

## Heartless

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# Heartless

by [youvebeenlivingfictional](#)

## Summary

When you landed at the Resistance base on D'Qar, you had nothing but the clothes on your back, your mother's heart pendant, and fifteen credits in your pocket.

## Notes

I feel like I've been sitting on this for an age. Anyway, here we go.

Growing up on a remote and impoverished homeworld meant that you were raised with very little. You and your mother worked hard for the scraps that you managed. When she presented you with a grey heart-shaped pendant, you knew that she must've scraped and scrimped to save for it. She swore to you that she'd save enough for you to have a chain to wear it on one day.

But when the First Order swept through your corner of the galaxy, they took everything that you'd ever known: your home, your school, your friends—your mother.

All that you had left of her was your memories, and your grief, and the heart-shaped pendant that you carried with you every day.

You didn't find your way off of the planet right away. It took time—to find and repair a functioning vessel, to concoct a plan to get off of the planet undetected, to get out of your system and into another. Once you'd landed on a friendly planet, you'd managed to get work as a bartender, a mechanic, a washerwoman—whatever you could manage. There were some nights when you couldn't find work, others when you couldn't find food. You knew that the pendant in your pocket would be able to buy you a bit of what you needed, but you wouldn't part with it for the world.

It was a year before you met a pilot that would change your life: a Dandorian named Jess Pava, who you helped out of a tight squeeze with a few Stormtroopers.

"You got anything keeping you here?" She asked as she'd readied herself to take off of the planet that you were both lingering on. And you didn't. You hadn't found a steady position, or a stable dwelling, or made any friends. You had nothing to lose.

When you landed at the Resistance base on D'Qar, you had nothing but the clothes on your back, your mother's heart pendant, and fifteen credits in your pocket.

Pava didn't seem put off by the fact that you were a little on the quiet side, a little guarded. You knew your way around a hydrosponder, and you knew your way around a blaster. Not everyone on base was as unbothered by your standoffish nature. The rest of Black Squadron—Pava's unit—was very friendly. After she introduced you around, they left you be, for the most part.

For the first few weeks, Poe Dameron would not leave you alone.

Maybe he thought that you had some hard, icy shell that could be melted. Maybe he thought that someone just needed to show you a little kindness, and you'd open right up. But you were at a point in your life where you were determined not to allow anyone into your life or heart again. You'd never forget the sound of your mother's voice frantically telling you to run—the thought always made you reach into your pocket and curl your fingers around the pendant.

Letting yourself be taken under Pava's wing was bad enough. You felt beholden to the pilot—found yourself trailing her like a lost little tooka when she was on-base, worrying about her

when she was off. You took charge of minding and fixing her ship, running her errands and messages. You knew that Dameron saw that. He teased you for it, too—though, not meanly.

“What’s Pava got that I don’t, anyway?” He asked, in one of his innumerable attempts to get on what he must’ve thought was your good side. You hardly looked away from where you were working on repairing the hyperdrive.

“She saved me,” You answered, voice quiet and matter-of-fact. When you turned to reach for the laser caliper, you saw Dameron’s typically blaster-proof smile waver in the face of your answer.

“Do you have anything better to do than stand there?” You added as you turned back to your work. He had left without another word.

--

Poe Dameron stopped trying to be your friend months ago. You were fine with it. Sure, there was some part of you that twinged with what could only be described as loneliness on late, sleepless nights in your bunk. But in your time at the Resistance, you’d come to feel that life anywhere in the galaxy was as fleeting as it had been on your planet. Lives could be lost in the blink of an eye.

So when you passed the usual groups of people in the canteen—when you spotted Dameron holding court, as he was wont to do—you ignored him, and them, and the gnawing bitter loneliness in your stomach. You told yourself that it was safer to be alone than it was to grow attached to anyone—because any of them could be gone tomorrow, and then where would that leave you? Just as alone as you were at that moment, and twice as aggrieved.

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To say that you found General Leia Organa intimidating would be an understatement. She had a commanding presence, one that drew everyone’s attention. She’d met your eye a time or two in the hall, offered you a smile—and you’d found yourself offering smiles in turn almost unwittingly. There was something about General Organa that reminded you of your own mother—something that made your chest ache with sadness and wistfulness when she offered you a smile.

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“...Do you need help?”

You couldn’t believe that you were asking it, you really couldn’t, but there you stood, toolbox in hand. The man’s droid recoiled, unleashed a confused *beeeeeep?*, just as its owner lifted his head from his work.

“Jess’ ship all set?” He asked. You knew from Dameron’s tone that he was teasing you. You didn’t respond, because you didn’t want him to get used to this. You just shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot, and waited for him to wave you in or tell you to go.

Dameron cast you one more look before he raised his hand just long enough to direct you to the nose of the ship: “I need a hand with the sensor window.”

That you could do. You nodded, ducking under the ship and rounding to the step ladder. You set your kit down and crouched beside it, opening it and rifling through the necessary tools. The two of you worked in silence for a while. You thought it may be the longest you’d ever seen Dameron quiet at a stretch—but it didn’t last.

“Pava says your planet was taken by the First Order.”

If this was Dameron’s idea of friendly small talk, you weren’t sure why half of the base was swooning over him. He’d moved around to your side of the ship, but he was hardly idle; he was repairing the acceleration compensator. You hummed affirmatively in response to Dameron’s statement, crouching beside your toolbox to retrieve a spanner. As you did, you felt something in your pocket shift, and then heard the clanking of something against the steps, and then the floor.

You hardly noticed it; you had a few spare nuts and bolts in your pocket from your repairs earlier.

“Hey, uh... You dropped something.” You glanced over at the sound of Dameron’s voice, and did a double-take at what you saw in his hand, panic swooping low in your gut. You practically scrambled off of the ladder, hurrying to Dameron to retrieve your fallen pendant. He seemed alarmed at your scurrying, and he passed the pendant over without question. You folded the pendant tightly in your hands, your own heart pounding roughly in your throat.

“...Thank you,” You mumbled shakily, swallowing thickly.

“Sure,” Dameron nodded, “You oughta get a chain or something for that.”

You avoided Dameron’s eyes as you tucked the pendant away. You couldn’t bring yourself to feel ire for the comment; he didn’t know that saying that would be a painful reminder of what you no longer had, and would never have again. Your panic was beginning to give way to embarrassment for your rush. You probably looked like a panicked child for the sake of a silly little thing. You took a couple of steps back, turning back to the step ladder and heading back up.

You found yourself tucking your hand into your pocket every few moments to make sure your pendant was still nestled safely there. It slowed you down in your work, and led to spending more time with Dameron. You could feel him watching you now and again. It was still embarrassing; you were sure he’d mention the incident to Jess. But at least it seemed to have stopped his preliminary probing into your past.

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“Are you busy?” You heard. It seemed like a stupid question, maybe; you were sitting alone, your eyes set on the screen of a datapad. Regardless, you lifted your head to meet Dameron’s eyes and shook your head.

“Do you have some time to work on General Organa’s ship?” He asked.

He hardly had the word *General* out of his mouth before you were standing and reaching for your toolbox. Dameron looked a little amused at your eagerness, but he didn’t comment on it—just took a step back to lead you to the correct slot. You didn’t question him accompanying you; if he was bothering to ask you for help, you could only assume that it was all hands on deck.

You didn’t know what relationship existed between the General and Dameron, but it seemed to tread the line between militant and maternal. When you’d been in the rare briefing with them, when you’d witnessed the General’s fatigue and fondness first-hand, your grievances with Dameron had lessened, and your fascination had unwittingly increased. Dameron’s manner had seemed to be showboating when you’d first met him. When you saw him in front of the General with the same swagger—when you saw her level him with gazes that would’ve taken down others, though there was something protective behind it—you came to wonder about the pilot.

But you didn’t wonder enough to seek him out yourself in your free time. You tended to busy yourself with schematics, or additional work on a few ships that were lying in wait for some eventual evacuation.

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“...Things are alright, right?”

You blinked at Dameron almost in surprise at the question. You were certain he wasn’t asking you about the ship—the two of you had just inspected it yourselves. Your mouth worked wordlessly for a moment, and he clarified: “Things here, for you,” He nodded toward the dorms. You considered the question for a long moment, brow furrowing as your eyes dropped to your tools.

You had more consistent work and shelter than you’d had since leaving your home world. You’d come to consider Jess a friend, which felt dangerous enough. You were beginning to share meals with another mechanic named Rose. She knew what it was like to lose family, to leave or lose a homeworld. It was a unique grief, and one that you didn’t revel in sharing. Still, at moments, it felt nice to be understood.

But you couldn’t afford to let Poe Dameron into the room that you were beginning to open up in your heart.

“Yes,” You answered, nodding and lifting your eyes to him, “Things are...” In flux, still—precarious, always—“Things are good.”

You expected a lukewarm reception to your answer, but Dameron smiled generously at you, murmured, “Good,” And patted you on the shoulder as he passed you.

It was hardly anything—small, and fleeting, and warm. But it took everything in you not to sway into it, or to reach to return it the way you used to, the way you would have before. It

was a casual touch that you'd seen Dameron dole out to other members of the Resistance, regardless of rank or position on the base. Despite the spiky shell that you'd presented, Dameron treated you like anyone else.

It felt dangerous.

It felt beautiful.

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You became a regular to look over the General's aircraft. The two of you began to speak—well, the General spoke, and you mostly listened. She asked a few questions about your life, and while you'd rarely told anyone else, you did answer the General. On a late night, when you were fixing up her craft, the General told you about Aldedraan.

You could tell how tired she was. She sat on the ramp of the ship, and spoke to you like she wasn't a General, or a Princess. You fixed her ship, and you told her—you told her about your home planet, and what you missed about it. You told her about your mother.

And when you stopped speaking—when you realized that your voice had come to wobble, and your eyes were wet—the General didn't engulf you with the pity that you'd typically expect from someone that you told this to. She met it with the same understanding that Rose had. The General stood, and set a hand between your shoulder blades. Your eyes were still set on the hull of her ship.

"I know that missing her hurts," The General told you softly, "But you can't let it consume you in silence."

She told you to leave your tools, and to finish up in the morning. You just shook your head, and insisted, "This should be finished," As you frustratedly scrubbed your tears away, "In case—In case something comes up."

You glanced over to see Leia pursing her lips. She gave a small nod before patting your back gently.

"Make sure you get some rest."

"Yes, General."

--

"Fancy going off-world?"

Pava asked you the question with a bright smile, but faltered when she saw panic overtake your face.

"...For what reason?" You asked cautiously.

"The General has a trip. She likes having a mechanic with her, just to manage the upkeep and ensure any patches are dealt with immediately. She asked for you."

Organa asked for *you*? You considered this, lowering your eyes from Jess' face and eyeing the canteen table.

"We can get someone else," Jess reassured as she lowered herself to sit next to you, "If you really don't want to go."

"...Dameron isn't going?"

"No. Why?"

"Just thought he could deal with any patches if he was, that's all."

"Concerned about us doubling up on personnel?"

"Sort of."

"Concerned about having to spend time with Poe?"

Very.

"That hadn't crossed my mind as a concern," You fibbed, turning back to your tray and taking up your caf. Jess watched you as you did, a concerned furrow to her brow.

"I don't know why you guys go off on such a bad footing, but...Poe's a good guy."

"I don't doubt that."

"But you don't like him."

"...It's not that. He's very nice, and he's always been kind to me."

"So what is it?"

You considered how best to answer as your eyes drift to Dameron. He was crowded by other members of the Black Squadron, a wide smile splashed across his face, a joke clearly poised on his tongue.

"It's nothing," You said, finally. "I don't know him well."

"Could go over and change that."

"I have work to do," You shook your head, standing. You took up your tray and looked down at Jess. "Tell the General I'd be honored to join her."

Jess nodded a touch before you left.

--

You couldn't bring it with you.



You'd had more than one incident where you'd dropped it. You felt nothing but panic if you couldn't reach down and immediately feel it in your pocket. You didn't feel comfortable just leaving it in your quarters, but you couldn't bring it with you. What if something went wrong? What if you had to leave your things behind, what if you had to run and it fell out of your pocket?

You stared bleakly down at the heart-shaped pendant, your stomach churning. You felt ill. Whatever you chose, you would leave a little bit of yourself somewhere else in the galaxy.

--

"May I speak to you?"

You didn't mean to sap Dameron of his mirth, but it seemed that you did. He looked up at you, briefly stunned into silence before he nodded.

"Be right back," He commented to his friends as he stood. You led the way away from the table in the canteen.

"I hear you're going with the General to Xicorio," Dameron commented as the two of you stepped into the hall.

"Yes."

"I'm glad you are. She needs someone that knows that craft inside and out."

"...Yeah," You muttered, stopping in the hall and looking around nervously. "Listen, I need to ask you something."

"Okay."

"And I know that I'm in no position to ask you for favors, but—" Your eyes flickered to Dameron's face. You found that his surprise had flipped to intrigue, his brow furrowed a touch. You swallowed thickly and pressed on: "But I need you to—That is, I want to ask if you'd be willing to look after something for me while I'm off-world."

"What is it?"

You reached into your pocket for the pendant. Your hand curled tightly around it, your fingers digging into your sweaty palm. Your hand shook as you pulled your hand out of your pocket. You opened your fingers, trembling.

"If I lose it—" You started before you stopped abruptly, a lump lodging in your throat. You corrected: "I *can't* lose it." You drew in a shaky breath, your throat growing tight.

"If you don't want to—" You added, but Dameron silenced you before you could finish. His hands closed around yours, clasping it tenderly. The touch made your stomach swirl. He held your hands softly, and carefully. His palms were a touch rough, but not abrasive. The way he touched you was so delicate, like you'd fall apart if he was any more firm...And hell, maybe you would.

“I’ll take care of it.” He spoke as gently as he held your hand. You glanced up as he let go of your hands and reached back, unfastening the chain from his neck. Your eyes darted to the ring dangling at the end of it, your brow furrowing at the sight of it. Poe met your eye before he reached down, carefully plucking the pendant out of your hand and sliding it onto the chain. It clinked softly beside the ring there before Poe pulled the necklace back on. Your eyes held on the two where they rested above his jumpsuit. He raised his hand, slipping his thumb under the chain and drawing the two forward.

“Whenever you get back, it’ll be right here.”

Your eyes stayed on them as you nodded. Poe tucked the chain into his jumpsuit and patted his chest where they were.

“You need anything else for your trip?” He asked.

“No,” You shook your head.

“Kay. When was the last time you were off-world?”

“...It’s been a while.”

“It’s gonna be fine.”

You met Poe’s eyes and found him giving you a reassuring little smile. You swallowed tightly and nodded shakily.

“I’ll let you get back to your friends now,” You offered, taking a couple of steps back.

“Alright.”

You got a couple of steps away before you stopped, turning back to him.

“Poe?”

He whirled around, likely startled by the use of his first name. Your eyes darted to where the pendant sat beneath his shirt before you met his eyes again.

“Thank you.” And then you forced yourself to turn and stride down the hall to pack the few things you had and would need.

--

Xicorio reminded you of home in the bitterest of ways. It wasn’t the richest of planets. The people worked hard for what they had, and so far, had lived untouched by the long arm of the First Order.

“If they have yet to reach this planet, why are we here?” You asked softly. Leia hardly looked away from her datapad.

“Just because they haven’t reached it yet doesn’t mean that they won’t. If we can prepare them now, then perhaps it won’t turn out like—” Leia went quiet abruptly, glancing at you.

“...Like my home,” You filled in knowingly, nodding.

“And mine,” Leia soothed softly. “If we can prepare them now, they may have a better chance in the future.”

She leaned back in her seat, scrubbing her hand across her forehead.

“I have to get ready for dinner with the ambassador. What are you getting up to tonight?”

“I’ll be in the landing bay. I want to make sure the ship is alright to fly tomorrow.”

“You told me that you checked it over already,” Leia frowned.

“Oh, I did, but it never hurts to have another look.”

Leia sighed softly, her lips lifting into a patient smile.

“Promise me you’ll do one thing for yourself tonight.”

Her request caught you off-guard, and made you dip your head as if you were being scolded.

“Yes, General,” You mumbled. Leia nodded, standing from her seat and patting you on the shoulder as she left the room. You stood there in silence for a moment, eyes darting over the small lounge in your shared accommodations.

Something for yourself?

--

“Is everything okay?”

“Yes—”

“The General, is she—”

“She’s fine.”

“Her ship?”

“In one piece, I just checked again for myself.”

Poe’s mouth opened and then closed again on the other side of the fuzzy holovid.

“So, what’s, uh...Hi?” He offered, brow furrowed a touch.

You swallowed thickly. When you’d called, it had seemed like a good idea, but now that Poe was staring at you, you had no idea what to say or do.

“Hello,” You managed. Oh—kriff, you should never have called. “How’s um...How are things? At the base?”

You could see a slight shift on Poe’s expression, his eyes darting around before he met your eyes again.

“Things are alright. Business as usual.” There was a pause, and you were certain that you ought to hang up, but Poe pressed on:

“How’s Xicorio?”

“Fine. Warm, and...Kinda rainy. Which I thought would be a worse combo, but it’s not humid, there’s a nice breeze.”

“What’s the market like?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why don’t you go find out?” Poe asked, a small smile on his lips. You gnawed at your lower lip.

“I don’t know.” You repeated as you shifted in your seat. “I don’t want to be too far if the General needs something.”

Poe nodded a little, murmured, “Okay.” Then, “It’s still here, by the way.”

“What is?”

Poe reached into his jumpsuit, flashing you his chest inadvertently as he pulled out his necklace. Your heart leapt into your throat, and you felt your shoulders sag a touch.

“...I didn’t doubt it,” You smiled a little, “But thank you.” Your eyes lingered on the chain, and the ring beside the heart for a moment. “I know I thanked you already, but I really do appreciate it.”

“I appreciate it, too, you know?”

“What do you mean?”

“...You trusted me with something important.”

The assertion made your stomach flip, and your throat go dry. You couldn’t bring yourself to answer him, so you just nodded. You glanced up when you saw movement out of the side of your eye, doing a double-take at the sight of one of the General’s guards standing in the doorway.

“I—I have to go,” You said, eyes darting to Poe.

“Alright. Be careful.”

“You, too,” You answered hurriedly before closing the holovid.

“We’re departing in half an hour, we need take-off checks,” The guard told you.

“Okay.” You stood, beginning to gather your things. “Are we heading back to base?”

“We’re going to another planet—Prismes.”

Oh—kriff.

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“I’m sorry to have interrupted your evening.”

“Don’t worry about it, General,” You gave her a small smile. Leia searched your face a little.

“What did you do?”

“...Sorry?” You frowned, shaking your head.

“I didn’t give you a lot of time to do something for yourself, I realize that, but you seem to have done something.”

“N-No, General.”

Leia’s brow arched, and you were sure she’d press, but she gave a small nod.

“Alright,” Leia conceded. “Get some rest.”

“Thank you, General.”

Leia took a few steps toward the cockpit, and then stopped, turning to face you.

“We’ll be joined by a few other officers when we reach Prismes.”

“Alright. General?”

“Yes?”

“If you don’t mind my asking, why are we going there?”

“There’s a chance that we may gain allies, and another strategic foothold.”

You nodded in understanding, smiling a little as she turned to leave you again. Your hand slipped into your pocket on instinct, curling around—*nothing*. Your stomach gave a brief lurch of panic before your mind flashed back to the image of the grey pendant set against Poe’s chest. You scrubbed your hand over your eyes before you kicked your shoes off, swinging your feet up to stretch out on the bed. You peered out of the window, folding your arms across your chest as you watched the stars rush by.

--

“Reading anything interesting?”

You startled at the question, your heart leaping into your chest as you turned to see Poe smiling down at you.

“Hi,” He added, taking the seat beside yours without hesitation.

“Hey,” You greeted, brows furrowing a touch. “I take it you’re here for the, uh—”

“The talks with the war council? Yeah. The General called in the big guns.”

“Jess is here, too?”

The tease flew out of your mouth before you could stop it, and before you could apologize, Poe’s jaw dropped, laughing softly.

“*Ouch*. If you must know, yes, Jess is here, too.”

You smiled a little, turning back down to your datapad and shaking your head.

“So?” Poe pressed.

“Hm? Oh—” You nodded toward the datapad. “No, just some specs. The General mentioned a few ships that they may be willing to give us.”

“Right to work, huh?” Poe asked. He plucked the datapad out of your hands without question or ceremony, looking over the specs that you had pulled up. You would normally be irritated, but now, you felt nothing of the kind. You leaned back in your seat a little, eyes drifting between Poe and the datapad.

You knew that Poe was attractive; you’d known that the second you looked at him. But now, you had far warmer feelings toward him. Your eyes drifted over the chain on his neck, trailing to where it disappeared beneath his shirt. As you felt him turn to look at you, you lowered your head, looking at the table.

“Do you know how long we’ll be here?” You asked.

“Not sure. Why?”

“Just wondering.”

“Missing base already?”

You huffed a soft laugh. “Honestly?...Yeah, kinda.”

Poe smiled, arm nudging yours.

“We’ll be back before you know it.”

“Hope so,” You muttered.

“...You never did get to the market, did you.”

“Hm?”

“On Xicorio.”

You shook your head.

“We had to leave.”

Poe nodded. “Maybe you’ll see one on this planet.”

You doubted it, but you answered, “I mean, maybe.”

Poe held out your datapad, and you took it with a murmur of thanks.

“I have to get scrubbed up, won’t do to meet the war council in a jumpsuit.”

You nodded a little, glancing up at him and watching him go. He turned at the last moment, giving you a smile over his shoulder. It made your stomach flip in surprise, and you felt yourself smile in turn. You turned back to your datapad and realized your heart was pounding in your chest, your face felt warm. You raised your hand, pressing your hand to your heated cheek.

You were being ridiculous. You couldn’t get this worked up just because a man smiled at you. You drew in a deep breath and pushed it out between your lips slowly as you refocused on the datapad. You were acting like a simpering child—and that comment about the marketplace, what was that about?

--

“How’d you find it?” Jess asked. You were briefly stunned into silence at the way her arm was hooked around your shoulders, steering you away from the war council.

“It’s been—interesting,” You spluttered. “I mean, it...I haven’t attended anything like that before.”

“You’ll get used to it.”

“Will I?” You couldn’t help but ask. She smiled, giving your shoulders a gentle squeeze.

“What are you doing for dinner?”

“Whatever’s around, I guess. I’ll probably just eat it in my room. Why?”

“Poe and I were going to go out and grab some food. You’re welcome to join.”

Glancing over, taking in the slight smile on Jess’ face, you could tell that she was already anticipating your refusal.

--

Poe found some little hole-in-the-wall eatery, the antithesis of the lavish dinner that the General was attending with the Primesian prime minister. It was surprisingly good. The three of you sampled planetary delicacies, drank a sweet wine local to the region. You spent the dinner listening to Jess and Poe tell you about missions that they'd flown together, their time on different planets, different bases. You were happy to sit back and listen to them. They were a lively pair, easily teasing one another as old friends often did.

Now and again, you found yourself feeling caught out in their company, when your conversations fell into the odd lull. It was usually after a bout of laughter, or Poe and Jess' teasing arguments—his jabs punctuated by *Blue Three*, and hers punctuated by *Flyboy*.

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You'd made it a total of three steps from the restaurant when you heard, "Where are you going?"

You turned to see Poe watching you curiously, and you frowned. Jess had left dinner early, leaving you and Poe to finish your meal in companionable quiet. You jerked your thumb over your shoulder, toward your accommodations, and Poe smiled, taking a couple of steps back in the opposite direction.

"Market's this way," He said, nodding you back with him. Your stomach flipped at the prospect, and you glanced back toward your accommodations before catching back up to Poe. You tucked your hands in your pockets as you fell into step beside him.

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"How'd you know this place is here?" You asked as you eyed the crowded, colorful stalls.

"I always try to find a market near where we go, if I have time."

"Why?"

You could feel Poe looking at you curiously before he answered: "For all of the turmoil that this war has caused—the pain, the fear... The bright spot—one of the few..."

You looked at Poe as he trailed off, and took in his soft expression. He went on:

"I have seen worlds that I may not have seen. I don't revel in the reason, of course," He hurried to add, "If I had a choice, I mean—If I had any say, I never would've seen them the way I have, but... We all have to find a silver lining somewhere, right?"

You nodded, turning to look at a stall with an array of music boxes, the melodies overlapping and winding together as you passed it.

"...Wanna grab a drink and sit down?" Poe asked after a few moments. When you looked at him, you spotted that same expectant look that you'd seen on Pava's face, and you found yourself chirping, "Sure," To keep a frown off of Poe's face.

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You'd argued with him the entire time, but Poe had paid for both of your drinks. The two of you sat on a bench near the market, eyeing the sun as it dipped toward the horizon. It was mesmerizing—It was nearly midnight, and only now was the planet's second sun beginning to dip toward the sky.

You swirled your straw around in the pink alcoholic icie, looking down at the slushy texture. As you took in a deep breath, the fruity, sugary scent rose up, curling around your nose.

"...Can I..." You started before nervously stopping yourself.

"Yeah?" Poe pressed softly. You glanced at him before your eyes darted to the chain on his neck.

"...Can I ask...About the ring you wear?"

And where someone asking you about the heart pendant may make you balk, Poe just smiled, reaching into his jumpsuit and drawing both out, the two brushing together and loosing a slight ringing sound at the movement.

"It was my mother's wedding ring," Poe said, "She passed away."

"I'm sorry."

Poe gave a slight nod and a shrug, tipping the chain to give you a better look at the ring.

"She's why I fly, you know, she's..."

Your eyes wandered Poe's face. You could see a flash of fondness in his eyes, the tightness and sting that came with memory. Poe's eyes flickered to yours, and he offered you a smile.

"It keeps her close. And it's important. It'll belong to someone else one day, you know, if I ever find someone to...To give it to."

Your chest hummed with tenderness, a small, slow nod taking you over as your eyes drifted to the ring—and to your pendant beside it.

"Now do you mind if I ask...?" Poe hedged carefully. You averted your gaze, looking down into your drink again as you swirled the straw.

"My mom gave it to me," You admitted.

"Yeah?"

"Mhm."

"Where is she?" Even as he asked it, he seemed to know the answer. But you still said:

"Gone." You glanced in Poe's direction, but didn't meet his eyes. "The First Order, they, um—" Your voice faltered, your throat going tight. You cleared it before pushing on: "They

came to our planet for the coaxium mines. My mom and I used to work in them. They tried to well up a rebellion on our planet, but we didn't—I mean. We weren't prepared."

You heard a soft breath huff out of Poe, as if it was punched out in surprise.

"I'm sorry."

You gave a small head shake, a tight smile as you looked down into your drink again, taking a swift sip from the straw.

"Nothing to be done," You offered. "That pendant, it was the last thing my mother gave me."

The two of you sat quietly for a little while. You could feel Poe turning to look at you now and again. You felt that you ought to say something, change the topic, anything, but you couldn't think of a thing to say. And then Poe reached out, taking hold of your hand and gently drawing it up to curl around his mother's ring, and your mother's pendant. Your fingers tightened around them as you turned to look at him. Poe was watching you with a soft smile, and your chest flooded with warmth. You gave your mother's pendant another squeeze before lowering your hand. Poe patted your knee, quietly urging, "C'mon. It's late, we oughta get going."

--

You couldn't believe what a relief the sight of the base was. You actually let out a relieved little sigh as the General's craft finally touched down. You didn't realize that you'd made a sound until you spotted Poe looking at you, smiling. You offered a small, thankful one in turn. You didn't even care if his smile was teasing—spending two weeks away from base had made you miss it. You'd missed your room, your routine, your friends.

Kriff, when had you let yourself become this person again?

The General having relieved you of your duties of checking over the craft, you practically rushed off of the shuttle, back to your room. You found yourself spooked as you went, wary about the fact that you knew exactly where it was—what each of the halls lead to, the ways to the canteen, the workshop, the medbay. By the time you punched in the code to your room, your breath was catching in your tightening throat, your jaw quivering. You took a couple of steps inside and braced your hand against the wall to keep yourself upright, not realizing that you've left your door open. You managed to straighten a touch, beginning to pat down your pocket on instinct, searching for the solid pendant, becoming more and more frantic as you can't find it.

The sound of footsteps managed to cut over the thud against your chest, and you whirled around to find Poe in your doorway. He looked you over, concerned, before he fished into his shirt, drawing out the keepsakes. You stumbled toward him, fingers curling desperately around the pendant, and Poe's ring. You drew in a shaking, relieved breath, and dip your head as tears begin to spill over. You felt Poe draw away just a touch, and you started to let go, but he got just far enough to whack the panel to shut the door before crowding into you again. He took hold of your shoulders, and you felt yourself steadied for the first time in a long time.

You tightened your grip, your palm pressing against the pendant, your fingers bending to the feeling of his mother's ring.

"You're okay," Poe reassured, raising a hand to curl around yours. You nodded a little, drawing in a shaky breath as your forehead rested against his shoulder.

It took time for the shaking to stop, and the tears to subside. As you began to calm, Poe steered you to sit down on the bed. The two of you scooted back (well, you scooted, and with your hand still wrapped around the chain around his neck, he went with you) to lean against the wall. You rested your head on his shoulder again, relieved as he wrapped his arm warmly around you.

"...Sorry," You muttered lamely after a few minutes. Your throat was thick from crying, your voice hoarse.

"S'alright," Poe reassured softly, giving your shoulder a gentle squeeze. He gave you a moment before he gently pressed: "What's going on?"

You sniffled, shifting your head on his shoulder to eye where your hands were still joined around the chain.

"...I'm a little freaked out."

"From being off-world?"

"No. No." You take in a deep, rattling breath, clearing your throat. "I was... When I lost my mom, when I lost home, I told myself that I'd never—I wouldn't let myself get close again."

"To what?"

"...Anybody." Your eyes welled with tears again, and you resolutely closed your eyes to hold them back. "I wasn't going to let myself grow close to anything I might lose. And... And working with the Resistance, loss is around every corner. Coming back here just made me realize how much I—I have to lose again." As you admitted it, your breath hitched, rattling with a stifled sob. Poe was quiet for a few moments, resting his chin atop your head.

"Or how much we have to fight for," He countered softly. "I know that having people close can be frightening, but is this what your mom would've wanted? For you to live alone? In fear?"

You sniffled, closing your eyes more tightly as the tears pushed at your lids harder still. You knew that he was right, and it hurt just as much.

"Keeping people at an arm's length is just as hard as letting them in," He added softly. You sat up, letting go of the pendant and ring, raising your hands to scrub irritably at your eyes.

"I was doing alright until you and Jess and Rose were all so...Kriffing nice," You grumbled. Poe laughed softly, fingers curling in your shirt.

“So it’s my fault?” He plied. You glanced up at him, smiling a little bit at the sight of his sweet, smiling eyes.

“...And Jess’,” You asserted, “And the General’s.”

“And Rose’s?”

“Uh-huh.”

“As long as we’re sharing the blame.”

Poe raised his hand from your shoulder, smoothing his knuckles over your skin, gently disrupting the drying tear tracks on your heated cheeks. You lowered your eyes to his neck, fighting the urge to lean into his touch.

“Tell you what,” Poe murmured, “The next time you feel freaked out, talk to me, huh? Or Jess—Someone. Talk to someone.”

You nodded a little, mumbling your agreement. You frowned, watching as Poe pulled the chain up over his head, unclasping it and carefully sliding the heart pendant off. He held it out to you.

“I was stopping by to give this back,” He added softly. You took it, curling your fingers around it and smoothing your thumb over the warm, smooth surface.

“I hope I haven’t wasted too of your ti—”

“Time spent with you is never wasted,” Poe insisted gently. Your stomach twisted at the assertion, and you nodded softly, murmuring your thanks.

“I have to go see the General, but uh...” Poe slid off of your bed, turning to face you. “Wanna grab dinner later?”

Your knee jerk reaction was to say no, despite the talk you’d just had. You nodded a little bit, reveling in Poe’s wide smile. He moved so quickly that you hardly had time to clock it, but before you knew it, Poe was leaning over you, hands braced on your bed as he pressed a kiss to your forehead. You blinked dumbly after him, nodded at his reassurance of *see you later*, and watched the door open and close behind himself.

Your forehead seemed to tingle from the quick, tender peck. Your face went warm, the heat seeming to trickle from the spot and on downward. You peered down at the heart pendant in your hands, drawing in a deep breath.

You knew, logically, that Poe was right. Your mother wouldn’t want this for you—solitude, upset, suffering in silence. You could make a home—a life for yourself with the Resistance. Whatever came after that... You could work that out later.

--

You felt oddly out of place with Poe's friends. You knew all of them by name and by face, but apart from Jess, you'd never really spoken to them before. In fact, you'd pointedly avoided speaking to them. Jess eased you in with Snap and Karé. Snap was quick to jump into conversation, but Karé was slower to speak with you. You were alright with that; you could hardly keep up with Jess and Poe when they'd traded stories on Prismes. You glanced away from your food as you heard a soft *whiiiiir* and felt something cool bump against your ankle. You couldn't help but smile a little bit at the sight of the orange and white astromech, and reached down, gently smoothing over its domed head.

"Hey, Bee Bee," You muttered. You looked up as a shadow fell over you, a tray set down beside yours, and found Poe smiling widely at you.

"What'd I miss?" He asked as he lowered himself in to sit beside you.

"Nothing," You shook your head.

"Your friend here was just telling us about the market on Prismes," Snap added.

"Oh yeah? She tell you about the slushies? You'd like 'em, Snap," Poe insisted before tucking in to his meal. You kept absently chiming in to the conversation, your hand intermittently passing over BB-8's head. It didn't seem to like to dislike it, but it whirred between you and Poe now and again for attention. Snap and Karé excused themselves after they'd finished their food; Jess followed, muttering something about needing to check over her ship.

"I can—" You started to offer, but Jess lightly waved you off.

"If I don't start managing my own upkeep again, I'm gonna forget what the insides of my ship looks like," She teased, ruffling Poe's hair as she went. You watched her go before turning back to your tray, lightly poking at one of the remaining crumbs on your plate.

"You feelin' any better?" Poe asked, "After, you know."

"Yeah, I've calmed down. Thanks again, for... You know."

"Anytime."

You glanced over to find Poe poking at the remainder of his fire stew.

"...So what'd the General say?" You asked, unable to help your curiosity. Poe was quiet for a moment before he glanced toward you.

"I'm going off-world for a while."

Your gut immediately twisted with panic, but you forced yourself to keep a calm face. You nodded a little, managed, "Okay. Where to?"

"I can't say."

You wanted to be upset, but you understood. There had been several missions where Jess hadn't been able to tell you where she was going, or when she'd be back. Hearing Poe say that he's leaving so soon makes your chest twinge with dread, that old familiar fear trickle back into your fingertips.

"I know what you're thinking," He added.

"I bet you don't."

"That everything I said to you before—About having me and Jess, someone around, that it was all bantha fodder."

...Okay, maybe he did know what you were thinking. You didn't argue, just eyed your empty plate. Poe sighed softly, raising a hand and gently grasping yours. You had the urge to pull away—because people could see you; because he was leaving, and you weren't sure which you feared more: remembering his touch, or forgetting it.

"It's just for a little while," He murmured. "I'll be back before you know it."

"...It's not that I'm worried about."

"Oh, well, excuse me—"

"Come on, it's just that—" You looked up at Poe, pursing your lips as you considered your response. It took you a moment longer than it should've, but it was hard not to revel in Poe's warm eyes and sweet, bemused smile. "It's just...I have to get used to it again, you know. Letting something or someone go and...And trusting that they'll come back."

"Because I am going to come back," Poe insisted, resting his hand on your back and rubbing in slow, gentle circles.

"I know," You nodded, though you weren't sure you were trying to convince yourself or him. "When are you going?"

"Tomorrow morning."

"Alright." You leaned into Poe a little, nudging his shoulder with yours. "I know you can't tell me where you're going, but...Are you gonna find a market?"

Poe chuckled softly, his arm curling around your shoulders and keeping you close.

"I might," He nodded. "If I do, do you want me to get you something?"

"No, don't worry about that—"

"You sure?"

"Yes. Do not get me anything."

"What if I want to bring you back something?"

“Then it’ll have to be a surprise,” You told him, tipping your head up to meet his eyes. Poe was quiet, eyes sweeping your face, before he nodded, murmuring, “Okay.”

You narrowed your eyes slightly at Poe, pursing your lips.

“What?” He asked.

“You just got an idea, didn’t you.”

“No—”

“You did—”

“No!...Maybe.”

You rolled your eyes a little, but you can’t help but smile.

“I’ve always found you infuriating, Dameron.”

“I take that as the highest compliment.”

--

You said your goodbyes to Poe that evening, certain that if you followed him to the hangar in the morning, you’d become as much a blubbering mess as you’d been the day before. While he was off-world, wherever he was, you reimmersed yourself with work on the base. That said, you didn’t let work take over your life as it had before. You managed to strike a balance between your working hours and the people that you were growing increasingly friendly with.

You and Rose tended to have breakfast together most days. Now and again, you and Karé worked alongside one another in companionable silence. You took your midday and evening meals with whoever was around from Black Squadron, or Finn. You missed Poe’s companionable chattering, the nudge and whirl of BB-8 at your ankles.

On nights when you couldn’t sleep, you sat on the grass hill beside the base, feeling the wind brush over your head as you gazed up at the stars. You’d be lying if you said that you weren’t searching for Poe’s T-70 X-Wing, listening for the sound of it dropping back into the atmosphere. You felt helpless, like a tooka waiting by the door for its owner to return.

Now and again, another ship would arrive at base at a late hour, occasionally in such a state that it was practically limping onto base. On those nights, you were up, grabbing a kit to repair the damaged landing gear, or an extinguisher to put out fires from an engine.

Your restlessness and enthusiasm did not go unnoticed by the General. Soon enough she had you training novice engineers on different craft, widening your circle of friends and acquaintances on base—your opportunities to care, and to lose.

When you found yourself feeling lonely, you curled your fingers around the heart pendant, and you thought of your mother, and Poe. It filled you with both warmth and a nagging want.

You considered reaching out to Poe now and again, but considering the speed of his reassignment, and the mission's secrecy, you didn't want to contact him and risk distracting him from his task.

This distance also afforded you what was, it turned out, a growing clarity.

You liked Poe. You liked him a lot. And it was well beyond the kinship that you'd come to feel for him. The mention of his name made your stomach do a ridiculous little twist. The thought of him returning spurred ridiculous fantasies—running into his arms, planting a kiss on him, holding him tightly only to be interrupted by a grumpy little BB-8.

Sometimes, you tried to talk yourself out of your crush. You told yourself that it wasn't a real one, that he was just one of the first people to show you any bit of kindness in a while—certainly the first person that you were attracted to do so. Other times, you felt that you were so infatuated with Poe that it hurt. What hurt about it varied from hour to hour. Sometimes it was the fact that most of the base seemed to have just as bad a crush on him as you did. Other times, it was the fact that he didn't tell you where he was going or when he'd be back, even though you knew that he couldn't.

What made you ache for him when you were alone was the memory of being tucked against his side, of him curling your hand tenderly around your mother's pendant and his mother's ring. It was hard. You were new to caring again; Poe seemed like he had been accustomed to caring his entire goddamn life.

--

The X-Wing skidded, bounced, and landed with a crunch on the runway. It made your heart drop down to your toes. You and any number of bystanders in the hangar were already running toward the ship. You were an inch from scaling the wing.

You were trying to remain professional about the endeavor as you cataloged the way ship was tipped on half-broken landing gear; the blast marks from phaser and cannon fire; the curl of grey smoke rising from the engines—but it was Poe's ship, and you were an inch from prying open the cockpit covering with your own kriffing hands.

And then the cover was peeling back with a hiss, and Poe was ripping off his helmet, trying to flip his sweat-matted hair off of his forehead.

"Could someone help my droid?" He called out. Three people were already darting in to help BB-8; another was grabbing a ladder to help Poe down himself. For a moment, you kept your distance, waiting to see if he was hurt, but Poe hopped out of the ship, sliding down the ladder without hesitation and rounding to where BeeBee was being lowered.

You sprang into action, then, setting your tool kit down and taking up an extinguisher and darting over to the wing as the fire began to spread across it. It took you and a number of others in the hangar to staunch the blaze, and you lowered the extinguisher. Once the smoke cleared, you looked around—only to find Poe gone.



Your heart sank like a stone, and you reached into your pocket for just a second, curling your fingers around the pendant to bolster yourself.

“Let’s get this ship jacked up,” You called out, beginning to direct the others toward an empty slot.

--

It would need a new wing—you were already prepared to source one from a junkyard. The paneling was shot to hell where the fire had gotten to some of the wiring—all of which would also need to be replaced. The landing gear was also shot to hell. The cockpit covering was scratched, but not cracked, and he’d need a new primary display monitor.

It was nerve wracking to think of how long he may’ve been flying like this, a relief that he even made it back to base—and a little thrilling to consider that Poe may not be going anywhere any time soon.

--

“Kriff, lookit you.”

It took you a moment to register the tease, and longer still to take in and register Poe smiling amusedly at you.

“...Hi there,” You managed to croak after a moment.

“Good morning,” He pushed past you into your room. You leaned against the button to close your door behind him.

“Hi there,” You repeated, scrubbing your hands over your eyes.

“Is that all you can say?”

“It’s early. I’ve got ‘hi there’, ‘what do you want’, and ‘get out.’”

“I’ll take *hi there* then.”

“I need caf if you want a real conversation.”

“...Open your eyes.”

You took a moment to do so, prolonged by the way you were reveling in his entreaty murmur. When you did, you found him holding out a steaming cup of caf. You couldn’t help but smile.

“Gimme five minutes and I will be talking nearly as much as you do,” You chirped, taking hold of the caf and walking over to the bed, climbing on to it. “Can you tell me how it went, or could you not tell me that, either?”

Poe smiled, sitting on the bed beside you.

“It was...A bit of a mess, actually.”

“Yeah?”

“Mhm.”

“Your ship looked a bit of a mess.”

Poe’s brow furrowed a touch, his lips pursing questioningly before he asked, “Were you in the hangar last night?”

“All night,” You confirmed before raising to take a pull from the caf.

“All—Is that why you look like death warmed up?”

“You’re just overflowing with compliments for someone that’s been working on your ship.”

Poe watched you with a sweet little smile before he nudged your knee with his.

“You didn’t have to do that.”

“Sure I did,” You answered too quickly, and hurried to add, “There was a ship, it needed repairs, I was awake, so.” You desperately wanted to move the conversation on, away from the curious way Poe was watching you. “Did you get to any markets?” You asked.

“Uh...Yeah. Yeah, I did.”

“What were they like?”

“I only made it to one, on Polus.”

“I’ve never heard of it.”

“It’s an outer rim planet, basically run by the Zann Consortium.”

“The syndicate?” You frowned. “Why did you have to go there?”

“They’ve sourced weapons for us before. They’re heartless bastards, but if war’s taught me anything, sometimes we have to be a little less choosy about our contacts.”

“...Did they do that to your ship?”

Poe’s eyes lowered to your sheets, quietly conceding, “Some of it.”

It made your stomach clench—the thought that someone meant to help the Resistance, to help Poe, would fire at him so openly.

“I’m alright,” Poe added. “I’m in one piece, so’s BeeBee, and the General is looking at getting weapons from a new source.”

“Okay,” You nodded, leaning back against the bed frame.

“...Tell you what,” Poe added, shifting in his seat and reaching into his pocket, “I did get to the market, though.”

“Yeah?”

“And I got you something.”

“I told you not to do that.”

“I know that, but you also told me it would have to be a surprise if I did.”

“...I did say that.”

“So, get another sip of that caf down and then close your eyes,” Poe ordered, waving to your hands. You shot him a bemused look before taking an obliging gulp and setting the cup aside.

“Alright?” You ask, turning to face him.

“Eyes—*closed*.”

You make a show of closing your eyes and raising your brows impatiently.

“Hands out.”

“It better not be anything big.”

“It’s not...I’m hoping it’s the right size, actually,” He commented.

“What is it?”

“You’re so impatient,” Poe laughed. You bit your lip, fighting the urge to argue that you’d been waiting for him for weeks, and that you’d rather speak with him than wait for a present. Him being nearby is present enough—and god, that’s schmaltzy, and awful, and thank kriff you didn’t say that aloud.

But then he’s lowered something cool and thin into your hands. You frowned when Poe said, “Alright, open.”

You were already curling your fingers around it, and as soon as you realized what it was, you couldn’t look.

“Open,” Poe repeated, a tease in his voice. But he went quiet when your lip began to wobble, tears slipping past your eyes as they were squeezed shut.

“Hey,” He murmured. You felt the bed dip as he shifted closer to you, as your head bowed over the chain in your hands. He cupped your cheeks, swiping at the tears gently. “You don’t have to use it if you don’t want it—”

“I want it,” You managed through your tears, in a low, shaking voice. “I do, I—Thank you.” opening your eyes and prying open your hands, you catch sight of the silver chain through the wash of your tears. “Sorry,” You add in a mumble, breath hitching. “Maybe if we ever hung out somewhere other than my room, I wouldn’t c-ry so much.”

Poe chuckled, shifting closer and drawing you into his side.

“C’mon,” He murmured, guiding you back to lean against the wall. You went easily, resting your head on his shoulder. You sniffled, raising the chain to get a better look at it in the light seeping into your room. You turned it carefully over in your hand, taking in the thin, delicate silver.

“How much did this cost you?” You mumbled.

“Don’t ask that about a gift.”

“But it’s too much—”

“Hey,” Poe shook his head. “It is not too much.”

“You didn’t have to—”

“I know.” Then, “Am I still infuriating?”

You looked up at Poe to find him smiling down at you, and you grinned through your tears.

“In the best way.”

--

Your hand still flew to your pocket sometimes, and, finding it empty, your heart would leap viciously. But then you’d feel the steady weight of the heart pendant against your sternum, and you’d calm immediately. Sometimes you’d run your finger absently along the chain when you didn’t know what else to do with your hands—and sometimes, when Poe caught you at it, he’d grin at you. It always made you tingle with excitement in a way that you hated to acknowledge to yourself.

Working with Poe to get his ship back together has been an enjoyable and...Somewhat enlightening experience. You saw Poe relaxed; you saw him pitch a jumper spanner at the floor in frustration when a panel on the ship won’t come off easily, fused to the hull from the fire—and then have to leap out of its path when it bounces back up from the floor. You saw him triumphantly hold up a fried spark plug after being able to prise it from melted home; you saw him pout over the scratches in the cockpit’s cover.

--

“You’re such a weirdo,” You teased, folding your arms over your chest.

“Hey, this is my baby—and I need it in tip-top shape to fly,” Poe insisted, turning a piece of siding from the junkyard around speculatively.

“You’ve fit and refit that same piece five times.”

“I just wanna make sure it’s right.”

“Okay.”

“...Which isn’t weird.”

“Agree to disagree.”

You smiled with mocking sweetness before Poe peered at you over his shoulder, your smiles each softening to something more sincere.

“Alright. Get that rivet gun and get over here.”

--

“You ever flown?”

“Hm?”

Poe peered at you over the nose of the X-Wing, his chin resting on his hands where they sat atop the metal.

“Have you ever flown—piloted, I know you’ve been on a ship before,” Poe rolled his eyes a little bit as you opened your mouth to give him your obvious, smart-mouthed answer. You smiled, looking down as you packed your toolkit up again.

“No.”

“You know how?”

“Theoretically.” Glancing up, you found Poe watching you curiously. “I mean...I’ve read Barion Raner’s X-wing Flight Manual a hundred times, I know the steps you take. I’ve just never actually, you know. Done it.”

“You wanna?”

You leaned back onto your heels, elbows bracing on your knees for balance.

“Dameron, we just got the kriffin’ thing back in one piece.”

“And now we gotta test it. C’mon.”

Poe was already sliding off of his place atop the ladder he’d pulled up, rolling it back.

“Is that cockpit even big enough for two people?”

“If I crank the seat all the way back and you don’t mind squeezing a little.”

You arched your brows, straightening after you close your toolkit.

“C’mon,” Poe plied, “Just a little bit, to let off some steam. I haven’t been able to fly in weeks—and you oughta try it sometime, you know.”

“Why?”

“Because I wanna go up and I wanna take you with me.” Poe gripped your sleeve, towing you toward the ladder to get in. “C’mon.”

“You’ve been up hundreds of times. Why do you need a companion?”

“I don’t need one, I want one. I love taking up someone that’s never been.” Poe was already dropping your sleeve to climb up the ladder. You folded your arms, watching as Poe slid back the covering and climbed in, seeming to adjust the seat.

“Get up here,” He laughed softly, waving you up. You hesitated before climbing up the ladder. You peered into the cockpit, eyeing the amount of room for you between Poe’s splayed thighs. You hesitated before climbing in nervously, navigating the space and carefully lowering yourself between Poe’s thighs. You glancing up as he closed the cockpit. You eyed a scratch or two, and then you felt his arms slide under yours, his hands reach for the controls. With you between them, they were just barely within reach, but you watched, mesmerized, as he flipped switches with an almost unnatural speed.

You looked around as the ship shifted, your body thrumming with the hum of the engines.

“Ready?” Poe asked, breath brushing the shell of your ear. You swallowed thickly, nodding just a touch.

“If I push thrusters to 75% and that side panel flies off, I’m making you go back to get it,” He teased as he guided the X-Wing out of the hangar. You let out a shaky laugh, but it was swallowed by a gasp as Poe pushed the ship up, up, and out of the atmosphere. Your head was almost spinning with the force of the ship. You’d been up craft before, of course, but never in such a small one, and certainly not in the pilot ship. Of course, you weren’t doing the actual piloting.

Now, you just listened to the hum of the engine, felt the way Poe’s body was pressed tightly against yours, slipping up and down your sides as he shifted from one mode to another.

--

“You wanna go back?”

“I’m not in an almighty rush.”

“...Then you can relax, you know,” Poe murmured. You hesitated before you leaned back against him, eyeing the darkness above you. You let your head tip back, then slid forward in the seat just a little as you rested your head against his shoulder. You eyed the stars twinkling above you for just a moment before closing your eyes.

“It’s nice up here,” You murmured.

“Yeah.”

“I can see why you like it so much.”

The two of you were quiet for a few moments, and you felt Poe’s arm lift from where it had come to rest around your waist. A moment later, his finger smoothed along your neck, over the chain that peeked just out of your jumpsuit. You bit your lip a little at the tender, sweeping touch.

“You like it, huh?”

“Mhm.” You were quiet for a moment before you shyly confessed, “It’s perfect.”

Poe’s finger hooked carefully in the chain before he gave it a gentle tug, drawing the heart pendant out.

“...Wanna hear something funny?”

“Sure.”

“I was keeping an eye on this for so long, I’ve started missing it.”

You tipped your head to eye Poe, smiling just a little.

“Is that why you’ve been spending so much time with me?” You teased. “Because you missed it?”

“No,” Poe shook his head, chin brushing your forehead before he rested his chin atop your head. “It’s just a bonus.”

“...I still remember what your mother’s ring feels like in my palm.” You let the statement out nervously, almost hoping, as you said it, that it would be swallowed up by the darkness of space around you. Poe was quiet for a moment. You felt his hand drop from the pendant, the thump of it against your jumpsuit, and your stomach clenched in panic. It was a moment before you felt him curl his hand around yours, drawing it up to run along his neck. You could feel the links of his chain against your skin, and you ran your finger under it, hooking it and gently drawing the ring up. You felt Poe take hold of your pendant again, and his soft sigh brushed against your hair.

The closeness and the quiet made your stomach give a joyous little flip. You wanted to cling to this the way you clung to his chain, and to the ring.

“I should thank you,” You said. “I’ve been meaning to thank you for some time.”

“For what?”

“...Drawing me out of my shell,” You admitted softly, “Bringing me back to...Me again.”

“Hey, I didn’t do it for you.”

“You were instrumental.”

Poe was quiet for a few moments, letting go of the pendant to smooth his arm around your shoulders.

“When we met,” He said, “I thought you were just...I thought you were—”

“A bitch?”

“No...The way you were, I knew you’d been hurt. We all handle it in different ways.”

You considered this, tipping your head up and gently brushing your forehead against his stubbled chin.

“I shouldn't have taken it out on you,” You mumbled.

“You may’ve been a little quiet at first, but I think the only person you were taking it out on was yourself.”

You let your fingers gently slide down from the chain, your fingertip catching in the ring.

Poe lowered his chin, pressing a gentle kiss to your forehead. The sweet touch made eyes slip shut again. You bit your lip before you tipped your head up just a little more. Poe’s lips smoothed down the slope of your nose before he dropped another kiss to the tip of it. You huffed out a gentle laugh, opening your eyes to peer up at Poe. His sweet eyes were watching you with tender curiosity, sweeping from your eyes to your lips and up again. The glances made your heart flutter in your chest.

Poe gently brushed your nose with his before he dipped his head just a touch, slotting his lips against yours. Your eyes slip closed, the twinkle of the stars blinking behind your eyelids as Poe holds you more tightly. Your hand raised up, shifting back from the ring to curl around the chain. You didn’t tug him by it, you just held it as you were held. You slid your hand up to skim over his neck. You groaned softly as Poe’s arm slipped down to curl around your waist. You shifted back against him, squirming just a touch against him.

The twist made your neck hurt, but you wouldn't draw away from Poe, or trade on the sliding of lips and twining of his tongue with yours. As it broke, and cooled, Poe didn't get far from you—well, it was physically impossible, the cockpit was so cramped. But he didn’t lean back, or away. He just raised his hand and wrapped it tenderly around yours, around his chain. He tipped his chin up, nuzzling against your forehead tenderly.

“...If we go back now, we can catch Snap and the others for dinner,” You offered softly.

“You want to?”

“Nn-nn...Do you?”

“Mm...” He lowered his head, lips skimming your cheekbone tenderly. “Not very hungry right now.”



“Good...Poe?”

“Mhm?”

“Is this why you asked me up here?”

“No,” He chuckled softly. “Another delightful bonus.”

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Living on the Resistance base meant that you had a fairly tumultuous life. You and Poe and the others worked hard for lives that you managed. When fear, doubt, and worry crept in in the face of tyranny and war, you fought to push away the feeling that came with them—the urge to pull away from them all, to take your things up and disappear.

It would be easy—you knew the way off of the planet, had an ear to the ground on the more hospitable, quieter systems. But you had no doubt that one day the war would arrive, and you would buckle under the weight of removing yourself from the people that you’d come to consider as family.

When fear bubbled up, truly bubbled up, you turned to Poe. You told him that you were considering running, that you wanted to go. He never tried to change your mind. He just watched you with those warm, sometimes guarded, dark eyes and asked you if that was what you truly wanted. When you said yes, he would ask you why. When you tried to explain, you would fall to bits.

Poe would gather you up in his arms, and curl your hands around your heart-shaped pendant, and listen and wait as you calmed. And then the two of you would go for a ride, and you’d allow yourself to be taken in the stars and the darkness that you’d come to love so much.

--

“Do you think it’ll ever go away?” You mumbled.

“What? The war?”

“Nn-nn.”

“Your urge to go?”

“Mhm.”

“...Maybe,” Poe offered, smoothing his hand over your thighs.

“What if it doesn’t?”

“...Don’t worry about that,” Poe murmured, shaking his head. “Just take each day as it comes.”

You sighed softly, closing your eyes as cuddling back against Poe.

“Tell you what,” He added, “When things go quiet, I’m taking you home.”

“Where’s home?”

“Yavin.”

“Will we go to the market?”

“Yes,” Poe chuckled, “Of course. It’s tradition.”

You nodded, raising your hand and curling your fingers around his chain gently.

“Poe?”

“Mm?”

“I...I got something for you—when I went with the General to Erymetus.”

Poe watched you shift against him before you reached into your pocket, drawing out a white heart-shaped pendant on a chain.

“So you don’t have to miss it so much,” You said softly as you lowered it into his hand. “I got it its own chain, to, so it wouldn’t...” Your eyes dropped to the chain around his neck. “I mean...I know it’s different.”

Poe’s hand closed around yours before he raised your hand to his lips, pressing a kind kiss to the back of it.

“Thank you,” He murmured. “...Things are alright, right?”

You glanced at him, surprised. Not two hours ago, you’d been considering leaving base—leaving everything that you knew, and had come to love, behind.

“...I think so.”

“If they’re not—”

“I’ll tell you.”

Poe smiled, dipping his head and brushing your lips with his.

“That’s all I ask.”

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