Charlie Chopra & The Mystery Of Solang Valley

A Review by **Sanjiva Sahai**

Charlie Chopra
& The Mystery Of Solang Valley
(The latest Hindi web series in 6 episodes on Sony Liv)

▫Directed by Vishal Bharadwaj the show opens with an innovative musical score and hilariously clever lyrics that reveal the protagonist's (Wamiqa) home address. These elements stand out as commendable highlights in the series. However, while the music and the stunning snow-capped setting deserve praise, the adaptation of Agatha Christie's classic Sittaford Mystery falls short of delivering a believable, relatable, and engaging narrative.

▫Charlie's sporadic fourth-wall-breaking moments, where she addresses the camera and talks to the viewers, leave much to be desired. This is a well-known technique in theatre, film, TV, and literature but here it's executed with a lack of

finesse, often descending into gimmickry and absurdity. Wamiqa Gabbi’s reactions serve as mere punctuation to these instances, highlighting their shallowness. It raises the question of whether delving into a detective’s psyche is justified when the true pleasure lies in external observation and deciphering their actions.

▫While Agatha’s novel sparkled like a well-polished diamond, the adaptation and cast’s performances were more like deflated party balloons. It’s as if they were handed a *Rogan Josh* recipe but decided to cook instant noodles instead. The characters needed emotional depth, but the actors served up emotional flatlines. Wamiqa Gabbi, a radiant presence, struggles to carry the show solo, hampered by a lack of versatility, rendering her lengthy role predictably dull. Naseeruddin Shah, oddly out of place, delivers a superficial performance. Neena Gupta, however, shines as the sole beacon of spontaneity and precision. Gulshan Grover repeats himself. The ensemble cast- including the entire Shah family (Ratna Pathak – Heeba – Vivaan – Imaad), Lara Dutta, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Paoli Dam, and Ashique Hussain, adds their bit to the mix.

▫It leaves viewers hoping that future adaptations by Vishal will capture the essence of Christie’s work more effectively.

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2/5

_ Sanjiva Sahai