

It's almost always a bad idea to impose your own standards of behavior on other people, which is especially true when it comes to fiction. You've got to accept that characters in stories don't always behave the way you expect, that when they make piss-poor decisions, they only reflect the kinds of decisions people make in real life. The only question that matters when they do is whether you understand where they're coming from. I say all this not to lecture you but to remind myself not to get too judgmental about Peggy's judgment in this episode. I wasn't impressed with Peggy's bizarrely impulsive conduct last week, beating down a good chunk of her colleagues, even the ones willing to give her the benefit of the doubt. I just couldn't understand what the point of that was, other than to show how freaking kickass she is, which was never in doubt. In the same way, I find it hard to figure out her terribly self-defeating behavior for the first half of this episode, other than a way to narratively stall for time while Ivchenko and Dottie do their things. In contrast to her usual calculating self, Peggy seems completely blind to how she must come across to everyone. She's initially outraged that they'd ever suspect her, then noticeably switches to offhandedness when Sousa presents a wealth of evidence against her. In short, she acts hella suspicious, especially when she refuses to respond to either Sousa's bad cop routine, Thompson's entreaties to cut a deal with them, or Dooley's straight-up questions. Again, you have no idea what she thinks she's accomplishing by keeping mum. The fact is she did deceive them, steal from them, and at times even worked against them; the only point of disagreement between her and them is why. Peggy is right to berate them for mistreating and underestimating her, and she may be right that Sousa is laying on the interrogation pretty thick for his own glory. But for her to remark to Jarvis that "it's safe to say I have no friends left at the S.S.R., not that I ever had any" is patently wrong, considering Thompson's almost pleading with her to give in and Sousa grates over her apparent betrayal of their gentle bond. If this was pre-"The Iron Ceiling", Peggy might be more convincing here, but as is, she doesn't seem to be giving the men any credit at all. I'm also pretty sure this is all narrative delay because Peggy ends up telling them everything anyway: Stark's offer, her motivations, Steve Rogers' blood, and on and on. It's unclear why she waits until the situation gets truly desperate to yield, especially considering the immediate effect her words have on everybody. Atwell's performance is cool enough that you almost think Peggy's known what she's doing all along, but multiple viewings don't make her choices any easier to decipher. Oh, well. It's kind of exhilarating how rapidly Peggy's standing shifts within the episode, going from total untrustworthiness to complete faith over the course of the hour. In retrospect, many of the episode's (and its predecessors') flaws boil down to a problem of pacing what is essentially a miniseries; the show does end next week, possibly for good, so maybe it should be forgiven for certain lapses in logic. And at least we end exactly where we should be, with Peggy charged with saving the day and the S.S.R. having her back, presumably. Along the way, there's an interesting moment when Jarvis succumbs to something strongly resembling disloyalty as he tells Peggy through gritted teeth that the damage they've suffered isn't her fault, but that of "Mr. Stark's bloody inventions." Again, this calls into question the entire premise of this series—seriously, Howard, why build the stupid things if you're smart enough to see how harmful they'd be, e.g., a gas that induces unrestrained violence in people—and it makes you wonder if pinning Leviathan will let Howard get off scot-free from all this. Some Musings:- So Dr. Ivchenko is indeed Faust, or a progenitor of Faust. That's exciting, I guess. The post Agent Carter: Snafu appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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