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John Jackson Miller

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The greatest hero in the galaxy faces his toughest challenge yet: He must stop being Obi-Wan-and become Crazy Old Ben. For fans of movie-related novels like Darth Plagueis!

In this original novel set between the events of Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith and Episode IV A New Hope, Obi-Wan Kenobi comes to the aid of the residents of Tatooine during his exile. But he struggles with his new mission when he realizes that protecting Luke Skywalker-the last hope of the galaxy-means setting aside his compassion and his Jedi warrior training, for the future of the galaxy lies not with Obi-Wan Kenobi, but with a mystical desert recluse known only by the name of Crazy Old Ben.

Kenobi Details

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From Reader Review Kenobi for online ebook

Khurram says

I read the acknowledgments and J J Miller said he was challenged to write Star Wars in a western setting. It was not till he was offered this project with Tatooine as the perfect setting. Mission accomplished. I think this is one of the best books JJM has written. He even manages to give a shout out to a couple of his own characters from other novels.

The story Obi Wan arrives on Tatooine to deliver baby Luke to the Lars. However his first interaction with the locals results in an attention grabbing lightsaber battle with local gangsters. Luckily most people are too drunk to know what they had seen. He has a ritual of describing his daily event so Qui Gun Jinn but has not yet received and answer through the force. Now Obi Wand does not appear in the book again for a good 70 pages. Giving time to build up the side characters and main protagonists of the story.

The farmers or Tatooine are still attacked by the Sand people, led by a brilliant straightest named Pug Eye to the settlers and A'Yark to the Tusks. The defenders of this part and unofficial mayor (always smiling) Orrin. Apart from his own farm land and properties his main source of income comes from what he calls the Settlers Call fund. Basically a siren (that sounds like a Krayt Dragon call) to alert others that a farm has been attacked, gathering a poise of the local community to help the neighbours. His only match is the tough as nails Annileen, their two families have been supporting each other for years, sometimes grudgingly, but all this is shaken up when Ben/Obi Wan dramatically arrives in their lives. Nothing can be the same and old secrets will come out. This is the strongest thing about this book the character development/revelations.

I like the way the mysterious Ben trying to avoid attention is the local sex symbol, and how uncomfortable this make the mighty Jedi. In fairness to Ben he does manage to do a couple of stealth rescues. I do like the way that Ben is completely out of the loop, I am not even sure he realises that Anakin is alive as Vader during the book. The Guilt does play on him having to kill the closest person he has to a brother. There are clues he finds for Anakin's decent started in Star Wars: Episode II - Attack Of The Clones, and things that might happen in the Star Wars: Legacy series set 100 year after Luke's death. I really enjoyed this book after the slow 70 pages, it is worth sticking with.

Alejandro says

A lost chapter in the life of Obi-Wan Kenobi...

This novel is set between the events of "Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith" and "Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope".

A WESTERN IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...

The story tells the arrival of Obi-Wan Kenobi to the desert world of Tatooine, along with the baby, Luke Skywalker.

I liked a lot the tone of the story since the author, John Jackson Miller, made the novel into a western.

Due the ambiance of Tatooine and the way of life there, the concept totally clicked and made the story even more entertaining. Also, there is moments of humor, not silly comedy, but good humor with taste.

Tatooine is one of the greatest alien worlds in Sci-Fi, conceived no doubt from stories of sword sci-fi like *Barsoom*, *Scorpio* and *Dune*. There is something appealing and mysterious about a desert world.

Also, Tatooine is very important to the *Star Wars* franchise since it's the world that you get more in the films (once in Ep IV, twice in Ep VI, once again in Ep I, once in Ep II and yet once again in Ep III) and here, John Jackson Miller, makes a great job portraying this alien planet and its elements.

Even you getting the richness of its inner cities, towns and smaller settings. Mos Eisley, Mos Espa, Bestine, Anchorhead, etc... Also, the author is able to put here and there, mentions of other worlds, so can feel that while the story is set on Tatooine, you have a sense of the larger galaxy.

About the characters in the book, I think that each of them are very well defined and developed, each of them have strenghts and weaknesses. And this western-like setting helps to get the best of each character about storytelling.

Also, it's very interesting when you get inside of the mind of a Tusken Raider and how thinks and how reasons what happens around.

THE JOURNEY FROM OBI-WAN TO BEN

The main purpose of this novel is show the change of the mighty Jedi Master Obi-Wan to the crazy old Ben, but remaining always as a Kenobi. The reasoning of the change can be a little forced on its justifications, but the story is really good and way entertaining.

Also, while maybe you maybe don't feel well that transition, instead you really can get into the mind of Kenobi and realizing all that he is enduring. He lost all his comrades, his home, and even he had to kill someone that he considered his brother (you have to realize that at that point he is so isolated on Tatooine that he still don't know that Anakin survived, even he doesn't know that the Republic became now an Empire).

His pain and suffering must be big and still he has a mission to do. Even, it's interesting when he is meditating, trying to reach the spirit of Qui-Gon Jinn, that Kenobi questioning about the Force, how a good intention can fall into a bad outcome. Even it's interesting when he thinks about the celibacy of the Jedi meditating about how strong is the Force in families.

In this book, there are mentions of the women in Kenobi's life and a comment that I liked a lot, when he is asked that since he remains single, maybe he didn't find the right woman, and he replies that he may find the right women, but they didn't find the right man for them. An angle that hardly is used in literature, so I liked that a lot.

THE BURDENS OF A TEACHER

Returning to the issue about Anakin. Kenobi feels way guilty since he was the teacher of Anakin, and he must put more attention to the signals that Anakin made on his long journey to the Dark Side. Nobody became "bad" in an instant. And Kenobi was his teacher, his guide.

I think that many of this guilt can be a reason that many people wondering, why Luke never was trained on all those years while they were on Tatooine. Maybe it wasn't a lack of preparing for the future, but maybe Kenobi had some fear that if he was Anakin's teacher and he turned to be a Sith, what can prevent that that could happen yet again with Luke? Maybe leaving Luke to grow up, living in a humble farm was the best option to avoid a journey to the Dark Side.

If you see examples in other works like Superman, he is a force of hope (see?) due that he grew up with the teaching and love by the Kents, developing humility. Also, in the case of Harry Potter, he is exiled to a world of muggles having to endure the treatment of the Dursleys. Luke Skywalker is like in the middle of those two scenarios, while the Lars aren't as loving as the Kents, at least they aren't so mean like the Dursley. In the middle of this, Luke can have a chance to avoid the temptation of the Dark Side having a humble way of life in a forgotten planet outside of the Empire.

Tony Evans says

Not as thrilling as the last Star Wars books I read. I really expected more from John J Miller. I found the book to be like Tatooine; dry.

Bianca says

9/3/13:

4.5 out of 5 stars....

I loved it - all the characters, except Orrin.

Obi-Wan...oh Ben... **sniff**

There were times I could hear Ewan's version of Obi-Wan so clearly...it brought tears to my eyes...literally!

I'm still a little emotional...so I need a little time before I can write a review.

9/5/13:

The first chapter sets up Obi-Wan's arrival to Tatooine -- even before he's taken Luke to the Lars' homestead.

We get to meet various characters -- moisture farmers, Tusken Raiders, Cantina Owners, Thugs (who work for Jabba), Shopkeepers and other locals...even a Krayt dragon!!

There are some nice ties to the Star Wars: Outlander series by Dark Horse (Tuskens) and other books in the EU that tie into Obi-Wan's past.

Some people will say that there's romance in this book -- no, not really. There might be some one-side feelings here but they never come from Obi-Wan.

My only true gripe with this book: not enough of getting into Obi-Wan's mind/head. There's room for more stories -- after all, he spends about 19 years on Tatooine.

I'll probably end up reading this one again -- just because I liked JJM's take on Obi-Wan...as I stated earlier, I could hear Ewan McGregor's version of Obi-Wan so clearly at times...and there's one scene near the last quarter of the book where he speaks (somewhat vaguely) about the events that occurred between himself and Anakin in ROTS...tears were running down my face. The anguish cut straight to my heart.

In all...it's a pretty fast-paced book and the story moves along pretty quick and I recommend it to all Star Wars fans -- especially those looking to get back into the EU.

Milo (BOK) says

The Review: <http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/08/...>

"A wonderful read – one of the best Star Wars novels in a while. Highly Recommended." ~The Founding Fields

I've had the chance to read a lot of the more recently published Star Wars novels – but for the past few books that I've shared my thoughts on have felt, well – somewhat average. They've never really stood out from the pack, despite being entertaining books – they've often felt like your average blockbuster film. You'll enjoy it – but there will be some inevitable problems that you can't ignore. However, whilst I did have one problem with Kenobi, that one problem was all that I had – the rest of the book was really enjoyable and I'm pleased to say that it's one of the best Star Wars novels that I've read in a while.

"Tatooine—a harsh desert world where farmers toil in the heat of two suns while trying to protect themselves and their loved ones from the marauding Tusken Raiders. A backwater planet on the edge of civilized space. And an unlikely place to find a Jedi Master in hiding, or an orphaned infant boy on whose tiny shoulders rests the future of a galaxy."

Known to locals only as "Ben," the bearded and robed offworlder is an enigmatic stranger who keeps to himself, shares nothing of his past, and goes to great pains to remain an outsider. But as tensions escalate between the farmers and a tribe of Sand People led by a ruthless war chief, Ben finds himself drawn into the

fight, endangering the very mission that brought him to Tatooine.

Ben—Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi, hero of the Clone Wars, traitor to the Empire, and protector of the galaxy's last hope—can no more turn his back on evil than he can reject his Jedi training. And when blood is unjustly spilled, innocent lives threatened, and a ruthless opponent unmasked, Ben has no choice but to call on the wisdom of the Jedi—and the formidable power of the Force—in his never-ending fight for justice."

The book itself feels like a western novel as opposed to a Star Wars one. Maybe because, despite its setting in a futuristic universe, the book itself takes place entirely on a desert planet. If you were looking for cameos of Darth Vader and others that you're familiar with from the original Star Wars trilogy, then you're also going to be disappointed – as the attention is focused mainly on Obi-Wan and several other characters. The book itself delivers an excellent look into Obi-Wan, exploring his character and provides some great depth for him. There's still some way to go for this Obi-Wan before he becomes the one that Luke meets in A New Hope. He's still dealing with the consequences of Order 66 and his actions against Anakin on Mustafar, and I'll be pleased to say that Miller handles this very well indeed. This book started life as a graphic novel, and like Darth Plagueis, another one of the best Star Wars novels recently, they've both undergone long periods of development to get to where they are today. Darth Plagueis was cancelled after it was announced, and then brought back again – and along with Kenobi, show that time and effort pays off a lot more than writing a book on a whim.

KenobiHowever, Kenobi is a very different book to Darth Plagueis. Exploring the middle period between Episodes III and IV, Kenobi not only gives a great insight into Obi-Wan as a character, but also the various culture of Tatooine. We see a greater exploration of what it's like to live on a desert planet, and its setting allows for an interesting take on a Western Star Wars novel, with the overall premise being familiar to fans of the genre. Alongside Obi-Wan himself we get viewpoints from other major characters, who play a pretty big role in Kenobi's life during this period as they're shaped by his arrival. POV characters range from a shopkeeper to a Tusken Raider Warlord, and they're all pretty much entertaining characters to read about – and you get the added unpredictability that comes from the fact that they're new characters, even if you know that Obi-Wan will make it out in one piece, every other character is fair game.

The book itself however does suffer from one problem, and that it didn't grip me in right at the start. Sure, once I was immersed in Kenobi I couldn't put it down, but the book lacks the pull at the opening for me, as it's a bit slow off the ground. However, I advise not putting it aside because of that – because once Kenobi kicks off, it really soars. The action, the characters – the setting and the tone are all engaging and I thoroughly enjoyed this standalone tale. This is the first John Jackson Miller novel that I've read, and if Kenobi is anything to go by, then you can count me in for Knight Errant and any other titles that Miller has written for certain.

This is one book you won't want to miss out on if you're a fan of Star Wars, and a welcoming return to form for the franchise when it comes to tie-in novels, especially when you consider the upcoming Razor's Edge novel by Martha Wells, which I've also read (review coming later) through NetGalley like this title, is enjoyable as well. Count me in for any more books by John Jackson Miller in the future, and I hope he returns to the Star Wars setting soon.

VERDICT: 4/5

PREVIOUS STAR WARS NOVEL: *Dark Lord: The Rise of Darth Vader* by James Luceno | **NEXT STAR WARS NOVEL:** *Jedi Twilight* by Michael Reaves (Coruscant Nights #1)

Amy Sturgis says

I would give this 4.5 stars if I could.

John Jackson Miller tells a classic Western set in the sands of Tatooine, casting Obi-Wan Kenobi as the stranger who rides into what passes as a town. It is his early days of exile, and he's trying to negotiate his new role as watcher and protector (from a distance) of infant Luke Skywalker. He's not yet "Crazy Old Ben," but the story moves him several steps closer to accepting that destiny.

But while Kenobi is the focus of the novel, he is not front and center in its narrative. Instead, the people of Tatooine - humans, non-humans, even Sand People - and their conflicts with the environment and each other take center stage. Kenobi's appearance and reluctant intervention serves as the catalyst for change, conflict, and ultimately redemption in one local population. It also proves to Obi-Wan that he must withdraw and never again get caught up in the lives of such desperate and courageous people, because his first responsibility is to the future and to Luke.

Miller draws captivating characters and a very compelling, lived-in 'verse. Mos Eisley may be a wretched hive of scum and villainy, for example, but some honest, hard-working, nice folk do visit on occasion, dreaming of something more than the difficult life they scrape from the sand. Kenobi himself is grieving, lonely, and driven to do what he must, and Miller makes the reader ache with him and admire him.

Kenobi proves there are many worthy stories yet to be told in the heart and around the margins of the *Star Wars* saga.

Samantha says

I'll be far from anywhere, and alone, with nothing but my regrets to keep me company. If only there were a place to hide from those.

Following the devastation of Episode III, this novel gives us a glimpse of everyone's favorite (well, at least he's my favorite) Jedi master as he struggles to determine the new path for his life. He makes his way to Tatooine, the planet he has decided is the best place for Luke Skywalker to grow up in obscurity. Obi-Wan believes Anikan to be dead, along with almost everyone else he has ever known. He also believes that he has a relatively simple mission: to protect the Lars family and live quietly.

However, Obi-Wan, who begins giving his name as 'Ben', and Jedi in general have never been very good at quiet living. About the moment his boot hits the scorching sand, he finds himself in the middle of battles between settlers and Sand People, schemes involving the Hutts, and an accidental romance. He just cannot resist saving the day, and what Tatooine lady can resist the handsome stranger who always seems to be there when she needs him most?

This is when Ben realizes that living as a hermit may not be as simple as he anticipated. He has long lived

without romantic love but as a part as a thriving community. Now he must learn how to do without both.

What does it mean to be a Jedi alone?

Being the hero draws far too much attention his way, and he knows that it is impossible for him to marry and have a family, even if a small part of him longs for that kind of life. After tying up the strings of the drama he discovered upon arrival, Ben recommits himself to Luke's protection and letting go of the heroic impulses that come so naturally to him. The seeds that grow into 'Crazy Old Ben' are planted, and Obi-Wan is buried.

It is bittersweet - for Ben, for the woman he rejects, for the reader - to see him reduced and left alone with his regrets and ghosts.

Andrew says

The book, set in the universe of Star Wars, takes place between the movies "Revenge of the Sith" and "A New Hope" and tells the arrival of Obi-Wan Kenobi on Tatooine with the little Luke. The author has written the story as a classical western, also supported by the desert environment in which most of the scenes take place.

The main characters are the classics of the genre: there is the stranger who arrives in the city (in this case scattered farms with an emporium as an aggregation center), the rich and arrogant owner with equally arrogant children, the raiders (in this case Tusken) and the charming widow attracted by the stranger. Let's not forget the real criminals, who give the story a touch of mystery novel, especially in the parts set in the city.

It's an adventure that shows the transformation from "Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi" to "Ben Kenobi", the man Luke will meet in the film "A new hope". We can see Obi-Wan determined to give up the Jedi's appearance, to keep himself in anonymity and watch over Luke, an operation that is not easy, because he will not be able to ignore injustices. There are some references to the movies that precede this story, but a full knowledge of the Star Wars universe is not required.

The reading is pleasant, the story is easy and the imagination runs fast, so that in the end I could not help but ask "who knows what other adventures will have lived Obi-Wan in the meantime?" I am sure that if I look carefully around I will certainly find more than one author who has answered this question.

Although this is not a story that highlights unknown aspects of the character, Obi-Wan appears less than you would expect, the story focuses more on the characters that gravitate around the emporium.

In the end, always an interesting story.

Emma says

This is it, folks. Every time we've picked up a less than stellar Star War EU book, that was karma paying forward. Because now we've got Kenobi.

The last few years I have finally started getting excited about the EU again. We're stepping away from those long, long, long series that you either liked or hated and read anyway because it was better than nothing. We've gotten Mercy Kill and Scourge near the end of the timeline. Zahn gave us three amazing inter-trilogy novels. Knight Errant, Into the Void, and a handful of Old Republic novels have been beautifully fleshing out the beginning of the timeline. But Kenobi? It's the end of the prequel trilogy, the beginning of the original trilogy, and it finally breathes another dimension into a well loved character.

Because if we're honest, writing for Star Wars is something of a trap. Our most common complaint is that so and so didn't "capture" Luke right. So, many of the authors write the characters the same way over and over again. It's safer, and I sympathize. However, the thing that has always been Star Wars' strongest asset are its amazing characters. And other than Zahn crafting the different facets of Han Solo like he's the world most priceless diamond, we're not seeing much of this these days.

John Jackson Miller might not be a name you recognize if you mostly read books from the current timeline. He's no newbie though having worked on the Knights of the Old Republic, Lost Tribes of the Sith, and Knight Errant comics, and he's written novels based off the last two. Kenobi is his first foray into the main timeline though, and I'm begging for it not to be his last. He took perhaps one of the most beloved characters of all time based on a few polls earlier this year and turned him from General Kenobi, Jedi Master to Old Ben, the local crazy hermit.

Probably the most common question I get about all Star Wars novels is: how many other novel must I have read to understand this book? With Kenobi, none! Although if you've got the time I do think it makes an extraordinary companion piece to Matthew Stover's Revenge of the Sith novelization. While I am biased toward Stover's book to the point of referring to it as The Book that Salvaged Anakin Skywalker, there was a distinct connection between the two portrayals of Kenobi and the emotional tones to the books.

Obi-Wan-Kenobi-Mythos-StatueBecause Kenobi is a book that's all about emotion. Unlike many EU authors, Miller takes into account the events that precede his novel and the impact they would have on his character. In short, Obi Wan is devastated. The calm and collected Jedi Master is too broken to completely recover. His entire world is gone, destroyed by his own apprentice, best friend, and brother. His training never prepared him for this. The heart of the book is the story of how Obi Wan pulls himself back together, redefining not just who he is as individual, but also what it means to be a Jedi. Many fans have noted the discrepancies in the Jedi between the two trilogies. Well, those begin here. The Force is death sentence not a gift, and moisture vaporators are more technologically important than lightsabers.

The other unusual twist to Kenobi is Miller's decision to make a Tusken Raider a main character. Star Wars has always excelled at creating new and fascinating alien cultures. But rarely do any of them become important players in the story. Although once again, this is an area the EU as a whole is improving on by leaps and bounds. Still, Wookies and Twi'leks make up the majority of alien supporting characters with a few Hutts thrown in for good measure. And with the bright and glaring exception of Mercy Kill, there's a general understanding that some of these other races are just inherently evil. The inclusion of the Sand People, and their interactions with Obi Wan suggest that maybe instead of evil most of them are just...alien. This isn't a book that's taking a stand on any issue be it race or the role of women. But as Obi Wan settles into his role of Ben, it's clear he isn't the only one changing. Very subtly all the people in the nearby settlement are touched by the former Jedi's influence and off planet way of thinking. It's a different kind of war that doesn't require bold speeches and leading from the front, but it's a war Kenobi finds himself well suited to.

This is the least dashing Star Wars novel I've read in a while. There's a distinct lack of spaceships and planet

hopping. The war is lost, the enemy is in control, and everyone is just hunkering down to wait for the next move to become obvious. Yet, the small cast and limited local is very reminiscent of the original trilogy where our main group of characters spend most of their time on the Falcon going, “now what?” The entire saga turns on this book, going from a vast and sprawling Republic to the cadre of brave, sarcastic, nobodies that take on the Empire. And most impressively, at the end of the book you’ll find yourself picturing an aging Ewan McGregor...except for the eyes. The eyes have the weary, haunted, undefeated gaze of Alec Guinness.

Republished from www.lytherus.com

Shane Amazon says

Over the last few years I have been continually disappointed by some of the Star Wars books that have come to market. I have found them to be too focused on the big players and too void of alternative viewpoints and perspective. After all, how many times can we read about Han, Luke, and Leia saving the galaxy from another super-weapon? But unlike those books, what *Kenobi* offers is a well balanced, fresh take on an old story that had plenty to offer but was never explored. Now, John Jackson Miller has opened the door to a Jedi's past that has had fans wondering about since the late 1970's.

We have all been wondering who exactly is Obi Wan Kenobi at his core, and what was his life like in the desolate wastelands of Tatooine as he watched over our young soon-to-be hero Luke Skywalker? So with those questions in mind lets walk through some of what the book has to offer, shall we?

Without providing too many spoilers lets first talk about the setting that *Kenobi* opens with. We know Tatooine to be a harsh environment that has little to nothing to offer its inhabitants, and most readers would find that to be a difficult stage to let the characters act upon. But what Tatooine offers is an opportunity to allow the harsh conditions to become a character in their own right. Tatooine itself is portrayed as evil villain bent on killing off those who would attempt to tame her, and at every opportunity she strikes out to slay her opponents. With dual suns beating down, and barren lands void of water, those who struggle against her must struggle tooth and nail to stay alive under her constant environmental bombardment. But where some would struggle against these inherently harsh conditions, others will strive and make the planet's weapons their own.

And that is where another villain enters the picture. From the first page JJM exposes the readers to a new insight on an old foe, an insight that we have not quite seen before. In other franchise incarnations the sandpeople have been portrayed as mindless savages willing to tear flesh from bone on a whims notice. But what JJM strives to do is make them a foe that is both competent and sometimes sympathetic to the reader. The sandpeople, too, have been adversaries to the twin suns and harsh sands of Tatooine, but having been born into these conditions they have adapted and overcome the wrath of the planet, even making their struggle against the two suns part of their heritage. Now a new enemy has presented themselves to the dessert warriors, and this new enemy has taken from the sandpeople far more than just their land. This enemy has taken what makes the sandpeople who they are and what makes them so fierce. At their core the sandpeople are a tribe of tradition and honor, and now this new enemy has taken too much, something must be done or the warrior race will face extinction, their existence only a historical footnote in the planet's unending timeline.

This new enemy comes in many shapes and forms; Human, Rodian, and even Hutts too, but as they consume

more and more land they become spread out and weakened by their distance to each other, and this presents an opportunity the sandpeople can not ignore. JJM sets the two foes on equal footing as they confront each other on the field of battle. Each opponent is painted as one should be, with purpose and heart. After all one does not fight for nothing, there must be a reason, a reward worth risking a life for. And in this book John Jackson Miller gives the reader a reason to care about the outcome, a reason to cheer both sides onto victory. But with any victory there must be sacrifice, and as the continuing battles between sandpeople and settler rages on, both sides experience the sting of loss and the heartbreak that comes with the death of a loved one.

But as the book continues on all is not what it seems. What makes an enemy an enemy is painted with a broad brush and lines that separate friend from foe are sometimes painted over. And as the end quickly approaches the story comes full circle in a way that makes the book stand high above some that have come before it. Characters are presented with incredible depth. Villains are presented as truly dangerous foes, and given enough heart and reason to become favorable to the reading experience. And as the last page meets the readers eye all the threads created by JJM are tied up into a neat little bow and presented to the reader as if it were a gift of extraordinary wealth. And as someone who read every word on every page, I can attest that this book is one that fans will cherish for some time to come.

With the characters well established we can now turn to the writing. Overall the pace of the book is steady, if not a little slow in parts, but given JJM spends quite a bit of the book building incredible characters one should expect that the larger picture can sometimes be delayed. I found JJM's writing to be very smooth and easy to follow. The story was entertaining and the way the characters were laid out made me really feel for them as they went through their troubles. I really liked how JJM created threads that were similar to threads we have seen before, but made them original enough so that the reader doesn't pick up on it until the end. I thoroughly enjoyed the interaction between all the characters and thought that the way they connected on so many levels really made them real. I also thought the humor within the book added another layer to the way the characters came off.

Overall I enjoyed every page of this book, even the slower aspects. I continually found myself saying "It would be awesome if this happened next." and then it would with JJM's own little twist to make it that much better. This is a book I will definitely read again.

A great book that offers new perspective and a meaningful story, too. Five Stars.

*I received this book in ARC (Advanced Review Copy) in exchange for an honest review.

Eoghann Irving says

I have to say I was disappointed by this book.

Not because it was badly written, but because I feel it was presented as something it isn't really. It's called Kenobi and it has a picture of a youngish Obi-Wan on the cover. But it's not actually about him.

Oh he's certainly in the book, and his presence is critical to the events that unfold. But you're not going to learn anything about his character or even much about what he's thinking in this book because we only get a few short passages from his point of view.

Instead what we get is (by author John Jackson Miller's own acknowledgement) Star Wars as a western. And

on that level I think it actually works fairly well.

We have a lot of familiar western elements here. Obi-Wan "Ben" Kenobi plays the role of the stranger who comes into town. We have a land-owner with just a bit too much power and influence. We have his spoilt brat kids. Oh and we have the Tusken's in the role of native Americans. It really does work quite nicely. There's even an almost romance for Kenobi.

Admittedly the pacing is a little odd as things build up to an apparent climax in the middle of the book, only to take a new path and build back up again for the real conclusion. That did throw me a little while I was reading, but looking back I quite like it.

There are niggling frustrations though. Since the book is 95% from the point of view of characters who don't know who Kenobi is, we have endless scenes of people wondering how he did something or references to funny noises or a blue strobe. But since the reader knows perfectly well what it is and why, that's just kind of annoying.

And in theory there is a sort of redemption story here for Kenobi, it's just not a very good one and we never really get to feel what he must be feeling. It just feels a bit tacked on. Basically it could have been any Jedi in this book, it really didn't have to be Obi-wan.

But I will admit a significant part of my unhappiness is that I really wanted a book about Obi-wan. A book where he was the focal character and the view point character. He's probably my favorite character from all the movies and he never gets the attention others get. So yeah, I'm a bit biased.

Bookdragon Sean says

Have you ever wondered what Obi-Wan did in the deserts of Tatooine for 20 years?

At the end of Revenge of the Sith he is in quite a state. His best friend and protégé has betrayed him, the order he serves has been annihilated and evil reigns supreme in the galaxy. All in all, he hasn't got a lot of reasons to get out of bed in the morning. He can't do a thing. He wants to act. He wants to use the force, but he has to watch, wait and grow old. He has to protect the last hope of the galaxy, and crush any feelings or heroism that arise within his noble heart. He must forget who he was, and, as Yoda suggests, learn patience. He must become Ben the hermit.

This is not an easy transformation. Obi-Wan has been a Jedi for decades. Saving people is what he does best; it's what he wants to do with his powers. Trying to solve other people's problems is a habit he must break out of if he wants to remain hidden. So it's not easy. As well as harbouring the Jedi's heir, Tatooine is full of swindlers, bounty hunters and the general scum of the galaxy. There are more than a few dark deeds going down on such a degenerate planet. Unsurprisingly, Obi Wan gets dragged into the squabbles of the locals and finds himself fighting for their freedom.

They're being attacked by bands of Tuscan Raiders. They've killed many villagers, and have started wielding the technology of the slain. This is an opportunity the retired general just cannot resist. The locals do have their own defences; they've devised a rapid response militia, but to the eyes of an experienced Jedi

master, there is clearly more going on. Obi-Wan sees straight to the heart of the conflict, and he tries to resolve it peacefully. But sometimes where words fail, a deadly lightsabre succeeds. This isn't the kind of attention he needs.

So the plot of this worked quite well. I loved the exploration of character shift, from Obi-Wan to Ben. But when considering this was his story, he was absent for large parts of it. The narrative focused a lot on the settlers, and they were so very dull. When Obi-Wan wasn't centre stage, the story felt flat and as dry as the desert. All the side characters were expendable and mere plot devices for Obi-Wan's transformation. They were just rather lifeless. I've already forgotten most of their names. I wanted to see more of the single character I was interested in. Personally, I think this would have worked much better if it was told exclusively in the first person form the perspective of Obi-Wan.

Sure, his private meditations were a nice addition. He was trying to contact his old master, but it never really lead to anything. It was pretty much a one way conversation, one that I grew tired of. Overall, this was an enjoyable read, but it could have been much better.

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Science-Fiction/Fantasy/Space Opera

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Star Wars fans, those who enjoy space opera and are familiar with the background story line

Book Available: August 27, 2013 in hardcover, Kindle and audiobook formats

Trigger Warnings: violence, massacre of a group of raiders

My Thoughts: I have read a number of very good Star Wars novels over the years, such as the Rogue Squadron books, and the Jedi Academy. This was not among the best of them, but it was a fairly entertaining story. The main problem I had with this one is that the protagonist was too far into the darkness. I never felt like there was much hope of redemption, and I must prefer a more shades-of-grey situation to the dark vs. light that is fairly strong in this book.

Nonetheless, I found the book both highly readable and very enjoyable. One sees a more mature Obi-Wan than how he was presented in the movies Episode I through III, but not quite the venerable oldster we see in Episode IV. I would love to read more of the details from his point of view through the entire stretch of time. I would love to have a better idea of how he came to the ideas that, "*Sometimes it takes losing everything to find the right path,*" and, "*... wise people never make desperate decisions.*" I'm quite certain Master Yoda planted those seeds, and they were amply watered with Anakin's blood, but there are hints of other stories under the blanket about which I would like to learn more.

We also learn quite a lot about the Tusken Raiders (aka Sand People) and their thought processes and way of life in this book, which is really neat. I need to go to Wookieepedia and look up pictures of some of the aliens mentioned in this book so I can see them better in my head.

Those who aren't fans of Star Wars, or who haven't at least seen the movies, will likely be a bit lost in this

book, but I enjoyed it quite a lot. I certainly made me want to go back and re-read some of the other Star Wars books sitting around here. If you're a fan of Star Wars and would like to spend some time in Obi-Wan's head and/or learn more about the Tusken Raiders, then check this very cool book out.

Disclosure: I received a paperback ARC from the Amazon Vine program in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Synopsis: In this original novel set between the events of Star Wars: Episode III *Revenge of the Sith* and Episode IV *A New Hope*, Obi-Wan Kenobi comes to the aid of the residents of Tatooine during his exile. But he struggles with his new mission when he realizes that protecting Luke Skywalker—the last hope of the galaxy—means setting aside his compassion and his Jedi warrior training, for the future of the galaxy lies not with Obi-Wan Kenobi, but with a mystical desert recluse known only by the name of Crazy Old Ben.

Hális Alves says

Kenobi é simples, direto. Um roteiro de filme correto, ainda que vagamente antisséptico, que aproveita bem a ambientação de Tatooine para contar um episódio do exílio de Obi-Wan.

Sendo meu personagem favorito de Star Wars, fiquei curioso para ver que tipo de nuances John Jackson Miller traria para ele. No final das contas, o Obi-Wan pós-Jedi Purge foi como se esperava: sua leveza aparente obscurecida por camadas de culpa e dever, sua nobreza de caráter intacta mas autoquestionada, e seu conflito crescente entre o isolamento e o altruísmo.

Talvez um dos problemas do livro seja justamente escantear um pouco esse desenvolvimento em detrimento da progressão dos outros personagens - alguns bem interessantes (Y'Ark) - mas imagino que tenha contribuído para manter alguma aura de mistério em torno do forasteiro, bem na esteira habitual do gênero.

Daniel (Attack of the Books!) Burton says

Kenobi is a beautiful surprise, a wonderful scene in the larger arc of the Star Wars drama. I had no idea what I was in for when I started it, and I'm glad I gave it a try. It's an exciting and moving story of one of Star Wars most important characters.

I had stopped reading novels in the Star Wars universe after Timothy Zahn's Thrawn series, way back high school (long, long ago in a high school far, far away...). There are a lot of novels set in the Star Wars universe, but few have ever captured my imagination the way the original series and its characters did. Give me Han, Leia, and Luke and their supporting cast of the droids, Obi-Wan, and Chewbacca. I didn't have the energy to devote to a gazillion novels with the same premise, but a different cast.

Then, earlier this year, I was asked by Salt Lake Comic Con to help write-up a couple of blog posts for their then upcoming convention, including one about the hero's journey, especially as it appears in Star Wars. Already a Star Wars fan, I decided to binge research, ordering nearly every book I could get my hands on from the local Salt Lake County Library system. I didn't read most of them--in fact, I ended up doing a more surgical review of the stuff that seemed germane and purchasing the only book I actually needed (*The Hero of Thousand Faces*, by Joseph Campbell). But one book among them struck me, though, and I found myself

listening to it in the car one day: Kenobi.

Set in the period directly after the end of Episode III, *Revenge of the Sith*, Kenobi picks up with the story about the beginning of Obi-Wan Kenobi's long years in the Tatooine desert as he watches over Luke Skywalker. He is a wanted man, a fugitive from the nascent Empire and, as far as he knows, the lone survivor of the Jedi Order. Disturbed by his failure to foresee Anakin's fall to the Dark Side, and wrestling with the ramifications of Order 66, he retreats to the desert to meditate, to hide, and to watch, from afar, the Lars and young Luke Skywalker.

It is a life of anonymity and peace that Kenobi wants, but even on distant Tatooine adventure seems to seek him out. Almost immediately upon his arrival he finds himself, before even delivering baby Luke to the Owen and Beru Lars, in the midst of a cantina fight. Soon, it becomes more, and Kenobi is increasingly sucked into defending the locals against the depredations of Sand People, thugs, and even Jaba's lackies. And yet, like the Dark Side's subversion of the Republic, things are seldom what they seem, and even Kenobi will need to rely on all of his skills as a Jedi to survive and maintain secrecy from the eyes of the Empire.

On its face, the novel is little more than a spin-off from the Star Wars cannon, a tiny window into the events surrounding one of the story's most important characters: Old Ben Kenobi, that hermit that will save Luke from Sand People in *A New Hope* and set him on the path of the Jedi before falling to Darth Vader's light saber. And yet, John Jackson Miller surprised me and created what is perhaps one of the best constructed and most satisfying stories that I've read this year.

Among the many characters that George Lucas created, Kenobi stands supreme as the epitome of the Jedi standard. Where Yoda is the head of the order, Dark Sidious the ominous overlord of the Sith, and Anakin the example of the allure of the Dark Side, Kenobi develops as an easy going, steady, trust worthy, and consistent image of the mentor, brother, and stalwart of the Jedi. It is his relationship to Anakin that makes Anakin's fall so tragic because it sets the fall into deep highlight. Kenobi begins as Anakin's master, but by *Revenge of the Sith* is more an older brother to Anakin and in that roll finds himself in the position of Anakin's executioner on Mustafar.

The Kenobi who arrives on Tatooine, then, bearing newborn Luke Skywalker, is a downtrodden and worn man. He has lost everyone he loves, including his brother, and no longer has the purpose that the Jedi order provided to his life. He is, in many ways, a lost man, and worse, he has no one to whom he can turn for counsel, advice, or consolation.

And yet, trouble doesn't seem to leave him alone. Before long, Kenobi is pulled into a local drama, and despite his efforts is repeatedly called upon to play a role that he had served his entire life--a peace keeper and protector of the weak against evil.

In *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, Miller has an already well established character. And yet, he manages to deepen and enrich and grow the person, a feat that could just as easily have backfired as provided a jumping off point for his story. In the end, Kenobi is a tragedy and a triumph, not because of poor choices--as is the case with Anakin/Darth Vader--but because of his choices in spite of the madness around him. He remains a proactive actor, albeit reluctantly, and his tale is a moving one.

It only adds to it that Miller's plot is constantly on the go, moving from one moment of action to the next with barely a pause to breath. More than once I found myself sitting in the driveway, waiting for the scene to play out, gripped in the drama and action of a Jedi knight bringing order to a lawless desert world.

That's why Miller's story, ultimately to be just another spin-off from the Star Wars cinematic universe, managed to resonate with me. It moves, building on a character that is already well established but not permanently fixed. If you're going to read anything in the SWU, this is the novel to pick up. I guarantee you a moving story in a galaxy far, far away that will feel as much at home as if you were there.

Amanda says

Obi-Wan Kenobi, fresh from the heart-breaking events on Mustafar and Polis Massa, lands on Tatooine to deliver Luke Skywalker to his aunt and uncle. He knows he must live a quiet, reclusive life, withdrawing from nearly everything and everyone he has grown to hold dear. He must give up being Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi and everything that goes along with being a Jedi. And become unassuming Ben Kenobi, the crazy old wizard who lives by himself. Of course, when do things go according to plan?

Obi-Wan finds himself instantly struggling to live a life of solitude, as he watches the locals in need of help with marauding Sand People. On a trip to pick up supplies, he ends up drawn into the lives of two local families. As he reluctantly weaves himself further into the lives of the locals, he discovers there is more than meets the eye with the situation involving the local Sand People.

I've been anticipating this novel since I heard it was going to exist. I put so much pressure on this book that by the time I got a copy, I was worried it wouldn't live up to the expectations I had built up for myself. I'm so happy and relieved to say it was basically everything I was hoping for. I thought it was appropriate that it was not easy for Obi-Wan to let go of himself and become Ben. Miller does a great job keeping the balance. Obi-Wan's meditation scenes were beautiful and perfectly done. Some excellent scenes take place between Obi-Wan and a supporting character named Annileen. She's a breath of fresh air for the Star Wars Extended Universe. The supporting characters are a vital part of the story and I enjoyed their POVs almost as much as Obi-Wan's. We also get a POV from a Sand Person, which was completely fascinating and well done. The novel wraps up with an ending that is all together great, sad and very much appropriate. Miller does a wonderful job with Tatooine itself. I really felt like it could be the farthest place possible from the bright center of the universe. Especially, keeping in mind, that we still have 19 years of events before a new hope for the galaxy is revealed.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

*A long time ago in a galaxy far,
far away*

EPISODE III and then some

The Trials of Tatooine

Gone! The Galactic Republic has been

*erased from the pages of history by the Sith.
Palpatine and his apprentice Darth Vader
having destroyed the Jedi Order and
founded the Galactic Empire!*

*But there is still hope! Yoda and
Obi-wan Kenobi survive, fleeing across the
vastness of space with Anakin's infant twins.
These fragile children the only hope of one day
overthrowing the vile Sith overlords and
restoring peace and security to the galaxy.*

*With the whole Empire searching for him,
Obi-wan takes infant Luke Skywalker to Tatooine,
to live among the rugged desert dwellers.
With his heart broken and injustice all
around, how can Obi-wan turn his back on
those in need - even when the fate of
the galaxy requires it . . .*

The story crafted by John Jackson Miller begins there: Obi-wan having just arrived on Tatooine and wishing to remain inconspicuous. With Palpatine hunting all Jedis and Luke in tow, our favorite Jedi Master's mission requires him to not become involved, but to place Anakin's son with the Lars and watch over him. However, within minutes, Obi-wan finds himself involved in a blaster fight, trying to save people without revealing his identity. It seems that, even when he tries, Obi-wan cannot remain outside events, but is subconsciously drawn to them. Thus, he determines to settle in an abandoned house at the edge of the Jundland Wastes, because surely he cannot become embroiled in anything out on the frontier of civilization.

And the waste is surely the edge of Tatooine civilization. On one side of the invisible line, there is desert and rugged mountains with only Jawas and Tusken Raiders for company; on the other, there are the rugged farmers, who scrap a living moisture farming, and fighting hard against their savage neighbors: both the Tusken Raiders and Jabbas' gangsters in town. To make the situation worse, an especially fierce tribe of Sand People has camped near Obi-wan's place, lead by the fearless Plug-eye; their gaderffii constantly raised against their neighbors.

Giving the situation, it is no surprise when Obi-wan is forced to decide between obscurity or notoriety. When a local girl is put in harms way, our hero intervenes, only to discover that she is the daughter of the oasis' mercantile owner: Annilee Calwell. Annie is a widower and immediately takes a "liking" to the mysterious stranger, who has saved her daughter. As the owner of Dannar's Claim, she is also one of the most well-known people in the oasis, and news of her daughter's rescuer spread around the frontier, much to Obi-wan's chagrin. Soon, our Jedi Master is a local celebrate, known all around as Ben Kenobi, who lives out by the waste. But the funny doesn't stop there, because Orrin Gault, a wealthy farmer, approaches Ben about becoming part of the Settler's Call: a local militia that protects the settlers from the Sand People.

What is Obi-wan Kenobi to do?

His Jedi nature tells him to help those in need, but he also must remain hidden so as to watch over young Luke from afar. Above all these things, Obi-wan is torn apart inside. The fall and death of Anakin (He believes he killed his former padawan) is leaving him guilt ridden, and yet the greatest loss he feels - the one

he cannot come to terms with - is that of the Jedi Order itself. For as he himself puts it: "I've never lived without the Jedi Order to fall back on, to help me when things went badly. What does it mean to be a Jedi alone?"

The tale that results from all of this is an entertaining one, making one hear the triumphant Star Wars music play in the background at every climactic moment. It is definitely meant to be a bridge story between the ending of *Revenge of the Sith* and the original *Star Wars: A New Hope*, explaining the whys and hows of Obi-wan's initial time on Tatooine, but Mr. Miller never gets bogged down in those details. His book introduces enough original characters from the frontier and plausible plot lines that it never feels like just a history book. Indeed, the rousing fights between Sand People and settler, betrayal of one friend by another, and ultimate conclusion of the "frontier" problems are all page turners. But the book's most poignant moments come from the passages where Obi-wan is meditating, trying to emotionally survive the loss of every person he has ever loved and depended on. It is there in those quiet moments with Obi-wan Kenobi that this book gets it right.

Netgalley provided me with a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. The review you have read is my own personal opinion.

Stephen says

John Jackson Miller's *Kenobi* is an addictive, engrossing tale that explores Obi-Wan's exile on Tatooine with wildly entertaining themes perfect for a western. Through this book, readers will get glimpses inside Obi-Wan's head as he reflects on Anakin Skywalker and the events of *Revenge of the Sith*. But more than that, Obi-Wan is brought to life as he deals with the realities of hiding from the Empire on Tatooine. Small town folk don't keep secrets very well, and as deadly as the Empire might be, the threat of Tusken Raiders is far closer to home.

While Kenobi may be the main character, he's certainly not the only character. A female shopkeeper named Annileen plays a central role in the story. For readers who enjoy strong female characters done right, Annileen delivers the goods. There's also a local farmer named Orrin whose struggle against the Tuskens becomes an indispensable part of the story. Toss in a myriad cast of local townsfolk, and you have a full cast of colorful characters. John does a wonderful job fleshing out the primary characters, expanding their plots and sending their story threads into very interesting directions. There are plenty of twists, turns and surprises. One character I thoroughly enjoyed was also quite unexpected: A'Yark the Tusken Raider. As much as I liked the exploration of Obi-Wan's character, I was equally intrigued by the exploration of the Sand People.

Still, with all the ground that the book covers, Obi-Wan is always at the heart of it. Of course he goes by Ben now. That journey of Jedi Clone War hero to desert hermit is precisely what is tackled in this book. How did he get the name Crazy Old Ben Kenobi? What did he do there in the desert all alone? What must have it been like? Those questions and more are explored. There's even an explanation for how Ewan McGregor Obi-Wan turns into Alec Guinness Obi-Wan as far as looks go.

In taking all these issues in stride, *Kenobi* returns Star Wars to its sci-fi/western roots. In another genre, this could be the story of a mountain man living in the wilderness and his occasional trips to the nearest pioneer town. There would be the struggling farmers and storekeepers trying to make ends meet. However the farmers harvest water from vaporators. The storekeepers offer landspeeder repairs. People ride dewbacks and eopies instead of horses. Plus there are no savage Indians, but rather something worse: cunning bands of well

armed Tusken Raiders. The book has all the common themes and vibes of a western but with the sci-fi drappings of Star Wars. In marrying those two together, John Jackson Miller creates a story that reaches new heights.

Reflecting on the story as a whole, I can't help but compare it to James Luceno's *Darth Plagueis*. Luceno changed the way fans look at the prequels with his *Plagueis* book. He also shed new light on Palpatine and his mysterious Sith master. John does much the same with *Kenobi*. Through the story, I gained a new appreciation for Obi-Wan's character and it changed the way I look at him in *A New Hope*. However, *Kenobi* doesn't get weighed down with overt ties to other Expanded Universe stories readers may or may not remember or have even read. Instead of diving into the depth of detail like *Darth Plagueis* did, *Kenobi* runs forward as a story that captures the imagination, entertains and teases the intellect. There's no dreary politics here. *Kenobi* is sheer fun.

When it was first announced that John Jackson Miller was going to do a novel that would tackle Obi-Wan's exile on Tatooine, I was overjoyed. But that excitement had me worried. Would *Kenobi* meet my expectations? Would I ask for too much only to be let down? John Jackson Miller didn't meet those expectations, however, he exceeded them. In fact, *Kenobi* broke through the roof, took flight and made orbit. I'd hate to set anyone else's expectations too high, so I'd be tempted to say that *Kenobi* is simply a great book. In my opinion, though, this is the best Obi-Wan story I've ever read. I unhesitatingly give it a five out five and recommend that every Star Wars fan should read it. Whether you are a fan of the books or just the movies, this is a story worth reading.

Lyn says

Sand and monsters ...

and a lone Jedi.

Kenobi takes place between the end of Episode III *Revenge of the Sith* and the beginning of Episode IV *A New Hope* (Star Wars) with Obi-wan Kenobi living on Tatooine and secretly looking out for young Luke Skywalker as he grows up.

The Tusken raiders are described in a parallel fashion as Native American tribes are to American west stories. The human settlers on Tatooine are similar to early western settlers of the 1800s, harvesting their moisture and surviving in the hostile backwater, far removed from the Republic (Empire) and ruled over by gangsters (Jabba the Hut). To his credit, and making a better narrative, Miller spends time with the Tuskens, the indigenous people on Tatooine, and we learn some of their culture with a shifting narrative perspective from the viewpoint of one of their leaders.

Author John Jackson Miller provides us with an illustration of life on Tatooine and also insights into the psyche of our protagonist, one of my favorite Star Wars characters, Obi-wan Kenobi. Portrayed as a young man by Ewan McGregor and as an older exiled Jedi by ALEC FREAKING GUINNESS!!! the surviving Jedi is a study in isolated cool. Miller also gives us a glimpse into the mysterious Force apparition status of Master Qui Gon Jinn and of the foreshadowing that we get some forty years after moviegoers (and Darth Vader) were surprised by Kenobi's strange disappearing act.

In intermittent "meditations" between Kenobi and the departed Qui Gon Jinn, Miller uses deft references to

the canonical films to cast Kenobi as a tragic hero, further developing the character.

This also reminded me again how much Frank Herbert's *Dune* must have inspired Lucas.

There are some scenes with Jawas, some fun background info, and an altogether enjoyable Star Wars universe expansion. The best of the Star Wars books I've read so far.

Kerry Nietz says

I haven't read a Star Wars novel in quite some time. The last one I read, was the movie tie-in for "Revenge of the Sith," now eight years ago. (Has it been that long?) So there are whole parts of the Expanded Universe that are totally unknown to me. That fact alone has discouraged me from reading more SW books—the worry that I've missed so much, I could never catch up now.

So, when I saw this book was available, one that starred one of the original SW characters that everyone is familiar with, I was intrigued. And then to read the story's premise: A glimpse into Kenobi's years of exile on Tatooine, I knew I had to check it out. What a great idea for a Star Wars book!

I have to say this book delivers on its premise. It takes a few pages (50 or so) until Kenobi makes an appearance, but hang in there until then gentle reader. The author is not wasting time. He is setting up characters and situations that drive the book from beginning to end. The story is really Star Wars meets *Pale Rider*, where Kenobi acts as this mystery outsider who is occasionally a hero in the shadows. The characters and situations are well wrought and generally believable, with occasional nods to other stories from the universe. (Movie and book alike.)

We also get to see more of the wildlife that is often referred to on Tatooine but rarely seen, and learn more about the humanoids (Jawas and Sand People) that live there.

Another nice touch, I think, are the meditation sessions Kenobi has between chapters. Here he shares his point-of-view on his new life with a former mentor. And though my mind kept reading his lines with Ewan McGregor's voice, what is written here is solid setup for the Kenobi of Alec Guinness. I hope Mr. Miller expands on what he's done here.

Kenobi is a solid story, and an excellent Star Wars tale. I recommend it!
