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Mobile Suit Gundam: The Origin, Vol. 1- Activation



Synopsis

It is the year Universal Century 0079, in a space colony the Earth Federation is storing and testing a new piloted robot for use in the battle against the Principality of Zeon. The experimental RX-78 Gundam mobile suit is scheduled to be transported to Federation command in Jaburo, deep within the Brazilian jungles. Unfortunatley, before the transporter would arrive, the Federation would come under attack from Zeon. With few resources available against the Zeon's most mobile mechs, Federation forces strike back using their new weapon, the mobile suit Gundam. Caught in the crossfire is a young teen named Amuro Ray. Not willing to see innocent people die like this, Amuro crawls into the cockpit of the closest machine around him. Whether it be a tank, jeep or jet, he was going to use it to help stop this slaughter. And what he happened to slide into was another Gundam. Having never operated a machine like this, what are the chances he can do anything to repel an experienced squad of mech-piloting invaders? Volume 1 includes an essay from Hideaki Anno, director of the hit anime Neon Genesis Evengelion. Color pages from Yas. And an essay from Kadokawa Publishing's Executive Shinichiro Inoue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gundam has returned to the United States in the form of a gorgeous, 456 page, hardcover edition of the Gundam: The Origin tale from the beginning! A young Amuro Ray and his friends and neighbors are caught in the crossfire during the One Year War when a Zeon Zaku squad attacks the neutral space colony Side 7. Amuro desperately tries to find an escape but stumbles upon the Earth

Federation's secret weapon; the Gundam. This crew of civilians take charge of the White Base alongside the remaining crew and have to escape the colony and make it to Earth, all while being pursued by the Federation's nemesis Char Aznable; the Red Comet! Amuro must battle the enemy in a war machine and utilize his quick thinking to stop Char from destroying everyone he loves and cares for and bring the prototype weapon to the Jaburo base on Earth! So, the Origin returns in America. Before, it was released by Viz comics in a soft-cover form but here we have a more traditional manga form with a beautiful, sewn-binding hardcover format. It collects the story from the beginning to the Earth entry operation and includes the full color pages as well as all the black and white material. Essays from various writers like Ryusuke Hikawa and Shinichiro Inoue are also at the end. The book basically covers the first two volumes and the writing here is obviously very well done and the translations, although not perfect (and contain a spelling error or two), work well and are fairly easy to read while trying to conform to the original Japanese speech bubbles. The art here is beautiful and especially takes its full form when in the nice, brush-stroked, warm colors.

After Viz cancelled this series in its infancy, I never thought we would have an English edition of Gundam: The Origin. I'm so glad that Vertical not only proved me wrong, but published this treasure in a high-quality format few comics get to achieve. Gundam: The Origin is an excellently-crafted comic that is highly accessible for any reader, reimagining the original Gundam story in a way that accentuates its depth while expanding older fans' views of the source material. The Origin is more than just an adaptation of a classic animated series. Penned by one of the series' original creators, this series treats the subject matter with the elegance of a masterful cartoonist. Every aspect of the original series' story and world-building is embellished, and Yasuhiko does not do this for the sake of fanservice; each creative decision enriches the reader's involvement in Gundam's setting and their ties to the series' characters. Yasuhiko's background in animation brings a unique sense of pacing and rhythm to his panels; his page layouts never feel like elaborate storyboards, instead using clever design to control the flow of reading. This volume also reproduces his fully watercolored pages (which bookend each chapter) in stunning beauty, showing off his unique sense of emotive color that's rarely been seen in the US. In terms of production quality, this hardcover is phenomenal. Every inch of the cover is wrapped in elegant art by Yasuhiko, with little text to distract from it. All of the pages are printed on nice gloss paper (which I found a bit strange for the black and white pages, but was well worth it for highlighting Yasuhiko's stunning color pages). The back of the book features three translated essays, providing some background and cultural context for the comic.

I'm not a regular manga reader, but I always have an eye out for collector's editions of classic graphic novels of any kind. Mobile Suit Gundam: The Origin caught my eye immediately. The first thing you'll appreciate is the quality of the physical book itself. Each volume in the series so far is well over 400 pages and hardcover with sewn binding. The books are heavy and feel good in your hands like they've been coated with some kind of soft waxy varnish. The pages are semi-gloss with black-and-white artwork supplemented with key sections in full-color. The first book in the series, Activation, introduces the main characters and the conflict. Varied circumstances all combine to result in a scenario where a space warship filled with refugees and manned by a mixture of inexperienced military officers and civilians is being hounded by a relentless enemy. The allies are green and outgunned with older tech except for one key difference: they've managed to obtain the Federation's new prototype Mobile Suit: Gundam. The depth of the story was actually a welcome surprise to me. This is quite a mature and realistic work. The characters all feel real and three-dimensional with their own personal struggles and mysteries. The villain, Char, is ambitious, shrewd and enigmatic. He's a master of manipulating people and events to his plans, which becomes even more evident in book two. The main character and emerging hero, Amuro is the classic reluctant hero, slowly emerging from inexperienced youth to tried-by-fire soldier. The artwork is great and mostly easy to read. The artist definitely understands cinematic, visual storytelling and translates it superbly to a multi-panel, book format.

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