

Timeframe: ANH; right after the battle of Yavin, a few hours into the night...

Characters: Han, Luke, Leia, others

Genre: viggie

Keywords: to believe - or not believe...

Summary: Luke's faith in the Force – and in himself – is challenged sooner than one might expect...

Notes: Just a somewhat silly scene that insisted to be written. Hope you enjoy.

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On hokey religions and ancient weapons

You had to give it to him; it was the kid's night. Han Solo grinned to himself as he followed Luke Skywalker's contagiously smiling figure. He was easy to track – just follow the noise, and at the center of the racket made by the most enthusiastic partiers, you'd find him.

Kid had come a long way in a short time, had to give him that too. Leaving Tatooine for Force knew why, not that you needed a reason to want to leave that dustball behind; talking Han himself into saving a Princess; fighting like a man on the Death Star; losing that old fogey who obviously meant a lot to him; taking a crash course on the *Falcon*'s laser cannons just like that and bagging himself those TIEs – well, Han had blasted half of them of course, had fought on the Death Star too and had at least half of the credit in saving Her Worshipfulness. But it was Luke who'd flown out on that suicide mission and had managed to hang on to his dear life while his buddies blew up like fireworks around him. And it was Luke who'd popped the Emperor's balloon into space dust, miraculously saving just about every life in this room.

Not strange they all bustled about him like maniacs.

Han Solo smiled indulgently and kicked up his legs on the table in front of him, picking up another fruit from the nearest tray. Yavin's rainforest offered its occupants a vast selection of fruits, but no one had touched it since the booze started to flow in earnest. Chewie had turned in some time ago – Wookiees could be heavy partiers under the right circumstances, but no one understanding a word they said put a damper on things. That, and Chewie always declared that the real fun came the day after when he could grin at other people's hangovers. That prospect in mind, Han resisted the urge to take a swig of his drink – like most persons present he'd had plenty already. He was nonetheless still sober enough to see that the main part of the Alliance Chief Command had kept their consumption of alcohol in control, at least reasonably, with the result that a certain princess also still had her head pretty clear.

A pity really, Han decided. He'd bet the *Falcon*'s forward deflection shields – maybe the rear ones too – that she'd be fun if she jumped over the traces. But as things were, Solo knew better than get stoned if he wanted to make an impression.

Not that it was important to make an impression on her, of course. The galaxy was full of fish... On the other hand, Han had already scored a few points by helping Luke, so why ruin his newly – and hard – earned good impression right away?

They probably all believed he'd been trying to help the Alliance. Well, let 'em. Even Han kept having to remind himself what the real reason was. But every time he turned his gaze towards a sandy haired figure, still clad in a sagging orange flight suit, he knew it had been worth it.

It *was* the kid's evening. 'Cos to be honest, if he hadn't been the Luke he was – a damn holy-minded pure-hearted bantha-stubborn pain in the ass – then Solo would've never turned the *Falcon* around and flown against the Death Star. And if *Falcon* hadn't appeared in the last minute, then Luke Skywalker would now be a couple of dust particles orbiting Yavin's old red giant, along with all the rest of these crazy idealists. He'd tried not to follow the battle, tried not to think of it – but then Chewie had turned on the com to pick up the battle transmissions – and Han hadn't stopped him – and they had realized kid was the only one left – and still just kept going...and some mysterious part of him had suddenly decided he couldn't let somebody that good go to waste.

Han shook his head. Luke kept saying it was the Force that had been in play, somehow guiding the events and eventually his hand when he fired that torpedo – eh, Han knew better, but let him ramble if he wanted. Kid might be the greenest thing Tatooine had ever produced, but he didn't deserve to get vaped for it.

Han chomped into his fruit and re-focused on the action below. Luke and Wedge Antilles were performing some kind of dance to a very improvised orchestra consisting of bottles, metal cans and clapping. Two mechs were trying to add words to a song but broke off every other minute – in the general cheerfulness nobody seemed to mind.

It surprised Han that Luke hadn't collapsed yet. Kid had been plastered since the first beer they'd poured into him – where would he have learned to hold his liquor? – and he was fun when he was drunk. Even more mouthy and spontaneous than usual and with a grin that went from one ear clear to the other. On the other hand, Luke didn't seem more hammered after ten beers than after one, probably the adrenaline still pumping. It might also have something to do with his knack for concentration, Han mused. Luke hadn't lost his head once during that chaotic rescue mission on the Death Star, even when nearly getting drowned like a nerf pup by that thing in the trash compactor. And that insane suicide mission just overhead had proved once and for all that there was more to Luke Skywalker than a scruffy appearance and bumpkin manners.

The dance ended and someone swerved over with fresh drinks. Luke shook his head, declining the booze. All right, the kid was more at helm than he'd expected...

Princess Leia, now circulating amongst the masses, beamed at him and grabbed another drink that she placed in Luke's hand. The kid flushed redder than a Zeltron's ass and toasted, spilling some of it the flurry.

Han grinned. Ok, maybe not...

Every time Luke met the radiant smile of Princess Leia Organa, he'd been blushing – oh yes, Han had noticed. And others had noticed too, which was probably why the hopeful gathering of girls

who had basked around the hero of the day had eventually pulled back somewhat. Luke, of course, was the only one not in the know. Probably he hadn't even kissed a woman. On the other hand, Luke had had his very own test of manhood the past days and hours. Surely that was enough for a while...

A new flux in the crowd made Han glance to the side, turning his attention to a man with flight officer markings on his pilot's jacket, standing a bit to himself, bottle clutched tightly in his hand and eyes coasting over the merriment. He had odd markings on his face, something that looked like an almost-healed, web-like burn and when Han thought about it, he recalled that the man hadn't shown up at this shindig until everybody was on their fourth round. He wasn't the only one. An entire shipful of pilots had arrived from Tierfon, too late for the battle but in time for the bottle. That wasn't the case with the flight officer, though. Something in his stance alerted Han that the man was peeved about something.

The tumultuous dance had come to an end, the orchestra was scattering in search of yet more rotgut, and the man used the chance to speak up, voice slightly blurred thanks to all the booze that wasn't in his bottle anymore. "One thing's really been bugging me, Skywalker. You shot down your computer out there. Why in Kessel did you do that?" Han rolled his eyes. Small shoes – even when you'd just got your butt saved! Well, why would Rebels be any better than the rest of the galaxy...

But Luke, of course, focused on the man, obliging as always. "I trusted in the Force," he explained, all open-faced enthusiasm, and Han groaned to himself. *Not more of that mumbo-jumbo, kiddo...*

The pilot's eyebrows lurched incredulously at Luke. "The *F-force*?" he repeated, at the top of his unsteady voice. "What, are you fracking me?" A few people around started grinning, some probably at his wasted exaggeration, others because they had actually heard the conversation. Han swung his feet off the table and leaned forward, more alert; he noticed the Princess was paying attention too.

"C'mon, Klivian!" someone protested. "You weren't there."

That was apparently the wrong thing to say; the pilot shot the speaker a glare of smoldering resentment. "Keep your nose in your own shavit, Farlander. I asked him." People around were gradually quieting. It struck Han that many people might have asked themselves the same question, but then forgotten it in the rush of victory. And in the following party, no one had wanted to question the Hero of the Day.

But Klivian did, and either he was too tanked to notice he was in the minority or he didn't care. Anyway he focused on Luke again. "So what, you didn't think the Force would be with you if you kept your computer on?"

Luke shook his head. "It's not like that," he insisted. "If I hadn't closed it, I'd have continued to pay attention to what it was telling me. And I wouldn't have allowed the Force to lead me."

"Are you claiming that the Force leads your actions?" a Twi'lek female fell in, batting her huge, reddish-brown eyes. "Seriously?" She twisted her lekku in wonder.

Luke was blushing now. His broad smile had begun to fade. "Yeah, Well, not often but... Out there it did."

Now Leia spoke up. "Luke's father was a Jedi Knight."

"A Jedi?" A renewed murmur went through the crowd and now there wasn't a pair of eyes that wasn't focused on Luke. Klivian scowled at him, an almost comical expression on his face. For a second it seemed like part of him wanted to give the kid a break, but the other part only dug its drunk heels in deeper. The other part won.

"So, what? He trained you? Or what?" he demanded.

"No he didn't." Luke sagged for a moment. "He's dead." Then his face cleared again. "But I was trained by Obi-Wan Kenobi. He was a Jedi too."

"I've heard of *him*!" a baby-faced pilot exclaimed, sounding like he'd just gotten an Idiot's Array. His yellow jacket revealed him as one of the late-comers from Tierfon.

"Yeah?" Klivian demanded, not impressed at all. "Well, where is he now?"

Luke sagged again, alcohol rendering him vulnerable to swift mood changes. "He'd dead too."

"Well, isn't that convenient," Klivian drawled, brandishing his bottle.

"Can it, Hobbie!" Wedge Antilles growled. "It's not Luke's fault that you got that bug and had to sit out the battle. Get a grip here! In case you didn't notice, Luke was the one who saved all our butts!"

"Yeah?" Hobbie Klivian shot back. "Well, in case you didn't notice, he also gambled with our lives out there. And *I* at least don't feel that thrilled to learn *that*! Turns out that hit was a lucky shot." He shoved his bottle onto the table, looking suddenly more sober.

"Lucky shot?!" His words triggered a wave of protest, but some muttered stubborn agreement. Han found himself face in palm. This was turning out to be the best argument against heavy drinking he'd seen in two weeks, and considering he'd been in a spaceport on Tatooine for the last two weeks, that was saying something.

"I didn't gamble," Luke blurted out, temper flaring like it had in that Mos Eisley cantina. "Ben Kenobi told me what to do."

"Here I thought you just said he was dead," the baby-faced pilot quipped, winking at some of the girls who had been swarming around Luke earlier. Han put his face in his palm again.

Luke set his jaw. "I can't explain it," he said stubbornly. "But I knew what I was doing."

Han groaned. There he was going again with that hokey nonsense. Couldn't the kid see he was cutting the very branch he'd seated himself on? No one would believe him and soon the new friends he'd gained would turn their backs on him. Han cursed silently to himself.

"Are you saying that you could do it again, then?" asked Klivian, an odd smile curving his mouth now, like he'd just got an idea. Considering how little was left in that bottle, it couldn't be good.

Luke bit his lip. "I could," he stated after a moment's hesitation.

"Hey! You know other Jedi tricks?" Baby-Face yelled. "Can you move this mug?"

The air went out of Luke again. "I haven't learned how to do *that*."

Hobbie Klivian grinned. "No? And here I thought that levitation was one of the *main* Jedi tricks."

"How much training did you actually get, Skywalker?" someone asked.

Han didn't know what made him open his mouth. Maybe the pair of pints he'd put away, but maybe it was the sight of the kid, cornered by all the questions. Hell, he'd gotten the kid out a few tight spots now, what was one more? He took a few steps closer to Luke. "Hey! I saw myself how you and Kenobi used most of the trip to Alderaan to train against a remote," he heard himself say. "You got pretty good at deflecting bolts – even with your eyes covered. I gotta hand it to ya, looks like that training paid off."

Luke grinned gratefully at him, which Han almost missed cause so was the Princess and it looked even better on her. Kriff these Rebels – he could take the kid with him when he left with Chewie. He'd meant what he said earlier; Luke had proved himself and he'd be a great hand to have along, wherever Han and Chewie decided to go next.

"Well, we can test it, can't we?" Hobbie drawled. "Skywalker says he has the Force. I say let's see it."

This took the murmur to new heights. Luke looked alarmed. So did Leia. Han didn't do alarmed, he just did pissed-off. "I say you already *did* see it," Han snapped, sticking a thumb at the ceiling to indicate the recent battle – not because he entirely believed it himself, but because it was the answer that would tick the guy off.

Klivian didn't back down; you didn't join a Rebellion if you were a coward, Han guessed. "Once is a fluke unless you can repeat it," he retorted. "Get the krething remote and we'll see if he can do it again!"

"Listen, pal," Han snapped, "I'm not gonna head all the way out to the *Falcon* an' all the way back just cause you've got a proton torpedo jammed up your –"

"Hey," Baby-Face broke in. "It doesn't need to be that hard – we can just cover his eyes and throw something at him. If the Force is with him he can parry!" Grinning like a maniac he reached to the nearest table and grabbed two large, ripe bola fruits from the generous selection, backed up a few steps, and tossed one to Klivian who just about managed to grip it.

Mutter broke into a racket, people starting to express themselves loudly even as they scrambled out of the new line of fire. Some thought the idea hilarious; others considered it an insult both towards the Jedi and the Force. There were a lot more of the former, considering how much booze they'd all put away in the last couple of hours. Leia exchanged glances with the Alliance leaders.

Han started forward, with the intention of showing Baby-Face and Klivian exactly where they could keep their fruit, but Luke threw a hand out over his chest to stop him. "I can do it," he insisted.

Dodonna spoke up, apparently feeling intervention was in order. About damn time. "You've had quite a lot to drink, son, so have we all. We should wait and..."

There was a flash to Luke's eyes. "I can do it!"

Baby-Face grinned. "Stellar! This is going to be *fun*." He weighed the fruit in his hand, moving clear of both Luke and his pal. "Projectiles ready. Cover your eyes, Skywalker."

Luke looked grim, but he'd grabbed the gauntlet and no mistake. He moved to the table, unhooking his lightsaber. The female Twi'lek tripped up to him, removing a scarf she probably would've kept on if she'd been more sober and binding it over his eyes.

The room was hissing with doubt. Leia's eyes were if possible even larger and darker than before, and glaring laser bolts at Han as if this was all somehow *his* fault. She didn't put many credits on Luke either, that much he could see. And neither did he. Even if the kid was right and he actually *had* heard Kenobi's voice out there, even if it *had* been Kenobi and even if there really *existed* something that could be called the Force and that Luke had managed to get in contact with, even then, the kid was so slammed there was no way he'd be able to swing it right now. He was swaying slightly where he stood – still his hands rose determinedly with the lightsaber.

A snap-hiss. The meter long, blue energy beam came to sight and all other noise stopped. Possibly no one in the hall, Han and Leia excluded, had seen a lightsaber in reality – but everyone had heard tales about them.

Luke clenched the hilt with both hands and had shifted to defensive stance. Somehow he'd managed to stop swaying. The ridiculous magenta dotted scarf over his eyes stood in stark contrast with the respect-infusing, almost mythological weapon.

Splatch! Hobbie Klivian threw his bola fruit. Even drunk the guy could aim. It hit Luke straight on the chest and smeared out completely. The greenish mush dripped miserably down his flight suit. Luke hadn't managed to move a finger.

A disappointed "ooh" went through the crowd.

Luke's mouth twitched. "Again," he demanded. "I wasn't ready."

Klivian leered. "Of course you weren't," he mocked, glancing at his comrade. "Take it away, Yellow Ace."

Baby-Face lifted his fruit, tossed it from hand to hand for a moment, then threw it as far from the right as he could manage.

Luke still didn't move and the bola hit his shoulder, disintegrating in a spray of pulp. A quiet moan went through the audience – not many seemed to enjoy the show now.

The kid let out a sound that sounded like a sigh. “Again,” he repeated, his voice strangely distant.

Klivian shrugged. “Plenty more to go around, Skywalker,” he commented. Someone handed him and his croney new missiles and this time Baby-Face took aim first.

Leia pulled at Han’s arm and he almost jumped – he’d been so transfixed on Luke that he hadn’t even noticed her close in. She brought her lips so close to his ear that her hectic whisper tickled the little hairs inside. “Han! He mustn’t be ridiculed before everyone like this! Get in there and –”

The lightsaber cut through the air and chopped the fruit in its trajectory.

There was two seconds of absolute, shocked stillness. Even Klivian’s jaw dropped. Then someone whistled acknowledgement. Luke didn’t move. His focus was completely on...huh. On what, really?

Hobbie’s mouth pursed up and he lifted his projectile again. This time he took a few steps to the left before throwing.

Once again, Luke flicked his blade straight into the line of the fruit, the movement small but precise. The bola was cut into two almost equal pieces.

A few cheers broke out. Several people clapped. Incensed, Klivian grabbed two fruits from the table and exchanged a few words with his mate to whom he passed one of them. Both men walked further away from each other, three long silent steps, then turned almost simultaneously and launched their projectiles.

Protesting shouts sounded, but Luke took a fast step back and for the third time the lightsaber sliced the air.

For a moment it was deadly quiet. So quiet that Han distinctly heard each of the four pieces of bola fruit hit the ground with a wet thud. Then people began to cheer and catcall like an audience at a smashball final. Leia almost bounced up to Luke who managed to shut his weapon down just in time, flinging herself around his neck. Luke staggered backwards and his sweaty face emerged from under the scarf. He was almost pale from concentration.

But Han would never forget the face of the kid when he saw the fruits on the floor. Luke stared a moment over Leia’s shoulder, like he needed a moment to tune back into reality. Then a small but happy smile wormed onto his face.

Disillusioned smuggler though he was, Han could not with total honesty attribute the twinge in his stomach to an excess of alcohol.

The crowd had already converged on Luke, like he’d tackled another Death Star and not a few bola fruits. After some reluctant moments, even Hobbie Klivian joined, still shaking his head in disbelief. His mate Baby-Face was already on spot, eagerly backslapping and laughing as if he’d never noticed the slightest suggestion of animosity. Well, he’d been practically swimming in the space juice and was lit like a supernova, maybe he hadn’t. And if the mournful look hadn’t quite left Klivian’s face, Han wasn’t sure it wasn’t because he actually permanently *looked* like that.

Who knew? Maybe the kid would actually become a Jedi one day? All of a sudden, miracles didn't seem *that* impossible. Of course, it would take more than a miracle for a crazy kid from Tatooine to resurrect the heritage of the old champions of the galaxy, but Han knew in that moment that he wanted to do *his* part to make that possible. Even if he had to watch the kid's back all the long, winding road...

Maybe it wouldn't be so bad. Sure didn't look like that Princess was going anywhere, for one thing. And if miracles were in the cards anyway, who knew...a princess and a guy like him, it could happen...

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