

# Review: 'Alice, Darling' offers a dark exploration of psychological abuse



- Anna Kendrick plays lead, and is executive producer
- Mary Nighy's directorial debut with first feature film

CHNNAI: English actress and filmmaker Mary Nighy's debut full-length feature "Alice, Darling," coming to theaters in the Middle East in early February, takes a close and horrifying look at a woman psychologically imprisoned and abused by her partner.



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Anna Kendrick — who bags her second feature film executive producer credit with the psychological thriller — plays the titular Alice.



Wunmi Mosaku, Anna Kendrick and Kaniehtiio Horn in 'Alice, Darling.' (Supplied)

Alice lives under the illusion that her boyfriend Simon (Charlie Carrick) loves her, but a vacation away with her two close girlfriends (Kaniehtiio Horn and Wunmi Mosaku) makes her slowly realize that he is a jealous and possessive man — to the extent that the relationship begins to smother her.

The movie examines how, with the help of her friends, reality gradually dawns on Alice. Kendrick's exploration of the trauma and abuse is as deeply disturbing as it is illuminating.

Pened by Alanna Francis, "Alice, Darling" digs deep into Alice's mental anguish and torment — criticized and abused by Simon over the years as we are shown in a series of flashbacks.

Smart editing by Gareth C. Scales helps to make the movie feel current and alive. We are shown how an intelligent woman has been brainwashed into submissiveness. Caught in a web of coercion, she constantly has negative thoughts about herself, and, at one point, begins to have doubts about her own capabilities.

Interestingly, the film has seamlessly woven in a subplot about a missing girl, who somehow begins to hold a fascination for Alice. There is a covert suggestion that the protagonist sees in this girl a fellow troubled woman. Alice wants to help her, and it is then that she realizes that she herself needs help and lots of it.

Carrick, in an outstanding performance, plays Simon the cad, who has an abundance of charm, and a magnetism that is endearing and deceptive. It is a pointed reflection that tells us how some men can have convincing facades that cover their darker motives, only to be revealed after they have complete control of their victims.

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