***Fixing the Past***

It shouldn’t have been such a big deal. A busted photograph should *not* have caused so much drama. So why was Qyreia screaming like a rabid Tusken over it?

Hiding away in a remote corner of the house, Leeadra could hardly breathe. The Pantoran had never seen her master so angry before; so distraught, as though a part of her had been shattered as much as the holopic display had. So the diminutive blue woman did what she thought best at the time: hide until the heat died down.

They had been talking, master and apprentice, about what they felt should be their next step in advancing their respective skills. “Just because you’re a Knight,” Qyreia had said, “doesn’t mean I’m done training your sorry choobs.” That was the extent of the conversation’s seriousness, as much of it devolved into idle banter as the pair chatted over cold drinks. The mercenary had gotten up to use the refresher, and Leeadra took the opportunity to look around at the nick-knacks on the various shelves and displays scattered around the room.

Her golden eyes caught sight of the picture: what looked like a younger Qyreia with long hair done up in a messy bun, sitting with her arm around another girl with short green hair. Who the other girl was, or if she was human versus near-human, was impossible to guess. The Force user was too engrossed in the meaning of the picture to care.

So captivated, in fact, that the sound of flushing from the refresher surprised the Pantoran, causing her to drop the frame and shatter the display.

Running seemed the most logical action to take at that point. Leeadra knew that Qyreia wouldn’t have to guess what had caused its destruction. Yet as she hid, the auditory signals changed, furious anger subsiding into quietude, interrupted by what sounded like an occasional whimper. *Ah crap. I know I’ll probably regret this,* the Knight thought as she exited the closet where she’d been hiding and, timidly, approached the sitting room where she found the Zeltron sitting on the throw rug, gingerly holding the remains of the display frame in upturned hands.

Despite her averted attention, Qyreia noticed the Pantoran as she entered. “What happened?” Her voice was flat, unsure whether to be angry or sad.

“I… I didn’t mean to,” Leeadra said quietly, already fighting her master’s unspoken accusations. “I was just looking around, and I saw the picture… I guess I got so absorbed that when I heard you coming it just…”

The Zeltron shook her head in disbelief. “You can block blaster bolts and fracking mind-dive people, but you *dropped* this when you heard my *footsteps*?!”

“To be fair, it was the toilet flushing.” The retort had sounded more clever in her head; not at all how it sounded in reality. She took a hesitant step forward. “Think you can fix it?”

“Me?” Qyreia scoffed, “Hell no. I’ve played around with ship systems, but those were quick fixes. This…” Her voice wavered as her attention returned to the wreckage. “I don’t kriffing know.”

“Who was she?”

“Who?”

“The girl in the holopic? Even with the long hair I could recognize you, but I don’t know the other one. Old girlfriend?”

“What does it matter if she was or not?”

“And you were keeping a picture of her? Doesn’t Keira live here too?”

Qyreia’s eyes turned up toward the standing blue-skinned woman. “Did you forget about how you *broke* this a minute ago?!”

“I’m just saying,” Leeadra continued, her academic curiosity and general sass taking over where caution was clearly the more prudent course, “if I were Keira, I wouldn’t want a picture of *my* girlfriend’s past lover posted up on the bookshelf.”

“You’re pushing your luck, *blueberry*,” the mercenary said, setting the fragments aside before standing, a stern glare on her face as she towered over the diminutive Force user.

As much as Leeadra hated it when Qyreia leveraged her with size and strength, the display brought her to her senses, and she recognized that this was going to be something that, if she pushed it, was going to take a lot longer to fix than even the holopic frame.

“Sorry.” The gesture seemed to cool the Zeltron’s temperature, allowing the Pantoran to pick up the fragments and examine them closely. While not familiar with the inner workings of computers in detail, she could make a fairly educated guess based on her observations. “I think I can salvage it. Well, not *me*, but someone I know. Data might even still be intact.”

The red woman’s expression softened, returning to an expression that had as much hope as sorrow. “Thanks. I’d appreciate it.”

Leeadra hefted the pieces in her hand, as though weighing the importance that her friend clearly held for it. “You gonna tell me who she is?”

“No.” The reply was firm, final, but held none of the hostility that had so briefly filled the room.

“Okay. I’ll just live with the undying curiosity of it all.” Her joke loosened a chink in Qyreia’s armor, a smile eking its way onto her face. “I’ll give you a ring when I find out the details.”

“Thanks,” Qyreia said quietly, sounding almost bashful about the whole fiasco. “Sorry about biting your head off.”

“It’s alright. I was being a *schutta* and putting my nose where it doesn’t belong. You should know by now that I get into more trouble that way.”

“S’what I get for taking on an ex-detective for an apprentice,” she chuckled, albeit still only half-heartedly.

*This gal really got to her back in the day*, the Pantoran thought as she carefully stowed the pieces in her handbag. With promises to call soon with status updates, she left Qyreia’s house and, once in a transport seat, out of the jungles of Aeotheran. Leeadra had a holopic to fix… and a green-haired girl to track down.