Summary

One-shot collection focused on Luke and Vader. All AU.

**Story 22:** Luke hangs on to the gantry above the reactor shaft. Darth Vader is ready to tell his son the truth, except there seems to be a malfunction with his vocoder.

**Story 23, 24, & 25:** (A three parter) Luke is raised by his mother, who becomes the leader of the Rebellion known by the code name Lotus. When Luke is captured on the first Death Star and questioned, he recalls his mother’s words to use his real name.

**Story 26:** (Dragon AU) The Sith dragon Vader takes care of his young son, but there is something else brushing against his mind. Another dragon, but it's not his son.

**Story 27:** Luke Skywalker was on the second Death Star being electrocuted by the Emperor begging his father to save him. He passed out, but when he awakes he finds himself in a strange featureless foggy place. He quickly discovered he is not alone. There he meets another Luke Skywalker.
Welcome and come on down to Between the Light and Shadows! This is a one-shot collection focusing on your favorite father-son duo, Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader! We've got all sorts of AU's! Canon-divergent AUs. Comic AUs. Time travel AU. Modern AU. Fashion designer AU! DRAGONS! We got all sort of one-shots in here. We've got those crack ones that make you laugh. Those sad ones that make you cry. *Slaps the roof of a fic* It's all in here at Between the Light and Shadows!

Chapter Notes

Summary: Post ESB AU. Vader and Luke got into a dogfight in their fighters. Both managing to shoot the other down. Both spun out of control. Both crashed. When they awaken they're both on Coruscant at the end of the Clone Wars. And to Vader's dismay, Luke has been taken to the Jedi Temple.

The speeder sped through the Coruscant traffic. Darth Vader looked over at his son, Luke. The boy was pale. He was pushed back into his seat. Vader wondered if he had fully recovered from the crash and whatever had brought the two of them here to the past. About twenty-four years in the past. It was the end of the Clone Wars, though those in this time were unaware of the upcoming conclusion to the war.

Vader still wasn't sure how he and his son were here, or why Vader was healed. He wasn't completely healed. All of his limbs were still prosthetic, but he no longer needed the suit. His lungs worked fine. In fact all of his internal systems appeared to be working just fine. He could breathe and eat. His eyes and skin had been healed too, though scars still lashed all along his body. Small stubbly hair was starting to grow back on his head.

Vader thought back to how this had happened. He had been chasing down his son in his X-Wing. Vader in his TIE Advance. The two had managed to hit the other's fighter. Both fighters spun out of control. Vader lost consciousness and when he awoke, he was here on Coruscant in this time. Luckily Vader's suit had protected him, but Luke had been injured and found by the CPF. It hadn't taken much for Vader to sneak into the hospital they had moved Luke into.


"No," Vader said. He was unsure what else to say to his child. For now Vader was contemp that Luke was by his side. That he had willingly left the hospital with him.


"Yes, she's alive," Vader replied. His eyes shot towards the direction of Padme's apartment. He had
been tempted, very tempted, to go to her. To see her. But how could he? After what he had done to her? Plus she wouldn't even know him. He was a monster. Scarred. Aged. He didn't deserve to see her again.

"Does that mean that you- that Anakin Skywalker is here as well?" Luke asked. His sense of hope raising. Vader gripped the handles of the steering yokes harder as jealousy raged through him. He could sense his son's desire to know Anakin Skywalker.

*Luke is my son, Vader thought to himself. He was born to me. Darth Vader. Not that fool Anakin Skywalker.*

Vader would need to keep Luke and Anakin far apart. He would not be sharing his son with his past self.

"Anakin Skywalker should be in the outer rim fighting in the wars at this moment," Vader said. He felt Luke's hope dim a little bit, which only made a small bit of happiness flare up inside of Vader.

"Now what?" Luke asked. "Do we find a way back? To our time?"

"Ideally," Vader said.

"Do you know how to?"

"No."

Luke let out a sigh. The boy's anger and frustration were starting to build. Vader inwardly smiled at how easily the boy's emotions got the better of him. He still might be able to lure the boy to the dark side yet. But not right now. Now wasn't the time for that.

"So then what are we going to do?"

Vader looked over at Luke. Luke was looking at Vader. His blue eyes, the same blue eyes that Vader once had (he would not think of it as the same blue eyes as Anakin), were staring right at Vader.

"We-" Vader started, but never finished. The speeder violently rocked to the side. Vader had been distracted. His focus had been on his son. He hadn't felt the warning in the Force. Suddenly three CPF speeders swooped down behind Vader. Their sirens blaring and lights flashing.

"Land the speeder," came the voice of one of the CPF droids.

Vader cursed. Had the hospital noticed Luke's absence? Or was this due to Vader's stunt in the hospital hanger? Regardless, Vader gripped the steering handle and dove the speeder down. He dropped through several lanes of traffic. He swerved expertly pass speeders and shuttles. The CPF were having a hard time following. Vader aimed the speeder lower and lower. It would be easier to ditch the speeder and find a hiding place in the lower levels.

The Force sent a shrill warning. Vader moved the speeder hard to the left, but still the shot hit left side. Luke's side. The engine had been hit and was losing power. Vader aimed the speeder towards an open roof. It would be a hard landing. Again another warning in the Force. This time Vader couldn't steer the speeder out of the way of the shot.

The shot hit the speeder. Vader was thrown out of the speeder. He used the Force to land softly on the rooftop. His eyes immediately snapped up at the burning speeder. It crashed into the roof. Instantly pain flooded Vader's senses.
"Luke!" Vader shouted as he started to run across the roof towards the crash. Luke was in there. He was in pain. Two shadows dropped from above and landed between Vader and the crash. At once a green and blue lightsaber shot from the two figures. Two Jedi stood between Vader and his son. His injured son.

"Don't move, Sith!" shouted one Jedi. He was near-human but Vader didn't care to figure out what race he was. He merely unclipped his own lightsaber and ignited the red blade.

"Leave," Vader growled at them. His robes whipped in the wind. Vader was tired of this stand-off. He had to get to Luke. He had to help his son.

He rushed at the Jedi holding the green sabre. The near-human one. Of course the second Jedi, a female human, lunged into the fight at once. Vader could feel their confidence. They thought the two of them were enough to take on one Sith. Fools. These two weak Jedi would be no match for Vader. He had personally killed hundreds of Jedi before. Possibly these very two Jedi for all he knew.

The duel was short lived. With the two Jedi disposed of, Vader's attention went at once to Luke. The pain Luke had been throwing into the Force bond with Vader had dimmed. The boy most likely had fallen unconscious.

A cold shot of fear raced through Vader as he saw a figure at the crash sight pulling Luke's body out of the wreckage. Another Jedi. When had this third Jedi arrived? This Jedi had his hands on his son. He was hauling the boy away from the speeder. Vader was going to lose his son, again, to the Jedi.

"No!" Vader shouted. His hand shot out. It was all too easy to summon the Force around the Jedi's throat.

Anakin Skywalker stood in a briefing room in the Jedi Temple. He had been called from the frontlines back to Coruscant. It must have been important for them to call him back from his current mission. Anakin hated leaving in the middle, but hopefully Rex and his men would be able to manage without him.

In the middle of the briefing room sat a large holotable. Standing around the table were Obi-Wan Kenobi, Master Yoda, Mace Windu, and Luminara Unduli. Obi-Wan nodded at Anakin in greeting. A small smile on his lips.

"Good you're here, Skywalker," Mace said.

"Masters," Anakin said with a slight bob of his head. "What's going on? Why have I been summoned back here?"

Mace clicked a button on the holotable. The table projected a blue hologram of a young human man. About Anakin's age, if not younger. He could tell his hair was light colored. He didn't look happy. It appeared to Anakin he was sitting in a bed.

"Recognize this face, do you?" Master Yoda asked. All four masters were staring at Anakin intently.

"No," Anakin replied honestly. The masters exchanged a look with each other. "Should I?"

Again Mace clicked a button and this time a the projector showed a hologram of a lightsaber. "And
this lightsaber?" Mace asked. "Have you seen it before?"

"No," Anakin answered again. "What is this about?"

"We believe a Sith is here on Coruscant," Obi-Wan said. "A new one. One we haven't encountered before."

"The Sith master?" Anakin asked hopefully. Could the mastermind behind Dooku have finally slipped up?

"We aren't sure," Mace replied. "But it is possible."

Anakin thought back at the youth in the hologram. No way that kid was Dooku's Sith master. "So what is with the kid then?" Anakin asked.

"We don't know that either," Obi-Wan said. "Two days ago a strange fighter crashed in the Industrial District. That man was inside it. He was taken to a local hospital."

"While he was still healing, he kept calling out a name." Mace paused here as he looked over at Anakin. "Your name."

"My name?" Anakin asked.

Mace clicked a button and the hologram changed. It showed the kid laying down in the hospital bed. His eyes were open, but he was clearly out of it. He kept tossing his head from side to side.


"So that's why I was summoned here?" Anakin asked a bit skeptical. "You couldn't just ask me about some kid over a holocall?"

"The kid's missing," Mace continued.

"Took him, this new Sith did," Yoda added.

"Took him?" Anakin asked.

The hologram changed yet again. It showed a hanger of a hospital. Medical speeders were parked neatly. There a few droids rolling about. One pilot leaned against a speeder. Suddenly the pilot became alert. It appeared he shouted something, he started to move, but then he was levitated off the floor. His hands grabbing at his throat. Then his head turned sharply to the side and the body fell to the floor.

A second pilot ran onto the scene. He dropped next to the fallen pilot. He pulled out a blaster and fired a few shots. Anakin could see the shots had been deflected. Then a man wearing a long robe with a hood confidently strode into view. He held a lightsaber, which Anakin could tell was red despite the blue of the holograph. Without hesitation, the man cut down the other pilot.

Then the robed man disappeared, only to shortly reappear. He was hunched over as he helped the kid from the holo before to a speeder. The kid was still clearly injured and the man moved with care. Once they were both in the speeder, they were gone.

Mace again changed the holographic image. It appeared to be from a security camera. It was of a rooftop. Near one edge was a burning wreckage of a speeder. On the other side of the roof stood three figures. Two quickly ignited their blades, followed the third whose blade was red. The Sith.
Anakin leaned in close. The security holo didn't provide a good detail shot of the Sith. He looked human, but his back was mostly to the camera.

Anakin watched the security holo play out. It wasn't much of a fight. The Sith fought very well. The two Jedi were quickly cut down. The third Jedi, who was helping the mystery kid out of the speeder, had his head snapped around like the pilot from the hospital. There was no sound, but Anakin could easily imagine the sound of bones breaking as the third Jedi's head was snapped at an awkward angle.

Anakin watched intently as the Sith ran over to the unconscious and clearly injured kid. The Sith gently cradled the boy to him. Anakin could just make out the Sith bring up a gloved hand to the boy's face and caress his cheek.

"That was almost a loving gesture," Anakin pointed out. "As if the Sith cared about this boy."

"Love, Sith do not," Yoda said.

"But Anakin is right," Obi-Wan said. "I would say that from an appearance standpoint, the Sith did seem to care about this boy."

"He also took great care getting the kid into the speeder. What else do we know about this mystery boy?" Anakin asked.

"We've gone over the medical report," Luminara said. "We ran his blood through the system. No known matches. The hospital said the boy never gave a name. He was possibly in shock. When the hospital sent us his records, it including a blood sample. We did run a midichlorian count on it. It was 15,000."

"15,000?" Anakin asked with clear shock on his face. Sure it didn't beat Anakin's count of 27,000, but Anakin's count was unnaturally high. Unheard of. Yoda's count was 17,000, which was also considered extremely high. The highest in history until Anakin. Obi-Wan was at 13,500, and even that count was considered high. For a kid to have a higher count than Obi-Wan . . . what kind of power did that kid have?

"You understand the dilemma, Skywalker," Luminara said dragging Anakin from his thoughts.

Obi-Wan spoke up. "It's easy to see why a Sith Lord would have gone out of their way to get the boy."

"Find this Sith and this boy we must," Yoda said. "Fall to the dark side, the boy must not. If the boy falls too powerful the Dark Side will become."

Anakin hoped the boy hadn't fallen already.

Anakin made his way through the dark streets of the lower levels of Coruscant. Luckily, the Council had allowed Anakin to hunt for this supposed Sith lord. Anakin guessed the Sith had not gotten very far with the boy. The boy was clearly injured. Anakin assumed the two were still nearby and hiding while the Sith treated the boy's injuries.

Anakin made sure he was shielding himself properly. He didn't want the Sith lord or even the boy to
know he was coming. Anakin's thoughts kept going back to the boy more than the Sith lord. The boy was a mystery. Anakin had gone over the data collected on the kid. The fighter the boy had first been found in was a mystery too. It matched no known designs. Anakin had glanced over the holos of the pieces. He had never seen anything quite like it.

Anakin had examined the clothing the boy was first found in. It was a bright orange jumpsuit. The helmet had a red signal on it, which reminded Anakin of the Jedi symbol but it looked more like a bird. Even odder than the fighter, was the boy's right arm. It was prosthetic, but like the fighter it matched no known prosthetics. In fact the healers hadn't even known it was prosthetic until they did a scan. The skin over the fake arm was extremely life like.

Anakin wished they had gotten a better scan of the mechanics of the hand. He would have liked to seen it. From what little they did have, the technology was more advanced than Anakin's own hand. Which was an impressive feat.

A mystery boy crashed on to Coruscant in a mystery fighter with a mystery symbol on the helmet. The boy had a prosthetic hand more advanced than any current model. The boy also has an insanely high midichlorian count. He carried a lightsaber, but was not in any Jedi records. The kid called out the name Skywalker in his sleep. Then the kid was taken by a Sith lord. A Sith lord who was gentle with the kid?

None of it was adding up, and Anakin hated it. But he did agree with the Council. Whoever this kid was, he needed to be found. Along with this mystery Sith. Anakin couldn't help but wonder if this was the Sith mastermind. What if they did catch him? What if they could finally end the war? All this bloodshed could finally stop.

\[ \text{father...} \]

Anakin stopped. He had heard a call in the Force. At least he thought he had.

\[ \text{father...} \]

There it was again. Anakin reached out towards the source. He felt pain. Confusion. Anakin started to move towards it. Why was he hearing this voice? To be able to speak telepathically to another Force user, one must have an established bond. Anakin could just barely sense whoever it was. It wasn't Obi-Wan. It wasn't Ahsoka either . . .

\text{Father...}

Anakin followed the pull of the Force to a shady rundown apartment building. He felt no danger lurking inside, so Anakin carefully made his way in. He followed the pull up several flights of stairs to a door. A simple flick of the Force unlocked the door and Anakin was inside. The apartment was filthy, but mostly empty. In the main room Anakin found a large bed with someone sleeping in it.

\text{Father.}

This was the person talking to Anakin in the Force. Anakin approached very carefully. His hand was right above his lightsaber. Then he paused as he made out the blonde hair on the pillow. He edged closer to the bed. With a small wave of his hand, he used the Force to pull down the covers. It was the boy! The mystery boy. He laid on his side. His face was plastered with sweat. He was shirtless, but his left side was covered in wrappings but blood was staining through. Cuts and bruises covered the kid.

\text{Father, the kid called out again through the Force.}
Anakin was on his comm unit at once with the Jedi Temple telling them he had found the kid. Anakin stretched out his senses with the Force, but still didn't feel the icy coldness of the Dark Side nearby. Granted the Sith could always been shielding himself. Anakin looked back down at the kid. Why did he keep calling out for his father? Was the Sith . . . the Sith his father? Surely not. Sith didn't love . . . and yet Anakin recalled the security holo of the roof. How the Sith had gently caressed the kid's cheek. Was it possible this kid was the Sith's child? And if that was the case, why hadn't he fallen to the dark side?

Vader watched from several rooftops over as Luke was loaded onto a Jedi shuttle inside a medical capsule. Vader was tempted to go down there and retrieve his son. It wouldn't take much. A powerful pull to the shuttle's engines would disable them. He could easily take down whatever Jedi and clone troopers they had down there. But . . .

Luke needed medical attention. A dip in a bacta tank preferably. Vader did not have access to any of that, and the Jedi did. The Jedi would see that Luke was healed. Vader was just going to have to . . . trust Luke to the Jedi for now. Plus Vader needed to get himself more secure in this time. He had no money. No resources. Vader knew Luke would return to him, regardless of the boy's foolish longing to know Vader's past self. The only way for Luke to return to his proper time was with Vader.

Vader already knew all the weaknesses of the Order. He knew exactly how to manipulate them to freely handing Luke over if need be. The only thing that worried Vader was Sidious. Hopefully Vader's wayward reckless child would be wise enough to avoid the future Emperor. But that didn't mean Sidious was going to avoid Luke. Vader needed to act quickly.

Chapter End Notes

I got fan art (!?) of this piece by Cole Roz at tumblr.

This has been turned into a longer fic. Find it here.
Amnesia

Chapter Summary

Bounty hunters find Luke after he crashed his X-Wing. They call to collect on his bounty.

Talking had never accomplished Darth Vader anything. He asked to save his mother. He asked his padawan to stay. He had asked his wife to wait for him and later to rule the galaxy with him. His words had accomplished nothing. He had lost it all instead. He had lost his mother, padawan, and wife.

What got Vader results was action. Violence finally brought Vader the respect he deserved. It was his actions that made him feared throughout the galaxy. It was through violence he solved his problems. The fear and hatred this violence created only gave him more power through the Dark Side.

This was why Vader turned to violence against his son at Bespin. Vader wanted his son to join him, but the only way he knew how to achieve that was through violence. So he fought his son. Cut off his son’s hand. When he finally used words to try and convince his son, the son denied his father. Again words had failed Vader as he watched his son let go and fall.

Yet his son hadn’t died. He had somehow survived Bespin and got away on that insufferable freighter. Violence had gotten him nowhere with the boy. Neither had words . . . but perhaps . . . The boy was too much like his mother. Kind hearted, and a person of words. His wife had been a great woman of words as a senator. Perhaps Vader should try words again.

It appeared Vader would have his chance. He sat in the command cabin of the shuttle as it made its way down to the surface of some poor planet of the Outer Rim. A group of bounty hunters had claimed they captured Skywalker and wanted to cash in on the boy’s large bounty. Of course Vader received multiple claims on the bounty and had requested a DNA sample. Blood did not lie. Not only was the midichlorian count too high, but also Vader’s own blood was a parental match.

The boy had successfully invaded capture or escaped from Vader for years now. How the bounty hunter scum had come to capture the boy, Vader did not know. Regardless, Vader was not one to pass up an opportunity. Perhaps it was the will of Force. The son was destined to be with his father after all.

As the shuttle continued its way to the planet, Vader reached out to the Force. He quickly found the strong bright burning light that was his son. The boy wasn’t even shielding himself. Vader gently reached out and prodded the boy’s presence. It flickered, but didn’t shrink away or flinch. Again Vader touched the presence. There was a sense of curiosity, a question, not fear or hate. Vader pulled back into himself. What had changed Luke?

He landed his shuttle landing at a medical facility. The small party of bounty hunters led him to a doctor. The Twi’lek woman held her own against Vader. She didn’t cower or shrink in fear. A trait Vader enjoyed seeing. The doctor motioned for Vader to walk with her. The bounty hunters stayed behind.
“The patient was found in wrecked X-Wing fighter in a field. The bounty hunters found him and brought him here. He suffered a severe brain injury along with a broken rib and some bruises and scratches. We also noted a prosthetic hand. Looks to be a recent addition. The skin around the prosthetic is still healing,” the doctor explained as she led the Sith down the hall.

She came to a door and stopped. Vader could sense Luke was on the other side. He was so close. “Most important,” the doctor said looking up into the black mask, “he has dissociative amnesia.”

“Which is what doctor?” Vader asked growing a bit impatient.

“The patient has not only forgotten his past but also his identity. He can’t recall who he is. We’ve shown him holos of his bounty, and he was unable to recognize himself. While suffering a severe brain injury can cause amnesia, usually dissociative amnesia is caused by a traumatic event the patient is unable to cope with properly.”

Vader was quiet and still, at least as quiet as his breathing allowed him to be. Finally he spoke, “He cannot recall anything?”

“No sir. He doesn’t know his name. How he got here. I asked him what he knew about the Rebellion and the Empire, but again he was clueless.”

That would explain why the boy wasn’t shielding himself. Why he didn’t shy away from Vader’s prodding in the Force. The boy simply didn’t know who Vader was. Had Vader gotten so lucky? That his prize be handed to him in such a condition? There was nothing else for the boy to fall back on. He would have nowhere else to go, but where his father led him. Darth Vader smiled under his mask.

“Will his memories return?” Vader asked.

“They usually do. Though how and when is unknown. It could all come back suddenly or slowly over time,” the doctor said with a shrug of her shoulders. “Generally it should happen within a few a days. He is still showing signs of a brain injury. He is uncoordinated when he stands and easily gets dizzy and confused.”

“Very good doctor. I will see the patient. Alone,” Vader rumbled. He pushed the door panel and the door slid open. Laying on a medical bed was his son, Luke Skywalker. He looked as he did on Bespin. His blond hair disheveled. Wide blue eyes staring at the Sith. Healing cuts and bruises littered the boy’s face and exposed arms.

“Luke,” Vader said softly as he could.

“Who are you?” Luke asked. There was no lie in his voice. The boy clearly did not know.

“You do not know who I am?” Vader asked.


“It is,” Vader confirmed. He walked over to Luke. The boy didn’t shy away. He just followed Vader with his gaze. Vader grabbed the boy’s arm, raising the prosthetic hand up. Vader twisted the arm to examine the prosthetic. The Rebels had fitted the boy with a decent model. “Do you not know how you lost your hand?”


Vader opened himself up to the Force and reached out to his son’s mind. His son’s mind was easily
accessed. There was no fight, no shields. The boy was an open book, but the book was empty. There
was an obvious sign of confusion and pain leftover from the crash. Vader pulled himself out of the
boy’s mind.

Vader dropped the boy’s hand and moved closer. A gloved hand reached out and gently pushed a
strand of hair from the boy’s face. The boy only slightly backed away from the hand, but let Vader
touch him. Vader couldn’t stop the sense of victory growing inside of him. He had the boy, his son.
Not only that but the boy knew nothing. He had no allegiance to the pathetic Rebels. No hatred of
the Empire. No disgust of his father. He was a blank slate.

He was perfect.

“You will come with me,” Vader announced. He turned and left the room. The doctor still waited
outside. The bounty hunters had joined her. “I will be taking the boy,” he announced.

“Hey what about our payment?” one bounty hunter asked.

“Yeah that kid’s got a fortune on his head,” another joined in.

“You will get your payment, bounty hunters,” Vader growled at them. He brought out his com and
ordered the captain of the squad of stormtroopers that had accompanied him to the planet into the
building. When the troopers arrived, Vader ordered, “Take the boy in a holochair to the command
cabin of my shuttle. Let nothing happen to him. Do not let him escape. You are allowed to stun him
if need be.”

The trooper saluted and entered the room. Shortly Luke was pushed out of the room in a holochair.
His hands were bound by binders. The troopers were clearly taking no risks in angering their
commander and letting the boy escape. Luke looked around wildly in confusion and fear.

*Calm down, young one,* Vader said through the Force. Vader had established their bond earlier
when he dug into the boy’s mind. Luke’s eyes snapped to Vader. His mouth was agape. The shock
of hearing a voice inside his head was clear. *You are safe,* Vader said again sending warm and
soothing waves to the boy.

Vader watched as the troopers pushed the boy down the hall. The bounty hunters shifted
uncomfortably until one of them finally spoke up. “Payment, Lord Vader?”

“Of course,” Vader said as turned away from his son. He looked at the hunters and the doctor. It
took only a second for him to summon his lightsaber and to ignite it. Their screams died on their lips
as they were cut down. The lot fell to the ground sliced in half. The fact that Skywalker had been
captured could not reach the Emperor. Even more important, Sidious could not discover Luke’s
mental state.

Vader turned his saber off and reattached it to his belt. He stormed out of the medical clinic back to
his shuttle and son. He turned to a waiting trooper at the bottom of the loading ramp. “Destroy this
facility,” he ordered. “Kill everyone inside. Track down any and all transmission they made about
Skywalker. Kill and destroy anyone who knew of him being here.” The trooper acknowledged the
order and set out to carry it out.

Vader walked inside the shuttle and ordered it to return back to the *Executor,* which was waiting in
orbit. He entered the command cabin and was met with a wave of annoyance and confusion from

“What’s going on?” he demanded. He held up his bound hands. With a wave of his hand, Vader
unlatched the binders with the Force. The binders fell open on the boy’s lap. Luke rubbed his wrists where the binders had dug into his skin.

“You are safe,” Vader explained. “Those were a mere precaution.”

“For what?” Luke snapped back. The boy would need to learn some discipline and respect, but that would come soon enough. Words, Vader reminded himself. He needed to use words. “Who are you? What do I call you?”


“What do you look like under that mask? Why do you wear it?”

Perhaps it was natural. The boy was trying to see how the two were related. He was trying to make sense out of his world he remembered nothing of.

“I wear it to breath,” Vader explained. “This is a life support suit. I cannot take it off unless I’m in a control environment.”

“Oh,” Luke said. A small silence stretched between them, but then the boy’s curiosity got the better of him. “What is your name? Those men in the white armor don’t call you father.”

“Darth Vader,” Vader replied. He paused as he watched for Luke’s reaction. Perhaps hearing the name would cause some of the memories to return, but nothing.


“Yes that is the proper way to address me,” Vader explained.

“Where are we going? What’s going to happen?” Luke said a bit quietly. He glanced down at his lap at the open binders.

“I am taking you to my ship. You will be examined by the best medical team. It will be determined how bad your brain injury is.”

“Will I get my memories back? The doctor said I might get it back in a few days,” Luke said hopefully.

“We shall see, my son,” Vader explained. “When you are healed we shall start your training. You have a lot to learn.”

“Training?”

“In the ways of the Force.”

“The Force?”

Vader sighed. “In due time, Luke, you will understand it all.”

Vader’s com beeped. The pilot announced they had landed on the super star destroyer. Two stormtroopers entered the command cabin and escorted Luke in the holochair out with Vader right behind. They brought the boy to the med bay. A team was already waiting to admit Luke per
Vader’s orders. Luke was taken away and put through a variety of tests. Vader stayed and carefully watched it all. He wasn’t quite willing to let the boy out of his sight yet.

“We’ve got the preliminary results, my lord,” the head doctor said as he approached the Sith.

“You findings?” Vader inquired.

“He did indeed suffer a brain injury causing amnesia. The amnesia should clear itself away in a few days time,” the doctor explained.

“And what if I do not want the memories to return?” Vader asked. The doctor looked a bit surprised. “I do not want his memories to return, doctor. Find a way to prevent it. If you cannot, I will find another who can.” With a wave of his hand he dismissed the flabbergasted doctor.

Yes, the boy was with his father as it should have been all along. Now nothing was holding the boy back. No misguided notions of a dead order or the lies of a dead betrayer. Vader would train his son. Together they would take down the Emperor and claim the galaxy. Together they would rule. To achieve this would require violent action, the type Vader was used to. But to get that point, first there would be words. Calm and soothing words for a confused child and a wanting father.
Chapter Summary

A Vampire AU that nobody asked for and yet here we are.
Fourteen year old Luke is a Sith (a vampire), though he doesn't want to be one. He's always been told by his father, Darth Vader, he was born a Sith. Then he meets a princess who tells him that not how Sith usually come about.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Luke’s favorite spot in the castle was the observatory. It was located at the top of one of the many towers. A large telescope was pointed at the sky. However, since the sky was always dark and overcast, Luke had never been able to see the stars through it. But the room was still beautiful. The floor was made of a swirling blue marble with silver lines that created a star map. The teenager loved to sit and trace the lines of the constellations.

The fourteen year old sat with his knees to his chests. He wore all black clothes, which made him easily blend in with the black stones of the castle. He brushed a piece of blonde hair from his face when a sudden sharp wind blew through the open room. The screeches of dragons could be heard in the distance.


Luke huffed, ignoring his father’s call. He uncurled himself from the floor. The room had no windows or closed walls. Just open archways to the sky. Luke approached the railing and looked across Star Destroyer Castle. It was a massive complex built on top of a low craggy mountain. It got its name from the many sharp point spires and towers. As if the castle would destroy the stars.

Loud screeches filled the air as a flock of TIE dragons whipped through the spires. Luke turned his attention past the wall of the castle into the sharp rocky mountains. Eventually he spotted the huge lumbering form of an AT-AT, a massive shelled monster with two pinchers set on either side of its face. The creatures were huge but slow, yet what made them fearsome was the acid they could shoot.

Everywhere around the castle were the creatures of the dark side. Twisted and monstrous. The lands around the castle had been burned and twisted by the dark magics. The stones of the castle had turned black long ago. There were still places, like the observatory, that gave a hint of what the castle had been like before. Before the rise of the Dark Empire.

*Luke*. This time the voice was harder. Sterner.

With a sigh Luke pushed off the railing and made for the spiraling stairway. He could only ignore his father for so long. He made his way through the castle silently. He knew this part of the castle very well. Luke saw nothing else moving through the empty, quiet, and dark halls.

He found his father in a large sitting room with large floor-to-ceiling windows that were draped in heavy purple curtains. The curtains were pulled aside. Gray light filtered in from the overcast skies. Lord Vader stood in front of the window. He was massive and tall. He was still in his armor and
mask. His breathing was loud and harsh. Luke silently walked into the room and kneeled on one knee next to his father.

Silence stretched between them. Luke felt the cold icy tendrils of the Force reach out from his father and wrap around Luke. When he had first come here seven years ago, Luke had no clue what his father was doing. The icy invisible tendrils had scared him and caused him to tremble. Now Luke knew his father was simply checking on him. Making sure the boy was fine.

There was a nudge in the Force, and Luke rose from his feet. His father had turned to look at his son. He held out his arm, and Luke slowly walked forward. He knew what was expected of him. Defying Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, was not a wise course of action. Luke knew from a multitude of experience. He didn’t want to be here. He didn’t want to be a Sith. When he was brought here as a seven year old boy, he had fought as much as he could. He had tried to escape. Defied and disobeyed Vader over and over again. But each time Vader would win. He would get what he wanted out of Luke one way or another.

Luke walked up to Vader’s outstretched arm and grabbed the black magic-enhanced metal of the armor. His fingers knew the way to the hidden straps that would loosen the braces. Slowly Luke helped his father out from his famous black armor. Luke gently placed each piece on a nearby table. He folded up his father’s thick black cloak. Lastly Luke waited as his father took off the black helmet and the black skull mask. Luke placed both on the table and then returned to his father side.

Vader reattached his saber hilt to his belt, but then he looked over at his fourteen year old son with burning yellow eyes of a Sith. Very few people laid eyes on Darth Vader without his infamous armor on. He wore all black clothing including black leather gloves and boots. His long wavy dark blonde hair was brushed back into a loose ponytail. A scar ran on the right side of his face which cut close to his eye. Another scar ran across his left cheek.

“When was the last time you ate?” Vader asked. His voice was always deep, dark, and demanding.


They entered a large hall. Five stormtroopers waited at the far end. Three humans stood in front of the troopers. They were pushed to their knees as Lord Vader entered. The troopers saluted as Vader neared. The stormtroopers were dressed in their fearsome bone amour and white skull masks. The bones came from the dreaded dark side beasts like the AT-AT and the TIE dragons.

“Dismissed,” Vader said and the five troopers promptly left leaving the three kneeling humans.

Vader wasted no time. He marched over to the human on the right. It was a middle aged man with long brown hair. Vader grabbed the hair and sharply pulled the man’s head. The human’s neck was fully displayed. Vader looked up at Luke.

“Eat,” Vader ordered.

Luke closed his eyes as he took a deep steadying breath. He hated this. He hated this. He hated this. But it was too late for Luke. He had lost his humanity seven years ago when his father had found him. He opened his yellow eyes and slowly walked forward. He could feel his fangs growing longer. He became acutely aware of the blood flowing through the human. He could hear the human’s
heartbeat. Smell the human’s blood.

He stepped up to the man and placed one hand on the man’s chin and the other on the shoulder. He leaned in and stabbed his fangs into the man’s neck. Instantly sweet blood rushed into Luke’s mouth. He drank and drank and drank. Force, he was hungry. He hated to admit it, because he hated having to drink blood to live.

When Vader wasn’t there to supervise Luke’s meals, Luke was a lot better at self control. He would only drink enough to sate his hunger. The human would still be alive in the end. But it meant Luke quickly got hungry again. When Vader was watching, he would not allow Luke to eat so little, so Luke didn’t hold back. He drank the human dry.

Luke stepped back. The human’s skin had turned pale and white and now looked sunken in. Vader let go of the man’s hair. The man crashed to the floor dead. Luke could sense his father’s satisfaction in him. Vader moved to the second human. A female with curly hair. Again Vader grabbed the woman’s hair to display her throat.

“Eat,” Vader ordered again. Luke opened his mouth to argue. He was going to say he was full, but he knew it was lie. Vader knew that as well. There was no point in lying. No point in arguing. This woman’s fate was already decided. Luke would drink her blood, willingly or not. Vader would see to it personally.

So again Luke drank the blood. He didn’t drink her dry. He became full and stepped away. He could sense his father’s icy tendrils of the dark side examining Luke. Satisfied, they withdrew. Vader open his mouth, his fangs long and sharp. He pulled the woman off the floor by her hair. Vader viciously bit into the woman. Luke resisted flinching at the crunching sound of Vader snapping some of the neck bones.

Vader quickly finished the woman and threw her to the ground. He took two large steps to the last human and pulled the man up. He bit into the man’s neck without hesitation. Vader finished his meal quickly and again threw the human to the ground without a care. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve as he walked over to his son.

“Luke,” he said. “You must let go of whatever shreds of your humanity you still think you have. Fully open yourself up to the Dark Side. It will get better. Easier. It doesn’t have to always be a fight.”

“I don’t want to be a Sith,” Luke said softly. He was staring down at the ground. He heard his father sighing. They were words Luke had said to his father when the two had met seven years ago. A gloved hand came under Luke’s chin and gently brought his head up. Luke’s yellow eyes met his father’s yellow eyes.


“There are guests here at the castle,” Vader said. Luke snapped his head up at his father.


He wasn’t sure what his father meant by guests. His father didn’t have guests. People didn’t come to this castle as guests. At least not to this part of it. The west portion of the castle was completely dedicated to his father’s job as Supreme Commander of the Dark Empire’s Military. Guests came to
that part of the castle. Generals, admirals, soldiers.

But Luke was not allowed in the west part of the castle and no one was allowed in the east part. It was just Luke, Vader, the few servants, and the guards in the east part. The guards didn’t just keep unwanted visitors out, but also kept Luke in. Vader granted the guards to use whatever force was necessary to keep Luke from leaving.

“Yes, guests. They will be quartered in the Lakeview Wing,” Vader explained.

It was a self-contained wing. It had its own set of rooms and a small kitchen. It was the most south-eastern portion of the castle. It sat right at the edge of a small lake. Luke assumed it must have looked nice before the taint of the dark side turned the waters inky and black.

“You are not to go near that wing. You are not to interact with these guests,” Vader paused and he turned to face his son. “Am I clear?”


Luke wasn’t sure what or who his father’s guests would be, but he had not expected the teenage girl staring at Luke. She was about the same height as Luke. She wore a white dress with flowing sleeves. Her brown hair was braided into a bun. Her hands were on her hips as her brown eyes bore down on Luke.

Luke had obeyed his father’s order for a week. He hadn’t approached the Lakeview Wing, but he had gotten a good look at it. Warm lights shone from the windows at night. Shadows were seen moving through the rooms. If Luke got closer he could smell things. Mostly food. The warm flakey smell of bread, of stew, or frying meat. Smells Luke hadn’t smelled in seven years.

A week after the guests had arrived, Lord Vader left for Imperial Center, the capital of the Dark Empire. He flew on his personal TIE dragon, which was much larger and faster than all the rest. Vader’s departure meant he would be gone for a few days. Luke couldn’t contain his curiosity any more. Sneaking into the wing did give Luke pause, but in the end his curiosity won out. He hadn’t planned on actually meeting any of the guests, lest they report back to his father.

Luke had found himself in a sitting room. Some of the furniture had white sheets covering it, protecting it from the dust. Some of it was exposed. Layers of dust and spiderwebs covered much of the furniture. The paint was peeling in a few places on the walls. Holes were seen in the fabrics of the curtains and cushions. Luke had been distracted by a tarnished painting on the wall of a beautiful woman. He hair was done up in an elaborate style and she wore white makeup covering her whole face. As he had moved to get a closer look, he had knocked over a small table. Now he was crouched on the floor with this girl glaring at him.

“Who are you?” she asked.


“I am Princess Leia Organa of Alderaan,” she said. There was a strong sense of confidence in her words and a bit of arrogance.
It was weird to have someone talking to him like this. The only person Luke had talked to in years had been his father. While the servants may have talked to him, they didn’t hold conversations. They only said what was necessary. Leia was looking Luke over. He wore all black clothing. A long sleeve shirt with a button-up collar, long pants, and soft leather boots.

“Your eyes!” she said. Luke at once glanced down at the floor as he felt himself blush. “You’re . . . you’re a Sith!”

Luke meekly looked up at her. He knew his yellow eyes gave him away, and she had already seen them. Again she seemed to assessing him. She frowned and crossed her arms.

“You don’t look much like a Sith to me,” she said unimpressed.

“Sorry,” Luke grumbled at her. “Not like I asked to be one.”

“Of course you did,” she responded. “How else did you become a Sith?”

“I was born a Sith,” Luke explained. Leia paused. She tilted her head.

“You can’t be a Sith,” she said. “That’s impossible.”

“Well it’s not,” Luke said defensively. “My father is a Sith, and so I’m a Sith.”

Leia took a step closer and leaned in towards Luke. “Is your father Darth Vader?” There was a clear note of interest in her voice. She was fascinated. Shouldn’t she be scared? Disgusted? Luke opened his mouth to answer, but then shut it. “He is, isn’t he?” Leia prodded when Luke didn’t respond. “So is that the lie he told you? That you were born a Sith?”


Leia straightened up and gave Luke a look of pity. Luke hated it. His canine teeth ached. They wanted to grow into fangs. His anger was growing. He couldn’t lose himself here.

“I never thought Lord Vader would take on some kid as his apprentice,” Leia said. “Surely there were better options.”

“I’m his son, not his apprentice,” Luke said in a dark voice. Or at least as dark as he could make it, which clearly did not intimidate this girl.

“I’ve never heard of such a thing,” Leia continued unphased. “I’ve never heard of a Sith so young as you either. Were you even aware of what you were doing when you pledged yourself?”


“When you took your oath to the darkness?” she said. “That’s how one usually becomes a Sith. You have to choose to be a Sith. Choose to fall to the Dark Side, and then you pledge yourself to it. You just aren’t born into it.”

“I . . .” Luke stuttered. He had never heard about this before. He had to pledge himself to the Dark Side? Hadn’t his father always just said to simply accept the Dark Side? It was already apart of Luke. “I’ve never made any pledge,” he finally said. That was the truth. He was sure he would recall that, for he was sure he wouldn’t pledge himself.

“Really?” Leia asked. “So how are you a Sith? Is there another way to be a Sith?”
“I told you,” he said getting annoyed. “I was born one.”

“Interesting,” Leia said. “So you’ve always been like this? Since you were a baby? Yellow eyes? Drinking blood? You do drink blood right?”


“No?”

Luke sighed. He was getting a headache. He should leave before the guards found him. That would be a true headache. They were not kind whenever they found Luke someplace he wasn’t supposed to be. Neither would his father’s punishment when he found out Luke had disobeyed him.

“No,” Luke barked back her. “No I was not always like this.”

“So you did decide to become a Sith,” Leia said.

“No!” Luke shouted. “I never wanted to be a Sith! But I had no choice! My father is Darth Vader, a Sith! I was born a Sith too!”

“But you said you weren’t always like this?” she pushed. “I’m just trying to make sense of it. How could you say you were born a Sith and at the same time say you weren’t always like a Sith? It makes no sense.”

Luke dug his hands in his blonde hair. “I don’t have to explain myself to you! You don’t understand anything!” Luke marched passed her towards the open door. It was time to leave. Time to sneak back out of this part of the castle and back into his part. Away from her. Yet Leia grabbed his sleeve.

“No! Wait! Please!”

Luke turned to look back at her. Her brown eyes were big and round and pleading.

“I’m sorry,” she said a bit uncomfortably. It felt unnatural, as if she wasn’t used to having to apologize. “I . . .” She let go of Luke’s sleeve and looked at the ground. “They also said I was born a Sith.”

Luke took a small step back. What? How? She didn’t look up at him. She simply turned and made her way through the room leaving a trail of footprints in the dust on the floor. She stopped and looked out the window.

“It’s why I know so much about how one becomes a Sith,” Leia explained. “I was told three years ago by my parents that . . . that . . . one day I might become a Sith. They just don’t know.”


“I was adopted,” Leia explained. “I don’t know who my birth parents are, but I know that my birth father was a Sith. When I was adopted they thought I was normal. It’s never been heard of before, you know? To be born a Sith. You have to choose to be one. Usually when you’re older. Yet the sun always hurt my skin. Holy water burned me . . .”

Luke’s heart plunged into his chest. He knew this all too well. The memories of his childhood before . . . before his father had found him were bubbling up to the surface. He knew what it was like. He knew the burning sensation direct sunlight caused to his skin. How holy water caused him to scream.
and writhe in pain. How he could see in the dark much better than everyone else.

“I had a Jedi teacher,” Leia continued. “My parents thought if I was raised up in the Light Side, the Dark Side could be chased away . . .”

“Is that why you’re here?” Luke asked softly. “To become a Sith?”

“No,” Leia sighed. “Lord Vader doesn’t know anything. My parents were very adamant I not let him know anything about my birth parents.” She paused as she looked over at him. Her brown eyes seeking his yellow ones. “You won’t tell him?”

“No,” Luke said. Or at least he wouldn’t outright tell his father. If his father directly asked him . . . well there was no point in lying to Darth Vader. But he didn’t need to let Leia know that.

“I was sent here as a political hostage,” Leia grumbled. “The Emperor thought my father was getting too out-of-line. He had too strong of anti-Imperial ideals. So the Emperor said I would stay here to remind my father of his proper place in the Empire.”

Luke didn’t know how to respond that. Though he did see why his father allowed guests in his castle if it wasn’t even his father’s choice, but the Emperor’s.

“So how did you change?” Leia asked. “How did you become a Sith like you are now? I assume you were like me once.”

“Are you sure you want to hear this?” Luke asked as he started walking through the room towards her. “It’s not a . . . It’s not a happy story.” He stopped as he stood besides her. She gently grabbed the wrist of his hand. She felt warm. Human. He could sense the blood rushing through her.

“I’m sure,” she said. There was no hesitation in her words or eyes. She looked at Luke with hard determined eyes.

Luke was seven years old. He was small for his age, something the other initiates liked to point out. It wasn’t the only thing he was teased about. Luke was different. The Jedi masters treated him differently. There were certain things Luke wasn’t allowed to do. Certain things only he was allowed to do. The other initiates and even the padawans didn’t like this.

Luke sighed as he pulled at his light tan tunic. Even now he was being treated differently. He walked up to the window and looked outside. A few of the Jedi masters and knights had taken the rest of the younglings out. Luke couldn’t see them from his window. All he saw were the golden dunes of the Western Dune Sea of the Tatooine Desert. It stretched endlessly into the horizon. The Jedi Temple Luke lived in was built into the side of a cliff wall, right at the edge of the Jundland Wastes.

Luckily the tall cliff wall provided plenty of shade and shadow, which Luke was thankful for. He didn’t like the sun. The sun, which was so strong in the desert, hurt him. The other younglings liked to tease him about it. They would stick their hands in a direct beam of sunlight coming in through a window carved from the stone of the building. They would start to pretend their arm hurt them. The others would all laugh.

The Jedi said Luke was just allergic to the sun. It was natural. He wasn’t the only one to have such allergies, though it was quite rare. As such Luke wasn’t brought on any lessons or trainings that took
place outside during the day. There were a few lessons that took place in the shadowed depths of the canyons of the Jundland Wastes or at night. Luke loved those lessons. He loved the night. A few times Luke had crawled through a window and out into the cold sands. The cold never bothered him. He would sit against the wall of the temple and stare at the stars. They stretched endlessly and brightly in the desert sky.

Since Luke couldn’t attend today’s lesson, he was given barn duty. The barn was carved into the cliff wall like the temple was. They were connected via a carved out tunnel, which meant Luke didn’t have to be in the sunlight. Large windows were carved into the stone, letting the light come in though luckily no direct light. The sun was now behind the cliff putting the temple in shadow.

Large stalls made of wood lined the left side of the barn. Each stall had a door carved out of the stone and a wooden door. Work benches and tables lined the right side along with hooks and shelves filled with harnesses and saddles.

Luke set about cleaning up the old dirty hay from the stalls and putting out fresh hay. Luke liked the barn. It was probably his favorite place, especially at times like this. The Jedi masters and knights were all busy and Luke was left alone with the animals.

The barn was filled with many animals. There were two large banthas, one dewback, and a mated pair of jerbas with their calf. The barn also had three eopies, but they were kept in the back and separate from everything else as they didn’t get along with any of the other creatures. The barn also had a small hutch of raivor lizards which the Jedi raised for meat and hides.

Though Luke’s favorite animal were the chickens. They weren’t native to the Tatooine deserts. The Jedi masters said they came from a country called Takodana. A place filled with lakes of water and green forests. Luke loved the chickens. They were much kinder than than the raivor lizards. Plus they had soft feathers. The chickens had come to like Luke, at least that’s what Luke thought. He could pick up a few and hold them for a small while.

Luke found himself in the chicken pen after he had finished cleaning out the hay. He had just collected the eggs from the nests. He gently carried the basket of eggs out of the pen and placed it on a bench in the barn. Next he would feed the chickens, but something caught his eye. He turned and saw a tall dark form standing on the other end of the barn. Shadows clung to it. There was a harsh breathing sound, which Luke only noticed now, coming from the figure.

Luke took a small step back. Fear had instantly washed over him upon seeing this darkness. Again Luke stepped away from this darkness. The animals had gotten quiet. The barn was oddly silent. There wasn’t even the clucking from the chickens. The darkened form stepped forward. Luke glanced wildly from side to side. How could he get away? The way back to the temple via the tunnel was behind the shadowed figured. There were the stall doors that lead outside . . . into the sun. Luke glanced uneasily at the doors. He would have to act soon. The form was quickly approaching Luke.

“Don’t,” came a dark deep voice. There was a sense of power in those words. It seemed to reverberate inside of Luke. In his bones. “You can not run from me, boy.”

The shadows seemed to give way as the creature came closer. Luke noticed it was a man. A tall towering man dressed in black armor. He wore a black skull mask under a black helmet. Luke noticed the saber sword attached to the man’s waist. It looked just like the Jedi sabers, but this man was no Jedi. Luke recognized the bone mask. All the initiates had seen the drawings. The Jedi Masters often preached about these creatures. The Sith. The dark lords of the Dark Side of the Force, the opposite of the Light Side which the Jedi served.

Luke took another step back, but he stumbled and fell. He should get up. He should move. Run. Go
get the masters or a knight. Go get anyone. The Sith now stood only a few paces away. His terrible breathing filled the barn. It was the only sound Luke could hear except for his beating heart. A coldness had crept into the barn, and Luke shivered slightly.

The Sith’s hand raised up and slowly took off his black helmet and then his black skull mask. Luke was surprised to see a very normal looking man underneath. He had long curled dark blond hair. There was a scar above his right eye and another scar across his left cheek. But he wasn’t a normal man. Luke knew from the golden yellow eyes. The eyes of a blood-drinking Sith.


An odd tense silence filled the air. Luke felt frozen. His body felt like it was under pressure, as if at a moment’s notice his body would jump up and spring forward. The Sith edged a bit closer, and Luke let a small whine of fear.


“You’re—you’re a Sith!” Luke finally said.

“Yes,” the Sith replied with a laugh. He seemed amused. “As you are too, little one.”

“No-no!” Luke croaked. “I’m a Jedi!”

“You are anything but a Jedi,” the Sith said harshly. “You are my son.”

“No. No. That’s not true! That’s impossible!” Luke cried. It wasn’t true. It couldn’t be true. Luke was an orphan adopted by the Temple. He was going to be a Jedi.

“Search your feelings, young one. You know what I say is true.”

Luke scooted further away from the man. He bumped into one of the work tables in the barn. Several items clattered on the table and rolled off to the floor. Luke eyed the training saber swords that had fallen to the floor. They had been brought into the barn to be cleaned. Luke desperately reached out and grabbed one. He pulled the sheath from the sword. The white metal blade started to glow blue.

“Put down that saber, child,” the Sith growled.

Luke unsteadily got to his feet. He was trembling. He was scared, but he had to do this. The Sith were bad! Luke held the blade out in front of him and pointed it at the Sith. The Sith just looked annoyed. He slowly stood to his full towering height. He looked down at Luke and then pulled free his saber hilt from his belt. There was no sheath nor blade, yet suddenly a sword made of red light erupted from the hilt.

This man was a true master. A true Sith lord. Only Jedi masters could produce a true lightsaber blade. Luke’s training sword had been dipped in holy water. When channeling the Force into the sword it made it glow, but as one mastered the Force eventually the water and the even the metal blade were no longer necessary.
“Do you really wish to duel me, young one?” the Sith asked. The glow of his red blade was much stronger than the dull light of Luke’s blue sword. The barn was casted in the eerie red light. Luke didn’t drop his sword or his stance. He just stared at the Sith. “You truly are my child,” the Sith said with a smile.

In an instant it was all over. The fight had never even started. Luke was slammed to the ground. The air pushed out of him. He stared wide eyed at the stone ceiling of the barn. His mind swam in dizzying circles. He blinked a few times clearing the spots from his eyes. Luke laid on the ground flat on his back. The Sith crouched over him. A heavy knee was pressed against Luke’s stomach. Luke’s training blade was stretched across his chest. A large and heavy hand grasped Luke’s hand that held the sword handle. The Sith’s red sword was gone.


“Why do you fear this blade?” the Sith asked in a calm tone. He pushed the blade down some more. Luke could feel the metal sitting right on the cloth of his tunic. Luke whimpered as again he tried to wiggle away, but this time his thrashing was much more subdued. Much more careful. “A Jedi shouldn’t fear this blade, a mere training sword. It has only been coated in Holy Water, which causes no harm . . . except to those of the Dark Side. Luke, you are my son. You were born a Sith.”

“I don’t want to be a Sith,” Luke cried.

“You cannot fight this,” the Sith replied softly. “It is your destiny.”

“No! I’m not a Sith! I’m a Jedi!”

“Then this won’t hurt,” the Sith said as he pushed the blade of the sword against Luke.

The top part of the blade touched Luke’s collarbone and lower neck. At once a scream tore out of Luke as pain tore into the boy like lightning. Then the pressure was gone. The blade was gone. Luke heard it clatter to the ground as the Sith threw it to the side. The Sith slipped his armored arms under Luke and carefully picked the boy. He gently cradled the boy in his arms and to his chest. Tears had formed into Luke’s eyes as he still fought back the burning sting of where the blade had touched his skin.

“Luke,” the Sith said softly. “My little Luke. As you see you are a Sith. You were born one. The Jedi have lied to you.”


“It’s time to accept your destiny,” the Sith said. Through Luke’s tear-stained version he saw the Sith open his mouth. His saw the fangs grow longer and pointed.

“No. No. No,” Luke pleaded. His voice was weak and hoarse.

The Sith tightened his hold on the little boy. The Sith leaned over, his mouth open wide. Luke felt the two sharp fangs against his neck. For a brief second Luke thought perhaps this man, this Sith, this person who claimed to be Luke’s father, wouldn’t bite him. But then the fangs pushed into him slowly. It hurt, but not as bad as the sword had moments ago. Luke could feel the warmth of blood trickling down his neck.
Then he felt the cold grow from fangs in his neck. The cold grew colder and colder until it started to hurt. It started to burn. A cold burning that tore through Luke’s veins. He started to scream. His whole body writhed in pain, but the Sith kept his tight grip on the boy. Luke thrashed and pushed at the Sith. The pain was all over his body. Each nerve was screaming. His body started to slow down as he grew sluggish. His eyes grew heavy. His screaming stopped as his breaths grew long and deep. Slowly his eyes shut, and Luke fell into the darkness.

Luke felt cold. Colder than he had ever felt before. He felt like stone. Heavy. Unmovable. Cold. He slowly opened his eyes, but even do that simple task was hard. It took a while for his eyes to even focus. When they did, he saw a high vaulted ceiling. It wasn’t the rough carved ceiling of the barn. He knew this ceiling. This was the ceiling of the sanctuary inside the temple. The most holy spot where the Jedi sat to meditate and connect with the Force.

Then a shadow fell over Luke. The blurry black shape slowly came into Focus. It was the Sith. He was wearing his black skull mask and helmet. He looked down at Luke for a short moment, before he dragged something into Luke’s view. The Sith was holding one of the Jedi master’s by the throat. The Jedi’s tan and brown robes were torn and tattered. A large bruise was on the master’s face.

Luke tried to move. Tried to open his mouth. Tried to do anything he could to communicate to the master, but he couldn’t. His body was too cold. Too heavy. But Luke did feel his eyes widen as he watched the Sith take a small sharp knife across the Jedi’s throat. At once bright red blood poured from the cut. The Sith pulled the Jedi over Luke so the blood poured in to Luke’s mouth.

Luke didn’t even realize he had opened his mouth. Didn’t know he could, but his mouth must have been open as he felt the blood going down his throat. It was warm. So warm. It felt good. He could feel the warm blood going into his stomach.

Wait.

He was drinking blood. No. No. No. He couldn’t drink blood. That was what Sith do. His body shuddered as he started to gag and couch. The master was pulled away from Luke. The blood stopped pouring into him. The Sith looked down at him. With his free hand, the Sith reached up and pulled off the jaw piece of his mask revealing his mouth. Then the Sith bit into the Jedi’s neck. The Sith didn’t feast for long on the already drained Jedi. He threw the corpse to the side.

The Sith disappeared and returned with another Jedi master, who like the one before looked worn and battered. Luke wondered if they had fought the Sith. He hoped they did. He hoped they didn’t go quietly. Again the Sith slashed the Jedi’s throat. Again the Jedi’s neck was placed above Luke’s throat so the blood would pour into his mouth.

Don’t fight it, Luke. A dark deep rich voice echoed inside Luke’s mind. Yet Luke tried. He tried so hard not to drink, but the blood was pouring into his mouth and down his throat. Again the Sith pulled the Jedi away. Again the Sith stabbed his own fangs into the Jedi and drank the rest of the blood.

Luke was thankful when the Sith didn’t disappear to go get another one of the Jedi. Instead the Sith carefully picked Luke up. It was over, Luke thought. He had fought it off. There would be no more blood. The boy was cradled against the cold black armor of the Sith. Luke started to relax. He could go to sleep. When he woke up this would all be over. But then he noticed the Sith leaning over with
long sharp fangs. Luke tried to wiggle away, but still his body was cold and heavy. The fangs pierced into him. The horrible searing pain tore through him again. Though this time Luke blacked out shortly after.

Leia had been quiet throughout the whole story. The two now stood side by side looking out the window. The view showed the black inky waters of the small lake that sat next to the castle. The castle itself could be seen towering up into the cloudy sky on the left side of the lake.

“I’m not sure how long it lasted,” Luke said. His voice was almost a whisper. “But it carried out the same. I would wake up. Father would slit the throat of a Jedi and force me to drink their blood. When all the masters had died, he moved on to the knights. Then to the padawans and lastly the other initiates. None of them survived. Each of them . . . each of them their blood is in me.”

Luke paused. His eyes were a bit unfocused. He wasn’t seeing the dreary landscape of Star Destroyer Castle, but the warm bright dunes and the Jedi Temple. He recalled the faces of the Jedi he had grown up with. The kind yet stern faces of the masters as they lectured. The faces of the knights as they laughed or scolded the younglings for skipping out on their duties. He even recalled the padawans and initiates. Then he saw each of their faces etched in horror as Vader had slit their throats open.

“I then slept for a very long time. When I woke up, I was here. And here I’ve been ever since over the last seven years,” Luke said.

Leia’s face looked paler. A slight look of horror played across her face. Luke didn’t blame her. He did warn her his story was not a good story.

“I understand what it’s like,” Luke said breaking the small silence that had fallen between them. “To be different. To be picked on, but . . . Leia . . . I would never wish this life on anyone. The life of a Sith. I never got to pick. Father always tells me I had no choice in the matter. I was born a Sith. It was my destiny. And . . . and I don’t know. You may become a Sith yet, but if you have a choice . . . it’s much better to be a human.”


“I need to go,” he said softly. Leia was quiet and still, too lost in her own thoughts. Too lost in the details of Luke’s story. He nodded goodbye and slipped back off in to the castle.

Chapter End Notes

Why were Luke and Leia born a Sith? The story never goes into it here, but Anakin became a Sith to save Padme. He thought if he could make her a Sith as well, he could save her from the visions he had of her dying. Padme was not pleased by this and did not want to become a Sith, but Anakin bit her anyway, injecting her with the Sith poison. That was when Obi-Wan attacked. The poison inside Padme infected the twins, thus they were born half-Sith/vampires.
Fan Art on my Tumblr.
The Podrace

Chapter Summary

Marvel’s Star Wars Comics Annual #4 AU. Luke goes to Hradreek to meet with an Alliance benefactor to pick up some funds. After securing the funds, he has a run with the local Imperial troops after he finds a mysterious red lightsaber. It appears his only way to escape the troops is by stealing one of the pod racers and running in a race. Meanwhile, Darth Vader is also on the planet hunting down two twin relic Sith lightsabers. Yet the Force pulls him towards watching the pod race.

“Pilots! Take your starting positions!” a voice came over a loudspeaker.

Luke Skywalker had been running away from a squad of stormtroopers. He was here on Hradreek to meet with an Alliance benefactor. The meetup had gone successful. The benefactor was running the betting pools of the many gamblers of the planet, especially those of the pod races. A percent of those bets went to the Alliance. The funds were placed on a cred stick, Luke and R2-D2 were on their back to their ship, when something called to Luke in the Force. There was something off. He felt a presence of something old and powerful.

Luke had followed the pull of the Force to room full of corpses. On the ground near one of the bodies was a lightsaber. One that had a red beam. When the stormtroopers had come in, demanding Luke drop the red saber, something had come over him. An unshakable urge of anger and rage. The troopers quickly fell to his blade. Luke didn’t like it. Something was wrong with this lightsaber.

Yet he hadn’t had too much time to dwell on it. An explosion rocked the hallway he was in, separating Luke from his droid. Then there was the new squad of troopers chasing him down. Thus he found himself outside. He looked behind him to see the rows and rows of seats filled with sentients of all kinds. He was on the race track.

Luke glanced around. Pod racers were parked all along the track. Crews, pilots, and droids ran about as they prepared to start the race. Luke eyed the large double engines of the pod racers as he wove between them. He needed a way out. As he eyed each entrance under the bleachers, they were blocked, either by the racing crews or stormtroopers.

“Artoo . . .” Luke said quietly into his com unit. “If you’re there . . . If you can hear me . . . I’m about to do something . . . really stupid.”

He mind was set. There was only on way out of here without engaging the troopers. He ran at a nearby racer. A blue humanoid alien with long limbs was being handed his helmet by a red droid. He knocked the droid over with the hand holding the lightsaber.

“What do you think you’re doing?” The alien angrily shouted as he reached out to grab Luke’s shoulder. “You can’t just come out here and-” The alien stepped back as the hissing sound of the red lightsaber filled the air. “Oh! Hey! I don’t want any trouble!”
Luke let the red blade disappear as he stepped into the pilot’s pod of the racer. “I . . . Like I said . . . Sorry about this,” Luke said glancing back at the shocked alien. As he settled into the seat and put the helmet on, he muttered, “Can’t be too different than a landspeeder. Right?”

“It’s only a matter of time before the race turns dirty!” the race announcer announced. “We’re seeing some rough flying out there as the racers vie for the winner’s circle!”

Darth Vader summoned his hate and rage as he summoned the Dark Side. He wasn’t sure how long he blacked out for from the explosion, but he knew it had been only a couple of minutes at best. By now that criminal had gotten a good head start on him, but no matter. He would find her. But first he had to do something about the large pieces of rubble from the wall that scum had blown up.

He grabbed at the Force. Demanded it do his bidding. Slowly he pushed up on the large pieces of wall. The sounds of rocks clattering down to the ground filled the destroyed room. The rocks around him started to levitate, and Vader stood tall and free. His cloak was torn and his armor was scuffed but otherwise he was fine.

As the rocks settled, Vader could hear the annoying announcer again.

“Who let this guy onto the track?” the announcer continued. “It’s amateur hour out there right now! And amateur hour usually means someone gets splattered! So we hope you’ve wagered on the fatality pool!”

The Sith lightsaber he had been sent to retrieved floated to Vader. If only the officer had been competent and hadn’t been swindled, Vader would have had both lightsabers. It was useless to only return with one. He made his way through the dusty room and into the hallway. He reached into the Force to find which way the criminal woman had run. The Force pulled him strongly down the hall. Vader frowned. This isn’t what he wanted. Whatever this pull in the Force was, it wasn’t about the criminal.

No, Vader hissed at the Force. You will bend to my will.

He was not a puppet of the Force. The Force listened to him. Did as he wished. There was a small flicker as the Force lightly pointed towards the criminal, but then it doubled its pull from earlier. There was something the Force wanted Vader to see. He gripped the Sith lightsaber tightly as he followed the pull. He found himself at the top of the bleacher seats of the racing stands. The crowd looked at large blue holograms of the race.

Vader walked down the steps ignoring the crowd. However he did enjoy their growing fear and panic as they saw him, realized who he was, and then fied for their lives. As he reached the bottom of the steps and stood before the blue hologram of the race, there were no other spectators. The Force was abuzz. Had it wanted him to see this race?

Anger boiled inside of him. Was the Force trying to remind him of the fool pathetic boy he had once been? That child was dead. Whatever was left him had been burned into ash on Mustafar decades ago.

And yet . . . he didn’t turn away. He watched the race and listened to the announcer. “We’re now hearing that a human is piloting one of the racers. Traditionally, humans are not equipped to survive this long in a podrace! Note that all wagers remain final! But management- as an act of good will- is
doubling the payoff in the case this pilot taking it all!”

Vader watched the human pilot swerved through the race’s obstacles.

“I’ve never seen anything like it!” the announcer shouted. Excitement clear in his voice. “This pilot, despite a rough start, seems to be hanging in there!”

“Impressive,” Vader murmured to himself. It wasn’t praise he was likely to give, but this pilot deserved it. He easily remembered how hard it was to pilot a pod racer. The skill it took. The announcer wasn’t wrong. It was a remarkable feat for a human.

“There’s never been a case of a human winning a major circuit race like this one,” the announcer said. “Stories have circulated in some of the lesser systems, but this in unparalleled.”

Never a case? Vader snarled to himself. His own win was nothing more than a story from a lesser system? Is this why the Force had called him here? It didn’t matter. This pilot would not be claiming any history today. Vader would not have his own glory stolen. It would be all too easy. His hand came slightly forwarded as he called upon the Force. The Force seemed to be waiting anxiously to be used. It still hummed around him. How should he do it? A simple pull on one part of one of the engines is all it would take to send the racer tumbling and spinning out of control. Vader would like to see how well this human pilot handled that.

Yet, as Vader’s fingers curled to pull on the Force, he felt something. He paused. The race continued. He let his hand drop to his side as he reached out into the Force. There had been something there with this pilot. It had been elusive. It had slipped by him, but this time Vader would not allow it. He opened himself up and focused on the racer and the human pilot inside.

It couldn’t be!

Vader had sharply retreated back into himself for a moment once he touched the presence of the pilot. There was no way that pilot was . . . but then again who else could it be? What other human could possibly manage to pilot a pod racer like that? They had to be Force sensitive. Vader slowly reached out again, and this time there was no mistake. The bright light of the pilot’s presence shone in the Force. It was the same presence he felt in the trench on the Death Star and on Cymoon 1. There was no denying it. The Force buzzed around him in confirmation. This is what it had wanted Vader to know. The pilot in the racer was his son.

“Not. Like. A. Landspeeder. At. All!” Luke grunted to himself as he tightly gripped the two steering handles. His knuckles were white. He was racing through a forested canyon. The track was following the natural path of a river that twisted below him. A large explosion behind him rocked his racer, and Luke fought to keep the racer under control. Most likely it was the lost of another racer. This was dangerous. Luke was barely able to steer this thing correctly, much less avoid the other racers. He’d already bumped into a few racers already. One of which Luke was sure had spun out of control and crashed.

“Artoo!” he shouted into his com. “Where are you? I’m gonna need a pick up? Do you hear me? Artoo?”

Nothing. No response from the droid. He hoped R2 got the message. He wasn’t sure how much he could keep this up. Plus he didn’t want to end up back at the finish line where the troopers were. He
needed to get off the track and land this thing safely. He needed to think of something and fast.

The right engine bounced into the air. Luke gripped the right handle, ready to bring the engine back in line with its partner. Then a panel burst off the engine. Flames and smoke poured out. The right engine was losing stability and fast. The racer was rocking side to side. Luke aimed it towards the ground. He needed to land and now. As Luke got closer to the ground, the right engine took a sudden dive into the ground, pulling the left engine and the pilot pod down with it. The left engine rammed into the ground.

Large pieces were falling off both engines. Flames created smoke which blocked Luke’s view. He could hear the screeching of metal as the engines slid against the ground. Then the pilot pod roughly slammed into the ground, jumped back into the air, and slammed into the ground again. The air was knocked out of Luke as the racer finally slid to a stop.

Luke’s head spun as he sat in the damaged pod. Pod racers zoomed past above him. He tried to move his legs, but they were stuck. He glanced down. The metal had been bent and his legs were now trapped. He couldn’t reach his own lightsaber, but he could get to the Sith lightsaber. The red beam shot up and a loud crackling sound buzzed around Luke. He slowly and carefully cut himself loose from the metal.

He climbed out of the pod and paused staring at the red saber. He could feel it again. The anger. The rage. There was an icy coldness wrapping around him.

“N-no,” Luke said. He turned the lightsaber off and dropped it.

In a quick fluid motion, he had his own lightsaber ignited. The blue beam slashed through the hilt of the other saber. The Sith saber fell to the ground in two. The anger and rage subsided, but the coldness did not. In fact it only seemed to be getting stronger. Luke stared at the broken saber. Had he done something wrong? The inky coldness seemed to be tightening around him. Luke didn’t like this feeling. He needed to get out here. Find R2 and get back to his X-Wing.

Yet as he took his first step, he found his movements sluggish. It had taken considerable effort to move. It felt like he was moving through thick mud. The inky iciness clawed at him.

He looked down at the broken Sith lightsaber. “No. I’m not going to let you overwhelm me,” he growled at it.

“That is nothing but a useless trinket,” a deep voice said through the smoke.

A voice Luke recognized. His head spun for a moment as he snapped his head up. A shadow appeared through the smoke. It was tall and dark and the sound of mechanical regulated breathing was coming from it.

“No,” Luke whispered. He pushed his muscles as much as he could. He wasn’t ready to face Darth Vader. He had learned that hard lesson on Cymoon 1. Yet despite how much he tried, his body was now frozen as if the inky coldness had solidified and turned into ice.

Darth Vader stepped through the smoke. His form was now clearly visible. His tattered cloak gently swayed with each of the man’s steps towards Luke. The Sith lord glanced down at the broken lightsaber on the ground. He pulled out a matching lightsaber. Luke’s eyes widened as he glanced from the broken saber to the one in Vader’s hand. How could there be two? The lightsaber in Vader’s hand cracked and broke apart as the Sith’s hand formed into a fist. The saber fell to the ground in pieces.
Not wasting any time, Vader pulled a pair of binders from his belt. Luke again tried to move, but still found himself unable to. Vader approached and sharply grabbed at Luke’s arm. Vader pulled it behind Luke’s back. He twisted the other arm back, and secured both wrists into the binders. Luke clenched his teeth, biting back words he wanted to throw at his father’s murder. Then he felt a pull on his belt. Luke glanced down to see Vader unclipping Luke’s lightsaber from his belt.

“No!” Luke shouted. “That was my father’s!”

“I know,” Vader said.

He held Anakin Skywalker’s lightsaber in his hand. His helmet was titled down, as if he was examining it. Then he clipped it to his belt next to his lightsaber. Vader’s helmet turned towards Luke. A shiver ran through Luke as he felt the Sith’s eyes on him.

“Your name,” Vader demanded.

“Rebel,” Luke growled at him. He would give this man nothing.

Vader’s hand came up and he pointed a finger at Luke. “Your name, Skywalker,” he hissed.

“What does it matter to you?” Luke said. Clearly Vader knew his last name. Why did it matter if he knew his first name?

“It matters,” Vader said.

Luke looked at the monster in front of him. Was it him or was his tone of voice . . . soft? Not threatening? Regardless, he wouldn’t tell Vader a single thing about him nor the Alliance. Slowly the sound of engines were heard, and they weren’t the engines of a pod racer. Luke knew the sound very well. The smoke was harshly blown to the side, and Luke’s X-Wing slowly lowered itself.

Vader grabbed Luke’s arm and pulled him close to him. Luke was pressed against the large body of Vader. He never imagined he would ever be this close to Darth Vader. Luke heard R2’s shrill beeps coming from his X-Wing. The droid wanted to shoot Vader, but now that he held Luke to him the droid couldn’t get a clear shot. R2 asked if there was any way for Luke to get free.

“Artoo!” Luke shouted at the same time Vader’s free hand came up. His hand waved to the right and so did Luke’s X-Wing. It slammed into the ground, mixing with the wreckage of the pod racer. Luke could hear R2’s screaming as the X-Wing went down. Luke’s eyes searched the wreckage. Then he felt a large glove hand grip at his chin. His head was turned to look directly into the eye lenses of Vader’s helmet.


“Luke . . .” Vader said again. There was something off about him. “That was the name . . . The name she . . .” Whatever state Vader had been in, he suddenly snapped out of it. Luke could feel the man tense up. “Who named you?” Vader demanded.

Luke only growled at him and struggled against the Sith’s hold on him. He wasn’t in the mood to play Vader’s game. He needed to make sure R2 was ok. He had to get free.

“Tell me,” Vader said. “And I’ll see that your droid is secured.”
Luke turned back to the helmet. Could he trust Vader? But there was something there in the back of his mind saying that Vader was telling him the truth. The Sith would honor his deal.


Vader didn’t move. He only stared down at Luke. When he finally did speak his voice sounded sad. Broken. “She . . . lived that long?” Vader asked. “How long? How long did she live for?”

Was Vader sad? Luke reached out. He barely knew how to do it. Yet sometimes he could read other’s emotions if he just pushed himself a small bit. He didn’t know what he was expecting, but he was not expecting the maelstrom that was Vader’s emotions. Grief, sharp and painful, lashed out the strongest from the whirlwind. There were currents of sadness, lost, love, relief, happiness, and anger. There was a lot of anger. Yet the grief was the strongest.

“My aunt said she died in childbirth,” Luke said. He wasn’t sure why he answered, but it appeared as if Darth Vader cared. “That’s all I know.”

Vader said nothing. Luke just listened to the man’s breathing through his respirator. This close the sound was grating on Luke’s ears. Then Vader stepped back, though he kept a hand gripped on Luke’s arm. The other arm came up and the hand curled. Luke heard the sound of metal screeching and braking. Slowly the small form of R2-D2 floated out of the smoke and wreckage.

Luke was amazed at Vader’s use of the Force. He had been too angry earlier when the Sith had knocked his X-Wing over. But this man clearly knew how to use it. Vader placed the droid down on the ground.

“Artoo!” Luke shouted. R2 was unresponsive. His lights were all out.


The speeder slowly lifted off the ground. Luke looked down at the wreckage of his fighter and the racer. R2 still sat unmoving.

“I will see the droid is collected,” Vader said.


“I am sure he has intel of the Alliance in his memory banks,” Vader said.

Luke groaned. Of course. They sat in silence as Vader piloted the speeder back towards the city. Luke was left to his thoughts. What would happen now? Darth Vader had him. Luke had been prepped about Imperial interrogations, but that lesson had come with a warning. To be interrogated by Vader was certain death.

“Our mother . . .” Vader’s deep voice brought Luke at of his dark thoughts. “She named you Luke. It means light giving.” Luke looked at the dark armored man sitting next to him. This was Darth Vader? The feared Sith Lord and henchmen of the Emperor? The man that would torture you to death?

The comment left Luke in a stunned silence. *Why does he think that?* Luke asked himself as he studied the man next to him. He became aware of the Force. It was buzzing in his ear. It kept pulling Luke’s gaze to Vader as if it was trying to tell Luke something about Vader. Luke recalled Vader’s words. Vader had said it mattered what Luke’s name was. He wanted to know who named him. He wanted to know about his mother. Then he recalled the hurricane of grief within the Sith Lord. Vader had been sad.


Vader looked back over at Luke. It took a while before he finally answered, “Yes.”


“She was . . . She was my wife.”


“Your name,” Vader had demanded.


“It matters,” Vader said.

It mattered to Vader. Vader wanted to know his first name.

“Luke . . .” Vader had said. “That was the name . . . The name she . . . Who named you?” Vader demanded.

“My aunt said my mother named me,” Luke said.

“She . . . lived that long?” Vader asked. “How long? How long did she live for?”

Why did Vader care? Why did Vader want to know about his mother?

“She named you Luke. It means light giving.”


“She was . . . She was my wife.”

If . . . Vader’s wife was Luke’s mother . . . than what . . . how . . . It could not be. It was not possible.


“Yes,” Vader said. The word seemed to send shockwaves through the Force. *Truth!* It sung out. *Truth!*

Luke slumped back into his seat as best he could with his hands still bound behind his back. His mind was reeling. How could Vader be his father? Was he really Anakin Skywalker? Yet the Force kept singing that this was true. Darth Vader was his father. Luke leaned his head back and closed his eyes. It felt like he was back in the pod race. His mind was being jerked from end to the other, while
Luke desperately tried to keep everything together.

Then there was a sudden moment of clarity as Luke recalled when he touched Vader’s emotions. He had been shocked by the overwhelming amount of grief and anger, but they weren’t the only emotions. There had also been relief, happiness, and love. Happiness. Love. Light.

Luke is defeated and captured at Cloud City by Vader. He is then dragged before the Emperor.

“You are beaten. It is useless to resist,” the deep dark voice of Darth Vader said. His red lightsaber was pointed down at Luke Skywalker. The young Rebel was on his back on the walkway in the reactor shaft in Cloud City. His shoulders dug into the metal staircase behind him. “Don’t let yourself be destroyed as Ahsoka did,” Vader continued.

Anger surged within Luke as he recalled Ahsoka’s robes simply falling empty to the ground in the Death Star. Luke pushed himself to his knees, rolled, and jabbed his father’s blue lightsaber towards the dark lord. It landed a blow on Vader’s shoulder. The black armor hissed, sparked briefly, and smoked. Vader had jerked back at the initial impact, but then he recovered immediately. At once his red saber was crashing against Luke’s again.

Luke had wasted precious time. He had thought about ducking under the instruments and railing, but that led to a dead end on a gantry. Instead he had side stepped, hoping to get around Vader and away from the shaft. However, Vader was quickly back on him. His powerful strokes smashed into Luke’s saber. Luke was covered in sweat, cuts, and bruises. This duel was going on too long. Vader was simply too strong.

Vader swung wide, slashed at the walls and machinery. Pieces fell loose. Vader used the Force to fling pieces of machinery and the reactor at the Rebel. Luke slashed through a large pipe, deflected two pieces of paneling, but a large metal box slammed into him. A strong pull in the Force ripped the lightsaber from Luke’s hand. Luke let out a weak yell as he toppled to the ground. As he rolled over he saw Vader towering above him with both blue and red lightsabers are pointed at Luke.

“You have lost, boy,” Vader said with a bit of triumph in his voice. “Surrender.”

Luke was tired. Down to his bones he was tired. Every part of him was sore. He desperately wanted to sleep. His eyes were tired and heavy. He still wore his torn and tattered jumpsuit he had fought Vader in. He had been offered no first aid. Dried blood and bruises dotted his skin. His hair was pressed down to his head in a sweaty and greasy mess. His hands were tightly bound in binders in front of him.

This was how he was to meet the Emperor.

Vader marched in front of Luke. His black cape slightly swaying from side to side with each of the Sith’s long powerful strides. Luke was being escorted by two stormtroopers. They both gripped
Luke’s upper arms tightly. Luke wasn’t the steadiest on his feet at the moment. He had tripped and stumbled a few times, causing the troopers to grab him and drag him at times. Luke was barely aware of his surroundings through the Imperial Palace. He was just focused on taking one step at a time.

There was a welcomed ride in a lift where Luke took a moment to collect himself. But shortly he was grabbed and pulled out of the lift into the throne room. The red Imperial Guards stood attentively on either side of the lift door. Six more guards were stationed down the narrow room near the throne. The actual black throne chair sat in front of a large circular window that was divided into eight parts. The afternoon sun bore through the window, making it hard to stare at the chair.

Finally the group came to the stairs leading up to the throne. Vader turned sharply and promptly dismissed the two troopers with a wave of his hand. Vader tightly gripped Luke by the arm and dragged him so the two stood side by side. Suddenly the red Imperial Guards quietly walked away. Leaving Vader and Luke alone with the Emperor.

Luke stared at the chair, which had its back to Luke. Luke’s heart pounded in his chest. He could hear the beating throbbing in his ears. Luke questioned if he was ready. He was in no state to actual defeat him. The only thing Luke could possibly walk away with was a noble and quick death. He wouldn’t give the Emperor the joy of a public execution.

The chair slowly turned around. In it sat the Emperor, a small hunched over old man in all black clothes. His eyes were shadowed in the black hood of his robes. They seemed to glow and pierce into Luke. Then suddenly the Emperor slouched forward. His head swayed a bit from side to side. It reminded Luke of a toy doll unable to support itself.


“My master,” Vader’s deep voice broke the silence of the room. “I have brought young Skywalker.”

If Vader hadn’t dragged Luke down, he wouldn’t have kneeled in front of the Emperor. He would show that man no respect. Luke snapped his head up in defiance, ready to stare down this plague to the galaxy. Yet the figure on the throne was still slumped in the chair. That’s when Luke heard the sound of boots clicking on metal. They were coming from behind Luke.

A cold shiver ran up Luke’s spine. His hair on the back of his neck stood on end. The Force screamed that whoever was walking behind him was dangerous. Luke could sense the dark side rolling off this newcomer in waves. He was stronger than Vader, which Luke didn’t think was possible. A man walked around the two kneeling figures and stopped right in front of them.


Luke just stared at him. He was mid-aged. His brown hair was greying, but was combed back into a sleek style. The man projected a sense of confidence and arrogance. He was smiling down at Luke. Luke noted a lightsaber hilt clipped to the man’s belt. He wore a black leather tunic and black robes that reminded Luke of the Jedi robes Ahsoka had worn. Granted the feature that pulled Luke in was the eyes. Bright golden eyes that were staring right at Luke. A scar slashed against the man’s face above the right eye.

“Rise, Lord Vader,” the man said.

Vader let go of Luke’s arm and rose to his feet. Luke stayed on the ground for a brief second unsure of what to do before he finally clambered up to his feet as well. The man was tall. Luke glanced
uncomfortably from the man to Vader and back to the man.

“We meet at last, Luke,” the man said.

“You-you seem to know me,” Luke said. His voice started off shaky, but he quickly found his confidence. “But who are you?”

The man took a step closer to Luke. Luke wanted to back away, but held his ground.

“I’m Anakin Skywalker,” the man said. “I’m your father.”

Now Luke did take a small step back. He looked at the man—his father—Anakin Skywalker again. This couldn’t be true. His father was dead. He couldn’t be—He couldn’t be alive. And here in the throne room. And... the darkness swirled around the man. And... a Sith.

“No...” Luke said softly. “No. That’s not true! You can’t be! That’s impossible! My father—Anakin Skywalker is dead!”


He was right. Anakin Skywalker was right. The Force hummed that this was the truth. This was Anakin. This was Luke’s father. The father Luke had always dreamed would come and take him away to the stars. The hero that had fought valiantly in the Clone Wars. The brave Jedi.

“No... No, No,” Luke said.

There was a pain gripping at his heart. This couldn’t be true! Yet the Force hummed truth over and over and over again. Anakin stepped forward. He grabbed Luke’s shoulder with a gloved hand. His other hand came to rest gently under Luke’s chin. Anakin tipped the chin so Luke looked at Anakin in the eyes. Luke could feel the cold darkness from Anakin start to wind itself around Luke.

“Luke,” Anakin said softly. “Join me. This is your destiny. I will complete your training. Together we can rule the galaxy as father and son.”

Luke’s eyes glanced behind Anakin to the slouched figure on the throne. Anakin looked over his shoulder following Luke’s gaze. He let out a hearty laugh. Anakin stepped away from Luke. Anakin walked up the steps to the throne. He grabbed a fistful of the hood of the Emperor and sharply pulled the head back. The Emperor didn’t respond. Then Anakin threw the head back down, which slammed into the chest.

“This Luke is nothing more than a mere puppet,” Anakin said as he started down the steps towards Luke. “A shell of a once prideful and foolish man. Sheev Palpatine has been dead for years now. But his body still serves my purposes.”

Anakin again stood in front of Luke. Vader was still quietly standing to the side. Anakin flicked his hand. Luke could sense the darkness lash out from Anakin towards the throne. Suddenly the Emperor’s body sat up. He folded his fingers in front of his face and looked down at the group below.

“Who stands before me?” the voice of the Emperor croaked. A shiver ran through Luke hearing that voice. It was the voice he heard over the holonet time and time again when the Emperor gave speeches.

“Quite convincing, isn’t it?” Anakin said proudly. He flicked his hand again and the body sagged
lifelessly into the chair again. Anakin’s golden gaze turned back to Luke and smiled a crooked smile.

“This . . . this isn’t possible,” Luke said.

“With the Force, all things are possible,” Vader said. His deep voice echoing through the room.

“But . . . how are you even alive?” Luke asked.

“What lies were you fed, young one? I’m curious to hear how they said I died,” Anakin prompted.

“They said . . . Uncle Owen said you died in a crash. You used to pilot a spice freighter,” Luke explained.

For a brief second, Anakin looked surprised. Then he let out a loud laugh. “That’s the first time I’ve heard that!” he said. He turned to Vader. “A spice freighter?” Vader nodded his head very slightly.

“And tell me, what did my old padawan Ahsoka tell you?”

Luke looked uncomfortably between Anakin and Vader. He brought his hands together in front of them and clasped them together. “She said you were betrayed and killed by Darth Vader,” Luke whispered.


“She’s the one that betrayed us,” Anakin hissed. “She turned your mother against me. She dueled me. Left me to die in a mining facility that was falling into lava. And . . . “

“And when I tried to save you,” Vader spoke up. “She attacked me from behind. Sliced off my limbs. Left me burning alive on the bank of a river of lava.”

“Then she stole you,” Anakin said turning back to Luke.

The anger, hurt, and betrayal was clear in the Force. There were deep wounds. The Dark Side reacted to both Anakin and Vader’s anger. It swirled and thrashed throughout the room. Luckily not at Luke. It seemed to bend around him as if there was a bubble protecting him.

“But now,” Anakin said calming down. He approached Luke and again placed a hand on his shoulder. “We’re now together. As it should have been all along.”


“So you say now, my son,” Anakin said smiling at Luke. “I don’t think now is the time to be making any decisions. You’ve had quite a day. I’m sure you need some time to sort through everything.”

Luke shook his head. “No,” he said more confident. “I won’t turn.”

“Stubborn,” Vader said. “Like his father.”


Chapter End Notes
Fan comic about this fic.

HEYO this became more than a one-shot. Read more of it here.
The Question

Chapter Summary

Luke Skywalker spent his early years with his father, Anakin, on Tatooine. Until one day Anakin disappeared and never came back. Everyone said Anakin died, but Luke still believes his father is alive. After the death of Obi-Wan, it appears the only person with answers about what happened to Anakin is Darth Vader.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Darth Vader was here. Luke knew it. He could feel it in the Force. The anger, the rage, the fear, and the cold swirled about this place. There was a wrongness to it. Luke had only felt it a few times before with the first being in the trench of the Death Star. Yet there was also a sense of familiarity behind it. Perhaps it was just due to Luke finally being able to recognize this darkness as Vader.

Luke gripped the steering yoke of his ship. He shouldn't go in. While everything reported to be calm coming out of the Alliance base ahead, Luke knew better. Vader was there. Waiting. Instead of turning his fighter around, Luke brought it into the hangar. As he took off his helmet, he noticed there was no life to be seen. No mechanics. No pilots. No deck crew. No one. Luke glanced around for the tell-tale sight of blaster burns, but he didn't even see those.

With no crew to bring a ladder, Luke was forced to jump from the cockpit. R2 made a sad little whine. "Stay there, buddy," Luke said up to the droid. "Keep the engines warm. I have a feeling we may need a fast getaway." The little droid beeped back at him.

Luke pulled his father's lightsaber free. His fingers slide along the all-too familiar grooves and lines of the saber.

"Can I touch it, please? Please daddy? Please?" Luke had begged his father. Anakin Skywalker just looked down at his young son. Anakin slowly brought out his lightsaber.

"You can touch it, but you can't hold it," Anakin said.

Luke jumped up and down in excitement. He reached out his hand and let his fingers gently slide along the groves. The same groves Luke touched now in the present. He had to face Vader. He was the only one with answers about Luke's father.

"Luke," Anakin said to the young child he carried. "You're going to go stay with your aunt and uncle for a while."

Anakin carried Luke out of the small house they lived in. Luke shaded his eyes from the harsh Tatooine suns. He was quiet the whole ride to his uncle's homestead. His father's face was scrunched up and serious. Something was wrong. Luke wanted to ask what it was, but he didn't. Once they arrived, Anakin carried Luke down into the homestead.

He recalled this moment with such clarity. Even years later he could recall the Tatooine heat. The feel of his course linen tunic. His father's glove and flesh hand cupping Luke's face. He remembered
the smell of his father, leather and sweat, as he leaned in and gave Luke a kiss. He remembered the
soft whispered words, the last words his father ever said to him. "I love you, Luke. Be good. I'll be
back."

Except he had never come back. Anakin Skywalker never came back for his son. One night as a
teen, Luke heard his aunt and uncle whispering in the dining room. He was supposed to be asleep,
but he had stayed up late in the garage tinkering with some engine parts to his skyhopper. He crept
closer to the dining room, careful not to be heard.

"Are you sure?" Aunt Beru asked.

"Yes, I'm sure," Uncle Owen replied. "His name was on the confirmed list."

"Oh Luke," Beru said sadly. "He'll be devastated."

"We don't have to tell him," Owen replied.

"Owen. We can't do that. Luke still believes Anakin is going to come back. That he's alive."

That was when Luke stepped into the dining room. His aunt and uncle stared at him. "What do you

"Luke," Beru said, "Honey, listen . . .Your father is dead."

"No," Luke said. He couldn't believe it. It wasn't true. He would know. He would know if his father
was dead, and he wasn't. "No. How do you know?"

"When I went to Mos Espa, I checked the holonet's record of confirmed dead Jedi. Anakin
Skywalker's name is on that list," Owen explained.

"That doesn't mean his dead," Luke said. When no one spoke up, Luke continued, "Everyone
thought he died back when the Empire was created!"

"But his name wasn't on the list," Owen explained. "Not until now and . . . and it's been on there for
a while. It's been on there for years. I've just haven't checked until now."

Then just a few months ago, his uncle had bought the two droids. The R2 unit claimed he was
owned by Anakin Skywalker. Luke never recalled his father owning any droids. The droid didn't
have answers about Anakin, but there was one person who might know. Obi-Wan Kenobi, who the
droid was looking for. That was how Luke ended up on the freighter with the Corellian smuggler,
the wookie, the two droids, and the old Jedi.

A Jedi who claimed he was Anakin's master. Who had Anakin's lightsaber, because Anakin had died
at the hands of Darth Vader. Obi-Wan said Vader was a Jedi who betrayed Anakin. Luke had so
many questions for Obi-Wan. He had wanted to know more about his father. Who was he before
Luke was born? But more importantly, how did he die? Luke wanted to know exactly how his father
had died, but then Ben had died. Now the only way to get that answer was to meet with Vader.

Apparently Darth Vader wanted to meet Luke as well. Since Luke had blown up the Death Star,
Lord Vader had put out a very high alive-only bounty on Luke. The past months Luke had avoided
capture several times from bounty hunters and Imperials alike. This included a few close calls of
almost running into Vader himself. Now Luke was walking willingly to the man. Luke wasn't
completely sure what Vader wanted in him. To kill all the Jedi? To kill what remained of Anakin
Skywalker? To kill the pilot who blew up the Death Star?
As Luke walked through the base, he found it as devoid of life as the hangar. He finally saw some signs of a battle though. A few blaster burn marks. Some drops of blood. Scuff marks on the floor. Luke kept moving through the base toward the ever growing inky cold in the Force. The darkness seemed to be growing into a cold fire that wrapped around and licked at Luke. Finally, Luke came to the door of the command center of the base. He keyed the door panel, and the door slid open with a soft swoosh.

The room was large filled with terminals, displays, and holoprojectors. The far part of the room was elevated above the rest, so the commanders could overlook the rest of the room easily. That is where the large dark mass of Darth Vader stood. Luke noticed the eerily regulated mechanical breathing coming from the man. It was also where all the cold darkness emitted from. Vader was a black inferno in the Force. Cold fear and hate swirled around him violently. Luke unclipped his lightsaber and ignited it. He slowly walked towards the Sith lord.

"The Force is with you, young Skywalker," Vader's deep booming voice said. "But you hold that weapon like an untrained child. You are not a Jedi."


"A wise decision," Vader said with a wave of his hand at Luke's unlit saber. Vader stopped a short distance away, just a bit out of a lightsaber blade's reach. Luke's heart felt like it was being squeezed. His vision was a little blurry on the edges. He could feel sweat dripping down his neck and back.

"I have a question," Luke said. Vader said nothing, but there was a very slight tilt of his helmet. Through the Force, Luke could sense the curiosity. "What . . . How did you kill my father, Anakin Skywalker?"

For a brief second, nothing happened. Then the darkness exploded off of Vader. Freezing cold dark tendrils lashed out in the Force. Luke winced as it felt like he was being sliced from icy shards. Luke ignited his lightsaber, ready to defend from any attack.

"What?" the dark lord boomed. "Who told you that? Kenobi?" Vader snarled the name. "The Rebels? Who has filled your head with such lies, child? Tell me."


"I will answer you question, if you first answer mine," Vader replied. "Who told you I killed Anakin Skywalker?"

Luke listened and felt for the Force. It was hard with Vader so close, but there was something there. A small thread weaving amongst the flames of Vader. The Sith was telling the truth.

"Ben told me enough," Luke said. "He told me you killed him. You were a Jedi who betrayed my father."

An odd noise came from Vader's vocoder. Luke wasn't sure what to make of it.

"Kenobi. That treacherous scum," Vader said. His voice was filled with disgust and venom. A shiver
ran up Luke's back. "He did not deserve his easy death. It should been far worse."

"Now tell me!" Luke shouted. "Tell me what happened to my father!"

Vader paused. The lenses of his mask were focused right on Luke. Then he started to approach again.

"What do your feelings tell you, Skywalker?" Vader asked. "What do you believe happened to your father?"

That he isn't dead, the thought raced through Luke's mind. The hope Luke had never been able to cast out regardless how many people told him his father was dead. He knew it was childish, and at times he tried to rationalize with himself. His father had to be dead. Yet no matter how hard he tried, he still clung to the hope Anakin was still alive.

"You are indeed strong in the Force," Vader said. "Your feelings serve you well. Obi-Wan lied. I did not kill your father."


Vader had only been moving on the defense. Suddenly he brought his saber down from a low angle. Luke backstepped to avoid it, but something slammed into his legs from behind. Luke tripped and fell hard to the metal ground. Vader was on top of him at once. A heavy boot slammed on Luke's wrist, which instantly released the saber hilt. Anakin Skywalker's lightsaber flew into Darth Vader's hand. For a moment he held both sabers, red and blue, on either side of him. Then he deactivated both and clipped both to his belt. He lifted his boot off Luke's wrist.


Luke pushed himself up to his elbows. "Then . . . then what happened?" Luke whispered. He wasn't even sure if Vader had heard him. The Sith knelt down to one knee on the floor next to Luke. The large gloved hands came up to the helmet and slowly took it off. He placed the helmet on the floor and then slowly took off the mask.

Luke looked at Darth Vader unmasked. He wasn't sure what he expected to find under the mask, but he was a man. The first thing he noticed were the yellow eyes. Then the pale skin. Shorn short hair that appeared to be light brown or dark blonde. His face was covered with scars. Luke had seen his share of scars as a Rebel. These looked to be burn scars, except for the scar by Vader's right eye that slashed through his eyebrow . . .

Luke suddenly couldn't breathe. His eyes danced across Vader's face again. He noted the similarities. The shape of the nose. The cheekbones. The eyebrows. The eyes . . . they weren't blue anymore . . . but . . . They were familiar. Painfully familiar. "I love you, Luke. Be good. I'll be back."

A large lump filled Luke's throat. He could feel the stinging sensation starting to form in his eyes as tears threatened to form.

"Da-Dad?" Luke croaked.

At once Vader's face changed. He sighed. Relief washed over the Sith. Luke could even feel it in the Force. The angry whirlwind that Vader casted into the Force was slowly dying down and becoming

"How-how?" Luke said. His voice choked with emotion that threatened to spill out at any moment. "Why?"

Suddenly Vader coughed. The coughing shook the large man's entire form. When it had finished, there was a brief look from Vader to Luke. Vader's yellow eyes were filled with pain. Vader put back on his mask and helmet. After, he didn't move or say anything. The only sound was his breathing. Finally his hand grabbed at Luke's upper arm. He pulled the boy up with him as he stood.

"Come," Vader said. He kept his grip tight on Luke as he steered the two out the door of the command room.

"Why? Why are you Darth Vader? What happened?" Luke asked. He had to know. What had caused this to happen?

Vader's mask only slightly moved to look at Luke. "We can discuss this later," Vader said. He continued to pull Luke down the hallway. Yet Luke dug his heels in, causing both of them to stop.


Vader stared at Luke for moment, before he pulled on Luke's arm. "We can discuss this later," Vader repeated. His voice lower this time. "Once we have gotten to a more appropriate location."

Luke let out a small crazed laugh. "A better location? Where is that? There will never a better location. Just tell me, please. I have to know." He did. His thoughts were going a million different directions at lightspeed. His father was alive this whole time. Yet all he kept hearing were the words of everyone telling Luke his father was dead.

"Honey, listen . . . Your father is dead."

"I'm afraid Luke, Anakin Skywalker is dead. Betrayed by a fellow Jedi named Vader."

"I checked the holonet's record of confirmed dead Jedi. Anakin Skywalker's name is on that list."


It was too much. Luke had reached his tipping point. Tears started to pour down his face. His chest started to heave with sobs.

"Why . . ." Luke said when he was able to catch his breath. He couldn't bear to look at that horrible black mask, so he just looked at the ground. "Why didn't you come back? Send a message? Any-anything?"

Vader turned to completely face his son. Luke felt a smooth leather glove come under his chin. Vader gently lifted Luke's face so he stared into the lenses of the mask.

"Luke," Vader said softly as his vocoder allowed. "I did what I had to to keep you safe." The Force coming off Vader was still cold, but seemed to gently wrap around Luke. It felt soothing in an odd way.
"Safe from what?"

"The Emperor."

Luke didn't understand. From the Emperor? He opened his mouth to voice this question, but felt metal wrap around his wrist. He heard the soft clink of metal clicking into place. Luke looked down to see Vader had placed Luke's hands into binders.

"What?" Luke asked. His sorrow was wiped out by anger and confusion. "Why am I in binders?"

"If you're not going to come willingly, I will force you to come," Vader said as his hand returned to Luke's arm and pulled. Luke stumbled a few feet as Vader pulled, but he once again pushed his weight down and dug his heels in. Vader stopped again and looked at his son.

"So you put me in binders?" Luke asked incredulously.

"You are still dressed in your Rebel flight suit," Vader pointed out. "It will be far less conspicuous if you are restrained."

"Where . . . where are you taking me?" Luke asked in a hushed tone.

"Back to my ship," Vader replied simply as if it was obvious.

"No," Luke said. He pulled against Vader, but his grip was iron tight. He tried to grab at the Sith's arm and push him away, but it was awkward with both his hands bound.


"No!" Luke shouted. "I'm not going to your ship! If you want to talk, we can do it here!" He continued to struggle, to break free. With a sharp tug, Vader pulled Luke towards him. Luke stumbled forward. Vader's free hand came up and placed it on Luke's forehead.

"Cease this, child," Vader said. "Sleep."

Luke was ready to shout back a retort, but a wave of tiredness hit him. At once his knees went weak. His head sagged back. His whole body felt heavy. It was struggle to stay standing. His eye lids felt incredibly heavy. He felt hands grabbing at him. He tried to push away and fight them off, but his body barely responded. A strong arm slipped under his knees and around his shoulders. His body was lifted up and pressed against Vader. Luke's head rested on Vader's hard shoulder armor.

Vader started to walk, but Luke continued to fight off the sleep. He wouldn't sleep. He couldn't, but his whole body no longer listened to him. It felt like he was paralyzed. It was a fight just to keep conscious and keep his eyes open. A strange noise came off Vader.

"It appears some things don't change, young one," Vader said. It was then Luke realized the noise earlier was a laugh. A memory came into Luke's mind of his father, Anakin, carrying a young Luke to bed much like Vader carried Luke now.

"I'm not sleepy," young Luke had said. His words slurring together. "No bed."

Anakin laughed as he looked down at his obvious sleepy son. The child's head kept nodding back. His eyes kept drooping shut.

In the present as Vader carried his grown son through the Rebel base, Luke could no longer keep his eyes open. They finally shut. It felt wonderful for them to be closed. Now Luke just had to let go. Let himself fall in slumber, yet he still didn’t. He focused on the even breathing of Vader. Of the rhythm of Vader’s steps.


"All Rebel troops have been contained or eliminated, sir," came a voice.

"They are no longer needed," Vader said. "Kill them all. Burn this base down."

"Yes sir."

"And the X-Wing in the other hangar," Vader added. "Have it collected and placed on my ship."

"At once, sir."

Luke felt the rocking of Vader walking again, but even Vader's breathing was starting to float away. Luke could barely make the sound anymore. His mind went to the last time he had seen his father as a child. Anakin cupping his face and kissing him. "I love you, Luke. Be good. I'll be back."

"Luke, I'm back," came a deep voice somewhere outside of his body. "I love you. I always have. I always will."

Unable to fight it anymore, Luke finally fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Art based on this fic
The Thief

Chapter Summary

A thief has snuck into a large house hoping to find something to steal. Meanwhile Darth Vader returns home to find his young twin children have escaped their nannies.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Rusk was glad he wasn't completely human or completely alien. He had no idea what he truly was. He had no idea who his parents were. He was just another orphan in the under layers of Coruscant. Though he supposed it was now called Imperial Center. That didn't matter. What did matter was this change in names had brought a change of rich people. Rumors had it a lot of rich people died when the Emperor took over. They probably had it coming. New rich people came in. Dumb rich people. Unfamiliar to the dangers of Coruscant.

Rusk was thinner than a normal human. His limbs were longer and narrower. His body was more limber. The only downside was his head was a bit bigger and his skin was a pale blue-grey. Rusk sometimes wondered if he had Duros blood in him. Regardless his body was good for sneaking into places. Coruscant was ripe with places to sneak into. The city had been built upon buildings on top of buildings on top of buildings. Old tunnels, sewers, air vents, and piping mazed its way through the city. If one wasn't smart, then fancy new homes could be accessed by forgotten passages. Luckily for Rusk, the new rich of the Empire didn't seem to be that smart.

Well except for whoever lived on the other side of the current passages Rusk had been navigating through. He had found this place months ago. At first he thought it would be another easy hit. Another new rich person who wasn't wise enough to completely block out the old passages. Yet than Rusk ran into security. Whoever built their home here was smart. This should have discouraged Rusk. He should have just turned around and found an easier hit, which was what he did the first time he ran into the place. But then he thought about it. Security meant money. There was sure to be a big hit if Rusk could get himself through.

It had taken months of delicate work. The security to this large home was intense. Now finally he was in. Gold light shone in from the air vent in front of him. He carefully undid the screws and slowly lifted the vent. Then he lowered himself down into the hallway. He had been almost living in that vent for a week to observe the living patterns of whoever lived here. He had only observed cleaning droids moving through this hallway.

Rusk took in the hallway, finally able to get a good look at it. The place was indeed rich. Rusk didn't know the names of fancy materials these rich homes were made of. But he could see the white swirling stone on the floor, which he only saw in rich homes. He knew this home had riches, and Rusk just had to find them. He cautiously made his way through the home.

He first came upon a sitting room. As expected it had fine looking couches and chairs with real wooden tables. Yet there wasn't a knick-knack or piece to steal. At least nothing Rusk could shove into his sack. The place was nice and all, but it seemed sparse. There were some very nice vases holding fresh flowers on the wooden tables and some large paintings on the walls. Rusk was sure those might be worth something, but it wasn't something he could take back through the vent.
He continued down the hall. Each room was like the first. Very nice furniture, but nothing for Rusk to take. No sculptures. No bottles of fine wine or liquor. No jewelry. Not even some tossed-aside datapad or com unit to swipe. It made Rusk wonder if anyone actually lived here. Rusk had just entered a strange room. Not much to it. Lots of plants. The room had large open windows. Again nothing for Rusk, so he made his way back into the hallway.

That's when he saw them, or well almost stepped right on them. Rusk jumped back and grabbed his blaster, but he lowered it once he saw what it was. Two small human children. Very small. They still had some of their baby fat. They were the same size. Both wore red outfits. One in pants and the other in a dress. A boy and girl? The boy had blonde hair and blue eyes. The girl had brown hair and brown eyes. They held each other's hand as they looked up at Rusk silently.

All three just stood like that for a while. Rusk had shifted to the balls of his feet. He was ready to run back to vent, the moment the children ran away to get their adults. But they didn't. They just stood staring at Rusk.

"Go," he hissed in a whisper at them. "Go and play little ones."

The two children shared a look with each other, before they looked back at Rusk.

"Who you?" a high pitched voice asked. Rusk wasn't even sure which one had spoken.

"No one," Rusk hissed back at them. He stepped around them and started to make his way back to the vent. The two children followed right behind him. He kept glancing over at them. Their large round eyes followed him. He found his way back to the spot and looked up . . .

*Kriffin' hells*, Rusk cursed to himself. There was no vent. He had gotten turned around. He casted a glare at the children. They were not affected by it. They just stared back him. Their faces unchanged. He turned and made his way back. He would just have to restart. Find a spot he did know and retrace his steps back to the vent.

He walked up to a door, hand out to the door panel, when a small voice came behind him. "No."

Rusk looked down at the two children who were still following him. "No."

"Das dada's room," said one of the children. The girl one? "No go there. Dada mad."

A wicked smile spread across Rusk's face. Perhaps he could still find something to take with him after all. He pressed the door panel and the door slid open. He walked into the room and looked around. He was expecting a bedroom, but instead it was a large empty room. Rusk frowned as he continued to look over the room. But then his eyes caught something.

*Weapons!* Rusk thought with glee.

Rusk rushed over to the far wall. There were shelves displaying different types of blasters and knives. Rusk greedily eyed them, sized them up, and figured out which one would get him the most money. He followed the shelves down the wall, when suddenly the shelving stopped. Hanging on the wall in neat row after row were lightsabers.

Lightsabers! Jedi lightsabers! These things were worth a fortune each. After the Jedi had been declared criminals, their lightsabers had been confiscated and destroyed. Now these weapons were worth some serious credits in the right market for arms dealers and collectors. Just one of these metal tubes would make Rusk rich, and there was a whole *karking* wall of them.

He grabbed one of the lightsabers off its display. He turned it over in his hands before he stuffed it in his bag. He wasted no time in grabbing about five more of the sabers. He wanted more, but he
couldn't be bogged down. He turned around to see the children. They hadn't entered the room. They stood in the door just staring at him with their big child eyes. He stormed back to the door. The children were smart enough to back out of the way.

"Das dasd!" one little voice said as Rusk passed the children. He paused and looked down at them. The boy one was pointing his finger at Rusk's bag filled with lightsabers. "Das dada's sticks!"

"Dada mad!" the girl one said backing up the other one. Her brother? Siblings?

Rusk only scoffed at them and made his way back down the hallway. He paused and looked back. The two children still stood by the door. They hadn't followed him this time, but they were still watching.

Darth Vader walked with long steps down the halls of his palace. He still wore his military uniform having come from Imperial High Command. His caped swayed behind him. His two little children had escaped their nannies yet again. He had yet to punish the nannies, as he understood all too well the annoyances of raising two Force sensitive children. While Vader would never admit it, the twins had given their father the slip before. Luckily, for Vader, it wasn't hard to find them when using the Force. Their presence in the Force was bright and unmistakable.

"Luke. Leia," Vader called as he saw his two younglings standing down the hallway. They turned to face him.

"Dada! Dada!" they shouted happily as they ran over to him.

Vader tried to keep his face stern. They were in trouble, but he couldn't. Not with them. He smiled as he knelt down and opened his arms. The two children ran into their father's arms. They wrapped their little arms around his neck. Vader kissed each one on the cheek and then on the head. They both kissed him back.

"Now my little ones what are you doing here? You know you're supposed to be with your nannies," Vader said. The twins took a step back. Leia grabbed at Vader's cape and pulled at it.

"Dada," she said as she pulled. She clearly wanted to lead him somewhere. Vader stood up and let Leia pull him down the hallway. Vader's cape was tightly clutched in her hand. Her little face was scrunched up in determination. Luke calmly walked next to his father. She paused at the door to Vader's training room.

"Dada!" she said as pointed at the door.

Vader crossed his arms. "You know you're not allowed in there," he said.

"No go," Luke said as he walked to stand next to his sister.

"Yes, Luke," Vader said. "You don't go in there, but did you go in there?"

"Weia no go," Leia said. "Wuke no go."

"You didn't go inside?" Vader asked.

"No," Leia answered.
"Good," Vader said smiling at them. Perhaps this was just an episode of the two exploring and reasserting their boundaries. They just wanted to confirm that they indeed were not supposed to go in there. "Let's go back," Vader said.

"Dada no," Leia said. "Dada go!" She pointed at the training room.

"You want me to go in there?" Vader asked. Leia smiled and nodded. "I'm not going to go train right now, baby."


"Sticks?" Vader asked.

Luke pointed at Vader's lightsaber, which was clipped to his belt. "Dadas sticks," Luke said. "Dadas sticks gone!"

Vader looked from one child to the next. It was hard to read their emotions, especially the more delicate ones. They were so young, they really hadn't sorted out their emotions yet. Anger, happiness, and sadness were easy to read, often without the use of the Force. Yet at times like this Vader could sometimes only tell they were bothered by something.

He sighed, keyed the door panel, and stepped into the room. At once he noticed an unease in the Force. Something was off. His eyes made a sweep of the room and paused when he saw the far wall. He stormed over to it. Six lightsabers were gone. The trophies he had kept from the Jedi he had personally slain. He looked back over at the children, who hadn't entered the room. They stood in the doorway.

They knew. This is what they were trying to tell him. The lightsabers were gone. A panic surged through Vader as he quickly made his way back to his very little and very fragile children. He had to find those lightsabers before the children accidentally turned one on. It was miracle they hadn't already gotten hurt.

"Luke, Leia," he said fighting to keep his voice even and calm. "What did you do with the lightsabers? With daddy's sticks?"


"Weia no go!" she said angrily at Vader. She was trying to tell her father she hadn't even entered the room, much less have the lightsabers.

"Did . . . did someone take them?" Vader asked.

Both twins smiled. "Yes," they both said.

Vader pushed his growing anger under a shield. It would do no good to get angry here in front of the children. There would be a time for that later. He would find whoever on his staff thought they could steal from him. There was a small part of relief inside him knowing his precious little ones hadn't gotten their hands on deadly weapons.

"Dada sticks!" Luke said pointing down the hallway. Then he started off jogging the way he had pointed with Leia right behind him.

"No. Luke! Leia!" Vader called out, but they were too set in their little minds. Vader sighed as he ran after them. Luckily they hadn't gone far. They stopped a bit down the hallway. Vader knelt down next to the children and pulled them close to him. Vader was about to lecture the children on running
off and not listening to him.

"Dada sticks!" Luke said happily and pointed up.

"Up Dada!" Leia said.

Vader looked up to see an air vent. He noticed that one of the screws of the vent wasn't as tight as the others. The anger was doubling, tripling inside of him. It pushed at his shields. The Dark Side of the Force swirled around Vader. It hungered for the anger growing inside of him. It wasn't one of his staff members who thought to steal from him. It was an intruder. Someone, some pathetic fool, had managed to sneak into his house and steal from him. Darth Vader.

"Dada mad?" a small voice asked.

Vader looked down at the children who he still had at his side. For a moment his anger was washed away as realization dawned on him. This could have gone much worse. What if intruder had hurt his children? Vader pulled the two into a hug and kissed their heads. He couldn't allow that. He couldn't allow them to be hurt. To be taken away from him. They were all he had.

Gold eyes glared up at the vent. Vader would see his small children back to their nannies. Then he would hunt down this intruder personally.

Rusk made his way through the vents and passageways. It was slow. The security of this place was tight and heavy. He understood why now. Lightsabers. He hoped that whoever owned this place didn't move the lightsabers. Perhaps Rusk could come back and score some more. Yet wouldn't these six be enough? How much could he get for them? It had to be a lot. More than he had ever scored before.

Rusk paused. He noticed the metal beneath him getting colder. Why was it getting colder? And quite suddenly at that. He glanced around looking for any cooling coils or tubes that would explain the coldness, but there was nothing. The cold was starting to make him uncomfortable, so once again he started forward.

Suddenly the spot where he had been a moment before in the vent, bent upward. The metal groaning and screaming as the metal bent down and tore open. Rusk gasped. Over his shoulder and through the opening he saw a man. He stood staring right up at Rusk with angry golden eyes.

Run.

And Rusk did. He didn't pause to think about it any more. He pushed himself up on the balls of his feet and used his hands to crawl as fast as he could. Now he ignored all the security. Whatever that was, knew he was here. There was no point going slow now. That person, that thing, was dangerous.

Stop.

Rusk stopped without thinking. A red beam shot up into the metal in front of him. It sliced toward him, but Rusk was just out of range.

Back. Back.
Rusk scrambled backwards as he watched as the metal of vent was ripped down as if by a giant claw. He had avoided being dragged down with it. The man was there again. This time holding a red laser sword. No a lightsaber. That was a lightsaber. Like the six he carried in his bag.

"A force sensitive thief?" snarled the man.

_Run. RUN. MOVE!_

Rusk was again moving as fast as he could. He crawled back the way he came, but this time he took a turn he hadn't before. He had to get away from that man. That . . .

_Kark. Karkin' kriff._ How had Rusk _kronged_ this up? That was Vader. That was Lord _karking_ Vader. Rusk ran through all the other curse words he knew. He soon ran out and just repeated the ones he already said. How had he run into Vader? What was he doing here? Rusk had to run. He was going to have run fast.

He was so lost in his thoughts, he didn't notice the air vent and until he tripped over it. He slammed into the vent, causing it to buckle. Rusk tried to regain himself, but the vent buckled and broke open. Rusk toppled out and slammed into the floor below. He heard a scream. Luckily a woman's scream. Not a manly scream. Did Vader scream?

Rusk rolled himself on to his feet. His was in a hallway of the rich house. The same white floor and soft gold walls. How _kriffin' big_ was this place? That's when he noticed the woman. A human. An adult, but young. She wore a black dress with a white apron. In front of her were . . . Oh _shavit, _seriously? The two human children were there. Again. The two were unchanged how Rusk had seen them earlier. They both wore their little red outfits. They big round eyes were staring at Rusk.

The woman's eyes darted down to the children and back to Rusk and back to the children. She ran towards them, and so did Rusk. The woman grabbed the girl child. Or at least the one with the brown hair. Rusk grabbed the yellow hair one. The child let out a whiny scream noise as Rusk hauled the boy up into his arms. He put the child in a choke hold and then pulled out his blaster from his bag. He pressed the end of the blaster to the child's head.

"Wuke!" the other child cried. Her little hands were reaching out for the one in Rusk's hold. The human woman held her child tighter and angled her body so she was between Rusk and the child she held.

"Weia!" the child in his arms called back. "Weia!"

"Wuke!"

"Shut up!" Rusk shouted. The boy, Wuke?, started to cry and wiggle in Rusk's hold.

"Please," the human woman cried. "Let him go! He's just a child! A baby! Please!"

"Where's the exit?" Rusk hissed. Darth Vader was still lurking around this place. He had to get out.

"No, please give him back," the woman pleaded.

"Where's the _karking_ exit?" Rusk shouted. He squeezed the boy tighter. He made little choking noises and wiggled harder.

"Dada," he cried. "Dada!"

The woman's eyes were large and full of fear. They kept flickered to the boy and then back to Rusk.
"This-this way," she said. She slowly started down the hall. She was walking backwards. Never taking her eyes off Rusk. Not allowing the girl child to be firing range. Smart woman, Rusk noted.

The boy continued with his pleas but softer now, "Dada. Dada."

Something was wrong. Darth Vader didn't know what, but the Force was a buzz all around him. Something was wrong and Vader hated not knowing what was wrong. He knew there was an intruder in his house. A pale blue humanoid, but was there something else? He moved towards the disturbance. That was when he felt the fear. It almost caused Vader to trip over his own feet. His breath got caught up in his throat.

*Luke*

Luke's fear was broadcasting into the Force all around Vader. Vader ran. He wasn't a person who ran, but he ran now towards the glowing beacon of his children. He reached out in the Force towards his children. Leia was scared as well, but nowhere near as scared as Luke. His son was on the edge of panic. *Why?* Vader asked. He was almost there. Almost to his precious little ones.

He turned the last corner and stopped dead in his tracks as he took in the scene. One of the nannies was holding Leia. She jumped and let out a small yelp as she saw Vader. She squeezed Leia tighter. Further down the hall was the thief who had stolen the lightsabers. The thief held Luke in a chokehold and a blaster to Luke's head. The little child was crying.

"Dada! Dada!" Luke cried. His little hands reached and grabbed for his father.

"Dada! Dada!" Leia cried as well.

But Vader was only focused on Luke. His son. His precious tiny little son hanging in the grasp of some scum. *His* child. *His. HIS.* The rage that overtook Vader was bottomless. It fed his powers into the Dark Side. He could feel his rage and hate lash out violently. Leia let out a cry and hugged the nanny.

"Dada," she whimpered.

"Let my son go," Vader growled as he started to approach the thief. There was a small bit of satisfaction as the thief realized the boy in his arms was Vader's son. As Vader came even with the nanny, he glared over at her. "Take Leia and go," he ordered. She only hesitated a second, then she nodded and ran down the hall.

With Leia safely away, Vader could devote his whole attention to the scum ahead of him. The scum whose hold on Luke had tightened. Luke was trying to break free. Vader's poor little baby kicked and clawed at the thief. But he was so little, so little and tiny, that he couldn't fight back against the creature holding him.

"Let. My. Son. Go," Vader demanded again as he came closer to the thief who was now backing away from Vader.

Vader brought up his hand. The blaster in the thief's hand was ripped away. Vader swiped his hand to the side and blaster was thrown into the wall nearby. The thief watched in horror as he weapon fell to the ground. At once his free hand started to grab at the bag. The lightsabers, Vader realized.
"No," Vader said.

At once his own lightsaber was in his hand. The red blade came to life with a quick snap-hiss. Vader wasted no time. He couldn't allow the thief to pull a saber out. A lightsaber was dangerous, and that fool would easily cut off his own arm and the child it held. Vader titled his body low and threw his saber out. It spun across the hall, just above the floor, and easily sliced into the legs of the thief.

He let out a loud scream and fell to the floor. Luke screamed as well as he fell with the thief. Vader was there at once grabbing Luke's arm and ripping the boy away from the thief. Luke was crying and his little hands at once tightly clasped around Vader's neck.

"Dadadadadada," the child cried into Vader's neck.


A pained groan snapped Vader's attention back to the body squirmed at his feet. Vader snarled in disgust at the thief. Vader took a moment to consider how he should kill him. Choke with him with the Force? Stab with his lightsaber? Decapitate him?

"Dada . . . Dada . . ." Luke continued to cry. Vader's shoulder was wet from his son's tears. No this thief did not deserve any of those quick deaths. That was too merciful. Vader summoned his lightsaber back to him. He deactivated it and clipped it back on his belt. He used the Force to turn on his commlink so he could summon his guards to drag the scum away. Vader would deal with him later. The thief would have a death deserving of his crimes. A very slow painful death.

Yet later that night, Vader's thoughts were not on the thief. Instead they were on the two small children snuggled up on his chest deep asleep. It had been a hard night with the twins. Any time Vader put Luke down, the boy would start screaming to be held again. Leia, Vader's tiny little angel, would ask her brother where his boo-boo was. She would kiss his arm or cheek to try and make him feel better.

Luke finally fell asleep exhausted from all of his crying. Leia followed soon after. Vader laid still. Not daring to move in fear of waking either child. He listened to their small breathing. He felt their little heartbeats against his chest. Every now and then he would lean his head down and give them both a small and gentle kiss on the head.

Eventually Vader allowed sleep to claim him. He had to convince himself his children were safe. They were in his arms. Right here with him, where he could keep them safe.

Rusk laid on the bench in his cell. His eyes kept traveling down his body. He would look past his knees, see a bit of leg and then nothing. No ankles. No feet. Nothing. His legs had been cut off a bit below his knee. By Darth kriffing Vader and his red lightsaber. He thought of two little children. Darth Vader's children. He should have known. With those stupid red little outfits. Red like Vader's lightsaber. And those big round eyes that followed him everywhere. How they weren't afraid when he had first pulled his blaster.

The more Rusk thought about it the more and more he realized how stupid he had been. Who else had a wall of karking lightsabers in their house? Who else was actually smart enough to have security like that? Rusk shivered as he recalled Vader's words to him. "Let my son go." There was a
deep anger and hatred in those words. Why was Rusk even alive?

Well he wouldn't be for long if he just let himself sit in this cell. The troopers that emptied him in here had given him a shot. They laughed and said it would keep him awake and make his pain more intense. But Rusk wasn't some soft Coruscantee. He was used to working on no sleep. He was used to pain. He examined his cell again. It was made of dark gray metal. The walls angled slowly upward.

But the floor was made of grates. There was no toilet in here. No other drainage system. The grates allowed for easy clean up. Rusk noticed the slow drainage below the floor and smiled. He reached into his mouth and pulled out the fake teeth. The troopers had only down a quick pat down on him. Only searching for the obvious weapons. Good thing Rusk wasn't human and didn't have as many teeth as them naturally. His back few teeth were fake. They came out together along with a metal mouthpiece that kept it all together.

He snapped the metal ribbing bars off the teeth. They snapped perfectly into small sharp little tools. He screwed the battery-pack teeth into the end of the tools. He slid off the bench and onto the floor. He at once used his tools to burn through the metal of the grates. Luckily it was only simple durasteel. Slowly Rusk was able to create a hole big enough for him to fit through.

He pocketed his tools and eased down into the hole. The drain tunnel below was filled with foul smelling liquid, but it wasn't the first time Rusk had crawled through sewage before. He would do it again and again if it meant he would live. He flipped himself on to his stomach and started to crawl down the sewer to hopeful freedom. He was grateful to walk away with only his life.

Chapter End Notes

Artwork on this fic
Vader was never a Jedi. Instead he stayed on Tatooine where he discovered a Sith holocron with a Sith ghost living inside. A sith master that will do anything so its apprentice become stronger in the ways of the Dark Side.

Slowly Luke started to awaken. His blue eyes blinked a few times as he took in his surroundings. The child slowly pushed himself up and looked around the large cavern. A small pallet lay on the ground on which he had been asleep on. Sitting nearby on the floor, with legs crossed, his arm on his knee, his head rested in his arm, was Luke's father. He wore a black leather tunic. His dark blonde hair curled around his face. His right hand was completely gloved up to his elbow.

"Daddy!" Luke called seeing his father. At once he tried to get up but was jerked down before he could finish standing. Luke's head whipped around to notice his body was chained to the wall at his wrists and ankles.

"Da-daddy?" he cried as his blue eyes sought Vader. "Daddy why am I chained up? Daddy?"

The other figure said nothing. He didn't move. Just sat there staring. His gold eyes never wavering.

"Daddy!" the child cried again. "Let me out! Please! Let me out! Why am I chains?" The child's voice was getting more pained and more frantic. The father's free hand clenched into a fist. He bit down on his teeth as he listened to the pleading continue. "Daddy! Daddy!"

"Tell me," a dark voice said. At once the child quieted. His chest heaved in deep breaths as he fought off panic and sobs. "Where did you get that scar on your knee?" Luke's father asked.

Luke looked down. He wore a simple white tunic and pants. He pulled up his pant legs and saw a large pink scar that ran down the side of one his knees. He gently fingered the length of the scar. Then he laughed. It was not the laugh of a child. As the laughter faded into echoes in the cavern, gold eyes squinted at the father from the child.

"Vader. Vader. Vader," Luke said. His voice was no longer that of a sweet child. It was off. Distorted. It scratched against Vader's ears. "Still acting so cruel to your son?"

"You," Vader hissed, "are not my son. Get out of him."

"How many times have we been through this Vader?" the thing inside Luke asked. "The only way to free me from your son is to kill the boy."

"I will not accept that answer," Vader snarled back.

The not-Luke shrugged and sighed. "Still weak," he whispered. Then suddenly he shouted, "Still weak! I am trying to make you strong, Vader! Make you invincible! This child is a weakness. Cut him down!" Vader still sat unmoving and quiet. "Tell me I haven't already done my job as a good master and made you stronger already? Now that you're free of that pathetic wife and daughter?"

"You will not speak of them!" Vader roared as he jumped to his feet. The Sith inside Luke only
laughed.

"See? See how much anger you have now? How much hatred? Pain? How much stronger in the Dark Side you have become? Let it go, Vader. You wish for revenge against the murderer of your wife and daughter, well he's right here." The Sith motioned to the body he inhabited. To Luke. "You're still the same boy that crashed his podracer into a canyon and rolled down into a cavern and found a Sith holocron. Found me. A Sith master trapped inside that infernal device. You are still the same. Still angry and burning with desire of revenge against all who have wronged you."


"And your Luke is a weakness!" the Sith inside Luke hissed. "You are a Sith! You cannot love! It only holds you back. Unleash your power. Strike the boy down. No one will be able to stand above you. You can finally strike that fool Darth Sidious down and claim this galaxy as yours!"

Vader took a deep steadying breath. Then he turned on his heels and marched away.

"Don't run away!" the not-Luke screamed. "You are weak, Vader! You will never be a full Sith while this boy lives! You know it to be true! To become a true Sith one must strike down their master! It is the way of our Order!"

Vader said nothing. He didn't turn to face the creature using his young son's body and voice. He stalked out of the cavern, letting the accusing screams die behind him.

He made his way up the winding staircase that had been cut into the rock itself. It was a long trek until he made it to the thick blast doors. There was no control panel on this side. Only an intercom and a single button to call with. Vader pressed it. At once a voice responded.

"It's Vader," was all Vader had to say. The doors slowly slid open. He stepped through and the doors slid shut behind him. There was a heavy thunk as the doors rested into place and the locked settled. The two guards saluted Vader, who only ignored them and walked on. He made his way up from the lower levels of his palace, back to his own personal room.

Once there he walked across the room to the large balcony that gave him an impressive view of the sand dunes of Tatooine. He leaned against the railing as his eyes found the road that led to his palace from Mos Espa. Vader could make out the white skulls that lined the roadway on either side. Most of the skulls belonged to the now-extinct Tusken Raiders. Though there were other skulls mixed as well of various races. Many of which were the old slavers of this planet.

It was a testament to all who came here. To all who dared challenge Vader. Let the skulls speak for themselves. There had been those who hadn't heeded the warning. The Trade Federation had come to beg for trade deals with Vader once he controlled a nice portion of the galaxy. They thought to offer Vader a slave. He still recalled seeing her. Brown curls and brown eyes that burned with a fire. A fire that Vader easily recognized. She wore a skimpy slave outfit of gold metal and loose fabric. A giant collar hung heavily on her neck.

He marched over to her. The Federation ambassadors thought he was examining the slave. Instead he leaned over and whispered into her ear, "Take my blaster. Kill them. I won't stop you." He leaned back so she could read his eyes. See the truth there. He could clearly see her thinking through it. Was Vader telling her the truth? In the end she had only internally debated for mere seconds. Her chained hands grabbed at his blaster, she spun around, and expertly shot the two ambassadors and their two droid guards down.
Vader wasted no time in using his red lightsaber to free her from her chains. Then he took her to the processing wing to get her slave chip removed. She marveled at the others in the room. "What is this?" she whispered. Around the room all types of sentients were having their slave chips removed. From Twi'leks to humans to Wookies. Once the chips were removed they received a basic medical check up.

"Freedom," Vader replied. Her large eyes stared up at him. "Go have your chip removed," he told her. "I can arrange for a transport to take you back to wherever you wish to go."

He thought that would have been the end of her, but it wasn't. Somehow she found him in the maze of his palace. How she got pass his guards, he didn't know.

"I wanted to thank you," she said. She told him her story. She was Padme Amidala, former queen of Naboo. Her planet had successfully fought back against the Trade Federation when she was queen. In revenge, they had captured her and forced her into slavery where she had been ever since. "I don't want to go back to Naboo. Not yet," she told Vader.

Vader let out a small laugh. "I know that look," he said. "I know that tone of voice. You want revenge against those who did this to you."

"Yes," she said. "Those two earlier were just underlings. Even if I return home . . . I'll never be safe. I don't see them letting me go back. Once they know I'm free, they hunt me down."

"Then stay here," he offered and she did. The two fell in love and married. They had two wonderful little children. Twins. A boy and a girl. Luke and Leia.

A red light seared through Vader's memories. He recalled that night. Running into the room. Seeing Padme and Leia laying on the ground. Their heads twisted at odd angles. Their faces forever etched in fear. Luke's eyes glowing yellow in the light. A horrible grin twisted on his angelic features. A cruel laugh echoing across the room. The fight to subdue his son had not been easy. The Sith inside Luke held nothing back. It had cost Vader his right arm, but in the end he was able to knock his child out.

"My lord?" a voice called bringing Vader out of his thoughts.

"What is it Cody?" he asked as he turned to face the clone.

Vader's first conquest outside of Tatooine had been Geonosis. They had underestimated him. He laid claim to their droid factories and was able to build his first army. When the newly minted Empire came for him, he focused on the clones. He called them his brethren. They were slaves as he had once been, and he offered them freedom. Citizenship amongst his lands. He would remove their biochips, no more than slave chips, and allowed them free choice. Originally it was only a few who defected, but once word spread more and more clones joined Vader.

"Latest intel, sir. From the Empire," Cody said. He held out a holodisc. Vader took the disc. Vader had his own men wear black with a large gold V on the shoulder. Many of the clones simply painted their amour black. Cody was no exception. The clone saluted and promptly left.

Vader turned the holodisc on. A recording of the holonet played. The holograph showed Emperor Palpatine giving a speech, one that Vader barely listened to, but the speech was directed at him. The Emperor hated Vader, but to Vader, Palpatine was one of many he had pissed off. Vader now held much of the outer rim in the galactic south. It cut off a lot of trade and resources to not only the Empire but to the Hutts as well. Vader's combined bounty was a very impressive number.
But it didn't matter. In the end they would all fall. Like Jabba the Hutt had on this planet years ago. He had been Vader's first conquest after he found the Sith holocron with his Sith master inside of it in the desert canyon. Yet a dead Sith master wasn't the only thing Vader found down there, he also found a large cache of water. He would later learn it was Jabba's secret cache, but Vader piped it out. He sold the water off. For in the desert, water is worth more than gold. He used his new fortune to build his army and lead the assault against the Hutt.

It was not a quick battle. It was long and bloody. In the end the sands of Tatooine ran with blood, but the slavers were dead. The slaves were free and swore their loyalty to Vader. That was when Vader took his vengeance against the sand people for killing his mother. He killed them all. He lined the road to his new palace with their skulls along with the many slavers of the planet.

But Tatooine wasn't enough. Vader craved more. His water cache had run dry, but what was left behind was more valuable than water. Water was only precious on Tatooine. Ionite was precious throughout the whole galaxy. At the time the only other planet to have ionite was Bandomeer. How it had remained unnoticed on Tatooine, Vader didn't know. Miners had long ago settled on Tatooine. They sucked the planet dry and then abandoned it. The native Jawas used the old mining transports as caravans. Even Jabba had used an old mining facility as his palace.

It didn't matter to Vader in the end. The ionite provided him with not only wealth but power. Ionite could break through any energy field and could be made into explosives that would destroy defensive shields leaving Vader's enemies defenseless. It was how he was able to conquer Geonosis. It was how he was able to defeat any of the Hutts who came for revenge. By the time the galaxy realized the threat Vader possessed, it was too late. By then he lay claimed to multiple systems.

But Vader would freely hand over planets, whole systems, if it meant he could have his son back. His Sith master was right, he was weak. He couldn't kill his little boy. His innocent child. The only one Vader had left that he loved. Everyone else had been killed. His mother, his step family, his wife, and daughter. That only left Luke.

Vader looked back at the blue holograph of the Emperor. Vader sighed. He tossed the holodisc over his balcony. He turned and retreated back into his room. Into the cold, dark emptiness that awaited him.

Vader slowly and quietly made his way across the cavern. Luke lay sleeping on his palette. Vader placed the tray of food down. He slowly kneeled down next to his child. As gently as he could, he collected the boy into his arms. It wasn’t easy to do without jostling the boy too much due to the thick chains, but Vader managed. He had done this before.

He cradled Luke to his chest. He kissed and petted the soft feathery blond hair. When Luke was asleep, he appeared as if he was fine. There was no parasitic Sith lord inside his mind. He was nothing more than Vader's child calmly asleep. Vader often wondered if his Sith master let Vader this close knowing the pain it caused him.

Sometimes, very rarely, would Luke wake up. It would be his Luke. The true Luke. It was how Vader knew his son wasn't dead. The two would be in tears. His poor son would apologize nonstop for killing his mother and sister. Vader would rock him and tell him it wasn't his fault. Eventually Luke would cry himself to sleep. The next time he awoke, Vader would meet with the Sith.

"I grow tired of this," not-Luke said.

"As do I," Vader grumbled in return. "Leave my son."

The Sith in the boy's body squinted his eyes at Vader. Then slowly a smile twisted across the pale cheeks of the boy. It was a horrible smile. "This ends now," the boy whispered. Before Vader could say anything, Luke's hand slammed into his neck. Only when he pulled it away did Vader notice the sharp piece of rock shaped into crude sharp needle. Blood started pouring at once from the neck wound.

"No!" Vader screamed as dashed over to the boy and placed his hands on the neck to slow the bleeding.

"The only way to save him," the Sith wheezed, "is to free me."

It wasn't the metal chains keeping the Sith down here, but the Force dampening qualities each cuff had in them. If Vader undid the cuffs, the Sith would have access to the Force again. He cared not for Luke. If the boy bled out during a battle with Vader, so be it.

"No," Vader moaned as he realized his dilemma. The boy only laughed. Vader delved into the Force. He summoned all of his rage and hatred. He recalled holding his mother's limp body in the tent at the Tusken camp. He remembered seeing the charred remains of his step-brother and step-sister-in-law. He saw Padme's glossy eyes staring wide at him in horror. He saw Leia's mouth open in a silent scream. He felt the warm blood flowing through his flesh hand.

Vader dove into Luke's mind. Shattering the shields the Sith had built. "OUT!" Vader shouted. At once the Sith was on him. He appeared as an inky black creature with four taloned arms and two legs. A large mouth filled with sharp teeth opened and let out an ear-shattering scream. He lept at Vader. The claws sinking into him. His real body grew cold where the claws dug into him.

Vader summoned the Force to him and pushed the creature off. The claws left long gashes along his arms. Vader pictured himself holding a lightsaber, and thus it appeared. He swung his lightsaber and cut off one of the arms of the creature, who let out a loud screech. Suddenly the creature had a lightsaber in each arm. Three sabers. All red and brought up to ready position. Vader didn't hesitate. He ran forward. His own red saber clashing and hissing against the other three.

"You can't win Vader!" the creature shouted. "I am your master! I have taught you everything I know! I know all your moves because they are my moves, boy!"

Vader didn't react to the creature's words. He delved deeper into the Force. It allowed him to stay just one step ahead of the three lightsabers. If he allowed for any distraction it would be fatal. Vader had no doubt if he died here, he would die in the real world as well. He couldn't allow that. He wouldn't allow Luke to die either. The only option was for this Sith ghost to die.

He was brought back to the previous duel. To the room with the two corpses lying on the floor. Of the horrible laugh coming out from Vader's boy. Luke had been able to use the Force with such ease and finesse that spoke of years of use. More years than Luke was old. Vader had swung his right arm forward and at once it imploded on itself. The bones snapping and creaking and blood vessels popping. The Sith had been so satisfied by this pain, he hadn't noticed Vader coming in with his
other hand. A sharp blow to the head knocked Luke off his feet. Vader knocked the child unconscious.

A screech from the monster brought Vader back to the fight. He jumped back away from the creature. He deactivated his lightsaber. It disappeared. He slumped to his knees. The beast was there instantly. Its lightsabers also had vanished. Claws tightened around Vader's neck.

"What are you doing, Vader?" it hissed. "Where has your fight gone? Do not tell me you mean to give up?"

Vader said nothing. The claws tightened their hold around him.

"Get up," the Sith hissed. "Fight me! The boy will die!"

The third arm grabbed Vader's right arm. It squeezed and the mechanical arm crunched and broke apart.

"Yes," the creature purred. "Yes. Let that anger consume you. Welcome the Dark Side."

"Yes," Vader said softly. He could sense the surprise from the creature. Vader leaned forward. "You were right master," Vader said. "I need to welcome the Dark Side." Vader's left arm lashed out and grabbed the creature by the throat. "I need to consume the anger!" Vader shouted. "Come now master! Be consumed by me!"

Vader pulled as hard as he could. He latched onto the Sith with all he head and pulled it towards him. The creature screamed. It's claws slashed at Vader, squeezed at his throat, but nothing stopped Vader from sucking the creature into him. The inky blackness was being stripped from the creature and flowing into Vader. He welcomed it in. The anger. The hatred. The darkness. He consumed it all. It coursed through his veins. Through his mind. He could feel the creature clawing inside of Vader. Hear its screeching now inside of Vader.

Vader withdrew from Luke's mind and entered his own mind. The Sith creature was pacing and snarling. Vader only smiled as he summoned all of his rage and all of his powers. No longer did he have to worry about Luke. For a brief moment he felt the fear coming off his master.

"It is the way of our Order, master," Vader said as he let his darkness completely crush and consume the Sith.

Vader leaned against the railing of the balcony of his bedroom. Night had settled on Tatooine bringing with it a cooling breeze. Vader's flesh hand gently rubbed up and down his right arm. He could feel the faint scars left from his battle with the Sith. It had left his arms crossed with thin slashes.

He turned to his room. He could make out the large bed and the small form that slept on it. Luke was sound asleep. There were no chains. No Force dampening cuffs. No parasitic Force ghosts. Just Vader's child deep asleep. Luke had not been left unscathed from the Sith. His mind had been injured. It left the child huge gaps of memory loss. It was perhaps for the best the boy didn't recall the death of his mother and sister. Yet some of his good memories of his family were gone as well.

Vader's mind had been changed as well after consuming his Sith master. His rage was quicker to
rise. He was much quicker to lash out violently and often deadly. He found he was enjoying pain and suffering and fear much more than before. He was enjoying the darkness. In the end, it was a price Vader was willing to pay as long as he had his Luke back. He walked back into his room toward the child that Vader would scoop into his arms and hold all night. Every part of him thankful he was able to do so.
Chapter Summary

((A bit of a crack fic. Part of my Halloween Trick or Treat Luke & Vader series.)) Ensign Han Solo didn't know if this was a trick or not. He had been summoned to Lord Darth Vader's personal quarters. Now the Supreme Commander was asking Han about . . . cats? It'll be a treat if Han makes it through this alive.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The pathetic Rebel worms had been crushed. The warehouses they had used as a base of operations now burned. Millions of residents called the Kuat Drive Yards orbital stardocks home. These residents worked in the Drive Yards building the Empire's ships. There could be no rebellion here. Darth Vader marched through the streets back to where his shuttle waited. The drive workers had all scattered earlier when they heard the march of the boots of the stormtroopers. Now Darth Vader walked alone along the empty streets.

As Vader walked he noticed a box on the side of the road. Written in sloppy writing the front of the box read: Free Kittens. As Vader got closer, a small cat jumped up to the lip of the box. Its front paws resting on the side. It was a small yellow cat with bright blue eyes. At once they seemed to settle on the Sith lord. Vader's step faltered only a second as he looked into the large round eyes, but then he kept moving on leaving the box and the kitten behind.

But then his steps started to slow. He couldn't shake the feeling he was being watched. He turned sharply. The small kitten was watching him from the box. Vader clenched his fists, stormed back down the street, and stopped right in front of the box. He towered above it, but the kitten didn't shrink back in fear.

The yellow kitten looked up at Vader with its blue eyes and let out a soft little mew. The Sith didn't move. He just stared. Another little mew escape the kitten and one of its little paws clawed playfully towards Vader.

That was when Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, Supreme Commander of the Imperial Navy, decided to he wanted a kitten. He couldn't explain it. Sith did not have pets, especially such small useless ones as this kitten. But . . . those eyes and pleading mews and it's cute little paw trying to play with him. With Vader.

He knelt down and gently wrapped his large hands around the yellow cat. It didn't run away. It was calm as Vader started to lift it up. That was when Vader heard the hiss. His eyes were on the yellow cat, thinking he had squeezed too hard. But it wasn't the yellow cat, but a new cat. Jumping out of the box, claws out, a brown cat stuck its claws into Vader's glove. The brown cat had round folded ears that were now flat against its head as it hissed at Vader.

Vader transferred the yellow cat into the unmolested hand and tried to shake the brown cat off. But all four feet had clawed themselves into Vader's gloved. The cat had unnatural brown eyes. (Didn't
cats have yellow eyes?) After several moments of trying to shake the other kitten off of him, Vader knocked the brown cat into the hand with the yellow cat. At once the vicious cat calmed down. It snuggled against the yellow cat though it still threw some hisses in Vader's direction.

Thus Vader returned to his shuttle with not one cat, but two.

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Ensign Han Solo had no idea why he had been summoned to personal quarters of Darth Vader. Solo had never been to any decks near this level. They were all for high ranking officers, and this deck alone was exclusive to Darth Vader. His stormtrooper escort led him down the endless halls to a large double door. The doors slid open to reveal the large form of Solo's supreme commander.

Fear was an adequate word to describe how Solo felt in that moment.

The stormtrooper stepped out of the room, the doors slide shut, and left Solo alone with Lord Vader. There was a tense moment of silence and stillness, and then Solo remembered protocol. He snapped into a salute.

"Ensign Solo, sir," he said.

Vader didn't immediately respond. There was just the eerie sound of his breathing for a few long antagonizing seconds. Finally the dark lord spoke up.

"At ease ensign," Vader said. Solo clasped his hands behind his back. "I looked over your file. An orphan from Corellia. No family. Just the Empire."

"Kriff," Solo cursed to himself. This was not good. Not good at all. This was the type of talk people gave you when they wanted someone to do something unsavory. When they wanted someone who didn't matter if you disappeared and were never heard from again.

"Tell me Ensign Solo . . ." Vader paused. Solo felt his breath trapped in his chest. What was Vader going to ask him to do? Spy on officers? Kill someone? Sabotage something? "What do you know about cats?"

Solo stood there dumbfounded. At first he thought about perhaps cats was a codeword for a secret Imperial project. But finally he managed to squeeze out, "Ca-cats? Sir?"

"Yes."

"Like . . . like the pet, sir?"

"Yes."

"I uh . . . don't know much about cats."

Another long pause filled with breathing.

"You will need to research cats, especially their young."

Ok, what was this about? Solo was so confused. "Sir?"

"Kittens, Solo. You will need to read up on kittens," Darth Vader replied.

"Why?" He couldn't stop himself from asking. Only afterwards did he curse at himself with for his loose tongue. One didn't just question their superior officers. It was why Han hadn't advanced much in the navy as he should have. And quite frankly, questioning Darth Vader could end up worse than
a demotion. Everyone knew Vader killed people who annoyed him. Han swallowed hard as he awaited the commander's response.

Vader stood still examining Solo. Despite the mask, Solo was sure Vader was eyeing him up and down. Probably thinking of the best way to kill him. Maybe he would be lucky and get the laser sword. That would be quick. Then Vader turned sharply on his heels. His cloak snapped behind him as he marched over to another door.

"Come," Vader ordered without looking back.

Han took a sharp intake of breath, steeled his nerves, and followed Vader through the other door. It appeared to be a large office. Han looked over his shoulder. Hadn't he just been in an office? There was a large formal desk in the previous room. But that room was rather . . . empty. Bare bones. This other office was larger and clearly looked more used.

The large desk was piled with neat stacks of datapads. A large holotable stood nearby. There was a large board on the wall with flimsi prints of engine schematics and fighter blueprints that had handwritten notes posted up near them. This clearly looked like Vader's personal office compared to the other office. Perhaps the other one was for more official and public uses?

Vader hadn't paused. He walked into the room over to a large metal box. There was no lid. He stopped and looked down into it. Then he looked over at Han, who slowly walked over. He grew more cautious the closer he got to Vader. He reached the box and looked down. Inside were . . . kittens. Two kittens. A yellow and brown kitten. They were curled up next to each other sleeping.

"Luke and Leia," Vader said gesturing to the cats with a large gloved hand.

"Kittens?" Han said completely surprised. "Sir?" he added quickly.

The black mask turned to face Solo again. "Yes, Solo. Kittens. My kittens. They are in need of supplies. You are to research everything there are to need. Procure such items, and bring them to me." Vader fished a chipstick out of his belt pocket. "This will provide plenty of credits."

Han took the stick. He looked at the stick, down at the kittens, and back up at Vader.

"Uh . . . Sir? I don't . . . I don't think I'm going to find pet supplies on a star destroyer. I don't think they're keeping kitty litter on stock."

"The fleet will soon pull out of hyperspace at Corellia. Surely you know your home planet enough to procure pet supplies. A shuttle will be waiting to take you planetside."

Was Darth Vader pulling his whole kriffin' fleet out of hyperspace so he could allow some random ensign to go get him pet supplies for his new kittens? Is that what was happening?

"I understand sir," Solo said a bit slowly.

"Good," Vader replied. "Also, Solo, if you mention my pets, this mission, to anyone, I will know. You are not to tell anyone about this. Am I clear?"

The threat was super clear to Han. "Yes sir," Han replied.

Solo had done a decent job in finding adequate pet supplies for Luke and Leia. The kittens themselves seemed to enjoy their new belongings. Vader had set aside a corner of his personal office for the cats. He placed their cat beds next to a small heater. As Solo had explained "They really like
sleeping where it's warm. It's not very warm on a starship, sir." It had been a correct assessment. The two little kittens slept by the heater a lot.

Luke had a little blue bed while Leia's bed was white with the word "Princess" embroidered in gold across the side. It appeared that Solo had a sense of humor. The ensign had also gotten a collection of cat toys and scratching pads and treats.

It was a very odd thought for Vader to realize he enjoyed the kittens. When was the last time he enjoyed something? When he felt joy? That wasn't in killing? But he did enjoy his two new little pets. He liked playing with them. His scarred lips smiled as he watched them chase a feather on a string.

Luke was by far Vader's favorite. The kitten would climb into Vader's lap and rub against him. He would purr, curl up, and sleep on Vader's lap. Leia was a different matter. She had gotten better, but she still disliked Vader. She hissed at him a lot. He could get her to play, and every now and then, if Luke was next to her, he could pet her without her hissing or attacking his glove.

Though what annoyed him the most was that Leia had no issues with Solo. In fact the brown kitten appeared to like Solo a lot. Whenever the ensign would come in, Leia would trot over to him and meow loudly at him. She would rub against his legs and let herself be picked up. She would purr happily in Solo's arms. Vader wanted Leia to do that with him.

"Ensign Solo," Vader said when Solo had come by to check on the kittens.

"Yes sir?" Solo asked.

"Why is that Leia likes you?" Solo looked down. He was holding Leia in his arms. Vader could read the confusion off the simple man. So he continued, "She does not like me. She hisses at me and won't let me hold her unlike her brother."

"Uh . . . I don't know sir. Have you tried being nice to her?" Solo asked, but Vader's silence was a clear answer. "How about only give her good treats when you're around? That way she thinks being around you is a good thing? Also make sure you aren't too . . . "

"Too?" Vader prompted.

"Scary," Solo said.

Han Solo gently took the cats out of the pet carrier and put them on their beds. They had both been sedated and were still sleepy. He gently pet them both for a bit before he stood up and left Vader's office. He was tired and ready to go get some sleep. Darth Vader had commed him in the middle of the night requesting Solo's immediate presence. When Solo arrived at the lord's quarters, he saw poor little Luke vomiting. It was clear Vader was tense and uncomfortable.

Thus this was how Han Solo had hidden two kittens and their pet carrier in a metal supplies box. Darth Vader had pulled his fleet out of hyperspace, so a shuttle could leave his ship to take his pet cats to a vet in a nearby star system.

How had Han's Imperial navy career come to this? A cat wrangler for the Supreme Commander?

Han yawned as he entered the tubrolift. However, it only went down a few more levels before the door opened again. An older man walked in. Han eyed the rank insignia on his chest. It had four red squares on top and four blue squares on bottom that were spaced widely apart. A single code cylinder hung to the right.
Han snapped to attention. "General, sir," he said.

"At ease ensign," the general said in a tired tone. He clicked a few buttons on the lift and the doors slid shut.

As the two rode down in silence, Han became very aware of the general looking at him. Not just looking, blatantly staring.

"Ensign what is your name?" the general asked.

"Ensign Han Solo, sir."

"Solo?" the general said in an oddly pleased tone. He smiled. The lift came to the general's stop and the door slid open. The general looped his arm around Solo's shoulders pulling him out of the lift. "How about a drink Solo?"

"A- a drink? Sir?" Solo asked.

The general dragged him through a set of double doors into a large room. Han looked around uncomfortably. This had to be the officer's lounge. A bar was against one wall. Various couches and chairs were set up around the room. There were tables where a few officers were playing sabacc or other games.

A few glanced at the general and the ensign. Some, most of those in the army like the general, nodded their heads at the general. A few eyed Solo's ensign rank questioningly. The general dragged Han to the bar.

"The usual," the general said to the droid bartender. He turned to Han. "And you?"

"Corellian whiskey," Han said. He wasn't about to pass up a free drink. The droid whizzed away to prepare the drinks. Once they had their glasses, the general steered Han to a set of couches near the large viewport. A man already sat there nursing a drink.

"Firmus," the general greeted happily.

"Max," Firmus nodded back. He looked over at Han. "Who is this?"

"This is Ensign Solo," Max said as he clapped Han on the back. Firmus eyes widened, but otherwise he didn't respond.

Han sat down in a chair next to Max and Firmus, which allowed him a good glance at Firmus' rank insignia. He quickly noted Firmus was a captain. Wait. Captain? As in the captain of the kriffin' ship Han was on at the moment? Han took a big swig of his whiskey.

"Solo," Max said. "I was hoping you could help me out."

"With what sir?" Han asked not liking where this was going.

"With a bet," Max said with a smile. "I've got a good amount of credits riding on this." Han only stared. "Now I know you've been assigned as Lord Vader's assistant. Kriff. "You've been going to his personal quarters quite regularly." Karkin' kriff. "And you see, the weirdest thing happened at an officer's meeting the other day. It was noticed that there was hair on Lord Vader's cloak. Blonde hair."

Kriff me into all hells, Solo cursed.
"Now, I've never seen hair on Lord Vader before. Does he even have hair? No one knows. But many believe its not his hair. So thus brings us around to the bet I've gotten involved with," Max said.

Han only stared at the general. What was he going to say? He couldn't say anything. Vader had made it pretty clear he would kill Han if he ever told anyone about the cats. The captain mistook Han's silence for ignorance.

"He wants to know where the hair came from," Firmus said dryly.

Max nodded, smiled, and took a sip of his drink.

"I'm afraid . . . sir . . . I can't tell you that," Han said.

Max leaned over towards Han. "But you do know, don't you?"

"Leave him alone, Max," Firmus scowled. "Even if Lord Vader did have some secret lover on the side, I'm sure he's been quite clear to this lowly ensign not to tell anyone."

"Secret lover?" Han exclaimed.

"Is it not a lover? Something else then?" Max asked still looking intently at Han.

"I'm sure the ensign would like to keep his head," Firmus said, "by keeping Lord Vader's personal life . . . personal."

Max sighed and leaned back in his seat. Han empitied his glass in one swallow.

Vader looked over the item Ensign Solo had left for him along with the note. It read: Your officers have noticed cat hair on you. You can have a droid use it on you next time you walk out. It's a hair collector. Picks up stray hairs the kittens have gotten all over your cloak. P.S. There is a betting pool that believes your stray hairs are from a secret lover. P.S.S. I told them nothing. P.S.S.S. To prove I have said nothing, some think I'm your secret lover, which I value my life far too much to ever say that about myself.

Vader slowly made his way into the room with his hyperbaric chamber. He sat down in the large chair and with a wave of a hand used the Force to press the button to close the large globe. The chamber hissed as it sealed shut and the fresh oxygen started to pump through. Vader slowly took off his helmet and mask. He set the mask and helmet down at his feet.

He leaned his head back and closed his eyes. He started to let himself go into the Force. However, his meditation was quickly cut short from a soft sound. At once he sat up straight and glanced down. Pawing at his helmet was little Luke. As if sensing Vader's attention was him, the kitten stopped and turned its blue eyes up at Vader.

At once the kitten jumped at Vader's legs. It used its little claws to climb up his leg into his lap. Vader at once wrapped his large gloved hands around the kitten. What should he do? Was it even safe for the cat to be in here? Would the air affect the kitten and its small lungs? Vader placed the kitten back in his lap. He leaned over to grab his helmet and mask. Luke took the opportunity to jump onto Vader's shoulder.

Vader froze as he felt, he felt, the small wet nose press against the skin of his cheek. Vader slowly looked over at the yellow cat. Luke was sniffing Vader. Vader could feel the wet nose, the tickle of the whiskers, and the soft fur pressing against him. When was the last time he actually felt such
things? Then he felt the rough little tongue as Luke licked him. Vader flinched as the tongue inflamed his sensitive skin.

Luke seemed to sense Vader's pain. The kitten started to purr and rubbed his head against Vader. Then the little cat curled up in the crook of Vader's neck. Luke purred as his eyes slowly closed. Vader slowly leaned back in his seat. He didn't want to knock Luke off his perch, which would happen if he reached down for his helmet. Instead he used the Force to bring the helmet and mask into his hands, but then he froze. Luke was in the way of him putting his mask and helmet on properly.

Vader sat there frozen. He knew he should just gently grab Luke and pull him down, but . . . he couldn't. That is when he heard another sound and felt another set of claws climbing up his leg. He glanced down to see Leia was now in his lap staring up at him and Luke. Clearly wanting to be where her brother was, she climbed up Vader's chest and on to his other shoulder.

Like her brother, she sniffed Vader's exposed face. She didn't lick him, but she didn't hiss or growl at him either. Instead she started to purr. She curled up on his shoulder. Vader figured he might as well try to meditate as he was unwilling to move or put his mask back on. He closed his eyes and let himself go into the Force. He became so acutely aware of the two little kittens sitting on his shoulders. He could not only hear their happy purrs, but feel it in the Force as well.

Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, was lulled to sleep by the purrs of his two little kittens.

Chapter End Notes

For those who really liked the first chapter/story in this collection, Back to the Past. It is being worked into a longer fic.

Also some art of the last scene over on my tumblr. (Scroll down)
The Red Place

Chapter Summary

((Part of my Halloween Trick or Treat Luke & Vader series.)) When Luke Skywalker sleeps he often dreams of the Red Place, a dream landscape where is able to meet with his father Anakin Skywalker. A man who claims he is alive and kept prisoner by the Empire. It's a treat to find out his father is alive, but Luke desperately wants to save his father. Plus he secretly fears this is some trick of the Force. Perhaps his father is dead, and this is all but a dream.

Luke threw his orange jumpsuit into the cockpit of his fighter. He pulled on a black robe with a hood over a black nondescript outfit. It would help him blend in with the black volcanic rocks of the Mustafar landscape. Stepping out from the rocky overhang he had hid his ship in, he pulled the hood over his head and looked up. A large towering fortress pierced the smokey red sky. The tower was backlit by the bright lava river that flowed behind it. A single thin lava waterfall exited the tower and made its way down the cliff the tower sat upon.

The Red Place, Luke thought as he made his way over the sharp rocks towards the base of the cliff. This is the Red Place. I didn't know it was a real place.

Shortly after the Battle of Yavin, Luke started to have dreams of the Red Place. A dreamscape of red smokey skies and black rocks. The landscape was endless and offered very little besides the black rocky hills. Until one dream Luke spotted a figure sitting on a large rock on top of a hill. It took several dreams for Luke to even reach the hill the figure sat on. When he finally made it to the top of the hill, the figure turned to him. It wore a long black cloak with a deep hood. Its face was completely covered by shadows.

". . . Luke?" the figure asked clearly surprised.

That was when Luke learned that the figure was his father, Anakin Skywalker. Like Luke, Anakin visited this place in his dreams. Yet the real surprising part was that Anakin was alive. All of his life, Luke had been led to believe his father was dead.

On Mustafar, Luke reached the base of the cliff. He carefully walked along the side of the cliff until he spotted the ventilation tunnel with a grate covering it. Using his lightsaber, he sliced open the grate and walked into the tunnel. His hand gripped the hilt of the lightsaber, his father's lightsaber.

"Have you practiced what I last I taught you?" Anakin had asked as he sat on his usual rock on top of the hill in the dream Red Place.

Luke unclipped his dream lightsaber from his belt. At once he fell into the opening stance of the kata Anakin had taught him. He went through the kata while Anakin sat quietly and watched.

"Good," Anakin replied when Luke finished. "Though the question is, can you do it that well outside the dream?"

Now inside the ventilation tunnels, Luke slowly made his up toward the fortress. Toward the prison his father was kept in.

"Please father let me help you," Luke begged for the hundredth time to his father in the Red Place. "There has to be a way! Tell me where you're being kept prisoner. I can get the Alliance to help free you."

Anakin let out a small sad laugh. "No Rebel fleet can free me, young one."

"Is there no way for me to free you?" Luke asked dejected.

Anakin was quiet for a long time before he finally spoke. "You may not be able to free me, but there is a way you might be able to meet me." Luke looked into the dark shadows of the hood. "In person," Anakin added. "Not here." He waved his hand at the place around them.

"Yes!" Luke said instantly. He noticed Anakin's sharp movement of surprise.

"This would not be a rescue attempt," Anakin warned.

Luke knew that, but even just meeting his father in person would be enough. Perhaps he could learn of a way to get his father free. Anakin spoke so little about his situation, despite all the prying Luke did. Luke was convinced there had to be a way to get Anakin free. Plus . . . meeting his father in real life. Sometimes he worried that perhaps this was all just a dream. That Anakin was a ghost like Ben was.

"That's fine," Luke said. "It would be nice to meet you face to face. Then I could show you I do know these katas just as well in the real world."

There was a flare of warmth from Anakin in the Force, which was how he showed his happiness. Luke labeled the action as Anakin smiling under his hood.

"Let's do this," Luke said. He couldn't hide the excitement in his voice or in his eyes. Anakin paused as he clearly looked at Luke.

"You would have to come alone . . ."

Luke frowned. No doubt Anakin was being kept some place very secure and most likely very top secret. Luke had wondered a few times if perhaps Anakin was kept somewhere on Imperial Center.

"I am not completely powerless here," Anakin continued. "I can mind trick a guard or two, but only enough for one person. Any more and they would grow suspicious."


Luke was so close to finally meeting his father in real life. It wouldn't just be a dream. But this fortress bothered him. The place vibrated and reeked of darkness in the Force. A few times Luke had put his hand to his mouth, as if protecting himself from noxious fumes. He eyed the black rocks of the old lava tubes. The rocks sometimes seemed to move and shift on their own, but when he took a harder look the rocks had not moved.

There was something wrong with this place. Something dark and twisted. Perhaps Anakin was right. Perhaps there was no escaping from this prison. Luke had yet to even make into the fortress. Would the darkness being thicker there? How had his father lived the past twenty years here?

Something brushed against Luke's mind. It caused him to jump not only in real life but in the Force.
as well. The presence quickly backed away. But then it came back slower and gentler.


*Father?*

A flash of warmth. A smile. He was here! Anakin Skywalker was here! Luke was so close to meeting his father.

*You have done well so far, young one. Keep going,* Anakin said.

Luke pushed on. He was rejuvenated after hearing his father's voice. It was getting hotter and louder. He could hear the low rumbling of lava and feel it shaking the earth around him. A layer of sweat was starting to build up under his robe. The tunnels were starting to lighten with a red glow. Finally Luke turned a corner and the tunnel emptied into a much larger tunnel.

A steady flow of lava flowed through the large tunnel. The lava roiled and bubbled. It was loud, but not deathening. A man made walkway carved into the rock lined one side of the tunnel. Luke followed it. He had memorized the directions from Anakin, but he felt the gentle pull and push from his father in the Force. The tunnel ended, at least horizontally. Luke glanced up as he saw the lava falling down from a height unseen.

It was now loud as the lava crashed into the underground river. Luke found a stairwell and climbed up the flights till he reached a durasteel walkway. The tunnel up here was large and wide. Now metal paneling was built into the wall. There were also a few instruments and control panels spaced throughout. A walkway extended across the tunnel in front of the lava. On the far side stood several control stations and . . . a tall figure wearing a black robe.

Luke would know the silhouette of his father anywhere. He shouted out, but Anakin didn't react. His back was turned to his son. Luke quickly made his way across the walkway. The lava waterfall was to his left. It was loud as it poured down the tunnel. No wonder Anakin hadn't responded. He wouldn't have heard Luke's shout.

*Luke, Anakin said. His back still to his son. We will have to talk to through the Force.*

*That's . . . that's fine,* Luke replied a bit disappointed.

*This was the best place for us to meet without anyone being able to hear or see us,* Anakin explained.

Luke nodded. He understood. He took a deep breath as he looked at his father, who was now slowly turning to face him. He was met with the same image he had seen the Red Place. Anakin was tall. He appeared much taller in real life, but otherwise he wore the dark heavy black robe that completely hid his face with a long hood.

Luke couldn't hide the disappointment from crossing his face. He wanted to know what Anakin looked like. He wanted to know . . . to understand who he was. Where had he come from. Did he look like his father? But perhaps it wasn't too surprising. Afterall it looked like the Red Place was based on a the real Mustafar. It made sense that how Anakin appeared in the dream was also how he looked in real life.

It is . . . it is a prosthetic, Anakin explained.


A silence stretched between the two. It was clear Anakin was looking at his son. Luke could feel the gaze all over him. Finally Anakin spoke again. Thank you.

Of course I would come, Luke said.

No . . . that is not . . .

Luke titled his head to the side. Anakin sounded pained. As if he was struggling. Perhaps he was. How long had he been kept in this place? Twenty years? How much true human interaction had he had? What did they do to him in this place? He was a Jedi knight. Had they tortured him? When was the last time Anakin had felt any sort of kindness and love in the real world?

So Luke just smiled up at the shadowed hood. He saw the cloaked shoulders rise in surprise, and then slump back down in relief. There was a flash of warmth in the Force as Anakin smiled, which only made Luke smile bigger in return.

Father . . . Is there really no way I can save you? That I can free you from this place?

Even if I were to leave this place, I would not be free my son. The Emperor has his chains deep around me.

There must be a way . . . Luke cried.

The hooded head turned away from Luke. There is only one way I know of, Anakin said slowly.

What? What is it?

For the Emperor to die.

That wasn't . . . That wasn't that surprising. But it was also an almost impossible task. Clearly Luke looked dejected.

He can be killed Luke, Anakin said. There was a confidence in those words. A sizzle of determination, power, and desire.

How? You think the Alliance hasn't tried?

A bright flare shot through the Force laced with amusement. Had his father laughed?

Only through using the Force can the Emperor be killed, Anakin explained. The Emperor is a Sith, a lord of the Dark Side. It is his power that keeps me imprisoned.

Luke's mouth hung open. The Emperor? He thought Darth Vader was the only Sith. But there were two? Luke once again became aware of the darkness that hung around this place. It was heavy.

You can do it, Luke, Anakin said. His hood was once again pointed at his son. Together. You and I can take the Emperor down.


He was barely trained. He thought of the one time he had faced Vader on Cymoon 1. It had showed how little he knew. Though he knew he had progressed some under Anakin's tutelage in the Red
Place. He feared it was nowhere near enough.

*I'm not a Jedi yet,* Luke said softly.

*I am well aware of that young one.*

Luke felt his cheeks burn and he glanced down at the ground.

*Let me complete your training.*

Luke's head snapped up. His blue eyes went round. *But... how?* When Luke had discovered his father lived in the Red Place, he had asked Anakin to train him in the ways of the Force. But Anakin said such things in the dreamscape were impossible. The most he was able to do was to show Luke lightsaber katas and give a few lectures on the Force. Proper teaching of the Force had to be done outside of the dream.


There was a pain in Luke's heart. *Stay here?* In this prison? But... He looked at the hooded figure. He recalled Anakin's soft words. They were almost a plea as if he was begging Luke.

What if he did? What if he did stay here and properly learn the ways of the Force? He would finally be a proper Jedi. He would be able to face Darth Vader and the Emperor. And he would be with his father. He could get to truly know Anakin Skywalker. It wouldn't be just in dreams, but in real life. Hadn't this been what Luke always wanted? To know his father? To learn how to be a Jedi just like him?

But there still seemed to be so many other questions. What about the Alliance? Leia and Han? Would they be alright without him? But in the long run wouldn't this be for the better? Plus... the only way for Anakin and Luke to kill the Emperor together, would mean Anakin escaping. His father would be free!

*Ye-yes...* Luke finally said. Then he took a deep breath and raised his head up high. *Yes, I'll stay here and let you teach me.*

*You must swear yourself to my teachings, Luke,* Anakin said.

*How do I do that?*

*Kneel and repeat these words.*

Luke slowly knelt in front of his father. Then he repeated the words, *I pledge myself to your teachings.*

*Henceforth you shall be my apprentice,* Anakin said. *Rise.*

Luke stood back up. It felt like such a simple thing, but it must have been some Jedi ceremony. Ben had never asked Luke to do such a thing, granted he never had time. But there seemed to be something different. The connection between his father had changed. Had it grown stronger?

Luke could sense Anakin's happiness and... a sense of victory? Also the darkness seemed to have grown thicker. Despite the heat of the lava, there was a chill. Though it seemed to be more inside Luke now than outside. Was this what Anakin had meant about the Emperor's power keeping him chained? Was Luke feeling some of that?
Anakin took a step closer. *Now that you pledged yourself to me*, he said, *it is time that you learn the truth.*

Luke tilted his head. What truth would he learn? He watched as Anakin's gloved hands slowly rose to the hood. Luke eyes went wide. He was finally going to see what his father looked like! The hands lifted the hood up and the hood slid down. Luke only stared in horror to see the black mask of Darth Vader staring back at him.

*Anakin Skywalker*, the voice of his father said through the Force, *died long ago and was reborn as Darth Vader.*

Luke took a small step back. He shook his head. This couldn't be true. This was impossible. There was no way . . . no way that . . . Anakin . . . his father was . . . Darth Vader. The rest of the cloak fell off of Vader's shoulders revealing the full suit. Vader raised a hand and offered it to Luke.

*Now come my son, my apprentice. I shall teach you the ways of the Force. Together we shall end this bloody conflict that has spread across the galaxy. We shall remake the galaxy into how we want it. We shall rule together as father and son.*

Luke wanted to scream. He wanted to run. For a brief second he even thought about jumping off the walkway into the lava. But found he could do none of those. His body felt heavy. Weighted down. As if cold heavy metal chains were wrapped around him pinning him in place. Then he realized what his father had meant earlier. *The Emperor has his chains deep around me. It is his power that keeps me imprisoned.*

And now Darth Vader had done the same to his son, Luke Skywalker.
Vader, Lord of Fashion

Chapter Summary

((Part of my Halloween Trick or Treat Luke & Vader series.)) Modern AU: Who knew helping out famous fashion model Han Solo with his car would lead a farmer boy to New York City? To see a real live Vader fashion show, was a treat to Luke's eyes. However, he wasn't expecting to catch the eye of the world famous designer. When Vader asks Luke if he wants to be a model, he fears it is some sort of trick.

The backstage was a hive activity. Assistants and stagehands buzzed around Darth Vader, but he was still. He stood tall, unmoving, his arms crossed. Like always he wore all black. His long dark blonde hair hung in loose waves and curls. He wore a frown, because annoyance, anger, and frustration always appeared to be Vader's permanent expression.

In mere moments his fall haute couture fashion line would be debuting down the runway. He should be happy or excited, perhaps nervous. But no, the world famous designer was internally fuming. The models were starting to line up as the start time to the show crept nearer. Vader looked along the line and noticed the still empty spot. Spot number 17.

Han Solo, Vader cursed to himself.

Vader had made and broken many model's careers. Solo had oddly come out as the most successful. Vader had met him on a New York City street corner trying sell cheap knock-off Vader purses. But there was something about the dirty swindler that Vader liked. A rogue-ish look that drew him in, and clearly that charm drew the world in as well. After appearing in several of Vader's runways and ad campaigns, the model started to book commercials and TV spots. Current rumors were he was being signed to a big movie deal.

However, the man was supposed to be here. Now. At Vader's show in spot number 17. The two still had a contract together. And Vader was a man not to be crossed with. For he was the best of the best. For the past nineteen years the Vader name was equivalent to high fashion.

No one knew where Vader came from, but from his first runway show he'd been a force to be reckoned with. He knew how to design. He could see a body regardless of size or shape and make a stunning outfit with all the right lines and curves. He was, however, a merciless designer. If one wanted a custom one-of-a-kind outfit, all he wanted from the client was their measurements and what type of event the outfit would be worn to. Everything else was Vader's decision.

From fabric choice, color, length, or patterns it was all Vader's choice. He was rarely a compromising man. You asked him for an outfit, you got an outfit. There was no changing it. You either accepted it or didn't. Those who had were his long-time repeat customers, had just come to accept his way of designing. You just had to put faith in him even if the outfit wasn't what you were expecting. It was almost like Vader had this sixth sense that extended beyond fashion. He could read the upcoming trends in fashion, and made it so his creations were always on the forefront in new ideas and trends.
Vader prided himself that he had only hit the worst-dressed list once. However, that wasn't his fault. He had designed a dress for a new up-and-coming young actress. She took his dress and let some other designer hack away at it. She showed up to the Oscars wearing some bastardized version of the dress and claimed it was a Vader.

Vader had his revenge. He got Artoo to hack into the actress's phone. It took a bit of digging before Artoo was able to get a video of the actress going off on some racist and homophobic rant. A simple leak to the media was all it took to drag her career down the drain. As for the designer, well once again Vader used Artoo's hacking skills. The designer would be coming out with a new high-end fashion line that heavily used a wonderful brocade fabric from Italy.

Vader secured a swatch of the fabric, sold the design to cheap knock-off factories in China, and then made sure the fabric made its way into the the low-end cheap ready-to-wear lines. By the time the designer's fashion-line debuted on the runway, the same high-end Italian fabric was seen all across Targets and Sears. Yes, Darth Vader was not a man to cross.

Vader glanced over at his personal assistant, Piett. The man had no sense for fashion, but he was an excellent assistant. Piett caught Vader's eye and shook his head. Still no word from Solo. Already the wheels were starting to turn in Vader's head if Solo didn't show up. First he would find out if that Hollywood deal was true, then he would do whatever was necessary to make sure Solo was kicked off the project.

"Sir!" Piett said snapping Vader out of his thoughts of revenge.

Vader looked pass the assistants, models, and stagehands. There swaggering in with an air of relaxed confidence was one Han Solo. In his wake was the large Russian man, Chewbacca, who was Solo's agent. Solo slowly made his way over, only causing Vader to grind his teeth. The insufferable man clearly either didn't care how late he was or he was just trying to anger Vader. Or both.

"Yo!" Solo said as he approached. "Sorry I'm late. My car broke down."

Why was Vader not surprised that Solo's piece-of-junk YT-1300 Corellian had broken down. It was the same car the man was living in and selling purses out of when Vader first met him. Why he still had the thing, Vader did not know.

"Get him in hair and makeup, now!" Vader snapped not in the mood to verbally spar with Solo.

Solo had the sense to let himself be led away. Chewbacca nodded at Vader as he moved to go follow his charge. As the Russian turned away that was when Vader saw him. A boy. Young. Fresh. He was glancing around at everything in wide-eyed wonder. He was covered in engine grease and Vader almost wondered if this was the mechanic that Solo had found to fix his car. Clearly the boy wasn't in the modeling business. He wore worn out old jeans and a faded red t-shirt. His blonde hair was long and shaggy . . . and yet . . .

Vader scowled at himself as he marched away. It was time to get the show started. A large TV screen was set up behind stage so Vader could watch as the models walked down the runway. Yet his attention kept being drawn back to that dirty kid. He spotted him milling around with Solo and Chewbacca.

The kid reminded Vader of himself. Young and starry eyed once. He also reminded him of someone else who was small with the same facial build. She had the same wonderful smile and eyes. Such thoughts caused Vader's heart to clench in pain. He snapped his attention back to the screen and the fashion show.
After the show ended, Vader dragged Solo into a corner.

"I know. I know!" Solo growled. "You can save the lecture, old man."

Vader pointed a finger at the model. "Do not think for one second Solo your actions are excusable," he hissed.

"And I told ya, my car broke down."

"Get. A. New. Car," Vader said. "You can afford it. I think you can afford paying your mechanic as well. What did you do, bribe him?"

"What Luke?" Solo said with a smile. "He's a good kid! Look at how much fun he's having."

The two both glanced over at the wide-eyed youth as he talked shyly to a group of models. His cheeks were flushed with pink. There was such a fresh innocence to him.

"This is not a place for entertaining guests, Solo," Vader snapped a moment later. Then he turned and left.

"I thought this was exactly that! How many guests are you entertaining here today, Vader?" Han called out after the designer.

After the interviews and small-talk with celebrities, Vader finally found himself home in his penthouse apartment. The skyline of New York city glowed through the windows. A whistle caught Vader's attention. Sitting on the couch was Artoo. He was a short African man only a few years older than Vader.

Artoo didn't speak. Couldn't. Instead he communicated in sign language as well as a combination of clicks and whistles. Sometimes he just took to texting.

"The show went fine," Vader mumbled as he made his way into the apartment. Another whistle from Artoo. "I'm angry because of that insufferable Han Solo, who showed up five minutes before the start."

"Oh, Master Vader you're home!" Vader's butler, Threepio, said. He was a tall pale man with blonde hair. He had a thing for wearing bright yellow. Said it was a happy color, which was odd considering how filled with anxiety and nerves the butler was. "I shall have dinner readied at once," Threepio stated as he tottered off towards the kitchen.

The three of them made up Vader's odd little family. They both knew Vader from before he was Vader. When he went by a different name. When he had a different life. One filled with friends and love . . . a wife . . . there was even going to be a child. Then he lost it all. The friends. The wife. The child. Now he just had Artoo and Threepio. And fashion to keep him busy.

As Vader walked sluggishly into his bedroom, he eyed a portrait of his late wife. She had been dazzling. A true fashion icon. And she wasn't even a model. She had been a politician. The old pain in Vader's heart flared up whenever he thought of her. Force, he missed her. How would his life have turned out if she had lived? Had their child lived?

The image of the boy from the show popped into Vader's head. His goofy smile and bright blue eyes. Vader scowled. Why was he thinking of that kid? But . . . he looked at the picture of his wife. What would their child look like? Would it have looked like that kid? Like Vader had when he was young?
Luke Skywalker was surprised when he was told that Darth Vader wanted to meet with him. He was just some kid from the country. He was supposed to be helping on his uncle's farm, but instead he had been helping in Fixer's Garage in Anchorhead when Han Solo had rolled up with his busted YT-1300 Corellian. Well one thing had led to another which had led to a being backstage at a high-end fancy fashion show.

And now that designer wanted to meet him.

He was nervous as he walked off the elevator into Vader Studios. A secretary met him.

"I'm Luke Skywalker," he said. "I was asked-

But the secretary cut him off, "Yes, yes. Mr. Vader has been waiting for you. His assistant will be with you shortly."

Luke nodded and moved to sit on a nearby padded bench. The assistant didn't take long. He was an older man who led Luke through the design rooms. Designers sat hunched over at drafting tables or desks with laptops. There were racks of clothes everywhere. Bolts of rolled up fabric leaned against tables next to sewing machines. Large boards were everywhere with fashion sketches and photos of models or inspirational photos with swatches of fabric tacked up.

Luke felt really out of place. He knew nothing about fashion or clothes. He got a lot of his clothes at the thrift store or were gifts from his aunt. No one really cared much about clothes out in Anchorhead. He looked at what some of the designers were constructing on mannequins. They were amazing creations. Clothes that looked far too luxe and expensive for Luke. He had been amazed to hear from Han that the outfits worn at the fashion show started at $30,000. Luke simply could not imagine buying a single outfit for that much money.

He was led to the back of the studio and up a spiral staircase to a second level. This area was much more open. Not as much clutter, and there weren't any people. In fact there was only one person who stood near a table by a large window. Luke recognized him from the fashion show. Darth Vader. It was a name even Luke knew. Granted he only knew that Vader had to do with rich fashion like Gucci, Prada, Armani, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton. Names Luke had only heard of in movies or songs. He honestly would never be able to pick out anything from those designers. And yet here he was meeting the famous Darth Vader. He wondered how many girls or guys from his old high school would kill just to be standing here.

Vader stopped his work and looked over at Luke. It was Luke's first time being so close to the man. Luke could tell he was older than he looked. There was a certain age to his face that was still relatively wrinkle free. Luke was sure the millionaire, or maybe he was a billionaire, could afford some amazing skin care products as well as plastic surgery. Yet the man didn't look like he had ever had any work done to him. There was something natural about him. He also looked very serious and stern. He held himself rigidly. Made Luke think of old military veterans.

"Mr. Luke," the assistant said. Vader nodded and the assistant walked away.

"Tell me, Luke," Vader said. "How is it you came to know Han Solo?"


"And then what?" Vader said. "He just offered a ride into the city? To go backstage at my fashion show?"

"You do not seem like the fashion type."

"Uh . . . no I'm not."

"Why agree to go to a fashion show?"

Luke shrugged. "Why not?"

One of Vader's eyebrows titled up. There was a very slight curve to his mouth, but nowhere near enough to call it a smile or even a smirk.

"Can I ask why you called me here?" Luke asked.

"You remind me of myself a bit," Vader replied. "When I was young I worked in a mechanic's shop. Even did some street racing."


Vader paused. "Beggar's Canyon? As in . . . the road? Out of Mos Espa?"

Luke tilted his head. "You've heard of it?" He couldn't hide the surprise in his voice.

"I . . . I am familiar with the area," Vader said.


Vader's sharp blue eyes narrowed at Luke. He was reexamining Luke. It was clear the wheels were turning inside the designer's brain, but Luke didn't know about what.

"Come here," Vader said as he waved over to a table that had some clothes laying on it. Luke walked over to it. "Take your shirt off," Vader ordered. Luke paused, but then did as instructed. Vader handed him a shirt. It was silky soft dark green shirt. Luke pulled it over his head. Vader walked around Luke like he was a prize cow up for auction. The designer pulled at the sides and started to pin the shirt tighter with bobby pins.

"Better," Vader mumbled.

"Uhhh?" Luke asked unable to form words.

"Better," Vader repeated louder. "Much better than those dirty mechanic clothes you walked in with."

Luke didn't doubt that. "Uh . . . sir? Why are you dressing me in clothes? Why am I here?"

"Ever considered modeling, Luke?" Vader asked.

"Me? No. No. I just work at my uncle's farm and do some part time at Fixer's Garage."

"Really? That is all you have ever thought about being? A farmer or a mechanic?"

"Not much else to be in Tatooine County," Luke said with a shrug. "Plus I thought models were tall and dashing. Like Han Solo."

Vader scoffed at the name. "Let me show you something boy," Vader said as he walked away. Luke
followed. Vader led him over to a wall. On it was a large full-body photo of a woman. Luke recognized her from his New York state history class.

"That's Senator Amidala!" Luke said.

Vader nodded.

She was dressed in a stunning gown. The outer layer was a blue velvet while the inner dress looked like rippling flowing gold. The gold dress was high collared an elaborate black beaded necklace wrapped around her throat and draped down all the way to her chest.

"Did you . . . Did you design that outfit?" Luke asked.

A small soft laugh escaped Vader. Luke looked over to see him smiling.

"No," he said softly. "No, she was before my time as a designer."

Luke nodded. The senator had died tragically quite young at the end of the war twenty years ago. It was rumored she had been assassinated.

"But she was a leader in fashion. She was also small and petite. Size does not matter."

"Pfft," Luke said softly. "I mean no offense, sir, but . . . She is . . . amazing. Beautiful. I get the point you're trying to make. But to compare me to her . . . no offense but I'm just a simple farm boy. She's a goddess."

"A goddess? Yes she was," Vader said more to himself than to Luke. Luke wondered if perhaps Vader had known the senator. "But you do not recognize your own importance, Luke. You do not realize the power within yourself. You can be a force in fashion just as she was. I know this to be true."

"You know this?" Luke asked. "How?"

Vader smiled at him. "That is my power, young one. I know fashion."

Luke looked back over at the senator. Vader saw the same thing that was inside her inside of him? A simple boy? He tried to imagine himself as one of the models on the runway from the fashion show. He tried to imagined himself in Han's spot. It just seemed funny.

"I don't know," Luke said. "My uncle needs me on the farm . . ."

"Why is your uncle of importance?" Vader asked.

"Oh well he's my guardian. My parents died when I was born. My aunt and uncle raised me," Luke explained.

"I would think your guardians would want you to rise above your station," Vader said a bit coldly.

"I would just need some time to think about it," Luke said. "If you don't mind that is."

"I suppose that is fair," Vader said. He walked back over to his table and Luke followed behind. "What is your contact information?" Vader asked as he picked up his phone from the table. It felt so weird giving some famous guy his cell number. Luke listed his number to him. "Last name?" Vader asked.


"What were your the names of your aunt and uncle?" Vader asked. The tone had suddenly shifted. Vader was very serious. He almost seemed dangerous. Luke was unsure if he should answer.

"Umm Owen and Beru Lars," Luke said.

"...Lars?"

"Do- do you know them?" Luke asked recalling Vader had said he did know the Tatooine County area. Though it would be kind of odd to know of the Lars family.

"As in Cliegg Lars?" Vader asked.

"Oh that was my grandfather," Luke said a bit relieved as clearly Vader did know the family. How, was a mystery.

"Grand- grandfather?" Vader choked the word out.

"Yeah, he married my grandmother, Shmi."

Vader's face had gone pale. "Your... your grandmother Shmi. Was your... was your father... Anakin? Anakin Skywalker?"

"Oh? Did you know him?" Luke asked.

Vader was quiet for a long time. Luke didn't know what to do. Should he leave? By the time Luke got the nerve to say something, Vader spoke up. His words were dark and angry.

"I would like to speak with your uncle, young Skywalker. Owen Lars and I need to have some words."
Night of Spirits

Chapter Summary

((Part of my Halloween Trick or Treat Luke & Vader series.)) It has been a few months since Darth Vader discovered and claimed his young son. The child asks his father if they can go to the Festival of Harvest to attend the Night of Spirits where festival goers dress up in costumes and collect treats. While Vader buys Luke a costume, the child changes it in secret to trick his father.

Darth Vader looked down at the small child. It had been a few months since Vader had discovered the truth. That his child, his son, had lived. The boy had been whisked away and kept from his father. But Vader had found out the truth and claimed the child as was his right.

"Father?" Luke asked. His big blue eyes looking up at the tall dark Sith lord. There was uncertainty there, but not due to fear as almost all others when looking at Vader. Luke had quickly overcome any fear towards his father. Something to this day Vader was honestly amazed by.

Luke was just little ball of joy and sunshine and love. Yes love. The little boy loved Vader. It sung triumphantly in the Force all around the child. Luke was a blessing. He was everything a child of Padme Amidala should be. Kind, sweet, caring, and loving. There was very little of the father in the child, which honestly Vader was thankful for. He liked Luke just the way he was.

"Yes Luke?" Vader replied.

"Your ship can go anywhere in the galaxy right?" Luke asked.

"Yes."

"Can it go to Rendili?"

"Any system you can name, this ship can go there," Vader replied. Luke took a step closer to his father. Vader asked, "But why Rendili?"

"There's a festival there," Luke explained. "I saw it on the holonet. It's the Festival of Harvest. The festival ends on Night of Spirits. Everyone dresses up in costumes! And they get sweets and candy if they do! I want to go!"

Vader's first instinct was at once to tell the boy no. The child had no concept of his own importance. A public festival would be a nightmare to keep Luke safe.

"Please, father," Luke begged. He leaned forward and grabbed one of Vader's large hands. Little fingers wrapped around black gloved ones.

"I will . . . think about it," Vader answered not having the heart to disappoint the child. "I will research this Festival of Harvest and Night of Spirits."

A huge smile spread across Luke's face. That was all it took for Vader to know he would be taking his son to Rendili.
Several days later Luke sat in Vader's lap at Vader's desk. They were shopping via the holonet for a costume. Vader had researched the Rendili holiday. Originally the idea had been to scare away evil spirits by dressing up in scary costumes, but over time that notion was lost. Now people dressed up in whatever costumes they desired.

Luke didn't seem all the interested in the creature costumes. There were costumes of nexus, rancors, gundarks, and more. Luke showed some interest in animal costumes such as loth cats, banthas, and convors. There were a dizzying amount of costumes. From plants, to famous holonet celebrities, to even food items.

After two hours of looking at countless costumes, Luke finally exclaimed, "That one! I want that one!"

"Are you sure?" Vader asked.

"Yes!" Luke said excitedly.

Vader eyed the costume. It was based on local Rindili legends. Something called a vampire. A humanoid with sharp teeth that went around biting people's necks to suck their blood.

"Didn't you like that loth cat costume?" Vader argued. Luke would look adorable in it.

"No," Luke said. "I want that one."

So Vader ordered the costume. The week before the festival, Luke spent a lot of time in his room. Each time Vader went in there Luke would shout at his father.

"You can't come in!" Luke said. "I'm working on my costume!"

At night when Luke was asleep, Vader would take a peek at the small desk in the child's room. All his saw was a mess of black fabric and cut up pieces of paper. Finally the day arrived. Luke was so excited, though Vader was not. He dreaded this trip. He loathed social functions. He hated the stares and whispers. But Luke glowed with happiness, and Vader didn't want to dim that light.

Vader held a black furry cloak in his hands. It was his costume. Some tusks had been attached to the hood to make it look like an animal. It would blend in decent enough with his suit.

"Luke?" Vader called. "Have you finished getting dressed yet?" Vader's star destroyer was in orbit over Rendili. A shuttle had been prepared to take Lord Vader and his son to the surface. It was time to depart.

"Yes!" Luke shouted.

The door to the child's room slid open and Luke marched out. He wore a black shirt and pants with the long black cloak that Vader recognized from the vampire costume. The child also had on black gloves and black boots. On his head he wore a black plastoid bucket. Tied around his face was a black paper mask Luke had clearly made himself. On his chest, he had tied a thin paper box with grey and red squares on it. Lastly he had a belt on with a cardboard tube painted silver hanging off of it.

It took a moment, but then Vader realized that Luke wasn't dressed up as some vampire humanoid.

"Do you like my costume?" Luke asked.

The only sound that came out of Vader was the hiss of his respirator. He looked down at his son unable to think of anything to say.
"I'm you!" Luke said joyously.

It became clear now why Luke wanted the vampire costume. It came with the black cloak. The child had made everything else. From the helmet to the mask to the control panel on his chest to the sloppily painted lightsaber. Luke walked up and grabbed his father's hand.

"We match!" Luke exclaimed.

Night had fallen on Rendili. The Night of Spirits had begun. People walked around in costumes carrying orange buckets made to look like local orange gourds. Others gave out sweets, which the festival-goers collected in their gourd buckets. Walking through the crowd was a very tall man holding the hand of a young boy. The boy happily swung his bucket that sloshed with collected treats.

Darth Vader was all too aware of all the stares and whispers. He hated it, but . . . he had to admit it was quite different to see people smiling and nodding at him. He had left the black furry cloak behind. He simply walked around in his suit. The festival goers thought his suit was his costume.

It was wrong. Vader was on to be feared. People shouldn't be shouting at him for a good costume. They should be shrinking away. Hiding their children behind them, not calling their children over to look at him. Vader's hand twitched next to his lightsaber. He was tempted to light it to show it was real, but the weight pulling his other hand kept him from taking such an action.

Luke tightly gripped his father's hand. Though Vader couldn't see Luke's face beyond his paper mask, he knew the boy was smiling from ear to ear. His happiness radiated into the Force causing it to ripple in the world around him. At the end of the night, Vader collected the child into his arms. Luke rested his head sleepily against his father's armored shoulders. Luke's mask had been shoved into his gourd sweet bucket. His eyes drooped as he yawned.

"Father?" Luke said sleepily.

"Yes?"

"Thank you."

Vader didn't reply. He just squeezed his son a bit tighter as he made his way back to his shuttle. The Night of Spirits was coming to an end. Vader thought about how originally the festival had started as a way to scare evil spirits away. Who else was scarier than Darth Vader, Lord of the Sith? And any evil spirits who came near his son wouldn't just be scared away, they would be destroyed. Vader wasn't going to let anything touch this precious child. A child who loved his father so much he wanted to dress up like him. Who didn't see the suit and the black mask as scary, but something he loved instead.
Leia moved quickly through the great room. The young girl was small and few noticed her slip amongst the crowd. The tables were completely filled. The noise was loud. It was filled with people talking and laughing and clanking plates and cups. There were a few drunken tunes being sung here and there. Every now and then she could make out the sound of a fiddle or flute.

She carefully eyed the travelers as she made her way through the room. The soldiers of Alderaan wore the blue and white of her house. Plus she knew many of their faces. Instead she focused on the many visitors who had come into the palace with a visiting delegation from Chandrila.

She finally spotted what she was looking for. He was a dark skinned man in a patch quilt cloak. A small group of drunks gathered around him as told some lewd tale of a fair maid and a stupid knight. He finished his tale and the crowd dispatched. Most likely off to get more drinks and food. Leia at once placed herself in front of the storyteller.

"I'd like a story please," Leia said.

The storyteller looked at her. He looked annoyed. He was most likely looking for a drink and a rest before he rounded up the next crowd. But he smiled when Leia held up a gold coin. The man quickly pocketed it.

"What kind of story do you want milady?" he asked. "One of dashing knights and evil fairies? Perhaps you would like to hear of the great forests of Kashyyyk and the giant Wookies?"
"I want a story about the dragon," Leia said.

"I know many stories about dragons!" the storyteller said. "The great krayt that swallowed an ocean whole!"

"No," Leia said a bit sternly. "I want to hear about the dragon."

The storyteller paused. "Surely . . . you don't want to hear about the Sith dragon."

Leia smiled and nodded. She had always been fascinated about the story about the Sith dragon. Her father and mother hated her fascination. They banned all stories and books about the subject. Official minstrels and visiting acts were warned beforehand. As such Leia had to wait for moments like these when storytellers and jesters got swept in with a large crowd.

"Very well," the storyteller said. "But this it not a happy tale."

"I know," Leia said. She had heard the story a hundred times and a hundred different ways. Each story was different. There was always something added or taken away, but she loved hearing them all.

"Ages ago, in the time of early man," the teller started, "was the time of dragons."

Ages ago, in the time of early man, was the time of dragons. Skywalkers as they were called. Great beasts who took to the sky. They were able to harness the magic of the earth. The Force. They taught their secrets to man, to the Jedi Knights. But some knights grew jealous. They thought the skywalkers were keeping secrets from them. Withholding techniques of the Force. These knights turned the world of man against the dragons and thus the dragon hunts began.

It was thought that all the true and proper skywalkers were killed off. There were still dragons. The krayts of the desert. The sandos of the lakes and oceans. But none of these could fly. None of them were smart. None of them could use the Force. And time continued. Only the Jedi Knights knew the secrets of the Force. The great dragon skywalkers were a thing of stories and myths.

Now out in the east, there was a beautiful and peaceful country of Naboo. It was known as the land of hundred lakes and waterfalls. It was a rich and bountiful land. At the time, a girl had ascended the throne. She was Queen Amidala. However shortly upon her crowning, her country was invaded by Neimoidia. The young queen fled for her life, but the Neimoidians gave chase.

The queen had a four handmaids that were chosen due to the likeness to the queen. The queen and the handmaids each dressed in the same outfit. Then they split into five separate groups to confuse the pursuing enemy. The real queen fled into the Tatooine desert, but the Neimoidians sent a fierce Dathomirian assassin who was not tricked by the queen's ruse. He chased after her into the canyons of the desert. Right when she thought she would die by the assassin's blade, a beast swooped down and killed the assassin.

The beast was like none the young queen knew to exist, but had seen in plenty of paintings. It was a skywalker dragon. He had gold scales and blue eyes the color of the sky. Then she noticed a shackle around his leg with a long chain connected to it. The skywalker was trapped in the canyon by a cruel Toydarian peddler. The young queen freed the dragon from his chains and the two flew to great island city of Coruscant.

Now in Coruscant there meets the Great Assembly. They say 2,000 nations and tribes meet in the great rotunda there. Queen Amidala pleaded her case to the Assembly, but the Neimoidians had representatives there. They said the queen was lying for she had no proof of an invasion. Behind the
queen stood a boy with gold hair and blue eyes, and suddenly he transformed into a dragon. He said he knew the queen was not lying and would accompany her back to her nation.

Seeing a real dragon, the great Jedi Knights sent two of their own with the queen and the dragon. The company returned to Naboo, and with the aid of the dragon and the knights, the queen was able to liberate her country from the Neimoidians. With peace restored, the Jedi asked the young dragon if he would return to their temple back in Coruscant. In his human form, he could learn to be a Jedi Knight. The boy agreed and bid farewell to Naboo and the lovely queen.

Time went on. Skywalker grew older into a Jedi Knight. Eventually he crossed paths with Queen Amidala again. The two fell in love, but such a thing was forbidden for a Jedi Knight. They were sworn to their Order and weren't allowed to marry, but Skywalker and the queen married in secret. However soon the Great Trade Wars spread across the land. Skywalker became a great general and was known as the Hero With No Fear. Whenever he could, he would sneak off and spend time with his wife.

The storyteller paused. A few others had gathered around during his story, but he eyed Leia. "Girl," he said, "Are you sure you wish to hear this story? It's not one for young maids."

"I already know how it ends," Leia said. "Everyone does."

The storyteller nodded. A sad look crossed his face. He took a deep breath and continued.

Queen Amidala grew pregnant with Skywalker's child, but since their marriage was forbidden she hid all signs of it the best she could. However, eventually the Jedi Order found out the truth. They confronted the queen. There was an argument, which led to a fight. In the end, the lovely Queen Amidala of Naboo was dead. Her child with her.

When Skywalker saw his dead wife, he was overcome with grief and rage. His once golden scales turned black. His blue eyes turned a red gold color. No longer was he a skywalker, but a Sith dragon who they called Vader. Vader flew to Coruscant and attacked the Jedi temple. His mighty roar brought flames that towered into the sky. Boats said they could see the glow from Kuat and Corellia. All within the temple perished. No one survived, not even the younglings.

But Vader was not finished. As you may recall, the dragons were the original users of the Force. Skywalker and thus Vader had abilities beyond any other Jedi Knight. Somehow the mighty Sith infected the minds of the soldiers serving under the Jedi generals. A single order filled their minds: to kill the Jedi. The soldiers carried this order out without hesitation. It was only after the Jedi lay dead, did the soldiers realize what had happened.

With the majority of the Jedi dead, Vader returned to Naboo. There he mourned his wife. His grief created a poison across the land. His rage turned the hundred lakes and waterfalls into boiling lava. The land became blackened and barren. The beautiful palace in Theed transformed into a tall towering black fortress where Vader lives to this day. No longer do they call the land Naboo. It is now Mustafar, land of the Sith dragon. Home of Vader.

"To this day the dragon still flies from his fortress," the storyteller said. "Sometimes he attacks places where there are rumored to be hiding Jedi. Sometimes no one knows why the horrible creature descends upon a town or city. Many brave knights and hunters have set forth to Mustafar to slay the beast, but none have been successful. None have returned. It is said that only a Jedi Knight's crystal saber could pierce a dragon's scales. Now that there are no Jedi, there is no one to craft the kyber
crystals into glowing swords."

The storyteller sighed. "We can only hope that one day the dragon's anger will finally die out."

The storyteller nodded at Leia and moved off to get a drink. The small crowd that had gathered went back to their own food and drinks, except for one man in a hooded cloak who seemed lost in thought. Leia was losing herself in her own thoughts. She was comparing and contrasting the story she had just heard to all the others stories about Vader.

There were many different variations. There were some that said the Jedi Knights were already in Naboo when the Neimoidians attacked and were with Amidala when she was in the desert. Some stories included Skywalker's mother, who was a human slave who had to be left behind. There were also sometimes tales of how Skywalker was forced to compete in races against horse riders through the canyons.

There were tons of details that got added or taken away, but the core of the story remained. There was something about that story that resonated within Leia. She didn't know why, but the story of the dragon always fascinated her and annoyed her parents. They said it wasn't healthy or proper for her to focus on such things. She was a princess, and needed to focus on her studies. On her country. Her people.

The cloaked man made a grumbling noise bringing Leia out of her thoughts. She looked up at him. He was tall. His hood was deep which casted his face in shadow. His was looking at her. It set a shiver up her back. His eyes . . . were they gold in color?

"Tell me you do not believe in that fool's tale, girl," the man said to her. His voice was rich and deep.

"Some of it has to be true," Leia replied. It had to be. Her father was on the city island when Vader attacked the Jedi Temple. King Bail Organ had gone to the temple to help the Jedi, but the flames were too strong. The city guard turned him away.

"Perhaps there is a sliver of truth in there."

"Regardless it's just so sad."

". . . sad?"

"Yes, sad. That the dragon's wife and child died. He was just lonely and sad."

The man took a long look at Leia. "I have heard that story a great many times. Afterwards people usually curse the Sith's name. Never have I heard anyone sympathize with the dragon."

Leia shrugged. "What would you do?" she asked. "If the one you loved was killed by your own people? The people who raised you and you fought besides?"

"I do not have to wonder such things, child," the man said in a very soft voice that Leia almost didn't hear.

"Ahem," came a voice from behind her. Leia turned around and looked up at the Captain of the Royal Guard.

"Captain Antilles," Leia said. "I hope you are having a good night."

"Princess Leia. It is time to bid your guests good night," the captain said sternly.
Leia bobbed her head at the tall man and allowed herself to be lead away from the great hall. It was late, so when she got back to her room she crawled into bed. Her thoughts were of dragons and queens and knights as she drifted to sleep.

She awoke to the bright warm light of day. But as her eyes looked up at the ceiling, she noticed dark shadows still clung to the walls. It was still night, but warm light flooded in from the window. That was when she noticed the flames. That was when she heard the screams. At once she jumped from her bed and raced to the window. The palace was on fire! Flames stretched high into the night sky.

A great shadow moved through the flames. Large black wings spread out. A black head with spikes and sharp teeth reared back. A horrible roar filled the air causing Leia to flinch. The very walls and windows shook and rattled from the sound. Then fire poured out of the mouth of the great beast. It was Vader. The sith dragon. He was here!

"Princess!"

Captain Antilles barged into the room. His guard tunic was scorched and tattered. He had a large cut on his upper arm and his face was dirty and bloodied.

"Come princess!" he shouted as he marched into the room and grabbed Leia by the arm. He pulled her out of her room and down the hall. Her bare feet slapped against the stone tile of the palace hallways. The captain often had to change their path due to flames, smoke, or collapsed hallways. But eventually they made it down into one of the large cellars.

It was quiet and cool down here. The air was still nice. The cellar was currently empty. It usually held crates and barrels, but those had been given to the Chandrilans. Now the large room was bare, except for the group of people on the far end.

"Mother! Father!" Leia cried seeing her parents. At once she saw the queen and king turn to face Leia. Both of them smiled.

"Leia!" her mother called and took a step forward towards the girl. But then she stopped suddenly. The queen's eyes grew large as did the king's.

Leia looked up at Captain Antilles. He no longer was holding her by her arm. His hands were by his throat. They were grasping and clawing. His face was white. His eyes large and round. He made short choking sounds. Slowly he started to rise. His feet left the floor, but the captain didn't seem to notice. His hands still grabbed at his throat. Then suddenly a sharp snapping sound was heard. The captain's hands fell limp to his side. Then his whole body flew to the ground as if casually flung to the side.

Leia wrapped her arms around her as she stared at the captain's unmoving form. She glanced back over at her parents on the other side of the large storage room. She was going to walk over to them, but found her feet couldn't move.

"You will not go back to them, child."

She turned her head to see a man walk into the room. It was the same man who had listened to the storyteller's dragon story. Except now his hood pooled on his shoulders. She could see his long curly hair and a scar that slashed by his right eye. But most alarming were the eyes. Golden red eyes that glowed. Eyes that were focused right on Leia.

"Leia!" Queen Breha shouted.

"Vader!" King Bail shouted. "Let go of my daughter!"
"She is not yours!" Vader roared. His voice seemed much louder than a man's should be. It shook the air. "You stole her! She is mine!" Vader came to a stop besides Leia. His gold eyes looked down at her. As her eyes met his, his eyes softened. She could see it. She could feel it. There was a deep sadness in those eyes, but also a deep love. A black gloved hand came out of Vader's cloak and rested on her shoulder.

"She is a daughter of Alderaan," King Bail said as he took two steps forward. "She is my daughter despite whatever you may claim."

The softness in Vader's eyes instantly disappeared. His pupils turned into slits. His lips curled in a snarl and Leia noticed sharp teeth.

"She is a dragon," Vader hissed. "A skywalker. A creature of the air. Let me show you."

"No!" Queen Breha shouted.

But Vader ignored the cry. He looked down at Leia again. Her brown eyes were wide as she looked up at the silted eyes of the Sith dragon. Slowly his gloved hand rose, and he gently pressed a finger right in the middle of Leia's forehead. She took a deep breath and her eyes slid shut. There was something ringing inside of her. Like a large bell. She could feel the vibrations humming inside of her. They were growing louder and louder.

Change, came a dark deep voice.

Her body grew warmer and warmer. It felt like she was in a really hot bath. As if she was melting into the water. Her body was moving, changing. The ringing in her mind continued to grow louder and louder. Then it faded away. The heat cooled. When she opened her eyes she noticed she was now on the floor. She felt the cool stones against her belly.

She looked up to see Vader staring wide eyed at her. There was a look of shock on him as he stared down at her. Leia turned her head to look at her parents, but as she did . . . Her body was wrong. Something was off. Then she saw it. The white scales. The white leathery wings. Then she felt it. Those were her scales. Her wings.

At once her head whipped around to take stock of her body. No longer was the body of a girl, but that of a dragon. She tried to move, but her body felt heavy. It wasn't responding. It felt so off. How did she move wings? And a tail?

But it also felt so right. This was her. She was a dragon. A skywalker.

It is all right, came a soothing deep voice. Vader was slowly approaching. This is just the first time in this body. You will eventually learn to move.

Vader walked up and his glove hands reached down to her face. His hands rested gently on her . . . her snout? Is that what she had now in this body? He gently stroked her.

Beautiful, he said softly. You are so beautiful.

She looked into his gold eyes. She felt pulled into them. She could feel him. Not just his human body, but . . . beyond that. He was large. Fierce. Dark. Cold. Hot at the same time. And horribly powerful. She could also feel her parents behind her. They were so small and weak compared to the tempest before her. She could also feel the hum of life above her. She could feel lives fading out as they fell to the fires.

Was this the Force? The magic of the earth and life?
She also felt the truth. This man in front of her was not just a man. He was a dragon. He was her father. There was a connection between them. It was now growing larger and larger. She could feel her father's sharp cold presence digging into her mind. She winced, but he didn't retreat. Then she felt like something locked into place.

Vader, in his human form, leaned forward and kissed Leia's snout. *You need to change back,* he said softly. *Change.*

Again she could feel her body warming up. No. No! She didn't want to go back to being a human! Not yet! She wanted to stay like this. But her body grew warmer and warmer. She could feel the wings getting smaller and smaller. Until finally she was just a heap of human flesh curled up on a cold floor.

Something heavy fell over her body. She saw the heavy black fabric pool around her. "Here," a came a soft but deep whisper. Hands gently pulled her up and wrapped the large cloak around her. She was cradled against Vader's- her father's- chest. Hot tears formed in her eyes and started to burn down her cheeks. She couldn't stop her sobbing.

How different it was to be human! She had felt so much as a dragon! It felt so right. And now she was so little and that power . . . that power she felt inside of herself. It had dimmed so much. So she cried. She didn't know what else to do. She felt lips gently press against her cheek where her tears burned her skin.

*It is ok, little one,* Vader's voice said into her mind. She just curled up and buried her face into his chest and neck. His arms tightened around her.

"Let go of her!" she heard her father . . . her other father, King Bail, shout.

"No," Vader hissed. She again heard the deep ring of a bell, but this one was much deeper. The body she was pressed against was growing hotter and hotter. It was changing. It was growing larger. The arms holding her were growing thicker. The fabric faded away and black scales replaced it. The hands were growing longer. The fingers grew into large sharp claws. In mere moments she was no longer being cradled by a man, but being held in the large claw of a dragon. A Sith.

The room was too small. The dragon had to crouch low. His back and head scraped against the ceiling. Dust fell everywhere. Leia was pressed firmly against the dragon's smooth belly scales. But they were growing warmer and hotter. She could feel the power humming inside. She twisted in the great claw. It wasn't easy. The black cloak and the scaled fingers made it hard for her to turn, but she managed. She peered through two of the scaled fingers. She saw her parents. Their faces etched in horror as the fire poured down on them.

She saw the blackened forms dance amongst the flames. Their flailing arms waved erratically. Luckily she couldn't hear their screams over the roar of the flames and the humming of the power inside the dragon holding her. Tears came to her again. She pressed her cheek against the hard finger of the dragon. Her thoughts were of dragons and a queen and a king as she drifted to sleep.

The night air felt good across his scales and wings. He loved flying. He always had. There was a peace to the sky that didn't exist on the land. He watched the farmlands go by below. The flames and smoke of the Alderaan palace had been left far behind. He was making his way home, back to Mustafar, but not alone. Darth Vader, the Sith dragon, slowly landed in a large field. He had to be careful. He had to do the landing with only three legs as his fourth leg held something very precious. Slowly he brought his large taloned claw away from his chest and uncurled his paw.
Laying asleep in his hand was the girl. His girl. His daughter. He lowered his head down and gently sniffed her. He reached out in to the Force. She was deep asleep. He slowly curled his claws back around her and brought his paw back to rest against his chest. There she would be warm. With a powerful lunge, he was back into the sky again making his way back home.

The sun had risen when the landscape below him changed. The green farmlands changed into brown grass lands and then into blackened rocks. The rivers and creeks started to boil and bubble until they turned into streams of lava. Then Vader saw his home. His fortress. A tall black tower that sat on the edge of a cliff. A lava waterfall flowing out the center of the fortress.

The fortress stood where once the palace of Theed sat. The rest of the city was half consumed by black flowing lava rocks. Vader landed in the courtyard of his fortress. Slowly he transformed back into his human form. He made sure he kept a tight hold of the girl. He adjusted his grip and held her small form with both of his arms.

His fortress was made to accommodate his large dragon form. It would be faster for him to move as a dragon, but with only three legs it would make his gait awkward and slow. So instead he carried his daughter into her new home as a human. He didn't make his up to the tower, instead he wound his way down into the earth itself. Tunnels wound into the rock creating a labyrinth only he knew how to navigate. The air grew warmer as they approached underground rivers of lava.

Finally he walked around a sharp curve into a large cavern. On one far wall stood an open pool of lava steaming and boiling. Next to it was the nest. Vader had collected large smooth rocks and formed them into the circle. Then he lined the nest with furs and skins of beasts he had hunted and ate. He stopped in front of the nest and placed Leia on the ground.

Unlike the Alderaan palace, the ground here was warm. The girl didn't stir. Vader took a moment to take a good look at her. She was so much like her mother. It was almost painful for Vader. He reached out into the Force along their newly created bond. He triggered her transformation. Slowly her body shifted into that of a small dragon.

Her scales were white with a bit of an iridescent sheen to it. She blinked her eyes sleepily as the change had awoken her. Her eyes had been the same as her mother's. A rich brown. But as a dragon they took on the proper skywalker color, sky blue. Vader wasted no time in switching back to a dragon. It was time they met as dragon to dragon. She was so small compared to his massive size. He sniffed and gently prodded her with his snout along her body. Then he started to groom her. She smelled like Alderaan.

Vader was gently licking along her back when she let out a small squeak. She still hadn't quite figured out how to move in her dragon body, except for her head. Her blue eyes looked back at him. He could feel her needs through their bond. He let a small snort. A laugh. She was hungry. Hanging on a wall near the lava pit were smoked and dried carcasses of cattle and other animals Vader had hunted. None were human. While he would eat humans, they were too small and not worth saving.

He pulled down a cow carcass and pulled some meat free. He chewed as he walked back to the girl, then spit it out right in front of her. Her head snapped back. She recoiled from the sight. Her human logic kicking in. One did not eat food another had spit out. But the smell of meat was filling his nose. She was still too new to being a dragon to properly eat food thus why he had softened it up for her. She sniffed the meat cautiously. She licked it, and eventually her hunger won out.

Once she had been fed and cleaned, Vader gently picked her up back the scruff of her neck and carried her to the nest. Her placed her on the side of the nest as he started to dig through the furs. He shoved his nose into the furs as he smelled and searched the nest. Eventually his nose brushed against smooth scales. Very gently he dug and shifted the furs out of the way.
Vader's son was curled up at the bottom of the nest. He looked like Vader once had. Golden scales and blue eyes. He was small and tiny just like his twin sister. Vader gently nudged him awake. Luke let out a small squeaky huff in protest of being woken up and being cold.

*Wake up, Luke,* Vader said. *There is someone here to meet you.*

Luke blinked up at his father confused. The child knew there were no others here. It was him and his father. That's when he saw her at the edge of the nest. She had been quiet the whole time. Her eyes were on him. Vader could feel Luke's surprise in the Force. He could sense Luke reaching out towards Leia curiously at this new dragon. Once he touched her, felt her, he knew instantly she was his sister.

Luke let out a small squeak of happiness. He jumped up and hopped over to her. He squeaked a few times and stomped his feet at her to show how happy he was to meet her. Then he settled down and waited for her to greet him back. His body hummed with excitement. He could barely sit still. But Leia did not know the ways of dragons. She couldn't even move her body yet.

*Luke. Leia,* he said to both of them. Both sets of blue dragon eyes fell on him. *You two are twins. Brother and sister. Luke, this is Leia's first time in her dragon form. She has much to get used to.*

Luke looked back over at Leia curiously. Vader grabbed Leia and pulled her gently into the center of the nest. Luke followed along. Vader tucked her wing's to her side and helped her curl up. Luke curled up beside her. Once the two little ones were settled Vader gently clawed at the furs and piled them up, around, and eventually on top of the children.

Little dragons couldn't create heat within their cores. They got cold easily. They liked to stay warm, especially when they slept. The warm air and rocks along with the furs was the perfect nest for them. He felt their minds as they both drifted to sleep. He was tempted to curl up alongside the nest and sleep with them, but not now. Not yet. He moved to the entrance of the cavern. He glanced back at the nest where his children slept, before he turned back and left.

He had to make sure this place was still safe and secure. He would do his rounds of his fortress and of the ruins of Theed. Once he knew there were no dangers could he rest. He already lived through losing everything once. It changed him. His burning heart of a skywalker had cooled and hardened. His scales blackened. His eyes reddened. He thought he knew what cold was, but it was so different. He was dying, but he wouldn't give in until he had his revenge.

He kept the fire burning inside of him so he could burn down the Jedi Temple. Burn down Theed. And when the burning finally stopped, he was finally ready to let the cold take over. He would die and join his wife and child. As the ice was about to fully claim his insides, he felt something warm brush against his mind. It was small, so very small and fragile. He ignored it. He was ready to die. But it came again and again.

Annoyed he reached out into the Force. That was when he felt it. When he felt Luke for the first time. His child lived! It had been a battle to reignite the fire with himself, but he did it. Then he found his son. Then one night as Luke slept, he felt a brush again against his mind. It wasn't from Luke. That was he realized he had two children. Twins.

It had taken Vader years to finally locate Leia. But finally . . . *finally* they were all together. The last of the skywalkers. Vader would watch and protect his children. Their fate would be different from his. They wouldn't know the coldness like he had. They would be beautiful, strong, and free skywalker dragons. Free to fly. Free to love and have children. He would make sure of it. Even if that meant burning the rest of the world down.
Chapter End Notes

And there is art!
Luke, Prince of Fashion

Chapter Summary

A direct sequel to a previous one-shot in this collection: Vader, Lord of Fashion. A modern AU in which Vader is a world famous fashion designer that has recently discovered his long lost son, Luke. Now Luke is thrown into the vicious world of the rich and famous and the dread paparazzi.

Bixene Rubix was a trust fund baby, yet still aspired to be a singer. She had a decent voice, and her first single had hit the top 10 in the pop charts. Though it wasn't due to singing prowess, but more due to the easy catchy tune. Bixene would be attending her first big award show, and of course she wanted to wear a Vader. She stood in front of a series of mirrors in a private room in Vader Studios. It was the final fitting. The award show was only a week away.

Luke thought she was a good looking young woman. Tan skin. Straight long blonde hair. Her nose was too big though. She was also on the tall side. In her heels she towered over him. She looked like the type of woman who had to struggle to keep her thin shape. He thought she would look better with a bit of a fuller figure. Some curves would suit her well.

Her Vader dress was sleeveless with a plunging neckline. The straps were a nude color made to match Bixene's skin. Gold and bronze scales started at her chest and thickened until they merged in a lovely metallic pattern. The dress tightened around her waist and then flooded out. The metallic scales again tapered away to a beautiful dark gold fabric.

Bixene swayed back and forth in front of the mirror as she examined the dress from different angles. The entire room was quiet except for the soft swoosh of the dress and light tinkles of the scales hitting each other. Luke sat on a stool near the back wall, and he examined the others in the room.

There was of course the world renowned fashion designer Darth Vader, whom Luke had recently learned was his father. He wore his normal all black and plain but well tailored clothing. His dark blonde hair fell in well groomed waves and curls. His face was stern. He always looked stern. Han Solo said that the old man had a resting b*tch face. Luke couldn't argue for that was the mask Vader showed the world, but it wasn't the one he showed his son. If Luke was honest, he had been scared and a bit intimidated by his father at first. But Vader had a soft caring side. He could also be a bit goofy. Like the goofiness you would expect from a father. It felt good. It felt right.

But here at his work, Darth Vader was completely serious. He had looped his thumbs into his belt as he silently watched Bixene. There were a few assistants standing around. Troopers they called themselves. Always running out to the frontline. There was Piett, his father's assistant. His hand was in his pocket clutching his phone. He was ready for anything and everything. There was also a small entourage that had come with Bixene.

The singer pursed her lips. Her brows furrowed, and Luke frowned. He could sense it, the upcoming storm. She placed her hands on her hips and did a swirl to face Vader causing the dress to dramatically spin in the air and settle at her feet. Vader was unphased. He stood unmoving.

"I don't like it," Bixene announced. She was projecting every bit of her arrogant spoiled rich girl fearless attitude. "The neckline should be lower. Also maybe a slit. Or two. These legs have been
working too hard to hide under all this fabric."

Bixene seemed to be completely unaware how the rest of the room had tensed up. The troopers stood on the balls of the feet. Piette squeez[ed] his phone tighter and pulled it up to the cusp on his pocket's opening. Bixene's entourage casted nervous glances amongst each other. Vader was the only who hadn't changed. He stood unmoving.

"These alterations shouldn't take that long," Bixene continued. "You should be able to complete them for the show."

"No," Vader's voice was deep and dark. It almost seemed like with that one word, everyone in the room had stopped breathing. All eyes had turned to him.

Bixene cocked her head to the side as she placed her hands on her hips. "No?"

"There will be no alterations," Vader said.

"Excuse me? I am not going on the red carpet in this."

"Then don't."

Bixene took in a sharp breath of air.

"I do not do alterations, girl. Wear it or do not. There will be no changes," Vader said. That was simply how Vader designed. You either loved what he did or didn't. He was rarely wrong in his assessment of what was needed for a design. He was a great designer. He knew how to read a body and make stunning clothes for it. He easily foresaw fashion trends. His creations never made a worst dressed list.

"This is my dress. I have already paid $20,000 for it. If I want it turned into a mini skirt and a tube top, it damn well will be that."

"It is not your dress," Vader replied. For the first time he moved. He brought his hand up and pointed at her. "That $20,000 was a down payment. It was for supplies and man hours. It was in the contract you signed. To actually own that dress, it would be another $30,000. Right now, that dress is still mine."

Bixene's eyes widened. Her perfectly lip glossed mouth fell open, but she quickly recovered. Her mouth close and twisted into a scowl. She bent over and grabbed fistfulls of the skirt. Then she turned and marched towards the door. The room exploded into a flurry of motion. The troopers jumped to the door, barring her exit. Piett's phone was already up to his ear as he called security.

"Out of the way!" Bixene shouted at the assistants blocking the door. "This is my dress and I'm leaving with it!"

Luke had been so focused on Bixene, that he hadn't noticed his father move. For someone who was tall and dark and demanded so much attention, he could move fast and stealthy if he wanted to. A small shiver ran through Luke as he knew it was from Vader's past experience. When he had gone by the name Anakin Skywalker. When had been a JEDI Knight. The elite of the elite of the military.

Vader grabbed Bixene's arm and spun her around. He pulled out his scissors and with one clean swipe, the dress was cut right down the side on the seem. Bixene gasped as she saw the dress fall open revealing her body. At once she let go of the skirt and grabbed at the dress to bring it together. Vader took the opportunity and grabbed a fistful of the dress. He slashed the dress again with his scissors right across the middle almost severing the dress in two. Metallic scales scattered across the
floor. Luke could easily make out of the soft pinging noise they made as they hit the floor.

At once the dress left a huge gap in hole revealing Bixene’s not very tasteful underwear on display to the whole room. Her face had gone red. Her mouth open and gaping, but no sounds came out except a strange choking noise.

"Walk out of here with that dress if you wish," Vader said. He glanced over at Luke. It was a look that said it all. Luke slid off his stool and was at once taking large strides to catch up with his father as he left the room. Vader stormed down the halls. Any who saw him knew to flatten themselves to the wall and let him pass undisturbed. He marched up the stairs to his private office and design studio where it was empty and quiet. It was just the two of them.

Vader plopped onto a large gray sofa by one of the large windows. He slumped into the cushions and let his head hang back. Luke quietly sat on a large armchair opposite of him.

"You disagree," Vader said softly. He lifted his head to look over at his son.

"I don't know if that was the . . . the best way to handle it," Luke said.

"And how would you have handled it?" Vader said as he sat up a bit straighter. "Let her go? Sue her for not following the contract?"

Luke looked down at his lap.

"I have done this a long time, Luke. I would much rather deal with an angry little wannabe starlet than have one of my designs walk out of here without my permission."

"What if she sues you?"

Vader let out a small laugh. "Whatever legal team her daddy has is nothing compared to mine."

Luke could personally attest to that. When Vader revealed Luke was his son, at once the designer wanted Luke to be apart of his family. Luke was nineteen, legally an adult. There would be no custody battles. Instead Vader reworked his will and holdings to include his son. Overnight Luke had gone from having nothing but a patched-up skyhopper to his name to having millions of dollars and being a significant shareholder in all of Vader's companies.

Luke had been surprised by all the different companies Vader owned. It wasn't just his high end fashion line. He owned a few fashion lines, including some that were much more reasonable priced. It was actually these lines that brought in a lot of money for Vader. Though the one that surprised Luke the most was the Empire luxury car company.

That fateful day Luke and Vader met in this same studio, Vader had dragged Luke to the parking garage. He was going to drive the boy to Anchorhead to speak with his uncle at once. Luke was gaping as Vader pushed him into the passenger seat of a black TIE Advanced X1. Vader was saying something to Luke, but he wasn't paying attention. Instead his hands were gently gliding over the smooth black leather. He eyed the dashboard and the gearshift. Later when Vader told Luke he owned the Empire car company and also designed the cars, Luke was left completely speechless.

In the studio, Vader had pulled out his scissors. They were the strangest pair of scissors Luke had ever seen, especially since they were made from a rare red crystal. Supposedly the scissors were very sharp. Vader had a special leather hilt made for them and carried them on his belt. The sunlight was coming through the window. The way it hit the blades made the scissors almost seem to glow red. Vader sighed as he tucked the scissors away.
"My mood had been soured," he said as he looked back at Luke. "I will get no more work done here today. Let us return home."

Luke only nodded as he got up and collected his coat and scarf from his desk. He wasn't sure why he had been given a desk here. Not like he knew anything about designing clothes, but Vader had wanted to include and welcome Luke in all facets of his life. Including giving him a spot in his personal and private studio.

The father and son walked quietly to the elevator. Two large men in black waited by doors. All four entered the elevator quietly. Vader had just finished buttoning up his jacket when he glanced over at Luke. The boy noticed his father's frown. At once Vader tugged on Luke's sleeve so Luke would face him. The designer spent the rest of the elevator ride adjusting Luke's coat and tying the knot in his scarf so it would look just right. As the doors opened, Vader gave a small smile and nod. Luke was presentable.

And presentable he needed to be. Waiting by the front doors of the skyscraper that housed Vader Studios stood a throng of paparazzi. The two bodyguards that had come down with them, at once took positions in front and behind them. As the bodyguard opened the door, a cacophony of shouts and camera shutters blasted against Luke's ears. Vader looped his arm through Luke's and tightly pulled him to his side.

"Luke!"

"Prince Luke!"

"Luke! Over here!"


The group pushed pass the throng into the waiting white Empire AT-AT SUV. The sound of the paparazzi didn't die out until they had driven away.

"I wish they didn't call me that," Luke said softly. He and Vader sat in the backseat. He could feel his father's gaze on him.

"That is what you are," Vader replied softly.

The rest of the ride was in quiet. Luke was glad that the parking garage to Vader's apartment was underground and private. He didn't have to deal with the paparazzi as they exited the car and made the long ride up in the elevator to the penthouse suite. Luke said nothing. He heard the whistle of Artoo and Threepio's greeting, but responded to neither. He went straight to his room. He ripped off his coat and scarf and fell face first onto his bed.

It was hard to believe his life just three months ago had been so different. He had just been a farm boy working at a car shop half time. Now? Now he was a millionaire. Now he was royalty. Actual royalty. He hadn't just inherited his father's clothing empire, but he also got his mother's legacy.

Padmé Amidala. He knew about her. She had been a young and famous senator of New York who died tragically and young at the end of the war. Like Luke, she hadn't been raised as royalty. She had been raised as Padmé Naberrie, a well known Nubian family. But when the old queen died and left a vacant spot on the throne, it was revealed the Padmé was actually an illegitimate daughter of the late king. At fourteen, she took the throne. She would eventually abdicate, handing the throne over to a cousin, relocate to the US, and become a senator. She would also secretly marry Anakin Skywalker.

Luke had stayed up light into the night texting. Mainly he talked to his best friend from Anchorhead,
Biggs Darklighter, and Han Solo. The fashion model and Luke had become close friends over the few months since their meeting had started the chain events that led to Luke finding his father. Han kept wanting Luke to meet his girlfriend, Princess Leia Organa of Alderaan.

He woke up groggy the next morning. The sun was already a decent way up the horizon, but still peaking through the New York City skyline. He checked his phone, and the alarm was turned off. Odd, he hadn't turned it off last night. He had been accompanying his father to work everday, and Vader was an early riser. Luke shuffled into the kitchen.

Threepio and Artoo sat at the table drinking coffee together. While Vader had no other biological family, he did have these two as his family of sorts. When Vader had gone by Anakin, he had been born to an immigrant mother who had come to the United States illegally as a victim of sex trafficking. Threepio had been adopted into the family when Anakin was a child and his mother still nothing more than a slave. Threepio had stayed with the Lars after Anakin left to attend the prestigious military Temple Academy and Shmi married Cliegg Lars. Threepio was a pale tall man with bright blond hair. He liked to wear outlandishly yellow or gold outfits. Though sometimes he opted for a more subtle grey or silver.

Artoo had been Luke's mother's companion at first. He was a short African man. He had been born with white hair and bright blue eyes. The people of his tribe thought he had been touched by the gods. They had cut off pieces of him to cook into potions to heal the sick or give power to the healthy. It was why he was unable to talk and had several prosthetics. Like Threepio, he seemed to favor certain colors. He wore a lot of white with accented blue and black.

The two had been the only ones aware of Padmé and Anakin's secret marriage. They were the only witnesses to it besides the priest. Even back then they were a family. The four of them, and it continued to be so after Padmé's death. Though Luke doubted any of its members actually called it that. Technically Threepio was Vader's butler. Artoo a personal assistant. Though Artoo didn't act like one. Mostly he sat at a computer. He was supposedly a master slicer.

"Master Luke!" Threepio said happily. "Good morning!"

Luke had asked Threepio to just call him Luke, but Threepio just continued to use the title. Artoo whistled a happy greeting. He often communicated via whistles and clicks. It almost seemed to be a whole language that both Vader and Threepio seemed to understand.

"I shall get breakfast going at once," Threepio said as he got and walked off to the kitchen. Artoo picked up his phone and started tapping away at it. Luke reached for the nearby slender remote of the tv mounted to the wall. He clicked it on, but right as he did so Artoo let out a sharp warning whistle. Luke looked over at him questioningly. Artoo just shook his head sadly.

Luke looked over at the TV. It was the news featuring him. Artoo had known what the TV was going to show when Luke turned it on. Had Artoo and Threepio been watching this? It showed the scenes from yesterday of Luke and Vader exiting the building into their waiting car.

"Luke Skywalker continues to be seen with his father, fashion designer Darth Vader. Is Vader grooming his recently found son to take over his brand? Will the little prince become a fashion emperor?"

Luke moaned and clicked off the TV. Artoo whistled as if saying "I told you not to watch." When the media found out that Vader had a secret child, Vader decided to put to rest any rumors that would spring up about Luke's legitimacy. It meant revealing he was the well-known and assumed-dead war general known as the Hero With No Fear. It also meant revealing Anakin Skywalker and Padmé Amidala had been lawfully married. Luke was not a bastard.
Neither Luke nor Vader had expected the Nubian response. Padmé, despite her scandalous claim to the throne, had been a much loved queen. Since his mother had been queen, the nickname of prince quickly stuck in the press. Luke had no claim to the throne. Despite that, he had met with the queen and she had welcomed him to the family as well as made him an official citizen of Naboo.

He had also met his mother's family. Luke had been nervous. What would the Naberrie family think of him? He was just some poor American farm boy. He met his grandparents first. The moment they saw him, their eyes watered as they pulled Luke into a big hug. The whole family had been so happy and accepting of Luke, including his mother's sister and her family. His grandparents gave him what was left on his inheritance from his mother. It wasn't much (though still quite a lot) as most of it had gone into charities and scholarship funds in his mother's name. They also gave him the Varykino lakehouse. Luke didn't really want a Nubian lakehouse, but it was his father who convinced him to keep it once Vader revealed the intimate history the house had for Luke's parents.

The past few months had been overwhelming. He enjoyed getting to know his father and extended family, but everything else still felt like it was part of another world. He still hadn't wrapped his head around the fact he was a millionaire European prince. And the press was having an absolute field day with the story. It was a trending topic across social media websites. A modern day rag to riches story.

Luke sighed. "You know, my alarm didn't go off this morning," he said.

"Really?" Artoo seemed to whistle. It wasn't a tone that was surprised.

"Did you turn it off?" Luke asked. Bright blue eyes snapped up from the phone. Artoo shrugged then went back to his phone. "You did, didn't you? Why did you turn it off?"

Artoo continued tapping. Luke's own phone pinged. He reached into his pocket and pulled it out. It was a text from Artoo that read, [Yes I did. Anakin asked me to do it. He said to let you sleep.]

"But he went to work?"

"Yes, came a whistle.

Luke moaned. "Can you call the car?"

[You want to go to the studio?] Artoo texted.

"Yeah. Why not?"

[You don't have to. You could do something else.]

"Are you trying to keep me away from the studio?"

[No.] Artoo texted while also shaking his head. [Just reminding you there are other things you can do. All you seem to do is go to the studio of late.]

"Is that what Vader said as well?" Luke asked a bit darkly.

Artoo flashed a smile. [Of course not. Anakin loves that you come with him to the studio. He wouldn't ask you to stop coming.]

"Yet he didn't want me to come today," Luke mumbled.

[He's worried about you, Luke. He fears all this media attention is too much for you. He thought you could use a day away from it.]
"Doesn't he need it too?"

[He's used to it.]

"He never seems to take a break. Even at home he's got a little studio where he's up all night. I've woken up to the sound of his sewing machine in there. Does he ever do anything else?"

Artoo whistled and rolled his eyes. *Of course he does.* But then he texted, [You've seen his other houses and the garages. He loves working on cars and racing.]

"Yes, but he has no garage here in his apartment," Luke noted.

Artoo sighed. [It's how he shows his love.]

"What?"

[When he's up late at night sewing and designing, it's not for a client. It's for you, Luke.]


[He didn't pull those clothes off a rack in one of his stores,] Artoo continued. [He made them himself specifically for you.]

Vader had... had hand made all the clothing in Luke's room? Luke opened his mouth. He was going to say that Vader didn't need to do that, but the soft ping of his phone stopped him.

[He's bad at showing his love.] Artoo's text read. [So he shows it through designing, something he loves to do. Where do you think Threepio and my clothes come from? Anakin made them all.]

"He made your clothes?" Luke said. He couldn't believe Vader designed the outlandish clothes of Artoo and Threepio.

[That surprising? But, yes he does. Yes, even these bright colors and horrible designs. Oh he hates making these clothes. But he knows what Threepio and I like. He wants us happy. He wants us to feel loved, and that is the best way he knows how to show it. Your father is a bit hopeless at times. If your mother were still alive, she would be drowning in a mountain of handmade Vader couture like I'm sure you eventually will.]

Artoo smiled a bit sadly, but softly. Luke at once thought back to the scene yesterday. What did that say about Vader to his clients? He clearly didn't care if Bixene was happy or not. In fact Vader only seemed to care about his design. He didn't want to change the design, because the design was already perfect. He would keep the design instead of making the client happy.

Threepio returned with a simple breakfast of eggs and toast. Luke was quiet as he listened to the almost one-sided conversation between Threepio and Artoo. Threepio was worrying about the upstate house and if the staff had dealt with the moth problem in one of the hallway closets. Artoo whistled or clicked a few comments, which either sent Threepio into a new fit of worry or him throwing snarky comments at Artoo.

"Artoo?"

A whistle.
"Did you text the driver to bring the car?"

[You're going to go to the studio?]


Half an hour later, Luke stood at the elevator door as they swung open. He entered the elevator and keyed the parking garage floor. The elevator started to move down, but shortly stopped. The doors swung open and a lady walked in. Luke didn't get a good look at her. He glanced down hoping she wouldn't recognize him and start up a conversation.


Luke internally groaned as he looked up. He was surprised to see Bixene Rubix. She was dressed in a all white fur coat with a long gold tunic and black leather tights and boots. As soon as his eyes were on her, her eyes lit up. She crossed the small distance between them in two large steps. She was close. He could feel the fur of her coat and smell the sickly sweet stench of her perfume.

"I don't think we've properly met," she purred.

Luke backed up and bumped into the wall of the elevator. Was it just him, or was this ride taking forever? Bixene followed him. This time she was closer. Her coat was pressed against him. He could just make out the warmth of her body. She gave him a devilish smile. The ping of the elevator and the doors sliding open, gave Luke the distraction he needed to press himself flat against the elevator wall and slide away. Once into the parking level, he was met with a black car that would take him to Vader Studios.

Of course Vader had noticed the boy come into the studios. He had told Artoo to keep the boy at home today. He needed rest. Vader was trying to work in a vacation to get the two of them away. But with an award show coming up next week, he was still quite busy. Then Artoo had texted him saying Luke was coming.

The boy had chosen to avoid his father. Insead he hung around the designers and the assistants. They seemed to have taken to Luke easily. They now laughed and joked with him. He sat at a table while two assistants hand sewed tiny crystals into a gown. Vader was tempted to go over there and order the boy back home. To go rest, but he had learned over the past few months Luke did not take direct orders well. The boy had a stubbornness in him that reminded Vader far too much of a brown-haired senator and perhaps a bit of a young war hero.

So for now he let the boy be, but he would be bringing up the topic of Luke resting and staying at home again. Vader went back to work. He was in the main studio space where his senior design teams worked. He was meeting with teams as he checked in with their progress on several outfits. He was examining some detailed seam work when Piett approached.

"Sir," he said in a soft but stern voice. That one word said it all. Something was wrong and needed Vader's attention. Vader nodded to the design team and marched away to a quiet corner. Piett was right on his heels. The moment they were alone, Piett pulled out his phone and showed him a video streaming in live from a news site.

The headline across the bottom read: Prince Luke in Love?
Vader recognized the interior of the elevator of the building where his apartment was located. Luke stood in the elevator with Bixene Rubix. They were close and with the camera angle, it looked like they were more than just close. It looked like they were intimate. Possibly kissing. The feed changed to a live interview with Bixene. Her cheeks were bright red. She still wore the same outfit from the elevator security camera.

"We met at Vader Studios," she said, "When I was doing consultations for a dress for the award show. Love at first sight." She shrugged her shoulders in a way that would be read as 'cute and flirty,' but to Vader it only enraged him. At once his eyes snapped onto the boy across the room. He was smiling and laughing as he talked to the two assistants.

Vader gripped the phone and marched through the room. Luke saw him approaching and stood up.

"Fath-" he started to say, but Vader cut him off.

"Come. Now," he barked and marched away not even waiting for Luke's response. He didn't even turn to see if he was following, but luckily the boy was. He led Luke up to the second floor of the studios to Vader's private work area and office. As soon as they were alone, Vader turned on his heels and shoved the phone into Luke's chest.

Luke took the phone and looked down. Vader watched his reactions carefully. First there was nothing, just earnest curiosity. Then Luke's face scrunched up in confusion which quickly turned into horror. His mouth hung open. His eyes were wide.

"What . . . What?" Luke looked at Vader. His eyes were large and pleading. It was a single look that sent a stab of pain through Vader. "I . . . I am not in relationship with her! We did nothing in the elevator! How did they get this?"

"When did you meet her in the elevator?" Vader asked.

"Today, on my way down to come here."

"This was all planned," Vader growled.

Luke glanced back down at the phone and then back up at his father. "What . . . what should I do?" he whispered. It was so painfully clear the boy was in over his head. The world of the rich and famous was not a merciful one. Vader hadn't wanted to reveal to the public he had a long-lost son. But when a lower assistant of Vader's legal team leaked the news to the media, Vader had to act quick before the media ruined Luke's reputation by painting him as an illegitimate bastard.

It meant Vader had to reveal a lot of truths about himself to the world. That he previously went by the name of Anakin Skywalker. That he had been in a secret marriage. And of course the media was enjoying every second of the Skywalker family scandal. And now this.

"You do nothing," Vader said.

"Nothing?" Luke said disheartened. "I can't do nothing! I have to . . . to something! This isn't true!"

Vader walked forward and placed a hand on his son's shoulder. "The story is already out in the news. There is no way to take what has been said and seen back. If we argue that this never happened, it'll only create more waves and more of a media storm."

Luke paused as he considered the words and then nodded his head. Like the day before, Vader left work early. Waiting on the street was a thick swarm of paparazzi. Vader pulled Luke close to him as they pushed through the shouting reporters. The ride back to the penthouse apartment was quiet, so
was the long elevator ride. Both Luke and Vader eyed the security camera. Once home, Luke disappeared into his room.

Vader marched straight to Artoo’s office. He had a large desk with an impressive computer setup with three display screens. The small dark-skinned man sat in a rolling chair hunched over the keyboard. He whistled and clicked as Vader walked in.


"Handling it," Vader replied. Artoo looked over his shoulder and raised an eyebrow, but he turned back to his work. Vader walked up and stood behind Artoo. There wasn't much to see on the screens. "Found anything?" Vader asked.

*Not much,* Artoo said. *But just give it time. I will find something.* He looked up at Vader with an evil little grin. *I always do.* Yes Artoo was excellent at slicing into people's lives and uncovering their dirty little secrets. Secrets Vader would use against Bixene Rubix. He wasn't surprised when Piett texted him later in the day saying Bixene had contacted the studio and left a personal message for Vader.

She was blackmailing him in revenge for his stunt with the dress. Bixene wanted a Vader dress to wear to the award show. Once she got it, then she would tell the media the relationship between her and Luke was but a mere passing thing. It would no longer be much of a story, and the media would move on. He texted Piett back. He wanted Bixene in the studio as soon as possible. He would make whatever blasted dress she wanted to get this to go away as painlessly and quickly as it could. His own revenge would come later. Vader could be patient, but he wasn't patient when it came to Luke.

A fresh stab of pain hit him as he recalled Luke's pitiful look in the studio earlier as he first saw the media coverage. Part of the reason it had been decided to keep Vader's marriage a secret was to avoid the media storm. There was a war going on. Both Anakin Skywalker and Padme Amidala had work to do. Hard and serious work to end the war. When they went working, all they both wanted was to be with each other. If the media found out, those small peaceful rendezvous would have been shattered.

Now their child was having to pay the price of their secrecy. Vader sighed as he watched Artoo work. He crossed his arms across his chest. Vader would right this. He wanted Luke to feel welcomed here. He wanted . . . he wanted Luke to stay. Each time Luke asked to go back to Anchorhead to visit the Lars, Vader had a deep rooted fear Luke was leaving. Leaving him like so many had. Already Vader had missed out on so much of Luke's life. He didn't want to miss out on any more. He wanted to be apart of Luke's life and for Luke to be apart of his.

Yes, one way or another, Vader would fix this. He would make sure Luke felt comfortable and that the boy wanted to be here.

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Luke sat curled up on the big couch in his father's apartment. A large flat screen TV was tuned to the channel showing the award show. Vader sat next to Luke. His back was straight and he didn't lean against the couch. His arms were crossed. His eyes narrowed as he watched celebrities walk down the red carpet. Threepio sat on the other end of the couch, while Artoo sat in a large chair with a laptop on his lap.
The rich and famous paraded down the red carpet in front of a sea of photographers, cameras, and reporters. They would often pause at some point so the camera could get a good shot of their outfit. It was then followed by a reporter asking them about the clothing. Vader said nothing, but made small noises such as grunts, huffs, and rarely he would hum in approval with a slight nod of his head.

Then the shouts started to come. "Bixene! Bixene here! Bixene!"

Bixene had stepped out of her limo and onto the red carpet wearing a brand new gown. Vader had been working on it the past several days. He had almost lived at the studio. Luke had stayed home. His father had insisted he stay out of sight until everything died down.

It was an interesting gown. It was nothing like the previous one. It was strapless and showed off her pushed up breasts. A large portion of fabric folded down from the top in a cream color, while the rest of the dress was in a soft olive green. The sleeves were long and belled out. The skirt sucked tightly around her rear then flowed out with two slits up either side off her legs. The dress was simple. There were no embellishments. Probably no time for it. Though the most striking feature of her outfit was her headwear. Headdress? It was almost a gold helmet that pointed straight up and out to each side. Her blond hair spilled out the back.

The room had become quiet. Luke turned his head to look at his father. His face had darkened. Vader kept looking straight ahead.

"Bixene! Who's your date?" asked one female reporter.

Luke's head snapped back to the screen. Standing next to the starlet was a young man. He was very average looking. Pale skin. Short brown hair.

"Oh this is Befa!" Bixene said. She leaned over and kissed his cheek. Artoo let out a few whistles.

"Is that so?" Threepio asked. "He's of the Jedha Crystal family fame?"

"Why aren't you with Luke Skywalker?" one reporter asked.

"Weren't you a couple?" another one chimed in.

"Oh that was such a passing thing," Bixene giggled. "We've called it off and both have moved on. Myself? I've moved on to Befa here." Bixene stroked Befa's arm. He smiled at her.

And then the next celebrity arrived and the cameras and reporters swooped back down the red carpet. It was a famous rapper, who had two ladies on his side. His current hit song started to play while he walked down the carpet.

"Shawty was gettin' low. Her booty touchin' them red Garrett heels~," rapped the lyrics.

Vader let out a low groan. Artoo let out a cheerful whistle. Garrett was a shoe company and one of Vader's many companies. Luke had asked his father why did he name a company Garrett. Vader only responded with a low, "It was a joke." Artoo later filled Luke in that Vader had been gifted the company by an old 'friend.' The name had been a jab at Vader. Instead of changing the name, Vader had turned the company into a booming success.

Artoo whistled something.

"It does not," growled Vader in response.

"Did he say the dress looked good?" Luke asked softly. Vader's sharp blue eyes darted over to Luke,
but that was the only part of him that moved. Then the eyes were back on the TV. "It didn't look that bad."

"Harumph," Vader said. "That bad? 'That bad' is still a degree of bad. It is just another way of saying 'not that good.'"

"Oh I do hope you don't end up on the Worst Dressed List," Threepio chimed in.

"Doubtful considering what else has been walking the carpet," Vader said as he waved his hand at the TV. It was showing a thicker woman with a very short crop top that showed off a bit of underboob. Luke had to agree. Bixene's gown wasn't the worst at the show.

Vader's fingers tapped impatiently on the tray table. His laptop was open. His eyes kept dashing between the screen and Luke. His son sat curled in a chair opposite of him on Vader's private jet. Now that the award show was over, Vader was taking his son to his estate in northern California. It was a large secluded estate that included an old airport tarmac. Vader now used the runway as a place to race his cars. He was sure Luke would enjoy it.

A small smile graced Luke's lips as he looked down at his phone. He was busy texting with his friends. The boy did seem calmer now that the incident with Bixene was over. The media had moved on to other stories. But Vader was not done with Bixene Rubix. His eyes went back to the computer screen. His fingers still tapped on the table.

It was time for his revenge. He wanted to strike while Bixene was still a trending topic though a fading one. An alert popped up on his computer. Vader at once clicked it. It was a message from Artoo. It was a single line: It's done. Vader smiled as he opened the attachment.

The scene showed Bixene walking to her car after leaving one her shows. A group of people had gathered which consisted mostly of teenage girls. They shouted the singer's name. Bixene smiled and waved, but otherwise kept walking. But then she took a step wrong on her high heeled pumps. Her foot wavered and she stumbled towards the crowd of girls. One girl grabbed at Bixene's arm. The starlet ripped her arm out of the girl's hold and swung her other arm slapping the girl clear across the face.

"Don't touch me!" she shouted. Then she stormed off towards her car. The crowd of teenagers stood there stunned.

A new alert popped up. Vader clicked on it. Already a gossip website had gotten hold of the footage. They tweeted the video out with the caption: Bixene attacks teenage fan! Then a second alert popped up, followed by a third and a fourth. Artoo was doing his job making sure the footage was spread far and fast. Bixene's reputation would be reeling.

Vader muted the alerts and instead brought up a different message from Artoo. He had dug into the Rubix estate. The family fortune came from mining precious ores. They're most profitable ones were out in the Shu-Torun region in the Pacific Ocean. Underwater mining was dangerous, but there were good veins of precious metals down there as well as oil. It was a shame that Rubix's main mining platform had malfunctioned a few hours ago. A pipe had unexpectedly cracked causing the ocean water to flood in effectively cutting off power to the underwater drills and halting production.

The only shame in all of this was that they wouldn't know it was Vader. They rarely did. They
would just curse the galaxy for their cruel luck not knowing it was he who had orchestrated this all. But that was fine. Bixene Rubix may have thought she got one over on Vader, but in the end he had the last laugh. There was no way she would be able to afford one of his designs for a long time.

"Father?"

Vader looked up from his laptop. Luke was looking at him. His face scrunched up just a bit as he wondered what Vader was laughing at. Vader could only smile. It was an expression so much like Padme. Vader slowly shut the lip of his laptop.

"It's nothing," Vader said. "Merely . . ." he paused as he thought of the right words. "Merely something from Artoo."

Luke gave him a skeptical look. The child might know of Vader's various companies, but he didn't know everything. He didn't know the dark side of Vader. The one who would cruelly destroy anyone who dared hurt his son.

"Father . . . I was talking to Han Solo . . ."

Vader groaned. He wasn't shy about showing his disdain of that model. Luke sighed.


"Leia Organa?" Vader asked.

"Yeah. Apparently she wants to meet me," Luke said as he blushed a bit. Vader smiled again as his heart warmed at how innocent and fresh Luke still was. How he got flustered at the thought of meeting a pretty girl.

"And where would you be meeting?"

"They want me to come to her country. Alderaan . . ."

Ah, that was the catch. The Scandinavian country was quite beautiful, but Vader had never visited even though his late wife had been close friends with the royal family, the Organas. He wondered if perhaps that was why the princess had asked Luke to come visit. Had Bail Organa told his daughter of his old friend Padme Amidala?

"I do not see why you shouldn't go," Vader said. A huge smile spread across Luke's face. One that Vader would never tire of seeing. But then the smile fell.

"Ummm. Uhhhh . . ." he said as he wiggled in his seat. "They uh . . . want me to go alone . . . Without you . . ."

Vader frowned and crossed his arms. If Luke had asked to go alone, he would have respected his son's wishes. But the fact that Solo and Organa were asking him not to come . . .

"Han says it would be good for me," Luke mumbled as looked down at his lap.

"No doubt that smuggler has some planned a few activities I would frown upon," Vader said.

Luke glanced up and a sheepish smile spread across his face. Vader sighed.

"You are old enough to make your own decisions, Luke," he said. "If you wish to go to Alderaan alone, you can."
Another heart melting smile from the boy. His boy. His son. "Thank you!"

Perhaps a trip to Alderaan would be good for Luke. What was the worst that could happen?
Tumblr Prompts

Chapter Summary

These are three unconnected small one-shots that come from tumblr prompts people submitted to me on my tumblr.

Tumblr Music Shuffle Prompt. "Wild Things" by Alessia Cara

The Emperor's large hooded face was projected in the air in the hangar. Pilots in their orange flight suits, pit crew in overalls, engineers, officers, and even a few droids had all stopped to look up. The Emperor was hissing and spitting some speech about the evils of the Rebellion.

"I can come to no terms with these so called Rebels," the Emperor's hologram stated. "Which everywhere as its first act after gaining power in systems is not the liberation of the poor and wretched souls of the galaxy but the liberation of the scum of all sentients, creatures that are concentrated in prisons. These Rebels then let loose these wild beasts upon the terrified and helpless galaxy about them. The Rebellion turns flourishing systems into sinister wastes of ruins. It has been the Empire that has turned the destruction and misery this galaxy once in into a healthy State with flourishing life.

"These Rebels, these wild things, wish to restore democracy. The same democracy that caused the Clone Wars. That caused the corruption of the galaxy. It is with grave anxiety that I see the possibility that if democracy is allowed to return it will continuously disintegrate this fine galaxy. The Rebellion are internally uncertain in their judgements and get caught up in decisions. Democracy is the canal which the Rebellion lets its poisons flow into the separate systems, which allows the Rebellion to take root and cause infections that lead to a crippling of intelligence . . ."

The hologram suddenly blinked out. There were a few moans, but a lot more grumbles and angry tones as conversation broke out across the hangar.

"Gather all the rebels now!" a voice shouted out. Wedge Antilles jumped up on a metal crate. He continued to shout in a sing-song voice. "We'll rebel-rouse and sing aloud!" A cheer broke out amongst the Rebels gathered in the hangar. Wedge continued, "We don't care what they say no way, no way! I'd rather be a wild one instead!" A loud cheer went out. "Find me where the wild things are!"

The rebels started to chant 'Wild Things' while pumping their fists into the air. Luke Skywalker could only smile at the scene unfolding in front of him. It was good to see this spirit amongst the Alliance. Too often were they fighting back the grief and worry that war brought. They all needed moments like this. But even Wedge's best efforts were always short lived for Luke now. Always the creeping cold anxiety returned. His thoughts always turned back to the Empire. To Darth Vader. To his . . . To his father.

Luke shuddered and let out an uneven breath. He turned from the chanting crowd and moved deeper into the hangar. He found a secluded crate and sat down. He wasn't surprised to feel a bump against his leg. He looked to see R2-D2 standing right next to him. The little droid let a few soft beeps of concern.
"I'm alright, buddy," Luke lied. Clearly the droid had picked up on that as he let a few beeps and whistles that seemed a bit on the angry side. Luke looked up at the hangar. He couldn't help but think of his friend Biggs Darklighter.

"We're a couple of shooting stars that'll never be stopped . . ." Luke whispered sadly recalling one of the last things Biggs said to him.

"Sounds about right."


"Why are you hiding over here?" Tycho asked as he took a seat on the crate next to Luke. Wedge shot Tycho a dirty look. "You can't be still upset about Bespin," Tycho said.

Luke took a deep breath and casted his eyes downward. He heard a smacking sound. Most likely Wedge slapping Tycho on the head.

"I've just been thinking," Luke said as he looked back up at his friends and squadmates. "What I should do next. I . . . just . . ." He stopped and sighed as he was unable to voice his concerns or feelings.

"Hey," Wedge said. "Whatever you decide, we'll be here." Tycho smiled and nodded in agreement. A huge grin spread across Wedge's face. "Because hey, we brought our drum and this is how we dance!" He started dancing very poorly. Tycho let out a small laugh and Luke couldn't help but smile. "No mistakin', we make our breaks. If you don't like our 808s, then leave us alone, cause we don't need your policies. We have no apologies for being Rebels!"

Wedge continued to dance around in a circle while he kept his little sing-song speech going.

"We will carve our place into time and space! We will find our way, or we'll make a way! Find your great. Don't hide your face!" Wedge gestured to Luke with that line. "Let it shine, shine, shine, shine, shine!"

Wedge stopped and Tycho clapped. Wedge did a dramatic bow, and Luke joined the clapping.

"See?" Wedge said. "You look so much better when you shine, Luke."

Luke could feel a small blush of pink on his cheeks. "Thanks," he mumbled under his breath. Yes, he would find a way or make a way. They were the wild things. The Rebels. The shooting stars as Biggs had said. Luke took a deep steadying breath and smiled at his friends. He nodded at them ready to continue the fight.

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Tumblr Music Shuffle Prompt. "Red Lights" by Tiesto

Red and green blaster bolts zipped through space. The battle continued to rage on. At least according to Luke's perspective. The second Death Star was destroyed and with it the Emperor. Yet, the
Imperial fleet had yet to completely back down. Perhaps they were preparing for a retreat. Perhaps they had chosen this as their last stand. Luke didn't know, and honestly he didn't care at this moment.

His focus was finding a clear vector so he could jump to hyperspace. He needed to get away and fast. He couldn't just land on an Alliance cruiser in the middle of the battle while on an Imperial shuttle. Well he probably could, but . . . Luke glanced over his shoulder. Laying on the floor of the cockpit was his father, Anakin Skywalker. He was no longer Darth Vader. He had chosen to be that man no longer when he chose to save his son and kill his master.

But he was gravely injured and would soon die if Luke didn't get him medical help soon. The problem was, Luke wasn't sure what the Alliance would do if he showed up with Darth Vader. Would they give him aid? Or would they let him die? Plus if they did give him aid, what would happen afterward? For now Luke thought it best not to return to the Alliance.


Luckily the shuttle brought up the coordinates for wherever this Mustafar was, but Luke still needed a clear shot to jump. Blaster bolts continued to spray around him. He just needed to out run them. And when he did, he pushed the lever to jump to hyperspace. The white lights that were flirting in the darkness turned to white streaks.

Luke leaned back in the pilot's seat and let out a long exhale of breath. He pushed himself up and lowered himself to the ground next to his father. His breathing was still ragged. He was painfully still, and with the mask on Luke didn't know if he was even conscious. Regardless, Luke reached over and grabbed his father's hand.


"Father," Luke said. "We got away. We're on our way to Mustafar. We're going to make it now."

"Why . . . did you . . . not go to . . . rebels . . ." Anakin said painfully between breaths.

"I wasn't sure what they would do with you," Luke replied in a low voice hoping perhaps his father wouldn't hear him.


"No," Luke said. "Nobody else needs to know right now." Luke could feel his father's eyes on him. Feel the curiosity that pushed itself free from the consuming pain. Luke squeezed his father's hand. He hoped he was making the right choice. He may get court martialed later for this, but he wasn't going to back down. He was going to save Anakin Skywalker. Even if it meant going against the Alliance and the Empire and anyone else, Luke knew this was the right thing. He saw the light return to his father. It was something he couldn't ignore.


"No," Luke said. "At least not yet. We're going to heal you first."

Anakin seemed to accept that. He was quiet for a long time. Luke finally let go of his father's hand and stood up. He looked out the viewport to the whorls of hyperspace. He wasn't sure where this road was going. He had just run them red lights of the blasters of the battle. He glanced back down at his father. No, he wasn't going to back down. They were going to make it now.
Absolute rage poured out of Darth Vader. The entire room shook. The lighting cracked and sparked before it finally blinked out. Cracks started crawling along the walls, floors, and even on the viewports. Steam and smoke poured out of pipes. Wires suddenly burst open sending bright sprays of sparks into the air.

Luke Skywalker curled up against the wall. He put his right arm tightly under his left. He could still see his right hand gripping his lightsaber. It lay on the floor a few steps away. It had been cut off by that young Imperial guy who looked like a Jedi. Or at the very least he had wielded a yellow lightsaber. But now the Imperial had been thrown against a wall. His hand grasping at his throat. Vader was slowly approaching him. His hand was out in front of him with his fingers curled.

Slowly Vader marched forward. His red lightsaber snapped to life with a sharp hiss. He paused right in front of the Imperial.

"This is how it was always going to end, Morit," Vader said in his deep baritone voice. Then in a quick smooth motion, he sliced through the young Imperial. His body landed with a distinctive two thumps on to the ground. Vader looked down at the smoldering body for only a moment before he sharply turned on his heels and turned his full attention to the Rebel huddling against the wall.

Luke's breath got caught in his throat as the Imperial Supreme Commander marched towards him. Vader paused at Luke's hand; the one Morit had sliced off in their duel. A surprising slash of cold whipped through the room. Luke shivered, and his teeth chattered. He swore he could see his breath. The lightsaber was ripped out of the grasp of the severed hand and into Vader's hand. Vader looked at the saber for only a moment before he clipped it to his belt. He also deactivated his own lightsaber and placed it beside Luke's saber. Luke's father's saber, which now hung on his father's murderer's belt.

Vader only needed two more large steps before he stood towering above Luke. The mask was tilted down to look at the injured Rebel.


"Darth Va-Vader," Luke said through his chattering teeth. He pushed against the wall and tried to stand. It was an awkward movement laced in small flinches of pain, but finally he stood on his own two feet. He was still hunched over making him even smaller than he would normally be. Vader's large black form was fearsome.

"Here-here to kill me-me?" Luke asked. There was a silence that was broken by the steady and even breathing of Vader. "Like you-you did to him-him?" Luke nodded his head over at Morit.

Finally Vader spoke, "No."

The response caught Luke by surprise. But then his brain caught up. Vader's impressive bounty on the Rebel That Shot Down the Death Star did say alive only. Most likely Vader wanted Luke for a public execution or perhaps a long interrogation session. A large gloved hand swooped down and tightly grabbed Luke by his left uninjured arm. He was pulled sharply to the dark lord's side. Luke
tried to pull away, but Vader's grip was hard and cold.

Luke glared up at the black mask. Vader was merely watching him. This lasted a few seconds before Vader turned and started to walk away pulling Luke with him. Luke stumbled along. Vader's strides were long and fast. He tripped a few times, but managed to catch himself before he fell to the ground. But it was starting to get a bit easier . . . Was Vader slowing his stride?

As they moved through the strange half-organic, half-mechanical whale ship, it shuddered and shook. Telltale signs of a battle raging on outside in space. Vader tightened his grip and his pace quickened a small amount. The stomping of feet was heard, and Luke noticed Vader had pulled out his lightsaber hilt. He gripped it tightly in his other black gloved hand.

Stormtroopers rounded the corner. Blaster bolts barreled down the corridor at Luke and Vader, and Vader's red lightsaber snapped to life. Vader expertly blocked the bolts. A few he managed to send back into the troopers. One trooper was lifted off his feet and slammed into a wall. His helmeted head snapping awkwardly and sharply to the side. His body fell limp to the floor. Another was slashed apart as he ran at Vader. It wasn't long before all the troopers were laying still and quiet at Vader's feet.

Through it all he had never let go of Luke. Luke realized he should have tried to pull free while Vader was distracted. He could have used the fight as cover to get away, but he had been so enthralled by Vader's fluid use of the Force. Vader pulled Luke on. They were met with a wave of small round seeker droids. Again Vader quickly destroyed them all. Luke tripped and the Sith let out a growl.

"Sorry for angering you," Luke growled back. Perhaps he could provoke Vader to just kill him now. Let it be quick and easy.

Vader paused. His mask fully turned to look at the young rebel. "It is not you," Vader said slowly. "It is my enemies." The two just stared. It only lasted a few moments before Vader was pulling Luke on again. Luke ran Vader's comment over in his head. What did that mean? His enemies? Wasn't Luke his enemy? He was a rebel. A rebel commander. A rebel who destroyed the Death Star.

They came to a hangar, in which Vader promptly pulled Luke into the first shuttle they saw. He shoved Luke into the copilot's seat. It wasn't long before they were out in space. Vader turned the shuttle around to view the battle. A whole fleet of large whale-like space ships were fighting against a massive star destroyer, the size of which Luke had never seen before. It looked like it was undergoing repairs or perhaps even being built. It was in a stardock. Various ships and machines buzzed between the TIE fighters and the whale ships.

Vader was furiously typing at something on the control board. Then a droid's voice came over the shuttle's com.

"Yes Lord Vader?"

"Activate Code 157-Axion829-34."

"Activation sequence password?"


"Password accepted. Activating code 157-Axion829-34."

Why did Darth Vader use Luke's name as a password? Vader started piloting the shuttle away from
the star dock and the battle. Luke felt it first. The hairs on the back of his neck and on his arms stood on end. There was a shiver that ran through him. Then he saw the bright blinding light bursting from behind them. Then the shuttle rattled and shook from the shock wave. Vader was an expert pilot. He kept the shuttle steady. Only after things calmed down, did Vader turn the shuttle back around.

The giant star destroyer was gone. The whale fleet and the star dock were as well. Luke's mouth hung open. Had Vader . . . Had Vader activated the self-destruct of that star destroyer? The shuttle's com beeped incessantly. Vader clicked it on.

"Vader," he said.

"Lord-lord Vader," stumbled the person on the other end. "This is the ISD Malice stationed at Kuat. The . . . The Executor has just been destroyed . . ."

"I am aware," Vader said. "It had been hijacked by traitors."

There was a short silence from the com before the officer spoke again. "But my-my lord," the officer said in squeezed pain voice. "The Emp-Emperor was aboard the Executor."

Luke could feel Vader's shock though he showed no body language of it.

"I thought the Emperor was on board the Eclipse," Vader said.

"No-no," the officer said. "He was on the Executor." Silence stretched between the two. Between the space. Luke held his breath. It felt like the entire Empire was holding its breath. As if every being under Imperial rule was listening to this conversation as Luke was. "Sir?" the officer asked again. "What . . . what should we do, sir? The Empire is yours."
Vader's Baby

Chapter Summary

Vader has tracked down Obi-Wan Kenobi and killed him. What he then finds is one-month old son.

The baby seemed to be screaming louder. For something so small and young, its screams were loud and piercing. That baby was laying on a changing table in a fresh diaper. Its little hands were balled up and waving in the air. The small feet were squirming with each wail. The baby's round cheeks were red. The brilliant blue eyes were red and full of tears.

Darth Vader stood motionless at the edge of the changing table simply staring down at the baby. His baby. His son, who was only a month old. It was such a small amount of time, and yet . . . A month ago Darth Vader was a different man. He went by a different name. He had a different life. He looked different. He had a family. A wife. A baby on the way . . . A month was too much time. It was a whole month that been stolen. It was only month, but that month was this baby's whole life so far. And if Vader hadn't hunted down Obi-Wan, how much more time would have been lost? How much longer would this baby not know his father? His only family?

But now Obi-Wan was dead and Vader had his son. Tatooine didn't have the best in childcare items, but the new Sith was able to procure at least the necessary items. A crib, a changing table, and baby supplies. And now it was just father and son. A son who was screaming at the top of his lungs.

"Baby is fine," the TDL nanny droid had said. Vader had also found it on Tatooine. It was an old model and in need of repairs. But at the moment Vader just needed someone or something that could help him take care of his son. "Baby has been changed. Baby has been fed," the droid stated. "Baby is fine."

"Then why is he crying?" Vader growled.

"Baby needs to be soothed," the droid responded matter-of-factly. It had little in terms of a personality program. The droid went to reach down to pick up the baby, but Vader stopped it.

"Don't," he said. "You are dismissed. I will handle this."

The droid paused, but then straightened up and promptly left the room leaving Vader alone with his son. The baby was still crying and wailing. Vader could do this. He could soothe his baby. He was a father. Yes . . . a father . . . Thinking of himself like that only brought a fresh stab of pain into his heart for it made him think of Padmé.

She should be here. Alive. She should be the one to collect the baby into her arms. She would know just what to do. He could see her gently rocking the baby with a loving soft smile on her face as she looked down at it. Possibly she would hum a Nubian lullaby that her mother had once sung to her.

The baby let out a fresh string of screams. They seemed more intense. Stronger. Vader could feel them. He wasn't sure if perhaps it was just his nerves, or if the baby was projecting into the Force. It
was interesting to sense the baby's emotions. They were so unformed, but also so intense and raw. It was hard to pinpoint exactly which emotion it was. Fear. Cold. Sadness. Discomfort. Loneliness.

Slowly Vader's arms started to move. One large black leather gloved hand came to rest on the baby's head. He gently slipped it under the small head. Padmé's voice floated through him.

"You have to support the head," she teased when she had given an impromptu baby holding lesson. The baby was a medium piece of fruit wrapped in a towel. He could still hear her giggles as the fruit slipped out of the towel and rolled on the floor after he had held it wrong. He remembered her smooth hands positioning his arms into the proper position to hold the baby just as he was doing now.

He had eased the crying baby into his arms and was slowly bringing the child to his chest. The baby continued to wiggle and wail. What should he do? Rock the baby? He didn't think humming or singing from his modulated voice would soothe the child. Vader slowly turned around and glanced around the rather empty room. There was just the crib and a set of drawers. Perhaps if he walked something would come to mind.

He walked to the viewport. The blue streaks of hyperspace whirled outside as the starship traveled back to Coruscant. In the viewport's reflection, Vader could make out the baby's form. It stood out sharply against the darkness of the life support suit. Vader shifted the baby so he was now more upright. Then Vader turned and walked back over to the changing table.

He just felt so useless and restless. He started to pace back and forth in the small room. He should be able to do this! To calm his son down. And yet the baby still cried. What was he doing wrong? Why wasn't the baby calming down? Was it him? Was he not good enough? Strong enough? Was it this horrible life support suit? It wasn't soft or warm. His breathing sharply sounded evenly. Perhaps the sound grated on the baby's tender ears. Perhaps it was simply Vader himself that was upsetting the child.

Again Vader found himself at the viewport. He should just put the baby down and call the nanny droid back in. His son shouldn't be wailing this much. He didn't need to be so miserable. Again Vader caught the reflection in the transparisteel. The baby was being held upright against Vader's chest. One of Vader's hands rested against the baby's head. The other hand against the back while the baby's weight rested on the arm.

The baby was quiet. There were no screams. Since when had it stopped? In fact the little one's eyes were closed. He breathed evenly.

Vader had . . . done it . . . He had . . . soothed the baby! His baby!

Gently and slowly he tightened his hold on the child. He bowed his head down. How he desperately wished to be able to kiss the forehead of this sleeping baby. To smell it's gentle baby smell. To feel the soft hair. So much had been taken from Vader. So much had been stolen.

But at least he had this. This child. This small wonderful miraculous baby. The one amazing thing that had come out so beautiful and perfect despite the heat and chaos the baby had been born into it.

The Tatooine couple whom Obi-Wan had given the baby to had called the child a name. A name Vader wasn't even sure where it had originated from. Had Obi-Wan named Vader's son? The Lars? Or perhaps . . . had she named him? That at least in her final moments, mother and son had been together. Vader hoped it had been peaceful. He hoped she died holding her son to her chest like Vader did now. That at least as this baby's life started and hers ended, it was filled with love.
That was when Vader knew that she had named him. She had to. The name fit. It was perfect. He took his eyes off the reflection and looked down at the baby.

Darth Vader made his way to his private chambers on board his flagship star destroyer. Those he met along the way, quickly flattened themselves against the wall. Vader keyed in his personal code to unlock the door. He stepped into a rather plain and empty reception room. He didn't pause here. He continued on to the next door. It slid open silently.

Vader stepped into a room filled with flowers. All sorts of flowers from every corner of the galaxy. They sat in tall beautiful arrangements in various vases and containers. The room was completely filled. Some arrangements were even as tall as he was. Vader walked up and gently brought his hand up to one white flower. Then he moved on deeper into his quarters and left the flowers behind.

He walked down the hall and stopped at an open door. Flowers filled this room, but unlike the sitting room the flowers were sorted by type, size, and color into thin plastoid vases. Against the far wall by the viewport sat a large workbench.

"Luke?" Vader asked.

The figure sitting at the bench turned around. Luke smiled. He stood up and wiped his hands on his pants. He wore a simple white shirt and gray pants but with no shoes or socks. He walked over and stopped in front of Vader.

"Did you see them?" Luke asked. He was referring to the new flower arrangements filling the sitting room.

"They are hard to miss," Vader replied.

"What did you think?"

Vader paused. There was a smile on the boy's lips. He shone in the Force. He was so bright. So eager.

"They are marvelous, young one," Vader said.

Luke's smile grew large and wide. His light grew brighter. It was almost painful to look at him. In truth Vader did not care much for the flowers. They took up a lot of room. He could barely discern their colors through the red lenses of his helmet. He couldn't smell their sweet perfumed scents. Plus Vader had to deal with getting rid of the flowers as well as procuring new ones.

Vader had never expected to find his son on Naboo. He had been there to attend a parade that was being held in the Emperor's honor that the Emperor himself was unable to attend. Most likely it had all been arranged by Sidious. Another jab in Vader's side knowing how well Vader hated the planet. How much it reminded him of her.

Vader had stormed away from the parade and into the side streets. That was when he saw a shop
sign. In the center was a large pink lotus flower. In curling letters underneath it said: Naberrie's Flowers. Padmé had been named after the lotus. Why did this shop use her name so?

Inside he found the young blonde human florist working on his latest creation at the counter. When he looked up and saw Darth Vader, his eyes grew wide with fear. He took a small step away from the counter.

"Boy," Vader grumbled. "Who owns this shop?"

"I . . . I do," he replied.

"You?" Vader asked. "You do not look old enough."

The boy straightened up. "It was a gift from my grandparents," he said defiantly. The boy had a bit of a fight in him, Vader noted.

"What is your name?" Vader asked. The fight fled away from the boy. He nervously glanced around. "Your name." Vader growled. "Do not make me ask again."


"Naberrie?" Vader asked. It was possible. Padmé did have an older sister. Plus there could be other families who used the name. "What are the name of your parents?" he demanded.

"Uhh my parents are dead, sir," Luke said quietly. "I was raised by my grandparents."

"Their names."

"Ruwhee and Jobal Naberrie."

So he was Padmé's nephew. But . . . that thought didn't sit right with the dark lord. He looked nothing like Padmé's sister, Sola. He had blonde hair and blue eyes. He had met Sola's daughters once with Padmé. The girls had dark hair and dark eyes like their mother and father.

"Your mother's name," Vader demanded. He wasn't sure why he asked. This boy had to be the son of Sola. He didn't look old enough to be . . . her son . . . their son . . .

Fear started to snake off the boy in the Force. Vader reached for it, and what he found made him skip a breath. When he touched the boy in the Force, Luke shone. He was bright. So unmistakably bright. He was strong in the Force but also untrained. Vader pulled back and passed through whatever shields had been erected to hide the boy.

Vader's mind spun. No. It wasn't possible. She had died. The baby had died!

Vader jumped over the counter in one smooth motion. Luke let out a squeak and quickly stepped away. He didn't get far until he bumped into the back wall. Vader was there. He gripped the boy's chin and titled the head so he could get a better look.

He could see it. Her eyes, but they were dark. Luke's eyes were light in color. Were they blue? Like Vader's had once been? He saw his chin, but her nose. His hair.

"What is the name of your mother?" Vader growled. It came out harsher than he had intended. The boy flinched.

"Pad . . . Padmé Naberrie," the boy whispered.
That was how Vader had discovered his son had lived. Luke Naberrie. He had been raised by his grandparents. By Padmé’s parents. Of course Vader had grabbed the boy and dragged him back to his ship. Luke did not go willingly. Only once they were on board the star destroyer did Vader reveal the truth. It was a hard truth. Luke knew his father was Anakin Skywalker, but had assumed like the rest of the Naberries that Anakin had been killed in the Jedi purge.

It took awhile for Luke to warm up to Vader. He kept asking for flowers, and finally Vader relented. For the first time, Vader saw his son smile. The flowers brought him so much joy, so Vader kept buying them. Luke kept arranging them. The flowers kept flooding his quarters.

Princess Leia's cell on the Death Star had security recording devices. Darth Vader views the recordings after her escape. He watches as a stormtrooper takes off his helmet and says he's Luke Skywalker.

"I'm Luke Skywalker. I'm here to rescue you," the blonde youth said.

"You're who?" Princess Leia Organa asked back.

The blue security holograph froze. Then it rewound back only a few seconds. Again the blonde youth pulled off his stormtrooper helmet. "What? Oh . . . the uniform. I'm Luke Skywalker. I'm here to rescue you."

Darth Vader paused the recording. He looked at the small blue holographic figure of the boy who called himself Luke Skywalker. Who had come to the Death Star with Obi-Wan Kenobi.

"It seems in your anger . . . you killed her." Old words that haunted him for twenty years whispered at him. He had tried over and over to chase those words from his mind, but no matter what it always crept back. Vader compared the old words, the words that burned at his heart and soul, and compared it to the words repeating on the holo.

At first Vader wanted to lash out at this boy. This young fool who dared to claim his name. Even if it was the name of that pathetic weak Jedi. It was still his. The Force seemed to swirl around the words of this youth. They flowed smoothly with each repeat of "I'm Luke Skywalker." The boy was telling the truth, or at least what he thought was the truth. And if this boy was Luke Skywalker, then this boy, like everything that had once belonged to that Jedi, belonged to Vader.

Vader thought back to the unusual death of his old master, Obi-Wan Kenobi. He had simply vanished leaving behind only his outer robe and lightsaber. Why had Obi-Wan showed up then? Vader remembered seeing the boy in the hangar. He had shouted out when Obi-Wan died. They had arrived together.

An anger grew from Vader. Its intensity was like none Vader had felt in years. Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan . . . Had he . . . Had he stolen Vader's child? Ripped the baby out of the mother's dying body? Hidden him away from his father? Obi-Wan was now dead and would fail in keeping the boy from Vader. For Vader would find the boy. The boy would be his.

A beep from an incoming com call pulled him out of his thoughts. The Death Star had arrived at Yavin IV and the rebel base. At once Vader could feel the bright mark in the Force that was his son. How had he not noticed this before? Had Obi-Wan been shielding and hiding the boy in the Force that much? The boy was so bright, so strong, and so . . . untrained. A smile painfully stretched the damage skin around Vader's lips.

However it didn't last long. The Death Star would be powering up its laser to fire on the rebel base, the base where Vader's son was. How was Vader going to secure the child? That was when he sensed the brightness approaching. The boy was coming here. Most likely in a snub fighter. Vader
gave an order to have his TIE fighter squadron released. He would be joining them.

It took some time before Vader had his son's fighter in his sights. The rebels were focusing on a specific spot on the Death Star. There was a pull in the Force that this was important, but Vader ignored it. His sole focus was on the X-Wing his son was in. Vader would need full control of the Force to get his son safely out of this dog fight. Ideally he needed to get the boy away from the active fighting. Into open space where Vader could disable his ship without fear of being shot down by anything else and get the fighter towed in.

But that meant chasing the child out away from the Death Star. The Rebels were still focusing all of their energy on doing suicide runs down a heavily armed trenched. Vader's mind raced over the schematics of the Death Star. Why were they focusing on this trench? The nagging of the Force was still telling him this was important. Again Vader pushed it aside. Once he had his son secured, he could worry about the Rebels.

He moved through the battlefield. He took down any X-wings he could. The less Rebel scum there were, the better. He could feel his son's bright light in the Force. Vader zeroed in on it and moved his fighter directly towards it. His two wingmen faithfully followed along with him in their own TIE fighters.

"Black 2. Black 3," Vader said over the com to his wingmen. "There is a Rebel I will isolate from the rest. Only fire to disarm and disable. I want him alive." Vader's words were heavy with the unspoken threat of what would happen should be displeased.

"Yes, sir," came the response of the two pilots.

They were part of Vader's elite pilots. They knew to follow his orders unquestionably. Vader also knew the rest of the Black Squadron had heard that as well. They were the only squadron out in the battle. The squadron Vader had personal control over and thus had ordered out to fight off the Rebel fighters. The Death Star held thousands upon thousands of fighters. This battle could have already been over, but Tarkin and the other fools saw these Rebels as mere flies buzzing around their heads. It was perhaps for the best none of the other fighter squads were out. Vader had much more control with just his squadron. His son was less likely to be shot down.

Vader needed to get rid of the other fighters around his son. They were easy pickings. A smile tugged on his lips as Vader saw his son use the Force instinctively to weave through the fire of blaster bolts coming from the cannons along the trench. Yes, the Force was strong with the child. Vader followed his son into the trench. He aimed expertly at non-vital parts of the X-wing. For now he just needed to chase the boy out of the trench and away from the cannon fire.

Vader's mind wandered. Soon he would have his son. The son he had thought dead all these long years. Finally they would be reunited. Together as they should have been. His son would be a perfect and truly worthy apprentice. Finally Vader would free himself from his master. The galaxy could finally be set right-

A shot slammed into Vader's fighter at once causing him to spin wildly uncontrolled away from the trench and the Death Star. Rage poured into him. He had been so close! What rebel rat had managed that lucky shot on him? They would pay. He would get his son-

For the second time Vader's thoughts were interrupted as blinding light caused him to slam his eyes shut. In the Force he could feel the massive lost of life. It echoed the destruction of Alderaan. In a single instant millions had died. The Death Star had been destroyed. Yet his mind wasn't on the lost of the blasphemous battle station. His thoughts were on the child. His child. The child he had just
discovered. Would fate be so cruel to rip away this small sliver of hope away from him?

But through all the death, there was a small beacon of light. It flared the brightest Vader had ever felt it. It was triumphant. Happy. And most importantly, it was alive. Vader's son still lived.

Night had fallen on Yavin IV. A light rain was falling, which served Vader well. It hid his approach to the Rebel base. After he had recovered from the shot, he had made his way to the moon. There was a mess left up in space from the remainder pilots of his squad. He ordered them to hide amongst the large pieces of the Death Star. He had already sent orders to nearby fleets to meet here. There was no point in him waiting around in space, especially when he still had a son to collect.

The Sith was surprised at how relaxed the Rebels were. Perhaps the victory had gone to their heads. They should be scrambling to leave the moon before Imperial forces arrived. Surely they had to know that someone would respond to the Death Star's destruction. That the Empire would investigate it and collect and scavenge what they could of the battle station's remains.

Vader could only sense overwhelming happiness and justice from the Rebels in the base. If a few were more practical and worried, their feelings were overshadowed by the majority. Vader stood on a dark ridge amongst the trees staring down at the temple the Rebels were using as a base. Even from here he could make out the partying going on. The Rebels were celebrating. These pathetic worms had nothing to truly celebrate. This was but a mere scratch in the mighty Empire. Vader would soon see to their end personally. Perhaps he would have help with his son by his side . . .

He refocused. He first needed to get the son. Vader reached out into the Force towards the temple. His son was easy to locate. It seemed he wasn't that deep into the temple. He was in a hangar. So Vader reached in further. He brushed against the boy's mind. He couldn't help but pause. His son's mind swirled warmly with positive energy and thoughts. He was feeling pride in his accomplishment. As he should.

Vader pushed on into his son's mind. Luke was his name, Vader remembered. For a brief moment Vader wondered where he had gotten the name. Had Kenobi named him? But yet that thought didn't seem quite right. Not Kenobi, but someone else. Surely it hadn't been . . . Padme. Had it? Had she lived long enough to meet her son? To hold him?

Vader cursed. He was getting side tracked. He pushed into Luke's mind.


. . . *who?* Luke finally managed to project out into the Force. The boy was very strong. He was using the Force intuitively. Vader paused as he considered how to answer back. What should he say? Finally he decided to answer with the truth.

*I am your father*, he said.

Alarm and anger sparked the Force, but it quickly eased away. Luke's curiosity burned. It was almost painful for Vader when he was so connected to him in the Force.


where?

Vader pulled on the child. Luke felt the tug of the Force and followed it. It wasn't long before Vader saw a Rebel pilot dressed in the garish orange and white flight suit cautiously step out of the hangar and make his way slowly across the lawn in front of the temple. Luke paused as he reached the edge of the woods. He looked into the trees almost right at Vader. The Sith was still a ways off into the woods. Surely the child could not see him. Vader pulled again, and Luke walked on.

Vader pulled his cloak around him masking the lights on the control panel of his suit. He also summoned the Force around him to help hide his presence and mask the sound of his respirator. With the rain hitting the leaves, it would be hard to notice.

Luke made his way carefully up the ridge and through the rain and woods. As Luke got closer, Vader reached out with the Force. He sent tendrils of the Dark Side to slowly surround the boy. Not completely encase him, but Vader was not going to allow the boy to slip through his fingers again.

father? Luke asked. where?

The boy was so close. Vader tightened the tendrils and snapped them around Luke. The boy shouted in alarm, but he couldn't move. Vader slowly lifted the boy off the forest floor and floated him carefully the remainder of the distance to Vader. Luke squirmed and wiggled as he tried to break free of the invisible hold he was in. Vader lowered him down and released Luke from the Force hold. The boy at once toppled to his knees.

It only took him a second before Luke was back up on his feet. His eyes settled on Vader. His eyes grew wide with realization as he took in the dark form before him. He tried to step away, but again Vader tightened the Force around the child.

"Stop!" Luke shouted as he squirmed. "Let go of me!"

father? Luke called into the Force. father? father! where?

Here, Luke, Vader replied.

Luke stilled as he looked at Vader.

"Luke, I am here," Vader said as he stepped up to his son.


"Search your feelings, young one," Vader said. "I am your father."

"No," Luke repeated. "It can't be."

Vader reached forward and grabbed Luke's- his son's!- arm. He pulled the boy to him. At once Luke was pushing against Vader.

"Cease," Vader said. Luke only glared up at him. "Come," Vader said as he pulled Luke back to his fighter. It would be a tight fit with the two of them, but Vader would make it work. His hand tightened around Luke's arm. He had his son now.

Vader's fighter landed at his fortress on Mustafar. Two stormtroopers saluted as Vader climbed out. Their necks were snapped immediately. His rage could not be sated. He stormed through the fortress.
Any and all he met along the way felt his anger. Droids and guards alike were violently snapped apart in the Force. They had failed. Their one and most important duty.

He made it to the security room and at once brought up the recording. The blue hologram sprung to life. Luke had been in his room. Where he was supposed to be. Where it was safe and secure while Vader trained him in secret so they could overthrow the Emperor. Luke jumped to his feet as something was burning a hole in the door. The view of the security camera did not capture exactly what had happened. But suddenly a girl walked into view.

She wore an all white jumpsuit. Her hair was braided and wrapped around her head. She held a green lightsaber. Vader scowled as he recognized her as Princess Leia, traitor and Rebel leader. However, that was not how she introduced herself.

"I'm Leia Skywalker," she said with a big smile on her face. "I'm here to rescue you."

"Leia?" Luke shouted as he ran up to her. "What are you-?" He looked at her lightsaber. "Skywalker?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said. "I'm Leia Skywalker. Your twin sister."

Vader just stared. His mouth hung open. Air continued to be pushed into his lungs, but he wasn't breathing. Finally time seemed to catch up to him. His hands formed fists and slammed them down on the console in front of him. Sparks flew and the metal screeched as it crumpled on itself.

"WHAT?" he shouted.
A bit of direct sequel to one of my small tumblr prompts. An AU set directly after ROTJ, Darth Vader didn't die on the second Death Star but is gravely injured. Luke secures an Imperial shuttle, but isn't sure where to take his father to get medical help. Vader mutters to take him to Mustafar.

The various medical machines beeped and buzzed. The medical and surgery droids worked tirelessly to remove Darth Vader's suit and to heal his injuries. Luke stood helplessly against a wall. His own body was worn and tired. He knew he should also see to his injuries, but for now he pushed the pain aside. He could only focus on the scene unfolding on the medical table.

The droids had to cut through layers of Vader's suit. Now the pale white flesh was starting to be exposed. As chunks of the suit were cut off and removed, Luke could see the horror of what was Lord Vader's body. Wires and tubes buried into his flesh. There were metal plates grafted onto his skin where the suit connected to the body. There seemed to be bags attached to his right side. One of which rose and fell with Vader's breathing. A mechanical lung?

More and more of the suit was taken off. Luke saw all of Vader's limbs were prosthetics, not just the one Luke had cut off on the Death Star. A memory from long ago drifted into Luke's mind.

"He's more machine now than man," Ben's ghost had said. He was right. There appeared to be so little of Vader left.

One of the med droids approached Luke, who straightened up.

"He is in decline," the droid stated. "The life support systems have received major damage. The artificial organs are only operating at half of their capacity and continue to fail. The prognosis is not good."

"There isn't anything you can do?" Luke asked. "Get new artificial organs?"

"The damage has already been done. The organ failure has been going on for too long. It is surprising he is still alive. By all accounts, he should be dead. It is too risky to give him new organs. His body is already under a great deal of stress. It is 97% likely the moment we unhook the old organs, total organ failure would occur."

There was a pressure building up in his eyes. "So . . . so now what?" he whispered.

"Give him pain medication to dull the pain," the droid said. "I predict he has only twenty-four standard hours to live."

Luke said nothing. His eyes at once went back to the white form on the medical table. He moved past the droid and came to a stop at the table. Vader, no Anakin, looked so different. He looked so sad. So broken. All of his limbs had been removed. The suit was completely gone. All that was left was a body and head with various tubes and plates and nasty scars.

Gently Luke placed his hand, his flesh hand, on Anakin's arm. For the first time, they were touching,
truly touching. Anakin stirred. His head weakly rocked from side to side and then his blue eyes slowly opened. At once they focused on Luke. A plastoid breathing mask had been placed over Anakin's nose and mouth to assist with the breathing. It obstructed the view of his mouth, but despite that Luke swore he saw the corners of Anakin's mouth raise just a tiny bit.


"Father," Luke replied. His voice was laced with pain and grief.

"I . . . know . . . I am . . . dying . . ."

Luke's body shook as he fought off a sob. He squeezed Anakin's arm tighter.


Luke couldn't stop the sob that escaped him this time. "Fath . . . father . . ." he said sadly.

"Stay . . . with . . . me . . ." Anakin asked.

If he opened his mouth, he would cry. So Luke nodded. His eyes were wet, blurry and filled with tears. He squeezed his father's arm again. They were quiet for a while. The only sound was the hum of machines and whirl of the droids working still to keep Anakin alive a little bit longer.

"Tell me . . . about your . . . sister . . ." Anakin asked.

A sad smile stretched across Luke's lips. "She's brave and smart and pretty. I uh had a crush on her when I first met her. I didn't know she was my sister. She puts on a tough act; I suppose a bit like you."

Luke went on and on about his sister. He told Anakin various stories about her. He only stopped when a coughing fits would wrack Anakin's entire body. A few times blood sputtered out into the breathing mask. The most recent fit had morphed into a full seizure. The medical droids buzzed into action. Luke backed away to let them work.

He couldn't watch. He ran out of the room. Anakin was dying. All Luke had done was ramble on pointlessly about stupid stories. He was ruining it! Anakin's last moments! He slammed his fist into the wall. The impact left a small crater in the durasteel. He hadn't been aware he had used the Force to power his punch.

Tears streamed down his face. He leaned over and placed his head against the smooth cold metal of the wall. He let himself cry as he didn't want to do it front of his father. After a few moments, he collected himself and returned back to the med room.


A wheezy sound came of Anakin. Perhaps he was trying to talk, and now finally he was unable to.

"Father . . ." Luke croaked painfully. "I'm sorry. These last few hours. I've just been rambling on and on about the most useless things."
He leaned over and placed his own face above his father's. Slowly and as gently as he could, he kissed his father's forehead. Luke's body trembled as he fought off waves of grief. He lowered his forehead and placed against it his father's scarred one.

Suddenly, Luke was filled with warmth and light. He blinked. No longer was he standing in the med room, but in a large open field. Tall grass and flowers swayed in a soft breeze. Rolling hills were seen in the distance in one direction and in the other were waterfalls tumbling down short cliffs into a river. The sky was a beautiful light blue.

"Beautiful isn't it?"

Luke spun. A man stood beside him. He was tall and wore black and brown tunics similar in style to that of a Jedi. He had long wavy dark blonde hair. A scar slashed along his face near his right eye. His eyes were the same color of the sky. Blue and bright.

The man smiled at Luke. It was large smile that felt so genuine and full of love. A smile tugged at Luke's lips, but he didn't let it form. He was still confused about where he was and who this man was.

"Luke," the man said. "There is no need to apologize. These last few hours with you have been the happiest I've had in years. Possibly decades even."

"Fa-father?" Luke whispered.

Anakin Skywalker smiled and nodded. He turned his attention to the field and Luke looked out as well.

"This is where your mother and I . . . well where we started to fall in love. Or perhaps we already were in love. At least I was," Anakin said amused.

"Where is this?" Luke asked.

"Naboo," Anakin replied. He turned back and faced his son. "What do you know of her? Your mother?"

"Nothing."

Anakin's mouth twisted into a painful grimace. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Again he faced the serene scenery.

"She was an angel," Anakin said in a soft voice. Luke took a step closer to hear better. "Her name was Padme Amidala. She was a queen and a senator of Naboo. She was beautiful and fierce and smart. And . . ." Anakin again faced Luke. Anakin's eyes were watery as if any moment he'd start crying. "And she loved you. And your sister. She was going to leave the Senate. She wanted to come here. Her family had an estate in the lake country. She wanted to have the nursery by the garden."

Luke again looked out across the green field. What would it have been like to grow up here? Amongst all this green and water? With both of his parents and his sister?

"She had long brown curly hair with warm brown eyes," Anakin continued.

As he spoke a figure seemed to appear amongst the grass. A young woman sat picking at the wild flowers. She wore a yellow dress that hung off her shoulders except for a pair of thin straps. The dress had small flowers sewn into it. Colorful ribbons were tied around her arms and streamed down
past her hands. She laughed at something unseen.

"She was beautiful," Luke said. He had never seen his mother. Had always wondered what she looked like. He could see Leia in her.

"Yes," Anakin said.

Her laughter grew louder and then she looked up. Her eyes widened as if she spotted the two of them.

"Ani?" she shouted. A huge smile grew across her face. "Ani!" she shouted as she jumped up. She ran across the grass. Anakin took a hesitant step forward. He looked over at Luke. He was fighting back tears.


Anakin said nothing. Only nodded and smiled. Then he turned and ran. He scooped her up into his arms and spun her around. She laughed and so did he. Her arms wrapped around his neck. Their faces came together in a long and passionate kiss. Then she took a small step away. She placed a hand on his cheek and he leaned into her. She took his hand, his ungloved hand, into both of hers and started to lead him into the grassy field.

Anakin never looked back. His eyes were on her. The field started to brighten, and Luke's eyes started to hurt. He wasn't sure if it was the light or his grief or the scene that caused the tears to fall. But right before everything faded into white, he saw his mother turn around. She looked right at Luke. A smile upon her face. Her lips moved, but he heard nothing.

Then he was back in the med room. The machines were blaring their alarms. Luke stepped away unable to face his father's lifeless body. He didn't need to hear the med droids tell him his father had died. He had already felt it in the Force. He left the room and the body and the alarms behind. The tears fell down his face. His body shook with sobs he could no longer fight back. But despite all of that, Luke Skywalker smiled as he recalled the words his mother had said. The ones he hadn't heard but knew she had said.

"Thank you."
The Battle of Corellia Bay

Chapter Summary

Someone sent me a prompt for a war au, and decided to do a historical war au. Based on the Battle of Mobile Bay from the American Civil War. Newly appointed Rear Admiral Han Solo is on a personal mission to break the blockade of Corellia Bay so the Alliance can seize Coronet City. But getting through the heavily guarded channel, known as the Kessel Run, will be tough. Luke Skywalker has a bad feeling as he spies Darth Vader aboard one of the Imperial ships.

"Han!" Luke shouted. "Come see this!"

The spyglass was pressed to Luke's face. He looked at the opposing Imperial fleet. It matched the Alliance fleet ship for ship. But Luke was drawn to the dark figure standing on the bow of the first ship. He was tall and dressed in all black. A cape billowed behind him in the wind. He wore a black helmet and mask.

There was no denying it. Luke had seen plenty of posters depicting Darth Vader. It had to be him.

"Let me look, kid," Han said as he approached.

He took the spyglass and looked out across the water. He stared for a few moments before lowering the glass.

"What am I supposed to be looking for?" he asked. "It all looks the same to me."

Luke snatched the glass away and brought it back up to his eye. There was no dark figure standing on the front ship. Had he just been imagining things?

"I . . . uh . . . must be seeing things," he mumbled.

Han clapped him on the back. "Just pre-battle nerves," he said.

Luke nodded. Plus why would Darth Vader be here? Shouldn't he with his own fleet? The dreaded Death Squadron? This was not the Death Squadron. It was a smaller Imperial fleet made of small boats made for the shallows of river warfare. Like the Alliance fleet, the ships were a combination of ironclads and wooden-hulled gunners.

Luke was on the Alliance fleet's flagship the *Millennium Falcon*. It was a wooden-hulled ship, but what it lacked in iron-plated armor it made up with in speed. It was the fastest ship in the fleet.

"How are you doing?" Luke asked. "How are your nerves?"

Han shifted and pulled at the collar of his new uniform reflecting his new rank, rear admiral. He looked stiff in the tan double-breasted coat that bore the shoulder markings of two stars with the stripes. The cuffs of his sleeves bore the three stripes and a star. The light blue collar of the undershirt was neatly folded over the jacket into two triangular points. Han had never strived to be part of the rebellion, much less an officer. But that didn't mean he was undeserving of his rank. He had earned this rank, and everyone in this fleet knew it.
This would be Han's first real battle as the highest ranking officer. It was a bit on the personal side for him, which was why he volunteered to do it. The Alliance fleet was going to break the Imperial blockade on Corellia Bay. They would then secure Coronet City, Han's hometown, and the shipyards there. This would weaken the Imperial war machine, but breaking the blockade was not going to be easy.

Attempts had been made to secure the bay earlier in the war, but all had failed. Natural geography helped the Empire. A long narrow peninsula of sand came out from the east side of the bay, while a line of barrier islands came in from the west. There was only one main thin channel going in and out of the bay called the Kessel Run.

The Empire had two forts on both sides of the Run. One on the island side and one on the peninsula side. Even though the two forts were within eyesight of each other, their gun range didn't reach into the middle of the Run. That was why there was a submerged minefield under the water. It stretched from the western islands almost all the way across the channel. It forced ships to come close to the eastern fort and its heavy guns.

Of course even if the fleet managed to make it through the Run, mines, guns and all, there was still an Imperial Fleet waiting in the bay.

"This plan seems a bit crazy," Han muttered.

"It's your plan," Luke said with a smile. He now held the rank of lieutenant commander, but unlike Han he wasn't wearing an officer's uniform. Instead he wore the simple sailor outfit of a light gray shirt, black vest, khaki pants, and black boots.

"The wind is working for us," Han noted. He gave Luke a nod, and then walked off. It was time to begin.

Han's plan had each of the sixteen ships in the fleet paired up. Each wooden-hull was paired with an ironclad, and the two ships were tethered together. The ironclad was on the eastern side, the fort side. As the boats made their way through the Run, the ironclad would act as a shield for its wooden sister. If one boat was damaged, then the other boat could tow it along. Once out of range of the fort's guns, then the fleet would untether themselves and focus on the Imperial ships.

It seemed like a good plan. But Luke had this sinking cold feeling in his stomach ever since he had seen that large dark figure on the Imperial ship. He had to remind himself it wasn't Darth Vader. It couldn't be. The Supreme Commander of the Imperial Forces would not be bothered with such a battle. There were more important fronts to focus on. Right?

Luke had missed the signal. The fleet was moving. The fleet had formed a single column of paired ships, since the Run wasn't wide enough for anything bigger. The Falcon was in the middle. The tide was running in, so Han ordered the ships to cut back on steam pressure on their engines. If the ships' boilers were hit by enemy fire, it would minimize the damage. Luke sent a silent prayer to the Force that the current would give their ships speed.

The ARS Aspiration tied with the ARS Ghorman's Honor led the column. As soon as the Aspiration got close enough, the Imperial fort started to fire. The column pushed on. Everything was going smoothly. The ironclads were shielding their wooden sisters. They were going to make it through the Kessel Run.

But the Aspiration wasn't staying on course. It was veering westward. Han was shouting. Flags were flashing orders down the column. But the Aspiration kept on. Luke could swear he could hear the shouts coming from the Ghorman's Honor. Why was their sister ship leading them to the mines?
The *Honor* desperately went to work to cut themselves free, but that was when the *Aspiration* hit a mine.

It took less than three minutes for the *Aspiration* to sink. The *Honor* was being pulled after it, but finally the ropes were cut. The ship tried to steer itself free of the mines, but met with the same fate as its sister.

Why had they lost those two ships? Why hadn't they followed orders? Luke couldn't see. Thick clouds of gun smoke filled the air. If only he could see! He glanced up. The air was clear higher up . . . It wasn't long before Luke was climbing up into the rigging. There was a slight shift in the wind as Luke got higher. It cleared the smoke enough for him to see out across the Run.

The rest of the column held true. They kept their pace down the Run.

"Luke!" came a shout. It was Han. "What do you see?"

"The column is holding!" Luke said. He glanced up again. The Imperial fleet had moved. A cold dread built up in him. They were preparing their rammer. The moment the column would come out of the minefield, the moment their ships would be rammed.


"Han!" he shouted down. "Adjust the heading! Order the whole column!" Luke gave the directions.

"That puts us too far west!" Han shouted back up.

"We'll get through the Run faster!"

"Yeah in pieces!"

"Just trust me! Damn the mines! Full speed ahead!"

Luke wasn't sure why he said that or even if he trusted those words himself. Han was right. This was foolish to run the whole fleet through the minefield. But it would put them out of range of the Imperial fleet's guns and rammers. The flags were raised. The signal ran down the column. The two new leaders, the *Liberty Gambler* and the *Star Breeze II*, started to turn and make their way into the mines.

Luke held his breath. Any moment now the hull of either ship would brush against a mine, but nothing came. The next two ships in line entered the field followed by the *Falcon* and her ironclad sister the *Sundog*. Then the two leaders were free of the mines. Then the next two and the next and the next. The whole column was out of the mines. The ship pairs started to untie themselves as they prepared to face the approaching Imperial fleet.

They had done it! They made it through the Kessel Run in record time! The Imperial ships were thrown off as they moved to confront the Alliance. No longer was this battle on the Empire's terms, but the Imperial ships came on anyways. A fierce battle started. The air filled with dark heavy gunsmoke. The Imperial ships moved to pincher the Alliance ships between them.

Luke was still up in the rigging as he watched the battle unfold. The Alliance had lost three ships, but the Empire had yet to lose any. Luke couldn't help but frown. Things were not going their way despite the good start. There was a sudden sharp change in the wind, which cleared away the smoke clouds. It gave him a clear view of the battlefield. He looked out assessing the two fleets, and that was when he saw it.
There standing in the middle of the deck of the Imperial flag ship was the tall dark figure. Luke didn't need the spyglass to know it was Darth Vader. He was here.

Luke swung down to the deck. "Han!" he shouted. The rear admiral was shouting orders to get the ships into a better formation. "We need to retreat!"

"What?" Han said. "That was the fastest time anyone has ever broken through the Kessel Run! It was luck we only lost two ships. Perhaps those mines have just been submerged too long to be effective."

"Han!" Luke said. "It's Vader! Lord Vader! He's on the lead ship!"


Han looked out at the battle. "He's just a man," he said. "None of those stories are true. He can't revert the tide or change the wind."

"Can't alter the course of our two lead ships so they go into the minefield and sink?" Luke asked.

Han glared at him, but the thought clearly bothered him.

"If that was the case," Han said slowly, "Why didn't the rest of us get hit?"

Luke shrugged. That he didn't have the answer to.

"It's a bunch of nonsense," Han said.

"Han. We've also lost the Sundog, the Night Sail, and the Inspire, yet none of the Imperial ships have gone down." Han didn't reply. "Han," Luke said again. "We're going to lose."

"You don't know that," Han replied angrily. "We could still win!"

An explosion instantly stole both of their attentions. The Star Breeze II's steam engine had been hit by Imperial fire. The ship was lost. An Imperial ship was plowing through the waters straight at the Falcon. The tall dark figure stood at the bow.

"Darth Vader," Han said under his breath. Then he looked at Luke with wide eyes. "We retreat," he said. "We'll head to the Bespin."

"Bespin?" Luke asked.

"It's a river a bit to the west. A bunch of marshland and swamps. Always thick with fog. There's a smuggler's hideout there called Cloud City."

Luke nodded. He prayed to the Force again. They needed just a bit more luck to get away.

The Bespin River didn't look like much of a river, but Han said this was just the large basin at the mouth of the river. It branched and braided over several miles creating various wetlands, marshes, bayous, and swamps. The water was black and murky. Pond cypress trees grew out of the water. They had large bases that spread out into the dark water. Gray moss hung from the branches. Green algae and water plants floated in the dark water. Tall marsh grasses grew where the water was shallow.
Luke wasn't sure how Han knew the way. He just seemed to know which turns to take. Luke expected the fleet to run aground even though these ships were made for shallow rivers. But the boats moved smoothly on. The deeper they went, the more the fog grew. It started off as a white wispy clouds clinging to the water between the tree roots. But it got thicker and thicker. Luke shivered.

All the ships had become quiet. Out of the original sixteen they had started with, they were down to nine. Two had been lost at the beginning, five during the battle, and another two during the retreat. They came to another branch in the river. The small waterway twisted into the dark trees and fog. A wooden sign with dark letters and green moss hung from a tree. It read: \textit{Dagobah. Do Not Enter.}

"Dagobah?" Luke asked.

"A swamp," Han said. "You don't want to go in there, kid. It's nothing but a maze. Plus there's nothing in there besides ghosts if you believe in that nonsense."

They continued on. The fog was now thick and heavy. They couldn't see that much in front of them. Luke started to notice signs of humans. Floating planks of wood. A chair. An old fishing pole. He saw paint on some of the trees. Then he heard the singing. Drunken singing.

"Looks like someone is having a good time," Han murmured.

Then the lights started to appear in the fog. Slowly a whole town made of shanty buildings on stilts or boats came into view. There was no large port, so the Falcon had to anchor amongst the trees. They took a boat to the town. They stumbled on to the pier and at once a dark skinned man was marching towards them.

"You know we don't want your type here," he said sternly. A group of men followed behind him. The man in front stopped as he took in Han's uniform. "An officer?" he said surprised. "You? You an officer? You slimy, double-crossing, no-good swindler?"

Han shrugged and pointed at himself innocently. Then the dark skinned man broke into a huge smile and laughed as he walked up to Han and wrapped him into a hug.

"How you been doing, you old pirate? Can't believe the Rebellion made you an officer. They must be really desperate," the man said.

"Hey, they were the one to throw the promotion on me," Han said. He looked over at Luke and waved him over. "This is Lando Calrissian. A friend. We go way back."

"And who is this?" Lando asked as stepped forward and offered his hand. Luke shook it.

"This is Luke," Han said.

"What are you doing here?" Lando asked.

"We just had a brush in with the Imps over in the bay. Just need to lay low for a bit."

"Trying to break the blockade?"

"Hey we made it through the Kessel Run in sixteen minutes!"

"Sixteen minutes?" Lando laughed. "In what? Kicking on a plank of wood?"

"We went over the minefield," Luke explained. "Twice, actually." They had to cross back over to
get out.

Lando looked from Luke to Han and back. "Now that sounds like a tale," he said clapping Han on the back. "Let's hear it over some drinks."

Laughter filled the air as the Alliance sailors were welcomed into Cloud City. Soon they joined the drunken singing and shouting and fighting. Luke joined Han and Lando for a while before he drifted away to the docks. He couldn't shake this feeling he had in him. It kept pulling his mind back to the Dagobah. He went back to the *Falcon* and curled up in his bunk. But still the word Dagobah repeated in his head.

The next morning he took the boat on to the river. No one was on watch. Probably everyone had got drunk last night. Luke should reprimand them when got back, but having escaped the Empire, having escaped Darth Vader, was a good reason for a night of drinking. Plus it allowed Luke to get away unseen. He made his back down the foggy river until he came back to the sign. He rowed the boat into the dark trees.

Han was right. The swamp was a maze. There were no clear paths. Sometimes Luke had to stand up and use his feet to push off muddy islands. There were a few tight squeezes between trees. Luke saw alligators and snakes swimming through the water. Birds swooped over head. He was about to turn around as he was unsure why he had even ventured here in the first place when he saw lights.

He made his way toward them. There was an island, slightly bigger than the rest. On it was a hut. It looked like it was made from a large tree and mud. It was rounded and small, but had several small windows from which gold light escaped out of. Luke pulled his boat ashore and walked cautiously to the hut.

"Made it you finally have," an odd voice called out.

Luke froze and looked around wildly. That was when he noticed an odd old man sitting hunched over on a fallen log. The man stood up and leaned heavily on a cane. He was short and old. Really old. His skin was brown and wrinkly. It almost seemed to sag off of him in spots. He wore a turban on his head that had two pointed pieces of fabric hanging out the sides. It almost looked like large ears. He wore a dirty beige robe.


"Young Skywalker you are," the man said.

"How . . . How did you know that?"


The hut was small and Luke couldn't stand up all the way. He sat down on a small wooden stool.

"Yoda was it?" Luke asked. "How did you know who I am?"


He had thought they were all dead, especially after the death of old Ben.

"Can you train me? In how to use the Force?" Luke asked.
"Why you wish become Jedi? Hmm?"

"Mostly because of my father, I guess."

"Ah, your father. Powerful Jedi was he. Powerful Jedi. Mmm."

Luke just watched as Yoda walked over to a fire where he had an iron pot hanging. He stirred the insides with a long spoon.


Was Yoda talking to someone?

"I am ready," Luke said jumping to his defense. "Yoda! I am!"

"He is too old. Yes, too old to begin the training."

"But I've learned so much!" Luke said.

Yoda turned and looked at Luke. Luke noticed the man's eyes were a piercing green. They seem to dig at Luke. Not just the outside, but into his mind as well. Luke feels like he is being weighed and tested. Finally Yoda sighed.

"Will he finished what he begins?"

"Yes!" Luke said. "I won't fail you. I'm not afraid!"

"Oh, you will be. You will be."

An awkward silence stretched through the hut.

"Training we shall begin. Ahead of you long road is, young Skywalker."

"Wait," Luke said. "I need to go back to Cloud City. I need to tell Han and the others."

"No," Yoda said slamming down his walking stick. "Stay here you must. Said you would finished what you begin."

"We haven't even begun yet," Luke pointed out. "If I don't go back, they'll worry about me. I won't mention anything about you, but they need to know I'm safe. I'll come back, I promise. I just need to tell my friends."

"You must not go!" Yoda shouted.

Luke stood up and moved towards the door. "I will return. I promise." He opened the door and walked back into the swamp.

He made his way back to his boat. He found it far easier to make his way out of the Dagobah Swamp. Once back on the Bespin River, he made his way back upstream. As he passed the first anchored Alliance ship, Luke looked up. The fog was still heavy, but he could see up to the deck. No one was on board. Luke frowned. It was one thing to give the crew a night off, but there should be someone on watch now.

Then Luke passed the next ship and the next. No one stood on deck. The ships were quiet and still.
He wondered where everyone was. Had they all gone into Cloud City? He would need to have a
word with Han. He saw the lights of the city. He expected a loud ruckus, but it was just a soft
murmur. Everything seemed subdued. A few smugglers and outlaws lingered about, but Luke didn't
see any Alliance sailors.

Once he tied up his ship, he made his way across the various boardwalks to the hut Han was staying
in. The lights were dark. Was Han even in? Luke pushed open the door.

"Han!" he shouted as ran across the floor.

Han was tied up to a support pole. His hands were stretched back around the pole. His face was
bruised and bloodied. There was a gag in his mouth. His head rolled from side to side as he looked

"Han," he said. "What happened?"

"Luke, it's a trap," Han muttered.

Before Luke could say another word, strong hands grabbed at his arms. At once Luke was
screaming and kicking, but more hands grabbed him. Then a cloth was placed against his nose and
mouth. Luke squirmed and continued to try and break free, but then his body started to feel heavy.
His movements started to slow down. His head spun. He felt sluggish. He fought to keep his eyes
open.

The hands lowered him to the ground. He couldn't move at all. Not even a finger. But he fought to
keep his eyes open. Heavy footsteps were heard. They echoed loudly in Luke's dazed mind. They
came to a stop right in front of him. Luke could only see black. He could just make out that some of
the black was different from the other. Black boats and a black . . . cape?

Then the blackness stirred. It was a figure. A person in all black. He even wore a black metal helmet
slowly slid down his face. As it covered his eyes, they closed. He could no longer keep them open.
There was a heavy pull inside of him calling him to sleep. He tried to fight off, but eventually he
could no longer fight it.

Luke woke up to the gentle rocking of the sea. As his eyes came into focus he found himself staring
at an unfamiliar wooden roof. He turned his head and found he was in a bunk that was placed
against the wall. High slats prevented him from rolling out of the bed, even if the water got rough.

He blinked as he took in the rest of the room. The bunk was in a corner. In the opposite corner sat a
large desk under a large window. Pinned up on the wall next to the desk were maps and notes. Luke
could see a bit of clutter on the desk itself. There was a globe, an inkwell, stacks of papers under a
paper weight, and a clock.

Luke glanced around. This room was big for a ship. It had to be the captain's quarters. But it wasn't
Han's. This wasn't the *Falcon*. So where was he?

He tried to push himself up, but found his body was still weak and not responding. He flopped down
back on to the bed. His head spun, and he squeezed his eyes shut. He sighed and reopened his eyes.
That was when he noticed the bright red flag on the wall by his bed. A horrible sense of dread started
to claw its way up inside of him. That was the red flag of the Empire. This was an Imperial ship.

What was he doing on an Imperial ship? In the captain's quarters? Why wasn't he in the brig? He
tried to push himself up again. He managed to sit up, but at once nausea overwhelmed him. Spots
swam in his eyes, and he fell back down into the bed. He groaned as he tried not to throw up. At some point he must have drifted off to sleep, because he awoke to the sound of heavy steps, the click of a key, and a door opening.

Yet he didn't open his eyes. He laid still. He heard the door close and the key click again. Luke cursed to himself. So he was locked in here. The heavy steps came closer and closer until they stopped right at edge of the bunk. Luke could feel there was someone next to him. Someone watching.

"Do not pretend to sleep," came a deep dark voice.

Luke opened his eyes. A man stood towering over him. His arms crossed across his chest. He wore all black. His long wavy blond hair was tied back in a loose ponytail. A scar slashed next to his right eye. His eyes were a bright blue, but they were cold. They made Luke shiver.

"Who are you?" Luke asked. His voice was weak. It felt unused and dry. "Where am I?"

The man stared at Luke for a long while, before he sharply turned. He marched over to the desk and picked something up. He returned to Luke holding a flask. He held it out to Luke, who only eyed it suspiciously.

"It is water," the man said.

Luke slowly sat up and took the flask. The water though it had a metallic taste was still cold and good. He emptied the whole flask and handed it back to the man.


The man took the flask. As he walked back over to the desk, he asked, "What do you know of your father?"

"My father?"


"I . . . uh . . ." Luke stumbled. "He was a sailor."

The man walked back over to Luke. "Is that all?" he asked slowly. "They never said what happened to him?"


"How?"

What was with all these questions? Why did this man want to know so much about his father?


"Is that all they said?"


The room grew colder still. The man stared unblinking at Luke. His sharp blue eyes felt like ice
digging into him. A sharp knock on the door finally caused those eyes to look elsewhere. The man let out a soft growl as he walked over to the door. Luke could not see it from the bunk, but he heard the door unlock and open.

"Yes captain?" the man asked.

"Lord Vader," a new voice said.

Instantly goosebumps ran up Luke's arms. He grabbed at the blanket covering him.

The new voice continued, "A new com just arrived via messenger bird."

No one else talked. There was just the sound of the door closing and locking. Then Vader's boots as he walked back into the room. He walked over to his desk as he unrolled the message. He took a minute reading it and then looked up at the map pinned up on the wall. He scowled and threw the message on to his desk. Then he turned and faced Luke again.

"You're Darth Vader?" Luke had to ask.

"I am," Vader replied as he walked back over.

"You were at Corellia Bay. Why?"

"Because you were there."

That didn't make any sense. Why did it matter if Luke was there or not? Was this still about Luke sinking the Empire's horrid dreadnaught the Death Star? It was a ship with such huge cannons it could destroy a whole seaside town single handedly.

"You are strong in the force, young Skywalker. You were able to get your fleet over the minefield without loosing a single ship. You were able to manipulate the tides and winds in your favor. Impressive, most impressive."


"I assure you, young one, you did. You are strong, but untrained. But I will complete your training."

"No," Luke said horrified. "No," he repeated louder this time. "I won't become like you!"

Vader glared down at Luke. The room seemed to grow cold again.

"I was not always like this," Vader said. "I once had a different life. I had a wife, and we were expecting a baby. But she grew ill. If I did nothing I would lose her and our baby. So I went to the Jedi for surely in their infinite wisdom and powers they knew of a way to save her. Do you know what they said to me?"


"They told me to let her die. To rejoice in her passing and rejoining the Force," Vader spat angrily. "If the Jedi would not help me I would find someone else. And I did. Chancellor Palpatine. He promised me power. Power to save my wife and child. All at the price of becoming his right hand man. His enforcer. His attack dog. And I did so willingly. I burned down the Jedi Temple. I slaughtered the Separatist Council to end the Trade War."

He stopped and just stared. His hands were balled into tight fists. Luke wondered if it was a trick of the light, but did his eyes looked yellow?
"Did . . . did you save her?" Luke asked. He had to ask. There was something inside of him that needed to know. "Your—your wife? And your baby?"

"No," Vader growled. "A Jedi, a friend my wife had known since since she was a girl, a person who was like a brother to me, came to her. He told her lies about me. Worried for my safety she boarded a ship and sailed to my location. The Jedi stole aboard. Once she arrived at the island, the Jedi revealed himself. We dueled. I lost. I was left to die there. The Jedi took my wife. When I recovered from my injuries the first thing I asked was what had happened to my wife. She had died. The baby with her."

Why was Vader telling him this? Why was Luke in his room? In his bed? What did this have to do with him?

"Was the Jedi my father?" Luke asked. Was this what this was all about? Was Vader out for revenge.

But suddenly Vader's expression softened. "No," he said softly. He took a deep breath and the hardness and cold returned. "No, it was not your father. I was to learn this Jedi's crimes did not end with my wife's death. I was to learn later, much much later that my child lived. That the Jedi had stolen my child and hid him away from me."

Luke shivered. It felt like the room was shaking. The wood creaked. It sound like a piece of wood splintered open. There was the sound of cracking glass.

"The Jedi who dared such a thing was none other than Obi-Wan Kenobi," Vader growled.

"Ben—Ben?" Luke asked. He couldn't believe old Ben would do such a thing.

"Yes, Luke. Now tell me, what lies did that Jedi tell you about your father?"

Luke's breath caught in his throat. Everything stopped. Even Vader was frozen. The only thing that seemed to move was Luke's thoughts.

"No," Luke whimpered. His voice broke the spell. Time moved again. "No," he said again. "It can't be. You can't be . . . my father."

Vader's face softened. He walked over and placed a hand on Luke's shoulder.

"It is true, my son," he said. "I am your father."
Retribution

Chapter Summary

The Imperial Prince Luke has been killed by Rebel assassins. The Emperor looks over the body with a smile. Darth looks over the body with barely held back rage and grief. Yet the Emperor doesn't know is that Vader has been planning for this event for years.

Darth Vader stood straight, tall, and unmoving. Even his cape was still. The only thing that marked him as alive was his breathing. It was an even kish-kosh of the respirator. His masked and helmeted head was pointed down. He was looking straight at the twisted body on the dark floor.

The body was twisted unnaturally. Its limbs were askew. Blood stained the black clothes and pooled around on the floor. Burn marks were spotted all over. The blond hair was caked in sweat and blood. The face was twisted and etched forever in a silent scream. The blue eyes were open and unseeing.

The sounds of steps approached, but Darth Vader still did not move. Emperor Palpatine walked up and stopped beside his Sith apprentice. He stood there unmoving as well, except for his face as a twisted smile slowly stretched across it. When he spoke, his tone was somber and serious.

"It is such a shame," the Emperor said slowly. "For your son to die so young and so cruelly. Assassinated by rebels."

Kish-kosh. Kish-kosh. Vader still did not stir. His unblinking lenses were still looking at the body of the sixteen year old.

"I have no doubt you will hunt these rebels down yourself Lord Vader," the Emperor said as he slowly turned away. "You will show them the wrath of the Empire."

Kish-kosh. Kish-kosh.

"Lord Vader?" the Emperor paused and looked over his shoulder.

Finally Vader moved. He straightened up then he turned to fully face the Emperor. He bowed down to one knee. "These rebels will be burned out of hiding, my master," Vader said. His voice was off. It was rough. Dry. Pained. "Whole systems will bleed rebel blood. The scum will finally be purged from the galaxy."

"Good, good," the Emperor said with a smile. "Now go. Execute your revenge. Bring peace and justice to our Empire."

"As you wish, my master," Vader said as he stood. But then he turned and looked back at the broken body.

The Emperor spoke up, "I will see to the boy. Now go."

Vader only hesitated a moment more, before he marched away. The Emperor eyed the corpse. His smile only grew larger.
Vader's fleet had just jumped to hyperspace. Vader had stood at his usual spot in front of the viewport on the bridge. The only thing he had said since coming on board was to order the fleet to Kestos Minor in the Kwymar Sector. Several officers jumped when Vader finally turned sharply on his heels. The entire bridge quieted down. All the small talk disappeared. Everyone at once appeared to be dutifully at work, but everyone was keeping track of their supreme commander.

However, Vader paid no attention to the bridge crew. He walked straight out of the bridge. He ignored all he passed in the hallways. Once inside his personal quarters, he paused. Then he moved deeper into the suite. He entered his private med room. The med droids stood powered down in a corner, yet he didn't activate them.

He walked up to a set of cabinets made of shiny metal. He waved his hand, and the shelves silently slid to the side revealing a hidden door. Vader keyed in a passcode into the door panel, and the door slid quietly open. Once inside, the door and the cabinet slid back into place. There was a short hallway with only one door. A wave of Vader's hand opened it.

The dark lord stepped inside and quickly made his way to the small bed against the wall. He lowered himself down to his knees at the edge of the bed. All was quiet except for Vader's loud breathing, kish-kosh kish-kosh, and the soft barely audible breathing of the sleeping boy in the bed. Cautiously Vader reached out his hand and placed it on the boy's head. He gently started to stroke the feathery blond hair.

The boy stirred in his sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Bright blue eyes blinked a few times and then settled on the black mask.

"Father," Luke said a bit sleepily. A lazy smile grew across his lips, but it was stopped by a yawn. "You're back."


"Father?" he whispered.

"It is done," Vader said as he slowly stood.

Luke's eyes widened. His hands clenched at the bed sheets. He took in a sharp breath and held it. Then he let it out in a soft hiss.

"He's . . . he's dead?" Luke said not looking up at his father.

"Yes," Vader said.

Luke clenched his teeth down. He knew he shouldn't get emotional. But his shoulders bunched up as he tried to stop himself from trembling. His eyes blinked rapidly trying to keep the tears at bay. A heavy weight settled on the edge of the bed. Luke saw in his blurry vision his father sit on down.

Vader wrapped an arm around his son and brought the boy into a hug. Luke wrapped his arms around his father and buried his head into the thick material of Vader's suit.

"It is okay," Vader said. "You are allowed to grieve."


"It was still a life," Vader said. "One you spent time with. Laughed with. Became attached to."
Luke nodded. The tears were now falling down his face. He tightly grabbed on to his father. Soon his whole body shook with sobs as the grief raked through his body. Vader shared his son's grief. He undid the iron tight grip on his emotions. Soon his heart pounded with pain.

It was foolish. They both knew this. Neither one should have been this upset. They had planned for this. And yet, they both mourned for the life that ended. The life of a clone of Luke.

When the first attempt was made on Luke's life at the age of four, Vader's investigation quickly pointed to his master, Emperor Palpatine. The Emperor had tried very hard to hide any connection to himself, but Vader had found it. When a second attempt on Luke's life happened only three months later, Vader knew he needed to do something. That was when he had Luke cloned.

The clone, like those of the clone troopers, was modified to age fast. But once it reached the equivalent age of three, Vader had taken the boy away from the cloners. By then Vader had created secret little pockets like this room amongst his ships and homes. Places where he could keep an extra child. The clone needed to fool Palpatine. And for that, the clone needed to be like the real Luke. So the clone was raised with Luke.

The clone wasn't even given a proper name. He was called Luke, though often shortened to Lu. The clone knew he was to be the real Luke's double. They studied together, played together, trained together, and flew ships together. As the clone became closer and closer to Luke's age, the two were swapped out. It would be the clone who stood beside Vader at state functions, followed Vader onto his warships, sat in on tactical meetings with the military, and would go on test runs of the latest TIE fighters together.

Vader knew the fate of the clone. Knew it wasn't his son, his real son. But he also knew he was going to need to sell the illusion to Palpatine. He was going to have to become attached to the clone. He was reluctant at first, but slowly over time he came to care for the clone. He was very similar to Luke, but Lu was his own person.

Lu liked being social. He liked the grand parties of the Empire. He loved to dance. He followed all the trashy holonet gossip shows. He always seemed to know who was dating who. He enjoyed romantic novels. He also liked to play jokes. One time Lu had filled Vader's feeding tube in his meditation pod with toothpaste. Both he and Luke had rolled on the floor with laughter. Vader stood there, mouth filled with minty paste, as he watched the joyful boys.

Lu was never told of his fate. His fate to one day die, but perhaps he knew. The attempts on Luke's life never diminished. A few times Lu had come close to losing his own life. After the most recent attempt, Lu broke into tears. Vader sat down on his med bed, like he was now with Luke, and pulled the clone to him. Lu cried and cried. When the tears finally stopped, he pulled away. He grabbed Vader's large gloved hand.

"I'm glad you're ok," he whispered. "You and Luke. I'm glad you're both ok."

The attempt had placed a bomb on the star destroyer Vader was currently traveling on. Luke and Lu had been in Vader's private hangar. Luke had been dressed as a mechanic and wore a dark wig. When the bomb went off, Lu had thrown himself on top of Luke.

"You know," Lu said with a smile. "I read a quote once that said, 'Life is not worth living until you have found something worth living for.' I'm glad I have that." The clone squeezed Vader's hand.

So Vader mourned. Sobs shook his own body. Tears formed in his damaged eyes and ran down and burned his scarred skin. And in the quiet of the night of space, father and son mourned the loss of their brother and son.
Luke now had to work really hard to stay hidden. He had cut his hair and dyed it black. He wore lenses on his eyes, making them look brown. It was important no one recognized him, because the entire galaxy now thought Prince Luke was dead. Luke had insisted, despite the crazy risk, he attend the funeral. Vader had protested. The Emperor would be there. What if Luke's shields slipped and Palpatine sensed him?

But Luke didn't give up, and eventually Vader relented. However, Luke did have to compromise. He stood amongst the hundreds of mourners on Imperial Center who gathered in the large parade ground in front of the Imperial Palace. Palpatine's speech was waning on. Of course he would use this moment to be more about himself and the Empire, but Luke wasn't listening.

His eyes were drawn to the large black casket that sat on a podium behind the Emperor. A large bright red flag of the Empire was draped across it. Small white flowers littered the top. He wondered who had put the flowers there. They didn't seem to match the stark almost emotionless ceremony. Had it been his father? Darth Vader stood to the side of the casket. His head was held high. He looked straight ahead. But Luke knew he was hurting as he was.

It wasn't until two days later that father and son were reunited back on Vader's ship. Vader's fleet was returning to space to hunt down rebels.

"Did you put those flowers on Lu's casket?" Luke asked.

Vader paused. He was quiet for a long while, before he spoke up. "Yes," he said. "They were placed in your mother's casket as well."

Luke couldn't stop the wave of grief that tore through him. He tried to blink back the tears. He thought he would be over this, but it was still there. The pain was still too raw. Vader collected his son into his arms. Again the two mourned together.

"We will stop him, won't we?" Luke whispered.

"Yes," Vader replied softly. "We shall have our revenge. Lu's retribution."

Luke wasn't there when Vader finally drove his red lightsaber through Palpatine's heart. He didn't hear the curses Palpatine threw at Vader. He didn't see the light fade from his eyes as his body grew cold.

Instead Luke stood in large medical room. Large tubes filled the room. Luke held his green lightsaber in his hand. He was now nineteen. It had been three years since Lu's death. Three years of hiding and training with his father. Three years of planning for this moment. For the death of Palpatine.

Luke looked over his shoulder at the massive bodies of the dead Imperial Sentinels. They had given Luke quite a fight, but eventually they had fallen. A small beeping sound brought Luke's attention back to the tubes. The base holding one of the tubes was blinking and beeping. Suddenly the liquid started to drain.

Inside was a man. Various wires and tubes were connected to the body to keep him alive. They snapped off and the body fell to the floor. Slowly the man took a big gasp of air and unsteadily pushed himself up from the ground.


The clone of Emperor Palpatine slowly looked at Luke. The clone looked nothing like the Emperor.
He was young with smooth skin. But the scowl he gave looked was completely that of Palpatine.


Luke shrugged. "You died as well."

"So you are a clone," Palpatine said as he pulled himself up to his full height.


"The one who died was," Palpatine said. "I am going to enjoy cutting you down myself this time, but tell me boy are there more of you running around? Will I get to enjoy this experience again?"


He lunged, and the body of Palpatine fell. This time Luke watched as the light faded from the eyes and the body cooled until the beeping of the base of the tube started to beep. Luke watched as the liquid drained and the next clone fell out. This time he didn't even let the clone say anything before the lightsaber slashed through it.

Luke was patient. He could have blown the whole facility up. Destroying all the clones in one go. But no this was personal. As the Emperor transferred his spirit essence from one clone to the next, Luke waited. Luke waited until the new clone stumbled out of its cloning tube. He made sure Palpatine knew that each of his deaths were at the hand of a Skywalker.

When Vader finally arrived on the planet Byss, Luke had made it through all the clones. It had taken hours, but finally there was only one. It was still alive, though Luke had cut off its arms, legs, and tongue. Vader and Luke wasted no time. They took the wiggling husk of Palpatine and threw him into the carbon-freezing chamber. There the last fragment of Emperor Palpatine, Darth Sidious, was frozen into carbonite.

Neither Luke nor Vader wanted to risk Palpatine transferring his spirit into someone else. Perhaps in a way Palpatine was getting his wish. He had mastered immortality. He would live forever as a limbless torso screaming silently as a slab of rock.

Luke stood in the tomb that was marked was once marked with his name. After Palpatine's death and Vader's rise to throne, the name had been changed. It now bore the proper name, Lu. Luke was now twenty-five. He placed a hand on the black casket.

"Thank you," he said.

He left the catacombs and returned back to the palace. He made his way through the hallways until he came to a room next to the gardens. The windows were open and outside the flowers were in full bloom. Luke smiled as he made his way to the crib that was placed next to the window. Inside was his son. He looked just his father. Blond hair and blue eyes.

The baby was awake. He wiggled happily as he recognized his father. Flowers had floated in from the window and into the crib. The baby held one flower tightly in his hand.

"What do you have there, little one?" Luke asked as he opened the baby's hands. It was a small white flower. The same the had been placed on Lu's casket. Luke looked out the window. Those flowers didn't grow in the garden. There weren't even any flowers that were similar currently in bloom.
He looked back down. The baby had wrapped his fingers back around the flower. Luke fought back a wave of sadness as he picked up his son and cradled him to his chest. He walked over to a window. Suddenly the baby let go of the flower. The wind picked up and blew it out into the garden. Both father and son watched it float away.
Malfunction

Chapter Summary

Luke hangs on to the gantry above the reactor shaft. Darth Vader is ready to tell his son the truth, except there seems to be a malfunction with his vocoder. ((A short little crack fic for Red Heathen who has helped me out a few times.))

Luke tucked his right arm under his left. His hand . . . his hand was gone. He tightly gripped the machinery at the end of the gantry. He glanced down at the bottomless shaft he was hanging over.

"Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father," Darth Vader said.

"He told me enough!" Luke barked back with all the anger he could summon. "It was you who killed him!"

"No," Vader said with a heavy weight to his words. "I am- . . . -ath-"

Luke can't stop the frown that pulled on his lips. He shifted uncomfortably. It sounded as if Vader's vocoder had broken up. Vader just stood there frozen. The wind snapped at his cape and Luke's hair. Luke shivered.

Finally Luke asked, "You are . . . what?"

Vader straightened up as if bothered or shocked. He took a small moment. It looked as if he was collecting himself. Then he said, "I- -r- . . . -er."

"You err?" Luke asked. He was now really confused.

"No!" Vader shouted. "Fa- "

"Fa . . .? Er? You are far?" Luke said as tried to figure out Vader was so desperately trying to stay.

"Far from what? Me? Good! Stay far away from me! Stay over there!"

There was an odd static sound that came from Vader. His hands balled into fists, but then he did them as he started to press buttons on the consoles on his belt. Luke glanced back down at the bottomless shaft. How was he going to get out of this?

Darth Vader was frustrated. Something is off with his suit. It is not projecting his voice properly. He fiddled with the controls, and finally felt like he has fixed the problem. He looked up. It was time.

Time to tell his son who he was. Time to reveal the truth. Time for father and son to join together and rule the galaxy.

"Luke-" Vader said, but at the same time Luke spoke.

"Listen-" Luke said.

Both stopped. They stared at each other awkwardly.

”No, you,” Vader said.

”What?” Luke asked. His body leaned forward slightly. ”I can barely hear you.”

Vader scowled and at once worked on adjusting the controls. Again.


Heat flashed across Vader’s cheeks. He did not need help! He could maintain his own suit. He fiddled with the knobs and buttons some more. He hated this suit! This blasted prison! He hated being at its mercy!

Luke shifted again. He was growing tired and colder. He needed to get off this gantry. He eased back towards the small railing that connected to the walkway. Vader seemed completely preoccupied. Luke carefully crawled across the small rail and grabbed onto the railing. He was close to Vader who stood just on the other side of the railing. With Vader this close, Luke noticed the man was also huge. How was Luke going to get around him?

Slowly Luke put one foot through the railing and onto the walkway. He gripped the railing and started to pull himself forward, but he froze as Vader stopped messing with his belt.

Vader had finally got his vocoder working. The feed was working properly. The volume was set. The truth can no longer wait. He straightened up.

”Luke,” he said. ”I am your father.”

What Darth Vader didn’t know, was he over compensated on the volume. Instead of just the normal deep voice, it came out at full blast.

”LUKE. I AM YOUR FATHER.”

Luke was frozen in shock. His eyes were wide. His mouth open. Vader finally noticed the boy was right next to him. The two just stood there. Staring at each other. Unsure of what to say or who should go first.

It was Luke who broke the silence. ”You’re uh . . . volume is up a little a loud,” he said sheepishly. ”I didn’t quite catch that. It came out too distorted.”

Vader sucked in a sharp breath. He grabbed the boy and dragged him onto the walkway. Luke gave a yelp. Vader would drag his son back to his ship. He would get his blasted Force forsaken suit looked at. Then he would talk to his son. Finally.
Luke Amidala

Chapter Summary

(Prompt by tgik) Luke is raised by his mother, who becomes the leader of the Rebellion known by the code name Lotus. When Luke is captured on the first Death Star and questioned, he recalls his mother's words to use his real name.

"Run!" Luke shouted.

He saw her hesitate. Leia Skywalker looked just like the Jedi Luke had read about as a child. Tan robes with a long brown outer robe. She held her lightsaber hilt in her hand. Her brown hair was done in a braid that twisted around her head. Her brown eyes were full of concern and fear.

"Go," Luke said, but this time it was a whisper.

This time she turned and ran up the loading ramp of the *Millenium Falcon*. The ramp closed, and the ship took off. He sighed in relief. Luke wasn't what the Alliance needed. What they needed was Leia. Was a Jedi. A symbol of hope. Hopefully Captain Solo would see her safely to Yavin IV and to Luke's mother.

Luke grimaced in pain. His leg had been shot as they had tried to make to the hangar. Luckily Leia was safely gone and the Death Star plans as well. Boots were clicking against the smooth floor. Luke didn't turn to face them, but soon there was a snap-hiss and a steady hum. He could feel the heat on the side of his face. His eyes glanced at the red lightsaber pointed at his neck. He followed the beam up to the woman who held the blade.


"Rebel," she spat. She looked over a group of nearby stormtroopers. "Stun him," she shouted.

Luke opened his mouth, but the stun shot hit him before he got a single sound out.

He woke up in a cell. He wasn't surprised. He felt the slight vibrations of an engine moving a ship through space. Was the Death Star moving? And if so, where? It wasn't long before Mara Jade stormed into the cell. She was alone. No longer did she wear the leathers of a spacer. She wore a simple tight black leather outfit. A lightsaber was clipped to her belt. Luke slowly sat up on the metal bench he had been lying on.

"So is this when the questioning begins?" Luke asked coyly.

Mara only glared down at him with her bright green eyes. "I already know about you Luke," she said in a harsh tone. "Son of the Rebel leader known as Lotus. She is currently the Chancellor of the Rebel Alliance. And you, are her son."

Luke just stared. He blinked a few times. "I didn't hear a question in there," he finally said.

"Your name," she growled. "What is your name?"
He paused. His mother's words rung in his ears.

"Luke," she had said. "If you ever get captured by the Empire, tell them your real name. Tell them my real name."

"Why?" he had asked. A wave of grief flashed over his mother's face. She placed a hand on his cheek.

"Because, hopefully it will save you."

He took a deep breath and said, "My name is Luke. Luke Amidala. My mother is Padme Amidala, former senator and queen of Naboo."

Clearly it was not the answer Mara had been expecting. Her face seemed to completely relax. It didn't show signs of shock. Mara was perhaps too well trained to show her emotions like that. But for a moment, it seemed like she forgot to keep the stern hard face of an Imperial. She quickly recovered.

"What?" she hissed. "Padme Amidala is dead. She has been dead for almost twenty years now."


"So are you saying the true identity of Lotus is that of Padme Amidala?"

Luke said nothing.

"Or were you adopted by Lotus?" Mara asked.

Again, Luke said nothing. Mara brought out a com and barked an order. It wasn't long before a med droid walked in.

"Get a blood sample," she barked.

Luke offered his arm voluntarily. Once the blood was taken, the droid left. Mara shot Luke one last dirty glare before she marched out of the cell herself.

The door slid open and Mara Jade stormed in. Time had passed since she was in here last. Luke had been given a meal of a nutrient bar and a cup of water. The last time he had seen her, she appeared composed. Now she was off.

"What did you do?" she spat.


"Was it some sort of code?"

"I don't... I don't know."

He didn't know. He only knew what his mother had said. Was it a code? Were there Alliance spies that had reacted? Mara straightened up, and a smile twisted across her face.

"You think you're being saved?" she asked in a high-pitched voice. "Oh no, little Rebel boy. That stunt got the attention of Lord Vader himself. I heard he was quite enraged when he got the report that you were claiming to be the son of Padme Amidala." She took a step closer. "Rumor has it," she said in a low voice, "Vader was the one who killed her."
Then she winked, turned, and left Luke alone in his cell.

Lord Vader? Darth Vader?

His arms and legs grew numb. A coldness settled in the pit of his stomach. This was worse. Much worse than Mara. Much worse than anything else. Luke recalled his training on getting captured by Imperials. There was a whole section that went over Darth Vader. It was simple. If ever faced with Vader you do two things: run or kill yourself.

It seemed harsh, but facing Vader was far, far worse. There were many rumors about what Vader did to Rebels. Every Rebel feared to be interrogated by him. He could get anything out of any prisoner. Just give him enough time. Whenever a Rebel was reported to be taken in by Vader, the Alliance had to scramble to quickly make new codes, alter plans, and make whatever intelligence Vader was gaining obsolete. It was always a race against time, because he acted fast.

What would Vader get from Luke? Luke's mother was Lotus, the leader of the Rebellion. He may not have a lot of codes, but he knew a lot of faces and names. He knew some details about some missions. He also knew about Leia Skywalker.

They had met on Tatooine. Luke was there to get a hold of the Death Star plans. He was expecting to meet another shady undercover Alliance agent, but instead it was her. Leia. A Jedi. He thought the Jedi had all died, but here she was waving a blue lightsaber that she claimed was her father's. Luke and Leia had gotten a ride from Han Solo to go to Alderaan. They were to pass the plans to Bail Organa, a member of the Alliance's council.

But the Death Star had destroyed Alderaan. Solo's ship was taken aboard. Leia snuck out saying she had to go save her master, an old man who was supposedly a Jedi master. They did manage to rescue him, but then came Vader. A black behemoth amongst the white stormtroopers wielding a red blade.

"Kenobi!" he shouted.

The old Jedi master calmly stopped and turned to Vader. He told the rest of them to go as he took out his own lightsaber and ignited it. Luke had stopped to watch the duel. That was when his leg got shot and he fell. Leia hadn't wanted to leave him, but it was for the best she did.

Luke wondered what happened to the old man. Had he won against Vader? Had he escaped with Leia? Or had he met the fate of so many other Jedi? Was he cut down by Vader?

Luke's thoughts turned to himself. He shouldn't be worried about an old man. He should be worried about himself. What was Vader going to do to him?

It was a much longer wait this time. When the doors finally slid open, Luke was on the edge of the metal bench. He was ready, but no large black cyborg walked in. Instead two troopers and an officer filed in.

"Up," the officer ordered.

Luke briefly considered resisting, but decided not to. He stood up. The troopers clamped binders around his wrists. He was taken out of the detention bay up to a hangar where he was placed in a shuttle.

"Where are we going?" Luke asked.

"Lord Vader wants you on his ship," the officer snapped.
Luke was quiet during the ride through hyperspace, as he left the shuttle, and placed in a new cell on board Vader's personal star destroyer. Time stretched on and on. No dark lord. In fact there was no one. Only the food that came through the slat in the floor.

He wasn't even sure how much time had passed, when finally two stormtroopers came. He was again placed in binders and marched out of the detention block. This time he was taken up in a turbolift and marched into a large empty room. Standing in front a large viewport of space stood Darth Vader. He said nothing. He didn't even turn around, but the troopers left. The door shut behind them. Luke was alone with Vader.

"Luke Amidala."


"Hey," Luke shouted. He tried to jerk his head away, but Vader's grip was tight. He twisted Luke's face one way and then another.

"You look more like your father," Vader said letting go.


Vader paused. There was a slight tilt of his head. "What do you know of him?" Vader asked.

Luke glanced down. This wasn't the interrogation he was expecting. He sighed. "His name was Ani," Luke said slowly. "He was a pilot, and he died before I was born." Luke shrugged. That was all he knew. He knew his mother loved his father. She spoke of him warmly on the rare occasion she opened up about him.

Vader was quiet. Only the sound of his breathing through his suit was heard. Finally he spoke. "Ani?" he asked. "So your mother . . . is alive. And she is the leader of the Rebellion."

How did . . . How did Darth Vader get that? Luke had yet to say that Lotus was Padme Amidala.

"What did your mother say of the Jedi girl? Of Leia Skywalker?" Vader asked.

Luke bit down. Finally, it was starting. He would give Vader nothing. Vader raised a hand and pointed a finger at him.

"Tell me," he growled.

"Nothing," Luke said. "She told me nothing about her." It was the truth. Vader's hand lowered.

"Nothing?" he said. His voice full of disbelief. "Nothing of this little Jedi? The one trained by Kenobi." Vader spat the name. "Was she raised by him? Was she not raised by her mother?"

"I wouldn't know," Luke said. He hadn't gotten Leia's life story. "I just know that her fath-" Luke snapped his mouth shut. Why was he so talkative? Was this a trick by Vader?

"Her father?" Vader said in a dangerous tone. "Her father what?"


"I just know her father was Anakin Skywalker," Luke replied in a whisper.
The room seemed to grow suddenly cold.

"You speak of her as if you don't know her," Vader said.

"I don't! I just met her right before we got to the Death Star. That's all I know about her!"

There was another long stretch of silence filled by Vader's breathing.

"It seems, young Amidala," Vader said, "your mother has not been honest with you."

"What would you know?" Luke barked back as he tried to jerk his arm free. Vader's grip was strong.

"I know that Padme Amidala secretly married Anakin Skywalker," Vader said as he pulled Luke close. "Her nickname for him was Ani."


"I had your blood tested," Vader continued. "You are the son of Padme and Anakin. I felt that girl in the Force as she flew above the Death Star. She used the Force to deliver the fatal shot."

Fatal shot? Did that mean? Luke's head was spinning.

"Your sister destroyed the Death Star," Vader said slowly.

Luke took a step away. Vader let go of him. Was Vader telling the truth? And if he was . . . then yes, his mother hadn't been honest with him. How could she keep such a secret? That he had a sister?


"Because that is my name," Luke said raising his chin.

"Why did you state your mother was Padme Amidala? Doing so gave away the true identity of Lotus. The Empire has been searching for that for years."

Luke just glared at Vader.

"Luke, why did she tell you to use that name?" he asked again.

"Why does it matter?" Luke asked. His voice was low.

"Do not test me, young one," Vader growled grabbing hold of Luke's arm again. There seemed to be a pressure on his throat.

"She said . . . She said if I was ever captured by Imperials to use her real name. That it might save me."

Vader was quiet for a while, before he finally said, "I see. She was correct."

"Correct?"

"No harm will come to you," Vader said.

"What?" Luke shouted. He was a Rebel! The son of the Rebel leader! "Why?"
"Because I once went by the name of Anakin Skywalker," Vader said.

The air was sucked out of Luke. His legs grew weak. His head was dizzy. Spots swam in front of his eyes. It wasn't true!

"I tested your blood against my own," Vader explained. "You are my son."

This couldn't be! This was impossible. His father couldn't be Darth Vader! He didn't have a sister! This was too much! Vader's hold of Luke seemed to soften. His other hand grabbed Luke's other arm. It wasn't a harsh touch. It almost seemed like he was trying to keep Luke steady.

"Now Luke," Vader said. "Tell me how to find your mother and sister. It is time we had a family reunion."
Chapter Summary

((A direct sequel to the previous story. Not as Luke or Vader centric. This time focusing on Leia and Padme.)) Padmé Amidala and her daughter Leia Skywalker go to the Imperial Palace to save Luke Amidala from the clutches of Vader.

Leia shared a look with Lotus, the current leader of the Rebel Alliance. Lotus's real name was Padmé Amidala. She was also Leia's mother as well as Luke's mother. Luke, her twin brother she had only just met. Padmé's hair was pulled back into a looping bun. She wore an outfit of an Imperial officer. Leia was dressed similar.

Mother and daughter eyed each other before they both looked at the looming ziggurat of the Imperial Palace.

There was a small chime over the com. "You sure about this, ma'am?" asked a voice.

"I'm sure, Antilles," Padmé replied.

"We'll be standing by," Antilles said.

Antilles was currently the commander of the newly and aptly named Rogue Squadron of X-Wing fighters. As currently they along with Padmé and Leia were on Coruscant against the Alliance's wishes. But Padmé wasn't going to leave her son in the hands of the Empire. She would have attempted the rescue mission all by herself, but Leia insisted she come as well.

Antilles and a few fighter pilots argued to join as well. Luke was a fighter pilot of the Alliance as well. He was their friend. They weren't going to abandon him, especially to the Empire.

Leia felt for her lightsaber through her jacket. Her father's lightsaber . . . Who was also . . .

"Why didn't you tell me?" Leia had snapped at Master Yoda and Obi-Wan's ghost. After the destruction of the Death Star, she had gone to Dagobah.

So much had happened in the course of a few short days. Master Kenobi had died at the hands of Darth Vader. Leia had destroyed the Death Star. She met her mother and learned she had twin brother. However, her brother had been capture by the Empire and Darth Vader. Darth Vader who had once gone by the name of Anakin Skywalker, who was her father.

Darth Vader who was now Emperor of the galaxy.

One month after the Death Star was destroyed, it was announced Emperor Palpatine was dead and Vader would take the throne. It was reported the Emperor died of old age, though there were plenty of rumors that Vader had killed him. The favorite rumor amongst the Alliance was that Palpatine was furious over the lost of the Death Star and blamed Vader, who had survived. Instead of taking his punishment, Vader simply killed Palpatine.

The sudden change in Emperor had caused huge cracks in the Empire. Groups had splintered off. Some broke off because they didn't support Vader. Some broke off because they simply didn't want
to be apart of the Empire and were using the opportunity to break away. The Alliance was trying to capitalize on this moment as much as possible. Plans upon plans were being made to strike at the Empire while it was weak and broken. But Lotus wanted to go after her son. The rest of the Alliance High Command thought it would be a waste of resources.

So now Leia and Padmé were sneaking into the Imperial Palace of the newly minted Emperor Vader. They hoped to find Luke and rescue him. They had no information as to what had happened to him after he had been transferred to Vader's ship right before the destruction of the Death Star. Leia had to trust in the Force to know Luke was still alive.

Leia and Padmé made their way down a service staircase into the service tunnels that were like a maze in the under layers of Imperial Center. Obi-Wan's ghost was against the idea of rescuing Luke as well. He feared they would face off against Vader and that Leia was not ready for such a confrontation. However, he had provided a way to get into the palace. It had once been the old Jedi Temple. It was actually Yoda who shared the knowledge about the old service vent to Obi-wan, who passed it onto Leia.

The service tunnel did provide them safe unseen passage into the Palace. Once there they used the small tunnels used by small service droids to move around. The tunnels ran parallel to a lot of hallways. There were often openings for the droids to go out of. Leia and Padmé had to pause whenever they heard the boots of patrolling stormtroopers.

It had taken hours to make their way slowly through the tunnels. Both women were tired and sweaty, but neither one was ready to back down. Finally they had made to Vader's personal quarters. It was the best guess as to where Luke was. The Alliance spies on Vader's ships claimed Luke had been transferred out of the detention block to speak with Vader. However, he was never brought back. Usually that meant Vader had killed the prisoner, but there was, perhaps unsurprisingly, paperwork that had to be filled out about corpse removal on starships. Vader's ship showed no logs of Luke's corpse.

There were no other sightings of Luke. Thus that meant he was most likely being kept close to Vader where spies did not have access to. Plus, Padmé believed that's where Vader would keep Luke. Keep his son.

Finally, Leia and Padmé crawled out of the tunnel. Leia stretched. It was the first time in hours she had room to fully stand up. Then they slowly made their way down the hall. They checked each door along the wall, until about the fourth door down. It slid open silently and opened up into a large bedroom. A bed sat against the middle of the wall.

"Luke!" Padmé shouted as she rushed forward to the bed.

Luke laid in the bed. He appeared asleep. His eyes were closed. His chest rose and fell evenly. However, a chill washed through Leia as she eyed the medical equipment next to the bed. Wires and tubes went from the machines and connected to Luke. The machines beeped and hummed as they monitored Luke.

Padmé had reached her son. "Luke," she whispered urgently. "Luke!" She cupped his face with her hands. She kissed his face over and over again while repeating his name every so often. But Luke didn't stir. She straightened up and looked at the machines. Leia could feel Padmé's despair in the Force.

What had happened to Luke? What was wrong with him? Could he even be moved?

That was when the soft clink of the lock was heard. Both women jumped and looked at the door.
Padmé brought out her blaster and held it in ready. Her eyes on the door. Leia fished out her lightsaber. It wasn't long before she felt it. The darkness. The cold. The storm of Darth Vader approaching.

He was like a black hole. The accretion disk around him was violent. But instead of intense heat as matter collided as it was suck in, it was an intense cold. And in the center was a black inky darkness. It was dense and also deep. Leia's breath caught in her throat as she felt it. She had no idea he would feel like this.

Again came the soft sound of the lock as it unlatched. The door slid upon, and Darth Vader walked into the room. He was huge. He towered over both women. He stopped a few steps into room. At once dark tendrils lashed out of him in the Force. They swirled around Leia. A few reached out and brushed against her mind. She doubled, tripled her mental shields. One or two tendrils slid away, but a few latched on and tried to worm their way in.

Padmé was tense and stiff. Her blaster was still up, and it was aimed right at control box on his chest. She glared up at the dark monster in front of her.

"What have you done to my son?" she asked. Her voice was even with a sharp edge to it.

"Your son?" came Vader's deep baritone voice amongst the even sound of his respirator. "Your son? Do you mean my son? Our son?"

"What have you done to him?" she asked again.

"Kept him alive," Vader said as pointed a finger at Padmé.

"What. Have. You. Done. To. Him?" she said louder. "Do not lie to me! I know you are to blame for his situation."

"The only one to blame is Palpatine," Vader hissed at her.

Padmé paused but a minute in thought. "Is that why you killed him?" she asked.

A strange sound came out of Vader's vocoder. Leia wasn't sure if it was a laugh or a huff.

"It is why I cut his hands off," he said. "When I transferred Luke off the Death Star, Palpatine had his loyal spy return to the palace and report to him. When he learned that the son of Padmé Amidala lived, he demanded that Luke be brought to him."

"And of course you did without hesitation," Padmé said darkly.

A tense stretch of silence filled the room, though the sound of the medical machines and Vader's breathing still filled the gap.

"And then?" Padmé prompted.

"And then Palpatine asked Luke to join him. Join the Empire. Join the Dark Side."

Padmé lowered her blaster a small bit. "And he said no," she said softly.

"And he said no," Vader said softly as well. At least what could be interrupted as softly.

"And Palpatine did not take this well?"

"No. He . . . He decided Luke would die. He was too much of a threat to his power otherwise. He
used his Force Lightning on him . . . and . . . I . . ."

"Cut his arms off?" Leia finished. It was the first she had spoken up. Both Padmé and Vader turned and looked at her. "But not killed him?" she continued.

"I would have," Vader said, "until Mara Jade, ever faithful, attacked. She brought with her the royal guards. She was able to get Palpatine out. I could either go after her or see to Luke. I chose Luke."

"Wait," Padmé said. "You didn't kill him?"

"No."

"So how did he die?" Leia asked.

"He isn't dead," Vader said evenly.

Padmé and Leia shared a look.

"What?" Leia shouted. "So you lied? Said he was dead and made yourself Emperor?"

"Yes," he replied.

Quiet again fell between them. Padmé lowered her blaster completely and glanced over at Luke. Vader's mask also turned to look at Luke.

"So Palpatine is still alive," Padmé said slowly. "Are you sure?"

"Yes," Vader confirmed again.

"Then where is he?" Leia asked. It had been three weeks since Vader had become Emperor.

"I do not know," he said.

Padmé pursed her lips as she took in this new information. Leia shifted on her feet unevenly. She didn't know what to do, especially since Vader turned and was looking at her. She could feel his eyes on him. The tendrils had picked up their effort in trying to break down her shields.

"I believe it is time for my questions," Vader said. He turned back to Padmé. "Padmé, what happened?"

Leia noticed Padmé's breath hitch, but she quickly smoothed it back out.

"What happened, Anakin," she hissed his name, "is you attacked me."

"That name no longer has any meaning to me. Anakin Skywalker was weak. I killed him."

"Oh save your angsty dark poetic words for someone else," Padmé barked back. "You choked me. I almost died and your children with me. You thought I would come back? After you destroyed everything I stood for? After what you did? How many people you killed? No. I decided I was going to burn it down, and started the Rebellion."

"That much I could discern myself. I meant," and Vader turned to Leia, "what happened with our children? Why did you give our daughter away? To Kenobi? Luke knew nothing of her! He had no idea she was even his sister!"

Padmé took a sharp breath.
Slowly she said, "I had just finished faking my own death and pretending to be a corpse for own funeral. I had just given birth to twins. My husband tried and almost killed me. My Republic had fallen to an Empire. And Obi-Wan and Yoda said it was for the best. They insisted and persuaded me that if I kept the twins together you or Palpatine would eventually sense them. Eventually find them."

She looked over at Luke. "And clearly they were right what would happen if he did find them."

"And you told them nothing of each other?" Vader asked.

If felt odd to be defended by Vader. His anger was clear for Leia shared it as well. She understood the reasoning behind keeping her and Luke apart. But they could have told her! Told him! They said it was in case one of them was found, then the other would still be safe. Another logical decision, but still one her heart didn't completely agree with. Perhaps this was why they never told her. They knew she would always ache for her twin. Yearn to meet him. She looked over at Luke. She did want to know him.

Leia had lost track of the conversation between Padmé and Vader, though at this point it seemed more like an argument. The com softly beeping silenced them both.

"Yes?" Padmé asked.

"Ma'am..." Antilles asked. His voice was shaky. Unsteady. "Are you alright?"

Contacting Lotus should have been for an absolute emergency. It jeopardized their whole escape plan.

"Of course," Padmé said as she shot a nasty look at Vader.

"Ma'am... are you with... Vader?" Antilles asked.

Padmé jumped slightly in shock. She shot a look at Leia.

"What do you mean?"

"It's all over the holonet..."

Vader turned sharply on his heels. He was out of the door before Antilles had finished speaking. Padmé silenced the com and hurried after him. Leia was not far behind. Vader had gone into a room a bit further down the hallway. It was an office. He marched up to a large holotable and brought up the holonet.

An Imperial newscast was on. Behind the human woman reporter was the symbol of the Rebel Alliance along with old pictures of Padmé when she was a senator and Anakin Skywalker. Both Padmé and Vader were still and quiet as they listened to the news.

"The Rebel Alliance released a statement today, saying that their former Chancellor known as Lotus is none other than Padmé Amidala. A former well-known senator and queen of Naboo, it was thought Amidala died in the violence during the birth of the Empire."

The news cast showed a clip of Padmé's funeral. In it Padmé laid in a large casket.

"During the Clone Wars, Amidala married in secret to Anakin Skywalker, a Jedi general who earned the title Hero With No Fear. The Rebellion also claims that like Amidala, Skywalker didn't die as well. Instead he renamed himself Darth Vader."
Now the image showed Vader when he gave his speech announcing Palpatine's death.

"The claim states that Amidala and Vader, previously Skywalker, have been working together in secret for almost twenty years now. Their goal? To bring the galaxy under their rule. Amidala was using the Rebellion to undermine Emperor's Palpatine's from the outside, while Vader worked on it from the inside."

The news showed clips of the Death Star's destruction. They were shaky blurry as they were clips provided by the Rebellion. Generally such footage would never get pass the Imperial censors.

"With the report of Emperor Palpatine's death, it appeared Amidala as the leader Lotus was going to work on destroying the Rebellion from the inside and join her husband at his side."

The imagine changed to that of Mon Mothma. She stood in front of the red firebird symbol of the Alliance.

"The Alliance to Restore the Republic announces that we no longer associate or welcome Padmé Amidala also known as Lotus. She has been accused of treason and."

"That is preposterous!" Padmé shouted. She turned on Vader. "You! Was this you? Your attempt to woe me back to your side?"

Vader was silent. His mask moved slightly as he looked from the newscast to Padmé.

"No," he finally said.

"No?" Padmé asked.

"This is Palpatine," Vader said slowly. "He is using his network of loyal spies. He is trying to weaken both me and you. Let this shattered Empire weaken itself further with a fight with the Rebellion. Then Palpatine will finally rear his head, but only to his loyalist within the Empire. They will flock to him. Meanwhile, he'll make a proposition to the Rebellion. Have them work together to overthrow me. He'll make sweet promises of new a reformed galaxy. Then once I'm out of the way, there will be something that will cast the Rebellion in a bad light. Some catastrophe with huge losses. That is when Palpatine will finally return to the public. That is when he'll swoop down and restore peace to his galaxy that only he can provide."

"That sneaky piece of kriffin' shavit," Padmé hissed. She stood straighter as she looked directly at Vader. "So what is your plan? You must have something planned to kill him off or reveal him early?"

"I was going to lure him out," Vader said after a moment's hesitation.

"With what?"

"The Death Star."

"It's gone," Leia said.

Vader turned to her. "No," he said. "The second Death Star."

Leia and Padmé shouted out at the same time.

"What!" "There's two?"

"Securing the second Death Star should be high on Palpatine's list. It is far too dangerous to leave in
my hands even if it's not completely operational."

Pame let out a long sigh. Then she turned and left the room. Leia gave a quick glance at Vader, before she followed her mother. Padmé had returned to Luke's room and stood at his bedside. Slowly she fell to her knees. Her arms rested on the bed. She lowered her head down. She almost looked like she was praying.

"Pad-Padmé?" Leia asked. She hadn't quite gotten used to thinking or calling Padmé her mother.

Padmé took a deep breath. She bounced back on her feet. She turned, but she wasn't looking at Leia. Leia looked over her shoulder to see Vader standing in the doorway.

"He is not getting away with this," Padmé said.

Leia sat cross legged on the end of Luke's bed. She wore comfortable bed clothes of a loose pair of pants and a tank top. Her feet were bare. Resting on her lap was holoprojector projecting the news. It was currently on mute as she waited for the press conference with Emperor Vader to start.

Leia did a quick glance at her brother. It had been a week since Leia had come here. His condition hadn't changed. He was still in a coma, and the galaxy was moving on without him. She turned back to the holo.

The first thing Padmé had done was contact the Rogue X-Wings. The squadron returned to the Alliance fleet and collected information. What the Imperial news had reported was true. The Alliance believed Padmé was a traitor. An arrest warrant and bounty had been placed on her. Oddly the same hadn't been placed on Leia, though there was a call to have her escorted back to High Command if found.

The squad were unable to find out where or from who the Alliance was getting this information on Padmé from. They returned to Imperial Center, where Vader let them land in the palace amongst his Black TIE Fighter Squad. It was an odd sight to see TIE fighters and X-Wings docked side-by-side.

Padmé had paced up and down Luke's room once she got the report from Antilles. Leia and Vader watched her quietly.

"Palpatine wants to weaken us by dividing us and turning us against each other," she said.

She was across the room when she paused. She looked right at Vader and Leia. Like Leia was now, she sat on Luke's bed, while Vader stood beside her.

"Then we shall strengthen ourselves by uniting," Padmé continued.

"Uniting?" Vader asked.

Padmé smiled. It wasn't a kind smile. It was a hard smile. The wrinkles in her face said this wasn't a new smile. Perhaps she had learned it as the leader of the Alliance. Perhaps it was from when she was a politician. But it wasn't a joyful smile. It was a hard smile. A smile of determination, but also a bit deviousness.

"Let's give them something to really talk about," Padmé had said.

Padmé had worked hard on getting everything ready for the press conference. She worked furiously to make sure everything was right. Leia was most surprised by Darth Vader. From what she had seen, he had offered little resistance to Padmé's ideas. When Leia had voiced this to her mother,
Padmé defended him.

"There is good in him," she said of Vader. "I know it."

Leia thought of the endless dark void that was Vader in the Force.

"I think something in him snapped," Padmé continued, "when he saw Luke being tortured by Palpatine. Whatever chains Palpatine had ensnared around him, finally broke. He was finally willing to step away."

"Because of Luke?" Leia asked.


"And you?"

Padmé took a deep breath and slowly let it go. "Yes," she said. "And me."

Leia saw the holofeed change. She unmuted it. The Imperial anthem started to play. It was made up of deep powerful marching notes. The music swelled as brass started to play the melody. The view showed a long walkway. A large red and black flag Imperial flag hung in the back.

Then Vader appeared at the end of the walkway. His suit had been changed. The chest and shoulder armor were now a silvery white. The tunic underneath was red, while the suit under that was still the old black one. His long flowing cloak was white on the inside and bright red on the outside. He still wore the same mask and helmet.

Walking directly beside him was Padmé. Her hand rested lightly on his hand. They walked side by side down the long walkway. Her lips were done in the style of Naboo royalty, bright red with a small mark on the lower lip. Two small red circles adorned her cheeks, but she didn't wear the thick white face makeup. Padmé's outfit matched Vader's in color. Red, black, and white. It was a marvelous dress. Like the makeup, it nodded heavily to Naboo and Padmé's time as queen. Her hair was twisted up into an elaborate headdress. Bright red lotus flowers sat on either side of her head, a clear nod to Rebel nickname.

There was no doubt she was Padmé Amidala. She walked with head held high. She truly looked an empress walking side by side with Vader. The media was going crazy. Holocam droids buzzed around snapping pictures. The reporters were all shouting.

"Are you sure about this?" Leia had asked Padmé as she was getting dressed. "You could go back to the Alliance."

"The damage is done," Padmé said. "I don't know what evidence Palpatine's spies brought against me, but to convince Mon Mothma and the others it had to be damning. I could fight it and prove myself innocent, but that will take time. I meant it when I said I was going to burn this Empire down. Just instead of burning it from the outside, I'm going to now do it from the inside."

She sighed. "Leia, I'm tired. And angry. I'm tired of losing the things I love. My husband. My son. My daughter. The Republic. The Alliance." She took a deep breath. "And Palpatine is the one to blame for all of this. So I'm going to take it all from him. I'm going to change this Empire, his Empire. I'm going to unify it, making it stronger, and better. Possibly eventually return it to a democracy. When Palpatine does reemerge, no one will want the Empire of old."

Emperor Vader and Empress Amidala stopped at the podium. Leia turned from the holonet and looked at Luke. The galaxy was going to be greatly different when he woke up.
Chapter Summary

((A direct sequel to the previous two stories. Decided might as well finish it up.)) Luke Amidala slowly fights his way free of his coma, but is kidnapped by Palpatine and goes missing for two years. When the second Death Star is stolen, Luke's family believes they will finally face Palpatine and find Luke.

It was hard to wake up. It was a battle to keep conscious. So much seemed to be pulling down on him. It was far easier to let the blackness win. To slip back into empty slumber. But Luke Amidala fought it, and he wasn't alone. His mother was there. She was always smiling and giving him soft kisses on the cheek each time he finally awoke.

There was also Leia. Though he had only known her briefly, he now felt like he knew much longer. She smiled and laughed as she told him stories. Many of which he had a hard time following because it was hard to stay awake. It took up a lot of his focus. But it was nice to see her smile.

Twice he had seen his friends. Wedge Antilles, Biggs Darklighter, Hobbie, and a few other fighter pilots. They all talked over each other and spoke so animatedly. They all had huge smiles.

Lastly there was him. Darth Vader. Luke's . . . father. He rarely said anything, but Luke felt him. Vader's presence was cold and inky, but also soothing. It wrapped around Luke and seemed to be strengthening and pulling him up and out of his never ending battle with sleep. It seemed to get a bit easier to wake up and stay awake longer after one of Vader's visits.

Even now as Luke pushed himself to wake up, it was far easier and quicker than it used to be. The effort of finally getting his eyes open sent him tumbling back asleep. But now with a bit of focused work, he found himself awake. It was night time. The room was cast in dark shades of blue and purple.

And no one was there. No Leia or his mother or Vader. They weren't always there. Luke debated on just going back to sleep. Perhaps next time he woke up someone be there. It was a little too lonely all by himself. He sighed and was about to close his eyes, when movement caught his eye.

He looked towards the window. There was something there. A dark shadow. The shape of a person. The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end as he felt the person staring at him. Then they took a step forward. Paused. Then walked forward again. As they came closer, Luke noticed they were wearing a dark cape with the hood drawn up.

They stopped at the edge of his bed. A human hand came up and pulled down the hood. Luke frowned.

"Mara," he grumbled.

"Rebel boy," she said with a smile.

"What are you doing here?"

"My master would like a word with you."
"I already said no," Luke said remembering the last and only conversation he had with Emperor Palpatine.

"That isn't an option," Mara said as she pulled out a hypospray.

Luke flinched and pushed himself up. But his movements were slow. He felt something cold pushed against his arm. He heard the soft click of something releasing. Then he was falling. Falling back on to his bed. Falling back into slumber. Into the dark.

Padmé was hiding. She didn't like to do so, but there were moments when she just wanted to get away. Get away from being the empress. So she found herself here in this room. Luke's room.

Luke . . . Her son. The baby boy she had raised by herself while she fought to create a rebellion against the Empire. Luke who had been taken in the middle of the night while the rest of his family was off planet. That had been two years ago.

There was no doubt it was Palpatine who took and now had him. Vader theorized Palpatine would make Luke his new apprentice after losing Vader. Palpatine would want someone strong in the Force.

"There is no way Luke would agree!" Padmé had shouted.

"Do not underestimate Palpatine," Vader replied. "His evil knows no limits, and he is very powerful in the Dark Side. I fear what he may do to get Luke to turn, for I do not think Luke would turn willingly."

Despite the best efforts of Padmé and Vader, they had found no clues of Luke. No clues of Palpatine either. At least direct clues to where the foul creature was lurking. There were lots of signs he was pulling strings from the shadows, but there was nothing concrete to go after.

A lot had changed in the past two years. Padmé was recreating the Empire. Unifying it. Strengthening it. Palpatine sought to break it apart, and then he would be the one to come in and bring it back together. She wasn't going to let him. So her first goal was strengthening the current Empire. It was broken and shattered as groups broke into smaller cells. Vader had wanted to go after these cells and force them to return. Padmé said first they needed a loyal support amongst the people they already had.

The first thing she did was change Vader. He was a ruthless commander. A murderer. Who struck fear into all. There was no point in arguing his past crimes, but she could cast them in another light. It was simple, just blame it all on Palpatine. She wove a tale that Vader was a slave, forced to do his master's bidding. She released Vader's horrendous medical records to the press, which detailed the living hell he had been living in.

Vader was not pleased by this. He did argue about it, but he didn't win against Padmé. Mostly because the next step of the plan was to have Vader undergo new medical treatment. It had broken her heart to learn what had happened to her husband. What he had lived with for twenty years. Vader hated it as well and was willing to ease his pain.

Some of the damage was impossible to repair, but Vader was better. The list of changes was an exhaustive one. He gone through many procedures. Overall his health was much better. He also looked different. The old suit had been thrown away. He no longer hid his face. Instead he wore a thick metal collar that extended up and over his nose and mouth. This gave him the needed respirator for his lungs. It left the rest of his head uncovered. His head was bald and covered in scars. At first
he hated going without the mask and helmet, but now seemed to be more at ease with it.

The second change was to wage war on slavery. Padmé knew this was one thing she knew she could easily and quickly get Vader behind, and she was right. Vader was all too willing to destroy any slavers such as the Hutts and Zygerrians. But it had to go beyond that. It also meant revealing to the public the Empire used slave labor. The Empire's slaves were freed. They were given medical care, credits, and the option to return home, wherever that may be. Planets like Kashyyk were 'returned' back to their rightful inhabitants. Then the Empire worked with the people to restore their homes.

There were of course those who hated this. There were those who betrayed the Empire. Those who broke away and joined some of the splinter cells. But Padmé was trying to right the wrongs. True they had lost individuals and companies with a lot of power and resources. They had depended on slave labor to help their profits. They were too used to the sense of entitlement and power it gave them. The entitlement Palpatine encouraged and created. Padmé was not sad to see them go.

Laws were reexamined to be more fair. Tons of prisoners were released. The senate was reestablished.

The Empire had lost a lot of money from these endeavours. But finally after two years, they were finally starting to see returns. Planets that had been enslaved or heavily enforced by Imperial military were starting to heal. New businesses and trade were starting to blossom. Overall the Empire was a happier one, which Padmé considered an impressive feat considering they were still at war.

Various fractions had come and gone over the two years. Some had been defeated by Vader. Others dissolved. Others joined another group. Now there were only a few big players with the biggest being the Empire, the Rebel Alliance, and a splinter group of the Empire calling themselves the True Empire. It was this last group that Vader believed was secretly being run by Palpatine. A lot of Palpatine's supporters had joined the True Empire. Thus it was watched the closest.

Vader stood in front of the large viewport in front on the bridge of the Executor. His hands were clasped behind his back. He wasn't dressed in his emperor suit, the one that showed his face. That one made him more human and thus more sympathetic. He was now in his battle suit. It wasn't the same as his old suit. The mask and helmet were different. The control box on his chest was smaller and lighter. But it was still all black.

"Never underestimate the power of a good outfit," Padmé had said. "We don't want you roaming around in your old suit. Remember, we're trying to step away from the image of Palpatine's Empire. But you in a battle suit still invokes power and fear. We need that too."

He would take whatever edge he could. For this was it, he was certain. Palpatine had finally made his move after two and a half years of waiting. He had stolen the second Death Star. It along with the True Empire's forces were in the Sava System. Finally, Palpatine would reveal himself. Finally, Vader would destroy him. Finally, he would get his son back.

Padmé stood beside him at the viewport. She was dressed in her battle outfit, as she called it. It was a simple affair, especially compared to some of her more elaborate outfits. It was a bright red coat with white and black detailing. It had a military style to it. She wore simple black pants and boots with it. Her hair was done up in a simple bun.

Next to her stood Leia. She was dressed as a Jedi in tan tunics and a brown robe. Despite Vader's very vocal dislike of the Jedi, he had never managed to persuade his daughter to abandon such foolish ideals. It didn't help that Padmé was very supportive of Leia as a Jedi. Claimed it helped the
Empire's image. That it helped Vader's image. He didn't want to argue with that point. He didn't want to mention how many Jedi he had personally slain. Not to Padmé. Not to Leia.

Yet regardless of what they were, emperor, empress, Jedi, Sith, ex-rebel, they stood there together. As a family. As a mother, father, and daughter. They all looked at the hulking mass of the uncompleted second Death Star. All of them thinking of Luke. And of Palpatine.

Vader turned his helmet slightly. "Are you ready?" he asked.

Leia nodded and Padmé looked at her husband and daughter. She was unhappy that she was to stay behind. Someone needed to stay and lead the fleet and troops. Padmé had objected. She had never given up on Luke. She wanted to be the one to find her son. Vader could feel her pain in the Force, but it was for the best. Padmé would be no match against Palpatine. No match against Luke if it came to that.

Vader's fleet had just arrived. It wasn't long before they were hailed. He ordered the coms opened. The hooded figure of Palpatine was projected on a large holo.

"Vader," he hissed. No title. Not even darth.

"Palpatine," Vader replied evenly. "I have come to negotiate."

"Negotiate? Ha!" Palpatine laughed. "Negotiate your surrender before I blow your fleet apart?"

Vader's hands tightened into fists.

"Do you accept?" Padmé said taking a step forward.

"And who will do the negotiating?" Palpatine said. "You?"

"No," Vader said. "I will."

Palpatine paused. "Good. Good," he said. "Then come. I will be waiting, my old friend."

It was a long ride up to where ever Palpatine awaited them. Leia glanced over at Vader. They stood in a turbolift. Four troopers in black amour stood around them. Vader was looking straight ahead. It was in this moment he fully felt like Darth Vader. A raging black storm of the Dark Side. It sent a shiver down Leia's spine. She had never, never, seen her father like this.

Over the past two and a half years, she had come to know him as her father. Often it was in small private intimate moments. She recalled the first time she had let the word slip. Vader completely froze in shock. But in this moment he was not Father, he was Darth Vader.

Finally the lift stopped and the doors slid open. Vader and Leia stepped out into a dark room. On the far side was a large window. In front of it sat a chair in which a robed figure sat. Vader didn't hesitate. He marched forward.

"Palpatine," Vader said as he came to a stop at the bottom of a small set of stairs that led up to the throne.

"Anakin," Palpatine answered back. "Here to grovel at my feet?"

"I am here for my son," Vader said as one of his hands balled into a fist. The other rested on top of his lightsaber.
"Son?" Palpatine said with a slight crook of his head. "Ah yes. I remember now. Your son."

A tense silence stretched across the room. Palpatine raised his hands. Both were metal prosthetics. He had lost them to Vader, who had cut them off when Palpatine had used his lightning to hurt Luke. A chill ran up Leia's spine as she heard footsteps approaching. Out of the shadows to Palpatine's left came a figure.

It was Luke. He was dressed all in a fitted black outfit with black gloves. His hair was shorter and darker. The skin around his eyes were dark as if he hadn't slept in days. A lightsaber hung on his belt.

"I don't believe you've met my new apprentice," Palpatine said in a light hearted tone. "I had to replace the old one. Turned traitor, that one. Darth Natus step forward."

The anger inside Vader rose. The hair on Leia's arms stood on end. The air felt heavy and charged, as if at any moment lightning would strike.

"I see your confusion, girl," Palpatine said. "Natus means to produce, give birth. It means son."

A long silence stretched across the throne room. It was Vader's deep voice that broke it.


Luke didn't move, but he did look at Vader's outstretched hand. After a moment, he cocked his head to the side and then looked at Palpatine, who only laughed a wheezy laugh.

"Did you really think that would work?" Palpatine said as his laughter died down. "Oh this has been amusing, but I tire of it. Natus." Luke snapped to attention. "Kill him."

It happened in a blur. Luke had his lightsaber in his hand. A red blade glowing from it. He jumped down the steps right at Vader. But Vader already had his own blade up. Red against red. Leia pulled her own lightsaber free, but didn't join the battle. Instead she just watched as father and son dueled.

It was heartbreaking. Luke attacked with such power. Such hatred. His attacks were heavy and ruthless. It was clear he did not have proper training. He pushed forward on instinct. Luckily, Vader was a good duelist. They two moved across the room. Each time Luke brought his blade down, it was for the kill. Vader was only fighting to disarm. It was a hard fight.

And then Vader slipped. Leia gasped. Luke hammered down blow after blow as Vader fell down to one knee. And then with a sharp slash, Luke cut through Vader's lightsaber arm. The hand was cleanly severed off. Luke paused as he looked down at his unarmed opponent. Then he brought his saber up, held it for a moment, and brought it down.

A scream broke through the room. It wasn't Vader's nor Leia's. It was Luke's as Leia's lightsaber slashed through Luke's arm. His hand, holding the lightsaber, fell to the ground. Luke fell to one knee clutching his injured arm. Leia stood over him pointing her blue lightsaber, her father's lightsaber, at Luke.

"Useless!" Palpatine shouted.

He stood up from his throne. Sparks danced from his fingertips. How? Leia thought. He shouldn't be able to do that with his prosthetics.

"You will all die here!" Palpatine shouted as the blue lightning zigzagged across the room right at the three Skywalkers.
Leia jumped in front. Her blade caught the blast, but *Force!* It was hard to hold it off. She took a small step back and then another. She was losing ground. Sweat dripped down her face and down her back. Her hands had gone numb. Her eyes watered from the bright light. She took another step back and another until her foot bumped against something. She quickly glanced down to see Luke.

He glanced up at her. His eyes were startling blue in the light. A clear blue. Not a sickly sulfur yellow as Vader's had been when he first went without his mask. They weren't even the clouded blue like Vader's were currently. But a clear sky blue. Like it had been when they first met on Tatooine.

"What?" Leia said softly.

And then the lightning jumped off her blade. It went wild. It struck all around them. Palpatine let out a scream. Leia looked through the dancing lightning to see streaks racing out of Palpatine's arms. Some arched back into his face and body. Over and over again he was electrocuted. Then it just suddenly stopped. The lightning. The screams. It went dark and quiet, save for the sound of Palpatine's body hitting the floor.

No one moved. No one said anything. Then Luke slowly rose to his feet.

"It's done," he said in a whisper.


"I am," he said with a small smile. "It's me. It's always been me."

Vader pushed himself to his feet. "What did you do?" he asked.

Luke looked back at the corpse. "I let him think he had destroyed me. Remade me. Then I offered to work on his arms so he could use the Force lightning again. When he tested them out, they worked fine not knowing I had engineered them to overload with extended use."


"Can we go?" he finally asked. "You said . . . you said my mom was waiting."

Leia nodded. The three of them, as a family, left together.

Luke was finally alone in the room given to him on board the *Executor*. He had already visited the medbay. His arm was in a med cuff where it suddenly ended. He knew there was a chance he might be maimed. He also knew there was a chance he might die, and he was ready for it.

He had to put up the perfect act. He had to make Palpatine believe he had fallen to the Dark Side. Believe he was now loyal to him. And only him. Luke had to lock away apart of himself, and let a new part grow and fester. But when Luke offered to work on his master's prosthetic arms to it so he could shoot Force lightning again, the old Luke snuck out. Perhaps the new dark Luke also knew better as well. It was self preservation.

Luke didn't know when Palpatine would use his lightning for an extended amount of time. The amount of time needed to overload the arms and send electric shocks through the body. It could have been while Palpatine was torturing Luke. When he was torturing someone else. But it would come. Eventually. And it did.

The door opened behind him. He turned to see his father . . . Darth Vader. Vadar walked through the
room and came to stand beside Luke at the viewport. Vader no longer wore the new battlesuit. He now wore the suit that showed half of his face. Though Luke had seen it before on the Holonet, it was odd to see it in person.

"How . . . How are you?" Vader asked.


"You do not know who you are," Vader continued.

Luke was quiet. Vader was right. Who was he? Luke Amidala? Luke the Rebel? But his mother had left the rebellion two and half years ago. So was he Luke the Imperial Prince? Son of Emperor Vader and Empress Amidala? Or was he still the Sith apprentice of Palpatine? Darth Natus?

"I understand," Vader said. "So much has changed since . . . since you and your mother and your sister came into my life. I found myself lost. Who was I? Darth Vader? Anakin Skywalker?" Vader paused. He was looking intently at Luke. "I realized I was no longer Darth Vader or Anakin Skywalker. I was someone else. Someone new. I can not go back to being who I was. I can only go forward."

Long after Vader had left, Luke thought on his father's words. He couldn't go back to who he was. He could only go forward as someone new. Those words sounded right. He wasn't sure who this new person was, but he was willing to find out.

He would get a prosthetic arm. He would spend time with his family. And then he wanted to go out in the galaxy. He wanted to find Mara Jade, who hadn't been on the Death Star when it exploded. She had been sent out on a mission. What would she do now? Palpatine had been her whole life. She would also need to become someone new.

It wasn't just Luke or Vader or Mara who needed to become someone new. Luke's mother would need to change. Luke doubted she would keep the Empire going for much longer. Slowly she would recreate the Republic and establish a democratic government. Luke wondered what would become of Leia. No longer was she the rebel Jedi nor would be the Imperial princess, which wasn't a role she had ever taken up anyway.

The whole galaxy was changing. It would all become something new.
The Sith Dragon and His Baby

Chapter Summary

(Dragon AU) The Sith dragon Vader takes care of his young son. However, something else keeps brushing against his mind. It feels like another dragon, and it isn't his son.

Chapter Notes

Possibly, completely self indulgent. This is a prequel to my previous dragon AU fic, chapter 13 in this collection. (The Story of the Sith Dragon) This fic is basically just some fluff. Fluffy daddy dragon and baby dragon time. I regret nothing. But also shout-out to those who really loved the dragon fic. You silent readers. I see those stats. It's one of the most re-read chapters in this collection, so I know at least someone out there would love some more dragons. Also you'll find cute art on my tumblr for this fic as well.

Vader, the massive Sith dragon, carefully cleaned his claws. They were stained with the blood and flesh of his meal. The large buck had calmed his appetite, for now. Vader stretched. The large cavern was massive and big enough for him to completely stretch his wings. His black scales and spikes glittered in the warm glow from the hole in the floor in the corner. Below this cavern were lakes and rivers of lava. Their warm glow danced from the hole into the cavern.

Vader turned his attention to what laid next the hole. A ring of rocks. Inside the rocks was a pile of furs and skins. Vader gently pushed the furs aside with his great snout. Deeper and deeper he went until he was close to the bottom. He clawed the furs away to reveal a small baby dragon. Vader looked down at his son.

While Vader was a Sith, a dragon who had lost its internal fire and fallen to the cold darkness, Luke was a skywalker, a true dragon, though he was still far too young for his internal fire to keep him warm. Thus little babies had to be kept warm. Luke slept close to the bottom of the nest where the rocks were warm from the lava below. He looked like Vader once had. Golden scales and sky blue eyes.

Vader let out a soft snort of a laugh. Luke was laying on his back. His wings spread out. His round belly, full from his meal, was up in the air. Surely it was not comfortable. Luke's back spikes may be nothing more than little nubs right now, but still he had them. Vader lowered his head and sniffed his son. Then he started to lick Luke.

He started on Luke's exposed belly. At once the baby started to stir. Vader knew Luke wasn't in a deep sleep. Earlier, Vader had fed Luke first and put him back in the nest while he ate. Luke let out a few squeaks as he woke up. He rolled him over to his side. Vader continued to groom his son. Blinking blue eyes looked up at Vader. Luke let out a long, loud squeak. The baby was far from being able to roar.

Vader used his snout to push Luke so he was laying on his belly, which allowed Vader able to easily
and gently bite down on Luke's neck. Vader picked up his son, who curled up a bit as he was being carried. Vader made his way through the large cavern and into the twisting tunnels. He made his way up higher and higher.

Luke started to wiggle a little bit as they neared their destination. He let out a small muffled squeak. Vader soon stepped out of the tunnels into the large courtyard in front of his fortress. Luke could not longer contain his excitement. He squeaked and wigged. Vader slowly lowered him down. The moment his feet touched the ground, he was off running across the courtyard and flapping his wings in excitement.

This place Vader called home was called Mustafar, but once it had been known as Theed, the capital of Naboo. Naboo was the country known as the place with a hundred lakes and waterfalls. It was the home of Padme Amidala, Vader's human wife. After her death, after her murder, Vader had used his unquenchable rage to poison the land. The lakes and rivers turned to lava. The ground blackened. The once beautiful palace surrounded by waterfalls was now a towering fortress that pierced the sky with a single waterfall of lava that poured down the cliff it sat on.

Theed and the lands around it were now a wasteland. Nothing lived there except for Vader and his son, and that was how the Sith preferred it. With a leap, Vader jumped up onto a ledge on his fortress. He jumped up a few more stories. He curled around the fortress and laid down. It gave him a good view of the courtyard and the surrounding ruins. Every now and then Vader saw a flash of gold as Luke ran and climbed amongst the toppled walls and collapsed roofs.

Vader watched as Luke climbed up to the highest point of a destroyed house that overlooked the courtyard. Luke crouched low. His butt wiggled as his hind leg claws gripped into the stone. Then he leapt into the courtyard. He unfurled his wings. He glided across the courtyard. When he landed, he let out a happy squeak and quickly found a new building to climb to the top of. Once he was up high again, he jumped and glided across the courtyard again.

Luke had yet to figure the whole flying and flapping his wings bit, but the rest he had taught himself. It must be some innate drive inside a dragon to learn to fly. Afterall, Vader had no dragon parent to teach him. He had learned to fly on his own.

Vader loved to fly, and Luke seemed to have the same attachment. He loved to glide. He easily learned how to, but he took a while mastering the skill of landing. There had been some rough tumbles the baby had gone through. Only a few were hard enough for Luke to cry for his father to come soothe him. Most of the time, he just bounced back up and was gliding again.

Eventually Luke had gotten distracted by the ruins. He started to dig around the destroyed buildings. Vader stretched his wings and lazily glided down to the courtyard.

*Luke*, he called into the Force.

At once a bright response called back. Luke communicated mostly without the use of words. He talked by projecting a mix of his emotions, images, and colors along the shared Force bond with Vader. Vader assumed this was how dragons naturally talked, but the only other dragon he had ever talked to was his son.

Vader did wonder who his father was. His mother never shared anything about who it was or might be. Surely his father had to be a dragon. Most likely one in human form. So were there other dragons out there? Perhaps hiding?

When Vader was a child, when he had gone by a different name and had different colored scales, he had joined the Jedi Order. The Jedi were humans who able to wield the Force. They had been taught
to do so by the skywalkers, the dragons of old. When Vader had been a Jedi, he had read through all of the Order's archives about dragons. There were some old scrolls that talked about the dragons teaching the Force to the first Jedi. But there was almost nothing about the dragons themselves.

But of course there was plenty of material on killing dragons. Eventually the Jedi grew jealous and greedy. They felt the dragons were withholding knowledge about the Force. Refusing to teach the humans everything. So they started to kill the dragons. There were piles upon piles of books and scrolls that talked about ways to sneak up on dragons, overwhelm them, maim them, poison them, and kill them. Once his Jedi master had taken him down into the lowest vaults of the the Jedi Temple and showed him the old bones and hides. The trophies of the dragon hunts.

It was believed all the dragons were killed off during the great purge. They weren't seen again for hundreds of years until Vader. So how did Vader exist? Had the old skywalkers discovered how to change their form into that of a human? Were dragons alive just living as humans? Vader didn't have the answer.

But he did have Luke, who had just jumped over a pile of rubble and was now trotting across the courtyard. His tail and head were held high. He walked up to his father and sat down right next to Vader's right leg. He leaned against it and then looked up with big blue eyes. Vader lowered his head. Snout to snout father and son touched. Then Luke stuck out his tongue and licked the tip of his father's nose.

Warm emotions flooded into Vader from his son. Warmth. Light. All in colors of gold and pink. Luke sent a vision of Vader, a big black scaley blog. Love. Luke was sending love. Vader sent happiness and love back to his son. Luke let out a small happy squeak as he received it.

Vader gently grabbed Luke by the scruff of his neck and picked him up. Luke curled up as Vader carried him back towards the sharp tower fortress. Vader headed down into the maze of tunnels that cut through the rock under the fortress, but he didn't make his way back to the nest cavern. Instead he wound away from the fortress.

It took a bit of a walk, but Luke stayed still and quiet. At last Vader stepped into a large open cavern. It was actually a series of connected caverns. Various pools of thermal springs were spaced amongst them. The largest of which was big enough for even Vader in his dragon form to go swimming, but he didn't take his baby there.

He dropped Luke into a small shallow pool. At once the baby squeaked and started running around the pool. The middle of the pool was deep enough Luke could swim if he curled his feet up. He used his wings to push himself around in circles. Just like with flying, Luke was able to figure out how to swim without any instruction.

After a few laps, Luke made his way back to the shallow edges of the pool. He laid down in the water and spread his wings out. He set his head against a rock on the side of the pool as if it was a pillow and let out a large yawn. Vader inwardly smiled to himself. Finally his son was tired out.

Again Vader picked Luke up, but this time Luke hung limply. He yawned a few times and started to nod off as Vader brought them back to their cavern home.

Vader headed towards the ring of rocks that made up the nest, but stopped before he reached it. Slowly he lowered Luke to the ground. The baby let out one squeaky huff. His emotions were blue, purple and gray. He was sleepy and a bit cranky. Vader carefully lowered himself and gently pressed his snout against his son. He sniffed him and started to groom him. Luke rolled over to his side and with all four of his legs tried to bat and push his father away. He was not in the mood to be cleaned.

Vader laughed to himself. He was thankful cranky tired baby dragons didn't cry like their human
counterparts. He curled around his son and tucked Luke into the crook of his foreleg against the warm smooth belly scales. Luke at once curled himself into a tight ball and fell asleep.

Vader sighed. He closed his eyes and focused on his core. His internal fire. The spark that gave a dragon life. Luke's was but a warm little ember glowing inside of him. It wasn't a raging fire, but one day would be. One day it would keep Luke warm and strong. For now, his fire was too tiny. He got cold far too easily, and thus snuggled up against his father. Vader would need to be the one to provide the warmth Luke needed.

But no longer did Vader's inner fire stay lit by itself. His core was a blackened coal he constantly fought to keep aflame. When Padme... when his wife died... Grief and anger consumed him. His fire raged through him, burned him, and changed him. His once gold scales became black and his blue eyes became a golden-red. But after he got his revenge on the Jedi and destroyed Theed, he laid down to rest. His fire slowly started to fade away.

Smaller and smaller it became. Colder and colder he got. He knew once the fire inside of him was gone, he would die. He was ready for it. There was no point in living anymore. Not without Padme. Not without their child. He had lost them both, and now he would join them in death.

Never had he experienced such cold before. His blood turned to ice. His scales hardened. His insides froze. Slowly, he was becoming stone. Cold stone. The Force was the magic of the Earth. The dragons were the children of the Earth. There were fueled by the same fires that fueled the Earth, and now Vader would return to the Earth.

And then he felt it. A soft brush of golden warmth against his mind.

He knocked it away. Whatever it was... it didn't matter anymore. Nothing mattered anymore. He was dying. He looked at his right front leg. It was starting to look more like rock than flesh.

But then it came again. That gentle happiness. Vader scowled. Why was he feeling this? Then it came again. What was it? Another... another dragon? Perhaps they would have better luck in this cruel world than Vader had.

Again it came. It was so tiny whatever it was. A young dragon?... a baby? Yes this world was cruel to the dragons.

Vader didn't know why he reached out to that tiny presence. Perhaps he wanted the baby to know it was not alone. Perhaps Vader himself was lonely as he died. But when touched the mind of that presence, he knew. He knew this presence. He had touched it before when it had been growing inside of its mother.

His child! *His child* still lived!

He tried to move, but his right front leg was solid rock. His whole giant body was sluggish. Cold. Weighted down. He couldn't even lift his wings.

No! He couldn't die! Not here! Not now!

His child would grow up without either parent! What would happen to them? Vader had to get to his child!

So he focused back on his core. It was now but a blacked coal that had a few flakes of glowing red embers in it. He had to reignite his core. With everything he had in him, he fanned the flames. Slowly, painfully slowly, his fire grew. It was a bit painful and took constant concentration to keep the fire strong, but he had to. Right now, in the present, it was to keep the little baby snuggle up
against him warm. The little baby whose own internal fire was only a gentle flame.

He remember the first time seeing his baby. He followed the pull in the Force. It led him to the Tatooine deserts, the very same he had been born in and called home. It was there he found his son. He was in a human form. Just a small baby wrapped in a blanket. He was asleep the first time Vader had ever laid eyes on him, but when Luke's eyes opened, it stole Vader's breath away. They were so blue. A true sky blue. There was no doubt this baby was a skywalker. A dragon.

There was a brush against Vader's mind.

At once his eyes snapped open. His head jerked up, but the rest of him stayed still. It had felt just like when he had first felt Luke. He looked down. Luke was fast asleep. Had it been a trick of the mind? Vader had been recollecting on when he first felt and found Luke. Surely, it was just his memories. He lowered his head and fell asleep.

He awoke to the feeling of small claws digging their way into his scales. He opened his eyes and at once noted Luke was no longer curled up sleeping. Vader felt the claws dig into his back again. Bright warm orange and yellow danced across the Force bond from son to father. Luke was playing one of his favorite games: climb all over his father. Vader didn't get the appeal, but Luke loved to scramble up on Vader's back and wind his way around Vader's back thorns. Sometimes, he would stop and chew on them.

Vader rolled over. He could feel Luke trying to dig his claws in for purchase, but the baby failed and fell to the ground. Dark reds and oranges were blasted at Vader. Vader rolled back up and stretched his legs and wings. Luke marched to stand in front of his father. He let out a series of huffy angry squeaks while he walked in a circle. Then sat down and looked up at his father. It was the baby dragon equivalent of pouting.

Vader sat and just watched his son. The emotions Luke was projecting started to change colors. The darkness started to lighten. It became a brighter yellow orange. Then Luke let out one sharp staccato little squeak. It was a simple sound, but one Vader knew all too well. Luke was hungry. The baby looked over his shoulder to the far wall. Vader kept a few wildlife carcasses hanging there. But Vader didn't walk over there and pull down some meat. He picked Luke up by the scruff of his neck and carried his baby out of the cavern into the tunnels. Luke's emotions turned a dark red again. He was annoyed. He was hungry. Where was his father taking him? Vader made his way upwards until he made it to a large cavern. At the far end the cavern there was a grand staircase leading up to a large door.

Vader approached the staircase, and as he did so he reached deep inside of him. He felt the hum of life and triggered the change. A deep loud bell sounded deep inside of him. His body started to get warmer and warmer. Vader also reached deep into Luke to start his transformation as well. But Luke's chime was a small higher pitched bell.

Father and son grew smaller and smaller. Vader's large wings morphed into a long flowing cape. His hind legs became legs and his front legs became arms. The black scales slowly faded away to tan skin and black clothes. However, his eyes stayed the same color.

It was no longer a dragon who strode across the cavern, but a man. A man holding a squirming toddler.

Luke was also in his human form. His hair was a fluffy blonde, his skin a light tan, and his eyes were still a bright sky blue. He was dressed in soft white clothes. He wiggled in his father's arms as he adjusted to being in his human form. He reached down and grabbed his feet. He looked intently at
his toes.

Until Vader had found Luke, the baby had lived as a human. When Vader found him and brought him here, Luke lived the next several weeks as a dragon. They were both dragons. They should live as dragons! But Vader eventually faced the truth he had been avoiding. Luke would need to learn to be human in this world. They were the last of the dragons. When Vader died, there would only be Luke unless he had children as well. But how would Luke find love? He would have to learn to be human.

Vader initiated that change, and Luke changed into a small human baby. The child was frozen in confusion and then his face scrunched up. It slowly turned red. And then the crying began.

Luke hated being a human baby that first time. He couldn't move! He couldn't even lift his head. His eyes couldn't see well. He didn't have wings, and now had this soft squishy flesh instead of scales. And he was so small!

Vader tried to calm him down, but eventually gave him. He changed Luke back into a dragon. Vader tried again to have Luke as a human, but had the same results. Luke would scream and cry until he was back as a dragon. One day, Vader was determined. Luke was going to be a human for more than an hour. He changed the baby into its human form. Then he put the baby on the blanket and walked into another room.

Oh the little baby cried and screamed. Vader could feel his sons wrecked emotions through their bond. He had to tighten his hands into fists. It was a battle not to hurry into the next room and console his son. After three hours of crying, Luke finally quieted down. When Vader entered the room, Luke was awake on the blanket. His face was red and puffy. His eyes were watery. His little human arms raised up towards his father.

Vader at once scooped his son up. "I'm sorry," he whispered into the soft downy hair. He walked over to a table and picked up the baby feeder pot. It looked like an oil lamp, but Vader had seen plenty of mothers use such devices to feed their babies. Inside was a mixture of milk and honey. He put the tip up to Luke's lips and gently poured a bit against the baby's lips. Vader pulled the pot away as Luke licked his lips.

The baby's face lit up. Vader brought the feeding pot back up to Luke's lips. Luke opened his mouth and quickly drank the milk. Bright pink came across the bond. Luke was happy. He enjoyed the milk. Vader couldn't help but smile. It had been the same for him as a child. There were many great things about being a dragon, but there was one thing humans were better at: food and taste.

A dragon's diet consisted of meat, but a human's? There were so many different and wonderful things to try. It was how a human slave had managed to get her dragon son to come inside after a day of flying. She just said it was dinner time, and a young boy with sun-kissed tan skin and gold hair would be sitting at her table. Luke was now no different.

Vader walked into his fortress. The levels above ground were made for a human. Eventually he made his way up the many stairs to the level Vader had furnished. He placed Luke down. The toddler wobbled a bit, and then off he went toddling around. Vader walked to the kitchen with the toddler waddling behind him.

Vader still ventured into the human world. Sometimes it was to hunt down Jedi scum who survived his initial purge. Sometimes he went as a human. Despite everything . . . he was still half human himself. He hated actual humans. A disgusting lot. But he enjoyed what they made, especially when it was something Vader could share with his son.

Luke and Vader had a meal. It was a messy affair. The toddler ate his hands and the food got

Vader loved his son.

The day wore on. Vader worked on teaching Luke to learn human words. As enjoyable as the colorful emotions and images Vader got from Luke, there was something easier about using words to convey complex ideas. Though Luke was still far too young for any complicated conversations.

After their lessons, Luke played. He had a few human toys Vader had purchased in human markets: wooden tops, dolls made of corn husks, and wooden blocks. His favorite toy was still his father. He loved to climb all over Vader even when they were both humans. Eventually Luke tired, and Vader cradled his son to his chest. He rocked Luke, who yawned and fought to keep his eyes open. But eventually he fell asleep.

Vader carried his son to a large bed where they both slept. As Vader started to nod off to sleep, again he felt a brush against his mind. It snapped him wide awake. He looked at Luke who was deep asleep. His emotions were dulled, but were currently a soft purple. What had brushed against his mind had been cold and green. That was . . . odd . . . Perhaps Luke was dreaming. The emotions didn't come again, and Vader soon fell asleep.

The next day, Vader brought Luke back down into the caverns. He pulled one of the carcasses off the wall. He had to chew the meat a bit before he gave it to Luke. But Luke was unphased. He happily gobbled down the meat. It was interesting to Vader how much his natural paternal instincts had kicked in once he had Luke. How he simply seemed to know things like to chew the meat before feed Luke or how to build a nest.

Vader kept giving Luke meat, more meat than he would usually give the small baby. Luke kept eating. Eventually he grew full and sluggish. His belly was round. He blinked a few times and sent his father bright purple emotions. He was tired and wanted to sleep. Vader collected his son and put him in the bottom of the nest next to the warm rocks. Then he covered the child in the furs and skins. Luke was asleep by the time Vader finished.

When overfed, the baby dragon would go into a deep long sleep which allowed Vader to go hunting. Even if Luke did wake up, he wouldn't leave the nest without his father near. Perhaps it was the baby's own instincts, but Luke knew to stay put. The first time Vader had ever left Luke like this, he had been a nervous wreck. He still felt anxious leaving Luke alone. Luke was so tiny. What if he crawled out of the nest? What if wandered into the tunnels? Fell down a hole into the lava?

Vader pushed those thoughts aside. He had other things to focus on. He started off by making rounds of Mustafar. Ever since Vader's attack on the Jedi, there had been nations who had sent fools to try and kill him. They had sent bounty hunters, great beast hunters, knights, mercenaries, even whole armies, and a few times surviving Jedi. Vader had killed any who dared venture into his lands. Sometimes he saw the remains of such scum. Armor glinting in the red light with rotting flesh clinging onto bones. Not even the scavenger birds ventured here to pick the bones clean. At least they had sense.

Something brushed against his mind. Yellow. Orange. Happiness. It caused Vader to lose focus. He took a short dive in his flying, but quickly recovered. He circled down to the ground. As soon as he landed, he reached out into the Force. He quickly found Luke. The baby's emotions were soft pale blues and purples. He was sleeping. Then what was that just a moment ago?
Vader shook his head. Luke dreaming again. He was preparing to jump into the sky, when it hit him again. Happiness. Vader froze. For a moment, it even caused him to forget to focus on his internal fire. His body started to cool. His head snapped to the east, away from his fortress. That was the direction this emotion was coming from. Away from Luke.

Another . . . dragon . . .? Surely . . . not.

Vader reached out searching for the source. Again it brushed against his mind. Yellow. Orange. Happiness. He caught a glimmer of a vision. Bright green grass and bushes. Flowers. *Humans.* Vader's lips rose in a snarl. Perhaps there were surviving dragons hiding amongst humans. But then he thought on the vision again. It was low in height as if the person was sitting or . . . they were small. Like the height of Luke . . .

Vader poured all of his strength into reaching out towards the source. It was fleeting. It kept slipping through his grasp. But just for an instance, he caught it again. This time he was sure. It was another dragon. Another *baby* dragon. Another *child.*

*Twins.*

His wife had given birth to twins. Just as Vader had felt Luke, he was feeling his *other* child.

Where? Where was this other child? He tried to search for their presence, but he was met with nothing. He had to find them! He would find them!

He didn't know it would take him years to eventually track down his daughter, but he eventually he would. Eventually he would bring his family together again. At last, all of the skywalkers would be together.
There's Too Many

Chapter Summary

Luke Skywalker was on the second Death Star being electrocuted by the Emperor begging his father to save him. He passed out, but when he awakes he finds himself in a strange featureless foggy place. He quickly discovered he is not alone. There he meets another Luke Skywalker.

Luke snapped awake. Was he dead? He had been on the floor writhing in pain while the Emperor shot him with Force lightning. He had begged his father to help him. Then he had blacked out. Now he was cold and a bit damp. He sat up, his body still ached and burned.

The place was featureless with a dull dark gray of mist and fog. The ground was smooth stone. Where was he? On the second Death Star? Back on Endor? Dead? He didn't feel dead. Slowly he stood up. He reached out with the Force, but there was nothingness all around him. Just silence and the swirling fog.

He ran his ungloved hand through his hair. What was he going to do? Out of the corner of his eye he saw something in the mist. At once he turned to face it. He stretched his senses. Was there something else out there? He thought he heard a faint voice saying the name Leia.

Leia? Was she here?

Luke moved in the direction of the sound. Again he saw something moving in the fog ahead. It was human shaped and gray. It was hunched over as if carrying something. Luke picked up his pace. He was almost running. Perhaps if there was someone else here he could get answers.


"Sorry!" a voice next to him came out. "I didn't know there was anyone else here!"

"It's ok. I . . ."

Luke's words died on his lips as he saw the man standing next to him. It was . . . It was him. Another Luke. He was dressed in the orange flight suit of the Alliance. He didn't look completely like Luke. At least not how he looked now. This other Luke looked . . . younger. His hair was brighter. His face was more tanned.

The other Luke was also staring. His mouth hung open slightly. "Who . . . who are you?" he asked.


The two said nothing. Neither one knew what to say. Both of their minds were reeling. How could there be two of them?

"Leia?" a voice called in the fog.
Both Lukes turned. A new figure stumbled out of the fog. He was hunched over, his right arm stuffed under his left armpit, his gray fatigues were torn and burned. But Luke instantly recognized him. It was himself. It was another Luke.

Luke glanced from the first Luke to the second. This second one looked like . . . looked like he had just finished that fateful duel with Darth Vader in Cloud City. He wore the dirty Alliance jumpsuit. His hair was plastered to his head wet with sweat. His eyes had a wild haunted look as he looked at the other two in front of him.

"Who . . . who are you? What is going on?" this new Luke croaked.

"That's what I'm trying to figure out!" the flight suit Luke exclaimed. "Who are you two? Why do you look like me?"

Luke's head spun. This was too much. He looked from one Luke to another. One Luke clearly from Bespin and the other . . . who looked younger.

"What was the last thing you remembered?" Luke asked. The other two looked at him. "You in the flight suit."

"Me?"

"Yes. What was the last thing you remembered before being here?"

"I was at the hangar on Yavin IV. I had wandered outside for a short break."

The Bespin Luke took in a sharp breath. He was coming to the same conclusion Endor Luke had come to.

"Yavin IV?" Bespin Luke asked. "As in . . . did you just come from the Death Star?"

"Yeah . . ."

"So you two are from the past," Endor Luke said. The other two Lukes looked at him. Endor Luke pointed at both of them. "You're the youngest from right after the first Death Star blew up."

"First Death Star?" both Lukes exclaimed. Endor Luke ignored them.

"And you are from Bespin. Right after the duel with Darth Vader," Endor Luke continued.

"And who are you?" Bespin Luke asked bitterly.

"I am you, but in the future. Only a few months though. I was on the second Death Star that was above Endor."

"So there is another one?" Yavin Luke asked. His eyes big and round. They were still filled with naive wonder. They were unjaded and not haunted by the horrors of the war yet. Endor Luke only sighed. He could feel a headache coming on.

Darth Vader walked through the foggy landscape. He had been on Cloud City returning to his shuttle. His attempts at securing his son and luring him to the Dark Side . . . had . . . not gone according to plan. The boy had . . . let go . . . Had decided it would be better to die than to face his destiny. To face him, his father.

The boy should have been angry! Angry that the truth had been kept from him! That he had been
denied his rightful spot in the galaxy! Instead, Luke had reacted in shock and horror. And now . . . Vader had yet to feel Luke die. He didn't dwell on that thought. Instead he focused on this place. This odd place he found himself in.

It was quiet. He had reached into the Force, and found almost a void there. How was it possible that the Force was so quiet? Only in the depths of space when he was alone in his ship did he ever feel this emptiness. He had been in a whole city of bustling with life mere moments ago. How did he get here?

But there was something out there. A small flick of life ahead that Vader was moving toward. He strode purposefully forward. His gait unwavering. Hopefully this life form would be sentient and could provide Vader the answers he sought. He couldn't be wasting time here. As he approached, he saw the lifeform was small and mostly white.

Vader stepped through a cloud of fog and stopped dead. A child turned and looked up at him. For a moment, just a moment, Vader thought it was himself. It wasn't, though it looked eerily enough like him. Bright blond hair, sun tanned skin, bright blue eyes, and white tunics. No, it wasn't Vader, but he did recognize the mark on the cheek.

"Luke?" he said. He hadn't meant to speak, but the words had come out anyways.

The child jumped and took a step back.

"Who- who are you?" he asked. "Have you seen my aunt or uncle? I was just playing in a cave . . ."
The boy looked around as if he would spot his lost relatives.

The relatives that had stolen him! Kept him away from his father!


"Come here child," Vader said.

The boy jumped and again took a step away. Vader summoned the Force to wrap around the child. The boy let out a small gasp. The Dark Side hungrily ate the boy's fear. Vader approached. The boy squirmed in the Force hold. Vader grabbed him and picked him up. He looped his arm under the boy's knees and the other arm around his shoulders. The boy trembled in Vader's arms. He took a long look at the child. His child.

Then Darth Vader headed back into the fog ready to find a way out of this.

A headache had formed between Luke's eyes. The three Lukes had all accepted the weird situation they found themselves. They were all Luke, the same Luke, but from different points in time. Yavin Luke was bright-eyed and constantly asking questions. His first focus had been on Bespin Luke.

"What happened to you? Is your arm gone? How did that happen? Is that going to happen to me?" Yavin Luke had rambled on.

Endor Luke knew that Bespin Luke was in no mood to answer questions. Everything was still raw. He had just let go of the gantry over the reactor shaft. He had expected to die. He was supposed to find himself hanging on to an antenna, but instead had found himself here. So now Yavin Luke was questioning Endor Luke.


"Hoth? What happened at Hoth?"


A tall dark shadow moved towards them. It soon stepped up to the three Lukes. There was no denying the figure before them was Darth Vader. Endor Luke moved so he stood in front of the other two Lukes. As he reached for his belt he realized he didn't have his lightsaber. He had tossed it aside back on the Death Star when he refused to kill his father.

"Who's that?" Yavin Luke asked.

Endor Luke had been so focused on Vader, that he only just now noticed he was carrying someone. Not someone. A child. A . . . another Luke? A child Luke? How many Lukes were there?

Clearly Vader was thinking the same thing. His mask moved as he took in each Luke.

"What . . . What is going here?" he asked in his deep voice.

Endor Luke took a deep breath. "I suppose before I answer that question, I need to ask. Where were you right before you found yourself in this place?"

"I was playing in a cave!" young Luke shouted. "Have you seen my aunt and uncle?"


"Don't worry," Endor Luke said. "We'll help you find them."

Vader's grip on young Luke tightened. His stance shifted to be more defensive. As if he wasn't going to let little Luke go.


One. Two. Three cycles through Vader's respirator passed. Finally he said, "Yes." His mask swung back to Endor Luke. "What is going on? Who are you?"


"And I'm from the oldest Luke," Endor Luke said. "I was on the second Death Star, which you know good and well exists, over Endor."

It had taken quite a bit of convincing to get Vader to let go of little Luke. At once the boy ran over to the other Lukes. He hugged Yavin Luke's leg and hid behind him. What would happen when Endor Luke went back? Would he recall this event happening from three different points in his life? Would
he have memories of each of the other Luke's experiences here? Or would it be something else?

Endor Luke and Vader walked through the fog side by side. Vader was clearly slowing his pace to match that of Luke. His mask kept turning to look at Luke.

"So you have accepted the truth," Vader said slowly.

"Yes, father," Luke said, fighting back the deja vu. He had just had this conversation with Vader. With his Vader.

Which was why Endor Luke and Vader found themselves leaving the group. If Bespin Vader was here, was Yavin Vader and Endor Vader here as well? Was there a young Vader to match little Luke? Or was there only the one Vader?

"At what point did you know who I was?" Luke asked. "Did you know I was your son?"

"A bit after Cymoon 1. I wanted to know about the pilot who had shot down the Death Star."

"So if there is a Yavin Vader or younger, they won't know," Luke said thoughtfully.

"No."

They walked through the fog. Both lost in their own thoughts. But then a large gloved hand gripped Luke's shoulder. Luke snapped his head up towards the mask, ready to bark at Vader, but the helmet was focused away. Luke followed the gaze. He didn't see anything, but he heard it. The humming and hissing of lightsabers clashing.

Both Luke and Vader made there way towards it. They first saw the two glowing red blades clashing against each other. Then the two large shadowy forms emerged in the fog.

"Imposter," came baritone voice of one Vader.

"You are the imposter," came the second. "A trick."

"I am no trick!" replied the other.

Luke took a deep breath and rushed forward. "Stop!" he shouted. "Neither one of you is an imposter!"

Two identical Vaders stopped their duel and looked at Luke.

"Who are you?" one asked.

"I am-"

"A Jedi," hissed one of the Vaders. Luke couldn't tell which one was talking.


"You will not touch him," Bespin Vader growled.

The two other Vaders stopped. One Vader looked at Bespin Vader and then at the other. Luke understood that confusion all too well.
"If you are here to claim you are Darth Vader," said one of the other Vaders, "Then prove you are him. Strike that Jedi down!"

"Wait! Stop!" Luke shouted. "I can explain all of this!"

"Very well," said one of the other Vaders. "I shall let you live long enough to explain this Jedi trick. Your death shall be quick as my thanks."

"You will not touch him," Bespin Vader growled again. A tense stretch of silence fell between them.


One of the red lightsabers fell a bit in shock. The other one raised higher.

"Impossible!" he shouted.

"My father is Anakin Skywalker," Luke said standing up straight.

"Anakin Skywalker is dead," one Vader said.


Bespin Vader spoke, "Listen to the Force. You know the boy speaks the truth."

An odd silence fell. It was filled with the sound of three respirators filling the quiet. Luke guessed that these other two Vaders were young Vader and Yavin Vader. Neither one recognized Luke or knew who he was. Plus they both still had their hands. Endor Vader had just lost his hand to Luke on the Death Star.

So that meant there was still one more Vader out there. Bespin Vader had started talking. He was explaining that Luke was their son. That they were all the same person just from different points in time. Luke wasn't paying attention. Something was bothering him. Something was pulling on his mind. He looked away from the Vaders into the fog.

There was something out there . . . Something . . .

"Father!" he shouted.

He ran into the swirling grey clouds. He heard a shout of his name, but he ignored it. He followed the pull of the Force. The moment he saw the dark shape on the floor, he knew who it was. He knew which Vader it was. It was his Vader. Endor Vader.

There was no right hand. Vader's breathing was uneven and pained. His body visibly rose and fell which each labored breath.

"Father!" Luke said as he knelt down next to Vader. "What happened?"

Last he had seen Vader was between the bright lights of the lightning.

"I . . . I stopped him," Vader said. "I could not . . . I could not let you die." He paused as he took a few more breaths. "I killed . . . killed him, but his lightning-ning struck me."


"Luke, help me take this mask off," Vader said.
"But you'll die," Luke said.

"Nothing can stop- stop that now. Just for once . . . let me look on you with my own eyes.

Slowly, hesitantly, Luke reached for the helmet. He lifted the helmet off and lowered it to the ground. Then his fingers gripped the side of the mask. He pulled it off. For the first time, he saw his father's face. It was a man with pale white skin completely covered with scars. His face is etched in pain, but despite that he smiled.

At once a lump formed in Luke's throat and his eyes started to burn and water.

"My . . . son," Vader said softly. But that didn't seem right. He was no longer Vader. No longer any of the Vaders Luke had left behind. This Vader was different. This man was Anakin, Luke's father.

"I'm going to save you," Luke said. He squeezed Anakin's hand tighter.

"You already have," Anakin said. "You were right . . . about me. Tell your sister . . . you were right."


He wasn't sure how long he had stayed like that, but he heard the familiar hiss of a respirator. He wiped his tears on his sleeve and turned around. Three Vaders stood only a short distance away. All three identical. All three unmoving.

In another time and place, it might look comical or perhaps nightmarish to see the three of them. But it only made Luke's heart ache.

Endor Luke walked back to the group of other Lukes. The two older Lukes had been sitting, but upon seeing Endor Luke, they jumped up.


"Did you find any other Vaders?" Yavin Luke asked.

"What happened to the other Vader?" Bespin Luke asked.

Endor Luke half-heartedly waved behind him. Both other Lukes gasped. Endor Luke didn't turn around, but he knew what the others were seeing. Four Vaders. Three of which were all carrying the fourth one. The dead one. Endor Luke had refused to simply leave his dead father in this cloudy nightmarish place. Whenever he finds a way out, he will bring his father with him. The other three Vaders, prompted by Bespin Vader, had agreed to carry the body.

Slowly, the three Vaders lowered the body to the ground. The helmet and mask were back on the dead Endor Vader. Endor Luke didn't need to see the lifeless face. The two new Vaders looked at the Lukes. The other Lukes did the same. Endor Luke glanced around.

"Where is . . . Where is little Luke?" he asked. The other two Lukes looked around. "I told you two to watch him!"

"We were!" Yavin Luke snapped.

"You know how he is!" Endor Luke snapped back. "He's us!"
At once Endor Luke was back in the fog. Part of him was glad to get away from the body. "Luke!" he shouted. "Little Luke!"

"Here! I'm over here!" came a child's voice.

"Oh thank the Force," Endor Luke mumbled to himself as he jogged over to where he heard the voice. As soon as he saw little Luke he stopped. "What is that?" Endor Luke asked.


Little Luke was holding the snow crusted boots of yet another Luke. A Luke from Hoth from the looks of it. The wounds on his face were still fresh. Endor Luke sighed and then let out a small groan.


Of course seeing yet another Luke caused a small uproar amongst the group.

"Give me your cloak," Endor Luke snapped at one of the Vaders. One of them unhooked their cloak and handed it over. Luke was sure it was Bespin Vader. It was Bespin Luke that came over and helped wrap the thick cloak around Hoth Luke. Hoth would still be quite fresh in Bespin Luke's mind.

"So now what?" Yavin Luke asked. "We find another Vader?"

Endor Luke's headache was getting worse. Yavin Luke was right. If there was a Hoth Luke, that meant there should be a Hoth Vader. When would this madness stop?

"Yes, we find another Vader," Endor Luke said as he stood up and looked into the fog.


Endor Luke looked at the corpse laying over a few yards away. "Yeah," he said slowly. "I'm the best choice."

"I will accompany you," Bespin Vader said.

"No. You need to stay here."

"I."

Endor Luke cut him off. "I don't trust those two to stay here with them."

Bespin Vader looked over at Yavin and young Vader. Both of whom were still standing next to Endor Vader's body. They were both quiet. Bespin Vader looked back over and nodded.

"Then I will go," said one of the other two Vaders.


Endor Luke headed off into the fog. One of the younger Vaders followed him. Neither one said anything for which Luke was glad. They walked through the dark gray land that was filled with thick fog. Luke looked up to the sky, but it was just a darker gray. Was there a sun? A moon? Stars? Were they even on a planet? He got the idea that they were somewhere else. A place within the Force.
Vader grabbed Luke's shoulder stopping him. Vader pointed and Luke looked. In the fog there was a
glow of light. It was a distinctive beam of light. Not just a beam, but beams. Luke didn't stop his very
loud exasperated sigh. They were only looking for one Vader. It was clear there were more visitors
in this strange place. And what was annoying, was only one of the lightsabers was red. Hopefully
that was the missing Hoth Vader, but who were the others?

Two other beams shone in the fog. The one clashing against the red was a blue lightsaber. Another
Luke? Standing a bit away from the fight was a green lightsaber. Luke's current lightsaber was
green. Perhaps it was an older Luke?

Vader and Luke approached the group. No one noticed the two new arrivals as everyone was
watching the fight. The one wielding the red lightsaber was Vader. The one holding the green
lightsaber was an old man. He was dressed in a Jedi tunic and robe. He had long gray hair and a
short beard. He reminded Luke of a bit of Ben, but this man was not Ben. Luke already knew it was
him. An older him. The lightsaber hilt was the same as his and the hand that held it was a metal
prosthetic.

Was this really what Luke looked like when he got older? A shaggy Jedi?

However, this old Luke wasn't alone. Standing behind was a child. For a brief moment Luke thought
it was another young Luke. They looked the same. Blond hair, blue eyes, tan skin, and clothes like
those worn on Tatooine. But as Endor Luke looked closer, he noticed this was not him. The hair
wasn't as bright as his had been. The style was off too. And if the child wasn't Luke . . . was he a
young Anakin Skywalker?

Finally Endor Luke looked at the man dueling the Vader. He was not a Luke. He wasn't a Vader. So
if wasn't a Luke nor a Vader, was he an Anakin? The man was tall, though not as tall as Vader. He
wore black and dark leather tunics like that of a Jedi. He had long curling dark blond hair. But Luke
couldn't make out much beyond that.

"Is that you?" Luke asked with a wave at the man fighting Vader.

"Yes," the young Vader standing next to him answered.

"Is that you as well?" Luke said as he pointed to the kid.

"Yes. Is that you?" Vader asked of the old man.

"I think so. Looks a bit like me. Plus . . . it can't be you . . ." Luke thought of the body back with the
rest of the group. He sighed. "Shall we stop this?"

Hoth Luke was still unconscious by the time Endor Luke returned with the four newcomers. The
two (living) Vaders both stiffened at the sight of the two young Anakin Skywalkers. Little Luke was
perhaps the only one excited as he ran up to the little Anakin.


"No," said little Anakin, "I'm Anakin."

older! And that's an older me too!" Little Luke pointed at the different Lukes.

Yavin Luke were seated on the ground next to Hoth Luke. The two Vaders were standing by
"This is little Anakin as you know," Endor Luke explained. "This is an older Anakin, who isn’t quite yet Darth Vader. That is Hoth Vader, and lastly this is Luke. Old Luke. Who has yet to say much about how far into the future he is from."

Old Luke frowned as he took in the sight before him. He then marched pass the whole group and stood over the corpse of Endor Vader. He knelt on the ground and placed his flesh hand against the helmet.

"This is kriffin’ impossible," the older Anakin blurted out. "How can these all be me? The kid I understand, but these guys?" He waved at the herd of Vaders. "You expect me to believe this is what I turn into when I'm older? A karkin' Sith?"

"It is your destiny," said one of the Vaders.

"My destiny is to become half droid? And what even happened to that one?" Anakin asked as he pointed to Endor Vader. "That one is dead!"

Bored with the grown-up talk, little Luke and little Anakin had taken up a game of tag. At first they just zigzagged amongst the group, but now they had ventured out into the fog. Two of the Vaders, Endor Luke was sure it was Bespin and Hoth Vader, were watching them. It looked like one of them was about to go get them, but it was old Luke who jumped up.

"I'll go get them," he grumbled as he walked off into the fog.

"And what happened to them?" Anakin continued as he looked at three Lukes on the ground.

"Perhaps instead of focusing on that," Endor Luke said. "We should focus on leaving. I know I for one would like to get back to my own time and place." He eyed the corpse of his father.

"Agreed," Anakin said as he crossed his arms. "That way I can go back and make sure this," He looked directly at the Vaders, "never happens."

One of the Vaders made an odd sound through their vocoder. A laugh?

"Shall we focus on how we each got here?" Endor Luke said. "I was... being electrocuted by the Emperor and passed out. I woke up here."

"I fell down a reactor shaft and woke up here," Bespin Luke said. He shot a nasty look at the Vaders. He was clearly not over the duel, losing his hand, and finding out the truth about his father.

"I walked outside to get some fresh air. It turned all foggy, then I was here," Yavin Luke said with a shrug.

"It was the same for me," Bespin Vader said. "I was walking through the service levels of Cloud City when it became dark and foggy."

"Young Luke was in a cave hiding from a sandstorm," Yavin Luke added in.

One by one they shared how they got here. It seemed they were each going about their lives, when suddenly they all found themselves here. Some of them just walked here, some of them awoke here, or in the case of Bespin Luke, landed here. Now the real question was how to get back? Should they try to repeat what had gotten them there in the first place? A Vader suggested meditating. Anakin grumbled at that. Yavin Luke just looked at everyone with large round eyes. Bespin Luke kept
casting a concerned look at Hoth Luke and then dirty looks at the Vaders. Who knew what any of the Vaders were feeling.

Old Luke Skywalker saw the two kids dashing through the fog. "Hey, get back here!" he shouted at them. The two boys giggled as they ran up to him. Luke Skywalker had seen some weird things in his life. Though this, this was the strangest. It was odd, no beyond odd, to see his younger self playing with a young version of his father.

"I won!" little Luke said happily.

"No you didn't!" little Anakin said.

"You both lost," old Luke snapped.

Two little heads looked up at him with large round blue eyes. Eyes that were eerily the same. Seeing them side by side, old Luke easily saw the resemblance.


The boys pouted and frowned, but followed along. Until little Anakin stopped.

"There is someone out there," he said as he looked into the fog.

"Oh great," old Luke said under his breath. Who else could it be? His brows furrowed as a shape started to form in the fog. Humanoid. Small. Another Luke? The figure became clearer. The two boys gasped, and so did old Luke. At once old Luke was running through the fog, pulling off his brown cloak, so he could wrap it around the shivering figure.

The discussion about how to return had gotten nowhere. In fact it had gotten off track. They were currently pairing up each Luke with a Vader. There were obvious connections. Yavin Luke and Yavin Vader. Hoth Luke and Hoth Vader. Bespin and Endor. Then there was little Luke tied to young Vader. But what of the rest?

There was little Anakin, the older Anakin, and the older Luke. None of them had a pair. It looked like if the son or the father wasn't even alive at the time, they didn't have a match. But that begged the question, were there going to any more time travelers? Where would it stop? When would they go back? Was there a reason to all of this?

Endor Luke didn't have the answers. None of the Lukes did. Neither did any of the Vaders nor Anakin.

Little Luke and little Anakin ran out of the fog.

"We're back!" little Luke said. "We found someone new!"

Of course they did, Endor Luke thought. The endless parades of Lukes, Vaders and Anakins had yet to end.

"Well at least we know it won't be a Luke to match me," the older Anakin said.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that," came the voice of old Luke.

The crowd turned to see him walking out of the fog. His arm was wrapped around . . . around a woman? She was small. Her hair hung in brown curls. She was dressed in a thin satin dress with
white beaded straps. Her feet were bare. Old Luke's Jedi cloak was wrapped around her.

"Anakin?" she asked as she saw the group.

"Padme!" the older Anakin shouted as he ran over to her.


"What's going on?" Padme asked.

"Why are you here?" Anakin whispered. "Wait . . . it can't be."

Anakin looked down. His hand came to rest on her stomach. Padme's round extended stomach. She was pregnant. Little Luke and little Anakin started to run around again. Old Luke's hand snatched out, grabbed Anakin, and pulled him close.


"Anakin?" Padme asked again. She placed a hand on his face.

"I uh . . ." Anakin said fumbling to find words.

Endor Luke sighed. He might as well explain. He had gotten quite used to it having to explain to everyone else. He walked over to the couple.

"Uh hi," Luke said. He couldn't help but stare at Padme. He had never known his mother. Never knew what she looked like. Didn't even know her name. "I'm Luke, and this is going to sound a bit crazy."

Padme gave Anakin a look, but he nodded and smiled. She turned her attention back to Endor Luke. Luke gave a weak smile, but he never got a chance to continue his speech. Instead a wave of dizziness and nausea hit him.

"Ugh," he said as he wavered on his feet. He stumbled forward, and ended up grabbing onto Padme's arm for support. Anakin grabbed Luke's other arm.

"Are you ok?" Anakin asked.

"I . . .uh . . ." he said. His tongue felt heavy. His eyelids were dropping. "I . . . can't . . ." And then he fell. Blackness met him before his body hit the ground.

Luke woke to a white room. It took a few moments to comprehend why this was odd to him. Then he realized. He wasn't in the foggy place anymore. He glanced around. It appeared he was in a medbay. A normal looking medbay. One with Alliance medics and officers. Was he back? The doctors and nurses saw to him. They said he was fine, and went about their other duties. Luke had yet to say a word. His mind still reeling from everything.

It wasn't long before he had his first visitor. Han Solo marched over to Luke's bed with a huge goofy smile.

"There you are!" he said. "How are you feelin'?"

"Well you missed the big celebration," Han said. "It was one big party with those Ewoks."

So the Alliance had won? How? How had they broken the Emperor's trap? Had Han and Leia managed to get the shield down?

"Though I am curious," Han said as he sat down on the edge of Luke's bed. "How did you get off the Death Star in time? What even happened up there?"

"I don't . . . I don't know. I don't remember."

Han's face had fallen into a serious expression. "You really have no idea?"

"The last thing I remember was the Emperor . . . and then . . . fog. Then I woke up here."

That was close enough to the truth for now.

"Well some ground troops doing a routine sweep for any Imperials found you," Han explained. "Found you in a crashed Imperial shuttle."

Luke nodded though he had no memory of ever being on a shuttle.

"You weren't alone, Luke," Han said.

There was tightness in Luke's throat and cold shiver that ran down his spine. "I wasn't?" he squeezed out.

"There was also . . . Also the dead body of Darth Vader," Han said.

Luke looked down at his lap. "What . . . what happened to the body?" he asked in a whisper.

"It's currently in the morgue," Han said. "They aren't completely sure what to do with it. Only High Command knows about it. Leia reported that a few want to flaunt it all over the holonet to showcase the Alliance victory."

"No!" Luke said.

Han leaned over and placed a hand on Luke's shoulder and squeezed.

"Don't worry, kid," he said. "Leia would never let that happen."


"Though who were the other two?" Han asked.

"Other two . . . other two what?"

"The other two people on the shuttle with you. Some guy and some lady. He had your old lightsaber on him."


"Actually I think they're in the next room," Han said. "What! Hold on!"

Luke ignored him as he threw aside his covers and ripped off the tubes and sensors. Barefooted and wearing his white medical tunic, he ran from his room and into the next. Laying in the bed on the left was Padme. She was still asleep, but Luke could see her round stomach. In the bed next to her,
sitting up with his arms crossed, was a very angry looking older Anakin Skywalker.

"Hey there you are!" Anakin said as he saw Luke. "What is going on? Where are we?"

That was a very good question, and Luke didn't quite have the answer to it.

Luke Skywalker had seen some interesting things already in his life. One instance included meeting several different versions of himself and his father. Though this seemed to be even odder than that. He was watching his mother give birth to him and his twin sister.

Luke and Anakin had eventually settled on one conclusion. Since Luke was touching Padme and Anakin when he came back to his time, he had taken them with him. Endor Vader had returned to his proper time of his own accord.

Luke couldn't help but wonder if Anakin, Padme, and now the newborn Luke and Leia were stuck in this time. What happened to their original time? Had Anakin and Padme simply disappeared? Had time continued on without them there? What would that timeline be like now?

And what of the other Lukes and Vaders? Luke had no new memories. He didn't recall meeting himself from three different perspectives. Had they returned back to their own times? Were they now new and different timelines? Alternate ones? How would their lives continue?

After recovering from Bespin, Luke returned to Tatooine to find Ben's journals. He built his new lightsaber. Then he set out to confront his father, Vader. It wasn't hard to find him. Vader was waiting for him. He seemed calmer and also more in the light than he had been at Cloud City.

Together they created a plan. A plan to save Han Solo from Jabba. A plan to kill the Emperor. A plan to end the Empire. A plan they would do together.

Luke woke up in the Hoth medbay right on time. The Imperials were starting their attack. It was hard to get his mind into the battle. He had the weirdest dream. After the battle, he went in search of Master Yoda on Dagobah. He didn't listen to Yoda or Ben's warnings when he left to go to Bespin to save his friends.

When he saw Darth Vader standing on the steps, Luke ignited his blue lightsaber. He would defeat Darth Vader! He would kill his father's murderer! He would save his friends! But Vader didn't ignite his own lightsaber. Instead he waved his hand slightly. Green stun bolts came from all directions. Luke was unconscious before he reached the ground. His lightsaber clattered and rolled away.

The stormtroopers came out of hiding. Their blasters still aimed at the prone Rebel, but Vader ordered them out of the room. Once alone, Vader slowly knelt in front of Luke. He wasn't sure what had happened at Bespin before, but he recalled that Luke. The one bruised and battered who hugged his arm to his body. The arm that was missing a hand.

He also recalled the other Vader. The one that had died. The one that Luke had saved. This time it would be different. Vader would see to it.

The next time Luke saw Vader was on Cymoon 1. Luke had just freed the slaves when he felt a familiar presence. So he left the group and soon ran into his father.

"Put that weapon down," Vader said in his deep voice. "You hold that weapon like an untrained
child. Did Kenobi really teach you so little?"

Luke huffed. "I'll show you," he mumbled as he ran forward. He could take Vader on! He could do this! He now knew who Vader was. He wasn't going to be caught off guard. However, Vader quickly knocked his blow to the side.


Luke only snarled and brought his lightsaber up again.

It wasn't long before Vader was on a shuttle leaving the moon. The factory had been destroyed. The Rebels had escaped along with a few slaves. But Vader had his prize. Luke glared at him. His arms were bound in binders. His lightsaber now hung on Vader's belt.

Luke was finishing up his chores in the kitchen. The sand had been swept out and the counters cleaned. He stretched as he walked into the courtyard. Aunt Beru had gone into town to buy supplies while Uncle Owen was out tending to the farm.

Luke was still grounded after his cave adventure. When he awoke in the cave, he found his way back to the homestead. He told his aunt and uncle all about the strange foggy place. How he had met different versions of himself. How he had met his father including one that was his age!

Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru had Luke brought to the doctor in Anchorhead, thinking he had lasting effects from heat stroke. But he was fine. Just a crazy dream. But Luke knew the truth! It wasn't a dream!

A shadow crossed over the courtyard. Luke glanced up to see a large triangular ship hanging low in the sky. How cool! He had never seen a ship that big! At once he was running up the steps and out into the sands of Tatooine. Small TIE fighters zoomed around the desert. A few seemed to be escorting a shuttle. Luke watched as it came closer and closer and eventually landed nearby.

The loading ramp lowered and down walked a tall man dressed in black. Luke instantly recognized him. He was Vader. One of them at least. Luke wondered which one he was. He didn't think it was the one he first met. The one that had picked him up. He felt like a different one.

Vader came to a stop right in front of boy.

"It's you!" Luke said as he pointed up at Vader. "I knew it wasn't just a dream!"


The two just looked at each other. Then Vader brought his hand out.

"Come," Vader said.

Luke looked at the hand. He turned and looked back at the homestead. He couldn't leave! Even if this man was his father. He needed to at least say goodbye to his aunt and uncle.

"Luke," came Vader's voice again. This time harsher. "Come now . . . my son."

"Uh . . . but . . . Aunt Beru and Uncle Owen . . ."


"Those two are kidnappers," Vader said.
What was with adults and saying such odd things? Luke missed the older Lukes. They were the first adults that seemed to make sense. Vader pulled on Luke's arm. He stumbled forward and tripped. But Vader caught him. Then Luke was picked up. He found himself being carried by Vader back to the shuttle. Little Luke knew that this time no older Luke would save him. He was going to have to save himself.

Luke Skywalker sat in his hut trying to meditate. However the sound of feet slapping against the rocks disrupted him. The door to his hut slammed open.

"Luke!"

Luke moaned as he looked at the doorway. The young Anakin Skywalker stood with a huge grin on his face. When Luke had found himself back on Ahch-To, he wasn't alone. The little Anakin was with him. Why had Anakin come back with him? He wasn't sure, but Anakin was here now. Little Anakin was unphased.

"Are you going to train me to be a Jedi?" little Anakin had asked.

"No."

"You can call me father."

"No."

"Can I call you son?"

"No."

"We can switch it! I can be the son and you can be the father!"

"No!"


"Luke!" Anakin said again. "I saw a ship fly by!"

"There are no ships," Luke mumbled.

"Yes there was! I saw it! A freighter of some sort."

Luke's first thought was of the Falcon.

"Come see! I can prove it to you." When Luke didn't budge, Anakin continued to pester him. "Please! Please Luke!"

"Fine," he said as he stood up and followed Luke along the steep narrow stone paths.

Luke stopped in his tracks when he saw a young woman approaching.

"Who's that?" Anakin whispered.

"I don't know," Luke said.

She walked up to them, stopped, and dug into her bag. She pulled out a lightsaber. Not just any

"Just tell me one thing," Luke said as he eyed the lightsaber. "You didn't get this from some blonde kid did you?"

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