



Allies

Christie Golden

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What began as a quest for truth has become a struggle for survival for Luke Skywalker and his son, Ben. They have used the secrets of the Mindwalkers to transcend their own bodies and speak with the spirits of the fallen, risking their very lives in the process. They have faced a team of Sith assassins and beaten the odds to destroy them. And now the death squad's sole survivor, Sith apprentice Vestara Khai, has summoned an entire fleet of Sith frigates to engage the embattled father and son. But the dark warriors come bearing a surprising proposition that will bring Jedi and Sith together in an unprecedented alliance against an evil more ancient and alien than they can imagine.

While the Skywalkers and their Sith allies set off on their joint mission into the treacherous web of black holes that is the Maw, Han and Leia Solo risk arrest and worse to aid the Jedi imprisoned back on Coruscant. Tyrannical Chief of State Natasi Daala has issued orders that will open a permanent schism between her government and the Jedi Order a schism that could turn all Jedi into renegades and wanted criminals. But it is in the depths of the Maw that the future of the galaxy will be decided. For there the Skywalkers and their Sith allies will engage a true monster in battle, and Luke will come face-to-face with a staggering truth."

Allies Details

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From Reader Review Allies for online ebook

Mike says

I gave "Allies," by Christie Golden, a marginal third star for this fifth book of the "Fate of the Jedi" series. It's not bad for what it is, but the narrative heavy lifting is slow and not that gripping.

For example, the book spins its metaphorical wheels waiting for Lando Calrissian to bring his asteroid hunting ship to where Luke and the Sith (in an tenuous alliance to fight Abeloth) are waiting. A lot does happen on Klatooine while they're waiting for Lando, but I get the feeling that the things that happened there are mostly filler to reinforce the lesser themes and characters.

Like most of the books in this series, there are a few things going on, but not a lot gets resolved.

Though I will point out that, yes, Abeloth is dealt with in this book. And the "mad Jedi" are cured.

So Luke and the "lost tribe" of the Sith go off to confront Abeloth. It's a LOT more about the journey than the actual battle, however.

But this is a book of over 400 pages (in paperback form) and the "fight" with Abeloth is kept to about fifty pages towards the end of the book. After the ENDLESS build-up of the previous books, I was filled with a severe sense of anti-climax.

Oh, yes, there's a large "twist" once Luke Skywalker confronts Abeloth. Abeloth may or may not be someone from Luke's past. I only happened to know who the person in question is because I read a truly lousy Star Wars novel called "Darksaber." Unless you're a die-hard Star Wars fan who reads every novel in the series, don't expect to be shocked or thrilled (or interested?) in who Abeloth may or may not "be."

And from looking at the blurbs written about the other books in this series (which I probably won't be reading until they come out in paperback form) the quest to find out what Abeloth was and why she was doing what she was doing is going to remain one focus of this series. Doesn't sound that exciting to me.

The "relationship" of Vestara Khai and Ben Skywalker seems to be going forward by slow degrees. It's a mirror of his father's attraction to the once evil Mara Jade, whom he ended up marrying. Mara Jade makes a quick afterlife appearance in "Allies," but the moment is not as poignant as it was before.

Daala is coming slowly unhinged in her vendetta against the Jedi and her quest to keep power. Her use of the Madalorians to blockade the Jedi Temple and her considering using the Mandos to stop anti-slavery revolts across the galaxy shows she is a tyrant in the making.

Though she doesn't have much to do other than be cute and precocious, Allana and her pet Nexu still have a fair amount of story time. Han and Leia have to balance helping the Jedi with raising their granddaughter. Jaina Solo and Jagged Fel are finding that duty and romance are not a good mix, which has been heavily foreshadowed to this point.

And a lot of time is spent on the subject of slavery. In case you didn't know, slavery is bad. The author doesn't seem to assume the reader knows this and a lot of time is spent hammering that theme home. And it looks like that theme will be a recurring one as we go forward.

Though I will say that reading one of the leaden, paint by numbers Star Wars books about the Yuuzhan Vong war makes this "Fate of the Jedi" series seem a LOT better by comparison.

Chad Bearden says

"Allies" is another disappointing entry in the "Fate fo the Jedi" series for mostly the same reasons the rest of the books have been subpar, with the added disadvantage of being written by Christie Golden, whose knack for writing the young-adult tone is as uncanny as it is annoying.

To get the gist of things, you really have to examine "Allies" from both the macro- and the micro-level.

Looking at the big picture, this entire series frustrates because of its elementary complexity and scope. For instance, the previous multi-novel arc (the rather impressive and intricately plotted "Legacy of the Force") featured an over-arching plot centered around Jacen Solo's gradual descent into the temptations of the dark-side. Each novel upped the stakes a bit as Jacen took baby-steps to accomplish what he rationalized as justifiable goals, each novel building on the last until he finally hit a tipping point, tumbled down the slippery slope and descended past the point of no return.

The new series seems like it wants to accomplish a similar goal, with a handful of storylines that are hit upon in each novel, but where the previous series offered each novel as the next rung on a ladder to the climax, "Fate of the Jedi" offers novels that feel like we're walking on a treadmill to nowhere. The main bad guy, for instance, is Abeloth, the mysterious entity causing all the z-list Jedi to go crazy (nothing raises the stakes like sacrificing a red-shirt!). But it took three entire novels just to find Abeloth! And had the journey to find her been interesting, that wouldn't have been a problem. The problem was that nothing in any of those novels had anything at all to do with Abeloth! The plots of the those novels was basically: 1) somebody points out that Abeloth is a threat to the ENTIRE GALAXY based on z-list Jedi going crazy. 2) Luke sets out to find her, but keeps pausing in his quest to have a completely unrelated adventure on the planet of the week. 3) repeat.

Even after we met her in part 3 of this series, Aaron Allston spent the entirely of volume 4 having an adventure on Dathomir without even mentioning Abeloth! Granted, we do finally meet her in person in #5, but whether it was bad plotting by the 'Fate of the Jedi' braintrust, or bad writing by Christie Golden (probably a little of both), the confrontation is pretty anti-climactic, to say the least. One is left with the feeling that Abeloth's role in things isn't quite wrapped up, not because of any ominous foreshadowing, but because they can't possibly have spent five novels hunting her down to have her story end like that.

Remember all those old Bantam one-off novels? "Darksaber", "Planet of Twilight", "Children of the Jedi".... They got old real fast because no matter how hard they tried to convince you that the villain was some menace to the entire galaxy, you knew that within 300 pages or so, Luke, Leia, Han, and Lando would always meet up in the last few chapters and put the kibosh on the nefarious master-plan and the re-set button would be conveniently hit in time for the next novel.

That's how "Fate of the Jedi" feels, only instead of everything being wrapped up by novel's end, the current powers-that-be have decided to stretch things out into NINE novels! Because wouldn't it have been great if "Planet of Twilight" had been 2,700 pages long!!

So that's the big-picture problem. Even within this frame-work, Troy Denning was able to wring out an

almost readable book with volume 3. "Allies", unfortunately has the black-hole of characterization and subtly who is Christie Golden at the helm. And with her come many many many little nit-picky problems which, instead of distracting from the over-arching issues (like Denning managed to do), rather highlight them. There be SPOILERS below...

1) Golden sucks at culture building

Karen Traviss did an incredible job developing the culture of the Mandolorians over the course of seven or so novels taking place in different time periods. Christie Golden apparently has been tasked with a similar remit, this time with the Kasherl Sith. Both of her novels have featured them quite heavily, and one of her original characters, Vestara, is allegedly important to plot. But Golden sucks at creating believable characters, much less an entire culture. Her Sith are comprised entirely of Lucius Malfoy-like back-biting malcontents. The cartoonish over-the-top Malfoy evilness is fine for the cartoonish universe of 'Harry Potter', but in the Star Wars universe (which plays a bit more gritty and realistic, inasfar as that's possible in a sci-fi space epic) it just comes across as infantile. At every turn, Golden tries to impress with all of their supposed Machiavellian scheming which always boils down to: 'I'm evil and I'll kill and betray people to get ahead'. She's doing a clinic in writing one-dimensional characters. She includes some strange attempts at trying to make them seem noble and cultured and refined. I keep feeling like I'm supposed to have a grudging respect for her Sith, but again, their mustache-twirling keeps getting in the way of their supposed nobility.

2) Golden does excellent pre-teen melodrama

Christie Golden couldn't create a believable character if she followed an actual person around all day with a video-camera and just published the transcripts. Every single person is a stock-cliche that is eye-rolling in their flatness. The worst victim this time around is Luke Skywalker himself who seems to have thrown all diplomacy and tact out the window and instead acts like a petulant child throughout the novel. There are a couple of great drinking games you could play with "Allies", one of which is to do a shot every time Luke turns to Gavar Khai or his daughter and tells them how much he thinks they suck. He practically ends every sentence of conversation with them with, "Oh, and by the way, I think you're an asshole".

The other victims are Jaina and Jag. As nonsensical and out-of-character as their whole engagement plot has been, Golden handles the 'Boy Loses Girl' phase of the romance with all the deftness of an airline worker tossing a suitcase onto a conveyer belt. Golden spends an entire chapter giving us the details of the Klatooinian judicial system by way of a weird and superfluous trial (more on that later), but dedicates a single sentence to the build-up of Jaina deciding to call off the engagement. Seriously. See page 132: they're quarreling (which they do pretty non-stop in the other books as well) then at the bottom of the page, "Jaina froze, like a statue, for a long moment." And that's pretty much it. She tosses his ring back to him, and its over. Why now? Because in pre-teen novels and episodes of Disney Channel fluff, girls ramp up emotionally and overreact at the drop of a hat, and 'pre-teen' is how Christie Golden rolls.

And don't get me started on how unbalanced a character Daala has become. Its laughable how incongruous her conversations are with her chief-of-staff about how she's trying to do the right thing with her actual actions. In the last novel, a possibly interesting dynamic arose between Daala and the Imperial Moffs manaeuvering to oust her from the presidency. Daala seemed to realize that she needed to win the public over to her side if she was going to maintain any semblance of power. So naturally, even though the public seem to be softening up their opinions of the Jedi (which is a somewhat arbitrary move in itself, as several novels were spent demonstrating why the public were super-pissed at the Jedi) Troy Denning had Daala send Mandalorians to attack the Jedi Temple to retrieve the crazy Jedi, which completely backfired. Daala's master plan to win public support by doing something everyone would hate turned out, in hindsight, to be a bad master plan. The next logical step, then, in Golden's eye, is to have Daala do the same exact thing again, only this time adding in the unnecessary murder of an innocent to further piss off and alienate the public. All

the while, Daala has somber conversations with her aide wondering why everything is going so wrong. (commence eye-rolling).

3) The planet-of-the-week subplot has reached a new low

As pointless as it felt to visit Dathomir, or Kessel, or the Kathol Rift in the last few novels, the visit to Klatooin reached new levels of stupid. To begin with, the reason they went there in the first place had nothing to do with the plot, but was just a stalling mechanism. Literally! Luke comes up with a nonsensical plan to team up with the Sith, but needs to borrow a ship from Lando for vague and arbitrary reasons. Lando says it will take a while to get the ship prepped for the ill-defined mission, so Luke and Ben and Vestara and her evil dad go hang out on Klatooin until the ship is ready. So going to the planet is already an eye-rolling exercise in wheel-spinning.

But then things get really stupid. The comically evil Sith decide that they want to steal a famous planetary landmark that is the hub of a political treaty that dates back *Twenty Five Thousand Years!!!* That's right, 25 and three zeros! Golden even italicized it once for emphasis! Apparently, the treaty in question keeps the Klatooinians enslaved to the Hutts, who have agreed to protect the afore mentioned planetary landmark, a big glass/stone fountain. But in a plot contrivance that would be at home in an episode of *Pokemon*, no one is allowed to bring any kind of modern technology with a several kilometer radius of the fountain. Not even the people protecting it! Therefore, this massively important fountain which is crucial to the existence of a treaty that has lasted for *twenty five thousand years!!* is being guarded by people wielding spears and nets (I'm not making that up). Oh, and there was also a wall built around it, but someone knocked a hole in that by driving a speeder-bike into it.

Naturally, when the Sith show up to debase the fountain, they can't stop laughing at how stupid this all is, and have zero trouble sheering off a piece of the strange glass/rock to take back to their evil mother-ship. And naturally, even though this odd arrangement has apparently worked for *twenty five thousand years!!*, the Sith wreck everything on their first half-hearted try, and throw all of Klatooin into a planetary riot.

And then there is the aforementioned chapter where Lando and Jaina have to serve as mediators in a trial that determines that 1) the Hutts who were supposed to be protecting the fountain didn't do a very good job, and 2) the Sith are evil. Well no shit.

4) "I see your point."

In lieu of writing a plot that logically leads from one thing happening to another, Golden resorts to the short-cut tactic she used in "Omen". It basically goes like this:

Character 1: I've drawn this very odd assumption that doesn't really fit the evidence in front of me but is necessary for the plot to move forward.

Character 2: But that doesn't really fit the evidence we have in front of us.

Character 1: That's true, but if you don't believe me, the plot can't move forward.

Character 2: I see your point.

Seriously, that's drinking game number two. Do a shot every time a character says some variation on the phrase, "I see your point".

5) Christie Golden expects the reader to "see the point"

* Example #1: Golden has characters going to drastic measures to prove how horrible a threat Abeloth is. They practically rend their flesh and gnash their teeth they're so troubled. But what has Abeloth actually done? The back cover of the book reads: "Only one thing could unite the forces of the Jedi and the Sith: an enemy far vaster--and deadlier--than both." And what could spell vast and deadly evil more than that random Jedi we made up last chapter going crazy and having to be locked up! Oh, the terror!! What unspeakable act will Abeloth commit next? Well, she almost kills the new Jedi companion that we just made up last novel, but when she hears Luke and Ben coming, she runs away and hides in a cave! EVIL!!!! Abeloth could possibly be the single most impotent threat to the galaxy ever created in the Star Wars universe.

* Example #2: Luke and Ben agree to team-up with the Sith because...um, because...Wait. Why did they team up again? There is an extremely hazy conversation about this early on between Luke and Gavar Khai, the main Sith we deal with in "Allies". Partly, it seems the alliance hinges on how horrible Abeloth is, with Khai mourning the way his Sith younglings are going crazy just like the Jedi. We have a common enemy, so we should work together. That kind of makes sense. Only it doesn't seem Luke actually believes Khai, what with the Sith being all evil liars, and when Khai indeed reveals that he was lying all along, Luke doesn't seem all that surprised. So maybe Luke is just using the Sith as a means to an end? Maybe Abeloth is so horrible, that even if the Sith are lying about their motivations, the benefits of teaming up with them outweigh the risks? Maybe? Except Luke pretty much defeats Abeloth by himself by stabbing her once during a fight. The Sith play zero part in the 'climax' of the story.

Reader: But Ms. Golden, you say this alliance is important in that it will facilitate the defeat of the Greatest Threat The Galaxy Has Ever Known!! But based on events in the book, the Sith contribute nothing to Abeloth's downfall.

Christie Golden: That might be true, but without the alliance, the title of this book, "Allies", would make no sense, and we'd just have to skip over this whole book and get straight to the next one.

Reader: I see your point.

6) The Star Wars EU apparently has a Black History Month

Completely out of left field, Golden inserts a clunky "Underground Railroad" subplot. There have been subplots in storylines past where oru heroes fight slavers and free downtrodden captives. But Golden's lack of subtly makes this feel like a *very special episode* of Star Wars.

* * *

I can't imagine anyone is still reading my review at this point. If you are, you win a cookie. It's just that everything about "The Fate of the Jedi" series and choosing Christie Golden as one of its authors is so monumentally wrong-headed that it brings out the best/worst in me (depending on your point of view).

Good God, I can't wait for this series to be over so we can start over with something new, fresh, and hopefully, containing logic and purpose.

Steve says

This series is so much better than the Disney reboot....already on book 6!!!!

Bill says

I liked the plot developments and of course the characters, but found Golden's writing style lacking. I had to read too many sentences over to crystallize their meaning.

I have read every Star Wars novel I know about up to this point, and this is the 1st time I have felt taken advantage of— like I am mainly helping to keep Skywalker Ranch well manicured.

It would be better for all readers, I think, if the 9 books of *The Fate of the Jedi* were distilled into 1 big novel or a trilogy, all written by 1 author.

Still I love living in this universe...

David Collier says

Sith and Jedi Allies? Woah! This book wraps up a bunch of stuff from the previous books. Not sure where they are going from here.

Khurram says

I enjoyed this book. There is a resolution to one of the main problems facing the Jedi. Being the fifth book in the set this is a welcomed step forward. New problems arise, and new enemies are introduced. I also like that fact that this book covers other issues in the Star Wars universe the biggest being slavery. I have to say even the political scenarios were done quite well.

At the end of the last book, lifting off from Dathomir Luke, band and their prisoner Vestara Khai are surrounded by the lost tribe of the Sith's armada. However the tribe have not come to destroy the Skywalkers they would like to form an alliance against the ancient darkside being then have names Abeloth living in the cluster of the Black holes called the Maw. Abeloth seem to have a personal connection with Luke. Back on Coruscant, more Jedi "snap" and Daala want them brought under GA arrest to make a statement. Even if this means making a deal with the Mandalorans, which cannot help but end in death. Also the journalist community are getting more forceful about the issue of slavery and a new element is added known as the Freedom Flight. Also Tahiri's trial begins, can even brilliant but eccentric lawyer help her.

Other books in the series talk about mention in passing about the attraction between Ben and Vestara, golden make this the main theme of the story, and the teenage soldier boy / Jedi resist the forbidden fruit of a beautiful Sith apprentice. Even this was done well; there is a lot of hurt feeling and mistrust, but an undeniable attraction there. It is funny how similar and sometimes different their parents feel about it. All this and then Luke in lightsaber action again. Great book. I think it was the best of the series so far.

Ithlilian says

There are aspects of this series that I enjoy less than others, plot lines that interest me more than others, and direction changes that remind me of hallows versus horcruxes, but all in all this is still an enjoyable series. The characters are entertaining and the banter is not shoved down our throats too much, so that's definitely a plus, but like the other novels this is broken up into separate stories that all somewhat relate and will eventually affect each other.

If you didn't know it already Ben has a thing for the Sith girl. No spoilers there because they shove it down your throat pretty much the entire time. We get it. Oh and Sith are bad and will probably betray you. Shocking, I know. So we have Luke and Ben running around a planet with some Sith for awhile, no one trusting each other, yet being forced to work together. I had almost no interest there because we knew how it was going to end for the most part.

Then we have the trial of the ex-Sith which is decently compelling and has some character development that is welcome. However, the whole he still loves me I can finally move on thing was a bit sickening.

Daala is being very emperor-like and comes off as crazy next to the Jedi, yet I can understand some of where she is coming from. What good is a senate against the might of these magic wielding renegades that just do whatever they want? Do the readers conveniently forget that Jedi are randomly killing people? The Solos do, yet we are supposed to dislike Daala and side with the Jedi? Ok.

Then slavery, it's bad, and the series is going to focus on it. They just now decided that. Yay? I can see how they are using it to add fuel to the Daala is crazy Jedi do whatever they want fire but I have a hard time caring when it is introduced more than halfway through the series.

Oh well, the stories are still interesting, interesting things keep happening, the characters are not cardboard and I am content to continue.

Jerry says

Much better than the previous book by this author.

Marcelo says

This book was actually better than the previous one by Christie Golden's quill. She's not very good with fight scenes, but that's hardly the point in «Allies».

In this book, we see the unease alliance between Luke Skywalker and the Lost Tribe of the Sith, the only way both parties found to fight the grand-villain of this entire series, the dark-side monster Abeloth. We finally discover why is that creature so interested in Luke and how is it maddening the jedi that spent time in Shelter during their youth.

There are a lot of goodies in this book. Golden was the first author to depict the mad jedi as paranoid — really paranoid. Until now, we heard they being qualified as paranoid, but we hadn't seen a true paranoid

behavior. In «Allies» we finally saw it.

This is the main story-line, but there's also the second story-line, the one about the GA-Jedi crisis. At first, the author inserts a story-line about slavery and slave liberators that seem not to fit in the story at all. But it all cleverly comes together by two-thirds into the novel, even involving the Skywalker story-line, to coalesce in the escalation of the crisis in the GA.

We see a lot more of Chief of State Natasi Daala — a deep character, that's doing the wrong thing for the right reasons. It's hard not to understand her, even if the reader knows she's utterly wrong. Such a well-made character!

Other character that I found myself enjoying very much is Daala's assistant, Wynn Dorvan. He's as well made as any other characters we saw so far, and his another character that's torn between duty and conscience. I hope to see more of Dorvan in the coming books.

«Allies» ends in a two-pronged cliffhanger that's going to make me bite my nails 'til December, when the next book, «Vortex», comes out from under Troy Denning's pen.

Holly says

This was arguably one of the worst Star Wars books I've ever read. And I have read 304 of them to date, so that's saying a lot. I'll admit that some of this comes from the fact that I despise Golden's writing style, but the story itself has a lot to answer for.

First of all, the characters. Luke is portrayed as a weak old man; Ben as the stereotypical teenager that nobody is like really; Leia and Han as dim echoes of what they were in the movies; Vestara and the rest of the Sith: Hello, you have only used the "Sith come back and attack the Jedi" plotline for about 9/10 of the books! These Sith are the same old characters recycled for the hundredth time.

Abeloth is a vague evil that is clearly not thought out very well. Natasi Daala is a different character in different books, because authors cannot agree on what she is like. Jaina and Jagged - isn't this the third relationship that Jaina has had, that the authors act is the last one, but then she breaks it off? Here's a hint: it's getting a little old by now.

Speaking of cliches, since when is the "son of leader of good falls in love with daughter of leader of evil" storyline original? I totally saw that coming, and yet I was still disgusted when it happened. For the most recent example of the storyline mentioned before, have you forgotten about Luke and Mara?

The happenings on Coruscant are poorly thought out and written. Just one stalemate after another. It was incredibly boring to read and probably boring to write too. The Jedi sickness is one of my least favorite parts. It's too vague and impersonal for the reader to care what's going on, let alone understand. The author tries to represent Tahiri as tragically misunderstood, but tragically fails in that endeavor.

Donna says

I should refer everyone to my past reviews of the Star Wars books I've read because I can't really say anything different about them. The audios are highly entertaining. I love Luke, who was the MC in this one. It also had Han and Leia making appearances and love them too.

I also like the relationship between Luke and his son, Ben. Overall, I enjoyed this one too.

Leo says

It's hard not to knock most of the books in this series for the whole Admiral Daala as Chief of State thing. That whole storyline doesn't work for me. The rebuilding of the Mando's make sense given Boba Fett's popularity. Unfortunately the Mando's don't really help the story either. Everything around her to this point has been way too predictable and frustratingly unconvincing.

I actually had less of a problem with Luke's interactions with the Sith. I haven't been a fan of the Abeloth stuff though, feels too much like the end scenes of the Dark Forces games where the bad guys had super powers that made them invincible unless you ran around and triggered things right. At least in Dark Forces you can forgive that since that's just how boss battles in video games work. That doesn't work for me in narrative fiction.

The series does seem to be setting up the deteriorating conditions that lead into the Legacy comics.

As I may have said about previous books in the series, Luke and Ben's story line's been interesting, but otherwise I still feel like I'm slogging through to find out what happens without much enjoyment of the story itself.

Andrew Wise says

continues the story, but lots of editing mistakes and poor quality of writing

Adam Bourke says

The first thing I can say about this fifth book is that it's a reassuring size. The last one by Golden was a bit thinner than the rest of the series, but this one isn't. As for the story, it's much better than the first three in the series.

As I often do, I'll start by discussing the characters, and in particular with my favourite character - Vestara. Vestara is a Sith apprentice, a bad guy by definition, but I find that I can't help but like her, can't help but want her plans to succeed. As in the previous book, we don't see an awful lot of scenes from her point of view, but if anything this makes her character more interesting, and the rare chapter that is from her perspective an exciting glimpse into her life.

And one of the ways we get to explore Vestara is through Ben, and his interactions with her, which are both interesting and amusing. I must admit to really enjoying their scenes together. However, some of his moods and ideas about things switch rapidly and are often unexplained. However, this is much more true of Luke - quite a major character. He just seemed a bit too vague a character. One minute he hated the Sith, the next he was agreeing with them - even with strange ideas that I don't see why anyone would agree with. So it's a little strange that I found the other Sith in general to be quite good characters. None of them were as major characters as Luke, Ben or Vestara, but I felt that they were done really well - particularly the High Lord and Vestara's Father.

This whole paragraph is a spoiler, so look away now if you don't want to know anything. Daala gets the Mandalorians to siege the Jedi Temple. As a political move, this is pretty silly. People kind of like the Jedi, and kind of dislike the Mandalorians. I can see why she wants to do it for her own pet hate of the Jedi, but I always thought of her as more level headed than that.

I'm not really liking the character that Daala is becoming, and the whole thing about the trials of Tahiri and Niathal are kind of tedious. It was interesting at first, and Tahiri's lawyer is an interesting character, but it just seems that it's going on for an awful long time. I don't mind reading it, it's not that bad, but I don't look forwards to those sections. I had been hoping it would have been cleared up by the end of this book, but it hasn't. In fact, it seems to be one of the few things that weren't.

The ending seemed a bit strange to me. It all happened quite fast, but it felt like the story was pretty much over. There was still the trial as mentioned a moment ago, and a brief scene with two people pretending to be jedi which made no difference to the story but suggests another, but the main story arcs seem to have vanished. Except the characters disagree. I'm not really sure where the story can go from here.

It was an improvement on the first three books, but not as good as the fourth. The main body of the book was good, and I really liked Vestara, but the ending was a bit too final. There's another four books to go, but not an awful lot of story to go with them. But it's made the series as a whole that little bit better, and it was fun to read - so if you don't mind a slow start, this series is looking better all the time.

Krystal Hickam says

I really enjoyed this next chapter of the Star Wars Universe. The compelling characters both good and evil keep you enthralled to the very end. I appreciated the amount of story that was given to the Sith as well as the Jedi and the deeply detailed world they inhabit. It showed great balance on letting you like the Sith just enough to not want them to get completely destroyed. Watching young Ben start to fall in love with his Sith counterpart is a great life lesson that you can take with you in the real world. Seeing both sides fight side by side against a greater evil as well as the galactic empire is a thrilling ride that you don't want to end. I cannot wait to get farther into this series. Ever since Jacen and Jaina have been introduced I feel the Star Wars universe has regained its credibility and I hope that the new movie will follow in this series footsteps.
