



THE  
COLOURIST

A fable about finding your path

VIBHAV

# **THE COLOURIST**

- A FABLE

## 1.

In the heart of an ancient Mayan city, nestled deep within the embrace of the rainforest, lived a young boy named Kulkan. The city, known as "Xelajún," was a place where narrations and nature entwined, and the tales of the past were whispered by the leaves of towering ceiba trees.

Kulkan was unlike any other child in Xelajún, for he perceived the world through a unique lens—a world devoid of the vibrant shades of colours. Instead, his world was painted in perpetual shades of gray.

He was a boy of delicate features. His skin, kissed by the dappled sunlight that filtered through the towering ceiba trees, had a fair, almost ethereal, quality. His raven-black hair framed his face, often tousled from his frequent explorations in the jungle. But it was his eyes that held the most remarkable, and in some ways, the most melancholic quality. They were the colour of polished onyx, deep and inscrutable, as if they held the secrets of the Mayan cosmos.

Every morning, Kulkan would wake to a world that offered no distinction between day and night. He couldn't discern the golden glow of the sun from the silvery shimmer of the moon. His world was one of

eternal twilight, where shadows played the role of colour, and light and dark were the only paints on his life's canvas.

Kukulan's days were a symphony of challenges. While his peers revelled in the hues of the market, the vibrant patterns of textiles, and the ripe, colourful fruits, Kukulan could only witness these in their greyscale glory. He longed to understand the beauty that others found so effortlessly in the world.

His mother, a woman with a temperament that seemed to hold the wisdom of the rainforest itself, tried her best to support him. She was a graceful presence in their small house, always attuned to the rhythms of nature. She watched him as he sat under the thatched roof, charcoal stick in hand, attempting to capture the world as he saw it. Each stroke on the paper was a labour of love, a desperate attempt to bring life to the monochromatic world that enveloped him. But Kukulan often felt a profound sadness wash over him as he sketched. He knew that his art could never truly capture the vividness of the world as others knew it.

His father, a seasoned fisherman named Malzar, who ventured into the depths of the cenotes, where the waters held secrets as deep as the ocean itself, harboured his own concerns. He had always dreamt of taking his son beneath the surface, teaching him the

ways of the underwater world, and sharing the stories of the sea with him. But he hesitated, knowing that Kukulan's condition made it impossible for him to appreciate the colours of the coral reefs and the myriad creatures that dwelled there. It was a sorrowful realization for both father and son, a shared dream forever out of reach.

In the midst of Kukulan's gray existence, his cousin Tepal was a constant presence. Tepal was the very embodiment of the Mayan spirit, with skin bronzed by the sun and eyes that sparkled like polished obsidian. He was quick to tease Kukulan, often saying, "Kukulan, my dear cousin, you live in a world of shadows. How can you appreciate the brilliance of a scarlet macaw in flight or the vivid dance of the quetzal's plumage?"

Tepal's words stung, and yet, Kukulan couldn't fault him. He, too, wondered what it was like to witness the world through the eyes of others. The vibrant descriptions of the Mayan market, the lush green of the jungle, and the iridescence of tropical birds were like distant dreams to him.

And so, each day, Kukulan's heart carried a quiet yearning, a yearning to bridge the gap between his greyscale world and the world of colours that surrounded him. He dreamt of a way to understand the

world, not just as he saw it but as others did, with all its hues and shades, its brilliance and subtleties.

In Xelajún, where the vestiges of bygone eras resonated through every stone, life carried on. Kukulan's small family, including his mother, father, and a curious little sister named Taali, lived in sync with the jungle that surrounded them. Taali, with her innocent eyes and a smile as radiant as the sun, was a source of endless joy for Kukulan. She had recently reached the age of curiosity, a time when every discovery was a cause for wonder.

One day, Taali approached Kukulan while he was sketching beneath the ceiba tree. Her hair, like spun obsidian, cascaded down her back, shimmering with a recent transformation. Their mother had dyed Taali's hair in bright hues of red and gold, creating a breathtaking contrast to her natural ebony locks.

Taali tugged at Kukulan's sleeve, her eyes wide with anticipation. "Kukulan," she chirped, "look at my hair! Mama says it's as beautiful as the feathers of the quetzal. Can you tell the difference?"

Kukulan gazed at his sister's hair, the vibrant colours a stark contrast to the greyscale world he knew. He hesitated for a moment, and then shook his head gently. "Taali," he began, "I see your hair, and it is lovely, but I can't truly see the colours like others can."

Their mother, who had been watching from a short distance away, approached with a warm smile. She knelt beside Kukulan and Taali and spoke in her gentle, soothing voice. "Kukulan," she said, her hand resting on his shoulder, "colours are not meant to be seen, my son; they are meant to be felt" she completed, touching his heart with her gentle fingers.

Kukulan's heart swelled with gratitude for his mother's understanding and support. He may not see the world in colours, but he understood that there was a deeper truth he could uncover—a truth that went beyond the surface and delved into the very heart of existence.

As a child, Kukulan often ventured into the rainforest surrounding their home. While other children marvelled at the vibrant plumage of birds or the kaleidoscope of flowers, he revelled in the textures of leaves and the rustling symphony of unseen creatures. His fingers became his eyes, dancing over the intricate patterns of leaves and bark, deciphering the world's secrets.

The rainforest, with its lush tapestry of green, was a sanctuary for Kukulan. He would lose himself amidst the towering trees, where dappled sunlight filtered through the dense canopy, casting playful patterns on the forest floor. Each leaf, each tree trunk, held a unique texture, a story waiting to be told through his sensitive fingertips.

He would often sit beside the river, where the gentle flow of water caressed the stones. The river, a constant companion, whispered its secrets to him. He learned to discern the subtle changes in its voice, the ripples that spoke of passing fish, and the murmurs that hinted at the secrets of the deep.

One of his favourite pastimes was visiting the riverbanks with his father, Malzar. As his father cast his net into the shimmering waters, Kukulan felt the vibrations in the air, sensing the telltale signs of approaching fish. With a swift motion, he would signal to his father, guiding him to a bountiful catch. Malzar marvelled at his son's uncanny ability to perceive the underwater world without relying on sight.

Their fishing expeditions became a dance of silent communication, a shared bond that transcended the need for words. Kukulan's understanding of the river's moods and rhythms allowed him to guide his father to the most fruitful spots, ensuring their family had an abundant catch.

Yet, it wasn't only in the natural world that Kukulan found solace and purpose. His colour-blindness often led to comical mishaps, moments that brought both laughter and life lessons.



Once, during a festive celebration in Xelajún, he mistakenly adorned himself in mismatched clothing, unaware of the glaring colours that clashed before the eyes of the villagers. They chuckled, finding his fashion sense endearing, and Kukulan joined in their laughter, appreciating the humour in his own unique way.

He would recount these moments to his family with a playful grin, adding his own humorous commentary to the situations. It was his way of showing that he could find joy even in the midst of his challenges.

Yet, there were moments when Kukulan's condition posed genuine challenges. On a sombre occasion, he was tasked with selecting the vibrant flowers for a family member's funeral. Unbeknownst to him, he chose a bouquet of withered blossoms, unable to discern their true colours. It was a painful reminder of the limitations his condition imposed on him, and he vowed to learn from such experiences.

Kukulan's parents came to know about his colour-blindness when they brought him to school. As the children would start speaking and walking, the only two conditions to enter the school they would be brought in formal education of counting, hunting, swimming. These were the basic levels. The advanced classes that came after puberty were medicine-making, architecture, concepts of buying and selling.

On the first day, to assess the children's basic understanding, the teacher asked the students to guess the resultant colours when two colours were mixed. When the turn came to Kukulan, he answered "black" with all his honesty, as everyone clapped, including the teacher herself, thinking he was jesting. She had mixed blue and orange.

However, when she mixed red and blue, instead of saying "purple," he again said "black," and finally, when she once more mixed yellow and blue, he said "black" instead of "green." All the kids laughed, including his cousin Tepal, who he had gifted a sharp tooth he found near the beach as a birthday present. Adorned in a necklace, it was a magnet of attention.

Tepal then came up to him, grinning mischievously, "Kukulan, what colour is this flower?" he asked, holding up a vivid crimson bloom.

Kukulan hesitated, his fingers caressing the petals, searching for a clue. "Um, it's... black?" he ventured, uncertain.

The children burst into laughter, not realizing the struggle that Kukulan faced in distinguishing the colours they took for granted. To them, it was a simple game, a moment of innocent mirth. They thought Kukulan was

jesting, joining in the laughter without understanding the genuine challenge he faced.

That's when his mother, who had accompanied him to school, comprehended why he often confused between mud, salt, and sugar; to him everything looked the same. She genuinely thought her young boy was a mischievous one. And how other's were wrong saying he would develop the ability to see ghosts of our ancestors as due to his grey eyes, perhaps it was colourless as due to his inefficiency to witness colours.

In the midst of Xelajún's vibrant colours, Kukulan found solace in the company of animals and the wisdom of the jungle. He observed how creatures, from the stealthy jaguar to the iridescent tree frogs, navigated their world with senses beyond sight. In the stillness of the forest, he heard the whispered stories of the trees and the laughter of the river. It was as if nature itself had become his mentor, teaching him the art of observation.

Under the towering ceiba trees, where the veil between the earthly and the mystical was thinnest, Kukulan felt a profound connection to the ancient spirits of Xelajún. He would sit in silence, his fingers tracing the patterns on the tree's massive roots, and commune with the unseen world. In these moments, he would ask why he wasn't like everyone else.

“Perhaps he likes black colour” a little girl who possessed wavy hair resembling the sea's gentle ripples upon the shore said, “I also want everything to be violet, because that’s my favourite colour” she smiled warmly. Kukulan wiped his watery eyes to get a clear glimpse of the girl.

She wore a huipil, whose fabric was adorned with intricate patterns that told the story of her village and family. The vibrant colours of her blouse seemed to capture the essence of the Mayan landscape, from the lush green of the jungle to the rich earthy tones of the soil. A colourful corte swayed gracefully as she moved, and a woven sash cinched her waist. Sandals, made with care from local materials, protected her feet as she navigated the terrain of their ancient city. A bright headband, the colours reflecting the spirit of the sun, held back her hair as it cascaded like a waterfall, mirroring the grace and beauty of the natural world around her.

Was she even real? Kukulan thought.

## 2.

In the modest classroom of the Mayan school in Xelajún, where young minds embarked on their quest for knowledge, Kukulan often found himself in a maze of numbers and scientific puzzles that left him bewildered. Mathematics and science appeared like distant constellations, their complexities forever beyond his grasp. However, when it came to art, to the enchantment of charcoal and paper, he felt an entirely different kind of attraction.

Kukulan's approach to art was unique, to say the least. While his classmates carefully selected vibrant pigments to bring their visions to life, Kukulan remained devoted to the simplicity of charcoal. He believed that even without the brilliance of colours, the world could still be captured through the delicate interplay of light and shadow. His fingers moved with a natural grace, creating captivating monochrome portraits that held a depth and soul that left his classmates and even his art teacher astounded.

Yet, when it came to painting with colours, Kukulan's world transformed into a comical carnival of blunders. His greyscale vision played tricks on him, making it nearly impossible to decipher colours accurately. This led to whimsical and often humorous outcomes. Once, in an

attempt to paint a lush green jungle, he ended up with a forest of fiery red trees. His interpretation of a tranquil blue lake resulted in what could only be described as a field of pink marshmallows. Laughter frequently erupted in the classroom at his artistic mishaps, and Kukulan would also join in the humour, embracing his colourful failures to avoid being bullied or made fun of.

One memorable day in the classroom, Kukulan's art teacher, a wise and patient woman, delved into the rich artistic legacy of the Mayan people. She spoke of the intricate designs adorning Mayan textiles, the captivating patterns embellishing their pottery, and, above all, the enigmatic beauty of Mayan murals and paintings.

With a glimmer of excitement in her eyes, the teacher shared a captivating legend from Mayan mythology, a tale that would ignite a fervent passion within Kukulan's heart. It was the story of the greatest Mayan artist who had ventured to seek the guidance of the gods of colours themselves to master the art of painting. And with such blessing he could paint a new reality.

"In the beginning of our Mayan world," she began, her tone measured yet filled with an undeniable enthusiasm for the subject matter, "where time unfolded in the intricate patterns of celestial bodies and earthly wonders, there reigned a monarch whose name

reverberated through time — CHAKAL AHAU. Mayan civilization reached its zenith during his rule. It was a time when kings and gods walked hand in hand, shaping the destiny of their people." As the history teacher delved into the lore, her voice deepened with the weight of centuries-old tales. Children leaned in as her scholarly demeanor commanded respect; her eyes twinkled with the passion of a dedicated educator eager to impart knowledge.

"His kingdom was draped in a mystical twilight, witnessing the intricate dance of the sun and the moon, forever locked in an eternal embrace. And amidst the splendour of Chakal Ahau's reign, there existed a figure shrouded in mystery and legend—a blind messenger known as Ahmek, known for always finding a pathway to unknown lands. Ahmek, at the King's request, embarked on a journey into the heart of the kingdom's mysteries. Guided by an invisible cosmic thread, he traversed a path that led him through the heart of the mystical forest—a realm where the boundaries between reality and the ethereal blurred into nothingness."She spoke with such conviction, as if every word she uttered was imbued with her unwavering belief.

"Amidst those groves," the teacher elaborated, "beside the gentle murmur of streams, Ahmek stumbled upon a relic of otherworldly craftsmanship. Forged, they say, from the very essence of lunelight and the dreams of

constellations, the artifact resonated with his very soul. Empowered by this mystical force, Ahmek ventured through an intangible opening way to a temple that existed beyond the perception of ordinary mortals—a sanctuary where the lines between the divine and the earthly wavered."

"In the presence of KUKULKANIL, the God of Eternal Colours," her voice tinged with respect for the divine beings that once graced the Mayan pantheon, "Ahmek received special eyes. These eyes seemed to know everything, like they held the secrets of the whole universe - the past, the present, and the future. With these eyes, Ahmek could see the cosmic energy that held everything together in the world. Guided by the god, he became an artist, tasked with painting a world free from the darkness of the eclipse that had covered our land. So, he poured the very essence of the universe into his paintings.

Guided by KUKULKANIL, Ahmek became a disciple of the cosmos, unravelling the symphony of colours that permeated every facet of existence. Each stroke of his brush became a bridge between the mundane and the miraculous, weaving together forgotten sunrises, the laughter of hidden meadows, and the tears of thunderstorms. With his art, he harnessed the essence of the universe, revealing the splendour that danced in the heart of all things.



"As his masterpiece got completed," the teacher continued, "Ahmek's painting started to come alive. It showed a new reality filled with colours, telling a story of a world being born again. His painting was like a mirror, showing the beauty of dawn, the calmness of twilight, and all the feelings that make up human life.

With the confidence of the strokes of his paintbrush, Ahmek's masterpiece worked like magic. The eclipse that had covered the kingdom vanished, revealing a beautiful sky of blue, touched by the golden light of dawn. People started to wake up from their fears, as if they had been sleeping for ages and were finally opening their eyes to a new day.

Ahmek, the traveller who had journeyed through realms both seen and unseen, presented his opus to King Chakal Ahau. Tears glistened in the monarch's eyes, tears that held the reflection of a world reborn, a universe resurrected from the abyss of darkness. To honour Ahmek's extraordinary odyssey, Chakal Ahau bestowed upon him the title of the "IJUN" signifying "The Greatest Creator of Art."

Tepal, Kukulan's mischievous cousin, couldn't resist a jab. "This story makes me chuckle," he teased. "Seems like Kukulan, your name, was inspired by the god KUKULKANIL's name. But sadly, the god could see all the

colours, and you can't. I hope your parents haven't played a prank on you by naming you after him."

Tepal's jest was followed by laughter, but Kukulan didn't respond immediately. He was awestruck by the fact that he was named after a god. After getting no reaction from Kukulan, Tepal reached into his bag and offered some grapes. Kukulan eagerly picked one up and took a bite, only to discover that they were sour berries. Grapes and berries, to his colour-confused eyes, appeared identical. It was a realization that he had only known in theory.

The sour berry had an unexpected effect on Kukulan. Unknown to him and his family, he had a severe allergy to berries. As he bit into the tart fruit, his body reacted swiftly, but he was oblivious to the impending danger.

Within moments, Kukulan felt his throat tightening, and his vision blurred. Panic began to set in, but he couldn't articulate his distress. His hands trembled as he desperately tried to breathe, but the constriction in his airways intensified.

The classroom, which had moments ago been filled with laughter, transformed into a scene of chaos. His classmates and teacher, initially unaware of the severity of the situation, now watched in alarm as Kukulan's face turned pale, and beads of sweat formed on his forehead.

It was in this dire moment that Ahva, a fellow student, sprang into action. Ahva was a remarkable girl, known not only for her radiant wavy hair that resembled the emerging sea on the shore but also for her compassionate nature and liking to the shades of violet. She had always been the one to rescue Kukulan from the countless embarrassments he faced due to his colour-blindness. Her friendship was like a steady anchor in the stormy sea of his challenges, and she had a knack for understanding his predicaments even when he couldn't express them.

When she saw Kukulan in distress, Ahva didn't hesitate. With a quick motion, she alerted their teacher and rushed to Kukulan's side. Her hands moved deftly, feeling his pulse and assessing the situation. The classroom buzzed with concern as their teacher instructed another student to fetch the school nurse.

Kukulan's world was fading to black as he struggled to breathe, but Ahva's presence was a ray of hope in the darkness. She whispered soothing words to him, urging him to remain calm. Her touch was gentle yet firm, as if she possessed an innate understanding of how to navigate this crisis.

As Kukulan's world faded into unconsciousness, he embarked on a journey unlike any he had ever experienced. In the depths of his unconscious mind, he

found himself standing at the edge of the jungle that surrounded his home in Xelajún. But this was no ordinary jungle; it was a place where the boundaries between the physical and the metaphysical blurred into a realm of dreams.

The air was thick with the heady scent of exotic blooms, and the sounds of unseen creatures filled the atmosphere. The vibrant jungle unfolded before him, and for the first time, Kukulan could perceive it in a way he had never imagined.

The trees, which had always appeared as shades of gray, were now adorned with emeralds of colours. Their leaves shimmered in countless shades of green, each one distinct and unique. The bark of the trees bore patterns that seemed to pulsate with life, and the very essence of the jungle appeared to sing with an ethereal harmony.

As Kukulan ventured deeper into this surreal jungle, he realized that he was not alone. A figure, radiant and otherworldly, stood before him. It was a being that seemed to be composed of pure, living colour—a manifestation of the hues that had eluded Kukulan his entire life.

The figure extended its hand to Kukulan, and as their fingers touched, an explosion of colour enveloped him. It was as if he had entered a realm where every emotion,

every sensation, and every thought was expressed through a symphony of colours.

Kukulan gazed in awe at this mesmerizing landscape. The sky above him was a canvas of blues, from the softest cerulean to the deepest sapphire. The sun, a radiant orb of golden light, cast its warm embrace upon the world. The jungle around him was a riot of colours, from the fiery reds of tropical flowers to the cool, soothing indigos of the river that meandered through the forest.

As he walked beside the river, Kukulan saw something he had never witnessed before—a rainbow arching across the sky. But this was no ordinary rainbow; it was a living, breathing entity, a bridge of colours that connected the heavens to the earth. Each colour in the spectrum pulsed with its own energy, and Kukulan could feel the emotions associated with them—joy, love, hope, and bliss.

The sensation of colour was not limited to his sight alone. Kukulan could hear the colours as they whispered in the wind, sang in the rustling leaves, and danced in the babbling of the river. It was as if the entire world had become a chorus of hues, each note a vibrant expression of life.

As he continued to explore this surreal realm, Kukulan realized that he was not merely observing the colours; he was becoming a part of them. He could feel the colours coursing through his veins, as if they were the very essence of his being. It was a sensation of profound unity with the world, a sense of oneness that transcended the limitations of his greyscale existence.

Amid this immersive experience of colour, the radiant figure that had guided him spoke. Its voice was like a melodious song, a harmony of sounds that resonated with the colours around them. "Kukulan," it said, "you have entered the realm of the Colours. Here, you are no longer bound by the limitations of your condition. You are free to explore the world in all its vibrant glory."

Kukulan could only nod in wonder, unable to find words to express the depth of his emotions. He had spent his entire life yearning to see the world as others did, and now, in this ethereal realm, his deepest desire had been fulfilled.

The figure led him to the middle of the jungle, where a magnificent tree stood. Its trunk was a mosaic of colours, and its branches reached toward the heavens, each one a different shade. Beneath the tree was an ornate easel, holding a blank canvas that seemed to shimmer with possibility.

"Kukulan," the figure said, "it is time for you to create your masterpiece."

With trembling hands, Kukulan picked up a charcoal stick that lay nearby. As he began to sketch, he realized that he was not merely drawing on the canvas; he was painting with the colours of his soul. Every stroke of the charcoal created a burst of vibrant dyes, and with each movement, he expressed the emotions that swelled within him.

He painted the jungle, the river, the rainbow, and the figure before him, each one infused with a depth of colour that defied description. It was a painting that transcended the boundaries of art and became a profound meditation on the beauty of existence.

As he completed his work piece, Kukulan felt a sense of fulfilment and contentment that he had never known. He had not only seen the colours of the world but had become one with them, expressing the beauty of life in its purest form.

The figure smiled, its colours shifting and swirling like a living aurora. "Kukulan, you have discovered the true essence of colour," it said. "Remember this experience, for it is a gift that you carry with you, even in your greyscale world. You are not defined by what you cannot see; you are defined by the vibrant spirit within you."

With those words, Kukulan felt himself returning to consciousness. The surreal realm of colours gradually fading, everything became black and white again, but the memory of his sensation will be etched in his heart he knew. As he opened his eyes, he saw the colours evaporating out from Ahva's face.

Everyone was staring at him, he immediately sat. Ahva smiled at him, her eyes filled with genuine concern. "You scared us all," she said softly, her voice like a soothing melody. "But you're going to be okay now."

As the nurse arrived, Ahva explained Kukulan's allergy and the situation at hand. With swift action, they administered the necessary treatment, and Kukulan's breathing began to ease. Flush slowly returned to his face, and he felt the warmth of life coursing through him once more.

As he sat there, regaining his strength, Kukulan couldn't help but marvel at Ahva's unwavering support. She had, once again, come to his rescue in a moment of dire need. Her kindness and intuition had saved him from what could have been a tragic outcome.

As the school day continued, Kukulan's colour vision returned to its greyscale normalcy. He couldn't see the colours of the classroom walls, the sand clock, the indoor plants, or the shades of clothing of his



classmates, but he could feel the warmth of Ahva's friendship, a connection that outstripped the limitations of his condition.