

[Back To Part 4](#)

[Back To Index](#)

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RESOLUTIONS SOLO: Part 5

by [Homer Sapiento](#)

A NEW GENERATION - PART 5

A large, towering man clad in the maroon robes of office entered the waiting room of the medi-unit and accepted the greetings of the few people there with polite coolness. Grim faced, he turned to the waiting woman. "Princess Leia." She seemed to grow smaller as she stepped forward to greet him.

"Governor," she said quietly.

"The General has filled me in, my dear, so my shock is not so great."

"You are not happy for us?" Leia asked.

The Governor guided her to adjoining chairs. Seated, he rubbed his hands together. "Princess, I wish that I could be. I've heard many good things about Captain Solo, but in the end he is still a smuggler -- a pirate!" He waved a hand. "And you, my dear, are a Princess. Surely there are many more suitable young gentlemen."

Leia stared at him. "I love Han, and he loves me."

"Ah, love," the old man sighed. "An emotion which leads too many to heartache. So, you love your pirate, but what do you know of him?"

The Princess straightened in the chair. "Governor, we were together for a long time. Han has been loyal in his service to our cause --"

He looked at her. "But his reputation?"

"Each of us hides our fears in our own ways," she smiled.

He studied her face. "And he loves you?"

Leia placed her hand on her pregnancy. "Isn't this proof of his love?"

"It is proof only of an act which any species can do - intelligent or not. In your case, Princess, so young and unworldly - and knowing Captain Solo's reputation - we would almost be compelled to judge that he forced you into the act!"

Lando charged him, "Now wait a minute!" Chewie bellowed loudly. The General restrained Calrissian but he yanked away. "I stayed quiet while you cross-examined Leia like some kind of criminal. But not any longer!" He glared at the old man. "Who are you people? What kind of people are you? I've known Han Solo a long time and maybe he doesn't have your fancy manners or your clothes or treat you with the respect you think you deserve because you have a title, but he's worth a hell of a lot more than you or anyone else on this tub!" Lando shook his head. "He was good enough to stick around here and risk his neck for you, but not good enough to live with you! Han was right - this, this Rebellion stinks! You're no better than the Empire! At least where we come from you know who you can trust!" He turned to the General, "As soon as Han's ready to go, we're leaving. Make sure your cargo's off the Falcon by then!"

As the General and the Governor began to protest, Leia screamed "Quiet! All of you just be quiet." She said softly. Her hands shook as she addressed the Governor. "You are partially correct, there was force." The room became suddenly quiet. "I forced him. I didn't want to be left without anything - without knowing his love. He even said my -- my father would have had him shot."

"And rightly so, you're a mere child. He had no right to take advantage of your romantic notions --" Leia began to cry and the old man embraced her. "There, there, my dear, no need to cry. You are home now. We will deal with this, no more shame will come to you."

"You said you'd never accept him! He was willing to let go so that this scene would never happen!"

"Perhaps you should take his council," the Governor interjected.

"No! I'll not leave him - nor take his baby from him!" She regained her composure and looked at Lando. "I shall be going with you."

"Now, don't be hasty, your Highness. Perhaps I should speak with Captain Solo first. Perhaps something can be arranged -- a just settlement."

"You can talk with him," she said, "but if you don't register our marriage, I'm leaving with him!"

The Governor tapped his knee. "Well, we shall have to arrange a title for him, if you insist on keeping him."

Leia glared at him. "Keeping him! You make him sound like a -- a pet!" Her voice trailed off. "He is my husband, not an amusement." She shook her head. "I'll never hurt him like that."

The old man looked behind her at the medi-droid sent to bring her into the unit. He shook his head as she disappeared down the corridor.

"How is my husband, Major?" Leia asked the white-coated figure as she sat in front of his desk.

The fair-haired Rebel doctor smiled at her. "He's stable. We were compelled to open his side and rejoin two ribs." He leaned back in his chair. "I would say he had a fair amount of pain before he was brought here. We're not all like the Governor, Princess."

She stood abruptly. "May I see my husband now?"

The Major led Leia into a small cubicle. The Corellian lay on his back, tubes and sensors on, in and around his deathly pale skin. "As soon as he regains consciousness, we'll remove the tubes. I know he looks terrible, Highness, but he will be all right."

Leia moved toward him and kissed his forehead. "How long will he have to stay here?"

"Han can probably leave in seven ship's days," the Major replied, "on limited activity. I don't recommend another trip around the Galaxy, whatever the reason!"

"May I stay with him?" she asked quietly. He nodded and brought a chair for her. Seated, Leia took his free hand. She held it tenderly and examined it closely; the fingers, veins, a small scar she had never noticed before. Slowly a finger moved, then another. The Princess placed a hand on his cheek. Wake up, sleepyhead."

Han glanced at her with half-closed eyes. "Is it over?"

"How do you feel?"

"I don't feel anything, just numb," he mumbled. "Did you get any rest?"

"Some," she lied. "I also talked with the Governor."

"And he's not too happy with the situation, is he?" Leia shook her head and bit her lip. "I didn't think he would be -- I told you, didn't I?" Han closed his eyes.

"It doesn't matter any more, Han, nobody can keep us apart." She touched his mouth.

He pulled her hand. "C'mere, Princess."

"Han, your side." she protested.

"It's the other one. Besides, it's numb. I won't screw it up, just come here."

Leia sat on the bed and faced him. He gently pulled her down to himself and kissed her. "You better take advantage of this, Captain."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm not going to be able to bend like this for much longer." She stared at his blank face. "The baby!" she sighed. "Oh, Han, sometimes I wonder if you think!"

"Well," Han frowned at her, "you really confuse me sometimes, y'know."

Leia got off the bed. "I confuse you? And you don't confuse me, I suppose?"

The Corellian glanced at her and shrugged. "Well --"

"What!" she stamped her foot.

Han grinned. "Still haven't gotten out of the habit, have you? If I could get outta here, I'd spank you!"

Leia stuck her tongue out. "You lost your chance, didn't you? Cannot spank the mother of your child; that's a no-no!"

"You, too? Lando's been talking like that. I think you're all goin' crazy! Come back here. Or sit down." he demanded.

"Giving orders again?"

"Only when it's for your own good -- and the baby's. Now, come here!" He pulled her close. "You are so small!" He kissed her deeply and she rested on his shoulder.

"Do you feel any different?" Leia whispered.

Han nodded. "You're stabbing me with your elbow."

"That's not what I meant and you know it! Do you feel any different?" He stared at her. "Oh, Han, sometimes you make life so difficult!"

"Now what did I do?" he frowned. "You asked if I felt different. Sure, my side isn't killin' me anymore!"

"Do you like being married?" she demanded.

The Corellian smiled at her. "I'll need a few years to form an opinion, sister."

"Okay, I'll withdraw that." She brushed his hair back. "When did you first know you loved me?"

"You're really getting' nosey, ain't ya?" he kissed her hand. She frowned and he closed his eyes. "Okay, gimme a minute -- it was when you grabbed my hand in the garbage bin -- you were so scared --"

"I was not! I -- I was just trying to grab onto something and it just happened to be your hand."

Han gazed deeply into her eyes. "Is that why you didn't let go until after we got out?"

"Why didn't you say anything to me?"

"About what? I was gonna tell a Princess I loved her?" Han laughed. "You woulda thought I was crazy -- Chewie would've for sure. I know I did!"

"So you stayed because of me?" she asked quietly.

The Corellian stared at her. "And 'cause I knew Luke couldn't handle it alone -- and that he loved you, too."

She looked away. "And now, to find out -- he's my brother --"

"You talked to him," Han asked. "How's he handlin' it?"

"What?"

"Sweetheart, if someone had just told me I was your brother it'd be pretty hard to stop what I felt." he said slowly.

Leia glared at him. "Luke's not like that -- he's a Jedi --!"

"He's still a man." the Corellian sighed.

The Princess moved away from the bed and stared out the window. She turned as a medi-droid walked in with a pill. Han looked at it. "What is it?" The droid pronounced a long, involved name. Leia giggled as Han yelled, "What's it for?"

"You," the droid replied.

"No -- Really?" Han scowled at the droid who turned to Leia.

"Princess --" he began.

"Leia!" Han yelled.

Leia approached the medi-droid. "The Captain would like to know exactly what that will do to him -- in simple words, please." Han stared harder at her.

The droid faltered. "I am not programmed to give that information."

The Corellian stared at him in amazement. "Doesn't anyone ever ask around here?"

"I am not programmed --"

"Yeah, well you can go back and tell whoever programmed you to take that pill and --"

"Han!" Leia interrupted. She looked at the droid. "I spoke with a Major earlier. If he is still here, will you send him in, please?"

After the droid left, the Princess took Han's hand. "Couldn't you have just taken the pill?"

He shook his head. "I don't take nothin' I don't know what it's for." His face tightened. "Side's hurtin'."

"Maybe that's what the pill was for?" Leia asked. "How can you be so stubborn?"

"I don't take orders from no machines!"

A white-coated, grim-faced Major entered briskly. "Is there a problem here?" He greeted Leia. "Your Highness." She nodded to him and waved at Han. The doctor probed Han's side and looked in his eyes. "You didn't take your medication."

Through clenched teeth, the Corellian fumed. "I don't take what I don't know about!"

The Major shook his head. "Does your side hurt?" Han glared at him. "Had you taken the pill, it wouldn't."

"Why couldn't that tin man just say that?" he muttered.

"It's easier to keep their programming simple."

"Yeah, easier for you."

After the Corellian swallowed the pill, the Major took his pulse. "It'll make you sleepy, don't try to fight it. You need your rest."

"You shoulda told me that before I took it! I don't want to sleep!" Han glared at him.

"Which is exactly why I didn't." The Major stood. "After you get some rest, we'll take care of all this."

"We'll?" Han raised an eyebrow.

"I'll do it personally."

The Princess followed him to the entry and thanked him. "Don't stay too long, he does need his rest." The Major smiled at her. "I do want to see you later, too."

She moved back to the bed and smiled at Han. "You should be sleeping by now."

"I didn't want to, until I saw your face." He smiled back.

"Okay, hot shot, you saw my face, now go to sleep.:

"Stay until I do," he whispered.

"Of course, now go to sleep." She brushed his hair back.

"Han looked at her through blurry eyes. "Not 'til I get a kiss --"

The Princess leaned against him and gently kissed his mouth. "Now will you go to sleep?"

Han held her hand and yawned. "I really think they got something with these pills --"

"Han?" she whispered. "You are so stubborn." She kissed him again and quietly left the room.

"HELLO, Princess," the Major smiled at her from behind his desk. "What did you want?"

"No. You said you wanted to see me," she replied. "I'd like to see Han's friends first, and then come back."

"I already took the liberty of filling them in," the doctor smiled. "I believed the human and the Wookiee returned to the ship you arrived in. The droid and the young girl are waiting for you." He moved around his desk. "Please, do sit down."

When she was settled, he sat on the desk's edge. "I mean no disrespect by what I am about to say, but it's obvious that Captain Solo is not the only one in need of medical attention. Am I correct in assuming that you haven't been examined since you've conceived?"

Leia nodded slowly and twisted her ring. "It's not that I was avoiding it -- there, there just hasn't been anyone around."

"I understand," he nodded. "May I suggest we remedy that right now? I -- took the liberty of looking at your medical file. It's been some time since you've been here."

Concerned, Leia leaned forward. "Is there a problem?"

"None that I can foretell. Certain changes come about - I'm sure you've noticed some yourself," he smiled at her. "Your size alone--"

Leia straightened. "Are you telling me I'm too short?"

The Major chuckled. "No, your Highness. The Captain did -- and he didn't say 'short', he said 'small'. He's very concerned about your health, and the baby's. He loves you very much."

"And just when did he say all this?"

The Major poured two mugs of tea and handed her one. "Oh, he said a lot of things when they brought him in here. And I faithfully promised him that you would get a thorough examination. I agree with him." She nodded. "Good, we can do it right now. You may have that young girl with you, if you wish. Tandy, was it? And also a droid if you prefer."

The Princess shook her head. "No, I'd prefer you." She looked closely at him. "Do you think everything is all right? I think I'm beginning to be afraid."

The Major held her hand. "It's a normal reaction for the first one."

SOMETIME later, the Princess and Tandy sat in the Major's office. He touched his fingers together and smiled. "You are in very good health, young lady, and the baby is fine."

"But," Leia asked.

"There is always a 'but', isn't there?" he frowned. "In your case the 'but involves more rest and less worry."

"I'll make sure she gets more rest." Tandy offered.

The doctor smiled. "You're lucky to have Tandy to help you." He read from a list of symptoms and Leia shook her head, then stopped. "Yes?" he asked.

"I've had a few cramps, not too many -- and not often -- it was probably my cooking, I don't cook very well." She smiled slightly.

The doctor nodded and made a note on her file. "They could be nothing more than nerves. You haven't had an easy time of it." He leaned forward. "Princess, I do not want what the Governor said to upset you."

"Does everyone know?"

"Your Highness," he leaned back in his chair. "This Transport has a very fast grapevine. Very little goes unnoticed! With all respect to the man, as a purely medical opinion, he should have retired years ago. I will not have him upsetting my patients!" He led the two females to the door. "You, little mother, get some sleep. Don't worry about anything." He took her hand. "I'm going to pay a visit to the Governor -- I think I'll enjoy every minute of it." He smiled at her.

HAN sat up in bed and waved a threatening forefinger at the med droid.

"But -- but, sir," the droid began.

"But, 'sir', Shit! You ain't touchin' me, you read me, you misfitted bunch of wire!"

The Major strode in. "I can hear you all the way down the hall! Just what is this?"

Han pointed at him. "You told me you'd do this! Not some machine!"

"I apologise," the doctor sighed. "I was detained -- I had a new examination file to fill out --"

"Leia?" Han looked at him. The Major nodded. "Well?"

The doctor held up his hand and detached the Corellian from the various hook-ups. He probed his side. "Hurt?"

Han shook his head. "Tickles."

"You had a good sleep?"

Han nodded. "How is she? The baby?"

The Rebel doctor ignored him. "You'll be sitting up for this first meal. Your wife will join you. I'll join you both for dessert and then we'll discuss her condition - which is fine."

The Corellian relaxed. "She saw her and she's okay."

"I saw her, she's okay, as you said -- the rest we talk about." The Major patted his shoulder and left the room.

AS the Major left, Lando and Chewie bounced in. The Wookiee waved a massive paw through Han's hair. "Hey, take it easy, you fur bag!" Han yelled. "Next thing, they'll open up my head!"

Lando sat on the bed. "How're you doing?"

Han smiled. "Okay. Now. It's a strange feelin'."

"What is?" Calrissian asked.

"The absence of pain -- never knew it hurt that much." He looked at the two. "What have you been up to?"

Chewie started bellowing and Lando cut in. "For starters, we got the cargo unloaded. All accounted for - here." He tossed Han a pouch.

The Corellian weighed it in his hand. "Full payment, huh?"

Lando nodded. "You should be jumping up and down, and you're not even smiling! What's the matter now?"

Han grinned ruefully. "Can't help thinkin' this might be a pay-off. Leia told me she saw the Governor."

"Yeah, we know. You'd have enjoyed it." Lando grinned. "Really let him have it!"

The Corellian glanced at the pouch. "I'm never gonna fit in here."

"Hey, pal," Lando punched his arm. "Don't go looking for trouble before it comes."

"Okay. You're right," He opened the pouch, dumped its contents and laughed. "Didn't know my life was worth this little! Let's divvy it up."

Lando protested. "Why don't you just enjoy it a while?"

Han shook his head. "I'd just as soon know how broke I am right away." The final total left him with 200 credits. "Nice way to start a marriage; this won't even buy a bottle of Mos Eisley's finest. I gotta find another run somewhere -- pick up a job --"

AS they left, Leia came in with 3PO pushing a cart which contained their evening meal.

"I feel better. Maybe that food will taste better, too," Han said.

"Better than what?" She glared at him.

"Better than after havin' no sleep." He took the covered dish from her. "What is it?"

"This I guarantee you'll like," she smiled. He looked at the bowl of broth and the biscuit. "Eat!" she ordered.

Han looked at her. "You want this?" he handed her the biscuit. She took it; he couldn't understand yet where she put it all. As the droid served large glasses of juice and salads, the Corellian took the juice, but shook his head at the salad. "You bring any real food?"

Leia stared at him. "I thought you'd like this!"

"I told you I don't eat vegetables -- look, if it's not too much trouble, could I just have a piece of fruit?"

The Princess grabbed a covered platter, stormed to the bed and slammed it on Han's lap. "Here! Real food!"

The platter was steaming hot and the Corellian moved it quickly off his lap. He removed the cover and found a steak, some mushrooms and two cooked apples. He looked up at Leia but her head was down. The rest of the meal was spent in silence; and when it was over 3PO stacked the dishes and beat a hasty retreat.

Han played with the 200 credits as Leia returned from freshening up. "What's that?" she asked.

"Huh?" he looked at her. "My -- our share of that run we made. You may as well take care of it." He handed her the pouch.

"Two hundred! Surely, this isn't all of it?"

The Corellian shook his head and explained the situation. "That's it. Not very much, is it? I'm gonna be a great provider." He stared at the ceiling.

"Is that what this is all about?" Leia sighed and brushed his hair. "Oh, Han the credits don't mean a thing to me, you know that." She took his hand. "We'll be fine."

Han nodded as the door slid open and the Major walked in with a tray. "I was finally able to liberate this! Princess, that galley is guarded as if they hide the Alliance Treasury in it! Here you are, Princess -- Captain?"

"Would it break the Alliance's bank to get a piece of fruit around here?" Han said sharply.

Stunned, the doctor handed the Corellian the bowl. "Now," he said as he seated himself, "let's get down to business. I'm very happy to see you ate all your dinner, Princess." He turned to Han. "You, on the other hand, are a disappointment."

Han spat out two seeds. "Sorry, but her Highness knows I don't eat vegetables."

The Major smiled politely. "You should, they're --"

"I know! Good for me! Unfortunately, I don't always do what's good for me!"

"Don't I know it," Leia muttered.

The Corellian glared at her. He forced a smile. "Look, you said somethin' about discussin' her condition. I'd like to hear about it, if you don't mind."

The Major cleared his throat. "Yes, of course, but I would just like to state that I am not your enemy, Captain Solo. I'll do whatever I can to help you."

Han glanced at him. "Can you find me a job? Skip it, how is she?" When the doctor finished, the Corellian decided that the ship's oil line was less complicated. "What you're sayin' is that we can't leave here for a while."

The Rebel doctor nodded. "I'd advise against it -- for both of you. Captain Solo, you don't realise your own need of rest. In the case of her Highness, a trip to Kashyyyk might be beneficial, but even you cannot guarantee her safety."

"Yes, she's not very good at takin' orders."

She glared at him. "Neither are you!"

"Maybe -- but I ain't havin' a baby!" he hissed at her.

"I keep telling you that!" she yelled.

"Children!" the Major yelled. "I have been at work since you first docked. Eventually I would like to get some sleep." He waited until they quieted. "Now, are there any questions? I'd really like to continue this enjoyable conversation, but both of you need your rest."

The Rebel doctor stood and the Corellian called him. "Yeah, I gotta question!" He glanced at Leia. "Can we still --"

"Han," the Princess sighed.

The Major smiled slightly. "It's a perfectly natural question, your Highness. And yes, you still can -- until I say otherwise." He stopped at the door. "Oh, I almost forgot, I spoke with the Governor earlier. I believe he has plans to visit you tonight."

WHEN he was gone, Leia stared at the Corellian. "Why did you act like that?"

"Like what? Okay, I'll apologise tomorrow. It's just that I'd like to be able to support you -- and her. Two hundred credits ain't gonna do it."

The Princess changed the subject diplomatically. "He is nice, though, don't you think?"

The Corellian frowned. "Yeah, he seems okay. C'mere."

Leia sat on the bed and leaned against his chest. "I like sitting this way."

"Just up, Princess," he grinned.

THE door slid open and the Governor walked in; his awesome presence filled the room. Leia moved quickly off the bed and greeted him cordially. The official kissed Leia's forehead. "The Major said he examined you and you are in good health, I'm happy to hear. Now, then --"

The Princes led the Governor to the bed. "May I present the Governor of the Alliance, Han. Your Highness, my husband, Han Solo."

The Corellian nodded politely as the official looked him over. "I've heard much about you, Captain Solo. This is a meeting I have been looking forward to."

Han forced a smile. "I hope what you heard wasn't too bad."

"Let's say it was interesting."

Leia seated herself next to Han and held his hand firmly. He gave her his best reassuring glance, then turned to the official. "Governor, if it's all the same to you, could you just spit it out? Leia's been through a lot and I'd like her to get some rest."

"I'm fully aware of the circumstances, Captain," the older man frowned as he sat next to the Princess. "What I have to say cannot wait." He leaned back in the chair and glared at Han. "To be blunt, you would not have been my choice. You've been a good friend to the Alliance. You've suffered much because of that friendship, and because of your profession."

Han glared back. "My profession? I'm a smuggler! I was the best in the business!" He laughed softly. "You want it all, old man, don't you?"

The Governor leaned forward and touched Leia's arm. "I've know the Princess since her birth. I want only what's best for her."

"And I'm not it, right?" the Corellian shook his head. "You're not likin' me doesn't make much difference. But the Major says we gotta stay here until the baby comes. I'd appreciate you allowin' her to stay until then."

"And where will you go? What will you do?" the official challenged. "At least stay until Commander Skywalker returns --"

"Where I go doesn't matter as long as Leia and I are together, does it?"

The official's face hardened. "Would you force her from her own people?"

The Corellian grinned. "Could anybody force the Princess to do anything?!"

The Governor looked at his aide and the younger man approached with a book. "While I am still against this marriage, I have no choice but to acquiesce to her." The book was opened and the Princess signed, and beneath her the Corellian. The official eyes him. "Perhaps you should consider a position here."

"Thank you, Governor, but I prefer not to play soldier." Han stared at him. "We'll be all right."

With the seal from his ring affixed to the page, their marriage was official. "I wish you the best of happiness," the older man kissed Leia's cheek. "Both of you." He added to the Corellian.

LEIA and Tandy stepped gingerly over the remaining possessions in the Transport quarters. "If I take any more onboard the ship, your Uncle will kick me out for sure!" the Princess frowned. "I didn't even know I had this much!" She turned as a messenger entered and her breath quickened as she read the note. "How marvelous! Tandy, Luke's returned! Help me fix my hair!"

THE Rebel doctor watched as the Corellian slowly dressed. "I'll be sorry to see you go."

Han stared at him. "I haven't exactly been the perfect patient. I'd think you'd want to kick me out physically."

"I enjoyed listening to you and your friends!" His hand waved around the room. "This is not full of activity, you can tell! I rather envy you your life, Captain."

"If -- if you don't have anything to do, why not come on board with me," the Corellian shrugged, "you'd be the best to judge how the side is."

The Major jumped at the opportunity. "I'd really like that, but don't you want to see her Highness first?"

Han grabbed his jacket and moved toward the door. "She said she was gonna be busy with Tandy - women stuff. I'd only be in the way, or ignored. Come on."

AS they entered the Falcon, loud swearing reached them first, then a loud Wookiee roar. "Welcome aboard," Han smiled weakly at the Major. "This is normal -- we have, a, a nothing to hid." Down the corridor, he yelled. "Now what!"

The Corellian turned back to the Rebel doctor. "A -- why don't you wait, a, just right here? I'll be -- right back --"

Han ran down the corridor and skidded to a halt right behind Chewie. "Now what!" The tall creature turned and waved a wrench at him. "All right! Calm down!" He glanced into the access hole as a loud crash came from within. Lando pulled himself toward them. "I see you got the line apart! Never looked better, pal!"

Lando wiped his face. "How'd you guess?"

The Major silently walked in on the scene and Han stopped laughing. "You all remember the Major?" After a leisurely tour, the pair wound up in the lounge. "Not much, Major, but it's home." Han opened a storage compartment.

"This is a most remarkable ship, Captain!"

"Yeah, she's got her better qualities," the Corellian smiled. "Haven't had much of a chance to practice lately," he brought out a silver globe and handed it to the doctor. "Meet my partner." While the Corellian strapped on his blaster and tied down the leg, the Major examined the ball. Finally, it was released from Han's hand. "Here's where the fun begins!"

The silver globe floated casually in the air and moved to the furthest part of the lounge. Then, effortlessly, it slowly lowered itself, and finally spun quickly all the while releasing bolts of energy at the Corellian. For all its speed, Han was faster and the globe finally settled to the floor.

The Rebel doctor clapped and cheered wildly. Lando and Chewie peered into the lounge, the former hit the latter's arm. "Captain's showing off again!" Chewie laughed as the Corellian replaced his blaster in its holster and looked up at him.

The doctor came closer as the remote was deactivated. "Captain Solo, that was marvelous! I've never seen anything like it! You, you have to be the fastest gun in the entire Galaxy!" He slapped Han on the back.

The Corellian smiled faintly. "I, I don't know about that, but it's kept me alive so far. Would you tell me how my side is supposed to feel now?" Han breathed hard, his face covered with sweat. "Man, I'm out of shape; this is just a simple routine and I feel like I just ran around Tatooine!" Han slumped into a chair and wiped his face.

The doctor sat across from him. "It'll take some time to regain your stamina. How does your side feel?"

Han rubbed it. "No pain, sorta tuggin' though, like a shirt that don't fit right."

The Major nodded. "The tugging sensation is from where we closed you up."

"Will it go away?"

"Some of it, and you'll probably get so used to it that you won't notice it," the doctor offered.

"What you mean is that I just have to live with it."

"That's about it," the doctor nodded. "You were fortunate it wasn't more serious."

The truth bothered the Corellian. "Thanks, I guess I owe you somethin'." He looked at the Major. "I know Leia'd expect me to say more, but I don't know what."

The Major smiled. "Your thanks is enough, although I'd enjoy watching you practice."

Han shrugged. "It can get awful boring, I gotta lot of time to make up." He looked at the doctor. "If there was somethin' wrong with Leia, you'd tell me, wouldn't you?"

"You know it."

The Corellian nodded, tightened his jaw and let go of the orb once again.

WHILE Han was pre-occupied on the ship, Leia and Tandy were pre-occupied with the arrival of Luke Skywalker. The Princess frowned as she attempted to minimise her condition and finally gave up as Luke knocked on the door. The Jedi that greeted her seemed different somehow, older, harder. The change frightened her.

He sat on the couch next to her and hugged her gently. "I'm so glad you're here!" Leia introduced him to the shy Tandy and filled him in on their journeys. After a short moment of silence for Mon Mothma, Luke glanced around the room. "Where is Han anyway?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," Leia said. "He should have been released by now." Her anger rose at Han for not being there and for putting her into a position of defence.

"Have you and Han --. decided on when you'll get married?" he asked.

Leia's breath caught. "The marriage was sealed by the Governor --" She put a hand on the Jedi's arm. "We wanted to wait for you but Han insisted because --"

For the first time, Luke noticed her swollen form. "Oh. I see."

Leia placed a hand on his cheek. "We've sent a messenger to the Falcon. Han should be here soon. He'll be so happy to see you!"

"I should go," the Jedi said quickly. "There are plans to be made for the new base -- it seems as if we're starting over again!"

He started toward the door when Leia called. "Luke, be happy for us!"

The Jedi came back and hugged her. "If you're happy, then I am -- all I ever wanted was for you to be happy." He smiled at her. "If Han's made you happy, I'm glad. I only wish -- you would've waited--."

She kissed his cheek softly. "I understand --"

AT the Falcon, the quartet was occupied with a friendly drink. "I'd really like to travel with you sometime, but I imagine that would be impossible."

Han raised an eyebrow. "Maybe not -- once they get a new base settled -- after the baby comes. Maybe you could come back to Kashyyyk with us. I'd feel better."

"Really?" Lando said skeptically.

"Okay, okay," Han reached for the bottle as Lando and Chewie laughed. "But you're still invited to come along if you want."

SOME time later, Han walked through the door of Leia's quarters and looked around the empty rooms. "Hey! Anybody here?"

Tandy ran out and flung her arms around his neck. "Uncle Han, where have you been?"

Panic suddenly filled him. "Something happen to Leia?" He looked over her shoulder as Leia came in and he held both females.

"Luke's back," the Princess said into his shirt.

Han smiled. "Luke's back? That great -- where is he? We gotta lot to talk about! Haven't seen him in -- in -- wait a minute." He raised Leia's face gently and looked in her eyes. "He doesn't like what he heard -- hell, what he saw. I'm right, ain't I!" He felt a small tremor go through her and held her body against himself. "I'm sorry. It'll be okay; we'll make it okay." Han looked at her and gave her a slow grin; the Princess slowly returned it and buried her face in his chest. Over her head, the Corellian motioned to Tandy to leave.

The Corellian led her to the couch. "I wish you'd take it easy, isn't that what you always tell me? Now, what happened with Luke?"

Leia tucked her feet beneath herself and leaned against him. "I handled it all wrong, I barely told him we were married when I blurted out about the baby --"

Han brushed the hair back from her neck. "What's wrong with that? He knew we were getting' married. Did he expect us to wait for his okay to have a kid?" He kissed her neck. "You told me he'd understand--."

Leia shook her head. "I hurt him, I know I did -- he seemed so different."

"He's changed, we all have," he held her closer and put his hands on the growing mound. "Look, you didn't hurt him, he knew about us a long time ago. He was just surprised."

"That's not the point, Han," she pulled away from him. "I care about his feelings, he's my brother. You should, too, he's your best friend."

Han looked at the ceiling. "I care, all right? I also care about you! What difference is it gonna make if he's not happy? What good would it do for me to talk to him?"

"You could try."

"What am I supposed to say?" Han argued. "If you can't think of anythin' to say, how am I supposed to?"

The Corellian pulled her back to himself. Leia frowned. "This was supposed to be a happy time!"

"There's nothin' we can do about it, but give him time." Han kissed her gently. "Luke's gonna have to deal with it as best he can." Han cradled Leia against himself. "Right now, all I want to make sure of is you and the baby. You can't worry about Luke. The Major said you can't worry about nothin', remember?" He tenderly kissed her. "No worry, no excitement. Just happy thoughts, right?"

Leia glanced at him and smiled sadly. "I'll try -- I just wish there was something --"

Frustrated, he moved his lips against hers. When they separated, the Corellian laughed. "Guess I found one way to shut you up!"

She played with the buttons on his shirt. "How does your side feel? Did the Major check it out?"

"Yeah, it's fine," he nodded.

"Good." She poked him hard.

"OW!" he grabbed her wrist. "Wait till the baby comes, I'm gonna get you!"

Leia softly bit his finger. "Why don't you just get me now?"

The Corellian smiled, stood and picked her up off the couch. "You're getting' heavy!"

"So are you."

"Nice." Han moved to the next room and gently placed her on the bed.

He closed the door as she giggled. "Does this count as our wedding night?"

The Corellian leaned against the door jam. "Maybe if we don't, we won't be legal." He turned to go.

The Princess sat up on the bed. "Han! If you don't come here, I'll --"

"Givin' orders again?" he grinned.

"In this case I am," Leia held out her arms to him. "Come here, you old pirate."

"I told you, I ain't a pirate!" he laid down next to her.

The Princess moved nearer to him. "Just old?"

The Corellian moved her beneath him and kissed her gently. "Old, huh? I'll show you how old I am."

OUTSIDE the bedroom, C3PO muttered to himself. "Oh, dear, now where can they be? First, Master Luke comes back and barely gives me a chance to visit with R2, when he takes him away. Now to the Falcon and back here -- where can she be --" The Princess' faint giggle reached him from behind the closed door. The droid stared at it, not knowing what to do.

HAN was happily engrossed in nuzzling Leia's neck when she tapped his shoulder. He shifted position and moved his mouth up to hers. She tapped his shoulder again. "Han."

"Hmmm?" He moved to kiss her shoulder.

"Han!" she bit his ear.

The Corellian picked up his head and looked at her. "What?"

"Someone's out there," she whispered.

"So what? The door's locked, they'll go away." He placed a hand on her leg and kissed the hand on his face.

"Han, stop it!" she pulled his hair.

He shook his head and leaned on one elbow. "Not a mega-second before you dragged me in here, now you tell me to stop?"

"I did not drag you in here!" she protested. "There is someone out there!"

"So what!" Han reached for her, but Leia pulled the blanket around herself.

"Go see who it is. Maybe it's important --"

"Now?" Han sighed. Leia nodded and pointed at the door. Han looked at her and shook his head. "Now." He slowly pulled himself out of the bed and pulled his pants on. "This better be important." He grabbed his shirt and made his way across the darkened room.

Halfway to the door, Leia called to him. "Watch out for --" She crawled to the bed in response to the loud crash and whispered Corellian curse. "Are you all right?"

"DANDY!"

The droid heard the crash and knocked loudly on the door. "I told you someone was out there!" Leia hissed.

Han rubbed his shin. "Hell the whole Transport probably heard that!"

He reached the door and pulled his shirt on just as 3PO called. "Mistress Leia! Are you all right?"

Leia giggled as Han glared at her. "It couldn't be anyone else, could it?" The Corellian opened the door and stuffed in his shirt. "Yeah, metal mind, what's up?"

The sight of the dishevelled Han threw the droid for a minute. "Oh, Captain Solo, I wasn't expecting to see you here -- I mean -- oh, dear --"

"And just where would you expect to find me?" Han finished buttoning his shirt. He glared at the dumbstruck droid. "Did you want something or is this just a social call?"

"I -- I heard a crash. Is everything all right?" the perplexed droid sputtered. Before the Corellian could respond, Leia swept past him into the room. Other than a slight amount of colour in her cheeks, she looked ready to entertain the Governor himself. Han could've strangled her.

"Everything is perfectly all right, 3PO," the Princess smiled at him. "Oh, good, I see you brought our meal. You can go now, I'll serve."

The droid moved toward her. "But -- but, Madam! Surely, in your condition --"

Leia sighed, "3PO, just go. I can still hand someone a plate. I'm not an invalid!"

After he left, the Princess smiled at the Corellian. "Are you hungry? I know I am."

Han shook his head and sat next to her. "What a way to live."

She offered him a forkful. "Open up, hot shot, the bed's not going anywhere."

AS time passed, Han continued to regain his stamina and to practice his draw. He also continued to refuse Leia's pleas to become more involved in the restructuring of the new and vital government. The Princess, however, attended the many conferences, and it was only she who came into contact with Luke. Each meeting was cordial, but the strain became too much for her, and as time went by, she stayed closer to her own quarters.

During a late meal, the Major entered. "I do hope I'm not disturbing you," he smiled as he declined the offered tea. "I just wanted to inform you that the Governor is planning a reception in your honour tomorrow. He wanted me to let you know as he felt Han would be more receptive to my invitation than his. Am I right?"

Han glanced at him. "We don't need a party."

"But I'm afraid you do!" he grinned. "You'd be surprised how many people wish to congratulate you both."

"Three or four?" Han hissed.

The Princess touched his arm. "It might be fun. Please?"

"Are my friends invited?" the Corellian glared at him.

"Of course," the Major replied. "In fact, I just invited them -- Chewbacca is looking forward to it."

'He'd walk through fire for a free drink,' Han thought. He shrugged. "What the hell?"

The Princess threw her arms around his neck. "Thank you!" Her face went white and she leaned against him.

"Are you all right?" Han held her tightly.

Leia shook her head as the Major rushed to her side. "It's all right, honest -- it's nothing!"

"Let's make sure," the Rebel doctor smiled. "Han, take her into the bedroom."

THE Corellian waited anxiously outside the bedroom door. As the Major came out he grabbed his arm. "Well?"

The Rebel doctor rubbed his eyes. "I don't like those cramps she's been having. I'll bring her into the medi-unit after the party --"

"Party? Uh uh, no party. You take her in now!"

The Major held up a hand. "The party might be just what she needs to relax. Don't worry, she'll have plenty of people looking after her."

HAN climbed into bed and held Leia tightly. "Don't do that any more, okay?"

"I didn't do it on purpose, you know." She glared at him.

"I know," he kissed her forehead. "Do you still think this party is a good idea?"

"I won't stay if I don't feel good," she promised. "We could go for just a while!"

He held her tighter. "Why am I givin' in to you?"

"Because you love me."

ALL HIS life Han had done his best -- he had studiously avoided triangles. This time it was different. No matter how much he tried to push the idea out of his mind, the Corellian knew Luke still loved Leia. Sister or not, Han questioned the Jedi's ability to turn off his feelings overnight. He unconsciously rubbed the Princess' arm and wondered if she was right and he was wrong. He hoped the kid was stronger than himself.

Han finally gave up his fight, and slowly disengaged himself from the sleeping Leia. The Corellian walked into the silent Falcon. He picked up a tool belt and a carbon lantern and crawled into an access hole. Han worked as quietly as he could; the last thing he needed or wanted was company. It was slow work, but the methodical movement was comforting. An oil line had no emotion. One day soon, Han thought, he'd have to have a talk with Chewie. He was acting stranger than usual and the only conclusion the Corellian could come to was that it had something to do with Leia. This strange twist was something else the Corellian didn't understand at all. After all, the Wookiee had spent the greater part of his life steering females toward Han. Han sat on the floor and cleaned the pipe fitting. Whatever Chewie was feeling, he thought, he didn't have a right to. Chewie had a life of his own outside their partnership, why shouldn't he? The thought of an encounter over his marriage rose the Corellian's anger and he swung at a nearby pipe. He swore silently as the clanging sound echoed through the sleeping ship.

Within seconds, Han glanced up at a throaty roar. "Yeah, it's me! No, nothin's wrong, I couldn't sleep! I don't need any help!" He watched as the Wookiee shrugged and turned away. "Hey, Chewie, wait!" Han called as he climbed out of the hole. "Why don't you go make some of that so-called stew of yours?" The Wookiee growled sceptically and Han glared at him. "Yeah! I'm sure!" He grinned. "C'mon, fur bag, it'll be like old times!" Chewie brightened, then finally nodded after clapping the man on the back.

The Corellian stared at his soapy reflection in the mirror and scowled. 'Solo,' he thought, 'you are a mental incompetent, now you got three people to make happy!'

CHEWBACCA busied himself over the galley's stove, grunting in some rhythmic fashion. Han watched him from the doorway. "Mother hen," he muttered as he gathered his courage for at least three helpings of the Wookiee's stew.

Chewie motioned him to the table and ladled the concoction into the bowl as Han opened a bottle. The Wookiee grunted happily as Han grinned at him. "We should do this more often!" Chewie growled slightly and Han glared at him. "Okay, okay. It's my fault." They ate in silence and finally the furry giant ruffed a question. The Corellian shook his head.

"No, nothin's wrong -- Leia had a problem last night, but the Major said she'd be fine." Han took a deep breath and set his spoon down. "Are you mad 'cause we have to stay here awhile?" Chewie bared his fangs and Han stared him down. "It wasn't my idea to come back here, you know! And don't lay it on Lando, 'cause you agreed with him! We'll go back home just as soon's the baby comes -- Yes, it's still my home! Aw, fur bag, don't start givin' me a hard time, dammit!" The Corellian grabbed his spoon and dug into the stew half-heartedly. "The only reason I -- I thought about quittin' the Falcon was 'cause of Jabba, you know I wasn't think' that 'cause I wanted it." Chewie eyed him cautiously. "Now?" Han glanced at him and forced a grin. "Now, I want some more stew!"

The human's friend lumbered to the pot and scooped more stew into his bowl. Han stared at his hands. "Luke? No, I haven't seen him. No! I haven't been avoidin' him! I, I been busy with that -- dammit, don't start!"

Lando leaned in slightly. "Is this a private argument or can anyone join in?"

As he sat down and took a bowl from Chewbacca, Lando glanced at Han. "Was that you beating on the oil line?"

Han nodded. "I just gotta put it back together."

Calrissian gaped at him. "You fixed it?"

"It's either fixed or it'll blow up when we turn it on!" Han grinned.

As Han lowered himself into the hole, the Wookiee leaned over grunting encouragements. Suddenly he jumped as a small hand tapped his shoulder. His jump and Wookiee shriek in turn caused Leia to jump. The Corellian slowly pulled himself up. "Now what!" he yelled.

"Can you leave that long enough to speak to me, at least?" Leia said.

"Why not?" he moved the hair out of his eyes and spread grease on his forehead. "What can I do for you?"

"I just wanted to know if you were all right," she smiled. "That note you left was unreadable."

Han gave her a weak grin. "I, I fixed the oil line --"

The Princess wiped some grease off his nose. "Wonderful. Did you have anything to eat?"

"Oh -- yeah, uh Chewie made some of his stew. I'd, uh, offer you some but --"

"Stew?" Leia looked from one to the other. "Did you put vegetables in it?" Chewie nodded and Leia glared at Han.

"He's bigger than you!" The Corellian climbed out of the hole and kissed her. "What're you doin' now?"

"I'm going to get ready for the party," she said. "Will you be long?"

Han grinned. "No -- but you go ahead without me --"

"Oh no, you don't! I'll wait for you!" The Corellian and Wookiee resumed their work and didn't notice as the Princess stopped momentarily at the hatch before going on.

LEIA put the final pin in place in Tandy's hair and sighed. "I wish I knew where your Uncle was." She leaned over the young girl's shoulder. "You don't think he'd deliberately be late? He wasn't too thrilled with this party."

"Oh, no, Leia," Tandy turned to face her. "He'd never hurt you that way."

"I just wish he'd get here," she muttered.

As time passed on, Lando and Chewbacca arrived. Calrissian kissed her hand. "You look absolutely beautiful. Motherhood becomes you. It's almost time, isn't it?"

The Princess blushed slightly. "Not too much longer, it seems forever already!"

"Well, where's poppa?" he asked as Chewie growled.

"Don't you know where he is?" she stiffened.

Lando shook his head. "We thought he'd be back here by now --"

As voices and grunts rose louder and louder, Han strolled in. "Now what!" he yelled.

Leia stared at him. "Where have you been?"

The Corellian looked around. "Where the hell could I go!" He eyed her appreciatively. "You look great!"

Leia stared at him. Though he had cleaned up and changed, he looked different somehow. "You got your hair cut!"

Han shrugged in embarrassment. "It was getting' kind of long-- hell, I can't do anything around here."

Leia nodded. "I think it looks nice."

"If you're all set, can we just go now?" he mumbled.

WHILE Lando, Chewie and Tandy moved on ahead, Han and Leia were stopped in the corridor by some members of the Rebellion-turned-Alliance. These were people the Corellian knew and liked and his spirits lifted somewhat.

IN the reception area, Lando and Chewie left Tandy with a small group of other children and headed for the bar. The young girl had become more than an oddity on the Transport, had made many new friends. As the children heaped their plates with sweet confections, the Major approached them. "Well, I see you all know a balanced diet when you're offered one!" His friendly smile was met with a chorus of loud groans. He turned to Tandy. "Are they coming?"

"I think so."

"I often wondered if they ever would." His frown deepened as he turned toward the doorway and his next mission for the Governor to make sure Han and Leia appeared quickly. The Major had known the official for many years and, while he was always a pompous bore, the doctor still could not understand the old man's intense dislike for the Corellian. No, it was more than sheer dislike, or even a clash of personalities; it was a genuine deep-seated hatred. Being a man of little prejudice, the Major tried to understand that of others. But what the Governor's attitude toward the Corellian was, he could not. It seemed more than mere prejudice; bordering on the fanatical. In the corridor, he watched as the couple, their arms around each other, talked happily with some other party-goers. There had to be more to the Governor's hatred, the doctor thought, much more. He

pushed any further conjecture aside as the pair walked up to him. "We're comin'," Han grumbled. "Or is there an armed escort further down?"

At the doorway, Han stopped and glanced at the mingling crowd. He leaned over to Leia. "I'm not too sure about this."

Leia smiled up at him and squeezed his hand. "No matter what, we'll be fine. You, mean and Little Han."

The Corellian winced. "Little Han? Maybe I should go look at that oil line."

She tugged his hand. "You fixed it. Come on."

As they were surrounded by an assortment of people, the Corellian glanced around the large room. He smiled as Lando sidled up to him. "Need rescuing, pal?"

Han broke into the Princess' conversation by squeezing her elbow. "I'm gonna get somethin' to drink. Want something?"

Leia nodded. "Some juice would be nice. Later we can get something to eat?"

Han kissed her cheek and whispered, "Think you can hold out that long?" She glared at him as he backed off.

When the group spread somewhat, Han made his way back to her. Halfway there, he heard his name called and stopped. The Corellian turned and faced Luke. "I haven't seen you yet, Han; you avoiding me?" the Jedi smiled tightly.

Han forced a grin and shook his head. "Hiya, kid, you're lookin' good. Avoidin' you? Hell, no," Han shrugged. "I been busy -- tryin' to fix that oil line -- finally did it, too. You coulda come around, too."

Luke nodded. "I've been busy, too. Plans have had to be made. We could have used your help."

Han shook his head. "This isn't my government, kid. I don't want to make your decisions."

"Don't you think Leia could use your help in this?" Luke asked. "She wants you to be a part of this."

Han looked over at the Princess and shrugged. "Yeah, well, nobody gets everything they want. That's life."

The Jedi grabbed Han's arm. "Except you."

"Huh?"

Luke's voice rose. "You get everything you want, don't you? You just take care of yourself!"

Han shook off his hand. "I love her, kid."

The young Jedi looked Han up and down. "You don't love anybody but yourself. You wanted her and you got her, didn't you?"

Han glared at him. "Look, kid, I don't know what's botherin' you, but you knew about me and her --" His face softened. "You knew we were getting' married --"

"Some day," Luke broke in. "But not like this! She's a Princess, Han, you can't use her like --"

"Like what?" Han snapped..

Luke came up behind him. "Han, I want to talk to you!"

Leia took the glass from him and smiled. "Think Luke wants to talk to you. I'm so glad you two finally got together."

Luke pulled Han's arm and turned him around. "I said I want to talk to you."

"Later. We were just gonna get somethin' to eat."

Leia touched the Corellian's arm. "I'll eat with the Major. He'll probably want to check my plate anyway. You two should talk." The Princess kissed Han as the Major took her arm. She smiled at the two men and walked toward the buffet.

Han looked at Luke. "Okay, kid, you want to talk -- talk."

"In the corridor," the Jedi replied as he moved toward the door.

WITH the din filtering down to them, Han waited. Luke stared at him. Han studied the walls.

"How could you?"

"How could I what?" Han asked.

"Come on! You know what! Leia!" Luke's anger rose.

Han pointed at the Jedi. "I told you once, I love her!" HE stared down the hall and shook his head. "What am I explainin' this to you for?"

"You couldn't leave her alone, could you? You couldn't keep your hands off her! And now --"

The Corellian was incredulous. "Grow up, kid! What the hell did you think we were doin' on Endor! Exchanging recipes? It takes two people. Why don't you ask her why she couldn't keep her hands off me?"

The anger built up in Luke and he took a swing at Han, it connected heavily with his jaw. The force of it knocked the Corellian off his feet. He sat on the floor and wiped the blood from his mouth. "Get up!" Luke yelled.

Han slowly got to his feet, keeping his distance from Luke. "I'm not gonna fight you, kid." He shook his head to clear it. "If we --. coulda got married sooner, we woulda --" He felt his lip as it began to swell. "Why don't we just --" Han never finished as Luke lunged for him and hit him again. This time, the Corellian slammed into the wall.

"Come on, Han. You can handle a female, how about a man?" Luke challenged him. Breathing hard, Han looked at him. "I told you, kid, I ain't gonna fight you." Luke flung himself at the Corellian, who ducked and caught Luke from behind and pinned his arms to his body. "Take it easy, kid." Luke loosened one arm and shoved the elbow into Han's just-mended side. A wave of pain went through him and he slid to the floor. As the Corellian struggled to his feet, a cry came from the doorway. In seconds a number of people crowded around. Han's head spun as he backed away from the angry Jedi. From somewhere in the crowd, Han heard Chewie's growl as he came up behind Luke. "No, Chewie!" His eyes off the Jedi, the Corellian was hit again.

Through the blur in his eyes, Han caught sight of Leia as she ran toward the scene. On his knees, the Corellian whispered her name as Luke hit him again. He spun into darkness as Leia slowly slid into the arms of the Major.

HE was surrounded by people and he swung his arms wildly as he fought to get to her. Something stung his face and his eyes opened wide. Lando placed a firm hand on his chest. Han shook his head clear and stared at his surroundings. "What'm I doin' here?"

Chewie growled and Lando swabbed at another cut. "You asked us to bring you here!"

Han slowly sat up. "I don't remember anythin' except Leia fallin'. I gotta get to her."

"You coulda took Luke out with one punch," Lando protested.

"And Leia woulda killed me." He muttered.

The trio entered the Transport's medi-unit and Tandy ran into Han's arms. He held her off. "Is Leia all right?"

"I think so. The doctor will be here to tell you soon.."

Han hugged her tightly and looked up as the Rebel doctor walked in. "How is she?"

"I've given her something to help her sleep. I'll keep a close eye on her. Why don't you all go get something to eat and get some rest?"

"I want to see her," the Corellian demanded.

"She's really very groggy," the doctor reached up to touch Han's face. "Let me do something about those cuts --"

Han pulled away from him. "I'm all right. I just want to see her."

In the dimly lit room, the Major touched her arm. "I don't want her upset any more."

Han glared at him. "I didn't upset her! Hell, maybe they shoulda just left me at Jabba's."

He kissed her forehead and she stirred. "I'm sleepy."

"You're supposed to be," Han shushed her.

Leia reached for his hand. "Han -- the baby -- it hurt so much."

He brushed her hair back. "Sssssh. The baby's all right -- you just sleep." Han smiled slightly. "Everythin's gonna be fine."

The Princess smiled sleepily at him. "I know -- you'd never let anything happen to our baby."

He kissed her hand. "You go to sleep. Nobody gonna take me outta here." He watched her sleep for a long time, then finally rested his own head and fell asleep.

HAN woke with a start as the Major shook his arm. The Corellian rubbed his eyes against the harsh light of the doctor's office. He shook his head against the offered mug. "What?"

"I wish you'd pull that wall down from around you," the Major stared at him. "I am on your side; your's and Leia's!"

Han shifted in the chair. "You gonna lecture me, or tell me about my wife."

The Major shook his head. "I think the baby will come sooner than I'd like."

The Corellian moved from the chair and stared at the dark void outside. "How soon?"

"I don't know; we'll not make it any sooner than necessary. All we can do is try."

Han turned. "I promised her nothin' would happen."

"I know," the doctor nodded, "so did I."

"Can -- can I go back in now?" Han asked.

The Major held his arm. "Get some rest, I'll call you."

He looked at the doctor. "My, my friends are still here. You'll call me if she wakes up? I don't want her to wake up without me there -- that's one promise I can keep."

THEY might have to take the baby," Han said quietly as he slid into a chair in the waiting room. "We shoulda gone straight home!"

You needed treatment on that side!" Lando yelled.

"The hell with my side! We were --. happy there! We had everything we ever needed or wanted." He began to ramble. Chewie knelt by Han's side and put a large furry paw around him. "I'm gonna need more than Corellian luck for this one, pal." Chewie held him tightly and passed on whatever strength he had to offer.

Han pulled away and rubbed his side. "Where's Tandy?"

"Sleeping. You want me to get her?" Lando asked.

"No. Somebody should be sleepin'." He smiled at Lando. "Thanks for bein' here, I don't have many friends left." His face clouded. "If somethin' happens to the baby, she'll never forgive me -- wouldn't blame her."

The door slid open and Luke walked in. "I -- just heard. Is Leia all right?"

"Maybe," Han grunted. "We're waitin' on tests."

The Corellian pulled away from the group and stared out the window. "No tests take this long!" Chewie grunted and the Corellian spun on him. "No, I don't trust him! I don't trust anybody any more!"

The Wookiee grabbed his arm and forced him into a chair. When he protested, Lando intervened. "They'll call, pal, you can't help Leia by eating yourself up inside."

Han gave up and leaned back in the chair. Luke studied Han's drawn face. "I -- I'm sorry."

"Forget it, kid."

Luke moved forward in the chair. "I am sorry, Han."

The Corellian's anguished face looked through the Jedi. "I told ya, kid - forget it! It doesn't matter any more! Nothin' matters any more!" He rubbed his side. "All I want is for Leia and the baby to be all right --" He spun as the Major called him.

"The baby's going to be born now, whether we're ready or not," the Major said tiredly. "I won't give you any false hope, Han, I'll do my best."

"I promised her," Han hissed.

The doctor stopped and held the Corellian's arms. "She's going to need all you have to give her, and she needs it now."

THE Princess looked at Han groggily as he kissed. "They said the baby's coming, Han. Don't let them, please, don't let them!"

He held her hand tightly. "I can't stop it now, Princess -- I'm sorry --"

She groaned slightly as slipped into unconsciousness. The Major nodded at Han. "Just stay with her, I want this baby as much as you do!"

The Corellian held her hand tightly, his eyes shut tight against the growing tears, his mind raced with the words he vaguely remembered saying long ago to some god of his childhood. Shortly, a baby's cry filled the room and Han looked up. The Rebel doctor smiled beneath his mask. "You've got a daughter, Captain! A perfectly beautiful little girl! Wake her up, Han."

As he rubbed her cheek, Leia stirred sleepily. "The baby," she whispered hoarsely.

"We got us a girl, Princess. A girl!"

The Princess struggled to keep her eyes open. "Can we call her Helena?"

The Corellian touched her cheek. "Whatever you want, sister, whatever you want."

As she slipped off into sleep again, the Major tapped his shoulder. "Come see your daughter."

Han looked at the kicking infant in the small basket, and sniffed slightly. "She's so small." He grinned as he wiped his cheek. Han stared at his new-born daughter in sheer awe. "Leia wants to call her Helena. How can she be small?" He watched as the baby kicked and brought a tiny fist to her mouth. "She hungry?"

The Rebel doctor grinned through his own misty eyes. "Corellian spunk, probably. She wants her mother."

SHORTLY, Han returned to Leia's room. The Princess smiled at him. "Come here, laser brain, she won't bite."

As the baby nursed at the Princess' breast, Han touched her tiny hand. "She's so small."

Leia touched his cheek. "She's perfect. You promised me and she is."

They turned as the Major entered with two druids who carried a cot between them. "Thought you'd like to spend the night with your family."

Han broke through his daze. "Do -- do our friends know yet?"

The Rebel doctor laughed. "Why don't you go tell them?"

The Corellian looked at Leia. She grinned back. "Chewie is going to love a baby girl!"

Han glanced at the doctor. "Can I call them? I mean, can they see her?"

"Of course," the doctor patted his arm. "Go, tell them."

THE mood was still glum as Han slid to a halt in the waiting room. He grabbed Chewie's arm. "We got a girl! A little girl! I want you to see her first!" Han pulled him down the corridor.

He nudged the Wookiee toward the bed as Leia called him. She unwrapped the baby and motioned for him to come closer. "May I present Helena?"

The baby kicked as the furry paw tickled her. Chewie bellowed in glee and turned to hug the Corellian; he lifted him off the floor. As Han took a breath, he smiled at Leia. "He says we did good."

Lando was next. He 'coo'd' at the baby and kissed Leia's cheek. "Chewie was right. She's as perfect as her mother." He hit Han's arm, laughed and turned out the door.

When Tandy came in, she was already springing tears of happiness. Han shook his head. "You ever gonna stop cryin'?"

Leia wiped her own eyes and glared at the Corellian. "Don't listen to your Uncle!"

Finally, they were alone and Han slipped into a chair next to the bed and relaxed. He looked lovingly at Leia for a while when there was a soft knock at the door. Luke stuck his head in. "Can I come in?"

Han stiffened, but Leia touched his arm. "Of course."

The young Jedi stood awkwardly by the bed. "Chewie's bellowing all over the place! Lando said something about bringing you a bottle --" I just wanted to apologise for what happened at the party."

Han cleared his throat. "Don't you want to see your niece, kid?"

Leia unwrapped the blanket as the Jedi came nearer. Helena Solo was sound asleep, chewing on her fist. "She's beautiful," Luke smiled. He looked at Han. "Isn't she kind of small?" The Corellian frowned. "Well, her mother isn't exactly --"

The Princess shifted the baby in her arms. "If you make one more crack about my height --"

"-- or lack of it --" Luke interrupted. Han laughed.

"Both of you are rude!" Leia snapped.

"Rude?" Luke frowned.

"Take it easy, kid, that's an improvement!" Han moved the blanket tighter around the baby. Leia moved it back. "She's gonna get cold, sister," he protested.

"Are you an expert now?" Leia teased.

Han shrugged. "Well, I didn't do too bad the first time." He leaned back in his chair and grinned.

"I had nothing to do with it, I suppose?" she glared at him.

"A little," he retorted.

Luke shook his head. "You two haven't changed a bit!"

The door slid open and Tandy entered. "I thought you might like to freshen up."

C3PO followed with the baby's bed. He nodded toward Leia. "I've brought the baby's bed."

Leia sat up. "Oh, thank you very much. Just put it over here." She leaned slightly and moved the bundle toward Han. "Would you like to put her in?"

The Corellian's face whitened. "I -- I don't think so." He backed away slightly.

Leia glared at him. "She is not going to bite you!"

Han held up his hands. "I know -- I just don't know how to -- uh --"

Luke laughed. "There's really something you don't know how to do?"

Han glared at him. "You're so smart, you put her in!"

The Jedi glanced at him and shook his head. "I, uh, would, but that's -- uh -- your privilege!" He smiled.

"Oh well." Han frowned down at the little bundle.

"All you have to do is hold her head." Leia smiled at him.

"What if she squirms?" Han panicked slightly.

"You're stronger than she is! Hold her!" Leia hissed.

The Corellian held the infant closer and stared at her face. "How come she's got blue eyes?"

Leia stared at him. "They'll change."

"You sure?"

The Princess nodded. "Are you going to stand there all night or put her to bed?"

"In a minute," she smiled. "This isn't so bad." Then the baby slowly stretched and Han flinched. "I think she's ready for bed now." He gently placed her in the crib.

"Not too bad, huh, laser brain?" Leia laughed.

"Gimme a chance," he covered the infant with the blankets she had just kicked off.

Lando walked in. "Man, you're missing a good party!"

"Sssshhhh!" Han yelled at him.

"Sorry." Calrissian looked in the crib and chuckled. "I can see Leia in her, but what did you contribute?"

Han shook his head. "You want somethin', or did you just come here to insult me?" He frowned slightly. "I thought you and Chewie were gonna sack in?"

Lando punched his arm. "Who can sleep with all this going on? I came by to bring you some of Mos Eisley's finest --"

"Two bottles? You know how much this stuff costs?" Han stared at him in disbelief.

As Lando left the Major and the Governor walked in. The Rebel doctor looked around the room. "Is this a private party?" He smiled at Leia. "You should be asleep like your daughter. Of course, if you offer us something to toast with -- I just might put in a good word for you to the man who runs this place!"

As the Corellian poured the wine, the Governor looked at the sleeping infant. "She is a beautiful little girl, Leia. I wish you much happiness with her." He quickly drank from his glass and kissed the Princess good-night.

The Major broke the silence left by the official's exit. "He, uh -- hasn't been feeling well of late. He's been under a good deal of strain lately --"

"And he hates my guts," the Corellian mumbled.

"That's not true!" Leia protested.

Han waved her off. "No? I didn't exactly hear myself mentioned there!"

Leia glared at him. "He'll come around."

"Don't hold your breath, sweetheart!"

The Rebel doctor broke in. "If I might offer a suggestion; if you let him interfere in your lives, he'll win. You have to learn to ignore him. Think you ought to know that he's having a room fixed up for her."

The Corellian stared at him. "He knows I can never give her what he can."

"That's what he's counting on." The doctor nodded.

Leia reached for Han's hand. "Let him -- her home's the Falcon, she'll love it as much as we do."

The Major placed his glass on the tray. "Now, I must insist you get some sleep. Would you like some help during the night? I can send someone in --"

Han shook his head. "Sooner or later we've gotta get used to this, thanks." When the door shut, Han sat on the edge of the bed and held the Princess gently. "How do you feel?"

"Tired. Is anything wrong?"

Han kissed her hair. "Nothing." He grinned slightly. "Think I'll teach her how to shut 3PO down first."

"You wouldn't!" Leia giggled. "No, I guess you would."

They watched as Helena kicked the blankets off. Han reached over and covered her again. "She sure didn't get that from you - you're always cold!"

"You never cover me up like that!" Leia poked him.

Han shrugged. "You told me you could take care of yourself." Helena began to whimper. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, she's just hungry." Leia pushed him. "Give her to me, please."

The Corellian looked from her to the crib. "You crazy? She's quirming all over the place!"

The Princess squeezed his arm. "Han, look at me -- watch my mouth. If you don't hand her to me, I'll need someone for the night."

"Oh," he replied quietly. "What if I drop her?"

"Han!" she hit his arm. "Just wrap the blanket around her tightly and pick her up."

"I...I don't want to hurt her." He gently pulled the blanket around the crying infant. He quickly handed her to Leia. "That she got from you, can't lay still for a minute!" Han leaned back in his chair and watched as the baby nursed.

"You staring again," Leia whispered. She looked up at him. "I said, you're staring again!"

"Yeah, I guess I am," he blinked. "I was just thinkin' --"

"You keep putting your brain in hyperdrive!" Leia laid the infant on her stomach.

Han moved closer and rubbed the baby's back. Leia traced the back of his hand. "So what were you thinking about?"

Han shrugged. "I don't know -- the past -- everything that's happened." He glanced at her. "The last thing I remember at Bespin was seein' you and wonderin' if I'd ever see you again -- if I'd stop bein' a jerk long enough to --"

Leia put an arm around his neck and kissed his cheek. "I told you I loved you."

The Corellian nodded. "Took you long enough --"

She mussed his hair. "It's over now, we have each other and we both have her."

Han nodded sceptically. As the baby fell asleep, he moved her to her crib. "I'm getting' pretty good at this!" His smile faded as Helena kicked off the blanket. He threw up his hands. "I quit!"

Leia laughed. "If she gets cold, she'll let us know! Can we go to sleep now?"

Han stretched slightly. "I am tired." He nodded. He settled her under her blanket and kissed her good-night. "I love you. Maybe tomorrow we won't have so many visitors."

"I'd like some time alone with you," the Princess nodded. Han lowered the light and moved to the lumpy cot. As he undressed, Leia called. "Will you be all right over there?"

The Corellian laid down and pulled the blanket over his head. "Fine. Just fine." As hard as the cot was, he didn't even remember when he fell asleep.

HAZEL eyes looked straight ahead in the dark. A noise had broken through their dreamless void and it puzzled him. Then he heard Leia's voice. "Han, come here!"

Panic filled him again and he stumbled out of the cot and hit his shin on the end of the Princess' bed. "What? What?" he whispered.

"Turn on the light," the voice whispered in the darkness.

Han muttered as he groped his way and raised the lantern. He turned it up and groaned as the bright light seared his brain. He rubbed them as he turned. "What!"

"Helena's hungry," Leia pulled herself up.

Han shook off the sleep from his mind and reached for the baby.

The Princess touched his hand. "Not yet. We need a new diaper. Or do you want to do it?"

The Corellian shook his head. "Diaper? Where?" he asked hoarsely. He felt his way and brought back the whole pile.

He disposed of the used diaper and crawled into the cot and out of it as Leia called. "Han, you can put her back now?" He put her back in her crib. "I love you," the Princess called. Yawning, the Corellian nodded as he fell face down on the hard bed.

After the fourth interruption, Han was still able to crawl over to the cot. Leia glanced at his still form and didn't have the heart to wake him. She cradled the baby next to her and soon drifted off.

As the baby kicked beside her, Leia awoke slowly. She picked up the cooing baby and cradled her in her arms. "You are in a good mood!" the Princess played with the infant's hand. "You are a lucky little girl. Did you know that?" She looked over at Han who hadn't moved. Leia brushed back the light covering of fine hair. "You have to be very quiet, your Daddy's real tired!" The baby gurgled. There was a knock at the door and Leia called in a whisper. "Come in!"

The Major and Tandy entered. "Hello!" he called.

Leia waved violently and pointed at Han. The Rebel doctor grinned. "Bad night?" He walked over to the sleeping Corellian and lifted his leg onto the cot. Quietly, he covered him with the blanket.

"She was up four times last night. The last time I didn't have the heart to wake him any more."

The Major played with Helena's hand. "I've come to take you and this little one for a check up. Tandy will carry this package and you're going to walk. Shall we wake up Han?"

Leia stared at him. "Are you insane?" She slowly pulled herself to the edge of the bed and pulled on her robe. "I'd rather have awakened Darth Vader!"

The Major chuckled. "I see your point."

The Corellian pulled the blanket under his chin and turned on his side. He had a dull ache in his shin and vaguely remembered the night before. Han rubbed his eyes and listened, the room was silent. He smiled and hugged his pillow as he fell back asleep.

[Continue To Part 6](#)

[Back To Index](#)