

[Back To Index](#)

Bring Me The Head of Han Solo
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Salex Bruitt crime lord extraordinaire, sat brooding behind his elegantly-carved Kesselian desk as his two henchmen brought his daughter before him.

Jewel Bruitt was eighteen, very beautiful, very pregnant, and very unmarried. Her violet eyes stared defiantly into her father's, steeled for whatever was to come next.

"Jewel, I will ask you this for the last time," Salex said through gritted teeth. "If you don't answer, I will have the child taken from you."

"No!" Jewel cried, her arms covering her swollen abdomen.

"Then tell me ... who is the father?!" Jewel sighed with resignation. She stared at the fine carpeting as she said, "Han Solo."

Salex showed no emotion. "That's all I wanted to hear. Go now."

"Yes, Papa." Jewel turned and hurried out of the room. As soon the doors slid closed behind her, Salex pounded his fist on the desk. His face had a vaguely reddish hue. His voice was a snarl.

"Bring me the head of Han Solo." The henchmen nodded "You got it, Boss."

It was a typical night in the spaceport's shanty town. Spirea-Gor wasn't exactly the safest spaceport in the galaxy, but it sure was one of the most fun.

The bars and clubs were rollicking all night and the streets were packed with revelers.

Han Solo and Chewbacca partied among them, celebrating a successful run out of the galactic core. They considered themselves extremely lucky to have landed such a lucrative job, since the galaxy was in the middle of a recession so bad, even the underworld was feeling its effects.

The Corellian and his Wookiee companion were passing a small casino/bar as a tall thirtyish man called to them from the doorway. "Hey, Solo! What are you doin' out here, you slimy pirate?!"

Han turned and went over to embrace the man. "Bernard!" Han exclaimed "Geez, I haven't seen you in six months! How'd that run to Avalon go?"

"Well, other than running into my ex-wife, blasting my way through a TIE picket, and getting screwed by the guys who hired me, I'd say it was a resounding success!"

"Typical," Han said with his trademark grin. Chewbacca came forward and offered his salutations.

"Nice to see you too, Chewie," Bernard said. "Hey, why don't you boys come on inside and let me buy you a drink?"

"Hey, I'll take a freebie any time," Han said. Chewbacca enthusiastically agreed.

"That's what I figure," Bernard said, "Come on."

The three entered the dark, smoky, noisy night spot, and snaked their way through the throngs surrounding betting tables and games. They at last came to the bar. "I'll have a Fuzzy Asteroid,"

Han told the young, attractive female bartender. "You got it," she replied with a wink-

"The Wookiee will have a mug of Slurpenburp ale and I'll have a Nasty Twi'lek," Bernard said. Minutes later, the woman served the drinks.

"A toast," Bernard said as he held up his glass, "To friendship and good times."

"Hear, hear."

"Wrranhhh"

All three smugglers clinked their glasses together and drank. After Han had imbibed about half of his drink, his vision started to blur.

"What's in this thing?" Han grumbled as the room started to spin. He knew he had a higher tolerance than this.

"Han, you look awfully pale," Bernard said. Han's stomach was churning uncontrollably. Chewie started hollering and waving his arms angrily at the bartender, demanding help for his friend. Bernard took a syringe out of his pocket and jammed the needle into the Wookiee's neck. Seconds later, Chewie was out cold on the bar. Han reached toward Bernard but fell out of the stool onto the floor as unconsciousness overtook him.

When Han awoke, he had a murderous headache. His wrists and ankles were in shackles. Chewie was inert beside him, in chains also. The chamber they were in was small and dark. Judging by the damp soil smell Han figured they were in a cellar storage area. But that didn't mean they were still in Spirea-Gor. bet he and that snarthy bartender were in on something." 'But what?' his aching mind wondered 'What do they want with us? Why did they do this?' Moments later, Chewie stirred and sat up. He whined about how much his head hurt.

"Yeah mine hurts like a son-of-a- Hutt too. You otherwise OK?" Chewie answered in the affirmative.

"Good Let's try to figure a way outta here, and then we can go kick some double-crosser butt. What the hell did we do to Bernard anyway'? I thought he was a friend."

Chewie shrugged. He then started pulling and pulling on his chains, concentrating his returning strength on splitting open his bindings.

"Hey, you think you can get those open?"

Through gritted teeth, Chewie explained the chains were made from a cheap, weak alloy. Minutes after that, he had freed his legs.

"Way to go, pal!" Han whispered. "Now help me outta these things before whoever's holding us captive comes back to check on us." The Wookiee quickly freed Han from his bindings. Just as Han was rubbing the circulation back into his legs, he and Chewie heard footsteps outside the chamber door.

The door slid open, and a lone figure stepped into the darkness. Han and Chewie jumped the person, and knocked the captor to the floor.

"Hey, it's that bartender," Han sneered as he pinned the woman's arms to the floor. Chewie held down her struggling legs. "Okay, wench, where are we?"

"In the cellar of the casino," she snapped. "Let me go. The others will be here soon, and you won't have a chance against them."

"Oh, there are others, huh? Are they Imps?"

"No ... I'm not telling you anything, dammit!" Chewie bared his sharp teeth and growled menacingly.

"I don't like hittin' ladies or nothin', but my partner here has no patience with anybody, male or female, so you better start talkin'."

The woman swore profusely. Then she said, "I don't know what asteroid you been hiding under, but Salex Bruitt's put a price on your head, ten thousand credits. He says you got his daughter pregnant!"

Han blinked, not quite believing what he'd heard. "Ten thousand credits?"

"Look, Solo, times are hard. Everyone's looking for a quick buck these days. That's why Bernard and some of his boys tried to trap you."

"Yeah, and I bet he promised you a cut, huh? Well too bad. We're gettin' outta here."

"You won't make it out of Spirea- Gor, Solo."

"We'll just see about that."

Han and Chewbacca locked the bartender inside the storage room and searched for their weapons. Luckily for them, their captors did a poor job of hiding them. Now, there was only the question of trying to find their way out in one piece.

The pair crept warily along a corridor. Chewbacca saw a door over to his left, and growled quietly in Han's ear.

"Okay, we can see if there are any windows in that room out to the street. Let's go." Han released the door mechanism with one hand and held his blaster at ready with the other. He rushed into the room, ready to fight if necessary. But all he saw were two blue-skinned women fixing their hair and makeup in front of a mirror.

"Good one, Chewie," Han thought. "We walked into the ladies' room."

"Excuse me," Han said sheepishly. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see a closed window about ten feet above the floor. "We're just headin' out this window, here. Don't mind us."

The two women shrieked and ran out of the room.

"I can't be losin' my charms already," Han said. "Chewie, let's get outta here NOW." Han blasted through the window glass with a well-aimed laserbolt. "Okay, Chewie, lift me up to the window!"

The Wookiee hoisted Han up to the window frame. The Corellian wriggled his way through, bolstered his blaster, and crouched before the window to help Chewie out. Chewie first handed his bowcaster up to Han. Then, he reached up toward the window. He gripped the window frame and started to pull himself up. He was about halfway through the window, when he discovered he could no longer move.

"Gruaaanh!" Chewie howled with dismay.

"Let me pull you through," Han said as he took the Wookiee's hands into his. Han tugged and tugged as hard as he could, but the Wookiee wouldn't budge.

Just then, Bernard and the bartender entered the ladies' room. "It's Chewbacca!" Bernard cried "Get him!"

Han cursed profusely. "Great time to get stuck, Chewie!" He pulled with all of his might as Chewie wailed with panic. Then a blaster bolt nicked the Wookiee's buttocks. The pain was enough to send Chewie through the window, and into the alley, landing on top of Han.

"Get off me! You're gonna crush me!" Han gasped as he tried to push Chewie off. Groaning with pain, Chewie rose to his feet and rubbed the singed spot on his bottom. He grabbed his bowcaster and followed Han out of the alley.

"We'll patch you up once we're on the Falcon," Han said as they pushed through the crowds on the main thoroughfare. "Can you make it okay?"

Chewie grunted a 'yes.' They made it to the docking bays without further incidence ... until they reached docking bay 777, where the Falcon was berthed. A pair of Myrmidons waited with their weapons drawn, underneath the ship.

"Damn," Han grunted as he surveyed the scene from behind a crate. "It's the Mael brothers. You think you'd be friends for life with the guys who take you to get your first tattoo." Chewie shook his head with disbelief.

"Maybe I can talk 'em out of it," Han said. "Cover me, OK?" Han came out from behind the crate and sauntered casually toward the Millennium Falcon, his hand resting on his blaster holster.

"Hey there, guys," Han greeted the two tall, saffron-skinned Sentients. "Nice of you to drop by."

"Long time, no see, Solo," grunted the Myrmidon on the left. He aimed his blaster at the Corellian's heart. "I heard that you got Salex Bruitt's little girl into some trouble."

"Yeah," sneered his brother. "You always seem to let your crotch do most of your thinking."

"At least there are more brains in there than in your entire body," Han shot back "I don't know what kind of delusions Salex has been having lately, but I didn't get his kid pregnant. I never even slept with her."

"That's irrelevant," said the Myrmidon on the right. "The point is that there's a big bounty on your head, a bounty too good to refuse. So, you either come with us nicely, or things can get ugly."

Han half-shrugged, then whipped out his blaster, pumping a stun bolt into the Myrmidon nearest him. Chewbacca took out the other one with his crossbow before the hapless being could react.

"I was always a quicker draw than those losers," Han said. Chewie came up to his companion's side. "C'mon pal, let's get out of here and get you patched up."

Two days later, the Millennium Falcon re-entered real space a few light years away from the remote Sindhal system. The freighter was headed for the planet Sindhal, a wild frontier planet that did not owe any allegiance to the Empire, the Alliance, or the Corporate Sector. It was a place where outlaws and other outcasts laid low whenever trouble brewed elsewhere. Han Solo figured it would be the perfect place to be until he figured out what to do about the bounty on his head.

Once they had landed at the Sindhali main spaceport, Han decided to head into town for a little R&R.

"I really, need a drink.," Han said as he headed for the ship's exit ramp. "This hasn't been a good week."

Chewbacca heartily agreed.

"Well, don't wait up for me, and take care of yourself. We don't have much bacta left in the ol' first aid kit," Han said. Chewie reached forward and gave Han a tight strong hug. "Okay, okay, pal. I'll see you later."

Han wandered the dark dusty streets, his eyes peeled for trouble. It seemed like everybody was avoiding eye contact with one another. Eventually, the Corellian came to a tavern, where he ordered a mug of ale. He drank and stared into space, until an attractive young woman dressed in a tight tunic crossed his vision. She smiled at him and came up to his table.

"You look lonely sitting here all by yourself," she said. "May I join you?"

Han flashed her a charming grin. "Yeah, sure," he said pleasantly, grateful for the company. "Can I get you a drink?"

"Oh, I don't know," the woman said modestly.

"Aw come on, let me be a gentleman," Han said. He called over a serving droid and ordered a drink for the young woman. When the droid scurried to the bar, Han took the opportunity to learn more about his new companion.

"So, what brings you to Sindhali?"

The woman sighed. "A little bit of business, a little bit of pleasure. What about you?"

"Pleasure," Han said with a devilish grin "All pleasure."

The woman laughed. "You seem like the kind of man who lives for pleasure."

"I am ... by the way, what's your name?"

"Sylphide. What's yours?"

"Han ... I like your name. It's pretty. It certainly does you justice."

"Thank you, it's a Chandritan name."

"Hmn ... interesting." The droid returned with Sylphide's drink. She and Han spent an hour or so talking and flirting. Han was greatly attracted to the woman. All of those days in space and all of his recent troubles made a night of passion a welcome prospect indeed. So, his hopes brightened considerably when Sylphide asked him to come with her to her hostel room.

Less than a half hour later, they were both in various states of undress kissing hungrily in the dark room. Han tried to slip Sylphide's undergarment straps off her shoulders, but she stepped back from him.

"What is it?" Han asked.

"I need to go into the necessary. That's where my, uh, protection is."

"Oh, okay. No problem," Han smiled, "I'll just wait for ya out here."

Sylphide smiled back. "I'll be right out." She went into the necessary and shut the door. Han whistled to himself as he removed his trousers, climbed into bed, and slipped under the covers. A few minutes later, the door to the necessary slid open.

"It's about time, sweetheart," Han said. "Now, hurry up and get yourself over here."

An unfamiliar, very unfeminine shadow stepped out of the necessary, a blaster in its hand. "If you don't mind, Solo, I'll turn down the invitation."

Han gasped. He knew that voice. "Dengar! What the hell are you doin' here?! What did you do to the girl?!"

Sylphide stepped out of the necessary and scooped up her clothes.

"Sorry, Corllian" the woman said as she got dressed. "It would've been nice, but I'm already involved."

"Hey! You set me up, you snarth!" Han cried.

"Shut up, Solo," Dengar snarled. "Don't talk to my lady like that."

"Your lady'?" Solo said. "You got pretty bad taste, doll."

"You got a lot more to worry about than my dating preferences," Sylphide said.

"Yeah," Dengar said. "There's a nice 5000 credit bounty on you and Chewbacca, courtesy of the Sindhali government. You forgot you're a wanted man here."

"What?!"

"You see," the bounty hunter explained, "Sindhal was just purchased by Allysan, the Warlord of the Ernu System. And, if I'm not mistaken, you're wanted by Allysan."

Han cursed to himself. He should've done a better job of keeping up with current events.

"Face it" Dengar said with obvious delight. "You got caught with your trousers down."

Han, who was now dressed again, sat in his tiny, dark cell, wondering how long it would be before Chewie would start to look for him. Probably not until tomorrow morning, at the earliest. He had to figure out something. Then his dejection became downright despair when Chewbacca was tossed into the cell with him. The Wookiee was still dazed from the tranquilizer darts Dengar had shot into him.

"It's not my fault," Han said to Chewbacca after he had lectured his friend on how one should be more selective in choosing a mate. "How was I supposed to know she was sent to trap me? I didn't even know the locals were out to get me."

Chewbacca asked what their next move was.

"I don't know," Han shrugged "Maybe they'll let us go or something. Maybe this is all a big misunderstanding."

Two days later, at Sindhali dawn, Han Solo and Chewbacca were taken to a cliff overlooking the port town, where a pair of nooses waited for them.

"I can't believe this," Han said as they were led to the gallows. "I thought this kind of execution went out of style centuries ago."

The pair was made to stand on a platform as thick ropes were coiled and tightened around their necks,

The official presiding over the execution began his long intonation. First he rattled off a list of Chewbacca's crimes, then he addressed Han. "Han Solo, you have been proven guilty of piracy, smuggling, flying without a license, tax evasion, deflowering a warlord's daughter, and falling asleep in church. For these crimes, you have been sentenced to forfeit your life. May the Supreme Being have mercy on your soul."

"It's been great, pal," Han said to Chewie. "Last one to the after life is a rotten egg."

Chewbacca bade Han a final farewell himself. The Corellian closed his eyes. He had expected a more spectacular death for himself, but sometimes you don't always get what you want.

The explosion of laser fire made Han's eyes snap open. He gaped in disbelief as an airspeeder swooped over the cliff, firing at the Sindhali execution party. The aircraft turned around and darted back toward the gallows. Two remarkably accurate blaster cannon shots severed Han and Chewie's hanging ropes from the gallows rafters. They fell to the platform, unable to move, since their arms and legs had been bound.

"What the hell's going on here?!" Han exclaimed as he saw the blaster cannon mow down the executors. Chewbacca roared a simple answer.

"Obviously, we're being rescued!" Han snapped. "But by who?"

The airspeeder landed several feet away from the gallows. The entry hatch snapped open, and Dengar and Sylphide rushed outside.

"It's you, you piece of..." Han snarled before Sylphide shot a stun bolt into him. Dengar did the same to Chewbacca.

"Next stop, Salex's place," Dengar said. "And ten thousand easy credits."

* * *

Salex Bruitt smiled as his henchmen dragged Han Solo and Chewbacca into his office. The two outlaws were bound by manacles around their wrists.

"I wasn't expecting you to brought here alive, Solo, but I guess I'll have to take what I can get," Salex said.

"You're makin' a big mistake here, Salex," Han said.

"Oh, am I? My daughter says you fathered her baby. And you ran out on her, shaming her! No one does that to my Jewel and lives, you Corellian lowlife!"

"Hey, man, it's not my fault!" Han exclaimed "I swear, I've never slept with Jewel! I've never even kissed her! All we ever did was share a moon disc. I mean, she's just a kid. Your kid, no less. I ain't stupid enough to fool around with a crime boss' kid!"

"Are you calling my daughter a liar?!" Salex roared

"No, it's just that..."

"Oh, so she's telling the truth! Good! Now I can go ahead and have you killed in a most unpleasant way for shaming my little angel! Dropo, Silman, take this filth down to the 'fish pool..".

"Sure, Boss," chuckled Silman. "What about the Wookiee?"

"Aw, take the walking fur coat down to the dungeon. He'll stay there 'til I decide what to do with him," Salex grunted as he lit up a cigar.

With that Chewbacca was taken down to a dark barren cell in the lowest level of Salex's fortress. Han was taken to a cavernous grotto.

"You know what's in here, Solo?" Dropo sneered. "Barazafish."

"Oooh, I'm just shakin' in my boots. What's a bunch of stupid little fish gonna do to me?"

"Watch," the other henchman said. He took a piece of meat out of his pocket and tossed it into the water. Han watched as the meat disappeared into fizzes within seconds.

"You know," Han said, "I don't particularly care for seafood."

"Got any last requests before we push you in?" Dropo asked acidly.

"How 'bout 'Supernova of Love?..."

"Sorry, we don't know that one. In you go..."

Han put up his bound hands. "Wait! Um, before I die, I'd like to make peace with the Maker. You know, atone for all of my sins before I face the final judgment."

"You got quite a long list of sins, Solo," Silman sneered.

"Oh, please? Have mercy on a dying man's soul," Han pleaded, tears coming to his eyes.

"All right," Dropo said. "You got a minute."

"Thank you, both of you," Han said with a grateful smile as he got down on his knees. He cast his eyes heavenward, and saw that there was a giant nightwing suspended in the cavern ceiling above him, asleep. Han grinned lopsidedly as an idea came to mind.

"Oh, dear Maker up above!" Han cried at the top of his lungs. His voice echoed loudly through the cavern. "Forgive me for my sins! Take me heavenward into your embrace!"

The loud echoes awakened the nightwing. Its red shining eyes saw the three men below, and almost soundlessly swooped down to attack its prey. The two henchmen never saw it coming. Han bowed flat on the stone floor as the nightwing's talons knocked Dropo into the water and Silman against a rock. The nightwing swooshed away as Han looked to see Dropo disintegrate into a pool of blood. Silman was slumped on the ground, inert just inches away from him was a blaster, a DL-44. Han hoped the keys to his manacles were also somewhere on Silman's person.

Han turned just in time to see the nightwing swoop toward him. With a whoosh, the creature flew over him, talons missing him by inches. As the nightwing flew up and away to make another attempt, Han scrambled over to the blaster. He grabbed it and managed to get a finger on the trigger just as the nightwing was making its approach.

With an amazingly steady hand, Han aimed right between the nightwing's glowing red eyes and fired two quick accurate shots. The nightwing spun out of control, screeching in pain. It crashed into the water, and soon was a tasty meal for the Barazafish.

Moments later, Han found the keys he needed in the henchman's jacket. After unshackling himself, he rushed out of the grotto and sneaked his way over to the detention block. After dispatching two very inept guards with his newfound blaster, he found Chewie's cell.

Han stepped back a few paces from the door lock and fired at it. The door snap-hissed open and Chewbacca rushed out. "Nice to see ya again," Han said as he and the Wookiee embraced. "I got a new toy just a few minutes ago," Han said, brandishing the blaster. "That other schmuck didn't deserve such a nice weapon."

Chewie reminded Han that they needed to get moving.

"Right," Han said, "Let's get the hell outta here."

Jewel Bruitt lay in her bed, her face contorted with pain. Her water had broken moments ago, and the contractions were getting more frequent and more intense. She needed a med-droid fast, but everything had been all topsy-turvy since word spread that Solo and Chewbacca had escaped. She wondered what she was going to do.

Just then, she heard a noise coming from her necessary. "Who's there?!" she called. No reply. She sat up, her mind racing. There was no way she could run from an intruder, not in her condition. Another contraction racked her body.

"Ohhh!" she cried out. Just then, her necessary door opened. In the doorway stood Han Solo and Chewbacca.

"Jewel!" Han cried, "Hey! You're the little wench who got me into all of this in the first place!"

Chewie came forward to the girl's bed and asked if she was all right.

"Who cares if she's all right!" Han snapped. "Let's go! Somebody could've seen us climb through that window!"

Chewbacca pointed out that Jewel was in labor.

"So what if she's in labor?! We both know it ain't my kid she's birthin'!"

Chewie begged Han to stay and help.

"What!!! Why should we help her? She's the one who lied to Salex and got me into this in the first place! Besides, there's a fortress full of people who want to kill us! We gotta get outta here!"

Chewie looked at Han imploringly with his gentle blue eyes, and uttered a sweet, poignant plea for help. It was a move that never failed with Han Solo. Ever.

He sighed heavily. "All right, dammit. But I don't know anythin' about this except boilin' some water and gettin' some fresh linens. That's what they do in the holovids, anyway."

Chewie, since he was the only one who had ever witnessed a midwife assist in a delivery (and it was a Wookiee involved that time), waited at the receiving end of the bed. Han attended to the other chores and gave the girl some "coaching."

"Okay, Chewie says he can see the head comin'. So push real hard-like, okay?"

Jewel pushed and pushed, until finally the baby was free and crying.

"All right!" Han exclaimed. "It's a boy! Way to go, Jewel!"

The girl sank back in her pillows, exhausted. After Han and Chewie quickly cleaned up the baby and the messes, they handed the newborn back to his mother.

Suddenly, the bedroom door flew open. Salex and six other armed men rushed into the room. "Grab 'em both!" Salex cried in fury.

"Hey," Han said. "Don't you want to see your grandson? He was born just a while ago."

"Daddy," Jewel said, cradling her baby. "Please, don't hurt them. They helped deliver the baby."

"What?" Salex stammered. He focused on the little squirming bundle in Jewel's arms. He came to the bed, and gently took the baby into his arms. A smile spread across his face. "Well, hello, there," Salex cooed. He laughed a little as the boy reached out his arms. "I'm your grandpa," he said, laughing.

He then asked Jewel, "What's his name?"

"Killian Salex.-Gortimer," Jewel said "Gortimer?!" Salex exclaimed. "I thought you said Solo was the father!"

Jewel shook her head "No, Daddy, I ... I lied I knew you'd be very upset if you found out Reg Gortimer was the father. So, I just blurted out Han's name, figuring he wasn't accessible enough to harm. But I never would've guessed you'd put a price on his head."

Salex sighed "I should've known it was Reg all along. That nerf-herder was always making eyes at you. That's why I fired him."

Jewel said, "Han, Chewie, I'm real sorry about what I did. That's why I appreciate your help even more. Thank you."

"No problem," Han shrugged. He then turned to Salex. "Can we go now?"

Salex said, "Solo, I have to apologize as well. As a way of showing my gratitude and repaying you for the trouble I've caused, I want to give you twenty thousand credits, a kilogram of our finest spice, and I'll arrange to get your ship out of impoundment on Sindhal."

"Thanks," Han said, taken aback. Chewie also muttered his gratitude.

"I shall arrange passage on my finest yacht to Sindhal. When do you wish to leave?"

Han and Chewie exchanged a brief glance. The Corellian said, "Now."

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[Back To Index](#)