“Sithspit! Where are you, Tiska?”

A sudden crash resonated from a room followed by a scream of frustration as Shadow Nighthunter halted in front of the door to Excidium’s Aedile’s quarters. She had been on her way to meet with her husband in his room, only to be disrupted by the noise that drew her away from her thoughts. Knowing it was Rasilvenaira who inhabited the room, the *Shadow Wolf* saw that there was no need for concern, and was about to continue her way. However, she had only taken a single step when her fellow assassin stormed out the door and saw her.

“Shadow! Have you by chance seen my beloved Tiska? The little gizka somehow got out of his cage and has gone missing.”

The Battlelord stopped in her tracks, and looked over her shoulder at Ras. “I haven’t seen him.”

“Well, can you help me find him? Please? Something bad could’ve happened to him, or he may end up causing mischief himself. I’d really appreciate it.” StormRaven smiled a bit. “After all, your sister told me about how you used to track animals in the Judeccan wilderness. Surely it wouldn’t be so hard for you to find a little gizka, and I’d really appreciate it.”

*“Frak”* Shadow thought to herself in annoyance. *“What else do you tell people, Alara? Geez.”*

The Battle Team Leader sighed and faced her Aedile. “Alright, I’ll help you find your pet. You say he was in a cage?”

“Yes. Come, I’ll show you,” Ras beckoned before disappearing into her room.

Shadow followed her inside, and joined Ras by the cage next to her bed. The half-Sephi knelt and studied the broken lock, rubbing her fingers on the edges of the metal as she felt for any irregularities. A rigid impression covered in saliva caught her attention. She followed the length of the damage as it became deeper to where it eventually penetrated the lock system. Though the saliva was a hint that the gizka had been gnawing the lock over time to escape, the impression itself didn’t fit with the creature’s bite. Especially since there were no other similar impressions that would’ve been left by multiple teeth.

That said, Shadow studied the lock itself, and sure enough, it had been tampered with and unlocked. “Seems someone tried to make it look like Tiska worked his way out. The locking mechanism isn’t locked, so someone had the key or lockpicked the cage. Do you have the key on you?”

The Aedile pulled out the key from her pocket and showed it to Shadow. “I keep it on me always. Who could’ve taken my little Tiska and why?”

“Who and why indeed.” Shadow got up and studied the room. “Whoever did it was in a rush. Otherwise, they might’ve done a better job at leaving bite marks.”

“Whoever took Tiska is going to suffer dearly,” Ras threatened. “Especially if they hurt him.”

“Relax. I highly doubt anyone is going to harm him a pest like him,” the half-Sephi said bluntly. “However, considering we’re now tracking a culprit instead of a critter, I have someone perfect for this kind of job.”

“What? You’re not going to handle it yourself?”

“Oh, I would, but this is an opportunity I’ve been waiting for. A training one to be exact.”

A few minutes later, Shadow arrived with both Loki, her anooba; and Tsume, a young Loth-wolf pup. The two black furballs had immediately caught the gizka’s scent, and were sniffing around in search for the critter. “Meet my companions, Loki and Tsume. Loki is a great tracker, whereas little Tsume us still in need of training. I thought this would be perfect for him.”

The pup went up to the Aedile and sniffed her boot before looking up at Ras in curiosity. Loki, being the mentor he was, barked as he sat next to Shadow, and the loth-wolf bounded to the anooba’s side. Both canines looked up at Shadow, waiting for her orders.

“You sure this will work? What if someone does try to harm my poor Tiska? We can’t have your pup waste time trying to find him despite how cute he is,” Ras remarked. “Just have Loki find him for me.”

“Patience,” Shadow calmly ordered. “Both will track Tiska down. Tsume will just take lead, and when he strays, Loki will lead him back on the right path. Besides, Tsume learns pretty quickly.”

Before Ras could protest, the *Shadow Wolf* knelt down, and scratched behind Loki’s long ears. “Alright, you two. Find the gizka and whoever took him. You both know what to do. Keep Tsume on track, Loki. Search.”

The anooba bowed its head, understanding the command as he then went to the door and started sniffing the trail. Tsume quickly caught on, and began following Loki. With a bark, Loki gave Tsume the lead, and the pup began leading both canine and Sith towards the stolen gizka.

“I’m surprised no one has tried to steal your pup,” Ras commented. “He’s more valuable than a gizka after all.”

“Perhaps, but then again, I don’t think someone stole your gizka for money or to harm him. I think it’s a prank.”

“Who in the name of Palpatine would have the audacity to pull a prank on me?” the Aedile demanded to know. “They’re playing with fire!”

“Who says it’s a prank on you? For all you know, they’re borrowing Tiska to prank someone else. It’s something I would’ve done in my teen years, only I wouldn’t have been so sloppy in stealing Tiska.”

It was silence from then on between the two as they followed Tsume and Loki. Minutes went by, the pup continuing on without straying. He stopped a few times to look around, but he always continued on right after with his nose to the ground and his wagging tail pointed up. Loki stayed at his side, his protruding fang now and then scraping the durasteel floor as he sniffed along.

Before long, Tsume looked up and yipped. In confirmation, Loki barked and clawed at the door the scent had led them too. When Shadow saw where they had ended up, she suddenly facepalmed and shook her head. “Why am I not surprised.”

“What is it? Someone you know?” Ras inquired eagerly and in curiosity.

“Oh definitely. Wait out here for a minute.”

Not giving Ras a chance to protest, Shadow stormed inside. Before her was Derek Cinn and her husband, Brandon Tarsus, with the gizka in an open box between the two. Tiska was covered in bows and ribbons with lipstick painted on its lips as it gave a toothy-like grin.

“Oh, hi...Shadow...uh...it’s not what it looks like,” Brandon stammered as he tried to look innocent.

“Derek...get out right now,” Shadow ordered. “And take Tiska with you and give him to Ras...she’s waiting outside.”

The thirteen-year-old nodded, and quickly grabbed the gizka before heading out. A shout of joy and surprise was heard, followed by a scream and the ignition of a lightsaber. Shadow however, focused on her husband. She glared at him, unfazed by his smile.

“What in the name of Revan did you think you were doing?”

Tarsus chuckled nervously, noticing his wife’s hand was positioned by her lightsaber. “Um...we were...going to prank you?”

“You evil, childish womp-rat!”

The sound of a scream for mercy followed by a cursing Shadow and item breaking was all that could be heard from the room as the Sith chased her husband. A curious Tiska listened outside of the room as Ras chased after Derek seeking vengeance. It wasn’t long before the little pest took off unnoticed, ready to cause trouble of his own.