

After Luke pulled the plug on the insane super tactical droid, we quickly realized that while we had defeated the primary threat, there were probably still droids all over the facility. We also realized that none of us were skilled enough to slice into the computer and send out a shutdown command. Luckily, as Nevue and his team had been working their way around the facility, they had inevitably gone down, which meant retrieving them and bringing them down to the central computer core only involved destroying a small group of B1s.

The slicer made quick work of the CIS jamming, allowing Ahsoka to reach out to the ships stationed around us and let them know everything was alright. As predicted, the negotiations for surrender had gone exactly nowhere. Instead, they had been waiting it out, pretending to go along with the unstable droid's plans to buy us time to make it through the facility. In the end, they had been closer to calling in reinforcements to smash through the CIS droids than they had been to surrendering.

When Fostar finally cracked the droid control program, he sent all of the functioning droids down to the lower hangar bays, easily fitting everything left into two of them. He also discovered some logs that explained what had happened.

According to the records, close to the end of the war, not much more than a month, the people in charge of the facility were starting to feel the pressure. They needed something to turn the war around, and they believed new tactical droids were their best bet. They began experimenting on their tactical droids, trying to come up with the best way to modify them to increase their abilities. Instead, they managed to drive one insane. It took over the entire base and all its droids, slaughtering the scientists and workers.

Apparently, the droid's plan was to wait for a supply ship to stop by, capture it, and use it to spread its influence and take control over the entire droid army. It would then use its "superior" tactical prowess to win the war. As far as Fostar could tell, its primary directives had been shifted enough that it came to the conclusion that the organic portion of the CIS was to blame for their losses. Considering the entire army was subtly designed to fail from the start by an organic... it was closer to the truth than most.

With the facility cleaned of any potential hostiles, we began a much more intensive run-through of the entire facility. Lieutenant Soran even assembled an extra third group from his troops to help. We went through every hall, opened every door, and cleared every single room we came across, wanting to make absolutely sure that the building was as safe as we could make it because once we were done, groups of engineers and specialists would be coming through.

At the end of the first day, after working for most of it, Ahsoka and Luke were due to return to Thila Command. Both of them were too important to waste their time hanging around doing menial tasks after all, not when they could be doing more good elsewhere.

"It was good to meet you, Deacon. Your... abilities are baffling, but I'm happy that you're on our side," Ahsoka said as we stood in one of the remaining hangar bays, used as a drop-off and pick-up point. "Your knowledge of things you have no right knowing is frustrating, to say the least, but I suppose I can't complain when you seem to use it to help more than harm."

"Good to know I'm keeping everyone on their toes," I responded with a smirk, holding out my hand, which she took and shook. "It was good working with you, Ahsoka. I hope we can do it again soon."

"Join the rebellion, and we just might," She answered.

"I'll think about it."

She seemed surprised by my admission but said nothing, instead opting to head up the ramp of the [small ship](#) she and Luke would use to get back to Thila Command. Luke, who was talking to Julius, spotted that she had left and patted Julius's shoulder before moving to follow her. He stopped in front of me, unsure of what to say.

"Thank you for helping me," He said, finally deciding. "I know it's a lot to ask, but could you train me some more?"

"Ahsoka wasn't completely wrong when she said that there is someone out there who can train you," I responded, holding up my hand when he opened his mouth to complain. "But that doesn't mean you can't work on it in the meantime. Continue doing your kinetic meditation, but focus on slowly learning how to reach that state without moving. When you can reliably reach out and feel that connection at will, try suffusing your body with the Force, letting it guide you more organically. Next time I see you, if you feel like you could use some more direction, I'll help more."

"What about getting better with the lightsaber?" He asked, sounding more impassioned than he probably meant to. He noticed and looked away, shaking his head. "Sorry, I shouldn't be so demanding, but..."

"I suppose you felt rather useless fighting alongside Ahsoka?" I asked, the young Jedi nodding with a frown. "Don't beat yourself up about it. She has been using the Force and her lightsabers for much longer than you. That said, maybe see if General Syndulla can't find a way to get you a sparring droid or three. They could likely teach you sword fighting styles that you could then modify to work better with a lightsaber."

Luke's eyes lit up at the idea of the sparring droid, realizing there was a way to cut reliance on Ahsoka or whoever she insisted was out there to train him. Before he could say thanks, I cut him off again.

"The most important thing to realize, though, is how important balance is for Force-sensitives. The Force amplifies emotions, especially when you use your emotions to force the Force to work," I explained, making sure to sound as serious as possible. "Don't let things fester, don't let your frustration win. And that doesn't mean smashing it down whenever you get annoyed. Emotions only become worse when you repress them. It means understanding where your emotions are coming from, being honest with yourself and, if necessary, fixing the problem that caused the imbalance. This is more important than anything else I could teach you, because becoming too unbalanced and still calling on the Force can make you spiral, drawing you into falling to the dark side."

"I would never-"

"It's got nothing to do with wanting Luke. It wouldn't be your choice." I said, pausing for a long moment while I tried to come up with a way to explain. "I'm not trying to scare you, but the dark side is a threat to every Force-sensitive, young and old, master or novice. The Jedi Order used to preach rising above your emotions, but that only ended up pushing them too far in a different direction, unbalancing them and blinding them. In the same vein, leaning too far in the other direction, submitting to your anger, your aggression, and letting your emotions rule you is how you fall into darkness. By maintaining a balance, by understanding yourself, working through your anger and your hate, and learning to be at peace with yourself, that is how you remain balanced and keep from falling."

"That... I knew the dark side was a problem. Obi-wan mentioned it, mentioned it's what the Sith use," He said, shaking his head, brushing his hair to the side. "That's a lot to deal with."

"It's a heavy weight. I can't say that I envy you," I admitted with a shrug. "But it's a burden you're locked to, and if you succeed, you will be able to help so many people. You have the potential to shift the course of the galaxy, Luke Skywalker. I have faith in you. And as aloof as she might be with you, so does Ahsoka."

"Thank you. You've given me a lot to think about, but thank you," The young hero said, reaching out his hand. "It was nice meeting you, Deacon. I hope we meet again soon."

"I'm sure you will," I assured him, shaking his hand. "Don't tell anyone, but my crew and I plan on officially joining up soon. We just need to finish a few pieces of business and get all our affairs in order first."

"That's great! We could always use people like you and your team!" He said happily, his smile absolutely contagious. "Hopefully, I can introduce you to Han and Leia."

"Looking forward to it," I said, returning his smile. "Do me a favor. When you get to Thila Command, let Pola and Miru know how it went and that everything is fine."

"Yeah, no problem."

Soon after that, Luke climbed the entry ramp of the small ship, which rose up and sealed shut. Not long after that, the ship rose into the air and slowly backed out of the hangar bay, leaving me alone with Julius.

"God, I feel so preachy!" I shouted, shaking myself as if to get it off of me. "I hate sounding like that."

"I don't know, Boss, sounded pretty good to me," Julius said with a shrug.

"I know, that's the problem! C'mon, let's go," I said, clapping my hands and turning to the exit. "I want to check out as much of this place as possible so I know what's on the table when we start to negotiate."

We spent another full day at the facility, exploring every nook and cranny I could get into, noting things I wanted into my datapad. The base had an incredible selection, including an array of odds and ends that seemed to be around to test programming modifications. We spotted several people doing the same thing as us, tallying inventory for the Rebellion. Eventually, on the morning of the third day on base, General Syndulla arrived to do her own inspection and eventually discuss who got what. A representative of Nova also arrived, but they kept to themselves.

When we finally gathered in a small, recently cleaned meeting room on the facility's second floor. I had a solid list of what I was looking for, what I really wanted, and what I could hopefully convince them to let me have. Despite that, I was nervous. These negotiations mattered just as much as our mission to clear the base, as they determined just what we got as compensation.

"I want to start off this discussion by stating that we plan on setting up a base at this location," She explained. "With control over the central computer core, we can control all droids in the area, giving us a substantial defense force."

"And what exactly will that do to our cut?" The Nova representative, a Rodian by the name of Thunn, asked. "If you do not plan on selling anything, how will we make money?"

"We will pay for your cut out of pocket, assuming that Nova still doesn't want anything?"

"Are there any repair droids, pilotable starfighters, ships, or stocks of parts?" He asked.

"There were some repair droids," She admitted before glancing at me. "But I get the feeling those will be a highly contested item."

"They will be," I agreed, getting a harsh look from the Rodian. "I would assume splitting them between the two of us, at least-"

"Absolutely not," Thunn said, shaking his head. "Nova was promised forty percent while you maintain twenty. You-

"Actually, that number was for the first raid," General Syndulla said, surprising both Thunn and myself. "Because of that, and because Nova did not assist in any way, especially after we *asked* if she wanted to, we think it's only fair to renegotiate the cut."

I looked at General Syndulla, my eyes wide. I had been expecting a sort of losing battle in this negotiation, where I would be sacrificing the credits and banking on goodwill to get a few of the things we spotted. Instead, I was being offered a more equal spot at the table.

"We were thinking thirty-five, thirty-five, thirty," Twi'lek said. "With thirty going to Nova."

"Unacceptable!" The Rodian said, standing from his chair. "And to think Nova insisted that you would deal fairly with her. I was under the impression you had a more friendly relationship with her."

"We value Nova greatly and would like to believe we continue to be friends. However, she insisted on not helping with this engagement," She repeated, leaning back hand, crossing her arms. "Further, it has come to my attention that she was less than friendly with our allies and further refuses to work with any more Jedi or Force-sensitives. Deacon and his crew are our allies, have fought alongside our troops, and promised to continue to support us. While we are very thankful that Nova has so far been agreeable, we are not ignorant of the amount of credits she has made from our business. If our analysts are correct, nearly seventy-five percent of her business is with us."

The Rodian attempted to stare down General Syndulla for a long moment, only to fail utterly. When she didn't even flinch, he leaned back with a sound of disapproval.

"It seems there is no recourse. I am forced to accept this for now, but know that Nova will not be happy with this sudden change in our agreement."

"Of course. Now, let's get back to the list. The Rebel alliance is amicable to let you and Deacon split the repair capable droids, as long as we can reduce the total credit payout...."

Over the next two hours, we hammered out a final deal. Thankfully, the Rodian was only really interested in the repair-capable droid, which meant most of that negotiating was done between Hera and myself, meaning it was much more amicable.

At the end of the day, Nova was getting three hundred thousand credits and fifteen repair droids, a mix of Clone Wars-era astromech, LE-series, and a few other models. I was getting a mix of ten, which was already more than I had room for, as well as ten naval droids, ten more

B2s, six tri-fighters, a mix of supplies, and two lots of tools that seemed to be specifically created to work on CIS droids.

A significant portion of our credits also went to a group of ten [BX commando droids](#), which I found standing unpowered in one of the laboratories. After thanking whatever god was listening that they hadn't been reactivated by Faudi, I knew I had to find a way to bargain for them. They would make the perfect addition to our growing droid support and would most likely be able to keep up with any of the crew in combat.

In the end, we were bringing home all I managed to bargain for and a hundred and eighty-five thousand credits. I was thrilled with the results, especially because we managed to do all that *and* significantly increase our standing with the Rebellion.