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"Days and Nights in the Forest"

Four friends from Calcutta: Ashim, a promising executive, Sanjoy, Labour officer in a Jute Mill, Hari, an allround-sportsman, and Sekhar, a jobless parasite with a yen for gambling, leave the cares of the city behind them and make for the forests of Palamau to spend a holiday there. With nothing planned in advance, they arrive at a forest bungalow which they acquire by bribing the chowkidar.

In the evening, in a mode of gay abandon, the friends go exploring in the woods and come to a local wine shop. While they sit drinking, an attractive tribal girl, Duli comes to them begging for money to buy drinks. Hari gets attracted to her and gives her 10 rupees.

The next morning, Sekhar wakes up to the sound of female voices. Looking out of the window, he sees two sophisticated young girls promenading in the woods in the distance. He announces the discovery, but nobody believes him. Later confirmation comes from Lakha a local boy they had picked up to run errands for them.

The boys make their way to the cottage where the girls are supposed to be staying. By a stroke of luck they gain access to it and meet the Tripathi family. This consists of father Sadasiv, daughter Aparna, widowed daughter-in-law Jaya and her eight years old son Tublu.

Ashim is interested in Aparna, and even continues to be alone with her while the others play badminton. But she remains aloof and coldly polite.

A series of events follow in which the boys find themselves inadvertently in the positions of increasing embarrassment in relation to the girls. Ashim, particularly, begins to lose his grip on things. At this point, the conservator of forests arrives, tells the boys off for having acquired the bungalow illegally and asks them to leave. The situation is saved in the nick of time by the arrival of the girls on the scene. It turns out, that Aparna's father is an old friend of the conservator. She introduces the boys as her close friends. The conservator apologises.

In a village fair, where they all go, the four friends get separated from one another, Sekhar gets stuck in a gambling booth. Hari finds Duli and runs off with her. Ashim finds the excuse to take Aparna away from her sister-in-law, and Sanjoy, left alone with Jaya, has to escort her back to the cottage.

Hari makes love to Duli in the woods, and thereby recovers his self confidence. Later he is beaten up by Lakha, whom he had earlier falsely accused of having stolen his wallet. Jaya is crushed and humiliated, when her attempt to seduce Sanjoy fails because of the latter's inhibitions. Aparna and Ashim come closer to each other after some doubts and misunderstandings have been cleared up.

When the girls have to leave suddenly because of a wedding of a relative in Calcutta, the boys realise they have nothing left to do in the forest.

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST

(Aranyer Din Ratri)

India

Source: Piyali Films, Calcutta. Production: Nepal Dutta, Ashim Dutta. Direction, Script, Music: Satyajit Ray. Photography: Soumendu Roy. Leading Players: Soumitra Chatterjee, Robi Ghose, Sharmila Tagore, Subhendu Chatterjee, Samit Bhanja, Kaberi Bose, Simi, Aparna Sen, Pahari Sanyal.

