

While our restructuring and expansion plan only took a few hours to develop, it took just over two weeks to really implement. I spent most of that time away from the station on the *Chariot*. We bounced around nearly a dozen planets, picking up supplies for Pola and Miru, as well as buying medical equipment, general supplies, and other infrastructure requirements like furniture.

While most of the furniture on the station was fine, since the vacuum tended to preserve most nonliving things pretty well. Unfortunately, save a few rooms made for dignitaries and high-rank individuals, all of the sleeping quarters were built for soldiers, most of whom the Republic barely considered as people.

It was not the most comfortable.

All of that meant a lot of shopping, a lot of shipping, and a lot of money spent. In total, we spent nearly a hundred thousand credits getting a significant portion of the station ready for use. I wanted our new home to have everything we could need. A not insignificant portion of that went to medical equipment, as well as an emergency [medical droid](#) for each of our ships. The medical droids were the hardest to get our hands on as well, because, for obvious reasons, they were in high demand. In the end, I had to bribe a cargo hauler five thousand credits to "lose" his shipment, which was destined for Hutt space.

While Calima, Nal, and I were bouncing around the Outer Rim, I spent most of my time working on my magic and enchanting. It was a lot of hard work, but by the end, I could happily say I knew all of the actually useful spells up to Adept. I had no interest in learning every single spell, so I could only hope that the next level of my grimoire would unlock soon. I got a lot of enchanting practice in, managing to complete a pair of enchanted rings, one dex, and one strength for all of the ground combat clones. My next project would be to make a pair of dex rings for our new pilots.

After getting most of our shopping done, we made one more trip, this one with multiple destinations. We were accompanied by a pair of clones, both of whom had undergone some facial reconstruction. Between visiting a merchant to pick up a specific fabrication machine for Miru and getting a shipment of metal stock for Pola, we dropped the clones off on a Mid Rim planet. There, they would be completing the final process of picking up and purchasing a used but well-maintained [YT-1930](#).

This new starship would be our first primary cargo ship, which was why we went through trouble purchasing it legitimately. The pair of clones were eager to start their new jobs, which was good because they immediately left for their first cargo run. While the YT-1930 was a pretty solid ship, I wanted our guys to have better than pretty solid, which meant they left for a two-day journey to pick up several upgrades for the ship. These upgrades included some improved sensors, shields, and a second laser turret for the bottom of the ship.

In all, the new ship would cost us just over a hundred and fifteen thousand credit. I would have spent more on it since I firmly believed that upgrading your ships was always worth the money, but this vessel was specifically designed to be legal, unassuming, and, overall, uninteresting. Stacking it to the nines with all the newest, shiniest, and most potent upgrades would have been counterintuitive. Where *Starcaller* was meant to look like a well of trader, so it could pick up strange things, like a high profile merchant, the newly christened *Staggering Bantha* was intended to carry basic, simple supplies.

I wasn't the only one busy, of course. While we were gone, Miru was working the V-Wings. She worked with the clone engineers to design a modification, finally affixing the starfighters with medium-grade shields. Unfortunately, while the shields meant I was finally comfortable letting our pilots use them in combat, they also drew a significant amount of extra power. With the ship's power core almost completely tapped into, a hyperdrive unit was entirely out of the question. At least it was without a total overhaul or severely hampering the ship's maneuverability and weapons.

Miru and her temporary team worked on converting twelve of the V-wings, waiting for news about the planned carrier or carriers before upgrading more.

The pink Twi'lek also orchestrated the deep scanning and cataloging of the *Loyal Hound*, the now-renamed and repainted IPV. The ship's hull now followed the same pattern as all our ships, white with purple lines and accents. It also bore our [new symbol](#), which was slowly being added to a lot of our stuff, including our armor and ships. It was a simplified eagle, wings spread around a simple circle and a shield over its chest with the letters SV written on the shield. It was very much stolen from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, as it was the symbol of the Strategic Science Reserve. I picked it because it looked cool, was pretty easy to do, and was easily simplified. Also, the original Skyforge, our namesake, was a massive stone eagle, so it really all just fit together.

Pola, as well as his two new assistants, had made solid progress on creating armor for our second-ground team. According to the talented armorsmith, only two helmets were left to convert when we arrived back from our final shopping trip, and those wouldn't take more than a day. After that was done, he was excited to get started on making more beskar fiber uniforms. At this point, we had transferred almost all of the exotic and valuable metals to a reinforced section of his workshop. All of the ships had a stash of a few valuable ingots just in case, but since the process of armoring our new clone members would take a significant portion of our stash, we couldn't leave much.

I spent a whole day converting beskar before we left, giving myself a headache in the process.

While we were busy, the Rebellion also made significant progress in repairing the station and the munificent. By the time we returned from our final shopping trip, the station's shields

were at full, which, with the assistance of the shield projectors on the Munificent, was actually just a few hairs better than they had been originally.

Since everything looked so good, I wanted to discuss what was left to do with the lead engineer. Unfortunately, since the Rebellion had yet to assign either a liaison or a real leader of the stationed Rebels, I was forced to ambush the lead engineer in a hallway using Clairvoyance.

According to him, the exterior armor was almost completely repaired, as was the integrity of the internal hull. Their next big project was salvaging and repairing the station's remaining turbolasers and point defense matrix. He revealed that it was very unlikely that they would ever be able to encircle and move around the station like they could before it was lost. Still, they would be spread around to offer maximum protection and firepower. I pointed out that with the Munificent's weapons repaired, they would be able to include them in their calculations, a fact he seemed to have not realized but promised to take into account.

When the two weeks, plus a few days extra, were over, I was preparing to gather a few people together to start planning our next move when we got a surprised guest. They landed their [ship](#) in one of the smaller hangars close to the major one where we landed our three larger ships. It was a vessel I recognized, so I headed out to greet its pilot.

"Ahsoka, what can I do for you?" I asked as the Togruta climbed down her ship's boarding ramp.

"Deacon, I'm glad you're here," She said with a small, worry-filled smile. "I... I need your team's help."

It was easy to pick up her obvious anxiety and worry, so whatever she was dealing with was important. I nodded, gesturing for her to follow me. As we walked, I pulled out my comms and started contacting my team, directing them to our meeting room. I usually liked using the act of gathering everyone as a chance to explore and see what everyone was up to, but this was obviously not the time.

Most of my group, save Pola, as he was well and truly off the combat roster, met us at the same conference room we had used a few weeks ago to discuss how our group would change with the induction of the clones. Nal was the last to join us, coming into the room at a jog. When he sat down, I turned to Ahsoka and nodded.

"Four days ago, the Rebellion got a message from an agent on an Imperial-held world," She started. "The message was a request for immediate emergency extraction. The agent was on the planet to watch and gather intel on a specific facility, a weapons manufacturing plant. The plan was to eventually sneak a team down to the surface and perform a precision strike on it and a few others. However, the agent stumbled on something more important. As the agent went about their cover job, they befriended a pair of street kids, siblings."

She pulled a small holoprojector from her pocket and activated it to reveal two young children. The relation was obvious, with a younger-looking boy with dark brown hair cut short and a young boyish face, no more than five or six. The clearly older sibling couldn't have been more than ten or eleven and shared the same dark brown hair, though hers was pulled tightly into a braided ponytail.

"Claron is the youngest sibling, and Felia is the older. Over the course of a month, in between his observations and other work, the agent got close to them, enough so that she was beginning to lay the groundwork to have them leave with her after her mission was complete."

"What happened?" Miru asked, her voice clearly showing that she was expecting the worst. It wasn't hard to imagine why the story was resonating with her.

"There was an accident involving the younger sibling and an out-of-control vehicle of some sort," Ahsoka said. During this, in order to prevent her younger sibling from being crushed, Felia instinctively reached out with the Force, picking up the vehicle and throwing it to the side."

"Impressive, couldn't have been easy," Nal said.

"The Force can react particularly strongly to times of need, but yes, it is impressive," Ahsoka admitted. "The problem is that this was not some backwater world. The feat was captured on camera, and the Empire quickly reacted. The planet was locked down. The stationed fleet, which was already impressive, has doubled, and... The Inquisitors have been spotted."

"Dammit... How many?" I asked, shaking my head.

"Three, including who we think is the current Grand Inquisitor," She responded.

"How have they not been found?" Tatnia asked before frowning and adding. "How do you know they haven't been found?"

"There were three other agents planetside when the lockdown began," She answered. "When her cover was blown trying to protect the children, she sought shelter with a second agent. They died at the hands of an Inquisitor, killed while making time for the first agent and the kids to escape. We know they are still free because the third is still in contact with them, though only at a distance."

"But why haven't they been found yet?" I asked, repeating Tatnia's question. "I'm glad they are, but if the planet is really in lockdown, and there are Inquisitors on the ground..."

"The agent who found them is good, one of the best. On top of that, I was told that she had an interest in the Force," Ahsoka explained. "She immediately recognized what had

happened and what kind of attention it would bring. According to what they knew, she is helping the eldest stay calm, reducing the likelihood that they would be found, even by Inquisitors."

"That... impressive, even if the Inquisitors are fed the absolute bare minimum in terms of force techniques," I said, shaking my head. They are kept purposely ignorant of the force, both dark and light, so they never pose a threat. The only reason they pose a threat to a fully trained Jedi is because of numbers, cheap tactics, and most of the strongest Jedi are long dead."

Ahsoka nodded in agreement, clearly not enjoying the bitter pill. After a long pause, she continued.

"The Rebellion, as much as it wants to help, cannot muster the forces to attack such a heavily guarded planet, especially not for just two agents and a force-sensitive kid and their sibling," Ahsoka said. "And I cannot contend with that many Inquisitors."

"So you need us," I said, getting a nod in return. "You know, I'm pretty sure I can't handle that many Inquisitors at once either."

"But together we have a decent chance," She said. "With your crew backing us up, we could infiltrate the planet, find them, and get them out."

Ahsoka continued to explain the situation, talking about the strength of the fleet in orbit, which was so large that the number of Star Destroyers outnumbered our entire fleet of starships. She described the general area in which our three targets were most likely, judging by the method of communication with the third and final Rebel agent. Apparently, there is a rock sitting by the corner of an abandoned building, which the third agent walked past every day on their way to work. Every morning, so far, the stone had been flipped over.

While incredibly crude, the method was effective and, honestly, kind of brilliant. As long as the rock turned over, the agent knew they were still alive, and they didn't have to break their routine at all to see it, so there was no suspicion raised. It was apparently an already agreed-upon method, planned from before the operation even began.

As Ahsoka continued to describe the scenario, Rider raised his hand and asked the question I was nervous about asking myself.

"Do we have an exfil plan?" He asked. "Or infiltration method? Anything at all?"

"No. the pre-agreed upon methods have all been cut off by the fleet."

"So, overwhelming forces, no plan of infiltration or getting out on the other side," I said, finally standing before looking around at my crew.

Every single member of my team looked back at me and nodded. All of them were ready and fearless. Even Tatnia, who was usually first to raise her hand and point out the risks behind charity at our own peril, gave me a subtle nod.

"Right... Well, it's time to get to work," I said, turning back to Ahsoka and smiling at her. "Our resources are yours, Ahsoka. Let's figure this out."