

Surabhi

Surabhi also known as Sri Venkateswara Natya Mandalis is Sri Nageswara Rao (Babji's) theatre group from Hyderabad. They are an entire performing family that has been in existence for 125 years. They are experts at rope techniques, pyro techniques and other forms of special effects and have in their repertory more than 30 mythological plays. Surabhi is one of its kind as they make their own props, paint their own backdrops and train their children generation after generation to grow into their magical characters. The Surabhi performing community is a salutation to tradition, art and theatre in their purest forms.



Thotta Ramudu is the son of the gardener of the royal gardens - a handsome, valiant and impulsive youth. He encounters 'thappu-thappu' the queen's stupid, naïve but arrogant brother who uses his authority to ill-treat the poor towns folk in the name of 'tax collection'. Ramudu saves the towns folk and sends the queen's brother and his henchmen running back to the castle.

Whilst enmity brews between the two young men, they both fall prey to princess Indumathi's beauty and profess their love for her. She initially rejects them both. However when the three of them are attacked by a snake in the royal gardens, 'thappu-thappu' abandons her but Ramudu rises to the occasion and saves her life - Young Love blossoms.

Far from the city of our hero, resides the evil sorcerer, Nepala Mantrikudu, whose power lies in his beard. In the quest for ultimate power, he sacrifices his right hand to the demigoddess who appears in front of him and directs him to 'Pathala Bhairavi' - the most powerful goddess whose ancient temple lies in our protagonist's city. In order to obtain ultimate power she advises him to sacrifice a brave, powerful man to the goddess.

Sadajapa, the sorcerer's assistant heals the sorcerer's right hand using the Sanjeevani plant and they begin their journey. Using his magic telescope the sorcerer identifies Ramudu as the best candidate to sacrifice to the goddess. He begins his search.

Indumathi's father, the king, has disturbing premonitions of his Daughter being kidnapped by the sorcerer and asks 'thappu-thappu' to stand guard outside her quarters. Ramudu, who comes to visit the princess in the night, is caught and arrested, and the king orders his hanging. The princess then explains to the king her love for Ramudu, begging the king to release him. He releases Ramudu promising his daughter's hand in marriage if Ramudu is able to accumulate wealth equal to his own.

Mantrikudu comes into town and wows the people by granting them anything they wish for out of an enchanted box. Ramudu steals this box in order to get wealth from it, but is unable to obtain any wealth from the box. The sorcerer catches him and explains that it's the magic in his beard that fuels the box. He convinces Ramudu that he can have anything he likes if only he asks goddess 'Pathala Bhairavi', whose lair is somewhere near the town.

Thus they both begin their long, arduous journey in search of the lair. When they finally find it, Ramudu proves his prowess by using his courage and strength to cross the number of obstacles they face as they enter the lair. Once inside the lair, the sorcerer prepares for the rituals while Ramudu goes to bathe himself in an underground lake. He is attacked by a crocodile. He battles and defeats it, and it transforms into an oracle who thanks him for releasing her from a curse. In gratitude she reveals to Ramudu the sorcerer's plans of the sacrifice. The oracle also gives him ideas of how he can defeat the sorcerer and get all the wealth he desires.

Enlightened, Ramudu turns the tables on the sorcerer at the sacrificial chamber. He beheads the sorcerer and goddess 'Pathala Bhairavi', pleased with his sacrifice, grants him an enchanted idol that can be used to summon her to have any wish granted.

He requests for riches to match the kings', returning to the city a rich man, with a luxuriant palace, plush clothes and treasures worth a mighty fortune. He asks for the princess' hand in marriage, the king agrees and the wedding is fixed.

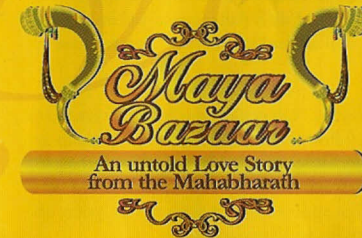
Sadajapa, the apprentice, is shocked to find Ramudu alive and decides to go in search of his master. He finds the lair and brings the sorcerer back to life using the Sanjeevani plant. The sorcerer returns to the city, looking for revenge and meets the queen's brother who is about to hang himself. With the queen's brother's help, he steals the enchanted idol and uses it to steal all of Ramudu's wealth, kidnap the princess and take them away by transporting Ramudu's entire palace back to his lair.

Ramudu, shocked to find himself poor again and Indumathi missing, learns of what happened from the queen's brother. He sets off in search of the sorcerer with his cousin Anji. Meanwhile the sorcerer is trying to woo the princess into marrying him. The sorcerer magically learns of Ramudu's plans, and uses the idol to transport him to the palace, tied and gagged, and tortures him.

Anji, surprised to find his cousin suddenly missing, roams the forests in search of him. He encounters two demons in possession of an invisibility cloak and magic slippers, that can instantly transport the wearer to a location of their choice. He tricks the demons, steals the items and uses them to sneak into the palace and frees Ramudu.

They then knock Sadajapa out and free the princess, allowing her to escape using the slippers and the cloak. Anji, dressed as Sadajapa, convinces the sorcerer to shave his beard in order to make himself more appealing to the princess. Mantrikudu, reassured by the fact that the idol can grant him all wishes, shaves off his beard and enters the princess' chambers where Ramudu sits waiting for him dressed like the princess.

Just as all is about to go according to plan, Sadajapa wakes up and comes and warns the sorcerer about what's going on. In the confusion that follows, Ramudu knocks the idol out of the sorcerer's hands and duels with the sorcerer whilst Anji duels Sadajapa. The sorcerer and his apprentice are destroyed, and they use the idol to transport the palace back to its rightful place. All ends happily as the queen's brother repents his ways and Ramudu and Indumathi are married to each other.



List of Characters:

Balarama: Lord Krishna's elder brother
Subhadra: Lord Krishna & Balarama's sister. Married to Arjuna.
Abhimanyu: Arjuna and Subhadra's son.
Sasirekha: Balarama's daughter
Laxmanakumaran: Duryodhana's son.
Hidimbi: A Rakshasi or Demoness who is also the wife of Bheema.
Ghatotkacha: Bheema and Hidimbi's son.
Revantaka: Balarama's brother-in-law.

Synopsis:

The great sage Narada is well known for meddling in people's affairs and whenever he does, things always work out for the best in the end.

The story begins with Narada reciting his plan to create mischief in the life of Balarama's daughter, since Balarama, while in an inebriated state, had abused him.

Abhimanyu and Sasirekha have been engaged to be married from a very young age. However, when they are both old enough to be married, the Pandavas are sent on exile after losing their kingdom and all their wealth to Duryodhana, in a game of dice. Narada plants the thought into the mind of Balarama's wife of Sasirekha marrying Laxmanakumaran instead, since Abhimanyu has no wealth or kingdom anymore.

Balarama's wife's already greedy nature gets fueled by Narada's idea. She convinces Balarama to change his mind and break the engagement. Abhimanyu and Sasirekha, the childhood sweethearts, are shocked by Balarama's decision. An enraged Abhimanyu is unable to do anything as he is bound by his respect for his uncle Balarama.

Lord Krishna, who is also against his brother's unwise decision, advises Subhadra and Abhimanyu to go into the forest in search of the Pandavas. They set out on the journey into the forest together.

Hidimbi (the Rakshasi) and her son Ghatotkatcha, rule over the forest. When they hear news of the pandavas exile and the circumstances surrounding it, they are enraged and Ghatotkatcha vows to set things right.

Meanwhile in the forest, Ghatotkatcha notices a youth and a lady entering their forest without their permission and sends his henchmen to apprehend them, not knowing that they are none other than Abhimanyu and Subhadra. Abhimayu, being Arjuna's son and well trained in all arts of warfare, easily defeats the henchmen.

Surprised by the young lad's prowess, Ghatotkatcha himself goes to apprehend the youth. A fierce duel follows that rocks heavens and earth as they are both equally matched. Finally Ghatotkatcha draws upon his trusted 'Ghadayudham' and Abhimayu's defensive techniques fail against it. He falls down struck by the weapon. Subhadra, angered by her son's defeat, picks up the bow and arrows herself in order to defend themselves.

She proudly declares herself wife of Arjuna the greatest archer in the world, and prepares to attack. Ghatotkatcha, on hearing this, realizes who he is fighting and immediately falls at her feet seeking her blessings and forgiveness. He introduces himself and the cousins are happily united.

Ghatotkatcha takes them back to his demon lair. Hidimbi, meets Subhadra and Abhimanyu, and is delighted to have them visit. On her command, Ghatotkatcha magically transforms his lair into a palace to entertain the guests. They then discuss their plans to right the wrongs, and to unite Abhimanyu and Sasirekha.

Meanwhile, the comic Revantaka, Balarama's brother-in-law, warns him of his mistakes. But Balarama takes it lightly and heeds nothing of what Revantaka says, banishing him a fool.

On Hidimbi's instructions, Ghatotkatcha teleports himself to Dwaraka to meet Lord Krishna and seek his advice. Lord Krishna reveals his plan to Ghatotkatcha, instructing him to execute it. So Ghatotkatcha takes Sasirekha back to his lair where she is reunited with Abhimanyu and Subhadra. Ghatotkatcha then returns to Dwaraka and transforms himself to look like Sasirekha and takes her place.

He also creates a magical market, 'Maya Bazaar,' to welcome the Kauravas and their entire party to Dwaraka. The market is manned by his trusted henchmen, who disguise themselves as amicable hosts. The entire Kaurava party is very impressed by the festivities, they are handed gifts of fruits and vegetables, exotic mattresses and exquisite silks.

The fun begins post the wedding of Laxmanakumaran and Ghatotkatcha. The gifts turn out to be enchanted, as the mattresses begin to fly, slippers begin to attack the wearers and all the magic of the 'Maya Bazaar' is unleashed on the Kaurava party.

Laxmanakumaran pleads with father Duryodhana and grandfather Shakuni, that something is amiss with his bride and that he is scared of her. They laugh and cajole the boy into his bedchambers, to spend his first night with his newly wed wife. Alone in private with Sasirekha, his fears materialize. Finally, Ghatotkatcha reveals himself and Laxmanakumaran realizes that he is in fact married to a Rakshas.

He runs out screaming, along with all of the Kaurava party as they flee back to Hastinapur. Balarama realizes his folly and comes to know of Krishna's plan and Ghatotkatcha's doing. Ghatotkatcha takes him and the rest of his party back to his lair, where they are all reunited with Sasirekha and Abhimayu.

They give their blessings to the newly weds and all of Narada's meddling ends right thanks to Hidimbi, Krishna and Ghatotkatcha.

Evam

Evam Entertainment is very happy to have had the opportunity to present Surabhi. We chanced upon them in Bangalore and since then were more than eager to share them with our dear audiences.

To learn more about evam please check out www.evam.in.

To keep in touch with us, get on to our mailing list and know about our future shows, mail us at teamevam@gmail.com.

If you'd like to bring entertainment to your workspace or help evam entertain the world mail us at mailevam@gmail.com.

Updates on evam at evamblog.wordpress.com and do keep in touch with us on **ORKUT** and **FACEBOOK**.

Any more information just give us a call at **9840612333** or **9940438669**.

Magic & Mythology on stage



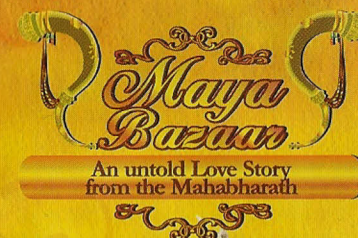
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