In The Last Jedi, being a space cowboy doesn’t fly anymore

Warning: spoilers for* The Last Jedi *follow.

Star Wars has a long history of the Galaxy’s best pilots jumping into ships and blowing stuff up—usually without serious consequences or repercussions. We’ve seen Han Solo recklessly jump into his Millennium Falcon and fire at the imperial TIE Fighters in *A New Hope*, and a precocious Anakin Skywalker in *The Phantom Menace* blow up the Trade Federation blockade ships against orders. Both characters are celebrated and cheered for their impetuous actions after they finish blowing stuff up, and the plot is cleanly resolved. But for Poe Dameron, the latest devil-may-care space cowboy in this great tradition, things don’t work out quite so neatly.

Poe has a very similar “hotshot flyboy makes decisions for everyone” moment in *The Last Jedi*, except this time instead of winning the day, there are lasting and damaging consequences. First, after Poe ignores Leia’s order to retreat during an attack on a First Order Dreadnought, his disobedience leads to the loss of all of the Resistance’s bombers. He is demoted, and when Vice-Admiral Holdo steps up as the resistance leader after Leia’s injuries and declines to share her plans with Poe, he’s clearly rattled; he’s always been one of Leia’s most trusted operatives in the movement. But as *Verge* veteran Kwame Opam noted on Twitter, his behavior gives Holdo every reason to cut him out of the loop.

> *People keep asking why Vice Admiral Holdo doesn’t just tell Poe the evacuation plan.*
>
> *Simple: Poe acted recklessly, got people killed, and got demoted. Holdo doesn’t have to tell him anything. Poe isn’t*

> *entitled to strategic knowledge, and it sucks that fans expected different.* https://t.co/3UGS8ILOAq
>
> — Kwame Opam (@kwameopam) December 18, 2017

When he learns of Holdo's plans to evacuate the remaining resistance members on smaller transporters, he decides to take matters into his own hands and instigate a mutiny, which is cut short when Leia awakens and stuns him. Sure, Poe is one of the good guys, but his recklessness and need to be the hero lead to disaster.

Although he ultimately learns that his and Holdo's plans are very similar, his actions end up undermining the Resistance and delaying their attempt to flee from a deadly attack. Some problems, it turns out, can't be solved by a ragtag band of would-be heroes who think they know best.



Image: Disney/LucasFilm

On the salt-planet Crait, it's Finn who's too hotheaded for his own good, and tries to sacrifice himself to take out the First Order's door-busting cannon. Although the now-wiser Poe orders Finn to pull out, it's Rose who stops Finn by knocking his ship out of the line of fire. Although it looks for a moment like he's going to go out in a heroic blaze of glory, she recognizes how foolish and ultimately useless that sacrifice would be.

Responsibility is a core theme in the film, which we also see in Luke Skywalker's arc and his admission to Rey about why Ben Solo turned to the dark side. It's a big change for a franchise that has always been more interested in the hotshot antics of the "galaxy's best pilot" than the practical results of taking those sorts of absurd risks. It subverts Star Wars

norm of rewarding impulsive decisions with accolades, and paves the way for a richer narrative that acknowledges the fact that sometimes, good guys can inadvertently do bad things with lasting consequences.

https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/24/16766588/the-last-jedi-poe-dameron-star-wars