



Tyrant's Test

By Michael P. Kube-McDowell

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Faced with an alarming image of Han as a battered hostage of the Yevetha, Chewbacca takes on an urgent mission. Meanwhile, Leia calls upon the Senate to take a stand and eliminate the Yevetha threat--even at the cost of Han's life. As a former Imperial governor takes his battle to the runaway Qella spaceship, Luke's continuing search for his mother brings him dangerously close to Nil Spaar's deadly forces. And as the Yevetha close in on the forces of the New Republic, Luke takes a desperate gamble with an invisible weapon...

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Editorial Review

Review

The New Republic faces a terrifying threat from the darkest depths of the Empire.

From the Inside Flap

In the wake of a shattered alliance, the New Republic fights a relentless new enemy in an all-new adventure in the bestselling "Star Wars saga..."

Faced with an alarming image of Han as a battered hostage of the Yevetha, Chewbacca takes on an urgent mission. Meanwhile, Leia calls upon the Senate to take a stand and eliminate the Yevetha threat--even at the cost of Han's life. As a former Imperial governor takes his battle to the runaway Qella spaceship, Luke's continuing search for his mother brings him dangerously close to Nil Spaar's deadly forces. And as the Yevetha close in on the forces of the New Republic, Luke takes a desperate gamble with an invisible weapon...

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Three levels down from Rwookrrorro and eighteen kilometers northeast along the Rryatt Trail, the Well of the Dead appeared as a solid green wall ahead of Chewbacca and his son Lumpawarrump.

This deep in the *wroshyr* jungle of Kashyyyk, the tangled web of trunks and branches was ordinarily almost barren. So little light penetrated the dense canopies overhead that any leaves that sprouted quickly withered. Only the gray bridal-veil sucker and the paddle-leafed *mock shyr*, both parasites, and the ubiquitous *kshyy* vines decorated the runs and paths.

But neither the bridal-veil nor the *mock shyr* was abundant enough to block those runs and force the Wookiees to the underside of the web of branches. They--and the creatures that made their homes at that level--could move freely over the top of the tangled maze. Despite the dim light, sightlines of up to five hundred meters were the norm, with the trunks of the *wroshyr* trees themselves providing the only cover.

It was the Shadow Forest, the realm of the nimble *rkkrrkkrl*, or trap-spinner, and the slow-moving *rroshm*, which helped keep the paths clear by grazing on bridal-veil.

The most numerous inhabitants were the tiny barb-tongued needlebugs, whose sucking proboscis could pierce the tough *wroshyr* bark and draw on the juices within.

The most dangerous inhabitants were the elusive *kkekhrig rro*, the five-limbed Shadow Keepers, which preferred to roam the underside and even more strongly preferred the taste of meat. The Shadow Keepers would not attack an adult Wookiee, but long history, now mostly forgotten, had made the *kkekhrig rro* the personification of the skulking unseen enemy, and it was the rare Wookiee who would not reach for his weapon on seeing one.

All this and more Chewbacca had shown and explained to his son as they journeyed down from the hunting ground of the Twilight Gardens, a level above. The whole time, memories had swirled around him on the stagnant air. Some were memories of his own journey of ascendance in the company of *his* father, Auitchitcuk, of the tests that had earned him the right to wear his baldric, to carry a weapon in city, to choose and confirm his name.

Two hundred years, and the forest is still the same--only I am the father now, not the son....

Chewbacca also vividly remembered the foolish expedition he and Salporin had made to the Shadow Forest in advance of their coming-of-age. Unarmed but for a single *ryyyk* blade Salporin had pilfered from his eldest brother, Chewbacca and his friend had left the nursery ring and descended into realms forbidden to the children they still were.

They had thought to prepare themselves for the unknown, but managed only to scare themselves with it. Their courage had faded with the failing light, and by the time they reached Shadow Forest, all it took was a skittish trap-spinner to send them fleeing back to the safety of the familiar.

And what we thought we saw filled our nightmares until our tests of ascension finally came Poor Salporin! I only had to wait six days.

If Attitchitcuk knew--then or later--what they had done, he had never let on.

Chewbacca looked at his son appraisingly. He doubted that there were any secret journeys concealed behind those nervous eyes. Years ago, a very young Lumpawarrump had gone alone into the forest near Rwookrrorro in search of *wasaka* berries and gotten himself lost--a misadventure that had grown much in the retelling, until it became a family fable populated by every monster of the dark depths of both jungle and imagination. But the scare had been real even if the danger had not, and since then his son had been content to stay close to the nursery ring and the home tree.

And Mallatobuck and Attitchitcuk had been content to allow it, to let him be different. Neither, it seemed, had pushed him to take part in the toughening--the unstructured rough-and-tumble play of the nursery ring, where young Wookiees learned their fearlessly headlong fighting style. When Chewbacca had greeted his son with a fierce growling rush, Lumpawarrump had turned from it, yielding as though he were already wounded.

It had been a difficult moment for everyone. But in the aftermath, Chewbacca realized that he was seeing part of the price his son had paid for his absence.

In honoring a life debt to Han Solo, Chewbacca had left his son to be raised by mother and grandfather. He could not fault their love or their care, but something had been missing--something to spark the *rrakkto*, the defiant fire, the eager strength that was a Wookiee's heart. Lumpawarrump did not even have a friend like Salporin to test himself against in daily clinches and slap-fights.

The calendar said that it was time. Lumpawarrump had sprung up to adult height. But he had only begun to fill out that tall frame, and it was clear that he did not yet feel the power of his size. It was also not difficult to see that Lumpawarrump was in awe of his famous father, and paralyzingly anxious for his approval. Beyond that, Chewbacca was still trying to take his measure.

His son had talent in his hands. Though he had dragged out the task through nine days, Lumpawarrump had done a skillful job constructing his bowcaster--its weaknesses were the kind that only experience would teach him to correct. And he had shown a steady hand in downing a *kroyies* with it, the first of the hunting tests.

But the second test, trapping and killing a big-eyed scuttle grazer on level three, had taken even longer and not gone as well. And the test waiting ahead, inside the Well of the Dead, promised to ask more of Lumpy

than he was ready to face.

[Explain to me what we see,] he said to his son.

[It is a wound in the forest, where something fell from the sky long ago. It is the bottom of the great pit of Anarrad, which we see from the high lookouts of Rwookrrorro--]

[Why did Kashyyyk not heal the wound?]

[I do not know, Father.]

[Because she needed a home for the katam. The light falls to the depths and calls forth the young vitality of the *wroshyr*. The green leaves shelter the daubirds and sustain the sprites and mallakins. The daubirds invite the netcasters, and the mallakins call the grove harriers. And the katarn, the old prince of the forest, comes to the kast.]

[If Kashyyyk has given the katarn this place, why must we hunt them?]

[It is our pact with them, from long ago.]

[I do not understand.]

[Once they hunted us, and the richness of the high forest was theirs for a thousand generations. But their hunting did not destroy us. Nothing of this world is to be squandered, my son. The katarn gave the Wookiee its strength and courage, and allowed the Wookiee to find the *rrakktor*. Now we hunt them to repay the gift. Someday it will be their turn again.]

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Barreto:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book titled Tyrant's Test? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have other opinion?

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Lupe Holloway:

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