

All in all, it was a good party. Diy had chosen one of the more popular clubs, with a large dancefloor and a huge bar. The owners had been all too happy to shut the place down for the night, given the sheer number of people expected to show up. And show up they did. It looked like Diy had simply opened Zuji's address book and sent an invite to everyone in it.

The music was loud and upbeat, the dance floor was packed, and the overall atmosphere was a happy one. Food was plentiful and alcohol flowed freely. Friends and well-wishers came from all quadrants of the galaxy to help the half-Ryn celebrate her last night of freedom before settling down into married bliss. And it seemed that every single one of them wanted to buy her at least one drink.

After the first four, she quickly realized that she would not be able to keep up, so she had started handing them off to other people, and to one person in particular. Much to Zuji's surprise, Lucine Vasano had shown up to the party, wearing a dress that was far too fancy for the club scene and a warm smile. She had immediately sought Zuji out to give her her warmest regards and well-wishes.

In truth, Zuji hadn't been very happy to see her. As he lay in the med ward, Kordath had already imparted his suspicions to her: that Grot was simply the triggerman, and that someone else had hired him for the attempted murder. Kord had a shortlist of people whom he suspected for the deed, and Lucine's name was nearly at the top of that list.

But while Zuji had not been initially pleased to see the redhead, the beginnings of an idea began to form. She had heard enough stories to know that Lucine did not deal well with large amounts of alcohol in a short space of time. Perhaps the party would give her an opportunity to find some answers.

With that in mind, the half-Ryn picked up the violent pink concoction that had just been handed to her, as well as her own drink. She navigated through the crowded club carefully, making her way toward the Sith, who had set up a small court of admirers a short distance from the dance floor. As Zuji drew nearer, she saw that the redhead was chatting and flirting with all of them, clearly enjoying the hold she had over them.

"Having fun?" Zuji asked as she got near enough to be heard over the throbbing bass. She handed the pink drink to Lucine with a smile, which drew a raised eyebrow from the redhead.

"Another one?" the Sith asked as she glanced down at the drink that was now in her hand. Zuji noted with satisfaction that her words carried a slight slur.

"Everyone wants to buy me a drink tonight. There's no way I'll be able to drink all of this and not get alcohol poisoning," the half-Ryn replied. "Thanks for helping me out with them."

"I am happy to, darling," Lucine replied as she took a sip of the drink. It was sickly sweet, the sugary taste masking the high alcohol content nicely. Two of them were enough to pack a punch, but by Zuji's count, Lucine had to be on her fifth one. She studied the redhead, and saw that her normally pale cheeks were flushed and her eyes a bit too shiny. This was as good of a time as any.

"Actually, there's something else you can help me with too. I was wondering how the investigation is going," Zuji pressed.

"Investigation?" Lucine gave her a blank look, before the mental gears finally kicked in. "Oh. Oh! That investigation." She looked around hazily at the club before saying, "I dunno if this is a good place to discuss it."

"Do you really think anyone is going to overhear us?" Zuji asked. Indeed, the two women were shouting just to be heard over the music.

"Mmmm, good point," the Sith replied. She gave her admirers an apologetic smile and a dismissive wave of her hand. The gentlement obliged, though more than one had a disappointed expression on his face. "What do you want to know?"

"Have you caught Grot yet?"

"Sadly not, darling. He is proving to be remarkably elusive. We know he has left Selen, and have his current location narrowed down to a few likely locations. We'll find him soon, hopefully."

"I'll bet," Zuji muttered. "I want to hear that he has to say."

Lucine raised her eyebrows at the half-Ryn's words, and swayed slightly as she considered them. "Hmm. Sounds like you have your suspicions."

"You could say that," Zuji replied.

Lucine stared at Zuji for a moment, before bursting into giggles. "Oh, I can only imagine what those suspicions could be. I suppose Kordath has told you all about the difficulties we've had in the past."

"He told me that you tried to kill him twice now," the half-Ryn replied coolly.

"Mmm, but never without good reason, darling. Even you have to admit that the Skittershub videos are a ridiculous breach of privacy. But that is neither here nor there, now is it? Sure, the former-Consul and I have had our difficulties, but all that changed after he made me Director of the DIA. I can't stand failure, and letting the Consul die counts as failure."

"So you didn't tell Grot to shoot him in the back," Zuji said. "And you don't know who did?"

"I am working very hard to find answers," Lucine slurred in response. "Don't worry, darling. We'll see to it that someone is punished. It's the least I can do for my sis-sis- sispren-" She giggled again, "It's the least I can do for you."

Zuji searched her face, looking for any sign of guile. The redhead was still swaying in place. Her words were slurring so badly that at times Zuji had a hard time understanding what she was saying.

"Did you know that I gave Kordath a list?" Lucine asked suddenly.

"What?"

"A list. Once a week, the deep thinkers of the DIA made a list of all the most likely threats against the Consul. Every week, Grot was on that list. Not very high, mind you. But he's a mercenary who cares more about the size of the game and the number of credits he earned. That made him a threat. Actually, come to think of it, half Arcona was on that list," Lucine paused for a moment, a hazy look on her face. "Anyway, I don't think Kordath ever read the list. Which is why I gave it to Strong and Bly too, just to be sure he was protected. When Kordath went on the mission, he had you and Tali with him. I figured he would be safe. I never for a second imagined that he would actually wander off with the only person who was determined to be a threat to him."

Zujenia's amber eyes narrowed slightly. "What are you saying?" she asked.

Lucine gave a noncommittal shrug. "You know what? Now I'm not sure. Seemed important at the time, but..." she giggled and shrugged again. "Hey, this is really good!" she added, holding up the pink concoction.

The half-Ryn stared at her for a long moment, trying to figure out what in the world the redhead was talking about. Finally, she just sighed. "Just be careful with them, okay? They tend to pack a punch."

"I will!" the redhead replied, her eyes already starting to roam over the club, their previous conversation already forgotten. "Actually, I should proly go. I am feeling pretty drunk right now."

The two women said their goodbyes, and the drunken Sith wandered off, muttering something about finding the Chiss she had been talking to earlier. As she swayed off, Zuji watched her carefully. It was fairly obvious that Lucine was smashed. While she felt a little guilty about contributing to her drunkenness to get her information, she still felt that it had been worth it. She filed the conversation away to discuss with Kordath later, before returning to the party. Tonight she would have fun. Revenge could wait until tomorrow.