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## Movie - Kadin (The Goat)

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Kadin (The Goat)

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Set in the beautiful backdrop of a small Ivatan village in Sabtang Island, Batanes, 'Kadin' ('Goat') showcases the picturesque mountains, landscapes, and seas of the storm-tattered, northernmost island of the Philippines in the eyes of a young boy who wakes up to find out that the family's goat is missing. From here, he sets out with his sister Lita to go on a seemingly impossible search for the goat on the long stretches and terrains of the island.

Writer-director Adolf Alix dedicates a prologue of the islanders' ritual involving a hog used as an offering – where its internal organs are used as instruments for fortune-telling, and the rest of what's left is brought home to serve as meals of the family. Given in a strikingly realist form in a real time presentation of how it's done, this prologue shows how the hog bleeds and dies as an offering.

The story is clear and simple. Along with his sister (Monica Joy Camarillas), the ten-year old boy (Rico Mark Cardona) wakes up and realizes that the family goat (kadin) Gima, the source of livelihood and sentimental memories of the family, is missing. He hides the truth with the hope of finding Gima and avoiding the hurt it entails to his grandmother and father. The story moves on further as the boy journeys to find Gima amidst a brewing storm, the external forces that test his values and morals, and his interactions and relationships with the people in the town and with nature itself. And along the way, the innocent boy gains new insights about the world he lives in, the hard way. The painful route teaches him more about life – where both kindness and cruelty should be dealt upon accordingly.

Alix delivers a story that is safe and accessible. He uses it to its advantage. The story is simple and straightforward; and tension and some form of suspense are established within its given elements. While watching the film, the well-conceived script then surfaces. The necessary elements of a good narrative become apparent in the story. As the boy journeys, there are a series of frustrating episodes, tension, and desperation as chances for recovering the goat gets slimmer. As a kid's tale where innocence and morals are tested, the characters mount the story to provide a good form of conflict and a very human approach of succumbing to thievery in such faded hopes of finding what is lost.

There is a lot of walking in the film – mostly consisting of long stretches of searching shown like colorful post cards of the unparalleled beauty of the film's location. And what really makes the film fascinating is the natural beauty of Batanes rendered so grandiosely in the big screen. While this is an edge (as its captured beauty provides wonderful sceneries that many eyes will surely appreciate), the treatment for the film goes a little too far. Alix's intention in showing the walking and searching mounted in picturesque long and winding roads is validating as it shows the feudal side of provincial life and it keeps up the particular emotional strain coming from the main character to the audience. However, the method of keeping the very long, real time moments that promote the natural flow of time becomes quite superficial already as its use seems quite skin deep still. You know that the real time factor is a method used with particular aesthetic intentions to let the audience feel the main character's tiring journey; but there is no follow up to this. Given the ultimate walk of time (probably consuming at the least half of the film being the minutes of walk on the same scene for most of the film's sequences), it could have been a much better route if certain dimensions are added to thicken the intentions with deeper messages or intangible concepts that can play around the minds and touch the hearts of the people watching the journey – aside from acknowledging these long stretches because of the valid strain it wants the audience to partake with the character and the aesthetic showcase of the mountains, blue skies, windy fields, and stone houses. It could have been crafted more effectively if the minutes of walking further touch the soul than just the cerebral mind and the surface of the heart of the audience.

Rico Mark Cardona generally delivers the needed innocence and type of character developed for the story. However, his overall performance still lacks a certain form of tension and emotional longing that could have helped push his character further. At some point, he doesn't get to carry through the pain to bear but he merely walks the long stretches for the reason that he is asked to walk in such a scene. Maybe this part could have made the long takes more soulful then – if he has been able to pull off the innocent and yet burdened character while walking the winding roads.

'Kadin' is about innocence and learning what life is in the grander scheme of things. Its physical beauty is an advantage. Its long takes give a statement. But it goes a little to far that the grandness asks for something more to make it better.

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