

[Back To Index](#)

## EVERY CORELLIAN HAS HIS DAY

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"And I'm tellin' ya, I don't need any damn wheelchair." Solo repeated defiantly. He took an unsteady pace closer to his hospital room door, but still the nurse barred his way.

He hesitated; even if he were fit, and he was far from that, Dragon Lady must outweigh him by a good fifty pounds. She was as solid as a Star Destroyer bulkhead, and twice as cold; two whole months of his best hurt-little-boy looks, wounded hero routine, charming smiles -- and nothing. His body might have mended but his ego would never be the same again. Remember the Falcon Clan Honor, Solo. He told himself sternly: Never say die. You've faced down Jabba The Hutt, you can take her. Collecting his courage, he dared to look the threatening woman straight in the eye. That was a bad move; her pupils were aimed at him like the sharp points of the hypodermic needles that were her favorite implements of torture. "I'm warnin' ya," he said nervously, "back off."

"No wheelchair, no out," Dragon rumbled.

"What's this all about?." an even more hostile female voice snapped from the corridor.

Solo groaned and closed his eyes. Hopelessly outnumbered.

"Your husband's being obstinate again," Dragon informed Leia Organa. She stood aside to let the petite Princess into the room, but then immediately resumed her defensive position.

"Haaaannnnn." Leia growled, pointed an imperious finger from him to the empty wheelchair. "Sit."

"All right. All right." Solo surrendered. "I was just tryin' to be a gentleman. Go ahead," he threw a glare at his nurse as he lowered himself into the chair, "Give yourself a hernia pushing me outa here. See if I care."

Dragon gave him her version of a sweet smile. "Can't be any harder than lifting your butt around every time I had to give you a bath while you were still in those casts."

"You enjoyed every minute of it." Solo gave her a wink and a smirk. She slapped the back of his hand. "Geez," he complained as she pushed the chair forward, narrowly avoiding ramming his bandaged leg into the doorframe, "beating up on a wounded war hero. I put my life on the line for you people, bravely placing my fragile body in the line of fire, and what do I get? Insults, abuse ... torture. I should give myself up to the Imps, I'd get better treatment. And I'll bet their food's ...."

"Are you sure he's well enough to be released?" Leia interrupted sarcastically, "He sounds delirious."

"Sorry, Your Highness," Dragon flashed her a sympathetic smile, "You cannot escape your destiny. He's all yours. Good luck."

Leia's face brightened as she spotted two familiar figures waiting for them at the end of the corridor. "Reinforcements." she smiled.

"How ya doin', Solo.?" Luke Skywalker greeted cheerfully. "Neat rig. Ready for the big day?"

"Just get me outa here, will ya, please." Solo begged.

Chewbacca scuffed the top of Han's head with a huge hairy paw \*I hope you haven't been mistreating the nurses again, Cub?\* he teased.

The Corellian's jaw dropped. "Me? My own so-called friends ganging up on me in my hour of need. And I thought this couldn't get any worse." A side door to the corridor opened and a tiny woman dressed in an Alliance Surgeon's uniform strode toward them. Solo flinched. "It's worse." He hid his head in his bandaged hands.

"Well." Doctor Pill called cheerily, "I see our favourite patient's leaving us." She grinned down at the man who was still hiding behind his white-swathed hands. She reached out and tugged at his hair, pulling his head up toward her.

"Oww." Solo complained. "Why is it you females can't keep your hands off my hair.?"

Doctor Pill only giggled and pinched his cheek. "You're so cute when you're mad, Sunshine." she taunted. "It's not going to be the same around here without you," she winked at the Corellian's friends. "No yelling, no food decorating the walls, no remodelling of our medical equipment, no nurses in hysterics, no ..."

"Nice." Solo scowled.

"I think we might even miss you." the woman concluded, patting his shoulder. "But please, don't hurry back this time, all right?"

"Ha." Leia exclaimed, but her reaction was lost to Chewbacca's bellow of amusement.

"Now," Doctor Pill continued, eyeing each of Solo's companions in turn. "I'm relying on you. You will make sure he rests?" They nodded. "And takes his medication?" More nods. "And you know how to change these dressings?"

"Aarrgh." Solo screamed, drowning her out. "I'll do anything, I swear." He clasped his bandaged hands together as if in prayer. "Just please, please, let me outa here. Show some mercy."

Doctor Pill waved a finger at him. "I told you not to put any strain on those hands." The Corellian groaned and slumped dejectedly back in his seat. She ruffled his hair. "Relax. As of now, you're a free man."

"Good." he snapped, lurching to his feet and snatching his crutches from the nurse. "The first thing I'm gonna do is get a haircut."

\* \* \*

Three days later and the recuperating Corellian was beginning to wonder if the hospital had been all that bad. His friends were proving far worse than any of the nurses had been. They fussed so much they were driving him insane, but worst of all, they knew him well and were ready for any ploy he tried. They wouldn't let him stay out of bed long enough to finish several very interesting games of sabaac with Calrissian, he wasn't allowed to go for a walk on his own, many of his favourite junk foods were on the proscribed list. He sighed. He didn't even seem able to get them stirred up to argue with him for long before they apologised for overtiring him. Everybody was being so damned patient with him it was

disgusting. He sighed again, listening to Chewbacca humming cheerfully to himself as he worked in the galley, helping Leia concoct more boring health food for him, no doubt. Savagely, he threw another dart at the picture on the bulkhead at the end of his bunk, taking some satisfaction as it landed dead centre between the eyes of one of the reptilian bounty hunters hunting him.

"Anybody home?" a deep voice called from the Falcon's ramp.

Solo sat up straighter in bed. That sounded like General Rieekan. No way was he going to miss out on this. He'd already missed too much of the action during his two-month stint in the hospital. There must be one doozy of a mission in the works if Rieekan was making a personal visit to Leia, who was one of the five exclusive Command chiefs who would give the final go-ahead on any military decision. She was supposed to be off duty. Ha. And he was supposed to be asleep; this was his middle-of-the-day rest period. Rebelliously, he grabbed at his crutches, and headed toward the voices in the galley.

"Han." Leia and Chewbacca rebuked in unison as they spotted him. "You're supposed to be ..."

"Yeah, yeah." Solo grumbled. "I had to take a leak. Just thought I'd say hello, seein' as I was passing by. Please, General," he turned to Rieekan, "Don't let them send me back in there."

The officer laughed, then tried to smother it with a cough as Organa threw him a furious glare. "Well, we wouldn't want you to have a relapse like last time ..."

Solo cried in utter exasperation. "I feel fine!"

"Oh, all right," Leia surrendered. "Stay then. Lunch is almost ready anyhow."

"Oh goody." Han said sarcastically. "Maybe I'll get real food if I can eat out here with the grown-ups."

"He is looking scrawnier than usual," Rieekan commented..

"Hey." Solo's jaw dropped in insult, but his expression altered to relief as Rieekan concluded,

"...so maybe he should get some solid food into him. He'll need it if he accepts the mission we have in mind for him."

Solo had snatched up a piece of fruit on the table, and he almost dropped it in utter astonishment. "Mission?." he repeated joyfully. "For me? Yahoo!"

Leia transfixed Rieekan with such a cold glare that it was a wonder he didn't resemble carbonite. "This mission is sometime in the distant future, of course," she said sternly, "after he's had medical clearance."

"Ummm," Rieekan swallowed nervously. "Not exactly."

"And what does that mean?" Leia chopped viciously at the vegetable she was dicing.

"It's an emergency, Leia," the General pleaded. "We wouldn't ask him if it wasn't a matter of life and death. I've already explained to Doctor Pill."

"And?" Solo's eyebrows peaked hopefully, and his heart was flooded with warm admiration for Rieekan - he knew the man was courageous, but to confront Doctor Pill.. That was really something.

And ..." Rieekan looked nervously at the knife in Leia's hands. She wasn't happy about it, but she's agreed there's no other choice."

There was profound silence for a few seconds, then a loud "Chunk." as Leia chopped through a huge gourd vegetable in one savage hack.

"There is a God!" Solo whooped jubilantly. "And she loves me."

\* \* \*

Rieekan's claim that Doctor Pill wasn't happy with the arrangements had to be the understatement of the millennia. Solo watched apprehensively, his stomach knotting and his heart racing as she completed her last-minute examination of him. Behind him, the Falcon was all primed and ready to go, bristling with a mouth-watering array of powerful new weaponry and spy equipment. Surely the doctor wouldn't stop him now? "Ahhh ... how about it, doc?" he squeaked nervously as she lowered the stethoscope from his chest.

"Your heart's racing like a trip-hammer." she scolded.

"So.?" Solo said in exasperation. "I'm scared, okay. What did ya expect?"

Doctor Pill's pretty face softened further with compassion. "Oh, Han," she patted his arm. "I'm sure you'll come back safely."

"Then I can go.?"

"Well ... yes," she said, puzzled by the sudden elation where before there had been terror. "But, I thought you were afraid ... which would be only natural after what you went through last time ..."

Solo laughed. "Hell, no. I was scared you wouldn't let me go. Do you know how long it's been since I took the Falcon up?."

"Yes," she snapped, back on track, "not long enough. And I thought we agreed you were going to stay in your bunk?"

"Aww, c'mon, Maggie," he pleaded, backing hastily toward the awaiting ramp, "You can't really expect me to let Skywalker take her up. You know what a klutz he is." He threw one final taunting wink over his shoulder, hurried the last two paces into the blessed haven of his beloved ship, and hit the hatch seal before the doctor could come after him. "Let's get outa here, kiddies." he bellowed with a grin as he entered the cockpit, "the natives are gettin' restless."

Leia and Luke turned in unison to give him an identical look of exasperation. "Don't get over-excited," Luke warned.

"You're going straight back to your bunk as soon as we hit hyper," Leia threatened.

Solo sighed; it looked like it was going to be a longer trip than he expected.

\* \* \*

The Imperials put up a good fight trying to defend their outpost and the information stored in the computer banks there. But, as expected, Solo's expertise with jury-rigging circuitry, and conning various officials via radio, had gotten them the access they needed. And indeed, it was as well he'd been allowed to head this mission; without his personal knowledge of this strange planet and its unpredictable magnetic

tides and radiation flares, the Alliance support ships could never have reached and destroyed the factories and storehouses where the Imperials had produced a new strain of germ warfare with which they'd hoped to turn the odds in their favour once again. Needless to say, the place had been heavily fortified, and many of the Alliance ships had suffered damage from both ground fire and the TIE fighters that had hunted them until they'd found the safety of hyperspace.

"Told ya it'd be a piece of cake," Solo yawned as he snuggled down in the bunk beside his wife. "Not a scratch."

"And just as well for you," Leia chided, kissing the tip of his nose. "I wouldn't want to be in your shoes if you had to have Doctor Pill patch you up again."

"Damn straight." Solo agreed, shivering at the very thought. "I guess the kid'll be her next victim. That's quite a bump he took, but he'll be okay. It was only his head, after all."

Leia slapped him. "Still, I'm glad Chewie's sitting with him until we get to base."

"Yeah," Solo smiled. "Which means I'll have to bring the Falcon in. Damn shame, aint' it." He wriggled closer to his wife's warm body. "Y'know, there were a few bad moments there. Luke wasn't the only one to get shaken up. I took a few bruises myself," he grinned slyly, "maybe you could kiss the boo-boos better for me."

"Maybe," Leia agreed with a giggle, "If I could sort out the new injuries from the old."

"Hey," Solo declared magnanimously, "I ain't picky. Kiss 'em all."

\* \* \*

"Look out! Get back!!" Skywalker's shouts shattered the stillness aboard the darkened Falcon.

"What the ....? Owwww." Solo sat up with a jolt, hitting his head on the overhead which seemed to be much closer than usual.

"Take cover. Watch that crossfire." The Jedi's voice continued to bellow out warning. "Duck, Chewie!"

The Wookiee's growls and a howl of pain came to their ears.

"We must have picked up an Imp stow-away back there!" Solo said in alarm as his wife blinked groggily at him. He snatched at his holster, swung his legs clear of the mattress, and let out a scream of shock as he overbalanced and fell some distance to the hard deck below. "What the hell.?" he exclaimed, utterly amazed as he stared up at the mattress floating completely unsupported in thin air above the bunk. "Owww," he added, rubbing at a sore spot as he stumbled to his feet.

Leia sat up carefully and gaped at him, finding his head level with hers. "How did the bed get up here?" she gasped, noting Solo had taken quite a tumble. She climbed down to him. "Are you okay?"

His reply was interrupted by more shouts from Skywalker's cabin. "Yeah, yeah, I'm okay, but Luke and Chewie are in trouble. C'mon."

Together, they charged down the corridor, coming up to Luke's door just as Chewbacca stumbled out and collapsed, bloodied and burned at their feet. Solo threw one quick, concerned glance at his co-pilot as Leia bent to check him. "Imperial spies!" he cursed. "Hang on, kid. I'll save ya."

Blaster at the ready, he executed a neat forward roll and came up ready to shoot, but unable to find any targets. The only occupant of the tiny cabin was Skywalker, who held his lightsaber aloft, then swung it threateningly toward the Corellian.

"There's another one!" he shouted, his eyes glazed as they focused on Solo. "Stay back. I'll get him."

Han let out a yelp as the humming tip of the lightsaber brushed past his nose, very nearly rearranging his features. "K-kid.?" he pleaded, backing up. "Take it easy ... it's me ... Han."

"No more lies!" Skywalker screamed, taking another swing that Solo only just managed to escape by diving sidelong toward the bunk.

"Chewie says he's hallucinating." Leia called from the doorway.

"No kidding," Solo muttered, trying to squeeze into the space beneath the bunk. "Luke?" he called again. "It's me. Put that thing down. There ain't no Imps here."

There was a terrifying hum and sizzle and the blade swished down once more, making contact with the bedding and setting it ablaze.

"Kreth!" Solo swore in utter amazement.

"Han?!" Leia cried fearfully as she saw the flames. She took a pace into the room. Skywalker immediately swung the weapon toward this new threat.

"Stay back!" Solo warned, but Leia was frozen in disbelief as her brother moved to attack her. Hurriedly, Solo checked the setting on his blaster. "Sorry, kid," he mumbled as he pulled the trigger. Skywalker went down in a limp heap, hitting his head again as he fell.

Leia threw an accusing look at her husband who was busy grabbing at the fire extinguisher.

"I only stunned him," Han said defensively.

"I should hope so!" Leia rebuked as she bent over her unconscious brother. "I'll take care of him, you look after Chewie."

"Uh-uh," Han refused. "First I'm gonna tie this Jedi to his bunk."

"What!?"

"You wanna take him on again if he's still seeing things when he comes round?" Solo bent and picked up the fallen lightsaber. "Find some place to hide this thing too, huh?" He handed it to her, then stooped again to very carefully lift Skywalker. Seeing the burned bedding, now sodden with extinguisher fluid, he changed his mind. "This place is a mess. I'll take him to our cabin, okay?"

Leia sighed. "I don't think so, not unless you think the altitude will be good for him."

Solo blinked, then remembered, now noticing that there were several items floating about the Jedi's cabin as well. "It can't be the artificial grav-compensator, it's too ..."

Leia shook her head, interrupting him. "He's doing it," she said wearily, reaching out to stroke a lock of hair from her brother's brow. "He's feverish. His Force control has gone haywire."

Solo blinked even harder, then he scowled. "Oh great." He took a pace toward the door. "Let's see if the acceleration couch is still where it should be." As he entered the corridor, he was relieved to find Chewbacca on his feet. "You okay?"

\*Nothing serious,\* the Wookiee assured him. \*Luke?\*

"I stunned him."

"I'll get the medical kit," Leia offered. "We've got to get that fever down."

"Yeah, good idea," Solo said sourly, dodging some tools that came floating serenely down the corridor. "Or else it's gonna get real hard to find things around here."

\* \* \*

Fortunately, they found the acceleration couch was indeed still behaving itself - not much else was. Leia had quite a time of it, trying to snatch the medical kit from thin air after she located it drifting about the cockpit. Chewbacca was patched up and ordered to return to his cabin for some much-needed rest, he was suffering more from shock than anything else. Having the blade of a lightsaber give you a shave couldn't be a pleasant experience.

"Maybe, just maybe," Solo muttered as he re-entered the flight deck, dragging a length of chain behind him, "I can believe Luke's makin' all this lighter stuff float around ... but those crates are heavy!"

"I know," Leia agreed distractedly as she sponged at her brother's sweat-beaded face. "I hope it doesn't get any worse."

"Worse?" Solo grouched as he tried to secure a crate and bring it closer, "How could it be worse.?" He hooked one end of the chain through a hole in the crate, then fastened it tightly against the deck close by the acceleration couch. He flashed a proud grin at his wife. "Your throne, Your Highness."

"Thanks," Leia collapsed tiredly on the makeshift seat, her eyes still dark with concern and fixed on Skywalker's pale, strained face.

"Hey," Solo assured softly, bending to kiss the top of her head, then placing his hands to her shoulders he began kneading gently at the tense muscles there. "I'm sure he'll be okay."

She nodded, giving him a faint smile as she leaned back into his caressing hands. "And I thought I'd be nursing you again."

"Hey." Solo winked. "Don't tempt me." He kissed her again, pleased to see he'd managed to lighten her mood. "I'll go get us some kalin. Looks like it's gonna be a long night."

"Be careful," Leia advised as she rinsed out a fresh washcloth, "the galley can't be a safe place at the moment."

"Right," Solo nodded, his jaw set as he bravely approached the storage area for knives and other utensils. But surprisingly enough, things went smoothly, and he soon returned, cautiously carrying two steaming mugs of the hot beverage. "Hang on to it," he warned as he passed one to Leia, "can't have this stuff wanderin' off. I'm gonna go check on Chewie. I won't be ..."

Further words were drowned out in a chorus of various alarms. Solo nearly spilled his kalin. Forgetting his warning, he placed the mug on the console top and headed toward the computer station. He read through various readouts, cursed, and turned to look back at his wife who was busy catching his already straying drink. "It's worse," he informed her succinctly.

"What?" she prompted.

"Your Jedi brother's triggering circuitry all over the place. I can't tell what's a genuine alarm and what's not. I'm gonna have to check every damn one of 'em." He sighed. "I don't want to disturb Chewie, but I might have to if this keeps up."

But the Wookiee appeared moments later, the screeching alarms disturbing him more than Solo ever could have. \*Luke?\* he inquired, peering over Solo's shoulder.

"Yeah," Solo replied tiredly, "but we can't take chances. I'd best get into the cockpit. Can you take over out here?" His partner nodded, and Solo left, stopping by Skywalker's bedside before he entered the cockpit. "Any better?"

"His fever's come down a point," Leia reported with some cheer.

"Good." He kissed her cheek. "Maybe we'll survive after all." He placed a hand to Skywalker's brow, feeling for himself that indeed the heat had lessened somewhat. "Hang in there, kid," he said softly, then added with an affectionate smile, "Why couldn't you be a mere mortal like the rest of us?"

"H-Han?" Luke mumbled groggily. "That you?"

Solo flicked an elated, hopeful glance to Leia, then bent closer to the bed. "Right here, kid. You're gonna be okay. Just take it easy."

Skywalker struggled a moment, then managed to open his eyes. He squinted, then gave a weak smile as he recognised his two nurses. "The Imperials get away?"

Solo exchanged a hurried look with Leia who shook her head at him. He squeezed the Jedi's arm gently. "It's okay now. We took care of 'em."

"Good," Luke whispered, his eyes closing tiredly once more. "Thanks for the help. Is Chewie okay?"

"He's fine." Leia stroked his warm face. "Go back to sleep now." She watched as he obeyed, then looked up as Solo called to her.

"Take a look," he said with a broad grin. All about them, various objects were gently descending to their proper positions, and alarms stilled. "I'll go tell Chewie he can go back to bed. Now, if we can just do without any more adventures for the next eight hours, we'll be coming up on base."

\* \* \*

"And why do you suppose we haven't been able to contact the Falcon's crew?" Doctor Pill asked even more scathingly.

"Errr, as I said," Rieekan repeated nervously, "they took some battle damage, their radio's out."

"Precisely." the medic snapped. "And if there was enough violence to damage the radio, what do you think may have happened to its operator? That's the job we assigned to Solo, isn't it? You said it'd keep him out of trouble. Ha! I swear if I have to spend another two months putting him back together ....."

"General Rieekan, sir." The flight deck officer called, "We have them on visual now. All the Falcon's flight systems seem functional."

"Show me," Rieekan said, hurrying toward the scanner, glad of the excuse to avoid the medical team's questions.

Long, anxious minutes later, they all gathered on the docking bay floor, watching as the Falcon's ramp lowered. Chewbacca was first to appear, his fur signed in some places, and bandaging covering other spots.

"See." Doctor Pill scowled. "If Chewbacca's hurt, goodness knows how bad Solo must be." She snatched up her medical kit and made toward the ramp.

"Can someone give me a hand in here?" Solo's voice drifted plaintively down to them. "I think we might need a stretcher ... and a wheelchair."

Doctor Pill threw a glare at Rieekan, then signalled her team to follow along behind her. She hurried up the ramp, but came to a sudden jarring halt at the sight that greeted her.

"I do not need a wheelchair.." Princess Organa was arguing vehemently with her husband. She sat at the holo-chess table, her bandaged foot propped on a crate in front of her. On the acceleration couch nearby, a bandage wrapped about his head, Skywalker lay blinking at them dazedly.

Slowly, Doctor Pill's eyes returned to the Corellian. She could see no sign of new injury. "What about you? Internal injuries, right.?"

"Naah," he winked. "I'm indestructible." He shook his head exasperatedly, waving a hand to indicate his wounded companions. "I did my best, honest, Doc, but they were just too much for me. I couldn't take care of 'em all. But now you're here, you can help me look after them, right? You got that wheelchair for Her Worship here?"

"I am not using a wheelchair." Princess Organa repeated even more heatedly, glaring at her husband. "You think this is funny, don't you?! It's not my fault I tripped over those tools. Nothing's been where it should be."

"Leia, Leia, Leia," he said with mock soothing, pushing the wheelchair toward her. "You're just going to have to calm down. Learn to relax. We'll have you as good as new in ..."

"Oooooohhhh."

Solo ducked as she threw a dinner plate at him. "Temper, temper." he scolded, grinning.

Skywalker turned toward the doctor as she activated an optical scope and shone a light into his eyes. "Have you seen my lightsaber anywhere?" he asked groggily. "I think the Imperials must have taken it."

"I'm sure we'll find it," Maggie soothed. She signalled her orderlies to assist Skywalker on to a stretcher. Solo she noted, amused in spite of herself, was whistling cheerfully to himself as he guided his wife's wheelchair toward the waiting ambulance.

"You and Luke are gonna love the hospital." Han left off whistling to tell her. She tried to slap him again. "They have such great food here. And the nurses are so sweet. And I'll come visit you every day, I promise. It's the least I can do, I mean, you all took such good care of me, after all."

End

[Back To Index](#)