

Bones TV Series

By C. E. Woollen (12-1-2010)

A lot of the great TV series are on their golden seasons. Most of the shows that make it past season three have solved the early cancellation curse that has proved especially notable for 2010. Bones is one such series.

I came to slowly appreciate the series as one easy to underestimate. The central "technical star" isn't as confrontational as on House or Lie To Me. For this reason, it is a mistake to disparage the series as mildly dull. Dr. Temperance Brennan is as smart as they come to be sure. On her way through life she traded some of the social niceties for additional academic studies - and here is where the quiet charm comes in.

"Bones" Brennan has learned to loosen up and relax a little by season six. She pondered whether she wanted to return to cultural sociology at the end of season five, but ultimately decided it was not to her liking after all. During this same period her investigative partner, Agent Seely Booth grappled with his own desires to return to overseas military duty. The season six opener involved reuniting the team to do what they do best - examine forensic remains.

Actress Emily Deschanel deserves a lot of credit for playing another of this century's strong woman roles. Fortunately her material feels solidly written, allowing her to make science a unstated "star" of the show. David Boreanaz follows up with classical agent legwork and agency connections.

A subtle aspect of the plots is a true collaboration among the team members until the case of the week is solved. A recent trend among both drama and comedy mystery shows involves the leading technical expert overriding the faulty theories put forward by the supporting assistant team members. As a nice change of pace, the forensic team in Bones more actively supports the partial theories in pursuit of the truth.

From a production standpoint the show concept allows for some great scenery while the team investigates the crime scenes. A nice side effect of a show involving forensic anthropology is that a murder victim's bones are typically tossed in obscure locations that - just so - happen to be beautiful camera shots.

Relationship back-stories are amusing, but a nice final touch of Bones is the quiet promotion of intelligence working its way through the learning process. Every episode has an obligatory humorous line when someone forgets how specialized terminology has become. Yet a little summarizing goes a long way, and it is understood by the team that the specifics are what make them great, for generalities will only take them so far.

In all, this is a show that I'll think about buying the DVD set to watch marathon style to make up for lost time.