

'Kissing Booth 3:' A teen rom-com that finally feels a little mature



CHENNAI: It surely did not need three films to tell the story of high-school girl Elle Evans (Joey King), but Vince Marcello, who oversaw the first two of this popcorn franchise, tries hard to give us something different in “Kissing Booth 3,” now streaming on Netflix. A pure young-adult fantasy that played out in the first two parts gets firmer here with Elle finally understanding where her heart really is.



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She wants to do something different, which is not following either of the Flynn Brothers. While Noah (Jacob Elordi) wants her to come with him to college in Boston, his younger brother, Lee (Joel Courtney), is keen that she goes to Berkley with him. The kind of pressure Elle felt in the second part, of not being sure of who she is in love with, is resolved here — Lee is her bestie while Noah holds the magnetic romantic appeal.



The series is based on a novel written by the-then 15-year-old Beth Reekles. Supplied

Based on a novel written by the-then 15-year-old Beth Reekles, with the sequels coming as an afterthought, Marcello and co-writer Jay Arnold did not have a solid storyline to stretch it to part 3, and it does appear somewhat repetitive. Admittedly, the duo have tried hard to pull out a few incidents to infuse a bit of novelty. Elle's father, Evans (Stephen Jennings), who was hardly seen in the earlier editions, has some life this time.

“Kissing Booth 3” takes us into one last summer that the brothers and Elle would want to spend in the beach house, owned by the Flynns, before they go off to college. And Lee and Elle have a bucket list, an exciting array of fun games and adventures, but what appeals mostly is the emotional quality that the movie invests in.



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The kids are growing up, and they have begun to take more informed decisions. Elle understands that she must pursue her own dreams rather than get pushed and pulled by the two boys. And characters begin to get built, and we get to see some maturity.

It is of course Elle's story, and also narrated by her. She takes greater control of her life, letting go of teenage tantrums, silly jealousies and juvenile games. Admittedly, a few of these could have been edited out, shortening the movie from its 113 minutes.

Suffice to say that King is really splendid as one who finds out that she has her own personality. She is a lovely natural, giving a fine performance here, not quite matched by either Elordi or Courtney.
