

A WOMAN'S REFUSAL: SILENCE AS STRENGTH IN MRS. (2025)

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In *Mrs.* (2025) from Arati Kadav, there is silence at work. But not just of the cinematic sort, but every day, sharp, hurting stillness of a woman folding herself into routines, into roles, into spaces constructed by others. Based on the Malayalam film *The Great Indian Kitchen*, this Hindi adaptation does not merely translate language but also cultural codes, expectations, and the uncanny familiarity of living as a woman in a home that is not hers, even if she cleans it daily. The movie shows a woman who has lost herself, and maybe never had the opportunity to know who she was in the first place. *Mrs.* is not interested in spectacle. Its resistance is unobtrusive. There is no boisterous confrontation, no cinematic high point—it is the slowness that disturbs.

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Right from the first few shots, the titleless heroine presents herself as an efficient, dutiful, long-suffering woman. Yet, every action—every shape of dough, every ladle being submerged in a steaming vessel—takes on the aura of unvoiced subjection. What Kadav nails so chillingly true is how mundanity has turned this all a normal affair. The movie forces one to face the fact that this isn't the story of a single woman—it's that of multiple women. Their daily routine is their confinement.



The kitchen, rather than being a warm place, is transformed into a theater of unpaid work, of inherited gendered bondage, and of rituals more concerned with control than culture. What is striking is that Mrs. doesn't depict patriarchy in its most grotesque manifestation. The men in the movie are not overtly cruel or violent; they are, rather, unsettlingly normal. They demand obedience because they have never learned otherwise. The father-in-law and the husband continue rituals and lectures in the name of tradition, completely oblivious to the human cost it exacts from the woman in front of them. portrayed with great control by Sanya Malhotra, never raises her voice. However, her rebellion bubbles beneath the surface. Initially regarded as passive acceptance, her silence soon turns to refusal—not quite rebellion as it's conventionally understood, but a deep "no" which in itself reverberates louder than any exhibition. As a movie, Mrs. requires its audience to be discomfited. It is slow-paced, its shots hold, and its repetition is deliberate. Yet, it is this very quality that makes it so strong. The drudgery compels us to coexist with her, to experience the fatigue and erasure that women have learned to accept. The power of the film is in its resistance to explanation. It doesn't overestimate its point; it merely presents—and allows the import of it to speak.

Viewers are left to supply the blanks, to think about the women they know who have done this very same thing, without appreciation, without a breath. Audience reception has been broadly approving, most notably among those familiar with feminist dialogue. Many have complimented the film on holding society up to mirror, not with hostility but with elegance. Some of its viewers found the speed difficult, but this discomfort is inherent in the design of the movie. It requires patience, just as women have been required to be patient their entire lives. For those who endured, Mrs. provided something that is uncommon: acknowledgment.

At times, acknowledgment is stronger than revolution. In the end, the film does not leave us with resolution, but with quiet resilience. A woman, having shouldered everybody else's rituals, at last chooses her own. Mrs. is not about reclaiming space—it is about reclaiming selfhood, however belatedly, however quietly. And that, maybe, is the most radical thing of all.



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