

## The best thing about The Last Jedi

I finally got to see [The Last Jedi](#) (after two previous failed attempts, both amazingly sold out afternoon shows, a month after the premier). I liked it a lot. My personal rankings of the "main" *Star Wars* movies is now something like

1. The Empire Strikes Back
2. Star Wars (A New Hope)
3. The Force Awakens
4. The Last Jedi
5. The Return of the Jedi
6. The Revenge of the Sith
7. The Phantom Menace
8. The Attack of the Clones

But there was something that really stands out. Spoilers ahead!

Rey and Kylo Ren share a number of heart-to-hearts. At one point, in the wreckage of Snoke's throne room, Kylo offers Rey a partnership where they rule together. All she needs to do, he insists, is let go of the past. Most importantly, she has to give up her attachment to her parents, for whom she's been waiting and searching her whole life. And finally, he confronts her with this:

[Kylo Ren](#): Do you know the truth about your parents? Or have you always known? You've just hidden it away. Say it.

[Rey](#): [in tears] They were nobody.

[Kylo Ren](#): They were filthy junk traders. Sold you off for drinking money. They're dead in a pauper's grave in the Jakku desert. You come from nothing. You're nothing. But not to me.

And that's the amazing point. Rey's parents were nobodies. Not great Jedi. Not great Sith. Probably not Force users at all. Rey isn't the heir of heroes. At one stroke, at long last, the director has restored to the *Star Wars* universe what it lost in *Empire Strikes Back*: The sense that anyone can matter, so that everyone does. David Brin famously [critiqued](#) *Star Wars* as framing it that the Galaxy's citizens "can only choose sides in a civil war between two wings of the same genetically superior royal family." The House of Skywalker is the center of the Universe and everyone else lives in the margins.

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But *The Last Jedi* undoes that. Rey is, well, Rey. She comes from no stock of worth. What matters is not her forbears are; what matters is what *she* does. She hasn't inherited her nobility or grace or morality; they belong to her, not her ancestors. Sure, the Force "chose" her -- but for all we know, she is strong in the Force *because* she is good.

*The Last Jedi* returns *Star Wars* to all of us. Maybe it will all be undone in Episode IX, but for now, that's good enough for me.