

Tenessa's Top Ten TV Shows from the 2010-2011 Season, Which Are Only in the Top Ten by Virtue of Having Been Watched at All by Tenessa

by Tenessa Gemelke

Some shows are just too hard to watch. They're on channels I don't get, and our laptop doesn't connect to our television. And then there are the shows I missed for three seasons, so I'd have to find all the old episodes and catch up. For someone who can barely keep up with a pretty pitiful DVR bank, there's a very slim chance I will ever, EVER watch one of these shows.

For those reasons, I'm going to begin by saying that *Louie* and *Game of Thrones* are probably my *real* favorite shows of the 2010-2011 season, but I did not watch a single episode of either one. And while I am quite capable of bullshitting through most things, I am not inclined to write impassioned endorsements of shows I've never seen.

[Thus ends The Annual Apology to the Other Good Shows.]

On the other hand, there are plenty of shows that are easy to watch. Each new episode gets aired 4 times a week, or there are marathons, or the new episode is sandwiched between the other shows you're already watching, so they just . . . *show up* in your viewing habits. If there's a theme to my list this year, it's "Shows I Never Meant to Watch Yet Still Genuinely Enjoyed."

10. *Chopped* I started watching *Chopped* after some friends of mine invited me to compete in an informal cooking competition during an anniversary party. It was hilarious and challenging and fun. They had modeled the contest after *Chopped*, so I began to watch the show. It has become one of the only shows our entire family watches together, and it has inspired my husband to buy fancy knives and prepare gourmet meals. I can't think of many television shows that have brought me so much tangible happiness.

9. *American Pickers* Two guys driving around in a van and digging through junk sounds like a terrible idea for a television show. And its new sister show (literally called *Picker Sisters*) is proof that the idea alone is sucktastic without the proper execution. But with Mike and Frank providing sports-style commentary about their search for old-timey treasures, I find the show thoroughly engrossing.

8. *The Office* Yes, *The Office* is not as good as it used to be, but I actually found a place in my heart for Michael Scott's final days. If nothing else, James Spader's interview as the new boss was exactly the right kind of crazy. It will be interesting to see if he can pull off a Diane-to-Rebecca transfer of power.

7. *What Not to Wear* For reasons I am not allowed to

divulge, I finally started watching *What Not to Wear* this year. I had turned my nose up at the show for ages, assuming it was a typical makeover show with no appeal for a woman who wears Spider-Man pajamas out to a bar. While it does employ some of the transparent tricks of other makeover shows, it also offers something more. The show approaches clothing as an act of communication. It doesn't indulge in body-shaming nonsense, and it is genuinely funny. I dig it.

6. *Happy Endings* I was poised to hate this show. It's pretty formulaically ripping off *Friends*—so much so that the first episode has bride Elisha Cuthbert abandoning her fiancé at the altar. Despite the weak premise of six good-looking people who hang out and say witty things, the show is more hit than miss. It's a far better home for Casey Wilson, who I didn't like AT ALL on *Saturday Night Live*. The biracial couple and football-loving gay dude are rarely relegated to The Biracial Couple and The Football-Loving Gay Dude. All in all, it's a surprising sitcom with memorable one-liners, including this favorite: "She gets crazy horny whenever we use our pizza stone."

5. *30 Rock* It may be slipping a bit, but I still love it. How great is it that they prepared a tribute show for a disaster that hasn't happened yet? And Matt Damon's ability to slip into instant sobbing made Carol one of Liz Lemon's funniest boyfriends.

4. *How I Met Your Mother* This was a standout season for me. Having lost my father in early 2010, I was completely bowled over by Marshall's story arc. Instead of packaging death into one Very Special Episode, the show let his grief bleed all over the season, the way it does across daily life. Yet somehow the episodes never stopped being funny. I'm getting really tired of Ted Mosby's love life, but the writing and characters are strong enough to keep this show near the top of my DVR priorities.

3. *Modern Family* There were plenty of serviceable family sitcoms on TV when I was a kid, but *The Cosby Show* stood out as something special. It pushed cultural boundaries without being too preachy, it both participated in and shut down stereotypes, and it was so funny and enjoyable that everyone in the whole world watched it. That's the space *Modern Family* occupies.

2. *Community* *Community* is just freaking brilliant. I could award high marks based solely on the fake clip show, but let's be honest: I'm just happy they brought Josh Holloway (Sawyer from *LOST*) back to my screen.

1. *Parks & Recreation* If there's a show that has more stand-alone merits than *Parks & Recreation*, I haven't seen it. Any one of these items justifies first place: Ron Swanson's Pyramid of Greatness Andy & April Li'l Sebastian's funeral The introduction of "LIT-relly" into my daily vernacular Any words that come out of Jean-Ralphio's mouth

POOP READING

Most importantly? The show appears on five out of five Poop Reading Top Ten TV Shows lists—proving once and for all that if you're not watching *Parks & Recreation*, you're a stupid jerk.
