

t is now the season of women heroes. We have seen that in Dangal where two sisters in a Haryanvi village wrestle to glory and stardom. We have also a story on the cricketer Mithali Raj bringing laurels to India in Shabaash Mitu. Now we have a story of a female boxer with Babli Bouncer. Admittedly, Madhur Bhandarkar – who is yet to give us something as brilliant as Chandni Bar despite his attempts at Page 3 and Heroine – has thought of something as novel as spinning a story around a female boxer. It also came as a pleasant surprise to me that he has pulled off a coup of sorts by getting actress Tamannaah Bhatia to perform to a great degree of conviction – a facet that I have never seen in her earlier outings.

Well, she plays Babli Tanwar, a young woman in a conservative Haryana village, renowned for turning out body-builders, and many of them work as bouncers in Delhi's nightclubs – where drunken "adventures" are not just common but get mixed by with inflated male ego and murderous malaise. But Bhandarkar, who has co-written the plot with a couple of others, travels further in this direction to tell us that women who frequent nightclubs in India's capital city can be as vicious and troublesome as men, and this is where Babli, an ace weight-lifter, fits in.

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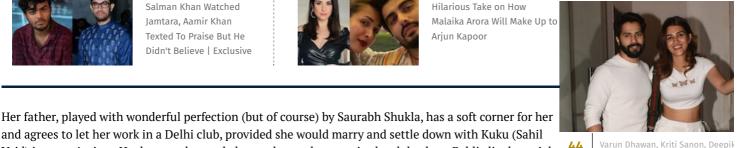
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Vaid) in a year's time. He dotes on her and also works as a bouncer in the club where Babli clinches a job. Padukone, Alia Bhatt, Janhvi Kapor

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attempt is made to get into the skin of a bouncer's life. Bhandarkar diverts his narrative to a romantic road with a sophisticated Viraj (Abhishek Bajaj) inadvertently leading Babli up the garden path, to use a cliche. He has no intention to settle down, as he avers, with one who tucks in dozens of "rotis" and burps unashamedly in public.

and agrees to let her work in a Delhi club, provided she would marry and settle down with Kuku (Sahil

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Bhandarkar seems confused as to how to bring his film to a convincing finale. He mucks up the third act with something as inane as Babli being feted by the State Chief Minister for bravery, and what began with a bang ends in a disappointing whimper.

If there is an aspect that could make this Disney+Hotstar title work it is Tamaannah's standout performance, and let us not forget Shukla's subtle piece of acting that many of us would remember for a long time.

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