Mirrorbright

by StoriesbyReese

Summary

This is a rewriting of the TFW and TLJ, influenced by the book Leia: Princess of Alderaan. In this story Rey leaves Jakku and finds not only who she is but who her parents are. Leia finds what she once thought lost. Leia and Amilyn Holdo are a couple. Leia also loves Han. Some people live, some still die. Kylo had a dark plan. Luke learns forgiveness and remembers what's important. Rey, Finn, and Poe live life. Basically it's everything I want to see happen influenced by my need for more Leia and Amilyn fics.
Chapter 1

From the moment the old ship showed up in Unkar Plutt’s scapyard she’d been drawn to it. She couldn’t explain why, it was just an odd pull in the pit of her stomach, a warmth in the center of her chest. The ship was old as hell and battered beyond belief, a pile of garbage that hadn’t flown in years. Sometimes when she would come to give her scrap to Unkar she would catch sight of the old ship and imagine what had caused all that damage, all the wear and tear that was so clearly evident on it, and for a moment she could almost picture the battles or races, the excitement it must have seen. As she and the Resistance fighter ran from the First Order, the old ship seemed to call out to her despite the fact that she was desperately trying to get to the quadjumper. When the jumper was destroyed however she had very little choice. The Resistance fighter, Finn, he said his name was Finn, didn’t seem to believe her when she said she was a pilot. And to be honest she wasn’t sure she could fly this old bucket of bolts, but as soon as she sat in the pilot’s seat it felt as if she’d done it before. Her fingers worked quickly flipping switches and pulling levers, and soon they were in the air.

Escaping the Tie fighters had not been easy and Rey had taken some pretty big risks. But the natural instincts she seemed to have when flying, or weaving her speeder bike through canyons to get away from competing scrapers, seemed even more acute in this flying scrap heap. She honestly couldn’t explain why she thought flying the ship through the inside of a wrecked star destroyer was a good idea, she just knows that in that moment something inside her said she could do it, and she did. She’d even managed to set up Finn’s shot to take out the last Tie. With no one on their tails she’d been able to get them off Jakku and into space.

Everything happened so quickly and violently that Rey hadn’t had time to think of anything but don’t get killed. Now that there was a safe distance between her and the danger, she could actually think. Panic of a different kind set in as realization hit. She’d left Jakku! And now an almost physical pain in her very core was screaming at her that she wasn’t supposed to leave Jakku. She had to get back there and as quickly as she could, but first she had to deal with Finn and the droid.

“Rey?” Finn said from the co-pilot’s seat. “Hey, Rey, you ok?”

She growled softly in the back of her throat as if that would somehow push back the uncomfortable feeling in her head. Then she turned to look at the young man and said, “I’m fine.” It came out a bit harsh, but she really didn’t care. This stupid Resistance fighter had gotten her shot at, chased, and forced off her own damn planet! “What the bloody hell do we do now?”

“The droid…” Finn began.

The little droid beeped and whistled in announce.

Rey smiled at the droid before looking at Finn. “His name is BB-8, not the droid.”

“Sorry?” Finn replied, his tone betraying his uncertainty. “Anyway, BB-8 has information that absolutely needs to get back to the Resistance. We…” His voice cracked a little and he cleared his throat before continuing. “We need to finish Poe’s mission.”

Rey could have maybe ignored the sadness coming from Finn, but the sad beep BB-8 made was just too much. She sighed heavily and said, “Fine. I will take you back to the Resistance, but then I have to get back to Jakku.”

“Are you serious?” Finn squeaked, his eyes wide. “They’ll kill you as soon as you set this flying
trash can down!

“I have to.” Rey said simply and then reached for the ship’s controls. “Now, where am I taking you?” There was a long pause and when Finn didn’t respond she turned to look at him. “Finn?”

“Well, see, here’s the thing.” Finn stammered. “I’m, um, kind of new to the Resistance and I, well, I don’t know where they are.”

Rey groaned. She took her hands off the controls for a moment so she could press the heels of her hands to her temples. She had to get back to Jakku. She couldn’t go traipsing through the galaxy looking for people she wasn’t actually sure existed.

“Maybe BB-8 knows!” Finn said as he looked to the little droid. “You left with Poe, you should know how to get back right?”

BB-8 beeped and cherped and Rey nodded. “I guess that’s a place to start.”

“What did he say?” Finn asked.

Rey reached for the controls. “He knows where two of their ships use to be. We’ll start there. BB-8, plug in and show me where to go.”

The Raddus, Poe’s base ship, was the first one they went looking for, but it was nowhere insight. Neither was the Ninka, the second ship BB-8 knew the last whereabouts of. Frustration and tension was settling over Rey. After each jump something in the ship seemed to break down and she was forced to act quickly to try and repair it. Each jump, each passing moment spent patching together this old pile of junk was keeping her from Jakku, and every time she thought about being away from Jakku, the pain in her head became worse and worse. She’d just finished patching a gas line and pulling herself up out of the deck when she made the choice to head back.

“Look.” She said as she and Finn placed the grating back. “I’ll take you to a safe port and you can find your way back from there. I’ve been away from Jakku for too long.”

“What is with you and Jakku?” Finn asked. “Why are you in such a hurry to get back there?”

Rey looked into Finn’s eyes and could see genuine concern and a want to understand. She sighed softly and was about to explain when the ship suddenly went completely dead. The two shared a brief look of panic and then ran for the cockpit to see what was going on. “The ship’s been shut down remotely!”

“How?” Finn asked. “By who?”

It was as if someone had been waiting for that very question to be asked. A large cargo ship dropped out of hyperspace just as Rey was about to say she didn’t know. She and Finn watched, terrified, as the massive ship swallowed them up. “Quick! We have to hide!”

Finn’s idea to unfix the gas line she’d just fixed might have worked if they’d had a chance to use it, but no sooner had they put on their masks the doors opened and they could hear feet on the plating above their heads.

“Chewie.” A man’s voice said. “We’re home.”

For a reason she couldn’t explain Rey stopped, wrench in hand. The fear she’d felt just moments before seemed to ebb away, leaving behind an odd sense of knowing this man wasn’t a threat to her. That didn’t stop her from jumping when the grating was ripped open to reveal an old man and
a Wookie standing over them.

“Who the hell are you two?” The man demanded. “Where’s the pilot?”

“I’m the pilot.” Rey answered. “And it’s just the three of us.”

The man eyed them septically. “Two swany kids and a ball droid?” Lowering his blaster he holstered it and then held out a hand to the girl. “Get out of there.” Once the girl was standing in front of him he demanded, “Where did you get this ship?”

“I stole it.” Rey answered with a soft huff.

“From where?” The man asked, still eyeing her suspiciously.

“Jakku.” Rey replied. “From Unkar Plutt.”

“Jakku?” The man sounded downright insulted. “That junkyard!”

Finn nudged Rey. “See, even he knows Jakku isn’t a planet you go back too.”

The man just shook his head. “Well, you can just tell Unkar that Han Solo has his ship back. For good this time!”

Rey’s eyes went wide when the man said his name. Even on Jakku the stories of Han Solo were legendary.

“Han Solo?” Finn said as he gaped at the old man. “The rebel general?”

Rey looked at Finn like he was stupid. “No, the smuggler!”

Han eyed the two kids, shook his head, and then headed for the cockpit. “Chewie put them in life pod. We’ll drop them at the next inhabited planet.”

“No!” Rey said as she bolted after him. “You can’t! We have to get this droid to the Resistance!”

Finn nodded. “He has a map to Luke Skywalker.”

Han stopped dead in his tracks. “Luke.”

“You are you him.” Finn said softly. “You are the Han Solo that fought with the Rebellion.”

Han sighed a deep, tired, sigh. “Yeah, I’m him, or I used to be anyway.”

“So you know Luke Skywalker?” Rey said in amazement. Until Finn had told her what BB-8 was carrying and why she needed to help him to the Resistance, she had thought Luke Skywalker was a myth.

“Yeah, I know the kid.” Han grumbled. If they could see his tired face they’d see the war raging inside his old, tired soul. “Married his sister, kinda makes him my brother-in-law. Well, ex-brother-in-law now I suppose.”

Chewie growled and grunted something that made Han kick the wall. He said it more forcefully and it made Han turn around and face them. “Alright fine!” He glared at Chewie and then turned to look at the kids. “I will get you to the Resistance, but I swear, if I get hit by a tiny woman with
bairds or a taller woman with wild colored hair, it’s on the the four of you!”

Chewie spoke up again.

“She’s only short to you because you’re a freaking Wookie!” Han replied, turned on his heel, and headed for the cockpit. “Now go set the autopilot on that cargo ship to deliver out payload while I see what’s been done to the Falcon.”

Rey trusted no one. She knew that Finn wasn’t being totally up front with her, but she could also tell that he wasn’t a threat, that he was even more scared then he was letting on, and just wanted to be someplace safe. Han on the other hand, he gave her no reason to trust him whatsoever, and yet she felt almost drawn to him somehow.

He could feel her following him and it made him roll his eyes. He hated it when people did this, looked at him like he was someone worth looking at like that. He wasn’t. He really wasn’t. He tried to ignore her, to focus on checking out his Falcon, but as he muttered to himself about what had been done to the ship she finishes his sentences and offered up solutions to undo all the stupid adjustments people had made to his ship. She was smart, resourceful, and something about her just prickled at him in a weird way. “What’s your name kid?”

“Rey.” She answered.

“Rey.” He repeated. “Well, Rey, how do you know so much about old ships?”

“I’m a scavenger on Jakku.” She answered, her hands deep in an panel full of taped and retaped wiring. “I learned from taking old ships like this apart.”

Jakku. Why had he and Chewie never checked Jakku for the Falcon? Come to think of it, when had he last been on Jakku? He use to get parts for the Falcon there all the time, but it had to have at least been a decade or more. Back before he’d lost everything but Chewie and his ship, then he lost his ship, and damn near lost Chewie. But no matter how stupid Han was, Chewie was loyal and remained his best friend and co-pilot, and now he had his Falcon back. To bad getting everything else he’d lost back was impossible.

Once Chewie was aboard and the cargo ship on its way to their client, Han looked at Rey and Finn and said, “Strap in you two. I’m taking you to someone who can help us find the Resistance.” Chewie howled something and Han huffed. “Yes, and by Resisternace, I mean her. You know, I’ve never stopped you from seeing her.”

Chewie responded verbally and backed up his sentiment by slamming his paw into Han’s shoulder. “Yeah, yeah, I know.” Han huffed. “Right back at ya big guy.”

As they broke the atmosphere of Takodana, Rey gasped softly and tried to get closer to the cockpit windows to see it all. All she had ever known were the desert browns and dead ship grays of Jakku. The sight laid out before her now took her breath away. “I’ve never seen so much green before.”

Han wasn’t sure why but hearing the kid say that hurt. Once he’d landed the ship he Rey practically ran for the door. He and Chewie lingered in the cockpit alone which allowed Chewie to finally say something he’d been waiting to tell Han. “What do you mean she smells familiar? She smells like a kid who hasn’t seen a fresher in over a year.” Chewie huffed and grunted. “Yeah,” Han replied. “I kind of do too. And yeah, I know, Jakku is no place to send a kid back too. Maybe it wouldn’t suck if we kept her around. I’ll think about it.”

Rey ran down the ramp and a few feet away from the ship, not bothering to wait on the others. She
looked at all the green and took a deep breath of the cool, moist, sweetly scented air. Crouching
down she ran her fingers through the blades of grass and when she stood and looked at her hand it
was covered in dew. This place was like something out of her dreams. Why would she ever want to
go back to Jakku when there were places like this out in the galaxy? The moment she thought it,
her head began to pound, causing her to press the heels of her hands to her temples

“Rey?” Han called out as he approached her. “You ok, kid?”

“Yeah.” Rey lied with a grunt. “I’m fine.”

Han didn’t believe that but he didn’t push either. It wasn’t his place, no matter how much of a
liking he’d taken to this girl so quickly. Holding out one of his favorite blasters he asks, “You
know how to use this?”

“Point and pull the trigger.” Rey answers. “But I don’t need one of those.”

“It’s a little more complicated than that.” Han tells her. “And yes, you do.”

She takes the blaster reluctantly and then holds it up and aims it at a tree, but she doesn’t fire it.
She just sticks it into her belt at the small of her back. She listens to Han tell Chewie to give the
Falcon a once over, and then she and Finn follow him through the woods. She can’t help but to
reach out and let her fingers brush against the trunks of trees, and the petals of flowers, the leaves
of the brush. She even picks a few flowers along the way and puts them in her rucksack to take
back to Jakku with her. When they reached where they were going she was almost overwhelmed by
all the colors fluttering over head in the form of flags and banners.

“What is this place?” Finn asked.

“Maz Kanata’s castle.” Han replied. “She’s a friend, an ally, if anyone knows which base the
Resistance is using at the moment, it’ll be Maz. So just let me do the talking and don’t stare.”

“At what?” Rey asked as they climbed the stairs.

“Anything.” Han answered before pushing open the doors.

The music washed over them first, then the smell of food and drink, followed by the cluttered
catter of several dozen conversations going on all at once. It was unlike anything Rey or Finn had
ever seen before. They followed close behind Han as he scanned the crowds until he suddenly
stopped at the sound of his name as it was bellowed from somewhere deep in the massive room.

“Han Solo!” Maz Kanata called out without even having to turn and see him. She had sensed him
come in and used that to make her way through the crowd to find him. “It’s been a long time, Han
Solo.” She said, her tone almost scolding. Then she asked, “Where’s my boyfriend?”

Han smiled warmly at his old friend. “He’s working on the Falcon.”

“What do you…” Maz started but then stopped when she saw Rey. She pushed past Han to get
closer to the girl and blinked at her. Then she barked out a name and called for food and drink to be
brought to her private table. “Come, sit, eat, drink. I see there is much to talk about.”

Han filled her in on what he knew, while Finn and Rey offered up details as well. Finn seemed
leery, cagy even, didn’t touch a thing to eat or drink. Han helped himself, and Rey devoured what
she could. Maz listened, watched, and finally and nodded. “I’ll find where they are.” She agreed
and then looked at Han. “It's about time you stopped running, Leia needs you. The fight needs
you.”
“I’m not going back to fight, Maz.” Han said with a shake of his head. “Leia needs the droid, not me.”

Maz shook her head and then fixed her gaze on Finn. “What about you boy? Are you going to keep running or are you going to fight?”

Finn looked panicked.

“He isn’t running.” Rey said in Finn’s defense. “He’s with the Resistance. He is fighting against the First Order.”

“Is he now?” Maz said as she got up on the table. She adjusted the lenses in her goggles and looked right into Finn’s eyes. “I have looked into the eyes of many and seen what I see in you. You’re going to have to make a choice, boy, and soon.” Then she turned to Rey, adjusted her lenses again, and looked into Rey’s eyes. She looked for several long moments before gasping softly and then laughing. “I have seen the same eyes in different people.” She moved back to her chair and then continued. “In you boy, I see someone full of fear who wants to run. And in you, child.” She looked at Rey and smiled a huge beaming smile. “I see hope.”

Maz continued to push Finn until he left the table and Rey followed. Han shook his head. “That was mean.”

“That was necessary.” Maz said, waving him off. “He needs to find his true self and he will. But now that we are alone,” She looked at him closely and said, “You don’t see it yet do you?”

“See what yet?” Han huffed at her. “What are you talking about, Maz? You’ve been acting a little more screwy than normal since you saw the girl. Do you know her?”

“I do.” Maz said. “And so do you, you just haven’t been able to see it yet.” She hopped out of her chair and patted Han’s hand. “It’s all in the eyes, Han. Stop being such a Bantha’s rear end and open your eyes, and look, really look, at that child.”

After Finn told her the truth about being a former Stormtrooper and not a Resistance fighter he took off, saying he needed to be alone and space to think. She would have followed, because up to this point they really had been ignoring personal boundaries, but then she heard something that made her look towards a dark back corner of the room. As she drew closer to what she realized where hidden steps she heard it again, a child’s voice. It sounded like a little girl in distress so naturally she followed it. Rey followed it down the stairs, through a long hall, and finally to heavy steel door which opened as soon as she approached. Her heart was pounding in her chest as she crept into the room. Something about the place sent the hairs on her arms on end and made her want to shiver, but she was being drawn to a chest of some kind and before she could stop herself she was opening it. Inside was an odd looking cylinder of some kind and suddenly Rey was overwhelmed with the desire to pick it up.

As soon as she wrapped her hands around the cylinder the room in Maz’s castle disappeared and Rey found herself in places she’d never seen before. A hallway first, cold steel and harsh light, outside a temple as it burned where she saw a hooded man and a droid, in the rain where a man was about to kill her before another man killed him. The masked man with the angry red sword loomed over her, she cried out, called out a name, then everything went dark. She’s on Jakku, a small child, watching as a shuttle flies away, crying out, begging, not to be left behind. Then she’s in a snow covered forest facing the man in the mask again. His sword in hand, he raises it, and then she’s blow back by some kind of unseen force and her head is suddenly filled with voices.

“Her first steps.”
“Time to go home.”

“...to where she truly belongs.”

When the images and voices stop Rey is panting hard, and she’s in the hallway outside the room. The cylinder still in her hand, Rey just sits there and stares at the room where the vision, or nightmare, or whatever the hell that was just happened. She isn’t quite sure how she ended up on her ass in the hallway outside but it’s probably for the best. She doesn’t feel well, her stomach is twisted up and her head feels both heavy upon her shoulders and fuzzy with air. She takes several quick, deep breaths to help the feeling pass, and then she feels the small alien standing nearby. She turns to look and sure enough there stands Maz. “What was that?” She asks as Maz approaches. “I shouldn’t have gone in there.”

“That lightsaber was Luke’s, and his father’s before him, and now it calls to you.” Maz says as she looks up at Rey.

That’s when Rey looks down and realizes that she is still holding the odd device she’d picked up in the room, the thing that caused her to do whatever it was she just did. She wanted to drop it but she couldn’t seem to make her hand open. She looks back at Maz and before she can stop herself she’s saying, “I have to get back to Jakku.”

Maz reaches out her hand. Rey takes it and begins to kneel so they are eye to eye. She squeezes the girl’s hand as she looks into her eyes. Such familiar eyes. “Dear child, the one who took you to Jakku is never coming back.” Tears well in Rey’s eyes and roll down her cheeks. Deep down she already knew this but was keeping the truth at bay. “What you seek is not on Jakku, you must push that thought away, banish it, and when you do, when you open yourself up to the truth of your belonging, you might just find that the ones you long for are closer than you think.”

“I don’t understand.” Rey says, her voice thick and cracked from her tears.

“I am no Jedi, but I do know the Force.” Maz tells her as she reaches out to cup Rey’s face. “It moves through and surrounds every living thing. It connects us all, and that connection is strong with those we love, with those to whom we are bound.” Maz closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. “Close your eyes, feel it, the light. It has always been there, it will always be there, and it will guild you.” She pauses, and when she senses Rey has closed her eyes she smiles. “Reach out with your heart, not with your head, seek out the light, the warmth, and tell me what you see, child.”

Rey tries, the pounding in her head, the drive to go back to Jakku is almost too overwhelming, but she does as Maz asks. She pushes Jakku from her mind, lets the ocean waves from her restless night dreams wash it away, when nothing is left she reaches out.

Maz smiles. “What do you see?”

“Lights, I think, figures maybe?” Rey answers as a fine sheen of sweat collects on her skin.

“How many?” Maz asks next. “Where are they?”

“Four? I think.” Rey replies. “One is close, very close, I could almost touch it. It’s bright, but not as bright as the other two, their further away, but so bright and beautiful.”

“And the last?” Maz pushes.

“Dim and far away.” Rey tells her and then shivers. “I don’t like it. It frightens me.”
“Push that one away, child. Block it off, quickly!” Maz says, helping as much as she can. “Now open your eyes, child.” Maz says when she no longer feels the dark presence Rey is sensing. “Quickly now, good girl.” Maz lets go of the girl and walks into the room where Rey found the lightsaber only to return a few moments later with a small ornate box. “The saber, take it, and take this as well.”

Rey is feeling incredibly overwhelmed, dizzy, and yet warm in a way she can’t explain. As she reaches out for the box with shaking hands so many feelings, so many thoughts, wash over her, she can’t catch her breath. “What is it?”

Maz smiles, pats Rey’s cheek, and says, “A key!”

Rey leaves Maz’s castle and makes her way through the woods back to the Millennium Falcon. The old battered to hell ship made her feel safe, and right now what she wanted more than anything was a safe place to clear her head.

Opening the lid of the box Rey was startled by the sudden sound it produced. It was music, a soft, pretty song. Nothing like the loud banging and clanging that passed for music on Jakku. The melody washed over her and Rey slowly felt herself relaxing, her pounding heart calming, her breaths evening out. The song made her feel safe, peaceful, and oddly enough like she wasn’t alone. She listened for a few more minutes, until she sensed the others returning, and then she gently closed the lid of the box and stashed it away. How was this a key? A key to what exactly? And what was it that Maz made her see? Those light figures, what were they? Or was the right question, who were they?

“You alright, kid?” Han asked as soon as he saw Rey.

Rey nodded and lied. “I’m fine, weird food is all.”

Han looked at the girl, but not to closely, not yet, he wasn’t ready for whatever he might see. “Well, while we wait on Maz you might as well help Chewie and me with repairs.”

“Yeah, sure.” Rey said as she pushed to her feet and followed Han down below.

Rey was exhausted by the time Han told her and Finn, who’d come back from his brooding, to get some sleep. She was leery of sleeping however, she didn’t want to see those images again, didn’t want to deal with whatever all of that was with Maz. But she was just to physically wiped out to fight it off, and as she slowly sank deeper and deeper into sleep a soft distant voice whispered in the back of her mind from the depths of her memories. The woman’s voice was singing along to the melody from the music box. "Mirrorbright, shines the moon, its glow as soft as an ember. When the moon is mirrorbright, take this time to remember. Those you have loved but are gone, those who kept you so safe and warm the mirrorbright moon lets you see those who have ceased to be. Mirrorbright shines the moon, as fires die to their embers Those you loved are with you still. The moon will help you remember.”
In a bunker on the planet D’Qar in the Ileenium system of the Outer Rim, Leia Organa awoke with a gasp. She bolted up right into a sitting position, her heart pounding, breathes short and quick, her gaze seeking something out in the darkness of her room. It took her a few moments to realize that the sensation she was sensing wasn’t physical, there was no one in her room that shouldn’t be, the presence she suddenly felt was in the Force. The presence had flared strongly, and felt somehow familiar, but when she tried to hone in on it the presence faded out of her reach, leaving her heart aching in her chest. When Leia felt the bed shift beside her she sighed softly. She hadn’t wanted to wake the person beside her. She had only just arrived that evening and needed her rest after a long tour on her ship.

“Leia?” A sleep laced voice called out softly into the dark. “What’s wrong?”

In the darkness of her room Leia felt the tall, thin, woman beside her shifting into a sitting position more than watched her do it. She smiled a bit when she felt a welcomely warm hand rest on her back. She could lie and say everything was fine, that it was nothing and she should go back to sleep, but Leia would never do that. There wouldn’t be much of a point, the other woman would know she was lying. “I felt something.” She admitted. “A sudden presence in the Force.”

Amilyn Holdo twiched an eyebrow in curiosity. She and Leia had meet as sixteen year old girls sent to Pathfinder training by their parents, and had slowly become friends during their first year in the Apprentice Legislature together. They had joined the Rebellion together, and slowly became more than just friends over the years that followed. They were there for each other during the most horrific points in their lives, and the most joyous. They’ve stood side by side to face off against enemies, and to welcome allies. When facing off on opposite sides of an issue, it was always with the utmost respect for the other’s options and differences, and had earned the right over the years to call each other out on their bullshit. While other lovers had come and gone from time to time over the years, in Amilyn’s heart, there was always and only Leia. “Luke?”

Leia shook her head. “No, it wasn’t Luke or Ben, but it did feel familiar somehow.”

“It’s faded now.” Amilyn said after a moment of silence while she rubbed circles on Leia’s back. While she was in no way as strong in the Force as Leia, she was sensitive to it. Whatever Leia had felt, it was too faded to sense now. “Do you think you can go back to sleep?

Taking a deep breath Leia nodded, a small smile forming on her lips. “I can try.”

“Please do.” Amilyn said as she laid back down and waited for Leia to settle beside her. “You need your rest.”

Leia chuckled softly as she curled into Amilyn’s open arms. “You’re the one who just got back from an extended mission. This is your first time in a real bed in months, and I need the rest?”

“Yes.” Amilyn replied. With Leia’s head on her chest, tucked under her chin, Amilyn felt peace and warmth as she closed her eyes. “Because you sleep, but you do not rest when you sleep alone, and I have been away for some time.”

Leia hummed softly as she allowed her eyes to close. “Yes, you have. I should have a stern word with your commanding officer about such long missions.”

Amilyn laughed gently as she soothing stroked Leia’s hair. “You are my commanding officer.”
“Well that’ll be an awkwardly one sided conversation.” Leia laughed, relaxing into the warmth of Amilyn and giving into the tiredness that never quite left her body these days.

The next morning the presence was all but forgotten as Leia dealt with the return of Poe, and sorting through the information he’d brought back with him. She needed to get the word out. They needed that BB unit back, not only because it held a piece to finding Luke, but also because if they didn’t Poe would be devastated, he loved that little ball droid. Both Poe and Amilyn had brought back new intel on the First Order as well, which meant Leia needed to reach out to her allies in the Republic. The First Order was up to something big, something that twisted a painful knot into Leia’s stomach after hearing Poe’s and Amilyn’s reports. She had a bad feeling about this.

Amilyn smiled at young Korr Sella as they passed in the hall. She knew that Leia was sending Korrie to Hosnian Prime with a message of warning, and paused for a moment to wish the young woman good luck. There were still those in the Republic with their heads in the sand, who would say Leia was war damaged and looking for trouble where there wasn’t any. Korrie had her work cut out for her, but it wasn’t anything new for the young, brave, bright woman. Korrie had been with Leia for many years, having worked for Leia as a senator’s aide before Leia had left to form the Resistance. The young woman was smart, determined, and fiercely loyal to Leia. The latter was always the best quality of a person as far as Amilyn was concerned. After sending Korrie off with, “May the Force be with you.” Amilyn continued her search for Leia. Repairs to the Ninka were taking longer than she liked and she was hoping to get Leia’s input on how to speed things up. She wasn’t planning on going anywhere any time soon, she just felt uneasy not having her ship at the ready.

Her search for the General wasn’t really all that hard. Amilyn could easily sense Leia in the Force just as Leia could sense her. Leia had awed many a young officer by asking if the Ninka had just dropped out of hyperspace before the sensors even had time to pick up the ship’s presence, or by asking Amilyn a question without turning around to see that it was her entering the room. So it was a little surprising when she managed to walk up behind the other woman without Leia commenting on her approach. Tilting her head ever so slightly, Amilyn listened carefully and was rather startled to hear that Leia was humming softly to herself.

“Leia.” She called out in her gentle monotone voice. “Is everything alright?”

Leia turned and smiled softly at Amilyn. She’d been so engrossed in reading incoming reports, tracking their ship movements, and sorting out her own thoughts that she hadn’t sensed her coming. “Hmm?” She hummed at first and then nodded. “As alright as things can be given the circumstances. Why?”

“You were humming.” Amilyn replied as she closed the distance between them. They were always very mindful of their behavior while others were around. They were high ranking command officers and needed to be seen that way, but it wasn’t much of a secret that they were a couple. And here, alone and out of sight of the masses, Amilyn was free to stand just a little closer than she normally would have outside their private spaces. “You’re not really the humming while you work type, and especially not that tune. I haven’t heard that since…”

“It’s been stuck in my head all day.” Leia said with a shrug. “I don’t really know why.”

Amilyn reached out to put her hand on Leia’s crossed arms. “Perhaps Poe’s report has Ben on your mind? Or could it be that having made the decision to seek out Luke has you thinking of Breha?”

“Maybe a bit of both.” Leia admitted and then sighed deeply as she reached up without dislodging Amilyn’s hand on her arm to pinch the bridge of her nose. “The past seems to be on my mind a lot lately.” Leia gently pulled back from Amilyn so she could move a few feet away and sit on a
supply crate. She sighed deeply once more and again pinched the bridge of her nose as if warding off a headache, or painful memories she’d thought tucked safely away. “Do you remember the night Luke came to the house?”

“I could never forget that night.” Amilyn nodded as she joined Leia on the crate. “The night Luke arrived to tell us what happened at the temple. His news left us all in various stages of shock and anger, and grief. We all struggled to believe…”

There was a hitch in Amilyn’s voice that made Leia look up and into her eyes. Sometimes it was easy for her to forget she hadn’t been the only one grieving their losses. Reaching out Leia took Amilyn’s hand in her own and squeezed it gently. “Sometimes I wonder if it would have been easier in a way if Ben hadn’t…”

This time the hitch was in Leia’s voice so Amilyn said what Leia couldn’t. “If he hadn’t killed his own sister.”

Leia nodded. “Han refused to believe he could do something that dark.”

“I think we all would have struggled with it more.” Amilyn said gently as she placed her free hand over the Leia’s. “If we hadn’t felt her loss in the Force. Han didn’t have that.”

Leia understood that, she did, but it still would have been nice to have her husband around so they could grieve for their children together. As Leia felt Amilyn’s hand sandwich her own, she smiled softly. At least she had had one of the great loves of her life at her side. Leia was sure she wouldn’t have made it through the loss of Ben to the Dark Side and Breha’s death at her brother’s hand, if not for Amilyn’s presence in her life. What she wouldn’t give to be able to thank her mother, her daughter’s namesake, for helping her understand that it was ok to love Amilyn. She wished she had had her mother around when she was struggling with loving both Amilyn and Han, because that hadn’t been an easy time in her life, but in the end it had all worked out. They had been a strange and unconventional family, but a family nonetheless, and they had been happy. Then it all went up in flames.

“Do you remember,” Amilyn said softly, wanting to break up the heaviness a bit knowing that Leia would need to refocus before getting back to work. “The first time Han tried to do Bay’s hair?”

Leia laughed at the sudden memory. “You’d convinced me to co-host a luncheon for the new junior senators, which meant I had to leave Han to get them up for lessons. When I got home Bay had three knots of hair in a line down the back of her head. It took me two hours to untangle and brush out because she wouldn’t sit still. Han had taken them flying and she wanted to tell me all about skipping lessons and helping Daddy fix the Falcon.”

“And when she was learning Alderaanian braids?” Amilyn said with a loving smile. “She used Chewie to practice on and he’d walk around with braids and bows in his fur for days.”

“And he did it with such pride.” Leia said with a nod as she let the memories come instead of fighting against them and pushing them away. They still stung, they always would just like remembering her parents and Alderaan, but the sting was bearable now, almost even welcome.

The pair sat quietly for a few moments as they took comfort in the past rather than dwelling in the pain of it. Then Lieutenant Connix softly announced her presence to give Leia a message. Amilyn watched as Leia read it over, watching to see if there was trouble or if perhaps it was good news. “Leia?”

“It’s a message from Maz.” Leia replied. “She’s found our missing BB unit and is sending it to us.”
Looking up from the message Leia addressed Connix. “Confirm our locate and give Maz a temporary landing code for her currier.”

“Yes General.” Connix replied and then walked off to do as she was told.

Amilyn smiled. “Good news indeed. Not only will we be a step closer to finding Luke, but Poe can stop pouting over his missing friend.”

Aboard the Millennium Falcon Han was getting a little frustrated that it was taking Chewie so long to get the information Maz said she had for them. He should have gone himself, he knew this, but Maz had asked for Chewie and he was more than willing to go. With a grumble Han made his way out of the cockpit to the lounge to make some fresh caf. As soon as Chewie did get back they would be off to the Resistance base, where Leia was. Leia, who he hadn’t seen or spoken to in a very long time. The thought of seeing her again caused a mix of emotion to bubble up in his chest, and he really wanted something stronger than caf but knew he would need his wits about him when he arrived. They hadn’t parted on the best of terms. The screaming match they’d had before he left still haunted his memories. Still, it would be nice to lay eyes on her again.

Turning to lean on the counter as he waited on the caf, Han stopped Rey asleep in the corner of the lounge. The sight of her in that moment, the soft, peaceful look on her face, instantly made him think of Leia and it startled him. Shaking his head to clear it, Han turned back around and poured himself a mug of caf and then started back towards the cockpit. He had literary just been thinking about Leia, she was already on his mind. There was absolutely no reason for this girl to remind him of Leia. Other than they may have a similar hair color, and maybe Rey’s eyes were kind of similar to Leia’s, but Leia’s were darker. Her cheeks were around like Leia’s, and her chin had the same shape, but it wasn’t as pronounced as Leia’s. Leia’s face was kind of angular, Rey’s was more round, more like his. Her nose was a bit like his too, and she was tallish, not as petite as Leia, more gangly like him. When Rey smiled though, that smile… Han suddenly stopped, dropped his mug of caf, and spun around to look at the girl asleep in the corner of his ship’s lounge. No. No that wasn’t possible.

The clatter of the metal mug against the deck made Rey frown in her sleep and a moment later the peaceful look on her face twisted and she began to whimper.

Han knew from years of experience sleeping beside Leia not to wake a woman from a bad dream. Leia had clocked him more than a couple of times before he learned that lesson, especially early on when her nightmares were still so vivid, when she was reliving Alderaan and Vader almost every night. Looking over to the little white and orange astromech that was never far from Rey’s side he said, “Hey, you, ball droid.” It beeped at him in response. “Wake her up will ya.”

The little droid beeped at him, several of which were high pitched, and he rolled his eyes. “Coward.”

Walking over to Rey, Han stayed out of reach as he said, “Hey kid. Kid wake up. Rey, wake up!”

Rey awoke with a gasp. Disoriented for a moment she reached for her staff but it wasn’t there. “Hey, hey, kid, it’s ok.” Han said quickly as he held up his hands to show he wasn’t a threat. “You were having a bad dream.”

Rey moaned softly once she realized where she was. Bringing her knees up to her chest she covered her face with her hands and moaned softly. She had always been a restless sleeper but now it seemed like everytime she closed her eyes she would see those images again, and again, and they still didn’t make any sense to her.

Getting to his feet Han went over and poured a second cup of caf which he brought over to Rey and
held it out to her. “Here.”

Dropping her hands Rey looked up at Han and the caf. Reaching out she accepted it gladly. “Thanks.”

Han looked into the girl’s eyes as she reached for the mug. He really looked, the way Maz had told him too, and his heart squeezed painfully in his chest. When she thanked him he simply nodded and then went to fetch his own mug from the floor after grabbing a rag to throw over the spilled caf. After all these years? Could it actually be possible?


Han turned to look at her. She was standing now, so it was easier for him to look her in the eye, and the confusion and fear he saw there twisted up his stomach. “Yeah, he is.”

“So the Force, it’s real?” Rey asked, looking into his eyes.

Leia’s eyes. Han felt as if he were looking into Leia’s eyes. “Yeah kid, the Force, the Jedi, the light side and the dark, it’s all real.”

“Are you…” Rey began to ask but then realized she wasn’t sure what she was asking.

“Force sensitive? Na, I’m not.” Han answered with a shake of his head. “But I know people who are.”

Rey nodded and then asked, “Maz?”

Han nodded. “Yeah, pretty sure she is.” He looked at her for a long moment, and the strange feelings he was having weren’t fading, only getting stronger now that he was open to them. “Why?”

“In her castle I thought I heard a child, a little girl in trouble.” Rey explained as she set her mug down and reached for her rucksack. “So I went looking, and found this room with this box, with this inside.”

Han watched as Rey pulled something from her bag. “Shit.” He muttered when he realized what it was. “I haven’t seen that in a really long time.”

“You know what it is?” Rey asked, as she continued looking into Han’s eyes. There was something soothing about it, about looking into this man’s eyes, about being in this man’s presence.

“Yeah, it’s Luke’s first lightsaber.” Han replied as he closed the distance between them. “How’d you get that?”

“Maz gave it to me. She said it was calling out to me. That it was meant to be mine.” Rey replied. She tore her gaze from Han to look at the lightsaber as she continued. “When I picked it up it made me see things. A lot of what I saw I don’t understand, places I know I’ve never been. But there were a couple of things, they.. they almost felt like memories.”

“What did you see, kid?” Han asked as he looked up from the Skywalker lightsaber to the girl he was starting to believe was more to him than was possible. But then, wasn’t his life full of impossible things? He watched her close her eyes in a way that reminded him of Leia when she was drawing on the Force.

“Everything was burning. The air was thick with smoke. My eyes burned from it.” Rey said after a
long pause. “It was raining, but that didn’t help much. I was running from something and I fell. The thing chasing me, the man, he was going to kill me. Then there was a flash of red light, a sound, and the man was dead. When I looked up there were others, all dressed in black and masked. One of them, the one with the red light sword that hissed and sputtered like it was angry, he stepped closer. I tried to get away from him but the ground was muddy. I was afraid. I was so afraid. I kept saying a name, over and over.” Rey was trembling and there were tears running down her cheeks. “Ben. I screamed it. Ben help me! I started to cry. Ben please! Please! I just want my… Then everything goes dark and I’m on Jakku. Unkar Plutt has ahold of my arm and I’m watching a shuttle leave. Come back! Please don’t go! Don’t leave me here! Ben!”

Han’s heart stopped beating and his lungs stopped taking in air. She was trembling and without thinking he reached out to offer comfort or support or, he wasn’t sure, he just wanted her to stop shaking. He grabbed her arm to pull her into a hug.

Rey’s mind flashed away from what she’d seen in Maz’s castle to the cockpit of the Falcon. A tall boy with shaggy dark hair sat in the pilot’s seat. Han stood behind him, pointing and guiding the boy as he flicked switches and turned knobs. A woman with brown hair in braids sat in the co-pilot’s seat with a small girl on her lap. The girl was younger than the girl in the rain and mud, the girl left on Jakku, but she was without doubt the same girl. Rey’s eyes flew open and she jerked away from Han, taking several steps back, she stared at him. “What… what was that?”

“What did you see?” Han asked again. Rey told him and he admitted. “My family, my wife Leia and our kids, Ben and Breha, though we called her Bay.”

Rey was breathing heavily. She had been seeing them from Han’s point of view, so she had seen the girl on Leia’s lap, the girl who looked just like she did as a child. Why? Why would she see herself in the place of Han’s daughter?

They thought Breha had been asleep in the temple with the other younglings, the friends she’d made while visiting her uncle and brother. They thought she’d been lost to the flames of the fire, a fire so intense it left nothing within the temple walls but ash. But what if, what if Leia, Amilyn, and Luke could no longer feel her in the Force because she’d been turned off from it? What if Ben couldn’t go through with killing his sister and instead hide her someplace he thought would be safe?

Chewie came aboard with a roar. He had the information they needed and Finn had supplies. Finn grumbled about having to carry so much stuff and Chewie laughed, said something about being the new kid, and then headed for the cockpit. When Finn walked into the lounge and saw Han and Rey just standing there looking shellshocked at each other he frowned with concern, and put himself between them as if protecting Rey from Han. “Everything alright? Rey? You ok?”

Chewie roared from the cockpit and Han finally shook off his shock and awe. “Yeah, Chewie, I’m coming, kept your pelt on.”

Finn watched Han look at Rey a moment longer and then headed for the cockpit. His frown deepened, his concern growing quickly. “Rey?”

“I’m fine.” Rey lied as she stepped away from Finn before he could touch her. She put the lightsaber back in her bag and then grabbed it and her staff and headed down a corridor with some comment about checking a part of the ship before they took off. What was it that Maz had said? The ones she was looking for, were closer than she thought? No matter how hard she tried Rey couldn’t remember her parents faces, the sound of their voices, or the way they smelled. She had no memories of them at all. Just the feeling they would come back and she had to stay on Jakku to wait for them. She had just assumed they’d been the ones in the shuttle in her memory, but what if
they hadn’t been? What if she had just spent the last twelve years of her life waiting for people who didn’t even know to look for her? Rey shook her head as if to rattle something loose or shake something free, but it didn’t help anything. She wished she understood what was going on, but everything around her felt as if it were happening in hyperspeed and she didn’t know how to slow it down so she could catch her breath. Slumping to the floor with her back pressed to the wall, her bag and staff clutched close, Rey sighed and let her head fall back with a heavy thump against the wall. Well, she thought, at least her head didn’t hurt when she thought about not returning to Jakku, which was a good thing. Because there was no way she was going back there now, she’d wasted enough time waiting for her life to come find her, she was going to go find it.
When Leia walked out to the tarmac to watch the ship Maz sent land, the last ship she expected to be watching was the Millennium Falcon. She hadn’t seen Han in a very long time and wasn’t sure if she wanted to see him now. While Han had been on her mind recently, it didn’t mean she was prepared to actually face him. After he’d first left she had practiced what she would say to him when he came back. She had a sathing speech ready for almost any circumstance of his return. Had a reply for every argument he would try, and a variety of names she was ready to hurl at him. But then weeks turned into months, and months into years, and now as she finally watched that old bucket of bolts settle on the tarmac she couldn’t remember any of it. Her heart began to race as she waited for the ramp to lower. What would she say to him after all this time? What did she want to say to him? She had no idea. All she knew in that moment, was just how badly she wanted to see him.

The airlock on the ramp clunked and hissed and then began it’s slow descent to the ground. Moments later Leia watched as Han made his way down the Falcon’s ramp and he smile when he caught sight of her standing there. It was one of his lopsided grins, one of his, I can explain everything grins, and she couldn’t help but smile back. His hair was a bit more white and his body a bit softer, but he was still the most handsome, rugged looking man she’d ever seen, and her heart still shipped a beat at the sight of him.

“You’ve changed your hair.” Han said when he was a few feet from Leia.

She huffed a bit of amusement through her nose as she said, “Same jacket.”

“No. Different jacket.” Han replied. After all the years apart, after all the heartbreak and distance, there she was. His Leia. He huffed a little when Chewie knocked into his shoulder to get to Leia, and watched as they hugged. He had never meant to keep Chewie and Leia apart, but Chewie had been unsure if his presence wouldn’t be a hurtful reminder that Han wasn’t around. When Chewie stepped away and Leia’s attention was once again on him, Han moved closer. “We need to talk, privately, now.”

There was something in his tone that made Leia nod without question. “Of course, Han, we can talk in…”

That’s when Leia felt it, that overwhelmingly familiar presence in the Force. The one that had awoken her from her sleep and lingered just out of reach since. It guided her gaze back to the Falcon’s ramp just in time to see a young girl with dark hair and dark eyes make her way down, alongside a young man and Poe’s astromech. Before she knew what she was doing Leia was moving away from Han and towards the girl. Something about her was drawing Leia to her. But then she felt Han take her arm to stop her and she tore her gaze away from the girl to look up at him with a million questions in her eyes.

“She’s what we need to talk about.” Han told her as he looked into her eyes. Standing there looking into Leia’s dark eyes again, he knew without any more doubt, that when he’d looked into Rey’s, he was seeing Leia.

Leia nodded just as Poe cried out in the distance. “BB-8! Buddy! I missed you!”

“Poe! Poe! You’re alive!” Finn cried out when he saw the man he’d helped escape.

Leia raised an eyebrow and turned to watch the young man who’d been with Han embrace Poe like
they’d known each other for years and not simply hours. Poe had told her all about the Stormtrooper who’d helped him escape, and she looked forward to meeting him. But then her gaze shifted once more to the girl, and this time their eyes met. They just stood there for several long moment looking at each other, and as they did so the presence in the Force started to come into focus, and Leia gasped. When she had been pregnant with Ben, Luke had been training her to knowingly connect with the Force, which had allowed her to connect with her unborn child. She had done the same with her second pregnancy, often sitting in medication with nothing but the soft glow and warmth of her growing unborn daughter for company. Looking into the girl’s eyes, seeing her face, Leia felt that warmth once again. She also understood why she hadn’t known it right away. It had been so long since she’d felt it, she had thought it gone forever, and her mind simply could not fathom the possibility despite what her heart had been trying to tell her. “Han!?”

“Yeah, I know.” Han said softly.

“How?” Leia asked breathlessly.

“Ben.” Han told her. “He hid her on a nowhere planet and closed her off from the Force.” He explained as Leia and the girl continued to stare at each other until Finn grabbed Rey’s arm and gently pulled her over to Leia’s young hotshot to introduce them. “He did something to her memories, some wonky Jedi mind trick thing, she doesn’t know who she is, Leia. She doesn’t know who we are, but I think it might be coming back to her.”

Leia looked up at Han, her heart racing, her dark eyes glimmering with tears. “Han, she’s alive, Breha is alive.”

“Rey.” Han told her. “She goes by Rey now.”

She was older but the woman Han was talking to was definitely the woman from Han’s memory. When their eyes meet, for those few seconds that had felt like hours, Rey had felt something oddly familiar about the woman. She felt it first in the strange sensation inside her that burst to life when she’d picked up the Skywalker lightsaber, but now she also felt it in a way that had nothing to do with that, and it was that feeling that seemed to draw her towards the woman. But Finn had other plans for her and she’d let him draw her in the other direction instead.

Still, Rey watched them, Han and the woman, and even though she couldn’t hear what they were saying, their frequent glances towards her let her know they were talking about her. It made her uneasy and she shifted a bit from one foot to the other. When she heard Finn say her name she turned her attention to him and the man in the familiar looking flight suit. It was almost exactly like the ones she’d found in the crashed fighters on Jakku, the ones she’d modeled her doll after.

“Rey’s the one who got me and BB-8 off Jakku.” Finn was telling him.

Poe smiled as he held out his hand to Rey. “Then I owe you one, Rey.” BB-8 beeped and whistled at Poe’s feet as he wobbled around, explaining how Rey had saved him from scavengers and scrappers. “I owe you more than one apparently.”

Rey shook his hand and smiled softly. “I was just at the right place at the right time.”

“That’s kinda how the Force works.” Poe said with a smile. “Putting the right people in the right places just when they need to be.”

Rey’s eyes went a little wide at the mention of the Force. “You believe in the Force?”

Poe nodded. “Of course I do, not as much as some, but it’s hard not to when you’ve seen what I
have. Mostly though, I believe in her.” He turned to look at Leia who was heading inside with Han. The sight of the man made Poe’s charming roguish smile falter a bit, but as he turned back to Finn and Rey it was once more big and happy, and a even a little dopey. “Now, let’s get you two settled inside. I know the General will want to talk to you both once she’s finished with Solo.”

The way Poe said Han’s name made Rey frown. “You don’t like him much do you?”

“Solo?” Poe questioned. He shrugged as she replied, “No, I don’t.”

“Why?” Rey demanded, suddenly feeling the need to defeat Han.

Poe paused in leading them to the bunker to look at Rey. “Details aren’t mine to share, but he hurt people I care about.”

Rey narrowed her eyes at Poe, looking at him for a long moment and then said, “Leia.”

Poe nodded. “When she needed him most, he ran. Thankfully she wasn’t alone, but still, he should have been there too.”

It was more then clear that Poe was very found of Leia, that he respected and cared for her a great deal, and that eased Rey’s sudden concern about how he might treat Han. Of course she was having a hard time fully understanding why it mattered, why Poe’s feelings about both Han and Leia even mattered to her. Rey nodded to let Poe know they were good and then followed him and Finn towards the bunker. Why did it matter? Why was she so drawn to these people she had just met? Hell, she hadn’t even met Leia yet! Rey sighed softly. She felt like she was caught in a sandstorm and couldn’t catch her breath.

“I’m going to assume Chewbacca will be staying with the Falcon?” Poe asked.

Rey nodded. “At this point I don’t think you could tear him away from it.”

Poe nodded and then called out to a crewman. “Make sure the General’s friend gets whatever he needs or wants.” Then he led Finn and Rey inside and smiled that smile again as he waved his hand at the people going about their day. “Welcome to the Resistance.”

Leia’s mind and heart were racing in opposite directions as she led Han to her quarters so they could talk privately and without interruptions. She was struggling with what was happening, with who the girl could be, clearly still having doubts in her mind despite what her heart believed. How was it possible? After all this time how had she not known she was out there? How could she have so easily believed her daughter was gone? How could she have believed Ben could have hurt Breha? Closing her eyes for just a second as the doors to her quarters opened, Leia remembered the feeling of loss in the Force, the cold that washed over her at the loss of Breha’s warmth, the darkness that overcame her at the loss of her light. Stepping into her private space Leia took a deep breath as she tried to push past the feelings of the past.

“Leia?” Amilyn’s soft, warm, tones called out from the bedroom.

And suddenly the cold and dark were banished. “Yes, who else would it be?” Leia called back with a chuckle. When Amilyn walked out of the bedroom she was wearing one of the mechanic crews’ mustard yellow jumpsuits, with the top pulled down and hanging from her waist revealing a white tank top covered in some kind of fluid that should have probably been in her ship somewhere. Normally Leia would have laughed and teased Amilyn about finding her in such a state, but Amilyn’s striking blue eyes weren’t on her.

“Hello Han.” Amilyn said softly and a bit sharply, not that anyone but Leia would notice the
Han smiled sheepishly and rubbed the back of his neck nervously. He hadn’t even thought about having to face them both. “Hiya Ams. How have ya been?”

“How have I…” Amilyn began as fire flashed in her eyes in her icy blue eyes.

Leia reached out to take Amilyn’s hand before something was said that couldn’t be taken back. While Leia had struggled with loving two people at once, Amilyn and Han had both come from places and cultures where love and relationships were much more open and fluid. They had both accepted that Leia loved them both, and wanted to have relationships with them both, and over time the two had formed a friendship of their own. What became of that friendship now would be up to them, but right now was not the time.

“Amilyn, I need you to do something for me.” Leia said gently as she looked up into her lover’s eyes. “I need to know that I’m not losing my mind.” Amilyn instantly looked concerned, her gaze shifting from the heated glare she’d been giving Han, to something much softer as she looked to her. Leia continued. “I need you to reach out and tell me who you see.”

“Leia?” Amilyn asked for clarity in that simple word. She was Force sensitive, but not nearly as much as Leia was. She would know Leia’s brightness and warmth because it had been apart of her since they were sixteen. She might be able to detect Han because they had once been close friends. She could seek out Poe because he was important to Leia, therefore he was someone to watch over. She could sense the overall well being of her crew because they were her people to look after.

“Please.” Leia said softly as she held Amilin’s hand tightly.

“Of course.” Amilyn replied. She smiled at Leia, shot Han a suspicious glance, and then closed her eyes and took a deep meditative breath. After several more deep breaths Amilyn reached out as Leia had asked and sure enough right there beside her was Leia’s warmth and magnificent brightness. Surprisingly, Han was more than just an echo to her, but his presence was much dimmer than it use to be. There was Poe, safe and sound, but again his presence was much dimmer than Leia’s. The new presence she sensed however was not dim, in fact it burned almost as brightly as Leia’s and felt almost as familiar. When Amilyn opened her eyes they shot back and forth between Leia and Han as she asked, “Who is she?”

“Berha.” Leia said in disbelief.

For Amilyn, Leia had always been her sun, the center of her galaxy, the warmth and light that nourished her soul. When Ben was born, his light in her life had been softer, but no less important. His bright eyes and charming Solo smile could influence her as easily as the moon could influence the tide. So he had become her little moon or her little moon beam. But Amilyn had given Leia and Han space with Ben so they could become a family, so her connection to Ben was as more of an auntie. It was different with Breha. Han hadn’t been around for most of Leia’s second pregnancy, through no fault of his own. The majority of Leia’s pregnancy had been during the peak of the racing season, and had limited the amount of time Han could be on Hosnian Prime. He had wanted to be there for the birth of his second child but the baby had come early, while Han and Chewie were in the middle of a two week relay and hard to reach. Amilyn had been there. She had been there through the pregnancy, the birth of Leia’s beautiful daughter whom she’d named after her late mother, Berha Organa the last queen of Alderaan, and the first few weeks of little Breha’s life. Bay, as Ben called her, had been so bright and precious in Amilyn’s life that she had become as important to her as the stars.

Amilyn’s eyes went wide as she gasped. “How?”
“Han was just about to explain that to me.” Leia said as she turned to look at Han.

Both women turned their focus on him and Han rubbed his neck again. “Well, Chewie and I were on a delivery run when we picked up the Falcon’s signal. When we found the Falcon we found the kids and the dorid on it. Rey had used it to escape the First Order morons on Jakku.”

Han told them about how Rey was a natural with the Falcon, and all about what happened at Maz’s castle. He told them what she had told him about what happened with the Skywalker lightsaber, about her vision, and about her seeing his memory. He admitted to not knowing what to tell her, how to explain things since he wasn’t really sure what the hell was happening himself.

“There’s a way to know for sure.” Amilyn said softly. “It’s a simple test any medical droid can do.”

Leia nodded. “I don’t know enough about the Force to undo what Ben did to her.”

“Luke could do it.” Han said.

Leia frowned. “We don’t know where the hell Luke is.”

“Apparently that little droid has something to help with that.” Han replied.

Leia nodded. She squeezed Amilyn’s hand, which she’d never let go of, and then gently dropped it before heading towards the door. They needed to know what Poe had been given, what he had hidden in BB-8, and they needed to know for sure who Rey was.

After getting a comm message from Leia, Poe took Finn and Rey down to medical. He watched them both and smiled reassuringly as they stepped into the bright, white, sterile domaine of the medical droids and Dr. Kalonia. “This will only take a couple of minutes and it’ll be painless I promise.” He told them as both of them looked at the medical droid as if it were some kind of torture device. “You’ve both been through a lot of trauma and excitement the last few days. It’s a good idea to check in and make sure you’re both alright.”

“I’m fine.” Rey said as she crinkled her nose at the droid. “I’ve never needed one of these things before.” BB-8 beeped at her and Rey laughed. “I did not catch anything from Unkar. Teedo bit me once though.”

BB-8 explained to Poe who Teedo was, and told him all about the nightwatcher worm and the chases through the desert, and about how smart and kind Rey was. Rey blushed. Poe smiled at her. “Sounds like you two had one hell of an adventure.”

“Something like that.” Rey replied. She gave Poe a small, soft smile in reply to his own. Did he always smile like that?

“Don’t forget the bomb.” Finn said, jumping into the conversation. He was familiar with medical droids and the need to follow medical procedures on a military base, so he wasn’t to concerned with having a check up.

“Bomb?” Poe asked, eyes wide.

Finn nodded. “Unkar, was that his name?” He looked at Rey who nodded and then looked at Poe again. “Unkar had put a tracker on the Falcon. Rey was able to find it, but when it was removed it turned into a bomb, she had Chewie throw it out an airlock.”

BB-8 felt the need to inform Poe that Finn had been the one to remove it. Poe laughed again. “I
really can’t wait to hear more. Once we’re finished here and we’ve meet with the General, rations are on me.”

Finn agreed easily. “I’d like to know how you ended up here. Man, I thought you were a goner.”

Rey had been engrossed in the conversation and hadn’t even noticed the medical droid scanning her until she felt a prick on the exposed skin of her bicep. She yelped more in surprise than in pain. “Hey!”

“I have finished my exam of the humanoid female.” The medical droid reported and then moved on to Finn.

Rey muttered something about scrapping the droid for parts as she made a show of rubbing her arm. Once it was finished with Finn, Poe began leading them through the base again. This time he was taking them to Leia and Rey wasn’t sure how she felt about meeting the woman. There had been a moment as she was descending the Falcon’s ramp that her eyes had locked with Leia’s and it felt as if they were being drawn to each other. This strange new feeling inside her felt as if it somehow recognised Leia, but Rey had never seen the woman before outside of Han’s memory. She wished she understood what was happening in her life right now, but she’d barely had time to catch her breath let alone deal with everything that’s happened. One minute she’s sitting with her back against her home eating her portion for the day, and now here she was on another planet with strange people, having strange feelings, and coming face to face to with myths and legends.

Poe smiled as he escorted them into the room where Leia was waiting. “General, Admiral.” He called out. “This is Finn, the guy I was telling you about, and this is Rey. Guys, that is General Leia Organa and Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo.”

“What am I?” Han asked from where he leaned on a console. “Chopping bantha meat?”

“Solo.” Poe greeted dryly.

Han smirked. “Dameron.”

It wasn’t Leia or Han that Rey saw first. It was a tall, slender woman in a long flowy copper colored dress with bright blue hair. Rey was hit with another strange feeling in her chest, that same pull from whatever Maz and the lightsaber had done to her, the feeling that something inside her knew this woman. She closed her eyes as she tried to chase the feeling away, and when she opened them again the woman was standing closer looking concerned. She also looked radiant, as if a warm light surrounded her. Rey gasped softly. “Wow,” She said as she looked up at the woman. “You’re bright.”

When Poe had led the pair into the room it had taken all of Amilyn’s training and experience not to react to the sight of the girl. She looked just as Amilyn had thought a grown Breha would look, though perhaps a bit thinner. When she noticed Rey’s hair, her mind flashed back to just a few days ago when she and Leia had been reminiscing about Han’s lack of skill in doing a girl’s hair. She turned to look at Leia who just gave her a look that said she saw it too, the three knots of hair down the back of the girl’s head. Amilyn turned back to the young trio and was about to speak with the girl suddenly closed her eyes as if in pain. She quickly took several steps towards the girl but stopped when she opened her eyes. She smiled at the girl’s words, not fully understanding her meaning. “This color is rather bright to previous colors I’ve had in recent years.”

Rey blinked, forcing her gaze from the woman’s eyes to her hair. “Oh! I didn’t know hair could be that color! I like that!” She said excitedly and then shook her head. “But that’s not what I meant.”
Leia noticed the twitch in Rey’s eyes when she looked at Amilyn, herself, or Han. Stepping up to stand beside her lover she smiled at Rey warmly and said, “Rey, are you seeing a light of sorts around Admiral Holdo?” Rey nodded. “And around anyone else?”

“You.” Rey said as she looked at Leia. “And Han, you’re both as bright as she is.”

“You’re seeing our auras in the Force,” Leia explained. “Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and focus on something that isn’t that strange feeling in your chest.”

As if he knew somehow what Rey needed BB-8 began to beep softly at her. Rey smiled and took a deep breath. When she opened her eyes again the lights were gone. She sighed softly in relief and then asked Leia, “You know what’s going on with me? What’s happening to me?”

Leia nodded. “I do, and I’ll explain everything as best I can.” She wanted so badly to reach out and touch Rey, to touch her daughter’s hand, because now that Leia was seeing her up close there was no doubt she was looking at Breha. She could see herself in the girl, she could see Han in the girl, and she could also see hints of her birth mother in the girl, which Leia wasn’t expecting or willing to deal with at the moment. “But there are other matters we must deal with first.” Turning from Rey, which was not an easy feat for her, Leia smiled as she closed the distance between herself and Finn. “Finn. Poe told me what you did. Renouncing the First Order, saving his life, I know it must not feeling like it right now, but what you did, it took a lot of courage.” She took his hands in her own and was holding them tightly as she smiled warmly at him. “You’re welcome to stay with us for as long as you wish, Finn, wither you join us or not. You’ll be safe with us while you figure out this new life of yours.”

Finn looked absolutely shocked. This was not how the commanders he was use to acted, and it certainly wasn’t what he was expecting from the leader of the Resistance. He’d been expecting an interrogation, to be thrown in a cell, to be put on trial, not to be welcomed. Leia was warm, kind, and caring. Leaders were allowed to be that way? “Thank you, General.”

Leia nodded, gave Finn one more warm smile and then stepped back to look at them both. “I know you have both been through a lot the last few days and you have a lot to work through.” She looked at Rey, her heart aching, but then continued. “But I need to know as much as you can tell me, about the First Order, about what they’re working on, and what if anything you’ve learned along the way to getting to us.”

Poe threw his arm around Finn as he said, “Finn here worked on their new base.”

“You must tell us everything, Finn, please.” Leia said.

“Of course.” Finn replied with a nod.

Then Leia turned her attention to BB-8. “And what about you my little friend? Do you have something for me?”

BB-8 whistled and beeped, and wobbled on his base before rolling over to Leia and opening the secure compartment where Poe had hidden the map.

Leia reached for the data chip and wrapped her hand around it. She smiled and pat BB-8’s dome with her hand. “Thank you, BB-8. Job well done. I’ll make sure you get a nice hot oil bath as a reward.”

BB-8 whistled and twirled happily. He had sand in places a droid really shouldn’t have sand.

“Threepo, will you see to it please.” Leia called out.
From the shadows of the room a tall gold droid with one red arm stepped into view. “Of course, Your Highness.”

Leia groaned and rolled her eyes.

“I mean, General, of course, yes General.” Threepo corrected himself. Then he sighed and looked down at the little BB unit. “Come along BB-8.”

A flicker of hope fluttered in Leia’s chest as she plugged in the data chip but that hope faulted when she realized, “It’s only part of a map.”

Amilyn walked up beside Leia and put her hand on her back as she looked over the display. “Perhaps it is enough for me to find these stars.”

Leia smiled warmly, grateful for Amilyn’s presence and quite reassurance. “It wouldn’t be the first time you saved the day with that astrology crap of yours.”

“And yet you keep insisting on calling it crap.” Amilyn teased back, a hint of a smirk on her lips.

“Only because it annoys you.” Leia replied. The smirk tugging at her own lips told Amilyn the rest, that she found annoying her charming because Leia thought she was cute when she was all flustered and annoyed.

“Wow, when did you two start flirting so openly?” Han asked from where he stood watching them.

Leia just shrugged. “Right about the time I realized I’m too damn old to worry about being so proper and princess like.”

“It looks good on you.” Han told her with a warm genuine smile.

After the debriefing ended and they were all dismissed Poe snagged some MREs and his own private stash of beers and lead Finn and Rey off to a place where they could catch their breaths and decompress. He figured they needed it as much as his leadership did. He’d known Leia long enough to know something was going on, something that had her rattled, and that it somehow involved this girl. So he might have had a little bit of an ulterior motive for getting them away from things.

Sitting in the grass outside of the bunker Rey sniffed at the contents of the can Poe had handed her. Her nose crinkled as she asked, “What is this?”

“Beer.” Poe answered. “Don’t they have beer on Jakku?” Just as he’d asked, Finn had taken a drink of his and then quickly began to sputter and spit. Poe laughed as he pat the other man on the back. “Clearly they don’t have it in the First Order.”

“That’s disgusting!” Finn choked.

“There’s a nutrient drink in the MRE.” Poe advised. “But at least try it, you might like it, and if not, it’s a new experience.”

“I think I’m reaching my limits on new experiences.” Rey admitted but tried a sip of the beer away.
She couldn’t tell if she liked it or not, it was just overwhelmingly strange like everything else she’d encountered since leaving Jakku.

Poe nodded his understanding, and smiled as Rey tried it anyway. “You been on Jakku your whole life?”

Rey shook her head. “I was left there when I was a girl. Don’t remember anything before that.”

“What about your parents?” Poe asked as he watched her. He could see the whirlwind of emotion in her eyes and felt like a heel for asking about things that caused her pain, be he had to make sure she wasn’t a threat to Leia.

“Don’t remember them.” Rey said with a shrug.

Finn noticed the sadness as well and gently bumped his shoulder to Rey’s. “It’s ok, Rey. I don’t remember mine either.”

“You don’t?” Rey replied, looking up from the ground to look at Finn.

Finn shook his head and explained. “I was taken from my family by the First Order when I was really little, old enough to train but young enough that I don’t remember who my family was or where I was from. Hell, for all I know there’s a colony out there somewhere full of people who are forced to have baby stormtroopers. I really wouldn’t put it past them.”

This was breaking Poe’s heart. He couldn’t imagine not remembering his mother, sitting on her lap in the cockpit of her A-Wing, listening to her stories about the Princess, the Smuggler, and the Jedi; or reenacting Pathfinder missions with his father under the old tree Commander Skywalker had given them. His heart swelled with pride every time Leia, or Holdo, or Ackbar mentioned how invaluable his parents had been to the Rebels. “I’m sorry guys.”

“It’s alright Poe.” Finn said reassuringly. “You can’t miss what you don’t remember.”

“Yes you can.” Rey said softly. Standing she handed what was left of her food to Finn, and then turned to head back inside.

“Rey?” Finn called out after her.

“Leave her be, Finn.” Poe said gently. “She needs time to herself. She’ll be alright.”

Inside the bunker Leia had been given the medical results from the medical droid. Her knees nearly buckled as she read them. There it was, the truth, Rey was their daughter. Tears welled in her eyes as her emotions swirled around in her head and slammed into her heart. She could sense Han take a step closer and she went a little ridged. “You were right. I’m…”

“Don’t.” Han said as he reached out to put his hand on her shoulder. “You felt her go, Leia, you felt the connection you shared with her through the Force since she was inside of you, suddenly cut off and disappear. And we never really had a reason to believe she was still alive, to think anything other than she was in the temple were she was meant to be that night.”

“He couldn’t do it, Han.” Leia said as she turned to face him. “He couldn’t kill his sister. He hid her to keep her safe. Maybe… Maybe there’s still good in him after all.”

“Maybe.” Han replied, giving her one of his crooked smiles.

For the first time in a long time there was hope in Leia’s eyes and she didn’t feel quite so bone tired
anymore. “We could still save him. You, and me, and Bay.”

“Rey.” Han reminded her. “She doesn’t remember being Breha Solo.”

“But she will.” Leia replied as she took his hands into her own. “She’ll remember, and we’ll get Ben back, and…”

“If Luke couldn’t keep Ben from turning to the Dark Side in the first place, what makes you think I can bring him back from the brink?” Han asked, cutting her off and shaking his head.

“You’re his father, Han.” Leia smiled as she reached up to caress his cheek. “Bay… Rey, is proof that we’re the link, we’re the anchors keeping him from completely turning.”

“And what do we do if he decides to cast off those anchors?” Han asked.

Leia sighed softly and took a couple of steps back from Han. “When did you give up on him?”

“I haven’t.” Han replied. “I’m just trying to be real about this.”

“Our daughter is alive, Han! She’s alive and somehow managed to find us without realizing what she was going.” Leia said as she looked into her eyes. “I think it’s alright if we have a little hope that maybe we could get our son back as well.”

Han gave her a sad but adoring smile as he reached up to cup her cheek. “Always full of hope aren’t you, your worshipness.”

“I am now.” Leia replied and then slapped him in the chest. “And I told you a lifetime ago to stop calling me that.”

Poe waited until Finn was busy with the General, helping her and the officers and techs by telling them what he knew. Then he slipped off to find Rey. He figured she’d needed time alone to deal with everything, but he didn’t want her to be alone for too long. He wanted her to know she didn’t have to be alone at all anymore. After asking around a bit he was directed towards the Falcon. When he stepped inside he saw her working on some wiring and knocked on the doorframe.

“Permission to come aboard?”

Rey looked up, surprised to see Poe standing there. When he asked if he could come closer she shrugged. “Sure.”

“I just wanted to make sure you were ok.” Poe told her as he walked closer to her.

“I’m fine.” Rey lied. She wasn’t. She was overwhelmed, confused, uneasy, and those were just the emotions she could name.

Poe smiled at her, a soft, genuine smile. Then he reached for a roll of patching tape and held it out to her as if he were trying to help. “I can’t imagine what the last few days have been like for you.” Rey took the tape, and held it in her hand as she looked at him with an oddly familiar look that he somehow knew meant to get on with whatever he wanted to say. “I get that you’re probably use to being on your own, alone, but you don’t have to be anymore.”

“It’s all I’ve known.” Rey told him. “For as long as I can remember.”

“Might be nice to know it differently.” Poe said carefully. “You’re off to a pretty good start.” When she gave him another look he smiled reassuringly. “You seem to have hit it off with Solo, and despite my personal option of him, he really is a good guy to have on your side. You and Finn
have a bond, I’m pretty sure he’d follow you anywhere. Leia’s taken a liking to you, and trust me, you can’t have a better person in your corner. BB-8 adores you, he thinks you’re pretty amazing.” He paused for a moment and then added, “And if you don’t mind a hotheaded flyboy hanging around, I’m here too.”

Rey didn’t trust people, except she trusted Han instantly, and she had the same feeling with Leia, and even Holdo. This was different, it wasn’t the immediate feeling she’d had with them, but something told Rey she could at least give Poe a chance. “Thanks Poe.”

There was his charming dopey smile again. “Anytime Rey.” Then his whole face lit up as he said, “Now, I am going to tarnish this moment by freaking out a little because I’m standing in the Millenium Falcon! I’m. Standing. In. The. Millenium stinkin Falcon!”

Rey laughed, a warm sensation swelling in her chest spreading out through her body. “Hey flyboy, you wanna see the cockpit?”

Poe’s eyes went wide and he nodded his head comically. “Yes! I promise not to touch anything.” “Come on then.” Rey said as she jerked her head in the right direction.

He took it all in with such awe that Rey couldn’t help but smile as she watched him. He was sitting in Chewie’s seat, and she was in Han’s. He had the biggest smile, and his eyes were bright and wide. She could tell he wanted to reach out and touch the controls but he kept his word and didn’t.

“This is amazing.” Poe said softly, his head swirling with all the stories he knew by heart about this ship and the people that belonged to it.

There was a moment of silence between them where words weren’t needed. Then that silence was broken by a loud grumble of, “What the hell are you two doing?”

“Nothing!” Rey squeaked.

Poe damn near jumped out of his skin as he jumped to his feet, wacking his knee on the seat as he went. He stood there staring at Solo who was glaring at him.

“Dameron.” Han grunted.

“Solo.” Poe replied with a nod of acknowledgement.

“Don’t you have something important and resistancey to do?” Han asked the younger man as the urge to protect Rey bubbled in his chest. Damn kid, just because Leia liked him didn’t mean he got to sit alone in the Falcon’s cockpit with his daughter.

Poe nodded. “Yes, of course, I should…” Turning to Rey he smiled at her and said, “Come find me and Finn for the evening meal later?”

“Sure.” Rey replied and then watched as Poe practically scampered away. Then she turned a questioning look on Han.

“What?” Han replied.

“You two really don’t like each other much, do you?” Rey asked.

“Who? Me and Dameron?” Han replied. “I don’t dislike him, he’s a good man, great pilot, a little hotheaded, way to cocky sometimes, but he’s loyal to Leia and that makes him alright in my
books.” He understood Poe’s feeling towards him, respected him for it even, but Han didn’t want to get into that right now. “Your butt is in my seat.” He said instead, shooing her out of the pilot’s seat. “Chewie’s on top of the ship, go help him out. He’s old as dirt and his eyesight’s shit. Make sure he doesn’t wield his fur into something important.”

Han trusted Poe, sort of, and that meant something to her. “Yeah, ok.”

Their fight against the First Order wasn’t going to wait for Leia to deal with her family issues. With Finn’s help they were piecing together information on what he had called Starkiller Base, including a possible first target. The First Order’s primary goal was galactic domination, and in order to do that they would need to take out the New Republic. Hosnian Prime had been her home, where she had raised her family, and she couldn’t bare the thought of losing it the same way she had lost Alderaan. She sent word to Korrie to warn who would listen and then to get the hell off the planet, and to take anyone willing to come with her to one of their safe bases.

As she made her way through the base towards her quarters Lena heard a sound she hadn’t heard in years. She followed the gentle chiming to an out of the way storeroom full of old bits and parts from various ships in various stages of disrepair. Amongst the open crates full of and shelves stacked high with arrays, injectors, turbines, and compressors sat Rey. Leia had seen her earlier that evening sitting with Poe and Finn in the mess hall and couldn’t keep from staring. If she hadn’t been needed in the command center she might have joined them just to be close to the girl.

She knew that Rey had been given a room in the bunker, though she’d assumed the girl would stay on the Falcon with Han and Chewie, so it was a little surprising to find her here of all places. Rey sat with her back against the wall and had her rucksack in her lap, and a small ornate box perched on top of the bag. Leia approached carefully, her heart squeezing at the sight of not only Rey looking so sad and lost, but the box she had in her lap. “I haven’t seen or heard that in a very long time.”

Rey’s head snapped up, her eyes wide. She’d been so focused on the music box, needing the feeling of peace and security it offered her, that she hadn’t sensed Leia coming. “General Organa!”

Leia waved her hand at Rey to make the girl stop when she saw her shuffling to her feet. “Just Leia is fine, Rey.”

Rey nodded and settled back onto the floor. She looked down at the music box, reluctant to close it and cut off the music, but she did so as she watched Leia sit on a crate across from her. She ran her hand over the surface of the box and then her head snapped up again. “Wait, you know what this is?”

“I should, it’s mine.” Leia replied with a nod. “It was a gift from my mother when I was very small. She use to sing me to sleep while the melody played.” She watched as the thought of having to give the music box up broke Rey’s heart and it broke Leia’s to witness. “When my daughter was born I gave it to her, and I would sing her to sleep.” Reaching out Leia opened the box so the song would play and began softly singing. “Mirrorbright shines the moon, its glow as soft as an ember. When the moon is mirrorbright, take this time to remember. Those you have loved but are gone, those who kept you so safe and warm. The mirrorbright moon lets you see those who have ceased to be. Mirrorbright shines the moon, as fires die to their embers. Those you loved are with you still. The moon will help you remember.”

That strange feeling in Rey’s chest swelled at the sound of the voice from her dreams and suddenly she wasn’t in the storeroom on the Resistance base but a room with warm colored walls and a big window that looked out over a park, and a sparkling city beyond that. There was a small white bed with brightly colored blankets and pillows, and nestled into those blankets and pillows was a small
girl with long dark hair braided to the side. Tucked into the crook of her arm was a stuffed toy that kind of looked like Chewie. The little girl’s eyes fought to stay open as the young woman perched on the bed’s edge brushed gently at the edges of the girl’s hair. Like the little girl’s, the woman’s hair was long, brown, and braided. Her eyes were brown and sparkled with joy as she smiled with amusement as her little one continued to fight sleep.

“Bay, sweetheart, you must sleep and get your rest if you want to go to the senate gardens to have tea with me and Ammy tomorrow.” The woman says softly.

“I’m not sleepy, Mama.” The girl says as she tries to hide a yawn. “Jedis don’t need sleep.”

The woman laughs. “They do to, everyone needs rest. Even Threepo and R2 need to recharge.” Reaching over to a small ornate box on the bedside table the woman opens it and a song begins to play. The woman tucks the little girl in and begins to sing. “Mirrorbright shines the moon, its glow as soft as an ember. When the moon is mirrorbright, take this time to remember. Those you have loved but are gone, those who kept you so safe and warm. The mirrorbright moon lets you see those who have ceased to be. Mirrorbright shines the moon, as fires die to their embers Those you loved are with you still. The moon will help you remember.”

“Rey.” Older Leia’s voice sounds distant and it draws Rey’s attention away from the little girl and her mother to the window. Rey moves towards it and looks out over the park and then up into the night sky. The moon is full and so very bright. “Rey.” Leia’s voice calls out again and Rey realizes it sounds as if it’s coming from the room. “Rey.” This time it wasn’t just older Leia’s voice, but the woman’s from the bed as well. Rey jumps when she feels the woman’s hand on her shoulder, turning her slowly to face her. Rey blinks, confused and a little frightened as the woman, as Leia, reaches out to hold her face in her hands. “It’s time for you to wake up, sweetheart. It’s time for you to wake up and remember.” Leaning in young Leia kisses Rey’s forehead and whispers. “Wake up, Breha Organa Solo.”

Rey gasps hard, painfully, as she is thrust back to the present. Leia has moved from her crate and is kneeling in front of her, hands on her cheeks and her concerned eyes staring into her own. Rey’s panting, desperate for air as she stares back into those now familiar eyes. She had been that little girl in the small white bed with colorful blankets and Leia had been the woman singing to her. Tears well in Rey’s eyes and roll down her cheeks. “I remember.” She says in a soft whisper. “I remember.”

“You remember what sweetheart?” Leia asks as she tries to wipe away the flood of tears.

“You.” Rey sighs in a mix of confusion and relief, heartbreak and joy. “I remember you.” She looks at Leia, takes her in, the familiarity of her face, the warmth of her hands on her skin, the comfort of her voice.

The shock Leia felt washed over her features instantly. She had felt the power of the Force swirling around them before Rey seemed to fall into a trance. She’d rushed forward and instinctively reach out to touch Rey. The moment she had she’d felt their connection flare. “Breha?”

Tears welled in Rey’s eyes as she softly whispered, “Mama.”

The two stared at each other for several long unbelievable moments before falling into each other’s arms.
It had been a really, really, long time since Leia had set foot on the Millennium Falcon. In fact she was pretty sure it had been when they’d dropped Breha off to spend a month with her uncle and brother at Luke’s temple. Leia had had a month off from the senate and she was going to spend part of it racing on the Falcon with Han, but Breha had desperately missed her big brother and had begged them to let her visit him. If only they had said no, if only they had kept her with them on the Falcon, they wouldn’t have missed a decade of her life. Instead of mourning her on her tenth birthday they would have celebrated, and Amilyn would have dyed her hair any colored she’d wanted, just as they’d promised. On Breha’s sixteenth birthday Leia should have been able to watch her daughter enjoying her day with a bittersweet pinch in her heart for that would have been Breha’s Day of Demand, the day she would have declared her right to be her heir. Leia’s heart ached for all the time she’d missed out on with her daughter. It’s at times like these, when she is longing for her children this way, that almost makes her understand the myth that her birth mother had died of a broken heart.

“Leia?” Rey called out with concern when she noticed her mother had stopped in the doorway, her hand resting on the frame as she leaned into it. Shaking her head to herself, Rey realized that hadn’t felt quite right to say, so as she closed the distance between herself and Leia she said, “Mother?” That felt better, but still very weird. It was so strange knowing this woman was her mother but having this huge gap of time in her head between the last time she knew her and now. Her memories were still a jumbled mess, but her feelings were firm. Deep inside she knew who this woman before her was, she held no doubt in that. It would just take time for her to sort all of this out. “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, Rey.” Leia reassured. Stepping further into the ship she put her hand on the wall and a bittersweet smile pulled at her lips. “It’s just been a long time since I’ve been aboard this old bucket of bolts.” She chuckled softly as she reached up to finger a few loose wires and some wall padding. “She certainly has seen better days.”

“Haven’t we all?” Han said from where he stood across the room, leaning in a door frame with his arms crossed over his chest.

Rey turned and for the first time saw Han as he truly was, her father. The man who would set her on his shoulders so she could see the ships race from the viewing stands. The man who taught her how to fix the Falcon, and think on her feet, and cheat at cards. The man who would let her wear two different shoes and would do her hair in any silly way she wanted, who would tell her the most amazing stories, and would make her mother laugh and roll her eyes. Han squirmed a little at the way Rey was looking at him. Looking past the girl he look at Leia, not that seeing her on the Falcon again wasn’t also making him feel things, a lot of things, a lot of very complicated things. “Why is she looking at me like that?” Leia just smirked at him and shrugged like she didn’t know but he knew she knew and it made him grumble before looking back to Rey. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“What? Isn’t this how every girl looks at their father when they finally remember who their father is?” Rey replied cheekily.

Again Han looked past Rey to Leia. “You told her?!”

“Not exactly.” Leia replied as she moved closer to Rey.
“Luke’s lightsaber wasn’t the only thing Maz gave me.” Rey explained as she pulled Leia’s music box from her sack. “She also gave me this. The song it plays, it made me feel safe, secure, and I didn’t want to risk losing it, so I kept it hidden.”

Han listened to Rey explain how Leia had found her in the supply closet, and how she had managed to undo the Jedi mind block Ben had done. Luke always said that if Leia had been properly trained she’d have been an incredibly powerful Jedi. He thinks that’s part of the reason she only ever allowed Luke to teach her the basics. Leia had understood that if she could have been a powerful Jedi, she could have also been a powerful Sith, and she wasn’t willing to take the risk. Leia also did things Leia’s way, and she wasn’t about to limit herself with one version of the Force over the other. She was perfectly content to continue using it as a natural extension of who she was. This was the perfect example of that. Rey had needed her, needed her help, her comfort, her support, and Leia gave her what she needed. She found a way to help who needed her the most.

Watching the way Rey held the music box, the way her fingers brushed it’s surface like it was something sacred; Han could understand why she’d kept it a secret. Pushing off the door frame he closed the distance between himself and his family. “I remember that old thing. It use to sit by your bedside.” He smiled as he shared a look with Leia. “It was your mother’s secret weapon.” Then he looked at Rey once more, soaking her in now that he could, now that he didn’t need to worry he would give to much away. “You were always fighting sleep, you never wanted to miss a moment, and whenever your mother couldn’t get you to sleep easily she would open that box and sing that old Alderaanian lullaby.”

“Worked every time.” Leia said softly, her eyes watching Han’s face and then Rey’s.

“Use to piss her off once she figured out what you were doing.” Han said with a smirk. He had stopped just in front of Rey, and now that he was closer he reached up as if to touch her but stopped, unsure if he should, if she’d want him too.

Rey noticed the hesitation. She smiled at her father as she put the music box back in her sack, letting him know it was ok and when he reached out to cup her cheek she leaned into it. His hand felt overwhelming familiar, warm, soft but calloused, despite not being able to recall a clear memory. She took a deep shuddering breath and it felt as if she were breathing for the first time in ages, like she had been holding her breath and now it was safe to breath again. Just like with Leia, Rey needed more than just a touch, and she launched herself into Han’s arms. She hugged him as tightly as she had hugged Leia in the storeroom and held on to him for dear life.

Han held Rey as tight as he could, his eyes closed as he just soaked in the feeling of her. When he opened his eyes his gaze locked with Leia’s and he knew she was in the same state of mixed emotion. This was all happening so fast it was hard to catch their breaths, hard to accept it was real. They had grieved for their child for so long that it was hard to let go of that and fully embrace the fact that she was there in their arms again.

Without looking away from Han’s gaze Leia walked over to him and Rey and was easily enveloped into the hug. A sense of peace she hadn’t felt in ages washed over her, and tears of happiness flooded her dark eyes. A lifetime spent fighting one war after another, one form of evil after another, took its toll and sometimes it was hard to remember that good things happened. That the Force didn’t just take things away, sometimes it gave things back.

When they parted Han had to clear his throat before he could ask Rey how she was feeling. He could only imagine if he and Leia were knocked loopy, Rey must be feeling pretty overwhelmed.

“It’s strange, and overwhelming, and...” Rey admitted. “I have this huge gap between who I know I am, or who I was, and who I have been since I was left on Jakku. I remember bits and pieces,
phantom fragments, but mostly I just feel it, and everything else is just...” She shook her head and waved hands around her it as if she were trying to shake something loose or back into place. She groaned softly as she let her hands drop and then said, “I feel like I have a Gatalentan sea storm in my head.”

“It’s going to take time, Rey.” Leia said gently as she pressed her hand into the small of Rey’s back. “Your memories will sort themselves out, and even though you couldn’t remember, you have always been you.”

Rey sighed softly as she asked, “But who am I? I mean, I’m not really just Rey from nowhere, but I don’t really remember being Breha Organa Solo either.”

“You’re both.” Leia replied. “You are who you life experiences make you. You’re not the little girl you use to be, and you won’t be the young woman you are now forever either.”

“Yeah kid; Rey, Bay, Breha, you’re still our kid, and that’s the important part.” Han added.

Rey smiled, reassured that whatever happens next she was no longer alone. After all this time, all the waiting, she’d finally found what she had been waiting for. She wondered if she might have been able to find them sooner, if the Force would have found a way to bring them together if only she’d been brave enough to actually leave Jakku on her own, and for a moment she was angry at herself for not trying harder to find them herself instead of just waiting around. But before she could get to lost in those feelings she sensed something, someone, outside and her eyes lit up. There still had been one last piece to put into place before Rey could truly feel she had her parents back. She smiled at her mother and father and turned on her heel and ran for the ramp.

“Was it something we said?” Han asked Leia, confused as he watched Rey seemingly flee the Falcon.

Leia was smiling a huge bright smile as she shook her head. “No, we said all she needed to hear from us for the moment. But there is someone she stills needs to know is there for her.”

Amilyn had felt the flare in Leia’s power in the Force, had sensed her distress and then the sheer magnitude of her joy. She knew that this had something to do with Rey, but she wasn’t sure how. She kept her distance, respecting the boundaries put into place long ago when it came to Leia, Han, and their children. She focused instead on work, giving Leia the much needed time to focus on her family instead of the Resistance. Finn had been an excellent source of information regarding the First Order’s new weapon, and Amilyn had been able to send out a well prepared recon team to monitor it. She had just returned to her star charts and the map fragment when she’d felt someone call out to her in the Force, and it nearly caused her to gasp openly when she realized it wasn’t Leia.

Amilyn made her way to the surface but still kept her distance from the Falcon. She stood several meters away, tall and imposing, hands clasped in front of her. Rey appeared at the top of the Falcon’s ramp and instantly Amilyn knew something was different about her, she just couldn’t pinpoint what until Rey saw her, their eyes meeting, and Rey called out to her.

“Ammy!” Rey called out as she ran down the Falcon’s ramp towards the tall, vibrate, pink haired, woman who had been in her life from the very start. Ben had always called Amilyn Auntie, but that had never been good enough for her, had never felt quite right, because Amilyn had always been so much more to her. Amilyn had soothed away nightmares, and cradled her when she was sick. She taught her the names of constellations, and recited poetry to her as she tucked her in. They had grand dress up tea parties in their home garden, and mack air battles through the house that made her mother shout at them to stop running around like drunk ewoks before they broke something.
Amilyn braided her hair, teaching her what each braid had meant on her mother’s lost homeworld, and she let her wear whatever she wanted no matter how silly it might have looked to others. Amilyn praised her for offering to share her lunch with a sad looking little Nikto in the senate gardens, and scolded her for kicking Threepo in the shin because she’d been angry at her mother. Not that Rey remembered any of that in detail, she simply remembered the feelings shared between herself and Amilyn, as brightly and as vibrantly as Amilyn’s hair. Amilyn was as much her parent as Leia and Han, and Ammy had sounded a lot like mommy to a very small Breha Solo.

Amilyn’s eyes actually went wide and began to burn with the start of welling tears when she heard Rey call out that name. That’s what the flare was in Leia’s powers. She had somehow managed to undo the block in their girl’s mind. Amilyn had barely enough time to shake off her delighted surprise and brace herself for Rey’s embrace. She laughed at the force of it and gladly returned it. “Hello Starlight. I’ve missed you.”

“I longed for you, for all of you, I waited so long.” Rey said, her voice cracking with fresh tears, her body trembling from all the emotion. A damn had broke and she feared she’d be swept away with the rush, so she held onto Amilyn a little tighter.

“I know, sweetheart, I know.” Amilyn replied as she held Rey and rubbed her back. “But you’re here now, you’re home, you are where you belong.”

From Poe’s X-Wing he and Finn looked on, confused, concerned, a little freaked out as they watched the scene near the Falcon unfold. Rey rushing into the arms of Admiral Holdo, General Leia and Han Solo watching with smiles from the top of the Falcon’s ramp. What the hell was going on?

“Poe?” Finn questioned as he watched Rey cling to the Admiral.

“I have no idea, buddy.” Poe answered. “None whatsoever.”

“Should we go over there and see what’s going on?” Finn asked as they watched Leia and Han walk down the ramp and over to Rey and Holdo. He tilted his head as he watched Rey and Holdo part, Leia reach for Holdo’s hand, Rey tuck herself into Han’s side.

“I kinda want too.” Poe admitted. “But I feel like we’d be intruding on something. Best wait and let Rey come to us if she wants too.” BB-8 beeped and chirped happily and Poe smiled. “Yeah, yeah, she does look happy. Whatever’s happening down there, I think it’s a really good thing for Rey.”

While Poe went back to tinkering with his X-Wing and muttering under his breath about punching Solo in the face if he hurt his General again, Finn continued to watch until the four disappeared into the bunker together. He could definitely seen there was something different about Rey, and he was genuinely glad to see her looking so happy, but he couldn’t help but wonder what was going on, and what it all meant for Rey’s next move. While Poe kept insisting he was safe here, Finn was still struggling with the urge to run. He couldn’t see how these people honestly kept believing they could beat the First Order. There was no winning against the First Order, didn’t they all understand that?

“Hey.” Poe called out when he saw the troubled look on Finn’s face. “What’s wrong?”

Finn jumped, turned to look at Poe and shook his head. “Nothing, I’m fine.”

“I guess with those buckets on your head there’s no need for stormtroopers to have poker faces.” Poe said as he tossed his wrench into his tool box.
“What?” Finn replied sharply. It was going to take him a long time to stop being defensive about being a stormtrooper. It hadn’t been something he’d chosen to do, it had been forced onto him. And when he was finally given a choice, he choose to save Poe and run.

Poe laughed. “I mean, you’re a terrible liar.” After wiping the grease from his hands Poe reached for his water canister and a couple of ration bars. “You still trying to figure out why we’re all here? Why we keep fighting?”

“Something like that.” Finn said as he accepted one of the bars.

Poe nodded and motioned for Finn to sit with him under the wing. Reaching into his shirt he pulled out a chain with three dog tags hanging from it. “Both of my parents were Rebels. My mom was part of the air strike against the second Death Star, and my dad was on the ground with General Leia and Han on Endor. They fought for the peace and stability I had as a kid. And I’ll be damned if I let those First Order bastards take that away.”

“There’s no way to win this, Poe.” Finn said sadly. “It’s impossible.”

“I’m sure there were plenty of people who thought the Empire couldn’t be beat.” Poe replied. “Nothing’s impossible, Finn. You just got to find a way to make it possible and believe you can do it.”

“You make it sound so easy.” Finn replied as he turned his head to look at his friend.

Poe smiled. “As easy as escaping a heavily fortified First Order base and making our way here.”

“There was nothing easy about any of that!” Finn argued with huff.

Poe smiled one of his charming dopye smilies. “And yet here we sit.”

As is normal for Leia’s life, she gets a small amount of time to bask in her joy and then reality comes back to smack her in the face. On Endor, she’s reunited with Luke and he tells her the truth of who they are to each other. The horror of finding out her birth father is Vader is nothing compared to the joy she feels when she finally understands the strange connection she’d felt with him from the moment his too short to be a stormtrooper self walked into her holding cell. And then Luke turns himself over to Vader, and she and Han fight their way into a trap they have to fight their way out of. On Coruscant, she’s laughing as all the blood rushes to her head because she’s tangled herself up in Amilyn’s skyfaring scarves and Amilyn, in the seriousness of her youth, was scolding her as she tried to untangle her carefully only for the both of them to fall the few feet to the floor in a heap because of Leia’s squirming and laughter. Amilyn lands on top of her, and Leia looks up into those incredibly blue eyes, and just as Amilyn’s about to push herself off Leia, Leia reaches up and pulls her back down. She kisses her, and they spend the rest of the afternoon tangled in each other rather than the scarves. Then her father sends her off with a data tape she needs to pass off to a small Rebel cell, and Amilyn’s off to pass messages to Mon Mothma. Now here on D’Qar, she is finally reunited with the daughter she thought dead and the husband who’d run off, soaking in every second of time she gets with them. Marveling in the way it feels when Rey calls her mother, and basking in the warmth of Han’s smiles, that crooked smile that’s just for her. Savoring the moments when she catches Amilyn looking at Rey with such awe, and delighting in the way even Threepo’s pessimistic point of view seems to change at the news of Rey’s identity. And then they are called to the command center, and she stands around the main table with her admirals and officers as they listen to the first reports come in from the recon team. The First Order’s weapon is operational, it’s bigger than anyone could have ever imagined, and it was powered up and ready to fire. Leia stood breathless, watching helplessly, waiting for the answer to
her demand. “Where is it’s target?”

“The Hosnian system.” Someone responded.

Leia felt as if she were stuck in this odd moment of both the past and the present and she once again watched helplessly as a planet, as a whole system, was destroyed. The disturbance in the Force was unlike anything Leia had ever experienced before, and as she looked around the room she knew that every Force sensitive person around her felt it too. There were tears in Amilyn’s eyes, a look of horror spread across Rey’s face, and much to her surprise a look of utter terror and confusion in Finn’s eyes.

“How long before it’s able to be used again?” Amilyn asks, the tears in her eyes not taking anything away from the authority in her voice or the steel in her spin. She had friends on Hosnian Prime, she’d had a life there once, and now it was gone. Her gaze darts quickly to Leia who was living through this for a second time and then to Finn who was explaining the time it would take for Starkiller base to suck up enough power from a sun.

“How do we defeat something that size?” Ackbar asks as they all stare at the massive planet sized weapon.

“What do you mean how?” Han said as he looked around the room. “It’s just another Death Star, sure it’s a hell of a lot bigger, but it’s still a damn Death Star. We blow the damn thing up.”

“Han’s right. We can do this, we’ve done it before, and we’ll do it again.” Leia said with a nod. She looks around the room at her people, giving them the hope they all need and then says, “Ok, now tell me how to blow the damn thing up.”

They manage to work out a plan that feels very familiar to Leia, one that involves shooting at one small vulnerable spot and hoping for the best. Then her people scramble to prepare, and she’s left to face the harshness of her reality. She and Amilyn find a moment to slip away, not to say goodbye, they never say goodbye. Amilyn holds her hand and smiles, a promise to return. She brings Amilyn’s hands to her lips and kisses her knuckles before looking into her lover’s eyes and saying, “May the Force be with you.”

“Always.” Amilyn replies and they share a soft kiss. Then she slips her hands from Leia’s and makes her way to the Ninka.

Leia watched Amilyn go and then heads up to the surface herself. She made sure to take a moment with the pilots and crew she passed on her way to the Falcon, reassuring and reaffirming that this was a battle they would win. She stops a few feet away and watches as Han barks orders at Chewie, and warns Finn about the explosives. She smirks when Chewie growls back that he knows what the hell he was doing. She returns her focus to Han and smiles fondly, lovingly, as she says, “Ya know, no matter how much we fought, I always hated watching you leave.”

Han turned slowly and smiled one of those dashing smiles that was only for her. Back in their heyday he and Amilyn would sit with a bottle of something expensive and strong between them, and talk about what it was like to love Leia Organa. They had both fallen fast and hard for their princess, and they both understood without any doubt or regret that they would love her for the rest of their lives. She was a force all her own and had become just as much a part of them as the Force was apart of her. “That’s why I did it.” He replied as he closed the distance between them. “So you’d miss me.”

“I did miss you.” Leia admitted, her heart pounding in her chest.
“It wasn’t all bad was it?” Han asked her. “Some of it was good.”

Leia nodded, a playful but loving smirk on her lips. “Pretty good.”

“Some things never change.” Han replies as he reaches for her, overwhelmed by the need to hold her again, to press her to his chest and feel her breathing against him, to feel her warmth.

“True.” Leia replies as she allows herself to be pulled into his arms. “You still drive me crazy.”

Han closes his eyes and breathes her in as he holds her against his chest. “I have always, and will always, love you.”

“I know.” Leia replies, her voice a soft husky whisper full of a decade's worth of pent up emotions.

He kisses the top of her head and pulls away. He gives her one more, just-for-her, smile and then turns to head up the ramp.

“Han.” She calls after him.

He doesn’t give her a chance to say it. He just turns to her and smiles. “I know.”

She says it anyway. “I love you too.”

The hardest one to see off is hiding behind a stack of crates. Leia gives herself a few moments to compose herself after Han has disappeared into Falcon, and then calls out, “You weren’t actually thinking you’d have to sneak aboard did you?”

“No.” Rey squeaked, and then came out from behind the crates. “I wasn’t sneaking. I just didn’t want to interpret.”

“Mmmhmm.” Leia replied as she crossed her arms over her chest and glared at her girl.

Rey sighed softly. She walked over to her mother and unfolded Leia’s arms so she could take one of her hands. “I have to go.”

“I know you do.” Leia replied as she sandwiches Rey’s hand between her own. “I don’t want you too, I just got you back, but I know you have too.”

“Ben will be on that base.” Rey said, feeling the need to explain even if she knew she didn’t have too. “Maybe I could still be the key to bringing him back.”

“I know sweetheart.” Leia reassured. “I just wish I could come with you.”

“No matter what happens, Mother.” Rey said as she and Leia pull each other into a hug. “I promise I’ll come back.”

“You had better.” Leia replied, holding Rey as tight as she could. “And you had better not keep me waiting so long this time.”

Rey chuckled softly as she pulled away. “I won’t.”

Reaching up Leia cups her daughter’s face in her hands and brings her close to kiss her forehead. “May the Force be with you.”

“Like Ammy always says,” Rey replied. “Always.”
Chapter 5

There was a heaviness in the Falcon that Rey didn’t like. On Jakku you fought to survive. You fought off other scavengers trying to steal your day’s work, or the creatures that wanted to make you their next meal. You fought off drunken pilots who got angry when you wouldn’t lay with them for parts you could trade in for portions, or Unkar’s thugs because he was in a mood and felt like you needed a good beating. You defended your home, be it an old AT-AT or a settlement, you didn’t go throwing yourself into a battle, and you certainly didn’t wage a war.

What did Rey know about battles? About war? Han and Chewie, they knew war. They had fought along said Leia against the Empire, and they had won. Rey turned her head to look at her father from where she sat behind Chewie and a memory surfaced, sort of. There was something tucked away somewhere on the ship, something from the war, a medal? A medal he had been given by Princess Leia for helping to blow up the first Death Star, a medal she had found once and he had told her, “Don’t tell your mother I still have that stupid thing. I’ll never hear the end of it from her worshipness.”

A wonderful kind of warmth filled her chest as she realized she’d had a memory! Rey was able to let go of a little of the tension that had been building up inside of her when she reminded herself that she was going into this at her father’s side. Her father. That was such a strange thing to think, seeing as how she hadn’t had a father just a few days ago. She had a father, and two mothers, and an uncle and… and a brother. Ben. The boy she had looked up to and loved, who she’d cried out for the night the temple burned, had in fact saved her just as she had wanted him too. But instead of taking her home to her parents, instead of placing her in their mother’s arms, he abandoned her on a nowhere planet without a single clue as to who she was. Ben spared her life that night, but why? Why put her on a planet where she could have so easily died instead of just letting it happen that night in the rain?

“Hey.” Finn said softly as he reached over to put his hand on Rey’s arm. He’d been watching the strange play of emotions on her face and wasn’t sure what to make of it. “You ok?”

“I think so.” Rey replied as she turned her attention to Finn. Finn had been trained for battle his whole life, he was conditioned for it. Finn had the skills and the know how, but he didn’t have the heart or the soul for it. Rey knew he was struggling, that he wanted to get as far from the fighting as he could get. But here he was, on the Falcon flying back to the very thing he’d run away from, that had to mean he’d made his choice, didn’t it? Finn was choosing to fight for his own reasons now, right? “Are you?”

“Nope.” Finn said honestly. “Not at all.”

Rey wondered if Finn knew just how brave he was being right now. Probably not. She smiled at him reassuringly, wanting her friend to know that it would be alright, and that they were in this together. Her friend. Finn was her friend. She wondered for a moment if she’d had friends as a child, anything not involving her family was so far down the list of things she wanted to remember that she had no idea. Though she was certain that nothing in the past could come close to the bond forming between her and Finn now.

“Alright kids buckle up.” Han said from the pilot’s seat. “We’re nearly there.”

“How are we getting in?” Finn asked as he turned his attention to Han.

Han explained the hiccup in the planet’s shielding and how they were going to pass through that
hiccup and Rey suddenly laughed. Han looked at her and smirked. Finn just looked at them both like they were crazy. “We’re making our landing approach at lightspeed? Are you crazy! Do you know the odds...”

“Never tell him the odds.” Rey said with a fond smile as she and Han shared a look. Then she giggled. “That’s why you told her she wouldn’t like your plan. She’d have told you you were nuts.”

“He is nuts!” Finn said as he threw up his hands.

“Ready Chewie?” Han said as he reached for the hyperspeed leaver. Chewie responded and reached for his side. “And… Now!” The Falcon dropped out of hyperspace hurling towards the planet’s surface. They’d made it past the shield. Now they just needed to not crash, or at least not crash badly. It was close, way to close, he was getting to old for this shit, Han thought. Then he turned in his seat and looked at Rey, and with a finger he said, “Not a word of this!”

He didn’t have to say, “to your mother.” she understood, and it made her laugh. “I’m not telling her. That was amazing!”

“Nuts!” Finn said, panting softly, braced in his chair with wide eyes. “You are all nuts!”

The four of them trekked through the snow almost slightly. Chewie kept complaining about being cold, and Finn kept muttering about them all being out of their minds. Han and Rey savored every moment because they were doing this together. When they had a brief moment alone before Chewie and Finn caught up to them Han said, “Ya know, I’ve been thinking. Maybe Maz was right, maybe Leia could use my help. So I thought I’d stick around for awhile, and I could use a second mate from time to time.”

“You want me to come on the Falcon with you?” Rey said excitedly. Though the thought of exploring the galaxy and having adventures was exciting, what really had Rey’s eyes lit up and what was putting the huge smile on her lips, was the feeling of being wanted. Han wanted her around, he wanted her in his life, and that to Rey meant everything.

“Yeah, why not?” Han replied. “I know you want to be with your mother too, so whenever you wanna tag along with me and the furball, there will be a bunk ready for you.”

“I would really love that.” She told Han before Finn came up behind them and pointed out the way inside.

Once they made it in Han asked about the shield and Finn smiled for the first time since leaving the base. “I have an idea about that.” Turning to look at Chewie he asked, “How would you like to body slam a chrome plated tin can?”

Chewie roaring quietly but excitedly.

The sound Phasma made when Chewie slammed into her made Finn smile a huge bright smile. It was such a satisfying sound. Once Chewie had her restrained and Han had her weapon, they made their way to where Finn knew they could shut down the shields.

He was here somewhere. Ben. She could feel it, feel him, at the edges of the Force. He felt different, he felt wrong to her now. Rey had to fight the urge to shiver at the coldness that now surrounded him, when once he had felt warm and safe. What had Snoke done to her Ben? When Han moved closer to her, Rey was grateful. The warmth of her father’s presence chased away the chill caused by Ben’s.
When they reached the control room Finn, bless him, tried so hard to get Phasma to lower the shield. He even took her helmet off, which seemed to enrage her even more than being captured, and Rey was surprised that beneath it was a rather striking blonde woman with piercing blue eyes.

“We’re running out of time kid.” Han said. “Let’s just blow it up.”

“Wait.” Rey said as another fuzzy memory came to light. “Let me try something.” When she was little she and Ben would often give their droids the slip and roam around while their mothers were busy. Getting past droids was easy, but getting past humanoids sometimes made their little adventures harder. So Ben would do this thing whenever they got caught someplace they shouldn’t be to keep them from getting into trouble. She could almost remember a time when he’d tried to use it on Amilyn’s aide, and when Ammy found out she was very cross with them. Rey looked at Phasma, looked into her eyes, and with all the confidence she could muster she said, “You will disable the shields.”

“Mind tricks won’t work on me.” Phasma replied. “Only the weak minded fall for those old tricks” Rey raised her hand, mimicking the gesture Ben had used, but still Phasma would not comply. Weak minded, the chrome woman had said. Ok, so Rey would need to weaken Phasma’s mind. Narrowing her eyes a little as she concentrated Rey spread out all five fingers and the curled them a little. She knew from experience crawling around in massive ships that the quickest way to lose focus is thinking you’re about to die. So Rey cut off Phasma’s ability to breath just enough that her mind would be more focused on the need for air and not on blocking Rey’s attempt to control it. This time when Rey spoke she shifted the tone of her voice the way she had seen Leia do when she was General Organa, and in fact it made her sound an awful lot like her mother. “You will disable the shields.”

There was a long pause after Rey let go of her hold on the woman, and then Phasma turned and walked over to the computer as she repeated. “I will lower the shields.” Rey whooped excitedly. “I can’t believe that worked!”

Han was a little conflicted about what he’d just seen. In the moment he said, “Good job, kid. Now, what do we do with her?” He hummed for a moment and then asked, “Wouldn’t be a trash compactor around here would there?”

Finn giggled, actually giggled, “Yeah, there is.”

Sending Finn and Chewie to scout ahead Han held Rey back for a moment. “Rey, you need to be really careful about what you do with your powers. The mind trick, that’s fine, Kenobi use to us it all the time, so did Luke. But the choking thing, that’s, well, that’s not really something Jedis do.”

Rey frowned a little. “I wasn’t going to choke her out anything. I just wanted to distract her mind.” “I know.” Han reassured. “And it was actually a pretty good on the spot idea, but still, I just, I need you to be careful, ok?”

Rey understood and nodded. “I know what you’re afraid of and you don’t have to be.” She took his hand in her own for a moment and squeezed it reassuringly. “I promise.”

As soon as they got confirmation that the shields were down Poe, Amilyn, and Ackbar began coordinating the attack on the base. While Poe’s squad of X-Wings hit their primary target, the Ninka, Amilyn’s ship, and her squads would back them up and help pick off the Ties that would be launched to stop them. While the Ninka’s weapons were a bit too heavy handed to deal with their
primary target, they were just what was needed to take out the base’s weapons. Amilyn stood on
the bridge of her ship, calmly, coolly, calling out orders to target Starkiller base’s canons to give
Poe and his squad a clear path. She had been at this a very long time, and that experience allowed
her to command her ship, engage with her fleet, and not let on to anyone that deep down she was
worried and even scared. Both of the children she loved with all her heart as if they were her very
own were down on that base, and she didn’t want to see either of them hurt. They had just gotten
Rey back, and a part of her still held onto the hope that someday they’d get Ben back too.

Seeing the battle overhead Han knew that they were going to need a bit more help. It was a good
thing they had a bag full of explosives. He sent Rey and Finn off to unseal the doors to the core,
while he and Chewie planted the explosives that would give the X-Wings and Leia’s hotshot a
better chance at hitting their mark. He felt a burst of pride when the doors lifted and smirked at
Chewie, “Kid knows her stuff.” Rushing in, he and Chewie spilt up to cover more ground.

Han didn’t need the Force to know he was there. That was his boy, he just knew. Peeking around
a column he could see Ben making his way across the narrow bridge that ran down the center of the
massive room. He had to take the chance. If he could just talk to his son, face to face, he could
convince him to come home and let his mother and him help him. Rey had come back to them after
all. Why couldn’t Ben?

“Ben!” He called out as he stepped onto the walkway behind his son, his voice echoing through the
cavernous space.

Ben Solo, Kylo Ren, turned slowly to face his father. “Han Solo. I’ve been waiting for this moment
for a long time.”

“Take off that mask.” Han demanded. “You don’t need it.”

“What do you think you’ll see if I do?” Ben replied.

“The face of my son.” Han answered.

Rey stepped into the room on a balcony above the catwalk and watched as Han moved slowly
closer to the masked figure from her vision, from her memory. The masked man with the angry red
lightsaber, who she know knew was Ben. She shivered, and it had nothing to do with the cold and
snow blowing in from the open door behind her. Fear knotted tightly in her belly as Han and Ben
drew closer to one another, as Han pleaded with his son to come home, and she knew without any
doubts that her father was in danger. She looked around her and quickly spotted a ladder that would
take her down to where they were, but as she moved away from the railing she felt Finn grab her
arm.

“Don’t!” Finn begged. “Rey, he will kill you!”

“No!” Rey said with a shake of her head. “He won’t, but if I don’t stop him he might kill Han!”

Jerking her arm out of Finn’s grasp Rey ran to the ladder and quickly made her way down to where
her father and brother were facing off. She couldn’t lose him! She had just gotten Han back. She
still struggled to recall memories but the way she felt about him, the way she knew he felt about
her, that was clear in her heart. Running onto the catwalk Rey called out, “Ben! Ben, don’t do
this!”

“Ben Solo is dead.” Kylo said, his gaze never leaving his father’s, the clatter of his helmet echoing
all around them.
“I don’t believe that.” Han replied as he felt Rey closing the distance behind him. His stomach knotted up with fear, not for himself but for Rey. Ben might not have been able to hurt her all those years ago, but would he hurt her now? “You saved your sister’s life, Ben. You kept her safe from Snoke because you know he’s using you for your power, and you didn’t want him doing the same to Breha. He’s manipulating you, twisting you up inside to control you, you know it’s true.”

“It’s too late.” Ben whispers, tears welling in his eyes.

“It’s not too late, son.” Han reassures. “Come home with us, come home with me and your sister, come home to your mother. We miss you, Ben. We can help you. We can break Snoke’s hold on you and together we can put an end to him.”

“Listen to him, Ben.” Rey says from just over their father’s right shoulder.

Ben tears his gaze away from Han to look at the girl. “You shouldn’t be here yet!” He growls and raises his arm, pointing his fingers at her in a claw like gesture. “Go back to sleep, Bay!”

Rey reacts on instinct, throwing up her own non dominant hand as if reaching out to him. She can feel him in her mind and the pain is incredible but she fights him. She not only fights to keep him out of her head, refusing to be shut off from the people she loves, the people who love her, but she pushes back. She reaches into his mind, seeking out the piece of him, however small, that is still Ben Solo. “No! I won’t! Stop it, Ben!” She struggles, the pain is almost too much to bare, but then she feels the warmth of them in the Force. Her father, her mother, Amilyn, Finn, Poe, Chewie, and she uses that to slam him out of her mind. She’s panting, sweating, they both are. “You’re not Darth Vader! You will never be Vader!” She screams at him. “You’re still good, Ben! I can feel it, I can feel the light in you! You are still Ben Solo!”

For a moment it appeared as if there were a real struggle going on in Ben’s eyes. It had been so long since he’d felt Bay’s presence in the Force. He had missed it’s warmth. “I do still feel the pull of the Light Side.” He replied honestly. “And it’s tearing me up inside. For the longest time I didn’t know how to make it stop.” He had missed it, but he could live without it. “But I do now, I know what I must do, I must correct the mistakes I’ve made.”

Fear washed over Han like an arctic ocean wave, cold, piercing, painful, as he watched Ben’s gaze shift as he stared at Rey. He reached for his blaster and drew it on his son just as the eerie sound of Ben’s, no, as Kylo Ren’s lightsaber igniting filled the cavous space. Han fired a disabling shot right into Kylo’s shoulder just as the excruciating pain of the lightsaber piercing his abdomen roared to life.

“NO!” Rey screamed as she watched the angry red blade stab through her father’s body. “NO!” Rips out of her throat like fire as he leans to the side when the lightsaber is pulled free, and as Ben simply lets him fall into the abyss far below. The scream that comes next is primal, gut wrenching, and amplified because in her heart she knows that back on D’Qar, her mother is feeling the same pain. Only she knows that Leia will not cry out as she feels Han die, as his presence disappears from the living Force, so Rey cries out for them both.

Chewie roared in angrish before aiming his crossbow at Han’s son, the boy he had watched grow and protected as his own, sending the boy stumbling backwards. He rushed forward taking out Stormtroopers as he went.

Finn blasted troopers as well. He had followed after Rey, knowing this wouldn’t end the way his friend had wanted it too. In the moment of her shock and horror he grabbed hold of her arm and began pulling her away, away from Kylo Ren, away from Han Solo, away from the danger. She began to struggle against his grip but he didn’t let her go. Once they were outside she seemed to
come back to herself, and forced him to stop.

“What are you doing!” She screamed at him. “I have to go back! I have to get Han!”

“He’s dead, Rey!” Finn shouted back, grabbing hold of her again and forcing her to stop. “And we’ll be just as dead if we don’t get out of here!”

“You don’t understand!” Rey cried as she fought against his grip. “He’s my father! I have to go back!”

Finn was stunned, for a moment he lost his hold on her and she managed to break free. He tried to grab her again as she ran but she didn’t get more than two steps away before the blast hit, shaking the ground beneath their feet and shooting flames out of the doorway they had just ran out of.

Rey sank to her knees and screamed her pain into the cold night air.

Finn helped her to her feet and with his arm around her waist began running towards the trees, back towards the Falcon. Thankfully Rey seemed to come to her senses and was soon running on her own. They made it well into the woods and away from the base before they were stopped.

“We’re not done.” Kylo Ren said as he appeared in front of them, red lightsaber hissing and spitting in the darkness and cold.

Rey’s face stung from the cold brushing against her tear soaked cheeks. Her heart roared in her chest, full of pain. She hurt so badly that she could barely breathe and despite having screamed her throat raw she still shouted at him. “He was your father! He was our father! You’re a monster!”

“It’s just us now, Bay.” Kylo replied as he raised his hand and force pushed Finn up high and into a tree several yards away. “Han Solo can’t save you now.”

Rey watched as Finn went flying, hitting the tree with his whole body hard enough that branches broke loose, before falling to the ground just as hard. He didn’t get back up, he wasn’t moving, and Rey couldn’t tell from this distance if he was even breathing. Turning back to Kylo she locked her gaze with his and reached, not for the blaster her father had given her, but the lightsaber hidden in her wrap. She held it up and watched as her brother’s gaze shifted from her to it and then she ignited it.

Kylo sneered. He pointed his own lightsaber at the one Rey held and hissed, “That lightsaber belongs to me!”

“Not anymore.” Rey replied simply.

Kylo charged at her, raising his lightsaber high over his head and bringing it down towards her in a crushing blow. Rey had no training, no experience, this would be easy.

It wasn’t. Rey embraced the feeling in her chest that had felt like a damn struggling to hold back a flood. The Force washed over her, through her, and she was able to counter Kylo’s attacks. Neither of them held back, their lightsabers clashing angrily, trees falling around them as wayward blows sliced through their trunks. The ground beneath their feet began to tremble as the base once again exploded and just over the sound of clashing lightsabers, Rey could hear the hum of X-Wings. A really hard tremor in the ground caused them to separate to regain their footing, and Rey quickly put a little distance between her and her brother so she could catch her breath.

“You should have stayed on Jakku, Bay!” Kylo yelled at her. “I would have come for you when I was ready! Just like I promised!”
“I was a little girl!” Rey yelled back. “You left me there to die! To wither away with no memory of
who I am or the people I loved, the people who loved me!”

“I left you there to keep you safe until I was ready for you!” Kylo shouted back at her. “I am still
only an aprienace, not yet a Master! I was going to come for you then! I would have awakened you
and taught you the ways of the Force and together we would have fulfilled our destinies!” He
lowered his lightsaber and held out his free hand to her. “Join me now, Bay. Let me teach you, let
me show you the power we can weild.”

“No!” Rey said without any doubts whatsoever, without any hesitations. “No! I will never be the
kind of monster you’ve become!”

“Then you will die, weak and powerless, just like your father.” Kylo said almost calmly before
once again surging forward.

Rey closed her eyes and called on the Force. She basked in the light that she knew was her
mother’s light, warm and full of hope; Amilyn’s light, calming and safe; and the fading light that
had been her father’s strength. She took a deep breath, opened her eyes, and charged Kylo’s attack.
She swung with all her might, beating him back, taking the openings given her now that she was on
the offensive rather than defensive. She felt the odd vibration in her hands as the lightsaber’s blade
sliced through Kylo’s thigh, and smelled the sicking smell of his skin burning as her blue blade
sliced up his collarbone and across his face on the upswing after she’d forced his blade to go out in
the snow.

Kylo crashed to the ground, his breath coming in short painful huffs, and watched as the girl
loomed over him. His anger, betrayal, and shame poured out of him as he screamed. “Do it! Finish
it!”

Rey shook her head as she panted and stepped back. The earth beneath them raged and she could
sense what was about to happen. She took several more steps back just as the ground opened up
between them forming a chasm. She stood there for several long moments, her gaze locked with
her brother’s, as fresh tears welled in her eyes and ran down her cheeks. Then she turned off her
lightsaber, put it back on her belt, and turned away from Kylo Ren. She walked to the treeline and
then ran back to Finn.

She dropped down beside him calling out his name and checking to see if he was still alive as the
planet came apart around them. “Finn! Finn! Please, Finn, please. I can’t…”

The light from the Falcon felt like a warm beacon. Rey began to sob softly into Finn’s chest.

By the time they reached D’Qar Rey felt numb, dazed. She hadn’t even realized they’d landed until
Chewie sprang to his feet to rush Finn to the waiting medics. How was she going to face her
mother? She had wanted so badly to return to Leia with Ben, but she’d failed. Not only was Ben
gone, but so was Han. Han was dead and it was because of her. He died to protect her, the sand rat
scavenger from Jakku. Forcing herself to her feet when Chewie yelled at her to move, Rey
followed him automatically, through the Falcon, down the ramp, onto the tarmac. The sun was
bright overhead, warm, but Rey couldn’t feel it, all she felt was cold, numb. All she could see was
the blazing angry red of Kylo’s lightsaber as it cut through Han’s body. All she could hear was the
hiss of Kylo’s voice as he’d whispered something in Han’s ear. She had witnessed Han’s death and
could do nothing about it. How was she supposed to face Leia after that?

Leia walked through the chaos around her with a single minded focus. She had to get to Rey, she
had to see her, to hold her. She had to reach her, had to reach out to her. Leia could feel her
daughter’s pain, her fear, her shame. She had to let Rey know it was alright. This wasn’t her fault.
They were both in pain, their hearts grieving for the man they loved, husband, father. As soon as she saw Rey, standing there looking lost, frightened, dazed, Leia’s heart hurt even more. As painful as it was she walked slowly towards the girl, afraid she might withdraw even more. As she drew closer Rey’s whole frame began to tremble and Leia worried she might collapse. It’s alright sweetheart, Leia thought, it’s ok I’m here, I love you. Leia’s fears waned a little when Rey took a small, unsure step forward. She continued to send reassuring thoughts and Rey took another small, frightened step. Soon they were closing the distance between them and Leia was able to wrap her arms around her daughter and hold her tightly.

Rey didn’t say a word, she just clung to her mother and let the tears come while her heart begged for forgiveness, her voice crying out in her mind. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. He’s gone. It’s my fault. Leia seemed to squeeze her tighter with each thought as if she could hear them and wanted to drive them away, and then Rey realized she probably could and that just made her cry harder.

Neither of them knew how long they stood there or when exactly they went inside to Leia’s quarters. They did both sense the moment the Ninka landed, they could feel the warmth of Amilyn’s presence wash over them as it grew closer. They sat together on Leia’s couch, Rey tucked tightly in her mother’s embrace, Leia’s chin resting on Rey’s head as tears came silently and unending. That’s how Amilyn found them when she entered the room and her already broken heart shattered into smaller pieces. “Oh my loves.” She said gently as she walked across the room to gather them both into her arms. “Oh my rays of light.”

They stayed like that for as long as they could but the people outside their door needed their General, and Rey needed to see Finn, she needed to know he was alright. Amilyn offered to go with her but Rey shook her head. “Stay with Leia, please. She needs you.”

“Leia?” Amilyn repeated, confused as to way Rey had switched back to using her mother’s name.

“Han’s dead because of me.” Rey said softly as if that answered the question.

“Oh Starlight.” Amilyn sighed softly and reached for the girl but Rey pulled away. Shaking her head Rey said, “I need to check on Finn, Admiral, please, just find Leia, she needs you.”

Amilyn watched the girl flee and tears pricked at her eyes. “But she needs you more.”

Poe was sitting beside Finn’s bed when Rey walked into the infirmary. When he saw her he simply stood up and opened his arms. He wasn’t sure if she would accept or even want his comfort, but he was going to offer it away. She hesitated for a moment but did walk to him, and he easily wrapped his arms around her. He held her for several long moments before finally saying, “I’m so sorry about Han.”

Rey squeezed him tighter and without understanding why she was saying it she admitted. “He was my father.”

That shocked Poe, but it didn’t stop him from holding her closer, tighter.

“Leia’s my mother.” Rey said into his chest. “We just found each other again, and now Han’s gone, it’s my fault, and she hates me.”

Ok, now Poe’s head was spinning. He knew who Kylo Ren really was, and he was aware that Leia had lost a daughter when Ben became Kylo Ren. It’s why he’d disliked Han. When Leia was grieving her daughter’s death, Han had run instead of sticking around to go through that with her.
As far as Poe had been concerned, Han Solo had been a coward. “You’re Breha?” He asked gently. He could feel her nod against his chest. “Wow.” Loosening his hold on her he nudged her back a little so he could look into her face. “She doesn’t hate you, Rey. She could never hate you, or blame you for what happened. Even if you weren’t her daughter.” He seriously wanted to know more about that, but now wasn’t the time. “She wouldn’t do that.”

“He died protecting me!” Rey argued. “It’s my fault!”

“That’s what parents do, Rey.” Poe said firmly as he looked into her eyes. Why hadn’t he noticed her eyes before? Such familiar eyes. “They protect their kids. He loved you, Rey, and when you love someone like that, you’d die to keep them safe.”

Somewhere deep down under all her pain and grief, Rey knew that. “It’s not fair.” She said, her voice quivering, fresh tears welling in her eyes and flooding down her cheeks. Once she stopped talking, stopped screaming, she wasn’t going to be able to speak for days. “I just got him back! It’s not fair!”

She pounded on his chest and Poe let her and when she ran out of steam he went back to just holding her. “It’s not fair, and I’m so sorry, Rey.” He held her tight as she sobbed into his chest. “Just don’t drown in it, Rey, don’t push people away. Let those of us who are still here keep you afloat. Please.”

Rey pushed away from him, turned towards the door and nearly fled just as she had from Amilyn, she didn’t want this, didn’t deserve this. But then a memory floated to the surface of her mind and she stopped in her tracks. She’d been bored with waiting on her mothers to finish their work and had slipped out of Leia’s office and gone down to the gardens alone. She’d climbed onto the edge of one of the garden’s reflecting pools and was walking across it like a balance beam. A boy with curly brown hair, younger than Ben but closer to his age than hers, with a soft smile and bright eyes had been playing nearby. “Be careful.” He’d called out to her. “You don’t want to fall in, you might drown.” She’d snorted. “I won’t drown.” He smiled at her, a dopey grin really, and laughed. “Maybe not, in that dress you’d probably float it’s so poofy” She would have said something back but her mother’s angry shout of her name and gentle demand that she get down, stopped her short.

Rey spun on her heel and looked at Poe with wide eyes. “You were the boy by the reflecting pool who made fun the new dress Ammy had just bought me.”

It took a moment but Poe remembered, his eyes going wide and filling with amusement. “It was a really poofy dress.” He smirked, recalling more of the memory. His father had brought him along on his trip to the capital and he’d been keeping himself busy while his dad meet with Senator Organa. “You really are Breha.” He just looked at her in amazement for a moment and then said, “Finn’s going to be fine. Go find your mom, Rey. Even if she’s being The General right now, she needs you to be close and you need to be close to her.”

She would have argued with him but she knew he was right. She ached to feel her mother’s arms around her again, but she couldn’t shake the way she felt. Sighing softly she finally gave in. She offered Poe a weak but genuine smile, kissed Finn on the forehead and promised to be back, and then went looking for Leia. Their renewed connect through the Force made it easy. She was in the mess hall with most of the base’s population giving a speech about finding a balance between honoring their losses and celebrating their victory, both apparently were important. Rey slipped into the room, hoping to be unseen, unnoticed, but that was hard to do when you shared the kind of connect she now had with Leia and Amilyn.

While Leia was center of attention, as she should be, Amilyn had been on the other side of the room. Rey thought she’d be safe lost in the sea of pilots, soldiers, and techs, far away from the
officers and leadership. Standing there quietly she listened to what Leia was saying.

“I know it can be hard at times like this to find the joy, the happiness, amongst the grief and the loss.” Leia told the room. “But happiness, love, joy, hope... These are the things that give us the strength to get through the hard and difficult times.”

“She got that from me you know.” Amilyn said. “I told her that along time ago. I’m happy she remembered it.”

Rey jumped and squeaked in surprise. Turning her head she blinked at the sight of Amilyn standing beside her. She actually whipped her head to the side to look where Amilyn had been and the back at the woman now beside her and wondered how she’d gotten through the crowd, and how she’d gotten so close unnoticed.

“So tonight we’ll mourn and remember those we lost today.” Leia continued. “And tomorrow we celebrate the massive blow we just dealt to the First Order.”

Just like on the tarmac Rey zeroed in on Leia as she moved through the chaos towards her and Amilyn after finishing her speech. She felt the urge to bolt but couldn’t if she tried. Amilyn had a firm hold on her wrist.

“Happiness is our moral imperative.” Amilyn said softly as soon as Leia was close. Reaching out with her free hand she took hold of Leia’s and squeezed it. “I said that to you when we were sixteen, Leia. I can’t believe you remembered it.”

“Once I’d figured out how to translate Holdo speak, I learned pretty quickly that you had some things to say worth remembering.” Leia replied with a soft but tired smile. Turning to look at Rey she asked, “How’s Finn?”

“Poe says he’ll be alright.” Rey answered.

“Good, I’m glad to hear that.” Leia replied. She could still feel the guilt pulsating off the girl in crushing waves, and it made her look over to Amilyn as if asking for advice. Leia didn’t want to push Rey, they’d only been mother and daughter again for such a short time. The soft reassurance she saw in Amilyn’s eyes simply told her to trust her instincts. The look she gave her in return was a sarcastic, oh that was helpful. Amilyn smiled. Leia rolled her eyes.

Rey was very aware of the silent conversation happening between Leia and Amilyn, and that it was about her. It made her feel both uncomfortable and comforted all at the same time. Uncomfortable because she knew they were trying to figure out what to do with her, or about her, or for her, one or all of those. Comforted because she somehow knew this was something she’d been familiar with in the past. Something they did when she was small, when she was Breha, their daughter, and not Rey, the girl who got Han Solo killed.

Leia turned her attention back to Rey and reached out for the girl’s free hand. She squeezed it reassuringly as she said, “I would like for you to stay with me and Amilyn in our questers tonight, Rey. I would really like to have the people I love close to me for just a little while.”

Rey wanted to refuse, to make up some excuse and then find a place to hide, but Leia’s eyes were so warm and full of love, and Amilyn stood so close Rey could lean on her and know she wouldn’t let her fall. The warmth of their hands, Amilyn’s on her wrist and Leia’s in her hand, seemed to keep the numbness at bay, and for a moment that warmth went to her head and made her feel cozy and safe. She nodded her agreement and the smile Leia gave her pulled a small smile of her own in return.
She slept restfully if not peacefully on Leia’s couch after the three of them had slipped away from the festivities. Poe had joined them after leaving Chewie to watch over Finn. He had wanted to check on Leia, and maybe her as well. He’d given her a reassuring, proud smile that made it easier for her to leave with Leia and Amilyn for the night. They didn’t talk much, they just stayed close, and it helped Rey to fall asleep knowing Leia and Amilyn were in the next room. As she slowly began to wake, her head nestled into a pillow that smelled of Leia’s shampoo, tucked under a blanket that smelled of Amilyn’s perfume, in a shirt she’d taken from Han’s things, there was a moment, a blissful moment when Rey didn’t remember. A perfect fleeting moment when she thought she was still marveling and reveling in finding her parents and being with them again, all of them again. Then reality came crashing in on her and she curled up into a tight ball and stuffed the pillow Amilyn had given her into her mouth to stifle the sob building up in her chest.

When the sharpness of the pain faded to dull but persistent ache Rey unfolded herself and sat up slowly. Scrubbing the tears from her face she took a deep breath and tried to get herself under control. That’s when she heard Leia and Amilyn in the bedroom, their voices low and soft, but still clear to someone who’d spent so long depending on listening closely to stay safe.

“How’s that?” Amilyn asks as she puts the last of the pins into Leia’s hair.

Leia looked at her reflection in the mirror while letting her fingers ran along the braid. “It’s perfect, Amilyn. Thank you.” Reaching up to placed her hand over Amilyn’s, which now rested on her shoulder, she add, “You’ve become quite the master at Alderaanian braids.”

“I’ve had many, many, years of practice, my love.” Amilyn replied. “Though I am sure TooVee could still find fault in my work.”

Leia chuckled softly, the sound a little hollow and haunted. “TooVee could find fault in anything, no matter how perfect it was.” Curling her fingers around Amilyn’s hand, Leia brought it to her lips, placing a soft kiss to her knuckles. Then she took a deep breath and stood. “Rey’s awake.”

Amilyn nodded. “I know.”

Rey was curled into the end of the couch when they walked into the room. She looked up to greet them and blinked. Last night Amilyn’s hair had been a very bright and vibrant green, now it was a rich shade of dark purple, and she was wearing a dark gray dress. Leia too was dressed in dark colors. “Hi.”

“Good morning, Starlight.” Amilyn greeted. “Did you sleep well?”

“I slept.” Rey said with a shrug.

“I’m going to go get us some caf and breakfast.” Amilyn said softly. She kissed Leia’s cheek and gave Rey a warm, loving smile, and then left the two alone.

Leia was about to ask how Rey was feeling but when she turned her attention from Amilyn leaving to Rey she saw Rey looking at her oddly. “Rey? What’s wong?”

“Nothing.” Rey replied as she continued to stare at Leia. She was wearing her hair differently and for some reason it had caught her attention. When Leia gave her a look that said she didn’t believe it was nothing she sighed softly and said, “Your hair, there’s something at the back of my mind, something… I feel like I should know…”

“On Alderaan, women, especially women of the royal family, wore their hair in braids.” Leia said when she realized what Rey must be struggling with. She walked over to sit beside the girl as she
continued, “Each style of braid held a cultural meaning. This is…”

“A mourning braid.” Rey said softly. “It’s a mourning braid, and you’re wearing it because Han’s dead.” Rey dropped her head and covered her face in her hands. “I’m so sorry.”

Leia reaching for Rey’s face, gently moving the girl’s hands and replacing them with her own. She turned Rey’s face towards her so she could look into her daughter’s eyes. “Rey, listen to me. Han’s death was not your fault.”

“You don’t understand.” Rey said sharply. “You don’t know what happened, you don’t know that he…”

“Do you know what I felt right before I felt Han die?” Leia said, cutting Rey off. “I felt the most powerful, most beautiful, surge of love. That’s how he died, Rey, without regret, or fear, but full of love, for Ben, for me, and for you.” Leia pulled Rey close to her chest, and held her tight. “I know it’s not fair, because it’s not, to have him back and then loss him so soon, so quickly. It’s alright to be angry about that, Rey. But you have got to stop blaming yourself, because it’s not your fault.”

“If I had stayed on Jakku…” Rey began.

“Rey, don’t.” Leia scolded lightly. “Finding you, bringing you home, that gave him so much joy. Don’t take that from him, don’t take that from any of us.”

There was so much she wanted to say, to tell Leia, but for now all Rey could do was cling to her mother and tremble in her arms as she finally gave in and let herself accept the comfort Leia had so badly wanted to give her. Everything was happening so fast that Rey felt as if she couldn’t breath, but in Leia’s arms, at least for the moment, Rey could catch her breath. She just wished that that breath hurt less.

After finishing the breakfast and caf Amilin brought back, before Leia could leave to be The General, Rey stopped her with a soft, “Mother?”

That word was a soothing balm to Leia’s battered and hurting heart. “Yes Rey?”

Rey swallowed hard, suddenly looking unsure and even a little frightening. She bit her bottom lip hard and then said, “Will you braid my hair like yours?”

The lump in Leia’s throat kept her from saying anything at first but once she’d managed to swallow it said, “Of course Rey, of course I will sweetheart.”
Chapter 6

Although destroying Starkiller base was a crippling blow to the First Order, it was far from a killing blow. They were still out there, and they still needed to be stopped. Leia and her officers went back to plotting their next move. They needed to strike hard again, and they had to do it as soon as they could. Amilyn took the Ninka out for a quick run to secure those who had heeded Leia’s warning, those few whose belief in Leia Organa had saved their lives, after receiving word from Korrie that they had cleared the system before it was destroyed. Finn was awake but still in the infirmary. Rey sat on the edge of his bed while Poe leaned against the wall. She told them about Leia and Han, how she was their daughter. That her memory was still fuzzy and incomplete, but there were fragments of memories coming back. She didn’t tell them about Ben, about what he had said as they fought in the woods. She hadn’t told her mother either. With losing Han, and everything going on with the Resistance, she just couldn’t bring herself to do it, to tell Leia that Ben had hidden her away not just to keep her safe, but to keep her for himself for something that sent chills down her spine.

After being chased out of the infirmary by Dr. Kalonia, Rey went in search of Chewie to see if he needed help with the Falcon. The Wookie seemed so lost without Han, and Rey wanted to help any way she could. Leia told her that Han and Chewie had been a team since Han was just a little older than she was, long before Leia had even met them. Chewie tried to tell her he was ok, saying Wookies were long lived and use to loss. Rey didn’t think loss was something anyone got use to, it was just something people learned to bare.

After passing through the command center to visually check on her mother Rey headed for the stairs that lead up to the surface. Even if Chewie wasn’t on the Falcon she wanted to see if she could find some sabacc cards so she and Poe could teach Finn how to play. BB-8 however apparently had a different plan because he damn near made her trip as he rolled into her leg just as she was about to take a step. “Hey, BB, watch it.” Rey teased at the little droid’s presisance. She followed him through the base to a back corridor that had been turned into storage. She watched as BB-8 rolled into something covered in a canvas, causing a loud echo to clank through the space. “What did you find, BB?” BB-8 beeped and rolled into the thing again. “You’re awfully bossy for such a little droid.” Rey teased as she reached out and pulled away the canvas tarp. Hidden beneath the tarp was an old astromech. Rey blinked, and crouched down to get a closer look at it. Her eyes went wide and she gasped softly. It wasn’t just any old astromech. It was the blue and white one from her vision, the one her mother said belonged to Luke when she’d described the vision to her. “I’ve seen this droid before.” She says aloud before looking at BB-8. “What’s wrong with it?”

“Okay, ok, show me.” BB chirped and beep at her loudly and rolled into her shins again.

“I’m afraid no one knows.” C3PO says as he comes up being them. When the girl looks up at him he continues to explain. “R2 powered down the night Master Luke left, after he’d told the Princess and Han Solo of their, of your, presumed demise. R2’s been like that ever since.”

With the guilt she carried over Han, Rey could almost see her mother’s protocol droid as a kindred spirit. Not only did Threepio feel guiltling for forgetting to turn on BB-8’s tracking device, but he also felt bad because he hadn’t instantly known Rey was Breha Solo. Turning her attention back to R2D2, Rey ran her hand gently over his dome as BB-8 beeped a question at her. She shook her head. “I don’t know what I could do, BB. Luke might have shut him down or he could have powered himself down. That night isn’t easy to remember, not even for a droid.”
“He was quite fond of you, you know.” Threepio said. “We both were. Though the two of you got up to quite a bit of mischief.”

Rey smiled sadly. “I hope I’ll remember that some day.”

“I… I could tell you about it.” Threepio said.

Rey stood up and turned to smile at the gold plated droid. “I’d like that Threepio.”

“Hey, there you are.” Poe said as he walked up to Rey and the droids. “You busy?”

“Are you asking me or your better half?” Rey teases him. As quickly as her life had changed, Rey was grateful that she’d managed to pick up Finn and Poe along the way. They’d helped to make things a little easier. Going from a parentless sand rat scavenger without a name of her own, to being linked to some of the galaxy’s biggest names, wasn’t easy. It was incredibly overwhelming, so she was glad to have Poe and Finn there to lean on when she needed them.

BB-8 liked being acknowledged as the better half of his partnership with Poe, and beeped happily which made Poe roll his eyes. “You, but I’ll need him too.” He smiled one of his roguish smiles as he asked, “You wanna learn how to fly an X-Wing?”

“Yes!” Rey replied excitedly.

“Mistress Rey, is that really such a good idea?” Threepio asked as he clanked along behind the pair. “I am not sure how your mother would feel…”

Rey flashed Threepio a very Han-ish smile over her shoulder as she practically dragged Poe towards the exit. “It’ll be fine, Threepio. I’m taking initiative and learning valuable skills to help the Resistance.”

Threepio raised his miss matched red arm to say something contradictory but Rey and Poe took off at a run with BB-8 on their feels. “Oh dear my.”

Back in the corridor a single red light began to blink on the front of R2D2.

Since Rey had never flown an X-Wing before Poe had BB-8 go with her while he loaded CB-23 into his ship. Normally seeing Poe with another droid would make BB extremely jealous, but not this time. He was perfectly happy going with Rey and that said a lot. Poe had been building a solid friendship with Rey and Finn, and the fact that BB liked them both so much helped with how easily he’d learned to trust them. Once Rey was in the cockpit he handed her a helmet and leaned against the ship as he pointed out and explained the controls. He knew she could already fly the Falcon so he knew she’d pick up on the basics easily enough. It was actually getting in the air and learning to handle the speed and agility of a light fighter he wanted to teach her. Plus, he was hoping that he could give her a few minutes of enjoyment where she didn’t have to think about anything else. He hoped that for just a little awhile she would forget to be sad. Poe was finding it hard to see Rey so sad, though he absolutely understood how she felt. He’d greaved a parent himself, so he knew that that kind of pain didn’t go away it just faded to the background.

“Think you got it?” He asked her with a smile.

Rey nodded and looked up at him with bright eyes. “Yeah, I think I’m good.”

“Then let’s get these birds in the air.” Poe replied. “We’ll start easy, keep it in the planet’s atmosphere and go from there.”
“Ok.” Rey said with a nod and then easily slipped the helmet on. Her heart was racing in a good way, the excited, playful way that was still really foreign to her. After the ladder Poe had been crouching on was moved away, Rey closed up her cockpit and checked in with BB-8. Once Poe was settled into his ship he called out over the comms in their helmets and talked her through the startup sequence. BB-8 helped her get the ship off the ground and into the air, which she was grateful for because fighter ships had a lot more of a punch than the Falcon or any of the junk ships she’d used to teach herself how to fly. When BB-8 gave her complete control of the ship she yelped a little as it surged forward a little faster than she’d been expecting.

Poe’s laugh echoed over the comm. “Easy there Ace, these are a lot smaller, lighter, and faster than that huge scape pile of yours.”

“No Kriff!” Rey laughed with a mix of excitement and nervousness. She tightened her grip on the stick as she adjusted to handling the more agile ship, and paid close attention to everything Poe and BB were telling her.

“General.” One of the operation officers called out from his station. “Two X-Wings just launched from the airfield.”

Leia didn’t bother to look away from the map where she was taking note of the locations of other resistance cells. Following the destruction of Starkiller base she’d ordered a massive relocation and change of bases. She knew the First Order would come looking for them and she wanted to make it as difficult as possible. “Poe mentioned testing some of the new ships we were able to get our hands on, but still, verify it’s him and find out which Black squadron pilot he took with him.”

Lt. Connix piped in from her station. “Black Squadron are on the Raddus, ma’am. Red went with the Ninka. Could be someone from Blue or Yellow.”

C3PO walked in just in time to hear the conversation and turned as quickly as his aging circuits could move him to walk back out. Leia would have questioned this action but D’acy walked up to her with a grave expression and a data pad. She’d received a scout report that she insisted Leia needed to read. Leia’s heart sank as she did. Looking up from the information and holopics she asked, “Are they sure?”

The blonde woman nodded. “Yes General. Niima Outpost was wiped out. There were no survivors.”

Rey didn’t need this, she didn’t need more things to grieve, or to blame herself for. Leia sighed softly. “Thank you, Commander.”

Once he was sure Rey had control over the ship they left the planet and after some practice maneuvers they jumped to a practice site so Rey could learn to use the hyperdrive. The squeals of delight coming over the comms were going to leave his ears ringing but it was worth it. Hearing the pure joy in Rey’s voice was making his heart flutter and he couldn’t seem to stop smiling. Deciding to take a bit of a break, they handed over control to the droids and simply enjoyed the view for a bit.

“This was amazing, Poe.” Rey said over the comm. “Thank you.”

“Anytime Ace.” He replied.

Rey smiled, a full, bright, untainted smile, the first since Starkiller base. “When I was younger I would find old fighters in the sand that were picked clean of tech and parts but still in one piece. I use to sit in the cockpits and imagine what it would be like to fly one, to race towards the stars,
away from the planet. Once, after a massive sandstorm, I found an A-Wing that hadn’t been touched yet. I hid it from Unkar and taught myself how to fix it, then I used it to teach myself how to fly. Unkar was enraged when he found out. He took the ship and sent one of his goons to remind me there was no leaving Jakku. My bruises healed after a couple of weeks, but Kantu’s fang would never grow back and I broke at least three of his ribs.”

Poe knew the kinds of A-Wings that fought at the Battle of Jakku well. His mother had flown that kind of ship, had taught him how to fly in that kind of ship. As Rey talked he’d pulled the wedding band he wore on a chain around his neck out from under his shirt and wrapped his hand around it. When Rey mentioned getting a beating for trying to get off planet something hot and dangerous bubbled up in Poe. He had to fight the urge to fly to Jakku and kick Unkar Platt’s ass. “Hey Rey?”

“Hmm?” Rey replied.

“Wanna blow some shit up?” Poe asked.

Rey laughed. “Yes please!”

As their fighters taxied to a stop on the tarmac they could clearly see Leia standing near by waiting, arms crossed over her chest as she watched them. “Um, Poe.” Rey said over the comms. “We didn’t like steal these X-Wings did we?”

“No.” Poe replied. “I told her I was taking a couple of new ones out for a test spin.”

“You just didn’t tell her who was coming with you.” Rey said as the cap of her cockpit popped open.

“Might have slipped my mind.” Poe replied as he pulled his helmet off.

As the pair approached her Leia couldn’t help but feel amusement at the looks on their faces. Poe was quick to rush to an explanation but she really didn’t need one. “It’s alright Poe. I need to speak with Rey, but it has nothing to do with you two testing the ships.” The pair relaxed and she found it rather adorable the way they seemed liked children relieved mom wasn’t mad. For a moment she thought of taking Rey aside and telling her privately, but then she thought better of it. Rey gravitated towards herself and Amilyn because of the bonds formed during her childhood, even though the memories continued to elude her, the feelings were there. But the bonds she was forming with Poe and Finn were new and based on who she was now, and Rey would need that as she continued to sort out the chaos of her life. “Rey…”

“What’s happened?” Rey asked, and then braced herself for the worse.

“Jakku’s been attacked again.” Leia answered. “Rey, sweetheart, I’m sorry. Niima Outpost…”

It felt like a punch to her gut and Rey was surprised by the burn of welling tears in her eyes. She didn’t let them fall though. “Did anyone survive?” Leia shook her head and anger washed over Rey. He did this. Ben did this. Unkar hadn’t been able to keep her on Jakku and Ben cut him down for it.

“Rey?” Leia said gently as she watched the emotions playout in Rey’s eyes.

“I’m fine.” She lied, and she knew they knew it was a lie. She just couldn’t do this right now. She reached out and took hold of her mother’s arm for a moment just to reassure Leia and then walked off towards the bunker.

“Why did you tell her?” Poe asked. “She’s already lost so much.”
“Right now she’s hurt and angry with them.” Leia explained. “If I’d waited to tell her then she would have been hurt and angry with us as well.” She paused for a moment before admitting. “She’s been on her own for a long time, Poe. She’s just learning to trust us, all of us.”

Poe thought about that, thought about what Rey had admitted to in the fighters, and then nodded his understanding. “I hate seeing her hurting.” He admitted. He felt Leia look up at him though his own gaze remained on where Rey had been before she disappeared inside. “But I’m glad that e cha ta is dead.”

“Oh, Poe Dameron!” Leia half gasped half laughed at the old Hutt expletive. “Where did you learn a word like that?”

“Do you really want me to answer that?” Poe asked, finally turning to look at the woman beside him.

“No, not really, because I’m fairly certain you’d say from me.” Leia replied with a chuckle before once again becoming somber as she asked, “Poe, do I want to know why Unkar Platt is a e cha ta?”

“No, Leia, you really don’t.” Poe replied. “But you probably should, I just don’t think it’s my place to tell you.”

Leia nodded. “Thank you, Poe, for being there for Rey, for being her friend.” She smiled at him and reached out to pat his cheek. “It’s nice seeing you with humanoid friends for a change.”

BB-8 and CB-23 had rolled up behind them at some point and BB was now squeaking his disapproval at that statement.

“No offense, BB.” Leia reassured. “Some of my oldest and dearest friends are droids.”

Finn had escaped the infirmary and was now trying his best to avoid Dr. Kalonia and her bloodhound of a medical droid. He would have to thank Poe for hiding a set of clean clothes in his room, grateful that he wouldn’t have to sneak around the base in sleepwear. Ducking into a back corridor Finn tried to remember how to get to the exit so he could get to the surface. Rey had mentioned looking for a deck of cards on the Falcon and he wanted to see if that’s where she was. She wasn’t. She was sitting beside an old droid with her forehead pressed to her knees. “Rey?”

Rey looked up, her cheeks tracked with tears. “It’s gone, Finn, and they’re all gone with it.”

He walked over and sat beside her, putting his arm around her. “What’s gone? Who’s gone?”

“Niima.” She answered. “Unkar, Teedo, everyone. Kylo Ren killed them all to punish Unkar because I got off the planet and he wasn’t supposed to let me leave the planet. But I had too, Finn, even before you and BB crashed into my life I knew I had too.” She paused for a moment to steady her voice, and fight back the stream of tears. “There was this old woman, she had to be thirty maybe even forty years older than Leia, who spent her whole life on Jakku. Every day she would go out and find just enough for Unkar that he’d give her enough food to last one more day. She frightened me, Finn, she frightened me because I didn’t want to become her. Now she’s gone, not because she didn’t find enough to eat for the night, because Unkar, he would have given a quarter portion no matter what she brought him, but because Kylo Ren didn’t get his way.”

Finn pulled her tighter into his side. “I’m sorry, Rey.”

“He’s trying to draw me out.” Rey told him. “But I can’t face him again, not yet. I’m not ready.”

“You don’t have to face him at all, Rey.” Finn said. “He’s dangerous, and he isn’t your
“He’s my brother.” Rey said softly. “If I can save him I have to try, and if I can’t,” She sighed and leaned into Finn a little more. “I’m not going to let him hurt anyone else.”

Finn sighed. Why did Rey have to be so damn stubborn! Why did she insist on running towards the danger? The thought of losing Rey, or Poe again, twisted his stomach up in away he’d never felt before. But he would never try and stop them from being who they were, he would just have to find ways of helping and making sure they were safe. “What are you going to do, Rey?”

Rey pulled away from Finn so she could turn to the blue and white droid on her other side. “I need to learn what I can before I see him again, and to do that, I need to find Luke Skywalker.”

After the Empire fell Leia had worked so hard to make sure her children wouldn’t have to know the kind of strife and hardships she had known during her young adult life. She wanted them to know peace, and security, and not have to fight or live with the kind of fear and grief that clung to all of those who’d fought in the Rebellion. She failed. Rey was the same age she was when Darth Vader captured and tortured her, when Tarkin murdered her entire planet right in front of her eyes. The parallels her daughter’s life was taking to her own caused Leia pain, but it also gave her a measure of hope. Leia was strong, and so was her daughter.

Leia’s head was down as she leaned against one of the consoles. She closed her eyes for a moment, taking a deep calming breath. A series of familiar beeps and whistles softly asked her a question and Leia smiled tiredly and answered without any real realization at first. “I’m fine, R2.” There was another series of beeps and whistles and Leia laughed. “It isn’t C3PO’s job to take care of me, R2. And you really shouldn’t….” Leia’s eyes went wide when it hit her. She turned slowly as she finished her sentence. “Call him such nasty names… R2D2?!”

R2 rolled closer to Leia and gently bumped into her legs affectionately and purred when Leia crouched down and hugged him.

From where he stood beside Rey, Finn looked on with confusion as the General hugged the old astromech. “You people get really attached to your droids don’t you?”

BB-8 made a rude noise at him and rolled over his foot.

Pulling back from R2, Leia looked at him in amazement. She’d brought him with her each time she moved base or ship, never once even thinking of leaving him behind, despite thinking he would never power back up. She’d just assumed he didn’t want to be active anymore, not after what happened, not after Luke left him behind. R2D2 had originally belonged to her birth mother, Padme Amidala, and had spent time with Anakin Skywalker, and Obi Wan before ending up with her father, and then with her, and then eventually with Luke. So much loss to bare, it was no wonder he’d want to just power down. “How?” R2 answered and she looked up and across the room. “Rey?”

“I’m not really sure what I did.” Rey admitted with a shrug.

R2 beeped and whistled as he drew back from Leia as if he were explaining something and Leia simply replied. “Show me.” Then he titled back a little and projected a map over head. BB-8 rolled over to stand beside him and projected the piece of map he had. The two pieces matched up but it still wasn’t a complete map.

“I still can’t recognize the system.” Poe said as he stepped forward to examine the map.
Rey’s heart dropped into her stomach with disappointment. She had really been hoping the old droid would have all the answers they were looking for, not just another piece of the puzzle.

Leia on the other hand stared at the map with hope as she said, “What do you think?”

No one in the room was sure who she was addressing until a soft monotone voice spoke out from the doorway. “I think my mother would be very disappointed in me for not thinking of this system a long time ago.” Amilyn said as she entered the room, her bright blue eyes fixed on the map as she walked closer. “She spent her whole life studying ancient Jedi lore, and she’d always felt this system might be full of unknown treasures.”


“Chewie.” Rey called out as she stepped over to stand beside her mother, wrapping her fingers around Leia’s, and gazing up at the map. “Get the Falcon ready. We leave in the morning.”

Rey spent that evening with Poe and Finn and then went to her mothers’ quarters. She knew she had to find Luke, not only to bring him back to Leia, but because she needed a teacher. If she were going to do anything about Ben, she would need to understand this power inside of her. But she had just been reunited with Leia and Amilyn and she didn’t want to leave them. She’d gotten so little time with Han, and she was afraid of missing out on a single moment with them. Reaching up to knock on the door Rey was startled when it opened for her. Blinking she called out, “Um, hello?”

“Come in Starlight.” Amilyn’s voice called out. She smiled at Rey when the girl stepped inside.

Leia chuckled softly at the startled look on Rey’s face. “I added your bio-signure to the lock. I was hoping you’d come join us tonight.”

“If you hadn’t she would have come and gotten you.” Amilyn said from where she sat beside Leia on the couch, her long legs draped over Leia’s lap.

Rey smiled. “So it’s ok if I stay here tonight?”

“You can stay with us whenever you want, Rey.” Leia reassured. Then she beckoned for Rey to sit with them as Amilyn handed her something which she then held out to Rey. “Give me your wrist.”

Rey did as her mother asked without hesitation which honestly said a lot about how safe she felt with Leia.

“It’s a cloaked biosignature homing beacon.” Leia explains as she put the bracelet around Rey’s wrist. “We’ve been here longer than we should have been. We’ll be moving bases soon and I want you to be able to find us. Amilyn and I will both be wearing one, so when you’re ready, when it’s time for you to come home again, you’ll be able to find us.”

“We’re not going to lose you again, Rey.” Amilyn said gently but firmly “Never again.”

Rey needed to hear that, she needed to know that no matter what came next, her mothers would be waiting for her. It helped, a lot, but it didn’t make letting go of Leia any easier the next morning. She hugged Leia on the tarmac a few yards away from the Falcon like she would never let her go, and Leia was hugging her back just as tightly. But they both had to let go, they knew Rey needed to go, needed to find Luke and face whatever came next. They didn’t need to say anything more, everything had been said the night before, so Rey just smiled at her mother before turning and walking towards the Falcon.

“Rey.” Leia called out softly. When Rey turned to look at her Leia smiled and said, “May the Force
be with you.”

“Always.” Rey replied simply. She watched as Amilyn walked up to stand beside Leia, nodded at them both, and then turned to board the Falcon.
Chapter 7

As the Millennium Falcon drew closer to the island and Rey could see it in more detail she gasped softly. It was the island from her dreams, the place she would run to when she felt as if she were suffocating in the sands of Jakku. How was that possible? Was it Luke calling out for his lost niece or the island itself that had reached out to Rey? She added that to the ever growing list of questions she would need to ask Luke once she found him. Landing the Falcon on the stony beach Rey stepped out into the fresh air, closed her eyes and took a deep breath. It was just as she had thought it might be, damp, clean, a bit salty, though she did think it would be a little warmer. She’d always pictured ocean islands as warm places, but after all those years on Jakku, the island air still felt really good, the chill welcoming in a way. As she threw her bag over her shoulder and picked up her staff she told Chewie and R2 to stay with the ship. Then she began the long climb to the top. She had no idea if that’s where Luke would be, but it’s where she was being drawn too. As she climbed she tried to reach out and scene her uncle but she didn’t feel a thing, no warmth, no light, no Luke. Could they have gotten it wrong?

Rey groaned as she continued to climb the never ending steps upwards, the muscles in her caves burning and a sheen of sweat forming on her skin. Rey stopped for a moment and fished her cantine out of her sack to take a drink, as she was putting it back her fingers brushed against the lightsaber inside. She needed to find Luke, needed to bring him home to Leia, and convince him to train her. It was the only way to make things right. Whatever happened with Ben, if she were going to survive it, she’d have to be ready for anything and Luke was the only one who could get her there. Stealing her resolved she finished the climb.

He stood there like the myth she had once thought he was, cream robes, brown cloak, long hair and beard billowing in the breeze. Despite the fact that she knew he was only a man, flesh and blood just like her, she was still in awe of him. She looked into his piercing blue eyes as he stared into hers. For a moment Rey wondered where Luke had gotten his blue eyes since Leia’s were brown, a fleeting moment of curiosity about her grandparents. Then Rey begin to feel a little uneasy as she stared at her uncle, not because of how he stared back, but because despite being only a few feet away she still couldn’t sense him. When Luke finally spoke after several minutes of just staring Rey actually jumped.

“Who are you?” Luke demanded of the girl who had appeared unwelcome on his island. How did some random girl mange to even find his island? And why was she looking at him like that? “What do you want?”

“You’ll find it hard to believe if I just tell you who I am.” Rey answered. “It would be easy for you to just see me.”

“I see you just fine.” Luke huffed at her. “You’re trespassing kid, get off my island.”

Rey blinked, shocked and actually a little insulted as Luke brushed right past her and began walking away. She stood there for several moments, to stunned and confused to move, and then quickly ran after him. “Where do you think you’re going? Hey! Wait up! I need to talk to you!”

“Go away kid.” Luke called back without stopping. “I have important stuff to do.”

A soft growl of frustration slipped past Rey’s lips as she tried to keep up. Damn he was fast for an old man! “I’m sure you do. There are all kinds of important things that need doing, but some of us can’t do them if you keep running away!”
Luke huffed in amusement at the words. He’d heard something simulator once before when he’d wanted to follow a random stranger to an old Jedi temple in the middle of a rebellion mission. “You sound like my sister.”

“I should.” Rey said as she continued following him. “She’s my mother.”

Luke stopped cold in his tracks and turned on the girl, closing the distance between him, getting so close she could feel his breath on her face. “How dare you.” He hissed. “My niece…”

“Isn’t dead.” Rey said, cutting him off and not backing down from his anger. “I wasn’t in the temple that night. I ran, I still don’t know why, can’t remember a lot, but I ran. Ben found me. He took me with him, and then dumped me on a forsaken nowhere planet, with no memory of who I was and with no connection to the Force.” She paused to let what she was saying seep past his anger, his grief. Pulling the Skywalker lightsaber from her bag she continued. “This called out to me and when I touched it my connection to the Force came back. I still had no idea who I was, not until I ended up with the Resistance, with Leia.”

“Leia.” Luke whispered his sister’s name as he took a step back from the girl. This time when he looked at her, he really looked at her. In his memory Bay was a little seven year old girl with her mother’s eyes and Han’s nose, Leia’s smile and Han’s laugh. Looking at the girl before him now, Luke could see Leia in her, he could see Han, and much to his surprise he could see traces of Padme. He took another step away from the girl, stumbling a little, his eyes wide. “Breha?”

“Hello Uncle.” Rey replied and then teased. “I told you this would have been easier if you’d just looked at me with the Force.”

Luke blinked. He stared at her a little longer and then once again turned and began walking away from her.

“Oh come on!” Rey shouted at him. “I don’t really have my memories back but I’m pretty sure you weren’t such a bantha’s ass when I was younger!”

Rey followed him to a smaller cluster of stone huts and watched as he went into one, slamming the door closed behind him. She banged on the door for awhile but when it was clear he was just going to keep ignoring her she kicked it and then went to get backup.

Breha was alive? How was this possible? How had he been so very wrong? Had he truly put his sister through that kind of unspeakable pain over a lie? Each sharp bang on the door felt like a blow to his head until Luke found himself covering his ears like a child trying to block out the sound of the thunder that frightened him. When the bagging stopped Luke sighed softly, hoping the girl had gotten the message and left. The girl with Leia’s eyes, and their father’s lightsaber. Where had she managed to find that after all this time?

When the knocking returned Luke growled and this time yelled, “Go away!” A moment later the door burst off its hinges and into the back wall of the hunt. He stumbled to his feet in shock. Had the girl done that? The light coming through the open doorway was blocked out, the figure standing there much to large to be the girl. When the figure stepped inside Luke’s heart jumped. “Chewie?”

Chewie roared and thumped his massive paw against his chest.

“He said to stop being so rude and listen.” Rey said as she walked in behind the Wookie. “Though he didn’t say it so nicely.”
“I know what he said.” Luke snapped at Rey before looking at Chewie. “Chewie, what are you doing here?” Chewie told him he was here with Rey, he’d come with her and R2 to find him. Luke blinked, his heart pounding in his chest. He looked past Chewie, past Rey, as if he were waiting for someone else to come walking through the door, but nobody came. He looked at Chewie again. “Chewie, where’s Han?” Chewie dropped his head and wailed a mournful roar. Luke’s heart squeezed painfully in his chest. Turning to look at the girl she had tears in her eyes. No. No, not Han. “Where’s Han?”

It took Rey several attempts to say the words but finally she told him. “He’s dead.”


Again Rey struggled to say the words and when Luke raised his voice demanding to know how she jumped and said, “Ben!”

Luke turned away from them as tears rolled down his aged and weathered cheeks. Han was dead. Ben was truly lost to the Dark Side. Leia and this girl had suffered for his mistakes, and they continued to do so. “You need to leave.” He finally said, his voice hoarse and cold. “All of you. Now.”

“I’m not going anywhere without you.” Rey replied. “I promised my mother I would bring you home and I intend to keep that promise.”

Over the next several days Luke did his best to ignore the girl but she simply would not leave him alone. She followed him around the island no matter what he did. In the moments where he wasn’t lost in his pain, he found it kind of funny, the girl was tenacious just like Leia. After a full week he was starting to wear down a little. He knew she was following him up the steep side of the hill, he was watching her to make sure she didn’t get hurt, and noticed when she slowly sank to her knees. He stopped his climb when he saw her turn and head off as if following something new. Luke frowned, and followed her. He was shocked when she not only managed to find the sacred tree but walk into it.

The whispers had felt like multiple voices all calling out to her at once. Rey was drawn to them, waiting to hear them more clearly, needing to hear them more clearly. Voices that Rey somehow felt she had heard before. Stepping inside of the massive tree she could feel the power of the Force wash over her and it made her gasp, and tremble. For a moment it felt like she was drowning, like she couldn’t breath! Then she felt a hand on her shoulder, strong and anchoring. Turning her head to look she locked eyes with Luke.

“What do you want from me, kid?” Luke asked the girl.

“Leia sent me..” Rey began to answer.

“No!” He said sharply but not unkindly. “What do you want from me?”

“Train me to be a Jedi.” Rey answered as she turned to face him fully. “I have all of this power inside of me and I don’t know what to do with it, how to use it. I need you to show me.”

Luke stared at her for several long moments and then repeated, over and over, until Rey finally answered the question. “What do you want from me?”

“I want you to show me how to save Ben!” Rey yelled. “Or to put a stop to Kylo Ren if I can’t! Please Uncle Luke, help me protect them! Help me keep her safe!”
There it was. The fear and the anger, he could see it in her eyes. Luke sighed. “Show me this power of yours.”

Rey once again followed Luke, this time beyond the tree to an old stone temple that pulsed with the same living energy the tree had. He led her out to a plateau and cluster of flat rocks and told her to sit. She groaned. “I already know how to mediate. Ammy’s been teaching me while we were looking for you.”

“Amilyn.” Luke said softly and with a fond smile. He was happy to hear she was still around. It gave him a sliver of peace knowing Leia still had someone who loved her as much as Amilyn did. “What color is her hair these days?”

“A really deep dark purple when I left.” Rey answered.

Luke hummed softly and without thinking reached out to brush his fingers along the barid in Rey’s hair. “Mourning braid, Amilyn must have chosen a dark color in support.” Then he withdrew his hand and grunted. “Anyway, sit, close your eyes, and breath.”

Rey stared at him for a moment and then did as he asked.

He watched her for a few moments as she took slow, steady, deep breaths, and when he felt she was ready he said, “Now reach out and tell me what you see.” He listened as she spoke, circled her, watching as she listed the things she saw and felt. Interesting, he thought as she named not only things attuned to the Light like peace and life, but also the Dark, death, decay, violence. He nudged at her a bit with his questions, wanting, needing to see where this led. When the pebbles around her began to float he smirked and managed not laugh since he’d just told her the Force was about more than moving rocks. “Alright Rey, that’s enough.”

She opened her eyes and looked at him. It was odd. She’d had to touch Han to trigger a memory, but that was because the mind block was still in place. After Leia undid the block, her memories surfaced during emotional moments like with Poe in the infirmary. She’d had plenty of emotional moments since arriving on the island, but she still hadn’t had one single flicker of a memory about Luke. She was sure she had them, he’d been in her life until that night at the temple. For a moment she thought perhaps it had something to do with the Force, maybe memories cam easier when she had a Force connection to someone? But she didn’t have a Force connection with Poe and she’d still been able to remember that one random moment from their childhood. So it couldn’t have anything to do with the Force. Besides, she couldn’t feel…

That’s when it hit her. As she reached out she could feel, even form a distance, her mother and Amilyn, but Luke who was right there beside her, was nowhere. “I didn’t see you.” She said as she stared at him. “I didn’t see you in the Force.” She stood to face him, shocked and disappointed. “You’ve cut yourself off from the Force.”

“I had too.” Luke replied as he moved away from Rey and towards the temple door. “I had no choice.”

“You did have a choice!” Rey replied. Leia had told her how she would often search for Luke’s presence but always found nothing, and had even admitted to how much that had hurt her, how lonely it made her feel. On Starkiller base Rey had felt the connection between herself and Ben, the one made stronger because they were siblings. She could only imagine how strong that bond would be between twins. He had severed that bond, why? Because he felt guilty? Because he felt ashamed? Did he once stop to think how severing it would make his sister feel? “Instead of facing what happened you ran from it, leaving your sister to face all of that pain alone. I take it back, Uncle Luke, you’re not a bantha’s ass, you’re nothing but a coward.”
She was right. He was. So what was the point of arguing with her? He left her standing there, and this time he made sure she couldn’t follow him. At least not physically. Her words however, like Leia’s often did, got stuck in his head like sand, irritating and impossible to shake off. After several hours of wandering, Luke found himself on the Millennium Falcon after slipping past Chewie. He made his way to the cockpit and let the memories wash over him. Reaching up for Han’s dice, Luke found it hard to believe he was now living in a galaxy where Han Solo no longer existed. Closing his human hand around the dice, Luke closed his eyes and let the tears come. When being in the cockpit became too overwhelming Luke moved back to the hold and sank onto a crate. His friend was gone. He wouldn’t ever be able to tell Han how sorry he was. The last thing Luke had ever said to Han was that his son had turned to the Dark Side and his daughter was dead, and now he would never be able to make up for that. How was he supposed to face Leia? He had put her through so much and now with Han gone, killed by their son, the son he’d failed to keep safe from the darkness. He couldn’t face her, he just couldn’t.

The beeps from the dark corner made Luke look up. He hadn’t heard those in a long time but he knew instantly who it was. “R2.” R2D2 rolled over to him, beeping and whistling in a scolding tone. “I know. I know. Hey, scared island, watch your language.” R2 kept scolding him like he was an angry nanny bot instead of an astromech and Luke chuckled softly. “Are you finished?” Reaching out he set his hand on R2’s dome. “I have missed you old friend.” R2 beeped and whistled softly. “I can’t R2. I just can’t, and nothing you or Chewie, or Rey, can say will change my mind.”

A shimmering blue light projected from R2 and took form. Nineteen year old Princess Leia spoke softly from the droid’s memory banks. R2 played the whole message Leia had once recorded for Obi Wan, but then he looped her very last word. Hope. Hope. Hope.

“That’s playing dirty.” Luke grumbled. R2 beeped that that was the point.

Returning to the temple after checking on Rey to make sure she was safe and sound asleep Luke sat on the stones himself. He sat there and looked out over the vast dark ocean, his mind and heart racing. Forget about being a Jedi, or a war hero, stop being a coward for five seconds, and think about being a brother, he thought to himself. Think about how Leia must have felt when he’d left, how much she missed her brother, how much she must have needed him. Rey was right. He was a coward and he should have stayed to help his sister through her pain and grief, and he should have allowed her to help him through his own. Seeing her image again reminded him of how he had felt a connection with the beautiful princess the first time he’d seen that recording, and it made him long to feel that connection again, even if only for a moment.

Taking a deep breath Luke slowly closed his eyes as he blew the breath out. He continued to breathe deeply, slowly, as he focused first on the world around him, the cool, salty night air against his skin, the crash of waves in his ears, the smell of night fires in the distance. Then he slowly began to reach inside himself, reaching out to a part of him he’d closed off so long ago he feared it may no longer be there. But just because Luke Skywalker had turned his back on the Force, that didn’t mean the Force had turned it’s back on him.

The warmth of the Force welled in his center, slowly building from a single spark, and then washed over him like a warm summer rain. This time when he reached outwards he did it with the Force. He could see Rey, asleep in her hut, the warmth of presence familiar and true. She really was Breha, and she was alive and well, and burned brightly in the Force just as her mother did. He reached out a little further and could sense Chewie on the beach, alone, without Han and Luke greaved for the loss of their closest friend. Pulling his power back into him Luke allowed himself to feel; to feel Han’s loss, to feel the anger at himself, at Ben, and even at Han for having the nerve to die. Then he let the anger go, casting it out to the waves and letting them carry it away. He let
himself feel the fear; the fear of what Ben has become or will become now that he has taken his own father’s life, the fear that he will fail Rey just as he had Ben, and Leia, and Han, and himself. Then he let the fear go as well, casting it out to the winds to be blown away, at least for now. Taking another deep, slow breath, Luke centered himself, embracing the warmth in his core that was the Force, and then once again cast it out, further then before, further than he had in a very long time.

The cold salty sea air, the crashing waves, the distant fires all faded away. Suddenly the air was warm and thick and smelled of the earth and trees. The wind rustled in the sturdy branches above his head, and the fires smelled closer and sweeter, mingling with the scent of roasted beast and grog. Opening his eyes Luke was startled to find himself on one of the wooden bridge walkways of the Ewok village on Endor. Looking down at himself he saw he was wearing the black pants and tunic he’d favored for awhile in his youth, and when he reached up to touch his own face he his clean shaven and his hair short. Was he reliving a memory? That certainly hadn’t been his intention.


Luke turned to see his sister standing a few feet away. Like him, she was young and dressed in the simple linen dress she’d worn that night, the night he’d told her that she was his sister. His heart swelled at the memory, at the way she had looked at him when she realized the truth, as if in that moment she had found a missing piece of herself, and in a way, she had, they both had. From that moment on it was as if they hadn’t spent the first nineteen years of their lives separated. She was his sister and he her brother and they loved each other with all their hearts. “Leia.”

She rushed towards him, wrapping her arms around him and holding him so tightly that if this were happening in the real world Luke wouldn’t be able to breath. He hugged her back, his grip tightening slowly as he realized what was happening. “Oh Luke, I’ve missed you.”

“I missed you too.” Luke replied. He wasn’t reliving a memory. Leia was here, right now in the Force, in a place that held great meaning for them both. He held Leia for a moment longer and then gently pulled back so he could look into her face. “Breha’s here, she and Chewie made it to me safely. She’s alive, Leia. I still can’t believe it.”

Leia relaxed, relief washing over her now that she knew Rey was safe. “I know. I’m still half convinced I dreamed the whole thing.” Pulling out of her brother’s arms, Leia took a step back and then looked around, finally taking in where she was. Then she looked down at herself, the dress she’d worn on Endor, her hair so long and loose, not a single strand of silver or gray anywhere. “Luke, where are we? And why do I look like I’m twenty three again?”

“I’m not entirely sure.” Luke answered honestly. “I wanted to reach out to you, to feel your presence again, and now here we are, in this moment from so long ago.”

“The night you told me we were twins.” Leia said as she turned to look at him. “The night our bond became unbreakable.” She looked at him for a long moment, and then suddenly she hit him square in his chest with the flat of her hands. “Luke Skywalker, where the hell have you been!? Why haven’t I been able to sense you!?”

“Ow!” Luke whined. He watched her purse her lips in the all to familiar way that said she was royally pissed and then flinched when she hit him again. Sighing softly, shamefully, he told her the truth. “I closed myself off to the Force, Leia, I’m sorry. I couldn’t bare to face you, after what I cost you, I just couldn’t… I couldn’t stop Ben from turning and because of that I thought Breha was dead. I couldn’t… Leia. I was ashamed, and I was a coward, and I’m so sorry. I should have never left you, I should have…”
“No, you shouldn’t have left.” Leia said sharply, cutting him off. “You should have been with your family, with me, we could have gotten each other through it Luke. I would have been there for you.”

“I know that.” Luke admitted. “And that’s one of the reasons why I left. I failed you, Leia. You entrusted me with your son and I failed you, and him. I couldn’t stop him from falling to the Dark Side.” Luke hung his head, turning from his sister, he reached for the railing, wrapping his hands around the wood and squeezing it so hard that if he were flesh and blood the wood would be cutting into his palms. “And now you’ve sent me your daughter. Why Leia? Why would you send her to me?”

“Because she needs you.” Leia replied as she walked over to her brother and put her hand on his back. She leaned into him, placing her chin on his shoulder. “Because I need you. I don’t blame you, Luke. I know you tried to save Ben. I know you tried to catch him before he fell, but Snoke’s influence over him was just to strong.” Pulling away a bit Leia forced Luke to turn and look at her. She reached for his hand, holding it tightly in her own. “We couldn’t keep Ben from falling to the Dark Side, despite how much we loved him. Just like Padme couldn’t keep Anakin from falling despite her love for him and his for her, because of Palpatine. But Luke, where our mother failed, and not for a lack of trying, you were able to succeed. You were able to break Palpatine’s hold on him, and to reach past Vader to what was left of Anakin and bring him back into the Light. We couldn’t keep him from falling, and Han couldn’t reach him enough to bring him back, but if there is anything of Ben left in Kylo Ren, maybe, just maybe…”

“His sister can bring him back into the light.” Luke said, finishing her thought. Pulling his hand free of her grasp Luke raised it to caress Leia’s cheek. “How are you still so full of hope, Leia?”

“I admit, my hope had gotten pretty low. If not for Amilyn I think I would have lost it a long time ago.” Leia told him honestly. “But then Rey happened, and now, well, it’s a whole lot easier to believe in the good despite the bad these days.”

Luke nodded with complete understanding. “She called me a bantha’s ass and a coward, you know. She’s clearly her mother’s daughter.”

Leia laughed. “She certainly is.”

The Ewok village began to fade around them causing the twins to take each other’s hands once more before they were again separated by the real world. “Alright, I’ll train Rey. And Leia…”

“It’s alright, Luke.” Leia reassured him. “I forgive you. I love you.” She stretched up and kissed his cheek. She smiled at him as she pulled back and then said, “But if you ever cut me off from you like that again I will come clear across the galaxy and kick your swany farm boy…”

Luke was laughing as he opened his eyes to see the sun just starting to peak above the horizon. With his bond, his connection to Leia renewed, he felt a kind of peaceful warmth wash over him he hadn’t felt in a very long time. Standing he moaned and groaned softly as he stretched out the kinks from sitting on cold stones for so long. He would get a couple hours of sleep and then wake up his niece and as promised, he would start her training in earnest.
Chapter 8

It felt as if there were something crawling across her cheek and Rey found it annoying even in her sleep. A sand beetle, she thought as she reached up to brush away the tickle. They weren’t dangerous just annoying little critters looking for warmth when the nights got cold during the shorter days of the yearly cycle. Rey moaned softly when she felt the tickle brush along her cheek again and shifted as she tugged her threadbare blanket up. Pulling the blanket over her head had left her ankles exposed, so now the tickle was coming from there and she kicked out trying to make the sensation stop. When the tickle finally went away she sighed softly and settled herself to go back into a deeper sleep. Then the tickle returned, and this time she thrashed around so much she fell off the cot she’d been sleeping on and onto the cold stone floor. Hitting the floor caused Rey to instantly become awake and for a few moments she was disoriented as she looked around the tiny stone hut. It wasn’t until her groggy gaze landed on a man in cream and brown robes that she realized where she was.

“Good morning.” Luke greeted with a smirk, a thin, long, palm leaf in his hand. “Sleep well?”

Rey moaned as she pushed herself up off the floor to sit on her cot. A quick glance out the window told her the sun had just barely begun it’s journey into the sky. Turning to look at her uncle she saw the leaf in his hand and then turned her gaze to his face to glare at him.

Luke snorted at the look on Rey’s face. She never did like being forced to wake up, she always preferred to do it on her own. “Get up kid. First we train the body, and then we train the mind.”

It took several seconds after Luke walked out of her hut for Rey to realize what was going on. Scampering to her feet she grabbed her boots, rucksack and staff and ran after her uncle. “Train?” She called out after him. “You’re going to train me?”

“I will teach you what I can.” Luke said with a nod as he grabbed his pack.

Rushing forward Rey grabbed hold of her uncle’s arm to make him stop and look at her. “I know this scares, and worries you, but I’m not Ben..” She reassured him. “I won’t fail you, Uncle.”

Luke looked into the girl’s eyes for a long moment. Now that he was open to the Force once more he could see her and much to his relief he saw the truth of her. He nodded once to acknowledge what she’d said and the sentiment behind it and he said, “The only person you have to worry about failing, is yourself. Now, if you want to eat any time soon, keep up.”

Rey nodded, gave her uncle a huge smile, and followed him up into the hills after hopping into her boots. She wondered what had changed his mind. He had been so adamant about not training her yesterday. What had happened overnight that he was now willing to give her a chance? Out of curiosity she reached out with the Force and was surprised to find she could finally see him. He felt different than her mother and Amilyn in a way she wasn’t quite able to explain. It wasn’t a bad different, not at all. He still felt warm and reassuring to her, familiar, and she could feel the similarities between him and Leia. It was just that he seemed more like the focused light of a torch where as her mother was more like a wildfire.

They spent the morning gathering fruit from impossible to reach trees, mushrooms from places even Rey’s slender frame had trouble fitting into, mussels and fresh water from a tide pool that Rey nearly broke her neck getting too, and milk from that poor creature Rey kept apologizing too on her uncle’s behalf. By the time they got back to their little cluster of huts Rey was starving, had been stung by something that made her calf itch like crazy, and she had seaweed in a place she didn’t
want to have seaweed. But as he cooked their breakfast in the stone circle fire pit Luke told her about the Jedi, and suddenly she didn’t care about where she had seaweed. His first lesson about the Jedi was that they were deeply flawed and had been unwilling to grow and change with the times. That was where they would have to make the first of many changes. If he were going to teach her what she needed to know, then he would have to teach her in a new way.

After they finished eating and cleaning up Luke led Rey to another plateau overlooking the sea, it was a much bigger area, open with a single large rock in the center. “Show me the lightsaber.” He watched as his niece pulled out the old lightsaber Obi Wan had once given to him, the lightsaber that once belonged to his father. It had been a shock to see it the first time Rey had shown him, but he’d been unwilling to really see it. Looking at it now he was reminded of the naive, way to enthusiastic, farm boy he use to be, and he realized that Rey reminded him a lot of himself. “You didn’t happen to find a hand laying close by that thing did you?”

“What?” Rey squeaked. “No!”

Luke chuckled. “Had to ask. Now, turn it on and let me see you use it.”

Over the next few days they developed a routine. Traversing the island on ridiculous scavenger hunts that not only conditioned Rey’s body, but taught her patience and critical thinking skills. As they ate their meals Luke would tell stories that served as history lessons as well as cautionary tales. He would show her new forms to practice with the lightsaber and staff. Meditation was important and so was the ability to share her feelings with those she trusted and loved.

“When be hesitant to share your feelings with Leia.” He told her one evening after whacking her with a reed to correct her form. “She’ll understand a lot of what you bring to her.”

As the sun sank behind the sea and the air began to chill Rey had helped Luke with dinner and sat by the fire with him as he told her stories. He told her about rescuing Leia on the Death Star, and the adventures they’d had together during the war and after. Rey could see how much Luke missed his sister, it was written all over his face, not to mention the way it virated in the Force. She knew he was still unsure about coming back with her, but she hoped that she would be able to change his mind. After Luke was finished telling her about how he, Leia and Han escaped Jabba the Hut, he sent her to bed as if she were still a child. Normally Rey would have put up a fuss but she could tell he was hurting and needed some time alone. So she bid him goodnight and headed into her little stone hut. After closing the door she peeked out the tiny window and watched as Luke made his way down to the Falcon. She knew he was going down to the ship to mourn his best friend and anger flared in Rey’s chest. Luke was yet another person hurting because of Ben’s selfishness, anger, and hated.

Rey knew she should meditate before going to bed, especially with the waves of emotion swirling around inside of her, but she was tired and knew her uncle would get her up before the sun in the morning. So after cleaning up she curled up on her cot, took a deep breath, and let sleep tug her under.

Three bright warm suns warmed the day from their various positions in the clear sky above. It felt good on Rey’s skin, it reminded her of feeling relaxed and safe and happy. Opening her eyes Rey look around, finding herself in a courtyard with gray slate tiles carving paths through soft grass and thin trunked trees with white bark and leaves so purple they almost looked black. The courtyard was surrounded by walls made of huge white sand colored blocks covered in crawling ivy with deep maroon leaves. Deep down Rey knew she knew this place but she couldn’t quite pull the memory completely to the surface, she just knew this place meant a great deal to her. Later when she felt safe and secure enough to share this with her mothers, Amilyn would tell her this was the
The gentle sound of soft leather shoes shuffling across the slate stones drew Rey’s attention to a small archway. Rey sucked in a sharp breath when she saw Ben, a much younger version of Ben, wearing what looked like a fancy suit. He was sitting on a low step with his back against a black iron fence. His legs are crossed, and so are his arms. His elbows are resting on his knees and his forehead is pressed into his arms. Rey can see that he’s breathing in that slow and deliberate way Ammy had taught them to do when they were too upset to use their words, or to even think properly. Rey wants to walk over to her brother and ask what’s wrong but stops when she see a tiny version of herself slowly making her way over to where Ben sat. She watches as little Bay, because in this memory that’s who she is, sits beside her brother without a word. Rey can feel Ben tense up as Bay sits beside him as if she’s the one physically close to him, and she can feel her smaller self lean into his side, resting her head on his arm. Rey can feel Ben relax, and slowly put his arm around his sister, drawing her closer.

Rey smiled; happy to have another memory resurface. But her smile quickly falters when the warmth of the memory gives way to a cold chill. Her heart begin to race. She knows that feeling. She would never be able to forget that feeling. Tearing her gaze from younger Ben and little Bay, Rey searches the courtyard and when her eyes fall on him she gasps. “Ben.”

Forcing herself awake Rey once again finds herself in her tiny stone hut on Ahch-to. She’s panting, her heart racing, as she frantically looks around to see if Ben was in the room with her. He wasn’t, he wasn’t outside her hut either. Standing in the dark outside her hut Rey slows her breathing, the pounding thumps of her rapid heart fading from her ears. Ben wasn’t here, but he had been in her memory. How was that possible?

She refused to go back to sleep and didn’t mention anything to Luke the next day. She focused on her training and that night she made sure to meditate before going to sleep. It would be a whole three nights before she found herself falling asleep in her little stone hut and then finding herself someplace else in her dreams.

Bay was bored. Daddy was busy, Mama was busy, Ammy was busy, even Uncle Luke and Chewie were busy. She wasn’t sure how much longer she could handle waiting on one of them to stop being busy. It was warm and sunny and she wanted to do more than just walk with Ben and Threepio along the garden paths in the senate complex. She wanted to play smuggler with Daddy, sneaking sweets past Mama and Ammy; or sabers with Uncle Luke, or swing in Ammy’s sky ribbons with her and Mama. Anything but just walking around slowly and primly like a proper young lady. Just walking was boring! When Bay started feeling like this it normally led to her doing something naughty, and sure enough her eyes started looking around for something to get into. Then she felt a gentle nudge and she turned to look up at Ben. He was smiling at her, a finger pressed to his lips. He put his hand on her shoulder to stop her from walking and for several moments they just stood there as Threepio continued on his way. Then Ben held out his hand to her and she gladly took it. They found a spot in the garden where no one would see them and then Ben sat down cross legged on the ground.

“Watch Bay.” He said as he stretched out his hand and spread his fingers wide. He took a slow, deep breath, and soon several small rocks began to float all around.

Bay giggled as she watched her brother use his powers. “Teach me Ben! Teach me to do that!”

“Oh, but you must not tell Uncle or Mother.” Ben said as he pulled his sister onto his lap. “Now, hold out your hand like this and close your eyes, Bay.”

“I was your first teacher.” Ben said, his voice low and soft as if he didn’t want to interrupt the
scene playing out before them.

Rey had felt the cold chill of her brother’s presence long before he’d spoken, but she had wanted so badly to continue with the memory she’d been watching. “Did you know?” She asked him as she continued to watch the younger versions of them. “In this moment, did you know you would turn against us?”

“No.” Ben answered honestly. “I was plagued with nightmares about the darkness, but I didn’t understand what it was at the time.”

“Snoke.” Rey said bitterly.

“Yes.” Ben answered. There was a long pause as they both watched little Bay giggle as she made a tiny pebble float and young Ben praise her for it. “Where are you?”

“As if I’d tell you.” Rey replied. “I’m not going to let you hurt anyone else, Ben. One way or another, you’ll pay for what you did.”

“You mourn for a man who was never there.” Ben hissed as he turned to look at Rey.

Rey looked into her brother’s eyes and fought the urge to shiver. “I mourn for a man who was flawed but loved his children, his wife, and his friends the best way he knew how.” Rey didn’t know how she did it, by just thinking of the memory perhaps, but the scene around them changed. She kept them in the garden but young Ben and little Bay were gone, replaced with Leia and Rey as Leia said, “Do you know what I felt right before I felt Han die?” Rey was watching Ben and saw the flinch he tried to hide. Leia continued, “The most powerful, the most beautiful, surge of love. That’s how he died, Rey, without regret or fear, but full of love, for Ben, for me, and for you.”

Ben’s anger swelled and he threw up his hand, making a claw with his fingers, and demanded. “You bill bering me Luke Skywalker!”

“Piss off, Ben.” Rey replied, and then forced herself to wake up. Sitting up slowly on her cot she rubbed her face with her hands and sighed. She should probably tell her uncle what was happening, that Ben was invading her dreams, but she was afraid he’d make it stop. There was, despite everything he’d done, the smallest sliver of light still in her brother. Maybe Rey could reach that and draw it out a little more. She at least had to try.

Sitting in the temple cave on the edge of the mosaic pool Luke explained the fundamentals behind the Jedi and the Sith just as Yoda had once done with him. He laid out the whole idea that Jedi were purely good, and Sith purely evil. He explained how attachments were bad, but a Jedi was still meant to be compassionate. He said Sith were selfish and cruel and did things only out of personal gain and for pleasure. And he watched, wanting to see Rey’s reaction, needing to know how she would respond.

“That’s utter crap.” Rey finally said.

Luke raised an eyebrow. “Crap?”

“Yes.” Rey replied. “It’s really rare for someone to be fully one way or the other. Even a truly good person will have dark thoughts, it matters if they act on those thoughts. A good person will sometimes be faced with making a really crappy choice that leads to doing something dark, that doesn’t mean they’re no longer a good person. If any of what you just said were true, you would have never been able to defeat Darth Vader and bring your father back into the light.”

Luke was about to respond when they heard something outside, a commotion of some kind coming
from down near the caretaker village. He exchanged a look with Rey and then followed her out to the plateau to see what was going on. “Raiders.” He told her. “They come from one of the other islands to pillage and plunder the caretaker’s village.”

“Come on!” Rey said as she moved back towards the cave’s opening. “We have to help them!”

“Do you know what a Jedi of old would do right now?” He asked her, not moving from where he stood. “Nothing.”

“This isn’t the time for lessons, Uncle!” Rey shouted at him. “They’re going to get hurt!”

“If you attack them now, they will only return stronger, and you will not always be here to act.” Luke said as he watched her struggle. “That anger you feel over what the raiders will do, the Jedi texts say to ignore that. Only act when you can maintain balance, even if it means people get hurt.”

Rey looked into her uncle’s eyes and repeated. “That’s crap and you damn well know it.”

He watched her run off towards the village and smirked.

There were no raiders, no danger, just music, a dancing droid, and a drunk Wookie. It was a celebration, for what Rey had no idea. She felt utterly and completely confused as she took it all in. When she felt her uncle standing behind her she spun on her heel and demanded, “What the hell was that?”

“A test.” Luke replied easily and with a warm, smug, smile. As he walked past her to join in the festivities he patted her on the head.

Rey just stood there completely dumbfounded. A test? What kind of test? Had she failed or passed? Rey growled in frustration. Then one of the caretakers walked over to her and offered a mug of something fermented while Chewie dropped a crown of flowers on her head. Luke had said that the Jedi’s of old would have done nothing, that they wouldn’t have interfered, but then he seemed proud that she had decided to do something. It wasn’t the first time she’d gotten the feeling he was making things up on the fly as far as the way he was training and teaching her. She’d thought it had something to do with Ben, that he was afraid of teaching her the right way because he didn’t want to train another Ben. But maybe it was more than that, maybe he was simply training her to be a different kind of Jedi?

The wind and rain howled and thrashed outside her tiny stone hut while Rey knelt on her small padded grass mat in front of the small stone firepit in the middle of the room. She was sitting by the fire, legs crossed and hands in her lap, with a blanket around her shoulders as she tried to breathe slow and deep the way Amilyn had taught her. It had been a miserable day. She and Luke had trained in the downpouring rain. Despite his age he was still fast and strong and she could really feel the welts and bruises where he’d managed to hit her with a long wood reed as they spared. He was trying to frustrate her, to make her angry, so he could teach her how to focus her feelings as she fought. She understood that, she did, but that didn’t stop her from thinking he was jerk. Especially after he caused her to lose her staff over the side of a cliff. She’d gone down to find it, slipping on the rocks and slicing a nice gash into her calf, but the staff was lost to the ocean waves. On her way back she stopped at the Falcon to retrieve the secret stash of tea Amilyn had sent along with her, and then settled into her hut for the rest of the night. As she meditated she breathed in the sweet, tangy scent of the tea, and the warm smoky scent of the fire and she was transported into another memory.

Bay sat in Ammy’s lap pouting, her little arms crossed over her chest, her chin down. Amilyn’s long arms reached around her tiny body with ease as she continued preparing their tea. Sitting
across from them on the other side of the low table and tea service was Ben, his hair a brilliant
electric blue as he practiced his calligraphy. It wasn’t fair that Ben got to have blue hair! Why did
she have to wait until she was ten? She wanted colorful hair just like Ben and Ammy!

“Is she still pouting?” Leia asks as she walked into the room with a soft chuckle.

Amilyn looks down at the little ball of anger in her lap and nods. “She can be quite stubborn about
these things. She is your daughter after all.”

Leia sits beside Ben and the boy happily moves closer to his mother. While the two women
continue to talk as Amilyn pours their tea Bay happens to look up and catches sight of her brother.
He’s making silly faces, and whenever their mother says something dull and grown up he mocks it,
and soon Bay completely forgets she’s angry and starts to giggle.

“What color is Auntie’s hair now?” Ben asks from behind Rey.

“Dark Purple.” She answers and then asks a daring question of her own. “Do you miss them?”

Ben tenses up, his eyes firmly on the two women in Rey’s newly surfaced memory, and then lies.
“No.”

“You’re not as heartless as you want everyone, including yourself, to believe you are.” Rey tells
him, smirking. She can feel it, it’s faint and well hidden, but she can feel Ben’s sadness, his
loneliness. He does miss them.

“The boy you knew is dead.” Ben tells her. “Whatever part of him that lingered inside of me died
with his father.”

“I don’t believe you.” Rey replied, turning to look at him. “If that were even remotely true you
wouldn’t be here. You wouldn’t keep connecting with me because I would mean nothing to you.
But here you are, Ben, why? Why are you here?”

The memory around them shifts and changes. Rey finds herself standing on a launchpad platform
watching her family at the very last moment in which they were all together.

Bay stood with her parents, her back pressed up against her mother’s legs, Leia’s hands gently
resting on her shoulders. She watched with tears welling in her eyes as their father and Chewie load
Ben’s things onto Uncle Luke’s ship, as Amilyn is handing Ben a gift she tells him to open the first
time he misses home. Over Bay’s head her mother and uncle are speaking in soft tones but she isn’t
paying any attention to what they were saying.

“Well,” Han says as he and Ben walked over to join them. “That’s it. You’re all set.”

Bay pulls away from her mother and runs to Ben, slamming into his legs and wrapping her arms
around him. “Please don’t go, Ben.”

Ben dislodged his sister from his legs so he could crouch down and look into her eyes. “I need to
go with Uncle Luke to train like a Jedi.”

“I know.” Rey said as tears rolled down her cheeks. “But I don’t want you to go! I don’t want you
to be a Jedi if it means you have to go away!”

“Close your eyes Bay.” Ben said gently. “And hold up your hand.”

Rey did as he asked and felt him press his hand to hers. He told her to take a deep breath, and then
another, and then to look for him without opening her eyes. She did everything he said and suddenly she could sense him, see him in the Force. His light was so warm and Bay let that warmth wash over her.

“You’ll always be able to feel me in the Force, Bay.” Ben reassured her. “I’ll always be able to feel you.”

Opening her eyes Bay flung her arms around her brother and buried her face in his neck. “I’m going to miss you.”

Ben sighed softly and hugged her tight. “I’m going to miss you too.”

“That boy is still somewhere under all the hate and anger and darkness.” Rey told the man standing beside her.

Ben turned to look at Rey and replied, “There is darkness under all that hope. I felt it, when you were on Starkiller base. I felt you use the Dark Side. You can’t tell me you didn’t enjoy the way it felt to choke Phasma.”

“I didn’t enjoy it.” Rey told him honestly. “It made me sick to my stomach watching her gasping for air, but we didn’t have time to wait, there were people out there who were depending on us. People I needed to protect, so I did what I thought would help in the moment.”

“People you had to protect.” Ben sneered. “By people you mean Poe Dameron.”

Rey nodded. “Yes.” She admitted. “I didn’t enjoy hurting Phasma, but you did enjoy hurting Poe, you savored every moment of it.”

“I did.” Ben replied with a shrug, a sick smirk on his lips.

“If there wasn’t a sliver of Ben inside of you, you wouldn’t be so jealous of Poe.” Rey said. They may have been in her memories, but she wasn’t the only one exposed in this strange space between them.

Ben’s anger was rising. “Why would I be jealous of Poe Dameron?”

“Because you think he’s taken your place.” Rey replied. “The son Leia always wanted but got you instead.”

Ben’s anger flared and his red lightsaber suddenly appeared in his hand. He raised it high and then swung it towards Rey.

Rey snapped out of her meditative state gasping and scampering backwards away from the fire and fumbling around for her lightsaber. She ignited it and held it up as if to block Ben’s blow before she realized he wasn’t there.

“So,” Luke said from her cot, his piercing eyes staring her like the disapproving uncle-slash-teacher he was. “You wanna tell me what the hell is going on?”

It took several minutes for Rey to relax enough to tell him. After turning off her lightsaber and moving to the fire, she picked up her tea and downed it. Then she took a deep breath and began telling Luke about her dreams, her memories, and how Ben had started appearing in them. He was angry that she hadn’t told him sooner and promised to come up with a creative punishment for her later. Then he explained that siblings could have a very strong Force bond, and that he and Leia shared one that was stronger than most because they were twins. He actually admitted that cutting
himself off from Leia, from the bond they shared, was a million times worse than losing his hand. “It felt like being cleaved in two.” He told her softly, his eyes swimming with regrets. Then he looked at her with a very kind and caring expression as he said, “Rey, I’m the last person to tell you to give up when it comes to Ben. I was the same way when it came to my father. But I do want you to try and stay as realistic as you can. It may be too late for, Ben.”

“Maybe.” Rey agreed. “But I have to try.”

The next day after lunch Luke took Rey to a cliff overlooking a cove and pointed down into water below, showing her a completely submerged X-Wing. “Since you think you’re strong enough to handle Kylo Ren on your own in the unfamiliar landscape of your memories, then surely you’re strong to lift that out of the water.”

Rey blinked. She looked at her uncle, down into the depths where she could make out the dark outline of the X-Wing, and back up at her uncle. “You want me to do what?!”

“Every afternoon until you bring it up.” Luke added and then walked away, leaving her to her task. He smirked and swallowed a chuckle when he heard her mutter the words crotchy, old, and bantha’s ass. When she was able to get the X-Wing out of the water she would be ready for her next test, until then Luke would keep making it up as he went along. Rey had told him she would not fail him, but Rey shouldn’t have been the one making the promise. He would not fail her.
Chapter 9

Not wanting to risk devastating their numbers Leia had ordered the abandonment of D’Qar to happen in three phases and for each group to head to different smaller safe bases. She of course would be part of the final group to leave aboard her ship, the Raddus. Amilyn and the Ninka, as well as the Vigil and the Anodyne, were also part of the final group to leave the planet. Years of experience had taught Leia to be cautious, and to listen to her gut feelings, so they had planned on making at least two, maybe even three jumps before heading to their safe base. She knew that the First Order would be on the hunt, and she didn’t want to take any risks that could potentially ravage the Resistance. Having had to build the Resistance from the ground up, Leia had a stronger respect for those who had done the same with the Rebellion, people like her parents and Mon Mothma.

Knowing that when she returned, Rey would become an active part of all this also gave Leia a better understand for how Bail and Breha must have felt when she joined the Rebellion. It was a strange mix of pride and gut wrenching fear. Leia took comfort in knowing that at least for now Rey was safe with Luke on his island. Knowing her daughter was safe allowed Leia to focus on what needed to be done for Resistance. With the base on D’Qar wiped clean to remove any evidence they had ever been there, they boarded their ships and left it behind.

The uneasiness Leia had felt about this whole operation proved to be warranted when their small fleet dropped out of their first jump and found themselves face to face with a star destroyer. Leia swore in a language that had C3PO declaring, “Oh my, Princess, really.” and then began to quickly shout out orders, the first of which was to launch her fighters. Leia rolled her eyes and bit back a smirk when she heard Poe’s muttered departing words to Finn. “I really hate when she has a bad feeling about these things because she’s always right.”

Poe Dameron had the potential to be a great leader but he still had a lot to learn and a lot of growing up to do. Leia shook her head and groaned as she listened to him over the comms. He was so cocky and selfassured that they could easily take out the swarm of Ties as well as the destroyer that he had hailed the destroyer just to taunt Hux. Leia on the other hand knew this wouldn’t be an easy fight, she was waiting for the other shoe to drop. The other shoe was the biggest dreadnought she had ever seen. While she was ordering the fleet to jump, Poe was ordering the bomber squads to bombard the dreadnought while he and the light fighters took out weapons and continued to sting at the destroyer. She ordered him to stand down, to retreat, but Poe had it in his head that blowing up a planet sized weapon base had made them invincible.

One bomber ship out of eight survived, the Hammer. The dreadnought was destroyed, but at what cost? Not only had they lose ships they couldn’t easily replace, crippling their squadrons, but more importantly they had lost lives. She would eventually be able to replace the A-Wings, the X-Wings, the bombers, and the other ships over time, but she could never replace the lives they had lost. The young men and women who joined the Resistance and agreed to fight their fight because they knew it was the right thing to do. How many of those brave men and women could have been saved if only Poe had listened to her commands!

The slap rang out across the bridge like blaster fire. Most of the crew flinched, some of the officers did too. It was a more personal disciplinary reaction than Leia would have had with anyone else, but Poe was pretty much her kid and a damn hard headed one at that. “You’re demoted.”

Poe was shocked by the slap, it actually hurt, and in more ways than just the sting in his cheek. “We took down a dreadnought!”

“But at what cost?” Leia scolded. “Damnit Poe, get you head out of your cockpit. You can’t solve
every problem by jumping into your X-Wing and blowing it up!” She huffed at him and then sighed as she pinched the bridge of her nose for a moment. Then she looked into Poe’s eyes and told him, “You still have a lot to learn, my boy. I just hope you learn it before I end up having to braid my hair for you too.”

That hurt worse than the slap. Poe wasn’t the most cultured person around but he understood Leia’s meaning. He opened his mouth to say something to her but he realized he had no idea what to say, so he just watched her walk away, then turned on his heel and left the bridge. His first stop was maintenance to check on BB-8. His little buddy had taken a bad shock during the fight and Poe wanted to make sure he was alright. Stepping into the room he did his best to smile but he just wasn’t feeling it. “How’s he doing, Rose?”

The young woman working on BB-8 looked up and smiled. “He’ll be fine. Just needed a few burned out wires replaced.”

Walking over to the table Poe rubbed BB-8’s sides. “I’m glad you’re ok, buddy. Good work out there.” Then Poe looked up at Rose and it felt like someone had slugged him in the stomach. Leia’s words rang in his ears, at what cost? Rose was a good kid, smart, clever, and really sweet. She was normally assigned to the Ninka and on the Hammer’s crew. But she was working on something for the General and was here on the Raddus for now, which meant she hadn’t been in the battle, but her sister had been. “How’s Paige, and the others?”

“Nix is in bad shape, so is Finch. Paige is stuffed into a bacta suit and griping about it when she’s awake for more than two seconds.” Rose answered. “They were barely able to get out of the blast zone. The Hammer might be a total loss, haven’t had time to see if I can salvage my little monster from it yet.”

“I’m really glad they’re ok, Rose.” Poe said softly as he helped put BB-8 back on the floor. He knew how a crew could become so much more than just the people you worked with, they became family. Seven out of eight of those families were gone now. Poe felt his stomach lurch and twist into a painful knot.

“Me too.” Rose replied. “I don’t know what I’d do without my sister. She’s all I have left, ya know.”

Poe managed to keep himself from flinching. He told Rose to let him know if he could do anything for her or Paige, and then thanked her for helping out BB-8. Then he left with BB-8 at his heels. He didn’t really have a destination in mind, he was just walking around the ship as he thought about what Leia had said, about the Tico sisters and how that could have ended, and about the letters Leia would have to write to the families whose loved ones hadn’t been as lucky as the Ticos. To say he was flooded with conflicting emotions would have been an understatement. He was starting to understand Leia’s point, but on the other hand they had taken out a kriffing dreadnought!

“Hey.” Finn said when Poe walked into the room. “You alright?”

“Yeah, fine.” He lied as he looked around and blinked. He was in one of the crew quarters’ bunk rooms. Finn was sitting at one of the small desks between racks of bunks working on a data padd. “How’d you get stuck in here?”

Finn looked around a little confused. “What’s wrong with here?”

“It’s a bunk unit.” Poe replied. “You ok with bunking with people?”
“I’ve always bunked with other people.” Finn replied. “You pretty much do everything with your unit; eat, sleep, train, fight, die.”

“That is not much of a life my friend.” Poe replied, grateful for the chance to focus on something besides his own thoughts. “What did you do in your downtime?”

“Didn’t really have downtime.” Finn answered with a shrug of his shoulders.

“Like, at all?” Poe replied with a raised brow. “You didn’t hang out and do anything with your comrades? What about a social life?”

Finn blinked. “Social life?”

“Yeah, you know, hanging out with other people and getting to know each other.” Poe told him.

Finn frowned. “They didn’t really want us getting to know each other. We were expectable.”

“Man I am so glad I got you out of there.” Poe said as he pulled up a chair beside Finn and clapped him on the shoulder as he straddled it.

Finn laughed. “You got me out? Wasn’t I the one doing the rescuing?”

Poe waved off the comment. “Don’t sweat the details. The important thing is you’re here with us now and you get to have a life, and that includes downtime. We got ourselves a minute to breathe, so let’s go have a drink and I’ll explain the finer points of just hanging out.”

They had all thought the first attack was a fluke, that Hux had just been damn lucky and stumbled upon them, or they’d been damn unlucky as they were making their jumps and landed in a rancor pit. But it hadn’t been a fluke, Hux had been waiting for them, and now somehow they had managed to find them again. Only this time Hux wasn’t alone. The Supremacy was one of the biggest ships Leia had ever seen and the moment it dropped out of hyperspace she felt the icy blackness of Snoke’s presence wash over her like a never ending nightmare. Leia somehow managed to suppress a shiver as she called out orders. “All squardans launch! Get the cruisers out of those ships’ line of fire!”

“Permission to blow something up?” Poe shouted at her as he was already on the move.

“Don’t be a smartass!” She scolded him. “I will smack you again! And yes, permission granted!”

How had they found them again? Leia didn’t understand. It was impossible to trace a ship through lightspeed, and she’d made sure their trajectory would be damn near impossible to trace. They couldn’t risk another jump closer to their base if the First Order were just going to find them again, but they couldn’t just hang out here forever either. Their fuel was limited, and so were the number of fighters they could throw at them. General Organa worked seamlessly with her admirals and officers to choreograph the battle as best they could to save on resources, but no matter what they did something was going to run out sooner rather than later. What they needed were reinforcements. She was just about give the order to send out a signal when she felt it, when she felt him. She sense him as clearly as she had when he was a little boy in her arms, a babe in her womb. She whispered his name so softly no one else could have possibly heard her over the chaos. “Ben.”

She could feel his struggle, could almost see his thumb hovering over the trigger. And he, she knew, could feel her love. He couldn’t do it, he couldn’t fire on her. His troopers on the other hand
had no issues with firing on the bridge of the Raddus. It all happened so fast and before Leia could even take in a breath, she was being pulled out into the coldness of space by a fiery blast. In her last moments of awareness Leia thought of the people she loved most, her children, Amilyn, Han, Luke, and just before the world went dark she heard their voices cry out her name in the Force.

Ben’s. Mother.

Breha’s. Mama!

Luke’s. Leia!

Poe’s. Leia! Leia no! Leia!

And her darling Amilyn’s. Leia! Leia no! Leia! Don’t leave me! Please!

Leia could almost feel Amilyn’s hand stretched out towards her so she stretched out her own. Amilyn had loved her for her entire adult life, and had followed her through hell and back time and time again without question, without doubt. Amilyn believed in her, always, even when she hadn’t believed in herself.

As Leia felt the power of the Force swelling inside her chest she thought about her children, about Ben who she’d felt waver enough that he couldn’t hurt her, and Rey who she felt crying out in fear in her uncle’s arms despite the distance, and Poe who was clawing at the window of the ship as if trying to get to her. This was not her time, she was still very much needed, so Leia reached out, grasping for those she loved, and grabbing hold of the ship. She used the Force to pull, causing herself to move through space, and soon found herself falling into Poe’s arms.

Amilyn rushed over to the Raddus as soon as she could. She had to get to Leia! She had watched from the bridge of the Ninka as the bridge of the Raddus exploded, and her heart stopped beating, her lungs stopped taking in air, and she barely managed to stay on her feet. Leia! She had felt the split second of fear, regret, and love that blasted over their connection. Leia! The Supremacy continued to beat down on them but Amilyn didn’t care, she still boarded a shuttle and flew straight for the Raddus, and once onboard she ran to Leia. Stepping into the medical bay Amilyn’s strength finally waned and she felt her knees go weak. “Leia.”

When D’acy came to her and told her Leia was the only one to survive the blast Amilyn didn’t really understand what she was saying, her mind, all of her thoughts were centered and focused on Leia. Poor D’acy had to repeat herself several times before Amilyn finally heard her. She was in command. Amilyn blinked. She was in command of everything, the whole damn Resistance. Looking down at her beloved Leia, Amilyn knew what she had to do, what Leia would expect of her to do. Bringing Leia’s hand to her lips Amilyn kissed her knuckles and then pressed them to her own cheek before setting Leia’s hand back down on the bed. “Come back to me, my love.”

Then Amilyn stood, took a deep breath, and said, “Gather everyone quickly. We don’t have time to waste.”

Poe couldn’t understand Holdo’s calmness, despite being use to it. He knew that even when calling out orders in the heat of battle she only ever raised her voice to be heard over the chaos if she had too. It was kind of eerie sometimes. But now wasn’t the time for that, Leia was hurt, she’d been blown out into space! The First Order was breathing down their necks just waiting for the right moment to strike them all down, and Holdo was standing there talking about sparks and hope and not a damn thing about what they were going to do next. As soon as the meeting was over Poe went straight to Holdo and asked, “What was that? That wasn’t a strategy meeting that was a sermon!”
“That,” Amilyn said calmly as she checked their status at various stations. “Was what people needed to hear to keep moving forward. You of all people should understand what Leia means to them all.”

“Ok, yeah, sure, I get that.” Poe relented a bit. “Now that the pep talk is out of the way, what’s the plan? We can’t hold out forever against this onslaught.”

“Let me worry about the plan, Captain.” Amilyn spat out his rank in a gentle hiss. “I’ll let you know if I’m in need of a hotheaded hotshot who thinks he knows better than those of us who have been fighting since before he was born.”

Poe was taken aback by Holdo’s tone and it rattled him a little. “Admiral?”

“Those were my people, Captain Dameron.” Amilyn said, her voice low. “Cobalt, they were under my command, and because of your recklessness and inability to listen, let alone lead, I have three people left. Take a moment and think about that, Captain. Each bomber had a crew of three or four, there were eight bombers, one survived your brilliant plan.” She looked into his eyes for a moment and then barked at him, “Dismissed Captain Dameron.” The look on his face before he turned to leave made Amilyn regret her harshness. She wasn’t normally the type to kick a man while he was down, and it was clear that Poe was frightened and angry, and feeling unsure of himself. He was lashing out and she had lashed back. Sighing softly Amilyn called out, “Captain wait.” He paused and then turned slowly to look at her. “That was unprofessional. I apologize.”

“No.” Poe replied as he walked back over to her. “No, I get it, or at least I might be starting too.”

“Good.” Amilyn replied. “I need you to understand something, Captain. Those of us who have been around for awhile do have more than a few tricks up our sleeves, and that whatever comes next, Leia was involved in planning it out. So what I need you to do, is to trust me the way you trust her. Can you do that, Captain? Or are we going to have a problem?”

Poe looked into those shape blue eyes for several tense moments. How’d she know his wheels were turning? Finally he nodded. “No problems, Admiral.”

“Good.” Amilyn said again. “Now Captain, take your station.”

As soon as the attack started Finn went looking for Poe to offer his help. He wasn’t a pilot, he was a soldier, meant to fight on the ground, but he knew things. He knew how the First Order fought, so maybe he could be of some help. Just as he was nearing the flight deck where Black One was kept he was knocked into the wall by the aftershock of an explosion. Poe! Finn’s chest felt tight as he ran towards the flight deck, each pump of his heart, each breath he took, was painful. Stumbling around the corner as he ran he saw Poe on his back, a young woman with short dark hair beside him. He rushed to Poe. “Poe! Poe are you alright?”

Poe moaned as Rose and Finn helped him to his feet. “Those bastards blew up my X-Wing! I loved that X-Wing! I painted it black myself!”

“He’s fine.” Rose told the man who’d come running up to them. Now that Poe was on his feet and she was sure he was ok, she looked the new comer over and gasped. “You’re Finn! The Finn!”

Finn blinked. “The Finn?”

Poe chuckled as he brushed bits of debris off his flight suit. “You’re kind of famous, buddy. The brave stormtrooper who defected and is now helping the Resistance.”

Finn blinked again. “Oh.” He replied uncomfortably. “Um, I’m not really anyone special, but it’s
nice to meet you?”

“Rose!” Rose replied. “Rose Tico.”

Poe frowned a bit. Finn was someone special. How did he not know that?

“What’s going on?” Finn asked, wanting to get away from the looks he was getting from the other two.

Poe explained.

“That’s impossible.” Rose said. “They can’t track us in hyperspace…. Unless…”

Poe blinked again as Rose began to spout a lot of technobabble at a rapid fire rate. When Finn joined in he really looked confused. His dark eyes swifted between them like he was watching a game of Click Clack. Then he held up his hands and said, “Stop, shut up, hold on a sec.” The pair stopped, looking at him oddly for a moment, and then said, “Come with me.”

Poe led the pair back to the bridge to get Holdo and pulled her aside before unleashing them on her. Maybe she could make sense out of what they were saying.

Amilyn took in the information and carefully turned it over for a bit. If the First Order could track them through hyperspace this fight was about to get a hell of lot harder. They needed to dystory this new technology, and if possible, find a way to block it. She looked at Finn and Rose for a long moment, measuring them up a bit, and then she asked, “If I can get the two of you on that ship…”

“I could get the device!” Rose jumped in. “If I can get my hands on it, tinker with it a bit, I could maybe find a way to block its ability to track us!”

Finn explained where it would most likely be on the ship and said he could take them to it, but then questioned their ability to get on the ship. That was Snoke’s ship, not just some random star destroyer. Getting on that ship would be impossible.

Amilyn smiled. “We’re very good at impossible things, Finn. The two of you head down to the shuttle bay. I’m going to have someone meet you down there.” Rose gave an excited salute and a yes ma’am, while Finn was a bit more reserved and nervous about the idea. Rose dashed off but before Finn was to far away she called him back. “Finn, be careful.” She looked at both young men and softened a bit. “If anything happened to either of you, Rey would be devastated, so no heroics, Finn. Understood?”

“Yes Admiral.” Finn said with a nod.

“Good.” Amilyn replied. “Dismissed.” Amilyn ordered before walking over to a comm unit. “Commander Sella, I have a job for you.”

Finn knew the First Order, Rose knew machines, and Korr Sella had proven time and time again that no computer could hold out against her for long. Sella had once, at a very young age at that, hacked the droids of a powerful crime boss and was able to find evidence that he’d been funneling money to shadow companies in the Outer Rim for the First Order. They each had their skills, but this would be in no way an easy, and Amilyn hoped she hadn’t just sent these three young people on a suicide mission. In the meantime, she had a mission of her own. Returning to the bridge she checked their position. Still not close enough. “Maintain course, steady as she goes, and keep as much distance as possible.”

As soon as she had the chance Amilyn went down to medical to check on Leia. She sat beside her
love and gently wrapped her fingers around Leia’s. She told Leia what was happening, giving her updates on the fleet and where they stood. She told her how they may have found out how the First Order had tracked them, and that she’d dispatched a hopeful solution. Then she sighed softly. “If anything happens to Finn, your daughter will never forgive me.”

“Our daughter,” Leia’s horse voice whispered. “Loves you, and would understand.”

Amilyn’s head snapped up and tears welled in her eyes. “Leia.”

“Hi.” Leia said as she slowly opened her eyes and smiled at Amilyn.

“Thank the Force.” Amilyn said as she moved the monitors above Leia so she could lean down and kiss her love.

Leia could hardly believe she was alive. It had all felt like some strange dream or nightmare, being blasted out into space, the icy cold that crept over her skin, the inability to breathe, and then flying back to the ship. She allowed Kalonia to fuss over her with no gripping on her part because she was lost in her own thoughts. And because Harter Kalonia had been her doctor for ages and Leia’s gripping would fall on deaf ears anyway, so what was the point? Once the doctor was reassured she was alright Leia was allowed to dress and leave medical but only with the assistance of a cane. That Leia protested. “I don’t need a damn walking stick.”

“You’re still weak.” Kalonia replied. “If you want to leave this room on your own you’ll do it with a cane, otherwise I will have you escorted to the transports by medics.”

Leia opened her mouth to argue but a soft murmur of her name from the corner of the room made her stop and sigh inside. “Fine.”

Amilyn nodded her thanks to Kalonia and told her she should began loading her transport. The injured would be among the first to launch when the time came. Once they were alone Amilyn walked over to Leia and placed her hand on top of Leia’s, which rested on the head of the cane. “I think it makes you look very distinguished.”

“It makes me look and feel kripping old.” Leia moaned. Looking up into Amilyn’s face Leia instantly softened. “I’m sorry, love. I guess I gave you a pretty big scare, huh?”

“A big scare?” Amilyn repeated with a raised eyebrow. “Leia Organa you were sucked into space!”

Leia raised an eyebrow because Amilyn never raised her voice. “Only for a moment. I came right back in, and now I’m fine.”

Amilyn simply shook her head. “You impossible woman.”

When they reached their destination Amilyn gave the evacuation order. Poe was surprised, he even protested the thought of running. They should stay, stand their ground and fight. Amilyn simply looked at him and said, “Hope is like the sun, if you only believe in it when you can see it…”

“You’ll never make it through the night.” Poe finished.

Amilyn smiled softly. “We’re not done fighting, Poe. We have a long hard road ahead of us. But in this moment, in order to still be here to fight, we need to go.”

“I don’t like this.” Poe said as he rolled his shoulders as if the idea of running felt like rough wool on his skin.
“We often have to do what we don’t like.” Amilyn told him. “In order to do what is best.” Looking away from Poe for a moment and over towards Leia. Her smile was sad and soft as she watched Leia reassure Connix and C3PO. Turning back to Poe she said, “I’m counting on you, Captain. They needed you. She’ll need you. So suck it up flyboy and prove to everyone Leia’s right to believe in you.”

Something in Holdo’s tone made Poe stand a little straighter and narrow his eyes a bit. Before he could question her about it she was ordering him to help get people on the transports and dismissing him. He walked away from her reluctantly, and watched over his shoulder as she and Leia moved closer together.

“He’s still pretty rough around the edges.” Amilyn said softly to Leia with a warm smile as they watch Poe get everyone on the ships. “But I like him, and I can see why Rey does too.”

“Me too.” Leia replied and then looked up at Amilyn with a questioning look. “Why did you say it that way? Rey likes him?”

Amilyn laughed softly. “Time to get on your transport, dear.”

Leia glared for a moment and then softened. She nodded and said, “Let’s go.” But Amilyn didn’t move. Turning back to the woman she asked, “Amilyn?”

“For the transports to escape someone needs to stay behind and pilot the cruiser.” Amilyn said firmly. She’d known this would have to happen, thought she had prepared herself for this moment, but she’d been wrong. The way Leia was looking at her, it tore her heart to pieces. “There’s an escape pod near the secondary bridge that’s programmed and ready to go. As soon as I know the transports have made it to the surface safely, I’ll use it. I promise.”

“No, to risky, something could go wrong.” Leia said just as firmly. “No, Amilyn, no, there’s been to many losses. I can’t take anymore. If something goes wrong… I can’t…”

“Sure you can.” Amilyn replies as she reaches out and takes Leia’s hands in her own. “You have always been the strongest person I know, Leia. You taught me how to be strong.” Leaning in Amilyn places a soft kiss to Leia’s cheek. “I’ll be right behind you, love. I promise.”

Leia knew there was no talking Amilyn out of this. “You’d better be. I flew through space to get back to you, you know. You can’t leave me now.”

“I will be with you always.” Amilyn promised. She pressed her forehead to Leia’s and closed her eyes. “May the Force be with you.”

“Always.” Leia replied. “Amilyn, I love you.”

Amilyn kissed her softly. “I love you, Leia, I always have and I always will.”
Chapter 10

It took spending every afternoon for a week at the cove, but Rey managed to lift the X-Wing from it’s depths. At first she’d thought it was about the strength of her powers, but slowly and surely she started to realize it was about focus, pactiance, and determination. When she was finally able to lift the X-Wing up from its watery grave, Rey had been so proud of herself. And better than that, Luke had been proud of her as well. The whole ordeal had left her exhausted, so Luke had given her a day off from training, and Rey had spent most of that day sleeping. Between her training and Ben invading her dreams, she hadn’t slept well in awhile and she needed the rest. The following morning Luke told her she was ready.

Ready for what she didn’t know but for some reason her stomach twisted up with nerves when he told her that they had a long walk ahead of them. He took her to a place on the island that made her feel cold, and filled her with a sense of dread that warned her to stay away. When she peered over the edge of the low cliff and into the massive hole covered in pitch black seaweed, Rey had to fight the urge to run. “What is that place?”

“Darkness.” Luke answered as he watched his niece carefully. “Before we can go any further in your training you must go in there and face whatever's in the darkness.”

Rey swallowed hard as she looked into the pitch black. She could feel something down there and it frightened her. Looking over at her uncle she knew that she had a choice, she could not go and they would continue to train the way they have been, or she could go and move forward. Taking a deep breath Rey launched herself over the side of the small cliff and scampered down to the hole. The closer she got to it the harder she had to fight the impulse to run as far and as fast as she could. Closing her eyes at the edge she steeled herself and then jumped.

She landed in a pool of warm clear water. She clenched her jaw tight to keep herself from gasping at the sight of the gleaming white skulls of creatures who’d died long, long ago. Swimming to the surface she made her way to a ledge and pulled herself up. The rock walls all around her were black as space without stars and pulsing with darkness. One of the walls, the one directly in front of her, was as smooth and reflective as a mirror. She was drawn to it, and despite the cold radiating off it, Rey inched closer. Reaching out she pressed her fingertips to the smooth glass surface and coldness consumed her.

Suddenly Rey was surrounded by the mirror but instead of seeing her own reflection, she saw the reflections of the people she loved. Han, Leia, Amilyn, Finn, Poe, Luke, Chewie, and even Ben as she had seen him in her memories, they all surrounded her and for a moment the cold and darkness of the cave vanished in their warmth. But then the cold returned, and this time it brought with it the eerie red flickering light of an angry lightsaber. Kylo Ren appeared beside the reflection of her father, and Rey watched for a second time as Han died at Kylo’s hands. When the Kylo appeared behind the reflection of Leia, Rey reached for her own lightsaber and ignited it. She surged forward, but Kylo was faster and Leia was gone just like Han. One by one the people she loved fell to the angry red hissing lightsaber until Rey was alone, panting, on her knees as tears streamed down her face.

She was alone again, alone and unloved, unwanted, forgotten. She felt Kylo move closer and hold out his hand to her. She looked up into his masked face, and she could feel a silent promise. Take his hand and he would give them all back. Join him and together they could keep them safe. Give in to the darkness and she could have the kind of power that would ensure she was never alone again. Rey stared for a long moment and then tightened her hand around her lightsaber hilt, ignited
it, and swung at him, severing his outstretched arm at the elbow.

The images all faded and Rey once again found herself in the dark cave. Wiping the tears from her face she pushed to her feet and made her way out of the cave and back to the huts where Luke waited with a pot of Amilyn’s tea freshly brewed and piping hot. She wrapped her hands around the mug, soaking in it’s warmth, and breathing in the sweet fruity scent, allowing it to calm her.

“The Dark Side will play off your greatest fear.” Luke told her after several minutes of silence. “And offer you an easy way around it. You faced the darkness, Rey, and you refused it.” He smiled at her, a warm, proud smile. “Now go get some sleep. You’re going to need it. From here on out, pulling that X-Wing out of the water’s going to be the easiest thing you’ve done.”

Rey nodded but remained by the fire until she’d finished her tea. When she finally went to bed that night she easily fell into a deep sleep, but it was far from restful. The Force did not connect her with Ben that night, but with her mother, and suddenly it was her nightmare come to life. She awoke screaming for her mother as her heart raced, her breathes came short and fast, and tears streamed down her face.

In her dream she saw her mother on the bridge of a ship. Leia’s back was turned towards her, arms spread wide as she grasped the edge of a control table. She wore a dark gray cape over a gray dress and everything about Leia in that moment radiated power and authority. Rey felt pride swell in her chest as well as her lingering disbelief that this incredible woman was her mother. Rey reached out towards Leia in that moment, as if to put her hand on Leia’s shoulder, but then she felt something cold wash over her and she shivered. Ben. Only this time her brother wasn’t invading her dreams. He was close to their mother, Rey could sense him, sense the conflict in him, and the love coming from Leia.

Then there was a bright flash of fire, followed by the coldness of space. Her mother was in grave danger. Rey could feel her life force slipping and she screamed out in the Force as well as into the night. Rey bolted up on her cot and reached out her hand as she cried. “Mama!! Mama!!” She continued to cry out until she felt someone pull her close. “She’s in danger, Uncle Luke! Something’s terribly wrong!”

“I know. I felt it.” Luke wrapped his niece in his arms and held her tight. “It’s alright Rey, she’s alright. Leia’s alright.”

When Rey was calmer she pulled out of her uncle’s embrace and looked into his eyes. “I have to go. I have to go to her.”

Luke nodded his understanding. He had been wavering on whether to go back with Rey or not, but now, now there was no doubt. Leia needed him. Letting go of his niece Luke stands and closes his eyes. He lifts his human hand and stretches it out towards something. His aged face twists a bit as he uses the Force but then he smiles just moments before something bursts through the wall of Rey’s hut and into his hand. Opening his eyes he looked at the hilt of his lightsaber for the first time since arriving on Ahch-to. Looking down at Rey, he smirks at the look of astonishment on her face, and then says, “So what are we waiting for, kid? Don’t you know it’s a bad idea to keep your mother waiting?”

Rey continued to look at him with shock for a few moments and then nodded slowly. Luke hadn’t used his powers before, and it was a little startling to see him do so now. Rey had wondered a few times about his lightsaber, he’d refused to even touch hers, and now that she saw it in his hand she wondered where it had been. There would be time to ask questions later. Right now they needed to get to Leia, so she calls out to Chewie to tell him they were leaving and to get the ships ready. They pack quickly, and with Luke’s help they managed to dock his old X-Wing to the Falcon. Because
after spending a week pulling the damn thing out of that stupid cove, there was no way in hell Rey was leaving it behind.

Plugging the tracker bracelet her mother had given her into R2D2 Rey laid in the course that would take them to Leia. As they grew closer Rey could sense them, Leia, Amilyn, and Ben. Ben. He couldn’t do it, he couldn’t fire on Leia, couldn’t hurt his mother. In the short time she had been with her mother and Amilyn she had heard them talk about hope, and how important it was, even if it were just a sliver of it. There was a sliver of Ben Solo left somewhere in Kylo Ren, Rey knew it, she could feel it. She just hoped she could reach it. She could sense that Leia was alright, that she was awake and alive, and with Amilyn. Which made Rey’s choice a lot easier.

“Keep the Falcon out of sight,” Rey told Chewie as she settled into the pod that she’d programmed to take her to Ben. “Until you get my signal.” Chewie grunted and growled at her. “I have to at least try.” She told him. “It’s what he would want me to do and you know it.”

As soon as the Falcon dropped out of hyperspace Chewie launched the pod with Rey in it, and then shook his furry head as he watched the blip of it on his screen as it headed straight for the massive First Order ship. Rey’s stomach twisted painfully as she felt herself getting closer and closer to Ben. There was a darkness coming off that ship that made the cave on Ahch-to feel like a bright sunny day on Jakku. Closing her eyes Rey reached out for a moment, letting her brother know she was coming to him.

When her pod landed in the docking bay of the massive ship Ben was there to greet her. He said nothing as he helped her out of the pod, but he did take her lightsaber, and she let him. She wasn’t here to hurt him or to fight him, she was here to save him. For a long moment they just looked into each other’s eyes, and then Rey reached up and gently touched the scar on Ben’s face. “You didn’t have this in my dreams.” She said softly. “I’m sorry.”

Ben’s reply was to slap restraining cuffs on her wrists. He led her to an elevator and as they ascended Rey did her best to squish all of the sudden doubts she was having about this plan of hers. Luke had warned her this was a mistake, but he didn’t try to stop her, much to her surprise. Coming out of the cave the way she had, had somehow changed his point of view on her. Luke believed in her and that gave her the confidence she needed in the moment. “You don’t have to do this. I can feel the conflict in you, Ben.”

“My Master has agreed to allow you to be my apprentice.” Was Ben’s reply. “All you have to do is give him what he wants.”

Rey bit back a growl of frustration. “And what is it that he wants?”

“They last Jedi.” Ben answered as the elevator doors opened.

Ben pushed her forward and Rey stumbled out of the elevator and into a massive red throne room. The overwhelming icy darkness she had felt as she’d approached the ship, now nearly brought her to her knees as she walked closer to the creature sitting on the throne. Ben did fall to his knee.

“Well done my good and faithful servant.” Snoke said as the Skywalker siblings approached. “My faith in you is restored.” He said to Kylo before turning his attention to the girl. “Young Rey.” His voice was a cold purr. “Or should I address you using your true name?” He paused and hummed softly. “Breha Amidala Organa Solo, welcome.”

The restraints on her wrists pop open and fall to the floor with a clatter. Rey instinctively shakes out her hands. Her heart is racing, but she manages to keep her breathing calm and slow as she looks into the face of evil. This was the creature who had tormented her brother, twisted him, and
stole him away from his family, from her. Well, she was here to steal him back.

“Come closer, child.” Snoke purred.

Rey stood, unwearring, staring him in the eyes.

“So much strength.” Snoke said as he summoned the Jedi’s weapon from Kylo’s hand. “The blood
and power of Darth Vader rushes through you just as it does my young apprentice. I can see why he
wishes to take you on his own, and with the proper training, you could make a valuable addition to
my Knights of Ren.”

Rey continues to stare unflinchingly, definitely, as he speaks.

“Come closer my child.” Snoke repeated, only this time he wasn’t going to wait for her to do it on
her own. Picking her up with the Force he pulls the girl to him. He practically moaned with delight
as he felt her power.

“You understatement us.” Rey told him in a firm and confident tone despite the fear she felt. In that
moment Rey was very much her mother’s daughter. With her chin up, and fire in her eyes, she was
almost the mirror of image of Leia standing up to Vader. “And it will be your downfall.”

Snoke gasped as if what Rey said was of actual concern, and then he laughed, a haunting sound
that echoed through the room. “Foolish child. Do you actually believe you can turn my apprentice
to the Light? Turn him against me? He is mine!” Reaching out he curled his long fingers around
the girl’s head and drew her closer until there were barely inches between their faces. “And soon
youngling, you’ll be mine as well.” He hissed and the raised his voice. “Tell me where Skywalker
is!?”

Fear and anger were rising in Rey, but still she maintained control. “No.”

Ben watched as his Master sent his sister sailing into the air and when Rey began to scream in pain
he flinched ever so slightly, as he fists tightened and pressed hard into the floor.

It was unlike anything Rey had ever felt before. Every cell of her being burned as if on fire, and it
was hard to think of anything else. She screamed in angrish as she felt the creature forcing his way
into her mind. She tried to fight him, tried to keep him out, but he was stronger than she was, and
far more experienced. He violently ripped what he wanted from her mind as he continued to torture
her body. But Luke had taught her well and she was able to hide the smallest details of the truth
behind the repeated lyrics of her mother’s lullaby.

Snoke laughed as he dropped the girl to the floor. “Well, if Luke Skywalker wishes to die on his
little island I will be happy to grant him his last request. We will go to his planet and obliterate it!
But first, we must finish taking care of the rebels.” Picking Rey up again he sent her to his monitor
and activated it so she could see what was happening outside. “Let Hux think it was his technology
that led us to the heart of the Resistance, it’s good for his poor ego. But you child should know the
truth.” Snoke closed his eyes and sucked in a breath of air as if he were tasting something on it,
something deliciously powerful, and then he hums in delight. “The raw untapped power of Leia
Amidala Skywalker.”

Rey twisted in Snoke’s hold, now that her fear was centered on her mother it was harder to keep
control of, as was her growing anger. She would not let him hurt her! “Her name is Organa.” She
hisses out as she manages to move just enough to try and summon her lightsaber, but it merely
twitches on the arm of Snoke’s chair.
Again Snoke’s cold laughter fills the room. “Such spunk! Such fire! I will enjoy breaking you, girl. Now watch as the Resistance dies.”

The thought of her mother dying, of Amilyn dying, gives Rey what she needs but instead of summoning her lightsaber, she calls for Ben’s just as she breaks Snoke’s hold on her. She ignites the angry red blade, feels the way it rattles painfully in her hands, and then charges towards Snoke.

“You have the heart of a true Jedi.” Snoke says as the girl comes at him, a little startled by the force of her power. But with a simple flick of his fingers he sends her flying, knocking the lightsaber from her hands. “Pity.” He once again picks her up and uses the Force to move her across the room. This time he places her right in front of Kylo. “She is lost to you my boy, full of too much Light, I warned you this may be the case once she’d discovered Skywalker. Now you must put an end to the Light, you must put an end to her.”

“Ben!” Rey cries out as she looks into her brother’s eyes. “Ben! Please! Don’t let him do this! Ben, you can’t let him kill our mother! I felt it in you, Ben! I felt it when you couldn’t fire on her! Help me save her! Please!”

Ben dropped his head, his fists flexing painfully in his gloves as he continues pushing against the floor as if trying to push something down inside him.

Snoke roared in anger. “My worthy and faithful apprantance, son of Darkness, and heir apparent to Lord Vader. Prove to her once and for all that you belong to the Dark Side and snuff out the Light!”

Kylo picks up his lightsaber and slowly rises to his feet. He looks into Rey eyes as he moves towards her. His hand flexes around his hilt. “I know what I have do.”

“Ben.” Rey whispers. Snoke laughs, he taunts her, mocks her for believing in the fallacy of hope, belittles her belief that any part of her brother still remains. But Rey continues to look into Ben’s eyes, to reach out to him, begging him to remember who he truly is. She doesn’t look away from him as he turns his lightsaber hilt towards her, as he aims it at her neck. She refuses to look away. If her brother was going to kill her he was going to have to do it looking into her eyes.

But when the sound of the lightsaber igniting fills her ears there’s no red light, no searing pain from it slicing through her flesh. Rey does however hit the floor painfully. Turning her head she sees Snoke on his throne with her blue blade piercing him clean through. She watches as the lightsaber moves forward, slicing Snoke in half, and as it flies towards them. Rey reaches up and catches it, and then turns as she’s getting to her feet to look at her brother before all hell breaks loose. The people in red armor around the room really didn’t like having their Supreme Leader slice in half like a bantha sausage.

They move in unison until they’re back to back, sabers held high, and then Rey fights side by side with her brother as it’s meant to be. She is completely outnumbered and overpowered but Rey allows the Force to guide her, allows her emotions to heighten her connection to the Force, and uses that power to her advantage. She stabs one red guard in the chest, quarters another as she pushes her blade into him and then yanks it upwards after freeing herself from his weapon. When one cuts her with his blade she uses that pain to fuel her own actions. There is a moment when one of the guards kicks her to the floor that Rey wishes she had her staff. She’d gotten better with the saber, but she was just more comfortable swinging her staff. She gets back on her feet and when one of the guard's gets ahold of her, pinning her dominant arm so she can’t use her lightsaber, she lets go of the saber, catching it in her other hand and spinning out of the guard's grasp, dispatching him easily with a swipe of her weapon. When she sees that her brother is trouble she doesn’t hesitate, she throws him their grandfather’s lightsaber.
The room burns around them as Ben uses the blue bladed lightsaber to kill the last of the red guards. They’re both out of breath, Rey trembles as she says they can still save the transports, save their mothers. She turns to Ben.

“Snoke is dead.” Ben pants as he stares at Rey. “Bay.” He says her real name with a sigh of relief. “He’s finally dead. We can finally take our places.”

“What?” Rey replies, confused. “Ben, I don’t understand.”

“Don’t you see? It’s our destiny! I am the grandson of Lord Vader! And you, Breha, you are the daughter and granddaughter of queens!” He shouts at her, but not in an angry way, he almost seems euphoric. “You and I could rule the galaxy together! Me as Supreme Leader, and you, Breha, as Empress!”

“Ben!” Rey shouts. She can’t believe what she’s hearing. Snoke is dead and yet Ben keeps talking as if he’s under Snoke’s control. “You’re delusional! Now come on we have to save…”

“We could finally give them peace, Bay.” Ben continues. “For the first time in their lives Mother and Auntie can live in a galaxy of true peace. They wouldn’t have to spend the rest of their days fighting. Mother could live out her remaining days as the queen she was meant to be, Auntie by her side just as she always has been, happy and at peace.”

He was using her desire to save and protect Leia to manipulate her and it was breaking Rey’s heart. Tears welled in her eyes and streamed down her cheeks.

Ben held out his hand to her. “Bay, join me, please. This is what I have worked so hard towards. This is what everything has been for. Please, Bay, please.”

Rey swallowed the lump in her throat, her stomach churning, her heart breaking. She lifts her hand and stretches it out towards Ben, but not to accept his hand, to call back her lightsaber. Ben roars out in pain, betrayal flooding his eyes and he reaches out for the saber as well. They struggle over this time, Rey doesn’t know why, it had come to her so easily last time. They both reach out to Force push the other, neither of them letting go. The lightsaber shakes and rattles between them until finally it cracks in two, the blast sending them both flying backwards, knocking them unconscious.

Amilyn watched as the transports made their way to the surface. They would be safe on Crait, at least for a little while. They just needed to reach the surface. Her gaze had been locked on Leia’s transport, needing to see it disappear into the planet’s atmosphere, but something pricked at the edge of her senses, making Amilyn turn to look at the attacking ship. While the main weapons of the Supremacy continued to bombard the cruiser, Amilyn noticed a flash of green roar down from someplace near the top. When the blast hit one of the transports Amilyn felt the blast in the very core of her being. Somehow they’d been discovered! She had to protect the remaining transports, she had to protect Leia! Moving to the pilot’s chair Amilyn began moving the ship into position and as she did so she closed her eyes for only a moment and whispered softly, “Forgive me, my loves.”

Rey awoke with a gasp, her mind flooded with images. It wasn’t quite a dream, more like a vision, of Amilyn. Scampering to her feet she went to the view screen, she narrowed her eyes she reached out, searching for why she was suddenly and overwhelming so full of dread. “No.” She whispered. “No! No!! No!!! Ammy what are you doing!”

Snoke’s escape ship was close by. Rey scooped up the broken lightsaber and ran for the ship. She didn’t have time to waste. Minutes, maybe seconds, hardly any time at all.
Leia continued to watch out the transport’s window, scanning the darkness for any sign of Amilyn’s pod, but there was nothing. Nothing until she noticed the Raddus beginning to shift its course. Fear washed over Leia like ice. “Amilyn.” She whispered as she stood and pressed her hand against the glass. “Amilyn, what are you doing?”

For a moment there is only silence. There is no hum of the engines. There are no voices from the people in the transport with her. She does not hear her own voice cry out, nor Poe’s as he calls out her name as her knees give out and she sinks towards the floor. She does not feel Poe grab her or guide her into a seat. For a moment there is only silence and the blinding white light of the Raddus as it hits the Supremacy at hyperspeed. The resulting explosion is so intense Leia has no choice but to turn away from it.

It takes longer than usual for General Organa to surface as Leia trembles, but she manages, she has too. Her people are counting on her as the remaining transports land on Crait, so she begins giving orders. Amilyn obliterated the Supremacy, taking the fleet with it, but Leia knew in her gut the danger wasn’t over. Endor put an end to the Emperor and Vader, but the war continued for months afterwards. Snoke was dead, she felt it, the icy black darkness she had felt was gone now, but the war was far from over. Hell, this day, this one terrible battle wasn’t even over yet. There was no way there weren’t a few survivors and they would have nowhere else to go but down here, on Crait, with them.

Sure enough a shuttle and several Ties were heading right towards them. She had only wanted a moment, a moment to mourn yet again, but the First Order was going to take that from her as well. Leia ordered the doors closed as she turned and headed back inside, but the shuttle managed to make it inside just before the door slammed shut. Grabbing a rifle Leia aimed it at the cockpit. Her anger and grief rose in her chest as the glass canopy popped off, her finger pulled back on the trigger, but then something caused her to shift her aim at the last moment and the shot she fired went between the raised arms sticking out over the glass. A second later a head popped up. Leia blinked. “Finn?”

“Finn! Korrie! Rose! You’re not dead!” Poe cheered beside her. “Where’s my droid!”

Leia watched as young Rose Tico held up a device of some sort and cheered about getting it, and how Korrie had wiped the ship’s computers after copying the plans for it. In her anger and grief Leia had damn near taken Finn’s head off. Drifting away from the group Leia ordered D’acy to use her personal codes to reach out to any allies, and then sank onto a crate. It was sweet of Finn to believe in her, telling the others to have faith because people believed in her. Han believed in her. Amilyn had believed in her when she was just a stupid sixteen year old girl out to change the galaxy and had followed her into this mess willingly and unwaveringly. Now they were both gone, the loves of her life, gone because of her war. The base began to shake above their heads. Leia looked up. The First Order was here.

Poe lead a group out onto the salt flats in skimmers that were so old, Leia was fairly sure they were the same ones she, Han, and Luke used the last time she’d been on this forsaken planet, and they had been rust buckets back then. She was only half paying attention to the comm chatter, rolling her eyes at Poe’s sudden whoop of excitement, assuming he’d been able to blow something up.

“Aren’t you a sight for sore eyes!” Poe’s voice cracked over the comms.

“Well I couldn’t let you have all the fun without me now could I?” Came the reply.

Leia gasped, the numbness that had settled over her ebbing away. “Rey.”

“Let’s see if we can’t take some of the heart off you.” Rey’s voice cracked over the comms.
“You got it, ace.” Poe replied as his teamed chugged along in their battered old machines. A minute or two later his voice once again crackled over the comms. “She’s doing it! They’re following, all of them!”

Finn’s laugh rang out next. “They really hate that ship!”

The ground above their heads continued to shake violently as whatever had survived the destruction of the First Order fleet, now marched towards their stronghold. Leia could feel the anger and hated without having to open herself to it. He was pushing it out as if he wanted to announce himself. Ben. No. Leia closed her eyes, and sighed mournfully. Ben was gone. All she felt now was Kylo Ren. Her son was lost. It felt as if the weight she had been carrying around with her since she was sixteen was finally taking its toll, crushing her slowly, and Leia almost gave into it. Almost. She had heard her daughter’s voice, and now as she lifted her head to look up at the doorway, she knew not all was lost. “Luke.”

“Leia.” Luke said as he walked towards his sister, pulling back the hood of his black robe.

“You came.” Leia said, awed by the sight of him after so long.

“You needed me.” Luke replied as he sat across from her. “I only wish I’d come sooner. Leia, I’m so sorry.”

Leia held up her hand. “I know you are. I’m glad you’re here.”

“I need to face him, Leia.” Luke told her. “Rey tried, but now, now I need to face who he’s become.”

Leia didn’t even try to hold back her tears. “I held out hope for so long, but I know my son is gone.” She shook her head slightly as she whispered. “So many losses.”

Luke stood and leaned down to place a kiss on his sister’s forehead. As he held her face in his hands he smiled. “Don’t give up all of that famous hope of yours just yet, Leia. There are still some sparks left in the galaxy.”

It was Poe who figured out Luke was giving them a distraction. The boy was learning and had brought his team back into the base when it was clear they were on a suicide run. Finn hadn’t been happy about it, but he followed Poe’s orders, would probably follow Poe anywhere, Leia began to realize. They both had a lot more to learn, a lot more growing up to do, but Leia was proud of both of them. The spark that would light the fire. Amilyn would have been proud of them too. The rest of their little band of rebels, however, didn’t quite see the growth in Poe just yet, so when he ordered them all to follow, they looked at her. She nodded, chuckled, and said, “Well, don’t look at me, follow him.”

After lifting an X-Wing out of it’s watery grave moving rocks was easy, but Rey couldn’t help but laugh. One of the first things Luke said to her was that the Force was more than just moving rocks. Closing her eyes Rey reached out and the pile of boulders blocking the opening began to tremble, and then slowly they began to rise and move to the sides, opening a path straight to her. She held them in place until she opened her eyes and saw her mother step into the light of day. Then she let the rocks fall, creating barricades on either side of a path leading up to the waiting Falcon. With their escape secured, Rey called out and rushed forward towards Leia. “Mother!”

“Rey.” Leia breathed out in a silent prayer of thanks that her daughter was safe. The warmth of having Rey in her arms burned away the cold she had felt from the moment Snoke’s ship appeared, though the numbness of her lost still remained.
“I’m so glad you’re alright.” Rey says as she clings to Leia. “I felt… I saw…”

“I’m fine sweetheart.” Leia reassured. She needed to tell Rey about Amilyn, that she was gone, but she just couldn’t bring herself to say it. So she pulled back and reached up to caress Rey’s face, and reminded her that they would have more time to reassure one another once they were all aboard the Falcon.

Rey nodded and then helped her mother up the side of the cliff to the Falcon before going back to help the others. Once everyone was onboard Rey closed the door as she said into her comm, “That’s everyone, Chewie. Let’s get the hell out of here.”

The Falcon lifted off with a Wookie’s roar and speed off planet unnoticed.

Rey made her way to the hold where she knew her mother waited. She could feel the sadness and grief rolling off Leia in crushing waves, and it broke her heart. She had wanted so badly to save Ben, but now she feared that was impossible. Spotting Leia sitting on a crate alone in the center of the room Rey went to her and watched as Leia stood, opening her arms to her once again. She soaked in just as much comfort and reassurance as she gave.

When Rey was sure Leia was alright, when her own heart stopped pounded painfully in her chest, she pulled out of her mother’s arms and looked at Leia for a long moment before she suddenly exclaimed, “Don’t ever scare me like that again, Mother!” Throwing her hands up in frustration she continues, “I mean seriously! What the hell? I leave for a couple of months and you get yourself sucked out into space, and then you get yourself stranded on a giant ball of salt!” Rey rants and then suddenly she’s pointing at a closed door, “And she tries to ram a mega death ship with an empty cruiser at lightspeed while she’s still kiffing on it because she has to save a spark or something!”

Leia turns towards the closed door Rey is pointing at and watches as they part to reveal a disheveled, bloody, but very alive, “Amilyn.” Again the rest of the world melts away and Leia is left in silence as she moves towards the woman she’s loved all her adult life. Was she dreaming? Had she died on Crait and joined Amilyn in the Force? As soon as she was able to Leia reached out, taking Amilyn’s face in her hands. She was warm, and soft, and real. In that moment Leia didn’t care who was watching. She pulled Amilyn in closer and kissed her. She was very real, and very much alive. It was then, as she felt Amilyn’s arms go around her, as she felt Amilyn returning her kiss with just as much love, and relief, that Leia realized she hadn’t felt Amilyn’s death in the Force like she had Han’s. She had been so focused on what she’d seen, she’s missed what she hadn’t felt. Reluctantly Leia pulled out of the kiss and looked into Amilyn’s eyes, her fingers reaching out to trace a trail of dry blood near her temple. “How?”

“I’m not entirely sure.” Amilyn answered as she held Leia and looked into her eyes. “One moment I’m at the helm on the Raddus, my hand on the hyperdrive, and the next I’m waking up here on the Falcon.”

Leia caressed Amilyn’s face once more before turning to look at her daughter. She was the only explanation for why Amilyn was still alive. “Rey?”

“I may have tried some risky Jedi stuff, with help, and a hell of lot of luck?” Rey replied as she squirmed under her mother’s gaze.

“Help?” Leia repeated and then gasped as she remembered. “Luke.”

“Is fine.” Came a gruff voice from behind Amilyn.
Leia blinked. Amilyn shifted them so they were no longer blocking the doorway that lead to a corridor that led to the captain’s cabin. Standing there now, well more like leaning there now, was Luke. He looked different than he had on Crait. On Crait his hair and beard had been short, neatly trimmed, and brown in color. He’d worn black like he use to during the rebellion. But the man slumped against the doorframe now wore tattered robes of cream and his hair was long, unkempt, and gray. “Luke?”

Luke smirked as he looked at Leia. “This time I’m real, I promise.”

Pulling reluctantly out of Amilyn’s arms Leia went to her twin, catching him in her arms just before he collapsed. “Luke?!”

“I’m alright.” Luke promised her. “Just tired. I’m to damn old for this crap.”

Leia couldn’t believe it. Breha, Amilyn, Luke, all thought lost to her at one point or another, and all of them here, now, surrounding her, alive and well. She had wondered how she was going to go on, how she was suppose to continue fighting, but all of her doubt was gone now. This wasn’t the end, it was just the start of something, and Leia was once again filled with incredible hope.
The Millenium Falcon was a light freighter not meant to carry more than a handful of passengers at once, and only for a short amount of time. It had been built and modified to carry stuff, not people. It hadn’t even had a kitchen until Han had put one in for Leia after they were married, and only one small crew ‘fresher. But until they could find a safe place to regroup, what remained of Leia’s small cell of the Resistance was calling the Falcon home. One of the small holds had been turned into a makeshift command center, the larger into living space with makeshift cots and hammocks. It was cramped and uncomfortable, but safe. It had been decided, though by whom Leia wasn’t sure, that despite the lack of personal space, the captain’s cabin was strictly for the family; meaning Leia, Amilyn, Luke and Rey. Chewie was certainly a part of the family but he had his own bunk, because honestly, who would want to share a bunk with a Wookie? Well, aside from maybe the small orange alien flickering on the secure comm channel Leia was using.

“I am so sorry I couldn’t respond sooner, Princess.” Maz Kanata said as she looked at Leia over the connection. “I’ve been dealing with a bit of a labor dispute, and things are just now starting to settle down.”

“It’s alright, Maz.” Leia replied. She had realized pretty early on that there would always be some people out there who just couldn’t let go of who she use to be, no matter how many times she told them she was no longer a princess. Alderaan was long gone, she would tell them, but then Amilyn had reminded her that as long as there were Alderaanians in the galaxy, there would always be a need for an Alderaanian princess for them look up too. “I understand. I’m just glad to hear from you now.”

“I’m already working on a few things that should be helpful.” Maz told her. “Just hold on tight for a little while longer. I’ll be in touch.” Maz smiled at Leia and then turned her focus towards Chewie. “I’ll be in touch with you soon too, you handsome Wookie you.”

Chewie roared excitedly. The little bird creature on his shoulder mimicked the Wookie’s roar. Leia had never seen a Porg before, though it did sort of remind her of a species of cold water flightless swimming birds they had on Alderaan. When she’d first made her way to the cockpit after their escape from Crait, and her reunions with Rey, Amilyn, and Luke, Leia had asked Chewie about his new found companion. Well, she’d asked after Chewie had stopped hugging her and she’d thanked him for keeping Rey safe. Chewie told her that the little Porg, which is what Luke said they were, was annoying and had refused to leave the ship. That it acted as if the Falcon belong to it, so Chewie had named it Lando. Leia had laughed so hard tears had rolled down her cheeks.

Turning to her old friend now Leia checked to make sure they were still good on fuel and supplies. When Chewie reassured her that they were, she thanked him, squeezed his shoulder affectionately, and then left the cockpit to check in with the others. The Supremacy attack had been devastating, but it could have been far worse had Leia not abandoned D’Qar in stages. The first time they’d dropped out of hyperspace Leia had Connix send out a short encrypted message to the leaders of the other two cells, letting them know their status, and Leia’s current orders. “The First Order’s leadership was in chaos. Be the thorn in their side that won’t let them have a moments peace to reorder or rally around one leader or another.” Leia had a feeling the First Order harbored the same fracture the Empire had, that of the more military minded like Hux versus those willing to follow Kylo Ren. They could use that to their advantage. The safety of the surviving members of the New Republic senate also needed to be maintained. But perhaps they could start using the senators’ survival, the loss of Starkiller base, and the destruction of the Supremacy to their advantage. That task she gave to Korrie, who quickly started pulling footage from droids, data storage, and other
places Leia wasn’t sure she wanted to know about.

When Leia felt the Falcon once again jump into hyperspace she knew it was time to give her people a few hour’s rest. Walking into their tiny makeshift command center she asked for updates and was told Greer Sonnel had responded to Leia’s message.

“She’s pretty pissed.” Korrie informed the general. “You know how she is about your safety.”

“Bangel reports the senators are safe, secure, and, um…” Connix says but pauses to find a more professional way of replaying the rest of Zari Bangel’s transmission.

“Whining like cranky toddlers.” Amilyn finishes for the young officer.

“Of course they are.” Leia said with a roll of her eyes. After she’d finished listening to updates and reports she says, “Good work. We’re back in hyperspace for awhile so you should all get some rations and sleep while you can.” Knowing a few of her people will remain to monitor things, Leia turns to leave with Amilyn at her side. “I didn’t see Poe or Finn.”

“Of course you didn’t.” Amilyn replied, a soft smirk tugging at her lips. “You didn’t see Rey either.”

“I told Rey to get some sleep.” Leia replied as they walked along the corridor towards the lounge. Leia didn’t have much of an appetite but she would never refuse caf. “She’s either been in the cockpit flying with Chewie or working on repairs to keep this old thing flying. I don’t think she’s slept since Ahch-to.”

Rey was not use to being around so many people, and knowing that she couldn’t really get away from being around so many people had made her feel more than a little uncomfortable. So in an attempt to find some space where she could breath she moved herself into the closet of the captain’s cabin. At first it was just her and R2, who had asked her to repair some old damage he had. Then Chewie took her droid away by order of her mother, who then insisted she get some sleep. Rey didn’t really want to sleep. Every time she closed her eyes she saw her mother nearly die, the sneer on Snoke’s face, or she relived the moment she’d lost hold of that thin sliver of Ben deep inside of Kylo Ren.

Not wanting to sleep Rey managed to talk Poe and Finn into a game of sabacc. Sitting on the floor of Rey’s little closest the three played and slowly began to open up about what had happened since Rey left. Poe talked about the dreadnought and how those deaths weighted on him. “The General was right.” Poe said as he tossed in his bet. “I wasn’t thinking ahead, I was just focused on the moment, on what I wanted to do, and not what was best for the people under my command.”

“You saw an opportunity, Poe.” Rey replied.

Poe sighed. “A costly one.”

Finn told them what had happened on the Supremacy. “We grabbed some officer uniforms from the laundry and made our way towards the sensor core.” He paused for a moment. The look on his face causing his friends to abandon their cards to move closer to him as he continued. “It turned my stomach to be on one of those ships again, to be surrounded by those uniforms, to hear the clatter of armor again.” Rey scooted closer and took Finn’s hand in hers. His lips ticked ever so slightly upwards. “I don’t know how Commander Sella managed to get us in but she did.”

“Korrie has been at the General’s side since before there was a Resistance.” Poe informed them. “Started out as an intern or something when Leia was still a senator. She’s been building an
information network ever since.”

“Well, she’s pretty impressive.” Finn replied. “So is Rose. While Commander Sella was downloading and wiping the computers, Rose stole their prototype. I watched their backs. We almost made it back to our shuttle, but somehow Phasma found us before we could get away.”

From the corner of the room BB-8 beeps and whistles angrily.

“A BB-9E?” Poe questioned. BB chirped an affirmative, and then beeped in a way that had Poe gasp and laugh. “Hey watch it, buddy. Where did you hear a word like that?” BB refused to answer, but Poe had a pretty good idea. “Maybe you shouldn’t spend so much time with R2. He’s a bad influence.”

“Finn.” Rey said gently. “What happened with Phasma?”

Finn recounted how he and Phasma had faced off, and how he’d made sure the troopers around them all knew she had been the one who lowered the shields on Starkiller base. “She shot the ones closest to us, point blank, in cold blood.”

“I’m sorry, Finn.” Poe said as he reached over to put his hand on Finn’s knee.

“I’m pretty sure others heard.” Finn continued. “If any of them survived, maybe it’ll get around.”

“And Phasma?” Poe asked.

“We fought, she fell off the platform into the fire below.” Finn answered and dropped his head.

Rey moved even closer, their bodies touching now, and Finn put his head on her shoulder. For a long time none of them said anything, each lost in their own thoughts and feelings as they tried to sort out the last few days, weeks, even months. Although Poe came across as open and friendly, Rey knew it had taken a lot of trust on his part to open up about how he’d been feeling guilt and even shame over the loss of lives during the dreadnought attack. For Finn, facing his feelings at all was something new and scary, but he’d willingly put them out there for them to see. Rey sighed softly. She knew it would be her turn soon, not that Poe or Finn would expect her to open up if she didn’t want too, but the offer would be made with a reassuring glance from Finn and an encouraging smile from Poe. She’d thought about just telling them about her time with Luke, her training, and maybe even about her first trial. But that’s not what came out of her mouth when she started to speak.

“Ben wanted me to join him.” She admits, surprising even herself. “He said as much in the forest on Starkiller base. He told me he put me on Jakku to wait until he was ready for his own apprentice. He didn’t so much save me, as kidnapped me.” She paused for a moment to let the anger pass. All that lost time with her mothers, with her father, time she would never get back because Ben had a stupid plan, and a messed up idea about destiny. “After he killed Snoke and we defeated the red guards, he asked me to join him.” She wiped angrily at the tears on her cheeks as she felt Poe shift so he was sitting on her other side, sandwiching her between himself and Finn. “When I refused, when I made my choice to stay in the Light, I watched Ben slip away and I don’t think I’ll ever be able to reach him again.”

“No one was expecting you to save him, Rey.” Finn said softly.

“I was!” Rey snapped at him and then drew her legs up to her chest and wrapped her arms around them. “I wanted too, so badly.”

“That just proves what a good person you are, Rey.” Poe said softly as he drew her into his side
and held her tight. “Despite everything he’d done, the people he’s hurt and killed, you still wanted to save your brother. I’m sorry he wouldn’t let you.”

Rey lifted her head to look at Poe questioningly. “Wouldn’t let me?”

“In order to save him, a part of Ben would have wanted to be saved.” Poe explained. “You couldn’t save Ben because he doesn’t want to be saved. He wants to be Kylo Ren.”

Rey blinked. She wasn’t sure what to say to that.

Silence filled the little closet after that. Thoughts and feelings gave way to tired yawns and slight shifts to find more comfortable positions. Rey fell asleep first with her head on Poe’s chest, her hand in Finn’s their fingers entwined. Finn was next to give in to the execution, his head on Rey’s shoulder. Poe was last, his arm stretched across Rey, and fist full of Finn’s shirt.

And that’s just how Leia and Amilyn found them when they came to check on Rey. Leia looked on with a mix of emotions. While she was glad Ray had made friends, that she was close to someone like Poe whom she trusted, there was something growing between the three that she wasn’t sure what to make of just yet. Amilyn however looked amused, and far more clear on what was happening between their daughter and the boys. Closing the door so they wouldn’t disturb the sleeping young ones Amilyn chuckled softly. “Like mother, like daughter.”

Leia turned to look at Amilyn with narrowing eyes as she crossed her arms over her chest. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Oh come on Leia.” Amilyn replied as she moved towards the bed. “You’re too old to be that naive.”

Leia continued to glare at her lover for another few moments before saying, “You think there’s something going on between them? Something more than friendship? The three of them? All three together?”

“No yet.” Amilyn answered. “But it’s leaning that way, I think.” She sat on the bed and watched as Leia moved to sit beside her. “It’s not surprising. She spent her formative years watching you love two people.”

“Yes, but that was different than what you’re implying.” Leia said as she sat beside Amilyn. “My relationship with you, and my relationship with Han, were two separate entities.”

“Well, yes.” Amilyn said with a slow smirk. “For the moment part.”

“For the most part?” Leia repeated as she looked up into Amilyn’s bright blue eyes. When was the last time she’d told Amilyn the color of her eyes reminded her of sunny days on Alderaan? She’d come so close to losing those eyes and the thought made Leia’s chest hurt.

“There was that time just after Ben was born.” Amilyn said as she got a far away look in her eyes and a loving, playful smile pulled at her lips. “During the celebrations marking the first anniversary of the New Republic.”

Leia thought back and blushed at the memory. “I had way too much corellian whiskey that night.”

Amilyn’s smile grew brighter as she said, “That night on Naboo following the state dinner you were invited too, the night Breha was conceived.”

Leia’s blush grew deeper as she groaned, “Glow wine.” Leia sighed and shook her head as she
chuckled. “Ok, ok, once or twice lines got a little blurred.”

“Your office after the dinner celebrating your many years of service.” Amilyn said brightly. “That time I believe it was a bottle of toniray wine Han had managed to fine, and a rather large bottle of Chandrilan champaign Mon had given you.” Gently tugging on Leia’s sleeve, Amilyn encouraged her to lay back on the bed with her. “I think the young ones have the right idea. We should rest while we can.”

“The three of us and alcohol seems to been a bad idea.” Leia said with a soft chuckle.

“Perhaps.” Amilyn smirked. “But fun nonetheless.”

Still recovering from recent events, Leia wasn’t going to pass up the chance to nap. Laying beside Amilyn she said, “There’s still so much I don’t know about Rey’s life on Jakku. I don’t know if she’s even ready for that kind of thing yet. And Finn, he spent his whole life a stormtrooper, I know he’s unfamiliar with the concept of romantic relations.”

“Then it’s a good thing that it’s Poe they’ve both gravitated towards.” Amilyn replied as she wrapped her arm around Leia. “From what you’ve said of his parents, he grew up in a loving home, with parents in a happy and healthy relationship. If the bond forming between the three of them does turn out romantic, I think it’ll be good for all of them.” Amilyn hummed softly and then added, “But just to be on the safe side, I’ll start working on their star charts in the morning.”

Leia laughed. “You do that my star girl.”

Rey sat in the middle of the captain’s cabin with her fingers deep inside of R2D2. Behind her, her mothers slept so she did her best to speak softly, quietly. “Alright R2.” She says between focused bites of her lower lip. “A few more wires to replace and you’ll be fully functional again.” R2 beeped and Rey smiled. “You’re welcome. This damage seems pretty old. How come Uncle Luke never repaired it?” R2 replied and it made Rey laughed a little too loudly. “Yes, well, I suppose having stubby sausage fingers would make it hard to reach these connections way in the back.” R2 continued with his soft beeps and whistles and Rey nodded. “No, I don’t suppose Mother is very mechanically inclined. Damn good with a blaster though. Poor Finn is convinced she was going to shot his head off. I think that’s why he practically ran out of the room when he realised Mother and Ammy were here.”

The sound of Rey’s laugh had awoken Leia but she didn’t move or even open her eyes. It was rude, she knew that, but she just wanted to listen to the cute conversation Rey was having with R2. She did feel a flash of guilt when Rey mentioned Finn. She had let her anger and grief get the better of her in that moment, and she wasn’t proud of it. She tensed up a little as she thought about that moment, about how easy it would have been to give in to her anger, and then she relaxed when she felt Amilyn tighten her hold on her. It shouldn’t have surprised her that Amilyn was awake as well. It was very rare for one of them to sleep longer than the other when they were together.

A small spark inside of R2’s casing made Rey yelp and withdraw her hand. “Powers back to that sector.” She said before sticking her shock burned finger in her mouth.

R2 gave a little yelp of his own, his dome twisting back and forth a couple of times before it stops and he starts projecting random images from his memory core. At first the images were scrambled, flickering before anyone can make sense of what they were seeing, but then the images slowed and stabilized. A young girl of thirteen or fourteen in orange robes knelt down so she was at eye level with R2’s holo recorder. The same girl slightly older dressed in fine red robes, the headpiece of the Queen of Naboo upon her head sitting in a throne. The young woman in a simple white dress and blue robe, hair down in long curls, laughing, and smiling.
“She’s beautiful.” Rey said softly as she looked at the young woman, her head tilted slightly as she took in her features. “Who is she?”

“My mother.” Leia said softly. Her eyes had snapped open when she heard Rey yelp, but before she could ask if her daughter was ok R2 began playing holos of her mother and Leia’s breath got caught in her chest. “My birth mother, that is. Mine and Luke’s.”

“She’s your grandmother, Starlight.” Amilyn said gently as she rubbed Leia’s back comfortably. “Padme Amidala Naberrie.”

“Amidala?” Rey repeated as she continued to stare at the blue holo projected image of Padme. Before they’d fallen asleep Poe had tried to encourage her to talk to Leia about what happen in Snoke’s throne room. He told her that Leia would want to know, that she would be there for Rey and help her through what she was feeling. Rey had been unsure about telling her mother because she was still feeling as if she’d failed Leia by not being able to reach Ben.

Something in Rey’s voice had Leia moving closer to the girl. “Rey?”

Rey looked up as her mother sank into a chair close by. She chewed her lip as she struggled with her thoughts and feelings. She’d been sitting cross legged on the floor as she worked on R2, but now she was scooting back a little so she could draw her knees up to her chest and hug them as she said, “Snoke used that name, he said it twice, once when saying my real name, and,” She paused to look up at her mother. “When he sensed you on the transport. He called you Leia Amidala Skywalker.”

Leia couldn’t hide the shock on her face. No one knew her by that name, or at least no one still living other than Luke. The only reason they even knew their mother had named them was because Luke apparently talked to dead Jedi from time to time. Leia looked from Rey to Amilyn. They had both wondered how the Supremacy had known to fire on the transports. They had potioned the Raddus to block a visual view of them, and Rose Tico’s bafflers had masking their energy signatures. Leia suddenly felt sick, but the look Amilyn gave her said this wasn’t her fault, and they would talk about it later. Right now they needed to focus on Rey.

Surrounded by the support of her mothers Rey continued telling them everything. She told them about Snoke, about the pain she’d felt, about how Snoke died and how she’d fought alongside Ben and the way that made her feel. She struggled to admit that she might have given in to the Dark Side a little during the fight and Amilyn must have noticed because Rey felt her settle beside her on the floor and put her arm around her. She stiffened, unsure she deserved the comfort.

“It’s alright Rey.” Leia reassured her daughter. “You were fighting for your life and used everything available to you to protect yourself and your brother.” She paused for a moment and then admitted. “I know how it feels, to give in for a moment and use that kind of power. I’ve done it.”

Rey’s eyes went wide as she stared at her mother. “You have?”

Leia nodded. “When I killed Jabba the Hutt.”

“You killed a Hutt?” Rey said in awe.

Before Leia could reply R2 played the holo recording of Leia strangling Jabba on his sand sailer with a slave chain. Leia frowned at the droid. “Why do you still have that?” R2 beeped and whistled. “What do you mean Han told you not to delete it!”
Rey was starting to understand why Luke was always telling her to talk to Leia. It wasn’t just that Leia was her mother, it was that Leia could understand her in ways he couldn’t. Luke had dedicated himself to the old ways of the Jedi, but Leia was more flexible when it came to the Force. Leia was honorable, kind, compassionate, strong, a good person down to her core, and yet she had drawn from the Dark Side, used it without allowing it to corrupt her. Rey had drawn from the Dark Side to fight the red guards, but when Ben gave her the choice, Rey choose the Light.

“He said you and Ammy could finally live in peace.” Rey said softly once Leia was done fussing at R2. When she felt her mothers’ focus on her again she continued. “Ben. He wanted me to be his apprentice. It’s why he hid me away in the first place, so one day we could rule the galaxy together. He thinks that because of who are grandparents were it’s our destiny or something.”

“That’s what the Dark Side does, Rey.” Leia said as she moved closer to her daughter. “It twists and corrupts and fuels the need for power.” She could see the shame and regret in Rey’s eyes and it broke her heart. Taking Rey’s hands in her own Leia continued. “Snoke used Ben’s fears and insecurities to lure him to the Dark Side, but it was Ben’s choice to embrace it. It’s Ben’s choice to remain in the darkness and ignore the call of the light. You did everything you possibly could, Rey, but Ben made his choice just as you made yours.” Letting go of her daughter’s hands Leia reached for her face and looked into Rey’s eyes as she said, “I’m proud of you Rey.”

Rey’s fears and regret melted away at hearing those words and she easily fell into her mother’s embrace.

After several moments Amilyn could sense the need to lighten the mood so she looked at R2 and said teasingly. “R2, would you send that holo of Leia to my personal…”

“Don’t you dare!” Leia said, cutting Amilyn off.

Rey laughed softly as she tried to be discreet at wiping away her tears and failing miserably. “What exactly were you wearing in the holo, Mother?”

“You just nevermind what I was wearing.” Leia replied with a huff as she wiped at Rey’s tears for her. Turning her attention to R2 she demanded, “What else are you hiding in that memory bank of yours?”

The next holo R2 projected was of Padme and a handsome young man in black robes standing in front of an older man wearing ceremonial robes. Leia gasped softly when she realized what she was watching. After finding out who her birth father was from Luke on Endor, she couldn’t shake her curiosity about her birth mother. It took some digging but Leia had been able to discover that Anakin Skywalker had spent a lot of time with a certain young senator from Naboo, even acting as her own personal Jedi bodyguard at one point. It wasn’t until a rather drunk Mon Mothma had mistakenly called her by her mother’s name that Leia had known for certain that Padme was her mother. Padme Amidala had been a remarkable woman, intelligent, brave, compassionate, accomplished. And Leia had spent a lot of time wondering how a woman like Padme had fallen in with a man like Vader. It wasn’t until much later in her life that Leia realized Padme hadn’t fallen for Vader, that the man she’d loved had been Anakin, and Anakin was not the same as Vader. Seeing the holo of their secret marriage play out now was bittersweet, and Leia could actually take comfort in knowing she and Luke had been conceived in love.

It was Amylin who noticed Rey’s reaction as she watched the young couple projecting from R2’s memory. Nudging Leia gently she directs the other woman’s attention to their daughter as she asks, “Starlight, what is it?”

Rey stares at the man in the holo as she struggles to grab hold of a memory trying to bubble up
from the depths of her mind. She bites her lip and lets her eyes trace the man’s face. Finally she replies, “I know him, well, no, I don’t know him, but I’ve seen him before.”

“How Rey?” Leia asks with concern as she watched her daughter struggle to remember.

Rey closes her eyes and focuses on the memory.

“Breha.” A firm but gentle voice calls out. “Breha, I need you to wake up. Come now. Wake up. That’s a good girl.”

Bay’s eyes flutter open to see a man she doesn’t know but isn’t afraid of despite the fact that he’s kind of glowy and blue. She rubs her eyes sleepily as she asks, “What’s going on?”

“The temple isn’t safe, Breha.” The man says. “You have to run.” Fear wells in the girl’s dark eyes, Padme’s eyes. The man smiles reassuringly at her. “Breha Amidala Organa Solo, you are brave and strong, just like your mother, and her mothers before her.” He sighs softly and drops his head for a moment before once again looking up at her. “I’ve tried, but I can’t stop what’s going to happen, so I need you to be brave and strong, Breha, I need you to run. Run as fast and far from the temple as you can, and hide. Hide until your uncle, and only your uncle, comes for you. Do you understand?”

Bay doesn’t know why but she nods. She can sense that it’s ok to trust him.

“Good girl.” The man says. “Now come, I will lead you out of the temple and show you which way to go.”

Rey opens her eyes, her breaths short and quick, tears welling in her eyes though she doesn’t know why. She looks at her mother and says, “The night the temple was attacked. He’s the man who told me to run. Who is he?”

“Anakin Skywalker.” Leia answers, stunned and full of conflicting emotions. Her voice is low and shaky and she adds. “My father.”

“Anakin Skywalker?” Rey repeated, looking very confused. “But how…”

“Luke says that certain Jedi, Master Yoda, Master Obi Wan, and his master, can somehow retain their individual presence in the Force.” Leia explains. “And so can Anakin.”

Rey blinked. So her once evil grandfather had come to her as a what? A ghost? To save her from what was happening that night? And what had he meant, he’d tried but couldn’t stop what was about to happen?

Any further discussion was cut short when the ship dropped out of hyperspace. Leia felt it moments before it happened, she knew the rhythms of this old ship like she knew her own heartbeat, but her thoughts weren’t on the ship at that moment. Anakin had appeared to her once, many, many years ago, and she had sent him away. Her anger and pain over Alderaan, her capture and torture, and worse of all what he’d done to Han, had still be fresh and hot. She could not, would not, hear him out. It wasn’t until many years later after discovering the journals of her grandmother that Leia would come to understand Anakin Skywalker hadn’t always been Darth Vader. He had been a clever little boy who liked to race pods, and help people when he could, who liked to play with his friends and was meant for great things. A boy loved by his mother, always, no matter what. Leia had a lot in common with Shmi Skywalker.

Leia’s comm beeped. It was Connix telling her they’d reserved an encoded message for her. Sighing softly Leia replied she’d be there as soon as she could. Then she struggled to her feet,
moaning softly about getting old, and then reached for her cane. She hesitated, not wanting to leave Rey but the girl told her to go, that she would be alright. Amilyn said she would stay behind with Rey and Leia smiled gratefully.

The message was encrypted using codes that only Leia would know, old codes that she hadn’t seen since the Rebellion. As she connected her personal comm to the message to open a secure channel she pushed her feelings about finding out her father’s Force ghost had saved her little girl, while his Dark Side self continued to fuel her son’s fall further and further into the darkness, out of her mind. When the comms connected and the image of the man took shape on the little holographic emitter, Leia smiled a genuine smile. “Lando Calrissian. Aren’t you a sight for old eyes.”

Lando bowed with a swish of his cape. “Leia. As beautiful as ever, Princess.” His smile is playful and charming because he’s Lando and can’t help himself. “I’m sorry it took me so long to get in touch, but I think you’ll find it worth the wait. I hear you’re looking for a secure place to crash for awhile. I think I have just the pad for you.”

“Well I’ll be damned! You finally found the kid!”

Luke snorted as he and Lando closed the distance between them. “I’m hardly a kid.”

The two men and long time friends embraced. Lando pulled back shaking his head in disbelief and clapped Luke on the shoulder. “Kid, son of a bantha’s ass, doesn’t matter what I call ya, what matters is that you’re finally back where you belong.”

Lando’s smile brightened and his eyes went wide when he saw Luke coming down the ramp. “Well I’ll be damned! You finally found the kid!”

“I can’t argue with that.” Leia replied. While she had ordered almost everyone to stay on the Falcon, a few had given her certain looks that said they weren’t about to let her off the ship alone. Amilyn had been one, Luke and Rey were the others.

Lando’s smile brightened and his eyes went wide when he saw Luke coming down the ramp. “Well I’ll be damned! You finally found the kid!”

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Lando groaned good naturedly. “Why does everyone keep calling me a bantha’s ass?”

“Because you’ve acting like one for over a decade.” Came a voice from the top of the ramp.

Lando’s gaze shot towards the unfamiliar voice. When the girl came down the ramp into clear
view his eyes went wide once again. Something about her seemed familiar, but what took him by surprise was the belt and holster around her waist. It was Han’s belt, his holster, and his blaster at her side.

“Be nice to your uncle, Starlight.” Amilyn scolded half heartedly. “He knows how he acted. He doesn’t need us constantly reminding him that he was a bantha’s ass.”


“Leia?” Lando questioned while Amilyn and Luke teased each other.

“I have a lot to tell you.” Leia replied when she followed his gaze to Rey.

“I can’t wait to hear it.” Lando replied. “But first let’s get you somewhere safe.”

When he offered his arm she smiled and accepted it gladly. “Thank you, old friend.”
Chapter 12

The last place Leia expected Lando to take them was the Bespin system. She tried to recall what she knew about the system these days, what intel she had on Cloud City, but couldn’t really recall anything. She had lost track of it years ago. As the freighter came up on Bespin, Leia’s thoughts were bombarded with memories. She told Han she loved him just before her father had him frozen in carbonite following hours of torture. She had first realized there was a connection she couldn’t explain between herself and Luke here, though it would still be awhile before she would find out why they shared that connection.

As the gas giant appeared in front of them Leia leaned forward in her seat, her eyes narrowing. The planet didn’t look the same as she remembered. It’s swirling gases were different somehow, they almost looked sick in away. “Lando?”

“Bespin’s seen better days.” Lando explained from the pilot's seat. “After Endor, Cloud City spent the next couple of decades shifting from one warlord to another. The last one, a relic of a crazy ass Imperial, decided that if he couldn’t have the tibanna no one could. So just before he was pushed out by a band of ruthless pirates, he positioned the planet. By the time the people who remained on Cloud City realized it, it was too late. The tractor beams sucked up enough of the changed gas that it caused an explosion that took out the city's repulsorlift engines, knocking the city out of orbit.”

Leia watched as Lando flew them past Bespin towards one of it's far off moons. “Cloud CIty’s gone?”

Lando nodded. “Most of it crashed into the planet. Thankfully Lobot and I were able to get most of the people off. Though at that point it was mostly pirates, smugglers, bounty hunters. All the decent folks had long since fled the constant violence of take over after take over.”

Reaching over Leia put her hand on Lando’s arm. “I’m sorry, Lando.”

“It’s for the best.” Lando replied, flashing her a brilliant smile. “A few years ago Maz found something interesting on one of the moons.” As he spoke he flew straight towards a mid sized habitable moon. “She reached out to me and we partnered up to see what we could do with her discovery.”

Leia turned her attention back to the viewport as the ship broke through the atmosphere of the moon. Squinting a bit she could just make out a circular shape in the surface. Her eyes went wide when she realized what she must be seeing. “Lando, is that…”

“Use to be.” Lando answered. “Cloud City is gone, everyone knows that, everyone knows it fell into Bespin, lost to the damaged gases. This place doesn’t exist, so no one is going to even think to look for you here.”

Before landing the freighter inside the base’s hanger bay Chewie launched the Falcon so he could land it in the base’s bay on it’s own. There was room enough for both ships and about a dozen more small ships. As Leia disembarked from Lando’s ship, she was surprised to see three X-Wings, and an A-Wing already in the bay. Not to mention the crates stacked against the walls. “Lando?”

Lando smiled. “Maz and I thought a place like this might come in handy for our favorite rebel princess. It’s not quite as finished as we were hoping to get it, but it’s got plenty of space, comfortable beds, hot water, all the supplies you’ll need for a few months, and best of all, it’s safe.”
“Lando.” Leia said, feeling relief wash over her for the first time since leaving D’Qar. This felt like a place where they could finally catch their breath and regroup. Taking it all in she asked, “How did you manage all of this?”

“You have many friends, Leia, all of whom are willing to help whenever and however they can.” Lando answered as he smiled down at her.

When no response came while they were on Crait, Leia had begun to wonder if that were true. Then again on Crait, before she knew Amilyn was still alive, before she’d head Rey’s voice over the comms, before seeing her brother again, Leia had come close to her breaking point.

“General.” A young woman with dark hair, dark eyes, and a smattering of freckles across her nose called out. She was coming towards them from the other side of the bay where the old wings were. “General Organa, we got your message. I’m sorry we couldn’t be any help at the battle. But I hope these will make up for it.”

Leia’s smile grew as she closed the distance between herself and the young woman. “Zay Versio.”

Zay smiled as she hugged the general warmly. “I’m glad to see you’re alright, General.”

“Same here, Zay.” Leia replied. “What are you doing here? You’re last report said you and Shriv were still suring up allies in the Outer Rim.”

Zay smiled warmly as she replied. “When you get a message saying Leia Organa needs your help you drop everything to go help. We were on our way back when we got a message from Maz.” Zay continued despite the roll of Leia’s eyes and amused smirk. “She wanted to know how possible it would be for us to get our hands on some wings.” Dio, Zay’s ID10 seeker droid, chirped something about it not being easy from over Zay’s shoulder. Zay shrugged it off. “No one said anything about easy, Dio, just possible.” Returning her attention to Leia she added, “Shriv is on his way with another A-Wing. I know they’re more than a bit battered and old, but they were the best we could do on such short notice.”

Leia could hear the voices of her people from across the bay and smiled. “No worries, Zay. I know a few people who can get those wings up and running in no time.”

“Poe!” Rey hissed at the man as he made a beeline not for one of the old beat up wings, but the shiny black and red one on the other side of the bay. “Poe stop touching it! That’s not yours!”

“But look at it!” Poe replied as he let his hand glide over the edge of the X-Wing’s wing. “It’s so beautiful, and it’s even black!”

“If you’ll excuse me, General.” Zay said with a chuckle. “I need to go stop Commander Dameron from molesting my ship.”

Leia laughed and nodded her permission for the girl to go. “Of course Zay, but it’s Captain Dameron at the moment.”

Lando’s attention was drawn once more to the brown haired girl with the Alderaanian braid. Leia had told him about Rey on the flight here, had re-introduced him to her daughter, to Han’s daughter, but hadn’t given him many details.

“How about after I get my people settled you crack open a bottle of whatever really good stuff you have stashed on your ship and we catch each other up?” Leia said after watching Lando watch Rey. She knew what he was looking for, each and every spec of Han he could make out in the girl. She’d done it herself many times. While Rey tended to look more like her, except in stature, a lot
of her personality was Han’s. Leia took comfort in that, knowing that Han lived on in their little
girl.

Lando nodded his agreement. “You can tell me all about her, and I can tell you all about my new
grandson.”

“Grandson?” Leia repeated brightly.

“Lando Calrissian the Third.” Lando said proudly, but then his smile turned a little bittersweet as
he added. “But we call him Solo, after the man who saved his life before he was even born.”

Leia’s heart squeezed in her chest. Reaching out she put her hand on Lando’s arm again. “I look
forward to hearing that story.”

Across the bay Rey watched as Poe hugged a dark haired girl who was about her age, who’d come
over to yell at him playfully for touching her X-Wing. There was a tiny little flicker of something
in Rey’s chest that she couldn't describe as she watched the way Poe laughed and smiled so easily
as he hugged the other girl. It was the same tiny little flicker of something strange she felt
whenever she saw Finn hug Rose. The feeling made her frown but she managed to put on a small
smile when Poe pulled away from the girl to introduce them all.

“Guys.” Poe said brightly to Rey and Finn. Finn had helped unload the injured, and then watched
as they were taken from the hanger bay to what he assumed was medical. Then he’d joined his
friends because the way Rey teased Poe always made his chest feel warm, and he liked that feeling.
“This is Zay Versio. Zay, this is Finn.” Poe paused to let the two greet each other and then
continued. “And this is Rey Organa.”

Rey blinked. In the whirlwind that her life had become it hadn’t really dawned on her that she now
had surnames. She was still dealing with having a family. But of course having a family meant
having a family name. Several actually, since both Snoke and her grandfather’s ghost had rattled
off nearly half a dozen, each holding meaning and weight. Rey wasn’t sure she could bare that
weight. For so long she had simply been Rey, a random name off the side of a helmet because for
some strange reason she’d liked the sound it, found it comforting when she would whisper it
outloud. Since being reunited with her mothers she’d heard Amilyn call her and Leia her rays of
sunlight and star light several times and was starting to think that’s why the name had appealed to
her so much. Plus it was better than being called a sandmite or just girl, which is what Unkar had
called her. She had been just Rey the scavenger, the sand rat from Jakku, longer than she’d been
Breha Organa Solo at this point. Did she even have the right to use that name anymore?

“It’s Organa Solo actually.” Leia’s voice cut in as if answering Rey’s question.

Rey looked at Leia a little wide eyed and then smiled when her mother looked at her that way. The
way a mother looks at her child to reassure her yet again that she is where she belongs. Rey Organa
Solo. Rey Solo. She liked the sound of that, she liked the way it felt, the warmth it caused. Rey
smiled at her mother and then at Zay and said, “It’s nice to meet you.”

They all chatted for a few moments until Zay excused herself. Apparently Maz had a lead on
something special for Leia and as soon as Shriv arrived they’d be off to see if they could get their
hands on it, so she had some things to prepare before he got there. Then Leia called everyone
together to let them know what was going on, and to give out orders. They would need to make
sure the base was secure, not that she didn’t trust Lando, but they had procalls to follow. She knew
they were all running on empty, and she told them how much she appreciated them pushing
through, and then she promised, “Once we’re set up and secure, we will all get some much needed
downtime to catch our breaths and deal with what’s happened, I promise.”
Everyone understood and quickly got to their assignments. Connix would make sure everyone had a room to call home while they were here. D’acy would contact the other cells to let them know their status, but not their location for now. Leia assigned Finn to the teams who would see what they had in way of supplies. Poe would come with her and Amilyn to see what they had in the way of defensives, and to get a general idea of the structure. Luke was familiar with the old Cloud City just as she was so he and Rey would also have a look around. She gave everyone two hours and then they would all report back here to see where they stood.

As they walked the corridors Luke could sense that Rey was ill at ease. He watched as her eyes darted around as if she somehow recognized her surroundings as a place from a bad memory. When he asked her about it she explained how she’d seen a flash of these corridors in the vision she had when she’d found the lightsaber. Luke hummed and stroked his beard. “The first time I faced Vader, it was here, in this place, in these halls, with my father’s lightsaber. I had no kriffing idea what I was doing.” He explained with a shake of his head. Then he looked at her for a long moment and added, “I would bet that you’ve inherited a very rare ability from your mother.” He explained as they walked. “Leia has the ability to sense strong echoes left in the Force. The old texts call it psychometry. Though she doesn’t really know that’s what it is. You know how your mother feels about her powers.”

“She claims not to have any.” Rey replied.

“Your mother’s abilities with Force are more natural, more instinctual.” Luke said with a nod. “And I think that suits her a lot more than being a Jedi would have.”

Rey nods and thinks about what Leia said to her about how she’d killed the hutt. Maybe her mother had the right of it, maybe balance in the Force was something far more personal. The Jedi ending the Sith wasn’t balancing the Force, it was making it Light sided. The Sith wiping out the Jedi made it Dark sided. What if finding Balance in the Force was being able to draw from the Dark Side while staying firmly in the Light? Was that even possible?

“Rey?” Luke said a bit sharply to get his niece’s attention.

“Hmm?” Rey replied and then turned to look at her uncle. “What? Sorry.”

“I said,” Luke repeated with a shake of his head. “You need to start on repairing your lightsaber.”

“Right.” Rey replied. “And how do I do that?”

Luke rolled his eyes as he pulled an old battered journal from his robe and held it out to Rey. “Read this.”

“What is it?” Rey asks as she takes the book.


But it wasn’t really hers though, was it? It belonged to Anakin Skywalker, her grandfather, the man who saved her life at the temple. Reaching up Rey pinched the bridge of her nose in a way that Leia was known to do. She still had so much to learn about who she was, about her relationships with the people in her life who were living, and now she needed to figure out how the dead played into all of this?

“I know it can feel overwhelming.” Luke said gently as they began making their way back to the hanger bay. “But you got this, Rey.”
“How do you know?” Rey asked.

Luke smiled. “You are your parents’ daughter.”

With the new base secure Leia’s small band of survivors were given their room assignments and an allotment of supplies. Then they were dismissed with twenty four hours of personal time before they were all expected to be ready to pick up the fight again. Leia and Amilyn were given the largest of the rooms and were able to get some time alone before Lando showed up with several bottles of glow wine, Corellian whiskey, and a sweet Riosan mead that he knew Leia was found of. Lando also arrived with Luke and Chewie in tow, both looking as if socializing was not high on their list of things to do at the moment, but Lando could be hard to refuse.

Sitting beside Amilyn on the sofa Leia told Lando how Rey had come back into her life, how Han had shown up with this swany girl from Jakku with Leia’s eyes, Han’s smile, and no idea who she was. “Han knew. He’d figured it out and brought her home to me.”

Lando swirled the ice in his drink and then said, “I found him on Corellia in a drunken stupor. I’d never seen him so broken before. I managed to get him off planet. It took another month before he was sober enough to tell me what happened.”

“My fault.” Luke said from where he sat in a chair across from his sister. “I should have known Breha wasn’t…”

“Luke.” Leia said with a shake of her head. “Don’t. We felt her presence leave the Force, what else were we supposed to think? We had no idea our father’s Force ghost told her to run from the temple that night. Or that Ben would block her memories and conceal her presence from us, and then take her to a planet that was so far from nowhere it makes Tatooine look like a vacation hot spot.”

Luke looked up from his drink and stared at his sister for a moment before saying, “Wait, what was that about Father?”

Leia hummed and shook her head. “No, I am not dealing with those issues tonight. We’ll talk about it later. Tonight is about Han, and Gial, and those we’ve recently lost.”

Chewie roared his agreement and Lando poured everyone another drink. They told stories of Han the smuggler, Han the war hero, and Han the father. “Han was freaking out. I’d never seen him lose his cool like that before. And Ben, Ben was no help at all.” Luke snorted. “He just kept telling Han, “Mother’s going to be so mad at you.” and Han just kept telling him, “Well your mother doesn’t need to know.” and I was just having too much fun watching Chewie pick up random people and roar in their faces.”

“You lost my three year old daughter on Lothal!” Leia yelled at her brother, her dark eyes wide as she glared at him.

“Only for a couple of minutes!” Luke replied. “Ten, maybe fifteen tops. We found her, safe and sound, eating star berries with a green haired boy who promised Han he wouldn’t tell his mother if Han would let him fly the Falcon.”

Leia blinked, dug around in her own memory for what she would have been doing at that time, and why Han would even be on Lothal, and then she laughed. “It must have Jacen Syndulla. I think Han and Hera were working cargo together back then.”

More drinks were poured, and more stories told.
“Han was allergic to cats.” Leia said with a fond smile. “But he just couldn’t say no.”

“He was also scared of Mon.” Amilyn added as she pulled pins from Leia’s hair and played with the tumbling braids. “He wasn’t going to tell her she couldn’t give Bay a kitten for her birthday.”

“Han wasn’t afraid of Mon.” Leia replied with a dismissive snort.

“Yes he was.” Amilyn, Luke, Lando and Chewie all replied.

Luke laughed. “She threatened to give him to the Hutts personally if he ever hurt you.”

“My fate would have been having to work personally with the Council of Mothers.” Amilyn said with a groan. “I’d have died of boredom in a gray dress and crimson robe.”

Leia hadn’t known that. She knew that because of her friendships with Bail and Breha, as well as Padme, Mon Mothma had been protective of her. But she had no idea Mon had threatened Han and Amilyn on her behalf. It made her miss her mentor and friend all the more, and Leia was once again reminded of all the loss in her life.

As promised Lando told them about his son, who went by the nickname Chance, and how the young man had fallen in love with a Crimson Dawn slave girl. The two ran off together and managed to live on the run for several years before the gang was able to catch up with them, mostly because Crimson Dawn just wasn’t what it use to be. His daughter-in-law was pregnant when they were discovered, and if not for Han both she and Lando’s grandchild would have been taken by Crimson Dawn. For saving his wife’s life, and keeping his son out of slavery, Chance had decided to call his son Solo in honor of Han.

Just when they thought they were nearing the end of the bottles Lando had brought he produced a few more. That’s when the good natured teasing and the loud boisterous laughter started. Leia laughed about having to keep Ewoks from trying to eat Gial on Endor, and Chewie replied that she should have let them eat the stormtroopers. Luke mentioned going back to Hoth, and that he was fairly sure the wumpas had eaten a few. Of course bringing up Hoth meant Chewie just had to tease Leia.

“I only kissed him to piss off Han!” Leia said loudly and defensively as Luke, Chewie and Lando laughed. “And to be fair I had no idea he was my brother!” The boys laughed harder and Leia huffed. “Oh fuck off!”

Amilyn chuckled as she hushed her drunk lover. “You’re so adorably crass when you’re drunk.”

“I’m not drunk.” Leia grumbled.

Outside the door to her mothers’ quarters Rey could hear the laughter and was curious as to what was going on inside. She had been helping Poe work on the old busted X-Wing he’d claimed as his own until he declared enough was enough for one night. Then he went on the hunt for some drinks and Finn, while Rey was put in charge of finding food and cards. She was on her way to her quarters which were next to her mothers’, and bigger than the shared room the boys’ had been given, when she heard a roar of Wookie laughter coming from her mothers’ room. Careful not to trigger the door’s release she pressed her ear up against it and listened. She couldn’t really make out what was being said, but she was fairly certain she’d just heard her mother, the princess, tell someone to fuck off.

“What’cha doin’?” Poe whispered into Rey’s ear after sneaking up on her.

Rey yelped and jumped back from the door, which caused her to crash right into Poe. Spinning to
face him, finding herself nose to nose with him, she huffed and slapped his chest before pushing him back. “Don’t do that!” She hissed at him. “I’m not doing anything!”

Poe was laughing hard and Finn was smiling as he said, “You know eavesdropping is really rude.”

“I wasn’t eavesdropping!” Rey huffed at them.

Throwing his arm over Rey’s shoulder, Poe started guiding her away from the General’s door and down the corridor towards her own. “Ya know Rey.” He said with laughter in his voice and the biggest of his dopy smiles in place. “I’ve been with the Resistance long enough to know that it’s a bad idea to listen in when those two are alone. It’ll scar you for life.”

Being her mother’s daughter Rey pulled a face and pushed Poe away as she groaned, “Oh fuck off!”

“That’s my whole point!” Poe barked out a laugh.

Rey’s room had a half circle sofa around a low table, which is where they deposited their discovered treasures. Poe had found some beer and a bottle of whiskey, while Rey had strange looking fruits that Connix said were safe to eat and absolutely delicious. The slightly older young woman said star berries were among some of her favorites and had smiled when she told Rey she’d like them, trust her. She also managed to find some jerky packets and bags of nuts. While Rey had brought the sabacc set from the Falcon, it was Finn who’d brought something else to do. One of Rose’s crewmates had a collection of old race recordings and he thought his favorite pilots might like to listen to them.

“I know about this one!” Poe said excitedly as he wiggled his sock feet which were resting on top of the low table. He had his fingers wrapped around the neck of brown bottle half full of Yarvin ale, which he’d had half way to his lips when the announcer named the race. “This is the race Sonnel was in! She never talks about her racing days, no matter how much I beg.”

“You mean there’s someone out there other than my mothers who can resist your charming smiles?” Rey teased. Finn laughed.

“I know, hard to believe right?” Poe replied with a snort, playing along. He was well aware of his reputation and to be honest he wasn’t afraid to play on that reputation when he needed too. “I wish this were a holo recording. Sonnel had this beautiful purple RZ A-Wing interceptor.” Poe hummed. “It was a work of art.”

While Poe was describing Greer Sonnel’s racing A-wing in almost perverted detail Rey was making a face. At first Finn thought it was because of the tiny yellowish fruit Rey had just eaten, but as he watched her tilt her head in a certain way he knew it was something more. “Rey? Are you ok?”

Rey nodded and began to describe a woman with black hair, brown eyes, and coppery skin. She explained that she kind of remembered a woman who looked like that giving her a little toy star fighter that looked just like the one Poe was talking about.

“Sonnel worked for Solo on the racing circuit for a little while before joining the General’s senatorial staff.” Poe said gently. “You certainly would have known her before…”

Poe paused, unsure what to say next, and Rey smiled reassuringly at him. “Before my brother turned evil and stole my life away from me.”

“Yeah.” Poe said gently as he reached for Rey’s hand and held it tightly in his own. “That.”
They listened to the rest of the race, cheering on Sonnel as if the race was happening live. They listened to the first stage of a Sabers run, and then Finn asked for clarification on something the announcer said and Poe looked at him with wide disbelieving eyes. He then spent the next hour introducing Finn and Rey to some of his favorite music, including the singer the racing announcer had mentioned. At one point Poe pulls Rey to her feet and shows her how to dance until they hear a commotion in the corridor outside and rush to the door to see what’s going on. They watch in various stages confusion and amusement as Calrissian and Chewie come stumbling out of the General’s quarters. When they’re spotted the two clearly intoxicated men stumbled towards them.

“Han and Leia are my oldest and dearest friends.” Lando says as he pokes Poe in the chest. “And that’s there little girl.” He slurs as he points at Rey. “I will freeze you in carbonate, boy.” Chewie roars, hiccups, and roars again. Lando pokes at Finn and then jerks his thumb at the Wookie. “He says he’ll tear your arms off.”

“Um, what?” Finn replies, confused. Chewie roars again, spraying them with spittle. “Ok, ok, arms off, I get it.”

Rey watches as the two men nod firmly and then start staggering down the hall. “What the hell was that?”

“Funny as hell?” Poe replies, laughing.

The next morning Rey makes her way over to her mothers’ quarters and leaves herself in. There are empty bottles and glasses all over the low table and end tables by the sitting area and Rey just shakes her head and chuckles. Then she calls out, loudly, “Mother? Ammy?”

There’s a soft moan from the bedroom followed by a much louder moan, so Rey headed towards the doorway. She remembers Poe’s teasing from the night before and stops short of going into the room. But she is close enough to the door, kept open by what looked like her mother’s boot, to hear Amilyn’s voice. “Leia, my love, are you trying to Force choke our child?”

Leia’s response was muffled.

Amilyn laughed softly. “Leia, stop trying to Force choke our child. It might actually work.”

Rey laughed, and then suddenly stopped. Leia couldn’t actually Force choke could she? Deciding to take pity on her mothers Rey walked away from the door and across the room to make them some caf and breakfast. When the door chime sounded Rey once again called out louder than she needed to, “I’ll get it.”

From the bedroom Leia muttered something about disrespectful children.

Rey was laughing as she opened the door to find her uncle.

Luke held up a couple medical packets and a bottle of orange liquid. “I figured your mothers would need this.”

“You don’t look any worse for wear.” Rey said as she allowed her uncle in.

“Old Jedi trick I learned from Obi Wan’s journals.” Luke explained. “Jedi were expected to respect cultural practices of the worlds they were on, but they also needed to keep their wits about them. So they had a way of damping the effects of intoxicants.”

“Which is a good thing.” Leia said as she finally came out of the bedroom in a robe, her hair down, her eyes pinched from the pounding headache she was suffering. “The last time you got drunk you
made some ridiculous bet with Mara about stealing a star destroyer and painting it blue and white to match R2.”

Luke tensed when Leia said the name Mara and when she realized she’d said it Leia tensed as well. Rey wanted to ask who Mara was but her mother’s and uncle’s reaction told her that was not a good idea. She stood there watching the twins look at each other, Leia silently apologizing. Luke shook his head and smiled reassuringly. He poured some of the orange stuff into a cup and handed to his sister as well as one of the medical packets. “That should help.”

“Thank you.” Leia said as she accepted his offering.

The family shared breakfast together and then Luke invited Amilyn to come meditate with him and Rey. “I’d ask you to come along but I know you hate mediation.”

“I don’t hate it.” Leia argued. “I’m just not good at it. You three go do your thing. I need to reach out to some people.”

Amilyn frowned a little. “You gave everyone the day off, Leia.”

“If I don’t reach out to Greer she’s going to have a stroke.” Leia replied as she squeezed Amilyn’s hand. “Come find me when you’ve finished, love. We’ll explore a bit.”

Rey brightened a bit as she reported, “I remember her, kind of, vaguely. Greer, I mean. I remember she gave me a toy ship.”

Leia smiled a huge smile. With each recovered memory, more and more of Breha was returned to them. Not that she didn’t love Rey just the way she was, and would love her even if she never remembered being Breha, but Leia wouldn’t lie to herself. She wanted Rey to remember how much she had been loved and wanted, to make up for all the years she thought she wasn’t. “She did, it was one of your favorites. I still have it.”

“You do?” Rey replied with surprise.

Leia nodded. “I kept a lot of your favorite things. Ben’s too. They’re in a safe place. Maybe I’ll send for them.”

“I think that’s a lovely idea.” Amilyn said brightly.

Rey nodded her agreement. “I’d like to remember more.”

“You will Rey.” Luke reassured. “No need to rush it, it’ll come, just be patient.”
Chapter 13

It hadn’t been easy but with a mix of what she’d read in Ben Kenobi’s journal and her own know how Rey managed to put the Skywalker lightsaber back together. Somewhat. The hilt was back in one piece, but the crystal had been damaged. The blue blade now hissed and sputtered when it was ignited, and Rey was finding it hard to hold in her hands let alone wield it. Kenobi’s journal had detailed instructions on how to build a lightsaber. It even explained kyber crystals, their colors and the meaning behind each color, and how to go about finding a crystal. Not that the entry about finding crystals was all that helpful. It basically said that a crystal called to the Jedi it was meant to be with, or to one that it has a strong connection to. As Rey read the lightsaber entries again she reached up to finger the small piece of blue crystal she couldn’t get back into her grandfather’s saber. It no longer fit in the lightsaber itself so Rey mounted it in a bit of wire and leather string, and wore it around her neck.

Rey knew what she needed to do, she just didn’t have a clue how to go about it. She could gather the other materials she would need, in fact she already had. She had a small crate under her bed full of things that she could use to build a hilt. But where would she find a kyber crystal? Kyber crystals were rare, especially clear ones, and somehow she just knew she would need a clear one.

The answer came to her in the form of a faint song hummed deep within a field of stars that she didn’t know. When the stars she saw in her meditations started to invade her dreams Rey knew she had to go, she just didn’t know where to yet. There was however at least one person on this base that might, and she felt kind of stupid for not thinking of going to her for help sooner.

Stepping into her mother’s quarters Rey called out, “Ammy?”

“Starlight!” Amilyn’s voice rang out from the bedroom. “I’ll be out in a moment, dear.”

Rey nodded in response as if Amilyn could see her through the walls, then walked over to sit on the sofa. With her elbow propped up and her head resting on her hand, Rey picked at the fuzzies on the throw over the back of the couch. Her mother was so use to living on the run that Leia kept a small case full of personal items that she could grab quickly during an evacuation. One of the items in that case was the old hand woven Alderaanian blanket Rey was now running her fingertips over. Like her mother, Rey could sense when Amilyn was about to enter a room, if she wasn’t distracted by something else, so she turned to look at the doorway just as Amilyn step out in a pair of simple leggings and an old tunic, her hair freshly dyed. The pink Amilyn had been sporting since before fleeing D’Qar had faded quite a bit, with no way for her to touch up the color. Early that morning before the first briefing of the day Rey had watched her mother retrieve a box from one of the crates of supplies Lando had delivered. Following the briefing, Rey watched Leia give the box to Amilyn. The way Amilyn’s face had lit up when she’d opened it made Rey feel a rush of warmth. Looking at Amilyn now, Rey understood what must have been in the box, replacement dyes for the ones Amilyn had lost on the Ninka.

Rey smiled at her Ammy, and raised her eyebrow in such a way that she was practically mimicking Leia. “That is a seriously deep red. I like it.”

Amilyn beamed. She was clearly still very touched by Leia’s simple gift. “I was aiming for something close to the red on Crait.”

“Really?” Rey replied as she stood so she could hug Amilyn. “Why?”

“I found the color quite striking.” Amilyn replied simply as she held Rey tightly in her arms. When
she pulled away she took Rey’s face into her hands and looked her over carefully before smiling at her. “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, Ammy.” Rey reassured.

Amilyn hummed softly in a way that meant she didn’t really believe that. She knew that Rey had been putting a lot of hours in the hangar bay working on the starfighters, on top of her training with Luke. Taking Rey’s hands she sat, pulling the girl down to sit beside her. “Talk to me, Starlight.”

Rey bit her lip and then explained everything to Amilyn, the way it felt to wield the Skywalker lightsaber, and about how she felt she needed a crystal of her own. She told Amilyn about the feeling of being called somewhere when she meditates. “But all I see is a field of stars that I’ve never seen before.” Rey groaned softly and then looked up into Amilyn’s icy and yet warm blue eyes. “I was kind of hoping you could help me.”

“Can you show me?” Amilyn asked without hesitation because of course she would help Rey. She would do anything for Rey, just as she would Leia. She would fight for them, die for them, and certainly search the stars for them.

“I think so.” Rey said with a nod. “Are you sure?”

Taking Rey’s hand in her own once more Amilyn stood and pulled Rey to her feet. She led them to the center of the room where they could sit face to face, legs crossed, an arms length apart, just the way they had when Amilyn first taught Rey to meditate. While Luke was Rey’s Jedi Master, he was hardly her only teacher when it came to the Force. Amilyn smiled lovingly at the girl across from her as she waited for Rey to wrap her hands around her wrists, as she did the same to Rey’s. Then she closed her eyes and together they took long, slow, deep breaths until their breathing and the hearts were in rhythm.

Slowly Rey’s vision came through their bond and into focus for Amilyn to see. As soon as she could see the field of stars clearly she knew them instantly. The scene around them began to shift and change, and they were no longer looking just at a field of stars. The stars now painted the night sky beyond a white marble balcony and the two girls standing at it’s railing. Girls, because that is in fact what they were. Girls thrown into a world of giants and expected to survive, but just girls all the same.

Rey had seen holos and had visions of her mother from the past before, but she wasn’t sure she’d ever seen her look quite so young. Leia had always come across as older then she was in the recordings because she was Princess Leia or Senator Organa. And she was larger than life in the visions Rey had because the image of her was from the perspective of tiny Breha Solo. But here, in what was clearly one of Amilyn’s memories, Rey saw the girl Leia truly was at the time.

Young Leia stood at the railing, her simple white shimmer silk nightgown and robe fluttered around her ankles in the gentle breeze. Her long chestnut brown hair ran down her spin in a loose braid. Her head was tilted back just a bit as she gazed up at the stars, the moonlight illuminating her features in a beautiful silver light.

Beside Rey, Amilyn gasped ever so softly, making Rey turn and look at her. She was smiling, her eyes simmering with tears. She wanted to say something, to ask what they were seeing, but then she heard her mother’s young voice and turned back towards young Leia. Even her mother’s voice sounded younger, lighter somehow, and Rey knew this moment was before. Before everything that would turn Leia into the woman she knew today.

“Something’s about to happen.” Young Leia said softly. “I can feel it.”
The girl standing beside young Leia was tall and slender, dressed in a pale blue nightgown, and a vibrant green robe which was open and fluttering around her like a silk cape in the breeze. While young Leia wore slippers, young Amilyn’s feet were bare. Her hair was long, well past her shoulders, loose and wavy, and turquoise in color. Turning away from the stars above to look at young Leia, she asked, “One of your gut feelings?”

Rey could tell from the movement of young Amilyn’s chest that she’d had the same reaction to seeing young Leia with the moonlight on her face, as the Amilyn standing beside her. It filled Rey’s heart with warmth to see and feel just how much her mother was loved, then and now.

Young Leia nodded. “It has me thinking.”

“Oh dear.” Young Amilyn teased.

Young Leia rolled her eyes as she turned so she could stand face to face with young Amilyn. “Everything is about to change. It’s about to get chaotic and messy, and dangerous, and I can’t stop thinking that life is too short to be so limiting.”

Young Amilyn raised an eyebrow as she looked down into young Leia’s face. “Limiting how?”

Young Leia reached out and gently fisted the fabric of Amilyn’s robe, pulling her closer, but then she stopped when they were mere inches apart. “I really, really want to kiss you, Amilyn. I have for awhile now. I think… I feel… I just…”

“Leia.” Young Amilyn replied in a breathless whisper. “It’s very sweet of you to ask first, but you never have to ask to kiss me. Just kiss me.”

Young Leia smiled brightly and then closed the remaining distance between them and kissed young Amilyn. When the kiss ended they pressed their foreheads together, both smiling happily. It was young Amilyn who spoke first. “I have been in love with you since the first time I drew out your star charts.”

Young Leia laughed a soft, husky sounding laugh. “Star charts? Not from the first moment you saw me?”

“The first time I saw you, it wasn’t really you, not the real you so few get to see.” Young Amilyn replied. Reaching up she held young Leia’s face in her hands as she closed her eyes. “Have I ever told you that every one hundred standard years Alderaan and Gatalenta are perfectly aligned, and remain so for one full cycle.”

Young Leia shook her head as best she could with her forehead pressed to young Amilyn’s and young Amilyn’s soft warm hands holding her face. “No, I don’t think you ever have.”

“The last time they were perfectly aligned was nineteen years ago.” Young Amilyn continued. “The year of our births.” Opening her eyes to look into young Leia’s she smiled a bright, blissful smile. “Our alignment was written in the stars, Leia. I have always believed that. I was just waiting on you to be willing to see it.”

“Well,” Young Leia said softly, her voice now husky and laced with amusement. “I don’t know about all of that, but what I do know, at least I know it now, is that I love you Amilyn, and I needed you…”

“I need you too.” Young Amilyn said before pulling Leia into a heated kiss.

This time when they parted young Leia laughed. “That isn’t what I meant in that moment, Amilyn,
but since you mentioned it, stay with me tonight instead of returning to your room?”

“You don’t need to see anymore, Starlight.” The Amilyn beside Rey said, her voice thick with emotion and her eyes filled with tears of joy.

Rey nodded, understanding where this was going and agreeing wholeheartedly that she didn’t need to see that. She broke the connection between them, allowing the memory to recede back into Amilyn’s mind. When she opened her eyes she looked at the woman sat across from her and was about to apologize for invading Amilyn’s memories, but Amilyn beat her too it.

“I’m sorry, Starlight.” Amilyn said softly as she wiped at the wetness on her cheeks. “I seem to have hijacked your vision.”

“Ammy.” Rey said softly as she looked into Amilyn’s eyes. “Where did that happen? The stars in your memory, they’re the stars from my vision.”

Amilyn rose slowly to her feet and then held out her hand to help Rey up as well. “That was the night before your mother’s nineteenth birthday.” She explained as they moved back to the sofa. “On the balcony outside of Leia’s room, in the royal palace, on…”

“Alderaan.” Rey gasped.

Amilyn nodded. At the confused look on Rey’s face, Amilyn explained that the remains of Alderaan were now an asteroid belt and a site of pilgrimage for surviving Alderaanians and their descendants. “You’re being called to Alderaan for a reason, and an important one I think. It’s a trip you need to take, and one I know Leia would like very much to share with you. Talk to your mother, Starlight.”

Rey bit her lip, still looking unsure. “I don’t want to cause her any more pain, Ammy. She’s been through so much the last few months.”

“She’s suffered more in her life than anyone should ever have too.” Amilyn replied. “But sharing Alderaan with you isn’t something she would have to suffer through because it’s something she’s always wanted to do. When you were born, and she decided to give you her mother’s name, she knew that someday she would take you to Alderaan and share those precious memories with you.” Amilyn smiled lovingly as she reached out to tuck a strand of hair behind Rey’s ear. “Talk to your mother, Starlight.”

Amilyn made it sound so easy. Just go to Leia and bring up her long dead homeworld and the horrific event that took her parents away from her. Rey understood how hard things like that could be to talk about. It was hard for Rey to talk about what Ben did, how he had taken so many years with her parents away from her. She didn’t know what was going to happen, how things would shake out when it came to Kylo Ren, but Rey would never forgive Ben for killing Han. Never. So how was she supposed to just walk up and ask Leia about Alderaan? Rey still couldn't shake the look on Leia’s face when she told her about seeing Anakin’s ghost at the temple. What kind of emotion would see watch play out on her mother’s face when she made her remember Bail and Breha?

Stepping into the command center Rey watched as Poe followed a flustered looking Leia around the room and it made her smirk. She couldn’t quite tell what he was saying but it was clear he was asking for something, and Leia was reluctant to give it to him. When Poe spotted her standing there he called out to her and Rey jumped a little.

“Rey!” Poe said as he drug her into the conversation. “Tell her I need to go.”
“Um, go where?” Rey asked, looking confused.

“‘To get the rest of Black Squadron.’ Poe informed her. “Threepio picked up a distress call, we know where they are, I just need to go and give them a chance to get out of the mess their in.”

Rey’s dark eyes flickered back and forth between Poe and her mother. Poe was looking at her so he didn’t see the way the corner of Leia’s lip twitched as if she wanted to smirk. Rey was learning to read her mother, and she was fairly sure this was one of those moments where she was trying to teach Poe something. So Rey threw up her hands and shook her head. “Don’t drag me into this. What makes you think I’d have a better chance at changing her mind than you do?” Poe started to reply and Rey glared at him. “I swear if you say because I’m her daughter I’m going to punch you. You’re asking your general, your leader, for permission to take on a dangerous mission. You’re not asking my mother if you can take me to see a holo.”

Poe deflated a bit. “You’re right.” He sighed. “That was low, and unprofessional. It’s just that they need help, and we need them, and we don’t leave people behind. Every one of us matters, everyone. Finn said the First Order just leaves their injured behind because if they were weak enough to get hurt that bad in the first place they’re not worth anything to the First Order. That’s not how we work. Once you’re one of us, once you’re apart of the Resistance, you don’t get left behind.”

Leia was smiling. That’s what she had wanted to hear. She wanted to know he had a reason other then running off to play hero. Poe needed to learn, to understand, that his actions had meaning, not only for himself, but for others, and for the people who were watching them. “Alright Poe, you can go. I want them back as much as you do. You’re right, each one of them matters.”

Poe’s smile was huge and bright. “Thank you General!”

“Get yourself ready.” Leia ordered.

Rey stood there smiling as Poe ran off to prepare for his mission. When she felt her mother walk up beside her she said, “You were going to let him go anyway, weren’t you?”

“Maybe.” Leia replied, still smirking. Then she turned to look at Rey and asked, “So, what do you need, sweetheart?”

“Oh, um, I…” Rey squeaked.

“General.” Connix called out from her station which made Rey sigh in relief. “I’m getting a docking request from two unknown ships.”

Leia spun on her heel and walked over to Connix as she asked, “Authorization codes from the pilots?”

“No yet.” Connix reported.

“What kind of ships?” Rey asked, having followed her mother to Connix’s station.

“One seems to be some kind of transport, and the other a starfighter.” Connix answered. She tapped at her controls for a moment and then said, “Receiving pilot clearance codes now. It’s Inferno Squad, ma’am.”

“Confirm that it’s them and then give them permission to land.” Leia ordered.

It wasn’t as glossy white as it use to be, it’s hull was scared with scorch marks, and pocked with
dents, but the unique W shape of the ship was unmistakable. It had been years since Leia laid eyes on her personal ship but she would know it anywhere. “Zay. Where the hell did you manage to find the Mirrorbright?”

“Maz found it, helped acquire it from Garkkus the Hutt, and we’re delivering it.” Zay replied simply. “Also picked up a gift for Captain Dameron.” She indicated the black starfighter they’d brought in. “I thought it might ease the pain of losing Black One.”

“I think the only thing Maz hasn’t been able to find is Skywalker.” The Duros beside Zay snarked.

“I found him.” Rey said as she continued looking at the ship in front of them. Though it didn’t give her the same feeling the Falcon did, it did seem familiar to her in a comforting kind of way. Jerking her thumb over her shoulder towards the doors that lead into the base she said, “He’s back there somewhere meditating.”

Shriv turned to look at the girl he didn’t know and blinked. “Who are you?”

Rey turned to look at him as she replied, “I’m Rey.”

Leia smiled brightly as she said, “I’m not sure if you ever had the chance to meet when she was little, Shriv. This is Breha, my daughter.”

“Oh.” Shriv said and then blinked. “Wait, what?”

Rey easily allowed herself to get distracted by the new ship. The First Order would be on the lookout for the Falcon, so Leia had ordered it grounded for the time being. Chewie wasn’t happy about it but he understood. He was working with Lando and Maz on supply runs to keep himself useful and busy. Since they couldn’t use the Falcon, the Mirrorbright would come in handy, so Rey set to work on any repairs it needed after making sure Poe’s new starfighter was safe for him to take on his mission. She’d felt that flutter of something in her chest again when he’d hugged and kissed Zay when she presented him with the ship, but she pushed it away and focused on his little boy with a new toy joy instead.

Luke had known that it would be easier to get a Hutt to give up it’s wealth, than it would be to get Leia to talk about their father. So he’d gone right to Rey to find out what Leia had meant about Anakin’s Force ghost and the night his temple was destroyed. Rey told him about her memory, about the man she hadn’t known in that moment but still felt as if she could trust. Luke had pushed the memories of that night so far down that he needed to meditate deeply to reach them. He had put Breha to bed with a story. She loved how he would do the voices for every character, even the high pitched cackling voice he did for one of the villains. He could see her so clearly, tucked into her bed, her favorite doll, a rebel pilot doll he had given her, tucked under her arm. Her hair neatly braided for the first time since Leia had left her with him because Mara had been there to braid it for her. That beautiful, bright, happy little girl had trusted him so completely, believed in him so wholeheartedly, and loved him so unconditionally, and he had failed her.

He had failed all of them that night. Ben. Breha. Leia. Han. Mara.

Luke struggled to keep his emotions and thoughts in check so he could continue retrieving his memory from that night. It wasn’t until he sensed Leia’s presence in the room with him that he was able to dive back in without becoming overwhelmed. He’d been sitting with Mara when he’d felt it, a surge of darkness like an eclipse over the Light. He can see Mara so clearly, the way she had looked at him when she asked him what was wrong, and concern in her eyes when he’d said it was Ben. He told her to stay in the temple with the younglings, while he went to check on Ben in the huts were the older students slept. Before reaching the bottom of the hill Luke had felt a wave of
regret and sadness that was not his own, but in that moment he hadn’t paid much attention to it. Looking back on it now, he realized those feelings felt familiar to him. They were feelings he associated with the words, “Tell your sister you were right.” Only now the words he heard whispered on the night wind were, “Tell your sister I tried, but I could not reach him. Something, someone, is keeping me from him. Tell your sister...”

“Tell your sister what?” Leia asked when Luke’s eyes flew open. She held out a canteen of nutrient water to him as they stared at each other.

Luke accepted the canteen and drank deeply before answering. “I think Father tried to save Ben that night, but he couldn’t reach him.” He closed his eyes, took a slow deep breath, and after letting it out he opened his eyes and looked into Leia’s. “Father wanted me to tell you he was sorry.”

Leia sighed softly. “He came to me once. I don’t think I ever told you that. He came to me as Anakin but all I could see was Vader.” Leia took a deep breath and shook her head as if to say they needed to stop blaming themselves. Ben made his own choices. “The only part of his grandfather’s legacy Ben wants is the Vader part. It’s not surprising he would refuse Anakin.”

Reaching out for his sister’s hand Luke wrapped his fingers around hers and squeezed. For several long moments they just sat there together, taking comfort and strength in each other’s presence. Then Luke sighed and smiled at her and said, “Do you ever think we’re getting too damn old for all this?”

“All the damn time.” Leia replied with a chuckle and then she teased her brother. “You more so than me. You are older after all.”

“By like three minutes.” Luke replied with a laugh.

Rose Tico was great. Rey liked her a lot, she liked how Rose was this mix of sweet and snarky, and that she was fiercely loyal to Amilyn. Everyone on this base was unwaveringly loyal to Leia, it was nice to see some of that loyalty aimed at Amilyn as well. Rey also liked having someone she could talk mechanics with, someone like her who was mostly self taught and could see outside the mechanics manuals. Rey liked Rose, so she didn’t really understand why it bugged her that Rose was really touchy feely with Finn. It was strange because she was glad Finn had Rose and her sister to include amongst his friends, because Rey knew how much Finn worried about people accepting him. Hidden here in what remained of Cloud City on a forgotten moon of a used up planet with Leia’s small cluster of survivors, Finn had found acceptance and appreciation and even respect. But he worried about what people outside their little bubble would think. So Rey was happy that her friend had Rose, who could make him laugh and remind him he was more than just a runaway stormtrooper. But did Rose really need to hug Finn that closely? Or lean so far into him as she whispered teasingly that her lips brushed his ear?

R2 beeped at her, causing Rey to blink and look down at the old blue and white astromech. “What? No I’m not!” R2 whistled long and low. “I am not jealous! Why would I be jealous? I’m not five. I know my friends can have friends.” R2 beeped and rocked a bit. “More than friends? Me and Finn? You must have a busted processor or something.”

“Excuse me, Miss Rey.” Threepio says as he walked up to Rey and R2. Rey had been heading into the mess hall to grab some food before she went to train with her uncle. She’d stopped just inside the doorway when she’d spotted Finn and the Tico sisters. She wasn’t sure when R2 had rolled up beside her.

“Yes Threepio?” Rey replied while glaring at R2.
“You’re mother requests that you join her and Admiral Holdo for the evening meal.” The gold protocol droid informed her.

Rey groaned softly. She still hadn’t been able to work up the nerve to ask her mother about Alderaan. “I don’t really have the time, Threepio. I was just going to grab a protein pack and nutrition drink before meeting with my uncle.”

“Master Luke isn’t expecting you until much later this evening.” Threepio replied. “And he has asked not to be disturbed until then.”

Of course he has, Rey thought with a sigh. She tried to think of another excuse when she heard her name called from across the room. Rose was standing, waving at her and smiling a huge smile. When she made eye contact with Rose the other young woman waved her over and shouted for Rey to join them. Rey smiled. “Sorry, Threepio. I already have plans for the evening. I’m sure my mothers will understand.”

Threepio blinked as he watched Rey walk off. “Princesses.” He grumbled as he turned to leave and report back to his Princess.

Rose was beaming when Rey reached the table. “I don’t think you two had a chance to really meet before.” The shorter, dark haired young woman said. “Paige was with the squad finishing a supply drop, then on the Ninka, and then you left, and then…”

“All hell broke loose.” The slightly older young woman seated beside Rose said.

“Yeah.” Rose said softly before the excitement was back. “Rey, this is my big sister Paige. Paige, this is Rey Solo.”

“It’s nice to meet you Rey.” Paige said as she held out her hand. “I’ve heard a lot about you.”

Rey returned the other young woman’s smile as she shook her hand. “It’s nice to meet you too. I’m glad you’re ok.”

Finn gave Rey a huge smile as she sat across from Rose and Paige. He liked this. He liked having time to spend talking and laughing with his friends, with the people he was growing to care about. Stormtroopers weren’t given time to socialize, they were given just enough time to eat their meals and get back to training, working, or fighting. Finn liked sitting here with a tray of strange food that tasted really good, though after a lifetime of nutrition drinks any kind of real food tasted good to him, listening to his friends talk about random things.

“What’s a fathier?” Rey asked the sisters after hearing that Paige was really into animals and would like very much to see a fathier in real life. Paige explained what one was and Rey’s eyes began to light up. “That sounds amazing.”

“What kinds of animals did you have on Jakku?” Rose asked.

“Nothing that sounds that pretty. Most of the animals on Jakku are meant to survive the sand and heat, like happabores.” Rey said with a shrug. She then went on to describe the massive beast before adding, “I pulled a power converter out of one’s nose once.”

She was about half way through her story of being shoulder deep in a happabores nostial, smirking at the way Finn was cringing, apparently he’d shared a drink with the beast, when Rose and Paige suddenly shot out of their seats to stand at attention. Rey blinked, and then she rolled her eyes.
when she sensed her.

“Admiral.” The Tico sisters said together as Amilyn approached the table.

Amilyn smiled warmly as she came to stand behind Rey, setting her hand on her girl’s shoulder. “Good evening ladies, Finn.” She greeted. “Paige, it’s wonderful to see you back on your feet. How are you feeling?”

“Physically, I’m aces, ma’am.” Paige replied easily.

“And other than physically?” Amilyn asked gently, her gaze raking over the younger woman as if to make sure for herself that Paige was alright.

Paige sighed, allowing her shoulders to droop and her head to drop. “I’m not sure yet. Everything happened so fast. To be honest ma’am, I’m still trying to sort it all out.”

Amilyn nodded her understanding as she tightened her grip a little on Rey’s shoulder. She was still trying to sort it all out herself. She’d come so close to death, and thinking about it now left her feeling shaken and a little cold. She did her best to smile reassuringly at the young women before her though. “Well, I would like to make the same offer to you that I have to the others, Lieutenant. You are more than welcome to join me for mediation before breakfast and the briefing. If nothing else it’s a few moments of peace where you can try to get a hold of your thoughts and feelings, a time to be around those still with us, and a time to remember those we have lost.”

“I might take you up on that ma’am.” Paige replied, and then added. “Congratulations on your promotion Admiral. Rose told me all about what you did. It was a very brave thing to do, ma’am, and I am really glad it worked out for the better.”

Leia had prompted her to full Admiral shortly after they’d arrived on Moon City, as they’d taken to calling it. “Thank you.” Amilyn said softly. “I only wish it were under better circumstances.” She offered another small but warm smile before turning to look at Finn. “I am glad to have run into you Finn. I would very much like you to come see me after the morning briefing. I have a proposition for you.”

Finn nodded. “Of course ma’am.”

“Good.” Amilyn said as she squeezed Rey’s shoulder. “I do hope you young people won’t mind to much, but I’m going to steal Rey away for the evening.”

Finn shot her a look asking if it were ok with her and Rey nodded, giving him a reassuring smile. Then she stood and said her goodbyes to the others, and followed Amilyn out of the mess. They didn’t say much at first but as they grew closer to their section of quarters Amilyn finally broke the silence.

“You’re mother thinks you’ve been avoiding her.” Amilyn said as she glanced over at the girl walking beside her.

“I’ve just been really busy.” Rey replied softly. “I want to help where I can when I’m training with Uncle Luke.”

“You have been immensely helpful, Starlight.” Amilyn reassured. “But you can’t simply ignore the Force when it’s trying to guild you someplace, especially since it isn’t just you it’s calling too.”

Rey turned her head to look up at Amilyn. “What do you mean?”
“Leia has been dreaming of Alderaan too.” Amilyn confided.

It seemed that her mother had been affected by her visions and dreams despite Rey not wanting to hurt or burden her. Sighing softly Rey nodded her head. She would talk to Leia about it tonight. As they continued down the corridor Rey felt a wave of guilt for having made Leia worry about why she’d been so distant over the last few days. Groaning softly to herself she realized she still had a lot to learn about being around people, and about having people in her life she cared about and who cared about her. She’d been so busy trying to protect Leia, it hadn’t dawned on her that as her mother Leia would be concerned about protecting her too.

“Really Amilyn?” Leia said with a roll of her eyes and a hint of a smile when Rey followed her lover into the room. Amilyn simply smiled and said she would make tea to go with their meals. Turning to look at her daughter Leia smiled warmly and said, “Rey…”

“I’m sorry.” Rey said softly. “I wasn’t sure how to bring something up to you and that’s why I’ve been avoiding you. You’ve been through so much in the last few months, I didn’t want to pile onto it by bringing up more bad memories.”

Leia blinked and then moved away from table, motioning for Rey to come sit with her on the couch. “What’s going on sweetheart?”

Rey sat beside her mother, and smiled a little when Leia took her hands in her own to hold tightly, reassuringly. Looking into Leia’s dark eyes, Rey took a deep breath and said, “I need to go to Alderaan.”
Chapter 14

The bright, beautiful, solid blue of hyperspace stretched out all around the Mirrorbright’s viewport. It was quiet, peaceful, and just what Rey needed. Safely tucked into a hyperspace stream in the familiar surroundings of her mother’s personal transport, Rey could savor the feeling of being alone. Not that she didn’t like being around people, being with her family, but for a large chunk of her life she’d been completely on her own. So it wasn’t too strange to think she might need to be alone for a little a while from time to time.

“Here sweetheart.” Leia said as she held out a cup of fresh caf while taking her seat in the co-pilot’s chair.

Well, not totally alone. Rey smiled at her mother gratefully. This was actually the first time since her return that Rey and Leia had been totally alone together. And for some odd reason it was making her a little nervous. Maybe it was because of their destination; the ruins of Alderaan. Though Leia couldn’t explain why Rey would be drawn to Alderaan while meditating on kyber crystals, they didn’t form on Alderaan, she had been more than supportive of the idea of Rey going.

“I would have taken you when you were sixteen.” Leia had explained while Amilyn had poured them tea.

“Why sixteen?” Rey had asked.

“On Alderaan, on the sixteenth anniversary of your Name Day, you would have had your Day of Demand.” Leia had explained. “You would have demanded your right to be considered one of my heirs. You would have then announced what your three challenges would be, Mind, Body, and Heart, and then you’d spend the next year seeing those challenges through.” Leia had to pause for a moment, her mind flooding with memories of her own Day of Demand and everything that had followed. Rey had taken her hand and squeezed it and Leia smiled sadly as she continued. “After the fall of the Empire, Alderaanians would go back to Alderaan, to what remained of Alderaan, to remember the lost. It became known as the Returning.”

Over the next few days they prepared for their journey. Rey trained with Luke and made sure the Mirrorbright was running perfectly and well disguised, while Leia prepared to leave command in Amilyn’s hands. Then they boarded the ship with R2 and took off on a pilgrimage neither one of them was entirely sure they were ready for.

Leia watched the blue of hyperspace rushing past the windows for several moments after Rey had thanked her for the caf. She’d known that the memories were bound to flow on this little sojourn and she was trying to just let them come. She was grateful that the first of what she knew would be many was of Amilyn. “The very first time I meet Amilyn on was Alderaan.” She said suddenly and with a bright smile. She could see Rey turn to look at her through her peripheral vision and continued. “My mother arranged a Pathfinding class for me and invited other members of my Apprentice Legislature class to join. The Pathfinding was part of my training for my Challenge of the Body, she made it a class project because she thought I needed friends my own age.” Leia laughed softly. “She was right of course. You’re grandmother had a bad habit of always being right.”

“That habit must run in the family.” Rey said teasingly while giving her mother a bright, loving smile.
Leia chuckled. “Our first Pathfinding excursion took us to Appenza Peak, the mountain I said I was going to climb to the very top of for my challenge. There were about a dozen of us, all dressed in white all weather gear, standard rucksacks on our backs, all expect for Amilyn. Everything she wore was a different color, her hair was acid green at the time, and she had these ridiculous looking goggles on. I honestly had no idea what to make of her.” Leia shook her head, a fond smile on her lips. “I introduced myself, and ask if she was looking forward to the class, and she replies, “Definitely! I hope it’s dangerous. I want to get more comfortable with the nearness and inevitability of death.” and my first thought was, there’s no kriffing way I’m letting her handle my climbing ropes.”

Rey laughed and shook her head. “Did Ammy have some kind of death wish?”

“Mon certainly thought she did.” Leia replied. “As much as Amilyn loves her home world and her people, Gatalenta fit Amilyn like a cocoon fits a butterfly. She was in the process of breaking free to become herself back then, she was just struggling to hard at first.”

“You obviously stopped thinking she was weird.” Rey said with a cheeky smirk. “I saw Ammy’s memory of your first kiss.”

“By the end of that first year Amilyn had become my best friend.” Leia said softly, her eyes full of love and warmth for the tall gangly girl who would become one of the great loves of her life. “She became the one person other than my parents that I could rely on, trust, and know without doubt would be there for me. She didn’t care that I was Princess Leia of Alderaan, she saw me as just Leia, and that meant the world to me.”

Rey reached over to take her mother’s hand and squeezed it. That look in Leia’s eyes, the beautiful smile on her face, Rey wanted that someday. She wanted someone to make her feel the way Amilyn made her mother feel. She had no idea that there were already hints of that smile on her lips from time to time, and that it tended to pop up whenever Poe or Finn was around. Rey didn’t know that every time she saw one of her boys she got the same look on her face Leia got every time she’d seen Han stepping off the Falcon. She didn’t even realize she’d started thinking of them as her boys.

When they reached the coordinates for what use to be Alderaan the only thing Rey could see was a massive asteroid belt. The Graveyard, her mother had called it as they’d come out of hyperspace. It was hard for Rey to wrap her head around the fact that the expansive field of rocks of various shapes and sizes outside their viewport had once been a vibrant, peaceful, planet full of life. Her thoughts drifted to her brother for a moment. How could Ben have had anything to do with Starkiller base and the destruction of worlds when he knew what had happened to Alderaan? The planet that had nurtured and shaped their mother, was gone. Billions of people died, their grandparents had died, in what had to have been the most terrifying moments of their lives. But then again the Organas weren’t the grandparents that mattered to Ben, where they? The only legacy that mattered to Kylo Ren was that of Darth Vader. Well, if Ben wasn’t going to honor them, then Rey should the hell would.

“What would I have said?” Rey asked softly as she stood beside her mother and watched what remained of Alderaan pass by their viewport. “On my Day of Demand.” She clarified. “What would I have said?”

Coming here wasn’t ever easy for Leia. The grief she carried with her for her planet, her people, her parents, always raged to the surface when she came here. Standing there watching bits of her beautiful, peaceful world float by the window reminded Leia of all the times she had longed to set foot on her home again, to be held in her parents embrace again. Oh how she had longed for her
mother’s comfort and strength during her pregnancies, and her father’s strong yet gentle words of encouragement when she felt she was too tired and beaten down to go on. Her parents had known and adored Amilyn, but she wished she could have introduced them to Han, to Luke, to place their grandson and granddaughter in their arms. Closing her eyes Leia tried to picture the look on her mother’s face when she told her her granddaughter’s name.

When Rey spoke Leia actually jumped. “What?” She asked. Rey repeated her question and Leia blinked. Looking into her daughter’s eyes Leia saw a kind gentle determination that reminded her of Bail. Leia smiled lovingly as she told Rey what she wanted to know. She told Rey what would have been said by Rey herself and before she could tell her what her responses would be, Rey mimicked the words as she looked out at the Graveyard. When Leia realized what Rey was doing her heart swelled and her dark eyes filled with tears. Rey’s Jedi training would easily cover her challenges, and even though Rey never took her gaze from the viewport she did reach for her mother’s hand. Leia held on tightly.

Rey hadn’t expected to be so overwhelmed by the sight of the Graveyard and found herself needing a little time before she actually got around to doing what they had come there to do. Not that she really understood what that was. Luke had told her to trust her instincts. She’d read Obi Wan’s journal and it had told her everything she needed to know about crystals and lightsabers. The rest was up to her. So with her mother watching their backs and R2 linked into the helm, Rey settled on the floor of the small common area of the ship where Leia could see her from the cockpit. She closed her eyes and began to breathe deeply, reaching out to the Force, and seeking out what it was trying to guide her too. The Graveyard had a strong Force echo, probably because of her mother’s presence on the planet as she grew up. Rey continued to breathe deeply and reach out with her feelings, her heart, and soon her mind was filled with images.

A man with tan skin, short black hair, a black beard starting to show specks of silver, wearing a long blue coat, carries a tiny bundle in a white blanket though beautiful ornate hallways to a balcony. A woman in a long dark blue dress sits and waits. Her long black hair is in elaborate braids atop her head, a braided coil headdress nestles into the braids, a long dark blue vail cascaded down from the headdress and over her shoulders. The man places the bundle in the woman's arms.

“She’s beautiful, Bail.” Breha said in a breathy whisper of awe. Her dark eyes fill with tears of joy as she looks down into the bright face of her new child. “Does she have a name?”

“Leia.” Bail answers. “Padme named her Leia.”

“Leia.” Breha repeats as if she is whispering a prayer of thanks.

The start of the echo, Rey realizes. The arrival of her mother on Alderaan, and the joy that brought to Breha and Bail Organa. Another flicker of the past flutters through Rey’s mind. The planet celebrates the Name Day of their new princess. Breha sits on a low leather sofa with her baby daughter in her arms and watches as Bail stares into an open wooden box he’d pulled out of a gift box. His face is hard to read, but it’s tense, and his eyes show anger and fear. He slams the box closed and takes it to a hidden safe in one of the bookshelves that held real paper books.

“I’ve never seen one quite so large before.” Breha said gently as she watched her husband.

Bail sighed as he closed the safe. He slides the wall panel back in place, and replaces the books. He snorted softly as he read the title on one of the spines. The Political History of Naboo. “Nor one so pure.” He added as he turned to face his wife and daughter. “Hopefully she’ll never need to use it as intended.”

Rey saw flashes of Bail and her mother when she was small and pouting as she stared hatefully at a
purple vegetable of some type, of Breha speaking with such command and compassion it was easy to see where Leia had gotten it from. Breha seemed to have pulmonodes of some type, unhidden by flesh for all to see, and Rey wondered why. Several of the memories Rey saw took place in the family’s private library and each time Rey’s attention was drawn to the bookcase and the hidden safe that held that wooden box. Why? What was in that box?

Rey witnesses flashes of her mother’s Day of Demand, the first time Amilyn had braided her mother’s hair, and what she realized in horror must have been her grandparents’ final moments. Bail holding Breha in his arms on the same balcony where he’d given her their new baby daughter. Why was she seeing this? What did any of this have to do with her building her own lightsaber? What was she supposed to be learning here?

She’d learned that her Organa grandparents were kind, compassionate, and brave. They loved and adored their daughter, and they fought against evil to give their daughter and their people a safe, just, and fair galaxy to live in. Bail and Breha Organa had fought and died for everything Kylo Ren was trying to destroy. Luke had said that when a Jedi finds their crystal the crystal becomes attuned to who they are. Rey was still working out who she was. What Rey did know is that she would fight to preserve what her parents, and her grandparents, had fought so hard for.

Rey could hear something, a faint hum of something, music maybe? She wasn’t hearing it with her ears, but in the Force. It kind of reminded her of the feeling she’d had the first time she’d heard Leia humming Mirrorbright. It had that same pull to it, the pull that had drawn her to Leia, and it was now drawing her to something else. Rey reached out for it, pulling it towards her. “R2.” Rey called out softly, still in her meditative trance. “Seal the cargo hold and open the hatch.”

R2 beeped at Leia who shrugged. “Don’t ask me, it’s a Jedi thing.”

After coming out of her meditation Rey went to the cargo hold to see what she’d pulled in and was surprised to find a small fist sized asteroid. The strange hum she’d heard while meditating seemed to be coming from the rock, drawing Rey to it. Reaching out tentatively Rey picked up the rock and her eyes widened in surprise. Half of the asteroid felt warm in her hand while the other was icy cold. Staring at it in her hands Rey wondered, she could move rocks with the Force, could she break them?

“So?” Leia asked when Rey rejoined her in the cockpit.

Rey smiled and held up the warm half of the small asteroid. Nestled inside was a clear kyber crystal.

“Rey.” Leia said, smile beaming. “That’s…” She paused, her eyes narrowing a little. “Do you hear that?”

“Hear what?” Rey replied, her eyes wide.

“I don’t know.” Leia admitted. She looked confused, the soft sound seemed to be coming from where Rey stood.

Rey held up the other half of the asteroid, the half that had felt cold in her hand. Nestled inside the rock was a smaller kyber crystal. “I think this one is meant for you.” Rey said as she held it out to her mother. “Actually, I think the whole thing was meant for you.”

Leia sank into her seat without reaching for the stone Rey was holding out to her. “What do you mean?”
Rey walked over and set both halves between herself and her mother and then sat in the pilot's chair. She told her mother everything she’d seen, even the parts she knew would be hard for Leia to hear. Then Rey reached over and took her mother’s hands in her own and held them tightly. Luke thought it might be another rare Force power, Rey’s ability to share memories and dreams with people she had a connection too. Whatever it was it allowed her to share what she had seen of Bail and Breha’s final moments. It was just a flicker of a moment in the echo around them, but Rey wanted her mother to know just how much her parents had loved her and that she was in their hearts and in their thoughts always.

“Thank you.” Leia said softly, tears welling in her eyes. She stood, and leaned close to kiss Rey’s forehead. Then excused herself. She needed some time alone.

Rey understood. Biting her lip as she watched Leia leave the cockpit and retreat to her quarters, Rey turned to R2 once they were alone. “I need a favor.” The droid beeped and Rey explained what she wanted and he beeped again. “Thanks R2.”

Poe stood at attention in front of Admiral Holdo as he debriefed her on the retrieval of Black Squadron, and the making of new allies. Holdo was so hard to read, and that tended to make him a little more nervous than reporting to Leia made him.

“Well done, Commander Dameron.” Amilyn said after a few very long moments of contemplation. Perhaps a few more moments than was really necessary but Amilyn enjoyed making Poe sweat a bit.

Poe held back a smile. “Commander?”

Amilyn smiled softly and nodded. “You’ve shown a lot of growth and maturity in recent weeks, Commander. I expect it to continue.”

“Thank you Admiral.” Poe replied, letting his smile bloom fully. “And I promise, I won’t let you or the General down again.”

“You’d better not, Commander.” Amilyn warned.

As soon as he was dismissed Poe went to check on his squad. His first stop was medical since some of his crew had been injured while stranded on a planet with the First Order hanging over head, but instead of finding his crewmates he found Finn. Instantly Poe was smiling as he walked up to the younger man. “Finn, buddy, you alright?”

Finn looked up from putting together medic field kits and smiled. “Poe! You’re back!” He stepped away from the table to hug Poe. “Yeah, I’m fine.” He gave Poe a smile that could easily compete with Poe’s biggest and brightest. “I’m training.”

“How? Poe asked, eyebrow raised, his smile shifting into one of pride. Finn could fight, he could fight well, but Poe knew that Finn didn’t like to fight. He was nurtured into an elite soldier, but his heart wasn’t in it.

“We lost a lot of medical staff at the Battle of Crait.” Finn told him. “Dr. Kalonia needed help, and General Organa and Admiral Holdo thought I might be a good fit. Admiral Holdo asked if I’d like to train with the Doc and I said yeah. I want to help, Poe, I want to do more.”

Poe reached out and clapped Finn on the shoulder. “You’re going to be a great medic. We should celebrate! Come find me when you’re off shift and we’ll have some fun.”

“Sounds great.” Finn said easily. It had been awhile since he’d had Poe to himself and he found
that he was looking forward to it.

There had been enough space in the base for Lando to turn one of the extra storerooms into a cantina. It wasn’t much, a makeshift bar stocked with whatever Lando could bring in, and someone had brewed some jet juice. There were empty crates for tables and some old chairs, and someone had rigged up a way to listen to music. Black squadron was already there, decompressing after their mission, when Poe and Finn walked in. Poe really wanted Finn, and Rey when she got back, to meet his crew. It was important to him that they all get along and like each other.

Finn really wasn’t a fan of alcoholic drinks and jet juice was by far the worse. He sputtered and whizzed after one drink and Poe chuckled as he pat the other man’s back. “I said you didn’t have to try it.”

The group laughed and told stories, easily welcoming Finn.

“It was something in the puddling.” Snap Wexley said with a boisterous laugh.

Jess nearly fell over laughing. “I didn’t even know princesses could fart!”

When another round of drinks was needed Snap went with Poe to the bar to get them. While they worked on pouring the drinks Snap smirked as he said, “So, you and Finn.”

Poe looked up from pouring jet juice for Jess. “Me and Finn?”

“You like him.” Snap said knowingly.

“Yeah, I like him, he’s my best friend.” Poe replied.

Snap raised an eyebrow. “Poe, man, you like him.”

Poe blinked, then he blushed and rubbed the back of his neck after giving Snap’s words a moment to truly sink in. “Yeah, ok, maybe I do.” He finally said softly so only Snap could hear him. “But it’s really complicated, Snap.”

“Because he’s a former stormtrooper?” Snap asked.

Poe took a deep breath and admitted, “Because of the General’s daughter.”

Rey had two reasons for returning to Jakku. The first one involved her mother. She had seen glimpses into Leia’s life, and Rey wanted to give her mother the same chance to glimpse into hers. She had heard Leia talking to Han back on D’Qar, the night they had spent together after Leia had unblocked Rey’s mind. They thought Rey was asleep, and Leia had talked about wanting to know what Rey’s life had been like. After having R2 check their intel to make sure Jakku was safe, Rey decided it was time to offer her mother some answers.

The second reason for Rey’s return was because she wanted to see for herself what Kylo had done to Niima Outpost. She had spent a decade of her life among the people of Niima and Rey wanted to pay her respects, to say goodbye. So after they dropped out of hyperspace and she and R2 ran a series of scans to make sure there wasn’t a lingering First Order presence, Rey flew the Mirrorbright planetside. Her stomach twisted a little as the golden surface of the desert planet came into view. It seemed like a lifetime ago that she’d been here, combining those sands for parts that would get her just enough to eat for a day, maybe two. It was such a strange feeling, coming back here now, knowing who she was and why she was there in the first place.

Rey landed the Mirrorbright near her toppled over walker home and smiled. “We’re here.”
Leia had been surprised when Rey told her they were making a stop at Jakku, but then she realized what Rey was doing and it warmed her heart. She had shared Alderaan with Rey, and now Rey was going to share Jakku with her. All through their hyperspace flight Leia had tried to prepare herself for what she would discover on Jakku. She wasn’t really sure how she was going to react to facing the hardships her daughter had lived through alone on this planet away from her, her father, and the people who loved her. Rey had been so young, so small, when Ben left her here to fend for herself until his return. How could he do that? How could he leave his baby sister to fend for herself on a harsh planet like Jakku?

“Here where?” Leia asked as the door of the ship slid open and the ramp extended.

“Home.” Rey said as she led the way to the underside of the walker and the auxilly hatch on his belly that served as her front door. Some of the traps she had placed around her desert home looked as if they had been triggered and Rey frowned a bit. The people of Niima knew better, they knew of her traps, they knew to leave her alone. Then again she’d left, she taken the Falcon and gone, they’d all seen her. Maybe Unkar had sent people to pick her clean as payment for stealing the ship, or maybe… Maybe it had been Kylo.

Her daughter had turned a weapon of war and terror into a home. The troop compartment had a small kitchen area, an old Y-Wing computer, a hammock, and workstation. There was a metal mug on an empty crate with a long dead flower stem in it, it’s withered petals turning to dust on the surface of the crate. On a makeshift set of shelves Leia spots an eerily familiar sight that makes her chest hurt. Reaching out she picks up the little doll made of scraps of cloth and bits of stuffing and has to swallow a sob.

“I made that when I was ten.” Rey said softly when she noticed what her mother had picked up. She’d been looking around to see what had been taken, what had been destroyed, and what she could possibly take with her. “Unkar hired a woman who lived on the ridge to take care of me until I was big enough to do it myself. Ty, her name was, or at least that’s what she was called. He gave her two extra portions on top of whatever he paid her for her day’s work, and told her to keep me alive, and healthy, unharmed. I’d go with her as she scavagened, she taught me how to find the best stuff and how to pull it apart, but there were places she wouldn’t let me go. So I would sit in her sled and wait. She’d give me a bucket of odds and ends and I’d make stuff to play with.”

“When you were,” Leia began but then had to stop to clear the lump in her throat as she blinked quickly to dry up her welling tears before they had a chance to fall. “When you were two your uncle gave you a doll dressed in a orange rebel flight suit. You loved that doll, you couldn’t sleep without it and the stuffed Wookie that Chewie gave you, that I’m still not convinced wasn’t made from actual Wookie fur.”

“It’s proof that deep down I still knew who I was.” Rey said softly as she accepted the doll when her mother held it out to her. She smiled and carefully put it in her bag to take with her. She also took her Cloud City postcard, smiling as she slipped it into her bag. She use to daydream about living in the city in the sky, and now she kind of did.

Leia looked around, taking it all in, wanting to commit it all to memory. This was how her daughter survived, she had made a place for herself in this harsh world, a home, with little touches of who she really was without knowing it.

Rey was surprised that more of her stuff wasn’t wrecked or stolen but as she collected the last of what she wanted to take with her, including the helmet she’d taken her name from, she figured maybe they simply hadn’t had the chance too. After saying a bittersweet goodbye to her walker home Rey flew the shuttle to Niima Outpost.
There was hardly anything left. The tents and stalls set up around the concession stand were all burned to the ground. The concession stand itself was covered in blaster fire on the outside and inside Unkar’s hut, the walls and shelves were covered in scorch marks that Rey knew were caused by a lightsaber. “He killed everyone because I got away.”

“Rey.” Leia said softly as she reached out to wrap her hand around her daughter’s arm. “Don’t. Don’t blame yourself.”

“It’s hard not to.” Rey said softly.

“I know.” Leia replied. “Believe me, I know.”

It had been months since the attack on Niima and the reports the Resistance had gotten said there’d been no survivors. So where had the bodies gone? It wasn’t like Jakku wasn’t littered with bones and bodies mummified by the sand and heat, so who had cleared out Niima Outpost if there were no one left? The answer to Rey’s question had come as she and Leia made their way back to the Mirrorbright.

The woman’s voice was rough and deep as she spoke. “If I had known you’d grow up to join the rebels I’d have told Unkar to kriff off and let you die.”

Mother and daughter drew their blasters simultaneously, aiming them at the woman several feet away. She was around Leia’s age, maybe a bit older, it was hard to tell. Her skin was tan and leathered from years spent scavenging under Jakku’s sun. Her hair was cropped short, salt and pepper in color, and she was dressed in the light colored tattered clothes common to desert dwellers. What had Leia holding her blaster a little more firmly, her finger ready to pulled back on the trigger, was the faded tattoo half way up the woman’s forearm; it was the Imperial crest with tie fighter wings on either side.

“Ty?” Rey replied. She was surprised to see the woman she’d just been telling Leia about. Surprised, and honestly a bit relieved. Not everyone had been killed.

“You know, sandmite, I always wondered what the hell was so special about you?” Ty said as she stood there with the butt of an old Imperial blaster rifle resting on her hip. “I mean, why would a greedy old son of a hutt like Unkar give out extra portions to keep some little brat alive? But I didn’t ask, extra food was extra food and you were handy to have around when it came to small tight spaces.”

Rey was watching the woman’s movements carefully. You never knew when a competing scavenger would attack you for your haul, you had to watch them, watch for the slightest tick of their muscles.

“I find myself asking once again.” Ty continued. “What is so special about you? Why would they leave us all to rot on this hell of a planet? Why didn’t they come for those of us who survived? Who managed to avoid capture by the rebels? But they send a whole unit of troopers to search for you? Lord Vader himself came here looking for you.”

Rey blinked. “Lord Vader? Ty, are you alright?”

“You were a Tie fighter pilot.” Leia says to the woman staring at her daughter in a dangerous way. War and years lived on this planet had clearly done something to her. The woman must have seen Kylo Ren, with his cape and red lightsaber, and thought it was Vader. She had no clue the First Order had razzed Niima to the ground, she thought it was the Empire. “You fought in the Battle of Jakku.”
Ty tore her gaze from Rey to look at the woman standing beside her. She narrowed her sharp green eyes and scowled. “Age can’t hide who you are.” She raised her blaster and took aim. “Princess Leia Organa of Alderaan, traitor to the Empire!”

Rey shot first. It was a disarming shot followed by a Force grab at the blaster. Rey sent it flying close enough that Ty could find it later, but far enough away that she couldn’t make a grab for it now. Rey watched as Ty reached for something in her garment and reacted quickly when the sun gleaned off something metal. She grabs it with the Force and brings it to her own hand.

“The people who came here, who did this, they weren’t Imperials.” Leia said to the woman now clutching her blaster wounded arm. “That was not Darth Vader. That was not the Empire.”

“No one is coming back, Ty.” Rey said softly. Kylo had killed so many innocent people to get to her. She wasn’t going to let him ruin another life. Holding up her hand Rey looked into the eyes of the woman who’d taken care of her for the first couple of years she was on Jakku. Then she said in a firm and commanding voice. “You never saw us here.”

Ty opened her mouth, blinked, and repeated. “I never saw you here.”

“You will find a safe place to live out your life.” Rey continued.

“I will find a safe place to live out my life.” Ty repeated.

Rey lowered her hand. “Goodbye Ty.”

Leia knew that Rey wasn’t simply saying goodbye to the woman who’d been apart of her life here on Jakku, she was saying goodbye to that life. She wanted nothing more than to reach out for her daughter’s hand but knew now wasn’t the time. They needed to get back to the ship and be on their way. It wouldn’t be until they were safely in hyperspace making their first jump towards home that Leia finally asked, “Are you alright, Rey?”

“I don’t know.” Rey said softly after several moments of thought. She turned to look at her mother, taking in the concern, support, and love in Leia’s dark eyes. Rey smiled softly. “I will be though.”
Chapter 15

As the three ships, two X-Wings and Poe’s new, black, one of a kind, advanced class A-Wing, flew through space towards their second jump point, Poe rolled his eyes repeatedly at his crewmates’ good natured teasing. He should have known when he told Temmin “Snap” Wexley about his complicated and complex feelings about Finn and Rey, that Snap would end up telling his wife. Poe didn’t mind. He trusted both Snap, and Karé Kun with not only his life but also his secrets. Plus, maybe Karé would have better advice then Snap.

“Ok, so let me get this straight.” Karé said over their closed comms so only the three of them could hear the conversation. “You have feelings for the ex-stormtrooper.”

“Finn.” Poe said a little sharply. “His name is Finn.”

“Sorry.” Karé replied. “You have feelings for Finn, and you also have feelings for Rey, but you don’t plan on acting on any of those feelings for either one of them?”

“Yeah, that pretty much summons it up.” Poe replies with a nod.

“Ok.” Karé says after a moment of thought. “Let’s work this out one person at a time. Why not talk to Finn about how you feel?”

“Because he was a stormtrooper.” Poe answers. “He was raised from the time he was like two or three to be a soldier, to eat, sleep, breath, feel, battle. He’s just starting to get use to having relationships with mentors and friends he can trust and respect. He’s not ready for something as complicated as romantic feelings.”

“Kind of presumptuous of you to say what Finn is and isn’t ready for without talking to him first.” Came Snap’s voice over the comms.

“Temmin’s right.” Karé adds in. “And damn you for making me say that.”

“Love you too, babe.” Snap chuckles.

“Talk to him, Poe.” Karé says. “Not about your feelings, not right off the bat, but see where he stands on his feelings in general. Now, let’s talk about you and the General’s daughter. You know she’s literally royalty right?”

Poe snorted. “Are you saying she’s out of my league, Karé?”

“Obviously.” The dark skinned blonde haired pilot to Poe’s left replied. “And yet, I think she might just be a match for you. What’s your concerns about her?”

“She’s so young.” Poe said after several long moments of thought. “And she’s already got so much on her shoulders. She wasn’t as sheltered as Finn, I don’t think, but she was still pretty sheltered on Jakku. And then there’s the fact that she’s Leia’s daughter.”

“Yeah, I can see how that last bit could be an issue.” Snap replied. “I wouldn’t want to face the General if things went sour. I mean the woman blows up death stars as a hobby.”

Karé laughed at her husband. “Shut up Temmin.” She told him before addressing Poe. “Life is kriffing short, Poe. We never know what’s going to happen one moment to the next. Stop wasting time and find a little happiness for yourself, be it with Finn or Rey or both of ‘em.”
After returning from Jakku Rey wasn’t in the right frame of mind to work on her lightsaber so she put her half of the asteroid in the crate under her bed along with more bits and pieces she’d collected to build the hilt. Leia still refused to have anything to do with her half of the asteroid so Rey took charge of that as well. Deciding that her mother was just being stubborn Rey got her hands on some thin leather strips, some sturdy wire gold wire, and pulled out her tools. Leia and Amilyn both took pleasure in braiding Rey’s hair, and Rey loved it as much as they did. Sitting on the floor between their legs as they brushed out and braided her hair helped Rey to center herself, to allow the feelings of belonging once more wash over her. When she’d asked if they would teach her Alderaanian braids so she could do her hair when they were unable or she was away, Leia’s eyes had grown bright and a little wet. She used those skills now, braiding the thin strips of leather into a simple but traditional Alderaanian braid. Then she very carefully wrapped the wire around the crystal she’d extracted from the asteroid. That had been an exercise in patience and focus all on its own. She didn’t want to damage the small piece of Alderaan they had brought back with them, or crack the crystal so she had to be very careful. It forced her to use her powers in a fine and precise way, and less like a sledgehammer.

Once the necklace was finished and Rey was happy with the result of her work she went looking for Leia. They had both needed time to decompress and sort out everything that had happened while away, so they’d gone their separate ways upon their return. Leia had gone into General mode, checking in with her people and getting status reports. Then she retreated to her quarters and the sanctuary that was Amilyn’s embrace. Rey had gone with Luke to talk about her crystal and what had happened while looking for it. They worked on her control for awhile and after he released her from training she went looking for Poe and Finn. She was disappointed to find Poe had been sent out on a recon mission since he’d been gone when she’d left, and she was starting to miss him. The strength and warmth of Finn’s hug however quickly overpowered her disappointment. They spent the night in the room Finn and Poe shared, telling each other everything. When they’d started talking Finn had been sitting in a desk chair, while Rey sat on Poe’s bed. By the time they were all talked out and exhaustion had overtaken them they were both stretched out on Poe’s bed, Rey tucked into Finn, his arm around her.

Stepping up to the door of the small space Leia had turned into her office Rey suddenly felt really nervous. During her time on Jakku Rey had never given anyone a gift, nor had she received one. What if the necklace made Leia angry? She had been dead set against having anything to do with the crystal, but when Rey thought about it she’d wondered if it had been more of a protest against what the crystal represented to Rey and Luke. Leia insisted adamantly that she was not a Jedi, but Rey knew Leia also had a very deep belief in the Force. The crystal didn’t have to be used in a lightsaber, and that’s what she was hoping to show her mother by making the necklace. What if Leia simply didn’t like the necklace? Once upon a time Leia had been a princess, an actual kriffing princess, who wore shimmer skin gowns, and jewelry made of rare jewels and precious metals. This was just a crystal bound up in scraps of wire and leather.

Taking a deep breath Rey knocked on the door and waited to be called in. When Leia looked up from the collection of data pads on her desk, Rey asked. “Got a minute?”

Leia easily returned that smile. “For you sweetheart I have two minutes, maybe even three.”

Rey smiled and then bit her lip before reaching into the small pouch on her belt. “I know you have no interest in the crystal for Jedi purposes, but just because the Jedi used them doesn’t mean that’s all they’re for.” Rey pulled out the necklace and held it out to her mother. “You believe in the Force, Mother. The crystal didn’t call out to you because it wants you become a Jedi, it called out to you because it’s attuned to you through the Force.” Rey was tense, a little unsure, but when Leia reached out for the necklace she relaxed and let out a slow breath. “If nothing else, this crystal and mine were once a part of a larger whole, our crystals are connected.”
“Rey.” Leia said softly as she accepted her daughter’s gift. Her dark eyes began to burn with welling tears as Leia ran her thumb over the leather braiding while cradling the crystal in the palm of her hand. “Did you make this?”

“Yeah.” Rey answered, her cheeks flushing as she rubbed the back of her neck in a very Han like way. “I know it’s crude, nothing like what you’re use too, but…”

“It’s beautiful.” Leia said, cutting Rey off. She put the necklace on and then closed the distance between herself and her girl to hug her daughter tight. “I love it, Rey. Thank you.”

“You do?” Rey replied with a squeak as she returned her mother’s hug.

“Of course I do.” Leia reassured as she pulled away to look into Rey’s eyes. “It’s a gift from my daughter.”

“You were really set against the crystal being meant for you.” Rey said softly.

Leia sighed. “I know. I made my choice a long time ago, not to become a Jedi. But you’re right, Rey, the crystals are more about the Force in general than what the Jedi did with them.”

Their moment together was cut short by Connix announcing that Poe was back. Leia sighed softly, but Rey reassured her it was ok. She understood that Leia needed to debrief Poe and his crew, and then go over whatever intel they managed to bring them. She had some training to do before her next lesson with Luke anyway. Luke wanted to know why Rey’s first instinct had been to grab her blaster rather than her lightsaber, and to be honest Rey wasn’t sure. So she was going to go practice reaching for her lightsaber until it was a more natural feeling for her.

It would probably help, Rey thought as she made her way through the base, if it felt like it use to before Kylo broke it. She really needed to get to making her own now that she had her crystals, but something still felt off about it. She wasn’t ready just yet. Something was still missing.

After being dismissed after the debriefing Poe, Snap and Karé ate the evening meal with the rest of Black squadron before everyone went their separate ways. Poe heard Rey was back and went looking for her. Cloud City use to have several resort areas, and one of the surviving sectors that had become their base was once a spa. It was a mid-sized room, spacious, with a water fountain feature. Admiral Holdo had commandeered it for use as a meditation room. Poe had found that odd at first, a meditation room on a military base, but according to Rose there had been one on the Ninka too, and Paige had reminded him that Holdo was Gatalentan and meditation was cultural for them. “Plus,” Rose had added. “We have Jedi now, and Jedi need to meditate a lot don’t they?”

That’s where he found Rey, sitting alone on the floor, legs crossed, hands on her knees, eyes closed. Her hair was down, a bit longer than it had been when she’d first arrived. Rey had been in relatively good shape when she first came to them, but nearly a year’s worth of three square meals had put some much needed healthy meat on her swany bones and starving muscles. Her skin retained a warm golden glow even though it had paled just a little since she wasn’t constantly under the rays of a desert sun. Poe managed to hold back a soft sigh, not wanting to disturb Rey, but he couldn’t stop the thought. She’s so beautiful.

“Did you need something, Poe?” Rey asked without opening her eyes. “Or are you just going to stand here and stare?”

Poe jumped and fumbled over an apology. “Sorry, I didn’t mean, I was looking for you, and I shouldn’t be staring, sorry.”
Rey laughed softly as she opened her eyes to look up at him. “It’s alright. Is everything ok?”

“Yeah, everything’s fine.” Poe answered with a sheepish smile. “I just wanted to check in, ya know. It’s been awhile.”

“Yeah.” Rey said as she got to her feet. “Chewie brought in some more of that Yavin ale you like. I hide it in my room.”

Poe’s smile was bright. “Rey you’re the best!”

They went to Rey’s quarters and settled onto her semi-circle couch with the ale and snacks. Poe told her about his missions, relishing in her laughter and her warmth as she laughed at his lame jokes or offered comfort when he expressed concerns or second guessed himself. When she started telling him about her experience with Leia at Alderaan he listened, even reaching for her hand to hold it as she described what it was like to see flashes of her grandparents.

“That must have been hard.” Poe said softly after she’d told him about Jakku. “Was there anyone else aside from Ty that you were close too?”

Rey shook her head. “Not really.” She replied as she reached for another bottle of ale. “There wasn’t anyone I could trust enough to let them get close.”

“I know it must be hard, to know you can trust people now, but I hope you know you can.” Poe said as he squeezed her hand. “I hope you know you can trust me.”

“I know I can.” Rey said with a warm smile. “And I do, Poe.”

He would have a chance to prove her trust in him was warranted a few days later when the General summoned them to command. She had a mission for him, but not one with his squad. Poe raised a brow when Rey walked in saying she’d been summoned as well. Leia was sending them to pick someone up and to meet with important allies.

Stepping into the hanger bay Poe made his way towards the Mirrorbright when he BB-8 came rolling towards him at full speed. He beeped softly in a secret kind of way and then led Poe to the Millenium Falcon. Poe raised a questioning eyebrow when he saw Rey at the top of the ramp. “We’re taking the Falcon?”

“Shh.” Rey hushed him. “Yes, we are. I miss her. We’ve already gone over everything with command, they’re in the middle of a meeting, so let’s go.” She beamed a smile at him. “Come on, you can’t tell me you don’t want to flyer her.”

Poe’s eyes went big like a child being offered the best toy in the galaxy. “You’ll let me fly her?”

“I’ll get us to the first jump point and you can get us to the planet from there.” Rey said with a nod.

“What are we waiting for!” Poe said as he ran up the ramp, disappearing into the legendary ship. All the time they spent on the Falcon following their escape from Crait, Chewie had refused to let him fly it. Rey, Leia, even Holdo, flew it, but he always got a growly no from the Wookie.

“We need to keep pushing at this divide in their ranks.” Amilyn says as she and Leia come out of their command meeting. “As long as they keep fighting internally, it gives us time to gain our strength.”

Leia nodded. “Agreed.” Then she hummed softly. “I wish we knew more about these Knights of Ren, that Kylo has gathered around him. We took on men like Hux when we were just kids, we
know how to deal with those types. But these Knights? Are they Dark Side users? Sith? I need to talk to Luke.” Pausing near Connix’s station she asks, “Leutenant, have Commander Dameron and Rey left yet?”

“Yes ma’am.” Connix replied. “The Millennium Falcon jumped out of the Bespin system half an hour ago.”

“Good. Thank you Leu…” Leia stopped, blinked. “Did you say the Falcon?”

“Yes General.” Connix replied, a look of confusion and anxiety on her young face. “Is there a problem?”

“We were just under the assumption that Commander Dameron and Rey would be taking the Mirrorbright.” Amilyn said in her gentle monotone.

“Rey decided at the last minute that the Falcon would be better for retrieving cargo.” Connix reported.

Despite what Leia was feeling in that moment she snorted. “I’m sure their “cargo” will appreciate that.”

As they left the command center Amilyn asked in a low whisper, “You didn’t actually think you could keep Han’s daughter off the Falcon forever did you?”

“No.” Leia admitted. “But I have a bad feeling about this.”

The view of the planet below was stunning. A canopy of greens stretched out in front of them, broken up by the crystal blues of lakes, the foaming whites of water falls, the gleaming gold and turquoise domes of the buildings as the city came closer. It was even more colorful, more beautiful, than Takodana. Rey was in absolute awe.

While Rey had been watching the planet come into view, Poe had been watching her. He couldn’t help but smile at the look of wonder on her face, nor could he help the flicker of heartbreak because she’d spent such a long period of her life with nothing beautiful around her. The crackle over the comms brought his attention back to what he was doing, landing the Falcon, the Millenium stickin’ Falcon!

As the ramp lowered and they made their way down, with BB-8, R2-D2, and C3PO following behind, Poe smiled and swept his arm in a wide arch as if presenting their surroundings to Rey. “Welcome to Theed, the capital city of Naboo.”

Rey’s awe was back as she tried to take it all in. “It’s so beautiful.”

“And this is just the landing docks.” Poe said with a chuckle.

“Well, I’ll admit I had my doubts.” A tall, tan skinned, dark haired woman said as the ramp of the Falcon raised and the doors sealed shut behind the pair and their entourage of droids. “But seeing you with my own eyes, yeah, I believe it’s you. Breha.”

Rey turned her attention to the woman and blinked. “Greer?”

“You remember me?” Greer Sonnel said as she closed the distance between herself and the two newcomers. “Leia said your memory…”

“Still mostly suppressed, but I have been able to recall fragments of memories.” Rey explained. “I
had a flicker of a memory of you while listening to some old races and Poe’s vivid description of your racer.”

Greer smiled warmly. “Well I’m glad your first memory of me was as a an ace pilot and not the woman who was constantly yelling at you stop doing that.” Turning to look at Poe she greeted him by rank, easily kicking into professional mode. “We’ll go to Leia’s suites first so you two can clean up and get changed.”

As they walked and Greer continued explaining things Rey felt herself drawn to one of the domed buildings in the distance that seemed to be set apart from the rest of the city.

“Rey?” Poe asked gently. “You alright?”

“What is that?” Rey asked as she pointed out the top of the domed arch.

Greer’s voice was gentle as she said, “It’s a mausoleum, Padme Amidala’s mausoleum.”

“I know our meeting is important.” Rey said as she looked at Greer. “But I need time to go there.”

“You’ll have it.” Greer replied. “I promise.”

While there were more than a fair share of people in the galaxy who turned on Leia when the truth of her parenage was revealed, there were those who didn’t focus on who her father was, but on who her mother had been. Not only was she the daughter of Queen Amidala, but Leia had saved Naboo from Project Cinder, and because of this Naboo’s current senator heeded Leia’s warning and survived the annihilation of Hosnian Prime. So her representatives were given a suite meant for diplomatic visitors, and time to speak with the Governor.

Stepping out of the room Greer said was hers, wearing a simmer silk bathroom, her hair down in dark, wet, tendrils that spilled over her shoulders, Rey holds up a bundle of dark blue fabric. “What is this? Where are my clothes?”

“It’s a dress.” Greer said without looking up from her data pads.

Rey blinked. “What am I supposed to do with it?”

“Wear it.” Greer answered.

“What? Why?” Rey said, a bit of panic in her voice. “I don’t… I haven’t… Not since… I don’t do dresses.”

Greer look up and over at the girl with a raised eyebrow. “You don’t do dresses?”

Rey shook her head. “I don’t even know how to get into this thing.”

Setting her pad aside Greer stood and walked towards the girl. “I’ll help you.” When Rey opened her mouth to protest she cut her off. “I took into account your need to carry your weapons, it’s a very simple dress, but it’s custom here, you have to wear it. Leia would have to wear an official gown if she were here.”

“Why?” Rey asked, pouting. When Greer pointed to a stool in front of a mirror Rey sat. Greer had been Leia’s chief of staff, and had been a constant presence in Breha’s life. It seemed Rey still reacted to the older woman the way she had when she was little, even without having to recall every detail of their time spent together.
“Because you’re a member of a noble house.” Greer explained as she reached for a comb.

Rey groaned. Her mother had explained that she was sending Rey to Naboo in her place to reassure her allies. Leia had explained the importance of Naboo, and their connection to it, and why it had to be Rey she sent in her place. Her mother had prepared her for everything. Everything but having to wear a dress, or fancy pins in her hair, or having to wear makeup, or get sprayed down with perfume. At least the dark blue soft leather ankle boots were comfortable. Suddenly Rey didn’t feel quite so guilty for taking the Falcon. It was a small credit for her mother to pay for making her do this.

Poe hated wearing a suit. The pants were too stiff, the under shirt itched, and the tunic style jacket was too tight, it’s collar to high. Poe kept pulling on the collar and groaning. He knew the reasons why he was here. One, protect Rey. Two, be there for Rey if this all overwhelmed her. He was her friend and she could lean on him. He understood what she’d been through, and what it was like for her as she adjusted to her new old life. Three, leadership lesson. Like it or not this kind of thing was a part of being a leader, of working on a level within the Resistance closer to Leia’s. He could do this, didn’t mean he had to like it.

“You don’t look any happier about this than I feel.” Rey said as she stepped out of her room.

Poe looked up with a quick witted remark at the ready but it died on his tongue at the sight of her. “Wow.” He said softly. “Rey.”

“I know.” Rey huffed. “I look ridiculous.”

“You look beautiful.” Poe said softly, his voice filled with the same sense of awe that Rey’s had held as she took in the sight of Naboo from the cockpit.

Rey blushed deeply.

As they made their way towards the Governor’s office C3PO prattled on about protocol, while Greer reminded them of their objectives, and Poe stole glances at Rey when she was stealing glances of him. The sight of him made Rey’s chest feel warm and her stomach flutter. But she didn’t have time to really think about what that meant right not, but once this was done, she really needed to sort out her feelings for her friend.

“What is this, Commander Sonnel?” The Governor harrumphed. “Where is General Organa?”

Before Greer could respond Rey was stepping forward. “My mother sends her apologies, Governor. I can assure you, she would rather be here to meet with you herself, and to show me around your beautiful city, but as you know things sometimes get in the way of what we want to do.”

The Governor blinked and sputtered. “Your mother?”

“Governor,” Greer smiled brightly. “May I introduce Breha Organa Solo.”

They gave him a quick explanation of how Rey wasn’t dead and her reunion with Leia. The Governor shook his head in dismay. “To steal a small child to torment the mother. Does the First Order have no morality? No heart at all? Are they truly the very worst of the already vile Empire?”

After hearing Rey’s tale the Governor didn’t just present their case to the current Queen. He led them through the palace to the Queen’s office to present them to her. Again Rey explained how she and Leia had been separated and reunited, and she was starting to realize this was a story she would have to tell repeatedly for awhile. The Queen invited them to return that evening to share the
evening meal, to celebrate the return of one of Naboo’s native daughters, and Greer accepted on their behalf. The Queen then informed them that they would have what they asked for and ordered the Governor to see to it. The Governor said it would take a few days to finalize all the arrangements, and encouraged Rey to explore the city and let him know if she needed anything. When they got back to the suite Poe snatched Rey up in a hug and spun her around. “You were brilliant!”

Rey laughed. “Greer did all the work.”

“No, Poe’s right.” Greer replied. “This was your first experience at something like this, and it was already at a pretty high level of difficulty before it escalated into meeting the Queen. You did great, Breha. You’re mother’s going to be so proud.” Greer smiled warmly at the younger woman. “Speaking of, I need to put together a transmission updating her. You have a few hours before you need to get ready for dinner. Take that time you needed.”

Once they were alone Rey turned to Poe and asked, “Do you think you could stand that suit just a little longer?”

“Sure.” Poe replied. He had a pretty good idea where Rey wanted to go now that they had a bit of free time, and he was honored that she wanted him to accompany her.

The pair walked through the streets of Theed with Threepio and R2 following behind them. BB-8 stayed behind to help Greer since the two older droids had personal connections to this place, and the woman they were on their way to see. They didn’t talk, and Rey was grateful for that. She wasn’t sure what she would say. But she was also grateful for Poe’s presence, his quite support. As they crossed the bridge over the canal she did warn him. “This place has a strong Force echo.” She told him gently. “If I do anything weird, it’s Force stuff. Threepio and R2 will know if I’m in any real trouble.”

“We have many decades of experience, Miss Rey.” Threepio agreed.

Poe and the droids gave Rey space as she slowly approached the sarcophagus. Like her Organa grandparents, Rey had heard a lot of stories about Padme Amidala. She was such a popular queen the people wanted her to rule longer, but she wouldn’t let them extend the term limits. Instead she served her people as a senator who worked closely with Bail Organa and Mon Mothma. She spent her life working on the side of peace, but wasn’t afraid to pick up a blaster when she needed too.

Rey reached out slowly and placed her hand on the cool stone of the sarcophagus. Taking a deep breath she closed her eyes. Before her mother had sent her on this mission Rey had felt like something was missing when it came to infusing her crystal and building her lightsaber. Maybe she could discover what was missing here as she discovered another piece of the legacy she’d been born into and kept from for so long.

For the first time Rey isn’t startled or overwhelmed by the flashes of the past she sees in the Force echo, she welcomes them. A girl forging an alliance, planning an assault, and blasting old battle droids before proclaiming, “I am Queen Amidala.” That same girl sitting on the throne of newly liberated Naboo, making hard choices to keep her planet safe. A young woman, no longer queen, making plans to return to Tatooine to free a slave woman who’d given up her son so he may have a better life. Shmi Skywalker. Her great-grandmother. But the young woman was talked out of it by a man that sent ice through Rey’s veins.

Rey sees her grandmother sitting at a table laughing with her family, a handsome young man at her side, her sister teasing her in the kitchen. She watches Padme stand up to Anakin’s arrogance, reminding him that she was the senator and he a padawan, and that she was more than capable of
taking care of herself. She then see flashes of her grandparents falling in love, trying not to fall in love, and then just giving in and embracing the fact that they’d fallen in love. Rey smiles, but her heart breaks a little too. Such a sweet and innocent start to something with such a sad and tragic end.

The next flash does surprise Rey a bit. Rey sees Padme picking the lock on a pair of shackles as several large creatures are released into what looks like some kind of arena. She then climbs a stone pillar while Anakin and a rather snippy man with a beard argue. One of the beasts managed to swipe it’s claws across Padmé’s back, then she uses the chain she’d been bound to the pillar with to swing around and kick the thing between the eyes. Where was that story, Rey wonders.

Padme speaks before the senate urging them not to declare war despite threats to her life. She sits beside Bail Organa as he says, “We can’t let a thousand years of democracy die without a fight.” The birth of the rebellion?

Then she sees the bearded man telling Padme that Anakin has fallen to the Dark Side. She sees Anakin, no, not Anakin. The man using the Force to choke Padme was not the man who’d come to Rey the night Kylo Ren sacked the Temple. He couldn’t be. That man could never hurt his pregnant wife. Rey was seeing the birth of Darth Vader. She shivers, tears are rolling down her cheeks from her closed eyes.

Rey watched the birth of her uncle and mother, and the last moments of Padme’s life. In those final moments Rey sensed a storm swirling within her grandmother. Padme’s desire to live for her children burned bright, as did her love for Anakin as she insisted there was still good in him, but it was being smothered by something dark and cold and powerful. The same things she’d felt when she’d seen the old man who had talked Padme out of going to free Shmi herself. Who was that old man? His connection to Naboo was strong, his darkness lingered in the echoes here. His dark power was strong, had he somehow murdered her grandmother?

Unlike her visions in the Graveyard, which ended with the final moments of her Organa grandparents, Rey’s visions now did not end with Padme’s. A man in a mechanical suit, long billowing cape, and a heavy helmet stood at the head of the sarcophagus with his hand resting atop it’s cold stone just as Rey’s was now. His heavy, respirator aided breathing filled the stillness of the room. Behind his dark and imposing figure the bright colorful window depicting Padme’s image stood out in striking contrast. He speaks, his voice soft and raspy. “Padme, our child,” He takes a breath, his head is lowered. “Forgive me.”

He looks up, looks at Rey, right at Rey. She gasps, and breaks her connection to the Force echo. She’s breathing quickly, deeply, as she stumbles back from her grandmother’s sarcophagus.

Poe catches her, wrapping his arms around her to steady her. “Rey? Rey, are you alright?”

“He was here.” She says softly. “A long time ago. He was here, in this space, saying goodbye to her.”

“Who?” Poe asks.

She trembling as she replies, “Vader.”

Poe brought her back to the suite and made her tea. She smiled gratefully at him. He didn’t push for details, or ask repeatedly if she was ok, he simply stayed close but gave her space to think. What was it that Ben had said to her? She was the granddaughter of queens? He was right, she was. But neither Padme nor Breha would want what Ben wanted, they wouldn’t want their grandchildren ruling over the galaxy like the tyrants they’d fought against. Padme made her share
of mistakes, but everything she did was done out of compassion and the desire to make people’s lives better. Ben and Breha Solo had inherited an incredible legacy from their mother, and her idiot brother had to obsessively focus on the one dark blemish that came with it. Rey shook her head. Let Ben have Vader. Rey would honor the others, they deserved better than Ben anyway.

Greer appeared with another dress for Rey to change into. She groaned softly, but changed for dinner without fuss. At least Greer was keeping in mind that Rey had very little experience with dresses, and what she did have was still buried with the bulk of her memories of being Breha. The dress was far more elaborate than the one she’d worn to their meeting, but still allowed Rey freedom and ease of movement. She was still feeling a bit shaken from her trip to the mausoleum, but having Poe at her side made getting through dinner easier. Especially given the unexpected guests the Queen had invited.

“By all the stars you look so much like her.” The old woman introduced to Rey as Pooja Naberrie said as she looked at Rey with wide eyes. Pooja was several years older than Leia and the daughter of Padme’s sister Sola. “You and Leia both favor her so much I’m surprised no one saw it in Leia sooner.”

The dinner had left Rey a little overwhelmed and she had kind of wanted to just hide in her room until they left, but when Poe asked if she wanted to explore the city that morning she found it hard to say no to his warm boyish smile. The clothes Greer brought her this time were much more casual and comfortable, but still very much the style worn by the nobility of Naboo.

Loose linen pants that could almost be seen as a skirt, a loose flowy top that was white with bright flowers on it, that left her shoulders bare but her arms covered in flowy sleeves. Rey loved the top, the colors, the flowers, the way it felt against her skin. Rey was keeping the shirt. The boots were simple, but still soft leather and really comfortable. She was keeping those too. She wore her hair down and loose because she liked the way it had curled since Greer had pinned it while it was still damp the day before she she hadn’t bothered to undo it before crashing into bed following their evening with the Queen.

Poe, since he was escorting a member of a noble house, also wore appropriate clothes. The soft tan pants, linen shirt and vest were a hell of lot more comfortable than the suit from the day before. When Rey stepped out of her room Poe managed not to say wow again outloud, but he was sure as hell thinking it. He gave her a huge smile as he asked, “Ready to explore the city?”

“Absolutely.” Rey said with a chuckle.

Theed was the first proper city Rey had seen since leaving Jakku, and she found it amazing and beautiful and overwhelming in a wonderful kind of way. Poe told her what he knew of the city, a lot of which revolved around its history during the war against the Empire. But he also knew a fair share about Naboo’s music, and they were able to catch a performance in a park before exploring the markets.

As they make their way through the market stalls Rey is drawn to a stall with several brightly colored strips of fabric. She reaches out for one, closing her hand around it, and letting it thread through her hand. A memory flood’s Rey’s mind. A sun filled room with floor to ceiling windows opened to let in a warm breeze. Long, brightly colored scarves hanging from the ceiling. Little hands grip at the fabric as Breha pulls herself up the way Ammy taught her. Ammy is suspended in her own scarves close by offering soft praises and encouragement. Mama sits on the floor shaking her head but smiling warmly.

“Are these skyfairing scarves?” Rey asks the vendor.

“They are.” The woman nods. “Do you skyfair?”
“One of my mother’s does.” Rey has a huge smile on her lips. For the first time in her life Rey had been given credits with no idea what to use them for until now. “I’ll take a set in each color please.”

It took all day but after watching Rey smile and hearing her laugh Poe was able to work up the courage to at least attempt a version of the conversation he’d been having in his head for awhile now. “Hey Rey.”

“Hmm?” She hummed in reply as they made their way towards the residential building where they were staying. They had gone to the Falcon to drop off the things she’d bought and had stopped for these little sweet treats that were soft and kind of gooey on the outside with something creamy and frozen on the inside.

Poe couldn’t help but smile at the sheer delight on Rey’s face. “Is it true that Jedi aren’t allowed to have personal relationships?”

“Use to be.” Rey answered before finishing off her frozen treat and then turning her head to look at Poe. “The old order had this thing about personal attachments. Uncle Luke says it’s one of the things that ended up leading to their downfall.”

“And Luke’s doing things differently than the old order?” Poe asked next.

Rey nodded and then said, “He had a wife once. Mara. I have vague memories of her. She was at the temple the night it fell.” She smiled a small smile when Poe took her hand. “So he would be a hypocrite if he said I couldn’t have personal relationships.”

They were standing in the small courtyard of their building when Poe asked, “Have you thought of having any personal relationships with anyone?”

“I think I’m starting too.” Rey answered honestly. “I’ve been feeling things, but I haven’t had the time to really work anything out.”

Poe licked his lips and swallowed the lump in his throat before asking, “Have you been trying to sort out these feelings about anyone in particular?”

Rey nodded. They looked into each other eyes for several long moments before slowly drifting closer. Rey reached out to cup Poe’s face, letting her fingers sink into his hair. Poe reached out and put his hands on her hips. It was a very timid but sweet kiss with the potential to become more but Rey suddenly sensed something. She continued to kiss Poe as she took hold of his hand and carefully moved it to the blaster hidden at the small of her back. He seemed to understand, she could feel his fingers curl around the hand grip. Then she reached for her lightsaber.

“Well isn’t that sickenly sweet.” A male Zabrak voice said.

“Best make it a goodbye kiss.” Another male voice added. “Because the girl is coming with us.”

They break apart, and turn to face the pair. There are blasters leveled at them. Poe’s hand is still on the one Rey has at her back.

“Don’t try anything heroic.” The Zabrak says to Poe. “Hands where I can see them.”

It happens quickly. Poe draws the blaster and Rey her lightsaber. She ignites it and smiles. “Sorry fellas, but the girl isn’t going anywhere with you.”

The human male’s eyes go wide at the sight of the lightsaber. He speaks to his partner in a low
growly whisper, “Is that… is she…”

“Don’t be stupid.” The male Zabrak says in the accented voice common to his species. “Jedi don’t exist anymore. And even if she was, the payout on this bounty is too good to pass up. It’s the largest First Order bounty I’ve ever seen.”

Rey raised an eyebrow at that. “The First Order put out a bounty on me?”

“For murder.” The Zabrak replies. “Dead or alive. So the question is, girly, how many people get hurt in the process, because you will be coming with us.”

Raising her free hand Rey grabbed for the human’s blaster. He was still flustered and unease about the lightsaber, taking his weapon with the Force was easy. The Zabrak was older, more experienced, he fires his blaster at her. She deflects it as Poe shoots at their attackers. Rey doesn’t sense the third bounty hunter. She doesn’t know she’s there until she feels the blaster bolt rip through her and the explosion of pain it sends rippling through her body. She does sense another presence as she begins to crumple to the ground. Greer. Greer is firing a sighted blaster at a point beyond the two bounty hunters who’d confronted them. A body falls from a rooftop into topiary, female, human, sniper rifle in hand.

“Rey!” Poe yells as he watches her crumple. “Rey!”

She feels Poe grab hold of her, his arms around her, his knees pressing against her back, the top of her head pressing into his stomach. Her hand goes to her wound and then she raises it to look. There’s blood.

Greer is screaming into a comm for backup and a medic.

“You’re alright, Rey.” Poe says over and over. “You’re alright.”

She wasn’t. She looks up at him, there are tears welling in his eyes. She takes hold of his hand and smiles at him. Then everything goes black.
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Reddevils2013 sent me a lovely, encouraging message over on the fic site and in one of her messages asked if I might do something along the lines of a hurt/sick comfort chapter. So that's where this chapter came from. I hope Red, and all of you enjoy. :-D

~Reese

The room was an odd amalgamation of Breha’s childhood bedroom and the captain’s cabin on the Millenium Falcon. One wall was the wall to wall windows of Breha’s room, but the view outside those windows did not show Republic City as it should have. Outside those windows an open field blanketed with wild flowers stretched out as far as the eye could see. To the west, in the distance was a waterfall, and just a smidge to the east a herd of shaak slept in a tight cluster. The stars and big, bright, full moon that hung in the night sky was not the stars and moons of Naboo, but the constellations and moon of Alderaan.

Inside the room, the opposite wall held the large bunk in the Falcon’s captain’s cabin. Gone were the basic gray linens that were normally on the bed. Instead the blankets, and pillows were brightly colored, just as they had been on Breha’s little bed. Propped up again the blue, green, and orange pillows was a well loved stuffed Wookie, a handmade rebel pilot doll, and a stuffed porg. Draped across the foot of the bed, as if it were an extra blanket, was Luke’s Jedi robe.

One of the walls between the bank of windows and the bunk was lined with shelves. A couple of the shelves held real books just like the shelves in the family library of the palace on Alderaan. One shelf had a miniature version of the stained glass window depicting Padme. Another shelf held toy replicas of an AT-AT, Poe’s A-Wing, and the Mirrorbright. Below the shelves, just as it had been in Breha’s room, was a desk. On the desk sitting on a round dock was a toy BB-8, and a holo-image frame the cycled through a collection of images; Leia and Amilyn sat close with their hands clasped together, Han leaning against the Falcon with his arms cross over his chest and a smirk on his lips, Finn and BB-8 giving each other a thumbs up, Poe in the cockpit of his X-Wing, Chewie with his fur full of braids and hairbows, and finally Ben sitting against the white bark of a tree under Gatalenta’s three suns with a smile on his lips and a pair of gold dice in his hands.

Rey sat in a plush chair in the corner of the room, beside the windows, across from the wall of shelves. Her feet were up on an ottoman, her mother’s Alderaanian blanket draped over her legs, a red furred cat purring in her lap. She was snuggled into the jacket, the jacket that was Poe’s but was now Finn’s. Her lightsaber lay on a small table beside her, along with a pot of tea and her mother’s long barreled black blaster. Rey’s eyes were closed, her head leaning back against the chair, her fingers gently raking through the cat’s soft fur, as she hummed softly to the sound of Leia soft singing Mirrorbright. She was relaxed, at peace, safe, home.

The cat in her lap starles and begins to hiss and growl.

“Bay?” There was surprise in his voice, but that surprise quickly gave way to concern. “Bay, what happened? Are you alright?”

Rey groaned softly. So much for feeling at peace.
“You closed the connection between us.” Ben says as he comes closer. He stops when the cat in Rey’s lap hisses at him and swipes out with claws extended. He stares at the cat as if confused by its presence, and then continues to speak. “If I’m able to be here something’s happen to weaken that block. Are you alright?”

Opening her eyes Rey sees her brother standing a few feet away looking at her with concern she doesn’t believe is genuine. Anger flares in her chest. “Am I alright?” She hisses at him as she sits up, placing the cat on the ottoman. “Am I alright?” She repeats as she stands to face him. “No, Ben! I’m not alright! You sent kriffing bounty hunters after me!”

Ben’s eyes widen. “I did no such thing!”

“The First Order put a bounty on my head for murder!” Rey yells at him. “We were confronted by bounty hunters and I got shot!”

It’s then that Ben looks around and really takes in the space they’re in. This isn’t simply a dream or a memory. That isn’t just an echo of their mother singing that old lullaby she use to sing to them when they were small, somewhere Leia was actually singing it. Ben sucks in a sharp breath, his eyes grow large, and he whispers. “You’re in a coma.”

Rey shrugs. “Suppose I am. Pretty sure the wound was bad. Hurt like kriffing hell. I haven’t been able to wake up, not sure why.”

“I didn’t do this, Bay.” Ben says, his voice almost desperate for her to believe him. “I did not put a bounty on your head, I swear it.” Then his voice drops and he growls. “Hux. It must have been Hux.” He moves away from Rey, towards the window, and looks out over the field. His hands flex in and out of fists, he’s so angry that he doesn’t even realise what he’s looking at. “Hux will pay for this!” He turns to look at her. “I will take care of the bounty, Bay. No one else will come after you.”

“Why bother?” Rey asks as she crossed her arms over her chest and glares at him.

He looks at her for a long moment before replying. “I don’t want you dead. Not you, nor Mother, or Auntie. I don’t want you dead, Bay, I want you all with me, as a family, as it always should have been.”

“The Skywalkers ruling the galaxy.” Rey says, her voice cold and yet heartbroken.

“Yes!” Ben replies. “Our grandfather had a plan that would have made him Emperor, and as his heirs…”

“No, Ben.” She said shaking her head. “You don’t get to make excuses, or blame others for you turning into a tyrant.” She closes the distance between them and pokes him in the chest. “Snoke was dead. His hold on you broken. You made the choice to remain in the dark. You choose to stay and become the very thing our grandparents and our parents sacrificed everything to fight against!”

“Our grandfather…” Ben began but Rey cut him off.

“Vader was not our grandfather!” She tells him with the certainty that came with her recent experiences. “Vader was a cancer that ate away at our grandfather until there was almost nothing left. Anakin Skywalker was a damaged young man but a good one until Palpatine filled him up with darkness until he drowned in it. He wouldn’t want this for you, Ben! He wouldn’t want you following in Vader’s footsteps!”

“How would you know what our grandfather would or wouldn’t want for me?” Ben demanded.
“You don’t know, can’t possibly understand…”

“He came to me,” Rey confesses. “The night you sacked the Temple, the night you murdered your friends, the other students, Aunt Mara; it was Anakin Skywalker who saved my life. He came to me, and he’d tried to come to you but you were already out of his reach.”

Ben looked shocked, angry, almost unwilling to believe her.

Rey took a deep, calming breath, and then looked into Ben’s eyes. “I will always love my brother, Ben Organa Solo, nothing will ever change that. But I will do whatever I need to do to keep the galaxy safe from the First Order, even if that means defeating Kylo Ren.” The truth of that statement shone brightly in her eyes. Leia’s eyes, Padme’s eyes. “You need to go now, Ben.”

When Ben reached out toward Rey the red furred cat once again swiped out with extended claws, this time making contact, scratching deep, drawing blood. Ben faded away, clutching his hand as Rey once again slammed the connected between them closed. Then she sighed, walked over to pick up the cat and sat back in her chair. “Good girl Mony.”

She sensed her coming but didn’t stop her soft singing until she felt two strong hands rest upon her shoulders. Leia sighs softly and leans back against Amilyn’s body. She’s been running on caf and sheer will power since getting the secure transmission from Greer. “She’s stabilizing, Leia.” Her former chief of staff and close friend had reassured her. “We want to bring her to you as soon as she can be transported but the doctor here is reluctant.” Leia had said she’d send Kalonia as soon as possible, and Luke had even volunteered to fly her. Attacking his niece on thier mother’s homeworld seemed to ignite something in Luke, and he decided it was time the galaxy knew the Jedi were back in the game. Finn wanted to go as well but Kalonia told him he needed him here looking after medical while she was gone. Leia could see the struggle in the young man, his desire to go to Rey and his sense of duty battling it out. In the end he nodded, agreeing to remain behind. Leia had been very proud of him, not only for his sense of duty but for realizing that what was best for Rey was to get her back here quickly and safely, and the fewer people it took to do that the better.

When the Falcon landed it took every bit of self control Leia had not to rush up the ramp, but she knew she needed to stay out of the way until they got Rey settled into medical. So she stood there with Amilyn beside her and watched as Rey was brought off the ship on a gurney. She was in a portable bacta suit and unconscious. She looked pale, but Leia could see her slow, shallow breaths. She’d known Rey was alive, she could feel it in the Force, but after what happened when she was small, Leia just couldn’t completely rely on that connection. She needed to see with her own eyes that Rey was alive, see her chest rise and fall, feel the warmth of her hand in her own. Leia had taken a shuddering breath as Rey was pushed past her, and Amilyn had put her hand on her shoulder as Kalonia reassured them Rey would be ok. She asked them to give her some time to settle Rey into medical before they came to see her, Leia had nodded. She watched as her daughter was wheeled out of the hanger bay and as soon as the doors swished closed she turned to see Poe and Greer.

When all of this was over and Rey was fine and back on her feet, Leia would regret her harshness, but in the moment she was angry and afraid. She demanded to know what the hell happened, how could they have let it happen, and where were the people who hurt her daughter. Dead, Greer told her. Leia listened to Greer’s and Poe’s reports without saying a word in response. When Kalonia commed her to tell her she could come see Rey she simply walked away from them. She heard Amilyn reassuring the pair as she walked out of the room and had rolled her eyes. She’d been splitting her time between her duties and sitting with Rey ever since.
“Leia.” Amilyn said softly as her hands began kneading Leia’s shoulders. “You need to have a meal and get some sleep, my love.”

“I’ll sleep when she’s awake.” Leia replies.

“You’ll do her no good if you’re too exhausted to take care of her when she does wake up.” Amilyn said firmly. “You and I are going to our quarters, we’re going to eat and get some sleep. Finn will stay with her.”

“I won’t leave her side, General.” Finn said softly from where he stood behind Amilyn. “I promise.”

Leia grumbled and growled in a way that Chewie would have been proud of.

“Leia.” Amilyn said simply, her voice as level as always but Leia could hear the determination, the reprimand, nonetheless.

“Fine.” Leia surrendered. Standing she took a deep breath and then stepped closer to Rey so she could lean down and kiss her daughter’s forehead. “Ammy and I will be close by, sweetheart.”

“Thank you, my love.” Amilyn said softly as she held out her hand to Leia and Leia took it.

Poe waited until Leia was around the corner, and then waited a few more moments to make sure she wouldn’t come back before heading into Rey’s room. He understood that Leia was angry and scared and was more than willing to bare the brunt of that, because to be honest, he was mad as hell at himself and scared to death. He could still feel the wet warmth of her blood on his hands, still see the smile before she passed out. He should have done more, done something. He was suppose to keep her safe and he hadn’t. Slipping into the room he didn’t even notice Finn as he walked up to her bed. Reaching out Poe takes her hand gently in his own and then leans down and kisses her softly.

“Poe?” Finn says softly.

Poe looks up, unsure what to say or do.

“She’s going to be alright.” Finn reassures as he comes towards them. “Doctor Kalonia is keeping her unconscious so the bacta can do it’s thing. It just takes longer when the injuries are internal.”

“I know buddy.” Poe replied, trying his best to give Finn one of his smiles. “Been through this with you. You took forever to wake up.”

Poe couldn’t manage much of a smile but Finn could to help his friend feel better. “Hey, those suits are kind of comfortable, and the bacta is nice and warm. Who wouldn’t take an extra long nap?” He’d seen Poe kiss her, and it stirred up a lot of emotions for him, but he pushed those aside. Right now what mattered was being there for his friends. “Besides, you’re avoiding the General because she’s mad about the Falcon, I wouldn’t be surprised if Rey was doing the same thing.”

That got a laugh from Poe. “Yeah, a mad mom can be scarier than a pissed off general.”

Finn beamed with pride at having made Poe laugh. “The Admiral is keeping the General with her for the rest of the night cycle. You’re welcome to stay here with Rey and me.”

Poe looked up at Finn, their eyes locking for a long moment before he looks down at Rey. He reaches out and brushes at her hair. “No place I’d rather be, buddy.”
At some point that evening Finn acquired two meals and a couple bottles of electrolyte drinks, the bright blue one for himself and the red one for Poe. They settled side by side on the floor with their backs against Rey’s bed. That’s where they were found the next morning, asleep on the floor, their backs against Rey’s bed, Poe’s head on Finn’s shoulder, Finn’s arm around Poe.

“Leia.” Amilyn said softly, gently, when they walked into medical to check on Rey before the morning briefing.

Leia took a step forward towards the bed and the sleeping men beside it but that was as far as she got before Greer was at the door.

“General. Admiral. Ma’am’s, there’s something you both need to see.” The woman said with a tone they both knew they could not ignore. She hands Leia a data pad and plays a video for her.

Standing before the palace on Theed the Queen of Naboo speaks as an amplifier droid floats close by. To her right stood a man in the traditional dress of the Naboo senior senator, a man Leia knew well. While the reveal of her birth father’s identity had given him pause, knowing who her birth mother was had allowed him to continue trusting Leia. Which is why he’d survived the attack on Hosnian Prime. To the Queen’s left, in all his Jedi glory, was Luke.

“Several days ago a citizen of Naboo, the granddaughter of our most revered and beloved Senator Queen Padme Amidala, a daughter of the noble House of Naberrie, was attacked on Naboo soil by bounty hunters hired by the First Order.” The Queen said in a clear voice full of anger. “We will not stand for such actions. Naboo will not idly watch as the vile evil of the First Order tries to destroy everything the galaxy has worked hard to obtain since the fall of the Empire. Naboo stands with Leia Organa and the Resistance. Naboo stands with the New Republic!”

They all watch wide eyed, mouths slightly agape as the Queen gives over the microphone to the Senator.

“The attack on the Hosnian system was devastating.” He begins. “The loss of life, staggering. Men, women, children, from planets and systems throughout the galaxy were murdered by the First Order in an attempt to put an end to the New Republic. Their lives shall not be forgotten.” He pauses in a moment of remembrance and then continues. “The First Order failed. The New Republic survives. While we did lose a large number of the Senate, many of us survived thanks to the efforts of Leia Organa and her Resistance. Senators from the Core worlds, the Inner Rim, as well as the Outer Rim, continue to work tirelessly for the galaxy we have devoted our lives too. Our numbers grow daily as new senators are sent to us from those worlds whose representatives lost their lives in the terror attack on the Hosnian system. The New Republic will not cower as the venomous serpent of the First Order slithers out of the rotted corpse of the evil Empire. The New Republic lives! And we stand with the Resistance!”

“Now they acknowledge us?” Poe said angrily from where he now stands by Rey’s bed. “Now? After everything, now they decide to pull their heads out of their asses and openly admit Leia was right?”

“They’d been talking about making it official for awhile, Commander.” Greer tells him as she, Leia, and Amilyn jerk their heads in his direction. “They were just waiting for the proper moment.”

“Great.” Poe hisses. “Wonderful. They finally got their proper moment to do the right thing, and all it took was Rey getting shot in the gut. Do any of them understand what that even means? Do they know the only reason you shoot someone in the gut is to make them suffer? Are they going to use that in their next soundbite?”
“Poe.” Leia says firmly, not angrily, but in that firm reassuring way she’d perfected over the decades. Though it wasn’t quite the voice she used with those under her command, but more the voice she used with her children. They share a look, a silent conversation where Leia lets him know she agrees with how he feels. It shouldn’t have taken an attack on someone they saw as significant to get them involved. But the declarations were made, and now they had work to do and she needed his head in the game.

Poe takes a deep breath and nods, letting Leia know he was good. “What do we do now, General?”

“That’s what we need to figure out, Commander.” Leia replies. “We’ll meet in command in fifteen to start working that out.”

Greer nods and leaves. Poe hesitates, turning to look down at Rey. He takes her hand, squeezes it. He wants to do more, but with Leia and Holdo standing there he’s unsure. Kriff it. She was already mad at him. Leaning down Poe places a gentle kiss to Rey’s lips. “I’ll be back later, I promise.”

Leia narrowed her eyes and crossed her arms over her chest. She glared at Poe as he walked past her and Amilyn and once he was out of the room she demanded. “What the kriff was that?”

“A kiss.” Amilyn stated, a smirk tugging at the corner of her lips.

“When did that happen?!” Leia asks.

“My guess?” Amilyn replies. “Naboo.”

She felt a large, rough, warm hand caress her cheek and brush at her hair. Rey smiles and allows her eyes to flutter open. The sight before her floods her with warm. Sitting on the edge of the brightly colored bunk is Han. She bolts upright and throws her arms around his neck as tears prick at her eyes. “Dad!”

Han wraps his arms around his daughter and holds her tight. “Hey sleepyhead.”

Rey clings to him for several long moments before it truly hits her that she’s in her father’s arms. Reluctantly she pulls back as she looks at him with wide eyes. “Dad?! How… Am I dead? Did I die? Kriff. Mama’s going to be even more pissed if I’m dead.”

“You ain’t dead, kid.” Han reassures her with a gentle chuckle. He jerks his head towards the room over his shoulder. “Interesting place ya got here.”

Rey looks around, taking in her hodge podge space as Mony nudges her thigh. She sighs softly and relaxes as she sits back. “Uncle Luke said I should build a safe place in mind. A place I can retreat to when I need it, where I can feel safe when I’m vulnerable.”

Han wrinkled his nose when the red furred cat wiggles her way between him and Rey. “Did you have to add the cat?”

“Yes.” Rey says simply as she picks up the cat from her childhood memories and cuddles it.

“That cat was Mothma’s revenge.” Han grumbles.

“Revenge for what?” Rey asks as she sets Mony beside her on the bed and then turns back to look at her father. She can’t believe he’s here, and it’s actually him, not a memory of him. How was that possible? As far as she knew Han hadn’t been Force sensitive, so she doubted this was anything like the Force ghost thing Luke explained to her. “Dad, how are you here?”
“Revenge for marrying your mother, for Kashyyyk, for every time I took off leaving my family behind.” Han replied with a shrug. “Any number of reasons.” He gave her one of his crooked smiles then. “It’s a Force thing, not like the Force that gives you and Luke powers, but like the Force as a bigger whole. The people you love, who love you, are always with you. I’m always with you Rey. Always lookin’ out for you and your mother.”

“She misses you.” Rey says softly.

“I miss her too.” Han replies. She’d ducked her head to hide the tears welling in her eyes, so Han reached out and placed a finger under her chin to gently lift her head up. “Don’t you think it’s time to wake up? You’re not completely healed, but your healed enough to wake up, so why haven’t you?” She shrugs. He smiles. “You wouldn’t be avoiding your mother would you?”

“What?” Rey squeaks. “No. I’m not… I’m…” Rey stops, she sighs and then admits. “I stole the Falcon and I’m pretty sure that’s how the bounty hunters found me. Mama grounded the Falcon for that very reason, and I knew that, and I took it anyway.”

“Could have been the Falcon.” Han replied. “Could have been, they just saw you and recognized you from the bounty pics. Naboo isn’t a perfect paradise. And your mom might be mad that you took the Falcon, though it’s not like she hasn’t stolen it before, but I think she’s more scared and frustrated than mad. You’re in a coma, Rey, she’s scared and worried, so is Amilyn, and those boys of yours.”

When Han said, those boys, he made a face that had Rey making a face. “What? What’s wrong with Finn and Poe?”

“Nothing.” Han replied. “I like Mister Big Deal, he’s a good kid.”

“So it’s Poe?” Rey questioned. “You don’t like Poe?”

“I like Dameron just fine.” Han replied, making that face again. “He just, I don’t know, reminds me of someone.”

Rey laughed. “A charming, roguish flyboy with an annoying amount of arrogance, gee Dad, I wonder who he could possibly remind you of.”

“Watch it kid.” Han chuckles as he tweaks her nose. “My point, kiddo, was that the people who love you are worried about you, so it’s time to wake up now, don’t you think?”

Sighing softly Rey nodded, but having her father here wasn’t going to make waking up any easier. Throwing her arms around his neck again Rey holds him tight. “I didn’t get to tell you before…” Her voice hitches and she squeezes him tighter. “I love you.”

“I know.” Han says as he holds his little girl in his arms just as tightly as she was holding onto him. “I love you too.”

Rey smiles, tears rolling down her cheeks. “I know.”

Poe sat beside Rey’s bed once again, his hand gently holding hers. The doctor said they’d taken Rey off the sedative, that she should be waking up soon, but she hadn’t yet. Leia was still busy dealing with the new developments and they didn’t want Rey to wake up alone so he came to sit with her without hesitation. It was selfish of him, he knew it, but he wanted to be the one there when she woke up. He wanted his face to be the first thing she saw and he wanted to be the first one to kiss her hello.
“Are you sure this is something you can handle, Commander?” Luke says as he steps into the room. He’d gotten back about an hour ago and had been speaking to Leia about where things stood. The galaxy now knew he was back, and Kylo Ren would know he hadn’t died on Crait. Things were going to start getting even more chaotic.

Poe stood to face the man, though he didn’t let go of Rey’s hand. “Master Skywalker.” He replayed what Luke had said and then looked at the man oddly. “Handle what, Sir?”

“Having a relationship with a Skywalker.” Luke replies “We’re not the easiest people to love. And it’s even harder to love a Jedi.”

Poe managed not to blush at having his feelings called out so easily by someone he barely knew. “Rey and I haven’t had a chance to talk about things yet.” He admitted. “But whatever we decide, wherever this goes, she’s worth it, no matter what the it is.”

“Good answer.” Luke replied, and then his warm smile turned into a bit of a twisted smirk. “Whatever it turns out to be, Commander, keep in mind that she is my niece. And if that doesn’t frighten you enough to remind you to always do right by her…”

“Leia Organa is her mother.” Poe said with a nod. “I’m not a stupid man, Master Skywalker, and I would never do anything to hurt Rey.”

Luke nodded. He knew the young man was being earnest with him. Walking over to his niece Luke caressed her cheek, glad to see she was ok. She’d looked so small and pale when he’d seen her in the hospital on Naboo. “She’ll be awake soon.” Luke said softly, smiling a bit. “You should spend as much time with her as you can now, because once she’s awake Leia’s not going to let her out of her sight for awhile.”

Poe was still with Rey when Leia made her way back to the room. She stood in the doorway and watched him as he sat beside her daughter’s bed. He held her hand so gently in his own, it reminded her of the way Han used to hold hers. Her fingers flexed at the memory of Han’s larger, rougher hand enveloping hers, and Leia closed her eyes to allow her grief a moment to wash over her. Oh how she missed her scandal.

Opening her eyes Leia sighed softly and stepped further into the room. “Poe.”

Poe shot to his feet at the sound of her voice and turned to face her. “General.”

“Relax Poe.” Leia said gently. She knew none of this was his fault, and that she couldn’t keep taking out her anger and concern on the boy. Especially now that she knew for sure that he had feelings for Rey. “I’m not here to bite your head off or shoot you with a blaster.”

“You have every right to do both.” Poe said softly, dropping his head. “I was supposed to protect her and I didn’t.”

“Those bounty hunters got the drop on you.” Leia replied as she closed the distance between herself and Poe. “Naboo isn’t a perfect paradise, even it has it’s dark underbelly, which is why I didn’t want you taking the Falcon.” Poe opened his mouth to say something and she held up her hand to stop him. “I know my daughter well enough to know that she would have taken that damn ship one way or another, with or without you, and that old bucket of bolts is hard as hell to handle without a co-pilot.”

Knowing that Leia wasn’t angry with him was a huge weight off Poe’s shoulders, and a step towards him forgiving himself. Leia was the one person, not including Rey and Finn, who’s option
of him mattered. Stepping out of the way so Leia could take his place beside Rey, Poe was about to say something but Leia once again cut him off.

Reaching for her daughter’s hand Leia smiled at the returned color to the girl’s cheeks. Then she asked, “So what exactly happened between you two on Naboo?”

“What?” Poe squeaked. He sputtered over his words for a few seconds and then sighed. What did he do? Come back wearing a sign that said, I kissed Rey Solo. Leia was giving him a look that said she wanted an answer, but the smirk she was giving him helped him relax as he sighed and said, “We didn’t really get a chance to talk about anything. We were about to, but we were very rudely interrupted.”

“I’m very fond of you, Poe.” Leia said simply. “You know that I care about you a great deal.”


“That’s good.” Leia replied, still smirking at Poe. “And I know you would never hurt her on purpose, I trust you, but she is my little girl Poe, and I am Vader’s daughter.”

“Mama.” Rey’s voice was nothing more than a horse whisper from disuse. She feels odd, her mind is foggy and her body feels as if it’s somewhat buoyant? There’s something warm, wet, kind of gooey washing over her skin. Rey had never experienced bacta before, so she had no idea what that warm goo was. “Stop,” She struggles against a dry throat and mouth as she lets her eyes flutter open. She had heard their voices, felt their presence, and that made it a little easier to float out of her unconscious state. “Stop threatening him.”

Instantly Leia’s attention was on Rey and she was overcome with a sense of relief that brought tears to her eyes. Leia smiles and when she says her daughter’s name it comes out like a softly whispered prayer. “Rey.”

“Hi Mama.” Rey croaks and then smiles up at her mother. She tries to move but finds it impossible. The warm, wet, gooey water washes over her skin again and she begins to release she’s in something, a bag or a suit of some kind.

“Hi sweetheart.” Leia replies with a chuckle. Then she is quick to still Rey’s movement as she begins to struggle against the bacta suit. “Easy, Rey, you’re in a bacta suit. You’re still healing.”

Rey crinkles her nose. “It feels weird.”

“I know it does.” Leia replies. “But now that you’re awake maybe Karolina can use something a little more localized to finish your treatment.”

“I’ll go get the Doc.” Poe says from over Leia’s shoulder.

Rey looks past her mother to Poe and smiles, her whole face lighting up. “Hey there.”

“Hey.” Poe replies with a huge smile and watery eyes.

Leia stood there watching the way the two were looking at each other and she no longer had any doubts about what was happening between them. Rey and Poe were becoming more than just friends, and she knew this was going to complicate a lot of things. But she had drawn these kids into this war of hers, and she wasn’t about to get in the way of them finding a measure of happiness within it. Having Han and Amilyn with her, having them to fight for, to return to at the end of the most horrible of days, had helped her get through the Rebellion. Having Amilyn by her side had given her strength to leave the senate behind and start the Resistance. Though she did have her
concerns about this, she was also glad the two had found someone who could be those things for each other.

BB-8 zipped through the corridors of the Bespin moon base at top speed, beeping loudly to tell anyone in his path to move or get a smashed shin. He didn’t slow down until he found his query standing at the head of a holo-table that displayed a new battle cruiser, a gift from the Queen of Naboo. He slowed even more, gently rolling up to the tall human female with vibrant red hair. He beeped and whistled at her softly, a polite droid, excuse me but I must speak to you.

Amilyn looked down at Dameron’s little orange and white BB unit and quirked an eyebrow. She smiled at it’s polite chirps. As soon as she acknowledged it BB-8 began a long string of beeps, whistles, and chirps, directed right at her. Amilyn smiled apologetically at the droid, then said in her level monotone, “You’ll have to forgive me little one, but I do not speak Binary.”

BB-8 sighed softly.

Across the table Snap speaks up, “He said, Friend-Rey is awake and is asking for,” He pauses, a bit of a confused look on his face and then adds, “She’s asking for her Andy? Who’s Andy?”

Rose, who was standing beside Snap rolled her eyes. “Your Binary is rusty, Commander. He said ammy, not Andy.”

“Ok,” Snap replied with a shrug. “What’s an ammy?”

Amilyn’s face lit up, and her heart relaxed at hearing the news. She gave the little ball droid a huge smile as she reached down to pat it’s dome. “Thank you for the message my little friend. Please go back and reassure Rey that I will be at her side as soon as I am finished here.” BB-8 chirped a happy affirmative while thrusting out his little welding torch and giving the Admiral a thumbs up just like Finn taught him. Then he zipped away at full speed once more. Returning her focus to those gathered around the table Amilyn said, “Now, where were we?”

“Wait, seriously,” Snap said. “What’s an ammy?”

Amilyn simply smiled warmly at the man and then explained, “It’s an amalgamation of words Rey created as a child in reference to who I am to her. Most of her peers referred to their female parents as mommy. Ben,” Amilyn’s smile faulted a little as the memory of her boy clouded her bright blue eyes with sadness. “Ben, referred to me as Auntie. My first name is Amilyn. So to a tiny Breha learning to speak and recognize relationships, I became Ammy.”

“That, is so cute.” Snap said with a soft dopey smile.

“Stop looking at me like that.” His wife, Karé, said with a crinkled nose. “No babies. Not yet.”

Snap pouted.

Amilyn simply smiled warmly at the man and then explained, “It’s an amalgamation of words Rey created as a child in reference to who I am to her. Most of her peers referred to their female parents as mommy. Ben,” Amilyn’s smile faulted a little as the memory of her boy clouded her bright blue eyes with sadness. “Ben, referred to me as Auntie. My first name is Amilyn. So to a tiny Breha learning to speak and recognize relationships, I became Ammy.”

“That, is so cute.” Snap said with a soft dopey smile.

“Stop looking at me like that.” His wife, Karé, said with a crinkled nose. “No babies. Not yet.”

Snap pouted.

Amilyn chuckled and then cleared her throat and stood at her full height as she clasped her hands behind her back. “Now, as I was saying. The cruiser is fast, and it’s tough, but it’s weapons systems are lacking. Commander Wexley, you are to gather a squadron to accompany Ms. Tico’s team to the cruiser. I trust the two of you will be able to outfit the ship rather nicely for our purposes.”

“Yes Ma’am.” Snap replied.

“You can count on us, Admiral.” Rose beamed.

Amilyn returned the girl’s smile. “I know I can, Ms. Tico.” Then she looked down the table.
“Captain Kun, and Lt. Tico, you’ll be joining me as part of my squadron on a separate mission. Details to follow.”

By the time Amilyn made it to medical Rey was out of the bacta suit and sitting up as Kalonia was fitting a portable bacta band around Rey’s midsection. They had come so close to losing her again, and every time Amilyn thought of that, pain exploded from her chest and through her soul. Leia looked over her shoulder and saw her standing there. Her love smiled reassuringly and held out her hand towards her. Amilyn smiled back and walked over to Leia, gladly accepting the outstretched hand.

“I’m not sure which feet is more miraculous.” Amilyn teased as she smiled lovingly at the girl on the medical bed. “That you’re sitting up already or that you’re awake and still in medical.”

“Mama took Dr. K’s side.” Rey pouted. “They’re making me stay until at least morning. Which is stupid, because I’m fine.”

“She’s fine.” Leia snorted. “She gets her insides wrecked by a blaster bolt and she’s fine the second she wakes up.”

“Like mother like daughter.” Amilyn teased. “You got blown out into space and the second you wake up you’re marching down corridors in your medical gown with your blaster in hand.”

“We were under attack and evacuating!” Leia replied.

“I recall a certain sunset orange haired captain back during the rebellion who snuck out of medical with broken ribs to fly her X-Wing in a battle because Nora Wexley had a big mouth and said they were short on pilots, and then returned to medical with a punctured lung.” Kalonia said as she finished securing the bacta band around Rey. “So this child comes by her stubbornness honestly.”

Leia laughed. “Han wasn’t any better. He’d break something and tell Chewie to wrap it in tape and he’d be fine.”

Once Kalonia moved away from Rey, Amilyn moved closer to wrap her arms around her girl. “I’m so glad you’re alright, Starlight. You had us pretty worried.”

“I’m sorry, Ammy.” Rey said, returning the woman’s embrace.

When Rey was finally released from medical it was into her mothers’ care. Instead of returning to her own quarters, which were literally right next to her mothers’, she found herself staying with her mothers’ in their cabin. It had been some time now since she’d left Jakku, but there were still things about her life there that weren’t so easily left behind. There was no time for illness or injury, and especially not to convalesce if you did happen to get sick or hurt. She was still in a great deal of pain, not that she would admit to it, but no matter how much she told her mothers she was fine they simply wouldn’t believe her.

Rey groaned as Leia told her once again to sit on the couch and stop getting up. “Mama, seriously, I can walk across the room get my own tea.”

The fact that Rey was still calling her mama instead of mother or mom said a lot. When they were around people, it was always mother, but recently Rey had switched to the less formal mom in private. Mama was reserved for when she was feeling vulnerable, like she was now. “Rey, everytime you move you flinch in pain. You try to hide it, but you suck at hiding it. The only reason you’re not still in medical is because Kalonia knows we won’t let you over do it and re-injure yourself.”
“Having your insides knitted back together is a slow process, Starlight.” Amilyn adds in. “It’s also very deciate work. So there is no rushing it, and no pushing yourself through it.”

Ray grumbled and pouted. “This sucks.”

“Well perhaps next time you’ll listen when I tell you not to take the easily identifiable ship, and believe that your old mama actually knows what she’s talking about.” Leia teases. “You can consider yourself grounded for stealing the Falcon while you recover by the way.”

“The Falcon belongs to the Solo family. I am a Solo. Therefore I couldn’t have possibly stolen my own ship.” Rey said with a smirk.

Leia blinked at the familiar words. She had said pretty much the same thing to Mon a long time ago after running off to save Han.

Amilyn chuckled as she sat beside Rey, putting her arm around the girl, and gently pulling her into her side. “That reasoning doesn’t apply to children who take the family ship without permission, Starlight.”

“I’m not a child, Ammy.” Rey replied, while leaning into Amilyn and putting her head on the other woman’s shoulder.

Amilyn tapped Rey on the nose and kissed the crown of her head. “You are our child Starlight, no matter your age.”

Rey crinkled her nose but couldn’t help but smile while rolling her eyes.

Rey had a long list of nightmares she cycled through whenever her unconscious mind decided to betray her while she slept. Old ones from her time on Jakku; her line snaps and she’s falling through the dark skeptical remains of a star destroyer, she wanders off into the dunes to find her family and gets lost in a sandstorm, or she wasn’t able to fight off that Weequay pirate that cornered her when she was fifteen. More recent ones that involved watching Ben murder their father again and again before moving on to kill their mothers, Luke, Chewie, everyone she loved until she was once again alone. The worse nightmare was the one where she stands in Snoke’s throneroom and takes Ben’s hand. She watches as the blue of her lightsaber slowly turns red as Ben gently pulls her to his side. When she catches her reflection she no longer sees herself, but a dark empress with the galaxy at her feet as it burns.

Her wounded body thrashes in her bed as Rey’s latest nightmare plays out in her mind. She is unable to disarm the bounty hunters and Poe is shot in the chest. Pain and betrayal twist his features as he falls at her feet, dead. She sinks to her knees, her hands going to his wound as if to stop the bleeding, his blood seeps through her fingers. A dark shadow falls over her. She feels invisible hands at her throat, choking her, lifting her into the air, turning her to face the shadow. Vader stands before her, arm outstretched, fingers curled as he Force chokes her. To his right a masked Kylo Ren kneels, his head down in submission. To Vader’s left stands a stormtrooper, blaster raised, it fires the blaster. She feels the explosion of pain as the blaster bolt tears through her body, Vader drops her. The stormtrooper walks over to her where she is crumpled beside Poe and takes off it’s helmet. It’s Finn.

“Rey.” Leia’s voice is distant. “Rey, baby, wakeup.”

Her mother’s voice, her mother’s warmth, her light. Rey clings to that, but she still screams out when she wakes. Leia sits on the side of her bed, her hands are on either side of Rey’s head holding gently but tightly. Amilyn sits on the other side, gently holding Rey down to prevent her from
doing any further damage to her already wounded body. Rey pants, tears rolling down her cheeks as she looks into her mother’s eyes. “Mama.”

“It’s alright sweetheart.” Leia soothes as she carefully helps Rey to sit up so she can wrap her arms around the trembling girl. “It was just a nightmare, baby. It’s alright. I’m here. Ammy’s here. You’re alright.”

The nightmare had made her mothers even more attentive to the point where Amilyn was debating putting off her up coming mission. Rey reassured her that she was fine, or would be, and that she didn’t need to put anything off for her. They still had a war to fight, they couldn’t put off fighting against the First Order just because Rey was hurt and hurting. Amilyn conceded with a deep sigh and a kiss to Rey’s forehead.

Rey sat sandwiched between Poe and Finn as they watched a holovid. She and Poe hadn’t had a chance to talk about things yet, but it didn’t seem to be affecting their time together or their time with Finn, so Rey wasn’t going to push it for now. When Amilyn stepped out of the bedroom in a flight suit Rey blinked. “Ammy?”

“Yes Starlight?” Amilyn replied as she smiled at Rey.

“You’re wearing a flight suit.” Rey pointed out in case Amilyn was unaware of what she was wearing.

Amilyn chuckled softly. “I am, yes.”

“Why?” Rey asked.

“Because they’re required to pilot an X-Wing.” Amilyn answered.

This time it was Poe who responded, his voice laced with surprise. “You’re flying an X-Wing? You can fly an X-Wing?”

“I’ve been piloting fighters since before you were born, Commander.” Amilyn informed the young man with a smirk.

Poe returned that smirk. “So when you said you knew all about flyboys, it’s because you are one.”

Amilyn smiled and winked at the boy. Then she turned her attention to Rey. “Would you like to come and see me off, Starlight?”

Rey would have jumped off the couch if she were able to. “You’re letting me out of the cabin?”

“Doctor Karolina says it’s alright for you to start walking around a bit more.” Amilyn replied. “So I don’t see the harm in you accompanying me to command.”

“Is Mama going to be ok with this?” Rey asked as she used Poe and Finn to help herself get to her feet.

Amilyn chuckled. “She’ll be fine with it. Besides, I, unlike everyone else on this base, do not fear Leia Organa.”

“You’re a braver person than me, Admiral.” Poe laughed.

“Me too.” Finn added.

“Me three.” Rey finished. “Even Uncle Luke calls her the evil twin when she’s royally pissed off at
him.”

Leia was leaning against the command table listening intently as Korr Sella updated her on information they’d been able to get from the First Order. Korrie had sources embedded within the First Order, ones she trusted, so Leia trusted what she was being told.

“Apparently it was General Hux who put the bounty out on Rey for the murder of Snoke.” Korrie said. “That bounty has since been rescinded by Kylo Ren. Ren and four of his Knights of Ren showed up on Hux’s command ship. According to my source Ren nearly beat Hux to death while his Knights kept Phasma at bay.”

“Phasma’s still alive?” Finn said before he could stop himself as he walked in with Rey, Poe, and Holdo. “How?”

“I don’t know the details of how, but according to my intel, her armor has quite a bit of cybernetics these days.” Korrie replied.

Rey reached for Finn’s hand.

Leia and Amilyn shared a look to which Amilyn simply smiled, which made Leia roll her eyes.

Once the rest of Amilyn’s squadron arrived they began the briefing on Amilyn’s mission. The more she listened, the more Rey became uncomfortable. They had gotten intel on a Free Virgillia class bunker buster in prime condition that was up for grabs, but they had to act quickly to get their hands on it. Amilyn was determined to claim it as a replacement for the Ninka. Rey wanted to go with her, waited to be out there protecting her, and the fact that she couldn’t made her squirm in her seat.

Seeing Rey’s discomfort Poe spoke up for her. “Admiral, I’d be honored to fly with you if you need any extra set of wings out there.”

“That’s appreciated Commander.” Leia replied. “But I have something else in mind for you and Commander Sonnel.”

The Resistance marched on and all Rey could do was watch from the sidelines. She hated it. She hated feeling useless, and she hated the slow process of healing that was keeping her from doing anything. She kind of liked being taken care of by her mother, but now that Leia’s concern for Amilyn was fueling her protectiveness of Rey, it was getting a little much to bare. She actually argued with Leia that morning, which was both pointless because no one argued with Leia Organa and won, and kind of amazing because it was such a normal thing to do. Rey hadn’t ever really fought with her mother since their reunion, but before Leia left that morning Rey flat out told her she was being ridiculous and that she needed to stop babying her.

With a frustrated huff Rey commed Finn and R2. As soon as Finn walked into the room she said, “I need your help. I was this close,” She held out her finger and thumb, which were nearly touching, “to doing something really stupid this morning.”

“How stupid?” Finn asked, smirking.

“I actually considered trying to mind trick my mother.” Rey admitted.

Finn barked out a laugh. “Yeah, that would have been pretty stupid.”

It took a little convincing but Finn agreed to help. R2 was always up for going rouge. So with her partners in crime at her side Rey snuck into the hanger to retrieve something from the Falcon, and
then retreated to the meditation room. She wasn’t actually stupid enough to try and climb a ladder, that’s what Finn was for. Rey remained firmly on the ground and used her Force powers to lift the top end of the ribbons up to Finn who adjusted them into place and held them there while R2 attached them securely to the beams.

“What are these for anyway?” Finn asked as he reached for the end of the next floating ribbon.

“Skyfairing.” Rey answered. “It’s a form of meditation that Amilyn practises. I want to surprise her when she gets back. Maybe ask her if she’ll teach me. She’d started to when I was little, but then, ya know, my brother turned into an evil asshole hell bent on galactic domination.” She said, and then added to herself, with me as his apprentice slash empress.

“I’m sure the Admiral will appreciate this.” Finn said before yelping softly. “Watch the sparks R2!”

Once all the ribbons were hung as Rey remembered them from the room in their home when she was small, they needed to be tested to make sure they were secure.

“Why do I have to hang from these things?” Finn protested as he dangled from the end of a bright green ribbon.

Rey was smirking as she watched him. “Because I’m injured and your heavier.”

Letting go of the last ribbon Finn stumbled a bit towards Rey who instinctively reached out to brace him. She’d kissed Poe on Naboo because she had wanted to kiss him, wanted to be held by him. Poe made her heart flutter and her stomach twist up in a good way. Finn made her breath hitch and cheeks flush hot. Rey bit her lip as she looked into Finn’s eyes, his hands holding tightly to her upper arms, her hands fisted into his shirt. She felt the same urge she had felt with Poe, the same desire to close the distance and find out what his lips tasted like.

“Ahm.” Leia clearly her throat as she crosses her arms over her chest. “Rey Organa Solo, what do you think you’re doing?”

Rey and Finn spring apart. Rey flinches in pain at the sudden movement. “Geesh, Mama!”

Seeing the flinch Leia was quick to close the distance between herself and her daughter to make sure Rey was alright. Though the bacta band she wore was getting smaller as she healed, she still wore one. “Are you alright?”

“I was fine before you decided to scare the Force out of me.” Rey replied as she batted her mother’s hands away. “I found skyfairing ribbons in the marketplace in Theed, so I got them for Ammy. Finn and R2 were helping me hang them before she got back.”

Finn was blushing and nervously rubbing his hands on his thighs. “R2 and I did all the work, General. I would never let her do something to risk making her injuries worse. I promise.”

“Thank you Finn.” Leia said gently. She looked between her daughter and Finn, and just managed to hold in a sigh. Amilyn was right. Rey had feelings for both Finn and Poe, and they for her, and from what she’d seen for each other. Turning her attention to the dangling ribbons Leia smiled brightly. “She’s going to love this, Rey.”

When Amilyn returned to base Leia wasn’t sure which was more banged up, Amilyn or her X-Wing. “Amilyn?” She asked as the taller woman came closer and she could get a good look at her. When Amilyn stood right in front of her Leia reached out and brushed her fingertips against a bacta patch on Amilyn’s long beautiful neck. “What happened?”
“Droids.” Amilyn answered as she gently batted Leia’s hands away.

“Droids?” Leia repeated.

Amilyn nodded. “Maz forgot to mention that the dead pirate who formerly owned the ship, maned it with a small army of old salvaged and modified Clone War era droids. It wasn’t anything we couldn’t handle. We airlocked most of the droids before taking the Ninka II to the shipyard to be worked on.”

“Ninka II?” Leia asked with a smile that faulted quickly. “Most of the droids were airlocked?”

“Captain Kun saved a couple crates of old B1 parts for Commander Wexley.” Amilyn answered.

Leia crinkled her nose. “Do you really think giving Snap B1 parts is a good idea?”

“What?” Amilyn questioned. “I found his droid rather endearing.”

“Only you would find a singing, dancing, murder bot endearing, my love.” Leia laughed with a shake of her head. “I could so see sixteen year old you trying to buy it off Wexley.”

Amilyn laughed. “I would have been endlessly fascinated by it.”

“You need to stop by medical.” Leia said, her voice firm and leaving no room for argument. “Then after you get cleaned up and changed you need to find Rey.”

Concern instantly flooded Amilyn. “Is she alright?”

“She’s fine.” Leia reassured.

The smile on Leia’s face put Amilyn at ease but also made her incredibly curious. She almost shipped medical to find Rey right away but she knew better. So she went to medical, then to their quarters to shower and change, and then she went on the hunt for their daughter. She wasn’t too surprised when she ended up in front of the meditation room door. Rey wasn’t allowed to do any physical training, but she could still do her meditative training.

What did surprise Amilyn, and what brought her ears to her eyes as her heart overflowed with love, was finding Rey standing in front of a full set of multicolored skyfairing ribbons.

“Look what I found on Naboo, Ammy!” Rey said brightly as she waved a hand at the skyfairing setup.

Amilyn gasped softly. “Rey.”

“I thought you might like them.” Rey said as Amilyn walked towards her. “Mama mentioned your last remaining pair were aboard the Ninka. Now you have a whole new complete set.”

Amilyn reached out to take hold of an orange ribbon and let it thread through her hand before she let it go to pull Rey into a careful but tight embrace. “What a wonderful surprise, Starlight. Thank you.”

Rey snuggled into Amilyn’s embrace and sighed happily. Her chest swelled with the same kind of warmth she’d felt when she’d given Leia the crystal necklace. She could get use to that feeling. When the hug finally ended Rey looked up at Amilyn and said, “I had a memory on Naboo. You were teaching me how to skyfair while Mama sat on the floor rolling her eyes at us.”
“I remember.” Amilyn said softly as tears of joy and happiness rolled unashamedly, down her cheeks.

“Would you teach me again?” Rey asked.

“Not until you’re completely healed.” Leia called out from where she lurked watching her family, her loves.

Rey was the one rolling her eyes. “Obviously Mama.”

Amilyn laughed. “Yes, Starlight, of course I’ll teach you. I would love nothing more than to share this with you.”

The galaxy around them was in chaos, there were battles to fight, a war to win, but for right now, in this moment, everything that mattered to Leia was in this room, safe and sound. And for a moment Leia could breathe easy, so could Rey, and Amilyn. After everything that had happened since sending Rey to Naboo, they needed just such a moment.
Chapter 17

He watched as she entered the hanger with her trademark confidence, chin up, posture perfect; radiating all that she was, the princess, the rebel, the senator, the general. And yet, somehow, she still seemed like someone sneaking into an area she shouldn’t be. At least to him, and it made him smile. Not for the first time Luke wondered what it would have been like if they’d grown up together. Sure, a lot of who they were was because of their upbringings, but the ways they were raised and their experiences in life just help shape who they truly were inside. With Leia’s bold confidence and natural leadership, and his brash, impulsive curiosity, what kind of trouble would they have gotten into as kids? He could almost see a tiny, bossy, Leia telling him off for something he’d done long before an adult caught wind of it, and then standing up and defending him against that adult. They would have been a handful that’s for sure.

As Leia drew closer to the Falcon Luke finally spoke up to stop her. “Leia.” He called out firmly. “Leave her alone.”

Leia had known he was there. She had sensed him long before she’d even stepped into the hanger bay. She stopped walking when he called out to her, and stood there, not turning to face him as he approached. Her gaze remained on the Millenium Falcon. When she felt him standing beside her she crossed her arms and huffed at him. “She’s been in there for three days, Luke.”

“She’s fine, Leia.” Luke reassured his twin. “You can sense it just as strongly as I can, hell, you can sense it better than I can. Rey is fine.”

After getting medical and maternal clearance to return to duty and training Rey had informed him that she was finally ready to tackle building her lightsaber. He told her she would need a space that was in some way sacred and secluded, a space where she would be safe and undisturbed since infusing her crystal would involve going into a deep meditative trance. He had gone back to Tatooine, to a cave close to Obi-Wan’s home, and as he built his lightsaber Threepio and R2 stood guard. Rey had smiled and said she knew the perfect place for her. Three days ago, with a crate full of materials, Rey had boarded the Falcon and sealed up the hatch behind her. Luke stood guard. While his droids had protected him from Jawas and raiders, he kept well meaning and worried mothers and suitors at bay. He had the harder job. Tusken raiders had nothing on Leia Organa in mama bear mode.

“It was to soon, Luke.” Leia grumbled at him. “She’s barely recovered from…”

“Leia.” Luke said gently, firmly. He reached out and turned his sister to face him. “Sit.”

“Excuse me?” Leia said incredulously, dark eyes slightly widened, lips setting into a hard line.


Leia grumbled and growled as she sank to the floor in sync with her brother. “I’m too damn old to be sitting on the ground like a youngling, Luke.”

“Shut up Leia.” Luke replied. She growled at him again and he couldn’t help but think she’d spent to much of her life around Chewie. Once they were sitting cross legged on the hard, cold, floor of the hanger bay he ignore the fact that she was right. They were getting old. No wonder Master Yoda had so many pillows. “Close your eyes.” He told her as he stopped her from crossing her arms over her chest again, instead placing them on her thighs, hands on her knees. “Deep, slow breaths.” If looks could kill Luke would have to continue training his niece as a Force ghost. He
returned Leia’s glare with a warm farmboy smile, which admittedly lost a little bit of it’s shine behind the beard. When her eyes were closed and she was calming her breaths he asked, “Do you remember what I taught you?”

“Center myself.” Leia replied begrudingly. “I am a cup, pour out the negative and pour in the positive.”

Luke chuckles. “More or less.” They sit in silence for a few minutes, eyes closed, breathes deep, even, and in sync. Then he asks, “Can you sense her? Feel that she is well, whole, and strong?”

Leia doesn’t respond right away but after a few moments she nods. “I can.”

Luke smiles. “Your daughter is remarkable, Leia.”

Leia smiles. “I know.”

They open their eyes at the same time and Luke notices the crystal around Leia’s neck as it floats a bit. He smiles. “Did I ever tell you that I’m not the Skywalker twin Master Yoda wanted to train?”

“No, you didn’t.” Leia replied with a raised brow. While she had agreed that Rey needed to get back to her training, she hadn’t been able to shake the constant worry that lingered since Rey was shot. It would take time for her to get that concern under control again.

“I was to much like our father.” Luke said as he helped his sister to her feet. “Impulsive, impatient, head in the clouds, reckless, already tainted by anger. But you, you were the very best of our mother, shaped and polished by the love of your parents.” He gave her a moment to remember them, Bail and Breha, and he wished he could have met them, thanked them for loving his sister. “Obi-Wan had always been meant to train me, but Master Yoda, he wanted to train you.” Luke smiled and then did his best to imitate the peculiar way Yoda spoke. He hummed a high pitched rumble and said, “An exceptional padawan, young Skywalker would have been. An excellent Jedi she would make. Teach her, you must, in my stead.”

Leia turned to look at her brother oddly as he spoke in the high pitched and strange way.

Luke laughed. “Master Yoda has a, unique, way of speaking.” He smiled as he wondered what Yoda would think of his imagination. “He had his little green heart so set on being your master.” He reached out and tapped the crystal at her neck.”He sent your father one of the last pure kyber crystals known to the Order.”

Leia raised an eyebrow at this. “My father never told me, in fact he tried to steer me away from any kind of Force sensitivity.”

“He was protecting you.” Luke said with a nod of understanding. “If we had shown any strong signs of the Force, Vader would have sensed us.”

“We could have sensed each other.” Leia huffed. “Been more than just fragments in each other’s dreams.”

Luke smiled. After Endor, when they had a free moment to breathe and talk, the twins discovered they had each grown up having dreams of each other. A phantom sibling they both had longed for, but had just chalked up the feeling to that of lonely only children. “It would have been nice to have been a prince.” He teased. “But I’m not sure anyone could have handled us together.”

Leia laughed. “Master Yoda would have been in for a bit of a surprise.” She said as she leaned into her brother as he put his arm around her shoulders. “I was a horrible student when I was young. I
annoyed my humanoid teachers, and may have reprogrammed my droid tutor once, or twice.”


“What?” Leia replied. “Do you know how dull language lessons could get? So I may have creatively edited a few things to get out of a few lessons.” A comfortable silence fell between them for several minutes before Leia asked, “What happens next, Luke? When she finally comes out of there, what’s next?”

“She continues her training.” Luke answers. “But I can’t be more detailed than that until she comes out.”

Three days ago Rey boarded the Millennium Falcon and after giving her loved ones a smile and an awkward wave as she balanced her crate of supplies, she sealed up the hatch and headed inside. She decided the best place to do this was in the middle of the common area because it would give her more room than the cockpit, and it was where a lot of her family’s time had been spent together. After laying out every piece and part, bit and bobble she could possibly need, and then some, Rey had walked the ship to clear her mind. Then she settled onto the floor, closed her eyes, and began breathing slowly, deeply. And when she was ready she raised her hand, called the asteroid to her, and began.

The extraction was easy because she’d done it before with her mother’s crystal. It was the infusion that was hard. Taking a mental and emotional inventory of one’s self wasn’t an easy task. It was much easier to list flaws than it was strengths, but Rey needed to focus on everything that made her who she was. So who was Rey? She was a survivor, a fighter. She was afraid, but also very brave, because being brave meant being afraid and kriffing doing it anyway. Her time alone on Jakku had made her tough, resilient, but not hardened against being compassionate, or empathetic. Rey loved, and was loved in return. She cared about people, droids, creatures, wither she knew them personally or not. She was smart, determined, and open to learning new things and having new experiences. Rey was good. Rey was Light, but she understood, she accepted that there was also the Dark. She knew that sometimes in order for the Light to succeed it had to drawn upon the Dark.

Anakin Skywalker had been the Chosen One. He had brought balance to the Force by destroying the old Jedi Order and the Sith, because both had tilted the scales to far in their respective directions. True balance was found in each individual person. Ben had never learned that lesson because he had fully embraced the Dark while ignoring the Light. Rey stood firmly in the Light but knew that if she had to she could and would draw upon the Dark. She would make the hard choices when she needed too, just as her grandparents had done.

Rey not only had to face who she was as a person, who she was at the core of her very being, but she also had to face the legacy she was born into. That had been a surprisingly big part of this particular journey. The Skywalker Sega, her uncle had jokingly called it once. But Rey was far more than just a Skywalker. Yes, she was the granddaughter of Anakin Skywalker, the Chosen One who brought balance to the Force, the Jedi who survived the Dark to return to the Light. But she was also the granddaughter of Padme Amidala, Senator and Queen of Naboo, who spoke of and fought for peace during a time of war. She was the granddaughter of Bail and Breha Organa, Viceroy and Queen of Alderaan, who helped build a rebellion to save the galaxy.

Rey Breha Organa Solo was the daughter of Han Solo, the scandaeral general who ignored his instincts to run, who stayed and fought for his friends and the woman he loved. She was the daughter of Amilyn Holdo, Admiral of the Resistance, who even as a girl knew the right thing to do was fight against evil, even if it meant putting herself physically, emotionally, and spiritually in
danger. She was the niece of Luke Skywalker, the last Jedi of old, who faced his failures and his fears to take his place at his sister’s side once more. Rey Breha Organa Solo was the daughter of Leia Organa, the heart and soul and hope of the galaxy, who was always willing to pick up the fight and lead, even if that fight was against her own son.

Rey had never felt so engulfed by the Force like this before. As she sat there, focused on the task of infusion, floating several inches off the floor, it felt as if a warm wind swirled around her body. Then she realized it wasn’t a wind. Rey was no longer alone. She felt a strong pair of hands grip her shoulders, unfamiliar but not unwelcome, comforting in fact. “You must always listen to your heart, child.” A man’s voice whispered, a somewhat familiar voice. Rey had heard it before, in a dream? A memory? If she were not in such a deep trance Rey would have gasped. Bail Organa. That was Bail Organa’s voice. It was her grandfather’s voice. She could see him clearly now, in the Force, standing behind her, his hands resting on her shoulders. “It may not always get it right, mistakes will be made, but when we let our hearts guide us, it will lead us towards the right thing to do.”

Tears began to well under Rey’s closed eyes. “Grandfather.”

She felt him lean in and kiss the crown of her head, and it was as real as when her Ammy did it.

Then she felt a pair of strong but delicate hands take her own. “You will learn many lessons, my granddaughter.” Breha Organa’s voice whispered as she knelt in front of Rey. “The hardest and most valuable will come from your failures. Do not be afraid to fall.” Rey felt a gentle press of lips against her forehead. “We are so proud of you, my little Breha.”

“Grandmother.” Rey whispered, her tears now edging past her lashes. Were they really here? What was it her father said? The people who love you, who you love, are never truly gone from you? Is this what that was? Nothing she had read in those old journals mentioned anything like this happening. Her uncle had taught her about visions, preimations, her rare ability to tap into Force echos, and about Force ghosts, but this wasn’t any of that.

She felt hands cup her face, thumbs wiping away her tears, and then she saw a face, a figure forming in the Force. Padme smiles, a big, bright, beautiful smile. “You are so much more than a legacy, honor it, but do not let it become a weight around her neck.” She brushed at Rey’s hair as she continued to speak. “Learn from, and listen to, those around you, but learn to trust in yourself as well.” She went back to holding Rey’s face in her hands as she looked into Rey’s eyes. “You must also be honest with those you love, lean on them, know that they are there for you and they are strong and can help you carry your burdens.” Padme embraces her, holds her as tightly and as lovingly and as real as Leia would. She kisses her temple and presses her forehead against Rey’s. “And remember that we are always with you, and that we love you.”

Tears ran like streams down Rey’s face, her eyes still closed in the real world, her breathing a little deeper as she whispers, “Grandmother.”

“Geesh, your mother’s family are a bunch of saps.” Han says from where he leans against the table across from Rey. It makes Rey laugh in the real world as well as in the Force. He moves across the room to crouch in front of her and caresses her cheek as he winks at her. “You got this, kid.”

Rey is exhausted when it’s over and decides that she needs to rest before she can continue. The next part would be easier, but would still require quite a bit of Force skill. So she sleeps, then she eats, and she processes everything she’d just experienced. Then she sits once more amongst her salvage and chews her lip. She thinks about everything she liked about Anakin’s lightsaber, and everything she disliked. Then she thinks of something she’d read in Obi-Wan’s journal. Each
lightsaber was as unique as the Jedi who wields it. She closed her eyes, takes a deep breath, and thinks of what her lightsaber would feel like in her hand, what will make her strong in battle and humble in retreat, Rey opens her eyes and begins to build.

Poe had been back from the mission Leia had sent him on just long enough to find Rey back on her feet and bacta band free. She had moved back into her own quarters, which had given them a bit of time alone, and then she was off doing her Jedi thing in the Falcon. They had made it pretty clear to each other that they wanted to explore something more than friendship, because you didn’t kiss friends the way they’d been kissing, but they still hadn’t sat down and talked about anything. They were just so relieved that they were both ok, safe, sound, and healed. Expressing that relief had outweighed talking things out.

When he’d gone back to the quarters he shared with Finn, Poe found himself spending that evening and the next alone. He hadn’t been sure at first, but after a couple days Poe quickly worked it out. Finn was avoiding him. Poe wanted to know why. Once he was off duty he made his way down to medical where he found Finn in a supply closet restocking and taking inventory. He watched the other man for a few moments as he leaned against the doorframe and smiled warmly. “Haven’t seen much of you since I got back. Was starting to think the General sent you on some secret mission.”

Finn jumped a bit as he turned to see Poe standing there. “Yeah, no, the Doc’s kept me busy. Everything ok?”

“That depends.” Poe replied. “Feels kind of like maybe you’ve been avoiding me or something.”

He had been. He hadn’t meant to avoid Poe, but he had been. Poe had feelings for Rey, Rey had feelings for Poe, and Finn had almost, very nearly, kissed Rey. He couldn’t even blame it on the moment because he had wanted to kiss Rey for awhile now, and it seemed as if she had wanted to kiss him too. Finn was beyond confused. Especially since Rey wasn’t the only one he’d thought about kissing. This was all so very confusing. There were no relationships among the First Order, at least not for expendable stormtroopers. Even the officers had to be worthy of the breeding programs. Finn understood the basics, males impregnate females for procreation. Being with the Resistance had shown Finn that there was more to it then that. The General and the Admiral, they were both females past the prime age for breeding, but they were a matched pair not because someone told them they had to be for whatever reason, but because they wanted to be. They loved each other. Holdo looked at Leia like she was the center of the galaxy, and Leia looked at Holdo like she was home, and for a princess without a home that said a lot.

At first Finn had thought Leia and Holdo’s coupling was because of their ages, because they were past breeding age, and because of the loss of Solo. Then Rey told him that Leia and Holdo had been a couple since they were young, since before Solo. After that Finn started looking a bit more closely at the people around him. Commander Wexley and Captain Kun were married. Snap smiled in a certain way when Karé teased him, and she laughed in a certain way when he was being goofy just for her. Jessika Pava and Kaydel Ko Connix seemed to be working towards a coupling, and unlike the General and Admiral they were of breeding age, so Finn figured that had very little to do with their relationship. He’d gone on a mission with the General and Poe while Rey was gone to see a man the General had called a slicer. They had met on a farm world because Leia would have been to easily recognized in the bustling city of the core world where the slicer lived. He had brought his husband with him, an ex-Imperial turned Chancellor’s aide, Poe had explained, and a close friend of Leia’s. All of these people had paired off in one way or another because of the way they felt for each other, not because of a need for children. They were simply together because they loved and cared for one another. Their couplings were emotional, full of sentimentality. They were real and honest for the betterment of the person.
Finn wanted that for himself. Was that selfish? But the two people he wanted to explore these feelings with, were already exploring together, and he didn’t want to interfere with that. Finn wanted them to be happy, because for him that’s what mattered.

“Finn.” Poe said gently as he reached out for the other man’s hand, taking it into his own and holding it tightly. “Talk to me, buddy. Please. What’s going on?” He could see that Finn was about to try and pacify him, and he wasn’t about to let that happen. He had a few seconds to think, to try and figure out what was going on with Finn, and he realized that it all started when he and Rey returned from Naboo. “Is this about me and Rey?”

“No.” Finn replied. It was, but it wasn’t, so that wasn’t totally a lie. “I’m glad you and Rey have each other. I’m glad it’s you with her because I know she’s safe with you, and you’re safe with her.”

“But?” Poe asked as he looked into Finn’s eyes.

“No buts, Poe.” Finn said, shaking his head. “You like Rey and I’m ha…”

“I like you too.” Poe finally admits. “I like you too, Finn. I like you the way I like Rey.” He held onto Finn’s hand a little more tightly. Not to keep Finn there, but to give himself an anchor to keep him from running off. “Having you avoid me and not knowing why, that hurt and it scared me. I didn’t know if I had done…”

“I nearly kissed Rey.” Finn blurted out. “I couldn’t face you.”

Poe blinked. Then he smiled a reassuring and hopeful smile. “I think when Rey comes out of her tin can the three of us need to talk.”

Finn finally squeezed Poe’s hand back. “Yeah, I think we do.”

She was finished, it was done. Rey had her lightsaber. It sat on the table as she packed away the bits and pieces and parts she didn’t use, though she ended up using most of what she’d brought with her. Beside hers lay her grandfather’s and she wondered what to do with it now that she had her own. She could give it back to Luke or maybe hide it somewhere just in case? She could ask her mother if she could put it on her case, the one Leia puts important things in that she wants to keep with her, but Rey knows Leia’s feelings about Anakin are complicated.

“I don’t suppose you want it back.” Rey says suddenly and without turning from the table where the lightsabers rest.

“Wouldn’t really do me any good these days.” Comes the reply.

Rey turns to face the Force ghost of Anakin Skywalker. “I was wondering if I’d see you. You weren’t in my vision of the others.”

“Jedi perk.” Anakin says softly, a playful smirk on his lips. “Knowing how to channel the Force, and how to transcend the Force, lets me appear to you this way. If that’s ok with you.” He appeared as the young man who stood on the balcony pledging his life and his love to Padme, and was dressed in a similar fashion to the way Luke dressed. “I would understand if you wanted me to leave.”

“I remember you.” Rey tells him. “I remember that night at the Temple. I would have died if not for you.” She looks at him, into his eyes which were so much like Luke’s. In fact, for as much as Leia favored Padme, it was clear that Luke had favored their father just as strongly. Then she said, “I won’t ignore you the way Kylo Ren does. I know it’s you calling to him from the light.”
Anakin smiled and then turned a bit more serious. “I will continue to do so. I’m nothing if not stubborn.” He smiles in a cheeky way that reminds Rey of Leia. Then he continues, “You’re on the right path, Rey. And while you still have much to learn from your uncle, it’s time you found a true master. Luke will understand this when he sees your lightsaber.”

Rey frowned. She wasn’t sure how she felt about learning from someone else. Plus, who else was there for her to learn from? Her uncle was the last Jedi of old. “Did you have someone in mind, Grandfather?”

“I do.” Anakin nods. “And once your uncle sees your lightsaber, he’ll known who. I just wanted you to be prepared. I also wanted to tell you, for what’s it worth, that I’m proud of you, and that I’ll be with you.” He looks sad as he adds. “I would have been with you on Jakku, but…”

“Kylo.” Rey says softly and with a nod of understanding. “Cutting me off from the Force hid me from everyone I shared a connection with, you, Luke, Mother.”

Anakin’s sadness deepens. “Leia.” He whispers, then he sighs and looks at Rey. “It’s unfair, all the mistakes of the past you’re left trying to correct.”

“It’s not.” Rey agrees and then smiles. “But I’m a Solo and we thrive when the odds are against us.”

When she finally make her way out of the Millenium Falcon Rey isn’t surprised to find them waiting for her. In fact it amused her and make her feel cared for, loved. She’d been in there for days and she could only imagine how each passing day increased her mother’s worries and added to her concerns. She listened as Leia teased Luke and Amilyn laughed while playfully chastising her for doing it. Walking down the ramp Rey made her way over to her family and smiled as she leaned against the Falcon. “You three haven’t been out here the whole time I was in there, have you?”

“Not the whole time.” Leia says with a bright smile as she turns to see her daughter. For a moment the sight of Rey caused her breath to hitch, and a small flicker of pain in her heart. Leaning up against the old ship the way she was, arms crossed over her chest, one foot crossed over the other, with that smirk on her lips. Rey reminded her so much of Han.

“Most of the time.” Luke said with a small smile and a shrug. “Someone had to keep your mother at bay.”

“Well excuse me for being worried.” Leia huffed. “It’s my right you know, as her mother, to worry.”

Rey laughed and then her gaze caught Amilyn’s who gave her a warm smile.

“Will you show us, Starlight?” Amilyn asked brightly.

Rey straightened and walked closer to her family. As she did so she reached for the place on her father’s belt where she’d made a space for her lightsaber. Detaching it she drew it out and held it up to show them the long chromium shaft, obtained on Naboo after asking the Queen about the silver ship her grandmother had used. In the center of the shaft were grips made of Amilyn’s cuff bracelets, the ones that mapped out Gatalenta’s constellations, the one’s she’d been wearing when Rey rescued her from the Raddus. On either end, just below the blade emitter, were bands made of a belt she’d found amongst a box of things her father had kept, that had once belonged to her mother. The bands depicted the phases of a moon through its orbital cycle. She used parts of the Falcon to complete the hilt and some of it’s more special features, and the very best parts she could
get her little scavenger hands on for the inner workings. It was actually a really nice looking hilt.

“Are those my bracelets?” Amilyn asked with a warm smile.

“They were too damaged for you to wear anymore so I used them. I hope you don’t mind.” Rey said softly, suddenly unsure.

“I think it’s perfect, Starlight.” Amilyn replied, a very soft crack in her voice, as she reached out to caress Rey’s cheek.

“Interesting choices.” Luke said as he looked at the weapon his niece had built while stroking his beard. “Let’s see the blade.”

This part made Rey a little nervous. Biting her lip she took several steps away from her mothers and uncle and ignited a blade that erupted from the hilt in a vibrant purple light.

While Leia and Amilyn looked a bit startled by the color Luke simply nodded and said, “That hilt is a little long for you isn’t it?”

Rey smirked, relaxing when Luke didn’t question the color of her blade. She knew from Obi-Wan’s journals that purple was a very rare color, with a very specific meaning. A purple lightsaber was used by a Light Side Force user who could draw on the Dark Side without it corrupting them.

“Nope.” Rey answered her uncle while igniting the other side to reveal a second purple blade. “I was always more comfortable with a staff, but I also know that sometimes a staff isn’t going to work, so.” With her hands on the center grips made of her Ammy’s bracelets, Rey twisted, turning her saber staff into two separate sabers. “There were two crystals in the asteroid, and they both sang to me.”

Luke hummed softly while he continued to scratch at his beard with his human hand.

Rey wasn’t sure how much lightsaber lore her mother knew and she had been expecting Leia to be concerned about the color of hers. With Ben having fallen so easily to the Dark Side, Rey had figured her mother would be afraid of what Rey’s purple lightsaber meant. She had been prepared to reassure her mother that she was not on the verge of giving into the darkness. But Leia’s concern didn’t seem to be aimed at Rey, at least for the moment, because the worry in her dark eyes seemed to be focused on Luke.

The Skywalker twins seemed to be having a silent conversation. Leia’s dark eyes asking her brother if he was alright, and Luke giving her a small warm smile as he reached for her hand to reassure her that he was. Then Luke turned his focus back to Rey and said, “Well done, Rey. It’s a fine piece of work. I can feel how much you put into it and your crystal. You must have had a hell of an experience. I’m proud of you.”

Rey beamed at his words and nodded. “It wasn’t like anything I’d been expecting.”

“A good lesson to learn when it comes to the Force.” Luke told his niece. “Is that it has a way of taking the expected and turning it upside down and inside out.”

Luke declines Leia’s invitation to join them for dinner but reassures her that he’s alright yet again. It’s not until they’re in Leia and Amilyn’s shared cabin that Leia explains her concern to Rey, and why the color of her lightsaber doesn’t worry her. Luke’s wife, Mara Jade, had trained in both the Light Side and the Dark Side. Mara’s lightsaber had been purple as well. Rey shared the vague memory she had of a woman with red-hair and a sharp wit and Leia smiled fondly and told Rey stories of her aunt over dinner. When they asked about her experience Rey told them about what
happened, though she hesitated a time or two when she noticed tears in her mother’s eyes. Leia had reached out for Rey’s hand and held it tightly, telling her it was alright, to continue. Rey did, and when she was finished Leia was hugging her so tight she couldn’t take in a full breath as the older woman expressed her pride.

Rey could only take so much smothering and motherly affection and as soon as she could make her escape she did. She’d sent word to Finn and Poe as soon as she had a chance, telling them they could wait for her in her cabin if they wanted too and she would just meet them there. For a moment before triggering the lock on her door, Rey feared there wouldn’t be anyone on the other side. While she and Poe had been physically expressing their feelings for each other, they still hadn’t talked about what was happening between them. Then she’d nearly kissed Finn, which led to him acting oddly around her for the few days between the kiss and her sequestering herself to the Falcon. A part of figuring herself out had been to accept the realization that she loved both Poe and Finn, but she wasn’t sure what to do with the new information. She’d grown up knowing that her mother loved two very different people, and that Han and Amilyn each made Leia happy in their own ways. Though she had no tangible memory of the dynamics between the three of them, Rey could remember what it felt like to be nestled in the love her parents relationships created around them. Rey wondered if she could have something like that with Poe and Finn, or maybe, if she thought daringly, something more.

Stepping into her quarters Rey berated herself for fearing one or both wouldn’t be there, because of course they were. Poe sat on her semi circle sofa and Finn in the chair across from it. They were playing cards and drinking Yavin ale and Rey felt like this was the way it should always be. “Well will you look at this. The three of us, all here at the same time, this is rare.”

Finn jumped to his feet and as soon as Rey was within reach he pulled her into a hug, while Poe gave her a dashing smile. When Finn pulled away he looked her over with a critical eye. “Are you alright? You were in there for days and Master Skywalker wouldn’t let anyone go in and check on you. Not even the General, not even when she threatened him with bodily harm.”

“Did you know those two could argue without saying a word?” Poe asked, amusement written on his face. “It’s kind of creepy and kind of funny to watch.”

Rey laughed. “It’s a Force sensitive twin thing, and I’m fine.” She reassured as she stepped into Poe’s arms for a long embrace. She could tell by the way he held her that he’d been worried. “Things got pretty emotional.” She admitted, wanting to be open and honest with them. “Infusing a kyber crystal is extremely personal, and it was an incredible experience that I want to share with you both, but I just hashed it all out with my mothers and I’d really like to just catch my breath and be around my two favorite people.”

“We’re your favorite people huh?” Poe teased as he pulled her down to sit beside him on the couch.

“Yeap.” Rey said with a smile as she accepted a bottle of ale from Finn. She took a long drink from it and then settled into Poe’s side, tilted her head back to rest on his shoulder, and closed her eyes. But her eyes didn’t remain closed for long because it felt as if Poe and Finn were having a silent conversation of their own over her head. Opening her eyes she let her gaze dart between the two men before sitting up and shifting so she was facing them both. “What? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong.” Poe reassured after sharing another look with Finn.

“It’s just,” Finn said nervously while rubbing the back of his neck. “We wanted to talk about something but it can wait. You’ve been through a lot and…”
“Talk about what?” Rey asked, suddenly feeling a little frightened and a bit defensive. “What’s going on?”

Again Poe and Finn share a long look before Poe says, “Finn told me about the almost kiss.”

Rey’s heart was thundering in her chest. “And you’re angry? You feel betrayed…”

“No.” Poe said quickly, reaching for Rey’s hand. “No, Rey, I’m not mad.” He sighs softly and then carefully adds, “And I hope you won’t be either.”

She blinks. She looks between them for several moments before returning her gaze to Poe. “You kissed Finn?” Poe nods and she says, “You like Finn?”

Poe holds her hand more tightly. “I do, but that doesn’t take away from how much I like you too.”

Rey’s heart was racing. What was happening here? Was it possible? Was there a real chance the three of them could… Turning her attention to Finn she simply said his name as if it held a millions questions. “Finn?”

“I like you both.” Finn said softly. “I don’t know how any of this works. All I know is how I feel, and that I feel it for both of you.”

Rey was feeling incredibly overwhelmed, and kind of like this was a dream that would slip through her fingers at any moment.

“Rey?” Poe said softly.

“I know what it feels like to be around people who love each other.” Rey finally says, her voice soft as she’s trying to think out what she wants to say. “But I don’t know how it actually works, how relationships like this actually work.”

“None of us do.” Poe tells her as he reaches up to caress her cheek. “So I guess we’ll just have to work it all out as we go.”

“If that’s what you want.” Finn adds.

Rey looks over at him and holds out her hand for him to join her and Poe on the couch. “It’s what I want.”

Leia was just sitting down with her first cup of caf of the day when the door chime sounded. She looked up from the data pad she was about to read and smiled warmly before calling out, “Come in Luke.”

The door swished open and Luke stepped inside. He had been meditating all night and had come to a decision he wasn’t sure his sister was going to like. “Before you ask, I’m fine Leia. I miss her, I always will, just as you will always miss Han. But I’ve had longer to learn to live with my geirf, and it’s no longer as sharp as it once was. It’s more of a dull ache then a painful stabbing in my chest.”

She pourd her brother a cup of caf and held it out to him.

He accept and sat beside her at the small table. “With that out of the way, I have something to tell you and I’m not sure you’re going to like it.”

Leia raised an eyebrow at that. “What?”
“Rey and I need to leave for awhile.” Luke told her.


Luke sipped his caf and then set the mug on the table. He sighed heavily and said, “I can be Rey’s teacher, but I can’t be her master.”


He shook his head to stop her and explained. “Even when she was a girl I could sense that I wasn’t meant to be her master, Leia. I’d actually asked Mara to take Breha as her padawan and she was thrilled to do so. She loved her a great deal you know.”

“I know.” Leia replied gently. “And I would have been fine with Mara training Breha, but Luke, there are no other Jedi.”

“Excatally.” Luke said. “Rey needs a master who can teach her more than I can, differently than I can. Kylo Ren isn’t a Sith. Rey needs to be more than just a Jedi.”

“You have someone in mind?” Leia asked.


“I do.” Leia said as she took her brother’s hands into her own.
Chapter 18

Before leaving the Bespin moon base Rey had gotten to celebrate her birthday for the first time since she was a little girl. She’d spent the afternoon with Amilyn learning how to balance herself in the skyfairing scarves so she could meditate. As she dangled she told her Ammy about the memory she’d had of being small and pouty because Ben got to dye his hair and she had to wait. Amilyn’s smile had been bittersweet and warm. Then she had said she would be more than happy to keep her promise, even if it was ten years late. Rey had beamed, and the pair retreated to Amilyn’s quarters to find the box of dyes Leia had gotten for her. When Leia returned that evening to prepare for Rey’s party, not only did she find her love had once again changed her hair color, but so had Rey. It was as bittersweet for her as it was for Amilyn. She remembered the promise they had made Breha, that on her tenth birthday she could color her hair whatever color she liked. She also remembered Ben, and how he had laughed as he showed off his electric blue or neon green hair to everyone they passed.

“There’s enough dye left to do yours too, Mom.” Rey had teased as she sat beside Amilyn with matching hair color.

Leia laughed. “Not a chance, but it looks lovely on the two of you sweetheart.”

Rey’s long, Alderaanian braided hair was now nearly the same shade of purple as her lightsaber, only a bit darker. Rey loved it.

With Chewie back from Takodana to co-pilot and Luke’s reassurances to Leia that he would keep her daughter safe, Rey didn’t have to steal the Falcon this time. Luke wasn’t sure how long they would be gone so goodbye hugs lasted a little longer and were a little tighter. Then the three humanoids bored the Falcon with R2-D2 and headed for their first destination in their search for a Rey’s new teacher. Rey had been full of questions. How was this done before? Was there anything special she needed to do? She remembered Ben and his friends having funny little braids that looked like skitter mouse tails, would she have to have one? Would she have to call this new teacher master? Luke answered all of her questions and actually smiled at Rey’s excitement.

Lothal had prospered over the decades since the end of the war. The people had taken the strength and perseverance they’d used to liberate their planet and focused it on it’s recovery. It was one of the top producing farm planets in the New Republic, a major harbor for trade, and was well defended. The Millennium Falcon had permission to land because Lothal was one of the hubs of Han’s legitimate shipping business. While they were checking in with the docking supervisor Rey was surprised to discover that Han’s half of the business was now hers. Chewie had rumbled softly as they walked through the streets towards the markets and cantina that Leia had agreed it should be Rey’s, so he’d taken care of things while he was away. Rey had given him a warm smile and hugged his massive furry arm. Chewie responded by padding her on top of her head which made her laugh.

When they reached the cantina Luke looked around for the person they were meeting. In a back corner he spotted the familiar and unique soft green lekku and headed over to the table where Hera Syndulla sat with her droid.

“So, ” Hera said without turning towards the approaching man. “You finally came out of whatever hole you stuck your head into.”

“Hello to you too, Hera.” Luke replied as he slipped into the chair across from the female Twi’lek.
Rey relaxed when she realized her uncle clearly knew the woman and even smiled as R2 beeped and whistled a greeting to the C1 astromech at the Twi’lek’s side.

“I got Leia’s message.” Hera said as she glared softly at the man across from her. “She said you needed my help finding someone.” Then she smirked. “She also said to tell you not to loose her daughter on Lothal again?”

“You lost me?” Rey said, finally drawing the woman’s attention from Luke.

“No.” Luke said with a chuckle. “Your father lost you. Fathers outrank uncles and older brothers, so it was Han’s fault you wandered off.”

There were some in the Resistance that had doubts about the return of Breha Solo, those who found it hard to believe that after such a long time the General’s long thought dead child would just magically surface alive and well. Some worried that this girl was some kind of trick or trap to take down the Resistance from within, perhaps even an assassin laying in wait to dispatch Leia at the First Order’s command. Hera had known Breha as a child, had known Leia since she was a teen, and she had known Han since the Rebellion. She looked at the girl, closely, carefully, and then Hera smiled at the girl. “It’s good to see you again, Breha.” Then her smile faded into something a bit more somber and sympathetic. “I’m very sorry about Han. He was a good man.”

Before Rey could reply Chewie did.

“Oh, sorry. Rey.” Hera corrected.

Rey blushed a little. “It’s alright, and thank you.”

Hera smiled at the girl and then turned back to Luke. “So who are you looking for?”


Hera gave them what information she had which led them to a backwater planet named Thabeska. While Lothal had allowed them access because of Han’s legit business, Thabeska allowed them to land because of Han’s smuggling. The Fardi clan was one of the few smuggling clans that Han hadn’t managed to royally piss off. Which was a good thing because it was the current head of the Fardi family that they needed to speak too. Chewie had made the request, and they were told to wait on their ship while the dock supervisor sent word to the Fardi compound. An hour later several young Fardis came to escort them to a small garden within the compound. Sitting on a cushioned bench under a large shade tree was a dark skinned woman with long silver hair. She was old, born at some point during the Clone Wars, but her age isn’t what Luke and Rey noticed first. The first thing that struck them both was the fact that the woman was Force sensitive.

Hedala Fardi looked up and right at Rey. She stared at the girl for several moments before saying, “A ray of light to burn away the growing dark shadows.” She smiled which crinkled Hedala’s weathered skin. “Come child. Tell me what you need of me.”

Rey looked at her uncle, surprised that the woman had singled her out over Luke. He gave her a slight nod. They’d talked about this. He was there to help guide her, but in the end it would be up to her to find and convince her new teacher to take her on as a student. Rey turned back to the old woman and closed some of the distance between them. “Hedala Fardi?”

“Yes, that’s me.” The ancient woman replied. “Who are you?”

“Rey Solo.” Rey answered as she took a seat on a padded stool the woman waved her hand at. “I’m looking for an old friend of my family’s, an old friend of yours as well, or so we’re told.”
Hedala reached out a withered hand and when Rey took it she grasped the child’s hand tightly. She hummed and nodded, “You seek her out to ask for the same help she gave to me.” She smiled warmly as the memories came. “I was four years old the first time I met her, back during the dark times. Back when you and I and the bearded one would have been hunted down and killed for who we are. She kept me safe.”

“You were a Force sensitive child during the height of the Empire?” Luke asked.

Hedala nodded. “The one you seek saved my life and safe guarded my future when she warned my uncle to be mindful of me. He kept me close after that, protected me, but also taught me all he knew. I sit here today head of the family because of that.” Turning her attention back to Rey said added, “After the fall of the Empire our friend returned as often as she could to teach me how to control what makes us so special. Then she continued to visit as the years and decades past, just to sit and share some tea, to tell stories, and to laugh.”

“She was here recently?” Rey asked. “To visit?”

“She was.” Hedala nodded. “But I’m afraid you’ve missed her.”

“You wouldn’t happen to know where she was headed next do you?” Rey asked.

Hedala smiled. “You might want to try Raada.”

The farming moon of Raada had been completely devastated by the Empire. It’s farming land leached useless by the corp the Imperials forced the people of Raada to plant. Following the evacuation of the moon’s people by the Rebel Alliance, what was left behind was razed to the ground in retaliation. Most of the Raada refugees settled on the planets of the Rebel leaders, while others joined the Rebellion it’s self. Many of those refugees passed on a desire to one day return to Raada, to reclaim it and start a new. Finally, after decades and several generations later, the farmland was once again demand useable. It would not be easy, establishing a life on the once ruined planet, but for those who set off for the home of their grandparents and great grandparents the hard work would be worth it.

Hera had known them all for years, she was a friend. Hedala had been able to sense the light and sincerity in Rey, and knew instinctively through the Force that she could be trusted. The people gathered in Selda’s cantina, the largest of the newly erected structures and named for the Twi’lek who had owned the original cantina, neither knew them nor trusted them. In fact no one was willing to tell them much until a young man with the features of someone with a human parent and a Twi’lek parent overheard Rey say the name Organa.

“What do you know of Bail Organa?” The man with dusky rose colored skin and small lekku near his human ears asked of Rey.

“He was my grandfather.” Rey answered. “My name is Rey Organa Solo, and I’m looking for a friend of my family’s.”

The man’s grandmother had barely been eighteen when the Imperials came. After the evacuation she joined the Rebellion, as did her younger sister. After the war his grandmother settled on Nakadia, married a former Twi’lek slave dancer, and together they took in war orphans. “My mother was the youngest.” He told Rey. “My grandmother Kaeden named my mother Ashla. That was the name she had given Gran when she first arrived here on Raada.” The man explained while sitting with Rey in a back corner of the room. “She’s been helping us set things up here so we’re ready for the planting season. Then a few days ago she comes to breakfast and tells us there’s something important she needed to do and headed up into the hills. No one has seen her since.”
“Thank you for telling me.” Rey said softly.

Luke had been acting strangely since they landed, and Rey had assumed he was just responding to the tension coming from the people of Raada, but maybe it was more than that. When she told him about the information she’d managed to get he reminded her that this was something she needed to do on her own, the padawan needed to seek out her master. “Besides,” He’d added. “I have a feeling I should stick around here.”

“Is everything alright?” Rey asked.


Rey looked at the three of them for a long moment before saying, “Please don’t start any trouble for these people.”


Rey laughed. “She’s the biggest trouble maker of all.”

With nothing more than her lightsaber and her blaster Rey made her way into the hills of Raada. She had no idea where she was going, she simply made her way out of the budding town and towards the hills beyond. She had never reached out with the Force to look for someone she wasn’t already familiar with, so she had to focus hard on not zeroing in on her uncle as she tried to find another presence in the Force. The woods at the foot of the hills still bore evidence of the moon’s past. Amongst the young sapling trees were tall trees with completely charred trunks, or deep gouges with burned edges left by blaster fire. When she reached one of the cave openings Rey discovered markers bearing several names. She could sense the Force echo around her, feel the cold that meant it was a dark echo, and for a moment she thought of closing her eyes to see what happened here. But she remembered what it had felt like to see Vader at her grandmother’s grave and decided against it, she needed to remain focused on why she was here.

Thankfully she didn’t have to go into the caves. The presence she felt was further up the hillside near the cliffs overlooking the revine, so she continued to hike upwards. The presence belonged to an orange skinned Togruta with white and blue striped montrail and head tails whose length marked her as a long lived elder. The woman was seated, cross legged, near the edge of the cliff, facing out towards the revine. Rey approached, but then stopped and debated whether she should interrupt the woman’s meditation. Finally after a long moment of just standing there Rey spoke up.

“Ahsoka Tano?” She pauses for a moment, feeling a bit of guilt for disturbing the peacefulness of their surroundings. “My name is Rey Solo.” She said next, paused again to think and then repeated. “Rey Organa Solo. And I need your help.”

“So it was your awakening I felt in the Force.” Ahsoka says as she reaches for the tall white staff resting on the ground beside her, and begins to stand. “I’m glad.” She continues as she turns to look at the girl. “After everything your mother has sacrificed… I’m glad she was finally given something back.” She walks towards the girl, stopping just a few feet away. She looked the girl over carefully and smiles. It’s easy to see Leia in her, to see Padme, but for Ahsoka it was also easy for her to see Anakin. Just like with Leia, when she looked past the color and shape of Padme’s eyes, she could seen Anakin’s passion and determination. “So, Rey Organa Solo, you mentioned needing my help?”

“Rey nods. In his lessons on the Jedi of old, Luke had mentioned Ahsoka Tano. He’d told her that during the Clone Wars Ahsoka had been Anakin’s padawan, but that she had left the Order, and that she had created her own path. Luke said that’s why Ahsoka would be a better master for Rey. She needed someone who could show her how to forge her own path. “I need a teacher, a master.”
Ahsoka raised an eyebrow as she shifted her weight to one foot as she leaned against her staff. “You want to be a Jedi, but I’m not a Jedi, youngling. I can’t…”

“I need to be more than a Jedi.” Rey cuts in.

That peeked Ahsoka’s interest and she relaxed her posture a little. She looked into the girl’s eyes, reached out to her with the Force, and asked. “Why?”

Rey shifted from foot to foot. Leia had learned her lesson from keeping the identity of her father a secret, so she didn’t try to keep Kylo Ren’s identity a secret, but it still wasn’t common knowledge. She didn’t go around saying, ‘Hello, I’m Leia and my son Ben is the scary man behind the mask with the angry red lightsaber who wants to be the Dark Side version of my father, you know, Vader.’ She made sure the people she was asking to risk their lives in a fight against the First Order knew who they were fighting against, because Leia needed them to understand her commitment to the fight, she needed them to know that she was not only willing to risk her life for this fight, but she was willing to fight her own son. Rey looked into Ahsoka’s eyes and began by asking, “You knew my presence in the Force?”

Ahsoka nods. “I met you when you were just old enough to start running around on your own. You were playing with a toy ETA-2 starfighter in the park with your parents. Your grandfather and I flew those in the Clone Wars, ya know. The way you were pretending to fly it made me think of him.” Ahsoka smiled a small bittersweet smile. “Even at such a young age you’re Force presence burned brightly.”

Rey liked hearing stories like this, bits and pieces from her past that she could file away and hopefully use later to retrieve a memory. She smiled a silent thank you to the former padawan and then that smile was lost to the gravity of her next statement. “Then you must know my brother Ben’s as well?”

Ahsoka nods. “I met you when you were just old enough to start running around on your own. You were playing with a toy ETA-2 starfighter in the park with your parents. Your grandfather and I flew those in the Clone Wars, ya know. The way you were pretending to fly it made me think of him.” Ahsoka smiled a small bittersweet smile. “Even at such a young age you’re Force presence burned brightly.”

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Again Ahsoka nods. “I know he’s become Kylo Ren.”

“My uncle trained Ben.” Rey begins to explain. “If I’m going to go up against him, I’m going to need to know more than what my uncle can teach me, more than what he taught Ben.”

“Ok.” Ahsoka says as she continues to stare at the girl. “That’s Luke’s reasoning for you needing a new teacher. Tell me why you want me to teach you, younling?”

Rey opened her mouth to reply and then stopped. Somehow she knew whatever it was she was about to say wouldn’t be enough. Ahsoka wanted more, she wanted honesty. “My Uncle is a good teacher, I’ve learned so much from him already, but,” She paused, took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. “But my Uncle fears the darkness, within him, within me. His guilt over Ben’s fall, and that fear, won’t allow him to be the teacher I need.” It was uncomfortable to say but it was the truth. Luke had been holding back and they both knew it, and they knew why.

“In order to bring Anakin back from whatever dark hell Vader had pushed him into, Luke had to venture into the darkness that was Vader.” Ahsoka said softly. “To feel that kind of crushing, overwhelming evil, I’m not surprised it left Luke a bit scared.” Again Ahsoka measured the girl up and then smiled. “Any other reasons, younling?”

Rey needed to dispel the discomfort she felt Rey reached for her lightsaber. She activated the blades, twirled it, and then separated the hilts. “Well, there’s also the fact that Uncle Luke has no idea how to teach me how to use these.”

Ahsoka’s eyes went wide at the sight of the girl’s lightsaber. “The master you need, youngling, is
Master Windu.” Ahsoka said as she looked at the duel purple blades. Over her lifetime Ahsoka had taught Force sensitives how to control their natural abilities to help make their lives a little easier to live, but she had never really taught anyone the way Rey was asking her too. But that was the point, wasn’t it? Rey wasn’t looking for a master to turn her into the Jedi Ahsoka had once known, but something akin to what the Jedi should have been. The Jedi, the Sith, they had all lost their way. After she’d returned from the world between worlds Ahsoka had gone on a journey of discovery as she tried to find her place in the galaxy and in the Force, and she had learned a great deal. If what she learned could help Rey, if it could help to bring peace to the galaxy and balance to the Force, well then. “But, I suppose I’ll have to do.”

“Really?” Rey replied, surprised. She’d had her doubts about Ahsoka accepting. She was asking the woman, who had probably just wanted a bit of peace in her elder years, to jump back into the mess her family was making of the galaxy.

“Yes, really.” Ahsoka replied as she smiled at the girl.

“That was easier than I’d expected.” Rey said, as she rubbed the back of her neck while putting her lightsaber back on her belt. “It took me days to convince my Uncle just to stop trying to ditch me.”

“To be fair to your uncle, I felt you coming and had a pretty good idea why. So I had time to think it over. I watched the Empire rise, I fought against it’s terror, I can’t just stand by and let something like that happen again. I was just waiting for where I was meant to fit into this fight. I’m not surprised that it’s beside a Skywalker.” Ahsoka replied as she raised her hood and began walking down the hillside.

“Thank you.” Rey said softly.

The pair made their way down the hillside and back into town. Ahsoka needed to gather her things and say her goodbyes before they left. While Ahsoka did that Rey went looking for the others so they could get the Falcon ready to go. She found Chewie and R2 at the ship already, but her uncle was nowhere around. When Chewie told her he’d gone off on his own and told them to stay put, she frowned. What was he up too? She asked Chewie to get the ship ready to go, and was about to set out to find Luke when Ahsoka’s voice called out.

“R2?” Ahsoka called out when she saw the little blue and white astromech. “R2, is that you?”

R2 wobbled and whistled with glee before rolling fast towards the approaching woman.

Rey smiled as she watched Ahsoka sink to her knees and wrap her arms around R2 in a hug. R2 had belonged to her grandmother, and had worked with her grandfather during the Clone Wars, of course he would know her grandfather’s padawan.

R2 whistled and tweeted happily and Ahsoka laughed as she stood up. She rested her hand on his shiney blue doom and smiled. “It’s wonderful to see you too, old friend.” Looking up, Ahsoka kept her hand on R2 as she asked, “Are we ready to go?”

“Not yet.” Rey answered. “My Uncle’s wandered off.”

“I have not wandered off.” Luke gruffed as he came walking towards them.

“Something wrong, Junior?” Ahsoka asked the bearded man walking towards them. “These people are my friends. If they’re in danger…”

“They’re not.” Luke reassured. “Once we leave they’ll be fine.”
“Then we should get going.” Ahsoka said firmly.

Luke nodded. “R2, lets go.”

Rey blinked, feeling a little lost.

“Come along, youngling.” Ahsoka called out as she, Luke, and R2 began walking up the ramp.

“I’m glad you agreed to take her on, Ahsoka.” Luke said to the woman beside him.

Ahsoka simply nodded. Even if she were going to say something in return she wouldn’t have had the air to say it. As soon as Chewie laid eyes on her he rushed to her and wrapped his massive furry arms around her in a crushing hug that had her feet leaving the ground. When he set her down Ahsoka laughed as he returned his hug, wrapping her arms around his middle. “Chewie! I’m so happy to see you too!”

“So, home?” Rey asked her uncle as she watched Ahsoka’s and Chewie’s reunion.

“No.” Luke replied firmly. Something in his tone had caused every eye in the room to turn towards him. “We can’t head back to the base.”

“Why?” Rey asked.

“A bounty hunter has been following us since we left Lothal.” Luke admitted. “I nearly had her but she slipped away.”

Rey tensed up at the mention of a bounty hunter. Her hand went to her stomach, covering where she’d been shot, without her even realizing it as she frowned. “I don’t understand. Why is there a bounty hunter following us? Kylo rescinded the bounty on me.”

“On you, yes.” Luke replied. “But I wouldn’t be surprised if there were one on me or even this ship.”

Ahsoka closed the distance between them and got in Luke’s face. “You led a bounty hunter here?”

“And we’ll lead her away.” Luke reassured. “We just need a place where we can confront her safely.” Chewie roared and Luke nodded. “Good idea, Chewie. Takodana is neutral ground, and Maz’s rules about no fighting and no collecting bounties will be helpful.”

“Well, what are we waiting for?” Ahsoka said as she crossed her arms over her chest and glared at Luke. “Let’s go.”

“Don’t look at me.” Luke grumbled and pointed to Rey. “It’s her ship not mine.”

“Let’s go Chewie.” Rey said as she headed for the cockpit. She wondered if she would ever get use to the headspinningly fast way things in her life happened. Probably not.

It was the first time she’d been back to Takodana since the first time she’d been to Takodana. Only this time Han wasn’t with her and Rey felt strange being there. Her journey had begun when she’d stolen the pile of garbage in Unkar’s shipyard to save herself, the Resistance fighter running from stormtroopers, and the little droid with his very important classified mission. But her journey home had begun in Maz Kanata’s castle when Maz told her that what she longed for wasn’t back on Jakku, and had given her her mother’s music box. When they reached the gateway to the courtyard of flags that lead to the front door of the castle, Rey stopped. Grief washed over her as she thought about her father.
When Chewie stepped up beside her Rey leaned into him as he put his arm around her. He whined softly and she sighed as she nodded her head. “I miss him too.”

Stepping into the castle they were quickly greeted by Maz and taken to her personal table. Maz scolded Luke for his disappearance, and told Ahsoka she was happy to see her again, and then scolded her for not coming around more often. She cooed at Chewie and laughed at R2’s rude comments. Then she looked at Rey and smiled. “You have found where you belong.”

“Thank you, Maz.” Rey said as the old alien woman held her hands tightly in her own. “For everything you did to help me.”

Maz waved her off with a amused snort. “All I did was give you a box.”

Rey laughed.”My mother’s music box. You knew who I was the moment I walked in didn’t you?”

Maz smiled and gave the girl a wink. “There’s just something about you Skywalkers.”

“Isn’t that the truth!” Ashoka laughed.

They were given VIP rooms in the castle for as long as they needed them. Once in her room Rey sent a secure holo message to her mothers to update them on finding Ahsoka, and to let them know they weren’t sure when they’d be returning to base. She didn’t mention the bounty hunter, she didn’t want to worry them. She sent a simpler secure text message to her boys, telling them the same. The next morning she and Ahsoka headed out onto the castle grounds to begin training while Luke went off to deal with his bounty hunter problem. Maz had confirmed there was no bounty on Rey, and much to everyone’s surprise informed them there wasn’t one on Luke either. So why was there a bounty hunter following her uncle?

“Junior can handle this, youngling.” Ahsoka reassured her new student as they walked. “You need to focus.”

“Why do you call him junior?” Rey asked, turning to look at the tall Togruta.

Ahsoka smiled. “I met Luke for the first time after the war was over. My friend Sabine and I were looking for our friend Ezra, and Luke was on his quest to find as much of the Jedi as he could. We all ended up at the same Jedi temple. I knew of Luke of course, every Rebel knew the name of the pilot who took out the first Death Star. But I hadn’t seen him until we stumbled upon each other in the temple. He looked so much like Anakin.” Ahsoka paused and laughed softly. “Well, almost. Anakin was pretty tall. The Skywalker twins got their height from Padme.” Ahsoka took a moment to remember her friends. Before the darkness overtook him, Anakin, her Anakin, would have been so happy to have been a father, a grandfather. “As we worked together in that temple I could see both Anakin and Padme in Luke, and by the time we’d each found what we were looking for, I’d started calling him Junior.”

Rey had been watching Ahsoka carefully as she told her the story of meet her uncle. She could see how much she missed her friends, and she could even feel it a bit in the bond forming between them. “It was Anakin who saved me the night Kylo and his followers sacked Uncle Luke’s temple. He appeared to me as a Force ghost and led me out of the temple. He is your Anakin again, I just wanted to tell you that, in case you didn’t know.”

They stopped in a clearing and Ahsoka put her hand on Rey’s shoulder. “I felt Anakin in the Force again, for just a flicker of a moment, so I knew but thank you for telling me, youngling. It does actually help to know that my master’s out there watching over the ones he loves.” She squeezed the girl’s shoulder, and then her smile turned into a smirk. “Now youngling, shall we get started?”
“I’m ready.” Rey said with a nod.

“Let me see you use a single standard lightsaber first.” Ahsoka ordered. She pointed to the center of the clearing and then watched Rey closely as she began moving through what Luke had taught her. “You’re rough, not bad, but you certainly need more training. Now, let’s see you use your staff.” Again, Ahsoka watched Rey carefully. “Stop, youngling, stop.” She waited until Rey stopped and then shook her head. “You’re use to a wooden staff aren’t you? You can’t use a lightsaber staff the same way you would use a normal staff. You’ll end up losing an ear, or slashing open your own thigh. Relax your body and start again.”

This time as Rey began moving through her exercises she watched Ahsoka raise her hand and then felt her use the Force to take hold of her and correct her movements.

When Ahokas felt the girl tense she gently said, “Trust me, Rey. If this is going to work between us, we need to learn to trust each other.”

Rey took a deep breath and nodded. She tried to relax, to work with Ahsoka’s guidance instead of against it.

“That’s it, good.” Ahsoka said with a warm smile. “Good. Now focus on the movement, memorize the differences.”

They worked on Rey’s form while using her lightsaber as a staff and then moved on to using two lightsabers at once. That’s when Ahsoka revealed her own lightsabers, and when she ignited their white blades Rey couldn’t help but stare in awe. “Obi Wan’s journal never mentioned white blades.”

“Ahsoka explained as she twirled her sabers in beautiful arches with ease. “So I was forced to leave them behind. They were found by an Inquisitor, the Sixth Brother, and were bled.” She paused, shifting her grip on one of her sabers so it was held backward in her preferred stance. “Bleeding a crystal is when a Dark Side user pours all of their anger and hate into a kyber crystal. The crystals are naturally aligned with the Light. Forcing the Dark into them, well, it hurts them, turning them crimson. When I took my crystals back from the Sixth Brother, when I reconnected with them, it healed them, turning the blades white.”

“They’re beautiful.” Rey said softly.

Ahsoka smiled. “I think they’re pretty cool.” Then her smile shifted into more of a smirk as she asked, “Are you ready?”

Rey hummed softly and nodded.

She was not ready. Ahsoka, despite her age, moved like a sand flea bouncing around from one spot to the next. No, that wasn’t right, Ahsoka was a lot more graceful and kind of beautiful as she moved, nothing like a sand flea. Rey simply didn’t have enough knowledge of the world beyond Jakku yet to use as a comparison.

“Focus youngling.” Ahsoka scolded gently. “I’m not putting on a performance you know, I’m trying to teach you something.”

“Sorry Ahsoka.” Rey replied sheepishly and took a deep breath and did as her master told her.

They trained until the sun dipped below the treetops and then made their way back to the castle. Ahsoka headed inside to find Maz and smiled when she spotted her old friend arguing with her
Ahsoka waited patiently until Maz shooed Emmie away and turned to her with a smile.

“Ah, Ashoka.” Maz greeted. “Loose your young charge already did you?”

Ashoka laughed. “No, she’s just looking for a way in that isn’t on the ground floor.” Maz laughed and she smirked. “Maz, I’m hoping you can help me find something.”

“I can certainly try.” Maz replied. “What are you looking for?”

“A holocron.” Ahsoka replied. “Master Windu’s holocron to be exact.”

Maz hummed and tisked. “Not asking for something easy are you. It’s not easy to find holocrons, especially ones belonging to the Jedi before the purge. But I will see what I can do.” She huffed softly. “To bad Skywalker isn’t here. He might know where to look.”

Ahsoka blinked. “What do you mean he isn’t here?”

“He took my boyfriend and the Falcon and left about an hour ago.” Maz said, frowning. “To deal with that bounty hunter. Didn’t you know?”

“No I didn’t.” Ahsoka grumbled and moaned softly under her breath. “Skywalkers.”
Standing on the bridge of her new flagship, a modified MC85 Star Cruiser she named the Ackbar, Leia looked over the reports coming in following their most recent engagement with the First Order. The First Order had tried once again to move into New Republic space, but the Resistance and their new heavy fleet were waiting for them. Though Leia worked well with her new ship’s captain, she missed Gial’s presence on the bridge something fierce. Gial Ackbar had been a supportive and loyal friend to her and her parents. It had felt strange, even wrong, to be fighting without him by her side. But Gial would have been the first person to tell her that the fight must go on, and so she had called out orders to the fleet and engaged the enemy without yet another one of her long time allies, companions, and friends. By the end of the chaos they had taken some losses, but the First Order occupation fleet had been destroyed before they could even reach the planets they’d been after.

Connix called out from her station, informing Leia she had a secure communication coming in on her personal channel. Leia thanked the young woman and then made her way to the office off the bridge before connecting to her personal channel and activating the call. A few moments later her daughter’s figure flickered to life in the form a translucent blue hologram hovering above the emitter disk. “Rey?”

“Your brother stole my ship!” Rey barked at her mother in a huff. “And my Wookie!”

“What?” Leia replied, blinking and confused.

Rey huffed out a flustered breath. “Uncle Luke took off with the Falcon and Chewie to deal with the bounty hunter who’s been following us.”

Leia blinked. “Bounty hunter? What bounty hunter?”

“I’m not sure.” Rey admitted. “After we picked up Ahsoka he mentioned a bounty hunter had followed us from Lothal. That’s why we stopped at Maz’s, because she has rules and he said it would be the safest place to confront the bounty hunter. Funny thing is, Maz confirmed there aren’t any active bounties on us, so we have no idea why a bounty hunter would be tailing us.” Rey paused to rub her neck and shrug. “Anyway, while Ahsoka and I were training, Uncle Luke and Chewie took off. He left R2 with a message saying he would handle the hunter, and that Ahsoka and I needed time alone to bond anyway.”

Leia crossed her arms over her chest and glared at her daughter’s image. “Why is this the first I’m hearing about a bounty hunter?”

Even in hologram form Rey could feel the power of her mother’s glare. “I didn’t want to worry you.”

“Rey.” Leia scolded.

Reaching up Rey rubbed the back of her neck again. That gesture along with the sheepish look on her face made her look a lot like Han. “Sorry.” She said softly before continuing, “I wanted to let you know that Ahsoka and I won’t be meeting up with you as planned. There’s something we need to do first. Something she wants to find to help with my training. Maz is lending us a ship. I’ll be in touch as soon as I can.”

Leia sighed heavily. “Do you have your homing beacon?”
Rey nodded and raised her arm to show her mother the beacon on her wrist. “Yeah, I have it.”

“Good.” Leia replied. She wanted Rey with her where she could protect her but she knew Rey’s training was to important. So she would just have to suck it up and trust in Rey, in Ahsoka, in Luke, in the Force. It wasn’t easy to do that, not after everything that’s happened. “Be careful, Rey, and stay safe.”

“I will, Mom.” Rey promised. “Love you, give Ammy my love too.”

“Love you too, sweetheart.” Leia replied. When Rey’s projected image flickered out of existence, Leia sank into a chair with a heavy sigh. Ahsoka had been her father’s spy master during the rebellion and Leia had trusted her from the moment she’d met the woman as a child. She knew Ahsoka would keep Rey safe, but she still wanted her daughter here with her. The last time she’d let one of her children go off to wander the galaxy with a Jedi master she ended up losing her son, and thinking daughter was dead for a decade. So naturally she had some concerns and reservations about this. There was also the fact that she had grown use to being on the Bespin moon base with Amilyn and Rey as a family, and she was missing that closeness.

Pushing to her feet Leia made her way back out to command on the bridge. She was instantly given updates on the Ackbar and their fleet, followed by D’Acy reporting that the New Alderaanian fleet had sent word that they were engaging their target. Leia closed her eyes for a moment and sent out a silent, May the Force be with them, before turning her attention to Korr Sella who was walking up to her. “Commander?”

“I’ve received word from one of my contacts inside the First Order.” Korrie replied. “They’ve been compromised and are asking for an extraction.”

Leia listened to the details Korrie offered carefully and when the young woman was finished she said, “Trying to get someone out will be a huge risk. Do you have a plan?”

“I’m working on one.” Korrie replied, and then proceeded to tell Leia what she had so far.

Leia helped her flush out some details and then agreed to let her have Dameron, his squad, and Finn for the mission. The New Republic had been burned before when it came to inside informat. Gallius Rax had played the Rebel Alliance and budding New Republic, posing as an Imperial informer, and that had led to the escape of the Imperial remnant. Leia would not make the same mistakes. She was leery of Korrie’s inside sources, but she trusted Korrie to use the information she was given wisely. If the younger woman said they needed to extract this particular informant then they would. Leia contacted Greer who she ordered to work with Korrie to set their guest up somewhere safe until Leia could make up her mind what to do once they had their First Order defector.

Their base of operations for this mission was a nowhere little planetoid far away from any key systems and Resistance bases, fleets, or anything else of importance. They would launch the mission from their small compound and bring the asset back here to wait for further instructions. The mission had two vital parts. The first part would be handled by Snap and Black squadron. They were going to intercept the transport meant for Korrie’s contact. The second part was were Poe and Finn came in. They would be accompanying Korrie, masquerading as the transport crew picking up Korrie’s contact. They would then bring the contact here, while Black squadron took their prisoners to the New Republic authorities. As they prepared for their parts in this plan Poe kept stealing glances at Finn as they dressed. He knew Finn was uneasy about this, about going back to a First Order ship, about putting on stormtrooper armor again. But Poe also knew that Finn wanted to help those like him, those who wanted to get out of the First Order, so he was willing to do this. Even if his body trembled and his hands shook as he put on the white plastoid armor.
Poe walked over to Finn, his own armor clacking softly, and reached out to cup Finn’s face in his hands. “You alright buddy?”

Finn nodded as best he could with Poe holding his head in his hands. “I’m fine. I can do this.”

“I know you can.” Poe said as he leaned close to press his forehead to Finn’s. “And I’ll be right there with you.”

Their kiss was soft and reassuring and Poe’s smile made Finn feel like he could take on the whole damn galaxy and win. Which to be honest is how this all felt sometimes. But no matter how big and impossible the fight seemed, Finn no longer wanted to run because now he had something, someone to fight for. He had Poe, and he had Rey, and he had a future worth looking forward to. Finn smiled at Poe and said, “Let’s do this, just remember what Rey made us promise.”

“No stupid heroics.” Poe said with a chuckle and after stealing another kiss he added. “So we’ll only do smart heroics.”

Korrie had figured her informat had been a high ranking officer from the level of intel she was getting from this particular insider. And she had been right, the dark skinned woman standing before her bore the rank of major around the left sleeve of her teal uniform. Korrie herself wore a light grey uniform with the lieutenant's branding around her sleeve. The two women sized each other up for a moment before Korrie used the identification phrase to let the other woman know who she was. Then she held her breath and waited. If this turned out to be a double cross now would be the moment for it to happen.

“Yes, well, let’s be off then Lieutenant.” The major ordered, her voice harsh and accented like the Imperials of old. “We mustn’t keep the General waiting.”

“Yes ma’am.” Korrie said with a click of her heels and a solute. She, Finn, and Poe in their trooper armor, escorted the major back to their shuttle. Once onboard Poe went to the cockpit, while Korrie disarmed the major. “Precautions, you understand.”

“Of course Commander Sella.” The woman said as she held her hands up as the shuttle eased it’s way out of the hanger bay of the star fighter.

Korrie raised an eyebrow at the woman. Until this point they had used code names. “You have me at a disadvantage, Major.”

“Yes, I suppose I do.” The woman replied as she took a seat after Korri handed her weapons to Finn. She looked at the man, narrowing her eyes at him, and then looked back at Korrie. Once the shuttle was in hyperspace she said, “My name is Renee Sloane.”

The message Leia got from Korrie didn’t say much, only that she needed to get to the outpost as soon as possible. She didn’t want to expose the whole fleet just incase something was wrong, but she couldn’t just go in unprepared for something bad either. So Leia made arrangements to take a shuttle over to the Ninka II and then send the fleet off to it’s next mission. Amilyn was waiting for her in the hanger bay and the sight of the tall dark purple haired woman helped Leia to relax a little.

“Welcome aboard, General.” Amilyn said in her soft monotone voice.

“Thank you Admiral.” Leia replied with a hint of a smirk.

As the two women walked side by side out of the hanger bay and down the corridor Amilyn asked, “Korrie didn’t tell you why she needed you to come to the outpost?”
“Only that it had something to do with the defector.” Leia answered and then she sighed softly. “I have a bad feeling about this, Amilyn.”

Since Leia had already sent the coordinates Amilyn’s crew had had time to make the hyperspace calculations. So as soon as she and Leia entered the bridge she gave the command to make the jump. Like Leia, Amilyn had grown use to being on the Bespin moon, spending time with her loved ones, and she missed that. Amilyn was growing tired of fighting and longed for the kind of peace they had had during those blissful years between the war against the Empire and this new war against its wanna be successor. They were starting to turn the tides, especially now that the New Republic was more directly involved, but a lot of the fight still fell on their shoulders. On Leia’s shoulders.

“Let’s hope this person can be of some help in getting more of an upper hand.” Amilyn said.

Leia nodded her agreement and then said, “This is my first time aboard your new ship Admiral. Why don’t you show me what your crew has been able to do with her.”

Amilyn smiled and nodded. “I’m sure Rose would love to show you her upgrades.”

When they arrived at the outpost Korrie filled them in on the mission and their new guest. Leia listened, her eyes darting to Finn with a touch of concern. She asked if he was alright, and it stung her heart a bit that he still looked so surprised that she would be worried about his well being. He reassured her that he was and she relaxed when she noticed Poe inch just a little closer to Finn. Leia nodded and then returned her full attention to Korrie. It still surprised her with everything she’d seen in her lifetime, everything she’d done and been a part of, that she could be shocked.

“She said her name was what?” Leia bellowed, her big brown eyes wide and her hands balling into fists.

“Renee Sloane.” Korrie repeated. “She’s claiming to be the daughter of Rae Sloane.”

“She wouldn’t tell us more than that.” Poe piped in. “She only wants to speak with you.”

There was a name Leia hadn’t heard in ages, but one she had often wondered about. Norra Wexley had told them what happened in the Emperor's vault below Jakku. She told them about her husband working with Rae Sloane to track Gallius Rax and how Sloane had put an end to him before taking off in his shuttle. Sloane had escaped with the rest of the Imperial remnant and Leia had often wondered what had become of her. She suppose she might be on the verge of finding out. Standing from her seat at the head of the small meeting table Leia said, “Commanders with me.”

Renee stood when the door to the room she was held in opened. Her hand went to her holster automatically and she grit her teeth when she realized she didn’t have her weapon. When the trio walked in she instantly knew who the woman leading them was. “Princess Leia Organa.” Renee looked the older woman over and her eyebrow ticked. She was smaller than she’d expected. “It’s an honor to meet you.” She bowed to the woman. “My mother had a great deal of respect for you, and always regretted not getting to make your acquaintance in person.”

Leia looked the young woman over with a critical eye. Although she and Rae Sloane had never met face to face, Leia had been very familiar with the woman. They had been under the impression that Rae Sloane was leading the Empire after the Emperor’s death, unaware of the truth until the end. Leia supposed she could see Sloane in this young woman, who looked as if she could have been born a few short years after the remnant’s escape. “Rae Sloane is your mother?”

“Yes.” Renee replied. “The injuries my mother suffered during the Battle of Jakku left her unable
to carry a child herself, but as she was so fond of saying, the Empire needed children. So she use a surrogate. My conception and birth was the beginning of our breeding program. Which, ironically, is why I’m here now.”

Anger and disgust crossed the young woman’s face. Leia could see her whole body tense up. “Why are you here Major Sloane?”

“I am here Princess,” Renee began.

“Oh General,” Leia corrected.

“Well, yes, I suppose it’s hard to be a princess when your world no longer exists.” Renee said, her tone snide and dismissive. “Not that Alderaan was your homeworld. You’re genetically a Naboo, aren’t you, not an Alderaanian?”

It would take more than that to get under Leia’s skin. “What I am Major Sloane, is the woman who holds your fate in her hands. So, either explain why I risked my people to pull you out of what we were led to believe was a hostile situation, or get comfortable while I make arrangements to hand you over to the New Republic authorities to stand trial for war crimes.”

“You have no direct evidence against me.” Renee replied with a soft smile.

“Doesn’t matter.” Leia replied. “Everyone associated with the First Order will be charged for the destruction of the Hosnian system.”

“Does that threat include Kylo Ren?” Renee asked as she looked into Leia’s dark eyes.

Leia didn’t even hesitate for a second. “It isn’t a threat, it’s what will happen, and yes, it includes Kylo Ren.”

For several long seconds Renee stared at the woman. She was serious. Renee was impressed. Perhaps this new version of the New Republic wasn’t as soft as they thought. “Very well General,” Renee finally said. “The reason I needed your help is because my life was in danger.”

“How so?” Leia demanded.

“I was chosen for the breeding program.” Renee answered. “That in itself was not unexpected, not given who my mother was. I’ve always known they would want to continue my gentinic line. But I will not subject myself to having a child with Armitage Hux!” Renee sneered and her nose crinkled as if saying his name left something foul tasting in her mouth. “After getting what he wants from me, if Hux doesn’t try killing me himself he’ll send his rabid pet savage after me. Just as he did his own father, and my mother.”

“Rae Sloane is dead?” Leia asked.

“I was told she succumbed to age and complications brought on because she never fully recovered from her injuries.” Renee seethed. “But that would have perhaps been a bit easier to swallow if the whole High Command hadn’t died, leaving only Snoke as Supreme Leader.”

“What turn on the First Order?” Leia asked as she continued to watch the young woman. She was listening to what Sloane was saying, but she was also reading her body language. Leia could often understand more from that than what was being said.

“I turned on Hux.” Renee answered. “He will not stop until he is Supreme Leader, or we are all dead. My mother taught me to survive at all costs, and if that means turning on the First Order, so
After talking a little longer Leia left with Poe and Korrie on her heels. She walked back to the meeting room where Amilyn and Finn were waiting. When Amilyn asked how it went Leia replied, “She’s up to something more than just getting away from forced reproduction. She was a little too quick to say it was Hux she was against, not the First Order itself, and she knows who Kylo Ren really is. It’s why she made a point of dropping his name.”

“Do we hand her over?” Korrie asked.

“Not just yet.” Leia replied. “We need to remain cautious where she’s concerned. I want to see if we can’t use the information she’s given us on their breeding and recruitment programs, and see if perhaps we can’t get a little more from her.”

“You want to see if we can’t sabotage their human supply lines, reduce their numbers” Poe said with a smirk. “Cut off access to replacements and reinforcements.”

Leia nodded. She also caught sight of Finn and Amilyn sharing a look. “Is there something you two would like to contribute?”

Amilyn gave Finn an encouraging nod and he sighed as he turned to look at Leia. “There has to be troopers like me, men and women who want to leave the Order, to fight against the Order.”

“You want to start some kind of Stormtrooper resistance movement within the First Order?” Leia questioned.

Finn nodded. “I’d at least like to start trying to work out a plan for one.”

“I’ll think about it, Finn.” Leia promised. “I’m sure I have someone somewhere who could help with that.”

After making sure Renee Sloane was secure for the time being with Korrie, Finn, Black Squadron which now included the newest incarnation of Snap’s Mr. Bones, and a handpicked security team from Amilyn’s crew, Leia returned to the Ninka with Amilyn. The Ninka was due to rendezvous with the Colossus so Admiral Holdo could meet with Yeager and Doza, but Leia needed to get back to the Bespin moon base. She would need to staff the outpost with more than a skeleton crew and quickly, she also needed to find someone to work with Finn, and perhaps someone with a different set of skills than Korrie who could get the most out of Sloane.

She also needed to work out the Resistances next moves on several other fronts. So she borrowed one of the Ninka’s shuttles and Paige Tico, promising Amilyn she could have them back as soon as she returned to Bespin.

It was late when Leia finally made it back to the Bespin mood base and she was exhausted, but she went right to work for several hours anyway before finally admitting to herself she needed sleep. Standing from her desk she stretched and grimaced at the crackling of her joints. “I’m going to catch a few hours of sleep.” She told her constant golden companion. “Goodnight Threepio.”

“Goodnight General.” The loyal droid replied softly.

Despite her physical exhaustion Leia’s mind continued to race with thoughts, ideas, and plans. So before slipping into bed she actually took a few minutes to meditate. She set her little Wicket tree on the table in front of the sofa and then sat down across from it. She pulled her throw over her shoulders, closed her eyes, and began to take slow deep breaths. Slowly she felt her mind settle, her body relax, and a familiar sense of peace wash over her. She knew she should have stopped and
gone to bed but she suddenly sensed something, a whisper, and Leia couldn’t stop herself from focusing on it.

Suddenly finding herself standing in the middle of a large open room with white walls, white marble pillars, fine white tapersies and two semi circle sofas on either side of her caused Leia’s heart to beat faster. Where was she? How did she get here? Wasn’t she just mediating on her sofa in her cabin on the base that had once been Cloud City?

“Mom?” Rey’s voice called out from behind Leia.

Leia turned towards her daughter’s voice to find Rey standing on an open balcony. All thoughts of where she was and how she’d gotten there were forgotten as she walked across the room towards her daughter. “Rey?”

“What are you doing here?” Rey asked, confused by her mother’s sudden appearance. Then it hit her. It had never occurred to her that she could do this with her mother as well because it had always been Ben who invaded her visions and dreams before she blocked him out. “Oh, I’m so sorry! I must have pulled you in.”

“Pulled me in?” Leia repeated. Now that she was on the balcony with Rey, Leia could see the view over her daughter’s shoulder. Taking one of Rey’s hands in her own she moved them so they were standing side by side as she took it all in. “Rey, we’re on Coruscant.”

“I’m on Coruscant.” Rey corrected her mother. “You’re still wherever your body is.”

“Oh.” Leia said softly as it dawned on her what was happening. “This is like when Luke pulled me into his memory of Endor.” She gazed out over the familiar vistage of the capital city she had spent so much of her youth in. “Why are you on Coruscant?”

“We’re looking for holocrons that Ahsoka thinks will help with my training.” Rey explained. “It’s probably better you don’t know too many details, you’ll just worry more.” She gave her mother a soft smile, but then she sighed softly and gently pulled her hand free of Leia’s so she could wrap her arms across her stomach. “The Force echos here are so strong. I was a little overwhelmed when we arrived so Ahsoka told me to meditate and center myself, to find a place I can root myself so I don’t feel so overwhelmed by it all.”

Leia moved close to her daughter again. She slid her arm across Rey’s waist and pulled the girl into her side. “I’m not surprised you’re feeling overwhelmed. Coruscant use to be home to the main Jedi temple, which then became the Imperial palace. There has to be Jedi and Sith energy all over this world.”

“It’s more than just the Jedi or the Sith that I’m sensing.” Rey admits. “I can sense you in the echoes of that building, you, Ammy, Grandfather and Grandmother.”

“Amilyn and I spent a lot of time there when we were in the Apprentice Legislator, and your grandparents worked there for years.” Taking in more of the nearby surroundings Leia began to recognize where she was, and it confused her a little. This wasn’t the Coruscant of today, this wasn’t even the Coruscant of her time. This was the Coruscant her father and birth mother would have known before the Clone War.

Turning on her heel, Leia headed back inside where she stood in the center of the room taking it all in. The two towering statues by the large entry from the balcony were deities from Naboo. The markings on the floor were reminiscent of the traditional face paint and headpiece worn by the
queens of Naboo. Everything about the room’s decor was meant to remind the residents of their home world, just as her father’s apartment had been style to remind him of Alderaan. “I’ve only ever seen this place in holos.” She said, her voice soft and growing thick with emotion when she felt Rey join her inside. Leia moved to run her hand over the rim of the fountain and closed her eyes. “The ones Mon and Sabe showed me after I learned who my mother was.” Turning to look at her daughter Leia asked, “Why this place sweetheart?”

“I sensed something familiar here while I was meditating and was drawn to it.” Rey answered as she walked across the marble floor to stand with her mother. There was a mix of emotion playing out on Leia’s face and Rey wasn’t sure how to respond. So she simply kept trying to explain. “This place, it feels like Naboo did, warm, welcoming, safe, but it’s not the place itself that makes it feel that way. It’s…”

“Her presence.” Leia said in awe.

Rey nodded. “Yes, but it’s more than that. Mama, I should warn you…”

But Leia was listening as tears welled in her eyes and her heart raced in her chest. She didn’t understand how, she couldn’t explain why, but she could feel the warmth, kindness, and love that imprinted on her at the moment of her birth. She could feel her mother in this space. Leia closed her eyes which forced her tears down her cheeks as she took a shallow breath and whispered. “Mother.”

Suddenly Leia felt a pair of delicate hands wiping away the wetness on her cheeks, hands that she knew were not her daughter’s. Her eyes opened and Leia gasped.

Padme smiled, her own dark eyes glistening with tears. “Hello little one.”

“Mother?” Leia whispered in soft disbelief. “How.. What… Rey?”

“That’s what I was going to warn you about.” Rey said kind of sheepishly. “See, when I was in a coma I saw Dad, and he told me that no one was ever really gone.” Rey explained to her mother as she moved closer to the shell shocked woman who stood there staring at her own mother. “I didn’t think much of it, I thought I’d dreamt him, but then when I was building my lightsaber.” She smiled at Padme and then looked at Leia. “I saw him again, only it wasn’t just him that time. I somehow managed to call out to them, and they were there with me, I could physically feel them just like you can physically feel Grandmother’s hands right now.” She paused for a moment and then added. “When I asked Uncle Luke about it, he couldn’t explain it, it’s not something he can do. He can interact with Force ghosts, but he can’t interact with non Force sensitives the way I apparently can.”

“You should ask Ahsoka, dear.” Padme advised. “She’s grown so much, she could give Master Yoda a run for his credits when it comes to being the wise grandmaster.”

Leia’s eyes darted back and forth between Rey and Padme before settling on her mother. “You’re really here?”

“I am.” Padme said with a nod. “But only for a moment.” Reaching out Padme caressed her daughter’s cheek. “My Leia, oh how proud I am of you. I am so grateful to Bail and Breha. They raised you to be a amazing person.”

“They were wonderful parents and I love and miss them dearly.” Leia said, her voice cracking. “But, I have longed to know you, and I have missed you all my life.”
“Oh my precious girl.” Padme replied softly. Then she smiled and clasped Leia’s hand in hers while cupping her daughter’s cheek. “I am always with you Leia, always.” Padme leaned in and places a lingering kiss to Leia’s brow. “I love you, Leia.”

The persistent chattering of a droid woke Leia, and she snapped at him angrily. Had it all been a dream? It must have been. But it had felt so real and her heart ached over the loss of the moment she had spent embraced in her mother’s arms. She thought she could even still feel the warmth of Padme’s hand on her cheek. Threepio leerily reminded her that she was needed urgently in command, which is why he had disturbed her, and Leia groaned. “I’m coming, Threepio, I’m coming.”

They had been wrong. The bounty hunter didn’t follow them to Takodana. In fact, after speaking to Maz and describing the hunter to her she had told Luke she wasn’t aware of such a bounty hunter. It was rare for bounty hunters not to cross paths with Maz Kanata. Over her extraordinarily long life she had known the likes of Jango and Boba Fett, Cad Bane, Sugi and Jas Emari, and Embo. Not everyone, she had reminded him, liked her rules of neutrality so not every bounty hunter, scoundrel, or mercenary passed through her world. Luke’s instincts were telling him that he needed to draw this bounty hunter out, so if the hunter wouldn’t come to him on Takodana he would need to go someplace else. Chewie had been concerned about leaving Rey and Ahsoka behind, but Luke reassured him that it was for the best. “They need time alone, to bond as student and teacher. You’ve known Ahsoka longer than any of us, you know she’ll protect Rey. They’ll be fine.”

Chewie ended up taking them to another smugglers outpost in the Mid Rim. He had some work to do for the Resistance anyway, so it wasn’t to conspicuous that they were trying to draw out their bounty hunter. They were on the planet a full day and half before Luke sensed he was being followed, hunted. After sharing a meal with Chewie in the cantina he left his friend to Resistance business and slipped out the back. He began walking the streets of the port settlement knowing the bounty hunter was following. Since it was the end of the work rotation everyone who worked the farms that ringed the port were in town blowing off steam, so Luke walked until he was alone in the midst of a field harvested bare. Sitting on the ground Luke closed his eyes and began to meditate.

He felt someone approaching from behind but he didn’t jump to his feet right away. He was curious. Would the bounty hunter shoot first or confront him openly? The bounty hunter stopped several feet away and just stood there. Luke waited for several moments before slowly opening his eyes and pushing to his feet. When he turned to finally see the shadow that had been following him, he couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow. The figure was clearly female, the burgundy suit the woman wore did nothing to hide that fact. The old gold helmet the woman wore, did however, hide who the woman was. Luke had tried on several occasions to reach out with the Force to see the bounty hunter, but always came back with nothing. He tried again now that she stood a mere few feet away, but again he felt nothing other than the basic presence of a life form. That was strange.

Several more long moments passed before the woman began closing the distance between them. Luke didn’t move, he simply watched as she approached. He watched as she reached up and began unsealing her helmet, and as she pulled it off her head his breath hitched in his chest. He watched as a long red braid with gimmers of silver catching in the fading light of day tumbled out of the helmet to rest over the woman’s shoulder. His heart began to race, as did his mind, until he looked into the woman’s eyes. His heart stopped beating then, and his lungs refused to take in air as the woman stepped into his personal space.

She slapped him hard across the face. “You son of a bantha! I thought you were dead!”
Luke raised his human hand to rub his jaw. He looked into her eyes as tears welled in his own that had nothing to do with the slap. “I thought you were dead too.” His voice was thick with welling emotion. “Is it really you? I can’t..”

“Sense me?” The woman asked as she settled her helmet on her hip. “Yeah, it’s a long story.”

This time when the woman reached up towards his face it wasn’t to slap him but to cup his cheek, her thumb rubbing at his beard. She smiled and he knew it was her. “Mara.”

“Hiya Farmboy.”
Leia once again found herself walking through the corridors of the secure outpost, but this time her trip had nothing to do with their First Order guest. Two days ago Leia had gotten a call from Luke saying he needed a safe place to take someone, and that he would need her to meet him there. She’d sent him here, and instantly began making preparations to leave the Bespin moon base. Luke was waiting for her when her shuttle landed and after a long embrace hello he told her who he had brought here. Leia was in shock. They had assumed that Luke’s wife had been killed the night Kylo Ren and his Knights sacked the Jedi temple. Just like with Rey, they had not been able to sense Mara in the Force. When Leia asked her brother for more information, where had Mara been? What had happened to her? Luke said it was a story best heard straight from Mara. So Leia walked beside her brother down the corridor to the quarters where Mara Jade Skywalker waited.

When the doors softly whoosed open Mara looked and watched as Luke walked in, followed by Leia. She stood, took a step towards them and stopped. “Leia.”

The woman standing before her certainly looked like Mara. Pale freckled skin, bright emerald green eyes, flaming red hair, but appearances could be deceiving. Leia reached out with the Force, but came back with nothing and frowned. “Mara?”

“It’s me, Leia.” The woman reassured and then reached up to the collar of her body suit and pulled it away from her neck. She pointed to a nasty look scar and said, “Inhibitor chip. That’s why you can’t sense me.”

Leia’s dark eyes flicked over to Luke’s blue ones with a thousand and one questions. He simply nodded ever so slightly as he told her he believed this was Mara, even without the Force he was certain it was her, and to please listen to what the woman had to say. Leia turned back to the woman and asked, “Where the hell have you been?”

“The Unknown Regions.” Mara answered. She watched as Luke and Leia looked at each other again to have another one of their silent Force sensitive twin conversations, and then smiled a barely noticeable smile as they moved together to sit in two of the chairs in the room. Mara took a seat on the bunk across from them. Leia was guarded, cautious, she would not be as easily convinced as Luke, despite the fact that she already knew the night the temple fell didn’t go as they had all assumed.

“I think you’d better start at the beginning.” Leia told the woman who looked like, sounded like, and even moved like her sister-in-law.

Mara nodded and began. “The night the temple was attacked, as soon as I knew what was happening, I went to get Breha. I was making my way through the halls when I was stopped by a man in a dark cloak. He wasn’t one of Ren’s lackies, he wasn’t masked, and he didn’t feel the same way they felt in the Force. I didn’t know who he was, but he felt familiar somehow. He knew who I was, who I use to be, and he said he was there to take me back to where I belonged.” Mara’s hands clenched into fists and she trembled slightly. It wasn’t any easier telling it now than it had been telling it to Luke. “I drew my lightsaber, and he drew his, we fought, and I kicked his ass. Then I went to Breha’s room, she wasn’t there so I went looking for her, but the cloaked man stopped me again. This time he didn’t give me a chance to draw my saber. The stun setting on his blaster hurt like kriffing hell. When I came to I was strapped to a medical table with this kriffing inhibitor in my neck.”

She had been staring at her clenched hands, willing her fingers to open and relax, when a hand with
a looping ring with two stones suddenly appeared holding a bottle of water. Mara looked up and into Leia’s dark eyes. “Thanks.” She said as she accepted the water. She took a deep breath, a sip of the water, and continued. “I was taken to Snoke. He reminded me that I had once belonged to the Emperor, and now I belonged to him. I told him that I would send him to suffer along with the Emperor in Dark Side hell as soon as I had the chance. He laughed.” Mara shuddered. “That’s when I learned that the implant in my neck doesn’t just sever my connection to the Force. The Emperor used pain. It’s how he controlled Vader, it’s how he trained me. I was use to pain.”

“What did he want?” Leia asked, finally starting to shed the shock she’d felt upon seeing her friend again after so long, which allowed the realization to sink in. This truly was Mara Jade.

“He wanted the Emperor’s Hand.” Mara answered. “And he wanted me to train the Apprentice to be one as well.”

“He wanted you to train Ben?” Leia asked.

Mara shook her head. “The hooded man who captured me was known only as the Apprentice. I never saw Ben.” She took a shuddering breath and continued. “I refused of course. Snoke didn’t like that. I was imprisoned.”

“How long?” Leia asked next.

“Three years.” Mara answered. “Took another year to get the hell out of the unknown regions. I knew I was being hunted, and I needed medical treatment, so I spent a few years in the Outer Rim. I became a smuggler again, a bounty hunter.”

“Why didn’t you come home, Mara?” Leia asked as she looked into the other woman’s eyes.

“It was to dangerous.” Mara replied. “I thought Luke was dead, Breha too, and as long as Snoke was hunting me, I couldn’t put the rest of you in danger. So when I found out that Mara Jade Skywalker had been killed in the attack on the Jedi temple, well, I decided to leave her that way.”

“What made you come back now?” Leia asked next. Luke hadn’t said a word. She assumed he had already asked all this and more. She also assumed he was in as much shock as she had been when she’d been reunited with Rey.

“Snoke is dead.” Mara replied and then smiled as she looked at Luke. “Luke and Breha aren’t. As soon as I saw Farmboy on the newsnet standing beside the Queen of Naboo of all people, I knew I had to find him.” Then she turned her attention back to Leia. “I’ve heard whispers over the years of this resistance against the invaders from the Unknown, and I figured if there was a ragtag team of do-gooders standing up to a much larger threat to the galaxy then they could possibly handle, you’d be involved.” She smirked at her sister-in-law. “So I started surveillance on the handful of surviving Rebels out there to find a way to you, but then I saw Farmboy here on Lothal and started following him.”

“Why didn’t you just come to me on Lothal?” Luke asked, finally speaking up.

Mara sighed softly and admitted. “It had been so long since I’d seen you, and to see Breha again, all grown up. I wasn’t convinced I wasn’t dreaming it all.”

Leia could understand that all too well. “Rey’s been home for awhile now and sometimes I still feel like it’s all a dream.” When Mara gave her an odd look she explained. “Breha. She goes by the name Rey now, it’s the name she gave herself while in exile on Jakku.” The two women stared at
one another for several long moments before Leia said, “I’ll send for Kalonia. If anyone can get that inhibitor chip out of you safely, it’ll be her or she’ll know someone who can.”

Mara nodded, and stood as Leia stood. “And she’ll be able to check and make sure I am who I say I am, and keep it discreet”

“If it makes you feel any better I ran tests on Rey too.” Leia replied with a soft smirk that quickly shifted into a genuine smile. “But for what it’s worth, my instincts are telling me you are who you say you are, Mara.” Leia moved closer to the taller woman and hugged her. “Welcome home, Mara Jade.”

Coruscant had been Ahsoka’s home. The Temple turned palace turned state house they’d broken into had been Ahsoka’s home. It’s how Ahsoka had known about the old tunnels they could access in the lower levels of Coruscant that would take them into long forgotten parts of the old Temple. Apparently this Master Mace Windu was very particular about who could learn his techniques, and was very protective of his holocrons. There were three that Ahsoka knew of, and one that she knew the general location of. Somewhere deep within the Jedi temple where not even Palpatine nor Vader could find it.

“If they couldn't find this thing, what makes you think I can?” Rey said as she sat in a long forgotten stone passageway trying to mediate.

“Sidious and Vader were both purely Dark.” Ahsoka explained as she sat across from her padawan in the same cross legged position. “They wouldn’t have been able to find Master Windu’s holocron without the Light. That’s what made Master Windu so unique, he was a Jedi who didn’t fear or shy away from the Dark side. If you truly want to learn and understand the kind of balance you wish to have, then we will need guidance from Master Windu. Now hush, youngling, and focus.”

Rey took a deep breath and tried to focus the way Ahsoka had been teaching her. She could kind of feel something prickling at the edges of her senses so she narrowed in on that. Once she had a better feel for which way to go next she stood, Ahsoka standing with her, and they headed off once more. The further they went, the more familiar the places they passed through became, the more Rey could sense Ahsoka’s emotions. Finally Rey simply had to ask, “Ahsoka?” She said tentatively.

“Yes youngling?” Ahsoka replied.

“Why did you leave the Order?” Rey asked.

“They were no longer the people I thought they were, and I was growing beyond them.” She answered as they walked. Then she began telling Rey what happened with Barriss, Tarkin, and the Council. “Anakin and Padme were the only ones who stood by me, who believed in me. Leaving them behind, it was one of the hardest things I have ever done.”

Rey could sense her master’s loss and regret, but also the love she still carried with her for her own master and mentor. “Have you see him?” Rey asked gently. “Has he come to you? He can do that, you know. Uncle Luke calls them Force ghosts.”

“I have communed with Master Yoda in the past.” Ahsoka replied. At the sight of the concerned frown Rey gave her she said, “I would welcome a chance to speak to my master again, but the last time we saw each other he was lost within Vader, and if not for my friend Ezra, Vader would have killed me.”

“He hasn’t come to you because he’s ashamed.” Rey said with a nod of understanding. “It’s hard to
face the people you love when you feel like you’ve hurt them because of what you’ve done, or
haven’t done.’’

Ahsoka raised a brow as she looked at the young woman beside her. “That was a very astute
observation for someone so young.”

“My father died because of me.” Rey said with a shrug of her shoulder. “He stepped between me
and Kylo Ren and I watched as Kylo ran him through with his lightsaber. I know my mother
doesn’t blame me, and I know she loves me unconditionally, but I still look at her sometimes and I
wonder, does it hurt her to look at me?”

“To look at Anakin and see the man I knew and loved, it wouldn’t hurt me, it would bring me
joy.” Ahsoka said softly and then reached out and put her hand on Rey’s shoulder, squeezing it
lightly. “And looking at you, alive and well and with her once again, could never cause Leia pain.”

The pair shared a soft smile of support and gratitude, their bond growing and strengthening, and
then once again ventured into the long forgotten hidden passages below the former Jedi temple.
Every once in awhile they would pause so Rey could refocus as they made their way through the
ancient labyrinth.

“How am I supposed to get up there to get it?” Rey asked as she and Ahsoka stood side by side
looking up into a narrow, vertical passage.

“We really need to work on your agility.” Ahsoka teased as she explain how Rey was to maneuver
up the shaft.

Rey managed to at least reach the hidden compartment and retrieve the holocron before falling out
of the shaft. Thankfully Ahsoka was able to catch her using the Force and helped ease her to the
ground gently. As they made their way back out of the temple’s maze of forgotten passageways
Rey continued their conversation. “Would you want to see Padme again if you could? Or would
that hurt to much?”

“I would love to see Padme again.” Ahsoka answered. “But that is not possible, only Light side
users with the proper training can do what Yoda and Anakin can do, and Padme wasn’t Force
sensitive.”

“No, but she’s still present in the Force.” Rey replied and then told Ahsoka about the times she’d
summoned her grandparents, and how the last time she did it, she’d pulled her mother into
whatever space she’d created that allowed her to call on Padme.

Ahsoka stopped walking and turned to look at the girl with wide eyes. “We really need to sit down
and have a long in depth talk about your abilities.”

Which they did as soon as they got back to their ship. Ahsoka agreed that Rey’s ability to sense
Force echos in a place or object was psychometry. Rey’s ability to view her memories as a
spectator was called flow walking, and it too was a rare ability to have. An ability Rey embraced as
she sat alone looking at the gold and silver cube and wondering what the hell she was suppose to
do with it. Before going to the cockpit of the ship Ahsoka had told her to simply meditate on the
day, and think about what she’d learned so far. Rey tried to do that, but the cube with it’s softly
glowing purple internal light wouldn’t leave her thoughts. Sure Rey wanted to know what it’s
stored data could teach her, but Rey being Rey, she also really wanted to know how it worked on a
mechanical level. Sitting alone in the small cabin she was sharing with her new master, Rey rolled
the holocron around in her hands, taking in it’s texture, it’s weight, running her finger along what
appeared to be seams. After several minutes of that she set the holocron down and finally tried to
do what her teacher had asked.

The memory came as clearly as all the others. Rey watched from a short distance as a tall, slender woman wearing a sleeveless black tunic sat cross legged on the floor of an open and spacious living room surrounded by open archways that allowed the sun to flood the room. The woman had long naturally vibrate red hair that spilled over her shoulders in soft waves. Her emerald green eyes were focused on a holocron very similar to the one Rey had just been studying. Out of the corner of her eye Rey spotted a tiny figure dressed in summer play clothes trying not to giggle as she slowly crept up on the redhead. Rey smiled at her younger self and let herself feel the sheer joy of Breha’s giggles as the woman caught her mid launch with the Force.

“Jedi don’t giggle quite so much, little one.” The redhead said as she drew Breha to her and settled the girl in her lap, giving her a cuddle.

“They should.” Breha said happily. “Giggling is fun!”

The woman smiled and began to tickle the girl who’s giggles turned into full blown laughs of delight, which made the woman laugh as well. “Yes, I suppose you’re right. Giggles are fun.”

Settling into the woman’s lap once more Breha sees the cube and tilts her head inquisitively.

“Auntie Mara,” Breha says, pointing at the device. “What’s that?”

Rey gasps softly. The woman she is watching with her younger self is her uncle’s wife. Knowing this makes Rey move closer, she crouches so she is more eye level with the woman, and she takes her in. The woman is strikingly beautiful, and the sight of her fills Rey with a sense of warmth and safety. She can also sense, even in a memory, how powerful Mara Jade had been in the Force. Rey smiles. She would have to be to be a match for her uncle.

“This is a Jedi holocron, little one.” Mara explains. “It is a device that Jedi use to hold information. They help us learn from the Jedi of the past.”

Rey watches with rapt attention both as her grown self and as Breha as Mara reaches out with her right hand and begins to manipulate the holocron. She watches as the pieces move and twist until the cube changed its shape and a hologram appeared above it of a dark skinned bald man in Jedi robes.

Breha gasped softly. “Who is that Auntie Mara?”

“That little one, is Master Mace Windu, a powerful Jedi of the Fallen Order.” Mara answered.

Again Breha gasped and this time when she spoke she did so in a whisper just in case Mama was close by. “Do you think he knew Grandfather Ani?”

Rey raised an eyebrow at her younger self. Grandfather Ani? A nickname for her grandfather certainly, but how would she know that? She highly doubted Luke would have used it if he knew of it, and her mother hardly ever spoke his name aloud. Even now Leia struggled with her feels when it came to her father.

Mara smiled. “I’m certain he did.”

“What kind of stuff are you gonna learn from it?” Breha asked next.

“I’m not sure, little one.” Mara answered.

“Do you have to learn it now?” Breha asked, shifting in her aunt’s lap so she can look into Mara’s
face. “Because swimming with me would be much more fun.”

Mara laughed as she once again used the Force to manipulate the holocron, this time closing it back up. “You are so right, little one. Swimming with you does sound like more fun.”

Rey watched as Breha cheered and then as Mara sent her off with a promise of meeting her down at the lake. Then she watched as Mara hide the holocron away in her things. Opening her eyes Rey looked at the holocron in her position. Biting her lip she reached out as she had seen Mara do, focusing on the holocron as Ahsoka had said, and sure enough it began to open. Rey’s flush of pride at having opening it faded quickly when she realized learning to open the holocron wasn’t the only reason for that particular memory. With a heavy, unsure, heart she made her way to the cockpit and Ahsoka. “I think I know were the the second holocron is.” She told the Togruta softly as she sank into the co-pilot’s seat beside her. “Or at least, I know who had it last.”

“Who?” Ashoka asked carefully, aware of the girl’s emotions.

“My aunt.” Rey replied. “Mara Jade Skywalker.”

Doctor Kalonia wouldn’t be able to remove the chip in Mara’s neck safely in the outpost’s simple infirmary, so Leia made arrangements for them all to travel to a medical frigate. As soon as they had arrived Mara and Kalonia went to a surgical suite, Luke following, while Leia went to the bridge to update those who needed to know what was going on. Amilyn didn’t even try disguising her shock when Leia told her. Once she was finished with the Resistance end of things, Leia went looking for her brother. She was surprised to find him in a surgical suite of his own.

“There you are.” Leia said as she walked into the room, a concerned frown on her lips as she approached the bed Luke was sitting on. “What happened? Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, Leia.” Luke reassured. “Hattie bullied me into having my hand worked on since we’re here. Apparently a decade of self maintenance on a deserted island wasn’t good enough for her.”

“The old prosthetic was incredibly out of date.” The medical droid said while working on the new prosthetic it was attaching to the end of Luke’s right arm. “And full of sand.”


Leia pulled a stool over so she could sit beside her brother as the droid worked. A small smile tugged at her lips as she wondered how many times over the years had she done that, perched herself on a stool to keep her brother occupied while his mechanical hand was worked on.

“To many to count.” Luke said as he smiled warmly at his twin.

Reaching for his human hand, Leia wrapped her fingers around his. “How are you feeling?”

He knew she didn’t mean his hand. “Do you ever get the feeling our lives are some kind of epic space opera playing out in a holo theater somewhere?” Luke asked jokingly. Then he sighed when his twin raised her eyebrow and gave him a slight smirk. He flinched a bit as the medical droid connected nerve endings to the circuitry in his new machinal hand, and then he shrugged his left shoulder again. “I’m not sure how I’m feeling, Leia. I’ve spent the last decade trying not to feel.”

“It’s perfectly natural to feel overwhelmed.” Leia said gently. “From the moment I saw the Millenium Falcon again for the first time since Han left, I felt as if I’d been caught up in a maelstrom. Whenever I have a moment alone and nothing to keep my mind busy, I still feel like I can’t grasp it all.”
Luke looked at his sister carefully for a long moment and then asked, “What’s happened, Leia?”

“Nothing.” She reassured. “Just a strange dream. I’ll tell you about it later. We’re talking about you right now.”

Luke crinkled his nose. “Could we not talk about me?”

“Luke.” Leia said in that firm but kind tone she had. “Mara is alive.”

“And not knowing that before now is just another mistake I’ve made.” Luke replied. “Our family was shattered, Leia. And instead of trying to piece it back together I ran off and hid because I couldn’t deal with how I felt, and because I couldn’t face what I had done.”

“We can’t change the past, Luke.” Leia said as she squeezed his hand. “What we can do is grab hold of the present and move on with what we’ve been given back. Mara is alive, and she’s here, and Luke, don’t waste a moment of that. We don’t know what’s ahead of us.”


By the time Kalonia found them to update them on Mara, Luke’s procedure was finished and he was testing out his new hand. The first thing Kalonia did was confirm that Mara was indeed Mara. Then she explained that she had been able to remove the chip successfully, but Mara was suffering from some nerve damage from its use as a torture device, and would be spending some time in a bacta tank for some intensive treatment to repair the damage. Luke thanked her and then went to sit with his wife so Mara. He wanted his comforting presence to be what she sensed as she hopefully reconnected to the Force.

Ahsoka refused to continue looking for the next holocron until Rey had practiced controlling her flow walking abilities. “Flow walking is a rare and potentially dangerous ability to have, youngling.” The Togruta had explained as she and Rey prepared to meditate together. “You can get stuck in a memory or if the memory is intense enough, you can even die from experiencing it. So before we set off to a place where you are most certainly to be overwhelmed by memories, you’re going to learn more control of this ability of yours.”

The first memory Ahsoka allows Rey to see is the moment she first met Anakin and Obi Wan. Rey watches as a very young Ahsoka walks down the ramp of a transport ship with wide eyes. “Wow, you were so tiny!”

Ahsoka snorts beside her. “I was only thirteen standard years old.”

Rey’s eyes went even wider as she turned to look at her master. “You fought in the Clone Wars at thirteen?”

Ahsoka nodded. “The war caused the Jedi to do a lot of things they wouldn’t have normally done, like sending young padawans out to fight as military commanders.”

The next memory was of Anakin, Ahsoka and a bald man in painted stormtrooper armor. Rey didn’t know much about the Clone Wars so she had to ask, “Who is that?”

“Captain Rex.” Ahsoka asked with a fond bittersweet smile. “A very dear friend.”

“Sir, I thought you said you’d never have a padawan.” Rex said while giving Anakin a look.

“There’s been a mixup.” Young Anakin Skywalker said in return. “The youngling isn’t with me.”
“Stop calling me that.” Little Ahsoka insisted and then smirked at her new master as she added. “You’re stuck with me, Skyguy.”

Rey laughed along with Rex while Anakin scolded little Ahsoka, telling her not to get snippy with him. “Skyguy?”

Ahsoka smiled and nodded her head. “Skyguy and Snips, more than anything else that’s who we would become to one another. We became more than just master and apprentice. Anakin and Padme, they were my family.”

“What was she like?” Rey asked next. “My grandmother?”

“I’ll show you but this time I’m not giving up those memories freely.” Ahsoka replied. “See if you can’t find the first time I meet her on your own.”

Rey’s dark eyes went wide at that. “What? Are you sure?”

Ahsoka nodded. “I’m sure, youngling. Go on.”

Rey took a deep breath and bit her lip. Whenever she had changed a memory in the past it had been because she’d started thinking of something else, another person or another feeling. So she started by thinking of Ahsoka and Padme. It didn’t go quite as planned. Their surroundings changed from the battlefront of Ahsoka’s memory of first meeting her master, to a spacious room that looked as if it could have been aboard a ship of some type, but it no longer felt as if they were seeing a memory. To the left of where Rey and Ahsoka stood was a dejarik table, to their right was lounge seating, and on the floor a symbol Rey had seen on Naboo.

Ahsoka hummed softly. “Padme’s ship, interesting, but not where I first meet Padme. Though I do have a lot of happy memories aboard this ship. I spent so much time with Anakin, Master Obi Wan, and the clones, that I jumped at any chance I could get to travel with Padme and her handmaidens.” She laughed. “Though some of them could be just as bad as the clones.”

“Technically Varbaros wasn’t a handmaiden she was my pilot, but yes, she could out gamble, out drink, and out swear any of the clones.” Padme said with a soft chuckle.

Ashoka turned to see her friend standing there smiling at her as if time and events hadn’t separated them so long ago. “Hello Padme. It’s good to see you again.”

“Hello Ahsoka.” Padme said, beaming at the other woman. “I’m glad to see you again too.”

Rey watched as the two embraced and smiled, which helped her to swallow the groan she felt bubbling up. This isn’t what she’d meant to do. “I didn’t think this felt like a memory. This isn’t what I meant to do.”

“It’s alright, youngling.” Ahsoka said as she and Padme released each other. “This is why we’re working on your control.”

Padme smiled at her granddaughter. “I don’t mind, sweetheart. Though I like the Organas might be getting a little jealous.”

Rey looked horrified at the thought.

Padme chuckled softly as she walked over to granddaughter and hugged her. “I’m teasing, sweetheart. Bail and Breha understand.”
Clearly Rey didn’t understand, so Ahsoka explained. “You and Padme share a blood bond which makes it easier for you to call out to her. In time and with a little work you’ll be able to form a connection to your Organa grandparents and call on them as well, though you might need Leia’s help at first. We can use her connection to her parents to establish yours.”

“I’m glad the two of you found each other.” Padme said as she watched Ahsoka and Rey. “I had a feeling you were just the one to teach her about these things, Ashoka.”

Ahsoka smiled, her gaze drifted away from Rey and Padme to a pretty green and white bird perched on the back of one of the chairs. She held out her hand and the convor flew to her. “My connection to the Daughter has allowed me to learn a lot. I’m more than happy to pass on what I know to Rey.”

Rey blinked. “Morai?” She rubbed the back of her neck. “Did I pull your pet bird into this too?”

Ahsoka laughed. “Morai isn’t my pet, youngling, and she is far more than just a bird.”

Padme put her arm around Rey’s shoulders and smiled. “You have a lot to learn, Rey, and Ahsoka’s the perfect person to teach you. Though,” Padme added with a knowing smile. “She won’t be your only teacher before you’re ready to face what you must fight.”

Rey sighed softly. “Kylo.”

Though she said nothing, the look at Padme’s face made Ahsoka raise a brow. Perhaps what Rey had to face was far more than just Kylo Ren?

“Grandmother?” Rey said gently, not wanting to deal with her brother right now. “Can I ask you an odd question?”

Padme smiled. “You may ask me anything, sweetheart.”

“Did Grandfather have a nickname?” Rey asked.

Padme blinked and laughed softly. “I called him Ani.”

It hit Rey all at once and her eyes went wide. She sudden knew why she called him Ani as a child. “You use to come to me in my dreams.”

Padme smiled and kissed Rey’s forehead. “We have always been, and will always be, with you Rey.”

Rey smiled and hugged her grandmother tightly. When she pulled back she said, “I can’t keep the connection open much longer, I’m getting really tired, but before we go will you do me a favor?”

“If I can.” Padme replied.

“Tell Grandfather to stop brooding and come say hello to Ahsoka.” Rey whispers. “She misses him.”

Padme beamed and winked at the girl. “I’ll do my best, sweetheart, but Skywalkers can be so frustratingly stubborn.”

Mara spent a week in a medically induced coma while floating in a bacta tank. Leia had had to return to the Bespin moon base, but Luke remained. He never ventured far from Mara’s room, and when he did leave her side it was normally because Kalonia forced him too. Luke found himself
thinking about his life with Mara a lot as he sat with her or walked the corridors of the medical ship. The first time he laid eyes on her he thought she was stunningly beautiful, and he’d found her sardonic wit captivating. Of course in those very early days Mara had to fight the compulsion to murder him with each and every breath she took, but that wasn’t her fault. The anger and hate she felt towards him in the beginning had been implanted into her mind by the Emperor, but Mara had been strong and stubborn and was able to overcoming that compulsion.

When Mara was finally removed from the tank and placed in a bed Luke wrapped the fingers of his human hand around hers gently. Kalonia wanted Mara to rest a little longer before she started easing off the drugs that kept her asleep. With Mara’s hand in his Luke closed his eyes and carefully reached out with the Force. Though she had yet to re-establish her link to the Force, Luke could once again sense Mara Jade’s life force and it soothed his very soul.

Knowing that Mara was going to be alright finally allowed Luke to think about some of the things she had told them. They had already known there were a couple of Force users with Kylo Ren, and Luke had no doubt they were a couple of his former students. What they had not been aware of was this Apprentice, Mara spoke of. This man had been powerful enough to go toe to toe with Mara, which meant he was strong and experienced. Could there possibly be a bigger threat out there than Kylo Ren?
They had stopped on the planet for supplies, fuel, and a little ship maintenance. They had not been expecting a First Order raid. Rey had watched the First Order officer, backed up by his Stormtroopers, intimidate and bully the people until the leadership appeared. She watched as the people huddled together in fear as the black uniformed man made threats and demands, as if he had the right to commandeer whatever resources they needed. When the Chief Councillor refused, when he demanded the First Order leave immediately, Rey watched the officer draw his weapon, aim, and fire. She knew she should wait for Ahsoka, but there was no time. The blaster bolt fired at the Chief Councillor never hit its target. Rey’s hand was outstretched, her focus fixed on the bolt of energy, she used the Force to deflect the blast harmlessly into the ground where it sprayed rock and dirt at the feet of those nearby. The gathering crowd remained silent but the rigid fear in their bodies seemed to ease just a fraction. The First Order officer however, stiffened, his finger once again twitching on the trigger of his blaster. Rey stepped out of her hiding place, her hand still outstretched, her focus on the officer who suddenly found himself unable to move.

Keeping her focus on holding the First Order officer still, Rey walked slowly towards the Chief Councillor and asked, “Chief Councillor, did I hear you ask these men to leave?”

“I did.” The tall man replied, his gaze fixed on her. “I did indeed.”

The First Order officer growled as he struggled against the invisible force holding him still. “Release me this instant or I shall order my troops to open fire on you all!”

The armored troopers behind him all shifted as one, raising their blasters.

Rey shifted her Force hold from the man to his blaster, ripping it from his grasp and crushing it before his eyes before letting it fall to the ground. It was something she’d learned from Master Windu’s holocron, and seeing it work for the first time Rey allowed herself the slight tick of a smile. Now that she wasn’t focused on using the Force she reached up and pulled back her hood. The sharp intake of breath from the officer let her know he knew who she was. She took a step closer to him, looked into his eyes, and said, “I don’t like bullies. And I really don’t like First Order bullies. You were told to leave. I would do so if I were you.”

“I’ll leave.” The officer growled as he stared at Rey. “With you in custody. Rey of Jakku you are under arrest for…”

Rey smirked as she pulled her lightsaber from her belt and ignited a single purple blade. “The name is Rey Solo, and you can tell Hux to take his meaningless arrest warrant and shove it up his…”

The blaster bolt almost hit her, causing Rey to change her choice of swears. Yelling at the Chief Councillor to get his people to safety, Rey did her best to protect the innocents as the stormtroopers began opening fire. Because they had only had one very old training droid that Finn had just happened to find on the Falcon, Luke had borrowed her mother’s blaster to use in Rey’s early lessons with him. She would wear an old helmet with the blast shield down and defend herself against the stinging zaps of the little floating ball, as well as random shots from her uncle. She moaned and bitched about it, but standing there now deflecting blaster bolts until she felt a comforting, reassuring presence suddenly at her back, she would have to thank her uncle when she got home.

Ahsoka had sensed the moment Rey made the choice to get involved and had rushed to get to her padawan’s side as quickly as she could. Now, as she joined Rey in the fight she just shook her head.
as she ignited her white bladed lightsabers and growled. “I am getting too old to put up with Skywalkers!”

Rey laughed as she pulled a blaster from a Stormtrooper’s hands, crushing it, and then pushing him back into another Stormtrooper, which sent them both crumpling to the ground. “At this point Ahsoka, you are a Skywalker.”

That actually sent a flood of warmth through Ahsoka and she smiled. Which probably unnerved the riot trooper charging towards her, which made it easier for her to disarm and subdue him. She heard the whur of another riot trooper’s baton and turned just in time to see Rey use her lightsaber to cleve the top of the weapon clean off before wounding the trooper. Thankfully this hadn’t been a very large raiding party, and not one filled with more experienced troopers. Once the officer and heavy troops were dealt with, a lot of the other troopers simply surrendered. First Order propaganda had painted Rey as the one who had murdered Snoke, which Ahsoka had assumed, they were hoping would spur on a sense of vengeance against her. In some it did, but in others like these new conscripts and recruits who saw no other way out of bad situations, it seeded fear within them. If this girl could kill their Supreme Leader, what chance did they have against her?

When the fight came to an end, Ahsoka had proved that she could still kick ass despite her advanced age, while Rey proved she still needed more training and experience but could at least hold her own. Rey commed R2 aboard their ship to send a message to the Resistance to let them know they had First Order prisoners. Then as soon as she clicked off the comm, Ahsoka was scolding her while looking over the blaster wound she’d managed to get in the fight. Rey groaned and tried to shoo her master’s hands away. “Yeah, yeah, I know, work on my agility. It’s fine Ashoka.”

Ashoka grumbled about just how strongly stubbornness ran in the combined bloodline of Anakin and Padme, while also biting back a smile as she watched Rey walk over to the Chief Councillor to reassure him and his peers that the Resistance would do what they could to help them, even if it were merely giving them the ability to protect themselves. She walked over to join her padawan just as the man was shaking Rey’s hand.

“We are grateful that you were here Jedi Solo.” The man said warmly. “You and Master Tano are welcome here always.” He continued to smile warmly even as he took a shuddering breath of relief. “It is good to know the Jedi have returned.”

Ashoka watched the emotion play out on Rey’s face and once they were alone she asked, “Are you alright, youngling?”

For a moment Rey moved her mouth without sound and then she looked at Ashoka and said, “No one’s ever called me that before. Jedi.”

“Not everyone will use that title with such respect.” Ashoka warned. “Many in the galaxy still hold onto the old prejudices towards the Jedi seeded by the Emperor. But this is how we change that, youngling. By showing them that we once again fight for those who can not yet fight for themselves.”

The Ninka II was the Resistance ship that showed up with the New Republic ship that was sent for the First Order prisoners. Rey could barely sit still in her seat as Ashoka and R2 docked their ship with the Ninka. It had been weeks since she’d seen either of her mothers and Rey’s excitement had her squirming like a five year old. Ashoka laughed softly to herself at the sheer willpower it was taking for Rey not to bolt from their ship to the blockade buster’s hanger bay. Willpower that
melted away like ice under twin suns as soon as the ship’s commanding officer spoke.

“Starlight.” Amilyn breathed out as soon as she laid eyes on Rey. It had been weeks since she’d seen her outside of a recorded holomessage. Rey’s hair was longer, pulled back in a long Alderaanian braid. And there seemed to be a change in the way she was dressing, with the grays and dark tans she’d worn before shifting into more light creams and whites. Gone were the loose wraps she’d worn before, now Rey wore proper trousers and tunic with a light hooded white robe. Amilyn smiled at the beautiful sight of the girl Leia allowed her to call her own.

“Ammy.” Rey smiled as she rushed towards the towering woman and hugged her tightly. She felt the warmth of Amilyn’s presence wash over her like a cool gentle rain after to long in the sun, and her smile grew even more. “I’ve missed you.”

“I’ve missed you too, Starlight.” Amilyn replied. “I’m so glad to see you well.”

“Well enough.” Ashoka said as she drew closer to the pair. “You need to get the blaster burn looked at, youngling.”

Amilyn gently pulled back from Rey and was instantly looking the younger woman over for injury. When she spotted the wound she gasped softly. “Rey, what happened?”

“Nothing Ammy.” Rey replied while shooting a heated glare at Ashoka. “I’m fine.”

“That doesn’t look fine.” Amilyn replied with a deep frown. “Let’s get you to medical.”

Rey glared once more at Ashoka. “That was a dirty trick.”

“You weren’t letting me have a look.” Ashoka replied. “I figured if you wouldn’t listen to your teacher you’d listen to your mother.”

Amilyn turned her gaze to Ashoka and smirked. “Hello Ashoka. It’s very good to see you again.”

“It’s good to see you as well, Amilyn.” Ashoka replied, returning the younger woman’s smile.

Turning her attention back to Rey, Amilyn said, “Come on Starlight, lets get that wound taken care of, and then you can tell me what you and Ahsoka have been up too.”

Renee Sloane watched the former Stormtrooper with curiosity every time he was in her presence. It baffled the minds of many who knew the truth of FN-2187 and his defection. He had been taken as a small child and conditioned into the perfect soldier, and yet he had somehow resisted or broken that conditioning. Hux was stumbling around like a fool trying to find the flaw in his perfect programming. Renee had to admit she was curious herself, especially if that flaw turned out to be something she could use against Hux.

Finn could feel the woman’s eyes on him as they passed each other and it made him uneasy. She was being taken back to her cell while he and Poe made their way to command. He couldn’t really explain why she unsettled him, there was just something about Sloane that set him on edge.

“Don’t let her get to you.” Poe said softly when he noticed Finn stiffen. “She won’t be our problem much longer. Once she’s in New Republic custody you can get back to your training with the Doc and I can get back into my cockpit.” Then he gave Finn one of his best most dashing smiles as he added, “And if we’re extra lucky Rey will be home when we get there.”

The mention of Rey’s name helped Finn to relax. “Yeah, that would be nice. I miss her.”
So, Renee thought with a tick of her lip upwards. There was something between FN-2187 and Rey Solo. Good to know.

Amilyn had invited Ashoka to join them but the Togruta politely declined, opting for some time alone before she and Rey departed again. Rey wasn’t stupid. She knew Ahsoka was giving her time alone with Amilyn and she was grateful for it. They had dinner together, and Amilyn touched up the purple in her hair, and Rey told her all about everything she’d done with Ahsoka over the weeks since becoming the older woman’s student.

“What?” Rey asked when she noticed the look Amilyn was giving her after she’d told her about her ability to speak with Padme.

“When you were little you use to tell your doll and your stuffed wookie stories.” Amilyn said softly as she brushed at Rey’s hair. “You would tell them about the beautiful angel in your dreams.”

Rey smiled. “It was Grandmother. Ahsoka says it’s easier for me to call on Padme because of our blood ties, and that when I was little I would do it in my dreams without knowing it.” There was a question in Amilyn’s eyes, one that Rey had asked herself many times since discovering this bit of information. “Ben doesn’t have this ability. He didn’t have a way to protect himself from the darkness the way I did. Something, Snoke I guess, kept Grandfather from appearing to Ben as a Force ghost, and kept Grandmother from appearing in his dreams. They tried, but…”

“The forces working against Ben were stronger than any of us realized.” Amilyn said softly.

“Yeah.” Rey agreed.

They only had a few hours together before they had to go their separate ways and Amilyn had wanted to focus on giving Rey what she’d needed from her, a loving and supportive parent who would listen. It wasn’t until the Ninka had been in hyperspace for almost an hour that it hit her. She probably should have told Rey the news that she hadn’t been the only one to survive the attack on the temple.

Nature had begun the process of retaking the land on which the temple ruins sat. Tall grass and wild flowers grew up and around the remains of the huts where the older student’s lived. A few of the small wooden structures remained, though they were battered by a decade of weather and no upkeep. A couple of them still bore evidence of the heat from the fires that night. At least one was utterly destroyed. The only place clear enough for Ahsoka to land their ship had put the padawan huts between them and the temple. Rey didn’t have a choice but to make her way through the structures that had once housed her brother and his peers. Rey had worked hard with Ahsoka to learn to control her abilities, but controlling her emotions was proving to be harder than she’d expected. As Rey picked her way through the rubble remains of Ben’s hunt her chest felt so tight she could barely breathe. This is where it would all change, where Ben Solo gave into the Dark Side, and her family would suffer for it.

Ahsoka was waiting a little further up the overgrown path, giving Rey a few moments to deal with her feelings. “Don’t push away your emotions, youngling.” Her teacher had told her as they’d dismarked. “Acknowledge them, accept them, and then let them go.” It was easier said than done, because Rey wanted to hold on to her anger and grief and disappointment, but she knew it wouldn’t help her if she did. So she let those emotions come and then released them by kicking at the beams and boards under foot, sending skitter mice and bugs scattering. Drawing her foot back for one more kick Rey stopped when something under the boards caught her eye. Crouching down Rey moved some of the bigger pieces and reached for what she’d seen. Drawing her hand back her eyes went wide and she gasped softly. It was Ben’s calligraphy set. The little wooden box that housed the set, which had been hand carved by Chewie from wood that came from Kashyyk, and the base
that held a brush and small pot for ink. Tears burned Rey’s eyes as she let herself remember watching Ben practice, and the way he’d always felt at peace through their bond as he did so. Taking a deep breath Rey used her shoulder to wipe away the tears on her cheek as she put the set into her satchel. Then she stood, took another deep centering breath, and walked over to Ahsoka.

“Can you sense anything?” Ahsoka asked as they made their way beyond the protective outer walls of the temple after freeing the gate of the ivy and vines that had grown over it.

“I sense a lot of things.” Rey answered. “My uncle had a lot of Jedi artifacts here, and he didn’t take everything with him into exile, so this place is scattered with Force objects.”

Ahsoka nodded. “That’s what I sense as well. You’re going to need to narrow your senses. Focus only on what could be the holocron if it’s here.”

Rey nodded. Closing her eyes she tried to focus on how the first holocron had felt, hoping to use that as a kind of filter to help her shift through everything else she was sensing. It wasn’t enough, she needed another filter, so she thought about the reason why she felt the holocron was here. She started reaching deep within for memories of her aunt. It was a struggle until they reached the practice yard.

“That’s good, little one.” Mara said with a warm smile as she watched her niece grip the hilt of the practice lightsaber. Then she crouched down and moved Breha’s feet, correcting her stance. “Keep your feet just like this, bend your knees a bit to brace yourself. Good, that’s it. Ready?”

“Ready!” Breha said excitedly.

Rey watched as Mara smiled as she stood and summoned another practice saber with the Force. Mara began to call out numbers, one through seven, and with each number Breha moved her saber into a different defensive position. After Breha shifted into each new position Mara clashed her practice saber against Breha’s, and each time she did so the girl giggled. Rey smiled. She couldn’t have been more than five in this memory.

Mara, despite herself, laughed as well. “My giggling Jedi padawan.”

When young Ben’s voice called out to Mara, Rey tensed up. She had long ago severed the connection between herself and her brother, but she was still expecting to hear his cold adult voice following his youthful one. When it didn’t come Rey relaxed and continued watching the memory playing out before her. Ben wanted Mara to train him.

“But I don’t understand why not.” Ben said with a pout when Mara refused. “I can learn from the others, I can learn some things from you, why can’t you train me in your style of…”

“Luke feels you will…” Mara began.

“Uncle is holding me back!” Ben snapped at her angrily.

Before Mara had a chance to scold the boy for his tone, Breha stomped over, placing herself between her brother and aunt. “Don’t yell at Auntie Mara, Benny! It’s not nice and it’s disrespectful!”

Ben sighed softly. “Disrespectful.” He corrected his sister and then looked up at his aunt. “She’s right, Aunt Mara. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean too.”

Reaching out Mara put her hand on the boy’s shoulder. “I understand your frustration, Ben. You are very strong with the Force, and you’re very gifted in your abilities, but learning to master those
abilities takes time. Patience nephew, and perhaps we will get the chance to train together someday.” She smiled reassuringly at him and then asked, “In the meantime, would you like to help me show Breha defensive positions?”

Ben sighed again and gave a little nod of his shaggy haired head. “Sure. Come on, squirt. You’re three and four are sloppy.”

Even back then Luke had feared any kind of Dark influence on Ben. Rey wondered, if Luke would have allowed Mara to teach Ben the kind of balance she had, if Ben would have been able to find his own balance, and if that would have given him a better chance at fighting off Snoke’s influence. Or perhaps it wouldn’t have helped at all. Had he felt as if he were entitled to rule the galaxy even then? Was that twisted belief that it was his destiny present even as a boy? Once again Rey found herself wondering where Ben had even gotten such an idea. They had never been raised to believe themselves better than anyone else, to think of themselves as entitled. Just the opposite in fact, they had been raised with a sense of duty to others, they were taught to help those who needed help. It would be up to them to decide how they would do this, be it as a Jedi or a senator, or any other calling they might have. Becoming the new emperor was not on the list of possibilities though, so where had Ben come up with this belief in a destiny that had them ruling the galaxy together?

Rey didn’t notice the shift in her thoughts right away. The further she went into the ruins of the temple the more clear her mind became, the easier it was to recall memory and emotion alike. She could remember the awe she had felt the first time she and her parents had come to visit the temple just after her uncle had settled into it. She was really young at the time and didn’t fully comprehend what a monumental task Luke had undertaken, trying to revive the Jedi Order, but she understood the sense of hope her uncle carried with him, and the sense of pride her brother had as his apprentice. She could recall her own sense of excitement at the thought of studying at the temple, of becoming a Jedi like her uncle and her brother, but also feeling conflicted because she really didn’t want to leave mommy, daddy, and ammy behind to do it.

“Mommy and Ammy have the Force too.” Breha had said with the kind of firm conviction that small child have. “They will come to Jedi school with me.”

Han laughed. “What about me, kiddo?”

Breha smiled and hugged her daddy around the neck. “You’ll smuggle for us, Daddy.”

Rey smiled at the memory of Han lifting her into the air and teasing her about what she would have him smuggle for her. Sweets were always at the top of her list.

“You’re getting distracted, youngling.” Ahsoka said as she gently put a hand on Rey’s shoulder to ground her in the present. “Find your center in the present and clear your mind. Focus on the energy of the holocron.”

“Sorry.” Rey said softly.

Ahsoka smiled warmly. “It’s alright, Rey. We expected this, and it isn’t a bad thing. This is where you’re connection with the Force was severed. It’s where Breha Solo ceased to be. It’s only natural that you want to connect this point in your life to who you are now, to link Breha Solo to Rey to Rey Solo. Just be careful, youngling, you must not get trapped in the past.”

“I can remember being her so clearly here.” Rey told her teacher. “How happy I was just to be with my family.” Taking a deep breath Rey closed her eyes and focused. Using the way her family made her feel then and now to search out where the holocron could be. Her aunt would have kept it
close, not wanting it to fall into the hands of students not meant to take the path of Mace Windu and Mara Jade. The feeling led Rey to what used to be the private apartments of her aunt and uncle. The large main room with the painting of Tatooine’s twin suns on the wall, family holos on shelves, and various other artifacts and trinkets on tables and racks on the walls. The room were her Uncle Luke would act out stories for her, changing his voice for each character, and where her Aunt Mara would brush and braid her hair. The room where she would watch her mother and uncle while cuddled in her own brother’s lap.

The room where her mother and uncle had argued loud enough that she could hear them from her aunt and uncle’s bed where she was meant to be napping.

“Why would you even have that at all, Luke!” Leia demanded, her voice strained and angry.

“As a reminder, Leia.” Luke replied gently. “Of what can happen when…”

“You become a murderous monster!” Leia had yelled. “What if Ben found that, Luke? How would you explain that to him?”

“He knows I have artifacts of all kinds, Leia.” Luke replied. “He wouldn’t need to know the details of what it was, unless you want to tell him the truth.”

“No!” Leia growled and then sighed. “Not yet, he’s still just a boy Luke.”

Breha crept from the bed to the door left partially open so her mother could hear her when she awoke from her nap. She watched as her uncle stood beside an opening in the wall she had never seen before. There were shelves lined with all kinds of things, little glowy boxes, lightsaber hilts, other things she didn’t know what they were, and a black helmet that was melted and scary. The helmet didn’t just look scary, it felt scary, and Breha cried out at the feeling it caused. Luke waved his hand and the wall closed shut just as soft footsteps came closer to the bedroom door. Breha skittered back to the bed and under the covers just as the door opened.

“Bay?” Leia called softly.

Breha sniffled. “Mama.”

“Are you alright?” Leia asked as she gathered the tiny girl into her arms.

Breha cuddled close, clinging to her mother as she recalled the cold, dark, scary feeling the mask had caused. “Bad dream.”

Rey made her way across the charred remains of the furniture in the room to where that wall had once stood. It was in ruins like most of the temple, but this is where she felt drawn too. Closing her eyes she reached out with the Force and then a moment later ignited her lightsaber. After cutting a hole into her uncle’s secret vault Rey called to the holocron she sensed inside and it came to her. Opening her eyes she looked at the cube she had seen in her memory of Mara at the lakehouse. “I’m surprised Kylo didn’t take this when he took Vader’s helmet.”

“It wouldn’t have done him any good. It’s a Jedi holocron.” Ahsoka said gently. “And he had no interest in anything Light Side. He wouldn’t have been able to use it, any of it.”

Rey watched as Ahsoka called to other items inside the vault, other holocrons, and two lightsaber hilts. Ahsoka gasped softly as she held one up to look at it. “Master Obi-Wan’s lightsaber.”

They collected what they could and began making their way back to the front hall and the exit. Now that she wasn’t focused on the holocron Rey was open to sensing other things around her. The
room she had been staying in that night wasn’t far from her aunt and uncle’s, and as Rey walked down the corridor she could feel the pull of an echo, one that could not be ignored. Closing her eyes Rey let the memory take form around her. The sounds of screams in the distance, the smell of fire, the familiar presence of Mara Jade. Rey watched as the tall, slender but muscular form of Mara Jade Skywalker stood in the corridor, lightsaber hilt in hand, facing off against a man in a cloak. She watched as a brilliant purple blade erupted from the hilt just as Mara charged the man, who had ignited his own blood red blade. The blades clashed hard, their distinct sound echoing off the stone walls, as flares of red and purple light glinted off nearby surfaces.

The way Mara fought was unlike anything Rey had ever seen, it was aggressive but in a controlled kind of way, not the overly anger fueled way Kylo fought. It was aggression with purpose and determination. The man, brown hair, square face, big ears, dark hazel eyes, wide nose, fought like Kylo. He allowed his anger and hate to feed his movements, he swung his crimson hilted lightsaber like a heavy hammer, trying to use his physical strength to overpower Mara. Mara used that against him and soon ended the battle between them, leaving the man wounded and defeated.

Rey followed her aunt, realizing that Mara was making her way towards the room she had been in. Rey’s heart swelled with the realization. Mara had been coming for her, to save her, to try and get her out safely. But Breha hadn’t been in her room, she had already fled with Anakin’s guidance. For a moment Rey wondered, if she had stayed would Mara have found her? Would they have survived and Breha taken home to her parents? Then she watched the man reappear as Mara called out her name in a frightened panic. Rey could sense Mara’s fear, her desperation, as it lingered in the Force echo around her. The wounded man didn’t give Mara a chance to finish him off. He stunned her, and Rey watched helplessly as her aunt collapsed to the ground, as the man picked her up and carried her away, and as Mara’s lightsaber rolled under a piece of furniture.

Rey pulled herself out of the echo as tears rolled down her cheeks, but she did not open her eyes. Instead she reached out her hand and using the feeling of her aunt’s presence still in her mind she began sifting through rubble until she felt something slam into her hand. Opening her eyes Rey looked down to see what she held. The hilt was silver with two lines of rivets around the grip, thin black bands around the middle, and a thick black ring around the emitter. When she pressed the button on the side a purple blade ignited from the emitter and Rey’s eyes went wide.

“Rey?” Ahsoka said softly as she came up to the young woman standing stone still in the middle of a ruined corridor. They had been making their way out together when Rey suddenly stopped. Ahsoka had watched as Rey closed her eyes, allowing whatever was happening to her to happen, and then she followed as Rey followed what was happening in the echo. When Rey stopped again, when Ahsoka saw the tears rolling down her cheeks, she reached out to call Rey back but then Rey had raised her hand and summoned a lightsaber from the ruins. “Rey?”

The girl’s dark eyes turned from the lightsaber to her teacher and Rey gasped. “Ahsoka.”

“Rey, are you alright?” Ahsoka asked with concern.

For a second Rey stumbled over her words as her mind tried to make sense of everything she had seen and felt. Then she said, “I think she’s alive.” Her dark eyes widened a bit. “Ahsoka! I think my Aunt Mara is alive!” She turned her attention once more the lightsaber in her hand and Rey took a deep breath. “And I have to find her.”
Chapter 22

Finn could understand why he had been sent on the retrieval mission. Who better to impersonate a stormtrooper than a former stormtrooper. He could even understand why he needed to remain at the outpost even after Poe had been called away on a Black Squadron mission. Greer Sonnel had been assigned to help Korr Sella with the retrieval, and now the containment of Renee Sloane. And because of his training with Kalonia he was capable of treating Sonnel’s Bloodburn Syndrome. So as long as Sonnel was here, and Finn was the only medically trained person to give her her treatments, he had to remain as well. What Finn didn’t understand is why they were both still here and not back at the moon base with the General. He didn’t understand why Renee Sloane hadn’t been handed over to the New Republic to stand before a tribunal and answer for her part in the Hosnian massacre. What intel could she possibly still be holding on to that was keeping her out of a New Republic prison cell? Something about that woman just set Finn on edge. Everytime he was near her he got this prickly feeling in the back of his mind that felt like a warning. It was hard to explain, that prickling sensation, so he never brought it up to anyone. He simply repeated, “I don’t trust her.”

“Have I not proven a valuable asset?” Renee asked from where she sat, her gaze shifting from Greer who sat across from her, to Finn who stood by the door with a blaster on his hip. “I have no reason to lie to you. My well of information will soon dry up and once that happens, well, at this point it’s simply a matter of saving my own life, isn’t it? My corporation in exchange for life in prison rather than execution.”

“We’re not the First Order.” Finn gruffed. “We don’t execute people.”

Renee laughed. “Such charming naivete.”

Greer tried to quickly pull the conversation back to the line of conversation they had been having about First Order resources. Renee however was fully focused on Finn. “We are not very different you and I. We both left behind the only lives we’ve ever known out of a sense of self preservation.”

“We are nothing alike.” Finn spat.

Renee hummed softly. “Not in every way, no, of course not. I was bred into the First Order, it truly is all I have ever known. But you, FN-2187, you were three and half years old when you were taken from Savareen.”

Finn’s dark eyes narrowed as he took a step forward, hovering just over Greer’s left shoulder. “Savareen?”

“It’s the planet you were born on.” Renee said with a smile. “In the Outer Rim, along the Corellian Run.”

“How do you know this?” Greer asked. She didn’t need to be Force sensitive to feel the emotion rolling off Finn in waves.

“I read his file.” Renee said simply. “Hux and Phasma were beside themselves when FN-2187 defected because he was a flaw in their seemingly perfect indoctrination system. I wanted to know more about the stormtrooper who managed to fluster that ginger bastard and his tin can pet savage.”

“What else do you know?” Finn demanded.
Renee smiled. “A bit more, which I will gladly share, all in due time.”

“You’re stalling.” Finn barked at her. “Trying to keep yourself here and out of New Republic hands.”

“Like I said.” Renee replied. “Self preservation is my main goal in all of this.”

It would be a lie if Finn said he had never wondered where he came from, who his family was, and if maybe they were still out there somewhere. He would see the gold band Poe wore on a chain around his neck as it rested on his bare chest, and knowing that it had belonged to Poe’s mother, had made him wonder about his own. He had assumed she was dead, killed by the First Order raiders who took him, because for some reason that hurt less than thinking he was merely given to them. Finn growled angrily as he punched his locker. He had let her get in his head. She was lying, she had to be lying. Playing with him because that’s what officer’s did, that’s what the First Order did, they played with people’s lives like a predator plays with its prey. Wither he did or did not come from some planet called Savareen, it didn’t matter. What mattered was his life now, what mattered was his life with Poe and Rey. Sighing softly Finn let his head fall against the metal of the locker as he silently wished they were here with him.

After they’d left the temple Rey had sat in the co-pilot’s seat beside Ahsoka holding her aunt’s lightsaber. She replayed the echo she had seen, and knew without doubt that when her aunt was taken, she was still alive. But if her aunt were alive, why couldn’t she be felt in the Force? Had Kylo taken her as well? Severed her connection to the Force just as he had her? Maybe. Ben had wanted to train with Mara so badly, he could have taken her to force into doing so. But the man in the echo, he didn’t look like one of Kylo’s Knights, he was different somehow. Rey had sighed in frustration. She didn’t even know where to start if Ahsoka agreed to go off and look for Mara.

Ahsoka agreed that they could go looking for Mara Jade, but first Rey needed to go home. Returning to the temple had been emotional for Rey, it had opened her up to her past in such a way that she couldn’t close her eyes without a memory surfacing. When she was three, Han and Chewie took her to Kashyyyk and Chewie had carried her around on his back in a wrap that Wookie mothers used to carry their young until they were old enough to maneuver around their treetop villages safely. Her mother had been less than pleased when she found out. “Do you know how many things could have eaten my baby!” Leia had yelled at the pair while clutching a giggling, Wookie roaring Breha to her chest.

When she was five, she ended up in a casino on Canto Bright with her father and Lando. Uncle Lando promised her all the hot chocolate she could drink as long as she never told her mama that they’d taken her to a casino on Canto Bright. She never said a word, and he always made her hot chocolate whenever he saw her. When she was six she got angry because her mothers had to cancel a planned trip to Gatalenta, and in her frustration she used the Force to shove a vase gifted to her mother by Mon Mothma to the floor, smashing it. Then she lied about it, repeatedly, so what should have been a talking to and loss of privileges, ended up becoming a trip over her mother’s lap and three swats to her bottom. Just before they left Hosnian Prime for the last time as a family, the grandson of the Hosnian senator tried to kiss her. She gave him a black eye.

“That’s my girl!” Han had said, high fiving his seven year old. “Anytime a boy wants to kiss you, you punch him in the nose.”

Breha giggled.

“Han.” Leia scolded her husband.

“What?” Han replied with a raised brow. “You wanna let her let people try to take advantage of
“Of course not!” Leia huffed. “But she can’t just go around punching people in the face.”

“It’s ok Mama.” Breha said from her daddy’s arms, looking down at her mother with understanding. “I’ll just mind trick them once Auntie Mara teaches me how.”

“No! Breha! That’s not.” Leia sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose. “We don’t punch people and we don’t mind trick them young lady.”

Her Aunt Mara had promised to teach her how to mind trick stupid boys who didn’t know how to keep their hands to themselves. Each new memory left a storm of emotion behind. Happiness at having another piece of her past back. Anger because she had been loved so deeply and unconditionally and she’d had it all ripped away from her. A sense of peace because she had belonged. And a deep sense of sorrow over what had been taken away from her. Ahsoka was right. Rey needed to go home. She needed her mother.

Leia knew that Rey was on her way home long before she sensed her ship enter the system, and she knew Rey was close before Connix could even mutter the words identification and landing code clearance. Though Leia had no idea where Rey had been or what she had been doing, she could feel the maelstrom of emotion her daughter was going through, over their bond. Wherever Rey had been, whatever she had been doing, it felt as if it had strengthened the bond between mother and child. Leia knew without any doubt or hesitation that Rey needed her, so she stood and waited in the hanger bay of the moon base as the ship her daughter was on landed. She watched the hatch as it opened, heard the hiss of it’s seal release and the gears whir. She watched the ramp descend and clank softly against the metal flooring. Then Leia waited, and watched as Rey emerged. She watched her daughter’s tight body language ease ever so slightly upon seeing her standing there waiting. Their matching dark eyes met, their gazes locked, and Leia drank in the swirling emotion that played in Rey’s as her daughter made straight for her. Leia simply opened her arms, and Rey came crashing into her embrace.

The way Rey wrapped her arms around her and nuzzled into her neck caused Leia to tighten her hold on Rey, bringing her left hand up to Rey’s head to hold her as close as possible. The very soft snuffle of breath that brushed against Leia’s ear let her know that Rey was close to tears if not already softly crying. In that moment, holding Rey this way, listening to her soft breathes, Leia is instantly reminded of little Breha, and how her daughter would nuzzle and snuggle as close as possible to her when she was upset. Leia had no idea what was going on with Rey so she simply held her daughter as close and as tightly as she could while sending love and reassurance to her through the Force. Finally after several long minutes Rey took a calming, though shuddering, breath and whispered a soft, “Mama.” that let Leia know it was alright to speak. “I’m here, sweetheart. It’s alright. I’m here.”

When Rey pulled out of the embrace she had tears rolling down her cheeks as fresh ones welled in her eyes, but she smiled lovingly at her mother. “I’m alright now, Mama.”

“Are you sure?” Leia asked as she reached up with both hands to cup her daughter's face and wipe away her tears.

Rey closed her eyes, pushing more tears out from under her lashes, and reached up to hold her mother’s hands in place against her cheeks as she nodded. “I have a lot to tell you.” She said softly. “But I need to speak to Uncle Luke first. Is he here?”

“He just got back.” Leia replied. “He’s in his quarters.” When Rey released her hold on her hands Leia shifted from caressing away Rey’s tears to brushing at her hair. “Sweetheart, are you sure
“You’re alright?”

“I’m sure.” Rey reassured. “And I’ll tell you everything you don’t manage to pull out of Ahsoka, I promise.” Rey smiled and then leaned in and kissed her mother’s cheek. Then she began making her way for the exit but paused, she turned back to Leia and asked, “Hey, Mom, how many times have Lando and I seen each other since that first time after Crait?”

Leia blinked at the odd question. “I don’t know, half a dozen or so? Why?”

Rey bit her lip playfully as she smirked. “Next time you talk to him. Tell him he owes me at least six hot chocolates and I expect him to pay up next time he’s here.”

Turning on her heel Rey practically sprinted from the hanger bay leaving her mother standing there confused. When she sensed a familiar presence coming up behind her Leia turned to see the tall orange skinned Togruta she had first met when she was all of five years old. Leia smiled and held out her hand. “Hello Ahsoka. It’s been a long time old friend.”

Ahsoka gladly accepted Leia’s hand and held it tightly in her own. “Hello little Princess.” She greeted, using the same phrase she had used the first time she’d meet Leia. “It’s been a very long time.”

“I want to thank you, Ahsoka.” Leia said softly as she motioned for the other woman to walk with her. “For taking on the responsibility of helping Rey with her training.”

“I appreciate that, Leia.” Ahsoka replied. “But there’s no need to thank me, I accepted a long time ago that my life was forever entangled with the Skywalkers. In another place, another time, it could have very naturally been you and I working together as master and apprentice.” She smiled at the shorter woman beside her and than that smile faded into something a bit more sad. “I made the offer to Bail once, to train you, but he was dead set against it.”

That surprised Leia, though she wasn’t sure why. Her father had tried so hard to dampen her Force sensitivity, not out of any kind of malice, but because he simply wanted to protect the only other person beside her mother that he loved with all his heart. “He wished to protect me.”

Ashoka nodded. “Which is what good parents do, and it’s why you’re trying very hard not to come right out and ask me what happened to upset Rey.”

Leia smirked. “Well, since you brought it up.”

Ahsoka laughed as her heart both pinched and filled with warmth. The look in Leia’s eyes reminded her of Anakin and the smirk was one she had seen grace Padme’s lips a time or two. “I will tell you what I can, but it really is her story to share.”

Rey stood outside the door of her uncle’s quarters, fisted hand hovering just over the surface preparing to knock. What was she going to say? How was she going to explain what had happened and what she now believed? What if she was wrong? Or had been right, and Mara had been alive, but was wrong now and her aunt was dead after all. Rey growled softly in the back of her throat. She didn’t want to cause her uncle pain, no matter how much of grouch and pain in the ass he had been.

Suddenly the choice of whether to knock or not didn’t matter because the door opened and there stood Luke with an amused look on his face. “Are you going to come in or just stand there brooding over whatever it is your brooding over?”

“I’m not brooding.” Rey grumbled at him. “I’m carefully considering my options.”
Luke chuckled as he turned and walked back inside his cabin. “Well are you going to come in and consider them or keep standing in the hallway?”

Rey stepped inside and watched her uncle carefully. She still wasn’t sure how to go about telling him everything.

“How are things going with Ahsoka?” Luke asked, deciding to help ease his niece into whatever it was she was struggling with. He could feel her desire not to hurt him, and he could sense that there was something different in the way she saw him.

“Great.” Rey answered as she rubbed the back of her neck. “Her pet bird being the embodiment of the Light Side is a little weird, especially when she’s perched on my head, but otherwise, it’s been good.”

Luke raised an eyebrow at that. “What do you mean…”

“I went to the temple.” Rey spat out. “I went back to the temple.” She corrected. “After we found Master Windu’s first holocron, I was led back to the temple to find the second through a memory.”

Luke blinked. He sat down on the sofa and patted the seat beside him. He watched as Rey hesitantly walked over and took the seat he offered. “That explains why you’ve felt so shaken the last few days, and why it seems to be easier for me to sense you at all. You’ve re-enforced old bonds with new ones through the Force.”


“She’s been worried.” Luke said with a nod. “But we didn’t feel as if it were a bad thing.”

“It wasn’t.” Rey told him. “It was hard, being there and remembering. I’m struggling with how I feel.” She admitted. “Which is partly why I came home.”

“Partly?” Luke probed. He would help where he could as far as her dealing with her feelings, but Luke knew that was more Leia’s role than his.

Rey nodded. “I saw something, Uncle Luke, in the Force echo that engulfs the temple.” Rey looked into her uncle’s eyes, bit her lip, and told him. “I saw Aunt Mara the night of the attack. She was taken by a man with a crimson hilted lightsaber. Uncle Luke, I think she might still be alive.”

Then Rey sat up straight and with a truly Skywalker bold confidence said, “And if she is, I’m going to find her, and I’m going to bring her home to you.”

It was easy for Luke to keep a straight face because the genuine sincerity and unconditional love behind Rey’s words actually choked him up a bit. Reaching out with his human hand Luke cupped his niece’s cheek and then leaned forward and kissed her forehead. “The fact that you want to do this for me means a lot to me, Rey. Thank you.” He said as he sat back and once again looked into her dark eyes. Then he smiled and said, “But you don’t have to do that.”

“Yes.” Rey insisted. “I do. Kylo Ren took everything from you that night. He took the temple, your students. You thought he took me which drove you away from Mama and Daddy. He took away your faith in the Force and your hope. He made you doubt yourself. And you thought he took away the love of your life. You haven’t been happy since that night, and while getting me and Mama back in you life has helped, there’s still something missing. My brother took away your happiness, and I’m gonna bring it back.”

“You are one hell of a kid.” Luke said with a chuckle he hoped would camouflage the emotion in his voice. “And I’m a pretty lucky old uncle to have you as my niece.” He smiled at her and then
said. “If you want to go looking for Mara, you have my blessing.”

“Really?” Rey said excitedly.

“Really.” Luke said and then finally allowed himself a huge beaming smile. “But it’s going to be a really short search.”

Rey instantly deflated. “You don’t think she’s still alive?”

“Oh, no, I don’t doubt she’s still alive.” Luke replied. “I just think you’re really not going to have to go to far to find her.”

Now Rey just looked completely confused, and with her emotions already a jumbled mess she wasn’t really sure what to make of Luke’s reaction. “I don’t understand.”

Luke smiled as a voice from across the room finally spoke up.

“Tell me little one,” Mara said softly as she leaned against the bedroom door frame. She was dressed in loose pants and a light tunic because she wasn’t completely healed from the nerve damage done by the inhibitor chip. Her red-gold hair was pulled back in a ponytail. She looked far more casual than she ever would have in the past, but she was still recovering so she allowed it for now. She was also still pretty much disconnected from the Force, which wasn’t new. It had taken her awhile to reconnect on her own after finally freeing herself from the last of the binders the Emperor had on her. “Do you still giggle every time you use the Force?”

Rey shot to her feet, turning to look at the source of the familiar voice. Her mouth dropped open and her eyes went wide as she tried to process who she was seeing. Like her parents and her uncle, the red haired woman looked older than she did in her memory, but even though her presence in the Force was somewhat dim, it let Rey know the truth of what her eyes found hard to believe. “Aunt Mara?”

“Look at you Breha.” Mara said as she took several steps closer to the young woman. “You’ve grown up.”

Rey’s eyes darted back and forth between her aunt and uncle. “How? When? What?”


Rey blinked at him and then turned to look at Mara. “That was you?”

“Wouldn’t be the first time I stalked your uncle.” Mara said with a snort.

Rey’s head was spinning a bit as she closed some of the distance between herself and Mara. She had seen her aunt being taken, seen the man who had taken her, and he had left the same cold dark feeling behind that she remembered feeling with Vader, and with Snoke. Seeing her aunt standing right before her eyes alive and seemingly well, her mind still swarming with newly discovered memories, all Rey wanted to do was give in to her need to hug her. But as she drew closer she stopped, her heart sinking a little as she sensed something from Mara. She frowned. “You’re in pain.”

“A bit.” Mara admitted. “But it’s nothing I can’t handle, and if it means getting to hug you again little one, any further discomfort will be worth it.”

Giving in at Mara’s reassurance Rey walked over and hugged her aunt. Closing her eyes she let the moment sink in and she smiled. One more victory, one more glimmer of light snatched back from
the dark. Kylo Ren and his master had tried to destroy her family. They failed.

But knowing that didn’t help Rey feel any less angry. Alone with her mother in Leia’s quarters the young Jedi began telling her mother what had happened. She started simply by talking about the differences between her uncle and Ahsoka as masters, and about all the new things Ahsoka had been teaching her. “I know Togrutas’ have a longer lifespan than humans, so Ahsoka’s not old by like human standards, but she’s still, well, old.” Rey said carefully. “But Mom, you should see her in a fight! She’s amazing!”

Then she told her mother about Coruscant. When she was finished she figured her mother was looking at her in the odd way Leia was looking at her because she’d mentioned falling out of the shaft. “It’s ok, Ahsoka caught me. She keeps moaning at me about my agility.”

“It’s not that, Rey.” Leia said with a gentle shake of her head. “The Jedi Temple on Coruscant was built over an old Sith Temple.”

Rey nodded as if that wasn’t new information to her. “That’s why Master Windu hid his holocron in the catacombs. Dark Side users wouldn’t be able to find the holocron because it’s a Jedi holocron, it’s powered by the Light Side. The Jedi wouldn’t have been able to find it because they wouldn’t have been able to sense it through the Dark Side remnant in the catacombs. Ahsoka said it was Master Windu’s way of testing a possible padawan. He was very selective about who got to learn his techniques.”

Leia nodded. She remembered Mara saying something similar. The single holocron Mara had been able to find, she’d found on in a Dark Side temple on a remote but peaceful planet called Bardotta. In order to find it Mara had required the help of a particularly odd old gungan who had been friends with Leia’s birth mother. That old gungan had made Leia wonder once again how people didn’t know of her parentage sooner, because as soon as he’d laid eyes on Leia he’d wept, overjoyed that a piece of his beloved Padme lived on.

It was easy for Rey to talk about her adventures until she reached the part about returning to the temple. She sat on the sofa beside her mother, both feet flat on the floor, bent at the waist as she leaned forward, her forearms resting on her thighs. She held a cup of tea between her hands and just stared down into its rich red depths as if the words she needed would float up to her on the wisps of sweet smelling steam. Her mother didn’t push, simply waited on her, and when she felt Leia place her hand on her back and begin to rub soothing circles, she closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

“Jedi are suppose to be able to master their emotions.” Rey said softly, still staring into her tea. “They’re not suppose to feel things like anger or hate or fear. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, and hate leads to suffering. That’s what Uncle Luke said, that’s how the Jedi use to be”

Reaching out Rey places the cup in her hand on the table before her. She doesn’t sit back because she doesn’t want her mother to stop rubbing her back, the warmth of Leia’s hand helped Rey to focus. “Grandmother says the Jedi views on emotion were antiquated, arganat, and just plain stupid. She said our emotions are what make us human and that there isn’t anything wrong with feeling them. It’s how we express them that matters, and that not bottling them up is important. It’s why she told me I needed to be open and willing to talk about how I feel with the people I trust and love.”

Leia raised an eyebrow as she listened to her daughter speak. She wanted nothing more than to question Rey about the way in which she spoke of her grandmother, as if she were having long meaningful talks with a woman long dead. Her mind flashed back to the dream she’d had, of standing in the senterial apartment of Naboo and meeting her mother for the first time. That had
been a dream hadn’t it?

“I’m angry, Mama.” Rey said after a long stretch of silence had lingered between them where she gathered her thoughts, and Leia simply offered physical comfort through her gentle touches as well as comfort through their bond in the Force. Taking a deep breath Rey stood, no longer able to simply sit still now that she was really digging into how she felt. “It’s no longer simply that I recognize you as my mother and know deep down that I love you, and that you love me. I remember now what it felt like to be held in your arms, to sit on your lap, and feel safe, and loved. My favorite place in all the galaxy was right there on your lap, with your arms wrapped around me, and your voice in my ears even if you weren’t necessarily talking to me.”

Rey moved across the room to the dinning table where she had left her belt and holster. She picked it up just enough to rub the warn leather between her forefinger and thumb. “I remember how special I felt when Daddy would kiss my cheek after he’d kiss you, because I knew I was the only girl besides you that he loved. I remember how I would giggle when he kissed me when he was all stubbly, and how much I loved sitting on his shoulders.”

She turned to lean against the edge of the table and wrapped her arms around her midsection as tears began welling in her eyes. “Those feelings, those memories were stolen from me. Years of my life were stolen from me!” The anger she had mentioned began to bubble up and boil in the pit of her stomach. “I remember thinking about all the different things I could be when I grew up, a Jedi, a senator, a scoundral, though I’m pretty sure I didn’t know what that meant outside of it being something you called Dad.” She swiped angrily at the wetness on her cheeks. “But I never had the chance to make those choices for myself! Ben decided that I would be his apprentice someday, and that he and I would rule over the galaxy together.” She reached back and picked up her lightsaber. “He didn’t get what he wanted, but I still don’t get to choose what I want to be for myself.”

Rey sets her lightsaber down, closes her eyes, and clenches her fists at her sides. “He took so much from me, from all of us! Time, memories, opportunities! He stole my life! Then just when I was getting it back, when I thought I would finally get the time I’d lost, he murdered my father!” Rey’s body trembled as she finally admitted. “And I hate him for that!”

It was unbearably hard for Leia to sit there and just let Rey talk knowing where it would all end, but she knew Rey needed this. Rey needed to give voice to the emotions inside of her in order to move past them. So Leia listened and she waited. Her heart squeezing painfully in her chest as she did so. Then when she saw her daughter’s body began to tremble she knew what Rey needed most in that moment was her full support.

“I hate him!” Rey repeated angrily. She could sense her mother approaching and for a moment she tensed up, not ready to give up her hate and anger, but then she felt Leia’s warmth, her comfort and her strength. When she felt herself being pulled into her mother’s arms Rey melted into the embrace.

“Your anger is natural, and it’s justified, sweetheart.” Leia said softly as she held her daughter as tightly as she could. “Someone you loved and trusted betrayed you and the relationship between you. Let yourself feel the anger, and grieve over what was taken from you and what was lost. You’re not alone in this, Rey. I’m here with you. Your family is here with you.”

Leia wouldn’t fully comprehend how true that statement was until the next morning over breakfast. She had held Rey, reassuring her, being there for her, for a long time before guiding her daughter to the bed in her room and laying them both down. Rey cried herself to sleep in her mother’s arms. When Rey awoke, Leia having barely slept as she watched over her child, they talked a little more. By the time they decided to get up and start the day Rey was in a much better place. So Leia had
bit her lip and dared to bring up what was on her mind, “Sweetheart, last night while we were talking, you mentioned your grandmother.”

Rey looked up from shoveling food in her mouth. She nodded as she swallowed and confirmed, “Grandmother Padme. She’s the only one I can call on right now because we have a blood bond.”

“Call on?” Leia repeated.

“Yeah, like in the vision I pulled you into.” Rey replied.

Leia blinked, her eyes suddenly and unexpectedly burning. “That wasn’t a dream?”

Rey became instantly concerned. “No, that really happened. Ahsoka says that I can call to those I have a bond with, those who are in the Cosmic Force, because of my abilities. It seems to be because of the Psychometry, which is an ability we share, it’s the odd feelings you get when you’re someplace with a strong Force echo, and the Flow Walking, which is the thing I do when I can watch a memory.”

She had actually met her mother. She had actually felt her mother’s touch, heard her mother’s voice, been kissed by the woman who had carried her, and loved her before all others. Leia’s heart raced.

“Mom?” Rey said as she reached across the table for her mother’s hand. “Are you alright?”

Leia nodded, and then gave her daughter a small but warm smile. “I’m fine sweetheart. I’m just…”

“Overwhelmed?” Rey asked with a slight chuckle in her voice. “Yeah, welcome to my world.” Then she gave her mother a bright loving smile and said, “I can take you back to her. Ahsoka says I may be able to call upon my Organa grandparents too, with your help.”

That caused a small gasp on Leia’s part. She could see her parents again? Was that something she wanted to do? Could she bare it? “I’ll keep that in mind, sweetheart.” A soft alarm sounded and Leia looked aprepenshivive. “I have command meeting starting soon.”

“Go Mom.” Rey reassured. “We both have things to do. Duties to take care of. I’ll be alright. I’ll be with Ahsoka.”

“Are you sure?” Leia asked.

“I’m sure.” Rey said with a nod. “I’ll come find you later if you don’t come find me first.”

Leia hesitated but then nodded her agreement. Standing, she moved around the table to pull Rey into an embrace and kiss the top of her head. “I love you, Rey.”

“I know.” Rey said with a cheeky smile. “I love you too.”
“I’m starting to feel like one of Mon Mothma’s cats.” Rey grumbled as she tried to even out her balance on the railing of the catwalk high above the ground of the converted space Ashoka had commandeered for her training. She heard the Toruga chuckle softly below her, happy to know that she had been correct in her memory since Ashoka got the reference. “She had this whole little system of walkways, platforms, and boxes that most people thought was just weird art, but was really for her cats.”

Rey sensed what Ashoka was doing a split second before she did it. It gave her just a fraction of a moment to bend her knees just enough to begin a leap backwards. She heard the whir of the blaster Ashoka had just fired as she propelled herself into a backflip, springing off the railing, and onto a crate nearby. She had just enough time to swing her lightsaber up to dispel the stun blast before it could slam into her hip. What she didn’t sense in time was the training ball droid that snuck up behind her and zapped her shoulder. Spinning on her heel Rey reached out with the Force, snatching it out of mid air and throwing it down towards Ashoka, who had fired a second stun blast. The blast of stun energy crashed into the ball droid, allowing Rey time to run and leap for cover behind a lower stack of crates.

When the training droid clattered to the ground Ashoka nodded her head approvingly and called out, “Alright youngling, that’s enough physical training for this morning.” Walking over to a bag of her things Ashoka set the blaster aside and began digging around for something. When she sensed Rey approaching she said, “Well done, youngling. You’ve improved. You’ll actually walk out of here today without any numb limbs.”

“That’ll be a nice change of pace.” Rey snorted. Ashoka hadn’t mentioned that agility training would include dodging stun blasts, and Rey was finding it hard to focus on so many things at once, but it seemed she was finally getting a handle on it.

“You’ve been spending a lot of time with Master Windu’s holocrons.” Ashoka said as she pulled another holocron from her bag and held it out to Rey. “I think it’s time for a change of pace.”

Reaching out Rey took the holocron and began turning it over in her hands to examine it. Unlike Windu’s, which glowed with a soft purple light, this one was softly glowing blue. “Whose?”

“Master Shaak Ti.” Ahsoka answered. “She served on the Council before the Order fell. She was one of our best, and since I had her holocron and not Luke…”

“Her skills are unknown to Kylo.” Rey said as she stared at the small box in her hand.

“There are other lessons to be learned from her as well, not just combat skills.” Ashoka said softly. “The Fallen Order lost their way when they were pulled into Sidious’ schemes. The Jedi were meant to be peacekeepers, not soldiers. Lightsabers were meant to be weapons of last resort, not weapons of war. Just as you’re learning how to balance using different skills at once, you must also learn how to balance your place in this fight.”

Rey simply nodded. She kind of understood what Ahsoka was saying. She would help those who needed help, she wasn’t about to allow the First Order to harm people if she could help it, but the larger galactic fight against the First Order was a fight she had to allow her mothers and the Resistance to fight. Her fight was with Kylo Ren and those who would try to once again tip the balance towards the Dark Side.
“Not just the Dark Side.” Ahsoka said softly. “Balance should not tip too far towards either side. Another lesson the Jedi had long forgotten.”

Looking up at her teacher Rey again nodded. Then she shared a memory of Ahch-to, of the Jedi temple, and the mosaic at the bottom of the small pool. The figure was half light and half dark in perfect balance.

Ashoka smiled and nodded. “Continue to keep that image in mind as you move forward, youngling. It will serve you well as a remember that true balance starts within.”

After parting ways with Ashoka, Rey headed to the canteen to get a ration bar and an electrolyte drink, which she quickly scarfed down. While she had gotten better at feeling more secure about food, it would take a lot longer for her to loose all the habits she’d picked up while living on Jakku. After grabbing her snack Rey made her way through the base to the meditation room. At this time of day the handful of people on base who used it would be on duty, so she figured she would settle herself amongst Amilyn’s skyfaring ribbons to study her new holocron. When she stepped into the warm and peaceful space she was a little startled to find someone already there. Kneeling in a meditation posture Rey had seen Ahsoka use, her long red-gold hair braided down her back, breathing slow and purposefully, was Mara. Rey knew that her aunt was trying to reconnect to the Force after having it painfully repressed for so long, and she didn’t want to disturb her so she turned on her heel to leave.

“It’s alright, little one.” Mara said softly without opening her eyes. “You don’t have leave. Join me.”

Rey jumped a little and then blushed as she turned to look in her aunt’s direction again. “Are you sure?” She asked. “I don’t want to interrupt.”

“I’m sure.” Mara answered.

Walking over to the older woman Rey stood in front of her and then copied her kneeling position. Then she closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and reached out with the Force. When she sensed her aunt’s presence strong and clear she couldn’t help but smile. “I can sense you clearly again.”

Mara let a small smile tug at the corner of her lips. She could feel the relief and happiness Rey was feeling, and it fueled her own sense of relief. Being without the Force, not being able to sense Luke or her family, had left Mara feeling as if she were in a cold dark place. It felt wonderful to be in the sun again. Focusing on Rey, Mara drank in her warm and familiar presence. The girl was as strong in the Force as she and Luke knew she would be. Then she sensed what the girl had with her and she smirked as she reached out to call the holocron to her as she opened her eyes. “This isn’t one of Windu’s.”

Rey didn’t even flinch when she felt the cube being gently pulled from her grasp. Opening her eyes she watched as it floated to Mara’s outstretched hand. “It belonged to a Jedi named Shaak Ti. Ahsoka wanted me to study something that wasn’t Master Windu.”

“Shaak Ti?” Mara repeated with a hint of surprise. “Really? Farmboy and I had seen her name in the Jedi recorders. She was on the Council of the Fallen Order, and the general in command of the clone facility on Kamino. But we were never able to track down any of her person holocrons.”

“You should talk to Ashoka.” Rey said with a warm smile. “She’s full of surprises.”

Mara floated the holocron back to Rey. “I always felt there was more to her than met the eye. It’s not surprising that Luke had you seek her out to be your master.”
“She’s my teacher, but she’d be the first one to tell you she isn’t a Jedi.” Rey said softly as she watched her aunt closely. She could feel the flicker of anger and grief bubbling up in the pit of her stomach that came whenever she thought about what should have been. “So she doesn’t really see herself as my master.” Rey sighed softly as she played with the holocron, using the Force to turn and twist it the way a child would play with a toy. “That was meant to be you.”

“I wanted that too, Rey.” Mara said gently.

“If you’re willing to teach me, the more I can learn before I have to face what’s coming, the better.” Rey replied just as gently.

“I’m a little rusty on the Jedi front.” Mara replied. “I’m not sure how helpful I’d be right now.”

“Right now maybe.” Rey said as she looked into the sharpe emerald eyes across from her. “I know you’re still healing, and you’re still working on your own connection with the Force, but maybe down the line.” She gave her aunt a warm and reassuring smile and then stopped playing with the holocron. “Wanna watch it with me?”

“Sure.” Mara said, barely keeping her emotions out of her tone. “I’d heard she was one of the very best.”

“That’s what Ashoka said.” Rey said as she focused on the holocron to open it. She smiled when the corners of the cube began to twist and pull away as the cube opened. Once everything was unlocked a small blue hologram of a Togruta woman with red skin and white markings, whose montrals were tall, pointed, and with a space between them that Ashoka’s didn’t have. Her lekku were long, but not as long as Ashoka’s which meant she was younger than Ashoka is now when she died, and the pattern on them was more ring like, while Ashoka’s reminded Rey of a large wild cat’s stripes.

“Whoever is seeing this.” Said the hologram of the murdered Jedi Master. “It is up to you now. Don’t let our deaths have been in vain. Don’t let this be the end of the Jedi.”

Rey bit her lip, pausing the recording. “Uncle Luke says the old ways need to die.”

“That doesn’t mean we have to ignore Master Ti’s last request, little one.” Mara told her niece. “We honor her and the others by learning from their mistakes as well as their accomplishments, and we use that knowledge to move towards something better. That goes for your uncle as well, learn from his mistakes and from his successes, and then use that to make something better. The Jedi don’t have to die, little one, but they do have to change.”

They finished watching the holocron and then parted ways when Rey sensed Amilyn drawing closer to the base. As she made her way to command to meet up with her mother so they could greet Amilyn together she kept thinking about what Mara had said. Rey had known since the moment Kylo Ren had told her to let the past die that it would be the past that would give her the key to saving the future. It had to be, why else would she be able to communicate with her non-Force sensitive dead grandparents, why send her to Ashoka who had lived through more of the past than anyone else she knew, and why was Kylo Ren so afraid of it?

“Are you absolutely sure that’s what you saw, Commander?” Leia stood by the main command control console speaking into the transmitter there. She was leaning forward a bit, her hands closed in fists that were pressed against the surface of the console. When she felt her daughter’s presence grow closer she straightened up to look over her shoulder as the young woman walked in.

“Sure as shit.” Poe’s voice crackled out over the comms. “Got some visuals on our way the hell
out. It was the damnedest thing to see, General. White armored stormtroopers fighting red armored stormtroopers.”

Leia hummed thoughtful not only at what Poe was reporting but at the fact that simply hearing Poe’s voice seemed to make her daughter’s face light up. “Report back here, Commander. Bring me that footage.”

“Yes ma’am.” Poe replied. “Dameron out.”

Rey waited until her mother clicked off the comms before speaking, “So I guess the rift between Ren and Hux has gone past political infighting?”

“Seems that way.” Leia said as she turned to face Rey. She leaned back against the edge of the console and crossed her arms as she thought about what Poe had told her. “We’ll see what the footage Poe has tells us before we start speculating.” She fell quite for a few moments as she thought this through a bit and then set it aside for later. Looking up at Rey she gave the girl a tired but warm smile. “You sensed Amilyn coming.”

Rey bobbed her head in affirmation and smiled. “I thought we could greet her together.” Then her smile turned into a smirk. “Unless you’d rather greet her alone.”

Leia made a face at her daughter’s smirk and teasing tone as she pushed off the console. When she was closer to Rey she reached out and playfully whacked Rey’s upper arm with the back of her hand. “Brat.” She teased, happy to see more of the comfortable ease between them that had come with everything that had happened at Luke’s temple. “Come on lets not keep your Ammy waiting.”

For the first time in months Leia had all of the remaining pieces of her heart in one place, safe and sound by her side. Leia felt like she could finally take a full unrestricted breath, and the muscles in her body could finally let go of the ever present tension they carried around. She longed for a few peaceful hours alone with her family but that would have to wait just a little longer. There needed to be a debriefing, reports given, and now that her second in command was back at command issues like clashing stormtroopers and Renee Sloane to be discussed. She did manage to get a couple of hours alone with Amilyn and Rey that evening. Leia rolled her eyes and again playfully swatted at her daughter as Rey teased them as to why she was leaving early.

“She seems, I don’t know, different somehow.” Amilyn said as she stretched out her long slender legs across Leia’s lap after the shorter woman re-took her seat beside her after walking their daughter to the door and hugging her goodnight. “She seems a bit more relaxed and secure in a way.”

Leia nodded her agreement as her hands naturally and without thought went to Amilyn’s caves which she started massaging. “She is.” Leia replied. “Going back to Luke’s temple, it somehow helped her to really reconnect with her past, with the relationships of her past.”

“Ahh.” Amilyn replied. “Yes, that’s it. She’s more comfortable with who she truly is and her place with us. She was much more relaxed and open with us this evening then she has been.”

“Which I’m grateful for.” Leia sighed softly. “She’s finally starting to get around to processing her feelings about what’s happened to her and she’s going to need us to help her deal with that.”

“We will love.” Amilyn reassured her. “We will.”

Rey remember the last night they had all been together, everyone in one room, happy, laughing, a family. It was on Chandrila, they were there celebrating Mon Mothma’s birthday. Amilyn had
already been on the planet for several weeks with Mon. After deciding to relinquish her seat as senator to Tai-Lin Garr, who Amilyn freely admitted was better suited to the position, Amilyn had taken on the potion of one of Mon Mothma’s advisors. Amilyn had worked closely with Mon during the war in some of the same ways Leia had worked with her father, so working with Mon had been a more natural fit for her. Leia, Han, Breha, and Chewie had arrived a few days before the big celebration, and Rey could remember feeling that her mother was uneasy about something. Rey never did figure out what Leia had been uneasy about, she didn’t know that Mon had told Leia about her illness, the one that would eventually take her away from her role in the government, which would then lead to the chaos that drove her mother away as well.

The day before the big party, which Rey remembers being really excited for, Luke, Mara and Ben arrived. While Rey had been a bouncing bundle of energy and glee over the prospect of dressing up and going to a big fancy party, Ben had been just the opposite. He’d been melancholy and broodish about the whole thing. But that evening as everyone gathered in the main room of the guest house on the grounds of the Mothma family home where they were all staying, even Ben’s dark mood lifted as the family spent time together, all together, for the first time in ages.

“You’re going to regret that tomorrow, big guy.” Han had said with a huge smile and deep chest chuckle. “You ain’t as young as you use to be and you know damn well Ams can drink you under the table.”

Amilyn smirked and raised her glass of whisky, challenging the Wookie playfully.

“There does seem to be a bit more gray in your fur then the last time I saw you, Chewie.” Luke teased from where he sat beside Mara near the fire.

Chewie grumbled and roared something that had Mara laughing so hard she couldn’t breath and Leia cover’s her daughter’s ears. “Chewie!” Leia scolded. “Children in the room!”

Amilyn snorted. “Like Bay hasn’t heard you say worse.”

Leia looked offended. “She can’t speak Huttese, she has no idea what I’m saying, but she is starting to understand Wookie.”

As if to prove her mother’s point Breha roared something in Wookie that had Chewie slapping his knee as he roared in laughter, and Han flashing his friend a look. “Did you teach her that?!”

While the adults were giving each other a good natured hard time Ben slips his sister another little sponge cake, the one with the jam and cream in the middle because he knows it’s her favorite. She gives him a huge smile and shoves the sweet into her mouth quickly so no one would notice, though the smirk on Aunt Mara’s face would say she was less than successful. Between the cakes her brother had slipped her and Uncle Lando’s hot chocolate little Breha gave her parents one hell of a hard time going to sleep that night.

Stepping into her mothers’ quarters in the Bespin moon base Rey was acutely aware of who wasn’t there this time around. She could hear her mothers voices coming from their bedroom, and her aunt and uncle were speaking in the corner of the living space. She could sense Chewie in the hanger bay. But her father wasn’t there to fill the room with his boisterous laugh, her brother wasn’t there to be her partner in crime, and in a moment meant to celebrate her family being together Rey felt her grief and anger bubbling in her stomach.

“I’m sure Rey wouldn’t mind if you used it again.” Luke said before turning his attention to his niece. “Would you Rey?”
Rey did her best to let her grief and anger go long enough to focus on her uncle. “What?”

Mara gave her niece a long, concerned look, having sensed the younger woman’s turmoil. She remembered feeling that kind of anger and grief, and she began to wonder if there was a way she could help her niece through it.

“Mara told me about the holocron you two were studying yesterday.” Luke said as Rey closed some of the distance between them. “She mentioned an interest in trying some of the techniques, but she’d need a lightsaber. I thought she could use the Skywalker lightsaber, if you didn’t mind. It is yours now.”

“Of course I wouldn’t mind.” Rey said, turning from her uncle to look at her aunt. A huge smile blossomed on her face as she said, “But I might have a better option. Hold on a sec!”

Just as Leia stepped out of her bedroom she saw her daughter run out of the room. She blinked and looked over at her brother. “What did you do?”

Luke looked offended, crossing his arms over his chest, but there was a smirk hidden behind his newly trimmed beard. “I didn’t do anything. Why are you always assuming I’ve done something?”

“Because you normally have.” Leia replied.

When Rey returned she had her satchel in hand and went right to the dining table where she started rummaging through it. In her mad grab to find what she was looking for other things came tumbling out before she pulled out her prize. Rushing over to her aunt she held up the silver and black hilt with a huge smile.

Mara gasped, her emerald eyes wide. “My lightsaber?”

“I found it in the rubble at the temple.” Rey explained. “When the man with the crimson hilted lightsaber stunned you it fell out of your hand and rolled under a piece of furniture.”

Taking the hilt from her niece’s hand Mara wrapped her fingers around it, she tightened her hold, and began twisting it around slightly as if testing the feel of it in her hand. Closing her eyes she reached out with the Force to the kyber crystal inside and instantly felt the rush of recognition, like greeting an old friend. Opening her eyes she ignited it and watched as her purple blade erupted from the emitter.

Near the dining table Leia reached down for one of the items that had spilled out of Rey’s bag, her heart squeezing painfully in her chest. The gold medallion at the end of the thick green ribbon was cool in Leia’s hand, her thumb rubbing at its slightly tarnished surface. Han’s Medal of Bravery. He’d kept it all these years? Closing her eyes Leia raised the medal to her chest, her memories zipping back to that moment on Yavin 4 on the stairs of the temple, to Han’s handsome face and roguish smile, and that goofy wink he must have thought was ever so charming. Han, she thought simply as she opened her eyes and put the medal back into their daughter’s bag. Knowing her husband he wouldn’t have wanted her to know he’d kept it, worried that it would somehow tarnish his rough and tough image.

When Leia looked up she found Amilyn standing on the other side of the table looking down with tears in her eyes. When she looked down to see what the other love of her life was looking at she saw Ben’s calligraphy set and instantly understood. Amilyn had been the one who’d taught their son calligraphy, as well as how to use it as a form of mediation. Rey must have found it at the temple, Leia thought as she gave a slight nod to Amilyn who slipped the set back into Rey’s bag. When their eyes met again the two women just stood and looked into each other’s gaze, taking
comfort as they shared their grief. Then the room suddenly filled with a purple glow and they turned to see Mara with her ignited lightsaber. Leia smiled as she walked over to stand beside her daughter, slipping her hand into Rey’s. “I suppose just this once we can forget the no lightsabers in the living room rule.”

Mara smirked. Luke blushed. “In my defence that spider was the size of Yoda. I thought I was protecting your infant daughter. I had no idea it was Chewie’s pet. And that couch was ugly, you hated that couch.”

Leia laughed.

“You never did like spiders, no matter the size, Farmboy.” Mara teased her husband before setting her deactivate lightsaber aside so she could hug Rey. “Thank you, little one.”

Rey gladly returned the hug. When Mara released her she used the Force to summon her own saber, and excitedly ignited one of the blades. “Maybe we can practice together sometime.”

Mara gasped softly at the purple blade. The color was extremely rare, and while she and Luke had always felt the Force guiding Mara towards Breha to train, she had never once thought the girl would produce a purple colored blade.

“I think that would be a very good idea.” Luke said while Leia fussed at Rey to put her lightsaber away.

When Chewie arrived he came baring a small crate for Rey with a note attached from Lando. “Deals a deal, kid. This ought to make up for some of what I owe you. Happy to hear you remembered. Uncle Lando.”

“Why does Lando owe you hot chocolate?” Leia asked, narrowing her eyes and glaring softly at her daughter.

Rey smiled a huge innocent smile. “No reason. Who wants hot chocolate!”

It was late when Rey finally made her way back to her own quarters. While she had missed her father’s and brother’s presence, having the rest of her family together in one space had been something she’d really needed following her temple trip. Feeling their presence and warmth helped to forge the links between who she was as a child, who she was on Jakku, and who she was now. It also helped her temper her anger and soothe her grief, it reminded her of what her mother had said on the Falcon as they escaped Crait, that they had just want they needed to carry on. She hadn’t completely understood at the time but she did now. They had everything they needed because they had each other.

Stepping into her quarters Rey gasped softly when she spotted the figure sitting on her couch. “Poe!”

Poe gave her a huge smile as he pushed to his feet. “Hiya Ace.”

Rey rushed towards him, meeting Poe in the middle of the room, and wrapped her arms around him. She kissed him hello, a rush of relief washing over her. He was here and he was safe. When they pulled apart she asked, “When did you get back?”

“About an hour ago.” Poe replied as he pressed his forehead to hers. It had been a long time since they had seen each other outside of holomessages, and he wanted to savor the feel of her standing there in front of him. He could feel her warmth, smell her unique scent, hear her breaths, and it filled him with a sense of home he hadn’t felt in a really long time.
“Why didn’t you come next door?” Rey asked as she let her hands slide down his arms to take his hand and lead him back over to the couch.

“I didn’t want to intrude.” Poe answered as he sat down and pulled Rey close to his side. “Connix told me the General had taken the night off to be with family so you could all celebrate Mara Jade’s return.”

“You could have joined us.” Rey scolded lightly. “You know my Mom considers you family.”

“Yeah, but I didn’t want to take the chance of triggering Leia’s General mode, what with the new intel I just sent her. So I thought I’d just take the chance and wait for you here. I hope you don’t mind.” Poe replied. “Besides, I’d met Mara Jade once, back when I’d first arrived at the Naval Academy, she’s a bit terrifying.”

Rey laughed. “I guess she can be a little intimidating.”

For awhile they just talked, catching each other up on the past few weeks, but then talking turned into reconnecting in more physical ways. Rey was fascinated by the scruff on Poe’s face, running her fingers through it and lightly scratching at it between long slow kisses. Poe busied himself with unbraiding Rey’s hair and then letting it cascade through his fingers. When things started going a little further than they had before Poe made sure to check in with Rey, asking if she was alright with where things were headed and if she wanted to stop or slow down. Rey reassured him she was fine and that she wanted where this was going, and that she wanted him to stay.

Leia let herself into Rey’s quarters the next morning carrying the crate of hot chocolate ingredients her daughter had forgotten the night before. “Rey?” She called out softly as she carried the crate over to the small dining table and set it down. She knew that Rey was an early riser, getting up early and getting things done before the heat got to bad was a must on Jakku, and even without reaching out with the Force Leia simply knew her daughter was awake or close to it. “You left your hot chocolate behind last night, and I’m pretty sure Luke helped himself to some of it.”

While Rey’s cabin wasn’t as large and spacious as Leia, it had still once been a Cloud City suite which meant it had a small open living space and a separate bedroom space. A loud, hard sounding, thud came from the bedroom and Leia frowned. “Rey? Sweetheart are you alright?”

“I’m fine, Mom.” Rey said as she practically rushed out of the bedroom door before Leia had a chance to reach it. Her hair was long, loose, and a bit wild. She was wearing a disheveled looking, long, off white linen shirt whose hem reached about halfway down her thighs, several inches above her knees. Her cheeks were rosy, and her eyes a bit wide. Rey did her best to give her mother a soft, sleepy smile.

Leia eyed her daughter suspiciously, a dark eyebrow raised. “Are you sure you’re alright? I thought I heard…”

“Fell out of bed.” Rey said a little too quickly. “I must have had a bad dream or something during the night, I was all tangled up in my covers, so when I went to get up when I heard you, I fell, but I’m alright, I’m fine. No harm done.”

“Mmmhmm.” Leia hummed, her dark eyes staring at her daughter for a long moment before she said, “Black Squadron returned last night, I’d like you to sit in on the debriefing meeting since their intel concerns Kylo Ren’s red troopers.”

Rey bobbed her head almost comically as she tried to keep herself between the door behind her and her mother’s line of sight, as if Leia could somehow see right through the door. “Sure, yeah, of course, Mom, I’ll be there.”
“Meeting’s in an hour.” Leia told the girl.

“I’ll be there.” Rey promised, flashing a hopefully disarming smile and not a nervous one. “Thank you for bring over my hot chocolate and saving it from Uncle Luke.”

Finally Leia smiled. “Last night was a good night, a much needed night.”

“It was.” Rey agreed, and then a flicker of sadness passed across her features but it was only there for a moment.

Leia closed the distance between them and took Rey’s hand in her own. “I missed them too, sweetheart.”

For a moment Rey seemed as if she were going to say something or ask something but then suddenly changed her mind. She already knew the answer. Ben was lost, no one was holding out hope that he could be saved. Well, maybe not no one, but Rey was trying be realistic. It just wasn’t easy to mourn her brother when Kylo Ren wore his face behind his stupid mask. She smiled sweetly at her mother instead of asking if Leia was having the same problem. “I should get ready if I’m going to make your meeting on time. I’ll see you in about an hour?”

Leia nodded, squeezed her daughter’s hand reassuringly and then left Rey to shower, dress, and grab a quick breakfast.

Rey stood there, following her mother’s presence until she was a safe distance away, and then she called out. “It’s safe. You can come out now.”

The bedroom door opened behind her and Poe walked out in pants, bare feet, and no shirt. His hair was as wild as Rey’s and his skin just as flushed.

Rey turned and started to giggle. “That was close. Are you alright? You hit the floor pretty hard.”

“I’m fine.” Poe chuckled as he pulled her into his arms. “But you do realise she knows, right?”

“No, she doesn’t, I covered…” Rey began.

Poe tugged on the shirt she had on. “Rey, you’re wearing my shirt.”

Rey looked down at herself. “Kriff.”

Poe laughed, pulled her closer and kissed her.

Amilyn stepped into Leia’s office with a mug of caf in each hand to find Leia standing by the window that overlooked the surface of the moon. She could sense Leia was troubled, and at first she thought it must have something to do with the Black Squadron reports she’d left their bed early to read. But if Leia was trouble about the war, she would have been standing there with her back ramrod straight and her arms crossed over her chest. Instead Leia stood there with her hands clasped together and pressed tightly against her stomach. That posture normally meant something more personal was on Leia’s mind, more specifically, her children were on her mind. “Leia? What is it?”

Leia grumbled and then sighed as she turned to look at the taller woman who looked back at her with warm concern in her bright blue eyes. “Poe Dameron was hiding in our daughter’s bedroom this morning.”

Amilyn raised an eyebrow while a slow smirk appeared on her lips. “Was he now?”
“She came out in his shirt.” Leia grumbled. “And I know what sex rumpled hair looks like.”

Amilyn laughed. “Do I need to hide your blaster?”

“No.” Leia huffed. “Besides,” She used the Force to finally take the mug of caf from Amilyn’s grasp. “I don’t need a blaster.”

Amilyn just laughed harder which weakened the scolding edge she tried to put in her voice. “Leia.” “That doesn’t look like a training scrimmage.” Mara said from where she stood as they all watched the video footage Poe and his team had managed to capture. “Or like any kind of heated disagreement between units. They’re locked in battle.”

“Agreed.” Leia said with a nod.

“But why are they fighting each other?” Rey asked.

“No idea.” Leia replied. “I’m going to have Sonnel and Sella check to see of Sloane knows anything, but I’m fairly sure she’s out stayed her usefulness. I’ll tell Sonnel to contact the New Republic and set up a prisoner transfer. Hopefully Sella has more up to date contacts she can get better intel from, so there’s no point in wasting more time on Sloane.”

“We should check with Maz.” Ashoka offered up. “See what she knows. Hera too.”

Leia nodded. “This could be very useful in finally putting an end to the First Order.”

“Let them tear each other up and we’ll come in and clean up what’s left?” Poe asked.

“Something like that.” Leia replied. “But it’s still too early to really work out a game plan. We’re just going to have to wait and see where this leads.”
Chapter 24

He’d been back on the Bespin moon base for three days before he’d worked up the courage, with Rey’s and Poe’s encouragement, to speak with the General about what he wanted to do. He knew that Renee Sloane was playing mind games with him, that she was scheming, but he also knew, though he couldn’t explain why, that the information she’d been slipping him was genuine. There was something or someone on Savareen that could help him find out who he was before he was FN-2187, and Finn needed to know who that was. So he’d gone to General Leia and talked to her, he told her what Sloane had told him, and how he felt about it. She sat and listened, a warm reassuring look on her face the whole time. When he was finished Finn had expected her to tell him she could understand why he wanted to go but that now just wasn’t the best time for it. But he’d been wrong, she’d agreed to let him go, and more than that she’d agreed to let Rey and Poe go with him.

The Millennium Falcon was loaded and ready to go. Poe and Finn had just settled a whining Threepio into the lounge while Chewie finished the preflight checks. BB-8 was checking out the new lockdown compartment Rey and Chewie had put in to keep the little ball droid from bouncing around and getting damaged when things got hairy. They’d put in two, one in the lounge and another in the cockpit near an access port. BB beeped happily at his new personal place on Rey’s ship. Not even R2 had his own personal space, BB trilled in delight. They were ready to go, all they needed was Rey, who was still with her mothers. When she did finally board the ship her cheeks and the tips of her ears were flushed a pretty pink that made Poe smirk as he asked, “You alright, Ace?”

“I’m fine.” Rey grumbled as she unconsciously rubbed where Dr. Kalonia had jabbed her while giving her the contraceptive shot her mother had insisted she get before leaving with Poe and Finn. She had pretty much been blushing since the day before when her Aunt Mara looked at her with wide amusement filled emerald eyes after hearing that Rey was involved with not only Leia’s hotshot pilot, but the quiet and kind of shy former stormtrooper as well.

“Both of them?” Mara had said teasingly. “The three of you? All together?” She’d laughed softly. “Well, like mother like daughter I suppose.”

“It’s not quite the same.” Rey said, blushing deeply.

“Expect for the times it was exactly the same.” Mara laughed, shooting Leia a knowing look.

“Mara Jade!” Leia scolded which just made the redhead laugh harder.

Rey’s blush deepened as her dark eyes went wide. “Wait, what?”


Just thinking about all the teasing that lead up to the conversation with her mothers that led to her seeing Dr. Kalonia made Rey blush even more. “Chewie!” She called out as she walked past the boys and towards the cockpit. “Let’s go!”

Finn and Poe watched Rey retreat towards the cockpit, looked at each other once she was out of sight, and then shrugged with amused smiles on their faces.

Slipping into the pilot’s seat after picking up Chewie’s pet porg little Lando and placing him in the little dashboard nest Chewie had made for him, Rey started helping Chewie with the prelaunch
checks and then moved right into lifting off and easing the Falcon out of the hangerbay. She could see Chewie glancing over at her and smiling softly, and she could sense a lessening of the grief he still carried around over Han’s loss. It meant a lot to him to have her here beside him, to have Han’s daughter beside him, and Rey was more than glad to give him that whenever she could. As she watched him program the navicomputer she asked, “So, how do you know about Savareen?”

Chewie began telling her the story of how he and Han had ended up on Savareen shortly after their first meeting. He told her how he and Han had helped drive off Crimson Dawn, the interstellar gang that had been terrorizing the locals and using them as slave labor in their refining plant. Over the years he and Han had returned to check in with the people they had met, and often helped them out with trade and such. As he told the tale Poe and Finn joined them, taking the seats behind Rey and Chewie just as the Falcon slipped into hyperspace.

After reassuring Leia that Rey needed to do this; that Rey needed to go off on her own without a teacher at her side because she needed to build her confidence in what she had already learned, in order to continue her training, Ahsoka made her way to the meditation room. She sent reassurance and confidence to Rey through their bond until she sensed the girl leave the system. Then focused on some much needed self meditation. While she was enjoying training Rey in the ways of the Force, Ahsoka struggled a bit with finding herself once more in the midst of war. In order to keep helping Rey find the fine balance she longed for in the Force, Ahsoka needed to regain and maintain her own balance. She was no longer a soldier, nor a Jedi; she was a teacher, a protector, a friend, she was a guardian of the Light.

Ahsoka had been able to slip into a pretty deep meditation for the first time in awhile in this safe and welcoming space created by the woman who had once been the vibrant haired girl looking for her voice, her place in the galaxy, as she stood at Mon Mothma’s back and Leia Organa’s side. She probably would have remained in her meditative state if she hadn’t felt a warm and familiar presence join her. The presence radiated love and strength as it burned brightly in the Light, but she could also feel regret, sorrow, and shame. Ahsoka smiled and with her eyes still closed and her breathing slow and even she greeted him. “Hello Master.”

Anakin waited until Ahsoka opened her eyes before smiling back at her and replying, “Hiya Snips.”

The Force ghost of Anakin Skywalker knelt in front of her, smiling warmly but cautiously, almost shyly, back at her. He looked just as she remembered him. His sandy brown hair short but a bit shaggy, his eyes bright and blue, his face young and far less troubled. He wore Jedi trousers and tunic in the same style she remembered but they were no longer black. Ahsoka looked him over, allowed his presence to wash over her, and could feel the tell tale burn in her eyes as she confirmed to herself that this really was her Master, her Anakin.

“You look well, Snips.” Anakin said carefully once he saw her relax after her quick assessment of him. “A bit older, which is a little strange.”

Ashoka chuckled softly. “Growing old happens when you’re still alive, Master.” She teased. “You look like you again, though a bit more translucent than I remember.”

“I see the Force ghost in you, Master.” Anakin replied as he held up his hand and flexed his fingers as if testing out his current form.

She had longed to see that teasing smile again for so long, and now that she was, the sight of it tried to tug a soft sob from her chest. She managed to push it down again as she said, “I’ve missed you, Skyguy.”
“I’ve missed you too, Snips.” Anakin said, smiling lovingly at her before dropping his gaze and dipping his head. “I’m so sorry, Ashoka.” He looked up at her again. “I need you to know that, to know that I will never be able to fully atone for all the evil I brought about as Darth Vader, but that I am remorseful and will do what I can to at least try.” He lifted his hand from his thigh as if to reach out to her but stopped, put his hand back on his thigh, and dropped his head even further. “I will never be able to forgive myself for Malachor. That’s why I haven’t come to you until now, but Padme said you wanted to see me again. Though I don’t understand why. I can’t forget what I tried to do, what I would have done if you hadn’t disappeared.” He shook his head, his voice cracking a bit, and there were tears in his eyes. “I will never forgive myself for trying to kill you, Ashoka.”

“I forgive you, Anakin.” Ashoka said as she reached for his hand only to find she couldn’t actually physically feel him, so she reached for him in the Force instead.

Anakin’s head snapped up and he looked at her with wide surprised eyes. “So easily?”

“Hardly.” Ashoka chuckled. “But I have had many years and a long journey to deal with my feelings about you and the past. You are my family Anakin, and even while you were lost inside the darkness of Vader, I loved you, I still do, and I always will.”

“I love you too, Snips.” Anakin said, blushing a little which looked strange given his current state of being.

“You’ve gotten mushy, Master.” Ashoka teased with a smile that forced a tear from the corner of her eyes.

Anakin laughed. “It’s Qui-Gon’s fault. He’s very much into the whole, ‘it’s never too late to get in touch with your feelings, Anakin’. And, “being dead is not an excuse to stop seeking higher enlightenment, my young padawan.’” He smiled at the sound of her laughter as he tried to mimic Qui-Gon’s accent. Then he said, “I know it’s probably just out of old habits but you keep calling me master despite the fact that I haven’t been that to you in a very, very, long time, but is there a possibility that you could trust me enough to allow me to teach you one last lesson?”

“Of course I can.” Ashoka replied.

“Then go Dagobah.” Anakin told her. “And there, I will pass on to you the last lesson I learned from my master, and he from his.”

Ashoka nodded. “I’ll leave as soon I can.”

They landed the Falcon on a grassy cliff overlooking the ocean and then followed Chewie towards the main village. As they made their way down from the grassy cliffs the terrain became more sandy and beach like. Even after all this time away from Jakku, Rey still found herself amazed by the different environments of the planets she visited. The sand of this planet was fine and soft, nothing like the sand of Jakku, and yet it was still sand. While the environment of Savareen was vastly different from Jakku, the culture of it’s people seemed to hold some similarities. As the group of three humans, two droids, and a Wookie apparched the village Rey could see how the people there had turned what was left behind by the Imperials and crime lords into their homes and communal spaces. Tented areas were set up around a large converted storage silo that seemed to be the main hub of the village. As they approached Rey could see a group of about six or eight older looking people inside the converted silo, sitting or lounging under ceiling fans as they ate, napped, or worked. Reaching out with the Force Rey didn’t sense any hostilities as they gained more and more attention from the people around them, only curiosity and caution, and even a little recognition.
As they approached the silo a young man with massively broad shoulders, deeply tanned skin, short pitch black hair, and a build that looked as if it were carved out of stone stepped out as if to block their way. His honey colored eyes swept over each of them, taking notice of their weapons, and even widening a little at the sight of the lightsaber clipped to Rey’s belt. He looked into Rey’s eyes as he took several steps closer, and then shifted his gaze to Chewie. The hard expression the young man, Rey guessed he was somewhere around Poe’s age or a little older, suddenly vanished, leaving behind a wide smile and twinkling eyes. “Chewie! Old friend! It is good to see you again!”

Chewie roared of acknowledgement as he clasped the man’s forearm in a sort of whole arm handshake. C-3PO translated for Chewie, telling the young man that the Wookie was glad to see him as well. Movement at the edge of the shade offered by the converted silo’s overhanging roof pulled Rey’s attention away from Chewie and his friend. Standing there watching them was an old woman. The woman seemed to smile when Chewie and the man clasped arms, and began making her way towards them. When she reached the young man she slapped him on his bare shoulder to gain his attention and then raised her hands to chest level and began making gestures with them and her fingers in a way that felt vaguely familiar to Rey.

The man chuckled. “She is scolding you for being away so long.” He paused as the old woman continued to sign. “She would like to know if Captain Solo is with you so she can scold him too.”

Chewie grunted sadly and shook his head.

“My father died.” Rey told him as she took a step forward to stand beside Chewie. “Awhile ago now, but sometimes it still feels like it was yesterday.”

The man looked surprised and instantly saddened. The old woman signed something and the man said, “You are Captain Solo’s little princess?”

Rey chuckled softly. “I’m his daughter.” She confirmed. “As far as little princess, he could have meant me when he said that, or he could very well have meant my mother. She is an actual princess, and really rather short.” She heard a snort behind her. Poe was amused that someone would actually call Leia short openly. “I’m Rey Solo, by the way, and these are my friends, Poe and Finn.”

“I am Akoni.” The man said with a slight bow. “And this is my grandmother, and our village elder, Meleah.” Meleah signed as she looked at Rey with sympathy and understanding. “My grandmother wishes to offer her sorrow at the news of your father’s passing, but also her reassurance to take comfort in knowing he is one with the Force.”

“Thank you.” Rey said, directing her words and a slight bow towards the woman.

Meleah, was one of the last of the Savareens to have their tongues cut out by Crimson Dawn, which is why she could hear them but not speak. As Akoni explained this Rey realised she had seen a version of sign language used as a child roaming the halls of the Senate complex. When he asked if they were here for trade, Rey shook her head and explained. “Actually, we’re here because of Finn.”

Stepping forward Finn gave them a nervous smile as he explained, “I was recently told that I was from this planet, or at least taken from it as a small child.”

“We were kind of hoping to find a lead on Finn’s family.” Poe added in.

“Taken by who?” Akoni asked as Meleah stepped close to Finn. She looked into his eyes and then reached out to hold his face between her weather, arthritic hands.
Finn tried really hard not to pull away from the woman or freak out as he replied. “The First Order.”

Akoni’s eyes went wide. Meleah hissed a breath between her teeth as she slipped her hands from Finn’s face, took a step back, made a gesture the known galaxy knew as a rude one, and then spit on the ground. Then she began to sign and Akoni began to speak for her. “Many of our young were stolen from us by the devils in white armor, their light stolen from us, their souls adrift in the unknown.”

“To many to know who I might have been taken from?” Finn asked, his voice soft, unsure, and a little nervous. He had tried to tell himself that this didn’t matter. That he either found out who he was or he didn’t, it wouldn’t make a difference to him either way. But like the other people who loved her, he had noticed the way Rey seemed more comfortable in her own skin now that she had a better understanding of who she was, who she had been, and her place in the galaxy with her family.

Meleah signed, “There is a way, but it will take time to arrange it. Until then you are welcome here as our guests.” What she signed next must have been only for Akoni because he nodded and replied, “Yes Grandmother.” Then he looked back towards the silo and called out, “Nalani.”

A stunningly beautiful woman with a slender but muscular build and long raven hair joined them. Akoni introduced her as his wife, and tasked her with making sure they had a place to stay and whatever they needed. She smiled and greeted them and then asked Meleah where they should stay. They were given a small but comfortable place near the beach, close to Meleah’s own home. Chewie went back to the main village with Nalani, taking C-3PO with him. He figured since they were there until whatever Meleah was planning happened, he might as well get some trade work done. Rey, Finn, Poe and BB-8 remained behind because Rey wanted to make sure Finn was ok. Finn insisted that he was, and tried to talk them into going back to the village too, maybe they could do some recon or something for the General, but Poe had a better idea. He made his way down to the beach, expecting the other two to follow, which they did. The three of them stood silently on the edge of where grass met sand and watched as gentle waves crashed along the shoreline.

“I haven’t been to a beach in way too long.” Poe said as a playful smile began tugging at his lips. “Going to the beach, spending the day in the water under the sun, man, that used to be my favorite trips as a kid.”

Rey and Finn watched as Poe started walking towards the water. Rey smiled, grabbed Finn’s hand and began to follow. She paused however when she saw Poe start pulling his shirt out of his pants before he began undoing the buttons. “Poe?” She called out as he took his shirt off and dropped it onto the sand, followed quickly by his weapon’s belt, and his normal belt. She laughed when he started hopping on one foot as he pulled his boot off the other. “What in the worlds are you doing?”

“Let's go swimming!” Poe called back. He turned to face them, the biggest, happiest, smile on his face. His dark eyes twinkling with playfulness. “Come on you two! It’ll be fun!”

“Swimming?” Finn replied, looking confused and unsure.

“What’s the matter, Buddy?” Poe called back as he slipped out of his pants before dropping them onto the pile of his clothes in the sand. “Do they not teach stormtroopers how to swim?”

“Of course they teach stormtroopers how to swim!” Finn huffed in response. The only time Finn didn’t flinch when someone brought up his past was when it was Poe or Rey, because he knew
they trusted him, they loved him, and saw him as far more than just a former stormtrooper. “But we have no idea if that water is safe! There could be predators in that water!”

Rey laughed, leaned over to kiss Finn’s cheek, and then began walking towards Poe. “I think it sounds like fun!”

“Rey!” Finn protested. “Don’t encourage him! This could be dangerous! Rey! You were raised in a desert, can you even swim?”

“We ran environmental scans before we landed.” Rey called back over her shoulder while undoing her blaster belt and loosening her tunic. “The water is perfectly safe to drink, so it’s safe to swim in, and yes, I can swim. I wasn’t raised on Jakku, remember. Our home on Gatalenta was near the sea, and when the Queen of Naboo, at the time, found out who my Mom’s and Uncle Luke’s mother was, she gave them Grandmother’s lakehouse. I loved being in the water as a kid. Come on Finn! It’ll be fun!”

Finn just shook his head. Poe had finished stripping down to his undershorts and was already in the water by the time Rey reached his pile of clothes. She quickly stripped down to her underclothes as well, and as Finn watched her run for the water he found himself flushed, his mouth suddenly dry, and his heart racing in his chest. With a huff he sat down in the sand and pulled his knees up as he scowled at the two. “You two are out of your minds!”

He could ignore the way the sea water and sun made Poe’s skin almost seem as if it was glowing a warm golden glow. He could ignore Rey’s squeals of delighted laughter when Poe would catch her by the waist and toss her into the water playfully. He could ignore the pure joy in Poe’s laugh when Rey splashed him. He could even ignore Rey tossing her wet, crumpled into a ball to make it easier to throw, bra up to join the rest of her forgotten clothes. Although that was much harder because it meant Rey was now topless in the water, and Finn had to swallow hard and remind himself that swimming in strange bodies of water on planets they knew little to nothing about was a bad idea. What he couldn’t ignore was Poe reaching for Rey, his hands settling on her hips, and pulling her in close to kiss her. He suddenly felt it very hard to ignore wanting to know what Poe’s skin felt like covered in sea water, and if Rey’s lips tasted salty at all.

Out of the corner of her eye Rey watched as Finn made his way to the pile of clothes as he pulled off his vest, then his shirt, and then his boots. She smiled against Poe’s lips. “You were right, that did work.”

Poe laughed. “He can only watch for so long.”

When Finn finally joined them his tension eased a bit when Rey kissed him, and Poe ran his hands over his shoulders and down his back. Before long he was laughing just as hard as Rey and Poe as they showed him how to enjoy the water. It was actually a really great way to take his mind off of why they were here and what was going to happen next since none of them had any idea how Meleah planned on helping Finn discover who he’d been taken from as a baby.

When they were finished in the water they retreated to the house and hung their underclothes on the railings of the porch to dry in the sun and warm breeze. Inside Poe and Rey continued to keep Finn’s mind distracted until it was time to return to the village proper for the shared evening meal. The elders told stories using the voices of the younger generations who didn’t have to suffer under the cruelty of Dryden Vos and Crimson Dawn thanks to Han Solo, Chewbacca, and the Cloud-Riders. Rey listened intently to the story of a young Han Solo and how he had helped drive off the gang, freeing the people, and helping the Rebellion in their fight against the Empire.

“How did he do that?” Rey asked, and Chewie replied, explaining the con they pulled on Vos and
how they’d ended up giving the goods to the Cloud-Riders to help them build their rebellion.

The following day Finn and Poe went with Chewie to help him check on the villages defenses while Rey showed Akoni a better way to break down an older speeder bike, and then how to best use the parts. It was getting close to the midday meal when Chewie and the boys returned and not long after that they could all hear the rumble and hum of engines. Reaching out with the Force Rey sensed a group of about five people coming in from the east. As she moved towards the edge of tented area, Finn, Poe, and Chewie moved to back her up. Akoni and several other villagers took up nearby positions as well. Rey watched as five swoop bikes came roaring into sight and her hand instantly went to the hilt of her lightsaber.

The group of five riders who were dressed in various kinds of armor, both bought and homemade, consisted of two tall human females, a blue skinned male twi’lek, a strange gray skinned alien the size of a human child that Rey seemed to find somehow familiar, and an old male human dwarf who seemed to be their leader. When Rey suddenly felt a hand on the hand she had on her lightsaber hilt, she looked over to see Meleah who shook her head and smiled reassuringly at her before signing a word she’d used a lot the night before. Cloud-Riders.

“You came faster than expected, Weazel.” Akoni said as he greeted the male human dwarf.

Weazel grinned as he dismounted his bike. “Your message mentioned Savareenian Brandy, and as it turns out, I’m all out at the base camp.”

“I swear the only reason you’re still alive old man is because you’ve pickled yourself in that stuff.” Akoni said with a laugh as he clasped Weazel’s arm the way he had Chewie’s the day before.

The laugh that came from Weazel was deep and a bit raspy. “So,” He said as he shifted his gaze from Akoni to Rey and those standing beside her. “Those them?” Akoni nodded, and Weazel gave a head nod to the small gray alien. “Go on then Cobak, check ‘em out.”

As the small gray alien made his way towards them Rey tensed up despite Meleah’s reassurance. So did Poe and Finn. Keeping her eyes on him as he drew closer, Rey got a better look at him, and she once again felt as if she had seen his kind before.

“What is that?” Finn hissed softly. “I’ve never seen anything like it before.”

“Not sure Buddy.” Poe replied, his hand on his blaster.

The gray skinned alien stopped a few feet in front of them and addressed Meleah in a gravelly, hissing pur, “Which one?” Meleah indicated Finn and the alien moved towards him. “Give me your hand, boy.”

As the gray skinned alien moved toward Finn, Poe moved to place himself between them, especially after seeing the alien’s sharp pointed teeth. “Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold on a second. What the hell is happening here?”

The alien hissed. “Meleah wishes to know who the boy is. I will tell her if I can.”

“How?” Poe demanded.

Suddenly it hit Rey, a vague memory from when she was very little. Reaching out, she put her hand on Poe’s arm. “It’s alright Poe, he doesn’t mean us any harm.” Turning her focus on the gray skinned alien she said, “You’re a Noghri, aren’t you?”

The Noghri’s eyes widened. “I am indeed. How do you know this? Not many know of my kind.”
“You’re people are allies of my mother.” Rey answered. “Leia Organa.”

The Noghri hissed louder and demanded. “Give me your hand.”

Rey did so, despite Poe’s protests. The Noghri took it in his own smaller hands and pressed her palm to his snout, and then breathed in deeply, his whisker like snout hairs tickling as he did so. Then he made a sound more like a purr than a hiss and stepped back from her. He lowered his head and held his arms out slightly at his sides, his palms open and facing towards her. She remembered the Noghri in her memory doing this to her mother as well.

“You speak truth.” Cobak said in his hissy purr of a voice. “You are the daughter of the Mal’ary’ush. I greet you Second Daughter of the Lord Darth Vader, First Daughter of the Mal’ary’ush. I am honored to be in your presence. I am Cobak Clan Khim’Bar. I am at your service.”

Poe’s eyes darted back and forth between Rey and the Noghri. “Um, excuse me, yeah, what the hell?”

“I don’t remember a lot of the details, I was pretty small the last time I saw a Noghri, but they have a special relationship with my mother.” Rey told him. “They served as her personal bodyguards for a time. I remember,” She paused, combing through old memories newly opened to her. “Khabarakh I think his name was, and there were a few others.”

“Khabarash Clan Khim’Bar was my kin.” Cobak said proudly. “He served the Mal’ary’ush faithfully for many cycles, until she released him so he might start a family of his own.” He let out a slow hiss and what Rey assumed was a smile. “He has had many offspring. All of whom would be honored to serve the Heirs of our Lord once more.”

“Thank you.” Rey said softly, her early childhood training kicking in a bit. “I’ll let my mother know of your offer.” She smiled. Cobak nodded, seemingly pleased with what she said. Then she asked, “What you did to my hand, is that what you want to do with Finn?”

“Yes.” Cobak answered. “The Noghri people have heightened senses. I was able to scent the blood of Vader in you. If it is a scent I am familiar with, I will be able to do the same with the male.”

Rey turned to Finn. “It’s up to you. It doesn’t hurt, tickles a little though.”

Finn looked uneasy, his eyes darting between Rey and the weird little alien, but he trusted Rey with every fiber of his being and if she said this was ok, then he’d do it. Stepping closer he held out his hand. “Um, hi, I’m Finn.”

Cobak took Finn’s hand just as he had Rey and pressed his snout to it. He sniffed, pulled back, and then sniffed again. He grumbled, hissed a little, and then took in an even deeper breath. When he finally stepped back from Finn Cobak nodded and said, “I have smelled his blood before. He is kin to Jannah.”

Commander Larma D’Acy and Lieutenant Kaydel Ko Connix stood in the commutations corner of the command center of the Bespin moon base softly arguing. “You’ve known her longer, you’re on a first name basis with her.” Connix huffed softly. “You tell her.”

“You are the communications officer on duty, Lieutenant.” D’Acy replied. “You received the report, decrypted it, and prepared it for her. You tell her.”

“Whatever it is one of you tell me.” Leia said from where she was leaning against the doorway with her arms crossed over her chest. “Though watching you two squabble like children about it is
rather amusing.”

Both D’Acy and Connix jumped. “General.” Connix squeaked. She and D’Acy exchanged a look and then she sighed and reached for a date pad that she then handed to Leia. “We’ve just received a message from our New Republic liaison.”

“Renee Sloane managed to escape.” D’Acy said. “Destroying the transport she was on. There were no survivors.”

“Other than Sloane herself.” Connix added. “She apparently took an escape pod, trajectory unknown.”

Leia swore in Huttese for a good ninety seconds before reading over the full report. Then she looked at Connix and gave her a list of names to summon to the meeting room in the thirty minutes. She would take those handful of minutes to get her thoughts in order. Once everyone was gathered Leia began debriefing them, and instantly both Sonnel and Sella started blaming themselves.

“We don’t know if this was planned out ahead of time or just a moment of opportunity.” Leia said firmly. “In either case, this isn’t on you.” She paused for a moment to wait for her officers to soothe their ruffled feathers and then continued. “Sella, I’ll need you to work with our New Republic liaison in the investigation. I also want to know why that transport didn’t have an escort.”

“I’ll go after Sloane.” Sonnel growled softly.

Leia shook her head. “No, I need you to continue looking into what’s going on with the trooper infighting. I’ll find someone else to send after Sloane.”

“It sounds like you need a bounty hunter.” Mara said from where she stood in the corner of the room.

Leia turned to look at her sister in law and shook her head gently. “Mara, you just made home to us, to Luke, and you’re still recovering, I would never ask…”

“I know you wouldn’t.” Mara replied, cutting Leia off. “I’m offering.”

For several long, tense moments the two women just stood there staring at each other. Finally after what felt like forever Leia nodded. “Alright Mara. Being me Sloane.”

Mara smirked. “Would you like her head on a silver platter, sister dear, or just…”

Leia rolled her eyes. “There’s the snark I’ve missed so much.” Mara had always been up to the challenge of meeting Leia snark for snark, she had missed it, and was happy to have her sister in law and friend back with their family where she belonged. “You can use the Mirrorbright.”

“Thanks but I have a ship.” Mara replied. “I just need a ride to it. Luke’s decided he needs to find some Jedi site to take Rey to. I’ll have him drop me off on his way.”

Luke wasn’t happy that Mara wasn’t going with him, but he understood. His wife had a wanderer’s spirit, always doing something, going somewhere, getting into things. He also understood because when Mara was telling him what was going on she’d said, “I don’t know why but something about this is setting off my danger sense, Luke. I didn’t mention that to Leia. But this is something I feel I have to do.”
He had learned a long time ago to trust Mara’s senses in these matters. “Do you want to take R2 with you?”

“Thanks, but no.” Mara replied. “I actually have my own droid these days. I left her dormant on my ship as security.” Mara flinched a bit. “She’s going to be pissed that I’ve left her on standby for so long.”

Knowing that her husband preferred X-Wings to A-Wings she rewarded him for taking an A-Wing so she could tag along with a long slow kiss and a promise they wouldn’t be apart for long. They’d been apart for over a decade and neither wanted to waste a moment now that they’d been reunited. Mara stood at the treeline and watched as Luke flew off and then turned and made her way to where she’d left her ship. The heavily modified MC-24a shuttle was nothing in comparison to her old ships, the Jade’s Fire and the Jade Saber, but it was well shielded, heavily armed, and tricked out with everything she needed as the bounty hunter Zorri Bliss. As she punched in the access codes to lower the boarding ramp she hummed softly in thought. The Jade Saber, the ship Luke had designed and had built for her as a gift, had been at the temple. She wondered what happened to it and if perhaps she could track it down now that she was Mara Jade Skywalker again.

Boarding the ship Mara made her way to the cockpit to start the old girl up, and as it ran through its start up cycles she went to the little compartment where her droid was sleeping in standby mode. Keying in her codes she activated the little dark purple and black BD-3 droid. While it genuinely still looked like the old BD-1s, the BD-3s had a slightly larger body to accommodate the ID9 type short arms, making it look a bit more like a reptilian raptor than a chicken. The head unit still had those two large lenses that looked like big wide eyes, and two antennae on either side on rotating wheels that looked a bit like ears. It still walked on two AT-ST like legs on either side of the body unit, but on the front of the body unit were two ID9 style arms with pincher grips on the ends. Having watched her husband haul his beloved R2 unit around for years, Mara had opted for a smaller more portable droid for herself, making the BD-3 perfect since it was small, compact, and could easily ride on her back if need be.

It only took a few moments for the BD-3 to power back up fully and sync up with the ship’s computer to get it’s barings. As soon as it had it fired up it’s little repulser lift so it was eye to lense with Mara and began beeping and chirping at her frantically. “Yes Biddy, I know. I know it’s been weeks. I’ll fill you in but right now we have a job to do.”

They were alone in the captain’s cabin of the Falcon. Rey sat with her legs outstretched and slightly off the side of the bed, her back up against the wall, while Finn was laying down with his head in her lap. Poe was in the cockpit with Chewie, co-piloting the ship to a planet called Pasanna where they were supposed to look for a woman named Jannah. Finn had been pretty quiet since finding out he had a blood relative out there somewhere, and Rey was trying to be as supportive and helpful as she could be. They were supposed to be sleeping but for the last hour they’d been going over what Jannah could be to Finn. As she raked her fingers through his hair, which he’d let grow out a bit, Rey told him about the different kinds of blood related female family members. “The closest blood relations would be mother, sister, grandmother, followed by aunts who are your parents female siblings. Cousins, which are the children of your aunts or uncles.”

“She could be any of those things to me.” Finn said softly. “I just hope she’s someone who can tell me who I am and more importantly, why. Why was I taken? How was I taken? Did they just hand me over or did they fight?”

“We’ll get your answers, Finn.” Rey soothed. “One way or another. I promise.”
Chapter 25

She sent Amilyn with Korrie to deal with the New Republic. Many of the Hosnian survivors would remember the formidable image of Mon Mothma flanked by her tall, elegant, soft spoken, intelligent, unflappable Gatelentaian advisor, and the charming, clever, quick-witted ex-Imperial ISB officer turned Rebel war hero advisor. They would be more willing to listen and take criticism from someone with Amilyn’s experience and her gentle, confident, commanding presence. This left no one at the Bespin moon base to wake Leia from her nightmare. The images flashed to quickly to make out details, but Leia could see Anakin Skywalker as a young man, Luke when they were young rebels, flashes of Ben as a boy, and Kylo Ren as he was now. She could hear a symphony of voices, all saying different things, but one word sticking out more than any others, destiny. Darkness incroches on her, all the images and voices stop. Leia’s cold, so cold, and then out of the darkness a sound that finally jolts her from her sleep. A laugh, a laugh like nothing she had ever heard before, a laugh that chills her to her very core.

Leia’s heart was racing and her skin was covered in a cold sweat as she bolted up in bed, her breathing rapid, her eyes unfocused in the dark silence of her room. The nightmare faded quickly, but the feelings it elicited did not. Throwing the covers off herself, she swung her legs over the edge of the bed and then put her face in her hands as she tried to calm her breathing and rapidly beating heart. She was no stranger to nightmares, nor was she a stranger to nightmares coated in Force energy. Which is why after her third night of waking from dark dreams shrouded in the Force Leia didn’t try to simply push the feelings aside while using more than her fair share of hot water in the water shower in her ‘fresher. This time after she managed to calm her racing heart and rapid breathing she got up and retrieved her little Wicket tree.

After the celebrations following the Battle of Endor, just before she left the forest moon, Leia’s little Ewok friend Wicket had given her an acorn from the tree his home had been built in. As part of her rudimentary Jedi training, Luke had asked her to plant the little acorn and use it as a focal point in her meditations. Much to Leia’s surprise, as her skills grew over the years, so did the little tree. Her little Wicket tree, along with her small travel case of mentos, and R2, were the only things Leia had made sure to take with her as she moved from base to base, and ship to ship. If she were unable to grab them, than C3PO or Amilyn, or someone who knew their importance to her would.

Feeling the need to get out of her own space Leia took her little tree to the meditation room Amilyn had created, and the rest of her Force sensitive family used on a daily basis. The coldness of her nightmares lingered, and she wanted to feel the warmth of her loved ones. Setting her little tree on the floor Leia eased herself onto a plush pillow near the skyfaring scarves her love and their daughter loved so much. Then she closed her eyes, took several deep breaths, and began to meditate. Her instincts were telling her that her nightmare was a warning, but of what? What was the Force trying to warn her about? She wished she were better at this whole Force thing. She used the Force in a natural untamed way, but right now she really wished she had a bit more of Luke’s focused abilities. She didn’t necessarily want to be a Jedi, but a little more training might have been nice to have right about now.”

The stillness of the room was suddenly broken by a strange little, low, rumble of a hum. “Mmmm.”

Leia’s eyes flew open, her hand reaching for the blaster on her hip that wasn’t there. Sitting in front of her was a softly glowing figure of a tiny alien species she knew nothing about. She only knew who the tiny alien was because of Luke’s descriptions, and because she had once seen his likeness emanating glitchily over one of her brother’s most prized holocrons. “Master Yoda?”
“A long time I have waited for you, young Skywalker.” Master Yoda said, a soft smile on his aged face, his ears twitching up and down happily. “A pleasure it will be to train you in the Force.”

Leia couldn’t help herself. She snorted softly. “I’m a little old to be a padawan, don’t you think?”

Yoda waved his hand at her comment dismissively. “Over nine hundred years I was when Qui-Gon came to me. Set me on the path to learn more about the Force, he did. Never too old to learn, you are. Mistakes I made in the past thinking otherwise.”

“There’s something dark on the horizon, Master.” Leia said after a long pause to think through what was happening.

“Yes.” Yoda agreed. “We feel it as well.” His Force ghost moved closer to Leia. “A part to play you have, young Skywalker. Details we do not have just yet, but training you will need.” Stretching out his hand he used the Force to levitate the kyber crystal Leia wore around her neck. “Ah, received the gift I sent you, you did. Good. Good. Begin we shall, my padawan. No time to waste, we have.”

Weazel had looked surprised when Cobak said Finn was related to someone named Jannah. For a moment, before he schooled his features, he had actually looked at Finn with awe. They wouldn’t tell them how Finn could be related to this Jannah person, only where to find her. Pasaana was several days of hyperspace travel away, so after making sure the Falcon was fueled and stocked the little band of humans, dorids, and their Wookie set off so Finn could find Jannah.

“That’s weird.” Finn said from where he sat beside Poe on the bed in the Falcon’s captain’s cabin.

“How’s it weird?” Poe asked, his dark twinkling eyes locked on the same view as Finn’s.

“Rey doesn’t like sitting still.” Finn replied. “She hates not being up and doing something.”

“True.” Poe replied.

Sitting on the floor on the other side of the room in the meditation pose that Ahsoka preferred, her shins flat against the floor, her butt sitting on the heels of her feet, her hands resting atop her thighs, Rey was deep into her morning meditation.

“It’s been forty minutes and she hasn’t even twitched her nose.” Finn continued.

Poe laughed softly, not wanting to disturb Rey. “She told me that Master Tano told her that the old Jedis could meditate for days. Rey’s only manages a couple of hours at a time, and that’s only when she has one of her teachers with her to help calm her restlessness.”

“How long do you think she’ll be like that?” Finn asked next.

“No idea, buddy.” Poe shrugged. “I guess it depends on what she’s doing.”

The cantina looked like many cantina’s across the galaxy but Rey knew were she was because of the orange RX series droid tucked away in a high alcove in the far wall. She wondered why, of all the places her subconscious could have conjured, it had picked Oga’s. Her best guess would be because it was the last cantina she’d visited so it was fresh in her memory.

“Oga’s huh?” Han said as he slipped into the booth across from his daughter. He chuckled softly as he looked around. “Some good memories in this place. So, what’s on your mind, kid?”

“The Cloud-Riders.” Rey replied, smiling despite herself because she always smiled when she got
“Why don’t you fill me in what Chewie’s told ya, and I’ll fill in the rest.” Han replied, returning his daughter’s grin. He listened to what Rey knew and nodded. “Yeah, that about covers it as far as first incounting them on Savareen. That happened before the Rebellion, back then they were just a gang of mercenaries trying to fight the Empire on their own. They managed for awhile, giving the Empire hell mostly in part because of their leader Enfys Nest. After I was strong armed into joined the Rebellion by your mother I went looking for her to see if she wanted to join the Alliance. Your mother was a little on the fence about it, the Alliance had some issues with a guy who didn’t think they were being extreme enough, but she, for some Force forsaken reason, trusted my judgement. Nest’s cell joined behind the scenes and was a huge help.”

“I strong armed you into joining the Rebellion?” An annoyed voice repeated a few feet away. “Is that how you remember it?”

Rey’s head snapped to the side and blinked. Standing there, arms crossed but a playful smirk on her face, was her mother. A flicker of panic washed over her, followed by annoyance at herself. Had she pulled her mother into this again? “Mom?”

Leia looked a little sheepish as she walked over to stand by the table. “It seems I’ve accidentally crashed your daddy daughter time.”

“You?” Rey asked, eyes a little wide with surprise.

“I’m meditating.” Leia explained with a shrug, like her meditating was no big deal, when it fact it was. Her family knew she wasn’t normally the meditive type. “I sensed you and followed that feeling.”

Rey’s eyes went even wider. “You’re meditating? On purpose?”

Leia chuckled at her daughter and then turned to her husband, her heart aching a bit at the sight of him. “So, I strong armed you into joining the Rebellion?”

Han stood and looked into Leia’s eyes, his smirk the one meant only for her. “Now look, Sweetheart, you know what I…”

“The way I remember it, you were there for the money, or at least that’s what you kept insisting you were there for.” Then she returned his smile. “But no matter how many times you threatened to leave and never come back, you always came back.” She paused for a moment, savoring the old familiar banter. “You were like a lost puppy following me around.” Leia teased, and Han laughed. She savored the sound of it. “Hello Han.”

“Hiya Sweetheart.” Han replied, pulling her into his arms.

Rey watched her parents and could feel the anger rising in her chest again. Ben’s actions the night he fell to the Dark Side had separated them, had broken what Rey had always thought unbreakable. Then just as they were given a chance to fix what was broken between them, Kylo Ren murdered her father, taking him away from her mother, taking away their second chance. Slipping out of the booth Rey walked to the other side of the cantina, giving her parents some privacy. She couldn’t outright leave since she was the one controlling this whole thing, but she could at least give them a little space.

“Leia.” Han said softly as he held her close.

“Don’t.” Leia replied into his chest. “Han, just don’t, please, you have nothing to say you’re sorry
for.”

“I couldn’t bring him home.” Han replied sadly.

“You tried, and it cost you everything.” Leia said as she pulled back enough to look up into his eyes. There were tears in hers. “I miss you.”

“I miss you too.” Han said softly, his voice thick and low.

When Rey looked over her shoulder she saw her parents kiss and it helped to soothe the anger but only for a moment. Closing her eyes she took several deep breaths. When she felt a familiar hand on her arm she opened them to find her mother standing beside her and her father standing behind her. She smiled at them as best she could.

“So what were you talking about before I crashed the conversation?” Leia asked.

“Enfys Nest.” Han replied.

Leia looked surprised. “That’s a name I haven’t heard in ages.”

“Here’s another one.” Rey said, smirking. “The Noghri.”

“You found a Noghri?” Leia replied with wide eyes.

Rey nodded and began updating her mother on what had happened the last few days. When she felt her hold on the dream slipping she tried hard to hold onto it, not ready to let go of being together with her parents again.

“It’s alright, kid.” Han reassured. “This won’t be the last time we’re together. I promise. Don’t over do it.”

Leia nodded. “You’re father’s right, sweetheart. We’ll do this again.”

Rey simply nodded, then hugged her parents and let the dreamscape dissolve around her as she brought herself out of her meditation.

Pasaana was a desert world, but unlike Jakku which was all desert browns and dead ship grays, Pasaana was full of color. It started out with bits of green in the bushes and patches of long grass that grew between the dark reds of the rock formations that jetted out from the open desert. Then as they entered the market town the colors came from the fabrics and beads used to decorate the buildings and stalls. But most of the color came from the people of Pasaana, the people filling the market square were dressed in the most vibrant colors Rey had ever seen. Rich warm golds, bright yellows, bold oranges, fiery reds, vivid pinks, warm blues, all colors one would find in the sky during sun rises and sunsets. They were beautiful.

Chewie stayed behind to secure the Falcon while Rey, Poe, Finn, C-3PO, and BB-8 went into the main market town to find some ground transport. The Cloud Riders’ camp was somewhere in a valley surrounded by the red rock hills they had seen as they approached the planet’s surface. The winding valleys and jagged rock formations wouldn’t allow them to fly the Falcon right to the encampment, so they were going to take ground transport and once they found the camp, Chewie would bring the Falcon as close as he could. As they walked amongst the stalls and people, Rey could hear the whispers and took notice of where the veiled eyes of the beginnings they passed were falling when they looked at her; her lightsaber.

“Threepio,” She said softly to the golden droid shuffling along behind her. “Do you know what
they’re saying?”

Threepio tilted his head a bit as he listened and shifted the words through the over six million languages he had stored in his memory. “Yes, of course I do Mistress Rey. The word used most is a version of Jedi, the word the older Aki-Aki are using is Ashla.”

“Ashla?” Finn questioned.

“It’s the Light Side of the Force.” Rey explained.

Threepio nodded his head. “The Aki-Aki are an ancient species. It is not surprising they would use the same word as say the Lasat.”

“Are the Aki-Aki Force sensitive?” Rey asked. “How do they know I’m Ashla just from my lightsaber?”

“That’s easy.” Poe said as he looked over at her and smiled. “You radiate goodness, Rey. You don’t have to be Force sensitive to see it.”

“While Commander Dameron’s statement is clearly romanticised, he isn’t wrong.” Threepio said, “And yes, I believe they could be, though not in a way that allowed them to be Jedi. Many species are Force sensitive but do not have the ability to manipulate it the way Jedi do.”

As Threepio continued to chatter Rey reached out with the Force, gleaming the surface emotions of the people around her. She sensed no malice or danger, but hope, awe, relief, and even reverence. Knowing that they didn’t seem to be in danger was a relief, but the awe and reverence she felt made her uncomfortable. She wasn’t someone to be revered, she was just a girl with a complicated story, a stolen child found, a sand flea, a savanager…. A Jedi. That last word sounded a lot like Ahsoka in her head, and it made her smile and wish her teacher were here with her. Ahsoka could tell her how she was supposed to handle all of this, how she was suppose to act around these people who whispered as if she were someone special.

They managed to acquire a sand sailer and general directions for heading out to the Cloud-Rider encampment, Rey getting the latter from an old Aki-Aki who insisted on calling her Ashla. After gathering a few supplies and loading up the droids the trio headed off north west of town and into the desert. It was late morning and according to the Aki-Aki they should reach the encampment by evening. As they boarded Poe went to the ship’s controls and Rey couldn’t help but smile. “Do you know how to operate this thing?”

“I can fly anything.” Poe said with that dashing hot shot grin of his.

“Yes, but you don’t fly a sand sailer.” Rey pointed out.

“I got this.” Poe said with a cocky tone while testing out the controls of the sand sailer.

As the sand sailer skimmed over the sand Poe whooped with excitement and joy as he tested out just how fast he could get the craft to go. Rey laughed, Finn looked a bit queasy, and Threepio whined the whole time. Poe slowed down as they approached the valley and it’s maze of gullies and canyons. Rey had been keeping an eye on their surroundings with the Force and sensed them before they appeared. Putting a hand on Poe’s arm she told him to slow down, that people were coming towards them. Sure enough minutes later their sand sailer was flanked by swoop bikes. They didn’t attack but were aggressive about herding them to a clearing where another group of riders waited.

Finn held up the marker Weazel had given them to let these Cloud-Riders know it was ok for them
to be there. Then he spoke, “I’m looking for someone named Jannah. Weazel said I would find her here.”

There were murmurs among the riders that meant they must have been talking using comms in their various helmets and masks. Finally one of them said to follow and the trio was lead the rest of the way to the encampment. The encampment was tucked into a large basin and was more of a settlement than an encampment. There were living spaces, communal spaces, a pool of fresh water, and room for livestock and even crops. They left their vehicles just outside the basin and walked the rest of the way. There was only one way in and one way out and it was heavily guarded. Poe spotted several droids placed along the ridges, and guard posts along the plateaus. Armed and armored beings stood watch at the opening to the basin with several Anooba hounds at their feet.

“ Seems a bit much.” Finn said in a low voice.

“We don’t know what this planet is like.” Poe replied. “Just because the Aki-Aki town looked peaceful enough, we don’t know what the rest of the planet has to offer.”

Finn nodded. “Point.”

They were lead to a woman with dark skin, hair and eyes. She was around their age group, older than Rey and Finn but younger than Poe. She was standing in a paddock with equidae of some kind that had tusks. The beast had long shady hair the color of burned ashy coal, bright intelligent eyes, and two curved tusks on either side of his mouth. The woman was brushing the animal out while singing softly to it. One of the men escorting them called out, “ Outsiders, Weazel gave ‘em a marker. They’re looking for Jannah.”

The woman, dressed simply in dark cropped pants, a dust yellow tunic, and half boots, turned away from her work to look them all over. Then she padded the animal and whispered to it, sending it off to feed or get a drink or whatever it wanted to do. Then she walked out of the paddock and over to the group. “Jannah, huh?” The woman’s voice was accented in a similar fashion to Rey’s. “What do you want with her?”

“My name is Finn, and I’m looking for my family.” Finn told her in response. “And I was told by Cobak that Jannah and I are related.”

“Related?” The woman repeated and then moved closer to Finn and began eyeing him critically. She noticed the way the other two moved in closer to him but paid them no attention. “How are you related to Jannah?”

“I don’t know.” Finn answered honestly. “I was kidnapped, taken by the First Order from Savareen when I was three. I went back to Savareen to find out what happened, to find out if I had a family, and that’s when Cobak told me about Jannah.”

“Stolen babies don’t come back from the First Order.” The woman said hotly, her anger flaring and her hate of the First Order clear. “They are turned into mindless slaves and shoved into white plastoid armor to fight in their war to bring the Empire back.”

“The indoctrination never stuck with me.” Finn explained. “I was able, with some help,” He glanced at Poe. “To get away from the First Order.” Then he glanced at Rey. “And find the Resistance.”

The woman narrowed her eyes at all of them now. “You’re with the Resistance?”

“We are.” Rey answered with a nod.

Shifting her gaze to Rey the woman looked her over and of course her gaze caught at the weapon
on her hip. “Is that…”

“Yes.” Rey confirmed. “It is, and yes, I am.”

“And you?” She asked Poe.

“Pilot.” He answered. “Best the Resistance has.”

For several long moments the woman stood there looking at the three of them. “Come with me.”
She ordered with a jerk of her head towards a cluster of communal buildings. “Doc’s an old model
med droid but he’s capable of telling me if you really are my little brother or not.”

Finn’s eyes went as wide as was physically possible. “Little brother?” His heart was racing as he
stumbled into a step to follow her. “You’re Jannah?”

“I am.” Jannah answered.

For the last five days she’d sat alone in the cave meditating. She had traveled to Dagobah, faced
and acknowledged her flaws, faced her fears, and resisted temptation. Then she was guided to
Morabond where she was confronted by the specter of Darth Vader, telling the Dark Side that not
only did she live, and through her the Sister lived, but Anakin Skywalker survived in the Light as
well. She faced the test of the Temple, and passed, and then was guided to this cave on
Christophsis where she began her meditation and training with Anakin. Even in her deep meditative
state she could feel when her master appeared in the cave with her, and it brought her comfort. But
then she began feeling other presences surrounding her and she slowly began pulling herself back
into full awareness.

Ahsoka managed not to gasp as she took in the faces gathering around her. “Master Obi-Wan.”

Obi-Wan smiled warmly at Ahsoka. “Hello there. It is truly good to see you again, Ahsoka.”

“You as well, Master.” Ahsoka replied.

“It is good of you to say so, child.” Obi-Wan replied, his voice laced with sadness and regret. “I
owe you an apology, Ahsoka. I should have stood with Anakin against the Council, I should have
fought harder to keep you in the Order, I should have…”

“We all should have, Obi-Wan, but we did not.” Yoda said as he appeared. “Mistakes were made,
yes, countless mistakes, made by us all. However, Ahsoka leaving, a mistake it was not. Better she
is for it.” He turned his attention to Ahsoka and smiled warmly at her. “A Jedi of the Fallen Order
you are not, Ahsoka Tano. Follow the will of the Force, like Qui-Gon, you do. A true Jedi that
makes you. Better Jedi you will help forge. Proud of you, I am.”

“Master Yoda.” Ahsoka whispered, her eyes burning with budding tears.

“A great Darkness is on the horizon.” Obi-Wan told her. “And you will play a part in it’s defeat.”

“How Master?” Ahsoka asked, turning to look at her old friend.

“By continuing to forge what it fears the most.” Said a third voice. Though she did not know him
she knew of him. Qui-Gon Jinn.

“And what is that, Masters?” Ahsoka asked, her eyes darting from face to face.

Anakin appeared and smiled that cocky smile she’d missed so much. “A balanced Skywalker.” He
paused for a moment and then explained. “I fell to the Dark Side. My son fears the Dark Side. My grandson has embraced the Darkside, and forsaken the Light. But my granddaughter, she embraces the Force as a whole.” He held out his hands as if balancing a scale. “Light and Dark together in equal measures.”

It was Qui-Gon who said, “The fall of the darkness will come with the rise of one who is true harmony with the Force.”

“Spouting prophecy again are you my Master?” Obi-Wan teased.

“We shall see my Padawan.” Qui-Gon replied. “We shall see.”

Jannah refilled everyone’s mugs from the pitcher of locally made ale before walking back over to the table in the center of her small hut and sitting across from Finn. She took a long gulp from her mug, set it down, and sighed. “We were on Savareen because it was safe. I was sick, nothing serious just one of those things every kid gets, but I was feverish and weak. You were just so young. It was dangerous for Mum to take us with her, and she trusted the people on Savareen.” Jannah got a far away pained look in her eyes as she continued. “They must have waited until she left, not wanting to tangle with her and her best people.” She paused to take a drink. “They landed in three transport shuttles. Men in gray and black uniforms yelling at the monsters in white armor to take what they needed, supplies, food, water, fuel, and children.”

No one wanted to interrupt her story but Poe couldn’t help himself. “Children? More than one?”

Jannah nodded. “There were four of them, my brother, two other boys and a girl. All of them were two, or three seasons old. I was still feverish and in a nearby hut away from the other kids. When I heard the shouting and the blaster fire I looked out the window.” She sighed and dropped her head. “When I saw one of the monsters grab Jael…”

“Jael?” Finn repeated, his eyes wide.

“It was your name.” Jannah explained, and then continued. “When I saw them grab you, I ran from the hut, but I couldn’t get to you. They put you and the others on one of the transports and left.” She looked away from Finn again as she said, “I heard one of the elders ask one of the men in a black uniform, why, why were they taking their babies, and he said, because the Empire needs children.”

“They needed children to turn into soldiers for the First Order.” Poe said angrily.

“Mum searched for you.” Jannah said when she was finally able to look at Finn. “I don’t think she’s ever stopped.”

“She’s alive?” Finn asked, his eyes once again wide. “Who… Who is she? What is her name?”

Jannah smiled proudly as she said, “The leader of the Cloud Riders. Enfys Nest.”

Renee Sloane was good, but she wasn’t former Emperor’s Hand turned Jedi Mara Jade good. Mara was able to pinpoint Sloane’s trajectory with Biddy’s help, and follow it to a nowhere backwater planet. From there Sloane booked passage on a freighter to a mining colony deep in the outer rim, where she met with four men. Taking one of the men’s personal transports Sloane headed for Savareen. Mara’s stomach twisted into knots. Wasn’t that the planet Rey and her boys had gone to? While Mara followed Sloane’s trail, she had Biddy keep tabs on the men she’d met with. Shortly after Sloane left the mining colony so did the men. Biddy tacked them to a farming moon. What was Sloane up too? And why was Mara’s danger sense telling her that it somehow involved her
niece?

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