

The rebel workers made quick work of clearing out the B-7 cargo bay, emptying it of everything we didn't want in only an hour, which included the time we were off meeting General Syndulla. When workers hauled away the last crate, all that was left was the stuff we had brought from Nar Shaddaa, the MRV, and three crates, we wanted to keep from the ship's original cargo. The stolen cargo we kept was actually a mix of several different containers. A few extra pistols, rifles, and ammo from one crate, a month's worth of food stable food from another, as well as other odds and ends that Tatnia and Nal thought were worth keeping.

While we were getting our stuff settled, transferring what we wanted into different containers, I wondered out loud why the cargo for this ship had been so well stocked with weapons and other useful stuff, and Nal responded while chuckling.

"It's our fault," He explained, leaning back from the crate he had been sorting through. "They wanted to increase security after we stole from them the first time. They were smuggling in new equipment for more guards."

"Huh... lucky us I guess..." I admitted before shaking my head and getting back to work. "I would have rather freed another batch of slaves, though."

Nal nodded, and we finished getting our crates secure, connecting them to the cargo bay floor in their new positions by the back of the bay. By the time we were done, whoever the Rebels had gotten to do an inspection of the ship was also done and confirmed that the ship and cargo were well with twenty thousand credits. Twenty minutes later, we had two new containers of credits in our pile, both filled with credit chips instead of ingots.

"We need to get some sort of account set up at some point," I commented, all four of us sitting in the cargo bay, looking at the stacks of credit boxes. "I can't imagine the shipbroker is going to be excited to deal with all this."

"With their clientele, I'm sure they are used to it," Tatnia respond before looking back out of the cargo bay into the now active hangar. "Which reminds me, you are being really trusting with these people. Are you sure that's a good idea?"

"Do I trust every member? Not even close," I assured her. "But I trust the General, Nevue, and the general group. But no, I don't trust all of them, so I will be sleeping on board in one of the cots to keep an eye on the credits."

Tatnia nodded in agreement, volunteering to switch off if I wanted to. After we talked for a bit more about posting a watch to keep track of the over one hundred thousand credits we had on board. By that time, it was starting to get late, both for us and the actual planet's timescale, which just happened to have a similar time schedule to what we had become used to on Nar Shadda.

We spent a little while longer chatting, mostly discussing what sort of ship we were looking for, before the group was escorted to some better sleeping quarters while I stayed behind and slept in the cargo bay. When they were gone, I closed the bay doors, sealing them shut before sitting down at the edge of my bed and pulling out my grimoire.

It wasn't the most responsible thing, but I couldn't resist the urge to learn another spell, especially now that I would have time to recover from missing sleep. I also hoped that my natural "talent" with conjuration would keep me from being up too late.

I slowly worked my way through the description of conjure bound armor, carefully paying attention to its limitations. Like all conjured objects, its time limit was connected to how much mana I put into it, and since it was also locked around my body, I would be able to easily feed it more energy. According to the description, I would be able to summon it and keep it summoned indefinitely, as long as I was conscious and didn't run out of magicka to fuel them.

I decided to start by learning the upper torso armor first, since it covered all my vitals. It would also make learning the lower torso version easier, since the first stage matrix was the same for each spell. As usual, it took about thirty minutes for me to get each stage set, forming the two matrices in my hand. When I was sure I had the right shapes, lines, and angles, I started pushing more mana through them, slowly adjusting and shaping each part of the matrices until the magic flowed through easily. It took me about seven hours in total, keeping me up well past when I should have been asleep.

It was well worth it, though, as I stood up from the cot and summoned the bound armor, the magic wrapping around my arm as I cast it. The magic stretched down my arm, over my chest, and down my other arm, forming the armor as it went. It even stretched up to cover my head, though the magic was completely see-through when it finally covered my eyes. I looked down at my hands, which were now covered in the pale purple color of conjured objects. Once again, I was glad that the things I was conjuring weren't based on the daedric equipment from Skyrim, instead finding my hand and arms were wrapped in a semi-translucent set of [plate armor](#), not some fear-inducing fantasy crap.

I moved around slowly, stretching and testing my range of motion while encased in the ethereal armor, finding that not only did it seem to weigh nothing, but it also didn't hamper my dexterity in the slightest. It seemed happy to clip through itself when I wanted to touch my arm, but was extremely solid when I tried to punch myself. I climbed up the ladder to the main deck, stepping into the bathroom so I could look at myself in the small mirror built into the wall. I could see my face through the purple glowing armor, the [helmet](#) still not hampering my vision at all. I had hoped that it would obscure my face, but I could hardly complain when everything else worked out so well.

Satisfied with how the top half of my bound armor looked, I quickly went back down into the cargo bay and ran it through even more testing. I shot myself with sparks, frostbite, and flames before slashing at it with a conjured dagger. The armor blocked several seconds of each

destructive spell combined, though I could feel that it was extremely damaged at that point, and I needed to re-conjure it to test out the dagger, which did noticeable damage to it but still stopped completely.

I practiced the new conjuring spell for about thirty minutes, making sure I had it down completely before finally heading to bed, excited to learn the lower torso spell as well, when I got the chance. With any luck, I would have the entire trip to wherever this Nova shipbroker was.

With the spell learned and my testing complete, I eagerly climbed into my cot, falling asleep to the low ambient noise of the outside hangar, the natural wind of Thila occasionally rattling things around.

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I woke up the next morning to the sound of a very active hangar outside the ship. I slowly sat up from my cot, my brain taking a few seconds to catch up. It was clearly much earlier than I had hoped to sleep too, but that's what I got for sleeping somewhere like an active hangar. I stretched and used a quick healing spell to clear up my aches before slowly making my way to one of the side doors of the B-7, tapping the control panel to open the thick, double-sealed door.

I stepped down and out of the small freighter and into the busy hangar bay. What had been an almost entirely empty space just a few hours ago was now abuzz with activity. Six [X-Wings](#) had landed at some point in the last few hours and were now in the process of getting looked over by several technicians and pilots.

While meeting Hera had been a bit jarring, her being the first in-universe person I had met so far, seeing an in-the-flesh, honest to god, mother fucking X-Wing, not fifteen feet away, had me looking on in awe, my mind completely blown away. Here was the symbol of the Rebellion, arguably one of the most famous and easily identified science fiction ships ever made, the subject of video games and an entire book series. My brother Brian and I had spent hours playing starfighters, running around our house, holding cheap X-Wing models, and making horrible imitations of their engines and the sound of lasers. This was a dream come to life.

Unbidden, I took a step forward to the closest starfighter, my attention locked onto it as I walked around, taking in every nook and cranny. I could see scoring along one of the S-foils, the sign of a very close call, most likely recent too. I could also see the ship was in pretty good shape despite that, though I lacked the technical knowledge to know exactly how good of condition it was in. What I could tell was that this was anything but a prop. It was clear as you looked at it that every piece had a purpose, that every plate was not just some random do-dad that the people at Lucasfilms stuck on to add some texture. This was starfighter, a weapon of war, and-

"Can I help you?"

I jumped when a voice half shouted out to me, needing the extra volume to cut over the tools and other echoing noises that filled the hanger. I also realized that I had been reaching out to touch the side of the starfighter, a big social faux pas when you didn't own the ship you were touching. I winced and pulled my hand back.

"Sorry, I wasn't really thinking," I explained sheepishly. "I've always loved the X-Wing design, and if I knew anything about flying, I would definitely want one of my own eventually."

As I talked, I looked over the S-foil again before turning to look at whoever had gotten my attention. It was a young man, probably about eight or ten years younger than me, with black hair and thick eyebrows. He was wearing a pilot's suit, but with all of the extra panels, tubes, and the white flak jacket removed, probably to make it easier to move around. He was looking at me with a raised eyebrow, most certainly wondering what the hell I was doing.

"Sorry, name's Deacon, I came in on the B-7 over there," I explained, stepping forward and holding out my hand, which the man shook. "Just dropping off one of your operatives we happened to pick up before moving on."

"Huh. Sounds like there's a story there," The man said with a smile. "I'm Wedge Antilles."

My brain screeched to a halt, studying the man's face. He did look a lot like the actor who played him in the original trilogy, though it was far from an exact match. I finally let go of his hand, coughing awkwardly before returning his smile.

"Maybe, it was certainly an adventure," I admitted with a chuckle, trying to cover up from the panic in my head.

I was talking to my childhood hero, the best pilot in the galaxy, Rogue Leader! Creator of Wraith Squadron and driving force behind the eventual invasion of Coruscant! An honest to god legend, currently in the process of forging that legend.

"My friends and I staged a breakout after we got picked up by slavers and dropped off at Nar Shaddaa," I explained, looking back at his starfighter. "We raided a couple of slaver holdings to make some cash before blasting out in the B-7."

The Rebellion hero scowled a bit when I mentioned slavery, nodding along as I told a highly abbreviated version of our story.

"Well, I'm glad you managed to escape. Slavery is a blight on the galaxy. I can only hope that when we take down the Empire, we can do something about it."

"Let's hope so."

"Are you here to join up?" The legendary pilot asked. "Even if you can't fly, we are always looking for soldiers, engineers, even specialists."

"No, my crew and I have plans to start a mercenary group now that we are off Nar Shaddaa," I explained with a wince. "I've already explained to General Syndulla that we are sympathetic to the cause, enough to work for cheap, and even donate our time if something particularly important comes up. But... I'm not much of a joiner."

"...Well, allies are almost as good as members," He said with a shrug. "It was nice talking to you, Deacon, but I need to finish my inspection before we take off again. We have to get back to Yavin 4 to help break the rest of the Alliance through the blockade."

"Sure, and... May the force be with you," I said, my inner child dancing with glee as Wedge gave me a serious nod, going back to his X-Wing.

I turned and headed back to the B-7, quickly climbing back inside, the double-sealed doors closing behind me. When the door shut all the way, my inner child broke free for a moment, and I danced in place while laughing.

"I shook Wedge Antilles' hand!" I said, laughing to myself. "Brian would be so fucking jealous!"

When I eventually calmed down, I made my way to the main deck of the ship, using the small kitchen system to make a small breakfast before eating it at the nearby table. My thoughts eventually drifted to what was next, what I needed to make happen in order to get my team in a good, solid position. We needed to have the ability to take on jobs and explore without having to look over our shoulders constantly, or at least know that when something bad did come knocking, we could handle it. The first step was a ship, something substantial enough to call a home base. If I wanted to start recruiting people, having a ship to live out of would make convincing people much more straightforward.

After that was securing supplies, which meant making money. I had a few ideas for that angle, some of which were as complicated as "listen to rumors and see if they pan out" to abusing some of my meta-knowledge. I knew a few places where I could make quite a bit of money or at least quite a bit of salvage, but unfortunately, some of those were a bit too advanced for now.

I finished up my meal quickly before heading down to the cargo bay, coming down just in time to see the cargo bay door open to reveal Miru, Nal, Tatnia and Nevue on the other side. There were also two rebel soldiers, who were both armed and carrying packs much more extensive than one would expect for just escorting some people around. One was a human woman, maybe a few years younger than me, while the other was a human man, just around my age.

"Morning guys. How's it going?" I asked, stepping off the ladder and walking to meet them halfway. "Everyone ready to go?"

"We are ready," Nevue said before gesturing to the additional soldiers. "This is Ayme Montera and Lario Vark. They are here as backup, just in case. General Syndulla was hesitant to let a newly purchased ship go with only your word we could have it back."

"Oh... fair enough, I hadn't thought about it like that," I admitted before nodding to both of them. "Welcome aboard. Thanks for joining us."

The two soldiers nodded before Nal reached over and tapped on the control panel for the bay door, the thick armored door slowly closing. The soldier walked further into the bay before dropping their packs while the rest of us made our way up to the bridge on the main deck. It didn't take long for Nevue and Tatnia, who volunteered to be the copilot this time, to get permission from hangar control to leave, the ship lifting off of the ground easily, slowly pulling out of the large hangar bay. After a quick flight up and out of Thila's atmosphere, Nevue plotted a course, and we left the mountainous planet behind.