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# Shaitaan Review: R Madhavan Scares Ajay Devgn and the Audience With His Impressive Performance

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[Mumbai, India](#)

Shaitaan released in theatres on March 8, 2024.

Shaitaan (U/A)

★★★★★ 3/5

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8 March 2024 | Hindi

WATCH TRAILER

2 hrs 20 mins | Thriller

Starring: R Madhavan, Ajay Devgn, Jyothika

Director: Vikas Bahl

R Madhavan and Ajay Devgn starrer Shaitaan is finally in theatres but is the film worth watching? Read our review here.

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Cinema has been obsessed with the horror genre. Sometimes, it works at a purely psychological level, and at other times, it is the jump-scare stuff. The 2007 *Funny Games* (with Naomi Watts and Tim Roth) by Michael Haneke – I remember clearly – had adults running out of a Chennai auditorium in sheer fright. Some puked. Such was the screenplay that superbly brought out the horror of two young psychopathic men who destroyed a family in their home. Then we have had *Bees Saal Baad*, which came much earlier, that nearly knocked you out of your seat.

And now arrives *Shaitaan*, directed by the Queen fame Vikas Bahl. Actually, it is a remake of the 2023 Gujarati movie, *Vash* by Krishnadev Yagnik. Bahl retains the essence of the original and shoves creeps all around. Interestingly, the work reminded me of *Funny Games*, and instead of two men terrorising a family there, we have in *Shaitaan*, a single guy, played to wonderful perfection by R. Madhavan. He is Vanraaj, who uses his hypnotic powers to lure young girls into a cave (Piped Pier, is he?).

When he picks a happy family of four at a wayside dhaba – Kabir (Ajay Devgn), his wife Jyoti (Jyotika), their daughter Jhanvi (Janki Bodiwala) and son, Dhruv (Anngad Raaj) – there is trouble that is terrible and terrifying.

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Vanraaj follows the family to their grand holiday villa in a desolate spot, and when the drama begins it is a night of heavy rain, lightening and thunder. Bearded and every inch evil, Vanraaj lays his eyes on the girl, unbelievably mesmerises her. She obeys every command of his to slapping her father to slapping herself. Dance, he orders, and she gets on her toes till she faints gasping.

Things come to a head when Vanraaj commands – though in a gentle manner that hides a wicked exterior – Jhanvi to kill Dhruv, and when she takes a knife and sets to go about, a tussle and a death-defying drama begin. I really do not want to go further, for that will be a sure spoiler.

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Shaitaan is a complete Madhavan movie, and what an arc. From a chocolate hero to a lover boy, he has come a long way in this work. He looks eerie, and sounds too, oscillating between two diametrically opposite images – a sage and a villain. If Devgn plays the loving father, determined to take his daughter out of the Satan's clutches, Madhavan is the very incarnate of a demon. Jyotika is flawless as the distraught mother who watches helplessly as Jhanvi plays a puppet, whose strings are controlled by Vanraaj.

The film is gripping and chilling, but leaves logic behind. Is hypnotism so powerful and so manipulative? I really wonder.

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