

"Vagabond" Has the Ending We're All Mad About

Still, it's a fast-moving and fun action thriller starring Suzy and Lee Seung-gi

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“배가본드”

☆☆☆ (out of ☆☆☆☆)

Cha Dal-gun (played by Lee Seung-gi)

Go Hae-ri (played by Bae Suzy)

↑Note: Korean names denote the surname followed by the given name.

There are so many great things going on in “Vagabond,” but the disjointed, *WTF* finale isn’t one of them. There was supposed to be a second season to tie up loose ends, but that never happened. Regardless, the ending seemed more like something you’d see before a commercial break, rather than the finale of an otherwise great season.

Dal-gun is a stuntman and taekwondo master, who struggles to care for his deceased brother’s son, Hoon. (The mother is alive, but out of the picture.) Right before the tween leaves for Morocco with his taekwondo demo team, the two argue. When Hoon’s plane crashes, killing all 211 passengers, Dal-gun is filled with grief and remorse.

But while in Morocco with the families of the other victims, he spots one of the supposedly deceased passengers (*Yoo Tae-oh of Past Lives*). From that point on, he goes into protective uncle mode, trying to figure out how anyone could’ve survived, *unless* he was part of a planned terrorist attack that allowed the perpetrators to escape.



He wins over the confidence of Hae-ri, a rookie National Intelligence Service agent, who believes he may be onto something. Together, the two investigate covert organizations in Morocco and South Korea to ferret out the terrorist group behind all of the carnage ... and figure out which conglomerate orchestrated the attack and why.

The two primary suspects are lobbyists for competing airline manufacturers who want South Korea's military business: Edward Park (Lee Geung-young) and his former

protégé (and lover), Jessica Lee (Moon Jeong-hee).

The action sequences are thrilling. Never mind that a stuntman shouldn't be a better marksman or fighter than trained military operatives or SWAT team members, but viewers have to suspend their belief in reality for any of this to be plausible anyhow.

Lee Seung-gi and Bae Suzy are among the most likeable K-drama stars for good reason. In "Vagabond," Lee has the flashier role. But Bae's part is more difficult in many ways. She is expected to be cute and sexy, while being an extremely competent klutz, who is aware of both her skills and shortcomings.

As for the ending I mentioned earlier, it's ambiguous. And unless there is a good backstory to explain it all, I don't like what it implies has happened to Hae-ri. But again, we may never know.

Controversy: Lee Geung-young was arrested in 2002 for the prostitution of a minor and was banned by some Korean networks from appearing on their shows for a few years.

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Airdates: Sixteen 70-minute episodes aired on SBS from September 20 to November 23, 2019. (I watched this on Netflix.)

Vagabond | Official Trailer | Netflix [ENG SUB]

Netflix K-Content



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Spoiler Alert: The series ends the same way that it began: Dal-gun is a mercenary hired to kill a target. But when he sees that the target is Hae-ri, he hesitates. What happened that put them on seemingly opposite sides? Is she working undercover for

the NIS? Or has she gone rogue like Dal-gun, only over to Jessica's side? Are both so deeply undercover that they'll never be able to return to their old lives?

Both lead characters started off as good people with strong moral compasses. Is this really who they want to be?

One of the things I really disliked about this series is how simple-minded many of the politicians are. They go to meetings *knowing* that there is a trap — because their underlings have already been caught — and they still allow themselves to be manipulated, when they could've easily said, "No, you come meet me at the spot of my choice." Instead, they walk right into the traps — even after finding the *secret* cameras — and allow themselves to be filmed doing things that can and will be used as blackmail. I'm talking about *you*, Minister of National Defense (Choi Kwang-il). When you see your upper level staff half naked and partying with sex workers, you do *not* allow Jessica to seduce you. Because, guess what? Now you've been incriminated on the dirty version of "Candid Camera"!

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