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## **Incident on Izilden**

by [Martie Benedict O'Brien](#)

A long time ago - and yes, in a galaxy far, far away - there was an insignificant planet called Izilden.

There was little to recommend Izilden, though the ethnologists waxed rhapsodic about the "pristine primalness" of its culture and the "static kneticism of its autochthonous population," by which they meant a wild and unruly agglomeration of warring clans sunk deep in the tradition of feud and vendetta, and the rigid code by which such anachronisms were perpetuated.

Izilden did have something, however, beyond its rather limited charm as an anthropological trove. It had grish. And grish was a rare and wonderful thing.

A common weed it was, growing wild and abundant in the forests of Izilden. An innocuous weed was grish, inert within the atmospheric envelope of its home planet. But when exposed to the rich and inviting atmospheres of other worlds, it metamorphosed.

On Jerook, its distillate became an aphrodisiac. On Ganna III it developed geriatric properties. When nurtured and processed on Loot, it gave its partaker gifts of prescience.

It was, in short and without resorting to hyperbole, a galactic panacea, and just the sort of thing to attract the notice of a young spacer flush with the pride of owning his first starship and hot to spread his metallic wings in a profitable adventure.

But the old shipmate whose tales of wealth and glory had so inspired the young Corellian had failed to mention one thing. Though grish was scorned by the

human inhabitants of Izilden, it was dearly prized by the Nessa. And they were large, unmannerly and bad-tempered creatures of a porcine persuasion, very aggressive and very possessive of their herbiculture.

The spacer had, then, barely landed his ship in an Izildanian meadow and set off in search of a grish patch when a Nessa of formidable proportions and an uncommonly low annoyance threshold happened upon him.

The Corellian had only time to pull his laser gun free of the holster when the Nessa knocked it flying with one hand, knocked him into the grish patch with another hand, pulled him out of it with still another, and started making chutney out of his body, as the scrappy youth bit, kicked and slugged for all he was worth.

But the infuriated Nessa, undaunted, was getting a painfully upper hand when suddenly he stiffened, reared back and fell away, howling in anger, pain and absolute frustration as he let go his still-living quarry and died.

Through the roar of adrenalin and incipient shock, the young spacer heard the gruff voice. He strained to see what he assumed was his rescuer, obscured for a moment by a film of blood and a bulky Nessa hip.

"'Il take him home w'me," the dour voice was muttering. "He's a stranger. No one refuses shelter to a wayfarer. Farmed these lands for forty years, an' I never refused hospitality to a stranger. Won't now."

The Corellian blinked and turned his head to search for the speaker, but the effort it cost him rendered him unconscious. "Put him up right in m' own home, I will," continued the farmer. "'Course, he'll have to sleep with m' daughters..."

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Han Solo woke to the unmistakable sound of giggling. He opened one eye, wary that he might let in too much reality at once and fearful of the consequences, for he felt very stiff, sore and helpless and not at all up to dealing with much beyond the tenderest of ministering angels.

There was a girl standing close by, her legs obscured by the edge of the bed Han supposed he was lying on. She looked to be only a few years younger than he, and was by far prettier, a golden-rosey country girl. In her hands was a covered tray.

"Look now, he's up!" the girl said, and he wondered what language she was speaking.

"How are y' today, laddie?" Standard, he hazarded a guess, but heavily accented.

Han blinked, cleared his throat and wet his lips experimentally. "Uhhmm.... Better, I think," he replied, and was pleasantly surprised that his voice sounded nearly normal. nearly normal.

The girl nodded happily. "Good, good! Then you'll be wantin' some food, I'll wager. "

"Maybe in a minute. Have you got anything hot to drink, like coffee, maybe?" Han asked hopefully.

"Oh, sure! Here," she replied, setting down the tray and taking from it a heavy glazed mug which steamed invitingly. He managed a sitting position, aware for the first time that he was naked beneath the bed covers, but more concerned at the moment with the revitalizing effects of the coffee than with whatever medical indignities had been performed on his person.

He took the mug from the girl and saluted her with a wink over the rim before downing about half the contents. Infirmary coffee, he knew, was never hot enough, and this wasn't either, but it was strong and good. Han felt much better at once. He handed back the empty mug and the girl traded it for a dish of fruit sections.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Tren. "

The way she trilled her r's , it sounded like a muted vid-phone ringing.

"I'm Han," he offered, noticing the merry sparkle growing more pronounced in her eyes, and also that the top two buttons of her snug bodice appeared to have popped open. Probably, mused Solo, because of the great pressure from within. To get his mind off that subject, which he felt would hardly be in keeping with the rules of hospitality, he asked after his ship.

"Oh, the wee bird is safe and sound, right where y' left her, cetas windin' about her landing gear. Hatch shut tight as a virgin."

Han smiled at that. "And who do I have to thank for saving my life, and for all this ? "

"M'father, bless 'im. A worthy farmer an' a fair hand wi' a pike. He skewered the Nessa what was doin' you harm, an' brought you back here... to me." Her grin was pregnant with suggestion. "How about a little fook?"

Han's eyes went wide and he started to say something, Ghana knew what, when he saw she was handing him a dish mounded high with pastries. "Fook's what y' need to build up your strength," she said wisely.

"Best fook I ever had," the Corellian muttered, chewing industriously.

"Now," the girl said, when he looked to be through, "how about a little dessert?" And she undid the last few buttons.

"Tren," Han began, "I can't--" but he was suddenly quite aware that he, indeed, could. Whether he was going to or not was another matter. Etiquette! he thought sternly, etiquette, you damned hedonist!

"Tren, go away," Solo said a bit desperately.

"No," Tren replied. She knew who held the upper hand.

He owed it to his conscience to give it one more try. "Really, Tren, thanks for breakfast. Goodbye," he said, hoping there was some modicum of conviction in a voice harassed with throat clearings.

Tren didn't reply. She unfastened more buttons and simply dropped her one and only garment to the floor. It was a convincing argument.

I was a sick man, Han thought, rationalizing. Here on my pathetic bed of pain. She took advantage of me. He sighed and pointed to the empty space beside him. Tren laughed softly. "Now, that's a good lad," she said.

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When he awoke, she was nuzzling his neck. Han turned to enjoy the sight of her lovely silver-gold hair spilling down the creamy curve of her back...silver-gold? Surely Tren's hair was a more rosy sort of suncolor?

The tip of her tongue was making little circles just beneath his ear. It felt nice.

"Tren?" Han asked, still musing on her chameleon hair. Her lips were against his ear. "I'm n' Tren," she chuckled softly. "I'm Shoop. "

Han backed off and turned her face up to his. The eyes that grinned back at him were green. "You're not Tren, " he agreed.

"I'm her sister."

"And so are we," came a lilting chorus from behind him. Solo grabbed for the covers. Somehow --and Ghana might know though Han didn't --he found himself

buck naked and surrounded by five, no six beautiful young women in various states of undress.

"How...Who..." he ventured idiotically.

"Don't worry," replied the tallest and darkest of the sextet. "We'll take ever so good care of you." She smiled, a bit predatory, but very lovingly all the same.

Han relaxed slightly. One by one the sisters eased over and sat on the bed. And Han noticed for the first time just how commodious a bed it was.

"I'm Joret," said the slender, dark one, stretching out beside Solo across from Shoop and slipping a hand beneath the covers to run lightly across his chest. "And this is Bally," she continued, indicating a buxom redhead. "Lorbell and Hourk are the twins." Han smiled at the matched pair of platinum-haired lovelies. (This was beginning to take on the appearance of his most wildly erotic adolescent fantasy come true.) "And Tren you've met."

"Han, you devil! " Tren grinned from the foot of the bed. "I couldn't keep such a good thing all to m'self, now could I?"

"I guess not, " he agreed, then laughed a bit self-consciously. "What do you ladies have in mind ? " he asked .

"There's no young lads nearly," Bally lamented. "All we know about is what we've read. " They giggled .

Oh, sweet erotic dreams of youth, Solo thought with a happily rueful nod to nostalgia. He was beginning to feel like the emperor of the universe.

"We want you to...teach us things, you know?" Lorbell said with charming artlessness. She leaned forward, and her filmy chemise fell open.

"We're so very lonely, " Shoop whispered in his ear, "so lonely."

"We'll do anything you say. "

"You could even spank us! "

Han barely suppressed what would have been a theatrical-sounding groan. Hourk leaned over to whisper something in his ear, and he groaned anyway.

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Sleepy breathing. Rustle of bedclothes. A door slamming.

"Oh, father's home," whispered someone.

Han came fully awake and tried futilely to struggle out of the tangle of bodies. Where ? Ghana! He couldn't even see his gun.

"Move, move! " he implored the drowsing girls. And obediently they did, bustling about and arranging themselves three to either side of him and decorously tugging the bed covers up to their chins.

"Aaaaaaargh! " He strangled in frustration.

The bedroom door banged open to reveal the burly farmer, Bessir Whant. Cradled in one arm was a wicked-looking pike.

"An' what have we here?" Whant wanted to know. "Well? How was he?"

"Oh, father! He was wonderful! "

"Grand! "

"Marvelous! "

"He favored y' all, then?"

"Oh, yes, several times! "

(Had he? Had he, really?)

"Well, thas' fine, then, fine." Whant winked conspiratorially at the flabbergasted Corellian. "Good lad!" he said, then to the girls: ""Il turn m' back, and you youngsters run along now. They're so modest, you know."

Han's jaw had been dropping lower and lower. That last remark snapped it shut. He didn't trust himself to say one word.

With a flurry of soft little kisses, the sisters bid him farewell and, giggling, scampered out of the room with their flimsies in their hands.

When they were gone, Bessir Whant turned a benign smile on Solo. "So glad y' took care of m' lassies," he said jovially.

"You mean. ...you wanted me to?"

"O' course! "

"But the pike. .." Han glanced apprehensively at the lengthy spike .

"Och! That!" Whant leaned it in a corner. "Your bein' an outworlder an' all, you know. I didna know if your custom favored ah, beddin' more than one lassie --or any at all. Customs vary."

They do indeed, thought Han.

"Anyway, the pike was just in case you needed. ..persuasion, dont'ya know."

"Then you don't mind ? "

"Mind? Mind?" Whant dropped heavily to sit on the bed and said confidentially, "The last several feuds killed off damn hear alla the young menfolk for miles about. I kenna find husbands for these lassies. An' here 'tis a great disgrace to have neither a husband nor a bairn. Both's best, O' course. But now that you're here, at least they'll have their bairns."

"Their. ...bairns?"

"Aye, bairns. Wee ones. " Whant mimicked rocking a baby and Han closed his eyes. "Well, you're tired, I see, lad. Heh, heh! No' without good reason. I'll leave y' to rest now. The lassies found some clothes for ye over there by the chair when you're ready to get up. Nessa made rags O' your other duds, I'm afraid. And you've surely found the necessary room by now. We'll call you for supper."

With another chuckle or two, garrulous Farmer Whant shuffled out of the room.

Things could be a lot worse, Solo reminded himself. A lot worse. Lassitude pulled at every muscle. He was thoroughly done in, but all he wanted to do was get back to his ship and lift off this mad little planet. A shower might help. He dragged himself out of bed and into the bathroom.

It helped a little.

Solo eyed the garments Whant had indicated, then shrugged with resignation and put them on. At least it was better than going bare.

Actually, he thought as he turned to slip into the vest, not too bad. Too business-like and somber for his somewhat flamboyant tastes, but not too bad. He rather fancied the red stripe on the trousers.

Well, he'd worry about things sartorial when he hit some port beyond this backwater planet. Now he had other concerns. It had been fun, all right, but a herd breeder? He snorted in derision and strode to the door.

It was locked, of course.

Whant's voice drifted down the hallway. "Just until we're sure you've put 'em all in the family way! We'll call you for supper."

Solo sat on the bed, head in hands, and wondered what the hell he was going to do.

Until he'd put 'em all in the family way, huh? Ghana! It would be a couple of weeks at least before anyone was sure of anything. And he couldn't have caught them all at once. Allowing for chance and different cycles...Shit! It could be months. Better to think of something else.

He thought about his ship, waiting patiently in the meadow, flower-bedecked, and he smiled. A good little starship. Not big enough for a proper cargo hauler, maybe, but a start. Picked up his termination pay from his last run with the 1 Portal crew and plunked most of it down on her, he had. Swift and sleek, he'd liked her name: Reiver's Wing. Bought her from that Kroatan down on Peleen. On...Peleen!

Suddenly Han began to laugh wildly, then stifled his mirth, looking quickly around as though he were afraid he'd been seen. The blessed Reiver's Wing even had an air lock.

It was almost too good to be true. He snorted, chuckled in whispers. Now, if only he could make it work.

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"Which one of you cooks?" Solo inquired, leaning back from a magnificent meal of succulent local provender.

"We all do," they chorused, smiling prettily. Beneath the table Hourk was massaging his knee.

"Fine meal, really fine. But you'll have to let me repay your hospitality."

"Not thinking of going anywhere in your little star-jumper, are you now?" Farmer Whant asked suspiciously.

"With all these ladies to keep me busy?" Han asked, incredulous. "No, I just wanted to invite you all aboard for some Corellian cooking. Maybe tomorrow night?"

"You can cook for us here," suggested Joret. "He does cook for us here," sighed Lorbell, and everyone laughed.



"Sure I could, but all the equipment, spices, you know, it's all aboard my ship, and'd have to go get it anyway, so why not just come along and we can... uh...have a party, you know?" Solo was determined the old man should suspect erotic business and decline the invitation.

"Well, if the lassies want to see your ship and have a party, then it's lall right w' me." "I'll stay her", though. Man 0' my age needs his rest."

Han relaxed a bit. "That's settled then," he said. "Now, who wants to come with me for a walk in the woods tomorrow to...gather herbs?"

"Me, me!"

"I do!"

"Oh, let me come!"

Giggles, giggles.

Farmer Whant beamed happily.

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Solo ended up taking Tren and Lorbell on the herbing expedition. And it was fun, really, what they did on the mossy bank beside the stream, even after the imaginative sport of the previous evening. But business is business, an axiom even a very young Han Solo appreciated.

While the girls splashed in the water to cool off, he pleaded a trip to the outdoor necessary room and moved off into the bushes, where he was rewarded with an unguarded patch of grish.

He plundered it quickly and stuffed the weeds inside his shirt front. Then he decided what to cook for dinner.

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"A merry troop we are, hey?" laughed Bally. She and her sisters were l, gathered at the Reiver's Wing. They had donned festive finery for the occasion and they looked sweet and fresh and happy. Solo was almost sorry for what he was about to do. But it was necessary, he rationalized. At this rate he couldn't last another week, much less several months.

"Now, we'll all have to get into this air lock together," he told them, keying the sequence that extended the boarding ramp. With a whine, it lowered from the ship's belly. The girls giggled.

Together they trod up the ramp, where he keyed another sequence. The air lock opened and he ushered them inside, then squeezed in among them and gently fought his way through the pulchritude to the ship's com panel, smiling all the way.

The hatch closed behind them with a pneumatic hiss. Re hit the main switch, and Reiver's Wing opened her inner hatch, welcoming her passengers aboard.

The sisters filed into the main cargo area. It was neither large nor fancy, but less than spartan, as the previous owner had run a surface-hop bordello and there were plenty of couches and a thick Ruga rug on the floor.

"Welcome to my home," the Corellian said grandly.

There were 'ooooooooos' and 'aaaaahs' in chorus.

" Just make yourselves comfortable while I throw a few things together." The genial host, Solo turned on the heel of those new and uncomfortable boots and headed toward the galley, which was literally a hole in the wall off the main corridor to the cockpit. But it was a well-computerized hole in the wall, and it very efficiently set about concocting a schuuutza and lamick casserole, salad and rolls for seven.

Han drew the grish from his shirt and spread it out on the small counter. He smiled at it as it lay there, so withered and innocuous looking. "Everybody like salad?" he called around the corner.

"Oh, yes! "

"We love salad! "

"Salad's my favorite! "

Whistling under his breath; Solo began chopping the grish into tiny, green pieces. In a moment, a beep signalled the galley's willingness to disgorge its culinary efforts. A tray slid out of a wall panel. Han took it and, one by one, arranged upon it the individual bowls --some steaming, some crisply chill -- offered by the machine. Then he busily sprinkled chopped grish over the salads, except the one he'd earmarked for himself, and, giving it a moment's thought, the casserole as well, with the same exception.

He stirred and poked at the thick stews until the grish disappeared. Then he crossed his fingers and headed aft.

Dinner was a great success, which, by Solo's definition, meant that everyone ate everything. And everyone was merrily replete with one sort of sensual satisfaction at least.

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Han figured it was as good a time as any to try his luck. If it didn't work, well, he wouldn't be any worse off than he would have been before. "So," he began, leaning back leisurely and stretching his supple body in a highly suggestive manner, "what shall we do now?"

He picked out Joret for a particularly seductive stare and nearly laughed aloud when she blinked and turned away in confusion.

"How about you, Shoop? Or maybe you and Tren and Bally would like to...you know. ..like we did yesterday?"

The three girls mentioned turned pale, casting nervous, frightened glances at each other. Joret was blushing furiously, her eyes averted.

"Lorbell! You won't. ..ah. ..let me down, will you? Hourk?"

The twins were staring at him, wide-eyed with incipient horror.

"Aw, come on, doesn't anyone want to play with..."

Joret began to gag. Tren gasped. "Oh, let me out of here! " she pleaded .

"Yes, yes, please, let us go!"

"We've got to go home! "

Han was up and running for the hatch. He hit the air lock switch twice, warning the Reiver's Wing to dump the Peleen atmosphere along with the passengers - and fast.

Six shocked and horrified girls staggered down the ramp into the Izilden evening.

"Bye," Han said softly, watching them shriek and gesticulate their way across the meadow.

He watched them until they were lost in the dusk, their gauzy gowns becoming indistinct pale puffs swallowed up by the gloaming, and their voices mingled with the chirrup of night creatures. He stood there in his new clothes and wished them well. The effects would wear off in a day or two --and maybe he'd left at least a few of them with their bairns. He hoped so.

Presently he turned away, locked up and headed for the cockpit, thinking of the marvelous serendipity of his escape.

Bought his ship on Peleen. Wonderful, edifying place, Peleen, home planet of the Priestesses of Anferth. The zealously celibate, grish-addicted Priestesses of Anferth.

Han wound the Reiver's Wing up and punched her skyward. He set her automatics on a slow orbital course with a pre-programmed hold for when he hit the antipodes of his circle. He could land and gather his load of grish then, a planet's diameter distant from the Whant sisters .

That was tomorrow's game plan. For tonight, Han Solo decided, a couple of very stiff drinks sounded good. His shoulder wound ached. A couple of very stiff drinks and a good night's sleep.

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