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Have The Soaps Lost The Plot?



ENTERTAINMENT FEATURED

By Alexander Baron



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When *Coronation Street* was launched in 1960 it was what the great Noël Coward called kitchen sink drama, ie something unedifying and worthy only of contempt. No one can claim that nowadays because the emphasis has switched from mirroring the humdrum lives of ordinary working people to increasingly bizarre plots that capture the ratings and attempt, even more bizarrely, to indoctrinate the public with the at times sinister agendas of their scriptwriters. You think not? Check them out, every major and not so major soap has now to have its own village *gay*, in fact there are lesbian *couples* in *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale*.

The non-existent *Emmerdale* village isn't even big enough to qualify as a one horse town, yet it's probably safer to live in Gaza than here, it has had its own serial killer and a few unnatural deaths besides. At present, the unpleasant toff, husband of the daughter of the new lord of the manor, is planning to murder the local pub landlady because she has found out he is bisexual and has been having it off with her own *gay* son. There is also the little matter of the death of the village bike – as he called her – which while not murder was at least partly his fault. To complicate matters, the 14 year old who is now his stepson has fallen foul of the law by indecently assaulting the wife of

the local shop owner. This is where it gets surreal. This plot was [discussed here previously](#). In the 1960s and probably later, if a drunken woman woke up to find a 14 year old pipsqueak interfering with her clothing she would have shrieked with surprise, whacked him round the head a few times then grabbing him by the ear marched him home to his parents, who would have done the same thing. Kiddo would have thought thrice before doing that again, to any woman, but what happened here? She called the police – fair enough – but she is totally distraught at what has happened, especially when the authorities decline to charge him, even though her story is more credible than his. What happens next?

Her husband kidnaps the reprobate, holds him prisoner and even threatens to kill him, not simply an off-the-cuff remark but for real. Then what happens? When that situation is resolved, instead of reporting the kidnapping, Lachlan's mother reports him to the police for the original sexual assault. Let's be clear about this, any indecent assault is a serious matter, but how serious was this one in comparison with what followed?

There is not much happening in *EastEnders* at present apart from a touch of madness, a suicide attempt and a natural death, but in *Coronation Street* there is a pregnant 13 year old girl going into labour early – five years too early at the very least. Okay, it's good to warn kids about the facts of life, but there are ways to do it and ways not to, this clearly being one of the latter.

It remains to be seen what will happen next, and don't say a train crash because there has already been one of those in *Coronation Street*, and a plane crash in *Emmerdale*. Whatever happens be it of profound social significance or none, no one, even Noël Coward, will again be able to allude to UK soap operas as kitchen sink dramas.

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