

MOVIE REVIEW



CINDERELLA

STAYING TRUE TO THE CLASSIC STORY

NIFATH KARIM CHOWDHURY

The live-action *Cinderella* movie saw its release this year, exciting girls everywhere. Directed by Kenneth Branagh, the movie takes a turn at portraying the classic fairytale that everyone knows by heart. The cast includes Lily James as Cinderella, best known for her role as Lady Rose on *Downton Abbey*. Cate Blanchett dons the role of the stepmother. The roles of stepsisters are taken on by Holliday Grainger (Anastasia) and Sophie McShera (Drizella); the latter also stars in *Downton Abbey* as the kitchen maid Daisy.

The movie for the most part does not deviate much from the classic story. Narrated throughout by the Fairy Godmother (Helena Bonham Carter), it begins with scenes from young Ella's pleasant childhood. Due to a sad turn of events Ella finds herself orphaned and in the company of her rather unpleasant stepmother and stepsisters. After firing the staff at home, the stepmother cruelly piles all the chores onto Ella, who henceforth finds herself being addressed as Cinderella. Even with all she has to suffer through, Cinderella manages to bear it all with a gracious smile, winning the heart of the prince (Richard Madden, aka Robb Stark to *Game of Thrones* fans). She ultimately manages to find her happy ending with some assistance from her Fairy Godmother and her little band of mice.

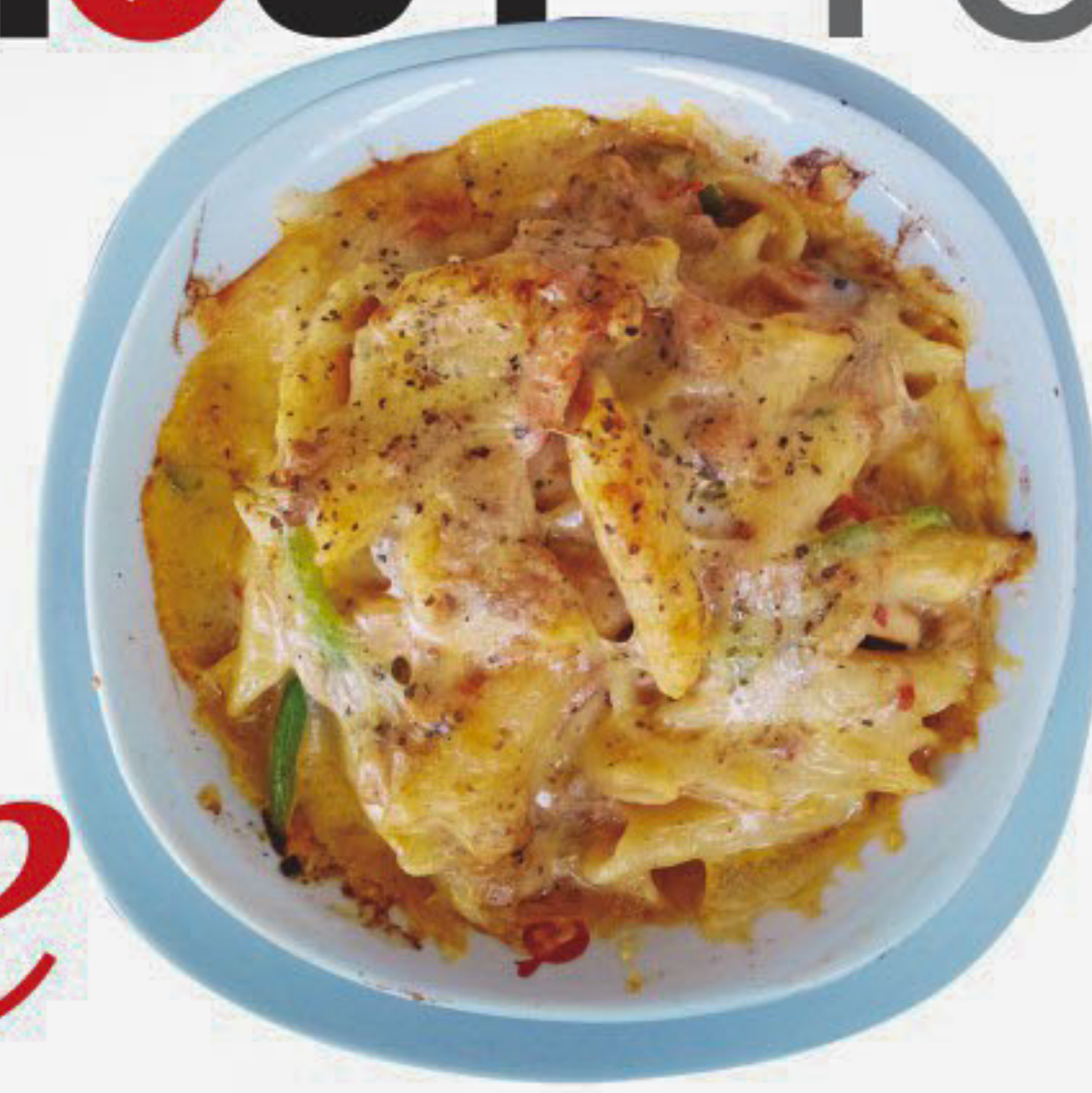
The movie fills in some gaps from the story, and also adds additional characters to create conflict. Cinderella's mother (Hayley Atwell) plays a significant role in the movie, teaching her to believe in everything good, and giving her the advice which keeps her strong through the trials she faces in her later years. Lily James takes on the role wonderfully, making it easy to forget that she was only acting. Cate Blanchett's evil laughs were the highlights, and the encounters between Anastasia and Drizella were ridiculous to the point of being pitiful. The stepmother is not the only conniving character in the movie – a Grand Duke also tries to prevent the Prince's marriage with Cinderella, thus providing more obstacles in their way than we would have thought. The script is well-written, and through short lines delivers the wit, humour and sarcasm necessary to keep the movie interesting. The music and the idyllic setting all add to the charm of the movie, and the animated scenes, though few, are well executed.

This isn't just a princess movie about being pretty and having luck on one's side. It's about having courage to face challenges and always being kind and helpful. A more contemporary take on the movie might involve Cinderella rebelling against the stepmother in aggressive ways, but this particular version stays true to the ideals of being good, because good things do indeed come to those who wait.

If you want to see the movie while surrounded by nine-year old girls and thirty-year old mothers then you can catch it playing at the Star Cineplex in Bashundhara City, Dhaka.

HANGOUTS

Comic Cafe



ARMAN R. KHAN

There aren't many themed restaurants in Dhaka. So positive posts about a certain Comic Cafe on FoodBank naturally spiked my interest. My friend and I, therefore, paid a visit to this new cafe that opened commercially on March 17, located in Khilgaon Taltola, Dhaka.

The cafe is indeed quite different from others when it comes to the decor. Hanging from a wall were backlit circular plates with pictures of some popular comic characters, especially from *The Adventures of Tintin*, Chacha Chaudhary and Pinky. One end of the cafe had a beautiful view overlooking the Taltola area from the fifth floor. All the wooden tables were actually customised Snakes & Ladders boards to entertain the waiting customers. And of course, there were stacks of comic books in one



corner, should you wish to read. Add to that music playing in the background; the environment was quite amazing.

The menu offers a variety to cater to different taste buds. The innovatively named pizzas (Pizza Billoo, Pizza Chacha Chaudhary, etc.) range from BDT 305 to BDT 745 depending on the size. I saw Creamy Mushroom Soup (BDT 220), Doi Fuchka (8 pcs for BDT 150), and other fast food and shawarma items on the menu. Desserts like Oreo Cheesecake (BDT 230) and Choco Mousse (BDT 165), and beverages like Root Beer Float (BDT 165) and a range of coffee are available. After consulting with the waiter, my friend and I settled on a small Pasta Tintin (small - BDT 185, large - BDT 330) and the cafe's signature Dum Pakht Biriyani (BDT 295). We

would've ordered some desserts too, but they had run out of the ones we wanted. While waiting for the food, we played a game of Snakes & Ladders, and the waiter served us complimentary Zeera Paani.

The pasta arrived first. The pale orange texture of the Pasta Tintin looked appetising and tasted pretty great. It was creamy on top, a little dry in the middle, and creamy again at the bottom. The cheese wasn't burnt, thankfully, thus providing a good taste unlike many other places where the flavour is overpowering. It had the right amount of chicken in it. I felt that the pasta lacked a bit of seasoning, but that is probably a personal opinion. The small serving of pasta was enough for one person.

Then came the best dish of Comic Cafe, the Dum Pakht Biriyani, served in a copper handi covered with a bread dough or *moyaan*. You have to eat (or rip) through the bread to reach the biriyani. The biriyani itself was a blast of flavours. The first thing I noticed was its aroma.

The combination of spices was great, but it had a strong influence of clove. The meat in the biriyani looked dry, but was succulent and tasted fantastic. Simply put, the biriyani was cooked to perfection and the quantity is good enough for two people, only if you can resist the urge to devour it all by yourself.

I got a chance to talk to the Marketing Partner of Comic Cafe, Minhajul Hoque. When asked how the idea of this cafe occurred to him, he said, "I'm a big fan of

comics, specially the Bangla ones. I opened a Facebook page where I would scan and upload some comics. It gained popularity soon, and that's where I got my inspiration for this cafe." Although the response was amazing, the cafe isn't spacious enough to accommodate the number of interested potential customers. People often have to wait to get a table. Moreover, FoodBank reviews reveal that sometimes it takes a long time for the food to be served.

Comic Cafe is pretty new and an innovative enterprise. The food is good and so is the decor. It is certainly a place I would recommend for a proper hangout.

You can find more about Comic Cafe at www.facebook.com/comic.cafe.bd or drop by at:

House 566/A, Block C, Khilgaon Taltola (5th Floor). That Dum Pakht Biriyani is something one simply cannot miss!