



Hell on Wheels Season 5 Episode 14 Review: Done

Sean McKenna at July 23, 2016 10:00 pm.

Hell on Wheels has had a bumpy journey, even skipping off the tracks a few times, but if you rode it out to the final episode, the last stop provided a positive ending for the series' lead railroad man, Cullen Bohannon.

The formality of the Golden Spike officially completed the railroad – which was really done on Hell on Wheels Season 5 Episode 13 – but Hell on Wheels Season 5 Episode 14 was far more about highlighting where characters might be headed after all was said and done.

A sort of epilogue, if you will.



It wasn't the most exciting episode, and there were some moments that seemed to drag a bit – almost like the character's themselves in dragging out the inevitability of moving on from life on the railroad – but it did find a a decent way to finish things all out.

The big action sequence was a rowdy fight that while silly was still entertaining. There was something refreshing about watching the workers who've toiled on the railroad get into one last brawl. It was a nice contrast from the stuffiness of setting in that Golden Spike, and seeing Mickey, Cullen and Psalms laugh about it was good to see, especially after all the hardships they've been through.

One last little uncivilized celebration.

Eva's storyline for Hell on Wheels Season 5 wasn't that interesting, and I'm not sure the writers knew what to do with her, so I wasn't that invested in how her story concluded.

And her parting with Mickey, which was the right move, felt a little over dramatic.

That said, it felt like a decent ending for her to ride off into the sunset on her horse. There was a certain feeling of freedom for her.

But it was Cullen's struggle to figure out his next play that was the most investing.

After all, he's carried this show with some underrated acting coming from Anson Mount. He could go from charming to menacing, from funny to dramatic, and so often, just his expressions conveyed everything you needed to know.

Plus, as a character, we got the most depth with him over his five-season journey.

The moment in the church confessional, with a great callback to Hell on Wheels Season 1 in that bullet hole, truly highlighted Cullen between his past life of revenge and death and one where he could hope to be redeemed, be saved.

Clearly, he was conflicted, but he knew in his heart where his true path was to go: to find Mei.

It wasn't a surprise, but it was pleasing to know that things ended for him on a hopeful note. He wasn't shot and killed at the last second or simply chose to work on a new railroad.

I even expected he might throw his hat into the water, shedding that past persona, before heading off to China.

And while the Durant hearings served more to give Cullen a sense of what path to take with the railroad done, Durant's big speech worked as the final note for the series.

The last episode unfortunately wasn't the most memorable of series finales, but it did wrap things up for Hell on Wheels, and especially for Cullen, in a decent way.

Certainly, Hell on Wheels Season 5 was a strong last outing, from its new direction and characters to the conclusion of Cullen and the Swede's battle to making us continue to care about Cullen through all his ups and downs.

Lives were lost. Blood was spilled. The railroad was completed. And Cullen found a way to move forward. Even with some of its misgivings, Hell on Wheels was a ride worth taking.