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MOVIE GUIDE



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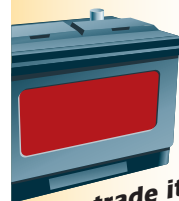


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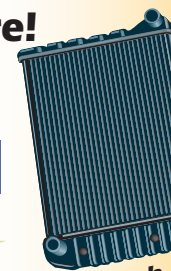


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We Only Know One Truth – It's a Great Time to Be a Star Wars Fan

BY JESSE DARLAND
CTW FEATURES

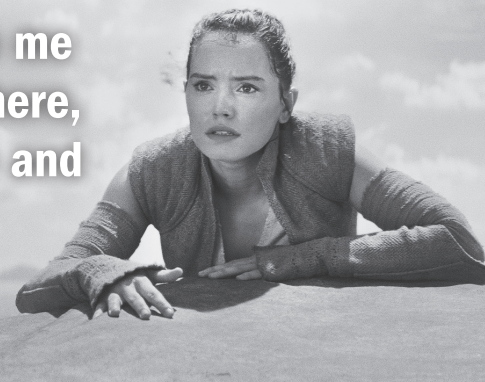
Breathe. Consider the ongoing Star Wars saga. And then, just breathe. Reach out with your feelings. What do you see?

If you see a bright future, then you must be strong in the Force. The slumbering Star Wars saga was reignited by 2015's "The Force Awakens," which pulled in more than \$2 billion worldwide. Released a year later, the standalone "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" earned an impressive – most impressive – billion for Lucasfilm and corporate parent Disney.

That leaves us to ponder the direction of December's "Star Wars: The Last Jedi," written and directed by Rian Johnson ("Looper," "The Brothers Bloom"). How will the latest film steward the 40-year legacy of film's greatest franchise?

"Something inside me has always been there, but now it's awake and I need help."

– Rey



As impressive as "The Force Awakens" was, director J.J. Abrams chose to follow the plot of 1977's "Star Wars" in broad strokes. (Both films featured a desert planet, orphaned nobody of a hero, a powerful villain dressed all in black, a war hero turned mentor and a planet-destroying superweapon.)

See **Star Wars fan** page 4B

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Star Wars fan • from page 3B

Based on the trailers and teaser so far, it appears that "The Last Jedi" seems to follow in the footsteps of 1980's "The Empire Strikes Back." We have training sequences with a reluctant and reclusive Jedi master, armored walkers menacing the heroes on a snow-covered planet and an overall darker and more dire tone.

Many Star Wars fans consider "Empire" to be the best in the series – so far, at least – so consciously aping a famous predecessor seems to be the right way to go.

So far, the production hasn't let many details leak out about the plot of the film, aside from what can be gleaned from trailers and a single behind-the-scenes video.

"This is not going to go the way you think."

– Luke Skywalker

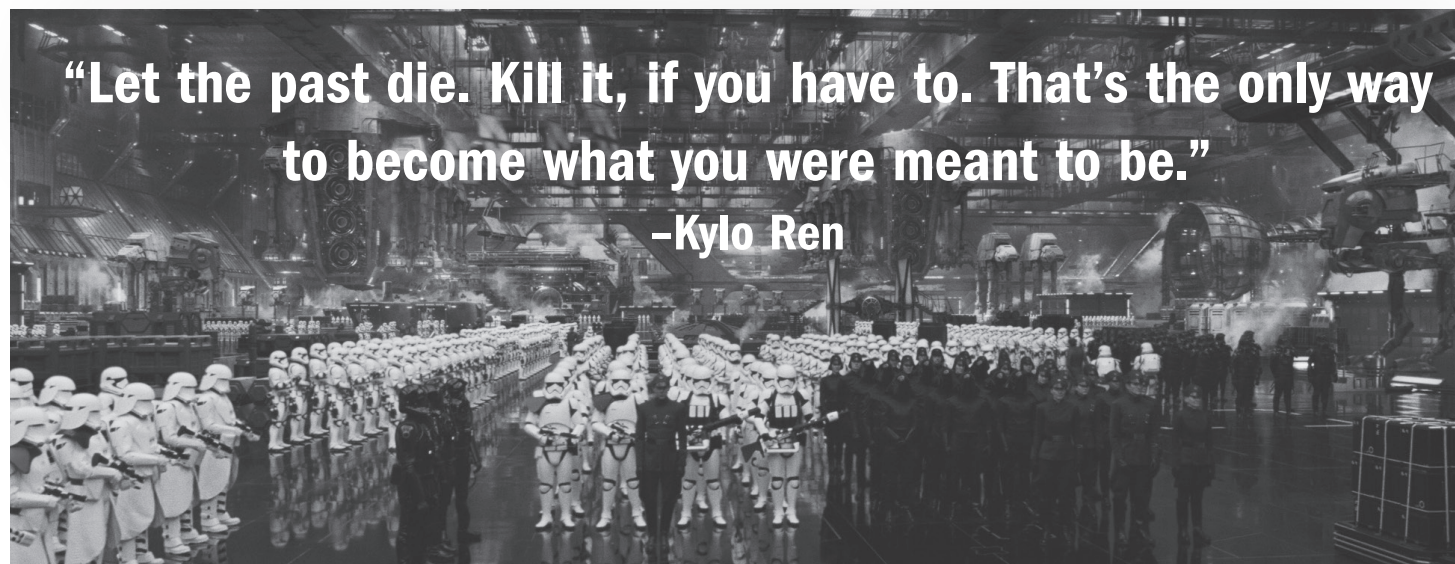
This is in keeping with the policy of secrecy deployed by Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy, who tightly managed the release of information beginning with "The Force Awakens" to quash spoilers and maintain a feeling of surprise for Force-loving moviegoers.

What we can tell is that "The Last Jedi" will feature a haggard, world-weary version of Jedi master Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill). While Rey (Daisy Ridley) ended "The Force Awakens" face-to-face with the reclusive hero on the remote world of Ahch-To, it seemed that Luke wasn't too keen to pass on what he had learned. "It's time for the Jedi to end," he intones in the film's first trailer, and based on the footage released so far, it might take some convincing before he begins to show Rey the ways of the Force.

Hotshot Resistance pilot Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) ended the last film a hero after his small strike team successfully destroyed the First Order's Starkiller Base.

It seems that he'll start the next film back in the thick of space-battle action. Numerous shots in the trailers show him running through corridors of Resistance battle cruisers with loyal Droid BB-8 hot on his heels.

Less clear is what happens to Finn (John Boyega), the former stormtrooper turned Resistance warrior. At the end of "The Force Awakens," Finn was badly hurt by dark-sider Kylo Ren (Adam Driver). He clearly makes a full recovery, as footage in the film's



"Let the past die. Kill it, if you have to. That's the only way to become what you were meant to be."

–Kylo Ren

second trailer show him locked in a fiery confrontation with Captain Phasma (Gwendolyn Christie), his commanding officer from the days when he still served the evil First Order.

With any luck, Finn will reprise his role as the emotional heart of the film. While Rey, Poe and Finn all had moments of heart and humor in the first film, Finn was the only of the three heroes who didn't have a special talent to fall back on. Rey was preternaturally gifted in the Force; Poe was an expert pilot. Finn's true gift was his conscience, which first prompted him to leave the First Order's evil ways behind, and then to join the side of good to fight with the Resistance.

"We are the spark that'll light the fire that'll burn the First Order down."

– Poe Dameron

"Let the past die. Kill it, if you have to. That's the only way to become what you were meant to be." –Kylo Ren

This brings us to Kylo Ren's journey in the film. "The Force Awakens" showed us that that Force-wielding villain had his own inner conflicts. Footage from the latest trailer shows him flying an attack craft toward a Resistance capital ship containing his mother, General Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher).

With his finger on the trigger, he hesitates. It's not clear whether he fires or not. Though he did dispatch his father Han Solo (Harrison Ford) during the climax of the previous film, there does still seem to be good in him. Perhaps "The Last Jedi" will involve a journey back from the darkness for the character.

Any mention of Fisher must include a note of sadness at the actress's premature death in 2016. Though she

had completed the vast majority of her filming for "The Last Jedi," there were rumored plans to feature her heavily in future films. Both Johnson and Kennedy have said that her performance in "The Last Jedi" is one of the strongest of her career, so it looks like her final bow will be worthy of her legacy.

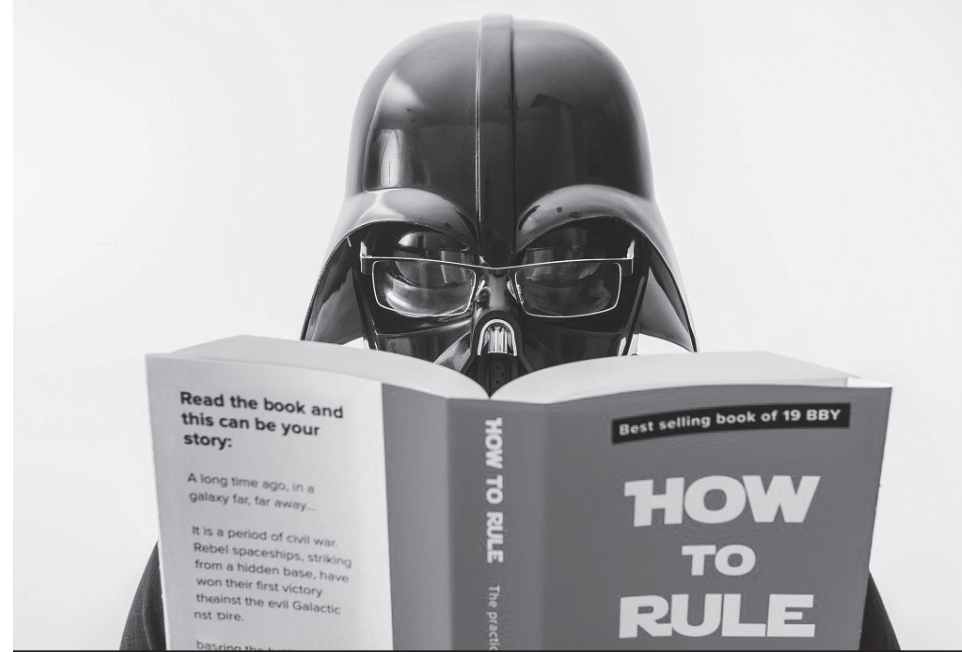
"When I found you I saw raw untamed power, and beyond that, something truly special." –Supreme Leader Snoke

As Star Wars fans get ready for the premiere, the future of the franchise looks bright. Director Ron Howard is moving ahead on a Han Solo-centric prequel film, while J.J. Abrams will return to finish the sequel trilogy with a sequel to "The Last Jedi."

No matter what twists and turns are in store for us – and there are sure to be many – it's a wonderful time to be a Star Wars fan.

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Galactic History Lesson

Before the Last Jedi Arrives, Check in With the Series So Far



Star Wars

Released: 1977
Director: George Lucas
Writer: George Lucas

After Rebel leader Princess Leia Organa is captured by the powerful Sith lord Darth Vader, Tatooine farmboy Luke Skywalker becomes embroiled in the galactic conflict between good and evil. After teaming up with reclusive Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi and smuggler and scoundrel Han Solo, the heroes rescue the princes from the hands of the dreaded Empire. All seems lost when Vader defeats Obi-Wan in a lightsaber duel, but Luke discovers the mysterious power of the Force and destroys the Death Star.



The Empire Strikes Back

Released: 1980
Director: Irvin Kershner
Writers: Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan

Following the Death Star's destruction, Rebel forces scatter across the galaxy as Vader pursues them with cold malice. After being forced from to flee the remote ice world Hoth, Luke travels of Dagobah to train with the diminutive Jedi Master Yoda. Meanwhile, Han and Leia find refuge – and romance – on the mining world of Bespin. Vader discovers them and plans to use the heroes as bait to turn Luke to the dark side. While Luke and Vader fight, the Sith lord reveals that he is actually Luke's father, Anakin Skywalker.

Galactic History Lesson

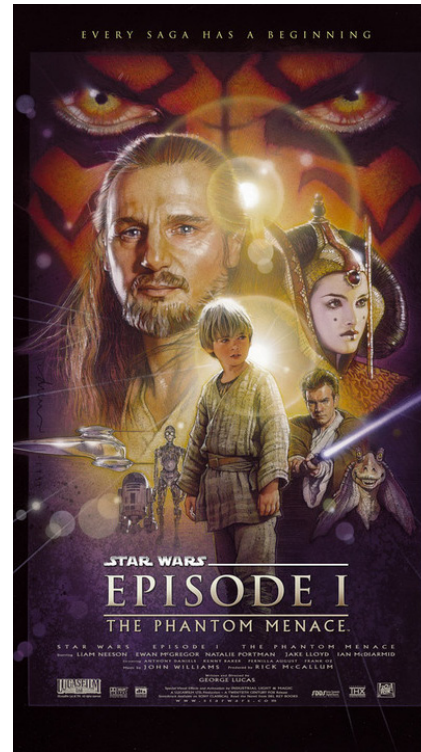
Before the Last Jedi Arrives, Check in With the Series So Far . . .



Return of the Jedi

Released: 1983
 Director: Richard Marquand
 Writers: George Lucas and Lawrence Kasdan

Leia leads a risky operation to free Han from the clutches of slug-like gangster Jabba the Hutt. With the heroes reunited, the Rebel learns of a chance to destroy the Empire once and for all when the Emperor himself travels to the construction site of a second, more powerful Death Star. Han and Leia work together to aid the assault, while Luke finds himself face-to-face with the Force-wielding Emperor. During the climactic confrontation, Darth Vader chooses his son Luke over his loyalty to the Empire and helps to bring about the evil Empire's destruction.



Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace

Released: 1999
 Director: George Lucas
 Writer: George Lucas

Set thirty years before the original "Star Wars," the prequel saga begins when Jedi master Qui-Gon Jinn and his apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi rescue Queen Amidala of Naboo when her planet is invaded by the evil Trade Federation. Along the way, the Jedi knights discover Anakin Skywalker, a 9-year-old slave unusually strong in the Force. After the boy wins his freedom in a lightning-fast pod race, the heroes find themselves confronted by the Sith, the ancient enemy of the Jedi Order. After Obi-Wan defeats Darth Maul in a thrilling lightsaber battle that claims Qui-Gon's life, Jedi master Yoda senses that there is something troubling about young Anakin's future.

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Galactic History Lesson

Before the Last Jedi Arrives, Check in With the Series So Far

Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones

Released: 2002

Director: George Lucas | Writers: George Lucas and Jonathan Hales



Now a young man and Jedi apprentice, Anakin Skywalker finds himself drawn toward Padme when her life is threatened by assassins. His growing feelings for her are in conflict with his vows as a Jedi, which forbid romantic attachments of any kind. Meanwhile, Obi-Wan investigates the mysterious world of Kamino, where a clone army is being bred in secret. After he is captured by the Sith lord Count Dooku, Anakin and Padme race to save Obi-Wan from the evil Separatists. The film ends with the secret wedding of Padme and Anakin – his first break with the Jedi Order.

Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith

Released: 2005

Director: George Lucas | Writer: George Lucas



In the midst of the galaxy-spanning Clone Wars, the Jedi Order leads the forces of the Republic against the evil Separatists. Jedi knight Anakin Skywalker's love for Padme proves to be his undoing. After seeing visions in the Force of her future death, he chooses to join the dark side of the Force in order to find a power to save her. But the dark side proves too powerful to resist, and he becomes the evil Sith lord Darth Vader. As the Republic falls and becomes the Empire, the galaxy's last hope rests Anakin and Padme's newborn children, born in secret – twins who will one day be heroes.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

Released: 2015

Director: J.J. Abrams | Writers: Lawrence Kasdan, J.J. Abrams and Michael Arndt



Thirty years after joining forces with Darth Vader to defeat the Emperor, Jedi hero Luke Skywalker has mysteriously vanished from the galaxy. In his absence a new face to the dark side has arisen: the First Order, led by Supreme Leader Snoke and the Force-wielding Kylo Ren. Only General Leia Organa's rag-tag Resistance opposes them in the fight for good. Into this new conflict step two nobodies – a back-water scavenger named Rey and a deserting stormtrooper named Finn – who realize that they have a part to play in finding Luke and restoring hope to a galaxy in crisis.

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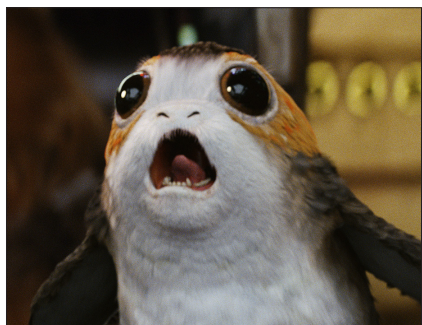
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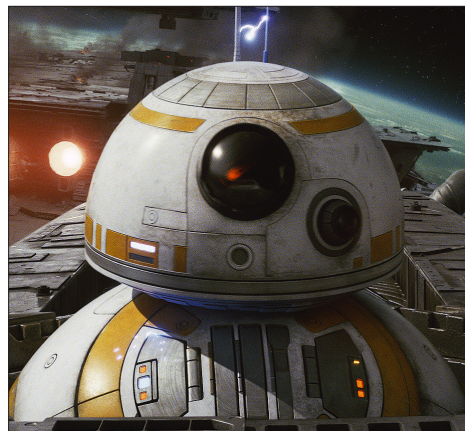
Heroes & Villains

Old and new faces will join the ages-long battle of good and evil in 'The Last Jedi'



Porgs

Found swooping and roosting on the cliffs of Luke Skywalker's remote island hideaway on Ahch-To, these bird-like aliens are both territorial and curious.



BB-8

This Astromech Droid is feisty, spherical and devoted to Resistance pilot Poe Dameron.



Chewbacca / Portrayed by Peter Mayhew

Known as "Chewie" to his friends, this mighty Wookiee warrior fought alongside the Rebel heroes who brought down the Empire. An expert pilot, mechanic and marksman with his bowcaster, Chewie joins Rey on her journey to find the missing Luke.

General Leia Organa / Portrayed by Carrie Fisher



Leia Organa was one of the Rebel Alliance's greatest leaders, fearless on the battlefield and dedicated to ending tyranny across the galaxy. Sadly, her son Ben was led away by the dark side, becoming the fearsome Kylo Ren.

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Heroes & Villains

Old and new faces will join the ages-long battle of good and evil in 'The Last Jedi'



Rey / Portrayed by Daisy Ridley

After leaving her old life on Jakku behind, Rey discovered that she possesses the mysterious power of the Force. At the beginning of the film, she finds herself face-to-face with missing Jedi master Luke Skywalker. Will he train her or reject her?



Poe / Portrayed by Oscar Isaac

An ace pilot, Poe Dameron is a leader in the Resistance's fight against the evil First Order. His expert piloting skills helped him destroy the First Order's dreaded Starkiller Base.

Rose / Portrayed by Kelly Marie Tran

Rose Tico and her sister Paige have had a grudge against the First Order since they were children. Now part of the Resistance support crew, Rose finds an opportunity to step into the larger conflict.



Finn / Portrayed by John Boyega

Trained from birth to be a foot soldier for the First Order, Finn's conscience led him to join the Resistance alongside Rey and Poe.



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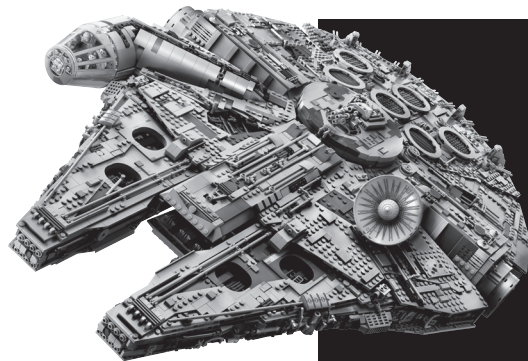
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If you have any Force-sensitive folks on your holiday shopping list this year – or you're such a person yourself – use this cheat sheet to get a hyperspace jump on your holiday shopping.



LEGO Millennium Falcon \$799.99

Photo used with permission: ©2017 The LEGO Group.

LEGO has dozens of new Star Wars themed kits available for purchase this season. This is definitely the biggest of them all, with over 7,500 pieces. Removable hull plates allow access to fully modeled interior spaces. Included are minifigs for recreating both original and sequel trilogy adventures.

Hasbro Force Link action figures

Starting at \$7.99

Photo: Business Wire

Hasbro's action figure link includes 3.75-inch figures of all major and minor characters from "The Last Jedi," along with matching vehicles. What sets these action figures apart is the Force Link technology, which enables playback of sound effects and phrases from the movie. The Force Link BB-8 mega playset (pictured, \$199.99) opens to features six play areas with special sound effects to recreate movie scenes, features Supreme Leader Snoke and Elite Praetorian Guard action figures, and includes a Force Link wristband.

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BB-9E, R2-D2 and BB-8 Droids by Sphero

Starting at \$149.99

Image courtesy of Sphero

These Astromech Droid toys are controlled by a special smartphone app. Once powered on, you can drive these Droids around or send them on patrol. The motions of these toys match their on-screen counterparts.



littleBits Droid Inventor Kit

Starting at \$149.99

Image courtesy of Sphero

Create your own custom Droid and bring it to life! This easy-to-assemble kit uses electronic blocks and a free smartphone app to create a personalized R2 Unit, teach it new tricks and take it on 16+ missions. This is a great way to teach STEM skills.



Star Wars: Jedi Challenges from Lenovo

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Image courtesy of Lenovo

This new augmented reality Star Wars product allows fans to experience the films in new ways. Jedi Challenges features a smartphone-powered AR headset, a tracking beacon and lightsaber controller. Players will hone their Jedi talents across a variety of augmented reality-based experiences, each offering multiple levels of deep and immersive gameplay.



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Heroes & Villains

Old and new faces will join the ages-long battle of good and evil in 'The Last Jedi'

Luke Skywalker / Portrayed by Mark Hamill



A Tatooine farmboy who rose to become one of the greatest Jedi the galaxy has ever known, Luke is brother to Leia and uncle to Kylo Ren. After hiding himself away on a remote planet, he has been found by Rey – and doesn't seem happy about it.

Kylo Ren /

Portrayed by Adam Driver

Once known as Ben Solo, Kylo Ren wields the dark side of the Force. After killing his father Han Solo, he now hunts the Resistance.



Captain Phasma /

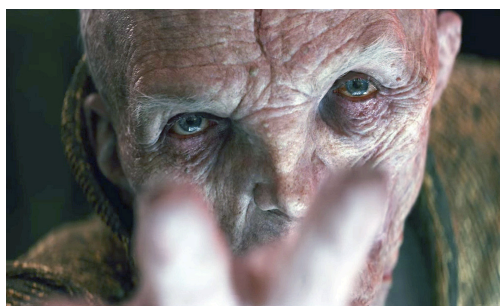
Portrayed by Gwendoline Christie



This mysterious warrior commands the vast armies of the First Order with ruthless efficiency. Defeated by Finn during the assault on Starkiller Base, she seems to have unfinished business with the former storm-trooper.

Supreme Leader Snoke

The Supreme Leader of the First Order, the mysterious Snoke is powerful with the dark side of the Force.



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