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Star Wars: Doctor Aphra Vol. 1: Aphra (Star Wars: Doctor Aphra (2016-))



Synopsis

Collects Doctor Aphra #1-6. Following her time in the clutches of Darth Vader, Doctor Aphra has barely escaped with her life. If the Dark Lord of the Sith ever learns of her survival, he'll hunt her to the ends of the galaxy. But for now, it's time for a return to what she does best. With droids Triple-Zero and BeeTee-One in tow, she's off in search of rare artifacts from the galactic center to the Outer Rim and everywhere in between. Aphra's got debts to pay, after all. Just as long as she can stay one step ahead of the Empire, some bounty hunters and just about everyone else in the galaxy!

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Customer Reviews

Great collection, keep the Marvel stories coming.

I really liked the character of Dr Aphra as introduced in the Vader series. She was a cool addition to the canon characters. This series didn't really live up to my expectations. First, the artwork is erratic. Some of it is ok, some of it so-so and some pretty damn poor (imo anyway, I've never been a fan of

cartoony or anime style art. I really don't think it fits Star Wars especially). Black Krystann (probably spelled wrong) looks like a poorly drawn furry most of the time. A far cry from the fearsome "dark Chewbacca" he is supposed to be. Beyond the artwork the story just wasn't all that interesting to me. It was amusing to get a glimpse of Aphra's early days but that was about it. On a plus it is always great to see her two droids again, the murderous cousins of R2 and 3PO are always fun. It is Star Wars so to me that is worth a star alone, just for trying.

First appearing in *Darth Vader*, Doctor Aphra quickly became a personal favorite of mine. In fact, along with Rey and Ahsoka Tano, I'd say she's one of the most significant Star Wars characters to appear within the last ten years. Consequently, because she regularly stole the spotlight in *Darth Vader* and even *Star Wars*, Marvel gave the good doctor her own series. If you're unfamiliar with Doctor Aphra, she is amoral, brilliant, and snarky as can be. An archaeologist by trade, Aphra is not bound by such things as decency and preserving life. She does what it takes, usually with a smile on her face. Make no mistake, though -- she is not insane. She's perhaps a sociopath, but of the really charming sort. The beginning of this volume, titled *Aphra*, gets us off to the perfect start. The first several pages succinctly establish Aphra's character. We immediately meet her hilarious supporting cast: the murderous astromech droid designated BT-1, the protocol droid specializing in torture named Triple O, and the seriously disgruntled Wookiee called Black Krrsantan. Why does such a delinquent crew tolerate one another? You'll have to read the book to find out. However, soon enough, Aphra became less enjoyable for me. I hesitated to write this review for a few weeks because I couldn't quite put my finger on it, and then, last night, it hit me. Doctor Aphra had a really tragic father figure in *Darth Vader*. Their bond, though completely toxic, also had an element of fun in that you could tell, somewhere deep within their crooked souls, they actually cared for one another in a strange familial aspect. Since we know *Darth Vader* one day will actually live up to his role as a father, it proved ironically endearing to watch him with Aphra. I feel that *Aphra* takes a serious misstep when it introduces her actual birth father. After such a long story arc with Vader, it struck me as far too soon to put Aphra back in this role. Yes, she is clearly her father's better and often puts him in his place, which was an interesting juxtaposition with what we've seen previously, but by the book's end you realize she does care for her father, just as you realize Vader cared for her. In my mind, this plot would have worked far better further down the road after we got to see more of Doctor Aphra as character devoid of any paternal influence. In fact, I think Doctor Aphra shines best in *Star Wars: Rebel Jail*. In that volume, Aphra is mostly interacting with Princess Leia and Sana Starros (who also has great potential). These three women are all about the same age

and have differing perspectives on life, priorities, and laws. It was an absolute blast to read their story when forced to work together. I'd hoped that we'd get more of that sort of thing with Doctor Aphra's first solo outing. I really wanted to see her fully in charge of her adventure without, frankly, any sort of patriarchal influence. I will, of course, continue to read Doctor Aphra, by no means is this volume a deal-breaker. She's an incredibly charismatic character who can fit into virtually any spot of the Star Wars universe, and I can't wait to see her further cement her place in the vast mythology.

Since Marvel got the rights to produce Star Wars comics back in 2014, we've been lucky enough to be inundated with loads of consistently great material: the main "Star Wars" series by Jason Aaron has been reliably excellent for nearly its entire now-30+ issue run, Kieron Gillen's "Darth Vader" series is to die for, and even the lesser titles (Chewbacca and Kanan, I'm looking at you), while not inspiring, also haven't quite managed to qualify for anything reaching truly "god awful" status. Sure, there's a certain frustration that comes with Marvel playing things so "safe," specifically in terms of when they choose to place their comics (so far, none of Marvel's series have really made the jump to time frames set outside of those in the movies, ala "Knights of the Old Republic" or "Star Wars: Legacy"), but I'd argue that the persistent quality of Marvel's output makes up for any nagging annoyances in their overall approach. Especially when said approach produces a series as unabashedly AWESOME as Kieron Gillen and Kev Walker's "Doctor Aphra." Guys, this series rocks. And that's not even coming from someone who's a diehard Aphra fan while I know of a lot of people have really gravitated to the character since her debut in Gillen's previous "Darth Vader" series (which this more or less acts as a direct follow-up to), my enthusiasm for her has been more measured. Don't get me wrong, I think she's a fun presence, and I think it's way cool that Marvel is in a place with their Star Wars line where they can create an entire series around one of their wholly original characters but if I'm being honest, the things that I love about this series aren't so much based around its protagonist as much as they are with the stuff that surrounds her. For my money, there are three big things that make

“Doctor Aphra” is among the very best “Star Wars” comics Marvel has produced thus far: 1.) The lore: If you’re a Star Wars lore-nut, you need to read this series, because you will absolutely adore it (trust me: I am, and I did, and I do). I won’t spoil anything, except to say that Gillen has a ton of fun filling in the ancient heretofore unfilled blanks of this new Star Wars canon’s history. 2.) Kev Walker’s art: The penciling by Kev Walker takes a little getting used to at first glance, you’d be forgiven for thinking it almost looks a little cheap or unfinished but by issue #3, I was entirely on board with his style, particularly in the way that he conveys motion (there’s a panel in the first issue depicting an explosion that ranks, for my money, as one of the most viscerally satisfying moments yet across Marvel’s Star Wars line, and it’s due entirely to the way he frames the characters’ movement). 3.) The tone: One of the best things about Gillen’s “Darth Vader” series was the way that it balanced the darker aspects that inevitably came with its titular character with a lighter, almost more playful sensibility. Tonally, the whole thing just felt utterly unique and unlike anything else we’d yet seen in the Star Wars universe, and that same singularity of vision carries over to this series: Gillen has a way of conveying humor AND seriousness simultaneously in a way that somehow never feels too jokey or heavy-handed, and it makes for a reading experience that’s almost never boring. I could go on and on, but really, just take my word for it: if you dig Star Wars, you’re going to dig this series. Aphra is a great character, but it’s a testament to Gillen and Walker’s skills that if you were to take her out of her own series, you’d still be left with something well worth reading.

After first discovering Doctor Aphra and her homicidal droids in the Darth Vader comics, I immediately became interested in a character that was part Indiana Jones, part Han Solo before he met up with Old Ben Kenobi in ANH (A New Hope). Although not quite “Rebel Scum” Doctor Aphra also isn’t an imperial sympathizer either. Having been a longtime fan of Star Wars, I had become a bit bored of seeing stories of the same characters over and over again and personally welcome this character and her storylines transition to other mediums.

I was looking forward to this ever since she first appeared. I wish it was longer but still really entertaining. The droids are hilarious. Definitely get this one.

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