

Once it was settled that we would be leaving the Jedi survivors behind, Ezra landed the ship on the landing pad outside the hangar. The large pad was probably thousands of years old, and despite looking like it was in decent shape, all of us were worried about it collapsing. So, we took the landing extremely slowly, lowering the ship inch by inch with the help of R2. In the end, we decided to not even fully land but instead set the ship down with the repulsorlifts on, drastically reducing the amount of pressure being put down on the ancient structure.

Once we were confident everything wasn't about to collapse, we started shifting things over. We took out a good chunk of our food supplies, some emergency equipment, and several other bits of cargo, handing them over to the Jedi survivors for them to use. We had a pretty good laugh handing out stuff like chocolate and datapads of entertainment. We also offloaded our ship's emergency [medical droid](#). I wanted them to all get looked at by the droid in case they had some sort of hidden medical issue, or they were asymptomatic carriers of some sort of virus or parasite.

Once we finished offloading supplies, one of the Jedi Padawans, a female [Balsor](#), helped carry the still boxed-up Professor Huyang into the ship. We stopped once we were inside the cargo area, which was now significantly more empty than before.

"Thanks for the help," I said, reaching out my hand. "Sorry, but I didn't catch your name."

"Padawan Malua Var'Samallo," She responded, reaching out and shaking my hand. "I'll be honest, however. I had an alternate objective for helping you. I wanted to ask a question."

I sat on the edge of a crate, gesturing for her to do the same. Once she was settled, she began.

"Knight Amescoll has been our leader for quite some time," She explained. "Most of us would follow his lead if he denied your invitation, whether to join this Rebellion or to stay here in hiding. My question is, would you allow some of us to leave with you, even if he denies the invitation?"

"Malua, the first thing I planned on doing if Knight Amescoll refused our invitation would be to inform the rest of you the invitation was to everyone, not just the group," I assured her. "In fact, if he informed me you planned on staying in hiding, the Skyforged Vanguard would make semi-frequent trips here with food and equipment simply to check if anyone had changed their minds."

Her face softened, an appreciative smile growing on it as I assured her I would make sure everyone who wanted to leave this place could. I didn't really see that as a problem, as I had gotten the sense that Amescoll wanted better living conditions for his people as well. He might not be desperate to face down the Empire, but I felt like he wanted more freedom.

"Thank you, I appreciate everything you are doing for us," She said. "You are taking a big risk helping us."

"Trust me, if the Empire doesn't already want us dead, they will soon," I assured her. "And don't think this is all out of the goodness of my heart, though I am happy I can help. Having Force-sensitive, trained people on my side, even if it's just with the Rebellion, can only be a plus in my mind."

Pointing out that there were more than just altruistic reasons for helping seemed to help her understand the situation, and she nodded. We chatted a bit more about what she would like to do, and I learned that my offer to get her trained to run a ship or pilot something like a freighter was what had really piqued her interest. After a bit, we left the ship again, and after saying goodbye, I made my way to Ahsoka and Amescoll. They were talking about our mission to find Kyber crystals. The old Jedi Knight mentioned the traditional pilgrimage to [Illum](#), and Ahsoka couldn't help but wince.

"Unfortunately, the Empire has blockaded Illum heavily," Ahsoka said with a frown. "We assume it is to prevent Jedi and Force-sensitives from accessing Kyber crystals, but in truth, the Rebellion is unable to confirm that. Either way, there is little chance of us making it down to the surface and even less of us surviving the blockade as we leave. We have an alternate location in mind."

"A separate location?" The man asked, surprised at the idea. "I know Kyber crystals can technically grow in other places, but where would you go that has such a plentiful amount?"

"I... Think it might be best to keep this location a secret, for now at least," Ahsoka said, beating me to the punch.

"It's better this way," I added, stepping forward to stand beside Ahsoka. "The fewer people who know about it, the better. I'm already planning on having people stay in the back when Ahsoka and I land the *Starcaller*."

"I see... I suppose that such a precaution is necessary," He admitted with a frown. "Dark times such as these require unfortunate actions."

"Exactly," I agreed. "With any luck, we could share the info later."

"I understand. Perhaps, before you leave, we should share a simple meal together? We do not have much, but I believe with the food you have given us, we can afford a large meal."

Ahsoka and I shared a look before the once-Jedi Padawan nodded in agreement. Word spread that we would be joining them quickly, and we were guided to a table to wait. When dinner was done, everyone congregated in a sitting area. We were served a simple meal of vegetables, meat from a bird of some kind, and a few other simple dishes. It was a bit bland due to the lack of spices, but still good and definitely hearty.

I couldn't help but chuckle as many of the younger teens kept looking back at the crates of shelf-stable food we were leaving behind for them. They clearly didn't get much in the way of variety here, so knowing there were various different foods just a dozen or so feet away must have been nerve-wracking.

When we finished eating, the group slowly made their way back on board the *Starcaller*. Ahsoka and I were the last to get on board, stopping at the boarding ramp.

"We will likely be gone for four or five days," I explained, reaching out to shake Amescoll's hand. "Should be plenty of time for you to reach your decision."

"Indeed, that is more than enough time," He agreed with a smile. "Thank you for the gifts in the meantime."

"Of course, we are happy to share."

After shaking hands a final time and sharing a few more words, Ahsoka and I climbed back up into the ship, the boarding ramp closing behind us as Amescoll returned inside the hangar. Slowly but surely, the ship lifted off, heading straight up into the sky.

The trip to Dantooine would take a day and a half, with Ahsoka and I piloting the entire way. Really, that just meant that Ahsoka was piloting, while I kept an eye on the sensors, since flying was not one of my many skills. We considered telling Luke the location of the crystal caves, but he seemed content not to know. He agreed he should learn at some point or if something came up, but in the meantime, he didn't need the knowledge rattling around in his head.

Honestly, I think he was just enjoying not having to worry about something for the future.

As we traveled through hyperspace, Sabine, Luke, and R2 worked on restoring Professor Huyang. Thankfully, whoever disassembled him knew a thing or two about droids, as putting him back together was a relatively simple task. Once he was reassembled, all that was left was to hook him up to a charging port and turn him on.

The ancient droid booted up slowly, sitting up straight on the very crate that had held him for years. His eyes slowly lit up a golden yellow as he regained power.

"Oh, my... Well, that's an interesting sensation," The strange robot said. "It appears I was without power for so long even my backup chronometers were drained."

The droid looked around, spotting all of us watching him, eventually settling on Ahsoka. Everyone was excited that he was working, and while I was among them, I was also shocked at the fact that he sounded like *David Tennant*, of all people.

"Lady Tano, it is good to see you. I imagine I have you to thank for finding me?" He asked. "Please, tell me the fate of the other survivors."

"Knight Amescoll and the others are fine," She explained with a smile. "We just left the lost temple and are on our way to... well, we are performing a Gathering."

"A Gathering? My, that is not what I expected to wake up to," He admitted. "Granted, I wasn't sure I would ever be powered on again. Nor did I know if I would ever teach anyone how to build a lightsaber again. May I request more information?"

Ahsoka chuckled and began to fill in the blanks, essentially repeating what she had told Knight Amescoll and the others. It ended with the explanation of my magic, as it had before. Perhaps I should have expected it, but the droid was the most stubborn person I had met yet, at least in terms of insisting my magic was the Force. I assumed it had something to do with his programming and let him believe what he wanted.

When the general overview was done, the droid seemed happy to be included in another Gathering esque event. He was also remarkably flexible, since *none* of the people participating in this event were at the right age for the Gathering ceremony.

"Of course, I will guide everyone in the creation of their lightsabers," He agreed with a nod. "We will need my equipment and parts from our refuge, though I am afraid my selection might not be as varied as it once was."

"We will figure something out," I assured him. "We have plenty of resources back at Omega Base."

When we finally landed, it was under the cover of darkness. We landed a considerable distance from the cave entrance, not wanting to attract attention directly to it. Instead, we would walk, crossing several large grassy plains and scaling a few of the [stone shelves](#) that seem to populate this area of Dantooine. Because his memory was basically an open book to anyone with sufficient slicing skills, Huyang agreed to delete and overwrite both the trek to and from the cave.

Now, the rest of the group did get a good look at the planet's surface, but with none of them ever having been there before and with the features of the planet looking pretty unordinary, the planet's name and location were still pretty safe. Once we reached the cave entrance, I stopped everyone.

"Alright. So last time we were here, we had to clear the cave of some nasty big insect things," I explained, using my hands to show how large the monsters had been. "We killed a bunch of them and burned their eggs to make sure they were gone. Unfortunately, there is a chance, however small, that they have come back. If they have and they attack us, Ezra and Huyang, you're in charge of getting the kids out of the cave. This guy..."

As I talked, I cast Conjure Mage Construct, the ethereal wizard appearing next to Ezra, the ancient droid, and the kids.

"This guy is going to be following you four, and he will keep you guys alive with healing magic," I continued. "So even if one of you gets injured, as long as he is still around, just focus on retreating. We will follow you out once the trouble is dealt with."

Ezra and Hyang agreed, the former nodding in understanding, as did Felia and Claron. Once we were all set, we started to descend. I quickly conjured lights, feeding them the barest hint of magicka to keep them going. Everyone else pulled out flashlights, and the cave was soon lit up. It was interesting to watch Huyang deploy multiple arms, each holding large light projectors.

As we slowly made our way deeper and deeper, I noticed that the corpses of the bugs, which at this point should have been rotten but still around, were gone. I warned everyone of this fact, and while it put us all on edge, it ended up being for no reason, as we made it all the way down to the crystal chamber without issues.

Just as before, the glow emanating from the deep cavern was visible before the crystals. As we got closer and closer, I slowed down so that everyone else could go in front of me and enjoy the experience properly.

The cave was still breathtaking, the sizeable cavern lit up by a rainbow of faintly glowing crystals that studded the walls and floor. The crystal growths ranged from the size of my fist to larger than me, and even though a few had been taken by my crew, there were still several dozen of them.

"Oh... Gods, it's beautiful," Ahsoka said, scanning the crystal-filled cave with a hanging jaw and wide eyes. "Deacon... how did you find this?"

"You can thank Revan for that, actually," I explained, both Ahsoka and Huynag quickly turning to look at me, the former with wide eyes. "Or the Jedi Exile. If not for either of them, the knowledge of this place would have died with the masters of the ancient Jedi enclave that used to be located nearby."

"Deacon, there is so much about that statement that I should demand answers about, but..." She trailed off, eyes sparkling with the reflection of the rainbow of crystals around us. "Thank you."

"Of course."

Ahsoka, Professor Huyang, Sabine, and I watched as the other members of our temporary groups slowly left the entrance of the large open area, stepping into the space proper. Sabine seemed to notice something was off, as when Ezra pushed past her, his eyes were vacant. She mumbled a curse, as if this was something that happened a lot, before attempting to reach out and shake him. Luckily, Huyang was close enough to snag her hand by the wrist before she did.

"He is communicating with the Force," The droid explained. "Not entirely uncommon when finding a compatible crystal. In fact..."

The droid gestured to Luke and Felia, both of whom had the same blank expression. We watched as Felia stopped in front of an impressive, deep blue Kyber crystal growth, nearly a foot taller than she was. She stared at it, unmoving, while Luke walked behind her and out of sight behind the central pillar of the room.

"I knew, in general, that this kind of thing happened," I admitted, watching Ezra approach an orange crystal growth. "But I had no idea it looked so creepy. Did you go through this, Ahsoka?"

I turned to look at her, only to see her standing in place, her eyes unfocused. I watched as she reached into her pocket and slowly and pulled out the single, large pink crystal.

"Fascinating... Where did she get that?" Professor Huyang asked, stepping closer and leaning down to study the crystal.

"I gave it to her," I explained, recognizing the chunk of Kyber. "It's from here originally, but I gave it to her almost a month ago."

As we watched, she held her hand up, and the crystal began to float above her palm, slowly spinning in place. For nearly five minutes, she stood there, unmoving. Finally, she let out a slow breath, and the crystal began to glow. The faint pink coloring shifted, becoming a deeper, more intense shade.

And yet her eyes were still blank, staring at the crystal, her mind clearly elsewhere.