

Star Wars

Planet of the Hoojibs

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Adapted from a Marvel Comics' story by David Michelinie, Published by Buena Vista Records, 1983

sended by : Queller

upload : 16.VI.2007

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Chewbacca skillfully steered the Rebel survey ship into orbit around a mysterious planet. Princess Leia studied the lush, green land below. "It's called Arbra, Chewie. If our reports are correct, it could be the perfect place for a secret Rebel base." The Wookiee growled a warning.

Leia nodded. "Sure, it could be dangerous. But we've been in hairy spots before. Er, no offense, Chewie."

After landing, the Rebel survey team mounted their air bikes and began their exploration of Arbra. The golden droid, C-3PO, set about collecting and processing data. "I wish Artoo was here to see all this. It's much nicer than that ice planet, Hoth."

Princess Leia was encouraged by what she saw. "Good climate. Lots of natural resources. The thick growth of trees will give us perfect air cover. And from the looks of it, no dangerous animals. We might have found just what we're looking for. Okay, team, let's make camp here tonight."

The place seemed safe enough. But as the Rebels set up camp, they were being carefully watched.

The exhausted Rebel team settled into their cozy camp. Soon they found themselves overrun by hundreds of the furry, leoparded creatures that Leia had seen earlier. C-3PO introduced their tiny guests. 'They're Hoojibs, Your Highness \227 natives of this planet. Not very intelligent. I'm afraid."

"I think they're adorable."

One particularly playful Hoojib took a liking to Chewbacca, much to his dismay. The little creature snuggled around the giant Wookiee's neck. Leia couldn't resist teasing. "Why, I think he's adopted you, Chewie. And you thought there was danger here! Now weren't you wrong?"

However, Chewie's instincts had been right \227 there was danger on the planet! And not even the night patrol could protect the sleeping camp from it.

But it was not some horrible terror in the darkness. The danger was in the cute, cuddly Hoojibs that the unsuspecting Rebels had befriended.

C-3PO was sitting on a tree slump in the "shut-down" mode when his emergency sensors were activated. He awakened to find hungry Hoojibs feasting on the electronic circuits in his leg. "Ouch! I'm being eaten alive! Help! Oh, someone help me! Shoo!Shoo!"

Gemmer, chief of the Rebel guards, raced to the rescue. Code red! Activate flood lights. Secure the area." But when the switches were thrown the huge camp lights failed.

"It's those Hoojibs. They're energy eaters! Get them off me!" sputtered C-3PO. But by the time Gemmer reached the droid, the Hoojibs were scurrying away.

Princess Leia watched the fleeing creatures. "We can't let them escape. Chewie, grab one!"

The huge Wookiee calmly reached down and scooped up one of the escaping animals. But he was in for a shock when the tiny Hoojib spoke! "Put me down, you great hairy beast!"

An amazed Princess Leia was handed the small captive. 'Hey, this little guy can talk. But our ream reports said that Arbra contained no intelligent life."

The tiny Hoojib huffed a tiny huff. "I am Plif, my good creature, and I daresay more intelligent than that shaggy beast that grabbed me."

"Then tell me why you made a midnight snack out of our power supply."

"Yes, we do owe you an explanation. Ages ago, our Hoojib ancestors made their home in a crystal cavern near here. Inside are huge crystals which draw power from the center of the planet and transform it into pure energy. This is what we live on."

"But with so much food at home, why hit us up for dinner?"

"We were forced out of our home by a b-b-beast!"

Leia shook her head. "Come on, Plif. What beast?"

"Tha-that one!" A blast of wind hit the camp as a huge, winged beast raged overhead! A writhing mass of tentacles on the underside of the monster's body grabbed up a helpless soldier.

Leia drew her laser gun and squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened! "The Hoojibs even drained our blasters!"

Gemmer dashed to her side. "I was on guard duty when they hit. Here, my blaster is still charged." Leia seized the weapon and fired! The stunned beast dropped the soldier and flew away.

Plif shuddered. "It's called the Slivilith. After drifting in space for years, it made its way to our home. We were forced to flee, surviving on any bits of energy we could find."

The Princess sighed. "Now we're all in the same boat! We'll have to help you get rid of your unwanted guest so we can recharge our energy supplies."

While Leia and Plif plotted their strategy, the rest of the Rebel team made crude spears. After a forced march through the night, they positioned themselves outside the Hoojib's cavernous home.

"All right squad, this will be dangerous. Wait, Plif, where do you think you're going?"

"Don't let our size fool you. We're going to help win our home back!" The courageous Hoojibs hopped to the mouth of the cave. Once in position, the little creatures taunted the beast with their shrill calls.

Something rumbled deep within the cavern. Plif and his friends made a mad dash for safety. In a flash? the Slivilith hurtled from the cave, sending the Hoojibs tumbling! Leia waited until the beast was right overhead. "All right\227NOW!"

A volley of homemade spears took the screeching creature by surprise!

While the Slivilith was distracted, Leia scooped up the disabled blasters. "Chewie. Gemmer. let's go! We have to get in the cavern and recharge these things before all those spears are gone!" The three raced for the cave opening while the other Rebels bravely continued to battle the beast.

Suddenly there was a shrill cry! Leia spun around. There was Plif caught up in one of the monster's waving tentacles!

Leia aimed the only working blaster. "Put that Hoojib down! "The shot hit the Slivilith squarely. Plif dropped unharmed.

"Thank you, Leia. I owe you one."

The angry Slivrtith turned and swooped at Leia. The Princess dashed into the cavern. "I hope Chewie's still in here or I'm sunk!"

She headed for an outcropping of rock as the horrible monster roared into the cave after her. Then Leia tripped and fell helpless before the beast.

Suddenly, from behind a rock, Chewbacca leaped up. The giant Wookiee grabbed the beast, halting it in mid-flight. Using the Slivilith's great size against it, Chewie slammed the monster into a wall of razor-sharp energy crystals.

An eerie sound, like shattering glass, echoed through the cavern as the Slivilith tumbled helplessly down the tunnel that led to the fiery core of the planet.

Cheering Rebels and Hoojibs rushed into the cave as Chewbacca gave a victory roar!

Then the Rebels grew silent as they took their first look at the overwhelming power and beauty of the cavern. The energy crystals glowed with unnatural light. Gemmer whistled softly. "This is perfect. The Empire would never find us here."

Plif cleared his throat. "May I remind you, sir, this is OUR home."

Leia smiled sadly. "Plif's right. The Empire has taken away our homes. We won't do the same to the Hoojibs."

The disappointed Rebel troops nodded their agreement. "You're right, Princess. Come on, team. Let's get on with our mission. Sorry, Plif. Guess we got carried away."

The Hoojibs sadly watched the Rebels turn to leave. Finally Plif spoke up. "Friendship is what makes a home really a home. And you're welcome to share our home with us."

Leia beamed. "Plif, I think I love you."

After recharging the radio, Leia sent the news to the wailing Rebel fleet. "Our recon reports were correct \227 location perfect, unlimited energy supply, and total seclusion. But we found something very important that was not in the reports \227 we found friends!"