



Into the Void: Star Wars Legends (Dawn of the Jedi) (Star Wars: Dawn of the Jedi - Legends)

By Tim Lebbon

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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.

Includes a special, full-color excerpt from the Dark Horse comic *Star Wars: Dawn of the Jedi* and an original Dawn of the Jedi short story by John Ostrander!

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**

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From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

Tim Lebbon is a *New York Times* bestselling writer whose recent books include *The Secret Journeys of Jack London* series (co-authored with Christopher Golden), *Echo City*, *The Island*, and *Bar None*. He has won four British Fantasy Awards, a Bram Stoker Award, and a Scribe Award, and has been a finalist for International Horror Guild, Shirley Jackson, and World Fantasy awards.

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Chapter One

dark matters

Even at the beginning of our journey I feel like a rock in the river of the Force. Lanoree is a fish carried by that river, feeding from it, living within it, relying on the waters for her well-being. But I am unmoving. An inconvenience to the water as long as I remain. And slowly, slowly, I am being eroded to nothing.

—Dalien Brock, diaries, 10,661 TYA

She is a little girl, the sky seems wide and endless, and Lanoree Brock breathes in the wonders of Tython as she runs to find her brother.

Dalien is down by the estuary again. He likes being alone, away from all the other children at Bodhi, the Je’daii Temple of the Arts. Her parents have sent her to find him, and though they still have some teaching to do that afternoon, they’ve promised that they will walk up to the boundary of the Edge Forest that evening. Lanoree loves it up there. And it scares her a little, as well. Close to the temple, near the sea, she can feel the Force ebbing and flowing through everything—the air she breathes, the sights she sees, and all that makes up the beautiful scenery. Up at the Edge Forest, there’s a primal wildness to the Force that sets her blood pumping.

Her mother will smile and say that she will learn about it all, given time. Her father will look silently into the forest, as if he silently yearns to explore that way. And her little brother, only nine years old, will start to cry.

Always at the Edge Forest, he cries.

“Dal!” She swishes through the long grasses close to the riverbank, hands held out by her sides so that the grass caresses her palms. She won’t tell him about the walk planned for that evening. If she does he’ll get moody, and he might not agree to come home with her. He can be like that sometimes, and their father says it’s the sign of someone finding his own way.

Dal doesn’t seem to have heard her, and as she closes on him she slows from a run to a walk and thinks, If that was me I’d have sensed me approaching ages ago.

Dal’s head remains dipped. By his side he has created a perfect circle using the stones of chewed mepples, his favorite fruit. He does that when he’s thinking.

The river flows by, fast and full from the recent rains. There’s a power to it that is intimidating, and, closing her eyes, Lanoree feels the Force and senses the myriad life-forms that call the river home. Some are as small as her finger, others that swim upriver from the ocean almost half the size of a Cloud Chaser ship. She knows from her studies that many of them have teeth.

She bites her lip, hesitant. Then she probes out with her mind and—

“I told you to never do that to me!”

“Dal . . .”

He stands and turns around, and he looks furious. Just for a moment there’s a fire in his eyes that she doesn’t like. She has seen those flames before, and carries the knotted scar tissue in her lower lip to prove it. Then his anger slips and he smiles.

“Sorry. You startled me, that’s all.”

“You’re drawing?” she asks, seeing the sketchbook.

Dal closes the book. “It’s rubbish.”

“I don’t believe that,” Lanoree says. “You’re really good. Temple Master Fenn himself says so.”

“Temple Master Fenn is a friend of Father’s.”

Lanoree ignores the insinuation and walks closer to her brother. She can already see that he has chosen a fine place from which to draw the surroundings. The river curves here, and a smaller tributary joins from the hills of the Edge Forest, causing a confusion of currents. The undergrowth on the far bank is colorful and vibrant, and there’s a huge old ak tree whose hollowed trunk is home to a flight of weave birds. Their spun golden threads glisten in the afternoon sun. The birdsong complements the river’s roar.

“Let me see,” Lanoree says.

Dal does not look at her, but he opens the pad.

“It’s beautiful,” she says. “The Force has guided your fingers, Dal.” But she’s not sure.

Dal picks a heavy pencil from his pocket and strikes five thick lines through his drawing, left to right, tearing the paper and ruining it forever. His expression does not change, and neither does his breathing. It’s almost as if there is no anger at all.

“There,” he says. “That’s better.”

For a moment the lines look like claw marks, and as Lanoree takes a breath and blinks—

A soft, insistent alarm pulled her up from sleep. Lanoree sighed and sat up, rubbing her eyes, massaging the dream away. Dear Dal. She dreamed of him often, but they were usually dreams of those later times when everything was turning bad. Not when they were still children for whom Tython was so full of potential.

Perhaps it was because she was on her way home.

She had not been back to Tython for more than four years. She was a Je’daii Ranger, and so ranging is what she did. Some Rangers found reasons to return to Tython regularly. Family connections, continuous training, face-to-face debriefs, it all amounted to the same thing—they hated being away from home. She also believed that there were those Je’daii who felt the need to immerse themselves in Tython’s Force-rich surroundings from time to time, as if uncertain that their affinity with the Force was strong enough.

Lanoree had no such doubts. She was comfortable with her strength and balance in the Force. The short periods she had spent with others on retreats on Ashla and Bogan—a voluntary part of a Padawan’s training, should they desire to go—had made her even more confident in this.

She stood from her cot and stretched. She reached for the ceiling and grabbed the bars she’d welded there herself, pulling up, breathing softly, then lifting her legs and stretching them out until she was horizontal to the floor. Her muscles quivered, and she breathed deeply as she felt the Force flowing through her, a vibrant, living thing. Mental exercise and meditation were fine, but sometimes she took the greatest pleasure in exerting herself physically. She believed that to be strong with the Force, one had to be strong in body.

The alarm was still ringing.

“I’m awake,” she said, easing herself slowly back to the floor, “in case you hadn’t noticed.”

The alarm snapped off, and her Peacemaker ship’s grubby yellow maintenance droid ambled into the small living quarters on padded metal feet. It was one of many adaptations she’d made to the ship in her years out in the Tythan system. Most Peacemakers carried a very simple droid, but she’d updated hers to a Holgorian IM-220, capable of limited communication with a human master and other duties not necessarily exclusive to ship maintenance. She’d further customized it with some heavy armor, doubling its weight but making it much more useful to her in risky scenarios. She spoke to it, its replies were obtuse, and she supposed it was the equivalent of trying to communicate with a grass kapir back home. She had even named it.

“Hey, Ironholgs. You better not have woken me early.”

The droid beeped and scraped, and she wasn’t sure whether it was getting cranky in its old age.

She looked around the small but comfortable living quarters. She had chosen a Peacemaker over a Hunter because of its size; even before she'd flown her first mission as a Je'daii Ranger, she knew that she would be eager to spend much of her time in space. A Hunter was fast and agile but too small to live in. The Peacemaker was a compromise on maneuverability, but she had spent long periods living alone on the ship. She preferred it that way.

And like most Rangers, she had made many modifications and adaptations to her ship that stamped her own identity upon it. She'd stripped out the table and chairs and replaced them with a weights and tensions rack for working out. Now, she ate her food sitting on her narrow cot. She'd replaced the holonet entertainment system with an older flatscreen, which doubled as communications center and reduced the ship's net weight. Beside the extensive engine compartment there had been a small room that housed a second cot for guests or companions, but because she had neither she had filled the space with extra laser charge pods, a water recycling unit, and food stores. The ship's four laser cannon turrets had also been upgraded, and it now also carried plasma missiles, and drone missiles for long-distance combat. At the hands of the Cathar master armorer Gan Corla, the cannons now packed three times more punch and were effective over twice the range as those standard to Peacemakers.

She had also altered and adapted the function and position of many cockpit controls, making it so that only she could effectively fly the ship. It was hers, it was home, and that was how she liked it.

"How long to Tython?" she asked.

The droid let out a series of whines and clicks.

"Right," Lanoree said. "Suppose I'd better freshen up." She brushed a touch pad and the darkened screens in the forward cockpit faded to clear, revealing the star-speckled view that never failed to make her heart ache. There was something so profoundly moving to the distance and scale of what she saw out there, and the Force never let her forget that she was a part of something incomprehensibly large. She supposed it was as close as she ever came to a religious epiphany.

She touched the pad again and a red glow appeared, surrounding a speck in the distance. Tython. Three hours and she'd be there.

The Je'daii Council ordering her back to Tython meant only one thing. They had a mission for her, and it was one that they needed to discuss face-to-face.

Washed, dressed, and fed, Lanoree sat in the ship's cockpit and watched Tython drawing closer. Her ship had communicated with sentry drones orbiting at thirty thousand kilometers, and now the Peacemaker was performing a graceful parabola that would take it down into the atmosphere just above the equator.

She was nervous about visiting Tython again, but part of her was excited as well. It would be good to see her mother and father, however briefly. She contacted them far too infrequently. With Dal dead, she was now their only child.

A soft chime announced an incoming transmission. She swiveled her seat and faced the flatscreen, just as it snowed into an image.

“Master Dam-Powl,” Lanoree said, surprised. “An honor.” And it was. She had expected the welcoming transmission to be from a Je’daii Ranger or perhaps even a Journeyer she did not know. Not the Cathar Je’daii Master.

Dam-Powl bowed her head. “Lanoree, it’s good to see you again. We’ve been eagerly awaiting your arrival. Pressing matters beg discussion. Dark matters.”

“I assumed that was the case,” Lanoree said. She shifted in her seat, unaccountably nervous.

“I sense your discomfort,” Master Dam-Powl said.

“Forgive me. It’s been some time since I spoke with a Je’daii Master.”

“You feel unsettled even with me?” Dam-Powl asked, smiling. But the smile quickly slipped. “No matter. Prepare yourself, because today you speak with six Masters, including Stav Kesh’s Temple Master Lha-Mi. I’ve sent your ship the landing coordinates for our meeting place thirty kilometers south of Akar Kesh. We’ll expect you soon.”

“Master, we’re not meeting at a temple?”

But Dam-Powl had already broken the transmission, and Lanoree was left staring at a blank screen. She could see her image reflected there, and she quickly gathered herself, breathing away the shock. Six Je’daii Masters? And Lha-Mi as well?

“Then it is something big.”

She checked the transmitted coordinates and switched the flight computer to manual, eager to make the final approach herself. She had always loved flying and the freedom it gave her. Untethered. Almost a free agent.

Lanoree closed her eyes briefly and breathed with the Force. It was strong this close to Tython, elemental, and it sparked her senses alive.

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