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Solo's Inheritance  
by Nadja Lee

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Author's note:

English is not my native language, please forgive my errors. For feedback mail me at [neh@post10.tele.dk](mailto:neh@post10.tele.dk)

This is my first attempt at Star Wars fan fiction, so go easy on me.

Note: This story is my version of Solo's past and only a few characters from the novels are in this work. - Mara and any other characters from the official novels are the property of their makes. I am only borrowing them for awhile. Any novels or comics not mentioned are because I have chosen to look away from these.

Timeline: This story takes place 10 years after Return of the Jedi. None of the events that transpired after the Jedi Academy Trilogy will be included in this story.

A big thanks goes to my Beta Reader; Naomi. You are the best!

You have to ask yourself 3 questions:

What is worth living for?

What is worth fighting for?

And what is worth dying for?

The answer is simple:

Only Love.

He ran down a big corridor. There was a plush, beautiful, red carpet on the floor and a nice, silver-worked tapestry on the wall. Occasionally he passed some furniture or other kinds of ornaments, all made in a classic

design. When he passed some of the many windows he could see that it was dark outside, but flames from houses below coloured the night sky in golden shades. Behind him he could hear a frightened female voice calling after him. He could not really hear her words but somehow he knew that she was there, and that it was important that he reach the end of the corridor before she caught up with him. He ran and ran but the corridor seemed to last forever. He was about to give up--which somehow he knew he had done thousands of times before--when suddenly he reached a big, dark door with a lot of embellishment on it. A little insecure, he laid his small hand on the old fashioned handle and turned it. The door opened and he could see inside to a nice living room. It had the same classic look as the corridor, appearing just as fine and well appointed.

With small steps he slowly went inside. At once the lights came on. He went around the room trying to find what it was he was looking for. He was not sure what it was, but he knew it was important he find it. Suddenly he heard a shot and then a loud thump as if a person had fallen to the floor. When he turned around he saw a man holding a still-smoking blaster; another man lay unmoving on the floor.

When the boy tried to come closer to see the fallen man's face, the darkness that surrounded the man followed him. With a feeling of loss and fear he kneeled beside the man, all the while keeping an eye on the attacker. With shaking hands he turned the man toward him and saw he had handsome features, brown hair, brown eyes, and a well-kept figure. He looked around the age of forty and was the image of himself, only a lot older. He began to cry and shake the man back and forth.

"Daddy, wake up," he begged with a small quavering voice. Silently he prayed to all the gods that this was not happening. That his Daddy was still alive. Very scared now he took his father's still-warm hand in his.

"Please, Daddy," he begged once more. He looked at his father's face and knew that he was never going to wake up again. With a cry he lay his head on his father's chest and cried. He cried till there were no more tears. Then he lifted his small head. On his cheeks were the not-yet-dry tears and in his eyes there was a knowledge and pain that he was far too young to know.

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"Father, no!" Han Solo cried out, tossing about in the bed. Beside him his wife Leia Organa Solo tried to carefully wake him from the torture that his sleeping mind was making. She had been awakened by Han's screams and had tried to wake him from his nightmare but his mind was too locked in the dream.

She laid her small white hand on his muscular forearm. "Han, please wake up. You're dreaming."

With a start he woke up. For a moment he looked disoriented. "Father?" he asked. Then he looked at Leia. He saw her delicate beauty and the worry in her pretty brown eyes and then he remembered where he was.

"It's ok," he said, but his shaking voice betrayed him and told her that everything was far from okay.

"That was a bad one. Want to talk about it?" she asked.

Since she and Han had married ten years ago she had discovered that she was not the only one who was haunted by the past. She still had nightmares about the Death Star and Alderaan, but since Han had been there to wake her up and comfort her they did not occur as often anymore. She was a little sad that her presence did not have the same calming affect on him that his had on her. They had married a few months after the battle of Endor and therefore Han's nightmares had in the beginning been about Vader and the terrible torture he had experienced first on Bespin and then during the six months of silent agony in the carbonite.

But then he started having nightmares about his past. He had never been able to tell her very much about it. Whether it was because he could not talk about it or because he simply did not remember his nightmares when he woke up, she did not know. Come to think of it, he never talked about anything from his past but some smuggling adventures. She sure hoped that it was not because it was all bad memories. Something told her that she was going to get some answers tonight, and that it would be far from pleasant. She was not sure whether it was her Force powers or simply female intuition which told her that, and right now she really did not care.

She gently stroked his hair; he put his arms around her and held her tight, as if he was afraid she would disappear. "You know that I rarely talk about my past," he started and gave her a small half smile. He continued, "Well, there's a reason for that. There are not very many happy things to look back on."

She looked up at him while he talked and her heart filled with love for him but also a deep sadness. She had grown up in the royal palace in the capital city on Alderaan. She'd had a loving family and she had never missed anything. It was first after Alderaan's destruction that she had seen with her own eyes how cruel the galaxy could be, and still she had not seen half of the bad things that Han had.

"I don't remember much about the time before I was five years old. When I was five, I remember I was going around on Corellia and begging for food." He did not know why he told her this. No one knew about his past and he had preferred it that way. But now it was as if his past was catching up with him. Over the last few years he had got more and more nightmares that were really half-forgotten memories and fears. But lately he had got this kind of flashback when he was awake as well, and it distracted him in his work. Two years ago the Senate had promoted him to Admiral, and as Ackbar was the Leader of the Fleet, he was the Leader of the Army. Together with General Calrissian, Ackbar, Wedge, and some other military leaders, he sat in the War Council. The Senate called upon the War Council every time there was trouble breaking or there was a war going on. And with so big a galaxy and the New Republic controlling 85 percent of it, there was a lot to be done. Not to mention if the troublemaker was a Jedi gone crazy. If that was the case, the Jedi Council was also called upon and the two councils had to agree on a way to solve the problem. And the councils were far from agreeing on the ways to do just that.

With Luke as the President of the Jedi Council and Han as the President of the other Council the discussions could get rather heated. (Well, heated on Han's part.) They were the best of friends but had very different opinions on how to deal with Dark Jedi. Han and the War Council had the opinion that it was safer for everyone to shoot first and ask questions later, while Luke and most members of the Jedi Council had the opinion that they could try to get the Dark Jedi back on the good side. Sometimes Han could get his good friend Kyp on his side and he knew that he could always count on Mara to support him. After the incident with the Sun Crusher and Kyp's turn to the dark side when Han had got him back to the light, Mara and Han had formed an increasingly closer relationship. They had discovered that they had quite a few things in common. They both had very few memories of their parents, they both had a cruel and cold upbringing, they both had been smugglers, and they pretty much shared the same opinions. The only thing that separated them was the fact that Mara had the Force and he did not. And now for two years she had been married to Luke.

In Han's opinion it had not been too soon. The kid deserved someone to love, not to mention that Mara and Luke were the perfect couple. They were like fire and water. Just like Leia and he. He also knew that had it not been for his support and encouragement, Mara might never have admitted to herself or Luke that she loved him. She'd had just as much trouble getting those three words out as Han had. And Luke, he had been so caught up in the Jedi thing that he had not had the time to sit down and analyse his feelings. Han was happy that Luke and Mara lived next to Leia and him on Coruscant. After Luke's near-death experience and the meeting with the dark spirit, Luke had decided that Yavin 4 was not the best place to educate Jedi. With Han and Mara's help he decided to just do as Yoda did. He waited

for the students to come to him and then he went with them to Dagobah and trained them there. The students got the same training he had and after the training the new Jedi travelled the galaxy helping where they were needed. Some of his best students became Jedi Masters and could educate students themselves. To avoid another Vader, Jedi Knights were not permitted to teach and the Jedi Council had to in unison "promote" the knight. Of course because of the obvious lack of Jedi Masters to the Jedi Council, Luke had together with the Senate and the War Council promoted the knights they found fit. Now the Jedi Council was complete and among the Masters sat Kyp and Mara and, of course, Luke, just to mention the few Masters that Han really liked.

But lately he had got these flashes of insight at the most inconvenient places. That being when he was in battle, at a diplomatic dinner, or at a press conference. Maybe he just needed to talk about it. And who had more right to hear this than the woman he loved more than life itself? He continued his story to his wife.

"After a few months a man took me with him. I discovered that he had gathered many such children like me and that he was living a good life from the money that he had us steal from people. Like I said, I don't remember much about my parents, but I do know that I was raised to believe that both stealing and begging is wrong. I had no choice but to beg if I wanted to survive."

He smiled cynically at her. "Pride is a very small dinner. Especially for a kid."

She almost got tears in her eyes. Why did he always have to be so brave? Not only on a battlefield but also with his emotions. She could not even begin to imagine how hard it must have been for so proud a person to live like that. She comforted him the only way she could think of. She gave him a kiss in which she lay all her passion. He kissed her back with just as much feeling.

"Then what?" Leia asked softly. Even though she knew that it was painful for him to remember it all again she believed that it would help him to get rid of the nightmares. And she could not help but be curious about what had made Han the man she loved.

"Well, the man, who we all called The Leader, took me under some "kind" treatment and I once again had no choice but to do as I was told."

Leia could not keep a shiver from going up her spine. She could only in her worst nightmares imagine what kind of treatment Han had had to endure if he

had been just half as proud and stubborn as he was now. Han felt her shiver and held her tighter.

"I used to work together with a girl. Her name was Isabella. She was not like the other children. Somehow she still believed in good and fairytales. She looked like an Engell with blond hair and blue eyes, and was the kindest being I have ever known." His eyes lost focus, as he became lost in the memory.

"What is an Engell?" Leia asked gently. She had never had the time to learn Corellian and it was at times like these that she regretted it.

"It is the name of the Corellian Goddess of Light. In Basic her name would be an angel even though the meaning is not quite the same. She is more like a qwita," he said, and compared her to the Alderaan small fairies, as it was the closest thing to an angel the Alderaani had in their belief. Han had found it useful to learn the Alderaani language as a smuggler, and had learned High Alderaani, a dialect spoken by the nobility and royalty on Alderaan, when he had married Leia.

Leia nodded understanding and smiled encouragingly to him.

"Over the next few years Isabella and I got a close relationship. That proved fatal to her when The Leader and I had another of our more and more common run-ins." Han fought against tears as he relived the past. Isabella had been defenceless and he had been supposed to protect her. In all her fairytales Han had been her knight in shining armour. But where had the knight been? Isabella had been the first girl that he had loved even though that it was a child's love. The memory was still too painful to talk about so he hurried to move on.

"I was 12 at that time. The same year that Isabella..." he had to stop as tears tried to get the better of him. Leia gave his hand a reassuring squeeze.

"The same year that Isabella...died, we got a new Keeper. The Keeper was a woman that looked after us and took care of us. The one we had before was not rather nice so we did not expect so much from this one. But we were wrong. It was a Wookiee woman and she was nice to all of us. But she held me dear as a son and I saw her as a mother." he said. His voice had automatically gone softer when he talked about his "mother."

"Is that how you learned to understand Wookiee and their customs?" Leia asked.

"Yes. She gave me a deep respect for the Wookiees and their Honour Code. Their Honour Code is very similar to the ones on Corellia." Han explained. "Anyway, Mother and I planned our escape from the big house. And not just me and her. All the other kids, too. We were held in an old house in the poor neighbourhood in Corias, the second biggest city on Corellia. The Leader lived in luxury in the Capital City on Corellia while his paid helpers guarded the house. When some of us had to go out of the house to steal or something for The Leader, some of us were always left behind. If the ones who was out had not returned at the expected time the guards began killing the kids left behind. So escape was not so easy," Han continued in an emotionless voice.

Leia could not help but to be shocked. She had seen many people--most of all the Empire--do far worse but it still shocked her every time.

"It took us three years to get ready to get away. We thought we had planned it all so well. Some of the guards we bribed with the money we'd succeeded in hiding when we were searched after we came home from a 'mission.' But if one was caught the penalty was 20 lashes so it was not many that had the courage..."

He smiled at her but it turned into a grimace. "...or stupidity to do that. We had learned the guards routes and changes inside and out so we could get out of our rooms unseen, and we had made puppets that we were going to lay in our beds so that we was not discovered so soon. We were going to escape out the kitchen door and hide inside the food car that came by the house once a month. The car would then involuntarily take us to the Capital City where we were going to steal a ship and get away."

He took a deep breath. He had not allowed himself to think of what happened next. For years the ghosts from that fateful evening had haunted his dreams.

"It did not work, to put it mildly," Han said. Memories that he wanted to forget came back to him. "It was a massacre. A boy named Nick, chickened out and sold us to The Leader. We thought that everything was going fine until we were out of the kitchen door and were heading towards the car when guards jumped out and started shooting at everything that moved. Most had not been able to steal and hide a weapon, so we did not have a chance. I was one of those who had a blaster. I tried to defend the others but I did not have a chance. It was 1 to 100 odds. I was wounded in the shoulder and a blast nearly cut my head off."

"That was when you got your scar," Leia said quietly, almost to herself. She was crying now. Crying for the children who had been murdered that

night and crying for the man who'd had to watch and been unable to do anything.

Han continued as if she had not spoken. "My mother got hit and I was able to get to her. She was dying and asked me to go. To save myself. I could not do anything but get killed and when she and the others were going to die she wanted to know that her son at least had been able to get away. Then she died in my arms. And I did what she asked and escaped. Somehow, I do not remember how, I got to the Capital City." His voice was without feeling and his eyes were dry, but behind them she could see a pain deeper than the Crystal Sea, the biggest sea on Alderaan. She had a feeling that if he stopped for a moment and thought about that night, he was never going to be able to go on again.

"I only had revenge on my mind. For a young desperate man everything is possible and I found The Leader's home. He was a nobleman." He looked at her and even though she knew that it had nothing to do with her, her cheeks coloured red. Now she understood his dislike and mistrust when he first met her. The member of nobility he had met had not helped to improve his dislike in everything in authority.

"I waited outside his house and when he came out I killed his bodyguards and we shot it out. One guess about who won," he said, and now there was a satisfied gleam in his eyes as he remembered the man's fate.

"What about Nick?" Leia asked and prayed that he had not killed him too even though she knew quite a few who would say that it was in his right to do so.

"He got away from the massacre. I decided that letting him live with what he had done was punishment enough. I did not know that the burden of having so many lives on his conscience was going to do to him. Somehow he never got over it and he hunted me for many years, probably in the belief that if he eliminated the only other one who knew about the massacre, he could eliminate the pain within himself. It is rather ironical that he ended up dying by my hand instead even though it was an accident."

Leia's mind was racing but she could not remember any Nick that had been after Han. "I've never heard about any Nick," she puzzled.

"He changed his name," Han explained.

"Then who was he?" Leia asked, curiosity getting the better of her.

"Oh, you knew him quite well," Han said, smiling at her.

"Han," She said in a warning tone.

"Ok, ok!" he said laughing. Then his mood sobered again. "Fett. He was Boba Fett."

Leia just stared at him with her mouth open. "What!?" she got out at last.

"He was Boba Fett." Han was a little annoyed by her disbelief. Han went on after he could see that Leia had recovered from the shock. "After that I began looking for my family. I remembered being called Han Solo when I was young, so I looked up the only Solo family that I could have been born into considering my age, where they were at the time where I must have been born, and so on. It was the Solo noble Family."

Leia gave a small gasp. Even on Alderaan she had heard of the powerful and rich Solo family. Her father had said that if there had been a member of the family in the right age he would have liked a marriage between him and Leia.

"Don't get all excited, Your Worship," Han teased when he saw it. "My family made it more than clear that they did not want me back."

"Why not?" Leia asked, astonished.

"Well, as far as I could make out I was the only child of the Duke of Conika's daughter, who had run away to get married, and that he therefore did not consider her his daughter anymore. And as the leader of the family, the rest of the Solos acted the same way."

Leia nodded understanding. She had heard of the scandal. No one knew who it was that the Duchess had run away with, but whomever it had been, her father had not approved.

"After that I joined the Imperial Navy. I wanted to learn to fly and shoot. It did not go so well with the Senior Officers, for obvious reasons, but I became an Imperial Officer at the age of 18. Not soon after that I saw some slaves, among them Wookiees. I had always been against slavery, which had been one of the problems that the Navy had with me."

Leia understood. She was against slavery for moral, ethical, and humane reasons, but Han had practically been a slave for many years. He had known the humiliation, the beatings. No wonder that he was against it.

"The Wookiees reminded me of my mother so I rescued them, and to help them get away I remained behind. When they lifted off in a stolen ship, I shot the advancing Storm troopers. There were a lot of them and in the end they

got me with a stun blast. I came for a court-martial and was found guilty. I was scheduled to be tortured as an example to scare others with foolish ideas and then executed." Han tried hard not to remember the long hours of torture he had experienced. At that time he had thought that he already had felt all the ways a man could get tortured. The Imperials had been more than happy to show him how wrong he had been. He shook his head to make those memories go away.

"After the torture, when I was awaiting my execution, one of my friends named Ranulf came to me and told me that the sentence was changed. I was 'just' being thrown out of the Navy."

Leia just realised that she had held her breath until Han had told that he got away. Her heart was breaking for him. How he could still have so much love to give was beyond her comprehension.

"I later found out that Ranulf's father was an Imperial Admiral and that was how he had been able to change the sentence."

"Is Ranulf the same..?" Leia asked disbelievingly.

"Yep, the one and only," Han answered with a smile. Ranulf had joined the Rebellion a few months after Han. Han had been very happy about it, as he would have hated going up against the man to whom he owed his life. Now Ranulf had married the queen Mora, who had been the reason he joined the Rebellion in the first place, and had two children. Ranulf also sat on the War Council and was a good soldier and leader.

"And the rest you know. Chewbacca found me and followed me, first because of the life debt and later because we became good friends. And we became the best smugglers in the galaxy." Han ended his tale proudly. He really felt much better now. It was as if a stone had been lifted from his heart.

"But you mentioned your father in your sleep?" Leia reminded him.

"Yes, I know. I'm not sure about what I saw. I'll get Winter to help me with it tomorrow."

The next day was Saturday and his day off. Well, as much of a day off as he ever got.

"Tell me about your dream about your father," Leia asked.

"As I said I don't remember much of it. I've had this dream for as long as I can remember and it always ended the same. I stood before a big door and I could not open it. But today I could. But..." He looked

helplessly as her. "Somehow I can't remember what I found behind the door. Only that it has something to do with my father."

"Luke has taught me a tactic with which I can go into your mind and..."

"No one, not even you, is going to mess around with my mind," Han interrupted, and his tone told her to not go there again.

Leia's mind was racing. Those symptoms that Han described had also something to do with a Jedi tactic that Luke had told her about. Uh, if only she had paid more attention. "I think that you should talk with Luke or Mara about this," Leia stated carefully.

"Ok, I'll drop in on Mara tomorrow," Han agreed. He felt more comfortable talking about his dreams with Mara than Luke. He knew that Mara was also often haunted by the ghosts from the past. "Now, no more talking about that," Han said and gathered his Princess in his arms and kissed her. She lay her arms around him, needing the closeness to convince herself that he was with her, and that all the other things were from the past.

"I love you so much," Han whispered.

"And I love you," Leia answered before Han's lips captured hers once again; it took quite some time before they fell asleep.

The Next Morning:

"Daddy, are you awake?" Jaina asked her father quietly as she tried to crawl into the bed with her dad. Han opened his eyes and saw his 5-year-old daughter looking up at him.

"Yeah. Now I am," he said and was careful to keep his voice as low as hers so they did not wake Leia up. He carefully lifted the small girl up and lay her beside him in the bed. "Now, what is it?" Han asked her.

"Can you keep a secret?" she asked.

"Of course. What is it?"

"Anakin is making Anastasia and Junior fly again," she said conspiratorially.

"What??" Han almost forgot to keep his voice low. He hurried to get out of bed and looked at the clock. 0845 it said. Uh, so much for waking up late. He lifted Jaina up and only dressed in his pants. He carried his daughter and almost ran into the nursery. Inside he did indeed see two small babies

flying. Both of them seemed to find it funny, but Han's sudden appearance had distracted Anakin and he lost his grip on the twins who started to fall to the ground. With remarkable speed Han ran across the nursery and caught the babies all the while still carrying Jaina. He hurried to put the babies on the floor so he only held Jaina. Supporting Jaina on his hip he turned towards Anakin and Jacen.

"Now, who did that?" Han asked sternly. This was the problem with having Force-strong children. He would love to see what Mara would do when she was confronted with flying babies or something like that.

"They did it themselves," Jacen hurried to say. His sister looked disappointedly at him from within her father's safe arms, absolutely sure that her Daddy would never dream of suspecting his Little Princess.

"Is that so? And how can they do that when they don't have the Force?" Han asked his son. He had to admire the small boy's quick thinking even though his answer was not entirely true. He knew that Jacen often was the one starting trouble. "I think that you asked Anakin to make them fly. Doesn't that sound right, Jace?" he asked his son.

"Well, I..." Jacen started but then realized that he could not win this one.

"Now get dressed and come to the living room to eat," Han said. Jacen looked relieved, but his father wasn't done yet. "And Jace," he continued.

The boy turned to face him again.

"No more baby flying, ok?" he said.

"Yes, sir," Jacen answered.

Han smiled and went over to Jaina's closet and was about to hand her a beautiful white dress that her mother had bought her.

"Daddy, I don't want to have that dress on," she complained.

"Then what do you want?" Han asked with a smile, knowing the answer.

"The red pants and the yellow blouse you gave me for my last birthday."

Han smiled. "Ok, honey," he said, doubting that there was anything in this galaxy he could deny her. Winter came to the nursery and nodded a good morning to Han before going over to the babies to change, feed, and then put them back to sleep. Then she helped Anakin while Han helped Jacen when

he was finished with Jaina. Then they all went to the living room where they always ate breakfast in the weekends. Leia had woken up and had a robe over her nightgown. She said good morning to the kids and they were just about to eat when Leia's comlink called. The kids and Han made a disappointed 'ooh' noise. Leia answered it the call.

"What is it now? Can't they do anything without you?" Han asked when she was finished.

"Han, I am the President. We have to discuss the new finance law for next year," Leia said while she went inside their bedroom to change.

"Ah, come on Leia. That law doesn't run away," Han called after her. She did not answer.

"But we might." he whispered angrily. Leia came out and kissed them all goodbye before leaving the President Residence in the Palace; Han caught a glimmer of the bodyguards that were going with her. By now Leia had the New Republic bodyguards, the Noghri, and the Royal Alderaan Guard to protect her. Han hardly thought she could be more protected than if she was locked inside a bank box. He himself had been offered NR guards as well as Noghri, but had declined. If he needed a bodyguard Chewie would do the job. He had been more than enough in the past and he still was.

Later that afternoon, after Han had taken the kids to an amusement park, he made some reports for the War Council's meeting the following Monday morning. Then he told Winter that he was going over to see Mara. Jaina wanted to come with him and Han of course let her. Han Solo, Junior and Anastasia were still sleeping' Anakin and Jacen were at a friend's house to play.

Upon arriving at Mara's, Han knocked at the door. Mara opened and her face brightened at seeing her guests. "Han, nice to see you," she said and smiled one of her rare smiles. With Jaina in his arms he went inside. As he had thought might happen, Jaina had fallen asleep on the way over to see her aunt and uncle even though they only lived in the other end of the Palace.

"I'll just put her in your bedroom," Han whispered. Mara nodded. When Han came back they seated themselves in the living room. "Where's Luke?" Han asked.

"He is out visiting a woman who may have the Force. She arrived yesterday. You're lucky. You just caught me. I've just come back from Headquarters," she said. Mara was, together with Karrde, the Leader of the Smugglers Alliance, who now had headquarters on Coruscant. "Biggs and Melicca are

with their father--it's about time he is spending more time around them," Mara said with laughter in her eyes. "And Hanna is sleeping." Hanna was Mara and Luke's smallest child. She was three months old and was the only one of the Skywalker-Jade kids who did not have the Force, which was one of the reasons that she was named after Han. The twins, Biggs and Melicca, had very strong Force powers.

"Mom, could you sign my mark book?" Dev came in asking. Dev was Mara and Luke's adopted son. Dev was the Jedi Prince that Luke had found a few years earlier. "Hi, Uncle Han," the 14-year-old boy said when he spotted Han. He was about to give his mother the mark book but when he saw Han he quickly gave it to Han instead.

Smiling, Han read it. "Don't you think that you should get your father or mother to see this?" Han asked when he saw that Dev apparently had had other things on his mind lately than studying.

"Oh, Uncle," Dev complained.

Han gave Mara the mark book and she too had a hard time trying not to smile. Apparently Mara's and Han's distaste in studying had had an influence on Dev. "I think you should show this to your father," Mara said.

"But Mother-" Dev began but was silenced by a glance from Mara's green eyes. "Ok," he said and hurried out.

"Well, Han, I have a feeling you did not come here just for my company," Mara said.

"No, I didn't, even though I enjoy it." Han admitted. "I have had some dreams," Han began.

"Like the ones you told me about? The one with the big door in it?" Mara asked him with some concerned.

"Yes. But last night something happened. For the first time I could open the door in my dream. But when I woke up I could not remember what I saw inside, only that it had something to do with my father," Han said.

Mara thought about it for a moment. "Luke has told me about a Jedi tactic that allows a Jedi to erase certain parts of a person's memory," Mara said slowly.

Han looked a little shocked at her even though he knew that Jedi could do far more.

"There is only one problem," Mara said and looked Han directly in the eyes. "A non Force Sensitive should not be able to ever get the slightest idea that he or she had lost a part of their memory."

"But when Kyp erased a part of Yxi's memory she knew that something had happened," Han said, slightly confused.

"Yes, and that is why Luke tested her for Force Sensitivity and found that she does indeed have a very low ability to feel the Force," Mara said.

"Are there any other ways that this could have happened?" Han asked, trying to take this news calmly even though he felt like standing on a chair and screaming.

"No. I know no other way that what you said could happen. That you sometimes get flashes of inside and sometimes remember something from your past what you could not remember before," she said and could not keep a little sadness from her voice. She had no memory of her past before she came to the Imperial Palace. She brought her mind back to Han's problem. "I will get Luke's crystal and see if you test positive." Mara quickly left to find it. She hated feeling vulnerable. She opened a small closet in the living room and took the crystal out. As she went over to Han with it she wondered why no one had ever thought about testing Han before. Maybe it was because he obviously did not like the Force. But if she was right, then the Jedi that had erased Han's memory had probably, as a protection, also planted the information in his mind that he disliked the Force. But why? Was Han so powerful that the Jedi had found it necessary to hide him even better than the Skywalker twins?

"Is this necessary?" Han asked, feeling very uncomfortable.

"It's ok. You won't feel a thing," Mara said and scanned him. The readings were not like anything she had seen before. He had a very powerful blue line around him, the one indicating Force powers. And judging by the size of the blue line, Han had more power than Luke or Kyp. But the colour indicating Force blindness was a little thicker than the other line. She had never met a person before that both showed signs of extreme Force powers and Force blindness at the same time. For a Jedi Master she was one confused person. Unless...

An idea hit her. "Han, you show signs of both Force powers AND Force blindness. As far as I know that is not possible..."

Han started to say something but she cut him off.

Mara continued seriously, "Unless a Force Sensitive has been stripped of his Force powers. Totally or partly."

"But who would do that? And why?" Han asked in astonishment.

"Well, about the who, I don't know, but with the why I may be able to help you," Mara said with a smile. "I think that it was done as protection for you so the Emperor and Vader did not find you. And for the galaxy. As powerful as you would have been with all your powers you could have either saved the galaxy or destroyed it." She paused, trying to soak up what she was saying. "Apparently the Jedi could not take the chance that you would stay on the light side with all the powers you had."

"So what you're saying is that I may still have some powers left?" Han asked, trying to get it all.

"Yes. The Jedi may have left you with very little Jedi power so you could protect yourself but not enough to be a threat," Mara explained.

"Is there any way to undo whatever it was there was done to me?" Han asked. If it was possible, he didn't necessarily want to go through with it, but he simply wanted to understand it all.

"A lot of knowledge was lost in the Clone Wars and under the Empire, but as far as I know there is no way to undo it. Which was probably why the Jedi did it," Mara answered.

"So what kind of powers do I have?" Han asked her in disbelief.

"Well, you definitely have the gift of insight. The ability to sense danger and see the possible future," Mara said, thinking. "You once told me that you had been able to "see" the Sarlacc when it was about to eat Lando so you could shoot it and save him. And you said that you had been able to "feel" and "hear" Luke while you were in your ordeal in the carbonite. That means that you are obviously able to receive and give Mind Talk. But probably only with people close to you." Mara continued, "You may be able to do a lot more if you had more belief in the Force. You could probably lift small objects with the Force." She smiled when she saw that his eyes were about to roll out of his head in astonishment. "I would love to teach you," she said, and could not help but laugh.

"Very funny," he complained but smiled when he saw the humour in the situation. Then he took a pillow from the sofa and launched it at Mara. Soon they had a great pillow fight.

They were taken by surprise by a mock-stern voice. "What is going on here?"

Luke called when he stepped inside his living room and saw his wife and brother-in-law having a lot of fun throwing pillows at one another. Mara and Han shared a look, then both at the same time launched their pillows at Luke who, of course, sensed them coming and with the Force made them hit Han and Mara instead, who could not keep from laughing.

"What is so funny?" Luke asked and sat on the sofa beside his wife. Only Han, Luke thought, could get Mara to show this side of her personality. Then he spotted the Force Crystal on the table and gave his wife a questioning look. Mara and Han got serious when they followed his glance.

"I tested Han for Force Sensitivity," Mara said and told Luke the whole story.

"My, my," Luke said and looked as astonished as Han had when he heard it. "You are going to explore your full Force-potential, right?" Luke asked, becoming the Jedi Master again.

"Well...," Han began, obviously uncomfortable.

"He will study with me when he has time on the weekends," Mara helped him out. Han gave her a grateful smile. He knew that he would come to Mara's teachings and that he would not feel so uncomfortable learning with her. And who knew? Perhaps would it one day save his life.

"Can you tell me if there is some way of making my memories more clear?" Han asked Luke.

"No. I know of no tactic that can do that. But I believe that you will remember more as time goes by, but of course not all. That is not possible even for you. I can only tell you to act on instincts and other feelings you get in the time to come," Luke said seriously.

"How do you feel about this, Han?" Mara asked Han, knowing his distaste of the Force.

"Once I would have hated it," Han admitted.

"And now?" Luke asked, knowing that Han's answer was of great importance if he were to train with Mara.

"I'm ok."

Mara looked hard at him and he smiled. "Really. I am. Even though I will never be a knight." He paused, then continued nonchalantly, "And thank God for that!"

Luke laughed and threw a pillow at him that Han easily avoided by dodging.

"I am happy that I now can play a bigger role in my children's lives. My Force-strong children, that is," Han said, more seriously.

Even now Anakin and Jacen went to their uncle or mother if they had a problem. They could not understand why Han was so strange, as they said. Only his Little Princess, Jaina, looked differently at it. She had once said to him that she did not want her powers if he did not have any. She did not want to be abnormal. Han smiled at the memory. Only Jaina would see it that way. But now he could play an active role in the children's lives. He was happy for that. But such a life-altering change would take a lot of getting used to. "But I am still not thrilled about this Force stuff," Han said, and the Jedi couple smiled.

"Of course not, Han. If what I suspect about you being stripped for your powers is true then there is no way you are ever going to get comfortable with it," Mara explained.

"But just as long as you can bear it," Luke said.

Han made a face at him and Luke smiled. "Come on, it won't be that bad," Luke encouraged, teasing the older man. "Some of us actually like it."

"Daddy, I'm hungry. Can I get an ice cream?" Jaina said as she ran into the living room from the bedroom and right into her father's arms. "Hi Uncle Luke, Aunt Mara," she said when she sat safely on her father's lap.

"Hi, honey," Luke smiled at her.

"Hi, Princess," Mara said, unconsciously using Han's nickname for her niece.

"Of course can you get an ice cream, hon," Han said to his daughter. He stood up; Luke and Mara did the same.

"Thanks for the help Mar," Han said, giving her a hug. "Thanks, kid," Han said and patted Luke on the back. Then he went with Jaina out of the Skywalker-Jade apartment. On the way back to the President Residence Han bought Jaina an ice cream even though it was 7 o'clock and it was time for dinner. Well, what Leia don't know, Han thought. Besides she may still be at that silly meeting. When Jaina and Han got home it was chaos. Winter tried unsuccessfully to get Anakin and Jacen to stop fighting with the Force. All kinds of small objects flew though the room.

"What in the names of all the Gods of Corellia are you two doing?" Han asked his two sons, who stopped at once; all the objects suddenly froze in the air.

"Ah, we were just..." Jacen began.

"He started it," Anakin said and pointed at his brother.

"I did not," his brother said.

"Did too!"

"Did not!"

Han could see that the fight was about to begin again. "Stop it," he said sharply. They stopped at once and every object fell to the floor with a loud boom. At times like these he wished that he had normal kids.

"Now, clean that mess up and get ready to eat," he ordered and could feel that a headache was coming up. The shock of the afternoon at Mara's and then this did not nothing to improve his mood.

"Yes, sir," both boys said simultaneously and started at once.

"Where's Leia?" Han asked Winter, who looked gratefully at him.

"She called and said that she was on her way home," Winter said, and started to put the food on the table. Han sent Jaina out to get ready to eat and a few minutes later, Leia got home.

Immediately, Han's mood improved enormously. "Hi, Sweetheart," Han said, grinning at her. She smiled back as Han gave her a kiss. "We're ready to eat," Han informed her while he hung her coat. He turned from the closet and said quietly, "After the kids have gone to bed I have something to tell you."

"Did you talk to Winter about what you saw in your dream? If it was buildings or something she may be able to recognise them," Leia said as she sat at the table.

"I will talk to her later when I know more. Right now I can't remember enough for her to be able to tell me anything," Han said as he too sat down. The kids came and Winter served their dinner for them. Han had often asked if he could help her but she preferred to serve for them.

A few Months later:

Han got dressed for the diplomatic dinner he and Leia were going to that night. It was not his favourite pastime but as the First Gentleman and the Leader of the War Council he had little choice. The past months Han had trained with Mara and had got a lot better with the Force. Leia had been a great support once she was over the shock. Han tried to reach out with the Force as Mara had taught him and tried to get in touch with the mind the most attached to his, as that was the easiest. When he felt contact he called out with the Force. "Halloo???"

"Han???" came the astonished answer.

"Yes," Han said. He recognised that voice. "Mara?" he asked.

"Yes. This is fantastic. How can you send Mind Speak so soon? You were not supposed to be able to do that before at last 3 more months," Mara said happily but confused.

"Yes. I know. I... It was just so easy to connect," Han explained.

"How can that be?" Mara asked in confusion. "Such an easy bond is only between sisters or other blood relatives."

"Yes, well as you said a lot of knowledge was lost. Maybe we just..." Han began when he felt Leia coming out of the bathroom. "Got to go. Leia and I are going to a diplomatic dinner tonight. Say halloo to Luke and the kids from me.:"

"Will do. We'll talk about this later," Mara said and broke their bond.

"Are you ready?" Leia asked. She looked stunning in a beautiful long green dress with an Oatinean silk shawl over it. In her ears glimmered fantastic Awian diamond earrings, a present from Han on her last birthday, and her long brown hair was arranged in an elegant coiffure. Over her dress she wore the Blue Bond for royalty, indicating that she still was Princess of Alderaan of rank even though Alderaan was no more. She wore a small amount of her other orders.

"I'm ready," he answered. Her husband wore an elegant suit in black that enhanced his handsome features. She was looking at a full time job keeping the ladies away from him, Leia thought. Over the suit he wore only a handful of the almost countless medals he had won. She noticed that he wore the Corellian Blood Stripe, the highest Order at Corellia, down the seam of his pants.

"Ok, then let's go," Leia said and got her purse. Han helped her into her Ancien fur and they went to the dinner.

"I don't understand why this is so important," Han complained as they were in the air car on their way to the Great Hall where the dinner was held. The Great Hall was on the other side of the Palace, and to save time Leia and Han had chosen to fly there in the Presidential Air Car.

"Ah, come on Han. This is a celebration for the Rusila Empire because they have just got their Empress back after the revolution," Leia explained patiently.

"As far as I know the Emperor deserved to be kicked out. He was not exactly nice. If one did not approve with his decisions he 'disappeared,'" Han said.

"I know Han, but in politics things are not black and white. The Emperor ruled by old rules and traditions. It was the way it had always been. The Emperor simply did not have time to adapt to the new ideas of freedom and equal worth no matter if one was noble or not." She smiled encouraging at him and continued, "Besides, the Empress seems ready to change. The Empress is the only known survivor of the Royal Imperial Family. She is rather old now. She is still looking for her two grandchildren, the only members of her family whose bodies has not been found. We do not know much about the Rusila Empire because it is so far away and because they prefer it that way, but we know that the Emperor had five children. The oldest was a boy who was five at the time of the revolution and the smallest was a girl who was still a baby at the time of the revolution."

"So what happen in the revolution?" Han asked even though he had a good idea about it.

"The people stormed the Imperial Palace and killed all of the Imperial Family they could find. The Emperor's mother was at Corellia at the time of the revolution and therefore escaped. The people then went on to kill all the nobility they could find. Luckily a few of the noble families were away from the Rusila Empire at the time, or escaped out of the Rusila Empire in the chaos that followed the fall of the Emperor," Leia said.

"Then who ruled the Empire?" Han asked absently, not really interested as he instantly looked around for any suspicious things as they neared the Great Hall and flew over Coruscant`s streets.

"Some people tried to form a Government but no one had any experience and no one could agree on anything," Leia said.

"Yes. Well, it's always easier to agree that something is wrong it is a lot harder to agree on how it can be done better," Han commented.

"Yes, and that is why the people invited the nobility back on the condition that they should form a Senate and that the Rusila Empire should become a democratic State with the nobility as good examples and the Imperial family as a figurehead," Leia said.

They had reached the Great Hall and Han saw that a lot of reporters were waiting for them. Great, he thought, now it would be a lot easier for someone to take a shot at Leia. He looked to see if he could find Chewie. He had been visiting his family on Kashyyyk and had called Han and had proudly and excitedly told him that he was going to be a father again. Han was of course happy for him and had asked if he did not want to stay on Kashyyyk with his wife until she gave birth, but Chewie would not hear of it. His place was at Han's side, he said. Han had decided that he would go to Kashyyyk with the kids, and hopefully Leia as well, so that Chewie would be with his wife without feeling he failed Han.

Up ahead, Han saw Chewie coming toward the car that now had come to a stop outside the Great Hall.

"Stay here," Han said to Leia and went out on the back side of the car where he met up with Chewie. "Good to see you again," Han said as Chewie said hey to him and gave him a quick Wookiee hug. "Help me get Leia safely inside," Han asked and they went to the other side of the car. Han opened the door for Leia and helped her out. With her hand resting on his arm they started to go inside but were stormed by the reporters. Han thought that they were going to ask about the new finance law but was wrong.

"Are the War Council really going to send troops to Leiva?"

"Is it truth that Ibiabáing troops have attacked Leivaen civilians?"

"Are you, Admiral, going to lead the troops?"

The questions rained down on Han, who did not have the time to answer any of them; he was too busy trying to keep a eye on everything that happened to see if there was any threat to Leia. When they were safely inside Han had time to think about the questions. How in the name of all the Gods of Corellia do they know about the operation at Leiva? Han thought. The War Council had only decided to help the Leivaen Government with troops during their meeting yesterday, and they had not planned to tell the press until the troops were safely on their way because Han and the others in the Council knew that the Leiva issue was a very hot political subject. For Han, however, it seemed rather simple. Leiva and Ibiabá were two planets in the same star system. Leiva was a peaceful world while Ibiabá had only one goal: to conquer Leiva, a planet that they felt was theirs because of some

old war conquests. Therefore Ibiabá was constantly making trouble and breaking the Beings Rights. The law made by the Old Republic protected all beings and their universal rights. But the problem was that Ibiabá was a very wealthy world that had many trade commitments with the New Republic, and a lot of the Republic engines for the war ships were built on Ibiabá. Leiva had, on the contrary, nothing to offer and was a poor but otherwise great world. They had no weapons and lived in peace with one another. They had only enough food to supply themselves but did not need any help from the Republic like some other worlds did.

Since the press knew about the Council's plans that meant that they had a leak somewhere. Uh, someone's job is defiantly in jeopardy, Han thought grimly.

The Great Hall was beautiful and perfect for a big formal ball. After the introduction at the door Leia and Han split up. Leia went over the Mon Mothma and some other political types while Han tried to see if he could find some company not so...ah, boring. From across the room Leia was in a discussion with some delegates from the Elinan provinces when she spotted Han standing alone probably looking for some non-political company. She knew that politicians did not like Han and his methods very much, even though they had to admit that he got the job done--she knew that the feeling was mutual. All the same she could see that almost all the females in the room could not help but look at him and admire his good looks. And she had to say that he was by far the handsomest man in the room. With a smile at her own good fortune at being married to him Leia turned her attention back to her conversation when she saw that Luke and Mara were on their way over to keep Han company.

"Having a good time?" Luke said, teasing Han as he and Mara came up from behind him.

When Han saw Mara he remembered their strange easy Mind Link a little earlier. He caught and held Mara's eyes. Not now, he silently asked of her. He saw the almost invisible nod of her head.

"Not exactly. I hate these kind of things." Han complained. Mara and Luke smiled at him, Luke with humour in his eyes and Mara with a hint of understanding.

"You should go over and say halloo to the Empress," Mara suggested, and nodded towards the other end of the ballroom where a lady with grey hair and green eyes sat on a chair.

She was dressed in an elegant, long yellow dress with a blue band from one shoulder to another. In her ears glimmered some kind of stones and on her

head she had a half-formed moonlike crown. A bodyguard stood on each side of her chair. She had a very proud bearing and her whole attitude just screamed: Royally. Her eyes met Han's and the world seemed to disappear. A flash of a memory came to him.

He was walking in a garden. It was a lovely day and the birds were singing and the flowers were in bloom. Beside him walked a woman. She had a long red dress on. His small hand found hers and she squeezed it. He felt safe. He raised his head to look at the woman.

Han was losing the memory. Something was preventing him in seeing it all. Instantly he called for help through the Force. Suddenly he was not alone.

"You can do it. Remember," A voice said in his head. Mara's voice. He did not have time to wonder why it could be that she could hear him. He hurried to use her strength to force the memory back.

He raised his head to look at the woman. She wore a cape that hid most of her hair but the soft wind had blown some of it free of the cape and he could see its colour. It was red-gold. His eyes met the woman's. Her eyes were green.

He could not hold the memory any longer. It felt like trying to push a big stone up a mountain. He could only push it so far. He blinked as he came back to reality. He was a little unbalanced on his feet but Mara steadied him. He quickly recovered.

"You ok?" Mara asked with concern.

"Yes, are you?" he replied, even though he had a killer headache.

"I'm ok."

Luke looked from his brother in law to his wife with a very confused look in his eyes. He had felt both Mara and Han's use of the Force but was at a loss about what was happening.

"What is going on here?" Luke asked when neither Mara or Han seemed eager to tell him anything. Well, not that he was surprised about that. One could do anything to either of them and they would only tell you what they wanted to. He was positive that there were a lot in both Mara and Han's life that he did not know of.

"I will tell you later because right now I am not sure myself," Mara said and looked at Han. Luke followed her eyes.

Han seemed lost in his own thoughts as he kept staring at the Empress. The same eyes. They're the same eyes, Han thought as he looked at the Empress. What was going on here? With a determined look in his eyes he started to go over to the Empress. Well, I'm sure as Hell going to find out, he thought.

When he reached the Empress he bowed to her. Again a flash of a memory came to him.

His went over the marble floor to the cradle. He looked down at saw a little baby girl smiling up at him. She had red hair and green eyes. He continued pass the cradle and bowed before the throne. The memory was very insecure and he could not hold it together. He was not even sure if it was a memory or his fantasy, and if it was a memory if it had happened at the same time.

"An honour to meet you, your Imperial Highness," he said formally. After his marriage with Leia he had learned to address people properly. But not after he accidentally had provoked a politician who had been ready to start a war. Luckily, Leia had solved the problem, meaning that Han had to apologise to the man and learn to address the different types of leaders and politicians properly. Well, he never did have any sense of humour, Han thought about the annoying politician who had started it all.

"Ebella iffla ihfe oule meia," she said. Her voice was soft but held a hint of authority. Like Leia, he suddenly realised. That language. He had heard that language before. He realised that he understood it. She had said that she was pleased to meet him. This was getting really weird. She continued, "You are Admiral Solo, are you not?"

"Yes, your Highness." He answered her in her native tongue. The language came easily to him like a memory from a dream. She looked pleasantly surprised.

"May I ask you a personal question, Admiral?" she asked and studied him intensely.

"You may, your Highness," Han said and wondered what she wanted to know, hoping that it was something he could answer.

"You must forgive an old woman for being this straightforward. But at my age time is everything," she said with a smile. Han nodded, wondering where this was going. She paused, then asked, "What relationship do you have with the Solos?"

Han stared at her. How did she even know that he had anything to do with the Corellian noble family? For all that she and a lot others knew, he

could just have taken that name or he could be so distantly related to them that it was not worth mentioning. Solo was not a common name on Corellia, but over the years the noble family that carried the Solo name had acquired a lot of relatives on very different social statuses. However by her tone of voice he knew that it was the Solo family she was talking about.

"How do you know that?" he demanded, in his astonishment forgetting to be polite.

"You remind me of a woman from that family I once knew. And you have certain arrogance, confidence, and inborn chivalry about you that only a nobleman can have," she said.

Han could not keep from smiling. Not many would see it that way.

She smiled knowingly. "I know. I know," she said, "but the environment one grows up in also forms the person one becomes. But there are certain things that can not be taking from you."

How does she know that? Han thought. Then he saw that she was still waiting for him to answer her question.

"Well, I am the son of the Duke of Conika's daughter," he said. At least that much had he'd got out of his otherwise not very helpful (to say the least) family.

"Which one?" She asked, looking really excited to hear the answer.

"What?" Han asked. He did not know that there had been one than one daughter.

"The late Duke had 3 daughters," she explained irritably, as if she thought that it was something he should know. "Their names are Melissa, Eleanor, and Ann-Marie."

"Well, I don't know her name," Han admitted, suddenly realising just how little he knew about his family. "It was the one who ran away to get married." Han hoped that not all the Duke's daughters had done that.

"Thank the Gods," she said and got tears in her eyes as she smiled at him. "Your looks you have from your father but your spirit is from your mother."

"You know my parents?" he asked happily. "Where are they?" Han looked around the ballroom and caught Mara's eyes before turning back to the Empress.

"I am sorry. They are dead," she said; Han could see the pain in her eyes.

Han sighed at let go of the small, and, if he should be honest, impossible hope. "I am sorry. I did not mean to remind you of your loss," he said quietly. It took control to speak when he just wanted to scream out, Who were my parents?

"Your father was the last Emperor of the Rusila Empire and my son. He married below his rank with Melissa, the youngest daughter of the Duke of Conika," she said, as if she could read his mind.

"Why did her father then not approve? He should be happy that his daughter married such a rich and powerful man," Han said, confused and shocked. He, Han Solo, was the son of an Emperor. Who would have thought that?

"I would," a small, happy but teasing voice said in his mind. He turned his head and smiled at Mara.

"Nicolai, my son, and Dimitri, your grandfather, could not agree. First of all, my son ruled by the old laws while the Duke and all the other Noble families on Corellia had moved on. Secondly, Dimitri had nothing against Jedi, and his family was well known for being Force Sensitive. But on Riasia, the capital world of the Rusila Empire, there was a great massacre thousands of years ago where a Sith Lord almost wiped out the entire population of our Empire. Since then the Rusila Empire has been against having Jedi running around in the galaxy," she said.

Oh, this does not sound good, not good at all, Han thought. "Then how can it be that...my parents..." That word sounded so strange coming from him. "...could get married?" Han finished..

"Well, they couldn't," she said flatly.

"What?" Han asked, sure that he must have heard her wrong.

"There is a law against marriage between Force Sensitives and citizens of the Empire. And Melissa was Force Strong. Very Force Strong," she said, emphasising the last three words.

"Then what happened?" This was like a fantasy turning into a nightmare, he thought.

"Melissa ran away, and she and Nicolai got married anyway," she said. Han could see that she had not approved.

"What happened?"

"Well, the people were against the marriage, and it was really their marriage that started the revolution as people was uncomfortable with a Force Strong on the throne."

This just keeps getting worse and worse, he thought. "So where does that leave me?" Han asked.

"Do you still have the Force?" she asked and held her breath.

"No, something is keeping me from using all my powers," Han said. Then Mara was right. He had been Force Strong.

"All my five grandchildren had the Force, but no Force Strong may rule the Empire. That law still stands. It is the decision of our new Senate, and mine as well," she stated. Her eyes narrowed and she asked him point-blank: "Then you do have the Force?"

Han nodded.

"Enough to be a knight?" she asked and prayed for a no.

"No," Han answered.

Her prayers were answered! She smiled. "Then there is no problem. At last our family can continue with the right successor on the throne," she said happily, holding her arms out to him.

He smiled back and gave her a hug. "We have so much to talk about," he said happily. He spotted Mara and Luke and waved them over. "Mara, Luke this is my grandmother," Han said proudly and happily when they reached him. He remembered to change language to Standard so they could understand him. They bowed politely to her.

"Nice to meet you," Luke said not sure how to talk to her. He could hardly call Han's grandmother Your Highness or something. But she did not seem to mind.

She smiled and there were tears in her eyes. "Had I just been able to come out of exile sooner. This is the happiest day in my life," she said in almost perfect Standard. "Why did you not tell me that you had found your sister?" she said happily, drawing Mara into her embrace.

Sister??? Han and Mara thought. Luke smiled. It did indeed answer a lot of questions. Mara drew back and looked at Han as if for the first time. She had a brother. She had a family. But, she realised, she had thought of Han

as a brother long before today. Han and Mara both had tears in their eyes as they gave each other a warm hug for the first time as brother and sister.

"I am happy for you," Luke said and drew Mara into his embrace, kissing her.

"You mean you did not know?" the Empress asked, shocked. "But she is the image of your mother. And me as a young woman."

"Now, I think that it would be a good idea if you told us everything," Han said and searched for Leia. She should share this.

"I have told her. She is very happy for you and on her way right now," Luke said, and indeed he was right. Leia came over to them with a big smile and gave Han a kiss. Han held her hand while they waited for the Empress to tell Mara and him about their past.

"Well, as you probably know, all the royal houses marry into one another. That is why my son got his Corellian looks. It is far from all the Houses of Corellia there has Force Sensitives in their families," she started. For Mara and Leia's sake she summed up what she had told Han. Then Han and Mara told her about what they could remember of their pasts.

"Who was it that stripped me of my powers?" Han asked when they had told her very briefly about their past.

"I think that it was your mother, right before she died," she said.

"Wait a minute. Just what is your name?" Mara wondered.

"Anastasia. My name is Anastasia," the elderly woman said.

"Just like..." Mara began.

"Just like my daughter," Han finished for her. That was where he'd received that name from.

"Your name is Han-Valentin Nicolac..." the Empress began, but was quickly cut off by Han.

"Stop, right there. How many names do I have?" Han asked. He had one time seen Leia's full name and there were 12 of them. Leia had told him that all royalty had 12 names, but they normally only used two of them: their first name and their family name, and then their marriage name later on.

"You have 12 names just like your sister," his grandmother said.

"Can we just get our first name and then our family name; you can always tell us all of them later?" Mara asked and looked overwhelmed just thinking about hearing all of her 12 names.

"Yes, of course. Our family name is Romanoc and your names are Han-Valentin and Mara-Elenor. When you were children we only called you Han and Mara. The names of all my grandchildren are Han, John, Etilaa, Annabella and Mara," she said.

My sisters and my brother, Han thought wistfully. He would like to know more about them and his parents. "How come I came to Corellia?" Han asked.

"Well, I am not sure as I was not there but I believe that some loyal servants got you both out. I'm sure they planned to get you to me on Corellia, but something much have gone wrong and Han was left stranded on Corellia." She turned to Mara.

Mara looked at her with questions in her eyes, and listened carefully as her grandmother continued.

"I do not know how it can be that you came here on Coruscant and ended up with Emperor and how it can be that your mother did not strip you of your powers," she said with a look at the lightsaber that hung from Mara's belt. Only Mara, Han thought, could look elegant with a lightsaber. She had a beautiful green dress on with a belt, from which her lightsaber hung. She had diamond earrings and a pearl necklace on. She was breathtaking.

"But I think that your mother died before she could get to you and that someone found you and probably sold you to the Emperor because of your great powers," the Empress said. "But let us not talk more about that. This is, after all, a day of celebration."

She favored Han with a smile. "Han is going to be the new Emperor," she said proudly, then asked her grandson, "And who is going to rule with you?"

"My wife, Leia Organa Solo," Han said, grinning.

Leia and Anastasia exchanged greetings. Then Anastasia's eyes grew wider. "One moment please...you are the Leia Organa Solo? The President?"

Leia nodded and smiled.

"Oh, no," the Empress groaned.

"What?" Han asked. He did not get it.

"She is Force Sensitive, is she not?" she asked.

"Yes," Leia answered when she could hear that it apparently was a problem, "I am a Jedi Knight, but I don't have so much power that I can be a Master."

"Oh, no no," the Empress said softly, her face full of sadness, "Mara is a Master and can therefore not rule. Han can rule but not with a Knight."

"Just what are you saying? That either I divorce Leia or I can say goodbye to my rightful heritage?" Han asked disbelievingly. This really was a nightmare.

"To put it simply: Yes." she said reluctantly. "I am sorry," she stated truthfully when she saw how sad both her grandchildren looked, "but there are some things that can not be changed. You have till midnight to decide."

Han started to protest, but stopped as his grandmother cut him off.

"I am sorry. That is the law." She looked at her clock. "That means that you have 2 hours."

1 Hour left:

Han sat outside on the balcony and looked at the stars. Why could nothing be simple? He loved Leia, but he had never had a family and he really wanted to know about his past. Besides, he could help a lot of people as the Emperor and he was sure that his father and mother had wanted their family to continue.

"May I join you?" Leia asked.

Han smiled up at her. "Of course." He could see that she had cried, and it broke his heart knowing that he had caused it. She sat down beside him and he drew her into his embrace and kissed her, never wanting to let go.

"Han, I just wanted to say that whatever you choose is okay with me."

He could hear how hard it was for her to say it but he could also see in her eyes that she meant every word. He listened as she went on.

"And I think you should say yes to be Emperor. You could help a lot of people and you deserve it. Besides..." her voice broke and her bravado left her in a rush; she started to cry on Han's shoulder. "Gods, I love you,"

she whispered. She lifted her head. "I know that I was raised to let others go before me but..." Tears came down her cheeks, and Han gently wiped them away with his thumb.

She sniffed. "Is it so selfish of me that I want you? That I need you? That I never want to be alone again? I love you," she said and hid her face in Han's chest.

Han's heart broke. He knew what he had to do. He had never really been in doubt. "And I love you so very, very much," he said and stroked her hair. He turned Leia's face up so he could look her in the eyes. She was beautiful, even with tears down her cheeks. With his eyes he told her about the undying love he had for her and found the same light of love shining in her eyes. He bent down and kissed her.

A week later:

Han and Mara stood by the Empress' ship and said goodbye to their grandmother.

"I am sorry that neither of you is coming with me back home, but I hear that you both have some non-Force sensitive children," she said with a gleam in her eyes. "Perhaps they want to be Emperor or Empress."

Mara and Han smiled, and Han answered what both he and his sister were thinking. "We'll let them decide that when they are old enough, but, of course, I hope that one of them is interested in taking their rightful place in this galaxy," Han said with a grin.

"So do I," Anastasia murmured. "Well, I hope we can visit one another often," she said. They embraced again and she waved at them one last time before going into her ship. Mara and Han saw her ship take off and disappear into the horizon.

Han lay an arm around Mara. "Let's go home," he said and realised how true those words were. Home is where the heart is, a great man had once said. How true. His home was wherever Leia was. He saw her and Luke standing by the end of the platform. He smiled as Leia ran to meet him. They met halfway and Han kissed her. "I love you," he whispered.

"Was I worth it?" she asked only half joking. She knew how much he had said goodbye to and how much he had wanted it.

"You definitely are. You definitely are," he said, and kissed her as the sun set over the horizon, colouring the two in a red light; and one could see a single star smiling down at them.

The End

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