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You Have the Greatest Heart

by [Birgitt Schuknecht](#)

The opportunity was too good to be true. Too good to be missed. Leia hadn't expected that she would have the chance to free Han and flee from Jabba's realm so soon and so easily. But then she'd never trusted the rumours and outrageous tales that travelled the Galaxy. Rumours about Jabba's decadency and tales about the extraordinary feasts with which he entertained his palace on a regular basis. On an every night basis, resulting in a total collapse of both master and serfs at the end of the Palace Light Cycle. Even those guards who were supposed to be on duty had had their share of drink and food and amusement of any possible and impossible kind and their attention was lacking any resemblance with what you'd expect from such a much-hated being like Jabba. Well, going by the hard and hurt feelings of his enemies, Jabba should have lived squeezed into a high security vault.

_ Makes me wonder how he's survived so long. Maybe that's the reason. His superiority on this planet, in the entire Rim of the Galaxy is probably so great that stories about his stronghold are enough to fend off would-be assassins. And after all, I'm most likely the first to try an attack from inside. And I'm not attacking His Ugliness himself.

You sound more and more like Han._ Leia smiled beneath the hideous mask of the bounty hunter she'd used to pass Jabba's defences. Nonetheless, the costume would have been useless without the bait in the shape of a brave Wookiee who'd sacrifice his life for his partner and friend. The thought of Chewie shook her out of the short reverie. _ First things first. There will be enough time for jokes and teasing when all of us are out of here.-_

Her plan was very simple and equally desperate. Too many ifs were involved and the chances were minimal all those ifs would play their assigned role. However,

like the man for whose rescue the mission had been designed would have done, Leia was determined to grab the slightest of opportunities. _After all, there is another..._

Leia shoved the last thought aside; Luke's Plan B might never be needed. No time to ponder about failure. The task at hand was huge enough to concentrate on. After she'd freed Han they'd seek out Lando and with his help they could go for the Wookiee. And then they would leave this life equivalent of damnation.

Slowly, inaudibly, she made her way to the alcove where the solid form of her lover held a blind watch over the Hutt's dominion. Leia stole precious seconds to let her eyes and thoughts linger on the scene that was displayed before her. The wall in itself being a place of honour, hanging there immobile, passive and powerless, mocked the very essence of Han Solo, bringing him as close to death as was possible without killing him for good. She closed the distance between herself and the object that had dominated her nightmares in the past months and reached up with her gloved hand. Every tear, every feeling of despair since Han had been carbonited vanished with that little gesture, leaving only gratefulness and a fathomless love for the man inside the incarceration. The life signs at the side of the form were active, indicating everything was normal.

Normal! Nothing about the hibernation technique applied to a sentient being was anything close to normal. Those regular flashes were only abominations of a heartbeat she'd listened to while Han had stroked her hair comfortingly, back on Bespin. And now that greatest heart of all was imprisoned, its beating transformed into a mechanical device that wasn't a pattern of life anymore but a proof of despair and a promise of eventual death.

Leia's diplomatic schooling had enabled her to control every desire for revenge. Until now. Now the anger found the necessary focus to border at the threshold to hatred. A hatred that battled with her love for Han as she tried to take the next step. After what seemed an eternity love won out, letting Leia slip into a kind of automatism and she deactivated the force-field and Boba Fett's most intriguing bounty came to a stand on the Palace's floor with a distinct thud. After another moment of hesitation Leia initiated the defreezing procedure.

The moment the light and the noise built up before her she knew she'd made a mistake. The chances she had taken had been too great and she could only hope they would survive the consequences long enough to regret her decision. However, destiny left her no room to linger on philosophical issues. Han fell from the encasement, convulsing. It took Leia some painful moments before she overcame her shock to see Han so vulnerable. The tormented being had little resemblance to the man she remembered with all her heart and soul. Shivering, coughing. Han seemed to reach out for - something, someone. That finally got her started and Leia took her lover into an embrace. A moment so long awaited

and longed for had become an automatic reaction. The scene was nothing like her dreams.

"Just relax for a moment. You're free of the carbonite." The voice distorted by the mask got Han's attention and he touched the covered face. "Shhh, you have hibernation sickness."

"I can't see." Never before had she witnessed such despair in the beloved voice. Still, just hearing it made her heart sing.

"Your eyesight will return in time." Leia wondered while she kept on the bounty hunter's mask. Of course, Han couldn't see the difference, but he would hear it... Somehow she waited for the perfect moment. Waited for the moment her words would make the difference matter...

"Where am I?"

"Jabba's palace." The moment would come, soon...

"Who are you?" came the hoarse question. The moment had come and she removed the mask revealing her face and hair. Her fears of detection vanished with that single movement. _Let them kill us now. Now that I'm with him I don't care anymore._

"Someone who loves you," she said and sealed it with a kiss.

"Leia!" He reached for her, as he'd done in all her dreams and yet totally different. There was only one thing she knew for certain before she heard the cruel laughter at her back.

She'd freed the greatest heart of all and nothing else mattered.

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