

The Togruta sat with her hand resting on the drink before her, her fingers swirling the edges. Her solitude was exacerbated by the echoing tone the glass made at her contact. She let a wistful sigh escape her lips and leaned back into the chair. She forced herself to remove her thoughts from wishful thinking and instead turned her focus back to the party around her. The banter and full smiles of the other party goers only served to deepen her despondency, however. She noticed that there was some excitement towards the main entrance of the hall, and let the sounds of rising cacophony help distract her again. A small group of what appeared to be security had gathered and were facing out into the hall. There was a small rumble as if something had fallen against the outer wall, and a small crack etched its way from the middle of the inside wall towards the ceiling. Tahiri's gaze followed the crack, which distracted her long enough to miss a black blur tackle one of the guards. The resulting crash of glass drew gazes towards the door and now the security force was unsheathing their shock batons from their hips.

Several Arconans made their way towards the door, but quickly fled as another blur shot towards them, a deep growl emitting from its throat. Tahiri squinted her eyes. Something was awfully familiar about those blurs...

As it caught her scent, one of the creatures began to pad over to her. Eyes widening, Tahiri realized she did recognize them. She'd know their telltale scales and grimacing teeth anywhere. As the smaller of the two massifs approached her, the larger ran back out the door carrying one of the security guard's shoe. The female massif stopped in front of Tahiri and sat on its haunches, dipping its head as it waited. Tahiri obliged and began to rub the creature's head spines.

"Hello Shar'kala. It's good to see you again. If you're here I take it Kul is, too?"

The massif snorted before turning around and sprinting back towards the entrance. A handful of guards suddenly backed their way into the dance hall as a Zabrak holding another guard entered and caught sight of the Togruta. The annoyed look on his face melted away as he smiled and tossed the guard towards his compatriots, their bodies collapsing in a small heap like pins struck by a ball. Tahiri felt a combination of emotions swell within her. Happiness to see him at the party, but a strongly rising shame as she realized this situation would not bode well for inter-Clan relations. As Kul approached, completely ignoring the crowd of Jedi and Sith alike forming around him, Tahiri began to stand to meet him. As she did a hand reached out in front of her as Zujenia stood protectively between the Zabrak and his apparent prey.

"Who are you and what do you want with Tahiri?" the half-Ryn demanded.

Kul gazed down at Zujenia, his eyes taking her in. Writing her off as a non-threat, he caught Tahiri's gaze.

"They told me this is where I could find you. So here I am."

Tahiri rubbed a hand across her montrals in consternation.

“It’s good to see you, Kul. But did you have to bring Shar’kala and Shor’kir? I left Solan back with you cause I thought you weren’t coming.”

Zujenia looked back at Tahiri.

“This the guy you mentioned before?” Tahiri nodded her affirmation. “You sure know how to pick ‘em.”

Giving her friend an awkward smile and a shrug, Tahiri switched modes and gazed sternly at her partner.

“By the way, if you’re here then who’s with Solan?”

With a swift jerking motion Kul pointed behind him.

“He’s here somewhere. Last I saw he was playing keep away with some useless guard at the front gate. He should be in range for you call him.” The Zabrak rubbed his neck, a slightly apologetic tone blanketing his voice. “Um. I didn’t realize it was this kind of party, though. They told me I needed an invitation to get in. I knew you were here, though, so I invited myself.”

Tahiri delved into her mind, grabbing at her connection to the Force. She reached out with it and probed the surrounding area, the search limited to bestial presences. Sure enough, she felt the excited presence of her Akul, Solan.

“The invite said it was for plus one, Kul. If you’d have told them you were with me they would have verified it and let you in.”

Kul’s naturally crimson skin often hid his embarrassment at times, but Tahiri had learned the little tweaking of his cheek muscles were his tell in that regard.

“Well they told me I couldn’t bring the massifs or Solan with me. There was no way I was leaving them outside or in some kennel.”

The half-Ryn had moved aside now, talking with a handful of the security. A few of them were trying to corner Shor’kir, but Kul shifted his weight and the massif bounded over to him and plopped down at his feet beside its mate. The guards threw up their hands in exasperation and returned to the hallway, one of them still missing his boot.

Tahiri smiled apologetically to Zujenia as she came back to stand close to Tahiri, eyeing the tall Zabrak and his massif’s. Tahiri shifted her weight slightly, the slit in the left side of her midnight blue satin dress, showing her crimson upper thigh and calf. The sharp fire like markings running down her thigh, almost blended with her dress, creating an interesting effect.

“Sorry about the interruption in the pa..” Tahiri began to apologize, but the half-Ryn put her hand on Tahiri’s arm, smiling.

“It’s okay Tahiri. I think everyone is used to things getting interrupted by now. Besides, I think it helped relieve a bit of tenseness in room.” She patted Tahiri’s arm, and then looked straight at Kul.

“Oh, Zuj, this Kul’Tak Drol. Kul, this is Zujenia.” Tahiri introduced the two of them as she quickly stepped forward and to the side, placing herself in between them. There was a paused as the two studied each other for a moment. *Oh kark, I hope she doesn’t ask him to leave.* Then Zuj nodded her head and smiled, holding her hand out as a truce offering. “It is a pleasure to finally meet the great beastmaster, Tahiri keeps talking about.”

“Oh really?” Kul smirked as he took Zuj’s hand and shook it, glancing at Tahiri as he replied. “It is an honor to finally meet one of Tahiri’s ‘other’ friends. Though I didn’t realize she told anyone much about me.”

Kul’s smirk widened into a grin as he saw Tahiri glance down. Even though she had practically the same crimson toned skin as him, Kul could easily see the darkening of her cheeks.

“Well, Zuj is about the only one, I’ve told anything too. I trust her very much.” Tahiri replied, the burning sensation in her cheeks rising to engulf her entire face.

“Oh! Okay, well if you both are good, I’m going to go check up on Kord. You good, Tahiri?” Zujenia looked between the Togruta and Zabrak.

Tahiri looked up and smiled, replying quickly, “Oh yes, I fine Zuj.”

“Ok then. Please stay out trouble, both of **you**.” The tone the half-Ryn used the emphasize the last word was directed more towards Kul than Tahiri. Kul acknowledged by a nod of his, while Tahiri sheepishly grinned. With a last look between the two, Zuj quickly headed off to the room off the great hall, where she had stashed Kord.

Tahiri took a deep and out a big sigh of relief. “Well, that was a close one. Come on, lets sit down.” She indicated the table she was sitting at before.

“Wait, ” Kul stepped back to take a full look at Tahiri’s attire. His eyes roamed slowly over her from the tips of her montrans to the bottom of her laced up heels. “You are quite beautiful tonight, I did not realize you had a dress like that.”

Tahiri blush came back again as she replied softly, “I got it on a shopping trip with Zuj. In fact it was one of my first dress shopping trips ever.”

“Well, I have to say, you have wonderful taste in clothing.” He grinned as he stalked closer to her. “Mmmm and you smell delicious too