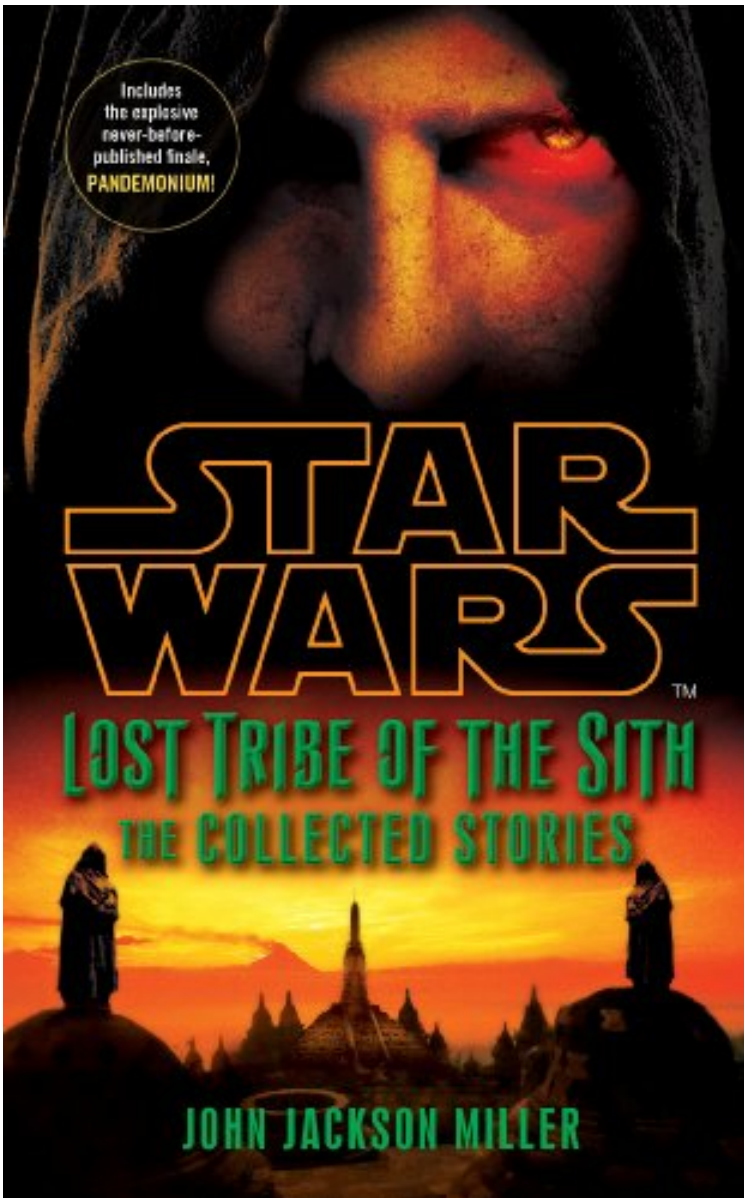


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Star Wars Lost Tribe of the Sith: The Collected Stories



Par John Jackson Miller
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThis collection of nine Lost Tribe of the Sith stories is for fans of the NewYork Times bestselling Fate of the Jedi series, as it features the origin storyof the tribe of Sith that play such a crucial role in those novels.The bestselling Fate of the Jedi novels introduce the Star Wars universe to along-forgotten tribe of Sith. This collection of stories tells the origin of that tribe.Written by John Jackson Miller, this paperback will include all eight of the LostTribe of the Sith stories, as well as "Pandemonium," the

never-before-seen final chapter that will only be available in this collection. Extrait 5,000 years BBY Lohjoy!

Give me something! Scrambling to his feet in the darkness, Captain Korsin craned his neck to find the hologram. Thrusters, attitude control! Even take parking jets! A starship is a weapon, but it's the crew that makes it deadly. An old spacer's line: trite, but weighty enough to lend a little authority. Korsin had used it himself on occasion. But not today. His ship was being deadly all on its own and his crew was just along for the ride. We've got nothing, Captain! The serpent-haired engineer Lohjoy flickered before him, off-kilter and out of focus. Korsin knew things below decks must be bad if his upright, uptight HoDin genius was off-balance. Reactors are down! And we've got structural failures in the hull, both aft and forward. Lohjoy shrieked in agony, her tendrils bursting into a mane of fire that sent her reeling out of view. Korsin barely suppressed a startled laugh. In calmer times half a standard hour ago he'd joked that HoDin were half tree. But that was hardly appropriate when the whole engineering deck was going up. The hull had ruptured. Again. The hologram expired and all around the stocky captain warning lights danced, winked, and went out. Korsin plopped down again, clutching at the armrests. Well, the chair still works. Anything? Anybody? Silence and the remote grinding of metal. Just give me something to shoot at. It was Gloyd, Korsin's gunnery officer, teeth shining in the shadows. The half-smirk was a memento from a Jedi light-saber swipe years earlier that just missed taking the Houks' head off. In response, Gloyd had cultivated the only wit aboard as acidic as the commanders' own but the gunner wasn't finding much funny today. Korsin read it in the brute's tiny eyes: Death in combat's one thing. But this is no way to go. Korsin didn't bother to look at the other side of the bridge. Icy glares there could be taken as a given. Even now, when Omen was crippled and out of control. Anybody? Even now. Korsin's bushy eyebrows flared into a black V. What was wrong with them? The adage was right. A ship needed a crew united in purpose only the purpose of being Sith was the exaltation of self. Every ensign an emperor. Every rival's misstep, an opportunity. Well, here's an opportunity, he thought. Solve this, someone, and you can flat-out have the blasted comfy chair. Sith power games. They didn't mean much now not against the insistent gravity below. Korsin looked up again at the forward viewport. The vast azure orb visible earlier was gone, replaced by light, gas, and grit raining upward. The latter two, he knew, came from the guts of his own ship, losing the fight against the alien atmosphere. Whatever it was, the planet had Omen now. An uncontrolled descent from orbit took a long time, surprisingly long. More time to contemplate your destruction, his father had always said. But the way the ship was shaking, Korsin and his crew might be robbed even of that dubious privilege. Remember, he yelled, looking at his entire bridge crew for the first time since it had started. You wanted to be here! And they had wanted to be there most of them, any way. Omen had been the ship to get when the Sith mining flotilla gathered at Primus Goluud. The Massassi shock troops in the hold didn't care where they went who knew what the Massassi even thought half the time, presuming they did at all. But many sentients who had a choice in the matter picked Omen. Saes, captain of the Harbinger, was a fallen Jedi: an unknown quantity. You couldn't trust someone the Jedi couldn't trust, and they would trust just about anyone. Yaru Korsin, the crew members knew. A Sith captain owning a smile was rare enough, and always suspect. But Korsin had been at it for twenty standard years, long enough for those who'd served under him to spread the word. A Korsin ship was an easy ride. Just not today. Fully loaded with Lignan crystals, Harbinger and Omen had readied to leave Phaegon III for the front when a Jedi starfighter tested the mining fleet's defenses. While his crescent-shaped Blade fighters tangled with the intruder, Korsin's crew made preparations to jump to hyperspace. Protecting the cargo was paramount and if they managed to make their delivery before the Jedi turncoat made his, well, that was just a bonus. The Blade pilots could hitch back on Harbinger. Only something had gone wrong. A shock to the Harbinger, and then another. Sensor readings of the sister ship went nonsensical and Harbinger yawed dangerously toward Omen. Before the collision warning could sound, Korsin's navigator reflexively engaged the hyperdrive. It had been in the nick of time or maybe not. Not the way Omen was giving up its vitals now. They did hit us, Korsin knew. The teleme try might have told them, had they had any. The ship had been knocked off-course by an astronomical hair but it was enough. Captain Korsin had never experienced an encounter with a gravity well in hyperspace, and neither had any of his crew. Stories required survivors. But it felt as though space itself had yawned open near the passing Omen, kneading at the ship's alloyed superstructure like putty. It had lasted but a fraction of a second, if time even existed there. The escape was worse than the contact. A sickly snap, and shielding failed. Bulkheads gave. And then, the armory. The armory had exploded. That was easy enough to know from the gaping hole in the underside of the ship. That it had exploded in hyperspace was a matter of inference: they were still alive. In normal space, all the grenades, bombs, and other pleasantries, the

Massassi, were taking to Kirrek would have gone up in a flourish, taking the ship with it. But instead the armory had simply vanished along with an impressive chunk of Omens quarterdeck. The physics in hyperspace were unpredictable by definition; instead of exploding outward, the breached deck simply left the ship in a seismic tug. Korsin could imagine the erupting munitions dropping out of hyperspace light-years behind the Omen, wherever it was. That would mean a bad day for some one! Might as well share the pain. Omen had shuddered into realspace, decelerating madly and taking dead aim at a blister of blue hanging before a vibrant star. Was that the source of the mass shadow that had interrupted their trip? Who cared? It was about to end it. Captured, Omen had skipped and bounced across the crystal ocean of air until the descent began in earnest. It had claimed his engineer probably all his engineers but the command deck still held. Tapani craftsmanship, Korsin marveled. They were falling, but for the moment they were still alive. Why isn't he dead? Half mesmerized by the streamers of fire erupting outside at least the Omen was belly-down for this bounce Korsin only vaguely grew aware of harsh words to his left. You shouldn't have made the jump! stabbed the young voice. Why isn't he dead? Captain Korsin straightened and gave his half brother an incredulous stare. I know you're not talking to me. Devore Korsin jabbed a gloved finger past the commander to a frail man, still jabbing futilely at his control panel and looking very alone. That navigator of yours! Why isn't he dead? Maybe he's on the wrong deck? Yaru! Jokes weren't going to save Boyle Marcom today, the captain knew. Marcom had been guiding ships through the weirdness of hyperspace since the middle of Marka Ragnoss rule. Boyle hadn't been at his best in years, but Yaru Korsin knew a former helmsman of his father's was always worth having. Not today, though. Whatever had happened back there, it would rightfully be laid at the navigator's feet. But assigning blame in the middle of a firestorm? That was Devore all over. Well do this later, the elder Korsin said from the command chair. If there is a later. Anger flashed in Devore's eyes. Yaru couldn't remember ever seeing anything else there. The pale and lanky Devore little resembled his own ruddy, squat frame also the shape of their father. But those eyes, and that look? Those could have been a direct transplant. Their father. He'd never had a day like this. The old spacer had never lost a ship for the Sith Lords. Learning at his side, the teenage Yaru had staked out his own future until the day he became less enamored of his father's footsteps. The day when Devore arrived. Half Yaru's age, son to a mother from a port on another planet and embraced by the old veteran without a second thought. Rather than find out how many more children his father had out there to vie for stations on the bridge, Cadet Korsin appealed to the Sith Lords for another assignment. That had not been a mistake. In five years, he made captain. In ten, he won command of the newly christened Omen over an accomplished rival many years his senior. His father hadn't liked that. He'd never lost a ship for the Sith Lords. But he'd lost one to his son. But now losing the Omen was looking like a family tradition. The whole bridge crew even the outsider Devore exhaled audibly when rivulets of moisture replaced the flames outside the viewport. Omen had found the stratosphere without incinerating, and now the ship was in a lazy saucer spin through clouds heavy with rain. Korsin's eyes narrowed. Water? Is there even a ground? The terrifying thought rippled through the minds of the seven on the bridge at once, as they watched the transparisteel viewport bulge and warp: Gas giant! Yes, it took a long time to crash from orbit, presuming you survived reentry. How much longer, if there was no surface? Korsin fumbled aimlessly for the controls set in his armrest. Omen would crack and rupture, smothered under a mountain of vapors. They shared the thought and almost in response, the straining portal darkened. All of you, he said, heads down! And grab something . . . now! This time, they did as told. He knew: Tie it to self preservation, and a Sith would do anything. Even this bunch. Korsin clawed at the chair, his eyes fixed on the forward viewport and the shadow swiftly falling across it. A wet mass slapped against the hull. Its sprawling form tumbled across the transparisteel, lingering an instant before disappearing. The captain blinked twice. It was there and gone, but it wasn't part of his ship. It had wings. Startled, Korsin sprang from his seat and lurched toward the viewport. This time, the mistake was certifiably his. Already stressed before the midair collision, the transparisteel gave way, shards weeping from the ship like shining tears. A hush of departing air slammed Korsin to the deck plating. Old Marcom tumbled to one side, having lost hold of his station. Sirens sounded how were they still working? but the tumult soon subsided. Without thinking, Korsin breathed. Air! Its air! Devore regained his footing first, bracing against the wind. Their first luck. The viewport had mostly blown out, not in and while the cabin had lost pressure, a drippy, salty wind was making its way in. Unaided, Captain Korsin fought his way back to his station. Thanks for the hand, brother. Just a reprieve, Gloyd said. They still couldn't see what was below. Korsin had done a suicide plunge before, but that had been in a bomber when he'd known where the ground was. That there was a ground. Once restrained doubts flooded Korsin's mind and Devore responded. Enough,

the crystal hunter barked, struggling against the swaying deck to reach his siblings command chair. Let me at those controls! They're as dead for you as they are for me! We'll see about that! Devore reached for the arm rest, only to be blocked by Korsin's beefy wrist. The commander's teeth clenched. Don't do this. Not now. A baby screamed. Korsin looked quizzically at Devore for a moment before turning to see Seelah in the doorway, clutching a small crimson wrapped bundle. The child wailed. Darker-skinned than either of them, Seelah was an operative on Devore's mining team. Korsin knew her simply as Devore's female that was the nicest way to put it. He didn't know which role came first. Now the slender figure looked haggard as she slumped against the doorway. Her child, bound tightly in the manner of their people, had worked a tiny arm free and was clawing at her scattered auburn hair. She seemed not to notice. Surprise was it annoyance? crossed Devore's face. I sent you to the lifepods! Korsin flinched. The lifepods were a nonstarter literally. They'd known that back in space when the first one snagged on its stubborn docking claw and exploded right in the ship's hull. He didn't know what had happened to the rest, but the ship had taken such damage to its spine that he figured the whole array was a probable loss. We were . . . in the cargo hold, she said, gasping as Devore reached her and grasped her arms. Near our quarters. Devore's eyes darted past her, down the hallway. Devore, you can't go to the lifepods. Shut up, Yaru! Stop it, she said. There's land. When Devore stared at her blankly, she exhaled and looked urgently toward the captain. Land! Korsin made the connection. The cargo hold! The crystals were in a hold safely forward from the damage in a place with viewports angled to see below. There was something under all that blue, after all. Something that gave them a chance. The port thruster will light, she implored. No, it won't, Korsin said. Not from any command on the bridge, anyway. We're going to have to do this by hand so to speak. He stepped past the ailing Marcom to the starboard viewport, which looked back upon the main bulge of the ship trailing aft. There were four large torpedo tube covers on either side of the ship, spherical lids that swiveled above or below the horizontal plane depending on where they were situated. They never opened those covers in atmospheres, for fear of the drag they would cause. That design flaw might save them. Gloyd, will they work? They'll cycle once. But without power, we're gonna have to set off the firing pins to open them. Devore gawked. We're not going out there! They were still at terminal velocity. But Korsin was moving, too, bustling past his brother to the port viewport. Everyone, to either side! Seelah and another crewman stepped to the right pane. Devore, glaring, reluctantly joined her. Alone on the left, Yaru Korsin placed his hand on the coldly sweating portal. Outside, meters away, he found one of the massive circular covers and the small box mounted to its side, no larger than a comlink. It was smaller than he remembered from inspection. Where's the mechanism? There. He reached out through the Force. Careful . . . Top torpedo door, both sides. Now! With a determined mental act, Korsin triggered the firing pin. A large bolt released explosively, shooting ahead and the mammoth tube cover moved in response, rotating on its single hinge. The ship, already quaking, groaned loudly as the door reached its final position, perched atop the plane of the Omen like a makeshift aileron. Korsin looked expectantly behind him, where Seelah's expression assured him of a similar success on her side. Like many of the Sith believers aboard, she had been trained in the use of the Force but Korsin had never considered using it to make in-flight corrections before. For a moment, he wondered if it had worked . . . Thoom! With a wrenching jolt that leveled the bridge crew, Omen tipped downward. It didn't slow the ship as much as Korsin had expected, but that wasn't the point. At least they could see where they were going now, what was below. If these blasted clouds would clear . . . At once, he saw it. Land, indeed but more water. Much more. Jagged, rugged peaks rose from a greenish surf, almost a skeleton of rock lit by the alien planet's setting sun, barely visible on the horizon. They were rocketing quickly into night. There wouldn't be much time to make a decision . . . but Korsin already knew there was no choice to be made. While more of the crew might survive a water landing, they wouldn't last long when their superiors learned their precious cargo was at the bottom of an alien ocean. Better they pick the crystals out from among our burned corpses. Frowning, he ordered the Force-users on the starboard side to activate their lower torpedo doors. Again, a violent lurch, and Omen banked left, angling toward an angry line of mountains. Rearward, a lifepod shot away from the ship and slammed straight into the ridge. The searing plume was gone from the bridge's field of view in less than a second. Gloyd's torpedo crew would be envious, Korsin thought, shaking his head and blowing out a big breath. Still people alive back there. They're still trying. Omen cleared a snow-covered peak by less than a hundred meters. Dark water opened up below. Another course correction and Omen was quickly running out of torpedo tubes. Another lifepod launched, arcing down and away. Only when the small craft neared the surf did its pilot if it had one get the engine going. The rockets shot the pod straight down into the ocean at full speed. Squinting through sweat, Korsin looked back at his crew. Depth charge! Fine time for a mixed

warfare drill! Even Gloyd didn't laugh at that one. But it wasn't propriety, the captain saw as he turned. It was what was ahead. More sharp mountains rising from the water including a mountain meant for them. Korsin reeled back to his chair. Stations! Seelah wandered in a panic, nearly losing the wailing Jariad as she staggered. She had no station, no defensive position. She began to cross to Devore, frozen at his terminal. There was no time. A hand reached for her. Yaru yanked her close, pushing her down behind the command chair into a protective crouch. The act cost him. Omen slammed into a granite ridge at an angle, losing the fight and still more of itself. The impact threw Captain Korsin forward against the bulkhead, nearly impaling him on the remaining shards of the smashed viewport. Gloyd and Marcom strained to move toward him, but

Omen was still on the move, clipping another rocky rise and spiraling downward. Something exploded, strewn flaming wreckage in the ship's grinding wake. Agonizingly, Omen spun forward again, the torpedo doors that had been their makeshift airbrakes snapping like driftwood as it slid. Down a gravelly incline it skidded, showering stones in all directions. Korsin, his forehead bleeding, looked up and out to see nothing.

Omen continued to slide toward an abyss. It had run out of mountain. Stop. Stop! Stop! Silence. Korsin coughed and opened his eyes. They were still alive. No, Seelah said, kneeling and clinging to Jariad. Were already dead. Thanks to you, she did not say but Korsin felt the words streaming at him through the Force. He didn't need the help. Her eyes said plenty. Presentation de l'diteur This collection of nine Lost Tribe of the Sith stories is for fans of the New York Times bestselling Fate of the Jedi series, as it features the origin story of the tribe of Sith that play such a crucial role in those novels. The bestselling Fate of the Jedi novels introduce the Star Wars universe to a long-forgotten tribe of Sith. This collection of stories tells the origin of that tribe. Written by John Jackson Miller, this paperback will include all eight of the Lost Tribe of the Sith stories, as well as "Pandemonium," the never-before-seen final chapter that will only be available in this collection.