

'Vaada Raha' a pleasant tale of emotional bonding

Film: 'Vaada Raha'; Cast: Bobby Deol, Kangana Ranaut, Dwij Yadav; Director: Samir Karnik; Rating: ***

This one springs a pleasant surprise. Warm, moving and utterly devoid of artifice, 'Vaada Raha' is the kind of emotional drama that can never go out of fashion.

Samir Karnik's cinema never tries to be fashionable. Last year he gave us the outstanding 'Heroes', a segmented drama on the joys and sorrows of being part of contemporary India.

Like Karnik's little-seen 'Nanhe Jaisalmer', 'Vaada Raha' focuses on the unique and emotional bonding between Bobby Deol and wonder-kid Dwij Yadav.

Before we go any further, this would be the right time to say little Dwij is an outstanding talent, bringing to his tender persona the experienced wisdom and maturity of a life lived well and long.

As a boy who spreads sunshine in a hospital, Dwij is to 'Vaada Raha' what Darsheel Safary was to 'Taare Zameen Par'. The relationship that grows between the paralysed doctor Bobby Deol and the bright boy conveys the warm vibrations between a pair that really cares for one another.

The inspirational plot about how the doctor heals himself through the subtle and insistent urging of the boy from the next ward is not quite that suspenseful drama where we bite our nails about the next sharp turn in the narration.

Karnik's narration is free of curves and dips. Except for one sharp and painful twist at the end, the director keeps the fable-like ambience free of overt cinematic devices.

Most of the film's dramatic energy emanates from the interaction between Bobby and the boy in a hospital room where the child's imagination illuminates the proceedings without cluttering the emotional graph.

But at times, Karnik's storytelling lapses into the naivete. The hospital looks like a meeting point for angels rather than sick people. The fringe characters are caricatural but minimized in their utility.

Also, Karnik could have made the hospital a little less prop-motivated.

However, the film's goodness of heart and nobility of purpose are incontestable.

There might be loopholes and the plot does sag in parts, but Bobby, in what is unarguably one of the best performances of his career, and little Dwij, a true synthesis of sparkle, spunk and innocence, carry the film to a point where it merits a viewing.

One question: what is Kangana Ranaut doing here? She sings a duet, smiles vacantly and dumps the well-to-do hero after he suffers from spinal shock. Her logic being she wants him to be self-sufficient.

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