

Star Wars: The Last Jedi is a worthy follow up

 By [Charles Siboto](#)

9 Jan 2018

Let me say it right off the bat that *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* is a great movie and a worthy follow up to *The Force Awakens*. If you've been following any news about the movie, you'll know that there is a split between some Star Wars fans and film critics.

Some of the fans feel that the movie is not a Star Wars movie at all and lacks the franchise's essence. Many film critics praised the movie for its strong storyline and for the manner in which it subverts the viewers' expectation. Director Rian Johnson (*The Brothers Bloom*) delivers a solid Star Wars movie with many unexpected twists and turns. *The Last Jedi* captures the magic of Star Wars but is brave enough to turn a lot of the lore on its head and steer the franchise towards a new direction. It does take some missteps as it changes course, though.



A New Hope

In 2015, JJ Abrams wrote the most beautiful love letter to Star Wars in the form of *The Force Awakens*. As fans, we loved it because it was 'Star Wars'. We looked past the fact that it was a rehash of *A New Hope* and that it did not really move our favourite franchise forward much. Sure, we got new villains in the form of the First Order, but we must admit that they were introduced as carbon copies of the Empire's villains. We got a new weapon in the form of Starkiller base (we see what you did with the name there, JJ) and that was pretty much the third Death Star. Snoke was pretty much the Emperor, Kylo Ren wanted to be Darth Vader and General Hux (with his amazing coat) was up-and-coming Grand Moff Tarkin. The good guys followed a similar mould, with maybe the exception of Finn. Don't get me wrong, *The Force Awakens* is a great movie but it served as a soft introduction to the new trilogy and did that well. Rian Johnson's *The Last Jedi* has the difficult task of being a Star Wars sequel and moving the story forward in an unexpected direction. It does that well.



JJ Abrams' love letter to Star Wars

Charles Siboto 19 Jan 2016



Luke's words from the trailer are pretty much what *The Last Jedi* does: "This is not going to go the way you think". Johnson gives the Star Wars universe some much needed fresh air by moving away from the beats we expect from a Star Wars movie. The good guys learn that they cannot fight the Dark Side using the same tactics they have been and the Dark Side goes to a place we've not seen before. Everything is not so Dark Side and Light Side, *The Last Jedi* dares to give us a grey area. We are given a new perspective on the Force and how it works and moves through the galaxy. Mark Hamill steals the show as a disillusioned Luke Skywalker. The story pays respect to the older Star Wars characters but it is more the story of solidifying the new characters' place in the story. Every time you see Carrie Fisher as Leia onscreen you can't help but feel emotional and her last performance as the character is beautiful. Daisy Ridley's Rey learns to pick up the mantle as a Jedi, Oscar Isaac's Poe Dameron learns to be a better leader and John Boyega's Finn learns to value what he is fighting for. Adam Driver is brilliant as Kylo Ren and both his and Rey's struggle with the Light and Dark sides of the Force is portrayed expertly. Domhall Gleeson as General Hux (his coat is so cool!) continues to vie with Kylo for the Supreme Leader Snoke's favour. Snoke (Andy Serkis) is as menacing and mysterious as ever.



The Empire Strikes Back

The movie opens with the rebel scum doing their rebel thing and the First Order doing their chasing and threatening thing. Nothing new here. *The Last Jedi* opens on the same beat we expect from a Star Wars movie: a Star Destroyer looks cool in space, there is a cinematic battle, the good guys fly their X-wings against impossible odds whilst keeping up their humorous banter, a cute droid beeps, a villain loses his cool and a John Williams soundtrack is pushing all the right emotional buttons. It's great. Then, all of a sudden our expectations start getting subverted at every turn. All of our YouTube prophets' fan theories are trampled into the dust and we are in new territory. It's great! Johnson questions things we believe about the Star Wars universe and opens new avenues of exploration.

The Last Jedi/The Return of the Jedi (They really need to make up their minds)

It's not all lightsabers and BB8, though. *The Last Jedi* makes mistakes and they do take away from the vision that Johnson has. My biggest gripe is that the movie is too long. I love long movies but only when it does not feel like padding. *The Last Jedi* gets to a point where there is a lot of padding and what feels like unnecessary storylines. They introduce places and characters you can't bring yourself to care about and that takes away from the brilliance of the core plot. At the end of the movie you are tired, happy, confused, possibly angry and then you go home and give it more thought and smile because this is a great middle act. The Last Jedi answers some of the questions we had offhandedly, not at all or asks us questions. The threads are left dangling and both groups of people who liked it and did not like it are left hoping that Episode IX answers all of our questions. YouTube fan theorists get to keep their jobs for the next two years as *The Last Jedi* leaves a lot of mysteries that need solving.

ABOUT CHARLES SIBOTO

Charles Siboto is a delightful, youngish person. He firmly believes that kindness matters and cannot abide people who are asshats.

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