

T  
H  
EF  
I  
L  
M  
S

EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

By Addison Toutant  
STAFF REPORTER

One of the most popular shows of its time, Fox's *The X-Files* was a huge influence on not only the science fiction genre, but pop culture as a whole. The original ran nine seasons, 1993-2002. With its recent revival, the show manages to stick to what made it so unique while still attempting to incorporate modern elements to keep it fresh. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson return in their roles as agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully. They're joined by newcomers like Joel McHale (NBC's *Community*).

Years after the X-File division of the FBI was shut down, agents Mulder and Scully have moved on with their lives. That is, until they receive a call from Tad O'Malley (McHale), a conspiracy theorist who enlists their help. He gives the former agents solid evidence of a planned world takeover by the government, and the two agree to help him investigate. It's the same overarching plot from the original run, and there lies the problem.

Mulder is the type of character who is expected to be obsessed with the idea of internet surveillance, but he's not. The show hasn't evolved to include modern technology such as smartphones or social media, and that may be a detraction for some. For others, it's a breath of fresh air, being able to experience more of what made the original show so great.

There's also the "Monster of the Week" formula present in most of the series (episode "Humbug," for example) which breaks up the main plot. Some have very interesting ideas, such as

telepathically linked siblings. These are enjoyable stand-alone stories, don't include a lot of modern technology and make the show seem more dated than it really is.

The writing is strong, and the delivery of the lines is equally strong. Through every episode, each actor does a fantastic job. By far the best written episode is the third. Written by Darin Morgan, it's a throwback to episodes he wrote in the original series and is explicitly comedic, poking fun at the fact that Mulder comes up with such crazy ideas and is somehow right every single time.

The music is atmospheric, but not memorable. There's a lot of overlying strings to most of the pieces, but besides the main theme, none of the songs are recognizable.

In comparison to the original series, Season 10 is not as enjoyable. What was intriguing about the original nine seasons was that they played off the fears society had at the time. The new season doesn't do that. Current topics today when it comes to the government are surveillance, drones and gun control. Those don't come up more than once.

In spite of its shortcomings, this reboot of *The X-Files* is acceptable. It's a suitable send-off to one of the most influential shows of the 90s, with great acting and a good script.

The truth is out there: this is a show worth watching.

★★★★★  
X-FILES  
2015  
TV-14  
FOX

## TV SHOW

## THE MAGICIANS

★★★★



Syfy, the network that gave viewers the two extravagant TV series *Dominion* and *Defiance*, has come out with yet another: *The Magicians*.

This fantasy creation takes place in New York, Quentin Coldwater (Jason Ralph) and friend Julia Wicker (Stella Maeve), two struggling graduate students who suddenly get thrust in the intricate world of magic practitioners.

It kickstarts with a familiar twist. Instead of starting with Coldwater, the series introduces the mysterious antagonist. It also foreshadows Coldwater's importance to the story, a recycled tactic viewers see all too often.

Once it switches to Coldwater's point of view, *The Magicians* delves into his life, creating a mood reminiscent of *Harry Potter*, but it doesn't engage.

There's a lack of intriguing characters, too. They don't have backstories that get viewers invested, which makes the show drag. It can be argued that the characters' relatable situation, prior to the magic bit, outweighs the lack of viewer connectivity, but it's not enough.

The series does have some new concepts that can overcome the slow plot. Coldwater practices real-life optical illusion magic prior to discovering Brakebills College for Magical Pedagogy (cough, cough Hogwarts), the school for people to practice magic.

That ends up tying into the show's interesting lore. However, viewers don't get it all in one sitting. The lore centers around the books Coldwater and his childhood friend, Wicker, read to learn "magic" as kids.

Along with new story details, *The Magicians* has strong graphics, but that's expected because of its magical theme. The show creates a nice balance of both in the beginning by including some real magic, like disappearing coin illusions and card tricks, with the computer-generated magic. The card tricks give the series a little reality to its completely fictional scenario.

*The Magicians* has some enjoyable qualities, but it seems too much like *Harry Potter* to thrive on its own. It's a show that should be watched by viewers who are just looking for some time to kill.

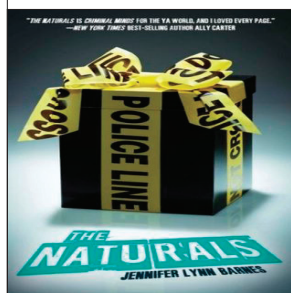
*The Magicians*; 2015; N/A; Syfy

By Josie Bennett

## BOOK

## THE NATURALS

★★★★★



Fans of classic mystery and crime stories will certainly find themselves unable to put down *The Naturals*.

Author Jennifer Lynn Barnes goes beyond the reader's expectations and creates amazing characters. All of the characters have interesting backstories and their own, reasons that keep them working with the FBI throughout the novel.

The main character Cassandra Hobbes' life is interrupted when she is recruited to work alongside the FBI as part of a training program for young teenagers. She is labeled a "Natural." A Natural is someone who is naturally talented at profiling or other skills that would come in handy for solving cases.

As a Natural, Hobbes is offered the chance to move to Washington D.C. to train with others like her. In return, she must use her skills to help solve cold cases. Her own mother's death even comes back to haunt her.

With a cast of fully realized characters, *The Naturals* sets itself apart from other mysteries. Instead of accidentally stumbling upon the case, Cassandra and her friends seek it out with the assistance of the FBI. *The Naturals* sets itself further apart as the protagonists are not modeled after everyday normal teenagers who are not qualified to chase down serial killers. Instead, each character in *The Naturals* has a unique skill. These talents range from being able to profile a person at a glance to being able to detect lies. Many of the teenagers even have past experience with killers.

The only noticeable problem is that the character development seems to be rushed in some parts of the book. However, this is a small problem. It does not occur that often, and the plot more than makes up for it. Setting up Cassandra to solve her mother's murder adds to the suspenseful action that takes place during the book.

With surprising revelations, readers will find themselves unable to put this book down. A real page-turner, this first book in the series is certain to entertain any fans of mystery or suspense.

*The Naturals*; 2013; Jennifer Lynn Barnes; 308 pgs; \$9.99

By Katelynn Mulder

## APP

## BLOCKY FOOTBALL- ENDLESS ARCADE RINNER

★★★★



Coming to join Full Fat's loaded collection of sports game apps is *Blocky Football-Endless Arcade Rinner*.

*Blocky Football* centers around the special teams aspect of football,

specifically the kickoff. The player's goal is to gain as many points as possible, which can be achieved by returning kickoffs and then kicking extra points.

When it comes to returning kickoffs, players have five lanes to move among on the way to the end-zone. As they run, they must avoid both opponents and even their own blockers, as running into either will end the return.

As a player progresses from level to level, kickoffs get longer. At the same time, enemies become faster and more plentiful, making for added obstacles along the extended path.

After returning the kickoff, you can earn the extra point. Kicking the extra point involves a bar with red, green and gold sections and an arrow on it, shifting from left to right. To make the kick, tap the screen when the arrow is on either a green or gold section of the bar.

Another game feature is unlocking characters using keys, which can be obtained by kicking extra points when the arrow is on the gold section of the bar.

Once the player has three keys, the game presents six lockers, each with one of two different icons inside it. In shell-game fashion, the lockers close and shift around, and it is the player's job to pick three holding the same icon. Success will unlock a new character, while failure offers no consolation.

However, all is not lost. The game will allow players the chance to open more lockers after watching a 30 second-long advertisement.

But even then, the shell game is near impossible to win, which makes trying to unlock characters more annoying than anything else.

Another nuisance is the intrusive advertising, a common issue with free games. An ad-free version is \$2, though ironically, Full Fat offers a 10-minute reprieve from watching ads in exchange for watching another.

In the end, despite its irritating ads, *Blocky Football* provides an entertaining challenge that is great for some cheap fun.

*Blocky Football - Endless Arcade Rinner*; Full Fat; 2016; Available for Apple & Android; Free

By Wilson Moin

## ALBUM

## MATTER

★★★★★



Riding the success of his debut album *When the Night*, St. Lucia (Jean-Philip Grobler) has released yet another album where 80s synthpop meets modern day alterna-

tive music. *Matter* rings in an irresistible hybrid sound that will appeal to listeners of all ages.

Grobler's distinct style sets himself apart from the countless other nostalgically funky indie artists on the scene. The South Africa native knows himself, and his approach is distinct. His vibrant sound and sun-drenched style blend together, manifesting his zippy appearance directly into the album.

Tracks like "The Winds of Change" and "Love Somebody" take listeners back in time with a heavily synthesized sound paired with Grobler's swooping, affected vocals. Grobler mimics the renowned voices of the 80s, bringing big names like Tears for Fears and Duran Duran to mind.

"The Winds of Change" especially serves as a blast from the past, with an upbeat tempo juxtaposing discordant lyrics that launch into a heroic chorus.

The immediate knee-jerk reaction to the album is to write it off as just a spunky, bouncy attempt to travel back to when it would've been all the rage—but *Matter* is more than that.

Grobler's tracks never waste a second. Every note and every run serves a purpose. They're not self indulgent or aimless, but artful pop that is mostly designed to get listeners out on the dance floor.

*Matter* has something for everyone—from the single "Dancing On Glass" that airs on the more Top 40 side, to the eclectic track "Help Me Run Away." The entire album is designed to get people up and dancing, not to communicate complex messages.

Listeners in search of an album that will get them up on their feet and have a good time will find exactly what they need with *Matter*.

*Matter*; Sony Music Entertainment; iTunes; \$8.99 2016

By Abbey Cadieux