

Caroline Dean

Dr. Gingrich

AP Language and Composition

22 March 2019

How I Met Your Mother Is Not Only About The Mother

Isn't so annoying when shows have a great plot and great characters who have kept you watching for multiple seasons, and then the shows concludes with this mediocre and rushed ending, leaving the audience upset and angry that they did not get the ending they seemingly deserved?

This was the case with the television series *How I Met Your Mother*. Its ending left its viewers angry, wanting more from the show that concluded on a sour note. This ultimately left the show with many negative reviews, but this bitter feeling is not fully justifiable by the show in total. Despite the lackluster ending, *How I Met Your Mother* allows its audience to connect with its characters on their journey to find themselves and also shows its audience how determination is a good quality to have when expectations rise.

Spanning almost nine years with eight seasons in total, [*How I Met Your Mother*](#) (or *HIMYM* for short) is a story following the life of Ted Mosby (Josh Radnor) as he tells his children the story of how he met their mother. The series takes place in New York in 2005 with a 27-year-old Ted Mosby and his friends Lily Aldrin (Alyson Hannigan), Marshall Eriksen (Jason Segel), Robin Scherbatsky (Cobie Smulders), and Barney Stinson (Neil Patrick Harris). As Ted discusses his story, he takes his children and the audience on his journey to find his wife in the city, going through ups and downs with careers and relationships along the way.

Truly captivating, *HIMYM* was able to keep the majority of its viewers around for all eight seasons. The show took the audience on a journey through the hardships of the characters' lives, and also the good memories that they shared throughout the series. The wait was long enough when the mother was finally revealed near the end of the show, but the ending, as mentioned earlier, left the audience mostly unhappy with how this grand show was finished.

HIMYM is easily comparable to other television shows such as [*Friends*](#), which also took place in New York and followed the lives of six best friends and their ups and downs of life. Both shows have similar reviews from media review sites, such as Rotten Tomatoes and IMDb, both of which gave the shows around an 85% to a 93%; both had a passing rate of 96% with ratings given by Google Users. Both have seemingly similar plots: taking place in New York, following the lives of best friends, watching them develop over time, etc. The only main difference is the main objective, with *HIMYM* focusing on how Ted met his wife and with *Friends* focusing on six lives of the characters. Despite this, it is easy to say that *HIMYM* is the early 2000s version of *Friends*.

With these ratings, it is apparent that the character development of both shows is quite similar to receive such positive reviews from the viewers. Basically everyone and their mom has seen *Friends*, and this should also be applicable to *HIMYM*. Although the plot of the show mainly focuses in on Ted's life, the viewer is also able to see the development of his friends throughout the series. Because the viewer is able to quickly connect with the characters, watching them develop with the show's plot really helps the audience put themselves into their shoes. This allows for the audience to feel what they are feeling in particular scenes, and almost seem as if they are truly experiencing these moments with the characters. The series mainly

focuses in on Ted, who has probably one of the best character developments in all of television history. The audience watches Ted go through multiple relationships, all the while pining after Robin. Funnily enough, Ted and Robin did go on a date in the first season, in which he tries to give her a blue french horn that he stole from a restaurant. Ted and Robin did, in fact, have a relationship early on in the series, but they decided to break up. You would think Ted would have gotten over Robin after their break-up, but this was not the case as Ted continued pursuing her. The audience, throughout this whole Robin situation, was introduced to the [yellow umbrella](#). Granted that this symbol has been strewn throughout the show, I would personally believe that this symbol represents Ted's determination to find his "soulmate" and how he is so close, yet so far, from his dream. Spoiler alert, Ted's wife was strewn throughout the show as well; they both went to the same bar to hang out with friends, just on different sides of the city, etc. In one season, Ted goes out with her roommate and there were also a few episodes in which Ted had her yellow umbrella. This symbol played a role in the development of Ted's character throughout the series. Because the audience saw his transformation, they grew with the character, which is truly the beauty of the plot. Even if the show is eight seasons long, the plot makes the audience want to continue to watch because of the strong character development through the series.

Despite their feature in *HIMYM*, the actors who contributed to the show have also had great careers as well. Cobie Smulders (Robin) was in *Safe Haven: Extras*, Jason Segel (Marshall) was in *Freaks and Geeks*, Alyson Hannigan (Lily) was in *American Pie*, and Josh Radnor (Ted) was in *Rise*. The most successful of the bunch is most arguably Neil Patrick Harris (Barney), sporting roles in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *The Smurfs*, *Genius Junior*, and many more.

While they might have great careers outside of their contribution to *HIMYM*, their role in their series made it a big hit among its viewers. Without them, the show would not have been the same and the personality of it would have been altered entirely.

Season eight, as the final season of the show, was probably one of the most heart-jerking seasons of the show. Because the show finished after this season, the audience, with myself included, had long awaited the reveal of the mother, but in this season, spoiler alert, Barney and Robin end up getting married. This proves itself to be one of the most symbolic aspects of the series because Ted, throughout the development of the show, was infatuated with Robin. Because this season focused on the marriage between Barney and Robin, it showcased to the audience that Ted had finally seemed to let Robin go and find happiness for himself. With this detachment from Robin, Ted is finally able to find his wife, the mother. Their instant connection was exactly what Ted needed to finally get over his dream of being with Robin. However, the mother ends up dying. Once Ted finished telling the story of how he met the mother, his children, in disbelief, tell him to go back after Robin, as she and Barney quickly divorced after they married. The reason why the show's audience was so upset with the ending was because the mom died and the series ends with Ted outside of Robin's window with the blue french horn, something of which he did in the first episode of the show. I understand the anger audience found with this ending, and honestly, I felt the same way at the end of the show as well. Reflecting back on the development of the series; however, the ending of the show is considerably appropriate as Ted truly does end up with the woman he loves.

With the pushes and pulls of the plot, *How I Met Your Mother* showcases itself as a show worth a view. Being mainly a drama and somewhat comedic, this series is truly for everyone.

Personally, I find it quite difficult to sit down and binge-watch any current television show I am into, but with *HIMYM*, I found myself wanting to sit for hours and continue watching the story. Addictive, entertaining, and all-around amazing, *How I Met Your Mother* is and will always be my favorite television series, and I encourage you to watch it as well.

Review Rules

1. Begin with a harsh criticism of the show. In the review of *The Enemy Within*, the author began with a harsh criticism. This was an interesting and captivating way of gaining the reader's attention. If the show you are reviewing has a controversial aspect to it, it is appropriate to make the reader aware of the controversy. Also, because this criticism is stated in the introduction of the review, the reader is more likely to be enticed to read the whole review and really peaks their interest in your opinion.
2. Discuss the characters and the actors who play them. In the reviews of *The Enemy Within* and *Shrill*, both authors discuss the characters and the actors playing them. By name-dropping the actors, it makes the reader begin to think back to what other films or television series the actors were a part of prior to, or after, the show's release. This recognition allows the reader to reflect back on how the actor was in other productions and decide whether or not they actually enjoyed their acting. The reader is also enticed in a way to want to watch the production to see whether or not the actor has improved or declined with time.
3. Discuss other shows in comparison. In both of the reviews that I read, the authors included television shows in comparison to the show they were reviewing. This is effective in a review because it discusses the piece in comparison to a more popular, or widely-known, show. This not only gives the audience a frame of reference, but it helps the reader decide whether they would consider viewing the show by taking into consideration a similar plot and how well-done the show is.

4. Discuss a particular episode (or season) of the show and how it ties the story together. In both of the reviews that I read, the authors, once again, included a specific episode that they thought brought the show together. They discussed how this certain episodes and seasons developed the plot, the character development, and other factors. The authors use this tactic to showcase the weaknesses or strengths of the show. This aides the reader in their decision to watch the show, depending on this one episode and the author's personal opinion of the season in general.
5. Discuss the plot of the story and how it develops; how it impacts the viewer; does it connect with the viewer and will the audience remain tuned in. The reviews on both *Shrill* and *The Enemy Within* discussed the plot of the story and the impact that it had on the authors. The authors highlighted the weaknesses and the strengths of the plot; they also reflected on how the show impacted them. The author's reflection of the show not only demonstrates the feelings and opinions of the author, but showcases how other viewers will view the show. If the reader has similar tastes to the reviewer, then the reader will probably take more into account when deciding whether to view to show/series. Also, the author's reflection of the piece announces to the audience the faults of the show and what to consider while watching.

