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hello, i love you: introduction

The opening riffs from an epic 1980s power ballad hit the hallways, piquing the interest of a dejected teacher, a malicious cheerleading coach and the resident bad boy. In the auditorium six misfit kids in matching red shirts and Converse sneakers twirl and wheel (literally!) to a song they have not only made their own but taken to heart — Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin’.” They radiate joy with every note, much to the delight of the teacher and to the dismay of the cheerleading coach. William McKinley High School’s glee club has arrived. And so has *Glee*, becoming must-see TV for millions of self-proclaimed gleeks around the world.

Glee, the show about a misfit show choir, is a celebration of freaks, geeks and underdogs, and of passion, pride and creativity. It’s about doing what you love and being proud of who you are, even if you don’t always fit in. “You know, the show choir thing, I think, is a metaphor for being different and embracing your difference and being able to express yourself no matter how hard or how much pain you’re in,” *Glee*’s creator Ryan Murphy says. It’s this metaphor that viewers everywhere connect with, looking at Rachel, Finn, Quinn, Kurt, Artie, Puck, Mercedes and Tina and seeing themselves (albeit with killer singing and dancing skills).

Glee is often compared to *High School Musical*, but it’s darker and more complex, and while the musical performances are similar to *American Idol*’s, that’s where that comparison ends too. *Glee* is a comedy, drama and musical

all rolled into one. To find a comparable show, you need to go back to the 1980s and the success of *Fame*, which aired for one season on NBC before being syndicated for its five remaining seasons. *Fame*, like *Glee*, put the spotlight on a group of talented high school students aspiring to stardom. It explored mature themes, dealt with the difficulties of growing up and addressed the sacrifices we make for our dreams, highlighting these issues with a dynamic musical element. After *Fame*'s television run ended, shows with a performing arts focus experienced a bit of a lull, but in the last decade they've regained their place at center stage. And with Rachel Berry–esque determination, they're not giving up their marquee status any time soon. With the success of shows and movies like *American Idol*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, *America's Got Talent*, *Stomp the Yard*, *Step Up* and the *Fame* film remake, it was only a matter of time before someone channeled the movement into a scripted television show.

When writer/director Ryan Murphy did just that in 2009, his show became an unstoppable force, with an average of 9.77 million viewers per episode, millions of song downloads, a live concert tour, a clothing line and so much more. The fans are in on the spin-off action too. From YouTube mash-up videos to fan cover songs, from Twitter trending to fan fiction: there's nothing *Glee* hasn't touched. Including us, the lucky gals writing this book.

We both became enamored of the show, mysteriously unavailable on each Wednesday (and then Tuesday) night, wearing Emma-inspired monochromatic outfits around town, dancing to "Don't Stop Believin'" in the subway and suggesting *Glee*-only karaoke nights with friends. We went online to find people who felt the same way, started our own blogs and connected with fans, including role players, other bloggers and frequent forum users.

In fact, it was *Glee* that brought us together. We're both writers who pitched the idea of a *Glee* companion guide to ECW Press, a publishing house known for their great television books. ECW loved both proposals and thought that, together, we could create a book that every gleek would love to read. Mash-ups, as *Glee* has taught us, can be a beautiful thing.

As much as we love *Glee*, we're the first to admit the show isn't perfect. Some lessons can be heavy-handed and some plot points fall flat. But *Glee* has guts and isn't afraid to make mistakes. Just like their characters, the creative minds behind the show push forward with originality, spunk and heart, knowing that doing what they believe in is worth the occasional slushie facial from their critics. Besides, emotional peaks and valleys are all

part of a regular episode of *Glee*. Inspiring laughter one minute and tears the next (and sometime tears of laughter!), one episode of *Glee* takes viewers through more emotions than some television shows do over a whole season. No wonder we finish every episode with a song in our hearts!

Glee is a huge, complicated and fascinating world, both on-screen and off. It has an eclectic cast of Broadway stars and previously unknown actors, a complicated production process, tons of musical numbers and references to everything from 1930s Broadway to Justin Timberlake. *Glee* moves at a breakneck pace and it's sometimes hard to keep up, let alone take it all in. But don't worry, we're here to help you successfully navigate the halls of McKinley High.

Don't Stop Believin' acts as a companion to this brilliant show, something you can read while watching (or rewatching!) each episode. The book delves into the history of the music, offers behind-the-scenes information, and explains the Broadway, pop culture and history references. Think of it as *Pop-Up Video* in book form. *Glee's* history, production process and cast biographies open this book, followed by episode guides so detailed that they make Emma Pillsbury's sanitation look sloppy. If you're reading along while watching the show for the first time, never fear! No spoilers for future episodes will be revealed. Each guide opens with a quote that captures the episode's major themes, followed by the essential who, what, where and when of its original U.S. airing. After that, we'll supply you with a full analysis of the episode and several juicy extras, such as:

Star Rating: A lot happens during an episode of *Glee*. You laugh, you cry, you get up and dance — sometimes all at once. By giving each element (the Music, the Drama, the Laughs) a star rating out of four, you'll know how much Kleenex you're going to need, or if you'll want to break out the spandex.

High Note: So much happens in a single episode of *Glee*, but for us, this was the moment most deserving of a Rachel Berry gold star.

Low Note: And, on the other hand, while we love the show, we know it isn't perfect, so we'll also mention the episode's biggest sore spot.

Behind the Music: Music is the heart of *Glee*. We'll focus on the music

don't stop believin'

heard in each episode, giving a brief history for the original song (or the version covered on *Glee*) and examining the connections between the song and what's happening on-screen.

The Sound of Music: Some episodes are based on a specific musical style or genre, or on the influence of a legendary performer, so here we'll give you a fun mini-music history lesson.

Give My Regards to Broadway: A lot of Broadway shows get the *Glee* treatment, whether it's New Directions singing a song from an acclaimed play or Sandy Ryerson directing a high school production of it. In this section, we will give you some background on these shows.

That's Pretty Popular: Ryan Murphy brought a lot of his best stuff — singing jocks, bitchy cheerleaders, social outcasts — with him from the halls of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School to McKinley. We'll point them out for you so you can find them more easily when you rent the *Popular* DVDs.

Slushie Facials: All the pranks and dirty deeds performed (on- or off-screen) at McKinley High are cataloged here.

Off-Key: Even the great Ryan Murphy makes mistakes sometimes, and this is where you'll find them, whether it's a blooper, an error in continuity or just something that didn't make sense.

Behind the Scenes: Sometimes fact is more interesting than fiction, and here we'll give you a backstage pass to the cool real-life stories with connections to *Glee*.

Center Stage: *Glee* is chock full of references to rock stars, stage stars, movies, songs, TV shows and more. Center Stage is a handy guide to the show's entertainment references.

Jazz Hands: The *Glee* world is filled with funny little details, quirks and references that give each episode an added sparkle, and here we'll point out some of the best ones.

The Buckeye State: The propmasters and writers do their best to make *Glee*'s version of Lima, Ohio, feel authentic. They (and the Ohioans who put up with this show!) deserve a few shout-outs now and then and we'll highlight them here.

How Sue Cs It: Sue Sylvester is one of the most quotable characters on television. Every episode, we pick a favorite quote and put it here!

As jam-packed as each episode guide may seem, that's not all! We've got exciting extras such as biographies of the greatest guest stars, exclusive interviews and a sidebar we call Gleek Speak, where we chat with the biggest gleeks around or people doing awesome *Glee*-related things.

While we did our best to make this the most comprehensive *Glee* guide out there, you may spot something completely new or disagree with our interpretations of certain episodes. Good, bad, happy or sad, we'd love to hear from you. Erin can be found at embalser@gmail.com and Suzanne's email is suzie.gardner@gmail.com. Don't forget to stop by our blogs, *Glee Dork* (gleedork.com) and *Gleeks United* (gleeksunited.wordpress.com), where you can find weekly Gleecaps, *Glee* gossip and more!

Don't stop believin',
Erin & Suzanne

can't fight this feeling: the origins of glee

With top 40 hits and Broadway show tunes, lightning-fast plotlines and a large cast of characters, dark social commentary and heartwarming moments, *Glee* itself is a mash-up more complex than the New Directions team could ever dream of. With so much going on, every element needed to be dynamite in order for *Glee* to work. One miscast character or poorly selected song and the pilot would have been criticized for being overly cheesy. But the final product was pitch perfect. *Glee* is the brainchild of three different men, Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Ian Brennan, who, with the help of a large cast and crew, make the world of *Glee* come alive every week.

Even the best show choir needs a leader and *Glee's* is none other than television veteran Ryan Murphy. Ryan was born on November 30, 1965, to an Irish-Catholic family in Indianapolis, Indiana. Considered a high-strung and precocious child, Ryan was always imaginative, immersing himself in movies, television, music and books as a form of escape. He even obsessed about becoming the Pope. "You just wanted a way out. You wanted a way to express yourself and just sort of not stay in Indiana and be an insurance salesman or a farmer," he says. Despite his aspirations to papal glory and his family's devout influence, Ryan never felt a connection with the church or with God. Yet his Catholic education would influence a major part of his future career — his storytelling. Ryan explains, "I'm very, very glad that I had that religious upbringing because, you know, it really taught me about

don't stop believin'



The man who makes dreams come true, Ryan Murphy.

storytelling and it really taught me about theatricality.”

Even with his strict Catholic upbringing, Ryan, who is openly gay, never struggled with his sexuality. “My sexuality was always just a given and I always accepted it,” he told *After Elton*. “I never really had a coming out. I was out in utero, I think. I had a very strong sense of self. It was never an

issue for me. I never struggled with it.” Despite Ryan’s keen self-awareness, his parents worried about his well-being and sent him to a psychiatrist at 15. However, the psychiatrist deemed him simply “too precocious for his own good” and sent him home. Ryan’s experience growing up gay in the Midwest would inform his future television shows, including *Glee*, and many of Kurt Hummel’s experiences are based on Ryan’s high school days.

Growing up, Ryan was always on the lookout for creative outlets to channel his energy. Ryan applied — and was accepted — to film school but couldn’t afford to go. Instead he attended Indiana University in Bloomington, where he majored in journalism, worked at the *Indiana Daily Student*, starred in productions of *Bye Bye Birdie* and *South Pacific* and sang in the choir. He flirted with the idea of being a professional actor, but decided to put his journalism degree to use by writing headlines instead of becoming a headliner. After graduating, Ryan moved to star-studded Los Angeles where he penned entertainment stories for the *Miami Herald*. The writer’s boundless energy and passion for showbiz led to freelance opportunities with such entertainment news heavyweights as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Daily News* and *Entertainment Weekly*.

It was only a matter of time before Ryan shifted his focus from chasing stories to making up his own. He started scriptwriting in the late 1990s, after he became bored with writing about Hollywood and celebrities. “I had interviewed Cher for the fifth time and I was like, ‘Okay, you got to do something else,’” Ryan says. “Even though I love her, I can’t keep writing about her.” The journalist began to write a screenplay about a woman who meets a man who loves Audrey Hepburn as much as she does, writing late into the night after work. He eventually sold that script, *Why Can’t I Be Audrey Hepburn?*, to Steven Spielberg. Despite the big-name buy, the project (which had both Téa Leoni and Jennifer Love Hewitt attached to star at different points) was never put into production. Hollywood’s many hurdles didn’t faze Ryan, and he eagerly launched into his new career as a screenwriter with his next project, the dark teen drama *Popular*.

Popular, which ran for two seasons from 1999 to 2001 on the WB (now the CW), brought a caustic edge to teen drama, a genre that was experiencing a surge in viewership at the time. The show was originally conceived as a movie, but, after getting some feedback, Ryan teamed up with television producer Gina Matthews and turned the concept into a series. They shopped it around and four networks bid on it, but they signed with teen television

powerhouse the WB. "We went with the WB because they seem to give shows more of a chance," Ryan says. At the time, the WB aired *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Dawson's Creek*, *7th Heaven*, *Felicity*, *Roswell* and *Charmed* and appeared to be the perfect home for *Popular*.

When *Popular* premiered on September 29, 1999, it enhanced the WB's teen line-up with its honest, and often brutal, portrayal of surviving high school. Cynical, funny and over-the-top, the show looked at high school through the eyes of two girls who were the heads of their own cliques: popular cheerleader Brooke McQueen and unpopular journalist Sam McPherson. "It was sort of *Heathers*-esque," Ryan explains, referring to the 1989 black comedy starring Winona Ryder and Christian Slater about a murderous, popular clique of girls, all named Heather. "I always thought that that was a culty, darker thing that had a very cynical tone to it." Ryan claims that *Popular* and *Glee* are two very different shows, but it's obvious that many ideas and themes found their way from *Popular* to *Glee*. (We'll take a closer look at these comparisons in the section *That's Pretty Popular*.) *Popular* was a hit in its first season but failed to hold on to its audience after being moved to Friday nights for the second season. In a dark, real-life plot twist, *Popular* was abruptly and unexpectedly canceled, leaving the audience with a deadly cliffhanger.

Ryan's next project was the 2002 WB TV pilot *St. Sass*. Delta Burke was set to star as the new headmistress of an exclusive all-girls prep school, but the show (which had future *Glee* star Amber Riley in its cast) wasn't picked up. Yet this small step back would lead to a much bigger step forward as the writer refocused his time and energy on a new project that would establish him as a top-notch creative force. That project was the F/X drama *Nip/Tuck*, a show about two plastic surgeons practicing in Miami and, later, Los Angeles. Ryan was inspired to create *Nip/Tuck* after visiting a plastic surgeon for research for an article about men's calf implants. He was so appalled and intrigued by the experience that he knew he had to turn it into a television show. "I went into my consultation with this plastic surgeon, and, within five minutes, he told me five things I could do to improve my face and my body, and thus my life," he recalls. The article never got written; instead, *Nip/Tuck* was born.

Nip/Tuck was a huge departure from *Popular* but contained the same dark humor, cynical tone and biting commentary on contemporary culture. With Dr. Sean McNamara or Dr. Christian Troy urging patients, "Tell me what you don't like about yourself," *Nip/Tuck* asserts that we don't grow out

of the teenage insecurities that plague the kids in *Popular*, and that the *Glee* kids strive so hard to overcome. Premiering on July 22, 2003, *Nip/Tuck*, a gruesome and graphic show, explores the ugly side of beauty, wealth and plastic surgery. "I think the public thinks that this is delicate surgery, and these surgeons treat the face as if it were porcelain," Ryan explains. "And in fact they treat it like it was sirloin." Ryan was an executive producer on *Popular* but came into his own with *Nip/Tuck*. He became more hands-on and began to direct for the first time in his career, a skill he'd take with him to movie sets and to *Glee*. The series won a Golden Globe for Best Drama in 2005 and received an order of 22 episodes, unprecedented for a cable TV show, for its fifth season.

Once *Nip/Tuck* became a well-oiled machine, Ryan started working on other projects, including co-writing and directing the 2006 film *Running with Scissors* and penning the 2008 pilot for *Pretty Handsome* (a show about a transgendered gynecologist that co-starred Jonathan Groff, Lea Michele's *Spring Awakening* co-star and Vocal Adrenaline's Jesse St. James). *Nip/Tuck* ended its remarkable six-season run with its 100th episode on March 3, 2010. The show's success had given Ryan's career a transformative facelift, and, in 2007, Ryan signed an eight-figure multi-year deal with Fox that included developing new series for 20th Century Fox Television and giving the network the first look at any project, including *Glee*.

It was a tremendous opportunity, but one that came with significant pressure. Luckily, Ryan wasn't working alone. Originally hired as a writer for *Nip/Tuck* in its first season, Brad Falchuk (currently one of *Glee*'s executive producers, who writes, produces and directs for the show) quickly worked his way up to producer on the R/x drama. In fact, Ryan liked Brad's work so much that the two developed *Pretty Handsome* together before teaming up again for *Glee*.

If Ryan was Kurt Hummel in high school, the gay drama and choir geek, Brad was Finn Hudson, the jock trying to figure out where he belonged. Brad played baseball, basketball and lacrosse in high school, and, despite being relatively popular, he always felt the need to stand out and be different. Brad, like Ryan, was driven by a need to move on to bigger and better things. He struggled in school (and later discovered he was dyslexic), and, to distract his classmates from his difficulties and to stand out from the crowd, he wore a tie every day and told everyone at his liberal-leaning school that he was a Republican. "Everyone is searching for something," he says. "And usually