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The Making Of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back



Synopsis

In this lavish thirtieth-anniversary tribute to the blockbuster film *Star Wars: Episode V The Empire Strikes Back*, New York Times bestselling author J. W. Rinzler draws back the curtain to reveal the intense drama and magnificent wizardry behind the hit movie—arguably the fan favorite of the *Star Wars* Saga. Following his *The Making of Star Wars*, the author has once again made use of his unlimited access to the Lucasfilm Archives and its hidden treasures of previously unpublished interviews, photos, artwork, and production mementos. The result is a comprehensive behind-the-scenes, up-close-and-personal look at the trials and triumphs, risks and close calls, inspiration, perspiration, and imagination that went into every facet of this cinematic masterpiece. Here, is the inside scoop on: the evolution of the script, from story conference and treatment to fifth draft, as conceived, written, and rewritten by George Lucas, famed science-fiction author Leigh Brackett, and screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan; the development of new key characters, including roguish hero Lando Calrissian, sinister bounty hunter Boba Fett, and iconic Jedi Master Yoda; the challenges of shooting the epic ice planet battle in the frozen reaches of Norway and of conjuring up convincing creatures and craft—from tauntauns and snowspeeders to Imperial walkers; the construction of a life-sized Millennium Falcon and the swamp planet Dagobah inside a specially built soundstage in Elstree Studios; the technique behind master Muppeteer Frank Oz; breathing life into the breakthrough character Yoda; the creation of the new, improved Industrial Light & Magic visual effects facility and the founding of the now-legendary Skywalker Ranch. In addition, of course, are rare on-the-scene interviews with all the major players: actors Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Billy Dee Williams, Anthony Daniels, Peter Mayhew, and David Prowse; director Irvin Kershner; producer Gary Kurtz; effects specialists Richard Edlund, Dennis Muren, Ken Ralston, and Phil Tippett; composer John Williams; and many others. Punctuating the epic account is a bounty of drawings, storyboards, and paintings by Ralph McQuarrie, Joe Johnston, and Ivor Beddoes, along with classic and rare production photos. An added bonus is a Foreword by acclaimed director Ridley Scott. *The Making of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* is a fittingly glorious celebration of an undisputed space-fantasy movie milestone. Search your feelings, you know it to be true.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review For Star Wars fans looking for a way to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the release of *The Empire Strikes Back*, this book will seem heaven sent. Rinzler follows up his magnificent *The Making of Star Wars* (2007) with this in-depth account of the production of the second act in George Lucas' original three-act epic. The author distills information gathered from a variety of sources: interviews with the actors and filmmakers recorded while the movie was in production; archival records; newspaper and magazine articles; new interviews; and books (including the now-rare *Once upon a Galaxy*, Alan Arnold's 1980 making-of book). Rinzler explores every aspect of the production, from the writing of the screenplay to casting to location filming to special effects to composing the score and designing print ads. The book is profusely illustrated with preproduction sketches, on-set photos, excerpts from various script drafts, reproductions of Lucas' handwritten notes, and more. Even fans who consider themselves quite knowledgeable about the movie might be surprised at some of the information here (Jeremy Bulloch, who played bounty hunter Boba Fett, was the half-brother of associate producer Robert Watts; the design of one of Empire's classic posters was modeled on a poster for a rerelease of *Gone with the Wind*). A splendid, comprehensive, and utterly indispensable book. --David Pitt

Advance praise for *The Making of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* – “These books are the acid flashback they’ve been promising us without the mess and fuss of dropping acid . . . again. A trip worth taking.” – Carrie Fisher, actress/author
Praise for *The Making of Star Wars* – “Rinzler’s books sort of freak me out – because I feel when

I'm reading them that I'm right back there! •Robert Watts, Star Wars production supervisor • "The Making of Star Wars is perhaps the most insightful account of what it's really like to make this kind of movie. The untainted perspective from the pre-release interviews offered inspiration when I found myself in the uncertainty brought upon by the chaos of day-to-day filmmaking." •Jon Favreau, director of Iron Man, Zathura, and Elf

OMG, you just have to have this book. Beautiful pictures. The gold was the transcript from behind-the-scenes with Harrison Ford and the Director brainstorming scripting issues over the carbon-freeze scene during a break in filming. A beautiful nostalgic record, direct from the time of the making of the greatest Star Wars movie ever.

If there's more information to be made available about the making of this film, I'd be shocked. This is an exhaustive account of the pre-production, production, and post-production of The Empire Strikes Back. Everything you ever wanted to know about the film is most likely here...and then some. It sounds like the making of this film was arduous, and, as such, the book can be an arduous read at times. Every time it got back to the topic of developing the character of Yoda, I thought, "Oh no, not Yoda again." That having been said, the book does what it sets out to do, and gives the reader what I can only assume is the complete story of the making of this film. It's a well-written book and definitely worth your time if you're a fan of the film. A warning about the embedded video and audio clips: they're a worthy addition to the book, but did not work for me on anything other than my iPhone -- not my Android tablet, and not my PC. At the time I purchased the book, the description stated it would work on Android (and I think PC as well), but this was not the case.

Not surprisingly, Ritter has done it again. Fascinating and detailed coverage of the production of The Empire Strikes Back, with plenty of concept drawings, production photos, and other material. My only complaint is that Rinzler's comprehensive coverage of everything means there are parts here and there that get overwhelmed with the names of staff, lawyers, studio executives, associates, etc, but it's easy to gloss over these parts if you wish to. Warning: this book, like all of his "making of" books and the blueprints book, is cocaine for Star Wars enthusiasts. Make sure you have enough money to buy the whole set, because you won't be able to stop after the first one...

Another excellent book in this series. I learned a great deal about the making of this film, and

despite the success of Star Wars there were points where Empire almost either didn't get made or was very close to losing financing. A great read on one of the classic sci fi films of all time.

Another top notch making of book from Mr. Rinzler. Incredible behind the scenes photos-- I thought I had seen them all after 30 years being a fan of this movie. Terrific artwork-- concept drawings, storyboards, models, you name it. The narrative is terrific-- you get not only the behind the scenes info during filming, you also get a very interesting look at how Lucasfilm was created on the business side-- I didn't think I'd find this interesting, but it was one of the best parts. Also covers those years between the first two movies and the speculation about what the "Star Wars 2" would look like-- it was really fun to remember a time when we didn't know the rest of the story. In this case, even George didn't know yet. Sadly, it also brings home how bad the Prequel Trilogy is-- George stopped listening to his own advice-- get someone else to write the screenplay and to direct. But I digress... Thank you Mr. Rinzler for your exhaustive research! Wish list for Jedi: please put the narrative into electronic form. Reading this book is a physical challenge-- I would have loved to have been able to thumb through the narrative on my Kindle.

Let me start off by saying that The Empire Strikes Back is one of my favorite movies of all time. As I am writing this review I am about halfway through the book, but I feel somewhat compelled to write a review due to the recent passing of the director, Irvin Kershner. One of the included quotations from Kershner regarding his approach to the making of "Empire" illustrates why this movie is so well-loved by Star Wars fans, and in my opinion reflects what exactly was so frustrating to many fans about the Prequels: "The thing that you learn in directing is that when you're on the floor, no matter how complex the shooting is...you have to remain absolutely sensitive to every nuance of the behavior of the people around you. Because, ultimately, if you don't keep in mind the overall humanity, then the machine takes over and suddenly all you have are technically fine shots, technically good performances. The story's being told, but something's lacking, something mysterious, indefinable." --Irvin Kershner "Empire" had this "indefinable humanity" in spades, and the book really shows how the director was able to craft such a tale. Kershner really played with the tensions between Luke and Vader, and between Leia and Han. He (along with Frank Oz and Mark Hamill) made us all believe there is a soul underneath that puppet (Yoda). The lack of this "indefinable humanity" in the Prequels is what made me so sad about how those movies ultimately came out (but perhaps this should better be saved for another review). Back to the book: I highly highly recommend this. From the inclusion of amazing archival behind-the-scenes photos,

gorgeous concept art and sketches (most notably by Ralph McQuarrie), to in-depth first-hand accounts by most of the important cast and crew, it really brings you so close to what everyone went through in the making of the movie.

Excellent, in-depth examination of the making of Episode V. Fascinating stories, never-before-seen photos, and just gobs and gobs of information to make true Star Wars fans appreciate the Saga even more. Highly Recommended.

Heavy book full of tons of info and pictures. Very glad I got this!

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