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in his living room. After seeing me all glammed up, he asked why I had put on so much makeup as he had not wanted to see me that way. Hearing that, I felt so bad that I couldn't even look him properly in the eye. He then proceeded to ask Suchanda Apa if I was extremely shy. She told him that I had done a few films in Bangladesh, and that I was already quite popular there. Satyajit Ray then told me to go to the Indrapuri Studio the next day, without any makeup. He also handed me the scripts, and told me to memorise them. The next day, when I got in front of the camera, he said that I was like a completely different person from what he saw the day before. I could hear him exclaim that he had found the actor he was looking for, and selected me. I could not believe that it was actually happening.

Rafi: What happened after that?

Bobita: Satyajit Ray then told the producer to complete all the formalities with me. I was handed the entire schedule and script. I was instructed to memorise the whole script. I still have the letters that he sent me. Satyajit Ray also formed a friendship with my father. The first shooting took place at Shantiniketan, and I went there with my father.

Rafi: Did Satyajit Ray ever rebuke you for not playing your part properly?

Bobita: I used to wonder from time to time, how Manik Da, as everyone used to call him, never told me that I am not acting properly. Maybe, he saw a similarity between me and the character. That's why he found all my gestures, style, and everything else exactly like the character. And if he ever was not satisfied with a take, he would say it in the nicest possible way. He would say that the show was very nice, but he would like another take. During a shooting I once did, my character and



a couple of others were in a jungle. Suddenly, an antagonistic character appeared, and once he saw me, he tried to forcefully rip my clothes off. During the struggle, Sandhay Di's character beat the man with a crowbar, and killed him. We then returned home, and my character stood by the doorway. Satyajit Ray told me that he would put my acting skills to the test as I would have to get teary eyed for the scene. He took a trolley shot, and I had to walk to the bank of Ganga, and then burst out in tears. I managed to do that, and after the shooting was done, everyone on the set broke out in applause.

Rafi: Who were your favourite directors?

Bobita: One of my biggest regrets is that I didn't get to do enough films with my mentor, Zahir Raihan. After seeing *Jibon Thekey Ney*, Satyajit Ray said that Zahir Bhai was an amazing director. I only did a few films with him. When shooting for *Let There Be Light*, Zahir bhai used to say that it would be his final movie, God knows why. And unfortunately, it turned out to be his last, and that project remained unfinished. I gave it my all for the shooting of that film. I would say that Zahir bhai is Bangladesh's best director. But, we also had a lot of amazing

directors back then: Khan Ataur Rahman, Subhash Datta, Narayan Ghosh Mita, Kazi Zaheer, Amjad Hossain, Sheikh Niamat Ali; they all made unbelievable films. And after working with the great Satyajit Ray himself, I got to take part in a lot of international film festivals. Since he was loved by film lovers worldwide, people got to know about me. *Oshoni Shongket* even won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. I represented Bangladesh in all those festivals. In the Moscow Film Festival, I was even picked to hoist the flag up, during the opening and closing ceremonies. They also put up huge posters of me at a cinema hall, during the festival. I even had a huge poster displayed at the airport there. I felt extremely lucky to have received adoration like that. I really miss taking part in those festivals.

Rafi: You have done a lot in your career, achieved more than most people can even dream of. But, in your personal life, do you sometimes wish that there was someone with you?

Bobita: In my career, I have achieved so much, and did so much in my personal life as well. Unfortunately, Anik's father passed away when Anik was only three years old. I was very young at the time, so my family suggested that I should

remarry. I told them that I needed some time to think about it, and after thinking about it, I decided to reduce the number of films I did as I wanted to spend more time with my son. I only took films for which I would not have to travel. I also had to ensure that my son received proper education.

Rafi: As all of your fans know, there was once something between you and Zafar Iqbal. Do you miss him?

Bobita: What I must tell you about him is that he was extremely smart and handsome. He was also a terrific singer and had a band of his own. All the romantic films we did together, they were all loved by the audiences. When we used to shoot, he always played the guitar in between.



He told me that he would teach me to sing some English songs. Even though I told him that I couldn't sing, he would play his guitar, and I would try to sing along. Funnily enough, many people would request to hear us perform at functions. People used to always say that we made a really great couple, and we were both truly amazing friends. So, I do miss him. He made an extremely popular song, *Sukhe Thako O Amar Nondini*, which many people assumed was about me. So, I asked him who the song was about. He told me that the music director, Alaud-din Ali had told him to sing that song as people would immediately think that it was about me.

Rafi: Do you have any plans to write an autobiography?

Bobita: I have so much to share about my life, so many events I want to talk about; so why not? I have so many memories, so many experiences to share. We all have to bid farewell to this world someday. I think that I should share my life story before that day comes for me. The one thing is that I don't think I can write it on my own. I'll require some help, but I do want to write an autobiography someday.

Rafi: Apa, it was amazing talking to you. I would love to sit with you, and talk again soon. Do you have any message for your fans?

Bobita: To my fans, I would like to say that even though I have received so many awards, achieved so many unbelievable things in my career, none of them mean to me as much as the adoration you all give me. I am very grateful that you all love me this much, and I love you all too.

Rafi: Thank you so much, Apa. I really loved talking to you.

