

TV Review: Clichés Dominate CBS’s Stupid ‘How to Be a Gentleman’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 29, 2011 - 8:32am

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CHICAGO – It’s funny how one tweak of the formula can lead to something tasty while another can lead to something rancid. On paper, CBS’s “2 Broke Girls,” one of the breakout hits of the season both critically and commercially, is not that dissimilar from “How to Be a Gentleman,” which premieres tonight on CBS in the cush post-“The Big Bang Theory” timeslot. They’re both oil-and-water, “Odd Couple”-esque shows but while the first one feels (at least mostly) fresh, the second one is just stale in every way. PLEASE don’t choose this over the amazing “Parks and Recreation,” airing in the same timeslot on NBC.



Television Rating: **1.5/5.0**

I’ll admit that some of my negative energy around “How to Be a Gentleman” is flavored by the horrendous final season of “Entourage” as this show is the new vehicle for Kevin Dillon aka Johnny Drama. It’s in no small part because of the fact that “Gentleman” plays not unlike a misguided choice that Drama would have made on the HBO comedy hit. If only there was a real-life Ari and a real-life Vince to talk him out of it. Wait, where was Matt Dillon when his brother announced this project?



How to Be a Gentleman

Photo credit: CBS

Inspired by a book of the same name, “How to Be a Gentleman” stars Dillon as a personal trainer named Bert Lansing, who crosses paths with the kid he bullied in high school, a grown dweeb named Andrew Carlson (David Hornsby). Carlson is working on an etiquette column when he’s told that the men’s magazine he works for needs to be edgier and appeal more to the average guy. The writer seeks out Lansing in hopes that this alpha male will teach him what he needs to know about the mind of the average dude. Cue a nauseating amount of jokes about “stuck-up guys” vs. “normal dudes.” Seriously, in a season with a number of poorly-written sitcom pilots (“Free Agents,” “I Hate My Teenage Daughter,” “Man Up!,” “Suburgatory”), this one could be the worst. That might be its greatest accomplishment.

The reason it’s not the worst new sitcom overall (that’s either “Agents” or “Suburgatory”) is that the cast is too talented to let it sink completely into the quicksand of clichés presented to them in their pilot script. Most notably, the very-funny Rhys Darby of “Flight of the Conchords” does his absolutely best to pull this out of a tailspin. Seeing the great Dave Foley in yet-another failed vehicle is just depressing but he is a better supporting cast member than other options. And, to be fair, Dillon is not a bad actor. I’ve loved his work back in the great

days of “Entourage.” Perhaps I just needed a break from Drama.

Where does “How to Be a Gentleman” go from here? I really hope thaht audiences turn on the show not unlike they did with William Shatner’s horrendous sitcom in this time slot last year. The increasing success of “The Big Bang Theory” makes it likely that audiences will sample the premiere but I hope they don’t like what they get that first time around. Critics have been literally screaming for more viewers to watch the great “Parks and Rec” and it might kill us if something this generic, something this safe, something this predictable beats it week after week. You don’t want to kill a critic, do you?

“How to Be a Gentleman” stars Kevin Dillon, David Hornsby, Dave Foley, Mary Lynn Rajskub, Nancy Lenehan, and Rhys Darby. It premieres on CBS on Thursday, September 29th, 2011 at 7:30pm CST.



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