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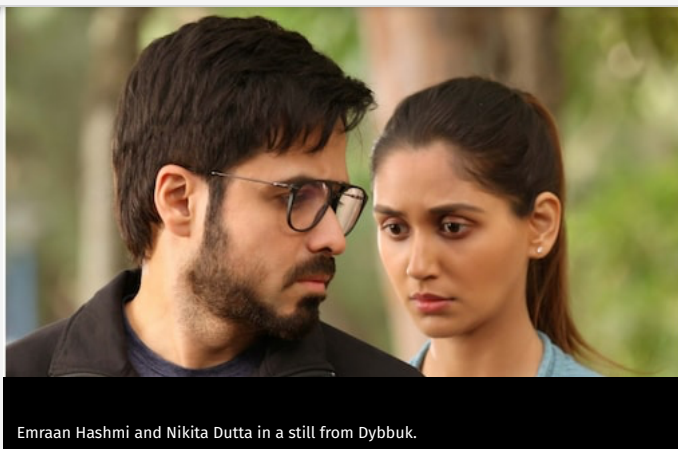


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Dybbuk Movie Review: Emraan Hashmi Headlines a Demonic Plot Set in Picture-postcard Mauritius

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Emraan Hashmi and Nikita Dutta in a still from Dybbuk.

Emraan Hashmi starrer horror-thriller Dybbuk offers little novelty, falling back on a plot that has been beaten to pulp.

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LAST UPDATED: OCTOBER 29, 2021, 07:45 IST

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GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Dybbuk
Director: Jay K

Cast: Emraan Hashmi, Nikita Dutta, Manav Kaul, Gaurav Sharma, Denzil Smith

Dybbuk has an interesting line of cast that includes Emraan Hashmi and Manav Kaul, but the film, now out on Amazon Prime Video, has too many convenient points that make it somewhat of an implausibility. Helmed by Jay K, he has remade his debut Malayalam movie, Ezra (with Prithviraj), in Hindi as Dybbuk. Hashmi as Sam or Samuel reprises Prithviraj's role, and does a decent job of a man who gets a new posting in a nuclear waste disposable plant in – believe it or not – the Mauritius capital of Port Louis. His wife, Maahi (Nikita Dutta), is not too keen to translocate, because that would mean going far away from her parents. But she plays a sport and accompanies Sam to a really scenic city that sadly harbours a demonic spirit inside a Jewish wine box. It can emerge for its run of death and destruction only after the last of the Jews dies on the island, and Sam's transfer coincides with the death of a rabbi, the last of the tribe there.

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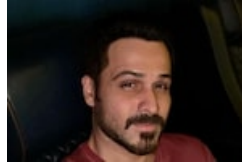
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But for some above average performances, Jay's work looks like yet another horror story of red-eyed ghosts descending from roofs, rocking chairs, cracking mirrors and flickering lights. And the atmosphere gets eerie at the colonial bungalow in which the couple decide to live. I sometimes wonder why writers and directors do not think of something different to frighten viewers instead of beating the same old drum of jump-scares. These shake and shock you momentarily, but beyond this, they merely produce yawns.

Dybbuk is an ancient Jewish custom which was written in the 16th century, but was ignored by scholars till S. Ansky's play (The Dybbuk) in 1914 popularised it in literary circles. About a form of transmigration of a restless/unhappy soul, the film narrates this through rather clumsy writing. With a local Muslim police inspector, Riaz (Gaurav Sharma), a Catholic priest (Denzil Smith), a Jewish Rabbi, Markus (Manav Kaul), a Hindu woman, Maahi, and her Christian husband, Sam, Dybbuk seems like a cocktail of religions out to bring about societal transformation and harmony. It does not quite achieve that; instead it appears forced and confused with a story that resembles a fairytale with a wicked spirit and all the good men around her.

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It is not just this, but we also learn as the movie progresses that there is revenge and retribution to the extent that a nuclear catastrophe is waiting to wipe out the scenic vacation island of Mauritius. That will be terrible.

Unfortunately, Dybbuk offers little novelty, falling back on a plot that has been beaten to pulp.

(Gautaman Bhaskaran is author, commentator and movie critic)

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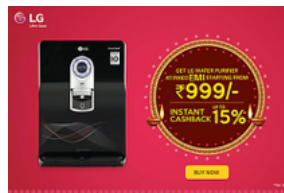
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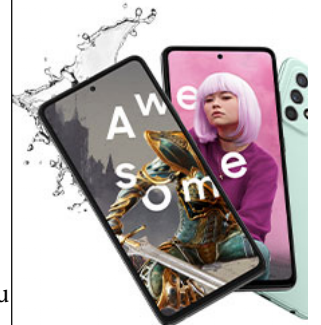
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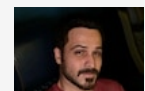
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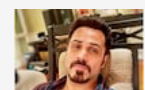
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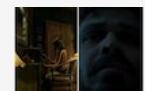
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