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## *Adventure* JOURNAL



Featuring an Original Work  
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### Power to the Fans

"The *Star Wars* trilogy has inspired me ever since I first saw the first movie, a mere child of three, dazzled by the spectacular special effects and epic struggle of tiny, struggling good against a massive, overpowering evil...I seek only the opportunity to give something back to it."

"I have loved the *Star Wars* genre ever since I was a child. I have watched the trilogy countless times, I have read the book adaptations, I have read all three of Timothy Zahn's novels, and have played and gamemastered the roleplaying game for years. I think that I have some good ideas for the game and I think that I have the kind of writing style necessary to contribute to the *Journal*."

These comments were in some of the letters I've received recently requesting writers' guidelines for the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*.

The *Star Wars* universe is big. And we're going to help define it here in the *Journal*. There are millions of worlds in the known galaxy filled with alien cultures, exotic planets, strange creatures and fantastic cities. The Empire, with its immense Star Destroyers and fanatically loyal stormtroopers, attempts to maintain its iron grip on the galaxy.

The *Star Wars Adventure Journal* will be helping to fill this exciting universe with new aliens, planets, creatures, starships, heroes, villains and adventures. Up to now, only professional writers have had the privilege of doing this in novels, roleplaying game books and comic books. Now those who know and love the *Star Wars* galaxy and who can write well can help define their small portion of the *Star Wars* universe right here on the pages of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*.

May the Force be with you.

Commander Peter Schweighofer  
Admiral's Attaché  
November, 1993

# STAR WARS®

Vol. 1, Issue 1

February 1994

## Adventure JOURNAL

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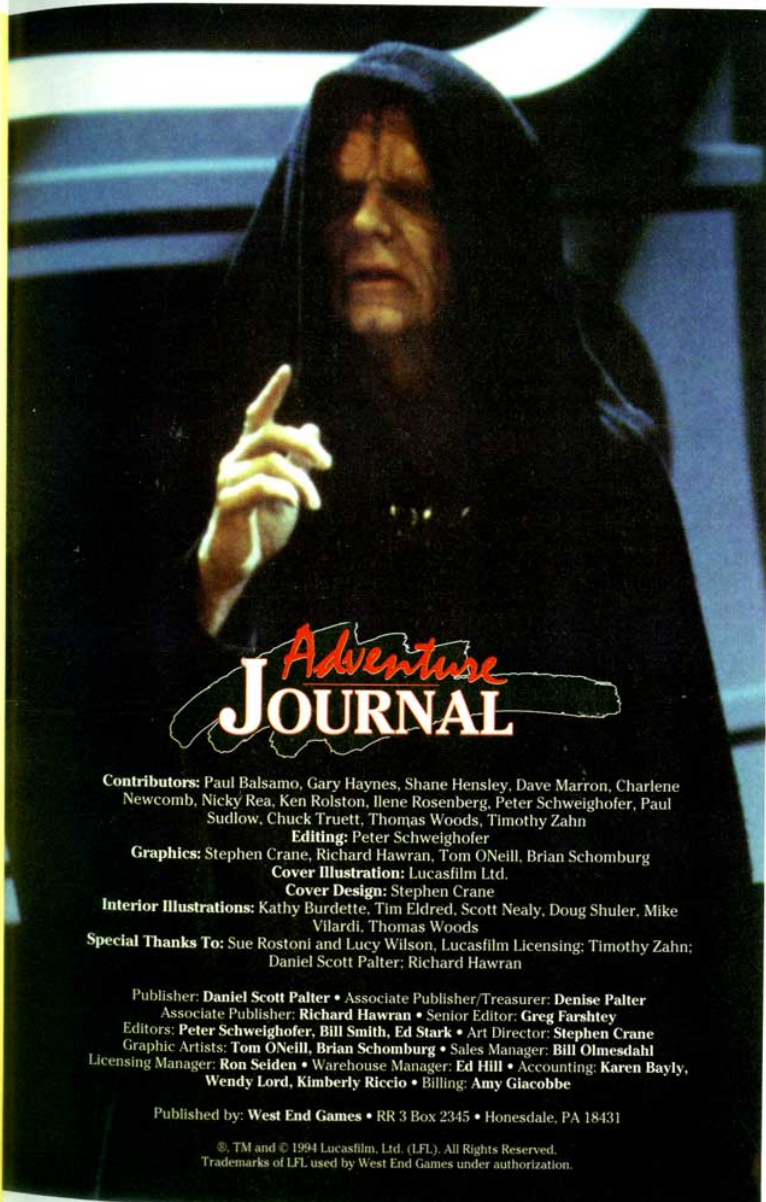


The World of  
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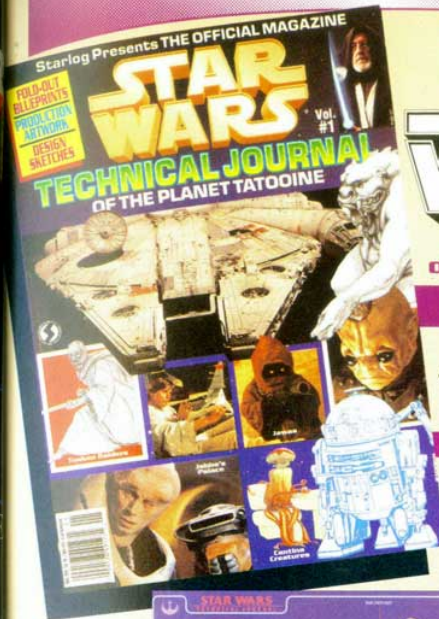
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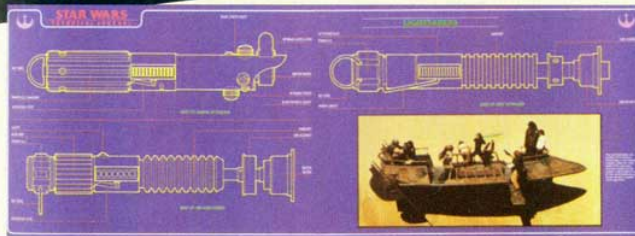
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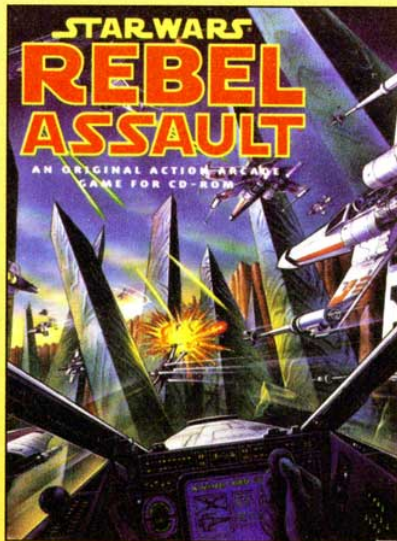
## NEW HORIZONS

### LucasArts Entertainment Company Releases *Rebel Assault*™

With more than 400 megabytes of intense action, *Rebel Assault* from LucasArts Entertainment Company is mounting an assault on the CD-ROM marketplace. Its ammunition: a riveting story, detailed 3D graphics, dramatic voice-overs, the *Star Wars* score as performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, and movie footage from *Star Wars*, plus original full-screen video footage. Its goal: to set a new industry standard for CD-ROM entertainment by combining compelling content, improved interactivity

and technical achievement.

*Rebel Assault* takes full advantage of the CD-ROM platform. "The game art is rendered in camera-perfect perspective using advanced 3D modeling techniques. The



result is astoundingly realistic game visuals," said Vince Lee, *Rebel Assault* project leader. "Past games, like X-Wing, have used 3D art sporadically, but this is the first time we've used it throughout an entire game.



We've immersed the player in a believable *Star Wars* universe. Even human figures—one of the most challenging subjects to capture—are rendered exquisitely in 3D."

The ultra-realistic graphics are featured in both the cinematic cut scenes, which move the story along, and the first-person interactive sequences. Additional scenes include the smooth integration of digitized, full-screen video. The result is a visually consistent world that deftly moves between first- and third-person 3D perspectives and live action, and between interactive and non-interactive components. An innovative streaming mechanism allows

*Rebel Assault* to be accessed directly from the CD without compromising game-play speed.

Complementing *Rebel Assault*'s stunning visuals is composer John Williams' original *Star Wars* score as performed by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Additionally, professional actors provide voices, and *Star Wars* sound effects, borrowed from Skywalker Sound, are used liberally. *Rebel Assault* features an internally developed, four-channel sound system that allows music, speech, sound effects and ambient sound to be played simultaneously.

In *Rebel Assault* players step into the boots of Rookie One, an aspiring Rebel fighter pilot.



Before the action starts, players have the option of making Rookie One male or female—the program will alter the character's physique and voice accordingly. Fifteen extensive

and varied levels take Rookie One from training runs through Beggar's Canyon in a T-16 Skyhopper to the game's climax—the trench run on the Death Star in an X-wing starfighter. In between, Rookie One chases TIE fighters through an asteroid storm, takes out a Star Destroyer, blows away Imperial walkers and blasts through a Rebel base overtaken by stormtroopers. A pass-code system lets players return to different sections of the game, and three levels of difficulty adjust *Rebel Assault*



higher), and a 256-color VGA monitor. It supports Sound Blaster series and 100% compatible soundboards, as well as Ultrasound, Aria, and Pro AudioSpectrum 16. A joystick is recommended, and it is mouse compatible.

LucasArts Entertainment Company develops and publishes interactive entertainment and educational software for CD-ROM, personal computers, video game consoles and multimedia. LucasArts is one of three Lucas companies. Lucas Digital Ltd., comprised of Industrial Light &



to players' skill levels.

In addition to the PC CD-ROM version, *Rebel Assault* will be available for Sega CD (published by JVC) in the first quarter of 1994. The PC CD-ROM game has a suggested retail price of \$79.95.

*Rebel Assault* requires DOS 5.0 or higher, 386-33 MHz minimum with 4 megs of RAM, a CD-ROM drive (MPC level 1 or

Magic and Skywalker Sound, is dedicated to serving the needs of the entertainment industry for visual effects and audio post-production. Lucasfilm Ltd. includes George Lucas' feature film and television activities, as well as the business activities of the THX Group, Licensing and Toys.

## Other LucasArts Entertainment Company Releases

LucasArts Entertainment Company and JVC Musical Industries have released *Super Empire Strikes Back*, the sequel to their best-selling Super



Nintendo game *Super Star Wars*. In *Super Empire*, the battle between Luke Skywalker and the evil Empire continues as Luke learns the ways of the Force from Yoda and directly confronts Darth Vader.

*Super Empire* features more than 20 levels packed with a combination of familiar and



never-before-seen aliens, enemies, boss monsters and locations. Playing perspectives alternate between sideways scrolling, first-person and thrilling Mode 7 flight sequences.

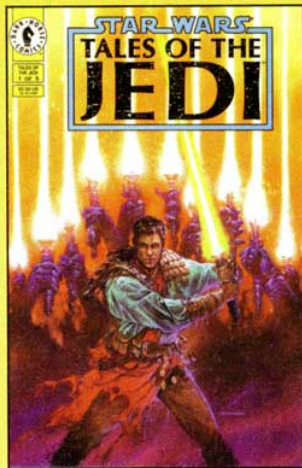
Look for more about LucasArts' *Super Empire Strikes Back* in the next issue of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*.

## Dark Horse Star Wars Comics News

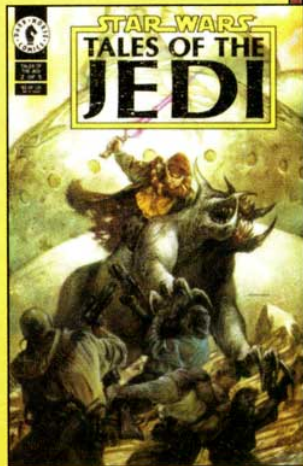
The second issue of Dark Horse's new *Star Wars: Droids* series appears in this month's *Dark Horse Comics* #18. The new series features C-3PO and R2-D2, who are caught in the crossfire between Olag, a ruthless trader, and a deadly battle droid. In the second issue, IG-88 forces R2-D2 to help steal a spaceship in a daring escape from the Hosk space station.

The series, set before the fall of the Republic and the rise of the Empire, concludes in April. *Star Wars: Droids* is written by Dan Thorsland with art by Bill Hughes and Andy Mushynsky.

The story of the



novice Jedi Nomi Sunrider concludes this month in *Tales of the Jedi* #5. Bogga the Hutt,



with the aid of intergalactic marauders, has destroyed what is left of Nomi's former life. If she does not take up a lightsaber and strike her enemies down, both she and her only child, Vima, will die! *Tales of the Jedi* features a story by Tom Veitch, with interior art by David Roach.

*Classic Star Wars* #17 and #18 (March and April) continue the story of the Rebel's flight from Yavin to their new base on Hoth. But Luke Skywalker and his friends make an unexpected landing on a nearby planet, a tropical paradise. There Luke finds



what appears to be an old friend, and tries to unravel the mysteries surrounding

"The 'Paradise Detour.'" *Classic Star Wars* features the story of Archie Goodwin and the art of Al Williamson, retouched by Al Williamson and Allen Nunis. Issue #17 sports a color cover by *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* creator Mark Schultz.

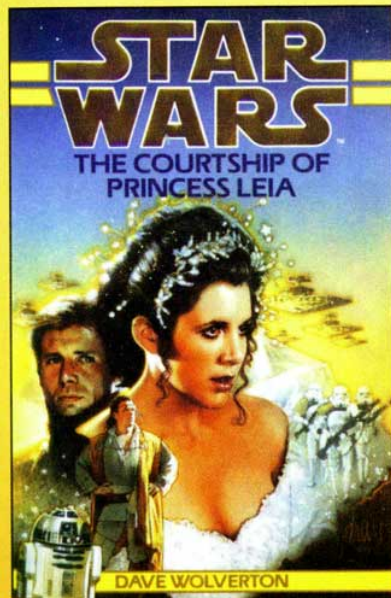
## Bantam Announces Star Wars Novel Schedule

Bantam Books has a full slate of new *Star Wars* novels ready for 1994.

Premiering in February will be the first paperback of the

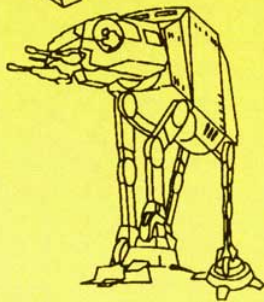
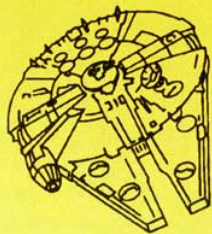
Jedi Academy trilogy by Kevin J. Anderson. In *Jedi Search*, Luke Skywalker seeks to establish an academy to train a new generation of Jedi Knights. But he is soon drawn into an adventure to find his friends Han Solo and Chewbacca, who run into trouble in the Spice Mines of Kessel and at a secret Imperial research laboratory. *Jedi Search* will be followed by *Dark Apprentice* in June and *Champions of the Force* in September.

In April Bantam will release a new hardcover novel, *The Courtship of Princess Leia* written by Dave Wolverton. Princess Leia is asked to wed the son of a queen to seal a treaty with the Alliance. But when Han Solo hears of the plan, he wisks Leia away in an attempt to win her heart, and leads their friends through an epic *Star Wars* tale.



## Hollywood Pins Creates Star Wars Pins

The Hollywood Pins, manufacturers of fine collectible cloisonne and enamel pins, will be manufacturing a deluxe line of *Star Wars*



pins under a license from Lucasfilm Ltd.

Approximately 50 pins are scheduled for release by June 1994. Many styles will be limited editions.

The range of styles will include favorite character figures like Darth Vader and Yoda, portraits, emblems, logos, ships — including the X-wing fighter and *Millennium Falcon* — famous phrases and many other stylized pins.

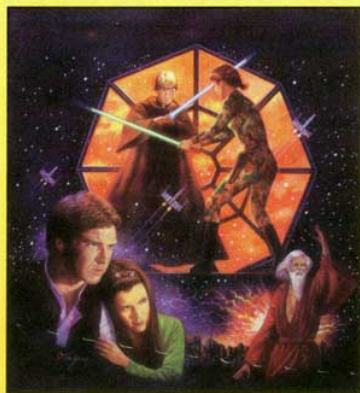
Pins are available through most comic book outlets and through the science fiction convention circuit. The pins will also appear in several

mail order catalogues. Prices range from \$4.00 to \$12.00 depending on pin size and design.

For more information, call The Hollywood Pins at (310) 471-9765, or write to The Hollywood Pins, P.O. Box 935, Beverly Hills, CA 90213.

## West End Games Publishes The Last Command Sourcebook

West End Games is publishing *The Last Command Sourcebook* in March. The sourcebook, based on Timothy Zahn's best-selling novel, will detail the characters, planets, aliens and starships of the climactic conclusion to *Heir to the Empire* and *Dark Force Rising*. *The Last Command Sourcebook* will be hardcover



and will retail for \$22 at hobby stores, book stores, B. Daltons and Waldenbooks.

West End Games will also be revising *Galaxy Guide 6: Tramp Freighters* (in March) and the *Rebel Sourcebook* (in April) to *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*. Stat updates will be available for those who have the first edition *Rebel Sourcebook*.

For a catalog of these and other West End Games releases, write West End Games, RR 3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA 18431.

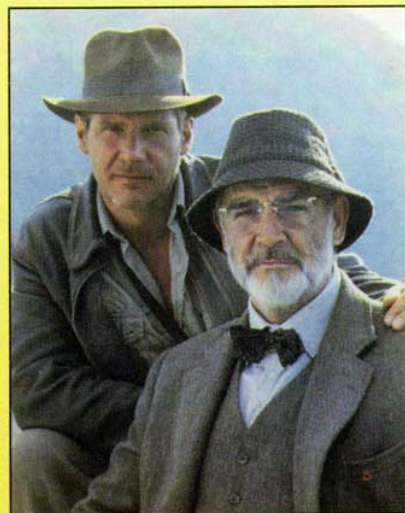
## West End Games Will Release The Indiana Jones Roleplaying Game

West End Games is planning to release *The Indiana Jones Roleplaying Game* in August as part of the new *Masterbook* roleplaying game system. The basic game book will be called *The World of Indiana Jones*. Characters like college professors, mercenaries and treasure hunters dash around the globe on adventures in the exciting world of Indiana Jones. West End

Games will support this game line with sourcebooks based on the movies as well as other original source and adventure material based on the style and setting of the Indiana Jones movies.

West End will also release *Bloodshadows* simultaneously with the *Masterbook* rules and *The World of Indiana Jones*. *Bloodshadows* will combine elements of dark fantasy with the excitement of 1930s pulps.

*Masterbook*, *The World of Indiana Jones* and *The World of Bloodshadows* will be available in hobby stores, book stores, B. Daltons and Waldenbooks.



# FIRST CONTACT

by Timothy Zahn

Illustrated by Michael Vilardi

With a last sizzle of jittering repulsorlifts, the space yacht *Uwana Buyer* settled down into the landing field that had been hacked out of the Varonat jungle. "What a fine, civilized-looking place this is," Quelev Tapper commented, peering out the cockpit canopy. "You sure we didn't overshoot and land in someone's weed dump?"

Talon Karrde looked out at the pale yellow trees encircling the field and the thirty or so dilapidated buildings nestled in beneath them. "No, this is it," he assured his lieutenant. "The Great Jungle of Varonat. Home of a handful of third-rate trading depots and a few thousand colonists who haven't the brains to pick up and go elsewhere."

"And an ugly Krish named Gamgalon," Tapper said. "I don't know, Karrde. I still think we should have brought in the *Wild Karrde* and *Starry Ice* and had some decent firepower behind us. We're kind of like sitting mynocks here."

"We're here to observe, not make trouble," Karrde reminded him, popping his restraints and standing up. "Gamgalon wouldn't be bothering with these private Morodin-hunting safaris if there wasn't some big profit involved. I just want to know what he's up to, and whether we can carve a piece of it off for ourselves."

"All the more reason to have backup along," Tapper grumbled, checking the draw of his blaster as he followed Karrde to the hatchway aft. "But you're the boss."

"How very true. You ready?"

Tapper took a deep breath, exhaled it noisily. "Let's do it."

Karrde punched the control and the hatchway slid up into the hull. Sniffing at the exotic aromas, he and Tapper walked down the ramp and headed across the field toward a building with a faded *Port Facilities* sign hanging on it.

They were no more than halfway there when two men lounging beside another of the buildings peeled themselves away from their wall and moved casually to intercept the newcomers. "Howdy," one of them said as they got within earshot. "Welcome to Tropis-on-Varonat. Here for the sights?"

"That's very amusing," Karrde complimented him. "No, we're here for the hyperdrive mechanic we very much hope you have."

"Ah," the other said, glancing back at the *Uwana Buyer*. "Yeah, I'm not surprised. The flashier the hull, the more crumbish the innards."

"Save the colorful language for the tourists," Tapper growled. "You have a hyperdrive mechanic here or don't you?"

The other eyed him a moment, then turned back to Karrde. "Your friend's a little short on manners," he said.

"He makes up for it in ability," Karrde said, pulling a handful of high-denomination coins from his pocket and sorting ostentatiously through them. "And in the understanding of schedules. We have some highly important business waiting for us on Svivren."

"Sure, I understand," the other said. "No offense, ah —?"

"Syndic Pandis Hart of the Sif-Uwana Council," Karrde identified himself. "This is my pilot, Captain Seoul." He chose one of the coins, held it up. "And we're rather in a hurry."

"Hey, no problem," the man grinned, jerking a thumb toward the port facilities building as he deftly took the coin from Karrde's hand. "Buzzy, go tell 'em they've got a customer. Rush job."

His companion nodded silently and loped off toward the building. "Name's Fleck, Syndic," the man continued. "Offhand, I'd say you're going to be stuck here for a few days. Got any plans?"

Karrde glanced pointedly around. "Would there be any plans worth having?"

"Matter of fact, there would," Fleck said. "Fellow here runs a pretty neat safari out into the jungle — got a trip heading out first thing tomorrow morning, in fact. Ever hear of Morodins?"

"I don't think so," Karrde said. "Big game?"

"The biggest," Fleck assured him. "Giant lizard-slug things, ten to twenty meters long. Make great wall or hallway trophies." His lip twitched sardonically. "They're not too fast or mean, either. Good way for a beginner to start."

"That's comforting to hear," Karrde looked at Tapper. "What do you think, Seoul?"

"Doesn't sound too dangerous, sir," Tapper said with just the right note of concern. "I trust you wouldn't be going alone?"

"Naw, there's four other hunters signed up," Fleck said. "And the boss always takes a couple of escorts along as guards. Safe as in a snuggy."

"I'd still recommend I accompany you, sir," Tapper persisted. "I used to be pretty good with a BlasTech A280."

"Let's find out first how much it costs to be as safe as in a snuggy," Karrde said dryly.

"Hardly anything," Fleck sniffed. "Not to a gentleman of your means. Only twelve thousand each."

Karrde smiled. "A man of means doesn't stay there by throwing money away. Fifteen thousand for the both of us."

Fleck grinned. "Hard bargainer, huh? Make it twenty."

"Experienced businessman," Karrde corrected. "Make it seventeen."

The other's forehead wrinkled, then cleared. "All right. Seventeen it is."

"Very good," Karrde said. "When do we leave?"

"Five-half tomorrow morning," Fleck said. "Just be here — I'll tell the boss you're coming. Don't forget to bring the seventeen." He pointed across the field. "You can get outfitted over at that building over there, and get a room for the night in the hotel next door. It's, uh, nicer inside than it looks."

"One would hope so," Karrde agreed. "I trust no one will be offended if we pass on the accommodations. The outfitters will know what equipment we'll need?"

"Sure," Fleck nodded. "Like I said, the boss runs these safaris all the time."

"Very good," Karrde said. "Come, Seoul, let's go see what they have to offer."

■ ■ ■

Varonat's sun was beginning to settle down behind the jungle by the time Karrde and Tapper finally made it back to the *Uwana Buyer* with their purchases. "I hope we gave them enough time," Tapper commented as they climbed up the ramp.

"I'm sure we did," Karrde said. "It doesn't take long for a professional to search a ship this size. And I'm not expecting Gamgalon to be employing amateurs."

Abruptly, Tapper touched Karrde's arm. "Maybe he is," he said, dropping his voice.

Karrde frowned. Then he heard it: a muffled clank from the aft section of the ship. "Should we take a look?" Tapper murmured.

"It would look suspicious if we didn't," Karrde said, grimacing. If this whole thing fell apart through the incompetence of Gamgalon's own people ... "Nice and easy."

Moving quietly, they headed down the central corridor to the engine room, hearing another clank as they reached the door. Karrde caught Tapper's eye, nodded. The other nodded back, lowering his bundles to the deck and getting a grip on his blaster. Karrde touched the release, and the door slid open —

The woman sitting on the floor beside the open access panel was young and attractive, with a cascade of red-gold hair tied back out of the way behind her head. Her face was calm and controlled as she looked up at their abrupt entrance; beneath her jumpsuit, her figure was slim and athletic and nicely formed.

And in her hands were a hydrosponder and one of the power flux connectors from the *Uwana Buyer's* hyperdrive. "Can I help you?" she asked coolly.

"I think you already are," Karrde said, the brief moment of surprise passing into relief. Gamgalon's searchers had not, in fact, fouled up. "I take it you're the hyperdrive mechanic."

"Cleverly deduced," she said. "Celina Marniss. You have any problems?"

"Only with the hyperdrive," Karrde said. "Why, were you expecting me to?"

Celina shrugged, returning her attention to the power flux connector. "I've known some men in my day who didn't think a woman could be decorative and competent at the same time."

"Personally, that's my favorite combination," Karrde told her.

She favored him with a look that was slightly amused, slightly strained-patient. "So you're Syndic Hart. Buzzy was most impressed with you."

"I'm ever so pleased," Karrde said. "I won't ask which way he was impressed." He nodded at the access opening. "Any idea yet what's wrong?"

"Well, for starters, your flux connectors are all about four degrees out of sync," Celina said, hefting the one in her hand. "They have to have been ignored for a long time to drift that far off."

"I see," Karrde said, his favorable first impression of this woman moving up another notch. Chin had assured him that the flux connector gimmicking would take an average hyperdrive mechanic at least a day to find. "I'll have to speak to my maintenance man."

"Personally, I'd fire him," Celina said. "I'll get these readjusted, then we can see what else is wrong."

"Good," Karrde said. "As Buzzy may have mentioned, we're in something of a hurry."

"Funny way to go about it," she said, nodding toward the packages in the corridor behind them. "Gamgalon's safaris usually take upwards of four days."

"It's been my experience that a failed hyperdrive normally takes at least six to ten days to fix," Karrde said.

"Possibly another reason to fire your mechanic," Celina grunted. "I'm guessing I can do it in two or three."

"What makes you think we're going on a safari?" Tapper asked suspiciously.

"The packages, for a start," Celina told him. "Besides, you're obviously well-off, and you talked to Fleck. He's Gamgalon's chief come-up flector — does his job pretty well." She shrugged, turning her attention back to the flux connector. "Besides, what else is there to do around here?"

"Cleverly deduced," Karrde said. "You're wrong about my personal wealth, though. I'm merely chief purchasing agent for the Sif-Uwana Council."

"I'd call that a marginal distinction," Celina commented. "Certainly given the casual way Sif-Uwanis approach management and money."

"Really," Karrde said, his estimation moving up yet another notch. He would have bet heavily that there wouldn't be a single person on Varonat who'd ever even heard of Sif-Uwana, let alone know anything around it. "Have you ever been there?"

"Once," Celina said. "It was a few years ago."

"Business or pleasure?"

"Business."

"What sort?"

She lifted an eyebrow at him. "I don't recall an invitation to play Questions Three with you, Syndic."

"No offense intended," Karrde said. "I merely find your presence here intriguing. You seem too skilled and well-traveled to be stuck out here in the backwater of the Ison Corridor. Not to mention your other obvious attributes."

He'd hoped to spark some reaction, to shake up that calm facade of hers a bit. But she refused to turn to the lure. "Maybe I just like the peace and quiet," she countered. "Maybe I'm trying to raise a stake to get out." She locked eyes with him. Green eyes, Karrde noted distantly. A very striking green, at that. "Or maybe I'm hiding from something."

Karrde forced himself to meet that gaze. There was a smoldering, almost bitter fire behind those eyes, driven by a turbulent swirl of emotion. He'd been right: she was no simple backwater hyperdrive mechanic. "You certainly instill me with confidence," he managed.

The corner of her lip twitched upward in a sardonic smile; and abruptly the fire vanished as if it had never been there. Or had been nothing but an act. "Good," she said briskly. "Maybe next time you'll stay out of your hyperdrive mechanic's way and leave well enough alone."

"I take your point," Karrde said, bowing slightly. "We'll be in the forward living areas if you need to know where anything is. Good evening."

He gestured to Tapper, and together they backed out of the engine room, gathering up their packages again as the door slid closed. "What do you think?" Karrde asked as they headed forward.

"You're right, she doesn't fit here," the other agreed. "One of Gamgalon's people?"

"Probably," Karrde said. "Backup for Fleck, perhaps, or else just a general snoop. Mechanics and other servicepeople tend to be invisible."

"Maybe." Tapper glanced down the corridor behind them. "If you ask me, though, someone of her talents would be wasted in straight surveillance."

"Agreed," Karrde said, pursing his lips. "Could be she doubles as saboteur."

"Or as ship thief," Tapper said grimly. "Gamgalon's covering up something with these safaris."

They'd reached the yacht's lounge now. "Well, he can't steal this one without considerable effort," Karrde reminded him as he dumped his packages on the lounge couch. "As to sabotage; well, we should be able to ungimmick the hyperdrive in twenty minutes if we have to.

And the *Wild Karrde* can be here in four hours if we need it."

"I take it that means you're still planning to bring a comm-relay along?"

"Very definitely," Karrde assured him. "But I'm not expecting we'll have to use it. My guess is that we're going to find the safaris are just Gamgalon's way of setting up clandestine smuggler meetings, and that Fleck and company are here to screen out any Imperial officials who might object to the proceedings. Come on, let's get this gear organized. Five-half is going to come early enough as it is."

■ ■ ■

The rest of the safari was already assembled by the time Karrde and Tapper emerged from the *Uwana Buyer* just before five-half the next morning. "Eclectic bunch," Tapper commented as they walked toward the group and the three Aratech Arrow-17 airspeeders waiting on the field beside them.

"Agreed," Karrde said, looking them over. A Thennqora, a Saffa, and two Duros, all resplendent in outfits and equipment as obviously fresh out of the box as the gear he and Tapper were wearing. Slightly off to one side, dressed in outfits that had just as obviously seen considerably more use, were a Krish, a Rodian, and Buzzy the laconic human. "The group matches the escort," he added.

Tapper nodded toward the Krish. "That's not Gamgalon, is it?" Karrde shook his head. "One of his lieutenants, I think. I doubt Gamgalon himself will be coming along."

"Ah," the Krish called, beaming about as cheerfully as it was physically possible for a Krish to manage as he beckoned toward Karrde and Tapper. "Welcome. You must be Syndic Hart. I am Falmal; I will lead your expedition."

"Pleased to meet you," Karrde nodded. "I trust we're not late?"

"Not at all," Falmal said. "The rest were merely early. May I present your fellow hunters: Tamish — " he gestured to the Thennqora — "Hav and Javis — " the Duros — "and Cob-caree — "

**There was a smoldering, almost bitter fire behind those eyes, driven by a turbulent swirl of emotion.**

the Saffa. "Gentlebeings: Syndic Hart and Captain Seoul of Sif-Uwana."

"Pleased to meet you," Karrde said, eyeing each of the others. None of the names were familiar, but of course that didn't mean anything. He and Tapper weren't using their correct names, either.

"We waste time," Tamish growled. "Get on with the hunt, Falmal."

"Certainly," Falmal said. "If you will all find seats aboard?"

Karrde and Tapper chose one of the airspeeders and strapped in. A few minutes later Falmal climbed in beside their Krish pilot, and they were off.

"You run these safaris often?" Karrde asked as they flew low above the rippling yellow jungle.

"Only a few times per season." Falmal threw him a speculative look. "You were fortunate indeed to have arrived when you did."

Karrde gestured toward the rack of BlasTech rifles in the back of the airspeeder. "I'll consider it fortunate only if we catch something," he said. "I'm spending far too much money here for just a round-trip tour through a jungle."

"You will be successful," Falmal promised. "All are. Rest assured of that."

They flew for an hour before putting down in a hilltop clearing. A small, semi-permanent looking camp had been built there, four buildings grouped around a burned-off landing area. "You must use this place a lot," Karrde commented as they settled to the ground.

"It is the base camp for all safaris," Falmal said. "Here the pilots and airspeeders will wait while we continue on foot. Take your packs and weapons, please. We will move out immediately."

Ten minutes later they were all tromping along a barely discernible path through yellow trees, yellow-green bushes, and a pale violet ground cover that looked disturbingly like masses of fat worms. Falmal was in the lead, with Tamish, Karrde, and Tapper behind him. Buzzy was next, followed by Hav and Jivis and Cob-caree, with the Rodian bringing up the rear.

They traveled for nearly an hour before Falmal called a break in a small clearing that opened off beside the path. "Bit out of shape for this kind of exercise," Karrde puffed as he got out of his pack and dropped it to the ground. "How far are we going today, Falmal?"

"Wearied so soon?" Falmal asked, throwing a sharp-toothed smile at him. "Not to worry, Syndic Hart. Three hours more, perhaps four, and we will be at the main hunting area."

"Morodins have been here," Tamish grunted from behind him.

Karrde turned to look. The Thennqora was crouched down at the

edge of the clearing, prodding with a knife at a patch of dark discoloration cutting across the ground cover. "Morodin slime was here," he said. "Several weeks old."

"Well observed," Falmal said approvingly. "It was two months ago that one of our safaris hunted Morodins through this region. Unfortunately, their migration pattern has since taken them further away."

"Wonder why we didn't land closer to begin with, then," Tapper muttered.

"Perhaps airspeeders spook our intended prey," Karrde suggested, frowning. A meter behind Tamish, along one edge of the slime mark, a neat row of short pinkish shoots was coming up from beneath a group of yellow-green bushes.

And in the shadows behind them was a glint of metal. Stepping around behind Tapper, he started over for a closer look —

"Time to go," Falmal called, slapping his hands briskly. "Packs on, all. We must continue if we are to reach our destination with enough time to begin a hunt."

Karrde considered checking out the metal thing anyway, decided against it, and returned to where he'd left his pack. "You are a botanist, Syndic Hart?" Falmal asked.

"No," Karrde said as Tapper helped him into his pack. "Why?"

"I saw you looking at the Yagaran aleudrupe plants there," he said, pointing a long finger at the pink shoots. "You will see many such non-native plants in the jungle, I'm afraid — leavings of previous visitors to the Varonat jungle who were less than careful with their provisions."

"Provisions?" Tapper asked as he got his own pack on.

"Aleudrupe berries are considered a delicacy on many worlds," Falmal said. "Some of those who join our safaris insist on bringing their own provisions. A few carelessly dropped seeds — " He gestured elaborately. "We can only trust that the jungle itself will deal with such intrusions. Come, we must depart."

■ ■ ■

They didn't spot any more slime remnants before they reached Falmal's chosen camping spot, at least none that Karrde could identify as such. There were no more aleudrupe plants, either. Perhaps after that first time the careless visitors had been warned.

"So," Tapper said, bringing two cups of steaming liquid over to where Karrde had propped himself tiredly against a tree beside their tents. "What do you think of our fellow travelers?"

Karrde looked over at the others, still struggling with the escorts' help to pitch their own shelters. "From the level of complaining during this last hour, I'd say they're exactly what they seem: bored, wealthy beings looking for excitement and somewhat annoyed they're having to work for it."

"Hardly your typical smuggler, in other words."

Karrde shrugged. "Maybe these are semi-legit businessmen Gamgalon wants to make deals with."

"There are a million places in the galaxy he could set up private meetings without this much trouble," Tapper pointed out, sipping at his cup.

"True. Incidentally, did you notice that piece of metal stuck in the ground behind those aleudrupe plants at our first rest stop?"

"Yes," Tapper nodded. "Looked to me like a transpond marker. Probably there either to mark the path or else to keep track of the Morodin migrations."

"Perhaps," Karrde said. "I can't help thinking, though, that Falmal reacted rather strongly when I started toward it."

"You think it's something less innocuous?"

"Could be," Karrde said. "Possibly part of a sensor array to —"

He broke off. Through the trees, from somewhere nearby, came a deep, rumbling growl. Across the encampment, Falmal straightened up as Buzzy and the Rodian unslung their blaster rifles. "This could be it," Karrde murmured, snagging his own weapon and levering himself to his feet. "Falmal?"

"Shh!" the Krish hissed. "You will frighten it. We will break into the same groups of three as in the airspeeders."

He hurried over to Karrde and Tapper as the others collected into their own groups and headed into the jungle. "Come. Quickly and quietly."

They headed out, blaster rifles at the ready. "How can the Morodins get through these trees?" Tapper asked. "I thought they were big."

"Morodins are long but slender," Falmal said, peering carefully through the trees. "They can move easily about the jungle. Ah — look!"

Karrde swung his blaster rifle around; but Falmal was only pointing at the ground. "Fresh slime trail," the Krish said. "You see?"

"Yes," Karrde said, eyeing the wide silvery line cutting across the ground cover and disappearing off into the trees. A remarkably straight line, too, veering only to get around an occasional tree.

"A large one, too," Falmal said. "Come. We will follow it."

"Doesn't seem very sporting," Tapper grunted as Falmal led the way through the trees.

"The trail will not last long," Falmal said over his shoulder. "It appears and disappears."

Karrde frowned off to his right. It was hard to tell through all the bushes, but — "Is that another slime trail over there?" he asked Falmal. "Paralleling ours about three meters away?"

"Yes, they usually move in pairs," the Krish said. "Quiet now. See, the trail is turning."

Ahead, the slime trail had turned sharply to the left. Karrde craned his neck; sure enough, the other trail was turning to remain parallel. "That's a pretty sharp angle," Tapper muttered. "You suppose something scared them?"

"Quiet," Falmal said again.

In silence they continued on along the trail. It changed direction twice more in the next few minutes, turns as sharp and precise as the first had been. And then, to Karrde's surprise, it split into two different directions. "How did it do that?" he asked.

"A third Morodin has joined," Falmal said. "Quiet. It could be just ahead."

"Maybe a third, fourth, and fifth," Tapper said, nodding to the right. The paralleling slime trail there had split into three lines, two of them angling off three meters farther along the ground ahead of it. Swallowing, Karrde lifted his blaster rifle and took another step —

And suddenly, there it was: fifteen meters long, rearing the front of its rounded body three meters up off the ground, a mottled yellow creature with spoonbill snout, stubby legs, and wide teeth.

A Morodin.

"Shoot it!" Falmal yelled. "Quickly!"

Karrde's rifle was already against his shoulder, the barrel tracking the huge creature in front of them. The Morodin reared another meter off the ground, giving out the same deep growl they'd heard back at the camp. Karrde squinted down the barrel ... "Wait a minute," he told Tapper. "Hold your fire. It's just standing there."

"It is Morodin," Falmal snarled. "Shoot before too late."

But it was already too late. From their right came a sudden sputtering volley of blaster fire, catching the Morodin solidly across its flank. Tamish and Cob-caree, with the Rodian behind them, had arrived along one of the lines of the other slime trail. The Morodin growled once more, then toppled to the ground with a thunderous crash.

"Well shot," Falmal all but crowed. "We will summon the

airspeeders, and the pilots will prepare your trophy. Let us return to camp now; the noise will have driven off the others." He looked speculatively at Karrde. "Perhaps tomorrow, Syndic Hart, will be your day for a kill."

"Perhaps," Karrde said, looking at the downed Morodin. So that was that. The big, dangerous Morodin safari ... and it had turned out to be no more challenging than shooting a brualki in a net. "I can hardly wait."

■ ■ ■

The pilots arrived within an hour, and for nearly two hours afterward the encampment was busy as they shuttled slabs of Morodin meat in from the kill and held interminable conversations with Tamish and Cob-caree as to which would get which part of the head and their preferences in trophy mount and framing. Karrde stayed out of the activity, retreating back to his seat by the tree with a portable melodium and leaving Tapper to handle their share of the work. He overheard one or two rather finely honed comments about poor sportsmanship directed his way, but he ignored them. Leaning back against the tree, eyes half shut, he let the music from the melodium envelop him.

And, surreptitiously, fiddled with the settings of the comm-relay concealed inside the device.

The sun was dipping low over the forest by the time the pilots finished their work and the airspeeders took off back toward base camp. "I trust you've been enjoying yourself," Tapper commented, sitting down beside Karrde and wiping his face with the sleeve of his no longer sleek hunter's outfit. "Some of the others think you've been sulking."

"I can't help what they think," Karrde said. "Don't get comfortable; we're going for a walk."

"Wonderful," Tapper groaned, hauling himself back to his feet. "What's the drill?"

"I've been playing a little with the comm-relay," Karrde said, standing up and slinging the melodium's strap over his shoulder. "If Falmal and company have been planting transpond markers in the vicinity, we should be able to pick them up with it. Nice and easy; let's not attract any attention."

They slipped out of camp and headed into the jungle. Karrde's hunch was right: almost immediately the rigged comm-relay found up a signal, coming from the direction of the Morodin kill. Following the slime trail again, they soon reached what was left of the carcass,

already busy with scavengers.

"There it is," Tapper said, pointing to a group of bushes a few meters away. "It's a transpond marker, all right. And right by one of the slime trails again."

"Yes," Karrde said, kneeling down for a closer look. The ground at the edge of the slime had been freshly turned, he saw. Almost as if something had been planted there...

He looked up sharply, catching Tapper's eye. The other nodded: he'd heard the faint crunching noise, too. "Coming from the camp," he murmured.

The sound came again. "Let's take the long way," Karrde murmured back, pointing to the section of slime trail Tamish and Cob-caree had arrived along earlier. Explaining to Falmal or his cohorts why he was carrying a melodium on a walk through the jungle could get awkward. Especially if they found the gimmicked comm-relay inside it.

They heard the crunching sound once more as they left the site, but after that it seemed to fade behind them. Which was just as well. No more than 15 meters into the jungle, the slime trail broke off; and when it reappeared three meters farther away, it had suddenly sprouted three more branches. "Uh-oh," Tapper muttered. "Which way?"

"I'm not sure," Karrde said, glancing behind them. The thought of a whole herd of Morodins prowling around was not an especially pleasant one. "Let's try this one," he said, pointing to the rightmost of the two trails. "We'll mark one of these trees first so we can backtrack if we have to."

Tapper was staring off into the jungle. "Let's try going a little farther in first," he suggested slowly. "We can always come back."

Karrde frowned at him. "Something?"

"A hunch," Tapper said. "Just a hunch."

Karrde pursed his lips. "How far in do you want to go?"

"About three hundred meters," Tapper said. "I remember a ridge in that direction on the map that overlooks a sort of wide depression in the ground."

Karrde grimaced. Three hundred meters in an unfamiliar jungle

**Karrde's hunch was right: almost immediately the rigged comm-relay found up a signal, coming from the direction of the Morodin kill.**

was nothing to be taken lightly. But on the other hand, Tapper's infrequent hunches were nearly always worth following up. "All right," he said. "But no farther than the ridge. And we head back sooner if our trail ends."

"Agreed. Let's go."

The slime trail split again a few meters along, and twice more made one of those short, three-meter breaks with new branches going off different directions when it resumed. For a while Karrde tried to keep track of the number of lines, hoping to figure out how many animals they were dealing with here. But he soon gave up the effort. If the Morodins decided to get nasty, the difference between six and sixty of them would be largely academic.

"There's the ridge," Tapper said, pointing ahead at a last line of trees that seemed to open onto blue sky. "Let's take a look."

They stepped forward and between the trees. There, stretched out perhaps 100 meters below them, was the wide valley-like depression Tapper had described.

And gathered together on one side of it were upwards of fifty Morodins.

"We've found the crowd, all right," Karrde muttered uneasily. The slope down from their ridge into the valley was mildly steep, but he doubted it would bother something with the size and musculature of a Morodin. In fact he knew it wouldn't; the slime trail they were following rounded the ridge and continued down without a break.

"Don't look at the Morodins," Tapper said. "Look at the slime trails."

"What about them?"

"Look at them," Tapper urged. "Tell me you see it, too."

Karrde frowned, wondering what he was getting at. The whole depression was full of the lines, that was for sure, clearly visible between the trees and over the trampled bushes. Lots of lines, showing the same bends and branches as the ones they'd encountered up here ...

And then, abruptly, he got it. "I don't believe it," he breathed.

"I didn't either," Tapper said. "Look — one of them's trying it."

One of the Morodins had detached himself from the group and into the three-meter channel between two of the trails. Waddling quickly on those short legs, it moved to the first bend and turned to the left.

Into the first section of the elaborately constructed maze.

"Let's get back," Karrde said, shaking his head in disbelief. "I have a feeling we don't want Gamgalon's people finding us here."

"Too late," a soft voice said.

Carefully, Karrde looked over his shoulder. Two meters behind him stood Falmal and two of the Krish pilots, all three with blaster rifles at the ready. Behind them stood a fourth Krish, gazing thoughtfully at him. "Indeed," Karrde said, lowering the muzzle of his own rifle and turning around to face them. "Well. At least we shouldn't have any trouble finding the way back to camp."

"Whether we return to camp directly has yet to be decided," the fourth Krish said in that same soft voice. "Put your weapons down, please. And tell me what you are doing here."

"We were looking for Morodins," Karrde said as he and Tapper lowered their blaster rifles to the ground. "In the process we stumbled on the fact that they're more than just simple animals." He cocked an eyebrow. "They're fully sentient beings, aren't they, Gamgalon?"

The Krish smiled. "Very good," he said. "On both counts. You know my name; what is yours?"

Under the circumstances, there didn't seem to be much point in continuing the masquerade. "Talon Karrde," Karrde identified himself. "This is my associate, Quelev Tapper."

Falmal hissed. "Was it not as I said, my liege?" he snarled. "Smugglers. And spies."

"So it would appear," Gamgalon said. "Why are you here, Talon Karrde?"

"Curiosity," Karrde said. "I've heard stories about these safaris of yours. I wanted to find out what was going on."

"And have you?"

"You're hunting sentient beings," Karrde said. "In violation of Imperial law. Even in these days, I imagine what's left of the Empire would deal rather harshly with you if they knew that."

Gamgalon smiled again. "You imagine wrongly. As it happens, the Imperial governor in charge of Varonat is fully aware of what is happening here. His portion of the earnings are quite adequate to insure that there are no such questions about the hunts."

Karrde frowned. "Surely you're not bribing an Imperial governor with scraps from safari tickets."

"Indeed not," Gamgalon said. "But as the safaris provide ideal cover for our planting and harvesting operations, it is in his best interests to allow them to continue."

"You're not bribing him with aleudrupe berries, either," Tapper put in. "You can buy those things on the open market for thirty or forty a packload."

"Ah — but not *these* aleudrupe berries," Gamgalon said smugly. "This particular crop is grown in soil saturated with Morodin slime ... and during their growth, these berries undergo an extremely interesting chemical change."

"Such as?"

Falmal hissed again. "My liege — ?"

"Do not worry," Gamgalon soothed him. "Consider, Talon Karrde, a merchant ship carrying three cargoes to a politically tense world: rethan-K, promhassic triaxli, and aleudrupe berries. All harmless, all legal, none worth so much as a raised voice from either Imperial customs or officials of the New Republic. The ship is sent on its way to the surface, where it is greeted enthusiastically by its customers.

**And from behind him came a deep, rumbling growl.**

be launching an attack on their political or military enemies. With weapons utilizing a blaster formulation fully as powerful as spin-sealed Tibanna gas."

Karrde stared at him, a hard lump forming in his stomach. "The berries are a catalyst?"

"Excellent," Gamgalon said approvingly. "Falmal was right — you are indeed clever enough to be dangerous. To be precise, it is the pits of the berries that create this new gas from the rethan and promhassic. The fruit itself is perfectly normal, and can stand up to any chemical test."

"And the safaris mask both the planting and the harvesting," Karrde nodded. "With the transpond markers there to help you find the crops again after you've planted them. All the profits of weapons smuggling, with none of the risks."

"You understand," Gamgalon beamed. "And thus you must also understand why we can't allow any hint of this to leak out."

He gestured, and one of the Krish pilots stepped forward, bending awkwardly down to pick up the blaster rifles Karrde and Tapper had dropped. "Certainly I understand," Karrde said. "Perhaps we could discuss an arrangement? My organization —"

"There will be no discussion," Gamgalon said. "And my arrangements are my own. This way, please." The pilot straightened up, gestured to the side with Karrde's rifle —

And suddenly Tapper's hands snapped out, plucking the rifle from the pilot's hands and jabbing the muzzle hard into the Krish's torso. Diving into the cover of the nearest tree, he swung the rifle

back toward Falmal and Gamgalon —

And dropped spinning to the ground as a pair of blaster bolts slashed through him from down the ridge to his right. A single shuddering gasp, and he lay still.

"I trust, Talon Karrde," Gamgalon said into the brittle silence, "that you will not be so foolish as to similarly resist."

Karrde lifted his eyes from Tapper's crumpled figure, to see the third Krish pilot step out of concealment along the ridge, his rifle steady on Karrde's chest. "Why shouldn't I?" he demanded, his voice sounding ugly in his ears. "You're going to kill me anyway, aren't you?"

"Do you choose to die here?" Gamgalon countered. "This way, please."

Karrde took a deep breath. Tapper dead; Karrde himself unarmed and alone. Completely alone — even the Morodins down below had vanished, apparently scattering at the sound of the blaster fire.

But, no, he didn't wish to die here. Not when there was any chance at all that he could live long enough to avenge Tapper's death. "All right," he sighed. Two of the pilots stepped forward and took his arms, and together they all set off.

Karrde hadn't expected them to take him back to the encampment, and they didn't. From the direction Falmal was leading them, it looked like they were heading toward one of the other clearings they'd passed just before setting up camp. Undoubtedly where Gamgalon's airspeeder was waiting. "What sort of distribution setup do you have?" he asked.

"I have no need of assistance," Gamgalon said, looking back over his shoulder. "As I have said already."

"My organization could still be useful to you," Karrde pointed out. "We have contact people all over the —"

"You will be silent," Gamgalon cut him off.

"Gamgalon, listen —"

And from behind him came a deep, rumbling growl. A growl that was echoed an instant later from both sides.

The group came to a sudden halt. "Falmal?" Gamgalon snapped. "What is this? Why are there Morodins here?"

"I do not know," Falmal said, an uneasiness in his voice. "This is not at all like them."

The growls came again, from what seemed to be the same positions. "Maybe they've finally gotten tired of being the prey," Karrde said, looking around. "Maybe they've decided to hold a safari of their own."



"Nonsense," Falmal bit out. But he was looking around, too. And he was starting to tremble. "My liege, I suggest we move on. Quickly."

The roars came again. "Falmal, take the prisoner," Gamgalon ordered, his voice suddenly grim as he pulled a blaster from beneath his tunic. "You others: to the sides and rear. Shoot anything you see."

Warily, the three pilots spread out into the jungle, blaster rifles held high. Falmal stepped to Karrde's side, closed a tense hand around his arm. "Quickly," he hissed.

Gamgalon stepped to Karrde's other side, and together the three of them hurried forward. Ahead, through the trees, Karrde could see the glinting of sunlight from an airspeeder. Another chorus of Morodin roars came, all from behind them this time. They reached the last line of trees, stepped into the clearing —

And with a gasping sigh Falmal suddenly released Karrde's arm and stumbled to sprawl on the ground, a knife hilt protruding from his side. Gamgalon snarled and spun around, his blaster searching for a target.

He never made it. Even as Karrde reflexively ducked to the side, the Krish's tunic erupted in a brief burst of flame as a quiet blaster shot caught him neatly in the center of his torso. He fell backward

to the ground and lay still.

Karrde turned; but it was not one of his fellow hunters whom he saw emerging from the cover of the tree they'd just passed. "Don't just stand there," Celina Marniss growled, lowering the tiny blaster in her hand as she passed him and headed toward the airspeeder. "My airspeeder's too far away — we'll take theirs. Unless you want to be here when those other Krish catch up."

■ ■ ■

"Nicely done," Karrde commented as the *Uwana Buyer* cut through Varonat's upper atmosphere toward deep space. "Nicely done indeed. Though I must confess a certain disappointment that it wasn't actually the Morodins finally taking their vengeance."

Beside him, Celina snorted under her breath. "Considering that they probably can't tell a Human from a Krish, let alone one Human from another, you should count yourself lucky it wasn't them. They'd have ground you into the dirt along with Gamgalon and his crew."

"Most likely," Karrde conceded. "Where did you get the recordings of Morodin growls?"

"Gamgalon took me along on one of his safaris once," Celina said. "Back when he still thought he might have a chance of recruiting me into his organization."

"So you weren't working for him. We'd wondered about that."

"I don't like Krish," she said flatly. "Even honest ones can't be trusted very far, and Gamgalon hardly qualifies as honest. Besides, all he wanted me to do was play spaceport spy for him. Not much future in that."

"Not any more," Karrde agreed. "So as long as you were out in the jungle anyway, you went ahead and recorded some Morodin growls?"

She shrugged. "I thought it might be handy to have something like that on file. Turns out I was right." She threw him a look. "You owe me for those three recorders, by the way. Those things don't come cheap."

"I owe you for considerably more than that," Karrde reminded her soberly. "Why did you follow us out there, anyway?"

"Oh, come now," she scoffed. "Hart and Seoul? Not to mention a ship called the *Uwana Buyer*? It was all just a little too cute; and I remembered hearing about a smuggler chief who had a fondness for cute wordplay. So I took a chance."

"And it paid off," Karrde said. "You've earned a considerable reward. Just name it."

She turned to look at him with those green eyes of hers. "I want a job," she said.

Karrde frowned. It hadn't been the response he'd expected. "What kind of job?"

"Any kind," she said. "I can pilot, fight, play come-up flector — " "Hyperdrive mechanic?"

"That too," Celina said. "Anything you've got, I can learn it." She took a deep breath, let it out. "I just want to get back into mainstream society again."

Karrde cocked an eyebrow. "You have a strange view of smuggling if you consider it mainstream society."

"Trust me," she said grimly. "Compared with some of what I've done, it is."

"I don't doubt it," Karrde said, studying her face. A very striking face, with a striking body to go with it. Decorative and competent both; his favorite combination. "All right," he said. "You've got yourself a deal. Welcome aboard."

"Thank you," she said. "You won't regret hiring me."

"I'm sure I won't." He smiled slightly. "And since we're now officially working together — " he held out his hand. "You can call me Talon Karrde."

She smiled tightly as she took his hand. "Pleased to meet you, Talon Karrde," she said. "You can call me Mara Jade."

## Roleplaying Game Statistics

### ■ Talon Karrde

**Type:** Smuggler

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 5D+1, brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 6D+1, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D+1, pick pocket 6D+1, running 5D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

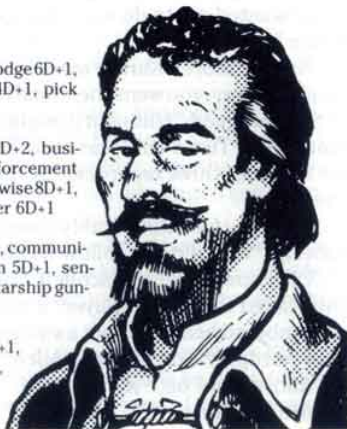
Alien species 7D+1, bureaucracy 7D+2, business 8D+1, cultures 7D+1, law enforcement 7D+1, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 8D+1, survival 4D+1, value 5D+1, willpower 6D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 7D+2, beast riding 4D+2, communications 6D+2, repulsorlift operation 5D+1, sensors 7D+2, space transports 8D+2, starship gunnery 5D+2, starship shields 6D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 8D, command 9D, con 7D+1, forgery 6D, gambling 6D+2, hide 6D+2, investigation 8D, persuasion 7D, sneak 6D+2



**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 4D+2, stamina 6D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Computer programming/repair 4D+2, first aid 4D+2, security 6D+2

**Force Points:** 2

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 26

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, melodium (with concealed comm-relay inside)

**Capsule:** Talon Karrde has been moving up in the world of smuggling since Jabba the Hutt's demise. Although Karrde's organization is now on top of the smuggling pyramid, he keeps that fact a secret. He is more subtle and unobtrusive in his dealings, and puts more faith in accurate information than brute force.

He has a strong feeling of obligation to the people within his organization, and does all he can to help and protect them. He currently works from of a base on Myrkr which has served as a home to many in his organization, and he has become quite fond of the security and serenity he finds there.

Karrde is always investigating new and profitable ventures for his organization, especially with the greater resources available through his success. He and his lieutenant, Quelev Tapper, often check out business opportunities themselves.

### ■ Quelev Tapper

**Type:** Smuggler

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 6D, dodge 4D+1, melee combat 5D+2, melee parry 5D+1, pick pocket 5D, running 4D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 6D+2, bureaucracy 7D, business 8D+1, languages 6D+1, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 7D+1, value 4D+2, willpower 7D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 5D, communications 4D+2, repulsorlift operation 6D, sensors 5D+2, space transports 6D+1, starship gunnery 7D+1, starship shields 6D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 4D+2, command 8D+1, con 5D+1, persuasion 5D+2, search 7D+2, sneak 6D+1

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 4D+2

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Security 5D+1, space transport repair 6D+2

**Force Points:** 2



**Dark Side Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, knife (STR+1D)

## Varonat

**Type:** Terrestrial  
**Temperature:** Temperate  
**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)  
**Hydrosphere:** Moderate  
**Gravity:** Standard  
**Terrain:** Jungle, mountain, plains  
**Length of Day:** 27 standard hours  
**Length of Year:** 325 local days  
**Sapient Species:** Humans, Morodins (N)  
**Starports:** 2 Limited services  
**Population:** 3,500 Humans, 50,000 Morodins (estimated)  
**Planet Function:** Abandoned colony, subsistence  
**Government:** Participatory democracy  
**Tech Level:** Space (around starports), feudal  
**Major Exports:** None  
**Major Imports:** Foodstuffs, high technology, medicinal goods.

**Capsule:** Varonat was settled 250 years ago by a group of idealists from Salliche led by the charismatic ex-legislator Adarian Tropis. Tropis was disaffected by the corrupt and ineffective bureaucracy of the Salliche government and gained a small following of idealists. The members of the group intended to carve out a new society where each colonist was directly represented in government.

The idealistic settlers chose Varonat because initial scouting reports showed unusually rich soil within Varonat's Great Jungle. The colonists first settled in what is now Tropis-on-Varonat and began living isolated lives subsisting off the land and directly governing their own society. Unfortunately, the soil's richness lasted only one season.

The Morodins were the settlers' initial problem. The immense beasts continually tried to trample the crops, spreading their slime everywhere. After one failed season, Tropis theorized that the Morodins' slime was a fertilizer which enriched the soil. After giving the Morodins the run of several fields for one season, however, the crops grew up yellow and inedible, like the jungle growth surrounding the settlement. From then on, the Morodins were treated as agricultural pests by the colonists and were chased from the fields.

The crop failures spurred a small group to strike out for the wide plains at the jungle's edge in hopes of finding better soil there. This second colony site was equally as unsuccessful as the first, and later became Varonat's other spaceport, Edgefields-on-Varonat.

After Tropis' death, the colonists lost their resolve and depended on irregular shipments of supplies. Many stayed and continued to try to make a living from the land — since Varonat had no viable exports, few settlers had enough credits to pay for passage off planet.

Almost a year ago, Gamgalon the Krish came to set up his Morodin-hunting safaris. The safaris have attracted enough off-planet traffic to boost the economy slightly. An enterprising local, Joodiel Amgris, opened Great Jungle Outfitters (selling hunting gear exclusively to Gamgalon's safari-goers), and the Varonat government, now lapsed into near apathy, began providing meager starport services.

## Adventure Idea

The New Republic sends the characters to Varonat as part of a survey team to look for any valuable resources within the Great Jungle of Varonat. The characters face resistance from the greedy Imperial governor who controls the Ison Corridor and a few colonists bent on staying independent of larger governments. The survey team also encounters the Morodins, and could discover that they are a sentient species.

**Capsule:** Quelev Tapper is Talon Karrde's trusted lieutenant. He is a much more physically imposing individual than Karrde, and always has a serious and business-like disposition about him. He is always suspicious, and often plays the perspective of "Hypothetical Hrongar" when Karrde comes up with new and elaborate ideas for operations.

Tapper was originally the leader of his own band of smugglers which profited from the collapse of the Empire after the Battle of Endor. When his smuggling operations became too deeply entrenched in Imperially-held territory, a local governor sent an assault force to crush Tapper's headquarters. Luckily, Talon Karrde was conducting business in the area and came to Tapper's aid. The two smugglers agreed to a merger, since only about one-quarter of Tapper's organization survived. Tapper and his people have been part of Karrde's "family" in the two years since the merger.

### ■ Celina Marniss (Mara Jade)

**Type:** Merc

**DEXTERITY 3D+2**

Blaster 9D+1, blaster: hold-out blaster 10D+2, brawling parry 7D+2, dodge 8D+2, melee combat 8D+1, melee parry 7D+2, missile weapons 6D+2, pick pocket 8D+2, running 6D+2, thrown weapons 6D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Alien species 8D+2, bureaucracy 7D+2, business 5D+2, intimidation 7D+2, languages 8D+2, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 6D, survival 7D, value 4D+2, willpower 6D+2.

**MECHANICAL 2D+2**

Astrogation 8D+2, beast riding 5D+2, communications 6D+2, ground vehicle operation 6D+2, repulsorlift operation 5D+2, sensors 5D+2, space transports 9D+2.



starfighter piloting 9D+2, starship gunnery 9D+2, starship shields 8D, swoop operation 7D+2

#### PERCEPTION 2D+1

Bargain 5D+1, command 7D+1, con 6D+1, gambling 4D+1, hide 8D+1, investigation 4D+1, persuasion 5D+1, search 7D+1, sneak 8D+1

#### STRENGTH 3D+2

Brawling 6D+2, climbing/jumping 7D+2, lifting 5D+2, stamina 8D+2, swimming 6D+2

#### TECHNICAL 3D

Blaster repair 6D, computer programming/repair 7D, demolition 4D, droid programming 3D+2, droid repair 3D+2, first aid 5D, ground vehicle repair 6D, repulsorlift repair 5D, security 8D, starship repair 6D+1, starship weapon repair 5D+1

#### Special Abilities:

**Force Powers:** Unknown

**Force Points:** 4

**Dark Side Points:** 5

**Character Points:** 17

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Hold-out blaster (3D), starship repair tool kit

**Capsule:** Mara Jade has used just about as many names as she's had odd jobs in the past five years — Karrinna Jansih the serving girl in a Phorliss cantina, Marellis the come-up flector for a Caprioril swoop gang, and Celina Marniss the hyperdrive mechanic in Tropis-on-Varonat.

Before the Battle of Endor, Mara was known as the Emperor's Hand, one of Palpatine's personal assassins and spies. Although she was trained in the dark side of the Force, her abilities apparently disappeared when the Emperor died. They have briefly reappeared, more frequently now than just after Endor. She is still trying to gain control of the hunches, sensory urges and sometimes deep but brief compulsions which occasionally haunt her.

Mara has been hiding long enough. She hopes to break into the galactic mainstream to bring an end to the haunting dreams which compel her to kill a certain Jedi named Luke Skywalker.



### ■ Gamgalon

**Type:** Krish Smuggler

#### DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 6D, dodge 5D+1, grenade 4D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D, pick pocket 5D+1

#### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Bureaucracy 4D+2, intimidation 5D, streetwise 6D+2, survival: jungle 5D

#### MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 4D, space transports 5D, starship shields 4D+1, starship gunnery 5D

#### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 7D, con 6D, forgery 4D+1, gambling 3D+2, persuasion 4D+2, search 5D, sneak 4D+2

#### STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 3D+1

#### TECHNICAL 3D

Demolition 3D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D+2, security 5D, space transport repair 5D+1

#### Force Points: 1

**Character Points:** 2

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), transpond marker tracker

**Capsule:** Gamgalon was once a small-time gun-runner whose Krish crime organization was always struggling to stay afloat. When he turned to Jabba the Hutt for assistance, Jabba helped fund Gamgalon's smuggling operations, driving the Krish deeper into debt. Eventually Gamgalon's gun-running operations became a subsidiary to Jabba's smuggling activities.

Gamgalon didn't like working as Jabba's stooge, and even plotted the Hutt's downfall. When Jabba died at the hands of Luke Skywalker and his friends, Gamgalon began his own independent operations again. He is fiercely protective of the current operation on Varonat, and refuses to share any part of it for fear a partner would eventually take over what he himself has built.

Gamgalon's lieutenant, Falmal, is equally protective of the operation his boss has formed. Falmal has been with Gamgalon from the earliest gun-running days, often as a field supervisor or an enforcer. He has a keen passion for the strategy of the hunt.

**Falmal.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 4D, *blaster rifle* 7D, *survival: jungle* 4D+2, *Perception* 3D, *search: tracking* 5D. **Move:** 10. *Blaster rifle* (5D), pack of survival gear.

Jombo the Rodian is a recent addition to Gamgalon's operation. His natural hunting instincts drew him to Gamgalon when he heard the Krish was organizing some safaris on Varonat to cover up a gun-running operation. Jombo says little, preferring to keep his opinions to himself.

**Jombo the Rodian.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 4D+1, *blaster rifle* 6D+2, *dodge* 5D+1, *melee combat* 5D+2, *survival* 4D, *Perception* 3D, *search: tracking* 6D, *Strength* 3D+2, *first aid* 3D+2. **Move:** 10. *Hunting rifle* (4D+1).

### ■ Krish

**Attribute Dice:** 11D

**DEXTERITY** 2D/4D

**KNOWLEDGE** 1D+2/3D

**MECHANICAL** 2D/3D+2

**PERCEPTION** 1D/3D

**STRENGTH** 2D/3D+2

**TECHNICAL** 2D/3D+2

#### Story Factors:

*Unreliable:* Krish are not terribly reliable. They are easily distracted by entertainment and sport, and often forget minor details about the job at hand.

**Move:** 8/12

**Size:** 1.5–2 meters tall

**Capsule:** The Krish take pride in their sports and games. Everything is a game or puzzle to a Krish. They are also somewhat mechanically inclined, possibly a result of their puzzle-solving nature.

Krish are also notorious for being unreliable in business matters. Although they have good intentions, they become sloppy and eventually leave those who depend on them in a lurch. For instance, Gamgalon's operation on Varonat was working out fine until his safaris gained a reputation from his Krish associates spreading word of the safaris throughout the Ison Corridor.

Krish have an odd habit of smiling pointy-toothed grins at anything which slightly amuses them.

## ■ Morodins

**Attribute Dice:** 14D

**DEXTERITY** 2D/4D

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D/4D

**MECHANICAL** 0D/1D+2

**PERCEPTION** 2D/4D

**STRENGTH** 3D/6D

**TECHNICAL** 0D/1D+1

**Special Abilities:**

**Biochemical Agriculture:** Morodins have extensive knowledge of Varonat's plant life, and modify it through their own biological niche in Varonat's ecosystem. By digesting certain plants and spreading their nutrient slime over other plants, Morodins produce new strains of plant food, some more nutritious than others. They have extensive knowledge of which combinations of food eaten and plants fertilized will yield the most nutritious and hardy crops.

**Nutrient Slime:** The Morodins' prime agent for implementing their biochemical agriculture is the nutrient slime secreted from a gland in their underbellies and spread in their path. The slime — which changes in nutrient value depending on the Morodins' diet — encourages growth and mutation in plant life.

**Story Factors:**

**Hunted Species:** Because the Morodin have no established cities, farms or other signs of a civilization, they are mistaken for wild beasts and are often hunted.

**Move:** 12/15

**Size:** 15 meters long



**Capsule:** Morodins are giant, herbivorous beasts which inhabit the Great Jungle of Varonat. They have six stubby legs and spoon-billed snouts filled with flat teeth for chewing on the flora of Varonat. The average adult is 15 meters long. Morodins are not native to Varonat, but came to create an agricultural colony 1,000 years before the Old Republic was formed. Bringing stores of food which would allow them to produce edible plants from Varonat's plains grasses, the Morodins transformed an immense section of plains into what is now the Great Jungle of Varonat.

Food was harvested and sent back to the Morodins' homeworld on great organic space vessels to support a growing population. When an ecological disaster on their homeworld prevented the Morodins from growing their organic starships, the colonists on Varonat were left to fend for themselves. They have continued to experiment and modify Varonat's flora to suit their nutritional needs.

When the Human colonists appeared, the Morodins attempted to aid them with their crops, but communication was nearly impossible. The colonists, convinced the Morodins were wild beasts trying to destroy their crops, began to hunt Morodins.

Much later, when several beings ventured into the jungles to sow aleudrupe plants, the Morodins believed they were genuinely interested in working on an agricultural cooperative. The Morodins aided them by adding the aleudrupe planting sites to their rounds of crop fertilization and experimentation. A common base nutrient in all Morodin slime seemed to please the new jungle farmers, and they returned to harvest and sow aleudrupe plants. Every few months, several members of the Morodin tribe helping these newcomers would be killed by hunters, but the Morodins did not associate the two groups of hunters and farmers.

The Morodin maze-running is the Morodins' means of fertilizing an area with their nutrient slime. The practice is also an intellectual exercise, and it helps the Morodin elders to teach young Morodins the art of biochemical agriculture. Morodins keep track of which areas were fertilized with certain combinations by the patterns of the maze.

*Game information created by Peter Schweighofer  
based on Timothy Zahn's "First Contact."*

## Adventure Idea

The characters are asked by New Republic officials to make formal first contact with the Morodins and study their biochemical agricultural practices. They would have to learn to communicate with the Morodins as well as determine the nature and use of their nutrient slime. Characters might have to fight off hunters who still believe the Morodins are more valuable as trophies than as New Republic allies. An inquisitive Imperial governor could also pose some problems.

Timothy Zahn:

# From *Heir* to *Last* *Command*

by Ilene Rosenberg



Timothy Zahn had great hopes for *Heir to the Empire*, the first book in his *Star Wars* trilogy. His dream was that the first printing of the book would sell out in six months.

It didn't. The first printing disappeared from the shelves within one week.

By the end of 1993, more than one million hard cover copies of Mr. Zahn's *Heir to the Empire*, *Dark Force Rising*, and *The Last Command* were in print, along with more than two million paperback copies of the first two books.

A full-time writer since 1980, the 42-year-old Mr. Zahn has also won a much-coveted Hugo Award for his novella, *Cascade Point*. In total, the Oregon-based writer, who lives with his wife Anna and his 11-year-old son Corwin, has written 13 books and three collections, including the Cobra series and, of course, the *Star Wars* trilogy.

**Q: How did Bantam Books pick you to be the lucky author to write the next *Star Wars* novels?**

A: I really don't know. The only part of the story I know is that they got together for a meeting after Lucasfilm had agreed to go ahead with this and threw out a bunch of names, made a list of them, and sent them to Lucasfilm. I don't know if it's deliberate or accidental that my name was on top. Apparently, Lucasfilm went with the top one on the list.

What Bantam's procedure was in putting together this list, I don't know. There's a flavor and a tone to *Star Wars* that's unique and they presumably recognized this and looked for writers who could work in that style.

**Q: The novels show your true love of the *Star Wars* universe. When and why did you fall in love with *Star Wars*?**

A: Probably a minute-and-a-half into the first movie, is when I first fell for it. Probably when everybody else realizes it's different — when that Star Destroyer came overhead. For the first time in any science fiction movie I've seen, you had a real feel for the size of this ship. At that point, I knew somebody knew what they were doing; Lucas and company knew what they were doing and were going to make something good out of it. I sat back and enjoyed it at that point. I saw the first movie 10 times in the theaters.

**Q: Have you ever met George Lucas?**

A: I met him once about a year ago. We were in San Francisco for the American Library Association convention. Bantam had sent me there to do some signings at their booth. And we were invited up to Skywalker Ranch for lunch with Lucy Wilson, who is the liaison between Bantam and Lucasfilm for the books. And while we were there, we were going to go up to see George's office. We weren't sure if he would have any time to say hello. As it turned out, he chatted with us. He did most of the talking, but he talked with us for about five to 10 minutes.

**Q: What's he like?**

A: Very interesting. He was talking mostly about movies and the state of things in the movie industry at the moment. He was a bit concerned that movie makers had gotten, my term for it would be "sloppy." They were not putting as much care into movies as they

should; leaving little things, like coherent plots, out of the whole concept in favor of mood or special effects or whatever. There was a lot in that five or 10 minutes. I was replaying it and dissecting it and pulling things out of it for a couple of weeks afterwards, and wishing I'd had a full hour to sit down and bounce things back and forth with him.

**Q: The books are paced very much like the movies. Did you spend time studying the films and consciously following George Lucas's magic recipe to give them that extra *Star Wars* movie flavor in print?**

A: The attempt to pace them was deliberate, of course. I was trying to reproduce the definite flavor of *Star Wars*. As far as studying the movies, I didn't really have to do much of that. Something nobody, including Bantam, knew at the time they offered it to me was that we had, about eight years ago, come up with this scheme to keep my son quiet in the car on long trips. We audio taped whole movies that he had seen, like *The Wizard of Oz*, and then played them in the car stereo system. If he had seen it three or four times, he could visualize what was happening and be happy as a clam in the back seat, playing with his Legos. So, the upshot of it is, that while I've seen the *Star Wars* movies X number of times, I've heard them X plus 10, because I've heard all three movies just on audio, on trips.

An advantage of that is partly that I have a feel for the way the characters speak. I also was able to kind of learn the pacing without being distracted by the visual images and special effects and such.

**Q: Was it difficult to work with a well-known universe which was already created by George Lucas, Brian Daley's Han Solo books, West End Games, the syndicated comic strips and others?**

A: Not really. I did have some complaints with what had been done by other people. I had some problems with the Dark Horse Comics series, and persuaded them to let me not have to reference anything there. I was very pleased with how West End has done. There's no problem at all working with this universe, as far as I can tell. It is so wide-ranging and rich as a tapestry that I didn't feel any real restrictions. The *Star Wars* universe has always struck me as being very internally consistent and that is the thing that most disturbs me about bad and average science fiction, is when things don't fit together. You have an amazing wonder and the writer forgets about it or doesn't use it in the way it would actually be used.

*Star Wars* was very much different along that sort of line and

because there was so much there, the whole universe kind of opened up. There were no problems with adding my own characters in, adding my own planets and such, and interacting them with both the characters from the movies and the history hinted at and displayed in the movies. So, it really wasn't any problem at all. It was a lot of fun, too.

**Q: How did you use West End Games' roleplaying game source-books as a basis for the *Star Wars* universe?**

A: I was aware of the roleplaying game, but I didn't really know how much stuff they'd done until I was about a month, maybe two months into writing and was told, "Oh by the way, we'd like you to coordinate with the West End Games stuff too," and they sent me this huge packet of material. And I really didn't want to do that until I got into it and started realizing that they had also done a good job of keeping things consistent and all. They saved me from having to reinvent the wheel all the time. They have a lot of hardware that I could reference, a lot of ship styles and air speeders that I could throw in instead of having to make up my own. I made up my own here and there, but they had filled a lot of the niches that would be filled in a real universe; you have certain sizes of ships and certain duties.

The stuff all fit together so well that I didn't see any need to step outside it too often. And it added a nice little bonus to gamers. They could see all the stuff that they'd been reading about actually fitting into a storyline.

**Q: How closely did you have to work with Lucasfilm to do this project? Did you have to work under any restrictions from Lucasfilm?**

A: They started out with two rules. I was to start three to five years after *Jedi* and I could use anybody who had not been killed off in the movies. That was basically all they said to start off with. Now once I had outlines, they had two or three other things they wouldn't let me do, and with each manuscript, of course, they sent back a list of things to double check or enhance. There was a mention to remind people who Wedge Antilles is. The changes of the things they wanted altered were, for the most part, extremely minor — two or three sentences here or there. They had problems with some of my alien words as well, they wanted them to be a bit more pronounceable, but that usually was a case of pulling out three or four letters

and being done with it.

So, they were very easy to work with. They started out, I think, being a lot more nervous about me than they wound up. They were a little bit nervous about turning the *Star Wars* universe over to someone who, to them, was unknown. I think by the time I finished the first book, I convinced them I knew what I was doing.

**Q: Were you afraid that the books wouldn't live up to the movies?**

A: I always worry that my books won't live up to whatever expectations were out there, and of course there were a lot more expectations here than anything I've ever done before. My comfortable niche in the science fiction field was suddenly being enlarged, and there were a lot more *Star Wars* fans out there than there were people who'd even heard my name before. I was promising a lot. The simple fact that there was *Star Wars* printed in gold leaf on the cover means I'm promising something, and I knew I had to deliver. There was underlying tension for the past three books, first of all that I could deliver something people wanted to read and then with the other two books that I could at least match myself, if not top myself.

**Q: What kind of feedback have you gotten from those who have read your novels?**

A: Mostly very positive. I've had a few complaints. With the first book, I had a couple of really strange complaints, but most of those disappeared after the first book. But most of my feedback has been very positive, people have liked the books.

One of the most gratifying things is the number of letters I've gotten from 12- to 18-year-old kids, many of whom said in their letters they don't read much, but they really like these books. So, I feel I'm doing my little bit to help remind people that it's not just Nintendo and MTV out there, that there's a lot of neat stuff in books.

**Q: Were you surprised with the popularity of the *Star Wars* cycle so many years after the movies had come out?**

A: Really, I was. In retrospect, I don't think there was ever any real loss of an interest in *Star Wars*, it simply had nothing to focus on for many years. But at the time the first book came out, my hope was that the first printing would sell out within six months. In actuality, I think they went back to press in a week. They caught everybody by surprise. I was very gratified that there was that kind of interest.

**Q: Why does the *Star Wars* series continue to remain so popular?**

A: The short answer is, it's a timeless story. If you look back, especially at something like science fiction, where techniques and such are always so dated, the movies that have become classics are the ones where there are interesting characters, interesting stories, you care about the people, you want them to succeed, there's chemistry between them and between them and the audience, a story that's not fixed to the particular era when it was made — and *Star Wars* has all these elements. It's just got that chemistry that it's going to last as long as there are videotape machines, I suppose.

A lot of these readers who are writing me letters were not even born when the first *Star Wars* movie came out, but they've seen them all on video tape and there's no feeling of "this is old time stuff." You look at something like the Flash Gordon serials now and it feels very dated. But, at least not for me, there's not that kind of sense of old-fashionedness in *Star Wars*.

**Q: When you began writing the trilogy, you obviously had to change the main characters a bit; making them older and wiser since *Return of the Jedi*. How did you face the challenge of creating more mature versions of Luke, Leia and Han while maintaining the original personalities created for them by George Lucas?**

A: I didn't really do anything specific. I felt I knew the characters, and when you know someone, really pretty well, it's not that hard to add an extra five years on to them. I really didn't have any stopping and thinking and mapping this out. I could feel how Luke was and the differing circumstance and how he feels about his sister and Han and his friends and the whole rise of the New Republic and his own duties now as the last remaining Jedi; it just seemed to come in as it was.

The discussions I've had were with people who said that Han has become too wimpy; he's given up too much of his devil-may-care attitude and become a little too over-protective of Leia. I would

**"I don't think there was ever any real loss of an interest in *Star Wars*, it simply had nothing to focus on for many years."**

argue on that he has never had to be responsible for anybody else since he became an adult, possibly before that. And now that he does have someone, it's perfectly believable that he'd over-react a bit, because he's very new at this.

**Q: How did you create menacing protagonists who rivaled Darth Vader and the Emperor, especially the brilliant military genius of Grand Admiral Thrawn and the psychotic clone, Joruus C'baoth?**

A: They just kind of evolved. C'baoth was one of the characters who originally had to be changed. My original intent was that was going to be an insane clone of Obi-Wan. Lucasfilm wouldn't let me do that, so I had to make him a clone of somebody else.

One of the things I wanted with Thrawn was I had a contention for a long time, through *Star Wars* and beyond, that Vader, while personally extremely dangerous and menacing, is not really much of

a leader; he dominates by fear. And you can do a fair amount of control that way, but you can't do the amount of dangerous leadership that someone who inspires loyalty can do. Vader never inspired loyalty.

I don't think the Emperor did either. In some sense, there are some people who probably were really terrifically enamored with him, Mara Jade was, for one. He probably had a fair amount of charm he could use when he wanted to. But I wanted a leader who could inspire loyalty and trust and not just fear, and Thrawn is what came out.

**Q: Mara Jade is a very complex character. Just when it seems she might actually go over to the dark side, she does something worthy of a Jedi Knight, such as joining Luke in the battle against C'baoth. Did you have any problems creating such a deeply psychological character?**

A: Again, she just kind of evolved. I wanted to have her tied in with the Emperor. It took me about a month to do the basic outline for all three books, and I knew where it was all going to go, and I had the basics of her from that point.

I find her complex, but not complicated to write about. I understand her, that she has a lot of baggage from the past, that she has memories, but she also has a here and now that

she has to deal with. In any situation I threw her into, it was pretty obvious to me how she was going to react. She has a certain sense of love, she also has a desire for this connection—people she can trust. In some other sense, she doesn't really want that because it makes her vulnerable.

A lot of the impetus for her joining up with Luke is protecting Talon Karrde, who at the beginning of the book is trusting her, grooming her to be a second in command. And a lot of her reaction to events is trying to repay that, whether it requires her to link up with this person she thinks she wants to kill, or at least says she wants to kill, or not.

**Q: How did you create the character of Talon Karrde?**

A: He just kind of evolved for the niche required in the story. I see him, kind of, as where Han would be if he hadn't linked up with Leia, or where he might have been. A similar sort of character, but instead of a wife and friends like Chewie and Luke, Karrde has started an organization, possibly without really realizing at the time that this also entraps him in a web of mutual loyalty; that he is now going to feel responsible for his people, which, if you think about it is the only stable kind of organization, at least with smugglers. Otherwise, you always have people trying to get the upper hand. Kind of an inversion of what Jabba's organization must have been like. People who worked with Karrde liked him, trusted him, felt that they would all stick together type of thing. There are several scenes throughout the books where Karrde's people are sticking up for him, whereas in Jabba's organization, they would have cheerfully knifed the chief in the back when they had a chance to take a piece of the action for themselves.

**Q: How did you choose the names of Leia and Han's twins, Jacen and Jaina?**

A: Jacen was easy. He was Corwin's best friend at the time, and so I named the boy Jacen, although Betsy Mitchell (Mr. Zahn's editor at Bantam during that time) suggested changing the "s" to a "c" so it wasn't so 1980s popular name. Jaina took a lot more work. I remember going over several days writing down names and bouncing them back and forth with Betsy and not really finding what we wanted yet. I figured if we were going to have Luke and Leia with similar initials, these twins ought to have similar initials as well.

**Q: The Noghri are an interesting alien species; very dangerous, yet quite honorable. How did you come up with not only the temperament, but the physical attributes of these aliens?**

A: Originally, the Noghri were going to be the Sith. Vader is mentioned as Lord of the Sith in various places. And I wanted them to be the Sith that were referred to. That one was another of the ideas that was canceled by Lucasfilm.

Another thing I wanted to do that again they wouldn't let me do was make Vader's mask a stylized version of the Noghri faces, that he adopted that armor in part as a gesture to them being so useful to him as the undercover death commandos. Lucasfilm would not let me do that officially, so what I did was simply take the same idea, describe their faces that way, but not make any reference within the book that they reminded people of Vader's mask. But that's basically where they came from. Also, by having their gray skin darken as they get older, that would also reflect in Vader's black armor, would be an image of old and wise to them.

**Q: Are you planning to do more tales of the heroes of the New Republic, and do you want to do more?**

A: Bantam is doing 12 more books. I have tentatively agreed to do the last of the 12. At the moment I've got, I think, a fair idea for a story that would bring back several of my characters from the trilogy.

I'm also doing a story for a collection Kevin Anderson is editing. I think it's tentatively called "Tales from the Star Wars Cantina." The idea is that each of the writers is taking one of the people or aliens that was in the cantina when Luke and Obi-Wan came in and writing their story. All the stories will intersect at that point.

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# The Spira Regatta

by Paul Sudlow

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

## Adventure Background

Imperial activity in the characters' sector has greatly increased recently. Indeed, the blockade runner that was to have delivered a much-needed shipment of medical and military supplies to the local Rebel cell group was seized and impounded by Imperial customs vessels.

In desperate need of the supplies, the cell hastily set a backup plan into motion. Another shipment was sent to a drop point on Spira, a pleasure world situated close to the Inner Core. Unfortunately, the smuggler making the delivery was intercepted in Spira's lower atmosphere by security forces, and had to abort the delivery. The pilot dumped the crates containing the supplies into Spira's giant sea, and blasted back into space, six blastboats hot on his tail.

The Force was with the Rebels, for the supplies came to rest in shallow water, and near the wreckage of an ancient alien spacecraft frequented by tourist divers. The two Rebel agents on Spira donned diving suits and spirited the supply crates into the underwater wreck, but lacked the personnel to raise and recover them. Under cover of vacationing tourists, the characters must travel to Spira, secure the supplies, and smuggle them back to their base.

To integrate this adventure into a campaign, the gamemaster should fill the crates with items needed by the characters' group that the Alliance can provide. In a one-shot scenario, or if no specific items are in demand, the supplies might be a cache of specialized

## "The Spira Regatta" Adventure Script

Use the following script to start the adventure. The gamemaster will tell you what part (or parts) to read:

**Gamemaster:** You are all aboard the luxury starliner *Madallo*, bound for the tropical pleasure world of Spira. Your mission is to pick up a badly needed shipment of technical and medical supplies, which, for a variety of complex reasons, are now at the bottom of the Spira sea. The liner is now orbiting Spira waiting for landing clearance. You have retired to your private compartment for the final approach.

**1st Character:** This is the way to go: first class accommodations to one of the hottest planets in the Core! I've heard the resorts here are the classiest this side of Coruscant!

**2nd Character:** We'll have little time for diversions, I'm afraid. We're here to pick up the supplies and get out.

**1st Character:** Well, we're supposed to be tourists, right? We have to look the part, right?

**3rd Character:** If "looking the part" consists of wearing loud floral-patterned shirts, you are certainly ahead of the rest of us.

**4th Character:** Well, I've got a bad feeling about the whole deal. This whole project has been jinxed from the beginning. First that Imperial blockade shuts down our regular supply line, then the backup drop on Spira goes sour...

**5th Character:** Yeah, it might have helped if the delivery crew hadn't cut and run at the first sign of an Imperial blastboat. They might have at least ditched our supplies on some little island or in space, instead of dropping them into the ocean.

**6th Character:** Hey, that's what we get for subcontracting to smugglers. If they'd at least done a bit of homework, they would have known Spira is off limits except for registered transports and chartered passenger liners.

**4th Character:** These little stun guns we get to carry don't exactly fill me with confidence. I kind of feel naked without decent weapons.

**3rd Character:** You feel...? What about *me*? I had to leave my ship behind! I still say we could have posed as merchants and brought it along! What if we have to leave in a hurry?

weapons, or medical supplies. In either case, the characters may come to realize that the military toys they take for granted do not grow on trees.

**2nd Character:** You know very well there was no time to hack a fake ship ID that would have gotten us on the ground with no questions asked. And since our contact has his own weapons cache, it really isn't worth the risk of smuggling banned guns through customs.

**6th Character:** Ah, our contact. Seth Cambriel, beach-bum play-boy extraordinaire, and Rebel spy on the side. Not a bad sort, from what I've heard.

**5th Character:** Really? Well, he's certainly got the plum job, eh? We're supposed to meet him in the Aspre Plunge casino on Ataria Island, right? I've heard legends about the card games that go down in that place. And now that we have money...

**2nd Character:** The Alliance gave us those funds to establish our identities as wealthy tourists, *not* to bankroll your exploits at the Liar's Cut table.

**1st Character:** Yeah, but 1,000 credits each... How better to show off our wealth than by blowing huge sums in the casino?

**5th Character:** I don't plan on *blowing* anything. I plan on getting rich.

**4th Character:** Look, this is all neither here nor there. We'll be spending most of our time at sea, in case you've all forgotten.

**3rd Character:** I'm trying to. I have trouble floating.

**6th Character:** You can stay in the boat then. Anyone know how we're supposed to get the goodies offplanet? Smuggling Rebel contraband out on a passenger liner is certainly a novel idea.

**2nd Character:** Cambriel is supposed to be handling that. Looks like we're leaving orbit...

**Gamemaster:** As the luxury liner drops from orbit, the endless tropical oceans of Spira fill the large view window of the compartment. Turquoise waters stretch in all directions, the surface broken only by a scattering of small islands. Gradually, one island grows larger as the liner drops toward it, its sandy beaches and fine coral reefs just beyond the surf visible even from this distance. A spectacular cliff gleams from the northern flank of the island. This is Ataria Island, according to the tourist map, the best of resorts, and your destination...

## Spira

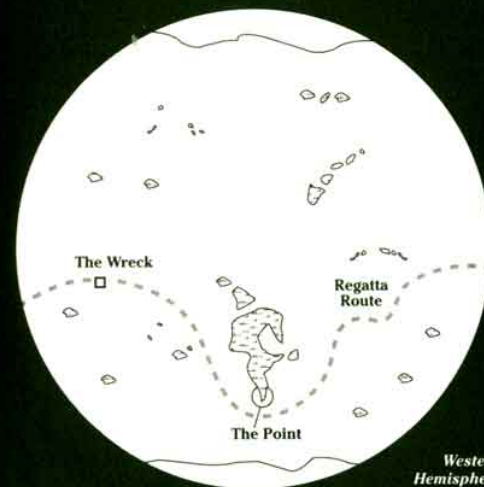
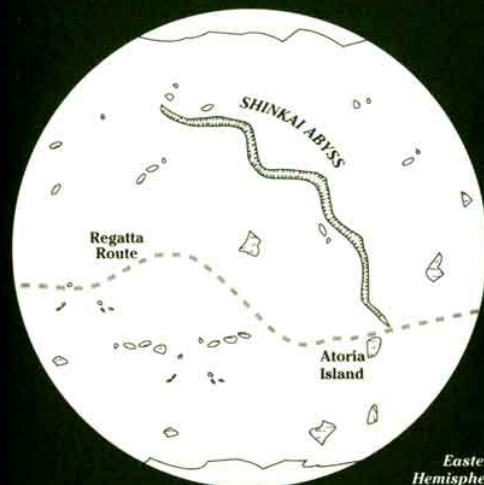
**Type:** Terrestrial  
**Temperature:** Warm Temperate  
**Atmosphere:** Standard  
**Hydrosphere:** Saturated  
**Gravity:** Standard  
**Terrain:** Ocean, small island chains  
**Length of Day:** 25 standard hours  
**Length of Year:** 377 standard days  
**Sentient Races:** Humans  
**Starport:** Standard  
**Population:** 500,000  
**Planet Function:** Tourism  
**Government:** Tourist Guild leases planet from Empire  
**Tech Level:** Space  
**Major Imports:** All (economy is not self-sufficient)  
**Major Exports:** none

**Capsule:** Spira is a water world with a low axial tilt, giving it a huge temperate zone over much of the planet. The tropical environment and lack of dangerous flora and fauna have made Spira one of the premier vacation spots within easy reach of the privileged Core Worlds elite. Thousands of islands speckle the surface of the oceans, many bearing tourist resorts. Many of the oceanfront bungalows, once occupied by wealthy citizens of the Old Republic, now house political officers and powerful servants of the Empire. Surprisingly, the official Imperial presence on Spira is minimal and low key. There is a small Imperial Army garrison on Ataria Island, but it exists more to provide honor guards to vacationing Moff's, Adepts, Governors, and such, than to impose the will of the Emperor on the inhabitants. Indeed, as on most Core Worlds, the Imperial garrison is well-mannered and largely deferential. Most significantly, its troopers and officers always honor the spirit and letter of Imperial law.

While the Empire patrols and protects the airspace of the planet, there is a larger, independent police force which manages the day-to-day law enforcement affairs of Spira. It answers to the Spira government, not to the Empire, though there is of course a great deal of cooperation between the two forces.

Due to a unique arrangement between the Empire and the Tourism Guild governing Spira, only passenger ships, contracted supply shuttles and Imperial vessels may land and take off on the planet.

## World Map of Spira Regatta



### Planet Log Terrain Key

 Mountains	 Plains	 City
 Hills	 Desert	 Spaceport
 Volcano	 Swamp	 Site of Interest
 Craters	 Forest	 Urban/Industrial
 Ice	 Jungle/Rain Forest	 Plateau
 Barren Rock	 Water	 Canyon

## Episode One: Living the Good Life

The characters will be undercover for the duration of the adventure, posing as wealthy tourists from the Core. They arrive dressed to the nines in what they imagine rich people wear on vacations (they may be wrong, of course). Each has been allotted a bankroll of 1,000 credits (along with stern warnings to spend as little of it as possible) to further the illusion of being big spenders.

The characters will be arriving on Spira armed only with small stun guns (3D stun damage). Generally, the weapons ban applies to all lethal weapons (damage rating above 2D), though stun guns are permitted as personal defense weapons. The ban does not extend to sports weapons (so the gamemaster may let characters bring such weapons if they have them).

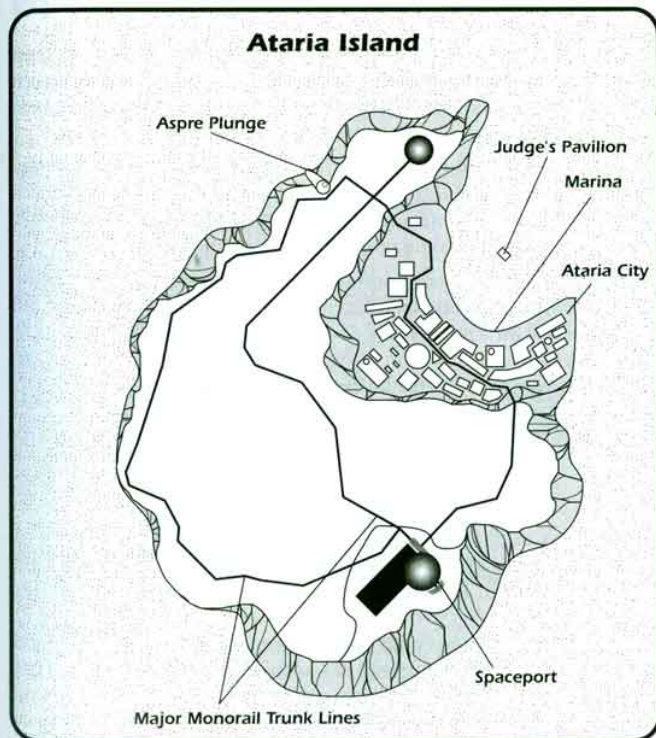
Remember, Spira is largely a pro-Empire world, and the people vacationing here are doing very well in the New Order system. There are a few aliens among them, but not many. Gamemasters should remember that the New Order line on aliens is less enlightened than it could be. Alien characters will certainly stand out, and may even be snubbed or insulted while on Spira. At the very least, they will be frequently mistaken for waiters and janitors.

### Welcome to Ataria Island

Ataria Island isn't the only resort island on Spira, but it is the best and most exclusive. Ataria boasts beautiful beaches on the east side, and spectacular sheer cliffs to the north and west. Thousands of

small bungalows are scattered across the gentle slopes of the interior, and a small tourist city thrives near the resorts on the eastern beaches. The southern inlet also boasts a large marina. The island is linked in an extensive web of monorails.

Ataria Island's spaceport is the only one on the planet which receives passenger liners. It is not at all the dreary wasteland of fuel-stained and exhaust-blasted concrete and steel one might expect on other planets. Here the landing pads are plated in red marble coated and super-sealed. Planters full of exotic trees and flowers frame the landing cradles, invisible force fields protecting them from the blasting winds generated by the mighty liners. Thousands of service droids roam the pads, maintaining the spaceport and the spaceships in their cradles, and carrying baggage back to the terminal.



There is a somewhat less impressive compound to the side of the spaceport housing a number of shining Imperial TIE fighters, blastboats, and shuttles.

The passenger terminal is as fanciful and steeped in luxury as the landing platforms. Comfort and class are apparent everywhere one looks. The decor is a tropical style full of arcing white walls inlaid with brilliant mosaics depicting scenes of underwater life. Fountains, potted palms and ceiling fans abound. Prominently placed banners welcome the participants of the 345th annual Spira Regatta Open.

Customs is brief and will go smoothly as long as none of the characters are carrying banned weapons. Travelers caught trying to smuggle weapons past security are let off with a stern warning not to cause trouble while guests of Spira—and the offending weapons are impounded.

The customs officials are relaxed but competent-looking, and wear the sharp tropical uniform of the Spira Security Police—an off-white tunic, pressed khaki knee-length shorts, brown leather shoes, and thick tan socks. They carry small blasters in hip holsters.

**Spira Security Police.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster* 3D+2, *melee* 3D+1; *Knowledge* 4D, *law enforcement*: Spira 6D, *streetwise* 5D+1, *Perception* 3D, *search* 4D, *Strength* 3D, *brawling* 3D+2, *security* 4D. Move: 10. Blaster (3D damage), uniform security sweeper.

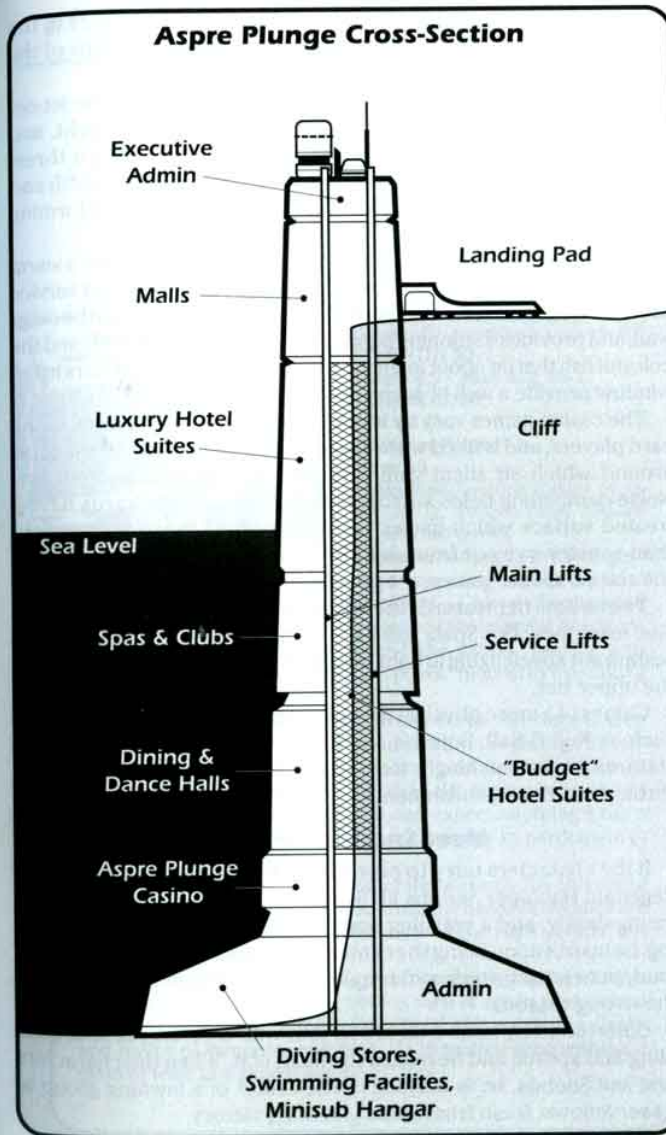
Use the police at other points in the adventure if the characters' actions demand an official security response. Stormtroopers will not be seen at all outside their compound area (until the adventure climax, that is).

If the gamemaster feels like developing the spaceport scene, the characters might see Snopps arriving on the planet, or meet an obnoxious but rich tourist, a regatta participant, or some sort of official.

## The Aspre Plunge

The most exclusive resort on the island (not to mention on the planet and in this sector) is the Aspre Plunge, a huge complex built into the north cliff. The characters are to meet their contact in this resort complex.

The Aspre Plunge is an impressive structure of steel and transparisteel, set into the wall of a cliff on the northern side of the island. It is dozens of stories high, and drops right into the surf and down 100 meters into an underwater ravine. Underwater windows



provide a panoramic view of marine life to the merry-makers in the dance rooms, casinos, hotel rooms, spas, and dining rooms of the complex.

The casino is the major attraction for those seeking the jet-set nightlife. Millions of credits are lost and won here every night, and properties and companies change hands constantly. It is a three-tiered room of immense proportions, spanning the entire width and breadth of the Aspre Plunge. The three tiers overlap, each forming a sort of balcony overlooking the tier below it.

The walls, paneled in highly polished greel wood, glow with a warm vermilion luster, and brass gleams from fixtures, railings, and service droids. A huge, curved 30 meter transparisteel window forms the outer wall, and provides a stunning panoramic view of the coral reefs and the colorful fish that flit about in them. Flood lights and special filters in the window provide a well-lit scene even at night.

The casino games vary by level. The upper level is devoted to the card players, and is filled with large polished tables with velvet tops, around which sit silent gamblers wreathed in chak-root smoke. Noise-dampening fields surround each table, and the cards have a treated surface which makes them impossible to read from more than a meter away or from an indirect angle. Liar's cut and sabacc, the classic spacer games, are popular, as are more genteel variants.

The middle tier features the noisier games of chance, such as the slot machines, the Spatz tables, and the Jubilee Wheels. A small restaurant specializing in light meals is located under the shadow of the upper tier.

Games of a more physical nature are reserved for the lower level, such as Null G-Ball, Bounce, and Reflex Races. The lower tier also features an astonishingly well stocked bar. Bar droids circulate throughout the establishment.

### Meet Snopps the Great

If the characters tarry to play a bit in the casino, they soon meet Regenal Hanniper Snopps III. Snopps is a handsome and wealthy young dandy, and a crashing bore. Arrogant, petty, and domineering, he insists upon being the center of attention. Happily for him, his loud, penetrating voice and braying laugh help him succeed for all the wrong reasons.

Unfortunately, nature endowed him with a certain skill in gambling and sports, and he makes the most of it. When the characters first see Snopps, he is basking in the center of a fawning group of lesser fellows, fresh from some gambling victory.

### Regenal Hanniper Snopps III



**Type:** Arrogant Noble  
**DEXTERITY 3D+2**  
 Blaster 4D, brawling parry 4D+2, Shock Ball 5D+2  
**KNOWLEDGE 4D**  
 Business 5D+1, cultures 4D+2, planetary systems 5D, value 6D  
**MECHANICAL 3D**  
 Beast riding 4D, ground vehicle piloting 4D, repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 5D  
**PERCEPTION 2D**  
 Bargain 3D, gambling 6D, search 4D  
**STRENGTH 3D+1**  
 Brawling 5D, swimming 4D+1  
**TECHNICAL 2D**  
 First aid 3D  
**Character Points:** 4  
**Move:** 10  
**Equipment:** Sporting blaster (damage 3D+1), wooden cane, comlink pager, 5,000 credits  
**Capsule:** Snopps is the youngest

son of Zafiel Snopps, ex-Senator and now governor of a key Core World sector. Despite the best efforts of his well-connected father, he failed to gain admission to the elite Imperial Academy. He spends his time flitting around the galaxy, seeking new amusements and opportunities to "prove" himself to a doubting universe.

Young Snopps, through his words and deeds, indicates that he believes himself the most important being in the galaxy. His self-assurance is only skin-deep, however, and he is sensitive to perceived slights to the point of paranoia. Anyone who shows him up or otherwise crosses him can expect anything from a screaming fit or enraged attack to a challenge to participate in some sort of duel or contest.

Though full of bluster and desperate bravado, his threats of calling the wrath of the Empire down on the heads of enemies are relatively empty—he really *does* know all the right people, but they all think he's a fool.

A tall, handsome fellow, Snopps is constantly toying with his long blonde hair and mustache. His face is set in a perpetual sneer. He wears only clothes of the finest cut, and favors cloaks and tunics of turquoise and pink. He is seldom seen without a glass of wine in a gloved hand.

Given the natures of Snopps and the characters, it shouldn't take much to set the two parties at odds. The goal here is to introduce the group to Snopps, and give them reason to dislike him.

## Getting Down to Business

The characters are to meet Seth Cambriel in the casino as soon as they arrive. They've seen his picture, and he's seen theirs, so linking up should be no problem.

Moving to a quiet booth in the restaurant, Cambriel informs them that the supplies have indeed been moved inside the hull of the undersea wreck. It was he and Harbold Taft, the other Rebel agent on Spira, who recovered the supplies and wrestled them into the alien wreck. He answers any questions characters may have about the mission.

Normally, he tells them, running a yacht out to the site would be a simple matter. Since it is a popular diving spot, a group of divers moving about in the area would not arouse attention. Unfortunately, an unavoidable complication has arisen which precludes such an expedition: an annual regatta is scheduled for the next week. Because the race route passes over the wreck, it is off limits to divers. Only a racing vessel will be able to get near enough without being hailed by authorities.

Since the Rebels can't tolerate another week's delay in getting the supplies, Cambriel has entered the group in the race, and made plans to smuggle a sailing droid aboard their yacht. They'll do terribly in the race, but if they reach the wreck quickly, they should be able to get the supplies with no one the wiser.

The race begins in two days, which will give the group a chance to get in some sailing practice and set up the operation to get the supplies off the planet at the same time. Since privately owned starships are off limits, the group must smuggle the goods off the planet on a registered passenger vessel. Inspections being what they are, Cambriel has devised a method of discouraging a close investigation of the crate holding the supplies: the Camray eel.

Camray eels are long, snakelike marine animals native to Spira that are popular trophies among upper class game hunters. Processed and preserved by a taxidermist, they make impressive wall trophies. Until they are preserved, however, dead Camray eels have an incredibly potent smell, and must be sealed in special storage tanks. Cambriel plans to transfer the goods into an eel storage tank, since he knows the inspectors are reluctant to brave the smell long enough to completely inspect the containers.

## Seth Cambriel



**Type:** Rebel spy

**DEXTERITY 2D+1**

Blaster 3D, dodge 3D, melee combat 2D+2, melee parry 3D

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Bureaucracy 4D+2, business 5D+1, streetwise 5D+2, streetwise: Spira 7D

**MECHANICAL 3D+1**

Communications 4D, repulsoflight operation 3D+2, sailed nautical vessel operation 5D

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Bargain 4D, command 5D, con 5D, gambling 5D, hide 4D, investigation 3D+2, persuasion 4D+1, sneak 4D+1

**STRENGTH 2D**

Brawling 3D+1, swimming 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D+1**

Computer programming/repair 4D, first aid 3D, security 4D+1, sailed nautical vessel repair 5D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Snazzy but practical clothes, comlink, sporting blaster, 5,000 credits (he can get more)

**Capsule:** The story about Cambriel around Ataria Island is that he made millions in his youth trading on companies being taken over by the Empire, and retired to Spira to sit out the galactic Civil War in comfort. Indeed, he lives the life of a genteel beach bum. His primary activities seem to be lounging around the Plunge all morning, skimming the seas around Ataria Island a bit in his yacht in the afternoon, and playing sabacc in the casinos until late at night. He knows just about everyone on the Plunge staff, and is on good terms with most of them (he's a good tipper).

This is all true, but what only one other person on Spira knows is that Cambriel is also a Rebel spy, mixing with alcohol-sodden Imperial elites in bars, parties, and in sports parks, gently probing for information useful to the Rebellion. He has a veritable legion of informers who have no idea of his affiliation with the Rebel Alliance, most of whom are bartenders, janitors, travel agents, and such.

Cambriel is a ruggedly handsome fellow, tall, with thinning blonde hair. He is every inch the sportsman.

But before he can do so, he needs an eel. So, not only do the characters have to participate in a yacht race and dive and recover a large container of illegal supplies, they must also hunt a dangerous predator.

Cambriel has reserved a modest suite in the Aspre Plunge resort for use by the characters during their stay ("modest" only in this economy—it still costs a fortune). However, the characters will be spending little time in the pleasure palace resort.

The characters may eventually meet the other Rebel spy in the Spira cell, Harbold Taft. Taft, a slim, mousy fellow with brown frazzled hair, spends his time getting into and out of places he has no business being in search of military intelligence. An errand boy and security expert, Taft works nominally as a clerk in the Ataria Island spaceport security offices (which gives him the right to carry a weapon). He doesn't play a key role in the scenario, but the gamemaster may find him a useful spear carrier or plot device, especially if the characters wind up in jail somehow. He can't sail a yacht any better than the characters, though.

**Harbold Taft.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster* 3D+2, *melee* 3D+1 *Knowledge* 4D, *law enforcement: Spira* 6D, *streetwise* 5D+1, *Perception* 3D, *search* 4D, *Strength* 3D, *brawling* 3D+2, *security* 4D. Move: 10. Blaster (3D damage).

## Episode Two: A Life on the Rolling Seas

The remainder of the adventure details the race and the events that occur during it—dangerous waters to navigate, a sea slug to deal with, and the recovery of the supplies from the alien craft. Before or during the race, the Rebels must also hunt and capture a deadly Camray eel.

The race is due to begin two days after the Rebels arrive. They have this long to practice sailing around the island a few times in their yacht, with Cambriel and the droid coaching. It also might give them enough time to land a Camray eel, and Cambriel will suggest that they combine the two exercises.

### Outfitting the Crew

The team also has two days to round up any gear they may need. This will certainly include diving suits and equipment, and eel-hunting gear.

Keep in mind that this is a vacation world, and that lethal weapons are very difficult to find. The most useful items are likely to

be sold in various sporting stores. Some weapons *are* sold, mostly stun pistols, sporting blasters and spear guns. Medpacs, glowrods, heavy-duty comlinks, and so on are readily available on the open market, and can be obtained easily.

Cambriel will provide such necessities as diving suits and weapons, but if the group wants to get exotic, they're on their own. He will offer the group use of his weapons cache, which contains a half dozen blaster pistols and rifles, along with a case or two of grenades (the gamemaster can determine exactly what he has, though a two-man cell group won't have a huge arsenal). He has also "borrowed" a few blaster spearguns from the Ataria Island seatrooper station.

### ■ Diving Suit

**Model:** SeaScape Aquasuit (Hardshell model)

**Type:** heavy diving suit

**Scale:** Character

**Skill:** Swimming

**Cost:** 400

**Availability:** 1 in coastal areas, 2 elsewhere

**Game Notes:** The reinforced ribbing adds 2 pips to *Strength* code for damage purposes only. Only reduces *Dexterity* codes on land.

**Capsule:** The diving suit is a rubber suit which provides an internal atmosphere. The air tanks contain enough air for 6 hours of continuous use, and reinforced ribbing and plates allows dives to 200 meters. The flippers and onboard propulsion unit add 2D to the user's *swimming* skill, and allow an underwater Move rate of 12. There is a comlink in the helmet, with a range of 2 kilometers. *Swimming* rolls are not necessary as long as the diver is not engaged in activities other than swimming or attempting complex underwater movements.

### ■ Blaster Speargun

**Model:** BlasTech Firearc49 Speargun

**Type:** Blaster speargun

**Skill:** Blaster rifle

**Ammo:** Speargun: 3 spears (one loaded, two side-mounted); blaster: 50

**Cost:** 300

**Fire Rate:** Speargun: 1/3; blaster: 1

**Range:** Speargun: 3-7/25/50; blaster: 3-20/30/45

**Damage:** Spear damage 4D/2D/1D; blaster damage 5D/4D/3D+1 (damages by range)

**Availability:** Restricted to Imperial personnel

**Game Notes:** Above stats do not reflect the usual underwater damage and skill penalties.

**Capsule:** A blaster spear gun is a long metal pipe which shoots a small spear through the water, often as far as 50 meters. A small blaster is slung under the spear barrel, which shoots a concentrated blue beam. The speargun only carries one shot at a time, though clips are mounted along the side of the weapon to hold two more. Additional spears can be carried on the user's person in a quiver.

## ■ Flotation Lifter

**Model:** Haileycraft MaxMode Lifter

**Type:** Underwater flotation lifter

**Skill:** Repulsorlift operation

**Cost:** 1,000

**Availability:** 3 in coastal areas, 4 elsewhere

**Capsule:** The flotation lifter is an underwater mechanical device used by divers to lift light loads to the surface. It consists of two large air canisters mounted on a frame between which is a sling where items may be placed. Water is let into the tanks to sink the lifter, and expelled to raise it. There is no motor to speak of; the lifter goes up and down, and must be manually maneuvered into the desired position.

The lifter is about a meter long, and can be dismantled to fit in the hull of a relatively small boat. It is not an industrial lifter, and cannot lift extremely heavy payloads. For the purpose of this adventure, it can handle the supply crates and three divers hanging onto straps on the sides, in addition to the driver. The driver sits atop the lifter, and controls it from there. The mechanics of piloting a lifter are very different from those in piloting a repulsorlift vehicle, but the controls are very similar, and the onboard computer does the rest.

## ■ Sailing Droid

**Type:** WBY-102 FirstMate

**DEXTERITY 3D**

**KNOWLEDGE 1D**

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Communications 4D, sailed nautical vessel operation 4D

**PERCEPTION 1D**

Command 4D (in tutorial matters only)

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 2D**

First aid 3D+1, sailed nautical vessel repair 4D

**Equipped With:**

- Humanoid torso
- Two legs
- Two arms
- Emergency inflatable flotation bag
- Comlink
- Two visual and auditory sensor recorders—Human range
- Vocabulator speech/sound system
- AA-1 VerboBrain

**Special Abilities:**

*Inertia compensators:* Add 1D to *Dexterity* when attempting to maintain footing on a violently swaying deck.

**Move:** 8

**Size:** 1.6 meters tall

**Cost:** 3,000

**Capsule:** The Webby is a specialized third-degree droid programmed to tutor humans in the use of a variety of mechanical vehicles. The 102 model is a less-common variant which is designed to provide competent instruction in sailing, caring for, and navigating a multi-crewed sailed

yacht. It can also serve as a proficient crewmember.

The Webby is sheathed in waterproof hard-impact plastic, shaded a deep blue. If submerged, it will inflate a flotation bag housed in a small chest-chamber, and send out a distress call over its comlink (Cambriel has disabled this function in this particular droid). Generally speaking, the Webby has a stable personality, and speaks in a deep, confident voice. Fearsome weather doesn't faze the Webby at all; it is programmed to deal with sea storms with steadfast calm. It is less effective in violent, stressful situations which lie outside of its primary programming—such as firefights and loud explosions. This particular model doesn't have much of a personality, since Cambriel has its memory wiped monthly for security reasons.

## ■ Cambus Gale

**Craft:** Saltech V-53 Hydromancer

**Type:** Civilian Racing Yacht

**Scale:** Speeder

**Length:** 23 meters

**Skill:** Sailed yacht operation

**Crew:** 6, skeleton: 3/+10

**Crew Skill:** sailed nautical vessel operation 5D, sea navigation 4D

**Passengers:** 2

**Cargo Capacity:** 1 metric ton

**Maneuverability:** +2

**Cover:** Full (below decks), 1/4 (above decks)

**Cost:** Unique

**Move:** 25; 70 kmh

**Body Strength:** 1D

**Capsule:** The *Cambus Gale* is Cambriel's personal yacht, and his pride and joy. She began life as a pleasure craft rather than a racing yacht, but he has spent several years and a fair amount of money reshaping the hull, rerigging the sails, and otherwise augmenting her capabilities to the point where she can give the local racers a run for the money. She isn't up to matching the speeds of the professional racing craft which have been arriving for the regatta over the last few weeks, but Cambriel hopes this won't be obvious until the illicit cargo is picked up. She certainly looks like a racer. She boasts a well-stocked galley, cramped but adequate quarters, and enough hull space to hold the expected supply crates, a flotation lifter, diving suits, spare parts and supplies.

## Becoming Sailors

The sparkling blue waters around Ataria Island are teeming with boats and yachts. Many are pleasure boats, but a good number of sleek racing yachts are also plying the waters as their crews adjust to the Spira gravity and prepare for the coming race.

The characters also have to practice. The gamemaster may spend as little or as much time on the training sessions as drama dictates. Tooling around the harbor and out into the ocean a few kilometers will demand a great deal of work and concentration from

the Rebels, but it will only take a few *Easy sailed nautical vessel operation* rolls to manage successfully—perhaps one to tack out of the harbor without hitting another craft, two or three more rolls during the day, and another to get back to the pier. Of course, the characters will probably be using their default *Mechanical* scores rather than a specialized sailing skill. The yacht has a generous supply of lifejackets, which Cambriel will press on anyone expressing doubts about his or her swimming capabilities.

Both Cambriel and the Webby have *command* skills which prove indispensable in helping their green crew sail the yacht successfully. For a refresher course on handling *command* actions, see page 68 of the *Star Wars* rulebook. Assuming a crew of six, Cambriel and the Webby will likely be making *Moderate* skills rolls most of the time. Remember that if one or the other are aiding the crew directly, they will be rolling with a 1D penalty. Commanding the crew is not essential in the practice period, but will be vital in facing the obstacles of the race itself.

## Eel Hunting

If the characters take Cambriel's suggestion, and combine the training sessions with an eel safari, they can kill two birds with one stone. If they wait until after the race, precious time will be lost in getting the supplies back to base. The trip out to the eels' domain will not place any additional burden's on the crew's sailing demands.

The Camray eel primarily inhabits the Shinkai Abyss, a fabulous undersea trench which runs more than 3,000 miles. The western mouth of this trench is only 100 kilometers from Ataria Island, and can be reached in about three hours of steady sailing. A glittering paradise of crystal-encrusted trench walls, colorful fish, and lacy green seafern, it is a popular destination for divers in general, and eel hunters in particular.

If the players don't hate Snopps enough yet, the gamemaster may place him in the area on a party barge loaded with his loud buddies and toadies, busily tossing concussion grenades in the water in the vague hopes of killing an eel without getting wet (this will succeed only in frightening away every fish and eel within two kilometers). However, if the players spent a lot of time with Snopps in the Plunge, another encounter so soon might be overdoing it.

Since the eels never approach the surface, the hunters have to go in the water after them. Once the characters enter the trench proper, they may begin hunting the Camray eel. The eel is a crafty

and stealthy beast, and there are not many of them around. Locating one will be a *Difficult* activity, and the characters will only get four or five *search* rolls per day (they can stay in the area for two days, if necessary). Combined searches are possible, but someone other than Cambriel will have to do the commanding—he is staying in the boat.

Spice up the hunt by describing the scenery and improvising an encounter or two with the local marine life. The classic fake scare always goes over well: when the characters approach one of the many small grottos lining the trench wall, send dozens of sliverfish suddenly swarming out of the dark crevice past the startled characters.

The characters eventually need to find an eel, of course. If their rolls are failing, send an eel their way. But because Camray eels are fearless and aggressive predators which investigate and probably attack suited humans they encounter, this eel is hunting *them*. It may follow a while using its *sneak* skill before closing for a blindingly fast attack.

The only thing which makes these waters relatively safe for recreational divers is that the eel is not at all common (due to their huge appetites, Camray eels have enormous territories and small population densities).

## ■ Camray Eel

Type: Sea Predator

DEXTERITY: 4D

PERCEPTION: 2D



Sneak 4D+2

**STRENGTH: 3D**

Swimming 6D

**Special Abilities:**

*Coils:* Do 5D constriction damage

*Teeth:* Do STR + 2D damage

*Camouflage:* Due to coloration, +2D to *sneak* when moving close to seabed.

**Move:** 16

**Size:** 4-5 meters long

**Capsule:** The Camray eel is a long, snake-like marine animal which haunts the Shinkai Abyss. It features a huge, gaping mouth with a fearsome array of teeth, and its lithe, muscular body can seize and crush prey.

The eel is a loner, and drifts among the deeply scored trench walls, hunting the sliverfish which are the main staple in its diet. It seldom rises above 75 meters, except in the rare event fleeing sliverfish make for the surface. It sleeps in the sandy silt on the trench floor, 150 meters below.

Due to its fearsome nature, and seeming pleasure in hunting and devouring divers, the Camray eel is a popular trophy among upper-class game hunters throughout the sector. The fact that it runs deep and can only be caught by a hunter willing to venture into its element makes its value all the greater.

## The Spira Regatta Open

If the characters spend the two days before the race practicing their sailcraft, they may begin the race with a *sailed nautical vessel operation* equal to their *Mechanical* scores +1 pip.

The race begins in the Ataria Island harbor. An inspection team will go carefully over every vessel before the race, assuring that race guidelines are adhered to. Having diving suits and flotation tanks in the hull does not violate the guidelines. Having a sailing droid or motor engines aboard does (Cambriel will know this ahead of time, and the group can take steps to hide illegal items).

There is a judging pavilion on a flotation tank in the harbor, where the race officials coordinate the regatta, and signal each yacht to begin. The boats are arranged in a randomly determined queue, and are giving the "begin" signal at 15 minute intervals. Their official starting times are recorded as they pass the pavilion.

The race participants will be flanked by other boats from Ataria Island for most of the first day, and several chase hoppers can be seen hovering in the sky. These will drop back toward the island in the late afternoon.

## Running the Race

Since the race itself is more of a backdrop to the adventure than a climatic test of skills for the characters, mechanics for conducting

the race have not been developed. Instead, a few events and encounters have been introduced which will serve to highlight interesting features of the race.

Following is a schedule of events that will occur during the race. Most days will pass uneventfully, meaning the characters will work hard sailing the *Cambus Gale*, get blistered and sunburned, and occasionally spot a competing yacht or a chase hopper. Easy skill rolls will keep the Rebels in the running on such days (thereby discouraging increased interest from race official tracking them from chase hoppers and from orbital satellites). Some of the days feature special events, and require more of the characters. The first two of these are detailed below. Episode Three is devoted to the wreck and recovery of the supplies.

- Day One—uneventful
- Day Two—uneventful
- Day Three—Galub slug encountered
- Day Four—uneventful
- Day Five—uneventful
- Day Six—weathering The Point
- Day Seven—uneventful
- Day Eight—over the wreck
- Day Nine—uneventful (this is up to the characters)
- Day Ten—the finish

## The Slug

On the third day, characters making a Difficult *Perception* roll notice that the pace of the ship is gradually slackening. Cambriel tells the crew that they probably have a passenger on the underside of the boat—a Galub slug. Indeed, upon checking, the group will discover that a large sea slug has adhered itself to the underside of the hull, slowing the yacht considerably.

Getting rid of the slug is a matter of swimming underneath the boat and blasting it until it detaches itself from the hull and floats away (spears have little effect). A mishap here will mean shooting a hole through the hull, which would be a bad thing. Cambriel does have hull patches in his supply kit.

Later in the day, the Rebels may pass another yacht suffering the same affliction. Its crew doesn't know what's wrong, since it hasn't spent much time in Spira's waters prior to the race.

## ■ Galub Sea Slug

**Type:** Sea Parasite

**DEXTERITY:** 2D

**STRENGTH: 3D**

**Special Abilities:**

**Adhesion:** Can adhere itself to a solid surface using powerful suction.

**Move:** 8

**Size:** 2 meters long

**Capsule:** Galub slugs are large, grub-white sea parasites which adhere to even larger sea animals to suck their blood. They are also incredibly stupid, and sometimes mistake the hulls of passing boats for the hides of potential hosts.

## Weathering the Point

According to the onboard marine navicomputer, the Point has a number of names, but to those who cruise these waters, it is simply the Point. The Point is actually the southern cape of Spira's largest island (almost a continent), where two major ocean currents meet. The resulting confluence creates a seething mass of angry water—strong eddies, minor whirlpools, strong and contrary currents, and huge waves.

Navigating the Point is a hazardous undertaking, and a great test of seamanship. That is why the race course runs right through it. Characters may opt to avoid the area, but will most certainly be disqualified from the race when the judges note the detour on sensors.

Braving the Point will demand three successful *Difficult sailed nautical vessel operation* rolls from the crew. Failure means losing control of the yacht, or minor structural damage to the rigging, rudder, and so forth, which will take a number of hours to correct. A critical failure might mean a sailor overboard, or the loss of the rudder. All three rolls must be made to clear the area.

## Episode Three: Recovering the Goods

The final stage of the adventure entails the actual recovery of the supplies, and an encounter with Snopps and his Imperial babysitters.

### The Wreck

The alien wreck has been a feature of Spira since the first Old Republic scouts scanned the planet nearly a thousand years ago. Even then it had been but a hollowed out hull, stripped of engines, instruments, skeletal remains, and other clues which might have hinted at the origins and identities of the beings who had piloted it. As to how the vessel came to rest in Spira's ocean, and who had stripped it, no one has been able to ascertain. The mystery remains unsolved, for the universe holds many mysteries, and the origins of

the strange ship of Spira ranks very low on the list.

Still, the huge rusting hulk presents tourists with an irresistible diversion, and the wreck is a popular diving spot. On a typical day, scores of divers and minisubs can be seen flitting about its metal bones. On this week, of course, the wreck is deserted, and the Rebels will be able to recover their cargo unobserved. Or so Cambriel keeps insisting.

Cambriel supplies the diving party with a plastic diver's map of the wreck, with the location of the supplies marked on it. The three crates are located in the rear of the wreck, in a small room believed to once have been an escape pod chamber.

The alien spaceship is physically in good condition and its original outlines are still quite discernible. It is an organic-looking vessel, streamlined and reminiscent of a sea mammal. There are several large gashes in the hull, through which coral-encrusted beams and thick tubing can be seen. Smaller bits of hull (each weighing more than a ton) are strewn all about the wreck. Now an artificial reef, the wreck is home to a myriad of sea creatures (very pretty, but none of which hold any particular danger to the Rebels).

There is only one safe entrance to the wreck—a large break in the hull on the port side, just aft of the bridge. The map indicates this, and warns against attempting to enter from the aft gash on the same side, which is so choked with twisted girders that passage is impossible (though perhaps not to those bearing explosives or lightsabers—see below for notes on moving through hazardous areas).

The interior of the vessel is murky, coated in slime and sea algae, but is otherwise surprisingly clean. The thousands of explorers and divers who have come before have made off with everything that could conceivably have been detached from the wreckage. Structurally, the walls are oddly (to a human perspective) curved and the surfaces are pitted and irregular. The passages are ribbed and somewhat cylindrical, giving one the feeling of floating down a huge esophagus.

The various chambers are very similar in appearance, and there are no devices or instruments in them to indicate function (the labels on the map are simply for convenience). The accessible areas of the ship are quite safe to move about in, and no rolls need be made to avoid injury to self or diving suit while swimming to and from the hidden supply crates.

Several doors in the ship have been welded shut at some point to keep tourists away from unsafe areas. There is an upper level which

has also been sealed up. There is nothing of interest in these sealed areas, only a great deal of razor-sharp protrusions and splintered metal. Traveling in these areas is hazardous, and those doing must make Moderate *swimming* rolls every round they spend in them to avoid injury (the protrusions do 3D damage).

Locating the three crates is a simple matter. They are concealed

### Undersea Action

- Lightsabers require a Moderate *Dexterity* roll to hold onto or pick up.
- Characters use *swimming* codes for movement and dodging, though merely swimming about in a diving suit requires no roll.
- Grenades do 4D damage to everyone in its entire range. Victims at close range can be wounded, others take stun damage only.
- Difficulty of blaster shots goes up one level, and they do -2D damage.

behind a number of girders in a small enclosure in the "engine room." The casual explorer would be unlikely to stumble across them, but they are easily found by those who know what they're looking for. Getting the crates out of the wreck (the flotation lifter will not fit inside) is a matter of making a Difficult *Strength* roll for each (up to four divers can handle each crate, and so combine their *Strength* scores).

As the divers load the crates onto the flotation lifter in preparation to hoisting them to the surface, they may notice a second hull next to that of their yacht far above on the surface. A Moderate *Perception* roll will determine success.

### The Return of Snopps

As the Rebels divers work to attach the supplies to the flotation tanks down below, there is a new development back on the surface: a tiny speck appears on the horizon. Characters keeping a lookout spot it with an Easy *Perception* roll. Otherwise, it will take a Moderate roll to detect. As the vessel nears, it can easily be seen by anyone on deck of the yacht.

The craft glides directly toward the yacht on large hydrofoils. The hull is clearly of Imperial design. Indeed, characters with some military experience may readily identify it as an Imperial

waveskimmer. A successful Moderate *Perception* roll will suggest to the observer that some of the normal military markings and external details are missing or altered on this vessel. Most notably, the two main blaster cannon ports appear to be empty and sealed, and the windows are somewhat larger than one would expect on a combat vessel.

The skimmer pulls up near the yacht in a half spin, generating large waves which rock the small yacht violently (an Easy *Dexterity* roll to maintain footing on deck). As it slows, it sinks into the water. A number of seatroopers can be seen moving within the skimmer as it drifts to a halt.

As the skimmer nears the yacht, a side-hatch rotates, drops, and a small diving ramp extends out over the water. A familiar figure struts out onto the ramp, clad in a flashy orange diving suit, and flanked by two seatroopers likewise suited for a dive. They are carrying blaster spear guns casually.

Snopps has arrived to explore the wreck, race or not. He haughtily addresses the visible crew of the yacht, informing them that he desires to dive and inspect the alien wreck, and that the whole area is, by his mere presence, restricted seaspace.

If the Rebels have not previously clashed with Snopps to a significant degree, he will simply order them away from the wreck, and expect them to obey. If the party has clashed with Snopps before, he will loudly order his troopers to impound the yacht and escort the Rebels back to Ataria Island. In this case, the captain will hold a brief and quiet conference with Snopps (in which he tells the boy that they have no grounds to seize the vessel). Snopps will glower and pout, and demand that the Rebels leave the area at once. The captain will suggest that the crew be off if they are interested in winning their race.

What occurs next is entirely up to the Rebels. A firefight is a distinct if unwise possibility. Remember that Snopps is a little unstable, and can be goaded into grabbing a spear gun and taking a shot at a character, if the characters push him too far. The crew of six seatroopers are crack troops, but they are not readied for battle, except for the two troopers on the ramp with Snopps. The weapons of the crew are stowed in metal lockers below decks.

The Rebels *might* win in a direct surprise assault, if they come up with an awesome plan, or rely on the Force (in a somewhat unheroic fashion, it must be noted). However, a contest between a military vessel with an Imperial walker-grade hull and a pleasure yacht will likely be a very short one. If fired upon, the Imperials will simply

button up and ram the yacht until it sinks. Even if all the Imperials are by some miracle killed or otherwise silenced, the group will face difficulty in leaving the planet without an investigation (and a very thorough search). Scenarios which devolve into hostage-holding situations are left to individual gamemasters to handle.

A bluff will probably have a better chance of getting the group out of hot water. Snopps isn't all that bright, and the troopers temporarily assigned as his escort do not much care for their charge. Indeed, they are so weary of his company that they will not be very motivated to intercede on his behalf, as long as overt violence or gross lawbreaking is not in the offing.

As a result, even if the diving crew surfaces right between the two boats, all is not lost, if the Rebels keep their heads. As long as some faintly plausible story is hatched which can explain everything, Snopps will probably buy it (he's an Easy *con*). The troopers may well be aware that something is amiss (they are harder to mislead, and require a Moderate *con* roll to fool), but will enjoy seeing Snopps hoodwinked more than they would enjoy investigating the weird doings of some yacht racing team.

Of course, the diving Rebels on the way to the surface may decide to return to the ocean floor and wait the encounter out. Alternatively, they might manage to hide just under the hull of the yacht with a little tricky maneuvering.

Snopps may become bored with the whole encounter (especially if he senses people are smirking behind his back) and depart. He may as easily grow stubborn and insist on diving. What he will do upon encountering other divers underwater is up to the gamemaster, and depends largely on events in past encounters.

**Waveskimmer Captain.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 5D, Mechanical 3D, walker operation 5D, waveskimmer operation: 6D, Perception 4D, command 5D+2, investigation 5D*. Move: 10.

**6 Imperial Seatroopers.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 4D, vehicle blaster 6D, Mechanical 3D, walker operation 4D, Strength 2D+2 (increased by 3 pips for damage purposes), brawling 3D+2, swimming 4D+2 (increased to 6D+2 by armor)*. Move: 10 (12 underwater). Blaster spear gun (blaster damage 5D, spear damage 4D), 5 concussion grenades (damage 5D), seatrooper armor.\*

\* Adds 3 pips to *Strength* code for damage purposes only. Does not reduce *Dexterity* codes. Increases *swimming* code by 2D, and allows underwater Move at 12. See page 47 and the stormtrooper armor insert in the *Star Wars Imperial Sourcebook* for more details.

## ■ Snopps' Touring Vessel

**Craft:** Customized Waveskimmer

**Type:** Attack hydrofoil

**Scale:** Walker

**Length:** 14

**Skill:** Hover vehicle operation: waveskimmer

**Crew:** 3, gunner: 1

**Crew Skill:** vehicle blasters 5D, walker operation 4D

**Passengers:** 20

**Cargo Capacity:** 1 metric ton

**Cover:** Full

**Cost:** Not available for regular sale (unique craft)

**Maneuverability:** 1D

**Move:** 55; 160 kmh

**Body Strength:** 2D+1 (widened windows reduce hull integrity slightly)

**Weapons:**

**Two Light Blaster Cannons**

*Fire Arc:* 1 front, 1 back

*Crew:* 1

*Skill:* Vehicle blasters

*Fire Control:* 1D

## Conclusion

It is not likely that the Rebels, with their slower yacht and extra activities, will place very well in the race. Indeed, with the exception of one boat which foundered in the rough waters of the Point, and the vessel plagued by the undiscovered Galub slug, they place dead last. This will be a blow to Cambriel's reputation as a sportsman, but one gladly endured.

Getting the goods off the planet is as easy as Cambriel predicted. The items in the crates can be sealed in plastic bags and concealed in the coolant chips which lie below the Camray eel in its transport container (with a great deal of gagging and holding of breath). The inspection is cursory, and the idle inspectors make no effort to break the seal of the container. The characters can board the next spaceliner off Spira, and look forward to returning all the money they didn't spend to their commanding officer.

# A Glimmer of Hope

by Charlene Newcomb

Illustrations by Michael Vilardi

Alex Winger squatted behind a maze of boulders overlooking the roadway that led up to the mining center complex. These jobs didn't make her nervous normally, but something gnawed at the back of her mind. Something just didn't feel right tonight. The number of Imperial personnel in Ariana had nearly tripled in the last few weeks. And all their energies seemed to be focused on the mines of Garos IV. Something deep inside her told Alex that whatever the Imperials were doing with these ore shipments was going to have a profound effect on her life.

"Look, Doro, they're loading a second cargo skiff," she said, peering through the macrobinoculars. Last night, they'd observed one sled being transported from the mines to the spaceport outside Ariana. Tonight, it looked like the Imperials were doubling their load. But these two skiffs would never make it to the spaceport.

"What in the worlds are they doing with all that ore?" her companion wondered. Doro was 28 years old and this was only his second mission in the field. Alex had been involved with the underground for two years, but her experiences made her feel a lot older than her 18 years.

"I count a dozen scout troopers on speeder bikes," she told Doro.



"Plus the two man crew on each sled." Alex pulled her comlink off her belt and sent a signal to her comrades who were waiting in ambush about a kilometer to the north. "C'mon, let's move out," she said.

Suddenly, blaster fire punctuated the stillness of the forest. "What's going on," Doro whispered.

"Team Two, come in," Alex called into her comlink as she headed for the wooded hillside.

"They found us," the voice on the other end of the comlink calmly reported over the static. "AT-STs! And some—"

There was more blaster fire, then the comlink went dead.

"C'mon, Doro, move it," Alex yelled to her companion as another round of blaster fire rang out through the woods. They were definitely getting closer.

Alex and Doro turned westward toward the Tahika Cliffs. The terrain here was too rugged for the AT-STs. Even the Imperial speeder bikes would have a difficult time traversing the area, especially during the middle of the night.

Several shots whipped past Alex's head, igniting a nearby tree. Then she noticed she didn't hear Doro's footsteps behind her. Alex slowed her pace for a few seconds and looked to see his prone body 10 meters back. She could hear the speeder bikes moving closer.

Alex took a deep breath, turned around, and reached Doro in 10 seconds. He'd been hit in the shoulder by a blaster and had fallen, cracking his skull on a rock. Alex could find no pulse. Another shot rang out to Alex's left. She touched Doro's forehead to wish him well wherever death had taken him, then headed farther up the hillside.

Alex could hear footsteps coming up behind her and search lights lit the side of the mountain. She felt confident that she could outwit these scout troopers. She was much more familiar with the terrain than they.

But at the top of the crest, Alex took a misstep, and tripped over some fallen branches. She went careening down the hill. Every rock and every fallen tree branch seemed to find a mark on her body. She came to a stop, bruised and aching, a bright light shining in her eyes. She squinted and could just make out the uniform of a scout trooper.

"Get up!" he yelled at her. "Slowly, now!"

Alex had no problem following that order. Ever so slowly she rose, first to her knees, her hand shielding her eyes from the bright light.

"Over here!" the scout trooper called to his comrade who was hidden from view by the dense underbrush. His light pointed away from Alex for no more than a second. That second was all she needed

to grab a fallen limb and send it crashing into the trooper with every bit of strength that she could muster. Alex grabbed the trooper's blaster as he tumbled to the ground and she sprinted the three meters to his speeder bike. Another blast shot past Alex's head and she returned fire as the scout trooper's companion came into view. Two shots from her blaster and the man had crumpled to the forest floor.

Alex jumped on the speeder bike and took off toward the Cliffs. The going was slow, the darkness hampering her vision, but she decided to stick with the speeder bike to put as much distance as

## **Suddenly, blaster fire punctuated the stillness of the forest.**

possible between the pursuing scout troopers and herself. She finally deserted the bike about one kilometer south of the landspeeder she and Doro had come in.

It was right where they'd left it, fairly close to the cliffs that over-

looked the most gorgeous, yet deadly, view anywhere on the planet. The Tahika Cliffs—for over one hundred kilometers they stretched the coastline, steep and forbidding. From this point they dropped vertically almost 200 meters. Few had attempted to climb them. Of those, fewer than half had survived. Alex had never attempted the climb, but in her dreams she saw herself scaling the sides of the Cliffs. It was a most unusual dream. She was always in the company of a man with sandy brown hair and blue eyes. He was there every time. He seemed familiar to her, yet she'd never met anyone like him. So she waited for the day he would come into her life.

It was quiet now except for the call of the crupas that dwelt in the trees. Alex heard no speeder bikes, no footsteps on the forest floor. She revved up the landspeeder and turned north, heading back toward Ariana.

She avoided the main roads and followed the paths that hugged the Cliffs—no need to risk running into the heightened patrols in the area.

Thoughts of Team Two came to her mind—she wondered if they'd been killed, or captured. She wasn't worried that they'd identify her. No one knew her real name. That's how the underground cells were set up. Mostly nameless faces, usually four to six people in each cell. If one were captured, they'd never be able to betray more than a handful of people.

## Alex Winger



**Type:** Underground freedom fighter

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 7D, brawling parry 3D+1, dodge 5D, grenade 4D, heavy weapons 5D, melee 5D+2, melee parry 5D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Alien races 5D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 3D+2, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 4D+2, survival 5D+1, technology 5D

### MECHANICAL 3D+1

Astrogration 4D+2, beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 6D

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 6D, con 5D+1, hide 5D+2, search 5D+1, sneak 5D+2

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 3D+1, stamina 6D+1

### TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D+2, demolition 5D, droid pro-

gramming 5D+1, repulsorlift repair 4D+2, security 4D+1

### Special Abilities:

**Force Skills:** Sense 1D

**Sense:** Life detection

**Force Sensitive?:** Yes

**Force Points:** 4

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), blaster rifle (5D), comlink, landspeeder with hidden compartments, macrobinoculars

**Capsule:** Alex Winger, or Alexandra as her foster father calls her, has long dark hair and almond-shaped blue eyes. She is poised and graceful when a situation calls for it, but privately is all tomboy. Though some men find her combination of beauty and intelligence intimidating, those who know her well agree that the 18 year-old Alex is bright, quick-witted, and loyal—someone you can always count on.

Alex was six years old when an Imperial task force raided her homeworld, killing the only family she knew. She was being raised by her grandparents after her mother, whom she remembers being named Ana, died in a freak accident. It is believed that her father may have been involved with the Rebel Alliance, but if she has any memory of him, she has buried it deep within her subconscious.

Alex was taken captive by that Imperial raiding party, as was not an uncommon practice. She was "given" to a childless couple, Imperial Governor Tork Winger and his wife Sali, of Garos IV, who had shown their loyalty to the Empire. Though they raised her in a loving environment, someday Alex hopes to gain access to Imperial records that may help her identify her homeworld and track down her father, who, more than likely, believes she died during that raid.

For several years Alex experienced vivid nightmares of the raid. She remembers, in startling detail, the death and destruction caused by the Emperor's troops. It is those memories, and the witnessing of a close friend's execution at the hands of the Imperials on Garos IV, that have led her to join the underground freedom fighters in their fight against Imperial domination. Alex's position as the adopted daughter of the Imperial Governor has allowed her not only the luxury of the finest education, but also the ability to infiltrate the political and military structure of Garos IV and its relationship with the Empire. She is truly fond of her foster father, but feels he is misguided in his espousal of the Empire, whether it be from a fear of retribution or just his inability to see a better way to end the Garosian conflict. Alex will never pledge allegiance to a government that rules by threat of force.

Alex is something of a genius, entering the University of Garos before her sixteenth birthday. Her natural curiosity and intelligence have made her an expert on many subjects. She is an accomplished pilot, receiving her wings at the age of 11. Her biggest desire is to someday pilot an X-wing starfighter.

As a member of the underground, Alex has not been content to merely spy on Imperial activities, but regularly takes part in search and destroy missions. Her comrades have recognized her special talents, and though they would prefer that she stay out of the most dangerous operations, they have been unable to convince her otherwise. Alex is wholeheartedly committed to every aspect of the freedom fighters' struggle, and willing to risk her own life in these troubled times.

Alex is a Force-sensitive individual, though she is only beginning to realize that her "dreams" may be visions of a possible future. At times, she has been able to sense danger, but she has not learned how to call on this power at will.

Ultimately, Alex and her friends in the underground realize they will need the help of the New Republic to remove the Imperial threat from Garos IV. But every little dent they can make, every weapon they can steal or supply line they can disrupt only furthers their resolve to continue the fight for freedom and justice.

**Quote:** "Hey, have you ever known me to take chances?"

Normally they worked efficiently. Tonight was the first time in months something had gone wrong. Alex wondered if the Imperials had been tipped off somehow. Or if the increased activities at the mines, which meant increased patrols, had just caused their bad luck this evening. She'd have to discuss it with her cell leader in the morning.

For now, she made her way up to the governor's mansion and parked the landspeeder. Fortunately, her stepfather hadn't felt the need to have security guards patrol the grounds around their home. So Alex was able to slip in through the back door unnoticed. The house was quiet. She tiptoed upstairs past the darkened wing where Tork Winger slept. Safely behind the doors of her own room, she stared at herself in the mirror, shaking her head. "What a mess you are, Alex!" she told the reflection. Her face was smeared with dirt, her clothes were ripped and filthy from her tumble down the mountain. She'd have to get rid of them tomorrow. She chuckled to herself, glancing at her chrono. Not tomorrow, she thought, today, as she cleaned the grime from her face.

Five minutes later, Alex fell into her comfortable bed, exhausted. Within minutes, she slept. But her sleep was restless. A disturbing dream intruded into her thoughts—*Explosions ripped through a building—everything was so hazy—it looked like a barracks. A man lay wounded in the corridor, stunned by a blast—a woman bent over him, cradling his head in her arms...*

Alex awoke with a start, as light streamed in through the window. *Who are these people?* Something seemed vaguely familiar about the man, but she couldn't really place his face. And who was that woman?

She nearly jumped out of bed when her servant droid entered the room. "Good morning, Mistress Alexandra," he chirped cheerily. "Your father would like you to join him for breakfast in the solarium in one-half hour."

She groaned as she sat up in bed. "Is it time to get up already?" "Yes, indeed, Mistress. You don't want to keep the Governor waiting."

Alex rolled her eyes, and glanced at the chrono. 0700. Time to get up. It was going to be a busy day.

■ ■ ■

"Good morning, Father," she greeted Tork Winger with a kiss on the cheek.

"Alexandra," he said, noticing the dark circles under her eyes. "Didn't you get any sleep last night?"

## Garos IV

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Temperate

**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)

**Hydrosphere:** Moderate

**Gravity:** Standard

**Terrain:** Forests, mountains, valleys

**Length of Day:** 25 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 382 local days

**Sapient Species:** Humans

**Starports:** 2 standard class

**Population:** 20 million Garosians, 4 million Sundars

**Planet Function:** Agriculture, manufacturing

**Government:** Imperial governor

**Tech Level:** Space

**Major Exports:** Foodstuffs, metals, minerals

**Major Imports:** High technology

**Capsule:** Garos IV is the fourth planet of six in the Garos system. It was settled by humans more than 4,000 years ago. And until recently, it was a self-supporting planet with little contact outside the system.

The seat of government is located in Ariana on the western coast, known for the forboding Tahika Cliffs, on the larger of two continents. Ariana is an intellectual and business center, dominated by the prestigious University of Garos.

For more than 100 years a civil war between native Garosians and colonists from the third planet in the system, Sundari, engulfed Garos IV. When the Empire intervened in the struggle, it ended the conflict—violently—executing hundreds of known "troublemakers" on both sides.

But the Empire has generally left Garos IV alone since establishing a quiet presence on the planet 12 years ago. Only in the last year has the number of troops begun to grow. Their chief concern seems to be the mining of hibridium in a region south of the city of Ariana. Only a few fleet captains, under direct orders from the late Emperor Palpatine, seem to understand the significance of the Empire's presence on Garos IV. But it is obvious to the underground that the Imperials intend to exploit whatever knowledge they can acquire on the cloaking properties of the ore which comes from the mines.

Alex rubbed her eyes, trying to wake up, and took a sip of tea. "Big exam today, Father. Chemistry. I was up until after one studying."

He shook his head. "Six hours' sleep? That's not too bad. But I imagine you dreamed of formulas all night long. That would be enough to keep me from a restful sleep."

Alex nodded in agreement.

They ate breakfast in silence. Typical, Alex thought, smiling to herself. Her stepfather always wanted to dine with her, but he saved most of the conversation for the end of the meal. Winger reviewed his schedule for the day, and read the morning updates. Alex could tell he was disturbed by something—it had to be a report of the underground's unsuccessful activity. He finally spoke just as Alex took the last bite of her meal.

"Alexandra, I'd like you to help me host dinner this evening."

"Special company tonight, Father?" she asked.

"The Imperial Star Destroyer *Judicator* is making orbit this afternoon," Winger told her. "You remember my old friend Captain Brandei, don't you?"

Alex felt her heart skip several beats. An Imperial Star Destroyer at Garos. "Yes, of course. He was here about three years ago, wasn't it right after the Battle of Endor?"

## Tork Winger



**Type:** Imperial Governor

**DEXTERITY 2D+1**

Blaster 6D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien races 8D, bureaucracy 9D+2, cultures 8D+2, languages 8D, planetary systems 8D+2, survival 5D, technology 6D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Astrogation 5D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, starship piloting 5D+2

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 10D, command 10D+1, con 9D

**STRENGTH 2D+2**

**TECHNICAL 2D+1**

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 4

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster (4D), data pad

**Capsule:** Tork Winger is an extremely distinguished looking, gray-haired gentleman, the epitome of a diplomat. For the past 12 years he has served as Imperial Governor on his homeworld of Garos IV.

He was one of the first Garosians to enter the service of the Old Republic almost 50 years ago. After serving five years in the army, Winger returned to Garos, and thanks to his family's position, he

Winger grimaced. "Alexandra, please do not bring that subject up tonight." He hadn't said it to admonish his daughter, but only to remind her that any mention of that disaster should not be discussed in the presence of any Imperial officers.

"Of course not, Father," she said. "Dinner, this evening? What time?"

"Seven," he said, smiling at her. "Your mother would be so proud of you, Alexandra. You really should consider a career in the diplomatic corps. You carry yourself so well at functions like these. And you are such a brilliant young woman!"

"I know, Father! You've told me this a thousand times! But I hate politics!"

Winger chuckled, taking one last sip of his tea. "All right, my dear, I won't try to talk you into it over breakfast." He got up and turned to leave the room, giving her one last peck on the cheek. "I'll see you this evening, Alexandra."

moved quickly up through the diplomatic ranks. By his 30th birthday, he was a top aide to the highest authority on Garos.

Winger discovered very early in his career that he had a natural talent for diplomacy. He was respected by his peers, and by his enemies as well. He became the planet's leading authority on the conflict between native Garosians and colonists from the neighboring planet Sundari. He mediated negotiations between the warring factions for years. Both sides found him to be a just man, capable of sorting through all the intrigue that seemed to dominate politics.

But Winger was also a man torn apart by his inability to reach a true and lasting peace on Garos IV. He felt he'd been closest to achieving that goal when the Empire stepped in and forced an end to the conflict. Winger felt dismayed by their methods, but he accepted them, seeing the sacrifices that were made had actually stopped most of the random violence.

Because he was held in such high esteem by his people, Emperor Palpatine chose Winger to be Imperial governor. But Winger soon discovered that many of his countrymen found his acceptance of the Empire a traitorous action. Many went underground to fight against Imperial control, though Winger strived to convince them that such actions were fruitless.

Now, three years after the Battle of Endor, Tork Winger watches as the Empire loses ground to the New Republic. He wonders what will become of Garos IV, and of the life he had envisioned for his daughter Alexandra. For she is the one truly bright spot in his life. Though she is adopted, he adores her, and wants only the best for her. He would do anything for her.

**Quote:** "I only want what is best for all the people of Garos."

"Yes, sir."

He was almost out the door of the solarium when he called back to her. "Oh, and good luck on that chemistry exam."

She smiled at him. He really had been good to her all these years. Alexandra did love him, but wished there was some way she could convince him that the Empire's method of controlling the Garosian conflict was not the solution to the problem.

Tork Winger didn't necessarily agree with the Empire's use of force, but at least the random bombings, assassinations, and outright fighting between towns controlled by the different factions seemed to have ended. Of course, the populace soon found itself with a common enemy—the Imperials. The more conservative elements of both groups united to form the underground. This small group of freedom fighters tried to make life miserable for those unfortunate people the Emperor had sent to their world. Little did Tork Winger know that a member of his own family was a part of that underground organization.

■ ■ ■

Alex tried to stifle a yawn. But this latest lecture at the university on Imperial military structure had to be the duller offering of the term. Unfortunately, it was required for all students since the Empire had established a presence on Garos.

And Alex, unlike many of her classmates, had the potential, but not the desire, of going on to the Raithal Academy. Being a woman could have put a damper on that idea, but Alexandra Winger was the daughter of an Imperial governor. And she was a brilliant student.

Had the times been different, she certainly would have been at the Academy by now.

But that was the crux of the matter. The Emperor was dead, and the Imperial fleet was in a state of disorganized confusion.

Admirals, governors, and fleet captains all jockeyed for position trying to bring order out of the chaos. The thing was, there didn't seem to be much order.

Now there were even rumors that the New Republic was advancing deeper and deeper in the Core Worlds toward Coruscant. Some said that nearly half the galaxy was in their hands. Garos IV wasn't that far off the beaten track—a mere four days from Coruscant. Alex

prayed for the day when the New Republic made its appearance on Garos. It was a day all who worked for the underground looked forward to.

The commander's voice droned steadily on. Alex had to rub her eyes just to stay awake. Just a few more minutes, she thought, glancing at her chrono. When she looked up, she caught Lej Carner giving her a sly look. She'd met him a year earlier when his father, a major general in the Imperial army, had been assigned to run the mining center complex. And she'd had the misfortune of having him in at least one class for each of the last three terms.

*Agh!* She tried to smile. She found Lej disgusting, one of the most arrogant men she had ever met. But she'd cultivated his friendship to uncover as much as she could about the increased Imperial activities at the mines. Unfortunately, Lej had little knowledge, by choice as far as Alex could discern, of his father's command.

The buzzer sounded indicating the end of class. Alex stood up, trying to collect her things when Trad Mays slammed into her.

"Sorry, Alexandra," he said. "Here, let me help you with those." He bent down to pick up her data books that had crashed to the floor, and Alex could have sworn he was blushing.

She smiled at him, overlooking his clumsiness, and let him pick up her things as Lej walked up to her.

"Alexandra, there's a group of us meeting at Chado's in a half hour. Can you come?" he asked.

She feigned disappointment. "Sorry, Lej, I've got some work to do."

"Aw, come on Alexandra, You know what they say—all work and no play ..."

"Lej, this is something my father asked me to do. I can't put it off," she tried to explain.

He rolled his eyes. "Oh, yeah, the great governor himself! You know, Alexandra, you don't work for him!"

Trad handed a stack of books to Alex and grinned sheepishly at her. "See you tomorrow," he called as he left her alone with Lej.

"I'm just trying to be helpful, Lej. Since my mother died last year I've picked up some of her unofficial duties."

"Oh, I see your plan! Trying to get extra points so they'll *have* to admit you to the Academy. Too bad you can't go this year with me!"

"Yeah," she hid the relief in her voice, "too bad."

"Well, guess I'll see you later."

Alex hurried from the MillnDoc building toward the University Library. She stopped at one of the central comm terminals to check

**When she looked up, she caught Lej Carner giving her a sly look.**

for messages, punching in her ID. Within seconds, the message she anticipated appeared.

*Study group meeting in L-25 at 1015.*

She glanced at her chrono. Five minutes. She signed off the terminal and headed for her "study group."

They were already waiting for her deep in the bowels of the library, through a maze of corridors to the secret entrance into an underground system of tunnels. It was said you could travel the entire length of Ariana underground, if you knew your way around.

The men sat at the conference table in the small room. Dr. Carl Barzon and Magir Paca were two leaders of the resistance movement on Garos IV. These men were part of the handful of people whom Alex knew the identities of. Barzon had been Alex's first contact with the underground. And Paca was an old family friend, at least until his traitorous activities had been uncovered.

"What happened?" Paca asked Alex.

"There were extra guards at the mines. And they must have been set up on the perimeter before we even got there. I never spotted anyone until the shooting began," she told them. "Any word on Team Two?"

"Scat was captured. He is being held in the detention center. And because of the incident last night, the skiffs are under heavy guard at the mining center."

She nodded. "What's going on at the mines? Have they discovered something we don't know about?"

"We were hoping you might be able to find out more about that," Dr. Barzon said. "They've confiscated all my research notes. I don't dare add any new data to what they already have."

"Your research on the ore?" Alex asked.

"Yes. We made a breakthrough—isolated the component in the ore that creates the natural cloaking abilities. I'm getting close to refining a technique which will allow us to manufacture cloaked weapons at a fraction of the cost it now requires to build cloaking devices, and with none of the energy requirements the current devices use. You can imagine the consequences for the galaxy if such knowledge fell into the wrong hands."

Alex didn't even have to imagine. It was all quite clear that this new technology could put the Empire back on the offensive.

"I wonder if your research has anything to do with the Star Destroyer *Judicator's* visit to Garos," Alex said.

"The *Judicator* is here?" Barzon asked.

## Magir Paca

**Type:** Underground leader

### DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D+1, grenade 6D, heavy weapons 5D+2, melee 5D, melee parry 6D

### KNOWLEDGE 4D

Alien races 4D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 7D, survival 8D, technology 6D

### MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 5D, repulsorlift operation 6D

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 6D, command 6D+1, con 6D+1, hide 7D, search 6D, sneak 7D

### STRENGTH 3D+2

### TECHNICAL 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character points:** 5

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), data pad

**Capsule:** Magir Paca is one of the original underground leaders known as COSGU (the Committee of Seven for Garosian Unification). Paca was a close friend of Imperial Governor Tork Winger, and had grown up calling him "uncle." Winger had high hopes for Paca and planned to groom him for an important position in Garos' political structure.

Paca had been working as an assistant to the Minister of Commerce when the Empire established itself on Garos IV. This gave him access to all types of useful information. For 10 years he covertly passed information to the underground until the Imperials realized there was a leak in the system. Paca fell into their trap and only by a stroke of fate was he able to elude arrest. Alex Winger, then only 15 years old, was forever fiddling with computer files. She accidentally uncovered an Imperial file on suspected underground figures and the cases being built against them. She was able to warn Paca, and he disappeared hours before Imperial troops came to arrest him.

Paca has remained in hiding for the last two years, and now coordinates much of the underground's activities.

**Quote:** "We're going to have to hit them where it hurts. Even if its only one little bit at a time."

"Yes. I'm helping my father host a dinner tonight for her senior officers. Maybe I'll be able to find out something useful."

"I wouldn't doubt it," Barzon said. "Just be careful."

"What about Scat?" Alex asked. They'd broken other people out of detention before, but there were a lot fewer Imperial stormtroopers to deal with during those missions.

## Carl Barzon

**Type:** Professor, underground leader

### DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 4D, brawling parry 3D, dodge, 2D+2

### KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Alien races 6D, bureaucracy 5D, cultures 5D+2, languages 6D, planetary systems 4D+2, survival 4D+1, technology 6D

### MECHANICAL 2D+1

### PERCEPTION 3D

### STRENGTH 2D

### TECHNICAL 3D+2

Computer programming/repair 4D, droid programming/repair 4D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 4

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster (4D), data pad

**Capsule:** Dr. Carl Barzon is a professor and research scientist at the University of Garos in Ariana. He has spent 25 years quietly researching the natural cloaking properties of the ore hibridium, which is only found on the western coastline of the main continent on Garos IV.

Barzon was born on the third planet in the Garos system, Sundarl, but came to Garos IV as a student doing graduate work at the university. He stayed on to teach, becoming one of the most well-respected people in his profession.

Barzon became involved with the underground shortly after the Empire established a presence on Garos IV. His greatest fear is that the Imperials will complete the research he began on hibridium and develop weapons which would help secure their hold on the galaxy.

**Quote:** "You can imagine the consequences for the galaxy should this knowledge fall into the wrong hands."

"Team Five is going in at 0400."

"I'd like to help," she offered.

"It's too risky, Alex."

"Risky's my middle name!"

"With the increased Imperial activity, I just don't..."

"Paca, I know what I'm doing," she insisted.

"All right. Rendezvous with Team Five at 0300 in tunnel C-21," Paca said.

She nodded. "You said the supply skiffs are still at the mine?"

"Yes. Our contact at the Defense Ministry said they're moving out at 1230 today. They are supposed to arrive at the spaceport at 1300."

"So they *are* taking the ore off-planet."

"Yes."

"Where?"

"We don't know yet. Our contact is working on that. Maybe you'll hear something tonight."

"That must be why the *Judicator* is here," Alex commented. "So, what time do we hit the spaceport?"

"We can't hit them there, Alexandra."

"Don't we have anyone who can get to the shuttle that's taking the ore? Sabotage it?"

"Security's really tight—we've had a difficult time infiltrating the spaceport. But we're working on that," Paca said. "For now, we have to hit the convoy on the road, before it gets to the spaceport."

"In broad daylight?" Barzon asked.

"We have no choice," Paca replied. "Are you in?"

Alex nodded, a grim determination in her face.

"Okay. Here's the plan..."

■ ■ ■

Alex's landspeeder zipped along the winding mountainous road south of the spaceport. She had such natural instincts for piloting, she could almost fly blindfolded.

*No signs of increased activity through here,* she thought. It surprised her that the Imperials didn't seem overly concerned about their ore shipment, even after that incident last night. *Well, hopefully that will make our job a little easier.*

Alex turned the landspeeder off the main road and stopped about a kilometer to the west. There were a series of caves here she'd discovered as a child, perfect for hiding landspeeders, or any weapons the underground might find useful. She pulled her landspeeder into a cave, the running lights illuminating the darkness, and moved about 50 meters from the entrance before stopping.

## Adventure Idea

The characters, working as members of the resistance on Garos IV, are assigned to place small, remote sensor packages around the Imperial hibridium mines in the region south of the city of Ariana. However, patrols and troop strength have recently been increased. Characters must dodge Imperial scout patrols as well as AT-ST walkers while making sure the sensors are well-placed, well-hidden and operational.

The cave was deserted; her comrades had taken the stolen Plex missile launcher from its hiding place. They would be set up about two kilometers to the southeast lying in wait for that supply convoy. Alex pulled on some camouflage clothing then grabbed her blaster rifle and macrobinoculars from the hidden compartment in the landspeeder. She took off at a trot to get in position for the coming attack.

Alex carefully made her way through the densely wooded terrain, over one rise, down the other side and back up another. She watched her back—she didn't want a repeat of last night—but she saw no sign of scout troopers in the forest.

**From the corner of her eye, Alex spotted a movement off to her left in the trees.**

with a slightly different angle on the road. Each person was assigned a specific target. They'd be lucky to get off more than two shots, so each shot had to count.

Alex checked the sight on her blaster rifle aiming for a spot on the road where she expected two scout troopers to appear. She glanced at her chrono. *Won't be long now, she thought.*

The forest muted the sounds of the two advance scouts, but Alex spotted them as they followed the winding road toward the spaceport. *Right on time.* She took a deep breath, trying to relax and get into a comfortable position. Another tense minute passed. Then, through the gunsight, she watched two, then four more scout troopers, appear on the road. The first skiff was behind that group. Suddenly, an explosion shook the mountainside as the Plex missile found its first mark. Alex immediately fired her first round, hitting the third scout trooper. Another shot and she'd taken out the one next to him as well. Another explosion lit the forest, as the second skiff exploded into flames. Alex peered through her macros and from her vantage point, she could see four dead scout troopers. A fifth one seemed to be wounded, crawling away from his wrecked speeder. Parts of the skiff had been blown for meters in every direction, probably killing a few other troopers.

But for now, Alex's job was done. She slung the blaster rifle over her shoulder and headed down the mountainside back toward the

northwest where her speeder was hidden. She was almost within sight of the caves when someone stepped out from behind a tree and tackled her, throwing her to the ground. She tried to pull away from him, but he was much stronger. She was flat on her stomach on the ground when he pulled her headgear off and turned her over.

"Holy empire!" he said. It was Lej Carner. What in the worlds was he doing out here? *He must have followed me, probably wondered why I went past the turn for the Governor's mansion.* She wondered if he knew about the caves. Alex, she thought to herself, *you've got to be more cautious!*

"Get off of me!" she yelled at him, hoping to throw him off balance.

"Alexandra," he said, moving off her, but pulling a blaster from his belt, "those are awfully strange garments you're wearing." He paused, then pointed at her blaster. "Nice rifle. Standard underground issue?"

Alex sat up glaring at him. If only she could remain calm for a few minutes, surely some of her comrades would show up. She had to stall him. She started to get up.

"Watch it," he said. "Move away from the rifle. Slowly. Gee, Alexandra, bet you didn't hear those two explosions, did you?" His tone was dripping with sarcasm, but Alex held his stare. She moved a step closer to him. "Lej, I..."

"Don't bother, Alexandra. I don't want anything to do with traitors."

From the corner of her eye, Alex spotted a movement off to her left in the trees. She looked off toward the right, and Lej's eyes followed hers. Obviously, this wasn't his line of work. He'd forgotten she probably had companions. He looked around nervously, then moved closer and pushed Alex toward his landspeeder.

Alex stumbled to the ground, and heard one shot ring out. She looked behind her as Lej crumpled to the rocky floor, dying instantly from the blaster shot.

A man she knew as Chance appeared from behind a tree. "You okay?" he asked her.

She nodded, but felt more shaken up than she cared to admit. "Thanks," she said, not wanting to look at her classmate's body, but forcing herself to do it.

Chance placed his hand on her shoulder. "It's all right," he told her.

Alex took a deep breath. "Yeah. I'll move the landspeeder into the cave," she told him.



"I'll get rid of the body," Chance said. He lifted the lifeless form over his shoulders and headed toward the Cliffs.

After Alex moved Lej's landspeeder deep into the caves, she changed her clothes, returned the blaster rifle and macrobinoculars to their hidden compartment, and moved her landspeeder out of the cave.

She knew the main road would be crawling with Imperial troops soon, but the back road to the governor's mansion was deserted. It was only a kilometer to the main drive near the mansion. Everything seemed perfectly normal as she pulled the landspeeder under the front portico of the mansion. She parked, grabbed her books and headed into the house. She glanced at her chrono. It was 1310.

■ ■ ■

The ancient timepiece in the front hall chimed midnight as Alex and Tork Winger bid goodnight to their guests. It had been a fascinating evening. Not surprisingly, the main topic of conversation had been the attack on the supply convoy.

Alexandra doted on Captain Brandei, hoping to learn where the Empire was shipping the ore. She was careful not to ask too many questions, but found that everyone else at the dinner party asked

almost everything she needed to know. Unfortunately, the captain was tight-lipped about the location of the manufacturing facility. But he did explain to a group of diplomats that the late Emperor had seen this vision of Garos' contribution to the war effort, and had left specific instructions concerning the ore.

*Amazing, Alex thought, the Emperor had had visions of the future.* She'd grown up hearing stories about the Emperor and his mystical powers—the powers of the Force. And his destruction at the hands of the young Jedi named Luke Skywalker was a story that no one would ever dare to forget.

Alex had tried to learn more about the Jedi Knights, especially this power to see the future. Many of her own dreams—she never really called them visions—had come true. But she could never imagine herself with the other powers ascribed to those few people known as Jedi. Yet, somehow, it all seemed so familiar to her.

*I hope the Jedi come to Garos. Come to help my people,* she thought as she mindlessly waved good-night to a group of commanders boarding a landspeeder back to the spaceport.

Far off in her mind, she saw another group of people—*They were saying good-bye—they were in the landing bay of a starship. And she saw herself there, sitting in the cockpit of an X-wing starfighter! An X-wing? How in the worlds? Another pilot was standing on the ladder of her ship. It was the man from her dream—the man on the Cliffs! He touched her hand and she was sure he called her name...*

"Alexandra?"

The voice seemed distant. It took a moment for Alex to realize that her stepfather had taken her hand. She smiled at him.

"I think I'll go to bed, Father." She yawned. "I'm really tired."

"It's been a long day, Alexandra. Thank you for being such a charming hostess." He kissed her on the cheek. "Captain Brandei was extremely impressed with you this evening," he said as they walked back into the foyer arm in arm. "I believe he's going to give you a recommendation to the Academy."

"Oh, Father, do you really think so?" *Just what I always wanted,* she thought sarcastically.

"Yes. I'll be sure you get it before the *Judicator* departs," Winger added.

"When is that?"

"A day or two. The captain said they'll try again tomorrow to move another shipment of ore to the spaceport."

"I imagine security will be much tighter. I still can't believe the underground attacked that convoy only three kilometers from here!"

"Yes," he said, a touch of concern in his voice. "You know, Alexandra, perhaps you should make arrangements to stay at the university until this business is concluded. It worries me to think of you travelling alone from the city. I may even have to think about requesting guards for the governor's mansion."

"Oh, Father, please. I hate to think of us living in an armed camp," Alex said, wondering about the difficulties of sneaking in and out of a mansion guarded day and night by stormtroopers.

"These are difficult times, Alexandra. I don't want you to come to any harm."

"All right, Father. Let's not discuss this now. I'm way too tired," she said, stifling another yawn. "Will I see you at breakfast?"

"Yes, of course, my dear. Good-night, Alexandra."

"Good-night, Father."

■ ■ ■

Three people silently entered the building through a maintenance room deep within Imperial Headquarters. The secret entrance had been there long before the Imperials' arrival on Garos IV, but only a few members of the underground even knew of its existence.

Alex checked her blaster one last time. Set for stun. The two men with her checked their own weapons, standard stormtrooper issue blaster rifles which had been confiscated during an earlier raid.

"Ready?"

The one man nodded and was about to tap the panel to open the door when Alex felt a tingling sensation crawl up her spine.

"Wait..." she whispered to her companions.

No one dared to breathe. At first they heard nothing. Then the distinctive echo of footsteps sounded through the corridor outside the door. At the end of the hallway, the footsteps stopped, a door slid open, then closed. The corridor was quiet.

The freedom fighters moved silently through the corridor toward the turbolift. Their objective was the detention block one level up, where their comrade Scat was being held prisoner. Two guards would be on duty at this time of night. They expected to move in quickly and surprise the Imperials before they had a chance to call for help. Then they would locate Scat and get out of the cell block. The whole operation shouldn't take much more than a minute.

Of course, things didn't always go as planned—muted voices from that last room near the turbolift caused Alex to pause. She held up her hand, signalling the other two men to stop. She pointed at the door.

"How many?" one of her companions mouthed.

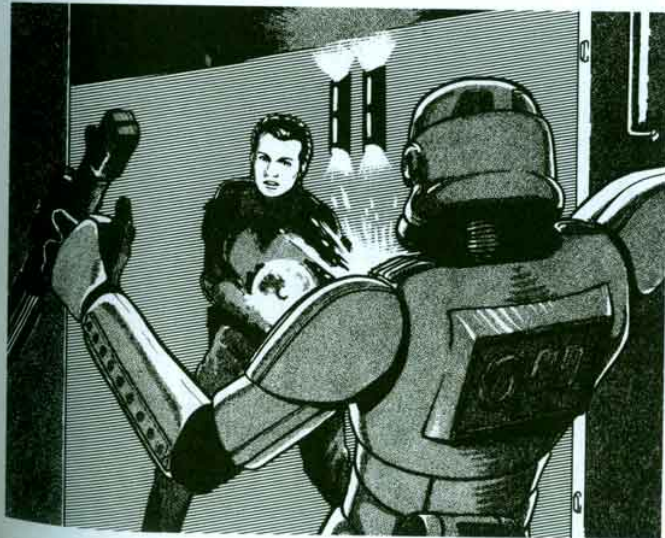
Alex held up two, then three fingers, shrugging her shoulders. They nodded, moving toward the turbolift, but cautious of this threat at their backs.

Alex pressed the panel for the turbolift and realized it was already headed toward this lowest level of the headquarters.

"Someone's coming," she whispered.

Pressed against either side of the turbolift doors the three freedom fighters waited. The door slid open and a young man was shoved into the corridor. From the corner of his eye he saw the three masked figures clad in black. Instinctively he fell to the ground.

Across from them, another door slid open and the lieutenant who was supposed to be interrogating a prisoner this evening found himself facing the members of the resistance. Alex moved out into the open and fired at the stormtrooper in the turbolift who had been guarding Scat. Her friends blasted the lieutenant, who never even had time to reach for his weapon. They rushed into the room where they'd heard voices a few moments earlier. The blaster fire had alerted the other Imperial officers inside. One was caught, his own blaster half-drawn, and the other had clicked on his comlink to call for help.



### Adventure Idea

Magir Paca believes his freedom fighters need the support of the New Republic. The characters, working as members of the underground, are asked to journey to a nearby sector where a New Republic task force is engaging the rag-tag forces of an Imperial Moff. Paca hopes the characters can interest the New Republic in Garos' plight, and perhaps gain some supplies and equipment.

But finding the New Republic fleet in a sector could be difficult. When the characters do evade Imperial forces and find the task force, the New Republic officials are too busy with their campaign against the Imperial Moff and are short on supplies themselves. The characters must try to convince the New Republic to take a minor interest in activities on Garos IV and help support the resistance there.

Within seconds it was over, both Imperials stunned by their enemies' blaster rifles. An alarm sounded as the four freedom fighters headed down the corridor back toward the maintenance room.

By the time security arrived, Alex and her companions were nowhere to be seen. In the maintenance room, Alex felt for the indentation on the back of one section of shelves and pressed it, revealing the entrance to the secret passage where they'd come in.

Ten seconds later the group moved back through the tunnel system and to safety.

Mission accomplished.



**STAR WARS**  
SOURCEFILE

# Glah Ubooki's



## Strange & Wondrous Imports

by Shane Hensley

Illustrations by Tim Eldred

Welcome to the shop, friend. Do I have anything that might interest you? A trinket from the debris of Alderaan? A glove once worn by Lord Vader himself? No, I can see such antiques don't interest a man of the world like yourself. What you need is that rare something that gives you an edge over your competitors. Something that will make your freighter faster than the Millennium Falcon herself. Well, come in then, friend, I have just the thing... a device procured from an old Imperial wreck. Nothing stolen I guarantee you, but finders are keepers you know.

What? You've seen me before? In Mos Eisley? I hardly think so. I haven't left Coruscant in years. You must be mistaking me for another Bimm. Yes, I know most Bimms wear yellow spun cloth rather than this drab attire I have chosen, but we can't all be wealthy now, can we friend? Now, about that artifact you were interested in...

Glah Ubooki is a Bimm from the planet Bimmisaari. A decade or so ago, Glah discovered the wreckage of an Imperial R&D vessel in the asaari woods near his native lands. There were no survivors, but the short adventurer decided to pluck through the wreckage before the Empire's salvage vessels arrived. What he found within were prototype weapons and equipment the Imperial technicians were devising to use against the then fledgling Rebellion. Glah ran back to his home, grabbed seven of his brothers, and raced back to the ship. For three hours the identical siblings carried off the prototypes and any other usable equipment they could find.

The following day, the Bimms took their find to the swelling markets of Glastro, the closest major city. Fortunately for them, a smuggler working for the Rebellion realized the wares for what they were and paid Glah and his brothers an enormous sum for the entire lot. The Bimms lived well for the next several months, but it was obvious the fortune wouldn't last forever. One night, while the eight brothers shared a bottle of the best Glastroan wine, Glah proposed a plan. They would pool their money, buy a ship, and explore the local systems for rare finds such as the one they had just sold. It was a little silly to think that such treasures would come their way again, but the optimistic nature of the Bimms and the influence of the Glastroan wine encouraged them to try. Before they could think better of it, the eight used the last of their money to buy a ship and enough fuel to roam their system on their naive scavenger hunt.

The brothers' success was impossible, but it happened. A major key to their luck was the way the Empire and the Rebellion carried out their war near Bimmisaari. Neither side had many personnel in

### "Glah Ubooki"



**Type:** Typical Bimm  
**DEXTERITY** 1D+1  
**Dodge** 3D+1  
**KNOWLEDGE** 2D+2  
 Alien races 3D+2, bureaucracy 3D+2, cultures 3D+1, streetwise 6D+1, technology 4D+1  
**MECHANICAL** 1D+2  
 Repulsorlift operation 2D+2  
**PERCEPTION** 2D+1  
 Bargain 6D+1, con 5D+1, gambling 2D+2  
**STRENGTH** 1D+2  
 Stamina 2D+2  
**TECHNICAL** 2D+1  
 First aid 3D+1  
**Force Points:** 1  
**Character Points:** 5  
**Move:** 8  
**Capsule:** All "Glahs" dress the same while working their store. They wear a brown robe and a tattered beige head-wrap with a dark stain just over the left eye. This is a simple grease mark that all the Ubookis have adopted to

further enhance the illusion that they are the same individual on 18 different worlds.

Bimms are born in litters of one sex, so all the Ubooki children of this litter are males, and all look enough alike so that non-Bimms cannot tell the difference. Another Bimm might be able to detect a difference on a Difficult *Perception* roll, but even then he couldn't be absolutely sure.

**Quote:** "Oh, hi again! No, I'm sorry, I'm not very good with names, but yes, I remember you. No, this is my only shop. Mos Eisley? No, I've never been there, I'm sure of it. Can I interest you in a rare and unusual bird from the backwaters of Dagobah?"

the area, so bombings, interplanetary missiles, and even orbital ship-to-ground attacks were common. This left many facilities wide open for several hours, allowing the watchful Ubookis to steal in and out with thousands of credits worth of data, secrets, equipment, and any other valuables that weren't welded down. A few weeks later, the brothers would take their wares to markets far away from the attack sites and make fortunes selling it to the other side, or occasionally, back to the very group they had stolen it from!

At the market, whichever brother was making the sale at the time

would introduce himself as Glah Ubooki and wear his sibling's clothes. None of the others would ever let themselves be seen at the market together. That way, any Imperials or bounty hunters who had figured out their scheme would be chasing a single Bimm instead of the whole group of eight. Their ruse saved their business and their lives on more than one occasion.

In time, smugglers, explorers, or even other pirates began to bring "Glah" the strange things they had found. Weapons and armor were abundant until and just after the Battle of Endor, but since then, strange and alien artifacts have become the Ubooki's specialty. When the Ubookis had amassed a great quantity of strange and wondrous devices, the brothers decided to settle on Bimmisaari and open up a permanent store in Glastro.

The business was so successful that the other brothers quickly took a portion of their stock and headed off to other planets to open their own stores. Their private joke of the "eight Glahs" stuck, and now every one of them says that he is Glah Ubooki. When someone asks who the Bimm on the last world is, the trader shrugs his shoulders and says that there are no other shops like his. To further the joke, "Glah" pretends to know all of his customers, even though he may have never seen them before. This way, it seems that the Glah remembers anyone that shopped at his other location, even though he swears that there is no such place!

Every year or so, the 18 Bimm brothers who now create this illusion get together on Bimmisaari and throw a week-long party celebrating their success and the great joke they have pulled on the known worlds. And of course, the Glastroan wine flows freely!

## Glah Ubooki's Strange & Wondrous Imports

"Glah" keeps hundreds of useless and overpriced trinkets adorning the walls and glass displays of "his" dimly lit store. This keeps casual browsers from knowing his true business while allowing scrutinizing buyers to look over his wondrous merchandise hidden amongst the gaudy baubles and junk. Also, the cluttered and ever-changing junk keeps each of the 18 shops looking similar without having to actually coordinate what baubles are hanging in any particular spot.

The newest treasures hidden among "Glah's" wares area are the exotic Jubba bird, a prototype neural interface device, and the Jodakan needler crab.

## The Jubba Bird

**Cost:** 4,000

**Quantity:** 1 each in 3 different shops

There are few splashes of color in the dark swamps of Dagobah—the Jubba bird is a rare and spectacular exception. The unique ability of the creature is derived from its quiet humming, eerie whistling, and soothing melodies. Its low songs soothe the nerves of all but the most foul-tempered creatures or individuals. "Glah" has tried to make a recording of the Jubba's song but the audio files didn't seem to carry the same effect as the genuine article. "Glah" believes that the bird's power may be a slight manifestation of the Force. Perhaps that's why the animal must be happy and healthy for its soothing song to work its magic. He also speculates that the power is a highly advanced defense mechanism, possibly even evolved from its close proximity to a certain green-skinned Jedi Master from its home world.

### Game Information:

Whenever a Jubba bird sings it acts as the *affect mind* power listed on page 152 of the *Star Wars Second Edition* rules. The song's "message" is always to influence those around it to a passive attitude. This is a Very Easy task as long as the target is only contemplating an act of violence. If those affected were already committed to hostility, the bird's song would have little effect.

If the Jubba bird isn't happy, it won't sing. This means that a new owner must provide it with a suitable cage or environment at least three meters tall by four meters wide on a side. Only when the bird has ample room to fly and preen its one meter wingspan will it remain content. The open interior of a spaceship is usually room enough. Of course, it must also be fed, which can often present a greater challenge than providing it with space.

Despite their calming powers, Jubba birds don't practice what they preach. They are hunters and must catch their prey themselves before they will feed. Their usual diet consists of snakes or common rodents. For this reason, the owners of the bird will have to release the prey-animal into the environment (such as the hold of their ship), and allow the Jubba to hunt, catch, and consume the meal on its own. A few will almost always get away, so the unfortunate ship or grounds used for feeding will often become overrun with rodents and other vermin. It is obviously much better to keep one of these rare creatures in an outside environment.

Jubba birds are deceptively intelligent as well. Most owners will



think that the creature is a beautiful and magnificent animal but with no real capacity for learning. This isn't quite true and seems to be a conscious decision on the Jubba's part—perhaps because it is stubborn and doesn't wish to be manipulated. As long as it "pretends" to be "dumb," its master won't think that he can train and control it at will. If the Jubba is kept very happy with plenty of space to fly, lots of prey to eat, and constant attention, it may reveal some of its higher intelligence to its owner. In this case, the Jubba can be a loyal and valuable companion often capable of pointing out a stranger's true motivations, seeking out a particular person or well-known thing, or most importantly singing its magical song on command.

If not bonded in such a way to its owner, the character must make a *Difficult persuasion* test to

persuade the Jubba to sing its placating tune.

#### ■ Jubba Bird

Type: Dagobah avian

DEXTERITY 2D

PERCEPTION 2D

Persuasion 3D

STRENGTH 1D-2 (no lower than 1)

#### Special Abilities:

*Soothing Song:* Jubba birds use their limited Force power of *affect mind* with their melodic song to calm others. They have *control*, *sense*, and *alter* at 2D each.

Move: 4/20 (flight)

Size: .3 meters

### Imperial Neural Interface Device

Cost: 9,000

Quantity: 1 each in 4 different shops

In the early phases of the Rebellion, the Empire experimented

with linking TIE pilots to their craft via neural implants. The theory was that they could simply "think" their commands to the ship and they would be translated and fed into the computer at lightning speed, thereby eliminating the delay of manual input devices. The project was abandoned when it was discovered that interfacing with the ship's computers was simply too overwhelming for most pilot's minds. Scientists were working on a "sorting" program that could filter out extraneous data when disaster struck. Their R&D vessel was but one of a large convoy of support craft in the rear of an Imperial fleet. Rebel planners wanted to disrupt these support services and the lightly armored vessels were quickly spinning out of control or were turned into drifting derelicts. In the confusion, the R&D vessel was lost until a group of smugglers robbed the floating tomb some months later. Most of the goods they didn't keep wound up in "Glah's" shops throughout the galaxy.

#### Game Information:

A neural interface device is wired into the standard control systems of any starship. Four long wires ending in gelatinous diodes are placed on the pilot's temples and just below the ears. After some initialization, the user can issue commands to his ship simply by thought.

Unfortunately, most ship computers keep track of so many millions of variables, vectors, and power management routines that only the most disciplined minds can sift through the massive amount of data and discern what is truly important. Obviously, the more the computer has to keep up with, the harder this becomes. It is nearly impossible to interface with anything larger than a freighter. Rumors have circulated for ages that one of the Empire's remaining Star Destroyers is controlled by a withered savant equipped with such a machine, but the tales are doubtful at best.

A character using a neural interface must make a *Perception* roll every round to discern usable data from the millions of other extraneous signals. The difficulty is determined by the chart below. If successful, any rolls made for the ship (such as *piloting*, *gunnery*, *astrogation*, etc.) are made at +2D for that round. This does not count as two actions. The neural interfacing process is so incredibly fast that the character's roll to interact with it takes practically no time at all, so it is considered a "free" action.

Interfacing with such an incredibly fast device is tiring work, so users will have to rest one round out of every four whether they have been making *Perception* rolls or failing them.

Small Ship (Lone Scout-A, T-16, etc.) .....	Easy
Standard Fighter (X-wing, TIE, etc.) .....	Moderate
Small Freighter or Bomber .....	Difficult
Corvettes, Light Cruisers, Frigates .....	Very Difficult
Cruisers and Star Destroyers .....	Heroic

### Jodakan Needler Crab

**Cost:** 250

**Quantity:** 1 in each shop

The vast seas of Jodaka produce many strange creatures, though none are as deceptively deadly as the Jodakan needler crab. This strange crustacean looks much like the spider crabs of other worlds. The needler crab, however, lives on the rocky reefs that jut above Jodaka's rough seas and feeds off the gulls that, in turn, try to feed off it.

The most interesting thing about the needler crab is the way it catches its prey. A hollow tube lies just below the shell along the width of its back, so that the opening points outward just above its tiny eyes. Within this tube the crab secretes a paralyzing poison that solidifies into a type of dart. When a gull or other target gets within two meters, the crab fires its projectile. The poison acts quickly and

the hungry crab then scampers over to feed on its fallen prey.

#### Game Information:

A needler crab can be induced to fire its biotic needle. This is done by tapping it on the back of the shell just above the air sacks that provide the barb's propulsion. If the needle hits and causes damage, the target must make a *Strength* test versus the potency of the poison (4D). Failure indicates that the victim is totally paralyzed for 10D6 minus *Strength* minutes.

There are a few steps an owner must take to keep his "weapon" alive. First, she must let it spend at least four hours per day in a saltwater environment such as an aquarium, and second, the crab must be fed at least one pound of meat per day.

If a crab ever sees a winged creature of any sort within 25 meters, it will leap from its owner and rush to attack. Needle crabs never miss an opportunity to bring down a bird if they have a barb ready. This can prove embarrassing if the owner has just met with a flying sapient and the needler crab paralyzes him before the first handshake!

#### Needler Crab

**Type:** Jodakan crustacean

**DEXTERITY** 2D

Needler weapons 4D

**PERCEPTION** 1D

**STRENGTH** 1D-2 (no lower than 1)

**Move:** 3

**Size:** 0.1 meters

**Special Abilities:**

*Poisonous projectile:* see below

#### Needler-Barb

**Scale:** Character

**Skill:** 4D (The crab's skill, not the owner's)

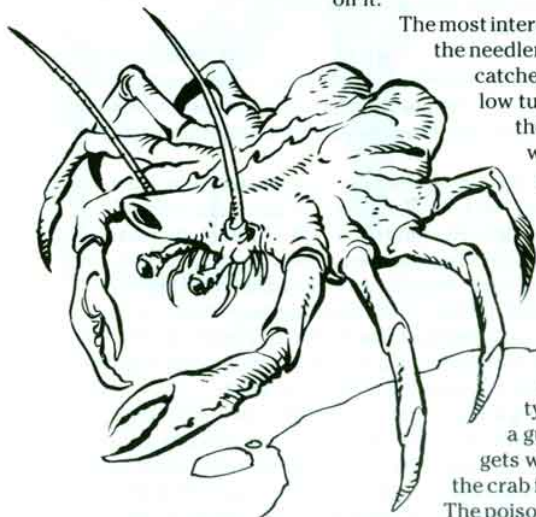
**Ammo:** 1

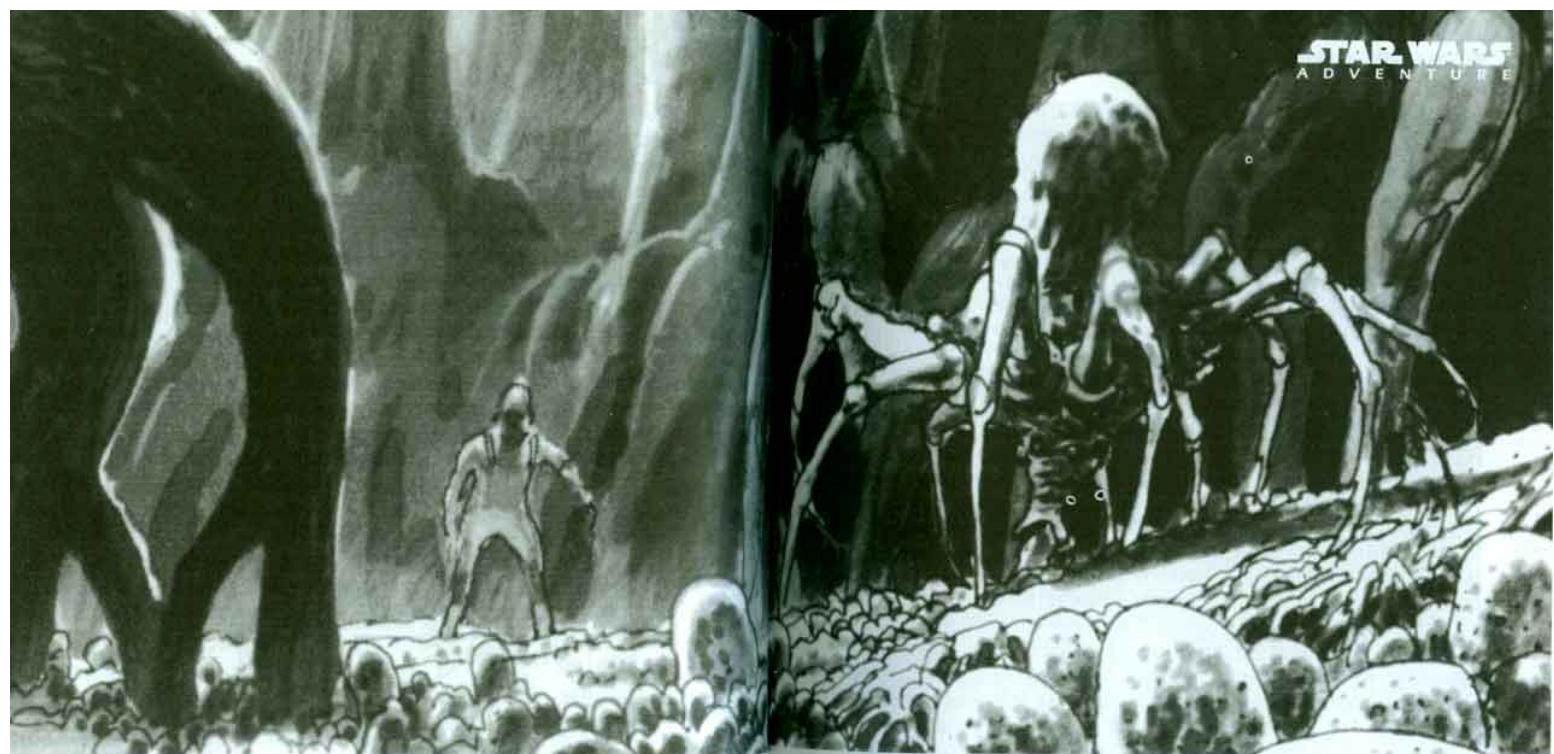
**Fire Rate:** 1 per 4 hours

**Ranges:** 1/2/-

**Damage:** 1D plus paralysis

**Note:** Since the crab has to excrete the materials that form its needle, it must be well fed and kept from injury or other distress. Under these conditions, it will create another barb in about four hours.





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# The Quality of Mercy

by Nicky Rea

Illustrations by Scott Neely

*Keldon hurried toward the Commander's office. The harried medic stopped outside the door, mentally and physically pulling himself together before facing the old man. The news was grim, far worse than they had thought in the beginning. Could all this have started only 12 hours ago? Keldon himself was the only medic still in good enough condition to fulfill his duties. The medical droids had assumed total care of the 40 patients who filled sick bay. The 100 or so less severe cases were staying in their living quarters, ostensibly to halt the spread of the plague. From the tests he had just finished, Keldon knew that strategy was doomed. So were all the personnel on the base unless someone could go for the medicine they needed and return in time. He could hear the agonized coughing from within the office and knew the Commander was gravely ill too. He knocked and entered, and after suppressing his shock at Commander Astred's appearance, gave him the report and his recommendation.*

"We can't send anyone." Astred paused to cough. "At the rate this thing is progressing, anyone from the base would be too ill to continue within hours. We'll have to hope that some of our supply ships return early. They can't be allowed to land, however; we'll have to send them a message explaining the situation. Is anyone left in communications? Blast, then we two will have to do it. Come on, Keldon, we have to get the droid set up with a continuous broadcast message before we collapse too. Then all we can do is wait—and hope."

## Introduction

Set during any period after the Battle of Yavin and before the Battle of Endor, "The Quality of Mercy" is an adventure for four to six characters who have ties to the Rebel Alliance. They may be members of the Rebel Alliance, smugglers, merchants or some other group composed of people who have a greater motivation than their own self-interest. A force-sensitive character would fit in well, and a pilot with a ship equivalent in cargo capacity to a stock YT-1300 freighter is a necessity. They are currently based on a minor Alliance outpost on the small, second moon of the planet Tiragga. (The base may be moved to any other semi-isolated location to suit a gamemaster's campaign.) The opposition is set for relatively inexperienced characters. If more powerful characters are used, their opponents may be made more exciting by raising their attributes or skills, adding more foes or making an otherwise standard foe force-sensitive.

A good book on tropical rain forests that features color pictures would be extremely helpful in running this adventure. Some recent films feature rain forest settings and *The Empire Strikes Back* provides good pictures of rain forest and swamp areas. The scenes of the Ewok village which feature their tree houses in *Return of the Jedi* also provide some idea of adapting to a treetop environment.

## Episode One: The Warning

Read aloud:

After this shipment, Commander Astred will never complain about the supplies you bring to the base again! You got one sweet deal on this equipment. Even the spare parts look like they've been refurbished. Too bad those customs agents got so curious. Having to blast off planet without the food and water you'd counted on loading meant a belt-tightening, uncomfortable trip back. (The second moon of Tiragga comes into view around the

## Kirtania

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Temperate

**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)

**Hydrosphere:** Moderate

**Gravity:** Standard

**Terrain:** Jungle, plain, mountain, desert

**Length of Day:** 23 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 369 local days

**Sapient Species:** Araquia (N), Humans

**Starport:** Standard class (3)

**Population:** 2 million Humans, 10,000 non-native races, 1,500 Araquia

**Planet Function:** Trade

**Government:** Competing economic states (Surana, Kinkosa, and Dulai)

**Tech Level:** Atomic

**Major Exports:** Medicines, raw materials and metals

**Major Imports:** High technology

**Capsule:** Kirtania lies in the Yyrta system and is the fourth planet from Yyrta, a yellow star. It is positioned along a trade route that has recently become more popular. Colonized by several groups of Humans (and a few aliens) and spurred on by economic opportunity, Kirtania has quickly developed its industries and taken advantage of its new status. Though it would normally be considered to be in the Information Stage so far as its technology goes, only certain parts of the planet have been settled.

**Gamemaster Information:** Blessed with variable terrain and climate from arctic to tropical, Kirtania's most pressing problem is the depletion of its natural resources in the near future as each state tries to outdo the other. Particularly at risk are the planet's tropical rain forests and temperate woodlands due to the demand for luxury hardwoods.

Of more immediate concern, however, is Kinkosa's recent deal with the Empire. In return for complete modernization of Kinkosa City and its starport and for privileged trading status above the other two states, Kinkosa has agreed to turn over the greater portion of its territory to become an Imperial supply station.

bulk of the planet.) It will certainly feel good to get home, see some friends, have a good hearty meal and soak your bones in the hot springs.

At this point, a force-sensitive character will get the feeling that something is very wrong.

Suddenly the radio crackles to life. You recognize the voice of Commander Astred, hoarse though it is. "Warning! Do not approach the base! All our personnel have been infected by the bacteria which cause Direllian Plague, a deadly respiratory disease which incubates in hours and kills within days. The disease is treatable, but requires a medicine known as Shiarha Root, to which we have no access." A long, racking cough punctuates the message at this point.

"The planet Kirtania lies within two days travel through hyperspace," the Commander continues. "According to our medical records, Kirtania is one of the few planets where Shiarha Root grows. Further, the noted epidemiologist, Dr. T'jaleq Kith'Araquia, also lives on the planet in the state known as Kinkosa. He is one of the doctors who first identified Direllian Plague and its treatment." The commander's voice becomes notably weaker. "He should be able to help you. We can hold out for about a week. Please, help us."

The Commander's voice ceases, and a mechanical voice replaces it, saying, "This is a continuously repeating message. No personnel are currently available. Stand by for coordinates for the planet Kirtania. Message will repeat in 30 seconds."

The characters have no food left, and only half a day's supply of water. If they leave immediately for Kirtania, they will be able to make it before they face real starvation and dehydration. If the characters insist on landing at the base, they are met in the hangar bay by a protocol droid which explains that the base is strictly off-limits. Though it is believed the bacteria originated in the food supplies, it may be airborne by now. Should they persist, allow the characters to become infected and reduce die codes by one pip for each day they spend retrieving the medicine. No die code should fall below 1.

Characters can find information on Kirtania in their nav computer or through a Moderate difficulty *planetary systems* roll.

The coordinates given for the hyperspace jump to Kirtania are correct at this time (a Moderate *astrogation* roll will confirm this), and plot the route that is the quickest and easiest.

## Episode Two: What Are They Doing Here?

Read Aloud:

As your ship enters the Yyrthan system, you can see Kirtania. From far out, the planet is a pleasant green-blue color with

respectable amounts of cloud cover. From a little closer in, as you approach Kinkosa starport, you can see a vast blue-green area with an enormous river winding through it. It looks as though several hundred kilometers have been stripped down to bare soil. Large parts of the forested area are blackened and bare, while other parts are in flames, sending oily smoke billowing into the atmosphere. Near the blackened and flaming areas, several wide scars have been scraped across the land, and huge equipment crawls forward, levelling trees.

According to the records this system was supposed to be free of Imperial control. Apparently nobody told that Star Destroyer they weren't supposed to be here! Somebody's paying attention. You're already being hailed from Kinkosa Starport and are told to identify yourselves.

The Empire has no reason to suspect the characters of being Alliance agents, but all free-traders are somewhat suspect as far as the Empire is concerned. The characters may try using *con, persuasion, bureaucracy*, or other applicable skills to convince the starport controller that they are not rebel agents and mean no harm to Kinkosa. This is a Difficult task. Some excuses which will allay suspicions include: a forced landing due to ship damage, being victimized by pirates and needing new supplies, or attempting to open a new trade route and not realizing the Empire had other plans for the starport. If they are successful, read the following aloud:

**You are cleared to land and directed to landing area A3. As you enter the lower atmosphere, your vision is sharply reduced by the teeming rain that cascades down around you. It blurs the starport into a washed-out gray smudge set against the vivid green of the jungle beyond. The starport controller speaks again. "An Imperial customs inspection team will meet you at your assigned landing area. Please give them your full cooperation. Welcome to Kinkosa Starport." As you set down, you see the team already in position and moving towards you.**

Since they are carrying the spare parts and equipment they were bringing to the Alliance base, there will be a little trouble with the inspection (which a small bribe can clear up). Of course, the characters may have other things they'd rather the customs inspector didn't find: anything with too obvious a connection to the Alliance to get out of with a bribe, like lightsabers and Alliance armor. They have time to hide one questionable item each. The customs inspection team will need to make a Difficult *search* roll if

the characters are successful in making their Moderate *hide* rolls. Otherwise, some fast talking may be necessary to re-convince the Imperials that they aren't Rebel sympathizers. If everything goes wrong, arrest them. They can always break out and continue their mission.

**Imperial Customs Inspection Team.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+1, dodge 4D+1, search 4D, Strength 3D+1, brawling 4D.* Move: 10. Blast vest (+1 STR from energy attacks, +1D STR from physical attacks), blaster pistol (4D), comlink.

There are six underlings and one officer.

The officer has a *command* skill of 4D. He asks for a complete cargo manifest. If they lack one, the best defense is a glib tongue—and a few more credits.

Should the characters mention Dr. Kith'Araquia to any Imperials, they are immediately arrested, taken to the Imperial base's detention block and interrogated. Dr. Kith'Araquia has been causing quite a bit of trouble and is wanted for crimes against the Empire. If characters are arrested, they are allowed to escape sometime after they've been questioned to see if they unwittingly lead Imperial troops to Kith'Araquia's and his tribesmen's hiding place.

## Episode Four: Contacts

### Scene One: Kutu

Read aloud:

Nice place. Hot as blazes and pouring rain. Your clothes stick to you five seconds after you leave your ship. Heavy equipment rumbles by transporting huge stacks of logs to cargo ships or carrying workers toward the jungle. Wide, muddy gashes have been carved from the starport into the jungle near the city. A walker stands poised near the largest road, looming over it like a vulture examining its prey. Clouds of oily smoke rise above the greenery in several places, stubbornly smoldering even in the heavy rain. Patrols of stormtroopers move through the starport.

A covered walkway ahead and to your left seems to offer some shelter, and it looks as though several buildings in that direction are cantinas or small shops rather than Imperial digs. Maybe there's a medical facility too. This Dr. Kith'Araquia is supposed to be around here somewhere.

Once they move a little further away from the landing area, the characters find themselves in the town part of Kinkosa City. Several

cantinas, entertainment facilities, shops and stores which cater to both the Imperial and private spaceport personnel have sprung up in this part of town. It is similar to Mos Eisley except that off-duty Imperial officers frequent the area and there are fewer aliens than might be expected. The population of the area is almost overwhelmingly Human.

A notice displayed prominently on several walls reads:

#### Kinkosa, Community of the Future!

Kinkosa City and its starport are undergoing modernization and expansion. We apologize for any delays due to construction or from implementing new security regulations. Our great state will be hosting an Imperial supply station in the near future. Many new job opportunities are available. Apply now!

As they travel through the area, the characters are subjected to beggars, con artists, thieves and scavengers. If they group together and present a tough front, these spaceport vermin get the hint and back off. Even when under the covered walkway, the characters are only inches from the incessant pouring rain. The heat seems to sap their energy, making each step and motion labored. The character who seems to be paying the most attention to where the party is going should be given a chance to make a Moderate difficulty *Perception* roll to notice a wanted poster hung on a nearby wall. If they bother to look at it, read aloud:

The poster shows a hairy, brownish green spider-like creature with six bright black eyes and menacing mandibles. Under the picture are the words: WANTED For Crimes against the Empire and Acts of Terrorism against the City and State of Kinkosa: Dr. T'Jaleq Kith'Araquia.

Anyone having information about this criminal or other Araquian tribesmen should contact Commander Teru at the Imperial base. A reward of 3,500 credits is offered for Kith'Araquia—only if alive and able to communicate.

As you read the notice, a voice from behind you says, "So, newcomers. You are bounty men or need guide? You like the doctor? Or credits you want? Tell quickly. Cannot be waiting all day for fast talk." A two meter tall lanky female alien with rubbery skin, reddish violet, snaky, scale-covered hair, dark bulging eyes and a wide, lipless mouth smiles at you ingenuously. "Kutu I am. You?"

Should the characters not notice the wanted poster, Kutu has noticed their arrival and becomes intrigued by them. She discreetly follows and overhears any questions about the doctor they ask locals, at which point she introduces herself as above.

## Kutu

**Type:** Adventurous Ho'Din medical researcher

**DEXTERITY 3D+2**

Blaster 4D, dodge 5D+1, thrown weapons 4D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien species 4D+2, languages 5D, planetary systems 4D, survival: jungle 6D

**MECHANICAL 1D**

Communications 2D+1

**PERCEPTION 2D+1**

Hide 4D, persuasion 3D+1, search 5D, sneak 4D+2

**STRENGTH 3D+1**

Brawling 4D+2, climbing/jumping 6D, stamina 4D, swimming 4D

**TECHNICAL 4D**

First aid 6D+2, medicine: pharmacology 2D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 3

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), canteen with water, 4 days ration bars,

netting, 2 medpacs, 200 credits.

**Capsule:** Kutu is a Ho'Din (see *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races*).

Anyone who makes a Difficult *alien species* roll knows what she is and the following information about her people: The Ho'Din are from a planet which is very hot, rainy and tree-covered. They are botanists and pharmacologists whose medicinal plants have proven effective against several diseases.

If no character is able to identify Kutu's species, she explains what she is in some detail as she gets to know the party better.

Kutu is in Kinkosa to study some of the flora in the nearby jungle. She hopes to combine her knowledge of medicinal plants with that of Dr. Kith'Araquia, and has been taking samples and searching for him. Horrified by the destruction of the rain forest which is taking place, and afraid to head off into the jungle on her own, she has been searching for a group to accompany her further in to locate the doctor. The characters seem perfect for the job. If they are after the bounty, she hopes she can lead them into a trap. If they seek Dr.

Kith'Araquia for some peaceful purpose, they have a common cause. She offers to guide them into the rain forest, claiming that she knows where Dr. Kith'Araquia is.

It is entirely up to the characters whether they accept her help or not. If they choose to enter the rain forest on their own, she follows them by moving through the canopy overhead and keeping them in sight. She does not have the knowledge to help the characters directly. Though she has heard the description of Shiarha Root, she does not know which part of it is effective as a treatment for Direllian Plague. If any character mentions the never-ending rain in her presence, she points out that it is the dry season, when it only rains during the afternoon and early evening. During the rainy season, it pours rain all day and night.

## Scene Two: Mistaken Identity

Read aloud:

**The unmistakable sound of a heavy blaster coupled with chips flying from the wall next to you alerts you to the presence of unfriendly company. From down the street you see four figures wearing black bounty hunter armor running toward you and pausing behind cover to fire again.**

The characters are caught in a long, narrow corridor between buildings. The nearest doorway is ten meters away toward the bounty hunters. The roof of the corridor is five meters overhead. Set out into the corridor are several metal barrels, which provide 1/4 cover (adding 1D to the attacker's difficulty number). The bounty hunters have claimed four of them, and there are three more near the characters. Kutu dives behind one of them. As the characters decide what to do or return fire, another shot comes from behind them as three more bounty hunters take up position there blocking any retreat. The barrels provide no shelter from their blasters.

**The Ebon Coursers (7 bounty hunters).** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 4D, blaster 4D+1, Perception 3D, Strength 3D+2.* Move 10. Protective vest (+2 to torso front and back to resist damage), medpac, heavy blaster pistol (5D).

The Ebon Coursers work as a team and are employed by Schnil Hakoon, a Kubaz crime lord who has recently bought into Kinkosa's starport district. Unfortunately for the characters, the Coursers have mistaken one of them for a notorious thief named Pierce Mantrell. Mantrell just robbed Hakoon's headquarters and made off with the crime lord's favorite artwork, a brilliantly smoothed palm-



sized amber crystal with a rare insect trapped inside worth about 35,000 credits.

Read aloud:

**After the first volley of shots, one of the bounty hunters yells, "Give it up, Mantrell. Hakoon may let you live if you return it—and beg hard enough. You're surrounded. You don't have a chance."**

If there is no immediate reply, they fire again, this time to kill. The characters should be smart enough to figure out they've been mistaken for someone else. They can try to persuade the Coursers of this, con them somehow, make an escape over the rooftops, or shoot it out. Persuading the bounty hunters that they've got the wrong people is a Very Difficult task.

If they just can't make any headway, an Imperial patrol arrives on the scene and orders a cease fire. After checking everyone's stories, they confiscate all weapons, lecture all participants on waging gun battles in the middle of a public thoroughway, threaten to take everyone in to perform forced labor, and finally, allow everyone to go about their business (unless someone is stupid enough to complain of their treatment, argue or act smart with them).

### Scene Three: Hakoon

Read aloud:

**No sooner is the battle over and the patrol gone than you hear clapping and a mocking voice saying, "Bravo! Bravo! An excellent showing!" Turning, you see a dapperly dressed alien. From beneath the cowl of his cloak, a short greenish-black trunk protrudes. Bowing, he says, "I am Schnil Hakoon. I see that these fools have failed in their mission to recover the Amber Eye, for none of you is Pierce Mantrell. You are, however, from the ship which arrived earlier today. Attend me. I wish to make you an offer."**

**Schnil Hakoon, Kubaz crimelord.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 2D+2, *blaster* 3D+1, *dodge* 4D, *bureaucracy* 3D, *business: insect farming*, 6D, *languages* 4D, *streetwise Kirtania*, 5D, *Perception* 3D, *bargain* 4D, *Strength* 3D. Move: 10.

Schnil Hakoon is from the Kubaz homeworld of Kubindi, where his family owns the patents on several strains of designer insects. Kubaz insect cuisine is becoming more well-known throughout the Empire as Imperial officers of discriminating taste "hire" Kubaz chefs, while on Kubindi itself there is always great demand for "new" or unique insects.

Hakoon is been both a ruthless businessman and an innovator.

He came to Kirtania because the planet was rumored to be teeming with all kinds of insects. He became a crime lord in order to raise the money he needs to corner the market on insect farming here. Hakoon hopes to adapt Kubaz insect farming techniques to Kirtania (in conjunction with the Empire's more mundane agricultural plans) and wants to eventually control the lion's share of his home planet's domestic market as well. Meanwhile, he is the person to see for black market goods in Kinkosa.

Hakoon suggests that the characters accompany him to a nearby cantina where they can discuss business. If they agree, he tells them that from his reports they seem to be lacking in food and water aboard their ship. If the Imperial patrol confiscated their weapons, he also mentions that they seem a little light on firepower as well. He offers to completely restock their supplies aboard ship and get them weapons in good working condition in return for a favor.

The characters should realize they need the supplies and they probably lack the credits to pay for them. If they seem interested, Hakoon explains that his own people seem incapable of finding the thief who took the Amber Eye (he describes it for them). He wants the characters to find the thief for him and recover the jewel.

He tell them the following about Mantrell: Pierce Mantrell is a Human (describe someone who looks much like one of the characters). Aside from this, Mantrell has a mole on his left cheek. Since Hakoon's men have covered most of the places in town, Mantrell must have gone out into the jungle by himself or disguised himself and gone out with an Imperial work crew. Hakoon is certain he has not gone aboard any of the ships in the starport.

Hakoon has no survival packs or gear to help the characters in the jungle. All his supplies of that sort have been sold to the Imperial work crews. Hakoon promises to deliver the supplies to their ship and arranges to get weapons to them via one of his men within the next few minutes. He tells them to contact the bartender here when they have succeeded, and the bartender will notify him.

Characters may get normal weapons such as blasters, heavy blasters, knives, vibroblades, force pikes, and even a few grenades. Hakoon has no access to specialized weapons such as bowcasters or lightsabers, or any weapons found mostly on primitive worlds.

## Episode Five: Babes in the Woods

### The Rain Forest

Kirtania's rain forest is moist, hot and subject to large volumes of

rain. There is an outer area which is covered in thick, clinging blue-green foliage, but once through this layer, there is actually very little underbrush to impede walking. The light which penetrates the canopy of leaves overhead does so only where trees have fallen and left a gap. The lower canopy may be up to 30 meters overhead, and the upper canopy may reach 80 meters high. Plants, insects, and animals all grow much larger there.

The ground area is covered in a sort of twilight which becomes completely black at night. The trees have wide supporting buttresses (some of which are razor sharp, doing 2D damage) which stick out along the sides and provide support. Thick, flowered lianas (woody vines) drape the tops and limbs of most of the trees and wind down the sides. These lianas provide the support the trees need to withstand high winds and lashing rain, since the trees' roots are quite shallow. Often, jungle slinkers are mistaken for lianas and vice versa. Insects and small rodents are the main ground animals, though big lizards often perch overhead and may leap down on an unsuspecting passersby.

Hundreds of exotically colored ferns, flowers, roots, and fungi are found from ground level up through the canopy layers. Several kinds of swinging screechers, avians, croakers, slinkers, web weavers and insects make their homes in the canopy, and brilliantly colored flowers are in bloom to spread their heady scents throughout the forest.

Gorgeous winged floaters flicker through the half-light, alighting on flowers, and the drip of rain falling through the leaves is punctuated by the hum of insects. The chattering calls of swinging screechers and croakers are almost drowned out by the singing or raucous caws of the avians high overhead.

The rain forest has the most complex, varied, and fragile ecosystem known. Strangely enough, this profuse life exists on soil which is extremely infertile. Wherever trees are cut down or burnt to provide farmland, the soil becomes played out in two to five years. Without the ever-renewing cycle of growth and decay from the forest, all nutrients wash away. Lack of trees causes soil erosion, less rain falls as fewer trees recycle moisture, and in a few short years, there is desert where there was once abundant life. Only massive infusions of chemical fertilizers make farming this land possible.

The Empire is utilizing only a fraction of what the forest has to offer. Initially, they send crews in to harvest valuable hardwoods and set up camps. When the area has been stripped, they burn the

"non-valuable" trees to provide nutrients for the soil and to open the area for use as farming or grazing land. In a few years, they will have converted the forest into fields (ostensibly for the profit of the Kinkosans). The continuing cost of the fertilizer to maintain those fields will make the Kinkosans clients of the Empire who barely realize enough profits from supplying food to the Imperials to keep their starport operating (as a base for the Empire, of course).

Force-sensitive characters feel as though they are surrounded by the Force itself as they travel through the rain forest, though they also feel a menace and a wrongness coming from the direction where the Imperial work crews are cutting and burning.

### Scene One: Getting In

With or without weapons and a guide, the characters have to go into the rain forest to locate Dr. Kith'Araquia. If Kutu is with them, she can tell them how to survive in the rain forest. Hopefully, the characters will have enough sense to avoid attempting to enter the forest along the Imperial roads.

Though they are clearly the most open ways in and seem to provide the easiest surface for travel, they are off-limits to all but Imperial personnel and hired workers. The scout walker (see page 103 of *Star Wars The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*) is manned and stands ready to deter the curious and the rebellious. Those intruding on the area receive one warning before being fired upon.

If the characters try a more secret way in, they can spot the tracks of a single humanoid leading into the trees if they succeed in a Difficult *search* roll (they are Mantrell's tracks). They may opt to follow the tracks or move off in another direction. Following is not easy. Once through the thick outer layer of vegetation, it becomes a Heroic task to find the tracks except whenever they are mentioned specifically in the text.

### Scene Two: The First Night

The characters arrived on Kirtania in the early afternoon. By now it is approaching dark. They need some sort of light to see by. The information given on the rain forest provides descriptions for the characters as they travel, but with nightfall, things change. They may camp on the ground or climb into the canopy if they have ropes or find strong lianas to support them. Read aloud:

**What seemed an emerald paradise by day is now an encroaching blackness. Eyes glint from all around you and the scream of a predator cuts through the cheeping and twittering of the insects.**

**Silence falls around you. After what seems an eternity, some silent signal is given and the insects take up their chorus once again. It seems the danger is past for now.**

A few false alarms from small rodents raiding their camp for food or a confused bird fluttering and banging its way through the nearby foliage should keep them from getting too much sleep. Once all is quiet and everyone relaxed again, continue reading:

**A thunderous explosion wakes all of you and sends you leaping to your feet or instinctively diving for cover. Rolling across the wide river which will be your chief obstacle tomorrow, it echoes and re-echoes, making sleep a distant memory. Trying to gauge where the explosion took place, you would estimate it to be about a kilometer north, about where the Imperial work crews have been cutting their largest road.**

Should the characters investigate, after several mishaps with unseen vines, snakes' pits, and other obstacles, they come upon the scene of the explosion. They have no trouble finding it once they get close enough, as the smell of oily smoke and the glow of orange fires flickering ahead guides them. Before they are able to make out the details, however, they have to get through two patrols of Imperial scouts (use the stats for standard Imperial Army Troopers). There are six scouts in each patrol. Read aloud:

**An enormous transport carrying cut hardwood logs has been overturned and is on fire. Machines which are used to scrape out and widen the muddy slash which the Imperials are calling a road are surrounded by troopers with drawn blasters. Workers are grouped together away from the blaze under the shadow of an AT-ST. Near the trees on the far side of the road a group of scouts attempts to cut others free from some sort of net which has been dropped over them and in which they have become entangled.**

The explosion was the result of sabotage by the Araquian tribesmen who have been fighting to protect their home from destruction. The patrols are skirting the perimeter of the Imperial work area searching for the perpetrators. If noticed or caught, the party is blamed for the explosion. Firefights are a distinct possibility.

If they do get caught up in a battle, they should have plenty of opportunities to make a run for it. They can't hope to stand up to the Imperials, who have an almost inexhaustible supply of troopers. If Kutu is with them, she leads them up into the canopy, climbing

lianas with hand and footholds (known as screecher ladders) to escape pursuit. If she was not with them, she now calls from overhead and urges them to climb up.

### Scene Three: Jungle Encounters

Kutu insists that they must cross the river to find Dr. Kith'Araquia. She is certain he and his tribesmen cannot be found on this side.

#### Encounter One: The River

Read aloud:

**Making your way through heavy vegetation, you emerge onto a muddy embankment as large, slithering creatures slide down the bank and into the water. It is not raining, and the bright sun dazzles your eyes after the twilight green of the interior. Before you the mighty river stretches. Fish leap and dive out in the center, snapping up the brightly colored insects which buzz and chase one another just above the surface. You would estimate that the river's width exceeds two kilometers. There is no apparent way to cross except swimming. Searching along the bank for anything which might help you, you come upon a cove-like area which contains huge water lilies and lily pads. The pads must be four meters across. A single humanoid footprint is pressed into the mud in this area. It heads toward the river.**

The footprint matches that of Pierce Mantrell which they encountered earlier. The lily pads will support up to 100 kilograms weight and can be used to cross the river provided their woody stems are broken off. The stems themselves provide convenient paddles.

The characters must make Moderate *Dexterity* rolls to successfully break off and board their lily pad boats. Three Difficult *Dexterity* checks are required to steer it across the river. A Moderate *Strength* check when halfway across allows the character to keep on course despite the river's current. Otherwise, the pad floats off course and downriver 1-3 kilometers.

As they float across, the characters' lily pads are nudged from underneath by two river serpents attempting to overturn them. A Very Difficult *Dexterity* roll is required to keep upright. Should they be overturned, the characters become the targets of attacks by the serpents. If any characters are over the weight limit, they may use the lily pad as an aid in keeping afloat as they swim across. This automatically exposes them to attack from the hungry river serpents, however.

**Two River Serpents.** *Dexterity 3D, Perception 3D, Strength 3D+2 Swimming 5D.* Special abilities: Can constrict around man-sized or smaller prey and use bite attack simultaneously. Constriction damage is 4D; bite damage is 4D. Move: 14. Size: 2 to 3 meters long.

These large, non-poisonous, carnivorous reptiles bask along river banks and feed on larger mammals (like rodents and wild pigs). Their preferred attack is to lure prey into the water where they have the advantage.



Once on the other side of the river, the characters may pick up Mantrell's trail again from his scrambling up the muddy bank. Kutu thinks he is headed for the doctor's hideout.

### Encounter Two: Allies?

Read aloud:

**It is late afternoon and you are beginning to wonder if you are on a fool's errand. There has been no sign of the doctor or his**

**tribesmen, and you aren't even sure if that footprint you thought you saw about half an hour ago was really there or not. From a few meters ahead a man's scream is followed by an earsplitting snarl. As you move forward, you see a huge, dappled lizard leap onto a man. A moment later, another lands atop the forwardmost person in your group. Hissing and yowling, it slashes with its claws.**

If the party is traveling in the canopy, leaping from branch to branch and swinging across where necessary, they (and Mantrell) have just disturbed a pair of mated predator lizards in their lair. Panicked, the lizards attacked. The attacks may knock their victims from the branch. A Difficult *Dexterity* roll is needed to catch hold of vines, leaves and other branches to break the 30 meter fall to the ground.

If they were traveling on the ground, the lizards were lying on a branch overhead when first Mantrell, then the party passed beneath them. They spring down from branch to branch until able to leap on Mantrell and the lead member of the party. They assume Mantrell and the characters are large herbivores and thus are easy prey.

**Two Predator Lizards.** *Dexterity 4D, Perception 2D+2, Strength 3D+1.* Special abilities: May rake with back claws for 5D damage if successful with front claws; front claws do 4D and bite does 4D damage. Move 14. Size: 1.9 -2.5 meters long.

Once rescued from the lizards, Mantrell profusely thanks the characters and tries to find out why they are in the jungle. He looks remarkably like one of the characters, but has a mole on his left cheek and is obviously different (heavier, higher cheekbones, etc.) when the two are seen together.

If the characters don't seem to be Imperial agents or if they mention Hakoon, he tells a sad tale of attempting to reach Dr. Kith'Araquia to find a cure for his little daughter, Olina, who is gravely ill and needs the medications only the doctor can provide. He admits to stealing the Amber Eye, but says he was desperate. He claims the crimelord stole his cargo, leaving him with no money to purchase the medicine he needs, so he stole the Eye in retaliation, hoping to offer it to the doctor in return for the medicine.

### Pierce Mantrell

**Type:** Self-centered thief and con man.

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 5D, dodge 4D+2, pick pocket 5D+1, sleight-of-hand 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Languages 4D, streetwise 4D+2, value 4D

**MECHANICAL 2D+2**

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Con 6D+2, hide 4D+2, persuasion 3D+1, search 4D+2, sneak (urban) 6D

**STRENGTH 3D+2**

Climbing/jumping 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D**

Security 6D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 2

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), medpac, canteen, survival pack, the Amber Eye in a small, soft neck pouch, 200 credits.

**Capsule:** Pierce Mantrell is both a thief and a con man extraordinaire. Moving about the galaxy, he lives well on his ill-gotten gains. He has worked for various crimelords, been a pirate, an Imperial snitch, a smuggler, and a dealer in used Imperial goods. He fancies himself a ladies man, and plays to their sympathies whenever possible. Mantrell's only loyalty is to himself.

Whenever capture (or payback for his thefts and lies) seems imminent, he has a talent for concocting believable sob stories which usually get him off the hook long enough for him to take ship elsewhere. He gets so caught up in the stories he weaves that he can make himself cry and comes to believe them himself. In actuality, he has no daughter, and stole the gem to provide him with living funds for awhile.

Mantrell discovered the tribe about a week ago and reasoned that once he'd stolen the gem, he'd be safe among them for awhile. He originally planned to return to the starport and arrange transport off planet as soon as the hunt for him cooled down. Before leaving, he intended to make some extra money by selling the Imperials information on the tribe's hideout.

If the party takes the Amber Eye and treats him as a prisoner, Mantrell tries to escape, recover the Eye and find the Imperials immediately to lead them to the characters and Dr. Kith'Araquia. If they treat him as an ally, he will accompany them and be helpful while trying to find out more about them. The Imperials pay well for useful information!

## Episode Six: The Araquia

### Scene One: Pig in a Poke

Read aloud:

**Just before twilight, you come upon a strange sight. Ahead of you there is a small clearing where two or three trees have toppled over and made an opening. On the far side of the clearing there is a net bag of some sort hung from a low branch. Something inside**

**the bag is struggling mightily. You think you hear a muffled cry from the bag.**

The bag is actually made of webbing, and is being used to restrain a rodent the Araquia caught. There are four Araquia with the captive, but they are hidden up in the trees. It requires a Very Difficult *search* roll to notice them concealed there. They became aware of the party as soon as the characters arrived within ten meters of the clearing and scrambled up into the foliage to hide. Force-sensitive characters may spot them with a successful use of *life detection* or *magnify senses*. Whenever the characters investigate the captive, one of the Araquia returns to their encampment to summon reinforcements while the other three get in position to throw webs on the newcomers.

**Three Araquian Tribesmen.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, web throwing 5D, languages 3D, hide 5D, search 4D, sneak 5D, Strength 3D, climbing/jumping 4D*. Special abilities: Construct and throw sticky webs to entangle opponents or prey and may inflict a paralyzing bite. The web has a strength of 5D, the bite causes 5D paralyzation (lasts about five minutes, does not paralyze autonomic nervous system). Move 12. Size: 2 meters long with leg span of up to 3 meters.

These three try to trap the characters in webs so they may be questioned by the tribe. If a battle begins, the Araquia seek to entangle the characters, ignoring Kutu since she is a Ho'Din and therefore considered an ally (since Ho'Din are also guardians of the forest). They recognize her species since Dr. Kith'Araquia worked with Sirta Kum, a Ho'Din who lived with their tribe for two years.

If the characters respond to the attack with deadly force, they are inundated with sticky webbing from all sides. Eventually, they are incapacitated, taken to the Araquian camp and questioned. There are about 100 Araquian tribespeople. If they allow themselves to be captured or try to talk to the Araquia, the characters will be received much more cordially. If Kutu is with them, the Araquia will take her word that the characters mean no harm.

### ■ Araquia

**Attribute Dice:** 12D

**DEXTERITY** 3D/4D

**KNOWLEDGE** 1D/3D

**MECHANICAL** 1D/2D+1

**PERCEPTION** 2D/3D+2

**STRENGTH** 3D/4D

**TECHNICAL** 2D/4D

**Special Abilities:**

*Web Gliding:* After a supporting platform has been made from web, the Araquia

may use it to glide upon the prevailing winds. Though they have minimal control, they cannot move the platform against the wind or make it soar higher (unless there is an updraft). When using the platform, the Araquia fill their bodies with air to make themselves lighter.

**Web Throwing:** Araquia throw their webs down on prey or opponents, entangling them and trapping them in this sticky "net," which has a *Strength* of 5D. Once entangled, prey may be wrapped up into a bag and carried off, or the Araquia may bite through the webbing to paralyze whatever is inside.

#### Story Factors:

**Pacifism:** The Araquia are protectors of the forests, and they seek to educate others concerning the forests' value. Those who abuse the forests' gifts are dissuaded through confiscating or ruining their equipment rather than causing damage to them. Killing (except as necessary to eat) and destroying the natural environment are repugnant to them.

**Move:** 12/16 (walking/climbing)

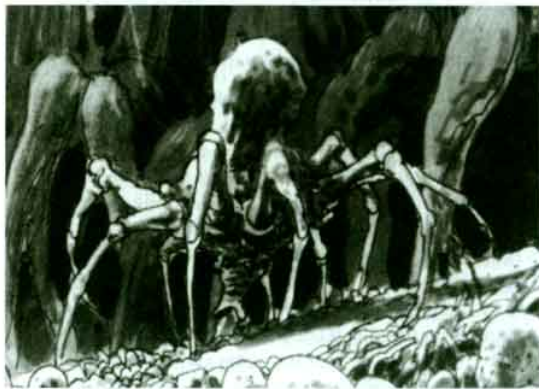
**Size:** 2 meters long with a leg span up to 3 meters.

**Capsule:** The Araquia are large greenish-brown, spider-like beings. Their faces feature mandibles and six black, beady eyes, which make them very alien looking and somewhat frightening. Native to Kirtania, these web-spinning omnivores once numbered in the thousands. Since the advent of Human colonization, with its attendant disturbance of the

forest environment and a misunderstanding which resulted in their being vigorously hunted and exterminated as "threats" during the early years, their numbers have fallen until there are barely 1,500 of them left. Overlords and protectors of the rain forests and deciduous woodlands of Kirtania, they make their

homes in the lower canopy, where they spin elaborate webs to trap the small rodents, insects and birds which provide the main part of their diet.

Good climbers, the Araquia often use the anchor strands of their webs to lower themselves to the ground, or cut it loose along with a webbing platform which they use to glide through the air to lower branches. When it is windy enough, they use these web platforms in the upper canopy, emerging above the treetops and flying to other trees like huge kites. Finally, they can cut their webs loose and drop them onto prey below



them. The sticky quality of the web does not hinder the Araquia, but causes great difficulty for anything caught in it. While their prey struggles to free itself, the Araquia quickly descend and tie up the web into a bag or use their paralyzing bite to quiet their captives. They do not prey upon intelligent species, finding the concept disturbing and repugnant.

Using their knowledge of native plants, several Araquia have been instrumental in controlling or curing rare diseases throughout the galaxy. Until recently, they have acted as guides to those wishing to enter the rain forest and as harvesters of the abundant plants, roots and fungi which provide the medicines which are the chief export of the planet. The most famous of the Araquia is Dr. T'Jaleq Kith'Araquia, who along with Sirta Kum, the noted Ho'Din pharmacologist, discovered the cure for Direllian Plague.

When the Empire arrived on Kirtania and began implementing plans to clear large portions of the rain forest to make room for farms and the projected expansion of Kinkosa City, Dr. Kith'Araquia tried dissuading them through logic. When that failed, he proposed legislation to stop the Empire's planned supply station. Tipped off that he was about to be arrested as a Rebel sympathizer, he and his fellow tribesmen retreated to the forest and prepared for war to save their homes and the ecosystem.

Kith'Araquia is currently acting as the witch doctor and chief strategist for his people. So far they have refrained from causing any injury to personnel and have concentrated on rendering the Imperials' equipment inoperative. They hope this will be enough, for they cannot bring themselves to kill even to save themselves and the forest.

## Scene Two: The Araquian Encampment

Whether as prisoners or visitors, the characters are taken to the Araquian hideout up in the canopy. Much of the middle canopy layer is kept cleared as most creatures use the easiest routes every day. This is also the area where Shiarha Root grows, and the characters may notice a deep pink bulbous root with bright red mottling spaced here and there.

They are taken to the Araquian council presided over by the witch doctor and told to explain their presence. The witch doctor wears a hood made of web which obscures his face and he jumps around menacingly as the characters are brought before him.

The characters must explain what they are doing here and what they want. Kutu will explain that she just wants to study with Dr. Kith'Araquia. When Mantrell is asked why he is there, he claims he is a fugitive from the Empire who is seeking sanctuary with the tribe. He then adds that he also wants to buy some medication for his sick little girl.

Whenever Dr. Kith'Araquia hears about the outbreak of Direllian Plague, he takes off the hood and ceases jumping around. He

explains that his tribe is planning a major attack on the Imperials' work camp and he will be unable to help the characters harvest what they need until after the attack.

### ■ Dr. T'Jaleq Kith'Araquia

**Type:** Dedicated Araquian doctor and pharmacologist, forest preservation guerrilla.

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Dodge 4D, web gliding 4D+2, web throwing 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 5D, cultures 4D, languages 6D, survival: jungle 6D

**MECHANICAL 1D +2**

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Command 4D, hide 4D+2, search 5D, sneak 4D+1

**STRENGTH 3D**

Climbing/jumping 4D

**TECHNICAL 4D**

First aid 7D, medicine: spec. diseases 5D, spec. pharmacology 4D

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 3

**Move:** 12/16

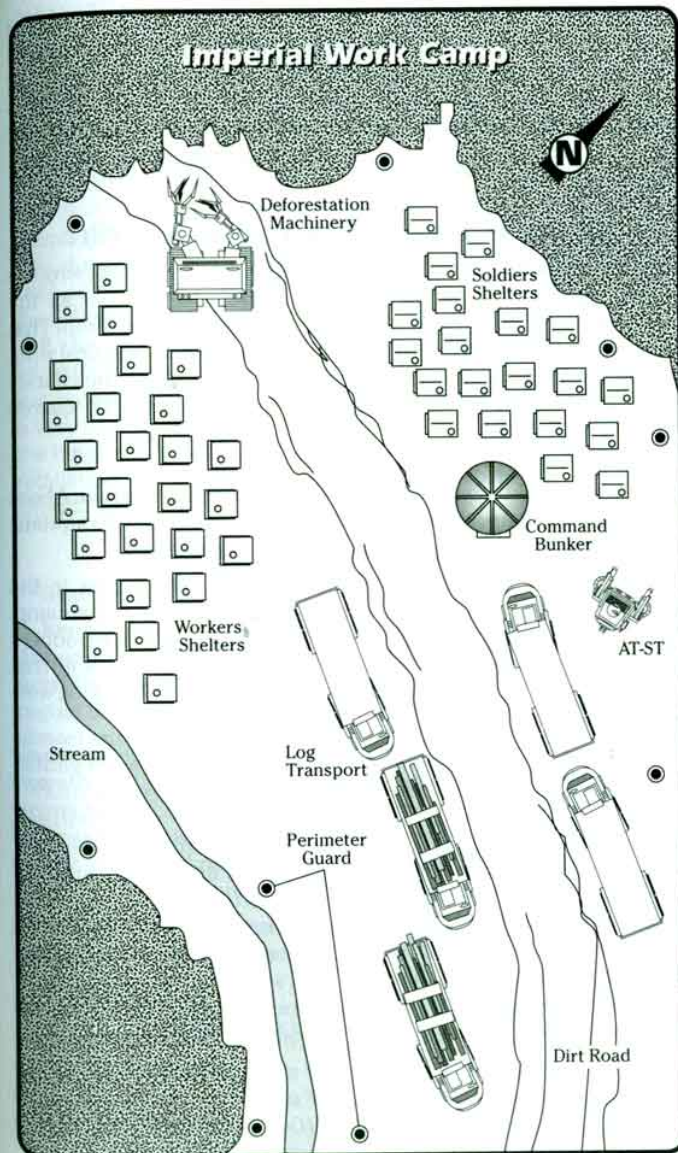
**Equipment:** Medpac, web

**Capsule:** Dr. T'Jaleq Kith'Araquia is a dedicated and compassionate being. He has devoted his life to discovering cures for the deadly diseases found throughout the galaxy. He is a firm proponent of natural medicine and sound ecological principles.

Kith'Araquia would be dry and scholarly if not for his passionate belief in forest preservation and his wicked sense of humor, which most often finds expression through taking advantage of Humans' and other aliens' natural aversion to his spider-like features. He is a firm believer in pacifism, though he is beginning to question whether his tribe's limited actions will be enough to turn aside the plans of the Empire.

If asked why they are fighting the development, Kith'Araquia explains about the destruction which results when the rain forest is cut down or burnt. He also emphasizes that most medicines, even those which are now synthesized, have their beginnings in forest environments. Some medicines, such as Shiarha Root, cannot be synthesized. Furthermore, bacteria and other disease-causing organisms tend to mutate and become resistant to medicines, and new ones must be found to combat deadly diseases. Without the plants, doctors would be completely dependent on chemical cures, many of which are less effective than natural ones.

The doctor asks the characters for their help in attacking the work camp. The Araquia plan to use explosives stolen from the Empire to blow up their equipment. This time, however, they intend to go even further. They plan to attack *en masse*, webbing soldiers and workers alike, bagging them and leaving them hanging from



nearby trees. They will then radio a message back to the Imperial base telling them to come get their people out of the forest and to stay out. They hope this will frighten most of the locals into quitting and make it too costly for the Empire to continue its plans. Unfortunately, they don't know the Empire very well and do not realize that Imperial scouts are combing the forest searching for them even now.

## Episode Seven: The Araquia Strike

If the characters agree, allow them to help plan the raid using the work camp map. There are enough Araquia to take out all the workers and about three-quarters of the troopers in the camp. That will leave 20 troopers and one AT-ST for the characters to deal with.

The camp is on alert. Though the Araquia are silent, the characters need to make Difficult *sneak* rolls to bypass perimeter guards and get in position.

Read aloud:

**You travel quickly through the canopy with the Araquia. About halfway to the Imperial work camp, the non-combatant Araquians take up positions as rear guards to await your return.**

Full dark is almost upon you, though the light lingers in the canopy. Mist begins to curl around you as you near the camp. Kith'Araquia says he and his people will attack to ensnare troopers first and asks your plans. Looking around the clearing, you note that there are several pairs of perimeter guards, most of whom look well-armed and alert.

**20 Imperial Troopers.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 4D+1, *dodge* 4D+1, *grenade* 3D+2, *heavy weapons* 3D+2, *Strength* 3D+1, *brawling* 4D. Equipment: Blast helmet (+1 to STR from energy attacks, +1D to STR from physical attacks), blast vest (same as helmet), blaster pistol (4D), 2 grenades (4D), comlink. There are two officers among these, each of whom has *command* at 4D.

**Imperial AT-ST Walker.** Walker, maneuverability 1D, move: 30; 90 kmh, body strength 3D. Weapons: one twin blaster cannon (fire control 1D, 50-200/1km/2km, damage 4D), one twin light blaster cannon (fire control 1D, 50-300/500/1km, damage 2D), concussion grenade launcher (fire control 1D, 10-50/100/200, damage 3D).

**Walker Crewmen.** All stats at 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 4D+1, *dodge* 4D+1, *missile weapons* 4D, *vehicle blasters* 4D+2, *Strength* 3D+1, *brawling* 4D, *walker operation* 4D+1. Equipment: Blast helmet

(+1 to STR from energy attacks, +1D to STR from physical attacks), blast vest (same as helmet), blaster pistol (4D), comlink.

Though they fanatically hate the Alliance, the troopers will surrender if it becomes obvious to them that they cannot win. Diversions, sabotage, or a heroic takeover of the AT-ST, the logging transports or the bulldozer will all help.

If Mantrell is with the group, he stays out of the fighting as much as possible, only helping the characters once it is clear they are winning. Even then, he tries to keep his face hidden. If the Imperials gain the upper hand and the guerrillas are forced to flee, Mantrell runs to join the troopers and tells them he knows where the Araquian camp is.

If the camp surrenders, the Araquians make the call to the Imperial base, then retreat back into the forest to rejoin the non-combatants. Though he understands the necessity, Dr. Kith'Araquia is very upset if the characters killed anyone, and tells them that now the Empire will certainly hunt down and exterminate his people in retaliation. He does not, however, refuse to help them gather Shiarha Root.

## Episode Eight: Raging Fires

Read aloud:

**Reuniting with the non-combatants, you travel back toward the Araquian camp. While still half a kilometer away, you hear a horrible crackling sound, smell smoke and see the orange fires raging through the trees. Animals flee in terror before the flames, almost knocking you over in their panic. A huge swath of forest is falling before the conflagration.**

Kith'Araquia shouts in your ears over the roar of the approaching fire, "They've destroyed our camp. There's no way we can get through. We'll just have to harvest what is available here. Look for the pink bulbs with red mottling. Don't lose the liquid in them!" He shouts to all the Araquia, "Hurry! Pick as many Shiarha Roots as you can find. We only have a moment. Hurry! Hurry!" The spider creatures begin frantically scuttling up and down the trees.

Imperial scouts set fire to the Araquian hideout and laid trails of oil along the branches to destroy as many trees around the lair as possible. Because this is the dry season, the trees are far more susceptible to the fire than they would otherwise be. The fire is raging out of control and heading for the characters and the Araquia.

It will reach them in five rounds. The smoke will reach them in two.

Everyone must make Moderate *Strength* checks for the first two rounds they are exposed to the smoke or begin taking damage from smoke inhalation. If anyone has *stamina*, that may be used instead at an Easy level of difficulty. Before the fire actually reaches them, the characters and tribespeople will be stung by ash particles and will feel their skin tightening from the intense heat.

Everyone has time to make two *search* rolls at a Moderate difficulty to locate Shiarha Roots within reach and to pluck them. A Moderate *Dexterity* roll is required to secure them to or pack them inside equipment without losing the fluid inside them. After two rounds, the heat becomes so intense that a Very Difficult *willpower* roll is required if anyone intends to stay in the area.

Those with any sense will run for their lives, attempting to run both away from and across the fire line. If they follow Dr. Kith'Araquia, the characters go in the right direction. They should make it out by the skin of their teeth if they act sensibly.

Almost all the Araquia survive, as do Kutu and Mantrell. About half of them have picked Shiarha Roots and retained the fluid inside them. Dr. Kith'Araquia explains that the fluid inside the roots is the cure for the plague. When boiled with clean water into a tea, it effects a cure within a few days, and suppresses the bacteria immediately so no more harm is done.

He also warns the characters to wear masks when they return to their base since the bacteria has become airborne. In return for his help, the doctor requests that the characters take the Araquian non-combatants off planet when they go. He and several others intend to stay and continue the fight. Kutu elects to stay with the guerrillas, saying they'll need all the medics they can get. If Mantrell is still with them, he tries to escape during the fire. If successful, he could become a recurring thorn in the characters' sides.

## Episode Nine: Return to the City

Read aloud:

**You sneak back into the city. Good thing! Your pictures are adorning the wall next to Kith'Araquia's. Either the Imperials finally figured out that you're working with the Alliance or someone knows you've been keeping company with the spider-folk.**

If the characters were successful in recovering the Amber Eye, they may unobtrusively go to the cantina and have the bartender

contact Hakoon. Once he has the jewel, he offers to sneak them onto their ship in crates. If they didn't get the jewel, they will have to figure out how to board their ship and get off-planet by themselves.

Once aboard, they can disconnect the restraining devices from their astrogation computer, locate the tracking device the Imperials placed in their cargo hold, and prepare to blast their way off-planet.

Hakoon has been as good as his word. Plenty of supplies have been loaded during their absence (and will be needed to feed the Araquia if the characters agreed to get them off planet). The crime lord is very grateful and can be recruited later as a spy for the Alliance. If they did not recover the jewel, however, Hakoon is extremely angry, and the characters will find themselves being hunted by the Ebon Coursers sometime in the near future.

Though the Star Destroyer fires at them as they take off, the characters should be able to compute their jump coordinates and get away before any real damage is done.

## Epilogue

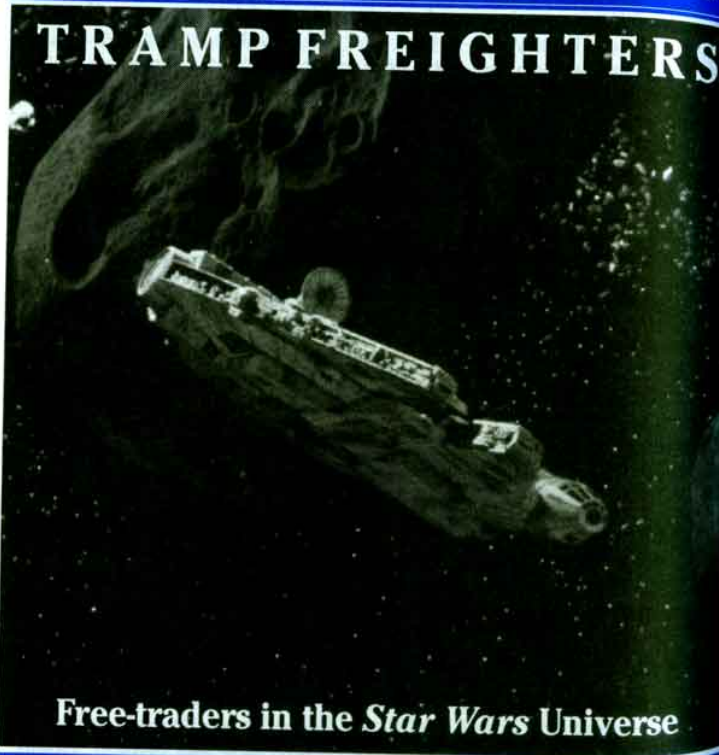
If the characters tried to get through the adventure as quickly as they could, they are able to make it back to the base in time to save everyone. They are treated as heroes of the Alliance and awarded small medals for their valor.

The Araquia could become important contacts for the Alliance. Their webs are made of extremely strong and durable material and can be made into clothing, tents, and even backpacks. It is also possible that the Alliance will send small ships to meet with the Araquia still in the jungle and begin transporting important plants and seedlings to new habitats. The medicine which can be manufactured from them may be sorely needed in the future. By preserving these plants, the Alliance will have acquired an extremely precious renewable resource.

# STAR WARS®

## GALAXY GUIDE 6

### TRAMP FREIGHTERS



Free-traders in the *Star Wars* Universe

Revised and expanded for *Star Wars* Second Edition

**March 1994**

WEST

Platt Okeefe

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## SMUGGLER'S LOG

Some of you out there have heard of the legendary entrepreneur (or smuggler, as some choose to call us) Platt Okeefe. If you haven't, then I'm surprised. I've been causing trouble for the Imperials, running legal and not so legal cargoes, and generally getting into trouble all over the known galaxy. All in a day's work, I say.

I've always loved space travel. When I was a kid, I used to hang out at the Brentaal spaceport, near the docking bays, and watch the freighters land and take off. On my twelfth birthday I ran away and signed on as a cabin steward aboard a Sullustan starliner.

I later joined a tramp freighter crew plying the Anarid Cluster. Since then I've gone through different ships like clothing goes through styles. When the Rebellion began, I helped several Sullustans (seven brothers and sisters of the Suuliem family) escape their planet's tyrannical government, and they've been helping me out ever since. I've crashed on a few planets, and had the Empire chase me out of many more. But all along, I've remembered everything I could about starports and have been kept up to date on new developments through my network of contacts.

Being a smuggler isn't easy. You have to know the ins and outs of running the Rampa Rapids, or how to handle an Imperial customs inspection without losing your cool, your cargo and your life. I've been plying the freighter lanes for years now (I won't say exactly how many), and along the way I've learned



my trade the hard way; through failure. So I thought I'd share some of my knowledge about the galaxy (at least the parts smugglers visit) so others can successfully find their fortunes among the stars.

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## Platt Okeefe

Type: Smuggler

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 6D+1, dodge 5D, running 5D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 4D+1, languages 4D, languages: Sullustan 6D, planetary systems 8D, streetwise 6D

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 5D, sensors 4D+2, space transports 6D+2, starship gunnery 5D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Con 4D, bargain 5D, sneak 4D+2

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Space transport repair 5D+2, starship weapon repair 4D

**Force Points: 5**

**Character Points: 12**

**Move: 10**

**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, heavy blaster pistol (5D), modified YT-1300 freighter



**Quote:** "Say, spacer boy, let me give you some advice."

**Capsule:** The two most remarkable features about Platt are her hair and her clothes. Her hair is a silvery white cascade streaming down her back. She typically dresses in a white blouse with bright red pants, boots and vest. Her heavy blaster is always at her side.

Platt is an easygoing smuggler who wants to make her fortunes among the stars. She has a great concern for her fellow smugglers, and will offer to help them whenever it won't jeopardize her own affairs.

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"Whenever you've got trouble following you, duck into a dive."

— Platt Okeefe

## Lorana's Labyrinth

Kelada is an industrial planet which produces components for Imperial walkers. The Empire is desperately trying to maintain its power on the planet in the face of growing opposition from the Alliance...which makes Kelada starport ripe territory for opportunistic smugglers.

Nestled among the warehouses and docking bays of Kelada starport is Lorana's Labyrinth, a popular dive with spacers, merchants and the local city-dwellers.

The windowless facades of the three separate entrances aren't too large or ornate, and a simple glowing sign over each door proclaims the dive's name. But inside it seems to stretch infinitely into the building. The walls are mirrored to give the illusion that the dive has greater depth. The mirrors can also confuse patrons who believe the mirrored sections to be different parts of the bar — at least until they see their own reflections there. In the afternoons and evenings the place is packed with spacers and local workers retreating from the polluted starport streets.

But the most interesting feature of the club is the bar itself, which stretches around the irregular edges of the interior, sometimes even extending out into the center. There are no tables, just raised, bar-like sections with stools in the middle of the room. The bar forms a maze which is challenging to navigate because of its size, the mirrored walls and the crowds.

Lorana's is usually dimly lit and filled with the sounds of chattering patrons and an occasional lousy band wailing from a stage alcove. Several beings tend various sections of the bar, each wearing silver-foiled aprons. Although the bartenders often provide good conversation as well as helpful information (if given the proper incentive), they rarely tell patrons how to navigate through or out of the bar.

**Lorana.** All stats are 2D except: languages 4D, planetary systems 6D, streetwise 5D+2, Perception 4D, brawling 3D+2. Move: 10. Character Points: 3.

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# ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

OKEEFE, PLATT..

Lorana's Labyrinth is a great place for smugglers because you can get lost easily. Somebody tailing you? Pop into the Labyrinth and lose them in the crowd and the maze. If you see someone inside you're trying to avoid, just navigate the maze around them. But be careful; if you lose your way, you could find yourself facing your foes.

When the Labyrinth first opened, the Imperials raided it often to try to capture smugglers and wanted criminals. Everyone slipped through their fingers. They closed it down only once, but then they realized they weren't catching anybody. Now the Empire is more subtle, sending its agents there to pick up information and occasionally sending in a patrol of stormtroopers to remind everybody just who's running the planet.

Lorana, the owner, has a soft spot in her heart for smugglers, and while she won't offer free drinks, she is a good source of information about Kelada and the Anarid Cluster. She also has several trap doors and secret panels she uses to help her friends escape when they need an exit other than the three entrances to the Labyrinth. Trust me; I've used them on more than one occasion.



This issue's Smuggler's Log was created by Peter Schweighofer.

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# Bloodshadows

It's a mean old world out there.

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blood from a six-pack;  
that stiff you left in the alley is up and  
walking around.

If you're lucky, the Guild will pay you for  
tonight's work; if you're not, you're  
going home in a box.

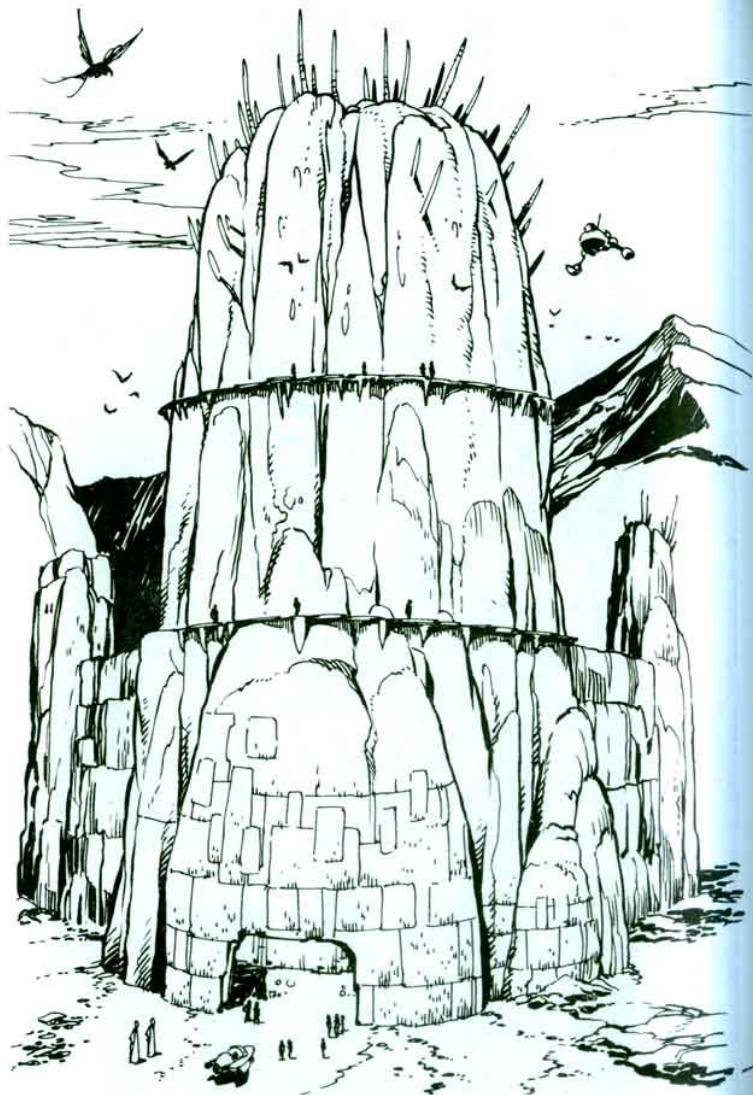
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cheap gin joints where it belongs.

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# Lan Barell

*by Paul Sudlow*

*Illustrations by Tim Eldred*

Three days and five hours beyond the Outer Rim terminus of the Enarc Run lies the remote Lan system. The system consists of five planets orbiting a large, sullen orange star. Life has developed only on the fourth planet of the system, Lan Barell. It remains the only habitable world, though pressurized and underground mining colonies are located on the other planets.

The inner planets of the Lan system are extraordinarily ore-rich. This fact first drew the attention of Old Republic scouts 1,300 years ago, and soon after, Gaminne Group Inc., a large conglomerate then looking to expand its mining operations.

GGI made contact with the Qieg, the insectoid inhabitants of Lan Barell, and bought from them mining rights to the inner planets. The Human colonists were granted a charter allowing them to build a city on Lan Barell. Over the centuries, memory of this arrangement has faded, and the present-day Human and Qieg cultures have intertwined. Most of the inhabitants regard the planet as jointly owned.

GGI has long since disappeared, but the mining operations, virtually the only source of income for this credit-poor system, continue. The various companies working the mines are supervised by the Human-Qieg government, itself a conglomeration of these cooperatives.

The rise of the Empire has ironically improved the lot of the system's citizens. When the Empire came to power in the inner systems, Lan Barell discovered it had a resource besides ore to offer the galaxy: extreme isolation and a lax legal system. Lan Barell is now a conveniently out-of-the-way spot for those seeking to avoid the loving attentions of the Empire. Ships now call to off-load refugees, exiles, and smuggled goods nearly as frequently as they arrive to load ore.

When the Empire at last saw fit to claim the system 15 years ago, it came only long enough to impress the locals with the might of the Empire, receive the oaths of fealty from the Lan Barell government, and to assess the value of the mining operations for tax purposes. Then it left, and has bothered the locals little in the meantime.

## Lan Barell

Lan Barell is a dusty, dry backwater world. Most of the moisture of the atmosphere is locked into the thin polar ice caps. The most inhabitable locations on the planet are on top of three huge plateaus, which serve as continents of sorts. The Lowlands, the lower altitude regions, are uninhabitable wastelands of wind-blasted rock that form the vast oceans separating the plateaus from one another.

The heavy iron content of the rocky soil gives the surface of the planet a faint blue sheen. When combined with the dim reddish light cast by the Lan sun, it makes for a gloomy atmosphere of slightly garish contrasts.

Lan Barell had three moons at one time, though one has been broken down and refined out of existence. The few remaining lumps of moon rock that survived as asteroids now serve as the foundations of ore refining plants which have been built on and around them. The remaining two moons are airless worlds, pitted and scarred by centuries of strip mining.

## Barellian Society

The indigenous species of Lan Barell are the Qieg, a diminutive insectoid people who have an uncanny knack with machines and mechanics. The Qieg have hundreds of thousands of colony nests throughout the cacti forests on the plateaus, and also dwell in the settlements built to serve the planet's many mines. Those Qieg who interact with Humans regularly wear electronic masks that translate the clickings and movements of their mandibles into Human speech.

The local Human culture has changed to suit its neighbors as well. The long-time Human residents of the Lan system, through long

## Lan Barell

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Hot

**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)

**Hydrosphere:** Arid

**Gravity:** Standard

**Terrain:** Desert, Mountains, Plateaus

**Length of Day:** 23 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 255 local days

**Sapient Species:** Humans, Qieg (N)

**Starport:** Standard

**Population:** 143 million (8 million Humans)

**Planet Function:** Mining

**Government:** Guild (mining companies)

**Tech Level:** Space

**Major Exports:** Minerals, ore, and other raw materials

**Major Imports:** foodstuffs, high tech goods

**Points of Interest:**

Shulell City, the Cacti Forests, the Lowlands

**System:** Lan

**Star:** Lan (orange)

**System Log:**

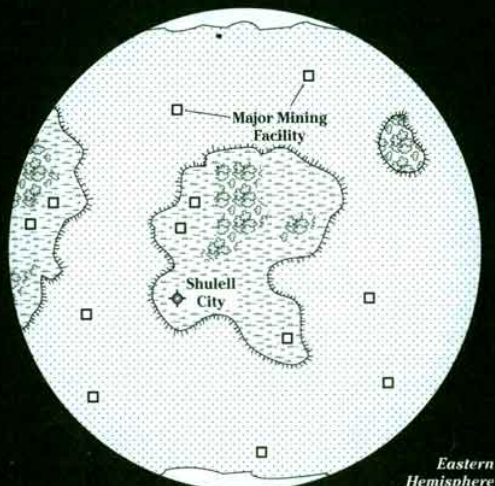
Name	Planet Type	Moons
Lesser Galam	desolate searing rock	0
Lan Fellow	barren rock	1
Lan Tundi	barren rock	4
Lan Barell	hospitable terrestrial	2
Greater Galam	gas giant	16

**Capsule:** Lan Barell is a desert backwater world far removed from the center of Imperial influence. Its inhabitants contribute to the galactic economy by selling large quantities of ore to outlying Mid-Rim systems.

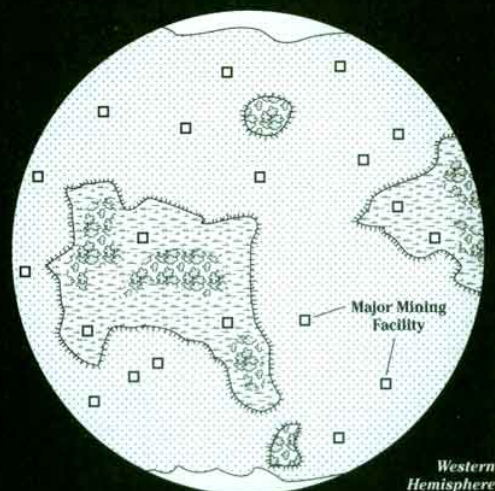
Humans coexist on the planet with the indigenous sentient insects known as the Qieg. The Qieg are diminutive arthropods who live in hives carved out of the huge cacti that are found in the forests of the planet. They are mechanically inclined and are partners with the Humans in the mining cooperatives.

The major Human-style city is Shulell. The raw materials mined on Lan Barell are gathered here and shipped out through the spaceport. All economic transactions must be negotiated in Shulell.

## World Map of Lan Barell



Eastern Hemisphere



Western Hemisphere

## Planet Log Terrain Key

Mountains	Plains	City
Hills	Desert	Spaceport
Volcano	Swamp	Site of Interest
Craters	Forest	Urban/Industrial
Ice	Cactus Forest	Plateau
Barren Rock	Water	Canyon

interaction with the Qieg, tend to express emotion with their hands rather than with their faces, in the same way the Qieg employ their antennae. More recent Human arrivals to the system, such as merchants and refugees, find this rather unsettling.

## Commerce and Government

Just as the system's economy revolves around the extraction and processing of raw materials from the millions of Lan system mines, the economy of Lan Barell centers on selling these goods to Coreward-bound freighters. Ore in both raw and refined forms is a much less expensive commodity in the Outer Rim than elsewhere, but cheap metal always attracts merchants, and Lan ore is shipped to many resource-poor systems in the Mid-Rim.

Lan Barell, and especially Shulell City, serve as the clearinghouse of the system's exports. Though most of the system's ore is not physically transported to Lan Barell, all financial negotiations and exchanges regarding ore must take place in Shulell's center of commerce, the Quilan Hive.

Lan Barell itself has its own network of major mines that are not yet tapped out, and the material extracted from these mines is transported to Shulell by sub-orbital freighters and processed there. Many of these mines are located in the lowlands, and are manned almost entirely by the Qieg. The mines on the plateaus are mined equally by Humans and Qieg.

There are also many ranches on the plateaus which herd dingories, the main source of meat for both Qieg and Humans. There is no

transportation network linking these ranches to one another and to Shulell, beyond the skyhoppers and speeders individual ranchers may own. Three times a year, segments of the packs are driven overland to regional slaughter houses, which have their own landing strips. Dingory meat is tasty, but little is exported to other systems, since most years don't see a significant surplus.

The Lan system is governed by one government, the Human-Qieg Guild based in Shulell. The Guild is a consortium of mining cooperatives and companies that has evolved into a stable government over the centuries. The Guild is quite *laissez faire* in its philosophy, and does little to curtail economic transactions. There are no restrictions on weapons, spice, and so on brought to the planet, as long as such activities remain on a relatively small scale. Large-scale operations threatening the security of the government, or inviting gross Imperial intervention, are frowned upon and will be stopped.

The Guild sees its mission primarily to provide its citizens with military and civil protection, and economic stability. The Guild maintains a space navy of one hundred space vessels, all very old, but carefully maintained. The 10 capital ships in the navy are no match for modern battlewagons, but are more than enough to deter pirates looking for unprotected isolated systems to raze. The navy is nearly wholly made up of Humans, while the Qieg serve in support roles. This division of labor is a result of the natural tendencies of the two species rather than some sort of inequity.

Most services commonly the responsibility of government, such as medical care and welfare, are the responsibilities of the member companies of the Guild, rather than the Guild itself. This arrangement works on Lan Barell mainly due to the influence of the Qieg culture, which places a great value on caring for one's own.

The Guild has tried several times over the centuries to diversify its exports beyond raw materials, expand its holdings, and attract new settlers, but such attempts have largely failed. Lan Barell has historically remained an unimportant sidetrack off the trade routes established to serve the Outer Rim worlds. The only reason freighters and transports call is to haul away ore. Traditionally, more people leave the Lan system than settle there, explaining the relatively low Human population. This trend is reversing with the arrival of more refugees.

Though Lan Barell is in name an Imperial territory, the Imperial presence on the planet is virtually nonexistent. Twice a year, a modest contingency headed by a representative of the sector moff visits the system to remind its people that they are subjects of the

Empire. At other times, the Imperial Embassy, located near the Quilan Hive, hosts a caretaker staff of four diplomats who obviously have greatly displeased their superiors at some point in their careers—no one volunteers to spend time on Lan Barell. Security is unenthusiastically provided by the Lan Barell government.

## The Mining Cooperatives

Mining is the main business of the Lan system, and both Humans and Qieg tend to be miners by trade. There are thousands and thousands of mines and ore processing plants on the various planets of the system, and in orbit around them. Processing plants abound on Lan Barell as well.

Culturally, the mining cooperatives are less conventional corporations and more member-driven associations, made up of both Humans and Qieg. These strongly familial and very large organizations not only conduct business on behalf of client companies, but also provide insurance, education, health care, and other services to members. They also allow member associations to pool resources and obtain capital assets not ordinarily affordable to individual members, such as the huge processing plants in orbit around Lan Barell.

Like political parties, the mining cooperatives retain members by following through on promises and commitments. Member families are in turn loyal to their cooperatives, and often stay with the same one for generations. There has been little record of abuse on the part of the cooperations themselves. The culture of Lan Barell, and the influence of the Qieg members and directors have insured that the social contract between the groups is not broken.

## Shulell City

While there are thousands of mining camps, ranches, homesteads, and towns scattered over the surfaces of the plateaus, there is only one Human-style city on Lan Barell—Shulell City. Shulell boasts the only gathering of Humans with a population of over 100,000 on the planet.

The city is a mixture of Human-style buildings and Qieg structures. Most of the former are old-fashioned constructions of plasteel and adobe, though an occasional modern building can be seen. These modern buildings are becoming more common with the influx of refugees from inner-rim systems. The Qieg buildings, traditional cacti hives, are older still, and date back to the time this area of the

continent was covered in cacti.

The spaceport is the only modern facility on the planet that provides comprehensive service to space-going ships, and even has a small shipyard. It is a very busy and dirty area, and huge conveyor hoppers move tons of ore from adjacent processing plants into the yawning bays of monstrous freighters. At all hours of the day, the air is filled with the dull roar of these freighters lifting off and landing. Most of these ships are from and bound for the inner system worlds or the Core. The sub-orbital traffic uses a smaller airport some distance from the spaceport. The airport handles the ore barges from the various domestic mines as well.

Many of the sectors of the city are given over to industry, for the minerals and metals mined around the planet must be transported

to and shipped out of Shulell City. These factories and foundries move the raw ore from the airport, refine it, and move it out to the spaceport. These areas are grungy, sooty, and not very appealing to those not entranced by the smelting industry. Other areas of town are more mundane, and include residential and commercial districts.

A few spots in Shulell likely to be of more interest to freighter captains and Rebel agents are covered below in more detail, including the historical downtown district where the commerce exchange is located, and The Grill, an area of town where business even the tolerant Barellian government would likely frown upon is conducted.

### Quilan Hive

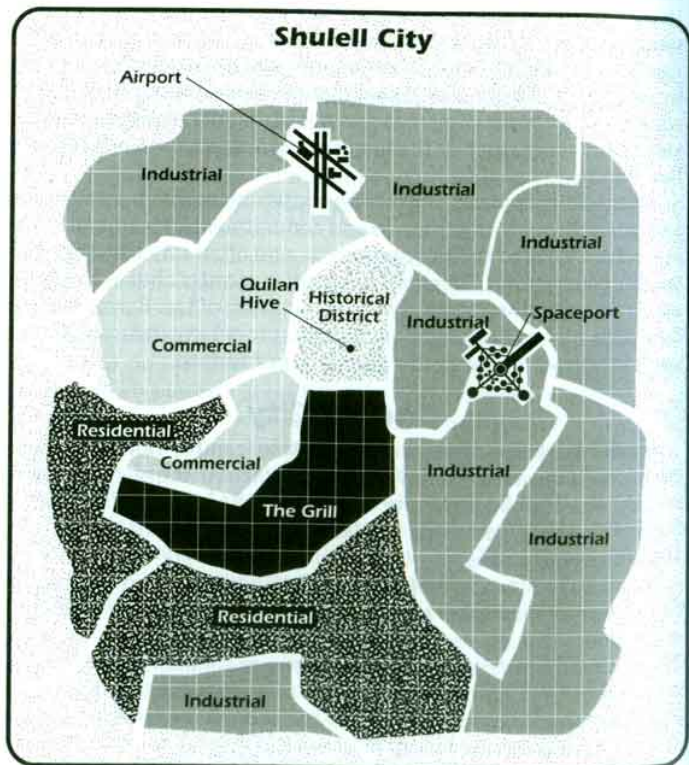
When Humans first came to Lan Barell, they found the Qieg living at a feudal technological level. The insects lived in the interiors of the huge cacti of the plateaus, which were fortified with ceramic plates and iron sheeting. One of the greatest of these natural citadels was the Quilan Hive. Actually a network of nests tied together by huge stone walls rather than a single cactus, the 5,000 year-old Quilan Hive housed over 100,000 Qieg at one point in its history.

Today the Hive serves as the financial and commercial center of the Lan system. Areas have been enlarged to admit Humans. It now is the home of government agencies, mining cooperative headquarters, and trading companies; 30,000 Qieg live and work in the complex, together with over 2,000 Humans.

A busy trade floor now exists in the ancient council chamber in the heart of the nest where hive policy was once debated. Here cooperative representatives and merchants meet to negotiate terms of trade, and jointly determine the destination of the system's ore.

Outsiders desiring to get a contract shipping ore Coreward are advised to hire one of the freelance introducers who maintain offices in the Quilan district. Negotiating with Human Barellians directly can be very difficult (Humans do most of the negotiating with offworld traders). They aren't quite as wily and mercenary as the Corellians, but their habit of expressing emotion in ways other Humans cannot read makes them fine bargainers nonetheless (they are also formidable sabacc players). Though Lan ore cannot command a premium price, the cooperative dealers are determined to sell it as dearly as possible, and are quite good at doing so.

The introducers are also very adept at navigating the intricate bureaucratic and cultural mazes that riddle the Hive, and can



produce the required permits and visas in half the time it would take an outsider to obtain them. Of course, there are many introducers who are less capable than they present themselves to be.

Physically, the interior of the hive is spacious and well lit in the Human sectors, and cramped and claustrophobic in the Qieg areas. The layout does not correspond with Human sensibilities, and the corridors and rooms weave and wind in all directions with no apparent reason. Those unfamiliar with the layout of Qieg hives can become lost quickly unless they either put a few credits in one of the page droids that are programmed to serve as guides, or come in the company of a native Barellian of either species.

Though there are no windows in the complex, corridors and chambers are filled with colorful plants that are rooted in the fiber of the walls and floors, and small streams run through some chambers near the outer walls of the Hive. The juxtaposition of such naturalistic features with computer terminals, droids, electrical piping, and other modern conveniences is slightly jarring to those accustomed to more sterile surroundings.

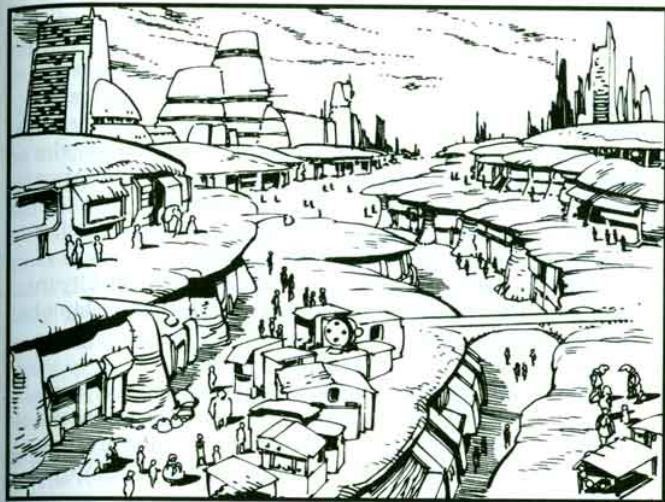
To Humans, the Hive has a faintly pleasing scent of spice about it. To mammals with a more developed sense of smell (such as Wookiees), the odor is maddening.

### The Grill

The government's *laissez faire* approach to law enforcement serves as an irresistible beacon drawing all sorts of men, women, and beings given to participating in enterprises the Empire would frown upon. Those who are wanted by the Empire, for whatever reason, often find themselves in the relatively safe neighborhood of the Grill, a wild mixture of adobe slums, gleaming business buildings, quiet shady plazas, and cacti gardens in an older section of Shulell.

The shops and markets of the Grill offer a veritable plethora of goods and services, few of them legal back in the real Empire. The black market is very developed, and everything from illegally enhanced hyperdrive engines to new Imperial citizenship IDs can be had, for the right price.

The Grill is a bustling place, given to impromptu bazaars and markets. It is common to see representatives of over 50 species at once on the narrow streets, and alien music and sounds assail the ears from every side. At any given time of the day, one is likely to witness the celebration of a festival or holiday from one of a hundred worlds. Religious leaders wail out prayers and sermons to the



faithful on every corner and from windows above the street.

Many of the aliens seen here are from worlds enslaved by the Empire. There are ethnic communities of varying sizes in the Grill. A few Wookiee clans made it this far out and run a series of tech-related businesses, including a small dockyard at the spaceport that repairs and rebuilds spacecraft engines, and a few Grill shops specializing in computers and droids. These Wookiees may be a surprising sight to those used to the shaggy-haired individuals they may have seen elsewhere—they shear their fur short, to better tolerate the oppressive heat of Lan Barell.

Herglics and Elomin can also be seen in great numbers. The latter can offer enterprising merchants a great deal on transparisteel purchased in bulk. No one knows where they get it exactly, but many suspect a few Imperial shipments of Lommite from Elom never arrive at their scheduled destinations.

One of the largest communities of "illegals" is not a species, but a political class. The hunted people who live here are Old Republic politicians, business leaders, and the fragments of governments-in-exile. Many managed to bring with them formidable assets, which allow them to live in luxury in secluded villas surrounded by bodyguards. Many more are less fortunate, and some who once commanded millions of credits now command small bars or pawn-

## Adventure Idea

A survey group from the Sector Development Agency's Department of Modification will arrive in the Lan system to determine if the system can furnish sufficient raw materials to build an Imperial Star Destroyer. If it can do so, the system's assets will be seized by the Empire, and the native Qieg enslaved to contribute to the war effort.

The Alliance has gotten wind of this plan, and believes that this is the perfect chance to recruit the Qieg and Humans of Lan Barell as allies. The characters are sent to Shulell City to represent the Alliance in negotiating with the leadership of the Guild. Their mission is to ensure that the survey group fails to recommend the system to the Moff.

The Rebels have a number of allies already in place, including Felix Habel, the leader of the Rebel cell group, and a former executive of Sienar Fleet Systems. Unfortunately, Habel, who is wanted by the Empire, is being hunted by a team of bounty hunters who are rapidly closing in.

The less radical urban Qiemal are possible allies as well, if characters can convince them that an occupying force of Imperials would enslave their people for the war effort.

shops. Such are the fortunes of war.

Though one would expect such a place as the Grill to be filled with low-lives, grifters, and pirates, criminals do not thrive in this environment. To be sure, the criminal element has a distinct presence in the neighborhood, but most people live more productive lives, and nearly everyone travels armed. Moreover, most of the people carrying weapons know how to use them, and are willing to stick up for one another. Citizens of the Grill frown upon muggings, protection rackets, and other crimes that often plague refugee communities. The street justice of the Grill is swift and often final. The Wookiees of the neighborhood, feeling honor-bound to protect fellow refugees and customers, are especially dedicated vigilantes. For obvious reasons, bounty hunters are especially unwelcome in the Grill, and those stalking their quarry into the Grill must be extremely circumspect.

There is a small Rebel cell on Lan Barell that is based in the Grill, but it is limited in its actions. It maintains a soup kitchen in the center of the Grill, and has a hand in a number of smuggling operations. The

cell also keeps an eye out for refugees of value to the Alliance who can be persuaded to uproot their lives again and move their families to a Rebel safe world.

But the cell can do little more. Few of the refugees are eager to contribute to a cause that would bring the attentions of the Empire on them again, now that they feel safe. The denizens of the Grill look with approval at the Rebellion and its crusade, but do not want the war brought to their neighborhood.

Another barrier is the Lan Barellian government. Though the government largely turns a blind eye to goings on in the Grill, it will not allow the presence of an active Rebel enclave. Left to itself, a Rebel movement would grow in power and influence until the day came that Star Destroyers filled the skies of Lan Barell. This is unacceptable, and the government has let the Rebel cell know this in no uncertain terms. Save for a few firebrands, the cell members reluctantly concur.

## Dingories

**Type:** Forest predator

**DEXTERITY:** 3D

**PERCEPTION:** 2D

Search 4D, sneak 3D+2

**STRENGTH:** 4D

**Special Abilities:**

**Teeth:** Do STR + 2D damage

**Paws:** Do STR damage

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 1-1.5 meters high, 2-2.5 meters long

**Orneriness:** 3D

**Capsule:** The dingories are large hairless canines that are the ancient foes of the Qieg. Dingories travel in packs of 20-50 adults and young, and primarily subsist on the large insects and slugs found in the cacti forests. However, a dingory will frenzy if it catches the scent of a Qieg, and Qieg have a very great ancestral fear of these beasts. Humans can domesticate dingories, but only as long as there are no Qieg within a kilometer or so. Dingories are a basic staple of the Qieg and Human diet, and dingory ranches are a common sight in the plateau interiors.

## Carmelle

Carmelle is a small settlement about 20 kilometers away from Shulell, where the local ranchers maintain stockyards and slaughter houses. Carmelle is the regional processing town for several large ranches in the area, and the ranchers and their dingory packs descend upon the town periodically.

Live dingories are under no circumstance brought into Shulell proper, except when sealed in habitats bound directly to the space-

port, since neither they nor Qieg enjoy face-to-face encounters.

## The Cacti Forests

At one time, sprawling cacti forests covered the plateaus. However, due to millennia of Qieg deforestation and centuries of mining

### Adventure Idea

Dingories have become popular pets in a number of Core Worlds, and command a high price. Those willing to make a few quick runs to the Outer Rim can make some easy credits shipping back breeders.

Characters can either buy dingories through the Rancher's Exchange in Shulell, or on the sly from poachers. A still cheaper alternative is to corral wild dingories in the deep interior. That is a more dangerous method, since wild dingories are dangerous, and often hunt in Qiemal territory. But the profits would be enormous.

And some freighter captains might forget dingories altogether once they see the goods being bartered in the Grill's black market.

and land clearing for dingory packs, much of the land on the plateaus became parched and unable to support life. Thanks to Human bioengineering science, a few hardy species of grasses were manufactured which would take root in the dry soil and prevent wholesale erosion on a massive scale. After two centuries of an aggressive seeding program, a thick growth of grass covers the plains. Native flora and fauna are returning to the plains slowly.

However, a great deal of the original cacti forests remain, and millions of Qieg still live in hives carved out from the giant cacti there. These hives are fortified with ceramic plates and plasteel, and protected by a variety of traditional and modern weapons. There are some hives deep within the forests that still live in a state of low technology. These are the Qiemal, and Humans and humanoid mammals are not advised to travel into Qiemal territories. These Qieg do not approve of aliens, and though violence is relatively uncommon, people have disappeared.

The forests are also the natural stomping grounds of the dingory packs. These aggressive predator mammals consider Qieg a great delicacy. They are drawn to Qieg settlements, and frenzy when they catch the scent of a Qieg.

The feeling is mutual. Qieg hate the dingories, and both Humans and Qieg find dingory flesh quite tasty. At one point, soon after Humans arrived on the planet and introduced the Qieg to blasters, the dingories were hunted to the brink of extinction. The dingory population is still controlled in the settled areas of the forests, but has once again risen to ferocious levels in the wilder areas.

## The Lowlands

The lowlands are harsh realms ruled by ferocious sandstorms, volcanoes, and frequent earthquakes. Volcanic ash and other contaminants make the atmosphere of the lowlands unbreathable by Humans, though the Qieg are able to survive in the harsh environment.

The ecology of the lowlands is simple but quite efficient. Most lifeforms are microscopic, but small insects and reptiles abound as well.

The Qieg do not find life in the lowlands comfortable, and there is little in the way of food. However, there are many mines in the lowlands, and surrounding each is a small settlement where the Qieg miners live. Sealed buildings also allow Humans to live and work in the lowlands, but the economics of the situation result in largely Qieg populations.

The Qieg have a passage to adulthood rite that involves trekking alone into the lowlands to shrines maintained there by the monks of the Qieg religion. These aesthetes are the only Qieg who live full-time in the lowlands.

## The Qieg

The Qieg are small, insectoid humanoids, which are about a meter tall when standing upright. Their bodies have three segments, a head, upper abdomen, and lower abdomen. The Qieg have six limbs, two arms and four legs. The feet on the first set of legs are joined so they may also be used as hands if needed.

There are several races of Qieg, some having rusty red shells, while others have yellow, light blue, and orange shells. Males and females are very similar in size and appearance and, unlike many other sentient insect species, have relatively equal roles to play in their societies. All females lay eggs, which are fertilized by many males.

There is no family unit—children are raised communally. Loyalty to the hive, however, is deeply ingrained in each Qieg, and the present Barellian system of industrial cooperatives owes a lot to the

Qieg culture. Indeed, the Qieg use the word "hive" to describe both their home nests and the cooperative in which they are a member.

Qieg culture de-emphasizes the importance of the individual and emphasizes racial and tribal pride. The various races of Qieg get along fine, though there is definitely a feeling of competition between them. The Qieg religion is one of predestination and acceptance of the status quo.

Qieg are very adept at solving mechanical and technical problems. Though they were in a feudal tech state when Humans first came to the Lan system, they had already developed primitive electronics and had a complex mining infrastructure already in place. They quickly absorbed the new technologies the Humans brought with them, and began to upgrade their economy to more closely approximate the galactic standard.

The Qieg communicate with one another in a series of clicks, chirps, and mandible motions, and by waving their antennae about in certain patterns. Their vocal cords can approximate the binary language used by some droids, and some Qieg can speak droid binary. Those Qieg dealing regularly with Humans wear electronic masks that reproduce the vocal ranges of the Human voice box.

Many Qieg live in the mining towns and in Shulell, but most of the Qieg live in the forests, in nests fashioned from hollowed-out cacti.

#### ■ Qieg

Attributes Dice: 12D  
DEXTERITY 2D/3D  
KNOWLEDGE 1D/2D  
MECHANICAL 2D/3D  
PERCEPTION 2D/3D  
STRENGTH 1D/2D  
TECHNICAL 4D/5D



#### Adventure Idea

The Grill-based Rebel cell has specifically agreed with the Barellian government not to stockpile heavy military-grade weapons anywhere in the Lan system. Unbeknownst to Felix Habel and the other cell leaders, some of the more radical firebrand members established a secret cache of such weapons in the lowlands some time ago, where satellites cannot easily detect activity through that region's atmospheric interference. They have been gradually building up an arsenal that they think will be necessary when Lan Barell finally decides to join the Rebellion and openly defy the Empire.

Their secret was blown just hours ago when one of their transports exploded at the depot, causing a catastrophic failure in the life support systems of the portable buildings of the small complex. The four survivors, including a prominent introducer, made it into vacc suits, and sent a distress call to Habel.

Habel is livid, and tells the characters that if the Barellian government finds out about the weapons cache, the Alliance might be banned from the Lan system altogether. Habel asks the characters to mount a rescue mission. Time is of the essence, since the survivors have only hours of air in their suits. Moreover, Habel has heard that Barellian satellites picked up the explosion, and that military engineers are currently debating whether it was natural or artificial.

The destruction of the Rebel transport was no accident; a group of militant Qiemal were passing by on religious pilgrimage, and decided to sabotage the offworlders' ship. They are still in the area, waiting to see if more humans arrive to rescue the first group. If the characters leave their own ship unattended when entering the weapons depot, the Qiemal will attempt to sabotage their vessel too. The Qiemal will confront the Rebels with spears and blasters when they see an escape is imminent.

And more trouble could be on its way if the Barellian government sends a patrol ship to investigate the explosion.

**Special Abilities:**

**Body Armor:** The Qiegs' natural chitinous shell gives them +1D Strength against physical attacks.

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 1 meter tall

### The Qiemal

When Humans first arrived on Lan Barell, there were a number of unfortunate first contacts, a result of the Qieg equating mammal with killer (from living in fear of the dingories for eons). Humans and Qieg soon resolved their differences and settled into an equitable arrangement. However, for some Qieg, the bad first impression the settlers made on them did not improve. These Qieg soon became known as the Qiemal, which means First Nest in the Qieg language.

The Qiemal are a small but militant group that works to get offworlders off the planet for good. They are not usually violent, but do occasionally strain interspecies relations when disputes flare up. The Qiemal have chapters and organizations in Shulell and other settlements in which Humans live, but most of them live in the forests, where they don't have to look at aliens.

The most predominant Qiemal sect maintains the level of technology of pre-Human settlement days, living in hives that look like historical relics. They are self-sufficient, and maintain that when the ore runs out, the Qieg of the cities and factories will have no more money to buy their fancy toy servants and flying ships, and no more money to buy food they have forgotten how to raise. When this day comes, only the forest Qieg who faithfully kept to the old ways will survive.

So goes the litany. Endless political fights rage between the city and forest Qiemal, and with the rest of the Qieg, which occasionally approach a state of religious warfare. Human Barellians wisely opt to stay out of the debate.

# Escape from Balis-Baurgh

by Paul Balsamo

Illustrations by Doug Shuler



"But why do you have to go away again, Papa?" Ponto asked as I tucked him into his bed. I looked down at my son and felt like saying that I wasn't going anywhere. I wanted to tell him that I would stay right here with him and his mother Panshee, play my flute in

the village of Tribe in the tribal ceremonies, go on the hunt with the other warriors, and listen to stories of how our tribe helped defend Endor from the evil Tribe Empire.

"We've been through this before, Ponto," I began instead, "I have to help Junas rescue his friends from the Tribe Empire place."

"Can't I go with you? Please, please, Papa?" he whined.

"It is too dangerous a journey for a young Ewok." Seeing the hurt look on his little face, I changed tactics. "Besides, I need you to take

care of your mother while I'm gone. You never know if Tribe Empire will come back."

"I'll protect her, Papa." Ponto said proudly, pounding a small fist into his chest.

"Thanks Ponto, I know you will. Now off to sleep. We'll say goodbye in the morning."

As I turned to leave, Ponto pleaded, "Tell me the story of the Tribe Empire place, please?"

Although he had heard it all countless times already and I really needed to rest, I couldn't think of anything I'd rather do on my last night in Tribe Panshee village...

■ ■ ■

I was on one of my usual solo hunts, about two nights distance from Tribe Panshee village, when I picked up the scent of a Yootak. In a spear-to-claw battle, it would take at least five Panshee warriors to defeat a Yootak. For a lone warrior to kill one, it would take cunning and intelligence. Luckily, I possess a great deal of both. I decided to set a trap. The area was heavily populated by Gunlabirds, a Yootak's favorite prey. I caught one of the birds and tethered it to a snare trap in the middle of a clearing. Then, I hid in a nearby bush to wait.

I waited there, watching the Great Trees that guarded the clearing and listened to the song of their leaves swaying in the breeze. Then, I felt the Yootak come. I couldn't see it, but the Spirits of the Trees revealed its location to me in their song. The Yootak was moving toward its prey at an unusually slow pace. I feared that the Yootak had sensed the trap.

Then, something crept out of the trees on the far side of the clearing. It was brown, standing roughly two Ewoks in height. It had patches of black fur and two beady little green eyes. It stopped a short distance from the Gunlabird and held out a small, black stick. It was not the Yootak.

As I tried to figure out what this creature was, why it was here, and what the little black stick was for, the Yootak appeared. It was a hulking mass of green fur, with two long forearms that ended in hooked claws. It had two black eyes set behind a muzzle of razor-sharp teeth. With blinding speed it swung out of a tree and struck the brown creature from behind, sending it sprawling into the clearing. The Yootak leapt out of the tree, claws bearing down on its prey. It barely managed to graze the brown thing's back as the creature rolled out of the way at the last moment.

Thinking to slay the Yootak while it played with the brown

## Grael



**Type:** Adventurous Ewok Warrior  
**DEXTERITY** 3D+2  
 Dodge 4D+2, melee combat 5D  
**KNOWLEDGE** 2D  
 Languages 3D, survival 3D+2  
**MECHANICAL** 3D+2  
**PERCEPTION** 4D+2  
 Artist(Flute) 5D+2, search 5D+2, sneak 6D+2  
**STRENGTH** 3D  
**TECHNICAL** 2D+2  
 First aid 3D+2, primitive construction 3D+2  
**Special Abilities:**  
*Smell:* add +1D to search when tracking by scent  
**Force Skills:** Sense 1D  
*Sense:* Life detection  
**Force Sensitive?** Yes  
**Force Points:** 2  
**Character Points:** 8  
**Move:** 9  
**Equipment:** Leather backpack, spear (STR+1D), reed flute, several useless but shiny objects

**Capsule:** Grael is one of the most revered warriors of Tribe Panshee. He has led many successful tribal hunts and those under his command usually return. An expert musician, Grael often plays his flute during the celebration following the hunt. Grael devoutly follows the way of the Tree Spirits that inhabit the forest and attends all ceremonies and rituals. Although he can use the Force power of *life detection*, Grael has no knowledge of the Force. He believes that it is the Tree Spirits that identify the location of his prey during a hunt. Only through his tribal beliefs can he use this power. Although he has a wife and son in Tribe Panshee village, Grael frequently goes exploring the galaxy with his friend Captain Junas Turner. He returns to Endor often to visit his family and tell his stories of adventure to the tribe. Like most Ewoks, Grael is inquisitive, curious, and intelligent. He knows that other species, particularly Humans, think he is a useless, but cute, little furball. Instead of playing up on that fact, Grael tries to show how smart and useful he really is.

**Quote:** "I may be furry and cute, but I know how to kill with this spear!"

creature, I sprang from my hiding place and charged the beast with my spear. The brown creature tried to stand, but the Yootak whipped around and backhanded it across the chest. I had to step sideways to avoid being struck by the brown thing as it sailed



toward me in mid air. Unfortunately, I stepped right into my snare trap and was immediately hanging upside down by my left foot. The Yotak reeled back on its hind legs and licked its lips in anticipation.

I took that brief instant to pray to the Spirit of the Tree from which my spear had been made. I leveled the weapon at my enemy. Time froze. I stared into the Yotak's eyes and growled menacingly. The Yotak stared into my eyes and growled back even more menacingly. I could see the bloodlust in its eyes. Spittle fell from its maw. With a triumphant howl it lunged at me. I raised my spear and aimed at the monster's heart. As spear struck hide, I heard a loud cracking noise and was blinded by a flash of light.

When my vision returned, the Yotak lay dead on the ground, smoke rising out of a hole in its chest. My spear must have come from a truly mighty Tree Spirit to have inflicted such damage. I spun around and saw the brown creature standing behind me, waving that stupid black stick. It looked at me in astonishment, probably in awe of my prowess, and dropped to its knees in homage. I cut myself loose with a knife and landed, with a thud, beside the brown thing. It just sat there panting.

Upon closer examination, I realized that the brown thing was actually a mostly tan thing dressed in brown hides. When it tried to

stand up, I pointed my spear at it. It raised its arms meekly and then it spoke. Nothing intelligent or anything, but I could tell it was speech of some sort. To this point I had never heard anything but another Ewok ever speak so I didn't know what to make of this strange creature.

It pointed to itself and said slowly, "Ju-nas."

I pointed at it and repeated, "Ju-nas."

I figured it was telling me its name, so I pointed to myself and said, "Gra-el."

Junas repeated my name. I decided to continue the game and pointed at the dead Yotak, "Yoo-tak."

Junas questioned, "Me take?"

I said, "No, Yootak."

Getting nothing but a blank stare, I repeated loudly, "Yootak!"

Junas looked perplexed and then tried, in a futile effort, to lift the dead animal. I threw up my hands in disgust and began to wonder what to do. At first I thought about killing Junas and seeing what he tasted like. Then it hit me that a talking animal might be some sort of omen. An omen about what I couldn't possibly imagine, but omens weren't meant to be eaten. Following this logic, I concluded that I should bring Junas back to Tribe Panshee village so that Shaman Rakra could explain what this was all about. If Junas wasn't an omen, everyone in the village could see what he tasted like.

It didn't take much to get Junas to come with me. I gave him some water and rations from my pack and he seemed to be content to follow. We traveled till dusk and then stopped to camp for the night. I climbed a suitable Tree and tied my travel hammock to its branches. Junas refused to follow me up the Tree. I tried to warn him of the dangers that lurked on the ground at night, but he seemed too stupid to understand. Instead, Junas spread out a thin tube of hide he got from his pack and climbed inside of it at the base of the tree. He fell asleep clutching that strange black stick in one hand.

We set out for Tribe Panshee village at dawn. I figured we might be able to make it by nightfall if we were lucky. I soon discovered that we weren't. We had only been traveling a short time when I picked up a strange, unnatural odor, like one of Shaman Rakra's experiments gone wrong. The Trees around me sang a song of danger. Junas must have sensed it too because he drew out the black stick again. I readied my spear. We continued forward at a quick pace. Suddenly, strange bolts of red lightning shot out and hit many of the Trees nearby. I heard a voice call out in a language that I didn't understand and then we were surrounded by creatures holding big

black sticks. They looked somewhat like Junas, but were all shiny and white. One of them shouted again. Junas put the black stick on the ground and raised his hands. He was surrendering. The white things moved in on us, not caring how much I waved my spear. We

## Captain Junas Turner



**Type:** Rebel Scout

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 5D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 5D+2, business 4D+2, cultures 5D, languages 4D+1, planetary systems 6D, survival 4D

**MECHANICAL 4D**

Sensors 5D, space transports 6D, starfighter piloting 6D+1

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Bargain 4D+1, con 5D+1

**STRENGTH 3D+2**

**TECHNICAL 3D**

Computer programming/repair 4D, droid programming 4D, starfighter repair 5D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 16

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Astromech droid, blaster pistol (4D), rebel uniform, survival gear, YT-1300 Transport

**Capsule:** Junas Turner has been a member of the Alliance ever since the Empire destroyed his home planet, Alderaan. He was a galactic trader before that event and was a natural to be sent on reconnaissance missions for the Rebels.

A little less brash than in his younger days, Junas Turner is no less idealistic at age 35. He believes that you take what life deals you and do the best that you can. He always seems to get into impossible situations that he somehow manages to escape. Captain Turner has befriended Graef, the Ewok warrior, and takes him on many of his missions for the New Republic. At first, Turner assumed that the cuddly creature would be fun to have around as a pet, but soon realized that Ewoks, especially Graef, can be very useful to have around. Graef and Turner return to Endor frequently and Turner is a welcome guest of Tribe Panshee at all times. The only problem for Turner is his fear of heights which makes staying in the treehouse village somewhat of a displeasure for him.

**Quote:** "Heroes are either extremely skilled or extremely lucky. I happen to be both."

were captured and our hands were bound within moments. As we were marched away, I wondered if finding a group of talking animals was a bigger omen than finding just one talking animal. Then I wondered if all talking animals would taste the same. Then I wondered if the shiny white talking animals were wondering what Ewoks taste like and if we all taste the same. Then I decided to stop wondering about anything.

We marched for some time until we came upon a village amidst the forest. It was not like any village I had ever seen before. It was certainly not built by Ewoks. There were huge huts made out of shiny black, silver, and white stuff. There were more of the shiny white talking animals and among them were several other shiny creatures of different shapes, sizes, and colors. They were doing all sorts of construction work about the village. Even stranger than the creatures was the fact that the village was built on the ground and not in the safety of the Trees. That's when I realized, there were no Trees! Not even a shrub or a blade of grass. I had never seen so big an area that had no plants.

Then, I heard a painful screeching noise and turned to look where it had come from. At the border between village and forest, I saw a hideous, flat, black creature with long silver arms. At the end of its arms were silver teeth that spun around. The creature was cutting down Trees with its arms and then eating them as each one fell over into its large mouth. I felt a wave of grief wash over me as I realized what was happening. It was cutting down Trees without performing the Ritual of the Children! The Ritual insures that the Spirit of a dying Tree is transferred to a Seed to be reborn. Without the Ritual, the Tree Spirits would be killed.

I had to do something to stop that creature. I struggled to break my bonds, but I couldn't. The shiny white talking animals grabbed me and shoved me into one of the huts. I tried to run back outside to stop the thing from killing more Spirits, but one of the white things bashed my head with something hard and I fell to the ground. I heard a scuffle above me and, a moment later, Junas crumpled to the floor by my side. He must have retaliated for their attack on me. I was starting to like Junas more and more. I felt bad that I had almost decided to eat him earlier.

We were roughly picked up off the floor and marched down a long corridor. We stopped at a silver door. One of the white things touched some symbols on the wall next to the door and the door slid sideways into the wall. They removed my bonds and threw me through the open doorway into a small gray room. As the door slid

shut, I realized that I was all alone. The room was empty except for a chair and a long table. There was light, but I saw no fires or windows. I tried for a while to open the door, but I couldn't budge it and there were no symbols on this side of the wall to play with. I sat in the chair, pulled out my reed flute, and began to play a tune.

After a while, I heard a rumbling noise and the whole room began to shake. It felt as though the room was moving. Eventually, the shaking stopped and the rumbling decreased to a low hum that I could barely hear. The door slid open and I saw Junas stumble into the room. He looked bad, like he had been in a fight. He staggered over to the table, fell onto it, and passed out. I climbed up on top of him and went to sleep.

I don't know how long we were in the little gray room, but eventually the door slid open and the white shiny creatures came back. They waved the big black sticks at us and guided us out into the corridor. We were marched down the long corridor and out of the hut the same way we came in. When we emerged from the hut, I was surprised to see that we were not in the enemy village. In fact, we were not even outside. It appeared that while we were inside, the hut had been moved and placed inside a large cavern. Before I could ponder any longer at how this could be accomplished, the white creatures forced us forward again.

We came to a halt in front of a tall platform. On top of the platform was a golden creature, similar in build to the white creatures, but much shinier. I figured he was the chieftain. The chieftain turned toward Junas and spoke in a strange language. Junas responded, but I don't think the chieftain liked what he said since a white thing swung a black stick into Junas' right knee. Junas winced in pain, but did not fall. The chieftain spoke again and this time Junas was not punished for his response. Junas and the chieftain had a short conversation and then the chieftain turned to me and said something I couldn't comprehend. Not wishing to insult him I tried to explain what happened.

"Greetings High Chieftain of the Shiny White Talking Animals," I stated, bowing. "I am Grael of Tribe Panshee and this is my friend Junas. We were just on our way back to Tribe Panshee village when your warriors there," I pointed over my shoulder, "abducted us and forced us into their moving hut. I'm sure this is all just some kind of mistake so if you would..."

"There is no mistake, primitive creature," the chieftain interrupted in perfect Ewok tongue. "You are enemies of Tribe Empire and will be held here in this place until further notice. Do as you are

## Balis-Baurgh

The star system Balis-Baurgh is naturally shielded from sensors by numerous gas clouds and heavy solar radiation. The system has three planets, only one of which can sustain life. After centuries of war, the superpower countries of this world were nearing global peace. As a symbol of their new brotherhood, a space station was to be produced in a joint effort by all of these countries. During the early stages of its construction, the space station project was sabotaged by the Empire. The superpower countries blamed each other for this act, with a little help from Imperial agents, and a great war ensued. With the planet's inhabitants all fighting each other, it was an easy task for the Empire to move in and conquer the planet.

The Empire converted the space station to a fully-automated prison facility. Labor droids take care of the day-to-day maintenance and operations while enforcer droids police the prisoners. These droids are all coordinated through one programmer droid that acts like a warden.

In order to prevent criminals from escaping, the Balis-Baurgh system was seeded with many sensor countermeasures. The gas clouds, solar radiation, and Imperial technology make astrogation into the system virtually impossible. The Empire has a coded flight plan program that is loaded into an astromech droid's memory whenever a ship needs to travel into the Balis-Baurgh system. The program is self-erasing and the astromech droid must be programmed by the programmer droid on the space station in order for a ship to leave the system safely.

told and you will not be punished. Your native language has been added to our library so that you can understand what we tell you to do. Welcome to Balis-Baurgh."

Before I could protest that I was not the enemy of Tribe Empire before today's events, we were ushered down a long passageway and into a large round cavern. A very large silver and black creature was sitting idle in its center. There were many silver doors of different sizes lining the walls of the cavern. Our escorts led us to an open door and one of them pointed at Junas to go inside. I tried to follow him, but the door slid closed in my face. I was led to the next

open door and the white thing motioned for me to get inside. The door slammed shut just after I entered.

I was in a small gray room, like the one in the moving hut. The door to this one had a small grated window in it. Peering through the window I could see the main cavern and the beast that lived there. The thing had many strange looking arms, but had no legs that I could see. It had several eyes distributed randomly about its body that would flash green, blue, or yellow. There were a few smaller creatures, about my height, moving about the cavern. They had blue and white shiny skin and two blinking yellow eyes. Occasionally, one of the smaller creatures would come to stand before the great silver and black creature. Although I saw no instrument, the silver and black thing would play a tune for the little creature and the blue and white thing would dance away to go back to work.

After watching this ritual for some time, I decided that the black and silver thing, which I named the Master, was rewarding the blue and white things, which I called the Dancers, for accomplishing their tasks. What a wonderful way to work and play at the same time. I wondered why such an obviously intelligent Tribe would work for the mean and nasty Tribe Empire. Then I saw two taller blue and white things enter the cavern. These things were much bulkier than the Dancers and each one had a large green eye that looked from side to side all the time. They strode up to the Master who played a cheerful tune for them when they arrived. Instead of dancing away merrily, the Greeneyes, as I decided to name them, turned around and stormed stiffly out of the cavern. If that was how they acted when they were happy, I sure didn't want to see a Greeneye when it was mad. Although the activity in the cavern amazed me, I eventually crawled over to what I assumed was the bed and fell asleep.

I was wakened the next day by an awful smell. Much to my disappointment the awful smell was breakfast. A slice of bread with some hot, gooey, brown stuff smeared across it and a cup of water. I was too hungry to worry about the smell and scooped down the meal in moments. It tasted worse than it smelled and it certainly wasn't enough to sustain my appetite, but it would have to do. Then I caught the sweet scent of hot meat drift into the room. I rushed to my door and looked through the window. A Dancer carrying a tray full of steaming meat had entered the cavern. My mostly-empty stomach growled in anticipation of real food. Much to my dismay, the Dancer did not bring the food to me, but stopped at a door across the main cavern. I let out a deep sigh and sat back on my bed.

Later that day, the door suddenly slid open and a Dancer ap-

peared. I hoped it was bringing lunch, but I saw that it had no food.

A voice spoke from nowhere in particular, "This is the exercise time. Follow this worker to the common area."

Seeing no reason not to, I stepped out into the cavern and looked at the Dancer waiting there. With two beeps, a whistle and a whirring noise, the little creature started off across the cavern. I followed the Dancer down a corridor that I hadn't been down before. The corridor opened up into a huge room which was filled with many creatures of all shapes, sizes, and colors, not to mention the different number of eyes, limbs, and mouths. I entered the room curious to see if Junas was here, but more curious about the strange things, and I do mean things in some cases, that I was to exercise with. I barely noticed the beep beep, whistle, and whirl of my escort as it departed back down the corridor. I couldn't help notice several Greeneyes keeping watch over the mish-mash of beings in the room.

There were green creatures with horns, brown creatures with

## L2 Base Labor Droid

**Type:** Industrial Automaton L2 Base Labor Droid

**DEXTERITY** 1D

**KNOWLEDGE** 1D

**MECHANICAL** 1D

**PERCEPTION** 1D

**STRENGTH** 2D

Lifting 4D

**TECHNICAL** 1D

**Equipped With:**

- Two heavy grasper arms (+1D lifting)
- Retractable fine work heavy grasper arm
- Two tractor feet
- Two visual and two auditory sensor recorders
- Small circular saw (4D damage, .3 meter range)

**Special Abilities:**

**Skill Duplication:** Since L2 Labor droids record all visual and auditory instructions, they attempt to duplicate these instructions to the letter. An L2 can perform a *Mechanical* or *Technical* task at the same skill level of the instructor, providing all steps to complete the task have been explained in detail to the droid.

**Move:** 5

**Size:** 1 meter tall

**Cost:** 1,200

**Capsule:** L2 Base Labor Droids are Industrial Automaton's answer for cheap, reliable, menial workers. L2s can be programmed to complete tasks with up to 100 separate steps and they can repeat the tasks any number of times without further instruction. They are popular in a wide variety of industries, but are mostly used for maintenance, construction, and mechanical repair.

## K5 Enforcer Droid

**Type:** Rim Securities' K5 Enforcer Droid

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 7D+1, blaster artillery 5D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 1D**

**MECHANICAL 1D**

**PERCEPTION 2D**

Search 3D

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 1D**

**Equipped With:**

- Two auto-balance legs

- Two arms

- One sweeping visual sensor (allows 360-degree vision, +2D search)

- Vocalator speech/sound system

- Body armor: +3D to all locations

- Weapon is variable: usually a heavy blaster pistol, blaster rifle, or light repeating blaster

**Move:** 10

**Size:** 2 meters tall

**Cost:** 9,000

**Capsule:** The K5 Enforcer Droid is Rim's successor to the K4 Security Droid. More versatile than the K4, the K5 can use a variety of external blasters as well as operate blaster artillery. The K5 is bigger, tougher, and a bit slower. RS has added a domed head with a sweeping visual sensor that offers a full 360 degrees of vision.

The Empire requisitioned the K5 strictly for its own use in prisons and government facilities, but a few Enforcer droids have made their way into the hands of crimelords and powerful private corporations.

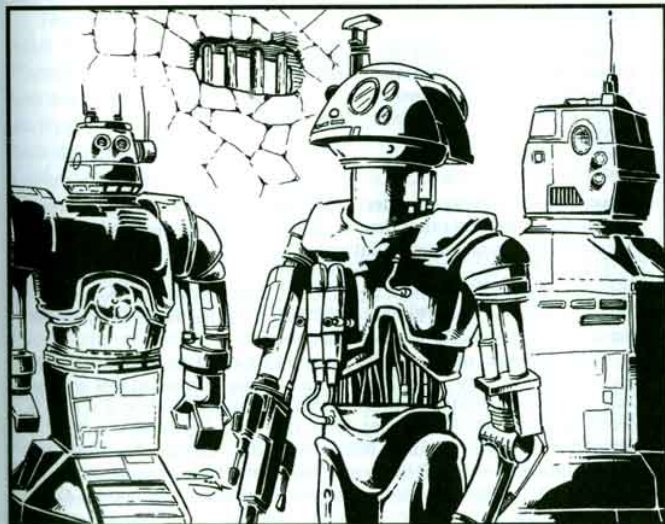
flat-crooked heads, silver things with red things sticking out of blue things, big furry things, little furry things, creatures with big fish eyes, creatures with no eyes, and creatures with things that I couldn't even begin to describe. There were several creatures that looked like Junas, dressed in the same type of hides. Then I saw one creature that looked like Junas that actually was Junas.

I started to wave hello at him, but a big black thing stepped right in front of me. It had long tentacles with red suckers on the ends and two orange tusks sticking out of his maw. Instead of waving, I had put my hand up into the black thing's armpit, well actually, tentaclepit. The thing screeched in disapproval and whirled around to face me. In doing so, one of the black thing's tentacles slapped into the creature next to it. This creature, which looked like a two legged gold bug about two and a half Ewoks tall, buzzed annoyedly at Tusksface and shoved him back. I jumped out of the way as the two strange

creatures began wrestling with one another. Many of the other beings in the room cleared away as well and started to cheer on the brawlers.

Tusksface had Goldy in a headlock, and a leglock, and an armlock. Goldy seemed to be no match for the black beast and was being crushed to death. Just as I thought it was all over, Goldy squirted a strange cloud of green gas out of his mouth into Tusksface's eyes. Tusksface broke away from the big bug, slapping at his own face and shrieking in pain. At that moment, a Greeneye broke through the crowd and leveled a black stick at the combatants. Goldy put his hands up submissively. Tusksface, his eyes clearing, took the opportunity to lunge at the bug creature. A shaft of light burst forth from the Greeneye's black stick and cut Tusksface down before he reached his target. Goldy nodded his head in approval and buzzed something at the Greeneye. The Greeneye buzzed something back and another burst of light from its black stick burnt a hole in Goldy's head. Two Dancers arrived to clean up the bodies.

I located Junas again and went over to join him. He was standing by the far wall talking to two others of his kind. One was taller and thinner than Junas and had blonde fur. The other was darker-



■ L2 Labor Droids and K5 Enforcer Droids run the Balis-Baurgh prison under the guidance of a 4XB Programmer Droid.

skinned than the other two and had black fur over his lip. They were startled at my approach, but Junas eased their concern with a wave of his hand. He spoke to them in that strange tongue of his. He finished by stating my name, "Grael," and then patted me on the head.

The light-haired one curved his hands inward and said, "Lon." "Becker," the dark skinned one said, bowing his head slightly. I bowed my head back.

The three of them continued to talk. From his occasional gesturing in my direction, Junas appeared to be relating the story of how

### 4XB Programmer Droid

**Type:** Cybot Galactica 4XB Programmer Droid

**DEXTERITY 0D**

**KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Bureaucracy 3D, law enforcement 3D

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Sensors 5D

**PERCEPTION 1D**

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 4D**

Computer programming 5D, droid programming 6D

**Equipped With:**

- AAA-3 VerboBrain
- CG4XB Expanded Program Memory Core
- ToneControl sound synthesizer system
- Broad-band antenna receiver
- Cubical body case with energy shield (+5D)

**Move:** 0

**Size:** 4 meters cubed

**Cost:** 25,000

**Capsule:** The primary function of a programmer droid is to oversee and program several other droids. The 4XB also has excellent administrative and management abilities and it is not uncommon for a 4XB to handle the day-to-day operation of a factory, a prison, or an automated law enforcement agency. Many corporations prefer leaving programmer droids in charge of their facilities since 4XBs follow management's policies without question.

4XBs program other droids by emitting complicated electronic sound patterns. Any type of droid can be programmed in this way as long as it has been fitted with a CG1XB Translator Module. Each 4XB droid has its own identifying code that is programmed into the translator modules. Droids fitted with the modules can only be programmed by the 4XB that emits the correct identifying code.

In order to accommodate different administrative needs, 4XBs have an expanded program memory core that can contain customized skill programs that fit the user's needs.

I saved his life and our ensuing journey to this evil place. Lon examined me from time to time. I remained quiet, but took the opportunity to start deciphering their language. The Dancers came to lead us back to our rooms before I had much luck.

Each day was pretty similar to the next. I was kept in my room most of the time except for the exercise time in the meeting room. I met with Junas, Lon, and Becker almost every day during exercise time and eventually picked up their language. They call themselves Humans and Junas, Becker, and Lon were all from Tribe Rebellion. Tribe Empire and Tribe Rebellion don't like each other and have been hurting each other for a very long time. They said that Tribe Empire must have thought me to be a member of Tribe Rebellion because I was with Junas. I asked how that was so since Ewoks and Humans look so much different than one another. Lon explained to me that Tribe Rebellion is made up of many different Tribes that have banded together to stop Tribe Empire from hurting each one individually. I told them that Ewoks would be unhappy about Tribe Empire hurting the Tree Spirits and that I would ask Shaman Rakra and HighMaster Fersin to have Tribe Panshee help Tribe Rebellion against the evil Tribe Empire.

That was if I could ever get back to Tribe Panshee village. Junas told me that Tribe Empire was building a weapon near Tribe Panshee village that would hurt Tribe Rebellion really badly. He wanted to get back to his Tribe to tell them where the weapon was so that they could destroy it. I swore a Root Oath that I would help him if he figured out how to leave the Tribe Empire place. Whenever I asked him when we would leave, he always said, "When Fate smiles on us and gives us the chance." I had no idea who Fate was, but I sure did wish he'd smile on us soon.

Most of my days in the Tribe Empire place were spent in my room. Usually, I just sat by the window playing my flute and watched the Master sing to the playful Dancers and the mean, nasty Greeneyes. I sometimes tried to copy the tunes that the Master sang. I eventually realized that the Master was not rewarding the Tribe for working, but that he was telling them what he wanted them to do by which song he sang. There was a song that made a Dancer bring me breakfast. There was one that made a Dancer open my room and bring me to the meeting room. There was another song that made a Dancer open Junas' room and bring him to the meeting room. There was even a song that made the big, hateful Greeneyes go to sleep by the wall.

I decided to try and get a Dancer to bring me some of the meat that

usually went to the room across the cavern. I was real tired of having to eat that awful bread with brown goo all over it everyday. I watched the Master closely for several days to see which song sent a Dancer to get the meat. I copied many songs until I finally identified the correct one. The following evening, a Dancer came to my room with the smelly brown dinner as usual. Before he left, I played the "get the meat" song for him. With the typical beep-beep, whistle, and whir noises, the Dancer was off. I saw him come out of a tunnel moments later with a tray full of the mouth-watering meat. I licked my lips in

anticipation. My excitement turned to disappointment quickly, however, as the Dancer did not bring the wonderful meal to me, but continued on to the same room that it was always brought it to.

Unwilling to be done in so easily, I decided to try again in the morning. This time, I played the "take me to the meeting room" song and followed the Dancer into the cavern. Before we got far, I leapt in front of the Dancer and played the "get the meat" song. It stopped to consider this abrupt change in plans, but eventually beeped, whistled, whirred, and headed off down a different tunnel. When it returned, I ambushed it at the mouth of that tunnel and grabbed the plate of meat. The Dancer seemed oblivious to this fact as it continued toward the room across the cavern. I sat down and began a victory feast.

I was about halfway finished when I heard someone shout, "Grael!"

I looked up to see Junas frantically waving at me through the window in his door. It hit me then that I had been very selfish and should have offered to share this wonderful food with my friend. Feeling a little guilty, I got up and started toward Junas' room to give him what was left. I was almost there when I realized that Junas wasn't waving, he was pointing. "Grael, look out behind you!" he shouted. I turned around and there, towering over me, was a Greeneye. I offered it the tray of meat, but it batted the tray out of my hands.

It spoke grimly, "You are not scheduled to be out of your room at this time. It is obvious that you are trying to escape. Escape attempts are punishable by death."

"Wait, there must be some mistake," I pleaded as I reached for my flute. If I could only remember the right song.

**The Greeneye pointed the blaster at me. I was doomed.**

"There is no mistake," The Greeneye said coldly as it reached for its big black stick which Becker had told me was called a blaster.

I put the flute to my mouth. The Greeneye began lifting the blaster out of its holder. My mind raced to recall the correct notes. There was no more time. I began to play what I hoped was the "go sleep by the wall" song. The Greeneye pointed the blaster at me. I played the last note. There was a tense moment when I thought I was doomed, but the Greeneye put the blaster into its holder, glided stiffly over to the wall, and went to sleep. I put the flute away and went over to talk to Junas who was staring at me in awe.

"Grael, how the heck did you do that?" he asked, baffled.

"I just told the Greeneye to go to sleep by the wall," I said casually.

"With your flute?" he questioned.

"Yes, I played a song that I learned from the Master," I replied, pointing at the Master in the center of the cavern.

As we were talking, a gold and red Dancer arrived to talk to the Master. It was about as tall as the other Dancers, but this one had a third leg that made it's body slant to one side. I'd only seen it a few times before. The song the Master sang to it was long and complex, but it was always the same.

"An astromech droid!" Junas exclaimed, "There must be a ship in the landing bay. Grael, can you get me out of here?"

"Yes," I replied, trying to figure out why he was so excited. I located a blue and white Dancer across the cavern. I ran over to it and played the "bring Junas to the meeting room" song. With the usual set of noises, it went to Junas' room and opened the door.

Junas grabbed me by the shoulders wildly and asked, "Can you get Lon and Becker out too?" He glanced over at the Master who was just starting to sing to the red and gold Dancer.

I shook my head from side to side. "I don't know the song to do that, but maybe I can learn it someday," I answered.

"There isn't time, Grael," Junas declared. "That astromech droid is our only shot to get away from here. We'll have to come back for Lon and Becker later."

The Master was done with his song and the Dancer was moving away.

"C'mon Grael, Fate has finally given us the chance," Junas exclaimed as he ran to follow the Dancer. Having no time to wonder where Fate was and how Junas knew that he was smiling, I ran after him.

As we followed the Dancer, we ran past the Greeneye that I had put to sleep earlier. Junas stopped momentarily and took the blaster

from its side. We pursued the Dancer down the tunnel that we had come through when we arrived at this place. Junas stopped at the opening to the cavern, crouched down, and motioned to me to do the same. We saw the Dancer climb up a ramp into one of those moving huts that Junas called a ship. There were two stormtroopers, as I had learned to call the shiny white talking animals, standing at the bottom of the ramp. Each held a blaster at the ready. Some blue and white Dancers were moving down the ramp carrying silver boxes and returning up the ramp for more.

"Watch out for enforcer droids, er, Greeneyes," Junas whispered as he pointed his blaster at the stormtroopers.

I nodded and quickly glanced back down the tunnel from which we had come.

Junas waited until the Dancers had finished their work and then said softly, "Get ready to run."

What happened next seem to take place very slowly, but actually took place in a few moments. I saw two shafts of red light streak out at the stormtroopers. One was struck right in the chest and collapsed to the floor. The other had dodged the second shot and ducked down behind a post at the bottom of the ramp. A high-pitched squealing noise rang out loudly from all over. A bolt of light from the stormtrooper's blaster struck the wall next to me. Junas returned with a shot of his own and the stormtrooper went down.

Junas screamed, "Let's go!"

He darted out toward the ship. As I trailed along after him, I heard a blaster bolt explode behind me. I glanced back to see a group of Greeneyes speeding after us. I knew I could play the "go to sleep by the wall" song for them, but I didn't think I'd be alive by the time they got close enough to hear it. I caught up to Junas and we both went up the ramp into the hut. Junas grabbed a lever at the top and the ramp began to rise and then closed.

I followed Junas into a room that had a long table standing in front of two huge windows. Looking through the windows, I could see the star-filled sky through a large opening in the cavern wall. There were all sorts of colored lights and stuff flashing on the table. The gold and red Dancer was here, a thin silver arm extended into a hole in the side of the table. Junas sat in one of the two chairs positioned in front of the table and began pushing things. I sat down in the other one and was about to do the same when Junas grabbed my arm.

"Hey, don't touch anything! You might break something. Just sit there and be quiet," he growled.

I grumbled at him, sat back, and folded my arms. That's the last

time I help him out of his room, I thought to myself.

"Just as I thought," Junas said as he looked at a piece of the table. "The astromech droid has the coded flight plan and is feeding it into the navcomputer. We can get through the countermeasure network and away to the Sullust system to warn the Rebels."

Junas pushed a blue button and the ship began to rumble and make a high-pitched whining noise. He grabbed onto a long stick with one hand and pressed a yellow button with the other.

"Here we go," he said as he pulled the stick back.

The high-pitched whining trailed off to a low-pitched whining and slowly stopped. Lights flashed all over the place. Nothing else seemed to happen.

"It's not my fault!" Junas screamed, bashing his hand down on the table. He furiously pushed, pulled, and pressed things all over the table. He stopped in front of the gold and red Dancer which had pulled back its silver arm and appeared to go to have gone to sleep.

"Break something?" I questioned casually.

He just glared at me and said, "They must have shut down all the droids in the complex to stop this astromech from letting us take off." There was a bashing noise on the side of the ship. "Well, all the droids except the Greeneyes, that is. Let me see if I can get this little guy going again," he declared, kneeling down by the red and gold Dancer.

Junas removed a piece of the Dancer's skin and reached inside. I didn't think ripping the Dancer open and playing around with its guts would help us escape, but I figured it was part of some ritual or something. The bashing noises continued from outside as Junas kept working. Much to my surprise, the Dancer's eyes lit up and it began moving again. Junas withdrew his arm and replaced the piece of skin.

"Damn," Junas exclaimed as he examined the Dancer, "the shut-down erased the programmed flight instructions. We can't go anywhere without that flight plan." He looked thoughtful for a moment and then suddenly turned to me and said, "Can you remember the song that the Master sang to this droid, er, Dancer?"

"I only heard it a few times, but I can come close," I replied.

With a very serious stare, Junas looked at me and said in a somber voice, "Grael, you must play it exactly like the Master did or we will die."

I gulped and reached for my flute. I had played my flute for ceremonies and rituals, but never had my life depend on my musical ability. Recalling the tune in my head, I raised the flute to my lips. The ship rocked back and forth and I was thrown to the ground.

"Hurry up Grael, they'll cut through the wall any moment!" Junas

cried.

I struggled to my feet and tried to remember the notes again. The ship rocked and broke my concentration a second time. I can't let the noise bother me, I thought to myself. A good warrior stays focused on his objective. Then it dawned on me that it was no different to focus on playing a song than it was to focus on hunting a Yotak. Closing my eyes, I made believe that I was back in the Forest on Endor. All I could hear were the sounds of the animals and the song of the Trees in the wind. I was at peace.

The notes came to me then and I began to play. I didn't know if the bashing had stopped and I didn't care. All I heard was the song and I let it flow through me like a river flows through a valley.

When I opened my eyes, Junas was already seated at the table and was pulling back on the long stick. I peered through the window and saw us come closer to the opening in the cavern wall. Then we were surrounded by the night sky and the stars that lived there. I stood there in awe as we drifted through the heavens.

We traveled to the Tribe Rebellion place and discovered that they had left to come to Endor because of the nasty Tribe Empire weapon. When we arrived here, the Great Battle was already over and we just joined the celebration that was going on. Now we're going back to the Tribe Empire place to rescue Lon and Becker and some other Rebel warriors that are still there...

■ ■ ■

I looked down at my son, who was straining to keep his eyes open. "Go to sleep now, Ponto," I said softly, "I'll say goodbye in the morning."

"Good-night Papa," Ponto whispered as he fell off to sleep.

I stood there for a long time and watched him sleep. Then I kissed his forehead and went back to my own bed to sleep. I would need all my strength in the morning to play the song that would take Junas and me back to the Tribe Empire place.

### Adventure Idea

The characters are recruited by Captain Turner and Grael to help them lead a commando raid on Balis-Baurgh. They must successfully enter the Balis-Baurgh system, evade patrol drones, destroy the enforcer droids and free the Rebel prisoners.

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# WANTED BY CRACKEN



### ■ A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL AIREN CRACKEN

The influx of criminal elements filling the void left by the crumbling Empire has made it necessary for Republic Intelligence to update the list of those wanted for crimes against the New Republic. Intelligence agents are continually collecting information about these dangerous adversaries, and I will frequently be sending updates so all New Republic personnel are aware of these criminals.

These are turbulent times. As the old Imperial order continues to deteriorate and the New Republic rises, certain elements in society are taking advantage of whatever disorder they can find. Opportunities left open by the Empire and which the New Republic has not taken are being seized by those who will use them to their own benefit, and everyone else's detriment. As new worlds join the Republic and we explore other planets, we face more threats to the peace and order we are striving to rebuild.

We are counting on you to help preserve the peace and order the New Republic represents.



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## CRAGUS 12

**Species:** Unknown **Sex:** Male  
**Homeworld:** Unknown  
**Height:** 2 meters **Age:** Unknown

### Crimes Against The New Republic:

Murder of New Republic personnel, destruction of New Republic property, theft

**Reward For Capture:** 50,000

The bounty hunter Cragus 12 is a mystery. Why he calls himself that, and where he is from is unknown. He has worked for various individuals and organizations as well as for the Empire. He has been spotted in several sectors but most often conducts his business in the bordering regions between New Republic and Imperial space. Cragus is direct in his methods of capturing a target and does not

mind causing a scene. This openly violent way of presenting himself in public has only increased his reputation as a fearful adversary. Although no one but his targets are ever injured, he has caused thousands of credits worth of property damage in the pursuit of his targets. Most of this damage is due to his high-powered arm repeating blaster.

To improve his abilities, Cragus has gone through several operations to implant cybernetic enhancements. The most noticeable alteration is his cyberarm. It has a removable hand that he can replace with his devastating repeating blaster. Cragus 12 travels in his modified Kazellis Light Freighter named *The Claw*. He is accompanied only by his security droid GX-99.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL  
 ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*No one knows what Cragus 12's name means. Those who ask him usually end up dead or, if they're lucky, seriously injured. Some think that he is a clone of some kind, but that technology is not widely available. Others think he is a droid, but his movement is too natural. The only way to make a positive identification would be to bring him in.*



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### ■ Cragus 12

#### DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 6D+2, blaster: arm repeating blaster 8D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 8D, grenade 4D+2, melee combat 5D, melee parry 5D, missile weapons 5D+1, running 4D+1, vehicle blasters 5D+2

#### KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien species 5D, cultures 4D+2, intimidation 7D, languages 4D, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 7D, survival 6D, willpower 6D+1

#### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 6D, communications 5D+1, jet pack operation 5D, repulsorlift operation 6D, sensors 4D, space transports 7D+1, starfighter piloting 5D, starship gunnery 6D+2, starship shields 4D+2

#### PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 5D, command 5D, con 4D+2, forgery 6D, gambling 5D, hide 5D+2, investigation 6D, search 6D+2, sneak 4D+2

#### STRENGTH 4D+2

Brawling 7D, lifting 8D, stamina 8D

#### TECHNICAL 3D

Armor repair 7D, blaster repair 6D+2, computer programming/repair 5D, demolition 5D, droid programming 6D, droid repair 5D, first aid 6D, (A) medicine: cyborging 2D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D, security 6D, space transport repair 6D, starship weapon repair 5D+2

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Cybernetic Improvements:** Cragus 12 has a BioTech Repli-Limb Prosthetic Replacement arm (see *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*, page 29), a Neuro-Saav Cardio-Muscular Package (see *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*, page 35) which increases *Strength* and all related skills by +1D. Also has a Neuro-Saav Hifold Sensory Package (see *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*, page 38) which increases *Perception* and all related skills by +1D.

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 7

**Cyber Points:** 5

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Arm repeating blaster (replaces cyberhand, 6D), bounty hunter armor, comlink, datapad, grenades (5D), medpac, synthrope, thermal detonator (10D)

### ■ Cragus 12's

#### Bounty Hunter Armor

**Model:** Unknown

**Type:** Modified personal battle armor

**Cost:** Not for sale

**Availability:** Unique

**Game Notes:** The basic suit provides +2D to *Strength* for physical and energy attacks, and covers all locations. The suit's bulk causes -1D to all *Dexterity* attribute and skill checks.

**Jet pack:** Has a move of 100 meters horizontally, 70 meters vertically. Uses *jet pack operation* skill. Base difficulty is easy, modified by obstacles. Has 20 charges, can expend up to two per round.

**Targeting system:** Contains a Multi-Frequency Targeting and Acquisition System (MFTAS) which gives +2D to all *Perception* checks in darkness, smoke and other visibility obscuring conditions. It also gives +1D to ranged weapon skill uses against moving targets (those that move more than 10 meters in a round).

The suit also has a climate-controlled body glove, a self-contained air unit (2 hours), a built-in comlink and a wrist laser (3D).

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### ■ The Claw

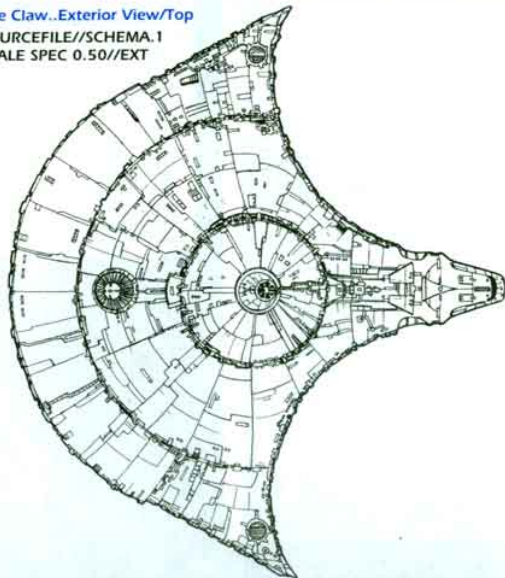
**Craft:** Kazellis Light Freighter  
**Type:** Modified Light Freighter  
**Scale:** Starfighter  
**Length:** 28 meters  
**Skill:** Space Transports: Kazellis Transport  
**Crew:** 1, gunners: 1  
**Crew Skill:** See Cragus 12 and GX-99  
**Passengers:** 6 (including holding cells)  
**Cargo Capacity:** 50 metric tons  
**Consumables:** 2 months  
**Cost:** Not for sale  
**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x1  
**Hyperdrive Backup:** x12  
**Nav Computer:** Yes  
**Maneuverability:** 2D

**Space:** 7  
**Atmosphere:** 350; 1,000 kmh  
**Hull:** 5D  
**Shields:** 3D  
**Sensors:**  
*Passive:* 20/1D  
*Scan:* 50/2D  
*Search:* 70/2D+2  
*Focus:* 4/3D+2  
**Weapons:**  
**One Quad Laser Cannon**  
*Fire Arc:* Turret  
*Crew:* 1

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### ■ The Claw..Exterior View/Top

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### ■ The Claw..continued

**Skill:** Starship Gunnery  
**Fire Control:** 3D  
**Space Range:** 1-3/12/25  
**Atmosphere Range:** 100-300/1.2/2.5  
**KM**  
**Damage:** 5D

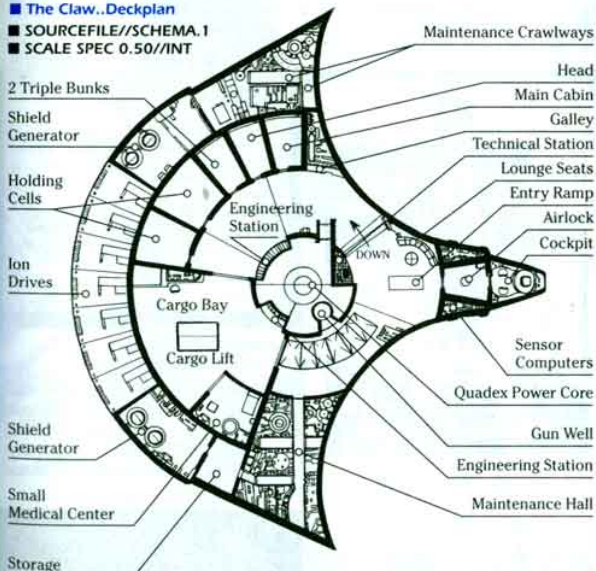
**Capsule:** Cragus 12's ship, *The Claw*, is a modified Kazellis Light Freighter. The ship is not only fast and deadly but it also serves as a small prison for the subjects who Cragus must bring in alive. Much of the storage space has been converted to small holding cells that are difficult to escape from. The doors and walls of each cell are

magnetically sealed and stronger than most blast doors (they have an effective *Strength* of 8D).

When Cragus isn't around, the ship is closely protected by his security droid, GX-99. GX is constantly monitoring the ship's surroundings for any unwanted activity, and will eliminate any who are not authorized to conduct maintenance on the ship.

### ■ The Claw..Deckplan

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## GX-99

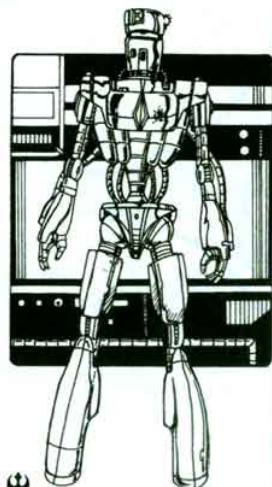
**Model:** Aro-GX Security Droid

**Height:** 1.8 meters

**Crimes Against The New Republic:** Murder, aiding and abetting known criminals

**Reward For Capture:** 10,000

If someone wants to get into (or out of) Cragus 12's ship while Cragus himself is not around, they will have to go through GX-99. GX-99 is a security droid who is totally loyal to Cragus and serves as the guardian of his ship. He has all the basic skills of a normal security droid and has gone through several modifications and programming to enhance these skills as well as give him extra capabilities.



If Cragus is ever in a tight situation, GX-99 can focus in on his homing beacon and pilot the ship to his location. GX-99 will then use the quad laser cannon manually to scatter the opposition, while Cragus uses his jet pack to board the ship while it is still airborne.

### ■ GX-99

#### **DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 7D-2, dodge 8D, running 4D

#### **KNOWLEDGE 1D**

Languages 3D, planetary systems 4D

#### **MECHANICAL 1D**

Astrogation 4D, communications 3D, space transports 5D, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 3D-2

#### **PERCEPTION 1D**

Search 4D-2

#### **STRENGTH 1D**

Lifting 3D

#### **TECHNICAL 1D**

Computer programming/repair 3D-2, droid repair 4D, security 5D

**Character Points:** 6

**Move:** 10

#### **Equipped With:**

- Body armor: +3D STR to all locations
- Wrist blasters (3D damage, range: 3-10/30/100)
- Two auto-balance legs
- Two arms

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

GX-99 shouldn't be too much trouble since he rarely leaves The Claw. Cragus 12 should be the main target, and once he is detained, taking the ship will be easier. Trying to take out Cragus and GX-99 together is almost suicidal.

*This issue's "Wanted By Cracken" was written and illustrated by Thomas Woods.*

# SHATTERZONE™

## FRINGER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know to be an unproductive member of society



## Fringer

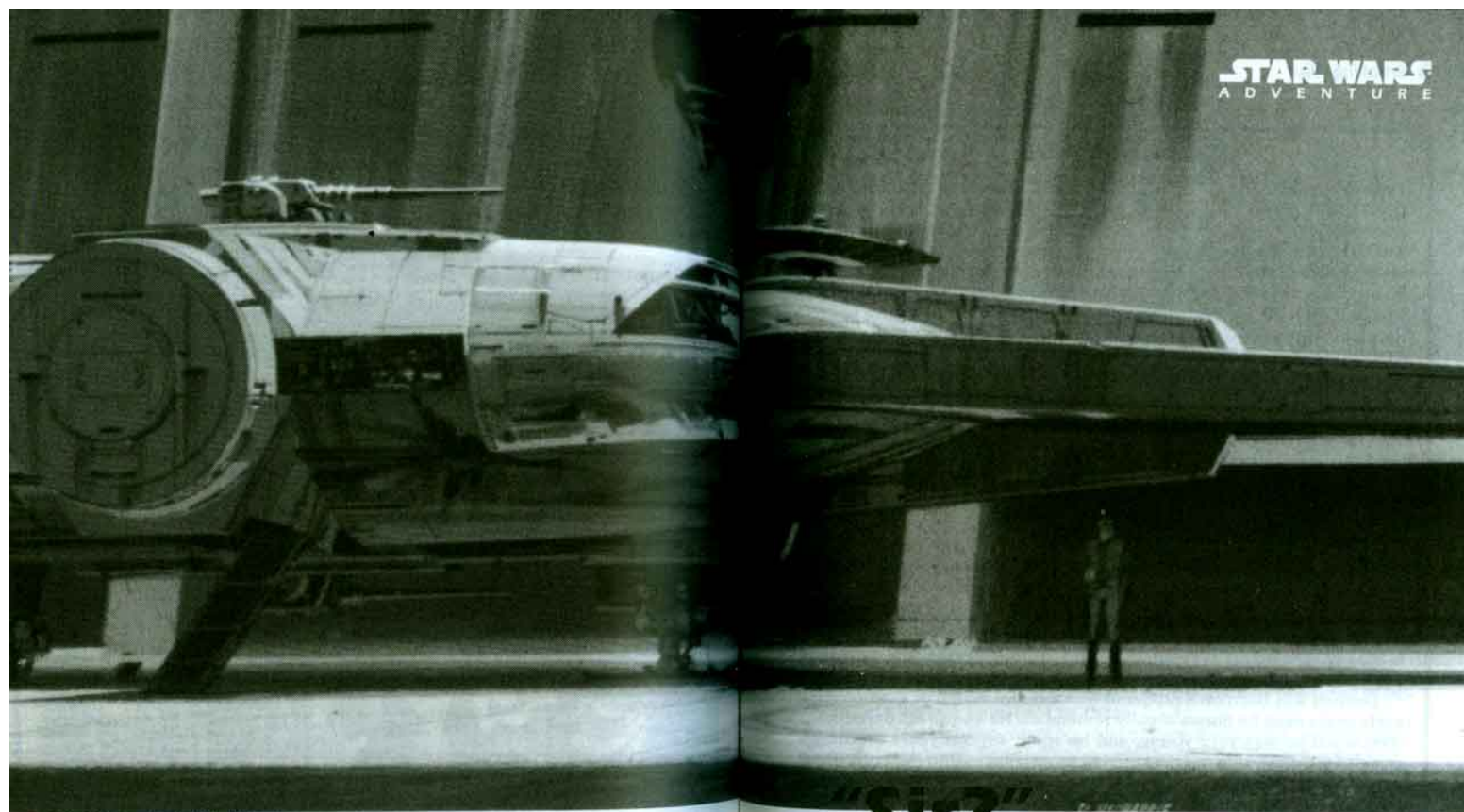
(frin'jar) n.  
1. A slang term referring to a number of different groups whose only links are their radical views and unconventional behavior. Politically incorrect, undesirable, who jumped away from Earth and the Core Worlds to form their own colonies, based on these beliefs and behavior patterns.

THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE CRIMINALLY INSANE!

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© LFL 1994 Illustration by Ralph McQuarrie

THE ADVENTURES OF DANNEN LIFEHOLD:  
**BREAKING  
FREE**

By Dave Marron

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

**"Sir?"**

Linkaas turned, gazing at his subordinate with thoughtful eyes. The sun of Evas VI had finally come out after three days of rain, and he wanted to enjoy its soothing warmth. Sunlamps only did so much.

"Yes, what is it?" he asked, leaning forward. "And it had better be good."

The subordinate seemed to shrink inside his clothing. "Sir, you wanted to know when Lifehold got his assignment?"

"And has he?"

"Yes, sir, just a few moments ago."

Linkaas turned back towards the window. "Excellent. He'll have to stop at Darkon III first before going to Dohu. Send Chokk and Bakk to Dohu immediately. I want them in place when Lifehold gets there."

The subordinate looked relieved. "They've already left, sir. Chokk

## Dannen Lifehold

**Type:** Smuggler  
**DEXTERITY** 3D+1

Blaster 5D+1

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D+1

**MECHANICAL** 3D+2

Space transports 5D, starship gunnery 4D+2, starship shields 4D

**PERCEPTION** 3D

Bargain 4D, con 3D+2

**STRENGTH** 3D

Brawling 4D

**TECHNICAL** 2D+2

Security 3D+1

**Special Abilities:**

*Owed A Favor:* Hero to the Silikas for stamina. May call upon them for minor assistance (if they're even around).

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 5

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Modified Stock Light Freighter (*Lifeline*), heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink, 3000 credits, 25000 credit debt to Linkaas

**Capsule:** Most smugglers try to keep a low profile. Some, like Han Solo, get thrust into the limelight and make the most of it. Dannen Lifehold is slowly developing a reputation, and although other smugglers scoff, a lot of it is true.

Dannen was born on a planet in the Mid-Rim. Much of Dannen's early years even he doesn't really remember. He knows his parents died when he was very young, and he spent several years on the street. Like most kids, he dreamed of far-off places and adventure. At 14, he got his chance, stowing away on a smuggler's freighter bound for Alderaan. When the captain found him, Dannen offered to work for his passage. The captain looked at this thin, dirty child and agreed.

Dannen stayed with Captain Twolz for five years, learning all about hyperspace, how to move cargo, how to leave in a hurry, and how to use a blaster. Soon Dannen's quick-draw was better than his captain's, and his handling of the dual laser cannon impressed Krell, the regular gunner. Twolz was a decent man, and treated Dannen like a son. Dannen also learned about the fall of the Old Republic, the rise of the Empire, and the birth of the Rebellion. But Twolz also instilled in him the fine art of tact; saying the wrong thing at the wrong time — especially about politics — would get him killed, or worse.

Dannen was on an errand for Twolz on the tropical world of Niian when Twolz was found by a squadron of stormtroopers. They shot and killed most of the crew and took the ship, leaving Dannen and Krell to find the remains. The two crewmembers stuck together, and traversed the space lanes doing odd jobs and getting into trouble.

When Dannen turned 19, he and Krell made it to Alderaan, where Krell set up a small repair shop. Dannen stayed as his assistant for a few years, but finally left his friend and crewmate to once again answer the call of the stars. He tried to get a bank loan to buy his own ship, but no bank was willing to take a chance on him. So, like many others, he turned to a loan shark.

Linkaas was only too willing to give him the capital for a ship, as long as Dannen "did some work" for Linkaas when Linkaas needed him. Over the next eight years he smuggled when and where he could, developing a flair for the dramatic in flight. He also gained a reputation as being more honest than his fellow smugglers, which annoyed them a little. Dannen became known as a man of his word; if he promised to be there by a certain time, he'd be there.

During the last two years, he hired a mechanic, Feq, and the two became fast friends. Feq almost became the brother Dannen never had, and the feeling was mutual. They planned to become full partners after the ship, the *Lifeline*, was paid off, and often talked about where they would spend their retirement.

Sadly, it was not to be. Tragedy struck when an Imperial cruiser boarded the *Lifeline* on a "customs inspection." The Imperial officer wanted to confiscate an engine part that Feq had modified, and take it for testing. Feq, naturally, became indignant, and tried to take the part back. One of the stormtroopers promptly shot and killed him before Dannen's eyes. After the Imperials left, Dannen held a small wake for himself, then released Feq's body into the cold of space, promising to see him again some day.

Dannen tried to keep the ship running, but he didn't have Feq's talent for maintenance. Then, two months later, with only one more payment due, Linkaas summoned him for a job. Little did Dannen know what was in store for him...

Dannen is tall and stocky, has green eyes and electric blue hair (dyes won't work on it).

**Quote:** "I'll have it there — you have my word."



says they'll beat Lifehold to Dohu by at least a day."

"Good," Linkaas said, drinking in the warmth. The rain had been good for his fronds, but without the sunlight he would freeze. "That should give them plenty of time to be in place to kill Lifehold." He spun suddenly, startling the subordinate. "Was there anything else?"

"N-no, sir," the subordinate mumbled.

"Very well, then. I think that I shall take my sun on the terrace. Wheel me out, Qwot."

"Yes, sir."

■ ■ ■

The pinging of the proximity alarm woke Dannen from a reasonably sound sleep. With a yawn and a stretch, he hopped down from his berth and headed for the bridge of the *Lifeline*. Out of habit, he cocked his ears, listening for any change in pitch that would indicate engine problems. Satisfied that his ship would make it back to Evas, he paused at an empty cabin. He almost knocked before he caught himself. Feq had been dead for a couple of months now, but Dannen still found himself listening for Feq's jovial voice, his friendly chuckle, and his curses as he'd tried to keep the engines running.

*Face it, Lifehold, Dannen told himself, he's gone. At least you won't have to listen to his snoring.*

Turning, Dannen walked to the bridge and sat down just as the hyperdrive shut off and the main engine kicked in. Checking his readouts, he confirmed that he was indeed just outside the Dohu system, about 20,000 kilometers from the outermost planet's orbit. He hated coming out this far from the system, but without a backup pilot, he didn't have much choice. He had to sleep sometime, after all. But, with eight planets in the system and his destination the seventh, he only had a short flight to deal with.

He glanced over at the empty copilot's chair. Well, at least this was the last job he owed on his debt. One more pickup/delivery, one more payment to Linkaas, and the *Lifeline* would be his at last — lock, stock, and sensor dish. Then he could afford to hire a first mate, and go for the profits.

Two hours later, as he guided his ship towards the largest land mass on Dohu VII, his ship comm began blaring insistently. "Unidentified ship, this is Dohu Space Control, respond immediately. Unidentified ship, this is Dohu Space Con—"

Dannen hit the response button, cutting the voice off in mid-syllable. "Dohu Space Control, go ahead."

"Unidentified ship, please broadcast your identity beacon, and state your purpose."

"Transmitting code now, Space Control," Dannen said, flicking a switch.

A moment later, the comm crackled to life again. "Space Control to starship *Black Knight*, state your purpose."

"Equipment delivery to warehouse of Linkaas Corporation in city of Skagras," he replied. A small lie; actually, it was a pickup.

"Starship *Black Knight*, you are cleared to land at Docking Bay 71 in the city of Skagras. Directions are being transmitted to your guidance computer."

"Space Control, this is the *Black Knight*, cleared for Docking Bay 71," Dannen said. "Directions received. Thanks for the assistance. *Black Knight* out."

■ ■ ■

Skagras was a fairly good-sized city, but Docking Bay 71 was little more than a pit in the ground with a few support buildings nearby. As Dannen hovered over the pit, the ship lurched to starboard, and a red light began flashing. With a curse, Dannen struggled to keep the ship level as the landing gear lowered. He heard a *thunk* as the gear locked into place.

*Here we go, all or nothing,* he thought. *Just hope it isn't too serious.*

Slowly he eased the ship to the ground, fighting the loss of power all the way. The starboard landing gear hit the ground, and Dannen reduced power to the port side repulsorlift. The port gear touched down with a thud, and all the legs creaked as

## Lifeline

**Craft:** Corellian YT-1300 Transport

**Type:** Stock Light Freighter

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 26.7 meters

**Skill:** Space Transports (YT-1300 Transports)

**Crew:** 1 to 2

**Crew Skill:** varies

**Passengers:** 6

**Cargo Capacity:** 100 metric tons

**Consumables:** 2 months

**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x2

**Hyperdrive Backup:** x12

**Nav Computer:** Yes

**Maneuverability:** 1D

**Space:** 4

**Atmosphere:** 480m, 800kmh

**Hull:** 4D

**Shields:** 1D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 10/0D

*Scan:* 25/1D

*Search:* 40/2D

*Focus:* 2/3D

**Weapons:**

**One Laser Cannon**

*Fire Arc:* Turret

*Crew:* 1

*Skill:* Starship Gunnery

*Scale:* Starfighter

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300m/

1.2km/2.5km

*Damage:* 4D

they bore the full weight of the ship. With a sigh of relief, Dannen shut down the engines and headed for the engine room.

Checking only told him what he had expected — the starboard repulsorlift had blown out. It was still barely operational, but it meant he had two choices: fix it today with money he didn't have yet, or lift off with 40 percent less power. Looked like the second option was all he had.

"Great," Dannen said to himself. "That's all I need today."

Heading out of the ship, he stopped just long enough to grab a datapad with his directions to the warehouse. Consulting it, he saw that it was about four kilometers away, in the heart of the city. Taking the first street he came to, he noticed a cantina on the corner.

A grin crossed his face. He had enough time for a little refreshment.

Dannen's nose wrinkled as he entered the cantina. An aroma of smoke, sweat, and incense fumes assaulted his nasal passages. Walking to the bar, he noticed a few patrons in one of the booths gazing his way. They scrutinized him intently as he placed his order with the bartender. After a short conversation, one of them approached him.

It was a Silika, his craggy face looking weather-beaten and worn. Like all of its race, it had a slit of a mouth across its face; but this one also had a curious look in its eyes.

It tapped Dannen's shoulder with the leftmost of its three arms. "You are Dannen Lifehold?"

Dannen looked at the questioner. "Who wants to know?"

The alien looked confused. "I do. Is there anyone else with me?"

Dannen sighed. "Never mind. What do you want?"

"I want to meet the being who beat Kemmel Attapi at his own game. He was rumored to have hair your shade."

Dannen ran a hand through his thick shock of blue. Then he remembered. "Oh, yes, now I remember. The Silika with a hollow body."

"Yes," the alien confirmed. "I am Kenta Anwa. Until you beat him, I lasted the longest against him." His eyes glittered. "Now, I challenge you to the Contest."

"Look, I really don't want to do this, friend. I've had a bad day and it promises to be worse. And I really don't think you want me to take your money."

"Honor demands that I challenge you, Lifehold-sir. And you know of our honor, don't you?"

Dannen did. The Contest demanded that the loser accept defeat

and not take revenge on the winner. Credits were usually exchanged by the witnesses, but bets between the contestants were not unknown. He sighed inwardly. "All right, all right, your challenge is accepted."

The Silika smiled gratingly. "Come join us, and I will get our fluids." He signalled the bartender. "Silika waters, if you please."

As the bartender complied, Dannen joined the other Silika at the table. The others faced him and performed an intricate series of gestures with all three hands as he sat down. Dannen repeated the gestures as best as he could.

"Greetings, Lifehold-sir, defeater of Kemmel Attapi," they chorused. "We welcome you, and wish you strength."

Dannen sighed. He hated standing on ceremony, but it had to be done. Challenge had been offered and properly accepted, so he had to go through with it. Besides, if he backed out now, they would shoot him.

"I thank you for your greetings, and return them in full," he responded.

At the reply, the three relaxed visibly and stretched out their middle hands to him for shaking. Dannen clasped each one, then surreptitiously wiped the gravel and dust from his hands. When his challenger returned with several frosted glasses, Dannen repeated the gestures and the words.

The challenger tossed a thousand-credit chip onto the table — his wager. Dannen blinked at the chip; if he had known, he would have been a little more adamant. He really didn't want to do this, but it was too late now.

Well, at least he could get his ship fixed.

"Are you ready, Lifehold-sir?"

"Yes," Dannen answered, eager to get it over with.

"Then begin, and I will follow."

Dannen took an experimental sip and tasted it thoroughly. No odd aftertaste, no trace of anything unusual, no unnatural smell...probably safe. Throat working, he drained the glass in one long gulp and set the glass down. The challenger gaped, then looked at his glass. Slowly, he raised it, and, as the Contest rules stated, drank his the same way.

Five mugs later, the challenger wobbled for a moment, mumbled something, then fell onto the floor with a loud crash. The three

**"Honor demands  
that I challenge you,  
Lifehold-sir."**

## Silika

**Attribute Dice:** 11D  
**DEXTERITY** 2D/4D  
**KNOWLEDGE** 2D/5D  
**MECHANICAL** 2D/5D  
**PERCEPTION** 2D/4D  
**STRENGTH** 3D/5D  
**TECHNICAL** 2D/5D

### Special Abilities:

**Rocky Body:** Due to their rocky physiology, Silika get +2D for resisting melee combat only. This does not work against blasters.

**Move:** 8/13

**Height:** 1.1–1.6 meters tall

**Capsule:** Silika have faces like eroded cliffs and stony expressions — simply because they are, in effect, living rock. They move on stumpy legs and shed dust and rock everywhere. They also have an extra arm that comes from the middle of their chests. This doesn't make them any more dextrous because their fingers are short and stubby. Silika also look very much alike, much like two Wookiees would look alike. One would have to be very familiar with a specific Silika to be able to differentiate between two of them.

They travel in groups of four to seven. Ancient tradition demands that families name their children using the same initials (all the children will have first names beginning with "B," for example). No one knows what started this tradition, but it is upheld nevertheless; the most blatant way to disavow a Silika family is to change one's name.



remaining Silika gazed at Dannen with awe as he picked up the chip.

"You are truly a champion, Lifehold-sir," the middle one said. "No wonder you beat Attapi."

Dannen bowed. "My congratulations to your friend. He is a brave being, if a little rash." With a small salute, he turned and left.

As he hit the fresh air and the path towards the warehouse, Dannen thought about this reputation he was getting. If he hadn't gotten into the contest with Attapi, someone else would have, of course. Almost any being would have done the job — he just happened to be the one selected. There just weren't too many

creatures who were affected by mineral water, and with their silicon-based physiology, Silika were influenced by it that much more quickly. Why they had to challenge a human in the first place made no sense, but maybe it was just bad luck. It was like challenging a Wookiee to a tree-climbing contest.

A couple of kilometers later, Dannen arrived at the warehouse. He had gotten used to the bizarre way Linkaas handled things; warehouses without workers were the norm. Dohu was just a stopping point for the cargo, and Dannen was just the next one to transport it.

"Boy, I'm glad this is the last one," he muttered to himself. "I hate the way that plant does business."

Keying his entry code into the lock, he stepped inside, making his way to the storage area. Rounding a corner, he found the cargo: 12 crates, each about six cubic meters in size. A rack of cargo movers stood against the wall. Knowing Linkaas, they would be charged and ready.

Dannen headed towards the movers. As he rounded the corner, something tickled the back of his neck. Instinctively he rolled forward, just in time to avoid the blaster shot that scorched the floor where he'd been standing. Dannen ducked behind the crates and drew his own blaster from its holster. Quickly he fired off two shots, then ducked behind cover.

*Great, this is all I need.*

Suddenly, something lashed out from behind and wrapped itself tightly around his body, pinning his arms. Seconds later, there was a small sting at his throat, and he was raised off the ground and gagged with a similar-feeling cord. He found himself looking at two red-skinned, muscular bodies. Something familiar about them...

He was still thinking about it when the darkness took him.

■ ■ ■

When he came to, he was suspended in midair. By twisting his body slightly, he found that he was hanging from a rafter in the roof. More cords had bound his wrists, and the rope on his body was tied to the beam above him. He had been blindfolded, but he could hear the thieves below as they moved the crates out of the warehouse and into some kind of vehicle. Slowly, so as not to arouse attention, he twisted his wrists to try to loosen his bonds. No use — it was almost like his hands were dipped in plasteel.

The sense of *deja vu* returned, stronger this time. Plasteel...something about bonds that felt like plasteel...

His musings were cut short when he heard a voice below him. "What do we do with him?"

"You remember what the boss said," a second voice replied. "We kill him, and leave him here."

*I've heard those voices before, but where?* he thought.

"What about his ship?" First Voice said.

"We leave it for now, and get it later."

"Okay," First Voice said.

Dannen heard the rustle of a blaster being drawn, and braced himself. *I'm on my way, Feq. Sooner than I thought, but I'm coming.*

When the shot came, there was a scream from below, and several war whoops from the direction of the door. Next came a lot of shooting, and a lot of shouting.

"Let's get out of here!" Second Voice said. "There's too many of them!"

Dannen heard the sound of the cargo carrier drive away. Then, a

## Chokk and Bakk

**Type:** Henchman

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 4D, melee combat 4D, running 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Streetwise 3D, value 3D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

PERCEPTION 3D

Investigation 4D, search 4D

**STRENGTH 4D+2**

Brawling 5D+2

**TECHNICAL 2D+1**

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 5

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** None, usually assigned by Linkaas

**Capsule:** Chokk and Bakk are two Bloxian brothers who work for Linkaas by doing the "dirty work." They could pass for twins; they are both large and muscular, and have dark red skin. The two are about two meters tall, but Bakk is awfully proud of an extra five millimeters over his brother, and tends to lord it over Chokk. The pair prefers to use their fists over using guns, and they do seem to have a positive talent for breaking heads and collecting fees.

Linkaas usually gives them fairly "easy" jobs ("easy" as in "no real thinking required"), and they are most often successfully completed. Linkaas is aware that they are the typical "dumb muscle," and tends to keep them around for their humor value. Sometime soon, they will mess up big time and get tossed out an airlock.

**Quote:** "You pay us now, da boss say so."

few moments later, he felt hands lowering him gently to the floor. A vibro-shiv cut his bonds, and his blindfold was removed. Blinking at the bright light, Dannen beheld...

"Kenta Anwa?"

The Silika shook his head. "No, Lifehold-sir, I am Klin, brother and companion to Kenta. Are you injured?"

Dannen stood, wincing at the pain in his muscles. "Sore, but I'll live." He looked from one Silika to the other. "How did you find me?"

"My brother's ego got the best of him," Klin said. "He wanted to prove that he had met and competed against you, but forgot to bring his holo-camera. When he woke up, he demanded that I get his camera and find you. We tracked your scent here, and came upon the bandits." His rocky face looked forlorn. "We could not stop them from getting away."

"But you did stop them from killing me," Dannen said as he stretched. "Thank you. I owe you one."

Klin shook his head. "You owe us nothing, Lifehold-sir. We are glad to assist. But, we would ask one favor."

"Name it."

Klin reached into his pack and pulled out a holo-camera.

Dannen headed towards the docking bay. He'd been walking and thinking for the last hour, trying to figure out what to do. His cargo had been stolen, he wasn't going to be able to make his last ship payment, and his starboard repulsorlift was almost shot. And, to top it all off, those bandits had even taken his winnings from the Contest.

As he entered his bay, his despair grew. So, what to do?

Go tell Linkaas the truth? Sure, as if he'd believe it. And Linkaas wouldn't consider the testimony of the Silika.

Run? Yeah, but to where? And he'd spend the rest of his life with Linkaas' stooges after him. Definitely not the way to a long life.

Dannen stopped cold in the middle of the bay. Stooges...wait a minute...

"That's it!" he shouted. "That lousy, rotten, son-of-a..."

His shout startled something under his ship. In an instant, his blaster was in his hand and pointing at the intruder.

"Come on out!" he called. "I'm not in the mood for games!"

The interloper slowly came out from under the ship. She stood about one and a half meters high, with light brown fur and blue eyes. Her face and body were very catlike in nature, right down to the whiskers. She wore a threadbare shirt and torn pants. A tool belt



hung from her waist. Barefoot, her tail twitched, although Dannen couldn't tell if it was from fear, anger, or apprehension.

Dannen approached her slowly. "What were you doing under there?"

She gazed at him with wide eyes. "Ship broken. I make better."

"You're a mechanic?"

"Mechanic?" she asked, her tongue stumbling over what was obviously an unfamiliar word.

Dannen tried again. "You fix things?"

Her eyes lit up. "Yes! I fix your ship!"

Dannen lowered his blaster. "Who told you my ship needed repairs?"

"I saw ship land. Knew it was broken. Came to fix."

"Wait a minute, you just walked in here and started working?"

"No, jumped wall," she said, pointing at the wall. "Ship is yours?"

"Yes, it is."

She smiled, revealing incisors like needles. "Very pretty."

*The Lifeline? Pretty? That's a new one.* Dannen returned the smile.

"What's your name?"

She said something too fast and too complicated for him to follow.

"Person I once travel with called me Purr. I liked that."

"All right, Purr it is. Would you show me what you fixed?"

She led him underneath the ship to the starboard repulsorlift. Removing a panel, she moved aside so he could look. Dannen looked, and gasped: parts and wires he'd never seen before were hooked together in a mess that looked like undercooked Dacho noodles.

"Oh, no! What have you done?" he moaned in despair.

"Fixed it," Purr said.

"You've got to be kidding. It'll never work like this!"

"Yes, it work now. Try it!"

Her confidence was real, but the way it looked... "Are you sure?"

"It work now. Promise!"

Dannen took another look, then sighed. "Okay, but if this ship crashes and I get killed, I'll never speak to you again."

"No!" Purr shouted, wrapping her arms around him. "No! Don't crash! Don't crash!"

"Easy, Purr," Dannen said, surprised. "It was just a joke."

Purr buried her face into his chest. "Never joke about death. Never!"

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry. I'll never do it again, promise."

She looked up at him. "Promise?"

"I promise. Now, let me go, and I'll try your repair."

She looked up at his face. "Repair?"

"Never mind."

Purr released him, and together they headed to the bridge. Dannen sat down, and Purr slipped into the copilot's chair. After receiving clearance to take off, Dannen slowly fed power to the repulsorlifts, checking the warning light every few seconds.

The *Lifeline* slowly raised off the ground. The starboard repulsorlift was carrying its share of the load with no sign of power loss. Dannen went to full power, and the *Lifeline* rose majestically toward the sky.

"I don't believe it," he said in awe.

"Told you it was fixed," Purr said with a smile.

"You sure did. I'll be a bantha, it works." Then he remembered. "Purr, I can't pay you. See, I was robbed, and..."

Purr raised a paw and silenced him. "Don't want money. But...something to eat? And a warm place to sleep?"

Dannen smiled, and led her to the kitchen. She operated the autochef with practiced ease, he noticed. After leading her to a spare room, he put the ship into hyperspace, then went to his own room.

He had a lot of thinking to do.

## Purr

**Type:** Tinnell

**DEXTERITY** 3D+1

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D+1

**MECHANICAL** 2D+1

Repulsorlift operation 3D+1

**PERCEPTION** 2D+1

Search 3D+1, search: tracking 4D+1, sneak

3D+2

**STRENGTH** 2D+1

Brawling 3D

**TECHNICAL** 4D+1

Repulsorlift repair 5D+1, space

transports repair 5D+1

**Special Abilities:**

**Claws:** All Tinnell have claws that add 1D+2 to their *Strength* in melee combat. These claws are not quite strong enough to add to their *climbing* skill.

**Force-sensitive?:** Yes

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 5

**Move:** 12

**Equipment:** Tool kit, 500 credits

**Capsule:** Purr is one of those rare innocents in the universe. How she managed to stay that way is an interesting story.

She was born on a remote planet in Mid-Rim; even she is not sure exactly where. She doesn't know its real name, either; she just called it "home." "Home" is a forest-like world with many trees and no real technology to speak of. Tinnell on "home" act like enormous housecats at play, delighting in chasing the smaller animals and hunting. The similarities stop there, however, as Tinnell walk on their rear legs and use crude tools.

One day, a spaceship landed. Some of the Tinnell approached the ship, only to be fired upon by the occupants. Most escaped, with only the unlucky falling. The ramp lowered, releasing strange-looking beings upon their world. Well, they were strange-looking to the Tinnell — they were biped, but almost completely furless.

The newcomers spread out to search for food and supplies. While they were gone, a young Tinnell warily approached the ship. Curiosity



At about three planetary diameters away from Evas, Dannen put a call through to Linkaas on the subspace comm. Linkaas came on immediately.

"Dannen, my boy, it's good to hear from you," he said, surprise evident in his voice.

got the better of her, and she sneaked on board. She prowled through the corridors, opened their cabinets, sniffed their belongings, and finally came upon a large pile of clothes on the floor. She made herself comfortable, then went to sleep. She continued to sleep right through the return of the aliens and the lift-off of the ship. It wasn't until they hit hyperspace that the crew found her.

She became the unofficial mascot of the ship, the *Bottom Line*. She spent a lot of time in the engine room, watching the engineer work on the ion drives. She began to pick up bits and pieces of repair technique as she went. She also learned to speak Basic from the engineer; when he swore at the engine, she repeated it. The crew enjoyed her company, and treated her fairly well. They hung the nickname "Purr" on the young cub, and it stuck.

When the *Bottom Line* reached its home base, Purr got a rude shock. The captain and crew worked for a crime lord who did not appreciate stow-aways. However, once he calmed down, he put her to work doing clean-up and other menial jobs. She discovered the garage when she went to take out the trash, and became entranced with the crime lord's swoop collection. She spent what spare time she had tinkering with them, boosting their fuel economy by 20 percent, and their speed by 30 percent.

When she was finally caught, the crime lord wanted to punish her. Fortunately, he tried the swoop first. Impressed with her natural aptitude, he put her to work in the garage on a permanent basis. She stayed for five years, until a rival gang lord staged a raid on the base, killing everyone there. Purr barely managed to escape on her former employer's landspeeder. It was then that she called upon the Force for the first time. This very calm feeling flowed through her, and she knew she'd be all right.

Purr rode the spaceways, fixing things as she went, and getting used and abused in the process. Now she's hooked up with Dannen, whom she sees as the most noble being she's met (the fact that he's risking his life to keep her alive is a big indicator that she's right). She's going to make the *Lifeline* the best ship in the galaxy ... even if she has to rip it apart and put it back together one part at a time.

Despite her experiences, she is still rather naive about the big, wide galaxy. Although she appears to be very stupid, she is just an innocent caught up in the machinations of the Force.

**Quote:** "It was broken — I make better."

"Spare me, Linkaas," Dannen interrupted. "You weren't planning on seeing me ever again, and you know it."

"Whatever do you mean, my boy?"

"You had your boys Chokk and Bakk waiting for me at Skagras, Linkaas. They ambushed me and almost killed me. I saw them."

Linkaas did his best to sound hurt. He didn't do well. "Even if they were there, how can you say I sent them to kill you? You're one of my best couriers."

Dannen smiled grimly into the vid pickup. "Because they were stupid enough to use rope guns, that's why. They're still in development. I tested them myself, and I know what the cord feels like. That's how I know, you sap-blooded Pliith weed. You tried to have me killed, and make it look like a robbery."

For a moment, Linkaas' fronds turned purple with rage. "Those incompetent, bungling...why, Dannen, I don't know what you're talking about. Those rope guns must have been stolen."

"No dice, Linkas. I figured it all out, you see. I think you wanted to steal the *Lifeline*. I'd almost paid it off, meaning I wouldn't have to work for you anymore. So you have me killed, then sell the ship to some other poor fool." Dannen smiled grimly. "Plus, you'd have the shipment to sell, without paying for its transport. Cute scheme. You

## Tinnell

Attribute Dice: 13D  
DEXTERITY 2D/3D+2  
KNOWLEDGE 1D/2D+2  
MECHANICAL 2D/3D+2  
PERCEPTION 2D/4D+1  
STRENGTH 1D+2/4D  
TECHNICAL 3D/5D

### Special Abilities:

*Claws:* All Tinnell have claws that add 1D+2 to their Strength in melee combat. These claws are not quite strong enough to add to their *climbing* skill.

### Story Factors:

*Rare:* Tinnell are extremely rare. They should be stumbled upon (usually fixing a ship without permission) rather than searched for. Tinnell have been treated fairly badly by Humans, so if they know they're being hunted, they disappear and can't be found (at least a Heroic roll to pick up the trail). They function best as gamemaster characters, coming up with that desperately needed repair roll at just the dramatically appropriate moment.

*Move:* 10/15

*Size:* 1.2-1.8 meters tall

**Capsule:** Tinnell act like they are completely clueless; blissfully ignorant of almost everything. "Innocent" and "naive" are apt descriptions. They are, however, master mechanics and have an uncanny knack for improvisation. They like to take things apart and put them together in strange and different ways. The odd thing is that, although they look like a nightmare, these creations actually work — most of the time. They will take apart other systems looking for parts, then leave them disassembled, making their ship a mess in the process. They also function as comic relief with their wide-eyed innocence.

get an A for effort. But it wasn't good enough."

Linkaas answered Dannen's smile with one of his own. "You can't prove any of it, you know. It would just be the word of a smuggler against the word of a corporation president. You wouldn't stand a chance."

Dannen's grin tightened. "Try me."

"I just might. Anyway, you still owe me for your last payment, plus the cost of the shipment you lost..."

"You stole it!" Dannen thundered.

"Prove it. As I was saying, you now owe me 25,334 credits, payable on demand. And I demand it now."

Dannen sat back, stunned. "I hope someone poisons your fertilizer."

Just at that moment, Purr peered into the comm screen. "He's a plant!" she exclaimed in amazement.

"Purr, get back!" Dannen said, pushing her away.

"Why, Dannen, who's your friend?" Linkaas asked, his anger momentarily forgotten.

"Ah, nobody," Dannen said.

"Nonsense, my boy; let me see her."

Purr leaned into the pickup again. Linkaas examined her image closely, then chuckled. "Do you know what you have there, my boy? That's a Tinnell."

Dannen frowned. "A what?"

"A Tinnell. They are excruciatingly stupid in everything but technology; the best mechanics in the galaxy. Tinnell seem to have an inborn knack for fixing things. They are also extremely rare. Where did you find her?"

"None of your business."

Linkaas looked thoughtfully at the pair. "You know, Dannen, this puts a new light on things. I'll tell you what I'll do: you bring that Tinnell to us for study, and I'll forgive your debt. You'll own the ship, free and clear, and you won't have to pay for the shipment."

"Forget it, Linkaas," Dannen snarled. "I know what you mean by 'study.' You want to dissect her!"

"Of course not. I must find out if her technical genius can be duplicated. She'll work for me by day, and I'll...study her by night."

"Nothing doing. I'm not going to let you enslave a living being. And I'm not paying for that shipment, or the last payment on the ship."

"I'm sorry you feel that way, my boy," Linkaas said. "But you have no choice. I will have my money, or the Tinnell. And you will give them to me now."

### Adventure Idea

After seeing that Dannen Lifehold has befriended a Tinnell, Linkaas hires the characters to try to find the Tinnell homeworld. The characters must discover leads from pirates, smugglers, and maybe even the Imperial Scout Service. The false leads could bring the characters to a lifeless moon, a pirate outpost, or a hunters' resort.

During their search, they might learn Linkaas' true interest in finding more Tinnell. If the characters actually discover the true homeworld of the Tinnell, they must decide whether they will betray its location to Linkaas, keep the homeworld a secret, or encourage the Tinnell to join the Rebel Alliance.

"Dannen?" Purr said, tapping his shoulder.

Dannen ignored her. "Dream on, Linkaas. You've been taking your own spices."

"Dannen?" Purr said again.

"What?" he snapped, annoyed.

"What are those?" she said, pointing out the window. He followed her paw, and saw four small fighters coming towards them from the planet.

"Oh, no," Dannen moaned. "I should've known. We're outta here, Purr. Hold on!"

"Known what?"

"He kept me busy on the comm line just long enough to send some friends."

Purr looked at the ships. "You mean those are friends of yours? Maybe they'll help us."

"Not *our* friends, Purr, *his* friends. He hoped I wouldn't notice." With a practiced flip of a switch, he brought the shields up, the engines on-line and full power. The *Lifeline* shot forward like a scalded cat, dodging the fighters' blaster fire, and swerved away from the planet.

Dannen smiled out the window, at the fighters swooping towards him. "Okay, suckers, let's dance."

"Dance?"

"Never mind." He reached up and activated the nav computer, and performed a tight bank that shook the lead fighter off his tail for a moment. "Now, where can we go for a while?"

Purr thought. "Don't know."

### Adventure Idea

After landing their ship for repairs, the characters run into a firefight between Linkaas' goons (including Chokk and Bakk) and Dannen Lifehold and Purr, who are grossly outnumbered. Characters who come to their rescue befriend Dannen and Purr, who offer to help them repair their ship.

Characters who aid Dannen and Purr might incur the wrath of Linkaas, who gives the Empire a false tip that they are part of a Rebel operation plotting to overthrow the local governor.

"That's all right, I don't know either." He began jinking the ship to make a harder target, shaking them in random directions. Then, with a grin, he punched some buttons and fed information into the nav computer.

"Where we go?" Purr asked.

"Alderaan," he replied. "Ever been there?"

Purr thought. It was an effort. "Don't think so."

"I know some people there. They're pretty friendly people, very peaceful." At that moment, a stray shot hit the shields, making Dannen grimace. "And a little peace is something we can use. Don't worry, you'll like it."

"Promise?"

Dannen grinned. "Promise."

A green light began flashing on the panel. Purr reached across the board and pointed at the light. "What's that flashing?"

"It means we're leaving," he answered, pulling back on the levers.

The *Lifeline* shot into hyperspace, just as the fighters activated their blasters. The lead fighter pilot flicked his comm switch. "LC-1 to base," he said.

"Go ahead, LC-1."

"They got away, sir."

"Yes, I know," the voice of Linkaas rumbled from the speaker. "You weren't fast enough. But no matter, I'll have Lifehold, his Tinnell, and his ship soon enough." Linkaas paused. "Oh, and Captain? You're all fired."

There were four brief flares as the ships self-destructed. Soon there was no evidence that they had ever existed.

As the stars became elongated lines and the ship's hyperdrive took over, Dannen relaxed. "Okay, we're safe now."

Purr looked at him. "Why did that plant want me?"

Dannen considered. If he told her the truth, she'd probably get confused. Best to keep it simple. "He wants to kill you."

Her eyes opened wide in terror. "Why?"

"Because you're special. And because he knows it would hurt me."

Purr gazed at him. "You won't let him take me, will you?"

Dannen smiled, and gathered her up in his arms. "No, Purr, I won't let him take you. I promise." He scratched her head; during the trip from Dohu, he discovered she liked it. "Come on, let's get some rest. We have a long trip ahead."

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# REGINA CAYLI

## A Solitaire Adventure

For those of you who have been roleplaying *Star Wars* for a while, some of this material might look familiar. It's the solitaire adventure from the original first edition roleplaying rules. But there are many

out there who have since joined the ranks of *Star Wars* roleplayers, especially since Timothy Zahn's novels spurred new interest in *Star Wars*. Some might never have been involved in roleplaying.

*Regina Cayli* is for both longtime and recent *Star Wars* gamers, as well as those who have never played a roleplaying game. There are some short rules on how to do certain tasks with your character, and there's even a sample character for you to try (or use your own). Experienced gamemasters can even use this short adventure to introduce the rules to new *Star Wars* gamers.

### Roark Garnet



Type: Smuggler

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 5D+1, dodge 4D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Space transports 5D+2

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 4D

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

**Equipment:** Stock light freighter, comlink, 2,000 credits, 25,000 credits in debt to a crime boss, heavy blaster pistol (5D damage)

**Capsule:** Your parents called it "gallivanting around the galaxy," but as far as you're concerned there's no better life than a free trader's. Traveling as your fancy takes you, trading a little here and a little there, looking for a sharp deal, bargaining and selling ...

New worlds to see, and always a new planet at the end of the journey.

That's how it's supposed to be anyway. But ... the Empire is more and more restrictive by the day. Goods that used to be legal are now contraband. Even contraband is harder and harder to come by. Customs inspectors are like bloodhounds. Bribes have become your major expense. You keep on dreaming of making one big killing and getting out ... but you don't want to get out. To you, your ship is home, transportation, and freedom: all in one package. The idea of losing it kills you.

But you may very well lose it. To keep on operating, you had to borrow money from a slimeball crime king. You're pretty deep in debt now, and they keep on making nasty jokes about breaking your kneecaps. Damn the Empire, anyway! It's their laws and their corruption that brought this all about.

## Your Character: Roark Garnet

The character provided with this solitaire adventure is Roark Garnet, a smuggler. As a character, Roark is described by a short capsule background and several attributes and skills. Attributes are things you're born with — innate abilities. There are six attributes — *Dexterity*, *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception*, *Strength* and *Technical*. Skills are abilities you learn, and they include things like *blaster*, *dodge*, and *brawling*.

Roark has a die code for every attribute and skill. The die code is the number of six-sided dice you roll when you use the attribute or skill.

**Example:** Roark's *Dexterity* is 3D+1, so if he tries to juggle something, his player rolls three dice, adds the rolls together, and adds one to the total. You add up the total of the roll.

If there is a +1 or a +2 after the "D," add that number to your total. For now don't worry what every attribute and skill governs — this adventure tells you when and what to roll.

All skills begin with the same die code as their respective attribute. Some are improved: Roark has increased skill in *blaster*, *dodge*, *space transports*, *bargain* and *brawling*. There are many other skills than those Roark begins with — those listed here are the ones Roark has improved.

Don't worry about the listings for Force Points, Character Points and Move. These are stats used in the roleplaying game which are not necessary to play this adventure. They are provided here in case you wish to use this character in other *Star Wars* roleplaying adventures.

## How Roark Does Things

The gamemaster (or in this case, the adventure notes) assigns a difficulty number to the task a character is trying to complete — like shooting a blaster at stormtroopers, flying a starship, or fixing the hyperdrive. If your roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty number, you succeed. If it's lower, you fail.

**Example:** Roark needs to land his freighter, the *Dorion Discus*, in a canyon. His *space transports* skill is 5D+2. The gamemaster says the difficulty number is 15. Roark's player rolls and gets a 17; Roark sets the *Dorion Discus* gently on the floor of the canyon.

You now know enough about the rules to start playing. But a roleplaying game is more than rules — roleplaying games are really about roleplaying and storytelling. Playing this solitaire adventure

will give you a feel for the game.

## Down on New Bakstre

*The planet New Bakstre rotates rapidly; the sun and its seven moons move at visible speed across its purplish sky. The sun sets slowly behind the Regina Cayli, an M-Class Imperial Attack Transport, which casts its long shadow across New Bakstre's twisted vegetation. You study it from your hiding place, a dozen meters distant, shivering slightly in the chill air.*

*The landing ramp is open and, for the moment, unguarded.*

*You bolt from cover, run across the clearing, dash up the ramp, and into the darkened cargo bay ...*

*Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* usually requires a gamemaster and at least two players. A solitaire adventure lets you play by yourself.

To play this adventure, you need a pencil, paper, dice, and the sample character template for Roark Garnet.

Begin by reading the section labelled "1." Each section describes a situation, and asks you to roll dice or choose a course of action. Depending on what you do or roll, it tells you to go to another section ("Go to 12"). Turn to that section, and continue. When you're told to write something down ("Write Alarm Triggered"), just jot it on a piece of scrap paper so you'll remember. The adventure will tell you when you're finished.

After you complete the adventure, try it again. This time, make different choices and see how they affect the outcome.

You are playing the role of Roark Garnet, a galactic entrepreneur and adventurer (a smuggler). Your ship, the *Dorion Discus*, was making an unscheduled delivery here on the planet of New Bakstre when it was forced down by Imperial customs cruisers. The *Dorion Discus* crash-landed in the forest nearby. The *Regina Cayli*, an Imperial transport, showed up with a bunch of stormtroopers, who started combing the area. They wounded and captured your companion and co-pilot, Hawk Carrow.

You don't give two hoots about the Empire or the Rebellion, but there's no way you're going to abandon your friend to the tender mercies of Imperial interrogators. You trailed the ambushers and your captive buddy back to the *Regina Cayli*. Your only plan is to find Hawk and get him out. After that ... well, there'll be time to worry about that later — you hope.

Ready?

1

Once inside, you look for a security console. "Where are they keeping you, old buddy?" Without the Artoo, you'll have to bypass security on your own. You lean over the console, study it, chew your nails, then punch a few keys in rapid succession ...

You are using your *computer programming/repair* skill, which is under your *Technical* attribute. Roark did not improve his *computer programming/repair*, so this skill is not listed in the character stats. Your skill code is still 2D+2, the same as your *Technical* attribute. So, roll two dice to see how well you do.

The difficulty number for this skill roll is 5:

- If your die roll is 4 or less, go to 3.
- If your die roll is 5 or more, go to 2.

2

Phew! No alarm. The monitor says, "Prisoner in Infirmary, Command Deck, Room B12." You get the infirmary's security code out of the memory banks. Calling up a diagram of the ship, you choose the most direct route and move out, alert for wandering stormtrooper patrols. Go to 4.

3

"EHHNT! EHHNT! EHHNT! EHHNT!" You got the location and the security code — Infirmary, Command Deck, Room B12 — But you triggered a computer security alarm. A ship's plan shows a grav tube up to the command deck. Time to get moving. Write down "Alarm Triggered" and go to 4.

4

Across the corridor is the grav tube to the command deck. You hear approaching footsteps, but no one is in sight. Should you stay hidden, or dash for the grav tube and hope you aren't seen?

- If you sprint to the grav tube, go to 5.
- If you stay hidden and observe, go to 6.

5

You run for it. You're trying to dodge out of sight before they see you, so you use your *dodge* skill of 4D+1. Roll four dice, and add one to the number rolled. The difficulty number is 10.

- If the score is 10 or higher, you made it across to the grav tube before anyone appears. You skid into the grav tube, twist the microgravity control, and sign with relief as the blast doors close and you begin to float gently upward. Go to 7.

• If the score is 9 or less, you're part-way across the room when a stormtrooper enters. The startled trooper hesitates, then fires from the hip — and misses — just as you dive into the grav tube, close the blast doors, and begin to float upwards toward the command deck. Write "Intruder Reported" and go to 7.

## 6

A stormtrooper walks into the room and stands by the grav tube with his weapon ready. You wait several minutes, but the trooper shows no sign of leaving.

- If you shoot the unsuspecting trooper, go to 8.
- If you try to bluff your way past the trooper and into the grav tube, go to 9.

## 7

You float upwards to a blast door; Imperial graphics indicate it's the command deck. You twist the grav tube control to neutral. The blast doors open. Beyond them, a corridor leads right and left. The infirmary should be to the right. Across the corridor are open blast doors leading to a darkened room.

- If you've written "Alarm Triggered" or "Intruder Reported," go to 14.
- Otherwise, go to 15.

## 8

- If you have not written "Trooper Wary," go to 28.
- If you have written "Trooper Wary," go to 34.

## 9

- If you have written "Alarm Triggered," go to 10.
- Otherwise, go to 11.

## 10

The trooper says, "Halt and identify yourself!"

- If you halt to regale the trooper with a clever fictitious explanation for your presence, go to 12.
- If you shrug, then draw your blaster and fire at the trooper, write "Trooper Wary" and go to 34.

## 11

You walk across the room to the grav tube wincing in pain, a hand clasped over one eye. "Excuse me, trooper, could you direct me to the infirmary? Got a splash of coolant in it, hurts like hell..."

You are using your *con* skill, which is under your *Perception*.

Roark didn't improve his *con*, so the skill is not listed. Your *con* skill is 3D, the same as your *Perception*. Roll three dice; the difficulty number is 15.

- If your roll is 15 or more, the trooper nods his head in acknowledgement — "command deck, to the right" — and continues to stand there as you enter the grav tube, close the blast doors, float gently upward toward the command deck, and grin smugly to yourself. Go to 7.
- If your roll is 14 or less, the trooper is not going to fall for this routine. Go to 10.

## 12

The stormtrooper seems unimpressed by your performance. "Seal all corridors and grav tubes. I have an intruder," he rumbles into his helmet comlink. "Make yourself comfortable, Rebel scum," he says, and stuns you with his blaster rifle. Go to 45.

## 13

"This don't look so good." You spin around just in time to see the landing ramp slam closed. Heavy footsteps pound closer. "Armed Intruder on Transport Deck!" loudspeakers blare. "Set blasters to stun and apprehend! Do not expose yourself to fire! Squads Four and Five to support ..."

"Neat," you think to yourself. "Trapped. Well, if they're set for stun, what've I got to lose ..."

You pot four stormtroopers before you're stunned. Paralyzed, you tumble to the deck. Go to 45.

## 14

You hear troopers approaching from the right and left.

- If you run across the hall to hide in the darkened room, go to 17.
- If you wait in the grav tube to ambush the troopers, go to 18.

## 15

"There's no sign of anyone in the corridor. You leave the grav tube, turn right, and head for the infirmary. Go to 16.

## 16

You peer around a corner. Down a long corridor you see a single trooper standing outside the infirmary door. "Hmm. Tough shot from here."

- If you test your marksmanship with this long-range shot, go to 38.
- If you try to bluff your way up to the trooper for a sure shot, go to 39.

## 17

You lean against the bulkhead in the dark, clasping the blaster two-handed and trying to control your breathing. In the brightly-lit corridor outside, two stormtroopers pause before the door. They peer in, then one gestures the other inside. "Check this room," a voice rasps, "and set for stun — the Commander wants this one for questioning." One trooper continues down the corridor. The other steps cautiously into the dark room ...

- If you hide and observe, go to 19.
- If you shoot the searching trooper once he's inside the darkened room with you, go to 20.

## 18

Two troopers approach from the left. As they enter your view, they call to the other troopers approaching from the right, "Cover us while we check the grav tube."

- If you want to shoot it out with the troopers, go to 22.
- If you want to hang motionless in the grav tube and pretend you're stunned, go to 23.

## 19

You look around quickly for a hiding place as the trooper cautiously enters the room.

You are using your *hide* skill, which is under your *Perception*. Roark didn't improve this skill, so it is not listed. Your *hide* skill is 3D, the same as your *Perception*.

The trooper's *search* skill is 2D.

Roll three dice; that's your roll. Then, roll two dice for the trooper.

- If your roll is higher than or equal to the trooper's, his careless search failed (or you found a great hiding place). The trooper leaves and continues down the corridor away from the infirmary. You leave the room and head for the infirmary. Go to 16.
- If the trooper's roll is higher, he spots you. Go to 21.

## 20

At close range, this is an easy shot. The difficulty number is 10. Your *blaster* skill is 5D+1; roll five dice, and add one to the total.

- If the total roll is 10 or more, the trooper is hit and stunned. You swiftly subdue and strip him, then don his armor. Grabbing the blaster rifle, you step out of the darkened room, now to all appearances a loyal servant of the Emperor, and march off toward the infirmary. Go to 16.
- If the roll is 9 or less, your shot misses. The trooper ducks back out

of the room, slams the door shut, sounds the alarm, and calls for reinforcements. You're trapped. After a brief but spirited engagement with a reinforced squad of stormtroopers, you are paralyzed by a stun blast. Go to 45.

## 21

The trooper pretends to have missed you in his search, but as he leaves the room, he slams the door shut, sounds the alarm, and calls for reinforcements.

You're trapped. After a brief but spirited engagement with a reinforced squad of stormtroopers, you are paralyzed by a stun blast. Go to 45.

## 22

The troopers, obviously experienced veterans, don't expose themselves carelessly. Two troopers take cover while four cautiously approach the grav tube and peer inside. When you open fire, they also fire.

Whether or not you hit doesn't much matter; even if you do, hitting you in a small grav tube is like shooting mynocks in a cargo cannister. At least one of the stormtrooper's stun blasts hits and paralyzes you. Go to 45.

## 23

A trooper jabs you viciously to make sure you aren't faking. Suppressing a moan or reflex action is pretty hard — difficulty 15. To resist this reflex, you use your *stamina* skill, which is under *Strength*. Roark didn't improve *stamina*, so the skill is not listed. Your *stamina* skill is 3D, the same as your *Strength*; roll three dice.

- If the roll is 15 or more, you don't respond. The two troopers take your blaster and drag you off toward the infirmary. Go to 24.
- If the score is 14 or less, you cry out involuntarily, and the trooper fires his blaster into your chest — now you're stunned for real. Go to 45.

## 24

Two troopers drag you down the corridor to a door marked "Infirmary." They drop you on the deck. One punches a security code while the other covers the door with his blaster — and neither is watching you.

Here goes nothing ... You concentrate and put everything into silently getting to your feet and jumping the troopers from behind. You're trying to do this without being seen — so you're using your

*sneak* skill, which is under *Perception*. Roark didn't improve *sneak*, so the skill is not listed. Your *sneak* skill is 3D, the same as your *Perception*; roll three dice.

The troopers have been careless — your chances are good. The difficulty number is 5:

- *If your roll is 5 or more*, you take the two troopers by surprise. *Go to 25.*
- *If the roll is 4 or less*, a noise warns the troopers, who turn and drill you with blaster rifles at point blank range. You are immediately paralyzed with a sour expression on your face. The troopers imprison you with your friend. *Go to 40.*

## 25

You try to do two things at once — knock one trooper down while grabbing the other's blaster rifle.

You're using your *brawling* skill for both purposes. Your skill code is 4D+1. However, because you're trying to do two things at once, you roll 1D less than you normally would. Your modified skill code is 3D+1.

Roll three dice and add one to the total in your attempt to knock down the trooper; and roll 3D+1 again for your attempt to grab the blaster rifle.

The difficulty number for both attempts is 10.

- *If both rolls succeed* — that is, both rolls are 10 or more — you grab the blaster rifle and knock down the other trooper. You make short work of the surprised troopers with the stolen rifle before they can sound the alarm. *Go to 42.*
- *If either or both rolls fail* — either one is 9 or less — your bold move has failed. You are subdued and imprisoned with your injured friend. *Go to 40.*

## 26

"Okay. Out the front door?"

"You got a better idea?"

"They'll seal the exits when they find I'm gone."

"What, you expect me to claw my way through the hull or something?"

"No, but it's not too much to ask that you think, is it?"

"Nice talk from a rescued guy being carried by his heroic buddy ..."

- *If you try to leave the way you entered* — *via grav tube to the Transport Deck* — *go to 30.*
- *If you try to find another exit*, *go to 29.*



## 27

"Intruder!" the trooper shouts into his helmet mike, and charges you, firing his blaster from the hip.

To see who wins this shootout, alternate shots between you and the trooper. The difficulty number for all shots is 10. Your *blaster*

skill is 5D+1, and the trooper's is 3D. When you shoot, you roll five dice and add one to the total; when he shoots, you roll three dice. Make rolls for both of you; the guy with the higher roll gets his shot off first. If that roll is 10 or more, he hits his opponent (and the opponent's shot goes wild). If both of you miss the first time around, roll again, and continue rolling until someone hits.

• *If you get the trooper first*, take a moment to gloat over your cool performance under fire, then run toward the infirmary. *Go to 42.*

• *If the trooper gets you first*, curse your rotten luck as you slump to the deck paralyzed. *Go to 45.*

## 28

You get your shot off before the trooper can respond. Your *blaster* Skill is 5D+1. This is a pretty easy shot; the difficulty number is 10. roll five dice, and add one to the total; if the result is 10 or more, you hit and staggered the trooper.

• *If you hit the trooper*, you dash past the trooper into the grav tube, hit the controls to shut the tube door, and grope for your lucky thesselbeast's foot. Write "*Intruder Reported*" and go to 7.

• *If you missed the trooper*, he recoils in alarm, then leaps into the grav tube. The blast doors close before you can get to them. Alarms blare from overhead — "Intruder on Transport Deck! Seal all bulkheads and grav tubes." Write "*Intruder Reported*" and go to 13.

## 29

"Well, is there any way out of this ship that the Imperials would never suspect we'd try?"

"Fired out a torpedo port?"

"Bad idea."

You try to think of a feature of M-Class ships that would allow you to escape. Your *Knowledge* ability is 2D+1. The difficulty number is 10. Roll two dice and add one to the total:

• *If the result is 10 or more*, you get a really bad idea. *Go to 32.*

• *If the score is 9 or less*, the best idea you come up with is to go out the way you came in — through the grav tube and out the boarding ramp. *Go to 30.*

## 30

You leave the infirmary, sneak back to the grav tube, and make it to the transport deck without encountering any troopers. *Go to 31.*

## 31

Two landspeeders sit near the open cargo ramp.

• *If you pile into one, and leave the other one alone*, go to 35.

• *If you take the time to disable the other landspeeder before you leave*, go to 36.

## 32

"Hey! Let's use the escape pods!"

"But we're on the ground, stupid. Probably get launched directly into the topsoil ..."

"No! The pods're on top of this baby. Trust me — I know what I'm doing."

"This isn't gonna work ..."

"Come on, cheer up. We'll probably be killed instantly."

This is pretty risky — you need to override the escape pod automatics and use manual controls from ground level. Even though your *space transports* skill is high, you estimate your chances of a crash are about 50/50, with possibly serious consequences.

• *If you decide to risk the escape pods*, go to 33.

• *If you decide to take your chances with the grav tube and ramp*, go to 30.

## 33

"Hmm. I think it's this button here ..."

"You sure you know how to work this thing?"

"Trust me, good buddy. Everything's just fine ..."

Your *space transports* skill is 5D+2. The difficulty number is 20. Roll five dice, and add two to the total.

• *If your roll is 19 or less*, there's a sudden, brutal acceleration, a staccato series of whangs, several splintering crashes, and a sharp, definitive impact. The battered pod is buried under a mound of vegetation and topsoil. The Imperials cut you out with a torch, commend you on your bravery and ingenuity, and march you back to the Regina Cayli. *Go to 40.*

• *If your roll is 20 or more*, you manage to wrestle the escape pod to a rough but serviceable landing about two kilometers from the transport. *Go to 46.*

## 34

The trooper is not surprised, and he shoots back. The trooper's *blaster* skill is 3D. The difficulty number for both shots is 10. Roll three dice for the stormtrooper. Your *blaster* skill is 5D+1. Roll five dice for yourself, and add one to the total. Whoever gets the higher roll shoots first.

• *If you both roll 9 or less*, you both miss. The stormtrooper leaps into the grav tube. The blast doors close before you can get to them.

Alarms blare from overhead — “Intruder on Transport Deck! Seal all bulkheads and grav tubes.” Write “Intruder Reported” and go to 13.

- If the stormtrooper shoots first, and rolls 10 or more, you’re hit before you get your shot off — and paralyzed with a stun blast. Go to 45.
- If you shoot first, and your roll is 10 or more, you hit the stormtrooper. He slumps to the floor. You dart past and into the grav tube, close the blast doors, and drift gently upward toward the command deck. Write “Intruder Reported” and go to 7.

### 35

The moment you get into the landspeeder and fire up, an alarm sounds. You zoom out the cargo ramp just as it closes. Go to 41.

### 36

The moment you fool with the landspeeder, an alarm sounds. The cargo ramp closes before you can make your escape, and in seconds the transport deck is crawling with troopers. Resistance is pointless ... so you charge them ...

The Imperial officer stands negligently over your paralyzed bodies. “Hmm. Dissatisfied with our accommodations?” he politely inquires. “Perhaps we have something more to your liking...” Go to 37.

### 37

The two of you are securely bound and jammed into a rather small closet. The heavy blast doors close with a solid sounding clunk. It’s dark. Hawk’s healing sheath is crushing your toes.

“Here’s another fine mess you’ve gotten us into.”

“Stop griping. Now, here’s my plan...”

Don’t fret. We’re sure they’ll get out somehow. But that’s a tale for another day... Go to 47.

### 38

You take your time, brace, aim, take a deep breath, and squeeze the trigger. Because you spent some time preparing, you get to roll 1D more than your normal *blaster* skill of 5D+1. Roll six dice, and add 1 to the total.

It’s a tough shot, though — the difficulty number is 20.

- If your roll is 20 or more, you get a bull’s-eye, and the trooper drops like a rock. You scamper up cheerfully, punch the infirmary’s security code, and drag the trooper into the infirmary. Go to 42.
- If the roll is 19 or less, you miss. Go to 27.

### 39

- If you’re wearing trooper armor, go to 43.
- If you have no trooper armor, but you have not written “Alarm Triggered” or “Intruder Reported,” go to 43.
- If you have no trooper armor, and you have written “Alarm Triggered” or “Intruder Reported,” go to 44.

### 40

Both you and Hawk are imprisoned in the infirmary. This time, however, two Imperial stormtroopers stand outside, guarding the door.

You sit in a chair next to Hawk’s pallet. “Well, now we got them right where we want them. Those Imperials think they’ve taken us captive. Actually, I just tricked them into bringing us here so I could rescue you.”

A barrage of rude noises and flying objects from the pallet greet your announcement.

“Look, if you’re going to be that way, I’ll just leave. Anyway, it’s your turn to come up with The Plan.”

Hawk reflects for a moment. “Well, how about the bacta tank?”

“The what?”

“The healing tank. We tip it over, spill the bacta in front of the doorway, and raise a false alarm. When the guards rush in, they’ll slip on the liquid and we’ll bash them with the tank.”

“You really think that’s going to work?”

“Sure! Look, you said it’s my turn, and that’s my plan.”

“Wonderful. Let’s go.” Go to 30.

### 41

In moments the other speeder, packed with stormtroopers, is hot on your tail. You’re gaining slowly on your overloaded pursuers, but one blaster shot could put you out of business.

Hawk leans over the rear windscreen with a blaster. “Hold it steady for a second, ace — give me a shot at their driver.”

You’re using your *repulsorlift operation* skill, which is under *Mechanical*. Roark didn’t improve this skill, so it isn’t listed. Your *repulsorlift operation* skill is 3D+2, the same as your *Mechanical*; the difficulty number for this maneuver is 10. Roll three dice and add two to the total.

If you roll 10 or more, the difficulty number for Hawk’s shot is 15 because you held the speeder steady. If you roll 9 or less, Hawk curses your driving skills and does his best with a difficulty number

of 20.

Hawk is good with a blaster, but this is a tough shot. His *blaster* skill is 4D+1; roll four dice and add one to the total.

- *If the roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty number*, Hawk zaps the driver of the pursuing speeder. It noses into the turf, cartwheels a couple of times, and begins to tear through the brush as you zoom out of range of the spectacle. *Go to 46.*

- *If the roll is less than the difficulty number*, Hawk's shot goes wide. he's readying for another try when a lucky shot from one of the troopers tags the drive system and your speeder falters, then drops abruptly, skidding through the undergrowth. The troopers shrewdly stand off and keep you pinned down until reinforcements arrive. They take you with embarrassing ease. It's the Imperials' turn to gloat on the short ride back to the transport. *Go to 37.*

#### 42

You go to the infirmary door, punch the security code, and drag the trooper(s) inside.

Hawk lies on a pallet, tended by a medical droid, one leg enveloped in a healing sheath. "Hi, old buddy. Nice place you got here," you say as you scan the infirmary. "Sorry we got to check out. Got any luggage?"

Hawk smiles grimly. "With the bum leg, fancy athletics are out of the question."

"No problem, old buddy. I'll just carry you."

"Roark, this is not a very good plan."

"Everybody's a critic. Let's move, huh?"

You heave your friend over your shoulder and tromp out of the infirmary.

*Go to 26.*

#### 43

You walk right up to the unsuspecting trooper, salute, and zap the fellow, who obligingly slumps to the floor unconscious. *Go to 42.*

#### 44

The alert trooper, under orders to stun first and ask questions later, snaps his blaster to his shoulder without hesitation, fires, and stuns you before you can get off a shot. You tumble paralyzed to the deck. *Go to 45.*

#### 45

An Imperial officer arrives with a squad of troopers. "The Com-

mander will be personally interested in this one, I suspect," says the officer as he relieves you of your blaster. "I'm sure you'll enjoy this opportunity to savor the comforts of Imperial hospitality, my Rebel friend."

"You two, put him in the infirmary with the other one. The rest of you, take a look around outside and see if there are any others crawling around."

"How nice," you think groggily, "a personal escort ..." as the two troopers each grab a leg and drag you down the corridor. *Go to 24.*

#### 46

"Nice work, ace."

"My mom always said that Driver Education course would come in handy."

Hawk and you are free of the Imperials for the moment, but now you have to deal with the problem of the disabled *Dorion Discus*. The Imperials will be waiting for you if you go back there, but you haven't got any other way off planet.

"Say, Roark, my man. You ever flown an Imperial transport?"

"Bad idea."

"Yeah. Let's do it ..."

Don't fret. We're sure they'll get off this planet somehow. But that's a tale for another day ... *Go to 47.*

#### 47

Okay, now you can see how it's done. Whenever you take an important action, you use one of your skills or attributes. You look at your sheet, find your code with that skill or attribute, and roll dice accordingly. If you roll equal to or higher than the difficulty number, you succeed. If you roll less, you fail.

In this adventure, we provided the difficulty numbers. The more difficult the task, the higher the difficulty number. When you're playing with others, the gamemaster will tell you what the difficulty number is each time you try to do something.

One thing you should keep in mind — when you start playing the game, your character is about as good as a normal person — a little better, because you're a hero. When you try something tricky, you'll fail a lot. Don't expect to be able to fly unscathed through an asteroid field, or dodge the fire of an entire stormtrooper squad. Han, Luke or Leia can pull that off — maybe one day you'll be that good, too.

# STRANDED

by Chuck Truett

Illustrations by Scott Neely

Day turns to night quickly on the flat plateaus of Karra. Soon the darkness is broken only by the fire burning between the village huts and your ship as you, Dr. Nardah, and his assistant gather with the natives for your evening meal.

Politely — as Dr. Nardah has requested — you force yourself to eat the coarse gruel the villagers have prepared for you, a thick concoction of foul-tasting tubers served in a smooth clay bowl that cools your hands despite the heat of its contents.

As you eat, you watch Tist, one of the largest of the aliens, continue his fascination with your weapons, awkwardly manipulating a blaster rifle with his long-fingered hands.

You cringe as he raises the rifle to fire, knowing that, as he has every time before, he will miss his target. Your only hope is that no one is injured.

But he does not fire.

Instead, he throws the rifle to the ground. "Useless," he tells you. "We will defeat the Imperials with our own strengths."

Dr. Nardah — who has developed the skill of eating the gruel as if he truly enjoys its taste — sniffs loudly, a gesture of comfort that he has taken from the natives. "Friend," he says, "you cannot hope to defeat them without our help."

"But we will," Tist answers, "as we always have. We have always conquered, and we always will." The other Karran warriors flick their tongues and hum, signalling their agreement.

Dr. Nardah stands and walks to Tist's side. They are an odd pair, the slight, white-haired Human contrasted with the tall, black-furred alien. Dr. Nardah slaps at the Karran with his forearm, another gesture of the natives, this time one of companionship. "We are brothers, it is only proper that we offer you assistance."

"But we will show you, Doctornardah, we will show that we have strength, then we will offer our assistance to you," Tist answers again. "We will attack. We will destroy the Imperials, as our ancestors destroyed all those that opposed them."

You laugh, quietly, to yourself. If only it were that easy.

## Summary

In this adventure, the characters have escorted Dr. Elth Nardah and his assistant to the planet Karra. Dr. Nardah is attempting to negotiate a treaty between the natives of the planet and the Rebel Alliance.

It is an uneventful, almost peaceful assignment — until an Imperial shuttle crashes nearby.

While investigating the crash site, the characters capture an Imperial prisoner. A chain of events begins that ends in the destruction of their starship and earns the characters the enmity of the Karrans who were so recently their allies.

Without their starship, the characters are trapped on the planet unless they can make the long journey to the Imperial base and steal a ship.

## Karra

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Temperate to hot

**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)

**Hydrosphere:** Dry

**Gravity:** Low-standard

**Terrain:** Bipartite (grassy plateaus/jungle canyons)

**Length of Day:** 20 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 304 local days

**Sapient Species:** Karrans (no additional data available)

**Starport:** None

**Population:** 1,000–1,500 Imperials, undetermined number of natives

**Planet Function:** Failed mining colony

**Government:** Imperial Governor

**Tech Level:** Space (at Imperial base), primitive

**Capsule:** Karra is a small, dense planet that circles a yellow star in the largely unexplored rimward region of Rayter sector. With an average temperature of 45 degrees centigrade at the equator and little rainfall, the planet is climatically inhospitable, although most known sentient races can adapt to life in the cooler temperate zones.

The primary distinguishing factor of Karra is the immense number and variety of insects that populate its surface. This number is so great that the insects have supplanted all other orders of animal life, all but becoming the sole inhabitants of the planet.

## Mission Profile

**Operation Identification:** Primitive Sentient Protection and Alliance, Operation 265-A: Karra.

### Mission Objectives:

1) Escort Dr. Elth Nardah and his assistant to Karra, providing necessary support and protection.

2) Examine and evaluate, from a military perspective, the physical and intellectual abilities of the native sentient species.

3) Return Dr. Nardah to the Seven Flames support base following the completion of negotiations (as determined by Dr. Nardah).

**Mission Background:** Several hundred years ago, a mining colony was established on Karra (see attachment) in response to reports that large concentrations of varmigio (trace elements of which are necessary in most hyperdrive cores) were present just below the surface of the planet. These reports were later discovered to be incorrect, and the Mineral Assets Partnership, which had underwritten the colony, withdrew its support, stranding the colonists. According to all available information, the colonists perished soon after.

Recently, the Empire has also established a mining operation on Karra (presumably acting on the same incorrect information that precipitated the establishment of the original colony). Like before, no varmigio was extracted, and the Empire subsequently withdrew the entire staff of the mining operation and over 50 percent of the military personnel.

Karra would normally be of no concern to the Alliance; however, reports recently intercepted by Alliance Intelligence indicate that a sentient race has developed on the planet. Dr. Nardah has hypothesized that, as no mention of sentients appears in the records of the Mineral Assets Partnership (which conducted a thorough survey of the surface of the planet), a pre-sentient race developed into sentience through the presence of the original colonists. If this is true, then, because of their primitive state, the sentients of Karra are prime candidates for Imperial slavery.

Alliance High Command is prepared to use military force to prevent the enslavement of the Karrans, but we will not presume to act without their approval. Dr. Nardah, using his expert knowledge of primitive sentient species, must negotiate a fair and proper treaty that will allow for the protection of the Karrans.

Before beginning the adventure, allow the characters to read the "Mission Profile" sidebar, which provides them with all available information concerning their mission.

### ■ Dr. Elth Nardah

Type: Idealistic Diplomat

DEXTERITY 2D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 7D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 7D, cultures: primitive societies 10D, languages 7D, planetary systems 6D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D+1

STRENGTH 1D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair: information retrieval and processing systems 6D+2

Move: 8

Equipment: Sporting blaster: Galinolo XX, Diplomatic Edition (3D)

**Capsule:** Dr. Nardah is a small, wizened Human male, with worn skin and stooped shoulders. His hair, although silver, still grows thick, and he has not lost any of the vitality of his youth. He dresses well, as befits a diplomat, in the conservative fashion of the Old Republic, and the blaster that he wears, while underpowered, has been constructed of the finest materials.

Dr. Nardah's primary motivation as a member of the Alliance Diplomatic Corps is to prevent primitive sentient races from becoming slaves of the Empire.

### ■ Karvinna Raen

Type: Xenological Researcher

DEXTERITY 2D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 4D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 4D, languages 6D, planetary systems 4D, streetwise 4D+2

MECHANICAL 2D

Holorecorder operation: Rebel Alliance Treaty Recording System 5D, repulsorlift operation 4D

PERCEPTION 2D+1

STRENGTH 1D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair: information retrieval and processing systems 5D, holorecorder repair: Rebel Alliance Treaty Recording System 4D

Move: 10

Equipment: Rebel Alliance Treaty Recording System (see entry)

**Capsule:** Shy and quiet, Karvinna Raen shares little of Dr. Nardah's drive for the liberation of oppressed beings. Instead, she is fascinated by the pure facts of their existence, by how they cope, or do not cope, with both the presence of the Empire and the Alliance.

Karvinna grew up under the rule of the Empire, during a time when



scholars were disdained, and has had to fend for herself through most of her life. Despite her youth, she has managed to acquire a much wider range of skills than has Dr. Nardah. These skills, in addition to her intelligence, have made her such a valuable assistant to the older diplomat.

Unlike most other beings, Karvinna has carefully cultivated a very plain appearance. She is of average height and weight, with short, brown hair and dark eyes. She normally wears a long, beige colored tunic and loose slacks.

Besides assisting Dr. Nardah, Karvinna is the official recorder of all treaty negotiations and is never separated from the pouch which holds her holorecording equipment. The holos she records are considered legally binding by all the systems within the Rebel Alliance.

### ■ Treaty Recording System

Model: Rebel Alliance Treaty Recording System

Type: Holorecorder

Skill: Holorecorder operation: Rebel Alliance Treaty Recording System

Cost: None

Availability: Only available to Rebel Alliance diplomatic teams

**Game Notes:** The main image lens on the RecSys holorecorder has a fixed focus and only one focal length (depth of visual field, 1.1 to 3 meters), making it unusable for long-range surveillance.

**Capsule:** The RecSys consists of an ordinary-looking holorecorder which is mounted on a gyroscopically stabilized tripod. Its only uncommon attribute is that the images it records are processed through a special set of RTZ security filters, then recorded on a WORM chip so the data cannot be modified. This system, along with special procedures that must be followed by the operator, virtually ensures that the recording cannot be manipulated. The images contained on the WORM chip are guaranteed to be a truthful recording of the events that occurred.

### Preparations

The Rebel Alliance has a stock Ghtroc freighter (see *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*, page 121, or use any other stock light freighter) which can be used for this mission.

**Note:** It is integral to the plot of the story that the ship in which the characters arrive on Karra is destroyed. If the group normally uses a personal ship for travel, then you should arrange for that ship to be temporarily "decommissioned" (undergoing major repairs, held by customs officials, etc.), forcing the characters to use the ship provided by the Rebel Alliance. (Unless, of course, it would be dramatically appropriate for the characters to lose their own ship.)

### The Journey to Karra

The hyperspace journey to Karra lasts three days. During this time, the characters become well acquainted with Dr. Nardah, an amiable man whose special talent is an ability to make others feel

comfortable in his presence.

Dr. Nardah spends most of the trip questioning the characters about the societies in which they grew up and explaining to them how the primitive history of a culture affects the advanced society into which it evolves. Despite the rather dry nature of his conversation, Dr. Nardah is usually able to hold the attention of those who surround him.

His assistant, however, while constantly present, is rarely noticed, blending into the background and retreating from all attempts to approach her.

**Gamemaster Note:** It is important that Dr. Nardah's death comes as a surprise to the characters, in order to amplify the fact that no one understands the actions of the Karrans. While setting up the adventure for the players, emphasize Dr. Nardah's presence, implying that he will play a large part in the adventure. De-emphasize Karvinna's presence, referring to her (if at all) only as "Dr. Nardah's assistant." Avoid referring to her by name until after Dr. Nardah's death.

## Episode One: Days Are Peaceful Here

### The Village

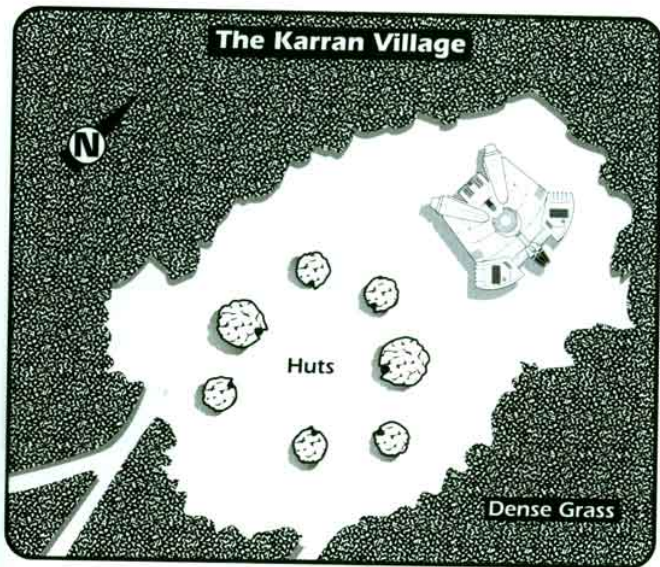
The Karran village consists of a cluster of seven huts constructed in a roughly oval area cleared of the thick, two-meter tall grass that evenly covers the plateau (see the map, "The Karran Village"). The huts themselves are constructed of sun-dried brick made from clay and shredded blades of grass, making them the same light brown color as the surrounding plain.

At the north end of the oval is a large, open area normally used as a ceremonial site, and this is the area where the characters have landed their ship.

The entire village is surrounded by a wall of the dense grasses, broken only by the well-traveled paths leading south to the fields where the Karrans grow their crops.

### Negotiations Are Interrupted

The adventure begins on the morning of the fourth day on Karra. The characters are playing *solli*, a catching and tossing game involving three brightly colored balls of differing sizes, with a small group of juvenile Karrans, using their performance to judge their physical capabilities.



Dr. Nardah and his assistant are in the village chief's hut, deeply involved in negotiations (which seem to be progressing well). The majority of the adults are in the fields to the south, harvesting the tubers that form the basis of their diet.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The game, which the Karran children have been enjoying greatly, judging from the volume of their humming, is interrupted by the roar of ion thrusters in the sky above you. You look up to see an Imperial Lambda-class shuttle fall in a staggered arc into the grasslands to the west, leaving behind a trail of thick, black smoke.

### Panic in the Village

The Karran children quickly disappear, running into several of the brick huts, but the characters are not alone long. The Karrans working in the fields to the south appear in the compound almost immediately. They crowd around the characters, begging for protection, certain that the "Dreaded Imperials" (a phrase they have taken from Dr. Nardah) have begun their war on the Karrans.

## The Karrans

Attribute Dice: 12D  
DEXTERITY 2D/5D  
KNOWLEDGE 1D/4D  
MECHANICAL 0D/3D  
PERCEPTION 1D/3D  
STRENGTH 2D/6D  
TECHNICAL 0D/2D

### Special Abilities:

**Technological Ignorance:** The Karrans know almost nothing about technology and have a difficult time grasping new concepts. They suffer a -1D penalty whenever they attempt to use any item more advanced than "stone age" (spears, axes, knives).

**Claws:** The Karrans can use their foreclaws as weapons doing damage equal to the Karran's STR.

### Story Factors:

**Altruism:** A Karran's sense of individuality is easily suppressed by its insectoid sense of community survival. The group, whether it be village, tribe, or species, is of much greater importance than the individual. As a result, it is not uncommon for a Karran to sacrifice itself, if this sacrifice represents a potential for the group to survive.

Move: 5/10

Size: 2-2.5 meters tall

**Capsule:** The Karrans are large, lumbering insectivores. Their bodies are roughly cone-shaped, starting with narrow, slender snouts, and steadily increasing in mass until they end in thick legs and hindquarters. Karrans are covered with thick, dark brown or black hair. They wear no clothing, but will decorate their fur with stripes of white clay for special occasions.

The Karrans are capable of using tools, but the dexterity of their four-fingered, thumbless hands is limited by the long, sharp claws that extend from the tip of each finger. They are further limited by the resources available to them on the plateaus: grass, clay, and small stones. The primary craft in which the Karrans participate is pottery (at which they are relatively proficient). The grasses of the plateau, which are the most accessible resource, are primarily used for fuel, although fibers from the grasses are occasionally woven into a coarse cloth.

However, the presence of wooden items (primarily simple spears and adze handles) indicates that the Karrans have some method of gathering materials from the valleys.

The Karrans speak an oddly accented dialect of Basic, apparently introduced to them by the original Human settlers, which has been relatively unchanged by time.

## Investigation

On hearing the screams of the villagers, Dr. Nardah (followed by his assistant) and the village chief and warriors push their way



through the crowd of agitated Karrans and demand to know what has just happened.

After hearing the explanation, the chief, a rotund female, requests that Dr. Nardah and the characters go to the site where the ship landed and investigate. Dr. Nardah agrees, insisting that, not only do all the characters go, but that six of the Karran warriors also accompany them.

When the characters have made whatever preparations they think necessary, the group begins to push its way west through the grass, toward the end of the shuttle's flight arc.

## The Shuttle

The Karrans lead, walking through the grass as if it was not there, using their great strengths and masses to clear a path for the others to follow. Fifteen minutes after they leave the village, the party arrives at the site of the crash. Read aloud:

**The shattered wreckage of the shuttle rests in a 20-meter wide trough of raw earth, framed by a wall of scorched and burning grass. The bulk of the shuttle is at the far end of the trough, more than 100 meters away. It is so twisted by the impact that it is barely recognizable as the starship it once was.**

**The smaller cockpit section of the shuttle is much closer, less than 30 meters away. It is almost completely buried in the dirt, but there is still enough exposed that you can see the ragged opening where it was torn from the main section. In that opening, you can see the slowly moving figures of two Imperial pilots.**

**And, as the Imperials raise their blasters, you realize they can also see you.**

**2 Imperial Pilots.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 4D*. Blaster pistol (4D).

The Imperials are at a numerical disadvantage, but they are hiding in the remains of the shuttle and are almost completely covered. Add 3D to the base difficulty (determined by the ranges of the characters' weapons) for the characters to hit the Imperials. The pilots in the shuttle are 20 meters away.

For the purposes of this encounter, treat the *Strength* of the shuttle hull that protects the Imperials as 6D, and ignore the applicable scale modifications.

If the Imperials are able to hold the characters off for ten rounds, then two of the Karrans act to end the combat. They rush up to the shuttle cockpit, reach into the opening, pull the Imperial pilots from

the cockpit, then break their necks and drop them to the ground.

### The Governor

When the characters search inside the cockpit section, they find a lanky, middle-aged Human wearing a very expensive Imperial suit strapped into one of the flight couches.

Shackles (*Strength* 5D) bind his hands together in front of him. His hair is disheveled and his suit wrinkled, as if he has been treated roughly by his captors. Read aloud:

**The Imperial prisoner eyes you nervously. "You are not from this planet," he says. "You are Rebels, enemies of the Empire."**

**He is quiet for a moment, then a gleam of recognition appears in his eyes. "I am Darryn Edalm, Imperial Governor of Karra. I have been accused of treason and am being sent to certain execution. I surrender to you and request your protection as a prisoner of war."**

Edalm is extremely polite and gracious during this first encounter. He attempts to make the characters feel he has suffered abuse at the hands of the Empire and is interested in joining the Rebellion. He is, in fact, only interested in saving himself. If he begins to fear the characters might desert or harm him, he announces that he has information which will be useful to the Alliance, although he does not specify what this information is.

### ■ Darryn Edalm

Type: Imperial Governor

DEXTERITY 3D

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Bureaucracy: Imperial planetary occupation forces 5D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Command 4D, command: Imperial military personnel 5D, con 4D+2, persuasion 5D

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Move: 10

Equipment: expensive gray suit

**Capsule:** Darryn Edalm is a tall, thin Human with pale skin and red hair. He is a low-level bureaucrat — paranoid and compulsively meticulous — who is trying to fit the mold of sophisticated Imperial Governor.

Edalm is the Imperial researcher



who rediscovered the results of the original survey of Karra, leading him to believe that there existed a large mass of valuable resources on the planet. He immediately shared this belief with his superiors, and, as a reward, was granted the Imperial Governorship of Karra.

Unfortunately, Edalm's reward soon turned to shame when the miners discovered there was no varmiglio on the planet.

All civilian personnel were immediately recalled. After the military commander determined the natives of the planet were not a threat, the majority of the military forces were withdrawn. Suddenly, Governor Edalm had control, but no power — and no importance.

### A Prisoner?

When the characters and Edalm emerge, Dr. Nardah and the Karrans have gathered in front of the opening, and Dr. Nardah's assistant has set up her holo equipment to record the event. On seeing Edalm, Dr. Nardah immediately asks the characters to explain what has occurred.

When the Karrans hear that Edalm is an Imperial, they become agitated, making quiet whistling sounds, but they do not act.

After the characters complete their explanation, Dr. Nardah asks a few questions to clarify the story, then makes his decision:

**"According to the policies for contact with the enemy developed by our military high command, it is our duty to deliver this prisoner to our commander at the Seven Flames base. We will return to the village and restrain him until treaty negotiations are complete, after which time we will transport him to the proper authorities."**

### Treason

The Karrans' agitation quickly turns to rage, but they still do not act until the characters begin to escort Edalm to the village. When this occurs, read aloud:

**The Karrans begin to howl.**

**Tist screeches, "Traitor! You are one of them!" The other Karrans join in, chanting, "Traitor!" and the brittle grass shakes with the force of their anger.**

**Tist screams again, "Insects! We will kill you all!" In a flash, Dr. Nardah is in Tist's grasp, and the huge Karran is pounding the diplomat's already still body with his fists, screaming, "Traitor!"**

The other Karrans begin to move towards you.

**6 Karran Warriors.** All stats are 1D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *brawling* parry 4D, *melee combat*: spear 5D, *melee parry* 5D, *Strength* 5D,

*brawling 6D. Move 7. Wooden spear (STR+1D).*

The Karran warriors fight until dead, because they are not fighting for themselves — they are fighting for their village and their species. Their individual deaths are of no consequence.

Karvinna does not move when the combat starts. Instead, she attempts to record it with her holo equipment and will not stop unless one of the characters drags her to cover. The Karrans will not attack Karvinna unless they have defeated the other characters.

Edalm, however, spends the entire battle trying to stay behind the characters and demands that they concentrate on protecting him.

### Returning to the Village

When the characters start to return to the village, Edalm demands to know where they are going, but when he is told, he balks:

**"To their village?" he asks, indicating the dead Karrans. "Are you kidding? What do you plan to say? 'Sorry we killed your friends, good-bye and have a nice day?' " He shakes his head. "I refuse to go along with this."**

There are a wide range of responses the characters can offer to this announcement. Edalm attempts to persuade the characters to go to the Imperial base, where a confiscated smuggling ship is being stored in the adjacent mining warehouse. Edalm claims the warehouse is unguarded, so they will be able to easily slip inside.

If the characters agree with Edalm, go to Episode Two; if they decide to return to their own ship, go to The Village.

Regardless of the decision made, Edalm willingly goes with the characters (although he complains loudly if they decide to return to the village).

Karvinna also follows the characters, becoming, if possible, more quiet and withdrawn than before. She does whatever the characters say — except leave without her holorecorder.

### The Village

When the characters return to the village, they find it is deserted. Nothing has been taken from the village, and there is no sign of violence, but every inhabitant has disappeared.

The characters' ship, however, is still there, and it appears to be unharmed. Characters making Moderate *Perception* rolls notice a large number of tiny insects crawling on the hull of the ship.

When the characters enter the ship, they realize something horrible has happened. First, they discover that the main entry ramp will not

open or close. Then they find that it is dark inside the ship, and there is no power going to the interior lighting systems — even the emergency lights are out. As they move through the ship, they learn that every system is without power. The ship is completely dead.

### Infestation

The cause of the breakdown becomes obvious the first time a maintenance panel is opened. The ship is infested with billions of tiny insects. They have penetrated into every part of the ship, eating wires, cables, and computer chips, destroying the very soul of the ship. An *Easy starship repair* roll determines that this ship will never fly again.

Included among the inoperative equipment is the hyperspace transceiver, several integral parts of which have been totally consumed by the insects.

Now the characters realize that their only hope for escape lies in the confiscated smuggling ship in storage at the Imperial base.

On searching the ship for supplies, the characters find that nothing of any potential use is intact except for a two-week supply (for five Humans) of NSFS food blocks. Everything else in the ship has been destroyed by the insects. You can make exceptions to this, if you wish, but limit it to very low technology items. Anything more complicated than a spear or a wrench has been destroyed.

Karvinna is the only one in the party who is familiar with the geography of Karra. She knows the Imperial base is due east, but she is unsure of how far away it is. She does, however, believe it is in one of the valleys.

The characters turn away from their ship and begin to push their way through the grasses.

## Episode Two: Brains With Which to Think

### The First Day

The first day's journey is uneventful, and all the characters encounter is the endless monotony of the plains. They see nothing except for the sky above them and the brown grass at their sides. When they prepare to rest as night falls, they have no idea how far they have traveled.

### The Second Day

On the morning of the second day, have all the characters make *Perception* rolls. The character with the highest roll is the first to

arise, awakened by Karvinna as she gathers her equipment and begins to walk back towards the Karran village.

Karvinna cannot believe that Dr. Nardah is dead and has decided to return to the crash site to provide him with medical attention.

### Karvinna

Karvinna is the only member of the party with a reason to grieve over Dr. Nardah's death. She has worked with him for several years, and he has been both her mentor and surrogate father.

In addition, Karvinna is a scholar, not a soldier, and this is her first experience with the violence of war. It is not surprising she was numb and lifeless during the previous day, but now her emotions have returned. It is obvious from the quiver in her voice and the unnatural expression on her face that she is upset. Karvinna does not begin crying until after the characters have convinced her that Dr. Nardah is dead.

Karvinna begins this encounter by denying Dr. Nardah's death:

**"He's not dead. He's unconscious. We just have to go back and wake him up and he'll be okay."**

When the characters have convinced Karvinna that Dr. Nardah is truly dead, her fears for her own safety surface:

**"We'll all die here, won't we? There's no escape for us."**

Now the characters have to convince Karvinna that they actually have a chance of sneaking into the Imperial warehouse, stealing the ship, and escaping the planet without losing their lives.

### Governor Edalm

Edalm will not be much help to the characters as they attempt to console Karvinna. His responses (which you can interject whenever the characters seem to be at a loss for words) range from "Let her go, she'll just slow us down" to "If you can't leave her, tie her up and drag her along."

### Continuing the Journey

Once Karvinna has been reassured that there is a chance of escape, the journey can resume. The rest of this day will be like the previous day, a seemingly endless journey through the grasses, broken only by the coming of night.

### The Third Day

On the third day of their journey, the characters unexpectedly reach the edge of the plateau. Read aloud:

**On the third day, you break through the edge of the grasslands and find the sheer drop of a 1,000-meter cliff at your feet. Neither to the north nor the south can you see any sign of a cleft or ridge that would permit you to descend.**

**The true cruelty, though, is the sight of the Imperial base, sitting in a clear area of the canyon. It cannot be much farther than a day's walk away, yet it could be on another planet, for all your chances of approaching it.**

**You are trapped yet again.**

### Unexpected Discoveries

Regardless of whether the characters go north or south, after a two hour walk, they stumble across an abandoned settlement:

**You turn slightly, following the curve of the cliff's edge, and notice an area where the huge grasses are much less dense. Peering through the scattered blades, you discover that this planet has yet another secret to yield — a small grouping of prefabricated metal buildings, and, next to them, almost hidden by the grasses, a large starship of unfamiliar design.**

### The Starship

The characters may feel a brief wave of elation on seeing the starship, but this soon dissipates, because there is very little about the starship that they can understand.

The hull of the ship is similar to that of a Mon Calamari starship, an organic looking collection of bulges and curves. These curves are periodically broken by flat, hard-edged planes, as if slices had been carved out of the ship.

There are only two compartments in the ship. The first, a small compartment at one end, appears to be the cockpit or engineering station, while the second, which takes up the bulk of the ship, is the cargo hold.

### The Cockpit

There are no seats or flight couches in the cockpit, although there are a number of straps that might have been used as safety harnesses. Most of the controls are mounted on the ceiling, while visual displays appear to be located on the upper sections of the walls.

The characters can attempt to use their *space transports* and *space transports repair* skills to determine the purposes of the controls, but all they can determine is that there is no power flowing to any of the systems.

Characters who want to examine the controls more closely must make a Moderate *space transports repair* roll. If this roll succeeds, the characters find a maintenance panel. On opening this panel, the characters discover that the internal components of this ship are filled with the dead carcasses of billions of tiny insects.

### The Cargo Hold

Characters who make an Easy *space transports repair* roll realize that the hold appears to have been retrofitted to carry a cargo that required an atmosphere. The only hint as to the nature of the cargo is the hundreds of three by one meter U-shaped troughs mounted on racks within the hold.

### The Settlement

The settlement consists of seven oddly shaped buildings (see the map, "The Alien Settlement"). The buildings themselves are constructed of unfinished metal of some unfamiliar alloy. The walls are not tarnished, but they are marked by scratches and punctures. There are windows along the straight sides of the buildings, and many of these windows have been shattered. Characters who make Very Difficult *metallurgy* or *crystallography* rolls (both are *Knowledge* skills) realize that it would have taken an incredible amount of force to mar either material.

### Treasures?

Unlike the starship, the technological items contained within the buildings of the settlement did not suffer an attack by the insects. The majority of the items seem to have suffered physical damage, or have suffered the effects of great age.

If the characters search through the buildings, then they find the following items which may prove useful:

- A large, blocky-looking device. It consists of nothing more than a metal box with a wide opening at one end and a small opening at the other. The only control appears to be a single button. (The molecular converter.)
- A much smaller (less than 50 centimeters long) version of the previously described device. This device is lacking the control button. (The heat generator.)
- A small supply of building materials, including several long, straight, rigid bars and flat plates, both made out of a reinforced cellulose aggregation.

- Five plastic containers of supra-molecular binding paste, which can be used to join nonmetallic and non-ceramic materials.

In addition, they find an interior room in one of the buildings that has remained sealed and locked.

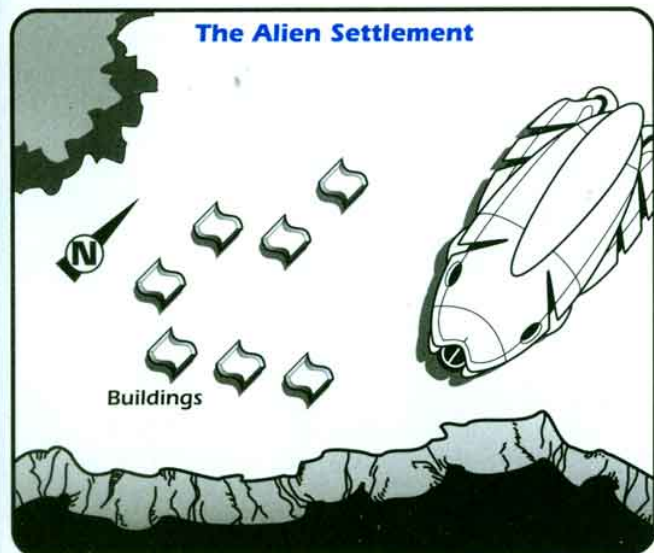
### The Sealed Room

There is a simple, mechanical lock sealing the room. Disengaging the lock is a Moderate *security* task, or the characters can use force to break down or shoot through the door (*Strength* 3D).

When they enter the room, they find that it is a small storage room. Its walls are lined with dusty shelves that are empty except for a small computer terminal on one of the upper shelves.

### The Computer

A Moderate *computer programming/repair* roll is needed to discover how to access the files stored within the computer. (If the characters are not able to succeed at this, Karvinna can.) The internal power cells are still working, although their efficiency has been greatly decreased by the passage of time, causing the display to be dim and blurry.



### The Alien Journal

The only file contained in the computer is the personal journal — consisting of a flatscreen visual display with an accompanying vocal track — of one of the alien colonists.

Surprisingly, the vocal track is in Basic (a fact that interests Karvinna immensely), although the dialect and accent are unfamiliar.

### The Alien Journal

#### Entry 1

**Visual:** A Karran stands next to a wide table manipulating several solid polyhedrons of varying sizes and colors. Three unfamiliar aliens are standing slightly away from the table, studying the Karran.

The aliens themselves are motile trees. Thick roots growing from the base of their trunks are used for locomotion, while the limbs that grow from their crowns end in narrow tentacles used as manipulators.

**Audio:** "We have not yet reached any conclusions with regard to the intelligence of the natives, but they have made an interesting assumption about us. They do not believe that we are capable of independent thought. The phrase they use is 'Only we are given brains with which to think.' At first, I believed that this applied only to animals, but I realize now that it applies also to us."

#### Entry 2

**Visual:** Three of the allophylic aliens are operating a large, blocky-looking device. Two of them are feeding bundles of grass into a chute at the rear of the device, while the third is coiling the thin cabling that is being extruded from the front.

**Audio:** "The days are peaceful here, despite the incessant hum of the flying insects. We have begun preparations to bring the colony ship down from orbit. The natives do not seem to comprehend the magnitude of the event. Their only response has been, 'Why did your queen not seed the hive herself?'"

#### Entry 3

**Visual:** A large number of the aliens have gathered next to the

If the characters choose to examine the journal, read "The Alien Journal" sidebar. If the characters are not interested in the journal, Karvinna examines it alone.

### The Molecular Converter

This is the large, blocky-looking device shown in the journal recording.

hull of the starship. Several of them are spinning, while others bounce up and down on their roots, and some sort of liquid is being sprayed into the air.

**Audio:** "A group of native leaders appeared as we began our celebration of the arrival of the colony ship. The new colonists were greatly pleased with this event, but the natives themselves were very stern and ill-humored and refused to join in the festivities. Instead, the eldest of the natives demanded, 'Where are your warriors?' Most of us, intoxicated with excitement, laughed at this, but now, after giving it more thought, I find the question quite disturbing."

#### Entry 4

**Visual:** Several small aliens play in the reddish dust, drawing patterns with both their roots and limbs.

**Audio:** "One of the children has noticed that the sounds of the insects have ceased. Apparently, the arrival of the colonists has offended the natives, for we have seen no sign of them since their appearance at the celebration. Of late, I've begun to rest at the cliff's edge and watch for sudden storms."

#### Entry 5

**Visual:** Several of the aliens slowly move through the grass, collecting samples from the soil.

**Audio:** "We appear to have cured the sickness of the children and are returning to our study of the soil. There have been sightings of..." (The alien's speech is overwhelmed by a low rumble that turns into a deep, thunderous hum).

**Visual:** The picture changes to that of a window, and through the window you see the aliens running from the attacking Karrans. Then the insects come, hundreds of millions of them, all sizes and species, ripping and tearing at the bark of the aliens, until the picture turns to static.

The characters are not immediately able to determine its purpose. (It will take a Heroic *Knowledge* roll for a character who has not seen the journal to identify it; the difficulty decreases to Difficult after viewing the journal recording.) However, if the characters imitate the actions of the aliens in the recording, they should be able to easily determine the purpose of the device. All the characters have to do is feed grass into the chute, and it is converted into three-centimeter diameter rope (*Strength* 4D). Pressing the single button located on the device changes its mode, and it produces a one-meter wide sheet of cloth. Pressing it again causes the device to revert to the previous mode.

The process that the device uses is simple. A mass of material is inserted into the chute on the back of the device. The converter then destabilizes the bonds which provide the molecular structure for the source material. This process releases a large amount of energy, which the converter then uses to reconstitute the source material into something as closely resembling the target material as possible. The optimum target material is a dense, quasi-metallic substance; however, the most readily available source material on Karra — the grass — results in a substance similar to celluloid cloth or rope.

### The Heat Generator

The heat generator is the smaller version of the molecular converter and is operated in a similar manner. When organic material is loaded into the chute at the rear of the unit, it is completely converted into superheated gases which are expelled through a small nozzle at the front of the unit.

### The Building Materials

The building materials are nothing more than very strong pieces of chemically reinforced wood, although their origin is not apparent.

### The Binding Paste

The binding paste can be used to connect the building materials to each other and to the cloth or rope produced by the molecular converter.

### Getting Down the Cliff

There is no single solution that allows the characters to descend to the canyon floor. Instead the players have a chance to use their imaginations.

The available materials can be used to construct any number of devices which allow the characters to reach the canyon floor safely, including parachutes, gliders, a hot-air balloon, or a winch. In this situation, the question is not, "Can they make their skill rolls?" but "Can they come up with an interesting, logical solution to the problem?"

Any logical solution should succeed, but the characters might have to make some applicable skill rolls to add some tension to the actual attempt at descending.

During the scenes surrounding the design and construction of whatever conveyance the characters use to descend the cliff, neither Karvinna nor Edalm will be very helpful.

Karvinna will fluctuate between an extreme interest in the alien artifacts and a sadness brought on by the fact that Dr. Nardah is not available to share these discoveries. She willingly begins any task that the characters ask of her, but it is not likely that she finishes it, before she becomes distracted.

Edalm, however, attempts to take an active part in the process, but most of his suggestions are on the order of "You can't be serious; that's much too dangerous." He attempts to veto any plan that involves a risk to his own safety.

## Episode Three: Watch For Sudden Storms

### The First Day on the Canyon Floor

It will not be as easy to travel in the canyon as it was on the grassy plateau. On the ground, the thick roots of the trees wind around each other, forming an uneven carpet of slick, black wood. Less than three meters above, the limbs intertwine, forming an intricate roof painted yellow and green with the profusion of swirling leaves. Between these, the twisted, gnarled trunks and limbs of the trees coil and writhe, almost filling the space through which the characters must walk.

Very little sunlight makes its way through the dense leaves of the forest canopy, leaving the forest floor dark. The air is thick with heat and moisture, and tiny pools of foul-smelling water fill the crevices among the roots.

Walking through this forest is not an easy task, since it involves climbing over and under the coils of the tree trunks as well as walking over the slippery root system. For every day the characters are in the forest, have them make a Difficult *running* or *Dexterity* roll.

Characters who fail this roll suffer a minor injury (such as a sprained ankle) and can only move at half speed for the remainder of the adventure. Successful use of a medpac can ease this pain, but it cannot fully heal an injury of this type, nor can injured characters heal naturally unless the party ceases movement completely for three days.

Aside from this potential for injury, nothing occurs during the first day of travel through the forest.

## The Night

While the characters are sleeping during their first night in the canyons, have each make a *Perception* roll. The character with the highest roll awakens, and you should privately tell that player that the sounds of the insects have stopped.

**One of the walkers grapples with a huge Karran mantis almost as large as it is.**

If Karvinna is awakened from her sleep by the characters, and first learns this information in the middle of the night, her fears of death return, and she becomes upset. However, if the waking character chooses to wait until the morning to share this information with the rest of the party,

her fears are almost balanced by her scholarly curiosity.

When Edalm hears this news (whether it is day or night), he becomes extremely agitated and loudly demands that he be protected.

## The Second Day on the Canyon Floor

Nothing happens during the morning of the second day, but at noon, the characters hear the roar of ion engines and the thunder of firing blasters in the sky above the trees.

An hour later, they begin to hear the sounds of battle coming from the east. An hour beyond this, the characters reach the edge of the forest.

## The Imperial Base

The Imperial base is a hexagonal pyramid that sits in the center of a massive, flat plain of artificial rock. Before placing the base on the planet, the Imperial Engineers leveled a 2,000-meter radius circle of the canyon floor, stripping away the vegetation and topsoil all the way down to the bedrock, then replacing it with a thick layer of

permcrete. It was supposed to be an almost perfect defensive position, but, instead, it has become an almost perfect battlefield.

The entire plain is filled with skirmishes, as the Karrans have apparently made good on their promise to attack the Imperials themselves. At their sides fight all the insects of the planet. Read aloud:

**The permcrete plain between you and the Imperial base has been transformed into a swirling sea of battle.**

Hundreds of Imperial troopers kneel on the permcrete, firing at their enemies, their bodies shielded only by the shattered remains of destroyed combat vehicles. Landspeeders and airspeeders whirl through the air, circling and firing, cutting swaths through the combatants on the ground with their blasters, while huge flying insects throw themselves in their paths. Two walkers, their metal skins covered with a layer of squirming insectoid life, trudge across the field of battle, bringing their heavy metal feet down on Karrans and insects alike.

But, despite the carnage being wrought by the Imperials and their high-tech weaponry, it is obvious that they have suffered many losses. You can see the smoking ruins of three TIE fighters. Before your eyes, one of the walkers falls, flames spewing from its neck, as it grapples with a huge Karran mantis that is almost as large as it is.

**And, suddenly, the Karrans bring you into this war. As their enemies.**

After the characters emerge from the forest, a Karran warrior and three large insects attack them.

**Karran Warrior.** All stats are 1D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *brawling parry* 4D, *melee combat: spear* 5D, *melee parry* 5D, *Strength* 5D, *brawling* 6D. Move 7. Spear (STR+1D).

**3 Karran Beetles.** All stats are 2D except: *Strength* 4D. Special abilities: mandibles do STR+2D damage; forelegs do STR damage. Move 15.

The beetles are two-meter long black insects, all angles and edges. They move on all six legs, and must rise up on their four rear legs in order to attack (this counts as an action).

During this and the following combat encounters, Karvinna and Edalm are not very helpful. Karvinna is more interested in recording the events (holding her holorecorder to her eyes as the party travels). Edalm stays very close to the most powerful character, constantly demanding protection.

## The Mining Warehouse

The mining warehouse is half the size of the Imperial base, and is located about 1.5 kilometers away on the far side of the base. It takes the characters about 15 minutes to move from the forest edge to the warehouse, twice that if one of the characters was injured in the forest. However, it is not an easy journey.

### The Battle

This is the one time in their lives that the characters don't have to worry about having the Imperials fire at them; they are all too busy fighting off the insects and Karrans. The insects, however, attack any non-Karran being that they encounter. Depending on the strength of the characters and their interest in combat, they can participate in these encounters as combat encounters, or you can just describe the creatures as being part of the greater conflict that they pass.

**Leaper.** All stats are 2D except: *Strength* 7D. Special abilities: mandibles do STR damage; creature can leap 60 meters. Move 15. This creature has a small (50 centimeter), almost spherical body surrounded by six, three meter long legs.

**Swarmers.** All stats are 0D. Special abilities: fly in eyes and ears, causing temporary deafness and blindness (-2D penalty affects all skills involving sight or hearing). Move 15. These almost microscopic flying creatures can do little harm on their own, but they cause interference during the characters' next encounter.

**Legworm.** All stats are 2D except: *Strength* 4D. Special abilities: claws do STR damage; mandibles do STR+2D damage; creature can attack up to 10 targets per round and suffers massive amounts of damage before dying (treat Strength as 10D for purposes of determining damage sustained by the creature). Move 10. This creature is a ten-meter long segmented worm, one meter in diameter. Ten of the creature's segments have a pair of two-meter-long legs, while the head segment possesses two large, silvery eyes and a set of sharp, pinching mandibles.

## Entering The Warehouse

The warehouse doors (four meters tall by 20 meters wide) are sealed by a simple electronic lock. An Easy *security* roll opens the lock, then the characters must manually open the doors. Opening the doors partially takes a Difficult *Strength* roll, while opening them fully takes a Very Difficult *Strength* roll. Characters can easily com-

bine actions for this task. Karvinna freely agrees to assist, but Edalm must be coerced.

## Inside the Warehouse

The inside of the mining warehouse is one large, empty space, occupied only by the confiscated smuggling ship (use a stock light freighter for this, or, if the characters lost their personal ship at the beginning of the adventure, this ship can be used as a replacement, and should be of similar, though not identical, capabilities).

While the characters are opening the entry way into the ship (an Easy *space transports repair* or *space transports* task), the large insect they saw grappling with the walker earlier crashes through the wall of the warehouse and begins to approach the ship.

### Preparing the Ship

The characters must make a *space transports* skill roll to prepare the ship for flight. (Again, the characters can combine actions for this task, but every character involved will be occupied until the ship is ready to fly, and cannot enter in the combat with the giant insect.) The result of the skill roll determines how long it takes the characters to prepare the ship.

Result of Roll	Time
Very Easy (1-5)	10 rounds
Easy (6-10)	8 rounds
Moderate (11-15)	6 rounds
Difficult (15 or greater)	4 rounds

### ■ Karran Mantis

Type: Large carnivorous insect

DEXTERITY 5D

PERCEPTION 2D

STRENGTH 10D

Special Abilities:

Foreclaws: Do STR+2D damage

Move: 20

Size: 15 meters tall, 30 meters long

Scale: Walker

**Capsule:** This is the last surviving specimen of the Karran mantis, and it is the largest insect on the planet. This individual only survives because the Karrans are able to induce it to retreat into a cave at the base of one of the plateaus and hibernate, awaking from its sleep only when the Karrans call for it. Mantis-like in appearance, with a head much like that of a giant Arconan, it walks on its four rear legs, holding its head and slender thorax upright, while the thick abdomen remains horizontal. It strikes at its prey with the long, spear-like claws of its forelegs.

## The Attack

During the first round following its appearance, the mantis moves between the ship and the open doorway, then moves forward during the next round, and begins attacking the ship during the third round.

The characters may defend themselves using their hand weapons and the weapons on the ship (although using the ship's weapons drains power, and extends the time needed to prepare the ship by two rounds).

If the characters wound the mantis before it reaches the ship, then it stops its forward movement for one round.

If the characters wound the mantis after it has begun to attack, then it ceases attacking that round (although it will resume its attack in the next round).

If the mantis is incapacitated or killed after it has begun attacking the ship, then it falls forward onto the ship, causing 3D damage to the hull.

There is enough open space in the warehouse to allow for substantial amounts of movement, so the characters can retreat from the stalker and maneuver around it in the ship, once the ship is ready to fly.

The purpose of this attack is not to allow the mantis to destroy the ship, but to make the characters believe the mantis will destroy the ship. Make all damage rolls for the ship in secret, ignoring any results which would cause the ship to become completely inoperative.

## Leaving the Warehouse

Whether or not the ship can leave the warehouse without suffering additional damage depends on two things.

If the characters only opened the doorway partially, then the ship suffers 2D damage when it crashes through the door.

If the characters fully opened the doorway, then the pilot must make a Moderate *space transports* roll. Failure means the ship nicks one side of the doorway and suffers 1D damage.

## Escape

As the ship flies away, the characters get one last look at the surface of the planet:

**Below you, the battle rages on. The Imperials may last another few hours, but the Karrans and the insects could hold out for days.**

**You consider, briefly, the report you will make. Do you know enough about the Karrans to truly make them allies? And, if not, can you risk the possibility that they might become your enemies?**

**The planet shrinks beneath you as you prepare for the jump to**

## Report on Karra

I thought that you might be interested in seeing these excerpts from the report I have prepared concerning our mission on Karra...

**The Hive Mind of the Karrans:** Judging from the actions of the Karrans, it is apparent that, as a result of their years of warring with semi-sentient insect races, they have, by necessity, developed a hive mind of their own. This communal mind allows them not only to communicate among themselves and coordinate the actions of large numbers of their own species, but also to command and coordinate the actions of the less-evolved insectoid species of the planet.

**Hive Warfare and Its Implications:** This aspect of the psychology of the Karrans is evident in the nature of their attacks on the starship provided for the diplomatic party and on the alien village discovered during our journey to the Imperial base (a more detailed report on the alien settlement is forthcoming).

At first glance, the attacks — performed by insects under the control of the Karrans — appear to be reactions against the technology, but they are, in fact, confined to the starships, as the technological artifacts within the alien settlement were largely unharmed (although many items suffered collateral damage as a result of the attack by the Karrans and the larger insects).

This paradox can be accounted for by hypothesizing that the Karrans saw the starships as being the "queens" of the respective hives (one being the aliens, the other being our diplomatic party). According to the Karrans' view of the world, once the queen has been destroyed, the ultimate destruction of the entire hive will soon follow.

This can further be seen in the conduct of the Karrans' attack on the Imperial base. This attack, which devastated the base itself, did not encompass the adjacent mining warehouse. The reason for this is that the Karrans saw the withdrawal of the mining personnel as the "death" of the mining hive. Therefore, the mining warehouse, if it was indeed the "queen" of the mining hive, was dead before the attack began, and the Karrans had no incentive to attack what they saw as a being that was already dead.

**Recommendations:** While the Karrans may ultimately prove to be powerful allies of the collected species of the Rebel Alliance, it will be necessary to proceed much more slowly in future negotiations, and I recommend that additional investigation of the Karrans is undertaken before these negotiations are begun.

Based largely on my work with Dr. Nardah and my previous experiences with the Karrans, I believe that I am the most qualified individual for this task, and suggest that you enlist the aid of those Alliance personnel who accompanied Dr. Nardah and myself on the original diplomatic mission to Karra as my support team for this investigation.

I sincerely hope that I will be working with you again in the near future.

**hyperspace. What will you do with Karra's secrets?**

## Epilogue: Seven Flames

The trip through hyperspace is uneventful (despite the damage suffered by the starship), and, after three days, the characters arrive safely at the Seven Flames base.


Immediately following their arrival, the members of the group are separated. Heavily armed agents of Alliance Intelligence surround Governor Edalm and take him to be interrogated, as a crowd of fashionably dressed diplomats whisks Karvinna away without a word. The characters themselves are escorted to a comfortably furnished residential suite where they spend the next week alternately resting and undergoing extremely intense debriefing sessions conducted by a starkly black and white protocol droid.

Award the characters 5–10 Character Points, adding bonuses for creative thinking and well-executed roleplaying. If the characters lost a personal ship during the adventure, then the Alliance allows them to take possession of the ship in which they escaped from Karra and assists in the task of repairing the ship.

### Darryn Edalm

The information that Edalm had (if he indeed had any information at all), apparently was of no use to the Alliance, because the characters soon learn that, shortly after he was delivered to Seven Flames, he was transferred to a medium-security work camp on Shimmer, destined to spend the remainder of the conflict carving blocks of ice from the massive glaciers.

### Karvinna Raen

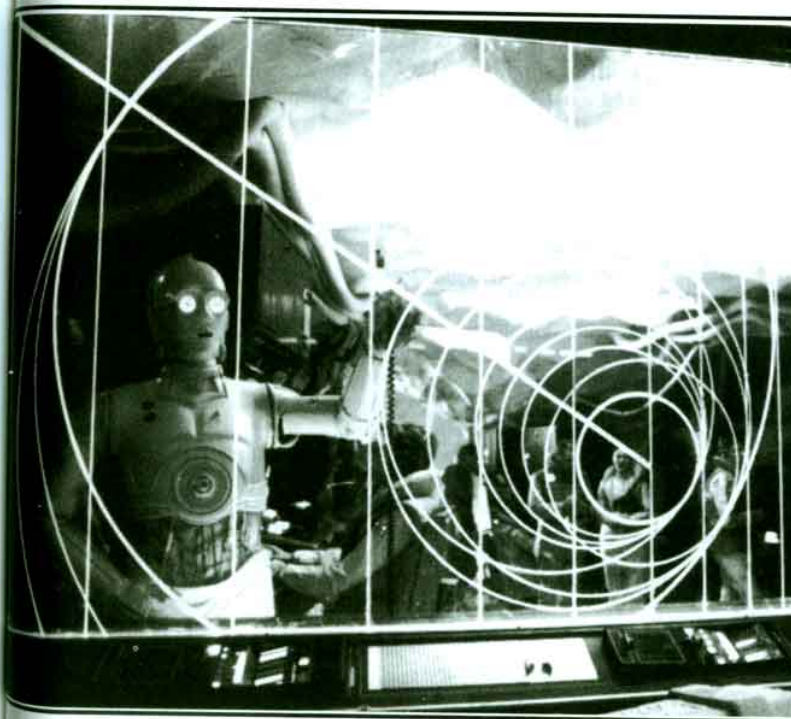
The characters learn through formal channels that Karvinna was promoted and transferred to the investigative branch of the diplomatic corps, but they learn little else until they receive a data chip containing excerpts from her report on their mission to Karra (allow the players to see the "Report on Karra" sidebar). 



# OBJECTIVE SIGHTED

## Uninvited Guests

by Gary Haynes



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## The Situation

Taul is a swampland planet in the Gunthar System used as a small Rebel outpost to train soldiers for severe battle conditions. The atmosphere is acidic in nature. The fine mist that permeates the air is not harmful to life, but results in maintenance problems for machinery. This condition was discovered after the base was constructed but was used as another level of difficulty to the training exercises — soldiers are less dependent of droids and weapons must be disassembled and cleaned on a daily basis.

The Empire hasn't been interested in the planet due to its location and was only alerted to the activity from the deployment of probe droids that eventually resulted in the location of the Rebel base on Hoth. Contact with the droid was lost and the *Victory-Class* Star Destroyer *Dominator* was sent to investigate.

Early this morning the *Dominator* exited hyperspace and began invasion tactics, but not before a force shield was set up around the planet. Due to the swampy conditions, large assault vehicles like AT-ATs were not used. Instead the Imperials deployed several attack droids, battle skiffs, dozens of troops and a squad of repulsorte-equipped spacetroopers, while the Rebels countered with a smaller, better-equipped (and informed) force.

By mid-afternoon both sides had taken severe casualties, while the Rebels had continued evacuation under the protection of two ion cannons. More than half the Rebel forces and one of the ion cannons have been destroyed. Many Imperial troopers have also been destroyed with blaster fire and a well-placed defensive grid of mines and traps. The Imperials have also been plagued with mechanical problems to the skiffs, droids and spacetroopers.

Both sides have fallen back, regrouped and stand ready for one final charge. The evacuation is almost complete, but the Rebel defenses could collapse at any moment.

The Imperials' mission is to destroy the remaining ion cannon to ensure the destruction of the remaining transports escaping from the planet, destroy the power generator to allow the *Dominator* to begin bombing the Rebel base, and infiltrate and destroy the Rebel command center. The Rebels must defend the base and allow the command personnel and transports to escape.

## Rebel Forces

(One Hero is assigned to each squad as noted)

### "Nomad" squad

(with Commander Krendan):

- 10 Veteran Standard Troopers.
- DEX 3, *blaster* 5, *grenade* 4, *melee combat* 4; KNO 2, *survival* 3; MEC 2; PER 2, *command* 3; STR 3; TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 8"; **Run Rate:** 13".
- **Weapons:** hunting blaster, vibroblade.
- **Commander:** *command* 4.
- **Specialists:**
  1. *grenade launcher* 5.
- Weapon:** grenade launcher with 3 grenades.
- 2. *repeating blaster* 5.
- Weapon:** repeating blaster with tripod.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 632.

### "Parody" squad

(with Warl Thimbus):

- 9 Elite Standard Troopers.
- DEX 4, *blaster* 5, *melee combat* 6; KNO 2, *survival* 3; MEC 2; PER 3, *command* 4, *sneak* 4; STR 3; TEC 3; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 9"; **Run Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** blaster pistol, vibroblade.
- **Commander:** *command* 4.
- **Specialists:** none.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 577.

### "Darius" squad

(with Maidtha Fait):

- 11 Veteran Standard Troopers.
- DEX 3, *blaster* 4, *melee combat* 4; KNO 2, *survival* 3; MEC 2; PER 2, *command* 3; STR 3; TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 8"; **Run Rate:** 13".
- **Weapons:** blaster carbine, vibroaxe.
- **Commander:** *command* 4.
- **Specialists:**
  1. *blaster* 5.
- Weapon:** medium repeating blaster.
- 2. *blaster* 5.

**Weapon:** repeating blaster with tripod.

- **Squad Generation Points:** 626.

## Commander Krendan

- Wookiee.
- DEX 4, *blaster* 5, *brawling parry* 5; KNO 2, *survival* 3; MEC 3; PER 3, *command* 4; STR 4, *brawling* 6; TEC 2, *demolition* 3; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 9"; **Run Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** hunting blaster, 2 concussion grenades.
- **Force Points:** 4.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 135.

## Maidtha Fait

- Gambler.
- DEX 4, *blaster* 6, *dodge* 5, *melee parry* 5; KNO 3, *survival* 4; MEC 3; PER 4, *sneak* 5; STR 2, *climb/jump* 3; TEC 2, *first aid* 3; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 9"; **Run Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** blaster rifle, vibroblade.
- **Force Points:** 3.
- **Camouflage Suit.**
- **Squad Generation Points:** 140.

## Warl Thimbus

- Quixotic Jedi.
- DEX 4, *lightsaber* 5; KNO 3, *survival* 4; MEC 2; PER 3, *command* 5, *sneak* 4; STR 3, *climb/jump* 5; TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 9"; **Run Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** blaster pistol, lightsaber (damage 5).
- **Force Points:** 2.
- **Force Powers:** none.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 167.

## Imperial Forces

### "Baung" squad:

- 7 Veteran Swamp Troopers (with stormtrooper armor).
- DEX (2), *blaster* (4), *blaster artillery* (4); KNO 2; MEC 2, *repulsorlift* 3; PER 2, *command* 3, *sneak* 3; STR 2 (3); TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 7"; **Run Rate:** 12".
- **Weapons:** blaster rifle.
- **Commander:** command 4.
- **Specialist:** *blaster artillery* 5.

**Weapon:** medium repeating blaster.

- **Squad Generation Points:** 414.

## Spacetrooper

(begins with "Baung" squad)

- Elite Zero-G Spacetrooper (with spacetrooper armor).
- DEX (2), *blaster* (4), *grenade launcher* (5); KNO 2; MEC 3; PER 2, *command* 5; STR 2 (5); TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 7" (**Repulsorlift Rate:** 14"); **Run Rate:** 12".
- **Weapons:** heavy blaster, proton grenade launcher, 3 concussion grenades, grenade launcher, 3 concussion grenades.
- **Comlink to Star Destroyer** (may call up to 5 heavy bomb strikes).
- **Repulsorlift mechanism on spacetrooper armor.**
- **Squad Generation Points:** 350.

### "Grung" squad:

- 11 Veteran Swamp Troopers (with stormtrooper armor).
- DEX (2), *blaster* (4), *blaster artillery* (4); KNO 2; MEC 2, *repulsorlift* 3; PER 2, *command* 3, *sneak* 3; STR 2 (3); TEC 2; Move: 10.
- **Walk Rate:** 7"; **Run Rate:** 12".
- **Weapons:** blaster rifle.
- **Commander:** *command* 5.
- **Specialist:** *blaster* 5.
- Weapon:** repeating blaster.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 630.

## Attack Droid

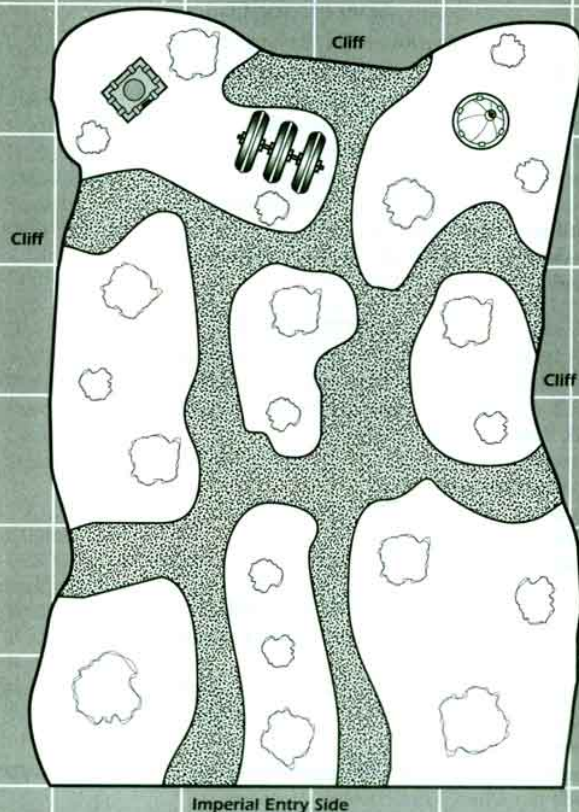
(begins with "Grung" squad)

- War Droid.
- DEX 3, *blaster* 5, *blaster artillery* 5; KNO 1; MEC 1; PER 2; STR 6; TEC 1; Move: 8.
- **Movement Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** blaster rifle (360 degrees), medium repeating blaster, grenade launcher, 5 concussion grenades.
- **Repulsorlift mechanism.**
- **Droid Cost:** 189.

### "Tharlist" squad:

- 8 Elite Imperial Soldiers (with scout trooper armor).
- DEX 4, *blaster* 5; KNO 3, *survival* 4; MEC 3, *repulsorlift* 4; PER 3, *command* 4, *sneak* 5; STR 3 (4), *brawling* 4, *swimming* 4; TEC 2, *demolition* 5; Move: 10.

# "Uninvited Guests" Set-up Map



## KEY



Command Center



Ion Cannon



Power Generator



Waterway



Tree

Scale: Background grid shows one-foot increments.

- **Walk Rate:** 9"; **Run Rate:** 14".
- **Weapons:** blaster pistol.
- **Commander:** *command* 6.
- **Specialists:** *demolitions* 7.  
**Weapon:** 3 thermal detonators.
- **Squad Generation Points:** 770.

## The Battlefield

The battlefield may be laid out as shown on the diagram. The terrain is swampy, with line-of-sight being determined by light to medium foliage. Ground movement varies from scrub to medium woods to swamp, but clear terrain may be used for beginning players. The waterways are classified as creeks for movement purposes but may vary from one to three feet deep. The battle takes place on a ridge with the only way in being the Imperial side, while the other three sides of the battlefield fall off to sheer cliffs.

## Gamemaster Notes

The Imperials set up within 24 inches of their end of the battlefield, while the Rebels begin within 18 inches of their designated areas. The Imperial rally point is any point toward, but not exceeding, the edge of the Imperial side of the battlefield where no Rebels are within 36 inches. For movement purposes, the droid may automatically move first or it can move with its squad. For combat, the droid fires at the same time the closest Imperial squad fires.

At the end of each turn the Rebel side rolls to attack the Star Destroyer in orbit, if the ion cannon remains intact. The Rebel side rolls one D6; on a 1, 2, 3, or 4 the Rebels have hit the destroyer, and ionized its weapons and controls. The Star Destroyer is unable to attack the escaping vehicles. If a 5 or 6 is rolled, the Rebels have missed and the destroyer may attack the escaping shuttles and may bomb the forces on the ground if the power generator has been destroyed. For the Star Destroyer to hit an escaping Rebel ship the Imperial side must roll a 4, 5, or 6 on a D6.

The ion cannon and power generator have a *Strength* of 9 and have no Force Points for rerolls. A *Strength* roll of 1 is not considered a zero but counts as 1. The following is required to destroy either the ion cannon or the power generator:

- 3 successful blaster hits ( $DR > SR + 4$ )

- 5 successful blaster hits ( $DR > SR + 2$ )
- 2 successful grenade/proton hits ( $DR > SR + 2$ )

The *Strength* of the command center is 15 (scaled for Star Destroyer attacks). The command center is destroyed by the Star Destroyer with:

- 3 successful heavy bombardment hits ( $DR > SR$ )
- 1 successful heavy bombardment hit ( $DR > SR + 4$ )

The command center cannot be destroyed from the outside by the ground forces. If the Imperials are able to infiltrate the command center, the following is required to destroy it:

- 2 successful grenade/proton hits ( $DR > SR$ )

The Rebel forces win if they can hold out until at least five of the ten remaining ships have successfully escaped. Then they must hold out for one additional turn to allow the command personnel to reach their ships, then two more turns to allow the two command ships to escape (one per turn).

The Imperial forces win if they can destroy three of the escaping ships and keep one of the two command ships from escaping or destroy both command ships.

**Note:** if the Imperial forces are able to destroy all the Rebel forces before the tenth ship escapes, the Imperials will automatically destroy the last two command ships while on the ground. Also, if the power generator is destroyed, the command center may be destroyed as indicated above.

# Chessa's DOOM

Story by Peter Schweighofer

Illustrated by John Lona



"And that's all there is to tell," Starter said.

"That was a tall tale," Platt cried, tilting her head and her platinum blonde hair back. "What a load of bantha dung."

"I especially enjoyed the part where you took out the Star Destroyer single-handedly," Tru'eb said, almost earnestly. "You've got a great flair for the heroic."

"Look, that's how it happened," Starter pleaded. "Honest."

"Yea, but you have to admit, it was a great tale," Jai added.

"Say, Harkness, you've been pretty quiet all night," Starter said.

"Certainly you've got some tale to best my Star Destroyer line."

Harkness looked up from his mug, surveyed his companions gathered around the center table at Gorkin's Rest, and scratched at the white patch over his left eye.

He looked back into his mug.

"Aw, Harkness, don't pull that mopin' stuff on us," Platt said. "We know you too well."

"Come on, Dirk, tell just one story," Jai asked, rubbing her hand against Harkness' shoulder.

Harkness set his mug onto the table, leaned back in his chair and propped his boots up on the table.

"One story. No more."

"Great! Tell us how an old crab like you got into the Rebellion and all," Starter said.

"I wasn't always a crab," Harkness started. "I used to be a pretty happy-go-lucky kinda guy. It all started about the time the first Death Star was destroyed. I was maybe 20, 21 years old..."

"You were not!" Jai said, jabbing his shoulder. "You're not that young."

Harkness smiled at Jai. "I had been working on this freighter as the ship's mechanic. The first mate and I, well, we had something going."

"This was Chessa, right?" Jai asked.

"Yea, her name was Chessa, and she was just about the smartest spacefaring person I had come to know in those days. We used to sit around the engineering station and daydream about getting married, living on a peaceful little world and raising a family."

"But like all paths in our lives, the Empire had to step into this one, too."

"We had just finished unloading a cargo of repulsor engines in Kelada starport. Captain Granf had already gone into the starport to settle some deals, leaving Chessa and I to unload the cargo. I had figured the ground transport crews had taken all the crates, when Chessa comes up to me, wanting me to help her load some spare crates onto a cargo skiff..."

■ ■ ■

"What is all this stuff?" Dirk asked, sliding the last long crate onto the cargo skiff.

Chessa was securing the other crates in the skiff. "Oh, just some spare parts I set aside for a special order. A guy in Kelada I know has a repulsorlift repair shop and he likes to have a good supply of spares around."

"And what are you doing after you make this special delivery?" Dirk asked.

Chessa leaned over the crates and the railing of the skiff and kissed Dirk gently on the forehead. "Why don't we go to this place I know..."

"I could buy you dinner," Dirk suggested.

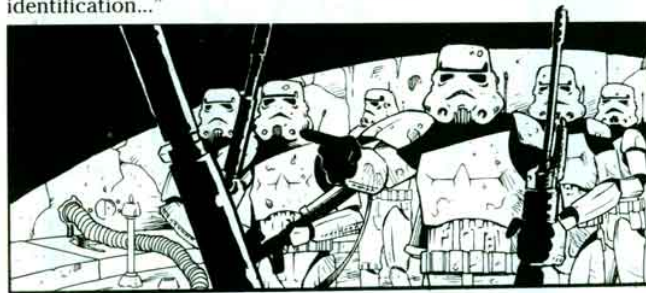
"Or I could buy *you* dinner," Chessa said, kissing him on the forehead again. "I gotta go."

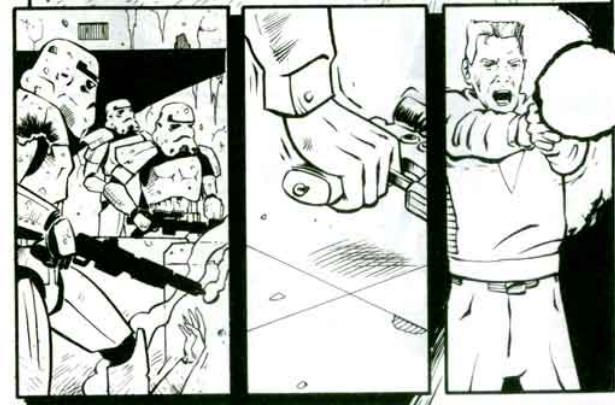
"Well, I'll be inside cleaning up," Dirk said, heading up the freighter's cargo ramp. "See you in a while."

He stopped just inside the cargo bay to wistfully watch Chessa secure the rest of the crates.

Dirk was about to head toward the hatch to engineering when he heard a different voice out in the docking bay.

"Halt!" the stormtrooper sergeant called. Dirk peered out from the corner of the cargo bay hatch. Eight stormtroopers were advancing toward Chessa from the landing bay's wide cargo port. "What's in those crates?" the sergeant said. "We want to see some identification..."





The blaster flashed, there were shouts, stormtroopers fell, and Dirk screamed. He kept pulling the trigger until his ears burned with the sound of its blasts.

When Harkness opened his eyes, he was at the personnel entrance to the docking bay. He dropped the blaster pistol from his shaking hand and steadied himself against the doorway. He heard voices behind him in the docking bay. He didn't look back. Harkness ran out into the streets of Kelada starport.



Harkness didn't know how long he ran; it was all a blur of city streets, spacers staring at him, views of the ground, of the sky, the roar of freighters lifting off and the spinning entrances to docking bays.

He stopped in front of a small storefront, it might have been a bar. "Go on in, kid," said a passing spacer who shoved him toward the door. "You look like you need a drink."

The doors flew open and Harkness stumbled into a confusing throng of spacers, smoke and chatter.

"Hey, watch it, bud!"

"Gley hinga to'e! natcha!"

"You okay, kid?"

"Yulek nak otkev!"

"The bar's that way."

The bar materialized before Harkness' eyes and he nearly crashed into it. He threw his arms onto the bar and buried his face.

"Hey, there, kid, can I getcha a drink?"

The woman behind the bar was easily old enough to be Harkness' mother, and had a matronly manner about her. Perhaps it was her greasy barkeep's apron.

Harkness looked up, his eyes bloodshot and bleary. He nodded.

"What kind?" the woman asked.

Harkness shrugged. He tapped two fingers on the bar.

"Why don't I getcha a Noonian Fixer? Maybe it'll help you forget your problems."

When the woman returned, she slid the drink right up to Harkness. He fumbled through his pockets for some credits, but found only some spare ventrator washers and some clamps for a power feed.

The woman behind the bar scrutinized Harkness for a moment. "A little short on creds? Don't worry, it's on the house."

Harkness looked down and sipped at his drink. When he looked up again, the woman was gone.

He nursed the drink. It was stronger than he preferred, but he didn't care. Chessa was dead.



Over the ale bulbs and the tubes of the automix machines were other patrons at a second bar. The swarming crowd and the stuffiness in the bar almost made Harkness pass out. He rested his head on the bar before taking another sip from his drink.

He almost leaped back when he saw the man across the bar. He was staring directly at Harkness like a cornered gundark. Was that

foam dripping from his lips? The man just stared. His hair was pushed in every direction, and his face was one big smear of dirt and tears.



"Don't get too spooked," the woman behind the bar said, blocking Harkness' view. "It's just a mirror. The whole dive is filled with 'em."

Harkness stared at his image in the mirror, the face of a lost man. He didn't look like a starship engineer, he looked like something dragged out of a pile of dirty, wet bantha fur. His eyes had changed; now there was no light within them.





"Hey, take it easy, son," the one with the closely-trimmed beard said. "We're here to help."

"We're friends of Chessa's," said the other one through his dark moustache. "We heard something happened to her."

Harkness tried to tell them she was dead, but no words passed his lips.



The two men looked at each other, then turned back to Harkness. "You can tell us about it later," the bearded man said, gently taking Harkness by the arm. "Right now we've got to get you to a safe place."

■ ■ ■

"And that's how I met General Corros and joined the Rebellion." "No exploding Star Destroyers or big dogfights?" Starter cried in disbelief.

"That's it," Harkness said, removing his feet from the table and retreating into his corner.

"I must admit," Platt said, "Your tale is just about as subdued and brooding as you are."

"But it does reveal the complexities behind the origin of Dirk's disposition," Tru'eb added.

"What happened after you met Corros?" Starter asked. "How'd you get involved with Alliance Intelligence?"

"Like I said, only one story for tonight," Harkness stared back into the bottom of his mug.

## Character Portrait

### ■ Dirk Harkness

#### ■ (At the time of "Chessa's Doom")

Type: Outlaw

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 4D+2, melee combat 5D, running 4D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Planetary systems 3D+2, willpower 4D

**MECHANICAL 2D+2**

Communications 3D, sensors 3D+2, space transports 3D, starship shields 3D+1

**PERCEPTION 2D**

Hide 2D+2, sneak 2D+1

**STRENGTH 3D+1**

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D, lifting 4D+2

**TECHNICAL 3D**

Space transport repair 5D, starship weapon repair 4D

**Force Points: 1**

**Character Points: 5**

**Move: 10**

**Equipment:** Datapad, hydrospanner

#### ■ (Three years after the Battle of Endor)

Blaster 8D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D, grenade 4D+2, melee combat 6D, pick pocket 5D, running 5D

Alien species 4D, bureaucracy 4D+1, intimidation 5D, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 5D+2, survival 5D+2, willpower 6D

Repulsorlift operation 5D, sensors 5D+2, space transports 4D, starfighter piloting 4D, starship gunnery 5D+1, starship shields 4D

Command 4D+2, hide 5D, search 3D, sneak 5D



Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 5D+1

Capital starship repair 6D, capital starship weapon repair 5D+1, demolition 4D, first aid 4D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D, security 5D, space transport repair 6D, starfighter repair 5D+2, starship weapon repair 4D+2

**Force Points:** 5

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 15

**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), knife (STR+1D)

**Capsule:** Dirk Harkness graduated from a technical school on his home-world of Salliche and signed on as an apprentice starship mechanic with a private shipping corporation.

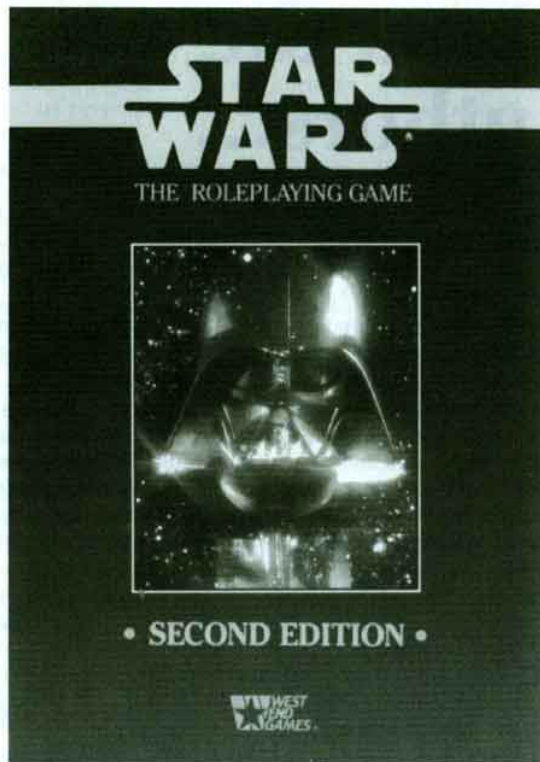
By the age of 20 he was working by himself as chief engineer aboard a bulk freighter, *Colders Watch*, under the command of Captain Beezrul Granf. All he wanted to do was discover some exotically peaceful world during his journeys, settle down with a special person and raise a family.

Dirk had been dating the first mate of the freighter, Chessa Dohhenty, and the two shared dreams of a peaceful life together. But the Empire changed that for Harkness.

After Chessa's death at the hands of stormtroopers, Harkness was discovered by Rebel agents who intended to meet with Chessa. General Corros and Captain Franco recruited Harkness and brought him to work as a mechanic at the hidden Rebel base on Reginard. Harkness was restless for revenge against the Empire, and soon left Reginard to gun down important Imperial officers and diplomats on his own. He later rejoined the Rebellion and ran several successful intelligence missions. Harkness was later reassigned as chief engineer on a capital ship in the Rebel Fleet and participated in the Battle of Endor.

After the Battle of Endor Harkness was commissioned as a lieutenant in New Republic Intelligence, but resigned after only a few weeks. He soon formed the Black Curs, a group of old associates and orphans who carried out intelligence and commando missions against the crumbling Empire. An explosion during a failed mission blinded his left eye and scarred parts of his arm and chest. Now three years after Endor, Harkness, 27, is still leading the Black Curs, which is considered to be a friendly mercenary group rather than an official branch of New Republic Intelligence.

Harkness is 2 meters tall and is often brooding, his cold eye staring off into the distance. He is not outwardly friendly, and maintains a small circle of close and trusted friends. Harkness has little tolerance for droids of any type.



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# About the Authors...

**Timothy Zahn** is the author of the recent best-selling *Star Wars* trilogy of *Heir to the Empire*, *Dark Force Rising* and *The Last Command*. He has written numerous other science fiction novels, and won a Hugo Award for his novella, *Cascade Point*. He lives in Oregon with his wife Anna and his 11 year-old son Corwin.

**Ilene Rosenberg** is a student at New York University studying for her masters degree in journalism. A graduate of Brandeis University, she is an intern for the They Might Be Giants fan club.

**Paul Sudlow** has been writing for various publications since high school. He has written on and off for academic journals and local and city-wide newspapers, and was a technical editor in the army's office of the surgeon general. "Among my three great loves in life are writing, *Star Wars* and gaming, and any opportunity to combine all three and get paid for it can't be missed," he said. Paul lives in Maryland.

**Charlene Newcomb** began writing *A Glimmer of Hope* last Christmas. "I was anxiously awaiting Timothy Zahn's *The Last Command* and decided to write my own story," she said. The mother of three, she is a graduate student at the University of Southern Florida in Tampa studying library and information science, and works part-time in the Rollins College library.

**Shane Hensley** is a full-time gaming freelancer from Blacksburg, Virginia, who has written for TSR's *Ravenloft* and *Dark Sun* lines and West End Games' *Shatterzone*. He wrote *Sole Survivor*, a *Shatterzone* novel, and *Crosshairs*, a *Shatterzone* supplement, and is working on another *Shatterzone* project.

**Nicky Rea** is a professional freelancer who lives in the mountains of western North Carolina. She has worked on projects for TSR's *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* and has written tournament adventures for the Role Playing Gamers Association. She is also a co-writer of the score for the children's play *Pinocchio*. Before turning to writing Nicky was a professional musician and children's storyteller.

**Paul Balsamo** is a corporate training specialist for Dreyfus in New York City. He was one of the playtesters of the original *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* and played an Ewok character. "I've been the champion of Ewoks all the way through," he said. Paul has also worked on several other roleplaying game projects for West End Games.

**Gary Haynes** is an civil engineer from California. He is also the Role Playing Gamers Association West Coast regional director. His adventure *Free Time* appeared in West End Games' *The Politics of Contraband*, and he helped troubleshoot some of the rules in *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*.

**Dave Marron** has been gaming on and off for the last 12 years, and has been playing *Star Wars* ever since it came out. He wrote *The Package*, a *Star Wars* adventure for West End Games' *Twin Stars Of Kira*. A resident of Southern California (just a few miles from Disneyland), Dave spends his spare time singing in a rock band and trying to catch up on some sleep. His interests include music, animation, pinball, and BBSing.

**Chuck Truett** is a full-time writer from Georgia who has published in the gaming industry. He wrote *The Abduction of Crying Dawn Singer* for West End Games' *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, and helped playtest the second edition *Star Wars* rules. He is currently working on children's stories and adult science fiction and horror.

# About the Artists...

**Kathy Burdette** is an English major at Connecticut College and is perhaps better versed in the likes of *Star Wars* and X-Men than she is in 18th century literature. She enjoys drawing characters from the roleplaying games she participates in as both player and gamemaster.

**Tim Eldred** runs the art department at Malibu Comics in California. He is the letterer and designer on several projects. Tim has also done a number of comic books on his own including *Robotech*, *Captain Harlock*, and many original stories. "I've drawn a lot of inspiration from *Star Wars*," he said. He has illustrated several

products for West End Games' *Star Wars* and *Torg* roleplaying games.

Rocketed to Earth by strange aliens from another planet, illustrator **John Paul Lona** began his freelance career at West End Games. He has since done work for TSR, FASA, and GDW, and has illustrated a Topps trading card for their second *Star Wars Galaxy* line. At home, John enjoys the company of his wife and son, collecting action figures, and eating chicken.

**Scott Neely** is a self-taught artist from Pennsylvania who has grown up with *Star Wars*. "I've always been fascinated by the story and the ships," he said. "It just always stuck with me." He started his art career doing freelance work, then moved into advertising art.

**Douglas Shuler** has been a freelance artist for seven years and has done work for many prominent game companies, including GDW, Steve Jackson Games, ICE, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games. Some of his more recent work appears in the card game *Magic: The Gathering* by Wizards of the Coast. A *Star Wars* fanatic, he lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Jordi and five maniac cats.

**Michael Vilardi** works at a microelectronics plant in Rhode Island and freelances art for the gaming industry in his spare time. "I like the creation of the newer alien species," he said. "*Star Wars* tends to be pretty free and open to allow new aliens to be used in the game." He initially had to get used to drawing *Star Wars* art for West End Games: "It's so strange getting paid for things I used to do in my teens just for fun," he said.

**Thomas Woods** is a beginning freelance artist from Texas. "The thing I like the most about *Star Wars* is drawing the Jedi Knights, especially their lightsaber duels," he said. Besides *Star Wars* art, he also enjoys creating superhero and science fiction art.



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- *Chessa's Doom*, the tale of how one man became a Rebel outlaw.
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