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Trust

by [Martha Wilson](#)

It was long into the Endor night, but human voices and the music of the Ewok celebrations still drowned the cries and calls of the night hunters. Mist cloaked the forest floor, and one solitary figure turned away from the rebel victory party.

Luke Skywalker moved silently through the brush toward the familiar shape of the Millennium Falcon. The cockpit light was on, but still he hesitated a moment before approaching. He was reluctant to disturb Han and Leia, but that wasn't the only reason he was hesitant. He was not really looking forward to what he had to do.

But that had never stopped him before. As he moved on toward the ship, the hatch slid open. Despite his mood, Luke smiled to himself. Some things didn't change. Han Solo was still watchful, even here.

Luke found his friend in the cockpit, sorting through a stack of technical diagrams on waxy blue paper. His bare feet were propped on a console, and loose circuits and sensory components were scattered on the nav-station. He acknowledged Luke's entrance with a noncommittal grunt, as though this were the middle of the day on some rebel base and not the night the Empire's power had been broken.

Luke slumped into Chewie's overlarge, comfortable co-pilot's seat and, to put off the inevitable, asked, "What are you doing?"

"Deciding how I'm going to replace the dish."

Luke leaned forward to look at the diagrams. "You're going to build one?"

"I'm thinking about it. It's either that or put Calrissian up there waving his arms with a power lead in his mouth."

The young Jedi had to laugh at that. After a moment, he asked. "Where's Leia?"

"Asleep."

"Why are you still up?"

"I got enough sleep. I expect to stay awake quite a while."

"Oh." The oblique reference to the carbon freeze brought back to Luke his reason for being here. He didn't want to hurt Leia's relationship with Han, but his conscience wouldn't let him keep silent. There had been enough lies and half-truths about the past. He leaned back in the chair and tried to think how to begin.

Han smiled a little to himself. At this rate Luke would never get around to it. "Do you want to play the question game or do you want to tell me about it?"

Luke looked up at him uneasily. "I guess I didn't come here for small talk. I have something I want to tell you."

"U-huh. About your father."

"Yes, I ..." Luke stopped, his blue eyes widening in astonishment. Since Bespin, Luke had been an old man in a young man's body. For an instant, the young man was back. "How did you know that?" he demanded.

Han put the diagrams down and looked at the young Jedi directly. "Darth Vader was your father, wasn't he?"

Luke looked away for a moment, feeling his face slowly turn red. Now that the subject was out in the open, he realised how uncomfortable he was with it. "Did Leia tell you?"

"Not yet. She was trying to work herself up to it, but she was so beat she fell asleep. I'll probably hear all about it in the morning." At Luke's expression, he protested. "I figured it out, Luke. Give me a little credit."

Luke couldn't decide whether to feel relieved or silly. But he knew this would be the last time he heard the matter discussed so casually. "But how ...?"

The things you said on the Tantavie after we got back from Tatooine. Your father was your god, Luke. You never used to go for too long without bringing him up, or Kenobi. But after Bespin you'd changed. You'd been hit so hard you were still

punch drunk. I knew whatever it was, it hit damn close to home. And you were so vague on details about the fight in Cloud City."

Han paused a moment and considered, as if he were trying to decide how much to say. "And then there was Vader. While we were prisoners on Bespin, Vader was so interested in finding you. He went to all that trouble to kill the other Jedi knights, but you he wanted alive. He didn't even want anybody else to touch you." The Corellian shrugged. "Then there was Kenobi's attitude back on that first trip. You were panting to know what your father was like, but all he'd tell you was that the guy was a great Jedi Knight. I mean, no funny stories, no sentimental reminiscing. Nothing like what an old man usually tells his best friend's son. That always struck me as odd. At the time, I thought he was just keeping you on a tight string, to hold your attention.

Luke closed his eyes. "He was," he whispered. He fought an unexpected surge of grief for the two men whom he had thought he had known so well. No, for the three men he had once known - Ben Kenobi, his father and himself. He searched for calm and found it. He said in a normal tone, "He wanted me to kill Vader."

Charming, Han thought. And what about afterward, how was he gonna work that? And, by the way, Luke, that was your pop you just cut in half?

"On Dagobah," Luke continued, I confronted Ben about it, but it was useless. I couldn't make him understand" he finished bluntly.

"On Tatooine, he didn't trust me enough to tell me the truth. I suppose he thought I'd run off to join the Sith or something."

Han couldn't suppress a snort of amusement at that mental image. "Well, Kenobi may have been a hell of a Jedi master, but he was one rotten judge of character."

"I guess so." Luke sat in silence a moment, contemplating the deck plates. "He talked to me, before the end."

Han was pretty sure he knew who the "he" was. Bit by bit and not really in any coherent order, Luke began to tell the rest of the story. The fight on Bespin, Dagobah, the Emperor's taunts aboard the new Death Star. Han wanted to shake his head in disgust. If he'd had any preparation at all, half of this wouldn't have happened. What did that old hermit think he was doing? If Luke had known when Vader sprung that "I'm your father" business on him, he could've said "so what?" and knocked the wind right out of the old bastard.

Luke was tapping his forehead tiredly. "The Emperor tried to turn me to the Dark Side. For a moment, I thought he'd succeeded. But he hadn't."

The practical Corellian fought the urge to comment that in that case he didn't understand what the problem was. He could tell now that he was doomed to be the only realist in a family of hopeless romantics.

After a moment, Luke added. "Vader became a Jedi again before he died. Ben and Yoda told me that was impossible. I believed everything they told me, Han. And so much of what they told me was wrong."

Han couldn't keep his two credits out of it anymore. He said, "Luke, has it ever occurred to you that the only time something went right in that whole mess was when you used your own judgement? When you made your own decisions? Hell, if you'd killed Vader like Kenobi told you to, the Emperor would still be alive. I don't want to think about where the rest of us would be."

"Yes, I know, but ..." Accepting it is something else again, Luke thought. But that's what I have to learn to do. After a moment, his original purpose in coming here occurred to him and he asked cautiously, "How do you feel about this?"

"I think it's disgusting; now get the hell off my skip. But hand me that discpack first."

"Dammit, Han, I want a serious answer."

"Why? My opinion doesn't have anything to do with it. How do you feel about it?"

"I know how I feel about it. What I want to know is how you feel about it."

"If I tell you I don't care, you'll sit here and bug me about it all night. Give me a break, huh?"

"But it should matter to you. You and Leia ..." Luke stopped. He realised he didn't know exactly what agreement Han and his sister had reached. But like the rest of the Rebel Alliance, he had assumed that after tonight

"Leia's going to support me in the style to which I intend to become accustomed. I'm going to lay around in the sun and return the favour by keeping her happy."

"What about your commission in the Alliance?"

"I'm going to resign it. I recently found out that keeping her happy may be a full-time job."

"Yeah, right." Luke chuckled. "What about Chewie?"

"We're going to adopt him. Hey, is that what you came here for? To warn me that I was buying into a family with a past?" Han was laughing.

"Don't rub it in. I've never had a brother before. How the hell do I know what I'm supposed to do?"

"Well, I don't know. I better think twice about this. I mean, I've got relatives living in some of the best dens of iniquity in the galaxy ..."

"All right, all right. I'm sorry. I'll never bring it up again."

"C'mon Luke, don't worry about us. We'll stumble along all right."

"Yes, I guess you will." It certainly left him with a few less things to worry about. Luke smiled, but the old man was back in his eyes. "I'd better leave. I just didn't want you to get involved with us not knowing ..."

In that case, somebody should have told me three years ago. Hell, somebody should have told YOU three years ago. He got up to follow Luke to the hatch. "Just don't brood over it, kid."

"Brood? Me?" Luke grinned at him, managing to sound like his old self. "I seem to remember you threatening to space me for being too cheerful once."

"I've mellowed. Besides, I had a hangover then."

The Corellian leaned against the hatchway and watched Luke vanish into the forest night. Han had never been a very sentimental person, but he hurt for Luke. That the young Jedi had come to him looking for absolution or condemnation and willing to accept either was worrisome. Luke might appear normal on the outside, but he was walking around with an open wound. It would be a long time before Luke was fully reconciled to everything that had happened to him. It might be more than a long time. It might be never. What was ironic was the fact that the worst blow of all had been delivered by neither Vader nor the Emperor. Damn you, Kenobi, Han thought again. You could've ruined everything.

Thinking it over, Han decided he and Leia were pretty lucky. There was a lot to be said for having a whole hide and a chance for happiness.

"Han," Leia said from behind him.

"I have something important to tell you. About Luke and I ... and our father."

For a change, maybe he'd act surprised.

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