

Snapshots & Posts Color

Zujenia: <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/14615/snapshots/1014/2177>

Eilen: <https://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/members/15115/snapshots/1065/2168>

Orange-speckled fingertips glided and drifted over a great array of buttons, fobbles, and switches like a graceful dancer. The Light Freighter's controls mere muscle memory to the Kel Dor after many years with the old gal. He barely paused in time to miss colliding into the brown-furred digits of the familiar hybrid beside him, having regrown used to piloting solo once again. Together the two finished up prepping the Galewing for entering Selen's atmosphere.

"Thank you again, Baro, for your help," the white-haired woman nestled behind Eilen spoke, her amber eyes holding true her sincerity. "The people of Selen need this."

"Hey, just offering what I can." Baro spun his chair about, giving a thumbs up. His voice came out slightly muffled through the beak-like, tusked mask that aided his species to breath in different atmospheres. His black, pupiless eyes glanced at the tall half-Bothan. "Besides, seemed like Eilen was pretty invested in aiding."

The lady in question straightened up awkwardly as she was brought into the topic of the conversation, again. It really shouldn't of surprised her that Baro and Zujenia had interacted just fine together, but she still was anxious as if bringing home a girl to meet the folks. Her thick tail nearly knocked over a nearby water canister on the floor when it swished nervously. "Er, just doing what you've always taught me, eheh."

Eilen's social awkwardness was infectious it seemed, as Zujenia's small talking finally stumbled. "Yes, uh, you raised her well. We've been lucky to have her..." She paused, that friendly smile twitching as if there was something she wanted to say but was restraining. Eilen fidgeted. The expansive view of Selen's oceans as they descended towards the main city seemed to force her hand. The woman froze, shoulder rigid. "Excuse me, I'm, er, going to go check on the cargo..."

"That wouldn't be wise right now—" Baro tried to advise, the sandy tail of the half-Ryn slipping out of sight through the sliding door. He sighed, air running through his respirator, and turned to Eilen. "Might want to stop her, don't want to crush anyone with a fourth ton of loose cargo."

"I, uh, think she's just doesn't..." the half-Bothan scratched the back of her head hesitantly, cheeks flushed beneath the fur, "...like water. But I'll go make, uh, sure she doesn't get smushed, yeah."

Messy crop of dark hair shifted with her as Eilen managed to not trip getting about her chair and heading to the door. She didn't catch the low buzz of her datapad on the control panel when she left. Ducking down to pass through the entry, her ears swiveled about while her lilac eyes searched for her fellow Arconan. It didn't take long until the hybrid found the other, and Eilen swallowed. Zujenia was standing still before her, tail tucked about her leg, and staring at her own datapad.

"Zujenia?"

The half-Ryn startled, unbiting her lip as she turned. Weariness was heavy in her tone as she reply. "Rhy lance has issued a House-wide message. Estle city...there's revolting in the streets. They're attacking the Sinchi Logistic Hubs, the medical centers, and... the Citadel."

"But, wait, we're supposed to land at the Hub's docks —" Eilen commented, ears back as she realised the new complication and worry, not to mention the fact that things had gone so bad already that the people are so desperate.

Zujenia nodded, her posture transitioning from the initial shock of the news into a determine stance. "We need to let Baro know, so we can prepare—"

" — uh, ladies?" The aforementioned Kel Dor's voice crackled on the Galewing's overhead communications, "We seem to have a party going on down below. Better come to the cockpit."

The tall and short hybrids exchanged a look before darting off to meet him and the view before the Starlight Class Freighter.

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"This is Captain Baro Jath of the Galewing, hailing the..." Baro checked the name again. "...Sinchi Logistics Hub, number twelve. Can you--"

"Please stand by, Galewing," the voice on the other end interrupted, his tone obviously desperate. "We have a situation on our hands."

"Yeah, I can see that," Baro said without opening his communicator again just yet. "...Sinchi, I can see your 'situation' from here. Can you redirect my ship to a safe landing zone? We're carrying relief supplies for your citizens."

Behind him, Eilen and Zujenia returned to the cockpit, their eyes both immediately drawn to the view below. Though the people were hardly more than dots from where they stood, the riot they were in was almost certain.

The Kel Dor glanced briefly at the hybrid ladies, then turned his attention back to the helm. No response yet. He grunted, almost annoyed, then made to improvise for the time being. As he stretched a hand across the controls for altitude adjustment, it quickly retracted as Eilen slipped back into the copilot's seat and halted their descent herself.

A long, speckled finger pointed toward a few other freighters visible in the air. "Give us some distance, but follow their flight pattern." Eilen nodded wordlessly and ran her jittery fingers over altitude control again. The Galewing tilted right, then slowly arced left, beginning a wide circle around the perimeter of the city below.

With their trajectory stable, Baro turned his chair to face the other two. "Seems you've got a real problem happening on the ground. The Hub isn't letting anybody land right now. Did you know it was getting this bad?"

Zujenia looked back to her datapad, still struck with disbelief. "Why..." She blinked, then cleared her throat. "We've had some problems and outbursts from the shortages, but we haven't had to shut down anything this big." Her eyes continued glancing through the reports coming through from the city. She sat behind Eilen before speaking up again.

"Some of the rioters have raided supply ships at the landing pads. They're stealing cargo and--they're turning violent... We've already had some of our workers attacked, and countless droids damaged or..." The half-Ryn shook her head with a sad sigh.

Just behind the cockpit doorway, Baro's silent droid turned its head curiously. Its body began to hum as it pulled itself out of low-power settings. "Am I needed, sir?" the looming droid asked.

Baro glanced at ZT-57, then held up a hand to gesture for it to wait. "Why haven't your police, or military force, whatever - Why haven't they responded?"

"They're spread thin all across the city," Zujenia continued, looking back at the datapad. "The riots are crying out about... Force-users." She glanced up at Eilen, who's ears flicked low as her head twitched around to listen more closely. "Someone, somehow, might have slipped, or-or tipped someone off, I don't know, but Clan is keeping silent. Eilen, we have to be careful. These rioters are attacking people all across Estle City who they think might be Force-users."

A long exhale sounded through Baro's mask. The Kel Dor took a moment to run his fingers beneath his hat, rubbing his head.

Beside him, Eilen's head sunk an inch as she glanced to her father figure, then back out of the cockpit. "Why here though?" she asked, her voice concerned. "Th-the Sinchi Logistics Hub is one of the places that's supposed to be *helping* these people! Why would they want to steal supplies we're already giving to them?"

Baro shook his head. “There comes a point in desperation when people stop differentiating between a hand offered to themselves, and a hand offered to their enemies. For all they know, our supplies are going straight to the Citadel’s people. And for all they care, the Citadel’s people are all Force-users conspiring against them. Our ship is just a hand for the taking.”

“Well, then, why can’t we just land and give it all to them?”

“Because when you toss a slice of meat between a pack of starving beasts, they’ll fight each other for it. We’re here to help supplement the relief effort, but we can’t resolve it.”

A variety of unfortunate outcomes played out in Eilen’s head as she considered her old master’s words. Her ears sunk lower in disappointment. “...So what do we do?”

Zujenia turned off her datapad, having read enough. The half-Ryn clearly had a lot running through her head. “...We have to try and help the workers at the Hub; they’re completely overrun. And whatever we do, the supplies we have need to get into the hands of the right people who can distribute them fairly throughout the city. There’s got to be a safe place we can bring them, or at least a way to tell the rioters we’re here to help and just to back off for a minute...”

Baro tilted his head. “I like your consideration, but doing all of that at once is very likely out of our hands.” He glanced back out of the cockpit for a moment, peering at the Citadel from afar for something he probably couldn’t see.

“...What if we can make our own safe place?” Eilen piped up. When the others turned her way, her fingers twittered together aimlessly. “...Uh... Well, uh... If we can, just... create a distraction, something that will disperse the riot in, I dunno, just a small spot... maybe this ship can land, unload, aaand lift back off before things get bad for us.”

To her side, Zujenia’s brow arched. “What sort of distraction are you talking about?”

Before Eilen could think of an answer, Baro turned back to the helm and took control of the Galewing again. “Lower the ship, Eilen. Just to get close...” Zujenia felt herself pushed against the back of her seat as the ship flew closer to the Citadel.

As they circled around the mountain the city was built upon, Baro pulled them in closer as they approached the Hub where they intended to land, and ignored the broadcast ping that came up from the communications towers below. His eyes only briefly glanced back at the controls as he studied the landing pads and their surroundings. To no one’s surprise, the rioting looked far worse up close, leaving Eilen and Zujenia both discomfited, but Baro was focused, looking for something else within the chaos. After a close flyby over all of Sinchi Logistics Hub 12, the Galewing tilted the other way and pulled off, quickly putting distance between itself and the sloped grounds of Estle City once more.

“What was that about?” Zujenia asked as the rioters below shrunk.

“Just a sec,” Baro responded, finally reaching for the broadcast ping. “Hey,” he said to the ship’s communicator before whoever was on the other end could speak. “This is Captain Jath of the Galewing, calling back.”

“Captain, please stand by, or your ship--”

“Hey, hey, look, just listen,” Baro interrupted, almost smugly after getting no better from his first call, “All disregarded warnings aside, my crew and I are prepared to offer assistance, if you can work with us up here. We have a possible plan to get our supplies down to you, and maybe we can do more once we get there.”

Zujenia looked to Eilen for some kind of answer, but the furred girl only returned an equally questioning glance. There was a long pause before anyone spoke again, and it was a new voice coming through the ship’s communicator.

“What would you need from us, Galewing?” it said calmly.

“I just need to know if there’s a safe place where you’re keeping all of your supplies going out to the city.”

After another pause, the new voice returned. “We’ve managed to keep our mass storage facility locked down from the riots. Most of the guards the Citadel could spare for us are keeping it secure. The only people passing through are armed escorts moving relief supplies out, but rioters have completely surrounded it.”

When the voice stopped talking, Baro glanced to Eilen, who was fidgeting like she had something to say. “I-- I know where that is! I can get us there after we, you know, get on the ground.”

“That’s my girl,” Baro uttered with a hint of pride.

“Galewing, what exactly is it that you’re planning?” the voice on the other end asked.

The Kel Dor took a few seconds to gather his thoughts again. “My crew and I are preparing a distraction that should move the rioters off from the landing pads, but only briefly.” Eilen might have been the only one who could detect Baro’s forced tone of confidence as he spoke. “If it works, we might have a chance for my ship and a couple others in the sky with me to get our supplies out to you. We’ll need your storage guards to be ready to receive a lot of cargo.”

“And your ‘distraction’, Captain?”

“You’ll know it when you see it. Just don’t freak out.” Baro cut off the communicator just as the other voice began a retort. “...They’re not gonna like me when they see it,” he added for only Eilen and Zujenia to hear, rubbing his head again.

The half-Ryn’s expression suddenly grew stern. “And why is that?”

“That, uh... happens with him, sometimes,” Eilen quietly commented.

With a long breath, Baro pointed blindly back to where the Citadel would be if it were in his view. “A lot of the skiffs and machinery operated by droids have been attacked or abandoned. I spotted a few empty ones along the docks, not too close to the people, but certainly close enough. I’m... going to blast them.”

Zujenia was shocked. “What?!”

“No collateral damage, I promise you that,” Baro quickly assured. “A demonstration of firepower should scatter the crowds and send them running. Of course, some of them might come back once the ship is set down and my canons get suck with a blind spot, but we should at least have enough of a window to land and unload. If we’re lucky, maybe two of these other ships can do the same.” His speckled digits gestured back to the other ships circling the city.

None of this changed the look on Zujenia’s face. “You’re insane. We can’t open fire on rioters, that could--”

“I’m not going to be shooting *at* them, just at something they can see.”

“There has to be a better way!”

“Do you have one in mind?”

“Yes!” The half-Ryn stood up, her stance firm. “Negotiation. We can talk them down - we have to!”

Baro’s head slanted, unconfident. “You can’t just talk down a riot that’s gone violent.”

“Well-- What they’re doing, they have to know that the Hub is one of their best chances at getting fresh supplies. Not through looting, not through attacking each other, but through fair distribution, and there has to be a way to convince them to let us get our supplies down and sorted out!”

Even behind his mask, the Kel Dor’s expression was clearly not convinced.

Between them, Eilen finally spoke up again. “I... I guess, if anyone could, well, make that work, it could be her. I mean, she was one of the House leaders for a while.”

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“Heh, we’ll see if that pays off now. Bring us closer again, Baro. Comms?” Zujenia asked, gesturing towards the control panels. Eilen hastily pointed out a section of knobs and buttons before relinquishing her seat. The half-Ryn replaced her fellow Arconan and, shooting a glance at the still skeptical Kel Dor who eventually complied, thumbed several controls. Holding down one, the Galewing gliding ever so closer, she cleared her throat.

*“*Hey, folks*...”* she paused, noting the one, two, three, maybe four heads from the nearest crowds that turned to stare up towards the crackling voice above. *“*I, uh, know things are bad right now, but if you raid the food and supplies... Well, we ain’t going to have food left for the next week. That means no bread for your daughters, no medicine for Grandma who’d escaped the plague’s clutches miraculously*...”*

Small passing of movements occurred on the edges of the rioting masses, likely the exchanging of patting arms to gather attention. Still, Zujenia’s efforts was holding the attention of a dozen or so. She swallowed, hoping that may be enough to persuade the others

*“*So, how about we clear some space for us up here and either head home or give a helping hand in depositing these goods that help our families survive in the coming weeks. Hell, I’ll pay fifty credits to each who does*.”*

She lifted her finger just in time. Baro interjected with a raised brow. “Fifty credits? Paying them off is your plan?”

“Incentive? Not my preferred method, but we only got one chance to convince them,” Zujenia sighed before resuming chewing on the inside of her lip as the seconds passed.

The heated, violent mob below had started to splinter, break away and pause in consideration. Not all had dropped their aggressive action but of the hundred or so people in sight, half had turned. Some had even started backing out of the way, prodding and forcibly urging their companions to do the same. Eventually, a space almost large enough for one of the smaller spacecrafts to land was cleared when a Selenian man clambered from the masses and on top of a overturned skiff. He held a large, disk-like device in his hands, bopping it several times to ensure it worked. His voice rang out over his companions as the loudhailer amplified it.

“Don’t listen to them! They are trying to pay us to keep quiet! To keep from exposing the truth of the Citadel, their employers! The mind bending Force-users that have squandered these supplies to control us!**”**

The man's speech returned restless vigor to their beings. The retreating numbers returning and raising their fists up in defiance, chanting with the speaker. *****Selen rises from beneath! The Underground revolts! Sink the Citadel!*****

The Force thread through the cockpit of the freighter, warning Baro, Eilen, and Zujenia each of impending danger as a large crane hook swung rapidly into sight. Baro jerked the joystick swiftly upwards and to the starboard. Shuddering the Galewing, the hook scrapped against the hull likely ripping loose a exposed part or two. He scrambled to steady the ship, intuitively countering the blows force before it spun them towards the ground.

"I, heh, don't think they enjoyed your speech," Eilen huffed out, pulling her lanky form upright from the back of Zujenia's seat. She didn't have long to find her balance when Baro suddenly pivoted the light freighter a several degrees. His pale yellow brow furrowed under his hood and he flipped a small plastic case up on the joystick.

"Frack this!" The Kel Dor exclaimed, pressing the red button on top of the steering mechanism, firing a bolt of green plasma. It struck into the side of another nearby skiff, exploding the machinery into a bout of flames. The mob jumped, stumbled, and scattered away from the destruction to safety and cover should the man shoots again.

"Hey!" Zujenia nearly jumped out of her seat, eyes wide in shocked anger. A broadcasting ping overlapped with her cry as the Sinchi Logistic Hub twelve frantically attempted contact. Eilen had stiffen behind her, exchanging her gaze back and forth between the two. "I thought we weren't firing on them."

"That was before they attacked my ship, and it's not **on** them." Baro ignored her glare, throwing the comms to life and hailing the other ships hovering nearby. "Land now and we'll help you unload while we got the space and limited time. Galewing out."

A chorus of 'Roger thats' echoed him in the cockpit. The haulers flying down to rest upon the durocrete yard. Baro finally glanced to the two hybrids beside him as he initiated a landing sequence. His voice muffled beneath his mask, he addressed his adopted daughter, "Eilen, grab your swoop and run the goods inside."

"G-gotcha! I'll get it right away." The half-Bothan scuttled out of the room, lavender eyes twinkling with excited yet weary energy.

"These folks aren't going to stay back for long and will direct their attention to the new feet on the ground." Baro fixed his attention to the other Arconan. "Zujenia, you should help the others out."

“...Alright, I'll cover them.” Zujenia finally nodded, her bewilderment giving way to the necessary demands of the dire situation. Her tail twitched slightly as she stood to leave, “Are you protecting the ship?”

“I'll do what I have to do here. She'll be open to more attacks or invasion down below.”

The Galewing rocked and bumped as it settled lightly onto the docking area. The Kel Dor flipped through several controls before standing to exit the cockpit, following behind the half-Ryn. He headed off towards the cockpit while the white-haired woman operated the hatch ramp to open. Zujenia slipped her bo-rifle off her shoulder and extending it into staff mode. She descended into the sunseting light of Selen.

Air gushed through the docking yard, whipping her vest about her as she hurried to the small freighter that landed beside them. She paused near the descending hoverlift, amber eyes watching for approaching resistance. This ship had to squeeze between Baro's ship, a cluster of crates, and several turned over machinery. It left it threateningly close to where a portion of the rioters had dived for cover. Zujenia spotted a handful of faces peeking over the objects, fear and anger mixing upon their faces. She couldn't help but to feel pity for them, a understanding of their plight. Distracted, she nearly missed the tinge of warning from the Force. Twisting backwards, she narrowly dodged a bolt of static energy as it shot past. She regained her composure, fixing her attention back to the hoverlift. She threw forward her free right hand and the staff held in her left.

“Wait, wait! I'm here to help, don't shoot!”

The blaster pistol raised up and the Sullustan behind it gave a small ‘*harrumph*.’ His black eyes darted over to the Zabrak woman on the other side of their cargo. She gave the short man a shrug after looking up from the hovercart she was controlling. The woman hoisted her own rifle while the cart rolled of the lift, replying to Zujenia. “Fine, keep the locals off of us and we'll get this job done quick.”

Zujenia nodded, falling in step to the right a couple of paces. The three of them kept vigilant watch for the rioters, who at the time being were holding back from taking action. Seconds ticked by, the half-Ryn counting them under her breath as her tail twitched to every movement. Nothing. It seemed as if the civilians had been frightened into submission or hopefully to reason.

The crate piles and machinery were closer set up ahead, eventually forcing them to pass within a gap of several meters. As the assembled crew did, the setting Dajorra sun blinded them temporarily and reflexively they raised a hand to shield their eyes. That's when the rioters attacked. Two pounced on the Sullustan, quickly wrestling him to the ground but not before the small man managed to stun one. A trio grappled with the Zabrak smuggler for her blaster rifle. She succeeded in clonking one in the head and kicking a second away. The struggle between

the woman and former hub worker has triggered a stun bolt which flew forth to strike a man attempting to grab for Zujenia's staff. He crumbled limply to the ground past her.

Attempting not to trip over the unconscious body, the half-Ryn arced her staff up and behind another assailant, jabbing it lightly in the back as she sidestepped past. Purple sparks of electricity licked against their nerf hide jacket until they joined their fellow rioters on the ground. Zujenia spun about, her amber eyes adjusting to focus on the shadows moving towards her while she attempted to maneuver this skirmish out of the sunbeams. Stepping lightly, she darted past punches and tackles, returning them with her own shocking blows.

With a moment to breath, the last immediate rioters asleep on their side, Zujenia glanced over the hovercart to assessed whether the smugglers needed assistance. The woman had managed to relinquish control of her blaster and free her comrade. Several Selenians blanketed the ground, limbs twitching, while others joined them as they attempted to bullrush the group.

Zujenia briefly considered hopping the small load to help when a massive shadow passed over her. A large hand wrapped about her bicep, Force flaring through her nerves too late as a behemoth of a man yanked her off her feet. The torque of his strength resulted in a sickening popping sound from the Arconan's shoulder, the joint pulled out of place. A cry of pain slipped from her throat and she bit her lip hard, dropping her staff and grabbing her right arm reactively.

"Heh, the Citadel can't stop us," his breath assaulted her face with the scent of fish. "We'll be taking that cargo."

"You'll...be...taking food...from others," Zujenia gritted out.

"Nah, helping them better than you."

The tall Selenian reared back his arm, preparing to drive his fist into her face. The urge to survive drew forth a burst of Force energy from her hand. It wrapped about his muscles and limbs, invisibly restraining his movement. Steeling herself from the pain, Zujenia wriggled out of his frozen hold, falling to the ground. She tucked her right arm against her ribs and reached for her staff.

Her concentration divided, she didn't noticed the man's twitching fingers and bending joints. Her hold on him was weakened. Breaking free, he lunged downward for her. Fingers wrapping around the shaft of her weapon, Zujenia whipped it in front of her, missing by centimeters much to her dismay. The stun bolt from behind him, however, did not. The Selenian tower fell, pinning her leg beneath his listless body. Behind him, the Sullustan blew away smoke from his blaster pistol and gave her a curious look.

"That was a funny thing that happen there," he alluded, propping his shoulder into the downed man to help her wiggle out.

Zujenia pulled herself to her feet, careful to isolate movement from her injured limb, numbing it with the Force. “Yeah, it was...”

“Hey! We don't have time for small talk, Ges. Let's get this inside now!”

“Right, on it, Yonda!” the turncoat wearing Sullustan answered back. He turned to head up front and gestured to Zujenia to follow. “Come on.”

Straightening up and giving one last panting look at the stunned, unconscious Selenians, Zujenia glanced towards the Galewing to see Eilen speeding towards the Logistic Hub building. The cargo hovered behind her swoop with a traction beam tugging it along as the air whipped through her fur. “**Good luck, Eilen**,” she muttered before jogging after the other two.

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