

Will Viewers Figure Out Whodunit in “Beyond Evil”?

Not likely. You may think you know, but I'm betting you'll be wrong.

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I've been **talking about how great** “The Scarecrow”¹ has been. (New episodes will air on Monday and Tuesday.) While 2026 isn't even half over, I can't imagine that there will be a better K-drama this year. Loosely based on the real-life Hwaseong² murders, the series centers on a detective and his frenemy prosecutor who attempt to catch a serial killer.

While “Beyond Evil”³ isn't as well executed as “The Scarecrow,” there are some similarities. The premise is intriguing, the acting is superb, and the script keeps viewers guessing until the very end.

“Beyond Evil”



Actors Yeon Jin-goo, Shin Ha-kyun

☆☆½

Lee Dong-sik (played by Shin Ha-kyun)

Han Joo-won (played by Yeo Jin-goo)

Yoo Jae-yi (played by Choi Sun-eun)

Nam Yoon-su (played by Oh Ji-hoon)

"Beyond Evil" is one weird (in an interesting way) Korean series that centers on the search for a serial killer who murdered multiple women — including the protagonist's twin sister, Yu-yeon. Virtually all the major characters are suspects at one point or another, with damning evidence that has been carefully weaved into the storyline.

Dong-sik's younger sister was one of the success stories in the small town they lived in. She was headed for Seoul National University and, after receiving a text to meet someone, disappeared. Assumed dead, her grieving family couldn't cope. Her father died of shock, her mother couldn't function, and her brother lived his entire life as a suspect, even though he was a police officer who had been cleared.

When hot-shot cop Joo-won transfers in from Seoul, he is partnered with Dong-sik and tells him right away: He believes Dong-sik is guilty and he will prove it.

This series could've turned into a hackneyed buddy series. Instead, it's an intriguing crime drama, but one that is sometimes marred by a slow-moving plot that makes the episodes needlessly drag on. As curious as I was about the serial killer's identity, the best parts of the series occurred after the serial killer was revealed. When the mind games ramp up, the series excels.

Shin Ha-kyun is a scene stealer whose sly mannerisms never reveal his character's intentions until the perfect moment. As his disapproving partner who begrudgingly grows to trust and respect him, Yeo Jin-goo has the less showy role, but one that is necessary in many ways to balance Shin's.

Airdates: Sixteen hour-long episodes aired on JTBC from February 19 to April 10, 2021. (I recently rewatched this on Netflix.)

Beyond Evil | Official Trailer | Netflix [ENG SUB]

Netflix K-Content



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Spoiler Alert: I was suspicious of just about everyone, to be honest. But I knew Dong-sik was innocent, because the writers made it too obvious that he was the prime suspect. In many ways, everyone in town was guilty because they kept so many secrets and hid so many wrongdoings — thinking they were protecting their own loved ones — that things got worse.

The serial killer was the town resident who has an intellectual disability. Except he doesn't. That simple-minded guise sheltered him from being considered as a murderer. He later kills his own daughter, when it becomes clear she's not his biological child.

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A local political bigwig committed all kinds of crimes to protect her son, who's not only Dong-sik's best friend, but was secretly dating Yu-yeon. He didn't kill her, but due to protective memory loss, he is never quite sure of his innocence. He lives wracked with guilt over her death.

Yu-yeon was killed by Joo-won's high-ranking father, who had been driving drunk and ran over her. Not wanting to mar his stainless record by admitting to what he had done, he covered it up and willingly let innocent people be punished for the crime he committed.

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- 1 I'm watching "The Scarecrow" on Viki in the U.S.
 - 2 Between 1986 and 1994, Lee Choon-jae killed 15 girls and women. He sexually assaulted most of them before strangling them with their own clothes (including pantyhose). The 2003 film *Memories of Murder* is loosely based on Lee's crimes.
 - 3 The Korean title for "Beyond Evil" is 괴물, which translates to *monster*.
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