

“Tanah Air Beta” - OFLC Requirements

Film Title – “Tanah Air Beta” (My Home Country)

Director's Name – “Ari Sihale”

Producer's Name – “Ari Sihale”

Duration – 81 minutes

Genre – Drama

Language – Indonesian (with some English)

Classifiable Elements:

Themes – Family, Friendship, Loyalty

Violence – Light (School children scuffling)

Sex – None

Language – Indonesian

Drug Use - None

Nudity – None

This film contains classifiable elements approximately corresponding to G

Synopsis

- “Tanah Air Beta” is set during a pivotal time in history, where the referendum of 1999 has the majority of East Timorese choosing the path of independence, and full separation from Indonesia. While the ensuing drama unfolded, the world became very aware of the plight of the Fretilin supporters and the TNI, Indonesia’s Military. What is far less known however is the plights of 300,000 East Timorese refugees as they make their way to West Timor, choosing instead to stay part of the Indonesian republic. In a time of extraordinary social and political fragility and instability, an uncertain future also awaited those who headed West with many being divided from their families, proving that nobody wins in times of war...
- Tatiana, a local East Timorese single mother and her pre-teen daughter, Merry (Mary) have arrived at the West Timor border as refugees having left her son behind as he couldn’t be found when the crisis erupted.
- Tatiana tries to make the best of a bad situation in assuming the role of school teacher for the children of the local refugee camp, and trying to grow her own modest vegetable patch.
- A local self employed handyman named Abu assists her and Merry settle in, and Tatiana in turn offers in return to teach him how to read and write.
- Essentially this is a story about reconnection. Merry seeking sanity and piece of mind by pretending to phone her bother on her bed every night using nothing but a piece of wood and a T-shirt on an old plastic torso to work with.
- Tatiana develops a Tuberculosis type cough, and while the local village doctor can find no clear cause, we get the strong suspicion that it is emotionally motivated through stress for his missing son.

- Mary and the orphan Carlo develop an intriguing friendship, as she sees her own future as being similar to that of Carlo's – no family and no one to take care of her.
- Mary does witness moments of hope though as she witnesses wedding celebration festivities – complete with a Mariachi band providing a glimpse of the Portuguese influences from days past.
- Mary overhears her mother Tatiana being told by the visiting Abu that her son has been found on the border but only wants to see Mary, his sister, as he believes his Mother deserted him.
- Mary then makes the decision that while only being 10 years old that she has to be the one to find her brother and unite her family once again. Taking what meagre resources she has (and with a some basic food and drink donated by the local kind General Store owners), she heads off on the long journey back to the East Timor border.
- Through the kindness of strangers, she is able to continue as her supplies quickly dwindle and at some points she appears as she will pass out and die of exposure and dehydration.
- Upon learning of her disappearance, Tatiana asks everyone to help find Merry, and it's Carlos that ends up finding her, but at Merry's behest actually ends up joining her in her quest.
- The two kids work, beg, borrow and steal supplies to keep going in their journey – creating a bond one would suggest could last a lifetime.
- Finally reaching the border post, another group of refugees are crossing into West Timor, with Merry's brother amongst them. The family reunion is complete with Tatiana arriving having been driven there by Obi, in their search for Merry. Overcome with emotion, all misgivings are forgiven and they are all a family once again.
- During the closing credits, footage of other families reuniting are shown with the written statement that this has all been possible since the border between East and West Timor had been reopened since 2005.