

As much as I would have liked to spend the week or so that Rogue Squadron had with us entertaining them directly, I did have other business to attend to. When we arrived home, I was happy to see that our two newest space stations had arrived, along with Corvak, his team, and the two ships I had sent with them. However, it meant that while the Rogues descended to Vercopa to have a proper welcome tour, I needed to stay in space to coordinate and decide where we would finally settle both of our new acquisitions.

Our new shipyard was surrounded by a flurry of small repair ships, and as we settled it into its new orbit, individual repair teams were immediately deployed, the groups of biological workers and droids walking along its surface, going over its systems with a fine-tooth comb. Our [Immobilizer](#) was already slowly being directed into its shipyard scaffolding, so I had to imagine the station had been given the partial green light for duty, most likely by Miru or her second in command.

The Immobilizer would be the station's inaugural project. However, the plan was to spread it out over a significant period to keep costs low and give us plenty of time to prepare and settle after our previous growth spree. The ship would need a substantial amount of work before it could be used as part of one of our fleets, but I was patient.

Seeing ships move around the station made it a lot easier to judge its size. The shipyard was a vast, long cylinder with one side drawn out to an angle. Along that angle was where most of the hangars were set in, with plenty of space in front of each hangar for things to be dropped off and taken away, all in the void of space. At the end of the drawn-out angle was where the two layers of adjustable scaffolding were attached. It was in that scaffolding that our interdicator would be staying for the foreseeable future.

While the shipyard was large, it was dwarfed by the *Fury*, which was nearly three times its length and around twice its height. The combat station we had around the starship, three of which worked and one of which was a large kinetic missile, looked small among them, even though they were far from undersized.

Even the cargo station, which arrived almost exactly four hours before we did, was larger than the combat station, even if it only had a fraction of their weapon. The empty cargo station had a simple design, an octagon ring with hangars on each side, with a dome on top and the bottom, making the whole thing look like a squashed sphere with a thick octagonal ring around the equator. The domes were marked with various antennas, fuel ports, weapon emplacements, sensor bulbs, and more, significantly breaking up the surface. The hangars were wide enough that both *Liberty Rush* and the *Loyal Hound* rode in a single one on the way back to the security checkpoint, though they returned home earlier. The hangars also extended far back into the central area of the top dome, which was basically one giant cargo storage area, while most of the station's systems and crew areas were in the bottom dome.

A few ships were flying around the cargo station, but it was a significantly lower priority than the shipyard. I spoke with Finder, our quartermaster, to see what he thought. He was clearly eager to take the cargo station over for our shipping needs.

"It's clearly designed for moving cargo around fast and efficiently," He commented when I visited him, the clone having just come back from inspecting the station. "The *Fury* is functional as a shipping hub, but mostly because we could basically just throw space at it until it worked. I think this station is going to work even better, and with barely any modifications."

"Will you be able to run everything from the station?" I asked. "Getting your whole operation of the *Fury*?"

"I think so, it might be smaller, but the space is much more efficient," He explained. "I mean, it has low-gravity lanes built into the flooring, letting us haul cargo significantly easier around those lanes. Yes, I'm confident I will be able to run our shipping on it for quite some time."

That was exciting news because it meant we were one step closer to being able to consistently use the *Fury* as a combat asset, without screwing up a good chunk of our production, repair, and shipping.

Granted, the list was still pretty long. It included large projects such as installing additional planetary defenses, both in orbit and on the ground, as well as finding more space for production, ship repair, and modification work. The latter was partially being solved by our new shipyard, but I didn't want to bog the station down by stuffing it full. The rest was just a matter of time, though it would likely be a good amount of time.

Once I had finally landed on Nirn, I did get to spend some time with Luke and his squadron mates. I refused to miss the trouncing our people gave them in our simulators, both a squadron of MA-wings and Heavy ARCs. By the time they finished a half dozen skirmishes, the Rogues were looking crushed, with only Luke, Wedge, and Wes Janson having any kills.

The Rebel pilots were clearly skilled, with Wedge pushing the limits of human reaction speed, and Luke going beyond that. Unfortunately for them, they just couldn't compete. The MA-wings were just too fast, and the Heavy ARCs were too powerful and too heavily armed, especially with their backwards-facing turret. In the hands of experienced and enhanced pilots, they just couldn't keep up.

After they lost a few times, I finally revealed what made my pilots special. I handed each of the Rebel pilots a set of enchanted jewelry before leaving them to their fun. From what I heard from Luke later, the matches were much more equal from then on.

Honestly, hearing that my pilots were more or less breaking even with Rogue Squadron was incredible.

Luke also said they really enjoyed flying each of our starfighters. The Heavy ARC was just about the same speed as an X-wing when its s-foils were in attack position, so having a ship that was also heavily armed and armored was an interesting experience for them. Of course, each of the Heavy ARCs would cost significantly more than an X-wing if we weren't making them almost entirely in-house, so it made sense that they were considerably better.

A few days later, I got to sit down with Luke again, though this time it was not a casual hangout. It was time to start discussing the idea of creating more mages with the Jedi, specifically ones I could trust to keep things quiet for now. Luke was invited because even if he was no longer the central figure restarting the Jedi order, in whatever form it would take, he was still undoubtedly going to be an important part of it going forward. Amescoll was also invited, as were a few other Masters and Knights.

We gathered in one of the meeting rooms built along the lecture halls, where there was plenty of room for all of us, and I knew that they were secure.

"Alright, thank you all for coming," I said, looking across the table at the various Jedi, save Ahsoka, who was sitting beside me. "I called this meeting to discuss something that could affect the future of the Jedi, as well as to ask for your help."

That perked everyone's interest, many of the Jedi leaning in to hear what I had to say.

"As some of you may know, my magic increases in fits and starts, my grimoire unlocking new spells for me to learn periodically," I explained, summoning my grimoire on the table to emphasize my point. "Recently, I discovered I had unlocked the highest levels of magic I will gain access to, at least as far as I know."

"Congratulations," Amescoll said, with Luke nodding from beside him. "It is always interesting to see more powerful forms of your magic."

"Yeah, there are a lot of interesting things that I am eager to learn," I admitted, before shaking my head. "But the spells are not why I called you guys here. My grimoire also showed me something rather interesting. It revealed a process for taking an ordinary person and giving them access to magic, turning them into a mage like me. It is a long process, requiring me to learn quite a few things, but the cost for the recipient... is their connection to the Force becomes like mine, essentially lowering it to practically nothing and diffusing it even further."

While the first half of my news got a strong reaction, that was nothing compared to the second half of the reveal. That got several gasps, with lots of hushed talking, muttering, and whispering. There was quite a bit of disapproval and disgust coming from the group.

"Losing one's connection to the force... that is a high price to pay..." Amescoll pointed out, sounding more than a bit disturbed.

"Which is why we would only offer it to those with an already low connection to the Force," I explained. "Less of a connection means no trauma from losing it. That's what I would need your help with."

"It sounds horrible to us, but look at it from the perspective of ordinary people, with little to no connection to the Force," Ahsoka added. "To them, they would be losing nothing and gaining a wonderful and potentially powerful ability."

"But to willingly diminish your contact with the Force..." One of the Knights said, looking a little pale. "Is it worth it?"

"Just the ability to have multiple healers alone would be an incredible boon," Ahsoka pointed out. "I have spent quite some time meditating on this, and I only felt confidence and acceptance in the Force."

"I'll admit, the concept is jarring... but I can see why it would be appealing to those without a strong connection to the Force," One of the masters admitted. "What proof do we have that will not harm the target?"

"Beyond the fact that I'm fine?" I asked with a raised eyebrow. "Just the trust I have in my magic. Our first volunteer will be under tight observation after the process is complete, and we will work to ensure they are fine before looking for more."

"... I believe that this will require meditation to properly adjust to the concept. I trust Ahsoka's word on what she experienced, but I'm sure I speak for all of us that I would be happier feeling it for myself," Amescoll added with a slight frown. "Until then... perhaps you could explain your plans?"

"As of right now, my plans are to first try the process on a volunteer. Once they have been confirmed to be healthy and stable, both physically and mentally, I will begin to search for a group of ten to fifteen people to undergo the process," I explained. "I want the group to have a wide variety of people, a handful of soldiers, farmers, doctors, scholars, a whole spread out group."

"Why the large group?" Luke asked, tilting his head slightly. "And why the variety? I would have thought that soldiers would be your main focus."

"A good chunk of the first group will be soldiers, maybe five or six," I admitted. "But I'm hoping that by spreading out the group, people will start to discover things about magic I haven't. The doctor may refine or create more specific healing spells, and the farmer may find a way to encourage crops to grow. The scholar may try to apply empirical thinking to magic, and may end up discovering a better way to create new spells. Yes, soldiers have the most to immediately gain, but I'm not thinking short term, I'm thinking long term."

"You want to set up an order... Like the Jedi Order," Amescoll said, his eyes going a bit wide as the idea washed over him. "Setting a wide foundation for later growth."

"Exactly. The book states only I can create new mages... but I can also pass that ability on when I die. If we do this right, this could be the start of a whole new order."

"What do you mean, we?"

"It occurred to me that a mage would make the perfect companion to a Jedi," I said, my excitement leaking out as I revealed my idea. "Imagine, the two orders forming together, growing into something new. The Jedi would provide spiritual guidance, a view in touch with the feelings and heartbeat of the galaxy, while the mages focus on utility and groundedness. They can pull the Jedi back when they start to fall, supporting them in ways that other Jedi might not be able to."

"It would certainly help keep us from pulling away," one of the masters said. "If pushing too far into the light side of the Force has the tendency to pull us away from the small problems, having partners we trust who could see those issues and pull us toward them would be an incredible boon."

"It might get in the way of a master and apprentice system," Another pointed out. "If that is how we eventually choose to structure the new order."

"I believe there would be a variety of solutions to that," Ahsoka countered. "Not the least of which is that both people could take on an apprentice at once, or they could take turns."

"Before we get too distracted, there are some limitations," I said, pulling the conversation back to the topic at hand. "The mages I create won't be as strong as me, or have nearly as easy a time learning spells. That isn't to say they won't be powerful, but there will likely be more specialization, and with lower magic reserves."

"Be that as it may... it is a rather interesting idea," Amescoll said, several of his fellows nodding in agreement. "We have seen how powerful your magic can be, even a fraction of that, working with us... I believe we will all meditate on this, as well as the idea of someone giving up their connection to the Force."

"Thank you," I said with a low nod. "And please, for now, keep this among yourselves. It will likely be some time before we are ready to put this idea into action, and I would prefer to keep it quiet until we are ready."

"Of course," Amescoll agreed, the rest nodding.

The meeting broke up quickly, and with most of the Jedi leaving quietly, clearly thinking about not only my offer, but the cost of turning someone into a mage. With Ahsoka here to assure them, they had thankfully taken the news better than she had originally, so I could only hope they eventually reached the same conclusion as her.

While most filed out of the meeting room, Luke made his way to Ahsoka and me.

"If it matters, I think it's a good idea," He said confidently, seemingly excited by the concept. "I think you were right, our abilities do complement each other. Besides, two heads are better than one, right?"

"I'm glad you think so," I said with a smile, patting his back, the three of us making our way out of the meeting room together. "I think your fellows will agree, they just need to absorb the news and meditate on it. Why don't you and Ahsoka go with them? I'm sure this is all they'll be talking about for a while."

Luke nodded, a determined look shifting onto his face. They both made to catch up with their peers, with Ahsoka pausing just long enough to kiss me on the cheek.

