

WHEN KACCHI MEETS LOVE

A romcom in Dhaka

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The smell of love still reeks in the air — that annoying time of year has come and gone, when couples all around flooded your newsfeed with their pictures of romance that gave you diabetes and made you wish you weren't sad and lonely.

If you're part of a couple, congrats to you, but if you're single, and are eternally grateful that it's over and now you can go the rest of the year without being reminded you'll die alone, chances are you decided to spend yesterday pretending romance meant watching a romantic comedy aka “romcom”.

Romcoms aren't the greatest form of entertainment, but they are entertainment all the same. Location and culture do influence how a romcom would be (I mean, just look at a Bollywood romcom versus a Hollywood one – wildly different). But what would a Dhaka-based one look like? Let's find out.

THE SETUP:

Our Dhaka romcom needs a setup. Of course, we've already established it's taking place in Dhaka, but what is our protagonist and his/her love interest like?

Meet Rakib Khan, a 26 year old successful, startup founder who's the golden child of his family. He has earned his degrees from both the best public university in Dhaka and a great foreign university. He's on track to be one of the most successful people in his circle. Long story short, money, brains and great looks (what romcom would be complete without this), Rakib's got it all. However, Rakib is unlucky in love and cannot hold a stable relationship for the life of him. He's messy and terrible at cooking. In true desi fashion, he was really hoping for the perfect wife who'd be a great cook, and so he resigns his fate to an arranged marriage set up by his

beloved mother.

In comes the love interest. Rumi Chowdhury isn't the best looking girl (they just pretend she's homely; she's actually super cute and will get a #glowup down the movie) but she's very bright. She's a modern girl from a conservative family. She loves t-shirts and jeans, and preaches how girls should have more freedom instead of listening to the men around them.

Her mother is nice and supportive, if a bit annoyed with her rebellious attitude, but her father wants her to get married to someone who makes enough money so that she can live a comfortable life and finish her studies abroad with someone to look after her.

Rumi hates the idea of an arranged marriage, and would like to get married to someone of her choice. She only agrees to meeting a family friend's son just to prove to her father that a relationship doesn't work based on money alone.

THE MEET CUTE:

Every romcom needs the meet cute to spark the relationship, and ours is no different. So a *dawat* happens where our two characters meet with their families to discuss the possible arranged marriage.

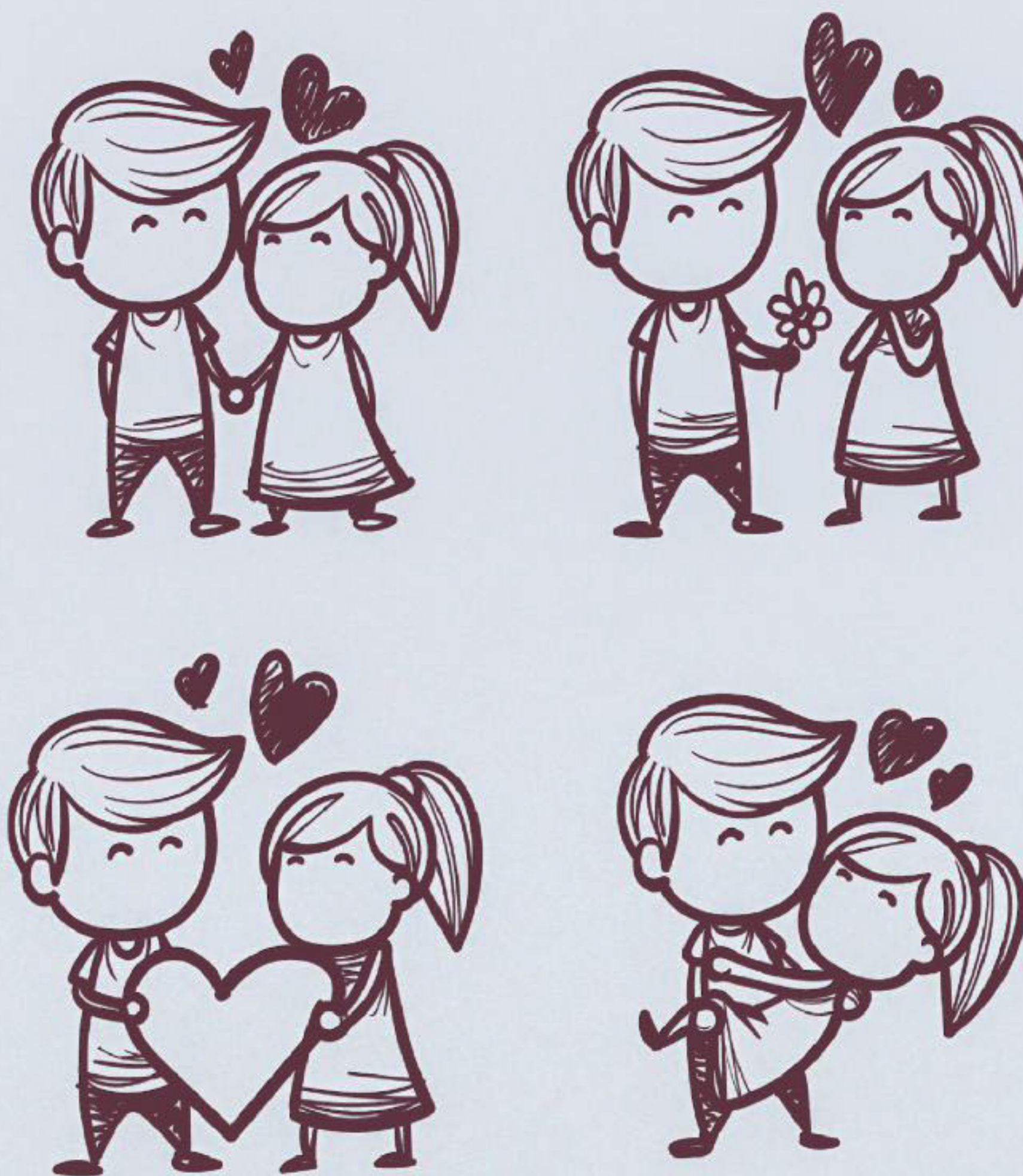
Rumi, of course, just doesn't care. She's disinterested in the stories both families narrate about Rakib and his work accomplishments and how it's so stressful but he's so successful. *yawn for her*

Rakib tries to talk to her and he's charming enough to hold a conversation with her about her goals and dreams. He's quite smitten by her and how she wants to be career-oriented and independent, and expresses his support for her. It's all going well until...

THE CONFLICT:

The meet cute is the wood for the fire of the relationship, but conflict is the bad smoke everyone in the story chokes on.

Our meet cute went all good till Rakib talks to Rumi about his past failed attempts at love and then he jokes about how he wants his wife



to have “good housewife traits” like cooking kacchi biryani for him, since he doesn't know the ABC's of cooking. Rumi doesn't take this well and assumes it means she'd just be a housewife and questions why he'd be so interested in her being independent if he didn't really want that. Of course, Rakib is trying to convince her that he was joking, but the feminist in Rumi doesn't believe it and thinks he's just another jerk. She calls off the meeting there and then, expressing how if he were joking he'd actually have tried to cook something for her and see how that went.

No one's happy with the outcome, and Rakib's family is disappointed because they really liked Rumi. Rumi is very annoyed and

complains to her family about how he's just another small-minded guy with money who doesn't really care about anyone else, and is threatened by strong female presence.

THE ROMANTIC TURN AROUND:

Of course, the romcom can't end there. There's got to be a happy ending.

Rakib doesn't want to give up just yet. He's mortified by how badly Rumi thought of him and thinks it's time he changed himself to show he does care about Rumi's goals and dreams. After some thinking and soul searching with his plucky comic relief friend/co-worker Ornob, he cooks up the brilliant idea of cooking her one of her favourite meals – kacchi biryani loaded with aloo.

He rings up Rumi's family and asks her mom about her favourite dish, and we're treated to a flashback (set to a song of course; Dhallywood wouldn't let it pass without at least one musical number) of Rumi's history with kachhi, and how she was tormented by an unseemly amount of elachi in a dubious plate of biryani from a random Dhanmondi joint (if the audiences aren't crying at this scene, they are heartless).

Rakib is moved enough to cook for her, and his questionable cooking skills are captured in a montage (also set to a song) of him failing to make biryani despite the help of his mother, sister and Ornob. Once he gets it right, he sets out to win Rumi's heart.

But alas, leave it to Dhaka traffic to hinder Rakib. A car and love is no match for every bad driver in the city clogging up the roads. So out goes Rakib, running out of a car and taking a rickshaw as he tries to travel to

Dhanmondi from Gulshan while praying the biryani doesn't get ruined.

Several hijinks ensue as he continuously switches transport (going from car to rickshaw to bus to CNG to foot) to try and reach her house, but doesn't find her there. She's on her way to her university. Rakib has to run to catch up to her car. Thankfully, Dhaka traffic owes him one in karma and makes sure his race to the car is cut short thanks to it being stuck – allowing him to woo over Rumi through her car window with his (elachi free, aloo loaded) kacchi.

Of course, bystanders would be all ogling at them, and passing aunties would remark “aajkalkarkharapchelemeyekhali public e premkore”, and cars would honk from behind yelling at Rakib to get off the road.

THE CONCLUSION:

Our couple deserves a happy ending, and a happy ending is what they get. Rumi changes her mind about Rakib after being moved by his heartfelt gesture to try and show he does appreciate independent girls like her, and eventually agrees to date him for a while till she graduates and then discuss marriage later.

Everyone is overjoyed, and the end credits show a lit holud dance party montage.

And thus they live happily ever after, love wins again, and if this ever gets made into a real movie, some poor single Bengali on Valentine's Day is going to emotionally tear up watching this movie because they're too alone for this. Just another romcom, right?

Nuhan B. Abid is someone who actually thinks puns and sarcasm are top class forms of humour. Tell him that 'sar-chasm' is TOTALLY the best thing ever at nuhanbabid@hotmail.com

