The End of Innocence

THE END OF INNOCENCE

The Dark Quickening (Something Wicked), and the Watcher mess, (Judgement Day, One Minute to Midnight) have left many dangling loose ends-issues among Duncan, Joe and Richie-unresolved. Methos, for the moment is out of the picture. His turn will come. (With a vengeance!)

This episode seeks to tie up the loose ends so that the characters can go forward with new perspectives and respect for each other. Richie evolves. Duncan admits past failings. Joe struggles to balance two loyalties. None of them is innocent of mistakes. Nevertheless, mistakes should be instructive, not repeated.

One other personal observation. Highlander mirrors our own flaws. How often does anger over a real or imagined hurt become a reason to attack something that has no relevance to that hurt? We are too chicken to face what is bothering us head on, so we project the anger elsewhere. You know...the boss reprimands you...you yell at
your spouse...spouse smacks the kid...kid kicks the dog, dog does...you know, etc. This episode is loaded with misplaced emotion. Somehow, they manage to sort it out. Whew! What a tangle!

Silly observation: This episode must set the record for most times the line, 'What are you doing here?' is uttered. I stopped counting at four.

New Characters:

HARESH CLAY - An Immortal, not inherently evil, basically a man of honor but no compassion or mercy.

CARTER WELLAN - Immortal, friend and companion to Clay for nine hundred years.

GRAHAM ASHE - Immortal, one of Duncan's teachers, fine swordsman but loved life so much that he begged on his knees to keep it-much to Duncan's shame and chagrin.

DELILA - Beautiful bar owner, will arm wrestle you for a free beer.

Just like old times,
Richie works out,
Pounding that bag,
His punches have clout,
He's lookin' good,
Muscular, leaner,
A shorter hairstyle,
Self-reliant demeanor.

Duncan strides in,
His coldness is clear,
To Richie, his friend-
'What are you doing here?'
'Just workin' out,
No more than that,'
Mac grabs Richie's face,
Shoves him down on the mat.

Never has Richie-
Seen Mac so abusive,
Rich tries for his sword,
But, it proves elusive,
Mac's foot descends-
With force on his wrist,
'Nearly...so close,'
Mac's smile-a cruel twist.

'Richie,' mocks Duncan,
'Never let your sword go,
Or else, this can happen-
As you very well know,
The katana swoops down!
Richie lets go a SCREAM!
Then awakes, dripping sweat-
From the nightmarish dream.

The Dojo

MacLeod's movements flow-
In an elegant kata,
As polished and skillful-
As the finest sonata,
His muscles are liquid,
All movements defined,
His power and strength-
Melds body with mind.

A visitor? Intruder?
Joe Dawson is both,
He enters the dojo-
To again break his oath,
'Dawson,' breathes Duncan,
Still flexing each sinew,
'You shouldn't be here,'
But Joe must continue.

Flashback, Joe's Bar, Previous Year

Says Richie to Joe,
'He wanted me dead!
If it wasn't for you-
He'd have taken my head!'  
'Mac couldn't help it,'  
'Joe, please just leave it,
Never thought Mac could kill me,
Now I believe it!'

Back to the Dojo, Present Day

Joe speaks two words-
That stop Duncan cold,
'It's Richie'... Mac turns,
Now the tale must be told,
'After you left-
Richie wasn't the same,
He's wild, picking fights,
Trying to make a name.'

'He's now back in town,
Gonna get himself killed'
Mac towels his face,
His attitude chilled,
'Joe...This is not-
Any business of yours.'
'But it's yours,' Joe insists,
To MacLeod, he implores.

Though Mac's stony-faced-
Inside, his gut wrenches,
'Fine!' Joe explodes-
Through teeth that he clenches,
'We can all go to hell,
You don't owe us a thing,
Richie's at South and Pine...
If you care'...Exiting.

Cheap Rooming House

Yet again, Richie dreams-
Of MacLeod's evil grin,
As he circles his prey,
Before doing him in,
The katana is raised...
Then Joe's gun rings out,
Mac is shot just in time,
Rich awakes with a shout!

The Buzz now is real,
For this, Rich has trained,
In the alley, he finds-
MacLeod, looking pained,
With hands in his pockets,
Mac tries to extend-
His heartfelt regrets,
'I still am your friend.'

'Ritchie, I tried-
To find you,' swears Mac,
Rich holds his sword out,
Prepared for attack,
'I wasn't around,
But you taught me well,
There Can Be Only One,
Thanks 'Teach', that was swell.'

'The next time you come-
Looking for me,
It won't be so easy,
I guarantee.'
'Ritchie,' pleads Duncan...
'I wish I could change-
What happened, but that-
I cannot arrange.'

The pain in Mac's eyes-
Is piercing and strong,
'Ritchie, you know-
What you're doing is wrong.'
'Thanks for the tip!'-
Richie hurls, upon leaving,
Mac walks away,
Silently grieving.

Bike Garage and Sales

Richie's had troubles,
A financial lack,
He sold his bike-
But now wants it back,
Things weren't this tough-
When MacLeod was his friend,
But it's MacLeod's fault-
That's now at an end.

He cannot afford-
The price for the bike,
Then two things happen-
That Rich doesn't like,
The mechanic says, 'No'
Then calls Rich a 'kid,'
These insults combine-
To flip Richie's lid.

He threatens to burn-
All the bikes in the lot,
The mechanic relents,
Now Richie has got-
All that he wanted,
He's a big man with wheels,
And he bullied to get it,
Like old times, it feels.

Delila's Bar

If you beat Delila...
You win a beer,
That, plus her looks-
Brings the customers here,
One patron tries-
His 'hand' at arm wrestling-
While Richie sits sullen,
Sipping beer and protesting.

'Why bother?' he bitches,
'For this lousy beer?'
Delila informs him,
'You needn't stay here.'
But, Richie is bored,
So, he'll try his luck,
If he beats Delila,
He might save a buck.

As they grip hands,
Carter Wellan comes in,
A young pleasant guy-
With an engaging grin,
He makes a small joke,
When he learns her name,
'A beer and a haircut,'
But, Rich craves the Game.

'It's more than a haircut-
You need,' Richie taunts,
Carter says that the head-
On a beer's all he wants,
But Richie persists-
And Wellan's no wuss,
He'll accommodate Richie,
And won't make a fuss.

When they find a place,
Wellan restates his view,
'We don't have to do this,'
Says Rich, 'Yes, we do!'
While they are battling-
Delila is busy,
Haresh Clay has come in,
His companion, where is he?

Clay's very handsome,
Well tailored and spiffy,
The type that commands-
Response in a jiffy,
He asks of Delila,
If she's seen a dude,
'Young, blondish hair-
With a big attitude?'

Delila tells Clay-
That his friend Carter-
Left with a guy,
An ill-tempered upstarter,
A real piece of work,
Nasty and rude,
Had even more-
Of a 'bad attitude.'

Fight Scene

The battle's concluded,
Carter's minus his head,
Clay arrives as Rich leaves,
Cries out, 'You are DEAD!'
'A dead man, you hear?'
But Rich zooms away,
Behind stands a grieving-
Enraged Haresh Clay.
Richie's Room

Rich has chilled out-
(Taking heads is a chore)-
First the Buzz...then a crash-
Clay has smashed through his door!
Like a wild man, he rages,
Runs at Richie, full tilt,
Breaks off Richie's blade,
Leaving only the hilt.

In Richie's 'career'-
He has often been chased
But, a madman like this-
He never has faced,
Rich flies through his window,
Rolls...bumps every stair,
Jumps on his bike,
Quickly peels out of there.

The Loft

Mac's buffing his sword,
Not pleased to see-
That Joe has come back,
He turns cheerlessly,
'It's about Richie...'
Worse than I thought,'
'Richie's okay,'
Mac says, features taut.

'He can handle himself,'
'With this?' There displayed-
In Joe's hand the sad remnant-
Of Richie's fine blade,
MacLeod lowers his eyes,
'Who is it?' 'Haresh Clay'
This name tells MacLeod-
That he can't walk away.

Flashback, Southern Europe, 1657

The fields are abloom-
With flowers and grass,
Two Immortals are sparring,
One lands on his ass!
The other one lectures-
' That defense was not wise,'
On his butt, young MacLeod's-
Had enough exercise.

Graham Ashe, a swordmaster,
Makes short work of Duncan,
He taught Juan Ramirez,
(No wonder, Mac's flunkin')
Says Ashe, 'Though I'm good,
There are others more skilled,'
When The Kurgan met Ramirez,
Ramirez was killed.

'My luck,' sighs MacLeod,
'I'll meet one that tough,'
Ashe lifts his spirits,
'Don't neglect the good stuff,
We fight,' counsels Ashe-
'So we'll stay alive,
Don't forget you must live,
Not merely survive.'

He reflects on the joys-
Of music and art,
Then the Buzz causes both-
To jump with a start,
'Haresh Clay!' whispers Ashe,
'Quick, find Holy Ground...
This is one Immortal-
We don't want around.'

Clay comes on horseback-
In Moorish attire,
White flowing robes,
Beside him, his squire,
Carter Wellan is honored-
To see to his needs,
Maintaining his weapons,
As well as his steeds.

Mac steps in front-
Of Ashe, as a shield...
But the challenge Clay makes-
Is to Ashe, so he'll yield,
Ashe bids MacLeod go-
To a nearby churchyard,
Though he'll be safe,
Just watching, is hard.

It soon is apparent-
How this fight will end,
Mac steels his heart-
To lose a good friend,
But as Clay prepares-
His death blow to give,
Ashe does the unthinkable,
Begs...‘Let me live.’

Mac cannot bear-
To observe this dishonor-
Of the swordsman who trained-
The man who taught Connor,
'I don't want to die,'  
Mac hears with dismay,  
Clay pretends to relent,  
Takes his head anyway.

The Loft, Present Day

Mac stares at the broken-Sword in his hand,  
Joe's pleading with Mac-Won't he please understand?  
Joe wants to help Rich,  
What else can he do?  
'This is who you are,'  
Mac grips Joe's tattoo.

'For once, keep your vow-  
And don't interfere,  
What I do for Rich-  
Is my business, that clear?  
Joe, we are through,  
Please leave,' orders Mac  
Joe and Mac separate,  
Both holding tears back.

Joe's Bar, That Night

Joe is alone-  
When Richie walks in,  
Both comment on how...  
Long a time it has been,  
Rich needs a stiff drink-  
Putting jitters to rest,  
When he gets up his nerve,  
He makes his request.

'I need a new sword,  
Can I borrow two grand?'  
Joe's ears are still ringing-  
From Mac's reprimand,  
'As a friend, I would love to,  
As a Watcher, I can't.'  
Rich blurts, 'How convenient!  
Stalks out, petulant.

Museum Exhibit, 'Masterworks of the Forge'

Rich has reverted-  
To pre-MacLeod measures,  
'Breaking and entering,'  
A thief, among treasures,  
Those swords in the case...  
Ah...that one looks right,  
It appears strong enough-  
To withstand a good fight.
That fight may come soon,
A buzz tells him so,
Haresh Clay knew exactly-
Where Richie would go.
Rich smashes the glass-
In the large display case,
But, the sword won't come free,
It is anchored in place.

'I'm unarmed!' Richie screams,
'Where's the honor?' he cries,
'Didn't come for your honor,
It's your head that I prize!'
But breaking the glass-
Set off the alarms,
The cops have become-
Richie Ryan's good luck charms.

Police Station

Again, like old times,
Richie's in jail,
MacLeod's grown accustomed-
To making his bail,
This time, it is different,
Rich acts cold and distant,
Doesn't want Mac's advice,
But, MacLeod is insistent.

Mac drives Richie out-
For a walk on the pier,
Mac's telling him things-
Rich does not want to hear.
'Graham Ashe was the best,
Rich, this is my fight,
It's not about you,
There's a wrong I must right.'

'Well, you'd better find him-
Before I do, Mac!' Mac leans in the car,
Pulls out from its back...
His friend Ashe's sword,
'You'll need one of these,
If you find him first,
Take it Rich...Please.'

Each makes a gesture,
Extending, accepting,
Slowly, these two-
Begin reconnecting,
'I owe you one,'
'No, I owe you one,
But Clay's still out there,
And, there's work to be done.

Delila's Bar

Rich approaches Delila,
In an insolent way,
'I'm looking for someone,
His name's Haresh Clay,'
He gives Clay's description,
While grabbing her arm,
'Let go of me!'
(She's immune to his charm.)

'If Clay comes around,
My name's Richie Ryan.'
Richie's manner's offensive,
What he sells, she ain't buyin,'
Richie learns zip,
So, he leaves without heeding-
A patron, (Joe Dawson),
Who pretends to be reading.

Joe is quite handsome,
An engaging sort,
He smiles at Delila,
Shows he's a sport-
By accepting her challenge,
The arm wrestling test,
He speedily pins her,
The lady's impressed!

He doesn't want beer,
But the same information-
That she denied Richie,
Haresh Clay's habitation,
Barkeep to barkeep,
Professional favor,
If she offers more?
Joe will not waver.

Joe's Bar, Next Morning

A day of decision,
Mac's swallowed his pride,
He's come to face Joe,
Putting principles aside,
Joe sees MacLeod's anguish,
Recognizes his strife,
'Weighing honor and ethics-
Against a friend's life.'

'Richie will die,
If I don't find Clay,
Where is he, Joe?'
Then Joe has his say,
After handing MacLeod-Clay's address that he won, Joe reveals his bare wrist-
The tattoo is GONE!

Where it used to be-
The skin's raw and scarred, This surprise revelation-Leaves the Highlander jarred,
'You were right, I could not-
Be both Watcher and friend,' 'I'm sorry,' says Mac,
Struggling to comprehend.

Mac's awed by the measure Of his friend's sacrifice, Joe valued the Watchers-
Above any price,
Immortals, their histories, The why and the how,
Joe sighs, 'Someone else-
Can take care of that now.'

Haresh Clay's Hotel

Mac and Richie arrive, At the very same time, Almost behead each other, But stop on a dime,
'What are YOU doing here?' (Both looking for Clay) Rich says, 'I messed up, But I won't run away.'

A guest sees the swords- But he's not a bit nervous 'Why aren't you Shriners- At the funeral service?' 'Uh...what was the name ?-
The cemetery...we forgot...' 'Saint John's by the Sea,' 'Thanks, that's the spot.'

Saint John's by the Sea Cemetery

Mac in the T-Bird, Rich on his bike, Still separated, Yet thinking alike, Haresh Clay kneels-
At the grave of his friend, While Mac and Rich argue- How this will all end.

Mac is disturbed-
That Rich won't obey,
'You get in line-
If you want to fight Clay!'
'I might just do that,'
Rich hesitates, mumbling-
Then follows MacLeod,
To the graveside, still grumbling.

'Duncan MacLeod,'
Says Clay with respect,
'You come a long way-
Since the last time I checked...
My fight's with your friend,
You and Carter didn't clash.'
'And you,' states MacLeod-
'Had no quarrel with Ashe.'

'Do you condone-
What he did?' inquires Clay,
Does he mean Rich or Ashe...?
Which one, who's to say?
Mac answers for both,
States a fact sad, but true,
'We fight to the death,
That's what we do.'

Clay nods, then reflects...
'Can you imagine?
Nine hundred years,
Of loyalty, unflaggin'
My squire, my friend,
Companion so true,
Now he is gone.'
(To Rich) 'Thanks to you.'

Rich is primed and ready,
Inside Mac feels hollow,
When Clay walks away-
Mac won't let Rich follow,
'Richie, I haven't-
Told the whole story...
He shamed me,' says Mac,
Crestfallen and sorry.

Flashback, Southern Europe, 1657

'I stood by in shock,
As Graham Ashe died,
After he pled for mercy,
I was stunned, mortified,
Clay taunted me then,
Dared me to fight,
But, I would not move,
Much to his delight.'
'He ran at me then,  
Ashe's sword in his hand,  
I screamed...'*Holy Ground!*'  
But, he never planned-  
To kill me, just give me-  
The sword that Ashe prized,  
And tarnish the memory-  
Of the man he despised.'

'As he rode away,  
Quipping to his squire, Carter,  
'A coward is not worth-  
Our bother, we're smarter,  
We're staying at the inn,  
Overnight, for the taking,'  
He called to MacLeod,  
'When your knees have stopped shaking!'

Cemetery, Present Day

'To this very day-  
Of that shame, I'm not free,  
I'm *asking*, not telling,  
Please do this for me,'  
Rich nods, 'Okay,'  
He will yield to Mac's claim,  
He will give Mac the chance-  
To blot out his shame.

'Stay on Holy Ground,-'  
Mac says, just like Ashe did,  
Then, a fair warning-  
Knowing Rich is rash kid,  
'If he takes me,  
He'll also take you.'  
Rich nods, 'Then don't let him.'  
No further ado.

Outside the Cemetery

Clay and the Highlander,  
Finally contend,  
Regardless the outcome,  
MacLeod's shame will end.  
Both suffer small wounds-  
From the other's attack,  
Then Mac pins Clay's arms-  
Behind his own back.

With Clay's arms immobile,  
MacLeod runs him through,  
'If it ends here.....'  
Offers Mac, 'I'll spare you.'  
'It's.. what... we... do,'
Clay whispers instead,
He echoes Mac's words,
At the cost of his head.

The Quickening smothers-
The sky from all light,
When the clouds dissipate,
Mac's emerged from his night,
His foe's sword's held high,
Then thrust in the ground,
Mac's disgrace is expunged,
From its chains, he's unbound.

Joe's Bar, Later

Richie, Joe shoot the breeze,
Mac sits apart, pensive,
Joe shows his scarred wrist,
Says his loss is extensive,
'Many good friends,
I've lost,' Joe admits
Richie smiles, 'Secret meetings,
Dark glasses...the pits.'

Joe sadly explains,
'Watchers never were meant-
To be used that way,
That was not the intent.'
'Then make it right!' Mac's passion, genuine
He walks close to Joe,
'Can you get back in?'

'Probably...but why?'
Mac responds earnestly,
'For thousands of years,
Of Immortals' history,
Watchers have recorded,
How we rise and fall,
One day there'll be one,
Maybe...none at all.

Someone must record, Accurately...
The lessons we've learned-
For the whole world to see,
Not some petty clerk,
One who does, truly feels,
Someone with honor,
Like you,' Mac appeals.

'And our friendship?' asks Joe,
'We'll work it out,'
Mac smiles so sincerely,
Joe's left with no doubt,
Mac offers his hand,
(Tying up all loose ends),
To Richie, who grasps it,
Again, they are friends.

Peace, Emit
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Under the Kilt from Highlander: The Official Site:

Don Paonessa, Creative Consultant, Post Production
"Gerard Hameline directed. In the Quickening, we shot out at Jericho Beach and we did a blue screen because we wanted the Quickening to go from day to night and then back to day. We did some stop motion shooting to get the transition from day to night. I thought Stan Kirsch was good. In the flashback, we fooled with the cutting a bit, but no big deal, just the standard Post Production tour de force."

Ken Gord, Producer
"Chris Martin went on to the series, 'Felicity'. Rachel Hayward did 'Harsh Realm', she was the tough warrior."

~ Manhunt

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!