

Terry ran down the hallway with all the speed and gusto of a parent searching for a child. In a certain kind of irony, he was actually a child searching for a parent(s). But, he wasn't a child. He was an full grown adult turtle, with something to prove. Carlton, his friend, former cop-partner, and ghost, was floating effervescently beside him.

"But, Terry. How are we going to find your mommy? She's dead," questioned Carlton, floating effervescently beside Terry. Terry noticed that the mark he had seen on Carlton's head before. He had a mark on his face, a symbol, that looked like an "s" with two notches sticking out of it at the top and one notch sticking out of it on the bottom. It looked kinda like DNA and it was really really really super-obvious in the middle of his forehead. He wondered why he hadn't noticed it during their last couple of interchanges. He supposed he'd just had tunnel vision with all the fighting. They should call it "barrel-vision", Terry thought. "Terry? Are you going to answer me?"

"Oh, yeah." Terry stopped running down the hallway. "Yeah, my mom's died. But this was the last place she was lived, and that's some place to start looking for answers. There has to be a record room or some sort of indicator that she had been here. If there isn't, then the path goes cold, and we continue our search for the falcon, Holli Gregg." Terry hoped he wouldn't have to go after that crazy bird anymore. She had killed his partner, and he was falling for her, fast. He needed something else on his mind other than her.

"You're crazy, Tear. Look, I think you should know something really, really important. I saw Holli Gregg, and I don't think-" Carlton's voice cut out as he suddenly disappeared into a vaporous nothing. He flickered a little bit, like he was being turned on and off by a switch. Then he dissipated altogether.

"Tonnie? Tonnie?" Terry looked around for anything remaining of his friend, but there was nothing. This appeared to be another thread with no possible follow-up or trail to follow and no hope of resolution. This was getting pretty ridiculous, Terry thought. But, then again, what isn't in this killer, crazy, psycho world. "I'm going on without you. Find me when you pull yourself together, literally."

Terry kicked in the door of the Head Office Keeper's office door. The door

flew across the room and smashed against the far wall. It stood upright for a second, then it fell over to the ground. The office was a mess. There was a secretary's partition with a desk and files everywhere. Papers were scattered around everything, some of which were dirty and dusty. Terry leafed through some of the files and folders on the desk before moving on to the main office connecting to it.

Inside the main office the mess was even greater. There was the addition, or subtraction rather, of a large portion of wall behind this office's desk. It looked out onto a gray landscape, with broken rock faces, dark clouds, and pouring rain. Rain was seeping into the office, filling the floor with a fair bit of water, soaking the papers and files. Terry looked around the files, looking for the T files. He figured that they would be grouped together, roughly, by last name, assuming that the person who threw them around just grabbed them like that.

Terry used his foot to move some files around on the floor and on the desk. He pushed aside "H" and "J" and "G" files, and then he uncovered "T". He fell to the ground and pushed aside all the other files. Then he bundled up as many "T" files as he could, and he went into the other office with them. He spread the files out tossing aside: "Tannis", "Tarkleson", "Tazzent", "Tent", "Teopart", "Tilman", "Tileman", "Toonis", and then "Turtle". He flipped open the cover and read through the papers.

Most of what he saw was water-stained and illegible. There were official hospital insignias as well as official Space Army stamps. It begged the question, why was Terry born in a military hospital? Was his dad a serviceman? If that was true, then he probably find well-kept records on his dad. Even, perhaps, why he'd left so long ago. "I doubt they keep records on that," Terry thought.

The final document in the pack was a death certificate. It did have two pieces of information on it: her name and her resting place. "Mary Ann Turtle" read his mother's name, and "Arlington National Cemetery" read her resting place. Terry now had a decision to make. Should he pursue his mother, to discover what he's fretted over for years, or should he continue investigating Carlton's murder?

“You should definitely investigate his murder,” came a familiar, female voice behind him. Again, Holli Gregg cocked the gun and pushed it hard into his strong, pavement-hard back muscles. “It looks like you don’t need a shell with such rock-hard muscles.”

“You can read my thoughts?” asked Terry. Well, that meant that he would have to censor his thoughts, yet again. It reminded him of the last time he had to watch what he thought, in Psychic Detective Boot Camp. Terry closed his eyes, and he closed his mind. He had long mastered the art of Occlumency, which means that other people cannot read his mind when he concentrates a certain way. He knew that he must rid his mind of emotion, empty it... make it blank and calm.

“Of course I can read your thoughts. Well... I could read your thoughts. It looks like you remember something from your Psychic Detective Boot Camp. Well, that means I’ll have to use other methods of information extraction. Move along, Turtle. As fast as you can.”

Holli Gregg forced Terry out of the room and back down the hall. They passed the pediatrics, and coming up was surgery. Terry continued to cloud his mind. “You know those lizards that can re-grow their tails?”

Holli Gregg laughed. “Yeah, what about them. You gonna re-grow your head when I blow it off?” She jabbed him in the hard back muscles with her gun.

“Not exactly,” Terry said. He quickly turned and tried to smack Holli Gregg in the head with his hands, but she flapped backward out of his reach, hovering over the ground. With her flapping, he turned and ran.

“Stop! Freeze!” Holli Gregg shouted, but it was no good. She pulled back the hammer and fired.

Just then concentrated with all his might and a new shell popped into place, just in time to block the incoming bullet. It ricocheted off his shell and shattered a window. Then he heard angry flapping. He picked up his pace, but he was much slower with his shell. And his stuff! He still had to get it. He ducked around the corner, finding he had a nearly perfect map of the hospital in his photographic memory. He made several twists and turns and

ended up back in that same room he was in before. He grabbed his bag and began stuffing the items into his shell when he saw something beneath the folder with his mother's name on it. It was another folder that read "Jordan Charles Lambert III, Ph.D."

His dad.

He couldn't believe that they actually had a file on his father, too, and in such close vicinity to his mother's folder as well. It seemed fate. He reached down to pick it up, when a bullet ripped through the files. Terry dived into the other room, and he headed for the hole in the wall. Another shot picked off pieces of molding and sheet rock hung around him. He sidestepped and jumped, using the wall for cover. Then he took out his gun. He ran down and around the building back to the only entrance.

Holli Gregg flapped down right in front of him, blocking his entrance. "Give up, turtle. I've got relatives that'd drop you from the sky as soon as look at you. But thankful I've been generous in granting you a life span."

"And why is that, Holli Gregg? Unless you need me for something... Why don't you just finish me off, like Carlton?" Terry countered. He was slowly backing up. Then, at the same time, they fired at each other, aiming for the other person's guns. Both bullets were fired with pin-point accuracy. Both guns exploded and fell away from the gun-holders' hands, both guns useless. Terry reached back into his shell to pull out another gun, when Holli Gregg came at him, through the air, with her talons out.

She landed on his shell, scraping and gashing and trying to get a grip on him to pull him into the air. Terry felt himself rising a little bit off the ground, and they slid a little causing lots of dust and dirt to fly up. Terry beat at the legs with his arms, but he failed to get the talons off of him, even when using his strong, bicep-strong, fingers.

Below them they both heard a bark. It was Samwise, the dog. He barked several times at them, obviously distressed. "Who should I help?" He barked at them.

"Samwise! Buddy! Help me! Grab my legs!" yelled Terry at the dog. Samwise just tilted his head a little bit to one side, as if confused. Then he

barked again.

“No, Samwise!” shouted Holli Gregg, panting. “You stay! Stay!” And both Holli Gregg and Terry continued to yell at the dog shouting for her to approach or to stay. The dog reacted by barking and bowing her head down a little, as if ready to attack. Terry felt himself rising further and further up.

“Please, Sam!” was his last ditch effort. The dog stood up.

“You gave me a treat, Mr. Turtle, and were kind to me. Holli Gregg hates me. I am now loyal to you.” Samwise reached up and grabbed ahold of Terry’s dangling turtle legs and pulled. Terry pulled free of the talons, and Holli Gregg, cursing this turn of events, flew off to the east.