

“Nikhil’s in love with the idea of being in love!”

EMMERDALE ITV1 Friday

He may own a confectionary factory, but life is not so sweet for ambitious Nikhil Sharma right now. His personal life has seen him stumble through a series of short-lived flings, and now he’s under pressure in his professional life as well as he takes charge of the factory while big brother Jai is away.

He’s a hard-working lad and pretty hot, too – so why do Nikhil’s plans always seem to go pear-shaped? Actor Rik Makarem suspects his alter ego is trying too hard...

“His need for ownership is a desire for security,” he shares. “His constant need to be in charge and try to be strong is to do with his past and constantly living in the shadow of his brother. He feels that he’s never quite as good as Jai.”

Sadly, Nikhil didn’t exactly inherit his sibling’s easy charm – and Rik admits that his character’s cack-handed personal skills don’t exactly help his plans for world domination.

“For whatever reason, Nikhil hasn’t found the right parameters to express himself and get the things he wants,” sighs the star. “He’s frustrated with himself because there’s a good man inside trying to do the right thing, but his methods aren’t quite right. He needs some support.”

Unfortunately, Nikhil won’t find it on the factory floor at Sharma & Sharma. This week, he faces a revolt when his efforts to impress Jai by getting a big order sorted are thwarted by his feisty workforce, who refuse to keep working overtime for the pittance he’s prepared to pay them.

“In his fear of not getting this big order out and losing a major client, he starts to treat the workforce with a lot of disrespect,”



Turning on the Sharm: Gennie only has eyes for Nikhil – but will he ever fall for her?

“Nikhil’s connection to Gennie is very strong – he’s been generating a lot of affection for her lately”

explains Rik. “He’s demanding that they get the order done or their jobs are at stake. It’s at that point that the workers unite and say ‘Forget it!’. Everybody decides to leave.”

Luckily, Nikhil has one fan among his staff in the form of loyal Gennie, who sets out to smooth things over for her boss.

“He’s very grateful,” admits Rik. “But he doesn’t want to show Gennie that!”

The question on everybody’s lips, of course, is this: does Nikhil feel anything other than gratitude for Gennie, or is there no hope of romance for the smitten lass?

“He’s not consciously aware of it, but I think his connection to her is actually very strong,” reveals Rik. “She’s understanding of his personality – and he’s a very complex character. Subconsciously, he’s been generating a lot of affection for her lately, but he’s not aware of his feelings.”

Still, Rik tells us there’s a romance on the cards for Nikhil – though he won’t reveal whether the lady in question is Gennie...

“You’ll soon find out who the right person for Nikhil is,” he teases. “It’s not going to be who he thought in the beginning, though.”

Despite his alter ego’s romantic disasters of the past, Rik still holds out hope that Nikhil could find himself loved-up.

“He’s in love with the idea of being in love,” points out the star. “So we’ve seen him chasing the wrong thing before. If he can find it within himself to admit that a certain someone could be the right person, then it could be a happy story for him...”

HELEN CHILDS

But actor **Rik Makarem** reckons his alter ego is going the wrong way about it if he ever wants to find a good woman...

NIKHIL VS CHARITY

Little does Nikhil know that his work woes have been instigated by his nemesis, Charity Tate. But can he hold his own against the devious dame?

“He’s not aware that she’s been stirring the pot,” reckons Rik. “But he knows what Charity is capable of. It was brilliant when Jai said recently that he was leaving Nikhil to run the empire for a bit. It’s the one time he’s had a chance to make things good for himself – and it appears he’s made a big mistake already. Classic Nikhil!”

