

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace Study Guide

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace by Terry Brooks

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Plot Summary

On the sun-drenched and sand-bitten planet of Tatooine, a nine year-old slave boy, Anakin Skywalker, dreams of the future when he and his mother, Shmi, will be free of the yoke of slavery. As only a nine year-old can, he also dreams what would seem to an adult to be unattainable, impossible dreams. He looks up at the sky and imagines himself grown up, a pilot who will be flying battle cruisers and fighters.

Adults like his owner, Watto, a Toydarian merchant with a lumpy body and constantly beating wings, could not hope to know what Anakin knows - that he is special in an extraordinary way that even *he* does not fully understand. He *senses* things that others can not, he knows that threats are present even when he can not see them, and he is gifted at building and repairing technically complex machines like protocol droids and pod racers. After all, doesn't Watto insist on entering Anakin and his pod racer in the regular races, in spite of fact that no human of any age has ever been able to win one? And hasn't Anakin been successful in hiding the fact that he's building his own pod racer, from scrap parts and components bartered from a myriad of sources? Someday soon, when he needs it, it will be completed and ready.

Still, he's a slave, and on Tatooine, slaves aren't able to escape. They each have an explosive tracer embedded in a secret location somewhere in their body tissues. Try to remove it, or try to run away, and the device will detonate and turn the slave into Bantha fodder. Of course, Anakin is too shrewd ever to attempt such a foolish strategy. He's wise far beyond his nine years, he's wily and cunning, and therefore he's content to bide his time until all his special gifts can be put to use to fulfill his dreams of a new life for him and his mother.

Meanwhile, at the same edge of this galaxy, two Jedi knights aboard a small cruiser bearing the insignia of the Republic are approaching the planet of Naboo, whose queen, Amidala, young and supposedly untried as a ruler, has just been newly elected. It's an especially perilous time to succeed to the throne, since Naboo is locked in a blockade deployed by the powerful Trade Federation, headed by the Neimoidian Viceroy Nute Gunray. As they approach the blockade, Qui-Gon speculates about the reason why Neimoidians, normally non-combatant traders, should suddenly appear with a Federation battle fleet and an army of droids to challenge the Republic.

The Republic and its Senate are the ruling body of this galaxy, and the independently constituted Trade Federation has complained about trade route taxes levied by the Republic, but has never taken such a defiant action as blockading a planet. Master Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn is puzzled by this warlike behavior on the part of the Trade Federation, especially over a relatively insignificant planet such as Naboo. His apprentice, Obi-Wan, is disturbed by the fact that he senses a malevolent force, not on the planet, but elsewhere, far away.

Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan, are part of an ancient order, whose members serve the Republic, not in an aggressive capacity, but as respected and powerful peacemakers



who are called upon in life-threatening situations. The discipline of the Jedi has evolved over centuries, and has centered around their attachment to, and understanding of The Force, which affords them extraordinary power, but only if their lives are dedicated to serving the community, guaranteeing equal justice throughout the galaxy.

The Neimoidian Viceroy, Nute Gunray, is frantic when he learns that two Jedi have boarded his ship as ambassadors. He sends a droid to meet the Jedi, then via hologram, he contacts the mastermind behind the blockade, Darth Sidious, a disciple of the evil cult called the Sith, who had supposedly been exterminated long ago.

Sidious orders Gunray to blow up the Republic Cruiser and kill the two Jedi knights. Gunray dispatches destroyer droids to accomplish this task and then orders his fleet of landing ships and battalions of droids to attack the planet. What he does not realize is that the two Jedi have escaped his assassination squad and hitched a ride with invasion troops down to the planet, where they surface in the swamp of the Gungan race. The Gungans are strange amphibious creatures with rubbery bodies, long flat ears, and ducklike snouts. One of these creatures, a clumsy renegade named Jar Jar Binks, agrees to help the two Jedi to make their way to Queen Amidala's palace.

Unaware of the events unfolding on Naboo that will alter his life in unforeseen ways, Anakin Skywalker treks out into the desert of Tatooine to trade with a nomadic race called the Jawas. At this same moment, the two Jedi, guided by Jar Jar Binks, infiltrate Queen Amidala's palace, which has been occupied by Nute Gunray and his troops. Qui-Gon orchestrates a brilliant escape from Naboo in one of the Nabooan cruisers, taking the Queen, her entourage, a crew, and Jar Jar, much to the distaste of Obi-Wan, who views Jar Jar as baggage. On the way through the blockade, the ship is damaged and is forced to land on Tatooine to seek repairs.

While Obi-Wan guards the ship, Qui-Gon, the droid R2-D2, Jar Jar, and a handmaiden, Padmy, journey to Anakin's nearby city, Mos Espa, seeking replacement parts for the Cruiser. They meet Anakin, whom Qui-Gon senses to be an extraordinary being, perhaps even Jedi material. Drawn to Padmy, in spite of the difference in their ages, and wanting to impress her, Anakin shows the little group his half-finished protocol droid, and the pod racer he has built and hidden. Then he leads the Jedi to Watto's shop, but Watto refuses to accept Republic credits in payment for the needed parts, and Qui-Gon, claiming to own a pod racer, makes a racing bet with Watto, but only if Anakin is supplied to pilot "Qui-Gon's" racer. If Anakin wins, then Watto supplies the needed parts and takes the winnings. If Anakin doesn't win, Watto gets Qui-Gon's Nabooan cruiser.

They agree on the deal, and a long exciting race ensues, which Anakin *does* win by a narrow margin, impressing Qui-Gon so much that he buys Anakin's freedom and takes him away.

As they approach their cruiser, they are confronted by a powerful Sith - Darth Maul, fearsome in appearance, and armed with a double-ended light saber. Qui-Gon battles Maul, to buy time for the cruiser to load and take off, but Maul is impressive, as well as stronger and younger, and Qui-Gon barely manages to escape him at the last minute,



by catching on to the ship as it takes off. The cruiser makes its way to a city-planet, Coruscant, the capital of the Republic, where the Senate holds its sessions, and where the Jedi Temple stands, housing knights, apprentices, and the Jedi Council.

Once on Coruscant, Queen Amidala pursues her suit for justice with the Senators, and Qui-Gon pleads unsuccessfully with the Jedi Council to allow him to train Anakin as a Jedi. An election for Chancellor of the Republic is under way, and Senator Palpatine, who promises to restore Naboo to Amidala and fight corruption in the Senate, is the lead candidate. Queen Amidala, not content with his promises, decides to return to Naboo, along with Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, Jar Jar, and Anakin.

During the testing of Anakin, it has been discovered that he possesses an extraordinarily high level of midi-chlorians, microscopic life forms that reside within the cells of all living beings and promote communication between their hosts and The Force. Qui-Gon assures Anakin that, with time and training, he will understand all these things. As they speak, the transports arrive, and they are off to Naboo. On the ship Anakin seeks out a less spiritual type of learning. He makes friends with the pilot, and persuades him to explain the workings of the controls on the pilot's console.

While they are on the transport, Amidala explains to the others what her plan is. She has learned from Jar Jar that the Gungans have a secret army, well equipped and ready to do battle. She intends to land in the swamps, raise an army and retake Naboo. When they land, she persuades the Gungans to join forces with them, but with a slightly altered plan. When the Federation brings out its forces against the Gungans, she and a small group of fighters will battle their way into the palace and take control.

When they land, they contact the Gungan leader, and Queen Amidala in her headdress, with Padmy and Anakin beside her, attempts to negotiate an alliance. As the negotiations falter, Padmy steps out in front of the queen, reveals that *she* is the queen, and that her handmaiden, Saby has been standing in for her. The plan proceeds as originally planned., The Gungans raise their force-fields, engaging the droid army that is controlled by a single cruiser orbiting the planet. Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, Jar Jar and Anakin, Amidala and her pilots and troops infiltrate the city and work their way to the palace.

As they take over the main hangar, Anakin, along with R2D2, is ordered to stay in the cockpit of one of the fighters, while Amidala leads her group to the throne room and while starships scramble and head off toward the Federation Battleship. At that moment Darth Maul appears, forcing Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan to fight him. From his vantage point in the star fighter, Anakin sees that Amidala and her group are about to be attacked by three lethal destroyer droids. Assisted by R2D2, he starts up the star fighter and obliterates the droids, allowing Amidala to proceed.

As the two Jedi Knights pursue Darth Maul into the power station, Anakin, unfamiliar with the controls of the star fighter, causes it to lift off under automatic pilot and pursue the other fighters toward the Federation Cruiser. In the corridor outside the throne room, Amidala surrenders to a number of droid pursuers and is taken inside to confront Nute Gunray, but she catches him off guard, gets a blaster hidden in the arm of the throne,



and barricades the whole group in the throne room so that Gunray will be forced to sign the peace treaty.

Meanwhile, Anakin struggles to control the alien star fighter he's flying. In an attempt to elude pursuers, he streaks along the side of the Federation Battleship, but finds the only way to elude them is to fly right into the ship's main hangar. In the power station Darth Maul and Qui-Gon have fought their way into the melting pit, leaving Obi-Wan behind, blocked by a laser field. Tiring, Qui-Gon makes a slip, and Darth Maul wounds him fatally. Obi-Wan, finally released from the laser field, mounts a fierce attack on Darth Maul which succeeds in driving him back, but strength and experience allow the Sith to smash Obi-Wan's light saber, and push him over the edge toward the melting pit. At the last minute Obi-Wan manages grab hold and stay his fall. Then he wills himself to get in touch with The Force, to calm himself, and with a supreme effort somersaults backward away from the pit, grabs Qui-Gon's light saber and cuts Darth Maul through the chest with a killing slash that catapults the Sith over the edge and into the pit.

In the battleship's hanger, Anakin, beset by droids, seems to sense something no more than a shadow, and by instinct he fires two torpedoes at it, then wheels and escapes through the hangar opening. Once outside, he has barely time to look back, when the communication channel crackles into life with excited voices. Anakin looks in time to see the Federation ship pummeled and dismembered by explosions from inside.

Back on the ground, the Gungans are almost being overrun when all the droids suddenly freeze, deprived of control from the orbiting ship. And in the Naboo power station, Obi-Wan runs to his master, finds Qui-Gon near death, but able to talk. "Promise me," Qui-Gon says, "you will train the boy."

Three days later, sovereignty is fully returned to Naboo, the Neimoidians have been shipped to prison in Coruscant to await trial, and Obi-Wan has been made a full knight in the order of the Jedi. The Jedi Council has seen fit to reverse their decision to train Anakin Skywalker, and has ordered Obi-Wan to undertake the task. Only one Jedi, Yoda, dissents. He senses something disturbed and unsettled in the boy, and he warns Obi-Wan to be on guard against it. Talk then turns to the death of Darth Maul, and Yoda says, "Always two there are. No more, no less. A master and an apprentice." And another Jedi asks, "Then which one was destroyed, do you think - the master or the apprentice?" This leaves the unspoken thought that if the Master has survived, he will seek a new apprentice.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

On the planet of Tatooine, under the burning heat of its two suns, nine year-old Anakin Skywalker gives the wedge-shaped rocket engines of his fragile Podracer a little more juice as he eases into the turn on the first lap of the course. One contact with anything solid, and the whole assembly would fly apart spraying metal and fiery fuel everywhere, but that won't happen to him. He sensed every part of the machine as if it were part of his body. An orange flash shoots past him, and recognizes Sebulba's Podracer as it pulls out in front of him. It pays to stay away from Sebulba, he thinks, but he feeds fresh power to the engines and narrows the gap ahead.

Anakin, the only human ever to compete, would make up with daring and skill and his uncanny sixth sense what he lacked in physical advantage, like a head that swiveled 180 degrees, or multiple appendages. Now he concentrates as he whips past ancient statuary and the spectator stands. His mother Shmi was in the stands, apprehensive and terrified for his safety, but there, nevertheless. It wasn't exactly as if he had any choice. He was a slave, and his master Watto ordered him to race. Past the stands now, he jockeys for position with the other racers. For Anakin, when he races, everything slows down. He sees every detail of the terrain clearly.

Down through the channel he goes, where sunlight can hardly penetrate. Now he's out in the sunlight again, and closing on Sebulba near Metta Drop, where a driver could gain speed, dropping straight down, and then pull out at the last second. This time Sebulba pulls out early, then blasts the pods below him to squash them against the cliff face. Only Anakin's uncanny intuition enables him to veer away and escape being flattened, but it's too severe a maneuver to allow him to regain control, and he crashes his pod into the desert floor, but emerges unhurt. Sitting in the shadow of the pod, the only shade, he thinks that he could have won, if Sebulba hadn't cheated. One day he will win, he promises himself.

Chapter 1 Analysis

It is interesting to note that the seemingly inhospitable, arid nature of Tatooine could host such an array of colorful and dramatic characters, like Watto, the Toydarian, the Hutts, the Jawas, the Rodians, and many others besides humans. The melding of widely varied alien races enhances the texture as well as the substance of the story, and prods one's imagination to become free to accept the other story inventions that arise in *The Phantom Menace*.

Although profound studies of character are not Lucas's strong suit, it is worthwhile to consider the makeup of Anakin Skywalker and the influences that come to bear on the formative stage of his development. The key to Anakin Skywalker's character is his



sense of himself as different, with abilities that not even he understands, and with large dreams that he sees as certainties rather than possibilities. In counterpoint to those dreams is his ability to adopt a stoic attitude toward the station in society that he occupies. It seems as though his low status as a slave feeds his lack of fear and his longing for danger, because, to a significant extent, he has very little to lose.

In light of the fact that Anakin will someday become Darth Vader, it is ironic that he "plays fair" when he races, and bristles at the fact that Sebulba uses every illegal and immoral tactic possible to win the race. The time will come when the deeds of Darth Vader will make those of Sebulba appear as child's play, and one of the fascinating elements of the Star Wars saga is the question, "How did Darth Vader become what he is?"



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Watto, Anakin's master, rails at him for having lost the race and wrecked the Podracer. Anakin, in his defense protests that Sebulba cheated, to which Watto replies, "That's how he wins! Maybe you should cheat just a little now and then!" After more scolding Watto winds down, as Anakin knew he would, and finishes by threatening not to let Anakin race any more. Shmi, Anakin's mother, chips in that that's a very good idea, but Watto reminds her that her son is *his* property, to do with as he wishes, and he orders them both back to work. Anakin thinks to himself that the next time he races, he *will* win.

When Anakin examines the engines and pod of the damaged racer, he realizes that there are parts that need to be acquired. Watto hated trading with other shops, and would rather win or steal what he needed. Just then, his two friends, Kitster and Wald appear and invite him to come with them and get a ruby bliel. Since it's almost dark Anakin slips away with them through the crowded plaza to the food stores.

While at getting themselves their treat, they strike up an acquaintance with an "old spacer," a retired pilot, who tells them stories about his own adventures and expresses an opinion that, from what he saw in the races that day, Anakin is a natural pilot and shows promise. He goes on to tell them that one time he flew Jedi knights to a destination he's not supposed to reveal even now. When Anakin says he'd like to fly ships to those faraway worlds some day, Wald scoffs that he's a slave and can't go anywhere. But the old spacer thinks a bit and says, "In this life you're often born one thing and die another. You don't have to accept that what you're given when you come in is all you'll have when you leave."

Arriving home late for dinner, Anakin is subjected to a second scolding, this time from his mother. Later, they sit outside together and look up at the stars. Anakin's home is small and shabby, made of mud and sand, but Anakin has his own room, with a large workbench and tools. Right now, he is in the process of building a protocol droid to help his mother. Before they go in, his mother makes him promise not to race pods any more. He promises, with the reservation that if Watto orders him to, he has no choice but to obey, knowing in his heart that Watto will get over his anger and start thinking about winning. Anakin watches the stars and makes a promise to himself that like the old spacer; he will fly with Jedi Knights some day.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Whereas the beginning of the book kept the action of the Podracing at a high pitch, and presented Anakin's life as exciting and heroic, at least until the crash of his racer, in the aftermath of the race, Anakin seems to be further than ever from his dream. He's a slave, he's wrecked his master's Podracer, his mother doesn't want him to race any



more, and his friend salts him with a dose of reality by bringing up the fact that slaves don't go anywhere.

Anakin's reaction is significant. As more people tell him that he can't or won't do something, the more determined he becomes. Then when he runs across someone who encourages him, like the old spacer, his resolve is stiffened to the point at which he makes a pact with himself. While this is not complex or profound writing, the authors have done a competent job of detailing the process that provides Anakin's energy and drive. Moreover, his future is foreshadowed by the fact that even outsiders begin to recognize that Anakin is gifted in a way that very few humans are.

Foreshadowing emerges in Anakin's attitude toward his mother. He cares for her, and is mature enough to realize that her scolding is rooted in her love for him, and her desire to keep him safe and happy. On more than one occasion in his daydreaming, there is mention of his desire to take her with him when he finally leaves the life of slavery and the planet. The reader can already anticipate what his feelings will be if he has to leave her behind.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

In the starry blackness of space the emerald planet of Naboo sits surrounded by a heavily armed Trade Federation fleet. A small Republic space cruiser glides toward one of the battleships. Behind the pilot of the cruiser, a shadowy figure sits watching Trade Federation Viceroy Nute Gunray, a Neimoidian, on the viewscreen. The shadowy figure instructs the Captain that the ambassadors for the supreme chancellor wish to board

immediately. The figure is a Jedi Knight Qui-Gon sent by the Republic's supreme chancellor to try to resolve the trade dispute amicably. Jedi Knights originated as a theological and philosophical order, but had evolved into a movement that studied and used The Force in their capacity as peacemakers.

As Qui-Gon debarks with his apprentice Obi-Wan, he thinks about how odd it is that the Federation should blockade this insignificant planet, ruled by a newly elected Queen Amidala, who, it was rumored was prodigiously talented and well trained. The Jedi are led by a droid to a conference room and told that the Viceroy will be with them shortly. As they wait, Obi-Wan expresses a concern that he senses something bad about this whole situation. When Obi-Wan asks him how the Viceroy will respond, Qui-Gon tells him that the Neimoidians are cowards and that they can expect the negotiations to be short.

When Nute Gunray learns that two Jedi knights are waiting for him, he panics and contacts, via hologram, the real force behind the blockage - Darth Sidious, a disciple of the evil cult called the Sith, who had supposedly been exterminated long ago. Sidious calmly orders them to begin troop landings and to kill the two Jedi knights. In the conference room, the Jedi feel the shock of an explosion, and realize that their ship has been destroyed, and that they are next, judging by the gas hissing in under the door.

Droids arrive to open the door, but Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan, very much alive, leap out and attack them, eventually fighting through to the bridge of the ship, and starting to cut their way in. At that moment, destroyer droids appear in the hallway, and Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan are forced to escape. Inside the bridge Nute Gunray receives a viewscreen message from Amidala, who is suspicious of their claiming they have seen no ambassadors.

In the main hangar, secreted in a large circulation vent the two Jedi Knights are shocked to see vast array of transports and battle droids. When Qui-Gon suggests they hitch a ride with one of the transports, Obi-Wan agrees and then reminds his Master what he said about the negotiations - they were short.



Chapter 3 Analysis

In an epic story like *The Phantom Menace*, it is expected that large forces will clash on a grand scale, and that the forces will represent an alignment of Good on one side, and of Evil on the other. In a Tolkien novel, this epic structure is palpable, and one is sometimes tempted to speculate how much the plot and structure of *The Phantom Menace* is an homage to the Tolkien Ring cycle.

True to genre, the forces one sees clashing are painted black and white to such an extent that they evoke in the reader a kind of distancing, a kind of reluctance to suspend one's disbelief. Sometimes the names of the characters themselves (like *Sidious*, which is an over-obvious play on *in-sidious*) tend to be an "elbow in the ribs," a nudge to remind the reader that, "Hey, this guy's evil."

The threats to the "good" characters are preponderantly from inanimate, though deadly, droids. This jeopardy to the humans is effective onscreen in a movie theater, where the audience has no time to reflect upon what's happening. In this novel the droids, however energetically described, remain pallid fodder for the light saber, and don't really make a reader's heart jump in fear for the protagonists. Contrast the effect of this chapter with that of chapter one, in which the threat to Anakin came from real life beings such as Sebulba.

Concerning the blockade of Naboo, the patience of most readers is likely to be strained by the emphasis on moving hardware from one place to another, by the backstory about what the Federation is and what the Republic is, in addition to a detour to explain the history of the Jedi Knights. All of that detail, perhaps interestingly busy in a movie, weighs the story down in this chapter, not to mention the repetitive "communication" by viewscreen and hologram, which serves to keep the characters from actually confronting each other in any kind of dramatic encounter.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

In the misty twilight of Naboo, Federation landing ships drop silently through the clouds and land near a vast murky swamp to disgorge their battle droids and land transports. Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon join the stampeding crowd of creatures flushed from hiding by the advancing troops. Qui-Gon, searching for firm ground, encounters a Gungan, named Jar Jar Binks, a strange amphibious creature with a rubbery body, long flat ears, and ducklike snout. Jar Jar is about to be run down by a transport, but is saved at the last minute by Qui-Gon. In effusive gratitude, the Gungan attaches himself to Qui-Gon as a self-appointed servant, and before Qui-Gon can be rid of him, Obi-Wan appears, on the run from an attack platform, which Qui-Gon destroys. Qui-Gon chides Obi-Wan for leaving his light saber's power on and killing the power source.

Jar Jar offers to take them to safety at Otoh Gunga, the city where he grew up, but then remembers that he's an outcast, under lifetime banishment. Obi-Wan points out that the forces behind them are far worse than anything in the Gungan city, and Jar Jar leaps into action to lead them forward till they get to a lake, and Jar Jar informs them they have to go under water. Using breathing devices from their packs, the two Jedi dive in after Jar Jar, and swim till they reach the city, encased in walls of interconnected bubbles anchored to large rock pillars. To enter, they climb in one side and out the other of a bubble, which admits them without rupturing.

They do not receive a warm welcome. In short order they are rounded up by armed soldiers who deliver them to Boss Nass, the ruler of the city. Boss Nass shrugs off the news of the army on the surface, saying it has nothing to do with him, but he does agree to loan them a transport to take them through the core to Theed, the capital city. They are about to leave, when Qui-Gon discovers that Jar Jar will be executed if they leave him behind, so they negotiate a release for Jar Jar into their service.

Meanwhile Nute Gunray reports the invasion's progress to Darth Sidious, who is pleased at their success, but the Viceroy has hidden from the Sith Lord the fact that the Jedi have escaped.

Chapter 4 Analysis

In the epic form, the hero is customarily put at the center of the story and stays there from beginning to end. In *The Phantom Menace*, the structure of the story departs from this pattern. It begins in the typical way with a young, but as yet untried and untested hero, Anakin Skywalker, showing his youthful promise in a number of action scenes. Then, having established the hero, the author switches focus to the Jedi Knights and their struggles with the powerful Trade Federation, directed surreptitiously by Darth Sidious. In terms of story structure the focus is split and the reader is forced to suspend



his or her attachment to Anakin and follow a new set of set of heroes led by Qui-Gon. At first Qui-Gon is accompanied only by his apprentice, Obi-Wan, but then Jar Jar Binks joins up with them, and the result is that the reader's empathy and attention is divided four ways. So the departure from the archetypal form that Lucas has taken is fundamental. He has tried to split the hero figure into four parts, whereas the typical "Hero's Journey" maintains the focus on one hero, often with a sidekick or two. In the typical form, it is often the opposing forces that are split, so that the hero gets attacked from many different directions, thus increasing the suspense and jeopardy. As one can readily see, splitting the menacing, opposing evil forces is a benefit to the storyteller, whereas splitting the reader's empathy and involvement with the hero is a significant handicap.

In the case of *The Phantom Menace*, the audience for the film vented their frustration with this storytelling weakness by heaping scathing criticism on the fourth "hero" Jar Jar Binks. In the novel form, Jar Jar comes off much more lovable than in the movie, chiefly because his extreme mannerisms, his fractured language, and vexatious vocal presentation are less irritating on the page than on the screen.

Despite the fact that multiple viewpoints prevail in the world of the novel, it is not surprising, if by this point in the book the reader is feeling increasingly put-upon as a result of being forced to jump from one hero to another. The genesis of the Lucas style of storytelling is rooted in the nature of the cinematic form, for which the story of *The Phantom Menace* was originally conceived. The cinematic form in particular gains momentum and energy from cross-cutting between and among several action lines. As the story of *The Phantom Menace* proceeds, the cross-cutting nature of the plot will become even more dominant, and the question then arises, is this continual switching from one story line to another becoming a mannerism that weakens both the movie and the novel?



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Deep into the waters of Naboo, Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and Jar Jar ride their ungainly watercraft - a bongo, basically a power system, topped by a fuselage consisting of three bubbles for the passengers. Jar Jar is a "project" for Qui-Gon, a creature that he thinks has value and can be reclaimed. For his part Obi-Wan feels that Qui-Gon takes on too much and risks danger to himself in the undertaking. When he challenges Qui-Gon, the Master replies that one must never leave it to another to uncover the secrets of the purpose of living things. As they navigate a coral tunnel, Jar Jar explains that the Gungans and Nabooans don't fight, but they don't like each other because the Nabooans consider themselves so superior to the Gungans.

Their conversation is cut short by the appearance of an aqua monster that narrowly misses having them for lunch, but succeeds in damaging the control panel and causing a leak so that they lose power and light. Meanwhile back on the bridge of the battleship, Nute Gunray has to confess to Darth Sidious that he cannot confirm that the Jedi have been killed, and Sidious commands him to report immediately if they appear again.

In the bongo, the lights come back on just in time to reveal a Coloclaw fish readying itself to open the bongo like a sardine can. As the monster chases them, Obi-Wan, now at the controls, steers the craft out of the cave they are in and straight into the Jaws of a waiting aqua monster. A deft maneuver by Obi-Wan and the monster misses the bongo, but catches the pursuing Colo claw fish, leaving Qui-Gon and his two companions to proceed to the city of Theed.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Although the journey from the Gungan Swamp to Theed is rife with the obligatory lethal sea monsters out to dine on a little submarine, there is enough time to develop a theme that will eventually connect to Anakin Skywalker. This theme centers on the purpose and usefulness of life forms in the larger scheme of things. Qui-Gon's sensitivity to living beings and their potential, and his willingness to depart from the well-traveled path in order to deal with them forms the basis of his philosophy of life and of connecting to The Force in a way that few others do. The reader learns from Obi-Wan's interior monologue, as well as his debates with his master that in the past Qui-Gon has defied the Council on such matters many times. Obi-Wan's opinion of this aspect of his Master is that it is a weakness that should be corrected.

Whether or not this penchant of Qui-Gon's turns out to be a positive thing in the long run is a matter for debate, but in the present, the exploration of this subject piques the reader's interest and provokes him or her to be alert for the outcome of the presence of Jar Jar in the affairs the Jedi and their involvement in the trade dispute and the



blockade. Understanding Qui-Gon's attitude also prepares the reader to accept the fact that this Jedi Knight would bother to go to the trouble of investigating Anakin Skywalker and arranging to take him with them later in the story.

One of the great strengths of the novel is that it allows the writer and the reader to explore and delve into what motivates human beings, and why they act as they do in any particular set of circumstances. In the novel it is easy, and in fact necessary, for the writer to detail the inner workings of the characters and provide the reader with a rich tapestry of thoughts, emotions, and motives, which in other forms of artistic expression such as paintings, sculpture, and movies, must usually remain hidden, or vaguely ambiguous.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

On Tatooine, Watto orders Anakin to take the speeder out to the Dune Sea, and barter with the Jawas for some droids he has heard about. One of the tricks of being a successful slave lies in knowing about and being able to do things your master cannot do. One of the things that Anakin kept hidden from Watto was the protocol droid he was reconstructing. He could take it with him to listen in to the Jawas in their own tongue, which could possibly give him an advantage in trading. The other thing he hid was the Podracer he had partly completed and hidden, disguised as junk. His thought is to build a star fighter next and escape with his mother from Tatooine.

Anakin meets the Jawas, small robed figures, near their sand crawler's ramp, and proceeds to examine the merchandise. With the help of his protocol droid, named C-3PO he is able to persuade the Jawas to trot out their best droids, a selection of which he barter for, and then embarks on the journey back to Mos Espa, hoping to get there before dark.

In a canyon, however, Anakin discovers and injured Tusken, a member of a reclusive fierce nomadic tribe, who claim the desert as their own. Anakin treats the man's injured leg, and stays with him overnight until a party of Tusken comes to rescue him. During the long night he thinks about how he is not afraid of anything for himself, but he is often afraid for his mother. If something should happen to her, what would he do? In his dreams he sees himself as commander of a great army, coming back to free the slaves, and his mother is there, but when he tries to embrace her, she vanishes.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Anakin's trip to the desert to trade for goods is as much a pilgrimage as it is a business venture. First of all he tests the value of his engineering skill by taking the protocol droid with him, and his self-confidence is validated when he sees that his creation is a tremendous asset. His greatest self-test comes on the way back when he encounters the injured Tusken. The story takes a fascinating turn here, because Anakin, despite the specters of danger raised by C-3PO, makes a conscious decision to play the Good Samaritan, and look after this fallen human being, part of a group reviled by Anakin's own society.

A careful reader will quickly realize that the significance of this incident rests in the change it works on Anakin, making him realize through a life experience that there may be more to other human beings than their superficial exterior and their reputation among one's own kind. In fact, he confesses to himself that he admires the Tusken for their independence and their free spirit.



The whole desert interlude takes on a somewhat religious tone as it proceeds, and Anakin's night under the desert stars concludes in a veiled prophecy wherein he is assured that he will become the leader of a great army, but that the price to be paid is the loss of his mother who vanishes when he tries to embrace her. The reader, if familiar with the Old Testament, cannot help but hear the echoes the Bible stories in which the stuff of dreams is so often interpreted to have life-significance, and to foretell the destinies of those to whom they appeared.

What a contrast exists between this chapter and the immediately foregoing chapters! Without losing the humorous diversions and playfulness that are welcome elements in the novel, this particular sequence of events enriches our understanding of Anakin and his developing consciousness of his place in the universe. There is almost no "action" as that word is commonly understood, yet the events possess a compelling, haunting quality that will likely follow the reader unforgettably as he or she embraces the inner journey that Anakin Skywalker is about to take.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Theed. The city had fallen shortly after sunrise. Nute Gunray now stands in the throne of Queen Amidala's palace being hectored by Sio Bibble, the Queen's mouthpiece. The Queen, in her black-feathered headdress and white face makeup, sits on the throne, surrounded by her captured security force and her handmaidens. In spite of Bibble's protestations, the Neimoidian Viceroy orders that the prisoners, including the Queen be taken to a detention camp, till the Queen is ready to sign a treaty legitimizing the Federation's occupation.

On the way to the camp, the prisoner party is stopped by Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and Jar Jar, who destroy the droid guard and spirit the party away to the main hangar. Once there, they take possession of the Queen's personal transport and lift off into the darkness of space. Before they make good their escape, they need to elude the ships in the blockade, and in preparation for this passage Obi-Wan puts Jar Jar in the astromech droid storage room, where he hopes the meddlesome creature will stay out of trouble.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Coincidence occurs, in great or small measure, in everyone's life and is accepted as good, bad, or indifferent, judged by the outcome or impact upon the person to whom it happens. Coincidence in life is one thing, but coincidence in literature and storytelling is another. The general rule that most writers learn is that it's safe to use coincidence in a story when the result is to get the hero into trouble, or into more trouble than he or she is already in. If the writer succumbs to the temptation to use coincidence to get the hero *out* of trouble, or to serve the necessities of the plot, the reader's enjoyment diminishes because the natural skeptic in the reader says, "this isn't plausible."

Even when, as in this chapter, the coincidence is papered over by conflict, it often falls flat. Such is the case with Qui-Gon and his band's fortuitous meeting with the Queen and her retinue being escorted to a prison camp. This seemingly accidental rendezvous is not only too convenient for the characters, it's too convenient for the creator of the story, who has a need to get Queen Amidala to Coruscant so that he can use her there for the scenes he has planned. Perhaps in the movie this shuffling of the characters is acceptable and unnoticeable, and can in any case be explained away, but it's not good enough for a writer like George Lucas, who presumably has millions of dollars available to hire professionals who would find another way of propelling the story.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Above the planet of Naboo, the Queen's personal cruiser finds itself in a desperate struggle to avoid being annihilated. The cruiser has no weapons, its shields are compromised, and its captain has put it into a spin to foil the Federation ships' guidance systems. Its only defense is to huddle close to the battleship where the big cannon cannot be brought to bear on it.

Droids are sent outside to effect repairs, but they are under attack by star fighters from the Federation fleet. Due to the persistence of one small droid, the shields return to service, and the cruiser is able to escape, only to realize that they have sustained so much damage they will have to land somewhere for repairs. Back on Naboo Nute Gunray confesses to Darth Sidious that the Queen has escaped and cannot be found, in response to which Sidious retorts that a Sith can find them, and he dispatches his protygy, Darth Maul, a terrifying looking Sith, his face a tattooed mask of red and black patterns, his skull a crown of short horns. This ominous development causes the Neimoidians to fear the reaction of the Jedi, if it is discovered that they are in league with the Sith.

On board the Queen's transport, Jar Jar emerges from his hiding place and wanders the corridors, finally meeting up with the handmaiden Padmy, who takes a liking to him. On the bridge, in spite of protests by the pilot that the Hutt, who control Tatooine, are gangsters and slavers, Qui-Gon decides that they will land near Tatooine's major city, Mos Espa. He and Jar Jar and the little droid will go into the city to find parts for their cruiser. Before they can get away from the ship, the Queen sends out her handmaiden Padmy and insists that she go along. Reluctantly, Qui-Gon agrees.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The escape of the Queen's transport from the Planet of Naboo is standard fare in action-adventure tales. An element that is unique in this escape is that the perilous repairs on the outside of the space ship are used as a vehicle to humanize one of the mechanic droids. The droid that stays the longest at its task, and succeeds in making the repair that will restore function to the shields, is invested with the human quality of bravery, and thus is respected by the human characters, to the point at which Qui-Gon selects it to accompany him to Mos Espa.

Those familiar with the Star Wars saga will certainly recall the anthropomorphic nature of C-3PO and R2-D2 in the original movie. Those were droids oozing with personality and acting human in their attitudes and behavior. The reader, by this point has already had a glimpse of the origins of C-3PO in the skinless protocol droid Anakin has built in his workshop, and the expectation of the loyal reader (or movie audience) is that R2-D2



will also evolve to possess humanistic attitudes and behavior, unlike the destroyer and battle droids with their robotic attack modes and their canned speech.

It is interesting to speculate how audiences would have reacted had Lucas filmed *The Phantom Menace* in chronological order, releasing it first before any other episode. Given that dissatisfaction was widely expressed in regard to this episode, it would seem that the movie failed to satisfy the expectations of the audience. Perhaps the bar was set too high, or perhaps, having seen later episodes, the audience expected many more recognizable "So-that's-how-it-began" moments than were delivered.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

As Qui-Gon leads his little "family" through the domed mud structures of Mos Espa, he keeps a close eye on the denizens of this city, most of whom are from off-planet, and come in all shapes and sizes and alien races. He enters Watto's shop, and Watto calls on Anakin to come in from the back and help him. When Qui-Gon goes outside with Watto to look at what equipment is in stock, Anakin stays to mind the store and talk to Padmy, who is the most beautiful person he has ever seen in his life. They laugh at the antics of Jar Jar and he asks her if she is an angel, which delights and intrigues her. He tells her about being a slave, and adds that he intends to be a pilot some day. Impulsively he says, "I'm going to marry you." She laughs and says that she can't marry him; he's just a little boy. Anakin says quietly, "I won't always be."

Outside in the salvage yard, Qui-Gon finds the hyperdrive generator he needs, but is stymied when Watto refuses to accept Republic credits in payment. Qui-Gon leads his group outside, contacts Obi-Wan to see if there is anything of value on the ship. Nothing. Qui-Gon's reaction is that another way will be found. On the walk through the market, Jar Jar incurs the wrath of the Dug Sebulba by snapping up a tasty morsel without paying for it. In a blink, Jar Jar is surrounded and Sebulba has thrown him to the ground, where the Gungan moans and whines. Anakin appears, and scolds Jar Jar for being afraid. Then he intimidates Sebulba and rescues Jar Jar. Anakin accompanies the little group, trying to spend as much time as he can with Padmy. Along the way he discovers that the man he thought was a farmer is carrying a light saber under his poncho. As they stop for a snack, a sandstorm begins to brew, and Anakin invites them to take refuge at his home.

Back on the spaceship a message is received from the Governor, begging the Queen to contact him. Obi-Wan wisely counsels the Queen that this is a trick and to send no reply of any kind.

Chapter 9 Analysis

This is the point that the plot has been moving toward since the beginning, the point at which the two major lines of action converge, one led by Qui-Gon and the other by Anakin Skywalker. It is the point at which it becomes inevitable that each will exert a profound influence on the life of the other.

Since his night in the desert, Anakin has grown even surer of himself and his destiny. Perhaps it is a strong likelihood that he would have met a Jedi Knight at some point in his life, but the moment has now presented itself and he has seized upon it by inviting the Jedi and his party to his home. It seems as if he has already embraced Qui-Gon's



philosophy of following one's intuition at the time one's senses are alert to an opportunity.

Anakin also feels himself mystically drawn to the Queen's handmaiden Padmé. In spite of the obvious obstacles, Anakin senses that his destiny is tied to Padmé irrespective of the difference in their ages and their stations in life. The certainty in his avowal that he is going to marry her is absolute, and it is emblematic of his attitude toward his life and his destiny that, when she says she can't marry him because he's just a little boy, his answer is, "I won't always be."



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Anakin leads his new friends through the streets in the gathering sandstorm, holding Padmy's hand as they go. When he bursts into the small dome followed by three visitors plus a droid, his mother is at first taken aback, then recovers and welcomes them. Anakin is eager to show Padmy his droid C-3PO, and he leads her to his bedroom to give her a demonstration of how it works. She is charmed and impressed by him at the same time. He promises to show her his Podracer as soon as the storm abates. He explains to her that it's a secret, and she assures him that she's good at keeping secrets.

Over the evening meal, Anakin and his mother chat with their guests, first about slavery and the fact all slaves have transmitters embedded inside them, which explode if they try to escape. Then the conversation moves on to Podracing and Qui-Gon comments that Anakin must have Jedi reflexes if he races Pods, and Anakin says, "You're a Jedi Knight, aren't you?" and adds that he saw Qui-Gon's light saber. When Qui-Gon comments that he might have killed a Jedi and stolen the light saber, Anakin declares that no one can kill a Jedi, and a sad look comes over Qui-Gon as he replies that he wishes it were true.

Anakin asks if Qui-Gon has come to free them and the Jedi says, No." Anakin contradicts him and says they wouldn't be on Tatooine otherwise. This insistent probing by Anakin prompts Qui-Gon to swear Anakin to secrecy about his presence on the planet. When he learns of the predicament his guests are in, Anakin hatches a plan with Qui-Gon to pass Anakin's Podracer off as belonging to Qui-Gon and enter it in the race to make enough money to acquire the needed parts to repair their ship.

In the city of Coruscant, Darth Sidious reflects upon the long history of the Sith. In its first incarnation the Sith Cult was comprised of rogue Jedis who embraced the dark side of The Force, but eventually internal dissension caused them to kill each other off until there were none left, except one who had gone into hiding, Darth Bane. This last Sith rekindled the order, but established that there should only be two Siths at any one time, a master and an apprentice, and so the order survived right up to the present. Darth Sidious comes out of his reverie, and orders his apprentice, Darth Maul to go to Tatooine, kill the Jedi knight, and return to Naboo with the Queen. Darth Sidious is elated that things are going as planned, and that the Republic will soon be in his control.

Back in Anakin's home, Qui-Gon cannot sleep. He is obsessed with finding out the truth about Anakin Skywalker, and the boy's relationship to The Force. He senses that the boy has an important destiny, and he's determined to find out what it is.



Chapter 10 Analysis

Anakin's relationship with Padmy is further developed, even to the point of suggesting that they might marry someday. Anakin's certainty on this subject is evidence of his growing sense that many seemingly impossible goals may actually be attainable for him, and his comment to Padmy that he won't always be a little boy reveals that his confidence about his future is growing. Moreover, the fact that Padmy does not contradict him or argue further with him about the possibility, however improbable it might seem, indicates that she, in an innocent, but powerful way is in the thrall of his magnetism.

Anakin's mother has always known that her son is gifted, but she now exhibits a growing awareness that her son is not only gifted, but also special in a rare way. In her discussions with Qui-Gon, they agree about the nature of Anakin's genius, and there is a feeling that both of them recognize that they have a responsibility to nurture his growth, whatever form that development may take. This conversation between the two "parent figures" foreshadows and prepares for the life changing event that is to take place later, Anakin's release from the bonds of slavery and his departure from the planet of Tatooine.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Anakin and Qui-Gon lead their party to Watto's shop, and Anakin presents his Podracer plan to the flying Toydarian, who scoffs because he thinks Qui-Gon can't afford it. Before Qui-Gon enters the shop Padmy takes him aside and cautions him that the Queen would not approve of trusting their fate to a boy they barely know. When Qui-Gon points out that the Queen will not know, Padmy shows a flash of temper and snaps that *she* doesn't approve of it. Qui-Gon convinces Watto that he will put up his ship as the stakes, and Watto beams when he sees the holographic image of the Queen's transport. The two strike a deal - If Anakin wins, then Watto supplies the needed parts and takes the winnings. If Anakin doesn't win, Watto gets Qui-Gon's Nabooan cruiser.

They all return to the slave quarter bone yards where Anakin's Podracer is concealed. Together they help to ready the racer. Qui-Gon has a chance to talk with Shmi about her son. He observes that Anakin is generous, he gives without expecting a reward, and his mother replies that Anakin doesn't have any greed, he only has his dreams. Qui-Gon points out that Anakin's quick reflexes are a result of when things are about to happen *before* they happen, which is a Jedi trait, and had Anakin been identified at a younger age, he could have trained to be Jedi. As it is he doesn't know what he can do for him.

Anakin conducts a test on the Podracer, and when the engines fire up without a hitch, everyone cheers. Everyone, that is, except Shmi, whose sadness is almost written on her features.

Out in the desert, beyond the Dune Sea, a small transport lands on top of a mesa and disgorges its pilot, Darth Maul. He produces a pair of low-light electrobinoculars and scans the horizon in all directions. Then he releases several spherical probe droids and sits down to wait for the results of their search.

At Anakin's home Qui-Gon dresses a cut in the boy's arm, and in the process, takes a sample of the boy's blood, which he transmits to Obi-Wan who tests it for midi-chlorians. He reports that Anakin has a count of twenty-thousand - higher than anybody's, even Master Yoda's.

At midnight, Anakin goes down to check every last possible item on the Podracer. The Jedi Knight had brought change with him, of that Anakin is sure but in what form? Perhaps change could come in the form of freedom for himself and his mother, and an escape to a new life. Anything could be possible if he wins the race.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The story has gained sharper focus and greater story energy because the two lines of action, one centering on Qui-Gon and the other centering on Anakin, have been brought



together. Preparations for the Podrace are the focus of attention for Anakin and his new friends. The reader can understand and empathize with the personal stakes riding on the outcome of the Podrace much more easily than on the more abstract political and economic stakes at risk over the blockade of Naboo. While it is true that in the larger scheme of things, the troubles on Queen Amidala's planet affect a huge number of human beings, a reader always find it difficult invest emotional currency in story material that deals with huge numbers of "faceless" people. Journalists are known to use the phrase "putting a face on the issue," by which they mean that to involve a reader in a news story, a writer needs to key the story on an individual person. The same is true of other forms of communication including novels and movies. In this case, Anakin's story is much more involving than the story of the hundreds of thousands of displaced citizens on Naboo.

At this point in the story, the reader has become emotionally involved with Anakin as if he was a close friend, and is rooting for him to win the Podrace and improve his life. It is because of this involvement that the reader develops a desire to see Anakin's mother and friends succeed and prosper. When a threat like Darth Maul appears, the story takes on greater interest because of the fear that something bad might happen to the people..

Foreshadowing and preparation for future events is embodied in two aspects of action. When Padmy bristles at Qui-Gon's comment that the Queen won't know about what they're doing (and therefore her disapproval doesn't mean anything), the reader senses a hint that Padmy's status is higher than a mere handmaiden. Her reaction at this point reinforces earlier hints when Queen Amidala seemed to be seeking counsel from Padmy. The second piece of foreshadowing comes in the form of the revelation that Anakin has the highest midi-chloridian count ever registered. If the midi-chloridian count is a marker for Jedi capability, then it almost certainly follows that he will be accepted somehow into training for Jedi Knighthood, in spite of the objections that will certainly be raised by the Jedi Council.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Anakin has a prophetic dream, in which he is older and in an unfamiliar landscape.. A dark wave approaches him, led by Padmy, also different from the present, older, sadder, and something more. Padmy rouses him from his dream, saying that they need to get ready to leave. She tells him that Qui-Gon and Jar Jar have gone early to the arena to meet with Watto. On the way to the arena, Padmy's normally sunny disposition clouds over when she learns, to her astonishment, that Anakin, in addition to not having ever won a race, has never *finished* one. She undoubtedly has fearful visions of being stuck on this arid planet for a long, long time.

Amid the chaos and confusion of the Mos Espa Podracer arena, Qui-Gon and Jar Jar haggle with Watto over the fine points of their deal. When Watto says he's going to bet on Sebulba to win, Qui-Gon says he'll take the bet, and tries to put the racing pod up in return for the freedom of Anakin and his mother. Watto counters by offering Shmi alone, and they end up by agreeing that if Anakin wins, Qui-Gon will hand the Podracer over to Watto in return for Anakin Skywalker. At the same time as the wager is being agreed to, a small search droid floats into the market at Mos Espa, traveling from shop to shop, searching.

A roar goes up from the hundred thousand spectators as the Podracers enter the arena. As they assemble, Sebulba casually strolls by Anakin's racer, reaches up and bangs a stabilizer strut, and then he sidles up to Anakin and taunts him with a threat that he will be destroyed this time. The racers line up at the starting line and wait for the green light.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Again Anakin has what seem to be prophetic dreams, but this time the dreams have a foreboding element to them. Anakin sees himself older, in a strange place facing a dimly seen wave that moves toward him, led by Padmy who appears to be older and sad.. When his dream is interrupted by Padmy, he tells her he has seen her in his dream, leading an army; he is disturbed by the dismissive tone in her voice when she tells him she hates fighting.

Having set up the stakes riding on the Podrace and raised them by adding Qui-Gon's wager that will see Anakin freed if he wins, the author devotes this chapter to building the suspense. He keeps the Sith threat alive by bringing Darth Maul's observer droid into the market place, so the reader knows that it is only a matter of time until Maul discovers where the Jedi Knight is and will come after him. There is a reminder that Anakin has never finished a race. At the racetrack Sebulba is seen sabotaging Anakin's racer. The tension builds as the racers line up to start the race.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

When the light turns green, Anakin feeds in maximum fuel to the engines and they both stall. It looks as though the race is over for Anakin before it has begun. He calmly restarts the Podracer and is off chasing the pack ahead of him. The power of the engines in his racer gives Anakin the advantage at the beginning of the race where the terrain is flat and even. By the time he reaches the tricky part of the course, he has almost caught up to the pack.

He works his way past his competitors, partly using sheer force and partly using guile, until he nears on Sebulba who is now in the lead, and who quickly destroys another racer who has the audacity to try to pass him. In the stands, Qui-Gon waits tensely, eyes closed, searching within his consciousness for Anakin to appear. Sebulba streams past the stands on to the second lap, but Anakin is not yet in sight. A moment passes; a cheer goes up as Anakin's Podracer explodes out of the midday glare and begins to overtake the front-runners. At this point Anakin is in sixth place, and by the time he reaches Arch Canyon, he is bearing down on the leaders, only four places back of Sebulba.

Sebulba now gets down to dirty strategies, like throwing pieces of ragged metal back into an approaching racer's engines, causing the other racer to collide slightly with Anakin to release the binding to Anakin's left engine. Maintaining control of his vehicle, Anakin manages to contort himself, get hold of a magnetic retriever and reattach the line. Even though successful, this repair has cost him space, and he finds himself needing to regain his position behind Sebulba. Again, he passes the other racers and pulls up along side Sebulba, who tries his old trick of opening a vent and flaming his opponent, but Anakin anticipates this trick and guns the racer up and over Sebulba to take the lead. Finally Sebulba tries ramming Anakin but damages his own racer. He crashes, leaving Anakin to cross the finish line first -the youngest racer ever to win.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The action of the race is pure thrills - escalating to an exciting finish, using all the "bells and whistles" of the science-fiction form, but actually following in the pulp fiction tradition of macho competitive struggle employed by man and machine. Underneath the hair raising suspense as Anakin finds himself in perilous danger time and time again, is a thematic current explored in a previous race in which Sebulba, much to Anakin's chagrin won by cheating. Notwithstanding Watto's admonition to Anakin to cheat if he wanted to win, Anakin wins this race cleanly, by sheer wits, skill, and clever strategy, against what seems like overwhelming odds, true to the story traditions of western culture.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

As Anakin is being congratulated by his mother and his friends, Qui-Gon seeks out Watto, who berates him mercilessly, wailing that it was not a fair bet because Qui-Gon "knew" Anakin would win. If Qui-Gon had not been so focused on the tasks before him, he might have noticed the Sith probe droid trailing after him. Down at track level, Anakin is still checking over his pod, oblivious of the cuts and scratches he has sustained. His mother and Padmy come over to smother him with hugs and kisses, which slightly embarrass him. He's thrilled with his mother's compliment that he's done a great thing - given hope to those who have none. Padmy adds that she and Qui-Gon owe Anakin everything.

When the congratulations are over, Qui-Gon organizes the transporting of the necessary replacement parts to the ship, and they say good-bye to Anakin. . At the ship the unloading proceeds without event, and then Qui-Gon informs Obi-Wan that he has some unfinished business back in Mos Espa. He departs, not noticing the probe droid that hovers nearby and then speeds away.

Back in Mos Espa, Anakin wrestles with the surges of emotions he's feeling. Having won the race, and triumphed in a way he could never have hoped for, he now wishes he had asked Padmy to stay -yet he knows that it would never have been possible. It feels hard for him to accept the fact that he may never see her again. He's still in this mood when a much bigger Rodian confronts him, jeering that Anakin could never have won without cheating. Anakin explodes in anger, venting his feelings about the loss of Padmy on the unfortunate Rodian. In the midst of the brawl, Qui-Gon arrives and intervenes, hauling Anakin off and looking at him with a disappointed stare. Qui-Gon asks the Rodian whether he still believes that Anakin cheated. The Rodian says he still believes it, and Qui-Gon uses this as an example to teach Anakin that fighting is not going to change anyone's opinion.

From the sale of the pod, Qui-Gon gives Anakin a pouch full of credits that Anakin immediately takes to his mother and enthusiastically hands to her. Qui-Gon explains that Anakin has been freed, and that if he wants to, Qui-Gon will take him along and get him trained as a Jedi. There are no guarantees. Anakin excitedly agrees, until he realizes that he will have to go alone without his mother. Shmi advises him to listen to his feelings, and his feelings are telling him that he must go.

Despite her encouragement the parting is painful and difficult. Anakin changes his mind several times before finally deciding that he must go, and tearfully leaving his home, he and Qui-Gon go to Watto's to make the arrangements to have his slave transmitter permanently disabled. On their way through the narrow streets, Qui-Gon senses something; abruptly swings his light saber and destroys a metal object hovering in the air - the observation droid following them. Thus warned they hurry away.



Chapter 14 Analysis

In sharp contrast to the tone of the Podrace, the events following are laced with powerful emotions. There is the thrill and exhilaration of the win and all that it means for everybody and continues with Anakin's anguish at having to part from Padmy. It ends with the profound sorrow and sense of loss that Anakin feels about having to leave his mother behind, not knowing when he will see her again.

The reader is left to ponder what effect this uprooting will have upon the young boy, facing a life without his mother who has been his only parent and so close to him. How will this journey with near-strangers affect a boy of nine? Of course it's a great day to be freed from slavery; it's an honor to be trained as a Jedi, and it's rewarding to follow a destiny that will fulfill one's talents. Is it worth leaving a supporting family and boyhood friends that one has known for years?



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Qui-Gon and Anakin, in spite of their haste to get to the Queen's transport, fail to arrive before Darth Maul has an opportunity to lie in wait. As soon as the two of them come in sight, the Sith lord launches his attack, deadly and swift. Qui-Gon and the Sith battle furiously, the rasp of their light sabers alive in the desert air. Anakin at a command from Qui-Gon races to the ship and relays Qui-Gon's orders to take off. Immediately, Obi-Wan orders the pilot to take off and fly low over the combatants as they hack viciously at each other, but neither gaining a clear advantage. When the ship nears him, Qui-Gon leaps onto the loading ramp, but the Sith leaps on and they battle for position. Finally Qui-Gon launches a heavy blow that forces Darth Maul to lose his hold and fall back to the desert, seething with rage and frustration as the Queen's transport lifts up and away from him. When Anakin asks what sort of creature that was, Qui-Gon replies that whoever it was, he was certainly trained in the Jedi arts. Then Qui-Gon introduces Anakin to Obi-Wan, who rolls his eyes at the thought of another one of Qui-Gon's "projects" accompanying them.

On the planet of Naboo, in the throne room, Governor Sio Bibble refuses to give up the strike against the Neimoidian invaders. Even threatened with death by Nute Gunray, he does not flinch. Eventually he is sent away, and the Neimoidian thinks that soon his Sith allies will bring him Queen Amidala and this business will be over.

Aboard the Queen's cruiser, Anakin finds it hard to sleep. It is cold, and he struggles with his homesickness and longing for the presence of his mother. He fights back tears as he notices someone enter - Padmy. She gives him a jacket and tells him how worried the Queen is about her people, and she comforts him, understanding that he's sad that he may never see his mother again. He reaches in his pocket and takes out the japor carving he made for her out of his pocket, and gives it to her to remember him. She puts the pendant around her neck and says she doesn't need it to remember him. "How could I forget my future husband," she says, holding him close to comfort him.

Chapter 15 Analysis

In the typical "Hero's Journey" epic, the hero experiences a "call to action" which, when acted upon will take him far from home into new worlds and new places full of strangers who may become friends or enemies. A part of this story pattern is that the hero experiences self-doubt and remorse about leaving, and feels a longing for home, old friends and family. Even though Anakin is a special, gifted person with extraordinary talents, he is not immune to the acute feelings typical of this genre of story. In fact, he may be more susceptible because of his age. In most stories the hero finds solace and comfort in a new friend, sometimes a mentor, but often a female. In this case, Anakin has a unique relationship with Padmy. She is a mother figure, which is seen clearly



when she holds him in her arms to soothe his deep sorrow at being parted from his mother. She is also a sister figure, and a potential romantic figure, as evidenced by the feelings he has for her that would rightly be described as "puppy love," but which, with his limited experience of life, he cannot identify.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

As the cruiser makes the approach to the city-planet of Coruscant and lands at a floating dock hundreds of meters in the air, Anakin tries hard not to be overwhelmed by the new sights and people he's coming in contact with. Qui-Gon leads a procession comprised of the Queen and her retinue, followed by Anakin and his companions and the crew of the ship. At the loading ramp Senator Palpatine, the Queen's emissary to the Republic Senate, and Supreme Chancellor Valorum, who announces that he has called a special session of the Senate so that the Queen can present her case.

As the Queen and the dignitaries move off toward an air shuttle, Anakin is uncertain where he should go, but a gesture from the Queen lets him know that he and Jar Jar are meant to join her. Later, Anakin and Jar Jar are led to their quarters, and then they sneak out and overhear a conference between the Queen and Senator Palpatine concerning the dire situation on Naboo and the lack of action by the Senate. Senator Palpatine paints a picture of the Senators as officials who care only for their own planets and waste a great deal of time in useless bickering. When the Queen says that Chancellor Valorum seems to be on their side, Senator Palpatine advises her that the Chancellor is mired in false accusations of scandal which occupy most of his attention, and that their only chance is to force the election of a new, stronger Chancellor. Palpatine warns the Queen that she may have to accept the Neimoidian occupation - for now at least. The Queen reacts vehemently to this suggestion and retorts that she will never do that.

Meanwhile Qui-Gon is at the Jedi temple, informing the Council that the Sith have returned. There is astonishment. How could the Sith have returned without the Council knowing? Then Qui-Gon tells the Council about Anakin and suggests that this boy may be the prophesied one who will bring balance to the force. The Council agrees that they will test Anakin.

Chapter 16 Analysis

The various threads of the plot are woven together closely with the arrival of the Queen and her party, and Qui-Gon and his apprentice Obi-Wan. Up till this point in the story these two story lines have diverged considerably, but now Anakin becomes the link between them, even though he is only an observer on Coruscant at the moment. The Queen has an attachment to him, apparently, since it is she who invited him to join her entourage, and Qui-Gon has made himself Anakin's advocate before the Jedi Council. The Jedi and the Queen have a common enemy - Darth Sidious, even though he has not been revealed to either of them. The Sith lord's minion, Nute Gunray, and his protygy Darth Maul are at present the instruments of the nefarious scheme Darth Sidious has put into action.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Anakin and Jar Jar are invited by the Queen to attend the Senate session as observers. Anakin is awed by the arena-sized Senate Chamber with its central podium for the Chancellor and the Senatorial boxes, which hold representatives from all parts of the galaxy and have the ability to float in to the center as its Senator is given permission to speak. The boy quickly recovers from his initial reaction, and follows the proceedings closely.

Senator Palpatine privately counsels the Queen to call for a vote of non-confidence in Chancellor Valorum if it looks like the Senate is going to defer action on the invasion of Naboo. She is reluctant. Senator Palpatine is persuasive, and it looks as though the Senate is just what he has represented it to be - the Trade Federation hotly denying their guilt and Palpatine pressing the case for Naboo. In the end, points of order and protocol win out and a motion crosses the floor to delay action. Queen Amidala demands a vote of non-confidence, and the Chancellor, looking betrayed calls for a recess.

An hour later, Anakin seeks out Padmy to tell her that Qui-Gon is going to take him before the Jedi Council. He finds the Queen who says she will relay his message, and expresses the opinion that she thinks Padmy would be pleased.

Obi-Wan has a less optimistic view of Anakin's chances at becoming a Jedi. Tradition has shown that training after the age of one is certain to prove a failure. Obi-Wan pleads with Qui-Gon not to go up against the Council on this matter because he will not succeed, and his status will drop even further. Had Qui-Gon not repeatedly defied the Council, he himself could have been sitting there. But Qui-Gon is firm. "Anakin will become a Jedi, I promise you," he says.

The next day, when Anakin is tested by the Council, they are impressed until Master Yoda questions him. Yoda feels some fear in Anakin and he questions him repeatedly about it until the young boy snaps that he is not afraid, giving in to his temper under the persistent probing. When Yoda suggests that Anakin is afraid of losing his mother, and Anakin replies defensively, asking what the question has to do with anything, Yoda replies, "Everything. To the dark side, fear leads. To anger and to hate. To suffering." When Anakin declares again calmly that he is not afraid, Yoda lets the tests continue.

Chapter 17 Analysis

It is apparent that Senator Palpatine is bent upon unseating Chancellor Valorum, who up until now has been a friend of the Queen's cause. It appears that, in spite of being the emissary for Naboo at the Senate, he is looking for a way to foment dissent and destabilize Valorum's control of the ruling body. He continually advances the thought



that the Senate needs a strong leader, which sounds suspiciously like the mantra of a potential dictator, and also sounds as if he has himself in mind as the prime candidate. Queen Amidala, despite her reputation as a wise leader, seems to fall into some kind of trap and ends up calling for a vote of confidence in Valorum. This will result in forcing him to step down in favor of a new Chancellor. Even worse, we have heard Senator Palpatine advise the Queen that she may need to accept the occupation of her planet, and all the signs seem to point in that direction if Senator Palpatine is elected as Chancellor.

Anakin, for his part, succeeds in impressing the Council at the beginning by his quick and accurate responses to the tests they give him. There is much more to becoming a Jedi than having superior intellectual and physical skills, and in the final analysis, Yoda probes into the fatal flaw Anakin possesses - his susceptibility to fear. Yoda also crystallizes the reason that a Jedi must be completely free of fear when he proclaims that fear leads to the dark side, to anger and hate, and to suffering.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Queen Amidala, profoundly saddened by the events in the Senate, goes into seclusion waiting for news of the new Chancellor. Jar Jar strikes up a conversation with her, and reveals a startling piece of news. The Gungans have a big army and a lot of weaponry, which is why they are left virtually alone by the other inhabitants of Naboo. Startled by this information, she is about to respond when they are interrupted by the arrival of Captain Panaka, her security chief, and Senator Palpatine bringing news that Senator Palpatine has been nominated to succeed Chancellor Valorum. Fearing that this development only means further delays and indecision, Queen Amidala determines to return to Naboo.

At the Jedi temple, Qui-Gon and Anakin are shocked to learn that the Council has decided *not* to admit Anakin for training - the main reason being that he is too old and already has too much anger in him. Qui-Gon declares that *he* will train the boy, but the Council point out to him that he already has an apprentice and that he cannot have two.

Qui-Gon counters that Obi-Wan is ready to become a Knight, but the Council disagrees, and turns to other business, namely the crisis at Naboo. The final outcome is that Qui-Gon will return to Naboo to protect the Queen, because her return will draw her attackers out of hiding. The Council orders Qui-Gon to discover the identity of the Sith who attacked him. As a parting word, Yoda orders Qui-Gon to take Anakin with him, but not to train the boy.

The two Jedi and Anakin board the Nabooan ship with the Queen's party, and a heated exchange passes between the Master and the apprentice. Obi-Wan insists that the boy is dangerous and expresses his frustration that Qui-Gon doesn't see it. Qui-Gon replies that Anakin's future is uncertain, but he is not dangerous. Later, Qui-Gon counsels Anakin to watch and learn from him. He tells Anakin about the midi-chlorians and their meaning, that they communicate the will of the Force, and when he learns to quiet his mind, he will hear them speaking to him.

The ship lifts off and sets course for Naboo, where Nute Gunray is being instructed by Darth Sidious to force Queen Amidala to sign the treaty when she arrives. The Neimoidian is also learning that Darth Maul will be coming to Naboo to deal with the Jedi.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Although Queen Amidala has not dealt well with the Senate, she makes a courageous and wise decision to return to Naboo. The problem she faces is the dire effects of the occupation, combined with the impotence of the Senate, and the looming change of a Chancellor, which will likely lead to further uncertainty and delay. Strategically her return



to her home will force the hands of those arrayed against her, and she will also have the assistance of the Jedi who are bound by their to protect her. Even though, unknown to her, there will be a move by the minions of Darth Sidious to force her to sign the treaty, she will have the advantage of being seen to be one with her people and to be exercising leadership. Additionally when she is at home, she is likely to have a better opportunity to find a solution.

As for Anakin, although Qui-Gon is a strong champion for him, the Council has seen that his future is clouded and there is a sense of some ominous destiny that could lead him to the dark side.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

On the ship Anakin makes friends with the pilot, and persuades him to explain the workings of the controls on the pilot's console. Qui-Gon watches this interaction and is pleased, but frustrated that the Council cannot see that Anakin is the chosen one.

While they are on the transport, Amidala explains to the others what her plan is. She intends to take back what her people rightfully own - sovereignty over their own nation, and she tells those present that she intends to land near the swamp and contact the Gungan people herself, with Jar Jar as her emissary.

As the Queen and her retinue wait at the edge of the swamp for Jar Jar to return from contacting the Gungan leader in the city of Otoh Gunga, Padmy talks to Anakin, tells him not to give up hope of becoming a Jedi, and reveals to him that the Queen has made a difficult decision - to fight a war against the occupying forces. Just then Jar Jar returns with the news that there is nobody in the city, and he suspects they have gone into hiding at a sacred place where they cannot be found. He leads them away.

When they finally succeed in contacting Boss Nass, the Gungan leader wants to have nothing to do with them. It is then that Padmy steps forward and reveals herself as the Queen, then takes over the negotiations. Then she surprises the Gungan leader (who has always experienced Nabooans as considering Gungans to be inferior) by kneeling in front of him and begging him to help her. He is disarmed by her humility, and agrees to talk with her.

The plan that evolves from this meeting is that the Gungans will lure the Federation forces into a battle, leaving the palace lightly guarded, then the Queen and a small force will fight their way into the palace, capture the Viceroy, Nute Gunray, while at the same time sending star fighters up to destroy the command battleship, which will render the droid troops immobile and useless. As a final gesture, in return for bringing the Nabooans and the Gungans together, Boss Nass appoints Jar Jar as a general in the army, much to Jar Jar's chagrin.

When news of the gathering of the Gungan army gets to Nute Gunray, he proposes to Darth Sidious that he mount an offensive against these rebellious primitives. The Sith Lord agrees and orders Gunray to destroy them all.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Now Qui-Gon's instinct is validated. His sense from the beginning that Jar Jar was a creature with value and ought to be allowed to accompany them was of inestimable value. Jar Jar's presence has led to the alliance with the Gungans promises to be salvation for the planet of Naboo.



Perhaps the Jedi's sixth sense about, and passionate advocacy in favor of Anakin Skywalker will be proven to be as true as his estimation of Jar Jar. The author has laden an insight about life that underlies many of the thematic threads of *The Phantom Menace* - the fact that exterior appearance does not necessarily indicate the intrinsic value of human beings, and in the case of science fiction, alien life forms as well.

At this point in the novel, the plot has gathered significant momentum, and reached a level at which the gathering storm clouds promise a battle between those on the side of good and those on the side of evil, the outcome of which appears highly uncertain.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

At midday, the gleaming Trade Federation forces and the Gungan army, having emerged from the swamp, are deployed opposite each other.

At the same time, in the city of Theed, the decoy Queen and the Queen's handmaidens, dressed in battle gear, accompanied by Padmy, Anakin, Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and a complement of about twenty armed officers, guards, and pilots, plus R2-D2, hunker down in the shadow of a building opposite the main hangar of the Naboo starfleet. Padmy talks briefly to Anakin, telling him that she's sorry about having to hide the truth about her identity from him, but that she feels the same about him now as she did before. Anakin is relieved and says that he guesses his feelings for her shouldn't be any different either.

As they ready to invade the hangar, Qui-Gon tells Anakin to find a place to hide inside and to stay there, then they fight their way past the droids on guard and take over the hangar. At the same time, on the plains abutting the swamp Jar Jar leads his troop forward as the Gungan General positions his shield generators, and activates the huge shield that will repel the droid army's fire. The shield protects them from large weapons fire, but not the mechanized battle droids, which come forward by the hundreds and engage in a fierce firefight with the Gungans.

In the Theed palace, Nute Gunray and his second in command, Rune Haako watch a viewscreen relaying coverage of the battle taking place in the hangar. Both are unsettled by the fact that the conflict has come to their doorstep, but at that moment, Darth Maul, impressive in his long dark cloak, and bearing a long-handled light saber, appears. They both shrink back from him, but inquire as to what he intends to do. He replies that he is going to rid them of the Jedi once and for all.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Anakin and Padmy take time out from preparing for an assault on the hangar to declare their feelings for each other in light of the fact that Anakin has discovered that she is not Padmy the handmaiden, but is the Queen of Naboo. She reassures Anakin that he need not feel differently toward her, and that she feels the same about him. It is a pact of sorts that looks forward to a time in the future, when perhaps they may have a relationship that is more than friendship.

Now when the battle is about to begin and suspense and excitement need to be heightened, the author makes maximum use of separated lines of action, dividing the conflict into four parts: the battle between the Jedi Knights and Darth Maul, the battle of the Gungans against the droid army, the conflict between Padmy and the Viceroy, and the clash between the starfighters and the Federation Battleship. This structure of



division undoubtedly owes its origin to the need for sustained action in the movie, but it is also a technique commonly used in novels. The chief advantage is that at a high point in the action, the outcome of a critical conflict can be left unresolved in favor of a switch to a different line of action, thus continually escalating the suspense felt by a reader or an audience.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Obedying Qui-Gon's directive, Anakin ducks underneath a starfighter and watches the action while the Jedi assisted by Padmy and her troops clear the hanger of droids. Pilots rush to the starfighters and with a roar of powerful engines launch their craft out of the hangar. When the last of the droids is destroyed, the two Jedi and Padmy's troops move toward an exit in the hangar. Qui-Gon sees Anakin hiding in one of the parked starfighters with R2-D2 at his side, and orders him to stay where he is. At this moment, Darth Maul appears blocking the exit, fire and rage in his eyes. Qui-Gon orders the rest of the group to back away, and then he and Obi-Wan engage the Sith warrior in what promises to be a fight to the death.

On the plains near the swamp the main battle still rages, with the Federation forces bringing more weaponry to the fore in the face of stubborn Gungan resistance. Back at the hangar, Anakin marvels at the skill and ferocity of Darth Maul as he attempts to defeat the Jedi Knights, but then Anakin's attention is drawn to Padmy and her group, suddenly faced with destroyer droids. With the help of R2-D2, he fires up the engines of the starfighter and after a few false starts because of unfamiliarity with the control panel, he manages to find the weaponry and fry the droids so that the Padmy and her troops can escape. Other droids surround him, and by pressing buttons, he turns on the autopilot and the sleek fighter streaks out of the hangar and heads for space.

In a short time, they are unavoidably joined with the fighter force in the vicinity of the Federation battleship. Unable to find a way to override the autopilot, Anakin stares helplessly as his ship bores in toward the Federation ship and the swarm of fighters there.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Since the beginning of the story, when Anakin is seen Podracing, the reader looks forward to seeing the boy apply his skills, not in a game, but in a life and death situation. The story, therefore, delivers this necessary development. It could be argued that it is entirely beyond belief that nine year-old could pilot a starship successfully. The author goes to some lengths to make it believable. R2-D2, programmed, supposedly with encyclopedic knowledge about the care and operation of a starship, is plugged in to the cockpit panel, and earlier on in the Queen's transport, Anakin has been observed learning about control panels from the pilot. Add to that his extraordinary ability with Podracers at the beginning, one can see that his ability has been prepared for.

Some may think the preparation is successful, some may think not. Unassailable plausibility in this type of instance is not as vital as in a serious novel intended for sophisticated adults. Also, since plausibility can be stretched more in a movie story than

in a published story, perhaps the way Anakin's piloting competence is presented is sufficient for the movie, but it seems to push the boundaries that many readers think is acceptable.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

In the hangar, Qui-Gon, an almost unmatched, skilled fighter begins to realize that he has met his match in the person of Darth Maul. The Sith warrior, although appearing to retreat, maneuvers them to an entry that leads to a power station, then on to a catwalk that hangs above the generators. The battle rages on with each side gaining momentary advantage, but not able to end it. Eventually Darth Maul and Qui-Gon fight their way into the melting pit area, leaving Obi-Wan behind, blocked by a laser field.

Meanwhile Padmy and her troops head for the palace, encounter fierce resistance, but fight their way through until they are close to the throne room. They find themselves trapped, and to the surprise of Captain Panaka, Padmy orders her soldiers to drop their weapons and surrender.

At the Gungan battlefield the Gungans are losing ground, and they decide to retreat, Jar Jar almost succumbs when the mount he is riding gets shot out from under him, but manages to leap onto a droid tank and cling there in spite of their attempts to dislodge him, until a Gungan captain rescues him.

Above the planet Anakin Skywalker finds himself caught up in the midst of a dogfight. He's still struggling to get off autopilot, and as a result, he is learning the control panel, while he experiments with button pushing. Finally R2-D2 restores manual control, and Anakin is flying the plane at last. He manages to outmaneuver an enemy fighter, then struggles with control and, as a last resort, escapes right into the battleship's immense main hangar, but in his attempt to turn and get back out again, stalls the engines. That's when he notices the droids coming after him.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The author uses a tried and true technique of storytelling to increase the suspense. He makes it look as though the hero is going to lose. First, Obi-Wan gets trapped so that Qui-Gon has to fight alone. Second, Padmy and her troops are forced to lay down their weapons and surrender, and third, the Gungan army seems to have been routed by the droids.

Many readers will not care about credibility issues as long as they are being entertained, and it cannot be denied that there is entertainment, in the form of fast-paced action. There is a healthy dose of humor, and humor can often paper over any cracks in the substance of the story. For example, the concept of a person trapped in a moving vehicle that he doesn't fully know how to operate goes all the way back to Buster Keaton, and Charlie Chaplin, and it serves the author well to put Anakin in the same type of predicament during the dogfight sequences in space. The reader likely feels that Anakin is on the edge of being totally out of control throughout, and therefore,

his success seems to be part luck and part good management - a more believable mix in a story.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

In the generator room, the marathon battle between Qui-Gon and Darth Maul continues while Obi-Wan waits for the laser field to recycle so he can come to Qui-Gon's aid. Before Obi-Wan can escape however, Qui-Gon makes a slip, and Darth Maul wounds him fatally just as Obi-Wan, finally released from the laser field, comes charging out and mounts a fierce attack on the fearsome Sith.

The Theed Palace throne room is alive with expectation as Padmy and her troops are marched in after surrendering to the droids. Padmy introduces herself as the queen, and Nute Gunray, elated at having captured her, orders her to sign the treaty. Just then the decoy queen in all her regalia appears, guarded by Naboo soldiers and announces that she will not be signing any treaty. Confused and annoyed, the Viceroy orders Padmy's guards to go after the "real" queen and capture her. Padmy takes advantage of this diversion to get to the throne, remove a blaster from a hidden compartment, and destroy the guard droids. Then she locks the room, and tells the Viceroy that he is going to negotiate and sign a new treaty ending the occupation.

In the generator room, Obi-Wan duels with Darth Maul and succeeds in driving him back, but strength and experience allow the Sith to smash Obi-Wan's light saber, and push him over the edge toward the melting pit. At the last minute Obi-Wan manages grab hold and stay his fall, and hangs seemingly helpless over the pit.

In the hangar of the Federation battleship, Anakin, beset by droids, seems to sense something no more than a shadow, and by instinct he fires two torpedoes at it, then wheels his craft, and escapes through the hangar opening.

Darth Maul, thinking himself triumphant, gloats over the sight of Obi-Wan hanging above the pit. Obi-Wan, however, wills himself to get in touch with The Force, to calm himself, and with a supreme effort somersaults backward away from the pit, grabs Qui-Gon's light saber and cuts Darth Maul through the chest with a killing slash that catapults the Sith over the edge and into the pit.

Above the planet Anakin guides his craft away from the battleship. He has barely time to look back, when the communication channel crackles into life with excited voices. Anakin looks in time to see the Federation ship pummeled and dismembered by explosions from inside.

In the throne room Padmy hears the blaster shots hammering at the doors in an attempt to break in. Then without preamble all noise outside the room halts.

On the battlefield by the swamp, the Gungans have been overwhelmed and most of them taken prisoner by the droids, including Jar Jar. As if at a signal, the droids begin to



shake violently, some of them running around erratically, then they all stop and become motionless.

In the generator room, Obi-Wan runs to his master, finds Qui-Gon near death, but able to talk. "Promise me," Qui-Gon says, "you will train the boy."

Chapter 23 Analysis

At a number of junctures in the story, Queen Amidala has been described as having extraordinary skill, wisdom, and cleverness. Until this point, however, those extraordinary abilities have not been prominently on display. Her cunning and guile in this chapter are extremely satisfying story elements. She demonstrates, with poise, sure-handedness, and quick wit that she can handle almost any situation, and proves herself to be a worthy hero.

The author's technique of switching to a different story line when suspense is at its highest peak, is amply demonstrated here in the moment when Darth Maul has smashed Obi-Wan's light saber and knocked over the edge toward the pit. This is a literal cliffhanger demonstrated by the switch to Anakin's line of action, leaving Obi-Wan hanging in mid air.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Three days later, sovereignty is fully returned to Naboo, the Neimoidians have been shipped to prison in Coruscant to await trial, and Obi-Wan has been made a full knight in the order of the Jedi. The Jedi Council has seen fit to reverse their decision to train Anakin Skywalker, and has ordered Obi-Wan to undertake the task. Only one Jedi, Yoda, dissents. He senses something disturbed and unsettled in the boy, and he warns Obi-Wan to be on guard against it. Talk then turns to the death of Darth Maul, and Yoda says, "Always two there are. No more, no less. A master and an apprentice." And another Jedi asks, "Then which one was destroyed, do you think - the master or the apprentice?" This leaves the unspoken thought that if the Master has survived, he will seek a new apprentice, and who will that be?

As Anakin attends Qui-Gon's funeral, he feels deeply the loss of both his mother and his Jedi Master. Obi-Wan tells him that it is the start of a new beginning for him, and the boy smiles, but he is sick in spirit and lost in his heart. He notices Jar Jar dancing up and down, and thinks that Jar Jar never lets bad things get him down - maybe it's a good lesson in life. Then Jar Jar says, "We bombed heroes, Annie!" Anakin cannot help but laugh.

Chapter 24 Analysis

In dramatic literature, it is typical to refer to the end of a story using the French word *denouement*, which means, literally, *an untying* or *unknotting*, which suggests that there are story threads left unexplained, or outcomes that need to be resolved. What happens in this respect is worth noting. The answer to the question of which Sith was killed, the master or the apprentice, is a subject of inquiry for the characters in the story, but not for the reader, who knows that it was the apprentice, and that the master will be looking for someone to replace him.

The reader, however, is left to his or her own devices to figure out who the apprentice may turn out to be, but with all the clues along the way as to Anakin's vulnerability to the dark side, it would be likely that the reader will assume that the boy has a dark future ahead of him.



Characters

Anakin Skywalker

Anakin in many respects is a typical nine year-old boy. He loves to build electronic and mechanical devices. He loves to hang out with his friends, and go to the store to buy junk food. He has a good relationship with his mother, although he seems not to have a father, and he loves the excitement of competitive games. The most formative aspect of his life is that he is a slave to the Toydarian merchant Watto, and as a consequence, he is obliged to deal with Watto every day, and do his bidding.

In other ways Anakin is not a typical nine year-old boy. Because he and his mother are both Watto's slaves, they do what they are ordered to do. Although his mother strongly objects, Anakin pilots a Podracer in the frequent races at the race course in the city of Mos Espa the largest settlement on the planet of Tatooine. Podracing is extremely dangerous, and Anakin is the only human ever to become competitive in the sport. In addition, he's gifted at building things and is extremely valuable to Watto for this reason.

What no one except his mother knows is that he has uncanny extra-sensory gifts. He seems to sense things before they happen in a way that no-one else can. It comes in handy at the Podraces, but he feels it in other ways as well. He has a sense of knowing how things work, how they fit together, or how they ought to fit together without having been taught anything about them.

The most salient aspect of his personality is that he has dreams far beyond his years - dreams of being a starfighter pilot, of becoming a Jedi Knight, of building a star ship and escaping from this slave planet with his mother. Not only does he dream these dreams, but also he believes in them; is confident that it's possible for them to come true.

Qui- Gonn Jinn

Qui-Gon is sixty year-old Jedi Knight, as gifted as most Jedis are, but he has never risen to a position of influence on the Jedi Council, which he might have done if he had not stubbornly defied the Council in certain matters. In spite of his long record of heroic accomplishments, he cherishes more his unique ability to sense the true intrinsic worth of other humans, or even other life forms. His weakness is that he often takes on these characters as projects of his own, to the detriment of his own self-interest. He is the one Jedi who fully understands and appreciates the tremendous potential of Anakin Skywalker, and the story of *The Phantom Menace* is centrally driven by Qui-Gon's obsessive passion to discover and nurture the potential of the boy, in spite of any obstacles.



Queen Amidala (Padmi)

Newly elected as Queen of the planet Naboo the rumor is that, although very young, she is a woman with extraordinary wisdom and skill. She is also caring and sympathetic to other human beings. She can, however, impose her will upon her adversaries and subordinates, and stand up to enemies like the Neimoidian Viceroy who has blockaded her planet.

Very little is known about her background or upbringing, but she has been well trained, both in the skills of diplomacy and politics, as well as physical skills useful in armed combat. The bond she forges with Anakin is a key part of the story. She becomes a substitute mother figure for him when he is taken away from home, and there is a hint that in future she may also be a romantic interest of Anakin's in spite of the difference in their ages.

JAR JAR BINKS

One of the most-loved or most-reviled (depending upon one's point of view) characters in the whole *Star Wars* series, Jar Jar is a member of the Gungan race, a species that is amphibious and extremely intelligent, and builds underwater cities and technology as advanced as much of what the humans are capable of. An outcast from his own city, under a death warrant for being the cause of the destruction of valuable property, Jar Jar claims that he was exiled for being "clumsy." In creating Jar Jar, George Lucas invented a unique language that sounds as if it is based on Caribbean dialects. As a result, while the effect seems to be hilarious as far as children are concerned, Jar Jar's dialect has ignited a storm of criticism about the character, and has sparked a name-calling spree - everything from "racist" to "moronic." Jar Jar is a key character and certainly fulfills the definition of "project" as far as Qui-Gon is concerned. In addition he is the source of a great deal of physical humor, both in the book and the movie.

Obi-wan Kenobi

An apprentice to Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan has little patience with Qui-Gon's "projects." Obi-Wan's talents lie more in his ability to get in touch with the Force and to sense things in the universe that are far away, or removed in time. At one point he senses the presence of Darth Sidious, the lord of the Sith cult, who is carrying out a plot to gain control of the whole republic. At another point, he defeats the lethal Darth Maul by means of calling upon the Force and drawing energy from it. Although he feels critical of Qui-Gon's obsession with aberrant life forms, he is a staunch friend and a loyal apprentice.

Darth Sidious (Senator Palpatine)

Darth Sidious is a continuing character in the *Star Wars* series. In this book, he appears as a holographic image in his Sidious persona, but appears live as Senator Palpatine.



Sidious is the master of the Sith cult, which consists of only two persons at any one time, a master and an apprentice, who in this story is Darth Maul. He has a lust for power, and a gift for manipulating other people, in addition to being a genius at hatching labyrinthine schemes that allow him total control over all those in his galaxy.

Darth Maul

Darth Maul is one of the most dangerous opponents one could have. Perpetually angry, filled with hatred for the Jedi, he is a formidable adversary. Like many psychopaths, he is pure calculated evil, with a dedicated passion for killing those he perceives to be his enemies. Totally loyal to Darth Sidious, his master, he follows orders with precision and seethes with awesomely frightening fury when thwarted, as he is in his first encounter with Qui-Gon.

BOSS NASS

The leader of the Gungans, Boss Nass has a feud going with Jar Jar over some physical catastrophes that most probably seemed like pure vandalism. Although cruel when it takes his fancy, he can also be genial and outgoing. The fact that makes him hate the Nabooans is that they consider themselves superior to his race, and his ploy has been, politically, to have nothing to do with them.

Nute Gunray

The Viceroy of the blockading Federation forces, Nute Gunray is a mix of the cowardly, the cunning, and the conquistador. At different times he can cower before Darth Sidious, lord it over Queen Amidala, or suggest cruel strategies, such as wiping out the whole Gungan people. He has all the qualities of a typical minion who serves a more powerful boss. He can be fawning and subservient, imperious, tremblingly fearful, or casually cruel, not to mention greedy for his own little piece of the power pie, and ready to blow with the next wind that seems to be to his advantage.

Watto

Anakin's slave master is as original a creation as one will ever encounter in the sci-fi world, starting with his incessantly flapping wings and his pudgy body. The physical creation is not the most memorable of his character traits. His personality is sharply drawn and utterly believable, from his Scrooge-like whining, to his pompous, all-knowing manner, and his taunting of Qui-Gon during their haggling over the bet they make on the Podrace.



Objects/Places

Tatooine

The two-sunned planet on which Anakin Skywalker lived the first nine years of his life, it is a slave planet controlled by a race called the Hutts.

Mos Espa

This is the largest community on Tatooine, where Anakin makes his home, and where his slave master has a shop dealing in used parts and droids.

Podracer

A flying racing machine consisting of two powerful engines and a pilot's pod from which the racer is controlled is called a podracer.

Republic

The Republic is the democratic governing body of the galaxy, ruled by a Senate with delegates from signatory planets.

Trade Federation

This is a business federation governed by its members, and existing within the structure of the Senate.

Naboo

Naboo is the planet on which Queen Amidala's subjects live, which also is home to the Gungans, an amphibious race with advanced technology.

Theed

Nabooan city where Queen Amidala's palace is located is Theed.

Otoh Gunga

Capital city of the Gungan nation is Otoh Gunga.



Droid

A mechanical robot is a droid.

Coruscant

Coruscant is a planet whose cities have consumed it so that every inch of the original planet has been built upon. Also the location of the Senate of the Republic and of the Jedi temple.



Social Sensitivity

In the "Star Wars" series, the theme of good versus evil, represented by the light and dark sides of the Force, looms throughout the various episodes. The side of good is clearly embodied in the Jedi, while the Sith represent the side of evil. This basic division resonates strongly, and those who are allied with the Jedi, such as the leader of the Republic, seek similar positive goals such as harmony and justice throughout the galaxy. Those who ally with the Sith, such as the Trade Federation, pursue selfish goals such as materialistic gain and personal power. This dichotomy presented in Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace promises to unfold in more complexity in future episodes as a key figure moves from one side of the Force to the other and back again, but in general the participants fall into one camp or the other.

A discussion of those who wield the Force leads to another underlying theme in "Star Wars," the existence of a supernatural authority and a relation of one's actions to a greater power. The Force in The Phantom Menace is as neutral a supernatural force as possible in a religious sense, lacking a complicated accompanying belief structure; it is a life force which permeates everything and can be manipulated by gifted individuals. And yet, it is made clear that there are two sides to the Force and that each side has its own qualities. The temptations of the dark side of the Force can seduce an individual; this siren song can appear so powerful and intentional that it takes on a devilish life-like personification of its own. Whether good, bad, or both, the Force appears to have a "will" and plans which it carries out.

The existence of the supernatural is one of the key social concerns of any society.

Belief in the supernatural leads to people dividing along theological lines, and then strife between those groups often follows.

Even without religious warfare, or belief in a given religion, belief in the spiritual is often a strong cultural current which impacts people's lives. An example of the popularity of the spiritual can be found in modern America where angels currently are popular in all entertainment media. It is important to note that these are anthropomorphic beings who come down to earth and mix with mortals. This desire for a tangible perception of supernatural intervention explains some of the allure of the Jedi Knights, as they are essentially mortal angels fighting evil throughout the galaxy.

Given their role as mortal guardian angels, the Jedi behavior regarding one particular type of evil, slavery, one of the greatest cultural evils of all time, is slightly puzzling. Slavery automatically ranks among one of the most powerful social concerns, and slavery is present on the planet of Tatooine, despite the Republic's anti-slavery laws. Anakin Skywalker and his mother, Shmi, are the slaves readers see up close.

While the novel acknowledges that slavery is wrong, little is made of this evil. Anakin assumes the Jedi have come to free the slaves, only to be told that is not their mission. Why, at the beginning of Episode I, are the Jedi more involved in trade disputes



regarding minor planets than in stamping out slavery? Is it an example of Jedi corruption, a question of which evil falls within which political parameters, or an oversight? The novel says there are ten thousand Jedi working for justice throughout the galaxy, but still, the Jedi readers see in action are more concerned with an economic blockade of a minor planet than with freeing people from slavery.

Qui-Gon Jinn's motivation in freeing Anakin appears largely to be based on the boy's potential power with the Force than on any righteous indignation at this unselfish young boy's enslavement. Obi-Wan Kenobi considers the whole effort to free the slaves to be a dangerous loss of focus. In fact, the attempt in the book to free the mother is so minimal as hardly to be credible. If it is impractical to free her immediately, why cannot the Jedi promise to return and buy her freedom? Why does not the Council rescue Anakin's mother, eliminating the reason for Anakin's fear, a fear which they say makes training him dangerous? The Jedi reasoning is not moral or practical, but is due to the shape of the plot: Shmi must remain a slave to lead to Anakin's downfall. Thus, this great social evil is given short shrift in this episode, but one suspects there will be more examination of it in the sequels.

Regardless of which cause the Jedi decide to focus on, what makes them effective is their power. The function of power in society is always of importance to a culture.

How do the Jedi use their power? As the most powerful individuals and one of the most powerful groups in the galaxy, devoted to serving justice, they have a serious duty to behave responsibly. On the large scale, they do their utmost to follow the laws and the will of the legitimate government. However, even they do bend the rules as can be seen when bureaucracy moves slowly and the Jedi agree to negotiate on behalf of the Supreme Chancellor, who is probably exceeding his authority by taking action without approval of the Senate.

On the smaller scale, the Jedi make interesting decisions concerning when and how to wield their power. Qui-Gon uses the Force to save Jar Jar Binks from Boss Nass, which certainly seems like an ethically defensible use of Qui-Gon's brainwashing influence. On the other hand, there are other cases of brainwashing to consider, such as when Qui-Gon attempts to influence Watto into accepting worthless currency, Republic credits which are worth nothing locally, for his T-14 hyperdrive generator. Watto appears to be an unsympathetic character, and the mission Qui-Gon pursues appears important, yet Qui-Gon's actions raise the old question of whether good ends justify bad means. When the Jedi brainwashing fails to work on Watto, one wonders why, if it is justifiable to influence his decisionmaking, Qui-Gon should not use his physical Jedi skills to simply overpower Watto and take the starship engine part needed by the Jedi? Again, Qui-Gon does not hesitate to use his Jedi skills to cheat when Watto is rolling the cube to decide whether Anakin or his mother will be part of the winnings for the race. Whether Qui-Gon's cheating here is appropriate behavior for a Jedi is unclear. Of course, the Jedi appear morally just when considered in contrast to their opponents, the Sith Lords, but still, the complexity of when and in what manner one may exercise power and remain morally correct is a strong current throughout.



Techniques

One literary technique which is easy to spot in *The Phantom Menace* is the use of imagery, most of which is predictable. For instance, the villain is associated with darkness, wearing black robes, lurking in shadows. Black is, traditionally, the archetypal color for evil, and in this story black is the color of choice for both Sith Lords, which is further appropriate as they are masters of the dark side of the Force. Another example of color imagery, one relying on two short snippets of text, is a comparison of two of the main characters' eyes, Qui-Gon's blue eyes and Darth Maul's yellow eyes. Blue eyes are those of the traditional American hero, while yellow eyes connote an unwell or reptilian association.

Beyond these obvious physical traits, slightly more subtle literary conventions are also at work on a greater scale, such as the use of setting. As described on the opening page, the planet Tatooine has a harsh landscape: "The suns burned down out of a cloudless blue sky, washing the vast desert wastes of the planet in brilliant white light." This brutal landscape is matched to a harsh social structure, a planet run by criminals, a planet which supports widespread slavery.

The planet Naboo, on the other hand, home to Queen Amidala and Jar Jar Binks, is described as an "emerald bright planet" with "green lushness." The planet is packed with a variety of landscapes, all of which teem with plant and animal life. This fertile planet type is perfect for the role Naboo plays in the story, that of the natural Eden being invaded by the mechanistic forces of the greedy Trade Federation. The theme of "machine in the garden," long favored by American novelists, finds new expression in this science fiction piece.

Then there is Coruscant, the glittering city world. This unnatural world is where politics, the invention of man, rule supreme.

The Republic and the Jedi both have their homes here, and this is where Darth Sidious is located, the base from which readers observe him manipulating events. An artificial world is very appropriate for a place where so many things are not what they seem.

Deception and mystery lurk as powerful presences in this story. The "phantom menace" is the shadowy plot going on behind the scenes which the Jedi do not see. From the beginning, Qui-Gon, thinking logically, is puzzled as to why the Neimoidians are suddenly acting differently, while Obi-Wan senses something disturbing; both have caught traces of Darth Sidious's influence but cannot identify its source.

While the situation provides a measure of dramatic irony for readers familiar with *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *The Return of the Jedi*, who have a better idea of what the villain is doing, the deception in the plot is so strong that even they are left uncertain as to exactly who the villain is. He is presented without details regarding his identity or even much physical description.



His most frequent appearances in the novel are from the remote point of view of Nute Gunray and Daultay Dofine's communications with him. The master villain is a phantom. There are hints that he may share an identity with someone else in the cast of characters, but nothing is confirmed. This technique of not revealing all the information is a classic method of building suspense and keeping the audience engaged.

Deception has a double presence in this story as Queen Amidala assumes the disguise of the handmaiden Padme throughout much of the novel and has one of her handmaidens disguise herself as the queen.

The readers of the novel are given a few clues, but the deception is not confirmed until late in the book. Again, this type of deception helps establish the theme of deceptive appearances, warning the reader to pay close attention.

The point of view from which the story is told has a large effect on the audience's experience. When Brooks adapted the story from movie script to book form, he chose to follow a traditional novel format by having the story most frequently be told in the third-person limited point-of-view of Anakin and Qui-Gon. Anakin's viewpoint is largely established from the adventures he undergoes in the novel. The character of Qui-Gon is highlighted more in the novel than the script, returning repeatedly to his relation with the Force, the troubles he has had with the council, and his relationship with ObiWan. Despite focusing on these two characters to a greater extent, the novel does follow the movie script closely, including a shifting point-of-view used more than Brooks would normally, acting like a camera seeking shots.



Themes

Themes

The theme of selflessness is explored in this book, as can be seen by the opposition of those who care for others versus those who care only for themselves. These very lines differentiate between the Jedi and the Sith. Indeed, the Jedi are taught from less than a year old to bring their emotions into an ego-free harmony, not allowing themselves ego-centered emotions which could make them vulnerable to the dark side. The Jedi serve as peacemakers, trying to bring justice and equality to creatures throughout the galaxy. They act under laws and take orders from the head of the Republic's government, the Supreme Chancellor, who is supposed to confer with the Senate. Thus, the Jedi seek to act in accordance with the larger community, obeying lawful and cooperative procedures.

The Sith scorn cooperative ways, believing in power for power's sake. They care only for themselves and as an order even failed to stay united while warring against the Jedi, which led to the virtual elimination of all Sith. As the novel progresses, it is revealed that there are only two Sith Lords arrayed against ten thousand Jedi Knights.

This fact coupled with knowledge from the cinematic versions of the middle episodes regarding the success of Darth Sidious's seizure of power raises the intriguing point Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace that selfish action can be enormously effective. In a way, though selfish, the Sith Lords are reminiscent of the tradition of American individualism and the few fighting the many. Helping represent this point is the climatic fight scene where the two Jedi duel the lone Sith. Having heroes outnumber their opposition is almost unheard of in any sort of American action/adventure narrative, so it is an interesting twist and helps reinforce the idea that Sith are loners and while the Jedi are cooperative in nature.

Almost more than group or individual actions, however, fate in the persona of the Force seems to determine success and failure. The idea that fate actively influences the lives of certain individuals is a powerful thread in The Phantom Menace. Anakin best demonstrates this theme as "coincidences" accumulate to lead his life in a certain direction. Not only does a Jedi land on his out-of-the-way planet and walk into the shop where Anakin works, but it is the one Jedi Master who would complicate his own long-term mission by championing Anakin.

Fate and the Force overlap, and in those individuals through which the Force will work, their blood is inundated with midichlorians, the biological connectors of all life to the Force. This connection to the Force not only allows the individuals to communicate with it and use it for special powers, but apparently allows the Force to manipulate the individuals. When Anakin, through a series of "accidents," ends up in the hanger of the Trade Federation battleship, his laser fire misses the attacking droids and by "chance" hits exactly the right spot to travel to the reactor and destroy the massive ship and



deactivate the droid army on Naboo—showing readers the will of the Force working through one of its instruments. In this variation on the theme of fate versus free will, Qui-Gon tells Anakin that the boy must choose whether to take the path before him, but the boy appears to have all the choice of a Greek hero on a collision path with a prophecy.

Harmony

A central theme permeating all of the *Star Wars* episodes is the idea living things being in tune with the universe and conducting their lives according to principles that bring peace and productivity and a sense of balance with the whole universe. This is a theme that is principally exemplified by the Jedi Knights and their quest for connection with an elusive energy called simply the Force. One's ability to connect with the Force and let its influence work through one is cultivated almost from birth by the Jedi, who maintain an ethic of service to the community and of peacekeeping. In this episode in particular, the mechanism that allows humans (and by extension other living beings) is a microscopic organism named midi-chlorian, which acts as an intermediary between the Force and the being the midi-chlorians inhabit in a symbiotic relationship.

The degree of heightened awareness to the Force is determined by the level of midi-chlorians that is present in the blood. When Qui-Gon discovers Anakin, he has the boy's midi-chlorian level tested and discovers it to be the highest of anyone, even higher than Yoda's.

Appearances Can Be Deceiving

Upon meeting Qui-Gon and his apprentice Obi-Wan one learns that Qui-Gon has a special ability, not present in many others, to divine the true intrinsic value of living beings, and this unique trait of Qui-Gon's comes into play in relation to two of the characters, first Jar Jar Binks, and then Anakin Skywalker. Against the protestations of Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon "adopts" Jar Jar after meeting the creature in the swamp while fleeing from the droid army of the Federation, and Qui-Gon insists that Jar Jar will prove to be an asset, although everything in the results of his behavior would point in the opposite direction. In the case of Anakin the sense of intrinsic value is so great for Qui-Gon that the Jedi devotes himself to seeing that Anakin is freed from slavery and is taken to the Jedi Council in the hope that he will be admitted to the order.

The proof of the rightness of Qui-Gon's intuition is the fact that Anakin is ultimately responsible for Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, Queen Amidala and their crew getting safely off the planet of Tatooine, and being able to proceed to appear before the Senate to plead their case. Had they not been able to get off the planet, Nabooans would have been condemned to a life of slavery. The second proof of the rightness of Qui-Gon's intuition is the fact that it is Jar Jar who alerts Padme to the existence of the Gungan military force, and it is Jar Jar who connects them with Boss Nass to create a pact with him and ultimately defeat the occupying forces.



Peace and Democracy

The underlying theme of this series of movies and books, and of this particular book is that peaceful existence is the best kind of existence, and that the best means to maintain that peace is through the democratic process. When the democratic process is corrupted, or ceases to function, then strife will inevitably ensue, and it will often take armed conflict to resolve the issue, but the preferred method is to negotiate, and stay peaceful

This story, like most of the stories in the *Star Wars* saga begins with a disruption of the peace, as a result of the Federation's blockade of the planet of Naboo. It is to be noted that energetic attempts are made to resolve the dispute peacefully; however, the process itself has been corrupted by Darth Sidious (and his alter ego Senator Palpatine). A corrupted democratic body cannot work, and must either be replaced or cleaned up.

At the end of this book, the reader knows that Palpatine is the corrupter, and since he has engineered himself a position a Chancellor, the Senate cannot work, and another disruption, war, or injustice will be perpetrated and will need to be corrected, which means that there will always be a place for the Jedi.



Style

Points of View

Characteristically for this genre the story is told from multiple viewpoints. The story opens on the planet of Tatooine and is told from the viewpoint of Anakin Skywalker, a nine year-old boy. The viewpoint here enables the reader to go back to a time when he or she was nine years old, to enter into a nine year-old's frame of reference and enjoy the simplicity of life and the pursuits and diversions that make it a special time of life.

Anakin's excitement and enthusiasm about the Podrace, his total concentration to the exclusion of all other concerns, is a better access to the experience than seeing the same action through the eyes of a grown-up. When he meets with his friends and they enjoy a "Hey, let's go get a coke" moment, the reader is totally in tune with the experience. When Anakin grumbles about Watto and gloats to himself about outwitting his slave master, the experience is delicious for the reader because of the nine year-old point of view. There is no room for criticism of the character to enter in, no opportunity for the reader look at his behavior as juvenile.

A central thread, and a pivotal action line is the existence of divergent opinions between Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon concerning the true value of beings. By moving from one Jedi's point of view to the other, the reader appreciates both sides of the debate, and gets a richer understanding of the issues.

Setting

The settings in the book are exotic, lavishly described, skillfully evoked. In the beginning Tatooine, with its arid deserts, two suns and dusty streets is a memorable picture. The fact that it is a renegade planet with races of all kind, color, and shape lends a unique atmospheric feel. The appropriateness of the mud dwellings, so neat and washed just like Anakin's, contrasts wonderfully with the seediness of the inhabitants and the grubbiness of the commerce.

The city of Coruscant is a cautionary tale in itself. How can readers not draw the parallel between it and what is happening to cities and suburban landscape on earth? The reader may wonder about Gunga, the bubble-enclosed underwater city. As in all the *Star Wars* stories, the settings are characters in themselves and contribute much more than realized to the appeal of the stories.

Language and Meaning

The language in this book is extraordinarily appealing. Brooks has managed to create a painterly kind of poetic style of description that is evocative without drawing undue attention to itself. At the very beginning Brooks describes the Tatooine landscape thus



"Sharply etched, the monoliths stood like sentinels keeping watch in a watery haze." The language is overblown, but there is poetry in it and the image sticks in the mind. Brooks is a writer of considerable skill, both with dialogue and description. Nevertheless he is handicapped by the extent of the action in the story. There is a frenetic feeling to the pace, as if the writer (and the filmmaker) has a pulsing urge to provide the reader with a constant diet of movement and conflict, and not to let too much contemplation or savoring of flavors go on too long. Some of the best passages of the book are those with *very little* action, like Anakin's trek out into the desert to trade with the Jawas, including his subsequent encounter with the injured Tusken raider. There is time for self-examination and pondering that serves as a welcome relief from the constant drive of movement in the protracted action sequences.

Structure

The structure of the novel departs somewhat from the typical "hero's quest" archetype that rules these genres of stories. Typically the hero is an untried young person of undiscovered or latent potential, much like Anakin Skywalker, who receives a "call to action" and must leave home to engage the real world. All that structure is present in *The Phantom Menace*. The departure from the typical structure that George Lucas takes is that he counterbalances what would have been solely the hero's line of action with other lines of action that of necessity shorten the amount of time available for the hero. Thus we follow Qui-Gon's adventures at the beginning and don't come back to Tatooine and Anakin for what amounts to a fairly long interval.

Once Qui-Gon has met and teamed up with Anakin, Anakin becomes to some extent, an appendage, loses the independence he had on Tatooine, which is mightily ironic considering that at home in Mos Espa he was a slave, and now he is free, but he is forced into other people's timetables and exigencies. Whether the novel suffers on this account is a subject for some debate. It could be argued that for general readers, one cannot stay with a nine year-old protagonist for a whole book. In the movie form, that objection possible holds true even more, and therefore the structural choice can be seen as a good one. On the other hand, the constant, sometimes predictable, and sometimes gratuitous jumping from one story line to another becomes annoying rather than being a relief for short attention spans.



Quotes

"There are secrets hidden in the Force that are not easily discovered. The Force is vast and pervasive, and all living things are a part of it. It is not always apparent what their purpose is, however. Sometimes that purpose must be sensed first in order that it may be revealed later." (Chapter 5, pp. 56-57.)

He fell asleep finally, and he dreamed of strange things. The dreams shifted and changed without warning and took on different story lines and meanings as they did so. He was several things in the course of his dreams. Once he was a Jedi Knight, fighting against things so dark and insubstantial he could not identify them....Once he was a great and feared commander of an army, and he came back to Tatooine with ships and troops at his command to free the planet's slaves. His mother was waiting for him, smiling, arms outstretched. But when he tried to embrace her, she vanished. (Chapter 6, pp. 78-79)

Padmy smiled, "That's okay. I'm very good at keeping secrets." (Chapter 10, p. 128)

Night blanketed the city of Coruscant, cloaking the endless horizon of gleaming spires in deep velvet layers. Lights blazed from windows, bright pinpricks against the black. As far as the eye could see, as far as a being could travel, the city's buildings jutted from the planet's surface in needles of steel alloy and reflective glass. Long ago, the city had consumed the planet with its bulk, and now there was only the city, the center of the galaxy, the heartbeat of the Republic's rule. (Chapter 10, p.134)

The Sith had come into being almost two thousand years ago. They were a cult given over to the dark side of the Force, embracing fully the concept that power denied was power wasted. (Chapter 10, p. 134)

So it was that he empathized with Anakin Skywalker in ways that other Jedi would discourage, finding in this boy a promise he could not ignore. (Chapter 10, p. 138)

"You were in my dream," he said, swallowing hard to get the words out. "You were leading a huge army into battle." (Chapter 12, p 155)

The girl paled. Her eyes burned into Anakin. "You've never even *finished* a race?" she demanded incredulously. (Chapter 12, p. 160)

Yoda's sleepy eyes fixed on him. "Everything. To the dark side, fear leads. To anger and to hate. To suffering." (Chapter 17, p.230)

The younger Jedi's voice dropped a notch. "The boy is dangerous. They all sense it. Why can't you?" (Chapter 18, p. 240)

"Telling you who I really am doesn't mean my feelings for you have changed. I was the same person before, whether you knew the truth about me or not." (Chapter 20, p.264)

So he smiled, but he was sick in spirit and lost in his heart. (Chapter 24, p. 322)

Adaptations

Brooks adapted this novel, *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, from George Lucas's script and story at Lucas's request.

The majority of the novel follows the movie script very closely. However, Brooks was allowed to add material as long as it was not inconsistent with the story, and he did so, most significantly with the extra Anakin Skywalker scenes.

The novel also appears in audio version from Random House Audio. Michael Cumpsty reads an abridged version, while Alexander Adams is the reader for the unabridged version.



Key Questions

This novel adaptation offers a chance to examine an extremely popular narrative in greater detail. Of course, since Brooks was allowed to make additions to the narrative, it is not the same as examining the movie in a frozen print form. On the other hand, the author was allowed access to the creator of the narrative, George Lucas, and to background information Lucas had generated which did not make it into the movie, so in that sense the novel offers a source for more in-depth discussion of specific topics. It is certainly very interesting to analyze elements of the novel closely to study this narrative which has been so influential on multiple generations. However, the "Star Wars" series ultimately participates greatly in the tradition of myth, so the reader performing analysis should be forewarned that if, as in an ancient myth, not everything hangs seamlessly together, he or she should not be too surprised.

1. Review the textual evidence and consider the decisions Qui-Gon makes. Are they intelligent, moral choices? Would you have done anything differently?

Why might the Jedi council disagree with some of them? What does the story have to say about individual action and initiative versus cooperative decision-making?

2. What are the apparent successes and failures of the Republic government? Is it similar to any current Earth government structures? What messages does the novel convey about democracy?

3. Based on the first episode alone, where would you think the story is headed?

What foreshadowing is present in this novel?

4. How is slavery portrayed on Tatooine?

Does it differ from slavery in eighteenth-and nineteenth-century America?

5. Female characters have very little presence in this novel. How does this affect your perception of the civilization as futuristic or more advanced than life currently on Earth?

6. If you are familiar with the other "Star Wars" books or with the movies, how does that affect your reading experience?

7. If you had to identify one character as the protagonist, who would you choose? Why?



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Anakin Skywalker's image of himself as a hero during the period he is on Tatooine before leaving with Qui-Gon. Compare what he imagines himself doing in the future with the things he *actually* does in the present that mark him as having heroic qualities.

Discuss how Anakin's status as a slave affects his behavior. How does his behavior differ from that of a typical nine year-old boy who is not a slave? What character traits do you think he is developing as direct result of belonging to someone else as property? Which of these traits might be defended as being positive traits?

Contrast the slave status of Anakin and his mother with the status of slaves on plantations in the United States in the 1850's. Make particular reference to methods employed to prevent slaves from escaping, living conditions, and privileges accorded to slaves with special skills. Specify what skills of Anakin's are most valuable to his owner, Watto, and suggest what skills a slave might have had in the 1850's that would have made him or her most valuable to an owner.

Compare the story of Anakin's rescue of the Tusken raider with the biblical story of The Good Samaritan, noting all the similarities. Look up the dictionary definition of the word *archetype*. Discuss to what extent the rescue of the Tusken raider constitutes an archetypal story.

Anakin Skywalker prides himself on the fact that he's not afraid of anything except losing his mother. Discuss how his lack of fear is a benefit to him, and how it might be a detriment. Use particular reference to his emotional struggle when the time comes for him to leave Mos Espa and Tatooine, and to his appearance in front of the Jedi Council.

The character Jar Jar Binks has attracted an enormous amount of criticism and antagonism. It has even been suggested that he could have been left out of the story entirely. Make a case *for* or *against* this point of view with particular reference to the character's necessity in: the development of the plot, the comic relief in the story, and, the proof of Qui-Gon's attitude toward the intrinsic value of creatures.

When examining Anakin, The Jedi Yoda unintentionally provides a very simple definition of the dark side, when he says, "To the dark side, fear leads. To anger and to hate. To suffering." Assume that "dark side" is just another way of saying "evil," and discuss what part fear plays in the behavior of Darth Sidious and Nute Gunray in *The Phantom Menace*. How might it be argued that fear leads to anger, hate, and suffering in our world today?

Literary Precedents

The way the characters are caught up in a larger tale, enacting a script beyond their control, is reminiscent of Greek myths.

Anakin especially appears as an Oedipus fated to live out a predetermined destiny.

The Force has a will, and it exerts that will on a large scale to manipulate people and events, just as the Jedi and Sith manipulate people and objects on a smaller scale.

Of course, this novel is an adaptation of a script for a film, and some of the precedents are cinematic in nature. The dramatic podrace borrows heavily from the famous chariot race in Ben Hur. It is a modern tribute to the old classic from the slave racing, laps, and huge crowd to the racers being injured and killed by the villain pulling underhanded tricks.

Related Titles

Brooks's earlier fantasy works, particularly the "Shannara" series, made him an excellent candidate for this novelization.

He had built his success as a writer describing fictional worlds, full of fantastic creatures and magic. Brooks's epic fantasy novels often invoke the same sort of mythical qualities as does the "Star Wars" series. In the "Shannara" series, good struggles against evil, prophecies are fulfilled, and heroes and villains have the ability to perform supernatural acts, abilities often linked to genetic inheritance.

Of course, an extremely closely-related work is the script for the movie, upon which much of Brooks's work is based. A facsimile of the complete script has been published. Of more general relation to this novel is the multitude of "Star Wars" books written by an array of authors which currently fill several shelves at all major bookstores.



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