

Rati: Story Bible
Synopsis/Major & Secondary Characters/Themes

Rati is a sitcom about a young Indian (South Asian) woman struggling to keep her dance studio a float.

Money for the studio comes from a series of off-off-Broadway (OOB) jobs as well as her modern-dance classes. Both are built on a reputation that she developed through past work. (choreography in HS, college and OOB musicals). Her reputation is primarily built on an OOB musical version of *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* and her version of *Born This Way* (viral clip)

Several clips of *Tomatoes* have been posted on YouTube. It is viewed as a minor absurdist masterpiece. She finds herself constantly drawn into the meaning of the play. Was it environmentalism or feminism? Rati politely accommodates her paying customers but tells her best friend/confidante Jaime that she considers it garbage.

The other source of the fledgling dance studio are its two silent partners, Mark & Dan. Mark & Dan are the basis of an unusual 'non' romantic triangle.

The show is told in a non-linear style. A scene will turn out to be a flashback or a dream sequence. It will have a tone & style similar to *How I Met Your Mother*.

The first episode focuses on Rati. Subsequent episodes will focus on other characters. Rati might not be involved in an episode.

Primary Characters

Rati

Rati is a talented choreographer / dancer. She parlayed a reputation - built largely from her participation in a handful of quirky OOB comedic musicals (which are widely known thanks to the social media, esp. YouTube) into starting a dance studio. This gets her money through Kickstarter & PayPal. She has two silent partners named Mark and Dan (primary characters). Many of her early clients are attracted by her reputation.

While Rati comes off as brass & cocksure, it becomes clear very quickly that she is riddled with insecurities. We learn this from her conversations with her closest friend Jaime and - to a lesser extent - Nick and Amy (secondary characters). The source of her insecurity arises from the following:

- 1) Will the Dance Studio succeed?
- 2) While proud that she is following her vision in life - and nurturing her talents - she is aware that her parents are disappointed that she did not pursue a medical career. This is esp. true of her dad. He has accepted Rati's career path - and is fairly supportive - but still makes snide comments.
- 3) She is both embarrassed and bemused by the OOB musicals that helped fuel her reputation. While a source of clients & funding for the Studio, she considers them to be - at best - really silly. The primary one is a musical version of *Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes*. Her amazement that this it is taken seriously is a recurring theme. There are clips of *Tomatoes* and other projects on

the internet. They are impressive dance pieces - some with Rati performing - but feature outlandish costumes and silly dialogue.

4) Rati is very much a cosmopolitan woman. At the same time, she is drawn by the beauty of her Indian culture.

5) Men/Relationships. Her search for a good man is central. She keeps considering Dan. He's a nice but there is no chemistry.

Jaime

Rati's closest friend and acts as a sounding board for Rati's insecurities and concerns. She is not a passive character. A statuesque blond - who looks a lot like Jaime Pressly (best known for *My Name is Earl*): this similarity is a set up for a lot of the jokes. Jaime holds a MBA and a responsible position at an area bank. It irks her that people are constantly comparing her to the actress: she feels that this objectifies her and dismisses her. It doesn't help her that she speaks with the same Southern accent (which she can't shake) that 'Joy' had in *Earl*. Of course, she also has the same first name: she can't change it out of respect to her parents. This gives Rati some moments of disquiet as it makes her reflect on whether she dissed her parents. Beyond this quirky neurosis, Jaime is a rock: wise & thoughtful. She is a bit reminiscent of Guinan, Whoopi Goldberg's character on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Like the Guinan Character, she listens to Rati's concern then advises her by some clever and well-formed story.

Jaime only shares her unique advice style with Rati. Other characters come to her concerns. She gives clear no bull shit answers.

Mark:

He - along with Dan - is one of two silent partners at Rati's Dance Studio. Mark shares Rati's feelings about the silly nature of the OOB. Other than Jaime, he is the only one that Rati shares her feelings over those plays.

He is gay and an attorney. Intuitive, kind, Jon Stewart personality (a mixture of smart, insightful with the insights delivered with the appropriate decree of self-deprecation). He is Rati's perfect man: except for the gay part. A pivotal scene between Ravi & Jaime - in the pilot - establish these feelings.

Dan:

Dan is a decent guy. He is nice, even-tempered. He is socially awkward.

Dan is a software designer and is straight. He is attracted to Rati and would love a relationship. He fails to act on these feelings - such as asking her out to dinner - because he is socially inept. Although Mark encourages him to act, Dan is concerned that it might be improper to pursue a relationship (since he is giving her money for the Studio). While business is a legitimate concern, it is simply a cop-out. He has never been on a real date, let alone intimate with a woman.

Rati - of course - knows that Dan has feelings for her. She also appreciates that he is a sweet, decent, financially solvent guy. Finding all these traits in a guy is a rarity. She is toying with asking him out. The problem is the lack of sexual attraction and emotional connection.

Secondary Characters:

Daksh & Oja

These are Rati's Mom (Oja) and Dad (Daksh). Both are professionals, the father is a cardio-vascular surgeon, and the mother is a professor of economics (she is also an author of a popular series of books on retirement planning/financial advice).

Daksh has come to take pride in Rati's accomplishments & potential. It is made clear that the relationship was once quite strained because of Daksh's disapproval of Rati's unwillingness to pursue a career in medicine (or another traditional career). Accepting his daughter's choices, he does his best to be supportive, but the conversation ends up being about how her business would be better run if she had degree.

Oja has always been much closer & simply more accepting: this is because of a strong maternal bond & a feminist attitude that encourages autonomy in her daughter. She is simply more accepting. Oja is deeply trouble by her damaged professional credibility. In 2005, she wrote a book that outlined a formula for 'flipping houses': this was right before the mortgage bubble burst. While she did nothing unethical and didn't profit from these all the money lost by those who took her advice, she is still viewed by anger and hatred by many. Much of the interaction between and Rati & Oja is the daughter trying to rebuild her mom's confidence.

Nick & Amy

They are husband and wife and own a recreational marijuana store in the same building as Rati's Dance Studio. They are two retirees and conservative in demeanor. Although both characters smoke pot, they are completely the opposite of the "Cheech & Chong" stereotype. Called *Ye Olde Pot Shoppe*, their business represents a dream for the two of them. Never the kind to stop working, Nick was a Probate Attorney and Amy a grade schoolteacher, they wanted to open a cozy business during their golden years. They imagined a confectionary shop (not a weed store). However, they constantly point out with great pride: 'We *do* sell edibles! They are tasty and make you feel so great! Also our customers are all so sweet, soft spoken and happy'.

Rati goes to them for advice. Jaime is her primary source for advice (because of her insightful nature) but Nick and Amy are a reassuring presence. They are two parental types that act as confidants in a way Daksh & Oja cannot.

Nick is prone to lighting up a blunt in the middle of things. He does have an unfortunate tendency to gesture with the hand holding the blunt while a flummoxed Rati tries to take it from him.

Themes - Primary

Relationships

Rati & Jaime

Over a period of several episodes, the viewers come to appreciate the intensity of feeling between the two: having known each other since 'the first day of their freshman year'. From the first episode on, it is clear that the two are best friends. Over subsequent episodes, the strength of the bond is explored. Jaime and Rati are both straight. They have no interest in a lesbian relationship.

To bring out these feelings, past incidents will be explored. In one episode, Jaime comes to Rati's defense when she is accosted by a drunk racist. In another, Jaime has a severe - perhaps life ending - health issue.

Rati & Mark

In the first episode, Rati discusses her passion for Mark with Jaime. However, a romantic relationship is impossible because he is gay. So, it is unrequited love. We never know the depth of his feelings for her. He is a good friend. As a silent partner, he is giving her money to help her realize her dreams. They are in the same social circle: they hang out. Mark is ultimately a good friend.

Rati & Dan

Dan is decent guy. In a world where a decent guy (who is not gay or married) is rare, Rati cannot bring herself to completely reject him as a possible boyfriend. But there is no chemistry.

Dance

Every episode will end in a dance number by the four primary characters (Rati, Jaime, Mark and Dan).

Sometimes, the number might be something being practiced, a number that Rati choreographed at a for a college production. Sometimes - in a surreal twist - it could be an idea taking place in her head. The final scene could dissolve into dance.

Themes – Secondary

Secondary themes mean ideas will appear in some but not every episodes. This should help enrich the show and provide continuity.

Indian Religion/Culture

Rati is a cosmopolitan American Woman. At the same time, she enjoys maintaining ties with her heritage. A possible future episode could have a plot like a Diwali celebration.

Customers

Harkening to *The Bob Newhart Show*, Customers - with their quirks and idiosyncrasies - would be a source of humor (both Rati's dance studio and Nick & Amy's pot store).

Success/Failure

Although she projects a brave front, Rati is afraid that her dance studio will fail. Should she have pursued a more traditional career (like her parents wanted)?