
MONSTERS UNDER THE BED

By

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My thanks to all the women who's stories
have gone into this one...

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Second Draft

THE FILM IS SET IN MUMBAI AND GOA, INDIA.

Scene 1

Darkness

In the area of darkness we begin to hear something breathing. The breath is menacing, animal. The darkness explodes into the sound of a dog barking savagely. We see glimpses of sharp teeth... enraged crazy eyes... a dog snarling and going for the kill...

A woman shoots upright, gasping for breath. She has woken up in a darkened room. Our first glimpse of Nina shows us that she is shaking with fear and sweating. The man sleeping beside her groggily surfaces.

Bunty

What's the matter?

Nina

The dog! The dog... The dog under the bed will bite me!

Bunty shakes off his sleepiness and sits up. Nina is very scared and incoherent. He soothes her like you would a child.

Bunty

What is it?

Nina

The Dog!!.. it's going to bite me.. the dog under the bed..

Bunty

We don't have a dog. We don't even have a bed.

Nina pauses on the edge of hysteria. She looks around. They are sleeping on a mattress spread on the floor.

Scene 2

Int: Halfway Home, Mumbai: Day

Nina smiles directly at us. It is a very different looking Nina. She looks cheerful, focused and decidedly pretty.

Nina

I have someone that I want you to meet.

She is sitting at a small child's desk. She turns. The chair beside her is empty.

CUT

We see Nina smiling at us again.

Nina

I'd like you to meet Sheila who has been at the Halfway Home for children for the last six months.

She turns to the chair beside her. No Sheila.

CUT

We see Nina smiling at us for the third time. A very shy girl is sitting next to her, hiding her face in her arm.

Nina

You'll say hello this time? You won't hide?
There's the camera... okay? Just hello.

The camera zooms into Nina.

Nina

Sheila has been at the Halfway House for
rescued children for the last six months. I'd
like you to meet her.

She turns to the chair. No Sheila. Nina peers under the table. Sheila is hiding there. Nina gestures for the camera to follow and promptly ducks under the table. Sheila crawls away to the next table. Nina promptly follows, converting it into a game.

We see a small hand pull paper and pencil off a table. We see Sheila curled up under a table drawing. Nina squeezes in beside her.

Nina

Can I see?

Sheila moves her hand. She has drawn a lopsided square and is busy colouring it black.

Nina

What is that?

Sheila

Box

Nina

Is there something in it?

Sheila shakes her head.

Nina

Why is it black?

Sheila

There's no light inside it.

Sheila draws another crude image. It is a lopsided circle with a tiny hole in the centre of it.

Nina

What is that?

Sheila

Guess.

Nina

It's a plate with a hole in it... a bangle?... a
ball?

Sheila

It's something you put on the door and even if
you bang and bang it doesn't open.

Nina

It's a lock!

We travel in to the crude drawing of a lock. As we do we hear a voice. We pull back from the drawing to see Nina with a teacher, talking informally, off camera.

Teacher

We rescued Sheila some time ago. One of the neighbours phoned the police and they called us in. She was chained in a small room with no windows. In utter darkness. She'd been there six months. The chain had worked it's way into her ankle.

We see the shock on Nina's face. She stares down at the drawing of the lock that Sheila banged and banged but which wouldn't open.

Int: Another room: Day

We are travelling over a series of children's drawings that are pinned on a softboard. The teacher is explaining. The camera crew is following her and Nina.

Teacher

Very often the children find it impossible to talk directly of their traumas and experiences. They're scared. They've been threatened with consequences if they speak. Some of them don't talk at all. We have to coax it out of them. Listen very very carefully. Because in their own way, they're trying to tell.

The teacher stops. They have come to the edge of the softboard. Beyond that the wall is covered in a sprawl of strange hieroglyphics drawn in coal. Strange scribbles cover every spare inch at child level. One can barely make out figures of people...fantastic combined monsters...what looks like alphabets... They continue around the corner. We follow.

Teacher

That's Muniya's work. We got her about a month ago.

Nina

What's her story?

Teacher

We don't know. She was found hiding in a railway yard. She hasn't spoken since the day she came here. But she draws. Only in charcoal.

Around the corner we come upon a little girl. She is standing facing the corner. All around her the walls are covered with her scribbles. The teacher goes up to her and gently turns her around. We see that her face is black. She is slowly and methodically rubbing charcoal onto her face. Tears are rolling through the charcoal and dripping off her chin.