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Featured Samples

How Admiral Akbar Became the Original Star Wars Rebel

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Though his role in the final act of *Return of the Jedi* amounts to little more than a cameo, Gial Ackbar remains one of the most iconic Star Wars characters in the saga, a Churchillian tour-de-force who embodies the essence of the stalwart leader. Comic book writers have always been fascinated by, and keen to expand upon Ackbar's lore, fleshing out a personality which already seemed fully formed in his first appearance on screen.

In 2018's *Darth Vader* comic book series, Ackbar, along with his fellow Calamarians, were introduced as the first inception of a galactic resistance, the spark igniting a galaxy-wide rebel alliance.

In Charles Soule's masterful *The Burning Seas*, third instalment in the *Dark Lord of the Sith*, events following *Revenge of the Sith* are expanded upon as Vader tracks down the last of the Jedi, a task which brings him to Ackbar's ocean world of Mon Calamari. Here the Calamarian king, Lee-Char, has offered refuge to a surviving Jedi, Ferren Barr and his gang of anti-imperialist warriors.

Ackbar, a close advisor to the king, is commander of the Mon Calamari Guard but not yet admiral in charge of his own fleet. As events unfold and Vader's orbiting star destroyers (commanded by the quietly terrifying Moff Tarkin) menace the peaceful planet below, Ferren Barr persuades Lee-Char and his commanders to resist Tarkin's unreasonable trade demands, triggering a full scale Imperial offensive.

This battle represents the first resistance on a planet-wide scale to Palpatine's newly forged Empire. Ackbar is established early on as a dedicated soldier, entering the heart of the conflict as he bravely leads a squadron of aquatic troops in a direct assault upon the enemy.

But the battle goes ill when Barr comes face to face with Vader and reveals his true nature - a fallen Jedi, full of pride and keen to kick-start a dubious prophetic vision. With his Jedi powers, Barr has witnessed the start and culmination of a great galactic rebellion and uses the impressionable Lee-Char to commence this vision. But the Jedi's agenda soon becomes clear. Barr is willing to sacrifice Mon Calamari for the cause. Lee-Char is little more than a gullible catalyst.

In the midst of Tarkin's vicious and unrelenting bombardment, Ackbar leads a desperate evacuation, flying heavily shielded deep space mining craft through an onslaught of star destroyer beams, taking the Calamarian resistance out into the stars.

Barr takes credit for all future rebel victories when he reveals that Ackbar and the other surviving militarists will build a galaxy-wide rebellion, that Ackbar himself will play a prominent role in two major strikes against the Empire. Ackbar will also be present when Palpatine's tyrannical hold on the galaxy finally fails.

The ruthless destruction of Mon Calamari serves as an effective backdrop for the introduction of the now iconic Ackbar, a book-end character whose origins and finale mark both the start of the rebel alliance and its ultimate victory within the on-screen universe. Barr's role as the Jedi errs toward darkness while still underlining the Churchillian undertones of Ackbar's essence, positing that a great sacrifice may be justified in the face of unmitigated evil.