

THE NESTLE

Project Overview

Logline

When Sayaka sees Aarav as he, he is he; when she sees him as she, Aarav is she, but if she desires him, she must shed her disguise and become him, to destroy the evil and nestle into one another.

Genre and Tone

The Nestle is a romantic drama with cross-cultural and LGBTQ+ themes. Its tone is emotional, intense, poetic, and socially conscious.

Themes

The film explores gender identity and fluidity, forbidden love across cultures, parental transformation, social prejudice, and the power of ritual and disguise.



Setting

The story begins in Japan and unfolds in Kerala, India, with the village of Kottankulangara as the

emotional and visual heart of the film. The Kottankulangara Festival, where men dress as women to honor the goddess, becomes the symbolic turning point. Aarav's performance during the festival exposes his identity and sets the story's climax in motion.

Character Arcs

Sayaka is a quiet, observant student traveler from Japan who discovers courage through love. Aarav is a reclusive agender youth navigating identity within a conservative household. Krishna, Aarav's father, begins as strict and distant but transforms into a fierce protector. Kamala, Aarav's mother, carries the burden of silence to shield her child. Manu, a local goon, is the antagonist driven by violent obsession. Arvind, a Police Officer, is compassionate and empathetic though initially bound by duty.

Short Synopsis

Sayaka, Kenji, and Albert travel from Kobe to Kerala to research the cultural anthropology of ritual disguise. Sayaka studies the Japanese *Shishi-mai* (Lion Dance), where a male performer becomes a spirit-beast, and is drawn to its parallel in Kerala's Kottankulangara Disguise Festival. In Kochi, they meet Robert, a local cultural archivist.



Through Albert's contacts, the group finds accommodation at the Varier ancestral house, where Sayaka discovers Aarav, a child living outside the gender binary. A profound bond forms between them, offering Aarav the acceptance he has never known. During the village festival, Aarav's stunning, sacred disguise draws the obsessive attention of the goon Manu, triggering violent confrontations.

Faced with this crisis and the threat of deportation for the researchers, Aarav's father Krishna undergoes a radical transformation. He secures a passport for his child and physically defends them, culminating in a final act of release. The story concludes with Aarav and Sayaka embracing in a crowded street, a victory of personal truth over societal rigidity.

The Nestle Vision

This film is about the courage to be seen and the beauty of transformation. Set against the vibrant backdrop of the renowned Kerala's disguise festival, this story merges myth, gender, and emotion into a cinematic experience that is both intimate and epic.

This narrative integrates cultural anthropology, visual arts, and performance to create a bridge between the study of identity and its lived reality.

Target Audience

The Nestle is intended for international film festivals, cinema halls, LGBTQ+ cinema audiences, the South Asian diaspora, and viewers who appreciate cross-cultural and identity-driven dramas.

Production Notes

The film will be in English, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. It is a feature-length narrative set in Kerala, India, with opening scenes in Kobe, Japan. The production is designed for efficiency and authenticity. The concept is fully scaled, and the project is seeking development and production support.

Funding and Budget Logic

For a project of this international scale involving Japanese and Indian stakeholders, the budget must cover international production costs between Kobe and Cochin, specialized sound design, authentic production design for the ancestral home, and technology for cultural archiving sequences.

Writer-Director's Statement

The core of this film is the liberation of the human

spirit from society's binary cages. It explores the "unclassified" spaces of identity through Aarav, a child trapped between rigid discipline and their own reality. The arrival of the researchers exposes this hidden trauma, setting in motion a journey through spectacle and social conflict.

The climax involves two major acts of sacrifice: a father defending his child and an officer risking his career for their freedom.

The final embrace symbolizes the ultimate triumph of love. This project is born from a research-driven vision, aiming to achieve absolute honesty in portraying how human connection can transcend every systemic obstacle.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Voyage

The story begins at the Kobe Port. Sayaka, Kenji, and Albert stand ready to depart. Sayaka and Kenji are cousins; Albert is Irish, an enthusiast in Japanese culture. All study at Tokyo University. Their research focuses on the cultural anthropology of ritual disguise.

Sayaka's key reference is Japan's *Shishi-mai* (Lion Dance), a performance where a male dancer vanishes inside a beast's costume to ward off evil. They travel to Kerala to study the Kottankulangara Disguise Festival.

In Kochi, they are joined by Robert, a British, who is a sharp local cultural archivist, who speaks most of the South Indian languages and Hindi. The four form a complete team: theorist (Sayaka), documentarian (Kenji), culturist (Albert), and linguist cum technologist (Robert). Their sea voyage to the Kerala coast begins.

Arrival

Upon arrival, the festival season makes accommodation scarce. Robert communicates with the Panchayat President, an acquaintance, who persuades Krishna to host the group at the Varier ancestral home.

They arrive without prior notice. Torn fragments of a painting fly through the air, landing at Sayaka's feet. Krishna's loud voice echoes; he stands in a rage. Kamala runs past him while Aarav cries. Aarav

picks up the scattered piece and raises his head to see the visitors.

Kamala greets them with cautious curiosity. The guests share rooms, tensions mirroring the theme of intimacy versus constraint. Sayaka settles into a corner room overlooking a lake.

Aarav moves like a shadow through the house. Krishna, valuing discipline, scolds Aarav for failing to behave "like a proper boy," unaware of the child's agender identity, a truth known only to Kamala.

The Agender Trauma

Years ago, Kamala realized Aarav defies the binary. Fearing marginalization, she buried the truth in silence. Aarav realized his difference in childhood, becoming introverted, finding solace only in painting and folklore songs.

Sayaka reaches out. Their connection deepens under a mango tree. Aarav asks, "Do you know what it means to be nothing?" Sayaka replies, "I know what it means to be unseen." She later tells him, "You don't have to explain. I see you." Kamala overhears and places a hand on Sayaka's shoulder in silent gratitude.

The Disguise Festival



The village transforms. Aarav masquerades, a vision of

striking beauty. Sayaka's love deepens. The crowd swarms. Manu, a feared local goon, becomes obsessed, publicly declaring his love for Aarav. Sayaka intervenes, using her black belt to protect Aarav. Police arrive, but Manu escapes, vowing to return.

Breaking Away

The researchers' visas near expiration. Manu circles the house. Police Circle Inspector Arvind warns Sayaka, a foreigner, not to cause trouble. Later, Arvind witnesses Sayaka skillfully defending herself against Manu's men, and his attitude shifts from duty to admiration. He offers her discreet help.

The Father

Rumours about Aarav spread. Krishna hears them, agitated. At home, he watches from a window as Aarav and Sayaka talk, Aarav laughing freely, a sight he's never seen. At dinner, he tells Kamala, "He's not like the others." She replies, "No. He's not."

The next morning, Krishna acts. He collects Aarav's documents, secures a residence certificate, and with an MLA's help, urgently processes a passport and visa to Japan. He prepares an escape route.

The Departure

The researchers' visas expire. Arvind, under orders, warns them to leave in two hours or face arrest. Kenji and Albert pack to leave. Sayaka resists, breaking from the group and running toward Aarav. Arvind executes his duty, arresting them.

Devastated, Aarav packs. Kamala blocks the gate. In despair, Aarav hits his head against it. Seeing blood, Kamala opens the gate, releasing her child.

The Nestle



Aarav rushes into the street, where Manu and his goons corner him. A chaotic fight erupts. Krishna appears. As Manu attacks, Krishna shields Aarav, pulling a knife to defend his child, an act that stuns the crowd. Police scatter the goons.

Aarav, crying, turns back toward the house. Krishna stops him. For the first time, he embraces his child. "Go. Whatever you are, it's not your fault. You will always be my son." He places the new passport and money in Aarav's bag. "Your life is with her. Run."

Arvind, choosing mercy, arranges the researchers' deportation. En route to the airport, he slows the police van near a crowded bridge. Kenji forces the door open, and Sayaka jumps into the backwaters - an escape that will cost Arvind his career.

Fishermen save Sayaka. On the highway, Aarav runs, staggering and crying. Sayaka runs toward him through halted traffic.



Exhausted, she stumbles and falls directly into his arms. They embrace and kiss in the crowded street, nestled together at last.

Note: This narrative integrates the study of ritual- from Japan's *Shishi-mai* to Kerala's festival and then weaving into a deeply personal story of identity and love, to end in emotional and dramatic climax.

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