

Despite the rather exciting ideas that Cal and I had, we could not immediately head off and start searching. First, we needed to purchase a few exploratory ships or sensors. These were considered rare and would likely cost a pretty penny, so it would likely take a week or so to find them. I was inclined to get the sensors so we could install them into appropriately powerful ships, but after some research, the merchants discovered that the selection on the open market was limited.

Within a few days, we had a lead on two exploratory starships and a single sensor rig for a large capital ship, which together would run us a million credits, though most of that was for the capital-ship-scale rig. They were powerful sensors that could give us some interesting data, both in close range and at long range, but with the cost so high, I could see why they weren't included in ships by default.

On top of the sensors, we also sat down with Miru to discuss the concept of using droids in the method that Cal described, as sending them forward like sacrificial scouts. In all likelihood, it probably wasn't that new of an idea, but I kept that to myself. Despite how it might sometimes feel, the Skyforged did not have a monopoly on logic and common sense, so it was pretty plausible that someone had already come up with the idea. It was also likely they didn't spread it around because it gave them a considerable edge.

On top of that, Miru revealed that robotic survey ships already existed and had been used by various guilds for a long time, but she had never heard of them being used to plot safe hyperspace paths. Usually, they were sent out to survey nearby planets and systems along hyperspace lanes, scouting for valuable minerals, garden worlds, or civilizations that could be traded with. Again, I doubted this was because it had never been done, but rather it was likely company secrets, since everyone "knew" just how dangerous hyperspace exploration, especially into Wild Space, could be.

"If you want to use starfighters, I would have to install some communication gear, something long range..." She started trailing off as she considered the concept. "It might be easier to just use a couple of cheap freighters. Honestly, it would probably be less expensive to lose them if they get into trouble. We save a good chunk of money on our starfighter by making them in-house, with a lot of our own materials, but they still aren't cheap."

"We have a few things like that in our catalog," Tatnia suggested. "We could just pull them to use as the scouts."

I turned to look at her, surprised that she was contributing, considering she had been against the idea in the first place. When she saw me give her a look, she rolled her eyes.

"What? Someone needs to make sure you're doing it right. And I have to occasionally play Sith advocate because you guys get all overconfident and heroic. That doesn't mean I want to fail." She pointed out, with an edge of bitterness in her voice. "Besides, you and Cal solved two of the biggest problems, so it's actually viable now, not just a waste of time."

"That's fair," I admitted. "And I do appreciate you voicing your opinions, even if I seem to brush aside some of your less optimistic ones. It's important to hear them so I at least have some concept of repercussions and other options."

She brushed me off, but judging from the thumbs up that Julius gave me behind her back, I had likely stumbled on something that she had brought up and complained about. I made a mental note to make sure Tatnia felt validated, as it did likely seem that I sometimes brushed her off a bit more than I should when making plans. She was a lot more jaded about the state of the galaxy than most of the crew were, but her thoughts and points were still valid.

"I'll look through our stock and pick out a few," Miru responded with a nod. "Anything I should look out for beyond the obvious?"

"No, just something that will hold together while we need them," I responded. "What about the droids?"

"Commando droids should be able to handle most of that," Miru assured me. "If we wanted to go overboard, we could hook up a pilot droid to each bridge, then use a few commandos as assistants and co-pilots."

"Sure, if you think that's enough."

The final ideas came together pretty quickly, but it would take time to implement, which was fine, as we had other things to work on in the meantime. If our sensors and scouts were set, I needed a few more people familiar with magic. Mara was now fully focused on training her Clairvoyance spell, and we selected a pair of clones to spread magic to, one from Lieutenant Rider's group and another from Commander Frost's. We were doing this early, before waking up anyone else from the people we had selected, because the clones would know to follow my direction and focus on Clairvoyance first.

At the end of the day, sometimes in the future, I would probably end up passing magic to a bunch of the various ground team leaders so they could function as their group's spearhead. For now, however, I only wanted to recruit and unlock the potential of people who wouldn't have to worry about leading a group. That way, they could focus entirely on practicing magic during their downtime.

While the clones were first, so that they could get started on the Clairvoyance spell, I also selected a variety of other people, from all corners of the Skyforged Vanguard and Nirn. A doctor and a nurse, a few Mandalorians, civilians, and soldiers alike, all made it onto my list. A few people denied the chance, like the doctor, but most of the people who were offered jumped at the opportunity. Pretty soon, we had fifteen people with magic, including the clones, and all of them were eager to learn as much as they could.

Rather than dumping them in front of an audience immediately to show off our new program, all of them had a chance to learn at least one flashy spell, the clones included, before we set up a sort of open press conference to explain and demonstrate the group's new power.

They then used that flash spell, whether it was summoning a familiar or throwing lightning, to rather dramatically show they now had magic.

As predicted, the people's reaction was nearly overwhelming. Their excitement was palpable, as was the pride our people had in both Nirn and the Skyforged Vanguard. Our growing power was staggering when compared to normal groups, and learning that I was now spreading my ability to the people, both civilians and soldiers, from all walks of life, was thrilling to them. We were becoming a true powerhouse, and with Jedi and Magic users on our side, people saw it as proof of a prosperous future ahead of us, full of advancement and growth.

The fact that we promised to create several more groups of mages over time sparked even more excitement.

There were even whispers that Nirn and Vecopa would be the birthplace of a new galactic power, that with time, we would come to rival places like the Hapes. At the moment, it was an optimistic dream at best, but damn if it wasn't a powerful thought. I had started this whole movement because I wanted to step into the Rebellion with a leg up in power, so I could influence decisions and keep them from making the same mistakes I knew from many stories I read and watched. My goal had only been to create a powerful group so we could stand on our own, and now, there was a chance we could be something even more...

Despite the lofty concept, I knew I would do my best to make it happen, to prove the faith our people had in us right.

With our first group of mages awoken and the public now informed, in a controlled and orderly way, that it could be done, I settled in to focus on training, both my own and my new quasi-students. I was basically running an open workshop, taking groups of the newly awoken mages to what was quickly becoming my training spot, the basin far from Vecopa. I had a structure set up there, where my students would meditate and learn. Meanwhile, I would be outside, trying my best to master the two shouts I knew, working to get a better feel for them so I could use them more easily and with more flexibility.

Most of my efforts were focused on the Whirlwind Sprint, both because it had amazing utility in a fight, but only if I got it down to an instinctual degree, and because Unrelenting Force was more or less just what you got. It was incredibly powerful, not to mention useful, but there wasn't much to it beyond "Big shout make things fly." I did practice the shout for a while, mostly so I could more easily and more quickly slip into the right mindset.

That was by far the most difficult part to wrap my mind around. The use of the spell was one thing, and was something I could learn just by repetition, but the more I understood and could put myself in the right mindset, even for just a moment, the easier, cheaper, and faster I could shout properly.

I also spent some time sparring and teaching a few of the mages how to fight with swords, setting up and watching over spars, which several Jedi and Mara also participated in. I wanted everyone who has magic to have at least *some* combat instincts, so that they could

better handle themselves if they ever got called in for, say, a mass casualty event when we needed more healers, or something equally troubling.

Some of the mages had no interest in learning a melee skill, so they were learning how to shoot from one of our clone troopers. It was more advanced than just shooting at the range, but not as extreme as sparring for several hours a week, along with more physical training to build their physique.

During all that, those learning magic would focus on their spells, but they would occasionally come outside to ask if I had any advice. Most of it was about whether I thought they were learning the right spell, so on and so forth. Most of their time was spent working on Clairvoyance, but they also got a few chances to learn other spells, which they personally chose.

By the end of the second week, not only were the clone mages getting very good with the Clairvoyance spell, but I had fully mastered Whirlwind Sprint. I could now activate it near-instantly, and all that was required was a single step in any direction. Using it as I was sparing let me handle four Jedi Knights at once, swooping in and out of range, attacking from new angles, and more.

Of course, Unrelenting Shout would have let me slap them around even more, but I wasn't going to subject anyone else to that.

It did have a certain amount of risk, though, as while it was messing with physics, I wasn't teleporting. If I used it without paying attention, I was likely to blur myself into something potentially lethal, like a lightsaber blade. Not that it would normally be able to get through my armor, but in the right circumstances, it could be very bad.

Eventually, not too long after our new mages were trained sufficiently in Clairvoyance, we had gathered and installed everything we needed. We had bought and looked over our new exploration equipment. My people installed the sensor loadout on the *Hope*, while others worked on fixing up a [Lancer-class](#) and a [YT-1300](#), both of which had smaller versions of the same sensor rig.

These sensors would allow us to take distant readings of energy and signals coming from nearby systems, then scan for cleared lanes and unseen hazards. Unfortunately, while the scanners were good, they were far from foolproof, which was why exploration was so dangerous, especially in a place like Wild Space, known for even more hazards than normal.

Thankfully, we also had a group of bulky, small, off-brand freighters, which would be piloted by droids. Only one of them was more than twenty meters long, and only barely, and they were completely disposable, with just enough space for the transmitter we needed for the ships to reach back to us and dump their sensor data, letting us know if the system they had jumped to was safe.

The plan was to split the 1st Fleet into three groups. Each would travel into Wild Space at slightly different locations and angles, while using our sensors and droid scouts to slowly

explore Wild Space. Throughout the dive, we would use Clairvoyance to triangulate Jedi Master Sevarril Arraln, sharing data between the groups to speed up the process.

After a short debate, we decided that the *Liberty Rush* and *Loyal Hound* would escort one of the exploratory ships and a few scouts, while the second group would be the *Triumph of Fives* and the *Storms Edge*. The *Hope* would be on its own as the third group, with a trio of droid scouts in her hangar, ready to explore. The *Quiet Ark* would also accompany the *Hope*, though from a significant distance away, just in case someone had fallen to the Dark Side and still needed transport when we were done with them.

With any luck, we would be able to stay safe while also turning what should have been a multi-month venture into a significantly shorter mission.

Part of me kind of wanted more ships in each group, but it was already likely overkill. They would not be fighting anyone if they could help it, and if a threat did pop up, they were to run until support, in the form of the other groups, arrived.

It was almost three weeks after Cal and his Jedi finding team returned with the message from the mysterious Correllian Jedi, and we were finally ready to leave. The *Hope* had almost a dozen extra Jedi on board, while most of the other ships had three or four, all in preparation for hopefully finding more of their kin, hiding away in Wild Space.

Everyone was nervous and eager, the dangers of Wild Space on everyone's mind, as was the hope that we could maybe be bringing back more survivors of Order 66. Ahsoka, Amescoll, Cal, Merrin, and I stood on the bridge of the *Hope*. After giving the group a look and a nod, I finally gave the order to jump to lightspeed, leading the fleet into hyperspace. We had a three-day trip to the edge of the explored galaxy before the 1st Fleet split up, and we could get to work.