



Designed to thrill

WEB REVIEW

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IF a script has been adapted several times over around the world, one can safely assume that it holds promise. In that regard, Tisca Chopra and Ronit Roy have the advantage of a strong foundation in *Hostages*, the latest web series from Hotstar, which finds its roots in the popular Israeli show *Bnei Aruba* created by Omri Givon and Rotem Shamir. But the question is, does the latest retelling — helmed by Sudhir Mishra — go beyond the 2013 fare?

Kicking off at a brisk pace, the 10-part series doesn't waste time before arriving at its central plot — Dr Mira Anand (Chopra), who has to perform a surgery on the chief minister the next morning, is held hostage, along with her family, by four masked people. A bargain is laid out on the table: kill the chief minister during the surgery in exchange for the safety of her dear ones.

It doesn't take too long to realise that Prithvi Singh (Roy) is one of the masterminds. Why Prith-

vi, a former superintendent of police who took early retirement from the force, has gone on the wrong side of the law and chooses Dr Mira to carry out his dirty work is a sub-plot of the story. As the clock starts ticking, Dr Mira learns several truths about her family while grappling with the situation.

It is to Mishra's credit that 10 minutes into the first episode, he has you on the edge of the seat. With Archit Rastogi's taut editing and various sub-plots, the director maintains the steady pace of a suspense thriller. However, if he repeats the incisive treatment of the original in the Indian adaptation, he also repeats its mistakes. This would be the first hostage story of its kind where the captives are flitting in and out of the house without alarm or caution. Besides that, there is little to criticise.

The splendid cast is Mishra's trump card. Despite minimal dialogues at his disposal, Roy

HOSTAGES

U/A: Suspense, thriller

DIR: Sudhir Mishra

CAST: Tisca Chopra, Ronit Roy, Parvin Dabas



delivers a brilliant performance, instilling fear and awe all at once. Parvin Dabas, who plays Dr Mira's husband, is competent. Dalip Tahil may have limited screen time, but he is ever so convincing as a man in power. Surya Sharma, Ashim Gulati and Anangsha Biswas deliver on point. But, at the end of the day, it is a Chopra show all the way — with her nuanced act of a surgeon

forced to choose between her ethics and family, she displays once again how the industry hasn't tapped her potential as an artiste.

With every episode ending on a cliffhanger, you will find yourself binge-watching. Interestingly, at the end of the season, Mishra tactfully leaves several questions unanswered. If that leads to the making of another season, it will be worth the wait.

★YUCK ★★WHATEVER ★★★GOOD
 ★★★★★SUPER ★★★★★AWESOME