

We stayed up for another hour, testing out my bow and figuring out what it was capable of. Miru and Nal were both fascinated with it but refused to take it and try it out for themselves, which I didn't blame them for considering how much damage I was doing with it. We ended up testing it out on some spare armor pieces we had, the arrow easily punching through the armor and severely denting, sometimes even piercing the metal underneath, before dissipating into ambient magic.

When I finally put an end to the testing, the three of us went to bed. Physically I was brimming with energy, but after the long process of tuning and learning to conjure my bow, I was mentally exhausted. I'm pretty sure I was asleep before I even reached my room.

The next day we had finally arrived at Tacruna. We spent a while hovering over the planet, waiting for permission to land, which Tatnia blamed on the Imperials.

"When the Empire locks down a world, everyone coming in and out has to go through their services," She explained. "On Terr'skiar, the merchant leaders handled it, and they wanted everything to work as smoothly as possible, while the Imperials only care about security and intimidation. I've seen more heavily populated planets reduced down to one-at-a-time checks by a single Imperial officer."

True to her word, the Imperial fleet did their best to intimidate us, stopping just short of getting dangerously close to us, all of their weapons tracking us as they processed our request to land. The *Consular* class, in particular, cut an impressive shadow over us as it passed between us and the distant sun. Unfortunately for Imperials, we were here to steal one of those ships, meaning that they were basically just showing off the goods.

"They all seem to be in good shape," Vaz said, sitting in one of the gunner seats, watching as one of the *Guardian*-class ships flew by. "Well maintained and cared for."

"The *Consular* looks good as well," Nal commented, sitting next to the Shistavanen. "Appears to be the heavier-armed version."

All three ships were painted Imperial gray, with black highlights and the Empire's symbol painted in various places. They did all look like they were in good condition, but I noticed something attached to the two *Guardian*-class light cruisers.

"Those might be a problem, though," I said, pointing out the four TIE fighters attached to the hull of larger vessels, two for each ship. "Will we be able to tank those as we escape?"

"Absolutely," Calima responded, primarily focused on her flying, tapping her controls as we waited for permission to land. "Especially if we have a jump already worked out and ready."

When the Imperials finally permitted us to land, we made a beeline for the planet's largest city, easily finding a landing pad big enough for the *Chariot*. Calima landed us safely, and we all breathed a sigh of relief. Step one of our plan was complete.

"Alright... well, now we wait," I said, leaning back in my seat. "Vaz, we need to go shopping in a few hours, do me a favor and go through the weapons like we talked about. Tatnia, we can start looking for a shuttle tomorrow, so see if you can't find somewhere to shop. Racer, keep watch on those security feeds for when our target lands."

With us landing on the planet safely and Racer keeping an eye out for our target, I finally settled down with my grimoire. I didn't have nearly enough time to learn a spell, but as we were testing my conjured bow out the previous night, I had a rather big realization. In the game, in order for magic to be effective at higher levels, you needed to focus on it pretty heavily. Any melee user could whip out Sparks or Frostbite, but in order to use higher-level spells like Chain Lightning more than once in a fight, certain magic-focused perks were all but required.

While I didn't have to worry about stormtroopers out leveling the effectiveness of a basic Sparks spell because they were growing to match my level, spells from higher levels, like Adept, did take considerably more mana. Just maintaining the conjured bow had taken more magicka than maintaining my conjured sword. Suddenly the multitude of new tricks that filled my grimoire made a lot more sense. If I didn't learn them, I wouldn't be able to keep up with the higher-class spells.

Thankfully, learning these tricks, modifications to my spells, casting techniques, and methods did not take nearly as much time as learning a spell, even at a novice level. It was so short, in fact, that by the time I left my room a few hours later to go shopping with Vaz, I had already improved my conjuration spells in effectiveness and efficiency to a noticeable degree. I would need to spend a lot of time working on these real-life perk equivalents to stay ahead of the curve, but it was definitely worth it.

I found Vaz having a conversation with Nal, standing by a crate of weapons. The two of them had gone over our supply of backup and spare weapons, separating what we should keep and what wasn't worth lugging around. Besides Tatnia, Vaz, and myself, everyone had a high-quality side arm and primary. Nal even had a third weapon, the Proton Rifle, though really that was situational.

"These are the ones we are getting rid of?" I asked, Nal nodding in response.

"No point in keeping lower-powered and cheaper weapons," He said. "Need to keep track of gear, or we will accumulate junk."

"I believe I will serve as a quartermaster in the future," Vaz added. "I need a secondary role, and while my repair skills are amateurish at best, I do know how to inspect most types of equipment, and I am familiar with many types of weapons."

"That's good, Vaz, thanks for volunteering," I said with a smile. "Are you all set to head out?"

"Yes, this crate just needs to be attached to the Arrow."

After spending a few minutes finagling the crate to the back of the Arrow, Vaz climbed into the driver's seat, and we were off.

"What kind of weapon are you looking for?" I asked the lupine humanoid.

"Something to match what I used previously," She responded. "In truth, I do not know if I will be able to find what I am looking for, this is an Imperial planet with very little heavy trade."

Vaz, before she was captured and sent to the mines, had made a living as a minor bounty hunter. I had seen firsthand that she was pretty good with a normal blaster and blaster pistol, but apparently, she preferred a heavier weapon. Considering we didn't have that type of heavy firepower outside of our vehicles, I happily agreed to cover the costs of a new weapon. I was also looking to replace my lost pistol, as well as some armor for myself and Vaz. Tatnia might be okay with wearing whatever, but I wanted to pick out my look.

We arrived at our first stop but immediately realized that this wasn't going to have what we were looking for. The shop was too clean, and everything they offered were civilian models, low-powered trash that was worse than the backup equipment we had back on the *Chariot*. We did spend a few minutes walking around the equipment section, going through body armor and other stuff. Unfortunately, after an hour, we came to the conclusion that our initial assumption was correct, so we left for our next destination.

Our first steps into the building filled me with a lot more optimism about finding what we wanted. While the interior was much darker and a lot less clean, the pure variety of weapons on display was much more encouraging. There was a lot of stuff I didn't recognize, which was expected. The Twi'lek man behind the counter watched us closely as we made our way to a large blaster pistol display.

"What are you looking for?" The male asked as he followed us around, still behind the counter.

"We need three solid sidearms," I explained, looking up at the display. "Some armor as well."

"We have plenty of pistols," He responded, gesturing haphazardly to the wall display. "As for armor... I might actually have something that your friend fits into..."

The older Twi'lek clerk disappeared around back, leaving Vaz and I to share a look. A few minutes later, he returned with a small crate about two feet wide. He put it down on his counter, cracked it open, and turned it around to face us.

"This came in on a shipment of parts for a speeder shop a few years back. Don't quite know what species it was intended for, but they were digitigrade like your friend here, so it might fit," He explained. "I don't normally deal in stuff like this, not a lot of people looking for such high-grade armor, but the shop owner just wanted it gone."

I gestured for Vaz to try it on, and the skilled warrior quickly started inspecting the crate's contents. When she was done, she started pulling on the armor, despite never having used it before. She pulled on an armored body suit first, which pulled tight around her body when it was on, which was cool and made me think this was an expensive piece of gear. Plates of actual armor slid and locked into place easily, though the back plate required my help. When it was on, [she cut an impressive image](#), armored up like how Mandalorians designed their armor, with plates protecting vital and fragile spots. However, that was where the similarities ended. There were two mounts for what were probably cape anchors, but no cape or cloak was included.

"What is it rated for?" Vaz asked as she tested her range of motion, even jumping in place a few times.

"From what I've read, it should redirect most of the energy from a normal blaster rifle and stop pistol bolts easily."

"How much?" I asked, the clerk looking back at me.

"Three thousand," He responded easily. "My research says that its worth nearly twice that."

"Yeah, but who is gonna buy it here?" I pointed out. "Plus, you got it cheap. Two thousand."

"Are you kidding me? I'm not doing anything less than two and a half."

We bartered a bit more, going back and forth. I brought up everything we had to trade and added a few more items, including two [DC-17](#) blaster pistols, one for me and one for Tatnia, as well as a heavier-looking pistol called an [RKF-44](#) for Vaz. In the end, we shook on a payment of five hundred credits and everything we had brought with us to sell. I was pretty sure he was making out like a bandit, but we didn't really pay for anything we were trading, so it was hard to get upset about it.

"Is that all?" He asked as Vaz was pulling off her armor and putting it back into its crate.

"No. My friend is also looking for something a bit heavier. A lot heavier," I said. "You got anything like that?"

"That depends. Anything specific?" He asked, looking at us both much closer. "I do like to keep an eye out for interesting things ..."

"I am accustomed to heavy weapons, preferably something with a sustained rate of fire," Vaz explained, the man nodding along.

"I'm not sure I have what you're looking for then. I have some high-powered heavy rifles, but it sounds like you're looking for something even heavier than those," He guessed, Vaz nodding in confirmation. "Sorry to say you're not gonna find something like that around here. I could sell you a heavy repeater, but that's about it."

"I was aware it was a stretch, thank you for your time," She responded before looking at me and then back to the clerk. "I believe we have a list of energy cells of various makes that we are looking for as well."

I handed the clerk a list of the several different varieties of power cells my crew needed, and after a moment, he nodded, confirming he had most of what we were looking for, though unsurprisingly, he did not have any proton rifle ammo.

Once we had a pile of cells packed away in our crate, as well as a patching kit for Vaz's new armor, we started bartering, settling on eight hundred credits for the second lot. About an hour after arriving, we left the shop with most of what we needed, though the lack of a heavy weapon for Vaz was unfortunate. We guided our storage crate, which now contained spare power packs, and hooked it back up to the Arrow, while Vaz put her armor in one of the seats. When we were ready, Vaz climbed into the driver seat and took off, leaving me in the far back seat, right in front of the powerful sensor systems that Miru installed.

Wordlessly, Vaz kept us low to the ground, flying as if we were a land speeder, heading across the city towards the Imperial compound. After a few minutes, she gave me the signal, and I turned on the scanner, focusing it to the left, letting it scan a series of buildings.

"Passing the compound.... Now."

I could see the readout change as we passed the military base, the powerful sensors picking up the drastic change in materials as it transitioned from scanning civilian structures to military ones. Still, it had no problem picking up a huge amount of information as we passed by, even with how far we were away. Eventually, when we had passed by, we pulled away down another road, not wanting to arouse suspicion. As we pulled away, I shut down the scan. I could see the sensor computer already compiling the data into a rough map of the base.

"Looks like we got it," I said, spinning my chair around to face forward, leaving the computer to do its thing. "How about we pick up some take-out for dinner? The shelf-stable meals are decent, but I'm feeling something freshly made."

"This world is known for its fish..." Vaz mentioned, trailing off when I snorted.

"Yeah, sure, super expensive fish sounds pretty good," I responded. "Just don't hurt my bank account too much, yeah?"

Vaz snorted but nodded in agreement as I climbed forward inside the speeder, my job in the back complete. I squeezed into the passenger seat, tapping at the air speeder's computer to try and find a good place to eat nearby. Something affordable too.