

Habit Forming

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Yuki sat at the bar listening to the thrum of the bass lines inside the club high above Nar Shaddaa. She had been at the game for a long time now and could afford things like Club Vertica, but she never really liked the choices of music. The people milling about the expansive den of iniquity were always more amusing to her. People won, and lost, fortunes at the tables, the games of chance and even the random murder just outside the entrance. The Corsair never walked away from the tables after winning big, made her too much of a target and she knew it. However, tonight, if one could use that word to describe the time of day in a place that never slept, she found herself looking intently at the growing piles of credits in front of her. Quick calculations made it more than enough to fix her ship, keep it fueled and then even keep the small kitchen well stocked for a very long time. She knew she should walk away, knew that she could not continue to pull cards from up her sleeve without someone noticing.

As if the worry conjured someone's sharp eyes, the small table suddenly exploded upwards, showering the room with credits, cards and drinks. Yuki blinked as some of her expensive Corellian brandy dripped away from her face. Her wide-brimmed hat looking as though she stood in the middle of a rainstorm. She raised an eyebrow and smiled sweetly from beneath the brim that kept most of her face hidden.

"Now, that was not very nice, now was it? Surely, you did not mean to upset the entire game by leaving so quickly," the woman said quietly, her hand resting in her lap scant inches away from her blaster.

"You're a dirty cheat! I seen you pullin' cards from somewheres!"

The Mercenary sighed softly and shook her head. It usually was the stupid ones that caught her. But, Vertica's screening process usually kept them outside of these rooms. Yuki tilted her head up and stared at the man with frozen violet eyes, her lips twitched into a small grin.

"A cheat, you say? My dear fellow, clearly you are mistaken. No one cheats in Vertica."

The man paused for a second and then shook his head vigorously. "I know what I seen! You pulled a Joke right from your sleeve! I seen it!"

The woman lifted her hand from her lap and scratched her chin, her face a mask of commensurate chastisement. "I did no such thing. Surely you are still mistaken."

She looked at the edge of the table, her eyes flicked from side to side as she made note of security quickly approaching the tables. It was a stretch, but it was not something she had not done in the past to keep herself out of trouble. The edge of her foot touched the curve of the

table a moment before the object spun quickly in place and she kicked the bottom of it. The large oval shot across the small space and impacted the man with enough force to knock him down with the table landing on top of him. Security began to run towards her side of the room, leaving Yuki with fewer and fewer options. Cheats were not handled very nicely on Nar Shaddaa, a lesson she had learned the hard way some years back.

The small scoundrel scooped up a large number of credits, her eyes making contact with the security guards as she smiled wickedly. She lifted her hand and released the coins into the empty space, her voice ringing over the music.

“Drinks are on me, folks. I have to go now!” she bent down and scraped more of the credits into her hands before she deposited them into a small bag at her hip. The crowd, she noted quite happily, surged almost as one to collect the shiny metal disks. Everyone always wanted more money, but that was the fastest way to make a screen between her and her would-be pursuers. She hated letting the money go for free, but they *were* providing her with an invaluable opportunity.

“Worth it, I suppose.” said Yuki as she turned towards the nearby exit. Security had not managed to block her escape route, but she would have to move quickly. The man stirred behind her and a blaster bolt arced through her hair to the left of her face. Her eyes flashed dangerously as she turned, drew her own blaster and shot the man in the chest. She continued pulling the trigger until the pistol clicked empty, her face lit up malevolently in the strobing lights.

The scoundrel shoved the weapon back in its holster and bolted for the exit. She would be back eventually, but she would have to find another place to gamble for now. This was definitely going to bite her in the ass for a while.