

Apologies for the delay in reviews. I recently got a paid position doing what I consider my dream job and obviously, I wanted to spend the first few days impressing instead of, you know, not keeping my act together because I was too busy writing reviews. My employers are rare and delightful people, but I'm pretty sure their tolerance doesn't extend to slacking off at work to critique the latest episode of Agent Carter. Anyway, this particular episode wouldn't have been worth it. Had the show continued its streak of episodes in which Peggy and Jarvis chase after yet another of Stark's inventions, fending off Leviathan and the S.S.R. both, you could easily sit back and just enjoy the ride. Bringing Howard Stark back into the picture forces you to sit up and remember how we got into this predicament in the first place, which is dangerous territory for the show to tread. As I mentioned when Agent Carter premiered, Howard never offered a compelling reason why he invented all this tech in the first place, which in turn makes you question if Peggy jumped the gun in deciding to help him. Bear with me as I wrap my head around this. Howard claimed he can't help what he thinks up as explanation for the existence of such dangerous technology. That might explain why they were created to begin with, but it doesn't explain why he not only allowed them to continue to exist, but actively hoarded them, with no protection other than a vault, his lecherous self, and a risk-averse butler. There's an inherent conflict between his supposed morals and his actions, which Peggy may not acknowledge but certainly senses. This explains why, despite Howard's crystal-clear description and warning about the Blitzkrieg Button, Peggy presses it anyway. Jarvis' hilariously obvious nervous tic may have given the secret away, but it's her growing suspicions of Howard that leads to her extra scrutiny in the first place. The Button may not have set off a disastrous citywide blackout, but it produces plenty of fallout anyway. [Spoiler alert!] Even though Peggy dismisses the suggestion, she's plenty agitated upon discovering that Howard had kept a vial of Steve Rogers' blood for himself. That doesn't discredit her accusations of his using it for his own gain, especially when he stubbornly admits that he lies to get ahead. There's nothing convincing about the way he starts off his defense by claiming to protect her feelings, which then somehow becomes a diatribe about the price of class advancement. It's not wrong to want to use the blood to help people and make a profit at the same time, but it's got to kill Peggy to realize she's been committing treason for a fugitive sex addict who's out for a buck. There's also some paternalism in Howard trying to spare Peggy from literally having the blood of the love of her life in her hands, much like the chauvinism when he cheerfully asks her to fetch a menu of items from her dining hall. His sting less because they're partly motivated by friendship, but it's no less part of the patriarchal culture she has to work with and against. It's only barely less insulting than Thompson's blatant declaration of her lesser worth: "You're a woman. No man will ever consider you an equal. It's sad, but it doesn't make it any less true." It's ambiguous whether he fully subscribes to that belief, but in this case, it hardly matters. But his speech also proves Peggy's point that at least her colleagues are forthright with her, even when it hurts. This seems even truer when you consider that to be a double agent, you need to have the trust of the people you're betraying. Peggy couldn't get the access she has but for her stature, such as it is, in the S.S.R. They may mostly give her lunch orders, but they give her secrets, too. Anyway, whether she's slumming for/with the S.S.R. or doing Howard's dirty work, she's a sight more useful than, oh, every other woman on this show. This is by design, of course. The contrast between the men of the S.S.R. working to track down black market tech and the women of the Griffith discussing ways to sneak some food from the communal dinner* couldn't be clearer. It'd be problematic if the series continued to make Peggy's female peers the source of most all the jokes while the guys did most of the work Peggy doesn't. It's probably why Dottie was added to

the cast; her villainy is obvious, but her competence is necessary to prevent a female-led show from having a sausage-fest background. Some Musings:* “My mom made me a special chicken pocket.” “Laurie’s got a compartment in her pocketbook that can hold a cup of gravy.” “Can you make me one of those that holds pickles?”- Stan Lee makes his obligatory cameo in this episode. Not his best, especially compared to him slut-shaming Coulson in Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.- “Ms. Carter. That was embarrassing.” Awkward nerds are awkward nerds in any era. The post Agent Carter: The Blitzkrieg Button appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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