

Review: 'The Menu' serves up chills aplenty but boasts a lackluster final course



CHENNAI: Ever since I watched “The Menu,” now available on Disney+ in Saudi Arabia and across the Middle East, I’ve wondered whether I will be able to enjoy a meal at a restaurant ever again.

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Director Mark Mylod's immensely uncomfortable, atmospheric thriller — which debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival — has spoilt my appetite for eating

out.

With a screenplay by Seth Reiss and Will Tracy, wonderful lensing by Peter Deming, and production design by Ethan Tobman, the film has all the ingredients of a superb watch — and it is packed with shocking moments.

An elaborate multi-course dinner is served up for an intimate group of 12 privileged men and women, who are taken by boat to a remote island for the occasion. The terribly pompous chef Slowik (a great performance here by Ralph Fiennes) serves up the fare with the help of his aides.

Slowik is more interested in his meal being admired rather than enjoyed, which is rather difficult considering one of his sous chefs commits suicide in front of the horrified diners. The macabre tale continues with Slowik tormenting his guests, who were handpicked for the monstrous occasion. Well, all except Margo (Anya Taylor-Joy), who arrives on the island as a replacement date of Tyler (Nicholas Hoult). She is curious and disgusted by what is going on, but is also harshly critical of Slowik.

It is only toward the end that we understand why Slowik does what he does — the reason is unconvincing, however.

The narrative seems interesting when the mystery is being thrown at us, but when the solutions come, the meal is ruined.
