



Written by [Elanor Bonta](#) on March 31, 2023

YOU's Plot Twists Become More Tragic and Wacky as the Show Continues

YOU is a Netflix hit show that never ceases to be number 1 on the billboard on Netflix each time a new season is released. It is based on a book by the same name by Caroline Kepnes. Each new season is as baffling, tragic, and creepy as the last, even though the show's description is fairly innocent.

The show centers around the “protagonist” — who is more of an antagonist — Joe Goldberg. He's an intelligent book nerd, seemingly as good as they come. But it doesn't take long for red flags in his character to pop up. And by the end of the first episode, the audience has connected the dots: Joe Goldberg is an obsessive, delusional stalker who is on a relentless hunt for love.



YouTube

YOU is so popular because it is the first show to take that creepy concept and spin it into a complex show (since usually this plot device is used in movies instead). Although it has its momentary lapses of craftsmanship and some uncalled-for goofiness, the underlying themes of manipulation and controlling behavior are present throughout.

And what makes the show special is that each season has an entirely new genre. Yes, there's the underlying creepiness and terror, and Season 1 especially capitalizes on that, but Season 2 is a bit more complicated and dramatic. Season 3 dives entirely into horror-comedy. And Season 4, released in February, goes entirely off the rails into a British-style whodunnit mystery.

Depending on the viewer's taste, each season's whiplash can be fresh or annoying. But no matter the genre, each season is cleverly crafted to replicate the same overarching plot in a different dynamic and setting and with more tragedy each time. It is safe to say that throughout the entire series, Joe Goldberg, the obvious antagonist, does not change. And each time, he acts as though moving somewhere or meeting someone new will change his fundamental issues. But at the end of each season, he remains the same, just slightly more delusional. After all, Joe Goldberg is a sociopath.

The show is tragic in its own way. The entirety of *YOU* shows how Joe Goldberg never ceases to destroy lives in order to preserve his own. Whether it's via blackmail, lies, or murder, I've lost count of how many people's — and especially women's — lives he's destroyed in his pursuit of love.

The most recent season was certainly a hit or miss for the viewers. Goldberg had relocated to London and had seemingly settled down. But as the series continues, the viewer gradually assembles the big puzzle pieces missing until the show's climax. The seeming plot of the series almost makes the viewer think that maybe Joe has changed — but perhaps he has just surrounded himself with people twice as



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awful as himself.

Everything catches up to him and the characters involved. There's the usual murder, but sometimes during this season, it wasn't even Joe causing the tragedy. After all, Lady Phoebe, one of Joe's new friends in Season 4, experienced a lot of emotional manipulation and abuse from not-Joe. It was an incredibly feel-bad season by the end because the cycle has repeated once more. The ending itself was incredibly anger-inducing, and the season was well-made, although all over the place and confusing — just like a British mystery, as the genre intended.

For those who enjoy a show about psychological horror, *YOU* is right up your alley. Because *YOU* is filmed in first person, the show cleverly makes us, the viewers, feel Joe is manipulating us.

This show is targeted at two different audiences— there are the viewers who enjoy the horror aspects, while there are other viewers who romanticize Joe Goldberg's characters and view him as protective, sincere, and loving, even though that is exactly what the show is showing him not to be.

Even Penn Badgley, who plays Joe and is known for his role on *Gossip Girl*, admits in [US Magazine](#) that he hates the character. The producers and actors on *YOU* know that he is an unredeemable character, and yet, some members of the audience don't agree, believing that his character is perhaps misunderstood and a man that just wants love. Goldberg even has an entire archive of romantic fan-fictions written by fans.

YOU can certainly be hit-or-miss, depending on your taste, but if you're looking for a complex horror-tragedy filled with plot twists and turns, it's right up your alley.



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