

WINDOW OF HOPE

/
(AALIA)

(WORKING TITLES)

By
NASIRA KHAN
TARUN JAIN

tarun1_99@yahoo.com

(SWA Member No: 35323)

Registered on
2020-06-01 16:59:07

Reference Number
1591010945

+91 9811545724

+91 8375839428

1 EXT. CASCADE- EARLY MORNING- MOUNTAINS

The weather is moist in the mountains. The soft sunlight penetrates on the cascade. Heavy water falls on the plunge pool, leading it to the stream bed. Beneath the plunge pool, lays pebbles of different shapes and sizes. AALIA (8), looks at a paper boat which floats on the plunge pool. It is moving slowly, following the pace of the water. A loud sound of an airplane passing from above the mountains catches Aalia's attention. She looks up and is mesmerised by it's grandeur. Aalia smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

2 INT. HOUSE - AALIA'S BED - BEFORE SUNRISE

Aalia quietly wakes up, rolls her blanket and sits upright on her low bed. She is wearing an old set of winter wear. She takes out a paper plane from beneath her bed and places it on top of the wooden shelf next to her. She takes the notebook and begins with her homework.

A dull portrait of Aalia with her father hangs on the mud wall. She pulls out some newspaper clippings from under her pillow. It has pictures of airplanes, cities, Eiffel tower and some famous personalities. Aalia touches them with admiration.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. HOUSE - DAWN

The roosters are crowing. It is still dark in the wilderness of Uttarakhand. We look at the exterior of an old Kumaoni house, painted in white with dull blue doors and windows.

Aalia collects the grasses from behind the house and feeds it to the cattle. She slices some woods and brings it inside the house.

MOTHER(O:S)

(Cold)

Dudh chada diya?

CUT TO:

4 INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

A small glass of milk and two biscuits lays on a steel plate. Aalia sits on the floor and stares into the plate. She is in her old school uniform.

In sometime, she walks towards the main door, picks up her muddied shoes, placed against the wall and wipes them clean with a piece of cloth.

CUT TO:

5 INT. WALL - MORNING

Aalia holds AAHANA'S (4), her younger sister's face by the chin and combs her oily hair. Aahana looks up at her while Aalia combs without any interaction.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

The sun has risen. Both the girls heads out for the school.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. JUNGLE & HILLS - PATH - MORNING

In the middle of the jungle, Aalia and Aahana walks along side each other. Next, they climb the rocky path holding each other's hands. Aahana looks up at Aalia while maintaining the pace at which they are walking. They cross from the jungle as we see the village with few houses in the background as the smoke from the chulah's from these houses fill the valley.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. BARREN MOUNTAIN - MORNING

A barren rocky mountain oddly stands among the other green mountains. Both the sisters climb it from one side and goes down from it on the other side.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. RIVER STREAM - MORNING

The sound of the stream fills the atmosphere. Aalia and Aahana walks down to the stream and walks on one side and crosses the stream from wooden log lying from one end to another making a perfect bridge to crossover. Later they walk alongside the stream bed.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. CASCADE - MORNING

The path is filled with heavy rocks. Aalia helps Aahana climb over them with ease. She dusts off her's and Aahana's uniform. They pass sideways a stream and arrive at a quagmire from where the only way forward is through a leap. Aalia puts one foot firmly on dry land and casually/ voluntarily puts the other on the quagmire, and lifts Aahana through to the other side. They continue walking - Aalia with a heavily muddied shoe. The huge cascade makes a splashing sound of water as Aalia leads Aahana towards a small uphill track in the jungle and disappear.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. SCHOOL - COURTYARD - MORNING

Aalia & Aahana walks uphill through a narrow track which leads to their school. Next, they stop and look at the school. It's an old school surrounded by pine trees and an open courtyard in between. There are few other classes on one side of Aalia's class. There are children loitering on the ground. Next, the school bells rings and the children disperse for their classes.

CUT TO:

12 INT. CLASSROOM - SCHOOL - MORNING

Few students walk into half filled classroom. Aalia, stops at the door, bends to take off her muddied shoes. Almost immediately, SONU (8), her classmate, snatches her bag and runs inside. She runs after him. The classroom breaks into a commotion, excited at the prospect of Aalia running after Sonu to fetch her bag. All of a sudden, Aalia stops, looks back, tracing her footsteps and the muddied floor. She stands still, not wanting to dirty the floor any further.

SONU
(Cheerfully)
Aa na, aa.

Sonu, realising Aalia is going to helplessly stay put, tosses her bag to BOY 1, who, after a brief pause, gleefully tosses it back to Sonu, who, in turn, tosses it back to BOY 1, who tosses it back to Sonu. Just at the moment Sonu receives the bag Aalia hurriedly lunges towards him and gets hold of her bag. Sonu tries to snatch it away from her but she hangs onto it with her life.

Taken aback by Aalia's relentlessness, Sonu's cheerfulness vanishes and he aggressively tries to pull the bag. Other students crowd around Sonu and Aalia, sensing that the sudden seriousness could lead to a fight.

The teacher enters the classroom. Everybody rushes to their seats. Aalia manages to snatch her bag from Sonu and quickly reaches her seat. The teacher walks towards the front and notices the muddy footprints on the floor. He turns to look at Aalia's muddied shoes.

TEACHER

Ye aaj fir se Ganda ho gaya.
(Pause) Kaun saaf karega ab?

Aalia walks out and takes off her shoes at the door.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Roz roz batana padta hai.

Aalia picks up the broom and dustpan from the back of the classroom, squats, slowly begins to sweep the floor. Other students look on.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Aise jungle hi banna hai to mat
aya karo school. Ghar pe kya
sikhate hain? (Pause) Yehi sikhate
honge aur kya sikhayenge. (Pause)
Homework kiya hai?

Aalia just nods.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(Pointing to another girl)
Copy nikalo iski.

The girl opens Aalia's bag and takes out her notebook. The teacher walks towards Aalia's desk and opens the notebook. Other students, including Sonu, look on in anticipation. Aalia pauses and then continues sweeping.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(Flipping through the
pages) (Disgusted)
Handwriting ko bhi safai ki zarurat
hai.

Sonu giggles.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Apne ghar mein pehli ho jisko
school naseeb hua hai. Fayda uthao
uska, warna wahi karna padega jo
Maa-Baap karte hain.

As the teacher goes on with his rant, Aalia finishes sweeping the floor and just stands there.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 (Breathing fresh air, Eyes
 closed)

Mujhe class main koi gandagi nahi
 chahiye. Saaf vatavaran main hi
 sarawati ka niwas hota hai.

Aalia hides her muddied feet with the broom and just looks down as the teacher turns towards the blackboard to begin his class. Aalia then notices a colourful magazine on the desk of one of her classmates who flips through the pages.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. SCHOOL - COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

Aalia walks to her younger sister, who awaits near the tree. Aalia avoids an eye contact.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. HILLS - PATH - AFTERNOON

Aalia quietly walks while Aahana looks at her from time to time.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. BRIDGE- AFTERNOON

The sound of water squashing can be heard. Aalia and Aahana walks on the hilly path. We notice Sonu and her friends throwing pebbles at the stream bed flowing below the broken bridge. Aalia and Aahana quietly walks on the bridge. In no time, Sonu throws a tiny pebble which hits the railing of the bridge. Aahana is scared while Aalia stays firm.

SONU

Junglee kahan ko jaree? Jungle ko
 jaree? Junglee jungle ko jaree.

Aalia quickly crosses the tiny bridge, collects few pebbles and throws at them. One of the pebbles hit Sonu who falls down. The sudden aggression shocks Boy 1, who's cap falls down, exposing his bald head. Sonu cries in pain. Boy 1 and Boy 2 begins to throw pebbles at Aaliya.

Aahana enjoys the moment and they run quickly after their small adventure.

SONU (CONT'D)
 (Crying)
 Kal master ji se pikwata hu tujhe.
 Chal bhagja yaha se.

On seeing Sonu in pain. His friends begins to laugh at him.

CUT TO:

16 INT. HOUSE - DUSK

Aalia stands facing the wall in her uniform. She looks at her notebook for sometime and later tears it apart and stands motionless.

After a moment, Aahana picks up a torn peice of paper from the notebook and looks on.

CUT TO:

17 INT. BATHROOM - DUSK

Steam comes out of the water while Aalia takes a bath.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - DUSK

The sun is setting. Their washed uniforms hangs from the rope. Aalia follows the same ritual. She appears from the back of the house with some straws to feed the goats. Followed by chopping of woods and later taking it inside.

CUT TO:

19 INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Rice, sliced potato curry and some green leaves lays scantily on the plates. Aalia sits by her plate and looks at the food while Aahana relishes the sliced potatoes.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Aalia washes the dishes.

CUT TO:

21 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGH

Aalia sits on the bed still in the same mood. She contemplates about what has happened and her reaction. Aahana enters into the room and climbs on the bed like a toddler. She looks at Aalia and slowly takes out a notebook from behind her and hands it to Aalia. The notebook is somewhat taped, looking more like a bundle of paper. Aalia looks at it and then at Aahana. She takes the notebook.

Aahana climbs to her side of the bed and lies down. She awaits to be tucked in. After Aalia tucks her in, Aahana goes off to sleep.

Aalia stares at her notebook. Next, she turns to a new page and begins her homework. She picks up a broken paper plane and straightens it. She takes out her collection of newspaper clippings and flips through it. Next, she takes out the new magazine she has found in her classroom and flips through. She comes across a giant size picture of a space shuttle launched into the space and on the right side of the magazine, a quote which reads "The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get on to it, and the perseverance to follow it. Wishing you a great journey" by KALPANA CHAWALA, the legendary India born Astronaut in her iconic orange space suite. Without understand a word, Aalia looks at her.

She is mermerised by the beauty of the machine in the picture. She cuts it out of the magazine and adds to her collection.

She picks up her crushed paper plane, straightens it and then turns it upwards, imagining it to be a space shuttle.

Next, she ties the tip of the airplane with a thread and hangs it from the roof next to the yellow bulb, making it appear like a rocket. It moves from left to right cutting the light from the bulb on Aalia's face. She looks at it as it floats in the air.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - BED - NIGHT

We hear the heavy laboured breathing of both the children. The room is dark, a soft moonlight from the window falls on Aalia's bed. She is fast asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

The breathing continues.