

# “The Elephant Whisperers”, A Precious Story About a Human–Elephant Hybrid Family

---

## A Heartfelt Documentary That Captured Global Attention and Won the 95th Academy Award

By Mona Khorsandi

March 2023

As a short documentary from India, The Elephant Whisperers attracted the attention of critics and won the 95th Academy Award. Watching this documentary is pleasant due to the beautiful views of the unspoiled nature of South India and the people who live in peaceful coexistence with other creatures of this environment.

"Raghu", an orphaned baby elephant who left behind his herd, connects with the man and woman who keep the elephant at the height of desperation to continue living and change their lives.

The Elephant Whisperers is in Tamil and the first directorial experience of documentary filmmaker Kartiki Gonsalves. This documentary was broadcast by Netflix. The Common Aerial Shots of wildlife documentaries look amazing in this work and create impressive frames. Gonsalves follows five years of the life of this human-elephant hybrid family to make this documentary.

The elephant keeper, called Bomman, is also the temple priest. He asks for blessings from Lord Ganesha, who has an elephant-shaped head for the elephants, and asks for help from this Hindu deity to take care of them. He thinks of taking care of elephants like taking care of God. Bomman's father and grandfather were elephant keepers too.

Bellie, a woman who lost her husband due to a tiger attack and also grieves about the loss of a child, is the keeper of another elephant sent by the Forestry Department to help Bomman.

Seeing Raghu pulling her scarf like a child and begging for her affection, Bellie falls in love with the baby elephant and decides to raise him as her child.

As they both help Raghu grow and survive, Raghu fulfills their emotional needs. Bellie's grief over losing her daughter is relieved by his presence.

The baby elephants who were entrusted to other caregivers could not be saved and

continue to live. Bomman says being in a family and loving it is important for the survival of the baby elephants.

Another baby elephant named "Amu" is then added to the family. Raghu is jealous of Amu at first, but the two get in touch and fall in love soon after.

During this collaboration, Bomman and Bellie decide to get married. Raghu and Amu attend their wedding ceremony as special guests.

Bellie's granddaughter Sanjana makes a brief appearance in the documentary as well. She likes elephants like her grandmother.

We witness the drama of Raghu's separation from his family in the last ten minutes of the movie. Raghu is entrusted to another keeper according to the call and request of the Forestry Department. Every human heart is saddened by Raghu's separation from his family and Amu, who had become accustomed to him. According to Bellie, Raghu's separation from her was as difficult and painful as the loss of her child. Although Raghu's living place is separated from the family, his heart is with the family and eagerly comes to Bomman whenever he sees him in the forest and calls him.

Another interesting part of the documentary concerns the children of that area who are very interested in elephants and have been training since childhood to become future elephant keepers, like Bomman's childhood.

Bomman and Bellie are the first couple who have successfully raised two orphaned baby elephants. This documentary shows interesting pictures of other creatures such as monkeys, tigers, peacocks, etc., in addition to the life of elephants in the camp. In addition to inducing the feeling of peace of being in the heart of nature, the music of the movie helps to convey emotions. Another notable strength of the movie is its artistic editing. Finally, it can be argued that watching this documentary and the elephants leave a commendable impression on the audience.