

TV Review: 'Castle' Returns With Same Strengths, Flaws

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 20, 2010 - 7:08am

- [ABC](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Castle](#) [4]
- [CSI](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jon Huertas](#) [7]
- [Molly C. Quinn](#) [8]
- [Nathan Fillion](#) [9]
- [Ruben Santiago-Hudson](#) [10]
- [Seamus Dever](#) [11]
- [Stana Katic](#) [12]
- [Susan Sullivan](#) [13]
- [Tamala Jones](#) [14]
- [Television](#) [15]
- [The Mentalist](#) [16]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [17]

CHICAGO – The best thing about the third-season premiere of the consistently-entertaining “Castle” may be that they’ve finally taken that stupid “Turner & Hooch” line out of the introduction to the hit mystery show. Other than that, the show pretty much picks up where it left off with two of the most charismatic stars on television often disguising the fact that the writing doesn’t live up to their talents.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Nathan Fillion and Stana Katic are remarkable enough on “Castle” that I actually suggested they be considered for Emmy nominations for the second season. With palpable chemistry, they are as charming a pair of leads as any TV creator could hope to cast. And the blast that they’re having each and every week on “Castle” makes it one of the most enjoyable programs of the week. I haven’t missed an episode and doubt that I will as long as Fillion and Katic remain attached.



Nathan Fillion, Stana Katic

Photo credit: ABC/Adam Larkey

Having said that, the mediocre mystery structure of the show continues to frustrate. The season premiere of “Castle” features another one of those mysteries-of-the-week that feels underdeveloped and doesn’t thrill the way a show like this should to truly stand out. Rick Castle (Fillion)

and Detective Kate Beckett (Stana Katic) will reportedly have an actual nemesis over multiple episodes this season and it's something the program truly needs — an actual sense of threat or mystery instead of just using it as a background for the charming characters. "Castle" takes its mysteries about as seriously as "Murder, She Wrote."



Stana Katic

Photo credit: ABC/Bob D'Amico

Despite having some of the least-interesting mysteries in the history of the genre, "Castle" continues to entertain due to the strength of its ensemble and their witty repartee. The premiere opens with a shocking scene in which it looks like Castle and Beckett are pointing guns at one another in an alley. The episode then flashes back to detail how we got there.

Fans of the show will remember that after a series of jealous moments as Beckett drew closer to a fellow detective and Castle looked like he might reunite with his ex, the pair split for the summer with the writer telling his friends at the police station that he would contact them in the fall. After realizing that he's been back in town without immediately getting in touch, Beckett, Esposito (Jon Huertas), and Ryan (Seamus Dever) act not unlike Castle's daughter Alexis (Molly Quinn) when she doesn't get a call from the boy she likes and give the ruggedly-handsome Castle the cold shoulder.

The problem comes when Castle starts popping up at crime scenes before the police get there. How is he involved in the case of two seemingly-unrelated people killed on the same day by the same assassin? The mystery brings the officers and Castle into the world of a shady nightclub but it's all just a device to get the writer back on the team that we know he will undoubtedly return to by episode's end.

Once again, the mystery of the week fails to satisfy in any way but Fillion, Katic, and the rest of the crew keep the proceedings moving at such an entertaining pace that it doesn't really matter. Could "Castle" be a great show with tighter mysteries, actual character development, and a sense of true danger? Sure, but sometimes we need a light diversion on a Monday night and "Castle" provides a level of high-quality popcorn entertainment that shouldn't be dismissed. I expect that it will continue to do so for years to come.

'Castle,' which airs on ABC, returns on September 20th, 2010 at 9PM CST. It stars Nathan Fillion, Stana Katic, Molly C. Quinn, Susan Sullivan, Tamala Jones, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Jon Huertas, and Seamus Dever. It was created by Andrew Marlowe.



[18]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

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- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/castle>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/csi>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jon-huertas>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/molly-c-quinn>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nathan-fillion>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ruben-santiago-hudson>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/seamus-dever>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stana-katic>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/susan-sullivan>
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- [18] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
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