

Communication Design Project II | 2023

ENCHANTING TALES

Kerala Folklore Unveiled through Parallax Scrolling Comics

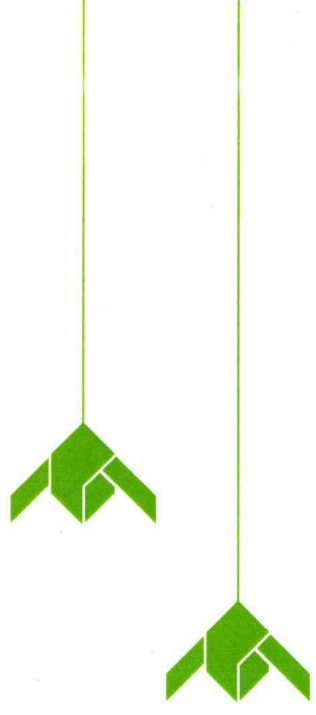
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Project Guide
Prof. Deepa Balsavar

IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय

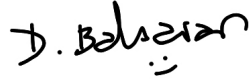


IIT Bombay



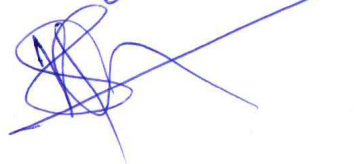
Approval Sheet

This project report titled 'Enchanting Tales: Kerala Folklore Unveiled through Parallax Scrolling Comics' by Abhinav S, 22M2264, is approved for partial fulfilment of the requirements for Masters of Design Degree in Communication Design, IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay.

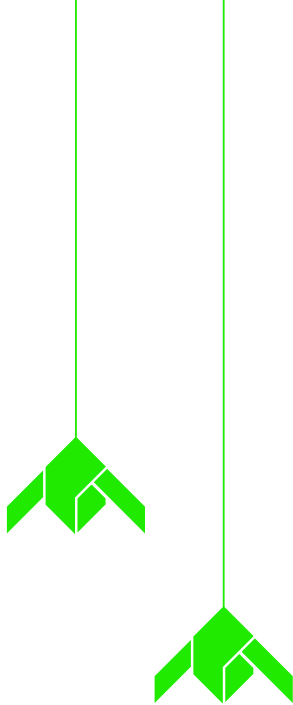
Project Guide: 

External Examiner: 

Internal Examiner: 

Chairperson: 

Date: 23.11.23

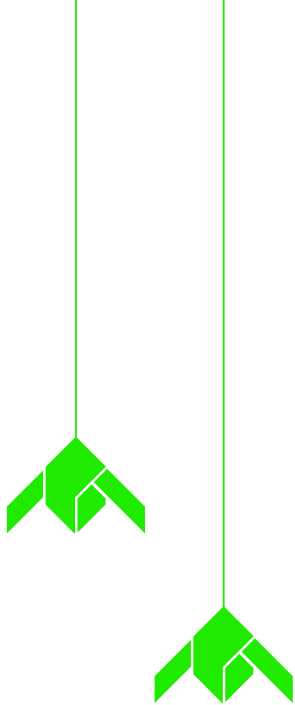


Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where other's ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any ideas, data, facts or sources in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause of disciplinary action by the institute and evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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Acknowledgements

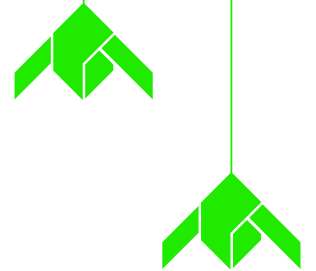
I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Deepa Balsavar for her unwavering guidance and support throughout the journey of creating this project. Her expertise and insightful feedback have been incredibly valuable in shaping this project. I am also deeply thankful to my batchmates and seniors for their encouragement and motivation, which played a pivotal role in helping me see this project through to completion. Their support has been a constant source of inspiration, and I am truly grateful for it. I'd like to specifically acknowledge my seniors, Lakshmi and Jaanhavi, for their invaluable guidance throughout the process. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to my schoolmates, Gowtham and Sarath, for their assistance in helping me navigate the technical aspects of this project.

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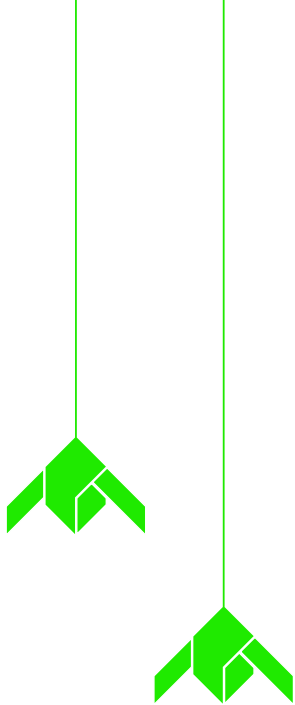
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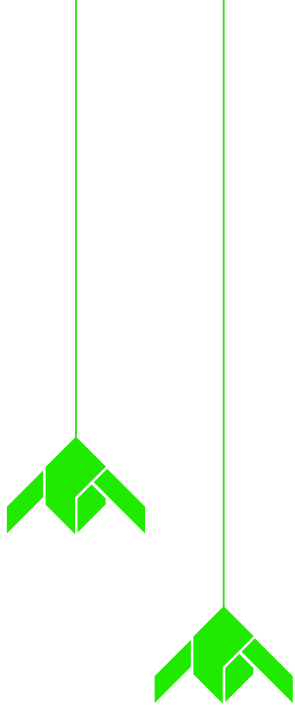
INTRODUCTION



Context

Kerala's folklore, rich with mythical characters and moral lessons, was a cherished part of my childhood, narrated lovingly by my grandmother. Recognizing the fading awareness of these tales among today's children immersed in screens, this project seeks to revive interest. By blending ancient stories with familiar technology, it aims to spark curiosity, offering interactive and visually immersive experiences. The goal is to ignite a passion for exploring one's heritage and encourage a connection with folklore beyond the confines of modern devices.



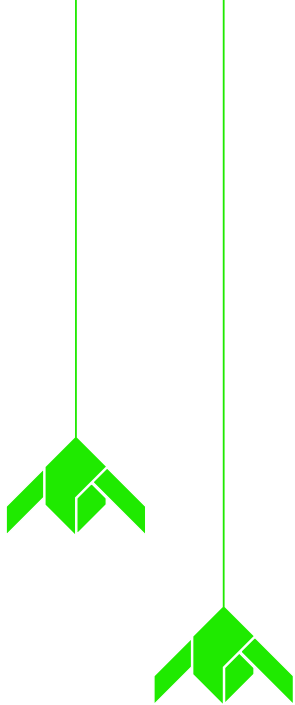


Objective

This project aims to bring alive the fascinating folktales of Kerala in the form of a parallax scrolling comic. By mixing the traditional stories with modern technology, this project attempts to spark a new interest in Kerala folklore.



STORY DEVELOPMENT

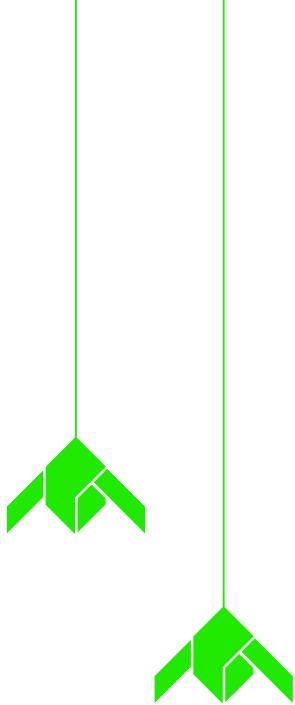


Searching Stories

The journey to find the perfect story for my project was both fascinating and enriching. I delved into the pages of "Aithiyamala," a remarkable book by Kottarathil Sankunni, which is a treasure trove of timeless Kerala folklore. This book is a collection of captivating tales and legends that offer a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of Kerala. It was an invaluable resource in my search for a compelling narrative.

In addition to my exploration of "Aithiyamala," I engaged in conversations with friends and elders, eagerly listening to their accounts of local legends and stories from various regions in Kerala. This process allowed me to uncover hidden gems of folklore, each with its unique charm and cultural significance.

Ultimately, it was during one of these conversations that I rediscovered the enchanting tale of "Poothapattu." This particular story held a special place in my heart, as it was one that my beloved grandma used to narrate to me when I was a child. "Poothapattu" is a captivating narrative that intertwines elements of love, adventure, and the supernatural, making it the perfect choice for my parallax scrolling comic project. It is a story deeply rooted in Kerala's cultural heritage and carries with it the fond memories of my childhood, making it a meaningful and inspiring choice for my creative endeavor.

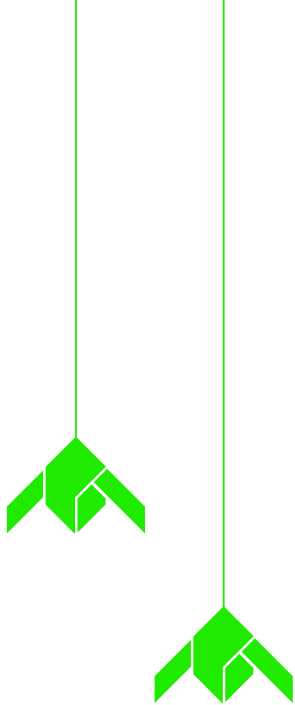


About the story

The story I chose for my project is based on the Malayalam poem "**Poothapattu**" written by the renowned poet **Edassery Govindan Nair**. This poem is considered one of Edassery's masterpieces, celebrating the profound essence of motherhood and sharing the poignant emotions of the Pootham character. It revolves around the life of Nangeli, a devoted mother whose boundless love for her son Unni leads her to protect him from the clutches of a mystical being known as **Pootham(demon)**. Unni's innocent curiosity takes him on a journey of temptation, but Nangeli's relentless search and sacrificial love ultimately reunite them. This narrative explores the extraordinary power of maternal affection, the allure of temptation, and the importance of preserving folklore.



Edassery Govindan Nair

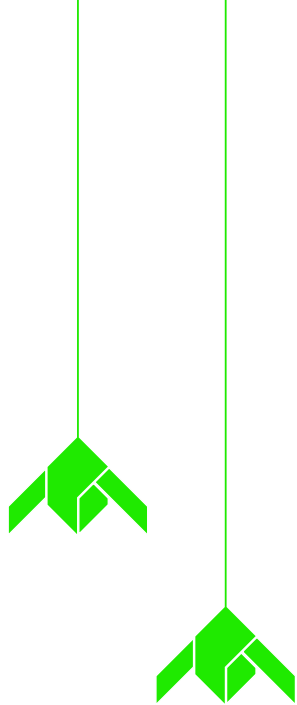


Poothamkali

Pootham is a lively folk art deeply ingrained in central Kerala's **Valluvanad** region. Emerging post-summer harvest, this ritualistic dance involves participants donning Pootham costumes, accompanied by skilled drummers. Known as **Poothamkali**, the dance incorporates various footsteps, and performers, wearing chilanka anklets, move in sync with the thudi's rhythmic beats. Beginning slowly, the dance gradually accelerates, requiring notable body flexibility. Traditionally performed by the **Mannans** community, Pootham is a vibrant expression of cultural richness in post-harvest celebrations.



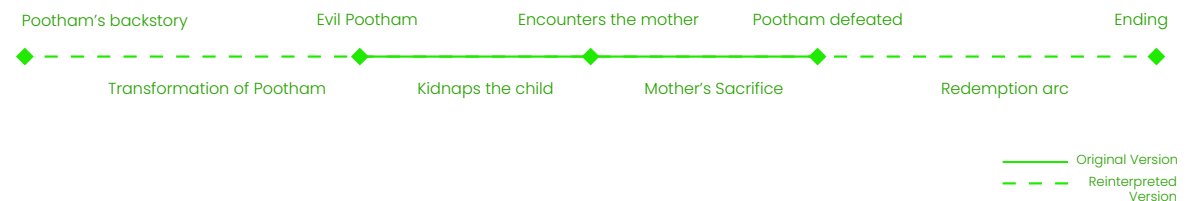
Poothamkali



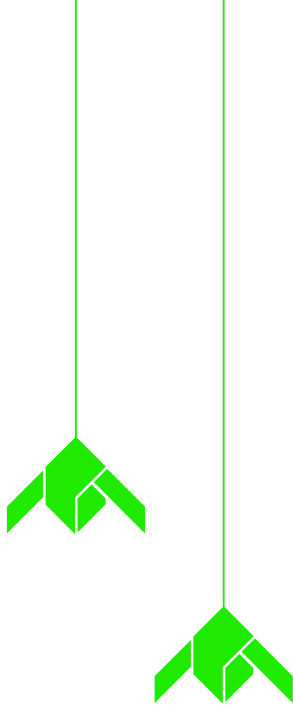
Reinterpreting the story

In my attempt to reinterpret the narrative, I aimed to transcend the conventional villain-hero dynamic, delving into the intricate layers of societal prejudices. The Pootham, initially feared and ostracized, serves as a poignant representation of individuals marginalized and misunderstood, pushed to the fringes due to society's lack of comprehension about their past. Through a richly woven backstory, the transformation of the Pootham from a kind figure to a labeled "demon" is unveiled, unravelling the intricacies of societal perceptions. The story unfolds with Nangeli's unwavering love for her son, Unni, propelling a transformative encounter between them and the Pootham. Nangeli's selfless sacrifice emerges as the pivotal moment that redeems the Pootham, underscoring the enduring power of maternal love and hinting at the potential for societal redemption. This reinterpretation not only grapples with the complexities of human nature but also accentuates the imperative of empathy and understanding for those living in isolation, free from judgment of their past. The story embraces inclusivity and reflecting the diverse tapestry of people and perspectives in our contemporary world.

The motivation behind this reinterpretation lies in the desire to breathe new life into age-old stories, making them resonate with and speak to the challenges and diversity of our modern society, all without losing the essence and roots of the original tale



PROCESS



Study on Parallax

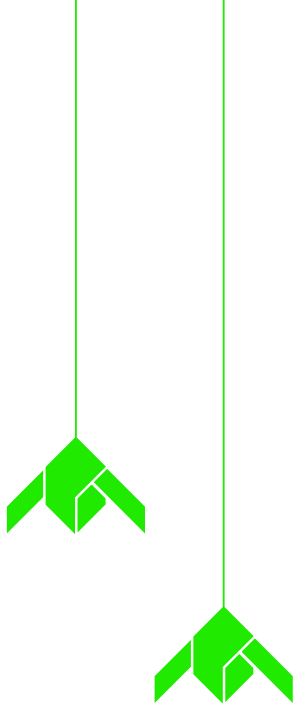
In my research on parallax scrolling comics, I delved into various sources to understand the intricacies of this storytelling medium. I explored articles, online tutorials, and examples of parallax scrolling comics to grasp the full potential of this technology. I discovered that the parallax effect can be used in multiple ways within the comic, such as creating a sense of depth and movement in scenes, transitioning between panels seamlessly, and adding subtle animations to enhance storytelling. Additionally, I delved into the technical aspects, learning about the tools and software required to implement parallax scrolling effectively. Most importantly, I realized how this parallax scrolling technique could breathe life into my story. By providing a visually immersive experience and allowing for creative transitions and animations, it would make the story come alive, captivating and engaging the audience in a way different from traditional storytelling methods.



<http://hobolobo.net/>



<https://www.firewatchgame.com/>



Script and Storyboarding

I started my storyboard along with writing the script as it was easy to visualize the panels. I decided to create a vertical storyboard for my project as it offered a highly visual approach to planning. This format allowed me to envision how each panel and scene would flow vertically, mirroring the final comic. By visually organizing the narrative in the same orientation as the end product, I gained a clearer and more immediate sense of the comic's overall visual impact. It facilitated a more immersive storytelling experience, enabling me to anticipate how readers would engage with the parallax scrolling effect as they scrolled down the page. This method of storyboarding not only enhanced my creative process but also ensured that the final comic would be a visually cohesive and compelling narrative that effectively conveyed the depth and emotion of the story.

I've added a few frames from my storyboard in the next pages.



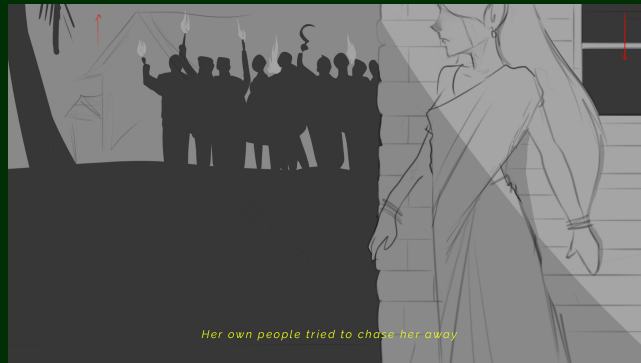
Long ago, in the forest nearby a small village.



there lived a woman alone, who possessed the power of magic



However, instead of embracing her abilities, the villagers, driven by fear and superstition, labeled her as a "Pootham"



Her own people tried to chase her away



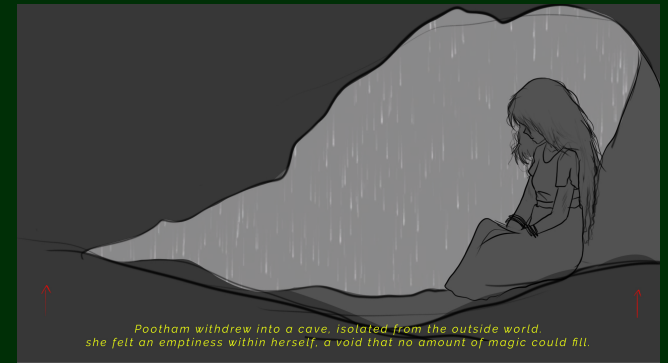
and had to hide in the forest for her own safety



As rumors and tales of her spread, her reputation turned darker by the day



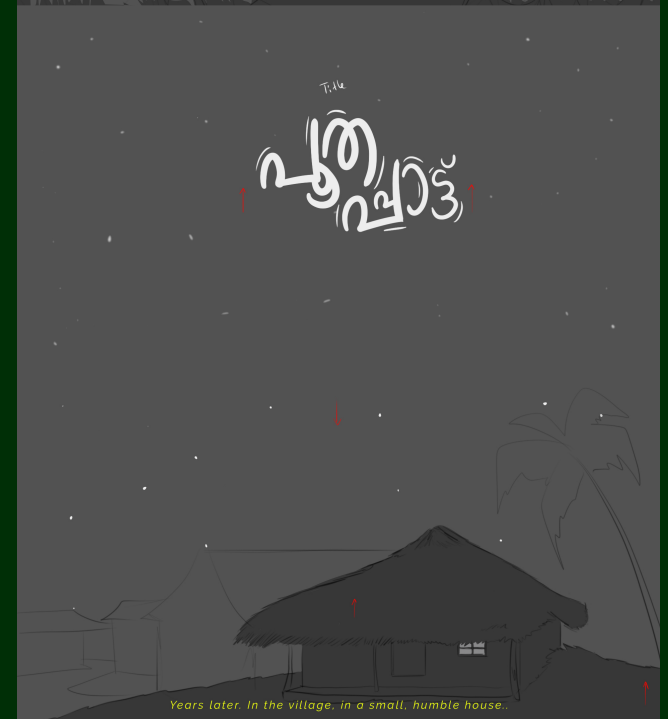
her pale skin and mere presence in the forest sent shivers down the spines of those who passed by



Pootham withdrew into a cave, isolated from the outside world. she felt an emptiness within herself, a void that no amount of magic could fill.



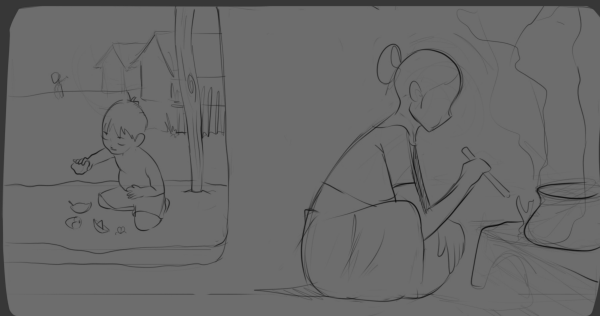
She gazed up at the sky, searching for answers.



Years later. In the village, in a small, humble house..



lived a woman named Nangeti with her son Unni.



She struggled to make ends meet.



but always tried making him happy, reading him stories.



Soon it was time for unni to go for school.



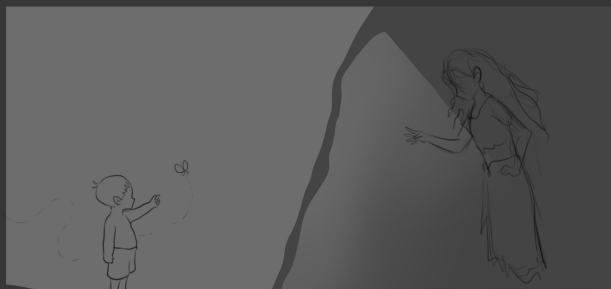
but his curiosity led him deeper into the forest until he stood before the entrance to the Pootham's cave.



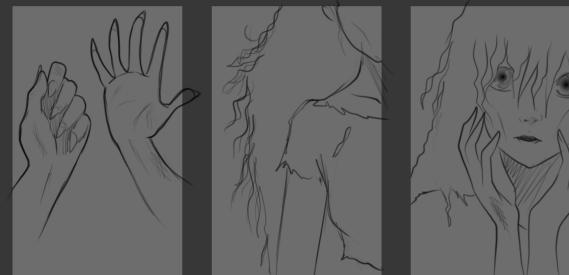
alerted by the sounds from outside, Pootham cautiously peered through a hole and saw Unni.



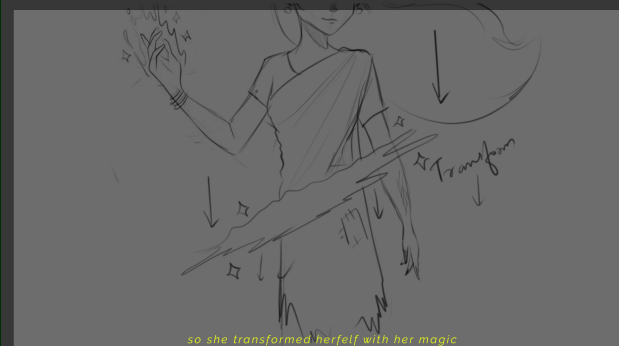
In that moment, something stirred within her, a feeling she had long forgotten - the warmth of maternal love.



She knew she wanted Unni.



She wanted to approach the child but suddenly felt self-conscious about her appearance, after a long time.



so she transformed herself with her magic.



and approached him.

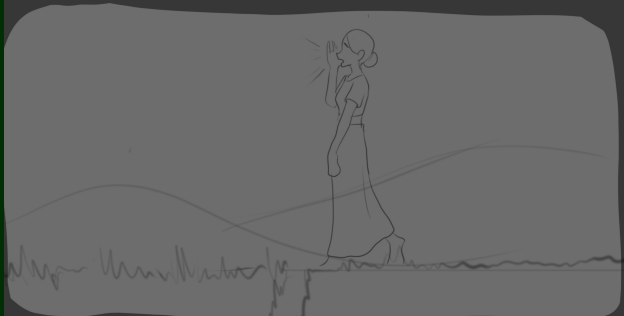




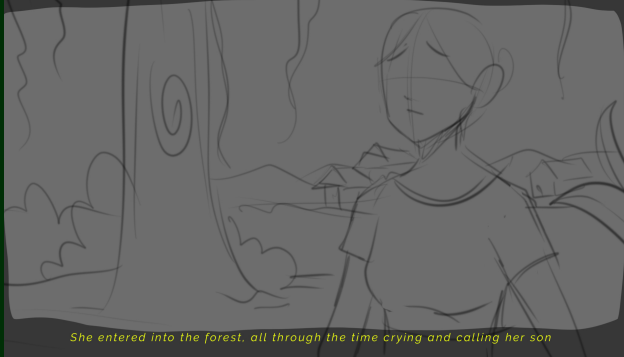
the day faded into darkness



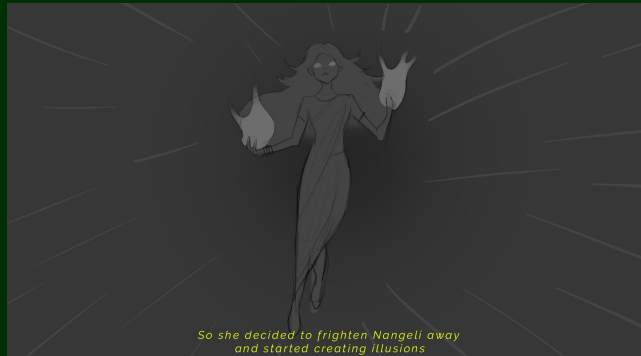
Nangeti anxiously awaited her son's return



Worried and teary-eyed, she could wait no longer and ventured out in search of Unni.



She entered into the forest, all through the time crying and calling her son



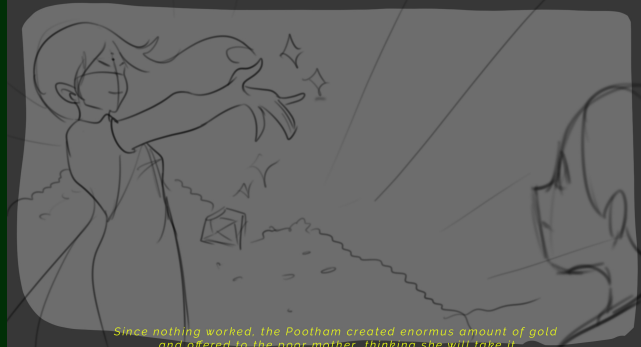
So she decided to frighten Nangeli away and started creating illusions



She conjured wild animals, but that didn't stop Nangeli from moving forward



even a huge storm and a forest fire didn't stop the adamant mother. She wanted her child back



Since nothing worked, the Pootham created enormous amount of gold and offered to the poor mother, thinking she will take it



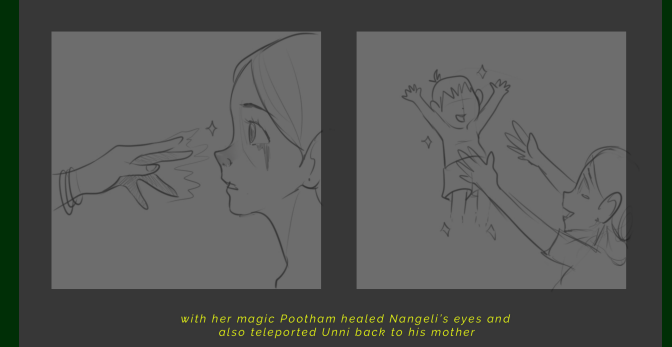
Nangeli didn't even glance at the treasure. Instead, she scooped out her own eyes and presented them to Pootham, declaring that her son meant more to her than her own sight.



!!!



The Pootham was shocked. That moment she realized the depth of that mother's love. She felt defeated



with her magic Pootham healed Nangeli's eyes and also teleported Unni back to his mother

Character Design

Pootham (Backstory)

In the back story, the Pootham is an ordinary woman living in society, different in one respect - she possesses the extraordinary gift of magic that people around her neither understand nor tolerate. Her character is shy and watchful, contrasting sharply with the Pootham who develops after years of isolation, bitterness and anger.



Character Design

Pootham (Present)

After years of evading torment from the townspeople and living in hidden isolation, the post-transformation Pootham starkly contrasts her former self. The visible effects of prolonged isolation are evident — with pale, worn skin, stretched ears from prolonged earring wear, tattered clothes, unkempt hair, and hauntingly vacant eyes. This visual transformation powerfully communicates the profound impact of her solitary existence and the endured hardships.

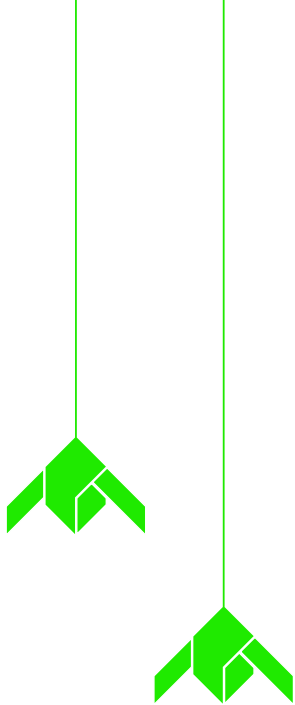


Character Design

Nangeli

Nangeli, the protagonist, bears the weight of poverty visibly etched on her face. Her hardships are evident in the worn lines, telling a story of resilience. Clad in clothes stitched from torn fabric, she reflects the art of mending amidst adversity. The choice to portray her struggle in her appearance adds depth to her character, emphasizing the challenges she faces and the strength she draws from those struggles.

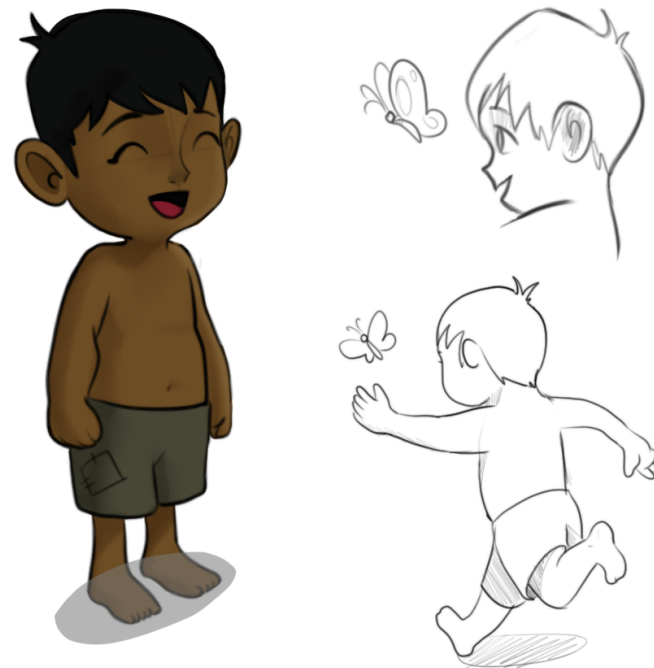


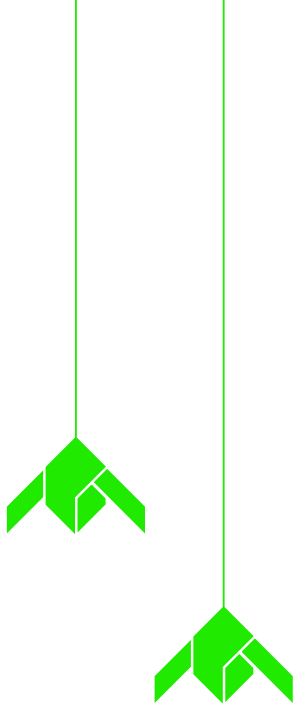


Character Design

Unni

Unni, Nangeli's son, exudes pure innocence and playfulness. His carefree spirit, curious eyes, and joyful laughter bring a lightness to the story. Despite the patched garments reflecting his humble background, Unni's resilience shines through, symbolizing the enduring purity found amidst challenges.





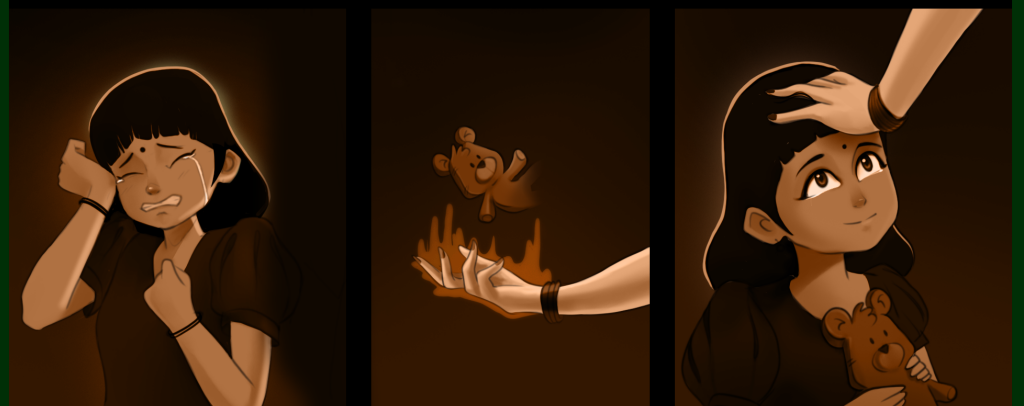
Final Frames

When I started turning my storyboard into the final artwork for the parallax scrolling comic, I was a bit slow at first. In two weeks, I only finished about 13 pictures. I took my initial sketches from the storyboard and made them more detailed for the final images. I didn't change the main ideas, but I added more details to make each picture look good and contribute to the parallax scrolling effect. I used layers to help me organize the different parts of each picture. These had foreground, background and in between layers.

At the beginning, it took me some time to get faster at making these pictures, but as I kept going, I got better at it. I learned how to manage my time well, and I realized how much work goes into making a parallax scrolling comic. I knew that all this effort would result in a cool and engaging way to tell my story.



Long ago, in the forest nearby a small village,







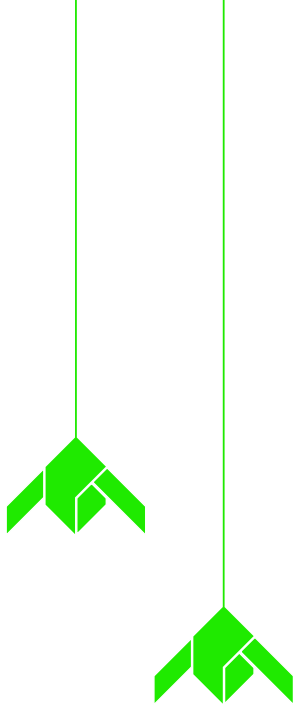
She struggled to make ends meet



Soon it was time for unni to go for school

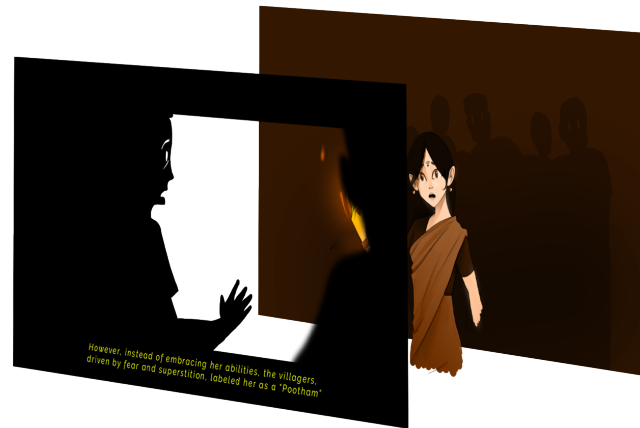


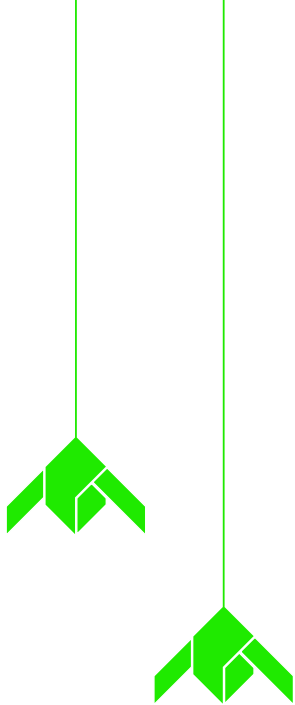
*In that moment, something stirred within her, a feeling she had long forgotten -
the warmth of maternal love*



Adding Parallax

Next, I had to make the parallax effect. I talked to two of my seniors who did similar projects, but mine was a bit different from theirs, so I had to solve it on my own. It was not easy; I tried a few ideas, and they didn't work. Actually, I failed four times before I finally figured out how to do it. It was pretty stressful, about five days of testing and trying different things. But in the end, I got it right, and that was a big relief. It was tough, but it taught me a lot about how this technology works.



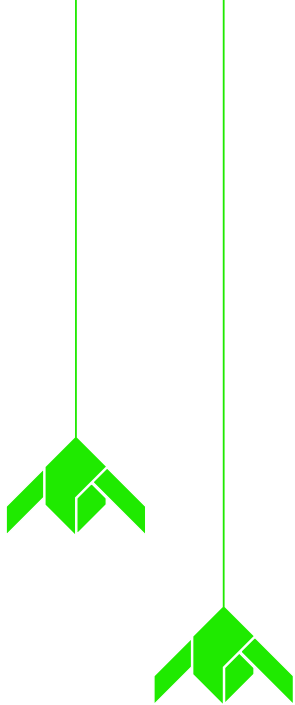


Sync the animation with Scrolling

After getting the parallax effect to work, the next challenge was syncing it with scrolling so readers could go through the comic at their own pace. My initial plan was to use a Lottie file and a web design tool like Webflow, but I hit a roadblock because the file size needed to be very small for this to work. It seemed like my project might stall.

I turned to my seniors for advice, and they suggested splitting the story into parts or making it a video, but I didn't want to compromise the essence of my project. So, I decided to explore other options. I reached out to my schoolmates who were working as software engineers, and together, we found a solution.

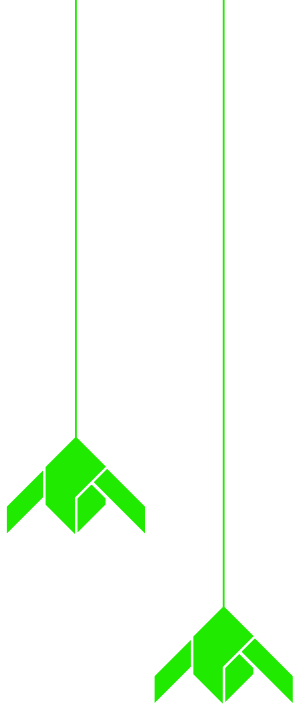
We exported the animation as a sequence of JPEG images and used HTML, JavaScript, and CSS to make it sync with scrolling. This meant that as readers scrolled, the images would animate accordingly, preserving the essence of the parallax effect and ensuring that the storytelling experience remained intact. It was a collaborative effort, and it allowed me to achieve the desired outcome without compromising the quality of the project.



Uploading Online

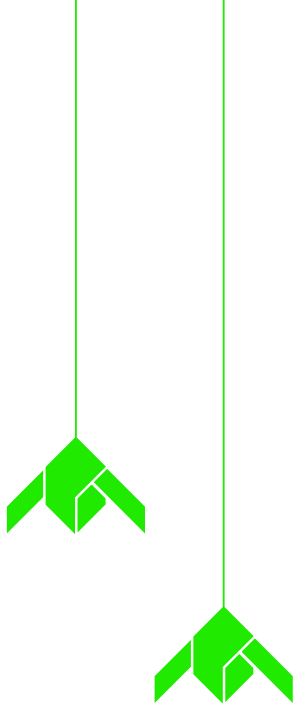
In the final phase of my project, the focus shifted towards making it accessible online, and after exploring various options, I opted for GitHub. This platform allowed me to seamlessly upload my HTML files and host the project online. The straightforward process enabled me to share my parallax scrolling comic effortlessly across different devices, ensuring accessibility for a wider audience. GitHub not only streamlined the process of hosting but also ensured easy sharing, making the storytelling experience accessible to a broader audience.

GitHub link: <https://abhivpm.github.io/Poothapattu/>



What's next?

I see this as just the beginning of a series, where I can keep bringing more amazing folktales from Kerala to life using the parallax scrolling comics. This way, I can explore our cultural stories in a super engaging way and feel even more connected to these timeless tales. Get ready for more adventures and stories coming your way!



Learnings

This project has been a digital exploration for me, diving into new mediums and learning how to amp up digital comics with motion, especially the captivating parallax effect. Navigating through new softwares was a big learning curve, but figuring out how to make it all work was a key lesson. Writing the story also became a whole adventure. Constantly exploring and rewriting honed my skills in crafting a more engaging narrative. Though I feel there's room for growth, this journey has significantly improved my storytelling approach and perspective. On a personal note, I also jumped into the coding world, learning how to bring my creative visions to life in a different way. It's been a journey of both storytelling and coding discovery!