

Film Review: ‘The Old Man & the Gun:’ Robert Redford oozes boyish charm at 82



CHENNAI: If the 1969 movie “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid” made a star out of Robert Redford, his latest adventure, “The Old Man & the Gun,” in which he plays a bank robber, is as compelling, which is made even more commendable by the fact he turns 83 next August.

Redford, who recently declared that this film would be his last, plays a delightful gentleman bank robber with a gun tucked inside his stylishly tailored jacket. And he is as charming as Forrest Tucker as he was walking “Barefoot in the Park” in once-upon-a-time New York.

Directed by David Lowery, “The Old Man & the Gun” is a crime caper but with a cheesy difference: Tucker is a loveable rascal who uses his boyish grin (his screen age is 76) and devil-may-care charm to sweet-talk bank managers into parting with money. Tucker hardly ever fires his gun, he just shows it. Redford pulls off heist after heist in his genteel manner.

When the cops arrive after the robber has walked away with a bow and a smile, all that the bank managers can say is: “Oh, he was a gentleman.” Caught several times, Tucker invariably manages to escape from prison and returns to looting banks with his two equally old accomplices, played by Danny Glover and Tom Waits.

Redford reminds one of what film stars once were, with their affable characters and natural ease on screen. Lowery’s little outing also tells us what cinema can be, a real pleasure where there is little space for blood-baying violence or other forms of crudity, and he could not have chosen a more suitable lead actor.

Long-haired police officer John Hunt, impressively played by Casey Affleck, is soft-spoken to the point of surprising us. But he has steel all right, and, humiliated by Tucker’s innumerable escapes, the cop promises himself that he will catch the gang, which adds some grit and light suspense to the film.
