Fifty-seven years have passed since the events of Phantom Menace, 25 since A New Hope, and 21 since the Empire's final defeat over Endor. The still-fragile New Republic, rocked by internal conflict, now faces a potentially overwhelming challenge from beyond the known galaxy: the Yuuzhan Vong, a sinister race of warriors using highly advanced (and creepy) organic devices and vehicles, whose immense strength and technological edge lets them fight toe to toe with Jedi. And who better to flesh out these powerful and malevolent aliens, so dismissive and disdainful of humanity, than R.A. Salvatore, the author who almost single-handedly popularized Dungeons and Dragons equally awful bad guys, the Drow, with his Drizzt DoUrden books. In kicking off Del Rey's five-year New Jedi Order story arc, Salvatore must endure the predictable hazing of any new Star Wars author. But an accomplished storyteller backed by legions of fans, the Dark Elf author proves to be up to the task and thankfully sensitive to the well-loved characters he's borrowing time with. Vector Prime sets up the early stages of the covert Praetorite Vong invasion, giving us a closeup glimpse of this nefarious new race and following our heroes attempts to combat them. Luke struggles with whether to revive the Jedi Council; Mara still fights her deadly disease; Lando is back helping Han, Chewie, and Leia; and Leia and Solos kids finally come into their own. Prepare yourself, though, for when a major, beloved character gets ceremoniously smushed. (Although we've seen Boba Fett come back from worse....) --Paul Hughes

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