

Entertainment WEEKLY



THE CAST SPILLS INTEL ON THE REVIVAL
AND **SECRETS** FROM THE ORIGINAL SERIES
(LUKE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A WOMAN!)

PLUS: THE FINAL FOUR WORDS ARE...(KIDDING!)

By Samantha Highfill

LUKE
DANES
—
Scott Patterson

JESS
MARIANO
—
Milo Ventimiglia

LOGAN
HUNTZBERGER
—
Matt Czuchry

DEAN
FORESTER
—
Jared Padalecki

LANE
KIM
—
Keiko Agena

LORELAI
GILMORE
—
Lauren Graham

RORY
GILMORE
—
Alexis Bledel

EMILY
GILMORE
—
Kelly Bishop

PAUL
ANKA
—
Sparley

Graham, Bledel,
and Bishop
photographed on
Sept. 30, 2016,
in New York City
Photograph
by Alexei Hay

Patterson,
Ventimiglia,
Czuchry, Sparley,
Padalecki, and
Agena photo-
graphed on
Oct. 29, 2016, in
Los Angeles
Photograph by
Justin Stephens

STARS HOLLOW HOME COMING

Just weeks before *Gilmore Girls* finally returns for Netflix's four-part series *A Year in the Life*, we asked the cast and creators to look back on some classic moments—and give us a sneak peek of what to expect next. *By Samantha Highfill @samhighfill*

IN

the very first season of *Gilmore Girls*, Lorelai and Rory are sitting in their living room introducing Rory's then boyfriend Dean to *The Donna Reed Show*. "So it's a show?" Dean asks, to which Rory responds, "It's a life-style," before Lorelai can add, "It's a religion."

Fifteen years later, the same can be said of the show Amy Sherman-Palladino once pitched to The WB as the story of a mother and daughter who are more like best friends. *Gilmore Girls* is a lifestyle—a religion, if you will. The story of the fast-talking single mom who left home at 16 to raise her Ivy League-bound daughter in one of the quirkiest towns TV has ever seen debuted on Oct. 5, 2000. Although *Gilmore* wasn't an immediate ratings success—it had tough competition in *Survivor* and *Friends*—an eventual move to Tuesdays helped it become The WB's second-highest-rated show as the nation fell in love with the pop culture-obsessed duo.

"We discovered Rory and Lorelai's dynamic once Lauren [Graham] and I started working together," star Alexis Bledel says. "It really depended on whether or not we had chemistry, and we had complementary energies, so it fell into place."

Just like that, Sherman-Palladino had her beginning, though no one could predict it would take a revival for her to get her happy ending. After *Gilmore Girls* hit Netflix in October 2014, the show found a new generation of passionate fans. By June 2015, when the cast reunited at the EW-sponsored ATX Television Festival panel, talks of a revival were under way, and as of January it was official: The Gilmores were coming back! With Netflix's *Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life* premiering Nov. 25, the cast and creators reflect on the original series.



THIRD GENERATION'S THE CHARM

Amy Sherman-Palladino pitched Gilmore as the story of a mother and daughter, but it wasn't until the show introduced Lorelai's parents that she saw the show's full potential. It all started in the pilot, when Lorelai and Rory attend their first Friday-night dinner with Richard and Emily.



AMY SHERMAN-PALLADINO (*Creator*)

Seeing the conflict around that table, that to me was a great family dynamic. Lorelai is made because of her experience with her family, and Emily is Emily because Lorelai left. That added a layer

SHERMAN-PALLADINO: EMMA MCINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES FOR EW; TOP: SCOTT HUMBERT/ THE WB; BOTTOM: WARNER BROS./EVERETT COLLECTION



LAUREN GRAHAM (*Lorelai Gilmore*)

There's something about going into that house where I had this very simple but big revelation, which is no matter how old you are, you're still a kid in your parents' house. That to me was a real hook in terms of who the character was.



ALEXIS BLEDEL (*Rory Gilmore*) Rory's grandparents welcome her into that world and give her everything. She's

a different type of person than Lorelai; she's the type to cherish those gifts and not rebel against the more established niceties that make up their lifestyle. At the same time, Rory knows that's not really where she belongs.



(From top) A Friday-night dinner during season 6 with Graham, Edward Herrmann, Bledel, and Bishop; Patterson and Graham in season 2

(PHOTO SHOOT) L.A. SHOOT STYLING: ANNIE JAGGER/THE ONLY AGENCY; PROPS: JASON MCKNIGHT; PRODUCTION: ALLISON ELIOFF/SUNNY 16 PRODUCTIONS; NYC SHOOT STYLING: KEMAL HARRIS/THE WALL GROUP; MANICURIST: GINA EDWARDS/DIOR VERNIS/KATE RYAN INC.; PATTERSON'S GROOMING: ANGE GRMOLYES; JACKET: JOHN VARVATOS; SWEATER: POLO; JEANS: HUDSON; BELT: H&M; BOOTS: FERRAGAMO;

VENTIMIGLIA'S AND PADALECKI'S GROOMING: BARBARA GUILLAUME/TOM FORD/ART DEPARTMENT; VENTIMIGLIA'S JACKET: ALLSAINTS; SHIRT: POLO RALPH LAUREN; JEANS: 3X15TEEN; BOOTS: WESCO; PADALECKI'S JACKET, SHIRT, THEORY; SHOES: CONVERSE; CZUCHRY'S GROOMING: SONIA LEE/SISLEY PARIS/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS MANAGEMENT; JACKET: HUGO BOSS; SHIRT: REIGNING CHAMP; JEANS: H&M; AGENA'S HAIR: AARON LIGHT/THE WALL GROUP; MAKEUP: HINAKO/KATE SOMERVILLE/THE WALL GROUP; DRESS: RED VALENTINO; SHIRT: MADISON & BERKELEY; SHOES: MUI MUI; GRAHAM'S HAIR: LONA VIGI/NEXXUS/STARWORKS ARTISTS; MAKEUP: ANGELA LEVIN/TRACEY MATTINGLY; SHIRT: VERONICA BEARD; JEANS: DL1961; BLEDEL'S HAIR: KENNA KENNOR/EVO/ART DEPT; MAKEUP: ERIC POLITO/CHANEL/ART DEPT; DRESS: TOPSHOP; BOOTS: L.K. BENNETT; BISHOP'S HAIR: MARK ANTHONY/PHYTO HAIR CARE/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS MANAGEMENT; MAKEUP: JESSI BUTTERFIELD/ORLANE PARIS/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS MANAGEMENT; DRESS, JACKET: NANETTE LEPORE; SHOES: VIA SPIGA



KELLY BISHOP (*Emily Gilmore*) The three generations is what brought it to a different level. In my life, I had something similar where I would've been the Rory character, my mother was like my best friend in the whole world, and then her mother my mother could never please. So I thought, I know this family.

WHEN LORELAI MET LUKE

It was a note from the network that inadvertently led to the show's central love story: the will-they-or-won't-they dynamic between Luke, the diner owner, and Lorelai, the caffeine addict.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** Luke was originally a female character. [The network] came to me and said, "We need another guy," so I changed the name. Then they just had chemistry. It was the episode where they were in the market and Lorelai's spying on Dean. Luke was there, and they had this scene that didn't mean anything.

● **GRAHAM** One of the things that I remembered was how much [a romantic relationship] was not a foregone conclusion. It's just this funny, weird chemistry that we had in terms of being complete opposites and also this built-in conflict of he has the thing she wants—which is coffee.



SCOTT PATTERSON (*Luke Danes*) You never know about that kind of thing. You can get the two most talented people in the world together on screen, and for some reason it just doesn't work. I knew it from the moment we met, I knew it was going to work. We just had a rhythm.



DANIEL PALLADINO (*Executive producer*) We've always been able to play that Lorelai and Luke are there for each other even if they're not in a relationship, and they weren't in a relationship for years. He always pined for her.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** Who wouldn't? Who wore jeans like Lorelai Gilmore? No one!

HOME SWEET HOLLOW

The small Connecticut town of Stars Hollow became the show's biggest character, complete with a cast of eccentric residents, from Rory's

best friend Lane, to Lane's antique-loving mother Mrs. Kim, to the Gilmores' nosy neighbor Babette—just to name a few.



KEIKO AGENA (*Lane Kim*) [The network] wanted to cut the scene where you actually go to the Kim house and meet Mrs. Kim [Emily Kuroda]. Amy fought for it, and I'm so glad, because you get so much of Lane's

life right from the pilot. Emily came out of the gate 100 percent.

● **GRAHAM** I love Gypsy, played by Rose Abdoo. Her secret subtext always was that she was a little in love with Lorelai. Maybe that's why I love her.

● **PATTERSON** My favorite townie is a toss-up between Taylor and Babette. Sally Struthers [who played Babette] is a force of nature. Every year on my birthday she

PALLADINO: EMMA MONTYRE/GETTY IMAGES FOR EW; GILMORE GIRLS: THE WB (2)

VENTIMIGLIA: WARNER BROS./EVERETT COLLECTION; AGENA AND BLEDEL: THE WB/PHOTOFEST

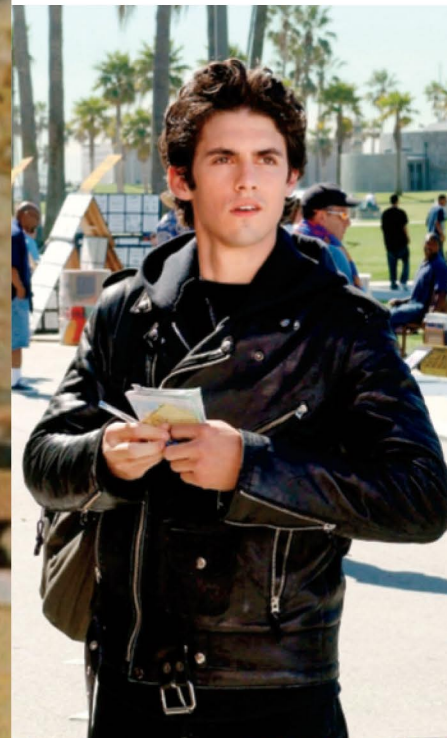
would literally pick me up and put me over her shoulder and take me around set and say, "Smack his ass, it's his birthday."

● **PALLADINO** A lot of [the inspiration for town events] comes from life, a lot of it comes from newspaper stories.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** And sometimes you just gotta make s--- up.



SPARKY (*Paul Anka*) Woof.



(Clockwise from top left) Rory and her gang; Bledel with Padalecki; Ventimiglia; Agena and Bledel; with Czuchry

didn't think it was something that made a lot of sense for my character. It was something I had to wrap my head around.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** We didn't want Rory to have sex in high school; that wasn't who she was.



JARED PADALECKI (*Dean Forester*) I knew that the entire marriage to Lindsay was a cry for help and not a union for a lifetime. He's in love with somebody who he thinks he doesn't deserve, so he's found somebody else and convinced himself he can be happy with that person.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** We brought Rory's bed back [for the revival], and I remember standing in that room saying, "There's no f---ing way Jared and her fit in that bed."

● **BLEDEL** It was like a miniature twin. In the outtakes I fell off that bed a couple of times.

● **PADALECKI** There was a shot where my waist to my head was laying on the bed, but my legs were counterbalancing me on the floor so that I wouldn't roll off. It works for the scene because it was supposed to be awkward, so maybe that's why they bought the smallest bed on the planet.

Season 5 introduced Rory to her college beau, the charming Logan Huntzberger, and the reality of rejection, which led to her dropping out of Yale and launched a mother-daughter rift that lasted for nine episodes and devastated fans.

● **GRAHAM** The thing I remember having a struggle with was when Rory and Lorelai are apart. It just felt odd. You needed to go in a different direction dramatically, but it was really hard to not have scenes with her.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** We felt like [Rory's] rebellious time was going to come much later than other kids'. Her teens were spent being best friends with her mother.

● **BLEDEL** We got to a point in the series where she was just a little bit too perfect. If she didn't do anything unlikable, they were running the risk of making her more unlikable by just being too perfect.



MATT CZUCHRY (*Logan Huntzberger*) I saw [Logan] as somebody who is going to push Rory to be the best that she could possibly be in her personal and professional life, and to live life in this kind of carpe diem way.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** We wanted Rory

RORY'S REBELLION

The season 4 finale saw Rory make her first misstep when she sleeps with a married Dean. The once seemingly perfect teen would then spend a season and a half struggling with romance, multiple suitors, the law, and even her mother.

● **BLEDEL** [Rory sleeping with Dean then] was one of the things that surprised me. I

to date her father. Every girl has a father issue, and Logan was Christopher.

● **BLEDEL** It's a relationship like the one Lorelai and Christopher had in their youth. They do reckless things together. It's fun but on this lavish scale.

Thankfully, reformed bad boy (and Luke's nephew) Jess Mariano makes his return in season 6 to talk some sense into Rory.

● **SHERMAN-PALLADINO** We always played that Rory and Jess saw each other for what they were. And that was the great thing about that relationship. He really got her.

● **BLEDEL** They always had an intellectual connection, and he pushed her out of her comfort zone. That was a big part of their relationship.



MILO VENTIMIGLIA (*Jess Mariano*)

Jess was always the troublemaker, but when you take a troublemaker that's grown up, they are an instigator and, more so, a thought provoker. That's the role that Jess filled, particularly with Rory.

THE LOST YEAR

After season 6, Sherman-Palladino left the show following contract disputes, and with her she took the show's central voice. The result? A less satisfying seventh (and final) season.

● **BISHOP** That's the only time on the show that I would say, "This is not an Emily line." A lot of the writers had been on the team when Amy was there, but Amy has such a specific voice, and to me it didn't match up. Plus, we just missed her. She was our god; she created us.

● **GRAHAM** Christopher and I got married that season. When we came back to do [the revival], I say something about having been married or somebody says it to me, and I was like, "I was never married." They had to get one of the super-fan assistants to get on the phone with me to remind me. It just seemed so out of character that I literally blocked it from my memory. That was my season 7 experience.

● **BLEDEL** Everything that they had established for the characters was still there, but the direction the story took was obviously different than what Amy would've wanted. So it's great that we get a chance to see what her original vision was now. ♦



THE FINAL FOUR CHAPTERS

When *Gilmore Girls* returns on Nov. 25, no stone or story line or townie is left unturned. Here's what to expect—in addition to the ending you've been waiting for.

Lorelai Gilmore won't stop talking. Ever. It's kind of her thing. She talks incessantly at a lightning-quick pace that can only be sustained by drinking multiple cups of coffee every day.

At least she did...until season 7.

Lauren Graham remembers the exact moment it happened. "I was in a scene in that seventh season and I thought, 'Something feels so odd to me,'" Graham says. "And it was I was in a scene with two other people and I wasn't talking. I thought, 'I've never had this before.'"

For *Gilmore Girls* fans, season 7 is essentially *The Godfather Part III* of the series: Some peo-

ple defend it, but it doesn't come close to touching the original. That all stems from the fact that *Gilmore* creator Amy Sherman-Palladino, along with executive producer Daniel Palladino, left the show after season 6 due to contract disputes. And *Gilmore* had to continue without its leaders for what would become its final season. (It was canceled after shooting wrapped.)

With that cancellation, fans were forced to accept the season 7 finale—which featured Rory (Alexis Bledel) heading off to cover the Obama campaign and Lorelai rekindling her romance with Luke (Scott Patterson)—as



(Clockwise from far left) Scenes from the new series: Graham and Bledel; Michael Winters and Bledel; Ventimiglia and Patterson; grieving Gilmores



the series ending. That is, until Netflix came to the rescue.

With *Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life* (premiering Nov. 25), viewers get the conclusion Sherman-Palladino had always planned, down to the series' final four words that she'd first imagined in season 1—words Matt Czuchry anticipates will cause a "heated debate" among fans. "We got the ending that weirdly was supposed to be the end of the series," she says. "They could've done something in season 7 that would've changed our ending and that would've been okay, but they didn't. This is the story that we wanted to tell."

That story is filled with lots of familiar faces—Sookie! Paris! Paul Anka!—though its focus is on the one that's missing. The revival kicks off with the funeral of Richard Gilmore (actor Edward Herr-

mann died in 2014) and follows the remaining Gilmores as they work through their grief over the next year. "It's a story about three generations of women at crossroads in their lives," Sherman-Palladino says. "It's going to have more weight and more emotion because there's more time, and when you've got time you don't have to truncate moments."

Graham adds: "We lost one of our key family members in Ed, and you wouldn't want to gloss over that. For years, people asked about doing a movie. This is that, in terms of when you follow somebody over that length of time, there has to be a more dramatic arc. It's still super fun, but it definitely does have a little more range."

That dramatic arc will have the Gilmore women trying new things, whether it's an unem-

ployed Rory moving back home from Brooklyn to try her hand at being "rootless," Lorelai enduring a midlife crisis that involves the unthinkable—exercising!—and, perhaps most surprisingly, Emily (Kelly Bishop) switching up her wardrobe. When the trailer for the revival hit the internet, *Gilmore* fans lost their minds at the image of Lorelai's mother in a T-shirt and—wait for it—jeans. "You would never see her like that, and that all gets explained pretty quickly," Bishop says, before addressing the real issue: "They weren't pretty, were they? They weren't well-fitting jeans."

But Emily's jeans are only one part of her grieving process, something that Bishop promises contains a couple of surprises. And yet *Gilmore* has never been about shock value. Sure, the show had a couple of twists

along the way (um, Luke has a daughter?), but overall it's a story about a town filled with love, tradition, and troubadours.

With Rory's return to Stars Hollow, we'll find that not much about the town has changed. Well, except maybe Rory. "I want people to get a sense that Rory's been living her life," Bledel says. "Hopefully we see somebody we could identify from today's world. Women like her work really hard, and that in part shapes who they are, and then she has these strong family ties that bring her back home." And home is a place where Taylor Dooze (Michael Winters) is still running town meetings, Kirk (Sean Gunn) never misses an opportunity to work, and Lane (Keiko Agena) still prefers to look at life from behind a drum set. "All of the characters feel very much themselves, even if big events have happened in their lives," Agena says. And that includes Rory's exes, all of whom will make appearances, though only one claims that his ending with Rory is "very, very special." (Hint: He's fond of the nickname Ace.)

Regardless of how it all ends, one thing is certain: Lorelai's getting her voice back. "It was literally everything I wanted it to be, in terms of conclusions but also in terms of wanting it to be special," Graham says. But was it good enough to merit even more *Gilmore*? "On the one hand, I wouldn't want to touch it," she says. "And on the other, it made me hungry for more." We hear the burgers at Luke's are delicious. —Samantha Highfill

BLEDEL, GRAHAM, AND BISHOP: ROBERT VOETS/NETFLIX; ALL OTHERS: SAIED ADYANI/NETFLIX (3)