

= Grey 's Anatomy ( season 4 ) =

The fourth season of the American television medical drama Grey 's Anatomy , commenced airing in the United States on September 27 , 2007 and concluded on May 22 , 2008 . The season continues the story of a group of surgeons and their mentors in the fictional Seattle Grace Hospital , describing their professional lives and the way they affect the personal background of each character . Season four had twelve series regulars with ten of them returning from the previous season , out of which eight are part of the original cast from the first season . The season aired in the Thursday night timeslot at 9 : 00 EST . In addition to the regular seventeen episodes , a clip @-@ show narrated by the editors of People recapped previous events of the show and made the transition from Grey 's Anatomy to Private Practice , a spin @-@ off focusing of Dr. Addison Montgomery and aired on September 19 , 2007 , before the season premiere . The season was officially released on DVD as a five @-@ disc boxset under the title of Grey 's Anatomy : Season Four ? Expanded on September 9 , 2008 by Buena Vista Home Entertainment .

For the first time in the show 's history , many cast changes occur , seeing the first departure of two main cast members . The season received mixed response from critics and fans , resulting in several awards and nominations for the cast members and the production team . Show creator Shonda Rhimes heavily contributed to the production of the season , writing five out of the seventeen episodes . The highest @-@ rated episode was the season premiere , which was watched by 20 @.@ 93 million viewers . The season was interrupted by the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike , which resulted in the production of only seventeen episodes , instead of twenty @-@ three originally planned .

= = Production = =

This is the first season to be produced by ABC Studios under its current name , after the transition from Touchstone Television in May 2007 . It was also produced by ShondaLand Production Company , and The Mark Gordon Company , whereas Buena Vista International , Inc. distributed it . The executive producers were creator and show runner Shonda Rhimes , Betsy Beers , Mark Gordon , Krista Vernoff , Rob Corn , Mark Wilding , Joan Rater , and James D. Parriott , all part of the production team since the series ' inception . The regular directors were Rob Corn and Jessica Yu . Producer Shonda Rhimes wrote five of the seventeen episodes , two of which were along with fellow producer Krista Vernoff . Unlike the other seasons , except from the first one , which aired mid @-@ season , the fourth season of Grey 's Anatomy had a reduced number of episodes , due to the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike , which caused the production to cease from February to April , leaving the show with no writing staff during that time . Since the show had only produced ten episodes before the winter @-@ holiday hiatus , and aired another one after the break ended , the show decided to complete the season with six new episodes , and returned on April 24 , 2008 . Only seventeen episodes were produced out of the twenty @-@ three originally conceived for the season .

After Kate Walsh 's transition the Grey 's Anatomy spin @-@ off , Private Practice , her character left the show after a two @-@ year run . On June 7 , 2007 , it was announced that Isaiah Washington 's contract had not been renewed . Former Reunion star , Chyler Leigh , guest starred in the final two episodes of season three as Lexie Grey , a new intern and Meredith Grey ? s younger half @-@ sister . On June 11 , 2007 , it was announced that Leigh would become a series regular , instead of a 13 episode story arc as previously planned . The character Dr. Erica Hahn , portrayed by Brooke Smith joined the main cast , reprising her antagonizing role in the season 's fifth episode . She replaces Preston Burke as head of Cardiothoracics . Upon her return , she makes Sandra Oh 's character , Cristina Yang work harder for her success in Cardiothoracics and initially served as a new love interest for Eric Dane 's Mark Sloan . Even though a new male character was originally thought to be introduced as a rival for Dr. Derek Shepherd , the change didn 't occur . Former Dawson 's Creek star Joshua Jackson was scheduled to make his return to television in a multi @-@ episode arc as a doctor with his first appearance in the season 's eleventh episode .

Jackson 's appearance was cancelled due to the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike , and the storyline of the character he was supposed to play has never been aired on the show .

= = Cast = =

The fourth season had twelve roles receiving star billing , with ten of them returning from the previous season , eight of whom are part of the original cast from the first one . All the actors who are billed as series regulars portray physicians from the surgical wing of the fictional Seattle Grace Hospital . The majority of the show 's episodes are narrated by Ellen Pompeo , who portrayed protagonist Dr. Meredith Grey , a surgical resident whose storylines are the series ' focal points . Sandra Oh acted as Meredith 's best friend , highly competitive resident Dr. Cristina Yang . Fellow resident Dr. Isobel " Izzie " Stevens was portrayed by Katherine Heigl , while Dr. Alexander " Alex " Karev was played by Justin Chambers . T.R. Knight acted as insecure resident with self @-@ confidence issues , Dr. George O 'Malley , whereas Chandra Wilson portrayed Chief Resident and general surgeon Dr. Miranda Bailey , former mentor of the five residents during their internship . James Pickens , Jr. portrayed attending physician and general surgeon Dr. Richard Webber , who continues his position as Chief of Surgery , despite his former wishes of retirement . Orthopedic surgeon and fifth @-@ year resident Dr. Calliope " Callie " Torres , who was portrayed by Sara Ramirez , has to face her husband 's unfaithfulness and her unexpected bisexuality . Attending plastic surgeon , Dr. Mark Sloan was portrayed by Eric Dane , who is constantly seeking reconciliation with former best friend , attending physician and Chief of Neurosurgery Dr. Derek Shepherd ( Patrick Dempsey ) , whose lasting relationship with Meredith Grey faces difficulties . Former Reunion star Chyler Leigh was promoted to series regular status , after short appearances in the final two episodes of the third season , portraying Meredith 's half @-@ sister Lexie Grey , who opts for a surgical internship at Seattle Grace Hospital against Massachusetts General Hospital , after her mother 's sudden death . Silence of the Lambs star , Brooke Smith was upgraded to series regular status after multiple guest appearances in the second and third seasons . An antagonizing character at first , she replaces Preston Burke as the Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery , constantly displaying disrespect for Cristina 's previous relationship with him .

Numerous supporting characters have been given recurring appearances in the progressive storyline , including former Gilmore Girls actor Edward Herrmann who appeared in three episodes . Seth Green of Buffy the Vampire Slayer guest starred in two episodes , whereas Lauren Stamile portrayed nurse Rose , a love interest for Derek . Former regular Kate Walsh appeared for the first time since her departure on May 1 , 2008 receiving a special guest star billing in the role of Addison Montgomery , now the main character of the spin @-@ off Private Practice . Jeff Perry , Loretta Devine and Debra Monk reprised their roles as Thatcher Grey , Adele Webber and Louise O 'Malley , respectively . Diahann Carroll and Elizabeth Reaser continued their season three @-@ introduced roles as Jane Burke and Rebecca Pope , respectively .

In October 2006 , news reports surfaced that Washington had insulted co @-@ star T.R. Knight with a homophobic slur during an argument with Patrick Dempsey . Shortly after the details of the argument became public , Knight publicly disclosed that he was gay . The situation seemed somewhat resolved when Washington issued a statement , apologizing for his " unfortunate use of words during the recent incident on @-@ set . " The controversy later resurfaced when the cast appeared at the Golden Globes in January 2007 . While being interviewed on the red carpet prior to the awards , Washington joked , " I love gay . I wanted to be gay . Please let me be gay . " After the show won Best Drama , Washington , in response to press queries as to any conflicts backstage , said , " I never called T.R. a faggot . " However , in an interview with Ellen DeGeneres on The Ellen DeGeneres Show , Knight said that " everybody heard him . "

After being rebuked by his studio , Touchstone Television , Washington issued a statement apologizing for repeating the word on the Golden Globes carpet . On January 30 , 2007 , a source told People magazine that Washington was scheduled to return to the Grey 's Anatomy set as early on that Thursday for the first time since entering " executive counseling " after making the comments at the Golden Globes . However , on June 7 , 2007 , ABC announced it had decided not to renew

Washington 's contract , and that he would be dropped from the show . " I 'm mad as hell and I 'm not going to take it anymore , " Washington said in a statement released by his publicist , borrowing the famous line from Network . In another report , Washington stated he was planning to " spend the summer pursuing charity work in Sierra Leone , work on an independent film and avoid worrying about the show . " In a subsequent interview , Washington claimed that " they fired the wrong guy " , referring to Knight , and said he was considering filing a lawsuit as a result . He accused Knight of using the controversy to bolster his own career and increase his salary on Grey 's Anatomy . Washington , in late June 2007 , began asserting that racism within the media was a factor in his firing from the series . On July 2 , 2007 , Washington appeared on Larry King Live on CNN , to present his side of the controversy . According to Washington , he never used the " F Word " in reference to Knight , but rather blurted it out in an unrelated context in the course of an argument " provoked " by Dempsey , who , he felt , was treating him like a " B @-@ word , " a " P @-@ word , " and the " F @-@ word , " which Washington said conveyed " somebody who is being weak and afraid to fight back . " Washington himself said that his dismissal from Grey 's Anatomy was an unfortunate misunderstanding that he was eager to move past . He later stated that if he were to be asked to make a cameo appearance on the show , he would not hesitate to say " yes " . Washington 's image was used in advertisements for the May 9 , 2008 episode " The Becoming " . After this aired , Washington 's attorney Peter Nelson contacted ABC and Screen Actors Guild and cited this as an unlawful use of his client 's image . His publicist , Howard Bragman , told The Hollywood Reporter that " they have the rights of the character to advance the story , but not the image " and stated he expected this to result in a " financial settlement " , but it is still uncertain whether this ultimately happened .

= = Reception = =

Debbie Chang of BuddyTV.com expressed disappointment in the shows ' development throughout the season , by stating it was " all about couples , jumping in and out of relationships , trying their darnedest to have hot sex on the cramped , twin @-@ sized bunk @-@ beds in the on @-@ call room " . Chang also noted the little screen time of characters Mark Sloan and Richard Webber , and the lack of romantic development in their storylines . Many critics negatively reviewed Izzie Stevens 's development in the show 's fourth season , particularly her affair with George . Katherine Heigl herself deemed their relationship " a ratings ploy " . Heigl explained : " They really hurt somebody , and they didn 't seem to be taking a lot of responsibility for it . I have a really hard time with that kind of thing . I 'm maybe a little too black and white about it . I don 't really know Izzie very well right now . She 's changed a lot . " Laura Burrows of IGN stated the series became " a little more than mediocre , but less than fantastic " in its fourth season . She also said that " this season proved that even strong chemistry and good acting cannot save a show that suffers from the inevitable recycled plot . " However , the episode " Physical Attraction , Chemical Reaction " received a positive review , with Burrows stating that it " fully encompassed all the things that make this show great : intense emotional drama and macabre OR activities " . The Derek / Rose relationship received negative reviews , with Burrows stating that it was " emotional , but not remarkable " . Jack Florey of IndieLondon reviewed the characters , stating that their behaviour is the show 's biggest problem : " the self @-@ absorbed , pretentious and frequently selfish attitudes that drive the surgeons at the centre of Grey 's exasperate more than reward . " As for the storylines , Foley stated that they didn 't " ring true " and that " the plot devices became increasingly clunky " , noting the lack of realism in arcs such as George and Callie 's marriage and the Izzie 's affair " as a means of ripping it apart " . Florrey also commented on Meredith Grey 's arc , by stating that she turned into " one of the most selfish , self @-@ centered characters on television " , whereas Mark Sloan 's storyline was named " sex @-@ obsessed , borderline misogynistic and close to scandalous " . Daniel Fienberg of Zap2It said " One of the season 's best performances came from Emmy @-@ nominated guest star Elizabeth Reaser . " Pajiba TV reviewed Reaser 's performance by stating that it " has been one of the only good things that show 's had going for it anymore . " Entertainment Weekly called Reaser 's performance as Ava the sixth most memorable patient performance on the

show . About.com stated that Alex Karev developed into " a bold and overly confident surgeon " .

Several actors and members of the production team have been awarded for their work on the show during the season . At the 60th Primetime Emmy Awards on September 21 , 2008 , Sandra Oh was nominated for her performance as Cristina Yang in the episode " The Becoming " , whereas Chandra Wilson received a nomination for her portrayal of Miranda Bailey in " Lay Your Hands on Me " , both for the Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series . Katherine Heigl who portrayed Izzie Stevens declined to put her name forward for consideration at the Emmy Awards , claiming that she had been given insufficient material on the series to warrant a nomination . Diahann Carroll was nominated for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series for her portrayal of Jane Burke in " Love / Addiction " . The make @-@ up team , consisting of Norman T. Leavitt , Brigitte Bugayong , Thomas R. Burman and Bari Dreiband @-@ Burman , was nominated for both Best Prosthetic Make @-@ Up in " Forever Young " and Best Non @-@ Prosthetic Make @-@ Up in " Crash Into Me " . Sara Ramirez 's portrayal of Callie Torres was positively reviewed , resulting in her receiving a nomination at the 2008 American Latino Media Arts Awards . At the 65th Golden Globe Awards in January 13 , 2008 , the series was nominated for Best Drama Television Series , whereas Katherine Heigl 's individual performance resulted in a nomination for Best Supporting Actress in a Television Series . At the 40th National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Image Awards , Chandra Wilson won Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series , where Shonda Rhimes was awarded at the Outstanding Writing in a Dramatic Series category , for " Freedom " . James Pickens , Jr. also received a nomination for his performance as Richard Webber at the Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series category . At the 2008 Prism Awards , Justin Chambers was nominated for Performance in a Drama Series Episode , whereas Elizabeth Reaser received a nomination for Performance in a Drama Multi @-@ Episode Storyline . At the Teen Choice Awards in 2008 , Patrick Dempsey and Katherine Heigl were nominated for Choice Television Actor and Actress .

The season was the second to air in the Thursday night time slot , at 9 : 00 ET , after it was moved at the beginning of the third season , following two seasons in the Sunday night timeslot , as a lead @-@ out to Desperate Housewives , which aired at 9 : 00 ET for its entire run . The season aired as a lead @-@ out to Ugly Betty , then in its second season , which aired on Thursday nights at 8 : 00 ET . Grey 's Anatomy averaged 15 @. @ 92 million viewers in its fourth season , ranking tenth in viewership . The highest @-@ rated episode of the season was the season premiere , with 20 @. @ 93 million viewers tuning in and a 7 @. @ 3 rating , ranking the third for the week . The episode showed a decrease in ratings compared to the previous season premiere , which had almost five more million viewers tuning in and a 9 @. @ 0 rating . The season premiere also attracted less viewers than the previous season finale , which was watched by 22 @. @ 57 million viewers , and received an 8 @. @ 0 rating Although " A Change is Gonna Come " attracted more viewers than Desperate Housewives 's " Now You Know " , which was watched by 19 @. @ 32 million viewers , received a 6 @. @ 7 rating and ranked fourth in the week , the episode was outperformed by CSI : Crime Scene Investigation 's " Dead Doll " , which aired in the same hour and ranked first in the week , with 25 @. @ 22 million viewers tuning in and an 8 @. @ 8 rating . The lowest @-@ rated episode was the ninth , watched by 14 @. @ 11 million viewers and ranked fourteenth in the week , with a 4 @. @ 9 rating , seeing a sudden decrease , after the previous episode , the second most @-@ watched in the season , which attracted 19 @. @ 61 million viewers and received a 6 @. @ 8 rating . " Crash Into Me : Part 1 " was outperformed in the time slot by CSI : Crime Scene Investigation 's " You Kill Me " , the Thanksgiving special episode which attracted 14 @. @ 75 million viewers and received a 5 @. @ 2 rating , ranking eleventh in the week . The season finale was watched by 18 @. @ 09 million viewers , being the first season finale of Grey 's Anatomy to attract less than 20 million viewers . It was ranked fifth in the week , and received a 6 @. @ 3 rating . There was a significant decrease in the number of viewers , compared to the previous season finale , which attracted almost four more million viewers and received an 8 @. @ 0 rating .

= = Episodes = =

The number in the " No. in series " column refers to the episode 's number within the overall series , whereas the number in the " No. in season " column refers to the episode 's number within this particular season . " U.S. viewers in millions " refers to the number of Americans in millions who watched the episodes live . The fourth season 's episodes are altogether 740 minutes in length .

= = DVD Release = =

The fourth season was officially released on DVD in region 1 on September 9 , 2008 , almost three weeks before the fifth season premiere , which aired on September 25 , 2008 . Under the title Grey 's Anatomy : Season Four ? Expanded , the box set consists of episodes with Dolby Digital 5 @. @ 1 surround sound and widescreen format . It also contained extras available only on DVD , including extended episodes , interviews with cast and crew members , footage from behind the scenes and unaired scenes cut from the aired episodes . The same set was released in region 4 on November 5 , 2009 , after more than a year after its original release in the United States , whereas its first release date in region 2 was November 23 , 2009 . The DVD box set is currently no . 1074 in Movies and Television on Amazon.com and no . 1927 in Film and Television on Amazon.co.uk. The season was also released as a five @-@ disc Blu @-@ ray box set in regions A and B. The Blu @-@ ray release proved unsuccessful and is currently no . 39614 in Movies and Television on Amazon.com