

TV Review: Second Season of 'Happy Endings' Delivers More Hilarity

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on September 28, 2011 - 10:21am

- [ABC](#) [2]
- [Casey Wilson](#) [3]
- [David Caspe](#) [4]
- [Elisha Cuthbert](#) [5]
- [Eliza Coupe](#) [6]
- [Happy Endings](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Matt Fagerholm](#) [9]
- [Television](#) [10]
- [TV Review](#) [11]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [12]

CHICAGO – It's a good thing ABC's sitcom "Happy Endings" is only 20 minutes, since the frenzied pace of its gags run the risk of exhausting its audience. With so many rapid fire punch-lines bouncing off the screen, one quickly suspects that the perpetually hyper energy level is a sign of desperation. Sampling any given moment from this show could easily repel potential viewers.

And yet, during its first season, this ensemble comedy has proven to be the type of show that grows on you rather quickly. Critics and audiences gradually began to embrace the show after settling into its rhythm. Though the plot has garnered several spot-on comparisons to "Friends," the style of the show is closely modeled after zany comedies such as "Arrested Development," which benefit greatly from the tireless invention of their writing and the chemistry of their impeccably cast ensemble.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

While the comedic bits in "Endings" veer between the truly inspired and self-consciously clever, the show is blessed with an ensemble that clicks on every conceivable level. The sheer pleasure derived from watching these performers riff and scheme together is what keeps viewers watching long enough to actually start appreciating the show's distinctive wit and lovability. Yes, there have been many shows about twenty-something buddies attempting to figure out their direction in life, yet few have ever been as disarmingly upbeat as "Endings." The first season kicked off with doubting bride Alex (Elisha Cuthbert) abandoning her groom Dave (Zachary Knighton) at the alter, yet the show is not cynical in the least about human relationships. There's such a resilient sense of goodwill between the broken couple and their ever-supportive friends that every would-be crisis tends to evaporate. Once you're hooked by the infectious charm of this cast, it's difficult to let them go, and that's the surest sign of a sitcom with staying power.



Eliza Coupe, Damon Wayans Jr., Casey Wilson, Elisha Cuthbert, Zachary Knighton and Adam Pally star in ABC's Happy Endings.

Photo credit: ABC

As the second season opens, klutzy singleton Penny (Casey Wilson) is bursting with excitement over her new loft until she realizes that it was once owned by a deceased spinster. Penny's heightened paranoia leads her to fear that the condo is haunted by a reclusive spirit intent on making her a cat-collecting old maid. The resulting comic bits in this subplot threaten to veer into "Scrubs"-like surrealism, yet they are anchored in a marvelously warped reality by Wilson, who finally has the chance to demonstrate the comedic chops she was never able to properly sharpen on "Saturday Night Live." In the role most evocative of Phoebe on "Friends," Wilson interjects countless hysterical lines, the funniest of which are rapid-fire asides. There's an uproarious moment in this season's second episode where Penny finds herself intimidated by a group of teenage mean girls, and ends up reverting to a phony Mexican accent she used as a defense mechanism in high school. The moment is super-brief, but it produces a belly laugh that resonates throughout the rest of the scene.



Casey Wilson shines in the second season of Happy Endings.

Photo credit: ABC

Another performance that should not be forgotten at next year's Emmy telecast is delivered by Eliza Coupe as Jane, the neurotic woman who desperately attempts to maintain peace between her feuding friends. Her efforts to make Dave and Alex honest with one another causes her to lie more often than everyone else combined. She's so doggedly determined to do what's right for all parties concerned that she ends up concocting wild ideas that occasionally equate with Penny on the wild-o-meter. Her husband Brad (an equally stellar Damon Wayans Jr.) reluctantly accompanies her on a particularly ill-advised mission early in season two that pays off in satisfyingly squirm-inducing fashion.

To say anymore about these gags would be entirely wrongheaded, since the show consists entirely of gags that ultimately have little to no consequence in terms of the overall plot. Chicago viewers are guaranteed to enjoy the show's Windy City locales and in-jokes for Northern Illinoisans (such as when Dave attends the Taste of Kenosha). Several of the show's best lines are reserved for Brad and Dave's openly gay friend Max (Adam Pally), who makes earnest yet unsuccessful attempts to change his unemployed status. After feeling left out when Brad starts hanging with friends closer to his own skin color, Max recruits a group of gay acquaintances to follow him around a party as he rattles off lines like, "Don't you wish they made trading cards of designers?" It's the sort of line that probably wouldn't be funny if it were accompanied by a laugh track, but Pally's off-handed delivery sells it.

Occasionally "Endings" gets mired in the sort of shrill sketches that derailed Wilson's brief "SNL" run, and some of the verbal banter relies too heavily on easy cultural references. Yet for every misfire, there's a handful of lines worth quoting long after the end credits roll. The cast and crew behind ABC's miserable new sitcom "Suburgatory" are advised to study the skillful way in which "Endings" makes zippy self-aware dialogue look effortless.

'Happy Endings,' which airs on ABC, stars Eliza Coupe, Elisha Cuthbert, Zachary Knighton, Adam Pally, Damon Wayans Jr. and Casey Wilson. The show was created by David Caspe. The second season premieres on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 at 8:30PM CST.

By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]
Staff Writer
[HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.HollywoodChicago.com)



[13]

matt@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 25 2024 - 12:27pm*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15812/tv-review-second-season-of-happy-endings-delivers-more-hilarity>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/mattmovieman>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/abc>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/casey-wilson>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/david-caspe>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/elisha-cuthbert>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/eliza-coupe>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/happy-endings>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matt-fagerholm>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/tv-review>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [13] <mailto:matt@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#MATT>