

## TV Review: BBC America's 'Being Human' Highlights Truly Scary Roommates

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 23, 2009 - 12:55pm

- [Aidan Turner](#) [2]
- [Annabel Scholey](#) [3]
- [BBC America](#) [4]
- [Being Human](#) [5]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [6]
- [Greg Chillin](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Jason Watkins](#) [9]
- [Leonora Crichlow](#) [10]
- [Russell Tovey](#) [11]
- [Sinead Keenan](#) [12]
- [Television](#) [13]

CHICAGO – We are undeniably in the age of the vampire. “[True Blood](#) [14]” “[Twilight](#) [15],” “[The Twilight Saga: New Moon](#) [16]” “[The Vampire Diaries](#) [17]” - the national appetite for bloodsucking film, fiction, and television seems insatiable. Add to the pile of vampire-centric stories, the great British import “Being Human,” a new dramedy starting this weekend on BBC America.



TV Rating: **3.5/5.0**

“Being Human” is less of a rip-off and more of a melting pot of several current vampire (or other monster fiction) trends. Like HBO’s “True Blood,” vampires, ghosts, and werewolves are one hundred percent real and living among us. And like the “Twilight” series, they are all longing for contact that their alter ego has denied them.



Being Human - (l to r) Mitchell (Aidan Turner), George (Russell Tovey) and Annie (Lenora Crichlow).

Photo credit: Touchpaper Television and BBC

The vampire in “Being Human” is the charismatic Mitchell (Aidan Turner), a creature of the night who knows that if he gets too passionate, his dark side could emerge. In the opening scenes of the premiere, we see Mitchell bed a woman and then suck her blood. He is often scared and protective of the creature within him but also unable to keep him from coming out.

George (Russell Tovey) can relate. The mild-mannered co-worker of Mitchell has a creature within him too - a werewolf who comes out once a

month and causes immense, screaming, terrifying damage. George spends most of his time in fear being revealed as a werewolf, picturing people with pitchforks and torches should his secret come to life.

With their similar problems, George and Mitchell move in together and happen to pick a flat already occupied by a ghost named Annie (Lenora Crichlow). The sweet girl is haunting the home that she lived in with her fiance Owen (Greg Chillin), now the boy's landlord. Most people can't see Annie. George and Mitchell aren't most people.



Being Human - (l to r) George (Russell Tovey), Annie (Lenora Crichlow) and Mitchell (Aidan Turner).  
Photo credit: Touchpaper Television and BBC

"Being Human" could have been an easy sell. It sounds like the beginning of a bad joke - "A vampire, a ghost, and a werewolf walk into a bar..." But there's a lot more to it than just the set-up. It's the depth of the writing and the performances that make it work. Sometimes, the writing can tend a little too much to the easy joke - I like the dramatic elements of the premiere much more than the attempts at comedy - but there are some surprisingly genuine and even heartbreaking moments in "Being Human".

"Being Human" works when it lives up to its title - using the supernatural to comment on the human. George's werewolf side has made him skittish and afraid of getting close but he can keep his dark side leashed for the majority of the month. On the other hand, Mitchell is suave and confident but he struggles with the killer inside him on a daily basis.

It's not hard to see the loneliness and fear of their true selves in these characters as symbolic of common human problems. George, Mitchell, and Annie are not that different from normal people trying to keep strange and dark secrets inside them.

The cast is uniformly good, although I think Turner is the stand-out in the premiere, especially in a series of scenes with the leader of the vampire underworld and a sin from his past brought back to potentially destroy his future. Tovey and Crichlow display potential but also over-emote at times and I worry that Annie's loneliness and George's shaky fear will become predictable and ineffective.

What's most interesting about "Being Human" is the potential. When I heard about the concept, I had my doubts that it could sustain a series without becoming obvious and I was worried about wacky "haunted house" hijinks. It could have been "Three's Company" meets "Buffy the Vampire Slayer". Luckily, the premiere hints at more dramatic beats than obvious ones and it will be very interesting to see how this trio functions from week to week. "Being Human" may not be as instantly addictive as the best of BBC America, but it definitely has the potential to sink its fangs into a loyal audience.

*'Being Human' premieres on BBC America on Saturday, July 25th, 2009 at 8pm CST. It stars Leonara Crichlow, Russell Tovey, Greg Chillin, Aidan Turner, Jason Watkins, Sinead Keenan, and Annabel Scholey.*



[18]

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