

JJ Abrams' love letter to Star Wars

 By [Charles Siboto](#)

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Okay, by now we all know that *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is good. It is frighteningly good. We have all watched it at least three times by now. I still have to see it in Imax and I am toying around with the idea of seeing it in Nu Metro's 4DX format. *The Force Awakens* has broken a long list of box office records, like being the highest grossing film of all time and, you know what, JJ Abrams and his team deserve it. Abrams is the chosen one and has brought balance back to the Force in a way that George Lucas failed to do with the prequels.

Do you guys remember *Super 8*, that movie Abrams did in 2011? That movie was really just a love letter to our favourite childhood movies of the 80s and 90s, especially movies like *ET* and *The Goonies*. The movie was also a love letter to the craft of filmmaking. That movie was great because you could tell that a huge amount of love and attention to detail went into it. It was a huge dose of nostalgia and for two hours you could just kick back and be a kid riding your BMX again. *Super 8* was basically fan fiction at its best. Abrams did the same with *Star Trek* reboots, with so-so results for both films. With *The Force Awakens* he hit his stride and it truly is the best love letter anyone could have written to the original *Star Wars* trilogy.



A labour of love

Do you know when the world began to believe that *The Force Awakens* could be good? It was at Comic-Con last year when they released that making-of reel and you could tell that the movie was a labour of love for everyone on the set. That was when we began to believe that this was going to be great. The final result follows many of the beats of *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back* and this is its greatest strength, and also a bit of a weakness. The very first time I walked into the theatre on the day of release last year I knew this is the *Star Wars* we know and love within the first five minutes. It really felt like Mark Hamill describes in the Comic-Con reel: "You've been here but you don't know this story. Nothing's changed, really. I mean, everything's changed but nothing's changed. That's the way you want it to be, really." *The Force Awakens* manages to strike a balance between paying homage to the old trilogy and telling a new story with the new characters. That can be no easy task and I applaud the team's dedication.



The new characters are just perfect and the actors are great in their roles. R2-D2 will always be my hero in the original trilogy, but BB-8 is the coolest character in The Force Awakens. He is cute, funny and you can't help but love him. BB-8 is so great that I entirely forgot about R2 and C3-PO while I was watching the movie. John Boyega as Finn and Daisy Ridley as Rey work well as leads. I love the chemistry between them and how their interactions switch naturally from funny to sombre. Both are badass in their own right and it will be great to see the direction in which their characters develop in the sequels. Oscar Isaac plays the best damn pilot in the Resistance, Poe Dameron, and he does so with style and enthusiasm. Adam Driver's Kylo Ren is rather menacing until you get under the mask and you learn how emotionally unstable he is and it works. Kylo Ren is not a fully fledged villain yet and still needs to learn to control himself and his powers. General Hux, played by Domhnall Gleeson, is the other up-and-coming baddie and he commands the First Order's troops. Kylo Ren and General Hux have a rivalry for who can impress the movies big bad the most. The big bad comes in the form of Supreme Leader Snoke, played by the marvellous Andy Serkis. We don't know much about Snoke for now other than that the Force is strong with him.



A poor man's Yoda

Maz Kenada may be a poor man's Yoda, but she is still very likeable and Lupita Nyong'o delivers a solid performance. Gwendoline Christie plays poor man's Boba Fett in the form of Captain Phasma. She commands the Stormtroopers and I

think she will have a bigger role in the sequels. She looks too cool not to.

It's great to see the familiar faces too and that lends a lot to the nostalgia you feel watching The Force Awakens. The first time you see Han Solo and Chewie you can't help but grin like an idiot and it truly feels like home. But the film makes it clear that the new characters are the ones that will be taking up the mantle in the struggle between the light and dark sides of the Force. Speaking of taking up mantles, director Rian Johnson is picking where Abrams left off with Episode VIII, which is scheduled for a 2017 release. Johnson is most known for 2012's *Looper*. He also directed three episodes of *Breaking Bad*.



For now, as a huge fan of Star Wars, all I can say is thank you Mr JJ Abrams and team for the new hope that you have brought to us that Star Wars can be fun again. The Force Awakens was well worth the wait and we are looking forward to spending more time in that far far away galaxy over the next few years.

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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