Prepare yourself for a nonstop Leia-fest. The New Republic’s new leader is back in bondage again, but at least this time she doesn’t have Jabba the Hut slobbering all over her. Kidnapped after a clandestine mission to the former prison-planet Nam Chorios goes awry, Leia relies on her wits, her ever-developing Jedi powers (including some mean saber-swinging), and her pals to escape, survive, and resolve the conflict on the desolate planet. Han, Chewie, and Lando may get short shrift in Planet of Twilight, but Luke gets in some good scenes on the trail of Force-sensitive babe Callista, and the droids provide more than their share of laughs. While veteran writer Hambly doesn’t subscribe to the admittedly entertaining shut-up-and-start-blasting school of Star Wars writing, her skilled characterizations and more literary stylings are a welcome addition to the fold. —Paul Hughes

My Personal Review:
Barbara Hambly has twice proven to be incapable of handling the reins of the Star Wars Universe. She is supposedly an accomplished science fiction. While that may be true in other stories, she lacks the understanding and ability to embrace the Star Wars novels and create compelling episodes in this ongoing series. Her first attempt was Children of the Jedi, which was a long, ponderous, and slow book. If a novel like this is slow, its a cardinal sin in writing. The reader gets bored and then frustrated with the book and is tempted to put it down permanently. The disappointing thing about Children of the Jedi was that the story, itself, had a great deal of potential and could have (should have) been a rousing novel. Planet of Twilight is Ms. Hambly’s second attempt at a Star Wars novel. Sadly, it fails for all the same reasons that Children of the Jedi did. It is long, ponderous, and slow. Her prose is so wordy that she sometimes takes up an entire page to describe items or scenes that should only take a sentence or two to describe. An editor could have helped her dramatically here. Her cutesy terminology also causes the reader to do a double-take and wonder if they read what they just read. Some examples have her referring to a coffee-like beverage as caffeine and a potato-like...
substance as topatoes. It seems to indicate a lack of true imagination and its slightly insulting to the reader who would much rather she used the original words or develop completely different words. Planet of Twilight is comparable to Children of the Jedi in the sense that it has an equally interesting plot that is completely muted by Hambly's writing style. In this story, there appears to be a Death Seed plague that is infecting the galaxy and causing massive loss of life. In an attempt to find out what has happened and establish diplomatic ties with the Chorios system, Princess Leia traveled to the planet of Nam Chorios, where most of the distress seems to originate. It seems the Death Seed plague is actually a species of insect-like creatures called drochs that can suck the life energy out of people. Unfortunately for Leia, she gets trapped on the planet by its evil ruler, Seti Ashgad and he suspicious assistant Dzym. Because of the strong defensive system set up on the planet, she is also unable to be rescued for quite some time. Luke Skywalker, of course, tries to save his sister while also tying up the loose ends of the Calista romance.

There are moments when this story seems like it could really take off and captivate the reader. Alas, Hambly continually confounds the reader with her writing. I can only hope that Hambly does not get another chance to write Star Wars novels. People read these stories because they are looking for an escape. They want an entertaining read that flows and isn't too much of a struggle to read. This isn't a novel for a school book report. If the writers style makes the novel too much of a chore to read, the reader is just going to put it aside and not read it anymore. That is the true mark of the failure of a Star Wars novel and it is exactly what has happened with Planet of Twilight.

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