

LS PICK

Meet Kali



A dangerous culture of impunity cloaks this ever darkening city of ours. Dhaka, a metropolis of over seven million people cramped together, has steadily become a breeding ground for all kinds of criminal elements and the future seems bleak. Standing against these harsh realities stands one woman; a woman whose mission is not to save the city but to save its very soul, one person at a time. Meet Kali; embattled, angry and empowered, Kali morphs into the city's last beacon of hope. The niqab wearing NGO worker, Kali sheds her facial modesty when she launches herself against the insidious seedy characters that populate the dredges of the city. The masked vigilante dons only her skin, exposing her acid burns in all its glory, a macabre reminder to her enemies of the consequences of the actions of their kin,

whilst simultaneously dishing out a glorious form of her own justice.

Whether it is domestic abuse, kidnapping or anyone who strays beyond the law of this lawless land, Kali is reclaiming her city, piece by piece. This nameless, often faceless figure captures a nation's imagination and brings forth Bangladesh's first vigilante. Who is Kali? What lies beneath the veil? We caught up with the lead actress, Azra, to find out more. "Kali resides in all of us. We are all Kali in a way. Given the recent events, we all have that need to fight out and Kali does that instead of just thinking it," she said. Kali is the vigilante Dhaka desperately needs. A Batmanesque style super hero, minus the gadgets and the gazillions, Kali is much more stripped down and kept to a bare minimum. She dons a niqab and that is her only costume, so to speak, and

once she takes that off, you know things are about to get nasty.

We meet Kali in her office at BRAC, where she is an NGO worker. From what can be deduced, even then Kali, the hero, is a known entity and one much admired but apparently has been missing in action for a while. The character even says in not so many words that Kali just does not exist anymore. That is until her consciousness is once again stirred as a wailing woman interrupts the monotony of everyday's work by informing everyone that her son is missing. Kali then begins to investigate and her investigation points her towards the lady's husband. A dangerous man himself, Kali decides that there is nothing left but to fight and fight she does. In one of the most memorable action sequences in the country, Kali pounces on the law-breakers with

gusto and there are none of those unbelievable kicks and punches but a straight gritty fight where Kali shows off her prowess.

Kali's message to society is to remind everyone that we have had enough. Through one character, the show tries to appeal to a national consciousness and while not outright advocating vigilante services, it does show that giving up is not really the easiest way out. This is the struggle one can identify most with Kali. Why Kali though? Because Kali is the ash, she is the dust and she is the last semblance of untainted purity left in this country.

To know more, catch Star Lifestyle's interview with the lead actress Azra at Star Live, The Daily Star's YouTube channel.

By Osama Rahman

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