

I've always admired Arrow's willingness to let its heroes experience all the growing pains of vigilantism. It shouldn't be that easy to just pull on a slightly-too-tight costume and start beating up bad guys, especially if all the training you've received to date are a few months of boxing lessons. Hence you have Dinah not doing so great in her first days as Black Canary, nearly getting shut down herself against a single thug in a back alley. Clearly, she's in the game by necessity rather than qualification. Her clumsy attempts at crimefighting do force Roy and Diggle to intervene, however, keeping them in the game when last episode left it ambiguous whether they still wanted to play. As a fan of Dinah's comic book incarnation, I'm not sure I like this role-reversal where Diggle and Roy—Roy!—are the veterans scolding Dinah for her rookie mistakes. But given how close she came to death in only her second costumed outing, the scolding is necessary, if entirely derivative of things Ollie's told her before. She doesn't listen, of course; it takes a more drastic screw-up for her to question what she's doing. As long as the risks are framed only in terms of herself, she can ignore them. The retaliatory death of a kidnapped alderman teaches her that this kind of work requires accept responsibility for the lives of others as well. Dinah's learning this lesson for the first time, but the incident is more of a reminder for Team Arrow, especially Felicity. It's fitting that the person who most vehemently argued against continuing the crusade now offers the best argument for it: "Maybe it's not about Sara, or Oliver, or anyone else we care about who we've lost; maybe what we've been doing, we've been doing it because there are people we care about that are still alive." So even though the end of the episode nearly moots their renewed determination by giving into Brick's demands to withdraw all the authorities from the Glades, it's good to know they'll still be fighting against his rule. Brick's accomplishment comes across as more the result of everyone else's incompetence than his own deviousness—invading and taking hostage a room full of city leaders does suggest that the entire SCPD was asleep at the wheel—but it's still a feat that seals his worthiness as a demigod among villains. It looks like Team Arrow isn't the only ones deciding to stand their ground. Merlyn spends nearly the entire episode proving that the only person who scares the bejeezus out of him is Ra's Al Ghul, a contrast to his typically badass self that doesn't go unnoticed by his daughter. While this season has seen Thea become the most confident (and physically disciplined) she's ever been, she's had no outlet to show it until now. Her bravado about Al Ghul comes in part from ignorance about how dangerous he really is, but you'd like to think it also comes from her Queen heritage. In contrast to the anxious Merlyn, both Ollie and Thea have little hesitation in confronting the boss assassin face-to-face. Thea's decision to stay is noted by Chase, Verdant's obnoxious DJ, who reveals himself to be a League of Assassins spy. Thank God, because as a romantic subplot for Thea, he was gaining zero traction. The fact that he reports to Maseo also brings the episode's storyline full-circle in an organic way Arrow rarely succeeds in doing. Maseo's debt to Ollie doesn't extend to Ollie's family, apparently, as he seems set to move on Chase's information moments after leaving Ollie and a tearful Tatsu behind. Although Merlyn is the one Al Ghul is after, you have no doubt he'll bump off Thea if she's dead-set on standing by her dad. Thus the danger Ollie sought to avert by dueling Al Ghul remains in place, and you can't help thinking his reluctance to tell her the whole truth (and Merlyn's willingness to do so) is to blame. Some Musings:- How is Ollie alive? Tatsu cites his will to live plus the snow and cold, but I'm still hoping that some soul manipulation was involved.- "Maseo blames himself for what happened." Oh, man. Their kid is dead, isn't he? The post Arrow: Midnight City appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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