

INT./EXT. RAJU'S CAR - FRIDAY MORNING 4AM

Raju pulls up in front of a salwar clad woman who looks like the picture on his phone.

RAJU

Rukku?

RUKKU

Yes - are you Venky's friend Raju?

RAJU

The same. Hop in.

Rukku glances over as Raju texts Venky 'package acquired.'

RUKKU

So I'm a package, am I?

RAJU

No, no, that's just a standard report when one of us picks anyone up from the airport.

RUKKU

Oh? Now I'm just anyone?

This time Raju deliberately exposes his phone to view and reads as he types.

RAJU

SMH Your future woman picks fights. Still time to back out.

Rukku makes as if to swat Raju on the head with her handbag, timed so she misses as he ducks. He pulls the car out and drives up to the gate to exit the airport.

RAJU

Okay okay, raising my white flag! Peace. Om Shanti!

Raju pays the attendant, the gate goes up and the two are driving down the road.

RUKKU

Who's Shanti? Is she another package?

RAJU

(Raising his hands above his head in namaskaram quickly, then returns his hands to the wheel)

Amma thaaye, Meenakshi Kamakshi Visalakshi enna vittudu! Surrender!

RUKKU

Good. I'm marrying someone whose best friends has the brains to throw in the towel when he's beaten.

Rukku licks her lips and makes a smacking noise.

RUKKU (CONT'D)

Is there anything to eat? I just spent 18 hours on the plane, I swear by the end of it I started looking at everyone like giant cones of paper roast and the pillow started looking like a giant idli. Even the kid next to me looked like a gulab jamun.

Raju turns down a side road that looks like a road less traveled.

RAJU

Not much open at 4 AM, but there is a truck stop I know that should have food.

Inevitably they have a flat tire.

RAJU (CONT'D)

Great. Wouldn't you know, my phone is out of charge. Do you have yours?

RUKKU

I don't have international roaming - I was going to borrow a SIM when we got back. I do have a power bank.

Raju takes the power bank, plugs his phone in, sends a message to Venky and leans back. He notices Rukku's pallor, but dismisses it as a result of the moonlight. The two exit the car, look up at the sky and share awkward silence for a moment or two. Venus twinkles brightly in the night sky.

Rukku starts singing absently. She is singing the Navagraha Kirtana for Venus - Sri Sukra.

RUKKU

Friday is supposed to be the day in honor of Venus. Did you ever think it odd that Venus is a love goddess in a lot of cultures but here he's the demon guru who got swallowed by a love goddess instead? And he's still the lord of Friday?

Raju gives her a strange look.

RUKKU (CONT'D)

No, seriously. The legend goes that the son of the Ocean, Jālandhara, was vanquished and his demon army was decimated by Siva. He called upon Sukra to bring the dead back to life. Sukra, according to the rules governing his conduct, is obligated to do so. He sprinkles the army with sanctified water and brings them all back, faster and stronger. Siva, according to his own dharma, can't kill Sukra, who is just doing his duty and is a brahmin on top of that. So instead Siva creates Kritya, a scary mother, and tells her to put Sukra where the sun don't shine until the war with Jālandhara was over.

RAJU

You're weird.

RUKKU

No. I'm just lacking brains. I'm hungry.

RAJU

How about I send a quick note to Venky and go get something from the truck stop? You can stay here if you want.

Rukku nods assent. Raju gets back in the car.

INT./EXT. VENKY'S CAR - STILL MORNING

Venky has just received the message from Raju that he's heading to the truck stop. Venky instructs google/siri to reply "eta 15 min"

SUPERIMPOSE: FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Venky sees a white shining figure to the side of the road. As he approaches he sees that it is Rukku. She is leaning against the car licking her fingers. He pulls over.

VENKY

Hey, how's that for a welcome?

RUKKU

Verrry nice. I much appreciated the pre-wedding present.

VENKY

What pre-wedding present? Where's Raju?

Rukku freezes for a moment, perplexed. Gradually it dawns on her that he wasn't a wedding present. She regains her composure and gets into the car.

RUKKU

Oh he came back in a truck with a spare tire and some masalvadai. The spare was the wrong size so he went back.

Rukku suppresses a burp.