

It's good to talk

Set a couple of months after Buck's awakening. I always wondered why Wilma maintained any romantic interest in Buck when he went off with all those space bunnies. Did she ever confide in anyone?

Disclaimer: I don't own Wilma Deering, Buck Rogers, Ardala, Cain or Dr Huer. I've lost track of who does but I think it's the Dilles Family Trust and Glen Larson.

"Wilma, how are you? It's great to see you again!"

The two women greeted each other and chattered excitedly. It was the first time they had met up in a long time and they were eager to catch up on each other's news. They ordered their drinks and sat down in the restaurant, by one of the windows which gave impressive views over the domed Inner City of New Chicago.

"Hi Betsy, It's been so long! How are Ben and the kids? Wilma enquired. Her friend, an attractive woman in her late twenties, was a little shorter than herself with auburn hair cut short to frame her face.

"Oh they're doing fine, you know," Betsy replied, "wearing me out as usual. I'm quite glad of this break though, even if it's only visiting mom! And it gives me a chance to catch up with people."

"Well I'm sure she must be so pleased to see you. You should bring the children next time. It would be good to see them. Lara must be quite the little lady now."

"Yeah and don't I know it!" Betsy exclaimed as she picked up her coffee cup. "Anyway, What about you Wilma? What have you been up to? I heard some mention that you had found some five hundred year old man. What on Earth is that about?"

"Incredible though that sounds," replied Wilma, taking a sip of her coffee, "it's true!"

She didn't think she was breaking any protocols in revealing this fact as news of Buck had already spread across quite a lot of the city and her friend was an ex directorate employee who she trusted implicitly. They had met in flight school, but whereas Wilma had quickly risen through the ranks, Betsy had given up her career to have a family and moved to New Boston.

She continued, "it seems that he went on one of the early space explorations just before the holocaust and his life supports systems were frozen somehow. He was found by a passing ship a couple of months ago, a little incoherent and bewildered, but otherwise totally unharmed!"

"Wow! It sounds like he got a lot more than he bargained for on that mission then. Imagine waking up five hundred years later. The world must have changed so much!" Betsy said, her voice full of wonder as she contemplated what Wilma had just told her.

Yes, thought Wilma to herself, imagine!

"So what's he like then? This guy - what's his name?" Betsy enquired eagerly,

"Oh! He's called Buck," replied her friend, "he's actually around thirty years old - the five hundred years notwithstanding, and attractive, she paused, "but I have to admit that I didn't think we were going to get along when I first met him. I thought he was a little crass but he's kind of growing on me now." She smiled and then shifted her gaze to the table.

"You like him, don't you?" said her friend with a grin.

Wilma shrugged "I guess so but..." her voice trailed off "he's kind of hard to get close to. I think he's just been through so much recently. I suppose it's pretty understandable after all that happened to him though. Waking up and finding that all your loved ones have been gone for centuries and to then find out that they must have died in such a horrible way too! That would be pretty tough for anyone to take in. He seems to be keeping people at arm's length."

"Funny sounds like someone else I know," laughed Betsy, "I thought it was usually the other way round. As I recall Duke asked you out so many times before you agreed to meet him!"

"I know" Wilma sighed, "but I was more concerned about my career than dating. And I suppose afterwards I had my fingers burned a little after you know, what happened with Duke." She paused, looked wistful for a brief moment then continued, "anyway, I guess time will tell whether anything is going to happen with Buck."

"Well, does he know you like him?" asked her friend inquisitively?

"Uh - I think so," Wilma looked sheepish. She gazed into her coffee cup. In a low voice she said, "I kind of made a pass at him at a directorate event." Normally she wasn't so open about her private life, but it felt good to confide in someone.

"A-and I take it this didn't go so well? Asked her concerned friend, one look at Wilma's face told her the answer.

"Not really," she sighed "I think my timing was a little off and...well it was a bit of a disaster."

"Why? What happened? I can't imagine any guy turning you down Wilma. She took in her friend's lithe figure which was accentuated in her tight fitting shiny blue jumpsuit. "What exactly did you say to him?"

"Well I, I sort of told him I was sorry for being so cold when we first met and then...I kissed him!" She coloured slightly as she spoke the last part.

Betty almost choked on her coffee, "Wow! "I didn't think you had it in you. Er...how did he react?"

Wilma gazed at her hands, "Well he, um, he said it was too early to get back into things like that and he wanted take things easy."

"Well I suppose he'd had a bit of a culture shock," murmured her friend.

"Then he left and went to meet someone else!" Wilma deliberately left out the rather bold invitation she had given Buck to 'go someplace'. She was a little embarrassed that she had been so forward with a man - especially when he had turned her down and left the party.

"He did what! What a rat!" exclaimed Betsy, "Wilma I really hope you kicked him on the seat of his pants the next time you saw him!"

"He..." Wilma began, "It's not as bad as it sounds. It turned out he already had a pre-planned engagement with our guest of honour - Although, that all turned out a little differently than we originally anticipated. You know I can't tell you any more about that, Directorate protocol and all, as you don't work for us anymore. But what I can tell you is that he actually did us a huge favour and that a lot of people owe their lives to him."

She sighed, wishing she could tell her friend about Ardala and Cain's plot to strangle shipping lines, using their own fighters disguised as pirate ships. She couldn't, however, as it was a matter of Terran Security and she had too much integrity to put her friend's life or the Directorate in jeopardy by revealing battle strategies.

"Well is he seeing anyone at the moment?" Betsy enquired. More for want of something to change the subject. She knew that Wilma couldn't go into Directorate Business and didn't want to put her friend into any uncomfortable position.

"I don't know," she replied, nonchalantly. "He seems to be pretty popular with just about every female he comes into contact with. I think he's dated a couple of girls, but I don't think it was anything serious, maybe I should just forget about him...for now anyway!"

"It's up to you sweetie, but if you think he's worth it, hang on in there. I haven't seen you this bothered over any guy in such a long time. I dunno, maybe he just needs time to adjust to his new lifestyle - was he married back in his old life?"

"No," said Wilma, "although he did have a girlfriend. He has a photo of her in his apartment that he took on his mission back in the 20th century and she was beautiful," I think he still misses her a lot."

"Then I guess you should just be there for him, be his friend, get to know him," Betsy laughed, you might even go off him. I should imagine that if he's from so long ago, he must have some pretty crude manners."

"That's just it, he doesn't," said Wilma, "he is really such a great guy, sure he does have some peculiarities and I don't understand what he's talking about half the time, but he's very enigmatic really." Her expression softened and a smile played on the corner of her mouth. I'm sure you'd like him if you met him." *After all she thought to herself with amusement, every other woman he meets does.*

They chatted for a while longer then Wilma finished her drink and stood up to leave. She hugged her friend. "I'm really sorry Betsy, I have to go now. It's been great catching up with you. Let me know next time you are in the Inner City and send my love to Ben and the kids.

"I will," said Betsy, "and you have to keep me updated about this Buck guy!"

The two women said goodbye and went their separate ways. On the monorail heading back into the outskirts of the Inner City, Wilma reminisced over their conversation. She wouldn't give up on Buck just yet; she'd give him time to adjust to his new surroundings if that's what it took. She enjoyed his company and Buck was turning out to be very useful to Dr Huer and the Directorate, even though he had stubbornly refused to officially join them. Yes she would be

his friend, however much it hurt her seeing all the other women fawning over him. His friend and companion and who knows what the future would bring.

NB: This hasn't been proof-read except by me, so all errors are mine and mine alone.