

Greeshmaant

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S1/DUSK/INT. DANCE STUDIO

Pious (23) and Shlok (27) are two dancers performing a Jugalbandi in Kathak, as Hindustani instruments are being played. In front of them stands Ketaki (35) examining them. Other students in the class are near the walls, watching them. Soon both the dancers start dancing together in sync. As the music and their dance reaches its climax, they both stop at an end pose, panting, yet looking very satisfied. Pious and Shlok exchange a victorious smile, appreciating each other. Ketaki smiles but looks serious. She comes forward. Everybody turns to her intently.

KETAKI

Iss saal hum Greeshmaant dance
festival mai perform karenge.
(Looks at Pious firmly). And Pious
tum performance lead karoge.

Pious is very surprised. Shlok is too, his face looks like he quickly accepted his loss and has a bittersweet smile on. Other students are excited too and come ahead and start congratulating Pious. Pious is overwhelmed but for a second he glances at a pimple on one of his classmates' faces. But then he looks back at Shlok. Shlok nods at him congratulating him. Pious smiles back.

S2/EVENING/INT. DANCE STUDIO

Pious is in front of the mirror, untying his ghungroos slowly. His look is fixated at his own reflection as he is looking very happy and proud. He holds the ghungroos near his heart as he closes his eyes and has a moment. He takes up his phone and thinks of calling his mother but then starts scratching his arm. He is lost and suddenly notices Ketaki behind. He quickly gets up. Ketaki is holding a thread in her hand. Seeing it Pious holds his hand in front of her, looking at her in anticipation. Ketaki starts tying that thread on his wrist.

KETAKI

Ye Guruma ki legacy hai, har naye
performance ki tayari ke liye.

PIOUS (Bowling down to her)
Thank you didi..

KETAKI

Hum semi classical kar rahe hai
aur lead character bhi jaisa hai,
sirf dhoti mai perform karna
better hoga. (Beat) Tum practice
bhi waisi hi karo, movements and
expressions mai clarity hogi.

Ketaki leaves. Pious's face changes, looks frozen in alarm. He starts getting anxious. He starts scratching again and immediately stops.

S3/EVENING/INT. BEDROOM

Pious throws his bag and straight comes in front of the mirror.

OLDER MAN/WOMAN (V.O.)

There is no cure as such, but you shouldn't give up on the care.

He takes off his shirt, revealing a bunch of rashes on him. A couple of them sting as he touches them. He caresses the rashes and doing so he slowly starts scratching over them. Scratching turns a bit intense but he quickly pushes his hands away making tight fists and controls himself. Just then the doorbell rings. Pious takes a moment and then puts on his shirt and goes to the door. To his surprise it's Shlok. He is holding a wine bottle. Pious looks at the bottle and is surprised. He is smiling. Shlok enters inside.

SHLOK

Ye Cranberry Vodka wala moment toh nahi hi hai, kuch celebratory hona chahiye na.

Pious is blushing a bit. Shlok winks at him and goes inside as Pious is still standing at the door, happy. He looks at the bit of rolled up sleeves of his shirt, revealing a rash around his elbow joint. He thinks for a moment and keeping the sleeves as it is, he walks inside. He sees Shlok is dusting a photo frame of Pious and his mother on the desk.

SHLOK

Kitni dhul hai ye. Already garmiya shuru hai, skin allergies ho jayengi.

Pious stands still and then quickly pulls his sleeves down.

S4/EVENING/INT. BEDROOM

Soft music is being played as Shlok pours wine in two glasses. Hands one to Pious and holding the other goes for a "cheers". Shlok takes a sip and Pious doesn't, sunk in a thought. Shlok notices.

SHLOK

Performance pressure?

Pious chucks and keeps the glass down. Shlok keeps looking at him in anticipation. Pious is looking away.

SHLOK

Gharpe bataoge finally?

PIOUS

Mere gharwale are a different breed. (Chuckles)

Shlok looks at him for a moment and keeps his hand on Pious's hand. Pious smiles back. Shlok then pulls him up and makes him dance with him. Pious coyly complies. At a moment where one has to turn under another's arm, Shlok quickly takes a lead, turns and comes towards Pious, anticipating he'll hold him but Pious in his thoughts is late and Shlok almost falls.

SHLOK

Dhyan kaha hai?

They make brief eye contact and get back dancing.

PIOUS

Actually kuch batana tha mujhe.

SHLOK

Mujhe bhi...

Shlok turns Pious and hugs him from behind. He tries to put his fingers inside Pious's shirt, lifting it up a bit from front. Pious quickly removes his hands, pushing the shirt down. Pious turns back, face to face with Shlok. Shlok continues trying to caress pious, and moves his fingers inside his shirt. Pious keeps nudging his hands. It happens twice or thrice before Shlok ends up touching a fresh rash on Pious's lower back. It stings. Pious quickly pushes Shlok a bit and steps back clenching himself. Shlok is extremely confused.

SHLOK

Kya hua?

Pious doesn't react.

SHLOK

Chot lagi hai kya waha koi? Let me check! (takes a step ahead)

Pious doesn't react but steps back.

SHLOK

Pious, are you fine? ek baar dekhne do exactly kya laga tumhe.

Pious steps back again. Shlok still steps ahead and comes close to him. Pious quickly goes sideways.

PIOUS

Shlok!

Shlok quickly goes back. He looks confused and embarrassed.

PIOUS

Kalse bohot intense practice hogi,
I guess let's call it for tonight.
(Beat) Good night.

SHLOK

Yeah... Goodnight. (turns and leaves)

Pious follows him and opens his mouth to call him or say something but cannot.

S5/NIGHT/INT. BEDROOM

Pious is lying on his bed staring at the ceiling with a dead, sad look. He is subconsciously scratching his shoulder. He quickly stops it and gets irritated at it. He gets up in anger and digs out a pair of gloves from his bedside table drawer. He then thinks about something, holding them and goes to his desk. There he picks a tape. He wears the gloves and strugglingly tapes them to his wrists and falls back on the bed.

S6/DAY/FOREST

Pious comes close to the tree. He runs his fingers over its rough barks on the stem. And he starts pulling out its dry barks one after the other. He starts doing aggressively and suddenly while pulling one of them, blood squirts out of it. He is terrified as he realises it's his own hand he is plucking out the barks from. He quickly steps back and turns around only to find a horrified Shlok standing behind him.

S7/NOON/INT. BEDROOM

Pious wakes up with a jerk. He notices he is topless. His shirt is crumpled up in the corner of the bed. His gloves are missing, he finds them tossed away on the floor. He checks his phone. There is a voice note from Shlok. He plays it as he sees a couple of small blood spots on the bed sheet.

SHLOK (O.S.)

Hey, good morning. Hope you are
fine. See you at the practice.

He touches his back feeling new rashes and gives a frustrated look. He gets up agitated and pulls away the bed sheet. He opens his wardrobe and fetches a new bed sheet. Just then he spots a translucent top behind some clothes. He looks at it and thinks.

S8/DUSK/INT. DANCE STUDIO

Pious is dancing as the lead with a few dancers including Shlok on a semi classical music. They are sweating yet dancing with energy except for Pious. He is neither in sync with others nor in grace. Ketaki is observing it and looks dissatisfied. Other students are watching too. Pious is trying his best but while dancing he looks in the mirror only to see him dancing without any upper garment and others dancing behind are now just standing looking at him in disgust. He quickly loses his balance.

KETAKI

Alright! Take a break. Pious tum
rukko. Shlok tu bhi. (Looks at
Pious) Shuruse karo.

Others go as Pious and Shlok wait. Shlok is panting and is confused. Pious is panting too but as Ketaki replays the music he takes a deep breath and starts dancing. Pious looks scared seeing Ketaki's pissed face. He misses a beat.

KETAKI

Stop! Pious, kya ho raha hai. Kab
se practice kar rahe hai hum,
still basic mistakes?

Pious just stands looking down, gasping for breath. Shlok is tense.

KETAKI

Character ko samajh bhi rahe ho?
Ekbaar shirt ke bina try karo,
might help. (Beat) Chalo phir se.

Pious is getting anxious. He looks at Ketaki looking at him impatiently. Others, including Shlok, are looking at him too. He very hesitantly starts removing the shirt, only to reveal that translucent top worn inside. He hears giggles and chuckles as he removes the shirt. He looks around, people are only looking at him confused but he still hears the laughs.

KETAKI

Pious kya keh rahi hu mai tumse?

PIOUS

Didi actually, what if I perform
in something like this. I mean
semi classical hai na. Ya phir koi
angavastra ya something
ornamental.....

KETAKI

Kya baatein kar rahe ho Pious.
Focus karo! From the top!

Pious notices Ketaki looks at Shlok, as he looks back at her too. He starts performing again. Pious now while dancing sees Shlok is dancing in the lead in the reflection, instead of him. Shocked, he loses balance and falls. Shlok quickly tries to pick him up, Pious refuses and gets up on his own.

KETAKI

Goodness Pious! (Looks back to
Shlok) Lead ke steps yaad hai na?

Shlok is taken by surprise and he nods. Pious quickly looks up.

KETAKI

Toh Karo tum ekbaar... And Pious you
observe carefully.

Pious feels ashamed and looks at Shlok in disbelief, which Shlok doesn't notice. Shlok comes ahead with a serious face and before getting into the initial position he removes his shirt. Pious feels hurt and looks at him angrily. He steps back and is shaken. Ketaki quickly gives Pious a look. Shlok dances as the music starts. Pious is feeling very humiliated. All he can concentrate on is his "normal" spotless skin instead of his dance. He sees that Ketaki is very happy and proud in the reflection, and she comes ahead and ties the thread on Shlok's wrist. Pious starts breathing heavily and starts scratching his arm. All he can hear is a rumble. He gets very restless and is breathing heavily. He grabs his bag and without looking at anyone rushes out. Ketaki and Shlok are confused.

S9/EVENING/INT. BEDROOM

Pious is aggressively removing the translucent top. He ends up tearing it while doing so and tosses it on his bed. His bag is already thrown on the edge of the bed, things inside from the bag are spilled down while the Ghungroos have stayed dangling from it. He looks at his reflection furiously and tries to perform the dance but uncontrollably starts scratching. He gets aggressive at it. One of the rash starts bleeding. He still scratches even though trying to stop his fingers. He finally gains control and stops scratching. With cotton from his dressing table he wipes the blood. He takes an ointment tube and is about to apply it but feels frustrated and throws it away. He nudges away stuff from the dressing table and gets back to dance. Losing balance he falls and grabs the table for support. Due to this jerk a dancing figure from the table falls and breaks. Pious halts. Just then the doorbell rings multiple

times with the door being banged constantly. Pious comes to the door confused.

SHLOK (O.S.)

Pious!

Pious gets furious. Shlok keeps on banging the door.

SHLOK

Pious yaar please darwaza kholo.

PIOUS

Kyu aaye ho Shlok, what the fuck do you want?

SHLOK

Tum theek ho? Bas ek baar darwaza khol do.

PIOUS

You got the fucking lead na. Toh jao enjoy! Yaha kya hai?

SHLOK

Pious, Kya bol rahe ho? (Beat)
Yaar Ketaki di ne mujhe waha bulaya na... mai kya karta? Tumhari help ke liye hi.....

PIOUS

Bas karo yaar! As if tumhe lead banna hi nahi tha!

SHLOK

Of course banna tha! Par lead tum ho. Aur iss baat se mai zyada khush hu!

PIOUS

Stop pretending, kyu khush hoge tum?

SHLOK

Because I love you. (Beat) I.....

Pious opens the door as it is, without wearing anything above. His rashes are visible to Shlok. Pious has a furious face yet he is smirking. Shlok is taken aback. He takes a moment or two to connect the dots and let things sink in. Pious is shivering a bit and is trying to stand firmly looking straight into Shlok's eyes strongly.

PIOUS

Kya bol rahe the?

Pious's eyes are welled up. Shlok is still processing, looking at Pious in shock yet concerned.

PIOUS

It's okay Shlok. Jao tum.

Pious slams the door and walks inside. The door slowly opens less than half way, revealing Shlok's half profile. Pious comes inside and clutches his head controlling his sobs. The door opens completely by wind and makes a thud sound. Pious instantly looks back with anticipation only to find Shlok not to be there. He is no longer able to control his sobs. He starts hearing multiple voices of angry Shlok, disappointed Ketaki, random laughs, and even of his mother. The room looks like it is coming on to him. He sits down on the floor and he starts sobbing, clutching himself together. Just then he hears the sound of Ghungroos. It falls on the floor from the bag on the bed's edge. He quickly looks up and notices them. He goes and gets them. Holding them he looks in the mirror, thinking subtly. He brings them close to his heart and touches the thread on his wrist.

S10/AFTERNOON/INT. DANCE STUDIO

Shlok and Ketaki are talking standing close to each other.

SHLOK

Didi i feel aapko Pious se baat
karni chahiye.

Just then they notice Pious entering the class wearing his ghungroos. Ketaki and Shlok are curiously looking. Others watch too. He has a subtle firmness on his face. He performs the namaskar kriya in front of Ketaki and starts dancing. He is moving around fluidly. And then soon, he removes his shirt. Ketaki is stunned, she looks at his skin and understands everything yet is subtle about it. Shlok gets emotional, slowly smiling, feeling proud. He starts smiling too. And as the music picks up he starts dancing with energy, grace and expressions, like before. Everybody is watching him in awe. Shlok's eyes are welled up. Ketaki's smile widens. And Pious keeps twirling with peace on his face.

The End