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# Irul Movie Review: Fahadh Faasil Plays Mr Broody All Over Again, in a Thrilling Theme



Irul, helmed by Naseef Yusuf Izuddin, presents a well-edited narrative with hardly any excesses, that takes us

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**GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN**

**I**rul  
 Director: Naseef Yusuf Izuddin

**Cast: Fahadh Faasil, Soubin Shahir, Darshana Rajendran**

Happily, Netflix's latest outing, Irul (Darkness), in Malayalam is far removed from the thrillers and mysteries we have been constantly fed by Tamil cinema, which invariably uses the "jump-scare" method to frighten audiences. And this, of late, has become so common – it has been around since the 1960s– that I have seen viewers treat all of this as some kind of joke. They actually laugh when a girl falls through a fireplace or a hand is shoved across an ajar door. And there are any number of swinging swings and dolls whose heads merrily rotate.

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Irul is very, very different from what I have been watching in this genre in Tamil films. If I remember right, there was just one single occasion in the Malayalam work when I jumped off my sofa. Otherwise, Irul, helmed by Naseef Yusuf Izuddin (who worked as an assistant director in Hindi language dramas like Kai Po Che!, Happy New Year and Tumbbad), presents a well-edited narrative with hardly any excesses that takes us into what turns out to be a bewildering mystery.

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Alex Parayil (Soubin Shahir) is a partner in a giant firm. He is rich and his debut novel, Irul, has not exactly made waves, but he hopes that it will place him among a luminary of authors. He is proud to have transformed himself into one, but his girlfriend, Archana Pillai (Darshana Rajendran), a criminal lawyer has not yet read the book.

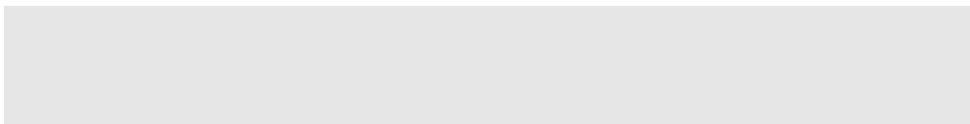
She firmly believes that buried deep inside every truth is a lie, at least a trace of it, and vice-versa. However horrific a lie may seem or sound, it is quite possible that there an element of truth. It is on this premise that Irul pushes us into the plot, which is not flawless though. I caught at least one slip or what looked like one.

But this is not imply that I did not enjoy the movie, which opens with Alex and Archana, who have been with each other for barely three months, deciding to take a weekend holiday – sans their computers and cell-phones. There is a scene at the beginning when we see Alex hoping to have a quiet coffee in a cafe with his girl getting a trifle irritated when call after call for her plays spoilsport.



Well, the couple take the car and head towards their destination; she is in the dark about the place, because he wants to surprise her, a surprise that soon turns into a series of shocks. To begin with, their car breaks down. It is raining heavily, it is dark and they are in the middle of nowhere. With no phones , they cannot get any help, when she spots a lighted bungalow. They head for it, and after constant banging and ringing, the door opens with a bang. Out emerges, a man, who later calls himself Unni (Fahadh Faasil).

It is a tastefully decorated house with a myriad collection of books lining the walls. The three begin drinking and having a rather philosophical conversation about crime, criminals and criminality. Mind you, Alex has just penned a murder mystery, and she is dealing with crime at the high court day in and day out.



Soon, the power fails, and as the couple learnt earlier in the evening, the landline phone connection has been off, and Unni says he does not use a mobile phone. An intelligent lawyer like Archana should have smelt a rat, but she is busy trying to push her point of view, trying to convince Unni, while he asks some brilliant questions.

Irul unfolds on a single night, and I wonder how two very informed people like Alex and Archana are oblivious of the pitfalls that are only to be expected in a situation they find themselves in. And they are not some giggly teenagers in the first flush of puppy love. Some things hardly convinced me.

However, on the whole with a run time of 90 minutes, it is not bad with uniformly good performances. Faasil has always been a thinking actor. He can be quite good, but he is getting typecast as Mr Brooder. Shahir is wonderful; his perplexity at the turn of events has been conveyed with amazing conviction, and Rajendran appears lost in the tussle between two adult men – one her boyfriend and the other a total stranger. Somehow, her character, given her background as an advocate dabbling in crime, appears out of place. A lawyer who cannot see what is so clear and right in front of her! But this is not to say, not in the least, that her acting is not up to the mark. She amply justifies what has been written for her, only that the writer, Sunil Yadav, has not given enough thought to her character.

Finally, a large segment of Irul happens indoor and there are only three characters, but imaginative mounting and story-telling keep the work pulsating.

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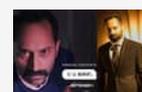
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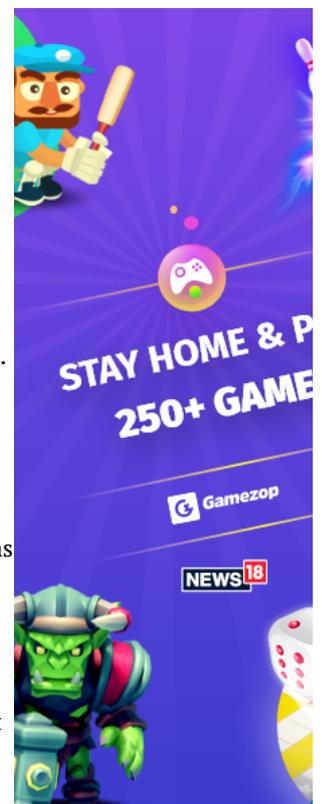


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● TAGS DARSHANA RAJENDRAN | FAHADH FAASIL | IRUL | NASEEF YUSUF IZUDDIN | SOUBIN SHAHIR |

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