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Kabir Khan's Predictable 9/11 Drama *New York*

By David Chute Wednesday, Jul 1 2009

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The so-called Bollywood strike that has kept new Indian commercial movies off international screens for the past two months was more like a lockout—an odd one, too, in which no workers were involved and one branch of management was pitted against the other. Exhibitors on the new urban "multiplex" circuit demanded a larger percentage of the gross, and the major production companies retaliated by withholding their masterpieces. It's a wonder the home audience is still willing to put up with these tantrum-throwers, especially when the hiatus is broken by the likes of Kabir Khan's *New York*, a predictable, brow-furrowing drama (sadly songless except for a couple of Sunday-in-the-park montage sequences) about the effects of 9/11 (and 9/11 paranoia) on some South Asian immigrants living in New York. At the outset, the movie promises something much more interesting, when Omar (Neil Nitin Mukesh), a Manhattan cab company owner, is framed on a weapons charge and blackmailed by the feds into cozying up to a suspected terrorist. The rub is that, a decade ago, the accused sleeper cell organizer, Samir (John Abraham), was Omar's closest college chum, and is now happily married to Maya (Katrina Kaif), the paragon whose



Details
New York
Directed by Kabir Khan
Yash Raj Films
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romantic choice broke Omar's heart. When the couple invites Omar into their home, the atmosphere should be clogged with desire, resentment, and paranoia, an emotional maze worthy of Hitchcock—or, at least, De Palma. Quite apart from the fact that none of these performers is capable of smoldering with conviction, there's no terror or sensuality in director Khan's images. He's a specialist in redundant visual prose, in underlining the obvious. The great Irrfan Khan has the meatiest role, a Muslim-American FBI agent who hates the *jihadis* for giving his community a bad name and scourges them for it even more ruthlessly than his Anglo colleagues. Toward the end, he becomes the voice of reason, and says some sensible things about the vicious circle of violence. But by then, it's way too late.

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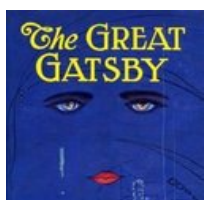
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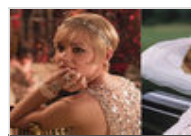
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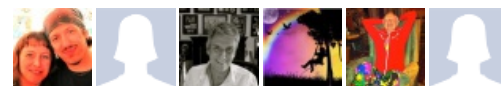
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1. Iron Man 3, 72.5 mil, 284.9 mil
2. The Great Gatsby, 50.1 mil, 50.1 mil
3. Pain & Gain, 5.0 mil, 41.6 mil
4. Peeples, 4.6 mil, 4.6 mil
5. 42, 4.6 mil, 84.7 mil
6. Oblivion, 4.1 mil, 81.9 mil
7. The Croods, 3.6 mil, 173.2 mil
8. Mud, 2.5 mil, 8.6 mil
9. The Big Wedding, 2.5 mil, 18.3 mil
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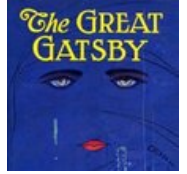
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