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FAITH- A Feature Film

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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a full-length screenplay for a feature film. A summary of the screenplay is as follows:

Sixteen Years ago, while eluding school punishments, Neev (10) and Ray (10) gets lost in the woods. In the depth of the jungle, they encounter insurgents, who kidnap Ray while Neev manages to escape. Ray's twin sister Raina (10), is Neev's love interest, who could not forgive Neev, for her missing brother. The incident broke them up and Neev's family leaves town.

In the present age at a house party, Raina and Neev meet again. They realize sooner who the other one is and separates. The incident that happened years ago changed their lives, altered their personalities and their life paths. All these recent years both Neev and Raina kept searching for Ray on their own, one for redemption, the other for love for her twin brother.

Neev (27) changed his name to Amrit and joined the army. He is introverted, reserved and shy. While Raina (27) is now a Psychiatrist, she is kind sympathetic but not empathetic. They are two individuals who cannot fall in love nor be in any permanent romantic relationships all these years. Meanwhile, Ray (27) has turned an insurgent, who does not hesitate to kill if required. He leads an army of insurgents his own, and never fathoms to surrender, and Neev threatens again to turn his world upside down.

Staged against the backdrop of politics and terrorism, which keeps the lovers from falling in love, and Ray from being a changed man. Their stories indeed come to a resolution and a bitter-sweet ending when they sacrifice for each other. Raina accidentally takes the bullet meant for Neev, as Ray tries to kill Neev for revenge. Ray later changes his mind, sacrifices his freedom to save his sister's life by donating his blood; and so, surrenders.

The Thesis is framed by an Exegesis which is a 6000-word essay on the subject of:

- a) the genre of the Thesis
- b) the development process from synopsis to the second draft

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Dated:

Signature:

(SUKANYA BAROOAH)

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Author
Sukanya Barooah

EXEGESIS

By

Sukanya Barooah

INTRODUCTION

The Exegesis consists of two parts. The first part is called the Genre Analysis; it will critically analyse my script keeping in mind with the genre in a way, it will try to demonstrate how my script is designed to target the audience based on genre. The second part is called The Script, this section will reflect in detail on my intentions and the decisions I have made in constructing the dramatic narrative in my script.

EXEGESIS PART ONE

GENRE ANALYSIS

This part of the exegesis is about the genre of my screenplay *Faith*, the audience I am targeting, the theme I am following – everything in detail. I will begin with the identification of my genre; after that, I will attempt to create a case study to show whether this genre is recognised in the film industry, whether producers and filmmakers still make movies on this genre. Then I will summarise the history of this genre. Next, I will identify the key signifiers of this genre in the existing popular screenplays. I will also explain the expectations of a contemporary audience of my genre. I will attempt to analyse how my screenplay fulfils all expectations to belong to the genre I have identified my screenplay with and explain how the choice of genre affects the characterisation of my screenplay. Lastly, I will attempt to explain how my screenplay will provide audiences with a new perspective on my chosen genre and how it differs from other screenplays in the same category.

GENRE

“Genres give a vocabulary. They give a frame of reference for the audience to enter into a movie. Then, once they have their footing, that’s when you can start doing things that they don’t expect.” (Inspiringquotes.com, 2016)

— [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](#)

The above quote cleverly states what genre is and why genre is so important. The genre of my screenplay *Faith* is ‘Drama’ and its subtype is ‘Romance’. It set against the backdrop of political turmoil and terrorism. Three screenplays that are examples of this ‘Romance Drama’ genre are:

- *Before Sunset*: Screenplay by Richard Linklater, Julie Delpy, Ethan Hawke; final shooting 25 August 2003.
- *Dear John*: Screenplay by Jamie Linden, based on the novel by Nicholas Sparks; final shooting 5 April 2007.
- *Remember Me*: Screenplay by William Fettes and Jenny Lumet, revised, final shooting 16 May 2009.

CASE STUDY TO UNDERSTAND HOW ROMANCE DRAMA IS RECOGNISED BY THE FILM INDUSTRY

A combination of drama and romance is what I consider comprises romance drama. In other words, romance in an otherwise plain drama. The romance-drama category can also be classified separately as drama and romance. According to film critic Tim Dirks, “Dramas are generally serious, plot-driven presentations, portraying realistic characters, settings, life situations, and stories involving intense character development and interactions... Usually they are not focused on special-effects, comedy or actions.” (Dirks, 1996). Examples of drama movies are *Schindler’s List* (1993), *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) and *The Help* (2011). In these famous movies we see a common theme. The characters, set and plot, and character arc seem more realistic. These are movies where the audience can empathise the characters and

can relate to their everyday real life, unlike fantasy or comedy genres which are more hinged on an unrealistic side to life.

According Tim Dirks, “Romance films are love stories, or affairs of the heart that centre on passion, emotion, and the romantic, affectionate involvement of the main characters (usually a leading man and lady), and the journey that their love takes through courtship or marriage. Romance films make the love story or the search for love the main plot focus. Oftentimes, lovers in screen romances (often romantic [dramas](#)) face obstacles and the hazards of hardship, finances, physical illness, racial or social class status, occupation, psychological restraints, or family that threaten to break their union and attainment of love. As in all romantic relationships, tensions of day-to-day life, temptations (of infidelity), and differences in compatibility enter into the plots of romantic films.” (Dirks, 1996). This statement establishes to a certain degree what this genre is all about and how it is well-recognised among film critics and film reviewers.

Eric Edson, who has written seventeen screenplays and a professor and a director of California State University, describes in his website, also states that “Romance Drama are serious in tone, centre around the hero and their love interest caught in a serious real-world problem. The main conflict is to overcome whatever troubling obstacles prevent the couple from coming together.” my screenplay, Faith has all the above need characteristics of a romance drama genre. (Edson, 2016)

Moreover, most distribution companies emphasise romance dramas along with other genres such as action, adventure, fantasy, comedy, musical and others. In their advertising boards, they strictly detail what projects they are willing to buy. For example, the book based on production companies by Jesse Douma and Dinah Perez, *The Definitive Contacts Resource for Filmmaking Professionals*, shows that this is a category distributors' love to buy and is recognised as a genre. (Douma & Perez, 2016)

Media moguls and other top movie productions companies like Sony Entertainment, 21st Century Fox, Viacom, Time Warner (under Warner Brothers), Walt Disney Company, NBC, Universal have recognised romance drama as genre for half a century now and have produced and distributed films of this genre each passing year till date. Therefore, screenplays of this

genre are valued according to me even till date. For example, romance dramas like *A Walk to Remember* (2002) and *Before Sunset* (2004) were co-produced and distributed by Warner Brothers. *Remember Me* (2010) is also categorised as romance drama and was produced by Summit Entertainment.

To add to it, if we see the chart of the Western Film Industry, Hollywood from the on start of the Academy Award in 1929, most awards are won by the films in Romance Drama category, even the best screenplay awards till date have gone in for this same above category. Most not worthy example in Romance Drama genre is *Gone with the win* (1939), based on the book by Margaret Mitchell with the same name, it has the highest record of holding awards till date in this genre until *Titanic* (1997) broke all the records. (Source Ocsar.org, film site org, the academy awards official).

Even other renowned awards that followed the Academy Award, and revered like BAFTA award, Cannes Film Festival Award, New York Film Critics Circle Awards, Writers Guild of America, Maverick Movie Award; most nominees and winners are from Romance Drama category. So, in my opinion it is a very sort after genre and has the potential to rewrite the history of cinemas, if it can fulfil all the necessary requirements.

The fan site boxofficemojo.com, owned by Amazon and founded in 1999, is most popular source of data amongst film industry enthusiasts. Since 2002, the site has maintained forums on its website, and these forums have been very popular with film fans. The site regards romance drama as a genre. The movies it has put under this genre include *Titanic* (1997), *Dear John* (2011) and *Safe Haven* (2016). These films are amongst the top grossing films of all time according to the site. Besides Boxofficemojo, the site imdb.com, also owned by Amazon, categorises romance drama as a genre. As when you look for romance dramas in the site, you will find movies *Remember Me* (2010) and *Before sunset* (2004) come up your search list.

So, in conclusion by reviewing all the above few noteworthy examples of leading film critics ' information from the distributors film companies, movie awards and film sites, reviewing the audience 's popularity and demand, I am able to point it out that romance drama is indeed a genre under which films are made and still are. These films did well at the box office and so

are most sort after even in the present times.

HISTORY OF ROMANCE DRAMAS

Romance in screenplays goes back to the silent cinema era when music had not yet been introduced to accompany films. Romantic screenplays frequently revolve around fairy-tale themes of love at first sight, spring-winter romances, unrequited, romantic, obsessive, sexual, nonsexual, zealous, fiery, forbidden, sentimental, destructive, sacrificial or catastrophic love, or anything else related to love. These themes were popular because they served as great escape and fantasies for viewers. They provided an adrenaline rush and feelings of ecstasy when the two lovers finally overcame all difficulties that kept them apart and they declared their love. It allowed audiences to experience, through the protagonists, a life which is happily-ever-after by sealing the end with a final kiss.

Romance drama is the subgenre where both the characteristics of romance and drama have been used. As such, the romantic drama screenplay genre can be defined as a genre which explores complexities of love in dramas. Here the plot centres on the difficulties and hindrances that prevents love from flourishing between the two main characters. Complications vary from condemnation to forbidden love, psychological constraints of the characters and societal pressure or expectations. Many times, in romance dramas, the lovers end up separating either due to the atrociousness of the obstacle, awareness of being incompatible, or, simply, destiny. Few mention-worthy examples of romance drama screenplays in the history of cinema owing to their popularity include *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *Titanic* (1997) and *Dr. Zhivago* (1965).

To write the history of romance drama genre in screenplays, I have chosen to talk about the films that were made only in the West, in Hollywood. To study it, I mostly surfed the internet went through various sites and settled with the sites flimsite.org and Imbd.com as I found their list more thorough and accurate. As such, the oldest romance drama screenplays as these sites depicts are *The Sheik* (1921) by D. George Melford and *Pandora's Box* (1929) by Georg Wilhelm Pabst, respectively. They both are silent films, made during the time when sound was not introduced in the motion pictures. The film, *The Sheik*, is 80 minutes long, which created sensations at its time of release. While *Pandora's Box* has no reviews, it is of 109 minutes

long.

The sound in motion picture came in by 1930 in Hollywood. In 1931 the film *Ten Cents a Dance* was released, it is 75 minutes long. After almost a decade, colour was introduced in the Cinema. It was when *Gone with the Wind* (1939) was released. It is based on the novel of same name by Margaret Mitchell and the Screenplay written by Sidney Howard which fetched the most Academy Awards at that time.

Casablanca (1942) another mention worthy film in romance drama genre is based on the unproduced stage play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* by Murray Burneet and Joan Alison. (Sorel, 1991). This classic and much beloved romance drama regularly appears in top-ten lists of films and screenplays till date. In fact, Tim Dirks's, best screenplays list written to date comes with *Casablanca* ranked first. It is a marvellous tale of two men desiring and contending for the love of the same woman in an intricate entangle to make a love triangle. The story of political and romantic intelligence is set against the backdrop of conflict between totalitarianism and democracy during World War II. This classic paved the way for similar screenplays to be written in this genre. After that thousands of films all over the globe in this genre is been produced till present in this particular genre or with other sub genres like crime, musical, epics, historical and others.

The reason behind romance drama genre screenplay's popularity like the action and adventure screenplays, despite being realistic, due to their ability to draw a crowd and cost less money to turn into a film, according to many movie enthusiasts. The drama and romance screenplays generally do not require a huge budget for the set and special-effects. They can fetch an Incredible Return on Investment (ROI) if one happens to take off. According to Michael Deane, the managing editor of the site Investopedia, in his article, *The Movie Genres That Make More Money*, "The movie *Once* was made on a mere budget of \$150,000 and took off, gaining Oscar nominations in the music category and taking in nearly \$19 million. Overall, it has the 10th-highest ROI at 6,232.39%. Likewise, filmmaker George Lucas's second film *American Graffiti* is number nine on the list at 8,909.01%; *Napoleon Dynamite* is at 12 with a 5,667.62% return on its \$400,000 budget." (Deane, 2010).

Apart from the points to be considered above, I also found out, in terms of allocations and felicitations when it comes to critics' opinions, nominations and awards, romance drama has

a history of its solid presence in the history of world cinemas all over the globe. Most prestigious awards ever given away in the history of cinema has been taken away by the screenplays of this genre. Thus, I believe, this sums up the history of the romance drama screenplays in a nutshell, and why it is still popular amongst the filmmakers as well with the audience in general.

KEY SIGNIFIERS OF ROMANCE DRAMA IN A SCREENPLAY

According to an article published in the site thescriptlab by Noelle Buffam, “Romantic Drama film is a genre that explores the complex side of love. The plot usually centres on an obstacle that is preventing love between two people. The obstacles in Romantic Drama film can range from a family's disapproval, to forbidden love, to one's own psychological restraints. Many Romantic Dramas end with the lovers separating because of the enormity of the obstacle, the realization of incompatibility, or simply... fate.” (Buffam, 2011). The obstacle which prevents deep and true romantic love between two people, the emotional mood creates an atmosphere of more excellent drive or desire for both the lovers. In the older films, the resolution and ending of a romance drama basically keeps the audience guessing whether the final romantic union between the two main characters will take place or not, but nowadays to keep up with the present demand for happy ending, screenplay writers end up uniting the lovers to draw more crowd.

Apart from the above, the emphasis is laid on the structure of a romance drama, character arc, the internal and external conflicts of the main characters or the characters' arcs, what's at stake in their lives, the climax and finally the resolution. The key image even theme has drastic contrast with other movie genres. The plot pace is generally slower than the other movie genre types and often goes without romanticising with background music.

Romance dramas compared to other romantic and comedy genres are intended to be of more serious themes than humorous. In romance dramas, the protagonist and his/her lovers endure separations and difficulties in the path of their achieving love. Unlike with a comedy, the audience would not find this humorous. They mainly focus on the in-depth development of characters which can be as realistic as people in everyday life. They must deal with everyday emotional struggles and ultimately must go through a transformation towards the end, making an arc. Consequently, the audience will expect a convincing plot where the characters suffer

real-life hardships and failures until they finally find what they are seeking.

In a nutshell, in romantic dramas, the audience will sympathise with the protagonist and expect him/her to win his/her love despite the obstacles thrown at them. There may or may not be an antagonist character, or the society or environment of the protagonist might act as the antagonist. Characters often have the determination to win over evil and fight injustice. Another characteristic of romance drama is where the protagonist will be put to the test so that the audience can see his/her personality traits. Again, the protagonist's decisions drive the story forward. He/she often will have to fight the antagonist to win his/her love in the end. Then there is always a helper/friend who comes to the aid of the protagonist and always stays with him/her when in need throughout the film, and this helper or friend may fall in love with the protagonist. Throughout the film, the focus is on the story's main line which is mostly a relationship line rather than an action line. (Jones, 2013)

Thus, all the above points sum up what audience will expect in a romance drama genre and will therefore, come prepared with a vague idea what they might expect. It is in my view also helps in targeting a particular audience, who are adults and who loves to watch films that resonates with their day to day life. Some more examples of romantic drama films are – *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995), *The English Patient* (1996), *Forrest Grump* (1994), *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2002), *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), *Dear John* (2011), *Water for Elephants* (2011), *Love Story* (1970), *5 Centimetres per Second* (2007) and recently *The Fault in our stars* (2014), *Safe Haven* (2016).

EXPECTATIONS OF ROMANCE DRAMA'S CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE

With modern technology and improvements in film production quality, the screenplays in this genre too needed to be upgraded to match the current times. The expectations of contemporary audiences around romance drama have changed altogether. New coming-of-age films in this genre have come up and have caught the audience's attention. These films contrast sharply with earlier films categorised in the genre. Older films of this genre are *Blue Angel* (1930), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Casablanca* (1942), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *Dr. Zhivago* (1965), *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), *Love Story* (1970), *Forrest Grump* (1994), *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995), *The English Patient* (1996), *Titanic* (1997), *Memoirs of a Geisha*

(2002), *Before sunset* (2004), *5 Centimetres per Second* (2007) *Remember Me* (2010), *Water for Elephants* (2011), *The Fault in our stars* (2014), and recently *Safe Haven* (2016).

The first difference is their duration of time and pace. Back in the early times of these movies, especially from 1930 – 1990s, their duration was long, and their plot pace moved slowly. They could go up to three hours, but now from 2000 - Present, the time duration has reduced to 90 minutes as the plot pace moves faster. This in my view, because of the fast-moving generation who has no time to sit and watch a movie longer than 90 minutes duration. The theme, key image, and the plot have changed keeping with the present times demands. Film industries are experimenting more with the arrival of new generation of screenplay writers. Many coming-of-age movies have been written of late, opening doors for more screenplay writers to experiment, to name a few depending upon their popularity worldwide:

- Bowen, M. Godfrey, W. & Kavanaugh, R. (Producers), Hallstrom, L. (Director). (2010). *Dear John* [Motion Picture]. United States: Screen Gems.
- Birnbaum, R. Barber, G. Glickman, J. & Taublieb, P. (Producers), Sucsy, M. (Director). (2012). *The Vow* [Motion Picture]. United States: Screen Gems.
- Nicholas, O. Engelson, T. Feig, E. & Pattinson, R. (Producers), Coulter, A. (Director). (2010). *Remember Me* [Motion Picture]. United States: Summit Entertainment.
- Linklater, R. Walker-McBay, A. (Producers), Linklater, R. (Director). (2004). *Before Sunset* [Motion Picture]. United States: Warner Independent Pictures.

There is a commonality among the screenplays of the above movies despite their differences. Firstly, as previously mentioned, the duration and the pace of the plots and scenes have become shorter and faster, respectively. Secondly, the emotions and expressions of the characters portrayed are more realistic and speak to the present generation. Moreover, the above movies lure audiences with its stage set-up so that they can connect emotionally to the plot and characters.

In my view, audiences want to experience something that moves them, touches their heart and

makes them feel good to see someone else's life is more troublesome than their own. As the protagonists overcome their struggles after struggles to find resolutions, it makes the audience think well about their own lives after they leave the cinema hall.

HOW THE SCREENPLAY 'FAITH' FULFILLS THESE EXPECTATIONS

I have put my screenplay in the genre of romance drama because I feel it fulfils all the categories of a coming-of-age romance drama. It has the emotions, theme, a key image and a plot required to be included in this category. It has the kind of love, the driving force for my protagonist to decide decision. It has an antagonist to fuel the protagonist to move forward and ultimately achieve what he wanted. It is bitter-sweet and feel-good unlike the romantic comedy screenplays, and as such rightly fall under the romance genre.

HOW MY CHOICE OF GENRE AFFECTS THE CHARACTERISATION IN MY SCREENPLAY

The choice of genre indeed affects the characterisation of the characters in my screenplay. It affects how my characters behave. They are more realistic, driven by their goals and inner desires. My protagonist, Neev's desire is to be free from the burden of his self-made guilt. He wants to save Madhab/Ray and win his childhood love, Sarah/Raina. He achieves it all, towards the end.

Besides all the above, the genre categorisation has effects on the theme, narrative, characters, plot, key image by portraying a serious note depicting harsh realities of life. However, at the same time, it keeps the playfulness of the characters alive like we would want to see in our own regular lives. In this way, the characters speak out to the audience.

HOW 'FAITH' OFFERS THE AUDIENCE A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROMANCE DRAMA GENRE

My screenplay *Faith* throws a fresh perspective on the genre of romance drama. As it not just

will bring in light a new class of people of which the world has very little knowledge. It will try to tell the story from a different part of the world who rarely gets attention.

The story is set in Assam, a state in India, where the problem of insurgency is a major issue. The screenplay in a way tries to examine the atrocities of the insurgency. The families it has destroyed lives it is still ruining for generations now, all for nothing. Moreover, the screenplay tries to blow away the cover from the hypocrisy of modern-day democratic government, modern-day problems of corruption, treachery in politics, the difficulty in separating good from evil today's complicated society. The dysfunctional and corrupt officers, intertwined with modern-day contemporary love, hopes and friendship to tell an engaging and entertaining story.

The screenplay is intended to target the young adult generation but also can be counted as family entertainment. Thus, it opens doors for more experimentation and research for screenplay writers, to consider writing stories against the backdrop of other cultures, away from what the mainstream media loves to portray.

Moreover, it will be a case study to open doors for a new kind of subcategory to romance dramas that will be set against the backdrops of politics and terrorism. It will also be able to show that these stories can be both bitter-sweet and feel-good at the same time.

EXEGESIS PART TWO

THE SCREENPLAY

This part of my exegesis consists of my screenplay *Faith*'s dramatic narrative. First, there is the synopsis. Second, my protagonist's main relationship line is discussed in detail. My analysis will shed light on what is at stake, the arc of my all my main characters along with my protagonist and the core conflict my protagonist wrestles with until the resolution. Third the story structure is critically discussed based on the key turning points in the central relationship line, the dramatic question, the core conflicts in the three main relationship lines, and, finally, the ending. Lastly, conclusions focus on the theme of the story, its intentions, audience, and key images.

SYNOPSIS

“Faith- a reel life drama about love, sacrifice, and hope.”

While eluding school punishments, NEEV (10) and his friend RAY (10) get lost in the woods where they encounter insurgents who kidnap Ray. Neev manages to escape. The police later search for Ray but cannot find him. Ray’s parents blame Neev for their son’s disappearance. Neev takes the blame and feels guilty. Neev’s family leaves town to protect their son. Before departing, Neev contacts RAINA (10), his love interest and Ray’s twin sister, and she vows never to see him again.

Sixteen years later, Neev (27) is an army commander. He changes his name to Amrit. Ray (27) is a terrorist, and he is known as Madhab. Raina (27) takes her mother’s name Sarah and is a psychiatrist. Neev sees Raina in the street by chance for the first time. His nightmares about Ray stop, and he develops romantic feelings for Raina. They finally meet, realise who the other is and separate. Ray captures Neev in an encounter and keeps him a hostage. Back home everyone thinks Neev is dead. Raina feels guilty now that Neev is dead. When Neev is released, Raina helps him overcome his post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and they form a friendship.

Neev falls out with higher government officials over Ray who used him to expose them. The DIG, Neev’s boss, tries to kill Raina to avenge Ray and he failed to assassinate her, he puts Ray on the shoot-on-sight list. Neev goes public seeking mercy for Ray. Raina and Neev fall in love. Meanwhile, Ray falls out with his chief, who threatens to kill Raina if he surrenders to the army. His group members start a rebellion against Ray. Ray blames Neev for his plight. Enraged, he tries to kill Neev, when he learns that his childhood friend and Raina are now an item. Raina comes between them and gets shot instead. Coaxed by his fellow rebel and friend, Dahor, Ray escapes, but he returns to save his sister by donating blood for her. Then he surrenders

Neev and Raina, the two people who cannot fall in love end up together. Ray who was brutalised to be a terrorist and impossible to change surrenders.

CHARACTER

“Desire is the crucible that forges character because it intrinsically creates conflict.”

(Corbett, 2013)

— *David Corbett (Crime Writer)*

The quote above aptly describes how the screenplay *Faith*’s characters were born. Characters are ultimately shaped from the characters’ desires which create internal and external conflicts. Neev is the protagonist of the story. Raina is his childhood love. They are meant to be together despite all the obstacles. Ray the vehicle of realisation for Neev and Raina to start caring for one other as the lovers in the end.

The happy ending does not come easily for the lovers. It is a struggle from the start. There is much at stake. Their inability to forgive each other is one of the issues. Raina is unable to forgive Neev for her brother Ray’s disappearance, and Neev is unable to forgive himself for not being able to save Ray from the kidnappers when he had the chance. The incident that took place sixteen years earlier changed their lives, altered their personalities, and broke up their families. As a result, years later Neev joins the Border Security Force as a commander, due to his unquenched thirst for revenge, his desire for redemption and his never-ending search for Ray. He becomes an introvert, one with integrity and in love with Raina, who still experiences all the sorrows of her childhood, dealing with her mother’s post-kidnapping depression and her father’s untimely death. With all these emotional scars within her family, she ends up choosing a career as a psychiatrist. She is kind, sympathetic but not empathetic. Therefore, the most significant requirement in their storyline was to seep love into two hardened hearts which could not feel romantic love.

Time is all they need to forgive one other. Raina forgives Neev. Being a psychiatrist, she understands what it means to grow up with trauma and guilt. When Neev returns alive from his captivity, suffering from PTSD, she takes it upon herself to treat him. They form a friendship as they realise their shared goal to save Ray has driven them both throughout their lives. This drive ultimately becomes the reason to release the rusted tap of love, so their love can flow freely after all these years. Thus, the two people who cannot fall in love, do at last.

Meanwhile, Ray becomes a rebel like his kidnappers. He is brutalised and trained to kill without hesitation if the opportunity arises. He attempts to kill Neev out of pent up revenge, but his shot hits his sister instead. When he finally has the chance to escape everything and to lead a normal life, he gives up his freedom and surrenders to save his sister by donating his blood to her.

Thus, the desire for a calm life which Neev wrestles with comes true. His struggle to keep faith alive all these years despite the obstacles reflects on the everyday reality that sustains us, as an audience.

STORY STRUCTURE

“The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds came home to roost.”
(Miller, n.d.)

—Arthur Miller

The movie script *Faith* is born out of hope. It is a wish of hope, for a happy ending for everyone. The characters in *Faith* hope. They hope for redemption and find it in the way they hope to. Arthur Miller’s statement encapsulates how the structure of *Faith* is based on the stories of characters that come together for a resolution.

The main storyline in *Faith* is of Neev and Raina’s relationship for they have more for the audience to offer in my view. They both endure many hardships, including their abrupt separation from childhood until meeting again as adults. Their journey is that of love, hate, forgiveness and redemption.

The five major critical turning points in Neev and Raina’s relationship line are:

- Their separation in childhood
- Meeting again after 16 years and separating
- Neev’s kidnapping by Ray
- Raina helping Neev with his PTSD
- Forming a friendship.

The crucial first turning point in their relationship line comes with their abrupt separation in childhood, just after their first kiss. Later, Ray is declared missing by the local police. Raina is hurt and unable to forgive Neev, despite wanting to deep down. Her family blames Neev for everything that went wrong. She is torn between her family and Neev. When Neev’s father finds out how shaken Neev is, he decides to leave town to protect his son. Neev learns about his parents’ decision to leave town and is not not ready about leaving the town permanently. He tries to contact Raina to convey his parents’ plans to her. However, before he can tell her, she declares that she never wants to see him again, so he decides to leave town with his parents.

The second crucial turning point comes sixteen years later when they come face to face, only to separate again. The meeting happens at a house party at Neev's place. Raina is invited to the party by Daman, Neev's friend. Neev has been looking for her. His constant nightmares about Ray stop somehow after seeing her. Previously, each time he saw her, he never could muster the courage to befriend her. So, finding her at the party that day, Neev is thrilled. At the party, they talk. They both have changed their names and were not sure who the other one is. Later at the party, Raina finds Neev's house album and realises who Neev is. They confront each other and part ways. They are both shocked at having met each other unexpectedly, so Raina leaves him to walk home alone, and Neev lets her go.

The third crucial point of no return comes when Ray and his rebels take Neev hostage for personal vendetta. Everyone back home thinks Neev is now dead. To deceive the army, Ray cunningly exchanges Neev's badges with a charred army man's body, killed by the bomb, Ray's man. Neev's death bothers Raina after reading his amendments letter addressed to her and she learns that her brother is alive. Raina is upset for she never allowed Neev explain himself. She is mad at herself for she always knew he was never at fault and everything that happened was simply their destiny. Her life turns upside down as she analyses her behaviour throughout the years. She is depressed and at the point of a breakdown.

The fourth critical point is when Neev suffers from PTSD. In her role as a Psychiatrist, Raina offers to treat him and is eager to help him get better. She goes to his house despite Neev continuously avoiding her. Neev is resentful. His whole childhood and his present have been affected by the twins' presence. He is in turmoil, depressed and anxious about not being able to escape the situations life has put him in. He directs his anger toward himself for being naïve, by being self-destructive. He feels vulnerable and sad for himself, for keeping the guilt for years over something of which he was never at fault. He is angry with Raina for not being able to empathise with him. All these hidden emotions surge, including his recent memories at the hostage camp, and take a toll and cause him to break down. However, when he realises his emotions are getting out of control and hurting people he loves, he lets Raina help him to get better.

The crucial, decisive point of no return in the Neev and Raina's relationship line is when they finally form a friendship. This friendship did not come easy. After months of labouring with Neev, Raina earns it. By this point, both characters start feeling empathy for each other. They have gone out of their way to befriend one other. Raina in particular tries her best to win Neev over. Neev on his part is happy that Raina is taking steps to help him overcome his problems. By now Neev's PTSD symptoms have reduced. He regains his health over time and starts taking care of himself. Thus, their friendship opens the door for love to seep in and their final confession of love to each other later.

The dramatic question that is set up at the start of my script is: are Neev and Raina the soulmates who will eventually fall in love, and will Ray, the antagonist change and surrender? The audience anticipates the obstacles thrown at Neev and Raina and which prevent them from being together. While it seems impossible to fathom that Ray gives up his 'kingdom' and freedom to surrender. So, will he change?

The dramatic question is planted earlier in the end of Act I, when Neev and Raina separate in the beginning. Later, at the start of Act II, we find their childhood has shaped their personalities and the career choices they make. Neev becomes reserved, introverted and someone who has integrity, who is conscious of his self-image in public; while Raina has chosen to become a psychiatrist and trusts none and lives her life on her whims. This explains why neither of them has been in a meaningful relationship. While Ray is now a rebel and does not hesitate to kill anyone, even his men when they disappoint him.

The dramatic question is answered at the resolution when Neev and Raina confess their feelings for each other and become a couple. Ray surrenders to save his sister, donating his blood at the point when he has the opportunity to leave behind everything and start a new life.

Likewise, the core conflicts are different for each of the three main lines in the script. These conflicts are mostly of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and betrayal. In the main relationship line, between Neev and Raina, the core conflict is the desire for forgiveness and acceptance. They both want to be together but are unable to let go of their internal demons. This subconscious

desire keeps bringing them together while their conscious mind puts them to stand apart on the threshold, which keeps the audience wondering about whether they will end up together.

In the second relationship line between Neev and Ray, the core conflict is of forgiveness and trust. Ray is unable to forgive and trust Neev for his lost childhood. All he wants is to seek revenge against Neev, while the latter wants to safely bring Ray home by making him surrender and redeem himself. He wants to give Ray a life he deserves. However, Ray does not want to surrender. He is happy with his freedom in his small realm which Neev's actions threatens to pull apart. Their conflict escalates with the actions each takes to put the other down. Ray uses Neev to expose the current government's officials. Neev hooks up with Raina, unable to control his feelings for her, despite Ray's threat. By doing so, he exposes her to the bigger enemy and costs Ray's acceptance within his group.

In the third line, the conflict is between the twins, Raina and Ray. The core conflict is to keep each other safe. Ray is smart. He has known from the start that he needs to keep his family safe from afar. As such he tries to keep Raina safe from Neev, for her protection, but that does not go well with her. He never comes once to see Raina in all these years, nor does he try to contact her. It is not that he does not want to see her, but he wants to keep things less complicated for everyone, so much so that, to stop his family searching for him, he changes his name to Madhab Dolloi. When Raina realises her brother is alive and a rebel on the shoot-on-sight list, she helps Neev to go public for mercy. Neev decides to go public as his DIG transferred him to a remote area before threatening him. Meanwhile, Neev going for public mercy for Ray, does not go down well with Ray. Ray attempts to kill Neev but mistakenly shoots his own sister. However, in the end, by donating his blood to save her, Ray surrenders, as their blood is rare, in that region which is O negative.

At the ending, when Raina takes the shot meant for Neev, Ray is coaxed by his friend to escape imprisonment. However, Ray changes his mind mid-way abandoning the redemption, for which he waited all his life. He returns to the hospital where his sister is admitted and offers her his blood. For his part, Neev knows what Ray's act implies. If Ray stays to donate blood, the army will capture him, and if he does not Raina will lose her life. He has to make the most difficult decision of his life, and he decides to let Ray give blood and to be captured by the army. Thus, in

a bitter-sweet moment he makes the audience believe in faith, that things do fall into place and there is both good and bad in everyone, that our judgments are ordinary and do no justice but to us. We always end up striving for inner peace over anything else and sacrifice everything for true love.

THEME

“Wherever my story takes me, however dark and difficult the theme, there is always some hope and redemption, not because readers like happy endings, but because I am an optimist at heart. I know the sun will rise in the morning, that there is a light at the end of every tunnel.” (Morpurgo, n.d.)

— *Michael Morpurgo*

The above quote by Michael Morpurgo reflects my thoughts regarding my script *Faith*. I wrote this story in a way which portrays that in life there is no strict definition of what is good or bad. Most times both good and bad exist within us depending on our perspective.

Terrorism is a modern term in my opinion. However, it is a problem the world has been facing since the beginning of history. My view is that terrorism can exist anywhere, in the form of rebels, government, personal internal turmoil, and in relationships. However, there is always hope once we are awakened to the genesis of the problem, we can turn poison into medicine, challenges into opportunities. All that is needed is the beginning, the first step to be taken.

Faith is mostly a product of imagination; it has nothing to convey to the audience which they have no knowledge of. I wrote the screenplay with the existing theme of keeping faith alive, believing in it and working towards it. To remind the audience that, things do sometimes fall into place, and of pure elements such as the desires of the heart can at times come true in the most unexpected of way. The theme of the triumph of true love, redemption and the beginning of a new chapter for the characters. The theme of romantic love, friendship love and brotherly/sisterly love also feature prominently in my screenplay and support notions of friendship and lasting bonds. The themes also include what may seem as extraordinary events (kidnapping, guerrilla fighters and change of identity) but they also point to the unpredictability of life and the way hopes and dreams can become impaired by internal (personality, family circumstances) and external factors (environment, political climate).

The key image I wish audiences to leave with is the final one of Ray walking towards the operation

theatre. The corridor fills with the army, Daman and Neev's mixed expressions of sadness and relief. It is a moment of victory for humanity. Our life is not just for ourselves, but our lives sole purpose is to keep humanity alive, hope alive, in my opinion which sums up the whole theme of the story.

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