Legorii dropped the scrolls at the Grand Master’s feet and left the chamber.

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“Tusken Skybender,” a voice cooed.

The man’s grey eyes narrowed as he appraised the woman addressing him. She was not an attractive woman by conventional standards. Even those with eclectic tastes, those drawn to the Iktotchi, would not have found her attractive. But there was something tantalizing about her regardless. Skybender was not a young man; perhaps in his youth, he would not have understood his own interest.

*It’s her power*.

Just as Skybender had been pulled toward the Iron Throne like a moon in orbit, he felt himself drawn toward Darth Necren.

“I’m surprised you aren’t in hiding, Necren,” Skybender responded. “The streets of Dreshdae are friendly to few these days. Why risk it?”

Necren smiled, revealing sharpened teeth. “You and I both know why, Tusken. We cannot allow Torin to deliver the scrolls to his master.”

Skybender waved a hand dismissively. “Torin doesn’t have the scrolls, those are just rumors. If anyone knows where they are, it’s Grey.”

The robed Sith scoffed. “Grey? Grey’s dead, Skybender. Where’ve you been?”

*Dead? Impossible. Grey was the only one who could point him toward the scrolls…*

“That’s impossible, Grey’s too careful for that. He’s been playing all of us from the start.”

Necren lifted a dark, asymmetric shape from a bag at her hip. With a slight shrug, she tossed it toward Tusken. It hit the ground with a meaty *thwack* and rolled only slightly before coming to rest. Tusken peered down at it, his sharp gaze looking past the bloodied, burnt hairs to make out the distinctive features of the rogue Jedi. Or, at least, half of those features, for his skull had been carved in half.

Had he been a younger man, perhaps Skybender would have retched. Instead, he turned his gaze back to Darth Necren. “Very well, Grey’s dead. What now?”

Necren cackled, her laughter high-pitched and abrasive. “What now? Now, Skybender, I will take your troops and kill Torin before he can bring those scrolls to Esoteric. You may come along if you wish.” She turned and started to walk away.

Tusken hesitated. The commander of the Iron Throne contingent that he’d been assigned was looking at him expectantly. “Necren! What are you going to do with the scrolls?” he called after her.

“I’ll deliver them to Lord Ashen,” came the faint reply.

Tusken sighed. He nodded to his commander, and watched as the soldiers fell into step behind Necren.

*We’ll see about that.*

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The scrolls sat there, motionless. They said nothing. They waited.

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Torin knelt before Esoteric, his head bent in an out-of-character display of submission. He knew better than to insult his master. Not at a time like this, when everything could be theirs, or everything could be lost.

“Stand, Torin,” his icy command came, and the erratic One Sith obeyed.

Esoteric, hooded, ran a finger along the edge of one of the scrolls. “You’ve done well. We’re mere moments away from launching our final assault on the beleaguered Brotherhood forces. With these, our victory is all but assured.”

Torin nodded. “Yes, my Lord. Eternal glory and power will soon be yours,” he intoned.

The shadowy figure chuckled, a raspy and unnatural sound. “Will be ours, Torin. Don’t be so timid. I won’t hurt you.”

The gearhead forced a smile. “Of course, I don’t mean to suggest otherwise, I’m not afraid…I mean, I am afraid…I don’t mean to suggest that you’re…” He trailed off awkwardly, subsiding into a sullen and embarrassed silence.

Esoteric chuckled once more, and turned to the masked figure beside him. Suddenly, he was no longer laughing. “Kill him.”

The masked figure nodded, and an emerald lightsaber sprang to life in his hand, separating Torin’s head from his shoulders.

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Legorii removed his mask and grabbed the scrolls. “Sorry, Eso, I’m gonna be needing these.”

He turned and ran as Esoteric realized what was happening. He shouted a command to his remaining guardsmen, but all three turned their blades on him. Legorii could have smiled at the Shadow Clan’s deception, but he dared not. He would forever remember the sacrifice of the three Equites who had given up their lives to let him escape.

He sprinted for the hangar, where a skirmish had already erupted. Loyalists were attempting to clear a path to a waiting shuttle, and Legorii recognized a few of his own Arconans engaging Esoteric’s minions. He kept his head down and ran. The shuttle took him toward the waiting Grand Master.

--Legorii #8893