

# All the strange things walk into a teashop...

RASHEED KHAN

*"This work of fiction is not an accurate historical portrayal. LIKE WE CARE. Now shut up and enjoy the show."*

These are the first words you see when you start watching this surprisingly unconventional show. If you tell me it doesn't immediately pique your interest, you're basically Pinocchio.

Samurai Champloo, made by Shinichiro Watanabe, creator of the critically acclaimed "Cowboy Bebop", is the story of three strangers who meet in a teashop in an alternate version of the Edo period in Japan (1603 to 1863).

You've got Fuu - a cute, clumsy, and slightly annoying 15 year old girl. Next comes in Mugen, a 19 year old brash, rude, impulsive, and utterly bada\$\$ swordsman. And finally, our third protagonist is Jin, a 20 year old calm and stoic samurai. You see the first embers of their journey when they coincidentally meet at the teashop where Fuu is working. By the end of the episode, the fire of their imminent adventure together is well kindled and burning bright after Fuu helps the two swordsmen out of their own execution (calm down, it's not a spoiler). She then

convinces them to act as her bodyguards as she travels across the country in search of the "the samurai who smells of sunflowers". In between the beginning and the end game, you join them in their zany and farfetched adventures.

Originality-wise, Samurai Champloo is nothing special. The male-female-male trio isn't new; their character types are even further from that, although they fit very well with each other. Even the plotline is a bit predictable. However, it's the sheer strangeness and presentation of the whole story that makes it one of the best things you'll ever watch, with plenty of scenes that will make you laugh, go "what even", or tug your heartstrings. From Mugen's swordplay style reminiscent of breakdancing, to rapping or beatboxing samurais, to previously-aspiring-swordsmen hooligans trying to draw graffiti on top of Hiroshima Castle and other anachronisms, this piece of art is something to be stapled for the years to come.

If you need more motivation, the fight scenes in this show are - bluntly put - absolutely bomb. The visuals, artwork and animation are top notch with picturesque scenes, sometimes foreboding and then balancing it off nicely with all the sprightly

## ANIME REVIEW



things, the transitions weird but oddly fitting. If THAT somehow doesn't get your attention, the soundtrack is nothing short of amazing and meshes so well with everything that you just (allow me to be Tumblr-like for a moment) can't even. Just a heads up: there are plenty of blood, violence and NSFW scenes.

In the end, regardless of whether you watch anime or even like it, Samurai

Champloo is one of the few shows I'd recommend to anyone. After all, who would have thought hip-hop culture, Bohemianism and history would tie in THIS well?

Final note: normally, anime shows tend to have woefully terrible dubs. This is not the case for this show. Go right ahead and watch the dubbed version. It's actually better than the sub.

# DON'T MISS THESE TV SHOWS

NAOMI MUSLEH

*With the array of TV shows that are being released every single day, it is difficult to keep up with what is worth the watch and what isn't so we tend to climb aboard the hype train and watch what everyone is watching. In this process, many shows go unnoticed even though they have brilliant plots. I've made a rough list of shows among which most people would have at least missed one.*

## THIS IS US

This is a show that makes perfect sense to watch in the cynical times that we live in because it gives us hope that there is still good in the world. There are 18 episodes in the first season and episode two of season two was released this month. Out of the 20 episodes, I cried to 16 of them which might give you an impression that it is a super sappy show however it's more than just the emotional rollercoaster ride that each episode takes you on because the plot of the story itself is anything but cliché. It is about 5 main characters, 4 of



whom have their birthdays on the same day, their lives overlap in the most unexpected ways and saying anything more would be nothing but a spoiler. This is a gem of a show that brings smiles and tears and isn't difficult to fall in love with.

## SENSE8

Irrespective of the fact that this show was cancelled on Netflix, Sense8 is a brilliant show which revolves around 8 strangers who are each from a different part of the world and are shown to be connected both mentally and emotionally, the first season

centers around the 8 trying to figure out their psychic powers while leading their individual ordinary lives in absolutely different places of the world. It's an amazing show which circles around the story of each of these 'sensates' and how they figure themselves and each other out.

## BLACK MIRROR

'Black Mirror' is meant to represent the screens we use on a day to day basis like the black screens of laptops or mobile phones. The show-artwork displays one such black screen, or mirror, that is

cracked; this is what the story centers around — the consequences of our obsession with modern day technology. The whole show has a satirical theme and highlights how our unhealthy obsession with technology is leading us to live disconnected lives that is built on what we see on social media. The best part about this show is that if you don't feel like watching a particular episode you can easily skip ahead because the story and cast keeps changing. My personal favorite episode is 'Nosedive' so if you want to give this show a chance start with this one and you'll be hooked.

## THE HANDMAID'S TALE

This is a show that is still on air with an addictive story from the very first episode. It is an outstanding drama series but pretty underrated probably because of the serious outlook of the show. It showcases women as objects and talks from the perspective of Offred, one of the very few handmaids. It captures the true essence of an authoritarian society where oppression is shown as something normal. If you need a show to watch that is thought-provoking and gripping, this is the show for you.

It's easy to climb aboard the hype-train but at times the walk to a different station is totally worth it because you get incredible shows like The Crown, Peaky Blinders, 11.22.63 and definitely the ones I've written about.