

“THE LESSONS I’VE LEARNT”

Carrie Fisher

Born with showbiz in her blood thanks to her entertaining parents – Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher – the *Star Wars* veteran reveals more about her rollercoaster life

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS Sunday September 18 at 8.30pm on **Foxtel Movies Premiere** [401] and **FOXTEL MOVIES STAR WARS POP-UP** Friday September 30 from 6am on **Channel 400**, both available in the **MOVIES** pack

I never thought [fame] was glamorous.

As I aged my parents’ careers started to fade. I understood that whatever it was [they had] it wouldn’t be ongoing. I didn’t really want to be an actress and I only did a part in *Shampoo* because I was on the set and they asked me, and I didn’t know how to say no. There’s a lot of fun stuff to [being an actress] – but it’s a weird profession.

I’ve been in a good place for a while, but I have lived with this [depression] thing for a long time. My advice is to find a community, find other people, find your tribe. Be with them and don’t wander around feeling different than everyone else. Or, do [feel different to everyone else] but make it interesting!

It would be a stupid thing for me to be bothered by being known as Princess Leia. She’s a good person to be. She is independent, strong and outspoken. I wonder who I would have been without [playing] her.

If I could give advice to my younger self now it would be: ‘Oh my god, don’t do anything you want to do! Your impulses are wrong! Don’t wear that! Don’t date him! They’re lying to you!’ Stuff like that.

I’ve never liked my appearance, and they were right to ask me to lose weight [for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*]. No one forced me to do anything because I now know the word ‘no’. I know it wouldn’t have been received well, so I lost the weight. I did it on the first [film] too, so everyone asked me to do it again! They wanted to hire me as three-quarters of myself

– leave a quarter of myself at home. On the first movie they told me to lose 10 pounds (4.5kg), and [this time] there was more. Why don’t I like to [lose weight]? I don’t like depriving myself of anything.

I take my dog everywhere. I’m always with my dog – well, until I start dating. I have to have someone with me. My dog is very funny, and he’s someone I can talk about [in interviews] besides myself because I’m sort of bored with me as a topic. So Gary is always interesting. I’ve had him for three and a half years; he’s smart and a good dancer.

You get less feisty as you get older. Being feisty is sort of weird looking at my age. I look melted and I look my age [in *The Force Awakens*]. Unfortunately, I don’t want to look my age. I would do everything but have serious surgery for it and [then] look like a weird fish with gills. I also don’t have an upper lip, which I am sorry about – but not sorry enough.

My mother got an Oscar statuette [Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award] for her life. It was great to see my mother finally get recognition. She was very ill... we thought she was not going to get better, but she is better. Only my mum would be able to pull a rabbit out of a hat.

But how much have the industry’s attitudes to female roles evolved? It’s so slow that you can’t see it happening. If we’re still talking about it and saying, ‘Are we evolving?’, we’re probably not evolving that much. When I don’t get asked the question again, we’ll be okay.

Elizabeth Taylor taught me not to steal my father from my mother! I became friends with Elizabeth Taylor, and then my mother became friends with her again. She was [my mum’s] matron of honour. I think Elizabeth thought my mother was more of a goody two-shoes. And perhaps she was at 17, but she swears like a sailor now, which I think is what healed her.

My favourite Star Wars movie is [The Empire Strikes Back]. We always said it was the spiritual *Star Wars*. We filmed for five months. It was really fun to film, and it’s the most emotional one, I think. The characters have longer screen time to develop.

I still know the sound of Harrison’s [Ford] footsteps. One special moment I have [from the new film, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*] is when I first got there, I was in my trailer and I heard Harrison’s footsteps. Then, he just came in and said without enthusiasm, ‘Is Carrie here?’ So that was a very special moment. The less enthusiasm the better. It was like being on campus again. We did grow up together [on *Star Wars*] and we had this extraordinary experience together that was unprecedented. We shared that. We laugh at each other. ■

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WORDS: JENNY COONEY CARRILLO. PHOTOS: BRIAN BOWEN SMITH/RAVEN AND SNOW



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