

CASE STUDY

चार गावे - Story Structure and Opening

OPENING SCENE

PROLOGUE: The Mist (4 months before main story)

September 15, 2002. 6:47 AM.

Farmer Gopal Phadke walks through the mist toward his field. The monsoon has been heavy this year - too heavy after three years of nothing. The ground squelches under his chappals.

He almost trips over the boy.

A small figure, curled in the wet grass. Shivering. Eyes open but seeing nothing. Clothes soaked with mud and something else - lake water.

“Ay! Boy! What are you doing here?”

The child doesn’t respond. Just shakes. His lips move but no sound comes out.

Gopal recognizes him. Raghunath’s son. Aarav.

“Aarav? Aarav! Where is your sister?”

The boy’s eyes finally focus. He looks at Gopal. Opens his mouth.

And screams.

CHAPTER 1: The Doctor (Present day - 4 months later)

January 2003. दक्षिणा (PHC), Talegaon.

Dr. Leena Shirke finishes writing her notes. Another case of respiratory infection. Third this week. The monsoon has left its mark on every pair of lungs in the village.

She looks around her small clinic. Two rooms. Rusted filing cabinet. One examination table with a suspicious stain she’s stopped trying to identify. Government-issue everything.

Home.

She didn't expect to be back. Scholarship to Pune. Medical degree. She was supposed to be in a city hospital by now. Instead, she requested rural posting. To this place. To the villages where she grew up.

Her mother thinks she's punishing herself. Maybe she is.

The filing cabinet contains records going back twenty years. Births. Deaths. Illnesses. She's been reading them at night. Trying to understand patterns.

Some patterns don't make sense.

The door opens. A man enters. City clothes. Clean shoes - remarkable in monsoon mud. He's young, maybe her age, with the alert eyes of someone trained to notice things.

"Dr. Shirke?"

"Yes?"

"I'm from CID Pune. I need access to medical records. The More children case. September."

She studies him. "CID? For a drowning?"

"For a pattern." He pulls out identification. "Three incidents in fifteen years. Same location. Same type of victims. Someone in Pune finally noticed."

She takes the ID. Reads the name. Freezes.

Arjun Gadkari.

"Gadkari?" she says. "Any relation to the Wada family?"

His expression flickers. "My grandfather. I use my mother's name professionally."

"Gadkari Saheb is your grandfather? The zamindar?"

"Does that matter?"

She hands back the ID. "In this village? Everything matters. Everyone is connected to everyone. Even CID officers."

CHAPTER 2: The Pattern

Over the next hour, Leena shows Arjun the files.

Three incidents. Six children.

Fifteen years ago: Ira and Asha. Twin girls. Age 8. Drowned in Korde Tal during flash flood. Ruled accidental.

Eight years ago: Neelam and Omkar Karande. Siblings. Ages 14 and 12. Drowned in Korde Tal. Ruled suicide due to family pressure.

Four months ago: Gauri and Aarav More. Siblings. Ages 12 and 8. Gauri drowned in Korde Tal. Aarav survived. Ruled suicide (Gauri) and attempted suicide (Aarav).

“All siblings or twins,” Arjun notes. “All at the same lake. All officially explained away.”

“The village calls it a curse,” Leena says. “The twin spirits. They take children.”

“You believe that?”

She doesn’t answer immediately. “I knew them. The first twins. Ira and Asha. We played together as children. I was supposed to meet them that day. My mother kept me home. They went to the lake without me.”

“I’m sorry.”

“The second ones - Neelam and Omkar - I knew them too. Neelam was my friend. We studied together before I left for Pune.” She pauses. “I should have been here. I should have asked questions.”

“You’re here now.”

“Yes.” She looks at him. “Why are you really here? A CID officer doesn’t come to a village for old drowning cases.”

He’s quiet for a moment. “My grandmother asked me to come. She says my grandfather is getting worse. The guilt is eating him. He’s obsessed with the curse.”

“Gadkari Saheb has been obsessed for years. Everyone knows he saw something that night - the night of the puja, when the priest died. He claims he saw the twin ghosts.”

“My grandmother says there’s more. Things he won’t tell her. Secrets from the past.” Arjun meets her eyes. “And I noticed the pattern on my own. In Pune. When I pulled the files. Three incidents. Six children. No real investigation. I asked to be assigned. They said no. So I took leave.”

“You’re not here officially?”

“I’m here as a family member visiting my grandfather. Who happens to be a trained investigator. Who happens to have noticed a pattern.” He shrugs. “What I do with my leave time is my business.”

Leena almost smiles. “So we’re both here for personal reasons. Pretending to be professional.”

“Something like that.”

“Then let’s stop pretending.” She pulls out another file - older, handwritten. “This is the boy’s testimony. Aarav More. The one who survived. The police dismissed it as trauma. But I’ve read it three times. Something doesn’t match.”

“What?”

“He describes the killers as ‘big shadows.’ Tall. Adult-sized. Heavy breathing. Cloth over faces.” She looks at Arjun. “The ghost twins were eight-year-old girls. Children. Not tall. Not adult.”

“He saw adults. Not ghosts.”

“He also mentioned a smell. Burnt plastic. Disinfectant. And a truck. Lights moving near the lake.”

Arjun stares at the file. “This was in the police report?”

“Buried in it. Dismissed as ‘trauma-induced hallucination.’”

“Someone didn’t want to investigate.”

“Or someone couldn’t imagine anything except the curse.” Leena closes the file. “This village has been haunted for fifteen years. Not by ghosts. By a story. A story that makes it easy to stop asking questions.”

“Then let’s start asking them.”

CHAPTER 3: The Two Paths

Over the following days, the investigation splits into two tracks:

Arjun’s Track: - Official case: More children (Timeline 3) - Access to police records, authority to question - Discovering illegal waste burning through Aarav’s testimony - Following the “business” angle

Leena’s Track: - Personal case: Original twins (Timeline 1) - Access to medical history, village trust - Discovering the deed rumor through Vasti connections - Following the “family” angle

They don’t realize yet: These are two different conspiracies. Two different killers. Same cover story.

Their paths cross at: Timeline 2 (Karande children) - which connects to both tracks.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Act I: The Curse is Real (Phase 1)

- Investigators arrive, establish their goals
- Everyone believes in the curse
- Superstition dominates every conversation
- First round of interviews reveals fear, not facts
- Player feels the curse might actually be real

Act II: Something Human (Phase 2)

- Aarav's testimony introduces doubt
- Kiln/waste connection emerges
- But also: Zamindar household secrets emerge
- Two tracks become apparent
- Player realizes there are human killers, but who?

Act III: Two Truths (Phase 3)

- Timeline 1 evidence points to Wada
- Timeline 2-3 evidence points to Bhatti
- The gap between them becomes clear
- Player must recognize: two separate crimes
- The curse was invented, then copied

Act IV: Resolution (Phase 4)

- Confrontations and confessions
 - Madhav confesses to T2-T3
 - Raghoba confesses to T1
 - Vasundhara exposed as T1 mastermind
 - The curse story revealed as manufactured cover
 - Village must reckon with truth
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KEY SCENES TO WRITE

1. **Leena and Arjun's meeting** - PHC, over files
 2. **Aarav's interview** - Fragmented, terrifying, key testimony
 3. **Gadkari Saheb's madness** - Arjun sees grandfather's guilt
 4. **Kalyani speaks** - After 15 years of silence
 5. **Sunita's whispered truth** - The overheard conversation
 6. **Raghoba breaks** - 15 years of guilt released
 7. **Madhav's cold confession** - No remorse, just calculation
 8. **Vasundhara revealed** - Ice where there should be grief
 9. **Final scene** - The lake, empty of ghosts
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THEMATIC ELEMENTS

The Curse as Metaphor

- The curse is how communities explain violence they don't want to understand
- Easier to blame spirits than examine power structures
- Belief in curse serves those who benefit from silence

Two Kinds of Evil

- Vasundhara: Personal evil (jealousy, pride, control)
- Madhav: Systemic evil (profit, protection, “business”)
- Both use the same cover - supernatural terror
- Neither sees themselves as evil

The Witnesses

- Those who saw things but stayed quiet
- Sunita, Dinesh, Haribhau, Kisan
- The cost of speaking vs. the cost of silence
- Justice requires someone to break

The Children

- Six children dead because adults valued other things more
 - Honor (Vasundhara), Money (Madhav), Comfort (silent witnesses)
 - Children are disposable when they threaten adult concerns
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PLAYER EXPERIENCE GOALS

1. **Feel the fear** - The curse should seem real initially
2. **Experience doubt** - Each interview should deepen uncertainty
3. **Recognize patterns** - Same structure, different killers
4. **Make connections** - Link clues across interviews
5. **Feel the weight** - These were real people, real deaths
6. **Understand the system** - Not one monster, but a network of silence
7. **Achieve resolution** - Both cases solved, truth revealed