

# Gehraiyaan Review: Deepika Padukone, Ananya Panday Film is Too Tame for a Triangular Romance



Shakun Batra directed Gehraiyaan, starring Deepika Padukone, Ananya Panday, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Dhairya Karwa, takes the often-tread path in sorting messy relationships.

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GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Gehraiyaan Movie Review: Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi's film could have had a crisper plot.

**G**ehraiyaan  
Director: Shakun Batra

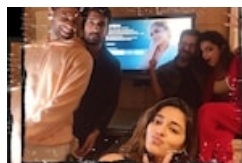
**Cast:** Deepika Padukone, Ananya Panday, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Dhairya Karwa, Naseeruddin Shah, Rajat Kapoor

Infidelity is a theme that has been explored in Indian cinema from time immemorial. One of the earliest directors to talk about this was Satyajit Ray in Charulata. Raj Kapoor's Sangam was another, and unlike Ray, other helmers took a convenient approach to sort out the triangular mess in marriage. In Sangam, Gopal played by Rajendra Kumar commits suicide paving the way for Sundar (Kapoor) and Radha (Vyjayanthimala) to stay together.

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The latest Amazon Prime Video offering Gehraiyaan (Depths), by Shakun Batra, takes the beaten track that so

many others have traversed, though the point of difference here is the couples – and there are two – have a live-in relationship.

Deepika Padukone's Alisha has been with Karan (Dhairya Karwa) for six years. A struggling novelist, he has not yet been able to clinch a publisher, and she runs a yoga centre and pays the bills. Her cousin, Tia (Ananya Panday), has just gotten engaged to Zain (Siddhant Chaturvedi). He runs a construction business with the help of Tia's family, and the couple live in style. He wears designer clothes, stays in a plush house and even owns a swanky private yacht.

Alisha sees him with envy; he is everything that Karan is not. While the writer is modest and has no trace of arrogance, Zain is haughty and a show-off – with a roving eye that spots Alisha during a trip by the foursome to Alibaug on the yacht.

The plot veers off to the oft-beaten track. Alisha, whose mother killed herself, comes with this horrible baggage, and she blames her father (Naseeruddin Shah) for it. The daughter and father have a strained relationship, but we would know later how mistaken she had been.

Tia is very close to Alisha, and they grew up together – their ties built on easy camaraderie and, more importantly, trust. Which Alisha breaks by flipping for playboy Zain, and this affair slips into terrifying territory. There is more lust than love, I would presume, and there is guilt. Alisha is anguished at having betrayed Tia, who comes off as a simpleton, does not even suspect Zain when he gets calls in the middle of the night. It was my contractor, he tells his fiancée, who naively believes him.

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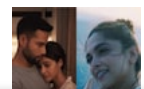
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Alisha gives Zain an ultimatum and threatens to tell Tia the truth. He is not prepared for this, largely because he needs Tia's money to pull him out of the financial mess his company had got itself into.

Batra, who has co-written the script, has very little new to offer, and the film, which runs for 130 minutes – when it could have wound up in 90 – often seems repetitive. There is a lot of style, yes, but no substance. We see gorgeous women dressed sexily, and Alisha's yoga demonstration appears to be all about titillation.

The much-publicised intimate scenes, which were done under the watchful eye of an intimacy director (probably the first in Indian cinema), are insipid, and we can see how uncomfortable Padukone is while she is in bed with Chaturvedi. There is diffidence, there is queasy discomfort. Even the kisses lack passion. Indian actresses, I presume, are still not up to letting themselves go in such situations. Call it social conditioning or fear of familial or community pressure.

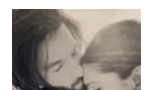
While Padukone's performance is just about okay (she is weak in the emotional scenes), Panday is too flippant to make a mark even when she begins to suspect her fiancé. Both men are huge disappointments, and they just cannot get into their characters to convey distress. Karan is shocked when Alisha tells him that she feels suffocated in their relationship, but he sleepwalks through these scenes. It is never clear why Zain wants to break off his engagement. And when the moment comes to face facts and take on the responsibility of getting

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together with Alisha, he chooses a frightening path – which reminded me of Woody Allen's 2005 psychological thriller, Match Point, in which the man gets away with murder.

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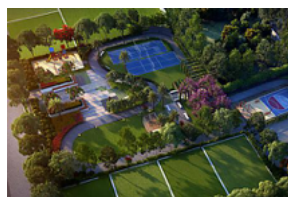


**GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN** *Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...* [Read More](#)

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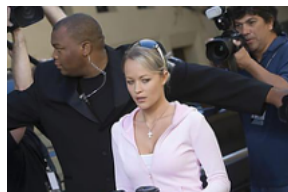
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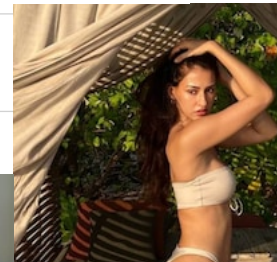
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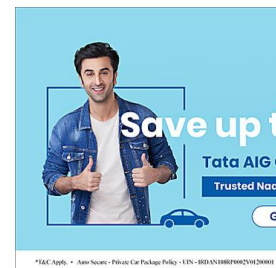
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