

STAR WARS

EPISODE I



A NOVEL OF THE ALTERNATIVE SAGA

THE CHOSEN ONE

BRANDON RHEA

STAR
WARS®

E P I S O D E I : T H E C H O S E N O N E

BRANDON RHEA

BASED UPON 'STAR WARS'
BY GEORGE LUCAS

DEDICATION

To the members of *TheStarWarsRP.Com*. There are countless elements of this story that are based in that website's lore, without which *The Chosen One* would not be what it is now. Without that website, I never would have grown as a writer. This would just be another cheap knockoff of *The Phantom Menace*, and the Alternative Saga would not exist.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, an evil legacy long believed dead has since been awakened. Even the Jedi, guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic, are caught by surprise, their attentions focused on political unrest between the greedy Trade Federation and the Republic. Now, the dark side of the Force threatens to overwhelm the light, and only an ancient Jedi prophecy stands between hope and doom for the entire galaxy.

On the desert world of Tatooine, far from the concerns of the Republic, a young man is being closely but unknowingly watched over by a strange group of hermits from the Dune Sea. These hermits sense that there is something special about him, seeing an aura of prophecy surrounding his life. This young man's only hope is in the hands of the one that these hermits call the Argus, one who will fall from the sky and help free him from the bind that keeps him in the desert wastes.

In another part of the galaxy, Jedi Master Jar Jar Dooku and Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi are charged with protecting Queen Arcadia of Utapau as she seeks to end the invasion of her planet brought about by the corporate greed of the Trade Federation. It is this quest that brings them to Tatooine, where Obi-Wan too senses something in the young man named Anakin Skywalker. Their only hope is to convince Anakin to leave Tatooine with them and become a Knight of the Old Republic, and join with men and women destined to become legends...

FROM THE SECOND SAGA....
THE JOURNAL OF
THE WHILLS

--PROLOGUE--

THE KEY

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, there existed a realm called Ashlan Four. Said in legends to be a planet shrouded within the vast expanse of the Ashlan Nebula in the far away galaxy's Unknown Regions, it was truly a land of myth and folklore. It remained a hidden plain of existence, subsisting as a pocket dimension with complexities and truths that proved to be far beyond those of Human understanding. Nevertheless, it was a reality hidden from the universe, a place that could be interpreted in so many ways that the interpretations were infinite. It remained an immense rainbow of every possible color one could imagine, and even some that one could not.

The landscape was lush and vast. The blue and green reality was still one of myths, legends and prophecies that dated back thousands and thousands of years in standard galactic time. For eons, philosophers spoke of a prophecy written by a holy man about a great race of wisdom called the Whills. The Whills, in the prophecy, would follow a great order to a "planet" in the light of the Ashlan Nebula, so the inhabitants could record the story of the galaxy. Of course, there was no planet, but instead a boundless land of mountains, rivers and rolling green hills.

As night quickly turned to dawn near the monastery of the Whills, where the story of the galaxy was kept, the sound of a thousand marching soldiers echoed through the rolling hillside. In reality, however, it was the tremendously echoed sound of one lone horse and her rider galloping over the lush countryside. The rider was draped in a white ornamental robe, a hood covering his head, hiding his face from the bright yellow sun that was rising in front of him. He brought the horse towards the edge of a hill and looked down towards a crystal clear stream a few miles away. Below him, on the bank of the river, he saw one of the small, diminutive Whills performing a task.

Curious, the rider pulled back on the horse, causing it to rear its two front legs into the air and neigh in excitement as if she was aware of its rider's intentions, and quickly began riding down the gradual slope towards the bank of the stream to find out what the Whill was doing. The wind whipped through the rider's hood and through his hair, giving him a slight rush of adrenaline just as it always did.

The rider frequently spent his mornings riding his horse, beginning well before dawn and ending shortly after it. It gave him a sense of normalcy, something that had been severely lacking in his life; from the day he was born on Alderaan to the day he arrived on Ashlan

Four and beyond, nothing in his life had turned out the way he had expected it to. Unlike how other people would have felt, and like he had originally felt when he discovered what his destiny was, that was fine with him.

Shortly before reaching the stream, upon entering a series of ruins, the rider pulled back on his horse. The slope became steeper from that point on, and because he would have to venture off the path to arrive at the bank quicker he decided to keep his horse waiting in the fading and decaying monastery, where once a group of Whills studying the nature of the universe had housed. The horse seemed to nod in approval as she was left to wait beside a stone pillar, knowing her rider would return for her.

The man stepped away from his horse and made his way down the rest of the steep hill in a running fall, brushing his way past the dozens of trees that grew upon the grounds in the clearing that the small Whill sat in. When he finally arrived, the man slid one leg out and came to an abrupt stop, silently ceasing his fall just behind the pudgy brown Whill that was nestled against a tree that reached out and draped itself over the stream in front of them. Even the trees on Ashlan Four were something special - there was a certain quality about them, a certain air of beauty in the vibrant colors that words couldn't describe and the way the wind gently wisped through the leaves.

It was these areas of Ashlan Four that, even after thousands of years, made the man happiest. He knelt down, still not letting the Whill onto the fact that he was there, and brushed his hand through the thick green blades of grass. As he felt the still-wet dew between the tips of his fingers, he paused. He closed his eyes and opened a wide smile, allowing memories to flood back to him. The area reminded him so much of his last mortal home, one that he missed terribly.

He could still feel the wet grass between his toe as he played with his beloved son in the fields of Kal'Shabbol. He could lose all sense of self on those lazy summer days, when there no politics, plotting or war. There was only family. He cherished the sound of his son's laugh as they played make-believe in the forests, remembering what it was like before he had a destiny. Before he was the man he was born to be.

For most people, memories and sensations like that were inextricably linked to childhood, but his childhood was nothing of the sort. There was a time when he was a child and a Jedi on the run, fleeing from the Dark Lords of the Sith who swore to destroy every last living member of the old Jedi Order, the Jedi Order that eventually fell to the Sith when the Galactic Empire came to power. It wasn't until he met the love of his life and the two had a son, his literal namesake, that he was finally able to have those childhood experiences.

When the man looked back up, the young Whill historian was still staring intently into the stream before them. The creature was so fixated on the water that he didn't even notice Ussej stand up and approach him, but it didn't take him long to figure out that someone was behind him. The short, pudgy brown Whill's oval-shaped head and large circular blue eyes turned to look at him for a moment, trying to figure out who the man was. He was somewhat familiar to the Whill, but the creature couldn't place him.

"Who are you?" the Whill asked in the ancient Ashlan language of his people, although he understood the language of Galactic Basic Standard which he assumed the Human standing in front of him spoke.

"I'm a friend," the rider said as he pulled back his hood to reveal his face. "My name is Ussej Padric Bac."

"The Shaman of the Whills," the Whill historian said rhetorically, knowing the name from his religious and historical studies although he had never met the man before.

Ussej nodded to let the young historian know that he was correct. The Shaman was a tall man, a few centimeters shy of two meters, with short, dark blonde hair and blue eyes. He had tan white skin and a faint scar across his right eye from a conflict that took place thousands of years earlier far beyond the most distant stars that could be seen on Ashlan Four. There were times when he longed for those glory days, although he was far more peaceful as the Shaman of the Whills, even though he had lived that life for over three thousand years.

"Why are you here?" the young Whill asked curiously, as very few throughout the previous three thousand years had ever seen the Shaman of the Whills in person.

"I saw you sitting down here," Ussej told him. "I was riding by and thought I might see what you were doing."

"I was watching the time stream," the Whill told him, turning away to continue with his studies.

Ussej looked down below the Whill where the stream was. To his left, the winding body of water was still blanketed in mist, and the stream itself faded into the distance. But in front of them, the water shimmered with gold as the sun reflected upon it. The light hit it just right, and Ussej was able to look at himself in the stream. It wasn't something he could often do, considering he spent most of his time in seclusion away from anything that would let him see himself. Still, as he moved into the shade of the trees, watching as his shadow and reflect disappeared, he wasn't arrogant enough to think that his reflection was the greatest thing that could come out of the stream.

The story of history was long and, at times, one that lacked of any sense. History was something that could be learned, but whether or not it could be understood was another matter entirely. Kings, warlords, prophets, space explorers, Jedi and Sith, along with numerous others, made their mark on the universe in the strangest of events, such as exoduses, wars and other major and minor conflicts. Historians continued to scratch their heads to make sense of some of it, as they were unable to truly understand the historical figures behind the events.

That was where the time stream came in. Within the large flowing stream just beside them, one could look through the clear blue liquid and realize that not only rocks and fish could be seen. In fact, with a trained eye, it was an entire timeline of universal history; not just of the galaxy, but of every galaxy in the vast void of space and time. Standing in one spot for long enough would have allowed one who had been trained to view it to see the entire history of the universe, although the viewer would need to live for an eternity to watch the slow moving timeline pass by in the same spot.

But simply viewing the timeline was not the greatest achievement of the unexplainable divine tool of time. The river moved slowly, as the weather remained calm and peaceful at all times on Ashlan Four, so one was able to look at one segment of time for any number of minutes. Were they to step within that segment of the river, it would appear to them as if time on Ashlan Four, which was meaningless on Ashlan Four to begin with, would stop. They would become an impartial and unseen observer, unless they wished to intervene; they

could watch the events unfold as they had either thousands of years earlier or thousands of years into the future.

There was only man with the ability to enter into the time stream, or bring others into the time stream with him. That was Ussej, which is why he had earned the moniker of the "guardian of forever". Although it was generally frowned upon, Ussej felt that he had a mandate to make his presence known to certain persons throughout time to ensure that events unfolded without outside interference preventing them from unfolding as they should. After all, as the so-called guardian of forever, it was his duty to protect the timeline. The higher powers of existence had a plan for the universe, but protection was still needed.

Only days earlier by his own personal time, Ussej had returned from a brief intervention. A destructive galactic civil war between the tyrannical Galactic Empire and a band of freedom fighters attempting to restore democracy to the galaxy had just ended, and a New Republic was rising from the ashes of the Empire. A dark lord had been vanquished, and the savior of the galaxy had been redeemed from darkness and fulfilled his destiny. The outcome was as Ussej knew it would be, although the events leading up to it unfolded differently as he had imagined. Ussej recognized that although there would be future conflicts, the galaxy was a far more peaceful place than it would have been had the outcome been tampered with.

"What is your name?" Ussej asked the young Whill chronicler.

"Duseuso," the Whill told him, not taking his eyes off of the cloth material on which he was writing the history he saw.

Ussej stepped closer to the time stream and fixed his gaze onto what Duseuso was watching. After a few brief moments the image became clear, and Ussej was able to watch a major historical event unfold. A lone star fighter raced down the trench of a planet-destroying battle station, chased by three other fighters. When it looked as if the lone fighter was to be destroyed, a cargo transport attacked the three fighters, sending two of them into a blaze of fire and debris while the other flew out into space. Finally, two proton torpedoes ejected themselves from the star fighter, and in the blink of an eye the battle station was gone. Ussej knew the battle well, and it was a major turning point in the rebel civil war against the Empire.

"May I see what you're writing?" Ussej asked, curious to see the Whill's interpretation of what they had both just witnessed.

Although slightly perturbed by the disturbance, Ussej took the cloth, unfolding most of it to read what was written. The document was chronicling the life of Anakin Skywalker which, from Ussej's perspective, was a misspelling of the name as he had known the man called Annikin Skywalker. From Duseuso's perspective, Anakin Skywalker was a legendary Jedi Knight during the time of the Old Republic who became a hero of the destructive Clone Wars, but later the oppressor of worlds as an evil dark lord. Ussej kept reading and there was very detailed information on Anakin Skywalker, but Ussej had a different perspective on the similar yet dissimilar Annikin Skywalker.

"Is this for the Journal?" Ussej asked, referring to the collection of historical knowledge known as the Journal of the Whills that was kept in the nearby Whill Monastery.

The Whill nodded his head as Ussej handed the document back to him. The Shaman stretched his long Human legs and arms before slowly sitting down on the bank of the river next to Duseuso, who shifted awkwardly as Ussej seated himself. Duseuso had never seen

legs work in such a way, as he himself barely had any legs at all. The Whill pulled back its lengthy neck in defense, although it did not take him long to realize that being fearful of the shaman of his people was illogical. Instead, he slowly returned to his document, waiting for the silent shaman to say something to break the awkward silence that had fallen over them.

"How much do you know about the time stream, Duseuso?" Ussej asked out of general interest, but also because he wished to make a point about how the stream worked.

"I know that it shows one the history of the universe," the Whill replied, this time not hiding his impatience at the interruption, despite his slow speech patterns.

"That may be true," Ussej told him, "but it doesn't look at things objectively. What I see and what you see when looking at it may not be the same thing."

"What do you mean?" Duseuso asked, the impatience being washed from his face as curiosity took hold.

"The time stream can tell us many things about our past and our future," Ussej continued, "but the historical events are subject to our own point of view. Interpretation is the key, and more than one interpretation belongs in the Journal so future readers can come to their own conclusions."

"Are you saying that my interpretation is wrong?" Duseuso asked, not fully comprehending the dynamics of the stream as Ussej relayed them.

"No, no, of course not," Ussej said as his eyes seemingly popped out of his head, worried that he had insulted the young Whill. "I'm simply saying that I have a different interpretation about the life of Annikin Skywalker, both because I watched the events unfold through the stream and because I associated myself with him on more than one occasion. Even with these associations, my interpretation may very well be wrong, and people might not agree with it. Nevertheless, the interpretation is there, and all points of view need to be understood to fully comprehend history."

"What is your interpretation then?" the Whill inquired, although he had not yet picked up his document.

"I would be happy to tell you," Ussej said with a smile, "so long as you are prepared to treat it as a learning experience, look at the story objectively, and document it."

Pulling his cloth document closer and gripping his writing utensil tightly, Duseuso accepted Ussej's requirements, eager to hear the Shaman of the Whill's personal perspective on the life of Annikin Skywalker. The Whill knew that it would be interesting to hear first person accounts on what the young Jedi was like, as the time stream could only tell one so much about a person's personality. Ussej, however, had actually associated with Annikin, giving him a unique, although potentially incorrect, perspective on the matter.

"As you know," Ussej began, trying to make his voice as engaging as possible, for telling a long story, however exciting it may have appeared to be, could become dreadfully boring, "a great Republic governed the galaxy for thousands of years. It was a time when peace, justice, and freedom flourished throughout the star systems. The forces of evil were once suppressed, but not for long. Instead of being eliminated, those bent on destroying the Republic were resigned to hide in the shadows, plotting their eventual revenge."

So far, nothing the shaman had been saying was remotely new to the young Whill, but the way it was being told was far more interesting than viewing the time stream. Looking at images that were open to interpretation could only tell one so much. Duseuso shifted, trying to make himself more comfortable, as he could tell the story would be a long one.

"As this threat continued to build," Ussej continued, "a young man on a remote desert world was about to take his first step towards a far greater destiny. Annikin Skywalker discovered he had a unique affinity for the ways of the Jedi, the guardians of peace and justice under the Republic. Soon, Annikin began an epic journey that would thrust him into the very heart of the ensuing struggle between good and evil, a struggle that began on Utapau..."