

Saving face



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Saving Face was a romantic comedy unveiling the truth about how characters identity can cause personal and cultural conflicts. Will and Ma had been keeping a secret from their family making it hard for them to come to terms with themselves and connect with others. However, between it all, motifs were seen throughout the whole movie expressing thoughts, feelings and presence. For instance, Ma's constant calls to Will, and tight camera angles in the movie symbolize an intrusion from the outside world.

Through those motifs, food was the central motif. It expressed emotion, intimacy, and true feelings for an individual without anyone's influence in Saving Face. Food was the central motif in the romantic comedy Saving Face because it was the only reoccurring pattern that would show an individual's identity. However, Ma's phone calls to Will and the tight camera angles in the movie made it captive for anyone to embrace their identity. The tight camera angles were able to show pain and scorn one was facing as they started to peel their identity away.

As this would happen, one saw how hard it could be in being upfront and honest about themselves to others. When Ma was faced with explaining to her father she was pregnant, with no husband, the movie captured Ma boxed in. In this shot, Ma was in a room, sitting down closed in by the narrow hallway leading to where she was sitting. Her father was in the same room as her not seen, but only heard. This shows how the "outside" influences make it difficult to accept one's state and affects making connections with others.

Ma now felt she had to marry someone, even if she wasn't interested in him. Will had witnessed her mother getting scolded by her grandfather (superior figure to Ma), thus, making it even more complicated and intimidating for Will to tell her family the secret (being a lesbian and having a partner; Vivian). Throughout, *Saving Face*, Ma would call Will, ironically, just as soon as an intimate scene with Vivian would come on. This is a motif because it was a constant reminder of how big of an impact the Chinese culture and family traditions were on Will.

Anything outside of Chinese tradition was frowned upon by her family. Especially with how hard Ma would try to set Will up with a date at the family gatherings, Will knew how hard it would be in being accepted. Will being a lesbian would cause havoc in her family and would have her disowned from the elders in her family. Just as they wouldn't accept Ma, they would do likewise to Will. When Ma would call Will, while she was with Vivian, Will would randomly start acting distant towards Vivian and rush to go home.

Vivian would respond to this in confusion and at a loss of words with knowing how Will felt for her. Ma's phone calls made it hard for Will to not only be honest to her family, but to herself. If you aren't true to who you are, no one is going to be able to see who you want to be looked as. This motif symbolized a wall in the relationship with Vivian and Will. Ma's constant phone calls and the tight camera angles were both symbolic of Will v. Vivian, Will v. her family, and Will v. herself.

These specific motifs were the block to help Will capture her true identity and share it with others. Will knowing she is a lesbian and coming out to it is

hard enough on a person. However, with Will's family and traditional culture having such an impact/influence on her life makes it even more of a complex situation because she doesn't want to shame her family. However, this leads to food being the central motif because unlike the two other motifs food captivates sincere feelings/expression.

Food was able to capture an identity of an individual in Saving Face without the fret of anyone judging you, forming it to be the central motif. Food can be seen as comfort for a person. For instance, when Ma was watching porn she had traditional comfort food alongside her. Food was capable of showing that Ma is interested in seeing/learning new things. As a result, this shows that Ma isn't all for keeping with tradition. Also, in the beginning of the movie food was capable of capturing a mutual interest between Will and Vivian at the vending machine.

Food expresses the truth in a situation. It lets one block out any outside influences. Food is the central motif because its able to form connections with others and to connect with oneself. Food shows a deeper meaning and understanding to a situation. Saving Face is a romantic comedy that shows how traditions can have an individual lead a life of lies affecting not only themselves, but others. Tradition in a family is very hard to break out of and is especially most important to elders of a family.