

The Parramatta Perfumer

© 2025-2045 no part of this document can be used without explicit written permission from the author.

This is a work of fiction. All characters, events, and places are entirely fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

The Parramatta Perfumer

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Alchemist's Shadow

Chapter 2: The Golden Fields

Chapter 3: The Art of Distillation

Chapter 4: Blossoms of First Love

Chapter 5: Shadows and Celebrations

Chapter 6: Arrival in Sydney

Chapter 7: Forging the South Asian Alliance

Chapter 8: Saam - The Art of Persuasion

Chapter 9: Daam and Dand - Bribery and Punishment

Chapter 10: Bhed - Sowing Division

Chapter 11: Triumph and Betrayal

Chapter 12: The Parramatta Pilgrimage

Chapter 13: The Saffron Empire

Chapter 14: The Full Circle

Conclusion

1: **कीमियागर की छाया**

2:

3:

4:

5: **छाया और उत्सव**

6: **सिडनी आगमन**

7:

8: -

9: -

10: -

11:

12:

13:

14:

Introduction

In the shadowed heart of a Punjabi haveli, where the low hiss of cow-dung fires has whispered secrets for centuries, a legacy of scent is born and carried across seven seas. The Parramatta Perfumer follows Chunmun Singh, a young heir to an ancient lineage of attar-makers, whose hands are stained not just with rose petals and sandalwood oil but with the unyielding spirit of his soil—the mitti that holds the memory of ancestors, festivals, and unbreakable bonds. From the golden mustard fields of Amritsar, where peacocks cry and jasmine vines climb in defiant sweetness, to the sterile fluorescent glare of a Sydney shopping mall, Chunmun's journey is one of fragrance as power, love as alchemy, and ambition as both fire and poison.

This is a tale of ruthless grace disguised in petals. Guided by the timeless strategies of Chanakya—Saam, Daam, Dand, and Bhed—Chunmun transforms from wide-eyed apprentice into a perfumer-king who can topple empires with a single drop of tainted oil or unite worlds with a breath of jasmine laced with eucalyptus. Yet beneath the triumphs and betrayals lies a deeper pilgrimage: the search for a scent that can hold both the sacred smoke of home and the sharp, alien breeze of a new continent. It is a story of how far a man will travel to prove his roots are unbreakable—and how, in the end, every conqueror must return to kneel in the dust from which he came.

Rich with the narcotic haze of Ruh Gulab, the peppery sweetness of sarson, and the metallic tang of cunning, *The Parramatta Perfumer* is at once a sensual ode to the ancient art of Indian attar-making and a darkly glittering fable about identity, legacy, and the

intoxicating price of carrying one's soil to the ends of the earth. Singh is king, the story whispers—east or west, the fragrance of home is the only empire that truly endures. Hindi translation has been provided at the end of the book.

Chapter 1: The Alchemist's Shadow

Long before Chunmun Singh drew his first breath, the heart of the haveli beat to the rhythm of a low, hissing fire. It was a sound that had whispered through the courtyard for generations, a sound of patience, of transformation, a serpentine sssss that promised that something was always being made, always becoming. This was the sound of the Singh legacy, a sound that pulsed from Baba Ji's workshop. The workshop itself was a cavern of shadows and wonders, less a room and more a hollowed-out piece of the earth. Its mud-brick walls, once a pale ochre, were now stained dark, almost black, by decades of soot and steam. The air was thick enough to taste, a tangible presence. Hanging from the low, smoke-cured rafters were dried bundles of vetiver root, looking like skeletal birds, and sheaves of *khus* grass, perfuming the shadows with a deep, earthy green. Along one wall, rough-hewn wooden shelves held rows of small, cloudy glass vials, each stoppered with wax, their contents glinting like trapped jewels.

The only light came from two sources: the narrow, high windows that cast sharp, dusty yellow rectangles onto the packed earth floor, and the deep, pulsing orange-red glow of the cow-dung fires beneath the *degs*. These *degs*, massive copper pots burnished to a dull rose-gold, were the wombs from which fragrance was born. They sat like silent, pregnant goddesses in the gloom, their bellies full of water and flowers, their curved necks waiting to release their steam. Baba Ji, already an old man, would sit on a low wooden stool, his white beard catching the firelight, appearing as an

alchemist in the smoky haze. His hands, gnarled as banyan roots, were impossibly gentle as he tended the flames, his movements economical and precise. He was a man made of smoke and secrets. The air was a thick, narcotic cloud of *Ruh Gulab*—the pure, unadulterated soul of the rose. To enter was to be submerged, to feel the lungs grow heavy with perfume. The scent was overwhelming: intensely floral, a supernova of rose, yet beneath it were deep, honeyed notes, a faint, spicy greenness that spoke of the thorns and leaves, and a surprising, wine-like fermentation. This potent rose-soul mingled with the earthy, acrid tang of the smoldering fuel, the sharp, metallic smell of the hot copper, and the damp, cool aroma of the clay used to seal the lids. It was the scent of creation itself.

Baba Ji's process was a sacred ritual, unchanged for centuries. It began in the profound, star-dusted dark. At 4 AM, under a sky of bruised purple and indigo, while the village slept and even the stray dogs were silent, he would be in the fields. The air would be sharp, cold, and clean, a stark contrast to the thick perfume of his workshop. He'd move by the light of a single kerosene lantern, its yellow flame flickering, casting his own long, stooped shadow against the rows of sleeping flowers. He was a ghost communing with other ghosts, a silent guardian of the dawn. He came to harvest the Damask roses. The petals, still cold and heavy with night's dew, were a deep, velvety crimson, their color almost black in the pre-dawn gloom. His fingers, though calloused, moved with a feathery touch, plucking them one by one, filling his jute basket. He would murmur to them as he picked, a soft, soothing rumble. "Not yet, *beti*. The sun is a thief. He will drink your perfume and leave nothing for us." He insisted they be picked before the first ray of sun, "before the heat steals their heart". The sun, he believed, was

a violent lover, taking the scent by force; the gentle, low fire of the *deg* was a patient one, coaxing it to be given freely.

Back in the workshop, the roses were steeped in water drawn from the haveli's oldest well, their petals floating like crimson islands in the dark copper vessel. The *deg* was sealed to a *bhapka*—the receiver—with a mixture of chalky white clay and cotton. He performed this sealing with the concentration of a surgeon, his fingers tracing the rim, ensuring not a single molecule of precious steam could escape. The clay itself released a scent of damp minerals, a smell of the riverbed. Then, the fire was lit. And the waiting began. The only sounds were the soft *gurgle* of the distillate collecting in the receiver, a sound like a contented child. The low *hiss* of the fire, the *thwump* of the cow-dung cakes as they caught, and the scrape of Baba Ji's wooden paddle as he stoked the embers. He would sit for hours, unmoving, his eyes closed, simply listening. He was listening to the roses give up their souls. He would murmur, "We are not making perfume. We are capturing a memory. We are bottling the *mitti* (soil)". For him, the soil was not just dirt; it was the repository of their ancestors, the dust of their struggles, their festivals, their births, and their sorrows. To bottle the soil was to bottle their lineage.

Into this world of ancient rhythms, Chunmun Singh was born. It was a bright, clear morning in the season of *sarson*, the world outside the haveli exploding in a defiant, celebratory yellow. The contrast to the workshop's sacred gloom could not have been more stark. It was as if the sun itself had decided to bless this day, painting the entire landscape in liquid gold. When the midwife, her face beaming, announced the birth of a healthy son, the courtyard erupted. The sounds of joy—the high-pitched, trilling *ululations* of the women that pierced the clear air, the deep, chest-thumping,