

Those Wedding Bleus

“You’re really cute when you’re trying to pout.” Keira leaned over and nudged the Zeltron playfully, who only huffed quietly in response.

Qyreia’s voice was low, but it still caught the attention of their immediate neighbors. “I’ve been friends with this guy how long? Watching his kid and everything, and neither he *nor Zuj* puts me in their party?!” She glared at Uji standing as best man, and some *goddamn dog* in the bridesmaid’s position. *I get that it’s standing in for Atyiru*, she thought as she glanced back at the program tri-fold, *but really?! A dog?!*

“You almost look manly enough to be a groomsman I guess.”

“Ha,” she said, voice thick with sarcasm.

“Although,” Keira added, running her fingers casually through the Zeltron’s thick hair, “it’s coming in nicely. Goes well with your dress.”

Qyreia’s angst was promptly defeated by a subtle blush. The new hair style was one of the few physical differences since her departure from Arcona several months prior. The short hair had been a literal safety measure when she’d adopted it so many years ago. The short reprieve, melded with so much feeling of safety and happiness, had prompted her to grow out the short blue locks.

The shuffle of footsteps, however, brought her back to the present. While Uji and the Cythraul might have been placed beforehand — one for his disability and the other because animal handling is difficult — the ceremony was imminently underway. With the sun beaming through the leaves of the great tree overlooking the Citadel Courtyard, the scenery couldn’t have been more conducive to a wedding.

First came the officiant, Turel Sorenn, modestly dressed in a nice suit and carrying himself rather ceremoniously. It was a pleasant if odd change to see in the oft flirtatious human. A few scattered greetings were exchanged as he went down the aisle, passing by the Zeltron with a polite nod before continuing further on to the dais. There was a certain feeling about him, though, that brought a smirk to Qyreia’s lips. *He’s remembering the bachelor party.*

No sooner was the former Odanite in place than the groom and bridal pairs started making their way forward.

First was Kordath, well-dressed and wearing pants. Qyreia had heard such protestations from his fiancée during the bachelorette party. *Seems he was smart enough to listen.* As he passed down the aisle, he met the merc’s eyes that glared at him with playful derision. He smiled, lips pursed as he shrugged and continued further on toward the head of the assemblage.

Keira leaned close to whisper, “Be nice, Q.”

“I *am* being nice.”

Celevon and Dyrian, arm in arm and walking almost perfectly in step in a casually executed sort of way, followed the Ryn. The Zeltron had only met either of them once or twice — the former in the Antei Combat Center, the latter through meet-ups with Zujenia — so she wondered where they fit into everything. Clearly she was not an expert on the soon-to-be-married couple's social circle or personal histories.

That sentiment shifted as Strong and Tali Sroka advanced up the aisle. Now *these* people she knew. The Twi'lek looked far stronger than the last time Qyreia had seen her, still recovering from the stabbing and deeper wounds of losing her child. The seafoam-green dress was matched well against her purple skin and her partner's color scheme. Garmis looked almost regal, resplendent in his formal military uniform. Unfortunately, his attire was just another hue of blue, and so made him appear a little *too* color coordinated, save for the embellishments on the cuffs and awards decorating his broad chest. His face took on another hue of blue — almost purple — as he passed the Zeltron. Clearly he also remembered the bachelor party, though his actual expression never faltered.

Last in line was Satsi. Just as the others, who had all worn *something* formal but without any distinct coordination, she walked solo down the aisle as the odd-woman-out between the bridesmaids and groomsmen. Her formal kimono seemed to make up for it, contrasting starkly from the expected norm yet still lending a subtle sort of beauty, even as she turned on occasion toward the Wookiee behind her to make sure the flower girl and ring bearer were being good.

"You're staring awfully hard," Keira whispered.

"She just looks... *different*. That's all."

While the words sounded true enough, the thoughts that hovered on the edge of Qyreia's consciousness were not so innocently inclined; fabricated thoughts-turned-memories from months prior that she'd rather have forgotten. When the Tameike woman passed by, the soft smile offered hints of mixed emotions that the Zeltron didn't know how to readily translate.

"She seemed happy to see you at least."

"Something like that," Qyreia returned hesitantly.

"You don't think so?"

"I'll get into it later." When she turned again to see the procession, Kelviin was coming up slowly, Samantha Tameike in one arm holding the ring-pillow, Shay'lra Bleu in the other arm gaily tossing flower petals. *Oh, I need a picture of this!* She fumbled for her holocam and brought it up just in time to get a well-framed snapshot.

"Anni Kyew!" the Ryntron nearly screamed when she saw the red woman, reaching out and flailing her basket around.

Keira hardly had time to cover her mouth and suppress the snort of laughter. Many in the audience, as well as Satsi, turned their heads at the sudden outburst.

Qyreia put a finger to her lips to try to quiet the child, but she only groaned in Kelviin's arms all the harder as they came nearer. *Dammit kid, you're too cute.* The Wookiee even slowed to a halt when he came up alongside. Her face an even darker shade of red, she could see Satsi wink and Kord wave an acquiescing hand.

"Heya Shay," she whispered as she stood to hug the child and plant a quick kiss on her forehead.

"You look vewy pwetty, Anni Kyew."

Her eyes teared a little. "You too, hon. But right now you've gotta be a good flower girl, alright? I'll see you at the reception though."

"Okay." The little red girl took a fistful of flower petals and threw them all over the bigger Zeltron. "Make you pwettier."

Qyreia smiled even wider and offered a growled "*Thank you*" to the Wookiee before he continued on his way down the aisle and she resumed her seat. Keira chuckled at the spectacle, even more when her lover stared at a petal ticklishly perched on the tip of her nose before blowing it off with a puff of air.

"You look *very* pretty now."

"Shut up."

With the wedding party in position, and the aisle thoroughly covered in flower petals, the music smoothly transitioned into what could be called a bridal march. While not any particular melody that the Zeltron was familiar with, it was a pleasant tune that still called the entire audience's attention. Taking the cue with everyone else, she stood, several petals falling piecemeal from her head and shoulders.

At the far back, Zujenia appeared from where they had been hiding her, though from the merc's vantage, she could only see pieces of the veil and the snow-white top of her head, along with the head of the Ryn's mother. That was the assumption at least.

Like the music, the bride's walk resembled the more common ceremonial aspects, but lacked some of the rigidity. Even arm-in-arm with her mother, who appeared to be feigning sadness out of tradition, the Force user would pause to talk to people, accept congratulations, or merely offer a quick hug. When she passed by the Arronen and Viru pair, the air seemed to grow briefly heavy with emotion, but the smile on her face made it evident that her happiness was heaped upon itself. With the Ryn-mother between the bride and the two women, she could offer only token wave before moving along.

It was a beautiful ceremony altogether. Unfortunately, the only audible one in the whole group was Turel. Between the bad acoustics, lack of audio equipment, and being halfway-deep in a throng of well-wishers and onlookers, the Zeltron and half-Umbaran hardly heard a thing.

Whatever the two Ryns were saying was clearly heartfelt though. Both of them were tearing up, occasionally giggling at some quiet joke, but smiling the entire time. It would bear repeating later on over drinks at the reception.

Then, in true Rynish fashion, a small loaf of bread was brought out, each of them tearing off a small piece and sprinkling some salt on it before feeding to their opposite. Qyreia's eyes darted from the program to the scene on the dais just to keep up. While it was apparently a custom very common in Ryn cultural spheres, it made enough sense that she could follow along. They were starting a new home, sharing their first bread together. At least that was how the Once the traditional stuff was done, the couple finally got to the part that everyone was hoping for.

Finally, they kissed.

Even with the Cythraul, the picture that they all painted together was magical. The audience cheered and cheered, from the first kiss through the third, and then all the way back down the aisle. Qyreia made sure that she was among the dozens that clapped the lucky man on the back as he ran the gauntlet of well-wishers. As he passed, she could feel a certain tingle in a very specific part of her head that brought a grin to her face.

“Oh, they gon’ frick.”

“Right before the reception?” Keira asked, finally allowed a normal vocal volume.

“I mean... I know *I* plan to.

For the first time that day, the Force user was the one blushing and at a loss for words.

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The reception was less a singular event and more akin to a collection of several miniature parties all coalesced around the central focus of Kordath and Zujenia Bleu. Small buffets of various foods dotted the floor of the Citadel's great hall, with roasting spits of various meats available to those so inclined. It was as traditional a Ryn wedding as one could likely get on Selen. Not that Qyreia was at all familiar with Ryn traditions. It was mostly guesswork by this point.

Hearing friendly voices negated any illusion of unwelcome.

“Oi Qybbles!” The pair saw Kordath waving them over to the bridal table. “Get over here will ya?”

And almost as though releasing the hounds, the Ryn's outburst called forth the diminutive form of a wobbly scampering Ryntron toddler. “Anni Kyew!”

Screaming and giggling the whole way, with only a brief pause when she tripped over her own feet, Shay'ira ran head first into Qyreia's waiting arms. The bigger Zeltron showered the child with hugs and kisses, even as she stood and made her way over to where the newlyweds sat, Keira enjoying the scene close behind. Strong was kind

enough to acquisition two chairs for the women, along with delivering a glass of wine for each of them.

“Thank you, Strong.”

“My pleasure, Miss Arronen.”

“Before we sit though,” she said as she rounded the table, Shay firmly perched in one arm, “I think I owe these two some love.”

She first hugged Zujenia, who hardly stayed in her seat long enough for the Zeltron to even reach her. Shay giggled furiously at what amounted to a group hug, with Keira swiftly being pulled in as well. The half-Ryn came away from the embrace beaming.

“I’m so glad you two could make it!”

“Wouldn’t have missed it if Pravypoo himself had tried to stop us.”

“Well, it’s good to see a friendly face we can trust.” The phrase hung thick with thinly veiled meaning — one which the Zeltron did not comprehend. Yet. “Oh and we missed you so much!” Zujenia leaped in for another hug, confining her guest to a seemingly endless cycle of familial love, and some amusement for the others at the table.

“And *Kord*,” Qyreia said when the bride finally released her, “*buddy. Pal. Friend.*”

“Aye, I missed ya too-chk!”

In a blink, the mercenary’s hug turned into a one-armed choke hold around the Ryn’s neck; not enough to actually hurt the outgoing Consul, but enough to make a point.

“You couldn’t be arsed to have me in your groom’s party, but you felt okay with having a karking *dog* stand in for Atty?! Care to explain?”

“Gak... fchk...”

From the other side of the table, seated between Satsi and Uji, Samantha was clapping and giggling. “Haha! Look mommy! S’like you and daddy when you naked wrestle each other!”

“Samantha...” Uji tried to coax and quiet his daughter. He failed.

“Only,” she continued thoughtfully, “Uncle Fluff doesn’t make the same noises as mommy.”

Qyreia’s grip utterly loosened on the Ryn’s neck as they all bore witness to Satsi’s face reddening, her newfound propriety ruined by her own child. Hardly one to kink shame though, the Zeltron merely released her arm from around Kordath, patting him on the head as she turned to attend her seat.

“You’re lucky, Bleu. You’re reeeal lucky.”

Zujenia’s mother chuckled. “I like this one. No wonder you let her babysit.”

“I’m sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. Qyreia.”

“Vai.”

A certain electricity filled the air between them, like two vornskyrns sizing each other up for a fight.

I know your type, you old bat. Overbearing mother.

Another of Kordath’s hussies I bet.

“Good to finally meet you.”

“Likewise.”

“Das my gramma,” Shay said as Qyreia took her seat, setting the Ryntron on her lap.

“You don’t say?”

“It’s uh...” Kordath rubbed at his neck. “It’s good ta see you, Qybbles.”

She winked back, the emotions telegraphed from her Zeltron biology letting him and everyone around know she was happy. “You too, Kord. S’good to be back.”

As the hostilities wound down, the conversation resumed along more normalized lines. Neither the bachelor party nor bachelorette party were mentioned — given the Zeltron’s role in both, and with Vai sitting across the table, it was likely for the best. There was still plenty of charged air floating around. Qyreia paid special attention to the newlyweds, noting certain movements and the way that they stared at each other.

Oh yeah. They fracked.

Just as it was scattered, the reception was very much an informal affair. There were no speeches save by anyone near enough — or loud enough — to be heard by the bride and groom. As good dwindled and liquor took its place, more people took to dancing.

The kids danced with *everyone*. Even Turel’s Togruta daughter came out of the woodwork, though he hardly let her out of his sight. Like the children, Qyreia danced with just about everyone. She danced with Keira, then danced with Zujenia to show off the engagement rings, which was in turn followed by another round of hugging. Then came the kids, Turel, Kelviin — who graciously accepted impromptu dance lessons — and the ever gentlemanly Strong.

She passed Satsi by one of the drink tables and, remembering the earlier awkwardness, nudged her elbow. Satsi’s expression was mixed, but it seemed by-and-large amiable.

“Hey.”

“Hey yourself, Pinkie. Glad to see you’re still in one piece.”

“You too.” She paused, thinking about the way the human’s stylized dress showed off the base of her neck... “You look good. I like your dress.”

“Thanks.” She paused, clearly trying to play nice by finding something of the Zeltron’s to compliment. “New haircut?”

“More like lack thereof.”

“Looks good on you.”

Beats being told I look less like a guy. “Th-thanks.”

Niceties between the pair still seemed such an oddity. Before leaving, the constant bickering between the Zeltron and the Tameike woman was only just starting to mellow out into something resembling respect or friendship. When it came to Satsi, Qyreia could hardly tell. Now with the formalities of the wedding and the after party, it was even harder to gauge. Clearly the human wanted to do right by the Bleus.

“You know, it sounds weird,” Qyreia said as she sipped her spiked punch, “but I missed your antics.” That seemed to catch the human’s attention. “Maybe not the part where you were hurling half-digested bar food into a toilet, but... you know what I mean.”

“Oh sugah, you can say it straight. You missed me.” She swung an arm over the Zeltron’s bare shoulders and clinked their glasses together. “I missed you too, Pinkie.”

“Momma!” came Samantha’s voice over the general din of the party.

“Coming Sammy!” She shrugged, smiling at the Zeltron. “I’ll catch you around.”

“Yeah. See ya.” Qyreia watched her walk away for a moment before turning back around to address the punch bowl, only to see Keira standing right in front of her. “AshlafrackinBogan!” she yelped, spilling the contents of her glass all over her hands. “Karkin’ *warn* me next time!”

“Having fun?”

The half-Umbaran’s tone seemed benign, but Qyreia could feel a certain edge in the air. “Y-yeah. Minus the sticky fingers.”

A semblance of remorse passed over Keira’s face and, grabbing up a napkin, started wiping down the Zeltron’s punch-covered hands. The gesture started as one of obligation, but the measured wipes of the cloth on the red skin gradually slowed and became more tender. Something was off, but the Force user knew well enough how to hide things from her lover as much as it worked the other way around.

“What’s wrong?” Qyreia asked simply.

Keira’s lips pursed, clearly trying to come up with *something*. “This is... the same place that you and father... you know?”

The reminder of the memory brought a knot into the Zeltron’s gut. “Y-yes?”

Keira drew her in closer, making her fiancée’s heart beat faster, even before the Force user kissed her. “Show me where.”

“Why?”

For half a second, it seemed like Keira’s eyes were looking at someone in the background of the party. Her stare burrowed into Qyreia’s eyes nonetheless. “Call it making things right.” She drew the Zeltron in closer. “And marking my territory.”

Yes ma’am. “Shame to let the bride and groom have all the fun.” Holding the Force user’s hand a little tighter, Qyreia led them away from the party proper and into a familiar alcove just off the main hall.