**K-Drama Archetypes: 7 characters that are always present in South Korean TV series**

There’s always a second lead bound to get his heart broken and an extremely unfortunate female lead

K-dramas and its creators are famous for impeccable storytelling that takes viewers to a roller coaster of emotions in more or less 16 episodes.

But these entertainment gems from South Korea—instrumental to the popularity of the country’s food, music, and traditions around the world—are also known for including characters that may have different looks or names, but have similar personalities, challenges, and life stories. Here’s a look at seven of them.

**The Nice Girl**

With the odds not always in her favor, a Korean drama’s typical lead lady character is poor, working multiple part-time jobs, and always insulted by society’s rich and privileged, and yet she continues to be kind, forgiving, and hardworking. Things usually work out for her in the end, but it takes a lot of twists, turns, and tears before she gets there.

The Heirs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwvDUt82Mjw&t=215s>

Cha Eun Sang (Park Shin Hye) from *The Inheritors* perfectly fits this archetype.

**The Mr. Almost Perfect Guy**

He’s good-looking, likely the heir to a giant corporation, drives nice cars, eats at the best restaurants, has multiple assistants at his disposal, and lives in a mansion. The male lead seems to have it all, except he hasn’t found the love of his life and his many unresolved issues keep holding him back. He gets a happy ending, too, but he needs to muster up the courage to fight against the odds.

Romance Is A Bonus Book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjeXZEtEI2A>

Take Cha Eun Ho (Lee Jong Suk) from *Romance Is A Bonus Book* for an example.

**The Disapproving Parents**

The parents of the lead characters always have something to say about their children’s choices and relationships. The rich male lead’s parents always have an arranged marriage planned with the daughter of another company to secure the family business’ future, while the poor female lead always gets warnings from her parents about the dangers of dating someone beyond her league. Both sets of parents, however, only wish for their children’s happiness.

Boys Over Flowers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sh1xV8Jafw>

Gu Jun Pyo’s mom, Shinhwa Group Chairwoman Kang Hee Soo (Lee Hye Young) from *Boys Over Flowers*, is an example of this.

**The Second Lead**

He may not have much compared to the male lead, but he’s kind, caring, reliable, supportive, and overall a likely better choice for the female lead. Viewers get attached and root for them, even though they know from the start that it’s not meant to be. The second lead, however, always loses, hence, the deadliest affliction among many K-drama fans--the Second Lead Syndrome. In the end, second leads are able to move forward, with the mere knowledge that the girl they love—and will never end up with—is happy.

Reply 1988: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn5h8Zg59-g>

Kim Jung Hwan (Ryu Jung Yeol) from *Reply 1988* is Second Lead Syndrome personified.

**The Nerdy Sidekicks**

The nerdy sidekicks may always crack jokes, make fun of their friend, or act all clumsy and incapable in many ways, but they are also deeply emotional human beings that care for the lead’s happiness and are always ready to back them up in any situation.

Kill Me, Heal Me: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPtLCBVQ6VQ>

Oh Ri (Park Seo Joon) from *Kill Me, Heal Me* is a memorable sidekick.

**The Ex Who Keeps Returning**

She’s rich, smart, beautiful, and accomplished. It’s difficult to believe she and the male lead did not end up together. It would turn out that she has not been able to move on from the relationship, after all. Despite being turned down multiple times, she tries her best to win back the male lead, even at the expense of the female lead. She doesn’t get what she wants in the end, but she finds peace in the fact that her past flame has found the love of his life.

Princess Hours: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMZovoTicas>

Min Hyo Rin (Song Ji Hyo) from *Princess Hours* is an example of this character.

**The Psychotic Villain**

They look like absolutely normal members of society, yet they hide a heinous side of themselves. They are K-drama land’s serial killers, stalkers, or manipulators, always out to hurt their targets without any remorse.

When the Camellia Blooms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIyt65iRz2E>

Take Park Seok-Yong from *When the Camellia Blooms*, for instance. He only appeared in a handful of scenes as an injured recluse living behind the neighborhood’s mechanic shop, but as it turns out, he uses the tools to kill his targets.