



Dil Se..

Director: Mani Ratnam

Ratings info: sexual violence, moderate violence, threat

12

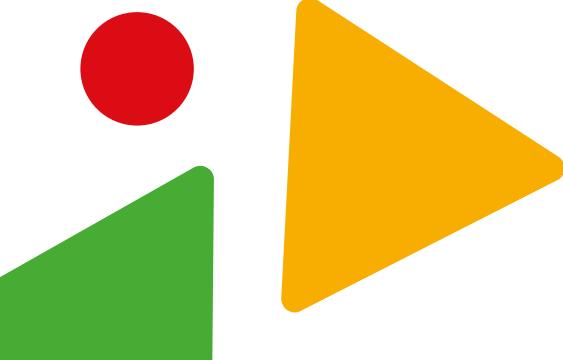
Synopsis

Dil Se.. is a Hindi language romance in which a relationship develops between a radio executive and a mysterious revolutionary.

About the film

Dil Se.. is a 1998 Hindi language Indian romantic thriller that blends Bollywood spectacle with an arthouse sensibility. The film's themes of obsessive love and violence are set against a highly political narrative that explores issues of separatism in India during the 1990s.

The film has an unusual classification history as we've rated the film both PG and 12. This is because two different versions of the film have been submitted to us, and each one received a different classification.



BBFC age rating and about the film

Cinema release

The theatrical submission was rated PG in August 1998. The film was submitted to us in a pre-cut version to remove some of the stronger moments including the kidnap of Amar and subsequent fight scene involving a plank of wood, and the scene of implied sexual violence during Moina's (Meghna's) flashback to her childhood.

The two examiners who viewed the film were content that the remainder of the violence and threat, and the occasional sex reference were acceptable at PG.

It's worth remembering that our 12A rating wasn't introduced until 2002, so to rate a film 12 in the 1990s meant that it could potentially prohibit families with younger children from seeing a major release rated 12.

Home entertainment release

A few months later in November 1998, the film was submitted to us again, but this time for a video rating. This version was much longer and contained additional scenes of violence, including a scene of sexual violence.

During a flashback scene in which Moina remembers events that took place when her village was attacked, she - aged 12 - opens a door and we see a silhouette move as screams are heard on the soundtrack. It is implied her sister is being raped. Monisha runs away and it's suggested she's being chased and is eventually caught, implying that she too is raped.

The scene is tough to watch but has been shot very discreetly with little visual detail. The scene is brief and strongly justified within the context of the narrative, as it explains Moina's motivations for getting involved with the 'terrorist' group. As a result, the examiners felt that the issue was acceptable at 12.

The uncut version of the film also contains stronger scenes of violence, including a fight scene in which the hero, Amar, repeatedly hits a man with a plank of wood, resulting in bloody detail. There are also several other beatings, as well as shootings and explosions. Although the violence registers more realistically than the 'dishum' violence evident in mainstream Bollywood movies, it still lacks a focus on blood and gore, so was considered acceptable at 12.

The theme of terrorism runs throughout and there are disturbing images of bomb vests and violence resulting from an act of 'terror'. The issue is handled sensitively and reflects the political climate of the time in which the film is set.

There is also an occasional reference to sex when Amar is asked if he's a virgin, but this also appears in the PG version of the film.

Would *Dil Se..* be rated a 12 today?

Our research with the public shows that attitudes towards sexual violence has become more restrictive. As a result, our approach to sexual violence has become stricter in the 20 years since we last classified this film, so it's possible that the film may require a higher rating when viewed and rated under our current guidelines.

However, when it comes to re-classifying older films, we have no control over when those films come in to us again for a rating - we can only rate them when a distributor decides to submit them for a new film classification. So, we won't know if the rating will change for *Dil Se..* until it's re-submitted to us.

Discussion Points

- The film merges melodrama and fantasy with moments of realism. What impact does this have on the tone of the film?
- What are the influences of mainstream Bollywood cinema on the film?
- How does the film treat the issue of terrorism? Does the film position Moina (Meghna) as a terrorist or a freedom fighter?
- What does the film say about Indian independence?
- The film was rated 12 in 1998. Do you agree with the 12 rating or would you change it? If so, what rating would you change it to and why?

Further Viewing

Roja (Mani Ratnam, 1992) 

Bombay (Mani Ratnam, 1995) 

Devdas (Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 2002) 

Curriculum links: This case study can be used for those studying 'Component 2: Global filmmaking perspectives - Section A (Two film study) - Outside Europe' on the A-level WJEC / Eduqas specification.