

Live, Love, Laugh

Can't decide on a movie to watch? It's about 8 o'clock on a Friday after a long week of school, and all you want to do is relax and watch a movie. You're not in the mood for a mystery movie because who really wants to think that much after a long week? Definitely not a horror movie — don't want to have nightmares — and you don't want to watch a sad movie because you don't want to cry and be sad. Thus, you decide on a rom-com. What even is a rom-com? A rom-com is short for “romantic comedy.” It is defined by the Bottom Line as, “A lighthearted, comedic love story with a happy ending that usually focuses on a relationship's development.” One of the best parts about rom-coms is that anyone can enjoy them. You can watch them alone or with friends or family. Rom-coms are a way to escape from reality, take a break, and maybe laugh. Rom-coms are about love, laughter, and life, and by far the best kind of movies.

The structure of rom-coms are very similar but are all different in their own way. The overall structure of a rom-com is usually followed by a format. The introductions of the two characters are shown living their separate lives. Then they meet for the first time, during their childhood or randomly in a park. Then the two people start falling in love with each other. They may realize they are more than friends, or actually like each other. After this is usually when the big turning point/breakup happens; it's usually something that gets between the two of them and breaks them up. Finally, they end up together, get over their issues and problems, and live happily ever after (“What Makes”). We watch these movies knowing that everything will turn out okay in the end, which can be very stress-relieving for people and precisely why rom-coms are so similar. It is so people know that the plot of the movie changes, but not the structure. When we watch a rom-com, it's for the story of falling in love, to feel comforted when we know

everything will turn out okay. While many rom-coms may seem similar, they are all different in their own way. But why are they so fantastic?

Rom-coms are more than romance; it's about love. Rom-coms are about two people falling in love. Whether they meet at someone's wedding, are childhood friends, or are friends to lovers. It's about romance, but what if that wasn't only it? No romance story is perfect, and there is always the love of supporting characters. The backstory, their family or friends. An example of this can be found in *Rich Crazy Asians*. There is a boy who is from a wealthy Asian family, while the girl comes from a less affluent family. Both people have very loving friends and family, but there were struggles. The boy and the girl meet in America and are dating. They decided to go to the boy's cousin's wedding in Singapore, which scares the girl because she knows the family won't approve of her. This is the turning point in the rom-com—family not approving. This rom-com shows the struggles of families not approving based on money, in this situation. As the movie continues on, the girl has a friend and her friend's family who provide the comic relief aspect of the movie, which makes the movie more lit and funny. Not every movie has a comic relief best friend, but there is always the best friend or the “sidekick.” *The Washington Post* said a sidekick friend is “The BFF characters may have similarities — namely a life just empty enough that they can drop everything at a moment's notice to rehash their friend's love woes — but they come in different packages,” meaning that these friends would do anything for them because they love them and their friendship. While some of the best friends can be wise, aspirational, or funny, they always help their friends and support them with everything. This is why rom-coms are more than romance; it's the love of friendship and always being there for each other. In *Crazy Rich Asians*, her friends and family always supported her and helped her because they loved her and formed a strong relationship. When the boy and girl break

up, the family helps her through the breakup and brings her mother to her so she can comfort her. As the movie continues, the boy's family eventually approves of the boy and girl's relationship because they know that their love for the boy, their relationship, and his happiness are more important than anything else. While rom-coms are about two people falling in love, there are other people that are in their life that are a part of it. The love of family and friendship helps them find their way through the relationship. This is why rom-coms provide more than romance.

Rom-coms are comforting. When you want to find a movie about a happy romance, you won't watch a movie like *Five Feet Apart*, which is a sad love story. Instead, you would choose a movie like *To All the Boys I Ever Loved*, which is a movie about fake love turning into real love. When we watch these movies, we want to feel relaxed, like we're actually there. The Acronym said that movies are great for relaxation: "Our minds are actively engaged with the television, allowing external thoughts and worries to fade away [...] romantic comedies are great examples of relaxing films." Rom-coms are a way to escape from reality and take a break, when you can sit down and watch one for the love story, crazy climax, and the comedy. These movies are stress-free. You know what will happen in the end, but it's the anticipation that makes you want to keep watching, just so you know for sure what's going to happen. It's the feeling that you know everything will turn out okay. And while it may be said that these aren't the best-produced movies, they are movies where you can understand what's going on and clearly see who the characters are based on their personalities and the way they dress. They are made to entertain you and make you happy. No stress from a jump scare in a horror movie or someone getting injured in an action movie. It's simply a time to enjoy. Rom-coms are a way to relax, laugh, sit back, and enjoy.

Rom-coms are fictional, but they have aspects of realism. When you watch a movie, most of it is unreal. In an action movie, people are flying and have super strong muscles, or in a horror movie, there's a creepy clown that hunts kids. Rom-coms, however, do include some realism. For example, in *13 Going on 30*, while the majority of the plot is unrealistic (a woman travels from being a 13-year-old girl because of the struggles of junior high, and wishes to become a 30-year-old girl from glitter), it is ultimately a love story about a girl realizing she is in love with her best friend, not the crush she's had forever. It's a light, funny movie that anyone could watch, showing what it's like to be an adult so that kids do not want to grow up too fast. It shows us that we will have struggles throughout our lives and not only as kids. Even though Rom-coms are about romance and finding love, there is always a deeper message behind the story. Even when they include unrealistic Hollywood magic, they always show some real-lives truths, particularly expressing that love is not always just "Happily Ever After" right away, but that it takes time to find your way there. Rom-coms show that not every love story is perfect, but that it's possible to find your way through it.

Some people may disagree that these movies are not for everyone. While some may not be appropriate for everyone, there are plenty of movies anyone could watch and enjoy. For example, *Parent Trap* has been said by Commonsense to be a "delightful remake that is great for the whole family." Well, for ages six and up. It's a great family movie that everyone could sit down and watch. There's a love story, comedy, family, friendship, and more. Some other family friendly rom-coms can include *High School Musical*, *Camp Rock*, or *The Princess Bride*.

Rom-coms are great for when you want something that everyone can relate to and watch. There's comedy for everyone, for the kids and the adults. Nothing is too intense or serious, you can enjoy

the love story without any worry. Rom-coms are a way for everyone to connect and have a good time.

Finally, you have decided on the perfect rom-com. You got in bed, grabbed a blanket, and maybe even a snack. It's time you get to relax and enjoy the movie, the love story. Maybe laugh a bit, get shocked by the crazy turning point, and be happy when everything turns out okay. To get lost in the movie and escape reality for an hour and a half to a different world. While the rom-com may be similar to others as the structure is mostly the same, they're all a little unique in their own way. They have their own love story. I have on countless occasions watched tons of rom-coms, with friends, family, or alone, and I can say that they are all different. They can make you feel relaxed or happy with the feeling everything will be okay. Rom-coms have been around since the 1920s and continue to change each decade. Humorous and romantic, they're comforting and made for everyone. While most of it is fiction, it includes some realism. They show the ups and downs, and highs and lows. Rom-coms show love, laughter, and life, which is why rom-coms are the best movie genre.

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