

The Bachelor: Rooted in Its Ways

- Linda Fitzpatrick

This season of *The Bachelor* marks the show's 20th on air, including its sister show, *The Bachelorette*. Every season, we gather before our televisions as a few dozen single men and women compete to win the heart of the Bachelor or Bachelorette. In light of such a milestone, I think it is clear that this show is here to stay, just the way we like it.

And we do like it. Something about watching a dozen women fight over one man is too entertaining not to enjoy. No matter what is happening in our lives, we can turn our TV's on every Monday and experience beautiful, yet unrealistic, dates and more than a handful of catfights that always make us grateful we've got good friends and good food. We also like the predictability of the series we've come to know. We love that everything that happens during those two hours is very unlikely to happen in our day-to-day lives. I'm both jealous and relieved I'll never go on a group date in which I'll have to do something absolutely insane (like swim with giant pigs in the Bahamas). But after twenty seasons of this reality show, I've stopped to wonder: will we be seeing any changes in the future? My guess is that we will not, considering the success *The Bachelor* has enjoyed thus far and after experiencing last year's Bachelorette.

Last season, ABC executives challenged the traditional "plotline" of *The Bachelorette*. During the first episode, there were two Bachelorettes and the men decided who stayed on for the duration of the season. It was weird to say the least. Kaitlyn and Britt were extraordinarily awkward around one another — and why shouldn't they have been when they were competing to be the star of the same reality TV show? Once Kaitlyn was voted the official Bachelorette, we all thought the show would return to normal, but it never quite did. Just when we were getting comfortable, Britt and her very staged relationship — with an ex-bachelorette contestant who left the competition once Kaitlyn was voted in — reappeared sporadically throughout the show. I assume this was to please viewers who preferred Britt over Kaitlyn, but the votes should have defined who got screen time, not a ploy to maintain high ratings. The fact that *The Bachelor* has returned to its traditional "script" is proof that the series is comfortable and more successful with its traditional ways. While some series strive for change, *The Bachelor* does not.

With that said, there is one aspect of the series that has always been criticized: the diversity...or lack thereof. It's true the show lacks a variety of people (appearance, race, and other such characteristics), but I've come to realize that much of this has to do with the qualities the Bachelors are looking for in a partner. People tend to have a type they are attracted to, which is why we often see a trend in appearance among the final contestants. So, if the show really wants to diversify itself, which I think it should desire, the best bet would be to pick a non-white Bachelor. Such a change would not alter the show we love; it may just give the series a larger audience, which would ensure many more years to come for *The Bachelor*.

I think it's safe to say our hearts won't be crushed in years to come, because our guilty pleasure is perfect the way it is. So grab your snacks and get comfortable. We've got a lot of drama to watch.