



SATIRE

THREE-SIX-ZERO

DEEPARGHYA DUTTA BARUA

It was a night in the year 2043, none of us owned flying cars or anything that the old-timers had predicted. If anything, the progress mankind had made were pointless 16K displays and small advances towards psychologically punitive justice. Cellars that went thousands of feet below the average surface, otherwise known as 'Global Restoration Camps', were soon becoming the norm for people to get 'Fixed'.

Then there was me, someone who had been trying to keep up with the pace of mankind, but while being swept against his own — I was being dragged to a particular 'Restoration Chamber', a fancy naming for torture cells, as a flat carousel of doors that lead to other torture cells peeped through my half-open eyes.

The one I was taken to had a chair right in the middle, firmly locked to the ground. Anyone would initially guess that they were going for the electric chair but the fact that it wasn't wooden convinced me that they were bringing out one of the new tricks up their sleeves. They cuffed me to the chair and made me wear a VR headset. I knew that this was it. I brought this upon myself. Flashes of lights started to fill my vision to the brim as the transmission started. One could only imagine the horror on my face when I recognised what this was all about. I was set to face one of my oldest demons, something that in fact, had scarred my teen years.

It was a mishmash of Indian animated shows for kids from the 2010s, and to make it worse, they had been converted to the VR format for an immersive psychologically horrifying experience.

I was assigned the role of a fat middle-aged man who ran illicit trade operations. I had a team that smuggled samosas, an old but forbidden South Asian delicacy that had been banned

sometime in the 2030s for its ability to run an average human to the edge of their power limits, being 200 times more powerful than any energy drink. Research from less credible sources had also claimed that it violated Newton's laws of motion, as a single punch from an average human who consumed three of these would send anything flying back to space.

The VR experience was scripted, in case I haven't mentioned yet. I wondered why they had set me up in an authoritative position whereas I'm the one who's convicted. A realisation is all that I needed to move onto the next portion of the script. All of a sudden, an eight-year-old-someone barged right into our hideout. Although he was named after a mythological figure followed by the word 'Chhota', I could hardly find any resemblance. Being the icon of vigilantism he was, he dished out a few corny lines on justice and then starting punching all the other token members of my samosa smuggling gang with such brute force that made wonder me whether he himself would pass the samosa test.

I could taste the sweet release of death as soon as he started beating me up. It wasn't the force that would've killed me. It was the godawful sound effects and CG. I passed out while a raaga loop played in the background, marking the end of my six-hour-long VR torture.

I work for community service now. I still bear the scars of that day; the poorly done animation, the looped sound effects, and the emotionless voice acting — they haunt me every night. After all, I had committed one of the biggest crimes of the 2040s, having an anime profile picture and stating opinions at the same time.

Deeparghya Dutta Barua likes to feel apprehensive whenever there are more than two people around. Help him in finding new ways of butchering his name at deeparghya@rantages.com

MOVIE REVIEW

It isn't romantic

Isn't it romantic – no, actually. It really isn't. Sure it is a romantic comedy with a very happy ending but there are certain things that let it down. For someone who has seen their fair share of movies from this genre – and cried multiple times and daydreamed through countless classes – this movie barely checked all the boxes of a good, honest romcom.

SUBAITA FAIROOZ

The story follows the life of a female architect who lives alone and is married to her career. She also believes that relationships are meaningless and worthless and that all romantic comedies are horrendous and an oversimplification of an otherwise very difficult life. Until one day, she hits her head (obviously) and is transported to a parallel universe where everything is a little too perfect and as corny as every single romcom out there. While Hollywood should be applauded for opening up the platform for young girls who feel invisible, it has to learn that there are better ways of doing this than showing a girl who is either extremely romantic in her endeavours or completely against it. There is a middle ground which they really need to explore more.

Starring Rebel Wilson, Liam Hemsworth, Adam Devine, and everyone's favourite Bollywood diva, Priyanka Chopra playing, well, a diva – the movie feels like a twin sister to Amy Schumer's 'I Feel Pretty', a much more sappy and whiny one, though. It is a movie about self-discovery, loving yourself, and realising who the love of your life is and then running 'half a marathon' to stop his wedding.

Technically, the movie pokes fun at all the clichés of a romcom. In the process it ends up being stuck in a loop because it invites us into this extravagant world where all the clichés of every single romcom out there occurs within literally forty-five minutes. From singing to

choreographed dance routines, to a date in the rain and with ice-cream, and everything else in between, the movie leaves the viewers in a confused mess as to what it is trying to be: a romcom or a satire of a romcom.

However, it is not all bad. Rebel Wilson really carried the weight of the movie on her shoulders while her co-actors pitched in from time to time with witty one-liners. Despite its many drawbacks, the movie is fast-paced and does not linger on a single moment for too long. It will definitely have you laughing in its entirety and make you feel as though you had a really good time. Well, as long as you can put aside your own insecurities. Otherwise it will probably just remind you of why you are so depressed all the time.

If you are in the market for a romcom, maybe you should look elsewhere. If you want to just have a laugh and keep nodding excitedly through Wilson's montage of why romantic comedies are a waste of time, then you are in the right place. Certainly it is not one of best movies out there but the cinematography, the background, the nostalgic music of 'Oh, Pretty Woman' and 'A Thousand Miles' is rather inviting and will make you want to continue watching it. Let's face it, the actors do a fairly good job, too, and the singing and dancing are not all that bad either.

Subaita likes cats and dogs and everything that hops. Send her your favourite animal videos and pictures at subaita.fairooz@gmail.com

