

STAR WARS: THE ALTERNATE PREQUELS

Story Treatments

by

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## ABOUT THE ALTERNATE PREQUELS

These story treatments derive from my personal dissatisfaction with the Star Wars prequels, the result of many years and conversations, much thought and consideration, as to where they fell short and how they could be improved in terms of theme, character, action...all around, really. All in my opinion, of course.

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## EPISODE I

### THE PHANTOM MENACE

A mysterious fleet of ships carries out a campaign of attacks against planets on the Outer Rim of the Galactic Republic. They appear out of nowhere, decimate the planet and then vanish once more into the black. The Jedi OBI-WAN KENOBI is drawn into the conflict, dispatched from the Jedi Temple on the jungle planet Yithian to investigate the mystery.

His investigation leads him to discover that the fleet is comprised of the remnants of the Mandalorians, a civilization that was destroyed by the Republic during an expansionary phase millennia ago. A small contingent of them went into exile, trying to rebuild their army to take revenge. But they were too small a contingent, their army building too slowly, and they were soon forgotten by the Republic, relegated at most to legend, and only on a handful of fringe planets.

But the Mandalorians -- a spacefaring but relatively primitive culture -- have somehow obtained cloning technology, which has allowed them to build their army exponentially, and finally begin their campaign of vengeance against the Republic in earnest. On the Outer Rim planet of Utapau, Obi-Wan discovers their primary cloning facility, and leaves to warn the Senate. But as he makes his escape he is attacked by Mando ships and barely gets away, his ship badly damaged. He limps to the nearest inhabited planet -- Tatooine -- for repairs.

Planetside, it is determined that the ship will take weeks to repair. Obi-Wan knows that he doesn't have weeks, and seeks out alternative transport. Obi-Wan has never been outside the Jedi Temple, and he sticks out like a sore thumb, leading to trouble in the local cantina. Before things can get out of hand, a young moisture farmer named OWEN LARS comes to his rescue and gets him out of there. Obi-Wan tells Owen his plight, and it just so happens that Owen knows someone who can help.

Owen introduces Obi-Wan to his brother-in-law, ANAKIN SKYWALKER, a pilot with his own ship (Owen's wife, BERU, is Anakin's sister). Upon hearing that Obi-Wan wants to go to Coruscant, Anakin refuses, but Obi-Wan offers him so much money he can't turn it down. He agrees, on the condition that they take a one-day detour so that Anakin can make a delivery that's just come in. Desperate to get on the move, Obi-Wan accepts.

The delivery takes them to another Outer Rim planet, Nimban. On arrival, instead of arriving via the standard approach, Anakin activates a scanner-scrambler, and with a bit of fancy flying evades planetary security without their even realizing he's there.

When Obi-Wan asks him why he did this, Anakin responds that it would not do to have security scan the ship, as the contents are not exactly legal.

Scandalized to realize he's been traveling with a smuggler, Obi-Wan gets all up on his high horse and Anakin tells him that if he doesn't like it, he can take his money and find other transport.

Obi-Wan disembarks at Nimban as Anakin makes the trade, but Nimban is somehow even more hostile than Tatooine. The other pilots regard Obi-Wan's offers of money as more suspicious than enticing, and pretty soon they're all giving him a wide berth. He quickly realizes that they're ALL smugglers here.

Humbled, he returns to Anakin, who is not interested in flying the long journey to Coruscant with a self-righteous stick in the mud. But when the Mando fleet appears and attacks the planet, Anakin lets Obi-Wan back into the ship and they make their escape.

Obi-Wan co-pilots with Anakin, and they manage to get out of the fray, the only ship that escapes unharmed. Obi-Wan is impressed, to say the least. Anakin is the best pilot he's ever seen -- so good, in fact, that Obi-Wan is certain his abilities are supernatural. He believes that Anakin has the Force.

For Anakin's part, having now seen the scale of the Mando threat, he agrees that the Senate has to be informed, and they set course for Coruscant.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, a nobody Senator named PALPATINE argues passionately that the Republic -- currently a diplomatic body comprised of individual, sovereign planets and/or systems -- cannot survive this new threat in its current form. The military might of any individual planet is insufficient to combat the encroaching army. One by one, they will be defeated. He proposes that a unified army -- the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) -- be formed from a voluntary alliance of member nations, to go on a combined offensive against the conquering marauders. They must stand together, he urges, or they shall fall apart.

Upon their arrival at Coruscant, Obi-Wan seeks an audience with the Senate and, as a Jedi, his request is granted. Obi-Wan and Anakin are both out of their element among the crowds and skyscrapers of the city planet, and they bond through their shared new experience.

Obi-Wan tells the Senate of what he has discovered. The size of the threat, combined with the fact that the Mando forces are increasing in number on an almost daily basis, turns the tide of debate. Now that they know what they're up against, dozens of planets agree to add their might, however great or small, to the GAR.

Obi-Wan and Anakin are recruited to help lead the offensive against the primary Mando cloning facility -- Obi-Wan because he is a Jedi, and all nations trust their wisdom and neutrality, and Anakin because Obi-Wan requests it.

The battle at the Mando facility -- into the heart of the Mando fleet -- is suitably huge and climactic. Anakin leads the air fleet while Obi-Wan leads a force on the ground to shut down the planetary defenses.

Shockingly, Obi-Wan finds himself face to face with a Sith Warrior, DARTH MAUL, the likes of which -- like the Mandalorians -- many including Obi-Wan believed to be mere myth. A LIGHTSABER BATTLE ensues. Maul is incredible and Obi-Wan nearly falls at his hands, but the ground contingent succeeds in shutting down the planet's defenses and Obi-Wan is able to escape as the airstrike destroys the facility.

After the battle, Obi-Wan returns with Anakin to the Jedi Temple, asking that Anakin be admitted for Jedi training. But the Council refuses, saying that he is too old to begin his training.

Dejected, Anakin prepares to leave the Temple and go back to his old life. But Obi-Wan, unwilling to lose the best (really, the only) friend he has ever had, and unwilling to see Anakin's potential go to waste, says that they should both accept the Republic's offer to join the GAR. Obi-Wan will teach Anakin the ways of the Force himself. Anakin agrees.

Meanwhile, the Jedi Council deliberates, attempting to decipher what part the presumed-extinct Sith are playing in these events, and in the Senate yet more planets commit their military forces to the GAR. The Mandos no longer have their primary cloning facility, but their fleet is still the greatest threat the Republic has ever seen.

The Clone Wars have begun.

## EPISODE II

### ATTACK OF THE CLONES

The Clone Wars have been raging for ten years, and they are nearing their end. With almost none of their cloning facilities remaining intact, and clones only having a lifespan of about ten years even when not being killed in battle, the Mando fleet is shrinking rapidly. It seems certain the battles will be over soon.

Obi-Wan and Anakin are both highly-decorated, respected Generals of the GAR, and so close that most people simply assume them to be brothers. Obi-Wan has continued training Anakin, and Anakin has flourished in his abilities with the Force, even succeeding in building his very own lightsaber.

But unbeknownst to Obi-Wan, Anakin's abilities have in fact outpaced Obi-Wan's ability to teach him. Anakin doesn't want to hurt Obi-Wan by telling him this, as he loves Obi-Wan as a brother and mentor, but his powers are growing to the point where they are beginning to frighten him and he doesn't know who he can turn to.

Anakin has also developed a relationship with now-Chancellor Palpatine. If Obi-Wan is a brother, Palpatine is a father.

Reliable intelligence brings to light that the Mandos are planning one last all-out assault on the planet of Alderaan, which is the planet that has developed some of the Republic's most sophisticated weaponry. At first they think that it is simply to destroy the weapons manufacturing, perhaps as retribution for the destruction of the cloning facilities.

But then it is revealed that the Alderaanians are secretly developing some truly devastating hardware -- even, they hint, something capable of destroying entire planets. It becomes clear that the Mandos wish to steal this technology, and turn the tide of the war once again.

The Senate, manipulated by Palpatine, will not authorize the GAR to mobilize to the protection of Alderaan. They have managed to spread the Mandalorian fleet thin enough to make it manageable, and if their intelligence is faulty then concentrating forces so heavily on the wrong planet could have devastating effects. Nobody wants to risk being the planet that wasn't protected when the Alderaan attack turns out to be a mere decoy. And besides, Alderaan has all those weapons. They can protect themselves.

Knowing that a Mandalorian coup of Alderaan would spell doom for the Republic, Obi-Wan takes it upon himself to go to the planet directly, putting Anakin in the uncomfortable position of having to decide where his loyalties lie. Ultimately, but not without hesitation, he sides with Obi-Wan and accompanies him to Alderaan.

After convincing the Alderaanian leaders that the danger to their planet is serious and real, Obi-Wan and Anakin split up. Anakin remains on Alderaan to help prepare them for the impending attack, as Obi-Wan goes to nearby planets and tries to convince them to exercise their rights as sovereign entities to pull their forces out of the GAR and give aid to Alderaan.

During his time on Alderaan, Anakin meets PADME, a soldier who at first is put off by his brash personality. But she warms to him, shows him the wondrous things her planet has to offer, the reasons she and her people will fight for it. And with the threat of annihilation looming over them, they fall in love.

Obi-Wan manages to get a mere half-dozen planets to give their fleets to Alderaan's protection, and he mobilizes them around the planet as best he can.

And then the attack comes.

The battle is massive and devastating. The Mandalorians implement kamikaze tactics to break through the defenses and land a ground party -- one led by Darth Maul. Obi-Wan and Anakin engage him in BATTLE, but he has spent the last decade training, and is far more powerful than when Obi-Wan met him on Utapau. He takes on both of them, nearly killing Obi-Wan and rendering him unconscious.

In his fury, Anakin unleashes hell on Maul, beating him back in lightsaber combat and then hitting him with a Force blast so powerful it not only kills Maul, but brings down a building, killing hundreds of Mandalorians and Alderaanians alike. Overwhelmed with horror, Anakin flees the planet.

In the end, the Mandalorians are defeated, decisively ending the Clone Wars. But Alderaan has paid a heavy price. Their cities destroyed, their population decimated, the Alderaanian leadership (Bail Organa among them) declares that they will no longer produce weapons on Alderaan -- in fact, Alderaan is to become a peaceful planet, and shall have no weapons at all.

Though the Clone Wars have finally been brought to a close, Palpatine manages to put his spin on it to work the Senate into a froth over the "treasonous" actions of the Jedi (for coaxing armies out of the GAR), and of those planets which abandoned their commitment to the GAR in order to protect Alderaan.

Declaring that this war has been fought too hard and too long for the Republic to divide again now that it has ended, Palpatine declares martial law to bring what he labels the "Separatists" back in line. Several more planets withdraw their own armies in protest, but recognizing that Palpatine will be coming after them too, the excommunicated armies ally together to create a new unified fighting force, the Separatist Confederacy.

Anakin goes to Palpatine, to beseech him to see reason. But Palpatine reveals he not only knows about Anakin's powers, he knows they have grown beyond Anakin's control. Far from chastizing him, Palpatine encourages him to pursue that path to power.

Palpatine reveals that he is the mastermind behind the Clone Wars, he the Sith Master who shared cloning technology with the Mandalorians, believing that their goals -- vengeance against the Republic -- were compatible. He tells Anakin of the Sith, an ancient race who had learned to harness the power of the Dark Side of the Force, and how the Republic, driven by Jedi "propaganda," led to the subjugation, slavery, and ultimate eradication of the noble Sith. But their knowledge, the "Sith Arts," survived, passed from master to apprentice through the millennia, waiting for the time when those who had forced the Sith to kneel would themselves be forced to kneel before the power of the Dark Side.

And now that his apprentice Maul is dead, at Anakin's hand no less, Palpatine must take a new apprentice...and he offers this to Anakin. He can teach Anakin things that Obi-Wan has never dared to imagine, and together they can rule the galaxy.

Anakin refuses to join him and attacks Palpatine. But Palpatine is far too powerful, using the Force to defeat Anakin without ever moving from his chair, and finally tossing Anakin out the window of his chamber.

Anakin survives, but he knows that Palpatine let him live. He returns to Alderaan, and he and Padme find comfort in each other.

### EPISODE III

#### REVENGE OF THE SITH

The Separatists have been fighting to keep the sovereignty of their individual planets, trying to negotiate a treaty with the Republic to re-enter the fold without need for any more bloodshed. But Palpatine is unwilling to accept anything but complete surrender, and fighting is inevitable as the corrupt Chancellor seeks to bring them under his thumb.

Padme, now Anakin's wife, is pregnant, very near term, with their first child. Their son. Anakin is already madly in love with the child, so excited to have someone he can teach and care for. They have gone into hiding on Yithian, at the Jedi Temple, having taken asylum in exchange for Anakin providing the Council with the identity of the Sith Master, Palpatine. As a result, the Jedi have allied with the Separatists to bring Palpatine down. Padme is a leader in the Separatist movement, though she has scaled back her involvement as she's come to term.

This has, of course, only fueled Palpatine's ability to demonize both Jedi and Separatist alike as traitors to the Republic, and has created such a climate of fear and distrust that nobody speaks out against an anti-Jedi genocide taking place right out in the open, under the auspices of the Chancellor's office. The Jedi are being systematically hunted and slaughtered by Palpatine's new Sith Warrior, a shrouded figure whose name has become a talisman of fear: Darth Vader.

A former trainee at the Jedi Temple, Vader turned to the Dark Side and against his former friends. Obi-Wan having trained most frequently with the man who would become Vader, the Council conscripts him to protect a contingent of Jedi, in hiding on the volatile lava-planet of Mustafar, from the Sith Warrior and his team of bounty hunters.

Anakin does not want to accompany Obi-Wan on this adventure -- he wants to stay with his wife, be ready for the imminent arrival of his child. On top of this, he doesn't trust the Jedi, and the Jedi have made it clear on many occasions that they do not trust him. They sense he is volatile, that there is darkness in him.

Obi-Wan insists that Anakin come along. He has relied on Anakin for over a decade now, would not have gotten through the Battle of Alderaan without Anakin at his side. But Anakin never told Obi-Wan what happened after Maul knocked him out, and being reminded of it only confuses his emotions even further. Obi-Wan pressures him into coming along, and Anakin very reluctantly agrees.

Upon arriving at Mustafar, Anakin and Obi-Wan confront Vader. But Palpatine appears on the scene and messes with Anakin's head some more. Palpatine puts it to Anakin: isn't he tired of having other people tell him what to do? How to live, how to think? He's more powerful than any of them, shouldn't he be the one making the rules, making his own decisions? Look what loyalty and servitude has gotten him -- he's put himself where he doesn't want to be when, light-years away, his wife and unborn child are in the hands of the very people who have kept him in line with their rules and dogma, through the guise of his "friend" Obi-Wan.

Horribly, everything he's saying is the truth as Anakin sees it. His fear and anxiety boils over into rage and hatred, directed simultaneously at Vader and Obi-Wan. Palpatine tells him that he can only have one apprentice, only one person to teach the Sith Arts and the true path to power. For now it is Vader, but it could be him. All he has to do is kill them both and "take your place by my side."

THE DUEL begins.

Obi-Wan tries to talk sense into Anakin in the midst of a three-way, all-out, knock-down drag-out fight. The saber battle to end all saber battles. The planet tears itself apart around them, both due to its already unstable nature and the furious Force-battle they wage in tandem with the lightsaber combat.

Vader is thrown into the lava and Anakin nearly falls, but Obi-Wan catches him, tries to save him. But Anakin is too far gone. He attacks Obi-Wan, and falls.

Devastated by grief over the loss of his friend, Obi-Wan returns to Padme to discover she has given birth not just to a son, but to twins, a boy and a girl. Fearful that Palpatine will come after Anakin's children, Obi-Wan tells everyone who knows about the birth to spread the word that she had a miscarriage and the son died, and to not even mention the girl.

The girl is taken to Alderaan, into the protection of Padme's close friend Bail Organa. The boy, Obi-Wan knows he must hide much further, where no one will look for him.

Meanwhile, a charred-beyond-recognition body is retrieved from the lava. The Suit goes on. The breathing starts.

"Who are you?" Palpatine asks the obsidian hulk.

"I am Darth Vader," the figure responds. And so he is.

Obi-Wan takes the boy child to the only place he can think will be safe, the only family the boy has left. He takes him to Tatooine, to his Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru. Owen tries to refuse, but Beru -- who is unable to have children of her own -- will not let him. They will raise Luke as their own child.

Word reaches Obi-Wan that Padme has been captured by Vader in a siege on the Jedi Temple (which has also decimated the Council, scattering the few surviving Jedi into exile). He sets out to save her, but he arrives too late. Padme is brought before Palpatine and grilled for answers. Tortured. She refuses to give in. And so, to make an example of her, Palpatine kills her with Force lightning. Vader stands by, watching, and does nothing.

Obi-Wan witnesses this, and in his distress he sets off an alarm. A search begins. Obi-Wan is cornered in a hiding spot, tracked down by Vader. Vader knows he's there, Obi-Wan knows he knows...but instead of revealing and capturing/killing him, Vader inexplicably leads the troopers away, telling them there is no one there. And Obi-Wan is able to escape.

On Alderaan, an astromech droid, designation R2-D2 (ARTOO), arrives at the Organa residence and is received by the family protocol droid, C-3PO (THREEPIO).

Artoo has a message from Padme Skywalker, to "Bail Organa and his daughter, Leia." Threepio asks for the message, to relay it, but Artoo insists that it is to be delivered to Bail directly. When Threepio refuses to let him in without screening the message,

Artoo simply barges in, wheeling his way into the house faster than Threepio can shuffle after him.

Bail thanks Threepio for his effort and accepts Artoo's message. Padme's message was recorded mere moments before her capture. She tells Bail that she does not expect to live through this, and she asks him to take care of Leia, to show her all the love that she will never be able to. She also gives Artoo to the Organas, to Threepio's consternation.

To Leia, she sends her love and says goodbye. She looks as Leia will later remember her -- beautiful, but sad. The infant reaches out for her mother's image, begins to cry when the message ends.

Obi-Wan returns to Tatooine, to watch over and protect young Luke as he grows. Owen, though, blames the entire rotten situation squarely on Obi-Wan, and tells Obi-Wan that he doesn't want him filling the boy's head with the same idealistic nonsense that got his father killed. Obi-Wan agrees to observe from a distance, and only from a distance, until the boy is old enough to make the decision for himself.

The Separatist movement fails and they are brought back under the jurisdiction (i.e. tyranny) of the Galactic Republic -- now rebranded the Galactic Empire, with Palpatine installing himself as the first and only Emperor. But though their sovereignty has been lost, the fight is just beginning, and the Separatists respond to Palpatine's rebranding with one of their own:

They call themselves the Rebel Alliance.