

'Morbius' is a stylish but insipid vampire adventure



CHENNAI: There is one significant takeaway from “Morbius,” a new film inspired by a Marvel Comics character. One may be tempted to draw a parallel between his experiment with bats and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which many believe emerged from a lab after clinic errors. In a desperate attempt to cure himself of a rare blood disorder, Morbius, played brilliantly by Jared Leto — an Oscar winner who portrayed the Joker in the 2016 “Suicide Squad” — uses the DNA of vampire bats to create artificial blood which he injects into his diseased veins. But the reaction is unthinkable. He evolves into a monstrous and villainous creature, killing all those who step on his path.



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The film is playing in theaters. Supplied

The third film after “Venom” and its sequel, all based on characters from the “Spider-Man” universe, “Morbius,” directed by Daniel Espinosa and penned by Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless, also stars Matt Smith, Adria Arjona and others. But “Morbius” fails to hit the heights of the rest of the series. Espinosa’s work lacks all the pulse-pounding excitement that we have come to associate with Marvel. The film is bland and such a drag that it does get a tad difficult to sit through the 90-minute runtime, even if it has been stylishly presented.

The opening scene shows Morbius getting off a helicopter on Costa Rican mountains to enter a bat-infested cave. He extracts their DNA in complete contravention of medical ethics and conducts his risky experiment on a cargo ship off the Long Island coast. Assisted by Martine Bancroft (Arjona), he injects the serum into himself, a picture of sunken cheeks with a cadaverous look. Although he morphs into a blood-thirsting vampire, the film offers little of the excitement that we have come to expect from the Marvel universe. But a bit of an emotional quotient is visible. Morbius is a good guy here, pushed into a terrifying pit.



Morbius is played brilliantly by Jared Leto. Supplied

He has little control over his misadventures as he sucks and kills, but feels a deep sense of remorse that deepens when he has to meet his unwell childhood friend, Milo (Smith), from a Greek sanatorium, who though has no misgivings about ingesting the artificial blood behind his friend's back and surrendering to his new devilish avatar.

A trashy time-killer, the movie has little of the magic and mayhem of the others in the genre. It disappoints as a vampire adventure, hanging as listlessly as bats do in dark caves.
