

[Back To Part 28](#)

[Back To Index](#)

This story was written just for fun and is not an attempt to make money or infringe on any copyrights or trademarks. Only the original ideas contained within the works on this nonprofit web site are the property of their authors, and please do not copy or link these stories to any other website or archive or print without permission of the author.

Lair of the Blue Falcon

Chapter 29: The Sealing

by [J.A. Berger](#)

In a line of uniformed men, Han Solo stood at parade rest while Kalyyyyn's resident members filed past. The procession moved with precision and reverence, the soft scuffling of their boots on flagstone the only sound as they entered the chapel.

The Corellian returned his attention to the front of the line where he met the steady gaze of the old Commandant. Han's eyes hardened with growing irritation. The old man would be watching his every move and it angered him.

Fighting the desire to pull at the tight military collar, Solo swore at a discomfort aggravated by years of civilian dress. The custom tailored trousers pulled taut across the tender flesh of the healing burn only irritated him further.

Solo studied with little interest the men standing on either side of him, some of them younger than he, others older. Men devoted to the Order and its traditions. And all, like he, would bear the Circle of Completion. These were the Order's elite and those eligible for Sealing.

Surprised, he watched young boys; Falcons in training, their eyes wide with the spectacle of the proceedings, walk past him and into the chapel. Before---in the days of the Jedi--- a Sealing would have been attended by only those eligible or those who had Sealed. A sudden thought and he glanced quickly in the direction

of the old man, a begrudging nudge of respect touched his anger. This Sealing was not going to be held behind closed doors for only a few to witness. The old fox was putting all his cards on the table and the stakes were high.

He swore under his breath. If it worked and by some unimaginable circumstance Luke and he sealed, it would breath new life into the old Order. However, should it fail it could spell the end of the Blue Falcons. He found the thought both infuriating and sad.

Of course, he reasoned, if all went as dismally as he anticipated, M'Fe might not figure it was worth the taking of a certain wayward Corellian's life. He chuckled in silent mirth, by then M'Fe would be mad enough to pull the trigger himself. Of one thing he could be certain, whatever happened it would not bode well for a certain Corellian named Han Solo.

"Detail, attention!"

The old man's softly spoken command pulled Solo back to the reality of his surroundings.

From long years of drilling, he automatically smoothed and straightened his uniform, his hand unconsciously brushing the holstered weapon on his hip. A long of warning from M'Fe and he eased his hand away from the belted blaster.

A faint smile touched M'Fe's mouth and Han stiffened under the old man's amused scrutiny.

Meeting Solo's hardened gaze, M'Fe's smile disappeared.

"Forward!"

Those in line still at stiff attention slowly marched past their leader in single file and into the small, dark chapel.

Keeping his place in line, Han Solo moved past M'Fe, pointedly avoiding the old Corellian's gaze. His foreboding increased. If there were any truth to the legends, should the old man's ploy work, there could be far more at stake than his life. He was his own man, he reminded himself yet again, and as such, he swore, he would die before allowing himself to be led by another----even Luke Skywalker. No, he corrected, not led, but controlled by the mind of another. This, he realized, was the real fear that lay behind his hopes for the boy's failure.

Warily, he entered the chapel, settling his gaze on the temple's only source of light, a huge hologram of a pale blue Corellian Falcon, its wings gracefully swept back, diving through a circle of red; a giant replica of the same symbol that he bore on his breast. A symbol, he reluctantly admitted, that he bore with a certain

amount of pride regardless of his disagreement with the Order's beliefs and traditions. He knew what the Falcons had been and he knew what they could be again. It was an old argument and one he had lost years before.

Bathed in the dim light of the huge holo, Solo followed the line down the center aisle, the heavy scent of Kalyyyn incense stirring to life memories he struggled violently to ignore, only to find he could not. Unwillingly, he remembered the first time he had walked down the chapel aisle. He had been Luke's age with his eyes already to the stars, his discontent already a subject of comment within the Order. Against his better judgment, he had consented to the ritual of Completion and, he admitted reluctantly, it had moved him far more than he had expected.

Tearing his gaze away from the holographic symbol of his Order, Solo hardened his defenses. Already he chafed with impatience, eager to get out of the unsettling atmosphere of the ancient temple and the bitter memories it evoked.

Reaching the front of the chapel, the line stopped and M'Fe walked past them to take his place before a massive stone altar its surface delicately carved with ancient runes. On the altar stood the Book of Sealing, its blue binding faded white with age.

According to the Words of Enchantment Han had been taught as a child, the book could not be opened except at the successful completion of a Sealing when the names of the Jedi and Falcon would be added to others already inscribed on the book's ancient pages. The recalled thoughts evoked immediate misgivings and he swore softly, stiffening at the venomous look he received for the old commandant.

The uniformed men filed behind M'Fe to form a straight line reaching across the front of the chapel, the holo at their backs and the assemblage before them. The soft blue light bathed them in a warm glow, leaving those who filed the hard stone pews in shadow.

The last of the line moved into position. Their feet shoulder width apart in parade rest with their hands behind their backs the chosen came to attention at a curt order from the old leader. An eerie silence fell over the assemblage.

Standing with the others, Han Solo found his attention focused on the back of the chapel. The heavy double doors, through which they had marched only moments before, were closed. The next time they opened, Luke Skywalker would enter dressed in the formal robes of the Jedi. The boy would walk down the aisle and stop before the altar, there to meet his chosen Second. In a flicker of interest, Solo wondered who had been selected to act in the Tatooine youth's behalf. Sadly, he realized, he would have liked it to be Chewie.

Doors opened and a Wookiee Color Guard entered from somewhere behind him. They moved slowly around the Falcon line and stopped before the altar. A ceremonial bowing and the Guard divided again into two lines before marching solemnly down the aisle. When both lines reached from front to back of the chapel, they stopped, spaced themselves equal distance apart and turned to face the aisle down which the revered Jedi would soon walk.

A touch of homesickness hit Solo as he watched the multitude of colored pelts move in and out of his range of vision, each carrying the banner of the Wookiee clan, which bore the symbol of their allegiance entwined and overlapping that of the Blue Falcons. A banner few outsiders, since the fall of the old Republic, had ever seen.

A huge black form moved away from the darkness where he had stood unobserved and Solo's heart quickened, watching in surprised amazement as the massive form of Butaka, Captain of the Stellar Jack, passed before him to take the revered position of Second at the right of the altar.

Acutely aware of the Wookiee's past, a glow of respect touched Solo. If Butaka had agreed to participate, it was likely because of their friendship forged from years of shared pain and discontent. If Chewie could not be present, Han was glad the black Wookiee was----for Luke and for himself.

The silence within the chapel had become almost palpable and the tall Corellian grew more restless. Once again the closely buttoned shirt begged for attention. He longed to run a finger between his neck and the tight collar to ease the irritation.

His wounded leg, throbbing from rigid inactivity and the weight it bore only added to his annoyance. Using the cover of semidarkness, Han slowly unlocked his hands and reached down to rub at the aching wound. He was stopped by the cold, hard muzzle of a weapon in the hollow of his back. Stiffening under the silent threat, he carefully returned his hands to their correct position. His hardened gaze seeking out the old man only to be met with an equally cold one. His anger intensified.

M'Fe had not been bluffing. He would accept no interference from his wayward Falcon. Lit it or not, Solo admitted helplessly, he would be forced to follow tradition regardless of his beliefs or disbeliefs. His jaw line hardened. M'Fe could do what he liked but unless Luke could pull off the impossible it was all going to unravel around the old man's ears.

The huge double doors at the far end of the long aisle slowly opened and Han Solo straightened in anticipated interest. Against the flood of daylight, which invaded the semidarkness of the ancient chapel, a slender figure in flowing white robes stood in the open doorway.

Luke Skywalker stepped into the dark silence of the crowded chapel and the heavy doors closed behind him shutting out the light and cloaking him in semidarkness. He straightened, glancing down the long aisle that ended before the ancient symbol of the Blue Falcons.

In the soft glow of the pale blue light issuing from the holo, the young Jedi's eyes slowly adjusted to the darkness and, before him, he saw the massive altar at the end of the aisle. Behind the altar stood the old Falcon leader dressed in the dark uniform of his Order and, to his right, the Captain of the Stellar Jack.

Luke frowned, struggling to make out the individuals within the stationary line behind the altar, looking for, but unable to find, the familiar form of Han Solo. The darkness keeping the men's features in shadow, while the blue glow bathed their forms in its gentle light, he had no idea where Han stood among them.

Aware of the multitude of eyes watching him in the silence of the massive room, Luke drew a deep breath. The graveness of his responsibilities weighed heavily on his conscience. This had to work, he admonished relentlessly. It had been his decision, and his decision alone, that had brought Han Solo back to Kalyynn. Now he faced his only hope of extracting the arrogant spacer from the deadly consequences of his actions and he had no idea what he was expected to do.

Having found it increasingly easy to attune himself to the Force since his arrival on Kalyynn, Luke trained his eyes on the beautifully graceful form of the diving bird and forced his concentration inward. Immediately, he felt the intensity of the power building within him and eagerly reached to pull it to him. The power waned and a touch of panic broke his concentration.

Surprised and puzzled, he reaffirmed his barriers. Closing out everything but the glow of the hologram, he settled his thoughts, his fears and concerns around Han Solo.

Desperately, he reached out--tentatively at first--then with more confidence. The power surged through him, his body tingling with the building energy and he reveled in it. Then it was gone, opening him to immense feelings of hostility and tremendous anger. He faltered. Was this the Dark Side he had been warned about, if so, why here, and why now?

Fearfully, he reached inward to his source of being where he had always found peace and reflection. Instead, he encountered chaos and darkness. Forced back by an unyielding wall of resistance, Luke Skywalker cried out silently. "Han, help me!" His overwrought mind echoed his fear, his helplessness. "I can't do it alone!"

Han Solo, his eyes adjusting quickly to the darkness, watched the slender figure clothed in the white robes of his cult step into the chapel. The heavy doors closed silently behind him.

The blue glow of the hologram touched the youth's sandy hair highlighting it in a silver halo effect. The Corellian smiled. 'Damned kid looks like an angel', he thought.

At the boy's obvious hesitation to advance, he groaned. 'This ain't gonna work.' He shot a hateful glance toward M'Fe, his belligerent resistance a hard light in the hazel depths of his gaze. He stiffened involuntarily at the disappointment he read in the old man and lifted his head in defiance. He was not taking the blame for this one, he vowed. He had done nothing. The damned ritual was falling apart all by itself.

He glanced again at Luke. The boy had taken a step or two down the aisle only to stop again, his eyes vacant, empty, with the far away look Han had grown to associate with the boy's attempt to evoke the Force.

Reading the hesitation and uncertainty in the young Jedi, Solo suspected the boy had been told little or nothing about the ceremony. The boy stood alone, defenseless, and at a loss before the assemblage, struggling with a belief in a power he would have been told could save the wayward Solo---a power that had obviously forsaken him.

Casting an accusing glare at M'Fe, Solo swore in helpless frustration. The boy had no idea what was expected of him, why in hell did M'Fe allow the fiasco to continue? Couldn't the old man see the strain he was putting on the boy, expecting the impossible when the boy couldn't give it?

With some reluctance, Solo admitted he had earned the wrath of the old man, but not Luke. The boy deserved better than he was getting. They were making a fool of someone who's only wish had been to save the life of a friend.

Clenching his hands tightly behind his back, Solo straightened, his gratitude and respect going out to the slender youth in the flowing white robes. His eyes focused on the face of the youth, longing to reach out and wipe away the apprehension and uncertainty he saw there. 'Say what they will,' he thought, 'they can't fault your courage...or your belief.'

Luke straightened. His face, illuminated by the hologram, had taken on a maturity and confidence that had been lacking only moments before. His eyes, without their haunted hopelessness, focused on the line of men and he started again down the aisle with steady, unfaltering steps.

Solo, his hazel eyes on the pale blue ones of the youth, smiled in admiration. 'You show 'em, kid,' he whispered through clinched teeth. "You may not know what the hell is expected of you, but they sure ain't gonna forget you tried.' The boy neared the front of the chapel. Unconsciously, Han Solo added his support to the growing confidence he read in the young Jedi's movements.

Luke Skywalker stopped before the ancient Commandant, his white robes reflecting the glow of the blue light, shown with a radiance of their own. "Jedi touches and embraces the truth of the Enlightenment." The boy's voice was strong, the pitch heightened by the acoustics of the high vaulted chamber.

"Jedi to Falcon, of one---with one---- unto the Force," M'Fe answered, his powerful voice echoing in reply to the youth's words. The glow intensified about the golden haired Jedi.

His entire attention focused on the white robed figure that stood defiantly regal before M'Fe, Solo's eyes sought contact with Skywalker and he reached out to the boy with his feelings of pride, gratitude, and trust.

Unaware he had stepped out of line, the room receded before Han Solo's consciousness, leaving he and the young Jedi surrounded by the soft glow of the holo above them.

The black Wookiee moved down the line, reaching the side of the tall Corellian and silently escorted him to the altar. Leaving Solo standing before the young Jedi and the Falcon leader, Butaka returned to his station.

There had been no force exerted, no fight for the control of his mind or his will. Solo smiled. Luke Skywalker stepped forward. Each grasped the right forearm of the other, their gazes unbroken. In a ceremony of silence, they swore allegiance one to the other, an allegiance forged from friendship and trust, spoken and understood in the language of total attunement.

The glow that encircled the young Jedi expanded until it touched and embraced the tall figure of the handsome Corellian. Their gazes still locked, arms still tightly clasped, Han Solo knelt willingly before the white robed figure, his eyes bright with unspoken pride and trust.

The pale blue glow heightened and Han Solo spoke, breaking the silence, his voice firm in its acknowledgment of the forming bond. "Falcon to Jedi, of one---with one---"

"Within the power of the Force," M'Fe finished, his voice echoing faintly in the consciousness of both men.

The familiar shape of a silver tube appeared in Luke's free hand at the edge of Solo's vision, but his gaze remained locked on the boy's blue eyes. A hiss proclaimed the weapon's activation and Luke raised the weapon shoulder high. A bright shaft of blue-white energy blossomed within a hand's span of the Corellian's cheek. He remained unconcerned.

Within the light of the energy-enriched blade, the room lost its contours for the Jedi and his chosen Falcon. No longer were they aware of anyone but each other. Solo tightened his grip on the boy's arm, his hazel eyes conveying his total trust.

"With the saber as symbol of the Enlightenment, I Seal this Bond." A gentle smile touched the boy's lips and the blade descended.

Solo made no effort to avoid the deadly blade. The pale blue energized beam moved toward his left shoulder, touched, and continued its descent until he heard the sharp crackle of hot energy on the stone flooring at his feet. A gasp sounded throughout the assembly. Han Solo stood uninjured.

Luke Skywalker deactivated the saber and pulled Han to his feet, both still attuned within the warmth of their friendship. Wild applause dissolved the contact and the two men were suddenly conscious of figures moving toward them from the shadows.

"Good show, kid," Han whispered to the smiling Skywalker. "Some day you'll have to tell me how you did that."

"You'll be the first to know," Luke promised, "as soon as I figure it out myself."

A suspicious look crossed Solo's face.

"We did it, Han."

"Not we, Kid, You did it."

"No," Luke denied softly, tightening his hold on the Corellian's arm briefly before releasing it. "We did it. I couldn't have done it alone. I tried."

Han turned as M'Fe moved up to his side, expecting an angry retort from the old man for his disobedience in line. Instead, the old Commandant offered his hand.

Solo hesitated in momentary confusion, than indecision, before he slowly took the hand in his own. Looking up, he met the proud gaze of his old master.

"Captain Solo, today you have made me a very proud man."

Caught off guard, the arrogant Corellian fought down the passion of his feelings for the old man. "Always tried to convince you I was a better man than this decadent order deserved," Solo replied, in an attempt to dispel his uneasiness.

M'Fe laughed, laying a fatherly hand on Solo's shoulder. "Yes, you did. As I recall on more than one occasion. But than we both know you can't always trust the word of a Corellian, don't we?"

It was the soft chuckle of the youth beside him that brought the familiar lopsided smile to the Corellian's features. "Okay, old man, you got me there, but what about the Book? I don't see it springing open in a blaze of mystic power."

M'Fe motioned Solo and Skywalker to join him before the altar and the ancient book resting there. A silence fell again over the chapel. The old man motioned Solo to the book. "Seems only right that the disbeliever of our Order should do the honors."

Solo shifted an uneasy glance toward Luke, who nodded agreement. "Go on, Han, open it."

Reaching out, Han lightly touched the top cover of the massive volume. It opened under his hand, midway through its yellowed pages. M'Fe and Luke moved up to stand with him before the opened volume.

M'Fe gently touched the last recorded names in faded ink on the page: Luke Skywalker and Han Solo. Beside the names, the correct date of Sealing. Reverently, he traced the firm pen strokes that had inscribed the names long before the birth of either.

"That was a good trick, M'Fe," Solo stated softly. There was no sound of conviction in his words.

"It was no trick, my distrustful Falcon," M'Fe spoke solemnly. "You know my hand from your training days. I did not write your names here, but I do recognize the hand." Reverently, he thumbed the discolored pages backward, past rows of inscribed names until he found the one he sought. Midway down the column of names, he paused beside the bold script identical to the hand that had written the last names in the book: Obi Wan Kenobi. Luke and Han exchanged glances over the old man's bent head.

Solo shook his head in puzzlement. "I'm not sure I understand any of this, but I guess that must make it official."

Ignoring Solo's flippant remark, M'Fe turned back and studied the inscribed names once more, a solemn reverence in his expression. "The Force moves in mysterious ways. It must have important plans for you, young Luke," he

commented, gently closing the book. "And for the Falcon you sealed with this day. May it guide and protect you both in the pathway it has chosen for you to follow."

The assemblage had fallen silent before M'Fe's softly spoken prayer. He sighed and pulled himself erect. "A Sealing is a time of rejoicing and celebration. Come! The ceremony of Sealing has passed; let's celebrate the bonding of Jedi to Falcon."

A cheer echoed throughout the chamber. The huge double doors at the back of the building swung open the Blue Falcons filed out eager to discuss the miracle they had witnessed in the ancient temple of their Order.

Han and Luke stood quietly before the altar allowing the room to empty, until they alone remained. Han glanced speculatively toward the closed book.

"Go ahead. Try to open it."

Han slowly shook his head. "I don't think so."

"Afraid it won't open?" Luke teased lightly.

"No, Kid," Solo denied tensely, "Afraid it will."

"Young Jedi, old friend..."

Solo whirled, his hand instinctively reaching for the weapon on his hip. He froze. A massive shape had detached itself from the shadows.

"Forgive me. I stayed behind to rejoice in your joining," Butaka explained, moving from behind the altar to join the two humans. "I had no meaning to intrude."

Solo relaxed. "A clansman is never an intrusion, you are welcome." Human eyes met Wookiee ones with unspoken understanding. "I know what it took for you to..."

Butaka silenced Solo's stumbling attempt at gratitude with a smile and a nod. "I could do no less." He settled his royal blue gaze on young Skywalker.

"Yea, he's okay," Solo agreed. "And a damned good man to have in a fight. Come on, you two; let's join the celebration. After all, we are the guests of honor." Solo winced as he moved away from the stone altar. "I've got to get off this leg or I might find myself on my knees in front of M'Fe." He shivered at the thought, then mumbled under his breath. "I'd never live that down."

end Chapter 29

[Continue To Part 30](#)

[Back To Index](#)