

This episode gives itself about ten seconds of holiday levity before things go to hell, which is the true spirit of Arrow. The show may have its flaws, but one of its most consistent virtues is never letting any plotline drag for too long. Just as the mystery of Sara's death was on the verge of losing its steam, Nyssa makes a well-timed return to put it back into center focus and accelerate its resolution. Her threat of killing a crowd of innocents at random if Sara's killer isn't found is a contemptuous spit on Ollie's defiance in "The Magician," proving how empty his challenge to Ra's al Ghul really is. But that's only because Ollie's earlier challenge encompassed a whole city and he really doesn't have the power to maintain it anymore. No longer a billionaire, his resources are limited to Team Arrow* and not much else, which makes it impossible to stand against the League of Assassins. Challenging Ra's one-on-one is somewhat more realistic, though ultimately, this is Ra's with all his immortal experience ("It's been 67 years since I've been challenged.") intact, and Ollie's still a rung or two below Batman. [Spoiler alert!] Ollie's seemingly fatal defeat makes for an excellent midseason finale cliffhanger—literally, he goes falling off the edge of a cliff in the end—and sets things up for a wild opener when the show returns next month. Since survival is kind of Ollie's thing, there's no doubt he'll live to see another day, though how that happens will be important to see. Will he pick himself up by sheer tenacity alone, or will Team Arrow come swooping in for a secret rescue? Either way, Ollie will have to deal with Thea's now-revealed connection with Merlyn when he comes back. I wasn't looking forward to watching the siblings doing their dance of lies and half-truths, so it's encouraging this episode expedites the confrontation a bit by having Ollie catch Thea in a lie not once, but twice. He temporarily sets aside these betrayals so he can have what he thinks will be a final farewell with his sister, but death is not his fate, so an ugly blowout between them will have to be. That and taking care of Merlyn once and for all. Crazy as it's always been for Thea to associate with a proven mass murderer, you could somewhat rationalize it by his devotion to her. But by manipulating (read: drugging)** her into killing Sara, just to manipulate Ollie into taking care of Ra's for him, Merlyn relinquishes the smidgen of a redeeming factor he has left. It's a clever plan, too, because he knows to break the ties between himself and Thea, Ollie would have to traumatize her with what she did, and Ollie could never do that. He might not have to, as Thea's halfway to realizing it herself once she stumbles upon Dinah mourning over Sara's grave. It's a completely random event that makes you think it could only be designed to get Thea to start asking questions, and to begin breaking down the secret of Sara's death. Now that Dinah's mom is on it, too, we're only a hairline away from Quentin finding out—and to be honest, it's always been a questionable choice to keep him in the dark. If Ms. Lance is curious as to why Sara's not returning her calls, surely Quentin, the freaking detective, should be more suspicious as to his daughter's sudden, inexplicable cessation of contact. Dinah uses Quentin's heart condition to justify the secrecy, but this reasoning seems weak in the face of how much more shocking it'll be when he eventually learns the truth. On a more minor note, the discovery that Maseo is alive and in the League of Assassins gives us the highly coveted tie to the flashbacks, as well as implications for where those storylines will lead. Despite a most excellently choreographed fight sequence between Tatsu and China White, Maseo's wife is lost, leaving him behind to take care of his son himself. League membership is obviously not family-friendly, so we can only assume that eventually his son will be written off as well. The fact that China is still alive, despite the vengeance Maseo naturally holds against her, also bodes ill. But there's still hope that Tatsu, being the prominent DC character she is, may come out of the woodwork and help settle things. Some Musings: * And maybe the rare S.O.S. to the Flash. ** I don't know how rare that Vitura stuff is, but if I was a criminal mastermind, I'd be using that crap

all the time. - Now that Felicity's on the inside with Ray's A.T.O.M. suit, can we take that to mean she might be seeing some shrink action in her time, too? The post Arrow: The Climb appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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