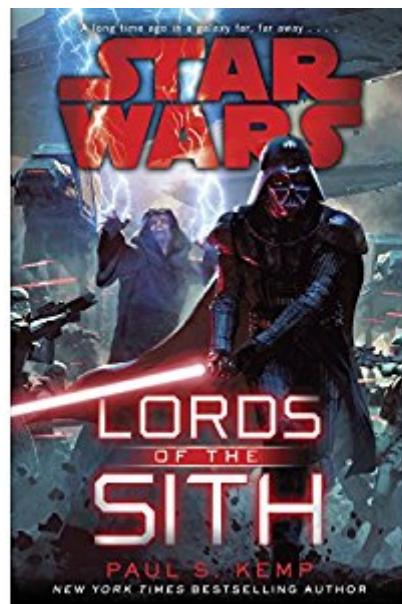


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Lords Of The Sith: Star Wars



Synopsis

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.... When the Emperor and his notorious apprentice Darth Vader find themselves stranded in the middle of insurgent action on an inhospitable planet, they must rely on each other, the Force, and their own ruthlessness to prevail. "It appears things are as you suspected, Lord Vader. We are indeed hunted." Anakin Skywalker, Jedi Knight, is just a memory. Darth Vader, newly anointed Sith Lord, is ascendant. The Emperor's chosen apprentice has swiftly proven his loyalty to the dark side. Still, the history of the Sith Order is one of duplicity, betrayal, and acolytes violently usurping their Masters - and the truest measure of Vader's allegiance has yet to be taken. Until now. On Ryloth, a planet crucial to the growing Empire as a source of slave labor and the narcotic known as "spice", an aggressive resistance movement has arisen, led by Cham Syndulla, an idealistic freedom fighter, and Isval, a vengeful former slave. But Emperor Palpatine means to control the embattled world and its precious resources - by political power or firepower - and he will be neither intimidated nor denied. Accompanied by his merciless disciple, Darth Vader, he sets out on a rare personal mission to ensure his will is done. For Syndulla and Isval, it's the opportunity to strike at the very heart of the ruthless dictatorship sweeping the galaxy. And for the Emperor and Darth Vader, Ryloth becomes more than just a matter of putting down an insurrection: When an ambush sends them crashing to the planet's surface, where inhospitable terrain and an army of resistance fighters await them, they will find their relationship tested as never before. With only their lightsabers, the dark side of the Force, and each other to depend on, the two Sith must decide if the brutal bond they share will make them victorious allies or lethal adversaries.

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Customer Reviews

Paul S. Kemp has shown that he has a talent for writing Sith in his previous Star Wars novels, and *Lords of the Sith* is no different. Here he gets to write the two greatest Sith of all: Darth Vader and the Emperor. For Vader, he serves his role as the Emperor's weapon. He is a thing of fear and legend. His prowess on the battlefield stirs people to disbelief. In short, he is the villain we grew up with, the masked man in black with the crimson blade. Yet the Emperor, as always, has other plans. For him, Vader is not yet ready, and there is another test he must pass on his journey as a Sith. "Are you testing me, Master?" "Testing you? Is that how you perceive things?" "Am I wrong?" His Master smiled and reached up to put a hand "a hand that could emit Force lightning" on Vader's shoulder, the gesture both a sign of affection and assertion of power. "We are, all of us, always being tested, my friend. Tests make us stronger, and strength is power, and power is the point. We must pass all the tests we face." A long pause, then, "Or die in the effort." The relationship between Vader and the Emperor is spot on in this novel. Kemp does a superb job of capturing both characters, nailing their dialog, and dipping into both of their heads. In *Lords of the Sith*, we see the Emperor testing Vader, and in turn, we see Vader being challenged by those tests. Furthermore, we see some of the ghosts of Vader's past still lingering in his head. One of the key plot points in this story is Vader dealing with the vestiges of his past and proving that they no longer hold any sway over him. In highlighting that story, Kemp gives us some great dialog and tense action scenes as the Emperor pushes Vader into extreme situations.

This was quite a good novel. Not the novel I thought I was going to be reading, but very engaging nonetheless. *Lords of the Sith* was billed a Vader/Emperor team up novel, but the star of the story was actually Cham Syndulla. Syndulla was in several episodes of *The Clone Wars* as a Twi'lek freedom fighter. He has also been revealed as Rebels character Hera Syndulla's father. This novel is Cham's attempt at taking down Vader and the Emperor in one fell swoop. Mixed with that tale is a few chapters of introspective and awesome Vader/Emperor team-up. As good as the Cham portions of *Lords of the Sith* was, I much would have rather read a full book focusing more on Vader and Emperor's relationship and adventure. The first half of the book was almost solely about Twi'lek freedom fighters launching an attack on a Star Destroyer and their attempt to kill the Emperor and Darth Vader. Really my favorite part of the book was the very beginning, in which we got to look

deep into Vader thoughts and see the man left over after the "death" of Anakin Skywalker. I also enjoyed the additions to the first chapter that were apparently made since it was released as a teaser for the book. Several mentions were made of Cham being Hera's father, a fact which was only very recently revealed. Cham's sidekick/ love interest Isval is a great real-world extrapolation of the cliche Twi'lek slave girl. She is traumatized by her former life of sexual slavery and out for revenge on the Empire. There were some really interesting tidbits in the second half of the book, which focused on Vader and Palpatine surviving the Twi'lek attack and playing a subtle game of one-ups-man ship along the way.

The old adage proves true once more - on the cover of "Lords of the Sith", Vader and Palpatine are depicted as dominant, roaring into action, brimming with fury. In this novel, however, the titular Darths play second fiddle to an assortment of minor characters - if anything, these villains are barely characters themselves, but rather plot points that other characters revolve around. Vader is intimidating, hateful, and haunted by his past. Sidious is manipulative and inscrutable. I'm bored - this is all rote for them. Nothing new is revealed about them, nor any larger secrets about the Sith. All the Sith philosophy is everything about the Sith you've heard before. The other characters include resistance fighter Cham Syndulla, who repeats the phrase "Freedom fighters, not terrorists" so many times that one begins to suspect he has some sort of neurosis. The character of Moff Mors is the very first gay character in Star Wars canon, supposedly. Apparently video game Star Wars homosexuals like Juhani and Lord Cytharath don't count. If this is the first one, though, she feels less historic and more like a bit of trivia - she's indolent and acts only when forced to, and does little more than engage in a petty power struggle that dominates the novel, with a struggle between her, another Imperial, and Cham - whose brutal actions, cold calculation, and fixation on an Imperial death count rather than any tangible "freedom fighting" make him far less sympathetic than he should be. The prose offers no great thrill. Oftentimes, one can feel very divorced from events, like you're reading a far too extended synopsis.

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