

Despite my first ruling that we would leave the future of the shipyard as a vague, come-as-they-may choice, I knew that that wasn't really an option long-term. Despite the potential usefulness of the Diamond-class Assault Cruiser, there were some rather severe issues with running the shipyard. For one, our forces were growing, but they were still limited, and I could not afford to station an entire fleet in orbit of this old separatist world. On top of that, it was way too far from Nirn to have a running patrol.

On the other hand, abandoning the site was really just not an option, especially not when we could get two potent ships out of it, for only quarters on the dollar. Even after they were done, it was still a massive resource that could serve the Skyforged Vanguard navy well. Despite its limited nature, bolstering our fleets with well-armed, fast, easily staffed ships would be an incredible step forward. Miru estimated that they could finish the already partially constructed ship in just over a week, and produce the second ship, assuming we could get the right parts in a timely manner, within a month. That sort of guaranteed growth could be the spine of a powerful navy, or at least the start of it.

And yet protecting and running the shipyard would be a significant issue that I really didn't have the answer for. Eventually, just two days after Miru had presented us with her findings, I called her, Tatnia, Ahsoka, and a few others to a meeting room to discuss what we should do. The 1st Fleet was already starting to prepare for departure, just waiting for my word to finish up. For now, I would be leaving the 2nd Fleet to take care of the engineers working the facility.

"The shipyard is an incredible find, but it also has a lot of potential issues attached to it," I explained, though most of the people in the meeting knew that already. "We need to solve some of them, or it's going to drain us in a significant way."

"Clearly abandoning the facility off the table," Corvak pointed out, most at the table nodding in agreement. "What if we staffed the facility and then worked to camouflage it even better. Clearing semi-permanent coverings shouldn't be too much of a hassle if it's only done once per month to extract the ship."

"It's a nice concept, but unless you can seriously guarantee that it won't ever be found, I can't just abandon people on the planet," I said, shaking my head. "Besides, they would need supplies shipped back and forth, so the camouflage would likely need to be cleared weekly, if not more."

"Miru... how long would it take to move the facility?" Ahsoka asked, a slight frown on her lips.

"Months," the young genius responded. "Two at minimum, probably closer to three. We would also need to clear space for it, including a cavern or building. It wouldn't be cheap either. It would probably be easier to build one ourselves."

"So... why don't we?" Julius asked, his brow furrowed. "If it would be easier, why don't we just build our own?"

I opened my mouth to respond, only to slowly close it. I leaned back in my chair, looking at Julius with a thoughtful expression, not really seeing him as I considered what he had said.

"It would be a huge expense," Tatnia explained, shaking her head. "It would be easier, sure, but a lot more expensive. We don't have that kind of money."

"But it would be exactly what we need, as opposed to a patchwork system adopted from the CIS," he responded, only to shrug a moment later. "I mean, I don't know much about this stuff, but it seems like building our own would be the best choice."

"It would be way too expensive," Tatnia repeated. "We-"

"Miru... how much would it cost to build our own shipyard, something that can reliably make starships... let's say around four hundred meters or smaller," I asked, an idea beginning to form in my head. "Something automated like this facility, but flexible enough to build multiple designs."

"I... Thirty, maybe forty million credits," she eventually said, slightly wincing at the estimate. "Closer to thirty if we built it planetside, beyond forty if we built it as a station. If we build it on the moon, it would likely be between those numbers."

"See, that's way too much," Tatnia said, gesturing to Miru. "We can't afford that."

"How much could we sell this facility to the Rebellion for?" I asked, still looking at Miru.

"What?" She asked, sounding shocked, taking a few seconds before considering the question. "I... well... probably around twenty million, maybe a bit more? It looks like it's in good shape, and nobody does automation like the CIS... plus it's got a whole attached facility. But it's also old and isolated, without any major manufacturing capabilities nearby."

"And if we included the two starships, it could make?"

"The Diamond-classes? Maybe... another seven million, since parts are needed for the second one?" She asked, before rolling her eyes and nodding. "But with the deal you have with them, it would be more like three or four."

"So, twenty-five to twenty-seven million credits in total... Then to make our own major ship yard, we would only need what... another ten million?" I asked. "I'll admit, that's not nothing, but we've made that kind of money before. Sure, we had to raid Jabba's palace... but I did say we could go after crime lords occasionally."

The room was silent, partly from shock, partly from people considering the concept. After a moment, Vaz, who had only been partially paying attention, spoke up.

"If we target another crime lord... could it be the man killed my adopted father?" She suggested.

"I thought you moved past that?" I asked, not accusingly but out of curiosity.

"I have, but if we are already planning on it, he would be as good a target as anyone," She explained. "I have done some research, and he is now the predominant crime lord on his planet. Small time compared to Jabba the Hutt, but he would still serve our purposes."

"Hold on, we are getting ahead of ourselves," Tatnia said, cutting me off before I could agree. "Yes, this is starting to look like the beginnings of a plan, but we need more people to discuss it. We need the quartermaster, we need the leaders of our construction team... and we need our merchants and Intelligence."

"That's fair," I agreed with a nod, before looking back at Vaz. "If we need the money, we can take down this crimelord. If he doesn't have the capital we need, he will go at the top of our list anyway, just not for this mission."

"Thank you," The Shistavanen said, nodding slowly.

"Planning and other issues aside... could we actually build our own shipyard?" Ahsoka asked, turning to look at Miru. "Is it actually feasible?"

"I mean... it wouldn't be easy. It would be a huge undertaking, but it *is* possible," Miru responded with a shrug. "Twenty-five million credits would let us get pretty deep into the project, and... well, studying the robotic systems here would be a great way to make the most out of automation, but..."

"We would need more people," I finished.

"Exactly," She agreed with a nod. "And I would recommend we build it on Nirn, as building it on the moon with the rest of our factories would make it noticeably more expensive. Not to mention, a ground-based shipyard would be more efficient. Everything is easier with an atmosphere and more consistent when gravity has you falling in only one direction. It doesn't have to be anywhere near Vercopa, of course, just on the planet."

"What is the hypothetical time scale?"

"That's kind of out of my wheelhouse," The young Twi'lek admitted. "I mean, I could make an educated guess, but..."

"No, that's fine," I said, shaking my head. "Tatnia is right, getting the right people together to hammer a plan out like this is better than shooting into the dark. Miru, for now, your task and your team's task are the same, but with an added layer. Complete the assault ship, find out how everything works, and scan *everything*. Take notes, make videos of the machines, anything you might even suspect might be handy information for later. Hell, record it even if you don't."

"Yes, Boss," She said with a nod. "I'll get my people on it. Though, just a warning, that's going to tip people off pretty quickly about what we might be up to. If that's something you wanted to play close to your chest..."

"No, that's fine. It would put people in the right mindset for creating our own shipyard," I agreed with a nod. "The important part is reducing the number of new people required by this project as much as possible. After all, we only just started to normalize from our last growth spurt."

We discussed the topic for a little while longer, but just as Tatnia said, without the necessary information and people, there was only so much we could actually plan for. I sent Miru back to the shipyard facility, before sending a fleetwide message that the 1st Fleet would be leaving soon. 2nd Fleet would hang around for a while with a few ships landed on the surface to help evacuate if such a thing became necessary. It likely wouldn't be, as the planet was devoid of anything useful and clearly already picked over, but it was better safe than sorry.

Meanwhile, while everyone was preparing for departure, I was making dozens of comms calls to people back home. I talked to the merchants about pricing, I talked to my builders about the logistics of such a large project, and I talked to my quartermaster about what it would take to keep up with a shipyard of the size we were considering. I even talked to my production teams on the moon about expanding our production to make a more significant amount of the parts needed for a shipyard, so we wouldn't have to spend nearly as much money on each ship we made. I wanted to give people plenty of time to think and do research, so that when I got home, they would have answers to my question ready and waiting.

Of course, this meant I also set up a meeting for the minute we got back. Julius may have suggested the idea in confusion, but it lit a fire in me. I wanted us to have our own shipyard, something that would let us pump out more ships than just the ones we captured and refurbished. Something designed to be automated and low-maintenance. Something that would

fit our needs perfectly, as opposed to spending large chunks of credits to modify existing ships to fit artificially.

When we finally shipped off from the pitmarked, mostly empty planet, I immediately retired to my room and started learning the final personal spell I planned on learn for a while, Repair Body. With it done and memorized, I could put off learning more personal magic, beyond what I needed to know to make more mages, for a while, which would allow me to focus on other projects.

Once we finally returned to Nirn, I immediately took a shuttle from the Hope, along with Tatnia and Ahsoka, to the *Fury*, where our planned meeting would be held. As we started, I outlined the general idea to the group before turning it over to them to hear what they thought.

"Depending on what style of shipyard you pick, it would likely end up being our largest undertaking yet," Zax Lod, the Correllian representative of our builders, said, his second in command nodding beside him. "But there is no reason it wouldn't be possible. We would have to set up a temporary living space if it's too far away, and move our tools and equipment over there. Beyond the delay in other projects and needing materials, we could do it."

"The funds from selling the facility, the parts, and the completed starship would give us plenty of money to start the project, regardless of size," Quartermaster Finder pointed out, the merchants nodding in agreement. When he was done, one of them spoke up to add to his statement.

"Unless you plan on building something big enough to build a Star Destroyer, you could probably finish a shipyard on that amount of credits alone," He explained, adding a shrug while he did. "Though it wouldn't be nearly up to our standards. With another ten million..."

"It would likely take more than a month to build," Vi Galti pointed out. "And take a lot of credits to maintain."

"That actually may end up being a good thing.... The month or more it took to build, that is," Finder pointed out, specifying his statement after a moment. "It would give us plenty of time to work on the systems required to support a shipyard. Mining, salvage, production, staffing, and more. The infrastructure is likely going to cost several million credits alone."

"Then we will have to hit some high-profile crime lord, or an equivalent," I said, looking at Sheora, who was, as always, sitting in the corner of the meeting room. "I will have Vaz talk to you about her target. If they don't have the kind of capital we need, we can look for alternatives, but we should spend some time looking into them anyway. She deserves some closure, even if it doesn't get us earn us big."

With some of the details of the shipyard touched on, our focus shifted to some of the infrastructure we would need to support it. Our mining and refining capabilities would obviously need to be expanded, and we would need to develop better manufacturing capabilities. We already produced a great number of parts for our starfighters, but the scale was totally different.

It was eventually decided that we would build a specialized manufacturing facility next to the shipyard. This would noticeably increase the cost of the project, as well as the number of people we would need to hire, but it would save money in the long run. The manufacturing facility would focus on building the more expensive and difficult-to-find parts, rather than trying to keep up with the shipyard entirely. This would save us time and money hunting down things like power cores or turbolaser parts, while preventing the facility from being bogged down by

things like shield capacitors, which were relatively cheap and easy to buy in large quantities, even for larger ships.

Of course, with all of this, we would also need to build more homes and more resources around Vercopa. We would also need to greatly expand our shipping capabilities, along with a hundred other things. It was a long list, but I was certain it would be worth it in the end.