

MOVIE REVIEW



THE SAGA BEGINS AGAIN

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Sitting down at the theatre a few days ago, it felt sort of surreal that it had been 10 years since the last Star Wars movie premiered. As people filed in slowly with hurried excited whispers buzzing around the theatre, I felt a small sense of apprehension at the thought that in 1999, people entered theatres just like this to watch *The Phantom Menace*, only to be severely underwhelmed. (And they had to wait 16 years.)

But after watching the movie I can say with utter certainty: Star Wars is back!

This review will be spoiler-free, so anyone who has been hiding from the internet can rest easy if they're reading this in print. Also, special mentions should be in order for the people who made the trailers. Not only did they not spoil huge plot points, they snuck in red herrings while still managing to keep them engaging. So thanks to them for making my job a little harder.

The biggest change of this movie from the prequels is something people rarely notice. He is a man called Lawrence Kasdan, one of the writers of Episodes V and VI. J.J. Abrams recruited him for the new movie and it definitely shows. Kasdan knows how to write the old char-



acters like the back of his hand. The mixing of the veteran writing with the witty Abrams quips between the characters makes *The Force Awakens* more akin to the original trilogy, though noticeably funnier. The world's been ending for a while now so of course the jokes have to be on point.

The plot of *The Force Awakens* is in my opinion one of the weaker parts of the movie.

"An average person caught in a struggle much bigger than themselves has to beat all odds and find his inner strength to rise against a dark overbearing order of evil dudes."

This vague explanation of the movie is also an accurate representation of a lot of other movies. It is understandable here because it is the first movie of a trilogy and maybe Abrams wants to play safe. But you'd expect that a franchise based on immense amounts of creativity and vision would stay away from the tropes for once.

The Force Awakens is about the First Order, a new dictatorial regime similar to the Empire, as it tries to seize control of the galaxy and destroy The Resistance, a group made to destroy them. The movie is set 30 years after the end of *The Return of the Jedi*, and Luke Skywalker has been missing for years. A new warrior of the Dark Side, Kylo Ren has emerged, this one seemingly more powerful than anyone before him.

The new characters are very entertain-

ing and great additions to the cast.

As is tradition, the leads are relatively unknown actors. John Boyega, playing Finn the Stormtrooper, with his inhibitions, self-doubt and occasional sparks of bravery, is a shred of humanity in this vast alien world. Daisy Ridley, playing Rey the scavenger, does a good job of being the character that got sucked into all this crazy space drama.

Oscar Isaac is also brilliant in his small role as Resistance pilot Poe Dameron. The indisputable fan-favourite new character is BB-8, Poe's droid partner. R2-D2 has a deserving successor, as Star Wars once again proves that only a few beeps and boops are enough to win the hearts of people. The new characters have great chemistry with the old ones and none of the appearances felt

forced or tacked on. Harrison Ford looked like he was actually trying and has some of the movie's best lines, as is appropriate for Han Solo. Speaking of old characters though...

Nostalgia has always played a big part in Star Wars. The forced references every other minute in the prequels were a large reason for their general unpleasantness. Abrams thankfully never goes overboard



with these. The Millennium Falcon reveal was absolutely perfect. The charge of the X-Wings into battle with the TIE fighters set to the new John Williams score had the crowd practically roaring.

I won't talk about Kylo Ren in this review because it is impossible to really discuss him without spoilers. Adam Driver's performance on how unstable and brutal the Dark Side can be was very believable though and I'm looking forward to see his character progress.

All in all, *The Force Awakens* could have done with a few extra minutes of runtime. The last battle against Starkiller Base (a.k.a. definitely not a Death Star) felt rushed, and so did a few other bits and pieces of the movie.

But in the end, we have another Star Wars, and it's actually great. What more could anyone possibly want?

Shuprovo Arko copes with the soul-crushing amount of studying he has to do by trying to be funny. He writes about movies, video games and music normal people don't listen to. This generic blurb was brought to you by facebook.com/shupro.arko

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2. Student satisfaction is 83 percent, according to The Princeton Review (2015).
3. Caltech (mainly post graduate enrollment) has 27 percent international students out of 2,243 – with 67 percent male and 33 percent female.
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