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Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice & Han & Leia &...
by Marcia Brin

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She sighed and ran the brush through her hair. Once it had all seemed so perfect: the Empire had fallen, a new Republic was rising from its ashes, and Han was safe--and here.

And that was the problem. The marriage wasn't working. Not because they didn't love each other; they did. It was a difference of opinion. Maybe that was why, even with the ability to live on any world a person liked, people still generally married a native of his/her own world.

Culture shock. That's what the problem was. Two people from two different cultures, with two different outlooks on marriage. Well, actually, not on marriage. On faithfulness, to be precise. To one, marriage demanded emotional and physical fidelity. To the other, emotional faithfulness was all that counted; casual sex was not a betrayal of the marriage vow. She had known that their backgrounds were vastly different, that the societies that had molded their outlooks had had completely different approaches to the institution of marriage, but she had been sure they could work it out. Sure--and wrong. It was tearing them apart, and causing a lot of pain.

A soft voice called to her from the bedroom, but she ignored it. For a moment, all she saw was the pain in Han's eyes. Damn, couldn't he understand that she loved him, but--

--variety was the spice of life? Her parents had adored each other, yet had had countless lovers. As long as Alderaan remained true in their hearts to their spouses, there was no infidelity. Sighing again, she turned off her light and went to join her companion, a perfectly charming junior diplomatic aide, but her last thoughts were for Han.

Damn you, Solo! Why do Corellians have to be damn...old-fashioned?

End

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