

Nevue stepped out of the cargo bay slowly, his hands out and empty as he moved. When he was a few feet ahead of us, he stopped.

"I'm Nevue Loc. I messaged ahead that I was returning?" He called out, his voice echoing throughout the large stone hangar.

After a few seconds, a head popped out around the corner of one of the entrances into the large empty hangar bay. It stuck out just long enough for Nevue to spot it before dipping back around the corner. He smiled and called out.

"Thak Gorn! I saw that, it's good to see you survived!" He called out, turning his head to look back at us. "He was part of the team I ran with."

After about a minute, the [Gotal](#) stepped out fully from around the corner, followed by two more people, a Twi'lek woman, and a [Mon Calamarian](#) male, following with him. Both of the additional people were wearing a vest uniform that I vaguely recognized as an officer's vest from some of the movies. They slowly made their way into the hangar, stopping about ten feet away from us.

"Nevue, it's good to see you alive," The Gotal, Thak, said when they stopped. "Who are your companions?"

"They are friends. Saved me from slavery," Nevue explained. "Are we the only survivors?"

"No, Salo and Maraliz also made it out," He responded solemnly.

"Only four?" Nevue asked, shaking his head. "Dammit..."

"You said your friends rescued you from slavery?" The Gotal asked. "How did you get wrapped up in that? We have you listed as KIA because you were cut off and wounded last we saw. Your stupid plan to lead them away is the only reason any of us lived, by the way."

"Well... I'm glad something good came from it, at least," He responded ruefully, though a smile quickly returned. "I managed to give the Imps the slip at the last second, but I passed out in my hiding space from blood loss."

He lifted up his shirt to show a gnarly-looking blaster scar that I had no idea he had. It was around the left side of his abdomen and looked like a mix of a crazing bullet wound and a high-temperature burn that had long ago healed up.

"Someone found me, slapped a bacta patch on me, and shipped me off to Nar Shaddaa," He explained, lowering his shirt. "I got tagged after we landed, and I spent the last few months weighing if I should just get it over with by killing the people who bought me. Luckily it didn't come to that."

The group was silent for a moment. The Twi'lek woman shared a look with Mon Calamarian before looking at Thack. After a moment, she sighed and looked back at the rest of us.

"Alright, for now, we will give you the benefit of the doubt," The green-skinned Twi'lek said. "I am [General Hera Syndulla](#), temporarily in charge of Thila outpost until the siege of Yavin 4 is over."

Tatnia gave me a slight shove, just enough to force me to step forward. I resisted the urge to curse, instead continuing to step forward as if it had been intentional.

"My name is Deacon Roy. I'm more or less the leader of this group," I said with a small bow. "We appreciate the trust."

"Let's move somewhere more comfortable. I want the full story," The General said. "I'm sorry, but while we are gone we will also be searching your ship."

"Well, it's only been ours for a few days. We had to borrow it for a quick escape," I explained. "But that shouldn't be a problem, as long as you don't mind one of us remaining behind?"

"As long as they don't get in the way."

I nodded and turned to Tatnia, who put her hand on Miru's shoulder and nodded, confirming both of them would be staying back. Miru didn't look happy about it, but I would make it up to her if this didn't go south. I would have preferred to keep us all together, but someone needed to stay behind and watch our money. I might trust some of the rebel leaders, and I might agree with parts of the movement, but I didn't trust some random soldier not to snag a couple of ingots from our pile.

The Mon Calamarian stayed behind, directing the troops around as we left the hangar, some of them staying behind while the others jogged away through the two other entrances. A few also jogged to catch up to us, serving as an escort. As we left the hangar behind, I focused on the Twi'lek General. I recognized her name, as well as her face from one of the newer cartoons. It had a reputation for being good, but by the time it gained any momentum, I was already working two jobs and picking up odd jobs on the side. It had been on my list of things to watch, along with several Disney Star Wars stuff, but there was just never enough time.

I quickly ran through what I knew about her from the few clips I caught on youtube. I knew she was a pilot and ran with a crew, including who I think was the show's main character. She had a love interest, or a partner, who I was pretty sure was training the main character to be a Jedi. I looked around to see if anyone else was following behind us. Seeing none, I focused on the soldiers, paying particular attention to their belts to see if they had any lightsaber-esq cylinders clipped there. I racked my brain for anything else, even as we were led to a small lounge-like area. Unfortunately, I couldn't think of anything else useful beyond a comedy relief astromech.

As I racked my brain, Hera walked in confidently and sat down at the table while two of the guards stood on either side of the doorway. Nal, Nevue, and I followed inside, with Nal and myself sitting across from the General while Navue sat on the perpendicular side.

"So, Lieutenant Loc, why don't you tell us the rest of your story," She asked, leaning forward in interest, her elbows on the table.

Nevue nodded and began explaining what he had been up to since his last mission went bad. Some of this I already knew, as even though he had been relatively quiet about his past, he never missed an opportunity to talk shit about Nar Shaddaa, which often included his previous owners. Eventually, he explained how his last owner shipped him back to the slavers, and he had been scheduled to go through a few days of "education."

"Luckily, before I could get shipped off, these guys bought me," He said, gesturing to Nal and me. "I was not looking forward to being tortured into submission."

"They bought you?" Hera asked, her eyes wide, looking at both of us harshly. "What-"

"That has a context I should explain if that's alright?" I asked, giving a harsh look at Nevue, who was chuckling to himself, his sense of humor returning now that he was among his allies. "We immediately freed him after paying for him, including removing his slave implant. The point wasn't to buy a slave, but get our money into their credit ingot storage."

I started to explain what we had been up to, giving the General the basic outline of what my crew and I had been up to leading up to freeing Nevue. I skipped over my magic, explaining that we had tracking chips cut inside the credit ingots. Nevue had agreed to keep his mouth shut about it as well, as long as we stayed friendly to the Rebel Alliance. He also explained that if someone asked him directly if I had special abilities, he wouldn't lie. He was willing to keep things out of his report, but he was not willing to lie to his friends and superiors.

"They didn't find the trackers?" Hera asked, leaning back in her chair, looking skeptical. "That seems unlikely."

"Well, to be fair, Miru did an outstanding job at hiding the tracker inside the ingots," I assured her. "And if they were smart they wouldn't be slavers."

"I suppose. So what went wrong?" She asked. "You mentioned you stole that B-7 as a quick escape, and you're clearly not still on Nar Shaddaa, stealing from slavers. So why did you need to run?"

"Our plan worked too well," I explained with a shrug. "The market we bought Nevue from looked successful, but it didn't look like they would be a group we would have to worry about. Except the credit transport was carrying sixty thousand credits. I was hoping to get that much

eventually, but spread out over a month, maybe two. We weren't prepared for the bounties and the attention from enforcers. Rather than tempt fate, we decided to get while the getting was good."

"Smart, can't imagine the Hutt's liked you stealing from them, though. I would watch out in the future, you'll probably have a price on your head soon, if you don't already."

"We... didn't steal from the Hutts. We intentionally avoided Hutt-owned markets because we didn't want to get them involved," I responded, a sinking feeling starting to form in my stomach.

"Sorry to burst your bubble Deacon, but everything on Nar Shaddaa is run by the Hutts. It's why we don't do much business there," She explained. "There is no way a business shipping that much money around wasn't owned by the Hutt's in some way. It's probably why it was so lightly protected. They assumed no one was... stupid enough to steal from the Hutts."

I stared at her for a long moment before I let out a long sigh, leaning back against the seat. Eventually, I shook myself off and rubbed my face, sitting back up. My mind raced, but I did my best to focus on the Twi'lek in front of me. I idly realized that she was the first person from the stories back home I had met, but I quickly pushed that thought away.

"Alright, thank you for sharing that with us. I guess we will be keeping our eyes open," I said. "And stepping up our timetable."

"What are your plans exactly?" General Syndulla asked.

"We plan on buying a ship, something big enough to run a small mercenary company out of," I responded. "Maybe a few smaller ships as escorts."

"An interesting goal, and by the sounds of it, you have the money to make at least the first part of that plan a reality. In fact..." The rebel leader seemed to think for a long moment before eventually continuing, having seemed to reach an internal conclusion. "We have contacts with a few shipbrokers that are sympathetic to our cause. With the right words, we might be able to help your money go a little further."

"Nova always has some good stuff," Nevue pointed out, looking at his superior. "Plus, I know them pretty well. I can escort them to his repair station."

"Are you sure? I was planning on putting your team back together. You're more than welcome to join them," The rebel leader asked.

"I would like to join my team, but these guys need a ride," Nevue responded, getting a confused look from his superior.

"We were hoping to sell you the B-7 and most of its cargo to you guys at a discount, something around twenty thousand for both," I explained simply. "We would then need a ride to the shipbroker,"

"That... seems like a low price," Hera responded, eyebrow raised. "Assuming the ship doesn't have anything wrong with it."

"It's in pretty good condition," Nevue assured her. "Better than you would expect, honestly, given its previous owner's occupation. And the supplies are useful, a few crates of blasters and ammo, some heavy cannons as well. Twenty thousand is a terrific deal."

"That only proves my point," She pointed out. "Why the low price?"

"We may not be interested in joining, but that doesn't mean we aren't sympathetic to the movement," I explained, Nal nodding in agreement. "In the future, we would be happy to work with you for a discount, maybe even donate our time for a good enough cause. We just need to get our feet under us first. We need a ship, a few more crew members... Probably don't have to explain that sort of stuff to you,"

"No, I know that process very well," She admitted with a smirk. "Alright, give some time for my people to inspect your ship and its cargo. If everything is in order, you've got yourself a deal. Nevue will bring you to Nova, they run a shipyard around an old repair platform. We buy a lot of ships from them. They always seem to have something worth buying."

"That's very generous of you, General," I responded.

"Please, you're practically giving away that B-7, it's worth at least fifteen thousand credits if it's in as decent quality as Nevue claims," She responded before pausing as if she was considering her next question. "Could I... ask about the young Twi'lek traveling with you?"

"Miru?" I asked looking confused. "She is our mechanic, extremely talented from what I've seen."

"How old is she exactly?"

"She says she is seventeen," I explained. "I will be very happy when I can leave her on a ship to keep up with maintenance while the rest of us do the fighting. She has seen a lot in her life already, but that's no reason to pile on more."

The green-skinned Twi'lek woman studied me for a moment or three before eventually letting out a sigh.

"I apologize. My race is often mistreated and taken as slaves and... I have a soft spot for children,"

"I do as well, and honestly, she reminds me of one of my younger cousins," I explained, shaking my head. "Anything wanting to hurt her will have to go through the rest of the crew and me to do it, I promise."

"I believe you," She responded, before standing up from her seat. "Unfortunately, I don't have much in the way of spare time these days, so I'm going to have to leave you in the capable hands of your new escort."

General Syndulla said, gesturing to the two soldiers standing by the doorway. Both of them stood at attention now that we were looking at them.

"They can show you to some spare quarters," She said with a subtle smile. "I'd ask that you resist the urge to explore, we may be friendly, but I can't have you wandering around in high-security areas."

"Of course, we will probably stick around the ship, rest and leave tomorrow if that works for Nevue," I said, sticking my hand out, the confident Twi'lek general taking my hand and shaking it firmly.

Shortly after that, General Hera Syndulla left us alone with the soldiers, who seemed to stand a bit easier with their superior officer gone. I smiled and gestured to the door.

"We would like to get back to the hangar for now," I explained, the taller soldier nodding in understanding.

The taller soldier led the way back to the hangar, the second soldier following behind us by a few feet, preventing us from making a run for it or sneaking away. It didn't take long for us to reach the mostly empty Hangar bay. The ship was already being emptied, with Tatnia standing near the cargo bay entrance, watching as workers unloaded some of the cargo. She noticed us and nodded in our direction, prompting me to head over and see what I could do to help.