

PRISM

an original screenplay by

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## PRISM

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

A pair of rough, deeply tanned male feet with ragged, multicoloured toenails digs into the sand as

PRISM

Late 20s, black, lean, wiry muscles, long dreadlocks, hauls in his seine of fish. Not a great catch.

He extracts the few fish from the net and tosses them into a large cooler with a bag of ice at the bottom. SLAMS it shut.

EXT. FISH STALL - LATER

The cooler opens and the last fish is taken out.

Prism slides the scaled, cleaned, sliced fish into a bag, wraps it in newspaper. Hands it off and pockets the money. Not a word exchanged.

He closes the cooler and sits on it, doing the 1000-yard stare.

Everything's slightly hazy, just out of focus. A vague sense of humanity – the OTHER FISHERMEN still selling their much-larger catches..

Prism's hands move in rhythm. He HUMS softly, insistently.

After a moment, he rises, takes his empty cooler. Heads away from the scene.

EXT. PRISM'S HUT - DAY

Squatting among the bushes just at the edge of the beach. Small, but sturdily built. A tattered hammock attached to two coconut trees sways in the coastal breeze.

Prism sleeps restlessly in the hammock, almost in fetal position, his brow deeply furrowed.

The SCREECH of CAR TYRES and the resounding CRASH OF METAL INTO METAL jerks him awake. He lies frozen in place for a moment, trembling. Then...

He scrambles out of the hammock, races down the beach, and hurls himself into the water. But doesn't swim.

Instead, he lets the waves knock him around until he finally drags himself out and collapses onto the sand, COUGHING and RETCHING.

Exhausted, he rolls onto his back, stares up at the sky. The full light of day reveals several healed facial and upper body scars.

After a while, he props himself up, stares down at his ragged toenails. Examines them closely.

Then rises and heads back up the beach towards his hut.

INT. BEAUTY SALON - DAY

Prism puts FIVE BOTTLES of fluorescent nail polish on the counter. All different colours.

A WOMAN's hands bag them as Prism pulls out his money, hands it to her. Nods a vague thanks as he takes the bag, heads out.

As he exits, WOMEN'S VOICES carry from the shop.

WOMAN 1 (O.S.)  
Mad like hell, oui--

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)  
And a nice-looking man so. Damn shame--

WOMAN 3 (O.S.)  
Mad wha'? Them so does go quite  
foreign just to come back home manicou  
man. Waste ah time--

WOMAN 1 (O.S.)  
Hush! Allyuh too bad!

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Prism takes a long, deep breath. The VOICES blur and fade as he closes his eyes. But the SCREECHING TYRES make him open them again.

He shoves the bag of nail polish into his shirt and takes off down the street, running full pelt towards the ocean.

VILLAGERS liming on the street watch him go and shake their heads, sympathetically. Again, the sense of them not being quite there. Vaguely surreal.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

A wave SLAMS Prism down in the shallow, nearly knocking him out.

He drags himself out of the water again, COUGHING, RETCHING, looking like a half-drowned rat.

He staggers up to his hut, picking up the bag of nail polish from the sand on the way.

INT. PRISM'S HUT - LATER

Prism rummages around in an old trunk and extracts a short, white dress. Simple, but classic style.

Underneath it is a BADLY DENTED CHROMED TENOR PAN with BROKEN STICKS taped to the sides.

He holds the dress up against himself, caresses it as he stares into a full-length mirror. The rest of the room is out of focus.

He strips off his T-shirt and tries to put on the dress, but it doesn't fit.

He casts around, finds some fish hooks, and pins the shoulders of the dress to the shoulders of his T-shirt. Puts the T-shirt back on.

He carefully lifts the dress as he sits at a small table.

He puts his feet up on a nearby chair and slowly, carefully, paints his toenails, matching the colours with the individual toes.

EXT. PRISM'S HUT - AFTERNOON

Prism sits in his hammock, still "wearing" the dress. His feet hang over the sides of the hammock, letting his freshly painted toes dry in the evening breeze.

He stares at the sea, his hands moving again. This time we recognize that he's playing an imaginary steelpan.

He HUMS softly, insistently as he sways, trying to drown out THE SCREECHING TYRES, a nagging undercurrent to his humming.

After a bit, he slides out of the hammock, walks down to the sea. Stops at the edge. Looks down at the water lapping around his feet.

He gazes back out at the horizon. Takes a deep breath. Decision made. He starts forward.

WANDA (O.S.)

Prism! Prism!

Prism stops, jaw clenched, turns to see

WANDA

bi-racial, 20s, racing down the beach towards him, panicked.

She breaks as she reaches him, PANTING, breathless.

Prism stands stone-still, unwelcoming.

Wanda looks him over, tries to hide her dismay. Even she has a quality of not being really there.

WANDA (CONT'D)

(British accent)

Prism... Good Lord, d'you know how long I've been looking for you?

PRISM

For what?

WANDA

What for? Man... you left without saying word to anyone! Nobody knew where the hell you'd gone! We spent **weeks** searching around London for you! We had the police involved--

The moment's gone. Annoyed, Prism strides out of the water, past her, heading back to his hut. She hurries after him.

WANDA (CONT'D)

--And then with COVID we couldn't do anything once we found out you'd actually come back home. We had to wait till the borders reopened--

Prism stops at the hammock, glares at a LARGE DESIGNER BAG sitting in front of his door.

PRISM

You not looking to stay here?

It's not a question.

WANDA

--Why in God's name did you do that? We were so worried about you. We thought you might have... done something...

She trails off, trying hard not to look at his disturbing outfit.

PRISM

Your people dem never liked my head no-how, so...?

Wanda looks away, embarrassed by this truth. Picks up the bag, holds it out to him.

WANDA  
This belongs to you.

Prism reluctantly takes it. Waits. Another awkward moment.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
So... I'm staying at a guest house  
in the village... Just overnight...  
I've a flight home day after  
tomorrow...

ARCTIC SILENCE.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
(backing away)  
So... hopefully we can... talk...  
before I leave...?

No response. She gives up.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
Okay, then. Well... um, good seeing  
you again. Cheers...?

She leaves, distressed. Prism watches her go, impassive.

INT. PRISM'S HUT - EVENING

Prism enters, switches on a lamp. It's the first time we properly see the inside of his home.

Neat, functional, sparse. Fishing equipment along one wall, the storage trunk along another.

Prism puts the bag on a small table and sits, staring at it. Finally, he unzips and opens it.

Reaches in and extracts some funky, artistic shirts. He puts them aside, reaches in again.

Pulls out a jewelry box. Opens it to find a man's chain attached to a faceted ball. He runs his fingers over the chain, takes it out. Puts the box aside.

He turns the ball over and over in his hand, staring at it, battling tears. Puts it aside as well.

He takes a deep breath, reaches into the bag again and extracts

A ROCKER BARBIE DOLL WITH PAINTED TOENAILS.

And the dam breaks. He BAWLS like a baby, hugging the doll tightly. His head drops onto the table, revealing

A PHOTO

Hanging behind him on the third wall. Prism, seated with his feet up, exposed chest showing the chain, laughing as a WOMAN who vaguely resembles Wanda plays with his locks while an adorable LITTLE GIRL paints his toenails with multicoloured fluorescent nail polish.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Prism, wearing only swim trunks and his chain, walks down the beach.

Everything is now in focus - Prism, the horizon, the entire expanse of the shore.

He wades into the water up to his waist. Closes his eyes, relishing the feel of the rising sun's rays on his face, his skin.

The sunlight glints off the prism around his neck, speckling his face in an ethereal glow.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This is the BBC News for 16th January,  
2020.

Prism scoops the water into his cupped hands, raises his arms to the heavens and lets it stream down over his head and face.

A cleansing. A rebirth.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Police report that the accident on the M25 last night that claimed the life of Leslie Ibukun and her daughter, nine-year-old Kaylie Pollard, was caused by inclement weather conditions resulting in poor visibility.

Prism dips under the water and starts to swim. Hesitantly at first, but then smoothly, evenly, perfectly at home.

FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The thirty-four-year-old Ibukun was the lead singer and songwriter for the award-winning world-music group also named Ibukun. She and her daughter were killed instantly. The sole survivor of the crash was the driver, her husband, Joseph "Prism" Pollard, who was also the group's pannist. He is currently listed in serious condition at hospital. Funeral arrangements will be announced by the family.

MUSIC CUE: *Put a Record On (or Climb)* by Kalpee

**THE END**