A Psychologist Explains Why Your Brain Loves Cheesy Holiday Movies

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‘Tis the season for friends, family and cheesy holiday movies. Whether you’re a fan of the Christmas classics or prefer the dozens of streamable and made-for-TV specials, experts say there’s a reason holiday-themed movies are so popular — even the most corny and predictable. In fact, this is part of what keeps us coming back, says Dr. Pamela Rutledge, a media psychologist and director of the Media Psychology Research Center.

“You would almost be disappointed if they weren’t a little cheesy and predictable, because that’s why you’re there. You’re there to have a feel-good movie,” she says. “This lowers stress, and it reinforces feelings of hope and renewal and all of those things that Christmas is supposed to bring.”

And while the city-girl-meets-hometown-guy plot line is often mocked for its clichéd overuse, Rutledge says the hint of romance in many of these film also speaks to our psychological need for social connection.

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