

A Galaxy of Magic

Chapter 5

"It's really humid today," Harry commented as he carried a box of tools over to Aayla, who was sitting on a conjured chair underneath the starfighter she chose to fix. It was only a couple of hours after the sun had risen, and it was already brutally hot. He set the box on the ground beside her and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"I believe a storm will soon arrive. The heat and humidity always ratchets up when a storm approaches," she explained while reaching into the box and removing a strange-looking tool.

"Are the storms intense on Felucia?" Harry asked. He had only been on this planet for a few days and hadn't experienced one yet.

"The big ones are," she said ominously. "The winds can be so powerful that they'll uproot the giant mushroom trees. The flash flooding is what you really need to worry about, though," she told him as she opened a panel on the underside of the starfighter. Aayla was lucky. She was shaded from the sun by the large ship. Harry pulled out his canteen and drank deeply from it. The icy cold water helped cool him down. He then poured some over his head until his hair and shirt were soaked. He gasped and shivered as the freezing water rolled down his back. Aayla looked over at him and chuckled. "Can't handle the heat?"

"I'd prefer that I didn't have to," he responded. "Please tell me not all planets are this hot."

"Most aren't, thankfully," she shook her head while working in the open hatch. Harry could see that she was sweating as well. He held out the canteen for her.

"Water?" he offered. Aayla took it and guzzled water for a few seconds before pouring some over her head, just as Harry had done. That, mixed with his Cooling Charms, was a good strategy to keep cool. "When you get this thing fixed, do you have any plans? Where should we go?" he asked her.

Harry obviously didn't have any type of plan. He had just recently learned that he was either in a different part of the galaxy, a whole different galaxy, or maybe a different reality altogether. Whichever it was, he had no idea what to do. He didn't know where any of the habitable planets were or how to get there. He was counting on Aayla to have the answers.

"Coruscant would be the ideal place to search for answers, but I fear it would be way too dangerous to start there," she told him. "Coruscant is the capital of the Republic. It's in the Galactic Core," she explained further, for his sake.

"The problem is that I don't know how many Jedi are left. Anyone who is still alive will likely go into hiding. Hopefully, we can find one with the answers I am looking for. Regardless of where

we go, we must keep to the shadows while seeking information,” Aayla told him. She dropped the tool into the box and grabbed one that appeared to be a probe. She pushed it into the open panel, and Harry heard a buzzing sound.

“Do you need any help?” Harry asked. He was just standing there with nothing to do.

“Can you hold the datapad up for me?” she asked. “I need to see the schematic.” Harry did her one better by conjuring a metal stand for her to rest the pad on. Aayla turned and smiled at him prettily before placing the pad on it.

This went on for a few hours until they stopped for lunch. Harry brought them back to the tent, where they ate and spent an hour cooling down. Then, they returned to work on the ship some more. Aayla only got another hour of work in before the wind began picking up. The surrounding flower trees swayed ominously, and the sky darkened as gray clouds moved in. Aayla quickly packed up and closed the panel. In the few minutes it took to place the tools inside the ship’s cockpit, the wind almost doubled in strength. Harry’s hair was pressed flat against his scalp while Aayla’s lekku bounced around and slapped against her back. Harry had to shield his eyes from the flying dust. “At least it’s not hot anymore!” Harry called out over the roaring of the wind.

Aayla snorted and closed the cockpit. An ear-splitting crack of thunder startled them both. They looked up and found that the gray clouds had turned nearly black. They flashed with hidden lightning strikes. “It might be best to leave,” Aayla said just before a flower tree broke with a loud snapping sound. “Right now,” she quickly added.

Harry nodded and grabbed her arm. A moment later, they were standing right outside the cave. The wind was very strong, though not as bad as in the clearing. The surrounding rocky terrain provided them with some protection from the wind. “Go ahead and go inside!” Harry shouted over the wind while trying to keep his hair from hitting him in the eyes. “I’m going to make sure these crates don’t go flying away!” Another crack of thunder and a bright flash of light made him jump slightly.

“Alright, but be quick!” she shouted back, trying to keep her lekku from wrapping around and smacking her face. It would have been comical to see if he weren’t half blind from the dirt in his eyes. Aayla disappeared through the illusion, leaving him alone to secure their loot.

Harry began placing Sticking Charms on them to keep the crates stuck together. He then made sure they were also stuck to the rocky ground. He tested a few by pushing against them with all of his strength and happily found that they didn’t budge an inch. Satisfied with his work, Harry turned to go inside when something stopped him. He heard a mid-pitched hum coming from the sky. At first, he thought it might be a tornado forming, but then he saw a blue light lazily flying through the dark clouds. The clouds obstructed the source of the light, but as it got closer, he recognized the hum as a starship’s engine. A short distance away from him, the ship stopped and slowly began to lower. It broke through the bottom of the cloud cover, and Harry saw it

slightly shuddering from the pounding wind. Landing pads extended from the bottom of the disc-shaped ship, and it expertly touched down.

Harry immediately went into the tent and called out, "Aayla!"

She stuck her head out from his room with a questioning look. "A ship just landed outside the rocky ridge," he told her. Aayla's eyes went wide, and she came out holding the hilt of her lightsaber, as Harry had discovered it was called.

"Just one?" she asked as she followed him outside.

"Yeah. It was shaped like a disc and had a long, thin band of blue light on the back," he quickly described it to her.

"That sounds like a ship from the YT-series," she said, exiting the tent.

"Do you know anyone who flies one of those?" he asked hopefully. She shook her head.

"Hold on," she said, grabbing his bicep and stopping him from leaving the safety of the cave. "Let me reach out with the Force."

Harry didn't respond. He just watched as Aayla closed her eyes. It took a few seconds, but eventually, her face peacefully relaxed. Harry wasn't too nervous about who their new visitors were. If someone was coming to harm him or Aayla, he could easily handle the situation. Thankfully, when Aayla opened her eyes, a small smile spread across her pretty face.

"Everything's fine. It's an old friend of mine," she assured him and began walking to the cave's exit. Harry raised an eyebrow.

"How do you know?" he asked, following close behind.

"The Force. I can feel her presence," she explained. Harry couldn't wrap his head around her strange gifts, but to be fair, Aayla didn't understand his powers either. He decided to just trust her and keep quiet.

When they exited the illusioned exit, Harry discovered that the downpour had begun. Fat droplets of rain were coming in sideways, almost stinging their faces. Within seconds of leaving the cave, they were soaked to the bone. The wind was howling, lightning was flashing, and the cracking of thunder rang in their ears. The daylight was gone entirely, replaced with a darkness that filtered the usually vibrant world into dull, lifeless colors. It was difficult to see where the ship had landed from where they were. "Over there!" Harry loudly called out, pointing to where he had seen it land. He could barely make out the outline through the heavy rain. It was easier to see its silhouette when lightning lit up the surrounding area. No sooner than he said it, a ramp lowered from underneath the ship, and two people came walking out.

“Come!” Aayla called out over the sounds of the storm. “Let’s go meet them!”

Harry nodded and followed her through the spiky rock formations. Harry held his palm up and conjured a ball of light large enough to light their way. The last thing they needed was to break an ankle on the uneven terrain. Harry tossed the ball above Aayla, and it began hovering over her head. She looked back and smiled at him. He cheekily smiled back. The weather slowed their trek, but they met the others halfway. There were two figures, and both were wearing long, heavy robes with their hoods pulled up. The taller of the two stepped up to Aayla and lowered her hood.

He shouldn’t have been shocked to see another alien humanoid since meeting Aayla, but he was. This newcomer was clearly a female. She had a pleasing, feminine facial structure that looked very human. What wasn’t human-like were the two large, curved horns on top of her head that tapered into wicked points. They were white with gray, striped patterns. The bottoms of the horns turned into long lekku that hung down both sides of her chest. From his angle, he could see a third, larger lekku running down the middle of her back. Like Aayla, her skin was colored far from a human tone. Her skin was red, except for two large oval-shaped white patches around her eyes.

The other newcomer also lowered her hood. Harry could immediately tell that she was the younger of the two. She looked mostly human except for a few key features. Her skin was extremely pale ... milky white even. Her eyes were yellow, and her lips were black. Harry didn’t know if that was their natural color or if she was wearing dark lipstick. The strangest part was the small, blood-red horns on her head. Her hair was black and fixed into long, thin braids that wrapped around her neck like a choker. He thought she looked very nervous.

“Master Ti!” Aayla shouted over the wind and thunder. “Thank the Force you are here!”

“I am very pleased to see you survived!” she answered, hugging Aayla. “I had faith that all hope was not yet lost!”

“How did you know where to find me?” Aayla asked. Harry could hear mushroom trees colliding and breaking in the distance. The storm was getting worse.

“I felt your presence in the Force! Since you contacted me, you’ve been like a beacon, cutting through the veil of the Dark Side! It was easy to track you down!”

That was something Aayla didn’t particularly like. If Master Ti could easily find her, then so could those who wished to finish her for good. She moved that to the back of her mind for now.

“Master Ti ... This is my friend and ally, Harry Potter!” she introduced him.

Harry stepped up and smiled as best as he could. It wasn’t easy with a gallon of water pouring down his face every second. “It’s a pleasure to meet one of Aayla’s friends!” he politely shouted.

"The pleasure is mine! We need as many allies as we can get! I am Jedi Master Shaak Ti!" the red woman called back.

"Follow us back to our tent, Master Ti! We need to get out of this storm!" Aayla said as low, booming thunder sent vibrations through the ground.

"A tent? That will offer no protection in a storm like this! We can go back to the ship and ..."

Aayla cut off Shaak Ti. "Trust me! Harry is full of surprises!"

"Follow me and watch your step!" Harry called out and summoned the light from over Aayla's head. It hovered above his head as he led them back to the spiky rock formations. He followed the uneven path between two formations, going slow so he didn't accidentally fall. The fierce wind constantly tried to push him over, but he eventually made it unscathed. "Through this patch of wall!" Harry told them and disappeared through the illusion.

Entering the cave, Harry slicked his wet hair back and wiped the water from his face. The other three women quickly followed him through. They were just as drenched as he was. The two guests were worse off due to their heavy robes. They were completely water-logged and probably heavy. They also wiped the water from their faces while looking like a bunch of drowned rats.

"You used a holographic projection to hide the entrance to the cave? Smart," Shaak Ti nodded.

"Not exactly," Aayla smiled slightly. "Harry possesses strange powers that I have yet to understand. Perhaps you will be able to shed some light on them."

"He is a Force user?" Shaak asked, looking him over.

"Not as far as I can tell," Harry answered. "Aayla and I have discussed it, and our powers don't seem to match up. Whatever the Force is, I've never felt it influencing or guiding me."

"What powers do you have?" Shaak Ti asked, intrigued.

"My people just called it magic," Harry said. Shaak Ti raised her non-existent eyebrow.

"Magic?" she asked, amused. Harry rolled his eyes.

"Yes. Aayla wasn't exactly a believer either, but she couldn't explain why I can do the things I can do," Harry told her.

"What can you do?" she asked. Harry just smiled.

"A lot," he simply told her. Aayla cut in.

"He created the illusion over the cave entrance with his power," Aayla told her. "He's done many things I've never seen anyone else do."

"Before we discuss this any further, how about we go inside? I think our other guest is getting cold," Harry said, looking at the younger woman. They turned and saw that she was indeed dripping wet and shivering. The girl suddenly looked embarrassed at being the center of attention.

"Forgive me. This is padawan Maris Brood. On my way here, I felt her despair through the Force and made a detour to investigate. Her Master went to investigate the recent purge and left her alone. I have been unable to contact him or even feel him through the Force," Shaak Ti stated.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I hope he's okay," Harry said to the nervous girl. She nodded in agreement, though she remained quiet.

"The purge? Master Ti ... What happened?" Aayla asked, eager to hear what the hell was happening out there. Shaak Ti winced.

"We have a lot to discuss," she simply said.

"Then let's go inside and get comfortable," Harry responded, waving his hand at them all. Maris squeaked and jumped when hers and Shaak Ti's robes began to billow. All four were suddenly surrounded by blowing hot air. Then, their bodies and clothing began to steam. Within seconds, they were all bone dry and quite warm. Shaak Ti seemed very surprised.

"Impressive," was all she said. Aayla chuckled and waved her into the tent. As soon as they entered, Maris gasped in wonder.

"How is it bigger on the inside?" she wondered out loud. It was the first time he heard her voice. It sounded just as human as the rest of theirs.

"An Undetectable Extension Charm is what we called it," Harry answered her, going straight for the kitchen. "It expands the internal dimensions of an object without affecting the external dimensions. It also has the benefit of making the objects inside nearly weightless. When I pack this tent up, it won't weigh more than it originally did," he explained while making tea for all of them.

They were all silent while trying to digest his explanation. Harry looked at them and smiled amusedly.

"I would like to know more about this. It could be a major help to us in the future," Shaak stated. Aayla nodded before speaking to her.

"Master Ti ... Please tell me what's going on out there. The holonet is being jammed in this area, and all I know is what I felt in the Force," Aayla said with desperation.

"First of all, let us put aside the formalities, Aayla. There's no need for them anymore," Shaak told her. Aayla nodded, and Shaak smiled softly in return. "Now, tell me what you felt in the Force."

Aayla did her best to explain it. She told her about the pain, betrayal, despair, and fear she felt. "I'm not surprised. The truth is that Chancellor Palpatine was a Sith Lord all along. When we sent a group of Jedi Masters to arrest him, he used the incident as an excuse to brand all Jedi as traitors to the Republic. What we didn't know was that the Clones had secret programming installed from the start. All it took was one order from the Chancellor to have them turn against us. From what I could discover, he has been planning the downfall of the Jedi for many years. Many Jedi are now gone," she shook her head sadly.

Aayla was extremely disheartened by the news. It explains why her clones had betrayed her. "How many of us survived?" she quietly asked.

"Very few. Us, Yoda, Kenobi. There are others who have scattered and are now in hiding. I'm afraid it gets worse," Shaak Ti said. "Skywalker has turned to the Dark Side."

Aayla gasped in shock. "I don't believe it."

"It's true. He stormed the Jedi Temple and murdered everyone inside ... including the younglings. He now calls himself Darth Vader."

Aayla rested her head in her hands and shook her head. "How could this have happened?"

"The Jedi have been complacent. We have ignored the signs for years and now have paid the ultimate price. The Jedi Order is no more. The temple is in ruins, and the Republic has fractured. Palpatine now goes by Lord Sidious, and he has named himself the Galactic Emperor."

"And the Senate has agreed to this?!" Aayla asked in disbelief.

"They have no say in it. Palpatine has been pulling the strings on both sides for years. He controls both the clones and the droids. No planet has the military might necessary to defy him," Shaak told her and smiled kindly at Harry when he placed a cup of hot tea and a plate of biscuits down for her. He then did the same for Aayla and Maris before returning to the kitchen to cook them a meal.

"So what do we do?" Aayla asked. Shaak took a sip of the tea and found it pleasant to the taste.

"For the time being, we simply must survive. Bounties have been placed on every surviving Jedi's head, including ours," she sighed. "Tell me, Aayla. How did you survive?"

"I wouldn't have if not for Harry," Aayla said, turning to look at him. She smiled, and he returned it. Aayla then gave the story that Harry had told her. She then stood up and turned around, showing them the circular scars on her back. "You never explained exactly how you healed me so quickly," Aayla told Harry.

"I didn't know if my medicine was compatible with your kind. I've only ever used them on humans, but I have a very powerful healing agent that I was confident would work ... Phoenix tears. They're tears from an immortal bird on my planet. They can heal even the most severe wounds within seconds. They cured me when I was on the brink of death, but that was a very long time ago," Harry explained.

"Immortal bird?" Aayla asked. Harry nodded and went on to describe the Phoenix and its powers.

"What planet do you come from?" Maris asked. Harry remained quiet for a moment. He didn't know these newcomers all that well yet. However, he trusted Aayla, and she thought they were trustworthy.

He explained his backstory and told them how he came to be here. Harry wasn't sure if they believed him or not, but he didn't care one way or another. It didn't change the fact that he was here. He let them continue to talk while he finished cooking.

"You said you were easily able to track me. Why is that?" Aayla asked Shaak while Harry served them food.

"Thank you," Shaak smiled at him when he put a plate of food down in front of her. "For some reason, you've become very clear in the Force."

"Since when?" Aayla asked.

"Since you contacted me, and I cannot figure out what has changed," Shaak said, trying the food. Aayla thought about it and told her about how a Dark Side user was trying to find her through the Force."

"That is likely our esteemed Emperor," Shaak practically spat. "I have felt him in the Force, lurking and seeking." Aayla then explained how he fled in fear anytime Harry was near her. Shaak seemed surprised and looked at Harry.

"Let me try something," Shaak said, putting down her utensil. She closed her eyes and appeared to be meditating. They remained quiet for a few minutes until she opened her eyes. She then looked at Harry strangely.

"I can see what Aayla means. Your presence alone pushes back the veil of the Dark Side. I can see more clearly now than I have in a very long time. Aayla, how far away from him were you when you had your nightmare?" she asked.

"He was in his room," Aayla pointed it out. "And I was sleeping there," she pointed to the couch.

"Interesting," Shaak said slowly, rubbing her chin. "This is something we will need to figure out, but it seems that as long as we are physically near him, Sidious will not be able to find us," she concluded.

Aayla breathed a sigh of relief. That was a load off her mind. "It will also help if we don't stay in the same place for too long," Shaak added.

The group then spent several hours talking and deciding where to go next. "Is the ship you brought in good shape?" Aayla asked Shaak.

"It's old and creaky, but the engines appear to be solid. I stole it from a bounty hunter before making my escape off Coruscant," Shaak explained. "It could use some repairs, though. The shields are next to useless, and the firepower is a joke."

"If we have no other immediate plans, then fixing the ship should be the first thing we do," Harry told them. "We have all those supplies out there. We can sell them and spend the money on repairs or upgrades."

The girls agreed to that. It wouldn't be good if they broke down while trying to outrun bounty hunters or the Republic. Eventually, Harry left them and took a shower. Aayla took her own soon after.

"Shaak ... Maris," Aayla called out. "The fresher is right there if you need to shower. Both agreed that a hot shower would do them good. "Harry?" Aayla came up to him. "Can you make them some clothes to sleep in? I doubt they brought any extra clothes," she said while wearing the long shirt he had made for her. Harry nodded and made two more.

"Where are they going to sleep?"

"I'll ask them," Aayla said, slipping into the bathroom. She closed the door behind her. Harry went into his room and lay down above the covers. He crossed his ankles and threaded his fingers behind his head. Closing his eyes, he silently wondered what was to come. He must have been really tired because he quickly nodded off. He woke startled when the bed moved.

"Tired?" Aayla asked with an amused expression.

"Just resting my eyes," he responded.

"Master Ti and Maris wish to sleep in the tent. I don't think they want to go back out in that rain," Aayla told him.

"I don't blame them."

"They said they'll sleep on the floor out there if you can provide them with blankets," Aayla said.

"Did you tell them that you've been sleeping in here?" Harry asked with an amused smile. Aayla rolled her eyes and nodded.

"Shaak lectured me about the Jedi Code. I had to remind her that the Jedi Order doesn't exist ... at least for now."

Harry got up with a groan and exited the room with Aayla hot on his heels. "You don't need to sleep on the floor," Harry told the two women, but Shaak waved his concerns away.

"We'll be comfortable enough. I've slept in worse places," she assured him. He saw that both of them were wearing the long shirts he had conjured for them.

"That's not what I meant," Harry said and pointed his finger at the couch. It suddenly transformed into a big, comfortable bed. He waved his hand again, and two sets of pillows, sheets, and blankets appeared on the bed. The two women looked shocked for a moment. Shaak even pushed down on the mattress to make sure it was real.

"You certainly are a wonder, Harry Potter," she said in amazement. She sat down on the bed and bounced a few times. "This will do just fine. Thank you," she smiled.

"You're welcome. I'll be in my room if you need anything. Make yourselves at home," he told them before returning to his room. Aayla followed him a few minutes later.

"Did you get them settled?"

"Yes. I showed them where everything is," Aayla smiled and pulled her shirt off, revealing her gloriously nude body. She crawled onto the bed and lay flat on her belly. After treating the scars on her back, he cleaned her off and got into bed. Aayla scooped closer to him and got into her usual sleeping position. Her body was soft and warm.

"Everything will be okay, you know?" Harry said, wanting to assure her she wasn't alone in all of this. Aayla smiled against his chest and squeezed him tighter. He played with the soft skin of her back until she was fast asleep. Harry fell asleep soon after.