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By Carrie Fisher



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***Star Wars VIII: The Last Jedi*, featuring Carrie Fisher, is scheduled for release on December 15, 2017. *Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds* debuted on HBO in January 2017.**

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With these excerpts from her handwritten notebooks, *The Princess Diarist* is Fisher's intimate and revealing recollection of what happened on one of the most famous film sets of all time—and what developed behind the scenes. Fisher also ponders the joys and insanity of celebrity, and the absurdity of a life spawned by Hollywood royalty, only to be surpassed by her own outer-space royalty. Laugh-out-loud hilarious and endlessly quotable, *The Princess Diarist* brims with the candor and introspection of a diary while offering shrewd insight into the type of stardom that few will ever experience.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Fisher offers a thoughtful, sardonic meditation on the price of fame, cost-of-living adjustments included."

–**J.D. Biersdorfer**, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Characteristically frank and unflinching, funny and true ... *The Princess Diarist* is about a woman's relationship with desire—her own, and of others' for her—writ large, as large as *Star Wars*." –**Julianne Escobedo Shepherd**, *Jezebel.com*

"In her funny and frequently touching new memoir *The Princess Diarist*, the iconic Star Wars actress and author reveals the diaries she kept as a 19-year-old starring in the blockbuster sci-fi film.... It's an eye-opener for fans, but it also shows a gifted writer even at a young age. There was a lot going on between Princess Leia's hair buns."

–**Brian Truitt**, *USA Today*

"There's tremendous insight into the volatile heart of a young woman, seen through the eyes of her wiser, older self still seeking her place in the universe." – **Anthony Breznican**, *Entertainment Weekly*

"Are you a woman who's ever fallen for a man who might fit this description? 'With him love was easier done than said/instead of taking you to heart he would take you to bed/and you take what he has to offer lying down/you're getting more involved while he's still getting around.' Yes? Read on ... [*The Princess Diarist*] is a radical truth bomb." – **Julia Felsenthal**, *VOGUE.com*

"An unflinching, sometimes painful, sometimes hilarious look inside the mind of a 19-year-old actress in the throes of a Hollywood locationship." –**Meredith Woerner**, *Los Angeles Times*

"An unexpectedly emotional read." –**The Verge**

"Fisher [is] a force to be reckoned with, both on the page and in real life." –**Heather Havrilevsky**, *Bookforum*

"A frank, self-deprecating memoir...outspoken, honest commentary of what it's like to be Princess Leia on and off the screen." – **Kirkus**

"The Princess Diarist...is about the making of Star Wars in 1976, but it's definitely not for the kids — a wry, witty look back through the diaries she kept at the time, its main event is her steamy affair with co-star Harrison Ford."

–**Colette Bancroft**, *Tampa Bay Times*

#### About the Author

**Carrie Fisher** was an author and actress best known for her role as Princess Leia in the *Star Wars* franchise. She appeared in countless other films, including *Shampoo* and *When Harry Met Sally* and wrote four bestselling novels: *Surrender the Pink*, *Delusions of Grandma*, *The Best Awful*, and *Postcards from the Edge*, as well as the memoirs *Shockaholic* and *Wishful Drinking*. She passed away in December 2016.

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**From *The Princess Diarist*:**

George Lucas held his auditions for Star Wars in an office on a lot in Hollywood. It was in one of those faux-Spanish cream-colored buildings from the thirties with dark orange-tiled roofs and black-iron-grated windows, lined with sidewalks in turn lined with trees—pine trees, I think they were, the sort that shed their needles generously onto the street below—and interrupted by parched patches of once-green lawns. Everything was a little worse for the wear, but good things would happen in these buildings. Lives would be led, businesses would prosper, and men would attend meetings—hopeful meetings, meetings where big plans were made and ideas were proposed. But of all the meetings that had ever been held in that particular office, none of them could compare in world impact with the casting calls for the Star Wars movie.

A plaque could be placed on the outside of this building that states, “On this spot the Star Wars films conducted their casting sessions. In this building the actors and actresses entered and exited until only three remained. These three were the actors who ultimately played the lead parts of Han, Luke, and Leia.” I’ve told the story of getting cast as Princess Leia many times before—in interviews, on horseback, and in cardiac units—so if you’ve previously heard this story before, I apologize for requiring some of your coveted store of patience. I know how closely most of us tend to hold on to whatever cache of patience we’ve managed to amass over a lifetime and I appreciate your squandering some of your cherished stash here.

George gave me the impression of being smaller than he was because he spoke so infrequently. I first encountered his all-but-silent presence at these auditions—the first of which he held with the director Brian De Palma. Brian was casting his horror film *Carrie*, and they both required an actress between the age of eighteen and twenty-two. I was the right age at the right time, so I read for both George and Brian. George had directed two other feature films up till then, *THX 1138*, starring Robert Duvall, and *American Graffiti*, starring Ron Howard and Cindy Williams. The roles I met with the two directors for that first day were Princess Leia in *Star Wars* and Carrie in *Carrie*. I thought that last role would be a funny casting coup if I got it: Carrie as Carrie in *Carrie*. I doubt that that was why I never made it to the next level with *Carrie*—but it didn’t help as far as I was concerned that there would have to be a goofy film poster advertising a serious horror film.

I sat down before the two directors behind their respective desks. Mr. Lucas was all but mute. He nodded when I entered the room, and Mr. De Palma took over from there. He was a big man, and not merely because he spoke more—or spoke, period. Brian sat on the left and George on the right, both bearded. As if you had two choices in director sizes. Only I didn’t have the choice—they did.

Brian cleared his bigger throat of bigger things and said, “So I see here you’ve been in the film *Shampoo*?” I knew this, so I simply nodded, my face in a tight white-toothed smile. Maybe they would ask me something requiring more than a nod.

“Did you enjoy working with Warren?”

“Yes, I did!” That was easy! I had enjoyed working with him, but Brian’s look told me that wasn’t enough of an answer. “He was . . .”

What was he? They needed to know! “He helped me work . . . a lot. I mean, he and the other screenwriter . . . they worked with me.” Oh my God, this wasn’t going well.

Mr. De Palma waited for more, and when more wasn’t forthcoming, he attempted to help me. “How did they work with you?”

Oh, that’s what they wanted to know! “They had me do the scene over and over, and with food. There was eating in the scene. I had to offer Warren a baked apple and then I ask him if he’s making it with my mother—sleeping with her—you know.”

George almost smiled; Brian actually did. “Yes, I know what ‘making it’ means.”

I flushed. I considered stopping this interview then and there. But I soldiered on.

“No, no, that’s the dialogue. ‘Are you making it with my mother?’ I asked him that because I hate my

mother. Not in real life, I hate my mother in the movie, partly because she is sleeping with Warren—who's the hairdresser. Lee Grant played my mom, but I didn't really have any scenes with her, which is too bad because she's a great actress. And Warren is a great actor and he also wrote the movie, with Robert Towne, which is why they both worked with me. With food. It sounded a lot more natural when you talk with food in your mouth. Not that you do that in your movies. Maybe in the scary movie, but I don't know the food situation in space." The meeting seemed to be going better.

"What have you done since Shampoo?" George asked.

I repressed the urge to say I had written three symphonies and learned how to perform dental surgery on monkeys, and instead told the truth.

"I went to school in England. Drama school. I went to the Central School of Speech and Drama." I was breathless with information. "I mean I didn't just go, I'm still going. I'm home on Christmas vacation." I stopped abruptly to breathe. Brian was nodding, his eyebrows headed off to his hair in something like surprise. He asked me politely about my experience at school, and I responded politely as George watched impassively. (I would come to discover that George's expression wasn't indifferent or anything like it. It was shy and discerning, among many other things, including intelligent, studious, and—and a word like "darling." Only not that word, because it's too young and androgynous, and besides which, and most important, George would hate it.)

"What do you plan on doing if you get one of these jobs you're meeting on?" continued Brian.

"I mean, it really would depend on the part, but . . . I guess I'd leave. I mean I know I would. Because I mean—"

"I know what you mean," Brian interrupted. The meeting continued but I was no longer fully present—utterly convinced that I'd screwed up by revealing myself to be so disloyal. Leave my school right in the middle for the first job that came along?

Soon after, we were done. I shook each man's hand as I moved to the door, leading off to the gallows of obscurity. George's hand was firm and cool.

I returned to the outer office knowing full well that I would be going back to school. "Miss Fisher," a casting assistant said. I froze, or would have, if we weren't in sunny Los Angeles. "Here are your sides. Two doors down. You'll read on video." My heart pounded everywhere a pulse can get to.

The scene from *Carrie* involved the mother (who would be memorably played by Piper Laurie). A dark scene, where the people are not okay. But the scene in *Star Wars*—there were no mothers there! There was authority and confidence and command in the weird language that was used. Was I like this? Hopefully George would think so, and I could pretend I thought so, too. I could pretend I was a princess whose life went from chaos to crisis without looking down between chaoses to find, to her relief, that her dress wasn't torn.

I have no recollection now of how I felt reading the two scenes. I can only assume I beat myself up loud and long. Did they like me? Did they think I was fat? Did they think I looked like a bowl of oatmeal with features? Four little dark dots in one big flat pale face ("Me pale face—you Tonto"). Did they think I looked pretty enough? Was I likable enough for me to relax at all? Not on your life. Because (a) there was no relaxing anywhere in my general area, and (b) there was no relaxing anywhere in show business.

But George must have thought I did well enough to have me back. They sent me the *Star Wars* script so I could practice it before the last reading. I remember opening the manila envelope it came in very carefully, one edge at a time, before removing its unknown cargo. It didn't look any different from other scripts—cardboard-like paper on each end, protecting the ordinary paper within—covered in antlike scratches of letters. I don't know why, but I wanted to read this screenplay out loud.

Enter Miguel Ferrer. Miguel wasn't certain that he wanted to be an actor yet—like me. But we were both intrigued enough that we continued exploring. Like me, he came from a show business background. His father was the actor José Ferrer and his mother the singer/actress Rosemary Clooney. We were friends, and I called him up and asked him to read this script with me. He arrived at my mother's newer, much smaller

house—since her dramatically reduced financial circumstances due to a second failed marriage—and we went to my bedroom on the second floor.

Like every young man wanting to be an actor in Hollywood then, he had also read for the film, so both of us were dimly aware what we were in store for. We sat on my bed and began to read. From the first page—STAR WARS: A SPACE FANTASY—the images and characters jumped off the pages. Not only into our minds, but into the chairs and other furniture that surrounded us. I'm exaggerating (a little) but it could have jumped onto the furniture, eaten all of it, and drank the blood of an Englishman—because it was as epic as any fee-fi-fo-fum rhyme you ever heard.

The images of space opened around us, planets and stars floated by. The character I was reading for, Leia, was kidnapped by the evil Darth Vader—kidnapped and hung upside down when the smuggler pilot Han Solo (who Miguel was reading for) and his giant monkey creature copilot Chewbacca rescued me. I had been (in the script) upside down and unconscious with yellow eyes. I'll never forget that image. Whoever got the part of the princess named Leia would get to do this. I would potentially get to do this! Maybe—if I was lucky—I would be rescued by Han and Chewbacca (Chewie!) from the caverns underneath wherever they'd tortured me, and Chewie would carry me, slung over his shoulder through thigh deep water as we made it out of (interplanetary) harm's way.

Unfortunately, none of this imagery was ever realized due to a combination of cost and the fact that Peter Mayhew—who they hired to play Chewie—couldn't do the stunt due to his extreme height of over 7 feet. He had a condition that left him unable to stand up quickly and remain stable; it was impossible for him to lift up weight of any kind. And my weight, as everyone at Lucasland can recall, was, and remains, of the "any kind" variety.

But I can safely say that any girl cast in the part of the feisty Princess Leia would've been of the any kind size—because once Peter was cast, the lifting and being carried through those thigh-high drenched caverns was out. But I also recall hearing that the water-engulfed caverns were quite an expensive set to build, and this was a low-budget film, so they were out for that reason—leaving only Leia's unconsciousness and those yellow eyes. Most of us know how inexpensive unconsciousness is or was to achieve, so that wouldn't have been a budget problem—just inappropriate. But by the time you lose Peter's inability to carry any feisty princess and consider the cost-ineffective underground water caverns—it doesn't matter how beautifully you can portray insensibility—it ain't happening anyway.

The Force was put in me (in a non-invasive way) by the script that day with Miguel, and it has remained in me ever since. I ended up reading for the film with a new actor, an actor I'd never seen before, but then he had never seen me, either. I'll bet since that reading with me he's rued the day—if he can get his strong hands on a rue that is—and if anyone could get their hands on a rue or a Woo it was Harrison Ford. We read together in a room in that same building I'd met George and Brian De Palma in. I was so nervous about the reading I don't remember much about Harrison, and given how nervous Harrison would come to make me, that was plenty frightened indeed.

The following week, my agent, a man who'd been my mother's agent, Wilt Melnick, and was now mine, called me.

"Carrie?" he asked.

I knew my name. So I let him know I knew it. "Yeah," I said in a voice very like mine. Mine but hollow, mine but it didn't matter because my stomach had swung into action.

"They called," he said.

Great, 'cause that was really all I wanted to know. If they called, that they called, not what they said—that didn't matter.

"They want you," he continued.

There was a silence.

"They do? I mean they did?"

He laughed, then I laughed and dropped the phone and ran out into the front yard and into the street. It was raining. It didn't rain in L.A. It was raining in L.A. and I was Princess Leia. I had never been Princess Leia

before and now I would be her forever. I would never not be Princess Leia. I had no idea how profoundly true that was and how long forever was.

They would pay me nothing and fly me economy—a fact that would haunt my mother for months—but I was Leia and that was all that truly mattered. I'm Leia—I can live in a tree, but you can't take that away from me. I never dreamt there actually might be a day when I maybe hoped that you could

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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#### **Mary Haskell:**

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