

■ **SYNOPSIS** Mumbai, the present. Radio producer Shruti, a 30-year-old feminist virgin, trawls matrimonial websites for a suitable husband. She meets and rejects the chauvinistic Debu ('Monty') when she catches him gazing at her breasts. Shruti's sister Shikha is trapped in a loveless marriage to call-centre boss Ranjeet. Ranjeet is having an affair with his employee Neha, who has attempted suicide twice after previous failed relationships. Neha is Shruti's flatmate. The ambitious Rahul, employed in the same call centre, is in love with Neha. He lets out his uncle's plush apartment to his bosses so that he can advance his career. Shikha visits her dance teacher Vijanti every Saturday at the retirement home where she lives. Vijanti's former lover Amol shows up, having left her 40 years ago to make a living in the US. They rekindle their romance but with the knowledge that Amol doesn't have long to live. The retirement home also houses a theatre group led by frustrated actor Akash. Shikha and Akash begin a tentative relationship that stops short of being sexual.

Shruti's boss at the radio station pairs her off with DJ Vishy, on whom she has a crush. She is shattered when she finds out that her boss and Vishy are in a gay relationship, and were only using her to placate Vishy's parents, who are keen for him to marry. She quits the radio station; Monty helps her to get a job with his firm. They become close, but Monty is by now engaged.

Neha attempts suicide over Ranjeet; Rahul nurses her back to health. Ranjeet confesses to Shikha that he has been seeing Neha and seeks her forgiveness but is himself unable to forgive when Shikha tells him about her relationship with Akash. He leaves her for Neha. When Neha rejects him in favour of the caring Rahul, Ranjeet returns home; he arrives just as Shikha is about to leave him for Akash. Vijanti and Amol sleep together, but afterwards he dies of a heart attack. On Monty's wedding day, Shruti tells him that she loves him, then leaves. He catches up with her at the railway station and they are united. At the same station, Shikha wishes Akash good luck as he leaves for a new job in Dubai.



Crouching tiger: Toni Collette

Like Minds

Australia/United Kingdom 2005

Director: Gregory J. Read

With Eddie Redmayne, Tom Sturridge, Toni Collette

Certificate 15 109m 18s

Cobbling together two topics that were hot a few years ago – namely teenage satanic killings and *Da Vinci Code*-style secret histories – *Like Minds* comes out now because, perhaps, it took this long to find anyone who'd back such a turkey. The film's first mistake was to cast as its male leads a couple of supermodel types who look as if they've just walked out of a Calvin Klein advertisement, all doe eyes and bee-stung lips (Eddie Redmayne) or floppy hair and ruby-red pout (Tom Sturridge).

Redmayne – who plays Alex, a public schoolboy accused of the murder of his friend Nigel – has a tendency to overact, but at least he manages to deliver the script's medievalist psychobabble with some conviction. However, as victim-or-manipulator Nigel – a boy with a worrying interest in taxidermy and dissection – Sturridge is a complete blank, and ultimately our emotional connection with the boys is about the same as if they were that pair of superhunks in the underwear ad. Who is the evil corrupter, who the victim? Who cares?

As Sally Rowe, the forensic

psychologist investigating the case, Toni Collette works hard to keep her head above all the muck, and the single suspenseful scene occurs when she's finally alone on screen, seeking out the alleged murderer's lair; only then does *Like Minds* start to feel like a scary movie. But Collette can't hold up the whole thing single handedly, surrounded by underdeveloped characters, a turgid, humourless script and a host of supporting characters who appear and soon vanish throughout the film. And even for a fantasy film the plot has some giant plausibility gaps: how could Sally not have been told from the outset that Nigel's was the *third* violent death (one a ritualistic murder involving vivisection) in Alex's immediate circle of friends – in a single school year!

Film-maker Gregory J. Read's for-your-eyes-only strategy consists not only of expecting us to drool over the boys, but also indulging in lots of atmospheric art direction, all dark wood panelling, stained glass, snowy parterres and oriental carpets. But low-budget *Like Minds* doesn't quite pull it off, and certainly its public-school setting can't begin to compete with, say, Harry Potter's magical Hogwarts; the sets too feel thin and disappointing. Plunging much of the film in the wet and the dark makes you feel you've just spent nearly two hours in a damp cellar, wishing you had an illuminated watchface so that at least you could check the time and see how much more of this you had to endure.

◆ Gilda Williams

after all, the boss has a giant poster of *Brokeback Mountain* in his office.

Basu has wandering minstrels (composer Pritam and his band) popping up every so often to sing the songs, rather than the usual Bollywood lip-synching. Though this has been done before – in *There's Something about Mary* – for Hindi audiences it's definitely a novel experience. Basu also employs his pet device of putting his characters at sinister, vertigo-inducing heights while the streets bustle and roar far below, thus ensuring that while the city is some distance away, it takes but one fall to swiftly become part of the metro again.

◆ Naman Ramachandran

CREDITS

Director
Anurag Basu
Producer
Zarina Screwvala
Screenplay
Anurag Basu
Director of Photography
Bobby Singh
Editor
Akiv Ali
Production Designer
Rajat Poddar

Music
Pritam
Lyricists
Sayeed Quadri
Amitabh Verma
Sandeeep Srivastava

Production Company
UTV Motion Pictures presents

Co-producers
Zarine Mehta
Deven Khote
Ronald D'Mello

Line Producers

Tani Basu
Rucha Pathak
Priya Aven

Associate Producer

Ram Mirchandani

Dialogue

Sanjeev Dutta

Playback Singers

Soham Chakraborty

KK

James

Suhail Kaul

Pritam Chakraborty

Adnan Sami

Soundtrack

"In Dino" – Soham

Chakraborty; "Alvida";

"O meri jaan" – KK;

"Rishtey"; "Alvida

(Reprise); "Rishtey

Revisited" – James;

"Baatein kuch ankahee

si"; "O meri jaan

(Reprise)" – Suhail Kaul;

"Kar salaam" – Pritam

Chakraborty, Suhail

Kaul, Soham

Chakraborty; "Baatein

kuch ankahee si – 2" –

Adnan Sami; "Baatein

kuch ankahee si

Revisited" – DJ A-myth;

"In Dino Revisited" –

Bunty Rajput

CAST

Shilpa Shetty

Shikha

Kay Kay Menon

Ranjeet

Konkona Sen Sharma

Shruti

Shiney Ahuja

Akash

Kangana Ranaut

Neha

Sharman Joshi

Rahul

Gautam Kapoor

DJ Vishy

Irfan Khan

Debu, 'Monty'

Nafisa Ali

Vijanti

Dharmendra

Amol

Manoj Pahwa

Rahul's neighbour

Vicky Ahuja

Gupta, Rahul's boss

In Colour

Subtitles

[2.35:1]

Distributor

UTV Motion Pictures

11,879 ft +1 frame

Publicity title

Life in a... Metro



Tears in the rain: Shilpa Shetty

■ **SYNOPSIS** Britain, the present. Seventeen-year-old public schoolboy Alex Forbes is accused of the fatal shooting of fellow student Nigel Colby. Forensic psychologist Sally Rowe is called in to hear Alex's story. He claims he is innocent, and that he was manipulated by Nigel, who staged his own suicide to look like a murder. In a series of flashbacks we learn of Alex and Nigel's interest in 12th-century cults; of the secret Masonic-type club to which both their fathers (Alex's father is the school's headmaster) belong, as does chief investigating officer Martin McKenzie; of Nigel's morbid fascination with dissection and all things death-related; and of the tragedies that have recently surrounded the two boys, including the accidental death of friend Josh Campbell and the gruesome murder of Susan Mueller, a girl with whom Alex was infatuated. Alex tells Sally he increasingly felt that Nigel had somehow entered his mind and was manipulating him. He also tells her that he tried to distance himself from his strange friend but Nigel insisted that the two of them were destined to be united in chivalrous glory. Following a trail that leads to more mysterious disappearances (including possibly Nigel's parents), necrophilia, incest, a secret taxidermy lab, prophetic texts and embalmed corpses, Rowe manages to prove Alex's innocence. To the acclaim of her psychologist peers she explains how Nigel forced Alex to submit to his evil will – only to discover later that Alex was the conniving murderer all along.