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Serenity, Vol. 1: Those Left Behind



Synopsis

From the creator of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, this is the comic of the futuristic action-adventure film that will be Josh Whedon's directorial debut. The film centres on a veteran captain of a galactic war, who, with a small crew, rents out his ship, Serenity, for the purposes of transport-for-hire and pulling off small crimes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Well, I unfortunately have to add my negative review to the other disappointed FIREFLY/SERENITY/Whedon fans below. Like many of the others reviewing here, I am a huge fan of both the series FIREFLY and the film SERENITY, so I was eager to enjoy a new adventure of Mal and his crew. I ordered this with great excitement and finished it with considerable sadness. I had hoped that this might equal in quality some of Whedon's other projects on Dark Horse, but this was easily one of the weakest. The problem isn't the artwork. It is gorgeous to look at and the characters all look quite like the real life models (not that that is a necessary measure of quality). The problem was the utterly uninspiring story. Here is my suspicion: I'm guessing that the novel partly arose from an unfilmed, partially scripted episode from the television series, and a not terribly good episode at that. Many of the scenes seem to merely mimic scenes to be found in the series and the film, while the scenes that are completely original simply aren't very inspired. The story is also very unbalanced. If you read writing guides on how to write a TV script or a film script or a short story one rule of thumb is that a script needs to have three to five acts (depending on the writing coach). This graphic story feels as if Act One takes up the first two thirds of the book, with too little space

devoted to the climax, and an act or two missing. To be honest, it doesn't feel like a completed story at all. So does the book have any redeeming values? As I stated above, it is a well-drawn story. The problem is entirely the story, not the art. Storywise, it does provide some filler between the end of the series and before the start of the action in the movie. That is not a small thing, but the problem is that there just isn't much of a story. In fact, the whole thing feels more like an outline of a story rather than a story. Do I recommend this to fellow Browncoats? I guess I don't. Now, if someone had told me not to get it, I would probably have ignored him or her and gotten it anyway, so I won't blame any FIREFLY fan wanting this as well. But while the series and the movie are things I treasure, this is a story I may never look at again. So while I don't recommend it, any real fan of the show is going to want to own it. Then we can all be disappointed together while we await word as to whether the DVD sales of the movie will be sufficient to bring about a made for TV movie or mini-series.

This graphic novel serves as a useful bridge between the final episode of "Firefly" and the film "Serenity." As a Browncoat, I've found it especially useful for showing new fans of the series because it answers the questions that they'd have from the last episode and the film (which starts everyone off on a different note than they were left in the show). For instance: "When and why did Book leave the ship?" This book isn't going to take the place of the television show for the fans that want to see our Big Damn Heroes played by the actors themselves, but it serves as the final episode that they were never able to make.

Quick admission: I'm a huge fan of the Firefly TV series and "Serenity". I think both were horribly underappreciated, and can't understand why they weren't more successful. This graphic novel was penned by Joss Whedon, so the dialog, tone, and timing are dead on. In many ways, reading *Serenity: Those Left Behind* is like watching an unaired episode of the TV show. The story deals with the events that take place after the final episode of Firefly: *Objects in Space*, but before the movie. All of the Serenity crew are in fine form, and even several characters from past episodes show up. The only reason I can't give this book a 5 is the art. I'm not a big fan of the artist. While I can definitely understand the difficulty of drawing a comic based on real people, I've seen better. All in all, a great story, and a must-have for all Firefly/Serenity fans!

The plot of *Those Left Behind* was probably intended to be an early-season-2 episode of Firefly that unfortunately was never shot. As such, it features a job gone bad, an enemy from the past, and

some fancy fightin' and flyin'. This, of course, translates quite well to the graphic novel medium. The illustration and dialogue are both well done and true to the series. The true gem of this work, though, is Joss' Brief History of the Universe, Circa 2516. It explains a lot of things about his high-concept vision of Firefly and Serenity, and how the world came to be as it was. This information was never conveyed in the series explicitly, and although it was implied, it was quite nice to have it all spelled out. I am looking forward to future Serenity graphic novels, as I, like many others, feel the show was cancelled far too soon and there are plenty of stories left to tell about these characters.

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