

LEGENDARY

THE LORD OF THE RINGS — STAR WARS

ANAKIN'S DESTINY



Places and
Forms of
Power

Space
and
Exchange

Myths
and
Heroes

The idea
of
Progress

Scene 1

1. Introduce the document.
2. Say everything you can about Anakin.
 - Social status, family situation, dreams...
3. Say everything you can about the strangers.

Scene 2

4. Explain the situation.
 - What is changing?

5. Explain Anakin's feelings
6. What is his promise?

Text

7. What are the historical similarities in that scene?
8. What does Shmi and Anakin's story refer to?
9. Why can't Qui-Gon free all the slaves?



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Slavery and emancipation

In *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, we encounter obvious and familiar forms of slavery. Slavery is illegal in the Republic, but it exists in the Outer Rim, where the Republic has influence but no direct power. This is much like the world in the late nineteenth century. At the Berlin Conference of 1884 and the Brussels Convention of 1889, the major powers of Europe, as well as the United States, agreed to a complete end to the African slave trade and to end human bondage wherever these Western powers had influence. Yet in reality, slavery, bondage, and "slavelike conditions" proliferated in the European colonies of Africa, because the colonizing powers tacitly agreed that there would be little investigation of actual conditions "beyond the line" of civilization. Such is the case on Tatooine, where Shmi Skywalker and her young son, Anakin, are slaves. Shmi had been born free but was captured by pirates (along with her family) and sold into slavery; she and her son are eventually acquired by Gardulla the Hutt. The same process also applied to Africans, kidnapped from their homes by other Africans who operated as slave catchers. The captives were marched to the coast and sold to European traders, who then brought them to the Americas, where they were sold and often resold. No one in Brazil, the Caribbean, or the American South questioned the provenance of slaves who were brought from Africa.

Gardulla later loses Shmi and her son, Anakin, to Watto the Toydarian in a bet over a Podrace. This is typical of the nature of slavery. Slaves in the ancient world, the medieval world, and the American South were property, to be bought, sold, given away, and used as collateral for debt or even to settle a wager.

When Qui-Gon Jinn, a Jedi Master, lands on Tatooine to repair his ship, he comes to the junkyard of Watto, looking for spare parts. There Jinn meets the young Anakin and, later, his mother, who are Watto's slaves. Anakin has dreamed of becoming a Jedi, and in one of his dreams he "came back" to Tatooine as a Jedi "and freed all the slaves." On meeting a real Jedi, the child Anakin thinks his dream will come true. He will be emancipated by Jinn, and then he can become a Jedi and return to free the slaves. Thus, the seemingly naive Anakin asks Jinn if he has come liberate him. Jinn honestly replies, "I didn't actually come here to free slaves." This is surely beyond the powers of a Jedi Knight, even though the Jedi are dedicated to justice. Slavery might be wrong and in violation of the laws of the Republic, but in a remote place such as Tatooine, it is a reality.

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