



Star Wars: Darth Vader - Dark Lord of the Sith, Vol. 4: The Black Fortress

Charles Soule , Giuseppe Camuncoli (Illustrator)

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Continuing the imperious rise of the Dark Lord! A Jedi makes a desperate deal. The Inquisitors' mission evolves. And Darth Vader discovers a theft... And when the thief faces the consequences of their crime, Emperor Palpatine rewards Darth Vader with three gifts: A thing, a choice...and a voice. Seeking the path to his destiny, Vader returns to the place of his birth. There, echoes from the past reach out to him - both his own past, and the dark history of the Sith! Be here for a story that could only be called "Fortress Vader"!

COLLECTING: DARTH VADER 19-25

Star Wars: Darth Vader - Dark Lord of the Sith, Vol. 4: The Black Fortress Details

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From Reader Review Star Wars: Darth Vader - Dark Lord of the Sith, Vol. 4: The Black Fortress for online ebook

Roy says

A very cool and consistent run. Vader Fraser returning to build his fortress of solitude in a way. So far both Vader runs were highly recommended.

Jordan Anderson says

The entirety of the new Disney/Marvel *Star Wars* comic catalogue hasn't been exactly consistent. The titular series has had its ups and downs, *Dr. Aphra* has devolved into a mess that probably won't ever be fixed, and, while mostly enjoyable and at least one of the better series, *Poe Dameron* kind of fizzled out and left the conclusion to be somewhat lacking.

Thankfully Soule's other work, *Darth Vader* has been one constant bright spot and always delivers a thrill ride.

Fortress Vader is no exception. Not since the first collection has Vader been such a Force to be reckoned with. In this last and final volume, Soule really cranks up the volume, so to speak, and takes Vader down one really dark and violent path. We've all seen Vader be a badass and slaughter his fair share of enemies, but I don't think any other author has done such a succinct job of really nailing the character and doing his actions and motivations justice. Plus, Soule is master of weaving in other plot lines from other comic series and novels, probably being the most well read, and well rounded author out there.

It's too bad that this iteration of Vader has come to close. There was the announcement that Chuck Wendig (who I don't especially enjoy anyways) was attached to do his own version of dark Anakin, but his removal from the project has me wondering when we get to see Vader in his own spin off series again. And I doubt whatever Marvel chooses to do, and which direction they decide to take, will ever be as good as Soule's vision.

At least it was a fitting end to a great run. Can't say I'm disappointed...which is a rarity when it comes to *Star Wars* these days.

Nick Scott says

This was a solid conclusion to this series.

This was one of those "Star Wars gets weird" stories that can often have elements I dislike in it, but I thought most everything worked here. Momin's character and backstory were cool, and I would love to see more about him, but I wasn't crazy about him coming back to life through the helmet stuff. What made this volume great was the artistic interpretations of Anakin/Vader's inner psyche as he continues his transformation and ultimately realizes that Padme is gone for good...and so is Anakin. The final issue, where we see the fiery-lava-force-specter-representation of Anakin/Vader wander through his past, hearing the voices of those that

used to be close to him, that was powerful stuff. Kudos to Soule and the art team for making me feel emotions tied to the "Now this is podracing!" and "Are you an angel?" lines. And ending with Kylo Ren's "Let the past die" quote? *chef's kiss*

Geoffrey Payne says

This series really went out with a bang. I'm genuinely sad to see this series finish up since I think it was one of the strongest comic series of the Disney era. Soule took Vader to such an interesting and emotional place and that made this a fantastic volume. 5 out of 5!

Chris Lemmerman says

Charles Soule brings his Darth Vader run to an explosive climax with a secret origin for Vader's fortress on Mustafar, a mysterious Sith Lord architect with ulterior motives, and a final visit from the most formative people in Vader's life.

It's hard to finish a Darth Vader book - it's hard to say anything about characters when their futures are already fixed, so writing the book in general must have been difficult. But Soule's pulled it off with equal and sometimes greater flare than Kieron Gillen before him, and there's a certain symmetry between the endings of their two runs.

Vader is a character defined by his relationships - with Padme, with Obi Wan, with the Emperor, and with himself, so to see him face off against his literal demons is a perfect, if similar, way to send off his series. The path we take to get there, involving the weirdly compelling Lord Momin, keeps you on your toes and even manages to be quite funny at times which is unexpected.

The artwork in all seven issues here, as with the rest of the series, is Giuseppe Camuncoli who needs a god damn rest after 25 issues on the trot. His final few issues do feel a little more rushed than usual, but Camo's also someone whose art lives or dies depending on the inker and colourist team employed, so the fact that he has a) a different team than usual and b) more inkers and colourists than previously could be a contributing factor too.

Vader's latest solo series is over, but I'm sure it won't be long before Marvel trot him back out again - we'll see if whoever comes next can hold a candle to Soule and Gillen before them.

Ben Brown says

Charles Soule's "Darth Vader" series goes out with a bang. Although perhaps not quite the strongest arc that Soule and Camuncoli, either in terms of story or art, these final 7 issues represent a fine sendoff not only to this chapter of Vader's formidable legacy, but also for Soule and Camuncoli, who – over the curse of the last 25 issues – have managed a not-unimpressive feat: actually managing to find a way to make Vader legitimately menacing again. Whoulda thunk, after 40+ years of films and who-knows-how-many canon and non-canonical novel/comic/videogame appearances, that'd be possible?

Jim C says

This collection concludes what I consider the best of the Disney *Star Wars* comics. In this one, Darth Vader picks Mustafar to be his planet of operations and we will learn why. This ties in with the show *Rebels* as it has a plot that was introduced in that show.

The aspect that I have liked from this run of comics is that it shows the awesomeness of Vader and why he is feared throughout the galaxy. This is once again shown in the first issue as we see Darth Vader hunting a Jedi and I loved it. Right away I knew this issue was going to be good. Even with this collection showing Vader being brutal it also shows him being Ruthful which ties in nicely with the original trilogy. In fact, this collection ties in with all the movies including the current trilogy that is taking place. There is one panel where we get the epic poster shot of a young Anakin and the shadow of Darth Vader which makes this collection worth reading just to look at that one panel. This collection also answers a lingering question from the movies (I am not a fan of the reveal but whatever).

In my opinion, this series has been so consistently good and I am sad to see it that it is ending. Everything works from the artwork, the story, and showing the character of Darth Vader and how the fans want to see him. We get to see that he is a badass with a lingering connection to human emotions.

Benji Glaab says

Overall this was good the final issue in this series was absolutely unreal. Charles Soule serves up a more than worthy conclusion to a great run. A series I consider in the upper echelon of SW comics.

The first issue in this volume was kinda standalone-ish where Vader's inquisitors find and destroy the last of the known jedi, having concluded there mission for now Vader does what he does best at this troubling stage of his life, he finds someone else to kill. After a full day of shenanigans on Coruscant Emperor Palpatine decides to hook Vader up with a planet of his own to keep him out of his hair I suppose. This leads to the construction of Fortress Vader. Which I keep seeing around. The perfect design is required to open a door to the dark side. When perfection is finally obtained we are in for one doozy of a finale.

What a great series, phenomenal art throughout, Soule was able to really flesh out Vader's character post episode 3. I'm really happy with the end product and would happily recommend this series

Tim says

It's a shame this is the end of Soule's run on Vader. For my money this is the best book to come out of Marvel regaining the publishing rights to Star Wars, it stayed excellent for the duration of the run.

Koen says

Masterpiece!

Peace says

ANAKIN IS A DRAMA QUEEN

Anime Mage says

Well, this comic was certainly not what I expected. On one hand, I found it to be somewhat disappointing because I felt like it didn't quite live up to its potential. But on the other hand, I thought it was really good and even an improvement overall to the previous three volumes. And while technically that would make this comic a mixed bag, I can safely say that I enjoyed this fourth and final installment of this comic book storyline.

So what is this all about? Essentially, Darth Vader hunts down a Jedi and kills two inquisitors that didn't follow orders very well. Next, he decides to go to Mustafar to bring Padmé back to life with the aid of a sprite of a Sith lord named Darth Momim. To do this, they build a giant castle that can serve as a portal to the Darkside (which explains why there is a fortress on Mustafar in Rogue One a Star Wars story). However, the spirit quickly betrays Vader and gets his body back and in the two fight each other. Vader wins, uses the portal that they created to try to bring back his wife. Instead, he gets this really cryptic vision that kind of re-play his entire life but also reveals that Darth Sidious is his father.

So let's talk about the positives because there is a lot of them. In fact, there is so many that it certainly makes this recent installment in this comic easily the best of the bunch.

The first thing that I liked about this comic was the Jedi that they chose to kill off at the start was Eeth Koth, Essentially, this Jedi was on the Jedi Council in the Phantom Menace and a Jedi general during the 2008 Clone Wars TV show (he was the one that was captured by General Grievous in season two). Honestly, one of my biggest critiques about this character is that originally in legends continuity this character died at the battle of Geonosis allegedly yet in the clone wars television series they brought him back to life (give him one really cool episode) and then proceeded to not explain where he ends up after Order 66. And finally, this comic gives us an answer that is pretty satisfying. We see that he essentially left The Order and became a father on some faraway world. He even became a priest. I like the way that they re-introduce the character. I think that his fight with Vader what is supposed to be a really big throwback to his fight with General Grievous in the Clone Wars TV show. I just like little nods like that. Honestly, their lightsaber duel was admittedly pretty cool. I also felt really sad for his wife when her child got taken away in such a cruel manner. It is kind of proves how evil The Inquisitors really are. I mean they gave his wife the false promise that her child would be safe only to take it away from her at the last second. I think it does a great job making me hate the empire. As for Eeth Koth's death, it was admittedly pretty decent. It was probably one of the more sad deaths stowed upon our beloved background prequel trilogy characters.

The second thing I liked about the comic was Darth Momim. One of the things that I liked about the old Expanded Universe was its plethora of obscure but really cool ancient Sith Lord characters. Examples of this

include Darth Bane, Darth Zahanna, Darth Cognus, Darth Plegeuis, Darth Revan, Darth Malak, Darth Malgus, and Exar Kun. Intuitively this is not a complete list because if that was the case...the entire review would just be a list of characters...so we are not gonna do that. But anyway, when Disney decided to do something similar in their continuity, I got really excited. Honestly, I thought this character was executed really well. To put it bluntly, he is essentially the artist side of the Sith. He's an architect and an artist. He's basically Pablo Picasso meets Hannibal Lecter with a lightsaber and force powers. I also like his lightsaber fighting style and some of the dialogue that he has. I love his philosophy that you only gain power if you serve the Darkside, and if one tries to control the Darkside they are ultimately destroyed. I also love the gimmick that he is imprisoned in his own mask and that he can possess people by forcing people to wear it. This character is really cool and is probably one of the greatest original characters that Disney has ever created for the Star Wars franchise. I like the character so much that I want to know more about him. Specifically, I want to know where he fits within the context of The Grand Plan (if you don't know what that is...essentially it just refers the plan for how the Rule of Two Sith were going to destroy the Jedi.) I also want to know whether or not he came before or after Darth Bane. So call me intrigued.

The third thing I liked about this comic was that they gave a really cool rationale for why Darth Vader builds his castle on Mustafar. And this is why I love this particular installment so much and by extension the whole comic book storyline in general. I love it because it is able to tie the various prequel material together and make everything within the Star Wars universe seem cohesive and alive. I love how it was able to tie Rogue One a Star Wars story with Revenge of the Sith so beautifully. Because now every time I rewatch the scene where Darth Vader's castle appears, I will always be reminded of his attempts to get Padme back from the dead. And honestly, it's stuff like that that just enhances the movies for me. It really enhances Vader's character arc in such a way that it's actually pretty cool. I mean the lore behind the castle itself was actually pretty believable and really interesting.

The fourth thing I liked about this comic what is the story and pacing. Yes, it wasn't all that amazing execution-wise, but it had tons of really well done emotional moments overall that it felt both dynamic and interesting. I think the build-up could've used a little bit more work, but the emotional moments within the narrative were executed well enough that the comic felt actually really entertaining. I guess the best thing I can say about the story and pacing was that things didn't happen to slowly. Rarely was there ever really any dull moments found throughout the comic. So yeah I thought the story and pacing were doing well enough.

And probably the fifth and probably the most important thing I liked about this comic was the vision that Vader got when he went through the portal. To put it bluntly this was probably the best moment in the entire comic book series for sure. For starters there is a lot to take in. For so many years, we've always wondered who Anakin Skywalker's father was. And now we actually know who it is. And the answer kind of put Star Wars on its head in a way that it changes the way one will see the whole Star Wars saga. So who is Anakin's father? *drum roll* Darth Sidious! Who would've guessed?! I mean personally I always thought it was Darth Plageius but I guess I was wrong. It kind of screws up my mind a little bit. The fact that Darth Sidious created what was essentially the main characters of this entire franchise and while he also configured the downfall of the Republic leads to some pretty dark stuff. You mean to tell me that Anakin was made to suffer from the start?! I mean when you probably re-watch the movies again with this in mind it actually makes the whole thing kind of depressing. That the entire time some evil old man created this little boy and then manipulated him to destroy everything he loves and make it such that he was destined to lose everything. That's really messed up. It also makes me love this comic even more. It actually builds upon the prequel lore in such a way that it enhances it!! But that's not all, I love how that entire vision shows us the entirety of Anakin's life. I love how they had a scene where Anakin's shadow took the shape of Darth Vader and attacked him (which was essentially an Easter egg to the promotional poster of Episode I: The Phantom Menace. God I love that poster. And the movie for that matter). I also love how the comic showed Darth

Vader more or less killing everybody that he has killed up to that point of in the series. I also love how when he tries to save Padme she ends up killing herself. Honestly, it just reminds me of a really well-written creepypasta....that this entire time Darth Vader is trapped in this purgatory where no matter how strong he gets, he will never be able to find love or be loved. Padme will forever be out of reach, and it is his fault and thus he'll burn forever. It just kind of makes the ending of Episode III scene even sadder than it already is! It just makes me wish the Anakin Skywalker had simply went away with Padme when she asked him to. Why didn't he just do that?! I mean I guess that's why Episode III: Revenge of the Sith is my favorite Star Wars movie. It's done in such a way where you know how it's going to end, but you wish that it would end differently.

The other thing I liked about the comic was the Tarkan versus Darth Vader side story. Yes I am aware that this is technically a story that was featured in the last volume but I never got to talk about it so I'm just gonna do it here. I thought it was pretty cool. It showed a how intelligent Tarkan really was but also how deadly Vader was. I think personally the reason Vader configured the situation in this way was because he wanted to avenge Ashoka after what Tarkin did to her in The Clone Wars. Obviously it's not stated outright, but given that Darth Vader/Anakin Skywalker is a very vengeful character I wouldn't put it past him to do that. But anyway, I thought the story was cool because it showed that the dynamic between them was interesting in that both characters are incredibly intelligent despite the fact they're so different.

Perhaps on a more funny note, the other thing that I liked about the comic was the running gag of Anakin's hatred towards the sand. I just found that to be really funny but not done in a way that distracts from the overall narrative. Personally I just find the line of "I don't like sand" be really funny but at the same time to be really true to Anakin's character. Maybe that's what this franchise was going with that particular gag. And on that front it succeeded. It really sends my belly into a fit of giggles. And I think that this comic was able to utilize that in a way that was funny as well. Admittedly, the Star Wars films and the extended universe are supposed to be pretty campy despite having a serious nature. And I think the "I don't like sand" line is a testament to that. I guess what I'm trying to say is that that particular line was funny in an endearing way, and that this comic utilizes that accordingly.

And then we get to the negatives. And this makes me sad because I feel like that while this comic has some of the best strengths in the entire series, and also some of the worst flaws.

First and probably the biggest thing I dislike about the comic was the artwork. I don't know if this is because the last comic I read (Killen's Vader) had amazing artwork or the fact that this particular comic has sub-par artwork, but suffice it to say the artwork in this comic is not particularly strong. I mean it just looks kind of sub par. I mean fortunately it's not terrible, but I think it definitely holds back what otherwise could've been a far better comic.

The second thing I dislike about the comic was that the potential love story between the two inquisitors was under developed and kind of stupid. And by extension, these two inquisitors weren't even that interesting. I could've deleted these characters from the comic and their entire fight with Vader....and nothing else would have changed. I mean the fight sequence itself was admittedly decent, but the emotional stakes behind it were completely and utterly nonexistent.

The third thing I dislike about the comic was that I thought the two architects that Vader brings with him were completely worthless. I mean they add nothing to the plot, they are annoying, and prove to be just a nuisance for the entire affair. Honestly I feel happy when Darth Momim killed them if only because I don't have to deal with them anymore.

And the fourth in the final thing I dislike about the comic what is that I thought that the little alien natives that they had on Mustafar could've been developed more. Because the comic kind of screws up with them. At first, they end up feeling like filler because they're not all that interesting and just serve as a distraction from all the cooler stuff that's going on. But just when they're about to get interesting, they die off way too quickly. So yeah that was the problem. Now to be fair the action sequences involving them were so cool but I can kind a look past that. But the fact that these characters were more or less a hindrance to the overall story does detract from my enjoyment of the comic.

Final Verdict:

Despite its flaws, I would say that this installment was easily the strongest one in the series. For one thing, I like the Jedi character that was killed, I like the new Dark Lord of the Sith character they added, I like the backstory for the castle, and I like the big vision at the end. However, I thought that the artwork could've been better, I thought that there were a lot of characters that could've been developed more, and there were a lot of side supporting characters that were annoying.

But still, I really liked the comic. And yes it was an improvement over the previous one, but it was not as much of an improvement as past issues. With this in mind, I give a Star Wars: Dark Lord of the Sith Volume IV: Fortress Vader 3.83/5.00 stars - An above average Star Wars story that more than makes up for its admittedly lackluster flaws.

Robert says

Less action but more character development than in prior volumes.

Ahdom says

This Darth Vader line from Soule deserves endless praise. Not only does this story add depth to the character, but it also digs deep into Star Wars lore and expands the universe in a way that others do not. Not only was the story brilliant, so was the artwork. I think most readers were hanging on to see where this went and it wrapped up beautifully in the end. This should serve as a model to what we are looking for in Star Wars comics when stories are character driven. Vader truly has to cut ties with his former self in order to embrace his new identity and this series illustrates that process brilliantly.

Jonathan Roberts says

Good finish to this volume! Liked the idea of the past meeting up with Vader in several ways!!!
