

The trip to Thila Command took a few days, and the crew spent it unwinding and recovering from the stress and tension of the previous few days. Between constantly being on alert, being stuck on a much smaller ship than we were used to, and the ever-present weight of the Imperial forces around us, everyone was exhausted. I even put off learning any new magic now that we were free, instead of spending the return trip reading and relaxing with everyone else. Quite a few games of sabacc were played, and by the second day in hyperspace, we were using ingots of platinum, gold, rhodium, and electrum as chips.

"How's your leg?" I asked Vaz, sliding an ingot of platinum to the center of the sturdy table we had set up in the cargo bay. "Healed up, alright?"

"I would not know it had been injured if I had not experienced it," The Shistavanen assured me, looking down at her cards. "I am disappointed with the quality of my armor, however. It should have performed better with how much we paid for it."

"Well, not much longer to wait," I pointed out, gesturing to our stacks of metal. "I'll start converting some of these tomorrow so you and Pola can get to work as soon as we get back. Have you chosen a final design yet?"

"We were waiting to see just how much material we had to work with," She responded, her lips pulling back into a smirk. "I believe we have enough for our most optimistic ideas."

"Yeah... very glad we didn't try and pay for it," I said, looking down at the stacks of valuable metal. "I'm tempted to sell some of it so I can give everyone a cut for the mission, but I think that keeping it reserved for making armor is probably a better idea. There are no guarantees we would ever be able to pull something like this off again."

"How much beskar will all of this make?" Julius asked, having finally finished his turn, matching my bet.

"A lot," I answered, Tatnia rolling her eyes at my response. "Between losing some to the spells inefficiency, losing more to platinum being a lesser metal... I may lose close to fifteen percent at first. But the more I use the spell, the better I will get at it, so that number is definitely going to go down. I also don't know what the ratio loss will be for gold, electrum, or rhodium, though I suspect gold will lose a lot more. No idea about electrum or rhodium."

We continued to play the game, and Julius eventually pulled ahead and won. As we agreed before we started, we each gave him ten credits, Julius happily taking his winnings as he bragged and gloated. It wasn't much money in the end, primarily because while I was all for playing games for fun, gambling with high stakes among friends had always seemed unwise to me. When we were done cleaning up from our fun, I headed back to the room I had claimed, grabbing the small sliver of beskar I had brought for just this purpose before heading back down to the cargo hold. I plopped back down around the same sturdy, improvised table and grabbed an ingot of platinum.

The transmutation process was slow and tedious. The spell, unlike its Skyrim counterpart, slowly converted the targeted metal into my targeted element. It was a relatively slow draw on mana, too, taking a few minutes to drain my reserves completely. When I stopped to let my reserves fill, I turned the bar of metal over in my hand. Only about a fourth of it has been converted, the difference between the two metals obvious to even the naked eye. It was also not a one-to-one conversion. The loss of mass from the spell's inefficiencies and from the quality of the metal resulted in the converted area being noticeably thinner than the rest of the ingot.

I spent basically the rest of the day transmuting platinum and rhodium, the two metals we stole the most of. I turned twenty bars of platinum into slightly thinner and shorter bars of beskar and fifteen rhodium bars into full, complete bars, each of them the same size as the original bar. It turns out that rhodium is actually more valuable than platinum, enough to counter the inherent inefficiency of the Transmute spell. When I was done with the fifteenth bar of rhodium, I looked at the remaining ingots on the table, knowing that there was still a lot more in storage and that I hadn't even transmuted a quarter of what we had stolen.

Already I had tripled the amount of beskar ingot that we had left behind on the *Intervention*, and these ingots were significantly bigger than the ones Pola and Vaz had made. In total, by weight, there was four times as much beskar in front of me than was back at the *Intervention*. In all likelihood, this heist had solved our beskar needs for the foreseeable future. The only question now was if I finished converting everything into beskar, or left the rest of the metal as it was. Converting it would shrink it down a bit, making it easier to store and easier for Pola and Vaz to use without my help, but leaving it as it was would mean we could sell or trade it without worrying about it getting back to us that we had a source of beskar.

Rather than make a unilateral choice, I decided to put it off until I could at least ask for Nal and Tatnia's opinions. Considering it was getting late, and Nal and Tatnia had both already headed to bed, the question would have to wait. I took one more look at the stack of beskar before heading off to bed.

The rest of the journey back to Thila Command went by smoothly, the *Starcaller* making quick work of the distance with its powerful, heavily upgraded hyperdrive. Calima insisted the ship was faster than a normal Class 1 hyperdrive, putting the ship in a very exclusive club with the likes of the Millennium Falcon, Jade Shadow, and several other heavily modified and upgraded ships.

When we arrived at Thila Command, it took a moment for us to be cleared for landing, three Rebel cruisers boxing us in until we were given the green light. Besides the cruisers and a few other small ships, the orbit around Thila was mostly empty, as were most of the hangars we passed by to finally land between the *Chariot* and the *Intervention*. Just about as soon as we landed, the crew poured out of the cargo bay access ramp. The *Starcaller* was an impressive

and comfortable ship, but it was also clearly not intended for that many people, especially not for so long.

It didn't take long for we were greeted by the rest of the crew, Miru leading the group at a run.

"Welcome back," She shouted, giving me a tight hug before jumping at Tatnia and giving her the same. "How did it go? Did you do it? Is everything okay? Nobody got hurt, right?"

I couldn't help but chuckle as I assured the young Twi'lek that everything was okay. I patted her shoulder and gestured to the cargo ramp into the ship.

"If you'd like to know how the mission went, go ahead and see for yourself," I said, watching as her eyes went wide, and she took off, quickly followed by the rest of the crew.

During the last leg of the trip back, we had stacked everything neatly, most of the material still in its original forms, onto three different repulsor carts. The beskar, all thirty-five bars of it, was on its own cart. When Miru spotted the stacked bars of precious metals, she froze and stared, her jaw hanging open. It wasn't until Pola passed by her to examine and count the beskar that she finally unstuck.

"There is so much!" she shouted. "What metals did you get? I can see gold and platinum... is that electrum?"

"Woah woah, how about we all head to the *Chariot* first? We can go over the mission there," I said, giving the mechanical genius a look. "Let's not shout just how well we did so everyone can hear."

The crew agreed, everyone making their way across the hangar and climbing into the ship. As we passed a pair of B2s in their charging rack, I activated them with a wave, ordering them to spread out and guard the hangar, specifically making sure no one boarded the *Starcaller*. Once the droids had deployed, I joined everyone in the lounge, sitting down with a sigh. I idly noted that there was a large holo-projector along the forward wall in front of the ship-style couch. It looked like Dazem had started to spend his entertainment budget.

Over the next few hours, we told the story of the last week or so, sharing the experience with the rest of the crew. We had lunch, some drinks, and generally reconnected with the people we hadn't seen in a while. It was cute watching Vakim and Allum hold hands and reconnect, the Mikkian showing much more emotion than she usually did.

Eventually, after everyone recovered from Nal explaining we had probably managed to get somewhere around a million and a half credits worth of precious metals, we moved on to what everyone had been up to while they waited for us to return. As I expected, Dazem had worked to update our entertainment options, having recruited his sister, and occasionally Pola to

help. Pola had been mostly focused on gathering the last bits and pieces he would need for the armor project. At this point, I was starting to wonder just how much was going into the project and just what he and Vaz had been planning.

They were both clearly excited to get to work with the beskar.

As Pola and Vaz started discussing their next steps for making our armor, Miru disappeared at a sprint, rushing out of the lounge and down the stairs to the first deck. She returned a few minutes later, proudly stopping in the doorway and striking a pose. She was wearing her usual work clothes, with a heavy-duty belt around her waist and two small boxes about the size of my hand hanging off either side. She was also wearing a [glove and gauntlet combo](#) on her left hand and arm all the way to her elbow, with obvious electronics built into it.

"Well?" She asked, showing her creation off. "What do you think?"

"I think it looks well made," I responded truthfully. "What is it?"

"It's a portable scanner, computer system and diagnostic tool!" She said excitedly, sliding her right hand along the gauntlet portion of her creation. "Just watch!"

The gauntlet lit up as she tapped a few buttons, the light spreading all the way to her palm. She walked closer and scanned my sidearm, waving her hand over it while the lights built into the device blinked and pulsed. After a few seconds, two miniature holo projection units lit up along her arm, displaying information on my blaster pistol, including energy readings, a wire form breakdown of its interior, and several other pieces of information that I'm sure meant something to Miru. She reached to the holo-projector and ran her finger through it, the scanned image of my pistol spinning.

Altogether, it looked like a successful, well-made, and sturdy gauntlet with an HD, full-color omnitool built in.

"That's impressive, Miru," I said, holding out my hand, the young genius holding her arm out so I could get a better look. "Seriously, this is incredible. You could make a lot of money selling the plans for this..."

"Maybe, but it was kind of expensive. I spent like eighty percent of what I got from the pirate mission on it," She admitted with a sheepish grin. "Plus... I kind of like knowing I have something unique."

"Pola is going to have to work around it when he makes your armor," Tatnia pointed out, but Miru shook her head.

"I made sure it was compatible with the undersuit he bought. It should seamlessly connect as long as the arm has the right ending part, which I also bought," She explained. "Plus,

these metal bits are all beskar that I painted, so I'll even get good protection! Not perfect, but still good!"

"Well, congrats, Miru. It came out great," I said with a smile. "I'm proud of you. If you ever want to figure out a way to sell the patent, just let me know. I'm sure we can figure something out."

The young Twi'lek nodded in understanding, blushing just a tiny bit at my comment about being proud of her. She happily sat back down in her seat, and we continued our meal, eventually finishing a bit later. By then, it was starting to get a bit later in the afternoon, so we cleaned up and got to work.

The most important thing I wanted to get done before we all turned in for the night was transferring all of the metal to the appropriate place. All of the beskar was sent to the *Intervention*, the incredibly expensive metal getting tucked away in Pola's workshop. The rest of the precious metals were split into fourths. Two-fourths went to the Chariot, stacked inside the enchanting room for safekeeping. Another fourth was split between two smuggling compartments on board the *Starcaller*. The last fourth was stored inside one of the spare bedrooms on board the *Intervention*.

The idea was that in a pinch, each ship would have a massive amount of wealth to throw around in an emergency while also preventing all of it from being lost should a ship need to be abandoned fast, or god forbid it was destroyed. I would have split it more evenly, but the *Intervention* would most likely have a good amount of beskar on board, so that was at least partially covered. We spent an hour and a half lugging the metal around despite knowing that this split was hopefully not going to last long. If the deepspace space station turned out to be as intact as we hoped, chances were we would be moving most of the precious metals there. Or we would once it was livable.

We also spent an hour or so moving out all of the supplies we had bought as an alibi on Gizer. With any luck, I would be able to sell it quickly and we could be on our way. Nevue would hopefully contact us soon about our potential new base of operations, and I wanted to give Pola to spend as much time as possible on our armor until then.

Once the cargo was loaded, all of us headed off to our respective ships, sharing a small meal with each other before we headed off for the night. I barely had enough energy to strip off my clothes before crawling into my bed, the familiar feel making it easy to fall asleep almost instantly.