

STAR WARS

Episode IV

A NEW HOPE

From the JOURNAL OF THE WHILLS by George Lucas
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A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far, away...

A vast sea of stars serves as the backdrop for the main title. War drums echo through the heavens as a rollup slowly crawls into infinity.

It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire. During the battle, Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the Death Star, an armored space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet. Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship, custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy...

The awesome yellow planet of Tatooine emerges from a total eclipse, her two moons glowing against the darkness. A tiny silver spacecraft, a Rebel Blockade Runner firing lasers from the back of the ship, races through space. It is pursued by a giant Imperial Stardestroyer. Hundreds of deadly laserbolts streak from the Imperial Stardestroyer, causing the main solar fin of the Rebel craft to disintegrate.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- MAIN PASSAGEWAY.

An explosion rocks the ship as two robots, Artoo-Detoo (R2-D2) and See-Threepio (C-3PO) struggle to make their way through the shaking, bouncing passageway. Both robots are old and battered. Artoo is a short, claw-armed tripod. His face is a mass of computer lights surrounding a radar eye. Threepio, on the other hand, is a tall, slender robot of human proportions. He has a gleaming bronze-like metallic surface of an Art Deco design. Another blast shakes them as they struggle along their way.

THREEPIO: Did you hear that? They've shut down the main reactor. We'll be destroyed for sure. This is madness!

Rebel troopers rush past the robots and take up positions in the main passageway. They aim their weapons toward the door.

THREEPIO: We're doomed!

The little R2 unit makes a series of electronic sounds that only another robot could understand.

THREEPIO: There'll be no escape for the Princess this time.

Artoo continues making beeping sounds. Tension mounts as loud metallic latches clank and the scream of heavy equipment are heard moving around the outside hull of the ship.

THREEPIO: What's that?

EXTERIOR: SPACECRAFT IN SPACE.

The Imperial craft has easily overtaken the Rebel Blockade Runner. The smaller Rebel ship is being drawn into the underside dock of the giant Imperial starship.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER.

The nervous Rebel troopers aim their weapons. Suddenly a tremendous blast opens up a hole in the main passageway and a score of fearsome armored spacesuited stormtroopers make their way into the smoke-filled corridor. In a few minutes the entire passageway is ablaze with laserfire. The deadly bolts ricochet in wild random patterns creating huge explosions. Stormtroopers scatter and duck behind storage lockers. Laserbolts hit several Rebel soldiers who scream and stagger through the smoke, holding shattered arms and faces. An explosion hits near the robots.

THREEPIO: I should have known better than to trust the logic of a half-sized thermocapsulary dehousing assister...

Artoo counters with an angry rebuttal as the battle rages around the two hapless robots.

EXTERIOR: TATOOINE -- DESERT WASTELAND -- DAY.

A death-white wasteland stretches from horizon to horizon. The tremendous heat of two huge twin suns settle on a lone figure, Luke Skywalker, a farm boy with heroic aspirations who looks much younger than his eighteen years. His shaggy hair and baggy tunic give him the air of a simple but lovable lad with a prize-winning smile. A light wind whips at him as he adjusts several valves on a large battered moisture vaporator which sticks out of the desert floor much like an oil pipe with valves. He is aided by a beatup tread-robot with six claw arms. The little robot appears to be barely functioning and moves with jerky motions. A bright sparkle in the morning sky catches Luke's eye and he instinctively grabs a pair of electrobinoculars from his utility belt. He stands transfixed for a few moments studying the heavens, then dashed toward his dented, crudely repaired Landspeeder (an auto-like transport that travels a few feet above the ground on a magnetic-field). He motions for the tiny robot to follow him.

LUKE: Hurry up! Come with me! What are you waiting for?! Get in gear!

The robot scoots around in a tight circle, stops short, and smoke begins to pour out of every joint. Luke throws his arms up in disgust. Exasperated, the young farm boy jumps into his Landspeeder leaving the smoldering robot to hum madly.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- MAIN HALLWAY.

The awesome, seven-foot-tall Dark Lord of the Sith makes his way into the blinding light of the main passageway. This is Darth Vader, right hand of the Emperor. His face is obscured by his flowing black robes and grotesque breath mask, which stands out next to the fascist white armored suits of the Imperial stormtroopers. Everyone instinctively backs away from the imposing warrior and a deathly quiet sweeps through the Rebel troops. Several of the Rebel troops break and run in a frenzied panic.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER.

A woman's hand puts a card into an opening in Artoo's dome. Artoo makes beeping sounds.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER.

Threepio stands in a hallway, somewhat bewildered. Artoo is nowhere in sight. The pitiful screams of the doomed Rebel soldiers can be heard in the distance.

THREEPIO: Artoo! Artoo-Detoo, where are you?

A familiar clanking sound attacks Threepio's attention and he spots little Artoo at the end of the hallway in a smoke-filled alcove. A beautiful young girl (about sixteen years old) stands in front of Artoo. Surreal and out of place, dreamlike and half hidden in the smoke, she finishes adjusting something on Artoo's computer face, then watches as the little robot joins his companion.

THREEPIO: At last! Where have you been?

Stormtroopers can be heard battling in the distance.

THREEPIO: They're heading in this direction. What are we going to do? We'll be sent to the spice mine of Kessel or smashed into who knows what!

Artoo scoots past his bronze friend and races down the subhallway. Threepio chases after him.

THREEPIO: Wait a minute, where are you going?

Artoo responds with electronic beeps.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- CORRIDOR

The evil Darth Vader stands amid the broken and twisted bodies of his foes. He grabs a wounded Rebel Officer by the neck as an Imperial Officer rushes up to the Dark Lord.

IMPERIAL OFFICER: The Death Star plans are not in the main computer.

Vader squeezes the neck of the Rebel Officer, who struggles in vain.

VADER: Where are those transmissions you intercepted?

Vader lifts the Rebel off his feet by his throat.

VADER: What have you done with those plans?

REBEL OFFICER: We intercepted no transmissions. Aaah....This is a consular ship. Were on a diplomatic mission.

VADER: If this is a consular ship...were is the Ambassador?

The Rebel refuses to speak but eventually cries out as the Dark Lord begins to squeeze the officer's throat, creating a gruesome snapping and choking, until the soldier goes limp. Vader tosses the dead soldier against the wall and turns to his troops.

VADER: Commander, tear this ship apart until you've found those plans and bring me the Ambassador. I want her alive!

The stormtroopers scurry into the subhallways.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- SUBHALLWAY.

The lovely young girl huddles in a small alcove as the stormtroopers search through the ship. She is Princess Leia Organa, a member of the Alderaan Senate. The fear in her eyes slowly gives way to anger as the muted crushing

sounds of the approaching stormtroopers grow louder. One of the troopers spots her.

TROOPER: There she is! Set for stun!

Leia steps from her hiding place and blasts a trooper with her laser pistol. She starts to run but is felled by a paralyzing ray. The troopers inspect her inert body.

TROOPER: She'll be all right. Inform Lord Vader we have a prisoner.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- SUBHALLWAY.

Artoo stops before the small hatch of an emergency lifepod. He snaps the seal on the main latch and a red warning light begins to flash. The stubby astro-robot works his way into the cramped four-man pod.

THREEPIO: Hey, you're not permitted in there. It's restricted. You'll be deactivated for sure..

Artoo beeps something to him.

THREEPIO: Don't call me a mindless philosopher, you overweight glob of grease! Now come out before somebody sees you.

Artoo whistles something at his reluctant friend regarding the mission he is about to perform.

THREEPIO: Secret mission? What plans? What are you talking about? I'm not getting in there!

Artoo isn't happy with Threepio's stubbornness, and he beeps and twangs angrily.

A new explosion, this time very close, sends dust and debris through the narrow subhallway. Flames lick at Threepio and, after a flurry of electronic swearing from Artoo, the lanky robot jumps into the lifepod.

THREEPIO: I'm going to regret this.

INTERIOR: IMPERIAL STARDESTROYER.

On the main view screen, the lifepod carrying the two terrified robots speeds away from the stricken Rebel spacecraft.

CHIEF PILOT: There goes another one.

CAPTAIN: Hold your fire. There are no life forms. It must have been short-circuited.

INTERIOR: LIFEPOD.

Artoo and Threepio look out at the receding Imperial starship. Stars circle as the pod rotates through the galaxy.

THREEPIO: That's funny, the damage doesn't look as bad from out here.

Artoo beeps an assuring response.

THREEPIO: Are you sure this things safe?

EXTERIOR: TATOOINE -- ANCHORHEAD SETTLEMENT -- POWER STATION -- DAY.

Heat waves radiate from the dozen or so bleached white buildings. Luke pilots his Landspeeder through the dusty empty street of the tiny settlement. An old woman runs to get out of the way of the speeding vehicle, shaking her fist at Luke as he flies past.

WOMAN: I've told you kids to slow down!

INTERIOR: POWER STATION -- DAY.

Luke bursts into the power station, waking The Fixer, a rugged mechanic and Camie, a sexy, disheveled girl who has been asleep in his lap. They grumbled as he races through the office, yelling wildly.

FIXER: Did I hear a young noise blast through here?

CAMIE: It was just wormie on another rampage.

Luke bounces into a small room behind the office where Deak and Windy, two tough boys about the same age as Luke, are playing a computer pool-like game with Biggs, a burly, handsome boy.

LUKE: Shape it up you guys!.... Biggs?

Luke's surprise at the appearance of Biggs gives way to great joy and emotion. They give each other a great bear hug.

LUKE: I didn't know you were back! When did you get in?

BIGGS: Just now. I wanted to surprise you, hot shot. I thought you'd be here...certainly didn't expect you to be out working. (he laughs.)

LUKE: The Academy didn't change you much...but you're back so soon?Hey, what happened, didn't you get your commission?

Biggs has an air of cool that seems slightly phony.

BIGGS: Of course I got it. Signed aboard The Rand Ecliptic last week. First mate Biggs Darklighter at your service...(he salutes)...I just came to say good-bye to all you unfortunate landlocked simpletons.

Everyone laughs. The dazzling spectacle of his dashing friend is almost too much for Luke, but suddenly he snaps out of it.

LUKE: I almost forgot. There's a battle going on! Right here in our system. Come and look!

DEAK: Not again! Forget it.

EXTERIOR: TATOOINE -- ANCHORHEAD -- SETTLEMENT -- POWER STATION -- DAY.

The group stumbles out into the stifling desert sun. Camie and The Fixer complain and are forced to shade their eyes. Luke has his binoculars out scanning the heavens.

LUKE: There they are!

Biggs takes the binoculars from Luke as the others strain to see something with the naked eye.

BIGGS: That's no battle, hot shot...they're just sitting there! Probably a freighter-tanker refueling.

LUKE: But there was a lot of firing earlier...

FIXER: I keep telling you, the Rebellion is a long way from here. I doubt if the Empire would even fight to keep this system. Believe me Luke, this planet is a big hunk of nothing...

Luke agrees, although it's obvious he isn't sure why. The group stumbles back into the power station.

INTERIOR: REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER -- HALLWAY

Princess Leia is led down a low-ceilinged hallway by a squad of armored stormtroopers. Her hands are bound and she is brutally shoved when she is unable to keep up with the briskly marching troops. They stop in a smoky hallway as Darth Vader emerges from the shadows. The sinister Dark Lord stares hard at the frail young senator, but she doesn't move.

LEIA: Lord Vader, I should have known. Only you could be so bold. The Imperial Senate will not sit for this, when they hear you've attacked a diplomatic...

VADER: Don't play games with me, Your Highness. You weren't on any mercy mission this time. You passed directly through a restricted system. Several transmissions were beamed to this ship by Rebel spies. I want to know what happened to the plans they sent you.

LEIA: I don't know what you're talking about. I'm a member of the Imperial Senate on a diplomatic mission to Alderaan...

VADER: You're a part of the Rebel Alliance...and a traitor. Take her away!

Leia is marched away down the hallway and into the smoldering hole blasted in the side of the ship. An Imperial Commander turns to Vader.

COMMANDER: Holding her is dangerous. If word of this gets out, it could generate sympathy for the Rebellion in the senate.

VADER: I have traced the Rebel spies to her. Now she is my only link to find their secret base!

COMMANDER: She'll die before she tells you anything.

VADER: Leave that to me. Send a distress signal and then inform the senate that all aboard were killed!

Another Imperial Officer approaches Vader and the Commander. They stop and snap to attention.

SECOND OFFICER: Lord Vader, the battle station plans are not aboard this ship! And no transmissions were made. An escape pod was jettisoned during the fighting, but no life forms were aboard.

Vader turns to the Commander.

VADER: She must have hidden the plans in the escape pod. Send a detachment down to retrieve them. See to it personally, Commander. There'll be no one to stop us this time.

COMMANDER: Yes, sir.