

TV REVIEW



'Lost' returns with a bang for final season

Alexa Milan
Reviewer

"Lost" fans had to wait eight long months for a new episode after last May's explosive finale. The Feb. 2 premiere marked a bittersweet occasion as the show kicked off its final season.

At the end of season five, the "Lost" gang was split between two times. In 2007, it was revealed that Locke (Terry O'Quinn) is dead, and the man everyone thought was Locke is the mysterious "Man in Black." This man tricked Ben (Michael Emerson) into killing the Christ-like Jacob (Mark Pellegrino.)

As the other "Lost" gang traveled back in time to 1977, Faraday (Jeremy Davies) discovered a way for the castaways to avoid crashing into the island. Detonating a hydrogen bomb in 1977 could contain the out-of-control energy that crashed their plane in 2004. The episode concluded with the explosion of the bomb and no indication as to whether or not the plan worked.

In the premiere, the castaways are back on Oceanic flight 815 in 2004, and the island is completely submerged beneath the ocean. After the first commercial break, the 1977 castaways are once again in 2007.

The bomb killed Juliet (Elizabeth Mitchell). Hurley (Jorge Garcia) saw a vision of Jacob telling him to find a temple where they can save Sayid (Naveen Andrews), who has been shot. When they arrive at the temple, Jacob's followers find a piece of paper with the castaways' names on it that implies they were destined to be there.

On the other side of the island, the "Man in Black" reveals what many fans predicted after May's finale — he is the smoke monster that has plagued the castaways since season one.

In 2004, flight 815 lands safely in Los Angeles. In this reality, Locke is still paralyzed, Charlie (Dominic Monaghan) and Boone (Ian Somerhalder) are still alive and Desmond (Henry Ian Cusick) is on the plane but disappears. Though they are not on the island, the stage is set for the castaways' paths to still cross.

The season six premiere is one of the best "Lost" episodes since season one. As confusing as it is, the alternate reality



Ben Linus, leader of the "Others" is transfixed by the smoke monster, revealed as the "Man in Black." Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

in which the castaways never crash on the island brings the show back to its beginnings in a refreshing way. It is also a treat for fans to see the return of old favorites like Charlie and Boone.

At the same time, the alternate reality does not negate the past five seasons. It would have been disappointing to only see the castaways back on flight 815 without wrapping up the mysteries of the island. In typical "Lost" fashion, the premiere solves one major mystery — the smoke monster — only to present a slew of new questions.

Though the premiere lasted for two hours, there was never a dull moment. Flashing back and forth between the two realities provides plenty of heart-pumping thrills and head-scratching mysteries.

It is also a fantastic showcase of O'Quinn's talent, as he now has to play a new version of Locke in one reality and a villain in another.

If this episode is any indication, the final season of "Lost" will be an intense, yet satisfying, thrill ride that will keep fans guessing until the very end.

Don't get lost:

5 Unanswered Questions

1. Who is the Man in Black?

Viewers know the new face of evil on "Lost" is Jacob's enemy and that he's been present on the island since the beginning of the show as the smoke monster. But why did he want Jacob dead? How long has he been on the island? And where is the hometo which he says he wants to go?

2. What's the deal with the alternate reality?

Viewers now know Faraday's bomb worked, creating an alternate

reality in which flight 815 never crashes. But how will the castaways' destinies intertwine in this universe? Why was Desmond on the plane this time? Will they meet other characters like Ben or Juliet in this world? And will the new 2004 reality collide with the old 2007?

3. What do the numbers mean?

One of "Lost's" oldest and still unanswered questions is the meaning behind the numbers "4, 8, 15, 16, 23, 42." Hurley played the lottery using this sequence, which spawned a heap of bad luck. Not only Hurley had misfortune with them: the numbers have appeared constantly on and off the island, but their significance is still unclear.

4. What happened to Claire?

In season four, Claire (Emilie de Ravin) disappeared, wandering off with her dead father (who could be the Man in Black, impersonating him just as he is impersonating Locke.) She left baby Aaron behind and hasn't been seen since then. Since de Ravin is back as a full-time cast member this season, it is likely viewers will discover her whereabouts soon.

5. Where are the castaways, anyway?

The big question is the one Charlie posed back in season one: "Guys, where are we?" Viewers know the strange things that have happened on the island, but where exactly is this supernatural place? Why were the castaways destined to find it? And, will they ever get away?

TV REVIEW



Martin is funnier than his own show

Second season of 'Important Things with Demetri Martin' premiere falls flat

Lauren Ramsdell
A&E Editor

Wildly popular on college campuses, Demetri Martin is best known as a quirky stand-up comedian. Last year, Comedy Central offered Martin his own show. "Important Things with Demetri Martin" is now entering its second season.

The season premiered on Feb. 4 with the focus of the first show being "Attention."

What doesn't seem to be important to the show is how to connect each segment to the others and make the series flow as a whole. Martin begins each episode with his signature wordplay and a drawing, but his familiar "big pad" is now a television screen with pre-drawn images. This may not seem like such a big change, but part of Martin's charm is in the process of his drawings. Now, because the drawings are already prepared, viewers do not get to watch the drawing take shape.

After the introduction, Martin breaks the rest of the episode into chunks of sketch comedy that fall flat. Either Martin, his team of

writers or the actors are dropping the ball. The premise is announced at the start of the scene, and then five minutes of awkwardly unamusing dialogue occurs with silly sight gags. Even clever ideas are flogged like the proverbial dead horse, making continued watching almost unbearable. Between sketches there

“

I can't do anything beyond what I think is funny.”

— Demetri Martin
COMEDIAN

are moments of stand-up, musical interludes and more drawings.

Martin is a Yale-educated, self-described geek. His normal stand-up reflects this personality. But, "Important Things" falls back onto more random humor and basic sight gags. It doesn't appear that Martin is really putting his heart into the show. "I can't do anything beyond what

I think is funny," Martin said in a conference call.

The show is redeemed when Martin's signature palindromes, his witty observations and his word games make an appearance. When Martin does stand-up bits in front of the studio audience, there is hope for his show.

"Important Things" and "Mind of Mencia" are Comedy Central's outlet for trying to find a replacement for "Chappelle's Show," canceled after a third, incomplete season.

"It's very different," Martin said of his comparison to Dave Chappelle. "It was a fair comparison as far as format, but we've sort of migrated away from that."

In his stand-up, Martin has the potential for as many laughs and quotable moments as Chappelle. But, Martin's talent does not shine through in his show, making every viewing a reminder that time would be better spent watching re-runs of specials such as "Demetri Martin: Person" or "If I."

Luckily, Martin has other things on his plate, including movies, potential book deals and an eventual return to stand-up.

VIDEO GAME REVIEW



One demon game

Jon Moore
Reviewer

It's been quite a while since Sega has had a turn in the spotlight. The Japanese game developer, most famous for the "Sonic" franchise, has been less than prodigious in recent years. Its track record does not bode well for "Bayonetta," co-developed with MadWorld's PlatinumGames, but is it possible that the Sega slump has come to an end?

The most notable gameplay feature of "Bayonetta" is its evocation of the style of the "Devil May Cry" school of combat. Of course, with the creator of the original "DMC," Hideki Kamiya, as director of the game, this is what one should expect. Combat is not the only thing brought by Kamiya, though. As anyone who has played Kamiya's cult classics "Okami" and "Viewtiful Joe" will tell you, he knows style. In "Bayonetta," enemies, environments and bosses are truly a wonder to behold. It's this synergy of fighting and fashion that forms the crux of his new release. Such a focus seems to have drained the life out of what the game badly needed: a coherent story and a decent way to tell it.

The premise of the game is a combination of a few well-known tropes, foremost among which are the epic fight between the forces of heaven and hell (or, as they're known throughout the game, Paradiso and Inferno) and the amnesiac heroine. Players only know that they are fighting against heaven, and the plot does little to convince the players why that is particularly heroic. Only deep into the story does there appear any semblance of reason for the eponymous Bayonetta's hostility, but because the character learns it at the same time as the player, it is not likely to offer any real solace. Beyond this, the plot is nearly incomprehensible.

The method Sega and PlatinumGames have devised of conveying their story is no prize, either. Many cutscenes are not fully animated. Cloth may sway in the wind, but characters' bodies and mouths are disappointingly immobile. It may have been intended to be purely stylistic, but it comes across as a cost-cutting maneuver that doesn't fit the polished nature of the visuals.

Gameplay is decent, following a linear path through various stages while intermittently using combo-centric combat, employing guns, swords and other weapons to eliminate everything that moves. Occasionally, the players are treated to segments with controllable vehicles, but these sections are understandably shallow and serve mainly to paint a more imposing picture of the heroine.

The combos are fluid and response time for the dodge function is perfect, even when in the middle of a combat animation. Such perfection is necessary to activate "witch time," a slow motion feature that is indispensable in giving you the slightest chance of coming out of the harder battles victorious. This feature is the best addition to the combat.

Bayonetta, the game's protagonist, is an epic gender studies debate waiting to explode. Proportionally even less representative of the female form than Barbie, Bayonetta proves that where Dante and Kratos succeeded in sensualizing ultraviolent masculinity, she can do the same with hyper-sexual femininity. She poses suggestively, teases opponents and performs special moves that leave her in various stages of undress, down to full (if only slightly obscured) frontal and rear nudity.

Contrast these supposedly exploitative scenes with those that show her in undeniable dominance over arrogant men and the player cannot be sure how to react. Was Bayonetta designed to be ogled by over-excited teenage boys or to be a type of strong female character that isn't afraid to flaunt her own sexuality? Only players can decide the answer to this question.