



## ***Runaways* (Season 2)**

**Showrunners: Josh Schwartz & Stephanie Savage**

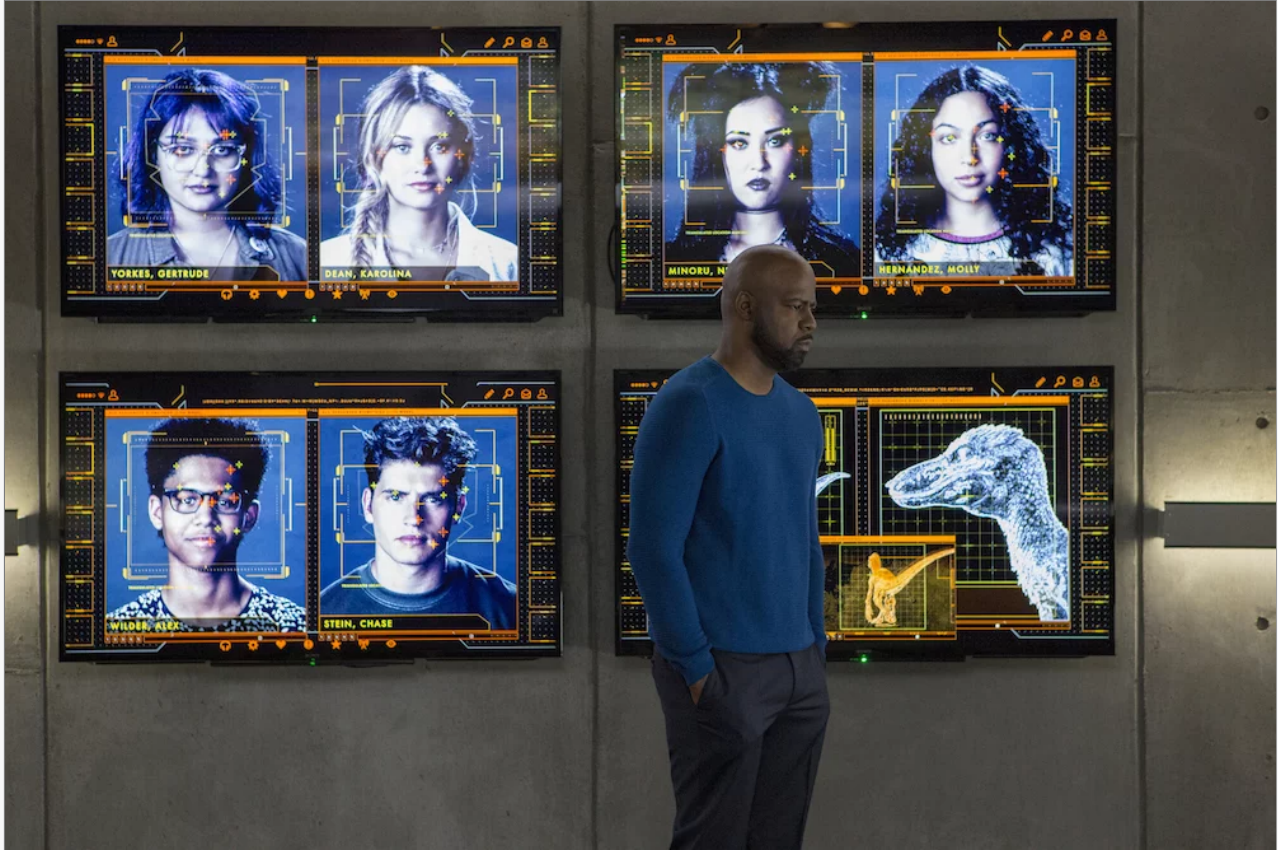
**Rating: TV-14**

**Release Date: December 21, 2018 (Hulu)**

Finally being true to the namesake, season 2 has our teenagers actually run away. Disenchanted by their parents participating in fatal rituals for the benefit of a devious extraterrestrial called Jonah (Julian McMahon), our runaways escape the comfortable spaces that their privilege provided them (though they can still afford the nicest clothing), eventually finding an underground mansion that serves as the base of their operations. Meanwhile, their parents, aka the Pride, are in hot pursuit.

Despite my grievances on how stuffed the plot of season 2 eventually became, I was impressed by how the writers were able to juggle all of the characters and give them all some significant role in the plot—not only are there six teens to keep track of, but each of them have roughly two parents each, all with their own agendas. With the actual Runaways, each performer seemed more comfortable in their role, though to the point of caricature at points.

Brains of the operation Alex Wilder (Rhenzy Feliz) always makes "nerdy" *Skyrim* or *Fortnite* references that fly over everyone's head, tech whiz and former jock Chase Stein (Gregg Sulkin) always quote his lacrosse coach, raptor owner Gert Yorkes (Ariela Barer) always rants about the patriarchy, and so on. Still, the writing provides each of these characters with some texture, and despite them trying to be a united front, they all come with their own feelings and motivations that always throw a wrench in their plans against the Pride.



"No more secrets" is a phrase that was often repeated by both the kids and parents in early episodes. As one can expect from the genre, people kept secrets anyway. It's a bit of a cheap way to pepper in drama every few minutes, but these shows always find a way to make it work. These constant conflicts work within the show's context—the Runaways took all of season one to finally bond, so watching them operate as a family, with all of the conflicts that come with that status, made sense. And you can tell that the cast members are more comfortable with each other as well—many of the quips land because everyone's timing feels very much in sync.

And for a show called *Runaways*, it has always had a near-equal focus on the parents as well. While I don't particularly enjoy the performances from the adults as much as from the kids, I find this web of dynamics to be quite interesting. Couples have their own internal moments of discord, but you can basically put all of the characters' names on a map and draw lines between each character because all of them have some sort of unique relationship or dynamic between them.

Yes, characters are friendly with each other, then they get mad at each other, and then they're happy again repeatedly. But despite the show's massive cast, no one goes to waste and that's an accomplishment.



It's a bit cheesy how both factions have their own home base now, the Runaways in their rundown mansion and the Pride in their high-tech boardroom. It adds some more visual consistency compared to the first season, however, and luckily we're not in both locations for that long. This Los Angeles-set show, from its soft focus-heavy opening credits to its constant use of pop and electronic music, has a nice dreamlike feel and look to it. Compare and contrast to the often gritty and violent look of the Netflix-Marvel shows, and what *Runaways* provides is a different and interesting corner of an already diverse world.

I also enjoyed seeing a bit more experimentation in the filmmaking of the show. Some scenes experimented with changing aspect ratios and lighting during more surreal scenes, almost like the show was inspired by *Legion* a bit. And for a television show, the visual effects worked for the most part—for example, Karolina Dean (Virginia Gardner) certainly glows a lot due to her light powers, and it somehow never looks that cheesy. And Gert's trusty sidekick Old Lace, a literal raptor, looks convincing, although it is quite obvious that the budget is limited enough to the point where she doesn't really do anything but snarl.

This is, however, the wrong Marvel show to look for good action. Sure, Molly Hernandez (Allegra Acosta) throws some stuff around with her super strength, but anytime characters engage in combat with each other, the results are uninspiring. With the exception of just one fight scene in literally the last episode of the season, the fight "choreography" all look like something out of a turn-based RPG (there's an Alex Wilder line for you).



There were so many elements about *Runaways* that I could glow about (Karolina pun not intended), but while increasing from ten to thirteen episodes between seasons might have been a creative opportunity at first, it ultimately becomes the show's undoing. Quite frankly, there were too many plots and plans going on at once. Characters are plotting against each other and then with each other; they have backup plans for their backup plans; some characters come up with their own schemes even though other ones are coming up with their own separate solution for the same problem.

Some characters come and go with little rhyme or reason. New villains and new allies are introduced and may have an arc for a few episodes before completely being dropped, with no hints about where those arcs could go in a potential third season and having little effect on the larger story. This second season also has a "*Twin Peaks* season 2 effect," in that so much happens in the middle that it is unclear what the rest of the season is really about.

It's hard for me to not recommend *Runaways* to those already subscribed to the genre and all of its tropes. It's not superhero-y enough to turn teen drama fans off, and as a massive MCU fan, I personally didn't think it was angsty enough for me to turn away. Season two was a big step forward and a few steps back creatively—if the show is lucky enough to get a third season (which it better, considering how this one ended), I'd hope that they make it a bit tighter.

Also, make the raptor eat people on screen.



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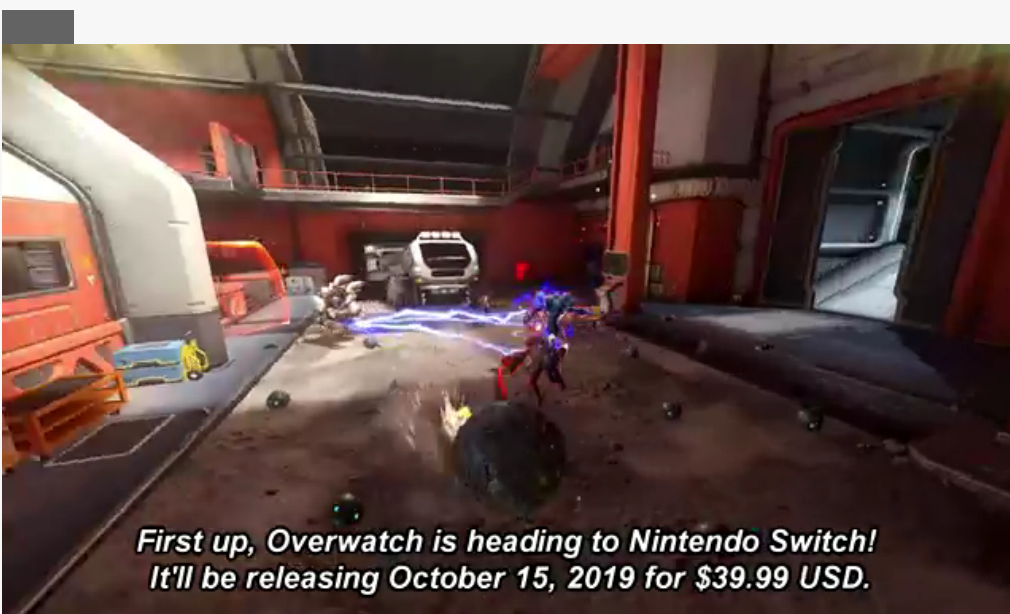
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First up, *Overwatch* is heading to Nintendo Switch!  
It'll be releasing October 15, 2019 for \$39.99 USD.

shares camera  
Pattinson as 'The

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#TheBatman#CameraTest<https://t.co/M1tAE2aTA1>

— Matt Reeves (@mattreevesLA) February 13, 2020

On Twitter this evening, director Matt Reeves shared a camera test for his upcoming Rob Pattinson starring *The Batman* and we now have a decent idea of how the former *Twilight* star will look as the caped crusader. Cast in a light that almost made me confuse him for *Daredevil*, I do have to admit that Rob looks pretty cool as *Batman*. There's maybe a bit too much armor going on, but this suit does seem to be noticeably different from past silver screen *Batman* iterations.

The darker lighting is clearly in an effort to see how Pattinson will look in *Batman's* typical low-light situations. It's not often you see *Batman* gallivanting around Gotham in broad daylight and shooting anything in low-light can be tough. Nailing the look of a costume under those circumstances is key and Reeves seems to have found a solid design.

Now we just need to see a trailer or something and I might actually be on board with this film.

