

## **Contemporary Literature**

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Mod-01 Lec-22 Lecture-22

Good morning, we will begin with Girish Karnad's play Nagamandala, subtitle : play with a cobra. The keywords in today's lecture would be folk theatre, meta theatre, mythical elements in Girish Karnad's plays and Brechtian techniques as employed by Girish Karnad. So, like all traditional plays, Karnad is extremely fond of using traditional structure and techniques in his plays. He is obviously inspired by the modernist like Strindberg and Brecht, but he also occasionally looks up to the classical Sanskrit theatre from our country and prologue is one way of asserting that. So, the use of prologue, so consider the set and the tone and the mood in the first lines itself is extremely surrealistic. It is the inner sanctum of a ruined temple.

Look at the stage directions all given in italics. The idol is broken, so the presiding deity of the temple cannot be identified. Now, we are looking at the unidentifiable nature of objects. It is a broken idol.

It cannot be identified and more will come. It is night naturally. It is night, so you cannot really identify whose idol it is and it is also broken. Moonlight seeps in through the cracks in the roof and the walls. Now, imagine a play where moonlight seeping in through the cracks in the wall and the roof.

A man is sitting in the temple, long silence. Suddenly, he opens his eyes wide, closes them, then uses his fingers to pry open his eyelids. Obviously, he is very sleepy. He is forcing his eyelids to remain open. Then he goes back to his original morose stance.

He yawns involuntarily, then reacts to the yawn by shaking his head violently and turns to the audience. Now, this technique of addressing the audience face to face is very Brechtian. Brecht uses that technique of alienation effect, which is in order to make the familiar unfamiliar and vice versa. I think that audience directly was one of the features or one of the characteristics of the alienation effect. We will look at it in detail soon.

The man addresses the audience. I may be dead within the next few hours. I am not

talking of acting dead. So, you see there is a reference to acting. He is talking to the audience and he is telling the audience that it is a play.

So, a play is going on, but I am real. I am not an actor. I would not be acting dead when they pretend to act dead on stage or in a film, but he is not going to act dead. He is actually going to die on stage. Actually dead, I might die right in front of your eyes.

A mendicant is a sage, a beggar. You must keep awake. Mendicant told me you must keep awake at least one whole night this month. If you can do that, you will live. If not, you will die on the last night of the month.

I laughed out loud when I heard him. I thought nothing would be easier than spending a night awake. I was wrong. Perhaps death makes one sleepy. Every night this month, I have been dozing off before even being aware of it.

I am convinced I am seeing something with these eyes of mine only to wake up and find I was dreaming. Tonight is my last chance. For tonight is the last night of the month. So, look at the suspense. He has been told.

He has been cursed that unless he stays awake one full night within a month, he cannot expect to go on living. Today is the last night of the month. For some reason or the other, he has been dozing off every night of the month. Today, he has no other choice but to remain awake and that is the problem. Tonight is the last night of the month even of my life perhaps because if I do not stay awake the whole night, I am going to die.

How do I know? My sleep would not creep in on me again as it has every night so far. I may doze off right in front of you and that will be the end of me. I asked the mendicant what I had done to deserve this fate and he said you have written plays. So, the nature of writing, the nature of being a writer is now discussed here. You have written plays.

You have staged them. You have caused so many good people who came trusting you to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs. That is a writer's dilemma. That is the playwright's curse. People come, people expect something from a playwright and if they feel they are not being entertained enough, they get bored.

Here we are told that people come trusting you to keep them entertained but what do your plays do to them? It makes them fall asleep. Stand in miserable chairs and that all that abused mass of sleep has turned against you and become the curse of death. I had not realized my plays had that much impact. Karnad has a fondness for using elements from folk theatre and this is a Kannada folk tale where a writer is cursed with curse of

death and he is cursed to sleep every night. This is actually a folk tale which is used by Karnad to a wonderful effect in this particular play.

Karnad, as we were talking about, he uses time and again elements from folk theatre, from our regional theatre and then he employs them and then he not only asserts or reasserts the thematic elements as contained in those folk tales but also subverts the contemporary trends, the contemporary established notions about many things, about gender issues, about social issues, about socio-political issues. So, using elements from folk theatre while asserting their essence, at the same time subverting them and interrogating the contemporary themes and issues. So, that is what he is doing here. Tonight, may be my last night, so I have fled from home and come to this temple, nameless and empty. So, that is the very nature of the place.

The place itself is nameless, it is empty, the idol is broken, there is not enough light. That is a good commentary on the writer's life as well. For years, I have been alluring it over my family as a writer. I could not bring myself to die a writer's death in front of them. So, he is being very ironical here, writer's death.

He has bored people and therefore, he is going to be cursed with death, writer's death. I swear by this absent God, if I survive this night, I shall have nothing more to do with themes, plots or stories. So, he has taken a vow, God just let me live and from tonight, I would not be writing anything anymore. I abjure all storytelling, all play acting. Female voices are heard outside the temple.

He looks, voices here at this time of night, lights who could be coming here now. He hides behind a pillar, several flames enter the temple, giggling, talking to each other in female voices. Look according to Aristotle, when he talks about his theory of Poetics and drama, he talks about, he uses a term like probable impossibility. Now, it is impossible to have flames coming and talking, flames coming as females and taking a female form and coming and talking, looking, taking the form and shape of a woman, but here they are and it is a play and it is a story and we are supposed to accept that and that is what we are talking about Aristotelian concept of probable impossibility. Why not in a story everything is possible and therefore, willing suspension of disbelief, that is what is happening.

We have to accept that flames can come and take a feminine shape and talk. Man, I do not believe it. They are naked lamp flames, no wicks, no lamps, no one holding them, just lamp flames on their own. Floating in the air, is that even possible? Another three or four flames enter, talking among themselves. Flame three addressing flame one, which is already in the temple.

What is pleasant surprise? You are here before us tonight. Flame one, the master of our house, you know what a skin flint is. He is convinced his wife has a hole in her palm like she is a spent rift. So, he buys all the groceries himself. This evening before the dark was even an hour old, they ran out of cushy oil.

The tin of peanut oil did not go far. The bowl of castor oil was empty anyway. So, they had to retire to bed early and I was permitted to come here. Laughter, flame two sneering, cushy oil, peanut oil, how disgusting.

My family come from the coast. We would not touch anything but coconut oil. Flame one, but at least I come here every night. What about your friend, the kerosene flame? She has not been seen here for months. She is one of the first tonight. You know, the Karnad is very cleverly commenting on the Indian caste system, the famed Indian caste system where there is a hierarchy among people of different caste and here to even among flames, you have a kind of hierarchy.

So, you have the flame which goes on the basis of cushy oil. Then, you have a flame which burns with peanut oil and then kerosene is at the bottom of the hierarchy and coconut, the flame which uses coconut oil is perhaps it belongs to the higher order. So, they are all discussing their status, their hierarchy, their positions in society. Actually, from today on, I do not think I will have any difficulty getting out and early. Why? What has happened? My master had an old ailing mother.

Her stomach was bloated, her back covered with bad sores. The house stank of cough and phlegm, pus and urine. No one got a wink of sleep at night. Naturally, I stayed back too. The old lady died this morning leaving behind my master and his young wife.

I was chased out fast. So, this is again a reference to the physical pleasures between husband and wife and that also tells you, sets the tone of the play, what the play is all about. You can expect from this conversation, the tone, the essence of the play. All flames giggle. Flame three, you are lucky. My master's eyes have to feast on his wife limb by limb if the rest of him is to react.

So, we lamps have to bear witness to what is better left to the dark. They all talk animatedly. New flames come and join them. They group and regroup, chattering to the audience. Now, again this talking directly to the audience, a very brush in technique.

I had heard that when lamps are put out in the village, the flames gather in some remote place and spend the night together gossiping. So, this is where they gather. New flame

enters and is enthusiastically greeted.

You are late. It is well past midnight. New flame, there was such a to do in our house tonight. What happened? Tell us, new flame. You know, I have only an old couple in my house. Tonight, the old woman finished eating, swept and cleaned the floor, put away the pots and pans and went to the room in which her husband was sleeping and what should she see, but a young woman dressed in a rich new saree step out of the room. The moment the young woman saw my mistress, she ran out of the house and disappeared into the night.

The old woman woke her husband up and questioned him, but he said he knew nothing which started the rumpus. So, there is a mysterious person in the house, but who was the young woman? Other flames ask, how did she get into your house? New flame, let me explain. My mistress, the old woman knows a story and a song, but all these years, she has kept them to herself, never told the story nor sung the song. So, the story and the song were being choked, imprisoned inside her. This afternoon, the old woman took her usual nap after lunch and started snoring.

The moment her mouth opened, the story and the song jumped out and hid in the attic. At night, when the old man had gone to sleep, the story took the form of a young woman and the song became a saree. The young woman wrapped herself in the saree and stepped out just as the old lady was coming in. Thus, the story and song created a feud in the family and were revenged on the old woman. Now, see, this is again what we are talking about Aristotle's impossibility, probable impossibility and again taking elements from our old folk tales and mythology.

If you suppress a story, it gets stifled inside. So, stories are for telling to people. We are talking about the oral story tradition, storytelling and the oral orality of stories in our country. So, stories have to be told, not to be suppressed. So, if there is a story inside, let it be told.

Stories can survive only by way of oral tradition. They have to be transmitted from one generation, from one person to another, from one generation to another because you learn a lot from your folk and mythical traditions. This woman, this old lady who had a story inside her, she has committed a cardinal sin. She has suppressed a story which she is not supposed to do and there was a song also. So, these are all parts of our oral traditions, our folk traditions, stories and songs. And the moment they had the opportunity, both the story and the song, they came out and turned into a young woman dressed in a rasbind and sari and there was a feud over that.

So, stories also have the power to create a feud in the family to cause a commotion in the family. That is the power of a story. So, if you tell them, there is a problem. If you suppress them, it may be worse. They have to be told and they have to be passed on from one generation to another.

So, if you try to gag one story, another happens. Flames. But where are they now? The poor things. How long will they run around in the dark? They are referring to the story and the song. What will happen to them? New flame. I saw them on my way here and told them to follow me and they should be here any moment.

There they are, the story with the song. The story in the form of a woman dressed in a new colorful sari enters, acknowledges the enthusiastic welcome from the flames with a languid wave of the hand and goes and sits in a corner looking most despondent. The flames gather around her. New flame. Come on. Why are you so despondent? We are here and are free the whole night.

We will listen to you. Story. Thank you, my dears. It is kind of you, but what is the point of your listening to a story? You cannot pass it on. Perhaps that is true. What can we do? I wish we could help. While the flames make sympathetic noises, the man who is sitting there jumps out from behind the pillar and grabs the story by her wrist.

Man, I listen to you. The flames flee helter-skelter in terror. The story struggles to free herself. Who are you? Let me go. Man, what does it matter who I am? I will tell.

I listen to you. Is not that enough? I promise you. I listen all night. The story stops struggling.

There is a new interest in her voice. You will? Yes. Good. Then, let me go. He does not. I need my hands to act out the parts.

He lets her go. There is a condition, however. What? You cannot just listen to the story and leave it at that. You must tell it again to someone else. So, see this is the nature of a story.

It has to be told and retold. It is not anyone's property. There is the charm of oral literature of folk theatre or folk tales. They have to be passed on and you have to narrate it to someone. You have to retell it to someone. That is the only condition I am going to tell you my story.

That I certainly shall if I live, but first I must be alive to. That reminds me I have a

condition too. Yes, I must not doze off during the day. If I do, I die. All your telling will be wasted.

Story as a self-respecting story, that is the least I can promise. All right then, start, but no, it is not possible. I take back my word. I cannot repeat the story. You see he has taken a vow. If he goes on to live that night, he is going to abjure all plot making, all story telling, all play writing and he has taken a vow and he cannot break that and why not? I have just now taken a vow not to have anything to do with themes, plots or acting.

If I live, I do not want to risk more curses from the audience. Good bye then, we must be going. So, Karnad may as well be commenting on his own craft, his craft of play telling, plot developing that he is extremely conscious of the fact that some members of the audience may get bored with what he has to say and he apologizes. He is aware. So, this consciousness of a playwright, you know this awareness about the craft of writing a play, this is known, this is an aspect of meta theatre. Making self references, being self referential, being self conscious about oneself, about one's art, about one's craft, that is one aspect of meta theatre and we will discuss it further soon.

Story good bye then, we must be going. Wait, do not go please. I suppose I have no choice to the audience. So, now you know why this play is being done. I have no choice.

Bear with me please. As you can see, it is a matter of life and death for me. Karnad is making a very self conscious attempt here, referring to himself. Playwriting is a matter of life and death for any playwright. There is no getting away with that.

You do not have a choice. A writer does not really have a choice. He has to write. A story has to be told. A play has to be written. Whether the audience receives it well or not, it really does not matter because for a playwright, for a writer, it is a matter of his life and death.

It has to come out. Play please musicians enter and occupy their mat. The story and the song throughout the rest of the play, the man and the story remain on stage. So, this is again a very brushy an element. The narrator, the story teller, the so called playwright, they remain on the stage throughout the play. The flames to listen attentively though from a distance go on and the main story begins.

The prologue has just ended and the story begins act one. The locked front door of a house with a yard in front of the house, a very typical village set up and on the right, an enormous anthill. Anthill is a place where snakes reside. The interior of the house, the kitchen, the bathroom as well as Rani's room is clearly seen story. Now, this story is

telling us the setting.

She is talking about who the actors are, who are the principal characters in this play. A young girl, her name is, it does not matter, it could be any woman, but she was an only daughter so her parents called her Rani. Queen, queen of the whole world, queen of the long trees is for when her hair was tied up in a knot, it was as though a black king cobra lay curled on the nape of her neck. A coil upon glistening coil, when it hung loose, the trees is flowed. A torrent of black along her young limbs and got entangled in her silver anklets.

Her fond father found her a suitable husband. The young man was rich and his parents were both dead. Rani continued to live with her parents until she reached womanhood. Soon her husband came and took her with him to his village.

His name was well, any common name will do. So, it is a story about any man. This is another aspect of the play. Any man or every man. So, just that it is a very common kind of a household and they could be any man.

So, there is a touch of universality about them. Apanna, let us call him Apanna. That means any man, every man. Apanna, Apanna enters followed by Rani. They carry bundles in their arms indicating that they have been travelling.

Apanna opens the lock on the front door of the house. They go in. Have you brought in all the bundles? Yes. Then, I will be back tomorrow at noon.

Keep my lunch ready. I shall eat and go. Rani looks at him nonplussed. He pays no attention to her, goes out, shuts the door, locks it from outside and goes away. She runs to the door, pushes it, finds it locked. So, he locks her from outside.

It also tells us that he is a very indifferent uncaring husband. She does not know what is happening. She stands perplexed. She cannot even weep. She goes and sits in a corner of a room talking to herself indistinctly.

Her words become distinct as the lights dim. It is night. So, Rani asks him, where are you taking me? And the eagle answers, beyond the seven seas and the seven isles. On the seventh island is a magic garden and in that garden stands the tree of emeralds. Under that tree, your parents wait for you.

So, Rani says, do they? Then, please take me to them immediately. Here I come. So, the eagle carries her clear across the seven seas. Now, see this is the power of stories.



She is all alone and even in her loneliness, she can recall a story that must have been told to her by her parents, by the elders of her family and she remembers it. There is no other way for her to spend these lonely hours, but to recall and keep herself occupied by remembering or retelling those stories. So, again we are looking at the power of a folk tale, a power of a story that has been transferred from one generation to another.

Stories have a power not just to entertain, but also the strength to heal and that is what Karnad is trying to tell us. She falls asleep, moans, oh mother, father in her sleep. It gets light and she wakes up with a fright, looks around, then runs to the bathroom, mimes splashing water on her face, goes into the kitchen, starts cooking. Mimes splashing water on her face, again a very technique, miming an activity, not actually splashing water, but miming it.

Just creating that touch of distance between the happenings on the stage and the audience. The audience are fully aware that they are watching a play. They are not supposed to get involved with the happenings of the play. They have to think and that is what Brash tells us and that is what Karnad. Karnad being an ardent admirer of Brash, he uses this technique in order to force his audience to think rather than get emotionally involved.

Aparna returns, Rani listen, I feel frightened alone at night. Aparna, what is there to be scared of? Just keep to yourself. No one will bother you. Please, you could look, I do not like idle chatter. Do as you are told.

You understand he is very rude to her, absolutely inattentive to her needs to what she has to say. He finishes his meal, gets up. I will be back tomorrow for lunch. Aparna washes his hands, locks her in and goes away. Rani watches him blankly through the window and then story says and so the days are all by.

So, this became Rani's life. She had an uncaring inattentive husband who really is not there. He comes just for his meals at regular intervals, but that is it. There is no other communication between them. Mechanically, Rani goes into the kitchen, starts cooking, talks to herself.

Then Rani's parents embrace her and cry. They kiss her and caress her. At nights, she sleeps between them. So, we now learn that she is a pampered child. She even after attaining womanhood, she used to sleep between her parents. She has been extremely protected and now suddenly she is thrown into this alien environment and this uncaring husband and she is scared.

She cannot cope with it. So, she is not frightened anymore. Do not worry. They promise her. We will not let you go away again ever. In the morning, the stag with the golden antlers comes to the door.

He calls out to Rani. She refuses to go. I am not a stag. Rani explains I am a prince. So, she has been fed on this diet of myths, legends and fairy tales and that is what she imagine, sits there imagining, thinking of the stories, thinking of the good old times when life was like a dream, just like a fairy tale for her. Rani sits staring blankly into the oven, then begin to sob. Inside in the street, Kapanna enters, carrying Kurudavva on his shoulder.

So, we have another two characters. They can be seen as comic interludes, also commentators on what is going on in the play. Kurudavva is blind. He is in his early twenties, so mother and son. Kapanna, mother, you cannot do this. You cannot start meddling in other people's affairs the first thing in the morning that Apanna should have been born a wild beast or a reptile.

By some mistake, he got a human birth. He cannot stand other people. What do you want to tangle with him? So, they are on their way to Apanna's house and Kapanna obviously does not like Apanna. Kurudavva, whatever he is, he is the son of my best friend. His mother and I were like sisters.

Poor thing, she died bringing him into this world. Now a new daughter-in-law comes to her house. How can I go on as though nothing has happened? Besides, I have not slept a wink. You told me you saw Apanna in his concubine's courtyard. So, now we are told that.

Now we know the reason for Apanna's indifference to his wife. He has got himself a bride and he still goes after that hallowed. I knew I should not have told you. Now you have insomnia and I have a backache. I have to carry you all the way.

Who has asked you to carry me around like this? I have not, have I? I was born and brought up here. I can find my way around. Do you know what I asked for when I pray to Lord Hanuman of the gymnasium every morning for more strength, not to wrestle, not to fight only. So, I can carry you around. So, Kapanna happens to be a very sincere, very obedient son, a very loyal son. So, he is an ideal kind of a son that we are told in our mythology and in our legends.

He knows his mother is blind, but he would not let her walk. He carries her around. That is another ideal of a son, an idealized character. It is Kapanna now. It is just that I

can see Apanna's front door from here.

For a moment, I was worried it was that. Who is that again? That witch or fairy, whatever she is, who you say follows you around. Mother, she is not a witch or a fairy. When I try to explain, you would not even listen. Then when I am not even thinking of her, you start suspecting all kinds of enough of her.

Now, tell me why we have stopped. Kapanna, there does not seem to be anyone in Apanna's house. There is a lock on the front door. Kurudavva, how is that possible? Even if he is lying in his concubine's house, his bride should be home. Who can tell about Apanna? She is a lunatic. You do not think he should have sent his wife back to her parents already, do you? Come, let us look in through the window and check.

Of course not, mother. If someone sees us, listen to me. Go up to the house and peep in. Tell me what you see. I refuse. I would not have asked you if I had eyes. I do not know why God has been cruel to me, why he gave me no sight.

Kapanna, okay mother. They go near the house. Kapanna appears through the window. Kapanna, the house is empty. Of course, it is silly. How can anyone be inside when there is a lock outside on the door? Tell me, can you see clothes drying inside? What kind of clothes? I cannot see a thing. Who is it? What is that outside? Oh my God. Is someone inside the house a woman? You do not have to tell me that. So what if there is a woman inside the house? We have come here precisely because a woman is supposed to be in the house.

Mother, what does it mean when a man locks his wife in? It means he does not want anyone to talk to his wife. Rani comes, you know, she hears all these noises and she comes out and she comes to the door and asks who is it? Kapanna, let us go.

Kurudavva, I am coming child right now. He keeps his wife locked up like a caged bird. I must talk to her. Let me down instantly.

I will wait for you here under the tree. Come back soon. Do not just sit there gossiping. Rani, who are you? Do not be afraid. I am Kurudavva. Now you have a sympathetic character and Kurudavva and Kapanna's characters, they are there to create a sort of conflict in the play. You know what is a conflict? Rani's life has days rolled by. It was static. Nothing much happened in her life.

Her husband, he would return from his mistress' house, take his meals, wash himself and then go back locking Rani in. Nothing changed in her life. Her days were all

monotonous and then through Kapanna and Kurudavva, there is a change in her life because they want to know what is happening. Where is a Apanna? I do not know. When did he go out? After lunch yesterday.

When will he come back? He will be back for lunch later in the day. You do not mean he is home only once a day and that too only for lunch. Are you alone in the house all day? Do not cry child. Do not cry.

I have not come here to make you cry. Does he lock you up every day like this? Yes, since the day I came here. Does he beat you or ill treat you? No. Does he talk to you? Oh, that he does not, but not a syllable more than required.

Do this, do that, serve the food. Kurudavva is concerned. Apart from him, you are the first person I have seen since coming here. I am bored to death. They know one to talk to. That is not what I meant by talk. Did not anyone explain to you before your wedding, your mother or your aunt? Mother started shedding tears the day I matured and she was still crying when I left with my husband.

She is probably even crying even now. Kurudavva, dear girl, it is no use crying. Do not cry. Come to the window. Let me touch you. My eyes are all in my fingers. She feels Rani's face, shoulder, neck through the bars of the window. Rani tells her, at home, I sleep between father and mother, but here alone Kurudavva, can you help me please? Will you please send a word to my parents that I am like this here? Will you ask them to free me and take me home? I would jump into a well if only I could. Kurudavva wants to take matters in her hand because she believes that Rani can go to any drastic lengths to get to free herself from her situation.

She knows obviously, Rani is very happy, very frightened and extremely alone. So, she calls her son and asks him, go home and bring some roots just above where you keep the plough behind the pillar on the shelf.

There is an old tin trunk. Take it down. It is full of odds and ends, but take out the bundle of cloth and tie it inside. There is a wooden box. In the right hand side of the wooden box is a coconut shell wrapped up in a piece of paper. Inside are two pieces of a root. Bring them.

Now, at once, before Apanna returns home and then, after sending Kapanna off, Kurudavva tells her story. What is the secret of the roots? I was born blind. No one would marry me. My father worn himself out going from village to village looking for a husband, but to no avail.

One day, a mendicant came to our house. No one was home. I was alone. I looked after him in every way, cooked hot food especially for him and served him to his heart's content. He was pleased with me and gave me three pieces of a root. Any man who eats one of these will marry you, he said and then, feed him the smallest piece first, he said.

If that gives no results, then try the middle size one. Only if both fail, feed him the largest piece. Rani is entranced and then, one day, a boy distantly related to me came to our village and stayed with us. That day, I ground one of the pieces into paste, mixed it in with the food and served him.

Can you guess which piece I chose? I was in such a hurry. I barely noticed the small one. The biggest scared me. So, I used the middle size root and then, he finished his meal, gave me one look and instantly fell in love, married me within the next two days, never went back to his village. It took the plague to detach him from me. So, that is how that is the magic of that root which has been blessed by a mendicant. So, our oral tradition, our legends and myths, they are full of such stories. We are talking about the probable impossibilities and we have to believe that there is, in Shakespeare, for example, A Midsummer Night's Dream, we have Puck's juice, the love juice which is dropped on the eyelids of the characters and whoever they see first after waking up, they fall in love with that particular person.

So, same way, we have to accept this as well by having a root of some certain plant, you know, love happens. There he is. Have you brought them? Here, take this smaller piece that should do for a pretty jasmine like you. Take it, grind it into a nice paste and feed it to your husband and watch the results.

He will make you a wife instantly. Go now, Kurudavva, but come again. I shall do, but do not forget what I told you. Apanna comes. Who is that? Kurudavva. Kurudavva, how are you, Apanna? It has been a long time. What are you doing here? So, he is, you know, he is customary root, customarily root to everyone and that is what we see.

I heard you had brought a new bride. Thought I would talk to her, but she refuses to come out. She would not talk to anyone and no one need talk to her if you say so. I put a lock on those, so those with sight could see.

Now, what does one do about blind meddlers? I think I will keep a watch down. Opens the door and goes into Rani. I am lunching out today. I will have my bath and go. Just heat up a glass of milk for me. Rani hurriedly mixes the paste into the milk, comes out and gives Apanna the glass of milk.

He drinks it in a single gulp, hands the glass back to her, goes to the door ready to put the lock on. She watches him intently. He tries to shut the door. Rani clutches his head, slides down to the floor, stretches out and goes to sleep on the doorstep half inside and half outside the house.

Rani is distraught, runs to him, shakes him. He does not wake up. He is in a deep sleep. She tries to drag him into the house, but he is too heavy for her. She sits down and starts crying. Apanna groggily water, water. She brings a pot of water, splashes it on his face. He wakes up slowly, staggers up, washes his face, pushes her in, locks the door from outside, goes away.

Rani watches, stunned, slowly goes back to her bedroom, starts talking to herself. So, the demon locks her up in his castle. Then it rains for seven days and seven nights. It pours. The sea floods the city. The waters break down the door of the castle.

Then a big whale comes to Rani and says, come Rani, let us go. She falls asleep midnight. Kapanna enters carrying Kurudavva, stumbles on a stone. They fall. Again, she takes resort. She takes refuge in her old stories. We are all familiar with the stories of princesses being captured and imprisoned in castles by demons. But now, she associates her husband with a demon, you know, with a monster who locks, who takes pleasure in torturing her, locking her up.

So, that is what she thinks of her husband as and the root of course, you know, does not have much of effect on the husband. Kurudavva, she comes. What happened child? Why is the lock still there? Did you feed him the root? Yes.

And what happened? Nothing. He fell giddy, fainted, then got up and left. That is bad. This is no ordinary infatuation then. Now, there is only one solution to this.

Feed him the larger piece of root. No, that little piece made him sick. This one, it will do good. Believe me. I am telling you from my own experiences. Go in, start grinding it. Make a tasty curry, mix the paste in it. Let him taste a spoonful and he will be your slave and then, just say the word and he will carry you to my house himself.

So, obviously, he is under the spell of his mistress and he does not want to give her up that easily. The root does not have any effect on Apanna. The small piece just does not work on him. So, next morning, Kurudavva comes again and asks Rani this time to give her the larger piece and we will see what happens after that in the next class. Thank you. Thank you.