The Mandalorian's season 3 premiere was a return to simpler, safer Star Wars storytelling

Between *The Mandalorian*'s second season and the way it played into *The Book of Boba Fett*, it wouldn't have been surprising if Mando's and Grogu's season 3 returns were shot through with a seriousness that spoke to how high-stakes their adventures have become. But instead, *The Mandalorian*'s season 3 premiere felt much more like a purposeful return to what the show was when it first premiered: a big and sometimes rather goofy joyride through space that's focused on forging the next generation of young *Star Wars* faithful.

Though Disney and Lucasfilm might want all of their Disney Plus series to feel accessible enough for viewers to be able to jump in anytime, *The Mandalorian*'s season 3 premiere crystalizes just how involved and complicated the show became in the buildup to Din Djarin (Pedro Pascal) willingly unmasking himself for his adoptive son Grogu. "Chapter 17: The Apostate" from director □□Rick Famuyiwa and writer Jon Favreau catches the bounty hunter father / Force-sensitive son duo reunited and feeling good as they embark on a new journey in search of a way to redeem Mando for exposing his face to someone else – a violation of the Mandalorian code.

After two seasons of teasing out new facets of Mandalorian culture in bits and pieces, the way "The Apostate" opens on the Armorer (Emily Swallow) overseeing a young Mandalorian's induction ceremony feels like a signifier of how the show's

entered into a new chapter of its existence, defined by providing more information instead of leading with intrigue. Similar to how it was sort of wild to see an infant of Yoda's species, it's interesting to see how young Mandalorians are brought into the fold and given their first child-size beskar helmets (which they presumably have to reforge as their heads get bigger with age).

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Compared to something like *Andor*, all of those creative choices might make *The Mandalorian* seem like it isn't trying hard enough to live up to the prestige-adjacent hype Disney's committed to maintaining around the show. But the reality's more that *The Mandalorian*'s a half-hour-ish series entering its third season, and Disney's very interested in keeping it going as long as it possibly can.

It doesn't feel entirely fair to assume that "The Apostate" alone speaks to how *The Mandalorian*'s entire third season's going to turn out. But in things like the episode's overlong repetition-based jokes and action pieces that feel like pitches for future theme park attractions, you do get the sense that *The Mandalorian*'s going for quick, easy thrills and not necessarily telling the most engrossing tale at this point.

Again, there's probably more to *The Mandalorian*'s third season than its premiere would have you think. It's very possible that the show might revisit or expand on some of the things that work well in "The Apostate," like its implication that Grogu's gaining a much more nuanced understanding of the world around him. But taken on its own, the episode leaves more than a bit to be desired — particularly if you've been looking forward to seeing *The Mandalorian* try something a little more

bold and new.

https://www.theverge.com/23620519/the-mandalorian-season-3-premiere-the-apostate