

Three Girls, One Wookiee

Zujenia waited patiently at the docking port, wondering when her guest would be arriving. Kordath had taken over Shay duty for the evening, and his fiancée wanted to thank their Galerian babysitter for taking the baby under her wing; sometimes for days at a time. That Qyreia was also a Zeltron definitely helped: she wasn't susceptible to the Ryntron's wiles and uncontrolled predisposed abilities. Even though the mercenary wasn't late, the response over the holocall had been tentative, and the Force user was starting to wonder if she'd gotten cold feet.

When she saw the YT-1300 with the massive red *qek* painted across the top, her worries were assuaged. Through the viewport of the cockpit, she could see her guest working steadily over the controls while she performed the necessary docking procedures. Zujenia offered a wave when the Zeltron finally looked up from the console, returning it in kind before resuming the task at hand and then disappearing into the bowels of the ship.

She reappeared moments later from the airlock, seeming a little frazzled, but otherwise none the worse for wear. "Heya Zuj."

"Hey, glad you could make it. Kord says they keep you pretty busy over there." Her amber eyes looked over the smooth black shirt and gray slacks of her guest. "He also said you only had one outfit."

"Yeah... These are my old work clothes. Use 'em for going out nowadays."

"They look very... formal," the half-Ryn chuckled.

"*Work clothes*," Qyreia returned, sticking her tongue out at the white-haired woman. "So, where are we heading?"

"It's called Ruby's Tavern, one of the more well-known cantinas here. Might be quieter than what you're used to, but I didn't want to overwhelm you." She kept her disdain for loud and raucous clubs to herself.

"What I'm used to? That a Zeltron crack?" she asked amiably.

"No, more like I know what spacer dens are like and I know you're a pilot, so I put two and two together."

Fair point, Qyreia thought as the Gatekeeper led the way through the asteroid port's streets. Ol'val was hardly unreachable, but going through the haphazard, rocky debris fields always put the merc on edge when she had to fly through them. Since she was here for a "girl's night out," she was also very visibly unarmed. Given the shadowport's reputation, she was happy that she had an escort.

Following what Zuj called "the ducts," they wound their way toward the centrally located Jerem Plaza, where their destination purportedly was. Despite its small size, or perhaps because of it, Ol'val offered dense foot traffic within its confines. *How many people actually live here?* she mused as they passed all manner of sentients, making a mental note to look up some statistics when she got back to Selen. About the only complaint she could muster was, between the inconsistent hallway construction, the lighting was just as sporadic and varied, and the constant fluctuations were starting to wear on her retinas. It was a welcome reprieve when they made it to the open expanse of Jerem Plaza.

The enclosure was much larger than Qyreia had anticipated. Residential structures butted up against businesses, leaving no space unused. As they walked, Zujenia mentioned this was one of the safer districts — fewer thefts, assaults, and murders occurred here than anywhere else on the station. She didn't answer when questioned about the Ryn couple's abode and its level of illicit activity; merely whistled innocently, blushing a little as she walked through the plaza. Before long they could make out the aurebesh sign of Ruby's Tavern, the warm glow within seeping through the open doorway and sparse windows.

Upon entering, the place seemed far quieter than even the half-Ryn had let on. Before Qyreia could make a remark, the quietude was shattered by a loud, annoyed voice. "Oi Zuj! What took ya so long?!"

Zujenia sighed amiably. "Qyreia, meet Juliane Kelrune, one of the other Qel Dromans. Julie, this is Qyreia."

"Hm," she huffed as she took a long pull on her large mug of beer.

"And this big fella over here is Kelviin," she continued, motioning toward the large gray Wookiee who smiled and offered a wave in greeting.

"Wyaaaa." While Qyreia understood the greeting as an informal *hello*, the follow-up [HELLO] by the robotic-sound from his belt made her do a double-take.

"Th-that's different."

"That's just his translation vocoder. Goes through the datapad he has hooked on his waist, see?"

Kelviin unclasped the device and displayed it almost proudly. "Hm. Okay, I gotcha." She cleared her throat. "Rrraorgh raaghff rfrf." —*Nice to meet you.*—

The whole group's eyes went wide, though none wider than the Wookiee. "Arragh owrargah!" —*You understand!*— [ARE UNDERSTAND ME!]

"And you can actually speak it," Juliane said after the translation software had done its work. She pulled out a seat for Qyreia between herself and Kelviin. "Where'd you pick up something like that?"

"Used to be a trader and spent a while running a shop on Kashyyk. Boss and the crew did the supply runs and I tended the desk planetside."

"And you learned Shyriiwook while you were there?" Zujenia asked, motioning for the server and some menus. "I didn't think non-Wookiees could actually speak it."

"More like it's really difficult. Pretty hard on the throat too, especially when out of practice like I am." She turned to Kelviin, "Wyrargh aaaarghar ahfr raargh." —*Hopefully I'll be getting more practice, though.*—

—*You are very good.*— [SPEAK ARE GOOD]

"Thanks," Qyreia rasped, happy for the glass of water that the server brought with him.

Drinks were ordered for the newcomers, the Zeltron enjoying the break for her voicebox while the new acquaintances introduced themselves now that she'd properly endeared herself. Juliane's talk of what was definitely piracy soured Qyreia's mood somewhat, her old prejudices hidden behind a disarming smile and several pints of ale. Definitely the rowdiest of the bunch,

the Echani woman had no issue with calling for drink after drink, eventually foregoing the pretense and outright challenging Qyreia to a drinking contest.

“Schrfaargh reearghagh braawr reff graargh,” Qyreia muttered to Kelviin while Julie ordered the lineup of drinks. —*Schutta don't know what she's getting herself into.*—

The Wookiee managed a laugh before the competition proper began, seemingly to Zuji's chagrin. Secretly, she was looking forward to seeing the Zeltron put the other Force user on her rear with liquor. If anything, it would quiet things down again.

One. Two. Three. Glass by glass, the liquor was emptied. Juliane clearly had some experience in heavy drinking and was holding her own... for a while, at least. Between snippets of casual conversation, Qyreia's second liver was clearly offering the advantage against the Echani's greater body mass. Zujenia's watchful gaze, still outwardly friendly, allowed her to see the Zeltron taking her time with the drinks: even after it was in her mouth, she didn't talk much until after several seconds, subtly swallowing sips instead of the whole drink at once. While Juliane would normally have been able to see the same nuance, her bombast coupled with the liquor dulled her senses thoroughly.

It was a blessing when she finally tottered, dropping her face onto her arms and passing out. All three of the others breathed a sigh of relief.

“You're good, Q. You don't look any more than tipsy.”

“Oh, I am *thoroughly* kriffed,” the Zeltron said, swaying back in her chair. “Kelviin, would you be a dear and help me to the refresher? I can barely see straight right now.”

Zujenia offered, but the Wookiee did as requested, steadying Qyreia by the shoulders and walking with her all the way to the door where she asked that he wait. Whether out of a sense of duty, respect for the red woman's linguistic skills, or simply wanting to help the new person, he remained patiently by the door. With his little shoulder cape, the scene from Zujenia's vantage was incredibly adorable. When Qyreia finally emerged, she did so looking refreshed and a little less wobbly on her feet, though she still accepted Kelviin's assistance back to the table.

“Feel better?”

“Oh my *god*, you have no idea how long I've had to pee,” she sighed, nearly melting into her seat. “Ol' Jules here timed it *just* right.” Qyreia giggled to herself, much to the amusement of the other two.

—*Good to see you are enjoying yourself.*— [HAPPY SEE YOU HAPPY]

When Kelviin grumbled to himself about the translation, the mercenary put a hand on his furry arm. “S'okay, I knew what ya meant.” Her blue-and-gray eyes scanned the room, enjoying the light music from the band on the stage in the corner. “There any food in this place? I'm starvin'.”

Despite the initial excitement, the night wound down from there. Once she had some food in her stomach, as well as several glasses of water, Qyreia's inebriation subsided well enough on its own that she could return to normal conversation and seated posture. Kelrune remained knocked out, sleeping happily on the table. It took some cajoling, but eventually even Kelviin was pried from his silence, foregoing the translator and allowing the Zeltron to interpret — she got practice and he didn't have to be frustrated with the haphazard software.

Drinking resumed after some time, though the Wookiee never looked so much as tickled by the alcohol. *Damn body mass*, Zujenia inwardly giggled, enjoying the pleasant company. Between eating a rather larger serving of fried goods and quite a bit more liquor passing into her bloodstream, Qyreia was once again quite gone, though thankfully no worse than after the match with Julie. It was well into what passed for night on the asteroid when they finally decided to call it a night.

“You going to be good to go home,” the half-Ryn asked Qyreia when she stood rather unsteadily. “Still have to fly back to Selen.”

“I’mmmokay,” she slurred, consciously trying not to trip over herself upon standing. Kelviin spoke, forgetting that his translator was still off. “I am *so* okay! Don’... don’tchoo be tellin’ me what I can an’ can’t do.”

“Q, honey, you’re in no shape to fly.”

The Zeltron grumbled, cradling her forehead in a palm. “Yeah... yeah, you’re right.”

“Come with me. You can stay at our place tonight.”

Kelviin *clicked* his datapad back into function. [AM WILL TAKE JULIE HOME]

“Thanks Kelviin,” Zujenia sighed, smiling as they each went their separate ways.

The walk was largely quiet, save for the local traffic, and it wasn’t until they were within the confines of the darkened apartment that either of them spoke.

“Sorry fer makin’ you take care of my drunk-choobs.”

“It’s alright dear. Did you have fun?”

Qyreia nodded as Zujenia laid her out on the sofa, Kordath’s gentle snoring filtering in from the adjacent bedroom. “Mhm. Thanks for inviting me. Don’t know too many folks on Selen, so it was nice to get out of the house.”

“Isn’t Keira there?”

She rolled her eyes. “Off playing tomb raider with Atra.”

“So what do you do with all that free time?” Qyreia merely coughed, glancing sideward awkwardly. “Oh... oh dear, um...”

“Yeah.”

Zuji chuckled, breaking some of the awkwardness. “Well, at least you had fun tonight, Keira or no.” She hugged the Zeltron tightly before slipping a blanket over her and making for her own bed. “Goodnight Qyreia.”

“G’night Zuj. Give Shay a smooch for me.”

“Will do.”