



Death Star: Star Wars Legends (Star Wars - Legends)

By Michael Reaves, Steve Perry

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“THAT’S NO MOON.”
—Obi-Wan Kenobi

The Death Star’s name says it all, with bone-chilling accuracy. It is a virtual world unto itself—equipped with uncanny power for a singularly brutal purpose: to obliterate entire planets in the blink of an eye. Its annihilation of the planet Alderaan, at the merciless command of Grand Moff Tarkin, lives in infamy. And its own ultimate destruction, at the hands of Luke Skywalker, is the stuff of legend. But what is the whole story, and who are the players, behind the creation of this world-killing satellite of doom?

The near extermination of the Jedi order cleared the way for Palpatine—power-hungry Senator and Sith Lord—to seize control of the Republic, declare himself Emperor, and usher in a fearsome, totalitarian regime. But even with the dreaded Darth Vader enforcing Palpatine’s sinister will, the threat of rebellion still looms. And the Emperor knows that only abject fear—and the ability to punish dissent with devastating consequences—can ensure his unchallenged control of the galaxy. Enter ambitious and ruthless government official Wilhuff Tarkin, architect of the Emperor’s terrifying dream come true.

From inception to completion, construction of the unprecedented Death Star is awash in the intrigues, hidden agendas, unexpected revelations, and daring gambits of those involved on every level. The brightest minds and boldest egos, the most ambitious and corrupt, the desperate and the devious, all have a stake in the Death Star—and its potential to control the fate of the galaxy.

Soldiers and slaves, loyalists and Rebels, spies and avengers, the innocent and the evil—all their paths and fates will cross and intertwine as the Death Star moves from its maiden voyage to its final showdown. And a shadowy chapter of Star Wars history is stunningly illuminated in a thrilling, unforgettable adventure.

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!

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Action sf (and Star Wars) veterans join forces to tell the story of the first Death Star from the point of view of its imperial builders. We see Grand Moff Tarkin, when he's not making love to Admiral Dala, sweating blood to assemble the materials and manpower necessary for the empire's superweapon. We see a seasoned gunnery officer slightly daunted by the power of the weapon he controls and eventually horrified by the results of its first full-power test on Alderaan. We see a firm friendship emerging between a civilian cantina bouncer and a martial-arts adept who probably is Force sensitive. We see a young architect imprisoned for her political dissidence arguing about the exhaust port that provided the fatal weakness of the Death Star against the Alliance attack. A fighter pilot defends the imperial construction site and ends up piloting a getaway ship for likeminded fellows for whom the empire has finally gone over the line. And Darth Vader kibitzes, believing his study of the Force outweighs any number of Death Stars in potential value. Dedicated SW readers, on the other hand, won't kibitz much, if at all, but revel in this splendid job of jacking up the tip of George Lucas' universe and shoving a well-wrought iceberg under it. Green, Roland

About the Author

Michael Reaves received an Emmy Award for his work on the Batman animated television series. He has worked for DreamWorks, among other studios, and has written fantasy novels and supernatural thrillers. Reaves is The New York Times bestselling author of Star Wars: Darth Maul: Shadow Hunter, as well as the co-writer (with Steve Perry) of the two Star Wars: MedStar novels, Battle Surgeons and Jedi Healer. He lives in the Los Angeles area.

Steve Perry wrote for Batman: The Animated Series during its first Emmy Award—winning season, authored the New York Times bestseller Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire, and wrote the bestselling novelization of the summer blockbuster movie Men in Black. Perry has sold dozens of stories to magazines and anthologies, and has published a considerable number of novels, animated teleplays, nonfiction articles, reviews, and essays. He is currently the science fiction, fantasy, and horror book reviewer for The Oregonian.

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FLIGHT DECK, IMPERIAL-CLASS STAR DESTROYER STEEL TALON, POLAR ORBIT, PLANET DESPAYRE, HORUZ SYSTEM, ATRIVIS SECTOR, OUTER RIM TERRITORIES

The alert siren screamed, a piercing wail that couldn't be ignored by any being on board with ears and a pulse. It had one thing to say, and it said it loud and clear:

Scramble!

Lieutenant Commander Villian "Vil" Dance came out of a deep sleep at the blaring alarm, sat up, and leapt from his rack to the expanded metal deck of the Ready Room quarters. Save for the helmet, he already wore his space suit, one of the first things an on-call TIE pilot learned to do was sleep in full battle gear. He ran for the door, half a step ahead of the next pilot to awaken. He grabbed his headgear, darted into the hall and turned to the right, then sprinted for the launching bay.

It could be a drill; there had been plenty of those lately to keep the pilots on their toes. But maybe this time it

wasn't. One could always hope.

Vil ran into the assembly area. A-grav on the flight deck was kept at slightly below one g, so that the pilots, all of whom were human or humanoid, could move a little faster and get to their stations a little sooner. The smell of launch lube was acrid in the cold air, and the pulsing lights painted the area in bright, primary flashes. Techs scrambled, getting the TIE fighters to final-set for takeoff, while pilots ran toward the craft. Vil noticed that it was just his squad being scrambled. Must not be a big problem, whatever it was.

Command always said it didn't matter which unit you got. TIE fighters were all the same, down to the last nut and bolt, but even so, every pilot had his or her favorite ship. You weren't supposed to personalize them, of course, but there were ways to tell--a scratch here, a scuff mark there . . . after a while, you got to where you knew which fighter was which. And no matter what Command said, some were better than others--a little faster, a little tighter in the turns, the laser cannons a hair quicker to fire when you touched the stud. Vil happened to know that his assigned ship this rotation was Black-11, one of his favorites. Maybe it was pure superstition, but he breathed just a little easier, knowing that particular craft had his name on it this time around.

The command officer on deck, Captain Rax Exeter, waved Vil over.

"Cap, what's up? Another drill?"

"Negative, Lieutenant. A group of prisoners somehow managed to take over one of the new Lambda-class shuttles. They're trying to get far enough away to make the jump to hyperspace. That isn't going to happen on my watch. The ID codes and tracking will be in your fighter's computer. Don't let 'em get away, son."

"No, sir. What about the crew?" Vil knew the new shuttles carried only a pilot and copilot.

"Assumed dead. These are bad guys doing this, Dance--traitors and murderers. That's reason enough to cook them, but we do not want them getting away to tell anybody what the Empire is doing out here, do we?"

"No, sir!"

"Go, Lieutenant, go!"

Vil nodded, not bothering to salute, then turned and ran. As he did, he put his helmet on and locked it into place. The hiss of air into his face was metallic and cool as the suit's system went online. It felt very comforting. The vac suit's extreme-temp-resistant weave of durasteel and plastoid, along with the polarizing densecris helmet, were the only things that would protect him from hard vacuum. Suit failure could make a strong man lose consciousness in under ten seconds, and die in under a minute. He'd seen it happen.

TIE fighters, in order to save mass, had no defensive shield generators, no hyperdrive capability, and no emergency life-support systems. They were thus fragile, but fast, and that was fine with Vil. He'd rather dodge enemy fire than hope it would bounce off. There was no skill in piloting some lumbering chunk of durasteel; might as well be sitting with your feet up at a turbolaser console back on the ship. Where was the fun in that?

The TIE tech had the hatch up on Black-11 as Vil arrived at the gantry above the ship. It was the work of an instant to clamber down and into the fighter's snug cockpit.

The hatch came down and hissed shut. Vil touched the power-up stud, and the inside of the TIE--named for the twin ion engines that drove it--lit up. He scanned the controls with a quick and experienced eye. All systems were green.

The tech raised his hand in question. Vil waved back. "Go!"

"Copy that, ST-One-One. Prepare for insertion."

Vil felt his lips twitch in annoyance. The Empire was determined to erase all signs of individuality in its pilots, on the absurd theory that nameless, faceless operators were somehow more effective. Thus the classification numbers, the anonymous flight suits and helmets, and the random rotation of spacecraft. The standardizing approach had worked reasonably well in the Clone Wars, but there was one important difference here: neither Vil nor any other TIE pilot that he knew of was a clone. None of the members of Alpha Squad had any intention of being reduced to automata. If that was what the Empire really wanted, let them use droid pilots and see how well that worked.

His musing was interrupted by the small jolt of the cycling rack below the gantry kicking on. Vil's ship began to move toward the launching bay door. He saw the tech slip his own helmet on and lock it down.

Already the bay pumps were working full blast, depressurizing the area. By the time the launch doors were open, the air would be cycled. Vil took a deep breath, readying himself for the heavy hand of g-force that would push him back into the seat when the engines hurled him forward.

Launch Control's voice crackled in his headphones. "Alpha Squad Leader, stand by for launch."

"Copy," Vil said. The launch doors pulled back with tantalizing slowness, the hydraulic thrum of their movement made audible by conduction through the floor and Black-11's frame.

"You are go for launch in five, four, three, two . . . go!"

Outside the confines of the Star Destroyer, the vastness of space enveloped Lieutenant Vil Dance as the ion engines pushed the TIE past the last stray wisps of frozen air and into the infinite dark. He grinned. He always did. He couldn't help it.

Back where I belong . . .

The flat blackness of space surrounded him. Behind him, he knew, the Steel Talon was seemingly shrinking as they pulled away from it. "Down" and to port was the curvature of the prison planet. Though they were in polar orbit, Despayre's axial tilt showed more of the night side than day. The dark hemisphere was mostly unrelieved blackness, with a few lonely lights here and there.

Vil flicked his comm--though it came on automatically at launch, a good pilot always toggled it, just to be sure. "Alpha Squad, pyramid formation on me as soon as you are clear," he said. "Go to tactical channel five, that's tac-fiver, and log in."

Vil switched his own comm channel to five. It was a lower-powered band with a shorter range, but that was the point--you didn't want the enemy overhearing you. And in some cases, it wasn't a good idea for the comm officer monitoring you back on the base ship to be privy to conversations, either. They tended to be a bit more informal than the Empire liked.

There came a chorus of "Copy, Alpha Leader!" from the other eleven pilots in his squad as they switched over to the new channel.

It took only a few seconds for the last fighter to launch, and only a few more for the squad to form behind Vil.

"What's the drill, Vil?" That from Benjo, aka ST-1-2, his second in command and right panelman.

"Alpha Squadron, we have a Lambda-class shuttle captured by prisoners. They are running for hyper. Either they give up and come back, or we dust 'em."

"Lambda-class? That's one of the new ones, right? They have any guns?"

Vil sighed. That was Raar Anyell, a Corellian like Vil himself, but not somebody you'd want to hold up as a prime example of the human species. "Don't you bother to read the boards at all, Anyell?"

"I was just about to do that, sir, when the alarm went off. Was looking right at 'em. Had the latest notices right in my hand. Sir."

The other pilots laughed, and even Vil had to grin. Anyell was a foul-up everywhere except in the cockpit, but he was a good enough pilot that Vil was willing to give him some slice.

His sensor screen pinged, giving him an image of their quarry. He altered course to intercept.

"Anybody else behind on his homework, listen up," he said. "The Lambda-class shuttle is twenty meters long, has a top speed of fourteen hundred g, a Class-One hyperdrive, and can carry twenty troops in full battle gear--probably a couple more convicts in civvies.

"The ship carries three double-blaster cannons and two double-laser cannons. It can't accelerate worth a wheep and it turns slower than a comet, but if you get in its sights, it can blow you to itty-bitty pieces. It would be embarrassing to have to inform your family you got shot apart by a shuttle, so stay alert."

There came another chorus of acknowledgments:

"Copy, sir."

"Yes, sir!"

"No sweat."

"Anyell, I didn't hear your response."

"Oh, sorry, sir, I was taking a little nap. What was the question?"

Before the squad commander could reply, the shuttle suddenly loomed ahead. It was running as silently as possible, with no lights, but as its orbit brought it across the terminator and out of Despayre's night side, the sunlight struck rays from its hull.

"There is our target, four kilometers dead ahead. I want a fast flyby so they can see us, and then I want a

fountain pattern dispersal and loop, two klicks minimum distance and bracket, one, four, four, and two, you know who you are. I'll move in close and have a word with whoever they have flying the stolen spacecraft."

Benjo: "Aw, Lieutenant, come on, let us have a shot, too."

"Negative. If you had a clue about the vessel, I might, but since you're just as likely to shoot each other as the quarry, you'll hold the bracket."

More acknowledgments, but without much enthusiasm. He couldn't blame his squad--they hadn't had any action except drills since they'd been assigned to this project--but his secondary goal was to bring all his men back alive. The primary, of course, was to accomplish their mission. He didn't need a squad for this; any fighter pilot worth his spit should be able to deal with a lumbering shuttle, even one with the new-vehicle smell still in it. The Lambda's delta vee wasn't all that efficient, but with constant drive it could get above the solar plane and far enough out of the planet's gravity well to engage its hyperdrive fairly soon--and once it was in the chute, they'd never find it.

But that wasn't going to happen.

The pyramid-shaped formation zipped past the fleeing shuttle, close enough for Vil to see the pilot sitting in the command seat. He didn't look surprised, of course--he would have seen them coming on the sensors. But he couldn't outrun them, couldn't dodge, and no way could he take out a full squad of TIE fighters even if he was the best gunner who'd ever lived, not in that boat. And anyway, Vil wasn't going to give him the opportunity to try.

The squad flowered into the dispersal maneuver as ordered, looping out and away to their assigned positions, angled pressor beams in their arrays providing maneuverability. Vil pulled a high-g tight turn and came around to parallel the shuttle a few hundred meters away, slightly above it. He watched the wing turrets closely. As soon as they started to track him, he jinked to port, then to starboard, slowed, then sped up. They tried to keep up with him, but they were a hair too slow.

Vil toggled to a wide-band channel. They'd hear this back in the Destroyer, he knew.

"Attention, shuttle RLH-One. Turn the craft around and proceed immediately to Star Destroyer Steel Talon's tractor beam range."

There was no answer; nothing but the slight hiss of the carrier.

"Shuttle craft, do you copy my transmission?"

Another pause. Then: "Yeah, we hear you, rocketjock. We aren't of a mind to do that."

Vil looked at his control panel. They were two minutes away from Minimum Safe Distance--the point far enough from Despayre where they could safely attempt the jump to lightspeed. Jump too close to a planet's gravity well and the shift would tear the vessel apart. If the guy he was talking to had enough skill to fly the shuttle, he'd know that. His control panel would tell him when he reached MSD, and then it would be over. Lieutenant Dance would have failed a mission, for the first time.

Never happen, he thought. "Turn it around, or we will fire," he said.

"You'd do that? Just blow us apart? Essentially murder fifteen men--and two women? One of them is old enough to be your granny. You can live with that?"

He was stalling for time, Vil knew. The beings on that shuttle were bad enough to have been sent to the galaxy's number one prison planet, and the Imperial courts didn't bother to do that with petty thieves or traffic violators. His granny hadn't robbed any banks or killed anybody. Not that he knew of, anyway.

"Shuttle pilot, I say again--"

Vil saw the port turret on the shuttle open up. He cut across the craft's flight path, angling away aft as the starboard gun began firing. He hit his thrusters full, coming up in a half loop and twist away from the incoming laserfire.

Even a good gunner couldn't have spiked him at this angle, and these guys weren't anywhere close to good enough. Still, the pulsed incandescent beams came close.

"Lieutenant--!" That from Benjo.

"Hold your position, Alpha Squad, there's no problem here." Cool and calm. Like discussing what they might be having for dinner.

He zipped Black-11 out of range.

The clock was running down. Less than a minute to MSD.

"Last chance, shuttle. Turn it around. Now."

In answer, the pilot pulled the shuttle topward so his gunners could get a better angle. They started shooting again.

The shots were wild, but there was always a chance a stray beam could hit you, even by accident.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Miller:

Precisely why? Because this Death Star: Star Wars Legends (Star Wars - Legends) is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap that but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book include such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking way. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I have been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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