

Topic: Deep Story Analysis: Arcane

Hello and welcome to Lit Service, where we're fans of fiction and purveyors of dodgy writing advice.

Introduction question: Your favorite story (book/movie/game) right now?

Discussion: The elements of an exceptional story

Time skips, how/when they work—good narrative timing?

- Okay! So I think where time skips tend to fall short is two-fold: One, when writers spend a lot of time playing catch up with the infodumping (they skip ten years but then do SO MUCH TELLING). Two, nothing happens in the time they've skipped. Like, ostensibly things *happen*, but the bad guys don't make any moves and politically things look more or less the same as they did beforehand. I think this happens in a lot of animated shows/anime and I get it—it's so the MCs can get skills they didn't have previously—but it always feels a little cheap to me. Arcane does the *opposite* for me. Spoiler alert, but Arcane is organized in three three-episode acts, and after episode 3, there's a time skip. Like, ten years, I think? Anyway, this was a *huge* surprise to me as a person who knew nothing about the game and basically hadn't even seen a trailer for the show. But I think they handle it really well because time *does* move on. Silco has taken over The Last Drop, and with the competing technologies of shimmer and hextech, things have changed in both Piltover and Zaun. Each character (minus Vi, but we'll get to her) finds themselves in a position where they've basically accomplished their goals from act 1 but are still feeling unfulfilled. Jinx is needed and her tech works, Jayce's hextech is important globally, Mel is running the council basically, Caitlin is no longer just under her parents' wings, Silco has taken over the undercity. And yet they're not happy because they didn't get the results the way they were hoping (Jinx's trauma/loss of her sister, Jayce is seeking to do good but keeps compromising his morals as he realizes his ideals are unrealistic, Caitlin still isn't taken seriously and is discovering the contradictions of the enforcers).
 - Then, of course, we have Vi, who's spent the last ten years in prison. She hasn't changed and hasn't been aware of everything changing, so it's great how in the next six episodes she serves as the audience stand-in. She, like us, knows how the world used to be and how it used to work, and has to catch up, and so we really feel her emotional turmoil when she sees how the place she loves has changed. It's a great way to give us an "outsider" to help catch us up on all the changes without ever infodumping. This is a cool storytelling strategy, but...why hasn't she changed? Ten years in prison, and her pink hair only grew a few inches. The thing that changed MOST about her dear little sister are the magic pockets she keeps those huge weapons in. They just appear! Like magic! Okay I think if we're talking character growth/appearance she *has* changed, more or less the way Sirius Black did—she's got a billion new prison tattoos and an anger/recklessness/vendetta to work on. I mostly meant that she's functioning as an outsider. And also I never noticed weapons coming out of nowhere but that is hysterical and now I wish I'd seen it haha What I mean to say about Vi is that an actual person who spent ten years in prison

would have changed. But I can see from a story perspective why they used her the way they did.

- The time gap didn't work for me all the way: We don't get enough time with Jinx or Silco functioning on their normal levels to see how they got to where they are. There's a big gap between Powder and Jinx, but we don't get to see her as anything other than the girl remembering her sister. I'm assuming she isn't that way all the time--she MUST be an important and competent part of the organization, even if she does have rough moments. Sevika points to it, saying she'll finally explode now that her sister is back...but who does Jinx think she is when she's not thinking about Vi and how did she get there?
- Same with Silco. What on earth does he actually want, and what is he doing to get it? He's in power and established after the gap, and I see why there was an opening for that to happen--we didn't need to watch his rise to power. BUT, what does he actually want? And why? That's never super clear because none of what he does actually jives with what he's SAYING he wants. The city of Zaun. Why does he want that? What would be different? What is Piltover actually DOING to the undercity other than not sharing resources. Like, there doesn't seem to be much interaction between them other than shots fired. I get the whole have-have not scenario but is that a "we're not taking care of people at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale" problem (and what would be solved by them having their own city?) or is it something else? Enforcers killed Vi's parents in the last fight against Piltover--what were they actually fighting for? Independence to do...what? (And yes, I get that this is a trope people can just use their imaginations for, but when Silco emerged as a drug lord I got really confused about what the actual plan was and why he thought it was better than Vander's bid to keep the peace. They literally do the same things--bribe police officers to leave the Lanes alone. Silco just makes money off of it.

How to use foils?

- Oh my word they're everywhere in this show and it's *amazing*. I think foils are generally used between the hero and the villain to accentuate the hero's flaws and show audiences that the hero really isn't that different from the bad guy in a number of ways. It makes for really compelling storytelling when you have people from similar backgrounds who approach problems from different perspectives because it shows how the hero *could* be, and Arcane has some of that typical good guy/bad guy foil action going on. But it also has a TON of more slippery foil action.
 - I mean, the show is set up perfectly for this because you have the twin cities of Piltover and Zaun, right? Piltover being this shining bastion of progress and prosperity, and underneath it, Zaun, the undercity, a den of iniquity and danger and just generally much cooler vibes than Piltover lol But neither side is necessarily the "good" side, and this tension between the two of them is the perfect promise for a lot of thematic discussion about duality. When you have two situations/societies that are so tightly intertwined and in such tension with each other, it makes sense to explore the concept of duality in individual characters.
 - So there are the really obvious foils, right? Vander and Silco: father figures who had the same goal of liberation for the Undercity and went about solving the problem in different ways. Vander got scared of Silco's drive/lack of limits and betrayed him/left him for dead. (this is actually one of the things I struggle with--Vander's first reference to Silco is that "there are worse things out there" than enforcers when he realizes Vi got stopped by

people down in the undercity on her way back from the job. Later, it shows that Vander tried to murder Silco, and we see what THAT interaction made Silco into--it's his moment of change that made him who he is today. But we don't know what happened. We see Vander's moment of change when Vi and Powder find him in the upper city killing people(!) and he looks around and decides to leave, taking them with him under his wing. So where does the fight with Silco fit in there? I thought that the fight with Silco happened before the day on the bridge, by a pretty significant amount. I wonder if it's just a case of tightening the story so much details got cut. I personally didn't need the details, but I think that's because one of the things I think this show does so well is non-verbal communication. So much information is conveyed in a glance or an expression or what have you that I didn't mind having nonverbal communication about some minor plot things. Ultimately, it didn't matter to me that I didn't know the timeline perfectly because the timeline isn't the point--the fall out is the point.) Then years later as Vander mellowed and Silco sharpened, we get a reverse of the betrayal and Silco takes on the hero mantle for the undercity (though it never fits him quite right). Vi and Jinx: start out on the same side (sisters passionate about liberation for the undercity and wanting to prove themselves to their father) but after Jinx um . . . murders their whole family by accident? . . . their paths get progressively further and further apart because Vi softens/recognizes the importance of peace and Jinx sharpens (sound familiar?). Vi and Caitlin: from opposite worlds, wanting peace/justice etc. the whole oil/water thing. Viktor and the creepy scientist dude whose name I can't remember: the goal/path of science. Honestly, Silco and Ekko! Because Silco *claims* to want to protect the undercity but it's Ekko who actually cares for people and keeps them safe/away from shimmer/gives them a place to recover. Anyway it's great. I'd add in Jinx and Ekko here too (the fight between them on the bridge with the flashback that ends in him not being able to hurt her and her choosing to destroy both of them!)--they both grew up with the terrible trauma of parents being killed, then their found family being killed right in front of them--but end up in two very different places based on their choices--Ekko, who uses that trauma to empathise with and protect/build a place of safety for others who have suffered the way he does. And Jinx who is so haunted by trauma, she clings to the only person who seems to find value in her even though that person uses her to inflict that same trauma on other people. ALSO a direct Vander/Silco (you were my broooother!!) Vi/Jinx story parallel (with Silco actually taking Jinx out to the river and inviting her to go under the way he did when Vander tried to kill him.) AND the one between the scientist and Viktor is sort of terrifying, but I'm not sure *I* understood about the whole "the mutation must survive" thing. The scientist is the brain behind shimmer...shimmer makes people stronger/heals them/. . . powers things? Pink Toothless didn't make sense all the way to me.

- ALSO I think foils allow for more nuanced characterizations because it pulls you out of the classic good vs evil/black and white morality and forces you to see each person as a complete person, if that makes sense. Like, it would have been SO easy to make Silco irredeemable or have nothing likeable about him. And yet: he was willing to make a bargain for peace with Jayce. And yet: he genuinely loved and cared for Jinx. Or with Mel: at first I was convinced she was a manipulative snake (I'm not convinced she's not, though she might be conflicted about it. The whole romance between her and Jayce is SO

forced at that critical moment of him deciding what to do with all his newfound power—he goes to her to ask her what to do about Viktor dying because “nothing is impossible when I’m with you” and there’s a moment there where she looks away and I’m like, oof you’re not in this at all.). Then we learn that she’s actually compassionate and wants to change things, too, and that she comes from a family with a scary mother who loves her and exiled her because of that love (I agree-ish. I think the mother gives her context, but that there will be choices in the next season. If she’s not dead because of sharkbomb™). Or even Marcus, that enforcer I thought was ridiculous and stupid. We learn he has a daughter he loves DEEPLY, and that makes him more human.

Consistent worldbuilding across different settings.

- So a lot of sprawling fantasy has this problem imo, which is like each town/country feels really fleshed out and the author could tell me the principle imports/exports of each place, but they never really feel connected? Like if there was a plague in X country, I don’t really believe it would affect Y country because weak worldbuilding forgets how intertwined the world actually is. I think Arcane did their worldbuilding in a strong way—when something changes in Piltover, it affects Zaun and vice versa, and their tech isn’t ever confined to one location. Hextech serves a different purpose in Zaun than in Piltover but it’s *there*, and decisions in one place affect the other place. I think we might see more of this in season 2 as the world expands with Nexus (is that the name of Mel’s country? Full confession, I watched this show three times but I still don’t remember all the names lol) because their problems are obviously starting to affect the twin cities already, but it was cool to see the council members being like “hey! We can’t close the hexgates because it will screw up our imports/exports!” and just generally proving that people would be affected by the decisions the MCs were making. Unlike in Marvel. Where a “blip” knocked out half of the world’s population and five years later CIVILIZATION LOOKED EXACTLY THE SAME. That is weak worldbuilding. Weak time skipping. Weak weak weak weak weak

Themes?

- “In the quest to be great, we forgot to do good.” Unintentional fallout/dealing with natural consequences of actions. Jayce and Viktor want to create hextech to solve the problems of Piltover/Zaun but as time happens the change doesn’t affect Zaun the way they want it to and it just leads to a greater divide between the two cities. Vander and Silco wanted independence for Piltover, but both men, when they finally get the shot to lead, aren’t nearly as radical as they claimed to be (Vander makes an alliance with the enforcers to keep an uneasy peace; Silco makes that deal with Jayce to negotiate for the independence of Zaun).
 - For the record, I think this is a super sad theme and I’m hopeful they’ll expand on it in a positive direction in season 2. While they never actually say that radical change isn’t possible in these two cities, there’s this bummer of an implication that the things standing in your way of making real change are the results of the fact that the change wasn’t made earlier. What I mean by that is that, at the end, when the council decides to vote for peace and liberate Zaun, there’s this moment where it’s like, a relief, and we’re excited because good things are coming. And then of course Jinx and her shark missile show up and decide no, we will not have peace. And if Jinx hadn’t been failed by the system when she was a child, she wouldn’t have been crazy, and probably wouldn’t have decided to

murder the entire council of Piltover. So basically, the theme seems to be that negative systems are self-perpetuating because the victims and the aggressors sort of seem to become interchangeable after long enough.

- Family/daughters, specifically. There's so much here about the things you do for daughters and what they do to you (Vander and Vi, Silco and Jinx, Mel and Mrs. Medarda, Caitlin and the Kirammans, Marcus and his daughter (Claudia?)), the inherent trauma of loving someone (and why, in the end, it's worth it to love). This is an interesting thing--Silco really does love Jinx because he can see himself in her--she's the abandoned one--but he *calls her Jinx*. As if she is one. And shapes her into someone he can use, then claims it's out of love. Her lack of trust (and shooting him in the end, even if it was by accident?) is because he taught her to be like him? Silco is alone and doesn't really trust anyone, doesn't build. If he's who she wants to be, the *monster* who will do anything to get power because it ensures no one has power over him...? What was he expecting, really? I don't buy this being a direct conflict between Vi and Jinx later, though? I feel like that whole connection wasn't...quite played out. I haven't rewatched the last three, so maybe that's why I don't know what I think--I can't remember the conclusions Vi came to about Jinx. Like, there's a moment of "this is who you are now??" when Jinx whips out her magical cannon that's heavier than she is but also fits in her pocket and starts shooting everyone, and another one on the bridge, I think? I probably need to go back and look. Like...is the next season going to be Jinx taking over Silco's empire and being the leader in the war against Piltover? I didn't think she connected her own trauma to what was happening up there--it was all her own world and dealing with...herself. She's not invested in any fight, she only wants to impress Silco...kind of. Because even though she's chosen him, her history makes her believe he won't always choose her. So she thinks she has to prove herself over and over...until she doesn't, but then she does again after she kills him...and it doesn't quite come together for me. Jinx's actions are too big for how small her wants are IMO. **That's a really well-said thought: that her actions are too big for her wants. I think I agree with you on that. My feeling is that it's all sort of bundled into this idea that Jinx doesn't know what she wants, at least to begin with. That's why she's so conflicted with her identity and her actions and everything, and her actions don't always mesh with what we would expect her actions to be. I'm guessing next season will be about fleshing out who Jinx is and what she actually wants because this season was really about her trying or failing to meet other people's expectations? I think there's a lot of room for them to tell us who she is absent Silco and Vi because you're right, her identity is SO wrapped up in who she is in comparison to them.**
- In conflict, it's the children who suffer! So when we meet all the characters as kids it makes *sense* what they grow up to be, and then any time we see or interact with children moving forward in the second two acts, we wonder what they'll become/what the city will force them to change into.
- The change now vs change over time theme between Jayce, Viktor, and the professor is interesting--the professor is constantly asking them to slow down, that there's time to make things safe for everyone. He's incredibly cautious based on his own experience and wants to build things for everyone's good only when he's sure it can *only* do good--Jayce and ESPECIALLY Viktor want to do good now, for people who need it right then (Jayce even says it--humans don't live as long as you, we need change now, and Viktor's illness puts that into direct focus--he needs help right then, not in another decade. There's a nice scene between him and the professor where the professor expresses regret for his diagnosis. Viktor asks him if he ever contemplates death, and the professor says "when it concerns my friends" or something like that). It's interesting because

they're both right, change needs to happen now, and the professor IS partly responsible for not directly addressing the problems down in the lanes, but Jayce etc do break some heads, cause some serious problems by moving too quickly (I'm still waiting to find out what exactly Viktor has done to himself and if he'll keep doing more with hextech plus shimmer. I'm guessing later seasons will feature another set of parallel characters--Jayce from the upper city vs Viktor from the lower city--Jayce has even already called Viktor his brother, so we all know where that's going :)), but ALSO love that at the end the professor finds Ekko and says "you built all this just within your lifetime?" That good doesn't necessarily have to wait...but sometimes it does? The audience gets a really clear look at both ideas and both are shown to be faulty and true at the same time. I love that Ekko built something alive and beautiful out of nothing and that the professor gets to see it.

- I really liked the highlight one character per episode format (I don't know if it holds true throughout) but I thought it was a cool approach (and one a lot of longer form fantasy and sci-fi take). Each episode gives a quick prologue backstory for characters as they become relevant to the main story that's being told.

Ep 1: Vi, 2: Jace, 3: Silco, 4: Soort of Heimdinger/intro to time jump 5: Caitlyn, 6: Viktor, 7: Ekko, 8: Mel, 9: no highlight here, though it does return to the first two characters, Jayce and Vi, showing them in the present and in direct contrast to where they started.

It's just a cool way to put a character into very clear focus both so the audience is connected to them but also to give context for something important right before the audience needs to know it. The Aurora Rising books do something like this. The Way of Kings does this with whole books being dedicated to one character's backstory. The Lunar Chronicles do this too, introducing a new POV to each book. Lots of books do this to highlight theme instead by using chapter headings or quotes to point to thematic/big picture stuff happening, too.

Fight scenes?

- So I don't know much about league of legends (hardly anything at all actually and I'd like to keep that way lol) but I DO know that like, you choose a champion and fight with them? Maybe? Basically all the main characters are beloved champions and they all have their weapons and stuff and it would have been easy to get some crowning moment of awesomeness in there with all those ridiculous weapons: Vi's gauntlets or Jayce's hammer or whatever. And there's kind of a lot of fighting in this show. But they never *once* forget the human cost of fighting. I think the first violence we see is the aftermath of that failed attempt to fight against Piltover when Powder and Vi were little, and it's impossible to see it as anything other than horrible. And that stays with you. The next time we see fighting, it's Vi and Clagger and Milo against some randos from the undercity who want to steal from them, and there's nothing awesome about it, it slows down and shows us the blood and the danger and in case we didn't get the message, then it shows us Powder's reaction to it: fear and running away (those first moments of her being horrified watching her sister fight were a great introduction to her and what she was afraid of--kids knowing what it means to lose someone and to hurt is really tragic). Even when there are some cool fight scenes later on, there's always a reason they can't just be awesome for the sake of being awesome. Vi fights Sevika in the thrall of her anger and is clumsy and almost gets killed. Vi and

the airships. Powder says (with great hope and wonder. They're symbols of progress, wealth.) "someday I'm going to ride in one of those things!" and Milo says "Someday I'm going to shoot one down," points his fingers like a gun and shoots. Near the end of the series, she (as Jinx) stares up at little fireflies (firelights, also the name of Ekko's gang who she's fighting and a symbol of hope) and does the same thing: aims her fingers and shoots. It's a full circle of where she was, what she could have been, and what she actually became. And foreshadowing for the ending. At least that's what I decided.

My complaints (they are few but worth mentioning)

- There's a big cast and I didn't always feel super close to each character. That's not totally a problem, but like, for instance, I wish we had known Sky better so when she gets sucked up by the magic to cure Viktor I could have been as horrified as he was. Although to be fair I think a lot of his horror may have come from the fact that he didn't really know her that well. I think they grew up together but I never got the sense of great closeness from them, so idk.
- Honestly, this was my biggest complaint, especially since the climax centers around Jinx deciding who she is--I SUPER did not care about Jinx at all. She made no sense to me. Most of the characters in this story act like the slightly movie-ified versions of actual people--I could follow them. Jinx is...something else. I get that she's traumatized and it informs a lot of the things she does, but it was like watching Harley Quinn starring in Lord of the Rings. It didn't fit. I wasn't invested enough in who she was and the decisions she was making and what her conflicts were to care very much which chair she sat in in the end because I'd never seen her NOT acting like a deranged weirdo, so I didn't expect her to do anything else because, of all of them, she's the most cardboard cut-out-ish. The choice had already been made--there wasn't ROOM for another one, so the entire time she's like "whooo should I BE, my sister with pink hair...I think I'll just shoot everyone!" I sort of zoned out because she wasn't actually doing anything to show actual conflict. Why was it a choice between killing Silco and her sister (like, symbolically, sure that makes sense, but in the context of the actual story??? DOES IT?) Why does she hate Ekko so much? Why did she decide to kill herself on the bridge just to get rid of him? Nothing makes sense Kristen!!!!!!!! (I kept waiting for them to use SOMETHING about Jinx to give her more than an I'm SO TRAUMATIZED personality (it was really cool how they showed that, but that's all there was) using her tattoos or friends she'd made or enemies she's made or something, but the only person she ever interacts with is Silco. Which, with her EXTREMELY over-sexualized character-styling or whatever is super uncomfortable. Like...who is she when she's not awkwardly sitting on Silco's lap or making bombs? Lolololololol I didn't have this problem at all, but I totally get why you did! My understanding now, as someone who knew nothing previously, is that in League of Legends Jinx has always been the MOST iconic character. She is crazy and that really was the extent of her personality, but she was a thing fans would know to recognize and want to see, and the show decided to fill her in and flesh her out as it were. Personally, I think she's got a ton of character. She's smart, she's an inventor, she's an artist, she misses being close to her family, she's got a sense of humor that was always a little off, but it makes sense to me. I'm not sure I'd say it's Harley Quinn starring in Lord of the Rings because I think this show was set up without such clear good/evil dichotomies as LOTR. I'd say it's Harley Quinn starring in Game of Thrones, maybe, or Locke Lamora. I didn't get such weird tonal dissonance, but I agree there are things about her that still don't make sense. The hatred from

Ekko to her makes sense to me but that's a good point about her hating him. It didn't bother me while I was watching it.

- I SUPER DID NOT CARE ABOUT JAYCE AND HIS RIDICULOUS AXE LASER GUN. HE IS STUPID. Him pulling that thing out was the moment I was like, "yeah, this was based on a video game". Laser axes aside, the way Jayce is able to just change all the rules and make everything worse with enforcers is classic newbie in power/I don't understand the ramifications of my actions now that they affect lots and lots of people directly, and I can see why it was there to escalate things, but on an intellectual level did not buy it. **Yes Jayce straight up sucks (but there are a lot of people who like him! Which I just can't wrap my mind around because he's so stupid).**
- So there's lots of foreshadowing about hextech (or magic, anyway) being a potentially corrupting force/that to do really impressive things it needs to be powered by blood (or by a whole girl, if you need a new leg or something) but the magic system didn't quite make sense. The interaction with shimmer? Arcane magic always wanted blood (and to kill the professor's dog for some reason?) but...is that trying to say that magic comes with a price--that science was able to compensate and create reactions that normally would...require blood? And shimmer...did something new? I'm just very confused and feel like there aren't real rules and the only reason there are two kinds of magic is because they wanted pretty blue vs pink aesthetics during fight scenes. To go with Vi and Jinx's hair. Which didn't grow out in prison. But she did magically get some nice tattoos. **I have 0% interest in magic systems so this didn't bother me lol Shimmer in my understanding = a drug, a manmade substance that wasn't quite right like a serum. Hextech = science, not drug. But again I am so the wrong person to answer this because honestly once magic gets too complicated I totally zone out haha**
- I struggled to get a read on Silco. Yes, he claims to want to take care of his own people and obviously isn't doing that...but what does he think he is doing? Does he lure people in with the promise of a better world and independence? But then he actually tries to negotiate for it...but under the old rule he's doing great, so why does he need to break off? What does Silco actually want? Because the best thing I can come up with is that he wants to be accepted as he is, which is why he tries to be that for Jinx. Which doesn't fit in with...anything else he's doing. You could read it as Jinx is a weakness because he sees himself in her and so she's the one person he won't betray...but if that's the case, then why is Sevika so *loyal* to him? She loses her arm saving him in the third episode. Loyalty is earned, but he hasn't done anything but frighten people into following him, which put money into a few hands...but what does she see in him? **I assumed Sevika's thought process is "I will go where the power is strongest" and when that was Vander she was on Vander's side and when that was Silco she was on Silco's side (she turns as soon as she realizes Vander is going to lose) and then in the intervening time he earned her loyalty.**
- There are some things I just will not understand/know because the show runners decided we didn't need to. Like, where were Jayce and his mother when the magician came and saved their lives? Is Jayce from the city? Why was it snowing? What would have happened if the magician didn't come? I didn't *need* those answers to appreciate that a magician saved his life and now he's obsessed with the saving power of magic, which was the important takeaway, but I personally **wanted them.** I did wonder. Jayce's family is very firmly established in Piltover. They made the hammers that helped cut out the stones to make all those fancy buildings. So they couldn't have arrived there when he was young. Those buildings are old.

- Yes, this is ridiculous, but Mel's makeup: the whole time I was like, hey cool we have people from all over this world, they're all representing the fashion from wherever they're from. No one dresses or wears glitter freckles like Mel, it's from her home country she was banished from. (side note, if she was sent away in disgrace, then why is she on the council? Houses in Piltover are related to...what? And how does that relate to council seats. There are more countries than house seats, I'm guessing, and they just...vote Jayce onto the council, so...how did any of them other than the old puppy professor get there?) BUT THEN WHEN HER MOTHER, THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WE'VE SEEN FROM NOXIA OR WHATEVER IT IS CALLED ARRIVES THERE ARE NO SUPER TIGHT DRESSES. THERE ARE NO GLITTER FRECKLES. I wondered if the gold glitter stuff is some form of armor? I thought maybe it was naturally occurring the whole time and then at the end when it shines as the bomb comes in, I wondered if maybe it's like magic tattoos or something. I assume we'll find out? If it was armor or magic tattoos, wouldn't her mother the warlord lady have it too? This is perhaps my most ridiculous of complaints, Allen legit was like "it's just pretty! LET HER BE PRETTY, it's okay." And I'm like INCONSISTENT WORLD BUILDING FOR AN AESTHETIC IS BLASPHEMY. But, yes, I suppose it could be brought up later and I'd be okay with that. Lol I'm with Allen on this one. Daughters don't always get the same aesthetic sense or even protection as their parents! Let her have her own thing hahaha Also wait!! My own sister is like this! She's got bright pink hair and loves sparkly makeup and wears outfits that can basically be described as piratical or like a fairy princess with very little in between and my mom is like just a very average, low makeup wearer. The real world has a ton of aesthetics you can choose from and no one is confined to just wearing one type of clothes their whole lives.
- Piltover was established as an oasis in a storm of mages waging war with magic (according to professor puppy person). Where is the fallout from all that? Sure, it's been a while, but what's the public perception of magic? Jayce is in awe because he was saved by a mage, he only knows about the stones because that mage gave him one. Are they really rediscovering the dangers of what magic can do (like the professor saying he's seen seeds that destroy whole nations and they look much like what Victor has created)...but we have no context for what he knows, what the common people know or expect from magic. Turning it into technology that can only be used for a certain purpose and could be used by anyone is a really cool concept, but where are we coming from on this? Wasn't that like . . . four hundred years ago? I think if you asked the average American their opinion on the cotton gin they'd be like "yeah it existed" so I don't mind that the average Piltover person doesn't have an opinion. Four hundred years is a long, long time.
- Side note, the fact that Jayce is like "we should give this to EVERYONE" without thinking, "hey, could someone pull the little hex-orb thing out and make their own thing, while very much consistent with his lack of capacity for complicated thought throughout this series, is maybe just a little too far to believe of Victor? Good point. Jayce is an idiot. Viktor is an idealist, maybe? But even so even I had to roll my eyes when they were like "this huge gauntlet and laser will help miners!" Like, bruh, that is a weapon. Who mines with their hands?!? Haha
- EKKO. He is super cool, but I didn't have enough time with him to really understand what was happening between him and Jinx on the bridge until I thought about it later. Like. He's super cool. The reveal that it was him under the mask was expected, of course, I just feel like he was so shadowy and mysterious the whole time when we finally got to find out what he was up to, it was too fast to really matter, and he's the only one with a solution that seemed to be working? Like, in

retrospect, I guess it's okay. I should probably watch it again, but the first time I saw it, I was like SO MANY MISSED OPPORTUNITIES HERE. Maybe they'll take them in the next season. Well, his solution is *kind* of working, but he's being villainized by both the undercity and the enforcers. It would work if there was any space for him to live in that wasn't occupied by DANGER but I feel like I know exactly what he wants and what he's willing to do to accomplish it, so while I would have LIKED more screentime with him, I don't think I needed any more to get where he's coming from.

- The oil and water idea is cool, but using Vi and Caitlin to make it hurt was NOT developed enough to make me do more than roll my eyes. (but what about US, Vi? You taught me to jump really far, but I can't do it in my short skirt. Cutesy nickname does not an established relationship I will be sad about leaving behind make.) !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I could not disagree more hahahahaha But I respect your opinion!! I just don't share it :P I always have problems with quick romances haha. Funny, because b and c story romances always are sort of quick and in the background. I just don't like them being used as if they ARE the A story when they haven't had A story time. Which I know is ridiculous. Not every story has to be everything. BUT, in this case, I feel like it was trying too hard--I would have believed a "we are the bridge between worlds and also I like you" type of thing rather than what happened: their relationship was still in that exciting nobody has said anything phase, but was then expressed as an already established relationship that Caitlyn wanted to continue rather than one she wanted to start in that moment? It would have been a great declaration of interest, but that's not what it was :) I skew demiromantic, so that's probably a personal preference thing. I struggle to believe in relationships that are only a day old.
- Also! the idea that Jinx could believe Vi had replaced her with Caitlyn was...really silly? And since so much of Jinx's confusion and ire hinged on that, I STRUGGLED. There's a classic "who are you?" "no, who are YOU" moment that just was not...set up very well. I think.
- I had one final thought while I was working today and that's that I think a lot of the things you thought of as flaws I thought of as the natural consequences of the medium. In books--especially close 3rd POV--you have to know what the characters know. You have to explain the history. You have the benefit of narration to pass along any information that can't be conveyed in a scene. TV shows don't have that ability--*everything* is about the action, and if a character wouldn't say a thing, there's no reason for us to know the thing. (Like, in Firefly, the audience doesn't have to know how the ship flies or what sort of distances they're covering because the characters never comment on it, and that's okay, but in the Martian or the Last Watch you can't get away from giving that information or else it feels like you're cheating). I feel like that's the case here. If it was a book, I'd 100% agree that the things you want to know more about would need to be answered. But in a show, action is key, and if there's not a good way to get the information conveyed through dialogue or in a glance, it probably isn't essential.

ADD MORE QUESTIONS

Critique: If you'd like to check out the text of this submission and see all our notes, check on our website: litservicepodcast.wixsite.com/litnation. If you would like a first chapter critique from us, you can find our submission guidelines there.

Summary: Two sisters mourn their warrior mother's murder, but when the elders come to crown a new queen, it isn't the sister who expected to get the crown.

Things we like:

Things that might need a second look:



Conclusion:

Thanks to the author for submitting.

Thank the guest.

Our next episode will feature [Tara Goedjen](#), the author of *The Breathless* and *No Beauties or Monsters*. **If you'd like a first chapter critique from us, get us your work by December 9th.**