

Click here to read why Standard Issue is now a podcast not an online magazine.

STANDARD ISSUE For all women

BE A PATRON

DONATE PODC

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PO

SHOP EVE

Search here...



You are here: Home \ Arts \ MY Outlander



Written by Maureen Younger

ARTS

MY Outlander

Episode five and Jack is back and causing trouble. Here's *Maureen Younger* to make sense of it all.

Posted on 09/05/2016



Return of the Jack: Black Jack Randall (Tobias Menzies) is back, to Claire's (Caitriona Balfe) displeasure. Photos: Sony Pictures Television/Starz.

At the start of this episode, the marriage of Claire (Caitriona Balfe) and Jamie Fraser (Sam Heughan) is back on solid ground; Jamie is even back to calling Claire his pet name for her in Gaelic – *mo nighean donn* (my dark-haired lass).

So *Outlander* fans let out a collective sigh of relief. After all, surely one of the reasons some of us are so hooked by Claire and Jamie's relationship is the appeal of seeing two people so in love. And should we not have such a great romance going on in our own mundane lives, well, we can at least feast on one by watching *Outlander* while crossing our fingers and living in hope.

However, the moral of this particular episode would seem to be: don't piss off a Scot. Both Jamie and Murtagh (Duncan Lacroix) are out seeking revenge and both men mean business.

Murtagh, furious at having been unable to stop Claire and Mary from being attacked, now vows vengeance on the attackers. These, we learn, are a group of French aristocrats, Les Disciples, who for supposed fun go on the prowl, raping virgins to gain entry to its select membership.

The Frasers still suspect Saint Germain (Stanley Weber) is the lynchpin behind the attacks against Claire, and Jamie informs him in no uncertain terms that whoever is responsible will die a slow and painful death at his hands.

But this being *Outlander*, it's not only the present our lovebirds have to contend with, but a problematic past. As well as the small matter of trying to change the future or, at times, not trying to change it.

"By being so underhand with other people's feelings and lives, are Claire and Jamie becoming bad people or does the end justify the means?"

Claire realises that for Frank (Tobias Menzies), her husband from the 1940s to exist, it is vital Black Jack Randall (Menzies with longer hair) marries Mary Hawkins (Rosie Day). Mary is, however, in love with Black Jack's brother, Alex (Laurence Dobiesz), who is in the Bastille falsely accused of raping Mary. And as luck would have it, Claire holds the key to Alex's freedom in her hands – literally – with a letter exonerating Alex of any wrongdoing.

However, Claire fears if Alex is a free man, he and Mary may marry. meaning Frank would not exist. Should she destroy the letter, thus condemning Alex to the Bastille? In the end, she chooses to deliver it but persuades Alex it would be better for Mary if they did not marry.

Claire is well aware Mary and Alex love each other and both will be heartbroken. There is no doubt that by doing this she is being hurtful but she justifies her actions as the only way to ensure Frank's existence.

This underlines a question raised in the previous episode: by being so underhand with other people's feelings and lives, are Claire and Jamie becoming bad people or does the end (stopping the destruction of the Highland way of life and the death of thousands of men) justify the means? But then doesn't everyone, even the most evil of men, always justify their actions in some way or other?

As for the past, like many a romance, fictional or otherwise, it has a nasty habit of rearing its ugly head and casting a shadow on the present. And its presence is most assuredly felt by the arrival of Black Jack at the French Court: his reappearance in Claire and Jamie's lives threatening to cause yet another seismic rift between them.

Not surprisingly, Jamie takes the first opportunity to challenge Black Jack to a duel. (I told you, you shouldn't piss off a Scot). However, the duel proves to be a double-edged sword between the past and the future.

Jamie is elated at the thought of killing Black Jack, thereby putting to rest the demons haunting him since Wentworth Prison. But for Claire, if Jamie kills Black Jack now Frank cannot exist in the future.

So she asks Jamie to do the nigh-impossible for this Highland warrior and hold off from killing Black Jack until the latter's child with Mary is conceived.



You owe me one: Claire reminds Jamie (Sam Heughan) of his debt to her.

Understandably Jamie is seething with anger, seeing this one lifeline back to his own manhood being snatched away from him by the very woman he has sacrificed so much for.

Finally, Claire plays the only card left to her, reminding Jamie that as she has saved his life twice, he owes her a life. As a man of honour, Jamie feels obliged to honour the debt, but the look he gives Claire while doing so does not bode well for their relationship.

It's clear Jamie can't believe Claire would claim such a debt from him: let alone ask him to refrain from seeking vengeance upon the very man who raped and tortured him.

And this is what makes *Outlander* so damn intriguing, *and* often more thought-provoking than you would imagine a programme of this ilk to be. That's because at its heart, despite all its fantastical elements, *Outlander* is a very human story. There are no easy answers and there are no easy decisions; at its core, it's the story of two people, trying to deal with whatever life throws at them while clinging on to each other.

Follow Maureen's week-by-week *Outlander* blog [here](#).

[@maureenyounger](#)

Recommend This Article+6



WRITTEN BY MAUREEN YOUNGER

A London-Scottish, multi-lingual, much-travelled stand up comic working on the mainstream, urban and gay comedy circuits, actor and writer. www.maureenyounger.com @MaureenYounger

Other great articles...



Apr 28, 2017
**7 Wonders:
The final
playlist**

It's the last playlist from us, so *Standard Issue* staff are picking a song to say goodbye



Apr 28, 2017
**Interview:
Cathy Tyson**

The powerhouse actor talks feminism, fear and women in authority with *Justine Brooks*, as they catch up between rehearsals for the world premiere of *Witness*



Apr 27, 2017
**Celebrating
the queen of
punk**

A film saluting punk pioneer Poly Styrene is in the making, and garnering shitloads of

Popular Articles

Sign up for our newsletter

* indicates required

Full Name *

Email Address *

SUBSC

**She never
dreamt that
she'd have
to keep quiet
about her
violent
boyfriend**



Childhood dreams can become living nightmares. Please help us change lives that have gone badly wrong.

CHANGING LIVES

#MyDream 

See our **Ethical Fundraising Promise** on our website. All photography kindly donated by Changing Lives staff to demonstrate client journey. Charity number 500640