

WHY YOU SHOULD WATCH NETFLIX'S NEWEST SERIES: BIG MOUTH

Ahhh Puberty. That special time in our lives when our bodies are going through fast, crazy and life-altering changes, our emotions are wildly out of control, and we seemingly have no control over our minds and bodies. Wouldn't you just LOVE to relive all of that? Well, now you can!

Earlier this month Netflix debuted *Big Mouth*, an animated adult-g geared series about, you guessed it, P-U-B-E-R-T-Y. The series, created by Nick Kroll (*The Kroll Show*, *The League*) and his longtime pal Andrew Goldberg (writer for *Family Guy*), as well as Mark Levin and Jennifer Flackett, details the ups-and-downs, the horrors, the discoveries, and lessons learned during those formative years in our lives.

The premise and sentiment of this show seem really lovely and heartfelt on the surface. But let me tell you, this show is messed up... in the best way possible. It doesn't give off a Disney-Lizzie-McGuire-coming-of-age-vibe and it doesn't paint puberty with the montage of Lisa Frank pencil cases and Hello Kitty Stickers.

Instead, *Big Mouth* follows a group of middle schoolers as they navigate life, love, and growing up during those horrible pre-teen years we have all tried to forget about. With characters Nick Birch and Andrew Glouberman lives and friendship as the crux of the show's narratives, the series begins with Andrew coming into puberty and meeting his Hormone Monster, a crude, disgusting thing that follows Andrew for the rest of the series.

The show is extremely honest and accurate when it comes to puberty. You know, with how weird and disgusting and confusing it can be. But the Hormone Monster really drives home a part of adolescence that isn't normally shown or discussed when media attempts to portray puberty. HM (Hormone Monster from now on) is incredibly twisted in his thoughts, actions, and erratic behavior. HM, and his female counterpart the Hormone Monstress (voiced by Maya Rudolph), are the physical manifestations of all of the f-ed up stuff our brains think and our bodies do without warning or reason.

Why do I think really improper and nasty thoughts while I'm looking at that man walking his dog? Why is this baby on the subway making my heart literally explode? Why did that AT&T commercial cause me to weep buckets? Why does my patience wear so thin during my period that an unexpected gust of wind instantly riles up my anger? The Hormone Monstress.

I've had never, during my 26 years on this earth, seen a more accurate, yet completely insane, depiction of hormones – *especially* for teenagers. There was so much with this show that resonated with me or that I at least appreciated, even if it wasn't always relatable to my pre-teen experiences. Particularly the women of the show.

Although two male characters are at the helm of the show, *Big Mouth* doesn't shy away from the plights of becoming a woman. One of the main characters is Jessi, a girl who gets her period early

on in the series...while wearing white shorts...while on a school field trip to the Statue of Liberty. It's not pretty, it's not fun, but boy is it real.

My heart ached for her during this episode and the changes her body begins to go through. Especially when her newly introduced Hormone Monstress tells her to irrationally get angry with her mom, call her Shannon and then throw herself down on the bed to cry. I FELT that. It made me cringe and then immediately call my mom and apologize to her for having to deal with my horrid teen years.

There is also an entire episode titled "Girls Are Horny Too" and it's just such a treat. While the episode involves the premise that a popular romance novel is driving girls and grown women into the horny depths of sexual fantasy, the best part of the entire episode is when Jessi finally gets to know herself, if you know what I mean....I.E. she looks at her lady bits with a mirror and gets an anatomy lesson from her vagina, voiced by Kristen Wiig. It was hilarious, accurate, and educational.

Aside from the horrors of hormones and sex, *Big Mouth* brings to light a hoard of other issues people have to deal with every day- teens and adults alike. Issues like infidelity, emotional neglect, sexual assault, navigating changing friendships and relationships, discovering your sexuality, realizing our parents are fallible and much more.

The series also allows boys to feel emotions too. It's extremely fair and equal in its depiction of emotions and sexuality for all genders. The boys don't just get to talk about all of the gross body changes and horniness and the girls aren't portrayed as incredibly emotional and irrational beings. These characters are complex and emotional and horny...and yeah, just going through *all* of it, and that's, sadly, revolutionary for media even today.

The truly wonderful thing about *Big Mouth*, aside from the nostalgia and this-is-so-painful-to-watch-because-it's-so-true feeling I get, is the way the show treats these teen characters. They're not made to be more adult than they are (like *South Park*) but they're also not treated with kid's gloves. Kroll and the other creators treat these characters and this particularly challenging time in kids' lives with a great deal of respect. They want to be funny and outrageous, but it's coming from a place of great honesty and care.

You feel for these characters because you know these characters. You *are* these characters. Watching this show brings up a lot of present emotions and memories, but it's all pretty ridiculous so you have no choice but to laugh about it- and if you're old enough- thank God that it's over. And that's what makes this show great. RUN, don't walk, home to your couch and settle in for a truly unsettling yet amazing binge watch.