

Considering I had just shot lightning from my hands, I wasn't entirely surprised when not everyone jumped to get their binders removed. In the end, I ended up freeing the Wookiee, whose binders were actually larger and more heavy-duty than my own, as well as the male and one of the female humans, the Duros and one of the female Twi'lek.

"What's next?" The Duros asked, looking around the interior. "We jump out when they open the hatch?"

"No, cannot wait. safe place be strong." The Twi'lek said in broken basic. "Need out now."

The Wookiee nodded and huffed in agreement before letting out a low growl and whine, pointing to my hands.

"Not really the time to explain my talents, big guy." I pointed out, stepping towards the door. "Do you-"

The Wookiee grabbed my hand and started pulling me to the back of the ship, easily overpowering me with his massive strength. He pressed my hand against the back of the ship's interior, releasing me and letting out another long growl, chuffing at the end.

"What, you want me to shock here?" I asked, looking at him like he was crazy. "Wouldn't we fall out of the sky?"

"No, no, he is right. An older, retrofitted transport like this isn't going to have the right insulation between us and the thrusters," The human female responded, having stepped closer when the Wookiee pulled me to the back.

"That's great, but I'm worried about falling out of the sky. How high are we right now?"

"The forward thrust and the repulsorlifts are separate systems for a transport this large," The human female explained. "If you knock them out, they will be forced to land, not plummet from the sky."

I looked at the Wookiee, who nodded in confirmation.

"Alright, sure," I said, shrugging before putting up both of my hands, holding them a few inches away from the wall. "Maybe hold on to something anyway?"

By now, my Magicka was already mostly full, so after I pulled and shaped my magic, pushing it out into a double casting of sparks, I held it, streaming electricity into the metal wall. The lights along the back all sparked and popped before the rest of them flickered once. I stopped, about half of my magicka pool empty.

When the sound of the arcing and sparking electricity stopped, the sound of the speeder's power systems struggling and a high-pitched whining filled the room. A few seconds passed, and the speeder began to noticeably descend. A mumble of excitement passed through everyone in the back, and I shared a look and a nod with the Wookiee.

"Good call," I said, looking over at the woman as well. "Glad you spoke up."

We all moved around a bit into more natural positions, kicking the ruined binders to the far side of the compartment. I moved next to the door, just barely within arms reach. Those of us with freed hands hid them behind ourselves as the speeder rocked slightly from a less than perfect landing. We waited for a long moment, silently watching the only entrance into the holding area.

Just when I was about to give up on waiting, the door slid open, revealing one of the guards, of a species I didn't recognize. He was holding his blaster pistol out, ready to open fire if he needed to. He stepped up into the holding area but stayed in the door. He was silent as he scanned the room, his blaster up and his other hand on the rod they used to control the binders. He was about to turn out and leave when he spotted the two singed and slightly cratered impact points of my spark spells. His eyes bulged, and he quickly tapped the restraint wand, causing everyone still wearing a cuff to shout, curse, and scream.

Unfortunately for him, this didn't help at all.

I blasted the back of his head with electricity, locking the humanoid alien up completely, only a long groan escaping from his mouth. The Twi'lek reached out and yanked the control rod from his hand, immediately using it to unlock everyone's binders in a quick wave. The Duros reached out and grabbed the slaver's blaster, tearing that from his grip as well. He quickly pressed it up against his side, along his armpit, and fired twice. The whine of the blaster was muffled by the now-dead guard's arm, with barely any light escaping either. The slaver fell to the ground as I released my spell, first to his knees before slumping to the ground. Smoke rose steadily from the corpse.

With our first hurdle down, I was already moving, stepping around the corpse and through the doorway. Magic danced and sparked around my hands as I started prepping the spell again, stepping out of the speeder.

We were in the middle of a massive city, with huge buildings all around us, which was unsurprising considering what planet we were on. Several bystanders were looking at us, but no one was moving to do anything. I turned to see another of the guards, inspecting the speeder less than twenty feet away. He caught me out of the corner of his eye, doing an actual double take. His eyes widened, his alien jaw and large ears moving erratically as he began pulling out his blaster. I raised both hands and blasted him with electricity, sparks dancing up and around his body as one stream struck his torso and the other seared his face.

The slaver guard twitched and stumbled, the lower stream of electricity doing very little through his armored outfit, but the stream to his unprotected face clearly caused more damage. I held the beam as I walked closer, only cutting it off when I was in range to lift my booted foot up, kicking him in the face as hard as I could. I followed it up with a second and third boot to the face after he had fallen down back to the ground.

I turned around just in time to see the Wookiee tear the driver from the vehicle cockpit and slam him into the side of the speeder. The driver was still moving after the first and second blows but went still after that. When the Wookiee finally dropped him, there was a noticeable bloody dent in the side of the vehicle.

More of my fellow liberated prisoners poured out of the transport speeder, looking around, a lot of them stuck with lost looks on their faces. I shook my head and started going through the pockets of the guard I had taken down.

I took everything that was useful, including a few credit chips, a comms unit, a vibroknife and sheath, as well as a few spare power packs for the blaster. I pulled off the armor he was wearing on his chest, quickly pulled his blaster holster off, and stood up straight.

The female human who had spoken up before was already done stripping the guard the Wookiee had splattered while the Duros looked around, holding the blaster at the ready.

“So... we should go, right?” I asked, nodding towards a nearby alleyway.

“Yes, whoever runs this operation will investigate,” The Duros responded. “We should not be here when they do.”

“Right. Well, I’m heading this way,” I said, grabbing the crappy chest plate the guard had been wearing. “You’re welcome to join in, strength in numbers and all that.”

With that, I turn and walk away from the wrecked speeder, stepping into an alleyway and disappearing into the shadows of Nar Shaddaa.

I had two people following me by the time I took the first left turn in the alleyway. I breathed a large sigh of relief when I saw that the Wookiee stayed behind. It would have been nice to have an infallible ally that I could completely trust, but the idea of having someone that was dedicated to me, putting my life before theirs... sacrificing for me like Chewbacca did for Han... honestly sounded exhausting.

I stopped around the corner, letting them catch up while I put on the *very* basic armor IO had just looted. Even though its previous owner had been an alien, it still covered my vital areas. Once that was on, I started clipping on the pistol holster.

I would need to work out how to use this specific pistol at some point because my extra knowledge basically stopped at "point and pull the trigger." The Duros and the human woman turned the corner and spotted me as I was finishing the holster, the former giving me a nod. I pushed off the wall and nodded to them. I continued to walk down the alley, both of them walking beside me.

"What were they planning?" I asked, referring to the people we left behind. "Please tell me they had something."

"They were going to make their way to a starport. Hopefully they will find a ship to take them off-world." The Duros answered. "We are fortunate. If they had chipped us before, we would already be dead."

"Explosive slave chip?" I asked the blue alien nodding. "Jesus, that's fucked. Need to come up with a way to beat that..."

We kept on walking for a while, doing our best to put as much distance between us and the wrecked speeder, without looking like we were running from anything.

"Do either of you have any idea how much trouble we are going to have to avoid for what just went down?" I asked as we passed a few carts selling food. "I'm not familiar with the area or the trade. I'm from a peaceful planet, nowhere near here."

Apparently, we had stumbled into an unofficial marketplace of some kind, with various carts and tents set up along a wider-than-usual alleyway. The Duros actually pulled out a credit chip he must have gotten as loot and bought something from one of the vendors as we passed.

"Depends on who was running the operation and how important the guys we just killed are," The woman answered with a shrug. "Considering how shit their equipment was, we should be fine."

I nodded and reached out my hand, which the woman looked at for a moment, before looking up at me suspiciously. When she didn't shake it I scoffed.

"The whole lighting thing is ranged out to like fifty feet. If I wanted to zap you, I don't need to shake your hand."

She paused for a moment before reaching out and shaking my hand. Her grip was firm and her hands were callused.

"It's nice to meet you, circumstances notwithstanding," I said, squeezing her hand before offering the same to the Duros. "Names Deacon Roy. So why did you two follow me?"

"I could get myself home eventually. Not much waiting for me there." The Duros responded, shaking my hand with his large, knotted fingers. "Besides, I saw you shoot lightning from your hand. Sounds like the beginning of an adventure. And Nal Tog. That's my name."

"Adventure, huh? I can promise a whole heck of a lot of excitement if you stick around me, at least," I admitted. "I don't know about adventure, but I don't plan on doing boring very much."

Nal nodded, and I turned to look at the human woman, who shrugged, trying to figure out just how much to reveal.

"Let's just say I'm pretty much already back to where I was before," She said, gesturing to the pistol on one hip and the small bag on the other. "Besides, it just felt right. And I'm Tatnia."

"Well... Let's see if we can't do any better than the bare-bones basics." I said with a smile when she didn't give her last name.

We kept walking, the streets starting to get dark as the sky changed. As it did, the quality of people walking on the streets began to drop at an alarming rate.

At some point, we stopped to ask for directions to someplace cheap to sleep and were directed to a run-down hotel. It was a large building, old and worn, with graffiti covering the exterior walls. It wasn't exactly the Ritz, but at this point, it was more about getting off the street than finding someplace nice.

We stepped into the lobby and waved down a clerk, who was behind some sort of blaster-proof transparent glass. I had intended to only stay for the night, banking on finding somewhere better the following day, but even that would have drained what little money we had recovered during our escape. In the end, I traded my blaster pistol to the clerk behind the counter for three days in a room with two beds.

"Was that really the smartest thing to do?" Tatnia asked as we stepped into the turbolift, riding it up four floors. "I know you've got... other options, but it kind of stands out."

"I know, but not standing out was never really an option for me," I explained with a shrug. "It's going to get a lot weirder."

"How were you doing that?" Nal asked as we stepped into the small room. "Did you have implants? I didn't see any, so perhaps it's biological?"

"Really? You expect me to spill all my secrets right off the bat?" I said, sitting down in the only chair the room had. "Stick around a while first."

"I very much plan on it. I am very curious where your journey leads," He assured me, sitting down at the edge of the bed.

"Right. Well, I should warn you, I don't plan on taking it easy."

"That sounds like you have some sort of plan," Tatnia said, crossing her arms and leaning against the wall next to the door.

I made a so-so gesture with my hand.

"Kinda? More of a vague outline than anything. See, it was slavers who brought us here, so I figure that it should be slavers who fund us getting out," I explained with a smirk. "I mean, they are the perfect target. I don't know about you, but I will sleep easy, well-fed, and happy knowing I made money by killing slavers. And this planet is full of them. Right?"

"Your idea is to steal from slavers?" She asked, an eyebrow raised. "Just like that?"

"Well, we would have to start small," I admitted. "The lighting thing? Yeah, I can do much more than that. I just need some more time to work on it. So we start small and see how we work together. I also need more experience. I'll be the first to admit I don't have much in the killing department."

"You can do more than just the electricity thing?" Nal asked, leaning forward. "What else? Why does it require time?"

"My friend, I can do so much more," I assured him. "There is a reason I didn't have a problem handing over the pistol. So, are you two in?"

"What makes you think you think we are any better off than you?" Tatnia asked, eyeing me skeptically.

"Well, Nal knew his way around that blaster pistol way too well to be a novice," I pointed out, looking over at the red-eyed alien. "You knew just how to kill him and keep it quiet."

"This isn't my first rancor ride," Nal admitted with a shrug.

"And you have the whole "grown up street urchin" vibe going on," I said, looking back at Tatnia. "Which, if I'm willing to dive into a bit of a stereotype, makes you a jack of all trades regarding the shady streets."

She glared at me for a few seconds before shaking her head and looking away. Her lack of denial told me the answer, though, and I couldn't help but chuckle.

“Well, both of you think it over,” I said before either of them could respond. “Sleep on it even. We have plenty of opportunities to talk tomorrow.”