

Untitled

By Rebecca Kludy

Zandra stared at the door. She'd come from the spaceport using the path she'd learned as a child. Everything looked the same, but nothing felt familiar. The door to her family's home was the same bright blue, yet it was like she'd never seen it before.

"Zandra." Frank's booming voice echoed from the cafe next door. The big man ran into the walk in front of her grinning widely. Her pulse raced, her adrenaline spiked and she clanged her teeth to keep from reaching for a weapon. She stopped two quick strides sway from him.

Frank didn't notice. "Dad said you were quitting the service." He reached out to hug her but the memories of how comforting her brother's embrace had been could not overcome her new fear. Her chest tightened and she couldn't breathe.

Tynn cooed in Zandra's ear and he wrapped his long tail around her neck. The soft pads of his six feet grounding her with his familiar presence. Frank froze at the sight of Tynn, who had been hidden by her coat.

Zandra pressed her cheek against Tynn's soft owl-like face, panic ebbing away. "This is Tynn. I picked him up on Castiar Prime."

Frank hesitated before smiling and rubbing Tynn on the head with one finger. "I hope he can adjust to life on earth." He head back into the café.

"I hope we both can," Zandra muttered to Tynn. His low cooing echoed in her ear as she reached out to open the door.