

EVIL NEVER DIES

THE SITH DYNASTIES

BY ABEL G. PEÑA

INTRODUCTION

Over the millennia, the Sith have existed in many forms: as a people, as a religion, as a dictatorship, as a philosophy. The Sith have been brought to the brink of extinction time and again, yet they have always found a way to survive. Many times the title of "the last Dark Lord" has been erroneously applied. First the Dark Lord Naga Sadow, vanquished by the Galactic Republic in the Great Hyperspace War 5,000 years before the Battle of Yavin, was thought to be the last. Then a thousand years later, the fallen Jedi Exar Kun was considered the last of these dark siders' twisted kind.

Then Darth Nihilus... then Lord Kaan... then Darth Vader. In the words of the arcane scholar Murk Lundi, the Sith, though oft-vanquished, understood and fully embraced a fundamental concept that was certain to assure their survival and resurrection -- an idea that most Jedi refused to accept.

Simply, if the will of the Force demands balance, then evil can never die.



PART ONE: Since the Beginning

"It is relevant to note that the word 'Sith' can be found in Pre-Corellian lexicons as a term meaning 'due to' or more plainly, 'since.' Sith that time -- wait, that's not right [student laughter] -- since that time, the word has evolved with Corellian phraseology to give us highly useful expressions, such as the expletives, 'Sithspit!' and 'Sithspawn!' [student laughter]."

-- Lecture recording from The Lundi Series, Vol. 3: Origins of the Darth Dynasty, Soundbyte Texts

The term Sith was once used to describe a variety of beings, and was not always synonymous with the dark side. Originally not only a cult but a cultured species before they were subjugated by dark Jedi exiles, the blood-colored humanoid Sith people lived a superficially barbaric though surprisingly harmonious existence on their homeworld Korriban. Sentient sacrifices to their gods, dining on bloodsoup, a rigid and prejudice caste system, and war between nations were all common in Sith culture. These barbarous practices were accepted not as contrary or antagonistic to life, but integral to it. War was quite literally a concept on par with peace or serenity; conceptually, the Sith people did not or could not differentiate one state from the other. There was, ultimately, only existence.

Some historians have speculated that the attitudes of the early Sith people were owed to a prehistoric encounter between their species and the vampiric beings known as the Anzati. Volfe Karkko, a rare Anzat Jedi known for his prolonged study of one of the Jedi Temple's rare Sith holocrons, was fond of reminding his fellow Knights that the Anzati "remember the very first Sith." Beyond the anecdotal, though, there is no solid evidence to support this theory.

A peculiarity of the Sith people was their innate tendency toward left-handedness. This led to their creation of the lanvarok, a forearm-mounted weapon adapted strictly for left-handed use (human Sith Lords later crafted a right-handed version). Pure-blooded Sith were also steadily bred out as their genes were eventually alchemically mixed with those of humanoid dark Jedi. Even after the genetic fusion, the Sith's rigid caste system remained in place. Priests and warriors, called Kissai and Massassi respectively, were two of the prominent classes. Later in their history, those that bore the elevated title of Sith Lord were became relatively common, but in 100,000 years of their existence, the Sith only ever had one monarch overlord.

Ruling nearly 3,000 years before the rise of the Galactic Republic, King Adas was a massive, regal being encased in majestic ebon warrior armor. Raised from his youth as a chosen being due to the charcoal pigment of his skin, Adas demonstrated great intelligence, fighting prowess, and a tremendous aptitude for Sith magic. With his alchemically forged battle-ax, Adas led the bloody unification of Korriban's disparate nations and became its undisputed world ruler. The Sith people came to believe that King Adas was immortal and that his reign would be eternal.

In fact, Adas was almost three hundred years old and had earned the title Sith'ari

(meaning "the Lord" or "overlord") when alien invaders came to Korriban. Misshapen Force-sensitive beings, these Rakatan soldiers of the so-called Infinite Empire first attempted to lull King Adas into their confidence by teaching him how to record his essence into a pyramidal, magical device called a holocron. But the Rakata soon showed their true colors and tried to conquer the Sith people. But even at that ripe age, the Sith King refused to go quietly and introduced the invaders to his oversized axe and the unconquerable will of his people. The dark siders were defeated, but the king gave his life to secure the Sith's freedom. After his death, King Adas' holocron passed to his "Shadow Hand," his trusted advisor and second in command. Without Adas' unifying influence, wars once again raged for rule of the Sith people, with the reigning combatants arrogantly claiming the title of Sith'ari, and eventually forcing a relocation of the Sith capitol to the planet Ziost.

Eventually, almost two-dozen millennia after Adas' death, a proper successor to Adas seemed to come at last.

Known in Republic space as the Exiles, traitorous Jedi defeated in a galactic war called the Hundred-Year Darkness arrived on Korriban and cowed the Sith people

with their astounding Force abilities, lightsabers, and superior technology. With the help of the ruling king's Shadow Hand, these Jen'jidai, as the Sith called them, lured the Sith monarch into their confidence and destroyed him. Never anticipating this stunning sequence of events, the Sith people concluded that the dark Jedi were themselves more powerful gods than even the Sith'ari. Bestowing the Exiles with Adas' holocron, the reign of the first Jen'ari, or "Dark Lord" of the Sith began.

The last lord of the Sith Empire to possess Adas' holocron was Lord Garu, who died around the time of the Great Hyperspace War. The holocron was abandoned on the planet Ashas Ree until its rediscovery centuries later by the fallen Jedi Freedon Nadd. Nadd used it to rule the planet Onderon, where the teachings of King Adas helped usher in a new age of darkness. When the Jedi eventually freed Onderon of the dark side, they gained possession of the Sith holocron and banished it to a place where it could, presumably, never be recovered -- under millions of tons of water on a scarcely known world called Kodai.



PART TWO: The Mecrosa Order

Immediately following their conquest of the Sith people (circa 7,000 years before the Battle of Yavin), a few upstart Exiles, now self-proclaimed Sith Lords, returned to Republic space believing they could revenge themselves on their Jedi enemies with their new knowledge of Sith magic. The attack proved premature, however, and instead they succeeded only in revealing that some Jedi schismatics had found a new home and a people to rule outside of charted Republic space. The true scale of the Sith menace lurking in unknown space remained invisible for millennia, however. Two thousand years later, the Great Hyperspace War indelibly proved to the Jedi how dangerous the Sith Lords could be.

The thoroughness of the Jedi extermination efforts following this first full-scale Sith war was criticized by many as being executed with a gusto rivaling a Bothan declaration of Total War. Nevertheless, Sith teachings survived, and a thousand years later, a new war erupted, this time called the Great Sith War. This conflict came to be grouped with a series of major Sith-related encounters that followed soon after: the Mandalorian Wars, the Jedi Civil War, and the Cleansing of the Nine Houses.

The Mecrosa Order was the focus of the Cleansing. The order started out benevolently enough. Emerging during the Tapani sector's Dynastic Era, approximately a quarter millennium before the Great Sith War, the Mecrosa began as an order of nobles from



House Mecetti who took an oath to protect the house against external attack and insurrection. For the next two hundred years, Mecrosa flourished from its castle on the planet Nyssa, gaining wealth and erecting chapter houses and fortresses on Mecetti worlds.

To assist in its crusade, the order also oversaw the creation of an elaborate spy network. It is believed that the

virtues of the Mecrosa Order were compromised somewhere during this two century stretch. Jedi from rival House Pelagia insisted that the order's founder, Viscountess Mireya, was the root of Mecrosa's Sith corruption.

When Mecetti High Lord Tritum XI realized there was a threat of inbreeding facing his house, he sought to introduce new noble blood. In one of those all-too-common circumstances when politics and noble pride must be reconciled, Tritum looked to a suitor outside the Tapani region -- to the nobility of a world called Vjun. Vjunite

Viscountess Mireya brought to House Mecetti not only her noble pedigree, but Sith teachings as well. Sith rituals were subtly integrated into Mecrosa initiation rites and ceremonies, and soon Sith "lords" of a very different breed terrorized Tapani sector, assassinating Tapani house leaders that appeared to threaten Mecetti power and infecting Pelagia's Jedi with Sith poisons.

The Great Sith War turned out to be advantageous for Tapani citizens, for it focused Jedi attentions toward the Sith in their sector. After crushing Exar Kun, the Jedi collectively turned their might against the Mecrosa Order and flensed the Sith corruption in what came to be known as the Cleansing of the Nine Houses. However, contrary to popular belief, the Jedi didn't destroy the Mecrosa Order itself. The surviving Mecrosa, many of them non-Force-sensitive to begin with, went even deeper underground, trading the flash of Sith magic and supernatural poisons for the silence of frinka venom and martial arts.

The humbled Mecrosa survived the next 4,000 years, maintaining their secret through careful member selection and their tradition of assassination. Only during the New Sith Wars and the Jedi Purge did the order participate in sector events more actively, respectively poisoning Sith Lady Belia Darzu for her unwanted incursions into Tapani Space and taking revenge against the Pelagian Jedi for their role in decimating Mecrosa during the Cleansing.

It was during the Jedi Purge after the Clone Wars that King Adas' holocron fell back into the hands of Sith descendants, when Mecrosa's most skilled agent Sir Nevil Tritum, snuck his way into Pelagia's holocron library. Despite not having any Force abilities, Tritum reported to his superiors his successful recovery of Adas' holocron from three very dead Jedi guardians.

Some time after the Battle of Endor, the Mecrosa were visited in their fortress on Nyssa by a woman appearing for all the galaxy like the abominable offspring of Darth Vader, requesting access to the order's most ancient documents and their Sith holocron. With little option and a sense of obligation, the Mecrosa ceded to the Dark Lady Lumiya's demands.

PART THREE: The New Sith

Sentients have often debated what has been the bloodiest, most wasteful war in galactic history. Jedi historians often recall the Jedi Civil War, while retired Old Republic rear-admirals name the Clone Wars. But whether it is referred to as "The War of the Fittest," "The Betrayal," or "The Curse of Qalydon," the Sith invariably cite the New Sith Wars.

The Old Sith Wars neutralized the Sith as an overt threat. But pressured by criticism of Jedi zeal exhibited in the aftermath of the Great Hyperspace War, the clean up job wasn't nearly as thorough this time around as it should have been. Political concerns were already beginning to take precedence over justice within the Republic, and instead of hunting down the remaining members of Exar Kun's Brotherhood of the Sith, the Republic chancellor urged the Jedi to finally destroy the Mecrosa Order, which had terrorized the influential Tapani sector for decades. The results were mixed. While the Tapani dark siders were eradicated, Sith survivors of the Great Sith War spread their evil into several distinct traditions, which would eventually wreak galactic-scale havoc as they brought themselves to the brink of extinction in non-stop combat.

It began when one Jedi abandoned the Knighthood 1,000 years before the last Battle of Rusaan. Known by the name Phanius and believed to be an Umbaran, the pale-skinned man was a charismatic and gifted Jedi Master who exhibited hints of a disturbingly relativistic, some said solipsistic, morality. He became one of "The Lost" when he abandoned the Jedi Order to pursue "alternative" knowledge. Unknown to the order, he infiltrated and united the various surviving Sith clans, intensifying his self-centered views. Phanius, convinced he'd obliterated the mental barriers that had kept him from understanding that his will superceded all things (or, in fact, was everything), took the name Darth Ruin.

A number of Jedi joined his Sith cause, and war with the Jedi brotherhood inevitably followed. It wasn't long before the Sith turned the war upon themselves. After countless numbers of Ruin's minions died for seemingly little else than his sheer whim, the Sith acolytes soon came to realize that they meant nothing -- quite literally -- within the scheme of their Dark Lord's abstract philosophy. They conspired and destroyed Darth Ruin, ushering in a millennium-long period of betrayal and darkness.

Chaos largely reigned for the next 250 years until a powerful Sith leader emerged. Known only as the Dark Underlord, his presence was clouded with rumor and Sith folklore. Some said he was called from the realm of Chaos by an inexperienced Sith acolyte who was never heard from again. Others even speculated that the Dark Underlord was the spirit of the Lettow general Xendor himself. The only thing that was certain was that he was a bloody marauder of the first quarter of the New Sith Wars.

Consolidating a large Sith group known as the Black Knights on the planetoid Malrev 4, the Dark Underlord was one of the few Sith powerful enough to actively take the battle to the Jedi during this era, hacking through battlefields with his twin Sith swords. However, the Jedi Master Murrtaggh cut a deal with Mandalorian mercenaries, who staged a diversionary attack on the Dark Underlord's forces. While the Dark Underlord's Zeltron commander faced the Mandalorian intruders, Master Murrtaggh stole into his enemy's territory and assassinated the Sith Lord, martyring himself to the dark side in the process.

The last quarter of this bloody, backstabbing period saw the rise of the Dark Lord Belia Darzu, the major historical intermediary between Darth Rivan and the last Sith of this era, Lord Kaan and his Brotherhood of Darkness. A changeling and master of monster creation, Darzu was infamous for assimilating her conquered enemies into her own army, the Metanecrons, though the conversions were anything but voluntary. Using the Sith power known as mechu-deru, she created the frontline of her force: hulking part-creature, part-machine technobeasts infested with nanogene droids. In combat, the tiny droids could infect their enemy, rewriting the unfortunate being's genetic code until she became a undead technobeast herself. Another sizable portion of Darzu's army was made up of her dead opponents, spurned to life by Sith incantations. Darzu's apoptotic army was ultimately sabotaged by Mecrosa poisoners, ending her evil. Centuries later, the Emperor's Hands Roganda Ismaren and Blackhole would use Sith scrolls preserving Darzu's secrets for their own sinister purposes.

Eventually the prominence of the Darth lineage was reestablished. The narcissistic Dark Lord Kaan ruled the Brotherhood of Darkness with an iron fist in the final days of the New Sith Wars. He commanded his Sith followers to create a Thought Bomb that wiped out both their forces and the Jedi enemies. This left the Dark Lord called Darth Bane the last Sith standing. With his apprentice Darth Zannah, Bane reshaped the Sith Order with two rules: henceforward, the Sith would only be two in number and until such time as they revenged themselves on the Jedi, they would maintain their existence a secret.



PART FOUR: Cults and Acculturation

The Jedi heard next to nothing of the Sith after the Battle of Rusaan. There were the vague threats by dark sider Kibh Jeen at his moment of desperation during the Dark Jedi Conflict (circa 150 years before the Battle of Naboo), who spouted seeming gibberish about there always being no more or less than two Sith, but few Jedi gave his mad utterances any credence. But then the Sith cultists began emerging. These "Sith" were disorganized and harmless for the most part. Many were merely youths in rebellion, without any solid idea of Sith doctrine or even any Force-sensitivity. But not all of them.

One of the more dangerous cults was the Thyrsian Sun Guard. Not Force-sensitive, nonetheless these soldiers-for-hire were fearsome fighters. Consolidated in the Thyrsus system by Darth Sidious, the Sun Guard wore helmets reminiscent of the elite Senate Guard, although instead of ceremonial robes these Sith mercenaries were mailed in black armor from head to foot. Several of these Sith mercs guarded Sidious' Coruscant stronghold, and were also instrumental in the Dark Lord's plans surrounding the events of the Battle of Naboo, assassinating a discreet, though pivotal, number of Senators prior to the election for a new Supreme Chancellor. However, after Sidious' schemes ran their course, Count Dooku had most of these devotees killed by his executor Asajj Ventress -- though more than a few of the most fanatical Sun Guards found their way into Chancellor Palpatine's Red Guard.

One Sith cult can trace its origins back to the days of the Great Sith War. Larad Noon was one of the Jedi corrupted into the Brotherhood of the Sith by Exar Kun. When Kun and his Shadow Hand Ulic Qel-Droma were defeated, Noon and the other Sith acolytes fled to various parts of the galaxy. Some flew to the Expanse, dooming themselves and the Sith of House Mecetti.

Noon, however, was forever scarred by Sith ideology and the countless deaths he caused. He distanced himself from the Jedi and became a recluse on the moon Susevfi. Here he discovered a peculiar ore called cortosis capable of rendering lightsabers inoperative on contact. From this ore he fashioned a suit of armor to protect himself against the Jedi he believed would inevitably come, though in actuality, none did. Noon died alone, survived only by his journal in which he wrote extensively on his theory of Jiaasjen or "integrating the shadow." It was Noon's attempt to amalgamate his Jedi learning with his Sith experiences in order to justify the atrocities he committed and to keep himself from going insane with guilt.

Thousands of years later, during the Clone Wars, an Anzat Jedi named Nikkos Tyris learned of his predecessor, the Jedi Volfe Karkko, and how he fell to the dark side. Curious, Tyris made a great effort to obtain Karkko's apocryphal teachings in which he found frequent reference to and snippets from Sith tomes. Looking on Karkko as a role model and lured to Count Dooku by his possession of one of Karkko's most cherished Sith holocrons, Tyris was slowly seduced into the darkness. Claiming he'd found the Saarai or "True Way," Tyris split from the Jedi Order, attracting many Jedi to himself, including the infamous Bpfasshi marauders. However, Tyris and most of his followers were slain by Jedi forces.

Tyris was survived by only a handful of Jensaarai pupils, Sith for "Followers of the True Way." Their training was far from complete, but as such they had not been corrupted as Tyris had. Tyris' primary apprentice felt it was her duty to make certain her master's ideals, or what she perceived to be his ideals, didn't die, and that the "evil" Jedi wouldn't



triumph. She took it upon herself to continue Tyris "truth" by finding what Sith texts she could. She was largely unsuccessful, but when she came to Susevfi, she found Larad Noon's journal. The result was the creation of a Force tradition that uniquely blended Sith and Jedi teachings.

Proliferation among the Sith cults can at least in part be attributed to one man, or one Quermian, as it were: history professor Murk Lundi, who made his career exploring esoteric topics. An excellent teacher but a mediocre researcher, he found himself struggling in the "publish or perish" world of academia.

In peril of losing his position at the University of Coruscant, Lundi began to explore topics outside of stale classics like Xim the Despot and the Atrisian

Empire. Eventually, he zeroed in on a single controversial subject: the Sith. To advance his research, the academician delved into the trenches, creating a communications network between the disparate Sith sects to grant himself greater accessibility to information.

Then, Lundi learned of the ultimate prize. A Sith holocron was buried deep beneath the oceans of the planet Kodai. Lundi attempted to retrieve the artifact, but was stopped by the Jedi. Afterward, one of his classroom students almost succeeded where the teacher had failed, but the pupil was destroyed by one of Darth Sidious' Sun Guard mercenaries and the holocron was restored to Jedi hands. Lundi later went irrevocably insane and died a madman's death. Meanwhile, the Jedi Council ultimately entrusted the Sith holocron to House Pelagia's extensive holocron library in the Tapani sector.

PART FIVE: A Dark Religion

The order of the Prophets of the Dark Side goes back nearly a thousand years to the three-eyed mutant Darth Millennial, a Sith Shadow Hand whose instincts drove him to see more sense in Lord Kaan's cutthroat Rule by the Strong than Bane's limiting Rule of Two. Gifted with the ability to foresee the future, Millennial was often at odds with his Sith Master, Darth Cognus.

Barely escaping his Master's wrath, Millennial fled to the planet Dromund Kaas. There he meditated on Sith teachings and combined them with the theories of early and pre-Republic thinkers like Plaristes and Dak Ramis. The result was an intricate religion the dark sider called the Dark Force. Hailing himself as a prophet chosen by the will of the Force, Millennial and his religion attracted many Force-users of considerable intelligence, as well as multitudes of naïve Sith cultists. Those who disagreed with the tenets of the Dark Force were labeled heretics and destroyed.

Centuries passed and so did Millennial, but his faith lived on, at one point seducing the Jedi Kibh Jeen. Eventually, Darth Sidious discovered the secret order, and bent these Prophets of the Dark Side to his will. When the Prophets were obliquely reintegrated into Darth Bane's line of the Sith, Palpatine secretly gave them the duty of providing early training for some of his dark siders. Occasionally, Palpatine asked the Prophets to train a

devotee to the exalted levels of Emperor's Hand, Emperor's Eyes, or Emperor's Reach. Just as the Prophets only ever trained one individual to the rank of Emperor's Reach for Palpatine, likewise they only trained one to the status of Emperor's Eyes. However, this latter individual was one of the Prophets' own.

A former Nightsister of Dathomir, High Prophetess Merili was one of only two Emperor's Eyes that Palpatine ever employed. The Emperor's Eyes were those Dark Side Adepts with a particular propensity for seeing into the Force. Like the other Prophets, Merili was able to gaze into the future; the invaluable difference, however, was that Merili's mind seemed to partially exist there. She was thus not only able to witness coming events with uncanny



clarity, but on rare occasion she was able to in fact manipulate them, much like a skilled Jedi Master can influence the outcome of a conflict using Battle Meditation. Needless to say, the stresses of temporal ambiguity made Merili's hold on reality tenuous at best. Of Palpatine's other Emperor's Eye, a mutant called Triclops, little is known, save that Palpatine considered the being a great personal failure.

The Prophets of the Dark Side have always maintained their sovereign right to accept additional adherents of the Dark Force at their discretion. The Prophets have three ranks in their order: acolyte, followed by prophet, with each subdivided into sub-ranks such as "Lesser Prophet" and "High Prophet," and ultimately the overarching position of Supreme Prophet (all acolytes and prophets of lesser orders are easily identifiable by their lack of a beard). The Prophets were one of Palpatine's most jealously guarded secrets, kept concealed even from Darth Vader for a time.

When Supreme Prophet Kadann adamantly disagreed with Palpatine concerning a guaranteed Imperial victory at Endor, Palpatine sent his Inquisitors to Dromund Kaas to reeducate Kadann's priesthood, causing the ecclesiastics to take flight to the secluded planet Bosthirda.

After Endor, while the Prophets were believed dead, former Imperial Intelligence Director Blackhole -- himself a former Prophet of the Dark Side -- helped acting-Emperor Sate Pestage set up a "Dark Side Church" on Imperial Center with a clergy of false Prophets, including a diminutive Bimm and a Null to impersonate the current Supreme Prophet Kadann and his High Prophet Jedgar, respectively. As religion had been largely outlawed under Palpatine, these charlatans filled a tremendous spiritual need for the population and became highly idolized. This later empowered the fakers to actually dictate rule of the Empire. They determined to bestow Emperorship on whomever secured the glove of the dead Darth Vader's severed right hand -- a Mandalorian crushgaunt which Vader had fitted around one of Lord Kaan's indestructible Sith amulets. The Imperial Grand Admiral Afsheen Makati eventually destroyed these prophet imposters, though one of them, Orloc, escaped to continue his con.

Meanwhile, the real Prophets continued to plot from the planet Bosthirda, until they were found by their most dangerous and embittered pupil, Azrakel, on a tip from a mysterious source. Armed with his double-bladed lightsaber and Darth Vader's prophesied gauntlet, Azrakel managed to destroy a number of the flabbergasted Prophets, including Supreme Prophet Kadann, before being permanently put down. Though the surviving Prophets thought they were now safe, within minutes of Azrakel's death, the Dark Lady Lumiya and her apprentice Carnor Jax finished the job.

PART SIX: Life After Darth

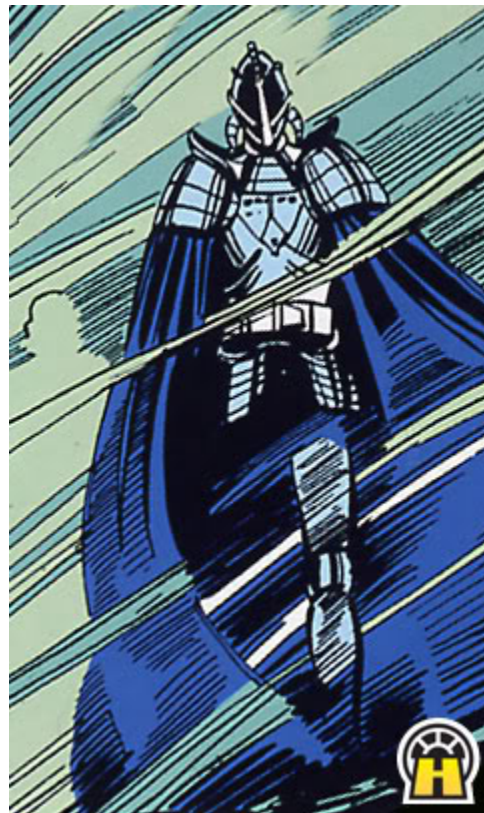
The problem Bane addressed when he bound the Sith to secrecy and their number to a pair was that only under such conditions could dark side ambition be checked. But Emperor Palpatine eventually broke the rule of secrecy and "bent" the rule of two by keeping a multitude of dark siders in reserve. Like his emperor, Vader also bent the rules, secretly training Sith disciples of his own so that he himself might usurp the title of Sith Master. Among them were Lumiya, an Imperial double-agent-turned cyborg, and Flint, a stormtrooper whose father was killed by General Grievous during the Clone Wars.

Vader had planned to pit these pupils against one another as past Dark Lords had done, taking the victor as his Shadow Hand. The Sith Lord died before that could happen, however. Flint, who had looked to Vader as a father, felt the loss deeply. He retreated to the planet Vjun where he mourned within Vader's Bast Castle. It wasn't long before he was found there by Lumiya. Though they'd never seen one another, without words they came to a mutual understanding. A towering statue of Vader looked on as Flint ignited his lightsaber and Lumiya her Sith lightwhip. The furious battle left both warriors battered, but in the end Flint's despair was no match for Lumiya's hatred, and the roles of master and the apprentice were determined.

Lumiya tasked Flint with subjugating the Phelleem sector and killing Luke Skywalker while she prepared an alien species called the Nagai (or N'Gai) for the invasion of galactic space. Nothing could make Flint happier, but instead of killing Skywalker, Flint was persuaded by an old friend to turn back to the light. For many years thereafter, Flint was kept in a cell of Mandalorian iron on an Alliance safeworld, healing from the traumatic influence of the dark side. Eventually, he returned to his home planet Belderone to live out a simple life. Lumiya vowed to deal with Flint when circumstances allowed and sought a new apprentice. She didn't have to look far.

As the dominant black color of his robes suggests, the dark sider Carnor Jax had ties not only to the Imperial Royal Guard, but his father was once a Sith mercenary of the Thyrsus Sun Guard who was killed by Darth Sidious following his failure to recover King Adas' holocron. Jax himself was a superior soldier, savvy and ambitious. Like Flint, he excelled as a stormtrooper, but Jax was handpicked from the ranks of the Blackhole's special stormtrooper unit for the Royal Guard.

After Palpatine's death, a number of Royal Guards partook in a mass suicide. Some distraught guards joined the cause of Lord Shadowspawn, while others found solace in



the words of the Prophets' Church of the Dark Side, who promised the Emperor would one day return. Jax was disgusted at the weakness he witnessed blind loyalty produce and resolved to have no part of it. Thus, it was easy for Jax to transfer allegiance from Palpatine to his successor Sate Pestage, then again to Empress Ysanne Isard. Ultimately, Jax was loyal only to himself.

That became problematic, however, when Isard transferred Jax and a number of other Royal Guards into the hands of Lumiya as part of a deal. Sensing the Force in Jax, Lumiya offered him something altogether different than any of his previous masters: the power of the dark side.

After giving Jax limited training, Lumiya informed her apprentice of her need to now gather the necessary elements to rebuild the Sith Order. The New Republic already thought Lumiya dead, and the circumstances surrounding her encounter with the Emperor's Hand Mara Jade on Caprioril led the Empire to the same conclusion. Before she disappeared on this quest, however, Lumiya ordered Jax to infiltrate the Empire's upper echelons and prepare, by whatever means necessary, for the ultimate threat to the Sith legacy. Jax pursued this agenda, collecting political and military allies and incriminating secrets within the Imperial Ruling Council and using Dark Side Adepts like Sarcev Quest to learn new Force powers. Jax soon had the Empire eating out of his palm.

Then came the unthinkable. Emperor Palpatine, dead for six years, miraculously returned. Suddenly, Jax realized what threat his master Lumiya had been referring to, and was not prepared to give up the power he'd accumulated. As a Force-sensitive Royal Guard, Jax easily became part of the Reborn Emperor's elite and trusted Sovereign Protectors. With Quest's help and particular relish, Jax convinced the Imperial Ruling Council to bribe Palpatine's physician into poisoning the clones the Emperor was using to stay alive. Palpatine died his last death as a result, and Jax set himself up as Imperial ruler.

Afterward, he attempted to reestablish communication with Lumiya -- not to rejoin her but to lure her into a trap. That's when one of Palpatine's loyal former Royal Guardsmen killed him.

Lumiya was nonetheless thankful, for not only had Jax permanently eliminated Palpatine, but before his attempted betrayal, he'd passed on word to her of a mysterious stranger called Nom Anor who was interested in a possible alliance with the Dark Lady.

PART SEVEN: Evil Lives

"Will the Sith ever return? It's a probabilistically historical inescapability. But, what makes you think they haven't already? [uneasy laughter]."

-- Lecture recording from The Lundi Series, Vol. 5: Historical Reincarnation, Soundbyte Texts

Despite all the efforts of the Jedi and the Republic, the Sith seem to be an inextinguishable plague. Seven years after the Battle of Endor, when Luke Skywalker established an academy with the intention of rebuilding the Jedi Order, the spirit of the ancient Sith Lord Exar Kun returned to prevent the Jedi Brotherhood's resurrection. Three short years later, another Sith daemon, this time the Dark Lord Marka Ragnos, also was called back from the realm of Chaos to terrorize the galaxy. This latter event was not isolated. Some of the disciples of Ragnos had formerly been aligned with the dark sider Hethrir and his Empire Reborn, which had been defeated only a short time prior. Worse, soon after the encounter with Ragnos, the lifeless body of the reformed Sith acolyte Flint was found on Belderone: an ancient Jedi lightsaber in hand, a cauterized hole through his throat.

The Force seethed with the suggestion of a grand, sinister scheme. But Luke could only guess at who was pulling the strings. Either the dark sider Irek Ismaren or Jaalib Brandl? One of Luke's rogue Jedi students, perhaps...Brakiss or Dolph? The list of suspects was considerable. In the wake of these events, Master Skywalker began to keep a formal compilation of known dark siders and to actively unearth any facts on the Sith that he could find, some of Doctor Lundi's teachings among them.

On the world of Korriban, through the ancient Sith Oracle and with King Adas' holocron now in her possession, the Dark Lady of the Sith Lumiya watched circumstances unfolding with deep satisfaction.

