

TV Review: Second Season of 'Hannibal' Crosses the Next Plateau

Submitted by [DaveHC](#) [1] on February 26, 2014 - 11:20am

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CHICAGO – After becoming one of last season's don't miss shows "Hannibal" has it's work cut out for it on several fronts. Forget the fact that the bar is set so high for the writing and the acting and visual aesthetics. Underneath all that is another far more daunting task. Show Runner Bryan Fuller has already let leak that Season Four is when the events depicted in the novels and previous film adaptations will start to enter the mix – culminating in a season that imagines events taking place after the film "Hannibal" (2001).



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Of course, what this means is that as the series progresses it is going to be harder and harder to surprise an audience that knows where certain things are likely to end up unless Fuller and his writers are going to make major plotting changes. Season One saw some changes but was mostly reminders of familiar stuff. Freddie Lounds? Yeah she's a girl now. So what. If they keep doing the show she's a dead girl. Will? He's going to get out of that insane asylum and switch places with Hannibal sooner or later. Jack? He's going to lose his wife. It's the stuff of great drama but it won't exactly come out of left field for anyone familiar with one of the most well known group of characters in the world.

But if the beginning of Season Two is any indication the fun will be all in getting there. The opener, "Kaiseki," features a brutal and electrifying action sequence, the details of which I won't reveal here. Yet the sequence does give strong hints at what the future holds while what follows signals the sort of languid grace the show is willing to utilize in it's approach to character development. The pace hasn't slackened one bit. The first two episodes of the season are all about what the characters will do now that they have a better idea of who everyone else is. Their relationships have deepened become more transparent and more challenging to sort through and you can just feel the sense that at any moment the most casual thing could reveal deep secrets and erupt in horrific physicality.



Hannibal

Photo credit: Universal

We pick up on the obvious ramifications of Will's breakdown, his quasi-romance with Dr. Bloom, Jack's failure to protect him. As for Hannibal he is always in view, wrestling with his own mysterious motives for remaining involved with Will, even trying on his life for size as a consultant for the FBI Behavioral team. Moving through the Second Episode of Season Two we watch him become increasingly self assured and willing to ignore the advice of his own psychiatrist Dr. Du Maurier played by a radiant Gillian Anderson. Of course all of this counterpointed by the elaborate and highly questionable dinners and disturbing visions that have become the series visual hallmarks.



Hannibal

Photo credit: Universal

Hannibal himself seems on a bona fide journey of self discovery and remains the clear narrative focus. His sense of menace is all about what he's becoming rather than what he already is. Mads Mikkelsen underplays to perfection and season two show exploring friendship, grieving, and other emotions as if trying on a human suit. There's a hint of yearning but he isn't just some well dressed Dexter type sociopath. He seems eager to explore what being human can mean to him and rarely comes across as the fully self-assured almost Sherlockian character that we have encountered in the movie versions. He's learning.

Hugh Dancy is making the most of Will's arc as a troubled man accused of being a serial killer. His main issue seems to be a tendency to overplay. But Season Two promises to deliver a series of serious mind games between him and Lecter that will flesh out his character beyond the tics and quirks that threaten to overwhelm it.

The other obvious strong point of the show is Laurence Fishburne. He's a grand presence projecting a complex emotionality underpinned by an absolutely authoritative presence as head of an elite FBI unit. He's no super sleuth and the humanity he brings to the part of Jack creates an aura of both potential fallibility and dedication to competency. In short, he is utterly believable and events in Season Two are going to lead his character down dark and challenging paths.

One question I have is how often the writers will dip into the serial killer of the week well. They zip through one such story very quickly in the first two episodes of Season Two and while it provides Hannibal with some nice moments as Will's professional heir apparent at the FBI and some spectacularly gruesome visuals for the show generally, it would have been nice to see such a storyline take place in a less condensed period of time. Viewers should be cautioned that the violence here is stomach churning. NBC can hardly be accused of treating the subject matter with kid gloves. This remains must watch TV.



Hannibal

Photo credit: Universal

For those who have waited, the Blu-ray edition of "Hannibal Season One" offers a seriously gorgeous presentation of the show and contains a ton of extras

- ? Audio Commentaries on select episodes with Bryan Fuller, David Slade, Hugh Dancy and more
- ? One episode never aired before on TV
- ? "Hannibal Reborn" featurette
- ? "A Taste for Killing" featurette
- ? "The FX of Murder" featurette
- ? "A Symphony for the Slaughter" featurette
- ? Blooper and Gag Reel
- ? Deleted Scenes
- ? Pilot Episode Storyboards

"Hannibal" stars Mads Mikkelsen, Hugh Dancy, Laurence Fishburne, and Caroline Dhavernas. It returns to NBC on February 28, 2014 at 9pm CST. "Hannibal: The Complete First Season" was released by Universal on September 24, 2013.



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By [DAVE CANFIELD](#) [11]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

dave@hollywoodchicago.com [10]

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