

The Official Companion Guide & Press Kit for

*P*_{ee} *Is For* *Prema*

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dear Reader,

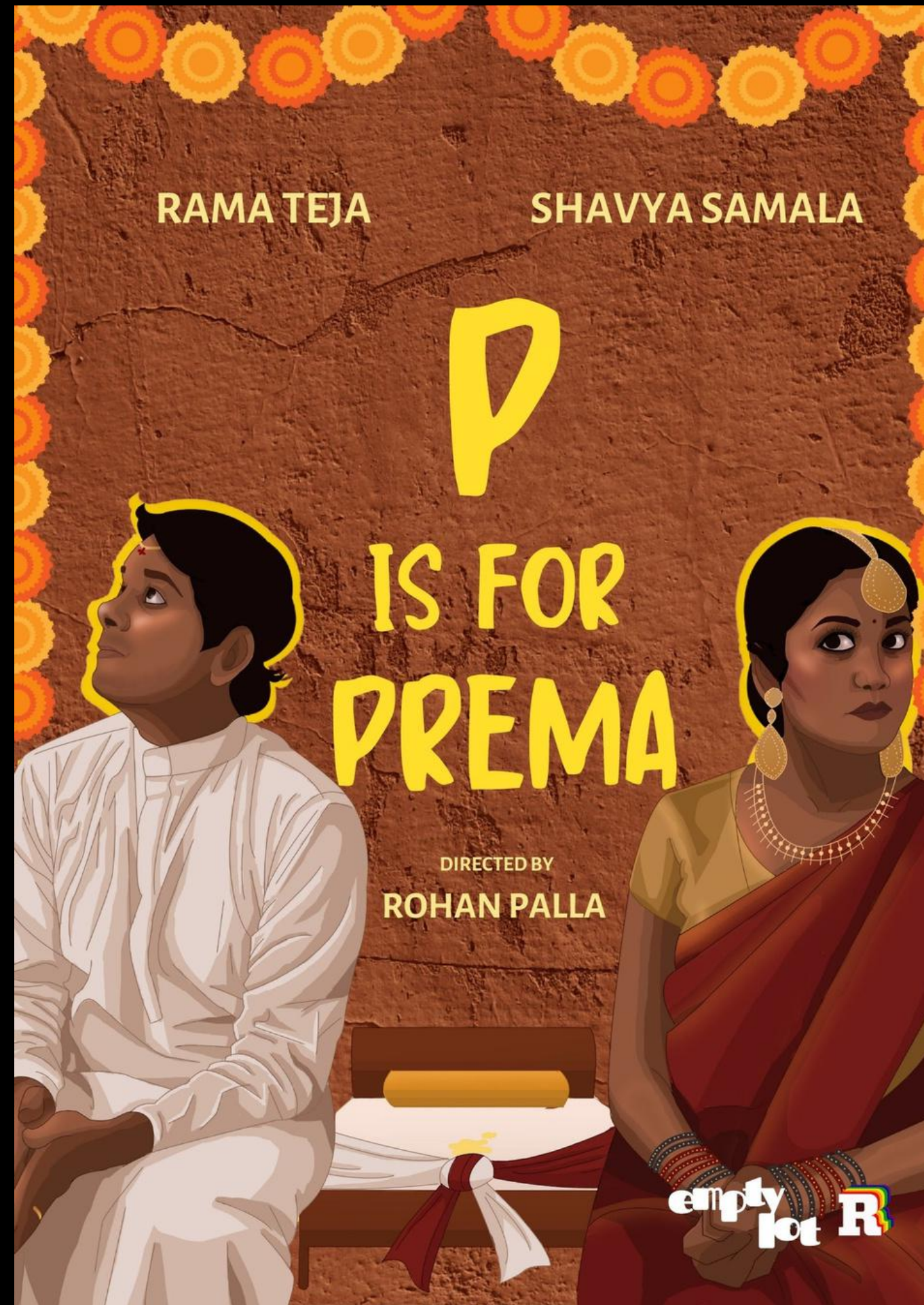
I can't remember the first time I peed the bed. Maybe I did? Maybe I didn't.

But I have always feared it happening the night of my marriage.

Films are a great way for me to map out situations that I fear and give them a good ending. With the curiosity of how this incident could find a good ending, we made a claim that "Pee IS FOR PREMA." Prema means "love" in Telugu.

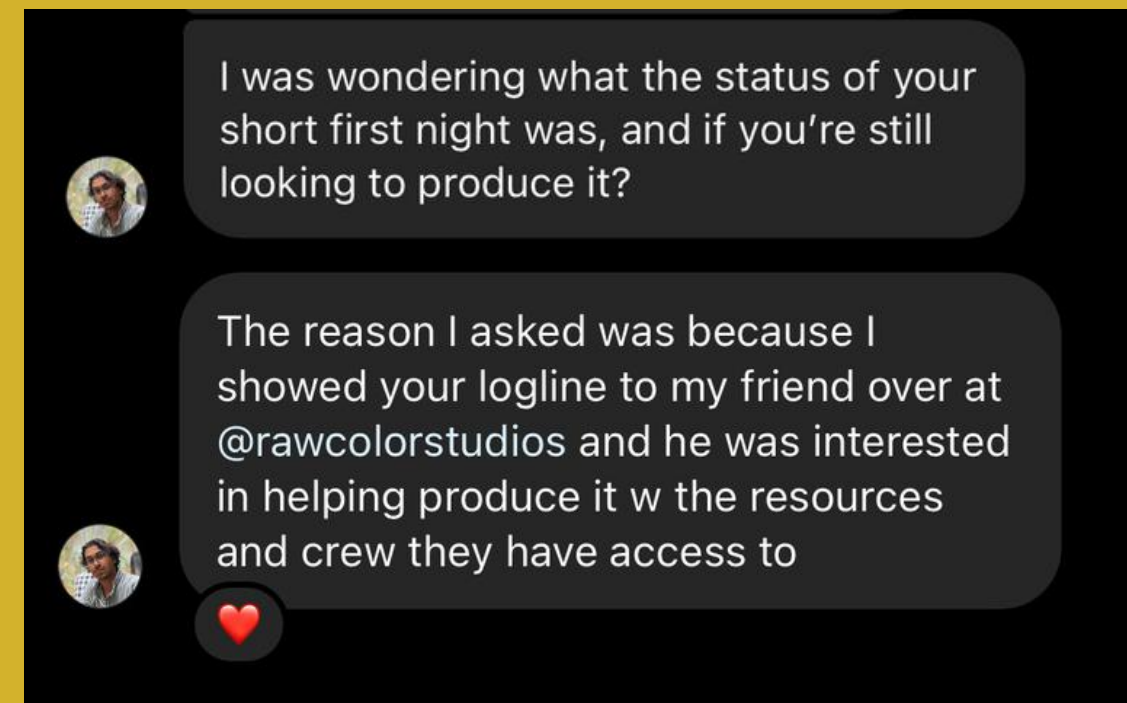
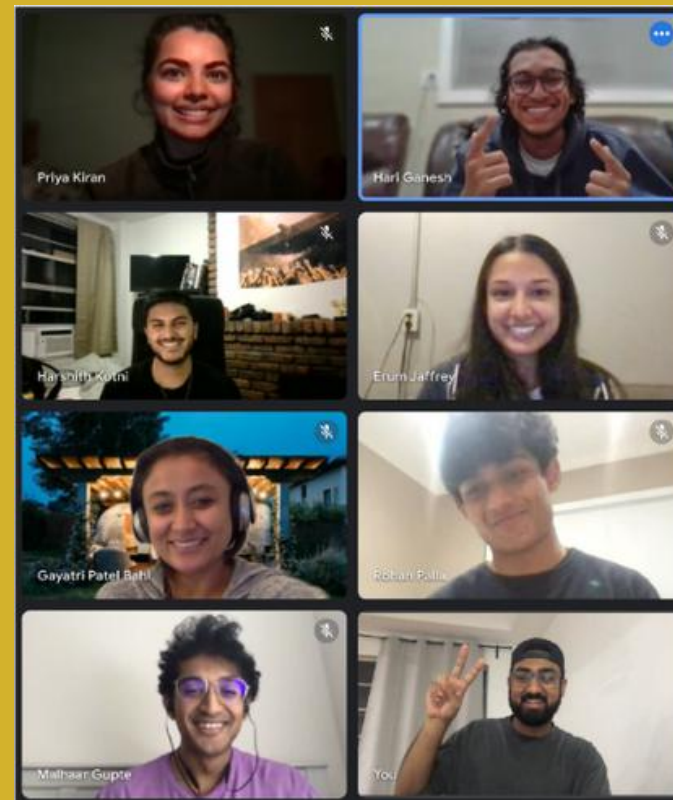
A Telugu-language cinema on the surface, the emotional journey of this character was developed to appeal universally. This guide is dedicated to the multicultural team that trusted me and my vision and brought their everything to make it happen.

**POSTER BY
ANNABELLE
AUGUSTINE**



ONCE UPON A DM...

The project was written as a random logline during my time in the Rickshaw's Writer's Room program, a South Asian film community based in LA. Rickshaw's President forwarded the idea to a production house. They said "let's touch briefly" ...



***BUT WE ENDED UP KEEPING IN TOUCH
A LOT LONGER :)***



MATT MARTINEZ
Producer

ROHAN PALLA
Director

AKSHAY RAVI
Producer

**AND BROUGHT ON THIS INCREDIBLE
TEAM**



ACTORS



Rama Teja studied engineering and works in tech consulting. His hobbies include cooking, dancing, and eating copious quantities of ice cream. Oops?!



Shavya Samala co-starred in Venus As A Boy, which won best narrative at the Tribeca Film Festival, had her TV debut on Netflix's Santa Clarita Diet, and is set to make her major Tollywood movie debut.

THE FUEL TO THE FIRE

With a concept as endearing and culturally specific as this, it was important that the team members were capable of matching the cheerfulness of the narrative, as well as understanding its cinematic influences.

In order to achieve this, we formed a hybrid crew of USC film students and members from an independent collective who have had long working relationships with each other. While these two halves of the crew were meeting for the first time, they shared one thing in common: a tenacious reverence for the art of filmmaking, and a desire to bring stories from every corner of the globe to life.

This resulted in a team with an unmatched positivity. The desire to learn more about the Tollywood style of filmmaking and learn from each other brewed a healthy set environment. While only having worked together for three days, it felt as though everyone had worked together for three years.

–PRODUCERS



CREATING THE LOOK



Our DP Graham's decision to use haze played a key role in achieving the light tone with a slightly vintage texture. It acted as a diffusion, spreading our light and carrying the color through the shot. It also added dimension, softening the background and making the foreground subject appear crisp.



GRAHAM BYERS
DP

MOVING ALONG



To really get in Pandu's perspective, Graham switched to a handheld camera movement post the pee stain incident to convey a sense of franticness and unease. Unlike typical comedy wides, we wanted to experiment in this film with tighter angles to connect with the characters and then have their relationship inform the comedy.

FILLING THE FRAME

Our main challenge was making our campus area in Los Angeles look like India! Rather than completely transforming each location, we took frames that we liked and deconstructed what was in them to get exactly what we needed for people to believe it.



REFERENCE



NEED CEREMONY ITEMS & PEOPLE



FINAL



FILLING THE FRAME

Some props were easier to get than others. Authentic Indian-looking beds were very hard to find in our budget but we lucked out when our production designer Carly scoured Facebook Marketplace until she got a match. We are forever grateful to her, the seller, and the movers who shipped it.



Full size bed frame & mattress OBO
facebook.com

on sale for
\$40!



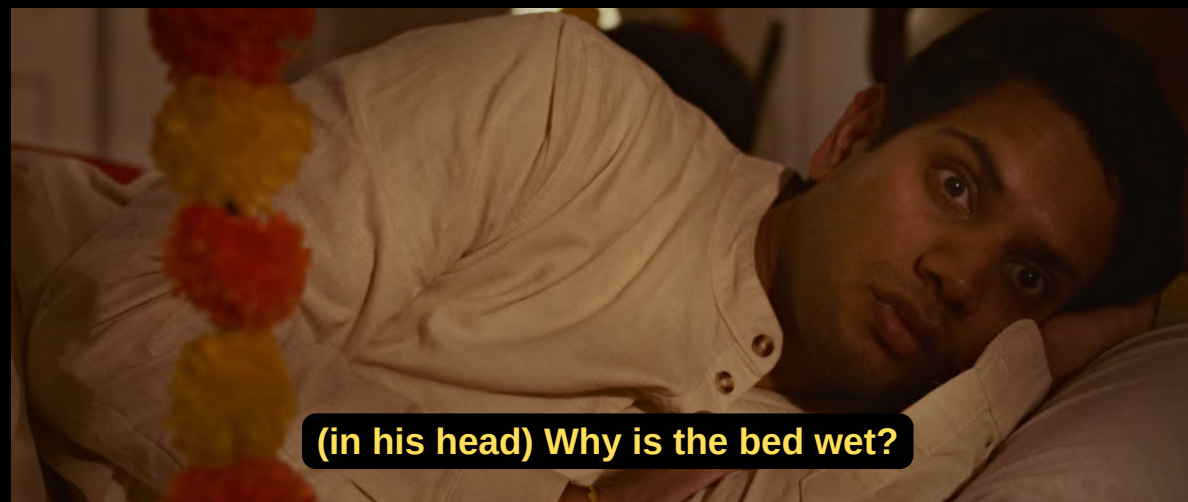
used LED lights as fairy lights
would flicker on camera



CARLY SHERMAN
Production Designer

LEANING INTO THE TOLLYWOOD STYLE

Hearing His Thoughts



Exaggerated Focus



Distorted Ratio Movements



To heighten the intensity of our nervous Pandu character, we used 2010 nostalgic comedic AV elements made common through Telugu director Sreenu Vaitla: Had Pandu's internal dialogue conflict with his external confidence, used a blurred mask to highlight him crushing on Pooja, and a distorted ratio in the 2 shot to display their conf(union).



LOVE IS ON ITS OWN TRACK

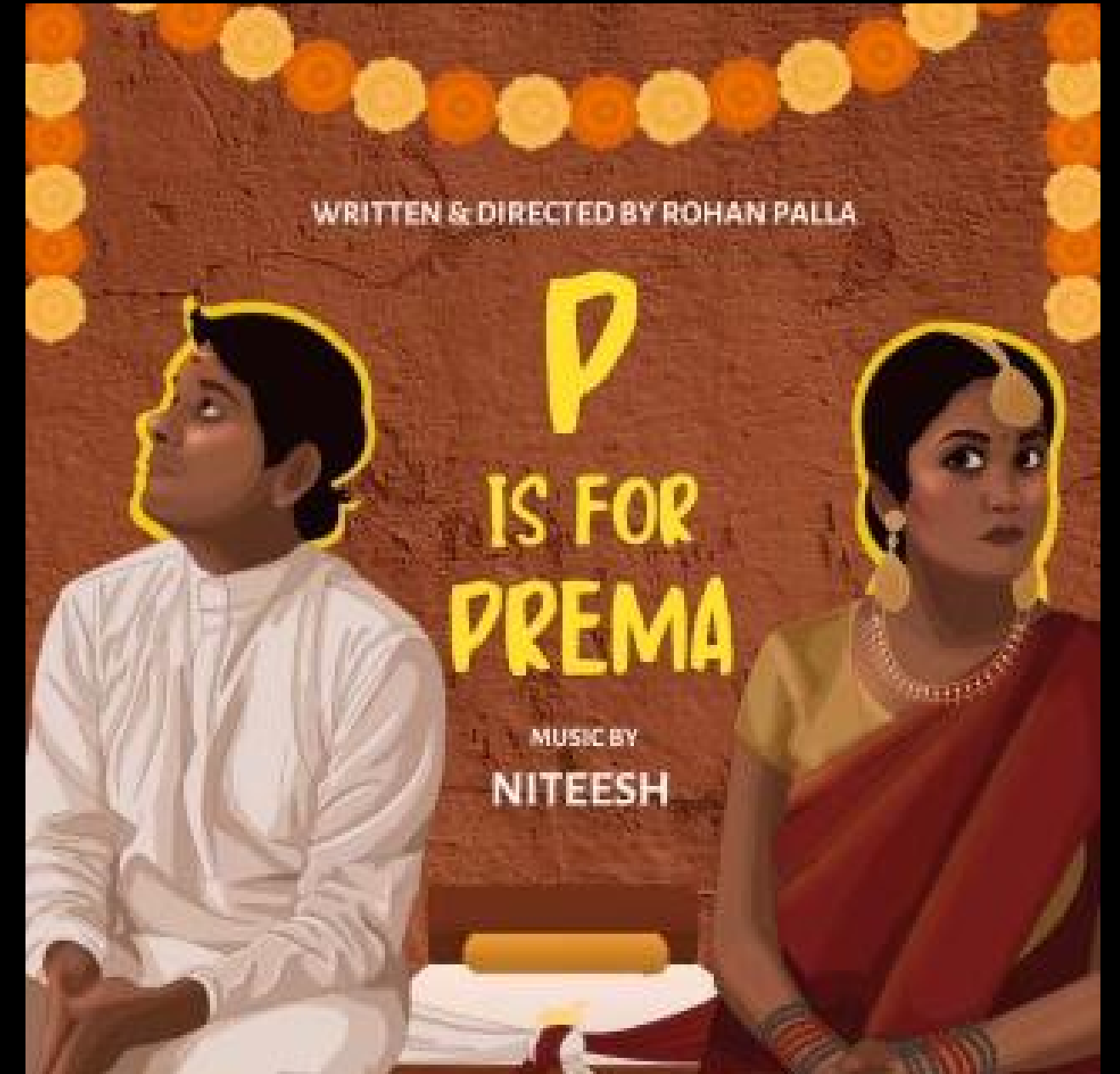
We wanted the marketing to help create a personal relationship between the viewer and the film and the way I connect with a lot of projects is through its prereleased songs. So we contacted



Verified Artist

Niteesh

and started collaborating. He delivered a vibrant song with wedding instrumentals and English/Telugu lyrics, reflecting both film's setting and the diverse team behind it. It plays during the end credits.



**RELEASING 11/28
ON ALL MAJOR MUSIC PLATFORMS**

SCORE BIG

The score was going to make or break the style.

Although we were surrounded by incredible composers in LA, we knew we needed someone who grew up with Tollywood to match the texture of this world and genre.

Niteesh developed a soundscape with tribal vocals, tabla, and shenai, to bring the spice this film needed to feel authentically South Indian. In addition to the style, the score along with the SFX was almost a character of its own reacting to the situations as they happened.





Thanks for your time :)



WISHING YOU ALL

LOVE, LAUGHTER, & HAPEENESS