

A Galaxy of Magic

Chapter 29

Harry had just finished tightening the last bolt on the repulsorlift assembly when he heard the familiar whine of a landspeeder echoing through the gaping cave entrance. He straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag, and caught Maris's eye. She raised an eyebrow, and Harry could tell that she was tense. They weren't expecting anyone for at least another day. Harry set down the hydrospanner and jogged to the cave lip to meet the newcomers.

The speeder emerged in a haze of blowing sand, and its old engine labored a little under extra weight. In the front seat, Aayla and Shaak Ti sat side by side, and he could see from their sweaty faces that they were suffering from heat exhaustion. Crammed awkwardly behind them, Yoda sat on a coil of cargo netting, and next to him was a stranger. It was a man in worn Jedi robes, with a battered travel bag and a lightsaber clipped conspicuously at his belt.

The man looked up as the speeder glided to a stop. He was in his thirties, with a rugged, handsome face framed by a mop of brown hair and a beard that would have been impressive if it weren't so uneven. He carried himself like a man used to authority, but there was an easy warmth in his eyes.

"We weren't expecting you back until tomorrow," Harry said, joining them.

Aayla hopped out first. "Luck was on our side," she said, trying not to sound breathless. "We expected to have to manually search the mountain for him, but instead, we spotted him with some Jawas, looking over some old vapor farming equipment."

The new arrival slid out after her, stretching his limbs after the cramped ride. He extended a hand to Harry. "Obi-Wan Kenobi," he said, introducing himself. His accented voice was cultured but with a touch of sly humor.

"Harry Potter," he replied, shaking the man's hand. "It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance." He gestured toward Maris, who was already approaching. "This is Maris Brood ... a former padawan of the Jedi Order."

Maris gave Obi-Wan a long, appraising look. She didn't offer her hand, but she nodded and smiled nonetheless. "So you're the one the Empire's been hunting? I've read on the holonet that the bounty on your head is over a million credits now," Harry said with a smile. Obi-Wan humorously chuckled.

"I suppose that's what happens when you ruffle a few feathers," he responded kindly.

"Since you're here, I'm guessing you want to get back into the swing of things," Harry said as he helped Aayla and Shaak unload the supplies from the back of the landspeeder.

"I prefer to think of myself as retired," Obi-Wan answered with a wry smile. "But they do have a way of drawing one back in."

Shaak Ti and Aayla dropped the heavy roll of cargo netting onto the ground with a groan. "Obi-Wan was living surprisingly close to our cave," Shaak explained. "We found him out by a wreck of an old Republic freighter."

"Unfortunately, it had been stripped of its useful parts. Damn, Jawas," Aayla told him.

Obi-Wan turned to the little green Jedi Master, and the two shared a silent, momentous nod that seemed to condense centuries of war and loss into a single glance. Harry got right to the point. "So you know who we are, and you understand what we're doing here."

Obi-Wan's grin faded, and he became very serious. "I do. Aayla and Master Ti have been thorough in their explanation. I want to help, if you'll have me." He looked at the ship that dominated the center of the cavern and let out a low whistle. "That's some fine work, by the way. You did most of this on your own?"

"Aayla and Maris mostly," Harry answered, gesturing vaguely in their direction. "They're the true geniuses when it comes to ship repair."

Obi-Wan gave a small, approving nod. They were all happy to have Obi-Wan join them, though the ways they showed it were as varied as their personalities. Shaak Ti, ever the practical one, immediately assigned him to help with the inertial dampeners. Aayla kept glancing his way, as if making sure he knew what he was doing. Maris peppered Obi-Wan with questions about his time on Coruscant and his encounters with the clone army.

By the time the sun dipped behind the mountains, the group had knocked off for the evening and gathered around the battered workbench that served as their table. Harry served up a meal that he had prepared while Obi-Wan and the girls worked on the ship. But the real surprise was when Obi-Wan produced a battered canteen from his travel bag. He poured out a measure of thick, honey-colored Corellian whiskey into small metal cups and passed them around.

"It's best to toast survival when you can," Obi-Wan wisely stated while lifting his cup. "The whiskey went around, and soon the harsh spirits had them laughing at old war stories, tales of exile, and the absurdity of finding themselves in a cave on the ass-end of Tatooine, plotting rebellion."

Through it all, Obi-Wan listened more than he spoke, but when he did contribute, it was always with his perfectly-timed dry wit. When the last of the sunlight faded from the cave mouth, Harry leaned back and studied their new addition. Obi-Wan was sharp, adaptive, and tough, but he also had the calmness of someone who'd outlasted a hundred disasters. It wasn't long before

the group had settled into a comfortable, almost familial banter. When they grew tired, Harry showed Obi-Wan to his personal quarters in the newest addition to the cave.

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The next morning, Yoda wasted no time in organizing the group for a proper bout of lightsaber training. He stood on a flat outcrop above the cave's main floor with his hands folded in his sleeves, watching as the four Jedi paired off to practice their forms. Aayla and Maris faced each other at one end, and their blue and green blades clashed in a flurry of youthful energy and barely restrained competitiveness. But the real spectacle was at the center of the cave, where Shaak Ti and Obi-Wan squared off in a sparring match more intense than any Harry had ever witnessed.

From the start, Shaak Ti pressed Obi-Wan with relentless, almost feline speed. Her technique was a blur of blue light, and every slash forced Obi-Wan to adapt. His own blade snapped up in perfect parries each time. The sound of their sabers rang across the stone and echoed through the cavern. Shaak Ti launched a high feint, spun low, and nearly swept Obi-Wan's legs, but he anticipated it. He leaped over the humming blade and countered with a precise cut aimed at her montrals. She twisted aside at the last instant, then swept her saber in a wide arc that forced Obi-Wan onto his back foot.

"Impressive," Obi-Wan called out, grinning as he retreated. For a moment, Shaak's lips curved into a rare, confident smile. She surged forward, driving him toward the mouth of the cave. Their blades hissed and clashed with enough force to make Harry's ears ring. The fierce battle was taking its toll on the two combatants. Even though it was nice and cool in the cave, sweat dripped from their foreheads and rolled down their faces. Shaak Ti's impressive bust was glistening with sweat as it bounced and jiggled, but even that glorious sight wasn't enough to break Kenobi's concentration.

Obi-Wan switched forms, shifting from his opening stance into a defensive posture. Yoda was shouting out instructions, though Harry didn't understand the terminology. The change caught Shaak Ti off guard. Her next thrust missed by a hair, and Obi-Wan immediately stepped in, twisting her saber arm up and using his momentum to lever her off-balance. Then, with a single sweep of his leg, he knocked her feet out from beneath her and brought the tip of his saber to her neck.

She froze, blinking up at him, and then let out a short burst of laughter. "Yield," she said. Her pride was only mildly dented.

Obi-Wan nodded and deactivated his blade. He reached down and pulled her up with a comradely slap on the shoulder. "You nearly had me," he told her, and Harry could tell that he meant it.

The rest of the group gathered around, all of them clearly impressed. Maris was practically vibrating with excitement, and even Aayla's usually cool demeanor was replaced with open admiration for the display.

When the training session ended, Obi-Wan wandered over to where Harry had disassembled a damaged blaster. Harry was using magic to try to repair the parts. Obi-Wan plopped down next to him, still breathing a little hard from the training, and studied Harry with a thoughtful expression. "You've got quite the crew here," Obi-Wan said. "And your magic ... it's unlike anything I've ever seen. Do you mind if I ask about it?"

"Sure," Harry said with a smile. "Go ahead."

Obi-Wan was nothing if not methodical in his questioning. He asked Harry about the mechanics of his magic, starting with the basics. "Do you channel your power through a crystal, as we use with lightsabers? Or is it an innate ability, like how we use the Force? I've seen you cast spells without any device. How is that possible?"

Harry explained the principles of using magic, using words like "focus," "intent," and "visualization." Obi-Wan listened intently, nodding along, though his eyes were alight with curiosity. He followed up with questions about limitations and discipline, asking, "Is your magic finite? Can you exhaust it? What happens if you try to do something beyond your power?"

Harry answered as best he could, comparing his magical stamina to physical exertion. Obi-Wan seemed fascinated by the idea of wandless casting and wanted a demonstration. Harry agreed and levitated a small rock before transfiguring it into a feather.

"In my world, most used wands. Wands were used as a tool to help with focus and intent. Wands weren't strictly necessary, but very few could do wandless magic consistently," Harry told him. Harry then explained that wandless magic was most common during their younger years, when children performed accidental magic.

For every answer Harry gave, Obi-Wan seemed to have three new questions. "If you are wounded, can you heal yourself? Are there magics that can cloud the mind or influence others? Do you sense living things as we do in the Force?" Harry was honest about what he knew and what he didn't, and once or twice, he found himself laughing at how quickly Obi-Wan was dissecting the intricacies of wizardry.

Maris wandered over, drawn in by the topic. "Is there a dark side to this magic?" she asked curiously.

Harry hesitated, thinking about Voldemort and his horcruxes, then nodded. "There's always a cost. Magic itself isn't good or evil, but how you use it ... that matters."

Obi-Wan and Maris exchanged a look that needed no translation. The parallels to the Jedi Code and the temptations of the Sith were obvious. They all understood the weight of power in the hands of someone who might abuse it.

The conversation became more philosophical as the day wore on. Obi-Wan spoke of the Living Force and compared it to Harry's descriptions of magical energy. They debated nature versus nurture, the use of power for defense or domination, and the responsibility that came with it.

"Yours is a curious blend of science and faith," Obi-Wan said at last, offering Harry a wry smile. "I suspect you'd have made a fine Jedi."

Harry grinned back, "And you'd have made an excellent Auror."

The easy banter made the time fly by, and Harry realized he was looking forward to these debates as much as the physical training. He hadn't realized how much he missed having an intellectual equal since leaving Hermione behind.

That night, as they gathered for another meal, Obi-Wan shared stories about his time hiding on Tatooine. He'd spent his time watching over the Lars family. He kept a careful distance but intervened when the Tusken Raiders got too close. He recounted several close calls with Imperial patrols, but luckily, those were few and far between. The Empire's influence on Tatooine was still thin, but they all knew that would change eventually. The girls listened raptly, and even Yoda seemed to relax, letting himself enjoy the sense of camaraderie.

The days settled into a routine. Yoda drilled them in the morning, and afternoons were divided between ship upgrades, working on the cave base, and running to and from Mos Eisley to pick up supplies and parts.

One afternoon, Obi-Wan tutored Harry in Jedi techniques for sensing his surroundings. Harry found that many of the meditations dovetailed neatly with his own Occlumency training, and he made remarkable progress in channeling his energy more efficiently. Unfortunately, Harry would never be able to use his magic in the same way that they use the Force.

Later that night, Obi-Wan, Harry, and the girls lingered by the fire. The cave was quiet except for the crackling of the flames, and outside, they could hear the desert wind howling across the dunes.

"You know," Obi-Wan said, pouring out the last of the Corellian whiskey. "I always thought of myself as a man of reason. But after seeing what you can do, I'm beginning to think the universe is far stranger than I ever imagined."

Harry and the girls laughed and sipped their whiskey.

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After several days of preparation, Harry and his companions established the cave as a true base of operations. They'd reinforced the walls, installed a makeshift blast door, and even set up running water throughout the cave. Yoda kept to himself most of the time, and Obi-Wan was gone for hours each day, always returning with that same haunted, watchful look in his eye. When Harry finally asked him about it, Obi-Wan simply smiled and said, "I'm keeping my promises." Harry knew better than to press.

Still, the days passed with a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and after a week, the cave was stocked with enough food to last a year, and their battered starship was purring like new. Harry had even carved out a small alcove in the wall, lined with stone benches and a table, which became their common room. It was there, over breakfast, that Obi-Wan announced he would not be joining their next mission.

"I have obligations here," Obi-Wan said. His eyes flickered to Yoda, and there was a silent understanding in the look they shared. "But you'll need a safe port to return to, and someone to keep watch over this world. I'll help hold down the fort, as you say."

Harry didn't argue, and neither did the girls. Instead, he shook Obi-Wan's hand and said, "We'll bring back souvenirs." Maris snorted at that, but even she seemed reluctant to leave the Jedi behind. Yoda gave them each a nod of approval, though he said nothing.

The final hours before departure were a flurry of activity. They loaded the ship with the gear Shaak Ti had selected, checked the hull one last time, and ran diagnostics on the engines. At sunset, the four of them stood on the cave's ledge, squinting into the dying light. Far below, the Dune Sea sparkled with heat mirages that looked almost like lakes to the untrained eye.

Obi-Wan appeared beside them with his hands clasped behind his back and watched the horizon in silence. "Where will you go first?" he asked.

"We're not sure. We haven't heard rumors of any living Jedi, and Queen Breha hasn't contacted us with any information. The best we can do is go out and look for ourselves," Aayla answered.

Maris was less diplomatic. "If we can find any Imperial outposts, maybe we can take them out so the rest of the galaxy will breathe easier."

"Both worthy goals," Obi-Wan replied. His tone was gentle, but Harry detected a note of warning. "The Empire will have spies in every port. Beware of kindness from strangers, and trust your instincts over any broadcast or rumor."

"Wiser words have never been spoken," Harry chuckled.

Obi-Wan smiled softly at that, then turned to Shaak Ti. "Your talents are wasted in exile, Master Ti. When the time is right, you must lead again."

Shaak Ti met his eyes without flinching. "If you're still here when we return, I'll expect you to have built a proper council chamber."

"Consider it done," Obi-Wan replied with a chuckle. He offered his hand to each of them in turn. "May the Force be with you. All of you."

The girls gathered their gear and, after a final round of farewells, filed into the ship's narrow airlock. Harry was last. He gave them a lopsided salute and jogged up the ramp.

Inside, the ship's cabin was already full of activity. Maris was at the nav station, scrolling through hyperspace routes. Shaak Ti's hands were a blur over the glowing console as she ran a systems check. Aayla was in the pilot's chair, doing her pre-flight check.

Harry took a seat behind her and strapped in. Through the viewport, he could see the cave mouth and, silhouetted against the sky, the lone figure of Obi-Wan Kenobi.

"All set?" Harry asked.

Aayla nodded with her hands steady on the controls. "Our first stop is Mos Eisley for fuel and last-minute supplies."

Harry nodded with a smile. Taking off in a starship always thrilled him. Then with a deep, echoing rumble, the ship's repulsorlifts powered up. Aayla eased the engines forward, and the craft slid smoothly out of the cave and into the open air. Outside, the sky burned orange from the twin sunsets. As soon as they cleared the cave mouth, Aayla took manual control. She angled the nose upward and accelerated, sending them skimming low over the dunes.

They banked hard, heading for the jagged outline of Mos Eisley on the horizon. The engines howled, and Harry felt a surge of excitement at the prospect of a new adventure.

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The monotonous, flickering blur of hyperspace began to lose its novelty after four hours. At first, Harry and the girls excitedly gazed through the cockpit viewport as streaks of starlight raced past. But after the second hour, even Maris's initial enthusiasm faded into restless tapping on the console and occasional exasperated sighs.

"Remind me, why does Tatooine have to be so far from everything?" Maris grumbled, stretching her arms overhead with an audible pop. Her thin top rode up, exposing the bottom half of her perky breasts. She slumped back in her chair and glared at the swirling blue tunnel of hyperspace.

"We could have taken one of the main trade routes," Shaak Ti mused from her place at the co-pilot's station, efficiently reading through diagnostic readouts. "But then we'd have to deal with Imperial checkpoints."

Maris scowled but didn't argue. The memory of their narrow escape from the last Imperial patrol hadn't faded. "I'd rather pluck my own eyes out with a hydrosponder," she muttered.

Aayla piloted with calm, silent confidence. Harry sat behind her, keeping an eye on the energy readings while stealthily observing his teammates. None of them showed any signs of fear or hesitation, but there was an unspoken tension in the tiny cabin. None of them knew what was going to come for them next.

Harry's mind began to drift as he was lulled by the gentle hum of the engines. He almost nodded off, but a sudden shift in pitch jerked him upright. "This is a good spot to settle in for the night. Aayla, do you want to take us out of hyperspace?" Shaak Ti said.

Aayla's hands danced over the controls as she brought them out of hyperspace. "Dropping into normal space in three ... two ... one," she called out, and the ship lurched slightly as it exited hyperspace. The cockpit windows flickered, then the swirl of blue resolved into a black emptiness filled with distant pinpricks of light. "Let's scan for trouble before we find a good spot to rest."

Shaak Ti was already on the sensor array, scanning the area. "There's a thick asteroid belt just off our starboard hull, and I see some small debris fields, but nothing with an energy signature. There are no ships, no transmissions, and no satellites. There are no lifeforms present either. We should be clear."

Aayla grinned and nudged the control yoke. "Perfect. We'll go to ground there and get some rest."

It took another twenty minutes to fly out of the hyperspace lane before the ship banked hard and entered the asteroid belt. Through the viewport, Harry could see looming boulders the size of houses tumbling through the dark void of space. Aayla handled the navigation with smooth, effortless skill, weaving between fragments of rock with only the faintest shudder transmitted through the hull. She made for the largest asteroid in the cluster. It was a misshapen mass with a gently sloping plain that looked almost inviting.

They touched down with a hollow clang, and the ship's landing skids scraped against the stony crust. The moment the engines powered down, Maris was the first to unbuckle. She bounced up from her chair with a relieved sigh. "Finally. My ass was going numb."

Harry grinned with a smirk. "I didn't know your ass could get numb, considering all the squishy flesh you're packing back there," he teased.

Maris shot him an unimpressed look. "I've never heard you complaining about the size of my bottom. In fact, you can't seem to keep your hands off it. Besides, you're the one who can't even walk straight after a night of bending me over."

Harry and the rest of the girls laughed. Harry then lifted Maris into his arms and kissed her. Maris responded by shoving her tongue down his throat. "We should run a systems check and make sure nothing overheated during the jump," Shaak said, though she was already rising from her station and stretching her arms high above her head. The motion accentuated the taut lines of her body and drew a sidelong glance from Harry.

Aayla keyed in a few commands and locked the controls. "Let's power down most systems to avoid detection. If anything happens, Harry's wards will let us know. Now, I'm ready to relax."

The group agreed, and soon they drifted through the narrow corridors to the now-empty cargo bay. All their supplies had been left in the cave base. Harry's tent was the only thing left in there, though there were still plenty of supplies in his tent's storage room.

The transition from the cold, metallic interior of the ship to the warmth of Harry's magical tent was always welcome. Maris dove for the couch, flopping across it with a dramatic groan. Aayla's lips twitched in amusement as she shucked her boots. Shaak did the same, yawning the whole time. "I'm too tired for a bath tonight. I say we go straight to bed," Shaak stated. All three agreed and made their way to the bedroom.

Inside the bedroom, the three women immediately began undressing. Aayla peeled off her top, revealing smooth blue skin and the gentle curve of her breasts. She noticed Harry's stare and gave him a slow, knowing smile. Maris impatiently discarded her clothes on the floor, exposing her ash-white skin, perky tits, and hairless pussy. She sat on the edge of the bed with her legs parted, not caring that Harry was looking at her naked slit.

Shaak Ti pulled off her tiny, strappy bodysuit and tossed it away. She stood with quiet dignity with her hands at her sides, meeting Harry's gaze with steady black eyes. Her big, round breasts stood proudly and perkily on her chest. She couldn't help but smirk as Harry openly stared at them. She even shook her chest a bit, making them jiggle. This seemed to spark him into action.

He stripped quickly, tossing his own clothes into the corner, and joined them on the bed. Maris immediately claimed his left side and wrapped her arms around his waist. Shaak Ti settled on his right, pressing her breasts against his arm. Aayla huffed and simply sprawled on top of him, making the other two women giggle. Aayla wasted no time in getting what she wanted. She straddled his lap and began grinding her naked pussy on the underside of his hard, throbbing cock. Harry gripped her thighs and groaned from the pleasure. "I thought you were all too tired to do anything," he said as Maris and Shaak began kissing his shoulders and neck.

"We're never too tired for this," Shaak said, caressing his lower stomach. Maris giggled and playfully nipped at his shoulder.

"Besides, after such a long, tiring day, I think we earned a treat," Maris added. She then squeaked when Harry flipped Aayla onto her back and settled between her spread thighs.

"You're certainly right about that," Harry said, smirking as he thrust into Aayla's wet and waiting pussy. Aayla squealed in pleasure, making the two women giggle even harder.