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RESOLUTIONS SOLO: Part 1 THE END

by [Homer Sapiento](#)

Chapter One

The man hid his yawn behind a bruised and dirty hand. A familiar sound caught his attention and he turned sharply. In a far corner of the celebration, a Wookiee roared drunkenly. The man shook his head. "He'll pay for it in the morning," he muttered. The native of the planet Endor, a small furry Ewok, looked up from its position at the man's knee and purred questioningly. "Not your fault, pal," the human smiled and rubbed the small creature behind its ear.

The loud music and louder conversations in the smoke-filled room drove the man to lean back against the rough-hewn wall. The man, being a Corellian, loved a good party the same -- no, MORE than anybody else in the Galaxy. However the man, being Han Solo, couldn't ignore the warning bells going off inside his head. Or the overwhelming feeling of desperation that was tightening his chest.

The desperation was easy to figure out: he was solidly and eternally committed to one woman now. Part of him wanted to raise ship in a hurry. The other part forced him to open his eyes and seek out the woman who turned his will to so much mush. He caught her eye and nodded in response to her little wave. The woman, Princess Leia Organa, frowned slightly then quickly returned to her group's conversation. Han closed his eyes and decided it was futile to wonder what the next step in their untidy relationship would be. He knew he loved her and she loved him. But she was a Princess, and he was a ... what was he now? No longer a smuggler but a General? General! A smile spread across his tired face: If they could see me now .. The grin faded to be replaced by a frown. And the slow tightness returned. Probably embarrass the hell outa her in court, or whatever this Alliance, Republic, whatever has. The tightness eased as the course of his desperation focused. "What happens next?" he asked aloud. The

sound of his own voice startled him and he glanced around quickly to make sure no one else heard. He knew she would be involved in the organization of the new government -- whatever it would be called. Light housekeeping on a freighter wasn't taught in Princess School. And diplomacy wasn't exactly his own cup of jet juice.

"Ten thousand credits for your thoughts." Han glanced up at the Princess staring down at him. "Are you all right?" she asked. The Corellian nodded, rose, and steered her out into the cool, clear night.

"We have to talk," he stated when they stopped walking.

Leia studied his face for a minute. "There IS something wrong. What?" She watched him, then backed away. Her anger growing, she accused him. "Don't, you dare announce you and Chewie are raising ship, at first light! Don't you dare!"

"I wasn't going to," he replied. Then his own stubbornness grew. "But it does not sound like such a bad idea now!" They glared at each other as the alien night sounds around them were drowned out by the more alien sounds of the party. Finally, she began to move around him to return to the party and he grabbed her arm. "We have to talk."

Leia pulled her arm free. "All right. Let's talk." She slowly folded her arms gently and forced a smile. "Go ahead. This was your idea."

Han shook his head slowly and willed himself to calmness. He held her arms gently and smiled deliberately. "I want to talk about us." She gasped slightly, not really convinced but allowed him to envelope her in his arms. "Now, don't you feel just a little bit foolish, Princess?"

Leia shook her head against his chest. "No. I intend to talk about us for the rest of our lives." She felt him stiffen and pulled away to study his face. "There is something. Give, hot shot."

"I've got a terrible feeling about this ..."

"Us?"

"No. This!" Han waved a hand toward the sounds of the celebration.

"Since when don't you like a party?" Her tone was clearly sarcastic and he winced.

"You don't understand." He moved to the edge of the walkway and stared into the blackness below.

"Obviously," she said softly.

"Leia," Han began patiently, "it's not over. Not yet. Maybe not ever."

"Not ...Han, the Death Star was destroyed! The Usurper and Darth ... my father are both dead! How can you say it's not over!" Her hand touched his back.
"When the new government is formed and terms of surrender are given ..."

Han's knuckles whitened as he tightened his hold on the railing. "... all the Empire's allies will throw down their arms and surrender like good little boys and girls ..."

"You don't believe they will."

"Leia!" The Corellian hit the rail in frustration and spun toward her. "It won't be over until they're all dead! Stormtroopers don't surrender!"

"But when they hear the terms ..."

Han shook his head. "What would they become? Farmers?"

Leia shook her head. "Don't. You're scaring me. It's over. It has to be. Our allies will take care of any resistance ... they'll ..."

Han laughed slightly. "Do you realise that we just made the Empire's allies into Rebels?" He shook his head and laughed louder. And both the old and the new Rebels, will wind up ending it with stands and stones just like the Ewoks."

"Unless we disperse the fleet's fighters ..." She stared at the myriad of stars twinkling through the branches above. "You want to be in that fight, don't you?"

"I have to," Han stated softly. He rubbed her arm. "You ... and Luke are gonna be busy setting up the new government. I'm no good at that, Leia."

She turned away from him to hide the dampness in her eyes. "You could learn."

His hands on her shoulders, Han bent to kiss her neck. "I'm too old to be a diplomat ..."

She spun and held him tightly. "I don't want you to go!"

He raised her chin and grinned. "Come with us. You're pretty good in a fight."

Leia giggled, then buried her head in his chest and cried. Han held her tightly as her sobs mixed with the music and laughter from inside the hut. Slowly he kissed her forehead and raised her face. He moved his mouth softly against hers.

Leia moved sharply away from him and gasped for air. "I want you," she whispered determinedly. "Now."

The hut they found was empty, dark and remote. So far from the victory celebration that the music was no louder than the calls of the native birds. "This is perfect," Leia smiled and tugged the reluctant Corellian inside.

Han surveyed the room and sniffed slightly at the musky odour. "Probably use it for their more contagious diseases."

"Found some blankets!" Leia called. "And an old-fashioned lantern!"

He smiled weakly in the faint orange glow and watched as she spread the blankets. From some long untapped well of self-control, the Corellian fought down the desire that was building from watching her. "Wait," some strange voice came from his mouth. "This isn't necessary." What are you saying! She's willing!, Han thought about kicking himself. She faced him and he took the last blanket from her, dropping it on the floor. "I don't want you to feel you have to. I'll be back and then ..."

Leia glared at him. "Don't you want to?"

How do I answer that one? With a straight face,, Han took a deep breath. "Well ... sure," he shrugged, "but this usually doesn't happen ..." Leia looked up from where she was straightening the blankets. "I mean," he added hurriedly, "It's not something you talk about ..."

"Well, what do you do?" she asked innocently as she pulled him to sit.

That's another question,, he smiled to himself. Han jumped as Leia ran a finger over his ear. "Look. Leia. I just meant that these things happen spontaneously ... when they ... happen." He stopped and grabbed a roving hand. "Leia, please."

"Well, what's wrong now!" she asked, her anger growing. Leia stood and stared at him. "I had assumed that telling me you loved me meant something. I must have assumed wrong."

Han shook his head. This was getting out of his sphere of understanding. "No. I do, do love you. It's just that ..."

"You've found a new meaning for the word?" she spat out at him. "I'm not desirable enough? Sometimes Han ..."

The Corellian caught her wrist and pulled Leia down onto the blankets. "I just meant that you deserved better than this ... this place." He shrugged, "After a nice wedding ..."

"What did you say?" Leia asked.

What did you say, Solo?, his numb inner voice asked. The Corellian fought back the last flickers of panic and nodded. "Would you marry me? I know all I've got to offer is the ship and what's on it ... and I know my prospects ain't too great at the moment ... and I ain't the best at bein, a diplomat ..."

Leia put a hand over his mouth and whispered, "Could we have a little more action here, you old pirate?" Han nodded slightly and moved her comfortably back onto the floor. "That's more like it," she said softly. The Princess held to him tighter. "Don't leave me without a part of you." The man wiped the dampness from her eyes and kissed her.

A strange bird call woke Leia from her dream of a small baby with hazel eyes. She felt the space next to her; it was empty. Startled, Leia sat up and looked around the empty hut. Her anger rose as she dressed; somehow this behaviour seemed typical of the man she had taken to her.

The sun was high in the sky as the Princess made her way through the still dew-wet grass to where the Falcon was at rest. Luke hugged her tightly. "Han said you were still sleeping. I'm very happy for you both!"

"Where is he? Or shouldn't I ask?" she squinted in the bright sunlight.

The pair made their way toward the ship's ramp just as the Corellian stepped out. He took her hand and led her away from the milling crowd of Rebels. "Why did you just up and leave like that?" there was an edge to her tone.

Han brought out a small velvet bag. "I wanted to find this for you before we left." She opened it and took out a folded piece of tissue which held a shiny golden band. "It was my mother's ... it's the only thing I've left of her ... I wanted you to wear it till I can you your own."

Leia nodded silently as he slipped it on her finger. She smiled at him, "This one is perfect."

His grin brought another tear to her eye; he frowned as Chewie barked in the short distance. "I've got to go. You take care of yourself ... and mind Luke."

"Why should I mind, Luke?" she asked, staring at her ring.

"Uh ... I told him ... about us ... just do it, Leia." Not waiting for an argument, the Corellian embraced her gently and kissed her quickly. He moved backwards toward the ship's ramp. "Take care of our son, too!"

Leia laughed at him. "How do you know it's a he,? How can you be so sure it even is?"

"Never was a doubt!" Han yelled back as he ran up the ramp.

Luke joined his sister and put an arm around her shoulder, hugging her tightly. "He'll be back."

She nodded as she twisted the ring and stared at the way the sun reflected off it. "I know he will ... that's the one thing I'm sure of."

The Millennium Falcon made the jump to light speed with no problems and Han Solo, Corellian, grinned at the streaks of light as if never seeing them before. Finally, he turned to his co-pilot. "Chewie," he laughed, "I wanta invite you to a wedding ..."

SILENCE has a sound all its own. And while it can have a rippling effect on those it touches, the silence of a certain Corellian holds all the promise of a volcanic eruption. The Wookiee, of course, was used to these lapses in decorum and chose to ignore this latest episode as just another good old fashioned Corellian pout. The other crew members moved cautiously as the ship's atmosphere grew heavy with anticipation: C3P0 was subdued to a fault; Lando hoped the explosion would come quickly and be done with. The others, the passengers, concluded the chill in the air was due to nothing more than their Captain's innate arrogant rudeness. He was, after all, a Corellian.

But it was neither a good old fashioned pout nor arrogant rudeness that drove Han Solo to seal himself alone in his quarters with his pent-up fury. In fact, it would have given him the greatest of pleasures to blow up at the next life-form to cross his path but for the promise he made to himself to "behave" for the sake of the woman he loved.

"Imperial or Alliance," Han muttered, "It's all bureaucratic guano." The bottle he poured from gurgled in agreement.

What he had hoped for not many weeks before was a simple end to the problem at hand. And to a Corellian, it was simple: get rid of the remaining enemy. "Simple," Han mused. It did seem simple that night on Endor. The Emperor was dead, Darth Vader was dead, the Death Star destroyed. The Corellian's shoulders sagged slightly. Along with that dish,, he added. Gotta remember to thank Lando one of these days .. Han refilled his glass and twirled it slowly in his hand. That night on Endor ... looking back at it, the Corellian decided that there

wasn't much left in the Galaxy to surprise him. Luke and Leia -- twins. Vader, their father. The Princess loved him, and -- a small grin slowly spread across his face -- he loved her. He wanted her for his wife, for the mother of the children he hadn't given much thought to before. "Now that," Han addressed the silent bottle at his elbow, "shoulda surprised me!"

It would have been so easy to allow himself to be swallowed up by the festivities thrown by the furry Ewoks. Too easy to manipulate Leia -- and himself -- into believing the demise of the Emperor had ended the war. "So, Solo," Han frowned, "you idiot, instead of kidnapping your Princess, you opened your mouth." The Corellian turned slightly in his chair. "Well, it woulda worked," he argued. "If ..." That small word stuck in his throat. All he wanted to do was get it over with, a few good clean raids on Imperial gun stores was a start. Training the various life-forms to use those arms was a little more tedious, but the Corellian knew you had to win your own freedom or it didn't mean much. Chewbacca had made more than a few references to lost brain cells -- those that told a person getting shot at wasn't fun. Han didn't care, much. In the Corellian's eyes getting shot at sure beat being a diplomat.

And, anyway, Solo justified, the sooner it was over, the sooner he'd be back with Leia. Even if they hadn't made love that night on Endor, he'd still go back, so great was his need for her. A small frown of confusion crossed the Corellian's brow as he remembered that night. For some reason, he had always assumed it would be he who'd have to talk her into it, not the other way around. Not that he didn't want to, the Corellian never ignored a willing, giving female. But Leia was different: she provoked new feelings in him. Sex wasn't enough, not this time.

Han moved to the window and stared out into the dark void. He had given her the most important thing in his life, next to the Wookiee, his ship, his blaster, and himself. A small gold band, all he had left from his mother. The Corellian breathed a sigh of relief when she accepted without hesitation. Other Princesses, in other times, might have frowned at the ring's plainness. He smiled slightly and tapped the ledge as he wondered if anything else had been started that night besides their life together.

He'd be back he told her, and he meant it. He'd be back as soon as the other life forms were capable of finishing off the clean-up of the remaining Imps.

As the Falcon neared its destination, the dark cloud over Solo's brow was thickened by a small piece of paper, tucked safely in his pocket. A directive, to act as transport for this bunch of pompous, self-indulgent bureaucrats who now graced the Falcon's main lounge. He chose to ignore their remarks about the ship he loved, and he bit his tongue when they began ordering a small repast, similar to that served in any Imperial palace.

Han finally emerged from his cloister, took his place at the ship's controls, and smiled for the first time in weeks. Chewbacca glanced at his best friend and growled slightly; his friend always smiled in such a way before a showdown. The Corellian shook his head, "No, pal, this is between me and a certain female." Patience,, Han thought as he banked his ship into a perfect landing. Calm patience.

The new Alliance governmental centre was situated in a massive grouping of buildings behind high protective walls in the centre of the main town on the planet of Kyril. The pleasantness of the day did little to brighten the spacious suite overlooking a small blue pond. Leia Organa had been awake since the first rays of sun filtered into her small parlour. After changing gowns four times, she finally decided on a pale blue one. Now she moved to the parlour and consciously moved a large flower arrangement in a fragile bowl from between the two couches. This is silly,, she smiled as she smelled the freshly cut blooms. A frown crossed her face and she shook it off. I'll laugh about it later.

"Han's back!" Luke called happily and Leia jumped. "The Falcon just landed."

The Princess nervously twisted the plain gold band on her finger. "That's great."

Luke led his sister to the nearest couch. "You're not still worried about that communique, are you? Han'll understand ..."

Leia shook her head. "No. He won't." She moved back to the window. "I should have written another for the Falcon ... he won't understand it at all ... not at all ... not after ... I knew it as soon as it was sent!"

"Leia. Don't worry. Han's not going to get mad about something as simple as that."

You don't know Han very well,, Leia thought and jumped as someone knocked on the door. She waved Luke off and moved to the door herself. The Princess took a deep breath, smiled broadly and opened the door. Leia's mouth twitched slightly as she faced a grinning Han Solo -- complete with bouquet and ribboned box.

"How quickly they forget," he winked at her. "Do I get to come in?"

The Princess blinked quickly and stepped back slightly. "Yes, of course." Her face was beginning to hurt from the intenseness of her smile, but she was also too well aware of the fury that focused on her through hazel eyes. As she closed the door behind him, Leia forced a laugh. "You didn't have to knock, these are your rooms, too."

Han glanced around and nodded at Luke. "Hi, kid." To Leia, he smiled, "I just was sure about the protocol, around here." He winked at the Jedi, "wouldn't want to

break any rules my first day back ..." Leia fumbled slightly as he opened his arms. "No hello? No hug? A tiny little kiss?"

Han held her at a distance as he kissed her mouth. "Didn't take time to clean up; wouldn't want to miss your party, clothes. There IS a party today, isn't there?"

Luke started nervously, his Jedi senses twitching from the tension in the air. "That's right. I ... uh, I better get over to the hall ... make sure everything is in order."

Leia twisted her ring. "Luke, why don't you wait and go with us?"

He glanced at Han. "I, uh ... I don't think so ..." The Jedi hugged his sister gently. "I'll ... see you ... later ..."

Leia faced the door and took a deep breath. "How was your trip?"

"Fine," Han said quietly. "First time no one took a shot at us. Uneventful. Except for almost being trampled by some angry crowds." He held out the flowers. "Thought you might like em, but I see such things were provided for." The Corellian fingered the blooms in the arrangement Leia had moved. "There aren't many flowers left."

Leia placed her bouquet on the low table. "Han, I can explain ..."

"Explain what? Oh, you mean this?" He slipped the folded paper from his pocket and tossed it on the table. "What's to explain? You gave an order and it was carried out. Isn't that what you wanted, Princess?"

"Han ... I didn't mean it as an order, ..."

"I know an order when I see one," he laughed derisively.

The Princess bit back her ire. "You should change, the reception will start ..."

"And I'm invited? How flattering." He sat on the couch and leaned back.

"Of course you're invited. You're .."

"Just what am I!" There was an edge to his voice. He stood and faced her. "And don't say a General, in this outfit; those days are over!"

"When we get married ..."

Han shook his head. "What'll that make me? Your husband? Your consort?"

"Han ... this isn't the time ... the reception ..."

"To hell with the reception!" he yelled. "I just got back ... haven't seen you in six weeks ... maybe, just maybe, I'd like some time alone with you ... maybe I'd like to say more than just "hello, how are you?,"

Leia flushed slightly and clenched her fists. "This reception is important ... I've got to be there. You said you understood that I would be busy with this!"

"Well, maybe, your royalnesses are goin' about it the wrong way!" he spat back.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," he began, "I mean, maybe you oughta get out of this pristine sanctuary and see what's goin' on out there -- where your subjects are! Maybe you oughta see the food lines and destruction, instead of sitting down to a five course dinner!"

"I'm sure the Council members will cover all that ..."

Han shook his head. "Right now all those diplomats give a damn about covering is their own asses!" The Corellian grabbed her hand. "Come back to the Falcon with me."

Leia touched his tired cheek lightly. "Han, I can't. I'm a member of the Senate, I've got to be there. I want you there with me."

"Is that an order,?" The Corellian backed toward the door. "I fell in love with a woman and made love with a woman. When you get tired of playing Princess, or Senator, look me up. Just don't send another directive!" He thrust the small box at her. "Here. Maybe you'll open it if you ever feel like playing mother!" The Princess watched dumbfounded as he stormed out the door.

* * *

Solo listened to the vacuous band in the corner. He knew there was only one cure for his confusion, so he wandered past the more opulent eateries and pubs to the distinctively shabbier section of the main city, where -- even with the 10 to 1 rate -- drinks were cheap enough.

"Hey, handsome," a soft voice blew in his ear. "Buy a gal a drink?"

Han's face spread into a grin. "What're you doin' here?"

The honey-skinned female slipped into the booth next to him and hung an arm around his neck. "I was just going to ask you the same thing." She kissed his

cheek and ran long fingers through his hair. "I've missed you, Han. It's been years since you said you'd call me." Her pink coloured lips came together in a pout the Corellian could never forget.

Han smiled and pulled her hand out of his hair. "Tess, it wasn't to be."

"Whatever happened to you?" she stared at him and sighed. "I'd heard tales, but never believed my soulmate would go through all that ..."

He raised an eyebrow at her. "Yeah, well, things change. How you been, doll?"

"Existing," she shrugged, "but now that you're back in action ..."

"Sorry," the Corellian said, "I'm not that much back in action."

"It's gotta be some female."

"What gave it away?" he grumbled.

"The glazed eyes for a start," she giggled. "Never thought in a million lifetimes that some female would put the great lover in such a state ..." The girl kissed him lightly, "There's a cure right at hand."

Han shook his head. "Those days are over."

"That bad, huh? Well, what the hell are you doin' here?" Tess frowned. "Don't tell me you blew it! How? Scratch that, it was a dumb question ... but why? If you love her so much?"

","Cause I'm a jerk," he whispered and poured from the bottle.

"Well, I won't argue with that," she said softly, "but no female in her right mind would send a self-admitted jerk packin' without leavin' the door open; go make it right, Han."

He shook his head. "She probably'd throw something at me."

"Do you deserve it?" He nodded and she grinned. "Well, you can use the room I got in back ..."

"Tess, I told you ..."

"You really are a jerk." She put the small key in his hand. "Here. Go sober up and get some sleep. Maybe you can come up with a heart-rending story in the morning."

"Thanks, Tess, you're one of the good guys."

She stood over him for a minute. "Look. If it doesn't work out ... never mind. Take care, hot shot." She kissed him quickly and disappeared into the din.

It was well into dawn before the Corellian had justified his next move to himself. If nothing else, he felt, Leia would not turn down the importance of meeting his family before their marriage. He was almost positive there was some such custom on his birth planet, after all wasn't that the case all over? And the only family he recognised, he smiled, was on Kashyyyk. Han punched the pillow in satisfaction. Chewie's mate Malla was the perfect example of what a wife and mother was supposed to be. With that thought in mind, the spacer fell into the comforting sleep of the simple-minded.

Han gingerly let himself into the suite of rooms as the sun neared midday. They were empty. "Where's Leia?" Luke asked behind him.

"I was just about to ask you the same thing." Han replied.

"She was upset at the reception last night," Luke murmured, "but I thought you two would settle it when she got back here."

"Obviously, we didn't ... I ... just got back here myself."

Luke's voice rose. "That's just great, Han. She's been waiting for you to get back! Where did you spend the night? And with whom?"

"I think that's between me and her, kid." Han muttered defensively.

Han moved toward the door and the Jedi grabbed his arm. "She's my sister, Han."

"And she's gonna be my wife," he shrugged off the younger man's grasp.

"Well, she isn't yet." Luke shook his head. "Han, I'm sorry. I know it's between the two of you, but I can't stay out of it when she's miserable. I love her, Han."

"Maybe that's the problem, kid." Han opened the door and was gone.

Finding no one he cared to see in main building, the Corellian moved to where the Falcon sat at rest. If nothing else, he decided, he could get rid of the taunts that were viciously stomping his brain into mush. Han had just reached the foot of the ship's ramp when he was called by a Rebel aide. "Captain Solo, sir, the General would like to see you in the Command Centre immediately."

Han frowned. "Tell him I'll be there in a minute. Wait a sec, have you by any chance seen Princess Leia anywhere?"

"I believe she's in the Falcon, sir. She's being going in and out all day, she and your Wookiee friend ,, moving boxes, crates ... it's really been something."

Puzzled, Han muttered, "What the ...", and moved up the ramp.

As the Corellian sauntered into the main lounge, he was accosted by an arm-waving, oath-grunting Chewbacca. C3PO moved past loaded down with a carton and Lando shouted in the passageway. From somewhere Leia's cheery voice yelled, "Don't worry!"

Han watched the scene in confusion. "What the hell is going on around here? I'm gone and you all go crazy!"

Just then Leia called from the passageway. "Will someone PLEASE bring in that last crate out there? I want to get this finished before he gets here!"

"What's up?" Han looked at Lando.

The former Bepin administrator put his arm around the Corellian's shoulder. "You are gonna love this ..." He gave Han a push down the corridor.

The Corellian stepped over, around and through the paper and boxes which littered the corridor. He just got to his quarters when Leia came rushing out. "Chewie, c'mon will you!" She bumped right into Han. "Oh. Hi."

"Would you mind telling me what is going on around here?" he picked some paper off the floor. Everything in his quarters was in chaos: clothes, books, papers, crates all over. "What are you doing?"

She put her arms around his neck. "I decided you were right. So ... I'm moving in."

"You're what ...!" The Corellian gently pulled her arms down and walked around the room.

Leia moved quickly ahead of him. She gestured to the various changes she had made. "I moved the things so we each get of the clothes compartments ..."

"Where's my desk, my papers ...?" Han looked at the room in an almost catatonic state.

Han wasn't pleased; he wasn't mad. He wasn't anything but confused. Besides, his head hurt.

Lando and Chewie lurked in the corridor. "You'd think he'd be screaming by now." The Wookiee shook his head in disbelief. 3PO pushed past them and rushed towards Han. "C'mon, Chewie, this ought to be real good!"

"Captain Solo, sir, I must protest this. Surely you are aware that this is not proper!" The droid was so upset his transistors rattled.

Han glared at him as Leia brushed past. "This will work out fine," she smiled as she picked up her litter.

"Now wait a minute!" Han followed after her. "What're you doing!?!?!?"

"Moving. In."

He grabbed her and turned her further in his direction which caused her to drop her load of papers. "Now see what you did!" she sighed and bent to pick up what she had dropped.

Han crouched near her. "Will you ..." She picked herself up and was off again, leaving him near the floor.

Meanwhile, 3PO rushed up behind Han. "Sir! You must listen to me!"

"Sure," Han said numbly as he raced off after Leia. He caught up with her as she struggled with the last crate.

Leia smiled sweetly. "Help me with this, will you please?"

Halfway down the corridor, he realised what he was doing and dropped his end. "Now, wait a minute, we have to talk ..."

"There isn't time now," Leia said as she pushed the crate. "now help me or move out of the way."

Han moved, then hurried after her. "Hey!"

He stopped as Lando called him from the lounge. "General here to see you ..."

The Corellian glanced back toward his quarters, then decided it must have been important if the General came to him. He scowled as the sound of Leia arguing with 3PO filtered toward him. "A great impression we're making," he muttered to no one but the walls. Han passed the Wookiee who wisely turned to open a panel. The Corellian paused only once in his determined stride as the sound of the argument reached him.

The General smiled as the younger man came nearer, and the two warmly shook hands. "Sounds like you've got your hands full, Han. I thought this first full day back, you'd be taking it easy." Just then a very loud, "3PO, if you don't SHUT UP!" reached them. Han shut his eyes as his tightened. The General looked over the Corellian's shoulder. "Her Highness is a very strong-willed young woman, but I imagine you've already found that out. Reminds me of her mother. Take my advice, son, and just roll with it -- ignore it, if you can, and if you can't," the General shrugged.

Han desperately looked for a change of subject and noticed the papers in the older man's hand. "Something new up? If it's another ferrying job, maybe one of the other ships can handle it ... I, uh, I promised Chewie we'd go see his family ... he hasn't seen them in a long ..."

The General interrupted. "It's more important than carrying diplomats, Han, if I could speak to you in private ..."

"Sure, General, all's I gotta do is find where she dumped my desk."

Han's new office was cramped and airless. He turned on a small ventilator, an incredibly small lantern, offered the General a chair and seated himself carefully to avoid hitting his head on the over-hang. "Drink, sir?" Han offered as he pulled a dusty bottle and two mugs out of a deep drawer.

"Maybe I will," the officer sighed as Leia's scream rang through the walls.

The Corellian swallowed the smooth liquid and hoped it would stem the now stampeding herd of taun-tauns in his brain. He cleared his throat, "Well, General, if you could get to the point, I'd appreciate it."

"Solo, you're a good man ... and you've done more for the Rebellion than you've been given credit for," he waved off Han's protest. "I didn't come to compliment you into some other make-piece work." The older man leaned forward. "There are those of us who have seen what you have seen. And there are those, even on the Council, who are willing to stick out their necks in going after the needed supplies for a final push. We're asking your help." He relaxed slightly. "We'll also understand if you refuse ... there have been those, uh, who have suggested ..."

Han grinned sarcastically, "You don't have to walk around it, sir, I know I'm not loved in the higher circles here ..."

"No. Han, no." the General hurried. "The Council is well advised of your service to the Rebellion."

"They just don't want me to marry their daughters," Han laughed. He shrugged and twirled the liquid in his mug. "A straight fight, General? No more jockeying

the upperclass around? Can't say I've missed being shot at, but it'd sure make my life simpler to get this over with. What did you have in mind?"

As the two men said good-bye in the main lounge, Leia came around a corner. "General! I didn't know you were here!" She turned to Han and handed him the tray she carried. "Thought you might like some food," she smiled, "we must talk about that kitchen."

The Corellian took it from her and smiled his first genuine grin of the day. "It's called a galley." He kissed her forehead. "Say good-bye to the General, Princess." With that, he moved toward the cockpit.

Leia walked the Rebel officer out of the Falcon as he explained the latest situation. The General ended with "... the only place to get them is on Corellia."

"Corellia!" Leia blanched. "He can't go back there!"

"He accepted it, your Highness," the officer stated. He touched her arm lightly. "Princess, he'll be all right."

She glared at him with cold, determined eyes. "Oh, I know he'll be all right, General, because I'm going with him. I'm never going to let him out of my sight again." She turned abruptly and re-entered the Falcon.

The only request the Corellian had had of the General and the Rebellion was that any available technicians and equipment be put into use to tear down and make sure the Falcon was in her finest fighting form. Lando chuckled slightly that that wasn't too much to ask, then fell silent as Han reminded him of a lost dish which blew up with the last Death Star under the piloting skills of the former Bespin head. All went well, with technicians and crew working side-by-side, it took but a short time to prepare the Falcon for her next exploits. Han was even moved, albeit to none but himself, that Leia was not only a hard worker but a quick study. Still, it unnerved him somewhat to work next to her and not know what to say, or how to say it. For some reason, she had managed to arrange things so they were never alone. And, by the time he was done with his work and ready to corner her in their quarters, he was too exhausted to await her arrival. What troubled him more was the absence of Luke Skywalker.

Finally, Leia met him in the main lounge. "I was just going to say good-bye."

Han watched as she fastened her hair behind her neck. "Think I'll just go through the old girl one more time." He shrugged, "Sides, I don't have anyone to say good-bye to!"

With the Falcon programmed for their first stop, Han took Leia's hand and led her to their quarters. The Corellian turned on the small lantern and moved his aching

body into the bunk. Leia closed the door and sat on the edge of the bunk. It was the first time they were alone since Endor and that was an eternity ago. Han looked around the room, "You've been cleaning again."

"I think it looks rather nice," Leia smiled. "At least now you'll be able to find anything you want."

"I had no trouble finding what I wanted before," Han kicked at the blanket. "Now it looks like a hotel. And would you quit hanging up my clothes!"

"We are touchy today," she said and took his blaster from him.

"Just tired, it's been a long day. Look, I'll make a deal with you: you leave my stuff alone and I'll keep my hands off your stuff." Han yawned and kissed her hand. "You gonna sack in, too, or what?"

"Soon as I brush my hair and wash my face," she smiled.

Han nodded as she brushed his forehead, too tired to wonder about anything but a good night's sleep. A finger poked him awake. "What?"

Leia smiled down on him. "Now what?" He frowned and she waved her hands at him. "The bunk. It's too small."

The Corellian grinned, "Who's fault is that? Oh, come on ..." He moved over and patted the mattress.

"You're kidding," she laughed.

Han shrugged, "It's either this or the acceleration couch ... can guarantee it ain't as comfy as here." She glared at him and crawled in beside him. "You forgot something," he said. "The light."

An extremely intense Princess made her way back into the bunk. She listened to his level breathing and finally poked him. "I can't sleep on the outside."

Han groaned slightly and pulled her over himself by holding her waist. The movement was paused slightly as Leia laid on top of him. Finding this position extremely distracting, the Corellian shook his head and swung her completely over. "Now can you sleep?" his hands were still on her waist.

Leia shifted closer to him and tilted up her head. "I think so." She kissed him quietly.

Cradling her in his arms, Han yawned. "We've got a lot to talk about ... weddings ... babies ..." He held her tighter.

"Babies," Leia whispered. "Han, I've got to ..." she looked up at him; he was sleeping deeply. She snuggled closer to him and finally fell asleep with a contented smile on her face.

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