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After hundreds of years, the Sith Empire has returned to the galaxy, determined to crush the Republic that sent them into exile. For young Sith Teneb Kel, this is his only chance to rise above his lowly beginnings as a slave and prove his worth to the Dark Council.

Blood of the Empire Details

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From Reader Review Blood of the Empire for online ebook

Samuel G Wells says

Solid Old Republic tale

Extremely fast paced and interesting, the characters were simple without being one dimensional. Very quick read, which is both awesome and my only complaint.

Lance Shadow says

Special thanks to my goodreads friend Mogsy for making me aware of the SWTOR tie-in comic series' existence.

The funny thing is, I never knew these comics existed until Mogsy mentioned The Lost Suns in her review of Drew Karpyshyn's Old Republic Tie in Novel, Annihilation. Did some research to see what it was, and I found that there were actually three tie-in comics done for The Old Republic, bioware's epic Star Wars MMORPG.

I think SWTOR is an extremely underrated video game, or just that the immense vitriol it seems to get is almost completely unwarranted. I find there to be three big complaints with it: 1) that it seemingly ruined the characters of Revan and the Exile; 2) SWTOR isn't KOTOR 3; and 3) it is just a rip-off of World of Warcraft, and it wasn't Star Wars' WoW answer that many MMO players were hoping it would be at launch. So in less than a year the player base crashed, the game was forced to go to a Free-To-Play model (which another group of haters see this as making the game inferior), and now it seems to be the target of every KOTOR fan's hatred. Despite that, SWTOR is still going reasonably strong, with a new expansion pending called Knights of the Eternal Throne.

Here's my take on the game: while it doesn't reach the greatness of either of the KotOR RPGs, I still really love it, and have had countless hours of fun playing the game with my girlfriend. While I can understand why people don't like the idea of the characters they defined and played as in the KotOR games being added to the MMO as NPCs, I don't think their story arcs as a whole were ruined by the MMO (or the book Revan for that matter) and even so they don't play so big of a role that their inclusion completely destroys the game. And when you take out the inclusion of Revan and the Exile, the world of SWTOR still has such a lush treasure trove of other great storylines and characters to offer. Even without the video game, Deceived does a decent job fleshing out the character of Malgus (as well as providing some good new ones) and Annihilation to me is the most underrated Star Wars novel out there.

Also, it is completely ridiculous to call SWTOR a terrible game just because there is no KOTOR 3. While I don't think it works as a KotOR 3 replacement, it is a great MMO on its own that provides memorable new characters, worlds, and lore.

I will admit the weakest aspect of the game is the gameplay, for the gameplay, especially combat, is clunky. But the story elements and being able to roleplay our characters with my girlfriend more than make up for it. I have taken a hiatus from the game but I have been really wanting to get back into it.

So where does this comic fall into all this? Well, it's part of the comic book trilogy that ties into the SWTOR video game. I was excited to pick this up because I love SWTOR and the Old Republic era, but it ended up being a really big let down.

THE STORY: The goal of this comic was to flesh out the backstory of a character that plays an important role in the Sith Inquisitor class story. It follows Teneb Kel, a young sith who was formerly a slave. He goes through some revelations, battles a female sith who turns out to be a traitor, and talks to the dark council about it.

There's probably more, but I really can't remember. It is that boring.

THE BAD: This is one of the most boring Star Wars stories I have ever come across.

The characters are incredibly bland. If you asked me what made Teneb Kel different from the sith lady he has to fight, or any of the other characters in this for that matter, it is only because the plot demands it or its because I recognize them from the game.

The plot is nothing to write home about either, in that it is just a straightforward rise through the ranks story. Yet, it focuses very little on those elements, basically just spitting out backstory and plot dialogue until the next action scene occurs.

Speaking of which, you know there is a problem when your character dialogue is more exposition heavy than your narration. I thought Tom Veitch's comic book writing was bad. At least he acknowledged how boring all that text was by stuffing it into a narration box. This feels like Shymalan's *The Last Airbender*! Nearly every single line of dialogue is used for exposition, plot, or backstory. No character development, no emotional connections, nothing!

Oh and did I mention the narration?

THE GOOD: Even though I rated it lower, at least this comic is better than *Dark Empire I*. And even though it was incredibly boring, I found nothing so bad that it offended me.

I will give a touch of credit that Alexander Freed at least tried to cut back on his use of narration... oh screw it I'm scraping for straws here.

The one positive thing I can say about this comic is with the artwork, and that it does look nice. When we do get to the obligatory action sequences they have some pretty unique and cool visuals. Overall the action was as fun as it could possibly have been, especially taking into account how little the artists had to work with. However, the art is not spectacular in any way and does not save the comic.

THE CONCLUSION: Final rating is 1 star.

Blood of the Empire is definitely quite bad, but it is not offensively horrible. I gave it a 1 star because I couldn't pick anything out that was good enough to give it two stars. In comparison, even though *Dark Empire I* was a dated piece of garbage that was more painful to read than this was, at least it had a good portrayal of Han Solo. Also, at least that one had the advantage of being memorably atrocious. This was quite the borefest, but it wasn't as offensively horrendous as *Star Wars: Princess Leia* and it was much mercifully shorter than *Fatal Alliance*.

Regardless, the point I'm trying to make is that this comic is dull, forgettable, and not visually interesting enough to stand out at all. Even if you just wanted to see some pretty looking comic visuals, I'd flip through *Obi-Wan* and *Anakin* instead. Even if you are attached to the Sith Inquisitor storyline in *SWTOR*, I still think *Blood of the Empire* is a waste of time.

Jordan Anderson says

Here we are, once again, at the end of yet *another* disastrous excuse for a *Star Wars* comic series. This marks the 3rd in a row and I'm beginning to think maybe, just maybe, it's time for a break from all things *Star Wars* related...especially in this format...

The thing is that *Blood of the Empire* had potential, considering its supposed to be setting up events for Paul S. Kemp's *Deceived* and, it is, after all, based on the overlooked (in New Republic storylines at least) Sith empire and it's constant fights against the Jedi rule of the Core planets and galactic senate. It seems like the recipe for a compelling, addicting, and hard-to-put down plot.

As you can see by my one-star rating. It's **none** of those things. Instead, what *Blood of the Empire* ends up being is a disjointed, hard-to-follow, weak, and wholly unnecessary mess of a story. Even after reading it, I'm still not even 100% sure of what Freed was trying to write or explain. Panels jump around between scenes with such frequency that there's no concise content or discernible plot. The things that *are* clear are laughably bad and have absolutely no bearing on anything that happens throughout the entirety of this volume. And the characters are stupid, one dimensional tropes of what all "bad guys" should be. There's no motivation, no clear motivations and nothing there to even make the readers *want* to continue to read and finish.

Even if this volume (and the other 2 with it) were supposed to be a roll-out for the *KOTOR* video games, and that readers probably should have either played the game before or directly after, it doesn't mean it had to be so horribly awful. Tie-ins and promotional materials are nothing new, but c'mon. Half-assing material that should be full of depth and lore, phoning it in just to make a quick buck, is a sad disservice to fans of the franchise and now makes me wonder if Disney *did* make the right choice by jettisoning all the Old Republic stuff to the Legends line and distancing themselves from shit like this.

Eric Farr says

Like *Threat of Peace*, an enjoyable video game tie-in comic is left weakened by its brevity. Pacing propelled the action forward at breakneck speed, but left a flimsy narrative with threadbare characters. The alien slave from Byss, Maggot, was perhaps the most interesting character to appear (and he seemed to serve the purpose of demonstrating the role of companion characters in the upcoming game), but the focus on his development from submissive to a warrior who is almost able to regain his honor, while somewhat heart-breaking, only detracts from the central plot. And as with *Threat of Peace*, the explanation to the central mystery of the story only creates an even bigger mystery. I doubt I spoil anything by saying that I still do not know what the children of the Emperor are supposed to be, exactly. Hardly heavy reading, though it may just get a fan more excited for the game. Certainly not the best trip into that galaxy far, far away.

Iset says

First thing's first, let's just get one thing straight: as a Revan fan the shelving of a third and concluding part to Revan's trilogy was immensely disappointing, and the substitution instead of an MMO set a couple of hundred years into the future in no way made up for that disappointment. Yes, Revan appears in it, but it was a cop out – a passing of the buck to a new set of characters centuries down the line, not the conclusion to Revan's story told in Revan's time that we all wanted. As a result of this ill-judged decision, several things happened. First the disastrous book named after Revan. It felt sparse, it felt gamified (e.g. go here and get the macguffins), and the revelation at the end that (view spoiler)

That's all even before I've begun talking about The Old Republic. Already it's not looking great because it

badly warped and ruined an existing amazing story. When you actually come to the story itself, the first thing that strikes is the bad premise. Throughout Revan's story we were told that they initially turned to the dark side because they discovered something that was such a dark threat that they believed the only way was to fight fire with fire, become grand strategists and seize control of the Republic to mould it into a force capable of fighting that threat. The Old Republic reveals that that threat is... (view spoiler)*This is what you're going with as the third part epic conclusion to Revan's story?!*

So for this graphic novel which sets the scene leading up into all this, we sit on the shoulder of Teneb Kel, a disgraced young Sith who is trying to earn back a position by going after the Emperor's apprentice who has gone rogue, and we don't care about him at all. You might be thinking it's pretty difficult to write a sympathetic Sith, but that's not it. I empathised with Revan, who despite everything held to a belief in doing the right thing and was swept up on a tide of destiny and a domino effect of bad events. I sympathised with Darth Bane, battered and abused and basically pushed into a corner. I didn't sympathise with Teneb Kel. He's just a sullen, arrogant youth with no personality and certainly no likability. I couldn't sympathise with the Jedi either – they're just not in this story enough, heck I don't even remember their names. The Emperor's apprentice had a chance to become the character that won my empathy, but she doesn't seem to have thought things through properly and events in the story proceed seemingly without rhyme or reason. Yawn. I hope it picks up in the next instalment, because at this point I am very disinterested.

4 out of 10.

Don says

This was a disjointed mess written by someone who clearly doesn't understand comic book storytelling. Oddly enough, that's understandable--this book was written as an online promo comic for Star Wars: The Old Republic video game. (Dark Horse, publishers of the print volume, had nothing to do with the production, as far as I know.) But when you add in the fact that the premise wasn't that good to begin with and you get a book I would recommend people skip. Or read for free at swtor.com.

Jared says

Star Wars Legends Project #23

Background: *The Old Republic: Blood of the Empire* was originally released as a series of webcomics every other Friday on the official "The Old Republic" game site. The series was collected into three acts published from April to August 2010, and the whole story was published together in 2011. It was written by Alexander Freed and pencilled by David Ross. Freed wrote another comic arc for the "The Old Republic" and did some writing for the game, as well as an arc for the Star Wars comic series *Purge*. Ross also drew an issue for *Legacy* and several issues for *Dark Times*. He has drawn for Marvel for a long time, including several dozen issues of "Avengers," and done some work for DC.

The story takes place 3,678 years before the Battle of Yavin. All of the "characters" in this story are brand-new, and I don't recall any references to characters from other stories, besides the Sith Emperor. Most of the characters are non-recurring, partially because most of them are throw-away characters with no memorable

qualities, and partially because the rest are dead by the end. Characters visit Ord Mantell, the ancient Sith planet of Korriban, and the Sith capital on Dromund Kaas. There are, doubtless, various connections with the "Old Republic" game which I am unaware of, as I have not played it.

Summary: The Sith Empire and the Old Republic are at war, and the galaxy is engulfed in conflict. Facing devastating losses on all fronts, the Jedi and the Republic fleet will jump at any chance of victory. But when the Sith Emperor's own apprentice approaches them with an offer to sell out her people, the Jedi smell a trap. A master and his apprentice are dispatched to verify her information. Meanwhile, Tenel Kab, disgraced apprentice of a traitorous Sith Lord, is dispatched by the Emperor's council to find the Emperor's apprentice before the Republic can launch an attack, kill her, and prove himself worthy of their favor.

Review: Maybe I screwed up by reading this comic in chronological rather than publication order. There are three additional volumes of the "Old Republic" comic series that came out before this, but they're set a few decades later. I can only assume that that comic set the stage for this phase of the Star Wars timeline. I just got through complaining that Revan (review here) seemed to dodge around all the interesting major events in its immediate vicinity. Too much "In-Between Star Wars" and not enough actual "Star Wars." By that I did *not* mean I wanted a story that just dropped me into the middle of an ongoing war with no context.

Revan provided some deep background and foreshadowed a galaxy-wide conflict that was destined to one day begin. Fast-forward 272 years, and we're randomly 3 years into the war. What finally sparked the conflict? What's been going on in the interim? What are the overall strategies being pursued by both sides? What's the big picture here? I have no idea. Your story can't raise the stakes when you haven't told us what the stakes are to begin with. Color me underwhelmed.

And it's not like we always have a clear idea of what's going on in the background in Star Wars anyway. That doesn't matter so much when there's meaningful character work being done. I can't remember another story where the characters were this undeveloped. I can't remember the name of a single character from this story, except the protagonist. I'm not even sure the two Jedi characters *had* names, and even the appearance of the apprentice is melting from my memory. He may have been the blandest character ever. And his master is only distinguishable because he wears a blindfold the whole time. I assume he's a Miraluka, but they never referred to it, so I have no idea. The cast is utterly devoid of life and interest.

The protagonist isn't much better. There are some pretty vague attempts to give him a dramatic arc, but the weird hints we get about his backstory don't accomplish that goal at all. It seems like he might be heading towards some major moral decision, but that moment never really arrives in a way that we can see. The character clearly has an internal life of some kind, but the reader doesn't get to glimpse it. As a result, it's hard to care much about him, either.

So, basically, this is a story about people talking about some stuff that doesn't make any sense without context, punctuated by the occasional perfunctory lightsaber battle. I'm not giving it an F because, first of all, the art was decent, and because the whole thing was such a giant yawn, I can't even really get up the energy to hate it. A big, fat "meh."

D

Jamie Flournoy says

I played the Knights of the Old Republic computer game years ago and enjoyed it thoroughly, largely because of the character development and exciting story.

If only that were true of this comic. No time is spent explaining why the Sith protagonist is interesting, nor what his personal goals are. He is just a person the story follows, who has things happen to him in exposition, gets orders from his new superiors, and obeys them. Who is he? What makes him tick? The story puts him in interesting situations, but doesn't spend time explaining why we should care about him as a person. The closest we get is that he wants a promotion.

The Sith traitor he is chasing is much more interesting; in their fight at the end I found myself hoping she would win. She has fairly clear goals, with a twist when we find out what she's really so mad about, at the end.

Also, I was surprised to find that I had trouble figuring out what was going on visually in several panels of the comic. I feel like an editor should have circled a few panels and said "this doesn't make visual sense, what am I looking at here?" There were action scenes where it was not at all clear what movement was supposed to be happening. In the absence of interesting character development, I was at least hoping to see some cool action art. There were a few (who doesn't like force lightning?), but lightsaber kills and force pull/push panels were visually disappointing. The space battle scenes were just crowds of ships that the characters had to zip through to get to the planets surface to walk around - what a wasted opportunity!

So, without caring about the protagonist, and with confusing movement and dull fights, I can't recommend you spend any time reading this issue. Maybe a different one from the series has a better story, or more interesting battles.

Joseph says

Hot mess is a good word for it. Well sort of. The story wasn't very good and seemed to skip parts or something. The whole comic took a long time to tell and at the ending you are left thinking, OK, great now what? But since these comics are a stand alone and Volume 2 and 3 are not tied to it you are left thinking did I really just waste my life reading this?

Adam says

This certainly isn't my favorite comic in the world but compared to Threat of Peace it feels like a marvel of basic competency. It's the straightforward backstory of a major character in the Sith Inquisitor storyline of TOR, as well as introducing some plotlines for the Jedi Consular storyline. It has a coherent theme mirrored in two plotlines, distinct characters, and a clear plotline. I'm still not a fan of most of these Sith designs, but at least this art is a faithful depiction of what's in the game (though unlike some of the Clone Wars art, it doesn't bring more gravity to their originally flawed designs). I liked Maggot and his whole deal does the most to make Kel an interesting character.

On the other hand . . . Kel is a very hard protagonist to like, though he does act in some surprising ways (sort of prefiguring the light side Sith Warrior at times?). And though it's thematically coherent, the "Emperor's Children" plan it introduces is dumb as hell. I'm not sure how TOR constantly manages to scavenge ideas

from Palpatine and earlier Sith but always stretch and caricature and layer them on in ways that saps any trace of imagination or potency they once had (not that this idea was a great one in the first place).

Online Eccentric Librarian says

Star Wars The Old Republic Volume One: Blood of the Empire is a graphic novel prequel to the Bioware/LucasArts video game. It's meant as a tie in but without the need to have played the game beforehand. Unfortunately, weak scripting and editing as well as poor characterization create a muddled, disaffecting mess that leaves the reader either bewildered or bored.

The story follows Sith apprentice Teneb Kel and his loyal companion maggot. Kel's master has betrayed the empire and the Sith - leaving Kel in a tenuous position. He is given the task of hunting down another Sith traitor (guess that was pretty common?) in order to avoid execution for his master's lack of vision. Wanton destruction and deaths ensue.

I am guessing that the point of the story is that Kel is not yet fully corrupted but his blind obedience to the Sith ideals take him down his eventual path of evilness. One one hand, he is protective of and saves his loyal companion. But then, he's quite happy to kill padawans or bystanders in order to protect the Sith goals. So the whole book is him calmly being evil or calmly being good - whiplash confusing to a reader since this happens within panels of each other. I get that the author wanted to pursue this duality of Kel's nature - but it's just so random without actually giving us any insight into Kel in the first place.

All of the characters were poorly defined, Kel especially, so we had no basis for understanding who he is, where he is right now with his idealism/fanaticism, or why he's always so calm and honest, and kind of boring in a resigned way. I just wasn't interested in him - I found the person he was hunting FAR more interesting, though she was sprouting mumbo jumbo just the same as every other character. It's one of those times I really hoped the main character would get axed (or sabred, in this case).

The action scenes were incredibly confusing and I had a hard time following the story. Eventually, I just gave up and kind of went with the flow. The artwork itself isn't bad - it is crisp and clean. But there is a lot of lost potential in the action scenes and I had no idea what was going on. Several times I thought I was missing something important but couldn't find anything significant in the previous panels to tell me what I missed.

As with all Star Wars novels, there is quality here. But I think without an editor providing coherence and guidance, even the most quality of artists and writers can get lost. Which appears to have happened with this book.

Matthew says

About once a year I pick up a SW novel or graphic novel. Sometimes I'm surprised and find something really good, but most times they are just ok. This one was just ok. The basic concept is fun---a young Sith trainee Teneb Kel is sitting in disgrace after his master betrays the will of the Emperor. He's given a chance to redeem himself and carve a new path for his life, but the trick is he has to hunt down the former apprentice of the Emperor, a powerful and crafty Sith Lord named.

Unfortunately the action's a bit clunky----it looks a lot like a comic from the 80's-----and the characters just aren't that interesting. Not sorry I read it, but I definitely won't bother reading any other volumes in this Old Republic line unless I hear there's a big change in quality.

Margarida says

What the hell did I just read?

I spent the whole comic trying to understand the motives of the characters but ended up with so many questions in the end. Everything looks so rushed and not planed at all.

I wanted to like Tenel Keb but his actions contradict themselves all the time, and his past is not explored enough for us to be able to feel any type of sympathy for him, much like it happened to me and Xesh (also a sith hound) - who at least had some type of character development in the short dawn of the jedi series.

Exal Kressh seemed soooo interesting, but much like Tenel, her actions don't have a lot of back story to make the readers the least interested in rooting for her. Such potential thrown out the window.

Not a terrible story but it's just not gonna stick with me like the DOTJ and the KOTOR series did. Hopefully the next old republic instalments will be better.

J.M. Giovine says

Improves upon the previous one, being more narrowed and focused, but considering how the first one was a complete narrative mess, it's not saying a lot. Completely set in a different time period and with brand new characters, this book has the chance to start off with a whole new concept. That being said, this opportunity seems wasted, as well, with an uninteresting and messy story line that never seems to fully flow. Here we're dealing with a potential new character with the opportunity to generate a certain interest, Teneb Kel, who has being chosen by the Emperor of the Sith as a mercenary to craft their goals against the Republic, as well as to find a potential Sith traitor that is, apparently, having deals and business with the Jedi. To be perfectly honest, I am not remembering these comic books stories after reading, and especially considering how poor the art is; again, Alexander Freed, once again, writes the story and Dave Ross provides the pencils, and the combo seems rather uninteresting and dry, and that's the last thing anyone would like to hear regarding a Star Wars comic book, specially an Old Republic story! Nevertheless, and although the book itself has good-average moments, we leave with a bittersweet sensation of never going anywhere either interesting or important, and that's an unforgivable sin, speaking about this franchise. This is one of the few SW titles I'd dare saying not even true fans would enjoy, although I'm not able to hate it whatsoever, for me it just seems as an uninteresting lecture, and while we're talking about a "Legends" series, is not to harmful, nevertheless, it could only mean a genuine step down for the late Expanded Universe, proving the actual effort Marvel Comics is providing into filling this stories within themselves in the new canon. In the end, this Old Republic series is looking quite forgettable and perfectly disposable. Maybe not a complete waste of time, considering how short it is and how quick of a reading it represents, but overall, there is far more interesting subjects to explore in a Galaxy Far, Far Away...

GodzillaGus says

I wrote a review for the whole story arc on the last volume. Read it there
