

"Are you sure they can fly into place in here?" I asked, standing beside Miru as she tapped on her oversized, clearly modified personal datapad. "Calima already volunteered to pull the *Chariot* out of the hangar to give them more room."

"There is plenty of room, Boss," She assured me for the third time. "Trust me, this kind of maneuvering is easy for them. They are used to much tighter angles in CIS storage."

She tapped her datapad again, and two raindrops lifted off the hangar bay floor. They wiggled a little bit, getting a smile out of Miru before slowly moving across the hangar, flipping over about halfway there. They slowed even more as they approached the *Chariot*, dropping down as low as they could, just barely making it under the ship's wings. Once in place, they slowly lifted upwards, the specifically designed mount latching on with a loud metallic thunk.

Once they were attached, Miru activated the next two. They followed the same path, lifting off and flipping over before latching onto the ship. However, these two locked into place along the ship's centerline, under the forward bow. These mounts were new, made overnight by the repair droids at Miru's direction. When raindrops finally locked onto the ships, I clapped Miru on the back.

"Congrats, Miru. With all the modifications you've made to the *Talos Chariot*, it's one of, if not the most deadly *Gozanti-class* cruisers out there," I said with a smile. "Six starfighters, a powerful mid-sized shuttle, improved shields and power, not to mention whatever else we can fit inside the starboard hangar. Hell of a lot of firepower from a ship of this size."

Miru beamed, eating up the praise eagerly. She shut off her data pad and tucked it up under her arm.

"So what's next?" She asked, looking over the hangar bay.

"Moving the [MVR](#) and a [CPH](#) to the *Intervention*."

That morning, after a full night's sleep, I had woken up and headed down into the cargo bay of the *Chariot*. Immediately, I realized that we had a new problem. We weren't full, not by a long shot, but we were rapidly approaching the point where it was going to start getting awkward to move stuff in and out. This was something I wanted to avoid, if at all possible. The *Chariot* served multiple functions. It was a landing craft, a warship, and also our home. The cargo bay was more than just a place to keep stuff. It was our workshop, our activities room, and it allowed us a level of flexibility when moving and taking things. Losing that, with how many people we had on board, would make spending long periods of time on the ship a lot less enjoyable. It would also make rapid deployment or embarking of cargo much more difficult.

So, we sat down and talked about it, quickly coming to the realization that several things should probably be on the *Intervention* anyway, primarily because it was where any living troops would be living out of, should we ever have any. In the end, we decided that the temporary living

structures, some of the wilderness gear, half of our backup weaponry, and, once we were done, one of the CPH speeder bikes and the MVR would be shifted over to the *Intervention*. The remaining two CPH speeders would be transferred later if we needed more space.

It was just about noon when we finished transferring and shifting everything around, and after a quick lunch break, I headed off with Tatnia to find General Syndulla. When I finally found her, she was standing in a rather impressive-looking command center, with people working all around her, the room filled with the hum of dozens of conversations at once. When I finally spotted the Twi'lek general, I froze, not because of her, but because of who she was with.

Standing next to her, looking over a projection of Yavin 4 and discussing the information, was [Leia Organa](#). She was stunning, of course, and even as she stood there, listening to a report from someone I didn't recognize, she still had a presence, a weight that spoke of her drive, presence, and pure charisma.

I looked around momentarily, collecting my thoughts and smashing down a rising panic when it occurred to me that if Princess Leia was here and not on Yavin, she would have needed a ride...

Sure enough, Han Solo and his massive hairy shadow, Chewbacca, were tucked into one of the dark corners of the large command center. He was watching me, probably noticing that I was looking too long at the princess. Unable to help myself, I gave them a casual and slightly sarcastic salute before heading into the room properly. General Syndulla spotted me as I approached and waved me closer.

"Deacon, I've been told you have everything packed up," She asked. "Coming to say goodbye?"

"For now," I responded with a smile, turning slightly to face Leia. "I apologize for the interruption, your highness."

"Deacon Roy... Hera speaks highly of you," She responded, looking me up and down. "She claims we have you and your team to thank for quite a few things, particularly our new base."

"It was a joint effort," I insisted. "Ahsoka, Luke, Commander Nevue and his team, Lieutenant Soban and his troops all had a part to play."

"Modest as well," She added with a small smile and a nod. "She also claims you are a... wizard."

"More of a battlemage at this point, but yes," I responded, working hard to squash my internal excitement.

"If there wasn't video footage of your... magic, I would be tempted to question this entire base's sanity," She said with a raised eyebrow. "Perhaps a gas leak or something contaminating the water."

"I can't say I blame you there," I admit with a shrug. "Not sure I would believe it if it wasn't happening to me. Were you here when Luke and Ahsoka returned?"

The severe, in-control mask she wore softened at her sibling's name, a small smile blooming on her face. She nodded and turned a bit to face me more directly.

"I did. He spoke highly of you as well. Thank you for teaching and for convincing Ahsoka to take him on as a temporary student."

"She agreed?" I asked, unable to hide my surprise. "That's great. It will probably do them both some good."

"You didn't know?" The Alderaanian princess asked. "I was under the impression that 'knowing things' was what you did."

"You'll believe I use magic, but not that I can know things I shouldn't?" I asked, raising an eyebrow and smirking. "I really shouldn't let myself get suckered in, but... I hope you apologized to Chewbacca for calling him a walking carpet when they rescued you."

If her mask had softened before, now it fell apart as she looked at me with wide eyes, her mouth open. I could practically hear Tatnia's eyes roll behind me. I chuckled before looking back at General Syndulla.

"Would you be willing to share when you plan on staging your rescue?" I asked, the Twi'lek's expression turning serious.

"...Within the next two weeks," She answered after a moment of thought, getting a look from Princess Leia. "We are hearing whisperings of something big coming, and that the reason they are holding back from glassing the planet with our people on it is because they want to send a message by using whatever it is on the final push-"

"And you want to beat that," I finished, nodding along with her. "Makes sense, but why wait?"

"We spotted a pattern, a rotation of forces that gives us an opening, one we can use to get a group of smaller ships in and out," She explained, turning back to the projection. "The next time it's open, we plan on pushing through, landing just long enough to load everyone on before burning fuel until we are in the clear."

"Solid plan," I commented, watching the holo representation of what she just said. "The second you land, though, every Imperial force on the planet is going to be coming for you."

"We are aware," She agreed, before confidently adding. "We have a plan for that."

"Alright. Call us if you need our particular brand of crazy," I said, sticking out my hand. "I'll even offer you a discount. We are likely going to be busy for the next week or so. After that..."

"I'll keep that in mind," She responded, shaking my hand with a firm grip. "Until next time."

I nodded, both to her and Princess Leia, before turning and leaving the command center. I managed to get around a bit down the hallway and a corner before I stopped and leaned against the wall. After a few seconds spent collecting myself, I opened my eyes and pushed off the wall, stopping when I noticed Tatnia staring at me.

"What?" I asked defensively. "If you knew half the things she's done you'd be intimidated too."

"The Princess? She didn't seem like much to me..."

"She resisted Imperial torture at the hands of Darth Vader," I said. "That alone is impressive enough to be wary of."

Tatnia was shocked by my statement, taking a few seconds to follow after me when I started walking back to the hangar.

It didn't take long for us to reach the *Chariot*, where everyone was already gathered, debating our next destination. When Tatnia and I reached the lo I poured myself something to drink before sitting at the table. When I was settled, Nal summarized the list they were compiling.

"[Birgis](#) or [Listehol](#) are the closest planets that are likely to have what we need," Nal said.

"Listehol is closer, and it's an intersection of trade routes," Tatnia pointed out, looking over Duros' shoulder to look at his map.

"But Birgis is known for having untamed wildlife outside of its cities," Vaz pointed out. "It is likely we will find someone willing to pay us for hunting the more aggressive wildlife. Despite having a few large cities, it is known for being a rough planet to live on. Armor and weapons will be abundant, meaning Pola and I will find everything we need to craft armor."

"I like the sound of Birgis," I responded, looking over the map Nal handed me. "What's the Imperial presence like?"

"It's on the same trade lane as Dantooine, so none," Nal answered. "Unless they have a reason to be there, it shouldn't have anything other than a periodic pass to discourage pirates."

"Then it sounds like Birgis is a better bet for getting multiple things done simultaneously," I said. "We can take some mission to fill my soul gems while Pola and Vaz work on their smithing, Miru works on the droids, and we search for some crew. In fact..."

I looked around at everyone, mentally going over everything and pairing off teams in my head.

"We could probably do it all at once," I said when I finished. "Nal and Tatnia, do you think you could handle the primary interviews?"

"Could certainly weed out the poor choices," Nal responded confidently.

"Shouldn't be too hard," Tatnia added with a nod.

"Then you two can use the CPHs to get around. Miru and Calima will stay at whatever starport we land at, working on the droids and keeping an eye out for anyone nosing around. Or looking for us," I said, gesturing to each pair as I talked. "Pola and Vaz can work on setting everything up and working for our armor production. They can use the *Brick* to get around, shop, and transport anything they can't get delivered. Julius and I go hunting with the Arrow since we will likely be dragging around carcasses."

As I talked, I noticed Miru shifting slightly, her nose scrunched up as she contemplated whatever idea her brain came up with. After a moment she pulled out her modified datapad and started taping away, obviously lost to us until she was done.

"That's going to spread us pretty thin," Tatnia pointed out.

"Yeah, what if one of us gets ambushed?" Julius asked. "Shouldn't we stay closer to support each other if something happens?"

"We will have support, constant support, in the form of the raindrops," I pointed out. "After what happened last time, I am not fucking around. If shit hits the fan, we send them in to cover our escape. No pulling punches, no sneaking around, just a whole lot of firepower until the problem goes away. On top of that, Pola and Vaz can be on the scene with the *Brick* pretty fast, especially if we stick a certain distance from the ship."

We discussed it a bit more before eventually settling on Birgis, specifically one of the larger cities. With our destination decided, Pola, Vaz, Tatnia, and Nal headed out to the *Intervention* to start the preflight checks while Calima began hers. Miru headed down to her workshop, clearly working through something in her head, while I headed to the enchanting room, grabbed one of three large crates of Kyber crystals, and returned to the lounge. I had already filled a satchel with soul gems, but if Julius and I were going on an intentional hunting spree for a week or more, I wanted to have as many on hand as possible.

When we finally lifted off, I was still in the process of turning the entire crate into soul gems, with only about twenty done at that point. The drain on my mana was significant, and with a crate of probably around sixty multicolored crystals, I would likely be sitting here for another hour. When I was finally done, I knocked on the door frame of the bridge. Calima spun around in her chair to greet me, with the backdrop of hyperspace behind her.

"What's up, Boss?" She asked, looking curious. "Is everything... alright?"

"I just wanted to check up on you," I explained, stepping into the cockpit and sitting down in one of the chairs. "I spend a lot of time with the rest of the crew, but I kinda feel like I don't check up on you often enough."

"Don't worry about me... Boss," She said with a smile, the white tendrils fused to her purple-scaled head shifting as she moved. "I prefer to keep to myself, and... the others come and check up on me when they can."

"That's good, but is there anything you need?" I asked. "Anything we could do to help make piloting easier?"

"All I need is... my datapad and the occasional connection to the holonet to download more books," She admitted with a smile. "As for piloting... Will there be any spare naval droids? Having one or two of them here to read panels and assist in sensor readouts would be helpful."

"We can set aside two for the *Chariot*," I assured her. "Is that all?"

"That's... all I can think of."

"Okay, let me know if there is anything you want or need," I said with a smile, standing up from the seat. "I'll talk to you later."

She nodded and turned back around, focusing on the readout in front of her, swapping through a few different tabs before finally settling back into her chair and grabbing her datapad again. Satisfied that our pilot was happy, I grabbed the crate of empty soul gems, went into the enchanting room to grab the already filled bag, before heading down to the cargo hold to store them in the Arrow.

