

After a short break from my magic stuff to stand by in case something went wrong during the process of landing the *Dark Blade* on the moon, I settled back down to learn the first thing on my list, Recovery. Basically, what it boiled down to was a long process of meditating and training your core with the intent of getting your magic to replenish faster. Supposedly I would immediately be able to tell the difference, as there was a significant amount of initial improvement, which would slow down significantly. The text in my Grimoire mentioned a second level to the process, but that required having more natural magic, which the large, ornate book assured the reader would happen naturally to long-time mages.

I settled down on the end of my bed and started to meditate, focusing down inside myself, not unlike I did oh so long ago during the beginning of this adventure. By now, I was an expert at drawing out my magic, so grabbing hold of a wisp and drawing it out was easy. The next step was less instinctual, pushing the tendril back into my core and keeping it there before repeating the process with a second strand on the opposite side.

It was an odd sensation, a sort of metaphysical movement happening inside me as I formed something like a double matrix inside my core. After I was sure I had everything set, I slowly started rotating one side and then the other, spinning them both inside my core, each in opposite directions. During all this, I continually pulled magic out through each tendril, which of course, fed right back into my core through the internal matrix. If the previous sensations was simply strange, this was utterly bizarre, as I could feel the draw on my magic even as my core was continuously full.

I spent three hours meditating, cycling my magic slowly inside myself, letting the process do its job. When the boredom and exhaustion finally got to me, I stopped. I was sweaty and a bit shaky, like I had just completed an extreme workout. Still, I needed to know just what kind of progress I had made, so I slid to the edge of the bed and cast Steadfast Ward, my hand glowing as the oval barrier appeared in front of me. Sure enough, the regeneration kept up a bit better with the magicka draw. It wasn't close to breaking even, of course, but it was a noticeable increase.

Mentally noting to try and meditate that way for a few hours every night, I barely had enough energy to undress before collapsing into bed, falling asleep almost immediately.

The following morning I ended up casting Fast Heal and Respite on myself to recover the soreness and slight tiredness I still felt from my meditation session. I climbed out of my bed and pulled myself into the sonic shower, letting the vibrations clean me. When I was done, I quickly got ready for the day before stepping out of my room and into the main hall of the second deck, heading right for the lounge.

Tatnia, Nal, Julius, and Vaz were already sitting at the table, with Racer next to them, while Miru and Calima sat at the bar top, facing towards the table.

"Hey, uh, Morning Boss," Julius said, spotting me first. "Slept pretty late."

"I was up late working on my magic," I explained, dropping down at the table. "I unlocked a lot of new things to learn. What's the news?"

"Racer finished digging through the outskirts worlds we came up with and found a few that would work for what we are looking for," Tatnia explained, sliding a Datapad across the table to me. "We've been looking at them and think this is our best option."

The datapad showed a planet labeled a Tacruna, tagged with a simple description. It was a tropical planet, populated by a few small cities and one massive one, all built around the edges of an ocean that took up over ninety percent of the surface. Apparently, the planet's main export was four different varieties of fish, all of which were bigger than the average human and one of which would dwarf a C-PH. The world was wet, with near-constant downpours and wild monsoons that would last for days, if not weeks, which completely removed any interest in tourism.

Luckily for us, the fish they exported was known as being delicious, with the largest being a particular delicacy. This meant that the Empire, probably at the behest of a corrupt general or senator, had a small defensive "fleet" stationed around the planet to protect the luxury product and the industry that harvested it.

The "Fleet" consisted of three ships. The heavy hitter of the fleet was a [retrofitted Consular-class cruiser](#), a design I recognized from the Clone Wars shows and the prequels. It didn't surprise me that some of them were still hanging around in some of the backward worlds around the Rim, especially since the only reason the Empire had to protect this planet was some tasty fish. Nal commented about being surprised to see one, assuming the older ships had long since all been mothballed, but didn't say much else.

The *Consular*-class was backed up by two [Guardian-Class light cruisers](#). Tatnia pointed out that they were probably part of the Imperial Custom's presence on the planet, as they frequently used those ships.

"So, unsurprisingly, fleet specifics and schedules are supposed to be classified," Tatnia explained. "Despite the fact that the first one is ruined by just stepping outside and looking up with a decent telescope. The schedule, however, is legitimately protected and out of reach from Racer, at least as long as he needs to stay undetected. Luckily for him, he found a workaround with some help from Calima."

Tatnia nodded to the astromech, who warbled and beeped before activating his holoprojector, displaying a map.

"This is the Imperial base of operations for the planet, notice the large landing pad here," Tatnia said, pointing to an area before nodding to Racer again, three dots appearing on the map, all around the base. "And these are all the bars and clubs around the base."

"Racer checked out all three of these locations, and all of them had pitiful security. He pulled the footage from the last six months and quickly scrubbed through it," Miru explained excitedly, gesturing to an image of five men sitting on a wide, semi-circle couch-like seat, a blue-skinned Twi'lek dancing in front of them. "So, twice every month, the number of Imperial officers at these bars spikes for three days before returning to normal."

"Shore leave?" I asked, getting a nod from Nal. "How accurately can you predict them?"

"We can pick out when one of the ships will be down pretty well," Miru responded, seemingly speaking for Racer, who beeped and whistled in agreement. "But we haven't found any way to confirm which ship belongs to each group."

"So we know when a ship will be on leave, but we don't know which ship..." I asked, continuing when Miru nodded in agreement. "What's the time frame then?"

"The next scheduled shore leave should be in four days," Tatnia answered. "It will take us a little over a day to get there, which gives us around three days to prepare."

"That sounds perfect, we can do some shopping when we get there," I said with a nod. "We still need a landing craft of some sort. Something that we can easily land and take off from one of the hangar bays. We also need to pick up a few other bits and things."

We discussed a basic plan outline, and Vaz spoke up a few times to give her expertise on assaulting a position. She recommended a fast strike, getting in, boarding the ship, and taking off as quickly as possible. Depending on the patrol pattern of the other two ships, we might even be able to time it so they are on the other side of the planet. How exactly we would assault the Imperial base depended on what the base looked like.

Personally, I didn't anticipate a fortress, and the few pictures Racer managed to scrounge up through other tangential sources seemed to agree. There was a single large turret, not quite a heavy turbo laser but certainly a powerful weapon, taking up the top of the tallest structure on the base. In all likelihood, we would need to take that down before starting any of our plans. From what we were able to piece together, there were only a few smaller, starfighter-scale cannons placed around the two structures that made up most of the base's infrastructure, and they wouldn't even strain the shields of the larger ship.

Racer managed to get his actuators on a pretty recent [deck plan for the Consular-Class refit](#). Unfortunately, the Guardian-Class light cruisers were a more recent creation, and the Empire wasn't keen on giving up information on an active war vessel. It did hammer home the fact that the Consular-class was only twelve meters short of being *twice the size* of the *Talos Chariot*. The Guardians were about thirty meters shorter than our current ship.

Once we started to get to the real meat of the planning phase, Calima stood up to head to the cockpit, starting the nav computer up to compute the jumps required to get to Tacruna. About an hour later, we had as solid a plan as possible, given how many variables there were, so we went our separate ways to prepare.

Knowing I had enough time for one spell, I warned everyone not to interrupt me unless something serious happened, before secluding myself in my room again. I pulled out my datapad and summoned my Grimoire, flipping through my must-learn spell list and reviewing everything added by the inclusion of Adept level spells.

All in all, Destruction, Alteration, and Illusion were more or less what I expected, though I was a bit sad to learn that the Invisibility spell wasn't Adept. As usual, Restoration lacked any spells that had to do with the undead. It did, however, offer three fortification spells that would increase my dexterity, strength, and stamina. It also had a spell called "Heal Middling Trauma." A quick skim revealed it was a healing spell that was specifically designed to fix a single injury rather than a general healing spell. It could handle much more missing mass than any of my other healing magic but wasn't quite at the level of restoring limbs.

Similar to Restoration, Conjunction continued to not mention the summoning of Deadra from the planes of oblivion. Instead, it offered several new construct options, allowing me to summon things similar to the Flame Atronach construct but for different roles or elements. I was looking forward to summoning a construct with a sword, if for no other reason than to have someone to spar with. There was also the Conjure Bound Bow and Conjure Bound Quiver, two spells that I had been impatiently waiting for.

Well, technically, I had been waiting for the Conjure Bound Bow spell because I forgot the quiver spell existed, predominantly because casting Conjured Bound Bow *also* conjured a quiver full of arrows. However, it seemed that whatever version of Skyrim this Grimoire came from, it encouraged the stealth sniper player even more than the game did. Not only did Conjure Bound Quiver create one hundred extremely high-quality arrows, but it also allowed you to imbue your arrows with shock, flame, or ice. It wasn't a ton of energy, the shock arrow seemed to be the equivalent of a half second or so of the Sparks spell, but it added an incredible level of potential.

Logically, I knew I should probably focus on something like healing or being more durable, especially because we had two crates full of ranged options in the cargo hold. But I had asked the entities for archery knowledge for a reason, and now I was being encouraged even more by the Bound Quiver spell.

A few minutes of mentally debating and option-weighting later, and I was sitting in my chair, the Grimoire opened on the desk to the Conjure Bound Bow section. I eagerly started the process of learning the spell, noting the first spell matrix's similarities to other weapon conjuration spells. After four hours, my ass was hurting, and I was forced to cast Respite and Fast Healing on myself, all while maintaining concentration on what I was working on.

Another three hours passed, and I was miserable but determined. I was just starting the third and last matrix, seven hours of work behind me and another three or four ahead of me. I was hungry, sore, and I could feel the oncoming head.

It took me ten and a half hours to finally complete the matrix tuning process and finally cast Conjure Bound Bow for the first time. I sat forward in my seat to give the quiver room to appear, letting the magic flow as the weapon appeared in my hand. The bow itself looked very similar to the [Nordic bow](#) from the game but also included a thematically designed three-pin sight, which I knew how to use despite not knowing it existed a few seconds ago. The quiver, which appeared on my back, looked like the [steel arrow quiver](#) from the game, and the arrows seemed to match. Of course, all of this was glowing, faintly see-through, and leaking a wispy purple energy.

Instead of celebrating, I immediately started casting it again, doing it nearly thirty times until I was absolutely, one hundred percent certain it had worked and that the final form of all matrices was sufficiently ingrained in my magic. When I was finally certain, I sagged in my chair, letting out a long groan.

After a few minutes of just basking in an utter lack of thinking, I raised my hand and cast Fast Heal and Respite, slowly climbing out of my chair. I made my way out of my room and into the lounge, grabbing two meals from a cabinet and sitting down on the couch, slowly and methodically eating the contents of both.

"How did it go?" Nal asked as he sat down on the other end of the couch, stepping out from the hallway.

"Pretty well," I responded, conjuring a bow and tossing it to him. "See for yourself." The blue-skinned, red-eyed humanoid caught the bow easily, looking down at it in confusion before looking back up at me.

"You learned how to... conjure this?" He asked, understandably confused. "Why?"

"...you know, it might be better to show you," I said, standing from my seat and releasing my mental grip on the bow, the construct bursting into harmless energy in Nal's hands. "C'mon, time to test this thing out."

We headed down to the first deck, to the main cargo hold. I noticed that the emergency docking system we had used to connect to the *Dark Blade* was once again closed, but the panel it was under now had a hinge welded along one seam, with a simple latching and locking system added to the other. As we entered the cargo bay, I spotted Miru connecting Racer up to his charging bay, the young Twi'lek looking over at me with a smile.

"Hey Boss, everything should be ready to go... How did your magic stuff go?" She asked, picking up a piece of cloth and wiping a grease spot off of her nose.

"It went well... you wouldn't happen to have a plate of metal I could test it on, would you?"

"Uh... yeah, I do, gimme a second..." She responded, turning back to her workshop.

After about five minutes, Miru had taken a two-foot by two-foot square and welded two metal pipes to one side, perpendicular, so they could function as a stand. We quickly ran it down the main line of the first deck, setting it up on top of the cargo elevator.

With a mental flex, I conjured the bow, rolling my shoulder before steadying myself. Holding the bow felt natural, as did every other step as I reached over my shoulder, pulled out a single arrow, nocked it, drew back and let it fly. The slightly translucent arrow streaked across the mainline before slamming into the metal plate and embedding itself into it, punching a hole completely through the metal plating before deconstructing and turning into a puff of purple magic on the other side.

In the world of Skyrim, with magic and mythical elements, the Armorsmiths forged armor with some incredible materials. Metals like Orichalcum, Ebony, Malachite, Moonstone, and even dragon bones and scales. Despite those fantastical materials, high-quality arrows fired from a high-quality bow were still lethal, punching through all that armor to hit the target inside. I knew that, in game, Conjured Bow was a weapon on tier with the highest quality, non-unique equivalent, its arrows matching that.

Sure, there was a chance that it wouldn't translate the same, and to be honest, I wasn't convinced there wasn't some limitation I hadn't run into yet. But for now, I was happy to have a summonable anti-armor, limitless ammo *cannon* with which I also just happened to be highly skilled.

"That's why," I said, unable to stop from smirking as I turned back to my stunned audience. "You guys want to give it a shot?"