

STAR  
WARS®

THE TRAGEDY

BRANDON RHEA

BASED UPON 'STAR WARS'  
BY GEORGE LUCAS

## DEDICATION

To Solus. Now, you might be wondering why I'm dedicating a short story about a gruesome Sith murder legend to another human being, a human girl nonetheless. Well, since she likes to tell everyone she's the "killer mecha angel of death," it only seemed appropriate. Big thanks for continuing to help as my editor for my Alternative *Star Wars* Saga work.

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

Did you ever hear *The Tragedy of Darth Plagueis the Wise*? I would be surprised if you did. It's not a story the Jedi would tell you, nor is it a story the Republic would readily allow published, despite its inherent accuracy. That's the thing about a democracy. As free as you believe it may be, there are always sinister forces at work deep within the government, making sure only what they want you to hear is heard. An old Sith legend is not on the top of their recommend reading lists.

Darth Plagueis was a Dark Lord of the Sith, one so powerful and so wise he could even use the Force to keep the ones he cared about from dying, including himself. You see, the dark side of the Force is a pathway to many abilities some consider to be unnatural. When it comes to unlocking the secrets of immortality, there are very few things that could be considered even more unnatural.

Eventually, Plagueis became so powerful that the only thing he was afraid of was losing his power, which eventually, of course, he did. Actually, come to think of it, his fear of losing his power was what his apprentice, the ever-legendary 'Dark Lord,' wanted everyone to believe, but only the Dark Lord and his fallen master know the truth.

It's ironic, really. He could save others from death and extend his own life by thousands of years, but when it came to saving himself from murder... Well, it's not entirely clear if he even wanted to save himself. I suppose it's up to you to decide.

Our story, and indeed the story of the galaxy's salvation, ironically enough, begins where Plagueis's story ends....

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The patter of rain was all that could be heard within the ancient, deserted Sith academy on Dathomir. Almost deserted, that is. Located on the edge of a deep and vast canyon containing rivers and deep, dark forests, the academy grounds were a graveyard of members of the Sith Brotherhood of Darkness that had died defending their people during the New Sith Wars; those that had failed their tests of strength before the war even broke out also had remains that littered the ground. Rotting skeletons still rested without peace within the dark forests, serving as a stark reminder of the consequences of failure.

By Human standards, Dathomir was normally a temperate and beautiful planet, but the rain storm that had lasted for days on end disrupted that norm. The world had a diverse terrain that included coastal lakes, thick forests, snow-capped mountains, raging rivers, and broad savannas. There were even small icecaps and rift valleys throughout the world.

Even with of that beauty and wonder, nearly ninety percent of the world remained unexplored. It was for that reason that Darth Bane, founder of the modern Sith, chose to use Dathomir as one of his training grounds when he first created the Rule of Two and the Order of Sith Lords.

Standing virtually alone within the academy, Darth Plagueis continued that traditions of Darth Bane as the Dark Lord of the Sith. He had seen many atrocities and failures in his life time, so many would have assumed that he would be used to the darkness and bleakness of Sith academies and temples. That could not have been further from the truth. Even before he became the Dark Lord of the Sith, Plagueis greatly appreciated beauty. In fact, his favorite time of day was when he would be able to catch the first glimpse of the moonlight reflecting off of the distant lakes and rivers.

Even with the normal beauty of the world, the dark side of the Force surged with power. He had heard an ancient legend about a rogue Jedi Knight named Allya who was banished to Dathomir by the Jedi. She took many of her followers with her and forged a friendship with the few settlers that were on the world. She taught them the ways of the Force, and later she taught the ways of the Force to her own children.

Centuries later, Allya was credited with transforming the settler society into one led by the women who held the men as their slaves. Despite the numerous other legends about her, the end result was always the same: the society dominated by Force-using women became known as the Witches of Dathomir and their story was used to frighten children around a fire.

Plagueis had encountered those who he believed to be the Witches of Dathomir, but there was an unspoken understanding between them and the Sith where they agreed to leave each other alone. It had worked out for many years, and Plagueis had continued that. Though he would have enjoyed having numerous seductive women under his command, the doctrine of Bane clearly forbid more than two Sith, though there were, of course, ways of getting around this. He simply never cared for it. There could only be one master and one apprentice: one to embody power, the other to crave it.

Alone within his chambers, Plagueis sat upon his flat bed, reflecting on the past as he knew that it would be the last time he would be able to do so. He had lived for nearly four thousand years, but it felt as if he had accomplished next to nothing. Even so, it amazed him how far he had come and how much he had changed. To begin one's life as a Jedi and to finish it off as one of the most powerful Dark Lords of the Sith in history was truly a rarity.

Though he had the powers of immortality, he knew that his apprentice was preparing to strike him down. This was where the question as to whether he feared to lose his power came in. The most logical assumption was that he didn't; had Plagueis truly feared the coming of death, had he truly grown paranoid over his apprentice's desire to become the Dark Lord, sitting alone on his bed was not how he would prepare for such an occasion.

Despite that, it can only be assumed that part of him would welcome the iced cold hand reaching over him. There was no mystery in death for him anymore and there was nothing more he could accomplish in life. His task was finished and his apprentice held the knowledge that Plagueis was immortal. Even so, it would take great power for his apprentice to discover the secret, as well as the other secrets that Plagueis did not share with him.

Plagueis couldn't help but wonder if he should give up his immortal life. He'd fought so hard for it and lost so much. His lover, a queen on a world so very far away so very long ago, had come to him with a vision of her own death, and her visions had always come true. Plagueis swore that he would find a way to stop those he cared about from dying, and after weeks he was able to.

But he discovered the secrets too late. One of his greatest friends betrayed him and his lover was killed. It was on that day that he began to walk the dark path, though he did not know it at first.

He always assumed that he would have died in battle. The great wars that he fought in always prepared him for that. He defended territories, defended the right to exist, and defended the love that the son of another of his greatest friends held for the daughter of a

ruthless tyrant in the Unknown Regions. Even with all of that, he sensed that he would die in his sleep, but he would have the last laugh.

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Hours later, Plagueis slipped into the realm of sleep, and his apprentice prepared to make his move. Darkness crept across the marble floor and thunder rolled through the canyon beside the academy. Though night had fallen, something darker than the night's shadows raced through the dimly lit halls. Not even a whisper escaped the heir to the Dark Lord as he made his way to his master's chambers.

At long last, Plagueis's apprentice stood above his master's bed as Plagueis slept. All remained silent and dark until a silver knife slid out from the sleeve of the apprentice's dark robes, reflecting the moonlight from the window beside his master's bed. However, the light that it created lasted only an instant. In a flash, the blade pierced the heart of the Dark Lord as the apprentice thrust it into his master's chest. Like a hot poker through the snow, it slid into the flesh of his self-proclaimed father.

In the beginning, Plagueis felt no pain. No desire for it to end caught his sadistic pursuits. In the end, the absence was not eternal, and with a shocking scream his body lurched upright. Plagueis' cruel eyes peeled open as his face began to turn a shade much like crimson blood. Clawed hands reached up to savage his killer and demonic hisses echoed throughout his halls. Plagueis had to keep up the disguise of feeling betrayed, despite the fact that he knew what was to come, just as any good master would.

His master had become weak, the thought the now-former apprentice kept repeating to himself as justification for finally fulfilling the destiny of all Sith: to become the master. The new Dark Lord brought his master in close, within an inch of his own face, watching the fire that had always been within Plagueis slowly begin to fade away.

As Plagueis' life-force left him, he knew that he would have the last laugh in the end and that his apprentice would realize that he made a mistake. Within hours, the new Dark Lord would question whether or not he should have snuck up on his master. He would feel ashamed that he did not meet him in combat face-to-face. It would, without a doubt, make him feel as if he were a coward.

It was exactly what happened later, a thought that crept up on him in the hours and, indeed, days that followed.

However, those emotions had not entered the apprentice's mind yet. The new Dark Lord of the Sith watched intently while his master welcomed the chilling embrace of death. It would be the new Dark Lord's duty to carry on the traditions of Darth Bane and, perhaps someday, overthrow the Jedi Order and avenge the lives of all those who had died at their hands.

Now the master, Plagueis's apprentice vowed to end the lives of the Jedi and not give up until he had done so. With that promise, the Dark Lord watched as the final spark of life left the eyes of his master, offering one final parting nod to his dead master's corpse.

His insidious plot, so long in the making, was complete.

The new Dark Lord left his master's corpse, leaving it behind to rot away until a servant undoubtedly noticed the foul stench that it would create. Holding himself in the highest regard - overconfidence was the way of the Sith - the Dark Lord could hear his footsteps as

he strode through the temple that now belonged to him, his boots sounding like thunder as they impacted on the ground.

The Dark Lord forced the doors to the throne room open, having walked through the vast corridor to the far side of the temple, away from where his master's corpse was beginning to decompose. The walls of macabre stones towered above him, emitting a pulse of darkness that compelled him towards it. A faint sound seemed to emanate from the bass relief, as if a thousand voices wept at once, and as if a thousand former Dark Lords were welcoming him into the fold.

A shiver went up his spine as he slowly sank into the throne, looking out towards the doorway of the dimly lit chamber, illuminated only by the faint flickering candles that lined the walls. A grin slowly crept across his face, a face shadowed by the hooded robe that he wore day in and day out. He appeared immovable and yet aware, as if some dreadful spirit of vigilance abode within him, as he was an unstoppable force that could control legions from where he sat.

The faint sound of footsteps began to echo in the corridors outside the throne room. The Dark Lord considered closing himself off from the outside for a short time, enveloping himself into his meditations, but he was expecting this arrival. It was someone whom he'd discovered some months ago, a great tool of rage and hate, one that would strike out and maul, like an animal would maul, all those who crossed him. All the enemies of the Sith would come to fear him, come to know him as the shadow hunter.

From the darkness of the corridor, the figure emerged, slowly, almost fearfully, making his way into the throne room. The figure wore the brown cloak of the Jedi, but he'd shed that mantra some time ago. In one final act of symbolic rejection of the old dogmatic ways of the so-called guardians of the peace, the figure threw off his cloak, throwing away the years of blind servitude to the dying order of simple, naïve worshipers of the light.

The figure was a Zabrak, a creature born on Iridonia, and a man discovered many years ago by the forces of the light and trained to be a weak servant of a corrupt council. His face showed little of the weapon that was waiting to claw itself out from within; though he was adorned with numerous horns, his pale tan face, covered with the traditional tattoos of his people, seemed innocent enough, but it was nothing more than a carefully-crafted illusion.

Beneath a humble exterior was a demon in the making. He took that first step as he knelt down before his new master's throne, a sign of subservience, hoping to gain favor with the Dark Lord, just as he'd been promised.

"What is thy bidding, my master?" the one who would become the new apprentice asked, eager to begin his tutelage in the dark side.

No words were needed to respond. This Dark Lord was a powerful being indeed. Why use words when one could simply showcase their power and speak through the dark side? His thoughts echoed through the Force when he commanded them to, playing out within the young Zabrak's mind.

"Yes, master," the apprentice replied gratefully, feeling a sense of confidence as his master entrusted him with such an important mission, "I will go there at once. Where can I find this woman?"

His master spoke again. The plan seemed simple enough. Find a pregnant woman in the Outer Rim desert and murder her before her child could be born. Such a region was sparsely populated. If all went according to plan, he would find her quickly.

"And when the woman is dead?" the Zabrak asked, waiting for his master's reply, which came quickly and clearly through the Force. "Yes, master. The hermit will die."

The Dark Lord nodded, satisfied that his orders would be carried out, that the unborn child would never see the light of day, and that he would end this threat to his rule.

Plagueis had told him much of the child of the desert that could destroy the Sith once and for all, and now it was time to ensure that it never happened. Plagueis was not strong enough to do what needed to be done, but the tragedy of his death was that despite his incredible power it was not he who would rule forever as king, but his former apprentice, the new Dark Lord, and that relied on the outcome of the Zabrak's mission.

The Chosen One could not be born.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brandon Rhea is a *Star Wars* fan fiction author and, along with Wayne Lipman III and Victor Dorantes, a co-founder of the Alternative *Star Wars* Saga series. Although Dorantes is no longer a part of the project, Rhea and Lipman continue to work together and with others in producing the content of the series, which includes *Star Wars: Episode I – The Chosen One* and Lipman’s novel *Star Wars: The Alderaan Affair*.

Rhea has been part of the online *Star Wars* community since 2004, when he registered on TheForce.Net’s Jedi Council Boards and began participating in discussions, particularly in the Classic Trilogy board and the Fan Sites board. He was the manager of the Fan Sites board from 2008 to 2009, the co-manager of the Classic Trilogy board from 2008 to 2010, and the co-manager of the Fan Design board from 2009 to 2010. He is currently a Manager Emeritus.



In 2005, Rhea was invited to register at The *Star Wars* RP, a role-playing board then-powered by ProBoards, and become the moderator of the board about SuperShadow, a notorious *Star Wars* fan who claims to be good friends with George Lucas, the creator of the *Star Wars* Saga. As of the present day, Rhea is the Head Administrator of The *Star Wars* RP, which is now powered by vBulletin software at <http://www.thestarwarsrp.com/forum>.

Along with TheForce.Net and The *Star Wars* RP, Rhea is an administrator on *Star Wars* Fanon, the Wikia, Inc. *Star Wars* wiki of fan invention. He currently hosts his fan fiction on this wiki and uses it as an encyclopedia to document information about his work. He also serves on the Council of Seers, the good article and featured article review board. All of the Alternative *Star Wars* Saga work by Rhea, Lipman, and others can be found on the *Star Wars* Fanon Wiki for public viewing and download.

In his personal life, Rhea is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America and its national honor society, the Order of the Arrow. He currently serves as the Immediate Past Chief of the Order of the Arrow Section NE-7A. Rhea served on the 2009 National Order of the Arrow Conference Training Committee, as well as the Northeast Region Cub Scout Task Force. He is an Eagle Scout and a member of the National Eagle Scout Association, and a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow. Both honors are the highest anyone can achieve in the Boy Scouts of America and the Order of the Arrow, respectively.

Rhea lives in New Jersey with his family and is in his junior year of college, where he is studying to earn a degree in political science. He plans to attend law school following his graduation from college, and has a desire to attain elected office in the future.