

The rest of the day was a flurry of constant activity.

The prisoners were transported back to Solinda, where they were promptly executed for their crimes. When I explained what the real story was behind the "raiders," Rabben seemed to be partly ecstatic and partly terrified. He asked very urgently if he could join me as we went back to the camp, and I agreed.

Very quickly, he recognized most of the equipment, having used it himself multiple times.

"It's a deep scanning system," He explained, activating it with a few button taps. "It's supposed to be a powerful all-purpose scanner, but this brand is known for seeing raw resources."

The device came in two pieces, one of which was its computer system, which was what Rabben was working on. After a few minutes of scanning, he pulled out his comm unit, downloading some data to it.

"They have been scanning since before their first raid," He explained, his usual rough demeanor fading behind a bubbling nervousness and wired energy. "And already they managed to uncover two mineral deposits! From what I can see, they are worth, a minimum, as much as both our platinum mines combined... EACH!"

"Have they been transmitting their data?"

"In batches," He responded. "I don't know when the last message was, just when the data was accessed. I need to return to Solinda, contact some people. This planet just became very valuable."

I had Nal drive him back in the speeder, and stayed behind to help with the looting. When I had gone to drop off our prisoners, they had gotten a jump start on going through the camp, picking out what was worth keeping, what was worth selling to the town, and what was worth hauling away to sell off the world. By the time I had returned with Rabben, Racer was already directing the labor droids to disassemble two of the temporary structures. Deployed, the structures were about six meters wide and ten long, but disassembled, they flat packed away into a tiny fraction of the space they provided.

The longer we went through everything, the more we realized that most of the stuff was better off being sold back to Solinda, as we really had no use for it. On top of the temporary structures, we also took some of their survival gear, specifically some heating units, water filtration systems, energy units, and a few more bits that essentially equated to Sci-fi camping gear.

On top of that, we also snagged the scanner system the mercenaries had been using to scan for ore deposits. According to Miru, it was a very nice system worth taking. She apparently

already had an idea in mind and had to be reminded to finish going over the equipment before running off to tinker. I was tempted to grab the laser cutter they used to make the underground base itself, but according to Nal, it was a low-powered version and wasn't actually worth much. On top of that, we already had two blaster rifles that could do similar things just by fiddling with their settings.

With everything we wanted to keep stored on the *Chariot*, we quickly loaded up the Arrow and C-PHs, before Calima flew us back to Solinda. We landed around the same spot as we had when we first came to the snow-covered planet. By then, it was starting to get dark, and as Nal and I stepped out, we were immediately directed to the town hall, where Rabben was still working.

Stepping into one of the larger ferrocrete structures in town, Nal and I both stopped to appreciate the whirlwind of work that was happening in front of us. Rabben was talking to three people at once through a holoprojector, negotiating the price of a land claim. When I realized they were talking about a down payment of just under three million credits, the number slowly creeping upwards, I mentally tossed out the idea of basically giving away all of the gear still at the mercenary camp. They could clearly afford to pay for it in full.

When Rabben was finally done with his negotiations, settling on the offer made by a Rodian for 4.3 million credits and 10% of their net profits, he turned to me with a smile. Behind him, the holoprojector shifted to show the planet, which was now dotted with two green marks

"Sorry for making you wait," He said, smiling despite how tired and frantic he looked

"It's alright, this is clearly big news to you," I said.

"You have no idea, my friend," The Besalisk said, patting my shoulder with a thump. "You've just turned the fates of this entire town on its head! Days ago, we were contemplating shutting down and leaving. Today, every member of this town is more wealthy than they ever dreamed of being."

"How come you guys missed these deposits before?" Nal asked, looking past the large leader to the holoprojector behind him.

"Because we bought them original scans from the Mining Guild," He responded, shaking his head. "We knew of the two deposits of platinum our mines sit on, as well as three smaller sites, but that's it, ya. But now? We plan on scanning around as much of the planet as possible."

"Well, I'm glad we could help you out," I said with a smile, the larger man chuckling. "We've taken what we want from the campsite, interested in buying the rest?"

"What's left?"

Nal pulled out his data pad and started listing the general outline of what remained in the camp, the Besalisk nodding along as he did. When he got to the bottom, Rabben was silent for a moment before making his offer.

"Ten thousand. And I want any salvage from the bikes around here."

"Fifteen. And that's fine."

"Eleven thousand. Don't forget the stuff that is ours was part of the original deal."

"I remember just fine. Thirteen."

"Twelve thousand... and another five if you wait to leave until after our new security arrives."

"New security?" I asked with a raised eyebrow. "What new security, and how long?"

"Our planet is now worth millions and millions of credits," He explained. "More if we keep finding deposits in our deep scans. We need more than just one cruiser to protect us now, especially if the Miners Guild doesn't decide to cut their losses. I'm hoping to spend a chunk of what we just made in those sales to hire them."

"How long?" I repeated. "We can stay for a while, especially if you are paying us, but we do need to move on eventually..."

"Fine, six thousand for four days, then another two grand per day after that," Rabben offered, extending his hand. "Deal?"

"...Deal," I confirmed, shaking his hand.

"Good. Telami!" Rabben shouted, waving down one of the many people running around the large room. "Pay this man, twenty-seven thousand. Fifteen for the original deal and twelve for the extra equipment."

"Right away, sir," The small, mouse-esque humanoid said, pulling me aside while Rabben shouted to another person, telling them to get a crew together to grab their newly purchased equipment.

A quick exchange of information later, and our group account was twenty-seven thousand credits richer. I immediately took nine thousand credits out and split it out between everyone, paying everyone my crew, before heading back to the *Talos Chariot*.

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The crew was happy to stick around for a few days and get paid to basically wait, although Tatnia did point out that we would be expected to defend the town if something did come up. I assured her, just like always, I was happy to help but not eager to become a martyr, as horrible as it would be to just leave. If the miners guild showed up, I would help negotiate a surrender or even evacuate people, but I wasn't about to sacrifice my team for a hopeless fight.

Miru was perhaps the most excited to have some extra time, as she had a project for the LE-Repair droids that would be much easier for them to do planetside.

Her project, which she fully designed out so that the LE droids could do most of the work themselves, was to put the Tri-fighters on the exterior of the ship so that we could clear up even more hangar space. The addition would use some of the mag-locks and clamps that were removed from the wings during the hangar modification. There would be four attachment points located under the "Wings" of the ship. Unfortunately, there was one major problem.

"Most droids used by the separatists are very, very illegal to use," Miru explained, getting wince from me. "So, I need to modify the Tri-fighters enough that they don't look like droids. Otherwise, the second we land on a world with a heavy Imperial presence, we are going to get in big trouble."

"Does that include the B1s and B2s?"

"Yeah. Not worried about that, though, they will be easy to disguise with a bit of metal plating stock, and no one will ask any questions. "The tri-fighter, however, are going to be stuck to the outside of the *Chariot*, completely obvious. I have an idea... but it's going to take a chunk of our metal stock."

"Alright, show me what you got."

The very eager mechanical genius led me down to her workshop, practically bouncing with energy. It was the morning of the first day of our extended watch on Itander, and I could tell she had been holding herself back since she woke up.

She sat down on a chair and tapped into her computer, a holo projection of the tri-fighter appearing next to her, showing several precise measurements. She described removing the top wing of the tri-fighter and shifting the engine components inside to compensate, as well as removing the missile support frame under the starfighter. The projected image shifted and changed as she described what she wanted. According to the pink-skinned Twi'lek, the reduced weight and height would let her use metal plating to cover the bottom wings. The resulting modification gave the tri-fighter an angular teardrop shape that terminated at the engines suddenly before the tail of the teardrop. The central sphere, where the primary control unit and droid brain sat, was still mostly exposed at the top and bottom.

"The ship would lose a single laser cannon and the ability to carry missiles, but we would have gone bankrupt keeping those stocked anyway. The reduction in weight compensates for the new metal frame, as well as this," She said, a small addition planting itself inside some of the empty space created by the metal frame and plating. "A shield generator. There isn't enough space or energy for anything massively powerful, but even a low-level shield would improve its survivability by a lot. And they are already a pretty deadly starfighter."

"How much will that cost?"

"The shield generator?" She asked, continuing when I nodded. "Depends on what kind we get, if it's used, and how old it is. There is enough space for several dozen different models that I know of. Somewhere between three to eight thousand if it's used, five to twelve if it's new."

"Something used then, I don't want these becoming too expensive to throw away if we need to."

"Sure, it makes sense to me," She agreed. "Does that mean...."

"Yes, you can start the modifications. Do one at a time so that if something comes up, so we will at least have one. What's the word on the vulture droids?"

"I haven't started working out their coding, I wanted to get the tri fighters usable first," She explained with a shrug. "Their programming is *really* basic, so it won't take long. The downside is that they aren't very good. Kinda just a group of moves tied together with instructions on when to use them. Plus, they only last like five minutes without the solid fuel slug they use."

"... Kinda sounds like they are useless."

"They might make a good distraction?" She suggested tentatively. "I don't know, they might not be worth working on."

"Could you use their armor?" I asked, continuing when she gave me a confused look. "As the metal plating for the tri-fighter modification."

"...Yeah, I could. I have all the right tools to work with metal... It would also be better suited, lighter, but probably tougher since it is specifically tempered as armored," She said, going over it in her head. "Does that mean you're giving up on the vulture droids? Because if you are, I could use their parts for other stuff...."

"If they are as useless as you say they are, then yeah. Do me a favor and use the parts from the ones we already disassembled first, alright? And finish the tri-fighters before moving on to your next project."

"I have like five projects going on at once," She said, putting her hands on her hips. "One more won't hurt!"

I chuckled and patted her shoulder, leaving her to her work while I went to find some breakfast. By the time I had finished, Miru already had four of the LE droids working on the exterior mounts, while she was already working on the first tri-fighter, the fifth LE droid working with her.

Over the next few days, all the way to the fifth day, we all did our best to keep busy. I worked my way through four spells, ice rune, elemental bolt, firebolt, and bound battle axe. At this point, I was starting to get closer to working on the apprentice-level spells that I really had no reason to learn but would anyway in case it counted towards when I would unlock adept-level magic.

The entire crew took turns working with Miru, helping her remold some of the armor pieces from the vulture droids into plating for the tri-fighters. It wasn't particularly difficult, her tools did most of the work. The most challenging part was maneuvering some of the awkward pieces into her workshop. Calima was the only one not to help, but considering she spent most of her time in the cockpit, keeping an eye on the sensors, none of us were complaining.

By the time the fifth day rolled around, Miru had completed her modifications and then some, painting the tri fighters to even further obfuscate their original design, settling on a simple design of spaceship white with blue highlights. For now, the modified tri-fighter, now nicknamed raindrops by the crew, sat in the starboard hangar bay, waiting for us to exit the atmosphere to attach to their exterior mounts. According to Miru, that wasn't necessary, but I wanted to ensure they could handle the docking process first.

Thankfully we wouldn't have to wait long, as the first wave of extra security finally arrived in the form of several drop ships and a Clone Wars-era Arquitens light cruiser, as well as a squadron of mixed starfighters. The Arquitens set up in the atmosphere and would soon be joined by more ships, while the starfighter squadron and drop ships landed near Solinda, quickly setting up a base camp. Not long after they arrived, Rabben made his way to the *Chariot*, and I headed out to meet him.

"I want to thank you again," He said, shaking my hand with his massive grip. "If you and ya crew hadn't come by, we would have left this claim behind, without knowing we were giving up our fortunes."

"I'm just glad we could keep you from getting cheated," I responded with a smile and a nod. "We will be heading out soon, now that your new security is here."

"I thought as much," He said with a large smile. "We already transferred your second payment, as well as a bonus for going the extra click. I suspect Itander and Solinda are about to see some rather impressive growth, so if you ever need a place to lay low, you have it."

"Appreciated," I said simply. "It was nice meeting you, Rabben. Good luck."