**TV SHOWS TO WATCH IN 2018**

* **It’s a queer ole year -**

**‘The Fosters’ Spin Off**

In the original *‘The Fosters’* Stef, a female police officer, is married to Lena; a selfless LGBTQ+ activist. Together Lena and Stef take in foster twins; Mariana and Jesus, alongside already having Stef’s son Brandon from a previous marriage. Agreeing to not take in anymore kids due to three being a handful, Lena then goes on to defy this agreement by bringing in Callie, intended as a “temporary” stay. Callie’s blunt comments about the nonconforming family hits a nerve with the twins, who are already struggling with their own identities.

Fast forward a few years into the future, (in the TV programme, not real years) and a couple of the Foster kids are getting their own primetime slot. Yet to be named, the spin-off is rumoured to have 13-episodes on freeform and focus on Callie and Mariana living together in LA as they “embark on the next phase of their young lives.” So, will the spin-off be in keeping with the LGBTQ+ content of the original, or will it take a completely different turn? It’d be interesting to see…

**Grown-ish**

ABC’s Black-ish spin off follows Zoey (Yaya Shahidi) as she departs her privileged life at home for dorm life in an LA college. While Zoey’s classmate Nomi promptly comes out as bisexual in the first episode to her friends, one of her storylines is her making the decision to not share her bisexuality with her family. With a storyline like this, it is most likely relatable to viewers, both in the sense of self exploration and the struggle to figure out different aspects of personality and what it means to be bisexual in 2018. The show addresses relevant topics to many people, mainly focusing on that time in people’s lives when they’re asking those all-important questions; “Who am I? Do I fit in?” In an interview with *Teen Vogue* (2018) Emily Arlook; who portrays Nomi, says **“I hope it will guide young people to face big questions and awkward moments of growing up head-on, with both courage and a sense of humour. Ultimately, I hope the show can pull back the curtain and spark discussions about the fears and hopes we have growing up today.”**

**The Chi**

Written by Lena Waithe, *The Chi* tells the story of an urban young African-American man coming-of-age. Waithe’s aim for this series was to pull on her own experience of growing up on the South Side and facing its diversity, ultimately crafting a story that paints a different portrait of what is typically shown of her hometown. The show stars Alex Hibbert from Academy Award-Winning film *Moonlight* (not heard of it? Hit Google up.)

Lena is an incredible influence within the LGBTQ+ community. Alongside *The Chi* Lena has worked on the likes of *Master of None.* Co-writing the episode “Thanksgiving.” Which in 2017, alongside Aziz Ansari, won them the Primetime Emmy Award for *Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series*. Waithe describes the episode as based on her coming-out experience as a lesbian. In her Emmy speech, Lena sent out a special message to her LGBTQ+ family:

**“last but not least, my LGBTQIA family. I see each and every one of you. The things that make us different, those are our superpowers. Every day when you walk out the door, put on your imaginary cape and go out there and conquer the world, because the world would not be as beautiful as it is if we weren’t in it.”**

Alongside co-writing that episode, Lena not only portrays character Denise in the show, but was the inspiration behind the character. Rumour has it, Denise was initially written to be a straight white woman; a potential love character for Aziz’s’ character. In an interview, Lena tells *Vogue* that “Once they cast me, they knew they were going to change it—even though I read her as a straight character, which was funny because of my cadence and my demeanour. We just cracked up doing it that way. Once I started doing table reads with them, they told me, “Let’s just make Denise like you.” Lena further outlines that she feels it’s “almost revolutionary to see a black lesbian who isn’t two-dimensional, who isn’t just there for shits and giggles. Being a black lesbian myself, I roll my eyes a little bit when I see black lesbian characters on shows where it’s purely there for decoration. You can just hear it in the writer’s room . . . “What if we make her a lesbian?!” It’s weird because I see black gay characters on television all the time, but do I relate to them? Not always, **because they’re set pieces**.”

For further information on this amazing woman, see her short bio piece **here**. [click through to it]

**Queer Eye**

Back in 2003 *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* was based on gay men giving advice on fashion, grooming, interior design, food, wine and culture to straight men. Netflix have a fresh take on it and the new Fab Five navigate Atlanta, Georgia, and discuss “everything from LGBTQ rights and social commentary to how to make the best farm-to-table guacamole.” In a Netflix trailer they outline that the original show was fighting for tolerance, and their fight is for acceptance. The trailer shows a straight man asking the gay men “so you guys married? One replies “I’ve been married for five year” “So are you the husband or the wife?” In which the gays react by saying “…Um, lets break that down! That is a misconception, let’s unpack that!”

With this kind of discussion taking part in the trailer, the show is sure to tackle further misconceptions from within the gay community and hopefully provide education that reaches further than fashion, we’ll certainly be binge watching!

**Black Lightning**

CW’s latest superhero show, features TV’s first black lesbian superhero – and her girlfriend. If that’s not cool as fuck, I don’t know what is. Not only does it feature two queer black women, it does so in such a *normal* way. There’s almost no stigma surrounding the characters within the show. Their sexuality is treated so normally in such a way that Anissas dad just casually says things like ‘she’s at her girlfriends.’ Quite right too.

The show follows Black Lightning; a retired superhero turned high school principal whose world is shook when his daughter, Anissa Pierce; portrayed by actor Nafessa Williams, begins to develop powers, discovering her other-worldy abilities. Meanwhile Anissa doesn’t \*know\* her dad is Black Lightning – it’s a whole thing. She basically kicks ass and is super gay. You should probably watch it and while you’re at it read the comic book.

Nafessa Williams describes her character Anissa as “timely and necessary.” Speaking at San Diego Comic-Con, she said: We need it. It’s been way too long.”

Unsurprisingly this show has received SO MUCH positivity from the LGBTQ+ community, and so it should.

* **Enter twitter screenshots –**

**Heathers**

Heathers was originally a 1980s drama/teen film. In which character Veronica (Winona Ryder) is part of the most popular clique at her high school, but disapproving of the other girls' cruel behaviour, Veronica and her new boyfriend, J.D. (Christian Slater), confront clique leader Heather Chandler (Kim Walker) and poison her, making it appear as suicide. Soon Veronica realizes that J.D. is intentionally killing students he does not like. She races to stop J.D. while also clashing with the clique's new leader, Heather Duke (SHANNEN DOHERTY). If the story isn’t already the stuff that queer dreams are made of then the cast is sure to make every gay man’s heart beat a little faster- mean Winona Ryder, Shannen Doherty and Christian Slater is every gays idea of perfect pop culture right?

Sticking with its LGBTQ+ appeal, in the 2018 update Heather Chandler isn’t your typical beauty queen; rather than being the 1980’s slim blonde, she’s fuller and brunette. Heather McNamara is a black lesbian, and Heather Duke is genderqueer. Fans aren’t sure what to make of this 2018 update of the 1980s mean girls gone queer, which means all the more reason to explore it.

**Here and Now**

Focuseson the lives of a mother and father and their four children, three of which are adopted from around the world. A split second within the trailer reveals one of the characters in a heated moment with another guy, and since Alan Ball (creator of the HBO series) has a history of creating incredible queer characters, responsible for “Six Feet Under” something remarkable can be expected.

As reported by *The Guardian* (2018) there is an ‘undoubted set of good intentions behind Six Feet Under creator Alan Ball’s glossy new family drama Here and Now. In promotional interviews, he’s spoken about his desire not to make “another show about another white family” and given his preferred network HBO’s tendency to avoid centering their event dramas around people of colour, it’s a progressive outlook.

It’s not just an awareness of racial diversity that’s spurred him to tell this particular story. Within the first two episodes, there are also gay characters, Muslim characters and a trans Muslim character, helping to make the show at least appear like one of the most inclusive of the golden era.

FUN FACT: Ball himself is gay and has been named “a strong voice for [the] LGBT community.” In 2008 made *Out* magazine’s annual list of the 100 most impressive gay men and women.

**Him or Her**

For the first time in 12 years, a queer black man will be leading a series. Created by Issa Rae, Him or Her chronicles the dating life of a bisexual black man and his struggles with dating. Word of the show triggered an angry response among some in the black community, reportedly complaining that a queer black lead would reflect unfavourably on black men. Rae was said to be dismayed by the reaction, but not entirely surprised. “There haven’t been many flattering images of black males on television,” she says, “because there haven’t been a lot of flattering images of black *people* on television.”

**Roseanne**

This ABC sitcom, created By Roseanne Barr, was known for pushing boundaries and being LGBT friendly before its end in 1997. It was a breakout hit, when they were few and far between. More than 20 years later, and it’s come back to primetime. While its revival has bought back all its original stars, some things have changed.

Whilst it was a pioneering show the first time round ‘focusing on blue collar Americans, diverse LGBTQ+ characters and its star- a woman who did not look or sound like a typical television female lead (NY times 2018), the new ‘Roseanne’ is shall we say topical. Homing in on the fact that Barr’s character, Roseanne Connor, is now a full-blown Trump supporter (y’know President Trump. The big old homophobe in the White House) mirrors the fact that Ms. Barr is herself a Trump supporter in real life, outlining in interviews her opinions on the presidents view of the LGBTQ+ community (she believes he is ‘not as homophobic as its made out’). This portrayal of republican support within the show is opposed by the characters sister, the lesbian liberal Jackie (excellently portrayed by queer favourite Laurie Metcalfe) however given the amount of political influence the show is sure to incorporate, plus Barr’s pretty sketchy opinions on trans rights, this might be one to avoid to save you feelings of anger and excessive eye rolling.

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