

The Hobbit Meets Darth Vader

(With apologies to JRR Tolkien and George Lucas, this article is pure satire at best, bad humour at worst.)

*I*t is a dimly lit chamber. One can barely make out the forbidding silhouette of the Dark Lord of the Sith seated in the centre of the room. But even in shadows and shades, he is unmistakable – the cadence of mechanical and air sounds reminiscent of a badly tuned refurbished second-hand ventilator on SIMV setting punctuates the cold air while blue and red lights on his chest repeatedly blink to a hypnotic effect like one of those cheap toys sold in HDB town centre shops. You know this is NOT Toys R Us. This is Darth Vader, AKA Anakin Skywalker, the Dark Lord of the Sith – the guy with more midi-chlorians than Chewbacca has lice.

A door slides open and light is thrown into the room momentarily. The helmet and body armour of the Sith Lord shimmers and coruscates with evil glee in this photon bath. A three-foot high humanoid figure is ushered in by an accompanying stormtrooper.

The trembling stormtrooper bows and pronounces: “Lord Vader, may I present the Hobbit from Middle Earth? He seeks an audience with Lord Vader.”

Hobbit: “Greetings, Lord Vader.”

DV: “Spare me the pleasantries. Arise, my friend.”
(And waves the stormtrooper away.)

Hobbit: “I am standing, my Lord.”

DV: “Oh. My apologies, Halfling, I did not realise how short you are. It is these blasted infra-red goggles I have been wearing ever since I got ambushed by Obiwan on Mustafar. If you had more hair, I would have thought you were one of those pesky Ewoks.”

Hobbit: “I am most honoured to be able to seek your wisdom and counsel in a most troubling matter.”

DV: “Speak freely, my friend. I can sense that the Force is strong with you.”

Hobbit: “I have a practice in my shire back in Middle Earth. Recently, life has been getting tougher. Since the defeat of Sauron, there are less and less folks joining the army. More and more are becoming healers. Also, with peace, there is more and more migration: elvish, gnomish, dwarvish and even human healers have come to set up healing shops in our hobbit shires. What is more, the King of Gondor, in a bid to earn the adulation of the various races of Middle Earth, has set up “poly-heal” centres to

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cater to all and sundry, offering healing for less than what my friend Gimli charges for a haircut. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you, my dwarf friend Gimli is now a boss who owns a chain of barber shops offering cheap haircuts. He earns more than I! There is no way I can compete with these poly-heal centres – well-equipped, splendidly appointed and staffed with orc-healers approved by Lord Gandalf himself!”

DV: “Gandalf is using orc-healers? I thought he hated orcs?”

Hobbit: “Lord Gandalf has changed somewhat, I am afraid. (*Sighs.*) He is now a little like his old master Saruman the White. Once in power, he is also dabbling into some of the Dark Arts. He claims that the orc-healers are only in Middle Earth temporarily at his behest to address the healer-shortage. But there is no healer-shortage and he keeps renewing the orcs’ healer licences! What’s more, he has said that to address the healer-shortage in our big General Temples, he may consider bringing in troll-healers or outsourcing healing to Numenor-healers who also have clairvoyance abilities! As you know, orcs and trolls can survive on the minimal of comforts, unlike us fun-loving hobbits. Even my dear friend Samwise Gamgee is worried that his bandage company will have to compete with cheap foreign imports soon.” (*Sighs again.*)

DV: “I see. The situation is grim indeed. Of what assistance can I or the Empire be?”

Hobbit: “Thank you for your offer, Lord Vader. (*Looks sheepish.*) I understand that the Sith Order is well-versed with a certain skill that I wish to acquire – the Sith Art of Aesthetics.”

DV: “Ah, you wish to join our Order and acquire aesthetics: the skill of eternal youth. My predecessors – Darth Plagueis the Wise and Darth Sidious – are well-versed in this skill indeed. I am but an apprentice.”

Hobbit: “You are too humble, my Lord. As you know, only the elves are truly immortal and most of them have sailed for the Undying Lands, like my dear friend Legolas. The rest: humans, hobbits and so on, they all grow frail and old. Although death is inevitable, many, especially

the females, want to look young and beautiful for as long as possible. But to be honest, even Queen “Arwen” Tyler is spotting a wrinkle here and there after she gave up her elven heritage. I heard the Sith’s skills with the lightsabre is essential in aesthetics.”

DV: “That is correct. If only you knew the power of the Dark Side. Power is the key to enlightenment in the Dark Side and skills with the lightsabre is our hallmark of power. We have many lightsabres in the Sith armoury. These include:

- Pulsed Light Lightsabre;
- Diode Lightsabre;
- ND Yag Lightsabre;
- Alexandrite & Q-Switched Lightsabre;
- Pulsed Dye Lightsabre;
- Optical & RF Lightsabre;
- Ebrium Lightsabre;
- CO2 Lightsabre;
- Ruby Lightsabre and
- Holmium Lightsabre.

But that is not all there is to being an Aesthetic Sith Lord. Indeed, even a few of the accursed Jedi are quite adept with the lightsabre.

Of course, when this battle-station is fully operational, it will be the ultimate light-based weapon yet: it will de-pigment and resurface entire star systems!” (*Evil mechanical laughter reverberates through the room.*)

Hobbit: “I have also heard of the Sith Mind Control Techniques.”

DV: “Yes, yes. You have done your research, my dear little friend. Sith Mind Control Techniques have enabled us to rule the galaxy for millennia. In time, you will call me Master, and I will complete your training. You will learn to insinuate fears and implant thoughts of insecurity in feeble minds. You will exploit these weaklings and they will in turn use your aesthetic services. When you master Sith Mind Control, even a 22-year-old girl will begin to see wrinkles and creases on her face and a middle-aged executive with a BMI of 18 will feel fat. We prey on their fears, vanities and insecurities.”

Hobbit: “Wow. And how about skin peels?”

DV: “Bah! Skin peels are out. Look at Yoda and Obiwan. Fat load of good skin peels did

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for them! Look at them in Episodes IV and V – creases and furrows everywhere! Lightsabres, my little friend, are the way to go, and of course, sometimes, I must admit, though not as artistic and elegant as a lightsabre, a good blaster helps. (*Whips out a mean-looking Mesotherapy Gun.*) Why do you think Han Solo gets the chick and not my wimpy son, Luke?”

Hobbit: “Point taken, your Lordship. How about spas? Do you think there is a place for them in the Sith armamentarium? Is there evidence that spa medicine works?”

DV: “The Force is strong with you, Hobbit, but you are not a Jedi yet.

As I have said to one confused admiral in Episode V when I was going after the Millennium Falcon, “Asteroids do not concern me, admiral. I want that ship.” We do not really care about evidence. Whatever the people want and are willing to pay an arm and a leg for, we give. Building an Empire needs cash, Halfling. Mustafar may sell everything 24/7, including plans for the Death Star, but building a Battle Station such as this still needs cold, hard cash. And no one is immune to beauty. Frankly, if Eowyn looked less frumpish, maybe she will be Queen of Gondor instead of “Arwen” Tyler. But I must admit, after her makeover, she still managed to marry Eomer and be Queen of Rohan – not too bad, issues of consanguinity notwithstanding.

You want evidence? Speak to Jar Jar Binks.”

Hobbit: “And anti-ageing. How is the Sith approach different from the Jedi?”

DV: “Yoda claimed to be 900-years-old and Obiwan was pretty nifty on his feet when he fought me in Episode IV. But let’s face it: no one really knows how old Yoda is. If you live in a swamp and chew on nothing but sticks, one year will seem like 900 years. Obiwan lived in a cave in the middle of a desert for 20 years! It is not about how long you actually live, Halfling, it is the lifestyle that matters. Here, we give the wealthy Coruscants pills and fluids to consume, baths to soak and creams to dab. We tell them they are detoxifying agents and antioxidants and they feel wonderful.”

Hobbit: “And they work?”

DV: “You are not getting the point, dude. I find your lack of faith in the Dark Side disturbing. The rich and powerful want good care and they think they know what is good care, but actually they do not. Look at my ex-wife Padme. Who would think that as an ex-Queen of Planet Naboo and a prominent Galactic Senator that she would get a lousy ultrasound scan during her pregnancy? Heck, she had bad care and she did not know it. If she did, I would have long known that I am a father of twins and not wait until the end of Episode VI. *&^%\$#@! Lousy Coruscant gynaecologist.

And do you know why she died? Did you see what crap obstetric care they gave Padme at the end of Episode III? That lousy parallel-import medi-robot performed a NVD for twins and did not even put her legs in the lithotomy position! Nin Naboo eh *&^%\$#@!.” (*The rest are expletives of a Tatoonie dialect strangely reminiscent of Hokkien.*)

Hobbit: “My apologies, Lord Vader. One last point: I understand that the Stewards of Gondor and White Council of Rivendell are planning to curb the practice of aesthetics even before they are further entrenched in Middle Earth. Do you think there is a possibility that aesthetics will be run aground?”

DV: “You worry too much. Learn from the Sith. The Old Republic Senate was also like this. But bureaucrats are the same everywhere, whether in Middle Earth or Coruscant. They are content with the trappings of their high office and are unwilling to take a position, lithotomy or otherwise. Here in the Old Republic, the various bureaucracy and Senate formed a Committee on Aesthetic Medicine. My spies tell me the Committee’s report was completed months ago but till now, nothing has been announced. They neither have the courage or wisdom to take a position and go forward. They have been made pliant by the comforts given by the Trade Federation. Even on a simple and clear-cut thing such as Mesotherapy (*waves his Mesotherapy Gun around purposefully*), they do not take a position. Aesthetics is unstoppable.

The Force is with the Dark Side, Hobbit.” ■