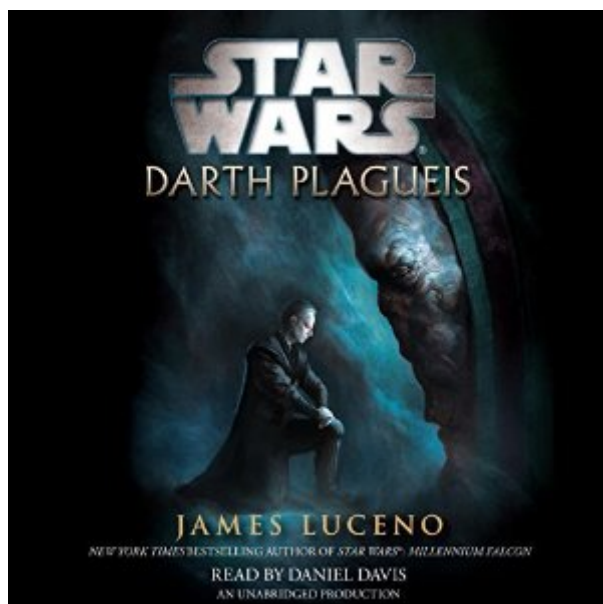


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Star Wars: Darth Plagueis



Synopsis

He was the most powerful Sith lord who ever lived... but could he be the only one who never died? "Did you ever hear the Tragedy of Darth Plagueis the Wise? It's a Sith legend. Darth Plagueis was a Dark Lord of the Sith, so powerful and so wise that he could use the Force to influence the midi-chlorians to create life. He had such a knowledge of the dark side that he could even keep the ones he cared about from dying." -Supreme Chancellor Palpatine, Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith Darth Plagueis: one of the most brilliant Sith Lords who ever lived. Possessing power is all he desires. Losing it is the only thing he fears. As an apprentice, he embraces the ruthless ways of the Sith. And when the time is right, he destroys his Master - but vows never to suffer the same fate. For like no other disciple of the dark side, Darth Plagueis learns to command the ultimate power... over life and death. Darth Sidious: Plagueis's chosen apprentice. Under the guidance of his Master, he secretly studies the ways of the Sith, while publicly rising to power in the galactic government, first as Senator, then as Chancellor, and eventually as Emperor. Darth Plagueis and Darth Sidious, Master and acolyte, target the galaxy for domination - and the Jedi Order for annihilation. But can they defy the merciless Sith tradition? Or will the desire of one to rule supreme, and the dream of the other to live forever, sow the seeds of their destruction? From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

[Note: I tried to make this review 100% spoiler-free, but read at your own risk. Once the book is

published, I will update the review to discuss a few plot points and characters in greater depth. However, I'm happy to answer specific questions in the comments section.]I think it's fair to say that *Star Wars: Darth Plagueis* is the most eagerly anticipated Star Wars novel of the past 5 years. However, *Star Wars: Darth Plagueis* is also one of the most risky because it delves into the backstory of Darth Sidious/Emperor Palpatine, easily the most evil villain in all of Star Wars. Some fans were worried that the book might "demystify" Palpatine or humanize him a bit too much (just as Episode I made Anakin a bit too sympathetic a character). So let me begin my review by stating that *Star Wars: Darth Plagueis* does not destroy Palpatine's character - it makes him even more evil and chilling. We do not see Palpatine as a cute little blond boy. While the book spends a good deal of covering Palpatine and his machinations, it's quite clear how the younger Palpatine presented in this book grew up to become the sadistic Sith Lord of the films. There were a few times when Palpatine's actions even sent a slight shiver down my spine. We do, however, learn a bit more about how exactly Palpatine rose to power and where his urges stem from. As for the title character, I think James Luceno does a great job of bringing Darth Plagueis to life. I admit I was actually a bit worried because Darth Plagueis is a Munn (the same species as San Hill), and we all know that the Star Wars universe has a tendency to stereotype characters by race. I was worried the book would overplay the stereotype of Munns as bankers. However, Luceno handles this pretty well by giving Darth Plagueis a sort of Count of Monte Cristo personality (or alternatively a mix between Prince Xizor and Darth Bane). Like Sidious, Plagueis lives a double life, and he lives each life with a ferocious intensity. In a few scenes, Plagueis transforms from negotiator to killer with frightening speed. Overall, Luceno created a complex character stands out above most of the other Sith characters. The plot is more of a political thriller and serves as a backstory for the movies. I personally dislike Star Wars books that throw in a bunch of battles just to see the characters whip out their blasters or lightsabers, so I thought *Star Wars: Darth Plagueis* was a welcome change of pace. There are only a few fight scenes, but those that are in the book are really emotionally intense and bloodcurdling (yes, I said bloodcurdling). More importantly, the action scenes reveal a lot about the characters and how much they enjoy violence. Again, without revealing too much, the book reminded me of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in how the plot develops. There were two unique aspects to Luceno's writing style in this book that I want to highlight. First, unlike so many Star Wars books (come on, we know Luke, Han, and Leia aren't going to die!), Luceno does not try to build a false sense of suspense. After all, we know Darth Plagueis is killed and we know who killed him (it was revealed in Episode III, but even if you fell asleep during that scene the murder scene takes place on the first page of the book). Rather, Luceno toys with what we think we know about Star

Wars history and holds readers' attention by focusing on HOW and WHEN events unfold. At his best, Luceno forces readers to rethink and relearn the events of the prequels. I for one thought the book filled in many of the holes left by the movies, even more so than the movie novelizations. I finally understand what happened in Episode II! Second, the narrative style in the book is unlike anything I've seen in Star Wars novels, with the exception of Matt Stover's books. The narrator has a voice of his/her own, one that doesn't intrude into the story but rather makes it more epic. For example, the narrator places certain planets or events in historical context, even referring to events and places from the movies. My favorite line [mini-SPOILER Alert] in the book is: "Naboo and Gungan alike couldn't recall a colder winter than the one that followed [Plagueis'] autumnal visit..." [end SPOILER alert]. The narrator also provides a lot of physical detail making it easy to envision the characters and the scene. It's a different style for Luceno, whose previous books seemed a bit lighthearted, but I think this tone suits this book really well. One more thing: Luceno worked closely with LucasFilm in writing the book. My understanding is that the book is as close as any novel can get to being canon (although the Star Wars Expanded Universe canon system is pretty confusing). In other words, this is THE story of Plagueis and Palpatine. Overall, I was pleased to see how James Luceno built Darth Plagueis, Darth Sidious, and Darth Maul into truly compelling and evil characters. It easily stands head and shoulders above most Star Wars novels both for its character development and its storytelling. I haven't been the biggest fan of Luceno's books in the past, but it's clear he dedicated a lot of time, thought, and love to this book. A must read for any Star Wars fan!

Star Wars: Darth Plagueis is not just the story of Plagueis, but also the story of the rise to power of his apprentice, Darth Sidious. Actually, the first chapter is the death of Plagueis. Then it reverts back to the time when he was an apprentice himself to Darth Tenebrous. Plagueis is a Muun, and as such, has a much longer life span than humans. His master, Darth Tenebrous, is a Bith, also having a long life span. This being the case, he was given a lengthy tutelage in the Sith arts before finally taking his master down and earning the mantle of Dark Lord. Then he meets a young man, strong in the force and defiant. So defiant in his ways, that this young man shed his given name but kept his house name, Palpatine. Plagueis decides that it is time to move away from Darth Bane's strict rule of two where the master possesses the power and the apprentice craves it. He sees himself as the one who will implement the Sith's ultimate plan of revenge and desires to forge a partnership for the Sith order. What ensues are the detailed plans and events that lead up to Phantom Menace. This book does an excellent job in linking with other pre-Episode I books. There are numerous

references to past Sith Lords, including Kaan, Darth Bane, and Darth Zannah, as well as hinting to some of the other Sith that came after them (including one who betrayed the order and turned to the light side, which will probably become another book that I will be interested in reading). Keep this in mind when reading because there are a few parts where it seems to skip over a section but the events actually happened in another book and they just did not get repetitive. For instance, when Sidious dispatches Darth Maul to take down Black Sun, it skips to the aftermath. That's because this mission is covered in *Star Wars: Darth Maul*. When he goes after the mining companies, that is covered in *Star Wars: Darth Maul: Saboteur (Short Story)*. So you get the idea. Also described in here are the events that lead to Jedi Master Dooku's decision to leave the Jedi Order and his dabbling in the Dark Side, the beginning of his transformation to Darth Tyranus. We meet Master Syfo-Dyas, who is the one responsible for placing the order with Kamino for the clone soldiers. Even Jedi Master Jorus C'Boath (from *Star Wars: Outbound Flight*) is mentioned here. Basically, this book is quite strong in linking with the other novels as well as the movies. James Luceno's writing style is great. It draws the reader in and, though I have read several of his novels, this has easily become one of my favorites by him. This is a wonderful addition to the Star Wars extended universe and I highly recommend it. Matter of fact, even if you aren't into the novels, I think you will appreciate this book, although some of the significance of small events may escape you.

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(Darth Bane)

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