

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation Presents


# BEWITCHED

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation Presents 02:26

ABOUT

HIGHLIGHTS

WHO TALKED ABOUT THIS  
SHOW

 From the [Museum of Broadcast Communications](#) Encyclopedia of Television

*Bewitched*, a fantasy situation comedy featuring the suburban life of a witch housewife married to a mortal, aired on ABC from 1964 to 1972. In its first season, it was the highest rated of all the new series and for its first five seasons, the program found itself consistently in Neilsens' Top Twelve. By 1968, its re-runs had sold to ABC for nine million dollars.

Set in Westport, Connecticut, *Bewitched* chronicles the difficulties Samantha (Elizabeth Montgomery) has negotiating her supernatural powers and her role as the suburban housewife of advertising executive Darrin Stephens (Dick York, replaced by Dick Sargent after the fifth season). Other major characters include Samantha's mother, Endora (Agnes Moorehead), who enjoys employing meddling witchcraft to complicate her daughter's marriage, a suspicious neighbor named Gladys Kravitz (Alice Pearce, later replaced by Sandra

Gould)) and Darrin's neurotic boss Larry Tate (David White). Sporadically, Elizabeth Montgomery would appear as her cousin, Serena, embodied as a teeny-bopper, counter-culture type, with a knack for free-spirited and manipulative sorcery. Eventually, Samantha and Darrin have a daughter, Tabitha, and a son, Adam, both of whom display witchy powers. (In 1977, ABC attempted a spin-off called *Tabitha*, where the now grown witch (Lisa Hartman) works as assistant producer for a California news program--with Robert Urich as the anchorman. The spin-off failed before season's end.)

*Bewitched's* formula typically involves a disruption created by either Samantha or Darrin's family, or Darrin's boss Larry. Samantha's responsibility to keep up the family harmony comes into conflict with her vow not to exercise witchcraft. Usually the resolution does come about with witchcraft, but Samantha's role as a "good" wife undergoes re-inscription because she performed her spells for the sake of her family (Morey, 1993).

Samantha generally exercises her witchcraft by twitching her nose and mouth (known at the time of the show as the "witch twitch") or casting verbal spells. Either method may result in making objects and people disappear or appear, granting unearthly powers to herself or others, or turning herself or others into various kinds of animals. She constantly subordinates her supernatural powers at the request of her husband--he is particularly adamant that she not cheat her domestic duties. Samantha could easily have the entire house cleaned and dinner on the table with a single "witch twitch" but, for Darrin's sake, she chooses to perform the labor of housework herself.

At the same time, Samantha takes a keen interest in Darrin's job and gets him out of many a campaign jam with her "imagination" and "intuition"--sometimes attributed to her witchcraft, sometimes not. She often saves Darrin's job by producing sales concepts on the spot for his clients or sometimes even going to the extent of turning his clients into animals to prove a point or buy him time. Her mastery in this area includes shoring up Darrin's ego and making him feel that it was his ideas that saved the day. In this way, *Bewitched* brings forward a host of questions pressing mid-1960s middle class culture such as anxieties about women's place in the public and private spheres and general mistrust between the sexes: What is the appropriate woman's role? How should a woman exercise her own agency to the best of her abilities? What do we do with female power since it has been relegated to a place outside of culture for so long? Toward the end of the run of *Bewitched*, Samantha often travels to far away places and times or interacts with historical figures, somewhat displacing the centrality of the home and middle class suburban life.

Notably, Elizabeth Montgomery's real-life husband was William Asher, the director of the series (who also directed *Love Lucy*, *Danny Thomas*, and *Patty Duke*). Asher and Montgomery owned a percentage of profits of *Bewitched* as well as a percentage of the merchandising rights which involved the conception of a Samantha doll, jewelry, cosmetics, and a flavor of *Bewitched* ice cream. The couple's first child was born three weeks before the production of the first episode leading much of the popular press at the time to refer to the initiation of the show as a birthing process.

That series premier remains one of the series' most memorable episodes in many ways. When Samantha reveals to Darrin that she is a witch, he seeks the advice of others (best friend, doctor, bartender), each of whom refuses to take him seriously. So he returns home, resolving "So my wife's a witch. Every married man has to make some adjustments." His conclusion rings true, and continues to define much of the series--marriage may not be what it appears on the surface and the commitment to marriage and family, certainly in late 20th century America, means confronting male fears about women's sexuality and otherness, women's power, and the changing social and cultural significance of domestic institutions.

-Christina Lane

## CAST

Samantha Stephens/Serena..... Elizabeth Montgomery

Darrin Stephens (1964-69)..... Dick York

Darrin Stephens (1969-72)..... Dick Sargent

Endora..... Agnes Moorehead

Maurice..... Maurice Evans

Larry Tate..... David White

Louise Tate {1964-65}..... Irene Vernon

Louise Tate (1965-72)..... Kasey Rogers

Tabitha Stephens (1966-72)..... Erin and Diane Murphy

Adam Stephens (1971-72)..... David and Greg Lawrence

Abner Kravitz.....George Tobias

Gladys Kravitz (1964-66)..... Alice Pearce

Gladys Kravitz (1966-72)..... Sandra Gould



## A

A-Team, The  
A.M. America  
A.k.a. Pablo  
ABC Afternoon Playbreak: "Miss Kline, We Love You"  
ABC Afterschool Specials  
ABC News  
ABC News Nightline  
ABC Stage 67  
ABC Sunday Movie, The  
ABC World News Tonight  
ABC's Wide World of Sports  
ALF  
AM Los Angeles  
Abe Burrows' Almanac  
Abraham  
Absolute Strangers  
Academy Awards, The  
Ace Crawford, Private Eye  
Act of Passion: The Lost Honor of Kathryn Beck  
Actors Studio  
Adam  
Adam-12  
Adam: His Song Continues  
Adams Chronicles, The  
Addams Family, The  
Admiral Broadway Revue  
Adventure

### Emmys

Home  
Awards  
News & Magazine  
- In Memoriam  
Photos  
Videos  
Events  
Academy  
Foundation  
Members  
Careers

### Contact

Contact Us  
Downloads  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
DVD Recycling

### Press / Media

Press Portal  
Media Contacts  
Trademark Policy

### Privacy / Terms

Privacy Policy  
User Agreement  
Site Submission Rules  
Code of Conduct

### Academy Sites



Foundation  
The Interviews  
Viewing Platform  
Online Voting

#### Connect

Facebook  
Twitter  
Instagram  
Tumblr  
YouTube  
The Interviews  
- Facebook  
- YouTube



© 1995-2017 Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. All Rights Reserved.  
Emmy and the Emmy Statuette are the Trademark Property Of ATAS/NATAS.  
Television Academy is a trademark of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.  
Website development by [FivePaths](#).

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation utilizes the resources and membership of the Television Academy to develop and sponsor educational and archival programs. Causes. Miscellaneous. Celebrity supporters 6. Television Academy Foundation has received support from the following celebrities listed on this site: Jason George. Jesse Tyler Ferguson.