Faith Reborn: A Sith Destiny
By Svelt Aller (Translated by Abel G. Peña)

I have assembled this disquisition at the behest of the Dragon Lord's Keeper. If you are reading this, clearly you are no novice acolyte, and we may delve into a more sensitive analysis of the transformative and controversial figure that was milady, Reeve of the Sith Order.

Sympathy is a trait equally foreign to my race and my adopted Sith way of life. As Sith scribe Ingo Wavlud once synopsized, our order is committed to the precept that strength guarantees freedom and survival.[1] This has been the creed of choice of Dark Lords such as Darth Ruin, Darth Bane, and even Darth Vader, unthinkingly idolized as the *Sith'ari*: that "perfect being" of Sith legend. But I need not remind discerning minds that "strength" is a relative concept, and I propose that, from an analysis of milady's legacy, we may profit by understanding how at times compassion, far from embodying weakness, constitutes a critical *vitality*.

This thesis shall surely be ridiculed by close-minded purists asserting that treachery is the way of the Sith.[2] I do not dispute this truth, but bear this in mind. If treachery is, indeed, the *only* way of the Sith, then we can *only* ever hope to achieve a greatness equal to that of our perished precursors.

Never better. Never greater.

Are we to remain slaves of the dead? Certainly those undead Sith putrefying in the Valley of the Dark Lords would prefer it no other way. But we have seen what sour lambent fruit the glorification of treason ultimately yields. The Sith may again rule the galaxy, but in the inevitable denouement, we shall betray one another and decimate ourselves—yet again.

I present the following examination of the legacy of milady, occasionally necessarily subjective, as an alternative to such a pathetically redundant lot.

Reject its contents at your peril.

DISCIPLE

For a thousand years, the farsighted Darth Bane's paronomastic "Rule of Two" governed the Sith agenda. The first of his directives was a vow of secrecy, the second, a commitment to the existence of only two Sith at any one time, to curb that backstabbing so common in our history. But Palpatine demonstrated little indecision in breaking Bane's commandments. The revelation of his Shadow Hand Darth Maul has been justified as a necessity, for how else might Lord Bane's visionary plan have ever seen fruition? Yet, after Maul's death, Palpatine then granted his new apprentice Darth Tyranus a free hand in training whatever pupils he pleased.[3]

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[1] From "Heritage of the Sith" in *Star Wars Insider #88*, which also appears in a slightly modified form in *The Essential Guide to the Force*, wherein the Council on Security and Intelligence agent Gannod Chant translates and summarizes the text, attributed to Sith sympathizer Ingo Wavlud.

[2] In the *Revenge of the Sith* novelization, Count Dooku philosophizes on how "treachery is the way of the Sith."

[3] As seen in the various Clone Wars literature.

These dark siders sowed chaos during the Clone Wars and blazed the trail for Palpatine's own plans to establish a Dark Side Theocracy,[4] reflected in the creation of his Dark Side Elite and the corruption of the title *Shadow Hand*, reserved for Sith apprentices, to the term *Emperor's* Hand, denoting his specialized Force-sensitive assassins.[5] When Darth Vader became Palpatine's pupil, the Emperor encouraged him to follow this trend,[6] and Vader, who'd already had an apprentice during his days as a Knight of the *Jidai*,[7] took to the idea with relish. Like Tyranus before him, the list of Vader's protégés runs long—the Imperial Procurator of Justice, High Inquisitor Tremayne, Codename: Starkiller, the Majestrix, Tao, Domina Tagge, Flint Bolde and Admiral Vost Tyne, to name most. But I will limit discussion to the only disciple indispensable to this treatise—his last.

Of all Darth Vader's pupils, the pivot was she who came to most resemble him in both spirit and appearance. Her name was Shira Elan Colla Brie,[8] an Imperial double agent who initially served the Dark Lord in a capacity much like his vassal Wrenga "Jix" Jixton. However, her relationship to Vader evolved to emulate that of the daughter he never knew, particularly as she came to possess another name: Lumiya, Dark Lady of the Sith.

By human standards, Shira was a striking, red-haired, emerald-eyed youth, raised from infancy in the expansive Imperial Palace. She distinguished herself as a leader in the Empire's Commission for the Preservation of the New Order and was admitted into the Coruscani Pilot Institute as a result. Easily outperforming her peers, she was thereafter accelerated through the Caridan Imperial Academy, where she deliberately killed several classmates while field testing an experimental Mountain Terrain Scout Transport. It was during this time that Vader sensed how strongly the Force was with her. After Shira's graduation, he began the earliest phases of her biological alteration, utilizing the Emperor's finest bio-scientists to artificially increase her pain threshold and healing abilities, and administering her with mnemonic drugs.

Lord Vader proceeded to give Shira over to Intelligence Director Isard, who charged her with resolving the mysterious disappearance of Imperial Colonel Crix Madine.[9] Through deceit and murder, Shira quickly ascertained that the turncoat colonel had defected to the Rebel Alliance. Having infiltrated the Rebellion, she then partook in an early, top-secret assault on the second Death Star, double-crossing the Rebels' in their premature efforts at sabotage.[10] Owing to these successes, Lord Vader entrusted Shira

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[4] Palpatine's plan for establishing a dark side theocracy is stated in the *Dark Empire Sourcebook*.

[5] Palpatine's Dark Side Elite are from *Dark Empire II*. The equivalency of the term Shadow Hand with Sith apprentice is from the *Knights of the Old Republic Campaign Guide*.

[6] As seen in the webstrip *Evasive Action: Recruitment*.

[7] "Jidai" is the term for Jedi in the Sith language, as established in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com. It is similar to the Yuuzhan Vong term, "Jeedai," and intentionally used by the narrator for that reason. To avoid overkill, I've decided not to use the term when immediately preceding a noun, as in "Jedi Master" and "Jedi Knight."

[8] Information on Lumiya comes primarily from the Marvel Comics, *Star Wars Galaxy Magazine #3:* "Lumiya: Dark Star of the Empire," *Star Wars Gamer #5:* "The Emperor's Pawns," "Carida: Heavy Duty" on Wizards.com, the StarWars.com Databank, and the *Legacy of the Force* series.

[9] This is new information elaborating on a mission mentioned in "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*. According to "Galaxywide NewsNets" in *Adventure Journal #5*, Madine was an Imperial colonel at the time of his disappearance and defection.

[10] From Part 1 of the "Dark Forces Saga" and the video board game *Assault on the Death Star*.

with discrediting or even killing Luke Skywalker. But an unforeseen development occurred during her mission when a robust affection ripened between her and Skywalker. Still, Shira's commitment to her Sith master was absolute, and while flying TIE fighters with Skywalker on a covert Rebel mission, she made ready to vaporize her target. However, Skywalker used the Force to pierce the veil of her intentions and shot her down instead.

Kept just barely alive by the combination of a Force trance and her physiological modification, Shira would've surely succumbed to the unforgiving void if not for Vader's intervention. When he found her ruined body Force-hibernating in her crippled fighter, the Dark Lord was apparently struck by an implacable sense of déjà vu—for Vader himself had staved death following the first Death Star's destruction by surrendering to a Force-coma within his own damaged TIE Advanced fighter.[11] Though her shattered limbs were submitting to paralysis, her heart and other vital organs failing, and her eyes blinded,[12] Shira's fierce will to live stirred something in the Sith Lord, convincing him her survival was the will of the Force. Yet, Vader's compassion was of that species he himself had received at Palpatine's hands on lava-belching Mustafar.

Shira was *rebuilt*, becoming a cyborg in Vader's own image. She ceased to be Shira Elan Colla Brie and adopted the name and title of Lumiya, Dark Lady of the Sith. Vader then began training her in the ways of the Sith,[13] planning to deploy her in a coup against Palpatine. As part of his plot, he revealed to milady his possession of that mysterious crimson crystal shard, a splinter from the rare artifact known as the Kaiburr. The Sith Lord was convinced that if he obtained the entirety of this precious stone, it would restore his connection to the Force to that total degree denied him by his transformation into a cyborg,[14] vesting Vader with unlimited power and rule of the galaxy.

In effect, becoming the *Sith'ari* of legend.

However, due to previous failures in concealing apprentices from the Emperor, Vader shrewdly presented Lumiya to his master as a suitable Emperor's Hand, surmising rightly that her true loyalties were unshakeable. As a rite of passage, Palpatine sent milady to the Sith capital Ziost, where she endured relentless attacks by mind-devouring Derriphan, smoke demons, Sith slayer war droids, and other dark side horrors before acquiring a tome by Darth Vectivus.[15] Along with a Sith prophecy of sacrifice, the manuscript detailed the projection of "Force phantoms," the coordinates of Vectivus'

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[11] From *Scoundrel's Luck* and "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*.

[12] *Threats of the Galaxy* states that Shira was "terribly injured, necessitating the replacement of her limbs and organs with cybernetic replacements," pg. 83. This coincides with Lumiya's statement in *Legacy of the Force: Sacrifice* that "I'm actually more machine than organic." Her blindness is new, intended to explain the change in eye color between visual depictions of her as Shira Brie and Lumiya.

[13] From *Threats of the Galaxy*: "Lumiya, as she now called herself, trained further with Vader, learning the ways of the Force and even some Sith techniques."

[14] Vader's reduced Force potential as a result of his cyborging is a theme harped on in both *Dark Lord: The Rise of Darth Vader* and the *Legacy of the Force* series. According to the novel *The Rise and Fall of Darth Vader*, pg. 168, the Kaiburr crystal's power is such that it allows him to shoot Force lightning, a skill otherwise denied to him: "Thanks to his proximity to the Force-enhancing Kaiburr Crystal, he [Vader] felt a sudden surge of the power of the dark side, allowing him to project lightning from his fingertips for the first time in his life."

[15] I chose to use Darth Vectivus here in order to reinforce the connection between him and Lumiya established in the *Legacy of the Force* series.

asteroid stronghold in star system MZX32905, and the construction of a melee weapon of "biting metal and stinging light." Victorious, she returned from her trial to Imperial space.

She found upon her homecoming an empire in chaos. Lord Vader, she learned, had killed Palpatine at the Battle of Endor, and succumbed to death himself. Lumiya was struck with grief at Vader's passing, but knew the Sith had to carry on. She immediately ensconced herself on the planet Vjun.

WARLORD

Dromund Kaas, Zigoola, and Korriban—these are all familiar furnaces of baleful energy. But far away from the morbid majesties of the Valley of Dark Lords, milady consecrated a number of sites with her own stygian mark. The first of these was on the planet Vjun,[16] saturated in acid-rain storms and once home to both Lords Vader and Tyranus. It was in her old master's stronghold that my mistress took residence.

Ominous in design, Bast Castle, or Château Bastien[17] was, in actuality, originally constructed not for Vader but for the Viscount Bast. Having written off the property after a plague wiped out Vjun's population,[18] the House of Bast ceded the castle to Lord Vader in order to secure the promotion of General Nejad Bast, whose twin sibling met his end aboard the first Death Star.[19]

A legion of gaunt Tac-Spec Footman droids tirelessly attended to the alcazar's myriad ornate rooms, including torture chambers and secret passageways hiding a quartet of curios inherited from milady's master.[20] One was a holocron that survived that desperate act of terrorism perpetrated by two Jedi fugitives of Order 66, Ashka Boda and Halagad Ventor, destroying the Jedi Temple's holocron collection to keep it out of Sith hands.[21] Another was the lightsaber belonging to Vader's vanquished Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi, mistakenly assumed by some to have been recovered from the first Death Star's wreckage by a "rookie" band of star-hoppers.[22] The third object was that

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[16] Information on Bast Castle comes primarily from *Yoda: Dark Rendezvous*, *Dark Empire II*, *Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*, and *Junior Jedi Knights: Vader's Fortress*.

[17] Literally "Bast Castle" in French, following the naming conventions used for Vjun castles in *Yoda: Dark Rendezvous*.

[18] Vjun's plague is mentioned in *Yoda: Dark Rendezvous*.

[19] This is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the character Chief Bast, who appears in both *A New Hope* and in recycled footage in the *Star Wars Holiday Special*.

[20] Asli Krimsan's holocron and Obi-Wan's lightsaber are found in Bast Castle in the *Junior Jedi Knights: Vader's Fortress* and *Junior Jedi Knights: Kenobi's Blade*. The placing of Vader's Kaiburr crystal fragment and a painting of Padmé here are new. The Kaiburr fragment ties into the larger narrative of this piece, while the painting of Padmé is another fan wink. Artist Edvin Biukovic slipped an image of Natalie Portman into the comic *The Last Command* in 1998, before the release of *The Phantom Menace*, and I've tied this to the *Visionaries* short, "The Artist of Naboo."

[21] Ashka Boda and Halagad Ventor's association is established in *Dawn of Defiance: Echoes of the Jedi*. The destruction of the Jedi Temple's holocron collection is meant to explain the rarity of holocrons in the Empire era as well as why Luke had to actually go on quests post-*Return of the Jedi* for even the smallest bits of information while preparing to resurrect the Jedi Order. Even Palpatine only has one Jedi holocron by the time of *Dark Empire* (which he refers to as *the* Jedi Holocron).

[22] According to the rpg book *Scavenger Hunt*, Rebels recovered Obi-Wan's lightsaber from scraps of the first Death Star in a far-flung star system. However, *The Rise and Fall of Darth Vader* states that Darth Vader clipped Obi-Wan's lightsaber to his belt after their duel, and thus had it with him when he escaped

fragment from the potent Force artifact known as the Kaiburr crystal Vader had once shown milady.

The last curiosity, hidden in plain sight among the castle's tapestried walls and decorations, was one of only two surviving portraits—the other in the Imperial Palace—of Lord Vader's dead mate, holopainted by a reclusive half-crazed member of the "Brotherhood of Cognizance" known only as The Artist of Naboo.

Taking the Kaiburr splinter, milady used it as the focusing crystal of her devastating Sith lightwhip. Based on Darth Vectivus' instructions, the weapon's lashes were forged of alchemically-infused war behemoth hide, resilient Mandalorian Iron, and raw, frenetic energy. Lumiya now declared herself the new Dark Lord[23] and acquired her first Shadow Hand, the aforementioned Flint Bolde of Belderone, after sundering his will in a vicious duel, along with his Imperial resources.[24]

Lumiya subsequently made a bold but rash attempt to gain control of the Imperial remnants during this galaxy's first extragalactic invasion, the Nagai-Tof War. Following a hostile introduction, she allied with the pale-fleshed Nagai, invaders from a tightly orbiting dwarf galaxy. Milady's gambit initially went well, hammering the newly-established Alliance of Free Planets at the Second Battle of Endor. However, she suffered a severe setback with Bolde's surrender to her old swain, Luke Skywalker. I took sincere pleasure in eventually driving the amethyst blade of my lightsaber through this Belderonian traitor's trachea. Milady also switched allegiances to the piratical Tofs when these centuries-old oppressors of the Nagai followed them into Imperial space. Unfortunately, my mistress and her Tof confederates were defeated on the planet Saijo, where she narrowly escaped with her life. Her survival unnoticed, she slinked, scarred and alone, into the shadows.

Over the next several years, milady steeped herself in Sith lore from throughout the galaxy and ages, acquiring all manner of arcane codices and tomes and absorbing the Sith teachings of the likes of Dathka Graush, Darth Vitus, and Karnak the Maleficent. In her research of such academicians of Sith lore as Murk Lundi, she also familiarized herself with the obscure art of quipulogy and the poisoning expertise of the Mecrosa Order.[25] All the while, an increasingly pathological hatred for Skywalker festered in her iron gut.[26]

The Dark Lady also came to an understanding with her past associate, Intelligence Director Isard, now acting-empress of the disintegrating Galactic Empire. Bartering with

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from the Death Star's explosion. As Obi-Wan's lightsaber reappears in Bast Castle in the book *Junior Jedi Knights: Vader's Fortress*, the simplest explanation seems to be that the Rebels in *Scavenger Hunt* merely mistakenly assumed the lightsaber recovered in that story was Obi-Wan's.

[23] A number of sources refer to Lumiya as a Sith Lord. Marvel Comics #88, wherein the character is introduced, states, "Darth Vader is dead. Long live the new Dark Lord"; *Star Wars Gamer #8*'s article "I, Yuuzhan Vong" calls her a "Sith Lord"; and *Threats of the Galaxy* marks her as an example of a Sith Lord, along with Darth Bane. This narrative explains that, initially, Lumiya naively considered herself a Sith Lord until a "wiser" Lumiya changes her mind prior to the *Legacy of the Force* series.

[24] As established in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com. Flint's last name is new, not be confused with that of his father, Flint Torul. The form of Flint's death, implied to be at Lumiya's behest, is also established in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties."

[25] This information embellishes on suggestions of Lumiya's activities after the Marvel comics, as established in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com and "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*.

[26] *Threats of the Galaxy* states that Lumiya was "filled with hatred for Luke Skywalker."

Isard for a new battle fleet, a platoon of stormtroopers, and two squads of deadly Royal Guards, my mistress agreed to discipline a handful of Imperial treasonists, including researchers in the Cron Drift, the secretive Prophets of the Dark Side, and one of milady's old colleagues—former Emperor's Hand and future mate of Skywalker, Mara Jade.[27] The researchers were whelp's play, while milady contracted the services of Vader's former vassal Jixton to demolition Vader's Coruscant stronghold—which had been converted into the Prophets' so-called First Church of the Dark Side. The Emperor's Hand, however, required a more personal touch. Traveling in her cloak-equipped Nagai starfighter, *Screamer*, Lumiya tracked Jade down to that mecca of racing, Caprioril. Though the assassin survived the furious showdown, milady captured her violet lightsaber and swore to one day end the woman's life.

While carrying on Vader's quest for the Kaiburr crystal, Lumiya also made an acquisition of almost unfathomable significance: the fabled holocron of the chiliagenerian King Adas, deity-monarch of the ancient Sith race and inspirer of the legend of the *Sith'ari*. With this hallowed item, lost for eons, Lumiya's knowledge of the dark side multiplied at an astonishing rate. The return of the Sith Order to a new gilded age now seemed inevitable, with the Dark Lady at its head.

Emboldened, Lumiya took another Shadow Hand. The fate of her first apprentice I've recounted already, though I can add that I took Bolde's life with the very lightsaber milady wrested from Jade. But it was among those Royal Guards acquired from Isard that my mistress discovered the Force-sensitive Carnor Jax.[28] Jax, too, I am familiar with from personal experience.

A GeNode clone,[29] the Jax was as a living weapon, cut from the same zeyd-cloth as Sith marauders like Darth Maul and Kaox Krull. Together, he and Lumiya personally wiped out the last vestiges of the Prophets of the Dark Side on the planet Bosthirda—on the precise thousand-year anniversary of their founder's birth. But Jax also proved an expert conniver. Under milady's direction, he carried out the destruction of the reborn Palpatine, who considered himself an avatar of the dark side itself and no longer a Sith in any traditional sense.[30] Utilizing Mecrosa venoms, Jax poisoned the clones this apostate used to keep himself alive and supplanted Palpatine as de facto ruler of the Galactic Empire.

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[27] Lumiya's attack on the Prophets of the Dark Side is from "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com, while her hunt for Mara Jade is from "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5* and the *New Essential Guide to Characters*.

[28] Information on Carnor Jax comes primarily from *Crimson Empire*, "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com, and "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*.

[29] According to Jax's creator, Randy Stradley, this character was intended to be a clone. GeNode cloning is established in the short story "Pax Empirica" as a method favored by the Empire.

[30] In *Dark Empire*, the clone Emperor never refers to himself as a Sith and instead seems to think of himself as something like a manifestation of the dark side of the Force itself, stating, "I live as *energy*… I *am* the dark side!" Granted, *Dark Empire* was published before the prequels established that Palpatine was a Sith, but in the last arc of the comic series, *Empire's End*, the clone Emperor is depicted at odds with the Sith spirits on Korriban. It seems reasonable to assume that the cloned Palpatine doesn't consider himself a Sith in the traditional sense. Lumiya, as Reeve of the Order, probably didn't see him that way either. In *Legacy of the Force: Bloodlines*, Lumiya rhetorically asks, "Now do you see why weak men like Palpatine saw only *power*, and why they were defeated?"

It was in the course of Jax's ascension that he was approached by the Intendant agent Nom Anor concerning a possible Sith-Yuuzhan Vong alliance[31] … an alliance of which I found myself the unlikely axis.

DISCLOSURE

As implied by my name, I, Svelt Aller,[32] once pertaining to Domain Aller of the esteemed Priest caste, am a member of the war-bred, extragalactic Yuuzhan Vong. Though other humanoid races seldom look on our skull-like, ritually scarred visages without a shiver, I once was, per my people's aesthetic, considered the measure of pulchritude. I worshipped pain and despised inorganic technology—cultural idiosyncrasies born of our olden, cataclysmic galactic wars. After destroying our own homeworld, Yuuzhan'tar, we undertook an eons-long odyssey on our organic worldships across the void between our dead galaxy and this one, yearning for a better life. For me, alas, the promised land arrived not soon enough.

Following decades of faithful service, it was arranged for me to take the sacred vows of a Royal Seer, the highest honor a priestess may achieve and a boon to the eminence of my Domain. My dilemma, however, was that I had already secretly sworn myself to the Lover Gods Yun-Txiin and Yun-Q'aah—for I had taken a forbidden companion. In living on the same worldship, I came to know Nom Anor of the Intendant caste, despite our distinct social pedigrees. Laws prohibited our union, but the attraction between us was powerful and undeniable. Our taboo liaisons in the Shapers' secluded bioengineering chambers allowed us to play at being gods, as we brought forth bygone creatures from the sacred Cortexes. Had we been caught, our punishment would've been death or worse—reduction to the opprobrious class of "Shamed One." But we reveled in defying providence.

Then, one evening, Nom gifted me a necklace of dazzling golden pearls, painstakingly smeared and malformed, harvested from extinct killer chuk'aket mollusks. Our ardor could be curbed no longer. That night, we surrendered to our passions.

We carried on in this way for years, reveling in the risk of our illicit rendezvous. But it was not long after we celebrated Nom's ceremonious elevation to the status of Executor, wherein he gouged out his own left eye and replaced it with a living plaeryin bol implant, when the arrangements for my own Royal Seer vows were made. However, I was not distraught. The idea of ever realizing a lasting happiness with my secret love never occurred to me, for our cultural creed of life as agony had all but cured me of such delusions. But as our worldships neared the end of their inconceivably long voyage, Nom Anor was chosen to scout and destabilize this galaxy ahead of our arrival.

My lover promised to conquer this new domain. He promised to do so in my name, and he promised to return for me. He promised … a life together in this glorious, unspoiled realm.

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[31] As mentioned in "The Emperor's Pawns" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*.

[32] The narrator Svelt Aller, named here for the first time, was originally introduced in the "Dark Forces Saga" on Wizards.com as a female, Force-sensitive Yuuzhan Vong, along with the insinuation that she is a disciple to Lumiya. I've made her Lumiya's familiar instead. Svelt's background connecting her to Nom Anor's offer to Carnor Jax of a Yuuzhan Vong-Sith alliance is new.

Words, I told myself. Only words. Ludicrous, heretical, irrational …

Intoxicating.

Against all reason, against all instinct, I dared believe him.

I executed my Royal Seer duties zealously, filled as I was with an utterly alien sentiment—*hope*. A faith in the future that filled me with a joy I'd not known even in my earliest memories.

That is, until a crisis arose. As part of the seer vows, a priestess is obligated to forfeit a chosen aspect of her body, taking a replacement divination implant. To mirror the sacrifice of my estranged lover, I opted to pluck out my right eye. The substituted vilhorak bol implant, loosely translating "scryball," was said to be a creation from the Holiest Eighth Cortex, the final rung in the bioengineering protocols. Spawned by a brilliant Shaper from telepathic yammosk neural tissues, the implant was to grant me unmediated communion with the gods.

It wasn't long before this prophesying organ betrayed me. The vilhorak bol's direct interface with my brain first blessed me with splitting headaches. Thereafter, my mind became filled with profane visions: of a synthetic woman made from blasphemous machinery; of the decimation of our people and way of life; and of myself, in a land of the dead, worshipping at the altar of unknown deities. The grotesque divinations became overwhelming. My vilhorak bol withered and died, sending a message that was not only clear but doctrinal.

I had been rejected by the gods.

Members of my own Domain carried out my degradation to the status of Shamed One with righteous flair, and, half-blind, I suffered all the inspired humiliations heaped upon that lowest and most pitiable caste. Though Yuuzhan Vong are no strangers to torment, the separation from my dignity and my truelove enlightened me to a category of suffering all together innovative. I became the test animal of the fanatic Shaper named Onimi, the selfsame that had styled my defective divination implant.[33] Probed endlessly by pain-tasting spinerays and subjected to bizarre cellular experiments I did not understand, time lost all meaning for me.

I'd virtually given up that hope I'd so reluctantly allowed to bloom when agents of my lover's enigmatic Deception Sect fraternity rescued me from depravity. These cabalistic patrons of the Trickster Goddess Yun-Harla, led by Nom's crèche-cousin Phaa Anor, smuggled me into this galaxy under cover of an identity-obscuring masquer. Before I knew it, I was ambushed by bliss, locked in the embrace of my rescuer and conqueror: Nom Anor.

Our reunion, passionately surreal, burned with an ecstasy that seemed impossible to retain alit forever.

Indeed, it lasted so much less.

Nom began teaching me the rudiments of this galaxy's standard tongue, though I soon learned this was not for my benefit. This realm of hope had changed my lover … or perhaps merely freed him to lay himself bare, a creature of naked ego and ambition. For Nom had struck a bargain with the newest ruler of the dying Galactic Empire, a partnership between the Yuuzhan Vong and the Dark Lords. And as a token of good will, as the reward for all my suffered devotion, my beloved delivered me a slave into the hands of the Sith sovereign Carnor Jax.

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[33] Onimi's past as a Shaper comes from the novel *New Jedi Order: The Unifying Force*.

RECOGNITION

Carnor Jax was soft-spoken and resplendent in a scarlet and obsidian variation of Imperial Royal Guard robes. We could hardly communicate, yet I instantly assessed that Jax shared my deceptive lover's lust for power. And while he must have superficially appraised my species as physically repulsive as I his, that primitive, animal recognition of puissance passed between us: a Sith silan and Yuuzhan Vong slivilith, each vacillating between verdicts of mate and prey. Yet, Lord Jax was a man in control of his passions. The Sith sovereign's interest in me was not personal, but rooted in the fact that members of my race appeared "absent" in some "energy field" he referred to as *the force*. To my trained priestess' ears, this gibberish smacked of profanity at best and dementia at worst.

On the Star Destroyer *Emperor's Revenge*, Jax subjected me to a battery of tests, at intervals foolish and sadistic. Imprisoned in a durasteel detention cell, bound in energy links, injected with caustic chemicals by IT-3 droid interrogators, surrounded by sacrilegious technology on all sides, I was driven to the brink of madness. Amid my hysteria, Lord Jax routinely "probed" me, his constricted hand sweeping the empty air before me in a vaguely sanctifying gesture. This baffling ritual seemed almost laughable, until the Sith sovereign, struck by an intuition, seized on my lustrous necklace. Silently meditating on the chuk'aket pearls, Jax averred to at last "sense" me by that supernatural sensibility he claimed. I would have thoroughly dismissed this pretension, had I not, through my drug-induced haze, detected a synchronous *itch* in the flesh of my infarcted scryball.

Lord Jax would concede defeat, however, as his tortures failed yield any further insight into my species' "Force-forsaken condition." Consequently, he delivered me to the planet Tozarin and his own obscured master. I was, in fact, to serve as bait in a high-stakes game of holochess, as Jax prepared to ensnare and kill and take the place of his Sith superior.[34] While Jax himself was soon after slain by a rival, effectively nullifying his tenuous alliance with Nom Anor, I now found myself a captive of Lumiya within the region of space called the Cloak of the Sith.[35]

From the moment mountainous, Nelvaanian mutants dragged me into the foreboding Tozarin ziggurat, I felt ill at ease. The temple was lined with abominable mirrors[36] that not only appeared to multiply the pyramid's labyrinthine character into the infinite but seemed intent on washing me of my Yuuzhan Vong heritage: hiding my every self-inflicted mutilation, highlighting my every unblemished feature. Alas, the greater horror was still to come as my captor revealed herself.

Jax's technological tortures were as nothing to the sight of the Dark Lady herself, an apparition of nightmare. Like me, she was a slender creature, yet the similarities stopped there. Hints of a metal faceplate gleamed from behind an inverted triangular

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[34] As explained in "Evil Never Dies" on starwars.com.
[35] Lumiya's temporary residence in the Cloak of the Sith region is foreshadowed in the "Dark Forces Saga" series on Wizards.com. The planet Tozarin and its ziggurat are new information.
[36] These beauty-augmenting mirrors appear in Lumiya's apartment and hideout in *Legacy of the Force: Tempest* and *Legacy of the Force: Inferno*.

wrap swathing her head, leaving visible only abnormally hard, sage[37] eyes. Silver durasteel sleeved each of her extremities, while a network of exposed circuits crisscrossed her torso like endless varicose veins and a raven cape like a shredded N'amiq's wing hung from her back.

The synthetic woman … undead execration of my visions.

In a husky, metallic voice, she reaffirmed her pupil's assertion that I appeared "Force-forsaken" through that invisible energy field supposedly surrounding all living things. But the Dark Lady was perpetually more patient and diabolical than Lord Jax could ever hope to be.

Building on her Shadow Hand's breakthrough with the chuk'aket pearls, she had two of her Nevlaanian ogres bind me to a Krath torture droid, a non-living contrivance like some perverse parody of the rack my people call the Embrace of Pain. As I hung suspended by my arms, my pearl rivière hanging from my neck, and my legs locked in immobilizing machinery, the cyborg woman took a cylindrical utensil from a nearby operating table loaded with inorganic apparatus. Suddenly, a meter-long purple plasma blade shot from the cylinder.

Shrill upon shrill was my forthright response as she applied the searing sword ever so tenderly to my various body parts. Blood and burns tattooed my flesh in asymmetric designs, and under alternate circumstances, I'd have called the schematic artful. As it was, I could not begin to estimate her motivations, save they were those of a demon. But after an interminable period, the Dark Lady switched off that unholy lightsaber and returned it to its place … just before unceremoniously plunging her metal index finger into my bare belly.

I cried out. Black ichor seeped from the wound as she withdrew her makeshift syringe. At once, I knew this was no ordinary drug like those plied me by Carnor Jax. I felt the Sith poison, more excruciating than yanskac venom, running rancid through my veins. I began to feel ill. I felt I was going mad.

I began to feel… *rage*.

Rage … unnatural, catalytic, uncontrollable. My blood curdled. Again, that persistent itch in my dead scryball. Hot pressure from the vilhorak bol feeding into my mind … I now sensed a presence there not my own. Could everything I knew of the gods be wrong? Could this "Force" be real? My instincts denied it. I raved, summoning the gods to visit their wrath on my captor's demonic metal body. My reaction only pleased the Dark Lady, spurring her into a decisive course.

As a Nelvaanian brute secured my head in a gargantuan paw, she conducted the operation. With the dexterity of a Master Shaper, purposefully and methodically, she grafted a *cybernetic* ocular implant onto my clotted eye socket, as my body's every fiber screamed to the gods for salvation from the violation!

And yet, when it was over—blessed be The Cloaked One—

I could see again!

My mind reeled at my warring emotions: could it be? Had this dead, infidel technology accepted me where living Yuuzhan Vong implants rejected me?

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[37] As in gray-green, addressing a disparity in Lumiya's eye color. As Shira Brie, she has green eyes, but after becoming Lumiya, she is clearly depicted with gray eyes in both the Marvel Comics and the *New Essential Chronology*. However, throughout the *Legacy of the Force* series, she is described as having green eyes. Therefore, sage.

My answer was violent. Without thinking, I called a cold and ungodly object from the nearby operating table through the air and into my hand. Like a thing alive, the lightsaber beam spat forward seemingly of its own accord, emancipating me of the Krath contraption in a fluid, burning arc. Free, I turned on the hulking Nelvaanians, rendering them inanimate blocks of meat with swift hacks.

As I stood over the mutilated remains, adrenaline churning, I shuddered. Not at what I'd done, but at the hungry, bass thrum of the evil I'd summoned. My eye—my *cybernetic* eye—traced the glowing, angry blade to the synthetic hilt in my left hand. I heard a whirring from behind me. I turned, my gaze falling on a thing more machine than woman. As if to quash any doubt, she reached into her faux leg and extracted that deadly lightwhip. Instinct possessed me. Mechanized, divorced from my people, from my gods and my very identity, I attacked.

As I hurtled toward her, a vessel of irrepressible hatred, the lacerating iron and rawhide of the Dark Lady's lightwhip lashed out, entwining my throat. I felt the strangling tendrils constrict as, hand over hand, she reeled me toward her like a helpless gooberfish. Instead of resisting, however, I summoned my anger and sprinted the gap between us. A simple twitch of her wrist would have detached my head, but my demise was a thing I no longer feared. With a desperate, savage lunge, I speared that harpoon of violet fire at her heart.

She did not move. The singing blade plunged hot into her chest, sizzling as it scorched circuitry and setting her cape ablaze as it melted out her back. I waited, perhaps expecting her to burst in a rain of shrapnel.

But instead … nothing. She did not move.

And as I looked into those cold, unblinking eyes, framed in the riotous fire of her burning attire, I realized I was fighting someone already dead. The cyborg activated the energy component of her lightwhip. Choking, visceral current enveloped me, detonating a luminous pain in my brain, pulverizing my consciousness. My laser sword clattered deactivated to the ground. And the Dark Lady capitalized.

In her studies, Lumiya had learned that on those exceptional occasions when a being had somehow been stripped of her Force sensitivity, fear, anger, and aggression had sometimes served as a quick and easy conduit to reestablish a connection to that dark power which binds the galaxy together.[38] Exploiting my anger and anguish, she wrenched the pearl rivière from my neck and channeled the dark side through it, bridging the metaphysical gulf dividing us, saturating me in a kinetic storm. Convulsing energy ripped through the allures of my body, erupting from my extremities. Some invisible barrier exploded. Abruptly, the searing fury of the cosmos invaded my being—*the livid, chaotic energy of all living things.* A scream of self-apperception tore past the stranglehold on my throat.

Not a scream—*words*. The snarling sound fleeing my lips and rending my larynx was actually *words* in an unknown tongue. Yet, as those foreign tonalities howled themselves from my body into the ether, there was no need to translate.[39]

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[38] The novel *Darksaber* opens with the dilemma that the character Callista Ming has lost all her connection to the Force. Through the course of the story, Callista regains her Force-sensitivity by giving into her anger and tapping into the dark side.

[39] For a precedent of spontaneously learning the Sith language, see the character Exar Kun in the comics series *Dark Lords of the Sith*.

"*Whereas once I was blind, now I am Sith*."

Inundated in power, I felt about to expire. Intuitively, I redirected the energy seething through me toward my captor and ... released. The telekinetic blast smashed into the cyborg, incinerating her headdress, dynamiting her airborne, frying and fusing life-sustaining circuitry. She released her lightwhip, and I collapsed.

We lay there. Sharing the dead silence … the silan and the slivilith.

I know not how long that blissful quiet lasted. I only remember it being broken … by a steady, metallic wheeze. Presently, there was the harsh accompaniment of metal slowly scraping stone, and I knew what it meant.

Lumiya, the undying mechanical abomination, was rising.

Too injured to move, barely conscious, I could only listen as death scraped her way toward me. Then, standing over my supine form, smoke steaming from her metal corpse, my cyber-vision made out the delicate, pink flesh of her unmasked face … marred with deep and beautiful scars.

Calmly, she extended a hammer-like fist above me. Then she spoke in that guttural, animal tongue.

"*Your conversion to the dark side is complete*."

The fingers of her fist unfurled, and my golden necklace, radiant with dark energy, spilled in a cascade onto my chest.

Mechanical technology is not so abhorrent as my people imagined. At last, I could see who and what I was. At last, I could see that there existed a far vaster reality than anything the close-minded Yuuzhan Vong priests had ever expounded, power beyond anything I had ever imagined.

And it was *mine*.

CONVERGENCE

From that moment forward, the Dark Lady became my mistress and I her kindred *other*—her familiar. The arrangement proved natural, for both my own people and the Sith have historically adopted such companions.[40] In honor of our covenant, milady also requested I retain the lightsaber with which I'd assailed her—that very trophy she acquired from Mara Jade—and we vowed mutual vengeance on our enemies, Luke Skywalker and Nom Anor.[41] However, I had yet one more rite to pass.

The frigid world of Nelvaan—referred to as the "Great Mother" by its indigenous populace—held singular meaning for my mistress.[42] It was in an immense cavern there that both she and her master experienced visions foretelling their destined metamorphoses into Sith apotheoses. It was here that milady now brought me.

The lupine, viridian-skinned Nelvaanians had for generations recorded the lore and stories of their respective tribes in the various caves of their planet. Eventually, however, clans from around Nelvaan were drawn to this single mysterious grotto, a Force

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[40] The concept of the Yuuzhan Vong familiar is introduced in the novel *New Jedi Order: Hero's Trial*, while the Sith familiar is introduced in "The Sith Compendium" in *Star Wars Gamer #5*.

[41] *Threats of the Galaxy* states that Lumiya "vowed she would get revenge regardless of the cost" on Luke Skywalker.

[42] Information on Nelvaan's Dagobah-like cave comes from the Clone Wars micro-series and *The New Essential Guide to Alien Species*, with some additional details of its history. The cave's name is new.

nexus, and agreed to paint the cavern's walls with the collective legends and history of their people. Nelvaanian folklore relates that as their finest scribes filled the walls with their graphic script, drawing ever nearer to the present day, the hieroglyphs begotten by their hands came to acquire lives of their own. Following the whispered instructions of their very creations, the artisans proceeded in a trance-like state, continuing with their work until the completed mural chronicled not only the breadth of Nelvaanian history but its future as well. Awed, the natives dubbed this cavern of auguries the Eye of the Great Mother.

It was here, while still a *Jidai*, that Darth Vader experienced the cryptic vision of the "Ghost Hand," a Nelvaanian prophecy foretelling his fast-approaching Sith destiny. As a result of this revelation, Vader later brought my mistress to the Eye to face the darkness within herself—and she now carried on the tradition with me. It was deep within this cavern that my trickster goddess, The Cloaked One, blessed me with a theophany—revealing her true self as one of the immortal gods of the Sith.[43] Pledging myself to these dark deities, I abandoned all ties to the Yuuzhan Vong.

The trials of my conversion to the Sith had scarred my voice with a permanent rasp, not unlike that of milady. But with my spontaneous apprehension of the Sith tongue now came unimpeded communication between us. The Dark Lady began inculcating me in the history of our order, from the legends of the *Sith'ari* and *Nemo Dak* through the many wars with the *Jidai*. In turn, I disclosed the narrative of the Yuuzhan Vong, their prospective invasion, and Nom Anor's proposition of alliance. Yet, my mistress showed greatest interest in my people's chance adoption of an alien native to her own galaxy.

Recounting my Deception Sect assisted escape, I mentioned briefly encountering an avian Fosh female named Vergere, the familiar to a graceful Yuuzhan Vong vestal named Elan.

Elan. The name did not fail to give milady pause. Perhaps it was only by chance that this novice priestess' name, in part, mirrored Lumiya's own prior to her becoming a Sith—a mere fluke of translation. But the Force insists on this plain apodictum: there *are* no coincidences. This Vergere, I explained, had appeared a meek and peculiar creature, prone to riddles, but, most importantly, I remembered her exciting in me a strange and unfamiliar sensation, what I now understood as a brush with the Force.

Digesting my tale, milady related a pertinent anecdote of her own. During her tenure as an Emperor's Hand, just prior to her mission to Ziost, Palpatine had conveyed to her the apologue of the Fosh's Paradox. This Sith "legend" concerned a radical Jedi Master whom apprenticed herself to a Dark Lord, only to betray him. "At which point," Palpatine divulged, "the Dark Lord dealt with the traitor."

At the time, my mistress had taken the story for pure allegory: a warning that the Emperor suspected her true loyalty to Vader over himself. Now, she wasn't so sure. I assured her that the Fosh *I* had happened upon was very much alive, and the uncanny conjunction only intrigued milady further.

As to Nom Anor's proposed compact, milady rejected the idea outright, confiding in me a terrible truth. While studying King Adas' ancient holocron, she came to believe that the most penetrating secrets and powers of the Sith Order—such as Force lightning,

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[43] In the Marvel comic Star Wars #6, Darth Vader exclaims, "By the Immortal gods of the Sith!" The worship of gods by the ancient Sith people is further established in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com.

alchemical mastery, and dimensional rending—required the coercion of a great many microscopic symbionts in a being's blood.[44] Alas, because the majority of milady's body had been dismembered, gutted, and replaced with cybernetics—from the gray-green simulacra of her eyes down to her steel heart—she felt there were critical limits to her Sith powers. Like Lord Vader, she'd committed innumerable hours to healing herself in a hyperbaric chamber, making negligent gains, and she'd even tried to re-grow her missing organs and limbs. But her body always rejected the cloners' implants.

Still, milady yet had a razor bug up her sleeve.

THE KAIBURR

The Kaiburr crystal is a relic of mystery. Legend has it that the gem's genesis predates the beginning of time and space, birthed by the Left-Handed God of the Sith known as Typhojem. More traditionally accepted is the claim that the crystal's origins lie in the pre-Republic clash known as the Force Wars,[45] pitting the light side followers of the Ashla against the dark forces of the Bogan. It's said that on the planet Tython, a member of the Kyber Royal Dynasty and devotee of the Ashla unearthed faceted gemstones ranging in hue from transparent to turquoise to blood red. The larger, denser, and more rubicund, the greater appeared the ability of these crystals to magnify the Ashla or the Bogan—that is, the light and dark sides of the Force—bestowing on their possessors respective capabilities for extraordinary healing or unfathomable destruction. Fragmented records even suggest that these miraculous artifacts could keep loved ones from dying … or bring the dead back to life.[46]

Precious few of these "Kyber crystals" survived the vicious battle at Condawn, Tython's ancient capital, at the end of the Force Wars. Those that did were generally small and translucent, boasting limited abilities to augment the Force, and many of these crystal were eventually locked away within the Great Jedi Library of Ossus. However, with the advent of lightsaber technology, much later *Jiadi* discovered that these leftovers served as excellent focusing crystals in their weapons as well as vast memory depositories when combined with holocron technology. Furthermore, after the devastation wrought on the planet Ossus during the Great Sith War, the aquatic Jedi Master Qalsneek[47] hid many artifacts from Ossus' Jedi academy beneath the seas of the planet Kamino, including a number of Kyber crystals. The Kaminoans used these crystals

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[44] Per Lumiya's reasoning in *Legacy of the Force: Betrayal*.

[45] The Kaiburr crystal's original introduction into the Expanded Universe occurred in the novel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*. On pg. 71, its nature is described: "This increases one's perception of the Force. It magnifies and clarifies … in proportion to its size and density, I think. Anyone in possession of the entire crystal, if it's much larger than this fragment, would have such a lock on the Force that he could do almost anything, anything at all."

Because of an accidental, off-hand reference to multiple Kaiburr crystals in *Young Jedi Knights: Lightsabers*, the nature of this Force-augmenting crystal has since been confused. This origin story for the Kaiburr reconciles these and other contradictions that have cropped up about the crystal in later sources, including *The Essential Chronology*, the *Legacy of the Force* series, *Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords*, *The Force Unleashed*, and the Clone Wars TV series.

[46] As seen in the novel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*.

[47] Jedi Master Qalsneek and his efforts to preserve Ossus artifacts on Kamino is from *Geonosis and the Outer Rim Worlds*.

to create the toxic kyber darts, which became a favorite among Journeyman Protectors and their kin the Mandalorians. As a consequence, the remainder of these "Kaiburr" crystals (as time has orthographically evolved the name) was eagerly and almost entirely exhausted by the start of the Clone Wars.

Yet, somehow, one exemplary specimen survived. A head-sized, deep-crimson crystal resided on the planet Circarpous V, at the indigenous shrine called the Temple of Pomojema. Darth Vader, milady explained, tracked down the last Kaiburr crystal to this place, where he clashed with not only his son Luke Skywalker and his daughter Leia Organa, but the spirit of Obi-Wan Kenobi. The Dark Lord's progeny amazingly escaped the melee with the Kaiburr as their prize, but misconstrued the magnitude of its importance, taking it for a mere healing agent. This was not wholly their fault, for the crystal's effectiveness seemed to wane in direct relation to its distance from Circarpous V.

What the fools failed realize was that the gemstone's power did not diminish proportionate to its proximity from the Temple of Pomojema, but in proportion to its proximity from *Lord Vader*. For the Dark Lord possessed a seemingly inconsequential *shard* from the crystal, sliced pristinely from the whole via the Force by some unknown personage. Just as holocrons had once been used by Jedi to unlock the information on miniature Kyber memory crystals, Vader believed this splinter was the figurative and literal key to unleashing the Kaiburr's inestimable power. Thanks to the Yuuzhan Vong priests' endless debates concerning the doctrinal indivisibility of our Yun'o godhead, this concept was easy enough for me to grasp.

In any perfect whole, such as a holy heptaty, every fraction of said totality is endowed with the encumbrance *of* the perfect whole. Crudely summarized: all is one and one is all. An all-powerful godhead categorically dissevered from any of his divine aspects, be it a transcendental "toe" or any other member, is, ergo, tantamount to a metaphysical gelding—omnipotence become impotent.

This same axiom of requisite totality held true for this, the last of the Kaiburrs.

Milady had never abandoned her hunt for the fabled object. Just before the death of her apprentice Carnor Jax, her search led to her to the Mid-Rim world of Ansion. There, she ferreted out an elderly peddler by the name of Halla. It seemed that Vader's son, in his ignorance of the Kaiburr's significance, had left the crystal in this eccentric's custody for nearly *a decade*, believing the woman's obscurity would serve as sufficient protection for a Force artifact of only modest import. Before dispatching the old shrew, milady learned the frustrating fact that she was scant late to profit from Skywalker's error, for he had recently reclaimed the gemstone for use as an instructional aid in his newly established Jedi academy on Yavin 4.

Patiently, milady obliged destiny to ply its trade.

It did not disappoint. A misguided student of Skywalker, the saurian Desann, shortly fled the academy, stealing the Kaiburr in the bargain.[48] Desann then joined the remnant Imperial faction known as the Empire Reborn and relinquished the object to his new master Hethrir, the Imperial Procurator of Justice. Like my mistress, Hethrir had learned the legends of the crystal's power from Lord Vader, and wished to use it in creating warriors artificially imbued with the Force. He promptly grew dismayed, however, when the incomplete crystal failed to satisfy Vader's predictions of power

[48] The following paragraph ties in to the whereabouts of the Kaiburr crystal with information from the videogame *Jedi Outcast* and the "Dark Forces Saga" on Wizards.com.

unlimited. Ignorantly, he thus exchanged the item for knowledge of a "Valley of the Jedi" supplied him by yet *another* of Vader's former pupils: the High Inquisitor Antinnis Tremayne.

Approximately a year after milady and Jax orchestrated the clone Emperor's death, with the Inquisitorius left weakened, we struck. The objective of our assault on Tremayne's opulent Corporate Sector palace was specific: to secure that ages-old Force gemstone in his possession. Though a portion of my mistress' fleet was sacrificed to Inquisition-model taskforce cruisers, we triumphantly cornered the High Inquisitor in his throne room. There, chaos erupted, as Tremayne's one-time pupil, Jaalib Brandl, arrived unexpectedly … with his father, Tremayne's arch-nemesis, in tow.[49] Though the unexpected appearance of the Brandls' Protectorate navy momentarily threatened milady's plans, she did finally obtain that relic for which she had so-long quested. The totality of the Kaiburr's power was unleashed, and, in a rush, the Dark Lady gained access to power only dreamed of.

For a perfect moment, she experienced what it was to be the *Sith'ari*.

The consequences were apocalyptic. The Inquisitorious stronghold was totally devastated, the Brandls ended Tremayne's life in vengeance, the orbiting battle fleets were mutually decimated, and, unable to control the hyperbolic influx of the Force, my mistress herself was nearly annihilated, saved only by her inhuman constitution. The Kaiburr itself was destroyed, shattered into pieces by the very preternatural power it had loosed.

In the bedlam, I dragged milady to safety and salvaged what I could of the exploded crystal. Though my mistress was not prone to displays of emotion, I perceived in her a terrible remorse. Irreparably fragmented, the Kaiburr could not confer on milady access to those unnatural abilities vital to a Dark Lord of the Sith. Sensing she had failed in her task to become Lord Vader's true heir, she fell into an incurable despair.

I could only urge my mistress to have faith in the Sith gods. In consolation, I devoutly used the jagged crimson pieces of the shattered Kaiburr to stud the solid lashes of her lightwhip.[50]

ONE SITH

The Kaiburr's destruction was a critical blow to milady's plot, negating her ability to remake her cybered body into a proper Sith Master vessel. Palpatine's improbable clone resurrection offered my mistress a sliver of hope, but after a decade searching for the secret of transferring one's essence into another body, running down each nebulous hint of Set Harth's Treasure Vault, Blackhole's Sunset Crown, and the legends of Darth Andeddu and Plagueis the Wise, alas, our efforts yielded nothing.

At that moment, milady changed. Despite her great wisdom and prowess in dark powers, milady assessed herself, at last, unworthy. The Force, she declared, had betrayed her—and by her own fault. Though claiming to want the power of a Sith Master to preserve the order's hundred-thousand-year legacy, in her heart, her primary motivation

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[49] Jaalib Brandl's apprenticeship to Tremayne is technically new information, but was the stated intention of Jaalib's creator, author Patricia Jackson.

[50] Lumiya's lightwhip is encrusted with Kaiburr shards, according to *Legacy of the Force: Tempest*.

was always petty revenge. Revenge not only petty, but pathetically crippled by a fear to face Luke Skywalker again.

She could never be the *Sith'ari*.

But she would sabotage her true destiny no longer. Formally renouncing the title of Dark Lord, she committed herself to Darth Vectivus' example, beginning with the unconditional sacrifice of her most cherished attachment—her hatred for Luke Skywalker.

She then spoke of *my* required sacrifice, insisting I likewise abandon my vengeful crusade against Nom Anor. Though ritual sacrifice to the gods was commonly observed by Yuuzhan Vong and ancient Sith alike, I hesitated to comply. These long years, I had dedicated myself to milady's agenda, leaving my *own* quest for reprisal against my lover painfully unfinished. But as the Dark Lady's familiar, owing to her the glory of my dark side enlightenment, I could not refuse. We slaughtered a hssiss dragon and consummated our accord dining on bloodsoup.

By the initial outbreak of the Yuuzhan Vong War, milady had taken the title of Reeve of the Sith Order, determined to find a proper heir to the Sith that would secure the stability of the galaxy.[51] Appropriately, that is when the Dragon Lord made contact.

He sent two heralds, the Dathomiri witch Lomi Plo and her apprentice Welk, the dark side bleeding from each like radiation from a pulsar. They conveyed their master's invitation of an audience and offered themselves as escorts to an unspecified world. Confident of our ability to survive any attempted double-cross, my mistress accepted. However, en route, we were attacked by the invading Yuuzhan Vong. While our squires were taken prisoner, as a Yuuzhan Vong myself, I adroitly secured freedom for milady and me. This setback not withstanding, the Dragon Lord's agents made contact again, this time in the form of an apologetic transmission accompanied by a navigation string. Her curiosity piqued, my mistress resolved to continue on her own, and on her own terms. She took her remaining Star Destroyer *Behemoth*[52] and left the Tozarin ziggurat in the care of her familiar.

During milady's extended leave, I attended to affairs in Hutt Space. For years, I had experimented mixing Sith alchemy with Yuuzhan Vong shaping practices in hopes of begetting milady a body and means to those Sith powers denied her. My expertise in these arts was humble, however, and my Nelvaanian victims suffered in various states of abortion. I conceded I needed help, and when the Yuuzhan Vong invasion broke out, my origin made it simple to exploit the connections my people had forged with the ruthless organization known as the Peace Brigade. My objective was to employ these mercenaries in kidnapping an unorthodox Master Shaper by the name of Taug Molou.[53] But my plans

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[51] Lumiya to Jacen in *Legacy of the Force: Sacrifice*: "My life's purpose is to enable you to become a Sith Lord, because that secures the stability of the galaxy," pg. 171. The details of Lumiya's contact with the One Sith of Korriban are from the novel *Legacy of the Force: Inferno* and the comic series *Legacy*. Some minor additions have been made to supply Svelt with a tangential role. The "Dragon Lord" refers to Darth Krayt, though I've avoided calling any of the One Sith by their "Darth" titles to focus on the significance of Vader's grandson becoming Darth Caedus.

[52] Lumiya's visit to Korriban during this time is depicted in "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on StarWars.com.

[53] The character Taug Molou is from "I, Yuuzhan Vong" in *Star Wars Gamer #9*.

were compromised by a Peace Brigader named Dash Rendar, via whose abetment the Jedi cyborg Daye Azur-Jamin[54] deciphered my dark side affiliation.

Thankfully, when Azur-Jamin attempted to use Taug Malou as bait, his ploy backfired. My Sith warbots and I successfully subdued them both.

Having longed for an excuse to turn loose his genius, the Master Shaper took to my experiment of "retroactive-incarnation" with surprising gusto, and Azur-Jamin became his test subject. Taug supplanted one of the Jedi cyborg's prosthetic legs and arms with equivalents from reptilian Chazrach slaves. Still, while the grafts agreed with Azur-Jamin's physiology, he exhibited no obvious appreciation in his capacity to manipulate the Force. Unsatisfied, I further utilized the opportunity to test a theory concerning cybered individuals' reputed propensity for the dark side.[55] If true, however, Azur-Jamin proved an exception to the rule. Only a concentrated injection of Sith poison succeeded in corrupting the *Jidai*'s will.

Hoping to duplicate my awakening to the Force, Taug also resorted to self-experimentation. First, he infused his own blood stream with Sith poison, but this only made him gravely ill, provoking the death of his squirming living headdress. Undeterred, he replaced his Shaper's chapeaux with a half-dozen horns from Sith hounds and immediately turned to more drastic measures. Isolating an ostensible sample of midi-chlorians from the Sith hounds, Taug transplanted an unspecified number of the microorganisms into his own body. Though the procedure did not avail the Master Shaper of the Force, he did not emerge unchanged. Almost gleefully, he informed me that the midi-chlorians were revealing to him the will of the Yuuzhan Vong gods, directing him to procreate the hypothetical noumena of the Holiest Eighth Cortex. My re-incarnation experiment a failure, I granted the mad Shaper free rein to sculpt the sublime intelligences of his demented whimsy.

Meanwhile, milady had established contact. To her surprise, the navigation string led her to the planet Korriban, graveyard of the Sith. To my knowledge, she had not returned to the worlds of the Old Sith Empire in the twenty years since enduring her trials on Ziost. Much can change in such a time. There, in the Valley of the Dark Lords, she encountered a horde of hooded individuals professing their identity as "the One Sith." Unfazed, my mistress reciprocated by informing them that she was the Dark Lady of the Sith, Reeve of the Order, apprentice to both Darth Vader and Darth Sidious, and that her orbiting Star Destroyer stood ready to bombard the valley into oblivion at her command.

That is when the Dragon Lord revealed himself … his body bearing the disfigurations and armor characteristic of my people.

Indeed, there are no coincidences.

The Dragon Lord divulged to her that at one time he had been a prisoner of the Yuuzhan Vong, and that he too had had associations with the mysterious Vergere during his captivity. Extracting from him a great deal of information concerning this Vergere's philosophies, milady grew confident an accord between herself and the Dragon Lord could be achieved.

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[54] This paragraph elaborates upon Svelt's encounter with Daye Azur-Jamin in the Cloak of the Sith, as established in Part 2 of the "Dark Forces Saga" on Wizards.com. The fact of Dash Rendar's sabotage of Peace Brigade business is from the *New Essential Guide to Characters*.

[55] The idea that cyborgs are particularly prone to the dark side due to the loss of their humanity comes from *Galladinium's Fantastic Technology*.

While my mistress agreed to recognize the legitimacy of the One Sith, she did not immediately anoint the Dragon Lord rightful heir to the order. Perhaps the One Sith's throng of dark siders too conspicuously evoked to her the failed endeavors of Lord Kaan's Brotherhood of Darkness and Palpatine's circus of dark side sycophants. In any case, their partnership never proved without tension. Before returning from her lengthy Korriban stay, milady staged a surprise attack on the Imperial stronghold of Yaga Minor. Though she sacrificed her last Star Destroyer in the battle, she successfully secured vast quantities of Bafforr pollen, a rare substance lethal to wearers of Yuuzhan Vong armor.[56] While her stated intention was to use this weapon in defense against the Yuuzhan Vong invaders, she needed not say that the pollen would coax death just as readily from the One Sith's Dragon Lord…

And her familiar.

Her caution was justified. For it seemed milady and the Dragon Lord had come to a special arrangement. Once again, I was offered up as a token of good will, a symbol of unity, and the One Sith welcomed me without judgment. This time, I did not consider it a betrayal, but as fulfilling my destiny, furthering milady's—and the Sith's—goals. In exchange for me, the Dragon Lord granted my mistress access to the tombs of the Sith Lords and the farseeing Oracle Stone, which resided beside an empty throne once intended for the corpse of Darth Vader.[57] Peering into this predictive relic, Lumiya learned everything she needed about her sought-after heir to the Sith mantle.[58] This legatee was none other than her master's descendant. Not Lord Vader's son, and not his daughter, but Jacen Solo—his grandson.

After milady's return, we abandoned our stronghold in the Cloak of the Sith. Bequeathing to me her Sith tomes and codices, milady delivered me to Korriban, while making for herself a new home of Darth Vectivus' fortress, having liberated it from a Dark Jedi named Croym while working for the Rebel Alliance. As for my pets, I left Daye Azur-Jamin and Shaper Taug Molou to make of Tozarin their kingdom. Drenched in the ziggurat's dark forces, surrounded by all manner of Vongspawn, Sith abomination and warbot, nothing short of a demigod could stand a chance against them.

LEGACY

Six years after the Battle of Endor, Luke Skywalker seemed poised to inherit the Sith mantle. At that time, his estrangement from his father served as the impetus for his submission to the influence of the reborn Palpatine. But the teachings of that clone heretic demonstrated incapable of securing Skywalker's conversion to the dark side. It fell to the offspring of Vader's biological daughter, Leia Organa Solo, to fulfill milady's vision of the *Sith'ari*.

When the Yuuzhan Vong finally invaded this galaxy, Jacen Solo, son to Organa and the pirate Han Solo, came under the brutal tutelage of that ubiquitous enigma

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[56] From *Star Wars Gamer #9*, "I, Yuuzhan Vong."
[57] As seen in *Empire's End*.
[58] The Oracle Stone appears in the comic series *Empire's End*, where it basically works like a crystal ball: ask it what you want to see, and it shows you. According to "Evil Never Dies: The Sith Dynasties" on Star Wars.com, Lumiya accessed the Sith oracle during this approximate time.

Vergere,[59] a fact milady divined from the Oracle Stone. I don't know if my mistress ever encountered the Fosh Jedi Master after leaving me on Korriban, nor how much of Palpatine's legend concerning Vergere was true, but the actual fact of these matters was irrelevant. My mistress knew everything necessary to turn young Solo to the dark side.

Jacen Solo's apprenticeship to Vergere terminated when the Fosh sacrificed herself at the Battle of Ebaq 9. Nonetheless, the brief relationship liberated his true potential, and Jacen himself brought the invasion to an end by slaying the Yuuzhan Vong Supreme Overlord. This overlord was none other than the Shaper Onimi, who rose to absolute power upon turning those abnormal experiments he'd once practiced on me unto himself, thus unleashing his own sensitivity to the Force. With surprising detachment, I also learned that my traitorous paramour Nom Anor apparently perished alongside my old tormentor—destiny, again, plying its inerrant trade.

Following the war, young Solo embarked on a years-long study of the nature of the Force. Like Palpatine,[60] he immersed himself in countless Force practices, among them those of the Aing-Tii monks, the Adepts of the White Current, the Sages of Baran Do, the Witches of Dathomir, the Theran Listeners, and the Jensaarai.

Though it's impossible to be certain, it seems inevitable that the teachings of the Jensaarai—a bastardization of Sith and Jedi traditions—abetted Jacen Solo's conversion to the dark side.[61] His decision to subordinate himself to the cloying strictures of Skywalker's Jedi academy, before assimilating these wildly disparate Force teachings into a sound axiology, would have done the rest.

By contrast, milady had taken decades to meticulously craft a coherent philosophy from countless Sith teachings. Luring young Solo to her asteroid base, Lumiya used all her knowledge and guile, including the half-truths learned of his mentor Vergere, to appeal to his sense of pride and intelligence. He thereupon embraced the dark side, accepting milady's guidance. My mistress availed herself of every resource to sustain him along the Dark Lord's path, even enlisting the assistance of a crazed and crippled Force-user named Alema Rar. Under her influence, Jacen Solo not only became Darth Caedus but ruler of the galaxy.

It should come as little surprise that Caedus took the Jedi Tahiri Veila—a woman once physically and psychologically reshaped by the Yuuzhan Vong—as his Sith apprentice. Still, questions remain concerning Lord Caedus' Sith conversion. It was said by the *Jidai* that Caedus' fall to the dark side was caused by *selflessness*, an affliction of logic run amuck.[62] Indeed, that was milady's transcendent objective. Yet, I am not so sure. In my investigations, I have learned that Caedus *deceived* milady, hiding, to the very end, the fact that he had a daughter. It was his love for this whelp that led to his undoing. In his obsession to protect her, he instead sacrificed his stranglehold on the galaxy and his own life.

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[59] The next several paragraphs summarize Jacen Solo's activities during the *New Jedi Order*, *Dark Nest*, and *Legacy of the Force* series.

[60] As explained in the *Dark Empire Sourcebook*.

[61] I don't know what the *Fate of the Jedi* series plans to reveal about Jacen's fall to the dark side, but this just seems like a logical in-universe thought for the narrator here to have.

[62] From *Legacy of the Force: Tempest*: "Like the Yuuzhan Vong who had once held him captive, Jacen had become capable of any sacrifice—and just as intolerant of those who did not share his commitment. Jacen Solo had fallen not because he was selfish, Luke realized, but because he was *selfless*," pg. 236.

Darth Caedus could have become the *Sith'ari*—the perfect being. Instead, he lost himself amidst the machinery of counter-intuition that is Sith enlightenment. My only consolation is in believing that once Caedus embraced the decision to succeed his grandfather Darth Vader as the legitimate Dark Lord, milady felt she had fulfilled her destiny. In the bargain, she achieved every vengeance a Sith might naturally desire. She turned Luke Skywalker's greatest *Jidai*, his pupil and own nephew, into a Sith Lord. And in turn, Caedus not only slew Skywalker's wife Mara Jade, fulfilling milady's vow to end her life, but deftly manipulated Skywalker's own adolescent offspring into becoming an assassin for the dark side.

Milady stated her true work to be the resurrection of the Sith. But even now I wonder whether she ever truly sacrificed what *she* valued most: her hatred for Skywalker. As Darth Vader's prize student, she believed her own fate was inextricably linked with her master's bloodline,[63] and I think she wanted, *needed*, to believe that a direct descendant of Vader could be the *Sith'ari*. I wonder not if she lied about moving beyond the need for revenge, but if she found an inimitably Sith way of slaying two vua'sa with a single amphistaff. As the Sorcerers of Tund noted, the most effective deception is that one which first beguiles the beguiler.

Though disdained by some, perhaps Darth Vectivus said it best: "To indulge in vengeance is wasted energy. Revenge is the natural surplus of fulfilling one's destiny."

Milady's story now comes to a close. In her final duel with her erstwhile love, on the planet Terephon, the Dark Lady allowed Skywalker to strike her down. And in the end, I can only guess at Lumiya's true motivations.

After milady's death, Sith disciple Lady Dician was sent to destroy Vectivus' asteroid habitat, eliminating any connection with our organization on Korriban and concurrently destroying that poor excuse for a familiar, Alema Rar. Out of respect, I also recovered my mistress's beheaded body, deserted on Terephon, along with her lightwhip. With some shock, I encountered an unexpected rival for milady's cadaver: an aging Imperial Royal Guard who looked nearly identical to Lord Jax … save for the attractive scar splitting his otherwise insipid face. This cortosis-armored man claimed to be Jax's killer, and sought revenge on Luke Skywalker and milady alike for their part in poisoning his master, the reborn Emperor. After some aggressive negotiations, we arrived at a compromise: I would take my mistress' corpse, and he my violet-bladed lightsaber, believing it would serve him in his final bid for vengeance. I now had milady's lightwhip, after all. Thereafter, I was able to personally perform the ancient Sith mummification rituals, and now Lumiya sits upon that tomb-throne originally intended for her master, Darth Vader.

Since Darth Caedus' reign ended, at the hands of his own twin sister Jaina Solo, no less, milady's legacy would seem also finished. But the Dragon Lord views the sacrifices of Caedus and my mistress not in vain, for the *Jidai* now believe us extinct. What's more, we have demonstrated that the dark side runs immeasurably strong in Vader's bloodline. So long as there is a Skywalker at the heart of the Jedi Order, the Sith have a prospective ally.

Were it not for milady, the Sith may not have survived Lord Vader's death, nor the despoiling of our heritage by the reborn Palpatine. We would not now possess that most

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[63] Lumiya to Jacen: "Vader saved me. So my life is inextricably linked with your family," pg. 311, *Legacy of the Force: Bloodlines*.

sacred Sith heirloom, the holocron of King Adas, the one true *Sith'ari*. It comes to reason that clemency, a sacrifice of a kind, may be used as a tool toward achieving greater power. Though an act of sympathy divorced from punishment evinces a lack of resolve and dependability, sympathy complemented by punishment may be gainfully used to elicit loyalty … and secure a destiny. This is milady's legacy.

I am Lumiya's legacy.

Treachery *is* the way of the Sith. Equality is indeed *a lie*. And, yes, to be united by hatred is fragile at best. But if we intend to avoid the failure of Palpatine's Empire, if we intend to transcend our precursors' limitations, we must achieve what millennia past Exar Kun and Lord Kaan's Brotherhoods achieved only in farce: a coalition of Sith united in spirit and not only in name. A *Rule of One* that redeems the self-destructive creed that found its narcissistic summit in Darth Ruin and his banal imitators. Treachery, lies, and hatred are effective tools when used on our enemies, but it is *faith*, faith in a *vision*, that can unite us and make us stronger than any *one* of us ever imagined.

After all, there are whole galaxies beyond ours to be conquered. My lords … there is an entire universe.

My mistress spent more than a decade indoctrinating me in the millennia of Sith knowledge she amassed, and now my new master has asked me to take up milady's role as the archivist of Sith history as well as the sibyl of its future. As the *yu'shaa* for the One Sith, I have unlocked the secrets from the temperamental gatekeeper of King Adas' holocron, who approves of my reverence for the Sith gods. And my mastery of the Oracle Stone has shown me the glories the Sith will achieve long after I am dead.

All of this priceless information I have passed onto the Dragon Lord's Keeper: the unquestionably faithful Lord Wyyrlok.

Under the tutelage of milady and milord, I have learned that my own life matters not. For I am more than myself or even my Yuuzhan Vong heritage. I am more than a drive for vengeance or a will to power. I am one with the dark side. I am one with the Sith.

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