



SQUID GAME

PLAYGROUND MURDERS

In Squid Game, a group of 456 people, in debt and desperate, are lured into a bloodgulching survival game where they have a shot at walking away with 45.6 billion Korean won (\$39 million) if they win a series of six games. The twist? They die if they lose.

The games are simple - they are childhood games that the players grew up playing. And that surprising element of innocent child's play with violent deaths has caused viewers to sit up.

There's also the element of nostalgia. For example, the Dalgona honeycomb challenge featured in episode three is one that most Koreans remember playing when they were kids.

In the challenge, players must carefully cut out a shape from a paper-thin sheet of honeycomb candy using a needle. If you get a very intricate shape and the candy cracks, you lose.



CHARACTERS LIKE YOU AND ME

Experts also attribute the show's success to its characters, many of whom are marginalised members of society.

Though they are all linked by huge money troubles, they come from all walks of life.

The lead, for example, is an unemployed man with a gambling problem who struggles to gain respect from his family. Through the game, he meets a young North Korean defector with a tragic background, and a Pakistani labourer who is mistreated by his employers.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

Western media outlets have drawn comparisons between Squid Game and Parasite, the Oscar-winning 2019 Korean film that also looked at the wealth disparity and unfairness of society.

But in east Asia, viewers have pointed out how the show bears similarities with the 2014 Japanese film As The Gods Will. The movie is centred on high schoolers but it follows a comparable storyline, and some have even accused Squid Game of plagiarism.

For example, As The Gods Will also features the traditional children's game "Red Light, Green Light". In one of the most famous scenes from Squid Game, a giant robot girl uses her laser eyes to spot players who have lost the game. They are then killed.

In any case, all the hype surrounding his show has led to calls for a second season. But fans may have to wait a long time for that.

