so minimal. Are you going tomorrow?

Ravi

Yes.

Sugandha

And what about this house?

Ravi

Ramaiyya will be here; you can ask him if you need anything.

Sugandha turned without saying anything and started descending the studio stairs. Ravi was watching her go.

Scene 38

Kilimanoor/exterior-morning

The morning rays were penetrating Kilimanoor. The carriage stopped outside Raj Prasad and Ravi got off. The servants, old and new ran to welcome him.

The spread of fields opposite the palace and the temple peeping through the coconut tree leaves beyond. Everything was just the same; he folded his hands towards the temple and started to go inside the palace.

As soon as he progressed towards the stairs he got baffled to see Raja Raj Verma with his stick, standing in the Mehrab.

Dressed in a sage like attire with terse white beard on the chin, Ravi was looking at his affable face in awe. He quickly traversed the stairs and reached to touch his feet. Affection grew in Raj Verma's eyes and he grasped Ravi by his shoulder to hold him close.

Raj Verma

Seems like forever...I've been just waiting to see you. This asceticism is such a farce, you made me realize that. Come... your parents are dying to see you.

Scene 39

Palace/ interior-morning

Ravi was greeted at the entrance. His feet were washed with water and fine grains of rice were sprinkled on his forehead. He then went for offerings in the Devtagriha.

Raj verma

Go...your mother is eagerly waiting to see you.

Ravi went inside the palace with his two brothers. He first met his father. After giving his blessings he said.

Father

It's good that you've come. Your mother remembers you a lot. I am happy that you still perform your necessary customs, but are you regular in your offerings and chants? Knowledge in my idea is the seed of your art, or any art for that Matter. You are mature now, but there is a lot waiting in this World. There is lot more to know. This is what may experience Says. Go and meet your mother now.

Scene 40

The second zone of the palace/ interior- morning

She was just the same; sharp nose, petite pair of lips, broad eyebrows and below them those exquisite untainted eyes. Ravi was admiring her and in the midst of it he touched her feet.

Mother

Everything is ok...!

Ravi didn't say anything. In her embrace he was oblivious of the whole world. Mother's loving stroke on the back was seemingly divine. In a corner watery pair of eyes were watching this scene. She was Ravi's sister Mangla.

Scene 41

Flashbacks

Excitedly he said " now let me draw a horse for you "

Examining the wall he asked the girl to get him a piece of charcoal.

She gave one of the pieces from shambles below. He lifted it to draw on the chosen place,

and the next moment he threw the charcoal saying “Silly! You don’t even have the sense to blow the ash from the charcoal?”. Girl grumbled and said “you hardnosed! Go... I don’t want your horse. She got up with a thump and in rage wiped her charcoal hands on her skirt. She was sickly and had gone crimson but the boy was busy finding the right sharp charcoal. She looked at him once and started to go inside the house, she turned to see the scene again and blurted – Oh! The temple was white washed just a few days back, what would uncle say!

➤ **Raja Raj verma, Ravi, Mangala, Paachan**

Raja – who did it?

Paachan – I am just a servant, I cannot nitpick, I told them not to do it... but they don’t listen.

Raja – where did you learn this Kocchu? These traces are so brisk!
...Why are you both crying?

Mangala, Ravi – we will never do it again!

Raja – then who will do it?
Don’t erase these pictures Paachan; nobody should touch them!

➤ **Raja Raj verma, Ravi verma**

Raja – I gave you the permission to draw, but on some conditions. First condition... your studies should not suffer.

Ravi - ok

Raja – From now you will never draw and scribble on the walls

Ravi – no, I will never do it!

-
Raja – if you break even one of these promises I will stop giving you drawing lessons, do you understand?

➤ **The beginning**

It was a landscape painting. Just then he looked at the palette with various shades, he dipped his fine brush into the green one. He was experiencing his right hand savor the canvas with the brush. And then finally he accomplished it; the banana leaf was there enlivened with the green shade. It was his first image on the canvas.

➤ **Raja Raj Verma, Ravi, Father, Mother**

Raja – You saw his pictures? His approach towards color blending is intricate and is very difficult to achieve. He will be a great painter.

I am planning to take him along to Trivandrum. What do you say? .

Father – Customary practices will get disrupted. There will be no routine! It will be disorienting, there will be no significance in life. _

Raja – I respect your seamless and precise routine, but may I know how well has it served it in your purpose? If you had decided to use your knowledge instead you would have achieved far ends.

Father – writing scriptures is not an easy trade.

Raj – writing needs to be unprejudiced. How will coherence penetrate into the thought with such farcical practices?

I am just placing my ideas in front of an eminent scholar.

Mother - ...but is it necessary to leave? Can't he learn here, in this house?

Raj – however hard he tries to blend color in this place, he'll be considered amateurish. The ones, who swim against the flow, accomplish something.

If you like my suggestion then I can progress further, other than that I have no intention to offend you.

Mother – you'll be leaving tomorrow, conduct yourself well there. How will you gather yourself to leave from here, wouldn't you miss me?

Ravi fell into her embrace.

Scene 42

Raja Raj Verma's room

Raj was meditating on his asana. He lifted his auburn eyes and saw Ravi. The silence was booming like the temple chimes. Mingled in it Raj's voice emerged.

Raj

Kochhu? What happened?

Without saying anything Ravi took the wares from the attendants hands and placed in front of Raj Verma.

Ravi

Please accept this small token.

He saw tears floating in Raj Verma's eyes. He felt a sense of fondness in them.

Raj

May you never cease to prevail. Wait I'll just come.

After sometime he came from one of the inside rooms with rose petals in his hands.

Raj

These are pink rose petals and are ingenious. The white shade in this denotes the impulse. Keep blending your whim with your imagination. You'll never cease to prevail.

Ravi got up. He saw Paachan standing aside in ease. taking a few notes from the attendant's hands he touched Paachan's feet.

Paachan

Swami?

Ravi

I am here today because of you. If you hadn't made a complaint to uncle that day, I would have never become a painter._

Scene 43

Nrityashala/ interior- evening.

Nrityashala was glistening in the light of the chandelier._The whole family was assembled there. Manikanchan was following the mridangam beats taping his feet in anklets.

After a sequence got over Raj verma asked Ravi.

Raj

Kochhu, now you get up.

Ravi

But...it's been so many years!

Raj

If you remember the art of early years, then there's no reason to forget the pulse of the feet. Getup.

Ravi verma tied the anklets.

After finishing his Kathak, he greeted everybody and sat in his place. At that moment his mother said.

Uma ba

Kochhu, Kathak is over but the Rupak is still left. Rajan give the Mridangam to me.

It was a familial ambience. Ravi saw his mother's fervent face. Uma ba began to sing Krishna virha on mridangam beats. Ravi verma began mirroring those lines with his facial gestures.

The Rupak was accomplished. Raj said.

Raj

Ravi you'll be an accomplished painter, I have no doubts about that.

Ravi

Reason?

Raj

Your hub is much in the gestures and expressions rather than in the Beat.

Mangala

We never knew you danced so well.

Ravi

If you get accomplices then you can enjoy anything, why don't you dance?

Mangala

Me? I'll never be able to do it. Ma doesn't even like me painting. She always says the way you have the sense of beat, nobody can ever have it.

Ravi

Does she say that?

Mangala

Always...

These words surrounded him as he progressed towards his bedroom.

Scene 44
Palace/ interior

Uma ba

Kochhu, when are you going to Mevilkira?

Ravi

Why?

Uma ba

That is your house! Your wife and children are there after all.

Ravi

I feel strange. I cannot stay there.

Uma ba

Wife's house is the man's house, this is our custom.
You should understand that.

Ravi

But when a man lives in his wife's house, he's dependent.
My father is senior but what is his influence in this house?

Uma ba

Which means you will not go!

Ravi

I'll go... but only where I can grow...this palace is mine... if uncle
Allows me stay here...

Scene 45

Mevilkira, outside the palace/interior-afternoon

In the afternoon, Ravi's bullock carts reached Mevilkira. Ravi got down. Cheerfully he entered the palace. His son Keral Verma, ram verma and daughter Sarswati greeted him.

Scene 46

Bedroom/ interior-night

Ravi

Puru, I have got a lot of things for you and children.

Puru

You've come that's enough.

Ravi

You are crying? What do you want?

Puru

Nothing. Can't you stay here?

Ravi

On a condition...

There should be no hitch in my work. I will live here on my own terms
I don't want to be dependent on anybody. I told you this earlier, don't force me
Into anything otherwise.

Puru got smitten with fear but that fear didn't stay long. Ravi embraced her harder.
Lifting her chin he kissed her on her lips.

Ravi

Puru, don't bother. I acknowledge the sanctity of our marriage. I am just
Putting forth my complexities. If you come to Kilimanoor with children then
You'll be happier than ever. But I wonder how far will you be able to break the
Customs and the rules.

Ravi took her to the bed. She fell into his embrace.

Scene 47

Studio (Ullas Madoham)/interior-morning

The space in Ullas Madoham was elaborate. There was enough light.

He placed all the pictures of Sugandha he'd painted.

Suddenly Puru came inside.

Ravi was sketching Damayanti.

Ravi

You like it?

Puru

It's beautiful. Is it Damyanti?

Ravi

Yes.

Puru didn't say anything. Ravi kept his brush down.

Ravi

What happened Puru?

Puru

Your Damyanti, Meneka and all the women in these pictures are the same.

Ravi verma couldn't help smiling.

Ravi

I met her in Bombay. She posed for me.

Puru didn't say anything. She just smiled.

Ravi

Why are you smiling?

Puru

Nothing. A woman's perception is not that simple. Aren't you two intimate?

Ravi

You're right, man can't conceal his love.

Puru

Should you keep your wife and children at stake for this?

Ravi

I would feel the same if I was in your place, Puru. Artists go through a lot of these enticing moments. Most of the time we get transmuted into these moments, and the realization dawns later.

Puru had withdrawn, without saying anything she left Ravi in the studio.

Scene 48

Studio (Ullas Madoham)/ interior- evening

In the evening Chetu came running in the studio. Ravi was cleaning his brushes after the days work.

Chetu

Chote sarkar has come.

Just then Raja Verma appeared in the studio. He seemed to be in good spirits.

Raja Verma

Mysore Diwan has come with an invitation to Kilimanoor.
You have been invited.

Ravi

Chetu, make arrangements for the tour.

Servants got busy in making arrangements. The confusion surprised Puru.

Puru

Heard that you are going tomorrow? You want to break all ties
from here?

Ravi

If you want you can come with me. But I cannot stay in this place
anymore.

Puru

How will you stay here, Sugandha is in Bombay. God knows who is
in Kilimanoor. Who is here for you? This air must be strangling you a
all the time...isn't it?

Ravi

Puru stop it...don't abuse womanhood further. When Ram went
for an exile, Sita didn't stay back. Damyanti got enthused in Nal's
condition. To follow that line of thought is not effortless. It needs a
Sense of submission, it's for going a lot of things.

Puru stomped out of the studio in anger.

Scene 47

Kilimanoor/ interior

Ravi was intently listening to the Diwan, and then he said.

Ravi

Diwan sahib, I will respond to the coveted invitation tomorrow.
I take pleasure in this invitation and feel honored at the same time.
I will follow, as soon as you reach there.

Scene 48

Raj Verma's room/ interior

Raj Verma was

-

