

YELLOWJACKETS:

Survival horror done right

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A rare 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, a 9/10 from IGN and an 8.1/10 on IMDb - Yellowjackets can arguably be called one of the best shows to come out of 2021. While the engaging plot, acting and writing are good reasons to dive into the show, the gory survival horror might be too much to stomach for some.

To summarise, Showtime's Yellowjackets is the story of a high school girl's soccer team, who on their way to a national tournament, get into a plane crash that leaves them stranded in the wilderness. The show chronicles two different timelines - when the crash

happened in 1996 and the lives of the survivors 25 years later in 2021.

While the parallel timelines trope can be tricky to pull off, Yellowjackets transitions between 19 harrowing months in the wild and the seemingly normal lives of the protagonists in 2021, in a way that makes sense.

Every time the story jumps between timelines, it only brings more clarity to the cause-and-effect relationship between the characters' past and present. While audiences complained about the confusing time-hopping in other popular shows like The Witcher, Yellowjackets just proves that non-linear storytelling can be an effective way to use characters' pasts to explain the future and vice versa.

25 years later, with the horrors of the wilderness behind them, the survivors try to move on only to find that the past never stays buried. As the story progresses, besides delivering plenty of shock and drama, the series does a good job of showing the impact of trauma on the psyche of teenagers and how that shapes them into adults still running from their pasts two decades later.

The stranded in the wilderness and pushed to cannibalism premise isn't new (with the same concepts portrayed in books like Lord of the Flies to shows and movies like Lost and Alive). But Yellowjackets still stands out as a savage tale of survival, a present-day mystery-thriller and an intensely psychological coming-of-age story - all wrapped into one.

While the show boasts phenomenal performances by Hollywood veterans

like Juliette Lewis and Christina Ricci, their teenage counterparts aren't to be taken lightly either. The younger actresses perfectly mirroring the manners and quirks of their older co-stars only makes the character development that much stronger.

The stellar casting and the writing give Yellowjackets its biggest advantage - getting audiences more and more invested in the characters, only to make it that much more unsettling when the horrors start to unfold. As the story progresses, the pack of starry-eyed high school girls are forced to the edges of their sanity for survival, all the while the storytelling deftly balances between shockingly absurd yet all too realistic. Once the audience learns to stomach the shock factor, they begin to look forward to the peculiar mix of blood, gore and hormones that Yellowjackets serves with a wry sense of humour.

Another strong suit for Yellowjackets is the cinematography. Masterfully balancing out the natural beauty yet haunting bleakness of the wilderness, the cinematography can only be called beautifully disgusting - so much so that even the goriest moments can make for a breathtaking scene.

Regardless of all that Yellowjackets does right, the show leans more into the lines of supernatural mystery as it heads for the season finale, which may be a dip in momentum for some. However, with the pathway all set for Season 2, the first season of Yellowjackets does what all great shows should: leave you wanting more.



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