

"Heya Miss Alethia, they said ya wanted ta see me?"

"Yes, Miss Arlow—"

"You can call me Jasper."

"Yes, *Jasper*, I understand you performed maintenance on this KX droid?"

"I sure did, ma'am. He's runnin' slick as can be."

"I did not request any maintenance."

"Well, no ma'am, but I saw his amb'latory strut was catchin' a bit and it woulda worn through the servo if I didn't do nothin' 'bout it. An' then when I was tryin' ta lube it up, I saw that computer interface plug on 'is arm and thought 'Well I ain't never seen one of them up close. Can't hurt nothin' ta just take a peek real quick.'"

"Jasper."

"An' it turns it out it weren't nothin' ta it *at all* 'cause all it was a switchy fer this hidden compartment."

"Jasper?"

"Didya know that was there? Seems like poor engineerin' ta me. Undermines the struct'ral integrity of the arm an' that'll be *real* bad if he's holdin' somethin' heavy in both—"

"*Jasper.*"

"Yes, ma'am."

"While I appreciate your technical expertise, I have to insist that you — are you *eating* something?"

"No, ma'am, jus' chewin' gum."

"Chewing what? Your gums?"

"Chewin' *gum*." Jasper punctuated the statement by blowing a pink bubble almost large enough to cover her face, popping it, and gleefully slurping the remnants back into her mouth. "Ma'am."

"That's... certainly an interesting habit."

"Well I dunno about interestin', ma'am, but ya really oughta try some."

"I'll pass, thank you. About the droid—"

"Oh right, so that compartment got me ta thinkin' and I started lookin' all over Buddy — I named 'im Buddy, ma'am, cause KX-57 ain't no proper name fer a droid — fer any other modifications. These ol' Imperial models are a devil ta git customized on accounta all the armor."

"Indeed. But—"

"It turns out the recordin' device in 'is head was broke. Weren't gettin' nothin' this whole time."

"Wait!" Alethia started, blue eyes widening in horror. "Recording device?"

"Oh yes, ma'am. Comes standard. Transmits back ta a central controller ta identify any intruders if Buddy can't git 'em."

"Do you know where this central controller is?"

"No ma'am, and I don't reckon it matters on accounta the transmitter's fried. I tried ta fix it up fer ya but the damn thing — pardon my language, ma'am — the darn thing's some weird model we ain't got the parts fer."

"Thank the Emp—," Alethia caught herself, "Thank the *Force* The last thing we need in someone listening in. Do you know if we have any other models with the same recorder?"

"I don't, ma'am, but if you let me at 'em I can check any other KXes we got."

"Very well. I think it would be best if you examined any droids or electronics the Councilors acquire going forward."

"My pleasure, ma'am."

"Oh, and Jasper?"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Don't ever paint flowers on my things again."