

[Back To Index](#)

A Very Short Star Wars Story

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Han Solo settled carefully into one of the chairs in the small cooking area, one of several scattered around the outlying reaches of the base for those who were unable to make it to the main dining area. It had been over a month now, and Jabba's tender loving care was fading into a distant memory, but he still avoided any sudden moves. Still, Doc had promised that in another couple of weeks held be as good as new.

Actually, except for a twinge now and then, life was pretty damn good. If someone had told him a year ago that he would find everything -- and everyone -- that he had without realizing it been searching for, he would have laughed him out of the cantina. It had taken his whole life, but he had finally come home.

And, in the end, it all focused on one person, one tiny, dynamic, wonderful person, who held his newly--found contentment in one slim hand, and treated it with all the love and gentleness its fragility required. He knew, thinking about her, that he had a damn, sappy smile on his face, but he didn't care.

Not everything had changed, of course. His sarcastic sense of humor, matched by her own, occasionally reared its wicked head. Then, they would engage in a top-this-zinger contest that would leave them both laughing -- and outsiders wondering if the two of them had all their cogs and wheels. Certain areas were taboo: He, for example, would never dream of making a crack about Alderaan; he had soothed too many nightmares. But everything else was fair game, including his ship -- and her height.

He grinned. Now there was a never-ending source of material. Leia, of course, refused to admit she was short. Petite she accepted, but he had

pointed out that if she were any more "petite," she wouldn't be able to sit up. He had beaten a hasty retreat before she had figured out whether that had been a compliment or an insult.

It did not really bother her, though; if he thought it did, he would have wrecked the Falcon before mentioning it. But Leia played the game zestfully, once pummeling him mercilessly with the nearest object at hand -- a killer pillow -- while expressing her opinion of his "height" jokes. "But Leia," he had protested, "I never make height jokes. Only *lack* of height jokes."

A shadow flickered beside him, interrupting his reverie. Luke sank into a nearby chair, followed almost immediately by the object of Han's affections. Leia looked perfect, but then she would look perfect to him in a burlap sack. She smiled warmly at Luke and then moved behind Han and dropped a light kiss on the top of his head, brushing his cheek gently with her fingers.

"Anything edible?" she asked, as she opened the cooler door. She pulled out a small container and peered inside. "Looks terrible. Any idea what it is?"

Both men shook their heads.

"Well, you only live once." She dumped the strange-looking mixture onto a small plate. "It can't make me feel any worse than this morning's meeting. That damn Klaxer! I could strangle that man. Pompous, conceited, stubborn--"

"You shouldn't hold it against him; everybody has a few failings," Luke laughed.

"Not Leia," Han announced.

Leia sighed, and conspicuously picked up the now empty container and began to flip it in her hand.

Luke shook his head, but played his part. "Come on, Han. *Everybody.*"

"Nope," Han replied firmly, "not Leia."

Her lips twitched, but she seemed to ignore him and just flipped the container while waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Luke continued, as ever the straight man. "Han, you can't be serious."

The Corellian rose, stretched and began to head casually for the door.
"of course I am, Luke. Other people have failings."

There was a pause.

"Leia has shortcomings."

He barely beat the container to the door.

END

[Back To Index](#)