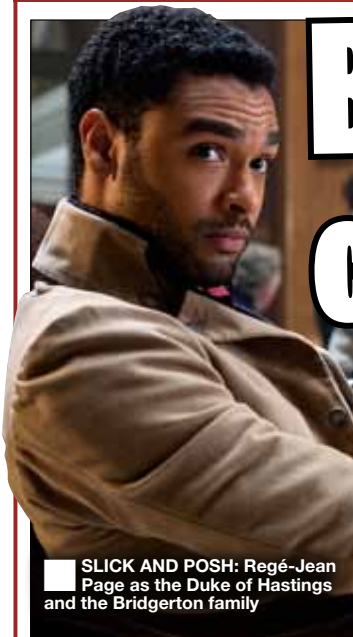


MIKE WARD'S BIG STREAM

Bridging the costume gap



SLICK AND POSH: Regé-Jean Page as the Duke of Hastings and the Bridgerton family



BRIDGERTON (15)
(Netflix from Christmas Day)
★★★★

OBSOLETELY there's no *Downton Abbey* Christmas special these days and no sign of Jenna Coleman reprising her Queen Victoria routine.

But for those left gagging for a bit of Christmas Day costume drama, Netflix has come to the rescue with this lavish new eight-parter, set amid Regency London's elite.

It's a typically sumptuous, budget-blowing affair, centred on a high-society family keen to find their eldest daughter a suitable hubby.

The sweet-natured Daphne Bridgerton (Phoebe Dynevor) looks at first as though she'll have plenty of choice, but over-protective big brother Anthony (Jonathan Bailey) starts sticking his oar in, dismissing each of these chaps as unworthy.

"Someone must guard my poor sister from the bucks and pinks," is how he puts it (there's a lot of that kind of semi-archaic language), "and ensure her virtue remains free of any kind of defilement." Well, quite.

Making matters worse, Daphne's reputation is then dragged through the mud by an infamous scandal sheet, published by the mysterious, anonymous, poison-tongued Lady Whistledown.

Things get so bad, it looks as though she's going to find herself saddled with the creepy Lord Berbrooke, a guy who makes her flesh crawl.

Offering her a glimmer of hope, however, is the dashing young Duke of Hastings (Regé-Jean Page). But there's a snag. In fact, there are several. First, Hastings is kind of grumpy and up himself. Second, he's not the marrying kind.

Third, he's an old associate of Anthony's, who sure as hell doesn't want him marrying his sister. And snag number four, he and Daphne seem to despise one another.

Based on a series of bestsellers by US novelist Julia Quinn, *Bridgerton* looks to me like a guaranteed hit. Particularly keen will be fans of those old Jane Austen adaptations (such as *Pride And Prejudice*) who've always wished they had a few bare bottoms and the odd F-word.

+ WIN ++ WIN ++ WIN +

WIN: The Fall DVD boxsets FOR our latest brilliant DVD giveaway, Santa has kindly given us six boxsets of the cracking British-Irish crime drama **THE FALL** (18), starring Gillian Anderson and Jamie Dornan. It features all three award-winning series.



For your chance to win one, just tell us which of these shows Anderson also starred in: (A) *The A-Team* (B) *The F Word* (C) *The X-Files*.

Email your answer (with "Fall" as the subject), plus your name, address and mobile number, to dailystarcompetitions@gmail.com.

Entries close at midnight this Wednesday, December 23. Normal Daily Star rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

★ **BRITBOX** is working on its first original factual documentary, due in the spring. **SECRETS OF THE KRAYS** will tell the story of infamous 60s gangster twins Ronnie and Reggie and how they came to be kings of the East End underworld.



DRAMA: Clooney with Caoilinn Springall

Cloon Doom

FOLLOWING its cinema release earlier this month, George Clooney's new sci-fi movie **THE MIDNIGHT SKY** comes to Netflix on Wednesday.

Clooney plays an Arctic scientist desperate to contact a crew of deep-space astronauts and warn them that Planet Earth is no longer safe for them to return to.

Other stars include Felicity Jones, David Oyelowo and Kyle Chandler.

StarWins

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Now available on all leading platforms

ARIANA GRANDE: EXCUSE ME, I LOVE YOU (Netflix) ★★

TO put together this intimate, feature-length documentary, arriving today, a camera crew followed the Grammy-winning superstar all over the place - on the road, into the rehearsal room, on to the stage, into her home, you name it. It's a good job she'd granted them permission or I reckon it could've kicked off big-time.

STAR WARS: THE MANDALORIAN - MAKING OF SEASON TWO (Disney+ from Christmas Day) ★★

ONE for the superfans,



FOR FANS: The Mandalorian special

this hour-long behind-the-scenes special tells you everything you need to know - and possibly quite a bit more - about the creation of the award-winning Star Wars spin-off's second season.

SCHULZ SAVES AMERICA (Netflix) ★★

BOUNDARY-pushing New York stand-up Andrew Schulz, who prides himself on being "uncensored, unfiltered and unsafe", sinks his teeth into some of his nation's most divisive issues.

The sub-heading here is *Pandemics, Predators, Protests And Presidents...* in this fearless four-part comedy special.