



The Mandalorian Season 3 Confuses Audiences With An Incoherent Season

By: Luke Schmitt

The Mandalorian Season 3 premiered its final episode on April 19th, 2023. The finale completes a story that leaves me with mixed thoughts about confusing season. There were many things this season did right, like fight choreography, space dogfights, and the visuals of the planets and their inhabitants. The last two episodes feature some of the best fight scenes in Star Wars media, and the dogfight between the heroes and the Tie Fighter ships in Chapter 19: The Convert echoed feelings from the original trilogy.

Another great thing this season did was it did not rely on cameos to carry the season. For example, Zeb Orrelios, a prominent character on the show *Star Wars Rebels*, appeared for a brief cameo in Chapter 22: The Pirate. Zeb's cameo was only for a few lines and had less than a minute on the screen, but they did it in a way where his cameo did not dominate the entire season or episode.

This season is different and contrast to anything that this show has accomplished in the past. It is a refreshing change of pace, but at the same time, I miss the gunslinger, space western show that I have watched for two seasons. This season has a widened story, and the main plot focuses on Bo-Katan, a character who has appeared in season two, and other pieces of Star Wars media like *Clone Wars* and *Star Wars: Rebels*. This season focuses on her journey to retake Mandalore and reunite scattered Mandalorian clans hidden around the galaxy. Din and Grogu (Baby Yoda), the main characters in the first two seasons, were not necessarily the focus anymore, and they felt more like guest stars in Bo-Katan's story. In this

season, the duo that fans and myself have grown to love over the years had very minimal character development, and it felt like they were afterthoughts in the grand scheme of the season.

I struggle with this new direction because it seems like the concept is lost. This season felt as if it was stuck in a weird situation of whether the show runners were focusing on Din and Grogu or the larger Star Wars storyline. Because it felt like they were focusing on the larger Star Wars story, the finale did not make me feel anything because there is always another show, movie, etc. The last episode closed the central storyline it was following for the season, but it was very low stakes and felt very underwhelming and conservative.

There were also many story lines that this season followed. The main story focused on the Mandalorians' journey to retake their home planet, Mandalore. There were also other plot threads and episodes the season tried to create that did not intertwine, like Chapter 19: The Convert. The episode featured a story about a reformed Imperial scientist from the prior seasons, adapting to a new life and change in the New Republic's rehabilitation system. This episode was great but contributed next to nothing to the story of Mandalorian and Bo-Katan's mission. We see connections from this episode to others in the season, but they are minimal and do not impact the overall story.

A big reason this season feels so incomplete and disconnected is that for most of the season, there was no clear antagonist. In the final two episodes, the main antagonist, Moff Gideon, from the first two seasons, returned to the screen. His return was welcome, his new suit is one of the best seen

in Star Wars, and Giancarlo Esposito once again-lays his character perfectly. Unfortunately, he was reintroduced late into the season and died only two episodes later. His main plan focused on using cloning techniques to create clones of himself so that he could never die. Like other storylines mentioned before, the cloning plot threat felt thrown into the season and a big letdown because the clones were destroyed within seconds of them appearing on the screen. The concept of cloning leaves the door open for Moff Gideon to return since his "death" could merely have been one of his clones. If this is true, it will carry on the new low-stakes route Star Wars and Marvel idea that no one who dies is ever really dead.

The Mandalorian season three does a great job of expanding the Star Wars universe after the Empire, wrapping up the Darksaber plot that has spanned multiple projects, developing Bo-Katan's story more, and introducing the audience to the flaws of the New Republic that lead to the First Order takeover that audiences witnessed in the sequel trilogy. Unfortunately, this season has many plot and narrative issues and suffers from not maintaining a steady concept over its eight-episode run. While the new season featured a wide range of Mandalorian people, Din and Grogu felt shelved of what used to be their own show. There are things to like, but more to dislike and question about this season's direction. The season ends with Din and Grogu settling down in a home and relaxing after their recent adventures. There has been no confirmed season 4, and the ending closes in a place that leaves me wondering if this could be the end of the Mandalorian and his storyline.