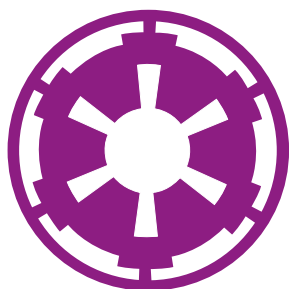


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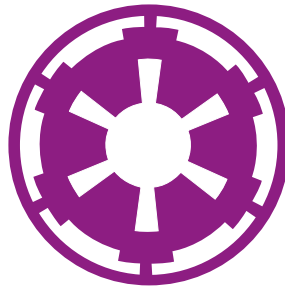
THE BEST OF
**STAR
WARS** INSIDER™

VOLUME 3



FROM THE PAGES OF THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

THE BEST OF
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WARS**
INSIDER™
VOLUME 3



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THE BEST OF
**STAR
WARS**
INSIDER™



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STAR WARS



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We Celebrate the 10th
Anniversary of Episode III

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The Emperor and Darth Vader
unite in an all-new tale—inside!

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DARTH VADER

THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK



Darth Vader is the greatest villain in movie history! At least, that is, according to countless movie lists across print and digital media. The truth is, of course, a little more complicated. As George Lucas' epic saga unfolded over the years, the truth about Darth Vader was slowly revealed. No longer was this particular Dark Lord of the Sith an out-and-out bad guy; here was a character much more complicated, and much more nuanced than he first appeared. With numerous actors adding to James Earl Jones and David Prowse's original first impression, Vader has become richer and more relatable over the years, beginning with the moment when Luke Skywalker confronted his father, face to actual face, during the closing moments of *Return of the Jedi*.

Writer Tricia Barr specializes in unpacking the characters of the *Star Wars* saga. Her skill at making us understand their place within the larger mythology by drawing on academia and classic sources illustrates why *Star Wars* is such an enduring modern myth in its own right.

Still the most iconic character in the entire saga—and cinema's most recognizable, Barr says—Darth Vader casts a massive shadow over modern storytelling, and this piece helps us see why.—Jonathan Wilkins

Tricia Barr is a novelist who has contributed to Star Wars Insider magazine, most notably on the "Hero's Journey" series of features. She can also be found discussing Star Wars extensively on her blog, fangirlblog.com. She is one of the co-authors of Ultimate Star Wars, published by Dorling Kindersley in 2015, and author of the award-winning novel, Wynde.

ISSUE 157

MAY 2015

THIS MONTH, FAR, FAR AWAY....

Star Wars: Kanan #1: "The Last Padawan, Part I: Fight" released

Return of the Jedi Read-Along Storybook and CD released

William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace: Star Wars Part the First released

LEGO Star Wars in 100 Scenes released

Star Wars Rebels: Fight the Empire released

Star Wars: Darth Vader #4: "Vader, Part IV" released

The *Star Wars* saga is released in high-definition with special features on digital platforms such as iTunes and Google Play Movies

Star Wars Epic Yarns: A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi released

Star Wars: Celebration Anaheim held in Anaheim, California

Star Wars: Lords of the Sith by Paul S. Kemp released

Ultimate Star Wars released

Darth Vader and Friends by Jeffrey Brown released

THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK

IN HER ONGOING SERIES ABOUT THE *STAR WARS* CHARACTERS WHO HAVE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON MYTHIC STORYTELLING, *ULTIMATE STAR WARS* CO-AUTHOR TRICIA BARR TAKES A PEEK INSIDE DARTH VADER'S HEAD.

Darth Vader intimidates me, now more than ever. Not in the way he terrified me as a child, who was awed watching a black-clad, masked behemoth crush a windpipe with a single hand, then later with merely a thought. Today Vader casts a massive shadow across the panorama of modern mythology, a daunting prospect both for storytellers and those analyzing his impact. How does one begin to do justice to this iconic character's legacy? In a series of articles for *Star Wars Insider*, I have examined some of *Star Wars*' most notable heroes, their personal journeys through the saga, and what they have come to represent to the fans. We, too, take journeys with our fictional heroes, and find courage and inspiration in them. When confronting Darth Vader, I pondered what it is that we gain from our villains. The answer, in the end, is the same: Villains show us the truth of who we are.



met Vader in the prequel trilogy, he is a hero fallen. To my niece and nephews, Anakin Skywalker is the "Jedi With No Fear" from *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*—and Darth Vader is the bad guy at Disney Parks' Jedi Training Academy they must rally courage to defeat. I met Vader

in 1977, when he marched through a bulkhead, dark and foreboding, and stalked down the white corridors of the *Tantive IV* with unrelenting focus on obtaining his objective. In that moment, my eight-year-old self was very afraid.

Our collective perception of Darth Vader has always been a collaborative phenomenon. In the book *The Complete Vader*, Ryder Windham relays an interview in which George Lucas describes how the characters Luke Skywalker

and Darth Vader in *A New Hope* came from "one composite—which is saying they came out of me. I was dealing with two opposites, and these are the two opposites of myself." A rough draft summary dated May 1974 includes two separate villains: General Darth Vader, "a tall, grim-looking" humanoid, and Prince Valorum, a "black knight of the Sith... a sinister warrior in black robes and a face mask." The story continued to evolve with ideas and input from artist Ralph McQuarrie, sculptor Brian Muir, and other production staff helping to mold Darth Vader into his now-familiar character.

THE MONSTER IN OUR HEADS



With Darth Vader's profound impression on the public consciousness, it is impossible to define his influence on everyone. To those who first



"TWO METERS TALL. BIPEDAL. FLOWING BLACK ROBES TRAILING FROM THE FIGURE AND A FACE FOREVER MASKED BY A FUNCTIONAL IF BIZARRE BLACK METAL BREATH SCREEN—A DARK LORD OF THE SITH WAS AN AWESOME, THREATENING SHAPE AS IT STRODE THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE REBEL SHIP."

—STAR WARS NOVELIZATION (1976)

Many fans were introduced to the character prior to the film's release by way of the novelization, comics, and movie promotion. The 34th World Science Fiction Convention held in Kansas City, September 1976, included a special room dedicated to *Star Wars*, which featured the villain's costume. Long-term fan Maggie Nowakowska recalls attendees at the Library Association Book Fair giving the Darth Vader cut-out a wide berth as they moved down the aisle. While the media focused heavily on Grand Moff Tarkin, being portrayed by well-known horror-film regular Peter Cushing, the fans had latched onto his villainous counterpart. The mask symbolized the villain's separation from humanity and his supernatural powers, a popular horror-movie device with mythological roots going back to the masks of the pharaohs. Yet the suit and helmet recalled the nobility of knights and samurai, bound to codes of honor. The idea of Vader, who he was, and where he fit into the storytelling framework, was circling around in fans' minds and elevated him to cult status before anyone had seen the film.

Star Wars burst onto the silver screen as an amalgamation of genres. It reflected the adventures of *Flash Gordon* space operas, the gritty reality of Westerns, and the nobility of Arthurian legends. Sometimes forgotten is George Lucas clue to the principal intended audience—children—by opening the movie with the fairytale-inspired words, "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...." Folklore passed down orally from generation to generation became written down in fables and fairytales. In those legends, the villains were the obstacle to the happy ending. They represented the embodiment of evil that children can't quite comprehend but know exists, like Obi-Wan's missing planet in *Attack of the Clones*.

At first blush, Darth Vader's role in 1977 seemed little more than the fairytale's necessary bogeyman, an implacable dark enforcer for the evil Empire. Even from the beginning, though, hints of the character's true depth peek through. Princess Leia boldly talks back to him and Grand Moff Tarkin has superior authority to him, while even a few simple lines of dialogue reveal that the hermit Ben Kenobi, an exiled Jedi Knight, has a long and tragic backstory with the murderous Vader. *The Complete Vader* quotes 1977 fanzine issues calling Vader, "a shining exemplar of chivalry" and "probably the most popular character in *Star Wars*," and Windham notes that, "most tellingly, the early fanzines cast him as the tragic figure in countless fan-generated stories, demonstrating a desire to elevate Vader to mythic status." Though the Vader onscreen in the first film has no real character journey, his portrayal—a rare combination of imposing physicality from David Prowse and masterfully measured voice-acting by James Earl Jones—inspired fans to imagine the possibilities of how a good man could become a monster.





Opposite page, from top: Obi-Wan tries to reason with an already lost Anakin; as the armor falls into place, Darth Vader is fully born; taking a step back as he serves under Grand Moff Tarkin aboard the Death Star; the Empire's brutal enforcer during his mission on Cloud City, which soon turns very personal.

This page, from top: The Dark Lord's torture of Han Solo shows how far the former Jedi has shifted from the ideals of the Jedi Order.

VADER'S BEST MOMENTS ARE THE ONES THAT REVEAL THAT HE IS NOT SIMPLY RAGE-FILLED AND INDISCRIMINATELY EVIL.

MACHINE TO MAN

In *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, Lucas delivered on the promise of Vader's potential as a villain with character depth. Vader's best moments are the ones that reveals that he is not simply rage-filled and indiscriminately evil, but a man of complex motivations and goals. The brutal Sith Lord is still there, asphyxiating an admiral for his incompetence, altering the deal with Lando, and arriving to personally ensure timely completion of the second Death Star by whatever means necessary. Yet the helmet comes off—first seen only in a glimpse from behind, to preserve the mystery—to confirm the character's underlying humanity. When Vader tells Luke that, "I am your father," the biggest point for speculation in 1980 wasn't the revelation, but whether the Dark Lord was telling the truth or a manipulative lie.

Ultimately, Luke's willingness to die a good man rather than fall to the dark side inspires Vader to find the courage and strength to make the right choice. His final act is to insist upon seeing Luke, "with my own eyes," at last returning to the man he always had been capable of being. Vader's is not a hero's journey, but a tragedy of a life surrendered to evil. Only at the end does he find redemption in an act of self-sacrifice, finally rediscovering his true self.



This page, from left: Luke fights for the soul of his father; Vader faces Obi-Wan Kenobi again in their final duel; the imposing Lord Vader.

Opposite page, clockwise from left: A crucial moment in the final battle between Luke and his father; the subservient Sith Lord; Vader faces Luke in a battle that takes unexpected twists.

ANAKIN IS VADER

In hindsight it may be easy to forget that many *Star Wars* fans experienced a shocking revelation in 2005 just as powerful as the one felt in 1980. When Darth Vader leads legions of troopers to attack the Jedi Temple and slaughter everyone inside, he is not the iconic Dark Lord in the mask—he is youthful and vital, not yet mutilated by a terrible duel amid lava, still Anakin Skywalker in everything but his intentions. With this simple and stunning visual, George Lucas makes a truly powerful thematic point: Darth Vader is Anakin Skywalker, and Anakin is Vader. They are not two characters, but one.

By its nature, the prequel trilogy portrayed a three-movie character arc for Anakin, in which he undertakes the initial stages of a hero's journey before his fateful choices propel his life and the galaxy into tragedy. *The Phantom Menace* establishes the roots of his later decisions in the circumstances of Anakin's childhood as a slave. Most importantly, his mother, Shmi, shows him that sometimes we must let go of others out of love, but the Jedi fail to nurture that lesson. *Attack of the Clones* more fully fleshes out Anakin's path as a metaphor for the fall of the Jedi Order, as Palpatine's manipulations begin to isolate Anakin from the Jedi while galactic war begins to separate the Order from their roles as peacekeepers and followers of the Force. As *Revenge of the Sith* draws to a close, Anakin loses not just his limbs but also his mentor Obi-Wan, his wife, Padmé, and his confidant Palpatine, now his Master. He once more becomes a slave, but this time to his own fears.

More recently, *The Clone Wars* added depth to Anakin and how his tragic arc parallels the fall of the Jedi Order that believed him to be the Chosen One. While the Jedi as individuals had become powerful protectors, the insidious toll of war and loss distracted them from their most important calling, to be compassionate counselors of the beings they were honor-bound to serve. Just as Obi-Wan cleaved Anakin's limbs from his body, so, too, had Darth Sidious meticulously sliced away vital pieces of the Republic's Jedi Order until it was rendered impotent.





ANAKIN HIDES BEHIND THE MASK OF DARTH VADER, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY.



A REFLECTION OF WHO WE ARE

I didn't always connect with Anakin, but I met many fellow fans over the years who wrote or spoke eloquently about him. One woman seemed to have a particularly keen empathy for Darth Vader, and I asked her about what inspired her affinity for him. She explained how she saw her son—a good young man who had made a bad choice and was then forced to live with it—in Vader. As she related her own personal experience, the relevance of Darth Vader as a hero-turned-villain began to resonate with me. While the character draws on various elements of myth, the familiarity of human nature is also embedded in his story. Even if the stakes are not so high, the tragedies not so great, everyone can relate to the journey Vader travels as a character. Each of us makes choices we regret, and we must bear the consequences, sometimes for years.

Beyond the simple admission of his starting point for his *Star Wars* hero and villain, George Lucas's legacy as a whole reveals that storytellers not only draw upon their own selves in creating characters, but also the reality of the era in which they live. Reminders of world-stage conflict are peppered throughout the saga, from the Nazi-like Imperials and nail-biting dogfights in space that harken back to World War II, to the callous disregard for clones' lives by the Republic they defended and the morally complicated, unwinnable Clone Wars reminiscent of the Vietnam War. Anakin represents the good men and women called upon to be heroes, to serve on the front line, and he provides a stark reminder of the costs of war to their bodies and their psyches beyond the battlefield.

With his friends and family dead and the galaxy conquered, Vader can no longer find a reason to continue to accept his own humanity. He cannot cope with being Anakin, the man who made terrible choices, so he hides behind the mask of Darth Vader, literally and figuratively. Only decades later does Luke break through the façade, giving Vader a reason to rediscover the Anakin who never stopped existing. This hopelessness of a lost soul resonates with us in the real world, too. People can become stuck in vicious cycles of addiction, mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, abusive relationships, and others. Sometimes all they need to find a way out is for someone to reach out a hand, to connect with them on a human level, as Luke does with Darth Vader. Though the tragedy of Anakin Skywalker is a cautionary tale, his redemption can be an inspiration for all of us to rise above the choices we regret. ☼



MORE TO SAY

Ultimate Star Wars is available now.

Follow Tricia Barr on Twitter @fangirlcantina or her website FANgirlBlog.com.

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OBI-WAN KENOBI VS PADMÉ AMIDALA!
JAMES ARNOLD TAYLOR AND CATHERINE TABER SPEAK OUT

STAR WARS

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ANAKIN AND AHSOKA'S DATE WITH DESTINY!**

**PLUS INSIDER UNRAVELS
THE MYSTERIES OF THE FORCE**



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THE FORCE EXPLORED

JEDI VS SITH



The Force is one of the central concepts in the *Star Wars* saga, so when *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* probed its meaning with a metaphysical story arc set on the netherworld of Mortis, it felt like a good time to investigate this “mystical energy field” in *Insider*. The unenviable task of writing this piece fell to Daniel Wallace, author of countless reference books—*Star Wars* and otherwise—who is a regular contributor to *Insider*, previewing the latest books and comics every issue. Quite simply, what Dan doesn’t know about *Star Wars* isn’t worth knowing.

I really liked the way Dan broke down the assorted Force powers in this feature, and while it sheds some light on *Star Wars*’ biggest mysteries, it leaves plenty of room for debate and discussion.—**Jonathan Wilkins**

Daniel Wallace is a comic-book expert and author/co-author of numerous books including Star Wars: The Jedi Path, Star Wars: Book of Sith, Star Wars: The Bounty Hunters Code, and the New York Times bestseller, Star Wars: The New Essential Guide to Characters. He also contributed 3,000 trivia questions for Star Wars Trivial Pursuit.

ISSUE 123

FEBRUARY 2011

THIS MONTH, FAR, FAR AWAY....

Star Wars: The Clone Wars:
“Nightsisters” aired

Star Wars: Knight Errant:
“Aflame 4” released

Star Wars: The Clone Wars:
“Monster” aired

Star Wars: The Clone Wars:
R2 to the Rescue released

Star Wars: The Clone Wars:
“Witches of the Mist” aired

Star Wars: Knight Errant released

Star Wars: Darth Vader and the Lost Command 1 released

Star Wars: Legacy: “War 2” released

Star Wars: The Clone Wars:
“Overlords” aired





SECRETS OF THE FORCE

"MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU" ISN'T JUST THE JEDI BENEDICTION—IT'S A PHRASE THAT WAS VOTED ONE OF THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE'S TOP 10 MOVIE QUOTES OF ALL TIME. BOTH AN ENERGY FIELD CREATED BY ALL LIVING THINGS AND AN INESCAPABLE POP CULTURE PHENOMENON, THE FORCE IS HERE TO STAY. NOW, AS *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS* REVEALS NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORCE IN THE MORTIS STORY ARC, WE EXPLORE THE POWER USED BY BOTH THE JEDI AND THE SITH! WORDS: DAN WALLACE