



Frieren: Beyond Journey's End is a timeless masterpiece about the passage of time

Here's a question for you: what happens after a journey is over? What does the world look like after the dreaded Demon King is defeated by the group of heroes? The story, supposedly, ends here. But the world keeps moving on and time, in all its wonderful beauty and cruelty, moves ever forward. This is where the story of *Frieren: Beyond Journey's End* picks up. After a 10-year-long adventure resulting in the defeat of the Demon King, the group of heroes – consisting of two humans, one dwarf, and Frieren, our titular elf – return to the capital city. Celebrations ensue, and they bear witness to a meteor shower that appears once every 50 years. Here, Frieren – who does not age – tells the crew she will take them to a special spot the next time the meteor showers happen.

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What she fails to realise, and really what the underlying message of the show, is that the passage of time can so often be very cruel. In 50 years, her companions will no longer have the life they currently do. But for Frieren, 50 years pass by simply as she meanders around. She remains unchanged because time means nothing to her. But her companions, now, are old and on their final breaths. This is neither the end nor the middle point of the story; it is a prologue. The rest of the story plays out in a manner filled with whimsy yet profound beauty, all the while never letting go of its most crucial element: the passage of time.

The world of *Frieren* is one of the most lush and detailed fantasy worlds I have seen in recent memory. Fantasy as a genre,

especially in anime, has seen a nosedive in quality with the rise of the isekai subgenre. Some have even taken this to mean that fantasy as a genre no longer has any appeal. This is categorically false as *Frieren* proves that a world built with care and attention and characters written to be imperfect yet beautifully humane will always see positive reception. The story of *Frieren* is as much a tale of the world itself as it is of our titular elf. And, in both regards, what they have been able to accomplish is nothing short of outstanding. The mythology and the history, along with the systems that either used to exist or have recently been put in place are all crafted with much care and attention, leading to the world of *Frieren* having a warm sensation to it, almost as if it really was lived in. Of course, a solid narrative and

beautifully written characters aren't the only things that make this show work. From the music to the animation to the voice acting, everything in *Frieren* is crafted extremely carefully to communicate a feeling of adventure. Yet, not one of those adventures really has any urgency to it. The characters meander from one town to another, helping where they can, and occasionally running into trouble whenever they can't help it. And, through it all, we see them as people, and we see them live their lives. Life and the act of living are not things that have a great sense of urgency. The passage of time can be cruel, but there is so much beauty in the little moments shared with each other as you live. *Frieren: Beyond Journey's End* encapsulates and explores this very idea – and it does so masterfully.

If you like Frieren, you should also check out

Delicious in Dungeon

Instead of a sprawling adventure filled with heartfelt emotions, *Delicious in Dungeon* has cooking. The entirety of the show revolves around our quirky crew meandering through a terrifying dungeon, felling monsters and finding new ways to make delicious meals out of their meat. The results are, to say the least, scrumptious.

To Your Eternity

Both *Frieren* and *To Your Eternity* follow characters who are mostly unmindful of the world around them. *To Your Eternity*, however, takes it a step further. Our protagonist starts off as an egg that takes the shape of whatever dying creature it encounters. The journey is, at times, confusing—but what it offers is a deep look into the nature of life and death and the things that give us identity in the time we spend alive.

Kino's Journey

There are a lot of similarities to be found between Kino and Frieren. It can be a very strange watch—but the subtlety present in the character writing throughout the series makes for a wonderful time with plenty of depth and adventure to be found.