

Pariahs among us

[*SEMPER AMICUS*]

by

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FADE IN:

ON SCREEN:

Konarka, January 18th, 1969.

EXT. KONARKA. ORISSA. INDIA. TWILIGHT.

GINA (Hispanic, short, white female, 16 years old, 5'4", 120 lbs, blonde hair, blue eyes, pregnant, wearing a long Hindu dress and sandals, her feet and face dusty), Gina looks tired and scared, she gets off a beaten up provincial bus that on the right side of the windshield reads: "Bhubaneshwar-Konarka"- with one hand she rubs her pregnant stomach and on the other hand she carries a worn out bag with her belongings.

Gina's hand shakes as she shows a piece of paper to an OLD HINDU MAN (65-70, 5'6", 140 lbs, bald, in Hindu clothing).

The old man motions Gina to follow him.

Gina follows the man through several narrow, empty streets until finally the old man points to an incomplete adobe home. Gina tips him and walks up to the door.

Gina knocks on the door.

A Hindu woman opens the door.

EXT. THE ADOBE HOUSE ENTRANCE. TWILIGHT.

Gina, INDIRA (Hindu dressed, olive skin, 45, 5'5", 130, long hair, slim), YAASEEN (6'3", 180, light skin, beard, dressed in Muslim garbs).

INDIRA

Gina?

Gina plays nervously with a small straw doll hanging from her neck, she replies in a heavy Spanish accent, her lips tremble as she speaks.

GINA

Mrs. Singh?

INDIRA

Dear! Come in, please.

(to the side and raising her voice)

Yaaseen, come here, Gina's arrived!

INT. INDIRA'S HOUSE

Gina walks inside, sits on an old straw sofa and exhales.

GINA

Oh, thank God! Has Kabdul called?

Yaaseen, who towers over the two women, says in a soothing voice:

YAASEEN

Relax dear, it's been a long journey,
how long did it take you? Three weeks?

INDIRA

You must be tired. [caressing Gina's
Forehead] Are you hungry, it's almost
8 p.m., have you eaten anything?

The conversation is interrupted by a knock on the door.

A young Muslim man, Damodar, (5'11", 150, 20 years old) knocks on the
semi-open door, sticks his head in and says in Bengali:

DAMODAR

Indira? Kabdul is on the phone.

GINA

Kabdul, did he say Kabdul?

INDIRA

Yes dear, he calls at our neighbor's
house, want to come with me?

GINA

Yes!

They walk past Damodar and out the door.

INT. A LIVINGROOM. NIGHT

Gina and KABDUL (21, tanned, 5'10, 170 lbs, long frizzled dark hair and
a soul patch, in a T-shirt with bandages around his head) on the phone.

INTERCUT:

GINA

I just got here...

KABDUL

I know, I've been calling for a week.
Did Mom tell you I've got shot?

GINA

You got what?

KABDUL

Shot, but I am fine, it was just a graze.

GINA

What? [Looking pale] you what? Oh my God...

Gina faints, drops the phone, and, slowly falls to the floor.

INDIRA

[Screaming]
Hold on to her Damodar! Gina!

People converge to help Gina.

INT. A BEDROOM. NIGHT

Two petromax lanterns light up an otherwise dark room, one lantern on each side of a bed, the flames cast phantasmagoric shadows on the walls.

Gina lies unconscious on a bed.

Indira pushes Gina's legs towards Gina's stomach vigorously three times, then, stops and rips Gina's dress in half.

Yaaseen looms over them with blankets in his arms.

A female midwife, ZIA, (40, 5'2", short, heavy set), places wet towels on Gina's forehead.

INDIRA
Yaaseen, boil some water quick,
and bring it here.

YAASEEN
Is she giving birth?
(bows)
May Allah bless her.

Gina moans as Indira pushes Gina's legs again.

INDIRA
Gina, come back to us dear,
(taps Gina's cheek)
you are going to be a mother.

Gina realizes what's happening and screams.

ZIA
(push motioning her hands)
Thelun, thelun.

INDIRA
Push dear, push!

Gina pushes as she screams. Zia gets under Gina's legs.

ZIA
Jore, aaro jore.

INDIRA
Hard, push harder.

Indira pushes Gina's legs towards her stomach.

INDIRA (cont.)
It's coming,
[screaming]
Yaaseen, the water!

YAASEEN
(sheepishly)
Here dear, I've got it.

GINA
(exhales) Ah...

Ragina screams and then, in between gasps, softly murmurs:

GINA
Ragina...

Baby Ragina cries as she's lifted by Indira, Yaaseen looks at Gina then raises his long arms upwards and says:

YAASEEN
Congratulations! [then looking at
the newborn:] Welcome to India.

INT. BEDROOM. DAY

Gina, baby Ragina on Gina's arms, Indira. Indira enters room, Gina motions her to be quiet.

GINA
Shsh, she's asleep.

INDIRA
She?

GINA
Quiet, (stressing the words)
don't wake her up!

The baby makes noises with her mouth.

INDIRA
I thought it was a boy...

GINA
[Whispering]
Quiet, she just fell asleep.

INDIRA
Gina, I saw...

Gina's eyes bulge out and she seethes, interrupting, upset.

GINA
Muslin boys grow up to be suicide bombers...

Suddenly Gina breaks into tears.

GINA [CONT'D]
... she had blood all over her,
it was dark, how could you see?

INDIRA
I'm an old woman, but blind I am not.

GINA
Enough! Don't wake her up.

INDIRA
But dear, [sighs then pauses]
have you named... her... yet?

GINA
Yes, Ragina, I've been dreaming
of her since I was a child.

BABY
Mm.

INDIRA
Ragina is a beautiful name indeed, Ragina Singh.

The baby cries.

GINA
See? You woke her up.
[looking at the baby]
It's okay, it's okay,
she was leaving anyway.

Indira looks annoyed. The baby cries in the background.

Gina waves Indira away.

ON SCREEN:

SUMMER OF 1974, THAR DESERT, INDIA

Gina and Ragina, five years old Ragina has her skirt wrapped around her waist and a play pot on her hands as she walks around.

Ragina falls down scraping her left knee, two other five year old girls play not far from Ragina.

Ragina gets up, dust herself off and then accidentally drops the pot she is carrying.

RAGINA
Clumsy Ragina!

Ragina picks the pot up and places it on top of a flat rock painted like a play-stove, with a frustrated grunt.

Gina gets up from where she's sitting and walks up to Ragina, fixes Ragina's hijab and lowers her skirt.

GINA

There! Don't pull your skirt up again.

Gina hugs Ragina and kisses her forehead, Ragina clings to Gina.

GINA (cont.)

You are not going to grow up to become a suicide terrorist. You hear? You are always going to be my little girl. (waves her away)
Go and play.

One of the little girls walks over and places a large dead rodent on Ragina's play pot. The girls giggle, Ragina stares with a blank look.

INT. PALANPUR. GUJARAT PROVINCE. DAY

Gina Ragina come out from a children therapy clinic, the sign on the door reads: cognitive functioning, developmental delays. Therapy and medication. Ragina in a staring spell walks away holding Gina's hand.

EXT. THAR DESERT. DAY

Five years old Ragina and several other young girls make dung patties from a large dung pile, they rub it in their hands until it looks like a meat patty ready for a hamburger, then lay it on the ground next to several other hundreds of patties aligned.

EXT. PATAN. GUJARAT PROVINCE. DAY

Gina, Ragina (7 yrs. old), a WOMAN in burka, two MEN and a mob of people. A truck stops at a busy intersection, two men take down a woman in burka with her hands tied up in the front, she screams, sobs and cries, agitated; people look at them and start to gather around.

RAGINA

What's going on mom?

GINA

I don't know but it doesn't look safe, let's go.

RAGINA

Ma, look, the truck is moving up.

As they speak the bed of the truck (full of boulder rocks) starts to lift up, unloading all size of boulders on the woman as she screams.

GINA

Oh, my God!

RAGINA

They are stoning her.

People scream insults and pick up stones and begin to stone the woman.

GINA
My God. (trying to cover Ragina's eyes).

RAGINA
They're saying that she is a prostitute.

People continue stoning the woman, the woman falls to the ground.

RAGINA (cont.)
I'm scared mom (but expressionless).

GINA
Let's get out of here.

Gina and Ragina run away while grunting people stone the fallen woman.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

Ragina looks at her half naked figure on the mirror in a partially lit bathroom, she flaps her hands in the air, her long hair loose.

Ragina hears a ruckus outside and looks out a broken window.

EXT. INDIA. DAY

Ragina sticks her face out from the broken window and sees Muslims and Hindus fighting, religious leaders instigating crowds.

EXT. A SCHOOL. INDIA. DAY

Gina [black burka], Ragina [10 yrs. old], male teacher (35 yrs. old), tall and skinny, with glasses, short beard and bald, and several children. Gina picks up Ragina at school, an adobe building on a dirt road. About twenty children exit, the teacher holds Ragina's hand as they wait by the school door.

TEACHER [In Hindu]
Oh, there you are! [looking at Gina]
Ragina was a good student today.

GINA [In Spanish]
What's he saying?

RAGINA [in English]
[looking sad] He says that I
did good in school today.

TEACHER
She's a such good child, sometimes
I forget her moderate retardation.

GINA

Ragina, what happened?

Ragina, a blank look on her little face, pauses, then replies.

RAGINA

He says that I did good in school today.

TEACHER

You should be happy, she's learning to open up.

Gina gets on her knees, caressing Ragina's face she asks.

GINA

Ragina, what happened honey?

TEACHER

[smiling] She participated in open class.

GINA

(screams) Pervert! [Grabs
Ragina by the hand] Pervert!

Gina's voice breaks as she sobs and starts to walk away backwards.

GINA (cont.)

Pervert! (sobs)

TEACHER

[Waves to Ragina as she leaves]
Alavidha, goodbye.

EXT. A DIRT STREET. INDIA

A confused Ragina questions her crying mother. Gina's eyes are red from
fury and frustration. Gina kneels to talk to Ragina.

RAGINA

(looking afraid)
Why are you crying mom?

GINA

(sobs)
Why was he holding your hand?