

Unhealed

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Introduction: The Architecture of Extraction

There is a specific, suffocating kind of silence that falls over a household just before absolute ruin arrives. It does not announce itself with the cinematic rumble of distant thunder, nor does it crash through the front door with the clashing swords and roaring battle cries of a classical epic. Instead, it arrives with a terrifying, mundane stealth. It begins with the quiet, whisper-thin slip of paper.

It is the crisp, heavy-stock page of a diagnostic report sliding across a polished mahogany desk, smelling sharply of fresh black laser toner and ozone. It is the soft, papery crinkle of a prescription pad being torn, a sound that slices through the heavy air of a consultation room. It is the muted, digital *ping* of an email arriving in the dead of night, casting a sickly, pale-blue luminescence across the walls of a darkened bedroom, carrying a referral to a specialist. In that exact fraction of a second, the warm, chaotic, and colorful symphony of a family's life is permanently muted, replaced by the ringing, high-pitched tinnitus of impending medical terror.

Unhealed is a chronicle of this modern, sanitized siege. It is set against the restless, hyper-kinetic, tech-driven backdrop of Koramangala—a neighborhood in Bangalore where the sensory overload of India collides violently with the sleek aesthetics of global capital. Out on the streets, the air is a thick, humid soup. It smells of roasting peanuts, pungent diesel exhaust from sputtering yellow-and-green auto-rickshaws, and the sweet, heavy scent of jasmine garlands wilting in the afternoon sun. The auditory landscape is a deafening, chaotic chorus of blaring horns, shouting street vendors, and the grinding gears of delivery trucks. It is a place vibrating with raw, unfiltered life.

But this narrative documents a tragedy where the battlefield is entirely devoid of that life. The warzone is the sterile, shadowless white corridor of the modern corporate hospital, and the weapon of choice is the devastating illusion of care. It is a story about the profound and terrifying transition from life to death, and how that sacred, inevitable, deeply human journey has been commodified, packaged, and sold into a mandatory subscription model. The sensory experience of dying has been hijacked. The smell of a loved one's skin is replaced by the astringent, eye-watering fumes of

isopropyl alcohol and industrial bleach. The soft, comforting cadence of family prayers is drowned out by the relentless, synthetic, rhythmic *beep-beep-beep* of telemetry monitors and the pneumatic hiss of mechanical ventilators.

In the winding, sun-baked residential lanes of Bangalore, gold is far more than mere currency; it is a physical manifestation of generational memory. It possesses a distinct sensory weight. When a woman unlocks her heavy steel almirah, the air released smells of aged velvet, camphor balls, and old silk. The 22-karat gold itself—heavy, warm, and gleaming with a deep, buttery-yellow luster—clinks softly when lifted, a musical chime that carries the echoes of weddings, births, and ancestral blessings. It is a tactile reassurance that the family endures. Similarly, a flat in these neighborhoods is not merely a concrete asset or an entry in a real estate portfolio. It is the anchor of a family's continuity. The walls hold the embedded, invisible stains of thousands of meals—the sharp scent of sputtering mustard oil, toasted cumin, and split green chilies. The floors carry the auditory memory of children's running feet and the rhythmic sweeping of grass brooms at dawn.

The antagonist of this tale, Dr. Chaddichandan, understands this emotional architecture perfectly, and he knows exactly how to dismantle it.

Through the heavy, tinted, soundproof glass doors of Darayana Hospital, he views the human body not as a fragile, breathing vessel to be cured, but as a biological resource to be ruthlessly mined. His world is an oasis of sensory control. His office smells of expensive, earthy vetiver cologne and freshly ground single-origin espresso. The lighting is always a cool, calculated, recessed glow that casts no harsh shadows, designed to make him appear both

angelic and authoritative. He is the grand architect of a system that introduces poison disguised as a necessary, cutting-edge cure.

He operates a machine that ensures the transition toward death is as agonizingly slow, and as financially exhaustive, as scientifically possible. The extraction is measured in the colors of decay: the sudden, terrifying yellowing of jaundiced eyes caused by toxic, unnecessary medications; the deep, cyanotic purple that blooms under the fingernails when oxygen levels are artificially manipulated; the stark, terrifying red ink of the cascading billing ledgers that print endlessly from the hospital's basement servers, smelling of hot plastic and impending bankruptcy.

The nine couples in this novella represent a choir of the modern damned. They are marched, step by excruciating step, through the agonizing stations of manufactured illness. They enter the hospital bathed in the warm, vibrant colors of their ordinary lives, wearing cotton saris of deep magenta and saffron, their wrists heavy with chiming metal. They are systematically stripped of their wealth, their ancestral homes, and their physical vitality. By the time the extraction is complete, they have been rendered entirely monochromatic, bleached of their joy and cast out into the blinding glare of the street, completely hollowed out.

They are discarded the absolute second the ledger reaches zero. This is not just a story of clinical malpractice; it is an exploration of the absolute, terrifying vulnerability of the human condition when the sacred bond of trust is weaponized. It is a testament to the darkest alchemy of the modern world: the conversion of human breath, love, and terror into cold, hard, glowing digital capital.