

Love through the lens of Indian soap operas

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We have all grown up fighting over the remote control with our parents or grandparents because we would rather watch “Courage the Cowardly Dog” than “Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” during our leisure time. Even though none of us intended to watch hours and hours of Indian soap opera, we ended up being a victim of their outlandish plot by the virtue of having to live in a family where different members have different choices when it comes to television. Thus, we grew up watching love stories of Arnav and Khushi's along with Jack and Rose's. Now, let's look into some of the weirdest, yet repetitive, plot twists that these soap operas have in terms of portraying a love story.

HORRIBLE IN-LAWS

Every Indian soap opera, whether it is a Star Jalsha love story called “Bojhena Se Bojhena” or if it's a Sony Entertainment Television production called “Bade Achhe Lagte Hain”, the common theme in these is always a negative portrayal of the in-laws, especially the mother. The mother-in-law is always shown as an angry, old woman filled with greed and jealousy who does not like the daughter-in-law, to the point where she wants to break up the marriage. The sisters-in-law are portrayed as the right hands of the mother-in-law and they help to make life miserable for the newly-wed couple. Where else, more often than not, the father-in-law is portrayed as the voice of reason who wants the couple to be happy. The subtle hints of misogyny that still exist while writing a plot for a soap opera are undeniable.

BOY MEETS GIRL — HATRED AT FIRST GLANCE

This is literally every Indian soap opera love story ever. The first episode starts with a bit of character building where the girl comes from a poor family but is full of life and the guy is the “spoiled child” of a rich father, or vice versa. They both meet due to the miracles of faith. They initially both hate each other because they are very different but fairy godmother decides to turn them into lovebirds and 15 minutes into episode 13, boy and girl fall in love and totally forget the fact that they were arch enemies just an episode ago.

PRESENCE OF SNAKES — LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY

Indian soap operas are obsessed with snakes for their plotlines. Whether it is a series called “Naagin” by none other than Ekta Kapoor, where everyone is an “Icchadhari Naagin” and can magically turn into a snake every other second, or it's a series where the hero or heroine gets bit by a snake and for the rest of the season we get to see how sad everyone is

about the sudden death of a character, you can never get enough of them. There are some “metaphorical” snakes as well—the villains. The overdramatic portrayal of villains in these love stories make them no less than a snake.

STORY NEVER ENDS

Love stories like “Kasautii Zindagii Kay” or “Balika Vadhu”, which go on for as many as 2500 episodes are the founding pillars of love stories in Indian soap operas. For the first 300 to 400 episodes, we get to see how boy and girl overcome their hatred and fall in love, the next 250 episodes involve the boy and girl's

undying attempt to convince their parents to let them get married. Then comes the post-marriage arc where you deal with struggles of newly married life. Eventually you arrive at the “death arc”, where someone dies and a new villain is introduced and it keeps going on for eternity because there are always extended family members who keep entering the show after every couple hundred of episodes to take their place as the new villains.

THE DEAD ALWAYS COME BACK

Last but not least, the dead in Indian soap operas are harder to kill than the

dead from “The Walking Dead”. Even if you see someone getting shot in the brain, they somehow come back to their husbands or wives. However, the closest thing to death that can happen in a soap opera is introducing an identical twin of the character that died and then for the next 500 episodes the whole cast goes around trying to find the mystery behind the twin's identity.

Megha is not into Indian soap operas.

You can find her at megharahman26@gmail.com to share doggo memes.

“SIMAR IS AS LIGHT AS THE SCRIPT OF THIS SHOW”

