

Skywalker: The Family Tree

Luke and Leia are related. No problem. Anakin and Padmé are their parents. Still got it. So who the heck is Bail Organa, why does it matter who Gui-Gon Jinn was, and what is a stormtrooper? The answers are here. By Brad King.



YOU'VE WATCHED *Star Wars*, but you can't recall how Luke and Leia are related to Owen Lars and Beru Whitesun. Or even who in the hell Owen Lars and Beru Whitesun are.

You probably aren't alone. George Lucas has created a galaxy rich with characters whose relationships are interwoven through several generations. Following along can be difficult.

However, it's those relationships that drive the *Star Wars* universe. If you get lost, well, the movies don't make much sense. Some critics have even argued that the movies don't make much sense anyway. Some critics are wrong. They've forgotten this is a fantasy-action adventure and not *War and Peace*.

We digress. For the rest of the fans, here is your water cooler guide to *Star Wars* to help get you up to speed.

But be forewarned. What follows could easily spoil some of the surprises in *Attack of the Clones*, which hits theaters on May 16.

For the brave -- and antsy -- among you, here's a brief Skywalker history.

Anakin Skywalker and his mother, Shmi, both slaves, are living relatively uneventful lives on Tatooine when they meet Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn during *Phantom Menace*. The two Jedi sense that Anakin has great potential and free the young boy.

Anakin gets the surprise of his life on his trip. While traveling with Kenobi and Jinn, Anakin and Padmé Amidala meet. The two will eventually marry and have twins, Luke and Leia.

The Jedi are responsible for much of what happens to the poor Skywalkers, but let's not forget that they have some dysfunction going on themselves.

Kenobi, Jedi teacher first to Anakin and later to Luke, was trained by Jinn, who was whacked near the end of *The Phantom Menace* by Darth Maul, an evil Sith lord. Jinn was trained by Count Dooku, who succumbed to the dark side soon after *Menace*. Dooku was trained by Yoda, who later finished Luke's training.

The takeaway: One out of every two Jedi heads to the dark side. Not great odds for the galaxy.

(None of these bloodlines can be traced to Kevin Bacon, since the actor won't be born for, well, a long, long time in a galaxy far, far away. However, we all know that Natalie Portman, who plays Queen Amidala, was in *Beautiful Girls* with Pruitt Taylor Vince, who was in *24 Hours* with ... that's right, Kevin Bacon. This is not the point.) So far, so good. Now it starts to get tricky.

When Anakin becomes Vader sometime in the next movie, Kenobi makes arrangements to hide his wife, Amidala, on Alderaan with Bail Organa, a politician Kenobi befriends in *Clones*. There, Leia is adopted into the high council and eventually becomes the youngest member of the Imperial Senate.

Luke, it turns out, drew the short end of the stick. He gets stuck on a backwater planet in the middle of nowhere, unaware that he has a sister.

As Darth Vader nears completion of the Death Star and just before *A New Hope* begins, Organa sends Leia on a mission to find Kenobi on Tatooine. Her mission fails

and she is captured by the Empire. The good news for her and the Rebel Alliance is that her message is intercepted by her twin brother, Luke Skywalker.

Of course, neither Luke nor Leia realizes they are related, and old Ben (remember, Kenobi is "Old Ben" in *A New Hope*) keeps his mouth shut. So how did Skywalker get back on Tatooine where his father was born years before?

Well, that's easy.

While Jinn and Kenobi freed Anakin from servitude, they left his mother behind. There, moisture farmer Cliegg Lars fell in love with Shmi and married her. She became the stepmother to Owen Lars and his fiancé Beru Whitesun.

So Owen and Anakin were stepbrothers. At least they are for a short time before some nasty Tusken raiders have their way with Shmi.

Years later, when the Jedi were nearly destroyed, the job of raising Luke Skywalker fell to Owen and Beru when Kenobi went into seclusion on Tatooine, hiding from the Empire's stormtroopers, who were hunting the Jedi down one by one.

Which brings us to the stormtroopers, those legions of mysterious white-armored soldiers of the Empire. Turns out the baddies are not really baddies at all. They were meant to be a clone army protecting the Republic.

The twist is they were made from one man, Jango Fett, the father of the ill-fated Boba Fett, who is killed by Leia's future husband Han Solo during *Return of the Jedi*. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Just after *Phantom*, a Jedi made a trip to Kamino, a mysterious planet on the outer rim of the galaxy, where he placed an order for the army. He specifically requested Fett as the clone source. In return, Fett asked that he be allowed to keep one of the clones to raise as a son.

That clone, Boba, grows to become the feared -- and rather honked off -- bounty hunter. He's a little miffed at the Jedi because he watched the very bad-ass Jedi Mace Windu chop his dad's head off in a vicious fight.

Samuel L. Jackson, who plays Windu, didn't get to utter any of the phrases fans have been waiting to hear him spout since he was originally chosen for the role. That is another story completely.

Nor should Jango fans fret; he might be gone, but he's certainly not forgotten. Those clones, originally meant to become the Republic's clone army, appear to be the very same stormtroopers who will eventually serve Darth Vader and the Empire.

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