

Stuck in Thanatophilia with this lot!
Port Ol'val/Thanatophilia
20:00

Stares. That's what was given to the smiling purple woman on the tabletop. No words were exchanged within the dim room. Not until the Twi'lek raised her arms and gave them a 'get at it' kinda smile. A small banter of chit-chat periodically hummed to life as the members of Shadow Gate picked and prodded at what topics to talk about.

A couple of meters away, Zujenia sat at another table. She had used the excuse that there wasn't room at the already overcrowded furniture. The Half-Ryn raised her glass, swirling the amber liquid. It was stark in comparison to her eyes, which flashed with the light reflecting off of the fluid's surface. She took a sip, content with watching until she is pulled into a conversation.

Zujeania saw the corners of K'tana's mouth frown as the Battleteam leader must have realized Marick wasn't budging to go and DJ. Her smile quickly returned as she waved to a dark haired maiden. If one could call the corpse-dressed woman a maiden.

"Sharrow! Music!" the Twi'lek hollered.

The death lady scampered off and a moment later a haunting yet jaunting beat filled the room.

Sip.

Sharrow returned with a tray of fresh drinks and was greeted with clacking glassware and noise of thanks. Zujenia stared down again at her drink. There was only a bit left, so she swung it back and swallowed.

Might as well.

She stood and closed the distance from her secluded spot to the bumbling group. Reaching between Adem and some fella she had yet to meet, she exchanged glasses. As she grasped a full glass, something pale caught her eye and she allowed her gaze to meet it. Her heart rate fluttered, picking up tempo as she recognized the pale, fleshy color within the table's surface.

Is that...a dead body?!?

Her eyes grew wide as she realized a human body was encased within the transparisteel table. Blaster holes dotted the man's chest, obscuring some of the tattoos that covered his skin. If she was able to think, she would have connected the gaping fanged mouth with three blood drops under it as one of Port Ol'val's gang symbols she had learned from material Marick had assigned her to read. He was dressed in a tattered jean vest and loose pants that hung to low,

exposing the briefs underneath. The blood stains that decorated his top suggested they were the clothes he died in.

Zujenia didn't notice she had frozen in place, hand gripping the base of a glass, leaning between the two men, white hair dangling over their laps. Not until the light grasp of a hand on her shoulder, warm and reassuring. Turning, she was greeted with the ice blue eyes of Marick that betrayed for a second, the sympathy he felt for the surprised Hunter. It was swiftly replaced by his usual quiet facade.

"Good?" he asked simply and she replied with a nod. "Excuse me then."

She obliged, shifting to the side, her knuckles slowly regaining color. She glanced around the table, self-conscious of her display. Half of the table appeared none the wiser or had averted their attention back to the conversation shortly after Marick's arrival. Loud, bumbling conversation and laughter erupted from the table. There was a few, though, that had seemed to noticed her reaction. Zujenia met the gaze of Adem, who quickly turned to feign listening to his neighbor.

The Combat Master passed her on his way back to his seat near Timeros. The pale, blond haired man's gaze seemed to drill into her, sucking away whatever information he could gather from her appearance. Her breath caught in her throat as she forced herself to meet his stare. He broke his concentration as he turned to speak with Marick. They exchanged a few short sentences and looked her away before returning to the topic at hand.

Exhale. Sip.

She took another sip, turning her attention to the table beside her. It was then that she caught the grey face of Kordath. He had his glassed raised and took a sip. He tilted his head and let out a chuckle to something Inarya said before turning his gaze back to Zujenia. A look of pity and sympathy sparked in his eyes. The Half-Ryn turned her head. She couldn't meet his gaze. The gaze of the man who brought her to Arcona. Arguably, he had even saved her life as much as she didn't want to give the drunkard the credit. If she had stayed on New Tython, she would have likely perished with many of Clan Odan-Urr. He had brought her into this band of assassins and she couldn't even look at a dead body without being overtaken in terror.

She lifted her drink and tossed back her drink. She chugged it down because all of a sudden, she didn't want to be here, to interact, to feel ashamed for an honest reaction. Her gut tightened at the close proximity of the 14 other people. It caused her to turn tail, walking away from the group, placing the empty cup on a table she passed.

"Zuji! Where you going?!" K'tana called. Zujenia turned slightly, sidestepping to continue her journey.

“Rest stop,” she called back with a slight smile and raised hand. Her eyes narrowed as she righted herself and continued onward. . She found her way across the large room and into a hallway. Once sure no one was following her, the Half-Ryn tried the doors that lined the walls. The first two she jiggled the handles on were locked. Third time the charm though and she slipped quietly through the doorway.

The door closed with a soft *click*. Zujenia turned, her eyes sweeping the room as she called upon the Force, willing it to erase her presence. She stepped forward and walked around a large, black table, her fingers trailing across the edge. She lifted them up. Clean.

They dust these rooms. Must be important. Meeting rooms?

She subconsciously moved over to the walls. Admiring a grotesque painting, she lifted a hand to feel the odd material it was created on. It was smooth and leathery, she tried to place it, but it wasn't nerf or any other leather she was familiar with.

Images of the corpse in the transparisteel table flashed into her mind. Zujenia fought the urge to vomit, her hand quickly leaving the tapestry and covering her mouth. Squeezing her eyes shut, she succeeded in keeping her last meal. The Half-Ryn grabbed a chair and moved to the corner of the room. She sat, practically kneeling, on the seat and expanded her electrostaff.

This place is not right. Who the hell cures humanoid skin!?!

“Hehe. Oh Zuji! Didn't I say we were making friends today?” a voice chirped up. Zujenia jolted, jumping off the chair and into a ready, defensive stance. Amber eyes locked onto purple skin before the figure swiftly bent down and sent a well aimed kick to her staff. It clattered off the wall and rolled against the chairs.

She opened her mouth to protest, but a finger placed on her lips silenced her. K'tana shook her head and clicked her tongue in disapproval.

“Avoiding the party? What shall be your consequence? hmmm...I got it.!” A wicked grin took over her face and she stepped closer. Soon, the shorter woman was towering over her, reaching down with open hands.

Off went her vest and top, her belt following suit. K'tana uncourtously pantsed Zujenia next while ignoring her protests. She went to straighten up when she came face to face with a bound, furry tail. An unnatural squeal came escaped her lips as the Twi'lek scrambled at the bandages and gave the tail a slight tug.

“Eek! You even have the Rat tail! It's itty compare to Kords. A baby rat's tail!!!!” She screeched.

A knock sounded on the door and a woman popped her head in. Zujenia froze before remembering she was undressed and crossed her arms in front of her, as if to add more coverage than her bra would.

Great! Just fraking great! Why don't we just parade me in front of everyone else?

"Sere! Hey, can you go get one of those repo-ed dresses, pretty place?" K'tana tugged on the tail as she waved her hands around. Sere gave a smile and voiced a quick apology to Zujenia before disappearing. She returned shortly with a deep orange dress that shimmered under the light.

K'tanna vaulted onto the table, grabbed the dress and rolled back towards the Hunter. The door clicked shut as Sere left, dismissed by the battle team leader. The Twi'lek shoved the dress over Zujenia's head. It molded against her skin, it's sleeveless and open sides showed off the Half-Ryn's hued skin and blue birthmarks.

Stepping back to examine her work, K'tana lifted a finger as if realizing an addition that need to be made. She grabbed Zujenia's vibroblade out of it's sleeve and cut a tail slit in the back.

"Yasss!" the Twi'lek nodded, satisfied. "Let's go!" She grabbed the Hunter's tail and lead the way, Zujenia grimacing with each tug.

K'tana guided her to the middle of the dance floor. She gave the Half-Ryn's fifth appendage some slack, but maintained her hold. The team had dispersed, a few finding their way to the bar, others moved towards the dance floor while some held fast to their seats. Skar was in an apparent argument with the Selenian bar keeper on the subject of drinks. Inarya and Livanna beelined for the dance floor, a slightly stumbling Adem following with his lute a strumming.

"Yo! Everyone!" K'tana shouted over the dim, demanding silence. It sent Zujenia's spine crawling. She itched to slink away unnoticed, but it was too late. Her teammates lined the edge of the floor. Adem halted his music, Skar broke his attention from the mixology battle. Marick and Tim turned their heads out of sheer curiosity and dread for the latter.

"Zuj, lass. Yer lookin' fine!" Kord hooted from the small crowd. K'tana threw up her hands in an over exaggerated quiet gesture.

"Zuji here, attempted to give our party the slip. So, she has kindly offered to dance for us tonight!" The purple woman smiled and hoped.

"What?!" Zujenia exclaimed gritting her teeth.

Dance? Fraking eh. She shot a glare at her leader, who just brushed her shoulder and nodded. Closing her eyes, the Hunter sighed. She moved over to one of the crowds. Picking out the only

full Ryn in the group, she reached out and snatched the glass of whiskey from his hand. Zujenia threw it back.

“Lass! That’s me drink!”Kord protested, the cup quickly returned empty.

Wiping the corner of her mouth with her arm, Zujenia moved to the center of the floor again. She pivoted on the balls of her feet, turning to face all of Shadow Gate.

Fine...I may not last prove myself worthy to you assasins tonight, but by galaxies! You better be entertained!

The Half-Ryn threw up her right arm, her tail curling upwards. Dark amber eyes flashed with fire as the alcohol wore away her reservations.

“Music!” she demanded, lifting her chin as Adem strummed up a song.

And she danced.