



(Image source: Hulu.com)

A Parade of Death You Won't See Coming

By Kaitlin Meaney

Well, it's the month of Halloween once again, and do I have a spooky anime to talk about this month? Frankly no, but do I have a really dark one and that's going to have to do. Believe me, this one is a doozy...

I came upon the series called *Death Parade* in the fall season of 2014 during my first year at Trent Peterborough. The episodes were released weekly and I watched it during my time at the Trent Anime Society every Friday evening. Damn, if there was anything else that could have kept me coming back to that club other than the people, it was this show. I was addicted to it and felt truly lost when it ended, as one does when you finish a show of any genre you've invested a lot of time into. Don't you worry little kiddies, I'm going to tell you what made this show good for me and I hope it makes you want to check it out as well; believe me, you won't regret it.

After doing a bit of research I found that the series itself was inspired from a short film by the name of *Death Billiards*, which could essentially serve as a pilot episode with how similar it is to basically every episode. It was animated by MadHouse, the same studio that did *HunterxHunter* which means that the animation was stellar and flowed beautifully.



(image source: Google)

When two people end up in a mysterious place called Quindecim, a bartender tells them they must play a game, and stake their lives on it. The explanations he gives them about their situation are very vague and everything about their presence there is a mystery, until they find out how they *really* got there. Interested now? I sure hope you are because I can't go into much detail without giving too much of the mystery away; which means that's all I'm going to say about the plot. Going into the first episode without knowing anything about the show or the main plot is the best way to go so you're going to have to check it out for yourselves. The first episode might get pretty ridiculous by the end, but if you can look past that it's really good, trust me.



(Image from the opening theme song. image source: Google)

The first thing that struck me about this show, before I even knew what was going on in the first episode, was the opening theme song. It is...*so happy*. I'm serious, you would never guess that this show is as dark and mysterious as it is if you only watched the theme. It is an amazing dynamic though that gives you a bit of a break through the drama and shows off the smoothness of the animation. It's pretty funny though since it pumps you up for a show that makes you feel things. Sad and tense things. Things that a happy song like that would not make you feel...

As the show goes on you learn more and more about what the heck goes on at this place, who the people are and why. This is done through the eyes of a character that's just as confused about it as the audience is who has been thrust into it with lack of a better solution. She is relatable and acts pretty realistically to what she sees as she witnesses the happenings of each episode.

The episodes begin on an innocent note, sometimes with a small hint to the background of the temporary characters to get you interested; with a lot of mystery surrounding the them as well. Something like a small clip of them and a friend or a family member, or even just doing something in their everyday routine. Everything is usually dandy of course, despite their lack of memory about how they got there. Then at a certain point, about halfway through the episode, things can start to go *very* downhill *really* fast and that's where the character development really shines. The temporary characters present in each episode are developed just enough to make you care about them which was phenomenal. From the way these people casually talk to one another to how they react when they realize their true purpose. It's very smart in its execution of the subject matter in each episode which makes the development of the more permanent characters all the more enticing.

This show goes into your mind and makes you really think about what it really means to be human. For example: if an object has intelligence and emotion does that make it human? In fact, what really makes someone truly human anyway? No one really, truly knows. Philosophical, no? The show uses emotion from an early point in the show to convey the humanity in the episode, and not just from the temporary characters. The major characters are the unemotional type and don't understand what emotions are but once they do, humanity as a concept is questioned. It also makes you think about how your actions can affect you in the long run, such as how you interact with a family member or even a stranger. Were you nice to them? Were you mean?

It is short, it is dark but it is very smart. If you're a fan of anime and you haven't given this show a chance yet, I would say give it a try!

Poem: "At the Hands of the One You Love"

It was a hell of a way to die

At the hands of the one you love
When they don't know how much you really loved them.
No one would have known;
The most popular and best looking guy,
The one that all the other girls dreamed of,
Could be a serial killer.
He confessed everything.
Every other girl like me,
Every other girl who had fallen for him,
For that brown hair and sky blue eyes.
That charm and charisma.
Let true love blossom.
Bragging rights.
The perfect love story.
No one would suspect him.
His image was too reliable, he knew this
Too perfectly planned out.
His victims his only witnesses.
His trail, swept away like footprints in a snowstorm.
He toys with us,
Asks us out.
Takes us to his house where he lives alone
Talks about his late parents,
That it turns out he killed too.
They were the start of this massacre.
I sit against the wall
Numb, bleeding out, heartbroken;
In more ways than one.

Shot through the heart both figuratively,

And literally.

He laughs.

I feel tears wetting my face,

Wishing I could have known better,

To see through his façade,

As my mother had seemed to.

I was too in love,

Or so I thought.

With the one guy I thought could be mine.

How could I have known?

No one ever knew.

He makes sure of that.