

The Truth - Best Episodes

2022/02/02

The Truth is an anthology fiction podcast that I have listened to for the last few years. Their tagline is “Movies for your ears” which I found to be accurate as the production quality and acting is consistently very good. The acting especially is very immersive considering the episodes are only 10 to 30 minutes long. I also really appreciate the great deal of variety and ingenuity in the way the stories are told. For instance, in The Hilly Earth Society we hear the story by listening to a collection of voice mail messages. And that’s not even the most unique one.

Are all episodes worth listening to?

In short: Yes. I started with the first episode and have listened to them all in order except for the last thirty. And with every new episode I don’t quite know what kind of story I am about to hear and what twists are about to happen in the story. I like that kind of surprise. Especially since the episodes can be quite diverse in tone (“sometimes dark, sometimes funny, and always intriguing”) and genre (i.e. horror or science fiction). So even though The Truth has published more than 190 episodes since 2012 I’d still recommend listening to them all. The overall quality is just really good and I plan to update this post after listening to the remainder.

Why are these the best ones?

For me ‘the best’ means that the episodes were really memorable, touched me and were really unique in some way. This is naturally highly subjective and it was pretty hard to decide as there are so many good ones. Because of this I did end up adding a list of honourable mentions also. So you can read about the one’s that just barely didn’t make the cut. As I’ve still listed 10+ episodes, these are the one’s I feel are the best of the best: The Hilly Earth Society, Visible, and That’s Democracy. Oh and I don’t seem to like episodes that have a strong comedic element in them, for instance: Everybody SCREAM!!! and They’re Made Out of Meat.

Interruptions

One of the few things I don’t like, is that some of the later episodes started

containing an introduction and advertisement section. Both are pretty elegantly integrated into the episode, but I do prefer not having any distraction or context when listening to a new story. Interestingly the advertisement section always seems to advertise for products that the director really seems to like. “Best friends without the r” for instance will sound familiar to anyone that listened to later episodes. I am conflicted on how to think about that. It does make the advertisements feel more personal, but in the end ads are about making money and should they be this personal? Not sure there. I do think I’d prefer the option of paying for an ad-free version.

The List

The episodes in the table are listed in episode order, not in any kind of ranking. Here’s also another list of which episodes are considered most popular. And here’s a review of the podcast that I liked. Oh and if you don’t want to be spoiled at all, first listen to the episodes listed below before reading my comments!

Date Aired	Episode Name	Their Intro	My Notes
2012-02-14	Eat Cake	Can coconut cake + random phone calls = love? Find out, when these two Valentine’s Day traditions collide.	This is such a sweet and wholesome story to listen to. Basically listen to this one if you are having a bad day and want to feel better ;-). I also like the basic idea about making random phone calls on valentine's day.
2012-04-25	Tape Delay	The recording doesn’t lie.	I won't deny it. I found this episode hard to listen to as it feels pretty creepy and crazy at times. Still that in itself made it really memorable and provocative. It also felt very original and I was unsure where the story was moving towards.

Date Aired	Episode Name	Their Intro	My Notes
2012-09-04	That's Democracy	A teacher gives his students a lesson about democracy that they'll never forget.	A very gripping and tense episode to listen to. I wasn't very surprised by where the story goes, but still the characters felt relatable. It's also a bit of a reflection on representative democracy and the importance of voting which I could appreciate.
2013-05-09	You're Not Alone	Are you hearing voices? You're not alone.	Another touching episode. I liked that it feels very real and it also brings across how important small acts of kindness can be in people's life. And an episode dealing with mental illness in a very mature way I found really interesting.
2014-06-18	Chaotic Neutral	A game of Dungeons & Dragons is thrown into chaos, in this story about fantasy, reality, and a chaotic neutral wizard named Nicholas Cage.	This one is both real, weird, silly, sad and happy at the same time. A rollercoaster of an episode (within 15 minutes) and it's 'just' about four friends having a D&D session. I basically just had to include this one because of the uniqueness of it all.

Date Aired	Episode Name	Their Intro	My Notes
2016-02-12	Visible	A blind man gets a Seeing Eye App.	One of the things I really like about good science fiction stories is if they feel like they might be possible once the technology gets there. Visible is such a story. And it's also very human as the main characters story is really well told & engaging. I didn't like the second story on this episode though ('Drive Straight Ahead').
2017-01-11	The Dark End of the Mall	Shopping can make you work up a thirst.	I was hesitating a bit whether I should add this episode to the list as I was expecting the ending for awhile so for me it felt a bit too predictable. Still, even with that the way the story is told is excellent and the setting / premise is interesting. Besides, months later, I still vividly remember how this episode went and how it ended, so that's also a great sign.
2017-09-13	Possible Side Effects	Intestilax is a miracle cure for stomach pains. But be careful: it may have side effects.	This episode is both really funny and really sad. It reminded me a bit of Charlie's Angels for some reason, probably because there are three women talking to the main character with very distinct personalities. It also deals with mental health issues and happiness in life in a way that I found thought provoking.

Date Aired	Episode Name	Their Intro	My Notes
2018-03-21	The Hilly Earth Society	Some people are just too interesting to be left alone.	This is my favourite episode. The story begins with an old celebrity isolated from the world that's getting sent letters from a fan that he's not too happy to receive. It's told in a very original, unique way (using a voice answering machine) and it is both surprising at times and really touching.
2018-04-19	Justice Battalion	How far is too far in the fight for Truth, Justice, and the American Way? This episode asks some serious questions by taking the form of a Saturday morning cartoon.	Initially I was a bit put off by the old-fashioned cartoony style, but it grew on me during the episode. And I ended up really liking the deeper themes and engaging story this episode had in it (pretty dark humour).
2019-02-13	Meet Cute	Kate finally talks to that cute guy at the bowling alley, and he even asks her out on a date. It's just like a movie romance until something unexpected happens...	This went in such a completely different direction than what I initially expected that I just had to include this. Without wanting to spoil it for you, the characters really don't act like you'd expect them to do in a normal romantic story. What makes it even better for me is that the whole story does feel like it could happen like this in real life. And maybe it has happened ;(.

Date Aired	Episode Name	Their Intro	My Notes
2021-04-14	Irish Water Spaniel	A widower loses his horse and goes on a search for something new to love.	I listened to this episode out of order and I didn't expect it to really like it after the first few minutes. But the story really ended up surprising me with the gentle, mature and tender way it deals with the different people and the relationship between them. The story is about an old man, his daughter, his grandson and his horse called "Horse".

Honorable mentions

- 2012-03-06, Interruptible: Multiple different overlapping storylines within one taxi ride. It didn't quite make sense to me at times, but definitely interesting.
- 2012-05-23, Total Transparency & Eye Contact: These are improvised and it's incredible how good these stories still ended up becoming.
- 2014-03-09, The Extractor: Beautiful, original story about someone who can extract sounds from objects.
- 2014-08-17, Cold Read: The delicate ending of this episode about fortune telling really made it stand out to me.
- 2015-07-16, Dark Matter: Interesting episode about a scientist researching dark matter with a twist I didn't expect.
- 2016-08-07, Sleep Some More: Chilling and pretty original episode about a student studying a bit too hard.
- 2017-10-25, The Decider: Someone gets a device that can predict how happy she will be with the possible choices she can make. That must make life so much better, right?
- 2018-04-05, The Runaways: Intriguing story about a couple receiving messages from the future. I would have liked to have seen this one explored a bit more deeply.

- 2018-06-20, Fish Girl: Very cute story about a socially awkward little girl and a fish :).
- 2019-04-03, The Body Genius: This is a five part episode about someone really focused on body building.
- 2020-02-12, The Choice: Three people suddenly get a choice, but no context to make it. Interesting premise!
- 2020-01-29: Robocalls: A story about how difficult new technology can be for the elderly.
- 2020-03-11: Chester: Pretty creepy story about an AI dog and how it affected a relationship.