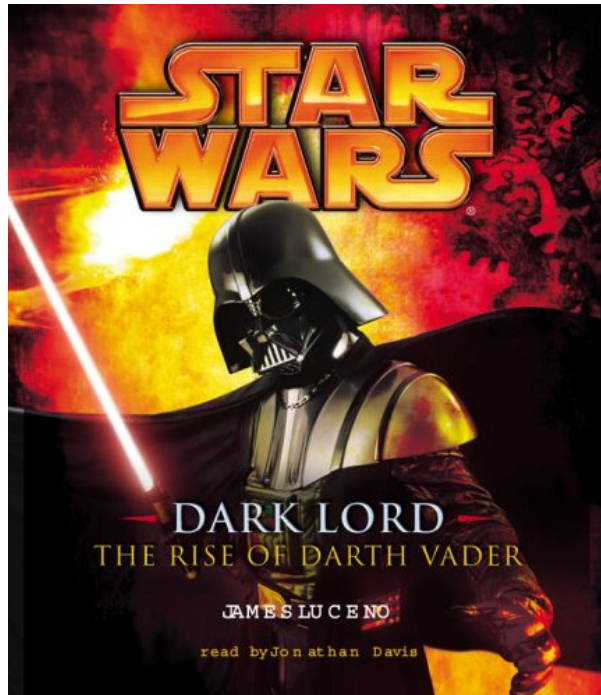
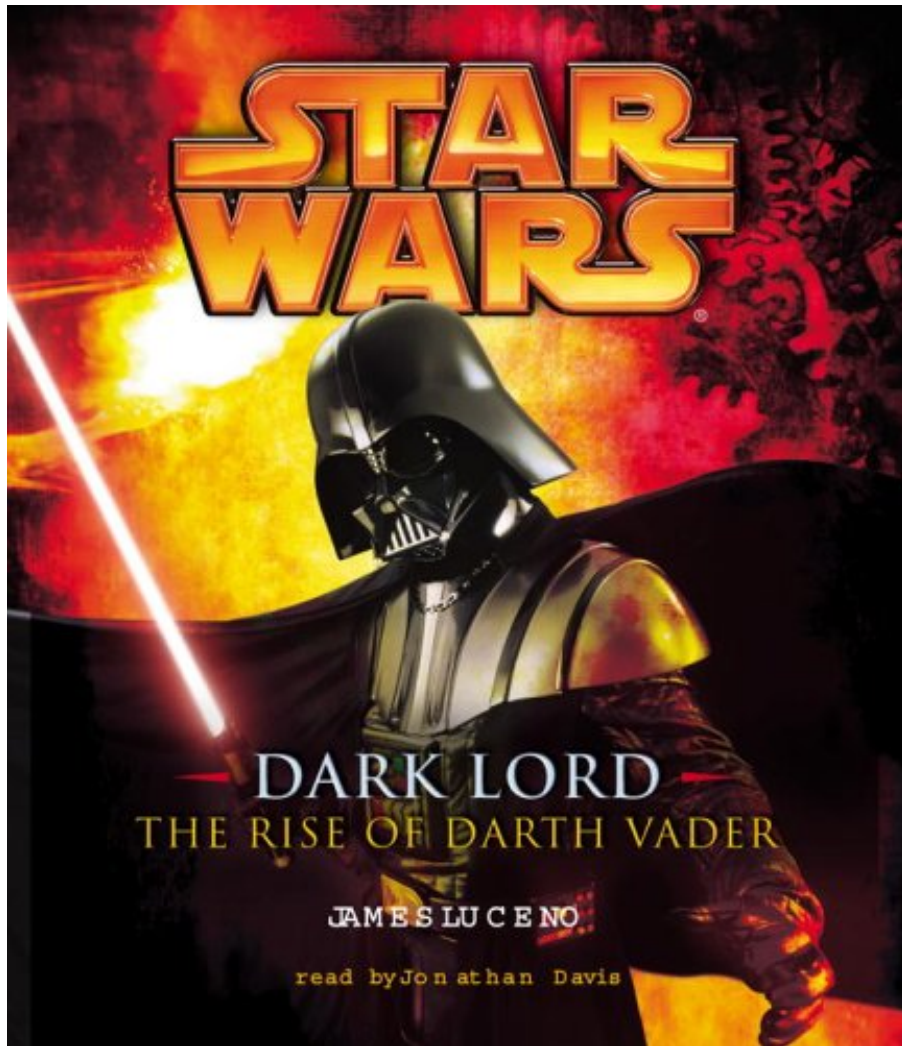


STAR WARS: DARK LORD - THE RISE OF DARTH VADER BY JAMES LUCENO



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Review

"A Star Wars adventure to chill and thrill" Northern Echo

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STAR WARS: DARK LORD - THE RISE OF DARTH VADER BY JAMES LUCENO PDF

Throughout the galaxy, it was believed that Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker—the Chosen One—had died on Coruscant during the siege of the Jedi Temple. And, to some extent, that was true. Anakin was dead.

From the site of Anakin Skywalker's last stand—on the molten surface of the planet Mustafar, where he sought to destroy his friend and former master, Obi-Wan Kenobi—a fearsome specter in black has risen. Once the most powerful Knight ever known to the Jedi Order, he is now a disciple of the dark side, a lord of the dreaded Sith, and the avenging right hand of the galaxy's ruthless new Emperor. Seduced, deranged, and destroyed by the machinations of the Dark Lord Sidious, Anakin Skywalker is dead . . . and Darth Vader lives.

Word of the events that created him—the Jedi Council's failed mutiny against Supreme Chancellor Palpatine, the self-crowned Emperor's retaliatory command to exterminate the Jedi Order, and Anakin's massacre of his comrades and Masters in the Jedi Temple—has yet to reach all quarters. On the Outer Rim world of Murkhana, Jedi Masters Roan Shryne and Bol Chatak and Padawan Olee Starstone are leading a charge on a Separatist stronghold, unaware that the tide, red with Jedi blood, has turned suddenly against them.

When the three narrowly elude execution—and become the desperate prey in a hunt across space—it's neither clone soldiers, nor the newly deployed stormtroopers, nor even the wrath of the power-hungry Emperor himself they must fear most. The deadliest threat rests in the hideously swift and lethal crimson lightsaber of Darth Vader—behind whose brooding mask lies a shattered heart, a poisoned soul, and a cunning, twisted mind hell-bent on vengeance.

For the handful of scattered Jedi, survival is imperative if the light side of the Force is to be protected and the galaxy somehow, someday reclaimed. Yet more important still is the well-being of the twin infants, Leia and Luke Skywalker, the children of Anakin and his doomed bride, Padmé Amidala. Separated after Padmé's death, they must be made safe at all costs, lest the hope they represent for the future be turned to horror by the new Sith regime—and the unspeakable power of the dark side.

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Review

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A STUNNING TOUR DE FORCE...

By Greggorio!

THE RISE OF DARTH VADER by James Lucerno.

This novel is set immediately after the events of Episode III *Revenge of the Sith* and from the outset to me it is a pity that Matthew Stover did not write both books. I say this because reading the novelisation of *REVENGE OF THE SITH* was one of the literary highlights of 2012 and it would have enhanced this story by the length of the Kessel run if it was written in the same style. In one sense the story of Anakin Skywalker ends on Mustafar and yet George Lucas himself has said that episodes 1 through 6 complete the story of his rise fall and eventual redemption (if such a thing is possible). So what I am saying from the outset is that the novelisation of *ROTS* and this one is really a two part story which would have been a better read if written by the same author.

(NOTE: I have come to realise that ROTS and this book are actually the final two thirds of THE DARK LORD TRILOGY so this criticism is clearly invalid. But I would like to leave this in my review as I refer to this paragraph later on. :-))

That out of the way, I can say that there are moments of pure star wars magic to be found in this book. This first one left me breathless early on in the novel when we entered the tormented mind of Vader as he begins to comprehend what has happened, what he is and what he has become. Regrets begin to form in his soul and rise to the surface of his consciousness when he remembers what he was and what he could have been. Little facts are raised in the book which are fascinating to some readers (me!) but possibly pointless trivia to others.

Part one of the book is compelling to say the least. We are on Murkhana when Order 66 is implemented and this is a well written but terrifying description of the mass murder of innocents under the guise of war. Part two - subtitled THE EMPEROR'S EMISSARY is when we are introduced to Vader for the first time in the book and this is where the heart of the reader really starts to pump. The story itself too jumps up a notch but in an attempt to humanise Vader it gets stuck in first gear for 50 pages or so. Anyway the heroes of this story become obvious given the context of what has gone before and it is easy to become attached emotionally to what is going on.

Part three begins on Imperial Centre and obviously is used to set the scene for what happens in the tumultuous and apocalyptic (for some) climax to this tale. Palpatine (Sidious) is still manipulating his new apprentice but at least we signs of development and independent thought processes begin to rise from Vader. Part four is based on KASHYYYK and is the highlight of the book in an emotional sense as well as from the storytelling perspective. A group of renegade Jedi and their support crew decide to use Kashyyyk as a temporary base and when Vader turns up with his support crew they refuse to surrender. A fantastic battle ensues with lots of action, fight scenes and truly moving events and dialogue to entertain and educate the reader. This part of the book is also significant in terms of Vader's development in the dark side and it is easy to close your eyes and see the book "happen" in front of you as you read each page.

With a deeply satisfying and equally emotional ending this book turned out to be one of the all time great EU novels. As I stated at the start of my review, the writing style is definitely different from that used by Stover in REVENGE OF THE SITH but looking back, that was definitely a good thing. I am not criticising Stover by saying this but even though the two books form the bulk of the same trilogy, they have to be sufficiently different in order to entertain and to give each writer his due. What Lucerno has achieved here is a classic star wars novel for the "new" star wars if you know what i mean. So in summary I give this book four stars out of five. The ending was awesome as I have said but held back by a minor lull in proceedings in part two. But definitely worth reading. The hard part now is to decide which SW book to read next!

Greggorio (LR)

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Getting inside Vader

By DH

I thought this book did a great job getting into the inner mind of Vader and begin to explain and show how powerful he is! A must read for any Vader fan.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Some Great/Some Awful.....Could Have Been So Much More

By W. Gorga

****WARNING: THIS IS A REVIEW CHOCK FULL OF SPOILERS*****

What did I expect from Dark Lord?

A thrilling novel in the afterglow of *Revenge of the Sith* which focuses on Vader coming to grips with his new life as he takes the first steps towards becoming a true Sith Master. Hunting down some surviving Jedi seems like a good way to reach that next step in Vader's Sith career path.

What did I get?

A novel that does an excellent job of explaining Vader's sense of loss and disillusionment after the events of *ROTS*, but fails to really give a convincing account of how Vader develops from Anakin in a black suit to the most feared being in the galaxy.

Much of the story revolves around the most forgettable group of Jedi imaginable and how those individuals (mostly a Padawan named Starstone and a burnt out Knight known as Roan Shryne) come to grips with new galaxy order. We also have a ship's crew which accompanies our ragtag bunch of Jedi survivors, whose captain happens to be Shryne's mother (I wish I was making this up).

So what's good about Dark Lord?

As many previous reviews touch upon, the guy whose name graces the title and whose mug is on the cover seems to get the short end of the stick when it comes to pages dedicated to him. However, the most compelling reading of *Dark Lord IS*, indeed, the chapters involving Vader.

To criticize Vader as coming off too much as the whiny Anakin we have off come to deplore and associate with the face of Hayden Christensen is oft-center. Consider: Anakin converts to the Dark Side in a wave of confusion and angst, trusting his fate to the long-time father figure of Palpatine, only to lose everything seemingly a day later on Mustafar. He is now trapped in a suit forever, his long lush mane of hair only a holocron memory. Vader is led to believe he killed his wife and his child with her. All his Jedi friends and acquaintances are dead, many at his hand. And yet, despite all these sacrifices, he will never be as powerful as he dreamed of being and the sober realization that he was played by Sidious all along stings even more considering he'll never topple the old geezer unless a perilously open air shaft is available some time in the next 25 years.

Therefore, the moments when Vader is left alone with his thoughts to make sense of his new life, descriptions of his suit, and instruction from Sidious make for some good reading. Alas, there just isn't enough of it.....

So what went wrong?

The story is about as humdrum as possible. Why Vader is so adamant on hunting down remaining Jedi and killing them is never really explained, though that's hardly Luceno's fault; Lucas himself did a lousy job of explaining Anakin's motivations from wanting to save people from dying one moment to cutting Jedi brethren in half the next. Then again, if the plot to *Dark Lord* is any indication of how boring life in the galaxy must have become before Luke came along, then it's no wonder why Vader was looking for an excuse to chop somebody's head off.

The origin story of the Rebellion and Bail Organa's role in its development are pretty good. However, there are some corny moments on Alderaan that involve Organa hiding Leia from Vader's awareness, as well as Vader chasing some politician by taking gigantic leaps instead of running after him. What was likely

intended to be a shocking indication of Vader's power instead conjures up some laughable mental imagery of a springy-heeled Darth.

Though the cynical renegade Jedi Shryne makes for some of the better non-Vader moments, it's shocking to realize how much focus is placed on the Jedi and their other allies considering A) we know they will make no impact on the course of future events anyway and B) despite the attention given them, they are all razor-thin in the "anything of interest" department. A few Jedi Knights, a Padawan, and some agricultural Jedi specialists who probably didn't know a lightsaber from a Bith's hookah hardly make for worthy adversaries, even for a Vader still tentative in the Dark Side. One Jedi Master appears in the book, only to reveal her identity before Vader and a whole legion of stormtroopers, allowing herself to get killed before she could be of any use (which only goes to show that the higher the rank for Jedi of the Old Republic, the dumber they were).

Vader himself grows more confident in his possession of the Dark Side without any real explanation as to WHY this is happening. We go from a man tormented by his decisions and uncertain of his abilities to a guy sounding like the Vader of "A New Hope" in a matter of a short time, all because he is embarking on a little Easter Egg Hunt of Jedi. His powers develop some over that time, but it's pretty much limited to the usual Sith talents of "choke" and "tear off stuff from a wall and fling it at somebody telekinetically". Some new abilities and real heavy immersion in the Dark Side would have gone a long way, but sadly, we are left with Roan Shryne and his mom instead (seriously).

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