

# TV is getting too good lately



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like, the cutest couple ever, and that Dwight character never ceases to infect me with the H1N1 version of laughter. Is it possible to giggle oneself into a coma? I hope not, because that would be sad. Although, it *would* make for a good TV drama. I'd tune in.

Most people also like reality shows, but I'm happy to say I don't. I mean, I already live in reality, and most the time it's just me sitting in my beanbag chair, crawling into my Snuggie, cracking open a warm Mountain Dew, and watching 14 episodes of *Home Improvement* on a whim. Who wants to watch *real* people do things when in *Beasties*, I can watch dinosaurs transform into robots and shoot lasers at each other? Let's see Heidi Montag do that. Seriously, let's force her to do that. That would be awesome.

## How am I supposed to resist the temptation of all these great programs when you people won't stop talking about them?

If you're like me, you're probably hopelessly addicted to at least one or two TV shows. And if you are me, you're probably hopelessly addicted to 17 TV shows and are on the verge of failing every course this semester and probably a few in the winter term as well.

As much as I'd like to blame others for my misfortune, I guess I can only really blame myself. I am the one that watches them, after all. But how am I supposed to resist the temptation of all these great programs when you people won't stop talking about them? In all seriousness, I'm afraid of what might happen to my life if I start watching *Glee*, that singing and dancing bombshell. It combines three of my favourite things: *High School Musical*, Jane Lynch, and copious amounts of jazz hands.

And this is to say nothing of the oft-talked about *Lost*. It's bad enough that I have to watch a new episode every week for some shows, but now I have to meticulously study an archive's worth of them? That's like TV show homework! I can barely manage to watch six episodes of *Pride and Prejudice* to avoid having to read a book, and now you want me to examine 103 episodes for my own enjoyment? Excuse me if I don't really care to know what that cloud monster is supposed to be, or if a sequence of numbers which add up to 108 has any satisfying payoff for attentive viewers. I'll be over here watching *Two and a Half Men*.

And these are just shows that I don't watch. I practically tell time by how long it is until the next episode of *The Office*. Spoiler alert: Jim and Pam are so married now, guys! They're,

So as it stands, television producers are conspiring to ruin my life, and there's nothing I can do to stop them. How can I say no to sassy one-liners and brooding sexual tensions between teens who are just trying to learn how to make it on their own? With that one sentence, I just described four completely different shows that I watch on a regular basis. Obviously I can't continue to do this — I'll be dead before the mid-season break. But I can't just destroy my TV: the shock of not knowing what happens on the next episode of *Heroes* might kill me — not that it matters. It might just be all a dream, or a cover up by the CIA, or maybe my secret twin brother died in my place. Too bad I'll have to wait till next Thursday to find out.

# Gay Tony adds personality to GTA

## gamereview

### Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony

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Developed by Rockstar North

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Perhaps the best news about the most recent piece of downloadable content for *Grand Theft Auto IV*, the aptly named *The Ballad of Gay Tony*, is that a certain Serbian slob won't be calling you every five minutes to go see some "big fat American tit-tees." *Gay Tony* provides some much-needed flair, and from the bright rainbow-coloured title screen to the badly overdressed and over-dramatic characters, to the purple sparkling loading text, this most recent foray into Liberty City has something sorely lacking from previous outings: character.

Bidding good riddance to Niko, Roman, and most of the other characters from the previous game and its first downloadable chapter, *The Lost and the Damned*, *The Ballad of Gay Tony* puts you in the shoes of Luis Lopez, last seen getting held up in the bank robbery in the initial game. You interact and do jobs for his titular boss and his cadre of friends and enemies.

By the end of it, you'll meet some friends, make some enemies, hit some golf balls (into people), skydive, and drive an armoured behemoth through downtown Liberty City. And, if you're the average *GTA IV* player, you'll find time to have some sex with hookers, and go on more than a few orgies of violence. It's more of the same great fun that the series typically provides, but with a couple of twists.

It's not so much what's in *The Ballad of Gay*

*Tony* that makes it successful, as much as what isn't. In the original game, there was a cavalcade of useless time-wasters, and none more evident than your seriously needy and clingy "friends." Providing help in a gunfight here, or some money or useful utilities there, the original had you hopping from bar to strip club to drug run to satisfy your friends' desires. For every mission there was a zillion requests to go play darts or masturbate or whatever. It was enough to drive a Serb crazy. God help you if you were trying to date a fine-looking lady at the same time.

A majority of those distractions have been removed, and it's to the game's benefit. Girlfriends are replaced with "booty calls," your plethora of acquaintances are replaced with only a few much less pushy counterparts, and the missions themselves feel tighter and more focused. The story sees business partners Gay Tony and Lopez try to pay off their debts to the mob, as well as make a little profit on the side managing Tony's two clubs.

The personality is very evident from the get-go, with characters like Tony's coke-mad boyfriend Evan, and Mori — older brother of fan-favorite Brucie — taking centre stage. It comes across as very much larger-than-life, and it really works. *Vice City* used a similar method to almost universal acclaim and it's obvious that it really works here.

At the end of the day, *GTA IV* wasn't broken; it was just very misdirected. The serious, almost depressing story of Niko Bellic clashed with the roots of the series as an open sandbox game, and it almost felt too dire and serious for its own good. *The Ballad of Gay Tony* takes away all of the depressing trappings of the first game and replaces them with glitz, glamour, and nightlife. If you enjoyed your previous trips to Liberty City, go ahead and hang out with Gay Tony and Luis, but there isn't anything new or groundbreaking here besides the atmosphere.

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