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A Day in the Life

by [Martha Wilson](#)

Han Solo walked into the receiving area of the sickbay on the *Tantavie IV*. He was exhausted, he had a black eye and was covered with bruises and contusions, and his clothes were torn and blood-stained, though the blood belonged to an Imperial hunter-killer scout who had tried to take his head off with a fusion cutter. But none of that had anything to do with the reason he was here.

The medtech on duty was an earnest young mainstream human who must be one of the influx of new personnel since the Alliance's major victory over Endor, since Han couldn't remember running into him before. He spotted Han and hurried over, grabbing a scanner off the console. "Is it an emergency?"

"No, this is all from yesterday." Han fended off the man's attempt to examine his black eye. "I was in the hangar when that Imp shuttle collapsed the gantry."

Unconvinced, the tech took a step back and looked him over. "All that is from yesterday?" he asked skeptically.

"I've been chasing TIE fighters since then. That's not why I'm here."

"Oh." The tech still looked dubious, but he put down the scanner and picked up a datapad. Han gave him a thumbprint so the device could access his medical records from the central diagnostic computer. "It's taking a little while to come up," the tech explained. "There are some surgeries in progress. Now, what did you need?"

Han sighed. "Can I talk to a droid?"

"Sorry, the TwoOneBees and the auxiliaries are all occupied. We haven't managed to transfer any patients to the medical frigate yet and we're still full up from that crash. We were lucky none of our people were killed."

Han nodded noncommittally. Lucky wasn't a strong enough word for it. He said, "When's the next droid available?"

"Not until the next shift, I'm afraid." The tech scrolled down the pad. "What do you need? If it's something I can take care of, I can work you in sometime in the next hour."

My luck never changes, Han thought. He let out his breath, then said, "I need my contraceptive implant replaced."

"Oh, that shouldn't take a minute, I--" He hesitated, looking at Han again. "Wait... You're Corellian, aren't you?"

"Yeah." Han folded his arms and looked at the ceiling.

"A full genetic Corellian, not--"

"A full genetic Corellian."

"Oh. That's a little more complicated." Flustered, the tech looked over the datapad again. "We don't have any private bays available just now."

Of course you don't, Han thought, tiredly, *because the universe hates me*. Most mainstream human males could take a contraceptive implant in the lower thigh, just above the knee; for Corellians it had to be much closer to ground zero. It was still a minor procedure, but Han had never looked forward to it, to put it mildly.

"Can you wait until the next shift?" the tech asked, still scrolling through his schedule. "Though I couldn't guarantee one even then, we're so backed up."

Han swore under his breath. Leia was leaving in three days to go to Forsallisport to work out an agreement on supply services for the Alliance ships in that area. There were also rumors that a group of Alderaani survivors had surfaced there that she wanted to check out. Han wouldn't be able to follow her for another two weeks at least, until the *Falcon* wasn't needed here anymore. Leia had gotten a contraceptive implant too, but hers was recent and still had a few days to go before it would reach full effectiveness. When Han had realized the time on his implant was running out, she had looked up some statistics on Corellian male fertility to see how safe they were, snarfed the concentrate tea she had been drinking all over her terminal, and informed him that if she got pregnant, she did not intend to be the one to go into labor. "No, I can't wait."

"You can't wait," the tech repeated, looking down at the datapad where Han's medical records since he had first joined the Alliance were beginning to come up. "Oh, are you Captain Solo? That Captain Solo?"

Han looked at the ceiling again. "Yes."

"Oh. Oh, I see." The tech punched buttons on the pad. "We'd better get this taken care of, then."

Han sighed, again. *My reputation precedes me. Yes, for the good of the Fleet, let's get this taken care of. Quick, before he gets loose.*

"And I definitely can't find a droid available." The tech looked up from the pad and smiled brightly. "I guess you're stuck with me."

"Wonderful."

"Regulations stipulate that another medical tech be present during the procedure," the man hastened to assure him.

"Oh, good. I usually like as large an audience as possible for this."

The tech gestured to the patient prep area. "Oh, and please lock up your sidearm when you take it off. We've got those Imperial prisoners being treated in here."

Han pulled off his vest, boots, and gunbelt and stuffed them into a locker, then wandered on into the main part of the bay. He wasn't planning on dropping his pants until they were ready to start.

The main area of the medcenter was crowded, the plated ceiling arching over treatment areas and patient bays, consoles and surgical suites. Medtechs and various types of medical droids worked among the diagnostic tables, most of which were occupied with rebels, wounded in the fighting over Rija. There were a few civilians from the merchants ships that had been caught in the Imperial attack here, too. The other occupants were Imperials, injured in the shuttle that had escaped the destruction of the Imperial base ship only to crash in the *Tantavie's* bay while fighting the rebel frigate's tractor beam. In their honor, rebel troopers were posted at intervals around the large chamber.

Han's medtech reappeared, with a faintly harried air. "We've really got a situation here today," he confided, leading Han over to the side of the main bay. It was still a far cry from privacy, but at least the only two diagnostic tables in this section were unoccupied. "One of the Imperials is apparently a staff officer of that admiral who's trying to set up his own protectorate out in the Minrae cluster. The higher-ups are going to question him with thircyen but those truth drugs can be

so unreliable, especially if you're conditioned against them." He rubbed his hands briskly and patted one of the diagnostic tables. "Come on, let's get you started."

"Oh, joy," Han muttered, approaching the table grimly.

"There isn't another tech free to stand in on this. Is that all right?"

"I won't tell anybody if you don't."

Han reluctantly surrendered his pants, and climbed up on the table. He hated the position, he hated having to put his feet in those things. "Hey, do you have to strap me in? Can't I just promise not to move?"

The medtech didn't fall for that one. "Procedures," he said briskly. "I'm going to turn the local nerve block on. Just lay back and relax and--"

"Think of the Alliance, yeah, I've heard that line before."

A couple of minutes went by where Han thumped his fingers on his chest and stared at the ceiling and tried to pretend the lower half of his body didn't exist.

The tech asked, "So how are things going down in the main hangar?"

"Oh, fine." At least the droids didn't try to socialize with you during it.

"How is the clean up going?"

"Just great." Han normally had trouble keeping control of his mouth under trying conditions, but not in this particular situation. He was going to stay best friends with this medtech until it was all over.

Then one of the auxiliary droids floated up, beeping and waving its arms in agitation. The medtech studied the holo readouts it was displaying and muttered, "Damn it, I've got an emergency over in bay four. I'll be back in a moment." He started away.

"Hey," Han yelled. "Excuse me?"

"Sorry." The tech hurriedly pulled a sheet over the exposed areas and bolted off.

"Great," Han muttered. "This day just keeps getting better and better." He tried sitting up on his elbows, but that was uncomfortable. The only thing keeping him on the table was the padded medical restraints holding his ankles in the diagnostic table's appendages, but with the nerve block on he couldn't sit up far enough to get them off. He flopped back down and looked around for something to keep himself occupied, not an easy task from this position.

Two troopers brought in a repulsar stretcher, with one of the Imperial prisoners on it, and put it on the other diagnostic table in the bay. The troopers withdrew, and Han thought, *Oh, great, I needed more company. Next they'll come and take holofilm for the Fleet net.* Then he spotted the medtech's datapad, left behind on a nearby console, and stretched to reach it. Just as his fingers brushed it another auxiliary droid floated up, caught the pad in one long arm and moved it safely out of reach.

Han swore and slumped back on the table. Impatient, he struggled up on his elbows again, and noticed the Imperial officer was looking at him. He was a young man, about Luke's age when Han had first met him in Mos Eisley, with close-cropped light hair, the aquiline features of an inner worlder, and a very scared look on his pale face. He had captain's rank markings on his torn uniform coat and a temporary bacta pack wrapped around one leg; padded medical restraints kept him on the stretcher. His voice low and tense, he asked, "What are they doing to you?"

Han stared at him a moment, nonplussed. Then he realized he was laying here, dressed in nothing but a torn and blood-stained shirt and a sheet, with a black eye and bruises and a two day beard stubble, strapped into a position that was at best unlikely, and probably wearing a trapped expression. He said, "I don't know yet," and glanced nervously around, as if checking to see if any techs or troopers were in earshot. Fortunately, none were.

The Imperial looked nervously around too. "You weren't on our ship."

Han thought rapidly. His hair was too long to pass as a regulation cut for an Imp trooper or officer. He said, "I'm in Intelligence. Was in Intelligence."

"Did they interrogate you?"

"For days." Han tried to look haunted. "They're still doing it."

"Did you tell them anything?"

"Yeah, I couldn't help it. It was awful. Did they say who was going to question you?"

"Madine."

"Uh-oh. He's a real bastard." This was true, as far as Han was concerned, at least. Madine had been Corellian liaison to Alderaan, before the Empire had cracked down on the Corellian system and cut it off from the Alliance. Madine was on General Rieekan's staff, and he was far more of a military disciplinarian than the older general, and he and Han had cordially disliked each other for years. "He's Corellian, and you know how vicious they are."

The young Imperial nodded earnestly. He must be only lately recruited and rushed through training to help fill the void in the ranks caused by attrition and the mass desertions, and had probably never seen a live Corellian before. Continuing to cheerfully defame Madine's character, Han said, "When Madine questioned me, I told him I wouldn't talk, and he had me hung upside down in grav-restraints for three days. I haven't been able to see straight since." *On account of being dead*, Han added silently, since that would certainly have been the outcome of such a process.

Unbelievably, the young Imp bought it. He couldn't have known much about interrogation technology. Or biology. He said, "Was...what they're doing to you now his idea?"

"Oh, yeah." Han remembered just in time that he had said he didn't know what horror was about to be perpetrated on him. He gestured to his vulnerable position and shrugged in resignation. "I can make some guesses, though." He added darkly, "You know what those Corellians are like."

Evidently the Imperial thought he did; he turned a shade paler, and a little green. He said, just a little dubiously, "I think I can resist. I'm going to try."

"You can't," Han said, shaking his head wearily.

"Why not?"

Yeah, why not? Inspiration struck. "They've got a Jedi."

"A Jedi?" the Imp looked incredulous. "A real Jedi?"

"Sure. He doesn't look like much, but he's crazy. He really enjoys his work." Keeping his face straight was starting to be a real problem. Han covered it with a shudder, which he didn't think he did very realistically, but the Imp seemed to buy it.

Wide-eyed, the Imp asked, "Are Jedi as bad as the Sith?"

"Worse. They're real pissed about being hunted down and slaughtered, I mean, terminated."

"What do they do to you?"

"They get inside your head." This was the worse kind of rumor and Luke would have gone ballistic if he had heard Han repeat it. Though Force sensitives could communicate through the Force with each other with great effort, even Sith couldn't read minds, especially of non-Force sensitives. "It's kind of like a

mindprobe, but a lot more invasive. At least, it was worse than the mindprobe they used on me."

"They use mindprobes?" The Imperial's voice got loud, and a little high. Han motioned him to keep quiet, and the boy glanced around worriedly before continuing in a whisper, "We were told they didn't have any!"

"Oh, hell, they got the latest models." Han glanced past him. "Oh, shit, there he is." Guilt added a touch of real apprehension to Han's voice; Luke Skywalker had come into the sickbay and was wandering this way, checking for people he knew among the occupants of the bays and diagnostic tables. The Imperial twisted around to look and gasped. Normally Luke's appearance was hardly frightening, but he had recently had a too-close-for-comfort encounter with a proton explosive in one of the Rija system orbital stations that had given him a bad gash on the temple. The temporary patch job they had done in the field looked terrible and he hadn't had a chance to spend the time in the medcenter to have the ugly wound completely healed and the scar removed. He was about as beat up as Han was from the recent fighting, and dressed in dark pants and shirt and a black jacket -- *Hey*, Han thought, *that's one of my jackets. I wondered where that went* -- and with the light sabre swinging prominently from his gunbelt, he did look sinister. Well, sort of sinister, Han reflected. If you used your imagination and squinted when you looked at him. The young Imp must have a great imagination, because he looked frankly terrified.

But as Luke drew near two medical corpsmen arrived to take the Imperial Captain's stretcher into the treatment bay.

Luke stopped when he saw Han, his expression baffled. "What the hell?" he asked, coming over to stand beside the table.

"Contraceptive implant," Han explained. "Leia's leaving for Forsallis in a couple of days and--"

"Han, dammit, don't give me details." Luke put his hands over his ears. "She's my sister, remember?"

"I can't explain why I'm lying here like this without offending your delicate sensibilities," Han said, exasperated. "What are you here for anyway? To get pretty again?"

Luke touched the bacta-sealed cut and winced. "Hopefully, if I have time. There's a prisoner Madine is going to question when the droids finish patching him up, and he wanted me to sit in to see if I could tell if what we hear is the truth or not."

That's perfect, Han thought. He chuckled to himself.

"What's so funny?" Luke demanded. His eyes narrowed and he looked suspicious. "Are you doing something?"

Han gestured elaborately, all affronted innocence. "What could I be doing?"

"Huh. I guess not," Luke admitted grudgingly. He sighed and glanced around the bay. "I hope this doesn't take too long. My shoulder's so sore I'm almost looking forward to a bacta treatment."

Distracted, Han frowned. The kid did look awful. "What happened to you, anyway?"

"What happened to me?" Luke stared, outraged. "When you hit the deck after the gantry collapsed, did you happen to notice that lumpy thing that broke your fall?"

"Was that you? I thought it was Antilles."

"You took out both of us, thanks."

"Well, with all the control I had over the situation, I was aiming for Antilles. Hey, you're the Jedi, why didn't you know I was going to fall on you and get out of the way?"

Provoked, Luke yanked the pillow out from under Han's head and briefly tried to smother him with it. When Han fought him off, he saw that the corpsmen had brought back the repulsar stretcher with the young Imperial Captain still on it and were replacing it on the opposite diagnostic bed. From the Imp's expression he had returned just in time to see the evil Jedi torture poor helpless Han. Luke was walking away in response to a summons from an officer on the other end of the bay, and Han yelled after him, "Hey, that's against the Allied Code of Conduct for Prisoners of War!"

"Whatever." Luke tossed the pillow over his shoulder without glancing back. His aim was force-assisted and Han caught it without having to stretch. "I'll be back."

Han flopped back down on the table, managing to turn his laughter into choked gasps. Han's favorite medtech fluttered back into their bay, telling the Imperial Captain, "Sorry about that. We had an emergency come in, but we'll get you taken care of next."

That sent Han into another paroxysm. The medtech paused to check the readout on Han's table, frowning. "And if you don't stop all that wriggling around, the diagnostic comp is recommending a sedative or more restraints. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

"Oh, no," Han said, breathless and barely able to get the words out. "Don't do that. I'll be good."

The tech gave him an odd look but bustled off.

"Are you all right?" the Imp said.

"Yeah." Han wiped tears of laughter from his eyes. "I'm getting used to it." He sat up on his elbows again, slowly this time, mindful of annoying the notoriously autocratic and short-tempered diagnostic comp. He looked over at the Imperial and said earnestly, "The Jedi said he's going to question you next."

The Imperial turned even paler. "He is?"

"Yeah. Since you're planning on resisting, it'll be pretty bad. He turns your mind inside out, and then it gets nasty."

The medtech appeared again, looking even more harried. "All right, this time I think we're really ready," he said briskly to the Imperial.

"Wait," the young Captain said, looking desperate. "Wait, I.... I want to talk."

The tech hesitated, puzzled, his mind obviously on scheduling surgeries and droids and treatment areas. "About...?" he prompted.

"Our tactical placements."

"Oh, my." The tech was taken aback. "Hold on, hold on, don't do it yet, let me call General Madine." He hurried off.

"Don't make Madine mad," Han advised the Imperial. "He gets crazy when he's mad." This was true, but it had never stopped Han.

Madine appeared rapidly, with a couple of troopers flanking him, confirming that the young Imperial really must know something important. Madine eyed the prisoner and said, briskly, "You've decided to cooperate?"

"Yes," the Imperial answered warily.

Madine looked at the tech, hovering nearby. "Can he be moved to a private area?"

The tech nodded. "Yes, sir. I can clear one in a few minutes. He was just about to go in to treatment for his leg."

Damn it, Han thought, I should've stayed a general. I could've gotten a private bay.

"All right," Madine said. "Find a TwoOneBee or a medtech with a level seven security clearance to take care of him while we're talking. And somebody call Skywalker, I want him in on this too."

As the corpsmen took the stretcher and the young Imperial away, Madine glanced down at Han, then did a double take. "What the hell's wrong with you?" he demanded.

"Contraceptive implant," Han said. "Didn't you know? I told them to send you an invitation."

Madine motioned the medtech over. "Let's expedite this, please?" He gestured to Han. "I don't want him running around loose without an implant. It's about the last thing we need."

"Thanks!" Han shouted after him. "That's the last time I do you any favors."

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