Misium fell painfully to the floor of the large, domed room. His anger flared for a moment, his pride hurt more than anything. He had fallen through the floor of an old abandoned hallway in an unexplored section of the Anchorage. He hated to look so stupid, especially in front of others, like the group of searchers he’d been walking in front of only a moment ago.

“Keep searching for Teylas,” he called up to the rest of the team, “I’ll look for a way back up to join you again.”

The room was nearly pitch black. He’d grown accustomed to the darkness, generally electing to leave lights off in his quarters, but even *he* struggled to make out what the shapes were that surrounded him.

Moving his light around in front of himself, large shadows moved on the walls in the distance. Ancient trees, long dead, stood hunched over in front of him. He didn’t recognize these trees from any planet he’d been to. Machines nearby suggested that they had been modified by the ancient Sith Empire for purposes unknown. He had clearly landed in some manner of research arboretum. Sith commonly mutated beasts of all sorts, but he wondered what interest these ancient Sith may have had in trees.

As he moved towards the tree that stood in front of him, he began to notice some sort of sap dripping down to the floor. Strange, for a tree that must have been dead for at least a couple thousand years. He reached toward the sap with a finger, but stopped suddenly, sensing the beast only a moment too late. He tried to move to the side, but not quickly enough. It leapt past him, catching his arm for a moment, its teeth opening a number of deep gashes in his left arm.

The beast turned to face him. Though it was heavily mutated by Sith alchemy, its shape was unmistakable. It was a giant, 6-foot tall, spiky, armored Kowakian monkey-lizard. These Sith had a sense of humor. Misium was too furious to laugh, though, pulling his lightsaber from his belt. He should have been on his guard and prepared, but he hadn’t imagined anything could still be alive on a station that had been left forgotten for over 3000 years.

The monkey-lizard lunged towards him, swinging its large clawed hand at his face. Misium ignited his lightsaber and raised it. With a loud roar, it retreated back a few steps, its hand lay severed on the floor beside him.

“You’re going to pay for this, monkey. I’m going to rip the armor from your body and carve my history into whatever’s beneath!”

With a little help from the force, he leaped over the beast’s head and landed on its back. He grabbed a firm hold onto one of the thick plates on its back as it began to try and shake him off. Pulling hard, the beast cried out in pain. A few moments later, a ripping sound and the thick armor plate tore free as blood began to spill out.

Without the armor plating to hold onto, he lost his balance and fell from the monkey-lizard’s back. As it turned to retreat, Misium noticed the presence of numerous other beasts approaching, undoubtedly called forth by the cries of the monkey-lizard he’d injured.

*“That’s… a lot of sithspawn.”* he thought. *“Too many.”*

He could feel them all around him, in many of the adjacent rooms and hallways. But there was something odd. He sensed a large cluster of them through a short hallway and into the next room. Focusing closer, he felt something familiar. It was faint, but he was sure of it. Teylas. No wonder they hadn’t found him sooner. He couldn’t be doing well.

Misium headed for the hallway that led to where Teylas was. There were a lot of sithspawn headed for him, but fortunately he had a plan. Stopping inside the hallway, he used the force to pull the door closed behind him. The door was thick and heavy, but the electrical systems that controlled it weren’t up to make the task easier. He spotted at least half a dozen sithspawn bounding towards him as the door finally slid into place. But that was the least of his problems.

There were at least a dozen more in the room in front of him. They were outside another door, trying to claw their way through the junk that had been pushed in front of it. He could sense Teylas inside that room, barely clinging to life.

Misium called out to the beasts and readied his lightsaber. Most of them turned and headed for him. They snarled and growled as their claws clacked loudly on the durasteel floor. But the hallway he stood in was small and served as a bottleneck. The beasts collided with the doorway, each fighting to squeeze past the others to get inside. He took advantage of their disorganization and began to drive his lightsaber into their skulls, one at a time, while dodging their large claws. As the doorway filled up, he force pushed a few corpses to the side to let the last stragglers through. In the end, he only suffered a few more small slices from all of the flailing monkey-lizard claws. Had they been a bit more intelligent, he wouldn’t likely have made it out alive.

He took a moment to feel out with the force but felt no other sithspawn on this side of the door. He pushed the rest of the corpses away from the door and rushed to the blocked door. Force pushing the junk to the side, he found Teylas unconscious on the floor in front of a series of ancient kolto tanks. He’d almost made it. He helped Teylas into one of the tanks and kicked on a nearby generator. Thankfully there was still juice in it. A medical bay always has to have backup power.

While Teylas took some time to heal, Misium left the room and moved some of the junk back in front of the doorway. He began to search the nearby rooms and hallways, looking for a way back to the search teams above. He was careful, this time, to watch his step. He certainly didn’t need anymore surprises.

Most of the adjacent rooms were of little interest. There were ransacked storage rooms where the ancient soldiers had likely searched for any remaining scraps of food they could find, bathrooms, common areas, and other such rooms. But he also found a small lab with some data spikes that he assumed might be useful. He grabbed them and continued on. Throughout his search he found a few elevators, but with the power out in this section, they were useless. Eventually, though, he found a stairway leading up, and as he approached it, he could hear faint sounds echoing from above.

He moved cautiously at first, but as he reached the top of the stairs, the sounds became clearer and he could tell he’d found one of the search teams. He called out for their attention and led them back to the medical bay where Teylas was still recuperating.

Misium entered the conference room, joining the rest of the Plagueians who sat around Teylas, who had recovered a great deal but was still clearly recovering. Of course everyone wanted to know what had happened and how a mere Jedi Hunter had managed to survive what the Battlemaster had nearly not.

“I ended up in a large research arboretum of some sort” Teylas began. “It was filled with mutated trees and areas where I’m sure other plants had once been. By now, they’ve decayed and are gone. But the trees remain. Some of them are leaking sap.”

“I saw that as well while I was down there. It’s been thousands of years, how is it still leaking sap? Or is it just petrified? I was going to touch it to find out, but that fucking monkey-lizard attacked me.”

“A monkey-lizard did that to you?” Viv inquired.

“It was a big monkey-lizard.”

“It’s good that you didn’t touch it.” Teylas warned. “When I touched it, it severed my connection to the force. The ancient Sith must have been trying to cultivate a weapon to use against the jedi. Without the force, I wasn’t able to sense the sithspawn that had closed in on me. I managed to kill a few of them and barricade myself in that medical bay, but I guess I didn’t quite make it to the kolto tanks before my injuries took their hold of me. I seem to have regained my connection to the force, mostly. But it does feel a little weakened still.”

“This sap could be very useful to us. We should send a team down there to clear out these ‘big tough monkey-lizards’ and try to recover some samples of it. Perhaps we can reverse engineer it. Or maybe there’s still data on it down there.” Viv proposed.

“No need.” Misium chimed in. “I found these data spikes in a nearby lab while searching for a way back up. Of course, clearing out the sithspawn wouldn’t be a terrible idea anyway, but hopefully all the information we need to recreate that sap or the trees that produce it can be found on these data spikes.”

“Incredible, Misium. We may just have to promote you to Knight for this.”