

## Cinematic and Literary Influences Temper the Glorious Chaos of ‘Loki’

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on June 9, 2021 - 6:27pm

- [Avengers](#) [2]
- [Disney Plus](#) [3]
- [Disney+](#) [4]
- [Eugene Cordero](#) [5]
- [Film Review](#) [6]
- [Gugu Mbatha-Raw](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Jon Espino](#) [10]
- [Kate Herron](#) [11]
- [Loki](#) [12]
- [Marvel](#) [13]
- [Michael Waldron](#) [14]
- [Movie Review](#) [15]
- [Owen Wilson](#) [16]
- [Richard E. Grant](#) [17]
- [Sasha Lane](#) [18]
- [Sophia Di Martino](#) [19]
- [Tara Strong](#) [20]
- [Thor](#) [21]
- [Tom Hiddleston](#) [22]
- [Wunmi Mosaku](#) [23]



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – From villain to anti-hero to homoerotic fan fiction icon, Loki has traveled a long way from the greasy-haired megalomaniac we have come to love. For most of his cinematic character development, Loki has been a foil to Thor’s massive **himbo** (*n.*: a very attractive, often beefy male who isn’t the brightest bulb, but is still able to shine because of his good-natured attitude and respect for women. Male version of a “bimbo”) energy. As brothers, it’s hard to see one without the other, making it harder to imagine just how a standalone series for the fan-favorite god of mischief could possibly work. *Loki* is burdened with glorious purpose, and this gold-horned deity proves to be more than capable of carrying his own multiverse where other characters struggle to be relevant in their own storyline.

To start off, it is worth noting that with all the time jumping that has happened in the last few Marvel films, this isn’t the same Loki who had his redemption arc and died bravely defending his family. That means that we are dealing with the ruthless, cut-throat Asgardian that was just humbled by the Avengers in their first team-up. After previewing the first 2 episodes, this show has exceeded expectations by showing us why this is the perfect jumping-off point for our standalone sneakster to cement himself as the real hero of his own story, the way he’s always seen himself. At 6 episodes for the season (British style series) *Loki* clearly is here for a good time, not a long time, and even that technical decision fits perfectly with our character’s persona.



Photo credit: Disney

This show is difficult to explain, mainly because it leans towards the absurd and Dadaist, with its rejection of modern society as you can tell by the outdated aesthetic of the Time Variance Authority (TVA). On top of that, influences from the works of Douglas Adams (like “Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Universe”) and Terry Gilliam (namely *Zero Theorem*, *Brazil*, and even *12 Monkeys*) are interwoven expertly throughout, especially with their time-traveling antics and disdain for bureaucracy. In many ways it will give you definite *Doctor Whovibes*, but instead of a Gallifreyan with 2 hearts, 1 big brain, and a sonic screwdriver, you get an equally alien Asgardian with 2 daggers, a slippery disposition, and a slew of magical abilities that he is more than happy to explain to you. The heavy influences don’t weigh down the narrative but unexpectedly gives the comic genre a refreshing, although borrowed, prefab architectural playground to play on, especially when things take an Escher-ial turn.

The creative team behind this new Disney+ series may not have the most prolific filmography, but their past experiences make them the necessary injection of fresh talent we need and deserve. Director Kate Herron, whose past series work includes comedies like *Sex Education* and *Daybreak*, brings to the screen their irreverent humor style, along with some experience in blending and balancing drama and comedy. It is also highly refreshing seeing female directors being included in comic book-based properties because the amount of testosterone and male-gaze usually seen in these projects is unnecessarily suffocating (See: Most of the current DC films). Herron’s nuanced approach and perspective confirms they are the perfect person to tell Loki’s story, especially with the surprise you’ll discover in the second episode.



Photo credit: Disney

Marvel’s on-screen universe(s) has been successful because of how much the studio heads focus on keeping all the stories tied together with either baseline tone or making sure all the creative teams are connected in some way so that the current story is always setting up the one. In this case, the catalyst that connects *Loki* with *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* is the writer of both projects, Michael Waldron. Waldron is no stranger when it comes to working on irreverent adventure comedies that deal with multiple universes and alien species since



he’s worked on a little animated show you may have heard of: *Rick and Morty*. As the show progresses further, you’ll easily see some recognizable similarities to the animated show, especially when it comes to world-building. It’s also easy to see how closely aligned the character of Rick is to Loki, which would fittingly mean that this show bestows the honor of “Morty” to Loki’s sidekick (or maybe Loki is the sidekick) Mobius M. Mobius, played by Owen Wilson.

We all know and love Loki, not because he is the good guy but because he usually turns out to be a charming anti-hero. Tom Hiddleston has played a slew of memorable characters in the past, but his legacy will likely be based on his time as Loki, and that’s the highest praise I can give him. All the work that Hiddleston has put into the character is a feat that refuses to be diminished by simply referring to his work as comic book camp. Just like the genre is seeing a necessary evolution, we have witnessed Hiddleston’s poignant alterations to his character, moving Loki from the stuff of myths to a fully realized person we somehow empathize with. While he may be the reason we start watching the show, we ultimately stay for the strong and diverse cast consisting of proven powerhouses like Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Wunmi Mosaku, Sasha Lane, and legendary voice actress Tara Strong. Even Owen Wilson’s inability to play anyone other than Owen Wilson isn’t a hindrance here as his natural charisma is shown to be the perfect fit for his by-the-book character, especially with Eugene Cordero there to boost the show’s comedy relief. There are more characters upcoming that also deliver fantastic turns, but the less you know going into this experience, the more effective the show will be.

*“Loki” is streaming on Disney+ beginning June 10th. Featuring Tom Hiddleston, Owen Wilson, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Wunmi Mosaku, Sasha Lane, Tara Strong, Eugene Cordero, Richard E. Grant, and Sophia Di Martino. Directed by Kate Herron. Written by Michael Waldron. Rated “TV-14”*



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