



Orphan Black or a sci-fi revival

What is it ?

Orphan Black is a Canadian television series created by Graeme Manson and John Fawcett, produced by Temple Street Productions and broadcasted on Space in Canada, and on BBC America in the US. **This 2013 TV show is a science fiction saga, which enjoys renewed sci-fi success on TV after a long period of second-rate shows.**

At the beginning of the series, Sarah Manning – a con artist – witnesses the suicide of Beth Childs on a train platform. Sarah is not only shocked by the killing-herself part, if not by the face of Beth: the two women are exact look-alikes. Sarah steals Beth's identity to find out why they are so physically identical. She meets Cosima and Alison, two other doppelgängers, who reveal the truth to her. They are clones, and they are part of an experiment conducted by an organization called the DYAD. From this point, **the show is just a succession of amazing twists** and keeps bringing in new elements of a larger mythology.



How it renews the genre

I loved *Orphan Black* from the very beginning. I was dived in a mysterious story where characters are not always who they appear to be, and where secrets are never-ending. **It reminded me of Lost** – and I loved this show too. Because you are facing a plot with many characters, all connected to each other somehow, and whenever you think you're getting somewhere, there are new elements that compromise your theories and make you rethink the entire show. Therefore, you can never be sure of anything. You never get bored watching it, you can theorize and guess what's coming next ... even if you are mostly wrong !

Science fiction has always been a thriving genre, in books or movies, for instance. There is something exciting about a world just like ours, except that science and progress have fastened its development. You can create anything – even what appears to be impossible at first – based on scientific or technologic hypothesis. It can be in the past, in the future, or nowadays, which makes it completely believable. On the paper, *Orphan Black* could be a true story. This is why you get so interested in the plot, in the characters and their progression throughout the show: it is possible.

I can't write about *Orphan Black* without bringing up the performance of Tatiana Maslany, who plays Sarah, Beth, Cosima, Alison and every clone on the show. She is so talented. She plays very different characters without falling into the trap of cliché. You will have your favorites, obviously, but **it is hard to dislike one of the clones – they all have wonderful personalities and great storylines**. The theme of the show could be difficult to apprehend, because it deals with science, gene modification and scientific ethic, but it actually is really interesting to become familiar with these concerns.



I can only advise you to watch *Orphan Black* right away. Close this tab, and get the first season. You will not be disappointed. The third season just begun, meaning that you have only two seasons to catch up on, with 10 episodes per season. **Give yourself a week-end and binge-watch *Orphan Black*.** You'll be doing yourself a favor!



Bates Motel, a creepy ‘Hitchcockian’ TV show

Bates Motel is a TV series you may have heard about, aired on the cable network A&E. **It was created to be a “contemporary prequel” of Alfred Hitchcock’s famous film *Psycho*.** And boy, it is good!

Before watching (or, should I say binge-watching?) the first season, I was über-excited: *Psycho* is one of my favorite Hitchcock’s movies, and Freddie Highmore (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Arthur and the Invisibles*) was really getting off the beaten track by playing a young Norman Bates, a disturbed kid who would later become a psychopathic killer. **It was really promising.** So here I was, laying on the couch, popcorn by my side, when I watched the first episode. And the next. And the next. Should I really keep going? I watched the entire first season in one go.

Vera Farmiga (*The Departed*, *In the Air*, *The Conjuring*) plays Norman’s mother, Norma Bates. And since the first episode, the relationship between those two is so close to incest! The limit is blurry: when one says “I love you” to the other, you’re never sure if it is a mother-and-son “I love you”, or the three words you say to your soulmate. This is a huge part of what makes *Bates Motel* so disturbing and creepy. That, and the fact that **in the very first episode, Norma got raped, killed her rapist and got rid of the body with her son’s help.** It sets the tone. Mother and son are bounded by this secret, which is only the first of a long list to come.



Pleased by the first season, I decided to watch the second one as soon as I could – which meant, one episode per week and no binge-watching, since the show was just back on air and not entirely available right away (this is not Netflix, guys). Maybe this is because I did not binge-watch it, or maybe *Bates Motel* did lose its way. Anyway, **the second season was not as fascinating and creepy** as the first one. The story-lines went crazy (especially Dylan's – who is Norman's half-brother, by the way) and if it were not for Norma (aka Vera Farmiga, amazing actress!) I would have quit watching.

I'm glad I didn't, though. **Season 3 started three weeks ago, and *Bates Motel* is back on tracks!** You have this strange and captivating relationship between Norma and Norman that is developed and taken to the next level. Also – and it is the most exciting part of this new season for me – Norman is slowly, but surely, becoming the psychopath we've seen in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Sometimes he just stares at the camera, with this murderous expression in his eyes. And he keeps telling that he has blackouts, that he hasn't harm anyone, I'm not sure I can trust him. God, even his own mother doesn't seem to trust him anymore: and this is great! **The dynamic of the duo is changing, for the better.** I don't know what's next on this third season, but for now, I am not disappointed, and I'm hoping for more blood and craziness, for sexual tensions and schizophrenia!

If you didn't know *Bates Motel*, now you do. You can therefore right your wrong by watching – or binge-watching, that's more like it – this show, talk about it with your friends, your family, with random strangers or even your date tonight: **you know creepy is the new sexy.**