

# Entertainment

## Rediscover a classic with "The African Queen"

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Some classic films can be hard to find on a high quality DVD. They might be lesser-known movies from well known directors or rare gems that are still overlooked today. There are those bona fide classics like "Casablanca" and "Gone With the Wind" that have been released and re-released in single disc and special edition DVDs numerous times. But while the most well known movies are being re-packaged time and again, some surprising titles are still waiting to be restored and released on DVD for the first time.

One such title can be scratched off the waiting list. Thankfully, director John Huston's "The African Queen," which contains the only pairing of legendary stars Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, is available on DVD and blu-ray for the first time.

The film's plot is a classic scenario of two completely different people thrown together and forced to work with one another in order to achieve a common goal. A German colony located in Africa is invaded at the

onset of World War I. Charlie Allnut (Bogart) is the captain and one-man crew of a rickety old steamboat named the African Queen. Rose Sayer (Hepburn) is a Christian missionary. To avoid more trouble with the Germans they must leave the colony by way of the treacherous Ulanda River.

He is crusty and unshaven. She is an English spinster. He likes to drink. She is God-fearing. It seems they share no common ground. But in order to survive they must first co-exist. Their navigation of the perilous river in the rickety old Queen is exciting. Their final attempt to destroy the German war ship Louisa is bold. But the real fun and entertainment comes from watching the progression of Charlie and Rose's relationship. First, they learn to stand each other. Then they learn to work together. Finally, they learn to love one another.

The chemistry between the leads is magical. It was 1951 when Bogart and Hepburn starred together for the first and only time. Both had been working in Hollywood for almost two decades prior to making this film.

As filmsite's Tim Dirks points out in his review, "The African

Queen" signaled the transition towards more mature roles for the 44-year-old Hepburn. There was a time during the 1930s when she was labeled "box-office poison." She went off to the theater, starred in "The Philadelphia Story," bought the production's film rights, starred in the screen version and never looked back. She would continue to make films into the 1990s and go on to have the most successful and revered career of any actress in history.

For the 52-year-old Bogart, "The African Queen" would bring him the only Best Actor Oscar of his career. And what a career it was. His early career consisted of supporting roles playing bad guys in 1930s gangster movies. He became a Hollywood mainstay following his success playing the leads in "The Maltese Falcon" and "Casablanca." He remains the epitome of on-screen cool. In 1999, an American Film Institute poll named the pair the greatest American Screen Legends; Kate was the number one lady and Bogie topped the men.

"The African Queen" was the fifth pairing of director Huston and star Bogart. When the topic of greatest American directors comes up, John Huston isn't

usually mentioned in the same breath with the likes of John Ford, Orson Welles and Howard Hawks. Huston, who started his career as a screenwriter, may be a bit overlooked nowadays but there is no denying the lasting quality of his best works, including "The Maltese Falcon," "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," "Key Largo," "The Asphalt Jungle," and "The Misfits." And while the first two are generally considered all time great American movies, "The African Queen" might just be Huston's most popular film.

Filmed on location in Africa (a rarity in Hollywood at the time), the shoot posed numerous challenges to the cast and crew. There were no luxuries. Hepburn and Lauren Bacall, Bogart's wife, became very ill. Untamed wilderness, wild animals and intense heat were ever-present dangers. To make up for the lack of clean drinking water Huston and Bogart happily consumed large amounts of gin. All involved with the production went through hell and created a slice of movie heaven.

More of the shoot's eventful moments and behind the scenes tidbits are highlighted in an hour long documentary included on

the special edition DVD. Also included is a 1952 Lux Radio Theater adaptation and an excerpt from Hepburn's book, "The Making of the African Queen: Or How I Went to Africa With Bogart, Bacall and Huston and Almost Lost My Mind," chronicling her personal experience while making the movie.

The extras are nice but the fact that this fan favorite is finally available on DVD and blu-ray is enough. The film has been restored and both the Technicolor picture and audio is top notch. The last disc-less film from AFI's 100 greatest list has finally been given a proper, albeit long overdue, release.

Huston, Hepburn, Bogart, Bacall and the rest of the crew traveled to Africa, braved the elements and hazards and made a classic. The lack of a DVD release for so many years was one of the great home video letdowns. It's been a long time coming and now, much to the delight of classic film buffs, the new DVD release brings the great romantic adventure to life and offers some noteworthy extras as well. "The African Queen" is a collection of some of film's finest talent. It remains one of its best loved triumphs.

## Unravel the mystery of "Lost" as the final season comes to an end

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"Lost" is winding its way down to the final episodes in its sixth and final season, but as they say, it's not over 'til it's over. The show has picked up new twists along the way. Once it was only about a group of people crashing on the island and making do with their surroundings, but over the past few seasons we've encountered supernatural elements like talking to the dead and time travel. Kooky, huh?

For anyone that doesn't know the gist of "Lost"—it's pretty hard not to have heard about it—it's this: a group of people flying on Oceanic Flight 815 from Australia to L.A. end up crashing on a mysterious island. The survivors can't find a way to communicate with anyone, and no one from the outside can locate them. Since

they can't seem to find a way out, several people begin to settle in and make a home for themselves, which involves hunting for food, finding fresh water sources, and providing themselves with suitable shelter.

Then the survivors begin to realize that the island isn't as quiet and simple as it appears to be. Many of them notice mysterious sounds in the middle of the night. They discover many odd places scattered throughout the island, like underground hatches containing electromagnetic energy. Soon the survivors also realize that they are not alone on the island, and they start to think that maybe they crashed for a reason.

Each episode of the show usually has a character focus, and blends what is currently happening on the island with flashback sequences of that character's life before the

crash. Through this method of editing we, as the viewers, are able to learn about each passenger and their deep dark secrets. And *everyone* has a deep dark secret.

The show has an incredibly diverse cast, which is interesting to see. To name just a few, there are Korean, Japanese, Chinese, British, Canadian, Brazilian, Hispanic, and Australian actors and actresses. The age of the cast also ranges from infants to adults in their 60s or 70s.

"Lost" is filled with symbols and hidden meanings. When I try to look too deeply into each episode I get a little confused, so I watch "Lost" for what it is: a show. However, there are those that are interested in analyzing the show and its references to philosophy, religion, pop culture, and almost everything else you can think of. The show tends to have many "What were they thinking of

when they did that?" moments, but as it's a norm in "Lost," it's best to just go with it and try to figure it out later on.

Keep in mind that if you miss one episode, you're out from that point. If you even miss 15 minutes of one episode, you're out. In fact, keep your eyes trained on the TV for every second until it goes to commercial. It's frustrating, but that's just how "Lost" operates. It's not the best way to attract

new fans or make wavering fans stay on, but for dedicated fans it provides more incentive for them to keep on being dedicated.

For any new "Lost" fans that are able to catch up on five and a half seasons worth of episodes, the show runs every Tuesday at 9:00 p.m. "Lost" has everything: comedy, drama, suspense, action, adventure, romance, and sci-fi. What more is there, really?



Pictured in the wreckage from Lost's Oceanic Flight 815

Photo courtesy of abc.com