

As we waited for Nova and her other ships to fly down, I couldn't help but feel a little tense. While none of her ships even remotely resembled what you would call a warship, they were all armed. She also had a significant number of workers with her, who were no doubt also armed. We might be good, or at least decent, but between the ships and her superior numbers, we would be at her mercy. If she wanted to betray us and take this whole site for herself, this would be the perfect time to do it.

"When are your people getting here?" I asked Nevue, who seemed to have picked up on my nervousness.

"Within the next five or six hours," He answered before patting my shoulder. "Relax, Nova is a friend. I don't blame you for being nervous, though."

"Yeah, I know. Not exactly the best position to be in."

When the businesswoman finally arrived, she was the first one out of her ship, even as her other ships landed. As her workers followed her out, her other ships lowering their ramps, she looked around and she turned back to address her people, giving orders and directing them to several tasks. A significant portion of the group broke off and started to inspect the ships on the landing pad while even more rushed into the buildings, weapons out as they began clearing everything, ensuring everything was safe. Before we could reach the older businesswoman, a pink missile streaked across the gap between us and collided with me.

"I'm alright, Miru, everyone is alright," I assured her, returning the teenage Twi'leks hug. "It was easy, no problems at all."

"I can clearly smell that your armor is burnt," She said, pulling away and inspecting my jacket and the armor beneath.

"Yeah, but you know me, I bounce back from that sort of thing," I said with a smirk, earning a slap to the shoulder before she turned to give a hug to Tatnia. Together, after a few more hugs, we crossed the rest of the distance to Nova.

"Good work, everyone," She said with a smile, stepping out to shake my hand, making me feel silly for my previous nervousness. "How did the mission go?"

"There were some complications at the beginning," I admitted, continuing when she raised her eyebrow. "The base was fully active when we got here. Patrols, lookout stations, the whole nine yards. But we managed to get inside without taking any injuries, and all it did was shrink our timeline a bit."

"Well, good job. The ships seem to be in good condition, despite being exposed for so long, and-

“Nova!” A voice called urgently from the older woman’s comms unit, cutting her off.  
“Nova, come in!”

“Sorry, hold on a second,” She said, unclipping her comm and holding up. “Nova here, say again?”

“You’re going to want to come to the hangar bay Ma’am,” The voice said. “It’s... well, you’re going to want to see this.”

She glanced at us, and I gestured for her to lead the way, all of us crossing the huge landing pad to the entrance into the hanger. It was larger than it seemed, and as we crossed from the harsh light into the darker, slightly cooler interior, we could finally see what Nova’s worker had been talking about.

All three walls of the hanger, which went back surprisingly far into the rocky hill it was carved into, were lined with stuff. The left wall was crammed, floor to ceiling, with cargo crates ranging from smaller standard crates to massive shipping containers. The far back wall was filled with several storage units of droids, most of them B1’s, but with several other types as well. Along the right wall were ten starfighters, most of them the [robotic variants](#) that I recognized from the movies, but there were also three X-wing look-alikes that I guessed were [Z-95 headhunters](#).

But all of that paled in comparison to the [large ship](#) sitting at an angle in the center of the space. It was at least forty meters long, maybe more, and looked sleek and clean. Large windows were arrayed along the side, making me think that this was a pleasure craft rather than a warship. It seemed to be in great shape as well, with its red paint in almost perfect condition.

“Well... that just made this whole thing worth it,” Nova said with a smirk, slapping my back. “That’s a PLY 3000. It’s worth at least a hundred and fifty thousand credits, probably closer to two hundred!”

“What the hell is a Personal Luxury Yacht doing out here in a military base?” Tatnia asked. “And in perfect condition?”

“Stera, Tedo, start going over this ship! I want to know how it looks on the inside!” Nova called out, her worker nodding before turning to other workers and barking orders at them.

“C’mon, let’s inspect the rest of these buildings, maybe we might figure out what’s going on here,” Tatnia suggested, nodding toward the hangar exit. “Who knows, we might spot something useful.”

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We spent a few hours exploring the structures around the base, with Nevue and the soldiers splitting off to go their own way, leaving us, plus Racer, to start with the upper floors of the main structure, working our way down. The first and second floors were clearly designed as a sort of central command, which made sense considering the massive communication dish on the roof. While all the stations were dark, dozens of display pads were set up by the reinforced structure's long, horizontal windows that overlooked a significant portion of the base.

Underneath the command center floor was a floor of storage, filled with replacement parts, equipment, and tools, as well as other basic supplies. Below that, we found three floors of empty rooms, well furnished but simple, like a very basic apartment complex. I was surprised to find that many living quarters, as this base would have been perfectly functional with a handful of organic supervisors.

As we explored further down into the many rooms we had fought past but hadn't explored, it got more and more confusing. Storage filled with long-term supplies for organics. Room after room filled with clothes, linens, literal tons of food, everything a decent-sized group of people needed to survive for a long time. There was even a commercial-sized kitchen, staffed with robots that were now shut down and tucked into a series of charging bays in the corner.

The second to last floor, the one directly above the central computer, was split into three luxury living spaces. They were big, bigger than any apartment I had ever lived in or even seen, and were filled with high-quality furniture, computers, and all sorts of luxury amenities. As we explored the largest of the three, I directed Race, who had joined us when we split with Nevue, to access the computer terminal behind a large wooden desk. He whistled in confirmation while we looked around.

After about three minutes, he whistled out, and Nal and I headed to the desk, reading the data entry that Racer had pulled up. It described the timeframe in which the facility had been constructed, as well as what its purpose was.

"Son of a bitch, we found someone's hidey hole," I said after reading the document. "Look, right here. 'A bastion of last resort.' and 'holds supplies to last several years, should our investments in the Separatist movement turn sour.' Some CIS dumbass didn't want to face the music if they lost the war, so they built a place to hide if it started going bad. Must have never made it out here...."

"That explains the Yacht," Tatnia said, dropping down onto a couch that probably would have cost me a few months' pay before I died. "What do you think that means for the data core?"

"Could be a separate system, with no contact with the rest of CIS," Nal admitted with a shrug. "Or it could have been a sanctioned project. Might be connected to similar bases."

“Either way, we get what we need at the moment,” I said, both of them nodding in agreement. “With any luck, it might lead to more profit later, but for now, it pays for our ship plus some starter fund while we search for more members.”

“You said you would be taking most of our cut-in materials,” Miru brought up. “Why was that?”

“Because when you're living on your own rules, supplies are worth more than any amount of credits,” I explained. “Fuel is likely our biggest issue that requires money to solve, everything else we can scavenge, bargain for, or loot from pirates, slavers, and other acceptable targets. Also, more specifically, I was betting that the C-ROC being stationed here would mean it would have supplies to maintain it.”

“Oh... could that include some droids?” She asked, looking a bit nervous to be asking for something. “It's just that I've always wanted to tinker with droids, and the B1s would be a great way to start. Plus, I could use some extra hands maintaining a ship as large as the C-ROC....”

“I think we could likely convince them to pay us to haul the B1's away,” I said with a chuckle. “They don't exactly have the best reputation. But yes, we can negotiate that, especially since I'm pretty sure some of the stuff you're going to end up making will be useful.”

Miru preened at the compliment before Tatnia raised her hand.

“I want this couch,” She said, now laying back on it, her eyes closed as she enjoyed the expensive seat.

“Why not the bed?” Nal suggested, the human woman's eyes flying open. “If he paid that much for their couch....”

Tatnia was up and off the couch before Nal could finish, looking around before making a beeline for the bedroom, Miru following close behind, looking around curiously.

We spent the next while unwinding and exploring the stronghold, making a note of anything we saw worth negotiating for. One building off the side of the central, large structure was some sort of garage containing five speeders, which Nal identified as a [Flitknot](#). They were unarmed, though, so not likely something I would ask for. Another one of the buildings contained what was clearly an armory, most of which was just blasters of different types and sizes. We already had blasters rifles, spare blasters, and spare blaster pistols, so most of that was useless to us. I did spot a few interesting things, but how much of it we would get would come down to how the negotiations went.

We were talking to Nevue about who was riding one of the unarmed speeders back to the B-7 to pick it up when the Rebel Alliance finally arrived. Three large ships landed on the pad, which was now well and truly full. Nevue and I ran out to greet whoever was in command,

which turned out not to be necessary as a soldier met us halfway and handed Nevue a data pad without a word.

“Well... Good news, I'm now in charge of this operation from our side,” He said, still reading from the tablet.

“What's the bad news?”

“The bad news is that I've been deemed too big of an asset to return to my team. I'm now forming a second team, basically doing the same thing,” He said with a frown. “Damn... I was looking forward to seeing them again.”

“No good deed goes unpunished,” I said with a wince, Nevue letting out a snort of blank amusement. “Shall we go find Nova? Start negotiations?”

“Yeah... let me give my people some orders, and we can go find her.”

Fifteen minutes later, the three of us, with my crew, a few rebel soldiers, and a pair of Nova's workers following behind us, began to divide up the loot, starting in the hangar. They both immediately started trying to claim the luxury yacht, as Nova hadn't made any claim to what was inside the hangar while we were originally discussing terms. Instead of joining in, mostly because it was useless to me, I offered to give up any claim to it in return for the three large storage containers worth of parts for the C-ROC sitting in the hangar. They agreed before continuing to negotiate for the PLY.

Eventually, it was decided that Nova would get the Yacht if the Rebellion got the three Headhunters, all equipment set aside to repair them, and thirty thousand credits or something equivalent, which Nova agreed to. I asked for some of the droid starfighters at the request of Miru, and the two agreed as they weren't interested in getting them to work. In the end, I claimed four [vulture droids](#) and two [tri fighters](#). Since both of them openly admitted to not wanting them, I managed to convince them to count them as only a thousand credits each, despite them being worth *significantly* more, even in scrap.

I was also able to convince them to let me take as many B1s as I wanted and to let me have ten super battle droids and two droideka. Nevue asked for the rest and offered to cut the credit IOU for the LPY 3000 in half in return, which Nova readily agreed to. I had to argue much harder to get a small team of [labor droids](#) and [repair droids](#), five each, as Nova wanted them badly. I did eventually win, but I had to give up on the unarmed speeder bikes. Miru almost mentioned how I hadn't actually cared about getting them, but Tatnia thankfully got to her first. Nova was still getting thirty-five of each type anyway, so she didn't have much to complain about.

The general supplies were also hotly contested, as all three of us had use for them. Eventually, Nova and I agreed that the Rebellion needed them more, and so we settled on each

of us getting a few crates of basic necessities and letting Nevue take the rest. Both of us then used that goodwill to claim most of the tools and spare equipment that were secured around the facility. I wanted Miru to have every tool she could possibly need to keep our ship running and do her tinkering. After a bit of negotiating, we settled on basically getting one of everything while Nova and Nevue would split the rest between them, heavily biased to Nova.

The negotiations continued as we argued over who would get what and if this trade or that trade would stick to the forty-forty-twenty agreement we had all shaken on. In the end, the one item that we argued about the most was the turret emplacements that dotted the stronghold. I wanted one of the more powerful cannons to bump up the punch of the C-ROC, Nevue wanted them to jump-start the defenses of the Alliance's next base, and Nova wanted to build them into her station, which at the moment was only lightly armed.

Eventually, we settled on a compromise. I got one of the larger turrets for the C-ROC, Nevue got a few, and Nova got the vast majority. In exchange, Nova would repair several alliance ships for free and increase the scale of the modifications she would do to the C-ROC on top of its repair.

“Just what exactly are you looking to get done?” She asked when I started angling for more modifications. “There is a limit to what I can do without a working refit station.”

“You were already talking about removing that tail thruster?” I asked, smirking when she nodded. “I want to take the heavy turret we just got and attach it there. Should make chasing us a much more daunting task.”

“...That’s not a bad idea, we could reroute the engine’s power to shields, but let it switch to the cannon when you need a bit more firepower.” She said, scratching her nose as she thought. “That shouldn’t be too difficult either, though you may need a separate station to work that turret, working it into the existing systems wouldn’t be worth the effort. What else are you thinking? We could do a few more like that, though you’re going to start putting a strain on your ship’s power systems if you add any more energy weapons.”

“No, no more weapons. I think I only want one more modification, but this one is going to be a bit bigger,” I admitted. “You know how the empire likes to use their new style of Gozanti cruisers to carry starfighters into combat? Well, Miru and I had an idea for something functionally similar, executed very differently....”

Nova narrowed her eyes at me before shaking her head.

“Don’t bother describing it to me now, we can sit down and plan it out later. For now, I have to get in contact with some more traders. There’s a lot of goods nobody is interested in, and I’m not leaving them behind when there is money to be made.”

