

Eccentric and highly energetic man english literature essay

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Sean SpencerFilm ArtSerenity, released in 2005, is a film about an honorable man and his ragtag crew who have to do less than honorable jobs to survive in the futuristic world of space travel when, as an assassin who has been hired to collect one of the more unique crew members pursues them, they discover a secret so big that it just might be the final push to wake the neglected peoples in the outer colonies to rise up once more against the oppressive Alliance government if they can survive long enough to share it. The film is actually based off the 2002 television series Firefly, created by Joss Whedon. In it Capt. Malcolm Reynolds and his second in command, Zoë, surviving members of the Brown Coats who fought for independence against the Alliance government, gather together a small crew consisting of Wash the pilot, Kaylee the mechanic, Jayne the hired gun, and even Inara, a legalized escort for the wealthy, who has rented out one of Reynolds escape shuttles for entertaining clients, for cargo jobs aboard the ship Serenity. While Reynolds prefers to do honest work, as he is an honorable man at heart, the reputations of those aboard make that style of life fairly difficult, resulting in them taking anything from simple under the counter trading to robbery and smuggling. One such job they undertake involves a simple transport for a shepherd named Derrial Book and trafficking a mysterious man and his cargo across Alliance space undetected. What they soon come to find out after a bit of meddling is that the cargo is in fact a girl who is none other than his sister. After a good deal of explaining, the man introduces himself as Simon, son of a rich Alliance doctor who had disowned him after Simon's continued trouble with the law chasing after rumors and convoluted messages that his sister River was not brought into a highly

prestigious institute, but rather an Alliance experimentation facility where she was being tortured and experimented on due to her high intelligence. Things begin to get heated as everyone discusses what should be done with the two with Shepherd acting as the mediator. Because of this distraction, the crew is caught unawares by an Alliance patrol ship which proceeds to board them. Reynolds, knowing full well what they would do to all of them if River and Simon are caught, stow them away in one of the ship's many nooks and crannies. Once the danger had passed it was obvious what had to be done. Reynolds couldn't leave them out in the world like that, hunted around every corner, and at least on his ship he could be sure of their protection. So long as they were useful that is, and useful they were. Simon, being the son of a doctor, was making a bright future in the same field before his rescuing of his sister and could patch up any of them if the situation arose and River, having been experimented on, had both her advantages and disadvantages because of it which happened to align in their favor. It was from then on that the adventures of the series *Firefly* took off full speed into the action-packed, story-riveting show that it would become and, with its unfortunate cancellation, lead into *Serenity*. Just like in the show, Simon and River, though primarily River, were prime targets for the Alliance. Only this time the Alliance were through messing around and decided to send one of their operatives, known as Believers, after her. The Believer was one of the few elite members of the Alliance that had been thoroughly trained and brainwashed into believing everything the Alliance might tell him and would do anything and everything without question and his mission now was to apprehend River by any means necessary. For she was a Reader. Unknown

to the crew of the Serenity, the experimentations done on River had heightened her mental awareness, giving her the ability to sense what others are thinking and, at points, see what is going on through their minds entirely. It was because of this that she had glimpse into important secrets when brought before key members of parliament to witness the results of her experimentation and they were ready to do anything to keep her quiet. Through painstaking means, Reynolds and his crew evaded the Alliance, survived direct conflicts with the Believer and found their way to an uncharted planet named Miranda which housed the secret buried within Rivers mind. Once there, they discovered that many years ago, as the product of mass population experimentation, the Alliance had accidentally created the Reavers, a race of highly violent and insane men whose entire existence had come down to just three basic needs, regardless of their wellbeing; to eat, raid and rape. It was clear to the entire crew that no matter what, even if it meant that none of them would live to see what would happen after, they had to get this information to the public fore it might mean the final push to bring everyone, oppressed and privileged, to arms in outrage against their government for having been the creators of the scourge of the galaxy. That meant barging their way through an Alliance fleet to do so. Goading the Reavers into following them, Serenity and her crew had their own trap in tow as they charged, using the battle to slip past to the broadcast station where the Believer followed and took a short cut to cut off Reynolds at the terminal. After a final confrontation, Reynolds old war wounds proved his salvation as the Believers paralyzing jab was ineffective, giving Reynolds the upper hand in the Believers pride. As Reynolds played

the transmission, the Believer saw for the first time just exactly how corrupt his beloved government was and when his men had a clear kill shot on our heroes, he ordered them to stand down and allow them safe passage, back to hobble to their ship and into the reaches of space as the Believer would not be doing the Alliance's dirty work anymore. Whedon has always been somewhat of an eccentric and highly energetic man and inspiration for his writing can spring up from both anything and nothing at all. For Firefly, it hit when Whedon and his wife were on a flight for a long-overdue London vacation. ' When the jet-lagged couple read through the night, Whedon dived into " The Killer Angels," Michael Shaara's fictional recreation of the Battle of Gettysburg. " I thought, That's the show I want to make!" he recalls. " It was about the minutiae of the shoulders' lives. And I wanted to play with that classic notion of the frontier: not the people who made history, but the people history stepped on -- the people for whom every act is the creation of civilization. Then again, there's also gunfights and action." ' (Must-See Metaphysics). Though personally I believe his best quote identifies with both aspects of the camera, in front and behind, as well as an overall attitude for life, which is, " I'd rather make a show one hundred people need to see, than a show that one thousand people want to see." (IMDB - Joss Whedon). And Whedon did exactly that. Filled with a variety of lively characters and quick witted writing, Whedon's reach into the science fiction community of television rocketed, instantly hitting home to those that happened across it. Unfortunately, because of under advertisement, the viewing numbers for the show did not qualify it for a renewal and, to many dear fans, the show was canceled. Almost all of the cast and crew were crushed as well as they fell to

the number one rule of entertainment; never fall in love with your project. It was a hard blow and, while good for their career, it left them saddened with the fact that they may never end up all working together again. Whedon, however, was a bit more stubborn than the rest. He had put in a great deal of time and energy writing this series. Like all his works, he had written enough to cover the first three seasons before the first had even fully launched and so fond of this one was he that he scraped and saved and called in all he knew to get the funding the bring Serenity's crew back together one last time. " I just loved the show and the people and the world too much to walk away when they cancelled it, so I hunted about for someone to agree with me and then, rather shockingly, found Universal Studios agreed with me to the tune of a great deal more money than I had ever expected to have to work with. What everybody said was dead in the water suddenly became—maybe not for them, but for me—a rather major motion picture." (Joss Whedon. Biography) Of course, Whedon had also planned that if the movie had done well to make it into a trilogy as he had plenty of ideas for that as well, but that was not to be. Whedon's vision on the design of his precious space ship, Serenity, was described as something a bit as a child's toy enlarged to enormous proportions. Roy Barnes, lead set designer for the film and show, did well in making this reality. Having worked on such projects as War of the Worlds (2005), The last Samurai (2003), The Hulk (2003) and Flight Plan (2005), this was right up his ally. With its bulbous build and elongated neck to the cockpit, the ship tends to resemble that almost of a pterodactyl, much like the one that decorates the control board of the, along with the multitude of other child's toys, of the ships pilot Wash,

played by Alan Tudyk. When asked about the direction of the film, or any of his films for that matter, he describes his style as something like this. " There's no way you could make a movie that looked like a Jon Favreau, Kenneth Branagh, Joe Johnston, Louie Lettieri movie. So it is the way that I can reconcile the different styles. My own style is actually kind of smack dab in the middle of what all those guys do. Therefore it plays." (The Daily Aztec) Such examples of this are shown in most of his creations, such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1996) and The Avengers (2012). Nathan Fillion, lead character Capt. Malcolm Reynolds, holds Whedon in high regards in terms of his writing and directing and having nothing but good things to say about working with him on set. " Joss is a brilliant man. He's one of those guys that is so very, very clever, he can leave you in the dust intellectually. But he's one of those guys that keeps his feet on the ground and doesn't ever make you feel stupid." (About. com) Similar things are said by all the actors and crew involved with the film and their reverence for Mr. Whedon. Interestingly enough, Nathan Fillion originally planned on becoming a high school drama teacher, loving to teach and interact with young minds, while pursuing a small acting career on the side. Little did he know that this small side career would lead to involvement with many of Joss Whedon's productions, not to mention his own large career on such shows as Castle (2009-2013), Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog (2008), Desperate Housewives (2007-2008), One Life to Live (1994-2007), Two Guys, a Girl and a Pizza Place (1998-2001) and many more. Despite all his previous works Fillion gained critical acclaim and a large cult of fans when he starred as Capt. Malcolm Reynolds on Joss Whedon's television series Firefly. The story of the troubled war vet who's

gone freelance after his glory days appealed to Fillion greatly, as it did with the fans and his portrayal of the captain. Surprisingly enough, this role was the only he auditioned for where he actually got to meet Whedon. Fillion originally auditioned for the role of Angel in Whedon's Buffy the Vampire Slayer in hopes of a more long term placement on the show which, if they had met at the time, I am sure he would have received. However, they did not, and so he was given the role of Caleb, a psychotic priest who goes against Buffy and her team for one to two episodes. However, at seeing Fillion's performance in the showing, when it came time for the casting of Firefly, not only did the fan get to meet his favorite writer, but the choice for Whedon was obvious. The relationship between Whedon and Fillion since that moment could only strengthen, and it did. Both developed a mutual respect for one another and shared similar views when it came to the work, resulting in powerhouse performances and one of the most positive airs you could possibly have on set. " I'll tell you this. No one has ever shown the kind of faith in me that Joss Whedon has show, in both giving me a lead on his sci-fi show Firefly and in letting me play a villain for the very first time. No one's ever let me play a villain before. So, I would say that I think he's done great things for my career and certainly my confidence in general." (IMDB - Nathan Fillion)As I said before, Fillion is not the only one who has had a great experience with Whedon. Alan Tudyk, who studied drama at Lon Morris Jr. College in Texas and is known more for his voice acting rather than his on screen work, did not have quite a shared relationship with Mr. Whedon, but that doesn't mean they didn't have their share of moments of inspiration. In the Firefly episode " Out of Gas", Wash wires up a large, red button for the

captain to press if he needs the crew to return to the ship. When he shows it to Mal, he says, " When your miracle gets here, just hit this button." When Tudyk left the Firefly set after the series was canceled, he took that button as a keepsake. When Whedon announced that he would be searching for a way to bring the show back as either a series or a feature film, Tudyk sent him the button with a note that said, again, " When your miracle gets here, just hit this button." (IMDB - Alan Tudyk). Tudyk's role in the film and series seemed almost designed just for him. Since he was a child he had always the ability to bring humor to even the darkest of situations. Most of which were by his own design, but the payoff generally tended to outweigh the consequences of the fake nose bleeds and fainting spells in school. As he grew though his comedic personality was not overlooked as he began his career in acting and he was able to bring his own personal qualities to his work in the recording booth. Having a very vast range he has been cast as the voice of such characters in films as Sonny in I, Robot (2004), Cholly in Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006) and Mickey in the video game Halo 3: ODST (2009). When he is on screen that special touch is brought into perfect physicality, like in A Knight's Tale (2001) with his reaction to the absurd idea of Heath Ledger's character posing as the now dead knight they had sworn their lives to serve in order to gain the life they've always wanted and make a name for themselves. Most actors would be tempted to take the serious route, to try and convey the weight of the situation and the idea that had just been presented and do their best to guide Ledger with a sound reasoning approach. Not Tudyk. He paces back and forth from the dead knight to Ledger, arms waving frantically as he yells and screams his line of

reasoning in panicked tones, changing the feeling of the scene completely and only adds to the movie's flavor and giving Ledger's character plenty of chances for some good back and forth rather than leaving Ledger to be the only comic relief of the film. That's not to say Tudyk wasn't the only comedic person involved with *Serenity*. Alan Baldwin, no relation to the Baldwin brothers, was brought onto the project to play role of Jayne Cobb, a gruff and not too brainy gung-ho kind of guy that tended to shoot first and ask questions later more for the fact that he preferred bullets and explosions to words. Baldwin modeled his character choices based on old Western movies such as Warren Oates in *The Wild Bunch* (1969) and Eli Wallach from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) with a bit of Strother Martin thrown in. It was Whedon who gave Jayne a sense of honor, even as small as it was, otherwise Jayne would be the type of character to toss them all out the air lock at the first chance he got, and that wouldn't exactly be good for story purposes. Baldwin is a good fit for such a role though as he is used to playing them. Having been in many projects he's played such roles as John Casey in *Chuck* (2007-2012), Marcus Hamilton in *Angel* (2004) and Colonel Dave Dixon in *Stargate SG-1* (2004). It was in high school that he discovered his interest in acting and it wasn't long before he was making his first debut in the 1980's film *My Bodyguard* leading into a decades-long career to which he has been in more than 60 movies. These great names and many others are the heart and soul that have breathed life into the works of Mr. Joss Whedon. From *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Serenity*, Whedon, Fillion, Tudyk and Baldwin have made sure that none of these great works will ever be forgotten.