

Competition: Run For It!
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Sesid
42 ABY
Weeq's Casino Palace Extraordinaire

Large emerald eyes ran over the gray-furred Zygerrian's hand she was about to play. She knew full well that it had been a fool's errand to try and bypass the female Weequay with the smuggled goods. A game of cards was a desperate attempt at distraction. The crime boss was at thirteen when she placed down a six. Nineteen. Zag was at eighteen, left with only a crimson minus four. A fanged tooth bit into her pink lip. She had been saving that card for over six games. Too long.

Just take the loss, you aren't here to win, Zag. Let's get outta here. Umangi told herself.

Her heartbeat was all the way up in her throat, she knew she had to just let the criminal take her chips, so that her loot would be safe. An argument went back and forth in her mind. Just fold and live another day. She flicked the cards with her sharp nails. Some of the thugs were taunting her. Zag tried to rationalize, but her almost fully covered brows pulled together. Her palm itched as she called to the Force to reveal the next pattern. It was an even number, she was sure of it.

"Nah, imma do this, just watch. Screw ya'll and have a great day," her silvery voice mocked them as she asked for another card.

Oh boy, oh boy!

A six snapped down onto the table. Twentyfour. Without a single thought she shoved her crimson card forward and stood up from her seat, making a gracious bow. Her raven bangs flicked over the grin on her face until she looked up at the Weequay. Her hands were already stuffing the many pockets of her cropped jacket with credit chits. A well-dressed man at the side of the table flipped the card over for him.

"Twenty! And we have a win-," a hole appeared in the croupier's chest before he could finish his sentence.

The Zygerrian swallowed hard.

Sore loser.

There was a collective clicking of plasteel as every henchman in the room reached for their blasters.

Time to go, go, go!

If only she hadn't left her jetpack behind. Big mistake. Her X-70B *Shimmer* was waiting for her and her chits. This was going to be a bit of a run.

"Grab her! I'm going to cut that little pink nose off!"

Everyone tried to peer down as they saw the Zyggerian slip under the table, some heads bumping into each other.

"You idiots!" The Weequay screamed.

Zag closed her eyes and exhaled deeply, letting pleasant thoughts of a distant paradise run through her mind. The smelly boots and ripped pants around her under the table became little more than objects in the background. Like being plunged into the icy deep, her body vanished from this reality as the Force recognized her needs. When the first criminal patron peered down, there was no one there.

"There's no one there!" A Rodian lifted his head back up. He froze as he realized his real mistake.

Zag wormed herself between the many legs, eyeing the exit just ahead. She sat still every time eyes were going in her direction.

"Why is it impossible to find competence!" The Weequay boss raised her blaster to the Rodian. With a gentle pull of the trigger she fired a bolt between his bulbous eyes.

"Elli'ot, tell them to lock the palace down," the gang leader commanded her main henchman.

"Excuse me, your highness, the Gammorreans at the door are having an argument," Elli'ot retorted submissively.

"Elli'ot, you idiot, do something about it then!"

"As you wish, your highness."

"There did you see it?" A no-name thug remarked pointing at a shadow on the carpet.

"What? I saw nuthin'," another replied.

"It's over there now, a shimmer!" Another scoundrel pointed at the floor just a few paces away from the carpet.

"Ohhh, now I see it."

Elli'ot took aim with his repeater.

The Force screamed at Zag as she turned her head. She ducked and rolled away, landing just lateral to the squabbling Gammorrean duo. A blaster bolt created a burnmark right next to the guard's bare feet.

A large axe landed on the duracrete just in front of Umangi as her body reappeared. She reeled herself back in, sprinted and jumped over it. She could feel the wind blow over her pointy ears as another vibro-axe missed her by a hair. A cascade of shots followed in her wake, one of them hitting the knee of one of the squealing guards. The chaos was complete.

Not good, not good.

The Zygerrian panted as she ran for her life. Outside. The palm trees and red carpet greeted her like a warm meal. Casino Palace guests were scrambling to get to their speeders as the situation escalated. Zag tried to run for a speeder that was just parked in front of the complex by a valet. The vehicle darted away before she could reach it.

Kark, now what?! The lake!

Motored gondolas littered the waters. Elli'ot and his goons spilled out of the main entrance as she bolted away, still barely in their sight. He and a trio hijacked one of the guest's speeders and risked losing the Zygerrian as they struggled to get it moving.

The temptation of yelling parkour became great as Zag pushed herself off of awnings, ramps and staircases. The big blue was in reach. A *thud* with a metallic *ring* made her ears twitch. A swathe of foam rapidly expanded close to her.

Close!

She managed to barely evade an adhesive grenade as she made the plunge. Blaster shots dissipated as the lithe Zygerrian disappeared underwater. The cool water pressed on her skin. Some of the credit chits escaped her pockets. Unwilling to lose them she snatched them before they sank too deep and fastened her pockets with a quick pull at the strap. Zag forced her eyes open, not being fond of opening her eyes while submerged. She peered at the boat shaped object and began swimming there.

Before emerging, she let the shadow of a speeder pass by one more time. She took a deep breath as she surfaced and swiped back her hair. Her arms trembled as she climbed aboard a powered up gondola. Nobody had seen her yet. She pressed a nail into her Linked Gauntlet to recall her starship **Shimmer** from stealth-mode. *Linky* buzzed and crackled until the Zygerrian shook out some of the water.

How am I going to explain this...