

INSPIRED BY REAL LIFE EVENTS

Tamasha Talkies

CLOSE ON A BUTTERFLY...

It sits motionless on the side of a tree. Suddenly, a jar comes down and covers it. A hand comes in to act as the lid.

EXT. VILLAGE SCHOOL. INDIA -DAY

A teenage boy, AMAR, pulls the jar away from the tree. Nearby there are ten mats where class was recently held. The TEACHER puts away her meager materials. Amar is surrounded by SIX SCHOOLMATES including a pretty, dark-skinned girl with big eyes, SONIA (17), and her smaller, fair-skinned sister, PREETI (14). Sonia watches the butterfly with great joy.

Amar takes the jar and puts it up to his cheek. (**NOTE: All dialogue in Hindi unless noted**).

AMAR

This is how you get a butterfly kiss.

Preeti moves in closer, partially blocking Sonia but Sonia doesn't mind.

Amar removes his hand from the jar and the butterfly flaps away against Amar's cheek. He laughs and puts his hand back on the jar.

PREETI

Can I feel it? Can I feel?!

Amar brings the jar over to Preeti and, again, removes his hand letting the butterfly's wings brush against Preeti's cheek. Preeti giggles.

Amar covers the top again. The other kids beg for them to feel it but he holds it out to Sonia.

AMAR

You want to try?

Sonia nods, giving him the OK. He puts the jar up to her cheek. The butterfly, though, doesn't move. It sits in place. Amar slaps the bottom of the jar and the butterfly comes to life, batting it's wings against her cheek. Sonia screams with joy and jumps away. The butterfly rushes to escape but Amar quickly puts his hand over the jar.

SONIA

Sorry.

Amar is unfazed though.

AMAR

It's OK.

Amar has a gentle way about him that embarrasses Sonia.

EXT. ROAD. AFTERNOON.

Sonia and Preeti walk back home after school. Preeti has a anklet with a bell that jangles when she walks. They are surrounded on either side by barren land.

PREETI

Amar likes you.

SONIA

He put the butterfly on you first.

PREETI

Because I asked.

An abandoned ox-cart lies toppled over.

A shack's roof has caved in.

They continue.

SONIA

It didn't feel like a kiss anyway.

PREETI

It did a little.

SONIA

It felt like this.

She takes Preeti's hand and places it over her (Sonia's) eye and begins blinking. Preeti laughs and pulls away.

PREETI

We don't even need a butterfly.

SONIA

I guess. Unless you like these kisses more...

Sonia suddenly lunges over to Preeti and kisses her cheek. Preeti laughs/screams and runs away. Sonia chases after turning it into a game of tag, Preeti's anklet jangling away.

EXT. SONIA'S FAMILY'S FARM -LATER

Sonia, Preeti, her MOTHER (a quiet, obedient woman with lines of hardship that define her face) and SHIVA, Sonia's weathered father, are working in the fields.

SHIVA
(to Sonia)
Take that to the shed.

Sonia lifts up a very heavy bushel and walks away from them.

In the distance we see ANOTHER FAMILY working the anemic land as well, a trail of dust being kicked up.

As Sonia gets close to the house...

SHIVA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Get up! Get up!

Sonia turns to see Shiva standing over Preeti. He grabs her and pulls her up roughly by the arm.

SHIVA (CONT'D)
You are a fool! You are a useless fool!
You cost me another days work!

Sonia puts down the bushel and rushes over to Shiva and Preeti.

SONIA
(to Shiva)
No! Daddy! No!

Shiva hits Preeti and she falls down amongst a spilt bushel that has been ruined. Her mother watches, helplessly.

SHIVA
Useless!

SONIA
Daddy!

Sonia comes to them.

SONIA (CONT'D)
Daddy, stop! Please.

Preeti hides behind Sonia.

SONIA (CONT'D)
We will make up for it.

Sonia picks up the spilt bushel. Shiva stares down at Sonia for a moment and then steps away from them, frustrated.

SONIA (CONT'D)
(to Preeti)
It's OK.

INT. HOUSE -NIGHT

Sonia comforts Preeti, combing her hair. There are a couple of torn pictures on the wall of Bollywood stars and one of Preeti (torn away from a picture that was the rest of the family). Preeti absently plays with the bells on her anklet.

SONIA
One day, men will line up to marry you
and maybe you'll get to go away.

PREETI
To where?

SONIA
To Delhi or Mumbai.

PREETI
I could meet Rani.

SONIA
That's right.

PREETI
You will come with us too, won't you?

SONIA
Of course.

PREETI
I'm sure we will need someone to help us.

SONIA
That's right. I will help with your
babies.

PREETI
I will have many babies!

SONIA
That's right!

PREETI

I will be so tired. You can bathe them while I sleep.

SONIA

You'll need to get a lot of sleep to keep your beauty.

Preeti puts her head on Sonia's lap and closes her eyes. Sonia takes Preeti's hand and puts it up to her (Sonia's) eye and begins blinking. Preeti smiles as she drifts off to sleep.

EXT. SCHOOL. -DAY

The students are assembled under a few shading trees. The teacher is giving a Geography lesson.

TEACHER

Even though Mumbai is many hundred of miles away, we rely on it for many things, don't we? Who can name one of the things we rely on from Mumbai?

STUDENT

Movies.

Sonia and Preeti sit near each other. Amar sits behind Sonia.

AMAR

(whisper to Sonia)
Did you hear- the computer is back?

Sonia shakes her head no.

AMAR (CONT'D)

Do you and Preeti want to come?

SONIA

We should not spend money for it.

AMAR

I will pay for us.

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER. -DAY

A BULL huffs and groans.

It is tied to a cart on the back of which is a computer station. In the middle of the cue are Sonia, Preeti and Amar.