# ‘Bridgerton’ season 4 debuts its take on the classic ‘Cinderella’ tale



**Poster advertising season four of Bridgerton on Netflix. This season focuses on the second eldest song, Benedict.** PHOTO COURTESY OF @BRIDGERTONNETFLIX ON INSTAGRAM

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In a fictional world swarming with debutantes and dukes, “Bridgerton” season four introduces viewers to a non-conventional, class-conscious fairytale.

The first half of “Bridgerton” season four debuted Thursday, Jan. 29 with episodes “The Waltz,” “Time Transfixed,” “The Field Next to the Other Road” and “An Offer From a Gentleman” released on Netflix. Part two of the season will come out on Feb. 26 of this year.

Season four will follow the life of the second eldest Bridgerton son, Benedict. Benedict is the most free-spirited of the bunch, surrounding himself with fellow artists as opposed to members of “society.” Viewers are thrust into the wild and promiscuous life of Benedict almost immediately as his highly anticipated season begins.

Disclaimer: I have only seen episode one of season four — “The Waltz” — before writing this review.

Fans of the series were expecting nothing less of a non-conventional romance arc from Benedict. However, a class-conscious, “Cinderella”-esque plotline was maybe not exactly what everyone had in mind. I, for one, found myself shocked by the conclusion of the first episode.

Season four picks up where season three had left off with Penelope’s grand reveal as the ton’s famous gossip writer, Lady Whistledown. We are shown glimpses of Penelope and Colin Bridgerton’s lives as newlyweds and young parents, all while Penelope balances meetings with Queen Charlotte.

The queen quickly demands insider information from Penelope before Whistledown’s gossip is released, leading me to anticipate a future conflict between the two later in the season. I potentially foresee Penelope witnessing or overhearing a scandal that she is not comfortable publishing or sharing since her identity has been revealed.

Besides this, the queen has chosen this season not to focus on a “diamond” debutante, but has instead chosen Benedict as an eligible bachelor. She goes as far to wager with Penelope that contrary to popular belief, Benedict will marry this season — a wager that may become problematic for a number of reasons.

It also seems we are going to get a continued view into Francesca Bridgerton and John Stirling’s newfound marriage, which blossomed as a subplot in season three. Also on the radar from the prior season is a budding romance between the widowed Violet Bridgerton (the matriarch of the household) and Marcus Anderson, which was indicated through a very sensual hand-kiss at the conclusion of episode one — rather scandalous for the lady to receive privately at her own ball.

Speaking of the ball, the beginning of Benedict’s romance arc finally begins with a mysterious woman, Sophie, who he meets at his mother’s masquerade ball. Sophie has a captivating innocence to her and may just be what Benedict needs to put his wild past behind him. He even goes on to tell Sophie that she is “not like the other girls;” a famous male-manipulator comment which seems rather fitting for his character.

Sophie reluctantly engages in a private dance lesson with Benedict before they share a passionate kiss. However, just as identities are going to be revealed at the ball, Sophie flees before midnight, leaving her glove behind with Benedict. Does this story sound familiar to you?

The very end of the episode reveals that Sophie is the maid of the rather pretentious Lady Araminta, who has two daughters prepared for the debutante season — oh, and Araminta is Sophie’s stepmother. Sophie and her “family” are all new characters this season.

Although the classic “Cinderella” tale is one we have seen many times before, I am quite excited for “Bridgerton” to take its turn, exploring the lives of the non-elite during the Regency era. It seems as though other servants in the show have gained a certain class-consciousness unnoticed before, as they are seen complaining about their frivolous duties at times throughout the episode.

I am also extremely curious to see how season four addresses Benedict’s queer identity, which has already been made apparent in an interaction he shared with a former male companion. An emphasis on masking one’s identity (literally) and the idea of self-expression and being one’s true self is shared between Benedict and his mother during the episode, which may be a hint towards him sharing private bits of his life with his mother or others.

Needless to say, season four is already off to a gossip-worthy start, successfully intertwining and introducing multiple complex plotlines in its first episode. Perhaps viewers will see “Bridgerton” expand diversity in representation for members of British society — such as class and queerness — beyond that involving race, which the show has already famously included.




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