

SAN JUNIPERO WORKSHEET

1) Read the article about the episode and comment it.

Charlie Brooker uses the episode San Junipero, set in 1987, to riff on the same idea: that love can transcend everything.

As the episode opens we meet Yorkie (Mackenzie Davis), a geek and shy girl with glasses. Getting to know the downtown scene of San Junipero for the first time, she heads to the local nightclub for a retro night out, her actually first night out.

In the pink and blue light of the club she meets Kelly (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), who sits next to her to dodge an eager ex-boyfriend. Soon the two are dancing on the dancefloor and Kelly is making a pass at Yorkie, which she deflects. The next time they see each other, and after a lot of overthinking from Yorkie's, they end up spending the night together. Then Kelly disappears.

The closer you look at this rendering of 1987, something seems a bit off and strange. Everything points to the spectre of another reality rippling through the neon. There are cigarettes which can't be tasted, mirrors that don't crack when they're punched. The pop culture that surrounds Yorkie's 1987 speaks to other worlds and split personalities at the same time that they go across different decades. As Yorkie pursues Kelly through different years (1987, 1997, 2002) we realise that time is as illusive as her lover. "Try a different time," Yorkie is advised by one of Kelly's ex's. "She's worth it."

This is a sci-rom where everyone is anaesthetised against feeling anything, except, incidentally, love. What Brooker presents is time travel as a tonic for assisted living. In the present day, Yorkie is connected to a life support machine and Kelly is a woman in her autumn years with a terminal illness.

Life after death exists as an artificial place in the cloud. San Junipero is an hedonistic heaven, a virtual reality where the dying people can enjoy their Greatest Hits past. Brooker says a lot of things here, about atheism, tolerance, euthanasia and the spirit, but it's his ability to capture the purity of love that stays with you.



2) Choose four adjectives to describe the main characters and justify your choice.

- Yorkie:

- Kelly:

4) Do you agree with Kelly's decision? Why or why not?

5) Can you think about an alternative ending to San Junipero's episode? How would it be?

6) Debate:

Do you think that it is possible to have a place like San Junipero in a few years? In case that you had the chance, would you choose to move to San Junipero and live an unreal digital life or would you choose not to do it?

