1960s AU where Ben works for First Order security and Rey for a flower shop!
They fall for each other at a New Year's Eve masquerade party and the rest is...well you'll see!
Valentine's themed gift I've created as part of an exchange!
Chp.2 and 3 are on the way!
Starlight Gets in Your Eyes

The year is 1959, at least for the next few hours...

Tonight in the city of Coruscant the place to be is Empire Boulevard’s New Year’s Eve party. Where the professionals, patrons, employees, and tenants of the uptown throughway gather to ring in 1960 in style.

The newly refurbished and thoroughly modern offices of 66 Empire Boulevard, specifically the top floors owned by First Order Security, host the elegant affair. A new decade dawns and the promise of uncertainty means this year a masquerade ball theme. By the stroke of midnight tradition leads attendees to the rooftop for a champagne toast and the prospect of a New Year kiss under the stars.

It is here minutes before midnight that we find First Order darling Ben Solo. Here in the cold crisp winter air where the heavens shine their brightest. Here where the drink keeps guests warm and a tower of crystal glasses is filled by a waterfall of champagne. Here where starlight brightens the scene and our desperate duo meets cute.

A single woman stands alone to the back of the crowd that is pressing in around reclusive First Order CEO Mr. Snoke. His administrator Armitage Hux has a particularly expensive bottle of bubbly at the ready for the boss and a small group of his favorite sycophants.

A wisp of clouds shifts in the otherwise cold and clear sky and moonlight sparkles brilliantly off of the crystal spectacle beside the executive and his flatterers. The sight is nothing to Ben Solo who moves towards the lone young woman in the back with wonder.

“Don’t let the starlight get in your eyes Solo” Hux shouts as Ben walks off.

Several times that night their paths had crossed but their respective orbits always seemed to keep them from meeting. Hearing her laugh as she finished her own joke, watching her nurse a single drink the whole night, and glimpses across the dance floor could sustain him no longer.

Ben gracefully navigated the crowd of tipsy party-goers. He was tall, dark, and reasonably handsome despite the relentless comments of Hux. His thoughts returned to his coworker and his warning. Perhaps he should reconsider the abandon with which he pursued this girl.

His black suit was tailored to perfection and the black wolf mask he donned suited his fierce and intelligent gaze.

As the big bad wolf approached the white star shining from across the roof the crowd began to count down to midnight.

“10” The sweater set she wore made him smile. A white cotton cardigan with the moons and stars embroidered around the collar. Modest yet endearing. “9” Not many others chose to wear a white costume. ‘The clearer for me to see you darling’ Ben thought. “8” She is taller than most of the other women. As a security expert Ben guessed 5’7”-5’8”. ‘The better for me to reach her lips’ he thought rogishly. “7” Ben couldn’t help but wonder why she would be alone, but thanked his lucky stars. ‘She’s the only lucky star I need’ he told himself. “6” She saw him approaching and Ben saw her bright eyes go wide. “5” She holds her ground and smiles softly. “4” Ben makes one final stride until there are only inches between them. “3” The crowd shouts with renewed enthusiasm as the final moments tick by. Suddenly her eyes break away taking in the merry group. “2” There is no punch
bowl, party-goer, or punch line to separate them now. “I” Ben removes one of the black gloves he is wearing and turns her face to him. His skin is warm and she welcomes the touch in the cold night air. “HAPPY NEW YEAR!” Jubilation erupts. Masks in place the lone wolf draws nearer the star. And as the crowd forgets themselves they too forget what ever kept them apart. The glittering symphony of crystal glasses joining fills the air as their lips meet. A new year’s kiss.

“1960” Ben whispers. “Best year ever”.

“So sure already?” The young woman asks blushing under the white points of her mask.

Drawing his cold star closer he warms her in his arms. Her smile is brilliant and for a moment he thinks the sun has come out to join the stars. She licks her lips before she giggles at his unnerving gaze.

“Already” he replies with certainty.
Chapter Summary

Part 2! I hope to finish part 3 (and perhaps a part 4) this weekend!

I couldn't help but go with another Platters song for the chapter title!

The song makes a lot of sense when you look at it from the perspective of Ben when he is parted from Rey (Not broken up as the song usually implies)

ENJOY

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Little more than a month later Ben Solo is a man with a plan. Valentine’s day is approaching and he has a proposal in mind. No not a business proposal, which before 1960, would have been likely...but a marriage proposal.

Rey Jakku and Ben shared more than a relationship, but a bond, since New Year’s Eve. As it turned out they had always been much closer than they had ever known. Rey worked in the flower shop on the ground level of businesses at 66 Empire Boulevard while Ben was employed by First Order Security on the top 3 floors.

Over the weeks following the party the pair were inseparable. If they weren’t sharing a meal, they were going for walks in the park, or talking over coffee, or tying up the phone lines to catch up. Flowers began adorning the halls and offices of First Order and Republic Blooms had more clients then they could keep up with.

Rey was less practical and more whimsical, Ben was happier and less sullen. Their colleagues took note, but the duo was keen to keep things under wraps. The woman who owned the flower shop was lovely. But Rey knew if Leia caught wind of their romance she would constantly face well meaning advice and questions. While Mr. Snoke would recommend anyone with Ben’s reputation avoid sharing any information that could soften the imposing figure he cut at First Order. He had told his office that the star that had captured his attention New Year’s Eve burned hot and bright, but was now a distant memory.

It is February 13th 1960 and Rey has spent the day filling flower orders for customers. She has closed up shop but spends extra time preparing bouquets for the last minute shoppers on Valentine’s day. There is a knock at the window and Rey lets in Poe and Finn.

“You two! Shouldn’t the shop be open another few hours?” she questions poking a finger at Finn’s shoulder.

“Oh yes, let us rush back! Welcome to Rebel Appliances! May I interest you in a washing machine for that special someone? Ah, you have a good eye. This model features a FN-2187 motor that improves the new spin cycle feature...C’mon Rey!” Poe mocks with quick wit and sarcasm.

“Hmm. I see your point. But maybe more men should think of such a practical gift!” She
reasoned.

“Ah and is that what your beau is getting you? A “practical” gift?” Finn chimed in.

Rey rolled her eyes and returned to her work arranging bundles of varying blooms.

“Look at that blush!” Poe teased as he picked at bundles of Baby’s breath strewn across the work bench. “You’ve got it bad darling, we only want to make sure our Rey of sunshine isn’t getting played like a coffeehouse guitar!” he added.

Rey shot the salesman a withering look before his partner rushed to his defense.

With thoughtful eyes Finn considered his words as he spoke “You know our secret, we only want to know our trust is returned”.

With that the two men joined hands, sat down, and Rey made a decision.

... 

Fortunately not a single customer came calling to Rebel Appliances that night. They would have been sorely disappointed since the salesmen in charge of closing were enthralled the next shop over with the news that their little florist friend was being wooed by none other than hotshot First Order executive, Ben Solo.

At the same time on the top floor of 66 Empire Boulevard Ben Solo broods in the office of Mr. Snoke.

“Sir. With respect, I would advise against continuing these acts of aggression to manipulate clients into seeking our services...One more bad piece of intelligence from Hux and you’ll have the feds tearing up the place” Ben said evenly.

“With respect Solo, you owe everything to me. Without my leadership First Order would be nothing! Your vision needs discipline and money! Had you ever thought about the small fortune I’ve reinvested into this company...” Snoke spat.

“Mobster strong arming is not leadership! And your twisted tactics are going to land us in the clink one of these days!” Ben bellowed. “Enough Solo! Clear your head...and don’t bother coming back until you’ve seriously considered your place here. I won’t abide this sort of dissent on account of a woman” the old man warned.

Ben lost control and swatted at a large vase on the CEO’s desk. Crystal shattered as the expensive Tiffany piece hit the wall and the blood red Amaryllises inside scattered the floor amongst the sharp debris.

Without a word Ben turned and left Snoke’s office and immediately headed to his own. Several First Order staffers froze as his shadowy form stalked across the work room. They had heard the yelling and the sound of breaking glass. For weeks they all speculated who could ever date such a brute. The men and women of the office agreed that money, status, and prestige couldn’t win a lady with a temper like Solo’s.

As the whispers began Phasma, the floor manager, clicked her tongue at the other secretaries and shot them a look that returned them to their work. While the leggy blonde returned the office to order Hux trailed after Ben to gather information.
Ben had already retrieved the black milk crate he kept in his office closet, the one he had used years ago when he first set himself up at First Order. The same crate he had used to carry a few meager supplies to his new office and home. There at the bottom of the crate, after all these years, remained the final vestige of that former life. His old CPD badge.

Hux entered without knocking, a habit Ben would not miss. As the ginger man helped himself to a seat Ben tossed his calendar and notepad in the crate to bury his momento.

Just because he was leaving First Order Security didn't mean he would be running back to the Coruscant Police Department or his traitorous uncle...Luke Skywalker.

Chapter End Notes

The Great Pretender by The Platters

"Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender
Pretending that I'm doing well
My need is such I pretend too much
I'm lonely but no one can tell

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender
Adrift in a world of my own
I've played the game but to my real shame
You've left me to grieve all alone

Too real is this feeling of make-believe
Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal

Yes, I'm the great pretender
Just laughin' and gay like a clown
I seem to be what I'm not, you see
I'm wearing my heart like a crown
Pretending that you're still around

Too real is this feeling of make-believe
Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal

Yes, I'm the great pretender
Just laughin' and gay like a clown
I seem to be what I'm not, you see
I'm wearing my heart like a crown
Pretending that you're still around"
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

I honestly don’t know any more how many chapters this story may have...In all likelihood it is going to be more than 4...stay tuned!

Valentine’s Day 1960 had arrived.

Rey momentarily regretted her decision to tell Poe and Finn about her mystery suitor when the pair made a frustrating, though accurate, charade of walking past Republic Blooms that morning.

Finn clutched a bundle of weeds he had pulled from the park across the street, while Poe strutted beside him with a stoic expression and a pair of all black shades. The performance made Rey blush, but she couldn’t help but laugh once they were out of sight. True to character Rey was always adorning herself with some flower or another. She had grown up in the desert and so the beauty of nature never ceased to amaze her. While Ben was infamous around town as the man in the black shades. Rain or shine he sported sunglasses. He often fiercely defended the choice noting that as a security specialist it afforded more anonymity and kept his eye-line and emotions guarded.

Across town Ben cleaned the lenses of his shades before he put them on and headed out the door. The crate with his office supplies sat discarded beside the door. The CPD badge hidden at the bottom was akin to the pit it left festering in his stomach.

As he wrenched open his door the shock of sunlight blinded him like the flash of his old service revolver’s muzzle. With that flash Ben recalled the shot which rang out so long ago. The instant the bullet drove home and stained the pavement red. The night that his very own ‘friendly fire’ claimed the life of his father, Sergeant Han Solo.

His uncle, Police commissioner Luke Skywalker, tried to convince him it was an accident, a tragic mistake, but Ben always wondered. Snoke had been pursing him relentlessly. Trying to recruit Ben to the newly assembled First Order, and the tension had torn him and his family apart since that fateful night. Had he acted on instinct or intent?

While Ben’s badge and the gleam of first morning’s light had drawn out the past the warmth of the sunshine returned Ben to the present. The gentle heat spread through his broad chest and comforted him as he set to work preparing what would be the most important day of his life.

Downtown at the train station Ben retrieves a thick manilla envelope from a locker at the terminal. Inside is all the evidence he has compiled on First Order and the highly illegal means they have been using to blackmail, extort, and coerce citizens and companies into becoming clients.

As he briskly made his way down the sidewalk towards the jeweler he gripped the package tight. Ben stopped to consider his reflection in the storefront of a local department store “Force & Bond”.

If he were to throw this evidence in Snoke’s face it would be a massive gamble. A gamble that could land him at the top of an empire. An empire he had sacrificed everything to and built from the
Ben stared into the dark reflection of his sunglasses as he thought of what a fool Snoke had been, and how he was owed his due for the life he renounced for First Order. At the same time Ben looked beyond his own reflection into the shop window. A Valentine’s day tableau adorned the store front. A fine black suit with satin lapels and a delicate cocktail dress that had airy layers of dove grey tulle accented by a blush satin sash at the waist that met in a bow at the back. The couple were posed before an elegantly set table and where the mannequin’s hands met the gleam of an engagement ring was showcased by the display lighting.

Ben gripped the envelope tighter as he struggled to choose between his plan to file charges with the Coruscant Police and blackmailing Snoke himself. While one afforded him the high ground, the other presented him the throne of First Order; the opportunity to rule a thriving security firm without his losses being in vain. No need to start from scratch...No need to suffer in silence...no need to be alone.

Concealed behind his shades a dark look filled Ben’s eyes. Turning away from the main street which led to the jeweler he set off towards the ‘wrong side of the tracks’, towards the apartment building which housed First Order’s muscle, towards ‘The Knights’.

End Notes

HOPE YOU ENJOYED! Please say hello, comments make me happier than anything!

I picked this song because it inspired the title for the work that popped into my mind and it fits the love at first sight feel of the party. Hux is the type to advise the message of "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and so he is the one to warn Ben. And Ben as we will see later, goes along with this notion to keep his relationship under cover while longer.

"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" by The Platters

They asked me how I knew
My true love was true
I of course replied
Something here inside
Can not be denied

They, said some day you'll find
All who love are blind
When your heart's on fire
You must realize
Smoke gets in your eyes

So I chaffed them, and I gaily laughed
To think they could doubt my love
And yet today, my love has flown away
I am without my love

Now laughing friends deride
Tears I cannot hide
So I smile and say
When a lovely flame dies
Smoke gets in your eyes
Smoke gets in your eyes

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