

Republic: The Lost Jedi's Return

A Star Wars Fan Novel

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PROLOGUE

You feel the cold metal of your starfighter's control yoke beneath your fingers, the familiar hum of the engines a comforting presence in the void of space. You remember your master's words, the way they lingered in the air long after he had gone. "Trust in the Force," he had said, his voice as serene as the still surface of a Naboo lake. It was a mantra you had held close, especially now, as the galaxy teetered on the brink of darkness.

The stars streaked past in silent reverence as you piloted your ship toward the remote outpost on the outskirts of known space. The Republic had sent you on countless missions, but this one felt different. The whispers of the Force were urgent, a silent scream in the vastness of the cosmos. You knew the Clone Wars raged on, worlds burning under the shadow of conflict, but your path lay elsewhere.

A distress signal had brought you here, a faint pulse of energy crying out amidst the chaos. It was from a Jedi, one who had vanished years before, their fate a mystery that tugged at the edges of the Order's consciousness. That Jedi was a beacon of hope once, a hero of countless battles, then gone as if swallowed by the dark itself.

Your thoughts are interrupted as the outpost emerges from the black, a jagged silhouette against the backdrop of a swirling nebula. The Force thrums in your veins, a warning that sends shivers down your spine. You navigate your ship through the debris of forgotten skirmishes, remnants of a time when the outpost buzzed with life. Now, it stands desolate, a tomb to lost secrets.

Landing your ship with practiced ease, you descend the ramp, your boots clanging on the platform. The air is stale, the silence deafening. You ignite your lightsaber, its blue glow casting an otherworldly light on the derelict structures that surround you. The Force leads you through the maze-like corridors, each step taking you deeper into the heart of the outpost.

Finally, you reach a chamber, its doors sealed by the ravages of time. With a focused thrust of the Force, the doors groan open, revealing a sight that steals your breath. There, amidst ancient Jedi relics and the dust of ages, stands a figure, cloaked in tattered robes, a lightsaber in their hand. Their presence is a well of power, a reminder of what was lost, what could still be saved.

"You have come at last," the figure speaks, voice echoing in the hollow space. It's a voice you realize you've heard before, in dreams and whispered legends.

"Why did you leave?" you ask, the question burning in your chest.

The figure lowers their hood, revealing a face haunted by war, yet alight with an inner fire. "I foresaw the fall," they say, their eyes meeting yours, a mirror to your own turmoil. "I had to

CHAPTER 1: ECHOES OF THE LOST

You stand on the precipice of an ancient world, the winds of the long-forgotten planet Crait howling around you, carrying whispers of battles past. The salted plains stretch out before you, a canvas of white and red, painted by the footsteps of warriors long gone. You remember your master's words, spoken as though only a breath away, "The Force is an ally to those who listen, to those who heed its echoes."

In your hands, the lightsaber feels heavier than it did in the days of the Clone Wars, its glow a beacon in the twilight of the fading day. It has been a long time since you last wielded it, a long time since you've called yourself a Jedi. You remember the fall of the Republic, the rise of the Empire, and your own vanishing – a self-imposed exile to evade the Empire's wrath. Yet now, as the galaxy trembles under the heel of Emperor Palpatine, you hear the echoes of the lost, calling you back from the shadows.

You close your eyes, allowing the Force to fill your senses, and when you open them, you're no longer alone. A droid, reminiscent of the ones that fought alongside the Republic, rolls up beside you, its dome head swiveling with curious beeps. "Yes, T7-O1, I feel it too," you say softly. The droid had been your companion since the war, its loyalty unwavering despite the Empire's attempts to reprogram it.

The suns dip below the horizon, and the first stars begin to puncture the night sky. You sense a disturbance in the Force, a flicker of light in the darkness. "It's time," you murmur, and T7 beeps in agreement, its lights blinking rapidly.

You make your way across the salt flats, your boots leaving a trail in the crimson dust beneath the salt layer. The night grows colder, but inside you, a flame is kindled, a warmth you haven't felt since the Jedi Council was still a beacon of hope. You were one of them once, a Guardian of Peace and Justice. But peace has become a rare commodity, and justice, a ghost.

As you travel, your thoughts drift to your former padawan, a bright and eager learner taken from you too soon by the war's cruel hand. You had sensed the potential within them, the capability for greatness or perhaps, the temptation of darkness. You had hoped to guide them, to see them become a Knight, but fate had other plans.

The ruins of an old Jedi outpost loom on the horizon, a reminder of a time when the galaxy celebrated your kind. Now, it stands desolate, forgotten by all but the sands of time. T7 rolls ahead, its sensor array extended like the feelers of a curious insect, scanning the darkness.

Inside the outpost, the shadows move with you, dancing across the walls as your lightsaber's hum breaks the silence. The light casts an eerie glow on the hieroglyphs of the Jedi Code, the words etched into the stone still clear after all these years. "There is no emotion, there is peace," you read aloud, the words a bitter echo in the void that the galaxy has become.

The disturbance you had felt, it grows stronger here, as if the Force itself is anchored to this place. You follow it, deeper into the heart of the ruins, until you come across a chamber untouched by time. In the center, a holocron pulses with a soft light, its facets reflecting the myriad possibilities of the future.

You extend a hand, and the holocron floats toward you, a testament to the power that still courses through your veins. The Force swirls around you, a storm contained within the confines of the chamber. You activate the ancient device, and a hologram flickers to life.

The image of a Jedi Master, one you recognize from the archives, appears before you. "To those who find this message," the hologram begins, "know that you are the galaxy's last hope. The Sith have risen, and the Jedi are no more. But in the shadows, there is a light waiting to be rekindled." The message is cryptic, yet a fire ignites within you.

A map appears, star systems and coordinates forming a path through the stars. T7 beeps and whirs, its processors working to decipher the code. The path leads to the Unknown Regions, a place where few have ventured and fewer have returned. But it is there, you realize, where you must go. The echoes of the lost have guided you here, and now they steer you towards a destiny you cannot deny.

You stand, the holocron in your possession, and the determination in your heart. The Empire may hunt you, but you are no longer the vanished Jedi who fled in fear. You are the spark that will light the fire, the whisper that will become a shout.

T7 rolls up to you, its form a steadfast sentinel in the gloom. "Together then," you say, your voice firm with newfound purpose.

In the silence of the chamber, the Force sings, and you listen, for you are the echo of the lost, and your journey has only just begun.

CHAPTER 2: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

You feel the chill of the space between stars as you emerge from hyperspace, the cold vastness of the galaxy stretching before you like a canvas of infinite possibility. The stars twinkle, each one a beacon of light against the oppressive darkness that seems to press in from all sides. You are alone, your ship a mere speck amid the grand tapestry of the cosmos. But within you burns the light of the Force, a flame that has flickered and waned but never extinguished.

Your eyes adjust to the dim light of the cockpit as you guide your vessel toward the shadowy planet that looms ahead. It is a world shrouded in mystery, a place where the dark side whispers and the light struggles to penetrate. You remember your master's words, spoken long ago but etched into your memory like lines in stone. "Darkness lies ahead, but you must walk the path. It is your destiny."

As your ship descends through the atmosphere, the planet's surface reveals itself: a tapestry of jagged mountains, deep valleys, and vast, foreboding forests. You know this world was once a bastion of the Jedi Order, a sacred place now lost to the ravages of war and the relentless march of time.

A small village comes into view, its structures built of stone and wood, huddled together as if in defiance of the encroaching darkness. You set your ship down on the outskirts, the landing gears making contact with a soft thud that reverberates through the hull.

You disembark, your boots crunching on the gravelly soil. The air is thick with the scent of wet earth and growing things, a stark contrast to the sterile environment of your ship. You pull your cloak tighter around you, its fabric a barrier between you and the unseen eyes you can feel watching from the shadows.

The villagers are wary of your arrival, their eyes filled with suspicion and fear. It has been many years since a Jedi walked among them, and the galaxy has grown darker in your

absence. You raise your hands in a gesture of peace, and slowly, they begin to approach. An old man steps forward, his face lined with the tales of many hardships.

"You bring the light of the Jedi back to us," he says, his voice cracking with age and emotion. "But why have you come? What brings you to our forgotten world?"

You consider his question, feeling the weight of your purpose like a stone in your chest. "I am seeking answers," you reply. "I have felt a disturbance in the Force, a shadow that spreads across the galaxy. I believe the source lies here, on this planet."

Whispers ripple through the gathered crowd, and a sense of unease settles over the village. The old man nods slowly, as if he expected no less. "Then you must go to the ruins of the Jedi Temple," he says. "There, you will find what you seek."

The path to the temple is long and treacherous, winding through forests where the trees seem to lean in and whisper secrets. The ruins stand upon a hill, their once-majestic spires now broken and overgrown with vines. You feel a shiver run down your spine as you approach, the Force pulsing like a living thing around the ancient stones.

As you step into the shadow of the temple, a voice echoes in your mind, a ghostly remnant of the past. "You have returned, child of the light."

You spin around, your hand going to the lightsaber at your belt, but there is no one there. Only the wind, carrying the voice away into the silence. You take a deep breath and enter the temple, the darkness swallowing you whole.

The interior is a labyrinth of corridors and chambers, each one a puzzle that tests your connection to the Force. You can sense something here, a presence that has waited long years for your arrival. You follow the pull, deeper and deeper, until you reach the heart of the temple.

There, in a chamber lit by shafts of light that pierce the gloom, stands a figure cloaked in shadows. Your breath catches in your throat as the figure steps into the light, revealing features that mirror your own.

"Who are you?" you ask, your voice echoing in the vast space.

The figure's lips curl into a knowing smile. "I am what you will become," it replies, its voice a whisper of darkness and light. "I am the future, the past, the ever-present. I am the Empire's shadow, and you are its light."

You feel a surge of anger, of defiance. "I will not become you. I will not fall to the dark side."

The figure chuckles, a sound that sends shivers down your spine. "We shall see, young Jedi. We shall see."

With a flick of its wrist, the figure vanishes, leaving you alone in the chamber with the weight of destiny pressing down upon you. You are the light that stands against the shadow of the Empire, the flame that must burn bright in the darkness.

You take a deep breath and step forward, your journey only just beginning.

CHAPTER 3: BEACON IN THE DARKNESS

You feel the chill of the void as you stand on the precipice of the ancient temple. The twin moons of this forgotten world cast an eerie glow on the stone beneath your feet, an ancient homage to the Force that seems both sacred and haunted. The galaxy has changed since you last walked among those who wielded the light and the dark. The Clone Wars, a dim memory now, have birthed a new terror—one draped in the cloak of the Galactic Empire.

You tighten your grip on the hilt of your lightsaber, the silver cylinder a dormant promise of both protection and purpose. Years of seclusion have left you with more questions than answers, but your heart knows it cannot deny the call of destiny that now echoes through the Force. The Empire has risen, and with it, the oppression of those you once swore to protect.

As you step into the temple's shadowed corridors, your boots echo against the stone. The halls are lined with statues of the Jedi of old. Their sightless eyes seem to follow you, heavy with expectation. You remember your master's words, spoken to you as a child, "In the darkest times, the light of the Force will guide you." Those words now resonate with a weight you had not anticipated, a beacon in the darkness.

You wander through the labyrinthine passages, hand trailing along the engravings of ancient battles and long-forgotten lore. The air is thick with the musk of history, and the whisper of the Force beckons you deeper into the temple's heart. You can sense it—a pulsing beacon calling out to the Jedi who have been scattered and broken.

A sudden tremor runs through the stones beneath your feet. You freeze, reaching out with your senses. Imperial ships? Here? No, something older, something bound to the temple itself. A door, unseen by eyes but felt by the Force, lies ahead. You push against it with your mind, and the ancient stone grudgingly gives way to reveal a chamber untouched by time.

Inside, a crystal hovers above a pedestal, pulsing with a light that is neither completely of the light side nor the dark. It is balance, it is power, it is danger. Your breath catches at the

sight. This could be the key to uniting the scattered Jedi, to stand against the Empire. Or it could be a lure, leading them to their end.

The crystal's light grows, casting sharp shadows on the walls. You step forward, a hand outstretched. Then, a voice, hoarse and crackling with disuse, breaks the silence. "Why have you come?"

You whip around, lightsaber igniting in a blaze of azure. A figure emerges from the shadows, cloaked in tattered robes that whisper of a thousand battles. "I came searching for hope," you say, your voice steady despite the rapid drumming of your heart.

The figure steps into the light, revealing a face etched with lines of sorrow and wisdom. "Hope is a rare commodity these days," he says, and you sense no threat from him. You extinguish your lightsaber but remain on guard.

"I am Aleron," he continues, his voice gaining strength as he speaks. "I, too, have been waiting for a sign, for someone to come."

Questions burn at the edge of your mind, but one takes precedence. "Are you a Jedi?"

"I was, once," Aleron replies, his gaze fixed on the crystal. "But the Jedi are no more. We are remnants, clinging to a galaxy that has moved on."

You ponder his words, feeling the weight of truth in them. And yet, the Force has guided you here, to this beacon. "The Jedi may be scattered, but we are not defeated. This," you gesture to the crystal, "could bring us together."

Aleron studies you for a moment, then nods. "It could. Or it could be our undoing."

The air shifts, and you sense it—a flicker of darkness, a thread of malice weaving through the Force. You realize with a start that the beacon has not only called to you. "We must protect it," you state, the purpose clear in your voice.

"To what end?" Aleron asks, his eyes narrowing. "The Jedi are hunted, the galaxy is under the thrall of the Sith. What can we truly hope to accomplish?"

You meet his gaze, feeling the conviction rise within you, a fire rekindled after years of doubt. "We can fight, Aleron. We can stand for those who have no voice, for those who suffer under the Empire's rule. We can be the beacon they need."

Aleron's expression softens, and the chamber seems to hum with the energy of your shared resolve. "Then we must act wisely," he cautions. "This beacon must not fall into the Empire's hands. We must gather those who remain, those who can still wield the Force for good."

You nod, the path ahead fraught with danger, yet clearer than it has been in years. "We'll start with the nearby systems," you suggest. "There are whispers of resistance, of those who defy the Empire."

Aleron smiles, the first you've seen from him, a glimmer of the hope you spoke of. "Then let us begin," he says

EPILOGUE

You stare out into the vast expanse of stars from the cockpit of your weathered starfighter, the gentle hum of the engines a soothing counterpoint to the turmoil in your heart. The spaceport on Coruscant dwindles in the distance as you set a course for the Outer Rim. You feel the weight of your lightsaber at your side, its presence a reminder of the teachings of your master and the order you once called family.

The galaxy has changed since you vanished into the shadows of the Clone Wars. You remember your master's words, spoken with conviction in the time before the war tore everything apart. "A Jedi must always seek to be a beacon of hope," he had said. Now, with the rise of the Empire and the Jedi Order all but destroyed, you wonder what hope remains.

You recall the harrowing events that led to your disappearance – a mission gone awry, a betrayal that left you stranded on a remote planet, fighting for survival. For years, you've been a ghost, a rumor whispered among those who still dared to resist the tightening grip of the Empire.

But now, as the stars streak past the viewport in the blur of hyperspace, you sense a shift in the Force, a calling that cannot be ignored. The time has come to emerge from the shadows, to act. You can hide no longer.

As your starfighter exits hyperspace, the desolate beauty of Tatooine greets you. The twin suns cast a harsh light over the sandy expanse, and you feel the heat even through the hull of your ship. You navigate to a secluded area far from prying eyes, a place where you can meditate and plan your next move.

Stepping out onto the scorching sand, you take a deep breath, allowing the heat and the silence to envelop you. You think of the friends you've lost, the battles you've fought, and the uncertain future that lies ahead. It is here, in the stillness of the desert, that you must find your purpose anew.

As night falls, you ignite a small fire and sit beside it, the flames casting a soft glow on your face. The stars above are your only companions as you reach out with the Force, feeling its currents and eddies, its whispers of possibility.

"You can't do this alone," a voice says from the darkness, breaking the silence. You turn to see a figure emerging from the shadows, a fellow Jedi survivor whose presence you had not sensed.

"I know," you reply, your voice steady. "That's why I've returned."

Together, you speak of the growing resistance, of hidden allies and secret plans. You share your stories, your fears, and your hopes. And as the twin suns rise, casting new light upon the path before you, you stand ready to face whatever challenges the Empire may bring.

For you are a Jedi, and this is your destiny.