

# Peacock gives *Bel-Air* a new look

Kristofer Jones, staff writer

Peacock took a '90s classic and gave it a new look. *Bel-Air* is full of Easter eggs that will instantly connect with people who loved the show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Viewers will see that one little fight that Will's mother feared drove Will from Philadelphia. With all the same characters, and some new twists, this show will not be disappointing to people who grew up watching the '90s classic.

Jabari Banks does a great job taking over the role of Will. His version of the character gives great details about Will that the first show was unable to do due to time restraints. *Bel-Air* now gives the names of Will's friends, the name of his former high school in Philadelphia, and shows details of what it took for him to become the prince of Bel-Air.

The casting choices for *Bel-Air* were well done, and I could not see anyone else as Vivian Banks (Cassandra Freeman) or Uncle Phil (Adrian Holmes). Vivian Banks is now an art teacher, not a lawyer. She has traded her passion for painting in for raising her family and helping Uncle Phil with his campaign. The new Uncle Phil is a former lawyer who switched careers to run for district attorney of Los Angeles, California. I like how he calls in his highly questionable favors, with sometimes mixed results.

One of my new favorite characters is Jeffery played by Jimmy Akingbola. He is no longer the Bank's butler, he is now Uncle Phil's security man, fixing any problems that the family might want to keep out of the public eye, problems like their nephew fleeing the state to avoid drug dealers that want to harm him.

The casting for the Banks children is great. Olly Sholotan as the new Carlton Banks could not have been a better choice. The struggle of adapting to his cousin invading his world is a new struggle that he was not prepared to deal with. Will's arrival only adds to his anxiety and his addiction to Adderall. Hilary Banks worked for a local television station in the '90s sitcom, but now is a social media influencer in *Bel-Air*. She is struggling with wanting to move out on her

own, and dealing with an overbearing mother. Coco Jones's Hilary Banks is unapologetic about wanting a life that was not set up for her by her parents. Akira Akbar as Ashley Banks is good too. I hope in season two they give her character more screen time and a bigger story.

The possibilities about the direction of *Bel-Air* are endless because it is on a streaming platform. That means the show can take more risks in how it is presented. I cannot wait to see Will become the prince of Bel-Air. I saw that classic Will and Carlton friendship starting to form at the end of the season, and that is what I was waiting for. The untimely incidents that Jeffery will cover up for the family. I hope that they choose to go away from other story lines and keep it about the Banks Family. Viewers of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* will also enjoy this show. It was fun watching *Bel-Air* and picking out all the Easter eggs that will remind people of the NBC classic.



Photo courtesy of Peacock