



BEHIND THE MUSIC OF *STAR WARS: AHSOKA*!

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE | ISSUE 222

STAR WARS

I N S I D E R

**Exclusive
Fiction!**
Two All-New
Star Wars
stories!

INTERVIEW:

It's a Trap!

Actor Tim Rose on
playing Admiral Ackbar

**"Together
again, huh?"**

The visual effects of
Return of the Jedi
with Dennis Muren &
Ken Ralston: Part Two

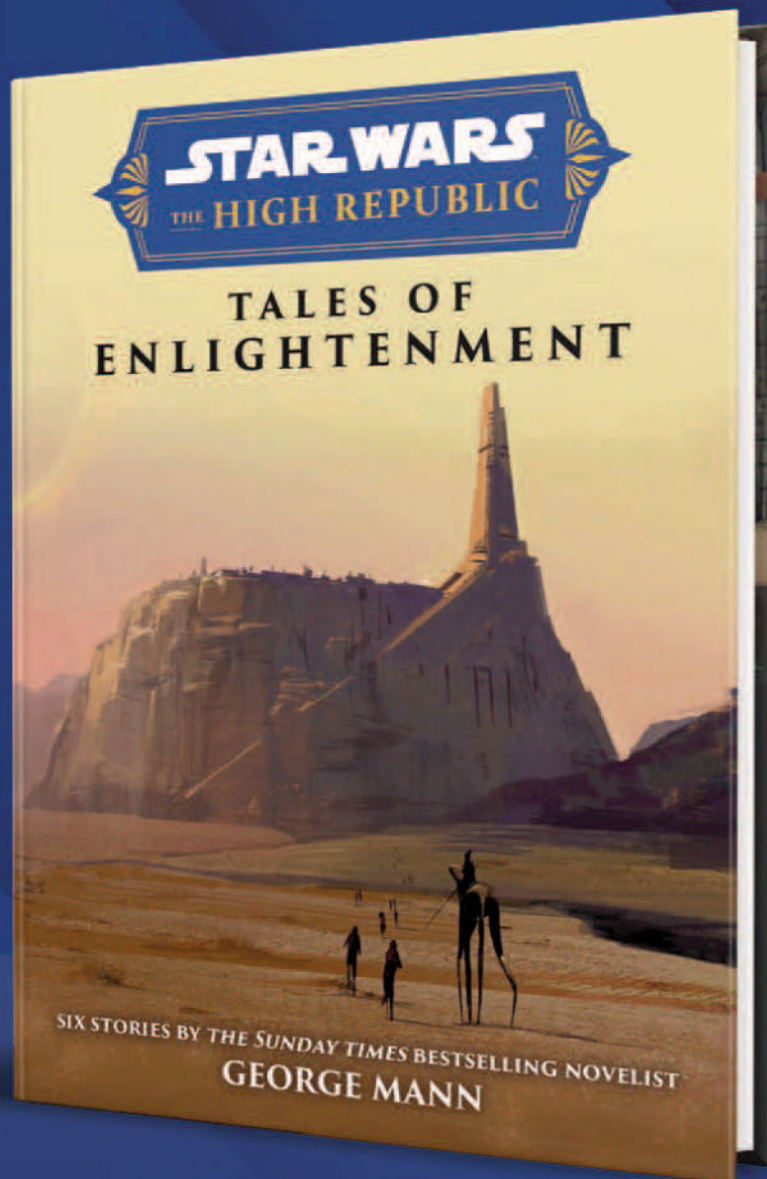
Mandalore and More!

***The Mandalorian* Season Three Companion**



WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ENDOR?
EXPLORING THE FALLOUT OF THE GALACTIC CIVIL WAR

ORIGINAL STORIES BY THE
SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
GEORGE MANN

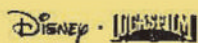


Step into Enlightenment, a cantina located in Jedha City,
where every patron has a story to tell.

This special edition contains six short tales, including a bonus story exclusive to this collection,
as well as a complete guide to the award-winning second phase of *The High Republic*!

FIND OUT MORE AT

TITAN-COMICS.COM



© 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd & TM. All rights reserved.



"Hello There!"



We'd all follow Admiral Ackbar into battle, right? He struck an imposing figure on the command deck of *Home One* in *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, barking orders in his brusque, efficient manner, despite stating the obvious on more than one occasion ("We can see it's a trap, Sir!" some despairing teenage rebel might have uttered).

True, there's no escaping that he looked like the main course at a very posh fish restaurant, but even then, Ackbar is the GOAT (not the billy kind of goat, but the "Greatest Of All Time") when it comes to commanding officers. So, I was glad to see several Mon Cals pop up during *Ahsoka*, not least because in this issue we speak to the admiral himself, puppeteer Tim Rose, who performed the character in *Jedi*. And while we're on the subject of *Ahsoka* Tano's live-action series, we also have a fascinating interview with the series' composer, Kevin Kiner, and his collaborators (and children) Sean and Deana.

But the big news is the return of *The High Republic* short fiction to *Insider*, and we welcome author Lydia Kang to the fold with the first part of her new run of stories—illustrated by *Star Wars* concept artist Jake Lunt Davies!—that kick off Phase III of the Lucasfilm Publishing initiative. Additionally, we have the final story in our *Return of the Jedi*-adjacent "Galactic Tales," and this time the focus falls on some desperate inhabitants of Jabba the Hutt's palace in an all-new story by Richard Dinnick.

With the final film in the original trilogy being very much our point of reference throughout it's 40th anniversary year, we conclude our two-part interview with Dennis Muren and Ken Ralston, and examine how the galaxy moved on after Endor with a look at the movies, videogames, and fiction set after the destruction of the second Death Star—which turned out not to be the most effective trap after all, did it, Admiral?!

May the Force be with you!

Christopher Cooper
 Editor

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS...



Lydia Kang
[@LydiaYKang](#)
 Poet, practicing physician, and author of young adult and adult fiction, Lydia's *The High Republic* novel *Cataclysm* is available now.



Jay Stobie
[@StobiesGalaxy](#)
 Writer, media consultant, and Wookiee fan, Jay is a regular *Star Wars Insider* contributor, and commentator for many sci-fi outlets.



Amy Richau
[@amyrichau](#)
 Amy is a regular contributor to *StarWars.com*, and is the author of *Star Wars: I Love You, I know: Lessons in Love and Friendship*.



Mark Newbold
[@Prefect_timing](#)
 A writer for U.K. sci-fi magazine *Starburst* and *Star Trek* magazine, journalist Mark is a proud Honorary Friend of the 501st and Rebel Legion.



Kristin Bayer
[@Kristin-Bayer](#)
 Kristin is a card-carrying *Star Wars* fan before she had reason to own a wallet. Now she's an associate editor at *StarWars.com*.



Richard Dinnick
[richarddinnick.com](#)
 Former journalist Richard is an award-winning screenwriter, author, videogame narrative designer, and comic-book creator and writer.

CONTACT US

Write to us
UNITED STATES
Star Wars Insider,
 Titan Magazines,
 2819 Rosehall
 Lane, Aurora, IL,
 60503, U.S.A.

UNITED KINGDOM
Star Wars Insider,
 144 Southwark
 Street, London
 SE1 0UP,
 U.K.

Email us:
starwarsinsider@titanemail.com

Call us
 To subscribe in the U.S. please
 call toll free on 800-261-6502.
 For U.K. and all other
 destinations please call
 01778 392085 or
 +44 (0) 1778 392085

Find us
[WWW.TITANMAGAZINES.COM](http://www.WWW.TITANMAGAZINES.COM)
[FACEBOOK.COM/STARWARSINSIDER](https://www.facebook.com/starwarsinsider)
[@SW_INSIDER](https://twitter.com/SW_INSIDER)

Star Wars Insider
 is also available online.
 To download, visit:
www.titanmagazines.com/digital

Visit www.starwars.com

TITAN EDITORIAL
 Editor / Christopher Cooper
 Group Editor / Jake Devine
 Editorial Assistant / Ibraheem Kazi
 Art Director / Oz Browne
 Designer / David Colderley

LUCASFILM
 Senior Editor / Brett Rector
 Art Director / Troy Alders
 Creative Director / Michael Siglain
 Asset Management /
 Chris Argyropoulos, Gabrielle Levenson,
 Bryce Pinkos, Sarah Williams, Jackey Cabrera,
 Shahana Alam, Elinor De La Torre
 and Michael Trobiani
 Story Group / Pablo Hidalgo,
 Leland Chee, Emily Shkoukani,
 Phil Szostak, and Kate Izquierdo

CONTRIBUTORS
 Kristin Bayer, Richard Dinnick, Mary Fan,
 Lydia Kang, John Kirk, Mark Newbold,
 Amy Ratcliffe, Amy Richau, Jay Stobie,
 and Dan Wallace.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
 Lucy Goldsmith, Erich Schoeneweiss
 at Random House, Holly McIntosh,
 Joseph Taraborrelli, Andrea Towers and
 Jim Nausedas at Marvel Comics, Lizzy Draeger,
 Tracy Cannobbio and Lyn Cowen at Lucasfilm.
 Kevin P. Pearl, Samantha Keanee,
 and Eugene Paraszczuk at Disney.

TITAN MAGAZINES
 Production Controllers /
 Caterina Falqui & Kelly Fenton
 Production Manager / Jackie Flook
 Sales & Circulation Manager / Steve Tothill
 Marketing Coordinator / Lauren Noding
 Publicity & Sales Coordinator / Alexandra Iciek
 Publicist / Caitlin Storer
 Digital & Marketing Manager / Jo Teather
 Head of Rights / Jenny Boyce
 Head of Creative & Business Development /
 Duncan Baizley
 Publishing Director / Ricky Claydon
 Publishing Director / John Dziewiatkowski
 Group Operations Director / Alex Ruthen
 Executive Vice President / Andrew Sumner
 Publishers / Vivian Cheung & Nick Landau

DISTRIBUTION
 U.S. Newsstand / Total Publisher Services, Inc.
 John Dziewiatkowski 630-851-7683
 U.S. Newsstand Distribution /
 Curtis Circulation Company
 U.S. Bookstore Distribution / The News Group
 U.S. Direct Sales / Diamond Comic Distributors
 U.K. Distribution / Marketforce

SUBSCRIPTIONS
 U.S. subscriptions / 1-800-261-6502,
 email: customerservice@titanpublishingusa.com
 Canada subscriptions / 818-487-4575
 U.K. subscriptions / 01778 392085
 email: swmag@servicehelpline.co.uk

For more info on advertising contact
adinfo@titanemail.com
 (USPS 003-027) (ISSN 1041-5122)

Star Wars Insider is published eight times per year
 (January, Feb/Mar, April/May, Jun/July, August, September,
 October, November/December) by Titan Magazines,
 a division of Titan Publishing Group Limited,
 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP.
 Contents © 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All Rights Reserved.
 Titan Authorized User, TMN1 4278

PUBLISHER'S U.S. AGENT
 2819 Rosehall Lane, Aurora, IL 60503, Periodicals
 Postage Paid at Aurora IL, and at additional
 mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
 Send address changes to Titan Publishing,
Star Wars Insider, PO Box 147, Lincolnshire, IL 60069
 U.S. subscriptions \$49.99 per year; Canada \$64.99 and U.K. £31.99.
 U.S. edition printed by Quad.

© 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd. and TM. All Rights Reserved.
 Used Under Authorization.



STAR WARS[®] INSIDER CONTENTS

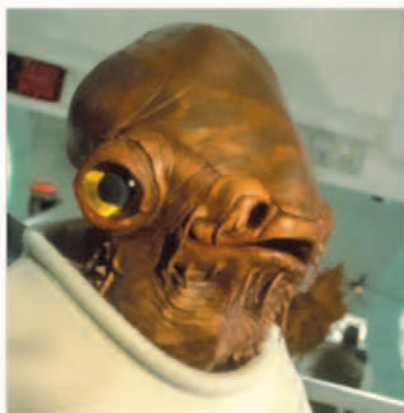
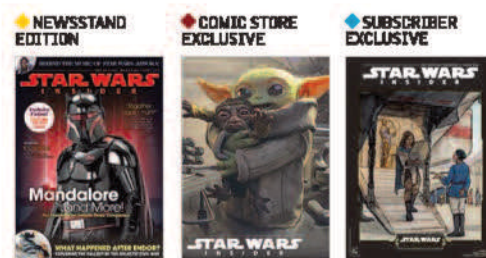
ISSUE 222

20

“For Mandalore!”

Relive Din Djarin and Grogu’s quest to retake their people’s homeworld with *Insider’s* *Star Wars: The Mandalorian* Season Three companion!





06

Launchpad

Insider's monthly roundup of the latest *Star Wars* movie, TV, publishing, and collectibles news.

20

The Mandalorian

We look back at the gripping third season of the Disney+ series that saw Bo-Katan Kryze lead her people home.

28

Tim Rose Interview

The master puppeteer behind Admiral Ackbar, Sy Snootles, and the rancor recalls his fascinating career.



34

The High Republic Exclusive Fiction

"No Big Deal"

Phase III begins with an all-new short story by Lydia Kang.

40

Dennis Muren & Ken Ralston Interview: Part Two

The Industrial Light & Magic veterans talk about creating the visual effects for *Return of the Jedi*.

46

After Endor

What happened after the Empire fell? We explore the aftermath of the Battle of Endor in books, comics, and videogames.



52

Tunes for Tano

Star Wars: Ahsoka composer Kevin Kiner talks about writing the soundtrack for the hit live-action series.

60

A Certain Point of View

Our resident holocron keeper traces the differences between tracking devices and transponders.

74

Exclusive Fiction

"Valnir & Laizhu"

An original trilogy short story by Richard Dinnick.

INCOMING TRANSMISSIONS

64

Worldwide

Pride in cosplay, scratchbuilding, and TK-101 takes some career advice!

70

The *Star Wars* Archive

Our visual behind the scenes history celebrates Princess Leia Organa.

80

Jedi Master's Quiz

Test your knowledge of The Way in our *The Mandalorian* trivia quiz.

STAR WARS
INSIDER

LAUNCHPAD

NEWS / BOOKS / COMICS / TOYS / GAMES / FASHION

Dark Forces Return

Classic videogame remastered



In 1995, *Star Wars: Dark Forces* redefined videogaming in the galaxy far, far away with a first-person shooter (FPS) that is now seen as an early classic of the genre.

Almost 30 years later, *Star Wars: Dark Forces Remaster* is a faithful recreation of the original title by Nightdive Studios in collaboration with Lucasfilm Games, coming soon for Windows PC (via Steam), PlayStation 4 and 5, Xbox One and Series X/S, and Nintendo Switch.

For those unfamiliar with the original, *Dark Forces* was the first ever FPS *Star Wars* game that allowed

players to truly explore locales and environments from the original movie trilogy, playing as hero Kyle Katarn on a covert mission deep into the heart of the Empire, where he uncovered a deadly new threat—the Dark Trooper Project!

“For many of us at Nightdive, *Star Wars: Dark Forces* was a title that we hoped to one day be able to give the faithful update that it deserved,” Stephen Kick, Nightdive’s CEO said. “Working with Lucasfilm Games has been a pleasure, and we’re eternally grateful that the team trusted us with remastering such an impactful title within the FPS genre and the *Star Wars* galaxy.”



Featuring high-resolution textures, enhanced lighting, upgraded gameplay, and capable of running at 4K resolution, the remastered version also adds modern console gamepad support such as motion/gyro controls and rumble effects, updating the game for the current generation of platforms while retaining its original 90s charm.



Frankendroid's Astromonster

Halloween fun from Disney Parks

Happy Halloween! As this issue of *Insider* arrives on newsstands on October 31—the spookiest day of the year!—we couldn't resist giving a mention to Disney Park's latest Halloween-themed droid action figure: C1-MNST4.

Available now at Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort, "Monster" is a frightfully fun collaboration between

Disney Parks and shopDisney.com, who have combined (dark) forces to celebrate all hallow's eve with an evil droid inspired by movie mashups including Frankenstein's monster and Darth Vader.

"Fans are always excited to see what new, creative concept we've come up with each year," Cody Hampton, senior manager, brand merchandising at Disney Parks told starwars.com.





The Living Prose

New novel prequel to *The Phantom Menace*

May 2024 marks a quarter of a century since *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* arrived in theaters, and Random House Worlds commemorate this anniversary with a new novel, *Star Wars: The Living Force*, by John Jackson Miller.

Set a year prior to the events of the movie, the galaxy is already undergoing great change. Whole sectors are slipping into disarray as the Jedi Knights—guardians of galactic peace and justice for more than a thousand years—find

their focus being drawn to Coruscant rather than the galaxy at large. As the Order seemingly becomes ever more isolated, warring pirate factions take advantage of their absence, creating havoc for any innocents that get in their way. When Mace Windu suggests the entire Jedi Council embark on a goodwill mission to assure the people of the galaxy that the Order can still be counted on in a crisis, he unwittingly places all 12 in danger as the pirates plot their assassination.

The hardcover novel is due for release on April 9, 2024.

Behind the Magic of Mando

The Visual Effects of *The Mandalorian* Season Three

Industrial Light & Magic have posted a short video on its official YouTube channel giving fans a fascinating glimpse into how the company crafted the visual effects for *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*'s third season, celebrating the hit Disney+ show's recent Emmy nominations.

Revealing the complex wireframes, atmospheric renders, and immersive StageCraft environments required in the realization of multiple sequences, the video is as exciting as it is enlightening, and joins a wealth of behind-the-scenes *Star Wars* content available on the venerated visual effects company's channel.



Tano Takes A Trip

Star Tours set for Ahsoka Update in 2024

Following the character's visit to the streets of Batuu at *Galaxy's Edge*, Disney Parks have announced that Ahsoka Tano will soon be making her presence felt on the famed *Star Tours: The Adventures Continue* attraction from Spring 2024, alongside new worlds and environments that are due to enhance the unique experience next year.

Star Tours—a simulator in which C-3PO and R2-D2 take guests on thrilling trips across the galaxy in a StarSpeeder 3000—already offers a different experience every time guests take a ride, thanks to its huge databank of exciting scenarios sequenced with each launch. The updates to the attraction will be rolled out at Disneyland Resort in California, Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, and Disneyland Paris.



Return of the Young Jedi

New *Star Wars: Young Jedi Adventures* on Disney+

Three characters from *The High Republic* novels—Jedi Master Loden Greatstorm, Padawan Bell Zettifar, and Bell's Charhound, Ember—are coming to *Star Wars: Young Jedi Adventures* this fall! Greatstorm, Zettifar, and Ember, who first

appeared in Charles Soule's *Light of the Jedi*, make their *Young Jedi Adventures* debut in an episode written by *The High Republic* author Cavan Scott, entitled "Charhound Chase." More brand new episodes are coming to Disney+ and Disney Junior (where available) on November 8.

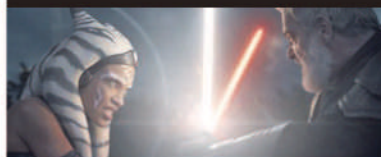
PRODUCTION DIARY

Star Wars movies and television programs coming from a galaxy far, far away....

STREAMING NOW

STAR WARS AHSOKA

Starring Rosario Dawson as Ahsoka Tano, Natasha Liu Bordizzo, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Ray Stevenson, Ivanna Sakhno, David Tennant, Lars Mikkelsen, Diana Lee Inosanto, Eman Esfandi, and Hayden Christensen.
Disney+



COMING SOON

(In alphabetical order)

STAR WARS THE ACOLYTE

Starring: Amandla Stenberg, Lee Jung-Jae, Manny Jacinto, Dafne Keen, Jodie Turner-Smith, Rebecca Henderson, Charlie Barnett, Dean-Charles Chapman, and Carrie-Anne Moss
Disney+



Season Three
Starring Dee Bradley Baker and Michelle Ang
Disney+



Starring Jude Law, Ravi Cabot-Conyers, Ryan Kiera Armstrong, Kyriana Kratter, and Robert Timothy Smith
Disney+

Moff Mandalorian

The Imperial warlord with a penchant for beskar armor

When Din Djarin and his cohorts returned to Mandalore in *The Mandalorian's* third season, they never imagined they'd encounter their archnemesis, Moff Gideon, wearing a next generation dark trooper suit made from beskar. The Hot Toys Moff Gideon Sixth-Scale Collectible Figure replicates the Imperial's armored ensemble, complete with a visored helmet topped by menacing horns. Standing nearly 11 1/2-inches tall, this figure is equipped with 30 points of articulation, 8 interchangeable gloved hands, a Darksaber hilt, 2 electrostaff accessories, and a newly developed head sculpt with separate rolling eyeball system. Priced at \$280, the Moff Gideon figure can be purchased on [Sideshow.com](https://www.sideshow.com).



THE LIGHT SIDE

By Jamie Cosley



Chew-brick-a

Piece together your perfect Wookiee co-pilot

Chewbacca had no qualms about widening his jaw to let out a ferocious roar, and you'll roar in amazement at LEGO's® Chewbacca build-and-display model honoring *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*'s 40th anniversary. This towering 2,319-piece set measures in at over 18-inches in height, featuring a high-quality level of detail down to the mighty Wookiee's bandolier and bowcaster. Also included are a plaque with Chewie's biographical details, as well as a Chewbacca LEGO minifigure with a stud-shooting bowcaster. There's no need to travel to Kashyyyk for this incredible set, as it is available now on [LEGO.com](https://www.lego.com) for \$199.99.



Light from Dark

Clever cross-stitch carriers turn the Empire to the bright side

Loungefly's Death Star Cross Stitch Mini Backpack (\$74.90) and Stormtrooper Ice Cream Cone Mini Backpack (\$79.90) harness an Imperial aesthetic, but flips the iconic imagery into playful designs. Each mini backpack is constructed from polyurethane with adjustable straps and a polyester lining. The Death Star pattern combines a portrait of the technological terror with cross-stitched flowers and embroidered TIE fighters, while the stormtrooper variant features a die-cut stormtrooper ice cream cone, complete with puffy paint sprinkle details, and a Darth Vader ice cream cone print on the back. Sold separately, these mini backpacks are exclusively available on [BoxLunch.com](https://www.boxlunch.com).



The StarWars DotColumn

Fascinating features and articles from the digital vaults of [StarWars.com](https://www.starwars.com)

Add [StarWars.com/Insider](https://www.starwars.com/insider) to your browser bookmarks to enjoy *Insider's* pick of the best of the official *Star Wars* website.

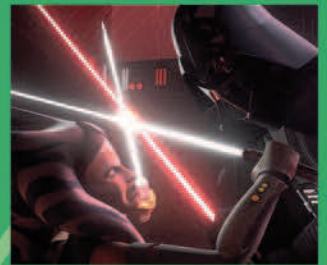
Star Wars: Ahsoka

Visit [StarWars.com](https://www.starwars.com) for all the latest news and features on the hit Disney+ series, including poster and character galleries and a host of extras.



Tano Top Ten

[StarWars.com's](https://www.starwars.com) Kristin Baver selects the ten essential Ahsoka Tano episodes from *Tales of the Jedi*, *The Clone Wars*, *Rebels*, and *The Mandalorian*.



Snips Snacks

Treat yourself to Ahsoka Tano pumpkin muffins with another tasty recipe from [StarWars.com's](https://www.starwars.com) food guru, Jenn Fujikawa.



Icy Imperials

The Emperor's fiendishly frigid servants

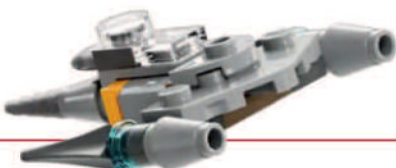
Encounters with the Galactic Empire sent chills through even the most heroic rebels, but the Holiday Snowman Funko Pop! Bobbleheads offer a festive twist on the Emperor's forces of evil. From Imperial stormtroopers and the dreaded bounty hunter Boba Fett to the Sith Lord Darth Vader, this Funko line blends classic character designs with the frosty attributes associated with a holiday snowman—carrots included! Retailing for \$11.99 each, these figures are approximately 3 3/4-inches tall. Additional characters, such as R2-D2 and C-3PO, are also available. Build your collection now by visiting [EntertainmentEarth.com](https://www.entertainmentearth.com).



Home for the Hoth-idays

Counting down to end-of-year cheer

Like Skywalker always looked to the horizon during his youth on Tatooine, but he would have had even more fun gazing toward the future if he could have utilized the LEGO *Star Wars* 2023 Advent Calendar. Filled with 8 collectible characters in holiday gear (Omega with a sled, an Ewok, and a Pit Droid in festive outfits, a Gonk Droid dressed as a reindeer, and more) and 15 mini builds (including he *Justifier*, a STAP speeder, the Mandalorian's N-1 Starfighter, and an Ewok village), the 320-piece set is priced at \$44.99 and can also be combined with other LEGO *Star Wars* kits. Save the date and begin counting down to Christmas on [LEGO.com](https://www.lego.com).



Grogu's Gifts

Unwrap the galaxy's most precious prize

During Djarin's adoption of Grogu on Mandalore formalized their bond, but the Mandalorian always knew his ward's presence in his life was a gift. Loungefly's Santa Grogu Mini Backpack captures that bounty of goodwill, portraying a cheerful Grogu decked out in holiday gear. Measuring 10 1/2-inches tall and made of faux leather, the mini-backpack is equipped with a top zipper closure, a front zippered pocket, adjustable straps, matching themed lining, and printed details. Available exclusively on [EntertainmentEarth.com](https://www.entertainmentearth.com), this jolly gem is priced \$69.99. Merry Force be with you!



Snow Trooping

Celebrating the holidays from Hoth to the Forest Moon

While the sight of Imperial snowtroopers inside Echo Base signaled the fall of the rebel defense on Hoth, the Rebel Alliance ultimately triumphed over the Empire with help from their Ewok friends. Hasbro establishes peace between these foes with its 6-inch-scale The Black Series Holiday Edition figures, adding fan-favorites like the Snowtrooper, Ewok, Jawa & Salacious B. Crumb, KX Security Droid, Purge Trooper, and Mandalorian Scout (complete with an X-wing holiday sweater!) to the line's expanding roster of characters. Each figure combines its character's familiar features with a unique, holiday-inspired design. Priced at \$27.99 per figure, you can take care of your holiday shopping needs on [HasbroPulse.com](https://www.hasbro.com).

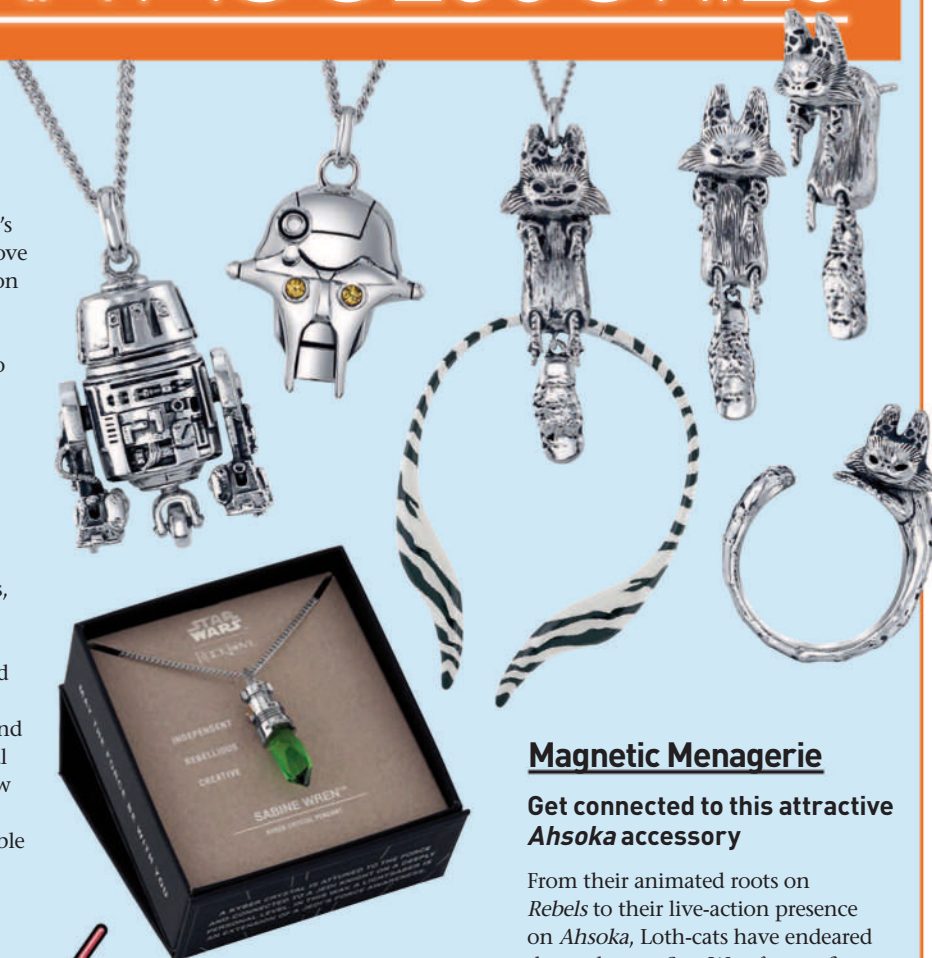


AHSOKA ACCESSORIES

Rebel Treasures

A stunning assortment of *Ahsoka*-inspired jewelry

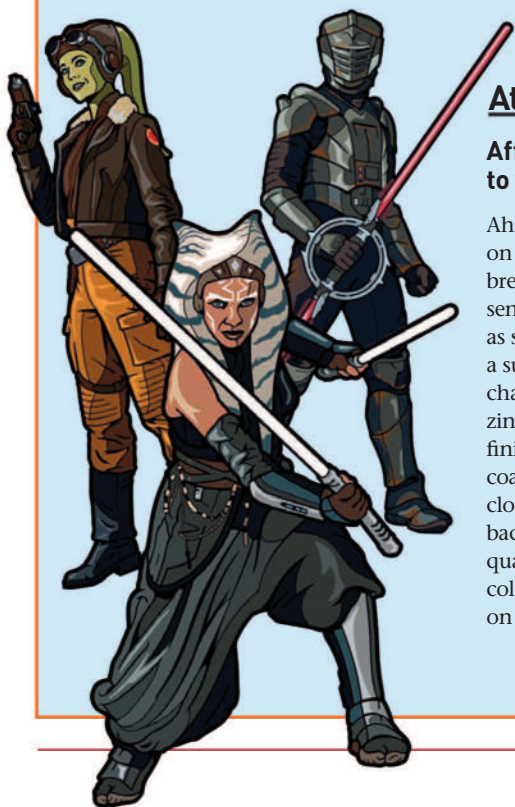
To commemorate *Star Wars: Ahsoka*'s successful debut on Disney+, RockLove jewelry has launched a new collection based on the hit series. The line incorporates Ahsoka and her allies, including the exclusive Ahsoka Tano Collar (\$175), an elaborate necklace handcrafted in multiple parts from durable nickel-free artisan brass and enamel, and silver-plated with a polished sheen. The sterling-silver Loth-cat Earrings (\$165), Necklace (\$150), and Ring (\$125) depict the lovable creature in three dimensions, while the handcrafted Chopper (\$135) and Huyang (\$135) replicate the loyal droids and boast articulated features. Cast in artisan brass and plated in gleaming black rhodium and silver, the Sabine Wren Kyber Crystal Necklace is accented with 14K yellow gold and enamel that highlights a brilliant green crystal (\$150). Assemble your rebel team on [RockLove.com](https://www.rocklove.com).



Magnetic Menagerie

Get connected to this attractive *Ahsoka* accessory

From their animated roots on *Rebels* to their live-action presence on *Ahsoka*, Loth-cats have endeared themselves to *Star Wars* fans as fierce-but-friendly companions. Regal Robot brings the creatures from the plains of Lothal to its "Beast Collection" line, interpreting the Loth-cat as a 3-inch-wide resin magnet with hand-painted bronze tones highlighting its fur and a light touch of silver accenting its face. Shipped ready to display, you can procure your Loth-cat Magnet (\$29.99) on [RegalRobot.com](https://www.regalrobot.com).



Attachments Are Permitted

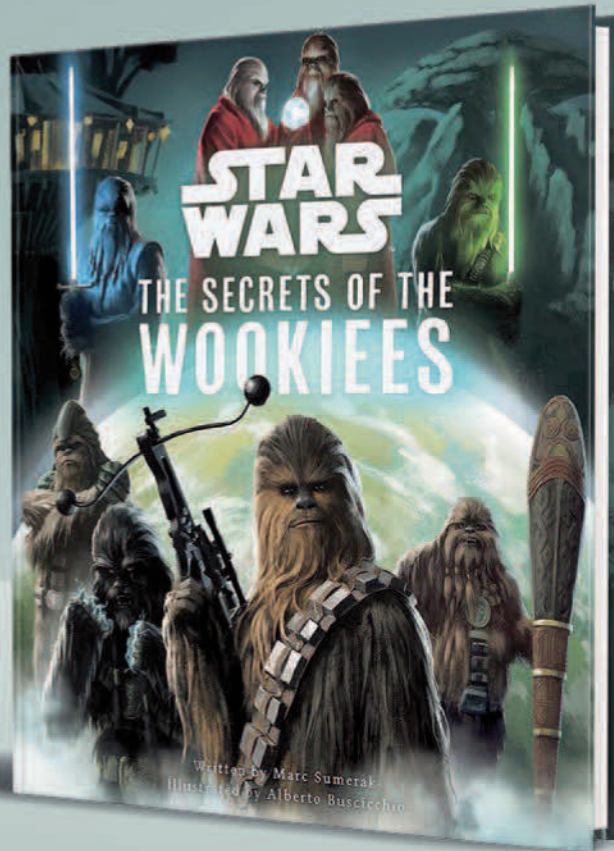
Affix these *Ahsoka* staples to your pin collection

Ahsoka Tano first encountered Marrok on Corellia, a clash which resulted in a breathtaking duel between the Force-sensitive duo that Hera Syndulla spotted as she flew past. FiGPiN has crafted a superb set based on these *Ahsoka* characters, with each pin made in cast-zinc alloy inlaid with hard enamel and finished with an electroplated nickel coating. Whether they're pinned to your clothing using FiGPiN's innovative pin backer or displayed in FiGPiN's museum-quality acrylic display cases, these collectibles retail for \$15 each on [FiGPiN.com](https://www.figpin.com).



Book Club

From Kashyyyk to Coruscant, explore the galaxy with the latest *Star Wars* books



It's Not Wise to Upset a Wookiee!

Help keep your arms in your sockets by studying *Star Wars: The Secrets of the Wookiees*

Star Wars fans with a fascination for Chewbacca and the Wookiee species can embark on an exhaustive exploration of their forested home planet Kashyyyk with *Star Wars: The Secrets of the Wookiees*, a 32-page interactive hardcover book from Insight Editions.

In the tradition of previous releases from the publisher, such as *Star Wars: The Secrets of the Jedi*, *The Secrets of the Sith*, and *The Secrets of the Bounty Hunters*, *The Secrets of the Wookiees* sheds new light on previously unknown Wookiee lore and investigates famous members of the species who have influenced the course of galactic history.

Writer Marc Sumerak's details the unique culture of Kashyyyk from an in-world perspective, while outlining numerous, fascinating tales that showcase Wookiee heroism. Readers can delve into Chewbacca's journeys with both Han Solo and Rey, while learning more about Tarfful, Krrsantan, Burryaga, Gungi, and more—all presented against a backdrop that lays out the importance of Wookiee folklore and technology to their actions within the galaxy far, far away.

Containing fascinating facts from the *Star Wars* films, television shows, videogames, books, and comics, *Star Wars: The Secrets of the*

Wookiees is filled with clever, interactive papercraft features that include pop-up pages, booklet inserts, and lift-up flaps that reveal amazing facts and trivia.

Alberto Buscicchio's evocative illustrations appear throughout the book, which comes complete with a frameable 11 x 17-inch poster of its stunning cover art, making it an ideal gift for any *Star Wars* fan.

Star Wars: The Secrets of the Wookiees is an excellent resource packed with engaging features that is sure to transport readers to the treetop villages of these mighty beings. Available from Insight Editions on November 14.

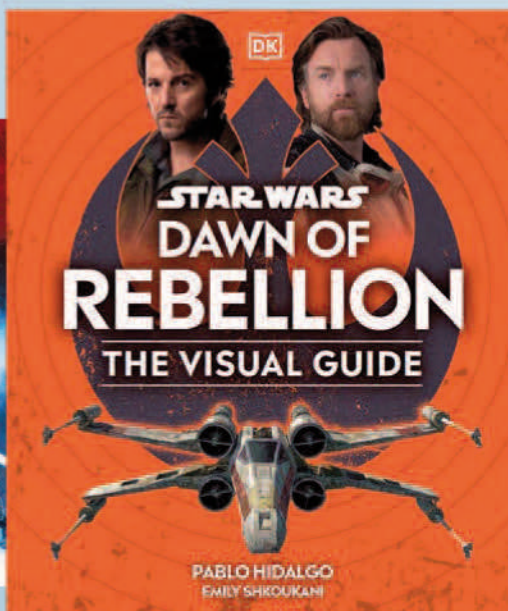
01



01
**Star Wars:
Jedi: Battle Scars**

Bridging the gap between the videogames Jedi: Fallen Order and 2023's Jedi: Survivor, the novel *Star Wars Jedi: Battle Scars* sees Cal Kestis and the crew of the *Stinger Mantis* encounter a stormtrooper deserter during a routine mission. She promises them that she can lead them to a powerful tool that could aid them in their fight against the Empire, as long as they're willing to go up against the Fifth Brother—one of the most dangerous Inquisitors. But how many times can Cal and his friends hope to evade Imperial retribution before their luck finally runs out? The paperback edition of *Jedi: Battle Scars*, written by Sam Maggs and published by Random House Worlds, is on sale on December 5.

02

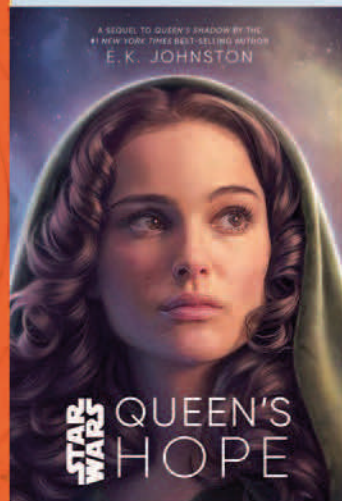


02
**Star Wars:
Dawn of Rebellion:
The Visual Guide**

DK's *Star Wars* visual guides have become essential companions to the saga, and the latest 144-page hardcover volume proves to be no exception to that rule.

Star Wars: Dawn of Rebellion: The Visual Guide, written by Pablo Hidalgo and Emily Shkoukani, explores a turbulent era in galactic history, charting the rise of the Rebellion with fascinating content from *Obi-Wan Kenobi* and *Andor* through to *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and beyond. Lavishly illustrated, the book details the key characters, locations, vehicles, and weapons of the era, and includes an exclusive new cross-section of Luthen Rael's Fondor Haulcraft from *Andor*! On sale November 7.

03



03
Star Wars: Queen's Hope

E. K. Johnston's young adult novel gets a paperback reprint this fall, with a story that reveals how the peace-loving Padmé Amidala faces life as a wartime senator while her secret husband, Anakin Skywalker, is leading the charge on the front lines.

When Padmé witnesses the casualties of the Clone Wars with her own eyes, she is horrified at the steep cost the Republic is paying and decides to do something about it, leaving her handmaiden Sabé to play decoy for her in the Galactic Senate. However, Sabé is repulsed by the amoral machinations of the politicians and faces a gut-wrenching decision when she realizes that she cannot fight a war this way—not even for Padmé. The paperback edition of *Queen's Hope* is available from Disney Lucasfilm Press on October 7.

Comics Roundup

Threats from deadly marauders to dark droids in this month's *Star Wars* comics

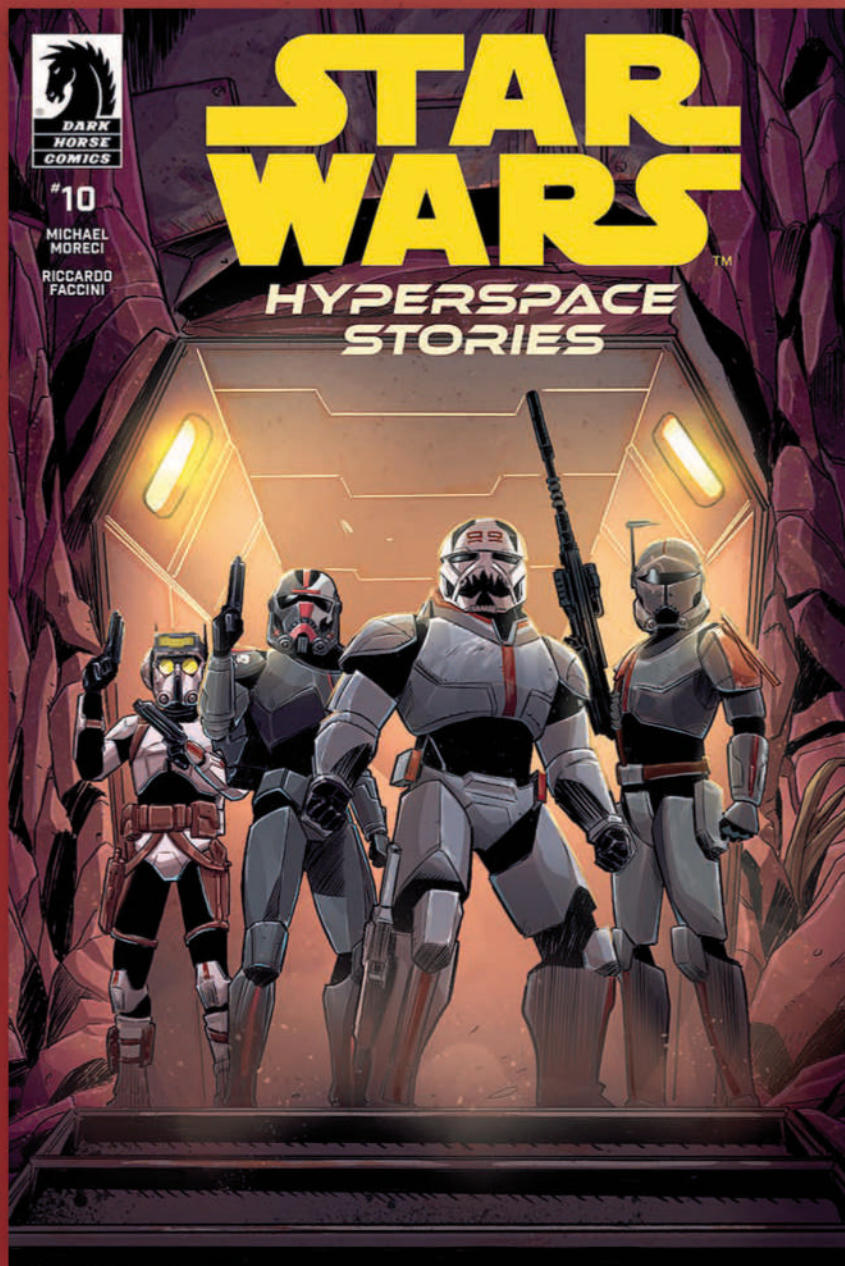
Bad Batch Droid Bash

Clone Force 99 meet their match in *Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories* #10

Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories debuted in 2022 as a Dark Horse Comics anthology, telling tales from every era of the *Star Wars* timeline through the talents of rotating creative teams. Even though each issue is a self-contained story, a hidden narrative underpins the entirety of the complete, 12-issue limited series. As Lucasfilm Publishing Creative Director Michael Siglain promised, "Fans of all ages will be treated to action-packed, exciting, and emotional stories that just may be more connected than they seem."

In the next issue of *Hyperspace Stories*, writer Michael Moreci and illustrator Riccardo Faccini weave an epic adventure from the time of the Clone Wars, starring a team of heroes that have become best known for their exploits during the early years of the Empire. "I'm bringing the Bad Batch to comics!" the writer teased, following a reveal at San Diego Comic-Con in July 2023. "Our favorite renegade clones get into an all-new adventure in issue 10 of *Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories*!" tweeted Moreci.

That story begins with Wrecker picking up a discarded Wookiee toy (much to Crosshair's irritation), as the squad of genetically altered troopers depart on a mission to Hylanth, a moon on the Outer Rim. Their orders are to track down and destroy a batch of modified battle



droids that could cause a big problem for the Republic if the Separatists get their hands on them.

Hunter, Wrecker, Tech, and Crosshair soon encounter the mastermind behind the dangerous droids, but it seems Doctor Krail has

been counting on their arrival as the ultimate test for his creations.

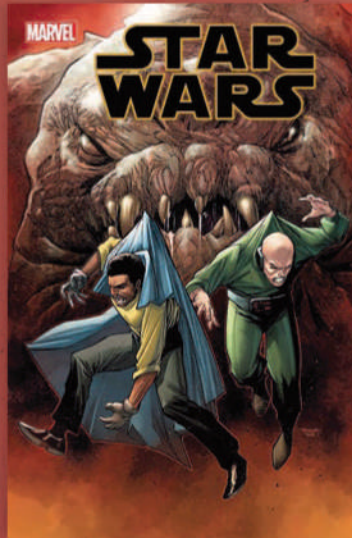
Can the Bad Batch of clones survive against Krail's bad batch of battle droids? Find out when *Hyperspace Stories* #10 goes on sale on November 1.

Star Wars: Dark Droids #3

The 5-issue limited series *Star Wars: Dark Droids* is the cornerstone of this summer's hottest Marvel crossover event, with the repercussions of a murderous droid infection playing out in the ongoing comics series *Star Wars*, *Darth Vader*, *Bounty Hunters*, and *Doctor Aphra*. In issue #3 of *Dark Droids*, the scourge descends on Mustafar once the sinister machine intelligence concludes that there is no greater prize in the galaxy than the Force—so who better to steal it from than Darth Vader, a being who is already more machine than man? *Dark Droids* #3, from writer Charles Soule and artist Luke Ross, features a cover by Leinil Francis Yu and is on sale October 11.

**Star Wars #39**

Issue #39 of Marvel's ongoing *Star Wars* series is a *Dark Droids* tie-in, which explores the unexpected consequences of the far-reaching machine contamination through the reveal of a droid death trap! Lando Calrissian has finally got his hands on an ancient droid with the ability to save his friend Lobot from the lethal contagion. But before that can happen, they must escape from Jabba the Hutt's palace on Tatooine, which is swarming with evil droids hungry for blood. Featuring the talents of writer Charles Soule, penciller Madibek Musabekov, and cover artist Stephen Segovia, *Star Wars* #39 will be published by Marvel Comics on October 18.

**Star Wars: Obi-Wan Kenobi #2**

In the six-issue limited series *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, Marvel Comics adapts the events of the 2022 Disney+ streaming series, which saw Ewan McGregor and Hayden Christensen reprise their roles as master and apprentice for the first time in nearly two decades. The comics adaptation is written by Jody Houser (who previously translated 2017's *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* into the comics format), and also features the talents of illustrator Salvador Larroca and cover artist Phil Noto. "I hope fans enjoy seeing a familiar story play out in a new medium," Houser told StarWars.com.

**Incoming**

Don't Miss These
Upcoming Releases

**November*****Darth Vader* #40**

Marvel Comics

Writer: Greg Pak

Artist: Raffaele Ienco

Cover Artist: Leinil Francis Yu

***Dark Droids* #4**

Marvel Comics

Writer: Charles Soule

Artist: Luke Ross

Cover Artist: Leinil Francis Yu

***Doctor Aphra* #38**

Marvel Comics

Writer: Alyssa Wong

Artist: Minkyu Jung

Cover Artist: Romy Jones

***Star Wars Visions* #1**

Marvel Comics

Writer, Artist

and Cover Artist: Peach Momoko

***Bounty Hunters* #40**

Marvel Comics

Writer: Ethan Sacks

Artist: Davide Tinto

Cover Artist: Marco Checchetto

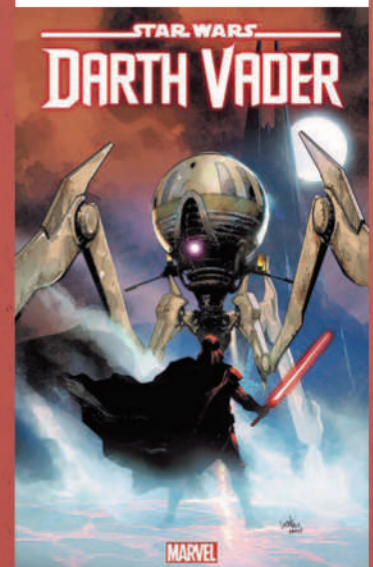
***Dark Droids: D-Squad* #3**

Marvel Comics

Writer: Marc Guggenheim

Artist: Salva Espin

Cover Artist: Aaron Kuder



Luminous Lore

Shining a light on *Star Wars: The High Republic*.

Stormwall Stories

Lydia Kang unveils Phase III short fiction!

This issue of *Star Wars Insider* sees the first installment of “Tales from the Occulsion Zone,” our all-new run of Phase III short fiction written by author Lydia Kang, who spoke to us about what readers can expect from this saga within a saga.

“The first story, ‘No Big Deal,’ occurs just over a year after the fall of Starlight Beacon, and it features two Phase I characters familiar to *Insider* readers, Joss and Pikka Adren, who appeared in Charles Soule’s two-part short story ‘Go Together’ in issues 199 and 200,” Kang reveals. “Once again, they’re called to duty, but this time things are different. The Nihil have staked a huge claim on

the galaxy with their Stormwall, which means even a straightforward mission can easily go sideways, as they so often do in *Star Wars*!”

Kang goes on to hint at how the Adren’s adventures in the pages of *Insider* will tie into the wider arcs of *The High Republic*. “The scope of Phase III is both big and small,” she says. “There are huge consequences for the Jedi, the Republic Defense Corp, and the Nihil with every story of this phase. I love that the characters in the *Insider* serial will grapple with stresses they’ve never imagined and odds that are tougher than any they’ve faced before.”

Incoming Comics



The High Republic Adventures Phase III #1
Dark Horse Comics
Writer: Daniel José Older
Artist: Harvey Tolibao
Cover: Harvey Tolibao, Kevin Tolibao
On sale: December 13



The High Republic #2
Marvel Comics
Writer: Cavan Scott
Artist: Jim Towe
Cover: Phil Noto
On sale: December 13

Republic Roundup

PHASE I

Light of the Jedi

Writer: Charles Soule
Del Rey, Adult novel

A Test of Courage

Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

The Great Jedi Rescue

Writer: Cavan Scott
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

Into the Dark

Writer: Claudia Gray
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

The Rising Storm

Writer: Cavan Scott
Del Rey, Adult novel

Race to Crashpoint Tower

Writer: Daniel José Older
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Out of the Shadows

Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

Tempest Runner

Writer: Cavan Scott
Del Rey, Audio original novel

Showdown at the Fair

Writer: George Mann
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

Mission to Disaster

Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

The Fallen Star

Writer: Claudia Gray
Del Rey, Adult novel

The Battle for Starlight

Writer: George Mann
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

Midnight Horizon

Writer: Daniel José Older
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

PHASE II

Path of Deceit

Writer: Justina Ireland
and Tessa Gratton
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

Quest for the Hidden City

Writer: George Mann
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Convergence

Writer: Zoraida Córdova
Del Rey, Adult novel

The Battle of Jedha

Writer: George Mann
Random House, Audio original novel

Cataclysm

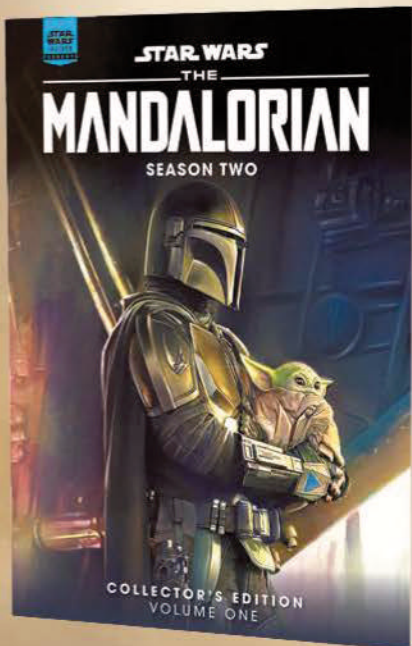
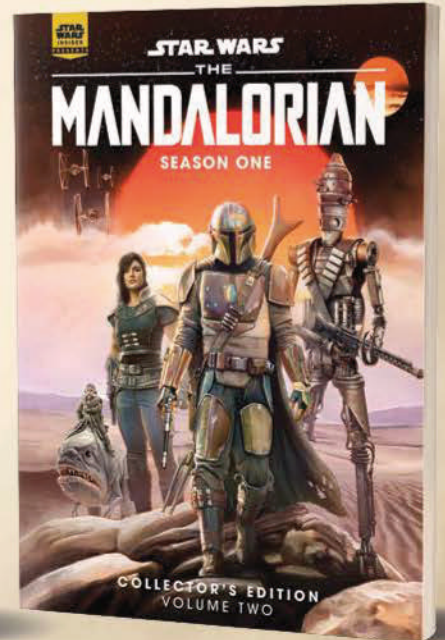
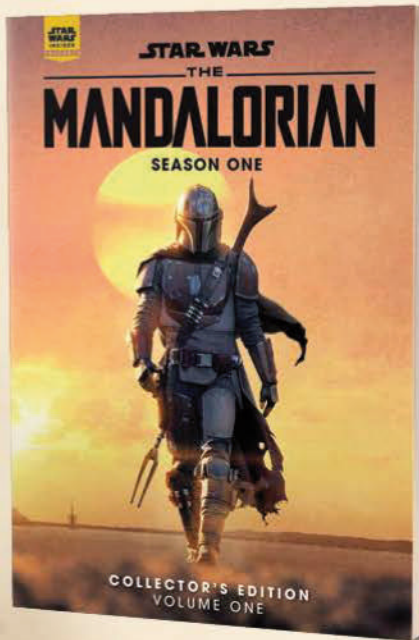
Writer: Lydia Kang
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Quest for Planet X

Writer: Tessa Gratton
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

(Excluding Comics & Manga)

COMPLETE YOUR *STAR WARS*: *THE MANDALORIAN* COLLECTION



Go behind the scenes of the hit live-action series, streaming now on Disney+, with episode guides, character profiles, rare photographs, and art from fan favorite artists including Nick Gindraux, Ryan Church, John Park, Doug Chiang, Christian Alzmann and more!


AVAILABLE IN ALL GOOD STORES AND ONLINE

TITAN-COMICS.COM



© & TM 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd.





**"WITHOUT THE
CREED, WHAT
ARE WE?
WHAT DO WE
STAND FOR?"**

DIN DJARIN



STAR WARS THE MANDALORIAN

Season Three Companion

The Mandalorian Season Three continued the adventures of Din Djarin and Grogu, reunited after some time apart and joined by Bo-Katan Kryze, in a series that explored their position within the Mandalorian creed and the history and destiny of the armored warriors. *Star Wars Insider* looks back at the unfolding story, with insights by creator Jon Favreau from a special press event in February 2023.

WORDS: JAY STOBIE

REPORTER: MARK NEWBOLD

More than two years after *The Mandalorian* Season Two concluded with the defeat of Moff Gideon, the transfer of the darksaber to Din Djarin, and Grogu's departure to be trained as a Jedi by Luke Skywalker, the series returned to Disney+ on March 1, 2023, taking the show in unexpected new directions. We would learn hidden depths about the Mandalorian creed, meet intriguing new villains, reunite with old friends, and finally discover the truth behind Gideon's secretive plans for a new Empire born of Mandalore and the Force.

"There's an inevitability to complexity developing over time," Jon Favreau, the creator, writer, and executive producer of *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*, revealed to *Insider* this past February. "That a show is going to go bigger and bigger, like the movies did. We're in new territory with Season Three, because we're dealing with lore that has developed from the choices that we have previously made."

Entering the third season there was a desire on the part of Favreau and his creative collaborators to be ever more

ambitious in exploring *The Mandalorian's* central characters and themes, which meant a focus on Mandalore itself.

"We know what Mandalore looks like from *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, and that there had been in-fighting there for centuries, so by having Din Djarin (from a creed that doesn't take its helmets off) meet Bo-Katan (who does), that allows us to bring those differences in Mandalorian culture into the center stage," Favreau explained. "That led us to the storylines you'll see in Season Three, which are a direct result of those tensions between the different factions."

The latest season culminated with the reunification of several of those Mandalorian clans, and that sense of coming together also relates to Favreau's approach to making *Star Wars* as a whole.

"People are invested in their expectations around our characters, and Dave Filoni and I have always been very cognizant of that," he said. "Whether you're a kid who's never seen *Star Wars* before, or you're somebody who has been following it all the way through, we want to make sure that everybody feels equally at home. We want to bring all *Star Wars* fans together and have something for everyone. Everybody is welcome."



Concept art by Christian Alzmann

CHAPTER 17

The Apostate

Directed by Rick Famuyiwa
Written by Jon Favreau
Premiered on March 1, 2023

In hiding on a desolate world, the Armorer is initiating a young member of her covert into the Creed when the ceremony is interrupted by an attack from a massive creature. Din Djarin arrives in his N-1 starfighter and dispatches the predator, before telling the Armorer of his intention to bathe in the Living Waters beneath the mines of Mandalore to gain redemption and rejoin the Creed.

Returning to Nevarro, Djarin helps High Magistrate Greef Karga fend off members of pirate king Goran Shard's gang after they harass the local school. In reward, Karga offers the Mandalorian a job as his new marshal, but Djarin has a request of his own: rebuild IG-11 to help him explore the poisoned world of Mandalore.

When it is determined that the damaged droid needs a new memory circuit, Djarin leaves the planet to search for the part, but his ship is attacked near an asteroid field by a squadron of pirate fighters commanded



by Shard's henchman, Vane. Evading capture and destruction, Djarin and Grogu travel to Bo-Katan Kryze's castle on Kalevala to seek her help on Mandalore, but find her alone and without followers, who abandoned her as she did not possess the Darksaber. Convinced that Mandalore remains poisoned and barren, Kryze nevertheless informs Djarin that he will find the Living Waters beneath the ruins of its capital city's civic center.



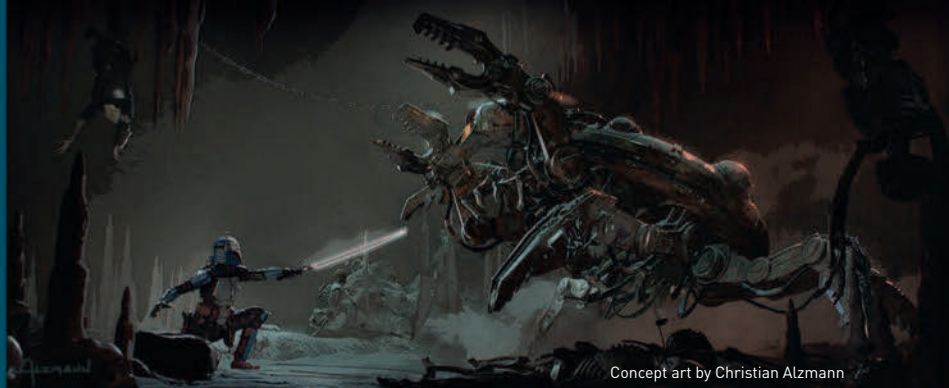
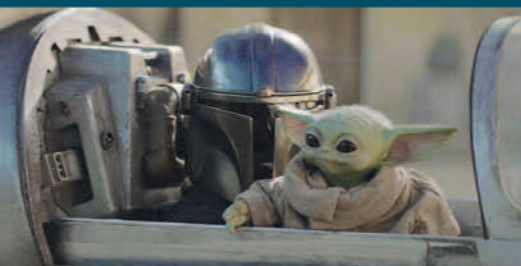
CHAPTER 18

The Mines of Mandalore

Directed by Rachel Morrison
Written by Jon Favreau
Premiered on March 8, 2023

Din Djarin and Grogu arrive on Tatooine during the Boonta Eve celebrations. Unable to secure an IG memory circuit, Djarin purchases Peli Motto's astromech, R5-D4, to assist him during his quest.

Passing through Mandalore's turbulent atmosphere, Djarin discovers that the planet's magnetic field was damaged by Imperial fusion bombs deployed during



Concept art by Christian Alzmann

the Purge, preventing communications from the world reaching the rest of the galaxy. As Djarin and R5-D4 explore caves beneath the planet's crystallized surface, they are attacked by feral creatures. Scans also indicate the atmosphere is breathable—it seems Mandalore is less of a dead world than popular legend describes.

With Grogu joining the expedition party, the trio moves deeper underground in search of the mines, but Djarin stumbles into trap, set by a being who prowls the caverns inside a mechanical body. Held captive and disarmed, the weakened bounty hunter tells Grogu to find Bo-Katan and bring help, so the foundling races to Kalevala with R5-D4

at the controls of the N-1. Despite some misgivings, Kryze agrees to aid Djarin, and the trio flies to Mandalore aboard her *Kom'rk*-class fighter transport. Guided through the catacombs by Grogu, Bo-Katan uses the Darksaber to slay the mechanical jailer.

Kryze leads Din Djarin to the location of the Living Waters, into which he walks while reciting the Creed. However, Djarin is unaware of deep cracks in the crust beneath the surface and plummets into the hidden depths. Kryze dives in and rescues him but witnesses something unexpected and totally impossible as she drags him back to the surface—the unmistakable form of a living Mythosaur.

CHAPTER 19

The Convert

Directed by Lee Isaac Chung
Written by Noah Kloor & Jon Favreau
Premiered on March 15, 2023

A Mandalorian once again, Din Djarin collects a sample of the Living Waters to prove his redemption to the Armorer. Upon their return to Kalevala to retrieve Djarin's N-1 starfighter, Kryze's ship is attacked by TIE interceptors and are unable to stop a squadron of TIE bombers from destroying Kryze's castle. When Imperial reinforcements appear, the Mandalorians elect to make their escape.

On Coruscant, Doctor Pershing delivers a speech to New Republic dignitaries. Rehabilitated through the Amnesty Program, Pershing hopes to put his cloning research to good use in order to help others. Now working as a clerk, Pershing is frustrated by restrictions that stop him from utilizing his previous research for the benefit of the New Republic. Returning to his accommodation block, Pershing spends



Concept art by Christian Alzmann

time with other former Imperials, including Amnesty Officer G68, who had served alongside him on Moff Gideon's cruiser.

G68 reveals her real name is Elia Kane, and suggests he finds a way of continuing his work unofficially. Pershing joins Kane on a trip to a disposal yard where Imperial Star Destroyers are being decommissioned. She has promised he will find suitable facilities there, but this was a ruse. Kane has betrayed him to the authorities. In custody, Pershing is placed in a mind flayer to undergo non-invasive rehabilitation, but when

the New Republic operatives aren't looking, Kane turns the equipment up to its maximum setting, submitting Pershing to an excruciatingly high level of exposure.

Meanwhile, Din Djarin and Bo-Katan Kryze return to the covert, where Djarin insists that the notion of Mandalore being cursed was a lie to keep them in exile. The Armorer tests the sample Djarin brought with him, confirming it was indeed sourced from the Living Waters. Since both Djarin and Kryze had kept their helmets on since being in the Waters, the Armorer declares that both were redeemed and now part of the Creed.



INSIDER INTEL: EASTER EGGS

The Mandalorian is a goldmine of *Star Wars* callbacks, but how are they worked into the show?

"It's very informal," Jon Favreau told *Insider* during the February press event. "We sit in a room with a board up on the wall, and we'll start to make notes about where things are going. Often, I'll write a scene and send it off to Dave [Filoni], and he'll say, 'This is interesting, but it wouldn't be that kind of ship!' He has a such a good working knowledge of everything *Star Wars*, so he'll suggest a ship from a game that was never in a movie that would be a good one to use. Or we'll talk to Pablo Hidalgo, or Doug Chiang, or John Knoll, or Hal Hickel. Everybody on the show is there because we love *Star Wars*, and everybody is an expert in a different era. I've used stuff like the Amban rifle from the 1978 [*Star Wars*] *Holiday Special*, and the cantono from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Things that we think will add a little bit more dimension."



Concept art by Brett Northcutt

CHAPTER 20

The Foundling

Directed by Carl Weathers

Written by Jon Favreau & Dave Filoni

Premiered on March 22, 2023

As the Mandalorians train at their hidden covert, Din Djarin puts Grogu forward to challenge another foundling. Initially hesitant, Grogu harnesses the Force to vanquish a Mandalorian boy in a darts competition. Suddenly a large raptor plunges from the sky and scoops up Grogu's opponent—Paz Vizsla's son, Ragnar. Djarin and Vizsla give chase, but their jetpacks soon run out of fuel. Bo-Katan Kryze, however, continues the pursuit in her Gauntlet, tracking the creature to its lair.

A small hunting party is convened to rescue the boy, intending to scale the peak where the creature's nest is located. Grogu remains behind with the Armorer, listening as she explains the importance of the forge to Mandalorian culture. As she talks, he remembers clone troopers attacking the Jedi Temple decades earlier, and the part

Jedi Master Kelleran Beq played in aiding his escape from Coruscant. The Armorer gifts Grogu with a new piece of armor: a rondel depicting his mudhorn signet.

Led by Bo-Katan, the Mandalorian hunting party climbs the face of the cliff. The raptor lands at its nest, regurgitating Ragnar as food for its three hungry hatchlings. The creature flees when the Mandalorians attack, clutching Ragnar in its claws, but Djarin rescues the boy as the raptor plummets to its death in the waters below.

Triumphant, the group return to the covert and present the raptor's hatchlings to the Armorer as new foundlings. The Armorer prepares a replacement pauldron for Bo-Katan's damaged armor, and Kryze chooses to display signets of both the Nite Owls and the Mythosaur, creating a further tie with the Creed. She also confides in the Armorer of her experience with the Mythosaur beneath the Living Waters, but the Armorer chooses to see it as a noble vision.



Concept art by Christian Alzmann

CHAPTER 21

The Pirate

Directed by Peter Ramsey
Written by Jon Favreau
Premiered on March 29, 2023

Angered by the deaths of his pirates at the hand of Greef Karga, Goran Shard arrives in his corsair above Nevarro's capital, intent on revenge. The ship opens fire on the settlement, prompting Karga to order an evacuation. Desperate for help, he contacts Captain Carson Teva of the New Republic, who promises to get the message to his superiors on Coruscant.

Teva meets with Colonel Tuttle in his office, where Amnesty Officer G68 happens to be working. Although empathetic, Tuttle says he does not have the resources to intercede. G68 also highlights the fact that Nevarro is not a member planet, further reducing the chances of New Republic assistance. Disgruntled, Teva tracks a signal from his old friend RS-D4 to the Mandalorian covert and informs Din Djarin of Karga's predicament.

Djarin petitions the covert for an intervention and Paz Vizsla stands by him, turning the vote in his favor. The Mandalorians head for Nevarro aboard Bo-Katan Kryze's ship, and while Din Djarin distracts the pirate's snubfighters in his N-1 starfighter, the remaining Mandalorians drop into the city, engaging in fierce combat with Shard's troops. After Djarin and Kryze deal fatal blows to the Pirate King's vessel in a blazing air battle, the Mandalorians liberate the city.

Karga welcomes Nevarro's saviors, bestowing them with land so they can call the planet their home.



The Armorer summons Bo-Katan to their old covert's forge and insists that she remove her helmet. Having interpreted Kryze's encounter with the Mythosaur as a sign that Mandalore's next age was upon them, the Armorer tells Bo-Katan it is her wish that Kryze unites all clans so they can retake Mandalore.

Elsewhere, Captain Teva discovers a derelict shuttle, the craft that was carrying Moff Gideon back to Coruscant, floating empty in space, with the former Imperial nowhere to be found. Pieces of beskar are found lodged in the interior, suggesting Mandalorian interference, but it is unclear who was responsible.



CHAPTER 22

Guns for Hire

Directed by Bryce Dallas Howard
Written by Jon Favreau
Premiered on April 5, 2023

Having commandeered Bo-Katan Kryze's Imperial cruiser, Axe Woves and his Mandalorian mercenaries have been undertaking lucrative jobs for various clients across the galaxy. Hoping to recruit Woves' group to join their mission to Mandalore, Din Djarin and Bo-Katan Kryze travel to the planet Plazir-15, where its elected leaders—Captain Bombardier and the Duchess—agree to allow them to meet with Axe's privateers, so long as they seek out and decommission a group of malfunctioning droids first.

After consulting with Commissioner Helgait and Ugnaught engineers, the duo inspect some reprogrammed B2-series super battle droids at the loading docks. Djarin provokes one of them into attacking him,

resulting in a chase through the city before they destroy the errant droid. A spark pad found in the mechanical's possession leads them to a droid bar, where the bartender explains that every malfunctioning droid had drank from the same batch of Nepenthé, a lubricant that delivered program refreshing sub-particles.

Their investigation reveals that Helgait, the head of security and a former Separatist, had purposely caused the malfunctions due to his dissatisfaction with Bombardier, an ex-Imperial. Djarin and Kryze apprehend Helgait, and Plazir-15's leaders express

their appreciation by granting them an audience with Axe's encampment.

However, Woves denies Bo-Katan's claim on the fleet of starships, so she challenges her former comrade to physical combat. Kryze emerges victorious, but Woves expresses his disdain for her unwillingness to fight Djarin to wrest the Darksaber from him. Although Djarin offers to hand the weapon over to her, Kryze understands that possession of the Darksaber would mean nothing if she accepted it as a gift, but Djarin points out that she had retrieved it from his mechanical captor on Mandalore. By defeating the enemy who had defeated him, Bo-Katan had rightfully earned possession of the Darksaber.

With the power of the ancient weapon now in Kryze's hands, Axe, Koska Reeves, and the Mandalorian mercenaries willingly join Bo-Katan's quest.



Concept art by Aaron McBride



CHAPTER 23

The Spies

Directed by Rick Famuyiwa
Written by Jon Favreau & Dave Filoni
Premiered on April 12, 2023

On Coruscant, Elia Kane informs Moff Gideon that Bo-Katan Kryze is now collaborating with Din Djarin and his covert. Gideon initiates a holographic conference with the Shadow Council, a group that includes Captain Pellaeon, Commandant Brendol Hux, and other Imperial remnant warlords. The officials agree to provide Gideon with reinforcements against the emerging Mandalorian threat.

En route to Mandalore, Bo-Katan's fleet arrives at Nevarro, where Greef Karga introduces Din Djarin to IG-12, a vehicle designed for Grogu utilizing salvaged components from IG-11.

Members from both the Nite Owls and the Armorer's covert volunteer for a mission to establish a safe perimeter on Mandalore, and a recon party is deployed to scout their homeworld's surface. They soon encounter Mandalorian survivors, who are

surprised to learn that Bo-Katan had tried, and failed, to save her people by surrendering to Gideon during the Great Purge.

Din Djarin professes his allegiance to Bo-Katan, and the survivors guide them to the Great Forge, dealing with infighting among the tribes and a dangerous predator along the way. When the Mandalorians are ambushed by Imperial troopers clad in beskar armor, Axe Woves flies off to secure reinforcements from the fleet in orbit above the planet. An Imperial retreat proves to be a ruse, as it leads the Mandalorians into a trap.

Wearing unique dark trooper armor forged from beskar alloy, Gideon captures Djarin and announces his intention to use the base on Mandalore to build an army that he will lead to bring order to the galaxy. Rather than accept defeat, Bo-Katan elects to regroup and fight back. Providing cover for his Mandalorian brethren so they can make their escape, Paz Vizsla valiantly fends off Gideon's troops but eventually succumbs to an overwhelming attack from a trio of Praetorian Guards.

INSIDER INTEL: THE DARKSABER

Despite being an integral plot device in both *Star Wars Rebels* and *The Mandalorian*, the idea of the Darksaber only came about when a script for *The Clone Wars* needed a quick fix.

"Dave told me that there was a scene where a vibroblade was being used to parry a lightsaber, and George Lucas said, 'No, you can't do that!'" Favreau recalled at the press event. "That might seem like an arbitrary change, but George knew! He's got a good instinct. And now the Darksaber has become such an interesting, iconic thing. It's the foundation of what's happening in this whole series."



CHAPTER 24

The Return

Directed by Rick Famuyiwa
Written by Jon Favreau
Premiered on April 19, 2023

In a bid to evade Moff Gideon's clutches, Bo-Katan Kryze leads the Mandalorians through the Imperial base and transmits a warning for Axe Woves to convey to the fleet.

With assistance from Grogu, Din Djarin breaks free from his captors and commits himself to killing Gideon. As he searches for his enemy, Djarin finds a room filled with clones of the Moff and initiates a sequence that destroys them.

Meanwhile, TIE interceptors have engaged the Mandalorian fleet, and Axe uses the cruiser as a decoy while his fellow Mandalorians escape the onslaught in Gauntlet drop ships. The Armorer and her Mandalorian reinforcements join Bo-Katan to assault Gideon's base. Wielding the Darksaber, Kryze and her troops battle jetpack-equipped Imperials.



Furious over his clones' deaths, Gideon faces off with Din Djarin and reveals his plan to incorporate the Force into an army of his clones. Grogu distracts the Praetorian Guards supporting Gideon, and Bo-Katan intervenes when Grogu needs help from Djarin. She can only watch helplessly when Gideon crushes the legendary Darksaber during their fight.

Axe Woves sets the Imperial cruiser on a collision course with the base, and the

resultant explosion consumes Gideon in a fireball. Grogu uses the Force to protect Djarin and Kryze from the blast.

With the battle won and Mandalore reclaimed, Din Djarin formally adopts Grogu, who becomes his Mandalorian apprentice, while the Armorer joins with Bo-Katan Kryze to reignite the Great Forge.

Djarin and Grogu return to Nevarro, where a quiet life awaits them on a plot of land gifted to them by Greef Karga. 🌱



INSIDE THE MIND OF THE PUPPETMASTER

Insider speaks to the puppeteer who gave Sy Snootles her groove and Admiral Ackbar his commanding presence.

WORDS: JOHN KIRK



01

I

t is no mean feat to bring a *Star Wars* creature to life. Characters like Admiral Ackbar,

Sy Snootles, and the rancor are little more than cool designs wrapped around an inanimate structure of rods, pulleys, gears, foam, latex, and silicone. That is, until a master puppeteer gets their hands on them. Tim Rose was one of the artists who lent his expertise to *Return of the Jedi*, operating Ackbar's head for close-up shots and rejigging the Sy Snootles

puppet to give it some unique dance moves, but his journey to the *Star Wars* galaxy had seen him overcome a learning difficulty that could have stifled his dreams.

"I couldn't read well," explains Rose. "My teachers at school used to say that I was obviously intelligent, but I still did poorly academically. After a lot of research and reading later, I eventually concluded that I was dyslexic."

Dyslexia is a learning disability that manifests itself in childhood. Without proper intervention at the right window of development, it can delay literacy and affect learning.

Unsupported, it can create emotional problems and insecurities for years. However, many dyslexic learners compensate for their literacy blocks by developing strategies that bring them success, and Tim Rose happens to be one of those people.

Having negotiated his way through school, the determined Rose "stumbled into university." It was there that he began to understand his true calling. "It gave me a chance to see what I was good at. I loved writing, acting, sculpting—tomfoolery, I called it. That was my early phase of performing, I guess." ▶



01 Sy Snootles was redesigned and operated by Tim Rose in the original release of *Return of the Jedi* in 1983..

02 Rose provided the physical performance for Admiral Ackbar.

▶ Lightning Revelation

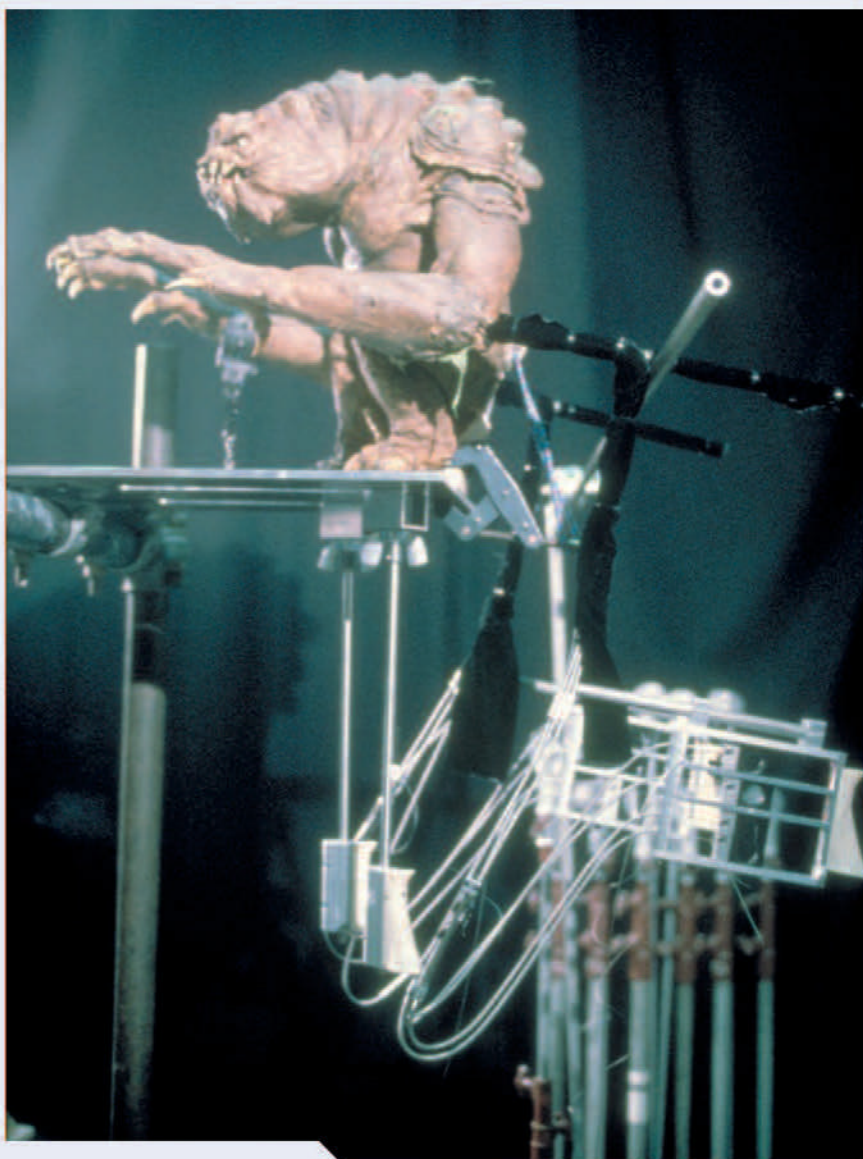
When Rose's college began putting on renaissance fairs, involving all sorts of artistic and crafted costumes and artifacts, he was happy to get involved. "We all had our jobs to do, and for one show I was asked to play the role of God," Rose recalls. "We were performing this piece out on a field, and I had to climb a ladder and step through a supported proscenium arch and say the line: *'I am the Lord thy God, and I am displeased at mankind, that which I have made and now I will destroy!'*" Even though it was

a clear day, at the exact moment I held out my hands and did the line, a lightning bolt came out of nowhere and hit a nearby tree. The audience was suitably impressed with my ability to deliver special effects, but I just wanted get out of that field. I *definitely* didn't want to play God anymore!" he laughs.

That moment led Rose to consider his future, but he was torn between the creative mediums he'd been exploring. "I knew at some point that I'd have to decide which one of these things I would do in life."

03 The fully rigged rancor puppet, ready for filming.

04 Tim Rose today.



Rose's big discovery at university was that he had a natural aptitude for puppeteering. As a dyslexic learner his approach was generally experiential, building knowledge through trial and error and developing personal rapport with mentors who could teach him what he needed to know through practical methodology.

"I started doing research. Specifically, I looked into traditional *Punch and Judy*

04



"I loved writing, acting, sculpting—tomfoolery, I called it."

puppet shows," recalls Rose. "I remembered that there had been a 'Mom & Pop' marionette show that used to entertain us when I was in elementary school. They had been doing puppetry since the late 1920s, throughout the Vaudeville era, so I decided to knock on their door and talk to them about how to make puppets.

03



05

Meeting The Muppets

Beyond *Punch and Judy*, perhaps the most well-known puppets in the world were born in the mind of Jim Henson and found fame on *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*. Inevitably, Rose drifted into the orbit of the foam-and-felt legends.

"After I left university, I began performing my own puppet show using a Chinese form where you have a booth on your shoulders and walk around during the show," says Rose. "A producer from Connecticut saw me while I was doing the story of 'George and the Dragon,' and he hired me to perform it during a street scene in a film. That was my start. I moved to New York City where I heard that the Muppets were hiring, so, again, I just knocked on the door and asked if I could make puppets for them! Thankfully they said yes, gave me a job, and I worked with them for a number of years."

Rose immediately felt accepted at the Muppet Workshop, and in good company.

"Jim took in these people who didn't really fit anywhere in society, and he gave us a playpen to mess around in," says Rose, appreciatively. "He didn't give us any restrictions. He just allowed us

They took me down to their cellar and showed me all these characters they had created. There were hundreds of these gorgeous, artistic creations hanging across the walls of their workshop. I looked at the puppeteer and said, 'You made all these beautiful things and had this much fun? Can you teach me?' And they did! That was the beginning of my career.

"My first puppets were terrible!" he readily admits "I made the heads out of plastic, but they were so heavy that by the middle of the show, halfway through my performance, my hands would go to sleep!"

05 Phil Tippet painting the original Admiral Ackbar mask for *Return of the Jedi*.

06 The Admiral Ackbar costume fitting for *The Force Awakens*.



06



EYE CONTACT

"George Lucas is one of the shyest guys you'll ever meet," says Rose of working with the filmmaker on *Return of the Jedi*. "I found that rather than trying to explain to him what I had in mind, it was better to show him, and then see whether he agreed or not.

"With Admiral Ackbar, I asked George which eye I should keep on the camera, because no matter what I did with him, he was going to look shifty because he was wall-eyed. I told George that two things I learned from the Muppets were the importance of crisp mouth movement and eye focus, so Ackbar wasn't going to look like the strong leader he wanted him to be. I stuck my hand up his faux head and showed him what I meant—even though I wasn't supposed to pick it up from the table. So, I made a special pair of eyes for Ackbar so that when he looked at someone, he focused on them. That gave him empathy, and that's how the close-ups of Ackbar were shot."

free reign to explore our ideas."

Rose eventually left Henson's company when his ambitions no longer tallied with the projects he was being assigned to, but that decision led the performer in a new direction.

"I asked Jim if I could work on *Fraggle Rock* when it came around," Rose relates. "He thought that my best value to the company was in the animatronic workshop, where I'd worked on shows like *The Dark Crystal* (1982) and *Labyrinth* ▶

07



PIT STOP

Tim Rose operated the rancor creature puppet that devoured Oola, a Gamorrean guard, and almost Luke Skywalker, and it was his turn as Admiral Ackbar that scored Rose the assignment.

"Phil Tippett was a go-motion guy. He was a stop-motion animator, very creative," says Rose. "His go-motion technique was based on the blurring of each frame while a rod was attached to the camera. It was much smoother and less jerky than you'd see in Ray Harryhausen's work. The rancor was going to be a go-motion character until Phil saw what I was getting from the Ackbar puppet, which influenced his decision to reimagine the rancor as a Bunraku rod puppet. He liked what I was showing him enough that it changed his focus for that scene."

► (1986). Now, I was young, and I thought that meant that he didn't think much of my puppeteering, so I got angry, and I left. Like I said, I was young. With age, I now realize that he could have found another puppeteer, but the animatronics I was making for him were what was selling movies!"

Luckily, Rose would not be out of work for long.

"I was beating myself up for wanting to work with puppets and walking out on the biggest puppeteering company in the world! Idiot!" he laughs. "But then

the phone rang, and it was my friend Mike Carter, who was working for Phil Tippett on some project called *Blue Harvest*. He told me about this character he was working on, and that he needed help. She was a heavy character and required a scaffold to animate, and he had fallen and broken his arm. He said that if I could get out to California, I could take his place. That was Sy Snootles."

Shapin' Up And Workin' Out

"I took what I did with the Muppets to *Return of the Jedi*," says Rose. "It was a 'free reign' approach. I just ran at things, seeing how I could make them better."

No sooner had he arrived at the *Jedi* creature shop than Rose threw his imagination into reconfiguring the Sy Snootles puppet so there wouldn't be further injuries in bringing her to life.

"Sy was originally a classic marionette, performed from a scaffold overhead. However, she was about five-and-a-half feet tall, and very heavy, weighing around sixty pounds," explains Rose. "I redesigned her into a suspended, reverse string marionette. I saw the solution in my head, and it was just something my little dyslexic brain came up with.

07 Phil Tippett and the puppet rancor.

08 Tim Rose with the Salacious B. Crumb puppet.

09 Rose (bottom left) at work testing the Sy Snootles puppet.

10 The finished Sy Snootles puppet on set.

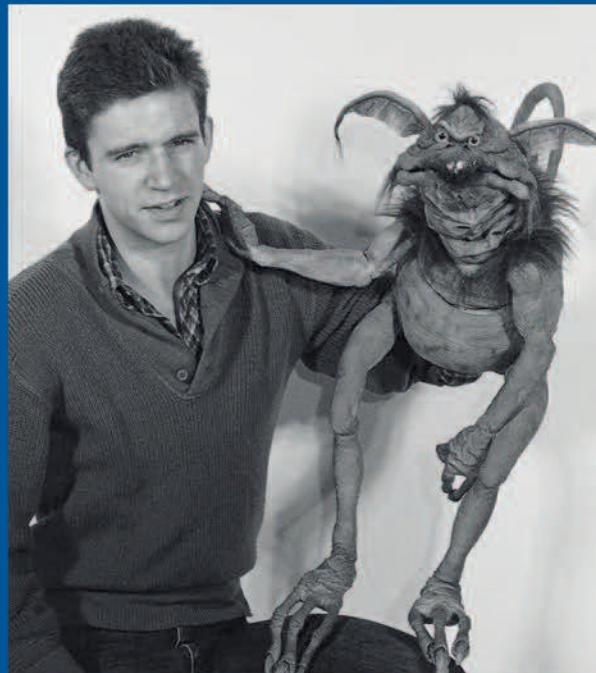
I operated her from beneath the set through rods running up into her feet. She was like a floating marionette that could bend down and stomp her feet, which normal marionettes can't do.

"I daydream about situations a lot," Rose says on how he works through such technical problems. "I think it's partly through being left-handed, and partly the dyslexia, but I have an ability to visualize things I want to do in three dimensions. I spatially reorganize and turn things around in my mind until I see a solution. In everything I've done, when I've found that things didn't work the way I was taught, I would just experiment with them in my imagination until I could figure out how to do them for myself."

In terms of performance, Rose also credits his dyslexia in the empathic way he interprets what filmmakers want him to bring to a character.

"In order to make inanimate objects come to life, you work with people's subconscious memory banks," suggests Rose. "Our own egos can get in the way, block us from seeing what other people

08





09



10

**"We
had a
goofy
time
on
Jedi."**

want. It comes down to watching someone's body language, the way they tilt their head, the way they look you in the eyes. You pay attention. There's a whole myriad of physical behaviors to watch for that you can bring into a puppet to make them come to life."

Trust is a major commodity in negotiating relationships with dyslexic individuals. Because they rely on empathy, awareness, and other sensory ways of communicating (eye contact, visual cues, experiential understanding) it's important for a dyslexic to not only extend trust but to have that trust returned in kind. Forming such connections has been a hallmark of Rose's career.

"During my forty years of performing, I only got two jobs by auditioning," he reveals. "My big problem with auditioning was always that you were handed a script and told to act this part or read it aloud, but as soon as I started to do that, the words would start to shift position on the page. All my other jobs were because I showed people what I could do, people got to know me, and they trusted me.

"I've worked with Jim Henson. I've worked with the best puppeteers in the world. But making movies can be a painfully dull process, waiting for exciting moments to come along," Rose continues. "Usually, the things I've wanted to do the most were those where I thought I'd have the most amount of fun! We had a goofy time on *Jedi*." 🐙





STAR WARS

THE HIGH REPUBLIC

TALES FROM THE
OCCLUSION ZONE

“No Big Deal”

By Lydia Kang

Illustration by
Jake Lunt Davies

He glanced around the mess, busy with species from across the Mid Rim and Outer Rim territories.

B

eing on solid ground is supposed to be a comforting thing, especially on a place like Eriadu. Here, everything on the planet was

inviting—from the tavern-laden streets of the various cities, to the snow-dusted mountains hiding their inner riches of lommite ore. The place begged you to keep your feet planted and stay.

For Joss Adren, feet solidly on the ground and with a foaming ale before him, he was nonetheless anxious to get back to the *Aurora III*, the Longbeam cruiser he and Pikka piloted for the Republic Defense Corps. Pikka and ship—that was comfort. That was home. She'd always patted the *Aurie*, as they'd nicknamed it, thanking it for saving their lives so many times. Speaking of Pikka, where was she?

He glanced around the commissary, busy with species from across the Mid Rim and Outer Rim territories. Two Ugnaughts, arguing over bowls of stew, another group of RDC officers rubbing their chins and occasionally glancing at Joss. He didn't know them. There were more and more RDC personnel on the planet these days, but they were trying not to stick out too much. Eriadu wasn't a place that enjoyed having a lot of off-world military muscle about. So it was no surprise that heads turned his way when Admiral Kronara and a young ensign at his side parted the crowds by the door and sat before Joss at his tiny table.

Joss was slowly growing accustomed to the rank and file formalities now that he and Pikka had been in the RDC since the fall of Starlight Beacon. But as soon as Joss began to stand, Admiral Kronara barely shook his head. Joss understood. This was not a time to bring attention to themselves.

He only nodded his head, as did the ensign. She looked rather young, her hair tightly wound beneath her RDC cap, lips pressed into a grim line.

"Good to see you again," Kronara said in his gruff voice. "This is Ensign Ebbe Casset. New to the RDC, after working in the Malastare-Sullust Joint Task Force for a few years. Ensign, this is Captain Adren."

"Oh!" Joss tried to rein in his surprise. "Casset...as in..."

"Yes, Hedda Casset was my aunt," she said crisply. Not a sign of sadness on her unlined face. More like resolve. She probably got this response all the time.

"Wow. That must have been...wow," Joss said. The young woman nodded with slight irritation, or perhaps sadness, before the steely resolve returned. Joss turned his

head this way and that, looking for Pikka. Where was she? He was not good with being face to face with the discomfort of what had befallen Hedda Casset. If not for her, more would have died during the Great Hyperspace Disaster. She was a true hero. But she was also a reminder of how many lives had been lost in the last two years. Sometimes, Joss shivered at the thought that he and Pikka could have easily been on Starlight Beacon when it was destroyed a little more than a year ago.

"Where is Pikka? The other Captain Adren, that is," Admiral Kronara said. "I believe she was going to be in this meeting?" He waved for a service droid.

Pikka had excused herself to wash up before sitting down, but it had been more than fifteen minutes. What was she doing? Pikka wasn't the type of person to preen before a mirror. More likely, she had found a poorly constructed electrical circuit and was telling someone to get it fixed before they had a wire-fire on their hands.

"Right here."

A slim hand squeezed Joss's shoulder and Pikka Adren slipped into the chair beside him. Joss tried not to beam, as he was wont to do whenever Pikka entered the room. He was terrifically proud of his wife. If it weren't for Pikka, they wouldn't have been able to change the operational code of their Longbeam when fighting the impossibly fast Nihil ships during the Battle of Kur. She pushed her wavy, deep brown hair away from her temples, her blue eyes glancing at Ebbe. Of late, there were dark circles under them. She'd been working too hard, but as always, Pikka never complained. She nodded to the admiral. Of course, she knew to play it casual so as not to bring attention to their group.

Pikka and Ebbe introduced themselves. Pikka's eyebrows went up slightly at hearing Ebbe's surname.

"Thank you for joining the RDC. It means a lot to many people," Pikka said quietly. Unlike Joss, she always knew the right thing to say. Ebbe nodded, her eyes glazing for a moment with moisture. The wait staff droid arrived.

"We're technically on duty, but I wouldn't say no to an ale myself," Admiral Kronara said, running a hand through his silver-streaked hair. "A round for the table?"

"Not during work," Ebbe said, eyeing Admiral Kronara.

"In that case, two jogan juices," Pikka said. She waved at the departing droid. "And some salted wuli nuts! I'm starving. So." She leaned in close. "I take it you're not telling us we have a well-deserved holiday coming. You have a mission to discuss?"

"You do deserve a holiday. As for this mission, it's no big deal," Admiral Kronara said. The ale and jogan juices arrived, and he took a deep pull on his amber drink

before speaking quietly. "We've received a distress call from a small ship, close to the Stormwall. We need you to intercept it."

Joss furrowed his brow. The Stormwall. It wasn't that close, but it was too close for Joss's comfort. Lately, they'd been working near Eriadu, running shipments and helping the RDC set up a quiet but active base on the planet. The Nihil had been striking and raiding here and there beyond the Stormwall, but Eriadu was still quite safe. Traders were flourishing here, as were the black markets on the edges of every city and village. There was money to be made in times of conflict. A tale as old as the stars.

"Why us? Any RDC crew could handle a ship in distress in this sector. Surely there's someone closer," Joss said.

Kronara said nothing for a beat too long. And Joss knew, almost the same moment as Pikka did, who pulled her jogan juice closer.

"It's a Nihil ship, isn't it?" she said low.

Admiral Kronara nodded. "Probably a raiding craft that got in trouble."

"No big deal, huh? Who else knows about this?" Joss asked.

"Me, Ebbe, and the technician who picked up the signal and has been ordered to stay silent about the report."

"Why the secrecy?" Pikka said. She leaned in to sip the jogan juice, sniffed it, and then pushed it away in slight disgust. She reached for the nuts instead, tossing a few in her mouth.

Ebbe cautiously tasted her own juice, then eyed Pikka curiously. "There's a chance it may provide the means for us to penetrate the Stormwall and enter the Occlusion Zone. Unless it's a trap, and the Nihil are trying to bait us."

"That sounds more like a job for the Jedi than us," Joss suggested.

"Unfortunately, the Jedi are not at our disposal for this one. We need your answer now," Kronara said. "I can pull rank, but I'd rather you agreed to the mission in this case. I can promise you a long break after this." He hid his face by drinking more ale.

Joss sat back and met Pikka's eyes. Usually they talked things out, but they knew each other so well that sometimes a look sufficed. In this case, he was as hesitant as she appeared to be. Lately, she'd seemed so overworked. Her shoulders drooped from exhaustion. He was hoping for missions closer to the Core Worlds, to do something a bit more stable. The year since Starlight Beacon fell had been so hard on them both. Yes, maybe some time off is what they needed. Vacation first. They needed to be a united front. This was a definite no.

Pikka broke eye contact with Joss, and leaned forward.

"We'll do it," she said firmly.



They had spoken little on their way to the *Aurie*. Joss trusted Pikka, and if she wanted to do this trip, he'd be right at her side. But something was off between them, and he wasn't sure how to broach the subject. So instead, he had put all his energy into prepping for the mission. The Longbeam was still in very good shape, and still one of the fastest ships in the RDC. It was capable of some mind-bendingly abrupt changes in direction for a ship of that size, thanks to Pikka's engineering adjustments.

At the RDC hangar several kilometers outside of town, Joss stood on the boarding ramp of the *Aurie*. He was eyeing a set of crates full of supplies on the ground, while checking their plan on a datapad. He had input the coordinates and they were waiting for a last message from Ebbe before the brief hyperspace trip. Pikka was heading his way, weaving between the jungle of boxes and crates that had turned into a labyrinth of sorts. Joss tried not to laugh.

"Seriously, Joss. You brought enough food for a crew of a hundred! It's just us two."

"You know me. I'm a planner."

She was right, though. There was so much food. Pikka had a tendency to overlook things like this, and Joss sometimes over prepped, just in case. But in his effort to push aside his discomfort about the trip, he'd compensated by ordering too many supplies. There were enough shelf-stable items to last a year. Plus medical supplies. Plus parts for the *Aurie*.

A head popped up from behind a huge box of dehydrated bantha milk powder. Ebbe, still looking as stiff as before, walked purposefully towards them.

"This powder isn't regulation RDC ration," she said stiffly.

"Ebbe!" Joss said, surprised.

"Ensign Casset," Pikka said, giving Joss a soft elbow to the ribs. "Yes, the powder was a particular ask of mine. Did you need to speak to us before the trip?"

"Yes, Captain Adren. And Captain Adren. What's the status of the *Aurora III*?"

"Nearly ready. Engines have been double checked, and Joss had made sure we have enough supplies to feed a whole camp of Wookiees." She tried not to laugh, and then suddenly looked a little green for no reason at all.

"You okay?" Joss whispered.

Pikka waved a hand away. "Fine."

"Sorry about the milk powder," Joss said.

"We paid for that ourselves."

"Oh, not a worry. Of course you'd want it. For the nausea. I heard it's particularly soothing to the stomach in your condition." She nodded towards Pikka.

Joss glanced at Pikka. He felt like he'd missed something important.

The Nihil had been striking and raiding here and there beyond the Stormwall, but Eriadu was still quite safe.

The stranded ship was small. The information about it had come from a passing transport that wasn't able to get very close.

“Don't worry,” Ebbe went on quickly. “This will be a brief mission, and I'll ensure that Admiral Kronara will approve a lengthy leave of absence in nine months. Give or take.”

For a fleeting moment, Joss wondered why she'd used such an arbitrary figure, and then the credit chip dropped. Nine months. Huh? He spun around and stared at Pikka, his eyes searching.

Pikka went red in the face. “Ebbe...” she said, with a warning in her voice.

Ebbe sounded confused. “For your upcoming family leave. For the baby?”

Joss felt the blood drain out of his cranium. His fingertips tingled, and spots swam in his vision. He was tilting a little, and caught the edge of the *Aurie* so as not to fall off the ramp. Something inside his chest went haywire, bouncing around and trying to burst out of his ribs. Oh. His heart.

“Pikka?” he said, his mouth suddenly dry. He was afraid to speak another word but he had to. “Are you...are we...”

“Yes,” Pikka said. Her serious face cracked a smile that was brighter than a double sunrise. She ran up the ramp. “I'm pregnant.”

“When were you going to tell me?” Joss said, enveloping her small hands in his. The tangle of four hands trembled.

“When we got going on our trip. I wanted a little privacy and space when I told you. I just found out.” She turned her head away from Joss. “Ebbe, how did you know?”

“It was hard not to notice when we spoke earlier,” she said. “Signs were all there. I'm sorry for making an assumption out loud. I can organize a mission but I'm, uh, not always good in conversation. But listen. I'll make it up to you. How about I join you? Lift some of the weight there?”

But Joss could barely hear Ebbe. Her words sounded like the distant *wah wah* of an insignificant alarm destined to be ignored. Pikka? Pregnant? Several emotions zapped through Joss's body. Joy. Terror. Worry. Terror. Joy. It was a palindrome of happy panic. So this is why Pikka had been looked tired lately. Why she'd spent more time in the lavatory than he did, probably emptying her stomach of jogan juice. It all came together.

Pikka turned back to Joss and raised her eyebrows. “Joss, what do you think?” Pikka said. Joss's mouth opened and closed. No sounds emerged. “Give us a moment, Ebbe?” Pikka gently led Joss to the interior of the *Aurie*. Finally, Joss managed to say something.

“I'm so happy, I don't know what to do with myself. I have a million things going through my head.”

“Me too,” Pikka said, exhaling a long, held-in breath.

“Are you feeling okay? What can I do?”

“You can help me do this mission, and do it well.” She pushed her shoulders back. “I'm all right. Once in a while, I become a regurgitation machine, but other than that?” She patted her lower belly. “I'll be checking in with the *Aurie*'s generic medical screening program. It has an obstetrical application. All is well so far.”

“The *Aurie* can't help you give birth, though. We don't have a midwife droid on board.”

“Pfft. This is one quick mission, Joss! No big deal. It'll earn us favor with Kronara, who already likes us. We've got many months of work ahead before we take that leave.”

“What do you think about having Ebbe with us?”

But Joss had gone back to an internal checklist of prepping for the mission, prepping for *after* the mission, and prepping for the rest of his life that had all suddenly multiplied like a swarm of gizka. Vaguely, he registered that Pikka had descended the ramp to speak to Ebbe. When Pikka returned, she patted Joss on the back.

“I told Ebbe we would do this one on our own. Ready to go?”

Joss nodded. Pikka gently touched his chin, closing his gaping mouth that must have been hanging open for the last several minutes. Joss laughed, and Pikka did too.

“Let's go Captain Adren,” she said. “Our mission awaits.”



It was time. The supplies were stowed. Pikka had checked the hyperdrive and had run safety diagnostics on the shield generator, while Joss reviewed the information that Admiral Kronara had given him.

The stranded ship was small. The information about it had come from a passing transport that wasn't able to get very close. They had some crude scanning equipment, but there appeared to be no life forms aboard. And it was definitely a Nihil ship. Small sized, but seemingly cobbled together with parts of other ships so it was lopsided and asymmetrical. There was a large cannon burn with damage to the engine on one side. It was far enough away from the Stormwall that Joss felt comfortable not having RDC backup. But it was close enough that it might have drifted out, broken, and the Nihil didn't know or care enough to bring it back in.

He rubbed his chin. Why hadn't the Nihil rescued this themselves? It made him wonder if the vessel was so trashed there was no point, or that the Nihil were either crueler of more disorganized than they let on. If it was the latter, then there was really a chance they could bring in a hyperdrive with the ability to pierce the

Stormwall. Kronara, Chancellor Soh, and the RDC would finally feel like they had a win on their hands.

It could change the entire direction of this war with the Nihil.

It could mean a safer future for Pikka, and Joss, and...another Adren.

"Hey Joss," Pikka said, appearing silently behind him. "We ready?"

"Yes. Coordinates are in. I'm ready if you are."

Back in one of the two captain's chairs in the cockpit of the *Aurie*, Joss felt more like himself again. They were ready to go.

Pikka spoke through the comms. "Ebbe, tell Admiral Kronara that we'll send a report as soon as we've made contact with the ship," Pikka added. "Hey...oh never mind." She hesitated, appearing to want to say more. She gave Joss a shake of her head, as if clearing some unimportant thought from her brain. Joss could finish her sentences sometimes, and he could have sworn she was about to say, "If you don't hear back from us..." But no. That was a paranoid thought.

"Very well," Ebbe said. "May the Force be with you."

Ebbe sounded disappointed. Joss could imagine what she was feeling—the desperate need to do something, do anything to fight the Nihil. There were whole planets and systems enveloped by the Nihil in the Occlusion Zone. Who knows how horribly those millions must be suffering. Every night, Joss had nightmares about the Nihil encroaching, closer and closer. But for the first time, he was filled with another level of worry entirely.

They settled into their seats in the cockpit. The *Aurie* soon left the green and brown world behind them, past the several ships coming to and from Eriadu. They soon entered hyperspace with the plasma glow about them. It was a short trip, but Pikka nevertheless dozed off in her pilot's chair for a time. Let her.

A short while later, he announced, "Exiting hyperspace in a minute or two."

Pikka yawned and tossed away the last bits of sleepiness away with a shake of her head. She focused on the bluish-white glow of the hyperlane around them, then the transformation of white streaks as they entered realspace.

"There it is," Joss pointed.

In the distance, there was the small ship, just a speck of gray against the darkness of the galaxy. Pikka looked at the scanners on the *Aurie's* control board. "Ebbe said that there were no life forms on that ship. She's wrong. There are at least two."

Joss tried not to show his disappointment. This was supposed to be a junk run. Remove some Nihil engine and comm parts and get going. He didn't want a conflict with the

actual Nihil. Not now, of all times.

"What about the ship itself?"

"Our sensors say it's cold," Pikka said.

"Engine could be broken. Or it could be shut down to appear broken." She looked at Joss, her eyes unsure.

"You can stay on the *Aurie*. I can board and find out what's going on."

"We're both here to do this job, Joss."

Joss shook his head. "The other option is, we can turn around, go back to Eriadu and get reinforcements. Ebbe wanted to come too. I think she knew something was off. I think we should do this with backup."

Pikka frowned. "They wanted this to be done quickly, and quietly."

What if they lost their chance to find out what was on that ship? What if procuring that engine really meant that they could push back against the Nihil, and push back the Stormwall? Joss's decisiveness was softening in the face of the new worry. As much as he wanted to know what was happening on that ship, he also wanted to get Pikka out of here.

"Let's call Ebbe. We ought to be able to communicate from this sector."

They opened up a comms channel. After a few transfers, Ebbe's voice sounded.

"What's going on?"

"The ship has passengers or crew. Alive. At least two," Pikka reported.

"Something feels off," Joss added.

"Requesting RDC backup."

"I agree," Ebbe said. "I'll let Admiral Kronara know. He's back on Coruscant. For now, just know that—"

The cockpit filled with the sound of static.

"Ebbe? Are you receiving?" Pikka's voice rose. The static continued.

The control panel of the cockpit suddenly went black, as if they'd lost power. It lit up again and flickered erratically.

"What in the...what's going on? Ebbe, are you there?" Joss tried to run a systems check, but the console didn't respond. He attempted a quick reboot. Again, unresponsive. The electronics continued to act like all the circuits were massively confused. The quiet of the cockpit was still filled with harsh static.

Amidst the flashing chaos, a single red light blinked with certainty. Well, *something* was finally working, but the red light made him feel far worse instead of better. He looked at Pikka, their eyes meeting for one long, panicked moment.


"That abandoned ship isn't alone anymore," Pikka said. "Company's coming."

And then the *Aurie* went dark.

TO BE CONTINUED...


**Joss could
imagine
what she was
feeling—the
desperate
need to do
something, do
anything to
fight the Nihil.**

**NEXT ISSUE:
"Tales from the
Occlusion Zone"
continues, only in
*Star Wars
Insider*!**

A close-up, low-angle shot of Dennis Muren, a man with dark hair, looking upwards and to the right. He is wearing a dark jacket with a light-colored, textured collar. His hands are visible, reaching up towards a complex mechanical rig that appears to be part of a puppet or special effects setup. The lighting is warm and dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a set environment.

01 Dennis Muren
adjusting the
lighting of
the rancor
puppet.

*“Together
Again, Huh?”*



**"THE MOVIE'S GOT TO
BE AS GOOD AS IT CAN
POSSIBLY BE. YOU DON'T
WANT TO GIVE UP."**

DENNIS MUREN

DENNIS MUREN AND KEN RALSTON PART TWO

In the second and final installment of *Insider's* talk with *Star Wars: Return on the Jedi* visual effects supervisors Dennis Muren and Ken Ralston, the duo reflect on the trials and triumphs of production on the final film in the original trilogy.

WORDS: KRISTIN BAVER

A

s work ramped up on *Return on the Jedi* in 1982, each of the three visual effects supervisors on the movie—Dennis

Muren, Ken Ralston, and Richard Edlund—focused on their own shot lists as Industrial Light & Magic prepared for George Lucas' third entry in his *Star Wars* trilogy.

Ralston took charge of the epic space dogfights that had become a hallmark of the movie series, while Muren laid claim to the ground-based effects required for Tatooine and

02



02 Dennis Muren in the ILM model shop.

03 Muren filming live-action footage of Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher).

04 The speeder bike chase was storyboarded in great detail.

shot a little more fun and a little livelier. To go a little more nuts with the action stuff.

Nowadays, I can just get on a computer and move this over there and off it goes. Not back then. It all had to be thought out. We had to film tiny little shots of ships built at different scales, and every movement of those millions of shots had to lock together so it all looked like they were flying around as part of one shot.

What I initially did was take the storyboards and we shot a

► Endor. That didn't mean he had an easy ride when faced with the problem of making the speeder bike chase look dangerously fast, or how to bring Phil Tippett's monstrous rancor to life. The work was often arduous. On one fateful day, 100 of Ralston's completed shots were cut from the film, setting his part of the production back weeks as he scrambled to replace them. Meanwhile, plans for a rancor costume were nixed too late to switch to go-motion animation, inspiring an unorthodox approach to filming a backwards-walking rod puppet, and a lot of smoke and drool to ratchet up the tension of the moment.

Getting up to speed

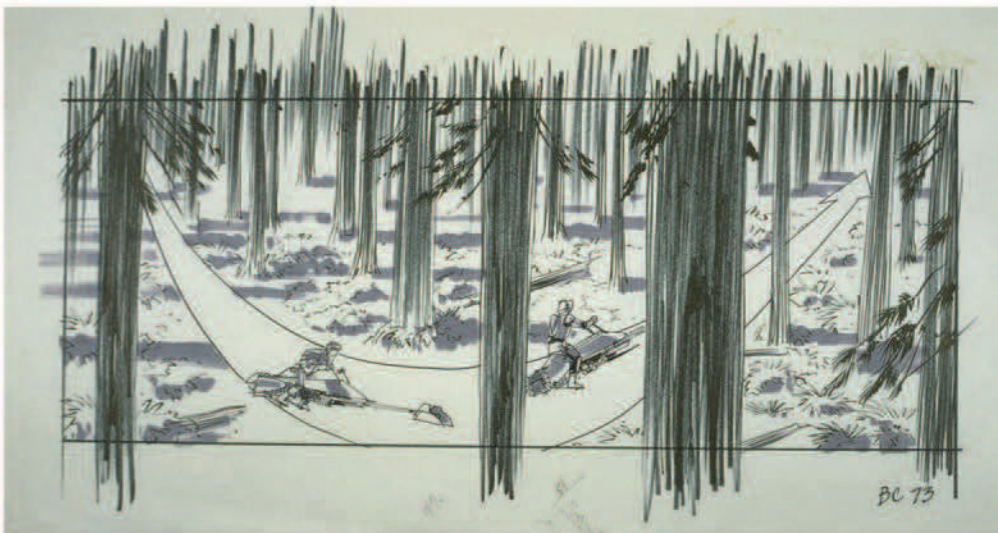
As the supervisor on the final battle sequence that pitted the Rebel Alliance against the Empire and its dreaded second Death Star, Ralston and his crew worked through countless hours of animation and a huge amount of pyrotechnics. With the aim of thrilling audiences like never before, the choreography of the spectacular space fight had to elevate what had previously been seen in *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, and surpass it.

Ken Ralston: For George [Lucas], with each movie it was all about, "How much closer can I get to my vision?" What he was hoping for was more flexibility in how the camera was going to follow the action, so I tried to make every

03



04





HIGH SPEED TOYS

Cardboard tubes and foliage substituted for the redwood forests of North California when shooting previsualization animatics for the speeder bike chase.

Dennis Muren's team filmed sequences using rods to guide rough models of the bikes through a miniature forest landscape, ridden by 3.75-inch Kenner action figures acting as stand-ins for Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia. A Boba Fett figure represented the scout troopers, while 12-inch Kenner *Star Wars* dolls were used for close-up shots.

"It was really well thought out," recalls Muren. "We did storyboards. We built this little set; I think we did it in three days. Ken Ralston helped on it. Joe Johnston was involved. Anybody who was around we'd have grab a toy. It was very simple and a lot of fun to put it all together. From that footage I saw that we could repeat angles, or just run the film in reverse to make it look like the bikes were going in another direction."

very cheesy previsualization of a sequence using cheap little models. I thought it'd be funny if we sat there with the finished sequence and recorded sound effects for the ships and the explosions with microphones. We cut it together and sent it to George, and he thought it was hilarious. He liked the sequence, so that gave me a starting point for what I had to do.

Meanwhile, Muren was at work devising how to shoot one of the film's most ambitious sequences—the breakneck speeder bike chase through the forests of Endor.

Dennis Muren: I don't think George had any thoughts about how we were going to do the bike chase at the beginning. He was just looking for something that hadn't been done in the other films. But it wasn't like we could just drive up to the redwoods and shoot something. The woods were so beautiful and complicated, but there was so much stuff going on that you couldn't focus on



05 The model forest built to plan visual effects shots for the speeder bike chase.

06 Muren and Phil Tippett prepare a speeder bike model for shooting.

anything. Everybody was freaking out about the matte lines—"How can you put a walker back there but in front of all this stuff?" Then it dawned on me that the forest was actually simplistic in its complication, so it wouldn't be a problem. Nobody would be able to tell what was in front of or behind anything so long as we didn't have something recognizable in the shot, like a big tree trunk. We could matte stuff into this complicated background and audiences would still be able to figure out what was going on, so long as the camera was following it, which it was in most of the sequence.

► I got Garrett Brown in to shoot the footage using a steady cam. He had some great ideas about how to do it. We shot all the backgrounds for real, everything in the show except for one matte painting right at the very end of the sequence where the speeder bike had to circle around to come back after Luke. We could never get a background that looked right where you could see the trees and pan on the background, so we did that as a real quick matte painting with a lot of blur on it.

Into the Rancor Pit

The rancor pit sequence posed a different kind of challenge. Initially, Muren and Tippett's plan had been to portray the monster *Godzilla*-style, with a performer in a full-body suit operating the creature, but costume tests proved fruitless, leading the crew back to the drawing board. As production on the movie was moving along at pace there was no time in the schedule to use stop-motion or go-motion animation instead, so they turned to a simpler solution: a puppet.

DM: I had thought we were kind of getting there with the idea of

07



using a full-body suit. There were two guys inside, one working one arm and one the body and other arm. Between lighting and camera angles and cutting, I think we could have had something that might have worked. But we were within a couple of days of shooting when George said, "No. This isn't really working guys. It's

07 Dennis Muren filming test footage of the full-body rancor costume.

08 Rancor production painting by Ralph McQuarrie.

08



not going to." And that was that, so we looked at another way to do it, which was a rod puppet.

We knew there were ways to shoot a puppet that would make it look big and fluid. Anything to make it look more real, more authentic, was going to help. We filmed it in reverse, with Phil Tippett moving the puppet backwards. We shot at high speeds, and we shot at really, *really* slow speeds. We just shook it up. I remember we did one shot that had at least 90 takes, which sounds like a whole lot but was probably over about 90 minutes. All we needed were these little sequences of frames. We knew the cuts. We just had to fit them within the edit.

Phil's design was so strong on the rancor, but it's always been surprising how that sequence has grabbed people, because when I look

STARSHIP TENNIS SHOE

Look closely and you might spot a few Earth-bound objects floating among the stars in *Return of the Jedi*.

"I like to have a few laughs doing this work, otherwise I'd go mad. I would try to do silly things," admits Ken Ralston, who slipped a few personal items into the movie's space battle.

"When I first started at ILM, I was surrounded with people who really appreciated and were interested in visual effects from movies from all over the place, and I learned that you don't have to make a perfectly sculpted object if you were just going to put it in the background— battleship structures were sometimes made up of blocks of wood in old war movies. A tennis shoe of mine is in *Jedi*. It's in the background, not flying close to the camera. Why would I do that? I'd get fired!

"Instead of worrying about the small stuff to the point where it takes away from what your big problems are, it leaves you room to do the important stuff and throw nonsense in the background. And believe me, those cuts were so fast sometimes I could have put anything back there."

And when the work on *Jedi* was complete, Ralston's famous shoe was mounted and signed as a gift to producer Howard Kazanjian.



at it, I just see a lot of effort. It kind of had to work or else we would have had to have gone stop-motion, and that takes a long, long time.

Final Cuts

In the final days of production, last-minute edits sent the crew into overdrive as they raced to create new shots to make up for those sent to the cutting-room floor. On a day known as “Black Friday,” Ralston learned he would have to make up for 100 visual effects shots that were scrapped after months of work. In the meantime, he was plagued by what should have been a simple sequence showing the Imperial shuttle flying past Darth Vader’s Super Star Destroyer.

KR: What happens, as I’ve found out over the years, is that when you are faced with some insanely complicated shot, you concentrate on that, and it never gets to be a problem. But the simple shot, the one where you think, “It’s just a shuttle flying right next to a ship,” never works, or it just keeps going on and on, and the dumbest things happen, and variables kick in. Next thing you know, you’re reshooting it.

DM: Everybody goes through that. The movie’s got to be right;

the movie’s got to be as good as it can possibly be. You don’t want to give up.

KR: George was making changes and had some new ideas, and we had a lot of shots cut. It was kind of a shock because everyone had been working so hard and we already thought we weren’t going to make the deadline. But we had to roll with the punches. You just get in there and you work really hard, and the next thing you know, the movie comes out and you thank God that’s over! [Laughs]

DM: And you’re already onto the next one so you can’t even enjoy it!

KR: That’s true. [Laughs]

09 Ken Ralston with one of the video cameras used to plan visual effects shots.

10 Dennis Muren in the ILM studio.



09



10

Moving On

Forty years later, *Return of the Jedi* remains a classic, the jubilant culmination of the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Production challenges, including the divorce of *Star Wars* creator George Lucas and his wife, editor Marcia Lucas, had made for an experience filled with both joy and tribulation.

KR: For me, *Jedi* really was a giant step forward for my career and it was an honor to do it, but at the time it seemed pretty big, and pretty tough. You know, we just pounded through that thing. We enjoyed working on it. It was fun, and then we were onto other things.

DM: *Jedi* was such a big show. It was exhausting, but it could have been worse. I remember being surprised at how fast the production was done.

It was a sad thing for all of us that George and Marcia split up. That was going on toward the end of the show. Skywalker Ranch was being built, and there was a lot of worry about

whether the company was going to stay together. We thought, “After *Star Wars*, is that it?” There were layoffs when *Jedi* was finished because there wasn’t work. We had no idea if we were going to need to move back to Los Angeles or get out of the business. And then ILM kept going and kept going.

KR: The company was a much smaller group of people compared to now, talking to each other face to face, jumping around the different departments. We all learned a lot from each other, and that learning experience was as invaluable as the friendships we made. Those were very special, unique times. 🍷



AFTER ENDOR

Insider investigates the immediate fallout of the Galactic Civil War after its apparent endgame at Endor, as revealed in *Star Wars* storytelling over the last decade.

WORDS: AMY RICHAU

The destruction of the second Death Star and the Rebel Alliance's victory at Endor was the climax of the original trilogy, but it was far from the definitive end of the battle between the rebels and the Galactic Empire.

Fortunately, the question, "What happened next?" has been explored in multiple books, comics, animated

shorts, and videogames over the years. Such stories not only presented *Star Wars* fans with updates on the adventures of Luke Skywalker, Leia Organa, Han Solo and the rest, but also provided enthralling insights into how the entire galaxy reacted to the underdog rebel victory at the Battle of Endor. We have seen happy times with the wedding of Leia and Han in

the days immediately following the final confrontation, and witnessed the dire results of Palpatine's sinister directive, Operation: Cinder. And while many saw the defeat of Darth Vader and the Emperor as a reason to celebrate, those loyal to the Empire vowed to avenge their fallen masters, while others sought to fill the power vacuum themselves.



THE PRINCESS AND THE SCOUNDREL

Beth Revis' novel, *The Princess and the Scoundrel*, showed the strength of Leia and Han's love for each other, as well as introducing the challenges the couple would face in the years to come. The rebel victory at Endor was a game changer, but Leia, Han, Luke, Lando, and Mon Mothma all recognized there was still a lot of work for the Rebellion to do to create a prosperous New Republic. Despite a mountain of challenges ahead of them, Leia and Han chose to put aside their official duties long enough to celebrate their love for each other. Turning their *Return of the Jedi* kiss into a life-long commitment, the duo wed on Endor and took a honeymoon on the galactic starcruiser, *Halcyon*. But, of course, taking a relaxing vacation during a time of upheaval was not entirely in the cards. An unscheduled stop on the ice moon Madurs led Han and Leia to an Imperial drilling facility that threatened the stability of the region. Leia used her Force powers to help save the moon and recruited its inhabitants to become a member of the fledgling New Republic.



SHATTERED EMPIRE

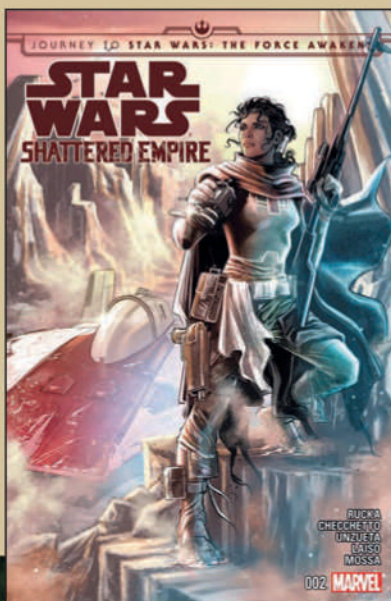
The comic-book miniseries *Shattered Empire*, written by Greg Rucka and illustrated by Marco Checchetto, introduced Shara Bey and Kes Dameron, the parents of future Resistance General Poe Dameron, and an evil campaign called Operation: Cinder. Shara and Kes joined Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, and other rebel leaders in their efforts to stamp out Imperial holdouts on Endor and across the galaxy in the days and weeks after the battle. While rebel forces attempted to solidify their support, Imperial messenger droids carried orders to initiate Operation: Cinder—a plan Emperor Palpatine devised before his death to punish and destroy dissenting planets. Worlds targeted by Operation: Cinder included Nacronis, Vardos, and Naboo, where satellite arrays caused catastrophic

weather storms on the planet shortly after Leia and Shara arrived on a diplomatic mission that became a rescue effort. Shara and Kes later decided to retire as rebel soldiers so they could enjoy some of the life they had been fighting for, after such a long period of time.



The Skywalker Odyssey

After the rebel victory at Endor, Luke Skywalker engaged in several missions to find and protect Force artifacts. In *Shattered Empire*, Luke, with assistance from Shara Bey, retrieved fragments of a Force-sensitive tree stolen from the Jedi Temple on Coruscant from an Imperial lab on Vetine. Drawn to the planet Pillio, Luke retrieved a Jedi compass from the Emperor's Observatory, where he also assisted Inferno Squad member Del Meeko. Later, Luke trained his sister, Leia, in the ways of the Force on Ajan Kloss.





BATTLEFRONT II

The videogame *Star Wars: Battlefront II*, released in 2017, showed fans the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Endor from the viewpoint of soldiers loyal to the Empire, via the game's single-player story mode. Iden Versio, a commander with the Imperial special-forces unit Inferno Squad, witnessed the battle station explode from her

team's position on the ground of the Forest Moon. Reunited with her father, Admiral Garrick Versio, on the *Eviscerator*, Iden learned of Operation: Cinder and its aim to stamp out all cells of resistance against the Empire.

Inferno Squad became divided after they witnessed the directive's effects on Vandor. Iden Versio and fellow Inferno Squad member Del Meeko felt betrayed

by the Empire and refused to abandon local civilians in jeopardy, leading Gideon Hask to denounce them as traitors. Iden and Del soon joined the Rebel Alliance, offering information and support during missions against the Empire, including at the Battle of Jakku.



Iden Versio

Commander Iden Versio grew up as an Imperial soldier and she remained loyal after their bitter defeat on Endor. But once Operation: Cinder targeted her homeworld, Vandor, and Iden received orders to ignore the safety of citizens loyal to the Empire there, her feelings towards it changed. Not willing to blindly take orders from a dead man, Iden defected to the Rebel Alliance after her actions on Theed impressed General Organa. Iden helped chase down remnants of the Imperial fleet until the Battle of Jakku, where she briefly reunited with her father. Admiral Versio refused to leave his post on his doomed Star Destroyer but encouraged Iden to evacuate. Versio later became a key figure in the Resistance, fighting alongside her daughter, Zay.

THE NEW REPUBLIC ERA

As weeks became months after the Battle of Endor, New Republic and Imperial remnant leaders struggled to gain and maintain support throughout the galaxy. For pilots on both sides, this period was an unrelenting gauntlet of missions, skirmishes, and battles. As it was regularly unclear what New Republic pilots might face during missions, it was common for squads to be comprised of a range of starships to increase their probability of success.

Imperial troops who tried to switch sides at first ended up being held in repurposed rebel bases such as Traitor's Remorse for questioning. Later, the New Republic built an official Amnesty Program, as seen in episodes of *The Mandalorian*, having realized that they would need the help of former Imperials to gain an advantage in the ongoing battle against the last vestiges of the Empire. During those early months it was unclear how well their amnesty programs and policies would evolve.



THE ALPHABET SQUADRON TRILOGY

The *Alphabet Squadron* trilogy by Alexander Freed (*Alphabet Squadron*, *Shadow Fall*, and *Victory's Price*) followed a specialized New Republic starfighter squadron given a specific task in the aftermath of the Battle of Endor—find and neutralize the deadly 204th Imperial Fighter Wing, better known as Shadow Wing. Hera Syndulla (someone familiar to *Star Wars* fans), led the efforts of Alphabet Squadron, whose pilots brought their own personal baggage to their missions, thereby illustrating the trauma and challenges many individuals had faced during this prolonged period of upheaval.

X-wing pilot Yrica Quell defected from Shadow Wing to join the New Republic after she witnessed the devastation caused by Operation: Cinder. Theelin B-wing pilot Chass na Chadic, mysterious U-wing pilot Kairos, A-wing pilot Wyl Lark, and Y-wing pilot Nath Tensent had seen many of their previous wingmates die at the hands of Shadow Wing, and were understandably concerned about where Quell's loyalties lie when they learned about her past.



Operation: Cinder

In his desperate attempt to exert control over the galaxy, even in the event of his death, Operation: Cinder was part of Palpatine's contingency plan. Following the Battle of Endor, messenger droids delivered orders to initiate brutal attacks on key planets throughout the galaxy. The objective was to strike fear in galactic citizens and dissuade them from joining a rebel-led new government. Climate-disrupting arrays of satellites created catastrophic storms, with elite TIE fighter units, such as Shadow Wing, following to ensure the destruction of such worlds was complete. The ruination of planets including Vardos, Nacronis, and Burnin Konn led to many Imperial defections to the Rebel Alliance.



STAR WARS: SQUADRONS

The videogame *Star Wars: Squadrons* followed two rival starfighter groups—the Empire's Titan Squadron and the New Republic's Vanguard Squadron—shortly after the Battle of Endor. The New Republic's Project Starhawk—a plan to create a new class of starship with advanced armor, armaments,

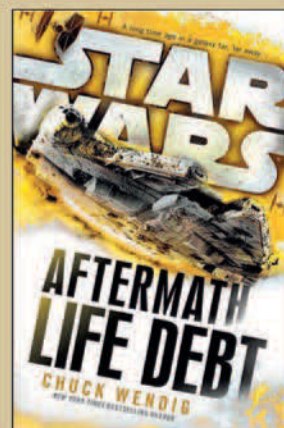
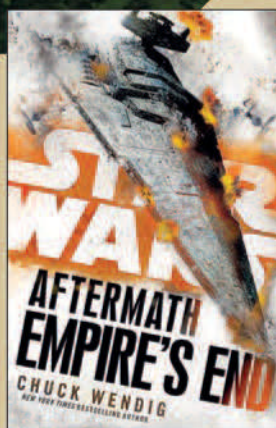
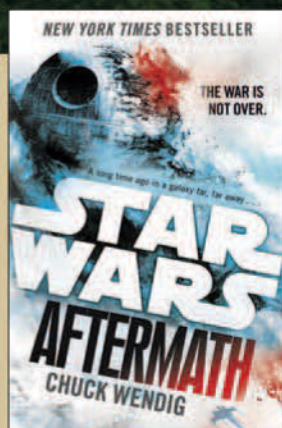
and shields from repurposed Imperial Star Destroyers—led to several clashes between the rival fighter groups looking for any advantage they could find over one another. The operational *Starhawk* prototype forced a Star Destroyer to flee the Zavian Abyss, but the Imperial Titan Squad soon sought revenge, attacking the Nadiri Dockyards where New Republic engineers built the Starhawk. The results of many such battles left both sides weaker, with little sign of an end to the conflict.



THE AFTERMATH TRILOGY

The *Aftermath* trilogy by Chuck Wendig (*Aftermath*, *Life Debt*, and *Empire's End*) covered the period between the Empire's defeat at Endor to the Battle of Jakku, following the various factions struggling for stability and power. The New Republic had begun to form, with its capital named as Mon Mothma's homeworld, Chandrila. As the first New Republic Chancellor, Mothma pushed through the Military Disarmament Act, which she hoped would ensure longer lasting peace after decades of war.

During the first year of the New Republic, rebel hero Wedge Antilles was taken hostage by the Empire and Han Solo resigned from his role in the military to assist in Chewbacca's effort to free Kashyyyk from Imperial control. The New Republic racked up wins when Akiva



became the first Outer Rim planet to join the New Republic, and setbacks such as the assassination attempt on Mothma during Liberation Day. At the same time, the dark-side worshipping Acolytes of the Beyond continued to collect Sith artifacts from across the galaxy.

While Mon Mothma was the clear figurehead of the New Republic, the leader of what remained of the Empire was much less clear. Grand Admiral Rae Sloane, a decorated Navy officer, helped keep the scattered Imperial fleet together in the aftermath of the Battle of Endor while the more secretive

Palpatine confidante Gallius Rax worked in the shadows. Rax claimed to want to stabilize and grow the Empire's resources when he formed a Shadow Council, but he remained loyal to Palpatine's contingency plan, which called for the destruction of both New Republic *and* Imperial fleets.



Endor Aftermath

A few *Forces of Destiny* shorts focused on the immediate joys and concerns on Endor after the destruction of the second Death Star. In "An Imperial Feast," Leia and Han convinced celebrating Ewoks to eat snacks that didn't include roasted Imperial stormtroopers. Hera Syndulla and Chopper appeared in "Feast" as well as "Chopper and Friends," where young Ewok Kneesaa helped the *Ghost* crew take down a few stray TIE fighters that threatened an Ewok village.

Mandalorian, vestiges of Imperial power remained at large long after the celebrations of its defeat at Endor had ended. Indeed, the First Order of the sequel trilogy grew from Imperial seeds. It seems certain that further stories exploring this chaotic time within the *Star Wars* galaxy are yet to come. 🌌



THE BATTLE OF JAKKU

When Rax brought the vast majority of the Imperial fleet to Jakku, the New Republic fleet, including three *Starhawk*-class battleships, soon followed. The Battle of Jakku would be the biggest military engagement since the Battle of Endor. Sloane, who did not like Rax's insurgent tactics, and New Republic agents Norra and Brentin Wexley were able to stop

Rax's plan to destroy the fleet and the planet along with it. The New Republic's victory at Jakku and the signing of the Galactic Concordance was considered the final defeat of the Galactic Empire, but some Imperial remnants remained active in nearby systems. Other officers, such as Rae Sloane, fled to the Unknown Regions.

As we've seen in Disney+ series such as *Star Wars: Ahsoka* and *The*



CELEBRATE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FINAL CHAPTER OF THE ORIGINAL *STAR WARS* TRILOGY!

Follow the making of the movie, from early script ideas, concept art, and costume designs, through to filming and its eventual release, lavishly illustrated with exceptional photography!

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSTORES & ONLINE



TITAN-COMICS.COM

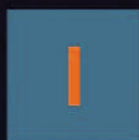


© 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd & TM. All rights reserved.

TUNES FOR TANO

Scoring the soundtrack for *Star Wars: Ahsoka* was a family affair for Kevin Kiner and his collaborative children, Sean and Deana. The trio of tunesmiths spoke exclusively to *Insider* to reveal how their working dynamic connected with the world of live-action *Star Wars*.

WORDS: AMY RATCLIFFE



f you've watched a *Star Wars* animated series, you will have heard Kevin Kiner's work. The composer has

provided the soundtrack to Ahsoka Tano's life since her first appearance in the 2008 *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* movie. So, it's only fitting that he also composed the score for *Ahsoka*—but he doesn't work alone. His children, Sean and Deana Kiner, who have worked with Kevin for years on the animated series, collaborated closely with their father to weave together new audio with existing *Star Wars Rebels* themes to create the soundscape for Ahsoka's latest chapter

Star Wars Insider: Kevin, you've been with *Ahsoka* for years. Do you remember writing her theme?

Kevin Kiner: "Ahsoka's Theme" was the first piece I wrote for George Lucas and Dave Filoni, somewhere around 2006 or 2007. I remember where I was, what the

scene was, and what I was thinking when I wrote it. It flowed really naturally, and was done in five minutes. Often, when they come that way, those are the best tunes.

Fast forward to more than a decade later. How did you react when you got the call to score a live-action *Star Wars* series centered on *Ahsoka Tano*?

KK: I had heard rumblings of *Ahsoka* happening for a long time, and I had dropped hints to Dave while we were working on *Tales of the Jedi*, but he was very coy about it. I'm sure a lot of gears were turning, and he couldn't say anything, so I didn't find out for quite some time. I remember exactly where I was when I did find out—purchasing irrigation equipment for my broken sprinkler system! There was a guy working at the store, and I had to tell him, "I just got this super, super awesome gig," although I didn't mention what it was. Deana and Sean lost it when I told them. It's something we've always wanted to do.

Deana Kiner: I absolutely could not sleep.

Sean Kiner: I think we started sketching out new things that day.

A composing trio is quite unusual, let alone a family of composers. What is your working dynamic like?

KK: The way I like to look at it is, nobody on Earth can replace John Williams, and yet the three of us working together, I think that's our superpower. The whole is much greater than the sum of the parts.

It's a different score when the three of us are composing together, although every piece of music comes from a different source. Sean wrote "Thrawn's Theme" a long time ago, which has become a fan favorite. Dave Filoni had suggested using an organ for that. Deana wrote the lyrics and a lot of the melody to "Igyah Kah," Sabine's theme, which is a contemporary rock-and-roll piece from Episode One of *Ahsoka* that plays when we first meet ▶

"The three of us working together, I think that's our superpower." Kevin Kiner



02 The otherworldly sounds that accompanied Ahsoka's visit to an ancient temple combined synthesizers and organic instruments.

03 Dave Filoni directing Rosario Dawson on the set of *Star Wars: Ahsoka*.

► Sabine. We all have the same equipment, and we bounce ideas back and forth, so the genesis might come from one or the other, but then it all comes together through the three of us.

SK: Having instant access to expert opinions on your music is invaluable. And being able to collaborate like that, with no ego and respecting everybody's taste, is invaluable. It speeds up the process significantly.

DK: Composing is a really lonely gig. A lot of the time you're in front of your screen in your cave for hours, doing the same thing over and over again. So, it's really nice to have these two close by. I love walking into Kevin's studio and finding out what he's working on.

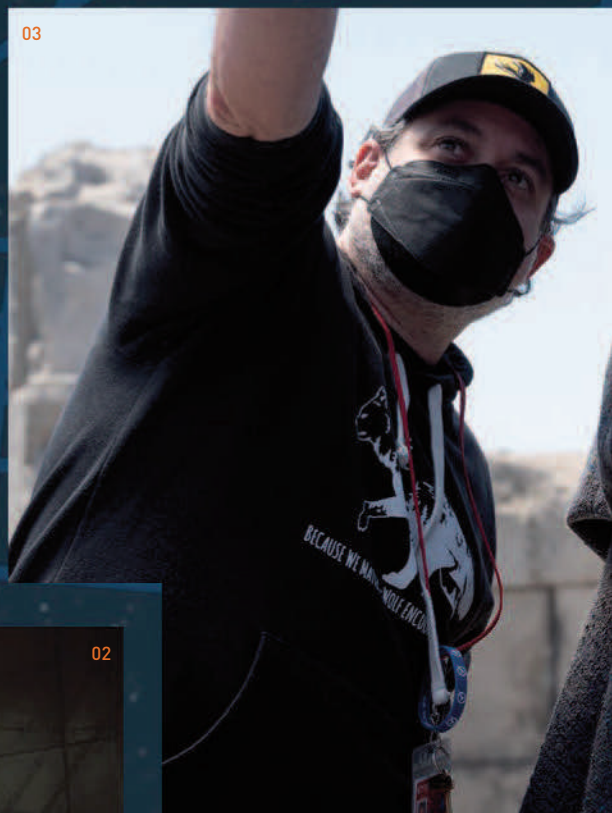
KK: We have a compound here. My studio is in one room, and Deana's is literally 20 or 30 steps



away. We have our own creative spaces and yet we often pop by and say, "Hey, what's going on? Where'd you find *that*?" We never use stock sounds. There's an alhorn-like sound that plays when Ahsoka is searching for an artifact and she drops into an ancient temple. It's not a real alhorn; Sean developed it. The instant I heard it, I had to ask, "Hey, what is that sound?" Sean sent the file through to my desktop and I could use it wherever it felt appropriate. The three of us are always searching for unique sounds, licks, and motifs to share.

Your score for *Ahsoka* sounds fresh and different while maintaining that familiar *Star Wars* vibe. Was that something that Filoni supported as you crafted the show's score?

KK: We were so lucky that Dave encouraged that and fostered an environment that was so positive for creativity, where we could explore and experiment. Sometimes, of course, an idea wouldn't work out, but he was great at suggesting



different approaches. He wanted us to attempt something new, something fresh and cool. That goes back to George Lucas, because George always loved to throw ideas up against the wall. He didn't want to do things

that had been done before, and when you're constantly experimenting that way, yes you're going to fail, but those gems you discover when you find something new, that's a big deal.

A number of *Star Wars Rebels* characters turn up in *Ahsoka*. How did you honor their existing musical themes while evolving them?

SK: The biggest benefit of having all those legacy themes was that they were already well





"Our mantra was always, 'Let's do something fresh. Let's do something that's never been heard before, especially in Star Wars.'" Kevin Kiner

we used this GuitarViol in a very exposed way. This naked-sounding plucked thing that has an investigative feel to it, and yet it's a sound you've never heard before.

I imagine it was a balance between hitting those themes just the right amount?

KK: There were instances where our instincts were to play "the theme," because we're such fans too. That was where having Dave's perspective was great. Like when Sabine was alone in her room and going through a lot of angst over a decision, the temptation was to use "Sabine's Theme," but Dave said, "We don't need it that much. We can have a little taste of it. Let's play what her conflict is—she feels kind of abandoned by Ahsoka."

04 Lars Mikkelsen as Grand Admiral Thrawn.

05 Sabine's space rock theme in Episode One was called "Igyah Kah."

06 Sabine Wren (Natasha Liu Bordizzo) watched a holomessage recorded by Ezra Bridger (Eman Esfandi).

established, so we didn't need to fight to put them into people's ears. We were able to adapt them to whatever a scene required.

KK: We had Thrawn's legacy theme, but we also introduced some new motifs for him. The organ didn't fit some of his scenes, so we had to find a new way of performing that motif to hearken Thrawn. There were two elements that we needed to interweave in a way that didn't sound like we had *this* block of old themes and *that* block of new themes.

We developed a hybrid sonic palette; we used a full orchestra for every episode, which was unbelievable, but we also added that alphorn I talked about, and we had Japanese-influenced percussion and flute. Deana played a bunch of ethnic flute sounds that you heard during the opening titles of Episode One—this whirling flute, which was not what you might have expected to hear when the *Ahsoka* title appeared.

We used some very exposed ethnic organic instruments to differentiate the sound of this show, including a plucked instrument called the GuitarViol. It has its roots as a viola da gamba. There's the scene in the first episode where Sabine examines the orb map, where you might have expected the kind of investigative music cue that you hear a lot in drama scores, but





MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

The Kinners have scored *Star Wars* animation for years, most recently on *Tales of the Jedi* and *The Bad Batch*. Moving into the realm of live action was a new challenge. Besides working with a full orchestra each episode, they were able to go bigger and be far more ambitious.

"I would say this was much more like scoring a feature film, except more like three feature films!" Kevin laughs.

The three composers worked closely with *Ahsoka* creator and writer Dave Filoni, whose direction was clearly focused on his storytelling goals. "Dave was so good during spotting sessions," Kevin recalls. "He never really talked in musical terms, but more in emotional terms, and in terms of his story, 'This is what's happening here. This is what's going through her brain. These are the conflicts that the characters are facing internally.' That really helped us to interpret his story musically."

07 Sabine Wren and Ahsoka Tano had bridges to build at the start of the series.

08 The Kinners took inspiration from virtuoso pianist and composer Rachmaninoff for Baylan Skoll's theme.

07



► **SK:** In that specific scene, Sabine was returning to an earlier version of herself, if that makes any sense. A lot had happened, and she was having to put her armor back on.

DK: In *Ahsoka*, those characters were in very different places to where they had been in *Rebels*, and I don't think we'd fully realized that when we first approached scoring the show. Dave helped guide us towards the insight that they'd been through so much more than we'd ever even thought about. It helped us to understand where Ahsoka was at with Sabine, and where

Sabine was in that relationship also. That was a breakthrough moment for us.

Kevin, you mentioned that when you wrote "Ahsoka's Theme," it came without struggle. Did you have a similar experience with the themes in *Ahsoka*?

KK: I would say Baylan Skoll's theme. There was a Sergei Rachmaninoff influence that came rather quickly. Sean, you can speak to that.

SK: Skoll is established so strongly in his first few scenes, and Ray Stevenson's performance was so amazing that Baylan's theme was very natural to write. We used a Rachmaninoff influence on the voicing of the piano, with a melody that is a variation of "Dies irae,"

(a Gregorian chant first written in the 13th Century. Ed.) which the orchestra played with a heavy-metal influence. It's an ancient, cultural piece of music that has been associated with death and the ending of things.

KK: There's a bombastic piano that you don't get in *Star Wars* that plays when we first see Baylan as he marches along a hallway with his lightsaber. Our mantra was always, "Let's do something fresh. Let's do something that's never been heard before, especially in *Star Wars*."

DK: But it's also so *Star Wars* to be pulling from the sources that we've drawn inspiration from—the Japanese influences, classical music, Rachmaninoff, Akira Kurosawa movies, and discovering why these foundational things work so well and why they've stood the test of time.



08

Aside from the characters, how much of your composing is about the environment and developing a setting's general mood?

SK: When building environments, the secret sauce with *Star Wars* is that it presents an alien analog for the familiar. We reflected that in our score by using alien-sounding noises to emulate the familiar or taking familiar sounds and making them slightly alien.

DK: Like when Ahsoka explored the temple ruins in Episode One, where there is no dialogue at all.

KK: What I'm most proud of with that cue, which was a very long cue, is that the sounds were otherworldly. There are synthesizers that sound organic, and organic instruments that sound alien. We wanted the scene to be like nothing



09



10

11



you'd heard before. When we use a synthesizer, we want to mess it up. When we use an organic instrument, we want to play it in an unusual way. That's something you're allowed to do in *Star Wars* where the music is part of the storytelling mechanism.

DK: You should be able to listen to the score and know exactly what's happening. That's something Dave always talked about, that when he watched *Star Wars* as a kid there weren't DVDs. He couldn't just put the movie back on. But he had the soundtrack album, and sonically he could "see" every moment of the story. 🍷

12 Ray Stevenson as Baylan Skoll

09 Ahsoka Tano investigating post-Imperial intrigue on Corellia.

10 David Tennant provided the voice for Huyang.

11 Shin Hati (Ivanna Sakhno).

"Ray Stevenson's performance was so amazing that Baylan's theme was very natural to write." Sean Kiner



BECOME AN INSIDER & **SAVE UP TO 40%!**



Your #1 source for EVERYTHING *Star Wars*!

- **SAVE \$30!** 8 issues just \$49.99 Newsstand price: \$79.92
- **EXCLUSIVE** subscriber cover!
- **FREE** home delivery!
- **Become an INSIDER** – never miss an issue!

GET THE BEST PRICE – SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

[TITAN-COMICS.COM/INSIDER](https://titan-comics.com/insider)

U.S. ☎ 1 800 261 6502 or 847 559 7339 • Canada & ROW ☎ 847 559 7339 • U.K. & Europe ☎ +44 (0)1778 392085

EXPLORE THE STAR WARS INSIDER ARCHIVES

Check out these *Star Wars Insider* back issues...



Complete your collection, buy a gift,
pick up a rare cover!

FIND THESE ISSUES AND MANY, MANY MORE AT
[TITAN-COMICS.COM/INSIDER](https://www.titan-comics.com/insider)

V007 C'OVN110W1 K1N1OV17V17

A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW

Our resident *Star Wars* expert, Jay Stobie, consults his library of holocrons and ancient Jedi texts to answer your questions about the events, people, and places of the galaxy far, far away....



Concept art by Ralph McQuarrie

"The Empire allowed the *Millennium Falcon* to escape the Death Star so they could follow it to the rebel base. What's the difference between a tracking device and a transponder?"
Anna Kline, Florida, USA

While tracking devices and transponders served very unique purposes in the *Star Wars* galaxy, they both dealt with a key detail: information. Also known as homing beacons, tracking devices supplied their owners with the chance to covertly keep tabs on the location of any starship, so long as the tracker had been physically attached to the target

vessel. Whether you sought to pursue a foe to their next destination or merely stay updated about their position, a tracking device was the right tool to call upon.

On the other hand, transponder codes were signals broadcast by all ships that operated within the law. The transponder was built into the vessel itself, and contained such essential data as the starship's name, captain, port of registry, weapons profile, and more. These codes identified a vessel and could assist law enforcement with recognizing a wanted ship. The absence of a proper transponder, as was the case with the *Razor Crest* when Din Djarin flew

Trackers & Tricksters

Obi-Wan Kenobi

Unable to apprehend Jango Fett on Kamino, Obi-Wan Kenobi threw a tracking device at Fett's ship that secured itself to the vessel's hull. Kenobi's quick-thinking proved vital in tracing the bounty hunter's route to Geonosis and uncovering the Separatists' covert machinations.



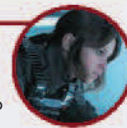
Weazel

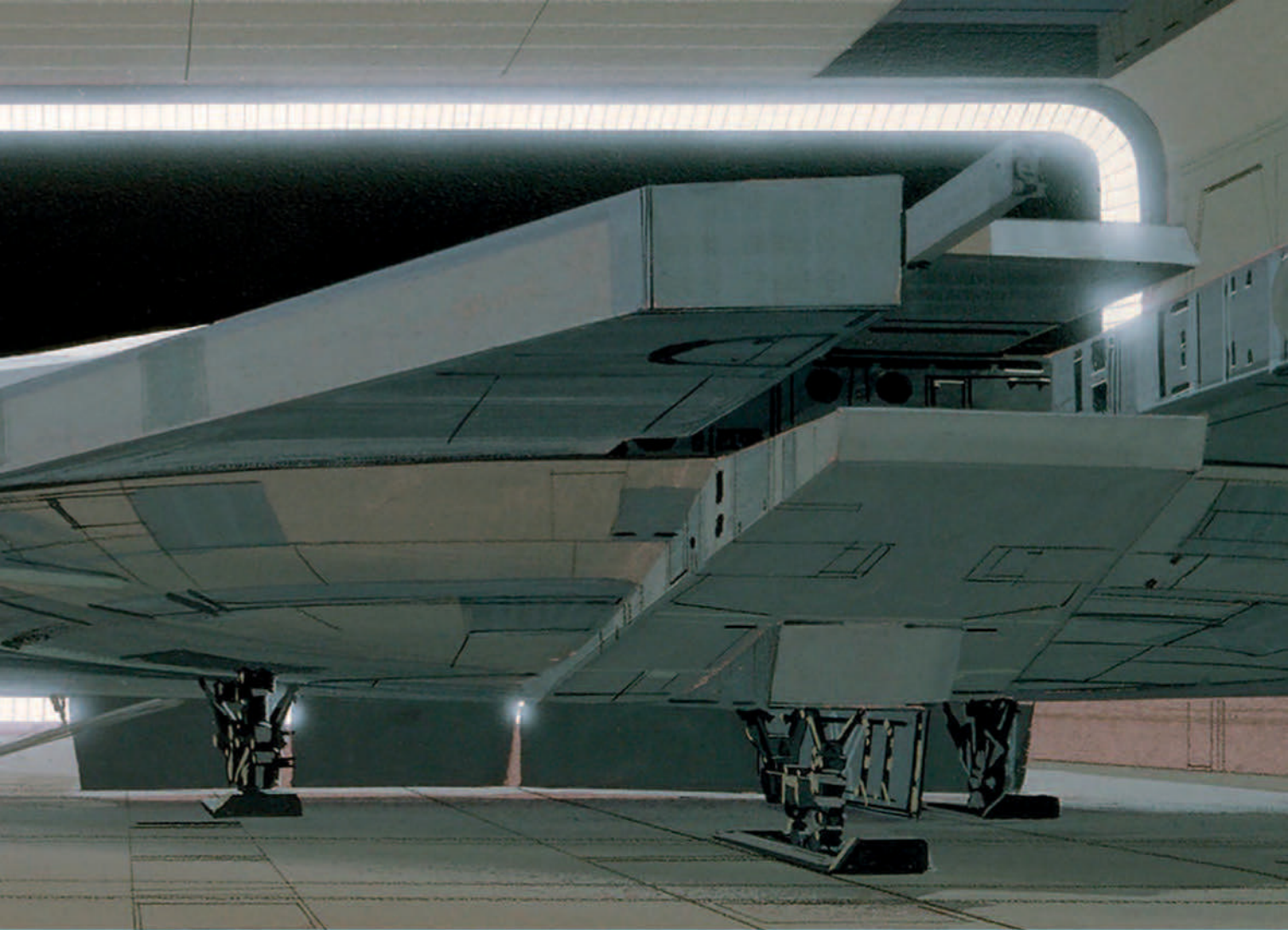
Hoping to procure valuable coaxium, Weazel secured a tracking device to the *Millennium Falcon* while it was docked on Vandor. Enfys Nest and the Cloud-Riders let the *Falcon's* crew obtain raw coaxium from Kessel, choosing instead to ambush Han Solo and his cohorts once they arrived at the refining facility on Savareen.



Jyn Erso

Having infiltrated the Imperial vault on Scarif to procure the Death Star plans, Jyn Erso noticed a file related to hyperspace tracking as she searched for the superweapon schematics. Decades later, the First Order deployed hyperspace tracking tech to follow the *Raddus* as the Resistance fleet fled D'Qar.





near Maldo Kreis, also alerted New Republic patrols to the possibility of criminal activity.

So, trackers and transponders each granted users with different types of data. However, as Dexter Jettster would have said, there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. The two pieces of tech in question gifted people with information but trusting that the data was always correct or was not being used in a deceptive manner could have dire consequences. ▶



Boba Fett

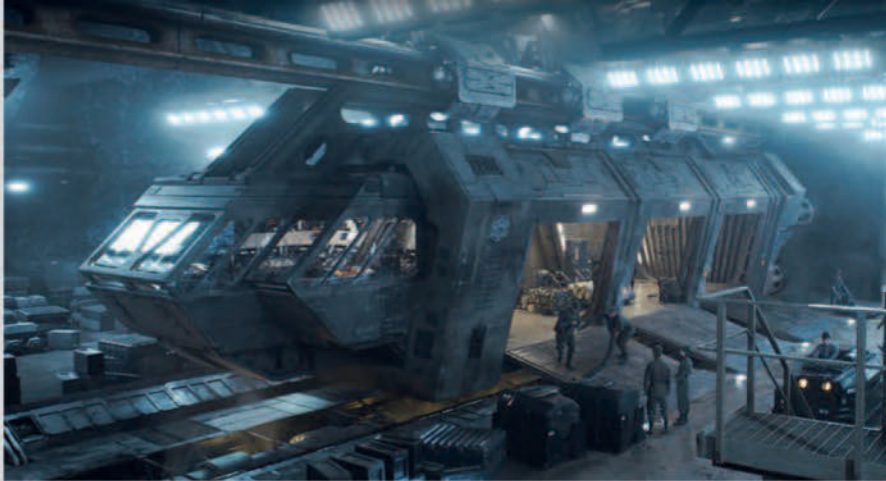
Proving why he was known as one of the galaxy's best bounty hunters, Boba Fett anticipated Han Solo's ruse of hiding within the trash ejected from Imperial Star Destroyers and tracked him to Cloud City. Fett's cleverness highlighted that one did not always need technology to locate their prey.



Carson Teva

As Din Djarin flew his new N-1 starfighter above Tatooine, he once again drew the attention of a pair of New Republic pilots who requested his transponder beacon. Carson Teva was willing to give Din Djarin a warning, but the Mandalorian sped off when Teva recognized his voice from the encounter above Maldo Kreis.





► Private Enterprise

Since tracking devices were typically placed secretly, most ships did not have an opportunity to counter them. Such was the case when Obi-Wan Kenobi planted one on Jango Fett's ship at Kamino, and the time Enfys Nest had Weazel secured a device to the *Millennium Falcon* at Vandor. The First Order perfected hyperspace tracking, which allowed them to follow a vessel without the need to plant a physical tracker on their target. Nevertheless, even these reliable beacons could fall prey to misinformation.

Darth Vader ensured a tracker was aboard the *Falcon* in order to locate the hidden rebel base, but Leia Organa wisely deduced its presence and chose to trade concealment for the possibility of cracking the Death Star's weakness. The gambit paid off and the Death Star 'lured' itself to its own destruction. After Cassian Andor and his cohorts used an Imperial freighter to escape Aldhani with stolen payroll onboard, they disabled the standard beacon the Empire had installed on the ship to evade capture. Without

any other means of tracking it, the vessel essentially disappeared into the vastness of space.

As for transponders, they were useful for identifying ships and assisting in emergency situations. Zeb Orrelios and Agent Kallus relied upon their escape pod's transponder to direct rescuers their way, while a New Republic officer activated a distress beacon to signal for backup when Migs Mayfeld arrived to break a prisoner out of his cell. Of course, once again, subterfuge proved inevitable. The *Ghost* crew released masking transponders, reprogrammable gadgets that could replicate a ship's identification signal, to confuse Imperial patrols at Lothal.

The always enigmatic Luthen Rael also deceived the Empire by transmitting a false transponder code that gave the impression that his haulcraft was an innocent Alderaanian vessel rather than a suspicious ship that required further inspection. So, as you can see, tracking devices and transponders were complex pieces of equipment that could be used or exploited for a variety of purposes. 📡

Biological Beacons

Starships were not the only things that could be tracked or identified. General Leia Organa kept a cloaked binary beacon that communicated with an identical device in Rey's possession on Ahch-To. By pairing the two beacons, Rey was able to find Leia and the Resistance after leaving the isolated world.



Similarly, the Empire's use of chain codes, or identification markers that describe individuals' biographical information and biometric data, continued to have ramifications in the post-Imperial era. Bounty hunters operated tracking fobs attuned to their target's data that let them hone in on their subject and confirm their identity.

PURSuing PREY

5 BSW4:

When his Fondor haulcraft was intercepted by a *Cantwell*-class Arrestor cruiser above Segra Milo, Luthen Rael attempted to conceal his identity by having his ship's computer provide the Imperials with a false transponder code.

0 BSW4:

Unable to retrieve the location of the Rebellion's secret base by interrogating Princess Leia Organa, Grand Moff Tarkin permitted the *Millennium Falcon* to escape the Death Star with a homing beacon attached to its hull.

9 ASW4:

Din Djarin utilized a tracking fob that was calibrated to an asset and followed the signal to Arvala-7. After a battle with outlaws and a standoff with IG-11, Din Djarin discovered his quarry was a very unexpected lifeform.

9 ASW4:

En route to Trask, Din Djarin's *Razor Crest* drew attention from a New Republic X-wing patrol for not running a transponder beacon.

34 ASW4:

Rey and Finn's escape from Jakku aboard the *Millennium Falcon* gave Han Solo and Chewbacca the opportunity to spot the modified freighter on their scopes.

35 ASW4:

The First Order's hyperspace tracking technology allowed its TIE pilots at the Sinta Glacier Colony to keep pace with the *Millennium Falcon* as Poe Dameron lightspeed skipped the ship across the galaxy.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Send your in-galaxy queries to starwarsinsider@titanemail.com with the subject header, "A Certain Point of View."

STAR WARS[™] INSIDER[™]

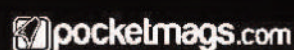
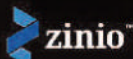
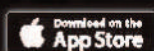
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

WHEREVER YOU ARE...



www.pktmags.com/swi222

Whatever your device there's an edition for you.
Search 'Star Wars Insider' on these platforms



STAR WARS INSIDER WORLDWIDE

CELEBRATING THE SAGA

PRIDE TROOPER

Celebrating the LGBTQ+ community with cosplay



Dutch cosplayer Niels was introduced to the *Star Wars* galaxy via a friend's VHS copy of *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1981. "In the Netherlands movies aren't dubbed, but shown in the original language and subtitled," he explains. "I was six, and the subtitles went too fast to read, so my friend's mom translated the movie for us. I became an instant fan."

Niels joined the 501st Legion while living in the U.S. with his husband and transferred to the Dutch Garrison when they moved back to the Netherlands. In addition to improving his stormtrooper costume, he wanted to add something personal. "I felt it important to show that the fandom and the Garrison supports the LGBTQ+ community, and that it is a safe place to be yourself," he said. "So, I decided to add a shoulder

INSIDER NEEDS YOU!

We want to hear from you! Tell us about your *Star Wars* experience. What made you want to become a fan? What have you done in the name of *Star Wars*? Tell us your *Star Wars* story by sending your photos, art, and letters here:

starwarsinsider@titanemail.com

Or via regular post:

UNITED STATES
Star Wars Worldwide,
Star Wars Insider,
Titan Magazines,
2819 Rosehall Lane,
Aurora, IL, 60503,
U.S.A.

UNITED KINGDOM
Star Wars Worldwide,
Star Wars Insider,
144 Southwark
Street, London,
SE1 0UP,
U.K.

pauldron like the sandtroopers have, but with the Pride flag on it.”

Niels finished building the costume during COVID lockdowns and posted photos to social media, where he received a lot of support. “Various comments motivated me to post more and even make some reels pointing out the various LGBTQ+ characters that exist in *Star Wars* canon and Legends,” he said.

He first wore his armor at a large public event at Heroes Dutch Comic Con in the spring of 2022. “I was very nervous, but I was there with the Dutch Garrison so I felt supported, no matter what,” he recalls. “The messages of appreciation and support were very surprising.”



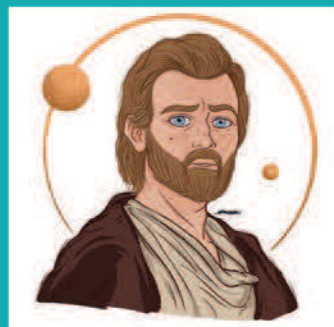
ARTISTS' ALLEY

Talented *Star Wars* fans share their amazing drawings inspired by the galaxy far, far away....



01 "DOOKU & SNIPS" AND "KENOBI" BY OLAZIEN

Olazien credits the original trilogy for turning him into a *Star Wars* fan, and his love for the saga only deepened as he watched the newer movies and spin-offs. “I’ve always expressed my enjoyment for the franchise through art, and when *Tales of the Jedi* and *Obi-Wan Kenobi* came out in 2022, I knew that I had to create my own art as these series focused on some of my all-time favorite characters,” says the artist.



02 "CODY AND CROSSHAIR" BY JADE T.

Commander Cody's return in *The Bad Batch*'s second season thrilled many fans, as did the modifications to his armor. “My main inspiration to draw Cody and Crosshair came from my pure excitement to see them back in action as our protagonists that season,” explains fan artist Jade T. “Their journey from heroes to serving the Empire is so interesting to me, and I’m excited to see how that affects them and their clone brothers around them!”



BOUNTY HUNTERS

Scouring the galaxy for the stars of *Star Wars*...

CHARTERMASTER
KOTOBUKIYA

Meet the stars, show the evidence, win the bounty! Bounty Hunters is sponsored by Kotobukiya. Each issue's winner will receive a fantastic Kotobukiya *Star Wars* statue kit! To see more, visit www.facebook.com/kotobukiyaofficial.



RUPERT FRIEND:

Quizzing the Grand Inquisitor



Devin Doty poses with Rupert Friend, the actor who portrayed the Grand Inquisitor in *Obi-Wan Kenobi*.

At a recent convention, fan Devin Doty had a fun run-in with Rupert Friend, known to the *Star Wars* community as *Star Wars: Obi-Wan Kenobi*'s Grand Inquisitor.

"As he walked by, I greeted him as Grand Inquisitor," explains Devin. "He stopped to talk about the show, and he recited some quotes from the Grand Inquisitor, in particular 'the Jedi code is like an itch.'"

"Rupert had played multiple dapper gentlemen in period dramas like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Young Victoria*," shares Devin. "It's no surprise that he was just as suave in real life, which was why I told him he has my vote to be the next James Bond. He was kind enough to sign some Grand Inquisitor prints for myself and my buddy, Justin Nunez. When we took some photos together, I suggested, 'You play a villain, so let's not smile for the camera,' and we didn't!"

WORLDWIDE

A MAKER'S MAGIC

Building a *Star Wars* collection from scratch

For Bree, *Star Wars* has been as much about family bonding as it has been about being entertained. "When I was a kid, *Star Wars* was the one thing my military dad and I got to geek out about together," shares the fan. "As a young girl, he always took me to see the latest movies and encouraged my pocket money to go on *Star Wars* figures instead of Barbie dolls.

"I enjoy building pieces that highlight my favorite scenes and are budget friendly," says Bree. "As much as I love seeing the expensive collectibles, it's satisfying to build things yourself." This hobby has led Bree to construct a host of iconic items from the galaxy far, far away, and found cozy places for them to reside at home. A gonk droid, atop



which sits a porg and a Kowakian monkey-lizard, as well as a control panel inspired by *Star Wars* decor and attached to a monitor, are just some of Bree's many creations.

However, Bree sees another member of the collection as the prized jewel of the bunch. "My favorite working piece is my Ewok. I built the body using spray foam, clay, Christmas decorations, gardening gloves, and fake fur," explains the fan. "The entire build cost around \$150 and stands at about a meter tall." Like any artist, Bree is always looking to improve the design. "I will finish adding pieces to the Ewok one day, I'm sure."

Of course, the driving force behind *Star Wars* has been its characters. "I will always love the fierce independence of Princess Leia," shares Bree, "Carrie Fisher really influenced the kind of person I've become—fearless, loyal, and creative. I have loved to see the journey that took Leia from princess to general and enjoyed the glimpse into her character during the *Obi-Wan Kenobi* series."





Photos by Luisa Raimondi and Alberto La

PROTECTING THE LIGHT

Finding meaning with Vice Admiral Holdo

Eva Enchanted has been a huge fan of the *Star Wars* saga since she was a little girl. “I owe it to my father, who first took me to see *A New Hope*,” Eva explains. While she has always had a great interest in cosplaying, she only started doing so herself after her son joined the 501st Legion. “I love to bring characters created by my imagination to the stage,” she said. “I think it was not by chance that I approached the world of cosplay.”

Eva felt drawn to the character of Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo, who was her first cosplay. “Holdo and I definitely have something in common,” she said. “She sacrificed her own life to save others, for the sake of the cause. While I certainly cannot say that I have ‘sacrificed’ my life, I have faced many difficult situations, so have always set myself the goal of helping others whenever I can.

“The greatest difficulty in putting the costume together was finding the fabric with the same color tone as the

character’s,” she recalls. “The Force was with us, though, and we were eventually successful in finding the right one.” For Eva, cosplay is more than just fun. “It has revolutionized the way I relate to others,” she declares. “Sometimes, I attend events in the pediatric wards of hospitals as Amilyn Holdo or a Marvel character. The smiles the children welcome us with are priceless, filling my heart with joy. I think I can say that, in a way, cosplaying has also made me a better person.”

TK-101

HINTS, TIPS, AND IDEAS FOR CRAFTING
YOUR OWN STAR WARS GALAXY



INSPIRATION AND PERSPIRATION

TK-101 talks to *Star Wars* artist Karen Hallion about what it takes to become a professional, and how she achieves such incredible results.

WORDS: CHRISTOPHER COOPER



Karen Hallion's work was exhibited as part of the *Star Wars Celebration 2015* Art Show, and she was among the artists who contributed to *Star Wars: Women of the Galaxy*, published by Chronicle Books in 2018. She also provided cover art for *Star Wars Insider's* Celebration special editions in 2019. With an illustrated children's book under her belt, and another book in the pipeline, TK-101 spoke to the artist about how she turned her hobby into a busy career.

"My ambitions to become a professional artist didn't emerge until late in high school," Karen Hallion tells TK-101. "I was college-bound and considering a career in political science when I saw Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989). I had always been a geeky kid, but something about that movie inspired me. When I got home, I spent hours drawing Ariel."

After two years at the University of Vermont, Hallion transferred to Ringling College of Art in Florida, determined to pursue a career in

illustration or animation. "A few years after graduation, I found a job in an elementary school as a paraprofessional then as an art teacher," she reveals. "All that time, I was working on my skills and putting together a portfolio, hoping to run a career in art alongside my teaching role."

However, when the teaching job ended after six years, Hallion decided to try freelancing as an artist full time and began posting her pop-culture artwork on social media. "I decided to draw things that I'd always wanted to—Disney characters, *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who*, and the like—and put my art out there even when it felt like no one was seeing it. I followed artists whose career paths matched what I wanted to do, and that's how I came to apply to be a part of 2015's *Star Wars Celebration Art Show* in Anaheim. That was a big opportunity for me, and it's led to many more since. I've gotten to work on some great projects and properties in the last few years, although *Star Wars* will always be my favorite."

Love Letters

"I've always been a pop-culture junkie," Hallion admits. "My best pieces of art come from my passion for a story or a character that I love. I like to find a theme or message that speaks to me and convey that through my art: Leia's spark of



defiance, Ahsoka's kind heart, Amidala's leadership. I'm also drawn to depicting strong women. Most of my art is a love letter to my favorite characters."

When it comes to sourcing references for likenesses, Hallion's approach depends on the venture. "I can be a little looser and more experimental if I'm doing something



PAINTING FAVORITES

"Amidala in her red throne room gown is one of my favorites to draw," says Hallion. "It doesn't matter what your skill level is, I know she seems complicated, but I always focus on the basic shapes of her dress and headpiece. Princess Leia will always and forever be my favorite *Star Wars* character, but Amidala in that costume might be my favorite *Star Wars* thing to draw.

SETTING THE TONE

"For my 2019 Celebration piece, I wanted to depict that emotional scene with Luke and Leia from *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. As a lifelong fan, seeing them on the screen together was very emotional, and the loss of Carrie Fisher made it all the more so," Karen Hallion tells TK-101. "I decided an art nouveau framing, with a somber color palette would be best suited to that scene. I put Darth Vader and Kylo Ren's helmets up in the corners with forget-me-not flowers. Adding little subtle touches and details like that is something I love to do, and art nouveau is perfect for that."



just for me, but if it's an illustration for a licensed project, I need to get a lot of good reference," the artist explains. "I'll spend hours gathering photos with good lighting and detail. I'll sketch out a few compositions to help decide on the tone and message that I want to convey. The next part of the process alternates between enjoyable and painful. I love drawing, I love doing the linework, but I struggle with color, so that's where the torture and tears begin!"

Hallion currently uses digital tools for her work, although her roots are in traditional media. "Ten years ago, I was working on wood panels with ink and acrylic glazes. Ten years before that I used colored pencils and watercolors," she says. "It's tough to say if one approach is more suited to a subject matter; I think it's more what speaks to an artist at a specific time in their career. Right now, I prefer my iPadPro and the Procreate app. Plus, I've found some great brushes, and they have really helped push my art in a direction that I am enjoying. I do miss the smell of paint, so I'm sure I will make my way back to traditional media at some point."

One piece of advice Hallion is evangelical about is that everyone can draw. "I was an elementary school art teacher, kindergarten to fifth grade, for six years. One of my biggest goals was to instill in my

students that everyone can draw, everyone can create, and everyone is an artist. Kindergartners understand this but by the time children reach their pre-teen years, perfectionism takes over. They think if their art isn't 'right' or 'perfect,' it's bad. They get frustrated and give up. I wrote my first children's book about this exact thing. Drawing is a skill that you can learn and practice and work at, but it's also something you can just do for fun. Art isn't perfect, it shouldn't be, because perfect is boring. 🧡



The *Star Wars* Archive

The behind-the-scenes
story of a galaxy far,
far away....

FOREVER ROYALTY

The irrepressible Carrie Fisher, who passed away on December 16, 2016, was a successful author, playwright, screenwriter, and performer, but as far as *Star Wars* fans are concerned, we'll always remember her as royalty—namely Princess Leia Organa.

The daughter of Hollywood actress Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher, she beat numerous rising stars who were also in the running for the role, including future screen legends Jodie Foster, Kim Basinger, and Kathleen Turner. Thanks to her assured performance in auditions, and natural chemistry with Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker) and Harrison Ford (Han Solo), she eventually secured the part.

"I didn't stop being Leia," Fisher said in an interview promoting the release of *The Force Awakens* in 2015. "I've stayed in character for the last 35 years. I try to keep her fit and ready for action," she joked.

01 Carrie Fisher rehearsing Princess Leia's introductory scene with David Prowse (Darth Vader) and several unhelmeted stormtrooper extras, during the filming of *A New Hope*.

02 Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill smile for a candid behind-the-scenes photo on the set of *Return of the Jedi*.

03 Fisher relaxing between takes on the Cloud City set while filming *The Empire Strikes Back*.

01



02



03

04



05



04 Fisher (left) returned to the role of Leia for *The Force Awakens*, with her daughter Billie Lourd (right) joining her as the Resistance's Lieutenant Kaydel Ko Connix.

05 Carrie Fisher as General Leia Organa in *The Last Jedi*, seen here on the set of an old rebel base on the planet Crait.

06 Harrison Ford (left), director J.J. Abrams (center), and Carrie Fisher (right) during filming of *The Force Awakens*.

07 Fisher sharing a joke with the late Jamie Christopher, first assistant director on *The Last Jedi*.



06



07



THE HAIR

The famous “donut” hairstyle worn by Princess Leia Organa in *A New Hope* was the result of a long design process.

Various concepts were explored, from austere, pulled back locks to unkempt contemporary looks (see above Ralph McQuarrie sketch), but it was only during costume fittings, just before filming commenced, that the now-iconic bun hairstyle was decided upon.

“I had at least thirty hairdos tried on me,” Fisher was quoted in J.W. Rinzler’s book, *The Making of Star Wars*. “The hairdresser woman Pat [McDermott] put on me what she had as an idea for the hair—and that was it. I went into the cantina and showed George the hair, and he said, ‘That’s okay.’” 🍩





STAR WARS


GALACTIC TALES

VALNIR AND LAIZHU

BY RICHARD DINNICK

Laizhu Bedenn quietly sliced through the skin of a bantha, an island of calm in the chaos of the palace kitchens. The staff had been toiling around the clock to prepare a feast for a wealthy visitor and his entourage, currently being entertained in the throne room. Bib Fortuna had ordered a sumptuous spread of untold courses, and there were still plenty to serve up. Whatever was going on elsewhere in the palace, Laizhu's policy of personal tranquillity had kept her alive for longer than many who'd had the misfortune to work in the service of Jabba Desilijic Tiure. Her motto was, "No confrontations, no complications." ►

Concept art by
Ralph McQuarrie



The kitchens were a cramped warren comprised of numerous small galleys, preparation spaces, and larders. It was also stiflingly hot. But Laizhu was a native of Tatooine. Heat was in her blood. For three years now she had been working hard to pay off her debts to the daimyo, although her culinary services had barely made a dent in what she owed. The interest charged always added up to more than the stipend she received.

She'd once been someone to look up to; a businesswoman that people came to for advice. Her modest Mos Espa diner had been a place one could be guaranteed a good meal at a fair price. She'd always managed to keep on top of her tribute payments to Jabba until some greedy spark had increased the levy. Laizhu couldn't pay. Jabba had been displeased. Now she was trapped in these kitchens as a short-order chef, meal planner, and general culinary all-rounder.

No one looked up to her these days. Well, that wasn't entirely true. There was her friend, Valnir Nai, an innocent young waitress who had arrived from Klatooine less than a year ago with a large delivery of paddy frogs for Jabba's delectation. "Naïve Val" some called her, but Laizhu knew better. Valnir was sharp enough to never answer back, to keep her head down, and to keep out of the Hutt's way. They shared a lot in common, and she was a constant source of juicy gossip to those in the kitchens who rarely ventured beyond its confines. But Valnir lacked Laizhu's experience, and the older woman worried about the kid whenever there were guests in the palace.

As if on cue, Valnir burst breathlessly into the kitchen, looking flustered.

"What happened to you?" Laizhu asked, laying her vibroblade on the countertop. "One of those Tusken lizards get up your nose?" She folded her arms, a smile tugging at her mouth.

"They're rich!" Valnir grinned, her hazel eyes flashing with excitement.

Laizhu smirked at her friend. "Jabba's esteemed guests usually are."

"They came in speeders like I've never seen. Real luxury jobs. And their tribute—boxes full of jewels from every quadrant," the waitress gushed. "I heard they're taking the sail barge out later. Gonna throw some debtors into the pit."

"Tribute season always goes bad for

someone," Laizhu sighed. "At least we'll get a break!" The memory of her lost diner flashed across her mind as she went back to slicing the meat with increased vigor. But Valnir wasn't finished.

"I was talking to that new skiff guard, and he told me this guy is some off-world landowner," Valnir confided. "Apparently he's got Imperial permits for industrial agriculture and is looking to get into the spice business."

Laizhu pulled a face. She hated that filth with a vengeance. "Wait. What new skiff guard?"

Valnir cast her gaze to the floor, suddenly shy but clearly pleased Laizhu had asked. "The handsome one," she said. "With the moustache. A scoundrel, I reckon..."

Laizhu rolled her eyes. Another crush.

Valnir's platter was almost empty by the time she'd circled the throne room, but she'd made sure to keep a few of the tastiest morsels back for a certain guard who was leaning against a pillar in one of its darker corners. The young serving girl briefly wondered why he always wore his helmet, its metallic grill obscuring his striking features as if he didn't want to be recognized.

"Dune Sea Delicacy?" she said coyly as she proffered her tray of sweet meats. The man smiled back as he took one, lowering his grill just enough to pop the delicacy into his mouth. Valnir felt her heart skip a beat.

"This is good," he murmured appreciatively. "Are you trying to feed me up for our inevitable wedding?" Valnir felt her skin blush and went to protest her innocence, but he grinned and held up his hand. "Don't worry, I'm just messing with you."

Valnir tried not to feel hurt when the guard's attention quickly shifted away from her and towards the partygoers, but she couldn't help it. That's how she ended up here in the first place, after all. Men. Scoundrels. Valnir used to be a singer. Respectable. Trained by a Bith opera mistress. And she was good, incorporating the singing with the feats of balletic gymnastics required to reach the heights both figuratively and for real.

Then came Tuds. The lawman with a lax sense of right and wrong.

They were saving and almost had enough to move to Coruscant. For her to get into one of the Galactic opera houses; for him to join the Coruscant Security Force. At least, that's what Tuds said. They'd made the journey as far as Klatooine, which Valnir had paid for as he hadn't "marshaled all his funds," as he put it. What he'd meant by that, as it turned out, was that he hadn't yet stolen all her savings and flown away on a starliner to who knows where.

Valnir was left with nothing but the clothes she was wearing, a few Imperial credits she had in her pockets, and, it seemed, an unrelenting penchant for scoundrel types.

She smiled ruefully at the back of the Skiff guard's head, gave him a perfunctory bow and retreated from the throne room, not paying much attention to the direction she headed. As a result, she unexpectedly found herself in one of the corridors leading to the stores. The quiet, dark passage was refreshingly cool after the heady atmosphere of the throne room, and she let her free hand run along its walls, enjoying the chill of condensation on her fingertips.

She was on the verge of retracing her steps and heading back to the kitchens when she heard someone up ahead. Valnir hid herself behind a stack of crates and peered curiously through an open door, beyond which one of Bib Fortuna's flunkies—a pompous and unpleasant Snivvian accountant who was always trying to get the kitchen staff into trouble—was busy cataloging... what?

The grin on the accountant's face grew even broader and his protruding fangs wobbled beneath his snout as he chuckled to himself. Valnir's eyes widened. The Snivvian held a huge gem in his small, hairy paw, examining its gleaming facets through a pair of bulbous eyeglasses, which made his own beady black eyes look huge. He tapped his findings into a datapad and placed the gem into a more secure metal container than the aged casket he'd pulled it from. The tribute the off-worlder had brought with him, Valnir reasoned.

The Snivvian almost dropped his eyeglasses at the unexpected buzz of his comlink, and Valnir could just make out Fortuna's barked orders resonating from the device's speaker. As soon as the communication ended, the Snivvian

hurriedly packed up his equipment, cursing bitterly in his own tongue. Then he paused, and Valnir almost gasped as she watched him pluck an uncatalogued jewel from the casket and slip it into his pocket. He operated the door controls and hurried away as it slid shut.

Valnir sighed. "If only," she murmured. To even touch such a gem was beyond her wildest dreams. To reclaim just a fraction of what had been taken from her.

Fate, it seemed, was smiling on Valnir. That particular room had been cleared of produce only a few days prior, and she'd helped clear it. As such, she knew the lock had been faulty for some time. Sure enough, after a few moments she heard an electronic fizz and it unlocked itself. A short circuit or something? She had no idea, and right now she didn't care. Without a second thought, Valnir slipped inside the room. To her shock she saw more than one casket inside. There were a dozen, at least. She swallowed.

"What harm is there looking?" she wondered. And if the person chosen to catalogue the tribute was happy to pocket a gemstone, then why not her?

Valnir opened a casket and grabbed a gem, marveling at the refracted light sparkling within it. The jewel was light blue and so very, very pretty. She held it to her lips and squeezed her eyes shut, half expecting to wake up or be dragged to a cell by a gaggle of lumpen Gamorreans, snorting and wheezing through their huge nostrils, their thick green biceps pressed into her face. When neither happened, she snuck the blue jewel into her belt pouch and made to leave.

Then it hit her. Why just one?

None of the other sparkling gemstones in the casket had been counted, she figured. There were so many, who would miss a few more? A handful would easily go unnoticed. Maybe more? She could carry a fair few on the food platter, but what if they rolled off? Valnir smiled. How many jewels could be hidden under her serving platter's domed lid?

Before she knew it, she had scooped handfuls of the precious jewels onto the oval plate until the entire platter was covered right up to the lip. She lowered the cover onto the dish, composed herself, and slipped out of the room, making sure to seal the lock. Then she

**VALNIR
OPENED A
CASKET AND
GRABBED
A GEM,
MARVELING
AT THE
REFRACTED
LIGHT
SPARKLING
WITHIN IT.**

VALNIR WINCED AT THE GEMSTONES THAT HAD SPILLED ACROSS THE CORRIDOR, A RAINBOW OF GUILT.

headed towards the kitchens, as if she was delivering an ornate dessert. At least that's how she hoped it looked.

Despite the palace corridors being unusually quiet, Valnir checked her pace and walked as calmly as possible, terrified of being caught. Then she remembered that by now most of the palace's grim occupants would be piling onto Jabba's sail barge for their excursion to the Pit of Carkoon. Buoyed by her continuing good fortune, Valnir walked faster—and straight into someone hurrying in the opposite direction.

The plater and its contents clattered to the floor, its cover slowly spinning to a stop. Valnir winced at the gemstones that had spilled across the corridor, a rainbow of guilt. She froze. She was dead for sure.

"Well, well, well. What have we here?" said the man, smoothly. Even as he helped her to her feet, it took the waitress a moment to recognize her gallant skiff guard.

"I..." Valnir had no idea what to say. Then a thought struck her. "Shouldn't you be on the barge?"

"I have other business to attend to," the guard said, scooping up the fallen jewels and carefully piling them back onto the dish before repositioning the cover.

Valnir frowned. What was he doing? Was he going to blackmail her?

"It's all yours," she heard herself beg. "Just don't tell anyone I took it."

The guard smiled, offering her the covered dish. "I didn't see a thing."

"But...?"

"No one belongs in this hellhole," he said kindly, placing a reassuring hand on her shoulder. "Not me, and definitely not a kid like you. Use it. Get yourself out of here and as far away as possible."

Valnir was now fully in love with this wonderful, mysterious man. "Who are you?" she whispered.

His eyes glazed for a second as if transported somewhere else. He didn't strike Valnir to be one with his head in the clouds.

"A friend..." he said, refocusing on the young woman.

Before the guard could finish, the gruff voice of Raymo, one of Jabba's Rodian enforcers, suddenly echoed from the far end of the corridor.

"What are you two doing down here?" the lithe, green figure growled in

Hutttese, each word contorting the snout beneath his big, pupilless eyes.

"You want to stand between Jabba and a delivery of fresh paddy frogs, be my guest," the skiff guard snarled back, squaring up to the Rodian. He turned to Valnir and gave her a wink. "You've taken long enough already," he admonished her. "If you're not on that barge before it leaves it'll be the rancor that gets a snack, understand? GO!"

Valnir rushed away, now carrying the platter with both hands as carefully as a newborn, and choking back tears.

All was quiet in the kitchen when Valnir rushed in and headed straight to the larder that Laizhu jokingly called her "office." Laizhu knew immediately that her friend was distressed, but when the young serving girl showed her what was beneath the silver dome and explained its provenance, the chef only became more concerned.

"What have you done?"

"I only copied what the Snivvian did," Valnir sobbed.

"He took *one*! You've lifted a whole jewelry store!" Laizhu threw a gesture at the plate of gems. "We need to hide this. Or get rid of it. Fast!"

Valnir was insistent. "No! We need to leave, like he said."

"Who?"

"My skiff guard," said the waitress.

"Listen, we go to the hangar and take one of those luxury speeders. We'll be long gone before the barge gets back."

Laizhu frowned. She'd had dreams of escape that had played out just like this. But could they get away with it? There was only one way to find out. She grabbed an innocuous looking vegetable sack and stuffed the jewels inside, lifting it like a goblet of wine to toast her friend.

"What are we waiting for?" Laizhu declared.

The dream was shattered the instant they stepped out of the larder to find Raymo waiting in the galley.

"Jabba didn't get his treat, then?" the Rodian sneered, raising his blaster. "I knew you were up to something. Get back in there!"

They retreated into the pantry and Raymo signaled for them to stop. "Put the sack down."

Valnir bit her lip. He must have followed her, and now they were dead meat. Shuddering, she placed the bag on the nearest work top. Raymo nudged it with the tip of his blaster and a flood of gems tumbled out.

Laizhu watched them reflected in Raymo's dark, hungry eyes.

"I didn't know you had it in you!" he rasped. "Stealing from the mighty Jabba? You serving girls really are stupid!"

The Rodian bent forward and scooped up a handful of gems, his snout twitching greedily, so captivated by the iridescent stones that he failed to notice Laihzu reach for a hefty metal skillet. She swung the pan down on his skull with as much force as she could muster, sending Raymo crashing to the floor. His blaster discharged as he fell, a rogue bolt striking the sack and sending shattered jewels into every nook and cranny of the kitchen.

As the smoke cleared, Laihzu and Valnir surveyed the carnage.

"We have to leave. Now!" gasped the older woman.

"Wait," said Valnir, bending to grab one of the stones that had flown onto the floor. "Now we can go."

A trio of Gamorrean guards grunting at the effort of running, lumbered past the alcove in which Valnir and Laihzu were hiding. The women waited until the thumping footsteps of the ugly green brutes could barely be heard before breaking cover and continuing their perilous journey.

Thanks to the Sarlacc excursion being enjoyed by most of the palace entourage, they had encountered hardly anyone as they made their way up through the higher levels to the main hangar. The cavernous space seemed even larger without the sail barge that usually occupied it. Save for a battered-looking *Firespray*-class ship and the sleek speeders they were hoping to steal, the place was practically empty. At the far end, sunlight poured invitingly through the hangar's vast entrance.

Then Laihzu spotted a leather-faced Weequay mechanic taking advantage of the downtime to practice cheating at sabacc. They were going to have to get past him if they were going to make it to the speeders.

"What are you two doing here?" The bemused mechanic stared at the women with mild disinterest as they walked innocently towards him.

"We, um..." Laizhu faltered.

"Those landspeeders that arrived the other day," Valnir suddenly piped up, her natural effervescence disguising her terror. She gave the mechanic her most alluring smile. "Any chance we could take a look?"

The Weequay leant back in his seat, suspicious, stroking the small horns on his lower jaw. "Well, that depends."

"On what?" asked Laizhu.

"What it's worth," answered the Weequay, grinding his teeth lasciviously.

Seemingly out of nowhere, a large, yellow gemstone skittered across the floor, coming to a halt directly in the mechanic's line of sight.

"Oh, that's pretty," gushed Valnir. "Is it yours?"

The mechanic's eyes widened but he had clearly not taken the hint. His bony brows knitted together in confusion. The Imperial credit only dropped when he noticed Laihzu and Valnir's overly innocent expressions.

"Um, oh yes. I wondered where that had gone," the Weequay growled, hastily reaching down to retrieve the gem. "I'd better go and put it somewhere safe. Don't want to lose it again!" he chuckled unconvincingly, before sauntering off towards a repair bay.

As soon as he was out of sight, the women raced towards the nearest of the expensive looking landspeeders, jumping into the one closest to the doors.

Laizhu gunned the engines. They sounded powerful. "Power cell is full. It's ready to go," she grinned and looked over at her young friend in the passenger seat. "How about you?"

"We don't have any gems left," Valnir admitted, crestfallen.

"We got enough to get us this far," Laizhu laughed. "And this ride has got to be worth a few credits, right?"

"Right!" Valnir laughed.

With that, Valnir placed her hand on top of Laizhu's, and they pushed the throttle forward together.

The sleek speeder burst out of the gloom of Jabba's palace and into bright sunlight.

THE END

JEDI MASTER'S QUIZ

Star Wars:
The Mandalorian's third season began with Din Djarin's quest to rejoin the Way, and ended with the liberation of Mandalore. What do you remember about the epic adventure?

Compiled by
Jay Stobie

"I'M GOING TO MANDALORE."

Shed the mantle of an apostate and showcase your knowledge of *The Mandalorian* Season Three.

DIN DIJARIN AND GROGU

1: Why did Din Djarin visit Nevarro before his initial trip to Mandalore?

- A/ To have his ship repaired
- B/ To rebuild IG-11
- C/ To become the new marshal
- D/ To drink spotchka



2: Who attacked Din Djarin after he first arrived on Mandalore?

- A/ Death Watch
- B/ Trandoshans
- C/ Alamites
- D/ Stormtroopers

3: What did the Armorer forge for Grogu?

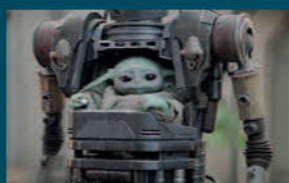
- A/ A helmet
- B/ A jetpack
- C/ A rondel
- D/ A whistling bird

4: Where was Grogu granted a knighthood in the Ancient Order of Independent Regencies?

- A/ Plazir-15
- B/ Sorgan
- C/ Arvala-7
- D/ Dantooine

5: Members of which species built a droid vehicle for Grogu?

- A/ Ugnaught
- B/ Kaminoan
- C/ Weequay
- D/ Anzellan



THE MANDALORIANS



6: Where were the Living Waters beneath the mines of Mandalore located?

- A/ Concordia
- B/ Saxon City
- C/ Kalevala
- D/ Sundari

7: Which creature did Bo-Katan Kryze see in the Living Waters?

- A/ Mythosaur
- B/ Colo claw fish
- C/ Ravinak
- D/ Opee sea killer



8: What was the Mandalorian covert given for liberating Nevarro from pirates?

- A/ The pirates' corsair
- B/ Beskar ore
- C/ A parcel of land
- D/ Republic credits

9: Who commanded the Mandalorian privateer vessel that intercepted a Quarren starship?

- A/ Gar Saxon
- B/ Axe Woves
- C/ Cobb Vanth
- D/ Koska Reeves



10: Why did Paz Vizsla sacrifice himself on Mandalore?

- A/ To defeat Moff Gideon
- B/ To cover Bo-Katan's escape
- C/ To obtain the Darksaber
- D/ To reignite the Great Forge



FRIENDS, FOES, AND FUGITIVES

11: Nevarro became an official trade spur of which hyperspace route?

- A/ The Corellian Run
- B/ The Kashyyykian Path
- C/ The Rimma Trade Route
- D/ The Hydian Way

12: What type of droid did Peli Motto sell to Din Djarin?

- A/ Astromech
- B/ Pit droid
- C/ IG unit
- D/ Treadwell



13: Why did Doctor Pershing go to the Imperial disposal yards on Coruscant?

- A/ To obtain a mobile lab station
- B/ To steal a Star Destroyer
- C/ To erase his personnel file
- D/ To encrypt a transmission

14: Grogu escaped Order 66 aboard a starship manufactured on which planet?

- A/ Jakku
- B/ Dagobah
- C/ Naboo
- D/ Tatooine



15: Whose clones did Din Djarin destroy on Mandalore?

- A/ Admiral Pellaeon's
- B/ Moff Gideon's
- C/ Commandant Hux's
- D/ Grand Moff Tarkin's

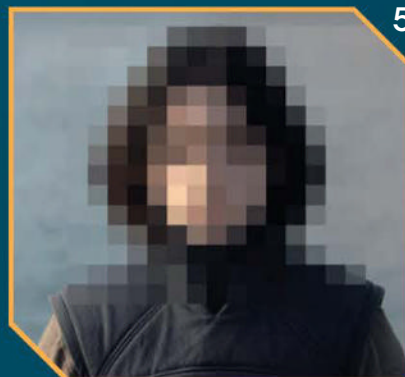
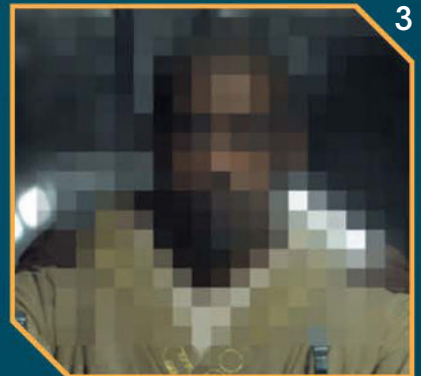
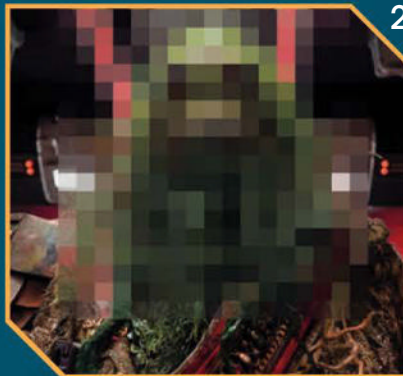
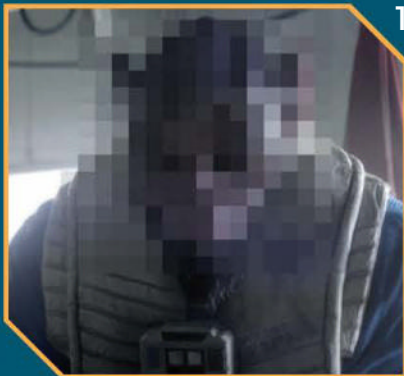
“WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?”

Determine who said these memorable lines in *The Mandalorian*'s third season:

1. **“THIS IS THE FORGE. IT IS THE HEART OF MANDALORIAN CULTURE.”**
2. **“YOU MAY NO LONGER HAVE A HOME PLANET, BUT YOU DO NOW HAVE A HOME.”**
3. **“NEVER TRUST A PIRATE.”**
4. **“This was once a beautiful civilization. My family ruled it all.”**
5. **“THE NEW REPUBLIC HAS TO KNOW THAT THE EMPIRE IS GROWING AGAIN.”**

“OUR PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED.”

Identify the *The Mandalorian* characters shown in the images below:



ANSWERS QUIZ: 1. B, 2. C, 3. C, 4. A, 5. D, 6. D, 7. A, 8. C, 9. B, 10. B, 11. D, 12. A, 13. A, 14. C, 15. B.
“WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?” 1. The Armorer, 2. Greef Karga, 3. Din Djarin, 4. Bo-Katan Kryze, 5. Carson Teva.
“OUR PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED.” 1. Zeb Orrelios, 2. Goran Shard, 3. Kelleran Beg, 4. Elia Kane, 5. Ragnar.

HOW DID YOU DO?

Were you able to achieve your mission and answer the questions correctly?

0-9: What are you waiting for? By the time you act, it's going to be too late!

10-19: You've done enough to be forgiven for your transgressions.

20-24: This is the Way. You can navigate the galaxy like Mando and Grogu.

NEXT ISSUE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE | ISSUE 223

STAR WARS

I N S I D E R

223

Galactic Couture

High fashion in the
Star Wars galaxy

Exclusive Fiction:

The High Republic

Phase III continues in all-new
fiction by Lydia Kang

The Death Star Stratagem

How the Emperor's
final plan failed

Dexter Jettster

Get to know the galaxy's
most famous Besalisk chef

Interviews:

Tait Fletcher

Paz Vizsla's heavyweight
body double in
The Mandalorian

Fon Davis

Model-making in the modern age



COMPLETE YOUR STAR WARS COLLECTION!

COMMEMORATIVE MOVIE & TV EDITIONS



*Star Wars:
The Clone Wars:
The Official Companion Book*



*Star Wars:
The Skywalker Saga
The Official Collectors' Edition*



*Star Wars:
The Mandalorian
The Guide to Season One*



*Star Wars Insider Presents:
Star Wars: The Mandalorian
Season One: Volume One*



*Star Wars Insider Presents:
Star Wars: The Mandalorian
Season One: Volume Two*



*Star Wars:
The Rise of Skywalker
The Official Collector's Edition*



*Star Wars:
The Last Jedi
The Ultimate Guide*



*Star Wars:
The Mandalorian
The Guide to Season Two*



*Star Wars Insider Presents:
Star Wars: The Mandalorian
Season Two: Volume One*



*Star Wars:
Age Of Resistance
The Official Collector's Edition*



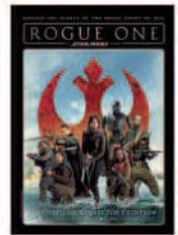
*Star Wars Episode IV:
A New Hope
The Official Celebration Special*



*Star Wars Episode V:
The Empire Strikes Back
The 40th Anniversary Special
Edition*



*Solo:
A Star Wars Story
The Official Collectors' Edition*



*Rogue One:
A Star Wars Story
The Official Collectors' Edition*

THE BEST OF STAR WARS INSIDER



*The Best of Star Wars Insider
Volume One*



*The Best of Star Wars Insider
Volume Two*



*The Best of Star Wars Insider
Volume Three*



*The Best of Star Wars Insider
Volume Four*



*Star Wars Insider:
The Galaxy's Greatest Heroes*



*Star Wars Insider:
The Galaxy's Greatest Villains*



*Star Wars Insider:
Aliens, Creatures and Droids*



*Star Wars Insider:
Rogues, Scoundrels and
Bounty Hunters*



*Star Wars Insider:
The Original Trilogy*



*Star Wars Insider:
The Saga Begins*



*Star Wars Insider:
Icons of the Galaxy*



*Star Wars Insider:
Fiction Collection
Volume One*



*Star Wars Insider:
Fiction Collection
Volume Two*



*Star Wars:
The High Republic:
Starlight Stories*

STAR WARS INSIDER SOUVENIR SPECIALS



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2022*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2021*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2020*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2019*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2018*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2017*



*Star Wars Insider:
Special Edition 2016*

AVAILABLE IN ALL GOOD STORES AND ONLINE
TITAN-COMICS.COM



© & TM 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd.

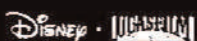




The legendary Boba Fett has returned! In this lavishly illustrated collector's edition enter the dangerous world of *The Book of Boba Fett* and learn more about one of the greatest bounty hunters the galaxy has ever seen. Explore each chapter via a complete episode guide and discover more about the characters, creatures, vehicles and droids that made the series a smash hit!

AVAILABLE IN ALL GOOD STORES AND ONLINE

TITAN-COMICS.COM



© & TM 2023 Lucasfilm Ltd.

