

STAR WARS: The Call of the Crystal Within

By Joe Mignano

[Opening crawl:]

There has been a stirring within the Force. In the few decades since the fall of the Galactic Empire, tragedy and adversity have befallen the peaceful and fragile New Republic. Behind the military might of the First Order, the shadowy Supreme Leader Snoke and the Knights of Ren have sacked the reemerging Jedi Order.

Despite recent setbacks, including the loss of the powerful Starkiller Base, Snoke and his apprentice, Kylo Ren, are poised to once again bring the galaxy back under an imperial rule.

Yet, all is not hopeless. A relic weapon, once belonging to one who was chosen to restore balance to the Force, has been recovered by a talented young student of the Jedi arts, and has been returned to its rightful owner...



{Planet Ahch-To, three decades after the destruction of the second Death Star. Site of the first Jedi Temple.}

The wind howled gently as a planetary ocean breeze whispered to the Master as he meditated. The first of his kind in many generations to visit this sacred, hidden place, Luke was now, once again, the *last* of his kind. And he didn't want to be found. If the Force would not allow the Jedi Order to flourish again like it once had, then it would die here, where it began.

[Sound of Millenium Falcon passing overhead, landing]

Luke was stirred from his trance. He had sensed a ship in orbit; he even expected it to land. But he could not intuitively tell who the ship's occupants were. Perhaps the time for the final confrontation has come, Luke thought, at first. Until the all-too familiar sound of the Millenium Falcon changed that thought entirely.

Luke did not want his friends to come for him; it would only put them in more danger. He'd sensed the loss of his old friend, Han Solo, through the Force. Maybe his sister had finally found him, seeking out the support of her twin brother to aid not just the Resistance, but also her grief. After all, she'd not only lost Han, she also lost her son, Ben, to the dark side. But Leia was not on that ship.

From his vantage point, high atop the tiny island the first temple of the Jedi Order was built upon, Luke watched the Falcon land. He wasn't sure why, but he felt compelled to, as if the

Force itself was telling him to. He saw Chewie and his faithful old astromech droid, Artoo Detoo, but they didn't leave the tiny platform their ship landed on, surrounded by an endless churning sea. Someone else from the Falcon began the long climb up toward him. Someone with a strong Force signature, a presence that glowed an aura of innocence, and sincerity.

Luke knew who she was, sensing that she'd come not just to bring him back to the conflict he was trying to avoid, but also to learn from him. He didn't want that, either. His last pupil was the one responsible for this whole new galactic mess; he didn't want to risk failure at being a teacher again. But, he sensed her persistence.

The soft whispering voices of the Living Force that he came here to commune with spoke to him, echoing to him with the advice and wisdom of the masters of antiquity, and he listened to them. Luke would let her come to him, but he still did not want to leave this place.

Closing his eyes, Luke began to meditate once more, as he waited for the newcomer to arrive before him. This time, however, there was nothing to hear; the ancients had gone silent. Instead, a vision took their place. Memories were played before Luke, as clear as if they were occurring right then and there.

He saw Tatooine. He saw Jakku. He saw his father. His aunt and uncle. His nephew. Then, he saw himself. His younger self, fighting his father, fighting Vader. Pain seared from his wrist, as he relived the moment he lost his hand, the hand that held his father's lightsaber. Then, he was falling, crying out to Ben Kenobi, pleading for help.

Suddenly, Luke was on Tatooine again, this time inside Ben Kenobi's old hermitage. Looking down, he saw that he was in the process of constructing his second lightsaber. He stared at the green Kaiburr crystal that he was about to build the new weapon around. It began to change colors, slowly, from green, to teal, to blue. It then spoke. It spoke in Ben Kenobi's voice.

“Your destiny has always been to allow the Jedi to live again. She has taken her first step. Train her.”

Kenobi's voice faded, as did his home, revealing the sands of the Dune Sea. In the distance, the twin setting suns merged into one, and Luke found himself on the sands of Jakku, instead of Tatooine.

The vision lifted, and Luke was back on Ahch-To. Turning, he saw Rey, his father's lightsaber in her outstretched hand. Pulling back the hood of his Jedi robe, Luke revealed his face, a face that still reflected the anguish of his apprentice's betrayal, the deaths of his students, losing his wife and child. But no, his daughter was very much alive! She found him, returned to him after all these years. And not just with her grandfather's lightsaber, but also with Kenobi's blessing.

He would train her, allow the Force to continue awakening within her, rebuild what had been so savagely cut down, and restore peace once again. Whatever the cost.