



# The Unseen Queen

*Troy Denning*

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## **The Unseen Queen** Troy Denning

The epic Star Wars odyssey enters a new frontier as the heroes of the New Jedi Order confront a monstrous evil—insidious, unseen, and insatiable. . . .

Despite being given new worlds to populate, the insectoid Killiks have not found peace. An unknown enemy has been attacking the new nests—and the Killiks hold the Jedi responsible. Traveling back to the Unknown Regions to unravel the mystery, the Skywalkers and Solos discover an evil far more familiar than they ever expected . . . and even more terrifying. Why does the Dark Nest want to kill Mara? Will Jacen's apocalyptic vision trigger another galactic war or prevent one? And perhaps most ominous of all, what deadly secret are the Killiks hiding?

To find out, Luke, Mara, Han, and Leia must embark on a perilous journey into the uncharted void between right and wrong. The ferocious Unknown Terrors are only the beginning of the awesome challenges that lie ahead in their quest to fathom the unfathomable. For an obscure dispute is about to explode into chaos, pitting Jedi against Jedi—and threatening the very galaxy itself.

## **The Unseen Queen Details**

Date : Published September 27th 2005 by Del Rey

ISBN : 9780345463036

Author : Troy Denning

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Media Tie In, Star Wars, Science Fiction, Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Unseen Queen for online ebook

## Crystal Starr Light says

"How am I to know what the Jedi would or would not do?"

A year has passed since our Star Wars heroes have found the Killiks and relocated them to the planet, Woteba. But now, it seems a substance is destroying their world, and the Killiks once again are advancing into Chiss space. Han, Luke, Leia, and Mara believe that this is the work of the Dark Nest and must figure out how to destroy this Nest, led by Alema Rar and Lomi Plo, once and for all. As if that isn't enough to keep our heroes on their toes, the whole Killik situation has made the Jedi take sides on whether or not they serve the government or the Force, with President Omas stuck helplessly in the middle.

### I Liked:

Last book, there was quite a bit of navel-gazing, leading to a rather dull novel with a really interesting and highly unexplored concept (Hive Minds? It does make one think!). This book is nothing like that. There is a little time spent on what the Jedi's role in the government should be and how far "to the Dark side" they should go, but it is nothing like the discussions in "The Joiner King". I love intense philosophical discussions, but I think Denning is a better action writer than a concept writer.

Characters continue to be interesting and to develop nicely. Han definitely rings true, as does Luke. In fact, their adventures on the planet Woteba and with Juun and Tarfang (the Sullustan/Ewok smugglers from last book) are some of the most fun, the best written, and the most interesting of all the scenes in the book. Saba Sebatyne is a most fascinating character (I love some of the confusions that arise from her misunderstanding of the "Basic" language), and I continue to be impressed with her inhuman personification and her Jedi acumen. In fact, I love how Denning draws a lot of the Jedi together, from Corran Horn to Kenth Hamner to Kyle Katarn to Kyp Durron. Nice to see there is more than one Jedi (Luke). But, by far, one of the most interesting character developments arises in Jacen. I love how he becomes a father (about time that these characters started having love lives and families!), and I like his subtle decline into the Dark Side. The way he memory-wiped Ben is particularly creepy, but really shows how badly he wants to protect his daughter.

### I Didn't Like:

I absolutely hated how Leia was portrayed. From manipulating a Jedi Master to get her own way to whining about not being addressed as "Princess", Leia's characterization throughout the novel made me want to spear her with a multitude of shiny objects. I love her being a Jedi, but does she have to have such a bad case of Protagonist Centered Morality? Can't she see that if SHE were the President, how SHE would be upset if someone hid the fact that a Jedi Master was being held captive? Wouldn't she arrest someone who broke HER governmental blockade? Wouldn't SHE get her panties in a knot if someone tried to manipulate her into not divulging information?

I really hope that Jaina and Zekk are fixed because they are quickly becoming The Annoying, Doofus Twins. I hate how they answer each others' sentences, how they are still basically Joiners but EVERYONE ignores that because...well, because Jaina is a Solo and Leia's daughter, how they click and clack and rub arms and are basically ANNOYING. If I have to read much more of them, I will choke on my bookmark.

Another thing that bothered me was the Jedi Order. I couldn't believe how Luke just left the Order so disorganized...didn't he EVER plan for a second-in-command, even if he did want his Jedi to be "independent"? Shoddy planning, seems to me (though with Luke's characterization in earlier books as an idiot, it makes sense...). Not to mention, how are the Jedi so easily able to justify taking the Alliance's money without being attached and aiding them in need? I understand WHY the Jedi want to be independent, but you don't go around borrowing or taking money from someone and then spout how independent you are! In

my opinion, the only Jedi Masters with any sense and my sympathy were Kenth Hamner and Corran Horn. And who else started imagining Kyp Durrone like this?

[image error]

Another annoying character was Ben. It's great to see him developing and rising in Force abilities and powers, but he is a bit of a smart aleck (okay, yeah, he's a kid). Also, whenever you introduce a child in the story, you have to somehow manipulate the story so the kid can be conveniently dumped somewhere safe and out of the action--unless, like with the Solo kids, they are going to be kidnapped.

And what is it with Troy Denning scene skipping? I noticed at least twice where, instead of **SHOWING** how Leia escaped Place X, it was summarized. I literally checked to make sure I didn't skip pages! And I have no idea why it wasn't shown, as it would have been very exciting and even important to see!

Lastly, let's talk about curses. I don't say it much, but man, can't we have Han, Luke, and Leia just use some Earth swears instead of the ridiculous child's "Bloah"? Does someone need to "Bloah" his nose?

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

Ridiculous Star Wars expletives such as "Bloah" and "Rodder".

Tenel Ka gives birth to Jacen's child. Ben laughs about telling Han and Leia on them (they aren't married).

Whenever Alema Rar appears, she is always described wearing a form-fitting garment.

As usual, this is pretty high. Luke, Han, Leia, and Saba all get to wield lightsabers and hack and slash away at Killiks. Gore factor is pretty high too.

Overall:

This book started to make me hate it when it made Leia into, once again, a b!tchy shrew, shrilling on about how her Joiner child can be trusted to go right into Joiner territory, conniving against Jedi Masters to get her own way, and having a hissy fit when an officer acts supposedly "rude" when he doesn't bow down and worship her feet and address her by her title gorrammit (when in "The Crystal Star", admittedly not the best written Star Wars book, she got huffy about being called Princess!). It wasn't made much better with sloppy transitions and a few other bumpy characters (and the crossover with Scooby Doo). However, I did like Jacen's growth, how the Jedi aren't unified (though, again, I would've loved to b!tch slap them at more than one point--what idiot Jedi Master is Luke that he doesn't leave behind a second-in-command?), and how it is faster paced with more action. Not a required reading, but if you've finished "The Joiner King", you may want to read this.

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## **Brendan says**

The sub-plot with R2-D2 still bothers me and makes no sense, despite Denning's attempts to justify it and make it make sense. UnuThul is still obnoxious. Making a character that can't see reason and has a flexible idea of truth is just obnoxious, especially if they can forget something five seconds after it happens. By the end of the book it had become tedious and nothing in Denning's fight scenes make me want to pay attention. Mostly I want them over with so I can continue the story.

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## **Jaime K says**

This takes place one year after the first Dark Nest book, and everything is darker and weirder. And there is a lot less direction.

There is a Killik epidemic on all grounds.

- Black membrosia is making its way throughout the galaxy in pockets. Turns out there are pirates bringing it everywhere.
- The Dark Nest has devised a devious way to overcome the galaxy.
- There is "Fizz" on the planets the Killiks were given, which is killing them.
- We get a real reason Gorog wants Mara dead.

That last subplot just hangs there and there's almost no push for a resolution. It was probably the more interesting stories within the book, especially because we get more of her past.

I like that Zekk is annoyed that he and Jaina are Joiners. Yet he's all creepy and stands with her while talking to Jag.

It has taken Luke long enough to rebuild a sense of Jedi principle, that is so much more better than an "anything goes" philosophy.

Yet there is still animosity within the Jedi Order. Kyp and Corran are still at each others' throats. It's quite immature and has become ridiculous. Kyp wants to do what he wants; Corran wants the Jedi to be for the Republic. That they argue in front of politicians is sickening.

Ben and Jacen begin on Hapes, and we all learn about Tenel Ka's child. Jacen then turns and memory rubs everyone, Force flashes come, destroys the minds of his cousin and Ta'Chume. I mean, I hate the woman, but she shouldn't have been turned into a vegetable. He takes all he learned on his five-year hiatus and becomes this ball of darkness, an inky spot on the galaxy, a person who believes the means justifies the ends. He's pure dark and vengeful.

(And I find it frustrating that HE is the one who sees the galaxy on edge with a devastating war at hand. Though, Leia sees it too, I think).

I find it adorable that Ben believes a baby outside of marriage means trouble for the couple.

Saba is absolutely a perfect master for Leia. I love their dynamic.

"Watching" Anakin Skywalker's slaughter of the younglings and Padawans was devastating. It was very difficult to read.

The "Jedi mystique" and "Jedi sorcery" lines got old quickly.

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## **Lane says**

If you liked The Joiner King, you'll like this book..... but that's not a good thing because Joiner King was nothing special. Honestly, I found this book more difficult to get through than the first in this series for a multitude of reasons. I just feel that Denning really missed the mark and wasn't able to grasp the actual essence of any of the main characters, so it just feels... disjointed... after reading New Jedi Order... like the expanded universe just went in a different direction.

Anyways, I would have given this book a 1 out of 5 if not for Jacen and Tenel Ka (and Ta'a Chume as well.... when you read it you'll know what I'm talking about).

## **Katrin von Martin says**

This was, in many aspects, better than the previous book in the trilogy, *The Joiner King*. The pacing of the book was a bit faster and didn't drag so much in places (like the first book tended to). While it was the second book of the trilogy, it held its own and offered up an intriguing plot that both advanced the Star Wars timeline and kept the reader entertained. Spoilers follow.

A year has passed since *The Joiner King* and although it seemed as if peace was achieved (at least temporarily), the Dark Nest has emerged again and, as usual, the Solos and the Skywalkers head for the Utegeta Nebula to investigate the Killik problem. A plot by the Dark Nest to strike against the Galactic Alliance is discovered and it is up to our heroes to thwart it. Meanwhile, Jacen and Ben travel to Hapes, where Jacen receives some shocking news from the Queen Mother. Personal battles are fought, characters evolve, and the finale leaves the reader eager to pick up the next book.

Overall, the plot was solid. It was, obviously, the plot of a middle book and didn't really tie up any loose ends in regards to the big story as a whole, but it offered up an intriguing story that was interesting to read both as part of the trilogy and as a stand alone book. I, for one, was glad to see Leia get some respect and focus as a Jedi. She seems to be very under-appreciated in the New Jedi Order. The relationship between her and her master, Saba, is quite dynamic and amusing. Denning writes the quirky Barabel well, and her interactions with the strong-willed Princess never fail to entertain. Under Saba's devoted tutelage, Leia is fast on her way to becoming a Jedi Knight, the title she has long deserved.

Luke learned the important lesson of doubt, which I personally found to be an interesting and fresh idea. His opponent, this unseen queen, uses his doubts (no matter how small and insignificant they may be) to mask her presence and carry out her dark deeds unnoticed. The Jedi Master also faces the tough possibility of his wife being involved in his mother's death, the main source of his doubt. His realizations, emotions, and experiences in the book all lead to an explosive fight with the illusive Lomi Plo (though, I can't help but wonder why the Galactic Alliance doesn't do something to upgrade their vac suits, as the concern of dying while wearing them seems to be a common problem in the *Galaxy Far Far Away*).

While all this is occurring, Jacen discovers that his "meeting" with Tenel Ka a year previous yielded bigger results than he probably imagined. While the baby herself played only a very small part, it opens the door to many possibilities both with the child and her parents. As for Jacen himself, I do wonder if he'll be the next Anakin Skywalker and if the cycle of "chosen ones" turning dark is forever doomed to repeat itself. The hero of the New Jedi Order is definitely becoming a lot darker in his thoughts and tendencies (and for a lot of the same reasons Anakin did). I'm interested to see where this will go.

As a brief side note, I really enjoyed the character of Bwua'tu. Minor characters sometimes come out a bit flat and unmemorable, but Denning did a great job with the Bothan admiral. Bwuat'tu's attitude in general and the way he interacted with others were truly enjoyable to read about. Denning also handles Cal Omas well, taking him from a cardboard cutout type politician and making him into a leader genuinely concerned about his people and willing to take whatever measure necessary to protect them.

The only thing that did get a bit annoying was the bond between Jaina and Zekk. I've never been a fan of them together, so those parts of the book were a bit difficult to stomach. Honestly, this bond between them

doesn't seem to really do anything for either character except make them really annoying when they're together. Otherwise, I have no complaints.

The Unseen Queen was a great follow up to The Joiner King and is definitely worth taking the time to read.

This review is also posted on Amazon.com

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## Scott Rhee says

Everyone who is a huge fan of something, anything---The Simpsons, "Fast and the Furious" movies, U2, McDonalds cheeseburgers, Internet porn, books by Stephen King, etc.---at some point experiences it: the point at which one realizes that there truly is too much of a good thing.

Even sex can lose its luster and excitement if one engages in it too much. For the record: I have no idea what that would be like anyway, as my wife and I have a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter and two full time jobs. 'Nuff said. So, anyway, bad example...

I am a ridiculously huge Star Wars fan. I freely admit that. I love everything having to do with Star Wars. I have considered breaking down and buying a video game system (something I am adamantly opposed to on moral, spiritual, financial, and practical grounds) just to buy that stupid Battlefront game which looks friggin' awesome every time I walk by the display at Target. I have personally set a goal of reading every single Star Wars book ever written, even the ones featuring that asshole Jar Jar Binks. Yes, I am that fanatical.

So, it pains me to admit that I have reached a point in my Star Wars Expanded Universe reading challenge that I am actually getting---gasp!---sick and tired of it all.

Not that it will stop me from reading on. I don't think anything will keep me from reading Star Wars books in the future, not even a Trump presidency.

I've just reached the point where I can no longer admit that all the gibberish I've been reading is in any way good literature or makes any friggin' sense. (*Seriously, what the hell is a dovin basal?*) There are so many characters, as well, in the SWEU that it is almost impossible to keep track anymore. Add to that the confusing names of characters, each one sounding like a disease or the stage name for the drummer of a Korean speed-metal band. *"Welcome to the stage Saba Sebatyne and the Raging Flicknacks!"*

"The Unseen Queen" by Troy Denning is Book 2 in the Dark Nest trilogy, started in "The Joiner King", about a race of giant bugs called the Killik who have pissed off the Chiss because two Dark Knights thought to be dead at the Battle of Myrkyr have become "joiners" and are poisoning the unconscious hive collective of a subspecies of Killick called the Gorog and HOLY CRAP I KNOW WHAT THE HELL ALL OF THAT SHIT MEANS!!!???...

See, this is what I'm talking about. I could go on and on with a plot summary, but only a handful of other SWEU nerds will know what the hell I'm referring to. Anyone else will simply think I'm speaking nonsense. Which I am, in a sense. It's nonsense that makes sense to only a few die-hard nerds.

AAARRRGHHH!!!!

Okay, whatever, I'm over it now. If you liked "The Joiner King", you'll like this one.

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### **Standardtoaster says**

Okay, I'm gonna have to defend this one. I attempted to read The Joiner King, part 1 of the Dark Nest Trilogy, and had to put it down. I never finished it. The Joiner King didn't "feel" like Star Wars. There were no steady action beats, it tried to put focus on too many characters, and it was generally very dull and confusing. This book, however, was a good step in the right direction! As I read it, I felt like I didn't even need to read The Joiner King; The Unseen Queen basically summarizes the events of the first book as it goes along. The story moves at a good pace, while incorporating good tidbits of info from Book 1, so I never really felt lost. The action sequences are spaced closer together, and the character interaction between the classic Star Wars characters is spot-on (particularly the Luke and Han parts). I will admit that some of the Expanded Universe characters, like Corran Horn, are a bit out-of-character, but it's not so bad that it takes away from the enjoyment of this book. Overall, if you're looking for a 'complete' run-through of the Dark Nest books, I would recommend listening to the audio versions of Book 1 and 3 (where the audio abridgment worked in their favor). This one, however, is a little better-written, and definitely worth reading on it's own.

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### **Stephanie "Jedigal" says**

If you liked The Joiner King, you'll like The Unseen Queen. Similar in quality to The Joiner King (see my review), it continues to have some of the same benefits (ie. good sense of mystery/intrigue) and some of the same problems (ie. less than satisfying treatment of the "foundation" characters).

On plot points, the development of Leia as a Jedi is an "about-time" for many Star Wars fans. And the interaction between Jacen Solo and Queen Mother Tenel Ka is compelling.

This trilogy is a must read for Star Wars fans, who are getting the first opportunities to see Luke & Leia reactions (and their friends and family) to new information on the fate of their parents, which we discovered in the recent Episode 3 movie, and is only now being revealed to the OT characters by R2-D2.

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### **Darryl Dobbs says**

Book II returns to edge of the galaxy and the skirmishes between the Chiss (i.e. the blue guys) and the Killiks (i.e. the giant bug-aliens).

I'm impressed that the planners of the SWU (as well as the author Troy Denning) can continue to come up with original scenarios and plot points with over 200 books already done. This story was at times engrossing and other times had me shaking my head. I still don't like the influence of the "Joiner" mind over Jedi. And the way that the Joiner Jedi finish each other's sentences and do little throat-clicks bothered me too. Is the Force powerful, or not? Anyway, some of the battle scenes were exciting (though most of the space battles were confusing). And I do like how knowledgeable and masterful Jacen Solo is becoming.

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## William says

Troy Denning is quickly becoming a favorite Star Wars author of mine as both this series of books and his contributions to the NJO series were full of action, suspense and surprises. *The Unseen Queen* takes us back to the frontier between Chiss and Killick space where the insectoid race is afflicted with a mysterious disease that they believe has something to do with the Chiss or the Galactic Alliance. In response to their pleas for help, the usual gang of heroes (Luke, Leia & Han) come to see what they can do to help. Instead, they become embroiled in a labyrinthine plan to take over the galaxy (what's new???) and to start another disastrous war in the galaxy. The final action scenes are the best written, and I hope that the third and final entry into the trilogy wraps things up neatly, as there were certainly some loose ends at the end of this novel.

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## Jaime K says

This takes place a year after *The Joiner King*, and it's amazing what changes in a year.

No one trusts the Killiks, except those already influenced by them.

Sullustan funerals are interesting. People talking of the deceased can only give a comment of exactly as many words as the dead had lived. Giving an account of their life is an affront to others, implying the mourners hadn't known the deceased. (p 52-53).

We find out that the Dark Nest was REALLY created by two people who ran from and hate Mara, which is why she was attacked first. They've completely corrupted Alema Rar and can still influence Ben.

Ben is such an annoying child. When Tenel Ka and Jacen tell him that Allana is a secret, he seems upset that he can't tell people...to where Jacen knows he'll spill the beans.

Right after that, the Killiks come, which was completely random, even if it was Ta'a Chume behind it.

It's so easy to see how Jacen's fall is in progress, with his mind wipes and the little care he has about Ben's injuries. He's just like Anakin (only with a slightly less one-track mind): he only wants to save his lover and their child. His mind-rubbing will only become more irritating and just worse in general.

Luke understands how dangerous the current Jedi mind was - that there IS no light/dark side, but how you approach things and use the Force. He knows that using/doing whatever is necessary to keep the Order & GA safe is an approach that damages more than it heals. Obviously, Jacen disagrees...as does Kyp. Nope, they believe the end justifies the mean, and Jaina/Zekk will go along with him if it means they can see Unu-Thuul again.

I truly enjoy Saba as Leia's Master. I love the odd Barabel humour and just HOW Saba trains Leia.

With the Killiks, it's just extremely weird and eerie how the unconscious mind controls the conscious so much that Alema kisses Raynar and *he has no clue at all*. It's worse than the Joiner situation, I think. Add that to the bugs inside the replicas and there's just a whole mess that is creepy.

Leia is the perfect political Jedi. She isn't trusted because of her Force skills but they also help turn Bwua'tu to accept how she truly wants to help.

Han and Luke working to expose the Dark Nest is quite frightening. At this point in the EU, anyone was fair game. I know I was a bit worried the first read-through.

If *Han Solo* is getting nervous from how the Killiks work and build ships, then that's something to be worried about.

At the end, Bwua'tu says it'll be an interesting war.

My butt.

The Alliance shouldn't go with the Killiks. Those bugs be crazy.

The Chiss already think the Alliance is against them (and from what I remember, the 3rd book has all hell breaking loose on the Chiss side, and Fel being highly confused and betrayed by Jaina). I think the bugs need to be wiped out...but not how Jacen's approaching it.

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### **Matthew says**

Better than the first book in the series, but still nothing special.

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### **Aaron says**

Yes, I'm reading a Star Wars book. In other words: I'm back, and the Force *is* with me.

And what a ride it was. Serialized fiction, a tradition at least as old as the 19th century (and perhaps older, but I really don't know) finds its home in many places these days, but none better than that galaxy far, far away. Excellent characterization of the Big Three, and well-done perspectives of them as well. Also: battle scenes that are actually exciting, rather than confusing! Combine that with a cliffhanger ending and you have a piece that does exactly what it sets out to do: return to that place of the Force and Jedi and X-Wings, of Han and Luke and Leia, one more time.

Fun, indeed.

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### **Rob says**

Ok the Insect comment on the first book may have been a bit premature, this series is getting good and kind of grows on you, I can't wait till I get the third book. This was a good read.

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### **Shara says**

**The premise:** ganked from BN.com: *The epic Star Wars odyssey enters a new frontier as the heroes of the New Jedi Order confront a monstrous evil—insidious, unseen, and insatiable. . . .*

*Despite being given new worlds to populate, the insectoid Killiks have not found peace. An unknown enemy has been attacking the new nests—and the Killiks hold the Jedi responsible. Traveling back to the Unknown*

*Regions to unravel the mystery, the Skywalkers and Solos discover an evil far more familiar than they ever expected . . . and even more terrifying. Why does the Dark Nest want to kill Mara? Will Jacen's apocalyptic vision trigger another galactic war or prevent one? And perhaps most ominous of all, what deadly secret are the Killiks hiding?*

*To find out, Luke, Mara, Han, and Leia must embark on a perilous journey into the uncharted void between right and wrong. The ferocious Unknown Terrors are only the beginning of the awesome challenges that lie ahead in their quest to fathom the unfathomable. For an obscure dispute is about to explode into chaos, pitting Jedi against Jedi—and threatening the very galaxy itself.*

***My Rating: Worth Reading, with Reservations***

Now that I've got *The Joiner King* under my belt and I've re-familiarized myself with these characters I hadn't read about in nearly seven years, *The Unseen Queen* proved to be a fast read. I liked seeing Leia's development as an actual Jedi, but I was disturbed by the direction Jacen is moving towards, despite the delightful surprise to his storyline. I can't say that the Killiks are my favorite story arc, because they and the Gorog create some really frustrating moments in the book, but I'll be reading the third and final installment, as I look forward to seeing how this story arc resolves.

**Spoilers, yay or nay?:** Yay. And I also want to point out: there will be spoilers, at any given moment, for the entire run of *Star Wars* books up until the date the current book was published. So if the *Star Wars* are something you want to get into, stop now and read THIS instead. I don't recommend anyone reading the full review unless they've read the book I'm reviewing now, due to aforementioned spoilers, so stop now or -- if you have read the book -- carry on!

Comments and discussion are always welcome, so if you're interested in the full review and all of its spoilery glory, feel free to read it at my blog. The link below will take you to the full review.

**REVIEW: Troy Denning's STAR WARS: DARK NEST III: THE UNSEEN QUEEN**

Happy Reading!

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