

[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.

Those Who Survive

by [T.J. Perkins](#)

Han crouched behind a stack of crates, his heart beating wildly as he desperately searched for a way out of the hangar. He looked all around him; there were several closed doors on the far end of the hangar, but to get to them without being detected would take some skill. Then again, he could always just blast his way out, but in order not draw attention to himself he'd have to settle for sneaking around. This time he would try get out of a tight situation by not being noticed in the first place; no sense in letting the three bounty hunters know their quarry was right under their noses. He didn't mean to walk in on the bounty hunters, it was just a simple mistake; not that they would believe that. The hangar bay that he wanted was the next one over, where his ship, the Millennium Falcon, sat waiting after being refueled and stocked full of supplies. Of course some of those supplies were actually crates of spice carefully disguised, logged and numbered to fool any docking agent who questioned him. No one needed to know that, of course, nor did anyone have the knowledge that Han was actually a smuggler for the most notorious crime lord in the galaxy, Jabba The Hutt.

Smuggling wasn't something that Han was proud of, but it was a living. He wasn't a fool for spice and didn't care -- nor wanted to know -- what Jabba actually did with it. He just made the pick up, delivered it and got paid. He was a very good smuggler, or as Han liked to put it, cargo runner. He rarely had a problem delivering his cargo but did, however, have a knack for getting into trouble. He was constantly running into the wrong people, in the wrong places and at the wrong times. This was one of those scenarios.

Earlier, in a shady cantina, Han had met with Umpal Gock, an insectoid with bulging red eyes and long sticky wings, attached to a frail-looking, but powerful body. Han had agreed to help the insectoid escape capture by redirecting a bounty hunter that was on Umpal's trail - for a price, of course. To Han,

everything had a price. The deal wasn't going to be easy and he didn't want to guarantee that he could pull it off, but when Umpal Gock handed him a stack of credits, Han couldn't say no. Only after the deal had been sealed did Umpal tell Han who the bounty hunter was - Boba Fett.

The name alone was enough to make Han's blood freeze in his veins. Though he hadn't actually crossed paths with the notorious bounty hunter, Han had heard his fill of stories and exploits, each one more unbelievable than the next. Boba Fett always got his target, no matter how much time it took, or where he had to travel, or what he had to do - he never failed. He was such an expert hunter that he would name his price and, depending upon how badly someone wanted another captured, that someone would pay it. Han knew that Boba Fett was highly intelligent and an incredible warrior, which earned him the right to wear the mandalorian armor. The sight of Boba Fett, in his fullface metal mask, complete with dark visor and full body covering, was enough to stop any quarry in its tracks.

Han knew this time he had bitten off more than he could chew, but he coned his way around Umpal Gock's nervousness, promised he'd take care of everything and slipped out the back door. Han walked back to the hangar bay with his head down and not really paying attention to where he was going; dodging humans and nonhumans in the crowded streets, trying to quickly make his way back to the Falcon. Since he knew there was nothing he could do to help Umpal Gock from being Boba Fett's target, Han had decided to skip out of town with a pocket full of credits. When Umpal tried to contact him, if the insectoid wasn't captured by then, he would simply make up a lie, saying he gave it his best shot and that he was sorry. Umpal wasn't very bright and Han was surprised the creature had been on the run this long without being caught by the likes of Boba Fett.

With his mind mulling over many rambling thoughts and decisions, Han absent-mindedly entered the wrong enclosed hangar bay. Upon hearing alien voices, he quickly looked up to see three bounty hunters talking - one of which was Boba Fett. Han could've turned around and walked out without being noticed, but because of the earlier conversation with Umpal Gock, his curiosity was heightened. He crouched down and advanced from one stack of crates to another until he was in hearing range.

"I don't care," Fett was saying, in his flat, emotionless voice, "I don't swap merchandise and I don't make deals - I work alone."

"But it's too easy," A Rodian bounty hunter was saying.

"Yes, yes. Why do you toy with him?" A Gotal bounty hunter asked.

"That's my business," Fett answered flatly, gazing suspiciously from one side of the hangar to the other. The special visor of his mandalorian helmet had built-in

infrared capabilities and could detect body heat, no matter which way he was looking; it automatically scanned the area all around the bounty hunter. To Fett's amusement it was suddenly detecting something new, aside from the creatures he was speaking to. He could see it was a human and knew exactly where the spy was located. Not wanting to let the other creatures in on his find, and wanting to conceal his true intentions, Fett decided to finish the conversation, then hide to see who it was.

"A master such as yourself shouldn't waste your time with such an effortless catch. Let us take it off of your hands so you may have more of a challenge," the Rodian flattered.

"Yes, yes. Take the Solo bounty, it will pay you well," The Gotal chimed in, wringing his paws and showing his nervousness around Boba Fett by uncontrollably shedding a great deal of fur.

Solo bounty! The sound of that information struck a vibroblade deep in Han's gut, twisting a knot until he felt nauseous. His instincts took over as he quietly pulled out his blaster and got ready to fight for his life. So much for sneaking around; although he did consider running to the closed doors on the far end of the hangar, but running didn't set well with him and neither did sneaking around. Now, waiting around - that was a bit more tolerable.

"What's wrong with this guy that you two don't want him?" Fett asked.

"He's too much work," The Rodian explained, "And never stays in one place. Besides they want him brought in alive - too much trouble. He's a smuggler and runs spice for Jabba. The Imperials want it stopped. Jabba will be very angry if his spice runs are interrupted and would surely put a bounty on the head of the one who does the Imperial's bidding. We do not want to upset Jabba, nor the Imperials."

Han couldn't believe that the Imperials had placed a bounty on him! This was about as far into trouble as he had ever been and he didn't want to stick around any longer than he had to.

"I'm not giving up my merchandise and I'll beat you guys to the Solo merchandise as well," Boba Fett stated.

"In that case, maybe we should work together," the Gotal suggested, shedding more fur.

Boba Fett stepped closer to the two bounty hunters, pointing a gloved-finger at them, "I told you, I work alone - always."

Han was in a panic; he had to get out of there or he would be easy pickings. Here he was thinking he could fake out the most relentless bounty hunter in the galaxy, thinking he could help a so-called friend, only to find out that he was a target too. Thanks to the two amateur bounty hunters, Boba Fett had been tipped off and was sure to make quick work of Umpal Gock so he could next set his sights on Han. His mind was racing as he crouched lower behind the stack of crates, weighing the odds on his chance for survival against three bounty hunters. It was too much to think about and action was better than words. He was determined to get out of this alive no matter what, but first he would have to make a move and take a risk.

Another peek over the crates revealed the way to be clear, surprisingly the three bounty hunters were gone. Han cautiously ventured from behind his cover, straining to hear the most remote sound from the bounty hunters. Nothing. With a wry grin spreading across his rugged face, Han wiped sweat from his hands onto his brown pants and nonchalantly started to walk out of the hangar. That was simple; no ducking and dodging, no running for his life, heck, they didn't have a clue that he was there. This time sneaking and waiting did pay off. With the threat of danger completely passed, Han arrogantly strolled out into the diminishing sunlight to make his way to the Falcon. It did occur to him that Chewie would be worrying, and if he didn't show up soon the Wookiee would be scouring the town looking for him. Chewie had a life debt to him and if something were to happen to Han, it would bring dishonor to the Wookiee; something that wasn't tolerated on Chewie's home planet of Kashyyk.

Han turned the corner of the mistaken hangar bay and was only several meters away from his assigned hangar when, without warning, Boba Fett silently appeared in front of him, stepping out from behind a stack of barrels. The bounty hunter held his right arm out straight, pointing it directly at Han. Anyone who didn't know Boba Fett may have laughed, but Han understood that Fett's fibercord grappling device was armed and ready. A pift was heard as hook and line were released, whizzing through the air with deadly speed and accuracy. Han waited until the last possible second, then dive-rolled to the left to avoid capture; the grappling device barely missed its quarry, scraping Han's shin with the taunt line. Looking up at Fett from the dusty ground, Han held the bounty hunter's gaze for a frozen moment, watching the grappling device quickly retract and reset itself, thus allowing Fett to prepare another nasty surprise.

Aggression set in as Han whipped out his blaster, took aim and fired a single shot. The blaster bolt ricocheted off of the bounty hunter's metal shoulder armor, forcing him to stagger backwards into the stack of barrels. Han waited to see if he got a good shot at Boba Fett, but when his pursuer quickly got up and reached for something else on his arm, Han knew then that the stories surrounding this mysterious being were true.

Not waiting around to see what Boba Fett was going to do next, Han scrambled to his feet and bolted toward the hangar. He had only taken a few steps when something plowed into the center of his back, knocking the wind out of him and slammed him against the open hangar doorjamb. The noise was enough to attract the attention of Chewbacca, who was making take-off preparations in the cockpit.

"Chewie!" Han yelled, finding his voice as he stumbled forward, "Chewie, get her ready!" The strength in his legs quickly returned as he ran haphazardly from his pursuer.

Chewie was very concerned about Han's peculiar behavior and started down the ramp to see what all the fuss was about.

"No! No!" Han shouted, waving both hands over his head in a forward motion, so Chewbacca could see that Han wanted him to go back inside. Chewie was at the edge of the ramp when Boba Fett appeared in the open doorway, aiming a BlasTech EE-3 rifle at Han. With a loud snarling-growl, Chewie quickly returned to the cockpit; he was not ignorant of the lore that surrounded Boba Fett; the braided Wookiee scalps hanging over Fett's right shoulder told a tale all its own.

Han hit the ramp as it started to rise, laser blasts bouncing off of the hydraulic lifts just barely missing him. The sound of compressed air hissed around the ramp closure as it sealed tight and the engines rumbled for take-off. He sat just inside the ramp lift, trembling, wide-eyed and ready to vomit the ale he had earlier in the cantina. Despite all the excitement, Han felt himself quickly calm down as the Millennium Falcon lifted from the ground and shot into space.

He drew his knees to his chest and rested his elbows on them. Think, he had to think. In times of desperation, his mind was the greatest weapon he had. "Come on, stay calm and think," he mumbled to himself. Hummm, the Imperials had a bounty on him for running spice to Jabba, Jabba was a bit sore at him because he dumped a load of spice two days ago because of an Imperial blockade. Jabba didn't care that he didn't want to get caught and told Han that he was to make this run plus owe him for the wasted spice. What a vicious circle. The solution was simple enough; he would go to Tatooine and remind Jabba that he couldn't pay him off if the bounty wasn't lifted and ask for Jabba to smooth over the Imperials. It was amusing how the Empire never bothered Jabba and his organization and it seemed like they were even a bit afraid of him. Han had also seen Boba Fett come in and out of Jabba's palace from time to time, maybe Jabba could have a word with him and get the bounty hunter off of his tail. It was worth a shot. What else could he do? Jabba would have to smooth it over on both ends and Han would be further indebted to the gigantic, slimy slug-type creature for all eternity. Oh, well.....those who survive, live to see another day. Before having another talk with Jabba he'd need a drink and the best place on Tatooine was the Mos Eisley cantina. It was better to face the crime lord with a

strong shot of ale in your gut because you'd never know if would be your last, Han reasoned.

He stood and shook off the remnants of fear as he started toward the cockpit. Now he truly understood why so many beings were deathly afraid of the notorious bounty hunter - add his name to the list. Well, he'd better get up front and tell Chewie to set a course to Tatooine. Boba Fett would be hot on his trail in the Slave I; a ship that had been specially modified by Fett to suit all his tracking and hunting needs. Han hoped that this would be his last encounter with Boba Fett, but in the back of his mind something whispered that this was only the beginning.

end

[Back To Index](#)