

‘Entourage’: Better than decent

July 26, 2010



As "decent" shows go, I think I've seen my share. This term applies for any "Entourage" episode described as "nice," "...it was OK..." and/or given the dreaded "...meh" label.

With that said, this week's show, "Tequila Sunrise," was better than "decent" and certainly moved the meter beyond "...meh" - but more on that a bit later.

As of late, "Entourage's" identity has undergone a transformation of sorts. Each of the main characters' storylines have been routinely focused on the development of their own identities (dare I say sans Vince). Each guy in the coattail-riding crew from Queens is largely handling his own business these days, with Drama making steady progress, but still trailing the pack some. Even Ari Gold's business ventures have swung largely in

the direction of becoming the actual "King of L.A.," as opposed to his former role on the show as "superstar agent TO the 'King of L.A.'"

I must admit, I like the moves. The show's writers have lofty ambitions for the cast, and while this may be a problem for some faithful viewers, it's the right play for the show's future.

I thought this week's show was laced with the tell-tale signs of a really good (beyond decent) "Entourage" episode. First, there was the signature push and pull of good old-fashioned confrontation, such as Lizzie Grant's profanity-laced spat with Ari as she made her departure from the agency. I've grown to love Autumn Reeser (who plays Grant) on the show, and her exit certainly seems to promise more fireworks down the road.

Next, there are the "dueling Napoleonic complexes" (copyright, Turtle) of Eric and Scott Lavin. While I never asked for more Scott Caan (who plays Lavin), the show's writers have delivered nicely. Caan is not just the "son of James" or the "guy from Boiler Room"; he has become a fine addition to the show bringing some great dialogue as he and E battle for Vince's heart and mind (or at least, that's how it seems to E).

I didn't get all warm and fuzzy about this week's "I can be cool with you Scott" situation, but I'll admit it smelled like the stuff good truces are made of. (By the way, feel free to use this E/Scott scene as a how-to for hatchet-burial with a smarmy co-worker).

Speaking of tutorials: Ari's opening speech to the "NFL to L.A." consortium was another fine show moment, and a great lesson in glacier melting to start a big meeting. We all know Ari wrote the book on "reaching people" in a conference room, but this was a classic.

Elsewhere, Turtle trekked to Mexico with Alex to explore a new venture, only to discover that it's the same old song and dance if there's money to be made. The entertaining difference in this scenario was the "new Turtle" scoffed at the notion of his friend's involvement, whereas the "old Turtle" routinely trampolined his way into pretty much anything via Vince.

Now, that's got me both warm AND fuzzy. Cue the tear: my boys ARE growing up! This development has me wondering if this will lead to more discoveries such as the rare "top of Turtle's head" sighting. I love the Yankees just as much as anyone, but by my estimates, there have only been about 5 of these "sightings" in the show's 7-season history.

Rounding things out was Johnny Drama's entertaining chemistry experiment with John Stamos. As celebrity cameos go, this one ranks high as Stamos volleyed zingers on the ping-pong table and in the script. His "you don't have the build" line to describe Drama's physique when challenged to a game of ping-pong was a perfectly hilarious line. For the record, I'll be using that one to answer anyone's challenge to (insert assorted board game names here) from now on.

For all I can say about how good I thought the show was, there were some spots of thin dialogue here and there, but I was able to look past those. The season still looks promising, and I was glad to see my old pal Andrew Klein dial in from rehab. If he's in the script, there will be some shenanigans, and next week's previews appear to deliver in that department. Here's to hoping. See ya next week.