



■ TV SERIES ■

# BAIT REDEFINES WHAT REPRESENTATION OUGHT TO LOOK LIKE

**SABIL SADAT ZAHIR**

Riz Ahmed's latest passion project, *Bait*, is an aptly titled six-episode comedy-drama miniseries that begins as a satire of cultural representation or "diversity casting" in Western cinema, but paradoxically evolves into one of the most authentic and profound portrayals of cultural representation.

The show is about Shah Latif, a Pakistani-British actor who auditions for the role of James Bond. We follow his journey as he deals with the subsequent fallout of this audition. This includes the immense pressure to secure the life-altering role and dealing with the racist backlash surrounding his potential casting. A major part of the story is how these two factors further exacerbate his already complicated relationship with his family, consisting of his parents and two cousins.

While Shah and his family are Pakistani Muslim immigrants, it is safe to say that anyone with South Asian heritage, Muslim or not, will deeply resonate with the characters. In one of the show's best episodes, the

family celebrates Eid with their relatives and other members of their community. The entire episode features the most accurate and relatable representation of South Asian culture that I have personally seen – from the lively yet hectic festivities to the awkward encounters with relatives. Besides the perfect representation, this episode also brings out the complexities of not just Shah but each of his family members, as we see their own individual struggles unravel.

Shah is a multilayered character, each layer well fleshed out. He starts off as an abrasive and selfish individual, but as the plot progresses and the layers start peeling off, we learn to understand him and cheer for his growth. His cousin Zulfi (played by Guz Khan) serves as a secondary lead and has an amazing character arc that runs parallel to and complements Shah's story.

Besides the aforementioned relatability and character dynamics, the show has an impeccable balance of humour and drama, which makes the characters and story even more compelling. The comedy consistently ranges from decent laughs to outright

hilarity. The transition from these light-hearted moments to the sadder, emotional scenes feels properly paced rather than a complete tonal shift. As a result, the dramatic scenes manage to evoke an equal sense of pity and empathy for the characters.

It's worth mentioning the few shortcomings of the show, however. Because it's a six-episode miniseries, with each episode having an average runtime of 25 minutes, the story in certain episodes might feel a bit too fast-paced. While the comedy-drama balance might not cause a tonal shift, the plot does take some rather jarring detours. However, by the final episode, the narrative manages to fall back into place.

Overall, *Bait* is a brilliantly written, poignant, and relatable story that manages to interweave the narrative and characters in a web of ironic brilliance. It delivers on every front, from its representation of South-Asian and Muslim culture, the multi-dimensional characters, the gripping plot, and unexpected twists, to its overall presentation. It scratches a very particular itch that makes it a must-watch.

## OPPORTUNITIES



Optimizely - Associate Quality Assurance Engineer

### ELIGIBILITY

Bachelor's degree in computer science, IT, or telecommunication preferred or equivalent working experience.

At least 1 year of experience working in a software testing role.

Experience working in an Agile/Scrum process.

Familiarity with common web technologies like HTML/CSS/JS.

Ability to work in an independent or team environment.

Service-oriented mindset.

Good skills in English, both written and spoken.

Work in a team setting with other QA engineers, developers, business analysts, and project managers.

Write test plans, test cases and manage testing assets.

Execute tests, find bugs, communicate findings and concerns to the team in a timely manner.

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