

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Velutha Rathrikal (*White Nights*) is an independent cinematic adaptation of the eponymous novel by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Manu is an artist in search of a new sky, from his troubled past, in a forest settlement. He meets Chelly, a tribal girl from a nearby settlement who bears the burnt from her own share of life. As she awaits the return of her beloved friend Jyothi, Manu gets closer to her. Despite their diverse upbringings, Manu and Chelly strike a serene and beautiful chord with each other. Their brief but intense encounter during the five nights makes the plot of the film set against the deep woods of *Attappadi* and surroundings.

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Chelly is awaiting the return of her beloved friend Jyothi who promised to be back with her exactly a year after since they met last. Chelly comes to the bridge on a night expecting her return and meets Manu. Their accidental meeting blossoms into a beautiful relationship. Manu, who himself admits being a romantic, shy and dilemmatic chap, narrates his story that led him to take a retreat in the forest. He was estranged from his dear friend through a series of mishaps during their post-graduation days in Baroda, Gujarat. Unable to come into terms with the separation from her, Manu is finding himself engrossed in his painting process, exploring the nature and meeting her inhabitants there. The bond with Chelly gets closer by each night as she comes at the bridge expecting Jyothi's return. Irrespective of their diverse upbringings and perspectives, Manu and Chelly strike a serene and beautiful chord with each other.

Chelly, is a single mother who escaped an abusive marriage. She lost her mother in her childhood and was raised by her maternal aunt. Her affectionate father insisted her to join college which was not common among their community. Chelly's story underscores the pathetic predicament of her community due to the prolonged negligence from fellow beings. Chelly could not have braved the indifferences and snubs of the mainstream society during her college days had she not met her beloved friend Jyothi. Jyothi instills a sense of empowerment and belonging in Chelly with their adventurous exploration of the world around. Their relationship grows from friendship to being prospective life partners. But Chelly's marriage and Jyothi's higher studies separate them for a while. Having escaped from the abusive marriage and a brief stint of urban labour life in Coimbatore, Chelly returns home. When she meets Jyothi again they promise themselves to be together soon as partners and Jyothi assures her return exactly a year later.

As they share each other's agonies and ecstasy, the new bonding between Chelly and Manu develops into a seemingly inseparable one and Chelly realizes her growing dilemma. She wishes Jyothi were Manu or he were she. She painfully longs for Jyothi not to turn up. But she could choose either of them.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Velutha Rathrikal is a cinematic tribute to Dostoyevsky and his body of works. White Nights left a deep imprint in me. This adaptation is a long cherished one and the new characterisations and backdrop have born out of much concerns, questions and deliberations. Chelly's compassionate approach to life despite many setbacks, Manu's dreamy ambivalence and Jyothi's boldness are woven together in the narrative while staying rooted to the crux of the novella. As the lead characters Chelly and Manu share their stories and find themselves that they have trodden similar paths in their life. Estranged partners, solitude and indifference from society mark their lives. Yet Chelly's perspective of life is crystalized through the miseries that called on her at regular intervals right from the childhood, her organic bond with the all encompassing nature and exposure to diverse communities and surroundings.

The intense life experiences crystalize one's relationships and integrity. The subtle and sublime revelation of our mindscapes sometimes takes us through uncharted terrain of relationships. It might shake our convictions and bring deep anguish. But the unflinching integrity to oneself and fellow beings matters the most. This film tries to bring forth the mindscapes of human beings caught between relationships, commitments, turbulent past and surroundings. But they could still nurture hopes and dreams for a peaceful and compassionate life.

CAST

disney james

smitha ambu

saritha kukku

palanisamy, sarojini, shibu

aj, mohanan, baby, suresh

kada moopathi, baby malini

naveen raj, shaju, ravi

sajan sindhu, satheesh

TRIBAL SONG PERFORMERS

asad kala sangham

palaniswamy, nanjamma,

kali panikkan, mani murugan

swaminathan, balan

maruthy, priya, manikantan

thankamani, roja, penmani

ayyappan, priya nakkuppathi

CREW

COSTUME DESIGN

biju

MAKE UP

harikumar

LOCATION MANAGERS

shibu changarampally

binoy pookkunnel

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

joji alphonse

PRODUCTION MANAGER

sudev avinjikkad

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

renjith karthikeyan & associates

PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE

satheesh

COLOURIST

ajay artone

STUDIOS

media mill, trivandrum

chithranjali, trivandrum

cut & color, cochin

SCENIC DESIGN, TITLES & GRAPHIC DESIGN

razi

PAINTINGS

k p reji, razi

VISUAL EFFECTS

shaheel shaz, razi

CURATION & TRANSLATION

bandhu prasad

ASSOCIATE CAMERAMAN

souri nath

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

rohith chandrashekar
umesh ambujendran

SINGERS

nanjamma
resmi satheesh
smitha ambu

BACKGROUND SCORE

jackson vijayan

SOUND DESIGN & SOUND MIXING

krishna kumar, chithranjali

FILM EDITOR

b ajithkumar, abhi

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

shehnad jalal

PRODUCED BY

razi

SCRIPT & REALIZATION

razi

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