


'Pieces of Her': The Netflix thriller is laborious and lacks immediacy



CHENNAI: Adapted from the 2018 bestselling novel by American author Karin Slaughter, Netflix's new series, "Pieces of Her" is eight episodes long, or yawningly long, at 40 minutes-plus with the last over 60 minutes. While it throws up one twist after another, they soon get laborious and confusing.

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At the beginning, the work reminded me of David Cronenberg's "A History of Violence" in which Viggo Mortensen's seemingly innocuous Tom Stall, a happily married family man who runs a diner, thwarts a holdup by shooting an intruder.

In "Pieces of Her," Laura Oliver (played fantastically, as expected from Toni Collette), also kills an attacker at a restaurant where she is having a meal with daughter Andy (Bella Heathcote, who holds her own most brilliantly against the older actress).

For Andy, it is then a roller-coaster run with episode after episode getting her more and more perplexed, distressed, and angry. At 30, she is still finding her way in life, unable to put her finger on what she wants to do, and her mother's dare-devilry is so bewildering to the girl that one question keeps popping up. Who exactly is Laura? What is her past? And what is it that she is not revealing?

The show tries, bit by bit, to piece together this mystery through innumerable back stories of Laura. When the mother becomes a media sensation after the eatery incident, the daughter realizes that Laura is no cuddly woman.

Although director Mikie Spiro and writer Charlotte Stoudt try their best to weave into these mysterious goings on a touching mother-daughter relationship, it does not quite help to keep alive the interest. And by episode three, a sense of boredom sets in despite excellent mounting and captivating photography, resulting in the temptation to fast forward.

The series also appears muddled with the introduction of several characters in quick succession. The result is that most of them float around like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle gone astray.

If there is one enduring aspect that helps this Netflix offering provide some degree of value, it is Colette's performance, which is fascinating to watch with its magnificent arc moving through cold indifference, rage, maternal affection and foolhardy bravado.
