



Tune In or Tune Out: Syfy's Van Helsing



In a twist on the classic vampire adventure tale, **VAN HELSING** revolves around unlikely heroine Vanessa Helsing (Kelly Overton, “True Blood”), who unexpectedly discovers that she holds the key to humanity’s survival: her own blood! Gifted with not only an immunity to vampires, Vanessa is also capable of taking out her bloodthirsty foes by turning them into humans with her bite. Now both prey and predator, Vanessa sinks her teeth into her role as humanity’s leader – and secret weapon – in their resistance against the vampires that plagued their world.

An original co-production, **VAN HELSING** is produced by Nomadic Pictures, which also serves as the studio. Executive producers are Chad Oakes & Mike Frislev from Nomadic Pictures, showrunner/writer Neil LaBute, Simon Barry (“Continuum”), Evan Tyler (Industry Works), Dave Brown and Zadoc Angell (Echo Lake Entertainment), as well as Daniel March (Dynamic Television). Nomadic Pictures will distribute the series within Canada, Fallout Asylum and Dynamic Television will distribute the series (initial window) in the United States. Dynamic Television is also on board as international distributor.

Van Helsing takes a classic vampire tale and tries to again adapt it to the modern movie/tv screen. In the days of Underworld 5 and the aftermath of Twilight, vampire series are not a very welcomed genre right now. Yes, it is still popular and yes it will still get a lot of viewers. The real question is does Syfy's reimagining of this tale hold water above all that came before it.



VAN HELSING — Season:1 — Pictured: (l-r) Aleks Paunovic as Julius, Paul Johansson as Dmitri, Laura Mennel as Rebecca — (Photo by: Brendan Meadows/HELISING S1 PRODUCTIONS/Syfy)

The series will air September 23rd as a 2-hour premiere, airing the first 2 episodes together. Based on our viewing of it, that is for the best. You will need both episodes to get a firm grasp of the series and judge if it is your cup of tea. First, it is nothing like Twilight, which is a great thing. It is strictly a vampire show, no werewolf at this point. I would class it as a bit of Underworld the TV series. What the show does well in the first 2 hours is setup the world we are in. We learn about the current state of the world and where humans are on the food chain, as vampires reign. We also get the backstory of how the world went to shit several years before our current events. While the writers decided to give us a flashback they didn't reveal all the answers yet, which is where the series shines. This gives us something to look forward to. The visual effects are simple, but well done.

What the show fails in to a degree is having an ensemble cast we care about. Other than our lead character Vanessa, we don't really care for any character in particular. That doesn't do the series any favors if they can't turn it around in a

few more episodes. Unlike another series starting on Syfy soon, *Aftermath*, *Van Helsing*'s setup for the fall of humanity is a bit more believable. If vampires were a real thing, of course.

TV and movies have quickly tried to reboot classic stories with gender swapping the characters from legends. However in this case, it seems they are going down the road of a descendant rather than directly swapping the gender of the classic character himself. All and all it comes together rather well and is another notch in Syfy's move towards pure genre programming. A move that I am personally excited to see.

Our Tune In Or Tune Out verdict is in:
TUNE IN