

NAATYAM

Drama, Romance

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1. INT. BACKSTAGE

BHANU sits in front of a mirror while adjusting her earrings and headpiece. She stares at her necklace and touches it, filling her with confidence.

ANNOUNCER

(background, echoey)

What an amazing set of dances by BHANU today. Before we move onto her final dance, I want to acknowledge the effort she put into this arangetram.

We see the back of BHANU as she approaches the end of the stage, waiting for her queue. Her head held low, gaining the confidence to walk onto stage.

ANNOUNCER

(continues, still echoey)

She has been learning dance since the age of five and has been dedicatedly practicing for this performance for months.

From the corner of the stage, Bhanu looks into the crowd one more time. She fixates on a single reserved seat, which is empty. Her face drops.

The announcer fades into the background.

2. INT. APARTMENT

A messy room covered in clothes and random papers. SANTOSH and VIK sit on the bed.

VIK

What did she actually say, man?

SANTOSH

Last night she texted me in all caps, "DO NOT COME TMRW". So I'm not gonna go.

VIK

Sir, she clearly wants you to come

SANTOSH
[disappointed, plays with watch]
... Are you not paying attention?

VIK
To be honest, I don't care what she
said. I think you should still go.

He looks at his phone and there is a missed alarm, from an hour ago showing that Bhanu's Arangetram started. The background is a picture of Santosh and Bhanu sitting together.

MATCH CUT TO:

3. EXT. GASWORK PARK

Backlit by the sunset, SANTOSH and BHANU sit on the grass with a pack of cards and a small charcuterie board beside them. SANTOSH taps his foot to a beat in his head.

TITLE CARD: 2 WEEKS AGO

SANTOSH
I have an idea.

BHANU looks at him with enthusiasm.

SANTOSH
I've been working on this song.
What if you perform it at your
dance?

BHANU's face quickly drops. SANTOSH looks at BHANU with confusion.

BHANU
Arangetram.

SANTOSH
Right. What do you say?

BHANU
I don't think I will have enough
time to practice. And knowing you,
you'll change it last minute.
(laughs)

SANTOSH

(annoyed)
What is that supposed to mean?

BHANU

You're spontaneous.

SANTOSH

I don't understand.

BHANU

You keep on changing your mind on everything.

SANTOSH

At least I don't need a calendar invite to meet up with you.

BHANU

You know how important the arangetram is to me. Clearly, you aren't doing anything with your time.

SANTOSH

Spending time with you is not important then?

BHANU

That's not what I'm saying.

SANTOSH

(angry)
What are you trying to say? I'm working on my music Bhanu.

BHANU

You need to focus on your degree.

SANTOSH

That's for my parents... Music is for me.

BHANU

(disappointed)
Why can't you do something that's stable?

SANTOSH thinks for a second. He stops tapping his foot.

SANTOSH
(angrier)
Why can't you let loose... For
once?

BHANU
(yells)
LOOK AT YOURSELF SANTOSH, you're
gonna graduate without a job or a
clear plan. You can't just go
through life with "good vibes"
(air quotes)
It's actually scaring me.

SANTOSH
And you're going to graduate with
your life written out, but what if
it doesn't go to plan?

BHANU
For once, can YOU be serious?
You're being childish.

SANTOSH
You know I don't like being called
childish.

BHANU
Sometimes, I wish you wouldn't come
to the Arangetram. I never know how
you're gonna act.

SANTOSH
If you don't want me to come I
won't.

BHANU
Then don't come.

SANTOSH angrily picks up his things and leaves.

FADE TO:

4. INT. STAGE/APARTMENT

BHANU sadly stares into the distance as she gets into her
starting position. As the song begins (Kanna Varuvaayo -
PRI), she touches her necklace.

SONG continues playing. Back in the APARTMENT, SANTOSH sits looking at his watch. Playing with the dial, he moves the time back.

5. INT. DANCE STUDIO

TITLE CARD: 3 YEARS AGO

The song still plays but it slowly fades into the background, and a classical song starts playing. BHANU was seen dancing but restarting every few moves as it wasn't to her standard.

Another person enters the studio and accidentally runs into BHANU.

SANTOSH
(exclaimed)
I'm so sorry. Are you okay?

BHANU
(on the ground, annoyed)
Yeah, I'm fine.

SANTOSH helps her up

SANTOSH
I just wanted to ask you if I could
just play my piano in the corner.

BHANU
Yeah... Sure, whatever. Go for it.

SANTOSH sets up his piano and starts to play Main Agar Kahoon from "Om Shanti Om". The song catches BHANU's attention, she stops what she is doing and listens.

SANTOSH getting bored of the repeated song changes the key of the song.

BHANU
(faces SANTOSH, concerned)
Noooo, why did you change it?

SANTOSH
I was getting a little bored so I
changed it.. at least this way, I
can make it my own.

BHANU

First you bump into me and now you mess up an amazing song. What else are you going to do today?

SANTOSH

(laughs)

"Mess up" is a little harsh don't you think. What if I make it up to you? Lunch?

BHANU

I think that'll be cool.

SANTOSH and BHANU leave the dance studio together.

BHANU

(background)

Mess up was not harsh, the original is always best.

MONTAGE: Progression of their relationship. From getting dinner together to playing instruments. BHANU comforts him when he is sad. SANTOSH gifts a necklace and BHANU fixes SANTOSH's watch. SANTOSH enthusiastically watches BHANU dance.

BHANU

I want you to play for me some time

SANTOSH looks at BHANU and smiles. They sit together on a couch in SANTOSH's apartment.

MATCH CUT TO:

6. INT. APARTMENT

Shot is similar to the previous scene, however BHANU isn't present. VIK comes over and sits where BHANU usually sits. SANTOSH looks at him angrily. VIK moves over a seat.

VIK

(drinks coffee)

I pity seeing you man.

SANTOSH looks over with more anger.

VIK

You really want to go. But you...
(points to SANTOSH)...
Don't let yourself go... Why?

SANTOSH

You're the one who told me a month
ago...
(mocking)
You need distance and time,
SANTOSH, you need vElOciTy.

VIK

That was for a different SANTOSH
and today's advice is for you now.

SANTOSH

Are you telling me to go?

VIK

Yes. I've made that apparent.

SANTOSH looks over to his phone one more time and sees the
lock screen with BHANU.

SANTOSH

Fuck it.

VIK's eyes widened.

SANTOSH

I'm going.

SANTOSH gets up fast and starts to get ready to leave. As he
is doing so VIK starts to yell.

VIK

(speedily, urgent tone)
The dance is at the concert hall on
the other side of town. You'll need
to be fast.

SANTOSH

Got it.

SANTOSH leaves the apartment. VIK falls back onto the couch.

VIK
(relieved)
Finally

7. INT. APARTMENT

TITLE CARD: 6 MONTHS AGO

SANTOSH plays piano on the couch. BHANU comes in and sits down upset. Santosh quickly stops playing the piano and looks over at Bhanu.

SANTOSH
Hey, is everything okay?

BHANU
For the last song, I am just not
on thaalam, I am off beat.

SANTOSH
I keep telling you, just go with
the flow and take some pressure
off.

BHANU
(angrily)
I can't just go with the flow,
Bharatanaatyam is very precise. I
need to perfect it.

SANTOSH
Bhanu, Kanna Varuvayo cannot be
robotic, it's about a mother's
yearning you need it to be
authentic.

BHANU
You're right, there is so much
history, and in order to express
it I need to be precise.

SANTOSH
But creativity doesn't work that
way, there is no perfecting, it's
all spontaneous. It's constantly
evolving.

BHANU

Bharatanatyam has been the same for
hundreds of years, music hasn't.

SANTOSH

The song you're performing is a
modern retelling of an old story.
You can do the same.

BHANU

Unlike you, I cannot improvise.
Last time I tried that, the
meaning just *beat* fell apart.

SANTOSH

Who cares? You create the meaning
for your own art.

BHANU

To innovate itself, you need
history. Music evolves but it
still pays homage to the ones
that came before it.

Silence ensues. Santosh and Bhanu look at each other and
smile. The camera moves back (giving them space) and reveals a
sunset. They talk but their conversation is not heard, and
ends in a hug.

SONG starts to fade in.

8. INT./EXT. MONTAGE/STAGE - SONG: KANNA VARUVAYO BY PRI

The song continues playing from where it previously faded
out.

BHANU is seen dancing on the stage, but from time to time
looks at the entrance to see if SANTOSH will come.

SANTOSH tries to rush to the venue. He runs as fast as he can
to catch the train. When he starts to slow down, he looks at
his watch. Then he starts to run once again, to the station.

CUTS between the dance and SANTOSH running to the venue.

The SONG and BHANU's dance end just as SANTOSH is entering
the room. The audience fills with clapping, but that soon

fades out leaving BHANU and SANTOSH in silence.

SANTOSH
I have a special request.

BHANU
What would that be?

SANTOSH
Dance to one final song?

BHANU
I would love to.

SANTOSH walks onto the stage, shakes BHANU's hand and sits at the piano.

WIDE SHOT: SANTOSH and BHANU on the stage together. One piano chord plays.

THE END.