

Nocturnal Burger: India's Live Action Short Film For the Oscars Is A Powerful Story Of Sexual Abuse

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[Mumbai, India](#)

A still from the film.

India's Nocturnal Burger is in the race for the upcoming Oscars. It is a live short action film and has been helmed by Reema Maya.

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India's Nocturnal Burger is in the race for the upcoming Oscars. It is a live short action film and has been helmed by Reema Maya. Twenty-eight minutes long, it is Reema's second short movie.

Set over a single night, Nocturnal Burger follows Simi (played by Millo Sunka) and 13-year-old Minu (Bebo Madiwal). When Simi sees an auto-rickshaw driver molesting a minor girl, she takes the help of a schoolteacher and together they go to a police station. There is nothing graphic in the short, but every time it shows Minu's eyes, we are devastated.

This is not a story that has not been told before; in fact, it has been several times. Yet, every time we watch something on this subject of child abuse, we feel deeply disturbed. Minu's trauma is unbearable. On the other hand, Simi tries to seek justice with the help of the teacher. Simi realises that time alone will heal some wounds. At the police station, a male inspector handles the investigation. And a female cop helps him. We can clearly see traces of misogyny and patriarchy. The movie handles a lot: casual racism, apathy in our systems and people, the lack of female agency, and just how public our exploitation often is.

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Nocturnal Burger is really honest, despite the fact we may feel a sense of helplessness when we see how it ends. "The journey of this film started from a very unfortunate true incident a few years ago. Everything that happened that night stayed deep inside me, and 'Nocturnal Burger' is the first outlet it has had. It is an exploration of abuse and trauma; fantasy and escapism. It talks about the omnipresence of sexual abuse even in our public spaces, and the need for vigilance and intervention by the community," Reema told Variety.



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"Nocturnal Burger" is a coming-of-age film in the darkest sense. We all remember our teenage moments of wanting to grow up too fast and the moment we understood for the first time what growing up actually feels like. It is in the transition between these two moments that the story of 'Nocturnal Burger' takes place on a rainy night in Mumbai," the director added.

The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. It has since been screened at multiple festivals and won over 30 awards, including the Best International Short Special Mention at Palm Springs International Shortfest and the Film Critics Guild Gender Sensitivity Award at Dharamshala International Film Festival.

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About the Author

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...[Read More](#)

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