Writing About Rogues
Jody Houser on adapting *Rogue One* for Marvel

Warrior Wren
Actress Tiya Sircar on picking up the Darksaber in *Star Wars Rebels*' most explosive storyline to date

The Doctor is in... Trouble!
The making of Marvel's *Doctor Aphra*

Rook Who’s Talking
Riz Ahmed on defecting to the Rebellion
Color the Galaxy!

The latest from Jeffrey Brown’s reimagining of the Star Wars universe features artwork from his bestselling series plus nine new images—sure to delight adult fans and young Jedi alike!

More from Jeffrey Brown!

For 25% off + free U.S. Ground Shipping, use code VADER on chroniclebooks.com

For a complete listing of Star Wars products by Jeffrey Brown, visit chroniclebooks.com/darthvader
... to the all-new Star Wars Insider! We’ve been working very hard to create an exciting new look with great new features, and we really hope you all enjoy the fruits of our labor.

There’s a lot more to come over the course of the year ahead—including some surprises that you won’t want to miss. Shall I tell you what they are? Nah, you’re just going to have to wait and see....

We have a team of writers who know and love the Star Wars saga and have plenty to say! This issue, we’re looking at the making of Marvel’s Doctor Aphra comic book; interviewing the folks who make Star Wars Rebels; hearing from Riz Ahmed, AKA Bodhi Rook from Rogue One; A Star Wars Story going on a Star Wars–themed run; and even presenting a fantastic tale of high adventure featuring the legendary Blade Squadron.

One thing that hasn’t changed is the fact that we really love hearing from you! Star Wars fans are the best in the world. No, really, you are! There are many ways to send us your thoughts, art, photos, poems, etcetera. Take a look below, put pen to paper—or finger to keyboard—and let’s enjoy the adventure together....

Punch it!

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Editor

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS...

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Jon grew up just outside of Cleveland, Ohio where he wore through multiple VHS copies of the original Star Wars trilogy.

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Star Wars Rebels
Tiya Sircar talks about life as a Mandalorian warrior and wielding the Darksaber!
The Battle Continues!
Do you want more Star Wars Battlefront?
Then you’re in luck!

Han Goes Solo
The next Star Wars movie starts shooting, Disney goes into hyperpace, and news of a primate Jedi!

Comics and Books
Marvel presents an unmissable Star Wars crossover, and we preview the latest Rogue One books.

Doctor Aphra
The creators of Marvel’s newest anti-heroine talk about this exciting new series!

Kevin Kiner
The maestro behind the music of Star Wars Rebels shares secrets of scoring the show!

Star Wars Destiny
Find out how designers at Fantasy Flight Games created its newest collectible-card expansion set.

Jody Houser
The writer of Marvel’s adaptation of Rogue One tells us why the new comic goes beyond the movie!

Celebration
What can you expect from a Star Wars convention?

Timothy Zahn
The fan-favorite Star Wars author reveals all about his hotly anticipated new novel, Thrawn.

Animating Thrawn
Rebels animation supervisor Keith Kellogg on bringing the admiral to life.

RunDisney
Discover what it’s like to run through Disneyland with fellow Star Wars fans!

Riz Ahmed
Insider gets intel from the charismatic actor who portrayed Imperial defector Bodhi Rook in Rogue One.
The next installment of *Star Wars Battlefront* will be released in time for Christmas 2017, EA has confirmed. Developed by DICE for PS4, Xbox One, and PC, the game will take place across a range of *Star Wars* eras and feature a new single-player campaign mode.

EA CEO Andrew Wilson made the announcement in January, saying, “Our next *Star Wars Battlefront* will be even bigger, taking players into more locations, and allowing them to play with more heroes and characters.” Released in 2015, the most recent *Star Wars Battlefront* game is an action shooter with third-person and first-person modes. It depicts conflicts on Hoth, Endor, Scarif, and Jakku, along with other locations from the *Star Wars* movies, and has sold more than 13 million copies to date.

In a post on its website at the end of January, EA told fans of the game: “We’ve been carefully reading your suggestions on forums, reviewing your feedback on social pages, and using your input to help drive us in creating more authentic *Star Wars* experiences.”
News in less than 12 parsecs

Filming has begun on the Han Solo movie

Woody Harrelson has joined the cast for the forthcoming Han Solo movie, Lucasfilm has confirmed. The two-times Oscar nominee has recently been lauded for his starring role as Detective Martin Hart in HBO’s True Detective, and will also feature in this summer’s War for the Planet of the Apes.

The as-yet-untitled Han Solo movie will star Alden Ehrenreich as Han, Donald Glover as Lando Calrissian, and Emilia Clarke in an unknown role. Shooting began on January 20, with two directors manning the ship: Phil Lord and Christopher Miller. To mark the occasion, Miller sent out a cheeky tweet that read, “Han First Shot.”

The announcement of Harrelson’s involvement was followed by the photo of the directors and their cast featuring from left to right: Christopher Miller, Woody Harrelson, Pheobe Waller-Bridge, Alden Ehrenreich, Emilia Clarke, Joonas Suotamo (Chewbacca), Phil Lord, and Donald Glover.

Maz Kanata gets cute!

Characters from far, far away are going to get cuddlier

Fans of the cute and cuddly will want to check out the 2017 Hallmark Itty Bittys wish list. The document, which can be downloaded from the Hallmark website, lists 11 Star Wars plush collectibles, including some not previewed at New York Comic Con—such as Maz Kanata! See the full list at hallmark.com, which includes Luke Skywalker X-wing pilot plush, and a Greedo toy inspired by the Kenner action figure from 1977. The latter is also an exclusive for PopMinded.

Stop Monkeying Around

Star Wars goes wild!

Star Wars is all around us—even in nature! More than a few animals have been named after characters and creatures from the galaxy far, far away, and the latest is the Skywalker hoolock gibbon!

Two other species of hoolock gibbon were already known to science, and the discovery of a third was reported in the American Journal of Primatology in January. Found in eastern Myanmar and southwestern China, the Skywalker hoolock gibbon has been so named in English because its Latinate name, Hoolock tianxing, is derived from the Chinese for “heaven’s movement” or “sky’s walk”—and because its discoverers are Star Wars fans.

The actor who plays Luke Skywalker, Mark Hamill, caught wind of the news and tweeted his excitement:

So proud of this! First the Pez dispenser, then the Underoos & U.S. postage stamp... now this! #GorillaMyDreams #SimianSkywalker #JungleJedi

—@hamillhimself
Rogue One: A Star Wars Story Arrives on Digital HD and Blu-ray

Rogue One has arrived for home viewing in a variety of formats, including Digital HD, Blu-ray, DVD, and On-Demand. A wide array of bonus features are available with the movie, ranging from never-before-seen cast and creator interviews to a look at hidden “Easter eggs” in the movie. Bonus features vary between format and retailer, but highlights across the range include:

- **A Rogue Idea**: Hear how ILM’s John Knoll came up with the movie’s concept—and why it’s the right film to launch the Star Wars standalone film series.
- **Jyn: The Rebel**: Get to know Rogue One’s defiant, resourceful hero, and hear what it was like for Felicity Jones to bring her to life on screen.
- **Cassian: The Spy**: Diego Luna shares insights into his complex, driven character, who becomes a hero through selflessness, perseverance, and passion.
- **K-2SO: The Droid**: Explore the development of this reprogrammed Imperial droid, from initial pitch and character design to Alan Tudyk’s memorable performance.
- **Baze and Chirrut: Guardians of the Whills**: Go deeper into the relationship between these two very different characters, with acclaimed actors Jiang Wen and Donnie Yen.
- **Bodhi and Saw: The Pilot and The Revolutionary**: Forest Whitaker and Riz Ahmed reflect on Saw Gerrera, the broken rebel leader, and Bodhi Rook, the Imperial defector.
- **The Empire**: Meet a dangerous new Imperial adversary... and cross paths once more with the most iconic villain of all time.
- **Visions of Hope: The Look of Rogue One**: The filmmakers describe the thrills and challenges of developing a bold new look for the movie that fits within the world of the original trilogy.
- **The Princess and The Governor**: See what it took to bring the young Princess Leia of Star Wars: A New Hope back to the screen, along with one of her most memorable foes—Governor Tarkin.
- **Epilogue: The Story Continues**: Filmmakers and cast celebrate Rogue One’s premiere and look forward into the future, to the Star Wars stories yet to be told.
- **Rogue Connections**: Uncover Easter eggs and film facts hidden throughout the movie which connect Rogue One to the wider Star Wars universe.
Voyaging through the galaxy

Set sail for an epic Star Wars journey across the ocean

everyone knows that Star Wars can take you to far-off places, but did you know those places include Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Tortola, St. Thomas, and Disney’s private island, Castaway Cay? Those are just some of the tropical stop-offs on 15 special sailings known as Star Wars Day at Sea!

Offered by Disney Cruise Line, these once-in-a-lifetime tours take place on board the Disney Fantasy, a 14-deck cruise ship that is more than three football fields long—or, to put it another way, slightly longer than a Hammerhead corvette! The ship sails to the Caribbean on two different itineraries, with cruises departing between January 6 and April 14, 2018.

“The Force is stronger than ever on board the Disney Fantasy, and we are excited to bring back Star Wars Day at Sea in 2018,” says president of Disney Cruise Line, Karl Holz. “The popularity of the event over the past two years inspired us to continue immersing our guests in the Star Wars galaxy.

Everyone, from the youngest Padawan to the most knowledgeable Jedi Master, is invited to enjoy this event of galactic proportions and make memories that will last a lifetime.”

The Star Wars Day at Sea portion of the cruise is packed with galactic activities for all ages from morning till night. As well as meeting Jedi, droids, and Wookiees, you can see stormtroopers patrolling the pool deck, dine on themed food, and join in with the “Summon the Force” deck celebration, featuring a dance party and fireworks set to the Star Wars music of John Williams.

For more information, set sail for disneycruise.disney.go.com

THE LIGHT SIDE

By Russ Brown and Jamie Cosley
Launching into Hyperspace

Take flight in an all-new Star Wars experience

Disneyland Paris celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2017, and one of its birthday gifts to itself and visitors is the renovation and rebranding of Space Mountain as Hyperspace Mountain! Following in the footsteps of the same attraction at Disneyland in California, the update doesn’t alter the structure of the much-loved ride. Instead, *Star Wars Hyperspace Mountain: Rebel Mission* adds to the excitement with projections that put guests in the middle of a battle between rebels and Imperials!

Guests are welcomed to the new-look ride with a briefing by Admiral Ackbar, before making the jump to hyperspace and route to Jakku, where TIE fighters and a Star Destroyer await. Epic music from the *Star Wars* saga accompanies the experience, completing the sense of being immersed in a *Star Wars* movie!

Hyperspace Mountain opens on May 6, 2017, and forms part of a new *Star Wars* experience at Disneyland Paris, including a new *Star Wars* meet-and-greet area, an expanded *Star Wars* store, and the long-awaited arrival of the 3D-simulator ride *Star Tours: The Adventure Continues*.

The opening of Hyperspace Mountain on May 6, 2017 follows the launch of *Star Tours: The Adventures Continue* in Disneyland Paris’ Discoveryland.
Navigate to Disney Parks

The galaxy far, far away is heading our way in 2019

In August 2015, Disney CEO Bob Iger took D23 Expo attendees by surprise when he announced Star Wars would be making a bigger splash than ever at Disney Parks. The franchise already had a presence in parks around the world with the Star Tours attraction and merchandise. What Iger announced was much bigger: immersive Star Wars-themed lands set on a new planet. The additions will be found at Disneyland and Disney's Hollywood Studios in California and Florida, respectively; they're the largest-ever, single-themed land expansions in either the Disneyland or Walt Disney World Resorts.

Given the size of the as-yet-untitled Star Wars lands, a whopping 14 acres each, construction is slow-moving. Ground break on both locations began April 2016, and fans have been speculating about the opening date, but as of February 7, we don't have to wonder about what year the expansion will be available. During a quarterly earnings call with shareholders, Iger announced the Star Wars-themed areas will open at some point in 2019. Go ahead and request the entire year off work.
Star Wars Rebels will return for a fourth season, Lucasfilm has confirmed. Production is underway and the new season will premiere on Disney XD in the fall.

The acclaimed third season of Rebels reached a gripping finale in March, having introduced characters such as Grand Admiral Thrawn, Saw Gerrera, and the mysterious Bendu to its ever-expanding story. “The team behind Star Wars Rebels delivers epic storytelling that has captivated fans of all ages across the globe,” said Marc Buhaj, senior vice president, Programming and general manager at Disney XD. “We’re excited to continue sharing the journey of these fan-favorite rebels with our audience in the fall.”

Since its launch in 2014, Star Wars Rebels has taken the Star Wars saga into new, unexplored regions of the galaxy, combining action-packed adventures with gut-wrenching emotional journeys and tantalizing takes on Star Wars lore.
Room for Expression

Sabine Wren’s artful side is showcased in Rebels

If you didn’t get a close enough look at Sabine’s cabin when it featured in the Star Wars Rebels episode “Trials of the Darksaber” earlier this year, head over to StarWars.com! The Rebels section of the site features a “trivia gallery” for the episode, which itemizes the artistic Mandalorian’s interior decorations—from puffer pig paintings to Lando Calrissian fan art! Similarly instructive stills from other episodes can also be found at StarWars.com/tv-shows.
Back to Her Universe

The classic Star Wars clothing company is back with a bang!

Her Universe, the fashion brand founded by Ashley Eckstein in 2009, has relaunched with a new website and an expanded product range. Eckstein, who came to prominence as the voice of Ahsoka Tano in Star Wars: The Clone Wars, started Her Universe in 2010 as a way to “create stylish, fashion-forward merchandise for female sci-fi fans.”

Writing on HerUniverse.com, Eckstein says, “You’ll see some new items on the site now, and you can expect to see new collections starting this summer. We are working on some men’s fashion items and are aiming for those designs to be out in the fall. Guys, you’ll have to be patient, but some cool fashion pieces are coming for you!”

The Star Wars items on Her Universe are officially licensed by Lucasfilm, with current highlights including a Leia “Self-Rescuing Princess” T-shirt, an embroidered “May the Force be with You” denim jacket, and an Ahsoka sweatshirt with a design by Dave Filoni. The company also offers items based on the Marvel universe, Doctor Who, and other sci-fi and fantasy worlds, with junior and plus sizes available in many cases.

See the full collection at HerUniverse.com
ANOVOS Goes Rogue

The company that dresses the galaxy

You don’t have to come to ANOVOS with a checkered past and questionable loyalties in order to own a Jyn Erso costume. The company known for their screen-accurate replicas of Star Wars costumes has made a Jyn outfit available for pre-order; it’s scheduled to ship in the third quarter of 2017.

The ensemble features Jyn’s jacket, mechanic’s vest, trousers, worker’s tunic, and holster belt. Each item comes loaded with details. For example, the jacket has the rubberized bloodstripe running down the sleeves and a Rebel Alliance rank badge, while the trousers have vertical pleat details. Jyn’s scarf, gloves, and outerwear will be sold separately by ANOVOS at a later date.

Visit www.anovos.com to learn more about their stunning line of screen-accurate Star Wars clothing.
Shelf Life

The heroes of the Star Wars galaxy launch a new assault on toy stores

The initial release of toys for Rogue One: A Star Wars Story happened on Force Friday in 2016, but now that the film’s arrived, it’s time for the next wave. You knew it was coming, but if you’re caught unawares, now’s the time to make room on your bookshelves and displays, because Hasbro has released details about their spring 2017 offerings—and they’re not limited to Rogue One.

Let’s start by looking at their 3.75 inch figures. A new double-pack will feature a Scarif shoretrooper and Bistan, so you have the Empire and Rebel Alliance represented in the same box—it’s ideal for reenacting the big battle. In single packs for Rogue One, you’ll find Admiral Raddus [01], the stalwart leader of the Profundity; Galen Erso [02], the erstwhile Imperial who rigged a trap in the Death Star, and the brave rebel soldier Lieutenant Sefl a [03]. There’s one Star Wars Rebels figure, too: the Mandalorian Fenn Rau [04], who comes with a removable helmet and a jetpack.

Death Trooper on Duty

If you turn the scale up a notch to the 12-inch line, you’ll find another new release. Hasbro’s putting a Death Trooper Electronic Duel Figure on the market. The death trooper is taking a break from protecting Director Orson Krennic to serve you. The figure emits authentic battle sounds, activated by squeezing its legs. You can make play time even more interactive with this figure because it’s compatible with Hasbro’s Star Wars Studio FX App (available from the App Store and Google Play). While the smaller figures will be available in spring, the Death Trooper Electronic Duel Figure won’t be available until fall 2017.

Hasbro is also putting more pieces for its Bladebuilders on the market. The upcoming batch of components includes a yellow lightsaber, two purple lightdaggers, and five adjustable connectors.
Comics Roundup

Marvel’s line of Star Wars comic books offers classics old and new.

Storming the Citadel

Marvel takes readers into the heart of The Screaming Citadel

Two of the Star Wars saga’s biggest ongoing comics—Star Wars and Doctor Aphra—are crossing over in a five-part storyline beginning in May. The Screaming Citadel is a crossover epic in the vein of 2015’s Vader Down, and unites the writing talents of Star Wars’ Jason Aaron and Doctor Aphra’s Kieron Gillen to mix up Luke Skywalker with the rogue archaeologist.

When Doctor Aphra makes Luke an offer he can’t ignore, he finds himself in the middle of a rare gathering at the heart of the infamous Screaming Citadel where the Queen and her parasites hold court.

It all kicks off in May with the oversized Star Wars: The Screaming Citadel one-shot, and continues in the pages of the ongoing titles, with art by Salvador Larroca and Andrea Broccardo.

The Screaming Citadel

(Star Wars: The Screaming Citadel #1 - May 10)
(Star Wars #31 - May 10)
(Doctor Aphra #7 - May 31)
(Star Wars #32 - June)
(Doctor Aphra #8 - June)
Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (Rogue One #1 April 5)

You may have seen the movie, bought the guidebooks, and read the novelization—but that doesn’t mean you’ve gotten the complete Rogue One story! Beginning this April, a six-part comics adaptation promises to reveal the events and character beats that never made their way onto the big screen.

Writer Jody Houser (Max Ride) and artist Emilio Laiso (Star Wars Annual, Hercules) are behind this graphical take on December’s blockbuster. The story of how the rebels got their hands on the Death Star plans involves multiple individual sacrifices, from Jyn Erso and Cassian Andor to Chirrut Îmwe and K-2SO. Completists take note—Houser is including extra scenes written for Rogue One characters that never found their way into the final theatrical cut.

Issue #1 will feature a cover by Phil Noto and artist variant covers by Terry Dodson, Joe Quinones, John Tyler Christopher, and Mike Mayhew.

“The characters and the choices they make in a grayer, grimmer time in the galaxy than we’ve seen in the movies so far makes Rogue One an intriguing addition to the Star Wars universe,” says Houser. “I’m hoping to dive deeper into the characters and what compels their choices.”

Star Wars Legends Epic Collection: The Rebellion Volume 2 (May 10)

Star Wars Legends Epic Collection: The Rebellion Volume 2 is a mammoth 488-page paperback reprinting some of the stories published under the Star Wars saga’s former comic-book canon.

What happens when Leia announces plans to marry? Will the Rebellion lose a princess, or gain a new safe haven? Darth Vader is on a mission to instill fear and discipline into the Imperial ranks using his elite stormtroopers, and Luke Skywalker fights side-by-side with a veteran of the Clone Wars as Han Solo flirts with an old flame.

This volume collects Star Wars (2013 series) #13-20, Star Wars: Empire #19-27, and material from Star Wars Kids #1-20. It features the writing talents of Brian Wood, Ron Marz, Jeremy Barlow, Ryder Windham, Mike W. Barr, and Henry Gilroy, and artwork by Facundo Percio, Stephane Crety, Carlos D’Anda, Brian Ching, Tomas Gioello, Adriana Melo, Brandon Badeaux, Jeff Johnson, Joe Corroney, Nicola Scott, Gary Erskine, Ken Steacy, Glen Mullaly, and Glen Murakami, with a cover by Hugh Fleming.
This Spring, *Star Wars* fans of all ages can find lots to love for their bookshelves.

### 01 Star Wars: The Classic Newspaper comics

The first of three deluxe volumes that present, for the first time ever, the classic *Star Wars* newspaper strip from 1979-1984 in its complete format—including each Sunday title header and “bonus” panels in their meticulously restored original color.

Initially the color Sundays and black-and-white dailies told separate stories, but within six months the incomparable Russ Manning merged the adventures to tell brand new epic seven-days-a-week sagas that rivaled the best science-fiction comics of all time.

Volume one contains 575 sequential comic strips from its premiere on March 11, 1979 through October 5, 1980.

April 25 / Marvel/IDW

### Also available:

*Star Wars: IncrediBuilds AT-ACT*

The latest books in the *Star Wars IncrediBuilds* books and model kits series are all about *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. The Death Star and AT-ACT books are ready for deployment on your desktop or kitchen table, and each model kit comes with a 32-page full-color hardcover book packed with facts and trivia. Each 3D wood model snaps together to form a displayable 3D version of the Empire's most fearsome military hardware.

May 9 / Insight Editions

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*STAR WARS INSIDER*
03

**Star Wars: The Rise of a Hero**

A tie-in to the 40th anniversary celebration of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, this 48-page comic-style storybook is told from Luke Skywalker’s point of view and features art from comics legend Walt Simonson with a narrative adaptation by Louise Simonson.

*May 30 / Disney Lucasfilm Press*

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**Star Wars: The Prequel Trilogy—A Graphic Novel**

This 208-page graphic novel, aimed at kids aged 8-12, follows in the footsteps of the bestselling *Star Wars: The Original Trilogy—A Graphic Novel*. Writer Alessandro Ferrari and illustrators Andrea Parisi, Matteo Piana, Davide Turotti, and Kawaii Creative Studio retell *The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones*, and *Revenge of the Sith* in a beautifully illustrated comic-book style interpretation.

*Out Now / Disney Lucasfilm Press*

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04

**Star Wars: A New Hope Big Golden Book**

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, this kid-friendly 48-page storybook retells how Luke Skywalker set off on his first grand adventure. Written by Geof Smith, the book features retro-stylized illustrations by Caleb Meurer and Micky Rose.

*April 11 / Golden Books*

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05

**Han and the Rebel Rescue**

This young reader book chronicles an adventure of Han Solo and Chewbacca set between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, and comes with stickers.

*May 2 / Disney Lucasfilm Press*
One of the most unexpected and delightful surprises in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* was the friendship between Baze Malbus and Chirrut Îmwe. Cynical gunman Baze and blind monk Chirrut didn’t seem too similar on the surface, but their undeniable bond provided countless moments of odd-couple chemistry. Now, Baze and Chirrut star in an all-new tale with *Guardians of the Whills*, a middle-grade novel from Star Wars veteran Greg Rucka (*Smuggler’s Run*, *Before the Awakening*, and the comic-book series, *Shattered Empire*).

*Rogue One* revealed that Baze and Chirrut, residents of Jedha’s Holy City, have ties to the religious order known as the Guardians of the Whills—with Chirrut far more devoted to the faith than his counterpart. The new novel will show how Baze and Chirrut cope and adapt after the Empire’s arrival on Jedha and the destruction of the Kyber Temple. At the start of *Guardians of the Whills*, Baze and Chirrut are doing what they can to protect the people of Jedha and organize a resistance. But a new arrival—the radical revolutionary Saw Gerrera—tips the balance of power into uncertainty. Saw commands his own militia and has his sights set on overthrowing the imperial rulers of Jedha and the galaxy at large.

Will such an alliance make a difference in freeing Jedha and its citizens? Or will Saw’s path to victory come at too great a cost? Find out when *Guardians of the Whills* arrives in bookstores!

Where there’s a Whill...

Get your Baze and Chirrut backstory in *Guardians of the Whills*.

Jyn’s Tale

Want more of *Rogue One*’s main hero? Jyn Erso’s history is revealed in *Rebel Rising*.

*Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* introduced a host of compelling new characters, but the movie’s narrative required that each biography reach its natural conclusion. Does that mean we won’t get more from the newest Star Wars stars? Not on your life!

In addition to the Baze and Chirrut prequel *Guardians of the Whills* (see related story), May 2 also sees the release of *Rebel Rising*, a young-adult novel by New York Times bestselling author Beth Revis, which tells the tale of how Jyn Erso grew into a fierce fighter willing to face impossible odds.

Moviegoers already know the basic pieces: Jyn Erso, aged eight, saw her mother gunned down by death troopers and her father forced into Imperial service. She found a new mentor in Saw Gerrera, a friend of her parents and an ongoing terror to the Empire.

Saw is willing to go to any lengths to hurt the Empire, and this environment of extremism becomes Jyn’s new home as she learns the tactics of armed revolution. But despite her devotion to the cause, Jyn learns that becoming one of Saw’s warriors requires risking life and limb, while raising troubling moral issues on how far is too far—even when your intentions are noble.

Contemplating whether she wants to spend her life as one of Saw’s soldiers, Jyn faces a shattering betrayal. In the aftermath, she must put her life back together, and determine what fate—or the Force—has in store for her future.
Take a walk on the dark side

Get your hands on a copy of the new book featuring the saga’s ultimate bad guys!

The Sith! The embodiment of evil across the Star Wars galaxy have been terrifying and thrilling audiences in equal measure ever since Darth Vader first strode across the screen during the opening moments of A New Hope.

In this new collection, the team at Star Wars Insider have gathered an unparalleled amount of archived content to bring you:

**Interviews** with the actors behind legendary dark siders such as Ian McDiarmid (Darth Sidious), Hayden Christensen (Darth Vader), Sir Christopher Lee (Darth Tyranus), and Adam Driver (Kylo Ren).

**In-depth articles** exploring characters such as Asajj Ventress, Count Dooku, and, of course, Darth Vader.

**Secrets** behind classic Sith moments throughout the saga and a lesson on how to speak the language of the dark side.

We have 5 copies of the book to give away. To qualify to be one of the lucky winners and have a copy of the book delivered directly to your door, tell us the answer to the following quote:

“Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to...”

A) WYOMING  
B) SUFFERING  
C) FLUSHING

Send your answer to the address on page 3 marked, “It is useless to resist!” by May 23, 2017.

TITAN-COMICS.COM
Spotlight, Darksaber

In Season Three of Star Wars Rebels, Mandalorian warrior Sabine Wren was put front and center in episodes such as “Trials of the Darksaber” and “Legacy of Mandalore.” Tricia Barr spoke to the voice of Wren, Tiya Sircar, about stepping into the spotlight and wielding the Darksaber.
Sabine Wren has had quite the journey over the course of Star Wars Rebels’ three seasons. When Insider last spoke with the actress behind her voice, Tiya Sircar, she gently teased that there were big things to come. Now she can finally discuss her dramatic season so far!

Rebels keeps on revealing more about Sabine and her backstory. What’s it like to keep those secrets and then see them shared with the world?

Tiya Sircar: It’s incredible! Finally we’re delving into her story and getting to know her better. Because of episodes like “Trials of the Darksaber” I learned so much more than I know already! As soon as I read the script I was intrigued.

Who is Sabine’s mom? What does she look like? I read the scripts like a Star Wars fan, not a cast member, and I watched that episode like any other viewer. Maybe what we know about Sabine’s past now can help inform how we think about her in the previous seasons. If we get where she’s coming from and what she went through, we can look back with a bit more empathy.

You’ve known some of Sabine’s backstory since Season One. How much more do you know about her now than you did then?

TS: [Executive producer] Dave Filoni gives us what we need for the performance, to get the job at hand done. He doesn’t muddy the waters with extra information. When we went in for our very first recording session [for the first season], we had a sitdown with Dave, who gave us a rundown of our characters, their dynamics, and a little bit of their histories.

I was furiously taking notes, and a lot of it didn’t make sense to me at the time. It would be cool to go back to that notepad and see what I knew then compared to what I know now! I did know about the weapons she built for the Empire, and the breadth of what she was working on that caused her to leave Mandalore. But I didn’t know the specifics about her family until I read the scripts for “Trials of the Darksaber” and “Legacy of Mandalore” in Season Three.

Dave and I had a little conversation about what was coming just before I read those scripts. He said I should prepare for some heavier episodes, and I appreciated the advance warning!

“SABINE IS COMING OF AGE AND I FEEL SO PRIVILEGED TO BE A PART OF THAT.”

Dave Filoni has talked about the importance of female characters [see page 30]. With Ahsoka gone, are these episodes a chance for Sabine to step up?

TS: We were all broadsided by what happened to Ahsoka at the end of Season Two. (Continues on page 30)
INTERVIEW

TALKING MANDO!
Tiya and Dave Filoni on a Mandalorian first!

Tiya: It was a lot of pressure, because people speak Mandalorian to me on Twitter! I felt a lot of pressure to not mess it up, but Dave said, “It’s cool. No one’s spoken Mando in a Star Wars film or show, so don’t mess it up, Tiya!”

Dave: However you say it is the actual way it’s said: you’re the first. So you trump everything else!
“If you look at a lightsaber from the top it’s not really a blade at all; it’s actually round, like a fencing foil. The original lightsabers in *A New Hope* were much thinner and tapered, and then they got wider in the prequels, with more of a tapered tip. A Darksaber is a flat beam of light.

“Originally it wasn’t a lightsaber at all in *The Clone Wars*, it was actually a physical blade that was electrified, a piece of metal called a ‘vibroblade.’

“When George (Lucas) saw that he asked me what it was. I explained that it came from the Expanded Universe and it can block a lightsaber. He replied, ‘Block a lightsaber? No.’

“We had shot this whole episode, and he had seen it in proxy, but when he saw it in practice, I could tell he felt bad because it was going to be work for us to fix.

“He said, ‘If you make something that can stop a lightsaber, then a lightsaber isn’t that great.’ I replied, ‘But in *Revenge of the Sith* there are lightsaber-resistant electrostaffs that can stop a lightsaber.’ He was like, ‘That was a mistake; I regretted that.’

“He called me later to say he came up with the idea of lightsaber and Darksaber. He had created this entire history for this Darksaber—that the Mandalorians had it, it was stolen from the Jedi Temple. So we took the blade, which was flat, and we electrified it. And because it’s a flat blade, I thought it would cut the air and ‘sing,’ because blades sing. So it’s an old singing sword myth.”
None of us knew how the story ended, as we hadn’t seen that part of the script. I was shell-shocked as a fan, but also because of my intense familiarity with Sabine and how she would take it. Because I didn’t know that was coming, I hadn’t taken anything Dave had said as an indication that Sabine might get more action in Season Three. I really appreciate Dave and all the writers letting me have that opportunity, and I have had the best time exploring Sabine this season as a result.

She has really come into her own, taking on a more important role, and realizing her power. She was always wise beyond her years, but in seasons past there was a lot of teenage angst. Now that she’s getting older and we know more about her, we see it was totally justified. She is coming of age and I feel so privileged to be a part of that.

What do you think the revelations about Sabine’s family bring to her story?

TS: I think they make her more vulnerable. It’s possibly the most vulnerable we will ever see her. Her family is at the crux of her issues: what they thought she did and what she felt they did. There’s a lot that’s been unsaid because she left. When she shows up again, nothing has been resolved—everything is the same.

It’s interesting to see her family’s dynamic, because there’s clearly a lot of miscommunication and misunderstanding. She doesn’t know what they’ve been dealing with since she left, and there have been grave consequences. When that starts to become clear, there are so many layers to the guilt and resentment. There’s also a lot of ego going on, and not Sabine’s. No one wants to let their guard down. They’re Mandalorians, you know?

What are your favorite moments from “Trials of Darksaber”?

TS: I love that whole episode! And not just because of what I got to do for the performance. Sabine and Kanan don’t usually get much
05 Audiences are given a glimpse into Sabine’s past in the second season episode, “The Protector of Concord Dawn.”

06 Sabine has proved to be one of the most popular characters in the show.

07 Kanan Jarrus and Sabine join forces in “The Protector of Concord Dawn.”

08 Sabine shows off her artistic side in “Fire Across the Galaxy.”
one-on-one interaction, so it was especially nice to delve into this emotional material with Freddie [Prinze Jr., who plays Kanan].

Dave actually had Freddie and me do our own recording session away from the rest of the cast, just so we had the freedom to be emotional and vulnerable. It was great because it gave us time to go to places we don’t necessarily get to go while voice-acting.

It was a bit challenging too, not only to go where I needed to emotionally, but also to pair that with the physicality of the training sequences, so it was nice to have Freddie to help me through that whole recording process. Freddie is kind of a big brother to me in real life, guiding me and making sure I don’t fall. Our relationship is actually very similar to Kanan and Sabine’s.

Do you have a favorite gadget out of all the weapons she’s acquired?

TS: It’s so awesome when she uses the vambrace to grab the Darksaber! I love that lasso move, and I think I exclaimed something when it happened. Before that, I thought getting a jetpack was the coolest thing! It’s like Christmas morning getting all these awesome gadgets.

Sabine’s art has always been important to her story. Do you get to see any of the designs early on?

TS: I don’t think I’ve gotten to see any of her artwork before I’ve seen the episodes. I see it during screenings or on TV with everyone else, and I go, “Oh, look how great that is!” Dave likes us to see mock-ups of new characters, like Bendu or the Purgills, but Sabine’s art is always an awesome surprise.

Sabine isn’t a Jedi, but her connection to the Darksaber ties her into Force lore. How do you feel about her stepping into that hallowed part of Star Wars mythology?

TS: I love it! In Rogue One there are no Jedi, but the Force is still there, and it still feels like anything is possible. Star Wars has universal appeal, but I think that makes the Force feel more accessible, somehow.

The Force, given the opportunity, makes anyone feel like they can make a difference. You don’t have to be “special” in a certain way. Everyone has the Force in them—the light and the dark side—and it’s about how you choose to channel it.

For someone like me, it’s very encouraging to see Sabine—who is not a Jedi, who is not a Padawan, who isn’t Force sensitive—wielding one of the most powerful weapons, and doing it well. It makes me feel like I can do anything. It’s pretty inspirational.
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The groundbreaking run of Marvel Comics' *Darth Vader* introduced rogue archaeologist Doctor Aphra into *Star Wars* lore. An instant hit with readers, she now stars in her own comic book series.

This is the first Marvel *Star Wars* series led by a character created for the comics. What drew you to Aphra's story?

**Heather Antos:** What's not interesting when it comes to Aphra? She's such a fascinating character—she's not a hero, but she isn't a villain either. It's a terribly fun mindset to play with, this moral gray area. Not to mention she has some of the best sidekicks the *Star Wars* universe has ever seen! Between working for the galaxy's most evil Sith Lord, and then turning hero to help Princess Leia fight her way out of a hostage situation, you never know what sort of trouble Aphra will get herself into—and out of! Every page is an adventure.

**Frank Parisi:** The draw was Aphra herself. Aphra is a revolutionary, and I don't use that term with any thought of politics or ideology. It's clear that life hasn't treated Aphra fairly... which isn't life's job, I suppose. She's been on the receiving end of some tough, tough times and has dealt with some tough, tough people. But she's the kind of person who [spoiler alert!] gets lobbed out of an airlock by Darth Vader into...
Doctor Aphra
by Kamome Shirahama as seen on the cover of Doctor Aphra #1.
the frigid emptiness of space, brushes herself off, and says to her crew with a grin, “That sucked. Now let’s get back to work!” While I wouldn’t go so far as to call her optimistic, she is most definitely anti-pessimistic and goal-driven, and to retain that attitude and sense of humor while contending against the worst life the galaxy has to throw at you… it’s a revolutionary act. It certainly does not hurt that Kieron Gillen is a storytelling dynamo to boot.

Jordan D. White: I agree with Heather and Frank—Aphra herself was just a joy in every issue of Darth Vader. We could not resist. When Kieron told us he had thought of a way to save her from Vader’s vengeance, we all rejoiced! If she can be a complete delight in the midst of the bleakness of the Darth Vader series, how much more fun could we have on her own adventures? That said, I think I might disagree that she isn’t a villain. She’s out for herself above all, and it’s certainly not her most admirable trait. If Darth Vader was our Breaking Bad, then Doctor Aphra is our Better Call Saul. You might love how charming she is, you might be rooting for her at every turn… but she’s probably not going to do the “right” thing. But that’s why she’s relatable.

Kieron Gillen, you brought Aphra to life in the Darth Vader series. What was it like to learn that Aphra would have her own story?

Kieron Gillen: It was great. That she’d made enough of an impression to get her own series is amazing. I have never had a character I created go on to have their own book. For Aphra to be my first, and the first non-movie Star Wars character to have an ongoing series of her own, is obviously pretty humbling. A second reason—and the main reason why I took the job—was that as much fun as she had in Darth Vader, there were huge chunks of her we hadn’t explored. She’s an archaeologist, but I wanted to excavate her personality. Oh—and with Star Wars’ long history, her being an archaeologist obviously lets us introduce a bunch of fun stuff. Who doesn’t like knowing more about the history of the Star Wars universe?

Do you have a lot of back-and-forth conversations in regards to the art and the script? What’s your collaboration process?

KG: Kev is fantastic. He’s the sort of artist who annotates his thumbnails and talks about his choices. I consider my scripts the start of a conversation rather than a diktat. Kevin certainly rolls with that—he’s a fantastic visual storyteller and writer, and that comes across in his active engagement with the stories, especially when world-building. There are visual elements Kevin adds that I then work back into my thinking—like stuff in his design for Captain Tolvan, the first arc’s main antagonist. It’s been wonderful.

“SHE’S VERY MUCH A TWO-FISTED ARCHAEOLOGIST ADVENTURER. SHE GOES AND DIGS UP THE PAST, AND PUNCHES PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY. THAT’S A VERY CLEAN STORY ENGINE FOR A CHARACTER”
A STICK UNTIL I DRAW WHAT THEY’RE HAPPY WITH.”

TOO FAR FROM THE PATH, THEY GENTLY POKE ME WITH A STICK UNTIL I DRAW WHAT THEY’RE HAPPY WITH.

THE WRITER, THE EDITORS, OR LUCASFILM WILL ALWAYS MAKE ME QUALIFY AN IDEA, AND IF IT STRAYS TOO FAR FROM THE PATH, THEY GENTLY POKE ME WITH A STICK UNTIL I DRAW WHAT THEY’RE HAPPY WITH.”

who don’t consider a book done until the print deadline hit. It’s an evolutionary process, and everyone pitches in to try and make this book the best that we can in the time we have; pushing and pulling the thing into shape.

Kev Walker: I always worry that I might come across as a bit of a thug when it comes to my writers. I have a habit of scribbling all over their carefully crafted prose without a second thought. Ideas are cruel. They just hit you round the head without any regard for the creative process.

I’ve found that honesty is the best policy—I draw it the way I think it should look, regardless of the script, but always with the caveat that these are just ideas and anyone else has exactly the same right to scribble all over my layouts and notes. The writer, the editors, or Lucasfilm always make me qualify an idea, and if it strays too far from the path, they gently poke me with a stick until I draw what they’re happy with.

Seriously, though, I’ve been blessed with writers and editors about Aphra’s past, he’s essential. This is a book about emotional archaeology as well as actual archaeology, if you see what I mean. He is like Aphra in many ways, but desperately, incredibly unlike her in others.

Kieron, you developed Aphra as a foil to Darth Vader. What’s it like having her lead her own story?

KG: It changes things a bit. In Darth Vader, she existed to do the things that Vader couldn’t do. Most of all, talk. Vader has to be stoic and laconic. The more words he says, the more it becomes untrue to the Dark Lord himself. Equally, there’s the comedy she added. Plus, there is a bit of tension—we knew that Vader wouldn’t die, but we couldn’t tell if she would survive or not.

Now that she has her own book, things change. She’s funny, but she’s not the comic relief anymore—she plays the lead and gets to do the heavy lifting. With Vader offstage, everyone else appears more threatening in his absence. Doctor Aphra is a fun and often sarcastic presence, but she’s also a darker creature.

What inspired the character of Aphra’s father?

KG: We explored a little of her background in Darth Vader when we revealed Aphra’s mother was killed by raiders during the war, after splitting with her father. Pretty much the first thing I knew when I started thinking about Aphra as an ongoing character is we would have to meet the father as soon as possible. If we’re going to talk about Aphra’s past, he’s essential. This is a book about emotional archaeology as well as actual archaeology, if you see what I mean. He is like Aphra in many ways, but desperately, incredibly unlike her in others.

KW: When I first drew him, I didn’t really have much of an idea of his background. It would be easy to draw parallels with Indiana Jones and his father. To be honest, Aphra’s father is way more closeted, idealistic, and naïve than Henry Jones ever was. When we first meet Aphra’s father, he’s literally in an ivory tower: he’s an academic with no concept of what’s going on in the world around him, let alone the galaxy at large. He’s let all sorts of important things fall by the wayside, in pursuit of a myth. Aphra begins this story as his polar opposite, a complete egotist and cynic, who believes he never cared for anything but his obsession. Gradually they realize they both have each other wrong, and trying to get that across, as both people change, is a challenge I relish.

We see some of Aphra’s school days in the comics too. Were those scenes you had in mind for a long time and are only showing now, or was developing Aphra’s history part of the process of making the new series?

KG: The core is there, but there is room to develop her history.

Thanoth hinted that Aphra’s doctorate had a question mark over it in the Darth Vader series, so there was certainly foreshadowing. That she manipulated an ethically questionable superior was always there. Of course, Aphra cheated. Aphra could have earned it by herself, but she’d much prefer to cheat. Cheating is what smart people do in her world.

Triple Zero and Bee Tee are both friends and threats. What can you tell us about how they’ll help out Aphra?

KG: They’re our Greek chorus in many ways, pointing out the ironies and hypocrisies in the cast in their own monstrous idiom. But, like Aphra, they become a little darker in the absence of Vader. Yes, they’re funny, but in the first episode they’re already murdering people by themselves, for their own ends. You have to suspect they’re a ticking time bomb. As Triple Zero said back in Darth Vader, “Heaven help everyone if I get bored.”

What is your favorite moment featuring the droids?

KG: There are too many to pick...
from. The first one which I genuinely loved from way back in issue four of Darth Vader was when he said, “Hahahaha! You’re on fire and also dead!” The one which tickles me in Doctor Aphra is from the second issue, where Triple Zero is threatening to torture Aphra’s father. “Your daughter is a truly horrible person. You must be very proud.” Which is funny, not least because of how Kev drew the astounding array of torture implements from his hand, but because it also serves as a good character beat for Aphra. I said that they’re the Greek chorus? Well, that’s an example. Aphra’s smart enough to know that if that droid is very much pro-you that it continually makes me haven’t even fi nished drawing it yet), but it continually makes me.

KW: There’s a gag in Doctor Aphra issue five which, for obvious reasons, I can’t tell you about (I haven’t even finished drawing it yet), but it continually makes me chuckle. Actually I have to stop myself from running too far with the humor, because this is Star Wars, not SpongeBob SquarePants. I mean, I thought I was pushing it a little with Triple Zero’s torture hands in issue two. How could he possibly have a circular saw and a blowtorch in his hands? They wouldn’t fit. But it is funny. Like Beate suddenly having bazookas and grenade launchers. It’s cartoon humor, but sometimes if you get it just right, it makes things scarier, like getting well-loved comic actors to play serial killers in movies or TV. The spoonful of sugar laced with poison.

Then there’s Black Krrsantan, who is a bit of an anti-Chewbacca. What can you tell us about his role?

KG: One of my favorite things about Doctor Aphra is that we get a chance to really dig into Krrsantan. He gets some of the best action beats in the whole series, and his past comes into play in a big way. Even from the start, the relationship with Aphra lets us show a lot about the book. He hangs with Aphra, sure, but only because she owes him a lot of money and he considers her an investment…and she has promised to locate the people who trained him to be a gladiator. Not that he minded being a gladiator, he just objects to anyone making him do anything.

KW: I like drawing Wookiees. That’s all. I just wanted to say that.

Kev, did you have a favorite character design in the new series?

KW: I do: Tolvan. I can’t say why, because it’d be a spoiler, and it’s not just because I got to design her, but because I (sort of) know what’s going to happen to her, which influences how I draw her. Actually, I enjoy drawing all the characters, and if there’s something about their design I don’t like, I find some way I can change it. Because these are characters who get dirty, get injured, have stuff that tears or breaks, or is unsuitable for the environment they are in, I get to continually mix things up—it helps to keep things fresh.

What was the thought process behind Aphra’s costume?

KW: Well it’s just trying to make things fit with the Star Wars universe. So the long duster coats in issues two and three came about from looking at the outfits the rebels wore on Endor in Return of the Jedi. They have a reason for wearing the things they do, and it’s not just to look cool. I’m making things up, but everything still needs to feel part of a whole and to echo things that have been seen in the Star Wars universe. The Academic installation harkens back to Bespin Cloud City on purpose, and not just because it might have been built by the same company, but because it grounds the location and makes it a part of the things we have seen on-screen. Soo-Tath the money-lender in issue one has a hat based on a Ralph McQuarrie concept for Bib Fortuna that never got used.

If you could see Doctor Aphra interact with any Star Wars character she hasn’t met before, who would it be?

KG: I can just see an older Aphra throwing her arm around Kylo Ren and saying “Oh, the things I could tell you about your Grandpops.”

KW: Jar Jar Binks! It would make a lot of people happy. Do you realize that without him bumping into Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan on Naboo, nothing else would have happened the way it has? It could all have been so different. Makes you think... 🤔

> The crew of the Ark Angel confront a figure from the doctor’s past in Doctor Aphra #2. Art by Kev Walker.

**PHOTO COURTESY OF IDW PUBLISHING.**

**COMICS: DOCTOR APHRA**

**APHRA’S CREW**

**TRIPLE ZERO**

A protocol droid, specializing in etiquette, customs, translation, and torture. Once designated to serve Darth Vader, wherever Triple Zero and his counterpart Bee Tee One go, carnage will follow.

**BEE TEE ONE**

Cunningly disguised as a astromech droid Bee Tee One is an assassin droid (a blastomech). Armed and dangerous, Bee Tee One was created by the Galactic Empire’s Tarkin Initiative.

**BLACK KRRSANTAN**

A Wookiee bounty hunter also known as Santy, Black Krrsantan is deemed by Boba Fett to be one of the best in his field. Krrsantan was scarred in a skirmish with Obi-Wan Kenobi.
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SMALL SCREEN, BIG SOUND

For 10 years, composer Kevin Kiner has been the man behind the music of *Star Wars* on television. *Insider* spoke to him about his work on *Star Wars Rebels* Season Three, but he began by going back in time to his days working on *The Clone Wars*…

INTERVIEW BY TRICIA BARR AND SARAH WOLOSKI
Kevin Kiner’s music has punctuated the action on a variety of productions ranging from video games featuring James Bond to series such as the Star Trek spin-off, Enterprise. Since 2008, he has been the composer for the Star Wars animated series, Rebels and The Clone Wars.

Both you and Rebels executive producer Dave Filoni cut your teeth on Star Wars working with George Lucas on The Clone Wars. What memories do you have of that time? Kevin Kiner: We used to watch rough cuts of the episodes together to talk about what the music should be, and George would often say, “Right here is impending doom!” There’s a lot of that in Star Wars, and I used to think to myself, I bet he’s said that to John Williams, too!

Now, when I hear “impending doom,” that could mean a lot of things, so what I would go away and come up with would depend on the situation. The greatest thing was to come back and see George nodding up and down to the beat of my music. Then I knew I’d got it right.

I mention that because the phrase has always stuck with me, and I guess with Dave, too, because he likes to use it now! If he says “impending doom,” I like to think I know what to do by now!

Is working with Dave very different from working with George? Dave is not a George clone, but he learned from the Master. They are very similar in that he doesn’t need a lot of words to convey to me what he’s after. That isn’t something you can learn. It’s either there or it’s not.

Dave and I have had an uncanny shorthand from day one. As soon as he starts to say something, I know what he is going for. I can almost finish his sentences!
You’ve called your work on *Rebels* a “creative reboot” of John Williams’ music, but it’s become more and more your own over time. How do you find a balance between the old and the new?

Good question! At the very beginning, the musical model was: “Let’s reboot *A New Hope,*” but you can only do that for so long before it gets tired. So, it’s a natural evolution whereby you say: “We need something like that, but fresh,” and then “Something like that, which was fresh, but refreshed again!” The reboot becomes a springboard for new stuff.

It’s hard to explain how that happens musically, but just look at the blues. A Buddy Guy song sounds different from a Chuck Berry song, but they are both recognizably blues. How does that work? In very simple terms: because they are building on the same foundation.

Taking that approach is very different from *The Clone Wars,* where George’s instruction was to go away and do something new. After six seasons of doing that, it was refreshing for me to go back to *A New Hope,* and I embraced that. But the more you build, the further you get from the foundation.

A particular influence that stands out in the episode “Legends of the Lasat” is the work of Philip Glass. What inspired that choice? That was all Dave’s idea! I know George is a huge Philip Glass fan, but I didn’t know Dave was until we did that episode. When he suggested Glass as a starting point for the *Ghost’s* journey into the star cluster, I thought it was a great idea. It was a completely different way to showcase that moment, and I ran with it. What I did turned out quite differently from the piece Dave originally played me, though.

Thrawn’s theme is reminiscent of old-school horror scores, with its organ and male chorus. How did you come up with that? My son, Sean, came up with that one. It’s become a family business here! I had nothing for Thrawn, but then Dave said, “How about an organ?” So Sean developed an organ motif, and it really came into its own in the scene where Thrawn interrogates Hera in “Hera’s Heroes.” We wanted something that suggests Thrawn is in complete control: rhythmic and almost meditative. Then, when he reveals he knows just who Hera is, the music gets really big.

As the season continues, you hear the theme evolve, getting bigger and grander, and a bit more versatile than the version you hear in his mastermind scenes. Sean really hit it out of the park with that one. He nailed it!
Sabine’s theme is very tragic. Did you know her backstory when you composed it? Does it have a relationship to Ezra’s theme?

I knew about her backstory, but I also knew there would be times when that theme would have to be positive, too, so that was all part of the plan. It isn’t related to Ezra’s theme, which is much more positive overall. When I wrote Ezra’s theme, I had to check I hadn’t just copied John Williams! I played it for a couple of composer friends and said, “Is this something of John’s?” To my relief, everyone said no! I think Ezra’s theme is the best thing I’ve written for Rebels, after the main theme.

In “Trials of the Darksaber,” you use drums that coalesce into Sabine’s theme. What inspired that?

Again, I have to give credit to Dave Filoni. He had a vision for it. We used a mix of Japanese taiko drums, Chinese drums, and regular tom-toms. We also threw in some timbales, which don’t obviously stand out, but do add to it.

The recording process was really interesting. If you saw these instruments lined up together, you’d say, “That’s a stupid combination!” You’d think the
taiko drums would just thunder and you wouldn’t need anything else. But when you get into the studio you find that they don’t have a lot of attack and you have to enhance them with a bunch of other drums.

It’s very technical making a drum ensemble sound good. When you’re in front of a drum, it sounds great because it’s right there. But on TV, it’s actually not playing very loud, so it sounds kind of wimpy. I rarely do a drum cue with less than four tracks, and ideally more like eight. That really fattens it up.

What are your favorite instruments? It depends on the gig. For [AMC Western] Hell On Wheels, I composed everything for Middle Eastern instruments, and I played them all. I used an oud, a tanbur, and a rubab, which comes from Afghanistan and looks like it was made by Dr. Seuss! They’re not guitars, but they’re all fretted and play kind of like a guitar. I really enjoy playing instruments that I’ve never played before. I go down to this one music store in Santa Monica, and I just buy something weird and expensive! If it’s weird and it’s expensive it’s probably a well-made instrument. Then I just play whatever sounds good to me. I still love playing guitar, too. I play guitar almost every evening, just to keep my chops up.

What’s the best part of writing for Rebels? My son, Sean, came up with the best answer: being part of the canon. It’s such an honor, for 10 years now, to be adding to the canon: to be a part of Star Wars that will never go away.

If you look around my studio you’ll see Ahsoka figures, Death Stars, a giant Darth Vader—stuff like that. I’m such a geek about it, and I have been since the first movie came out.

So, yeah, the best thing is definitely adding to the canon. And still having my job after 10 years!
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THE OFFICIAL COLLECTOR’S EDITION

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1. The band that plays in the cantina contains 5 members. What species do they belong to?
A / Bick
B / Biss
C / Bith
D / Biggs

2. What is the name of that band?
A / Bobolo Baker’s Bith Band
B / Figrin D’an and the Modal Nodes
C / The Max Rebo Band
D / The Sozzenels

3. According to Han Solo, what are Wookiees known to do if upset?
A / Throw people into trash compactors
B / Pull arms out of their sockets
C / Write a strongly-worded letter of complaint
D / Eat the closest living creature

4. What is the name of the Wookiee home planet?
A / Dantooine
B / Yavin 4
C / Corellia
D / Kashyyyk

5. Who is described by Han Solo as being “a bit of an acquired taste”?
A / Maz Kanata
B / Chewbacca
C / Jabba the Hutt
D / Leia Organa

6. Boss Nass is a resident of which planet?
A / Dantooine
B / Dathomir
C / Talus
D / Naboo

7. What is Bossk’s profession?
A / Chef
B / Bounty hunter
C / Smuggler
D / Mailman

8. What species is the Jedi Master Plo Koon?
A / Ewok
B / Twi’lek
C / Cerean
D / Kel Dor

9. The creature shown below is the young of which species?
A / Wookiee
B / Tila
C / Wampa
D / Ewok

10. An elephant named Mardji played the role of which beast in A New Hope?
A / A dewback
B / A bantha
C / A roonto
D / The dianoga

11. On which planet are our heroes menaced by a nexu, an acklay, and a reek?
A / Dagobah
B / Tatooine
C / Geonosis
D / Coruscant

12. To whom was Darth Vader referring when he said, “If you value that creature’s life, you should tell it to never again do that in my presence?”
A / Yoda
B / Bossk
C / Chewie
D / Salacious B. Crumb

13. Which real-world hip-hop group inspired the name of the Abednedo pilot Ello Asty from The Force Awakens?
A / Outkast
B / Beastie Boys
C / Swet Shop Boys
D / Public Enemy

14. Boga the varactyl was ridden by which Jedi on Utapau right before Order 66 was given?
A / Anakin Skywalker
B / Kit Fisto
C / Yoda
D / Oh!-Wan Kenobi

15. Which animals could Luke Skywalker bullseye in his T-16 Skyhopper?
A / Womp rats
B / Banthas
C / Eopies
D / Krayt dragons

16. What is the name of the Jedi Master who is the same species as Yoda?
A / Yaddle
B / Tangle
C / Dabble
D / Boggle

17. Which giant reptile from the planet Molostore rampaged on Coruscant in Star Wars: The Clone Wars?
A / Dewback
B / The Zillo beast
C / Howler
D / Varactyl

18. This is the young of which species?
A / TuskenRaider
B / Iktotchi
C / Togruta
D / Thawaash

19. Who is Anakin Skywalker’s archrival at Podracing?
A / Watto
B / Ben Quadinaros
C / Sebulba
D / Ratts Tyerell

20. Malakili was the best friend of which ill-fated creature?
A / A tauntaun
B / A wampa
C / The sarlacc
D / A rancor

In 1977, the teaser trailer for Star Wars promised “aliens from a thousand worlds!” We can’t compete with that, but here are 20 brain-teasers about the non-human inhabitants of the Star Wars galaxy!
Compiled by Tolly Maggs

HOW DID YOU FARE?
16-20 A great score. You really know your aliens!
11-15 Not bad, but there’s room for improvement.
5-10 A bit more study and you could achieve greatness!
1-4 All is not lost. The Force might be with you next time…

In 1977, the teaser trailer for Star Wars promised “aliens from a thousand worlds!” We can’t compete with that, but here are 20 brain-teasers about the non-human inhabitants of the Star Wars galaxy!
Compiled by Tolly Maggs
FIGHT AND FLIGHT!
Collectible cards-and-dice game *Star Wars Destiny* pits characters from across the *Star Wars* canon against one another in epic tabletop battles. To learn how the game came about, *Insider* asked its designers to lay their cards on the table.

**Corey Konieczka:** We’d been throwing around the idea of a collectible *Star Wars* game for a while when one of our business partners in Germany showed us a superhero game that used full-color dice. These two ideas came together and we started talking about what the game would actually be.

**Lukas Litzsinger:** For that discussion, a group of us sat around rolling dice and talking about the different things you could do with them. We wanted a fast-paced game with back-and-forth actions, and we wanted a simple structure so that we could get everybody involved—you can play it with your gaming friends or you can play it with your family. It was very important for us that it could reach a larger audience than some of our other games.

**CK:** The next step was for Lukas to make lots of different prototypes. Then he and I got together and started tag-teaming the core design.

**How do you go about making the prototypes?**

**LL:** We start with blank, card-sized templates in a layout program such as Adobe InDesign, and write abilities onto those in plain text. Over time, we start adding colors and extra scribbles, but the very first cards are just black-and-white text. It gives you a feel for how it works on the table, and you slowly add in detail as you keep on repeating that process.

**CK:** After we had solid card prototypes, we began to move quickly on the dice designs. Our interactive team made a dice app that lets us input any dice design we wanted. It was nowhere near as much fun as actually rolling...
“WE STARTED WORK IN SEPTEMBER 2015. A COUPLE OF MONTHS INTO 2016 WE FINALIZED THE FIRST SET.”

dice, but it let us try out things very quickly without having to print and glue things onto real dice.

How quickly did things come together after that?
LL: Pretty fast. We started work in September 2015, and then began locking everything down toward the end of the year. I don’t think we put together a prototype for the final version until after Christmas, but a couple months into 2016 we finalized the first set.

CK: The big questions were, “How do we make a game with dice and cards and not make it feel random?” and, “How much of the game is about the cards versus the dice?” Once we had those answers, things moved pretty quickly.

How did you manage to strike that balance?
LL: We had to be very careful with the different controls we put into the game so it didn’t feel like one or the other dominated. Having smaller card decks was important, as was being able to discard in order to re-roll any of your dice. Those things helped us get to the point where it felt like there is still randomness with your dice roll, but still with an element of required skill.

So you settled on a player’s deck comprising 30 cards?
LL: Yes, and if you look at other card games, you notice that how big a deck is tends to determine how many copies of a particular card you can have. Basically, one copy for every 15 cards seems to be about the right ratio. We knew we wanted to be on the lower end of the deck-size spectrum to make sure you would be able to draw every card. A lot of times with 50- or 60-card decks, you don’t even see your whole deck over the course of a game.

The character cards have point values, and players can team characters with a combined value of up to 30 points. How did you choose those numbers?
LL: It just seemed right that team building and deck building should parallel in that way: 30 points was the right number because we had 30-card decks.

CK: And once we’d landed on 30 points, we could start to fix the teams you could actually have. We knew through play-testing that we didn’t want someone to have more than four stormtroopers in a team, so if 30 points is the maximum, stormtroopers should be seven points apiece. Then, if a stormtrooper is seven points, how should the value of other characters stack up against them? Once we established those values, we could set the rules by which we measure everything else.

How do you make the leap from prototypes to a finished product?
CK: We meet with our internal graphic design team and show them our chicken-scratch templates. They usually start by replicating whatever card templates we give them and start playing around with those. Then there’s a lot of back and forth about the look.
INTERVIEW

LL: It’s very collaborative. The designers put in lots of time to make sure that every template has the right details. Monica Helland and Christopher Hosch were the two main graphic designers on the project, and they did a fantastic job.

CK: The dice were a challenge. We spent some time figuring out what the best size was, while factoring in how big we could print the label that gets heat-sealed onto them.

LL: An early question we raised was, “Do we put different art on each side depending on what the effect of the die is?” Eventually we realized that for collecting the dice, storing the dice, and seeing the dice in play, it helps to have the same, clearly identifiable art piece on every side.

What can we expect from the forthcoming “Spirit of Rebellion” expansion pack?

LL: In the main game, you have a lot of dice with a lot of different symbols. For “Spirit of Rebellion” we thought it would be interesting if the dice you put into your deck are a little more predictable in terms of getting a specific result.

We didn’t want to introduce too many new things, though. It all plays under the same rules.

So we can expect more from Star Wars Destiny in the future?

CK: I hope so! For now, I’m happy the game’s out there, and I’m excited to see where it goes. We wanted it to be a game where all the rules are on a single sheet of paper and you can play it with anybody. We also wanted a game with enough depth that serious gamers can appreciate and enjoy, and I think we’ve achieved that. The amount of support and buzz we’ve gotten from the community, and from people just picking up the game and playing it, has been phenomenal. I’ve never seen anything like this. So thanks, everybody!
Starting this April, Marvel Comics is set to release the first in a six-issue series for *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* to include content not seen in the theatrical release. Insider spoke to writer Jody Houser to gain insight into this highly anticipated, expanded retelling of the blockbuster movie.

*Words: Michael Kogge*
Jon McCoy’s stunning variant art for Rogue One issue #2.
COMICS: ROGUE ONE

"I LIKE PROJECTS THAT PUSH ME OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE."
Phil Noto’s distinctive cover art for the first issue of *Rogue One*.
BODHI IS THE NEW CONVERT, CASSIAN IS THE DEVOUT, AND JYN IS THE LAPSED BELIEVER.

How do you enjoy working with artist Emilio Laiso?
Emilio is doing some really cool things with his layouts! The way he arranges images on the page to impact the flow of the storytelling is a strength of his, and I'm glad he's bringing that strength in this series.

In terms of action beats I try to give Emilio as much leeway as possible. For almost any scene I come up with, the artist usually knows how to draw it better than I can tell them.

I relate comics to poetry, where you have to decide where each line ends, and what it means to have the line ending at that moment. In comics you have to work out what's on each page, where it ends, and what you're focusing on for the next page. You get to fill things out that you don't necessarily get to do while screenwriting, for example, because when you write a screenplay it's up to the director how long a moment lasts. With a comic, it's just you and the artist, so you have a lot more control over the pacing and feel.

Which of the characters from the movie were you most drawn to?
Bodhi Rook is probably my favorite to write for. He's the one character whose life probably would have been OK if he'd done nothing, but he chose to rebel. All of the events of the movie hinge on his bravery, so that choice and the repercussions he faces are really fascinating to me.

Collectively, the trio of Bodhi, Cassian, and Jyn is interesting to me, too. Bodhi is the new convert, Cassian is the devout, and Jyn is the lapsed believer. They're all coming together from different perspectives and have to get over all their huge ideological differences to accomplish one goal. In the comic, I'm able to show more about how they make the decisions they do.

So much of the film is from Jyn's perspective, it's not always possible for it to show Cassian feels or what Bodhi is thinking. I get to delve a little deeper into some of those moments and focus on what is behind some of their choices.

Can you hint at what some of those moments are?
A moment I was really excited to write occurs in the first issue, when Bodhi makes his decision to defect and deliver Galen's message. If you think about it, Bodhi's at the heart of everything that happens in the movie. For me, this particular scene was really important because it's when the story takes off. If Bodhi had chosen another path, everything would have turned out differently.

How do you set about writing each issue?
I generally start with page-by-page breakdowns of the story, followed by scripting out everything panel-by-panel, which is generally referred to as “full script.” With Rogue One, I'm pulling from a bunch of different sources—the film, the novelization, scenes and ideas that didn't make it into the film, and the background material in Rogue One: The Ultimate Visual Dictionary.

In fact, one of my favorite parts of the job was to read the James Luceno prequel novel, Star Wars: Catalyst. It does such a great job of laying out the foundation for Galen, Krennic, and Lyra, and made me want to incorporate more of their backgrounds into the comic.

Which of your additions to the story are you most proud of?
There's a line Galen has when he's talking to Bodhi. He's describing how the Empire likes citizens who don't make trouble, and he says “I was a good man for too long.” Of all the lines I've written so far, that one is probably my favorite.
Phil Noto’s art for *Rogue One* issue #2 heralds the shift of the action to Jedha.
Star Wars Celebration comes to Orlando, Florida on April 13–17 this year. Long-time attendee (and Behind-the-Scenes Stage host) Amy Ratcliffe shares her tips for first-timers and veterans alike!
The official key art for Star Wars Celebration Orlando by artist Paul Shipper.
**Go to the art show**

Yes, there will be queues, but don't let that put you off. The Celebration Art Show should be one of your first stops, hands down. The expert judges from Lucasfilm have selected the artists who get to exhibit here, so everything you see will be special.

Even better, you can buy the art on display, making it the ideal place to grab a limited edition showpiece for yourself or a loved one. You might even get artists such as Katie Cook, Jeff Carlisle, and Jason Palmer, who all bring their own take to the *Star Wars* universe, to sign your purchase. And it doesn't matter if your tastes lean toward comic art, photorealism, Art Deco, or the abstract, you'll find something to hang on your wall. Even if you don't think art is your thing, this is the place that could—and probably will—change your mind!

unless you stick with your friends for the entire event, it's unlikely anyone will have the exact same experience as you—which isn't a bad thing!

So how do you decide when to see the stormtroopers of the 501st? What should you circle as a “must do” on your schedule, and what will you kick yourself for missing? Allow us to make a few suggestions...

"Star Wars, nothing but *Star Wars...*" That's the unofficial theme song of *Star Wars* Celebration. The three or four day event (depending on the year) is packed full of panels featuring the cast of upcoming films; fans wearing incredible costumes; stands selling collectibles old and new (not to mention exclusive); and... anything else you care to mention. You can even get a *Star Wars* tattoo!

There are so many options at Celebration you'll be forced to make some difficult decisions about what to see and what to skip. Even seasoned Celebration-goers can feel overwhelmed by the choices, and...
/ Because Celebration is an official event with close involvement from Lucasfilm, it can get big-time stars from the various productions. Cast members from the movies, voice actors from the TV shows, writers and directors, model makers and musicians, and Lucasfilm executives often stop by the main stage (usually called the Celebration Stage) for one-on-one interviews, to reveal new information, or to present new footage or trailers. Notable happenings at Celebrations past have included Jon Stewart interviewing George Lucas; Gwendoline Christie hosting a panel of *Rogue One* cast members; and Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy and director J.J. Abrams unveiling the first teaser for *The Force Awakens*.

When these moments take place, the atmosphere in the room is electric. Being in an audience of fans creates a shared excitement like nothing else. You have to wait in line for a wristband to gain access to main-stage events, but do it at least once. You'll never forget it!
As you wander from activity to activity at Celebration, you won’t be able to miss the costumes—so much so that winding your way past clone troopers and Twi’leks starts to seem almost normal. But don’t let yourself become blind to the detail and imagination on display across the event. It’s easy to forget that most of the cosplayers you see have spent hours crafting their costumes themselves, and many have added inventive twists to otherwise familiar characters.

Remember also that, however fearsome a cosplayer might look in their gear, underneath it all is a fan much like you. Don’t be afraid to say hello to them and ask questions. One important rule of thumb is to always request permission to take their photo, unless they are clearly part of a parade of characters. Throughout the weekend, likeminded cosplayers will come together at scheduled times to strut their stuff en masse. The march of the Mandalorian Mercs is a sight to behold, as is the Running of the Hoods—that is made up entirely of cosplayers dressed as background character Willrow Hood! Check out the cosplay
Star Wars has made fans of us all, but at Celebration it is fair to say that fans make Star Wars what it is. The community, with roots as far back as 1977, is never better represented than at this global gathering. Be sure to swing by the many fan tables to meet enthusiasts from around the world who represent groups as diverse as the 501st Legion and the R2-D2 Builders Club.

It doesn’t matter if you don’t want to join a particular group—everyone is happy just to chat about their passion, and many have props and collectibles on hand that they are eager to show off. The 501st and the Rebel Legion sometimes even deck out whole rooms with displays! And while no one is under any pressure to sign up for anything, maybe you’ll find the fan organization you’ve been looking for...

Visit fan organizations

The worlds of collecting and Star Wars fandom go hand in hand, and Celebration is awash with merchandise, as well as places to find out what your own prized possessions are worth. But aside from all those tempting stalls, there’s another way to stock up at Celebration, and that’s by collecting experiences.

Of course you’ll leave Celebration with a bag of swag, but make sure you also take away some special memories. Go out of your way to meet new people, make new friends, and take lots of photos. Those queues we’ve talked about are the perfect place to strike up a conversation, and can become a core part of a memorable Celebration experience. If you’re queuing for the same thing, you know you have something in common to talk about for at least a few minutes, and if you really hit it off, you can arrange to meet again later in the weekend. You might even make a lifelong friend!

Celebration is also a great place to hang out with people you already know, whether you’ve met them at another convention, online, or wherever! Arrange get-togethers on social media and nab a group photo to cement your friendship well into the future. It may not seem like much at the time, but your memory will thank you for it later!

Keep up with the latest Celebration news by following @SW_Celebration on Twitter.

Collect experiences
The Star Wars Archive

Lights! Camera! Action!
Rare images from the Star Wars photo archives.
Harrison Ford (Han Solo) and Joonas Suotamo (Chewbacca) film the daring raid on Starkiller Base. Photo by David James.
THE LONG GAME

MORE THAN 25 YEARS AFTER HE FIRST WOWED STAR WARS FANS IN PRINT, IMPERIAL TACTICIAN GRAND ADMIRAL THRAWN MADE HIS ON-SCREEN DEBUT IN *STAR WARS REBELS* IN 2016. NOW, AUTHOR TIMOTHY ZAHN IS REVISITING HIS MOST FAMOUS CREATION IN A BRAND NEW NOVEL. MEGAN CROUSE FOUND OUT MORE.
A popular villain, in an all-new tale written by his creator (fan-favorite author) promises something more akin to an event than a book. Grand Admiral Thrawn’s time has come...

Your latest book, *Thrawn*, covers a significant span of time. What is it like to plan and pace a novel like that?

**Timothy Zahn:** It can be tricky. The first part of the book shows pivotal incidents in Thrawn’s career, each separated by a few months. In that case, Thrawn’s rank as he moves up the ladder is an easy shorthand for the reader to keep track of passing time. The last quarter of the book—as is typical with me—details the massive finale where everything laid out in the rest of the book comes together.

**Did you research real-world tacticians in order to inform Thrawn’s strategies?**

**TZ:** I didn’t research anyone in particular for this book, but I do read a fair amount of military history. So there’s a lot of strategy and tactics lurking in my subconscious, ready to be plucked out and put into a battle scene.

**What do you enjoy most about writing for Thrawn?**

**TZ:** He’s a very interesting character to write for, because he’s very good at what he does. The biggest challenge is the fact that he’s smarter than I am, which means I really have to work to keep him at the top of his game. Fortunately, in a situation where he might only have a few minutes to come up with a battle plan, I can take hours or even days figuring it out.

**How have your intentions for the character changed over time?**

**TZ:** In the original Thrawn Trilogy he was more of a force of nature: like a storm the heroes needed to face. We started to see more of his thoughts and background in the “Hand of Thrawn Duology,” and with this book we’ll learn more about him as a person as well as a genius commander.

Admiral Thrawn has been a huge hit in *Star Wars Rebels*. What’s it like for you to see him brought to life on the show?

**TZ:** It’s very surrealistic. On one hand, I’m fully aware that this is a character I created, but on the other hand, I’m looking in from outside, just like every other fan. I’m very pleased with the way Dave Filoni and the team are portraying him. Every time the *Ghost* crew outmaneuvers him or one of his subordinates, he gains information about them. Thrawn learns their tactics, their personalities, and their likely behavior in future encounters. He has always been one for the long game, and the *Rebels* show captures his motivations perfectly.

*Thrawn* takes place before Season Three of *Star Wars Rebels*, making it the admiral’s earliest appearance in the *Star Wars* timeline. Will this glimpse into his early days make viewers sympathize more with him, or has he always been an out-and-out villain?

**TZ:** Ideally, readers should always be able to sympathize with Thrawn’s motivations and goals, even if they disapprove of his actions. I’ve always wanted readers to understand him. The goal with this novel is to give a little more insight into the character and to show some of the prejudices and hostility he would undoubtedly have faced as he worked his way up through the Imperial ranks.

Thrawn’s tactics are based on artworks from the cultures he’s up against. What piece of Earth art would he find particularly interesting?

**TZ:** It wouldn’t be a single piece of art, but the overall patterns of how the various cultures see themselves. He looks at the art that has stood the test of time and reflects upon the core of a particular society, and he pays attention to new trends, to see if cultures are reimagining themselves or possibly moving to another section of a long-term oscillation. I suspect he would shake his head in bemusement at the painting by C.M. Coolidge, *Dogs Playing Poker*.

You’ve created fan-favorite characters such as Thrawn and Mara Jade. What do you think is the key to their appeal?

**TZ:** I really have no idea what makes a given character click with the readers. All I can do is try to create complex, understandable, competent characters and hope that the readers will connect with them.

Are there any other characters you’ve created that you’d like to revisit in a *Star Wars* novel?

**TZ:** I’d love to write Mara Jade again, and I’d like to reassemble the *Ocean’s Eleven*-type team from *Scoundrels* and send them on another caper. There’s also a character in *Outbound Flight* that I once envisioned weaving through the movies and *Star Wars* history, so I’d like to take another crack at that one, too. But right now, I’m content to write Thrawn again, and let the future take care of itself.

*Star Wars: Thrawn* by Timothy Zahn is available now.
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ANIMATING THE ADMIRAL

Keith Kellogg, animation supervisor for Star Wars Rebels, talks about transforming Legends icon Grand Admiral Thrawn from prose protagonist to 3D threat!

INTERVIEW BY TRICIA BARR
Weith Kellogg’s key role as animation supervisor on the Star Wars franchise began on Star Wars: The Clone Wars with the Season Four premiere, “Water War.” He has worked on every episode of Star Wars Rebels to date.

> On animating Admiral Thrawn…
First, we receive a design from our amazing art director Killian Plunkett and his team, and then we create a model, based on what we’re given, in a 3D software program called Maya. Our character technical directors then create what is called a “rig” for the model, basically a virtual skeleton complete with bones and joints, which can be manipulated. The “rig” is then passed to our animators, who can then pose the character, like moving the arms and legs and creating facial expressions, to suit the needs of the action.

> On what Thrawn means to him…
I read Timothy Zahn’s original Thrawn trilogy when I was growing up, and I know how much the character means to the Star Wars community, so it was humbling and exciting to bring such an icon into the animation realm. We were all aware of the significance.

> On setting Thrawn apart from other bad guys…
When we found out Lars Mikkelsen was providing the voice, and got to hear him for the first time speaking as Thrawn, we knew he would be a very calculating villain and very intelligent—not at all typical, and certainly not over-the-top. With that in mind, we knew that when animating him his movements would need to be toned down, too, more so than most of the characters in Rebels. For example, we gave him very little movement in his brow, and even less movement in his mouth. His changes in expression, when they happen, are also very deliberate and toned down as well.

> On meeting Timothy Zahn…
[Rebels executive producer] Dave Filoni is very open when it comes to creators, so he had Timothy come down to see us. We talked to him about what we were doing with Thrawn, and got his feedback. He really liked it, which was good to know, because we spent a lot of time trying to figure out how we would portray him, based on what we knew from Timothy’s books.

> On Thrawn’s body language…
One of the great insights Timothy Zahn gave us was that Thrawn is always trying to fit in. His blue skin makes him stand out, certainly, but he does things to emulate humans, whether that is putting his arm on his elbow or putting his hands behind his back. Thrawn is always thinking about how he can look as normal as possible and to not stand out more than he already does.

> On the challenges of Thrawn…
Because he doesn’t emote using big facial expressions and often keeps his hands behind his back, it can be hard to find spots where his character comes across to the audience, without him being over the top. One of the ways we can show who he is as a character is by placing him in his office, and then positioning him around or near the things he has collected. You will notice he is often framed by his two lizard statues. We try to play up the fact he is a historian and that he learns the motivations of his enemies based on their cultures, which ultimately comes back to the art he’s collected.

> On his favorite Thrawn moment…
There’s a scene in “Hera’s Heroes” where Thrawn grabs Captain Slavin by the collar and hisses at him because Slavin didn’t understand the historical significance of the Twi’lek Kalikori. Thrawn loses his composure for a split second, realizes what he’s doing, and then puts Slavin down. Next, Thrawn brushes off his shoulder and regains the control he so desperately tries to maintain at all time. I loved that scene because again it harkens back to Thrawn being a historian and valuing artifacts taken from his enemies. To Slavin, it was a simple bobble; but to Thrawn, the artifact represented knowledge. The moment caught Thrawn off guard and he went ballistic, which was a lot of fun to do. 🙃
The 3rd annual runDisney Star Wars event took place at the Disneyland Resort in California on January 13, 14, and 15. Jon D. Witmer went the extra 6.2 miles to compete in the Rebel Challenge, which featured a Star Wars 10K on Saturday and a Star Wars Half Marathon on Sunday!
January 2016. I was 10 miles into runDisney’s Star Wars Half Marathon when I saw him. It was the first time I’d ever tried to run 13.1 miles in one go, and I was on what felt like an endlessly long stretch of Chapman Avenue in Anaheim, California. My energy was waning as I pounded the pavement, and then there he was: my unlikely inspiration. Malakili, Jabba’s rancor keeper, was only a handful of runners in front of me, complete with headscarf and green pants, his torso bare in the cold January morning. He clutched his beloved pet beneath one arm as he kept pace, showing no signs of flagging. The sight of him brought joy and adrenaline back to my heart and carried me capably to the finish.

There were many such inspirations along the course, with runners and viewers alike bedecked in the raiment of rebels and Imperials, Jedi, and Sith. Not to mention the Disneyland and Disney California Adventure theme parks themselves—aglow in the early morning hours, before their doors opened to a new day’s visitors.

It was all so exciting—every finisher received a medal straight out of A New Hope—that I determined immediately to sign up for an additional race, the Rebel Challenge in 2017. That meant I would again race, the Rebel Challenge in addition to the Star Wars Half Marathon weekend at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

The expansion also brought the addition of the Kessel Run Challenge, which offers yet another medal for anyone who completes the Star Wars Half Marathon at each park within the same calendar year. When Tina mentioned this, the room seemed to fade away, and I could have sworn I heard Emperor Palpatine’s goading words: “You want this, don’t you?”

First Steps
The following day, I was back in Anaheim by four in the morning. The forecast was clear, but temperatures were chilly. I pulled my knit cap snugly over my ears—its Star Wars logo front and center on my forehead—and reminded myself, “I am one with the Force and the Force is with me.”

Making my way to my starting corral, I stepped in time to John
Williams’ “Parade of the Ewoks,” which played from nearby loudspeakers. There were 13,000 registered runners for this 10K, and among them I spied everything from X-wing pilots to a tauntaun. No sign of Malakili—but he is a half-marathoner, after all.

The race began at 5:30am. The corrals were released one at a time. “I am one with the Force and the Force is with me.”

The course first went through California Adventure before leading into Disneyland. Along the way, the parks’ cast-member crew lined the route, their cheers of encouragement floating over the constant backing of Star Wars scores. Shortly past the first mile marker, I heard my mantra spoken aloud. “You are one with the Force,” a pair of cast-members shouted in unison. I dubbed them “the Guardians of the Whills” as they finished their inducement: “The Force is with you!”

I ran past a Sabine-tagged TIE fighter wing, BB-8 at the foot of Rey’s downed walker on Jakku, and Chewbacca in the Resistance base. Rounding the corner into Tomorrowland, I saw two First Order stormtroopers on patrol, their F-11D blaster rifles at the ready. Heading out of Main Street toward the final mile-and-a-half of the race, I passed beneath Captain Phasma on a lookout—her chromium armor resplendent in the colorful glow of the park’s lights.

Feeling like I could take on the whole Empire myself, I crossed the finish line and let the event’s BB-8 medal drop into place around my neck.

**Run Rebel, Run**

The next day was Sunday, but it was no day of rest. I donned my official Rebel Challenge shirt, which identified me as one of the 6,000 runners who had opted to add yesterday’s 6.2 miles to today’s 13.1, and set out to join them and another 10,000 runners who had signed up just for the half marathon. In total,
30,000 runners from more than 24 countries participated in the weekend’s races, making this the earthbound equivalent of a gathering at Maz Kanata’s castle. As today’s contingent approached our starting corrals, I scanned the crowd for Malakili. Still no sign of him, but no matter. “I am one with the Force and the Force is with me.”

The half marathon’s first four miles were identical to those of the 10K the day before. Sure enough, around the first mile, I heard the first of the two Guardians of the Whills: “You are one with the Force!” she reminded us. “The Force is with you!” Less than a mile later I passed her counterpart. “You are one with the Force and the Force is with you,” he echoed.

Between miles four and five, the course led out to the streets of Anaheim, where we were greeted by an oversized Jawa draped in holiday lights, gesticulating wildly and cheering us along with shouts of “Utini!” Soon after, we passed her counterpart. “You are one with the Force and the Force is with you,” he echoed.

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Victory Lap
Once across the finish line, I accepted—with profound relief—my two medals: one for the half marathon (adorned with a beautiful rendering of Han and Leia) and one for the Rebel Challenge (featuring Threepio in silhouette). When I’d spoken with Tina two days earlier, she’d mentioned what the medals add to the runDisney experience. “It’s a way to commemorate an experience with Star Wars that is unique.”

But she pointed to another facet of these races that I find to be even more profound. Each run, she said, “is an opportunity to not just watch Star Wars on a screen, but to have a real-life interaction with the characters.” And not just the characters, mind you, but also thousands of fellow fans.

After running a combined 19.3 miles within a window of roughly 26 hours, I was exhausted and hungry—but I also felt an urge to do all of this again next year. And I’ll bring with me a revised mantra. “I am one with the Force of others, and the Force of others is with me.”

The runDisney Star Wars Half Marathon – The Light Side weekend takes place January 11-14, 2018. Find out more at www.rundisney.com
As brave defector Bodhi Rook, Riz Ahmed has vital information to impart in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. *Insider* learned more about this rising star!
izwan “Riz” Ahmed has forged a career in independent films such as *The Road to Guantanamo* (2006), *Four Lions* (2010), and *Ill Manors* (2012), before earning wider recognition for his performance in 2014’s *Nightcrawler*. But it is his role in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* that has won the plaudits of *Star Wars* fans around the world.

What was it like getting the call to be in a *Star Wars* movie?

Riz Ahmed: [Rogue One director] Gareth Edwards called me up and said he’d like me to go on tape [for an audition]. It came out of nowhere as I wasn’t even aware that *Rogue One* was being made! So, I was a bit confused and thinking, *Is this for real?*

I went all out when creating the audition tape, doing 15 different versions of the scene [I was reading for]. Gareth made the mistake of giving me his email address, so I kept emailing them to him. After a while, he said, “You can stop sending auditions now!”

**What’s your take on the character of Bodhi Rook?**

RA: Often in these big sagas that deal with great mythology, we’re talking about the children of important people: members of a dynasty or an important family line. What’s cool about Bodhi is he’s an average Joe. He doesn’t come from a special family or have special powers. He’s just trying to make a living, and the only gig in town is working for the Empire.

So, he becomes a cargo pilot because he enjoys the escape of the long-haul flights. But something is eating away at him. Jedha—the place he’s from—is occupied by the Empire, and he’s got a front-row seat to see what the effect of that is. Eventually, he decides to take a huge risk and deliver a message to Saw Gerrera [Forest Whitaker]. Bodhi decides to risk everything for what he feels is right.

**How did you prepare to play Bodhi?**

RA: The amazing power of science fiction is that it’s an opportunity to comment on the world and the struggles we face. We live in a time when many countries are occupied and people are forced to do things they’re not comfortable with in order to earn a living. For me, the fact that Gareth wanted to make a very gritty film that had a realistic feel to it meant that I could look to those real world examples and watch interviews of people in those circumstances who feel conflicted in that way. Then, when I went on set and saw everything the amazing production team built, I was instantly there.

**Was there a particular moment when you “knew” the character?**

RA: I don’t know if I ever feel like that. It’s always a bit of a rollercoaster ride—each day you hope to learn a bit more about the character. Some days, you’ll think you’ve got it, and then suddenly you’ll think: *I don’t know this guy at all!* In a way, I guess you should never fully know your character. It would be dangerous to think I’ve nailed it and it’s a finished product. I try to approach my character as a journey: a process of constant discovery. I don’t even think I fully know myself.

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**“IT’S ALWAYS A BIT OF A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE—EACH DAY YOU HOPE TO LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT THE CHARACTER.”**

01 Ready to complete the mission on Scarif, Bodhi Rook (Riz Ahmed) prepares to engage the enemy!

02 Pilot Bodhi Rook takes control of the rebels’ U-wing starfighter.
Did you enjoy working with Gareth Edwards?
RA: Working with Gareth is almost like working on an indie movie or a documentary. You have the director holding the camera, in the pit, in the mine shaft, with you. You forget about the rest of the world.

Sometimes when the director is out there watching on a monitor, a small part of you is out there, too, wondering if he or she likes it. But when the director is right there with you, you focus completely on your immediate surroundings. It’s very immersive.

Also, he’s such a fan of *Star Wars* you can really feel his enthusiasm when he talks to you about scenes. He’ll start humming the music! It’s infectious. His roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-involved energy is inspiring and really brings you into that world. That’s something I really respect.

What’s it like to be part of such a large ensemble cast?
RA: It was fun working with everyone and being a part of this group. Everyone has their own quirks and vibe, and it becomes a kind of a family! It felt like doing a play with a theater troupe, spending every day together, and I liked that camaraderie. You don’t always get that, and it can sometimes feel like you’re acting in a void, unsure what the other pieces of the puzzle are. But when you’re surrounded by the other characters, you learn how each piece fits. It makes you more secure about what you’re doing. Creatively, and on a personal level, I was grateful for that.

Who was the biggest joker on set?
RA: Alan Tudyk (K-2SO), without a doubt. He says that doing a computer-generated character doesn’t bring the same pressure as being on camera, so you end up feeling very free. We’d do a scene, and he would improvise the lines and say the most random things. I think it takes a lot of confidence to do that, and it created a loose, playful feel on set.

What does being in this film mean to you?
RA: So much! To be part of a diverse ensemble cast that I respect so much, made up of people whose work I’ve watched for so long, means a lot. So does being a part of a story that means so much to so many people around the world. *Star Wars* shapes culture. That was true with the first films, and it’s true now.

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**5 FACTS ABOUT RIZ AHMED**

01 Riz is also known as Riz MC. He is a member of the hip-hop group Swet Shop Boys. In 2012 he released a solo album entitled *MICroscope*.

02 Riz features on the Billboard number one album, *The Hamilton Mixtape*.

03 He was awarded the Geneva Cinéma Tout Ecran Award for Best Actor for his performance in the film, *Shifty* (2008) co-starring fellow *Rogue One* cast member Daniel Mays (Tivik).

04 Riz also worked with another *Rogue One* co-star, Ben Mendelsohn (Krennic), in the film *Una* (2016).

05 He graduated from Christ Church, Oxford University with a degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.
My name is Jez Allinson, but I'm better known around the world as “The Running Stormtrooper.”

In 2016, I ran in various events dressed in full stormtrooper costume to raise money for the terminally ill children’s charity, Make-a-Wish Foundation International. “The Running Stormtrooper” became an internet hit in February 2016 with a viral video that received more than 2.3 million hits on the Facebook platform “Lad Bible.”

My 2016 charitable activities culminated in me completing the London Marathon dressed in the stormtrooper costume in 5 hours 26 seconds. I couldn’t leave it there though, Make-a-Wish need more help, but I recognize that I’ll have to up my game if I want to beat last year’s fundraising efforts.

In March this year I ran the Vitality Bath Half Marathon, and in April I will have a booth at Star Wars Celebration with a treadmill where I will run at least a half marathon each day for 4 days—I can think of no greater opportunity to raise awareness for Make-a-Wish.

Following this, I will be running the Virgin Money London Marathon on April the 23rd. However these are just the warm up events as I have decided to take it to the next level....

STORMING PINewood
To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Star Wars, I have organised my own 40-mile run on May the 4th at Black Park which is adjacent to Pinewood studios. The final part of this event will culminate with me running through the gates of Pinewood and up to the Lucasfilm buildings—all while wearing my stormtrooper armor. This has the full support of Pinewood Studios and the blessing of Lucasfilm.

This, like last year, is going
to hurt. The armor is not
comfortable. It cuts and chafes my
body, I can’t see very well, drink or
eat easily, or tie my shoes. However,
if I can raise more money for
Make-a-Wish, the experience will all
be worth it. Last year I raised
£6,000, and this year I am hoping
to reach £10,000.

It is a lofty target, and
stormtroopers aren’t known for their
accuracy. With help and support, I
might be able to reverse this trend!

Keep up (if you can!) with
The Running Stormtrooper at
www.justgiving.com/fundraising/
rogueone

01. THE ART OF WARS

Here is some artwork I made to
celebrate the release of Rogue
One. It’s my favorite Star Wars
movie to date, which I didn’t
think would be possible outside
the main Skywalker story.
Tom Amici, email

02. HAN AND CHEWIE GET BLASTING!

I wanted to share a few Star Wars sketches
with Insider that I drew recently. I hope
you enjoy them! Daryl Ryan, New York
Blade Squadron: Jakku

As the battle rages over the backwater desert world of Jakku, the vaunted Blade Squadron flies its B-wing starfighters against a decimated Imperial war machine. Having played a crucial role in the battle of Endor by destroying the Imperial I-class Star Destroyer Devastator, the fearless pilots engage in another heated confrontation in the ongoing galactic civil war...

Written by David J. Williams and Mark S. Williams
Illustrations by Chris Trevas
Il available ships, concentrate your fire on the engines of the Ravager. Repeat, concentrate on the engines—"

Admiral Ackbar’s words were still ringing in Gina Moonsong’s ears as she keyed her comm.

“OK Blade Squadron, you heard the man.” Moonsong tightened up her squadron’s formation as the B-wings swooped in to attack the Super Star Destroyer Ravager, flanked on either side by their X-wing escort. She found herself keeping a particularly close eye on the X-wing piloted by Braylen Stramm. Given how much Kuat had depleted their pilots, he’d remained with the squadron; they needed every able-bodied pilot on deck. Officially, their relationship was strictly professional. In reality, though, it was more complicated than ever.

Fanty’s voice cut through her reverie: “Fifteen seconds out.”

“No TIE fighters, just capital ships.” Lieutenant Sandara Li’s contralto echoed over the squadron’s frequency; she and her wingman Johan Volk rolled in to cover Moonsong’s approach. Gina smiled grimly as the Ravager’s aft filled her cockpit window. To her surprise, there was almost no return fire—the vast ship was best from too many directions to worry about a small squadron. And there seemed to be some kind of issue with its drive-system... the craft was shifting course at an unpredictable angle. But that wasn’t Moonsong’s problem. Her problem was finding a way to make it even worse.

“Stand by to fire ion cannons. Transmitting targets in three... two... one. Weapons free! I repeat, weapons free!” The B-wings of Blade Squadron unleashed a withering barrage of fire, scoring multiple hits on the drive systems. Moonsong hung back, allowing her pilots to take their shots and peel away. It wasn’t until after Stramm and her wingman Fanty cleared the area that Moonsong started her own attack run. There was an undeniable pleasure in delivering the coup de grâce, and as the squadron commander Gina revealed in it. Moonsong reduced her speed, lined up the engines and let loose with everything her B-wing had. She was rewarded with orange blossoms of fire and molten debris as the Super Star Destroyer pitched and heaved. Gina’s readouts were going haywire; there was massive EMP interference, and what little she could decipher made no sense: had someone unleashed a tractor beam on the enormous ship? What was going on? She swerved away but there was nowhere to swerve; all of a sudden, the Ravager was losing traction and plunging toward the planet Jakku below. Leaving Gina right between the two.

She heard Ackbar’s voice echoing on override across all channels: alarms were warbling right next to her head, and she smelled acrid smoke. But through those alarms she heard a voice: “Gina! Gina can you hear me?”

She could, but as the comm died, it became clear Stramm couldn’t hear her. She wanted to tell him she was sorry, that they should have ditched this whole war and made for some world where no one had ever drawn weapons... but now it was too late. The G-forces were hurling her down toward blackout; the prospect loomed before her almost inviting, like some kind of ultimate solace. But she fought for consciousness—and then stopped fighting gravity; instead, she vectored down and past the Ravager. They were well beneath the heat of re-entry now; all she had to worry about was surviving the crash—not to mention crashing in a place that didn’t promptly get smashed by millions of tons of falling metal. She made some guesses on the fly, used the little power her ship had left to accelerate well past its safety limits, the craft shaking like a leaf in the winds of atmosphere. A vast ceiling of falling metal loomed above. Desert stretched below. With her last breath of consciousness, she engaged the auto-landing sequence....

It was a steady sound; like a drumbeat, or somebody tapping the inside of her skull. As her eyes opened, Moonsong realized that there was some strange looking bird pecking at the glass of her cockpit. She unstrapped herself and activated the emergency explosive override across all channels:...
Especially since half the sky was on fire. Miles away, the huge wreck of the *Ravager* sat like a volcano, spitting plasma-charged steel and smoke into the air, while the sand all around had been blackened by its impact. Looking back at her wrecked B-wing, Moonsong realized it was a miracle she was alive, but she seriously doubted that was going to remain the case for long. She pulled off her helmet and thermal gloves before disconnecting the controls for the suit’s systems. She felt more than a little conspicuous in her red flight suit. She quickly discovered that the B-wing’s survival kit was destroyed and if you didn’t count the signal flares she carried—which she didn’t—then she had absolutely no weapons.

Of course, things could always get worse: the distinctive whine of TIE fighter engines high above brought her to her feet and running. She ran up the side of a dune and dived for cover behind a cluster of rocks as the TIE fighters swooped in, firing wildly and quickly turning what was left of her B-wing into a molten heap of burning scrap. So much for honor among pilots; it seemed that neither the New Republic nor the Empire would be taking prisoners this time. She watched her beloved ship burn and took a deep breath. No comm, water, survival supplies, homing beacon. But heading in the opposite direction of the gigantic funeral pyre of the downed Super Star Destroyer seemed like a good start. She folded her lucky flight gloves into her suit and started walking. At least she was still walking...

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Moonsong was burning with thirst. She estimated she had trudged a good ten kilometers or so from the crash but still had no point of reference to tell her where she was. Darkness was falling fast and she was more than a little concerned about sleeping out in the open. She scurried up the side of a particularly high sand dune and peered down into the valley below—to find herself looking down at the shattered remnants of an Imperial stormtrooper camp.

Moonsong ran down to the scene of carnage, and carefully sifted through the remains of the dead troopers. Whatever had done this had made fast and terrible work of the squad. But Moonsong was intent on turning their bad luck into her good fortune and went to work scavenging through what was left of their equipment. She found a canteen of water—she didn’t care it had belonged to a dead guy, he wouldn’t be needing it. As she drank, she unclipped an E-11 blaster and a utility harness, then strapped on the utility belt, and unfolded the weapon’s stock for maximum stability. She flipped the select fire switch with a degree of satisfaction. Maybe things were looking up.

And then she heard something behind her.

Moonsong spun around to find herself face to face with a teenage boy in a torn flight suit. “Don’t shoot!” he said. And then, the challenge code: “Thunder!” He looked scared as hell. Moonsong slowly lowered the weapon but kept her finger on the trigger.

“Heart... Who are you, kid?” He gave her a crisp salute.

“Temmin... Temmin Wexley, Phantom Squadron.” He didn’t look old enough to shave, let alone fly an X-wing, Moonsong allowed herself the ghost of a smile.

“Well, Temmin Wexley: I’m Lieutenant Gina Moonsong, Blade Squadron. Is your comlink still working?”

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Gina Moonsong encounters Temmin Wexley amid the carnage on Jakku.
“Uh... no.”
“Got a blaster?”
“Sure.” Temmin pulled his DH-17 and checked the charge. “I’ve only got one spare power pack though.”
“What about provisions?”
“Most of my kit was destroyed. I got this though...” Temmin dug deep into a flight suit pocket and pulled out a pair of nutritional supplements. Each bar could sustain a human for up to three days. The downside was the terrible taste. Though at this point Moonsong wasn’t complaining.
“Well, at least we won’t starve. We’ve got to link up with the ground forces if we’re ever going to get off this rock.”
“Yes si—I mean yes, ma’am—”
“Call me Gina. It’s easier.”

Moonsong took the first watch while the kid slept. Though that was really just a way to make sure he got some rest, because as soon as he woke, Moonsong skipped her watch and got them on the move instead. She figured they could make some real distance before the sun came back up. The kid seemed sullen and stayed quiet. Moonsong figured a little talking might ease the time and lower the panic factor. Too bad she was terrible at making small talk.

“So, um... what happened to the rest of your squadron, kid?”
“They’re still up there fighting. But some of them are dead. They were my friends.”
“I’ve lost good friends too,” she said. She touched his hand gently. That was the starlight. “I’ve got friends I want to see again. I’ve got friends I want to see again too...” Moonsong’s voice faltered as she thought about Stramm. She decided there and then that if she ever saw his face again she would tell him everything and see where the cards fell.

“Do you hear that?” Temmin asked.
“Hear wh—” But before either of them could react half a dozen figures popped out from behind a rock with weapons drawn. One of them called out the challenge.
“Thunder!” Moonsong let out a sigh of relief—they were friendly.
“Lightning!” Weapons lowered as the New Republic soldiers closed around them. One of them noted Moonsong’s rank and gave a perfunctory salute.

“I like to suggest a plan,” she said. She glanced at Wexley. “I hope you know how to maintain radio silence until we make contact with our target—and even if I could give you a comm there’s so much EMP interference, you’d need a full blown command-and-control sat-uplink to get through all the chaff.”

Moonsong shrugged, burying her disappointment. This was war, nothing went as planned. “What is your target?”

“Thank you, Sarge,” said a voice of angry stormtroopers between here and Base Alpha. It’s up to you, Lieutenant.”

“Spirit convoy.” Wexley looked up at the rebel troops. Some of them were wounded. All looked tired. “That sounds like it would be well protected.”

**“IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES, AN IMPERIAL SUPPLY CONVOY IS GOING TO ROLL RIGHT THROUGH THAT PASS.”**

“Lieutenant, I’m Sergeant Agarne, Third Recon Group.”
“You’re a sight for sore eyes.”
“We don’t have much time. Group command is over there. He’ll explain everything.”
“Roger that. Lead the way.” The group double-timed it over a few dunes to a rocky area where a squad of soldiers were digging in.
“Downed pilots to see the group commander,” said the sergeant.
“Thank you, Sarge,” said a voice from down in the trench. “Do me a favor and double check our lines of fire again.” Agarne gave a curt nod and headed off to check the other soldiers. The group commander climbed out of the trench and faced the two newcomers. Blue eyes shone from within a scarred face.
“I’m Major Ranz, he said.
Moonsong saluted. “Lieutenant Gina Moonsong, commander Blade Squadron. This is pilot Temmin Wexley.

“Will it be. I expect at least one re-enforced company of stormtroopers to be traveling with it.”
“Where are the rest of your men?”
“You’re looking at them. Yesterday we had a full company.”
“You don’t honestly think you’re going to be able to take out a heavily armored Imperial supply convoy with a dozen men do you? That’s suicide.”
Ranz laughed mirthlessly. “Didn’t they say that about taking down the Death Star? Look, we have our orders. You’re welcome to some supplies if you want to make a run for it, but we’re about a hundred kilometers behind enemy lines with nothing but thousands of angry stormtroopers between here and Base Alpha. It’s up to you, Lieutenant.”

It wasn’t really much of a choice.
“Count us in,” she said. She glanced at Wexley. “I hope you know how to use that blaster, kid.”
Then she turned back to Ranz.
“I’d like to suggest a plan,” she said.
The six Imperial Troop Transports skirted across the sands at 20 kilometers per hour. They were unbuttoned, with a single trooper sticking out of the top hatch manning the craft’s main gun. Ranz waited until the very last second and gave the signal.

“Now!” The scouts detonated a jury-rigged cluster of power packs buried in the sand as the second transport passed over it. The ITT rose into the air on a pillar of sand and fire, then flipped over onto its back and split open, spilling supplies and troopers in all directions. The ITT behind it desperately turned, skidding to a halt as it impacted with the wreckage. The lead transport stopped and spun its dorsal turret, spitting cover fire in all directions as the stormtroopers poured out, ready to meet their enemies. The remaining transports pulled into a triangle formation and stopped. On cue, Major Ranz and his New Republic troopers leapt from their spider holes and opened fire on the rear ITTs. Half a dozen rockets turned the rear transports into flaming coffins for the stormtroopers that had yet to disembark—but it didn’t take long for the remaining Imperials to form a skirmish line and return fire. They even managed to deploy a heavy weapons team which struggled to set up a tripod-mounted blaster cannon. The surviving troopers from the front of the column raced to reinforce the rear and face their attackers... just as Ranz had anticipated.

“Now!” he shouted.

Moonsong, Wexley, Sergeant Agarne and three of the squad popped out of their hiding place at the head of the...
column and tossed the few remaining anti-personnel grenades they had before running down firing at the few troopers outside the command ITT. Moonsong felt the heated air of near-misses, did her best to forget just how naked and exposed she was to the enemy’s fire as she reached the ITT first and yanked a dead stormtrooper out of the smoking cockpit. She smiled as she saw the intact communication gear on the vehicle's dashboard. But that smile quickly disappeared as she realized the long range comm-dish was damaged.

"Temmin! We're going to have to align the dish manually!"

"I'm on it!" Wexley climbed atop the vehicle and pulled out his multi-tool to quickly unscrew the fitting that held the dish in place. An explosion went off nearby and Wexley fell from the ITT like he'd been hit by shrapnel; Moonsong somehow managed to focus the heated air of near-misses, did to her. As to what came next—well, the sands of Jakku hadn’t claimed

Sergeant Agarne fell in next to her and slapped a fresh pack into his blaster rifle.

"All right, you lot: set your blasters on single shot and watch your aim. The only way we’re getting out of this is if we conserve our ammo."

"You really think we’re getting out of this?" someone muttered. That was when the unmistakable sound of fighter engines overhead drew Moonsong’s attention. Diving out of the sun were the familiar shapes of TIE fighters straking towards them. On their first pass, their deadly laser fire raked the area, killing most of the remaining troopers in Ganz’s regiment as well as a few stormtroopers too close to what was left of his position. "It’s over!" shouted one of the rebels. "They’ve got us... we’ve got to surrender!"

"I seriously doubt these guys take prisoners," said Moonsong. She stood up and raised her rifle to her shoulder; if this was it, she figured she would go down fighting. "Okay, you want some of this? Come and get—" but even as she said the words, the TIE fighter suddenly exploded, followed by the next one in formation, and then the next one... until finally the only fighter craft in the sky were B-wings diving down and strafing the ITTs. Snub fighter laser fire kicked up huge plumes of smoke and sand; the stormtroopers broke formation and scattered in all directions. The second pass of the B-wings finished most of them off. The rest ran into the desert. Moonsong waved to the sky as Blade Squadron sped past, waggling their wings and rolling in salute to the survivors on the ground. She wasn’t surprised to see Stramm’s marking emblazoned on the lead fighter. She stepped over to where Wexley was kneeling.

"What’s happening?" he said looking up at her.

"We’re going home," she said.

"Your mother will be proud."

She knelt beside him—with
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