

It didn't take long for the shock of my injury to fade and for it to be immediately replaced by a rapidly growing pain. My hand was mostly intact, but the wound itself was brutal, and as I twitched from the pain, I could see movement inside my hand. Before I could focus long enough to cast Fast Heal on myself, the door opened with a whoosh. Calima was standing on the other side, her eyes wide, only getting wider when she spotted all of the blood and my injuries.

"Wh- Boss!" She shouted, stepping closer and reaching out like she was going to take my hand.

"It's fine, it's fine! I just underestimated how violent a critical failure would be," I explained, my hands glowing as I dual cast Fast Heal. "See, already getting better."

I showed her my hand, which had, in fact, started to heal. I cast it again and then a third time before letting my hand down. By then, the bleeding stopped, and the hole mostly healed.

"Are you sure....?" She asked. "You were cursing and shouting... very loudly."

I frowned and thought back, realizing that I absolutely had been and didn't even realize it at the time. I shook my head and cast Fast Heal again, this time in separate hands to finish off my hand and fix the cut on my cheek.

"Sorry, I guess I was. I'm fine though, just need to clean up this mess..."

I trailed off and looked around, eyes trailing over all the blood that I had spread over the room. I cursed under my breath but looked back to Calima and smiled.

"Thank you for coming to check on me, though," I said with a smile. "I appreciate your concern."

"... No problem, Boss," She responded. "I'll get back to the cockpit. Miru... wanted to talk about charging points for the Naval B1s..."

I nodded and watched her leave, letting out a long breath before getting to work, hunting down some cleaning equipment, and washing my blood off of the walls, floor, and Arcane Enchanter. When I was done, I stepped into the sonic shower to clean myself and my clothes at the same time. When I was finally done, I made my way back to the enchanting room, only to stop, curse, and turn around, making my way down to Miru's workshop.

A quick conversation later, I was back, this time with a [safety mask](#) over my face, securely strapped onto my head. The shard had gotten worryingly close to my eye as it cut my cheek, and that was one injury I was pretty sure I wouldn't be able to heal for a while.

As I entered the room again, I picked up the soul gem sitting on the enchanting table. The crystal was undamaged and, as far as I could tell, was about half used. I looked around for

a moment before placing it in an empty box in the corner, which I then dragged under the enchanting table as a place to store half or partially-used gems. In the future, when I was skilled enough to transfer between gems without losing my grip on the enchantment, they would be useful. For now, they would sit and wait.

With my workstation cleared, I grabbed another full soul gem, then another ring, almost identical to the first. I leaned over the table and began the whole process over again, first creating the enchantment matrix and then adjusting it to fit perfectly inside the ring. It was startling to feel just how different the two rings were despite being made of the same material and having the same general structure.

When I was confident everything was in place and adjusted properly, I once again started the process of pulling energy from the soul gem and guiding it through the ring, feeling the life energy flow across my magic thread and burn itself into the metal. Rather than try and rush it, however, this time, I focused on keeping steady, not shifting or pushing it to go faster or slower.

As I watched the flow of life energy, I realized that I had been lucky the ring had taken that long to explode. The life energy was extremely energetic, rising and lowering, flowing quickly one second and almost stopping the next. If I hadn't been carefully maintaining a tight grip on the flow, adjusting for every increase or decrease, my second attempt would have turned out the same, or even worse than the first one. I could also feel life energy escaping the transfer as well, losing a considerable portion of the soul gem's power to nothing but the air.

Eventually, after what felt like an hour or so, the soul gem winked out completely, its energy drained. After a second, a crack appeared along the side, quickly spreading before the entire gem broke apart into soul gem chunks.

"Well... there goes any hope of them being re-usable..." I said, frowning at the pile of dull, opaque crystal.

Idly noting to get a box to keep the used and broken gems, I quickly focused my attention on the ring, my first enchanted object. It was warm to the touch, warmer than me at least, and was glowing the same color of the life energy, a pale blue, as I turned it over in my hands. I was starting to worry that the entire crew would be walking around covered in small glowing objects when it finally started receding, quickly leaving a normal-looking ring.

Turning the ring over in my hand, I slowly slipped it on, securing it on my middle finger. Like the instructions for this particular enchantment said, I reached out with a tendril of magic, easily connecting to the ring and feeding it, feeling the draw as it drank in my magicka. The mana reservoir filled up almost immediately, with just enough magicka for a novice spell or two at most. But as I reversed the draw, pulling the magic back into myself, I couldn't help but laugh and cheer, pumping my fist.

I pulled off the protective face shield, laying it down on the enchanting table, and quickly left the room, turning to the lounge. There, Julius was sitting with Miru, both of whom were enjoying what looked like their lunch.

“Did it work?” Miru asked as I smiled, tossing the ring to her gently.

She caught it with one hand, opening her hand and examining the ring. After a minute, she looked back up at me, looking confused.

“I don’t see anything special about it,” She said, handing the ring to Julius so he could see it. “What does it do?”

“It stores mana for me to use,” I explained with a smirk. “It’s such a small amount it’s practically useless, but it proves I can do it. You’re now holding the galaxy’s first magically enchanted object.”

“The first of many, I hope,” Miru said, looking over Julius’s shoulder now.

“Oh yeah,” I agreed with a nod. “I want all of us to be decked out in the best. Beskar armor enchanted to the nines.”

“Nice job, Boss,” Julius said, tossing the ring back to me. “I’m excited to see what you can do with the armor that Pola and Vaz make.”

“I am as well... I want to get in a bunch more practice before that, though,” I said, pulling the ring onto my finger and checking to make sure it was still full. “Which means...”

“Which means more hunting,” Julius said, standing up from the table. “I’m ready when you are, Boss.”

“Great... How long was I working for?”

“About three hours,” Miru answered. “But one of those was before you almost blew your hand off.”

“Two hours... lots of room to improve,” I said, scratching my neck before looking back at the young Twi’lek. “And it wasn’t that bad...”

“Judging by how thankful you were for the face shield, it could have been a lot worse, though,” She pointed out. “Safety always comes first in the shop, Boss, even if the shop is a creepy-looking altar for contacting ancient gods.”

“There will be no contacting ancient gods on this or any of our ships,” I said, shivering slightly. “They might actually answer.”

I turned to walk back to the enchanting room to empty out the filled soul gems from my satchel and get ready for hunting.

“Funny, Boss,” Julius said from behind me, only to go silent for a moment before continuing. “You were joking, right? Boss? Please tell me you were joking.”

We quickly packed up and piled into the Arrow, the BX droids climbing in after Julius got into the cockpit, and I took the chair beside the sensor panel in the back. Today’s target was a nest of torgena, the small velociraptor-looking things with reinforced skulls and spines along their back.

“Alright, so I’m hoping to avoid even getting close to these fuckers,” I said once we were on our way. “They look like they could tear us to shreds, and this nest is supposed to have close to fifty of them. I don’t even want to be on the ground with them.”

“So... how are we going to take them out?”

“When we are twenty minutes out, BX-1 and BX-2 are going to climb on the roof and lock on with their magclamp feet. Then we will sit at the doors, and all four of us will shoot down on the nest. One, Two, you guys are going to be shooting on stun unless something goes drastically wrong. After we clear the nest we can use Clairvoyance to track down the runners. Once that turns out negative for anywhere near the nest, we will start cutting tail tips to prove we completed the bounty.”

“Solid plan, Boss,” Julius said, nodding in appreciation. “I’ll land us in about ten minutes to let the commandos climb on the roof.”

The rest of the trip was quiet. I kept an eye on the sensors, and Julius piloted us above the forest treetops. When we landed, the commando droids climbed out and jumped onto the roof quickly, making the distance with a single leap.

“We will take it slow, but contact us through your comms if something goes wrong or you feel like your feet can't keep you secured,” I ordered.

“Roger Roger, Boss,” The droids said together, getting a laugh from Julius.

“At this rate, the doors on the *Chariot* are going to start calling me that whenever I walk through them,” I half-heartedly complained.

We arrived at the outskirts of the nest about fifteen minutes later, floating around the outskirts. The sensors scanned the area, showing that the nest was centered in a large but shallow valley, a low point surrounded by rocks and fallen trees, with living trees around either

side. The entire space was lit up with biosigns, about sixty of five of them in total, almost all of them in the valley.

“Jesus... They nested in a killzone,” I said, shaking my head, before looking over at Julius. “You ready?”

“Yeah, just tell me when you want me to bring it in,”

I nodded and conjured my bow, linking the soul trap to it, shifting from a back seat to the front row, where the doors were. I pulled out my comms and warned the droids we were moving in and to wait for me to open fire. When they confirmed my orders, I turned to Julius and gave the go-ahead.

We slowly moved over the slight gap in the trees above where the valley itself was. Once there, the Arrow began lowering slowly, pushing through the gap in the trees. As we breached through the canopy into the space underneath, I slid the door open, my eyes taking a second of five to adjust to the change in lighting. When they did, I saw dozens of the lizards looking up at us, clacking their large teeth and tilting their heads up at us. I could hear Julius slowly moving to the other door, his blaster rifle in hand.

I slowly knocked an arrow, drawing it back steadily to keep from setting the dangerous creatures off. We may have been close to fifty feet off the ground, but I was *not* going to have an actual “clever girl” moment, even if it meant being ridiculously paranoid.

After sighting my first target, I slowly emptied my lungs, and after a second pause, I released my arrow. The conjured shaft of magic slammed into one of the many lizards below us, piercing its side and sending a splatter of green blood onto the ground.

Instantly, the BXs and Julius opened fire, a spray of blue circles firing out from above and behind me. Dozens of the torgena dropped in the first few seconds, even more following soon after. The BX directly above me kept any from escaping on my side as my slower firing rate killed at least seven, still more running and screeching as they did their best to run from us.

As quickly as the chaos started, it abruptly ended. By my vague count, around twenty of the lizards escaped into the woods, leaving at least thirty, probably closer to forty torgena on the ground beneath us.

“Well... that worked better than it had any right to,” I said, Julius snorting behind me. “Now comes the fun part.”

Over the next twenty minutes, with the help of the BX units, I systematically finished off every single stunned torgena. It was a bit on the grim side, just killing the defenseless and stunned creatures, but it needed to be done, both for the safety of the surrounding villages and for the advancement of my crew.

When that was done, we moved into the forest, doing our best to track down any larger groups. When we had gotten around fifteen more, and our sensors read that the rest had broken up and spread out, we started going over the kills and cutting off the last five inches of each of their tails. All said and done, we collected fifty-four tail tips. With each tail worth a hundred credits, we had made a cool five and a half thousand credits. We also gathered thirty-two eggs, which would bring us another three thousand. Between them and the bounty for clearing the nest, we were looking to make an even twelve thousand credits.

By the time we had finished everything, all the proof of our kills and the eggs loaded up in the cargo crate attached to the back of the Arrow, I gave one final look around. The sun was starting to set, and the forest was quickly getting darker and darker.

“Alright, I think that’s everything,” I said, nodding to the Arrow. “Let’s get back and cash in before it gets too late.”

Five minutes later, we were on our way back, another successful hunting mission behind us.