

# Is This The Way? *The Mandalorian* Season 2 Review

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For the last eight weeks, Season 2 of *The Mandalorian* has brought the Mandalorian and the Child to new planets, new people and new perils... and now it's over.

The season expanded our characters' stories and broadened the possibilities of Star Wars' future. The doors this season left open are exciting for all fans, especially after the [massive slate](#) announced at Disney Investor Day last week. That said, with so many doors open, it's uncertain which one *The Mandalorian* will choose as The Way. Let's take a look back at Season 2 of Disney+'s flagship series.

**SPOILERS AHEAD FOR *THE MANDALORIAN!***



From the first episode, Din's mission has been simple: reunite the Child (whose name we learned is Grogu) with the Jedi. As the season progresses, old and new characters come into the fold as Din attempts to carry out his mission. From Season 1 standouts like Greef Karga and Moff Gideon, to new introductions like Cobb Vanth and Frog Lady, to longtime fan favorites such as Bo-Katan Kryze, Ahsoka Tano and Boba Fett, this season delivered a slew of exciting characters.

While many fans criticized the series for resorting to shallow fan service, each character's inclusion felt meaningful. Each new journey for Din and Grogu was a puzzle piece working toward connecting a greater whole. It was fan service, sure. But more importantly, it serviced the plot as well.

For instance, it was great for fans of *Rebels* and *The Clone Wars* to see Katee Sackhoff reprise her role as Bo-Katan in live-action, but more importantly, she played an instrumental role in the story of Din and Grogu. She furthered the plot by leading Din to a Jedi and created a new subplot in searching for Moff Gideon and the Darksaber, all while challenging Din's Mandalorian creed by removing her helmet. She served a purpose **and** served the fans.

This formula was replicated throughout the season. Ahsoka Tano gave us Grogu's story, Boba Fett helped Din in his time of need, Migs Mayfeld returned in one of the best episodes of the series yet. No matter who we were introduced to on Fridays, the story kept a laser-like focus on our protagonists.

The throughline was clear: Din felt obligated to return Grogu to the Jedi, **but neither Din nor Grogu really wanted to leave one another.** It was a clear set-up for a heartfelt finale which would emphasize what we knew all along: Din and Grogu are an inseparable father-and-son duo. **Until... they weren't.**



I'd love to spend time diving into how much I loved the first seven episodes of Season 2. I'd love to explore how each added its own unique twist to a story we've all come to love. I'd love to do that, but it's nearly impossible to after the bombshell that was the season finale.

**I want to preface this by saying everything here is my own opinion.** This is how I personally feel about the finale and what it means for the season and series as a whole. If you disagree, that's alright! But these are my thoughts.

Chapter 16: *The Rescue* is... a lot to take in. It's simultaneously everything great about *The Mandalorian* and everything I feared it may become. The fight choreography is stellar, some of the best we've seen in all of Star Wars. The emotional core of the show, Din and Grogu's bond, is on full display. Giancarlo Esposito shines as a truly menacing Moff Gideon. The Dark Troopers are a seemingly insurmountable obstacle for our crew, and the tension they create is spine-chilling.

We spend a great thirty-something minutes on a rescue mission where Boba Fett, Moff Gideon, Bo-Katan and Din all get their time in the spotlight. Their stories are compelling and their goals are all intertwining in a captivating fashion. But then... **things get a little murky.**

With our heroes trapped on the bridge and a platoon of Dark Troopers approaching, none other than Luke Skywalker flies in to save the day. Grogu departs with Luke, leaving a helmet-less and tearful Din Djarin standing alone, and I can't help but find myself wondering... **why?**



We don't even have to talk about the awful CGI on Luke's face and hair (seriously, Sebastian Stan was **right there**). The creative choice to have Grogu willingly leave Din is simply... unearned.

The whole season has driven home an emphasis that Din and Grogu don't want to leave each other. The best example of this is in Chapter 13: *The Jedi*, in which Ahsoka Tano struggles to train Grogu, but Din does so with ease. Their bond is at the heart of *The Mandalorian*.

In what's possibly the best moment of the entire season, Din kneels to bid Grogu farewell, saying "I'll see you again." Grogu reaches up to feel Din's helmet, and Din removes it. Pedro Pascal then turns in a heart-wrenching performance as Din says goodbye to his child, his former bounty target turned loving son.

But Grogu holds onto Din's leg, hesitating to leave him. Until... R2-D2 appears. R2-D2 randomly rolling up in the middle of an emotional scene is obviously going to avert any Star Wars fan's attention. In fact, **Luke's very presence is distracting.**

We spend the first half of the episode on the edge of our seats. The moments we see hold weight and the tension is slowly building for our characters. Will Din rescue Grogu? Will Bo-Katan retrieve the Darksaber? Will Moff Gideon find a way to escape? How will Din and company defeat the Dark Troopers? Right now, we care about **these characters**. We've spent eight episodes with **these characters**. We're not concerned with Luke Skywalker or R2-D2, we want to see what **these characters** do.

Unfortunately... they do nothing. They look at a screen while Luke Skywalker gives us a swift deus ex machina to save them. Luke Skywalker, who's had nothing to do with the seven episodes building to this moment. I suppose it makes sense narratively for Luke to appear. Grogu called out through the Force on Tython earlier in the season. But there are so many exciting prospects that would've been far less distracting than a 2010's-video-game-esque CGI Luke Skywalker saving the day.

Perhaps Din could've taken his beskar spear and given the Darksaber to Bo-Katan, so they can each use their weapons to defeat the Dark Troopers. (Wait, no, apparently the Darksaber can't be given away [like it was in \*Rebels\*](#). This is confusing.) Perhaps a Dark side Force-user could've answered Grogu's call, surprising the audience. Perhaps even Luke could've shown up, but later down the line when the show can devote more time to including him in the story of Din and Grogu, as it did so many characters this season.

As it stands, Luke's appearance in *The Mandalorian* feels... **soulless**. It feels like the shallow fan service the show has been criticized for all season. In 15 short minutes, Moff Gideon reveals that there are suddenly new rules to who can wield Darksaber, Luke destroys the Dark Troopers and the tension they created, and Grogu willingly leaves Din after an entire season of not wanting to leave his side. These creative decisions left me and many others **confused and disappointed**.

Where the future of *The Mandalorian* is headed, I have no idea. One thing is for certain now: where Season 1 introduced us to an intriguing bounty hunter underground and a lovable crew of Din, Grogu, Greef Karga, Kuiil and IG-11, Season 2 lost some of the show's unique charm by tying it directly into the Skywalker Saga and settling for **fan service** instead of **challenging storytelling**.



If you loved Season 2 of *The Mandalorian* from start to finish, I'm glad. I don't write this to detract from others' viewpoints or experiences. Love what you love and take joy in it. We all deserve that in 2020.

For me, I still adore *The Mandalorian*. It's been one of the most consistently enjoyable shows in recent years. I've praised Season 2 each and every week. But the way it seems to be going may not be one I can get on board with.

It seems as if the show is having an identity crisis. The show doesn't know what it wants to be. Many times, it wants to be a unique piece of storytelling set aside from the grandeur of the Skywalker Saga. Other times, it wants to be a predictable-albeit-fun piece of content for Star Wars fans to turn their brain off and enjoy.

As a devoted Star Wars fan, I know I can enjoy either of these identities. Whichever way it goes, I'll still have fun. Personally, I hope for the former of the two. *The Mandalorian* is at its best when it's emotional, character-driven and thought-provoking.

Star Wars is no stranger to that. Works such as *The Last Jedi*, *Empire Strikes Back* and the *Siege of Mandalore* arc from *The Clone Wars* are masterful pieces of art that make us feel and think. They challenge us and teach us lessons. They make us cry, they make us smile.

*The Mandalorian* can do those things too, but only if it chooses to. Only if it chooses that **emotional, character-driven and thought-provoking storytelling truly is The Way.**