

Your Clan is Watching You

? ? ? A B Y – S E L E N

Skitter. Skitter skitter. Skitter. CLANK.

The sound of something landing heavily behind her caused Sivall to look up from her datapad. The Chiss woman blinked a few times, dusting her studies from her weary eyes, before turning to look for the source of the noise. Behind her was an empty wall and the corridor leading out of her apartment onto the streets of Estle, and on that wall was a hole where there was once a vent grate. A vent grate that was currently laid unceremoniously on the floor near where it had previously hung.

Siv's face scrunched into one of inquisitive confusion as she pushed herself away from the table she had been sitting at. That grate had not come off on its own; something had pried it from its usual place. The question now was it friend or foe? From an enemy droid to any of the fauna that called Selen home, something was in the vents of her apartment.

Lowering herself to the floor, Sivall stared into the ventilation shaft. There were a few seconds of silence and blackness before one red light illuminated in the void. The chiss stared back at it for a few moments, unmoving, silent, before the light moved closer and a shape came into view. Half of a small metal dome, four legs with small pincers at the end—A ID9 droid. One of the few she had seen here in Estle.

“Oh, hello, little one, “ she spoke as a soft smile splayed across her features, “What are you doin’ all the way in my vent? Did you get lost?”

Boop. Boop.

Was that a ‘no’?

Sivall opened her mouth to ask another question—not that she would get an actual answer considering she couldn’t speak droid—but before she could, another red dot appeared behind the first. Then another. Three red lights were staring back now into her own sanguine hues, and Siv felt the first bubbles of unease begin to brew in her stomach.

The chiss woman slowly pushed herself back, easing her head out of the vent in a slow but deliberate movement; one that the droids mirrored. For every inch she moved out of the vent, the droids moved an inch closer—in till she was sat on the floor in front of the vent with the three ID9 droids floating just out of the opening to the ventilation system.

Oh boy.

Sivall let out a nervous chuckle, dusting her hands off on the top of her Envoy outfit. She faintly remembered hearing about these droids—Skitters—that watched the members of Arcona. She also remembered hearing that they weren't entirely harmless. But as long as she was kind to them, they would be kind to her, right? Gods she hoped so.

"Well, I hope you three found something worth your while in the ventilation system. I'm quite boring, I'm sure there's other more interesting people to be watching right now," the blue woman stated, hoping to somewhat reason with the spider-like droids.

The three droids looked at each other, and a few seconds of beeps and boops ensued. The skitters seemed to be having some sort of debate about the validity of her statement. The medic made a note for droid or binary to be the next language she studied. Perhaps if she understood what they were saying, she could steer the conversation towards them getting the *frack* out of her apartment.

One of the skitters, maybe the leader of this tiny group, turned to her and flexed one of its little pinchers in her direction. Siv cocked an eyebrow, unaware of what it wanted. It flexed its pincher again, pointing to the Envoy pin on her lapel—*was this little droid asking for payment to leave her alone?* With a look of bewilderment, the Chiss removed the lapel pin from her coat and handed it to the skitter.

The ID9 droid did a little victory dance, turned to its co-conspirators, made victory *beeps* and *boops*, then the trio was gone just as fast as they came leaving Sivall sitting on the floor with a look of absolute confusion. One of the skitters even put the ventilation grate back where it belonged.

"I...." Sivall looked down at her hands, her sanguine eyes wide in disbelief, "Did I just get shook down by three droids....?"

No one would ever believe this if she told them.... Or maybe they would.

Sivall returned to her spot at the table, trying to shake the feeling that she was still being watched, but still acutely aware of every skitter or clang coming from the ventilation system. She had a feeling she wouldn't be able to sleep tonight.