



RAZ AND PITCH

ON . . . UM, WE'RE NOT REALLY SURE

THE TWO RIEVER companions of the infamous Cherazii Orias Tarn weren't officially a part of my interview tour. But they were both so fascinated with my tape recorder that they followed us around throughout all of my interviews and, finally, through many appealing and piteous looks on Pitch's part, convinced me to ask them a few questions (strictly off the record, of course).

We sit down, very impromptu, in the cloak room in Glen Arden, from which I'm about to depart after my interview with Lord Thyra. They share a large bench. Raz leans back, arms crossed, trying not look impressed as I punch record. Pitch abandons the chair altogether and comes over to my side to watch.

So what would you like to say for yourselves?

Pitch: [Taps the microphone, like he's seen me do.] I would like to say, "Test, test, test, test, test, test, test, test."

Raz: She's supposed to say that, you waxhead, not you.

Pitch: Oh, sorry. Are the people you talk to supposed to sit down?

Yes, that would probably be best.

Pitch: [Skips back across the room and clambers up onto the bench beside Raz.] Who will you talk to first? Me or Raz?

How about I just ask you both some questions and whichever of you who wants to answer can?

Raz: And you're really thinking there's any question you're going to ask that *he* won't have something to say to?

Pitch: Don't worry. I'll let you answer some too. [Looks at me expectantly.]

Who's older?

Pitch: Raz, of course. Can't you tell?

Raz: [Glares at him.] What's that supposed to mean?

Pitch: Well, you do look older. What's wrong with that?

Raz: And how do you know I'm older? You don't know how old I am. You don't even know how old you are.

How old do you think you are?

Pitch: I am thirteen and he is sixteen.

Raz: You don't know that!

Well, then maybe you can tell me what is the average life expectancy of a Riever?

Pitch: What's that mean?

How long do most of your kind live?

Pitch: Oh, I don't know. Twenty years?

Raz: [mutters under breath] Twenty-five.

Okay, so if Raz is older, then which of you is smarter?

Raz: Hah!

Pitch: [Thinks for a moment.] Yes, Raz is smarter. He's better at gutting zajeles, he knows more about the weather, and he can stare down wolfhounds. He's smarter.

And, dare I ask, who's better looking?

Pitch: [Grins.] You mean you think we're nice looking? Most humans don't like how Rievers look.

Raz: As if we liked the looks of them either!

Pitch: Well, *you're* nice looking [directed at me], for a human I mean. Even though your eyes aren't black and your skin hasn't got

any wrinkles. I will give you my dog-tooth earring if you will wear it. You would look nice in it.

Raz: That's not gonna help her in the least, believe you me.

Ahem, thank you, but no. I'm sure it looks better on you. Now, where did the Riever custom of claiming a sleeping human come from?

Pitch: Oh, that! That's my favorite law. That's—

Raz: That's a secret. You can't just go blabbing Riever secrets all over the place. She butters you up, then worms our secrets out of you. Are you daft?

Pitch: I like her. She's not bad. Besides that's not a secret. Everybody knows it. [Turns back to me and stage whispers.] Actually, I don't know how it started. I don't think anybody, not even the old-ings know, anymore. But when you have a good law, you shouldn't get rid of it just because you don't know how it started, should you?

Um, no, I guess that wouldn't make much sense. So, on that note, I'm afraid I really do have to go. I have another book to write you know.

Pitch: Are there Rievers in it?

Not this time I'm afraid. But there is a biplane.

Pitch: What's that?

Raz: [Rolls eyes.] She's balmy.

Pitch: You should put Rievers in your book. That would make it better. And, if you let us be in it, I'll give you my dog-tooth earring *and* my hawk's claw necklace!