



THE HUNGRY STONES

An immersion into the phantom past.
Based on the story by Rabindranath Tagore.

A delayed train and a sleepless night
open the door to the extraordinary.

The Audience

A skeptical narrator and his
theosophist kinsman, rapt with
wonder, convinced of the
stranger's astral body.

The Stranger

A man of unknown origin who
discoursed upon the Vedas, Persian
poetry, and secret policies with an
unnerving, supernatural confidence.

The Setting

A junction waiting room at
10 P.M. A bed rolled out on
a table. A night entirely
devoid of sleep.

*"There happen more things
in heaven and earth, Horatio..."*



The solitary marble palace at Barich guards a forgotten century of luxury.

The Location

At the foot of lonely hills



The River

The Susta, tripping and babbling over pebbles like a skilful dancing girl.



The History

Built 250 years ago by Emperor Mahmud Shah II for sheer pleasure, where Persian damsels once splashed their snow-white feet in rose-water fountains.



The Present

A vast, solitary quarter for a lonely collector of cotton duties, completely devoid of human habitation.



The deserted house begins to digest its occupant like a living organism.

The Warning

Karim Khan, the old clerk: "Pass the day there, if you like, but never stay the night." Servants flee before dark. Even thieves refuse to venture near it.



The Reality

The narrator passes the warnings off with a light laugh, returning tired to sleep. But within a week, the solitude weighs like a nightmare.

I felt as if the whole house was like a living organism slowly and imperceptibly digesting me by the action of some stupefying gastric juice.

A dark curtain falls, and the invisible mirage of a 250-year-old world awakens.

The Silence

Not a breath of wind. An oppressive scent from spicy shrubs. The sun sinks behind the hills.

The Footfalls

A sudden rush of many steps down the 150 stone stairs. A thrill of delight tinged with fear.

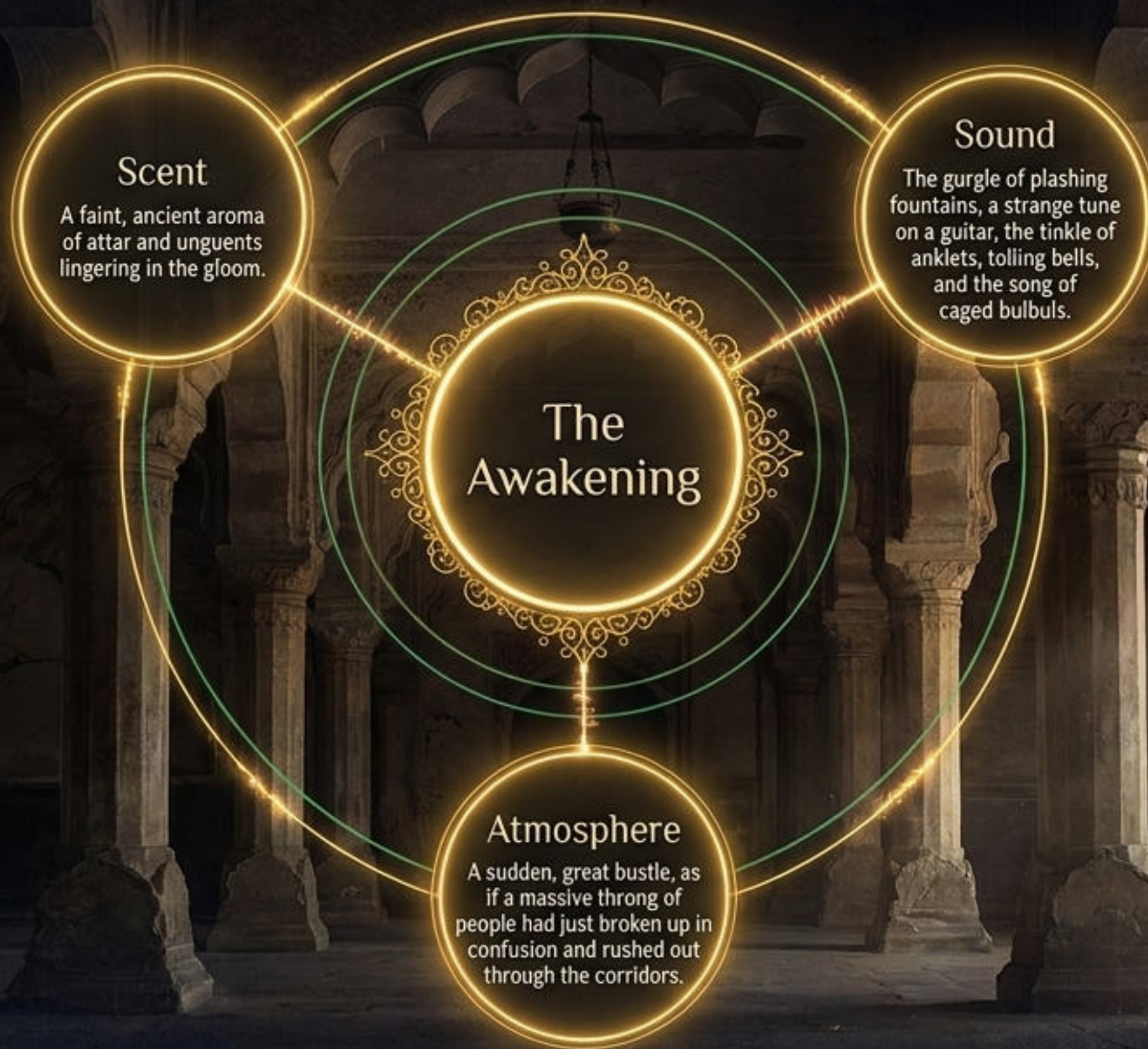
The Phantoms

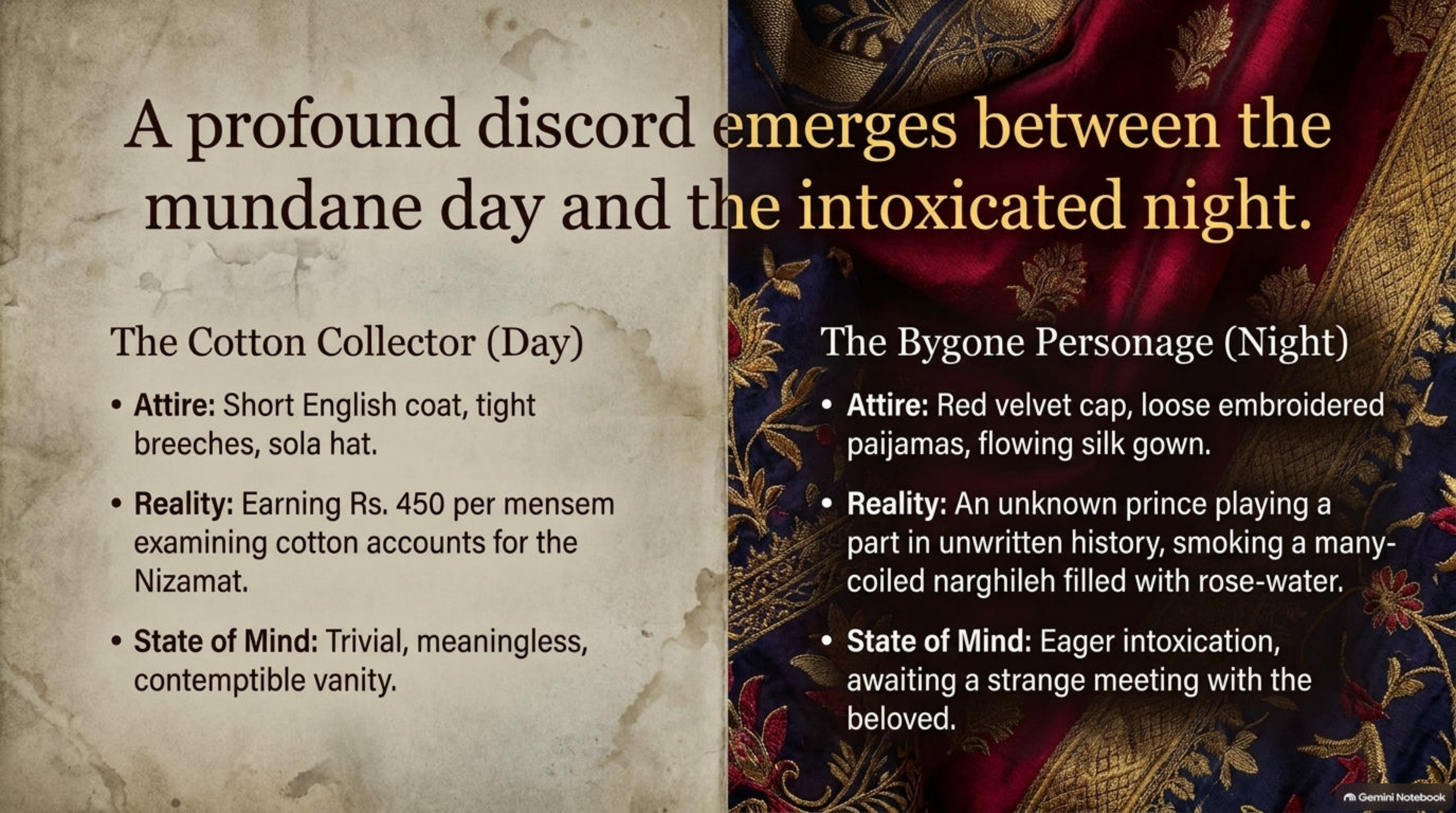
A bevy of joyous maidens, entirely invisible. Gay, mirthful laughter like the gurgle of a spring gushing forth in a hundred cascades.

The Splash

Shallow waters stirred. The splash of arms jingling with bracelets, tossing tiny waves up in showers of pearl.

The groaning, desolate halls echo with an unearthly symphony of the unseen.





A profound discord emerges between the mundane day and the intoxicated night.

The Cotton Collector (Day)

- **Attire:** Short English coat, tight breeches, sola hat.
- **Reality:** Earning Rs. 450 per mensem examining cotton accounts for the Nizamat.
- **State of Mind:** Trivial, meaningless, contemptible vanity.

The Bygone Personage (Night)

- **Attire:** Red velvet cap, loose embroidered pajamas, flowing silk gown.
- **Reality:** An unknown prince playing a part in unwritten history, smoking a many-coiled narghileh filled with rose-water.
- **State of Mind:** Eager intoxication, awaiting a strange meeting with the beloved.

The architecture of the dream leads deep into the slumbering heart of Baghdad.

1. The Guide

A beckoning, invisible Arab girl with marble-smooth arms and a curved dagger.

2. The Corridors

Wending through endless dark alleys, solemn audience-chambers, and close secret celis.

3. The Guard

A terrible negro eunuch with a naked sword, dozing at the foot of a deep blue screen.

4. The Inner Chamber

An orange-velvet Persian carpet, crystal trays of fruit, a gold-tinted decanter, and overpoweringly intoxicating incense.

The phantom reflection reveals a dazzling flash of ecstasy and pain.

1. A swift turn of the neck
and a golden frill falling on
a snowy brow.

3. Intense passion and pain
glowing in large dark eyes.

2. A close-fitting bodice
wrought with gold.

*A dazzling flash of pain and craving and ecstasy, a smile and a glance
and a blaze of jewels and silk, and she melted away.*

From the stony foundations, a tragic apparition pleads for rescue.

*“Oh, rescue me! Break through these doors of hard illusion,
deathlike slumber and fruitless dreams... and take me to the
warm radiance of your sunny rooms above!”*

The Bloody History

Snatched from a desert
mother by a Bedouin.

Sold in the slave-market for
gold to the Badshah's officer.

Swept away by the
blood-stained, dazzling
ocean of grandeur and the
rocks of royal intrigue.

**The crescent moon and
the madman's cry shatter
the Arabian nights.**

The moon looks pale like a weary sleepless patient.
Outside, crazy Meher Ali, who escaped the palace at the
cost of his reason, cries out his daily custom.





**A wild tempest mirrors the violent
grief trapped within the palace.**

The Return

Driven by contrition, the narrator is drawn back to the sullen, dark rooms at twilight.

The Tempest

The sky shivers. A wild blast rushes howling through the distant pathless woods, showing its lightning-teeth like a raving maniac.

The Agony

In the dense gloom, a woman lies on the carpet, tearing her dishevelled hair. Blood trickles down her brow as she bursts into wringing sobs while the rain pours in torrents.

The curse of blasted hopes leaves the stones famished for the living.

The Cause

Countless unrequited passions and lurid flames of wild blazing pleasure raged within the pleasure-dome.



The Curse

The collected heart-aches made every stone thirsty and hungry, eager to swallow up any living man like a famished ogress.



The Cost

No one survives three consecutive nights without losing their life—or, like Meher Ali, losing their reason.

An abrupt departure severs the tale, leaving only a lifelong rupture in its wake.

The Interruption

An English gentleman calls out “Hallo!” to the storyteller from a first-class carriage.

The Severance

The storyteller boards first-class. The protagonist and his kinsman are left in second-class, the end of the of the Persian girl’s history forever lost.

The Skeptic

The narrator declares the man took them for fools, deeming the story a pure fabrication from start start to finish.

The Believer

The theosophist kinsman defends the tale. A lifelong rupture ensues between the two travelers.



The inescapability of the mirage.

Like a bird flying fascinated about the jaws of a snake...

All is false.