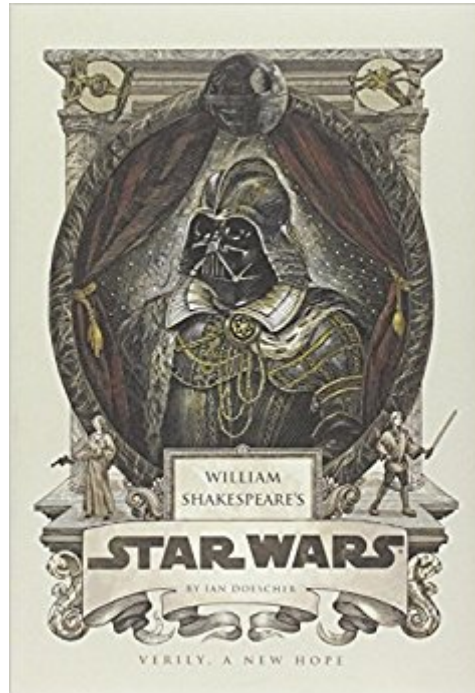




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William Shakespeare's Star Wars



Synopsis

Reimagined in glorious iambic pentameter and complete with twenty gorgeous Elizabethan illustrations • William Shakespeare's Star Wars will astound and edify Rebels and Imperials alike. Zounds! This is the book you're looking for. Return once more to a galaxy far, far away with this sublime retelling of George Lucas's epic Star Wars in the style of the immortal Bard of Avon. The saga of a wise (Jedi) knight and an evil (Sith) lord, of a beautiful princess held captive and a young hero coming of age, Star Wars abounds with all the valor and villainy of Shakespeare's greatest plays. It is a tale told by fretful droids, full of faithful Wookiees and fearsome Stormtroopers, signifying...pretty much everything.

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Customer Reviews

"...a quirky addition to the genre-busting canon..." • Entertainment Weekly "... a great gift for every geek you know, no matter what their passion." • Huffington Post "...the book is so brilliant you'll wonder why someone didn't think of it sooner." • Paste Magazine "William Shakespeare's Star Wars is Exactly What You Need For Your Next Geeky Houseparty." • Tor.com "Nicolas Delort's woodcut-style illustrations are a fabulous mixture of old and new." • Boing Boing "At last, the mother of

all mashups is "Upon Us." CNET.com "Ian Doescher has reimagined the entire first Star Wars film as an Elizabethan play, complete with iambic pentameter and elaborate illustrations. It's geekception. The Mary Sue "Doescher's pseudo-Shakespearean language is absolutely dead-on; this is one of the best-written Shakespeare parodies created for this audience and it is absolutely laugh-out-loud funny for those familiar with both The Bard and Star Wars. School Library Journal "...the ultimate fan fic. ABC News Radio "For anglophiles, scifi nerds, and probably 9th grade English students. The Bookreporter "...outstanding. Geekdad "If you are looking for a neat way to get acquainted with Shakespeare or you are a teacher whose students are having a rough time accessing the genius of the Bard of Avon, I highly recommend you give William Shakespeare's Star Wars a try! GeekMom "Delightful. PortlandMercury.com "Doescher's attempt to recreate a Shakespearean play is noteworthy and clever. Blogcritics.org "The Bard at his finest, with all the depth of character, insightful soliloquies, and clever wordplay that we've come to expect from the Master. For those who wish to read the Star Wars legend in the original Elizabethan, this is the book for you. Timothy Zahn, New York Times bestselling author of Scoundrels "Well-read geeks have breathlessly waited For what Ian Doescher hath created This book's cover is the door To a Star Wars ne'er seen before. Daniel Wallace, New York Times best-selling author of Star Wars: The New Essential Guide to Characters "I'm delighted to have William Shakespeare's Star Wars, and have read it with great pleasure. What a fine idea, to set this in the world of Luke Skywalker and R2-D2 C-3PO and Darth Vader! A period of civil war, rebels, the Galactic Empire, the death star. A star-crossed galaxy! Ian Doescher does iambic pentameter well. This is a hoot! David Bevington, Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Humanities, University of Chicago and co-editor of The Bantam Shakespeare series "...another smart tribute fans will enjoy. The Star-Ledger "As Shakespeare would say, you might think, this be madness, yet there is a method in 't. Newsday "...what Doescher made is delicious. Charleston City Paper " "...brilliant... Deseret News "This is a great read. Author Ian Doescher may not have bested Shakespeare, but he's certainly one-upped

Lucas. Asbury Park Press "…charming... The
Courier-Journal "Is it all a great, geeky, inter-galactic goblet of literary fun?
Verily! AmericanProfile.com "Whether your tastes run to Alderaan or
Avon, this reimagining of Star Wars overflows with heart and wit. Jason Fry, author
of Star Wars: The Essential Guide to Warfare "[William Shakespeare's Star Wars] is
a brilliant and super-cool way to meld pop culture and high culture Bella
Online "An elegant translation for a more civilized age. Let's face it if you love
Shakespeare or Star Wars half as much as I do, you've already bought this. Adam
Bertocci, author of Two Gentlemen of Lebowsky, a writer-director of Brooklyn
Force and Run Leia Run, and moderator of TheForce.net "Zounds, the
Forsooth is strong in this one! Two of the most creative minds in the universe collide with
spectacular, hilarious and surprisingly touching insight into the original classic. This truly is Star
Wars as you like it. Joe Schreiber, author of Star Wars: Death
Troopers and Lenny Cyrus, School Virus

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 IanDoescher.com.

This is just a brilliant adaptation of Star Wars into the style of Shakespeare. Those two things are so
different that my first reaction was "This is some kind of joke, right?" But while there's a great deal of
humor to be found here, the project is not a parody. Not at all. It's a celebration of two hitherto
separate but equally great triumphs of storytelling. The first step was converting the dialogue of A
New Hope into iambic pentameter. This is a great accomplishment in its own right: archaic
sixteenth-century grammar and vocabulary are used, giving this writing a very authentically
Shakespearean feel; at the same time, Star Wars jargon is faithfully represented: "Now lock thine S
foils in attacking mode," for instance, or "E'en now the princess is on Level 5/Detention block of
AA-23." Deliberately awkward dialogue from Star Wars is dialed up to eleven, with side-splittingly
entertaining results; read the reinterpretation of Han's attempts to convince security that everything
is fine in the detention block after his fire fight with the guards there. Unintentionally awkward
dialogue, of which Lucas wrote a fair amount, is smoothed over and expanded upon to the point of
eloquence; see Wedge's "Look at the size of that thing!" and Red Leader's response of "Cut the
chatter." R2-D2's beeps and whistles and untranslated gibberish from alien characters are

sometimes used as needed to get a tricky line into blank verse, which didn't bother me any. While contractions like "Millen'um Falcon" and "th'Imper'al Senate" look awful on paper, calling to mind some cotton-mouthed Mississippi redneck, there really is no way around it, given the nature of iambic pentameter. At any rate, the conversion to blank verse is just the beginning. The dialogue is just so rich. It makes good use of Shakespearean cribs, great and small: During the briefing where the Rebels lay out their plan of attack on the Death Star, Luke gives a paraphrase of Henry V's band of brothers monologue, which includes reference to having hunted wompa rats which are not much more than two meters. One-liners are also in abundance: During the Falcon's desperate flight from Tatooine past a star destroyer, we hear "What light from yonder flashing sensor breaks?/It marks the loss of yon deflector shield." There are also inside jokes for Star Wars lovers; my favorite was Han's rhyming couplet after his confrontation with Greedo: "I pray thee, sir, forgive me for the mess/And whether I shot first, I'll not confess." As for the stormtrooper who, while searching for R2-D2 and C-3P0, ordered his mates "This door's locked, move on to the next one," his one line is transformed into an absurdly grandiose explanation of how his father told him he could be absolutely certain that nothing of interest would ever be found behind a locked door, and he's made that a guiding principle of his life ever since. More seriously, the use of Shakespearean conventions adds so much texture to this version of the story. Liberal use of asides which create original dialogue not based on anything from Lucas's text give characterization to characters whose motives are a bit obscure in *A New Hope*: Obi-Wan alludes to the events of *Revenge of the Sith* and explains why he is concealing most of the truth from Luke at this point. He also indicates that he anticipates and is prepared to accept his fate. Darth Vader, meanwhile, uses his asides to acknowledge the bitterness and resentment which cuts so deep to his core and continues to corrupt Anakin Skywalker (without ever acknowledging that he is Anakin, of course). The combination of these two side-characterizations gives the duel between Vader and Obi-Wan the sense of being a climactic showdown many years in the making that it deserves. (In *A New Hope* proper, I've always thought it felt terribly anti-climactic, even more so after seeing the circumstances under which the two men had previously parted ways.) Han Solo uses his frequent asides to paint himself as a man who feels drawn to a nobler existence than his life of ruthless self-interest has provided, but who cannot heed that internal calling because of the burden of his debt to Jabba the Hutt. In the culmination of this journey he walks us through his decision to join the attack on the Death Star and save Luke from Vader's TIE fighter, rather than just showing up out of nowhere as he does in the movie. R2-D2 also gets plenty of asides, and they are intelligible; in the first of these he explains to the audience that he only beeps and whistles where other characters can hear him because he's

decided to play the fool so no one will suspect he knows more about the situation than he's letting on. This is a stroke of genius; I'm certain that that is exactly what Shakespeare would have done with the character. Subsequent asides are used to provide exposition to the audience. Asides also give development to characters who are just nameless extras in the movie, mostly stormtroopers reflecting on their station before getting shot. And of course the asides provide humor: After being interrupted by C-3P0, Obi-wan asks in annoyance "Why speaks't he here when 'tis my time to speak?/These droids of protocol are e'er uncouth/Of etiquette they know but little, troth!" One small complaint I have about the asides is that the word "aside" is often misused in the text, identifying as an aside a line that is directed at another character, or being absent from a line that should be described as such. Hopefully that's one of those typos that crops up in an uncorrected proof and will be caught before the finished product goes to print. Another smart innovation is the use of a chorus to advance the action. They recite the famous trapezoidal crawl of text at the beginning of the movie--recast as a sonnet--then crop up throughout the book to provide linking narration between scenes or within a scene via rhyming quatrains. Mostly they're describing or summarizing scenes which in the movie were shown entirely by visual effects, effects which could not possibly be duplicated in a stage production. They really come into their own during the climactic Rebel attack on the Death Star, explaining what's going on while the various characters supply dialogue. In the Globe Theater this is how it would have to be done; it would not be practical to have the pilots give elaborate descriptions of what they're supposed to be seeing. (By the way, the chorus opens that scene with an appeal to the audience to use their imaginations to picture what's described rather than to insist on having everything presented as sensory stimuli. I couldn't help wondering if this was a gentle mockery of the special effects saturation of the prequel trilogy and recent rereleases of the original trilogy.) Not many Shakespearean plays include a chorus, but it's necessary here and really is the best way to reconcile elements of a story written for a visual medium with the new literary medium in which it's being recast. One final feature which makes this book even more enjoyable is the illustrations. They're no masterpieces, to be sure, but there's a real level of enjoyment to see familiar characters represented via sixteenth century drawing methods, including some very stylized costumes which give recognizably science fiction outfits an Elizabethan flair. All in all, what sounds like an amusing gag gift when you read the product description turns out to be a very sophisticated merging of two great storytelling styles. I do hope that this is not a one-time thing; I hope it's a great success that inspires the adaptation of the other Star Wars films in the same style, and similar projects for Doctor Who or Harry Potter or whatever. It's intelligent, it's enjoyable on countless levels, and its brilliance cannot be overstated.

Twins, separated at birth, brought together by fate to fight a war for the good of all, pitted unknowingly against their own father. With combat, subplots with comic relief, a ghost, and an antihero on the side, sounds like a pretty good Shakespeare play to me. But really, it's the plot of "Star Wars." So why does it sound so much like an Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy? Because George Lucas based his screenplay on the same literary archetypes and structures Shakespeare used (and is often credited for creating) in his writing. Now Ian Doescher has taken these two icons and brought them together in "William Shakespeare's Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope". This script, for it is written in script format, follows scene by scene "Star Wars, Episode IV: A New Hope" but is completely in iambic Pentameter, with the added flourish of some Elizabethan Early Modern English. Fans of the Bard and Star Wars will find plenty of in-jokes throughout the text that are not directly from "A New Hope". For example, Luke has a rousing speech that references both "Julius Caesar" and "Henry V", and Han Solo waxes sentimental about his days as a nerf herder. For those who are fans of only one or the other, many jokes may go by unnoticed. For those unfamiliar with both source materials, this is unlikely to be a book of any interest. There is a scholarly element to this book for those who wish to look for it, but all in all, it's just a lot of fun. I laughed out loud at moments (not something I'm apt to do when reading), and as a theatre artist, found myself thinking of possible staging solutions for battles in space. And there are illustrations, some of which I would happily frame and hang on my wall. There are some flaws, of course, mostly in structure. Shakespeare was a wordsmith and very spare with stage directions; it was all about the language. And "Star Wars" tells a lot of story visually. As a result, Doescher employs a Chorus to deal with much of the action, and said Chorus is perhaps a bit too present within scenes. Also, as previously mentioned, the entire thing is written in iambic Pentameter. Although this was the primary verse form in which Shakespeare wrote, nowhere in his work is any play written ENTIRELY in iambic Pentameter. He would use prose or another form of verse to identify class, relationship, and even social situations. The TYPE of verse, or prose, was just as important in Shakespeare's writing and it seems Doescher missed that element of the Bard's style. But then again, this is the nit-picky, scholarly bits. I'll just bring it back to this: If you are a fan of Shakespeare and "Star Wars" read this book. Enjoy it. Have fun. Laugh. And if anyone has plans to mount a stage production, call me. (Review also posted on Goodreads.com)

I have always loved Star Wars, born with it, raised on it, followed it passionately for many years. So when I was alerted to the existence of "William Shakespeare's Star Wars" I laughed, and looked it

up. After reading an excerpt, I was intrigued, and instantly ordered a copy. When it finally arrived, I sat down, gave it a read, and realized something shocking. The book is INCREDIBLY useful. Having sat through high school, I have realized that not too many students "Get" Shakespeare. In the words of Edmund Blackadder, "Every Schoolboy and Schoolgirl...standing around in tights going 'What ho, my lord' and 'here comes somebody spewing utter crap as usual'", Shakespeare is not the most accessible playwright and poet to understand. Until now. "William Shakespeare's Star Wars" is useful for English teachers who wish to allow their students to understand Shakespeare's manner of writing, by giving them familiar content in Shakespearean English, opening their mind to the subtleties of Shakespeare's writings, the jokes, the insults, the asides, all now understandable through the magic of some English nerd who just so happened to get the BRILLIANT idea to translate Star Wars into Shakespearean English. This book, and I do not often say this, is a MUST READ for any Star Wars fan, or anyone struggling to understand Shakespeare. Bravo Mr. Doescher, you have outdone yourself.

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