Dilshi Thathsarani: The magical writer

Posted on

These days, writer Dilshi Thathsarani is celebrating. Her foray into movie script writing has paid off. Visal Adare, a beautiful movie about love and friendship, was Dilshi’s maiden stint as a scriptwriter. What makes the film special is its stupendous success at the box office. It collected a colossal revenue of a hundred million rupees in the shortest time since its release in June 2024, a testament to a fine blend of creativity with viewer understanding.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



Dilshi signing a copy of her first book in Sinhala – ‘Beer Scented Kisses’.

Dilshi Thathsarani is a dreamer. She is unapologetically romantic. Otherwise, why would she cry at the end of writing a novel, the end of a journey, the end of the world she lived in for four years? She enjoys being lost in a world of stories. Her world of stories. It is her safe place. A place of peace and freedom. A place where

she escapes and finds solace. It's her 'little corner,' where she's immersed in the plot and the characters she creates. A theater of characters representing the oddities and niceties of life, a bit of herself in every female character, and a bit of the man she has met. To the writer, living in the stories and their characters is for the benefit of her readers. For them to finally enjoy and take the journey that she did while writing. If not writing, she will read or watch a movie to escape into a world of stories.

A passionate writer who knew nothing about writing jobs, Dilshi embarked on her first writing assignment as a young graduate at BT Options, which she claims opened the door to realize her potential and hone her writing skills and love for storytelling. It was also when she gradually expanded her artistic repertoire to photography, which was an opportunity to transfer her creativity to reel. She moved onto television as a scriptwriter, finally settling in advertising as a copywriter, helming many commercials with the stroke of her pen and creative genius.

While pursuing her career in media, Dilshi wrote continuously, publishing her first book in Sinhala, 'Beer Scented Kisses' in 2019, which has since had seven prints. It's set in an imaginary place called the Valley, where a bar becomes a central point of meeting for women and men, women as the bartenders turning into intent listeners to men looking to make conversations, and so the story goes on. Her second novel, 'C'est La Vie,' further expresses the writer's drift in plotting her characters. The story revolves around a married couple and an extra-marital relationship, where the writer-husband, instead of confrontation, attempts to understand his partner's actions. This is Dilshi's specialty: creating hope rather than despair, magnanimity over maleficence, an alternative narrative to storytelling, and portraying life's events and incidents in a new light, where kindness and thoughtfulness counteract confrontation and conflict. According to Dilshi, this drift stimulates feelings of joy and compassion for the characters, even when they are not right. However, that doesn't mean her characters are withdrawn from the real world. She beautifully and thoughtfully narrates their inner conflicts and struggles amid life's situations so the reader feels sympathy and identifies with them. In abandoning violence in favor of wisdom, love, and kindness, Dilshi asserts that her readers are relaxed reading her.

No wonder her readers describe her as a magical writer, a term inspired by her penchant to write about people's feelings rather than only events. Her characters are not defined as black or white, heroes and villains. They are depicted as individuals with frailties, shortcomings, and immense strength and humanity. She

creates hope, transporting the reader to her fictional world, where everything is not dark and dull; even in despair and sadness, there is always the hope that things will improve. She builds characters that are positive and thoughtful. She bestows excellent qualities upon them, such as maturity and understanding, which Dilshi believes her readers appreciate.

As a storyteller, Dilshi describes in detail the world she creates because as she lives in those moments, she also visualizes the surroundings that her characters move in, which are very important to her storytelling.

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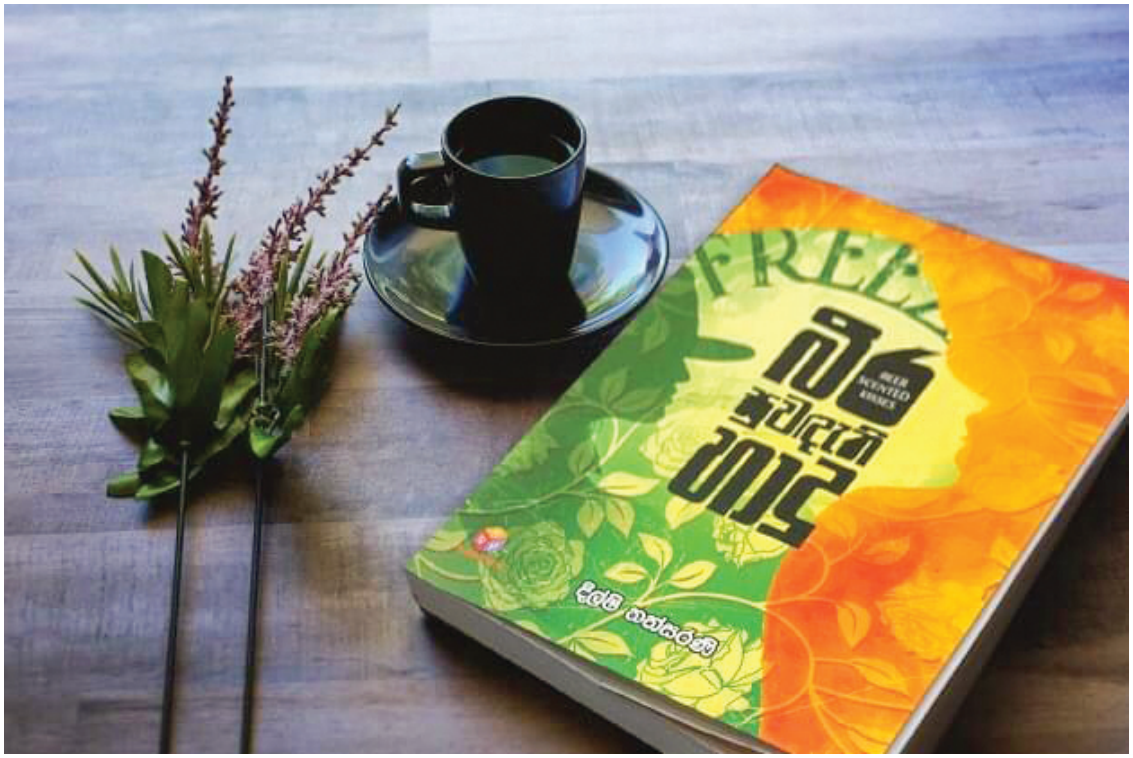
Dilshi Thathsarani with the main actors of Visal Adare – Rashiprabha Sandeepani, Dinakshie Priyasad and Sachin Liyanage.

They are the same values that one sees in Visal Adare. A movie buff, Dilshi, first

met young director Wasawa Baduge to convey her desire to do a short film with him, a project they discussed but did not realize. Then it was Wasawa’s turn to approach Dilshi with his idea for a big commercial movie, which she scripted within a deadline of three months. Filmed in 2023, Visal Adare was released in June 2024 and holds the record for making a revenue of hundred million rupees in the shortest time since its release. She is proud of her involvement in a mainstream commercial movie that has excellently balanced artistic vision with commercial appeal.

The movie is beautiful and reflects the same flow as in her books. The characters demonstrate empathy even in moments of conflict and sadness, expressing instants of grief through many emotions. There is no violence. She has voiced great conversations in the record-breaking movie and created new characters to add depth and variety to the story. She deals with divorce, which she depicts through conversations of healing. They convey thoughtfulness, maturity, and love so that the audiences conform to the same thoughts and empathize with their circumstances. That way, the movie creates happy memories. Thus, she has highlighted the intricacies of divorce, creating mature conversations about choices, the choice of a woman to leave when she cannot be in a relationship that takes away her individuality and denies her of being herself, notions hardly spoken in society. Hers is a call to stop and think of an alternative narrative on separation. In creating a conversation where two partners understand their differences and their choice to separate, she sends a sobering and thought-provoking message of shifting mindsets in a world where movies become the platform for depicting and justifying violence. She believes mainstream media has a huge platform and a great responsibility towards creating social change. Hence, while the greater thrust should be to give what the audiences desire, creators and directors should not hesitate to deviate, provide life lessons, and cause a change in the attitudes and behavior of a larger collective by bringing depth to their creative projects. Visal Adare did just that while offering audiences great visual entertainment.

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‘Beer Scented Kisses’ is Dilshi’s maiden Sinhala novel, released in 2019.



Visal Adare movie script.



‘C’est La Vie,’ is Dilshi’s second Sinhala fiction.

Dilshi attributes her growth as a writer to her training in advertising, imbuing in her the ability to focus on an idea, analyze its purpose and intended message, write to

stimulate and entertain an audience, and speak to their minds to encourage reflection. Thus, scripting Visal Adare is a blend of the movie’s objective and her perspective. Her maiden project belongs to the mainstream commercial movie genre, but Dilshi asserts that it’s a misplaced notion to separate scriptwriters along the lines of commercial and art films. A creative individual should be able to cater to the requirements of both segments, whether artistic or commercial, which she is ready to meet. And so, Dilshi continues writing, dabbling in an activity that she describes as magical and a burst of ideas that create characters that, in turn, shape her story to the end. Today, buoyed by the success of her two books and her debut movie script, Dilshi is penning a story that she hopes will eventually make it to the big screen. In that hope, she’s once again lost in her world of storytelling.