

Solitude Companions

written by

Jennifer C. Posada

EXT. TOWN OF LEOLUNA - EVENING

The rain cloud sky slowly darkens as the sun goes down behind it. The street lanterns are being leisurely lit one by one. Jovial voices of merriment can be heard coming from the many shops, inns, and establishments along the street. A short hulking figure walks down the damp cobblestone road. ONZAR TJUNU, a male dwarf, is walking with a tired but steady pace through the emptying streets. Onzar casts glances to the open doors and large windows to as he continues his path. Onzar occasionally sighs longingly as he sees the populous enjoy their eventful evenings. He readjusts the luggage on his back and presses on.

The passing buildings start to change to more higher-end shops, many are already closed for the approaching night. Onzar surveys the buildings. Something catches Onzar's attention just before he then walks over to it. The building is quiet and nicely lit from the inside. Ornate stone pots decorate the fancy written sign taking up most of the stone wall. The sign reads: CAVALIER DINING BROS.

Onzar took in the restaurant, then looks down at his clothes; muddied and soiled from his travels. An audible growl comes from his stomach. Onzar sighs.

ONZAR TJUNU
... Alright then.

Onzar adjusts the pack and fighter's shield strapped to his back. He walks up to the door and steps inside.

INT. CAVALIER DINING BROS- FOYER - EVENING

Shutting the door behind him, Onzar now stands uncomfortably in the doorway. The walls have large paintings, the floors are polished, and the tables are draped in a rough cloth.

ONZAR TJUNU
(mutters)
Oh, the gods are certainly have'n a
good laugh at me.

A human waiter, young adult male, sees Onzar at the door and steps away from one of the two occupied tables he is waiting. He is the only staff present.

CAVALIER WAITER
Good evening, sir. Will you be
dining alone?

ONZAR TJUNU
Erm- yes. Just me, thank you.

The waiter nods and steps aside to gesture to the wall next to the door. Revealed just off to the side of the entrance is a coat and weapons rack. On it hangs a patreon's hap sack, and another's shawl. Lastly, a massive great sword leaning within the weapons rack catches Onzar's eye. The blade is as wide as Onzar's torso.

CAVALIER WAITER

Please, if you could set your things in an available space here. Your belongings will be perfectly safe.

Onzar eyes lingered on the great sword before adjusting his shield's strap possessively.

ONZAR TJUNU

Ah... I'd like to keep my things with me, if that's alright.

The waiter's smile stretches wide.

CAVALIER WAITER

I am afraid I must insist. It is our policy.

Onzar huffs. He eyes the great sword again. Onzar thinks over whether he will do as requested; then his stomach growls. Defeated, Onzar sighs.

ONZAR TJUNU

(removing his pack and shield)

Aye...

Once his belongings are put away, the waiter turns and begins to walk towards an empty table. Onzar quickly glances at his belongings, then the large blade before following behind the waiter.

INT. CAVALIER DINING BROS- DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

The waiter stops at a lone table stationed in the center of the dining hall. Onzar lifts himself onto the tall chair. Once Onzar is settled, the waiter hands him a tall parchment with fancy writing. Onzar squints his eyes, he is struggling to read the cursive writing on the parchment. The waiter stands silently waiting and watching Onzar.

ONZAR TJUNU

Urm, well...
(beat)

Onzar quietly releases a frustrated sigh. Giving up, he drops the parchment menu onto the table.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
What's that yer cook is makin'?
That heavenly smell.

The waiter raises an eyebrow at Onzar.

CAVALIER WAITER
The cook is preparing potatoes
stewed in a chicken broth and a
prime cut for another customer.

ONZAR TJUNU
Ahh, right then.

Onzar reaches behind his back. He pulls out a coin purse.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
Have the cook prepare another. And
anything you got to drink that'll
warm me up, if it's not too much
trouble.

Onzar pulls four gold coins out of the coin purse and places them on the table, in front of the waiter. The waiter's patient expression stretches into surprise. His mouth falls slightly open, looking at the coins before him.

Straightening his posture, the waiter collects himself and clears his throat.

CAVALIER WAITER
Right away, my good sir.

He quickly takes the coins and parchment from the table, then leaves. Onzar watches the waiter disappear behind the kitchen doors. He sighs, closing his eyes as he relaxes in his chair.

The dining hall is quiet. Only a few sounds of quiet voices and utensils meeting the surface of a plate. Onzar has a peaceful expression on his face.

Onzar opens his eyes and takes in the other patrons. An elegantly dressed elf is enjoying some bread and wine as they read. Two humans, a young woman and an elderly male, are having a meal and a quiet conversation. They look like they are related to each other.

Slowly, Onzar leans forward. His eyebrows are pinched together. He darts his eyes to the foyer, where the large greatsword is.

His gaze turns back to scan the other guests, then the rest of the dining hall. Onzar's face grows more and more perplexed.

ONZAR TJUNU

But, who... whose blade-

Onzar's attention is pulled to the kitchen doors as the young waiter steps back into to the dining hall. He is carrying a platter with a fresh hot meal in hand. The waiter looks anxious as he lingers by the kitchen door. After a moment, the waiter quickly and fearfully he walks away from the door. He stops in front of a table in the lowest lit corner of the dining hall.

Onzar can now see the other patron he had missed earlier. Sitting alone, and away from the other patrons, is a hulking female Orc. Her massive dark hair is tied back and left to rest loosely over her back. Her leather and animal hide attire is styled to look like a traveling civilian's clothes, rather than outlander Orc attire. The Orc woman, GROHLVA, sat quietly with her eyes closed and her head resting in her folded hands. She looks like she is meditating.

The young waiter approaches Grohlva's table. His hands shake like he is trying to feed a dangerous hungry animal in a cage. He sets down the platter and quickly pulls away. Grohlva remains still and opens her eyes to the platter before her. She nods and speaks wordlessly a few words to the waiter. This makes the waiter step back and give a low and quick bow. He then turns and quickly walks away from the table. He is sighing heavily in relief, looking a little pale, before he disappears behind the kitchen door.

Grohlva quietly eats her meal.

Onzar watches Grohlva from his table. He turns to look at the other guests in the dining hall. They show no interest to the Orc seated in the corner. Onzar then turns to the kitchen door. The waiter has not return yet. Looking back and forth between Grohlva and the door, Onzar shrugs.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

Bah, It couldn't hurt.

Onzar hops down from his chair. In proud dwarf fashion, he strides to the Grohlva's table. She is focused on her meal and does not show if she sees him walk up to her. Regardless, Onzar greets her as soon as he reaches the table.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

Pardon me...

Grohlva stops just before taking another bite and turns to look to the Dwarf man before her. She dosen't look angry to be interrupted, but dosen't look thrilled to be approached either.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
 ... I don't mean to disturb your meal, m'um, but I was far too intrigued to not find out for me self. Might you be the owner of that impressive blade I saw on ma way in?

Grohlva observes him for a moment. She turns back to take her interrupted bite.

GROHLVA
 Aye, the blade is mine.

ONZAR TJUNU
 (pleased)
 Ah ha! I thought it might be!

Grohlva says nothing and continues her meal.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
 Erm- Ahem. That is quite the weapon. Fine quality make, I can see.
 (beat)
 If you don't mind me ask'n, who might have crafted such a weapon?

Grohlva pauses. Her fork then met the table hard. She eyes Onzar sharply trying to read him. Her breathing almost sounds like a growl. The other patrons sneak glances their way.

GROHLVA
 I didn't kill anyone for it, if that's what you want to know.

Surprise, then realization wash over Onzar's face.

ONZAR TJUNU
 Oh, no m'um! I didn't mean- I wasn't trying to-
 (clearing his throat)
 Forgive me- Ye see, I was brought up in a forge. And like the best of Dwarves, I know fine craftsmanship when I see it. Never before have I seen such a fine blade of that size and quality!
 (MORE)

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
I only wish to know what man had
made that weapon of yours- I meant
no disrespect.

Onzar was visibly sweating on his brow. Grohlva holds his
gaze for a beat. She slowly raises an eyebrow.

GROHLVA
Is that so...

ONZAR TJUNU
(anxiously nodding)
Y-yes, m'um.
(beat)

Grohlva visibly relaxes in her chair. She turns a little more
to Onzar, addressing him better.

GROHLVA
Very well... The blade is PRETTY
STONE....

Onzar eyes widen at the name.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)
... And no, I didn't name it. It
was a gift for saving the
blacksmith and his family's life.

Grohlva casually goes back to eating her meal. Onzar shakes
off the shock.

ONZAR TJUNU
Oh ho, a Dwarf smith per chance?

GROHLVA
(smirking)
Human.

ONZAR TJUNU
What!?

Onzar's voice bellows and draws the open looks of the guests
in the dining hall. Grohlva only smirks even wider in
amusement.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
A puny human?

GROHLVA
(nodding)
Aye. Said he was the apprentice of
a forge master Drawf.

Onzar eyes her suspiciously

ONZAR TJUNU
Yer not try'n to sell me copper for
gold are ya?

Grohlva chuckles at the question.

GROHLVA
I enjoy your reaction more knowing
it to be the truth. I witnessed the
forging of the blade, myself.
(beat)

Onzar erupts into a loud belly-laugh. The abrupt sound causes the other patrons to jump at the broken silence. They turn back to their own meals, now annoyed.

Wiping away a tear forming in his eye, Onzar's jovial laughter calms down.

ONZAR TJUNU
Oh aye, that is sound reason
enough!
(clears his throat)
Ahem. Um, may I?

Onzar gestures to the open seat across Grohlva. She raises her brow again at Onzar.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
I would like to ask more, if you
don't mind.

Grohlva eyes him up and down for a beat. Soon after, a grin forms and she motions with a nod for him to sit. She takes another bite of her meal while Onzar climbs up the seat and settles himself.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
Now- Oh, wear is me head?
(clears throat)
I am called Onzar Tjunu. It means
Iron Son in Drawvish. And what
might I call you?

GROHLVA
(not looking up)
Grohlva.

Onzar nods in acknowledgment.

ONZAR TJUNU

Aye, Grohlva. How'd you come about
save'n the life of this forge
master's apprentice?

Grohlva finishes her bite. She leans back into her seat
meeting Onzar's gaze. A relaxed expression rests on her face.

GROHLVA

I was traveling to Jordune when I
came across him and his lot on the
road. They'd set up camp out in the
open by the road.

ONZAR TJUNU

(shakes his head)
Inexperienced imbeciles.

Grohlva nodded in agreement.

GROHLVA

I was camped in the nearby brush.
Nightfall came and I hear them
start screaming. I grabbed my
greatsword and hurried over to see.
It was a group of filthy knolls
raiding their camp for their food
and horses.

ONZAR TJUNU

(shaking his head)
Terrible, filthy things. Always
willing to do anything for a meal.
Might even eat a man if they could.

GROHLVA

(nods)
Their hired escort was either
running scared or being cut down. A
losing fight. I joined the fray and
made minced meat of those fleabags.
But not before one of them shatters
my blade with its thick skull.
Caught em with the flat side of my
blade.

Onzar winces like he is in pain. His hand comes up to his
chest.

ONZAR TJUNU

My gods... just what condition was
your blade in?

Grohlva just casually shrugs. She takes another bite of her meal.

GROHLVA

Twass an old blade. Cut down many
beasts and creatures, and spilled
many others blood. It had served me
long enough. Furry bastard just had
a head stronger than steel.

This statement made Onzar burst in mirthful laughter.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

When the fighting was done, their
sellsword leader asked me to
accompany them to Jordune. Paid me
what their slaughtered men was
promised.

ONZAR TJUNU

Oh ho! That was fortunate, and
mighty generous of em.

GROHLVA

(nodding)

Aye, wasn't too bad. And the
journey wasn't either. Scared off a
couple of lowlifes watching the
road. Fought off a troublesome
Ogre.

Grohlva forks another bite into her mouth.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

One of my easier jobs.

Onzar has an amused grin on his face.

ONZAR TJUNU

Aye, can't say I've had such luck
of a journey in a long while. Color
me jealous!

Grohlva chuckles. Her own amused smirk grows on her face.

GROHLVA

I'd like to see how you'd handle
yourself against an Ogre. You'd be
squished into a Drawf puddle.

A bark of laughter erupts from Onzar.

ONZAR TJUNU

Don't tempt me! I'll go look'n for
the nearest bog and bring you back
its hide, if that's a proper
challenge! I'd bet a whole tavern's
tap on it!

This gets Grohlva to chuckle in almost equal merriment. She
is looking at him with intrigue.

GROHLVA

(chuckling)

Is that so? Well-

The kitchen doors open. The young waiter emerges with a fresh
hot meal in hand. He looks over to Onzar's table and stops in
his steps as soon as he realizes Onzar is not there. He looks
around to the other tables.

Onzar waves a hand up to flag down the waiter.

ONZAR TJUNU

Oh, aye! Over here, lad!

The waiter follows Onzar's voice and spots the dwarf at
Grohlva's table. Seeing Grohlva makes the young waiter go
pale. His hands begin to shake, causing the platter in his
hands to rattle. He gulps and approaches the table in slow
fearful steps. Grohlva sees this and rolls her eyes. She
turns her focus back to her own meal.

Onzar watches the waiter bring his meal slowly to the table.
He turns to Grohlva, then back to the waiter. With an audible
groan, Onzar shakes his head disapprovingly and loudly moves
off his chair. The table and its contents rattle at Onzar's
movement.

Grohlva now looks to Onzar. Her eyes follow him as he stomp
his way to the waiter. Onzar has fire in his eyes. A look
Grohlva recognizes.

The waiter never takes his eyes off of Grohlva as he inches
closer. Onzar walks up to him and grabs him by the tunic. He
pulls the waiter down, forcing him to look away from Grohlva.
The young waiter now meets Onzar's hard stare. Onzar uses his
other hand to rip the clattering platter out of the waiter's
hands. He shoves the waiter back, almost causing the young
man to fall backwards.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

Sunder's sake! Give me that before
you make a bigger fool of yourself!

The waiter is taken aback. He then straightens and attempts to unwrinkled his tunic.

CAVALIER WAITER

N-now, see here-

ONZAR TJUNU

You should be ashamed of yourself!
A grown man, can't even serve a
meal to a payin' customer! I've met
Halflings smaller than you and
could fight any beast twice your
size! If yer all done wettin'
yourself, go and bring us more ale!
And bigger tankards, while you're
at it! I've seen boots on a wee
baby bigger than these sorry mugs!

The other patrons are all staring. The waiter looks at everyone watching them and goes red in the face. Softly, he clears his throat. He opens his mouth to speak; however, no words leaves his mouth. The young waiter is taking in Onzar and Grohlva's robust adventuring appearances. He promptly presses his mouth closed and gulps.

CAVALIER WAITER

(whispers)

Y-yes, sir.

The waiter bows his head and turns on his heels. Quickly, he strides to safety of the kitchen door.

Onzar huffs before turning back to his shared table with Grohlva. He throws his plate on the table and climbs back up the tall seat. The other patrons have awkwardly returned to their own meals. Grohlva is still watching where their waiter had disappeared behind the kitchen doors.

GROHLVA

(amused)

Hmph, I was sure you were gonna
make the poor boy cry.

ONZAR TJUNU

(now seated)

Bah! The whelp could use more
toughening up! He's lucky all I did
was raise my voice to 'em!

Grohlva's eyes move to watch Onzar carefully as he stabs his fork into his meal and raises it to his mouth. Onzar's deep frown disappears. His eyes widen in shock, his fork never leaving his mouth. Slowly, Onzar looks as though he melts in pleasure.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

(mouth full)

Mmmmm... I don't know if I am just
so damn hungry, or that bloody chef
back there is the greatest cook in
all of The Reech!

Grohlva smirks, then turns back to her own plate.

GROHLVA

The chef is indeed a master in his
craft...

Onzar nods as he takes another mouthful of food. Ecstasy is
written all over his face. Grohlva looks up from her plate to
watch him.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

... He is also the welp's brother.

Onzar's food catches in his throat. He leans forward and
coughs the contents out of his airways, pounding his fist
into his chest. Finally, he takes a deep breath.

ONZAR TJUNU

Ahem- erm...

Grohlva wears an amused grin. Onzar looks away from her gaze,
rubbing the back of his head bashfully. A light color of pink
is on his cheeks.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

... I, uh... I suppose I can leave
a generous tip- for both of 'em,
and uh... thank 'em properly for
the meal... Properly.

Grohlva's smile grows as she observes Onzar. She looks away
and takes a bite of her own meal.

GROHLVA

Perhaps that will do.

Onzar turns more pink. He clears his throat.

ONZAR TJUNU

Well then, if you don't mind.
Please, continue your tale...
Please.

GROHLVA

(chuckling)

Ah, yes. Where was I?

ONZAR TJUNU

You were hired on, I recall.

Grohlva smiles sweetly to Onzar. She is please to know he is listening well.

GROHLVA

Right. While my presence made the journey a lot easier for em, the less... traveled of the lot took some time getting use to me. They did come around some time after I saved their child from almost being squished by that Ogre. After that, the child wouldn't leave my side practically the whole journey. I guess she felt safe near me.

Onzar gives a soft warm chuckle in between bites.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

They were grateful to have me there. The smith even vouched for me when we made it to Jordune's gates. We had parted ways there, and I found work to earn some coin for a new blade. I thought that would be the last I'd see of that smith. However, maybe a month since I had seen him, he shows up to the inn I was staying at. He tells me he moved his family to Jordune to buy a shop and set up his forge in the city. He finished his forge and wanted to replace the blade I had lost. All he needed from me was protection while he travels up the mountain to mine the metals for it.

Onzar perked up at hearing the smith mined his own metals.

ONZAR TJUNU

Oh, ho! He mined it himself?

(pounds his chest with pride)

Aye, that is the way of a true drwaf raised in a forge.

Grohlva smiles at Onzar's shining pride.

GROHLVA

(nods)

He and his two forge hands.

(MORE)

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

This went on for a while, having to
run his forge in between trips 'n
all. The wife became a good friend.
And that child of theirs was a
curious little pup. She had
questions waiting for me every day
I arrived to the forge. Her
questions could fit a parchment
made from a giant's hide.

This made Onzar bark in laughter. Food bits fall from his
mouth.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

Before I knew it, the blade was
ready. Our business was concluded,
and the job postings were running
thin, so I took my leave of
Jordune. I found passage for
Wayfold and was on my way.

Grohlva finishes her story. She casually takes a few bites of
her food. Onzar blinked a few times watching and waiting.

ONZAR TJUNU

Now, wait a moment!

Grohlva looks up from her plate, still enjoying her meal.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

That's it? You got your blade and
left!? How'd you name your blade?

GROHLVA

(chuckling)

Ah, Pretty Stone. The child named
it before it even reached my hands.
(beat)

Onzar leans back into his chair.

ONZAR TJUNU

Ah, then that was that eh?

A humerus smile grows on Grohlva's face.

GROHLVA

Bad luck to change the name of a
weapon. No matter whose blood it
spilled, or whose hands wielded it.

ONZAR TJUNU

(nodding)

Aye...

(MORE)

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

(beat)

... Unless you were to reforge it.
Not that such a fine blade ought to
be reforged, of course. That
apprentice did some right work...
for a human.

GROHLVA

(nods)

Ah, he did indeed.

Grohlva reached to over to her tankard. She took several gulps of her ale.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

So... Tell me, dwarf...

Onzar hums in response, his mouth occupied as he brings his own ale up to his mouth to take a few large swallows.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

... What brings a mountain dwarf of
Uthum to Leoluna?

Surprised, Onzar lowers his tankard, looking over the rim at Grohlva wide-eyed. He gives a sheepish grin.

ONZAR TJUNU

(wiping his mouth)

Ah ha, what gave me away?

GROHLVA

(smirks)

Your hair color, for one...

Onzar looks down at his dark brown beard.

GROHLVA (CONT'D)

... But it's also how you dress
yourself. The material is obviously
what you can afford or find
locally, but you fashion yourself
the same way as the dawrfs there.

Onzar looked at his sleeves and gloves. He then breaks into a smile.

ONZAR TJUNU

Ah ha! Guilty as charged, I
suppose.

Then, his smile lowers as he looks away. Grohlva can see on his face something has cross his mind.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
 ... Erm, well... All I am willing
 to say is... I wanted something
 different from what was expected of
 me. So...
 (lifts his arms out wide)
 ... Here I am! Going where ever
 there's coin to be earned and ale
 to drink!

Onzar gives Grohlva a wide, toothy smile. Grohlva, though,
 has a soft expression. She says nothing and takes in the
 dwarf sitting with her. Her eyes wonder over his face finding
 something new there.

(beat)

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)
 Umm...
 (coughs)

Finally, she looks away. A smirk cracks around Grohlva's
 tusked teeth. She returns Onzar's gaze and raises her tankard
 to him.

GROHLVA
 Ah... To the next cup of ale and
 earned coin, then.

Onzar, confused at first, but he then beams a smile back to
 Grohlva. He lifts his own tankard to meet hers.

ONZAR TJUNU
 Haha! To the next coin and ale!

The two cheers and finish off their beverages. They both
 exhale a pleased huff of breath as their cups meet the table
 surface.

GROHLVA
 Well, that's how I earned my sword.
 Now tell me, how does Onzar Tjunu
 earn his coin? What have you seen
 out on the roads you've traveled?

Onzar wipes off the ale in his facial hair.

ONZAR TJUNU
 (chuckling)
 Oh ho! Have I got a few good tales
 for you! This ol dwarf has seen a
 thing or two-

The young waiter emerges from the kitchen with two fresh tankards in hand. He keeps his head obviously down to focus on walking towards Onzar and Grohlva's table. He is moving faster than before but not at all in a hurry.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

-Oi! There ya are, lad!

Onzar reaches into his coin purse.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

Bring us another round! And here, a show of gratitude to you and yer brother for the warm meal!

In a hurried excitement, he pulls out a few gold coins and nearly shoves them into the unprepared waiter's hands. The waiter stares at the coins, then to Onzar. His mouth is hanging open. He chances a glance to Grohlva, then back to Onzar rather quickly.

CAVALIER WAITER

Buh- um... That is awfully generous of you, sir... uh...

Onzar throws a wink to Grohlva and distributes the two fresh mugs. She smiles back as she receives her mug.

ONZAR TJUNU

There's plenty more coin where that came from, lad. Just keep the ale commin' our way!

The waiter stares at the coins and slowly nods

CAVALIER WAITER

C-certainly, sir. O-of course!

The waiter walks away as he counts the coins in his hand. Onzar raises his new cup of ale. Grohlva raises hers as well. The two cheers again.

ONZAR TJUNU

Now, let me tell ya about the time I was paid to retrieve a stolen goat from a lonely troll! Damn fool was off stealing every cattle-beast in the plains thinking he was adopting the poor creatures.

GROHLVA

(chuckling)

The poor bastard. You did this all by yourself?

ONZAR TJUNU

Oh, aye! I thought it was going to be as easy as pie, too! And I didn't think twice of how much the poor farmer was payin' me.

Grohlva snickers in a way that wrinkles her nose as she watches Onzar huff.

ONZAR TJUNU (CONT'D)

Oh, but I found a way. I even freed the other stolen creatures, too, I might add!

GROHLVA

Oh? And how'd you manage that?

ONZAR TJUNU

(chuckling)

Well, let me tell ya...

The two wordlessly continue on with their conversation. Nothing pulls them away as they give each other their full attention.

EXT. TOWN OF LEOLUNA - NIGHT

The day's early evening gives into the dark damp quiet of the night. All other patrons of the Cavalier Bros. house of dining eventually finish their meals, leaving two solitary figures keeping one another company with stories and ale. Until, eventually, the ale ran out and the two continued on elsewhere down the wet cobblestone road. To their next coin, and to their next ale together.

END