



The Hunter Escapes

(A Boba Fett fan-fiction)

By: Natasha A. Morea

Boba Fett attempted to open his eyes and groaned from the effort. Had it worked? A fit of coughing racked his body; his lungs sought for air. He wiped at his eyes, waited a moment for his vision to clear and attempted to move. It *had* worked. He was free. He eased himself up from the disgusting contents of the Sarlacc's stomach only to be greeted with an intense pain in both of his arms. The left one seemed to be broken; the right one ached. Bruises made a path along his torso. His skin was on fire from the globs of acid burning away at his flesh. He could smell the seared meat of the beast mixed with jetpack fuel and his own sweat.

Luckily his armor had been his savior. It had protected much of him from the neurotoxin filled vessels of the creature; giving him more of a fighting chance than the Sarlacc's other victims. It had taken the brunt of the blast that freed him and now pieces of it lay scattered around him in the darkness. What was left of his exploded jetpack, was a charred jumble of shards imbedded in the injured beast.

Boba looked around the acidic chamber for his helmet that had become dislodged in the blast. He saw it, there in the shadows and slowly made his way over to it; his right ankle sending sparks of pain up his calf as he did so. He bent down, scooping it up with his good arm. As he did so, an old memory flashed behind his eyes; a painful one. He saw himself, a young boy in a sandy arena, with his head pressed against his father's helmet. A Jedi had taken his father from him, and it was a Jedi at the root of all of this. Always the Jedi! He clenched his fists, his grip slightly weakened from his ordeal. Pushing his memories aside, he wiped the creature's juices from the helmet's visor with a scrap of cloth, from the leg of his flight suit. He rubbed his hands over the surface of the helmet, checking the damage.

"Not too bad," he whispered to himself in the darkness. It had more dents and scratches than usual, but overall, it felt solid. He placed it on his head.

Boba's surroundings became clearer as light began to filter in from the razor tipped hole that was the creature's mouth. The crumpled body of one of his cell mates lay nearby, charred from the explosion. How easily that could have been his lifeless body there instead. He racked his brain for the best plan of action now that he was free. He had to get out!

"You will never get out of here."

The voice echoed in the darkness or was it just in Boba's head? He scanned the area, his gaze falling on one of the other victims in the far corner. A withered old man stared at him in the darkness. Boba could see he was trapped completely by the walls of the creature, its vessels digging in to the man's body, keeping him alive just enough to make his torture last for a millennium.

"Get out of my head, old man." Boba snarled.

"What I say is true, bounty hunter. No one gets out of here. If the Force could not save me, what chance then do you have?"

"I don't need the Force to get out of here, now stay there and die like a good Jedi."

Boba turned his back on the man and looked up. He had to do something, had to kill this beast if he could. He reached for his weapons. His blaster pistol seemed to have survived and his vibroknife, as well as a few concussion grenades.

He used his right arm to reach for one of the grenades, his eyes darting around for a good place to aim. He threw it high into the air aiming for the stomach wall farthest away. He hit the ground fast, flinging his already aching body into a corner and lying flat, face first into the squishy glob that served as a floor.

The explosion was small in radius, but powerful. The blast of kinetic energy violently shook the floor and walls of the beast's stomach. Boba felt the creature shiver from the pain. He slowly raised his tired frame and chucked one last grenade. This time, Boba not only felt the pain-filled quaking of the Sarlacc, but swore he heard the creature shriek with terror, then nothing. The shadowy pit was silent, not even the Jedi made a sound. Boba hoped the man was dead, but he didn't stop to see.

He stood and hobbled over to where he had tossed the grenades. He could see the blast holes high up the chamber wall. He reached down and pulled the vibroknife from its sheath, on what was left of his tattered belt. He removed the rest of the broken armor and tossed it aside. Parts of the flight suit still clung to his skin and the helmet covered his haggard features as he stabbed the knife into the wall of the Sarlacc and started to climb.

Agonizing pain racked his body, radiating from his injuries; still he dug his knife, his hands and his feet into the beast, digging and clawing his way to the blast hole. Light streamed in as he climbed higher. He could see the mouth of the creature, with its inwardly pointing teeth above him in the distance. He pushed his way into the hole and reached his hands through till he could feel the monster end and the sands of the desert begin. The air in his helmet sustained him as he dug. Minutes felt like days as his hand sought the sky and when he felt he was done for, his hand broke through and he pushed his way out to freedom.

