



Hell on Wheels – AMC



‘Hell on Wheels’ Crafts a Masterful Final Season

by Michelle Lee

‘Hell on Wheels’ concludes its five season run this Saturday and for many longtime fans, we couldn’t have asked for a better final season.

Hell on Wheels, AMC's drama set against the backdrop of the race to build America's first transcontinental railroad, has finally come to the end of the road. With only one episode left, nearly all the ongoing storylines have come to a satisfying conclusion. One thing the writers and producers did exceptionally well with their final seven episodes is manage gratifying conclusions while not taking the easy road and coasting through to the end of the series.

The writers chose to take risks and they paid off in a big way. Having the final confrontation with The Swede open the midseason premiere was a bold move and one that could have been risky. What would the show do for the next six episodes with the show's best villain out of the way? Luckily for us, the final episodes were planned out well and the loss of The Swede ended up setting the tone for the rest of the episodes. Final seasons can be hit or miss. Hell on Wheels has managed to craft a final season that's kept fans engaged and unable to guess what will come next.

While most of the focus has been on Cullen Bohannon (Anson Mount), as it should be, they've given us enough time with the people of the Union Pacific Railroad to feel as if their stories have been given enough thought as to a proper conclusion. Episode 13 would have served as a fine conclusion to the series, if just a bit on the nose. The race for the railroad was completed, though it was neck and neck until the end. I'm glad that the writers chose to go beyond that for the finale. I honestly don't know what to expect from the final episode, I have no clue where they might go. But I'm excited to watch and glad that they've kept me on my toes this entire season.

There really wasn't a moment where I thought I knew where they were going and if I did they never went where I expected them to.



I know better than to think everything is going to end with rainbows and sunshine. However, I know that even if the show doesn't have a happy ending, it will have a satisfying one for its fans. If there is one thing I've learned over the past five years is that the show never disappoints when it comes to effective storytelling. While we live in an age of great television, Hell on Wheels sets itself apart from the competition by maintaining its quality throughout its entire run. It's rare for a show to maintain a high level of creativity for five years. Hell on Wheels didn't just maintain it, it exceeded it more often than not.

While I am going to be sad to say goodbye to Cullen and the rest of the characters I've come to adore over the past five years it's more than comforting to know that we got to see their story play out and it never went off the rails. The writers, producers, and cast committed to telling this story as best as they could. I'm very happy to say that they managed to deliver. So tonight we'll say goodbye to Cullen and the rest of our beloved Hell on Wheels family. We can take comfort in the fact that we got a final season that maintained the high standards that the show has set so far. That's a very rare thing to get these days.