



The Hive

Steven Barnes

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Features an exclusive author interview—plus an excerpt from Steven Barnes’ new full-length *Star Wars* novel, *The Cestus Deception*

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Dispatched as a Republic envoy to the Outer Rim planet Ord Cestus—in a bid to halt the sale of potentially deadly “bio-droids” to the Confederacy—Obi-Wan Kenobi finds himself enlisted in a mission more desperate, and dangerous, than diplomatic. The once self-contained world has long since been co-opted by unscrupulous offworlders, whose plunder of a vital natural resource has enabled the rise of a powerful corporation that controls the economy. Ord Cestus’s native population, the X’Ting, are now mere second-class citizens in their own society.

Enter the Jedi Knight, with news that a legal technicality has turned the tables—and the corrupt forces with a stranglehold on Ord Cestus are now at the mercy of the X’Ting. Circumstances, however, are more dire than the Republic suspected.

In the wake of a devastating plague, the X’Ting’s benevolent rulers are dead, and the once tightly knit race has splintered into battling factions. Reunification can only come with the rise of new royals, whom all X’Ting are bound by blood to serve. But the eggs that will spawn those sovereigns lie out of reach, secured in a secret chamber and booby-trapped by those whose knowledge died with them in the plague. Now, to salvage a people’s destiny, Obi-Wan will risk a veritable descent into hell: braving the unknown horrors in the forgotten depths of an alien world, on a perilous quest from which none who went before have ever returned.

The Hive Details

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From Reader Review The Hive for online ebook

Thomas says

This novella is set on Cestus and features some of the same characters from *The Cestus Deception*. In fact, it opens with a scene lifted directly from the novel, and then takes us on a side journey. I think I preferred the novella to the novel, simply because it moved faster, and highlighted the bravery of the X'Ting. Barnes added a thematic element to the story that felt a bit rushed (the X'Ting doesn't trust Obi-Wan, but comes to due to his actions), but otherwise it was an entertaining read.

Michael Tidd says

A short novella tucked at the end of the *Cestus Deception*, it is so far the best part of that much longer novel. If you're reading *Cestus*, flip to this around page 200 for a halfway-mark breather. It's more of what a Star Wars story should be - alien mystery, battles, jedi resolve - and less slow-moving political theatrics with no payoff.

Jared says

Star Wars Legends Project #120

Background: *The Hive* was written by Steven Barnes and released as an eBook in May 2004. His only other Star Wars work is *The Cestus Deception* (my review) to which it is a companion. He has also written a number of his own novels and a smattering of TV episodes.

The Hive takes place during *The Cestus Deception*, about a year after the Battle of Geonosis and 21 years before the Battle of Yavin. The main character is Obi-Wan Kenobi.

Summary: As Obi-Wan continues to strengthen his relationship with the X'Ting government of Ord Cestus, and in particular with Regent G'Mai Duris, a new opportunity surfaces. Generations ago, a plague nearly wiped out the X'Ting and the eggs containing the last members of the royal family were secured behind layers of security measures deep beneath the surface. Secured so well, in fact, that multiple attempts to recover them have failed. One more failed attempt and automated countermeasures will destroy the eggs to keep them from falling into the wrong hands. G'Mai Duris believes Obi-Wan is the X'Ting's best hope to restore the royal leadership. Accompanied by one elite X'Ting warrior, Obi-Wan ventures into the depths to accomplish the impossible and save the future of an entire race.

Review: This novella is a bit of a weird animal. Ostensibly, of course, it is a companion to *The Cestus Deception* and it happens right in the middle of the events in that novel. But in almost every way it is a better, tighter story, and it doesn't even fit with the events of the novel. Obi-Wan in *The Hive* is a better-written, more likable character, and the most prominent side-character is better than any of the characters Barnes created for the novel as well. Thanks to the length, the plot is more focused and more action-packed, and there are coherent themes and motifs that run through the whole thing and actually pay off in the end.

Now, the payoff isn't great. In fact, it's kind of an eye-roller. I won't give it away, but it's certainly an overused device in Star Wars . . . but the point is that there's something there that feels like a solid, in-universe, well thought-out conclusion that the whole story was building up to. That's kind of the whole thing for me . . . It's mediocre, but it's serviceable, which is leaps and bounds ahead of the novel.

Now, if you're familiar with the plot of *The Cestus Deception* (as I was, having just read it), you spend the whole story wondering what's going to happen at the end that will feel like a satisfying outcome to the story but still fit with the novel. Well, it turns out he couldn't figure out how to do both of those things, so he settled for the former. This novella was published before the novel, but I assume it was conceived and written after the novel was already completed and submitted. Why else would such a significant, world-changing event not even be *referenced* anywhere in the novel? The outcome of this story should have changed the entire ending of that one. It makes no sense that it didn't.

You could try and come up with an explanation for why there doesn't appear to be anywhere to fit the events of this story into the events of that one, and why none of the characters mention what happened even though they should, or why Obi-Wan's companion in this story isn't even mentioned in passing in the novel . . . But there's no coherent explanation for why nothing that happens in this story appears to have impacted anything that happened in the other.

Honestly, this story, though not great by any means, is so vastly superior to the other in every respect that I'd just disregard the novel entirely and say this is the only story of the two that Really Happened.

C+

Victor Orozco says

Nice. A very good story in that it relates briefly to the events of the novel Cestus Deception. Obi-Wan Kenobi is tasked with the finding of a collection of eggs of the X'Ting people's royal family. Assisting him is a noble warrior who has his doubts on Kenobi but is surprised by the Jedi's character in the end. Short but sweet. B-

Rachel says

This was a pretty good story. I think I enjoyed this more than the book it went along with, Cestus Deception.

Angela says

This is a short story/ novella set during the events of the Cestus deception. Obi wan is asked to retrieve royal eggs, this involves a quest into the depths of the planet. It's a lot of fun with many action sequences and some nice character interactions. A good read.

Jim C says

This is an ebook novella that takes place during the novel *The Cestus Deception*. Obi-Wan is asked to recover royal eggs that have been protected for years.

I liked this short story better than the actual novel. This went straight to the heart of the matter. It was a nice adventure that required Jedi skills and intelligence. I also enjoyed the little twist at the end that fans will enjoy.

I didn't give this a four star rating because of its timeframe. This should have been included in the novel and this was probably a income supplement gimmick. If you plan on reading both the novel and this ebook do yourself a favor. In the novel when Obi-Wan befriends the X'ting Regent stop reading the novel and read the ebook. Then go back to the novel and I think this will enhance your reading experience.

McGooglykins says

I'm rating this four stars because it did everything I wanted it to do for me as a short story - sufficiently amused me during a nightshift. That said, it's not particularly standout, and I found a couple of the "plot twists" a tad contrived. I may read it again, I may not - but I don't regret reading it or feel my time has been wasted by doing so.

Leonardo says

Really short story.

Obi-one has a solo quest on a world populated by a species of ant-sapiens. This story is chronologically placed between the Chapter III and the Chapter II motion pictures.

Just action packed. Not much of anything else.

Matthew says

A fun little adventure much more in the style of classic Star Wars than the full novel this was linked with. Monsters and puzzles and scary moments, and the ending made me chuckle.

Anna says

I really enjoyed this book. It was packed full of action and Obi-Wan. These two elements make for a great Star Wars story. It was, however, a bit short. I would have liked to know a little more; wrap it up some more. But overall a good short story.

Ursula Johnson says

Secrets of the Hive, Setup for the Cestus Deception

This short novella was a Clone Wars novel about an insectoid race who had requested assistance from the Republic, in the form of Jedi knight Obi-Wan Kenobi. This book also sets up the following book, the Cestus Deception. Before the larger issue of enslavement to a cybernetic factory, a ritual test must be performed. An untrusting warrior accompanies Obi-Wan during their quest and the pair discover horrors below, as well as the identity of the Jedi who previously visited their planet. An entertaining short story with a few twists and turns and an interesting setup for the Cestus Deception novel.

Darryl Dobbs says

This one was an easy read, just a couple of hours. It takes place about two-thirds of the way into Cestus Deception, but gave us great insight on the inhabitants of Cestus – insect-like creatures called X'Ting. Obi-Wan and an X'Ting warrior delve deep into the mountains in order to acquire eggs of the royal family that were stored there some decades earlier.

Bruno Di Giandomenico says

Short story

Really for an half Hour read. Short but in the viene of Classic star wars. Obi Wan Kenobi with an alien warrior looking for Royals eggs on a far alien planet where an insectoid race lived.

Christian Smith says

Story: 8/10

"Why couldn't this great story have been in the original book?! It would have made The Cestus Deception so much better."
