

When he made trips to buy betel in Kandy, my father would take me along too.

Come on boy

The town was like another world. Even aged 10, I could see no future on the plantation...

When I was offered a job in a hardware store, I jumped at the chance to escape

Think you can sweep and clean?

I started out with the mop and broom but soon was fixing machines and running errands for the shop owner...

And finally he made me his house boy



They were Muslim and didn't speak Sinhala, so I began to teach them a little...

It's funny, I called the owner 'Master' and now I forget his real name...!

I lived there for three years. But one day the Master called me lazy. I was affronted! I left soon after with my friend Kumar...

Come! We'll find better work!

After working in the shop all morning, in the afternoon I would take care of Master's four children...

Arunachalam, how do you say 'Mango Juice'?

We spent seven years working in various betel shops in Kandy - fetching, cooking, cleaning, sweeping...



Can we play hide and seek tonight?

If you want to, Sir...

I would collect them from school

They were younger than me but I had to call them 'Sir' and 'Madam'

1963

1965

1969

Kumar was a kindred spirit. He knew the value of hard work, like me. And aged 19 we left together to seek our fortune in the capital - Colombo

We'll have our own betel shops - ten each, you'll see!

