

FIGHT SABER

JEDI LIGHTSABER COMBAT



Yoda's bludgeons Luke Skywalker with heavy machinery during their duel, a graphic demonstration of Form V's focus on raw power in the hands of a Sith.

precisely blinded in both eyes by Vader's blade in a duel. Vader is thus a far more formidable foe on Bespin than he was against Ben Kenobi on the Death Star. His technique lacks the advanced polish of study with lifelong masters, but he wields his Form V power with utter confidence against Luke Skywalker, masterfully taunting Skywalker as he seeks to dominate his spirit in the evil Sith tradition of *dun m'och*.

In his duel against Darth Vader on Bespin, Luke Skywalker reveals himself as an extraordinarily gifted artist with the blade who has largely taught himself. After a single brief session with Obi-Wan Kenobi years ago, and only short time with Yoda, Skywalker is able to hold up against a Dark Lord of the Sith at the height of his powers. It is only Vader's much greater experience that gives the Dark Lord the dominant edge in the battle.

Return of the Jedi

By the time of the Battle of Endor, Luke Skywalker has studied some lightsaber technique from Obi-Wan's journal and greatly advanced his abilities. Without a Master, such advancement would be nearly impossible for most, but Skywalker's unparalleled aptitude makes him a match for Darth Vader in their fateful duel onboard the second Death Star. Both are limited, Vader by his cybernetic body parts and Skywalker by his relative lack of experience dueling. But Skywalker's skill at blaster deflection is highly refined, and his lightsaber technique is so superb that he is able to duel the Dark Lord on even footing—and finally able to defeat a man who is a powerful living product of the ancient Jedi sword traditions from time immemorial. Such an achievement with little formal training is a testament to



In his final assault on Vader, Luke Skywalker mirrors Vader's own Form V technique and responds with a furious demonstration of Form V's raw strength. An observing Jedi Master would be astonished at such instantaneous learning in battle.

YODA'S LEGACY

As they teach in the Temple, fighting styles are philosophical styles, and all battles are really battles of spirit. It is therefore interesting to observe that it is most of all Yoda's distinctive approach to the Force that determines not only his fighting style but much of the struggle that we see between the Jedi and the Sith. Yoda teaches open-mindedness far more than other Jedi Masters, and this leads to both great and terrible things in his disciples. In identifying what has happened to the "missing" planet Kamino, Yoda's young students are able to imagine a corruption of data in the Jedi Archive that the Archive's own director could not, because they think for themselves. But Yoda's other students—and their successors—pursue independence to other effects: Count Dooku leaves the Jedi Order and falls to the dark side, while Dooku's apprentice Qui-Gon Jinn repeatedly defies the Jedi Council and insists on training the dangerous Anakin Skywalker, to the ruin of the galaxy. Luke Skywalker, paradoxically, absorbs enough of Yoda's philosophy during his brief apprenticeship on Dagobah that Skywalker then defies Yoda's counsel and goes to Bespin to battle Darth Vader. In the end, Yoda's legacy is the greatest triumph of the Force: it is only Yoda's unique focus on open-mindedness that helps Luke Skywalker to see that his own mentors are wrong. He instead trusts his own belief that the only way to defeat Darth Vader is through the very opposite of *dun m'och*. To conquer Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker creates a new kind of victory. Through a faith resolute validation of his opponent's spirit, a faith that overcomes all obstacles, Luke finally redeems Anakin Skywalker and brings balance to the Force.

Skywalker's innate abilities and instinctive skill. Tremendously strong with the Force, Skywalker never crosses the line into Sith hatefulness and ceases his attack immediately upon rendering his foe helpless—an even more impressive demonstration of self-mastery than his lightsaber skills.