

Sands of Time Fiction 2

Terrors from the Deep

Continued from Muz's report and "A Moraband Tale"...

Macron Sadow, #4856 in red words: 2821

Tasha'Vel Versea, #14192 in blue words: 1481

Total Words: 4302

Secret chamber

Somewhere

Moraband

Previously....

"Whe, wher, where's... Where's Tasha?"

The scream filled their ears again as she fell from the ceiling, fingers bloody and raw from clawing at the stone, her skin fading before their eyes. She opened her mouth and nothing but blood and inarticulate howls came as she bounded toward them, rage in her cloudy eyes. "

Now...

"Och hell!" Firith gasped in surprise as Tasha's hands clutched at his throat. He was caught off-guard and unwilling to hurt her. Blood dripped from her lips as she bit her own tongue in-between howls. Her hands wrapped themselves around his neck as her lekku twitched in rage. "Gurrrk! Whurg the fughhrg!"

"Nobody touch anything!" shouted Mactire as the room began to erupt into chaos. Lilith moved back toward the entrance, Tasha and Firith danced their danse macabre, and the HK droid merely regarded the scene. Mactire regarded the room from the back where his eyes swept from place to place looking for solid foes. He was a very untrusting fellow and sought trouble from unseen directions.

Macron's HK 22 droid pointed the vibroblade it held at Tasha. "Permission to.."

“No 22,” stated Macron flatly as he drew a nasty-looking hyposyringe from his belt, dialed the dosimeter ridiculously high, and jabbed Tasha unceremoniously in the neck with it from behind. The Sith stepped back and calmly began to count. “One, two, three, four, five...” A thud came from Tasha’s inert body as she dropped to the floor like she had been pole-axed. “Hm. That took longer than I thought. Twi’lek biology is interesting.”

Firth coughed spasmodically as he regained his composure once the clutching hands left his throat. “Frack! The lass damn near ‘ad me! What in the bloody blazes?” He hacked and bent over double, while checking the blade in his boot. Just in case, of course. “Nae good.”

“Everyone okay?” asked Lilith as she winced while walking over to the fallen Twi’lek. Her hands moved deftly across the unconscious Tasha. The Gray Jedi sought information on her life-force as she touched Tasha’s neck. “She lives.... And is coming around. I am having a hard time channeling light-side energetic threads here on this planet.”

“I’m good,” replied Mactire sarcastically. “I’m not surprised. This is an unholy Dark Side cesspit. Hmmp. Your leg still bothering you? I hate to see you suffer.” The Mystic looked concerned as he side-eyed Macron. “I’m keeping an eye on things.”

Lilith nodded. “Yes. I’ve been healing it as much as I am able in this place. What happened Macron? I don’t understand. One minute she was fine, the next a raving beast.” The Consular continued to check the Savant’s vitals.

“Proxy talismanic vector for a Dark Side domination attack.” The Sith looked at the remains of the broken poppet, closed his eyes, and sought for the feeling of the object. It felt old, treacherous, and spent. “Spirit focus. In the old days, they would call it a trapping talisman. Sith Sorcery is an art I’m fairly familiar with but I’m not much of a practitioner personally. My Sith Master was a puissant sorcerer but he is mostly dead now.” Macron handed Firth’rar a small flask. “Corellian brandy. You look like you could use a shot.”

“A spell that lasted that fargin bloody long? F’arnicatin’ eons? Shavit,” said Firth as he slugged the whiskey down and rubbed at his neck. “Nae bad whiskey aye. Thanks. Will the lass be okay?”

“I think so,” commented the Elder as he bent down. “22, cover the entryway.” The Adept took Tasha’s vital signs and administered another injection as the HK droid moved into

a covering position. “She’ll be out for a minute or two. She should be okay, and mostly back to her old self shortly.”

“Mostly back? What does that mean, exactly?” Mactire looked concerned. “What was that injection?” Tasha’s skin began to return to its normal azure shade. “Looks like she is coming around.” The distrustful warrior kept his eyes on the Adept. He knew full well that not all Clan-mates were trustworthy and he had heard rumors..

“Oh... just a little something something.” The Alchemist grinned. “Diluted Sith poison and a quick-acting anesthetic. Fight fire with fire, you know? Her will is strong unlike the soldiers outside. Should counteract the effects of the talisman. Burn it out.” *And draw her deeper into the darkness...*

Tasha coughed and sat up. The Savant’s eyes flashed yellow and then cleared. Her veins were filled with liquid fire for an instant, a sensation of both painful and enjoyable for a few seconds. Anger washed over her and then faded out. For now. “What... augh. What happened?” The Twi’lek flexed her hands as they began to respond to her will. “My fingers... the last thing I remember was picking up a very old and broken doll.”

“You got hit with an occult whammy,” said Lilith as she massaged her wounded leg. “You tried to kill Firith’rar.” The Gray Jedi continued to flow as much energy as she could into her own limb. “I’m having a hard time with healing in here due to the Dark Side site effects, but I’m pretty close to functional.”

“Yeah. Dirty trick,” commented Macron. His mismatched eyes scanned the objects on the sarcophagus and altar plinth. “Not unusual for the Sith of old to camouflage or misdirect potential looters of their multiple tombs. Their actual places of rest have *real* necromantic power. What Sith would want an enemy known or unknown to find that? I’ve heard of several major Sith Lords having multiple tombs, each a blind or trap aside from the real one. Lord Orian had a massive tomb site, and I have yet to figure out if it”

Tasha Vel stood up fully and pulled the old Sith tablet she had found in the ancient tunnels from her belt pouch. “Could this be the key to what we have here?” Her mind drifted to the symbols on the tablet and they seemed to make some sort of rude sense. “Ajak...” Her veins burned as she stammered and looked at her cohorts.

“That’s not good,” commented Mactire coolly. “You probably should stop that.” The Gray Jedi looked agitated. “I mean, how long are we going to be down here? Shouldn’t we be getting topside?”

“Topside. We should be going there. Soon, lads and lasses. Real soon.” Firith polished off the last drops of the whiskey and frowned. “We’re in a bad place.”

“Our probability of that is decreasing rapidly, meatbag Jedi.” The HK droid patrolled the tunnel entrance behind them. “I am detecting moderate thermal meatbag signatures headed towards our current position. Definitely hostile.”

“I think that droid sees everything as hostile. I’m good to move out.” Lilith held herself confidently as she frowned. “Although many of us are injured, I think we can move in my opinion. My saber hilt took a blaster shot back there when the gray-faces hit us.”

“I see,” commented Macron as he eyed her with a weird stare. “I get it.” The Adept unclipped a secondary backup Elder lightsaber from his belt. “Use this one. She’s a red crystal blade. Cuts really hot and a bit hard to control. Don’t hit the blue switch. No one in my Clan should go unarmed. Please do return her when we get out of here.”

“Erm.” Lilith looked a bit surprised. “Okay sure.” Her eyes turned to her husband as they huddled together.

“May I see that tablet you found Tasha? Hmm. Ajak.” Macron grinned as the pain hit his face from the Silooth’s acid burns. “Ugh. It means Dominion.”

“Sure.” Tasha looked nonplussed. “Do you think it is safe?” The Twilek’s eyes began to turn yellow again.

“Probably not.” Macron looked at the objects on the sarcophagus. “The book is obviously fried.” He took a vid shot of the object and its cover with his gauntlet com-cluster. “Crystal is good. Let’s start there.”

Mactire, Lilith, Firith and Tasha all looked concerned. The droid chimed in. “Probability of master Meatbag screwing this up is...”

“Shut up droid. I see.” Macron grimaced. The madman brushed the dust from the old tablet and spoke. The Elder canted the old Sith words with a booming voice as he read them aloud, his finger tracing along the lines of spiky Sith script. “*Asha Dzwol Hask Jen*

Kaggath Taral Won Ajak.” The Sith looked confused. “That’s not the right syntax.. I mean... uh. Uh oh. Oops.”

“Oops?” echoed Sadowans in the room, droid included.

Grinding sounds echoed from all around the group as ancient Sith corpses filled with evil and hate fueled by the Sith Sorcery that they had been bound by. The bones in the sarcophagus remained inert, but stone plates slid upwards in the walls to reveal caches of hardened mummies filled with the Dark Side. Each of the bony corpses was clad in rotting ancient rags from the days of the old Sith empire. Every one of them held a single ancient lightsaber lit by a hungry scarlet blade. They sought to extinguish all life.

Tasha’s yellow eyes glowed. “Well we certainly won’t be bored.” A wicked smile drew across her face as she looked at the mummies. “Macron, while I looked at that tablet, I remembered something. Look at my Lekku, I have something on one of the tattoos I received by the Sith Acolytes on Ryloth. It is an inscription to do something to spirits. I can’t decipher it, but you might. As of now we don’t have much time.”

Taking her lightsaber, she charged the nearest mummy and attacked. Lightsaber clashed against lightsaber as she found new vigor and strength. A couple of the other mummies began to converge towards her, but soon faced their own opponents as Mactire and Firth stepped in to fight. Macron himself pulled his own lightsaber and began to fight his way towards Tasha. “*She must have either a control or dispel spirit inscription.*”

Meanwhile, Tasha was grinning like a mad woman. She was enjoying the thrill of battle, her body moving faster as she beat her blade relentlessly on the mummy in front of her. The feeling was almost euphoric, nothing like she had ever felt before. Pure, raw power that flowed seamlessly throughout her body. She let out a howl of delight as she brought the blade down with all her strength behind it, breaking the mummy’s left arm. She then slashed and drove her blade through the mummy several times, cutting it into several pieces as she moved to the next one. Laughing maniacally, she put out her left hand and lifted the next mummy off the ground and slammed it into another.

Part of the mummy’s blade sliced into the other one as they both fell. The Twi’lek then leaped onto the fallen Sith mummies, used her blade to carve a couple patterns into their black flesh, and sliced off their heads.

As Macron neared her, he saw the crazed look in her eyes. "She's using the darkside, He grinned. "Good."

To the left of Tasha, Lilith sneaked up behind the mummy that Firith had been keeping busy. The Mystic thrust her green lightsaber into the mummy's stomach and sliced the creature in half.

"Thank ye Lassie." He blurted out as he chopped off the mummy's head.

"It's already dead, Firith," frowned Lilith. "You didn't need to mutilate the creature."

"Lassie, I am making sure it's dead. I don't want it tae reanimate again." The Shadow used a free hand to quickly wipe the sweat from his brow. "Killing these things is some work."

Towards the right side of the sarcophagus, Mactire was fending off another mummy. The creature wasn't easy to just take down by himself. He had to dance around the lightsaber several times and struggled a bit to keep the mummy's lightsaber from slicing off his body parts. As he maneuvered about, the Mystic felt the smelly living corpse driving him towards the corner. "*This isn't good.*" Right before it could back him fully into the corner, the creature groaned a bit and fell apart into several pieces. Tasha smiled at the Mystic. "Need some help, young one? Looks like he was getting a bit too much for you, no worries though. I got him."

Mactire growled a bit, slightly irritated at the remark. "I was perfectly fine, Tasha. I could have taken him down myself."

The Twi'lek turned around and laughed. "Really? Well, I could always sit on a rock and watch you then."

The Equite was not amused. Tasha seemed a lot different than her usual cheery disposition. It was like she transformed into something else.

Looking about, Mactire only saw one left or so he thought. Without warning, the fallen mummies began to glow and reform. "They are getting up again!" He yelled out.

"What? How can this be?" Tasha asked as she watched the bones and putrid flesh of the mummies reconstruct themselves again.

“Macron what on earth did you do when reading the tablet?”

The Elder gritted his teeth as he struck down the last standing mummy. “I misread the tablet and accidentally summoned a few Sith mummies that cannot die. More or less.”

“Great.” Tasha replied sarcastically. “I wanted a workout today. I guess we are all getting one.”

They all watched as the broken bones, tattered flesh and rags that had once been human stood up. Several of the mummies began to crack their jaws and necks back into place as they let out several painful moans. “*Surely it can’t get any worse than this.*” Tasha thought. Unfortunately, she was wrong. There came a low rumble as the Sarcophagus in the middle of the room opened. It revealed a seven foot mummy with glowing red eyes getting up. The creature had on the remains of tattered Sith robes and had some sort of amulet on its left wrist. Letting out a piercing wail, the other mummies began to flock around this towering creature.

“Oh for Kriff’s sake! Macron remind me to never let you read another tablet out loud again if we live through this.” Tasha said shaking her head as she readied herself for these ugly creatures.

“I think we cannae all agree, this fraking stinks.” replied Firth.

The Mad Scientist smiled as he turned to his HK droid. “Just not my day today is it 22?”

“No, meat- er, Master.” the HK droid chirped back. “Would you like me to give you the probability chances of us surviving?”

“By the nine hells no!” Came the unified answered from the party.

“Suit yourselves then, little meatbags.”

“Mirtis kia natura!” The sepulchral voice of the nasty creature reverberated in the chamber. The large creature raised a bony claw as it’s lesser minions shuffled forward. Sanguine lights flashed from the red jewels on the amulet the ancient corpse bore on its sinister appendage. Bolts of blue electric fire erupted from its clawed hand to blast at the assembled group.

“Death to the living?” responded Macron as he lunged forward and raised an orange lightsaber in a horizontal block to stop the Force Lightning. Fat blue sparks crawled up and down the blade, illuminating it. The Alchemist grunted from the serious effort it took to channel the Dark Side to deflect and absorb the energy through his weapon. “I... don’t...think so! Take the mummies out! I will deal with this rotting carcass! If I can get it under control, that inscription might save us!”

Four foul rotting rag-clad cadavers loped towards the other four Sadow warriors. Each one had regained its previous antique lightsaber and ignited the ragged-bladed weapons to continue the attack.

HK 22 covered the entrance to the chamber to ensure no other surprises found the warriors of Sadow. “Gray-face hostiles detected, meatbags. Monitoring. Deploying blaster rifle.” The droid knelt and began to hammer away with precise, quick and short bursts. One of the gray-faces leapt at the door with a snarl bearing a vibro-pike, and the droid jammed the barrel of it’s rifle in the creature’s stomach and calmly blew her guts out with a deuce. “One hostile terminated with severe intestinal distress. Good luck meatbags. Don’t cry for your mummy.”

“Strike their hilts! They canna be strong after such a time!” Firith shouted advice as he closed with his own enemy. Both sides had their own advantages. The Gray Jedi was smarter, faster. The undead felt no pain and never tired. In a protracted fight surely the undead would prevail. It was not to be however. Firith’rar maneuvered himself to place some rubble between himself and the undead he faced.

“Ye dirty fracker,” he growled as he shut off his blade. “Oy! Ye bag o nasty bandages! Come nigh and ah am gonna see ya get right pooched!” The corpse obliged by lunging forward with it’s jaws distended. Firith’rar sidestepped, placed his lightsaber emitter in the thing’s open stinking maw and hit the switch. The amethystine plasma arc burst through the top of the mummy’s head and dropped it like a stone.

Lilith found herself facing another mummified antagonist. Her yellow-green eyes quickly sized up the shuffling abomination. Lightsaber combat was not her forte, but she was skilled enough to defend herself. She blocked the first few strokes with her borrowed ruby-colored lightsaber and considered her knowledge of anatomy. She knew that the dried up creature’s joints lacked flexibility and arrived at a solution. “If you cannot stand, you cannot fight.”

The Mystic anticipated the creatures' next blow using the Force to sense its intention. As the pile of bones and rags swung, she deflected the blow upwards. Her off-hand pounded the ground as the creature was slow to recoil. A blast of telekinetic energy rocketed upwards into the mummy's knees and legs and shattered them, knocking it off-balance. As it fell she struck out and split it in two along its spinal column from head to sacrum.

Mactire found himself locked in a lightsaber struggle with a dried-out corpse. The Mystic's silvery-blue blade sparked as it slid off the washed-out scarlet of the ancient lightsaber held by the musty carcass. His resolve was unshakeable. The lone wolf grimaced but kept his emotions in check in front of the others. The Sentinel shoved the mummy back with a burst of Force-imbued strength, dropped low, and swept the thing's legs off at the knees. The mummy continued to scabble for the blade it dropped as Mactire relentlessly chopped away at the fallen husk. The bits still wriggled as he hacked the cadaver apart.

Tasha found herself looking at the last of the shriveled skeletons. It faced her with a two-handed (or clawed) grip on its antique weapon. It seemed oddly familiar to the Twi'lek. She could feel some of her own stolen essence resonating within the bony husk. The remnants of a face leered at the Savant as she launched her attack. "You dirty shavit! You STOLE from me!"

The creature was faster than the rest, perhaps as a result of somehow absorbing some of Tasha's essence when she was possessed. Its movements were crude but there was no denying the raw power it held. It hammered at her defense with chopping physical strokes and overhand blows.

The Twi'lek's rage mounted as she tapped deeper into her own personal darkness. Tasha was talented with her weapon. Ripping swings and fierce lunges struck at the mummy. Her blue-skinned muscles rippled with the Force as her eyes began to turn yellow. "Die!" The Gray Jedi threw a mighty telekinetic blast that pinned the musty undead to the chamber wall with a puff of old dust. The Twi'lek was right behind it, driving the blade of her lightsaber between the thing's empty eye sockets with a yell of victory.

In the meantime Macron had his hands full. He glanced at Tasha's lekku tattoo and spoke, "*Prazutis kia zkusimas nesvan!*" The taller mummy continued to blast at him with goutts of blue Force lighting as the Sith struggled to get closer. "22! The crystal! Destroy-the-crystal!"

“Probability of this being a stupid plan is high. Complying now, Master Meatbag.” Blaster fire rippled over the remains of the ruddy glittering gem. The massive hulking mummy turned the blue lightning on the droid in response as the synth-crystal blew into fragments amidst the searing plasma blasts. “Dumbass now non-functional, meatbags.” HK 22 fell over sideways with a clanking thud, sparks cascading along its sides. “Probability of droid getting screwed one hundred percent...zzzzt urk.”

As the droid fell, Macron tackled the giant mummy directly with a snarl. Crushgaunt-clad Echani fists hammered with the power of the Dark Side behind them into the thing's skull and breast bone. Bolts of lightning hit the Adept in return directly as the cadaver crumbled under the powerful blows. The Sith slumped against the sarcophagus with a rattling cough. “The Crystal was the focus. Shame I couldn't have... *hack hack*. Taken it. That sucked.”

As the smoke, dust, and stench of fried rags and bone settled in the room Tasha bent over and held her knees as she struggled to control herself. “Everyone okay?”

“No, I am not.” Macron gasped. “Definitely hurt over here. And HK 22 is down. Anyone else?” The Adept reached for a cannister of bacta on his belt. “I can't keep my muscles from twitching, and my right leg is locked up.”

“Well understandably so. You both took quite a beating.” Tasha answered as she walked over to the fried droid. “I think he can be repaired, but we need to gather him up for now.” The Twi'lek was now back to herself again it seemed. The green in her eyes showed and she had a motherly attitude again. She grunted a bit as she dragged the fallen droid closer to Macron. “Now let's have a look at you.” Macron's body was twitching horribly as he attached the cannister to a hypodermic needle and stabbed his left arm. “This will at least patch me up, however that Sith lightning really fracken stings,” Macron replied as he leaned against the sarcophagus, “I just wish that I could have stopped it sooner.”

Tasha looked about the room. Most everyone was hurting and struggling to catch their breath. Tasha herself had taken quite a few blows and the rush of blood lust was now gone which meant she would be exhausted for a bit. Already she felt very weak and found it harder to stay standing. She turned back to Macron. “We did what we could. This was a very difficult fight and took a lot out of everyone. Right now I don't think anyone is in a position to move on right now. We will have to take a forced break for

now. Honestly, I really don't even know if we will be able to get out of this grave alive, Macron. I am still hoping that we can get some message through and be rescued."

The Elder kept looking at his body. It was still twitching, but the bacta was doing well in healing up his battered body. "Yeah unfortunately I can't move the leg Tasha. It is going to take a little time to get it functioning again. I don't recommend staying here too long though. There are worse things than old Sith mummies lurking around here and I really don't fancy running into them."

Tasha thought back to the Siloath they had fought and imagined something worse. "Yeah let's not run into whatever I just thought up. That would be horrific. I am still not sure how we are going to get 22 back up again. We can probably drag him, but unless someone here is a robot engineer, I don't see him coming back online till he gets back to base. For now let's meditate and rest up."

"Aye, I have a bit 'o that skill. I might be able ta get the bastart moving agin," Firith'rar piped up. "He's likely too loused up to give anyone a square go though." The Mystic pulled a small kit from his belt and began to fiddle with the droid. "Manky loon." Minutes passed while the members of the team either groaned in pain or took stock of their situation. "I've got 'em walking but he's knackered. He's shut his gob though, he has."

"That's a blessing," snickered Macron as he stood gingerly. If the droid could have glared at him, he would have. "About time he shut the hell up. Too damn expensive to leave here though." The Adept winced. "I'm channeling all I can to control the pain and knit the flesh, but I'm still going to limp and hobble." The Sith did just that over to the wreckage around the sarcophagus. "We've got crystal fragments, the remains of the book, a dagger, and a beat-up holocron. Not bad, but not worth dying for."

"I think we all agree there," commented Lilith as she limped over on a makeshift crutch. "Let's make our way to the surface."

Mactire grumbled as the group shuffled and limped. "What a sorry lot."

"Perhaps so," replied Tasha'Vel as she walked tiredly alongside the gimpy lot of Force-users. "Sorry or not, we are warriors of Sadow. We survived, and we recovered some items. I'd call that a success."

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“So how did you all make it back to the surface for rescue?”

The Twi'lek let out a yawn as she leaned back into her chair. She gave a huge grin to Riku, who had been listening intently to the whole recollection.

“I am afraid it's late and I need to get back to my child at home. I will tell you the rest some other time.”

“Really Tasha,” Riku sat forward in his office chair, “So you just are going to keep me hanging and wondering aren't you?”

The Marauder smiled as she got up and walked towards the door. “As my Grandfather would say it's a tale for another time.” She then opened the door, walked out and closed it on a surprised Riku.

“Really Tasha, you are no fair!” He yelled as Tasha continued walking down the hall.

“Till next time, Riku.”

THE END

