

“THE FADES: Season One” (DVD/Blu-ray Review)

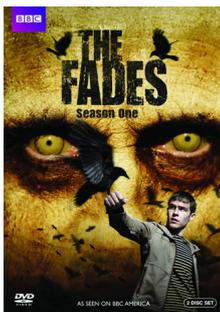
Written by Bekah McKendry

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It's hard enough just being an awkward outcast teenager, but Paul has to contend with a lot more than zits and prom dates. The apocalypse is coming, the dead are walking the earth and somehow he is slated to save all of humanity.

When I first received THE FADES: Season One (on DVD and Blu-ray from BBC Home Entertainment), I really didn't think it would be my cup of tea. I had seen previews of the hit British show between episodes of DOCTOR WHO and AB FAB on BBC America. The previews made it look kind of like 90210 with some zombies thrown in. Whoa, was I wrong! This show kicks ass! After sitting down and watching the first few episodes, I'm now a devoted fan, and can add this to my growing list of favorite TV series.



Created and written by Jack Thorne of SKINS (and featuring several of SKINS' cast as well), THE FADES revolves around Paul (Iain De Caestecker), a teenager who lives with his mother and twin sister Anna (Lily Loveless). While Anna is pretty and popular, Paul and his best friend Mac (Daniel Kaluuya) are the school outcasts and surround themselves with geek culture. The duo seem complacent falling into typical high-school social classes—until Paul starts having apocalyptic nightmares and seeing corpses wandering about the town.

He soon meets other “Angelics” who explain that these beings are “Fades”—dead souls who were not able to ascend into the afterlife and are forever trapped on Earth. Usually Fades cannot be heard, seen or have the ability to touch objects, but the shit is about to hit the proverbial fan because a number of the Fades have discovered that eating human flesh gives them the power to be reborn as live beings. The battle between the living and the dead is quickly escalating, and Paul seems to be at the center of it all. This may sound a bit complex and religion-heavy, but it's really not. As a character states in the first episode, there is no heaven, hell, God or eternal salvation. There is only life, death and varying stages in between.

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The show’s FX vary in caliber; though the dead look great and have plenty of gruesome, gore-filled moments, some of the other FX have a distractingly digital look. Think DOCTOR WHO or BUFFY-style bits where the CGI is mediocre at best, but passable for the split second it’s on screen. THE FADES goes for quite a bit of eyeball gore, whether sticking things in them or pulling them out, and these moments had me cringing and gasping a number of times. But the best part of the show is sidekick Mac, who endlessly quotes STAR WARS, MORK AND MINDY, Neil Gaiman and other geek-culture references. He is witty and charming, and occasionally drinks cough medicine to “take the edge off.” I want to hang out with this guy!

The disc sets contain six episodes that run an hour each, with special features including ample amounts of behind-the-scenes footage, outtakes and deleted scenes. Though the latter are interesting to watch, in most cases it’s easy to see why these moments were omitted. The making-of footage is fascinating, as it reveals some of the FX applications and executions from beyond the camera’s frame. But the best feature is definitely the outtakes, which confirmed my belief that the antics and strong cast connections onscreen are just reflections of the close bonds and hilarity that took place offscreen.

Internet rumor has it that THE FADES has already been renewed for a second season, which should be gearing up soon. This show seems destined to become a cult fave itself; check out the trailer below.

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