



We love anti-heroes?

RABITA SALEH

Villains these days are awesome. There's no denying that recent times have given us the most interesting, complex villains we've ever witnessed. Be it Heath Ledger's Joker or Josh Brolin's Thanos, villains have definitely taken centre stage as of late.

Perhaps this reflects our evolving tastes towards more realistic entertainment than what previous generations enjoyed, because even our heroes have grown over time, operating much more in the grey than ever before. Great anti-heroes are what make or break shows, be it Cillian Murphy's Tommy from Peaky Blinders, Ryan Reynolds's Deadpool, or even Sherlock Holmes - both Downey Jr. and Cumberbatch coming to mind. Even in the animated world we can't escape our draw for them. Can you imagine Dragon Ball Z without Vegeta or Avatar- The Last Airbender without Zuko?

These characters manage to steal every scene they are in. However, regardless of what we might enjoy watching on screen, we need to be able to dissociate that from our true ideologies. Television these days makes us support some very questionable characters. Take Tommy for example. Simply put, he's a corrupt individual, who makes his money from illegal gambling, and killing off competition, and yet we are cheering him on every step of the way. We deplore the idea of him being taken into custody, even though we know that if this was real life he would deserve it.

Then there's Thanos. There's no doubt that quite a few of us stuck in traffic after watching Infinity War found ourselves agreeing with him. However, while you wish Thanos existed, do you realise you or your loved ones would most likely be part of the half that disappears? Some people may question why I'm spelling out something as basic as this, but trust me when I say this, I've seen people genuinely agreeing with Thanos. I only hope that it's Marvel's amazing cinematography that put such thoughts in their heads and not an actual appreciation for the 'Blip'.

One show that absolutely excels at throwing this conundrum of supporting a questionable character into the limelight is House of Cards. The genius of that show is that even though we loved Frank Underwood during the first three seasons and wanted him to succeed, after a certain point we begin to doubt our own opinions. The perspective of the show, especially the constant breaking of the fourth wall, allows us to root for Frank despite his increasingly criminal activities. At a point though, we realise we've been supporting a lying, murdering politician all along, and a brilliant dissociation between the audience's and Frank's perspective takes place. His shift from anti-hero to villain is one of the most spectacular arcs I've witnessed.

Every villain is a hero in their own stories. That's what makes them great villains. But the key thing remains; they are villains. Their ideologies are flawed, and when we witness their actions we should be under no doubt that the world they are imagining, or the methods through which they want to achieve this world, are not morally viable. After all, a spoonful of perspective never hurt anyone.

Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com

ASMR FOR CRICKET FANS

WASIQUE HASAN

Now that the World Cup is over, cricket is going to be in short supply until the Sri Lanka series. To fill the cricket itch you're bound to have, I have compiled some YouTube channels which are practically ASMR for lovers of cricket.

FANTAIL

This is the YouTube channel of New Zealand-based cricket shop, Fantail. It seems that besides being very nice people, New Zealanders are great at making and repairing bats. Almost all videos on the channel are from inside the workshop as one gentleman takes the viewer along his wood-crafting journey of turning a decrepit-looking piece of willow into a pristine bat. My favourites are where someone sends an old bat to be repaired. Most of it consists of things you would expect, like getting rid of the old stickers and tape, sanding off the dirty wood on top and gluing up smaller cracks. You'll get the best entertainment, however, if a bat is so damaged that a graft is required.

Grafting really does feel like watching a surgery. The process of the cracked damaged wood being sawed off the bat, finding the right transplant piece of wood, chopping it into shape for the transplant, gluing it into the injured area of the bat and drilling in structural support to get a marriage between the old wood and new wood - it is surprisingly compelling to watch. You can't take your eyes off it. Sometimes I come back to old videos and re-watch them just to see the masterful replacement being done. The videos are made that much better by the soft music in the background and the effervescent Kiwi accent of the bat repairer as he explains what's wrong with a ghastly-looking piece of willow. I would have no qualms about

wasting many more hours of my life watching this man fix bats.

A2 CRIC.KET

This is another channel similar to Fantail. Featuring another cricket workshop, we get to see repairs similar to the ones done by Fantail. I stumbled onto this channel after I'd seen all of the Fantail videos. One of the things I liked about the videos on this channel was how different this workshop was to the Fantail workshop. A2 is an Indian bat manufacturer, so their factory looks a little worse for wear in comparison. In the end, the finished product comes out looking slightly less impressive than the Fantail bats, but just as capable.

JPGAVAN CRICKET

This Australian workshop has one key difference from the aforementioned channels: they do not have music playing in the background of the videos. This means you can hear all the machinery at work, from the scraped of the wood-shaver to the mechanical whirring of the drills and saws. This adds the auditory aspect of ASMR alongside the visual. However, I do have one criticism of their work, since often they glue damaged sections of the bat. A rookie move, if you ask me.

If you don't find these videos to be incredibly insightful, then I'm afraid cricket isn't the sport for you. Of course, if you've been to the bottom of as many YouTube spirals as I have, you must've come across them anyways. If you hadn't, happy watching.

Wasique Hasan came back to Bangladesh to eat mangoes and get heat-stroke, and he hasn't found any mangoes yet. Send him information that will lead to the acquisition of mangoes at [fb.com/wasique.wasan](https://www.facebook.com/wasique.wasan)

