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## QUICKTAKES

### Sensitive slice-of-life tale

#### ➡ PADAKSHEP

**Directors:** Suman Ghosh

**Cast:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Nandita Das, Sabitri Chatterjee, Tota Roy Choudhury, June Maliah, Shweta Dutta, Bibhas Chakraborty, Jagannath Guha, Ashok Sharma **7/10**

In Suman Ghosh's *Padakshep*, widower Soumitra is a retired banker who potters about the house rearranging candle-stands and calendars. Daughter Nandita is a working woman trying to balance duty towards father and pressures of career and clandestine relationship with Muslim boyfriend. And super-considerate, hyperactive retainer Sabitri completes this new Indian nuclear family. Young NRI couple (Tota and June) reverse-migrates to the country, the city and moves in next door and into their humdrum life. Their little girl-child is a breath of fresh air in Soumitra's increasingly stifling old age, constricted by blocked arteries, boredom and frustration at his incapacity to keep up with a rapidly changing world around him.

Straight storyline. No dramatic plot twists or high melodrama. Temperate tempo and medium-slow narrative pace — only a neat 93 minutes long, thanks to editor Mainak Bhaumik. What works perceptibly for *Padakshep* is the film's honest, unpretentious mounting. Natural dialogue, spontaneous acting, emotion and humour in real-life situations, using small ordinary details of daily life to tell a simple, sensitive slice-of-life tale. But the icing on the cake is the director's ability to create symbolism without being overtly weird/surreal. Only a sense of slightly heightened reality. In a scene where Soumitra and Bibhas play a quick game of chess outdoors, the two thespians excel in their craft of understated histrionics. As their apparently trivial conversation about old age ailments, insurance policies and a new game called stock-market becomes really a metaphysical discourse on meaning of life and will to live.

The film's mostly instrumental music track is a bit clawing because of its continuousness. But vocalist Moushumi Bhaumik's ditty-ballad is unassumingly evocative juxtaposed with seemingly mundane images of people at an idyllic picnic-spot. As song ends, semblance of tranquillity is broken by palpable friction among characters. Argument, conflict of interest, values and ideology. We're forced to confront and come to terms with our unipolar globalised world where survival is the new-old name of a game we all play.

*Mandira Mitra*

### Fails to conquer

#### ➡ I LOVE YOU

**Director:** Ravi Kinnagi

**Cast:** Dev, Payel, Tapas Paul, Arun Banerjee, Anuradha Roy, Rajatava Datta, Kamalika Banerjee, Bharat Kaul, Subhasish Mukherjee **3/10**

He stoops to conquer. Ravi Kinnagi re-scripts the Oliver Goldsmith romance, with a gender reversal. Here, the 'he' (Dev) is the son of a multimillionaire (Arun) and the 'she' (Payel) is the sibling of a hard-nosed peasant (Tapas). The boy-meets-girl-at-wedding-party romance takes a predictable turn towards the rich-poor conflict once the villain (Rajatava) steps in.

After the relative success of his last film, *Agnipariksha*, Kinnagi here concocts a corny tale with some well-conceived comic scenes. The aggressively promoted new pair, Dev and Payel, does not fare badly either. Tapas, too, puts in a reasonably good performance. The snazzy sets along with the richly wardrobe dancing duo, up the glitz quotient. But despite all this, the Kinnagi flick fails to rise above average fare due to its slow, tiring pace and an insipid plot structure.

*Arnab Bhattacharya*

### Tiresome threesome

**▶▶ YOU, ME AND DUPREE**

**Directors:** Anthony Russo and Joe Russo

**Cast:** Owen Wilson, Kate Hudson, Matt Dillon, Michael Douglas **3.5/10**

The 'You' and 'Me' (Kate Hudson and Matt Dillon) get married and move into their new home. So does Dupree (Owen Wilson), Matt's best friend. And, no, they do not all happily live ever after.

First half it is Kate who is unhappy that they have to share their newly married life with Dupree, who turns out to be an absolute home wrecker, literally. The carpet is littered, the bathroom flush overflowing, and generally speaking, the living room becomes for Kate a much-dreaded spot, where she finds Dupree in rather compromising positions on more occasions than one. And it's not long before it actually goes up in fire.

After that, in the second half, while Matt goes all sniff-sniff for the smoke, Kate and Dupree bond brilliantly with each other, as together they cook and drink and laugh. Most of their antics are just good for short muffled laughs. And it's best to keep them muffled, unless one wants one's neighbour wondering what's up with you....

*Deepali Singh*

