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Bunkies

by [Lisa Adolf](#)

Luke Skywalker reached to activate the light mechanism with his free hand, making sure that his grip on his Core11ian companion was sufficient to keep Han Solo on his feet.

"Well, here we are, Han," Luke announced cheerily as light bathed the room in which they would spend the night.

"What the hell, kid, I thought I told you to ask for a double!" Han slurred, eyeing the huge bed and rather shabby furniture that dominated the small room.

"We didn't have a choice, Han. *This* was all they had. This is the only room left in town—we are lucky to have a roof over our heads!" Luke replied, supporting Solo and endeavoring to close the door without both of them sprawling to the floor. Finally he was able to stretch far enough to activate the close/lock mechanism. Satisfied at his acrobatic accomplishment, he heaved a sigh of relief and took the opportunity to survey his surroundings.

Luke had little experience upon which to base a hard and fast judgment, but at first inspection, the room seemed perfectly suitable. It was illuminated overhead by a light panel in the ceiling. A large and seemingly comfortable bed seemed to dominate much of the area, a couple of chairs and low tables balanced out the room's furnishings. The fresher was through a doorway on the far side of the bed. The room seemed fairly clean for being situated over a cantina. While the furnishings were definitely outdated, they did not seem particularly decrepit.

"An alley would be better than this, kid. I have slept in enough of these blasted dumps to know ..." Han was mumbling, attempting at the same time to dislodge himself from Luke's grip.

Due to a scheduling snafu, Han and Luke had found themselves in the position of having to kill an entire planetary day upon the backwater world where they had expected to make contact with a Rebel agent. Already committed to procuring a shipment of much needed supplies at the same time on another planet in this sector

of unallied space, the decision had been made to allow Chewbacca to take the Falcon on to that rendezvous, leaving Luke and Han to keep this equally important appointment. Han had been torn between accompanying his co-pilot and leaving Luke to meet the agent on his own, or staying with Luke and entrusting his beloved ship to the fully capable Chewbacca. The Corellian had

decided on the latter course, exclaiming that a "soft head has won out over common sense". The truth of the matter being that he knew Chewbacca could take care of himself and—yes—his beloved Falcon, while he was firmly convinced that Luke Skywalker could not. A further selling point, Luke had later cause to learn, was an avenue of cantinas and the irresistible opportunity that the delay afforded of sampling the pleasures contained in each establishment.

"But Han, this place looks fine to me." Luke said, finally allowing the Corellian to try his own legs. Feeling a little irritated at his friend's displeasure with the quarters he felt clever in procuring, Luke took malicious pleasure in watching Han lurch to the bed.

"Looks deceive in these joints. Personal experience has—" Han began, sitting down on the bed, apparently, from the wince he gave, somewhat more heavily than he had intended. His grimace turned into a smirk of superiority.

"Whad'I tell ya hard as a rock, with lumps the size of banthas in it " Han announced knowingly. "Never fails. Now if we had a double, the beds'd only be half as hard as a rock, and the lumps'd be the size of jawas."

Luke shrugged, deciding to allow the matter to drop. The fact remained that they had needed a shelter for the night and—due to Han's reluctance to give up his pub crawling—as they had gotten a late start in looking, they were indeed lucky to have the room. It turned out to be none too soon, either, for the effects of too much and many unfamiliar intoxicants were settling in on Han, Luke believed. He had come very close to being deathly ill all over their table at the last cantina, despite the Corellian's fervent claims to the contrary. Luke, some hours before, had decided that one of them should remain sober and had, therefore, decided that as Han seemed incapable of resisting temptation, he would not drink anything alcoholic. During the twelve hour drinking marathon that best described their day, the young Tatooinian had endeavored to keep food in his friend to prevent him from doing serious harm to himself. Successful in that, he had decided to call an end to the Corellian's revelry. Finally dragging Solo away from the cantinas and up to the room had proved to be an effort worthy of a medal. Luke found himself wondering how he'd gone from being a Rebel Alliance hero to a Corellian's brother in so short a time.

"You'll just have to learn to live with the banthas, my friend." Luke replied finally, approaching Han and pushing him gently back on the bed, reaching simultaneously for a booted foot. He yanked the boot off the Corellian and reached for the other leg. Han flailed an arm in protest, surprised at Luke's ability to knock him off balance so easily, not realizing as Skywalker did that several rounds of local wines had rendered the task child's play. Pulling off the second boot, Luke reached for the buckle on Han's belt, opened it, and unbuckling the leg strap of the blaster holster, pulled Han's weapon away from his hip.

"Better men than you have died for less," Han commented darkly, not moving from the prostrate position in which he'd found himself.

"It's bad enough I have to sleep with you. I'm not going to sleep with fully energized blaster as well," Luke replied.

Han struggled to sit up and after several attempts was successful. Taking Luke's hint, he removed his own vest and shirt and then gingerly pulled back the covers and crawled into bed. He threw an arm over his eyes and sighed heavily. "I'm exhausted," the Corellian commented. Luke tossed his own boots, shirt and blaster into one of the chairs. "I shouldn't wonder. How's your stomach?"

"I'd rather not talk about it," Han replied. Luke walked around the bed and crawled in.

"Hey, kid, ya forgot something."

"What?"

"The lights," Han replied. "Never mind; I'll get 'em." Luke watched as Han attempted to rise again and after watching several futile attempts, he breathed a sigh and sat up himself. "Forget it, Han. I'll get it." Luke crawled back out of the bed — realizing as he did so that the mattress was indeed as hard as Han had warned — and walked over to the far wall. He deactivated the light, then struggled to find his way back to the bed. He bumped into at least two objects in the stygian darkness before a slightly amused voice cut through the gloom and served as a direction finder.

"Hey, kid. Too bad your lightsabre's back on the Falcon; it would have come in handy in this murk."

Luke grunted and finding Han's side of the bed, decided to take a short cut to his own side. He crawled over the Corellian's long legs, ignoring several loud protests and pointed comments.

Silence reigned for several minutes, Han trying to find a comfortable position in which to sleep and Luke thinking back over the events of the day. Slowly the young Tatooinian felt whatever irritation he'd felt towards Han Solo slowly slip away. The day had been most agreeable in actuality. Han, on a round of pub crawling, was more open and talkative than any other time. Today he had been most informative, teaching Luke, a neophyte at the game, a great deal about not only the fine points of drinking but variations in custom from planet to planet. Han had treated him as more of an equal, more of a comrade than ever before. Luke felt suddenly closer to Han and touched in a strange way that he had entrusted the Falcon, the one thing in Han's life that meant more to the Corellian than that very life itself, to Chewbacca, just to stay with him. Han was nothing if not possessive and usually became tense if the ship were out of his sight, let alone half a quadrant distant from him. It was not that Chewbacca was not trusted by the Corellian, it was just a part of Han's nature and an indication of the depth of his attachment to the ship.

"Hey, Han ..." Luke reached over and tapped the Corellian's shoulder. Han was on his side, facing away from him.

"Hmm?" Solo responded, having just found a comfortable position and nearing the blessed oblivion of sleep.

"How long have you been spacing?" Luke asked, leaning his head against an upraised arm.

"A long time, kid. Now, go to sleep," Han grumbled. "Now come on. How long?" Luke persisted, his maudlin spell rendering him careless of the consequences of rousing a tired Corellian.

"Got on board my first off-planet ship when I was twelve. It was a pirate ship."

"Pirates, at twelve— wow!"

"Don't sound impressed, it wasn't as romantic as you seem to think. I got into smuggling as soon as i could."

"There's a difference?"

"Dam right! Boy, don't let any self-respecting smuggler hear you ask a question like that! Smuggling's downright honorable compared to some of the things pirates end up doing," Han replied defensively. "Now, if ya don't mind, I'd like to get some sleep."

Luke was silent for several minutes. Han sighed audibly, hoping that Luke had fallen asleep and that the cross examination was at an end. He found himself hoping that the young man didn't talk in his sleep as well.

Just as Solo was once again settling peaceably into a light slumber, he once again felt a tap on his shoulder.

"Hey Han, did you ever go to Alderaan before we contracted you to go there?"

Han sighed. "Many a time. Now will ya please let me get some rest!"

Luke seemed deaf to all but the answers to his questions. "Well, what was it like?" he asked. "Was it a pretty planet?"

"Yeah, real pretty. Imagine the opposite of Tatooine and ya got Alderaan. Lots of water, green plants, little animals. Rain. Snow in winter—"

"What's snow?" Luke interrupted, suddenly intensely interested at the unfamiliar term.

Han was taken back for a moment, then realised that Luke could hardly be expected to know anything about snow. He could hardly be expected to recognize water itself, coming from the planet he did.

"It's frozen particles of water vapor that fall down from the sky as white flakes. It gets cold on some planets during certain seasons. If it gets cold enough, it snows. Okay?" Han explained, adding: "Sleep!"

Once again, Luke was silent. Once again, just as Han thought he would fall asleep undisturbed, he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"Han, what do you think of the Princess?"

Han was silent for a long moment.

"Han!" Luke persisted. Han realized that feigning sleep would not work, Luke, in his present mood would probably awaken him forcibly.

"Haven't we been over this before?" Han commented.

"I'd like a serious answer."

"All right. She's pretty enough, but she's got an awfully sharp tongue."

"That's your answer?"

"Damn right. Now go to sleep!" Han growled.

The silence was a bit longer this time, but as sure as two suns come up on Tatooine, Luke spoke again.

"Do you think we'll have any trouble meeting up with the agent?"

Han rolled over onto his back and hit the mattress with a fist. It hurt.

"We will if we aren't awake enough to see the guy," Han replied, rolling over onto his side so that he was facing Luke. He reached over, rolled Luke onto his side—facing away—and growled an ultimatum. "Now go to sleep!"

After a time, after three times the length of Luke's previous pauses, Han detected the deep, even breathing that betrays sleep, coming from Luke's direction. He breathed a sigh of relief.

"Ahhhh," he mumbled, rolling onto his back. He closed his eyes blissfully.

Several moments later, Han was rudely aroused by a blow to his midsection. His stomach reacted in protest. Han had been sampling the local intoxicants in moderation, for a Corellian, and firmly believed that the discomfort he had experienced earlier in the evening was due, not to the wines, but rather to the unsettling array of exotic foods Luke had pushed at him all day. It had seemed to Han that every time he had turned around, Luke had been offering him something to eat. The blasted kid was nothing if not persistent, and he had been forced to sample much of what had been pushed at him. Han opened his eyes, eyes that seemed to have closed only seconds before, and examined the weight that still rested across his stomach. Investigation determined the object to be an arm, attached to the body on the far side of the bed. Despite an impulse to toss the offending member back towards its owner, Han very gently moved it off and away. Better to control my anger, he mused, than to risk another round of questioning.

During the course of the night, Han was able to learn a great many things about Luke as he slept that he would normally never have learned about him otherwise. Not that he wanted to be aware of any of them, they were not particularly useful, but Han was determined to file them away for future reference. He was able to discover, for instance, that Luke showed a marked preference for settling down in the center of the bed, regardless of the position relative of any other occupant. Once there, he tended to like to sprawl and for someone raised on a blisteringly hot desert world, he had unusually cold feet. When Luke was not sprawling, he liked to roll himself up very tightly in the bedclothes, leaving precious little covering for anyone else. Not only were the youth's feet cold, but his elbows seemed amazingly sharp as well. He seemed a deep sleeper, but tensed and turned frequently nonetheless.

It was towards dawn that Han was finally able to adapt to the peculiar sleeping habits of his bedfellow and fall into a light slumber. For three or four hours he slept undisturbed—relatively. When finally he did awaken, it was to the refrain of an old Tatooinian folk song being whistled merrily from the vicinity of the fresher. Han was able to determine another truth about Luke upon awakening. The kid whistled shrilly enough to wake the dead.

Han allowed the notes to stop echoing within his head before he attempted to move. When the last echo died, he made an attempt to sit, marshalling all his strength and energy. His head protested violently, sending a jolt of exquisitely sharp pain between his temples. Han then decided to retreat and regroup. He was oblivious to Luke's return until the youth came to stand over the bed and grin down on the Corellian.

"Hey Han, how about some breakfast?"

Han's only response was a full bodied groan and to pull the covers up over his head.

It was later that day that Chewbacca stood in the designated area, awaiting the arrival of his friends. He had procured the shipment of supplies and had begun the return immediately so -that he could arrive in time to pick Han and Luke up after their scheduled rendezvous. He had no sooner docked the Millennium Falcon than he bounded off to the cantina they had chosen. Now he waited patiently for the two humans to show up.

He did not have long to wait for as he stood at the bar ordering his second drink, he spied Luke entering the establishment, followed closely by Han. Luke seemed bouncy and pleased with himself. Han appeared exhausted physically and emotionally. No doubt the Corellian had partied heavily during the long hours of their layover. An avenue, of cantinas was too great a temptation for any Corellian and Han was Corellian down to his skin pores. Chewbacca quaffed his drink, paid the bartender and ambled over to greet the duo. Exchanging greetings, the three beings then left the cantina. Han seemed particularly relieved to be away from the noise characteristic to the establishment. In silence, they returned to the ship. Once inside the docking bay and near the ship's boarding ramp, it was safe to speak, "Yeah, we found the guy ... Luke got his precious data tapes," Han replied tersely.

Luke smiled at Chewbacca..

"Didn't have any trouble finding our contact. You didn't have any trouble with the cargo, did you, Chewie?" Luke asked, his bouncy mood still quite evident.

Chewbacca growled negatively and shrugged.

"Good!" Luke grinned and bounded up the ramp. Han watched him disappear into the ship. He shook his head in disbelief.

"You know something, Chewie? If a situation like this ever arises again, promise me something?"

Chewbacca growled questioningly.

"You stay with the kid!"

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