

BREATHING ROOM: WHAT ARE YOU STREAMING NOW?

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

Autumn is solidly upon us now; my neighborhood's trees are at peak color. By this time next week we'll be wading through dead leaves as the first freeze is expected tonight, triggering leaf fall in earnest.

Which means this weekend – sandwiched neatly between the end of golf and other warm weather sports and the beginning of leaf raking and firearm deer season – is the one weekend available for binge watching streaming series and movies.

I admit to being an Asian drama fanatic. My Netflix profile looks so very different from my spouse's and my son's because their viewing habits in our shared account. Spouse watches a lot of westerns and war films and comedies; my son watches a lot of stand-up comics, comic and drama series, and a few odd documentaries.

Mine is chock full of K-dramas, Japanese and Korean anime, Chinese series, Taiwanese movies, and some Bollywood romances.

I really need to take Korean lessons on Duolingo because I want to be able to listen to some shows in Korean rather than watch them so closely because I rely on English subtitles. There are enough differences between the English subtitles and voice-over dubbing which affect one's perception of what's happening that I really want to know what it is I'm missing in the original Korean.

The last series I finished watching was *Under the Queen's Umbrella* (on Netflix), which was a big hit in South Korea last year. It was a 16-episode historical fiction drama set some time and place in the Joseon dynasty (some time

between the 14th and 19th century).

I've watched enough K-dramas now that I have favorite actors; this series features a couple of mine who I recognized right off without checking the cast list.

What I found appealing about this series was the political intrigues within and without a fictional monarchy. I don't know enough about Korea's history let alone the Joseon dynasty, but there must be some actual history from across dynastic Korea to bolster this series' writing. It makes it all the more interesting knowing the complexity on screen mirrors reality to some degree.

One only needs to read the Wikipedia entry for the Joseon dynasty's first queen to grasp the truth of this.

It has always cracked me up how American audiences have devoured fictional fantasy epics like Game of Thrones and Lord of the Rings trilogy, epics which are framed upon conflicts within monarchies and dynastic politics. The appeal is in part because it's fantasy to Americans – we have no true dynasties, we rejected monarchies from the nation's inception.

All of which makes me wonder what Koreans find appealing about a series like Under the Queen's Umbrella. Is it the popularity of the actors, many of whom in this series are both young and very attractive? Is it the familiar yet fictional story line? Is it the political machinations, an entertainment like the U.S. version of House of Cards?

After watching the Queen's Umbrella series I am so very glad we do not have a monarchy, that our country doesn't have to rely on leadership by succession – no matter how nice the monarch or how smart their successor. Nor do we have to worry whether legitimate offspring born of more than one than one wife will succeed or that illegitimate children born to concubines/consorts will contest succession, possibly by a coup.

We have all the challenges we need within US democracy; they're challenges by choice and not permanent. Imagine an unelected King Trump being succeeded by his coke-headed son Donnie Jr., his succession potentially contested by his brother or brother-in-law because they have more business support or foreign sponsors.

shudder

What have you been watching that you'd recommend? What have you been watching that you think we should avoid?

This is an open thread.

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ADDER:

Username Convention

The site's standard for usernames upgraded a year ago this month to protect community members' privacy and security as well as that of the site.

Usernames new and old should be:

- unique;
- a minimum of (8) letters;
- letters and numeric characters are acceptable;
- avoid all numeric character names;
- avoid characters except dash or underbar (some existing names may need to change eventually to replace other characters).

Contributors, moderators, and long-time community members who have accrued more than 1000 comments and participated in comments over a decade may be able to keep their usernames.

This is subject to approval.

All community members should use the same email address each time they comment. We don't even ask for a working, validated email address, just that the same one is used every time.

New users may share their personal website's URL, but they should include that same URL in the provided field each time they comment. If a URL was not added with the first comment, a URL should not be added for future comments.

If you have been asked **four times** to change your username to meet the site's standard but do not change your name, your identity will be added to the auto-moderation list until a username has been updated to comply with the site's standard.

Why does the site need this standard naming convention?

It is too easy for trolls and bots to spoof identities, especially simple common names like Bob, John, Jane, Anna. Once a troll/bot launches a new identity, they can gradually begin to poison the site's comments. The problem will get worse over time as trolls/bots begin to use AI to create identities and comments.

The new naming convention makes it easier to pick off trolls/bots when they make their first comment.

Why can't community members use a login with a password?

Imagine how many times a day moderators would have to help a commenter with a password problem. That's time not spent on moderating comments or writing material to contribute to the site.

Furthermore, maintaining a list of user identities with passwords means retaining a potentially hackable database of personal data. It would force the site to comply with personal data regulations, again pulling resources from moderation and

contribution.

The current WordPress-based system only contains what metadata users leave on servers (like data left on all internet-accessible servers including time/date/IP address/device), what they voluntarily enter as username/email address/URL (none of which is validated and assumed to be pseudonymous), and the comments users publish at the site.

Why doesn't the site use a different comment system?

Nearly every comment system requires more personal data with one validating factor making it appetizing to hackers and putting users at risk.

The current system has worked adequately for roughly 16 years – not perfectly but it's withstood the traffic from multiple presidential and mid-term elections, a large number of scandals and crises, serving roughly 650,000 comments (not including another ~200K comments which were spam/trolls/bots).

Why isn't this comment convention automated?

We're working on it. Developers have been engaged but design time is an extremely valuable commodity.

When there's more to report on the status of an upgrade we'll share it. Bear with us, and keep in mind:

- We don't ask for real names, real email addresses, nor other personal data like phone numbers or credit card numbers for validation.
- We don't take advertising which may harvest your information as it does on

other commercial websites.

- This site operates on donations from readers and commenters and volunteer work by contributors and moderators. Your donations pay for Marcy's time, hosting, developers' labor and maintenance.

Thank you for reading, for your comments and your support.

#UsernameConvention