

# *HULU'S NEW SERIES - LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE*

By Kyra Robinson

The Covid-19 pandemic has sent a majority of society indoors to practice social distancing. This has given people more free time to explore hobbies, exercise, read, and, of course, stream new shows. Netflix, Hulu and other streaming services alike have certainly seen an uptick of user activity on their platforms.

I, like many others, have jumped headfirst back into streaming shows on some of my favorite platforms, and recently, I have become a dedicated viewer of *Little Fires Everywhere*, Hulu's new highly acclaimed show that is updated every week. Yes, they took the traditional television route and gave viewers only one episode a week which is something I can admit I am used to no longer. Even more frustrating, the show is devastatingly good, and it sinks its hooks into you until you are completely enraptured in its story. It's not a fast-paced show, but you can feel the vibrations of the build-up in every episode. Obvious enough because the first scene of the show starts with the main character's house on fire. Viewers sit down every episode desperate for a clue on how that came to be.

*Little Fires Everywhere*, for a synopsis, is a show based in the late 90s in a humble town called Shaker, Ohio. It follows two families, one well-off and white and the other black, with a single mom and one daughter: The Richardsons and The Warrens. As mentioned before, the show opens with the Richardsons, the white family, watching as their house burns to the ground. The mystery is established: who burned down the house? It unravels from there, delving into the complicated lives of both families as their problems and secrets begin to intertwine.

I certainly don't want to give too much away, but this show took such a simple idea and utilized it to explore such complex topics. Motherhood, capitalism, choice and the lack thereof, racism in romantic and platonic dynamics are all examined in various relationships in the show. The study of motherhood and how it differentiates based on race and class are at the forefront of the show and guide the plot as we watch how the main characters, Elena Richardson (played by Reese Witherspoon) and Mia Warren (played by Kerry Washington), navigate their relationships with their kids. Elena Richardson is a white, suburban mother and journalist, with four kids. She's married to a successful lawyer, and they're so well off that they are disconnected from the realities of the lower class (Surprise? Not really!). Elena Richardson is like many white liberals and sees the opportunity to help out a struggling black woman...by asking her to be her maid. Excuse me, "house manager." This struggling black woman is Mia Warren, and after some thought, she agrees to assist Elena in the house. Her motives for agreeing to work there are revealed later in the show.

Mia has one daughter, Pearl, who is just starting high school. They move around a lot and live out of a car sometimes. This is how Elena's character first crosses with Mia's character actually. Elena sees her car parked with her asleep inside and calls the police. Later, Elena is showing an apartment she owns to no other than Mia and recognizes her car, and in an overwhelming surge of white saviorism, immediately decides to rent the house to Mia and her daughter. Pearl becomes close with the Richardson's after their son, Moody, comes by to introduce himself.

It seems simple enough in the beginning. Pearl attends school with Elena's children, Izzy, Moody, Lexie, and Trip. Izzy is an outcast, presumably gay 14-year-old daughter who clashes consistently with her mother. Juxtaposed to her, Lexie, her older sister, is a perfect replica of her mother and has a black boyfriend who is the focus of her character's development. Moody (a nickname! Nicknames are significant!), also starting high school, is awkward and shy, unlike his older brother who takes on the stereotypical role of a hot jock who runs the school. They all invite Pearl into their circle in

different ways under the indirect direction of their mother (Well, Moody was ahead of the game), and Mia's daughter gets caught up in the beautiful, privileged life of the Richardsons. It is completely valid too, since Pearl never had experienced a life like that before: big house, her own room, family dinners, simplicity. Pearl yearns for more in her life, especially information about her biological father. Of course, the anonymity of the father is only the seed that plants the tension between Pearl and her mother.

There's a lot of moving parts in this show, but it comes together smoothly to create a gripping storyline. It's irresistible from the beginning, and you become so attached to the characters even if you dislike how they do practically everything. The writers of this show are doing an incredible job, and I would love nothing more to pick their brain. With this plot and these characters, they study the most intricate and complicated aspects of human beings. It's written in a way where you know who's wrong and who's right, but you realize it doesn't really matter in the end. People are meant to be imperfect, but why they do the things they do is the thing worth examining. What you observe in those reasons is where you find the true morality of a person.

Witherspoon and Washington are two actresses I never thought we needed to see together. These two seasoned artists know how to take character and live in it, and I would not want anyone else in these roles.

I would definitely recommend this show to anyone, quarantine or not. If you're bored, this show is a good place to start. It's exhilarating, it's thought-provoking, and you won't be able to stop once you start.