

Both of my new compatriots claimed the small but serviceable beds, and since I planned on staying up for a while longer, I didn't complain. I could tell Tatnia was more than a bit concerned about sleeping in the same room as two strangers. I couldn't exactly blame her, considering I was nervous about it as well. I wasn't stupid, I didn't trust either of my compatriots very much at this point, but I was willing to give them both a chance. Maybe it was because my "give a fuck" meter seemed to be firmly stuck on "off" ever since the entity had brought me back to life.

I was very glad I had managed to get some sleep during the trip here because I had plans for the next few hours. Once Nal and Tatnia had gotten into bed, I got up and headed to the small refresher room, closing and locking the door behind me. I sat down on the refresher, noting that it was surprisingly clean, as was the tiny sonic shower. Satisfied I wasn't going to catch something by just sitting there, I willed my grimoire into my hands, and the large book suddenly appeared.

I started flipping through the pages, examining what kind of spells the book was offering to teach me. Unsurprisingly it was still all novice-level spells, the easiest ones for each discipline. The enchanting section still displayed instructions for setting up an enchanting table rather than any information about how the actual craft was performed, beyond the absolute most basic explanation.

Now that I had escaped, my old mental list of what spells to learn and what order needed to be adjusted. I was no longer in danger of being locked up, which is what I believed was happening at the time.

A large part of me wanted to work on summoning a bound sword. I convinced the entity to give me the knowledge of sword fighting and using a bow specifically because I knew I would be able to summon both with conjuration magic.

I was very glad I had managed to sneak that in as well, because I was pretty sure it was the only reason I had survived up to this point. The entity taught me how to *fight* with a sword and a bow, which included how to deal with combat. I instinctively tapped into the knowledge earlier, staying calm in a situation I would have had no idea how to handle otherwise. No doubt it would have its limitations, but for now, I was just happy that I didn't have to worry about panicking during a fight.

I read through the introduction to the bound sword spell again, still undecided. The real draw for the spell was that the bound sword would get more powerful the more skilled I became in summoning them. I could only assume that the bow would work like that as well. With any luck, once I had learned them both, I would have a powerful ranged and melee option with me at all times. Unfortunately, the spell to summon a bound bow was not a novice spell, which meant it would be a while before I could learn it.

I also needed to learn either oak flesh or lesser ward, but I had no idea how effective they would be in this setting. I had a feeling that wards were going to be useful against energy, like blaster bolts or, god help me, force lightning, while the oakflesh spell and its more advanced versions would increase my durability in general. The information the grimoire gave me was primarily written in terms of Elder Scrolls related things, like magic and arrows, so I would have to test that out personally. This meant experimenting with myself as the target, something I wouldn't feel comfortable doing until I could heal myself.

In fact, learning the first restoration spell was beginning to sound more and more like the right thing to do. The ability to heal myself was always going to be useful, and I'm sure that I would be doing it a lot. The sooner I get a handle on the spell the better. I also hoped that mastering the spell to a certain level would "convince" my grimoire to teach me healing hands. The ability to heal others was almost as important as learning to heal myself. Bacta was expensive, so my ability to fix allies with my magic would be a powerful incentive for loyalty.

With my decision made, I flipped to the restoration section and started reading the entry on the novice-level spell, healing.

I spent the first ten minutes locked in the refresher, reading and attempting to copy the spell matrix that the book was describing, working my magic into the proper shape. When I finally had it down, I attempted to cast the spell, but it immediately failed. Surprisingly, though, the first fifth of the matrix had held, meaning I had a not insignificant head start on tuning the spell to myself.

While the book hadn't mentioned anything specific about what that could mean, I got the feeling that it meant I resonated with the spell, meaning I probably had a slight talent for healing spells. I pushed away the revelation and started working through my matrix, tweaking and teasing it before trying again.

About two hours later, I cast the healing spell for the first time, the golden orange glow spinning slowly in my hand. I ended the spell and worked on casting it with my other hand, then casting it in both at the same time.

The heal spell was effective for minor injuries at first and would grow in potency as I got better at casting it, and my affinity grew. Unfortunately, as I read about the spell, I learned about the great restriction of healing through magic. The time, and therefore the energy, required to heal an injury was exponentially scaled with the severity.

Low-level injuries were easily fixed. In fact, I could already feel that the bruises from being kicked in the side yesterday were gone, just from casting the spell for a couple of seconds or so. The burns around my arms, where I had been zapped while breaking my binders, had hardly even been touched. When I cast the spell again, holding it this time as the spell drained my mana, the burns slowly started to fade. I ended up holding the spell for a full thirty seconds to heal both wrists completely from the second-degree burns.

This was not the gamified crap from Skyrim. Any legitimately life-threatening wound would take considerable time and effort to fix, and would only work if I had that time. For example, a person would bleed out before I could fix an arterial bleed. That would change as I got better, but that would take time. Thankfully the grimoire specifically stated that while healing spells were slow to naturalize, they didn't need to be actively healing to practice. There was no need to self-harm to practice this or most other spells.

I spent another few minutes practicing the spell, casting it until my mana was at about half before waiting for it to recharge and then repeating the process. Eventually, I was satisfied with my grip on the spell matrix, so I exited the refresher. Tatnia and Nal were both asleep by then, neither of them shifting in the slightest when I reclaimed my seat. It took a while, but eventually, I managed to fall asleep in the relatively comfortable chair.

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I woke up the following day to the smell of food, though neither my old or new memories could figure out what it was. I opened my eyes to find Tatnia and Nal both eating from disposable containers, a third one sitting on the small table a few feet away from my chair. I groaned and leaned forwards and stood, my back protesting the movement.

"Should have slept on the floor," Nal said. "Less comfortable, but more ergonomic. Tania bought food."

"I'll be fine, just need a second," I said, hiding a smirk as best I could before casting heal.

My hand glowed for a few seconds, healing energies swirling around my hand and sinking into my skin. I let out a satisfied groan as my lower back loosened, and the pain disappeared.

"Mmm, much better," I said, stretching slowly. "What did you get?"

"Street food. A local dish that should be safe for humans," Nal answered. "What was that?"

"That was me healing myself," I explained, picking up the container and popping the top, finding a small utensil already inside. "How did you pay for it?"

"One of your spare power packs," Tatnia responded in-between bites. "No reason to keep it if you don't have a blaster anymore."

I nodded in agreement, lifting the food and sniffing it. There was a surprising amount of spice coming from it, vaguely smelling like curry. There were chunks of meat, some different colored chunks that seemed like vegetables. I took a bite, nodding in appreciation before sitting back down in the seat. It was pretty good and very close to a spicy curry.

"Wait, hold on! You can *heal* yourself?" Tania asked incredulously, her mind seeming to have caught up. "How the kriff can you do that?"

"I learned last night," I explained after swallowing another mouthful of food. "Took about two hours."

"You're full of shit."

I sighed before standing and putting my food back on the table. I reached into my pocket and pulled out the small vibroknife I had pulled off one of the slavers. I flicked it open, which automatically turned it on. Before Nal or Tania could say anything, I sliced my palm just deep enough for it to bleed. Nal watched with obvious interest, while Tania seemed more sure I was about to out myself.

I carefully constructed my healing spell, making sure it was as good as I could get for the moment before letting it form, my hand glowing in the now familiar orange-gold light. I waited a few seconds before grabbing a towel from the table and wiping away the blood, revealing perfectly healed skin.

"Proof enough?" I asked, Tania nodding with wide eyes.

I went back to eating, getting about half way through the container before Tania started talking again.

"Are you human?"

"Last time I checked," I answered, looking up at her.

I was going to make a joke, but she was starting to look nervous. It had finally settled in that she had been pulled, or perhaps pushed into something rather different. Nal just looked excited. For a moment, I considered my options. I had no real reason to trust these two, other than the fact that they hadn't tried to kill me yet. But I needed to start somewhere, right?

"Look, I...I have an energy inside me," I tried to explain. "Think of it as a universal power pack. I can use that power pack to do a whole lot of things. But it's all new to me, so I'm learning what I can do as I go along."

"Were you taken for that reason?" Nal asked, finishing off his food and crumpling up his trash. "For your inner power?"

"No, that was just bad luck."

"What else can you do?" Tania asked this time, her nervousness falling a bit.

"Nothing, yet. Well, actually, I guess I can do this," I admitted, correcting myself before pushing out pure mana. "But that doesn't do anything. It's basically the pure form of the energy."

"How are you learning? Trial and error?"

"Kinda?" I lied. "It takes time to experiment. I just finished healing today."

I wasn't about to reveal everything, even if that aspect of my power was relatively small. I also wasn't going to mention that my mana had a limit. Let them think I was endlessly powerful for now.

Tatnia and I finished our food before Nal brought up what we had discussed the night before.

"I am in," He said simply. "I already disliked slavery. Now it is personal."

"Good, that's good to hear," I said, reaching out to shake his large hand before turning to Tatnia. "What about you?"

"I don't know. I think that if we start attacking slavers repeatedly, we are going to attract a lot of dangerous attention. How far are you looking to go?"

"I'm not trying to start a fight with every slaver in Hutt space, or bring an end to slavery as a business. As horrible as it is, and as much as I wish I could, a three-person crusade against it would just end up with us dead." I explained, trying to reassure her. "They are just a convenient target. I would prefer to avoid killing innocent people, and targeting slavers means we won't be. When we make enough money to secure a few things, we can stop and move on."

"Secure what?" Nal asked. "Having an end goal will keep us from becoming overly greedy."

"I want a ship. Something that me and a comfortable crew can leave this planet on," I explained. "I figure starting a mercenary group would be an interesting way to earn a living. My... energy generally leans towards combat anyway."

"A ship? That's going to take a lot of money," Tatnia pointed out, shaking her head. "And get a lot of attention on us."

"Not if we space it out and do it all over the planet," I responded. "We have a whole planet of slavers who are just waiting to donate their money. Basically, we keep away from the big names, maybe pick up a few compatriots along the way and slowly build up our savings. Then, when we have enough money, we buy a used ship. Then we blast off... If you're still interested."

For a long moment, Tatnia looked conflicted before finally letting out a long sigh.

"Yeah, fine, I'm in. I was mostly worried you were doing this to take down slavery. I might be willing to blast a few of the karking shitheads, and it would be nice to free a few people, but I'm not looking to be a martyr."

"Exactly. We do our good deeds, and we make some money in the process."

"A good plan. I am happy to be a part of it," Nal said with a nod. "What is the first step?"

"The first step is something quick. We better blasters, better armor, equipment, the whole shebang," I said. "I say we go back to the landing pad that we arrived at and ask around. We might get lucky and find out how often new slaves get dropped off."

"And if we are not?" Tal asked.

"Then we come up with a new plan," I responded with a shrug. "Maybe find some way to track people away from where the slaves are being brought to. Or maybe we ask the local constable where I could buy the best slaves and burn it to the ground. Actually... that one might be a solid back up..."

"Not sure, but if you're talking about going after where they keep the slaves, that's not a good idea," Tatnia explained, shaking her head. "A few stupid slavers from who knows where dropping off a dozen prisoners is one thing, but a market will have guards by the dozens, probably even a turret or two."

"They are also most likely controlled by a Hutt clan," Nal pointed out. "Who will most likely spend quite a bit of money to hunt us down."

"Right, fair enough," I agreed. "Then let's start small."

"About that... How do you plan on getting back to the berthing dock?" Tatnia asked. "We didn't really see the surroundings and were flying in that speeder for a few minutes."

"I know. Give me a few hours, and I'll have a solution for that."