

As much as I wanted to spend some time sitting in the lounge area of the *Talos Chariot*, I ended up back in the *Dark Blade's* passenger bay almost immediately after showing Vaz around the ship, including the large empty room at the back of the top deck, which I definitely hadn't forgotten about. There were some backup control systems along the wall, but everything else had been cleared out while Nova and her team were fixing the ship up, so now it was mostly empty.

After introducing Vaz to Calima, Miru came up and dragged me back down to the *Blade*, wanting me to tell the story of what had happened when we were gone while she was going over the ship. This led to me, Tatnia, and Vaz sitting in the passenger chairs in the *Blade*, watching the young Twi'lek work. She started by hooking Racer up to the ship's main computer core, letting him roll through the ship's systems while she and Leddy, who was now on their third color scheme, a deep forest green, scanned the ship with handheld equipment, looking for anomalous devices and emissions. Nal, Calima, and Julius were also present, with the former two hanging their feet over the edge of the docking portal and the latter sitting in the cockpit.

I started the story off with Tatnia and I being chased through the streets of Daalang, the planetary security forces forcing us into a bounty hunter trap. I guessed that they had done that on purpose, but Nal chimed in and assured me they hadn't.

"Stayed on Daalang for days, looking for you. Trying to find your trail," He explained. "Security forces were only told you were wanted. Couldn't trace where that information came from."

"So the bounty hunters tricked the police into herding us around?" I asked with a raised eyebrow. "That's... a lot of work, kind of impressive for how long we had been on the planet. How much was our bounty?"

"Thirty-five thousand for you, Boss, twenty for Tatnia," Julius said from the cockpit. "Nal and Miru still have twenty."

"What the hell... Are we going to have to kill Jabba?" I asked before looking at Nal. "Would that stop the bounties?"

"If he already gave the money to the guild, no," He answered. "But Jabba is notoriously cheap..."

"So he probably hasn't," I finished, shaking my head. "Alright, that's an option then. Either way, we need to be more careful, especially around Hutt space. It's also just a matter of time before I get noticed for my abilities again."

"We knew this would happen, Boss," Julius reminded me. "Especially with you wanting to join the rebellion."

“Yeah... I just wanted a bit more time to build things up first,” I explained. “I was hoping to have another ship the same scale as the *Chariot*, a few starfighters, and maybe a few support craft.”

“You realize how many credits it would take to keep a fleet, even as small as that, going, right?” Calima asked. “Fuel alone is going to be difficult...”

“Which is why one of the stipulations for joining up would be that the fleet sticks together and that they help keep it supplied,” I explained, getting an appreciative nod from Calima.

“So... what do we do?” Miru asked, still holding her scanning device, having stopped once I stopped talking about what we had gone through.

“We get to work. I think we start looking for more targets, maybe put mercenary and bounty hunting to the side and start making a list,” I explained. “Anything connected to Jabba the Hutt just became a preferred target, for example. But that’s for tomorrow. For now, I need to take a break and sleep in my own bed.”

“After you finish the story,” Miru said, threateningly pointing her scanner at me.

“Yeah yeah, after we finish the story.”

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It took a few more hours for us to make our way through our story, ending with my fight with the Inquisitor. Miru was enthralled by that part, even more than the rest, but I was much more interested to hear how Tatnia and Vaz handled a dozen stormtroopers on their own.

According to Vaz, when they ran back around the wreckage of the exploded YT, they immediately split up. Vaz kept running, sprinting across the landing pad to the next ship, while Tatnia hid behind some rubble. The stormtroopers took the bait and followed after Vaz, allowing Tatnia to pop up out of cover and attack them from behind. Once Tatnia started hitting them from behind, Vaz attacked from the cover of the nearest ship. Their trap evened the odds, but the stormtroopers were still able to injure them due to their superior numbers.

When we were done recounting our missing time, we left Miru, Leddy and Racer to finish their scanning, Nal keeping them company while the rest of us went back into the *Chariot*. I headed up to the lounge and dropped onto the couch-like seat that took up a corner of the space, letting out a long sigh. Calima, who was walking back to check the cockpit, chuckled as she walked by.

“It is good to have you back, Boss,” She said, crossing into the cockpit, keeping the door open. “Nal did his best... to keep the situation calm, but it felt... directionless.”

"I'm glad to be back, Calima, it was not fun being gone," I said, sitting up on the couch. "You guys would have been okay though."

For a while, I just sat on the couch, soaking in the lounge and the feeling of returning home. Unfortunately, it didn't take long for me to get antsy. I wasn't about to jump up and get back to the grind, I had been serious about wanting to take it easy for a day or so. Unfortunately, my inability to do nothing for very long soon forced me off of the couch. I stretched and made my way through the ship, heading to the bottom deck, and making my way to the docking portal, only to find it sealed up, a red light blinking along the side.

"Uhh... Miru?" I called out, looking down the ship's centerline and into the cargo area. "Whats the red light mean?"

"I'm over here," She said, calling from her workshop, prompting me to leave the portal and head to her. "Leddy and Racer are handling the exterior scans of the *Black Blade*. They had to depressurize the ship to do it."

"Right, I... Miru, what are you doing with that?" I asked, doing my best to channel my dad's disappointed voice as I spotted the lightsaber on Miru's bench.

"Just running some scans, I promise!" She said defensively. "I was gonna ask before doing anything else, I swear!"

"You need to learn a bit about boundaries, Miru," I said, leaning against one of the tool cabinets lining the back wall of her workshop.

"Sorry... I just can't help myself! I've always wanted to know how a lightsaber works!" She admitted, looking suitably ashamed. "And it was just sitting there..."

I let out a sigh and pushed off the table and looked over her shoulder, the young engineer returning to her scans. Most of the information went over my head, but I could see she had identified the power source and started a scan of the two kyber crystals it contained.

"Be careful, I do not want to have to wipe you off the floor because the edge lord who made this trapped his weapon," I explained, her eyes going wide as she turned to look at me. "And you would have known about that possibility if you had asked first."

"Right... sorry."

"Just learn your lesson before it gets you hurt, alright?" I said, the pink-skinned Twi'lek nodding rapidly.

"Is there anything else I should know about it?" She asked, and I chuckled, glad she had at least learned that much.

“Yes, kyber crystals have a presence in the Force, and lightsabers themselves require the Force to be put together, something about everything needing to be perfect,” I explained. “Or at least, that's what I've been told. Either way, if it breaks, *do not* reassemble it. We can't take the risk of it exploding or something because it's not precisely put back together.”

“I can be precise.” She said with a slight pout.

“I know, I don't doubt that, but you have no idea what to adjust it to,” I explained, getting a confused look in return. “Look at the crystals, see how they aren't a uniform shape? How do you know which precise orientation to put them in to get the perfect energy... Transference? Pass through? Whatever, you get what I'm saying, right?”

“Yeah, I get it... But how would a Jedi know?”

“Their connection to the Force lets them feel the answer to some things,” I explained. “Basically, they would listen to the Force, and it would tell them when it was perfectly in place.”

“That's... disappointing,” She said with a frown. “Are you sure that's how it works?”

“To be honest? No, I'm not sure,” I admitted with a shrug, knowing that between Legends, Disney and everything in between, lightsaber lore was incredibly jumbled. “But I don't want to find out here, on a ship surrounded by vacuum. Besides, this lightsaber could come in handy. It's an impressive tool, and it would be a shame to break it. So, for now, just scans. I'll work on finding you some stuff to mess around with, promise. ”

She nodded with a smile before turning to focus on her scan, tapping the screen occasionally as she guided whatever tool she was using to get a look inside the internals of the weapon. As usual, I couldn't make heads or tails of what I was looking at, but she seemed to understand at least the gist of it.

“It's a simple design, but you're right, the level of precision needed... I could maybe do it if I had a few years to make specially designed and zeroed machines, but we are talking lab settings, with no room for error systems, and hundreds of thousands of credits. And even then, I wouldn't be certain. The level of precision it would require is mind-boggling, and that's if you know the precise angle the crystal needs to be in, which I don't know the first thing about, ” She admitted, shaking her head. “With this equipment, all I can't tell you is that it's not trapped. But the only evidence I have that it's properly calibrated at all is that you claim it worked not too long ago.”

I nodded and reached around her, grabbing the lightsaber from her workstation. I carried it out of her workshop and to a slightly more open area in the cargo hold. I lifted the dangerous weapon up in front of myself, double-checking to make sure neither end was pointing at me. I spent about three seconds holding it out before cursing and looking back at Miru.

“The top button inlaid with a goldish-colored metal is the activation, the one inlaid with a silver metal activates the spinning,” She explained with a smirk. “Double tap the saber button to activate the second blade.”

I nodded and turned back to the lightsaber, my thumb hovering over the activation button before I realized I was being stupid and quickly conjuring my bound armor.

Then I hit the button.

The lightsaber extended with the classic snap-hiss, the thrum of the deep red energy blade filling the cargo hold. It cast an eerie red light across everything, which in turn created long, harsh shadows. I swung the blade around for a moment before activating the second blade, which snapped out with a similar sound, the red glow now twice as intense.

After a moment of hesitation, I held out the lightsaber and tapped the second button. Immediately the blades began to spin, picking up speed ridiculously fast. I had no idea how it worked, but it was fast enough that it made me very, very nervous. I quickly shut it down, deactivating the spinning and turning off the blades.

“Wait, that’s it?” Miru asked. “You’re not gonna swing it around or try to cut anything?”

“No, this thing is a hull breach waiting to happen,” I said, shaking my head. “When I said it would be useful, I really meant it as a tool, like carving through doors and stuff. Chances are I will *not* be using this as a weapon, especially now that I know my conjured swords work against lightsabers.”

“That’s... kinda boring,” She said, and I shrugged.

“Probably. I might consider using one that doesn’t have all these extra bits,” I admitted gesturing to the main gimmick of the spinning blade. “But that would require modifying it, and I’m not willing to sacrifice its utility for a chance to get a weapon that I already have a suitable replacement for anyway.”

The younger Twi’lek pouted for a moment before eventually letting out a groan of disappointment and turning back to her workshop.

“How about you take a break?” I asked, Miru turning back to look at me. “Why don’t you show me what you were working on while I was away?”

“How do you know I’ve been working on something specific?” She asked, squinting at me suspiciously.

“Because I know you,” I responded with a smirk. “You were stressed and had a lot of downtime. I’m surprised you didn’t build a whole new ship.”

She slapped my stomach but didn’t deny that she kept herself busy. After a few seconds, the urge to share what she had done beat out the urge to prove me wrong, and she smiled.

“Well... you remember that idea I mentioned for the sensor suite from the ‘raiders’?” She said, getting excited. “Well, I finished it! Come on!”

She excitedly led me through the first level of the ship, making a beeline for the Arrow, which was parked in the starboard hangar. The speeder was resting on its landing struts, the side door open. She stood by the door and gestured inside.

With a curious look, I leaned into the speeder, looking around for a moment before noticing the difference. Along the back of the interior, what was once a small storage space for gear, guns, or whatever we wanted was now filled with the scanner system. It was locked into a roller cage of some kind, cleanly welded and finished, though unpainted. It was all well done and clean but still had the custom “done in a workshop” look.

“I hooked it up with the systems and the exterior of the speeder. You still have to run it from the actual equipment, but the data it gathers can be read from any screen connected to the main system,” The excited mechanic explained. “Then, because I took up all of the cargo space, I added this!”

She walked around the back of the speeder, where there were two new mounting points.

“These are mag-locks, like the ones we used to attach the raindrops to the ship hull, but smaller. It will let the Arrow haul a small cargo crate. It won’t be able to go nearly as fast when it’s loaded down, but Nal pointed out that carrying cargo is important, so I added it on.”

“Nice work Miru, that’s going to come in handy,” I said honestly. “Have you had a chance to test the scanner yet?”

“No, we’ve been busy looking for you,” She responded with a shrug. “I mean, we scanned the ship pretty well, but that’s about it.”

We spent a few more minutes going over what she had made before eventually going up to the lounge to have dinner. I almost had to drag Miru back with me, but ultimately, she did agree to take a longer break. The whole crew spent a while together, reconnecting and talking, enjoying an extended dinner break before we went our separate ways across the ship.