

# KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON

## ACT 1:

### SCENE 1: SET-UP

The first scene opens with a **Council Meeting**. Members of the *Phulganj Council* are sitting on the **left** and the other local white residents sitting on the **right**.

The **Phulganj Council** includes:

1. The **HEAD (SAHEB)** of the *Phulnivasis* (Native to Phulganj).
2. **Govind Raj** - He is a **Liaison** between the Phulnivasis and the white residents.
3. **Samar Singh** - He is Saheb's aide.
4. **Suman Nair** - She is the **Protagonist** of the Play.
5. **Deepa Nair** - Suman's sister.
6. Two more extras.

The White Residents include:

1. **Rajneet Tripathi** - He is the **local Sheriff** of Phulganj
2. **Gopinath Tripathi** - He is the nephew of Rajneet.
3. **Suresh Tripathi** - He is another nephew of Rajneet.
4. **Amar Sethiya** - Deepa's white husband.

There is a sense of *Tension* among everyone.

**SAMAR:** Aditi is no longer with us. (while looking at Suman) We all pray for her soul to rest in peace.

**SAHEB:** With Aditi's passing, now totally 5 *Phulnivasis* have died in the last 2 months. Now... I really want to

believe this to be a coincidence but let's face the facts.(pause) Something else is going on here.

**SAMAR:** Mr. Tripathi - (clears throat) - **KING** - with all due respect to you, I believe it is time to take help from someone else.

Rajneet Tripathi is about to speak but Saheb interrupts him.

**SAHEB:** We thank Suman and Deepa Nair for donating 5,000 rupees each to hire a private investigator. (everyone looks at Suman and Deepa) Although this investigator will have help from our local police force, he will be working independently to solve this mystery.

King stands up.

**KING:** Saheb, I can understand you getting impatient. But hiring a private investigator from outside would not reflect well upon us. I believe my team is close to solving this case but we need more time. The private investigator would just slow us down.

**SUMAN:** You have been given enough time, Sheriff! I kindly request you to step back this one time. Please.

King nods reluctantly. Everyone freezes.

Suman walks away from the meeting to one corner of the stage. She has become the narrator.

**SUMAN (Narrator):** This might seem all confusing to you, so let me take it back. Back when we were living in peace. Back when the Phulnivasis weren't dying every week.

Everyone leaves the stage except Suman.

[NEED TO WRITE SCENES TO INTRODUCE PHULGANJ AND PHULNIVASIS AS WELL AS THE OIL BOOM AND HOW IT AFFECTED EVERYONE'S LIFE AS A MONTAGE] - **SCENE 2**

**Suman (Narrator):** And then one day, I met a person who would change my life forever. For better or worse. I was in the Doctor's clinic the day I met him.

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### **SCENE 3: THE FIRST MEET**

There is a small clinic on Stage left - 1 desk and a couple of chairs. On Stage right we have **Gopinath Tripathi (Cab Driver)**, waiting for Suman to come out of the clinic.

The two halves are separated by a door. Focus on the Clinic.

**SUMAN:** These medicines are making her weak, Doctor. I cannot see my mother so helpless.

**DOCTOR:** I can understand your pain, but there's nothing I can do. Unless she has any motivation to live, the medicines won't help her.

**SUMAN:** Then I'll take her to Delhi, to see a better doctor.

**DOCTOR:** You are not understanding me Suman ji. No doctor can heal a person who has already decided to die.

**SUMAN (snaps back):** My mother...is not going to die! And I'm not gonna spend the rest of my life regretting that I didn't help her.

Suman stands up to leave. She grabs the medicine pouch.

**SUMAN:** Are these all the medicines, doctor?

**DOCTOR (sighs):** Yes.

**SUMAN:** Including my diabetes medicine?

**DOCTOR:** Yes, Suman.

**SUMAN:** Thank you doctor. (Suman turns to leave)

**DOCTOR:** Please let me know if you need anything else.

Suman exits the Clinic. She is now looking for a Cab. Gopinath sees her. He quickly walks towards her.

**GOPI:** You seem a little tense, ma'am. Bad news from the Doctor?

Suman hesitates to talk. She continues to look for some other cab driver, ignoring Gopinath.

**GOPI:** It's 5 o'clock, ma'am. Everyone would be at the Racing Bowl.

Suman hesitates.

**GOPI:** Ma'am...If I were you, I would get in that jeep right now, because I know it will be the greatest ride of my life.

Suman smiles. Gopi smiles back.

**GOPI:** Right after you, ma'am. (smiles and gives her his hand)

Gopi takes Suman to the jeep on stage right and helps her get on the jeep. Gopi starts driving.

**GOPI:** I'm new to this town. Moved in here with my **Uncle** recently.

**SUMAN:** You talk a lot.

**GOPI:** That's who I am. I like to talk to people. My name's **GOPINATH. GOPINATH TRIPATHI.**

Suman laughs.

**SUMAN:** Your name is Gopinath?

**GOPI (embarrassed) :** Yes. But you can call me Gopi.

**SUMAN:** It's a... name.

**GOPI:** You can thank my Uncle for that. He was the one who named me. Do you mind me asking... Are you okay?

**SUMAN (confused) :** Am I okay?

**GOPI:** You came out from the doctor's clinic, so are you, like ill?

**SUMAN:** You're asking too much.

**GOPI:** Just making conversation ma'am.

**SUMAN.** Suman.

**GOPI:** I'm sorry?

**SUMAN:** Call me Suman. That's my name. And it's not funny unlike yours.

**GOPI (smiles) :** Yes it isn't.

**SUMAN:** I'm diabetic. That, along with my mother's illness, makes me come down here almost every week.

**GOPI:** I'm really sorry to hear that.

**SUMAN:** It's funny..

**GOPI:** What is?

**SUMAN:** You asked about all this stuff but never asked my address.

**GOPI:** Well... I'll ask now.

Awkward silence.

**SUMAN:** I'm waiting for you to ask.

**GOPI:** Right. I'm sorry. Where do you live?

**SUMAN (smiles):** Just drop me three blocks from here.

**GOPI:** Right away.

**SUMAN:** What did you do before coming here? To Phulganj.

**GOPI:** I was in the army. **An Army Chef** to be precise.

**SUMAN:** So you cooked food for the soldiers.

**GOPI:** Pretty much yeah. One day our camp got ambushed and I got shot in my back. Luckily I survived. Got relieved from my duty and then my uncle brought me here, got me this jeep and now, I'm taking a beautiful lady back to her house.

**SUMAN:** (taunts flirtatiously in local language)

**GOPI:** I don't know what you said, but I'm pretty sure it meant *INDIAN* for "*Handsome Devil*".

Suman laughs.

[LIGHTS OUT. SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN]

**SUMAN (Narrator):** Though he was dumb, he did make me laugh. His uncle was the Town Sheriff. Later, I found out that he is, technically, my *Brother-in-law*. Yes. My older sister **Aditi** was married to his older brother, **Suresh**. Every week, he would ride me from the clinic to my house and one day I invited him over for dinner.

[SPOTLIGHT OFF. LIGHTS ON]

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#### SCENE 4: THE PROPOSAL

We are inside Suman's house. Suman's mother -MONA- is sitting inside and meditating. Gopi and Suman enter.

**GOPI:** It's a big house you've got. Nice and warm.

**SUMAN:** Well... This is what you get when you own a lot of oil.

**GOPI (greet's Mona):** Hello Aunty!

Mona looks at him. She then looks at her daughter. She *scowls* at her and LEAVES the stage.

**SUMAN:** Please ignore her. She gets a bit stirred when I bring white men into our house. I'll be back. Please make yourself comfortable.

Suman leaves the stage.

Gopi takes a seat. He thinks. Then he **breaks the 4th wall**.

**GOPI:** I'm going to propose to her. (takes out a ring)  
I even have the ring ready.

[SUMAN ENTERS STAGE WITH SOME FOOD AND DRINKS.]

They start eating/drinking.

**SUMAN:** Who are you talking to?

**GOPI:** Nobody... I was just thinking about your mom. Do you live here alone with her?

**SUMAN (proudly):** Yes, I do. Don't you live with your uncle?

**GOPI:** Yes. He's a nice man.

Awkward Pause.

**SUMAN:** Why did you come here?

**GOPI:** Why did I come here?

**SUMAN:** Yes.

**GOPI:** To live.

**SUMAN:** Yes. But why?

**GOPI:** For my uncle. I work with him.

**SUMAN:** You scared of him?

**GOPI:** Of whom? My uncle?

**SUMAN:** Yes.

**GOPI:** No. He's the King of the Phulganj Hills. He's the nicest man you'll ever meet. But he may not be nice if you cross him.

Suman stands up and gets two glasses to pour the drink into. She's losing interest in Gopi.

**GOPI(trying to win her back) :** I'm my own man. I do my own work. I'm a businessman.

Suman pours the drink in the two glasses and gives one to Gopi.

**GOPI:** Thanks.

Awkward Silence.

**GOPI:** How come you don't have a husband? (pause) What? I'm a man and I wanna know why a pretty woman like you doesn't have a husband.

**SUMAN(surprised but impressed):** Who said I don't have one?

**GOPI:** Well... if you did, I wouldn't be here. (pause) You know, you've got nice color skin. What color would you say it is?



**SUMAN:** My color.

**GOPI:** Well... I really like it. It suits you. You've got nice skin, a nice house, a good chunk of "you know"... but no husband.

**SUMAN:** [calls him "COYOTE" in local language]

**GOPI (smiles):** You called me a coyote didn't you?

**SUMAN:** Coyote wants money.

**GOPI:** I want a wife. Marry me, will you?

Gopi puts his hand in his pocket to take out the ring but Suman stops him.

**SUMAN:** Wait. I need time.

**GOPI:** Yes. Of course. I'll leave now.

Gopi exits stage.

[LIGHTS OFF]

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## SCENE 5: MEHEK

[SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN]

Suman is now standing on the left side of the stage. Gopi is standing on the right side- **frozen**. There are 4 people standing in a line beside her. She is going to talk to each one of them separately.

The first person is **Aditi Nair**, her eldest sister.

[SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN AND ADITI]

**SUMAN:** He's not that smart. But he's handsome.

**ADITI:** Looks like a snake to me.

**SUMAN:** No! He looks like a coyote. Those blue eyes...

**ADITI:** He wants *our* money.

**SUMAN:** Of course he does. But he wants to get settled. He's not restless.

**DEEPA (off light)** - His uncle is the Sheriff.

Suman **and** Aditi now walk to the second person in line - **Deepa Nair**, another of her elder sisters.

[SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN, ADITI AND DEEPA]

**DEEPA:** His uncle would have all the money in the world. If he wants to marry you, it's because he loves you.

**ADITI:** What about my husband then? He told me many things to convince me before our marriage, but now... nothing.

**SUMAN:** How do you expect a marriage to work if you carry a **GUN** with you everywhere, even in your bed.

Gopi *unfreezes*. He looks at the three sisters and smiles and freezes again.

**DEEPA:** Coyote's looking.

**SUMAN:** Deepa, see...Those blue eyes.

**ADITI:** I can confirm one thing, he looks better than *Amar*.

**DEEPA:** Of course you want to bring my husband into the conversation.

**SUMAN(teasing):** Aditi's not lying you know.

**DEEPA:** Amar may not look good from the outside, but his heart is pure. And he's wild like a rabbit, in the bed.

**MEHEK:** Don't leave out your little sister.

The three sisters move to the next person - **Mehak Nair**, the youngest sister.

[ALL 4 SISTERS ARE IN THE SPOTLIGHT]

**MEHEK(coughs)**: I don't wanna miss out on the fun.

**SUMAN(goes and holds Mehek)**: Mehek, you tell me. Am I making a mistake marrying him?

**MEHEK(coughs)**: If you love him, and you are certain that he loves you, then you're making no mistake.  
(coughs again)

**ADITI**: Are you alright?

**DEEPA**: Did you meet the doctor yesterday?

Mehek coughs again.

**SUMAN**: Mehek-

**MEHEK(interrupts)**: I'll be right back.

Mehek exits stage.

**ADITI**: I'll go with her, you go talk to mom.

Aditi exits stage right behind Mehek. Suman and Deepa go to the 4th person standing in the line - **MONA NAIR**, their mother. Mona is sitting in a chair, meditating sadly.

The sisters realize that their mom is in tears and quickly go to her.

**SUMAN**: Mom, what happened?

**DEEPA**: Are you alright?

**MONA(helpless)**: Mehek...

**DEEPA**: Please tell us what happened. We're here to help you.

**SUMAN**: Yes, Deepa is right. What happened?

Mona looks at them helplessly. Deepa and Suman immediately understand the gravity of the situation.

**SUMAN:** When?

**MONA:** Yesterday.

Aditi enters the stage crying, into the spotlight.

**ADITI:** Mehek's gone.

[SPOTLIGHT OFF. LIGHTS ON AND OFF IMMEDIATELY]

Everyone leaves the stage except Suman and Gopi.

[SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN]

Suman is at the center of the stage. She is lying down, crying. Her youngest sister had died due to a whooping cough. Gopi walks near her. He puts his hands on her shoulder.

**GOPI:** It's okay. I'm sure she was at peace when she passed.

**SUMAN:** I didn't take enough care of her. It's my fault.

Pause. Suman realizes something. She looks at Gopi.

**SUMAN:** What if I let the same thing happen to my mother. I cannot live without her. If she dies-

**GOPI (holds her face):** Hey! Hey! Look at me. LOOK AT ME. Nobody is going to die. We're in this together. We'll fight this together. Come here.

Suman stands up. Gopi hugs her.

**GOPI:** You don't have to worry about our marriage. We can do it when the right time comes.

**SUMAN(wipes her tears):** No. I want to marry you. I love you Gopi.

They hug again.

[SPOTLIGHT OFF]

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## SCENE 6: 2 MONTHS

Lights are off. Gopi is hanging a *photo frame* of Mehek on the center wall. While he is hanging the photo -  
[SPOTLIGHT ON GOPI]

**GOPI(realizing light is on him) (narrator):** Oh! Just give me a moment to hang this photo. You must be wondering where Suman is. Well, she's busy with some work, so I thought why not let you guys hear my side of the story.

Gopi hangs the photo frame and walks to the front while the stage is being set up for the next scene.

**GOPI:** A lot has happened in the past **2 months**. Yes. 2 months. After Mehek's passing, a couple more Phulnivasias were murdered (**2 gunshots**). My uncle is personally handling this case. And then finally, Suman and I got married. (shows ring on his finger) We're living happily now. Suman brought her mother into our house because she has been **cursed by the OWL**. It means

that when you're about to die, you start seeing visions of an OWL. That's what happened with Mehek. She got cursed but didn't tell anyone out of fear. And then one day the owl came and took her to the afterlife. Suman's not doing great after her mother got cursed. Her diabetes shot up and she's getting sicker as time passes. Anyways, I need to prepare the house for a family lunch. See you around.

[SPOTLIGHT OFF]

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## SCENE 7: ADITI

[LIGHTS ON]

We are inside Suman and Gopi's house. The dining hall to be specific. Everyone is inside - Suman, Gopi, Aditi, Suresh, Deepa, Amar and KING Rajneet. Mona is resting in her bed. There is also a housemaid.

Everyone is eating. Suman and the housemaid are serving food.

**GOPI:** Suman, you sit. I'll serve the food.

**SUMAN(snaps back):** Oh! Now you want to help me. In front of your uncle. (shock across the room)

**DEEPA:** SUMAN!

**GOPI:** It's okay. She's just kidding, I'm sure.

Suman continues to serve food. She reaches Aditi, and smells something. She finished serving the food.

**SUMAN:** Aditi, a word?

Aditi and Suman walk far from the table so nobody can hear them. The others continue to eat.

**ADITI:** What is it?

**SUMAN:** Are you drunk?

**ADITI (brushes it off):** Of course not. I bought some clothes for Mother. I want to give it to her myself.

**SUMAN:** I'm not letting you anywhere near her.

**ADITI:** You think you can stop me?

**SUMAN:** Aditi! Why have you started drinking again? I thought you both (looks at Suresh) stopped fighting.

**ADITI:** Yes we did. For a big fat 24 hours. Our marriage is shit.

The housemaid is serving food at Suresh's table. Suresh starts teasing her- first he touches her hands, then hips.

**ADITI:** That man (Suresh) is not who you think he is. He doesn't love me anymore and I can't take it.

**SUMAN:** Aditi...

Aditi looks at Suresh flirting with the housemaid. Suresh stands up and starts to kiss her neck.

**ADITI (loudly):** Sometimes I feel like taking my gun and blowing his brains out. Ending this forever.

**SURESH (lets go of the housemaid):** Then do it! What are you so afraid of?

Aditi takes out the gun from her handbag.

**GOPI | RAJNEET:** ADITI!

**RAJNEET:** Take the gun off her hands.

**SUMAN:** Aditi, put the gun down.

Gopi goes near her to take her gun.

**ADITI:** If you come near me, I'll shoot your brother.

**SURESH:** That's what I am asking you to do. Shoot me.  
SHOOT ME.

Aditi realizes she can't shoot him. She puts the gun down. Gopi takes it from her.

**SURESH:** That's right. (runs towards her to slap her)  
You bitch! (Gopi stops his brother)

**GOPI:** ENOUGH!

**SURESH:** You wanna kill your own husband?! Think before you act. Whether you like it or not, you're stuck with me forever, you piece of shit.

**KING:** Alright! THAT'S ENOUGH. Suresh and Aditi! Keep your fights to yourself. Go outside. Sort it out. Suman, Deepa... take your mother inside.

Suresh and Aditi exit. Aditi gives a bag of new clothes to Suman.

**ADITI:** Give these to mom.

Suman and Deepa take their mother with them and exit the stage. Amar, Gopi and King are on stage.

**AMAR:** That's not good what he did. I'm talking about Suresh.

**KING (annoyed):** I don't need you telling me what's good and what isn't. (gives a look to Gopi)



Gopi goes to Amar.

**GOPI:** Why don't you go somewhere where my Uncle cannot see you! He's real mad. And your face makes him more mad. And you know what happens when my Uncle gets mad.

Amar nods and leaves the stage.

**KING:** Son, listen. I don't know how to say it but I have to. For yours and Suman's sake. (pause) Something has to be done about Aditi.

**GOPI:** I don't think I understand you Sir.

**KING:** She carries a gun, Gopi. In her bag. She's drunk half the time. All I'm saying is if she takes out that gun at the wrong place at the wrong time, something real bad could happen. Do you understand what I'm getting at son?

**GOPI:** Yes. Yes.

**KING:** Talk to your brother and sort it out. Leave Suman out of this. She needs to be with her mother. Understood?

**GOPI:** Yes sir.

**KING:** Good.

Gopi smiles because he impressed his Uncle.

[LIGHTS OUT]

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WE HEAR A LOUD GUNSHOT. AND THEN A LOUD THUD OF A BODY FALLING ON THE GROUND.

## SCENE 8: COUNCIL MEETING

Gopi is now putting a *SECOND* photo frame on the wall. This time it's **ADITI**.

[SPOTLIGHT ON GOPI]

Stage is being set for the Council Meeting in the background.

**GOPI:** My uncle was right. She took out her gun at the wrong place and at the wrong time and now poor Aditi's no more. Me and my brother tried to talk to her but NO. She resented us. Kept drinking. Her body was found at the railyard forest by some locals. When Suman saw her sister, lifeless... she couldn't take it. She immediately called for a Council Meeting.

Everyone in the Town council takes their seats (just like the first scene)

**SUMAN:** My sister is DEAD! She was murdered, just like the other 5 Phulnivasis who died in these last 2 months! And 15 in the last year! This is clearly not a coincidence.

**DEEPA:** These White men are murdering us. We need to take back control of our home! (people cheer)

**SAMAR:** Aditi is no longer with us. (while looking at Suman) We all pray for her soul to rest in peace.

**SAHEB:** With Aditi's passing, now totally 5 *Phulnivasis* have died in the last 2 months. Like Suman said. Now... I really want to believe this to be a coincidence but let's face the facts here.(pause) Something else is going on. Something bad.

**SAMAR:** When this money started coming in, we should've known it came with something else. Because it was the

white man's money. It's not what we were taught, coming from Ganga. And now, these white men are circling us. Picking us up one by one.

**SAHEB:** Now, we thank Suman and Deepa Nair for donating 5,000 rupees each to hire a private investigator to investigate Aditi's demise. (everyone looks at Suman and Deepa as they say "YES") Although this investigator will have help from our local police force, he will be working **independently** to solve this mystery.

King stands up.

**KING:** Mohan, I can understand you getting impatient. But hiring a private investigator from outside would not reflect well upon us. I really believe my team is close to solving this case but we need more time. The private investigator would just slow us down.

**SAHEB:** I know you have been doing nothing but good things for this community but this... This is clearly something which is beyond our and respectfully your understanding. Our people are getting killed. Lives are getting destroyed. It is not a joke anymore. Please take a back-seat in this matter.

King nods reluctantly and sits down again.

**SAHEB:** I request everyone to help this investigator in any way possible. The sooner we find these *KILLERS OF OUR FLOWER MOON*, the better.

[LIGHTS OFF]

Mona enters stage left.

[SPOTLIGHT ON MONA]

Mona walks across the stage to meet someone. She reaches the other end. There is an OWL waiting for her. She pets the owl and follows it, exiting the stage.

(Mona is dead in case you didn't figure it out)

### END OF ACT 1

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## ACT 2:

### SCENE 1: INSULIN SHOTS

Gopi is now hanging a third photo frame beside the other two. This frame is of MONA NAIR.

[SPOTLIGHT ON GOPI]

**GOPI:** Hey there again. We are officially into ACT 2. Congratulations to those who made it this far because it only gets better. I have both good news and bad news. Let's give you the good news first. *I am now a father.* Suman gave birth to our daughter, *Monica*. She's a very cute baby. But the bad news is that Suman is very sick. After her mother's death, her diabetes shot up and she was getting sick every passing day. So we called my Uncle for help.

We are inside Gopi and Suman's house. Suman is lying on a bed. Gopi opens the door and his Uncle along with a Doctor enters the house. Although Suman is lying weak, she can still hear everything.

**KING:** Son...

Gopi escorts the doctor near Suman's bed. He wakes up Suman. Suman doesn't like what she sees.

**GOPI(talks as if Suman is a baby):** Suman, this is the best doctor available who can treat you. Now, you're gonna sit up straight and let him give you his medicine.

**SUMAN:** No.

Awkward. Gopi looks at his uncle and sees his disappointed face - *"my nephew can't even control his own wife"*.

**GOPI(still the same tone):** What do you mean no? He's gonna help you get better. Think about our daughter.

**SUMAN:** I don't trust him.

**GOPI:** But you trust me, right? (pause) Do you trust me, Suman?

Suman nods.

Gopi goes to his uncle and tells him something. King calls the Doctor and then the doctor gives the medkit to Gopi. King and the doctor leave the house.

Gopi opens the bag and prepares the insulin shot. He mixes a *sus liquid (poison)* into the medicine.

**GOPI:** You can't say "NO" like that in front of my uncle.

**SUMAN:** You scared of him?

**GOPI:** No. He's the King of the Phulganj Hills. You need to give him respect.

**SUMAN(sarcastically, angrily):** Who gave him that title? "King of the Phulganj Hills". You know, ever since I hired that private investigator, your uncle's not been the same.

**GOPI:** SHUT IT! Not another word about my uncle! He's trying to save you and this is what you have to say? Huh!?

Gopi takes the injection to Suman.

**GOPI(softly):** I am trying to help you. Hey, you trust me right?

**SUMAN:** Yes. (pause) Gopi, do you love me?

**GOPI:** Of course I do. I love you.

Gopi injects the shot into her body and then lays her down in the bed.

**GOPI(narrator):** Days passed. I gave her an insulin shot every day, hoping she would heal. But she got worse. [Gopi gives a few more insulin shots (poison shots)] And after a few days, the very thing which I was afraid of, happened to her...

Gopi exits stage.

Suman is sleeping on her bed. An *OWL* enters the stage and starts calling out Suman. She wakes up and sees the owl standing near her bed.

**SUMAN:** No! This can't happen to me! GOPI!

[LIGHTS OFF]

[LIGHTS ON]

The owl is not on stage. Gopi enters running to address his wife.

**GOPI:** What happened sweetie? Are you okay?

**SUMAN(in fear):** I've been cursed. I'VE BEEN CURSED! I saw the OWL!

**GOPI:** No. Nothing's gonna happen to you.

**SUMAN:** Gopi, I'm going to die. I'm going to die!

Gopi holds Suman and shakes her.

**GOPI:** HEY! LISTEN TO ME! LISTEN!

Suman stops crying and listens to Gopi.

**GOPI:** We're in this together. I won't let anything happen to you as long as I'm breathing.

Silence.

**GOPI:** You're the strongest woman I've ever met. If you can't fight through this, then I don't know who can.

Suman cries and hugs Gopi. Gopi comforts her.

[LIGHTS OFF]

[SPOTLIGHT ON GOPI]

**GOPI (narrator) :** Suman's health was improving slowly. She could walk now. But she was very concerned about the murder investigation. Even though she couldn't do anything from home, she asked her sister Deepa and her husband Amar, to make sure everything was going smoothly with the case until one day..

[SPOTLIGHT OFF]

[LIGHTS ON]

Suman and Gopi are sleeping together.

[LIGHTS OFF]

BOOOOOOOOOOM. A loud bomb blast is heard outside the house. We hear the sound of an ambulance as well as a fire truck. We hear people screaming.

**GOPI:** Suman, stay here. I'll be back.

**SUMAN:** Please come back soon.

We hear Gopi exiting the stage. We wait a few seconds. We hear Gopi getting back on stage.

**SUMAN:** Gopi! What happened?! Where was this?

[LIGHTS ON]

We see Gopi. HORRIFIED. SHOCKED AT WHAT HE JUST SAW. Suman immediately understood what had gone down. She starts crying. Gopi goes to console her but she pushes him away.

**SUMAN:** GO AWAY! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!



**GOPI:** I- I don't know-

**SUMAN:** DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID?! GET OUT!!

Gopi exits the stage.

[LIGHTS OFF]

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## SCENE 2: CBI

[SPOTLIGHT ON SUMAN]

Suman is putting a 4th photo frame on the wall. This time, it's her sister Deepa's photo.

**SUMAN (narrator):** They blew up their house. I couldn't even see her dead body. Her body got incinerated. Amar survived the blast but went into a coma and died the next day. They didn't even spare her daughter. The private detective we hired, well he's gone missing. I think he's either dead or he got paid off. All my sisters are dead. My mother is dead. And I don't want to sit in this house and take insulin shots from my husband everyday knowing that these Killers of our Flower Moon are still out there, murdering our people for money. So I have decided to go to Delhi. To talk to the CBI. I need to avenge my people. My family. I will right the wrongs!

[LIGHTS OFF]

[LIGHTS ON]

We are inside Rajneet Tripathi's house. The living room, to be precise. Rajneet, Suresh and Gopinath are all inside.

**KING:** I told you to slow her down!

**GOPI:** I did. I did exactly what you told me to do.

**KING:** Then how is she physically able to travel to DELHI?!

**SURESH:** What are we going to do now, King?

**KING:** Prepare for the CBI. We need to tie up all loose ends. They do not have any strong evidence against us. But we cannot eliminate the chance of me getting arrested. (looks at Gopi) All because of this dum-dum. What kind of a husband are you, who cannot even control his own wife?

Gopi is disappointed that he let his uncle down.

**SURESH:** We should've killed her. Just like we killed the others.

**GOPI:** I won't let you kill my wife.

**KING:** Oh! Now you love her?

**GOPI:** I always loved her.

**SURESH:** Where was this love when you agreed to POISON HER?!

**GOPI:** Poisoning her and killing her are two different things.

King and Suresh start laughing and then King slaps Gopi.

**KING:** Stop this nonsense. We need to get to work. (to Gopi) And son, listen... If you get arrested, you do not utter a single word of what we did. Lie to them, like you lie to your wife. Understood?

Pause. Gopi is scared.

**KING (more authoritatively):** UNDERSTOOD?

**GOPI:** Yes sir!

**KING:** Good. Then let's get to work.

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### **SCENE 3: THE ARREST**

We are inside Suman and Gopi's house. In the living room. Suman is lying on the couch. She is watching her husband *dance*. The song is *Jamaal Kudu*.

The song is being played on a live bluetooth speaker on stage. Gopi is trying to cheer his wife up by dancing. They're having a great time.

We hear a *door knock*. Gopi stops the music and opens the door. We cannot see who is outside the house yet.

**GOPI:** Hello sir. How may I help you?

**UNKNOWN VOICE:** Can I come inside?

**GOPI:** Do I know you sir?

**UNKNOWN VOICE:** I'm detective Munshi Ram from the Central Bureau of Investigation. Now, can I come inside?

**GOPI (scared) :** Yes. Please.

The detective Munshi Ram enters the house. He's wearing an old typical "*detective hat*". Suman is still sleeping.

**GOPI:** So... you're a detective?

**MUNSHI (confidently) :** Yes! I was sent down here from Delhi to see 'bout these murders.

**GOPI (nervous) :** See what about them?

**MUNSHI:** See who's doing it.

**GOPI:** I'll tell you what, if you've- if you've got questions... you know, you could take them to the Sheriff. He- he lives right across the street.

**MUNSHI:** Oh yes sir. I already have. He's been arrested.

**GOPI:** Arrested? You... You arrested the... Sheriff?

**MUNSHI:** Yes. He's been arrested on reasonable suspicion.

**GOPI (more tense after hearing about his uncle):** I'm sorry detective, but why are you here?

**MUNSHI:** Well, I came here for 2 things actually, the 2nd thing being... speaking to Suman Tripathi, whose sisters and mother are dead.

**GOPI (laughs nervously):** She's my wife. What's the 1st thing?

**MUNSHI (smiles):** To arrest you. Mr. Gopinath Tripathi, you are under arrest on suspicion for killing Aditi and Deepa Nair.

Munshi takes out his handcuffs and starts arresting Gopi.

**MUNSHI:** You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and –

**GOPI:** You can't arrest me. I have not done anything wrong.

**MUNSHI:** will be used against you in court.

**GOPI:** My wife's sick. I need to take care of her!

**MUNSHI:** She's our responsibility now. And so is your daughter.

Munshi drags Gopi out of the house. Suman is still asleep.

**GOPI:** You can't prove anything! You're doing the wrong thing!

[LIGHTS OFF]

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#### **SCENE 4: THE LOOSE END**

[LIGHTS ON]

We are in Munshi Ram's office. There is a long table at the center stage. Gopi is sitting on a chair. He is *not* handcuffed. Munshi is interrogating him.

**MUNSHI:** From what I can see, you have 2 options. You either tell me the truth about these murders voluntarily and not go to jail or you refuse to confess and spend the rest of your life in jail.

**GOPI:** So you're saying that if I tell you the truth, you'll let me go?

**MUNSHI:** Yes!

**GOPI:** Bullshit.

**MUNSHI:** Come on Gopi. Don't make this harder than it already is. I'm only trying to help you.

**GOPI:** I need to call my lawyer. I have the right to.

**MUNSHI (disappointed):** Yes. Of course. But let me tell you that your buddy Soham Gulati already told us everything and lucky for him he's not going to jail.

**GOPI (scared):** Soham Gulati? You arrested him too?

**MUNSHI:** He was the one who told us that your uncle is involved in all of this and that he tried to kill him in order to "tie up loose ends".

**GOPI (desperate) :** What else did he tell you?

**MUNSHI:** Why don't you speak with him?

Munshi exits the stage and a man called SOHAM GULATI enters the stage.

**GOPI:** Why did you rat on us?

**SOHAM:** They cut me a deal. What did you expect me to do? Besides, your uncle tried to kill me. That stupid bastard. After everything I did for him.

**GOPI:** Did you tell him everything?

**SOHAM:** Yeah. And I suggest you do the same.

**GOPI:** Oh yeah? I'm not gonna rat out my uncle.

**SOHAM:** Well, let me tell you something. Word is... your uncle is planning to kill you right here because he's scared that you'll speak. You're basically another loose end for him.

**GOPI:** My uncle would never do that to me.

**SOHAM:** That's what I thought as well. And now look at me. He would do anything to save his own life, that selfish prick.

**GOPI:** Don't call him that.

**SOHAM(sighs) :** I'm just looking out for you bud. The decision will obviously be yours.

Munshi enters the stage along with **Hardik Singh**, Gopi's lawyer.

**MUNSHI:** Time to go, Mr. Gulati. (to Gopi) Your lawyer, Hardik Singh. I'll see you guys in a bit.

Munshi takes Soham and exits stage. Hardik sits down.

**GOPI:** You're my lawyer?

**HARDIK:** Yes.

**GOPI:** My uncle sent you?

**HARDIK:** Yes. Do you always ask these many questions?

**GOPI:** Sorry. My bad.

**HARDIK:** Let me just cut to the chase. Have you told anything to the CBI yet?

**GOPI:** No.

**HARDIK:** Good. Make sure it stays that way. If you speak, your uncle might go to jail but you WILL.

**GOPI:** Understood. But Soham... He told me that he's told everything to them.

**HARDIK:** They offered him a *hoax* deal to make him speak. Now that he's of no use to them, they'll send him to prison.

**GOPI (hesitant):** Um... Soham said something about... um... Me being a loose end and that... my uncle is planning to...

**HARDIK:** You're safe. Nobody's killing you. You're too valuable to your uncle. He loves you, you know that right? (Gopi smiles) Well, that's it. They'll keep asking you to confess, but you have to stay strong. Understood?

**GOPI:** Yes sir. Thank you.

**HARDIK(leaves the stage):** The pleasure is mine.

Munshi enters the stage.

**MUNSHI:** So... My team went downtown to give that... doctor... Sumit Sharma a visit. I'm sure you know him.

**GOPI:** Yes. I know him.

Munshi and Gopi freeze.

[FOCUS ON STAGE LEFT]

There is a clinic on the left side of the stage. Two officers are inside the clinic standing beside Sumit Sharma, the doctor. The officers are holding a box.

**OFFICER 1:** Doctor, do you mind explaining what is in this box? And why is it in your clinic?

**DOCTOR:** I have no idea, officer.

**OFFICER 2:** Let me clue you in. This box contains *HEROIN*. The same heroin which you gave to Gopinath Tripathi to inject into his own wife, Suman Tripathi.

**OFFICER 1:** By injecting heroin inside her body, you don't kill her. But you "slow her down", don't you?

**DOCTOR:** I'm sorry officer but I'm a doctor. I'm meant to save lives, not take them. Yes, I gave Gopi the insulin shots for his wife, but I don't know how that box came inside my clinic.

[FOCUS BACK ON STAGE CENTER]

**MUNSHI:** Now, we were not ready yet to believe that your wife was getting poisoned, but when she was taken to our doctor, he immediately found traces of heroin in her blood.

**GOPI:** Is she alright now? My wife.

**MUNSHI:** Yes. She's recovering well. Although she doesn't know that she was poisoned... yet.

**GOPI:** Can I see her?

**MUNSHI:** If you help me... sure. Now, *your* doctor friend told us that he doesn't know anything about the heroin and that you were poisoning your own wife intentionally and he had nothing to do with it.

**GOPI(falling into the trap):** Bullshit! He was the one who gave me the poison.

**MUNSHI:** So you agree that you poisoned your wife.



**GOPI (realizing his blunder):** ...Yes. But the doctor was involved too.

**MUNSHI:** In my whole career, I've seen a lot of horrible things happen to people but I've never seen a man poison his own wife. Why would anyone do that?

**GOPI:** I don't know.

Pause.

**MUNSHI:** What else can you tell me about these murders?

**GOPI:** I don't have anything to do with the murders. I'm innocent.

**MUNSHI:** I'll leave you to it, then.

Munshi exits the stage.

[LIGHTS OFF]

[LIGHTS ON]

There are 2 prison cells on the stage. Inside one cell is Gopi and inside the other is his uncle.

**KING:** Why did you talk about the poison?

**GOPI:** The detective told me that the doctor was not involved in this.

**KING:** Of course he was lying to you. Do you want me to be in jail?

**GOPI:** Of course not.

**KING:** Then stop helping the detectives.

An officer enters the stage and walks near Gopi's cell.

**OFFICER:** Mr. Gopinath Tripathi?

**GOPI:** Yes. That's me.

**OFFICER:** I'm sorry to say but your daughter has passed away from a whooping cough.

Gopi is shocked. He realizes that he cannot see his daughter again ever. The officer leaves. Gopi starts crying on the floor. [LIGHTS OFF]

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### **ACT 3:**

#### **SCENE 1: THE MURDERS**

[LIGHTS ON]

Gopi is sitting on a chair at stage right. Munshi is questioning him. The center and left part of the stage will be used for flashback sequences.

**GOPI:** I'm ready to confess, detective.

**MUNSHI:** Well, you can start from the first. From when you came to Phulganj.

**GOPI:** After I was relieved from the Army, my uncle brought me to Phulganj.

#### **FLASHBACK 1:**

Gopi enters King's house. King welcomes his nephew and they both sit. Suresh is also in the house.

**KING:** Welcome to Phulganj. It's great to see you after a long time. You've grown so much.

**GOPI (laughs):** Yes I did.

**KING:** Do you know why I brought you here? To Phulganj?

**GOPI:** No, uncle.

**KING:** Call me King. Or sir. Took me a long time to earn that title from these people.

**GOPI:** Yes King. Of course. Why did you call me here?

**KING:** How's your back? I heard you broke it on duty.

**GOPI:** Yes I did. I can walk fine, but if you ask me to do any heavy lifting then I'll just be a sitting duck.

**KING:** Are you good with women?

**GOPI (with sharm):** Yes. Yes. I'm good with women. As good as they come.

**KING (smiles):** That's great. Do you want to have a family?

**GOPI:** Sure. I don't see no harm in having one.

**KING:** There's this woman. She lives downtown. Her name's Suman Nair.

**GOPI:** Okay. (pause) I'm sorry King, but I'm not too sure what you're hinting at.

**KING:** Long before you were born, this town was... let's just say it was not in a good condition. Then came the Phulganj Oil Boom. These people discovered oil in their soil and before you knew, money started flowing in. That too the big bucks. Now since I came here, I slowly tried to make my way through these people. And now I'm closer than ever. Son, do you love money?

**GOPI:** Yes sir. I love both Money and Women.

**KING:** Suman's family is the richest family in Phulganj. And if you marry her, and then do some 'things', the money will start flowing in the right direction.

Gopi hesitates to speak.

**KING:** Son, I know this is a lot to take on your first day here. Your brother was also in a similar situation. And look at him now, he's married to Aditi, Suman's sister. He did the right thing and I trust you to do the same.

**GOPI:** Yes King.

[FOCUS ON STAGE RIGHT]

**MUNSHI:** So you married Suman for money?

**GOPI:** Yes.

**MUNSHI:** And at that time did you know that only if a person dies, their head-rights go to the next person in the bloodline?

**GOPI:** Yes.

**MUNSHI:** So you knew that you would have to kill your own family to get money?

**GOPI:** Yes. I knew.

**MUNSHI:** And that's what happened with Aditi I suppose?

Suresh and Soham enter the stage from the left. They are carrying a *drunk* Aditi. Aditi is singing. She has no clue what is going to happen to her.

**SURESH:** Quick! Make her sit.

**SOHAM:** Gopi, you're gonna take the shot. Aim for her head.

Aditi is still singing.

**GOPI:** Yes. After that "gun incident" at our house, my uncle got stirred. He told me to talk to my brother and sort it out.

**SURESH:** Gopi! Shoot! What are you waiting for?!

**MUNSHI:** And by "sort it out", you mean kill her?

Gopi stands up from the chair and goes to the left side. Aditi is on her knees. Gopi takes out a gun and...

[LIGHTS OFF]

GUNSHOT SOUND. BODY FALLING DOWN SOUND.

Gopi walks back to the chair and sits down. The others leave the stage.

[LIGHTS ON]

**GOPI:** By killing Aditi, her head-rights went to her mother. And then after some time, the mother passed away as well.

**MUNSHI:** Thus leaving all the head-rights to Suman.

**GOPI:** Yes.

**MUNSHI:** Why did you do this? You had all the money in the world and you still killed your own sister-in-law. Why?

**GOPI:** My uncle would beat me if I didn't.

**MUNSHI:** Beat you?

**GOPI:** Yes. He didn't like people who didn't listen to him. When Suman got pregnant, he called me to his house.

## **FLASHBACK 2:**

Gopi enters King's house. His uncle is waiting for him.

**GOPI:** Good evening King.

**KING:** I've been waiting for you son. I heard you're gonna be a father?

**GOPI(smiles):** You heard it right.

**KING(builds tension):** We need to talk.

**GOPI:** What is it king?

**KING:** Do you remember the first day you came here? I told you about the oil boom and the money that comes with it?

**GOPI:** Yes. I remember it well.

**KING:** No you don't.

**GOPI (nervous):** I don't understand you sir.

**KING:** Why did get Suman pregnant?

**GOPI:** Sir?

**KING:** Come here. COME!

Gopi goes near his uncle.

**KING:** Lean against the table.

**GOPI:** But-

**KING:** Do as I say!

Gopi leans against the table. King takes a paddle/bat/belt. He starts hitting Gopi in his ass. Gopi screams in pain.

King stops.

**KING:** Get up and sit over there!

Gopi sits.

**KING:** What happened to you? Are you not serious about this?

**GOPI:** I am sir. I am sorry for what I did.

**KING:** You are not a child anymore. You have responsibilities. Responsibilities which I give you. You have to control your wife.

**GOPI:** I try to sir.

**KING:** Are you challenged to lead your house?

**GOPI:** No.

**KING (shouts):** She's hired a private investigator, who noses and brings unwanted eyes. She's got the Council to pay for her trip to Delhi. She's a very hard-headed woman and she's gonna make it harder on you!

**GOPI:** I'm sorry king... you know she's just... she's just stubborn.

**KING:** Gopi... my handsome son... What do you think is gonna happen to Suman and all of them? I love them but in the Turning of the Earth, they're going to go. Their time is over. That's it. Gone. Gopi! There will be no lightning strike and it stops happening. It will happen! These head-rights must go to Suman. Not to the mother, not to the sister Deepa, NOT Amar Sethiya! You've got to take back control of your home! You hear me?

**GOPI:** Yes king.

**KING:** Now, about your child. What happens if you get all emotional when time comes? A child is a liability. I need to be sure you don't mix up the child into business. Think with your brain, not your heart.

**GOPI:** Understood.

**KING:** Get outta here now.

Gopi leaves and walks back to the chair near the detective.

**MUNSHI:** Did you try to kill your child?

**GOPI:** I tried to... but I couldn't. My daughter is the reason I'm talking to you here, detective.

**MUNSHI:** So what happened to the Private Investigator who Sumand and Deepa hired?

Suresh and Soham enter again this time with the P.I. They hold him tight so he doesn't escape.

**SURESH:** Gopi!

Gopi stands up and walks towards the P.I. This time he takes out a *KNIFE* and...

[LIGHTS OFF]

SOUND OF KNIFE STABBING AND P.I SCREAMING IN PAIN.

They leave the stage and Gopi goes back to the chair.

[LIGHTS ON]

**GOPI:** I killed him.

**MUNSHI:** And what about blowing up Deepa and Amar's house?

**GOPI:** I didn't have anything to do with that. My uncle got Soham to plant a bomb in their house. He didn't like the fact that Amar was poking his nose at the wrong places. That and also the head-rights upon killing them would come to my wife.

**MUNSHI:** That is all. If you say all this in court, I'm sure you will get a reduced sentence.

**GOPI:** Thank you detective.

**MUNSHI:** Your wife wants to meet you. I'll send her in.

[LIGHTS OFF]

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### FINAL SCENE: CLOSURE

[LIGHTS ON]

All this is at center stage.

Gopi and Munshi are in Munshi's office. Gopi is handcuffed. Munshi brings Suman into the room and leaves.



Suman sees her husband in handcuffs. She is happy that he's finally been caught but also ANGRY, FILLED WITH RAGE that his husband killed her family.

Suman sits down.

**GOPI (helpless):** Suman, whatever I did... I did it for our family.

Suman laughs.

**SUMAN:** You're sitting there, being found guilty for killing my sisters and you're still lying to me?

**GOPI:** Suman-

**SUMAN (snaps back):** Ma'am.

**GOPI (correcting himself):** Ma'am, I would never lie to you.

**SUMAN:** BALLS! You've been lying to me from the very first day we met. (pause) (helpless) Why did you do it?

**GOPI:** I- I don't know. [PRESTIGE HOMAGE]

**SUMAN:** You don't know?! Was it for money? Or did you get off on it?

**GOPI:** My uncle-

**SUMAN:** YOU! I asked why YOU did it! Don't bring your uncle into this.

**GOPI:** I did it for my uncle.

**SUMAN (laughs):** You really want me to believe that?

**GOPI:** I did it for myself. And I don't regret doing it.

Silence.

**SUMAN:** Why did you poison me?

No reply.

**SUMAN:** Did you poison me?

**GOPI:** No.

**SUMAN:** You didn't -

**GOPI:** I did many things, but I did not poison you.

**SUMAN(breaks down):** Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

**GOPI:** Suman-

**SUMAN(even louder):** SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!  
SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!!!!!

Gopi is heart-broken seeing his wife in this state.  
But he WILL NOT apologize. Suman cries.

**GOPI:** *Ma'am, I will not apologize to you because I  
didn't do anything wrong.*

Suman wipes her tears. She calms herself. Makes  
herself feel strong. She smiles. She then asks Gopi  
***one final question.***

**SUMAN:** *Do you love me?*

**GOPI:** I-

**SUMAN:** *Did you ever love me? Even for a single second?*

**GOPI:** Ye-

**SUMAN:** And please don't lie this time.

**GOPI:** From the day we first met to this very day, I  
have always loved you. And nothing can change that.

Suman stands up and turns to leave.

**SUMAN:** You're a bad liar, Gopi. Goodbye.

[LIGHTS OFF]

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**EPILOGUE:**

I walk onto the stage with a MIC.

[SPOTLIGHT ON ME]

**ME:** Gopinath and Rajneet KING Tripathi were found guilty for the Phulganj Murders and received life sentences in prison. Although they got released on parole after 5 years in jail, despite protests by the natives. Gopinath's brother, Suresh Tripathi served NO time in jail due to lack of evidence. Soham Gulati was also charged for murder by the court but he killed himself before he entered prison. The Doctor who gave Gopinath the poison for Suman was never prosecuted due to lack of evidence. These *Killers of the Flower Moon* lived freely and peacefully for years even after committing these horrific murders and destroying the willpower of thousands of Phulnivasis and there was nothing these native could do about it.

Suman divorced Gopinath and married a man named Amit Mishra. They had a happy marriage. Mrs. Suman Mishra, 50 years of age, passed away at 11 o'clock, Wednesday night at her home. She was a full blood Phulnivasi. She was believed to die in peace. She was buried with her father, Mother, sisters and her daughter. There was no mention of the murders.

**CURTAIN CALL**

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