

Lagaan: the village he lives in which

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Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India is one of a kind. There is no movie comparable to it. Set during the Victorian period in British raj and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker the movie combines cricket with political feud, romance with some heartbreaking , betrayal and musical numbers.

This movie also shows some of the common division among the people of India from religious difference to social difference among the high classed people to the low classed people who are regarded as the untouchables in the Indian's caste system but at the end the villagers come together to fight off the British, this is somewhat similar to what actually happened in history when the Indians fought the British by uniting under the idea of nationalism to fight off the British but Mr. Gowariker added a twist to the movie because there wasn't an untouchable group in the caste system back then but he added it to the movie to show something that is an issue in the country today.

The main actor Bhuvan who is played by Aami Khan introduces us to the village he lives in which is under the control of an evil British officer known as Captain Russell. There is no love between Bhuvan and Captain Russell after Bhuvan chases a deer which the captain was trying to shoot. Given a last chance to live Bhuvan goes back to village where everyone is patiently waiting for the rain so that they could plant and harvest to pay their grains as Lagaan which is tax to the British. But it does not rain so the villagers go to their king to tell him to beg the British to allow them go that year without paying Lagaan. But as you would have guessed that does not happen.

Being ignorant and seeing this as a game and funny captain Russell challenges the villagers to a cricket match and challenges Bhuvan to make the decision for the villagers and in return they would not

have to pay Lagaan for three years but if they lose they would have to pay triple the amount.

Being left no decision Bhuvan agrees to the bet. Many of the villagers are mad with Bhuvan for agreeing but he convinces them by telling them cricket is similar to a game they played in the village known as gilli-danda. This gives the villagers some hope. There is no drama movie without romance in it and Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India does a really good job in this. We are introduced to Elizabeth who is the captain's sister after she decides to sneak into the village to help them because she thinks her brother is being unfair to the villagers and then she teaches them what cricket is and how it is played. Her closeness to Bhuvan makes Gauri jealous, a village girl who had feeling for Bhuvan since they were young and believed they were destined to get married. And out of this comes the village betrayer Lakha who loves Gauri and wants to marry her. Driven by jealousy Lakha becomes a spy for the British and he wants them to win so that the villagers may hate Bhuvan for agreeing to the bet and by destroying Bhuvan's reputation he would have a chance with Gauri.

Lakha tells the captains about his sister's betrayal but Elizabeth refuses to listen to him and she tells Bhuvan that Lakha was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Hearing this the villagers decided to kill him but Bhuvan saves him and they make a plan to win the game. The villagers' team includes a crippled man who belongs to the untouchable group whom the villagers refuse to go close to but Bhuvan tells them that division among themselves is what causes them harm. The part about caste differences is not a very international thing but it is a

concept unique to Indian people but the movie director does a good job in explaining the cultural difference and viewers abroad can be able to easily understand the cultural difference.

The team also includes Deva, a man who used to work for the British military but after seeing their horrible actions decided to leave. Although it is not said in the movie the reason why most of the Indian soldiers left the British army was due to the British using cattle and pig fat to grease their guns and cattle was very sacred to Hindu beliefs while the Muslim population in India were prohibited from eating pork.

One unique thing about Bollywood movies is the ability of the characters to just burst into songs in the middle of actions. When the villagers see rain clouds they burst into dance and singing around happily when compared to a dancing in the British headquarter where ladies and men are dancing the director does a good job in showing the difference between the two different dances. While one is very wild with the dancers freely jumping up and down the other is very slow and almost robotic like and with this two scenes we see the cultural

difference among the two groups. Lagaan does a good job of keeping the viewer on edge when the final cricket match comes, both teams are very good but at the end one of them wins and then there is the question about who Bhuvan would choose to marry at the end. Would it be Gauri or Elizabeth who were portrayed as good women, the suspense and the need to know who he is going to choose is the best scene. Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India makes you feel as if you are similar with the characters but the movie has unique production and is unlike anything I am used to watch.

From the buildings, to the dancing Lagaan is definitely one of its kind.