



Tatooine Ghost

Troy Denning

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SPECIAL BONUS INSIDE—the exclusive story "A Forest Apart," previously available in e-book format only!

Han and Leia struggle to keep the Empire at bay as stunning revelations from the past threaten to eclipse the future of the New Republic. . . .

The deaths of Darth Vader and Emperor Palpatine by no means spelled the end of the Empire. In the aftermath, the New Republic has faced a constant struggle to survive. Now a new threat looms: a masterpiece of Alderaanian art—lost after the planet's destruction—has resurfaced on the black market. It conceals a vital secret—the code used to communicate with New Republic agents undercover within the Empire. Discovery by Imperial forces would spell disaster. The only option is recovery—and Han, Leia, Chewbacca, and C-3PO have been dispatched to Tatooine to infiltrate the auction.

When a dispute at the auction erupts into violence, the painting vanishes in the chaos. Han and Leia are thrust into a desperate race to reclaim it. As they battle against marauding TIE fighters, encroaching stormtroopers, and Tatooine's savage Tusken Raiders, Leia's emotional struggle over the specter of her infamous father culminates in the discovery of an extraordinary link to the past. And as long-buried secrets at last emerge, she faces a moment of reckoning that will forever alter her destiny . . . and that of the New Republic.

Tatooine Ghost Details

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From Reader Review Tatoonine Ghost for online ebook

Ian Robinson says

This was one of the most enjoyable Star Wars novels i've read. It goes to show that somehow, the desert world of Tatoonine has a magical connection to the Star Wars mythos. Taking the macguffin of an Alderaan painting being auctioned on Tatoonine after the fall of the Empire, the story allows for Leia (accompanied by Han, Chewie and Threepio) to discover the backstory of her father before he became Vader - the young boy Anakin Skywalker. She encounters characters seen in Episode 1 and their fond memories and inspiration they took from the young pod racer.

I did have one major quibble with the story, however. Although written between the theatrical release of Episode 2 and 3, I was fairly sure that the true identity of Darth Vader was known only to the Emperor, Kenobi, Yoda and (eventually) his son and daughter. In this, though, everyone knew that Anakin became Vader, but they preferred to remember him as their local hero.

Katie says

This one was great! Lots of Han/Leia.

And lots of connection the prequels, though I don't remember them much at all, so I have no idea what parts are "real" and which were "made up."

Mark Kaye says

Awesome tie in to the legacy of the force series, when Leia has a vision of the future.

Elizabeth Waschak says

I loved this one. The writing was decent--no distracting uses of "mellifluous" or repeated instances of "he realized"--and the plot solid. I picked it as my next Star Wars conquest because of Leia's emotional arc. To put it in interwebs terms, it was full of feels. As a kid, I never realized why Leia was so distraught when Luke informed her of her parentage (perhaps because I was more thrilled about Luke being her brother...). Only recently did I fully realize Leia was tortured by Darth Vader. She watched Darth Vader blow up her homeworld. He froze the love of her life in carbonite. He tried to kill her brother. Her father? It is pretty horrifying. So to watch her discover Anakin Skywalker before he was Darth Vader (and through the eyes of his mother! So beautiful!) was wonderful. Another issue she faced was a fear of bearing Force-sensitive children. By getting a glimpse of Shmi's love for Anakin, she came to terms with loving a child in spite of the potential for evil. I read this knowing that in thirty years her family would be devastated, and her decision to have children and love them would end with intense pain for her, Han, and Luke.

Augh. The feels.

Stargirl says

Well, well, well... *Tatooine Ghost* was good. I loved the characterization, the setting on Tatooine and the way we got to see more of the past while going forward.

I'd say my friend Jess was more than right to recommend it to me ;) Thanks!

Now, the bad is that I only wanted to read the "new canon" (at least for now) and now I kinda want to read more of the old one. Especially because it features more of Luke, Leia and Han, compared to what we have now and I'm curious (about the kids, how Luke rebuilt the Jedi Order and Mara Jade. See I know a few things already!)

Since the novels are grouped in series/time period, I might just pick a few to read along the way.

That being said, *Tatooine Ghost* is quite early in the timeline (following the movies) and can very well insert itself in the new canon if you want to read it that way. Nothing contradict the info we got (so far) in *The Force Awakens* so I guess I CAN RECOMMEND IT TO EVERYONE AHAH

Anyone who wants to read about Star Wars, that is. Otherwise, I don't think it's necessarily the best way to jump into the story.

You'll get insight of Leia's character, Han and Chewie. Also cute young Ani (I'll keep that instead of "Annie" though, it looks weird on the page) and even more of his mother, Schmi.

The whole Skywalker fam story, in short and I thought it was well done. Seeing Leia's side of the Force too.

So now I'm all tired up. Should I continue reading this canon or not? I might be tempted, but since it's not by the Dark Side of the Force, I think I'll be alright.

Mark Oppenlander says

There are a couple of options for creating Star Wars fiction. You can take existing characters and extend their stories, you can fill in backstory only hinted at in the films, you can create entirely new characters and drop them into the existing narrative somewhere or even create new characters and situations in the same reality but unrelated to the canonical story arc. With the development of the prequel movies, another option became possible: to make connections between one era of Star Wars and another. *Tatooine Ghost* is the first book I have read that does just that.

Several years after the Battle of Endor, Han and Leia travel to Tatooine to participate in a black market art auction where a famous Alderaanian painting is up for bid. Not only is the painting a lost masterpiece, it also contains a secret code used to communicate between the New Republic and intelligence agents working undercover in the Empire. Han and Leia must find a way to procure the painting, by hook or by crook, lest these secret agents lives be put at risk. But other people have an interest in the painting as well, and the simple task of simply outbidding everyone at the auction becomes much more complex.

After the auction ends in violence, the novel takes Han and Leia on a far-flung chase across the landscape of Tatooine. There are encounters with Jawas, Tusken Raiders and stormtroopers. But most importantly, Leia is confronted with her father's past. On Tatooine, Anakin Skywalker is still something of a folk hero: a young slave boy who earned his freedom by winning a pod race. Many refuse even to believe that he went on to become the vicious villain Darth Vader. Leia meets some of Anakin's childhood friends, now adults, and hears a different side of the story. Now, as she races against time to protect the invaluable painting, she must also grapple with her perceptions of her father, a man she thought she knew and despised. Can she reconcile

the stories she is hearing with what she knows of his later reign of terror?

For my money, Troy Denning does a better job here than in his last Star Wars novel, *Star by Star*. The dialogue between the canonical characters feels right; he has the vernacular down and for once, I never felt like the characters behaved in ways that didn't correlate with the canon. And Leia's struggle to accept a different view of the father who imprisoned and tortured her seems entirely plausible. The action remains fast-paced and somewhat relentless, but at least it's not as busy and dark as it was in Denning's New Jedi Order entry. The through-line of the book's plot is remarkably clean and straightforward, despite the number of characters and situations. And with the action, humor and Tatooine setting, I almost felt like I could see and hear this one (complete with John Williams score) as the story unfolded.

This is a solid interstitial entry in the Expanded Universe. I appreciated that it was a stand-alone tale with a simple and interesting idea behind it and that the characters were handled with fluency and authenticity. Recommended.

Crystal Starr Light says

Mr. and Mrs. Solo on Tatooine...

This novel, I tried to start some years ago but couldn't quite get in the mood for. Now, hearing from many how good it was, I thought I'd find out for myself.

Plot:

Han Solo and Leia Organa Solo, recently married, travel to Tatooine with Chewbacca and C-3PO to recover Killik Twilight, an Alderaanian painting that contains the Shadowcast code. This code has been used to contact undercover agents for years and if found by the Imperials will spell doom for many agents. Things turn amok when the painting is stolen at an auction by Kitster Banai, Anakin Skywalker's former friend. Now, Han and Leia must rush across Tatooine and retrieve the painting before the Imperials do.

Good:

It is difficult to replicate the intricate, multi-dimensional chemistry between Han and Leia, our favorite smuggler and princess couple. However, Troy Denning has been able to capture this and portray it in a format that is compatible with the on-screen performances of our favorite characters. Han Solo is still dashing, reckless, and madly in love with Leia; Leia is done much, much better than in most Star Wars books (I should know as I have read all but the most recent dozen or so books) as the headstrong, freedom-loving princess who isn't afraid to use a gun when necessary.

Further, Troy Denning was given the assignment of molding Leia from Courtship of Princess Leia to Heir to the Empire, which means having her come to grips with her father and her Force abilities. Her transformation was fairly convincing (more on this later), and I liked how Leia learned about how her father wasn't always bad. Plus, it is nice seeing little tid-bits from the prequels in the post-Return of the Jedi era.

Troy has done a good job with his new aliens, the Squibs (perfectly annoying) and portraying Kitster Banai and Wald later in life. Also, kudos to Troy for finally including normal families (i.e. families that have been through divorce) in a Star Wars book! His action sequences, for the most part, keep you on the edge of your seat, particularly Han's speeder bike race and the end battle (which crashes to a halt before your very eyes!).

Bad:

Number one dumb thing about this book: the plot. Han and Leia must go to Tatooine to pick up a painting that contains a code the Rebellion used to contact undercover agents. Stupid! Why would the Rebel Alliance put such a sensitive code in a rare painting like this? Did Bail want to keep this for the memories? Because, how in the heck are people supposed to access this code anyway if it is in one person's painting? It seems to

me the whole idea of putting the code in the painting is a big headline that says, “Steal me!” Not to mention, how many times do we have to get drug through the “Imperials are one step from taking over the galaxy” plot?

And why are Han and Leia—famous Rebels with bounties on their heads so huge that anyone who sniffed them would probably sell them immediately to the Imperials—sent anyway? They only succeed in bollixing the whole thing anyway, from their agreement with the Squibs to their attempt at destroying the painting to their repeated failures at recapturing the painting and getting caught in a sand storm. This is such a stupid mission in the first place that almost anyone could have accomplished it better and faster than they did. The obvious reason this book was written was not to detail a mission (especially the stupid one concocted here), but to show how Leia evolved to want kids (something Troy vehemently says time and again she doesn't want, which I was rather surprised about as she didn't seem anti-children anywhere else) and use the Force as in *Heir to the Empire*. Troy does a so-so job with this. In my opinion, he should have dumped the stupid “the painting has a key-code that will spell disaster if the Imperials get it” and focused solely on Leia's discovery of her past.

Number two dumb thing: Shmi's diary entries. Gag me! I swear, these, which should have been the best parts of the book, were the absolute worst parts of the book. Hearing on and on and on and on about how proud she was of Anakin, how Anakin won the Boonta Eve podrace (including a brief screenplay of *The Phantom Menace*), about how Shmi tried to find out how he was doing, about how everyone was so happy about Anakin's success, how Anakin's success influenced everyone else to dream big, and so forth made me want to gag! I sincerely doubt a mother would write something like this to a son! I would hope my mom would spend more time on the present—what was happening in the neighborhood, with my friends, family, etc.—and less on my one great achievement in life!

And Shmi, who has, up until now, been portrayed as our respectable, honest, sensible mother, turns into a giggly, love-struck, rattle-brained twelve year old at the first sight of Cliegg Lars. These are her words directly from the book: “He looked directly at me and my knees went weak, the way Ameer says hers do whenever she sees Roc or Jerm or nearly any boy... Before I knew it, I had admitted the truth: that I had done it because I had found [Cliegg:] so handsome”. If that doesn't make you gag, nothing will.

Weird things about this book:

1. Why do authors feel like they have to drag their characters through a space battle at the very beginning of the book? I was so distracted and disgusted at Han and Leia's Tatooine approach, I was half-tempted to drop the book completely! All it does is let Han and Leia know that the Imperials are there. D'oh! The auction could have told them that.
2. Isn't it odd that practically every single person—from Dama at Anchorhead to Kitster Banai, who stole the painting, to the Tusken Raiders at the very end—is from or related to someone who is from the prequels? I understand this is Mos Espa, but come on! That's a little bit convenient.
3. Why the heck did Qui-Gon give Shmi the Tocal lens? I never got that part at all! It seems like an insensitive gift—or a really foresighted gift.
4. Chewbacca and C-3PO are really in the way throughout the entire book. They serve stupid menial parts, contrived to make the audience feel they were important to the plot (which they weren't—on numerous occasions, Troy leaves them elsewhere so that Leia and Han can focus their efforts elsewhere). I wish Troy would have felt comfortable enough just leaving them out completely.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

Restricted to h***, d*** and made-up Star Wars lingo. It is alluded that Han and Leia sleep with each other in a hotel. Other sexual allusions made (particularly to scantily dressed Twi'leks). Violence is typical Star Wars.

Overall:

Certainly not as good as I expected, but not the worst I have ever read from the galaxy far, far away. It does convincingly explain Leia's transformation, have its share of Star Wars action, and is pretty intriguing. As for the part I was most anticipating—Shmi's diary—this was hugely disappointing. A few other minor points make this book hard to enjoy thoroughly. Definitely interesting, but not paramount for continuity.

NOTE: Included in the mass market paperback version is a kinda cute short story, "A Forest Apart" about Chewbacca and his family. Although a little trite and overdone (Imperials steal a datapad from Leia's home in an attempt to usurp the New Republic), it is neat to see Chewbacca's family and how he interacts with his son and wife.

Ron says

Maybe a 3.4. All the iconic characters in a classic site (Tatoonine) with a twist on the attitudes and behaviors of the Imperials, of all people.

Most of the story ping pongs between Han and Leia's point of view. It works.

Flunked high school physics dept.: (page 19-20) "The quad laser cannons fired in diametric sequence The *Falcon* was still at maximum range, and the bolts took an eternity to reach their destination." Even allowing that "an eternity" is hyperbole, laser bolts travel at the speed of light. Do you think Leia knew that? Does Denning?

Elen says

The premise of this book had so much potential. And every time Leia started going on about how she couldn't bear to bring children into the world that might turn into Darth Vader I went "GAAAHHDOENSBDISNDKFO THE FEEEEEEEEELS." T_T

And then the ending was like - what? That's it? That doesn't even answer questions! Long story short, I was really disappointed. :(

steph says

Really liked this. More than I thought I would. This other does a great job of writing Leia and Han (which, I was shocked because most SW published books massacre them!) and other known characters in addition to introducing new ones and I like how we got a chance to delve into the backstory of Leia's father and grandmother. It did a really good job of tying in the prequels with the original trilogy. I think this book helped diminish my SW need for the moment but if I ever feel the need to read more, I know which author to choose!

Sarah says

I'm a complete sucker for anything that connects the prequels with the original trilogy, especially with major characters like Luke and Leia finding out more about their parents. It's the only thing that makes the Dark Nest series worth wading through for me. This one has Leia 'interacting' with Shmi via Shmi's diary, and it's pretty good. Grand Admiral Thrawn puts in a very brief, vague appearance, and Leia learns a lot about herself and her heritage. I enjoyed this one.

Michael says

With a book featuring Han Solo & Princess Leia it's a little surprising that the best parts of the book are when Leia discovers the secret past of her father Darth Vader when he was still a Skywalker. A holo-diary, force visions and just occupying the same Tatooine space give her glimpses into the past that really have good emotional pull. Denning also has fun with some of the non-human species notably the Jawas and the Squibs. Listening to this on audio brought the alien languages to life - love the Jawa stuff. Unfortunately the audio also delivers music and sound effects which is fine in the quiet moments that use pieces like Luke's theme but the battles with action music, weapon fire, explosions and narrative turns into a bloody irritating mess. The plot is a bog standard mcguffin driven one that doesn't interest much but Denning makes up for it with his three Squibs. If you have read some other Denning Star Wars books you might have met them already. They're a lot of fun. The only creatures who could make Jawas look like weekend warriors when it comes to being obsessed with trade deals. Google them if you want to see what they look like (they aren't in the films). I think they were created for some game or other. I shall now inhale some helium and wish you 'ubanya'.

Megan says

When I initially sat down and began to read this, I was a little excited. I'd been avoiding the book for years because it had a NJO cover and I didn't think it was canon. Later, when I found out when it was set, I knew I had to read it to establish its canonicity or non-canonicity, as the case might be. So I was kind of excited to sit down and read a new Star Wars novel, and one about Han and Leia, too! Han is a pretty difficult character to write; most authors cope with him by having him repeat his lines from the movie and slouch. I myself don't write about Han because I can't get a good handle on him. Troy Denning did a tolerable job, and the book was fairly readable. The chapters were short enough to make your eyes cross, but on the whole, I don't have complaints about the writing.

No, what earned this book one miserable star from me was the fact that the plot took my willful suspension of disbelief and beat it with a rubber hose until it'd had enough. Han and Leia go to Tatooine to recover a valuable painting before the Empire gets it. (There is a vague notion that if the Empire does get it, it will be very bad for everyone involved, but Denning is not terribly good at developing an antagonist. The bad guys never appear in this book in more than name only—which I was fine with, because Pellaeon is another difficult character to get, and I'd rather him never show up in person than be mutilated by someone who doesn't know what he's doing.) And so far this is all great. They meet Kitster at the auction house; he's put up a holo of Anakin Skywalker winning the Boonta for sale. This is also really cool—I love it when Star Wars characters encounter the unknown past! But Denning spoiled an incredible opportunity by somehow, inexplicably, having everyone on Tatooine know that Anakin Skywalker became Darth Vader. Now, if this were the case, well, in the words of Goldentusk, it's strange that Owen never thought to change Luke's last name in the event that someone might connect the dots! Very, very few people knew that Anakin Skywalker became Darth Vader, and Denning spoiled a fantastic opportunity of playing with people's minds by having the entire backwater planet inexplicably know this. It ended up ruining most of the rest of the stuff in the book; what that didn't ruin was ruined by one unlikely occurrence after another, all facilitated by an obvious refusal to do any research whatsoever.

Anchorhead is very, very far away from Mos Epsa, and yet everyone in Mos Epsa is on intimate terms with everything that goes on there. Watto didn't even know where the Lars had moved to, for goodness' sake.

Then, in a twinkling fairy godmother spell of fate, Gavin Darklighters' parents have moved into the old Lars homestead and Mrs. Darklighter has found Shmi's journal! GASP! Leia reads her grandmother's journal, which just so happens to include footage of her father's epic podrace—because 15 minutes of that crap in the movie wasn't enough, and I really wanted to read a three page blow-by-blow description of it again. And magically they go to Obi-Wan's house and find a magic box that gets forgotten about by the end of the book. Also, in spite of the fact that Tusken Raiders are wildly nomadic and Anakin obliterated the entire tribe that killed his mother, Kitster is being held in the SAME ENCAMPMENT and Leia is able to enter the VERY SAME torture tent her grandmother died in!! Will wonders never cease?

Really, the entire book limps along in this fashion, flogging the reader over the head with more obvious coincidences than can reasonably be expected in a book. You know, when I was about 12 years old, I wrote a little piece of fanfiction about Luke encountering a bunch of stuff to do with his nine-year-old father. It read like a hokey bit of crap, and yet now I'm disappointed I didn't forward it to Lucas, because apparently it would've gotten published and honestly read better than this nonsensical assembly of way too many pages in large text with huge margins and double the necessary chapters. To top it all off, the end simply peters out, and somehow they're making an escape successfully and it doesn't really matter if the Imperials are about to blow them up or not because Han is okay with having kids now, and that really was the important part.

On the whole, don't bother reading this. It tried very, very hard, and there could have been some interesting stuff involved, but Denning spoiled it by having no sense of the universe about which he was writing. Because of all the unlikely coincidences heaped up together combined with facts that couldn't possibly be general knowledge, the canonicity of this book is extremely dubious, and I still don't know what to make of it. I'm sorry. I did try.

This review via [The Rebel Librarian](#)

Destiny says

I had heard about this book back in 2005 when I was in the first throes of my Star Wars obsession. After I tried and failed to read Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith, I stayed away from the EU and other science fiction books.

Fast forward five years or so, I realized that the books that I just couldn't deal with at the tender age of fifteen now make more sense to me. So I figured why not try the EU again? The first book I read was Star Wars: The Courtship of Princess Leia and while I enjoyed it, I felt that the portrayal of Leia was somewhat...off. She didn't seem to be the same woman from the movie series. I know that with different authors writing the EU, it's a possibility that the characters make act OOC.

But with Tatooine Ghost I felt that Denning had a better grip on Leia and not just Leia but her relationship with Han. The two of them really matched their movie versions. Their banter felt familiar.

I have to admit I was more interested in Leia's feeling about her father more than I was about the recovering the painting. It was very interesting to see Leia contemplate her father's turn to the darkside and all the atrocious things he did. It felt realistic.

I thought the story was wrapped up perfectly with the ending.

Maythavee says

I love, love, love this book! It's so nice to see the Solos in their happier times. You know, before the New Jedi Order and the Legacy of the Force series. I feel so bad for them; they were carefree (as much as they can be anyway) in this book. They have no idea what's in store for them in the future... Now that I think of it, I really wish Luke, Han and Leia would get their happy ending. It seems that as the series continues, their lives gets worse every time : (

Anyway, I love Han and Leia! They are my favourite characters from the saga so it was freaking awesome to have a whole book about them. Troy Denning did a fantastic job portraying Han, Leia, Chewbacca and C-3PO.

Han Solo is still the lovable scoundrel we all know and love. We see more of his soft side which I thought made him so much cuter! Gah! I just love him so much :P You are one lucky woman, Leia. As for Leia Organa Solo, she is still one of my favourite female characters ever! She is amazing. Her strong personality we see in the movies are portrayed here. We also get to see more of her soft side as well. I loved her struggles with understanding the Force and her Skywalker heritage. I'd always wanted to know how Leia took the news that Darth Vader was her father. It was nice to see the Force leading her to different places so that she could discover her father's past before he became Darth Vader. I loved the connections between the characters from the Prequels and the characters from the Classics. I really liked how Leia's opinions regarding the Force, Tatooine and her father changed as the book progresses. It was cool to see Leia become more opened to the Force and to her Skywalker heritage.

Chewbacca and C-3PO were awesome as always! They both added the right amount of humour to the tense moments. It was nice to see the gang (minus Luke and R2-D2) together again, fighting what's left of the Empire. The other supporting characters were great as well. I love the Squibs! They were freaking hilarious.

As for the plot, it was very good! I loved how there were two plotlines intertwined together: the mission to get the Killik Twilight and Leia's journey to understand the Force and her father. These two plotlines worked very well together. I also liked how it took place on Tatooine, the place where everything began: Anakin's path to become a Jedi as well as his son's Luke's journey. The book also explored Han and Leia's relationship after six months of marriage. I understood both of their arguments regards having children. It was so sad (and ironic) to know that Leia's fear will actually come true. However, there were really sweet and adoring moments between them. I loved every moment that they had. They were really meant to be together.

Overall, Tatooine Ghost was a wonderful read! I loved the two short stories at the beginning and at the end of the book. I mean, what could be better than to start the book with Han and Leia's honeymoon? 'Corphelion Interlude' was the perfect portrayal of their honeymoon. It was so Han and Leia. Oh Han, can you get any sweeter than this? We also get to see Leia's romantic side which we don't get to see very often. I was sighing dreamily and aww-ing throughout the story. As for 'A Forest Apart' Chewbacca's story, I enjoyed it as well. I already adore our 'walking carpet' so it was really cool to see him in action with his family. It's great to see Chewie's interactions with his family. They are so cute.
