

SPOILER ALERT This was mostly a solid episode because it went back to the action and forward momentum that has made The Walking Dead a much improved series this season. Except for a few deviations into what is/isn't a cop-- as if anyone gives a damn-- the episode was mostly about solving problems, saving people and killing zombies. One thing this episode managed much better than I expected was the juggling of the different storylines. There was quite a lot going on in this episode: The Beth rescue attempt, the ethics of police pre/post-apocalypse, Carol's condition, Dawn's possible new positive attitude, Abraham's group out on the road, etc. You might think that would make the episode kinda hectic, but it actually worked really well. Part of the reason is that there wasn't much time to dwell. TWD sucks when it dwells. The show is a little like driving in a car with people covered in walker juice; if you get bogged down in hot, Atlanta traffic, it will stink to high heaven as you listen to characters talking. But if you keep it moving with the windows down and the music turned up, you can't smell the stench and can only hear Rick talking if you really, really want to focus on him. It was a pretty strong episode, but a few things did kinda suck: Police ethics - My goodness, is this narrative of "cops gone bad" tiresome. It's like the writers want us to be really and truly shocked that the people who were once our guardians and protectors could become our oppressors. Geez guys, watch the news. Regardless of where you fall on the police spectrum from "Fuck the Police!" to "They are underpaid and have dangerous jobs," I can't imagine anyone would be surprised if at least a few cops turned out to be rotten apples in a Hobbesian setting. Tara being Tara - The writers are purposely trolling us at this point. Naming the group "Greatam"? I mean, WTF?!? "Whoa! Guys! I found a yo-yo!" Maybe the point is, what if not everyone in your group was a bad-ass killing machine? What if some of them were annoying and did awkward fist-bumps? Even if that is a realistic possibility if we really did have an apocalypse, I'm not sure it's what I want a TV program to focus on. Abraham's crisis - Seriously, dude... That doesn't even look comfortable. Kneel in the grass. The problem with Abraham's existential crisis is that it hasn't been earned. To be impacted by seeing this big, strong man crumble, we need to see him being a big, strong man. Instead we've mostly been told in the last month that he is a big, strong man. If we saw Glen doing this same meditative knelling thing, it would be impactful because we KNOW Glen and know what kind of guy he is. Abraham is just too new to do this sort of story with. If you were in his group, you'd consider leaving him on the side of the road. The Priest - Seriously, we get it. He has a guilty conscious and is otherwise annoying. Find something good to do with him or get rid. But even those elements couldn't drag the episode down because it was generally good. We got to see a plan being formulated. Some good zombie fights. Nasty burnt-to-the-asphalt zombies. Cops being jackasses. As I said above, one of the real strengths of the episode was that it kept hopping among settings. If you got bored watching Tyreese talking to Sasha about killing Bob when she got sad about ripping Bob's jacket (because they kissed that one time), well that scene will be OVER in about 30 seconds and something new will be on your screen. It's like speed dating. Now let's talk about something that was kinda sneaky good in this episode, Glen and Maggie. When was the last time you saw a Maggie scene and didn't cringe at her accent? Yet, suddenly when she is facing down Abraham she is badass again-- for the first time in AGES. I really liked her. Maybe she's getting her swagger back? And Glen.... Did you catch the flirty stuff with Glen and Rosita? How cool would it be if the Glen/Maggie marriage was rocked by a hot number with pig-tails, huge hoop earrings and a belly shirt? I am yearning for this TV show to step away from the comics and bring some big changes. The other nifty thing about that flirting was how subtle it was. Usually this show is as delicate as a sledgehammer, so it was wonderful to have

these scenes where you had to wonder, "Wait, were they flirting? I think they were. What do you think?" I'd love to see that storyline continue to develop. All in all, we're in a fairly decent spot as the show heads for its mid-season finale. The show has mostly kept a snappy pace and seems to be maintaining that briskness as we head for a stopping point. It is still concerning that the writers on this show are more interested than any viewer in things like Sasha's angst over Bob, but those tendencies have mostly been contained this season. -Dean Stell The post The Walking Dead: Crossed appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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