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Fifteen years ago, Dashiell "Dash" Bad Horse ran away from a life of poverty and hopelessness on the Prairie Rose Indian Reservation in search of something better.

Now he's come back home armed with nothing but a set of nunchucks, a hell-bent-for-leather attitude and one dark secret.

He finds nothing much has changed on "The Rez" – short of a glimmering new casino run by a corrupt leader named Red Crow, and a once-proud people overcome by drugs and organized crime.

Scalped, Vol. 7: Rez Blues Details

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From Reader Review Scalped, Vol. 7: Rez Blues for online ebook

David Schaafsma says

Scalped, Volume 7 (of 10); Rez Blues, is full of blues, for sure. After the last highly orchestrated, action-packed and violent volume 6, we slow way down and breathe a bit, stretch out and deepen the contexts for the broader stories and arcs. We begin by meeting an older married couple who live far away from everyone else, who are having to accept “government” food for the first time. We are never far from the terrible poverty of the Prairie Rose Rez—meth labs, gangs, prostitution, are ever-present—but it is affecting to see this simple, sweet and loving couple suffering.

The emotional center of this volume is, I think, fatherhood (or maybe more broadly, parenthood), as we get to meet Wade, Dash Bad Horse’s long-absent Dad who wants to work with Dash to find out who murdered his ex-wife Gina. (We do find this information out, and a . . . confrontation happens). We also learn of Red Crow’s father, and we know Red Crow’s not been a good father to Carol and he wasn’t a good partner to Gina.

Can Dash be a good partner to Carol? Could he be a good father? In Killing Diesel he avenged the death of a 13 year old kid he had taken under his wing. But when Carol gets pregnant, can she be a good parent? They are both addicted to smack?! Can they get it together enough to kick the habit and be role models for a child?

Part of the blues in this volume reflects on the wide gulf between what could have been in parenting and the crushing reality. But are there ways to be “parents” outside of blood relations? Can Granny Poor Bear, who never had kids but raises so many, “parent” Carol to health? Can Red Crow’s murdering, meth-labbing, mobsterism also involve “parenting” Dash to health?

We see Carol and Wade early on when they are happy with Dash, before things fell apart, and it is sweet, but didn’t last. We see Red Crow and Gina happy early on, before it falls apart.

There’s a gay-themed arc in this volume as we see the super-violent Shunka is actually closeted, which gives us the opportunity to see the more open perspective on gender diversity in most Native American cultures, though there is still a lot of homophobic behavior present.

Just an awesome volume in an awesome series.

Jeff Rice says

So I started reading the Scalped series about two weeks ago, and have absolutely devoured it. Following double-agent Dasheil Bad Horse as he tries to walk the knife-edge between FBI agent and mafia goon in the setting of a run-down, desolate Indian reservation is absolutely enthralling. Full of badasses, hard cases, drug addicts, two-time losers, hussies, hustlers, cretins, felons, and occasionally the outlier honest person, the story grabs you in a stranglehold and dares you to try to get loose.

I found this collection particularly gripping, mostly for the first chapter about an old Indian couple living by themselves out in the middle of the badlands, who, for the first time in their long lives, feel that they haven't

caught or harvested enough food for the winter, and with the old lady's kidneys failing, are facing the fact that they're going to have to finally ask for help. It's a hard and touching story, elegantly written, with strangely familiar themes of pride and forgiveness.

Five stars isn't enough.

Benoit Lelièvre says

At this point, it seems like Jason Aaron and his guys are just huddling up between issues and going like: "all right, what is the wildest thing that could happen?"

I mean, the narrative is heading home at that point, but it unfolds with the energy and the violence of a freakin' Shakeaspearan tragedy. I love how Dashiell Bad Horse has turned from resident badass in the first issue to a broken, vulnerable man that everybody is trying to protect. This is a great story that should live beyond the pages it's printed on.

Gavin says

Red for all the blood, the colour of the Dakota dirt, and of course, the racist white man name for Aboriginal peoples of North America...(Dan Synder still sees no issue...)

This is a collection of a few different stories all wound up under the banner of Scalped as a whole. That being said, they're not really disjointed that much, as they're all related in a way.

The first story is probably the best in my opinion; 2 old folks living on the land way outside of the Rez, stubborn, proud, strong, the kind of people I strive to emulate. Their love was a beautiful and simple thing, and I love how the story ends on a positive note (something Aaron rarely does in Scalped, so it's a great change).

Then there's a 2-parter about Shunka, Red Crow's Muscle. It's an illuminating story, and it's great, because there's no reason for it, and yet, every reason for it to be important to understanding the man beneath the beast. The second half I was torn on, because I see how it's important to see that everyone can be self-serving, but I also thought, that's just going to push Shunka even deeper back into his hole than anything at all, which is the beauty and crushing sadness of Noir work.

We get a new story where we meet Dash's father, Wade, and we see there's a lot of similarities between father and son...good and bad.

We also move forward on the Dash/Carol love story, and it is achingly gut-wrenching to watch these 2, as we see the internal monologue telling each other what they want to say, and the speech bubbles saying what they actually say to each other. You just want to reach out and help them open up, but you know it's not going to

happen...luckily, we see them both bottom out here and start a slow climb back from hell, but, knowing Aaron and this series, there's more hell waiting for them both.

I particularly enjoyed the Granny Pooh Bear stuff, and Carol with her especially, might be life-saving. The parallels Aaron draws between Carol and her mother and Dash and his father are striking, and say just as much about Nature as they do Nurture. When Nitz crosses paths with Wade (Dash Senior) you really feel like Oh shit...things have come full circle.

I did like it all, and it was all strong stuff, but I felt like it was a little short on Red Crow, and he's integral to the story. Individual stories are 5 star work for sure, but I'm thinking this isn't quite 5-star like the last few volumes were...

(Jason Aaron 4+ star work is better than most others' 5+ star any day though!)

Ill D says

It's always interesting to go through all the reviews for a series here on Goodreads. Certain patterns emerge with few exceptions. Unless its fucking Harry Potter, the number of ratings and reviews steadily decline from the debut onwards. Scalped is no exception with a steep decline onwards from #1. Thankfully, the series has still not lost its energy, ferocity, nor it's surprisingly warm human heart behind it all.

One of the things that makes Scalped great is the depth of backstories and their continual development. From ancillaries to collaterals, everyone contributes to this complex tapestry of love, hate, and good ol' fashioned murder. And Vol. 7: Rez Blues is no exception.

From the very beginning of this collection, the camera veers from the main road, favoring a surprisingly subaltern story of two country bumpkins just living day to day on the outskirts of the "rez." Although on the periphery of the story literally and figuratively, this micro-story adds a strong emotional and historical resonance to the over-arc. While Red Crow is blowing people away, prostitutes are prostituting away, and tens of thousands of dollars of narcotics slosh through the community, it's a real treat too see just what's going on with the average Joe at the time. Even though the impoverished duo's connection to the "rez" is tangential, lest we forget it's their otherwise unseen stories that are building this environment as well. Danijel Zezelj of Loveless fame (w/Azzarello) makes a surprise appearance as illustrator of this tale.

As surprised as I was with the subaltern take of the first issue, nothing could have prepared me for the ensuing two issues which en flesh the backstory of Red Crow's enigmatic right hand man, Chunka. Although a progressive theme could be retroactively applied here, a far more complex (and highly relevant to modern day readers) tales emerges. While it strongly reaches back to the traditions of the Native American past, it remains firmly rooted in the present with all the deception, blood, and guts that would entail. Just as Chunka curb-stomps an opponent in this section, so too did I feel curb stomped by the emotional and brutal intensity of this two issue insert.

With not a moment to spare, R.M. Guerra shows back up to complete the last 3 issues of this already phenomenal edition. Alongside the introduction of Dashielle's father and his ensuing backstory, a million

controversial themes ranging from abortion to drug addiction saturate each and every panel with crushing claustrophobia. Bad Horse, reaching rock bottom with his addiction now resembles Dhalism from Street Fighter. Carol finds herself facing an equally dismal decision regarding her unwanted pregnancy. In a similar vein to Tarantino's canon, sans the amorality, Aaron and his team aim to tell us the story the way it is and allow us to arrive at our own conclusions.

I'm trying to remain as vague as possible but, this entire collection is an incredible emotional roller coaster that swerves up and down all throughout the Human Condition.

Nikki says

If Scalped were a tv show, Rez Blues would be one of those "filler" episodes that don't progress the main story line. Thankfully, this isn't tv. Even though several of the stories here are either sidetracks or backstories, this is no filler. In Rez Blues, I've finally moved past merely understanding the characters and toward real sympathy, at least for Dash and Carol, and even maybe for Shunka, if only a little bit. Also, the first story in this collection was a wonderful little slice of life. It was nice to have a little positivity break from the noir. Overall, I really enjoyed this one, and intend to keep reading the series.

Jedi JC Daquis says

A relatively more peaceful volume than the previous one, Rez Blues delves deeper into the lives of Scalped's main characters - Dash, Red Crow, Gina, Carol and even Nitz. the story not only reveals more of their past but also defines what they would be, or rooting for in the next volumes to come.

Whereas volume 6 is full of unexpected violence, Rez Blues is a triumph on narrative. Though not giving huge plot progress, the seventh volume is way more than just a filler arc, it is a preparation of a rather bigger storm that will hit Prairie Rose Reservation for the second half of the story. So keep them coming, because we are all ready.

Oh wait, there's Shunka. Watch out for his story.

Ije the Devourer of Books says

There are so many brilliant reviews for this volume that capture what I want to say. This volume gives back stories to some of the minor characters but also give side stories about life on the rez.

Everything comes together in this series: the writing, the art, the characters, drama, tension and grit, all of wrapped in thick layers of darkness.

It is just pure brilliance!!

DaViD'82 says

Anotace zaříná slovy "*po?ád ta samá písni?ka*" a p?itom pravda snad ani nem?žeme být vzdálen?jší. Naopak, Skalpy jsou knihu od knihy lepší a lepší. Ty tam jsou k?enící momenty z prvního alba, kdy se skrze rádobu cool hlášky šlo po laciné líbivosti, nyní to Aaron dotáhl na regulérní skoro až dokudrama o každodenní t?žkosti (ne)bytí (nejen) v rezervacích. Mistrovská práce s charaktery, genius loci, fakty i žánrovými pravidly, kde mezi nejpamátň?jší momenty nepat?í pasáže nekompromisního násilí, ale scény à la no?ní setkání ve sn?hu s dialogem nevy??eného.

Sam Quixote says

The society of the Prairie Rose Indian Reservation is explored further in this book with the short story of an old Indian couple living far from town in a house they built themselves in the middle of nowhere. It's very touching and sweet to see these two people as they talk to each other without talking but the reader can see their thoughts through word panels. Their story is a light in the midst of so much darkness.

Then we get back into the dark and violent world of these characters. One of the more enigmatic characters, Shunka, Red Crow's right hand man, is given a two part story where we get to know more about who he is as a person rather than a mindless goon. Expect some revelations and a lotta violence.

The main story picks up after this where we get to know about Dash Bad Horse's parentage, his father Wade and how he came to get involved with Gina Bad Horse when he returned from a tour of duty in Vietnam. Aaron depicts the fall of Saigon as engagingly as he does every other episode in this series and it's great to see that even previously minor characters are given a backstory and a chance to become more real. It adds to the overall richness of this story and makes the main characters even more complex and interesting.

Dash and Carol wind up cleaning themselves up drugs-wise and Carol finds a new path to follow after some dark moments in this book. Dash meanwhile has a hard time cleaning up and dealing with the re-emergence of his father in light of his mother's murder.

"Rez Blues" is a fantastic continuation of this startlingly original series and is an impressive book on its own. Jason Aaron and RM Guera are creating something incredible here and anyone not on the "Scalped" bandwagon yet, and is a fan of comics, I urge you to give this series a chance - you won't regret it.

Rural Soul says

I just wonder that is there any character there who doesn't dislike anyone ?

Koen Claeys says

Gut-wrenching, heartbreaking.... Aaron & Guéra found great beauty in extraordinary pain...

Justin says

How writer Jason Aaron does it, I don't think I'll ever really know, and perhaps that's the most fun about SCALPED.

Like the best serialized television series or the most epic films (and, for the latter, I can't think of a single film that measures up to the storytelling scope of SCALPED), Aaron both catapults his readers into the ongoing conflict of an undercover Native American agent working to uncover crimes on "The Rez," and unflinchingly casts glances into the sordid histories of the series' characters to give the book more depth and, ultimately, more future conflict.

"Rez Blues" follows suit with this narrative strength. Here, the fate of Dash's unborn child is revealed, and for those readers that felt that the pregnancy itself was going to be the biggest cross that Dash Bad Horse and his "equally bad" mistress had before them ... "Rez Blues" sets up conflicts that might not even come to fruition for another year or two, and that's perfectly okay with this particular critic.

It's the anticipation of what lies around the next corner that makes SCALPED one of the most coveted monthly books and collections to purchase & read, when it becomes available.

But "Blues" also continues to shed more light on the backgrounds of those memorable characters that populate the Rez, never failing to humanize them and never failing to force the reader to second-guess their presumptions about each of them, their motives, and their futures.

SCALPED remains one of the best comic book series being published today, complete with riveting storylines and compelling character development.

Strange, isn't it, that SCALPED is one of those series that demands to be produced for the cable small screen, whether for HBO, Showtime, or AMC?

Akin to programs like JUSTIFIED or THE SHIELD, this critic is confident that a televised SCALPED would become one of the most appreciated series on television today.

For those that have never read Kirkman's THE WALKING DEAD, the AMC cable program is one of the most entertaining shows of its kind ever.

Yet, like Kirkman's THE WALKING DEAD, would readers of SCALPED find that the program was simply "pretty good," understanding that nothing ... absolutely nothing ... will replace the storytelling that Aaron and his artists have constructed?

That, true believer, is the true measure of great reading: Something that cannot be captured or replicated, even in the hands of the most capable director and in the faces of the most trained actors.

For now, readers can continue to clear their throats of the dust that this series kicks up.

Gasping for your breath never felt so good.

Mike says

Shunka story? About as awesome as Aaron gets. I did *not* see that coming, and I'm about used to seeing how that boy turns my expectations inside out.

Dash & Carol? Great storytelling here - these are people I totally understand, and even though I'd like to feel like I'm better than them, I'm pretty damned sure if I was in their shoes I'd be doing the same damned things, making the same damned mistakes and compromised choices as they keep making.

It's not easy, looking straight in the eyes of human weakness and trying to retain your own fantasy of just how cool or right you are. Aaron & Guera make it so easy to slip into this world and feel like you're watching long friends, and as hard as it is to see no happy end in sight, I'm thrilled to keep feeling like they created this to make my life a little more real.

Waiting for the next book, and trying to retain that dirty, gritty, metallic taste in my mouth until then, is going to be very hard (but worth it).

Key plot points:
(view spoiler)

Aaron says

Visceral, gut-wrenching stories. This volume strays away from the central crime plot elements to focus on characters, some new, some old. Every single entry feels fresh. It's a bleak, harsh landscape, but that doesn't mean it can't have spots of beauty. This is a series unafraid to take risks, and that's always rewarding.
