

Orange is the New Black ? simply amazing

Orange is the New Black is the Netflix original series loosely based on a book of the same name (by Piper Kerman) and I'm hooked. I binge-watched all 3 seasons all 39 episodes in a two week period. That show is everything! If you don't have a Netflix account, get one (or ask one of your friends who have it for their login info).

?Orange? is about Piper Chapman, who ends up in federal prison serving a 15-month term for carrying drug money once, 10 years before. She was a naive drug mule for her then girlfriend, and two years before the statute of limitations runs out, so does her freedom. The show follows Piper's journey in prison, weaving in the lives of her fellow inmates and how they got to where they are. The theme song at the opening of ?Orange? is the song ?You Got Time? by Regina Spektor, and it goes for a minute before every episode and after a few episodes I was humming the song.

Piper Chapman walked into prison as a rich, blonde white girl who wanted to just do her time and be out. She was an ?other? in that she didn't fit the mould of someone you'd expect to go to be where she was. She wasn't a junky, her crime wasn't violent, she was college-educated and overall pretty privileged. However, the more she tries to stay out of drama, the more she got woven into it. Although the show centres around Piper, it's also about the other women around her and how they've created this community in prison. I think what I love the most about ?Orange? is seeing the camaraderie of these women who are sharing their lives behind bars.

For them to be able to forge these deep relationships is a testament to the human need for connection, no matter the circumstance. Characters like Red, who is the head chef of the prison kitchen. Or the friendship between Poussey (pronounced Poo-say) and Taystee. And the kinship between the Latinas. Even the pitiful ?God squad? got each others back. In a world where these women have so little control over their coming and going, it's amazing to see.

They have all types of women on the show including a transsexual woman playing the role of a transsexual woman! And that is ridiculously novel. Sophia is a trans woman who was a husband and father pre-transition, and is now struggling with how her gender switch changed her family dynamic. And I like that Sophia was one of the first characters besides Piper, whose background we got to explore. Which brings me to the next point.

?Orange? does a brilliant job of telling the story of the women in the Litchfield Federal Correctional Facility through intermittent flashbacks. Because knowing where they are now makes you want to know where they came from. These women aren't ?bad? per say ? they all just made bad decisions at one point or another.

This show can be dark but it's also extremely funny as well as heart-breaking and tragic. And that's no small feat. ?Orange? takes what makes us uncomfortable and throws it in our faces. The lives of these women are complicated and messy and in all shades of gray and shows it with no sugar-coating.

?Orange? is smart, funny, compelling and just downright awesome. If you haven't watched Orange is the New Black yet, I'm actually jealous of you because you have a chance to watch it for the first time.

By Michelle Austen