

PALA

WRITTEN BY:
Vindhya Buthpitiya
Theena Kumaragurunathan

NOTES:
Final Script, 2023/01/20

COPYRIGHT:
Vindhya Buthpitiya & Theena
Kumaragurunathan, 2023

BLACK SCREEN:

SHAMAN (VO):
*I say, Ayubowan, Ayubowan. It's
 after a long time we walk in a paddy
 field such as this.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A DARK FOREST - NIGHT

PALA'S MOM (VO):
 When he and the other children were
 little, father wove baskets. He'd
 weave baskets using a bottle lamp.
 He'd tell us to go and sleep around
 10 after weaving. He sleeps on the
 bed. We sleep, with the children, on
 the floor on woven mats. These mats
 would be laid out with pillows. I
 picked up the kids one by one and
 laid them down, but when I looked
 for him he wasn't there. I looked
 everywhere in the house, called out
 for him but nothing.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT.

A MAN, BACK TURNED TO THE CAMERA, IS WAVING HIS REED TORCH
 IN SLOW MOTION WHILE WALKING DEEPER INTO THE PITCH BLACK
 OF THE FOREST.

PALA'S MOM (VO):
 Now what to do? So we lit coconut
 leaf branches through in order to
 illuminate the dark house. Stil
 nothing. Then we took petrol
 lanterns and was ready to go
 searching outside the house. When I
 went to light the petrol lamps at
 the stove, I found him crouched like
 this. Just sitting. No word. I tried
 talking to him but no reply. I then
 splashed some water on his face,
 held him close and that's when he
 started talking. We asked him,
 'What's wrong?' And he said,
 'Someone came with me, told me to
 sit here and went away.' That is
 what happened.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A POTHUPITIYA PIECE - DAY.

THIS PAINTING HAS A MAP OF SOUTHERN SRI LANKA LAYERED WITH
 SYMBOLS OF LIONS.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

MEDERIPITIYA

SHAMAN (VO):

*The poems we sang then, we sing
today to help this lady who is
unwell. We do so in order to dispel
her illness, weakness and the
darkness afflicting her.*

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN:

@PALA (VO):

These rituals happen because of the fear of demons, and the fear of demons happens in the night, in the dark. But once we got electricity in the area, when lightbulbs appeared in our homes, the fear of the dark gradually disappeared.

FADE TO:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT OF A HOUSE IN THE JUNGLE - DAY

@PALA (VO):

It's my father's mother's younger brother that was the master of this low country dancing tradition. I was very connected to that uncle - not my father's father, not my grandfather but my father's uncle. He was another grandfather-like figure to me.