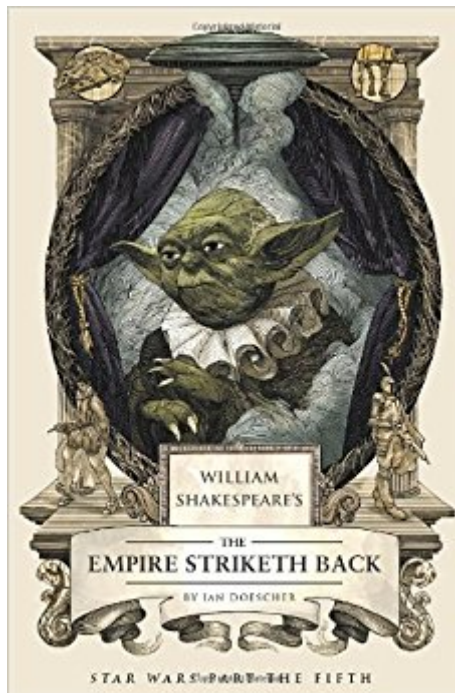


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William Shakespeare's The Empire Striketh Back (William Shakespeare's Star Wars)



Synopsis

The saga that began with the interstellar best seller William Shakespeare's Star Wars continues with this merry reimagining of George Lucas's enduring classic The Empire Strikes Back. Many a fortnight have passed since the destruction of the Death Star. Young Luke Skywalker and his friends have taken refuge on the ice planet of Hoth, where the evil Darth Vader has hatched a cold-blooded plan to capture them. Only with the help of a little green Jedi Master and a swaggering rascal named Lando Calrissian can our heroes escape the Empire's wrath. And only then will Lord Vader learn how sharper than a tauntaun's tooth it is to have a Jedi child. What light through Yoda's window breaks? Methinks you'll find out in the pages of The Empire Striketh Back!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"...enormous fun" - AVClub.com
"Good luck getting to the end without rolling off your chairs. This book is a hoot." - McClatchy Tribune
"So what are you waiting for? Get thee once more to a galaxy far, far away." - Paste Magazine
"...an inspired illustrated mashup that retells the space adventure in artful iambic pentameter and answers the question: What light through Yoda's window breaks?" - Tampa Bay Tribune
"Classic literature blended with fun is the best way to describe William Shakespeare's

The Empire Striketh Back...
•San Gabriel Valley Tribune
“Illustrated with beautiful black-and-white Elizabethan-style artwork, [William Shakespeare’s The Empire Striketh Back] offer[s] essential reading for all ages.”
•East Bay Express
“Tis a delight.”
•Palm Beach Post
“masterful”
•Deseret News
“This is a must for any fan of Star Wars”
•The Citizen

Ian Doescher is the New York Times best-selling author of William Shakespeare’s Star Wars®: Verily, A New Hope. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his family. Visit him at lanDoescher.com.

William Shakespeare’s Star Wars The Empire Striketh Back by Ian Doescher is the sequel to William Shakespeare’s Star Wars, a retelling of George Lucas’s space saga in the style of William Shakespeare. I would strongly recommend picking this up as an audiobook rather than ebook or hard copy. Random House Audio’s production is top notch with an excellent cast. It is far more like a radio play than an audiobook and the excellent cast does a wonderful job of telling the story. What I liked The source material. The original Star Wars trilogy is a darn good story. It contains a lot of strong themes which would have been as relevant in Shakespeare’s time as today: love, betrayal, youthful impetuosity, struggle against tyranny. Doescher therefore has a strong base on which to base his adaptation. It also isn’t too jarring, for example, when Han rails against Lando’s betrayal in Shakespearean language as it is a theme and emotion found in many of Shakespeare’s works. Yoda. On my first listen through I was a little disappointed that Yoda didn’t sound too different from the other characters. In the movies, he has a unique speech pattern and I was hoping that this would be reflected in Empire Striketh Back. It was only on reading Doescher’s commentary that I realised Yoda was speaking in haiku! Darn I wished I’d picked that up first time. This is intended to reflect Yoda’s role as Luke’s master or sensei in the mystical force giving an eastern feel to it. Brilliant. Appropriate and brilliant. The production. Random House Audio has gone full out to make this a radio play rather than an audiobook. We have a strong cast, sound effects (including the iconic swish of the lightsabres) as well as snippets of John Williams’s memorable soundtrack. It all combines to make it a wonderful listen. Doescher’s Notes and

Commentary. In the ebook edition I also possess, Doescher adds some commentary explaining some of the creative decisions he made while writing *Empire*. This, combined with the teachers notes provides a fascinating new insight into the book. What I didn't like there was nothing, I tell you, nothing I disliked about *The Empire Striketh Back*. I already have *The Jedi Doth Return* on pre-order. As the trailer says "these are the books you have been looking for."

The place in the canon of Shakespeare's *The Empire Striketh Back* is, of course, unchallenged. This is one of the most moving stories ever told, and it shows Shakespeare's genius at an early age. Rather than write YET ANOTHER review of how great this play is, however, I'd like to focus on a less-discussed topic related to ESB. George Lucas' 1980 film adaptation of the play. Lucas failed in several ways in his film adaptation of the Shakespeare classic. Like many Shakespearean movies from the 80s, the most glaring omission is the verse. The verse is as integral to Shakespeare's *Empire* as it is to any other of his plays, and Lucas, in a fashion that thankfully disappeared by the mid-90s, follows the contemporary trend to ignore the verse of Shakespeare plays. In fairness, hacks like James Earl Jones and Harrison Ford were likely unable to handle the verse with the same finesse as their more-talented costars (I'm thinking, of course, of Billy Dee Williams and Peter Mayhew). On the other hand, we see that omitting the verse causes eccentricities in Shakespeare's stories that ultimately fail on film. For instance, let's look at the most-obvious example: Yoda. Shakespeare was such a genius that he pioneered the haiku form long before it was rediscovered and employed in Japan almost forty years later. Trying to distinguish Yoda's verse from the other characters with his experimental style, Shakespeare produced such memorable lines as this one: "I my own counsel shall keep on who's to be trained! A Jedi is wise." Compare this beautiful work of poetry to the movie's sloppy "translation": "My own counsel will I keep on who is to be trained!" Losing the verse mangles the line, producing a distasteful effect of anastrophe. I think it's safe to say that no one likes this alteration to the original. Furthermore, the addition that Jedi are wise never even appears in the movie. George Lucas, in adapting the text, seems completely unaware of the importance of this line; cutting "A Jedi is wise" leaves the audience wondering... Shakespeare's influence on such influential theorists such as Kierkegaard comes back to this line, and the audience is left wondering whether Jedi are wise or not. A simple cut changes the film for the worse. Another omission of the text is the chorus monologue describing the lightsaber fight with Vader. Everyone knows that Shakespeare hated violence more than anything, and never showed weaponry even a little in his plays. Consider, for instance, *Romeo's*

duel with Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet, in which the two men *almost* engage in a pillow fight, only to decide that violence, even feathery, fluffy violence, solves nothing. Rather than preserving Shakespeare's pacifistic style, Lucas actually *shows* the lightsaber fight! I know that movies should take dramatic liberties with their sources, but showing violence onstage is so unlike Shakespeare - this text serving as further proof to that effect - that it's like Lucas didn't even read Shakespeare's play before filming. Perhaps the worst offender is one of Lucas' personal emendations, the groan-inducing lines spoken between Han and Leia at the carbon freezing chamber. "I love you" says Leia, to which Han replies, "I know." While one might argue for the merits of Lucas' writing in places (if one were to forget that the original verse existed for 400 years before the fact), but certainly this line above all others demonstrates that the text was better in iambic pentameter. How could anyone find an exchange like this endearing? It's beyond my ability to reconcile. If only Lucas had kept his directorial paws off Shakespeare's masterpiece, Empire Strikes Back may have been a good movie. Rumors exist that Irvin Kershner had his sights on directing a film adaptation of Shakespeare's masterpiece, but as it stands, I'm not sure the play even stands up to cinematic presentation. Some things are just better left in text.

There really isn't anything that I could say that would influence a decision on purchasing this book. It's Star Wars, but written like Shakespeare! You literally cannot get anything better than that! Obviously it would help if you have seen the movies before purchasing these books just so you have some baseline on what it originally was, but this is a great read and I am enjoying it immensely. Can't wait for the 3rd book to be released! Overall: Would strongly recommend to a Star Wars fan looking for a laugh that has a slight appreciation for Shakespearean theater.

I don't remember how I heard about the author's first book, "Verily, A New Hope," but I got ahold of it and loved every minute of it. I'm on to Act II of this one, and again it is sheer genius. For this one, Doescher is riffing pretty hard off of "Macbeth," and it totally works. Anyone who is a Shakespeare geek AND a Star Wars geek is going to have a really good time with these books. I'm not sure, however, if you could "get it" with a familiarity with only one genre. In terms of nuts and bolts, the dust jacket for this book is kinda lame, but the quality of the binding and the pages and the printing is very good. Anyway, I'm sold on the franchise, and have already pre-ordered "The Jedi Doth Return."

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