

The celebration continued for several hours before eventually winding down, the vibe for the entire event only rising more after my speech. I was not there for most of it, however, as Ahsoka, Tatnia, and I quickly excused ourselves, boarded a shuttle, and burned atmo to join the skeleton crew currently on board the *Dovah*. We wouldn't be the only non-crew on the ship, as a dozen or so people closely responsible for the ship's production, including Nuk and Li, were all already on board. They were all just as eager as I was to witness the ship's first performance.

The three of us entered through the aftmost starboard hangar, which was mostly empty and set aside for shuttles and larger ships. The other hangars were filled with scaffolding to carry starfighters. The ship could carry four squadrons in total, but would likely normally carry only two. With all of its heavy weapons, what the *Dovah*-class needed most was a fighter screen, but given the ship's direct combat-heavy role, putting too many starfighters on board would likely force it to focus on being a carrier instead. So instead of stuffing it full of starfighters, the standard loadout would only be two MA-wing squadrons.

We were already considering how we could retool its design to create a carrier-focused ship for later fleet construction, but for now, all of our fleets could already hold several squadrons, so there was no need to stuff the ship with more than it needed.

As we made our way through the ship, we paused to get a look at a few things. The standard crew quarters were above average for a ship *Dovah*'s size, and its crew spaces, like the lounge and cafeteria, were downright luxurious compared to Imperial designs.

After inspecting a few spots, we eventually arrived at our intended destination. The overall look of the bridge was simple, utilitarian, and militaristic, with none of the gleam and ostentatiousness that other ships tended to have. That said, it was pretty open and spacious, with nearly fifteen consoles spread around, nearly half of them staffed by naval droids, the rest by normal sentients. At the center of the space was the captain's chair, which had its own display and control consoles on either side of it, allowing the captain of the ship to check a variety of things at a glance.

The most impressive aspect of the bridge was the view.

A perfect view of the surrounding space encompassed us, starting from the starboard side of the bridge, from behind the captain's chair, and sweeping all the way around to the port side. The view didn't stop at just the walls, of course, but continued up and over the roof of the room, showing off an unprecedented viewing radius. It was so much that it actually took some getting used to, causing a bit of vertigo when first walking onto the bridge, which was why, for now, the roof view was off.

Of course, in other ships, such a wide bridge view would have meant opening the bridge as an incredibly obvious weak spot. Thankfully, not for the *Dovah*. After all, there was no way in hell I would let the ship designer curse our beautiful ship with the most obvious design flaw in the science fiction genre.

Even if Star Wars was very much guilty of it.

The bridge for the Dovah-class was buried in the heart of the ship, and the view was done through camera feeds. The primary cameras were stationed on the observation deck, which was sitting where most would expect a bridge to be, and even looked quite like a bridge, but was mostly an empty space for crew and passengers to relax in.

It would obviously be evacuated during combat.

As we stepped onto the bridge, Nuk and Li greeted us, the latter passing flutes of a celebratory champagne-esque drink. Both of the Mon Cal creche mates were clearly excited, their project having finally borne fruit.

"To a successful first launch," Li said, raising her glass.

"And to many more!" Nuk added smoothly.

We shared the toast, enjoying the bubbly, floral, tart liquid as I looked over the large bridge. It was insane to consider that, not too long ago, I had been dropped into this galaxy, my arms in shackles, with nothing to my name but a grimoire of magic from a stunted universe. And now I was running a mercenary group capable of producing a starship of this size and power level. This ship wasn't just a new weapon in our arsenal. It represented a shift in our group, from something that drew its power from others to one that existed by its own force of production.

"Admiral?" Li said, pulling me from my thoughts as she gestured towards the command chair. "Would you like the honor of waking them up?"

"For... Oh! You haven't activated them yet?" I asked, turning towards the console projector on the right side of the captain's chair. "What do I do?"

"It responds to the name of the vessel as if it were its own," Nuk explained.

"Just say its name, and it should activate," Li finished.

One of my few contributions to the design process was to try and steer a few things away from some of Star Wars' strange standardizations. One of those had been the embedded bridge, but it also included things like convincing the designer that the armored doors protecting the hangars should be closed by default, rather than open to space. I also pointed out that, with our ships being so droid-focused, including having a more powerful and connected droid brain for the ship, forcing it to work in the background was a waste.

"Dovah, time to wake up," I called out.

After a moment, the projector next to the captain's chair blinked on, and a small, [generic Skyrim dragon head](#) appeared, projected smoothly with just the head and neck. It was a simple projection, so it lacked any color, but it still got the point across fine.

"Greetings, Admiral," the projection said. "What is your request?"

"What is the ship's current shield charge at?"

"Shields are at full charge, Admiral," they responded easily in a deep, gravelly voice.

"Thank you, that would be all."

During a report on the ship's design progress, I had pointed out that there was no reason that a droid brain for a ship of this size, especially with all the enhancements we were doing to it, couldn't talk. It wasn't alive, nor was it really much different from other ship brains used on other capital ships, just significantly upgraded and augmented with additional interface capabilities. It wasn't the most efficient interface, but it did let people interact with the ship from basically anywhere, essentially like the computer systems for the ships on Star Trek. Plus, what it lacked in efficiency, it made up for in ease of access.

While its ability to control the ship's functions was normally extremely limited, and again, it wasn't alive, having such a back-and-forth relationship with the ship's controlling brain had numerous benefits. Most of those were small things, but there was one major advantage it provided.

In an emergency, the droid brain's restrictions could be lifted, allowing the captain to pilot the ship himself by simply telling the brain what to do, though it wouldn't last very long. There were a lot of moving and shifting aspects of a ship this large, and trying to hold all the reins at once got very complicated very fast. At most, it was an emergency measure, something a captain could do if his crew was incapacitated.

After I confirmed I didn't need anything else, the projection nodded and vanished a second later, the projector going dark not long after.

"Alright, droid brain is awake and responding," I confirmed, looking around at the robotic and biological crew. "Any errors to report?"

After a moment of confirmed negatives, I nodded and sat down in the captain's chair, passing Ahsoka my mostly full glass. I shifted slightly to get comfortable before nodding and focusing back on the task at hand.

"In that case, tell the *Fury* that we are ready for our test jump," I said, looking towards comms. "And notify 1st Fleet to form up."

It took a few minutes for everything to work out, but when the way was cleared, the *Fury*, which was still acting as the orbit control for ships orbiting Nirn, gave us clearance to jump. It was mostly ceremonial, there weren't enough ships around to cause any issues at the moment, but there was a certain gravitas to going through the proper steps. After 1st Fleet formed up around us and we shared hyperspace coordinates, we made the jump to lightspeed.

...Only to drop out only a few moments later, just a short distance from one of the other planets in the system. This particular planet's moon was a lifeless ball of rock, which made it perfect for target practice. Once we arrived and stationed ourselves over the moon, we oriented our starboard side down, and commenced with weapons testing, tracking energy flow, looking for issues in coolant systems, anything that would speak to underlying mechanical issues. We

even spent a few minutes rotating the turrets and adjusting their aim, just to make sure nothing was gummed up or jammed. Once we were done with one side, we switched to the other and opened fire.

After twenty minutes of creating a small lake of slagged, glowing lava, we were done with most of our weapon systems. Our weapons were potent for our ship's size, making up for their simple design by being perfectly adapted to our power production, which was also well above average for a ship of Dovah's class.

"There seems to be a jam in the port side large plasma dart bay," the weapons officer announced. "As well as a slight unexpected uptick in our coolant draw from heavy turbolaser five. One point defense turrets was non-functional and threw up warning errors and immediately shut down when we attempted to test fire it."

"Alright. Make a note of everything in the report," I said with a nod, though it was likely an unnecessary reminder. "What's the charge on the central core cannon?"

"One hundred percent."

"Then let's get into position."

The central core cannon, otherwise known as a super heavy Ion Cannon, was the *Dovah's* ace in the hole, the primary weapon that would let it go toe to toe with Star Destroyers all by itself. It had two firing modes, rapid and heavy. Rapid fire allowed it to fire as fast as a normal heavy ion cannon, with the downside that it would be just as powerful. The heavy setting was a much slower, massive shot that could take down a capital ship's shields in one blast and then disable the ship after that. Unsurprisingly, heavy shots took time to recharge, forty seven seconds in total. It sounded like a short cycle, but it was, in fact, an eternity during rapidly shifting space combat.

The upside to the long recharge time was that the central core cannon did not run on the same power cores that ran the rest of the ship. That meant that it was always recharging, and wouldn't need to be powered down if the captain wanted to put all power to shields and thrusters.

There were obviously emergency systems in place, which would allow the captain to override that separation, should the primary power cores fail, but it was honestly unlikely. Not that they would fail, that could happen with enough damage. It was just unlikely that they would fail and that there would be enough of the ship intact after the resulting explosion for anyone to do anything, let alone want to fire the central core cannon.

As the *Dovah* reoriented itself, the ship's bow aiming downward towards the moon, I gave the female Twi'lek behind the weapons controls a nod.

"Dumping charge from capacitors!" she called out, starting the first stage of the powerful weapons firing cycle. A full five seconds passed before she spoke again. "Triple C charged, sir! Ten seconds to charge failure."

Such a high level of power being stuffed into a single ion cannon meant that the systems could only hold on to that energy for so long. The capacitors held the charge, and when we were ready, they would push that charge into the large weapon. It then had ten seconds to fire before it was forced to discharge and ground out that energy, or risk its internal systems being fried.

The weapon was finicky, and the heavy charge took some time to prepare, but it put the Dovah-class in a position to knock out Star Destroyers by itself, and with a fleet formed up around it, it could take down several over a long battle. Not to mention that, even without the central cannon, it could still go toe-to-toe with other heavy cruisers.

"Fire."

In a split second, a beam of blue and purple energy fired from the central line of the ship, powerful enough to vibrate the deck plates beneath us. The "viewport" screens around us darkened for the moment to compensate for a sudden increase in light, before the beam cut off. Moments later, the beam hit the planet... and did nothing, its powerful charge grounding into the molten rock our other weapons had left behind.

"Sensors? Weapons?"

"Readings look good, Admiral," the Twi'lek woman responded with an eager nod. "No errors, clean discharge, capacitors are already filling up, and will be ready for heavy fire in thirty-eight seconds."

"Not reading any issues outside the weapon systems," Sensors responded. "Isolation between the Triple C and the main ship systems held perfectly, no increase in temperature, no coolant spikes. All systems green."

"Alright, that's good!" I said excitedly. "Let's put them through a stress test!"

For ten minutes, we fired off the Central Core Cannon, in rapid and heavy modes, making sure the machine could fire consistently for a long time. By the time we were finished, all of the weapon readings were coming back solid, and save for a few more uncovered errors, the ship passed with flying colors.

We continued to do stress testing, pushing the engines, then some of the internal systems like life support and the power cores. The last test involved the shield systems, which thankfully didn't require deliberately damaging the ship. The whole process took just over an hour, and I was smiling through the whole thing.

"Well done, everyone," I said as I addressed the bridge crew and the passengers who were on board to witness the ship's first "action". "Other than a few small glitches, unavoidable with a project this large, I am ecstatic with the results."

The crew and passengers cheered, and after one more loop around the moon, 1st Fleet reformed around the ship, and we jumped back to Nirn.