



Into the Void

Tim Lebbon

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

On the planet Python, the ancient Je'daii order was founded. And at the feet of its wise Masters, Lanoree Brock learned the mysteries and methods of the Force—and found her calling as one of its most powerful disciples. But as strongly as the Force flowed within Lanoree and her parents, it remained absent in her brother, who grew to despise and shun the Je'daii, and whose training in its ancient ways ended in tragedy.

Now, from her solitary life as a Ranger keeping order across the galaxy, Lanoree has been summoned by the Je'daii Council on a matter of utmost urgency. The leader of a fanatical cult, obsessed with traveling beyond the reaches of known space, is bent on opening a cosmic gateway using dreaded dark matter as the key—risking a cataclysmic reaction that will consume the entire star system. But more shocking to Lanoree than even the prospect of total galactic annihilation, is the decision of her Je'daii Masters to task her with the mission of preventing it. Until a staggering revelation makes clear why she was chosen: The brilliant, dangerous madman she must track down and stop at any cost is the brother whose death she has long grieved—and whose life she must now fear.

NOTE: This version does not include the *Dawn of the Jedi* comic insert.

Includes an original *Dawn of the Jedi* short story by John Ostrander!

Features a bonus section following the novel that includes a primer on the *Star Wars* expanded universe, and over half a dozen excerpts from some of the most popular *Star Wars* books of the last thirty years!

Praise for *Into the Void*

“In a story filled with adventure, intrigue, and great quotes, there’s a lot to like in this book. Tim Lebbon dives into his very first *Star Wars* story with a great deal of success. He manages to spin a tale that feels like *Star Wars*, but also feels different from other stories that have been told before. While there is some threat of system wide destruction, the point is never pushed to being ridiculous. The characters feel believable and provoke interest. The attention to the characters never takes away from the plot. There’s also a remarkable balance between world building, plot and character development, and action. When it comes down to it, *Dawn of the Jedi: Into the Void* is just great storytelling.”—**Roqoo Depot**

“A nice, compact *Star Wars* tale that both acts as an introduction to the Dawn of the Jedi period and a standalone story.”—**Club Jade**

“A solidly enjoyable read . . . a nice addition to the Expanded Universe.”—**Tosche Station**

“A good solid *Star Wars* adventure story with heart.”—**Knights’ Archive**

Into the Void Details

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From Reader Review Into the Void for online ebook

Mersini says

Definitely one of the best Star Wars books I have ever read. If you've ever wondered about the history of the Jedi, about their origins, before their temple on Coruscant, before their wars with the Sith, in fact, about a time where the Sith were simply a species, their name not yet a synonym for terror and the dark side of the Force, then this is the book for you.

Packed with the usual action sequences and struggles between two opposing forces that usually appear in Star Wars novels, it follows Lanoree, a Je'daii Ranger, who follows hot on the trail of her long lost and now corrupt brother, attempting to stop him before he changes the course of the entire system. Set in a time before hyperspace travel, it's fascinating to see the galaxy reduced to one handful of planets, diverse though they are, teeming with familiar species, and some unfamiliar ones too. Lebbon infuses the story with a mysterious history and a long gone species that no one knows much about, echoing other texts in the Star Wars universe, such as Bioshock's Knights of the Old Republic and its Builders, while at the same time, establishing a history of the universe that opens up a whole new space for writing and expanding the canon universe. There are many interesting things to note, from the way a Padawan undertook their training, to the planet it was set on, to the fact that there was no 'dark side' nor a 'light side' to the force that a Je'daii must stay on, but rather a balance that they must achieve.

It also follows the story of Lanoree as a child, going through her training, and though this might sound like it would detract from the story, it doesn't; it fleshes it out, the twin story lines co-existing and fueling one another, so you, as a reader, have a better understanding of the characters' motivations. Of Lanoree's at least. On that note, it would have been interesting to see some of the other characters' backstories explored, like Tre's, Lanoree's companion for the most part of the novel, and Dal's, her brother, who spent many years in hiding, under the guise of being dead. Unfortunately, the latter seems impossible, given the nature of the book's ending, but perhaps not, considering that several chapters of the novel begin by quoting Dal's diaries.

It would be wonderful to see a sequel to this novel, perhaps with Lanoree, or some other character, finding and picking their way through Dal's journals, while also filling in some gaps from this book, like revealing some more of Tre's history, or even just informing us of what happens afterwards. And of course there are some things that leave a reader still a little confused, like the art of Alchemy of the Flesh, which seems to be genetic cloning of some sort that can be harvested for its healing properties for the being whose DNA it is grown from, but the specifics are not clear. Also, as it's not something that seems to come up a lot in later Star Wars novels, it might be interesting to explore whether that was continued, or whether it became a banned practice, or even a dark side practice.

But overall, Lebbon does a great job of presenting us a new face of a well known universe, by making it strange, delving into a history that most readers never even really take the time to think about. I, for one, definitely hope that he writes a couple more novels about this time period, and look forward to hearing about future Star Wars publications of his.

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

This ought to be 3 stars but I'm doing rating because no Star Wars book should take me nearly half a year to finish and fill me with such dread every time I pick it up.

I don't know that Tim Lebbon gets Star Wars; Lanoree is one of the most incompetent Force Users I've ever read (albeit still more interesting than the dull as dirt, Kerra Holt of Knight Errant). This story was completely pointless and failed utterly at answering the big question of "What are the origins of the Jedi?"

It may sound like I hated this book, but that's not true. I'm just massively disappointed.

Not a Star Wars book I would recommend. I won't be checking out Lebbon's other works either.

Full Review:

Lanoree Brock is a Je'daii Ranger who has now been assigned to find her long-dead brother, Dalien, who holds a dangerous device that could ruin the world - or send them to the depths of the universe.

As a long-time Star Wars fan, who has read the likes of "Children of the Jedi" and "Jedi Trial", I must say this was a big fat disappointment - and confirmation that it's a good thing I'm not going to read past the Legends line.

Now, we all can't be too hard on Star Wars. For every "Crystal Star" (and yes, that book WAS the inspiration for my screen name - back in the day when I was a teenager and didn't have the same standards I do now), there was a "Heir to the Empire" or "Shatterpoint". Ying...and yang. That said, there are SO MUCH Star Wars out there, I'm done. I'm burned out. And, yes, I'm disgruntled about all of this canon being wiped out, just so Disney can rewrite everything and make a ton of money.

But just because Star Wars is prone to bad books doesn't mean I have to tolerate it. Just because Star Wars has its rough spots doesn't mean that I have to turn the other way and pretend they don't exist.

I'm not sure why this book was written, other than to cash in on the mildly interesting comic series of the same name - which, to be honest, was much better than anything in this book. This was not an origin story. It was not an original Jedi story. It really isn't an original Star Wars story. I mean, how many times will we suffer through the "Character X chases Character Y for MacGuffin J" plot?

The characters are so boring and dull and lifeless. Lanoree WAS a better character than Kerra Holt - but come on, that's not saying much. Kerra Holt was pretty bland. She makes Saltine Crackers look like they're made of Sriracha sauce. Lanoree could have been a kick @\$\$ female Jedi - Space knows, Star Wars has its problems showcasing females doing things other than dying of broken hearts (or did you retcon that now, George?). But no - she's a complete and utter moron. A simple mission turns into a jaunt around the solar system, a 300 page waste of paper/electronics/however you read this book. Her investigation skills are pretty much zero; Tre does more investigating than Lanoree and he's not a Force User at all. A character can leave a heap of bloody clothes in her path, and she collapses and IMMEDIATELY thinks he's dead without checking her surroundings!

And then the bloodbath Lanoree leaves in her wake! I get that Je'daii at this time weren't the sparkling brilliant white of the Jedi in the movies, but Lanoree justifies killing people A LOT. A LOT. And her incompetence quite possibly gets a main character killed! (And no, that "death" is not stirring or compelling

or heart-wrenching in the least - unless you mean it in the sense of "Lanoree is a moron and should be fired".)

Other stock Star Wars characters:

- + The Fat Evil Businessperson
- + The Twi'Lek bad guy
- + The Family Member Who Isn't Dead

Also, what are Twi'Leks and Noghri doing on Tython and all these planets? Isn't this much before interstellar travel? What, did all these cultures come from the SAME system? HUH?

And now, before I lose steam, your favorite and mine:

NERD NITPICKS!

1. Landing permissions - ain't nobody got time for that! Seriously, is there a Star Wars book in which characters actually ask for permission to land, land, and then chase their bad guy?
2. Is there a requirement for a Star Wars author to create at least one planet per book wherein there is SO MUCH POLLUTION that acid rain and black skies are the norm? Is that in the list that George Lucas sends to all potential authors of his books?
3. At one point, Lanoree pilots her ship "out of Nox's gravity". Only, she just left the atmosphere. Yes, the further you get from the planet, the less the gravity will be, but it hasn't disappeared!
4. Force alchemy can save a person from a point-blank blaster wound! After that person has been drug through mines and been knocked out for half a day! SURE, let's go with it!
5. "We are but residents here; our true home is in the Force." I think the word you mean is "foreigners", not residents!
6. The book ends at 65% on my Kindle - the rest (besides a short story going to 68%) are a bunch of gorram excerpts of other books! I MEAN REALLY!! I am paying for THIS?!
7. Force Punch?! Seriously, Lebbon is never allowed to use this again - I've never heard it called "Force Punch" before (only "Force Push") and Lanoree overuses it so much, it must be banished from existence.

And this has been another...Nerd Nitpicks!

Seriously, the best thing about this book (other than yes, Lebbon did make the protagonist female) is the short story "Eruption" written by John Ostrander. THAT was awesome. THAT made Lanoree look bad @\$\$ and competent. THAT was more interesting than anything of this book.

Lanoree is an incompetent Je'daii doing a stupid mission with boring characters, and the writing is just average. This isn't the worst book that I've ever read, nor the worst Star Wars book, but it took me over 5 months to finish, and for a Star Wars book, that's a crime. Not to mention, every time I did pick up the book, I wanted to promptly put it back down.

No wait, you know what the REAL best thing about this book is? Disney has banished it from canon - a move that almost no one will cry over!

Khurram says

This book is a prequel to Star Wars: Dawn of the Jedi Volume 1-Force Storm (Star Wars : Dawn of the Jedi). Let me rephrase that it is a Prequel to the main story of Force Storm. Issue 0 & 1 offer a much more comprehensive history about the Dawn of the Jedi era. Luckily for me I had already read this so I understood much of the history which was alluded to but not explained in this book.

The basic history is huge pyramid shaped ships (called Tho Yor gathered up many different force sensitive, including the Witches of Dathomir, the Sith species, Humans and others to a Planet called Tython. Tython is rich in the Force and very sensitive to changes to it. It has two moons Bogan the dark moon & Ashla the light moon, these represent two sides of the force. The planet is so sensitive that Jedi (or in this era Je'daii) swaying too far to either side are sent to one of the respective moons until they can find balance. Cause of the nature of the planet any one born without Force powers (Force sensitive) is banished from the planet as it is too dangerous for them. On a technological note from the sounds of this and this millenniums before the movies outer solar system travel has not been perfected, and you might have noticed the Je'daii on the front is carrying a sword. Yep the Je'daii are going Samurai, no Lightsabers yet.

This story Lanoree Brock is a Je'daii Ranger (the equivalent of a Jedi Knight). She is called back by the Je'daii counsel for a special mission. She is specially selected because the antagonist is her long thought dead brother Del Brock. The difference between is Lanoree excelled at using the Force, Del didn't even though he was Force sensitive he shunned and hated the force slowly turning him into a dark and angry young man. What makes Del so dangerous is he want to leave the system to the bigger galaxy. To do this he need to open a Hyper gate; the side effect if this is creates a Black hole wiping out the whole system. The story is a now and then format. Half taking place when both Brocks are Journeyman and not with Lanoree current mission.

In this era the Je'daii are taught all areas of the Force, both Dark and Light techniques of accessing it but they must maintain balance. As Journeymen they are sent to the different Je'daii temples specialising in a different disciplines (science, art, medicine, martial arts, and alchemy/magic).

Lanoree specialises in telepathy and alchemy. Del even though he does not use the Force favourite was combat. Even though he or maybe because he does not use the Force he has built up way of block or at least sensing telepathic attacks and he taught this technique to his followers (the Stargazers) who are just as passionate about leaving the system at any cost as he is.

Like I said as this is the first book of this era I was expecting to learn more of the history. The do mention a couple of events like Deposit wars, and a bit about the Great Journey was good; but I would have liked more difference in the way the Je'daii are trained compared to the modern Jedi. Je'daii training is rawer more like a survival course getting from temple to temple. Having Lanoree using a sword the battles are a lot more bloody and brutal. The last 3 chapters run alongside the Force Storm comic. There is also a 7 page bonus story about Lanoree previous mission to this one. It gives more insight to the Je'daii thinking and their use of the Force.

I good book in all, but I would say read the comic of Force Storm first then this book, as a follow up The Prisoner of Bogan next.

Jacob Berry says

I can't believe this was published.. this book is just badly written and half of it isn't close to cannon. the species mentioned here shouldn't be there at all.. Wookiees, Noghri and Sith!? Did anyone check if this book lined up to the lore and history of the Star Wars universe? I'm a huge Star Wars book nerd and got so frustrated with this guys book. I expected a book that sets its time as early in the history as anyone ever has to have had much better lore. it doesn't explain anything! why are Sith here?! this takes place after the Rakata's Infinite Empire was destroyed by the Siths Sorcery right? the Sith are met for the first time by dark Jedi after this book possibly at the end of this guys planned trilogy!? (PLEASE GOD DON'T LET TIM MAKE MORE OF THESE!!)

Cannon issues aside, he's no scientist. he mentions at the beginning of the book that "Exposing dark matter to normal matter would be cataclysmic. It would create a black hole..." Oisk!! pure Oisk! Dark matter would not act that way ever!

And by the way don't swear in a star wars book. he says "Bitch" and "Piss" in the first two chapters, which might not be awful in a PG-13 movie but never have i read a Star Wars book with any kind of bad language at all. they say plenty of other words from tons of other languages in the SW universe.

Please don't let him ruin more precious Star Wars novels, the future movies are getting close to tossing the expanded universes Cannon out the window they don't need help from this guy..

signed, I weep for Star Wars

seak says

The "Dawn of the Jedi" series was first produced in comic form and of course the logical progression is novelization. It takes Star Wars back to its roots. As the title says, it's the origin story to the Jedi, the beginning of our favorite protectors of the universe, users of the force (and lightsabers!), and purveyors of piety.

(It was radioactive spiders that created the Jedi!)

And you'll never believe how they began. In fact, if I gave you infinite guesses, you'd never get it. And it's not for the reason you think.

The "Je'daii" have a mysterious society that does its own thing, which tends to be for the betterment of the universe, saying "may the force go with you."

Yeah, you'd never be able to guess because you'd be going for something new. Also, they use the force and swords and have masters and apprentices. So it's definitely an origin story and not just an exact replication of the jedi we know and love.

Okay, so if you're reading Star Wars books, you really can't go into it expecting a whole lot. And sadly, any of the newer books have the added reputation of being bloated series with little plot.

However, what you can expect is lots of action and lots of fun. *Into the Void* delivers on both counts. While I make fun of the "origin story" it's still an entertaining and interesting look at the beginnings of the Jedi. These Je'daii go through an interesting training period on an incredibly dangerous planet.

Into the Void follows Lanoree Brock, a Je'daii Ranger, who spends most of her time on her own in solitary missions ranging around the galaxy. She's called in for a special mission that could result in the salvation or destruction of the galaxy as they know it, and it's all because of her brother Dal, once thought dead.

The narrative switches between the present where Lanoree is in pursuit of her brother in her current mission and her past training where she and her brother participated together. It's a great way to introduce Dal and find out what his motivations are for his dark pursuits later in his life.

Lebbon does a great job with these characters and his narrative structure works well to set things up for an exciting ending while providing plenty of excitement throughout the training on this dangerous planet. I'm interested to try out Lebbon's other works because he obviously knows what he's doing.

Like other Star Wars audiobooks, *Into the Void* is filled with suspenseful music and every type of sound effect they can possibly fit in. Like a movie in your head, I can't recommend Star Wars audiobooks enough. And January LaVoy does an excellent job bringing Lanoree and every other character to life.

But what I really can't wait for is the origin of the origin story. That's where the money is.

3.5 out of 5 Stars (recommended)

Eric Allen says

I can't read this book. It's just written too terribly to even get past the first chapter. The writing is beyond amateurish and it uses present tense, which I absolutely HATE. Examples of this would be *The Hunger Games* and *I Am Number Four*. I'm sorry, but I just cannot stand the use of present tense. I absolutely despise it. Not to mention the fact that few people who use it in their writing are able to do it well. Some Star Wars fans may be able to get past the terrible writing and the present tense, but I cannot. Honestly, I sat on my couch for 45 minutes correcting the grammar in the first chapter, more than actually reading it before I put it down. It was THAT bad. I don't know what editor green-lighted this for publication, but whooo-boy did he fail to do his job. This one's going back to the book store for a refund and the writer should be ashamed of himself. It's not often I find a book so badly written that I can't even get past the first chapter. I've read writing assignments from high school kids that had more skill and grammatical knowledge than this. My advice to anyone seeking to read this book: Pick up the trade paperback compilation books of the Dark Horse comics that this book is based on. The comics are far more enjoyable with some very good artwork. Don't support shoddy, half-assed work like this by paying good money on it that would be more enjoyably spent on unanesthetised dental surgery.

Lyn says

Tim Lebbon's 2013 Star Wars novel *Dawn of the Jedi: Into the Void* is difficult to rate or review.

First of all, this is a Star Wars novel, because we explore the Force and an early version of the Jedi, called the Je'daii. That's why I chose this work, I like ancient history, I like Star Wars, so how far back in the series can we go? This is it, look on the Star Wars timeline and this is as far back as any writer has ventured in Lucas' interactive vision.

But is this really a Star Wars book?

It reminds me of Frank Herbert's 1976 *Children of Dune* with the setting of two children in the wilderness training and also that each chapter begins with a quote from a Jedi master. This is also more gruesomely violent and in many ways more barbarously dark than the run of the mill SW book. There are no light sabers (though there is an oblique reference), the protagonist uses a sword and decapitates with the wild abandon of a samurai on holiday.

Set thousands of years before the events we are all familiar with, this is far removed from the goings on of Obi Wan and Anakin. And though there are droids, there is none of the campy but fun personality we are used to from R2 and C3P0.

Here's my theory – and I could be way off. Lebbon had this idea and sold it to Lucas with some Je'daii lore taped on.

Anyway, all that said, not a bad story. Lebbon is a good writer and while the characterization is flat, and the dialogue seems also-ran-ish, I stayed tuned in til the end.

Turns out this is based upon a graphic novel series about the beginnings of the Jedi as we know it. Lebbon tells about a young Je'daii Ranger who tracks down her long lost brother who is Force deficient and mad about it. Lebbon alternates between now time and the Ranger's memories of her and her brother's initiation into the Je'daii rites and where it all goes wrong.

Matthew says

Really probably 2.5 - this book for me was rather mediocre and here are a few reasons why:

- This was the first Star Wars book I have read that does not include characters and storyline related to the original. You might say "Matthew, you went into this knowing it is long before the original trilogy". To that I say that the author then should have worked harder to make it entertaining on its own so I didn't care so much about the lack of connection.
- The book goes back and forth between time periods and I often forgot which I was in as the transition was not smooth.
- The overall story was blah. It had no teeth. It had no pizzazz. As I read, more often than not, I was like "okay, guess this is what is going on, I am not sure why I care"

I will keep reading Star Wars, but I hope these duds are few and far between.

Elaine says

I'm struggling between 2 and 3 stars because this didn't really feel like a Star Wars book. It was very dark, which isn't unusual for this series, but I thought it was especially so.

Set 25,000 years before Luke was born, this is the earliest book in the SW canon so far. Je'daii Ranger Lanoree Brock is tasked by the Council to track down her brother and stop him from trying to use mysterious and ancient alien technology. There are plentiful flashbacks of Lanoree as a child, entering the order with her brother Dalien and his eventual rejection of the force: Dale becomes obsessed with intergalactic travel and xenotechnology, and I actually wound up identifying more with his yearnings than hers. Too bad his methods were so darn disagreeable. (On that, the section of the book covering the events at Greenwood Station on Nox was very well written.)

Based on how far in the past this was set, I was hoping the author would cover how the force was discovered or how the Jedi were founded - but even 25 millenia ago, the force and its users are well-established and commonly known. *Dawn of the Jedi*, a totally misleading title.

Ultimately, it was an enjoyable space adventure and a quick read at under 300 pages, hence the 3 stars. It just didn't feel like Star Wars to me.

Milo (BOK) says

Read the Review Here: <http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/05/....>

"A fun look into a Star Wars before such a time as even the Old Republic. Action packed and page-turning." ~The Founding Fields

I've been reading a lot of new Star Wars releases recently and there seems to be a trend of one thing happening - they're fun, action packed and page-turning, but they're rarely anything more. Crucible and The Last Jedi both prove my point, but nonetheless, it's Star Wars, even if Tim Lebbon has picked an era of history that I know nothing about (aside from the confusing *Spiral*), in order to tell his tale in.

"On the planet Tython, the ancient Je'daii order was founded. And at the feet of its wise Masters, Lanoree Brock learned the mysteries and methods of the Force—and found her calling as one of its most powerful disciples. But as strongly as the Force flowed within Lanoree and her parents, it remained absent in her brother, who grew to despise and shun the Je'daii, and whose training in its ancient ways ended in tragedy.

Now, from her solitary life as a Ranger keeping order across the galaxy, Lanoree has been summoned by the Je'daii Council on a matter of utmost urgency. The leader of a fanatical cult, obsessed with traveling beyond the reaches of known space, is bent on opening a cosmic gateway using dreaded dark matter as the key—risking a cataclysmic reaction that will consume the entire star system. But more shocking to Lanoree than even the prospect of total galactic annihilation, is the decision of her Je'daii Masters to task her with the mission of preventing it. Until a staggering revelation makes clear why she was chosen: The brilliant,

dangerous madman she must track down and stop at any cost is the brother whose death she has long grieved—and whose life she must now fear."

This novel explores the early days of the Jedi, back when they were known as the Je'daii. You can see certain similarities, and for the first time, the novel itself feels like it wouldn't work if it was set in the same time period as the main films – which was the problem that dogged the Old Republic novels. I picked up the #0 issue of Dark Horse's Dawn of the Jedi saga a few weeks ago in the bargain box at my local comic store in order to see if it could clarify anything, and it certainly helped me to understand to a certain extent the background that this novel was set in,

The book itself is set 25,000 years before the A New Hope, and deals with a very different time. Intergalactic travel is merely an idea, planets boasted different names and technology is far from what we're used to. The early days. There aren't that many alien species yet, nothing like the vast sea of them that you see in the Mos Eisley Cantina. There's humans, Twi'lek, Wookiees – and even the Sith, presenting a threat of course to the Je'daii, who aren't as powerful with the force as say, Yoda is in the prequels.

The main character here is Lanoree, and it is through her eyes (first person present tense) the story is told. She's an interesting character, and it's nice to read a novel with a female lead in the Star Wars Universe for a change, but Lebbon hasn't managed to make her have a lasting impact on me as a character, although she does undergo some development throughout the book. The story has some great promise and some great ideas, but ultimately it isn't more than your average book from this Universe. The setting is the only thing that makes this book stand out, because otherwise Lanoree could be replaced with pretty much any minor EU Jedi character and we wouldn't notice the difference.

The flashbacks are a somewhat weak element of the book as well, and the ending itself doesn't really deliver as it feels sudden, as if it was forced and abrupt. However, I still enjoyed the book itself despite all the negative things I've said about it, but only to a certain extent. The action, the twists and the world is fun to read in and I hope that *Into the Void* isn't the last book that I see in this Universe. And I'll also be reading something else if it's written by Lebbon as well, because I'm fully aware that he's already an established writer - *Echo City* is high on my to-read list and has been for a long time, so I may have to check that out and see how well he fairs outside the Star Wars Universe.

VERDICT: 3/5

Ken says

Having heard so many great things about the Star Wars expanded universe, I felt it was finally time to take the gargantuan task of starting this series of Legends (no longer Disney cannon) from the beginning. Set 25,000 years before the battle of Yavin this is the earliest novel in the timeline.

Je'daii Ranger Lanoree Brock is given the task to stop her (believed dead) brother Darlen Brock from activating a bomb.

This is the only novel set around this era, but I believe that it's linked with the comics. Working as a stand-alone but I soon started to find that the author's descriptions slightly lacking. At times it felt like a novelisation, as this is my first introduction to this era I found it hard to visualise some

of the characters and places.

It was a fast paced story and I was easily swept along with the ride.

What I did find fascinating during this era was the use of technology. No lightsabers or hyperspace. If anything this book could have easily been a part of a trilogy itself.

Enjoyable, but left me slightly unfulfilled.

Sud666 says

This is a story of the foundations of what would, in time, become the Jedi Order. Taking place tens of thousands of years before the Old Republic, on the planet of Tython, a group of Force users gathered to study the ways of the Force. They were called the Je'daii.

As they develop the foundations for what will become the Jedi Order- we see the original beliefs of the original before they became the hubris laden, hide bound, morality lecturers for the "Light" side-aka the Jedi Order.

No the Je'daii understood that the Force was about balance- both light AND dark. While the Jedi shunned the Dark, rightly fearing its power and seduction, their ancestors understood that to be truly balanced one needed both.

Now mind you this was a time before lightsabers. Je'daii used finely wrought swords. This is the story of Lanoree Brock- a Je'daii Journeyer. Her brother Dal (he's basically a prick throughout the entire story) has found an ancient device. He hates the Force and plans to leave Tython- but his device might spell the destruction of a galaxy. That's the premise. More than that I will not spoil.

The main story is good, but what makes this interesting is the focus on the Je'daii and their philosophies. While any fan of the Jedi order will see the substance of the basic beliefs, there are subtle differences. It is in finding these subtle differences that this story shines. I enjoyed reading about their view of the Force and was surprised to find them more open and understanding than their dogmatic descendants. I leave you with this quote (and compare it to the hubristic and dogmatic drivel spewed by Jedi propagandists like Yoda or Mace Windu):

"A Je'daii needs darkness and light, shadow and illumination, because without the two there can be no balance. Veer to Bogan (the Dark Side), and Ashla (Light Side) feels too constraining, too pure; edge toward Ashla, and Bogan becomes a monstrous myth. A Je'daii without balance between both is no Je'daii at all. He, or she, is simply lost."

The line about ".....toward Ashla, and Bogan becomes a monstrous myth." presaged the Jedi's hubris millennia before the events that led to the rise of Sidious. An interesting look at the foundation of the Jedi Order and their ruminations on the Force.

Don says

Okay, would it have killed Lebbon to have written the book in one tense? It really made the flashbacks kind of annoying. I was actually thinking of just skipping them because they really didn't add anything to plot.

The rest of the book was just okay. Problem #1 is that Lanoree Brock really isn't all that likeable of a hero. None of the Je'daii are, in fact. Second, Dal isn't really evil. So you have a weak hero chasing a bad guy who isn't bad.

Another of the problems is that Lanoree doesn't recognize that her brother isn't a bad guy until late in the book. Something that could have made an interesting sub-plot is barely touched upon.

And the MacGuffin is another problem. Lanoree blindly follows orders when she should have been questioning them. Why is this stargate bad? What's wrong with the idea of exploring space? Why do the Je'daii Masters think the device that opens the stargate will destroy the planet?

Lanoree never asks these questions and the book never answers them. It's simply: Je'daii good; Stargazers bad.

So, die hard Star Wars fans only.

Iset says

Meh. I'm struggling to decide how to rate this book. There were things I liked about it... and things I definitely did not like. I've come to this book after something of a hiatus. I collected all the Expanded Universe books in my teen years, saving up my pocket money to make a new addition once a fortnight, reading each book multiple times over, arranging them all neatly in chronological order on a dedicated shelf... And then I went to university and the only time I had for reading was spent reading those five chapters and seven articles on historical methodology that I had to give a presentation on the next day. So I fell behind as the newer books came out. Now, newer books and the rest of my collection alike have been wholesale swept aside, and Disney tells us none of them ever really happened. What a crock. Of course, I choose to ignore this grandiose edict, and like many Star Wars fans, I make my own canon – why not, after all, most of us are still trying to forget the prequels happened. But it got me to thinking about my EU collection. About how the newer books seemed to steadily lose their way – several books were being churned out a year, in the past few years before the Legends lockdown; many of them barely over 200 pages in hardcover, with thin, stretched plots and mediocre writing. I suppose another reason why I fell behind with the newer books was lack of enthusiasm. But even back in the day, the series had terrible entries. *Crystal Star* was ghastly, and *Children of the Jedi* was nonsensical. When I got to thinking about what I should do with my now non-canon EU book collection, I decided to weed out the good from the bad, and give those newer novels I never got round to a read before I placed them in the keep or throw pile. And I decided to begin, well, at the beginning. I did read the *Dawn of the Jedi* graphic novels before reading this – which I now realise was an error as they actually take place immediately afterwards. They were alright – enough to save them from the throw pile – but I wanted more out of them, frankly. I rather hoped that a meaty book would provide the depth I desired. The result was a mixed bag.

I've always really enjoyed the ancient history of the Star Wars universe, so I must admit I was interested in the history, and comparing and contrasting the Je'daii of this era to those of the era we all know so well. And this particular era always fills me with a sense of smug vindication. Everyone loves Jedi, and I'm no

different, but I always got this nagging feeling that their world view was kind of simplistic. Very rarely are things as simple as good versus evil – people, and life, are a chaotic riot of colour. Without the dark side, how would they know the light side? How would there be any concept of good if there was no bad? Some Jedi deliberately dabble with the dark side and don't fall, others fall completely unintentionally; some say love is bad, others believe no such thing... The Jedi may be awesome, but their code is one great big mess. Taking us all the way back to this era, the Jedi Order in its earliest incarnation, their life philosophy is taken in a completely different direction. The Jedi here recognise that you can't have light without dark, and strive not towards the light side, but to be in balance between the two. It's a nice retcon explanation to see that the Jedi Order's original intention was founded upon wisdom after all, and the later Jedi have just screwed it all up and deviated out of balance. It explains a lot of the mess that happens millennia down the line.

I won't go into the details of the backstory – you'll have to read the comics to find that out – but to summarise, the early Jedi Order, and a whole bunch of non-Force sensitives, of several different species, were brought to and have colonised the Tythos star system. This is early galactic history, so whilst they've colonised most of the star system, they haven't yet developed interstellar travel. The main plot revolves around the quest to achieve this, and the quest to stop it. I liked the time Lebbon spent on describing this different stage, so to speak. It's a wildly different era, and I felt that Lebbon achieved the creation of a different sort of ambience. It felt like a different atmosphere from other Star Wars novels I've read, and I've read a lot. I have to say I felt the inclusion of several iconic Star Wars aliens in this era is a little too convenient and engineered – but I can't blame Lebbon for that. When I envisioned the early Star Wars era one of the interesting struggles I imagined was those different aliens meeting and the tension and possible conflict around those landmark events, way before the Republic became the Republic with all its mixing and integration of so many different species. And that was another problem I had with the book – well, not just this book, but this era – this novel and the comic series are set just over ten thousand years after these people are collected up and dumped on Tython. They've already established themselves. This isn't really an origins story at all. It's what happened after the initial struggles were over and the whole system had been colonised. On the one hand, I can see that setting it in an era where the whole system has been colonised gives the characters plenty of exciting locations to go to, keeping the scenery fresh and allowing a good dose of space travel. But on the other hand I feel like I've been cheated out of the real origins story – the mysterious Tho Yor and the very first struggles of these people on Tython. The real origins don't even go back ten thousand years before this book is set, but even earlier – the ancient Gree technology, the Kwa, and just who were the Celestials?! I have wondered these questions through years of dropped hints and brief references in Star Wars books and comics – I WANT ANSWERS, DAMMIT! But Star Wars is never going to give them to us. Because they don't know. They're just making it up as they go along, and extending galactic history ever further backwards without any real plan or coherency. It's like the writing team for *LOST*.

I have to say I agree with reviewers who were frustrated that Lanoree didn't consider Dal's plan to open the hypergates with more seriousness. Alright, obviously I'm rooting for her to stop a potential cataclysmic event, and I don't want her crazy brother to go through with his madcap scheme. But why doesn't Lanoree ask more questions of the rest of the Order, and the Masters? If I were in her boots I'd be asking the Masters "*what makes you think opening the hypergates would cause a cataclysmic event? Shouldn't we explore other possibilities for interstellar travel even if the hypergates are a no-go? Shouldn't we spend some of our time and resources studying and examining the hypergates so that we at least know what we're dealing with here, and learn as much as possible, even if we never activate them? It could be a joint venture with Je'daii and the system's top scientists...*

 But the Je'daii Order just didn't want to seem to have anything to do with the hypergates at all. The message was that nobody should even think of looking for or examining these things, let alone activate one. Hey, if I had a piece of ancient, powerful, potentially destructive tech lying around, I wouldn't leave it alone. It's a little like an unexploded bomb. I'd be damn careful around the thing, but I'd sure as heck send people in to study the thing and see about the possibilities of safely dismantling it, or

learning more about it in hopes of one day understanding how to use it, or at the very least setting up the area as a total no-go zone.

Speaking of Lanoree... I struggled to identify with her and root for her. I did support her from the basic position of I hoped she would stop disaster from happening, but other than that it was difficult to empathise with her. She was a fairly distant character, and whilst I didn't dislike her, I didn't like her either. Tre Sana and Dam Powl were more interesting. I wanted to know what secrets those two were so obviously hiding. At times I outright disagreed with Lanoree's actions, specifically, her using the Force to intrude upon her brother when they were young. I get that she was well-intentioned, and obviously Dal has issues with personal identity and purpose, but Lanoree couldn't respect or accept his boundaries and choices (misguided as they may have been) and that made me downright annoyed with her. That said, I must praise (view spoiler)

On the subject of the writing, I have little to say. I feel it was competent but unremarkable. Except, I must praise the flashback in which Lanoree enters the Old City. This was the scene in the book where I really felt the eerie atmosphere leap off the page. This was well done, and fairly evocative. I only wished it went on longer and Lebbon had got to play with it more. The climax and the resolution of the story did feel sudden and abrupt to me, and kind of an anti-climax, to be honest. After reading the Big Showdown I thought "that's it?" I really expected something more; a bigger struggle, a harder fight, and an altogether more emotionally wrenching scene.

In conclusion, I'm not sure how I feel about this book. It's been a mixed bag for me and I'm not yet decided on whether it'll stay or go. But I'm pretty sure there won't be any more of Lanoree's story, now that Disney have shut this canon down.

6 out of 10

Mike (the Paladin) says

I have a lot of friends who like the Star Wars books, so I hope I don't annoy them. I just read a review of a book I like immensely where the reviewer said she found the characters whiny and the dialogue wooden... I listed the entire series among my favorites. Obviously I disagree. So, some of you will disagree here.

On the plus side I don't plan to greatly "trash" the book. Mostly I just couldn't get into it. I may go back and try it again later when I'm in a different mood. I've read several books I liked a lot lately and this one just (mostly) left me cold. I couldn't get involved.

When it comes to Star wars I've never gotten into any of the books, for that matter as far as I'm concerned only the original trilogy of movies are worth seeing.

Just me I guess.

Also i need to say that I got this in audio and sound effects didn't help...mostly they just annoyed me. I don't need to hear wookiees howling, droids beeping and so on as the book is being read.

So, 2 stars mostly because I just couldn't care about the characters or the book. Still it's a good idea and I may try again...maybe...later.

