

Hotel Hollywood breaks the mold

We have all had our share of horror haven't we? There is always something frightening about it. It can be something we think about before going to sleep, or something we laugh at if it is terrible. However we somehow can't do without it. It's almost like a compulsive habit, to go on seeing the fear even when we know it will affect us for days to come. This is exactly how the movie Hotel Hollywood leaves us feeling.

The story is set around a group of friends who are all getting together for the marriage of their two college pals Priya (Mehr Hassan) and Jai (Param Gill). To celebrate the coming together of everyone, the love birds hire out a hotel, where the ceremony will take place and also where the guests will stay. And to make sure that everything goes as planned; the bride and groom organize a wedding rehearsal so that their big day runs smoothly. The plans start to fall apart when ex-lover Tony Krishan also known as TK (Rahul Nath) turns up unexpectedly and declares his love for his college romance Priya. Unknown to Priya, Jai and TK have a physical fight which ends with TK falling unconscious. With the help of his good friend Gulzaar (Sandeep Singh), Jai locks TK in a room so that he will not ruin the wedding that he and Priya have gone to such lengths to organize. The story takes a turn when family members suddenly start to fall ill and unexpected events occur that lead to the guests becoming ill and turning into zombies and everyone attempts to fight for survival amongst these strange events

A horror film can go either way and there is never a 50/50 road. With Hotel Hollywood it travels down the road of success, mainly because of its strong star cast. A horror film is difficult to grasp with Indian audiences, mainly because they have been spoilt with the romantic storylines. However Hotel Hollywood does have that quality, but it does not last long, because where the romance ends, is where the movie actually begins (in the sense the story gains momentum). On the other side of the fence it is refreshing to see a story that does not revolve around boy meets girl, but takes you to an area of unknown terror.

Firstly the top reason for watching this film would be because of the performances of the cast. Mehr Hassan and Rahul Nath lead the way with their characters, with Rahul Nath having the slight edge, playing an arrogant and rich guy who has it all and wants it all. He is great as the cocky TK but even better as the frightful and scared for his life guy in the second portion. He somehow gets the comedy just right in the tense and heated moments. Mehr Hassan is visually stunning and shy in the first half, but comes back as a strong and confident woman in the second, giving us some powerful dialogue that keeps everyone in watch. Sandeep Singh's delivery of poetry and his characters fear of commitment resonates very well. Param Gill gets the elements of Jai right and comes into his own, especially once the viral outbreak is revealed

The risk that films such as these run, is of caricaturing the horror moments. However the detailing that has been put into the story lifts it to another level. Be it the attention to make up that the zombies display, blood oozing out of infected people and bite/burn marks that the characters develop. It's amazing to watch! Finally it definitely keeps you engrossed, instead of targeting our heads it targets straight to the nerves! Be it the moment where TK gets dragged away by the zombies, or where Priya is attacked by one of the zombies

As mentioned the performances are noteworthy, but helping them is the great skills of the camera that make you feel the fear that these characters must be going through. Added to that is the dimmed light effect, and a darkness that turns up the dial of the fear intensity

The pace of the film gains momentum once the viral outbreak is revealed. Prior to that you do question where this movie is going as you immediately assume that this is another love story, but the foundation does become stronger once the movie hits halfway

Overall Hotel Hollywood is like chicken pie. Outside may seem plain and simple, yet inside is a good mix of a lot of different components. Love, anger and greed all mixed with a good dose of horror and zombie mania!