

**PALA**

WRITTEN BY:  
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NOTES:  
Final Script, 2023/01/20  
The film is in Sinhala, but this  
script is a rough English  
translation based on the subtitling  
work carried out by Dilina  
Pathirage.

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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.