

# SEVENTH SON

**Director:** Sergei Bodrov  
**Writers:** Charles Leavitt, Steven Knight  
**Stars:** Ben Barnes, Julianne Moore, Jeff Bridges  
**Strength:** Effects and action  
**Weakness:** Story and script  
**Runtime:** 102 minutes  
**Rating:** 2/5

**PLOT:** John Gregory, who is a seventh son of a seventh son and also the local spook, has protected his country from witches, boggarts, ghouls and all manner of things that go bump in the night. However John is not young anymore, and has been seeking an apprentice to carry on his trade. Most have failed to survive. The last hope is a young farmer's son named Thomas Ward. Will he survive the training to become the spook that so many others couldn't? But he only has a week to train before he faces Mother Malkin.  
**REVIEW:** Tom Ward (Ben Barnes) is the seventh son of a seventh son: a rare genetic lineage that sets him

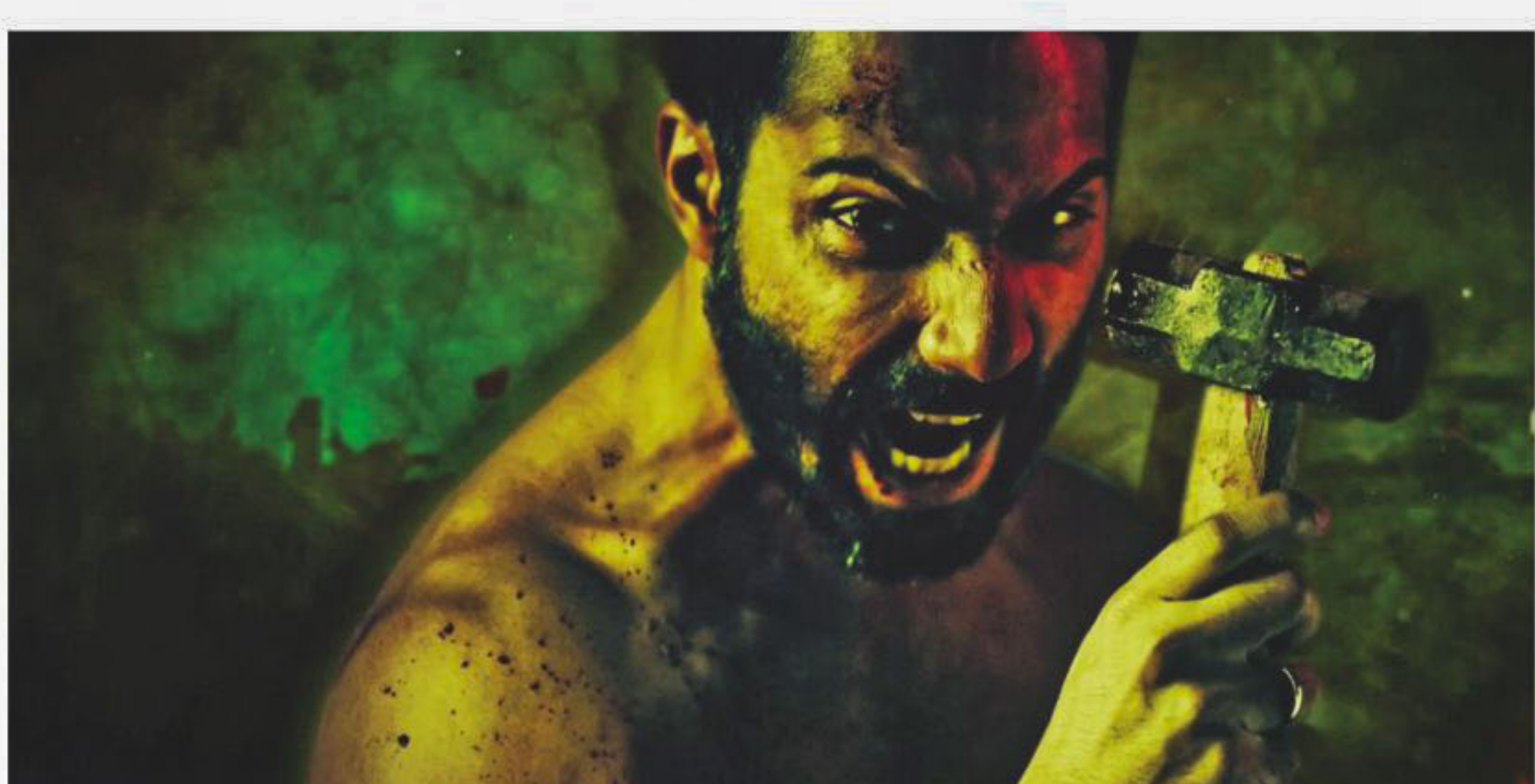
on the path to becoming a Spook a.k.a., a slayer of the myriad evil creatures that haunt the land. He becomes the apprentice of grizzled, alcohol-addled John Gregory (Jeff Bridges), shortly after Mother Malkin (Julianne Moore), an evil witch, escapes her earthly prison to claim the world as her own. With only a week to go before the blood moon rises, Tom trains with Gregory but finds himself distracted by the charms of Alice (Alicia Vikander) – a mysterious young lady with a few secrets of her own. Seventh Son does what has been done a hundred times before, takes a more or less okay story and fills it with special effects and CG monsters in an attempt to use eye candy to paint over a flat story. Unfortunately, this never works. The back and forth between Mother Malkin (Julianne Moore) and Gregory (Jeff Bridges) is the only saving grace of the film, everything else is either too predictable or simply falls short of standard expectations. The protagonist (new-

comer Ben Barnes) just doesn't seem to own his character or is simply not driven enough. Every decent scene in the film is in the trailer and the rest are just fillers. The fights aren't half bad, but they cannot save the weak story from falling through. The books that inspired this movie themselves are a sort of Harry Potterish thing for children, replacing Hogwarts with a grumpy fighter against the creatures of the dark and Harry with a rare "seventh son of a seventh son" that is traditionally employed in this "spook" business. However the plot of the books is easy to follow, interesting, sometimes engaging. But the film, which attempts to emulate some of the fun from the Lord of the Rings trilogy (pick one), just doesn't seem worthwhile. If you want to watch fantasy adventure films, I would say it's a safe bet to simply watch the Lord of the Rings again.

Reviewed by MOHAMMAD HAQUE



# BADLAPUR



**Director:** Sriram Raghavan  
**Writers:** Arijit Biswas, Sriram Raghavan  
**Stars:** Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Varun Dhawan, Yami Gautam  
**Strength:** Story, Acting and Script  
**Weakness:** Confusing conclusion  
**Runtime:** 134 minutes  
**Rating:** 4/5

**PLOT:** After the murder of his wife and child, Raghu seeks out the killers for revenge. The lines get blurred in the pursuit of taking an eye for an eye. How far will Raghu go?  
**REVIEW:** Sriram Raghavan's finesse in handling noir drama is unmatched in Bollywood. Be it Ek Hasina Thi or Johnny Gaddaar, Raghavan has always proved his mettle in this genre. His movies unfold with a stark alacrity which keeps the audience glued to the screen. Badlapur is a gritty, realistic and gripping drama. This thriller develops at a taut pace, starting as a light-hearted love story and later gradually growing in suspense with its shocking proceedings. The director knows his

job well and lets the audience simmer in anticipation as he slowly cooks a meaty plot. Even five years ago, a film like this would be unimaginable from the Bollywood film industry, and even in 2015, this is a bit of a shocker. Badlapur has no clear heroes and villains, but every single character in the film feels real – too real for comfort. The story is not suitable for children, as most revenge dramas are not. Yet, Badlapur transcends the generic revenge story by putting Varun Dhawan in a career-lifting role of an anti-hero that you will not soon forget. Nawazuddin give a performance to be cherished. Yami Gautam doesn't get enough scope to perform, and that's my only complaint with the film. With a unique story, great acting and screenplay that holds the movie together tightly, Sriram Raghavan delivers one of the best movies to come out of Bollywood in months.  
Reviewed by ZAKIR MUSHTAQUE

## CLASSIC REVIEW

# A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN (1992)

**Director:** Penny Marshall  
**Writers:** Kim Wilson, Kelly Candaele  
**Stars:** Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, Lori Petty  
**Runtime:** 128 minutes

**PLOT:** Two sisters join the first female professional baseball league and struggle to help it succeed amidst their own growing rivalry.  
**REVIEW:** The film's focus is the Rockford (Ill.) Peaches, one of the four clubs that made up the league in its problematical first season. As imagined by Ms. Marshall and her associates, the Peaches are a gallant and somewhat rum crew. Dottie Hinson (Geena Davis), the team's star player and a crackerjack catcher and a dependable hitter who is so beautiful that she winds up on the cover of Life magazine. On the mound is Dottie's younger sister Kit (Lori Petty). She has a terrific arm but tends to go to pieces when at bat. Keeping things lively in center field is pint-size Mae Mordabito (Madonna), informally known as All the Way Mae, who finds pro-baseball preferable to taxi dancing. Coaching the Peaches, at first with great reluctance, is Jimmy Dugan (Tom Hanks), a former major league hero disabled by booze and unreliable knees. While the women on the field are knocking themselves out to achieve fame and glory in a league that

embraces just three Midwestern states, the film never strains to get a laugh or make a point. It adopts a summer pace as it follows Dottie, Kit, Mae and their teammates from what is, in effect, boot camp to the league's first world series, in which the Peaches face the Racine (Wis.) Belles. Director Marshall shows her women characters in a tug-of-war between new images and old values, and so her movie is about transition - about how it felt as a woman suddenly to have new roles and freedom. Though big of budget, "A League of Their Own" is a very cheerful, relaxed, and easily enjoyable comedy. It's a serious film that's lighter than air, a very funny movie that manages to score a few points for feminism in passing.  
Reviewed by S.M. INTISAB SHAHRIYAR

