

TV Review: AMC's 'The Walking Dead' Returns with Gruesome, Action-Packed Attitude

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 14, 2012 - 11:04am

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CHICAGO – I heard a chorus of complaints during the second season of AMC's mega-hit "The Walking Dead" regarding the program's pace and how it got weighed down by the soap opera involving Rick (Andrew Lincoln), Lori (Sarah Wayne Callies) and Shane (Jon Bernthal). It feels like the people who make everyone's favorite undead drama heard them as well since the third season starts with a pair of episodes that features about as much action as the entirety of their sophomore year. And yet the show has also not lost its dramatic edge. Gory, intense, edgy, and incredibly risk-taking, this is some of the strongest television you'll see this Fall and I have every reason to believe that this will be the best season of "The Walking Dead" to date.



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Remember that complaint about too much dialogue? Think it's a coincidence that the creators of the show open with five minutes that are language-free? Yeah, me neither. The opening of "Seed," premiering tonight, October 14, 2012 at 8pm CST on AMC, captures where this group is now that they've left the farm and lost some of their own. Most importantly, they're looking for a place for Lori to have her baby. They clear out a house, think it might be a safe haven, see lumbering undead on the horizon, and move on.



The Walking Dead
Photo credit: AMC

Rick & Lori are joined by a ragtag crew that includes Glenn (Steven Yeun), son Carl (Chandler Riggs), Daryl (Norman Reedus), T-Dog (IronE Singleton), Carol (Melissa McBride), Maggie (Lauren Cohan), Hershel (Scott Wilson), and Beth (Emily Kinney). They're on the run, looking for

one of the final safe zones in the world. When they arrive at a prison at which it looks like most of the zombies are still in inmate or guard uniform, Rick theorizes that it means that the outbreak probably hit the place quickly, meaning there could be a lot of supplies waiting inside. They'll just have to kill a hundred or so zombies to get to them. And who knows what else they'll find there? Meanwhile, Andrea (Laurie Holden) and the striking new character of Michonne (Danai Guira) have their own arc that will surely soon intersect with our leads.



The Walking Dead
Photo credit: AMC

The action of "The Walking Dead" is pretty straightforward at this point but character motivations are starting to shift. Most interestingly, Rick seems to have reached a point where it's not mere survival any more but protection. Where is the moral boundary when you're trying to find a place to have a child after the apocalypse? Is there anything Rick could be blamed for doing in the name of protecting his family? It doesn't help that Carl is growing increasingly stubborn and even violent, even going as far as searching for zombies to kill on his own. And Lori is going to have a baby soon and starts asking the terrifying questions related to that given the chance that either mother or child could die during labor and they now live in a world where death isn't permanent.

There are also minor beats like the growing love between Maggie & Glenn and the potential new role for Carol that are incredibly well-developed without being underlined as boldly as they were in season two. Of course, Hershel is still an interesting voice

The last season lost some of its way dramatically by being a bit too on-the-nose with its writing. Characters discussed for hours what they were going to do and then they did it. The start of "The Walking Dead" (and I've seen the first two, for the record) feels much more organic. Action is spontaneous, urgent, and rivetingly staged. Perhaps it's purely due to the increased danger in the move from a farmhouse to a zombie-populated prison, but the stakes seem higher.

And the increased urgency has upped the writing and acting across the board. I was concerned that the show might lack with the passionate personality of Shane absent from it but his disappearance has allowed other supporting characters valuable time. Carol, Maggie, and Daryl have interesting character development scenes in the first two episodes that wouldn't have been allowed if we were still so focused on Shane, who really dominated most of season two.

What dominates season three? Chaos. Movement. Spontaneity. These are the elements that are going to bring "The Walking Dead" back from the brink creatively. I must admit that after the opening five minutes of season three, in which action took focus over discussion and not a word was spoken, I forgot all my concerns about this show and buckled in. Enjoy the ride.

"The Walking Dead" stars Andrew Lincoln, Sarah Wayne Callies, Laurie Holden, Steven Yeun, Chandler Riggs, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Lauren Cohan, Emily Kinney, Scott Wilson, and Danai Gurira. It returns to AMC on Sunday, October 14, 2012 at 8pm CST.



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