

Parramatta Liars

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Introduction

In the liminal light where the **Parramatta River's** ancient waters murmur secrets to the concrete veins of Parramatta, a suburb suspended between continents and centuries, nine women enacted a covenant as old as sorrow itself. This liminal light was a breathtaking, fleeting phenomenon—a violently bruised, bleeding sky transitioning from the blinding, searing gold of the Australian afternoon into a deep, suffocating, plum-colored twilight. The **Parramatta River**, a sluggish, winding serpent of dark, murky jade, moved with a heavy, liquid sound, its cold waters slapping rhythmically against the algae-slicked stone pylons, exhaling a dense, damp odor of ancient river mud, rotting riverweed, and sharp salt. This ancient moisture met the sprawling, baking

concrete veins of Parramatta—a dense, rigid network of grey, heat-radiating sidewalks and asphalt roads that smelled sharply of melting tar and stale exhaust fumes, slowly releasing the trapped, blistering heat of the day into the cooling evening air. Here, amid the perfume of turmeric and eucalyptus, the clang of temple bells blending with the distant roar of commuter trains, destiny had bound each to a man named Satya—Truth incarnate, yet a name that could not be spoken without summoning the shadow of mortality.

The atmosphere of the suburb was a chaotic, overwhelming collision of sensory worlds. The air was incredibly thick, saturated with the deep, earthy, golden-yellow aroma of dry turmeric powder sizzling in hot ghee, which violently clashed with the sharp, cool, sinus-clearing menthol bite of crushed eucalyptus leaves dropping from the massive, peeling gum trees. Auditory boundaries blurred entirely as the sharp, crystalline, high-pitched *clang-clang-clang* of heavy brass temple bells pierced the humid air, only to be immediately swallowed by the deafening, bone-rattling, metallic roar of the massive silver commuter trains tearing across the elevated steel tracks, leaving a lingering, acidic scent of hot iron brakes and blue electrical sparks in their wake. The tradition, whispered through generations like a forbidden raga, decreed that the utterance of Satya, or any unvarnished truth, would unravel the fragile thread of their husbands' lives, shortening existence with every syllable of verity. The shadow of mortality they feared was not a metaphor; it was a visible, creeping darkness—a cold, suffocating, charcoal-grey stain that seemed to pool in the corners of their living rooms, smelling faintly of clinical antiseptic, sterile cotton, and the terrifying, metallic tang of unpumped blood.

Thus, these women—Puju, Priyanka, Priya Sharma (whom the streets knew as Ms Aussie), Rashmi Bongi, Rohini, Pallavi, Sumitri, Khusbu, and Komal Gupta—became priestesses of Mithya, the sacred art of beautiful lies. When they spoke, their lies were not merely words, but physical manifestations of dazzling, almost radioactive color and sound. Their tongues wove veils of illusion not from malice, but from the profoundest devotion: love rendered desperate by the arithmetic of survival. These veils were shimmering, iridescent fabrics woven from spoken breath—blinding, hyper-saturated silks in neon pinks, electric blues, and burning saffrons that draped over the grim, peeling, grey realities of their lives, smelling intensely of sweet night-blooming jasmine and warm, comforting vanilla to mask the sour, acidic stench of mounting panic and physical decay.

This is not merely a tale of domestic subterfuge, but a luminous inquiry into the architecture of human endurance. The architecture of their survival was a breathtaking, terrifyingly fragile structure, resembling a towering, teetering skyscraper made entirely of perfectly polished, blindingly reflective, razor-thin stained glass. It caught the harsh, white glare of the sun and fractured it into a thousand dancing rainbows, yet groaned and shrieked with a terrifying, high-pitched, crystalline tension at the slightest breeze of reality. In Parramatta's terraced labyrinth—where sari-clad aunties bartered gossip alongside Lebanese shopkeepers and Anglo retirees tended stubborn roses—the nine wives transformed the ordinary into the mythic. The labyrinth was a sensory overload: a dizzying zigzag of narrow, sun-baked brick alleyways where the blinding, clashing colors of heavily embroidered, mirrored saris swept against the dusty ground with a soft, rhythmic *shhh-shhh* sound.

The air was a dense, heavily layered perfume: the dark, rich, smoky aroma of Lebanese flatbreads blistering inside incredibly hot, stone ovens collided with the delicate, sweet, powdery fragrance of the Anglo retirees' meticulously manicured, pale-pink heritage roses. Each dawn, they met the world with fabricated dawns: gardens of eternal spring, husbands of superhuman vigor, neighborhoods bathed in improbable harmony. Their invented dawns were visually staggering—a sky painted in artificial, screaming magentas and perfect, flawless azures, untouched by a single cloud of doubt. Their Mithya rippled outward like monsoon rings upon still water, reshaping neighbors' perceptions, children's futures, and the very pulse of community life. The ripples were visible distortions in the air, a shimmering, heat-haze mirage that made the dull, brown, drought-stricken grass look like a blinding, vibrant, lush emerald carpet, smelling intensely of sweet, fresh rain and cut sap, even in the middle of a suffocating dry spell.

What began as individual shields against fate evolved into a collective tapestry, a mandala of deception wherein truth, that most lethal of gods, was exiled so that life might flourish in its absence. The mandala they wove was a massive, vibrating, geometric explosion of pure, blinding light that hovered over the suburb, radiating a warm, golden, humming frequency that drowned out the harsh, scraping, metallic noises of everyday suffering. Yet beneath the shimmer lies the ache of paradox. Beneath the glossy, flawless, hyper-saturated paint of their creation, there was a deep, resonant, mournful vibration—a low, agonizing cello note that hummed constantly in the marrow of their bones, smelling faintly of the cold, damp earth of an open grave. For in speaking only Mithya, these women preserved their Satyas while eroding the foundations of shared reality. The physical foundations of Parramatta seemed to warp under the weight of their fiction; concrete paths turned soft

and spongy, brick walls vibrated with an unnatural, sickly-sweet hum, and the harsh, unfiltered light of the midday sun was continually bent and distorted by the heavy, invisible gravity of their necessary falsehoods.

Gardens bloomed through belief alone; failing businesses revived on whispered miracles; friendships deepened in gilded illusion. The artificially revived businesses glowed with a frantic, neon-lit energy, their aisles smelling of aggressive, pine-scented floor cleaners and hyper-sweetened synthetic air fresheners, a blinding facade masking the terrifyingly quiet, echoing emptiness of their cash registers. Parramatta itself became a character—vibrant, fractured, alive with the fragrance of falsehood—its multicultural heart beating to the rhythm of necessary invention. The suburb's heart was a massive, chaotic, thumping drum, leaking a perfume so overwhelmingly dense—a chaotic blend of cardamom, roasted coffee, exhaust fumes, and blooming frangipani—that it physically intoxicated anyone who inhaled it, making their heads spin and their eyes water with the sheer, blinding beauty of the lie. Through nine chapters, each a petal unfurling from the same stem, we enter the intimate chambers of their lives: Puju's exuberant veils, Rashmi's melodic deceptions, Komal's culminating synthesis.

Here is a novella that whispers of migration and memory, of Australian light filtering through Indian veils, of the universal hunger to defy death with the oldest tool in the human arsenal—story. The Australian light was a brutal, unforgiving, blindingly white force that sought to expose every crack, every grey hair, and every dying breath, but it was caught, diffused, and beautifully softened by the rich, deep, jewel-toned silks of their Indian veils, transforming the harsh reality into a warm, forgiving, golden glow. In the tradition of the great epics, where gods and