



Star Wars: Clone Wars, Volume 5: The Best Blades

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"Try us all, these times do. In this war, unsheathed must all of the Jedi's blades be. Survive constant use, even the best blades cannot."

- Master Yoda

The darkest days of the Clone Wars have arrived, when even victories are cause for abiding sorrow; when the hopes for a brighter future are lost in the turmoil of a divided galaxy; and when friendships are tools of convenience and the reason for betrayals. From political intrigue within the Senate to bloody battlefields on exotic worlds, the war has left its mark on the bystanders as well as the combatants, and the events in this wide-ranging volume reveal the extent of the damage.

Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker battle for survival; Senator Bail Organa struggles to preserve freedom within the Republic; and Master Yoda strives to prevent an old friend from plunging a system into war in four exciting stories from the Clone Wars!

Star Wars: Clone Wars, Volume 5: The Best Blades Details

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Andrew says

This book is both good and bad - hence the hung judgement. The good, the story as predicted is show signs of tipping and not for the good. There are cracks showing not only in the war effort but also in the Jedi order and you can start to see how a once noble and unified order appears to be simply all but wiped out - and now sadly the bad. the artwork changes style - and swings towards a style I am not so comfortable with. Don't get me wrong a story on its own I am sure I would love - but here - in the middle of a book in the middle of a series - I am sorry but it jars. The style accentuates contrast practically putting harsh straight lines to almost everything - I am no expert I will be the first to admit it so forgive my observation but it almost feels like the artist has tried to take on Manga styles and it does not quite work. But on the whole the book is a good read - and I like how you can see the cracks yet they are not so obvious as you want to scream at the characters "What you really cannot see what is happening!!!!"

Yves says

Ce tome de la série Clone Wars se compose de plusieurs parties. La première est avec Bail Organa qui reçoit la visite de l'ancien Chancelier Finis Valorum qui vient le mettre en garde contre les magouilles politiques de Palpatine. Dans la seconde histoire, Palpatine demande au Conte Dooku d'éliminer entièrement un Jedi et son groupe de clone car celui-ci a eu une idée qui pourrait l'obliger à révéler son identité de Sith. La quatrième histoire porte sur l'évasion d'Obi-Wan Kenobi et son sauvetage par Anakin. La dernière partie implique un Yoda en mission de paix qui tourne très mal.

Ce n'est pas mon tome préféré de Clone Wars. J'ai bien aimé les magouilles de Palpatine pour éliminer le Jedi trop curieux et l'évasion de Kenobi mais les deux autres histoires étaient plutôt ordinaire. Cette BD était plutôt inégale à cause des multiples auteurs mais au moins les dessins sont toujours excellents.

DiscoSpacePanther says

The first story in *Star Wars: Clone Wars, Volume 5: The Best Blades*, entitled *Dead Ends*, is great. It gives some fascinating political machinations (of the kind that are sorely lacking from the new canon) showing that ex-chancellor Finis Valorum has realised that some ongoing conspiracy was responsible for his ouster during the crisis on Naboo (from *The Phantom Menace*). The intrigue in the Senate and some good action with Bail Organa works really well, especially the climax of the story.

The middle section of the volume is also pretty good, dealing with Obi-Wan and Alpha's escape from the clutches of Asajj Ventress on Rattatak, where she has been keeping the Jedi prisoner in a Sith gimp-mask. It is a fun little escapade, although nothing too original or groundbreaking.

It is the last story, *The Best Blades* (which also lends its name to the entire volume), where things fall apart. The artwork is *hideous* - airbrushed animé-esque original characters and a horrendously off-model Yoda, coupled with backgrounds that look to have been made with a 1990s era CGI 3D clip-art package.

The plot of this final story is nothing to write home about, either - a generic world has seceded and a couple of kamikaze locals have killed some disposable no-name Jedi masters, leaving their hotheaded padawans to wait until Yoda can arrive to find a peaceful solution, as the king of the planet is an old friend of his. Not impressed with this one.

I can only give this volume an average rating - it is a must read only by dint of the fact that it shows Obi-Wan's escape from Ventress.

Daniel Rose says

I see things in each of the graphic novels that seem to make sense either because I read a latter story that the story in this is tieing in or something that has been vaguely mentioned is now being told. I like how Yoda doesn't agree with everything that is happening but he doesn't know what to do differently at the same time.

WyrnbergMalcolm says

The volume actually contains five stories:

1. Dead Ends – Bail Organa and Finis Valorum explore the lies and corruption that surrounds the senate. If it weren't for the fact that we all already know it's Palpatine, this would have been quite interesting. Instead it was merely a thing.
2. Bloodlines – Upon the imminent death of a Jedi, we watch as his recent life flashes before his eyes and we see all the tricks and lies culminating at the end at the beginning of the sequence with his forming a friendship with Palpatine. Told in a way that kept the narrative interesting, this was a poignant story showcasing the damage that high-level corruption can do.
3. Hate And Fear – Obi-Wan Kenobi, presumed dead by the Jedi order, joins forces with fellow captive ARC clone trooper Alpha in a bid to escape the clutches of Asajj Ventress. Beautifully illustrated and very exciting, this story make reading this book so much more worth it.
4. No Mans' Land – Sees Anakin Skywalker lead a rescue mission to rescue Obi-Wan Kenobi despite being told that he must already be dead. This is really more of the closing chapter to the previous story as Obi-Wan fights his way out, Anakin fights his way in. Not sure why this has a separate title, to be honest.
5. The Best Blades – Yoda visits an old friend in a bid to convince him not to split his planet from the Republic. Using more of a Manga style of artwork, this is very wordy and quite slow-paced with an almost inevitable conclusion.

Jared says

Star Wars Legends Project #124

Background: *The Best Blades*, released in November of 2004, collects issues 60-62 and 64 of *Republic* and the fifth and final issue of the *Jedi* series of one-shots: *Republic: Dead Ends* (1 issue, February 2004) and *Republic: Bloodlines* (1 issue, April 2004) were both written by John Ostrander and drawn by Brandon Badeaux. *Republic: Hate and Fear* (1 issue, January 2004) was written by W. Haden Blackman and pencilled by Tomás Giorello. *Republic: No Man's Land* was written by Ostrander with art by Giorello. *Jedi: Yoda* (1 issue, July 2004) was written by Jeremy Barlow and drawn by HOON.

All but Barlow and HOON contributed to earlier issues of *Republic*. Barlow is the writer of a few dozen other Star Wars comics, and also served as the editor for the and the first half of *Knights of the Old Republic*. HOON's only other Star Wars work was drawing the covers for a few issues of *Knights of the Old Republic*.

All 5 stories are set 16-17 months after the Battle of Geonosis (21 years before the Battle of Yavin), and variously feature Bail Organa, Palpatine, Obi-Wan, Anakin, Yoda, and Asajj Ventress. They are set mostly on Coruscant and Rattatak along with a few other one-off planets.

Summary: In *Dead Ends*, Senator Organa is warned by an old friend that Palpatine cannot be trusted, which coincides with his observation that the Republic seems to be fundamentally changing. But is he already too late to make a difference?

In *Bloodlines*, Palpatine publicly mourns the loss of an old friend and member of the Jedi Order, but a look back through key moments in their friendship tells a much different story.

In *Hate and Fear* and *No Man's Land*, Obi-Wan, presumed dead on Jabim by the Jedi, nears the breaking point as a captive of Asajj Ventress on Rattatak. But he remains hopeful of finding an opportunity for escape. Meanwhile, Anakin, now under the care of Jedi Master Ki-Adi-Mundi, can't shake the certainty that Obi-Wan somehow survived. He would certainly cross the galaxy to save his master, if only he knew where to look.

In *Yoda*, the venerable Jedi Master undertakes a mission to negotiate with an old friend, the ruler of a planet who is determined to leave the Republic and seems likely to take the entire system with him. Although he finds their friendship as strong as ever, the scheming of a corrupt senator and the arrogance of a youthful padawan threaten to unravel everything.

Review: *Dead Ends* (and I have no idea what the title is referring to) is probably the least substantial of the lot. It isn't bad, but it's one of those comics where you pretty much get the full effect from a 1-paragraph summary. *Bloodlines* is better, with an interesting nested flashback plot structure that delves a bit more deeply into the long game Palpatine is playing.

The two-parter that returns Obi-Wan to active duty in the land of the living is fairly mediocre. A merely okay ending to a pretty lame storyline. Actually, I call it a storyline . . . Obi-Wan vanishes without trace or explanation from the Battle of Jabim, and we get one panel at the end of that story explaining that he's a captive of Ventress (though not how that makes any sense). And then nothing about what's going on with Obi-Wan until this point . . . so not really a storyline per se. Just like we knew Obi-Wan wasn't dead, we also know he'll escape Ventress and Anakin will find him in time, and beyond that nothing particularly exciting happens.

Yoda is probably the best of the bunch because it gives him a chance to go do something a little different from the "sitting on Coruscant at the beginning and end of others' stories" routine. I liked the way this story balances Yoda's wisdom and compassion with his inability to step outside of his narrow perspective about how compromised the Republic is. I didn't care for the main padawan character, and I don't think I was supposed to, but I also just didn't think his character made any sense . . . I mean, he looks like he's about 13 years old, and he somehow thinks he's wiser and more experienced than Yoda. Seemed like a stretch, even for a teenager. Plus he looks like a refugee from manga.

None of these stories stand out as particularly important or memorable, although a few of them are at least diverting. There really just isn't much to this collection and it seems like it's definitely for completists only.

Marta Dulce ?i Gavina says

3,5. The first three stories are good, especially the third one, with Obi-Wan Kenobi and Alpha; there is some typical Obi-Wan humor and Alpha sarcasm I've grown to like. The weakest link is the last comic which did not pull me in at all.

Garrett says

Ah, to be back at the height of Dark Horse's Star Wars comic days. If it weren't for the sometimes awkward illustrated characters, I'd give this one five stars. They are a series of short stories all taking place in the Clone Wars era (obviously). Some have quite a bit of action, but for the most part the stories are related because they are all about diplomacy. This might sound boring to some, but I love when the EU explains backstory from the movies--which this collection does and does well.

Victor Orozco says

Nice. Love how this leaves off from what happened after Jabiim in that we discover Obi-Wan in Asajj Ventress' prison. Learning what happened to Ventress one does pity her. But in the end I am glad for Obi-Wan's escape. Cool reading on Bail Organa as the defender of democracy in the Republic. I found his story interesting in the not only why he and his wife adopt but also finding out what had happened to the former Supreme Chancellor Finis Valorum. Interesting look into Palpatine's relationship with a Jedi that he used to obtain information on the Jedi Council particularly since the story was told uniquely backwards from the Jedi's death announcement, his death, the setup to his death, so forth. Tragic end with Yoda discovering what happened to an old friend who was the ruler of a planet that believed in Dooku's message and had to force Yoda in a terrible predicament. Great collection. B+

Zuzana says

I didn't like the manga style art of the last story. It was jarring to see Obi-Wan look like a 15-year-old with a beard. The stories were o.k.

Zachary Hatton says

Many different stories with different qualities. Politics, retrospective history, escape, and liberation. I'll go through each story separately.

Dead Ends. Okay, a senate story, about Bail Organa and Mon Mothma buddying up with the ex-supreme counselor to figure out how politely power-enthused Palpatine is. Kinda boring, deals with stuff we already know about. I mean, yay, characters that are hardly mentioned, but there's a reason they aren't prevalent in

the comics; they're boring politicians, not force-wielding Jedi. Good characterization of Palpatine, he's so politely threatening. 2 stars.

Bloodlines. I liked this story a lot. It's organized uniquely in that it starts at the end and ends with the beginning. It works very well. I actually wish this character Master Ronhar Kim was not just a one shot character, him and Palpatine's character relation is really cool. His apprentice really reminded me of Super Buu from Dragon Ball Z by the way he's portrayed. Anyway, there were some New Republic references that I was like "a-ha" at such as Captain Pellaeon and the planet Bakura. I also liked how it shows us how Palpatine first became a senator. Overall pretty good. 4 stars

No Man's Land. A necessary plot story and a bit more than that, it adds depth to Asajj Ventress who I really don't give much thought for anyway. It's funny how in Truce at Bakura Luke deals peaceably with body destroying worms whereas Obi-wan just kills them. Makes me wonder about Jedi's view about protecting ALL life. Anyway, it's too bad the way Ki-Adi-Mundi's families demise was brought up. I actually read that story and it was cool. I really hate how flippantly people die in the clone wars like it's no big deal. It's aight. 3 stars.

The Best Blades. A Yoda story and a liberation story. Liberating planet clone wars stories for some reason always end terribly in more than one way. For one the victory is never a true victory, and all the defeats are the most pathetic defeats you could think of. It's really hard going through story after story of the theme "is the Republic worth saving?" Like this is the 10th story with that theme, can there just be one, just ONE story where the good guys save the day like Star Wars IV? What made this story stand out a whole lot is the art. Woah man, it's like something out of Avatar the Last Airbender but way better. Definitely feeling the Asian vibe. Now I had some WTF moments reading this comic book such as:

*Hurray, pathetic and meaningless Jedi Master deaths.

*Is Cal Padawan learner seriously back talking Yoda, the Grand Master Jedi? This is like something I'd expect to see between Anakin and Obi-wan.

*You've got to be kidding, Yoda just stands there letting Cal die taking on like 40 house guards? Yoda respect seriously dropped.

*Last page includes nonchalant side boob and chick's bare buttocks. What part of the Jedi temple are Yoda and Mace in?

I have mixed feelings about Yoda in this story mainly about how he freaking let a padawan take on 40 house guards without intervening. Cal was right when his dying words to Yoda is "It's your fault". Other than that, great characterization. This deserves 3 stars but I want to give it 4 for the art. 3.5 Stars?

Overall I guess I'd give it a 3.4.

Adam says

Hate and Fear - 1 star

Provides an asinine backstory for Asajj and little else.

No Man's Land - 2 star

Once again the moving gears are too bare here; a lot of things are accomplished here--Obi-wan is rescued, the bounty on Jedi is set up for later issues, they show consequences to the new security legislation--but they all feel more like box-ticking than storytelling, like they're still (over halfway into the series) just setting up stuff for later arcs.

Dead Ends - 3 stars

Bail Organa moving the subplot of Palpatine's political machinations forward, giving the first realizations that there might be a darker shadow looming beyond the end of the Clone War. The whole war/civil rights thing maybe felt more on-the-nose at the time of the Patriot Act than it should have but in retrospect isn't maybe as specific as it felt. The scheming here is a bit blunt (as usual for these comics) and it almost seems like Palpatine should be tipping his hand but I guess that's only obvious when you already know. I love Palpatine though and it's fun to see more of him in this issue.

Bloodlines - 4 stars

Another attempt to show the scope and depth of Palpatine's scheming and ramp up the tension by threatening to unmask him. This time it works. There's the tragedy of Kim coming so close to determining the truth but trusting Palpatine too much to follow through. The layered narrative here works well, fleshing out both that personal relationship and the timeline of Palpatine's manipulations, his foresight in befriending those who could be useful or dangerous. The art in this one is also superb. The colors jump out a lot more than other issues, and there's some neat angles on the architecture (that opening shot of the Senate chamber is almost vertiginous).

Teresa says

21BBY

This volume contains Republic issues 60, 61, 62, 64, and Jedi: Yoda. Each issue in the collection has various artists and writers. In "Republic 60: Hate and Fear," Obi-wan and Alpha aim for a daring escape from Ventress. We also learn a little bit about Ventress's origins and how she became so hateful. In "Republic 61: Dead Ends," Bail Organa's ship is attacked by pirates. It is speculated that Palpatine set it up in order to bring back a certain law. Bail is warned against opposing Palpatine, but he also knows that he, too, has great influence in the Senate, making him a great threat to Palpatine's growing power. In "Republic 62: No Man's Land," after Obi-wan and Alpha's escape from Ventress, they encounter a number of bounty hunters that Ventress has sent after them. With the aid of the Force, Obi-wan is able to escape and be reunited with Anakin, who sensed Obi-wan vitality through the Force, knowing he was surely still alive. In "Republic 64: Bloodlines," we meet Jedi Rhonr Kim, who aims to befriend Palpatine. Being a Jedi, Rhonar has always been distant from his family, and his father was always concerned about their bloodline living on. When it is suggested that Palpatine have his midi-chlorian count be taken as an example to find the Sith Lord, Palpatine finds this threatening and assures Rhonar's defeat on his next mission. In "Jedi: Yoda," Toda takes a personal mission to meet with an old friend whose planet refuses to aid the Republic. Through this meet-up, Yoda works with a young Padawan involved in the war on that planet, and they find themselves being hunted down by a relative of the king. Yoda is saddened that peace could not be made.

"Jedi: Yoda" was definitely the best of this bunch, with an interesting story to part of Yoda's past and a unique anime-esque art style that differs from previous issues. The other stories were still good, demonstrating some of the political issues and things going on behind the scenes with Palpatine and other senate and Jedi members, but we do not see a whole lot of front lines or interesting Jedi in this volume. At least we finally found out what happened to Obi-wan!

Rachel says

Learning Ventress' background was interesting and good to see the return of Obi-Wan.

Angela says

The best book in this series so far. Obi Wan is captured by Ventress and needs to escape. Anakin is given a new master because everybody else believes that Obi Wan is dead. Finally, Yoda is sent on a diplomatic mission. Each story is both powerful and character driven. It focuses on the politics of the war rather than battles. This makes it all the more interesting. The Yoda story is particularly poignant. A very good read.
