

Excerpt

Krac's Firebrand

Zion Warriors book 2

By S. E. Smith

Krac stared at the exposed tip of his finger. With a silent command, tissue began reforming over it. Within seconds, the flesh was once again soft and gray. That was just one of the advancements designed into him over the original Alluthans who would have needed to replace the finger. He glanced at the slumped body of the shopkeeper. Fury burned through him that Violet was exposed to such creatures. Now, she was in a far more terrifying situation.

Yes, he thought as he pulled the hood of his cloak over his head and exited the dim shop. It would be difficult to kill Ti'Death's daughter, but not impossible. I just hope she has not harmed Violet first.

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"Ahhhh!" Violet cried out as the sword went through her. "You..." She whispered before her tiny body crumpled to the floor of the corridor.

"Argh!" The large creature growled as it swung its massive head back and forth menacingly as it stepped closer to the still figure. "Roarrrrrr!"

"Will you two knock it off? What in the hell are you supposed to be?" Froget yelled out from the bridge.

Skeeter pushed back the large head of the costume she was wearing so she could see. She moaned when the huge head she was wearing hit the wall and popped her on the end of the nose. She dropped the small, plastic sword in her hand and grabbed her offended appendage.

"I'm a dinosaur," Skeeter said in a muffled voice.

"Are you okay, Skeeter?" Violet asked, sitting up and pulling the other plastic sword out from between her arm and her body.

"I bumped my nose," Skeeter replied. "What to kiss it and make it better?"

Violet's delighted laugh echoed in the passageway leading to the bridge. "You're silly."

Skeeter just grinned before she let out a loud roar and put the mask back on over her head. She laughed as Violet squealed before she jumped up and started running down the corridor. Skeeter did her best to keep up, but it was hard to do in the bulky costume that she had found during one of her many stops.

Froget rolled his eyes and turned back to the freighter controls. He frowned as he thumbed through the unusual star charts that kept popping up. It had been four days since they had left Pyrus. They had floated somewhere between Newport and Banshore Spaceports. Not bad even if that was between one end of the star system and the other. It had taken him a day and a half to finish modifying the module, but it had worked like a charm.

During that time, he had to admit he was thankful that Skeeter had found the little person. It had kept

her focused on caring for the child instead of wreaking havoc on the freighter she was supposed to be the captain of. He shook his head in amazement that Ti'Death let his only daughter loose on the universe.

Well, he thought with a sigh. Maybe I should be more amazed that the universe has survived with her loose in it.

A loud scream shook him out of his musing. That one was different from the ones he had been hearing for the past few days. His heart raced as he hopped down out of the Captain's chair and took off down the passageway. He turned the corner and froze when he saw a huge gray creature standing in the center of it holding two very long, very dangerous looking curved blades in his hands. One of the long horns from Skeeter's costume lay on the floor behind him.

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Krac had been surprised and more than a little suspicious at how easy it had been to board the huge, pink freighter. At first, he had thought he was seeing things when he had gotten his first visual of the *Lulu Belle*. It wasn't just pink. It was a blazing hot pink with flowers on it!

The only thing that Krac could determine was that Ti'Death's daughter must be so sure of her ability to kill anything that came at her that she wasn't afraid to flaunt it. No one else that he knew would be caught dead in such a ship! He had opened the emergency access underneath the freighter and came up through one of the large storage bays. From the looks of her cargo, or lack of it, she mustn't even be trying to

pretend to be a legitimate freighter pilot. Most short haul freighters made sure they had a full cargo before heading to their next destination. It was the only way to either break even or make a marginal profit if they wanted to stay in business.

He had quickly accessed the computer system. He wanted to connect to the PLT, or Personal Location Trackers, that were standard for all commercial freighters to locate those aboard the ship in cases of emergency. He was confused when he discovered there were no operational PLT's. He decided that Ti'Death's daughter must have dispensed with them since this was not a genuine freighter operation but a cover for her true occupation – mercenary for hire.

His heart beat heavily when he heard Violet's terrified scream and the loud, muffled roar of the Razor-tooth Triterian. He had rounded the corner in time to see Violet's small body fly through an open doorway, the creature just steps behind her. The only thing that saved Gracie and Kordon's daughter was the Triterian was too large to fit through the door.

He roared out in rage as it tried to work its way into the room, clawing at the sides. Violet's loud screams filled the narrow passageway and fueled his determination to kill the beast. He swung his blades at the same time as the creature, sensing his approach, turned and emitted a bloodcurdling cry of attack. Krac's eyes narrowed when another creature suddenly appeared.

"What the... who are you and how did you get on board the *Lulu Belle*?" Froget demanded.

“He cut off one of my horns!” Skeeter cried out, lifting her hand to touch where the horn on the top of the costume was missing.

Krac reacted the moment the Triterian moved, slicing through the air at the arm that was rising up. He knew they could extend additional razor-sharp scales in defense. He was shocked when the arm fell to the floor as well, leaving a huge gaping dark hole. The creature squealed again and stumbled backwards.

“Frog!” Skeeter cried out in terror.

Krac watched as the small amphibian creature named Frog pulled two small blades from his waist. The male jumped up, ricocheting off the left wall and over the Triterian where it landed between her and him. He turned as the male released his long, sticky tongue at him.

“Stay back or I’ll kill you,” Frog snarled.

Krac evaluated the threat of the other male. He had already classified him and pulled up all known information. All data coming back indicated the male was of negligible threat. No, his biggest threat was from the Triterian who could take out three Zion warriors at one time.

“Move,” Krac demanded. “I will kill you quickly after I have dealt with the Triterian.”

“Why do you want to kill me?” A soft, confused voice asked. “What did I do?”

Krac ignored the warmth that flooded him at the sound of the husky feminine voice. It must be another ploy. He had never fought a female Triterian before.

They must be able to use their voices as well to affect their prey.

“What have you done to her?” Krac growled in a low dark voice, taking a step forward.

“I told you to stay back,” Frog snapped.

Krac swung the curved blade in his left hand down at the same time as the creature struck out with his own knife. He felt the sting of the small blade as it cut a long, deep line across his thigh. His own blade neatly cut through the other blade. The creature fell backwards into the Triterian causing it to lose its balance.

“Now, you die,” he said coldly, taking a step forward.

“No!” The female Triterian cried out, scrambling up and over the body of the smaller male. “You can’t kill him!”

“What in the...?” Krac’s voice died as a slender arm popped out of the section of the arm he had cut off.

He watched in disbelief as the slender hand, the same as Anastasia and Gracie’s, pushed at its large red head. He stepped backwards when the head fell forward onto the floor and rolled, stopping face up at his feet. His eyes rose from the decapitated head, following the floor where it had rolled until he came to the large, clawed feet. His eyes continued to move up the body of the Triterian until they locked on a pair of vivid blue eyes framed by flaming red hair.

“Oh no,” the voice whispered as those amazing blue eyes widened in shock as they stared back at him. “You’re bleeding.”

Krac looked down at his bleeding leg and sent a command for the skin to heal. He glanced up at the same time as the eyes staring back at him fluttered close and the female collapsed back onto the male who was struggling to get up. He took a step to catch her at the same time as another figure peeked out from behind the door.

“Uncle Krac!” Violet squealed before her eyes flew to the pile of bodies in the corridor. “What did you do to Skeeter? She’s my new friend.”