


'Kate': A middling work that is high on action but lacks innovation



CHENNAI: Director Cedric Nicolas-Trovan, who has given us a titles like fantasy-filled adventure “The Huntsman: Winter's War,” steps on the gas this time with “Kate,” now on Netflix. The film currently tops the streaming platform’s trending list in Saudi Arabia, but is it worth the watch?

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A narrative set largely in Tokyo, though the opening scenes are in Osaka, it takes us on a roller-coaster ride thorough the city, dazzling neon signs competing for attention along with smoking guns and glittering swords. In some ways, it almost resembles a violent Manga comic with Mary Elizabeth Winstead in the shoes of assassin Kate, a 20-something hard-to-crack woman, trained to the hilt by Varrick (Woody Harrelson). She caught the eye as a “scream queen” in the horror series “Wolf Lake” in early 2000 and graduated to notorious characters in “Monster Island” and the supernatural thriller, “Final Destination.”

“Kate” is several notches higher than any of the aforementioned movies, and packs in a kind of arresting action that is sleek and performed with a nuanced sense of fair play and justice, which we see in the titular character. It seems like she becomes tired of chasing and being chased around after her original assignment to shoot a Yakuza kingpin misfires — she kills his brother instead, leaving his daughter, Ani (Miku Martineau), devastated. Controlling her is V, whom she calls Varrick, who has been a parent to her, a teacher and guide.

But in the game of collateral damage that Kate and V play, there can only be tragedy. The fallout is unthinkable. Poisoned by a lethal dose of polonium, and with just 24 hours of life left, she must take her revenge. But the only person who knows where the gang leader who planned her death lives is Ani. A touching bond between them is established as the film moves along, with Kate daring death as she travels along an insanely destructive path.

The film is a middling work, with very little that is inventive. Writer Umair Aleem just cannot seem to get past the violence and mayhem, and this can get on one’s nerves.
