

Why Indiana Jones 5 is going to ROCK

The *Indiana Jones* franchise is one of the most beloved franchises of all time. These movies have inspired generations and will continue to inspire generations of the future. With a total of four films established and a fifth on the way, many fans are concerned about where the series is going. The release of the fourth *Indy* film in 2008, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, upset a lot of fans. I, personally, really enjoy *Kingdom* and think it's pretty underrated. It is the only *Indy* film I had the privilege of seeing on the big screen, and I'm able to have a lot of fun with it to this day. Even though I am able to enjoy it, I do understand why others can't. The magic that is present in the first three *Indy* films is somewhat missing in *Kingdom*. I'm a huge sci-fi fan, but even I can agree that the genre-blending didn't work 100% of the time in the context of an *Indiana Jones* movie. I'm not here to write a movie review for something that came out ten years ago though; I'm here to tell you why I think the fifth *Indiana Jones* film is going to rock!

The untitled fifth installment of the *Indiana Jones* series is due in theatres on July 9, 2021 (however, it'd be awesome if they bumped it up a month to the first week in June to coincide with the 40th anniversary of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). *Indy 5* has been pushed back multiple times and has also changed writers a few times. In June, Lucasfilm decided on screenwriter Jon Kasdan to finish the job and produce the screenplay. Jon is most-famously known for co-writing the screenplay for *SOLO: A Star Wars Story* with his father, Lawrence Kasdan. Lawrence is no stranger to the world of *Star Wars*, having written *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, and *The Force Awakens*. Lawrence also famously wrote the screenplay for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the very first *Indiana Jones* movie. It's come pretty full-circle given that now his son, Jon, is penning the fifth *Indy* movie. When it was announced that Jon would be writing *Indy 5*, many people were happy with Lucasfilm's decision. Coming right off of *Solo*, many enjoyed the vibe of the movie and Jon's work. They also mentioned how he'll have his father as a resource and mentor in writing the character of Indy. Now this may be true, but I'd like to talk about why Jon is an excellent writer for Indy because of his talent as a solo writer (no pun intended). In this article, I'd like to focus on a teleplay he wrote for the show *Freaks and Geeks*.

Back in the 1999-2000 television season, a now cult-classic show was born called *Freaks and Geeks*. It started the careers of actors such as James Franco, Seth Rogen, Jason Segel, and many more. It was a short-lived series, only receiving eighteen total episodes with only one season. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, I finally got to binge the show, and it was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made. Everything about the show is perfect. It has such a strong focus on character growth, and the whole series can basically be treated as a masterclass in the coming-of-age genre. I'd love to write about why I love this show so much, but I'll save that for another article; I need to stay on topic. Of these eighteen episodes, one was written by

twenty-year-old Jon Kasdan. This was Jon's first Hollywood writing gig and also one of his best. He wrote Episode 17 entitled *The Little Things*. Spoilers for the episode, and the *Freaks and Geeks* series, to follow. This episode focuses on closing the character arcs of Sam Weir (played by John Francis Daley) and Ken Miller (played by Seth Rogen), as well as giving Lindsay Weir (played by Linda Cardellini) a new arc of her own. For the entire series so far, Sam has had a crush on a girl named Cindy Sanders (played by Natasha Melnick). To quickly sum up the situation, Neal Schweiber (played by Samm Levine) said this line to Sam in the first episode (the pilot) when Sam wanted to ask Cindy to go to the homecoming dance with him: "The dance is tomorrow. She's a cheerleader. You've seen Star Wars twenty-seven times. You do the math." Although this was a hilarious joke played for laughs, it basically establishes that Cindy is "out of his (Sam's) league." Sixteen episodes later in *The Little Things*, Sam and Cindy are now dating. Throughout the entire series so far, Cindy has been the object of Sam's affection and he now accomplished his goal of being her boyfriend. Throughout the course of this episode, however, Sam learns that Cindy and he are very different. She is very full of herself, not appreciative, and has a very different sense of humor than Sam (a huge part of the episode is when Sam gives her a necklace that has been in the family for generations and Cindy asks him how much it cost. She also shows ungratefulness later in the scene and doesn't even try to act thankful). After this, Sam is conflicted about whether he should stay in the relationship with Cindy because that is who he has had a crush on for forever, or break up with her because they are incompatible.

The day that Sam is about to break up with Cindy, he still feels conflicted and isn't sure if he should go through with it. He runs into Ken who is also debating breaking up with his girlfriend, but for a different reason. Ken learned that when his girlfriend was born, she could have been either male or female. Despite this, he and Amy (his girlfriend) both share common interests, enjoy each other's sense of humor, and are very compatible. Ken, who was never in this kind of situation, is somewhat freaked out. In this conversation Ken has with Sam, Sam makes him realize that he has it all, and there isn't anything he should worry about. This is a defining moment for both characters. In this quick exchange between two characters that never really interacted in the series before (although, Sam is Lindsay's brother and Ken is Lindsay's friend, so Sam and Ken aren't complete strangers), their arcs were complete. Ken realizes that Amy is someone special, and he shouldn't break up with her just because she's different. Sam realizes that he shouldn't waste his time on someone who doesn't appreciate him for who he is. When Sam goes through with the breakup, his friends Neal and Bill (played by Martin Starr) both agree that he did the right thing. The magic of this entire sequence is that it takes the punchline of "she's a cheerleader; you've seen Star Wars twenty-seven times," and gives it a sense of drama and meaning. On a smaller scale, this kind of "dramedy" style of writing is seen in the opening sequence of *Solo*. When Han picks up a rock and makes a clicking noise with his mouth, claiming it is a thermal detonator to scare Lady Proxima, the scene is very comedic and fun at

first. He then turns that joke into a dramatic action when he throws the rock at the glass, breaking the glass, and exposing Proxima to light, which is harmful to beings like herself. The joke itself is there to make the audience laugh, but it is really a setup for the dramatic payoff.

In addition to that kind of “joke-payoff” comedy style Jon has, the most important part about why I think he’ll do a great job with *Indy 5* is because he knows how to do character arcs. Jon understands why characters have motivations and what the outcome of the circumstance should be. He doesn’t necessarily cater to what the audience wants, but he caters to what the story and the characters need. An example of this type of storytelling is present in the conclusion to *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. After Elsa and the Holy Grail cross the seal in the Knight’s Templar, the Templar begins to collapse, resulting in Elsa losing the Grail, going after it, and dying trying. When Indy has a shot to retrieve the Grail, while also putting his life in danger, he and his father realize that their lives are more important than some 2,000-year-old cup, even if it is the cup Jesus drank from. They realize that sometimes they need to let go of what they want. This is even foreshadowed earlier in the film when Indy says to Kazim, “I’m not after the cup of Christ, I’m here to find my father.” Fulfilling his initial desire by finding his father, he eventually went after the cup of Christ in hopes of preventing the Nazis from getting it. He was successful in this mission too, but still ended up having a desire for the cup, in which he realized that this whole adventure began all because he wanted to find his father. His mission was complete and he didn’t need to risk his life for the Grail. In this situation, the audience may have really wanted Indy to get the Grail in the end, but screenwriter Jeffrey Boam knew it was more meaningful to Indy’s arc if he didn’t save the Grail. Just like in *Freaks and Geeks*, the audience may have wanted Sam to maintain his relationship with Cindy, but Jon knew that it would complete Sam’s arc if he broke up with her.

To conclude, I can’t think of anyone better to write *Indy 5* than Jon Kasdan. I’m a huge fan of *Solo*’s final product, and really feel like Jon and his father captured the character of Han Solo perfectly and were able to craft a really fun and well-made adventure-heist story. Going back this past weekend and binging all eighteen episodes of *Freaks and Geeks* was an absolute privilege, and I wish I could go back in time to last week just to watch them all for the first time again. Lucasfilm picked an excellent screenwriter for one of the most anticipated films of 2021, and I can’t wait until my favorite action hero makes his way back onto the big screen!

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