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## NFDC Film Bazaar: '50th Anniversary' And 'Nikas' Talk About Disappointment, Pain



'50th Anniversary' narrates the story of a couple who has just celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage; 'Nikas' also follows a married couple who is devastated when their baby is born with an ugly scar on her cheek.

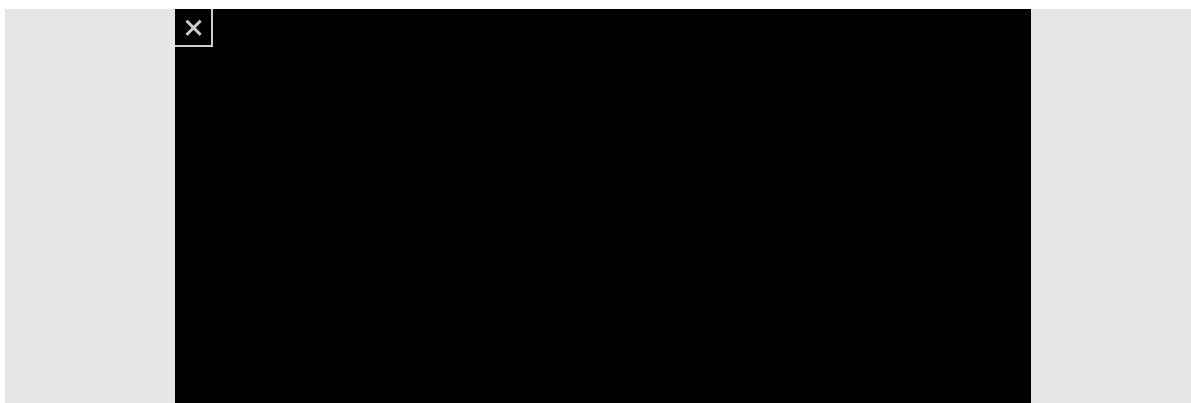
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This year, the ongoing Film Bazaar has many short features, although I found some of them were not original. Take, for instance, Tamal Dasgupta's 50th Anniversary – which is more or less a copy of the 2012 Cannes Palm dOr clincher, Amour, made by the renowned Austrian helmer, Michael Haneke (Funny Games, The White Ribbon – both psychologically scary). Yes, Dasgupta has tweaked his work, but the core idea remains the same as Amour (Love).

With actors Ashok Ranjan Dutta and Ipsita Bhattacharya leading the small cast, the Bengali movie, on the virtual Bazaar platform, organised by the National Film Development Corporation of India, narrates the story of a couple who have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage. It has not been a happy one with the husband suffering from cancer and the wife bed-ridden. The man, who has just a few months left, is in a dilemma. Who would take care of her after he is gone? She does not want to go to her son in Bengaluru. So, both die by suicide and lie holding each other's hands with flowers on their bed. He writes a long letter to his son, and we can feel the man's sense of abandonment and loneliness.



In Amour, the 80-year-old husband, who notices his wife wasting away in bed, smothers her to death, and leaves. He does not kill himself. His daughter finds her mother after cops had broken in.

The one plus point of the 50th Anniversary is the performance. Both the actors are superb at expressing the anguish of having to depart this way, taking a very lonely road. The man's letter to his son says, time and again, that he must be awfully busy with his work and family. The words convey deep pain and disappointment. Which Dasgupta paints poignantly and powerfully.

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The other short work, Nikas, by Shashank Sudhakarro Sao, is also about regret and disillusionment. Suhas Bansod and Poonam Tripathi headline the cast as a young, married couple. They are devastated when their baby is born with an ugly scar on her cheek. The man wants to give away the child, while the woman is very reluctant. She says that they could go in for plastic surgery to remove the mark, but he is adamant.

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Many years later, the man is alone with his wife dead, and his son, pressured by his wife, admits the father to a care home. And who is the supervisor there? None other than his daughter, who has grown into a pretty young woman, warts and all, but vivacious and extremely good-natured.

I would suppose life gets back at you, but, nonetheless, suspect that it could not have been the scar alone that drove the man to abandon his child in an orphanage. The fact that the child was a girl must have been the deciding factor in a country where the female child is still looked upon as a burden. Female infanticide is still not uncommon in the countryside.

*(Author, commentator and movie critic has been covering the Film Bazaar for several years)*

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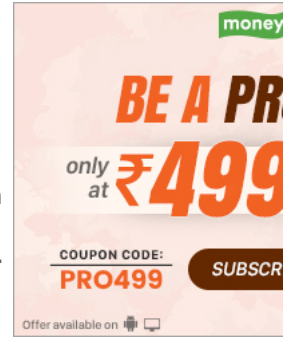
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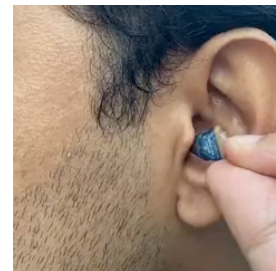
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