

Oxford Revisited

A feature screenplay synopsis By Zak Mir & S R Ahmad

Logline: A middle-aged Jewish German psychologist's confession of sin to a starry-eyed Muslim student at Oxford from Southeast Asia is darker than the secret agent's plot that destroys him.

Synopsis: Rolf Kosterlitz, a middle-aged German Jew, who is an inmate at a Nazi concentration camp, is charged with the crime of being an accomplice in an insurgency plot. In the hands of ruthless German soldiers, he is given a choice: either remain silent and suffer a painful death or save his skin and turn in a friend who recently saved his life. That night the choice Rolf makes will haunt him for the rest of his life and the only way he can find solace is by getting that story off his chest.

Years later he finds Rafi Ahmad, a young Oxford University freshman of Southeast Asian descent and befriends him. Over the years, Rolf unloads the burden of guilt of his sin by sharing the chilling stories of how he lost his eye and later his heart and soul. Rafi is his willing and dedicated listener.

The main plot takes place in Oxford, capturing the zeitgeist of Sixties' England and on the backdrop of its exciting and explosive Cultural Revolution. Despite their wide age and cultural differences, the lives of the two men – Rolf and Rafi, intertwine during various social gatherings and their common interest in women, arts and culture, and philosophy.

One night, Rolf hunts Rafi down and takes him to his flat. He begs him to come to the police station to make a statement. He claims agents of an organization are following him. When Rafi refuses, Rolf suspects his malfeasance and collusion with the agents, who allegedly are hell-bent to destroy him. The accusation hurts Rafi and he storms out of the flat. He turns forthwith to Rolf's flat and resumes listening to his story. Following that episode, over the months and years, he gets pulled into Rolf's amazing world, filled with classical paintings, books and music but most of all his theories in the field of psychology and the chutzpah with which he challenges the Carl Jung Institute of Psychiatry to expose their hypocrisy. His paranoia about agents is all to do with his crusade to debunk C G Jung.

A glimpse of Rafi's own background is also shown: his childhood in a remote village in East Pakistan and his amusing and often, anecdotal events and experiences of love and heartbreak, prejudice and culture shock in 1960s England. At the close of Rolf's story, over a heated exchange and Rafi's impulsive outburst their friendship abruptly ends, leaving Rafi with deep regrets. Many years later he goes to visit Rolf to make amends but it is too late. Rolf is dead, and his death is shrouded in mystery. The film concludes with Rafi sitting in his living room and staring at the Chinese vase, the wedding gift from Rolf, and agonizing that he has to live with his own guilt forever.

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