

Humshakals (Comedy) ★★

Cast: Saif Ali Khan, Riteish Deshmukh, Ram Kapoor, Tamannaah Bhatia, Esha Gupta, Bipasha Basu
Director: Sajid Khan
Language: Hindi



Jim Carrey has woken up from his celluloid deep-freeze, post his masterpiece of ‘dumbness’ *Dumb & Dumber* (1994). Shaken out of a ‘dumb people’s home’ in his sequel *Dumb & Dumber To* (don’t miss the spelling of ‘two’). That’s what Sajid Khan’s latest ‘H’-bomb (all his movies begin with that ‘H’-orrible warning letter) has provoked him to do. And delivers what was to be a tribute to Carrey; his predecessor Peter Sellers (*Pink Panther*) and our very own legend of corniness — Kishore Kumar.

But alas, those three could make you laugh with a wiggle of their eyebrows or with one funny sound. Here Saif, Riteish and Ram in triple roles, can’t multiply the humour by three (wiggling whatever they want). The only genuinely funny moment in this torturous comedy of terrors is when Sajid Khan’s own *Himmatwala* is shown to torture the inmates, reminiscent of the Mel Brooks style of the ‘80s.

Movie Review

But then Sajid seems stuck, as a five-year-old, in a time-warp in the dialogues like *Polson maska lagaane se sab khush ho jaate hain* and *Hum paagal nahin hain, hamara dimaag kharaab hai* — straight out of Kishore Kumar’s epic *Half Ticket*.

So picture this: Ashok Singhania (Saif) is a millionaire with a penchant for bad jokes. His middle class friend Kumar (Riteish) bears the brunt and so does the audience. Ashok’s evil mama KANS (Kunwar Amar Nath Singh) wants to usurp the *jayedad* with the help of a scientist. He administers them a drug that makes them behave like dogs who hump-a-lot-of-legs. They’re sent to an asylum where they

meet their *humshakals*. Can you feel the torture already?

Saif, Riteish and Ram walk through this “slappable” attempt with some dignity intact. But Riteish seems to “drag” his cross-dressing iden’titty’ too much. Bipasha, Esha and Tamannaah have nothing to do apart from looking hot and grooving. The problem is that the comic formula is missing and a string of gags, however suspended in disbelief, do not a comedy make.

To end on a corny note, a joke: Sherlock discussing a death with Watson: “It seems to be a case of suicide.” Watson: “How can you be sure?” Sherlock: “We found a ticket of *Humshakals* in his pocket!”

Watch at your own risk. Another ‘H’ from Sajid.

—Omar Qureshi

Poor ★ Average ★★ Good ★★★ Very Good★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★

Roadside MBA: Backroad Lessons for Entrepreneurs, Executives and Small Business Owners

Book Review

Authors: Mike Mazzeo, Associate Professor, Kellogg School of Management; Paul Oyer, Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Business; and Scott Schaefer, Professor, David Eccles School of Business.

What can a corporate leader learn from Mike Bodart, the sporting goods king of Columbus, Indiana? Plenty about customer service, since he’s beating the sweat pants off large chain competitors. Bodart is plugged into the local community, so when the two high school football teams face off, his is the only place that locals can get apparel with each school’s colours.

The authors found Mike during their small-business inspired journey around the country. It’s not that common for academics to venture to meet real people — let alone those who run small businesses in the hinterlands. This is what makes the book refreshingly different.

The book focuses on strategy and offers plenty of common sense insights on everything from pricing to brand management to team building. There are timeless lessons for every executive, entrepreneur and business student.

The book unpacks back road business strategy in the words of small business owners and managers.

—Bloomberg Businessweek



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twilight’s highlights

TOP PICKS OF FOOD, ART AND CULTURE IN THE CITY TODAY

WORLD CUP FEVER



Edible Cup

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Beer Offer

Holiday Inn offers buy-one get-one free on select beer with a menu to match: fish tikkas, steaks, subs and special garlic bread.

Holiday Inn, Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai;
When: Till July 14;
Tel: 022 4085 1800



FOOD



Culinary Collaboration

The White Owl celebrates its first anniversary with Culinary Collaborations, a quarterly event where Executive Chef Kshama Prabhu teams up with a food connoisseur to create a special menu available for over 45 days. The first edition features food blogger and chef Nikhil Merchant of Nonchalant Gourmand.

The White Owl, One Indiabulls Centre, Tower 2-B Lobby, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (W), Mumbai.
Tel: 022 24210231

THEATRE



There is never enough room for everyone. Three men squabble over three regular benches in a park. Directed by Kumud Mishra and Marav Kaul.
Prithvi Theatre, 20 Janki Kutir, Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai; When: June 25, 6 pm and 9 pm; Phone: 022 2614 9546



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by Amit Varma

Meditations on the complex game of poker, by a novelist and poker pro

Beast vs Human

One of the most important lessons I learnt as a live cash game player was to treat all cash games as one long session that lasts a lifetime. This helps us avoid the two classic bad habits that a live pro can develop: playing too tight when one is up during a session, to preserve profit and playing too loose and recklessly when one is down to recover losses. Ideally, you should try to play each hand in the most profitable way you can, without regard to whether you’re up or down, or what stage of the session you’re playing in. That is analogous to a batsman playing “one ball at a time” in cricket, as the cliché goes. But it is easier said than done.

We might pride ourselves, as a species, on our superior intelligence, but however much we aspire to be perfectly rational creatures, we are wired to be emotional beings. Theodore Dreiser once described civilisation as “still in a middle stage, scarcely beast, in that it is no longer guided by instinct, scarcely human in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason.” I’m not sure if Dreiser played this great American game, but in every session of poker that I play, Beast battles Human. It’s fascinating as a spectator, and frustrating as a participant.

It’s easy to say that we should approach every hand with the same cool-headed dispassion, but there is a fundamental difference between the start of a session and the end

of it. At the start, most players usually have between 100 to 250 big blinds. By the end, it is common for the average stack to be 1,000bb, and for a couple of the big stacks to be approaching or surpassing 2,000bb. In technical terms, decisions get harder as stacks grow bigger: at 100bb, I’m always content to raise with a pair-and-flush draw and go buckwild; at 1,200bb, near the end of a 22-hour-session, I’m inclined to be more careful. I’ll gladly go broke with AA at 100bb; but if I stack off with it at 1200bb, I probably made a big mistake somewhere. Stack sizes make decisions exponentially more complex and the consequences of mistakes more brutal.

But that’s a banal point. Of course it’s technically harder to play big stacks than small ones. But it’s the mental aspect that makes this a tough game. Remember, there is real money at stake here and a bad day in poker feels much worse than in any other profession because in poker you actually lose money. In no other profession, if you have a bad day on June 25, can you lose your entire salary for April and May as well. Losses are felt viscerally and taken personally. We rant at the guy who gives us a bad beat. We feel smug and superior when we’re running good. As a session progresses past the 12-hour mark, and people start getting tired, the beast starts taking over. We crave action, revenge, retribution and dominance. We want the biggest d*#k in the room.

I have seen grown men cry at a poker table. I have seen respected middle-aged men tear up playing cards and demand a change of deck and dealer. I have seen (and felt) anger and humiliation and contempt and loathing and desperation. If sport reveals character, poker plonks a mirror in front of us and says, “Here you are, your ugly majesty. Where are your clothes?”

The longer the session, the deeper the stacks, the more there is at stake, the harder it gets. In your tumult of inevitable emotions, you’re supposed to be calm and rational, and exploit the infirmities of others. You’re supposed to do math, set up metagame, play “optimally”. You’re supposed to fight the beast — but the beast is who you are.

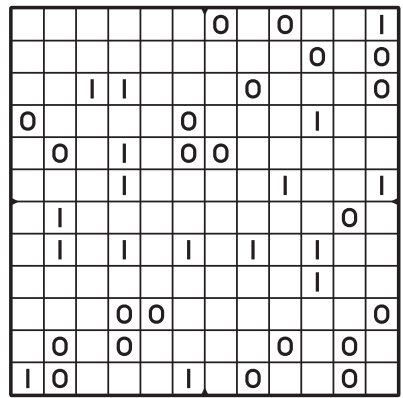
Rubes by Leigh Rubin



“First you’re going to delete all those negative comments about our food, furniture and sleeping arrangements. Then you’re going to give our cozy little bed-and-breakfast a nice big five-star rating, now, aren’t you, dear?”

Binairo

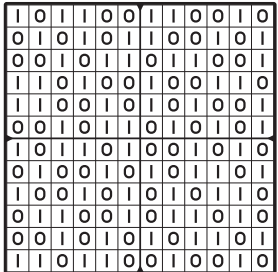
Binairo ★★



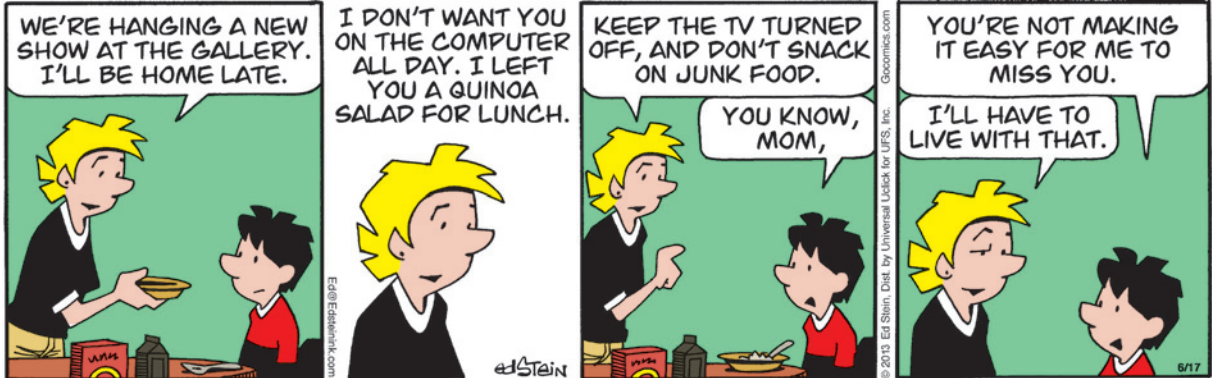
How to play

- Complete the grid so that every row and every column is filled with just as many zeros as ones.
- A maximum of two zeros or two ones can be placed next to or underneath each other.
- Identical rows and columns are not allowed.

Solution to 20/06/14 puzzle



Freshly Squeezed by Ed Stein



Bizarro by Dan Piraro

