

## *Fear*

### **Daleem Tunnels**

#### **Daleem**

#### **Kiast System**

The dark and small hidden temple was illuminated by many lanterns and caldrons. The obsidian walls seemed to ooze an oily dark film that reflected the light and made it appear to dance and flicker from side to side. Mauro Wynter sat on a mahogany chair ringed by his acolytes Mair Sal and Lyra Narix. The Human women were deep in concentration as the trio kept their eyes locked on the Magna Guard droid in the middle of their formation.

Wynter gave off a calm and calculated air as his brow began to bristle with sweat. The women kept the same appearance and continence but all knew they were racked with fear and apprehension on the deed they were committed to. They had secluded themselves in the temple for an entire week, practicing their esoteric art.

They had tried, and failed, several times to grant sentience to the droid. The machine, an abomination to some, was implanted with the stored memories of the deceased Silvia Tanos. The women had known her for over twenty years and shared the history of being slaves, sold across the Unknown Regions and handed from Imperial Moff to Imperial Moff before gaining their freedom and joining the Odanite Expeditionary Force. Wynter had his own connection.

He loved the deceased Zabrak, and had shared only a short time with her. The fear of failure did not daunt them. The terror of creating an abhorration and falling to the Dark side of the Force was what troubled them all. And yet, their minds were set on this act. It would prove their Mechu-Deru abilities and bring back a semblance of their lost comrade.

And so they concentrated, and prepared for the worst. They had failed many times over the preceding days, but their abilities were growing daily as they studied over old tomes and Sith artifacts. They thought they heard ominous, unknown voices and noises within the temple but brushed it off as their own fear playing tricks on them.

The droid sat lifeless, its power turned off and sitting idly. They concentrated, and began chanting incantations slowly and in hushed tones. Soon the lights began to flicker as their shared drain on the Force grew. What would happen if they succeeded? What would happen if they failed yet again? What was the personal cost to their souls and their psyches?

They dared not wonder such questions aloud, but it was a shared fear. Determination proved stronger than fear, as they focused more and more on the task at hand. Soon they levitated the droid, and sweat began to pour off the brow of all three. In minutes the droid began to move, and lights illuminated its eye sockets and an eery purple glow began to radiate off from it. Finally, it spoke. "Mauro? Lyra? Mair?"

The voice belonged not to a machine but to a woman. It had succeeded. They had given sentience to the machine. Silvia, or a poor imitation of her, had returned to them.