

Drona — More Flaws Than Fantasy

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Dated: Oct 09, 2008

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That's what a fantasy film should do - transport you into its imaginary world and haul you back only when the end credits roll - for that matter, any film should do that. Drona didn't pass the test.

That said, director Goldie Behl, must be at least acknowledged for making the film - Drona is India's serious attempt at making a fantasy flick with spectacular visual effects, unless we have Hatim Tai, starring Jeetendra, and a whole host of other tacky B-Grade Bollywood fantasy in mind.

Drona is certainly not in the line of Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter series, at least some one tried something different, and that needs to be lauded.

Not that this is to overlook the flaws in the film - especially when it actually starts off quite promisingly. We are told of an age old tale - the Gods nominate a particular king and his inheritors (Dronas) as the protectors of the precious amrit (nectar), which is sought by the asuras (demons).

We are introduced to Aditya, (Abhishek Bachchan) an orphan who grows up lonely and neglected in the company of grouchy aunt and her spoilt son (a la Harry Potter?).

Unaware of his "special powers" Aditya meets magician Riz Raizada, an asura in search of the elusive amrit.

Riz recognises that Aditya is Drona and tries to capture the unsuspecting Aditya, and is almost successful, but his plans are thwarted by Sonia (Priyanka Chopra) - a female "bodyguard" of sorts, whose sole aim in life is to protect Drona.

In an impressive sequence, shot in the cobble-stoned streets of Prague, Sonia defeats Drona's adversaries and tells him about his hidden strengths. Until now, the film had my undivided attention.

From here on, it should have become more interesting. Instead, the film starts spluttering.

Aditya is introduced to his mother, Jayati Devi (Jaya Bachchan in an insipid performance), who makes him aware of his responsibilities.

Enter the evil villain, who turns Jayati Devi into stone and warns Aditya/Drona that unless he brings him the amrit, his mother will not be released.

That sets Aditya, and of course Sonia, on a quest for the amrit. During the journey they encounter magical lands, strange people and of course, danger. Somewhere along the way romance blooms.

The special effects were what this film was touted for - and they do impress. Watch out for the scene with

the horse and the train - but they impress only occasionally. Behl's direction is the same - good in fits and starts. He is obviously inspired by LOTR and Harry Potter, but at least he should have stuck to that style of film making. Why try and add a Indian touch to it, such as the inane songs that are inserted at all the wrong moments and without any provocation whatsoever. Instead of taking the story forward, the songs in this film just hamper an already weak script. Of the cast, Chopra is smouldering - as Sonia, she kicks in a punch and comes out as a better warrior than Drona.

That brings me to Abhishek Bachchan. Make no mistake; he does act the part well, especially in the first half and performs the stunts with required expertise but I just didn't think he cut it as Drona.

He is saddled with some bad costumes and he isn't looking his best. Perhaps a little more attention to styling could have saved the day.

Overall, this is an average film - neither great and nor too bad. Worth a watch only for the fact that this is Bollywood's first real attempt at making a fantasy film.

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