

# “Lost and Found”

*OT Turel Sorenn, #13830*

**Sith Academy Interior**  
**Valley of the Dark Lords Entrance**  
**Korriban, Horuset System**  
**Now**

“Hand me another charge would you Rhi?” Turel inquired as he balanced precariously on a plasteel crate affixing adhesive putty to the capstone of an arch holding up a hallway ceiling. The stone edifice of the Sith academy was thousands of years old and held secrets that would drive most mad. It really was a shame to damage such a historical treasure, but this was war and the loyalist position was on the verge of being overrun. Survival trumped scholarship any day.

Rhiann handed Turel another charge from his backpack on the floor, cocking an eyebrow as she took stock of the previously placed charges further up the hallway toward the front entryway. “Aren’t you using too much? This structure seems a bit...unstable.”

The Quaestor flashed a cheesy grin as he took the charge from the Sephi, “Trust me.” Rhiann shook her head disapprovingly in response as she collected Turel’s backpack and prepared to move to the fall back position in the main hall of the academy.

The sound of blaster fire and explosions echoing down the hall from the academy entrance intensified. That wasn’t a good sign. The rebel forces led by Clan Taldryan outnumbered the beleaguered loyalists 5 to 1. Reinforcements for both sides were on the way, which would surely even the odds, but not if the loyalists were overrun first. The loyalist vanguard had simply taken too many casualties driving the One Sith out of the Academy. Now their very lives depended on holding the academy long enough for help to arrive.

Turel jumped down and picked up the crate to move to the next weak point he had picked out. “A few more secondary charges and we’ll be in business. Damn Tally-whackers won’t know what hit them.”

The hallway shook with the sound of a mortar round hitting dangerously close to the front entrance of the academy. Dust and bits of sand fell from the ancient ceiling and clouded the air. The Quaestor pulled up the teal colored neck gaiter of his *Pride* armor to filter out the freshly disturbed particles. He carefully checked to ensure that the explosive charges he had just placed remained secure. Satisfied with his work he turned his attention to the sound of shouting and frantic footsteps coming down the hall.

Unsure of who or what was heading his way, Turel unslung a Karpaki Fifty slugthrower rifle and signaled for Rhiann to take up a defensive position as he ran back toward a T intersection in the hallway. The Quaestor took up a crouched position at the intersection to aim his rifle

down the hall, using the corner as cover. He was steadying his breathing to take off some heads when he spied a flock of soldiers in the unmistakable uniform of the Iron Throne racing his way. The rifle went back over his shoulder as he stood up. He and Rhiann began directing traffic back toward the positions in the main hall.

A soldier about Turel's age with an immaculately regulation military haircut rounded the corner yelling orders as he went. "To the fall back positions! Move!" The authority and urgency in his voice seemed to give his men an extra pep in their step as they scurried down the hall. Tolyn "Tusken" Skybender ushered about a platoon's worth of soldiers around the corner before traversing the hallway to stop and address the Quaestor. "We're out of time my Lord, the rebel forces will be here any second."

"I trust you gave as good as you got."

"Aye, but once they dialed their mortars in on our positions we couldn't hold them back any longer. A squad volunteered to stay behind to buy more time, I'm going back to them."

The Obelisk threw a armored fist in front of the soldier. "No. You have more Tallys to kill before you can martyr yourself." The soldier glared at the Quaestor, disrespect of the soldier's sense of duty aside, Turel had a point. "The Grand Master is on his way with reinforcements from Naga Sadow, he needs us to hold this position long enough for him to arrive."

"Understood my Lord."

"Besides, I have a little surprise for our rebel friends." Turel reached up to his right ear to key up his communicator. "Skar, come in." The Templar paced around for a few tense seconds waiting for a response. Tolyn and Rhiann could only hear Turel's side of the conversation. "What's your status? ... Is Arcia still with you? ... Grab her and any remaining troops, deploy smoke and fall back immediately, that's an order!" He lowered his hand and stood up. "Get ready, the rest of our forces are coming in hot. You might want to fall back a safe distance, this party is about to bring the roof down."

Rhiann cocked an eyebrow, "That was uncharastically soldier-like of you."

Turel shrugged. "I want to be an Obelisk General when I grow up, what can I say?"

Almost on cue, Skar came bolting around the corner, lightsaber ignited followed by a squad's worth of soldiers. The masked Kaleesh ushered soldiers as he stood ready to deflect any stray blaster bolts from pursuing enemies. Turel stopped Skar as he ran past behind the last of the soldiers.

"Where's Arcia?"

“She’s right behind me.”

“Uh, no she isn’t.”

Before Skar could retort, a cloud of smoke illuminated by a green glow and blaster shots began to fill the far end of the hallway. Arcia emerged from the smoke, deflecting blaster bolts with a emerald saber in her left hand and firing back with a pistol in her right. Turel and Skar instinctively took cover and pulled out their respective rifles to give Arcia some cover fire as soon as the smoke cleared.

*Come on Arcia, just get clear.*

The *Nighthawk* Captain took off at a dead sprint, holding her lightsaber behind her as she ran. Four soldiers in Taldryan colors emerged from the smoke behind her and took aim. The soldier on the left flank’s head disappeared in a cloud of red mist as Turel’s rifle shot upwards with recoil. A split second later the soldier on the far right fell backwards spinning horizontally from the force of a round to the upper right chest. Before Turel and Skar could take aim on the last two soldiers, the soldiers’ blasters opened fire. Arcia deflected the first few bolts but took a bolt to the left shoulder and spun to the ground with a cry of pain.

*FRAK!*

Rhiann already had her curved saber out deflecting stray bolts with such fluid and elegant grace one would think she was performing a choreographed dance. Turel and Skar downed the last two soldiers as Tolyn brought his E-11 to bear, ready to engage any subsequent enemy. Arcia deactivated her lightsaber and rolled behind a plasteel crate, nursing her left arm. Her moving under her own power was a good sign.

Turel slung his rifle and ducked behind the T intersection corner. He pulled out the detonator remote. “Rhiann, catch!” The Sephi made eye contact and made a graceful catch with her left hand. “Blow the charges when we’re clear of the blast zone.”

“You aren’t seriously going out there?”

Tolyn began to rise, “I’m coming with you.”

“No! I need you to lay down cover fire.” The Quaestor ignited his teal blade. “I will bum a smoke grenade off you however.” The soldier dutifully tossed the Templar a smoke grenade as Skar downed another soldier with a well placed shot. Tolyn took aim and began firing controlled bursts down the hallway.

Turel bolted down the hallway with Force-enhanced speed, saber in one hand, grenade in the other. As he got close to Arcia’s position he stuck out his right foot and dropped down into a

slide that would have made the highlight reel of a Huttball championship, releasing the grenade mid-slide. With a fresh layer of smoke for cover the Quaestor moved to assess his comrade's injury, or at least he intended to assess her injury. Instead he found himself distracted by the *Nighthawk* Captain's legendary cleavage.

Arcia took notice of the where Turel's gaze was fixated and it *wasn't* on her blaster burned deltoid. "My breasts are unscathed, I assure you." She quipped with as much venom as she could muster under the circumstances.

Snapped back into the reality of the situation the Quaestor shifted his focus to Arcia's actual injury. "Atriyu can treat that burn at the defensive position, we need to move. Now!"

"Get down *Di'kut!*"<sup>1</sup> The Exarch shouted as she shoved Turel out of the way to take out a Taldryan soldier with her blaster pistol. She nodded toward the Templar's deactivated saber, "You going to cover me or what?"

Turel raised a hand to signal to the friendlies behind him that he was popping up before jumping up, igniting his saber and blocking the incoming blaster bolts with a series of smooth, efficient movements. Arcia sprinted toward her comrades at the T intersection. By this point the Taldryan soldiers were joined by what appeared to be Knights with ruby sabers.

*Time to go!*

"Rhiann do the thing!"

The Sephi held up the detonator with an unsure expression on her face as Turel was still within the blast radius with two Knights hot on his tail. Arcia looked up at the detonator in abject horror as she realized what was going on. Skar and Tolyn instinctively dove for cover.

"Just do it!"

Time slowed down to a crawl as Rhiann clicked the detonator. Turel dove behind the plasteel crate, nearly knocking Rhiann and Arcia over. He reflexively threw out a protective field of Force energy around himself and his female comrades. The first of the charges detonated in the rear of the hallway sending soldiers and Dark Jedi flying. The charges detonated in sequence collapsing the hallway up to the T intersection sending a shockwave of dust and debris flying.

The five loyalists stood up to examine the rubble and thoroughly blocked hallway. Turel began prancing around in a premature celebration. "HA! Take **that** you Tally *Schuttas!*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mando'a for "Idiot"

<sup>2</sup> Huttese for "Slut" or female of ill repute

Before anyone else could react the ground started to shake as the sound of stone cracking and supports giving way emanated from the floor. Everyone present braced themselves with looks of confusion and terror on the faces, except Rhiann who stood firm shaking her head as if to say 'I told you so' to Turel.

The earth below the group opened up and the next thing anyone remembered was darkness and a sharp pain.

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When Turel came to he was on his back staring at the ceiling of what appeared to be an artificially lit subterranean cavern. It hurt to move as he had bruises all over his body and what felt like a cracked rib but he was whole and mostly ok. He brushed himself off and turned to see Arcia standing above him.

"He's awake, finally." Her voice dripping with contempt.

"Is everyone ok?"

"Mostly, no thanks to you."

Arcia's tone shifted ever so slightly to one of concern, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I think so."

"Good." Arcia delivered a swift kick to Turel's man parts causing the Quaestor to hunch over in pain whimpering. "**You almost got us killed** you frakkin' idiot!" Skar and Telyn winced in sympathy while Rhiann betrayed an ever so slight grin.

Turel rolled around in the fetal position for a few moments whimpering before he regained enough composure to speak in just above a whisper. "It worked didn't it?" He managed to flash his trademark grin through the throbbing pain in his genitals. Arcia scoffed loudly and turned her back to the Templar.

Telyn walked over to help the Quaestor to his feet. "If you've gotten *that* out of your system my Lords, we need to figure where we are and rejoin our comrades."

Skar appeared to be staring off into the dark tunnel beyond. "Wherever we go I'll take point, the darkness does not hinder me like it does you humans." Rhiann cleared her throat audibly in response to the Kaleesh's oversight. Skar shrugged, "And near-humans."

The Sephi nodded with satisfaction at her comrade's concession. "We are in the subterranean level, the ancient Sith used this level for keeping their creatures," She paused for dramatic effect. "And they're dead."

"Well then there must be multiple access points to the ground level then." Arcia interjected as she turned to face the rest of the group. Rhiann nodded in affirmation.

"We should be able to follow the airflow to find our way out." Turel stated as he regained his composure, though still nursing a cracked rib. "Skar, lead on."

The group gathered what equipment they had and followed the Kaleesh deeper into the tunnels with flashlights out. As they progressed Turel became more and more uncomfortable with the awkward silence and inquired, "Did anyone try to raise the others on the radio?"

"All the radios we had were damaged in the collapse." Arcia noted, turning around just long enough to shoot Turel an icy glance. He winked in response.

"Rhiann can you fix any of the radios?" The Quaestor asked, half thinking out loud.

"Not with what I have on hand, it will be quicker if we just keep moving."

"Right, right."

"I would advise my Lords against unnecessary chatter that would give our position away." Tolyn noted curtly. The rest of the group nodded silently in agreement.

The motley crew of loyalists continued to move in the direction they believed their comrades were in. Several minutes passed in tense silence as they traversed the tunnel until they reached what appeared to be the end of the natural tunnel and the beginning of a finished hallway. As they entered the hallway the group noticed the walls were decorated with ornate carvings of robed figures and ancient Sith text.

"This must be a catacomb of some kind." Rhiann observed.

Turel cringed with the memory of his last venture into a Sith catacomb, "Let's not linger, I'd rather not meet whomever or whatever the Sith kept down here."

Skar throw up a hand to halt the group as he pulled out his lightsaber with the other. He whispered, "We are not alone." The rest of the group readied their respective weapons.

Turel moved closer to the Kaleesh and communicated telepathically, "*I don't sense anything, what is it?*"

“A Human.” Skar hissed from behind his mask.

“Where?”

The Kaleesh pointed to a large chamber at the end of the hallway. Turel nodded and motioned for the group to move forward. When they came to the entrance Skar halted them and took in the room with all his senses. He pointed to a far corner. The group fanned out and began to close in on the point Skar indicated. As they moved Rhiann noticed lighting fixtures dispersed throughout the room that had been deactivated.

Without warning, Skar took off toward the corner and lept at what appeared to be thin air. When the flashlights caught up with the Kaleesh they revealed he was sitting on top of a Human male with a worn face and unnaturally blonde hair. “Who are you and what are you doing here?”

“Get off me you damned lizard!” The strange male yelled as best he could with an angry Kaleesh sitting on his chest.

“You’d better answer his questions.” Arcia remarked nonchalantly about her former ship’s quartermaster. “He tends to get a little...stabby when people piss him off.”

The blonde male exhaled audibly in resignation, “Fine, my name is Connor Grey. I’m a scholar of sorts.”

Turel motioned for Skar to let the stranger up to his feet. “Ok, Connor, what are you doing here and who do you work for?”

“I’m looking for some relics and I work for myself.”

“Suuure ya do. Which faction are you with?”

Arcia interjected, “Wait, Grey, I’ve heard the name before in DIA files. You’re that rogue Sith the Dark Council sends out to find ancient artifacts and trinkets that can’t be found.”

Connor bowed with a flourish, “One and the same, my lady.”

Rhiann activated the lighting fixtures, illuminating the room. “So, what relics precisely were you looking for Mister Grey?” She inquired flatly.

Turel interjected before the rogue Sith had a chance to answer, “Wait, wait, wait, he still hasn’t told us which side he’s on.”

“I’m not on anyone’s *side* but my own.”



"I find that hard to believe."

Connor took notice of Turel's Lion themed *Pride* armor and Tolyn's Iron Throne Armed Forces uniform. "I'm loyal to the Brotherhood," he paused for a moment, "**And** the Iron Throne, if that's what concerns you."

"We can interrogate him further once we rejoin our comrades." Tolyn turned to Connor. "Tell me, do you know your way around these catacombs?"

Connor grinned devilishly, sensing an edge over his would-be captors. "Indeed I do."

"You will take us to the ground level at once." The Iron Throne Captain demanded, punctuating his sentence by gesturing with his E-11.

The rogue Sith pulled out a cigarro and lit it, "In due time." He took a drag from the cigarra and exhaled a puff of white smoke. "I'll help you once you help me with something."

Arcia pointed her gun at Connor, "How about you take us to ground level and I don't blow your head off."

Connor silently took a few puffs before responding, "Grand Master Ashen would be very interested in what I'm searching for. I dare say he'd want you to help me secure it before moving on." He took another drag and exhaled. "A certain holocron of great value to all sides of this conflict."

"We don't have time, we need to rejoin our forces to hold the ground level from assault." Turel remarked with a frown.

"Your whole assault will be for naught if you fail to secure this holocron."

Turel, the ex-gangster from Nar Shaddaa got into Conner's face. "Why do I get the feeling you're running a game on us? You can't play a player." The Sith grinned and exhaled smoke into the Quaestor's face. Arcia snickered ever so slightly at Turel's tough guy routine backfiring on him.

"If we were to help you, where would our search begin and how close were you to the holocron?" Rhiann inquired.

"I believe the holocron is in this very chamber or very near it. There is a likely a hidden side chamber that is opened through a mechanism in this room."

"How can we help?"

“You can’t be serious!” Turel interjected.

The Sephi never broke eye contact with Connor. “He has a point, besides moving through this labyrinth with a guide would save us time in the long run. We are essentially guessing on which way to go.”

“The lovely lady has a point.”

Without missing a beat Rhiann added, “and should he waste our time, I will cut his head off and leave it as a warning to others,” in a perfectly manner of fact tone. Turel looked at his friend with a sincere look of shock as if he couldn’t believe what he just heard. The Sephi winked at the Quaestor out of sight of the rogue Sith.

“Very well, let’s get started. And for heaven’s sake don’t touch anything!”

The group split into different parts of the chamber searching for anything unusual that might betray a opening mechanism. Several minutes of searching passed to no avail. Knowing that a battle was raging topside while they fiddled around in an ancient Sith catacomb didn’t ease the party’s frustration.

Exasperated Turel leaned up against a statue in an alcove. “Didn’t the Sith ever build anything that wasn’t underground or filled with traps and dead things?”

“Hey don’t touch anything!”

The Obelisk gave a dismissive gesture, “Pssh, it’s not like this statue here is going to bite me.” The statue shifted into the wall a few inches with a click. “What was that?” Rhiann buried her face in her hands in frustration. Before Turel could move the entire alcove spun around taking him with it and dumping him into an adjacent chamber behind the wall.

“Oh just great! I frakkin’ hate the Sith!” The Templar exclaimed as he gave the statue a swift kick causing pain to shoot up from his cracked rib. “This is just perfect. The next time someone tells me to storm an ancient Sith death trap I’m just going to base delta zero the whole frakkin’ grid square.” He slammed his fist on the alcove wall. “Bomb it from orbit, it’s the only way to be sure.” Turel leaned his forehead against the stone wall and slumped down in frustration.

An altar in the center of the tiny chamber began to glow a bright red, almost in response to the Obelisk’s anger. He slowly turned around, drawn instinctively toward the source of the eerie glow. “Ancient Sith glowy thingy, seems legit.” He sarcastically commented to no one in particular as he began to move toward the altar. “What could possibly go right?”

As he drew closer Turel noticed the source of the glow was indeed the holocron the group and shady Sith had been searching for. He took the ruby, pyramid shaped holocron from the altar and stared deeply into it. "All this trouble for an ancient glow in the dark paperweight." The holocron began to shift in his hand, almost in direct response to his sarcasm.

A robed male figure with a bald head, worn skin and dark circles under yellow eyes appeared before him. "Greetings, I am the gatekeeper of this holocron. Do you know who I am seeker?"

"Don't you mean who you *were* gatekeeper since you aren't actually here."

"Very astute, but you still haven't answered my question."

"Look, I really need to get out of this chamber, so if you can't help me with that then '**be gone**' or whatever magic Sith words it takes to get you to go away."

"To gain the answer you seek you must give answers in return."

Turel cocked an eyebrow at the robed gatekeeper, "Alright you self important piece of office decor, I'll answer your bloody question. You *were* Darth Bane."

"Very good."

"Oh please, aren't you holocrons supposed to be telepathic or something? I'm a Professor of the Shadow Academy, *of course* I know who Darth Bane is. You're wasting my time."

"You are wasting your own time mortal, I am eternal."

"Oh really? How about I turn you into a lightsaber crystal and see just how immortal you really are?"

"Empty threats will gain you nothing."

The Templar scoffed at the Gatekeeper. "You know, that's the kind of vague, unhelpful, self-serving run around I'd expect to get from a Jedi holocron. I thought Sith Lords were more direct."

"You waste your breath with empty provocations when you so clearly need the freedom I can offer you."

"Freedom? Freedom of what exactly? The freedom to be a backstabbing sociopath who stood by and let his entire order get wiped out just he could be the last man standing hmmm?"

"I don't need to justify my actions to one who deludes himself into thinking he is still a Jedi after joining a Dark Brotherhood."

Turel raised a finger at the gatekeeper, "Ah ha! My provocations aren't empty. You can feel anger." The gatekeeper hologram crossed his arms in apparent frustration. "Besides our Brotherhood is nothing like Kaan's Brotherhood."

"History repeats itself because ignorant fools fail to heed its lessons. The Brotherhood you serve is *exactly* like Kaan's. Power is diluted among the many, the purity of Sith teachings are perverted. The weak bleat like sheep, thinking themselves strong. Your Brotherhood is worse: your supposed Grand Master admits Jedi apostates into his fellowship. Disgusting."

"If you can read my thoughts then you know that whole rule of two thing didn't work out so well in the end."

"The Jedi were destroyed, the Sith ruled the galaxy even if it was for a time. I'd say I was vindicated."

Turel rolled his eyes. "Yeah, the Jedi came back with a vengeance and broke your little legacy. Now Sith and Jedi have returned to the galaxy in larger numbers. The Force and the galaxy inevitably return to a state of equilibrium. Darth Plagueis understood this, strange that you do not."

The gatekeeper's eyes narrowed on the Quaestor, "You wouldn't have found this chamber or this holocron if you did not yearn deep down for the knowledge I can provide, the knowledge of greater heights of power than you can possibly imagine. Your Star Chamber and so-called Grand Masters are fools and mere children compared to the wealth of knowledge and power I possess."

"Clearly you've never met any of them."

"The one you serve, the Lion, strives for personal immortality and unity among dark brethren that countless others have tried and failed to achieve over the millennia. He will fail as the others before him have. While the power of the Dark Side is so diluted across so many mundane Sith pretenders, immortality is impossible. And unity? To struggle against rivals, to accumulate power, that is what it is to be Sith. With Sith there can only be the fleeting unity between a single master and apprentice. To assert otherwise is a perverse heresy and folly." The gatekeeper continued, "I won't even comment on the one called Pravus who is a traitor in more ways than you suspect."

"I know right! What kind of a Sith Lord wears white anyway? He's probably a closet Jedi if you ask me."

The gatekeeper focused his gaze on Turel, probing deeper into his mind. "Enough misdirection!" He paused as the search continued. "You desperately hide from the truth, the truth of who and what you really are."

"And what truth would that be?"

"You are Sith, you've always been Sith, even if you didn't know it." The visage of Darth Bane let that sink in before continuing. "Search your feelings you know this to be true. You run from it, but the need always catches you. When the Jedi cast you out and your Shadow Lord offered you power and prestige, you left at the chance to betray everything you once claimed to stand for as a Jedi. Be honest with yourself and accept what I have to offer."

Before Turel could respond the wall inside the alcove he entered the chamber through began to glow white hot in a slowly moving pattern along the seam of the wall. Someone was cutting through with a lightsaber on the other side. "Looks like my friends are coming through."

"Consider my offer, you could be so much more than you are if you but embrace the true path of the Sith." The Gatekeeper's visage faded away with his voice as the holocron returned to its original, non-glowing state.

Turel stood staring at the now lifeless holocron as the wall came crashing down beside him. "Boring conversation anyway." He stuffed the relic in the a pouch on his belt.

Skar walked onto the fallen wall, his saber ablaze. "Who were you talking to?"

"No one in particular. It seems someone beat us to the holocron, it's gone." Turel vacantly replied as he unconsciously rested his hand on the belt pouch.

Connor rushed into the small chamber and began examining the altar. "Such a shame, I could have made a lot of credits off that particular trinket. Oh well, follow me, there's a stairwell to ground level not too far from here."

The Jedi turned Obelisk patted the pouch on his belt. "It is a shame, who knows what we could have learned from that holocron." As he turned to leave the chamber he could have sworn he saw Darth Bane's visage smiling out of the corner of his eye and heard the faintest of laughter in the corner of his mind.