

'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' is a Worthy Addition

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 13, 2016 - 3:37pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – I guess from now on, it will never be the holidays without a Star Wars movie, and why not? Every year, we'll have a celebration with the ardent fans and characters that are one in that universe, "a long time ago, in a galaxy far far away." For 2016, "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story."

The film is "outside" the official story, rebooted last year with "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but it lives and breathes in the oxygen of the developing legend, and is set before "A New Hope" (AKA the first 1977 "Star Wars"). This is a great little fill-in story that throws red meat to the rabid fan base, with references to all the other films in weaponry, characters and storyline. Directed by Gareth Edwards ("Godzilla"), the plot is pretty serious – with the usual catchphrases and wacky robots – and the religiosity of the "force" is well on display. Hell, if Scientology is a "religion," than why not the force? As in all Star Wars stories, the underdogs are good, the evil is Darth and never will there be a twain between that darkness and the light. But so what? "Rogue One" has it's own power, style and passion, and is a more-than-worthy addition to the Star Wars canon.

Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones) is the daughter of an exiled scientist named Galen Erso (Mads Mikkelsen). The imperial power, AKA the Empire, is building a new weapon and needs the expertise of Daddy Erso. They kidnap him from his exile, killing his wife and leaving his daughter behind. An emissary of the opposing Rebel Alliance, Saw Gerrera (Forest Whittaker), retrieves Jyn and raises her to be a warrior.



Cassian (Diego Luna) and Jyn (Felicity Jones) Team Up in 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures

Fifteen years later, she is thrust into the fight when the Alliance recruits her to find her father again, to figure out an element that could destroy the Empire's new weapon. Through a series of events, she hooks up with pilots Cassian (Diego Luna) and Bodhi (Riz Ahmed), warriors Chirrut (Donnie Yen) and Baze (Jiang Wen), and a wacky robot named K-2SO (voice of Alan Tudyk), to find that elusive Imperial vulnerability.

Despite a slow start, the film works beautifully by establishing its own world within the Star Wars universe. Felicity Jones' Jyn character continues and forges another strong female role that Star Wars thrives on, and she adds her British toothy determination to that lineage. One of the strongest parts of this film is the great acting in it, and the performers are able to overcome some stiff dialogue and cliché battle situations (Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy created the screenplay from a story by John Knoll and Gary Whitta).

Once the story kicks into gear, it allows all of the character widgets to work as a Star Wars fighting machine. The new age of special effects makes those battle sequences seamless, and there are several eye-popping sequences, including the return of the AT-AT Imperial walkers – from "The Empire Strikes Back" – and old Darth Vader himself. So yes, there is a mix of the old and the new which will satisfy all souls, young and old, for the price of admission.



A Familiar Figure Enters in 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures

The Stormtroopers, bless 'em, still have trouble with their blasters, and oddly seem to have no protection with their "armor" – they were literally knocked out by hitting their heads together, Three Stooges-style. Heck, instead of the new weapon, the Galactic Empire maybe should have invested a bit more in armature, which parallels the famous Don Rumsfeld quote, "You go to war with the army you have, not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time." Discuss that symbolism over cocktails after the movie.

"Star Wars, nothing but Star Wars, give me those Star Wars, don't let them end." Who knew back in 1977, when Bill Murray (as Nick Winters) would sing those prophetic words, that someday it would never end. As he sang later..."If they would bar wars, please let these Star Wars...stay."

"Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" opens everywhere in 3D, IMAX 3D and regular screenings on Friday, December 16th. See local listings for 3D/IMAX theaters and show times. Featuring Felicity Jones, Diego Luna, Alan Tudyk, Forrest Whittaker, Mads Mikkelsen, Jimmy Smits and James Earl Jones. Screenplay by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy. Directed by Gareth Edwards. Rated "PG-13"



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