

# What the Shut-in Watches

by Phyllis Chesler



I read, write, and answer email all day but then, come night, every night now, I settle down to watch a movie or episodes from a series. What have others been watching? I've already seen most of the "high class" films, many of the world's best police procedurals and forensic dramas, the very best foreign films, and am now watching what's merely popular. The much-touted *Hunters* is a comic book version of the Holocaust for a comic book generation. The Nazi torture of their concentration camp victims is depicted as psychologically sadistic and very personal; the series is filled with graphic over-the-top violence, villains, infiltrators, camouflaged identities, and an unexpected discovery at the end of episode ten. Al Pacino stars—why, I cannot say.

I have also begun watching *Outlander*. It is about time-travel from 20th century England to 18th century Scotland. It is a real bodice-ripper and, like *Hunters*, shows graphic, gruesome violence, nudity, repeated rapes, and medieval-like public

punishments. But it also has a Fabio-like male Scottish kilt-wearing lover, romance, sex (lots of it), politics (Scottish Jacobins vs the bloody British), lovely Scottish landscapes, music, healer-women, and Druids. I don't know if I'll stick with it all, it depends on whether something better comes along.

I watched all of the *Handmaid's Tale* for an article I was asked to write. It, too, had gruesome and graphic violence as did *Game of Thrones*. Is this what is now required in order to attract funding and an audience? Have we truly arrived at Bread and Circus times?

I am not a total snob. There are soap operas that I adore. For example, I love *Call the Midwife* and have even watched it more than once. It's also popular but the nuns and the midwives in East London, as well as the residents, are real characters and the power and poignancy of live births (no nudity) just pulls me right in. I also loved *Shtisel* and *Fauda*, as well as the British version of *Cats* which is wonderful as are both the original and the recent *Mary Poppins*.

<https://www.starz.com/us/en/series/21796/episodes?season=1>