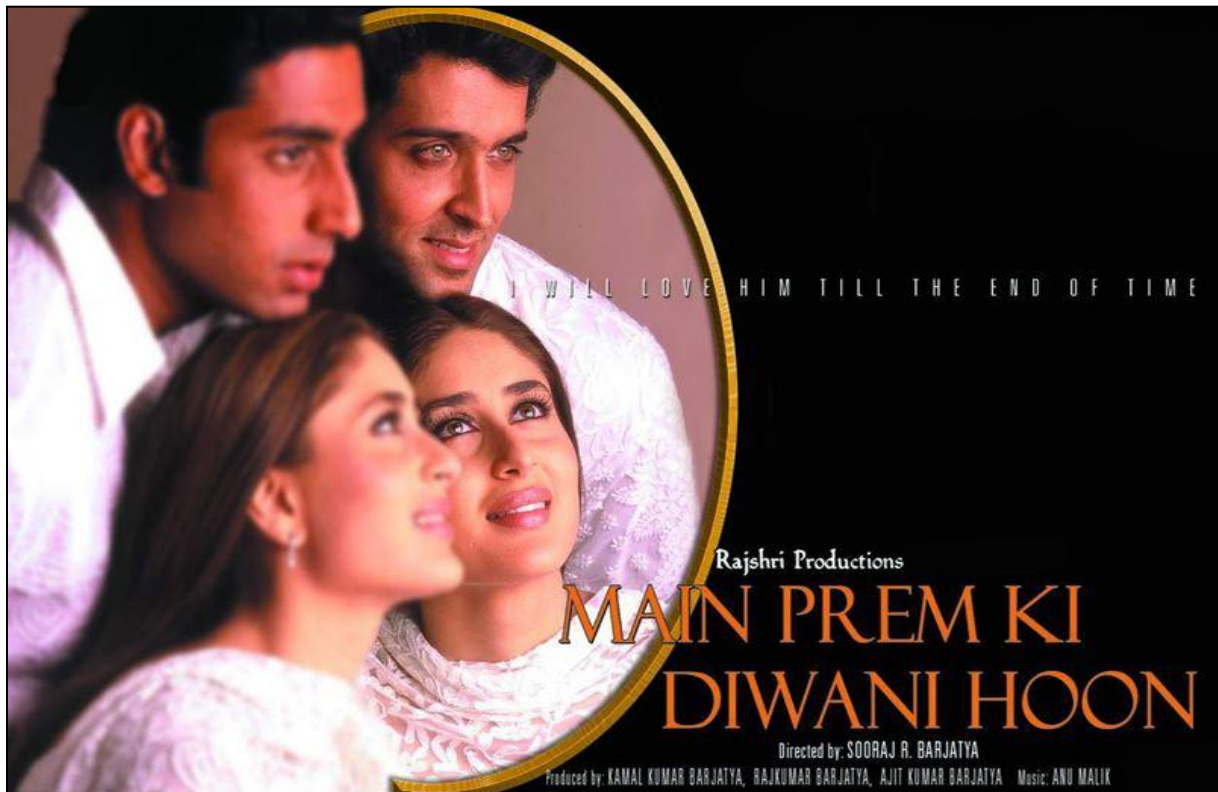


Review #65 : *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* (2003)

Kareena Kapoor & Hrithik Roshan

CLIP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hHbFDtjuB0>



When the keenly-anticipated *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* got out, the expectations were mammoth. After all, director Sooraj R. Barjatya weaved magic in his first three films : *Maine Pyar Kiya*, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* and *Hum Saath Saath Hain*. So, obviously, people expected Sooraj to recreate the magic in *Main Prem* as well. And at that point, there could only be two diverse opinions after watching the film : either you'd feel that you got what you expected OR the film just didn't measure up to the expectations. Either Sooraj would win the game or lose it.

Well, *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* falls in the first category. To be more specific, Sooraj wins the game for the fourth time!

SYNOPSIS

All's well in picturesque Sundernagar, where **Sanjana (Kareena Kapoor)** is cooing a ditty with her five friends at Sophia College. Her father is a publisher (**Pankaj Kapur**) who dotes on her while Mom (**Himani Shivpuri**) dreams of getting Sanjana married off just like her elder sister Roopa. Roopa emails her parents about **Prem Kumar (Abhishek Bachchan)**, a wealthy business tycoon who intends to set up a project at Sundernagar. His mother's (**Rima**) only wish is to see her introvert-son smile and settle down. Naturally, Roopa wants him to see her younger sister Sanjana. Visions of money-bags dancing in her head, Sanjana's Mom cleans up the house and gives her daughter flirting lessons, while Papa would rather not see her prospective groom. Meanwhile, Sanjana sets booby-traps. She's got very specific requirements for the guy she'll marry, and '*Richie Rich*' doesn't sound like he fits the bill.

Yet when **Prem (Hrithik Roshan)** arrives with a bag that reads '*I'm happy*', he's darn near perfect. Sanjana's family likes him at once and after a couple songs and some wacky inter-sex warfare, Sanjana too eventually comes around and the two settle down to mooning over each other while indulging in the variety of X-treme sports that this small, rural town apparently offers. He's indeed the man of her dreams, the kind she always wanted to marry.

A few scenes later, Roopa informs her parents via email that **Prem Kishen, and not Prem Kumar**, has come to Sundernagar while the real guy will be visiting Sundernagar shortly. Prem Kishen happen's to be Prem Kumar's employee and college friend but not '*good enough*' to consider marriage. Of course, unlike her mother and sister, Sanjana knows where her heart is and has her papa's support too! Meanwhile, Prem Kumar too is smitten by Sanjana but the right guy has to get the right girl and so, after a long-drawn climax, Sanjana and Prem walk away hand in hand.



THE DOWNS

Some people might find the climax predictable and the storyline outdated. Personally I don't mind, although it's a little difficult to believe that Prem Kishen not once suspects of some confusion on Sanjana's parents' part. The parents, especially the mother, get so carried away that they let their daughter spend time with Prem till 2 o'clock in the morning without cross-checking facts! What bothers me more is how, after just one song, the shy and reticent Prem Kumar is transformed for life ! It's actually a little difficult to believe that a globe-trotting businessman like him would fall in love so fast. But it's just a detail actually. What bothers me even more is the **momentary excess in acting** from most of the cast – the characters quickly **verge on caricature**, and the use of a cartoon parrot and a cartoon dog doesn't help **take the characters seriously**. On the other hand, it's very similar to what the film-makers of *Pride and Prejudice* did with Mrs. Bennett, and so it helps bring laughter right through emotional scenes by not taking the situation *too* seriously. **Anu Malik's** music is good at parts but the songs come too many and too soon – and I don't like all of them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSF6OHGHJqM>

THE PLUS

Like his earlier films, Sooraj's latest film does not have a story that is **novel, original or path-breaking**. The story follows beaten path of **two guys falling in love with the same girl**. But Sooraj's handling of this oft-repeated subject is **what makes all the difference**.

The Rajshri tradition of **wholesome and clean entertainment** is evident in *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* as well. But beside the **family values and typical Indian emotions**, Sooraj also gives the film a **contemporary look**.

It has its share of **romance and light moments** but there's a clear **undercurrent of strong emotions** all the way through, such as the bonding between teachers and students at the very beginning of the film (especially with the cute old nun) or the scene when Kareena admits her love for Hrithik for the first time, as she walks out of her college, or the intricate sequence between the father and daughter, when the father tells her that whatever her opinion of the boy, he's approved of him already, or the Valentine Day portions, right till the intermission. All those scenes have been handled brilliantly. The turning point in the first half does come as a surprise and the interval point **raises the expectations for a dramatic second half**, which, despite a few deficiencies, comes out a winner.

The second half is a triumph from the director's point of view. That Sooraj is a good storyteller is well-known by now. But in *MPKDH*, it's the treatment that saves an otherwise routine story from sinking. The second half also has a few brilliant scenes that have the unmistakable stamp of a genius. The Abhishek / Kareena interaction and how their friendship grows or the sequence when Hrithik learns of Abhishek's engagement to Kareena and even the climax leave you completely mesmerised. **The climax is the best part of the enterprise.** The sequence when Kareena confronts Hrithik [no dialogue] deserves distinction marks for the writing, treatment and execution.

Rajan Kinagi's cinematography is first-rate. The **locations of New Zealand and Mauritius** are breath-taking of course, and beautifully captured on celluloid.

Hrithik Roshan is in top form this time around. The role he's portrayed is of the boy next door and **very identifiable** – unlike the larger-than-life roles in his past few films. More than anything, his emotional scenes are a revelation. His sequences in the latter part of the film prove that the gorgeous actor is capable of much more than just flexing his muscles.

Kareena Kapoor is a delight to watch as well. She's gotten into the skin of the character and portrayed her part with utmost conviction – although a bit excessive at times. She infuses her character with a bit of mischief, dollops of sensuality and a lot of sensitivity. Face to this bubbly girl, timid **Abhishek Bachchan underplays his part well.** However, the length of the role doesn't give him much scope to display histrionics. In second roles, Pankaj Kapur is fabulous, Himani Shivpuri is excellent, Rima is alright and Johny Lever is okay. Raja the Parrot and Johny the Dog are sure to be liked by the kids.

On the whole, *Main Prem* is a worthy successor to Sooraj R. Barjatya's previous hits. ++

