

APAH: Write this down. (RADHA WRITES THE FOLLOWING) To the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. From this moment on you should take every step to protect your person and property. If you do not have sufficient numbers or adequate strength-

RADHA: / Apah -

APAH: -you must immediately evacuate the places where you live or transact business and get into safe Tamil areas.

YOUNG RADHA: / But Colombo is for-

APAH: You must not say thereafter that you were not in a position to be safe; be warned. Signed, Mannikavasari, or - your Apah. Nihinsa!

YOUNG RADHA: What is the need to tell people to flee to *Tamil* areas? Why can't you address *all* Sri Lankans to protect each other?

APAH: Do you not see what is happening, Radha?

YOUNG RADHA: If you cross this line Apah you will not be able to go back.

APAH: It has been crossed, and not by us!

YOUNG RADHA: Us, them - there can be no separation, no violence.

APAH: When you are secure you can fight for equality. But when you are no longer safe you can only fight for your survival.

YOUNG RADHA: (WAVING THE PAPER) This is not Sri Lanka!

APAH: In Urumpirai, our ancestral village, we are famous for our special brand of pot arrack.

YOUNG RADHA: What are you talking about / Apah-

APAH: Shut up and listen. In the old days toddy was freely available. It was given to mothers for post-natal nourishment. They never became *intoxicated*. Then the British put through the toddy regulations law and it changed the culture. Arrack became something manufactured and expensive. Toddy booths,

arrack taverns, *rasayanam* and *kasipu* sprung up everywhere. People got *drunk* from it. But our village was different, Radha. We decided *not* to obey the law. When the European regulation parties found out, they personally came and interrupted arrack preparations on the ground, intruding on our way of life. Our entire village stood up for itself. As a boy I watched your Aacha's mother lead the village women to summarily break pots over the heads of these men and drive them back to their cities. We considered it our *birthright* to make the stuff our way. It was in Urumpirai that I first learnt the rudiments of democracy. Democracy means the *counting* of heads, within certain limits, and the *cracking* of heads beyond those limits. To *this day*, our village holds its reputation intact - and the arrack is still smuggled to Madras, where it is in great demand.

YOUNG RADHA: Gandhiji held his reputation intact without breaking a pot over anyone's head.

APAH: We are not all Ghandiji, Radha. Most probably, no one ever will be again. (BEAT) නීහින්සා, මේක අරන් ගිහින් ජාර උඩහ සිවනන්දන්ගේ ගෙදරට ගිහින් එයාගේ අතටම භාරදෙන්න.

මගේ මේ ලිපිය, වහාම ටෙලිග්‍රෑම් කරන්න කියන්න හැම ජරධාන පන්නරේටම... රේඩියෝ , ටීවී වැනල් එකකටම ...අපේ ලයිස්තුවේ ඉන්න හැම දෙමල කණ්ඩායම් නායකයෙකුටම. හුඟක් හදිසි කියන්න. යන්න! [Nihinsa! Take this statement of mine and go to Sivanandan's house just up the road. Tell him to telegram this message to every major Tamil newspaper, radio and TV station and to every Tamil community leader in our database as a matter of urgency. GO!]

NIHINSA TAKES THE LETTER AND EXITS.

THE PHONE RINGS. RADHA ANSWERS.

YOUNG THIRRU: Radha!

YOUNG RADHA: Love? Are they near you?

YOUNG THIRRU: They've already passed through-

YOUNG RADHA: Thank god.

YOUNG THIRRU: They came up to our office and demanded the Tamil workers. My colleagues told them that there were no Tamils here, and then they took scissors and rulers and blocks of wood and pushed them in the mob's faces and the mob left. I'm alright. I'm going to be alright.

RADHA IS TOO RELIEVED TO SPEAK.

YOUNG THIRRU: Radha?

YOUNG RADHA: Yes?

YOUNG THIRRU: If something happens today, and we can't call each other - let's meet in the little mechanics shed, behind Saraswathi Lodge. You remember?

YOUNG RADHA: Your cousin's shed.

YOUNG THIRRU: Yes.

BEAT.

YOUNG THIRRU: Are you ok?

YOUNG RADHA: Yes. So, you'll stay inside the office?

YOUNG THIRRU: For now. I'll come back home as soon as it's safe to do so. I love you, Radha.

YOUNG RADHA: I love you too.

SHE HANGS UP.

APAH: We are moving back to Jaffna.

YOUNG RADHA: Absolutely not. I will stay in Colombo.

APAH: Don't be stupid, Radha.

YOUNG RADHA: No. I will stay with my countrymen, not my race. They saved Thirru.

THE PHONE RINGS. APAH ANSWERS.

APAH: Yes?

WELAWATTE SHOP OWNER: அப்பா.. நான் இன்னும் வெள்ளவத்தையில் தான் நிக்கிறேன். பொலிஸ்காரன் ஒருத்தரும் இன்னும் வரவில்லை. காவாலிகளின்ட

சண்டித்தனம் கூடிக்கொண்டே போகுது. [*Sir, I'm in Welawatte. No one has arrived. The hoodlums are becoming increasingly violent, they're harassing my staff...*]

BEAT.

APAH: Yes?

WELAWATTE SHOP OWNER: நீங்கள் ஓம் எண்டு சொன்னா....
நாங்கள், நாங்கள் யாரெண்டத அவங்களுக்குக்
காட்டுவம் அப்பா. [*With permission sir, I can teach these hooligans the lesson of their lives.*]

APAH: கையில் என்ன கிடைக்குதோ அதால அவங்கள போட்டு
சாத்துங்கோ. [*Lay it thick on them with whatever you have.*]

APAH HANGS UP. THEY LOOK AT THE PHONE,
BUT IT DOES NOT RING. NIHINSA RETURNS.

YOUNG RADHA: If they defend themselves with violence Apah,
won't more violence ensue?

APAH: What are the options Radha?

YOUNG RADHA: I will call 10, 20 people, Tamil and Singhalese, and
we will go into the middle of Colombo and fast, unto
our deaths if necessary. Imagine the attention we
would get, in the community, all over the country.
The whole world would sit up and take notice-

APAH: Do you know those 20 people Radha?

RADHA: / I- Yes I could-

APAH: Would you lead them by example?

RADHA: / I -

APAH: Even *if* the whole world took notice: they wouldn't
act upon it. What do we know of the struggle of
other people around the world? Who do we really care
for, but our own?

THE PHONE RINGS.

APAH: We cannot look to the world for help, darling.
Today, we cannot even look to our own government.