

Galactic Wizardry

Chapter 27

“Over there!” Sabe pointed.

“I already cleaned that area,” Harry told her.

“Do it again. It smells musty,” she retorted.

“Maybe it’s your upper lip,” Harry muttered.

“What did you say?”

“Nothing!” Harry chirped, smiling to himself.

Harry had gone over the shop and living quarters a dozen times to fix every little problem that the girls were pointing out. Apparently, his definition of clean was severely lacking. Every smell was removed, every nest and cobweb was vanished, and even the floors were cleaned of sand and grit. Thankfully, it only took a few hours after waking up the following morning. He shuddered to think about how long it would have taken without the use of his magic.

“Aayla ... Shaak!” he called out while digging in his pocket. The two women joined them in the shop. “Here you ladies go!” he said, handing each of the four women necklaces made of small, golden coins.

“Necklaces?” Padme asked, looking at the small coin.

“Enchanted necklaces,” he corrected her. Aayla put hers on first and squeaked when her skin changed from blue to green.

“I chose green since it’s the most common color for a Twi’lek. I chose a cream white for you, Shaak. Red is already the most common, but no one will suspect an off-white Togruta to be you. For Padme and Sabe, it will place a Glamour over their faces, making them look plain and unassuming.”

Each girl put them on and checked themselves out in the mirror. “The more you use them, the more often I have to recharge them,” he explained.

“How long does a charge last?” Shaak asked, taking hers off and studying it closer.

“Perhaps a day or so of continuous use,” Harry shrugged.

“What coin is this?” Aayla asked, looking at hers as well.

“A shrunken wupiupi,” he told them. A wupiupi was a golden coin used on Tatooine that was worth 0.625 Republic Credits. There were sixteen wupiupi in a trugut and sixty-four in a peggat. The girls were given a crash course on the currency used in Hutt Space.

He heard a chorus of thank you’s before going back to work. Choosing what profession to take on was challenging. They didn’t want to do anything that would draw too much attention to themselves. They especially didn’t want to try and muscle in on any of Jabba’s businesses. Because of this, the most logical choice was to go into the water business. Harry could conjure as much water as he wanted, though he had to be careful. He couldn’t just flood the city with cheap water unless he wanted to paint a bullseye on his forehead. Other water dealers would immediately have it out for him, drawing attention to their group. Not only that, but it could crater the value, making the incredibly poor moisture farmers that much worse off. The best bet was to keep the price in line with those around him.

The good part was that because it was all profits, Harry could accept trade as a form of payment. Most water dealers wouldn’t accept trade. They wanted cold, hard cash. Harry didn’t care. He would accept anything for his water, even Republic Credits. If they did receive traded items, Harry could fix them up and sell them in his shop. That’s what the girls wanted to do ... start a junk shop. It gave them something to do, so Harry didn’t mind. Now he just needed to get things going.

He picked a perfect time to become a water salesman. Tatooine was in the middle of a drought that had already lasted three months. The desert planet would occasionally go through them, and some were worse than others. At the moment, the moisture farmers were really struggling and prices for their water were through the roof. The dealers, of course, passed that increase on to the consumers.

The girls needed to find wares to sell before they could start up, but Harry really didn’t need much. He quickly went out and bought a few junk items from Watto’s shop that were made of copper. Back at the shop, he used his magic to change their shape into several large cubes. He etched runes into each of them and hung them inside conjured water tanks with spigots and hoses attached to each. Activating them, he waited for a moment before the purest water imaginable began to drip down. Once the water level reached the cubes that were hanging from the inside of the tanks’ tops, the cubes were deactivated. When the water level dropped, more water would be produced. Because of this, Harry had three fifty-five-gallon drums constantly filled with water. Before he could say anything, the girls began filling up gallon-sized bottles that they would use to trade. Once topped, they capped the bottles and kissed him goodbye. Harry didn’t need to worry about them since Shaak was with them, but even so ...

“Remember your emergency Portkeys!” he called out. “Be careful!” They turned around and smiled, waving and giggling at him. It seemed that they were eager to try out their new magical disguises. Harry couldn’t blame them. This was the first real adventure for the two Nabooan girls since joining his crew. They had a few missions here and there, but Harry made sure that the

risk level for them was very low. Unfortunately, he couldn't constantly hold their hands and shield them from danger. He had to teach them how to survive and let them struggle. At least, that was what the Jedi would tell him. He didn't care about any of that crap. He would watch over them and kill any who dared to harm them. The only reason he wasn't with them right then was that he trusted Shaak and Aayla to protect the inexperienced girls. Eventually, Padme and Sabe would be brought up to par, but that would take a long time. This mission was a good start.

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Laying flat on his belly atop a large and semi-flat rock, Harry scoped out Jabba's Palace with his binoculars. If he hadn't been using his magic, he'd have been cooked like an egg on a hot frying pan. The sun was beating down viciously on his back. During the current drought, the heat levels had increased as the moisture levels decreased, making it miserable all around. Like every scumbag dictator during a time of crisis, they only looked after themselves. As such, Jabba had recently enacted a "water tax" on everyone who produced or sold water in his sphere of influence. Harry hadn't been visited by his goons just yet, but they were sure to come.

He watched as another group of his thugs arrived in an old, junkard of a speeder car. Spinning the dial on his binoculars, he zoomed in to see what they had been doing. They went into the back and removed several crates and quickly ran them inside. It definitely wasn't water. 'Probably spice,' Harry thought, cataloging the time and date in his datapad. This was just the beginning step to taking down Jabba's empire ... information gathering. After another couple of hours baking under the twin suns, Harry called it quits for the day.

"Honey, I'm home!" he called out as he entered the temperature-regulated environment of their new shop. It seemed that the girls had gone a bit overboard with their pickings. There were piles of crap all over the shop. "What a load of shit," Harry said, looking it all over.

"This is quality merchandise! Or at least it will be once you use your powers to fix it all," Padme smiled at him. The rest of the girls quickly joined them. Harry picked up a cracked, metal cooking pan before dropping it back into the pile. He walked over to a corner of the room where a large piece of machinery was leaning. The thing kind of looked like a small starship, only the top had a long, skinny antenna-looking device. It was bent, twisted, and looked twenty years past its prime. He saw a marking on the side and rubbed the dust and dirt away to read it.

"GX-8," he read.

"It's a moisture vaporator!" Sabe chirped, hugging his arm. "We got this and a whole cargo load of broken vaporator parts for only one bottle of water!" she said proudly. "They even delivered them for us."

"You got ripped off," Harry chuckled, tapping the broken-down device with the tip of his boot.

“Nuh Uh!” Sabe glared at him which only made him laugh harder. Harry concentrated and waved his hand at it. They watched as it vibrated for a moment before the crushed-in parts inflated and the bent parts straightened. The outer shell was cleaned of dirt and grime until what appeared to be a brand new vaporator stood in front of them. Harry grabbed a power cord and plugged it into the base. Reaching around back, he flipped the switch and watched as the power came on. Shaak walked up and examined it.

Smiling happily, she declared, “It works!” The girls cheered.

“See! I told you it was a good deal!” Sabe stuck her tongue out at him. She squealed when he poked her in the belly with his finger.

“So I’m supposed to fix and clean all these things?” he asked, looking around at the dozens of items that they had brought home. The girls smiled and nodded. Harry sighed and got to work. As it turned out, it didn’t take all that long ... only a few hours. Once he was done, he helped them set up the shelving and watched as they talked about the pricing. Tatooine was a poor planet, and as such, their potential customers had little to spend. As Shaak was the oldest and most experienced, she was the one to take over the pricing.

The following day, Harry wheeled out his drums of water and began his new life as a water dealer. Placing a sign out front, he charged only slightly less than others in his area. Before he could even sit down, he already had his first customer. A female cantina owner from down the street was interested. Since she was buying water in bulk, she always tried to get the best prices. Harry quickly cut her a deal, and he had his first sale.

“You see this?” Harry asked Aayla who was sitting next to him while wearing her disguise. Though she would be equally beautiful with any skin color, he preferred her normal blue skin. “We’ll be able to retire in no time,” Harry joked. Aayla rolled her eyes and snatched up his money.

“The girls and I can use this to buy more junk,” she quickly said, stuffing it into her pocket.

“Already stealing from me?” Harry raised his eyebrow. “You’ve jumped into the whole Tatooine lifestyle headfirst,” he quipped.

“I’m just doing as you said and blending in with the locals,” she teased, leaning in and kissing him deeply. Their kiss was cut short when a group of seedy chaps pulled up in a landspeeder.

“Good day, gentlemen!” Harry smiled. “What can I get you?” he asked.

“You can get us ten gallons of your water by the orders of the benevolent Jabba the Hutt. Taxes are due and we’re here to collect!” one of them sneered while the others held their blasters menacingly. Harry just continued to smile.

"Of course! I'm nothing if not a follower of law and order," Harry told them. The gun-toting henchmen took a step back while two others brought in large water cans and began to fill them up from his fifty-five-gallon drums. Once they were filled, they sneered once again and took off. It seemed that they were angry that they didn't get to rough him up.

"They've been doing that to everyone," Harry told Aayla, who had kept quiet during the confrontation. "Most moisture farmers can barely harvest enough water to keep themselves alive. Now Jabba is demanding even more from them," Harry shook his head.

"I'm surprised you kept such an even head," Aayla said, looking at him. "You normally don't let others treat you in such a way."

"I'll get my revenge in due time. The most important thing right now is to not blow our cover," Harry explained. "This isn't the last we've seen of those idiots, so be prepared."

The rest of the day was spent selling their wares to anyone willing to buy them. Once the suns began to sink into the horizon, Harry and the girls made their way to the cantina that the woman who purchased his water owned. As they entered, the smell of a hundred different species hit their noses. Harry wouldn't describe it as pleasant by any means. There wasn't a live band playing, but rather music was being played over speakers hidden in the ceiling. There was, however, live entertainment in the form of dancers.

Most dancers on Tatooine were slaves who were taught exotic dance moves when they were young and were put to work by whoever bought them. There were some criminals that bought up pretty slave girls, taught them to dance, and rented them out to cantinas and nightclubs. Harry suspected that the girls dancing there were rented. The air was thick with smoke and could get a person high just from being in it. It was loud with laughter and arguments as people joked and gambled their ill-gotten gains away. Toward the back, they finally got a large enough table to fit them all. Once they were seated, Harry got up to go get them some drinks. As he waited at the bar, he checked out the dancing girls. One was a good-looking, light gray Twi'lek. She danced as if she had been doing it all her life, which sadly, she probably had. Her moves were very sensual. The other was a cream-skinned Zabrak girl. Her moves were a little rougher, telling him that she hadn't been a dancer for more than a few months. Flicking his finger in her direction, he placed a Tracking Charm on her. Once he had their drinks, he carried the tray over to their booth.

He and the girls chatted like everyone else in the cantina, which was kind of the point. They weren't there to have a good time. They were there to keep up appearances. Everyone in the city frequented these bars. It was important for them to be seen in them often so that they would be accepted as locals themselves. Harry finished his glass and was just about to get up to go get a refill when a beautiful, blonde human female walked up to their booth. She stood right in front of him.

"Deathstick?" she asked, holding up the illegal narcotic. "Only two wupiupi."

Harry smiled but declined. "No thank you. Never touch the stuff."

"Come on now," she purred, dropping down onto his lap. "It will make you feel so good."

The girls looked on in shock as the beautiful woman leaned in and kissed him passionately. She then whispered in his ear while playing with the hair on the back of his head. Harry whispered something back and gave her the money. She handed him the drug and kissed him again, only a slight peck this time before getting up and smirking at the gobsmacked girls.

"What the hell was that?" Sabe asked. She was about to get up and go cut a bitch for taking liberties with her man. She eyed the woman walking off, her wide hips swaying sensually.

"It's our cue to leave," he told them, tossing the drug onto the floor underneath the table. The women got up and followed him out of the loud and busy cantina. They didn't say a word until they were nearly home.

"Want to fill us in?" Shaak asked as they walked up to the front door. Suddenly, they jumped to attention as the attractive blonde came up behind them and walked over to Harry.

"Master Ti. It's been a while," she said. Shaak walked up to get a better look.

"Siri Tachi!" she said in relief. "We have not met in years."

"Let's go inside where we won't be heard," Harry told them. All of them quickly went inside.

All of them took a seat, and Shaak began explaining how Siri Tachi was the former padawan of Adi Gallia. They, along with the Jedi High Council, came up with a plan where she and Adi would have a disagreement and would be removed as her padawan. Siri would then leave the Jedi Order, leaving her free to join a slave trader named Krayn in order to take down his operation.

"Master Gallia was sent to Nar Shaddaa to help finish up my mission. Unfortunately, things went a bit awry," she said, looking at Harry. "I was finally able to contact her, and with Master Yoda's permission, she filled me in on what she is now doing. Of course, I immediately demanded to be let in on it and wouldn't take no for an answer," she smiled.

"I take it that they agreed?" Shaak asked. Siri nodded.

"They even gave me the rank of Jedi Knight!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"Then congratulations are in order," Shaak smiled.

“Master Gallia told me that you were on a mission to take down Jabba and would be stationed on Tatooine for the foreseeable future. I’d very much like to be part of your mission. I have dedicated my life to ending slavery, and Jabba is number one on my list,” she said with passion. She was looking at Harry for an answer.

“Girls?” he asked, looking at his women. While he was the leader of their ragtag bunch, he valued their opinions on any major change of plans.

“I would be delighted to have her along. She sacrificed much for the Jedi Order,” Shaak said. The other girls quickly gave their blessings.

“Welcome aboard,” Harry told her. “We have some extra space if you need to stay here,” he said, pointing to their quarters. She, however, waved it away.

“I’m renting a room close by, but thank you. I need to get back to the cantina now. I have a lead that I need to follow up on,” she said, eyeing Harry up and down with her cheeks turning slightly pink. She thanked them and made herself scarce.

“That was unexpected,” Padme said as the sexy woman walked out of the shop.

“Just what we need ... another sexy girl eyeballing Harry,” Sabe sighed. “Well ... I better get as much hot sex as I can before I have to share any further,” she said, grabbing Harry by the hand and leading him into their quarters. The other women looked at each other and shrugged, stripping off their clothes and quickly joining them.