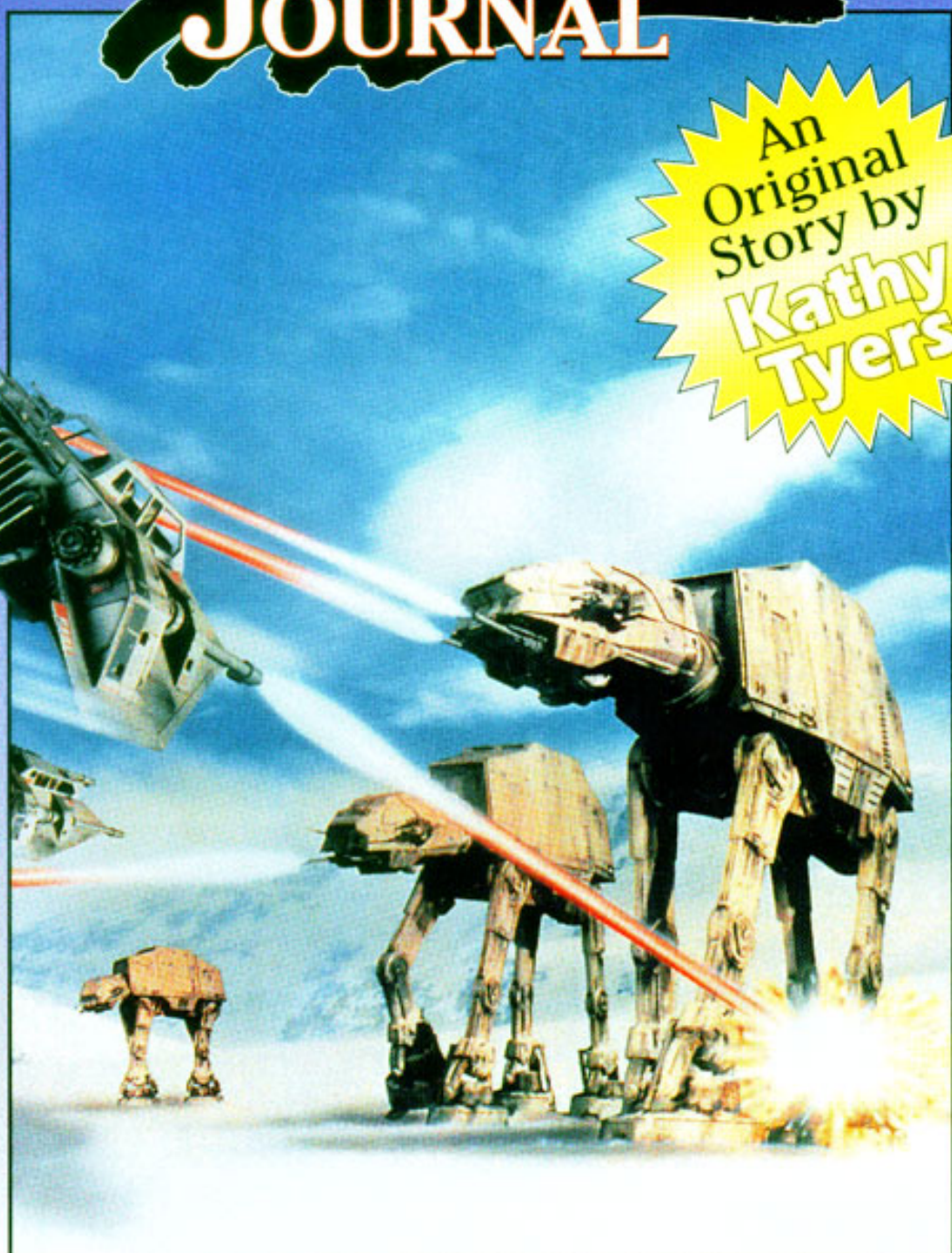


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## ADMIRAL'S COMMUNIQUE



### Brian Daley Inspired Fans

As an unashamed child of the 1970s, one of the pivotal experiences of my childhood was seeing *Star Wars* on the big screen for the first time. (The 22 times I dragged my family to see it after were pretty neat, too.)

*Star Wars* created a palpable ache in my then six-year-old mind, an ache to actually *live* in the world I had seen on the screen. And when the credits rolled, I wanted go back and see it over and over again.

A lot of you already know what I'm talking about.

That ache didn't diminish a jot after my parents had tired of seeing yet another showing of the movie. But I had a few cures for that ache available: the Marvel comics, and — more importantly — *new novels*.

No, I don't mean the Timothy Zahn or Kevin J. Anderson novels, nor even *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* (although those were cool, too). My first grade English teacher, in a blatant attempt to fire up her somewhat apathetic students about the joys of reading, mentioned in passing that a new book about Han Solo would be released in a couple of months.

For weeks, I pestered my parents to call the bookstore — located almost two hours away from my rural upstate New York stomping grounds. Every day I asked with a hope-filled voice, "Is the new Han Solo book out yet? Is it?"

My parents were always remarkably patient people.

Finally, after what seemed like *endless* waiting, we made the trek to the bookstore to pick up a small blue paperback. (I got the first copy out of the case at the bookstore; I know it doesn't sound like much, but at the time I was in adolescent Nirvana.)

And the best part was, the novel was just as cool as the movie. All the stuff I loved: gun battles, dogfights, intrigue, romance — it was *all right there*. I could open up the pages of that little blue paperback and relive the excitement whenever I wanted to.

See *Admiral's Communique* on page 13



# STAR WARS®

Vol. 1, Issue 10

May 1996

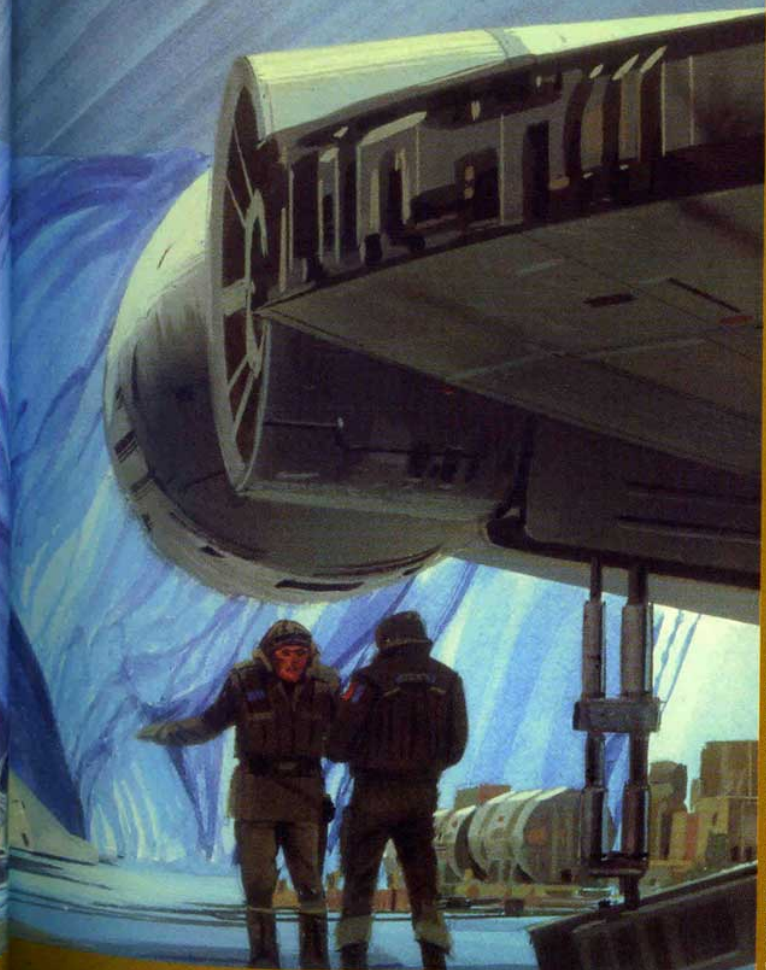
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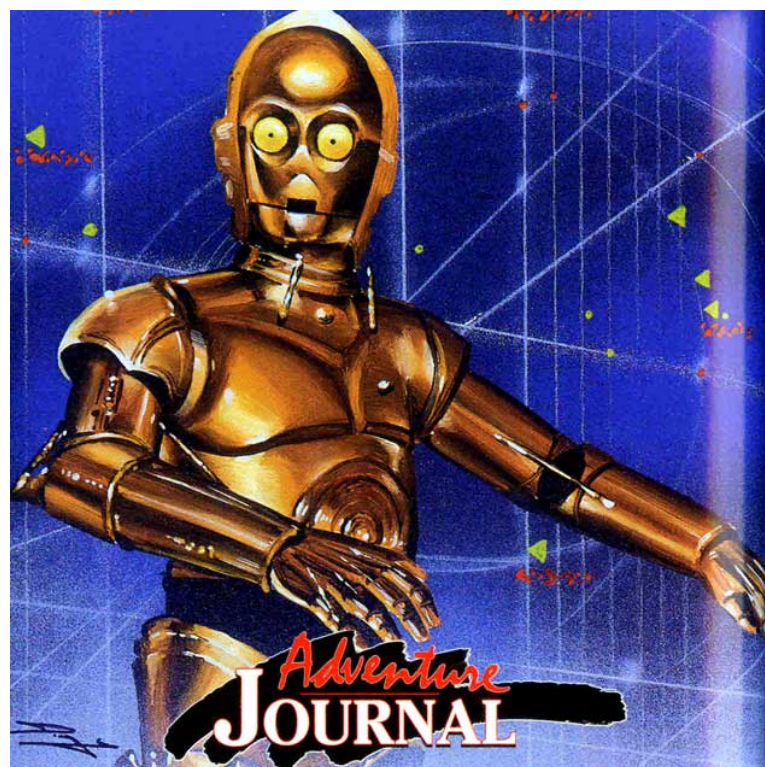
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**Special Thanks To:** Kathy Tyers, Allan Kausch, Sue Rostoni, Julia Russo and Lucy Wilson, Lucasfilm Licensing, Daniel Scott Palter and Richard Hawran, West End Games.

**Publisher:** Daniel Scott Palter • **Associate Publisher/Treasurer:** Denise Palter

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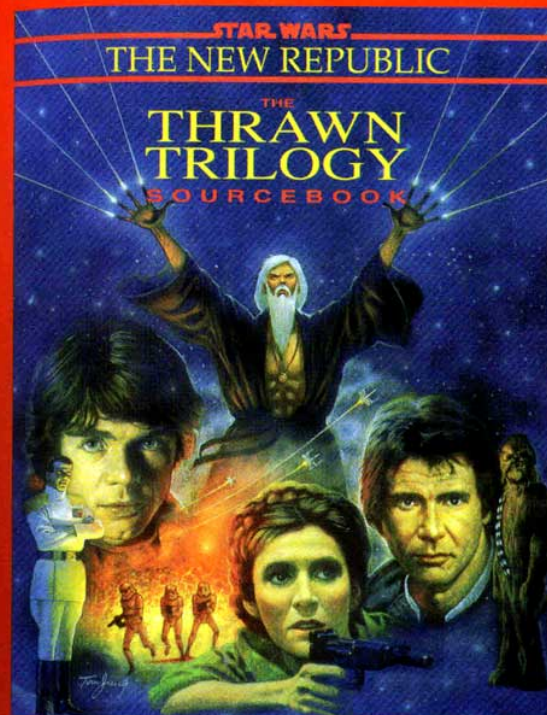
**Sales Manager:** Jeff Kent

**Licensing Manager:** Ron Seiden • **Warehouse Manager:** Ed Hill

**Accounting:** Karen Bayly, Wendy Lord • **Billing:** Amy Giacobbe

Published by: **West End Games** • RR 3 Box 2345 • Honesdale, PA 18431

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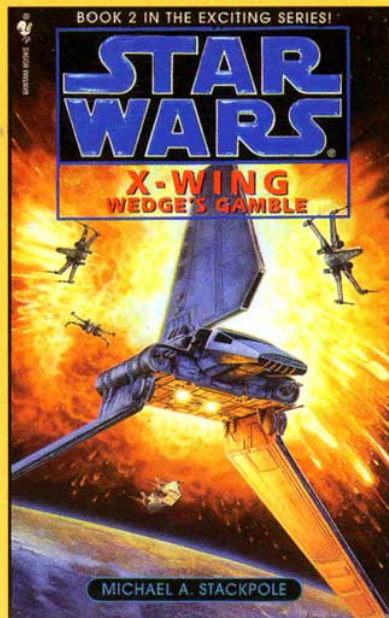
## NEW HORIZONS

### X-Wing, Black Fleet Sequels On The Way

Bantam is continuing its best-selling line of *Star Wars* novels with several exciting, new releases in the coming months, including sequels in two popular story lines.

In May Bantam will publish *X-Wing: Wedge's Gamble*, Michael A. Stackpole's sequel to *X-Wing: Rogue Squadron*. The battle against the crumbling Empire continues, and *Rogue Squadron* is once again right on the front lines. So far these brave pilots have been risking their lives in the machines that made them famous — sleek, swift and deadly Incom X-wing fighters — going up against the might of the Empire's remaining fleets. But

now they must embark on a dangerous espionage mission, braving betrayal and death at the Empire's heart to smash the power of a ruthless foe.



May, 1996

Star Wars Adventure Journal • 7



The giant city-world from whose massive towers the Imperial High Command directs the war, Coruscant is the evil heart of a battered and reeling Empire. The Rebels will invade this mighty citadel in a daring move to bring the Empire to its knees. But first Wedge Antilles and his X-wing pilots must infiltrate Coruscant to gain vital intelligence information. Capture means death, or worse — enslavement by the vicious leader known as “Iceheart,” Ysanne Isard, now Emperor in all but name. And

one of Rogue Squadron's own is already her slave, a traitor hidden behind a mask of innocence, working to betray both colleagues and the Rebellion itself.

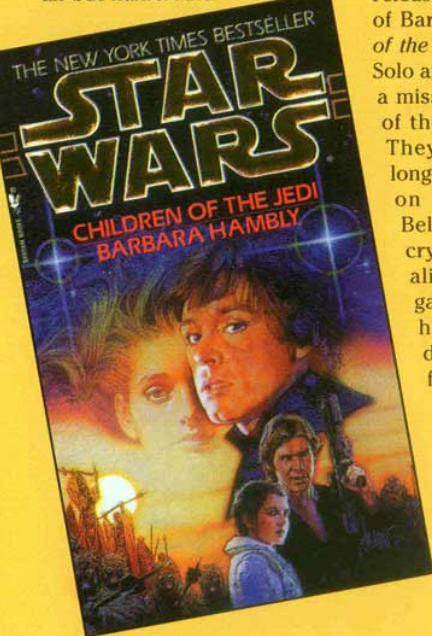
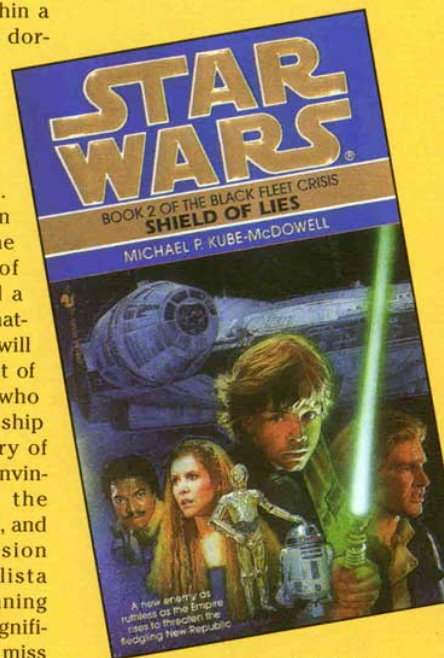
Michael A. Stackpole has written numerous other novels, including several based on role-playing games such as *BattleTech* and *Dark Conspiracy*. His article “Missed Chance” — a “prequel” story about *X-Wing*: *Rogue Squadron* hero Corran Horn — appeared in *Star Wars Adventure Journal* #7.

This June Bantam will release the paperback edition of Barbara Hambly's *Children of the Jedi*. Princess Leia, Han Solo and Chewbacca set out on a mission vital to the survival of the fragile New Republic. They are searching for the long-lost children of the Jedi on the frozen world of Belsavis, from whose dark crypts no one has returned alive. Halfway across the galaxy, Luke Skywalker — haunted by ominous dreams and guided by a force he cannot identify — travels to a remote asteroid field over the planet Pzob. There he discovers the automated Dreadnaught *Eye of Palpatine*, a relic left over from the days of all-out war.

Camouflaged deep within a nebulous gas cloud and dormant for 30 years, the *Eye of Palpatine* is governed by a supersophisticated artificial intelligence known as the Will. The Will has awakened. The *Eye of Palpatine* is on the move. Its mission: the total annihilation of Belsavis. Luke must find a way to destroy the automated ship. To succeed, he will need the help of the spirit of the Jedi Knight Callista, who gave her life to stop the ship once before. The mystery of the Belsavis crypts, the invincible power of the Dreadnaught, the lost Jedi, and the burgeoning passion between Luke and Callista come together in a stunning climax worthy of the magnificent *Star Wars* saga. Don't miss the paperback edition of this *New York Times* best-selling *Star Wars* novel.

Fans of Michael P. Kube-McDowell's first novel, *Before the Storm*, can look forward to its sequel, *Shield of Lies*, coming out this August. This novel is the second in the best-selling Black Fleet Crisis series, and continues the story of the fight against a new enemy as ruthless as the Empire, an arrogant species bent on war that has risen to threaten the fledgling New Republic.

As Leia must deal with a new threat to the fragile alliance that binds the New Republic, Lando becomes a prisoner aboard a runaway spacecraft of unknown origin. The ship is following an unstoppable path to its homeworld, destroyed by Imperial forces. Luke continues his quest to learn more about his mother among the Fallanassi, where his every belief about the use of the Force is about to be challenged.





And while Leia ponders a diplomatic solution to the aggression of the fierce Yevetha species, Han pilots a spy ship into the heart of Yevethan space and finds himself a hostage on one of the vessels of a vast fleet of warships under the command of a ruthless leader — a fleet more than a match for the New Republic's forces.

Fans of *Star Wars: Tales from the Mos Eisley Cantina* and *Star Wars: Tales from Jabba's Palace* will want to check out a

new science fiction anthology featuring many writers from the *Star Wars* anthologies. *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches* features stories about the invasion of Earth by Martians, from the perspectives of famous writers and personalities like Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, H.P. Lovecraft, Teddy Roosevelt and Albert Einstein. The anthology was edited by Kevin J. Anderson, and will be published by Bantam in May.

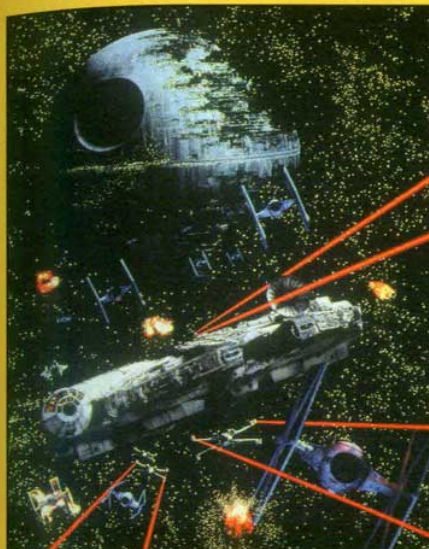
## Star Wars: Roleplaying for a New Generation

This August West End Games will release *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded*. This revision of the popular *Star Wars* roleplaying game will be at least 240 pages long, with much of it in color. "This version of the *Second Edition* game is completely reorganized and more accessible for the first-time player," says Bill Smith, designer of the game.

"The book's presentation is designed to attract *Star Wars* fans who've never thought of buying a roleplaying game. We've added a solitaire adventure so readers can play their first game within a few pages of opening the book. There's also a handout that explains all

the concepts and rules players need to know — gamemasters can give each player a copy and get them ready to go in a couple of minutes. It's never been easier to learn or play this game!"

With the special editions of the original movies coming in 1997, West End recognized a need for this book. "There will be a whole new generation of *Star Wars* fans. While roleplaying is a great way to experience *Star Wars*, it's always been difficult to learn. This book changes that. With the flashy new presentation, organization and expansion, the game is easier to learn. We have characters like smuggler Platt Okeefe and Alliance



General Airen Cracken hosting chapters and talking to the reader ... making it more direct and entertaining."

In the updating process, West End has made a few revisions. "The rules are essentially the same system that everyone knows and loves, but we've tweaked trouble-spots to make the game faster and more 'cinematic.' For example, the movement and chase rules are more streamlined. These changes speed up the game and allow players to concentrate on playing their characters ... it's easier to picture yourself in the middle of a *Star Wars* movie."

In making these upgrades, West End considered the needs of its customers. "We're working hard to make this revision so exciting that you'll *want* to buy it, but we've been careful to make sure that you don't *have* to buy it. This edition is fully compatible with all previously published *Star Wars* products — the game is still very close to the original *Second Edition* rules. You'll still be using the same skills and game statistics, but in a slightly different way."

West End also added several new sections. "The reorganization is more intuitive and easier to use. It's more fun to read and less like a textbook. We've updated all of the first edition templates and added a full adventure in the back so gamemasters can begin running the game right away. Finally, there's the '*Star Wars* Rules Overview.' This short chapter collects all the rules in 'digest form.' It's a great quick reference tool so you don't have to constantly flip through



the much longer rules chapters.

"For those of you who want to see what those rules changes are, we will be publishing a 'rules upgrade' in *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal* #11 (November 1996). Starting in September, the

rules upgrade will be available to anyone who sends in a self-addressed stamped envelope with 64¢ postage."

The revised *Star Wars* roleplaying game will be available in August at finer game, book and comic stores across the galaxy.

## Timothy Zahn Goes to GenCon

*New York Times* best-selling *Star Wars* author Timothy Zahn will be a guest at this year's GenCon Game Fair, August 8-11, in Milwaukee. Sponsored by West End Games, Mr. Zahn will

be autographing books and games, participating in several *Star Wars* seminars, and talking with fans. He will also be playing in two *Star Wars* roleplaying games with the highest bidders in a charity auction.

Mr. Zahn has worked closely with West End Games before, writing several short stories for *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal*, contributing to the development and writing of the *DarkStryder Campaign* boxed set, and helping to ensure the accuracy of the game sourcebooks based on his novels. His appearance at GenCon '94 was very well-received.

Mr. Zahn will also be promoting his latest science fiction novel, *Conquerors' Legacy*, which will be published in June by Bantam. In his previous novels *Conquerors'*

*Pride and Conquerors' Heritage*, Mr. Zahn depicted the drama of interstellar war and savage alien invasion. Now humans and aliens careen toward a final, cataclysmic showdown. As both humans and Zhirrh gird for all-out war, a handful of individuals from both races discover the explosive catalyst behind the approaching holocaust — a misunderstanding so tragic and profound it has brought two mighty civilizations to the brink of mutual extinction.

Fans will have plenty of

opportunities to meet Mr. Zahn throughout the GenCon convention. He will be answering what questions he can about his *Star Wars* and other science fiction writing, as well as any upcoming projects.

The annual GenCon game fair brings together thousands of avid roleplaying gamers, representatives from game companies and special guests. For more information about attending GenCon, write to GenCon '96 Game Fair & Festival, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

## Admiral's Communiqué

*Continued from page 1*

In fact, *Han Solo at Stars' End* was one of the first books that told the kind of story I truly wanted to read and wanted even more to tell. It didn't talk down to me or treat me like an idiot (as a lot of pop fiction tends to do — even today). Brian Daley handled themes of honor, integrity and bravery in one exciting package that trusted me to be smart enough to keep up.

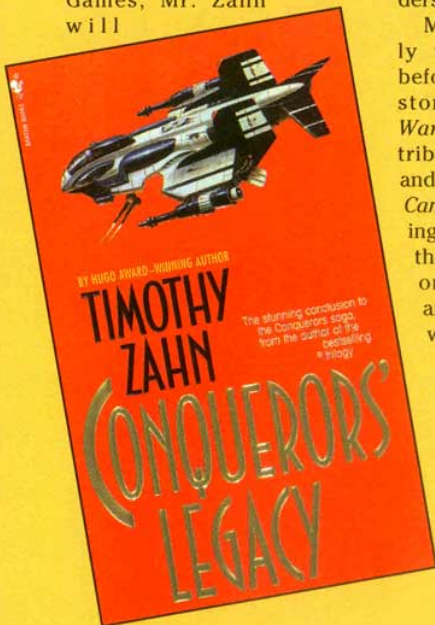
*Han Solo at Stars' End* actually inspired me to start writing stories of my own. I had

endless fun crafting my own adventures for Han, Luke, Leia and the rest of the gang. And now, almost 20 years later, I'm still writing those kinds of stories.

Thank you, Brian, and clear skies.

Major Eric S. Trautmann  
Alliance Intelligence  
March 1996

To read more about Brian Daley, turn to "Remembering Brian Daley" on page 14.





# Remembering Brian Daley

On February 10, 1996, Brian C. Daley passed away at his home in Maryland. The author of many science fiction and fantasy books, he is well known for his three Han Solo novels and his radio scripts for *Star Wars: A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

He had recently completed the third radio script in the series, for *Return of the Jedi*,

which recently finished production. Only hours before his death, Mr. Daley received a phone call from the wrap party in Los Angeles, where the radio show cast had finished recording. The radio play may air this fall.

Mr. Daley's many novels include *Doomfarers of Coramonde*, *Starfollowers*, *A Tapestry of Magics*, and a three-volume series recounting the adventures of Alacrity Fitzhugh and Hobart Floyt. He collaborated with his friend and fellow Ballantine author James Luceno — under the pen name Jack McKinney — to write more than 20 books in the popular *Robotech*, *Sentinels* and *Black Hole Travel Agency* series. He also scripted some dramatic recordings for Disneyland/Buena Vista, and a number of animated television episodes.

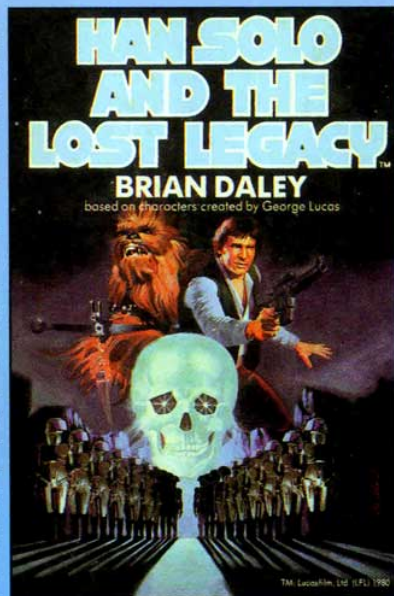
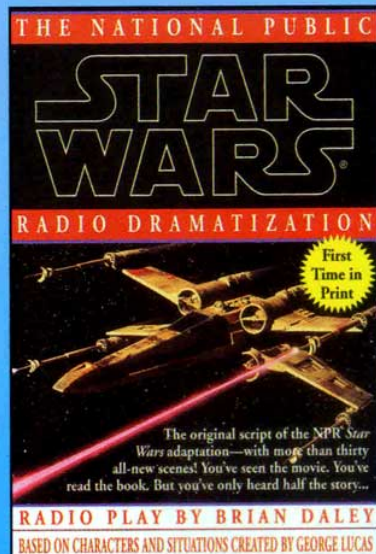
But Brian Daley will also be well-remembered for his three Han Solo novels — *Han Solo at Stars' End*,

*Han Solo's Revenge* and *Han Solo and the Lost Legacy*. They made the *New York Times* best-seller list and were reissued in 1994 in an omnibus edition from Del Rey.

For many *Star Wars* fans, Mr. Daley played an important role in opening up and exploring that galaxy "far, far away." "One of Brian Daley's most important contributions to the *Star Wars* mythos was not a character or a type of spaceship: it was a style of storytelling," said West End Games' *Star Wars* editor Bill Smith. "All of the 'traditional' *Star Wars* elements were present in his novels, from spaceships travelling faster than light to evil and corrupt villains scheming against valiant heroes. Droids, aliens, starships, blasters, even Chewbacca the Wookiee — it was all there. But not once did the fate of the galaxy hinge on the actions of Han and Chewie. The stories were

much smaller in scale and narrower in scope than the movies, but were no less satisfying. Brian Daley gave the *Star Wars* universe a much more personal and intimate face."

The staff of West End Games will always have fond memories of Mr. Daley's contributions to the *Star Wars* universe. Clear skies.





# ONLY DROIDS SERVE THE MAKER

By Kathy Tyers

Illustrations by Matt Busch and Mike Vilardi

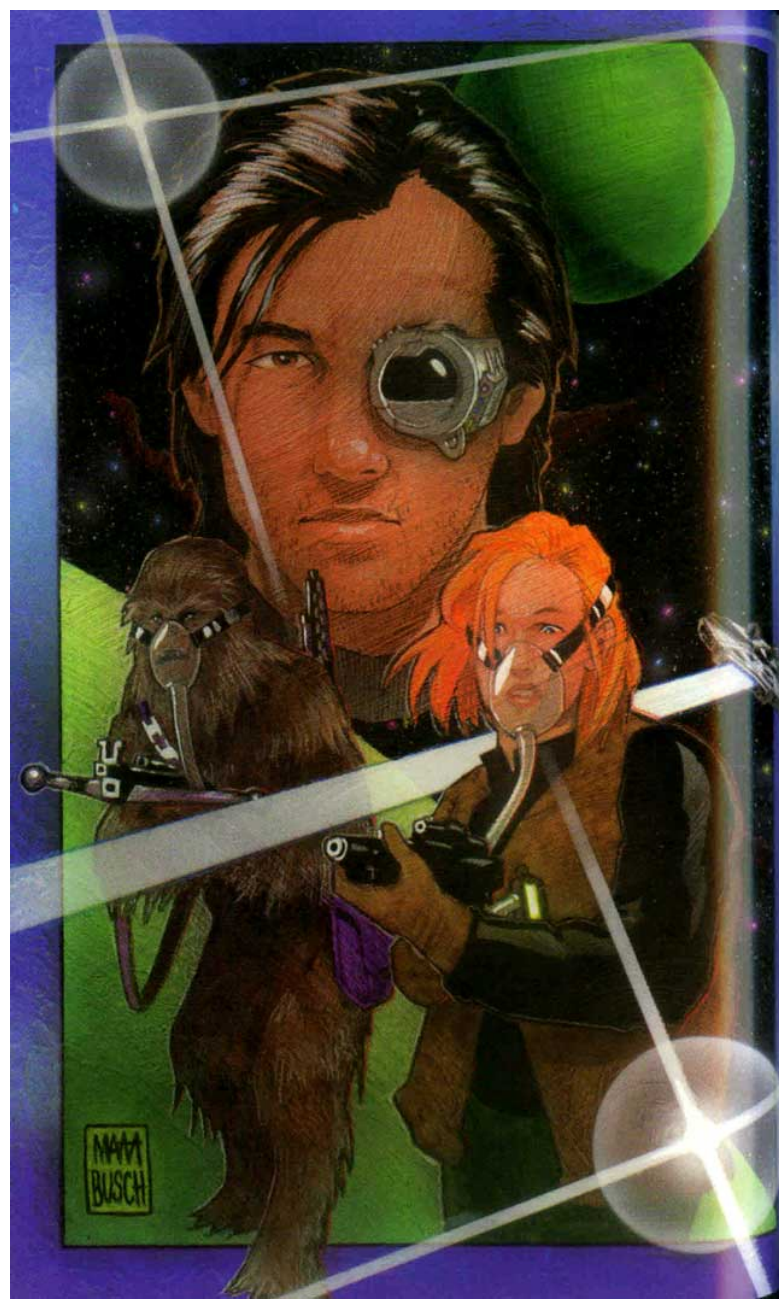
"Vessel on lunar bypass," crackled the comlink. "This is Kline Security, vessel three-niner. Broadcast your entry permit data."

"Uh-oh," grunted Woyiq. "Bad company."

Daye Azur-Jamin yanked himself upright. His leg braces whirred to adjust. Monor II dominated the viewscreen, opaline atmosphere concealing its five continents.

The Rebel tugship was an aging clunker, and it smelled like old sweat. Daye's team had hoped to slip through the system, camouflaged by dozens of similar craft. "Do we answer?" he asked.

"That or be shot," said Toalar. Rebel gunrunner Una Poot had given Toalar an altered transponder code, but she'd warned him not to put much faith in it ... or the entry permit. Toalar clawed the control board. "Transmitting now." The Gotal spoke in monotones, but he would've passionately defended anyone's freedom. His perceptor cones resembled thick horns. Gray-brown folds crossed



MATT  
BUSCH



his face where humans wore noses.

On a nearby moon, Toalar and Woyiq had just cached 10,000 blaster carbines and two powerful explosives. Monor II was occupied by the Empire. Toalar still had to launch a small pod telling Monor's native sentients, the Sunesis, where to pick up those weapons. Una had ordered him to use a message pod, rather than transmit subspace, to avoid Imperial interception. Their odds of being hailed at all had seemed astronomically small. This was evil luck.

Woyiq rubbed his cheeks with big, hairy hands. "They're taking too long, blast them." Woyiq had competed in Imperial wrestling tournaments. He and Toalar behaved like a life-debt pair, though neither discussed what bonded them. Muscular legs bulged as Woyiq leaned forward.

Envious, Daye gripped his leg braces. Outside his flight suit, stiff metal strips joined alloy rods that pierced his leg bones. The automatons were droid-slaved to an implant low on his spine.

Daye had sabotaged his own armament plant, rather than let the Empire seize control. Toalar had found him half-dead under rubble and spirited him offworld. At remote Silver Station, an Imperial raid had interrupted bacta treatment that'd repaired his hand and almost restored one crushed leg. Rebel medics later braced both legs, and replaced his shattered shoulder; but cranial damage left him 85 percent blind in his right eye, with blurred vision in the left. Restoring full vision would have required surgery that those medics weren't equipped to perform. They implanted a clip in his left cheekbone, enabling him to wear a temporary, high-powered monolens. He was learning to ignore his right eye's misty tunnel vision.

"Maybe we can outrun them." Toalar was already vectoring past the moon, drawing Kline Security away from that weapons cache.

Security responded. "Your code is not locally known. Stand by for boarding."

Daye poised both hands over the armament board.

"Hold fire," said Toalar. "We'll need full engine power." He jabbed a control. "Pod away." Much of the tugship's momentum would transfer to that half-meter alloy pod, speeding it toward Monor's surface. "In five seconds, we'll clear gravity —"

The tugship shuddered. Daye plunged forward against narrow seat restraints.

Toalar hit another panel. "Tractor beam," he droned. Daye plainly felt Toalar's anger, echoed by Woyiq; Una's lessons had accom-

plished that much. "Hold fire, Daye. That won't help now."

"You over there." The comlink crackled again. "Kill your engines. Prepare for armed boarding. Cooperate or be shot. We don't care which."

"We will cooperate," Toalar answered. He cut the connection. "Daye, you're on deck," he murmured. "Una says Administrator Fugueé detains casual smugglers, asks a few questions, and then sentences them to menial labor. This was always a possibility. We'll eventually get off planet."

Daye frowned. Toalar, like Una, believed too strongly in Daye's minor Force sensitivity. Una had survived a husband who'd known a little about using the Force. She'd recruited Daye for his sensitivity, despite his injuries.

But he couldn't manipulate all conversations. "A few questions?" he asked.

Toalar smoothed gray fur over his knobby brows. "Just convince Fugueé we're no threat."

Back on Druckenwell, Daye had been considered a good character judge. Only Tinian I'att had realized that he could faintly sense others' feelings —

Tinian. He shut his eyes. He'd loved her courage, creativity, and light heart. She'd loved armament work, casual clothes, and uptempo music ... and, amazingly, him. It hurt to remember himself as Tinian had known him, before Moff Eisen Kerieth destroyed their lives. At I'att Armament, she'd been heiress-apparent. He'd been her second under-supervisor, skilled at design and administration. She'd caressed the prematurely gray streak in his left eyebrow and teased: without it, he'd have looked too fresh-faced to command her employees.

No risk of that now. He flexed his aching shoulder. Moff Kerieth had dragged one leg ... but without mechanized help, Daye could only crawl. Furthermore, his monolens gave him all the charm of a speeder with one headlamp.

At least Tinian had escaped whole, thanks to Daye and a Wookiee bodyguard. He had not seen her since then. She must never know he'd survived. He meant to spend himself serving the Rebellion, and then rest ... forever.

There was nothing on board this tugship worth trying to jettison. They could only wait. Monor II, listed on newer Imperial registers as Kline Colony, lay helpless before Imperial planet-rapists. Chemical engineers coveted its cirrifog, a perpetual, glittering haze of crystals so light that they floated in Monor's atmosphere. Daye adjusted his



monolens' adjustment ring for maximum distance. The iridescent atmosphere focused.

So did the other ship, growing slowly onscreen. Its long, thin shape, thicker at both ends, resembled an in-system hauler.

He preferred staring at the planet. Monor's native Sunesis had furry, speechless, intelligent juveniles with diffuse nervous systems. At about 15 standard years, they stopped eating and pupated. Some never awoke, but most metamorphosed into hairless adults. Mature mouthparts let them speak Basic. They also used ultrasound.

Like many sentient species, they had squabbled for centuries. Now their priest-prince, Agapos the Ninth, was inciting them to unite and revolt. Sunesian juveniles needed cirrifog to pupate successfully, and the Empire threatened to take it all. Agapos' writings were so eloquent — so universally relevant — that several planetary undergrounds relayed every transmission. On board Una's ship, Daye had accessed several quotes. He particularly liked: "Ye that oppose not only tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! The New Order seeks to hunt down Lady Freedom. Let us receive this bold fugitive. Let us fight boldly alongside her!"

The Empire had responded with a death bounty.

The security ship eclipsed Monor II. Daye's legs whirled as he slumped.

"Don't worry," Toalar murmured. "Administrator Fugueé won't give us much trouble."

**T**he first man through the airlock wore a trooper's black uniform. "Phew." He pinched his nose. "Look, Lieutenant Karr. Half a stinkin' droid. Where's the other half?"

The next boarder wore the two-color insignia of a naval lieutenant. "So it is," he snorted, lounging against the starboard bulkhead as two more men boarded. "You're going to wish you'd tried smuggling in some other system, boys. Administrator Brago despises your kind."

Brago ... not Fugueé? "We're not smugglers," Daye insisted. Gunrunners was the proper term ...

Toalar added, "We need repairs. We found out too late there's no —"

"Tell Brago." Karr, lean and thirtyish, picked his teeth with a long metal sliver. "You launched a message pod. I say you're smuggling."

Una's informer must've guessed right: the Empire was preparing

to wipe out the Sunesis. Why else would it send in a tough new administrator? They *must* get those weapons. He must stall this crew until Una's message pod vanished into Monor's atmosphere.

"Take 'em on board," snapped Lieutenant Karr.

Woyiq whooped. He swung his beefy arms in long, powerful arcs. Two troopers flew against bulkheads. They slumped to the deck before a third Imperial stunned Woyiq.

Karr kept picking his teeth. The third trooper, a red-haired boy who looked more scared than fierce, prodded Woyiq with one boot. The big human didn't move ... but he'd bought 15 valuable seconds.

Karr raised a comlink. "Keehon, send another squad. I've got three masses to drag." He scratched his chin with his comlink, eyeing Daye and Toalar. "Care to make it five, boys?"





Daye shifted, balancing. If Toalar twitched a whisker, he'd jump too. The droid legs were phenomenally strong.

Toalar raised his clawed hands, meek for the moment.

"Better," observed Karr. "Conor, take them through."

The young trooper twitched his blaster. Daye shuffled through the airlock. Someone seized his arms from behind and snapped on binders. Toalar, too, was grabbed quickly. The young trooper walked them up a short corridor to the patrol craft's bridge. "Sit." He gestured toward a gap between lashed cargo piles along one bulkhead.

At least it smelled better over here. Daye cooperated as slowly as he dared, and the trooper didn't rush him. He cabled Toalar's and Daye's binders to lockdown rings. Another group dragged in Woyiq, wrestled him upright, and secured him. Woyiq's head lolled.

Lieutenant Karr stepped onto the bridge. "Disengage."

With a heavy ka-chunk, the Imperial craft loosed Una Poot's tugship. Karr stalked to an overhead viewscreen. "Spot that pod," he barked.

Una's ship plunged into view. Maybe its mass would hide the pod.

A dark young man grasped handgrips that protruded from his station. "Sir, permission to fire?"

"Blast away."

White light lashed space. Una's clunker dissolved into wreckage.

"Come on," growled the Lieutenant. "Half rations for all of you if nobody spots that pod."

Daye faintly caught the troopers' dislike and distrust.

"I see it!" exclaimed the young red-haired trooper. "Heading six-five by two."

Daye clenched his binders. The dark gunner squeezed his handgrips again. "Target destroyed."

Which target? Daye wondered frantically. Debris or the message pod? The gunner's sense felt just wrong.

"About time," Karr snapped. "This is the slowest crew I've ever had. Set course for Kline Colony."

**K**arr marched Daye's group down a long gray corridor to a long gray room. Behind the bulkhead-gray desk sat a human with black hair and a short neck.

Lieutenant Karr saluted. "Here they are, Administrator."

Through the monolens, still adjusted for long distances, the

Administrator's rank patch was a long red and blue blur. "Thank you, Lieutenant," he purred. "At ease." He glared at his prisoners. "What was your cargo?"

Daye stared. This wasn't the scenario they'd rehearsed.

"We didn't get much cooperation with boarding, either." Karr had drawn his toothpick again.

"The pod was destroyed?"

"Affirmative, sir."

Brago laced his fingers and leaned back. "Which of you is the boss?" He dismissed Woyiq, who stood wobbling from the stun bolt, with a scornful glance. "The Gotal, I think? You Rebels always put oddballs in charge. Are you spying for the lumpheads?"

The Sunesis' prominent cranial melon was used for ultrasound. *Lumpheads.* "We're not spies." Daye listened hard. Brago's hostility remained steady.

"Interrogate the Gotal, Lieutenant. We can terminate them all after the feast. Make it festive."

Lieutenant Karr saluted again, then jerked Daye's arm. "Move, droid."

"Droid?" echoed the Administrator.

"It's mostly human above the belt, sir," Karr explained, "but look at these legs."

Brago peered over his desk, then looked up. Daye squinted into unnaturally green eyes. "What happened to you?" Brago asked.

Daye shrugged. "Explosion."

"Saboteur?" Brago cocked an eyebrow.

Daye smiled inwardly. In Agapos' words, "Liberty's flame must be fueled with our blood, mingled with that of the tyrants."

Brago waved a hand. "Lock them up."

As they passed a guarded double-door into a blind corridor, Daye murmured to Karr, "Is Administrator Brago liked?"

"That doesn't concern you."

"He's not well."

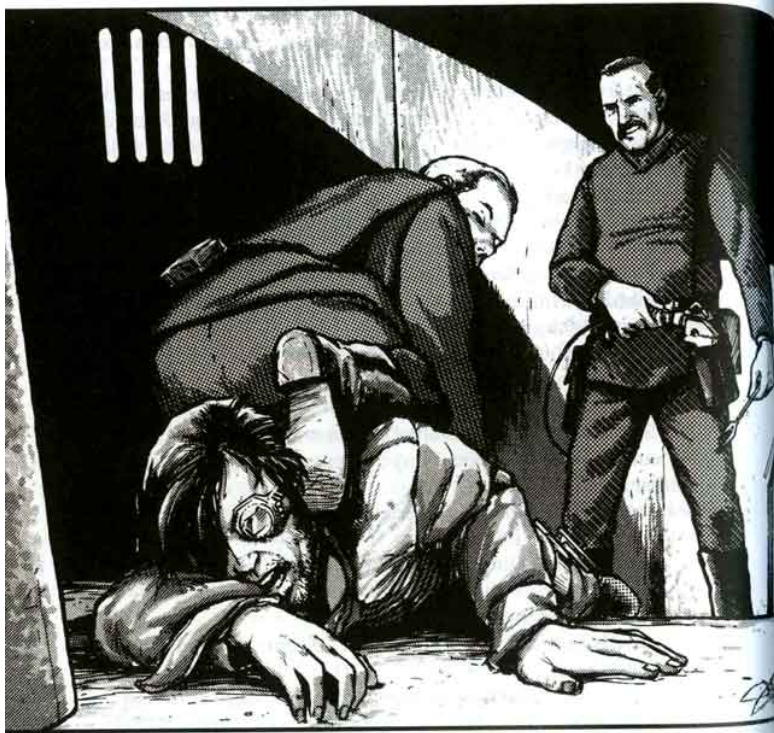
"You may be right," Karr laughed. "Stop."

The young, red-haired trooper reached for a black wall panel. A door slid open. Karr shoved Daye through, and it shut with a boom.

Still hindered by his binders, he backed up to a wall. He slid down onto the bare, windowless cell's floor.

**Daye gritted his teeth, summoning that steel. Our blood fuels liberty's flame, he reminded himself.**





Now what? Since fleeing Druckenwell, he'd lost track of days. New Year's Fete must be starting. One of several Imperial festivals, it was widely celebrated with heavy eating, drinking, and spicing.

He, Toalar, and Woyiq would be after-dinner entertainment if he didn't think of something. He looked hard at himself, hoping to find steel. He did not want to amuse Brago by begging for mercy.

Within minutes, two other troopers arrived. One had brown hair and a drooping mustache. "Brago wants the droid parts." He pointed a blaster at Daye's braces. "Souvenir."

They whirled as Daye struggled to his feet. Without them, he'd be as helpless as a newborn Talz. "Leave them for now," he pleaded. So much for steel. "Leave me my dignity."

The paunchy blonde trooper lunged. Adrenaline overrode Daye's common sense. Halfway into a lunge kick, he realized he'd overex-

tended. The super-strong droid legs threw him. He crumpled on one side.

The blonde jumped from behind and rolled him onto his stomach. "I thought you'd try that," he grunted. He settled his bulk on Daye's shoulders, his hands on Daye's hip bones. Daye clawed the rough floor. The binders made him doubly helpless, twisting his wrists.

The mustached trooper drew a wicked-looking tool from his hip belt. He knelt on Daye's left ankle and started prying.

Daye gritted his teeth, summoning that steel. *Our blood fuels liberty's flame*, he reminded himself. Through his nerve block, he felt only pressure as the trooper wrenched rods from his bones.

The paunchy blonde leaned hard on his hips, then sprang off. Daye pushed up on both elbows. Sweat slithered down his forehead. The blonde guard stepped away. "Going to give us the glass eye? Or do we take it our way?"

Something whirled in the near distance. Daye's wrists relaxed. Half-hearted, he sat up and slid off the binders. Much help hands would be, if he were blind and lame. He pressed his left cheek, releasing the clip. The duracrete floor and walls became gray blurs.

The trooper snatched his lens and binders, then tossed something aside. His partner stepped down with a sickening crunch. "Karr has decided to send you back to the Maker," he announced. "Wait'll you see what we do with old droids."

They left.

Slowly, Daye stretched his arms. He rubbed his wrists. Then he squinted at his thin, limp legs. Already atrophied, they bled at the joints.

He didn't intend to die without a fight, though his effort might be laughable. Rebels were terminated every day, in pockets of resistance all over the Empire. Daye only wished he'd accomplished more. He wondered what Karr planned.

I'att Armament had sold old droids for parts, but Daye had heard of huge Imperial acid vats and settling tanks, from which composites and metals were reclaimed. If they meant to dump him into one of those, he'd dissolve before he could drown.

Where was Una Poot? Not that he hoped to be rescued, but he wished he could tell her what'd happened. His musical friends, Cheeve and Yccakic, had traveled on with the Rebel medics. Hopefully, Cheeve's wife Twilit would join them at the medics' cushy retirement station. *The ultimate gig.*

Daye was glad he could still smile. He tugged up one shipsuit leg. His ankle had stopped bleeding. He rolled over and started circling



the cell, dragging himself with his forearms. He mustn't give up.

Some whooping stranger dashed past his door. The feast must be underway. Daye laid his cheek on rough, cold duracrete. When was the last time he'd seen Tinian happy? Young-looking with shoulder-length, red-gold hair, she'd worn the white chest protector and shoulder pauldrons of Imperial stormtrooper armor. Daye and Tinian's grandfather had invented a new way to dissipate blaster fire. Naive in their trust, Tinian and her grandparents had believed that the Empire would offer a lucrative contract.

Instead, Moff Eisen Kerieth executed Tinian's grandparents and seized the plant. Daye and Tinian would have become his slaves if they hadn't escaped. He'd wanted her to build a new life, far from the Empire's leprous grasp.

He'd seen her once more, from a great distance. Silver Station had been drifting apart under Imperial attack. Woyiq had just carried him aboard Una Poot's escape ship, the *Sitting Duck*. A small, saucer-shaped scout had flitted across the *Duck's* viewscreen, and despite a weak particle shield — and energy shields with peculiar frequency gaps — that saucer destroyed a TIE fighter before vanishing into hyperspace. Una had claimed Tinian was on board. She'd found another Wookiee protector: *Chenlambec*, Una pronounced, is no ordinary bounty hunter.

He rolled onto his back. He'd tried to forget that. His spirited fiancée had joined a bounty hunter instead of finding a place to lie low.

"We are not afraid to follow truth wherever it leads," Agapos had written. "We will even tolerate error, so long as our minds are left free to combat it."

But he feared Tinian had made a grave judgment error.

**C**henlambec thumbed a lock of silver-tipped brown facial fur out of his lightweight breathing mask. Billions of microcrystals floated in every cubic meter of air. One deep, unfiltered breath would've shredded his lungs. By daylight, Monor II dazzled the eyes. Tonight, no star glimmer penetrated.

Tinian adjusted her own mask. Built like a half-grown cub, his new apprentice was ferocious for a human. Chen had also lost most of his family to Imperial attacks, but Tinian was unstable, stunned by grief for her murdered grandparents and chosen life-mate. She'd begun to recover, then relapsed ... repeatedly, for no obvious reason. He

suspected nightmares.

"I still don't like it that we didn't pick up any lifeforms," she grumbled. "Are you sure your contact found the right location?"

He crooned softly: this was the place. A sentry must have spotted them.

"We're not even picking up anything underground."

A metal chamber wouldn't show on scanners against a major ore vein. Did she want to wait on board?

"Not me." Over her plain black shipsuit, she straightened her diagonal belt. Two cargo pockets bulged opposite the blaster he'd given her: no l'att, unfortunately, but an inexpensive Merr-Sonn.

Stepping quietly, Chen rounded the *Wroshyr's* pitted hull. Tinian constantly urged him to upgrade his scoutship. She might have been an expert with explosives, but she still didn't understand hunt-trade credit flow.

They groped through warm fog to the cliff's base. "Well," Tinian muttered, "here's a door. But it's magnetically sealed."

Finding this site had taken fast work. Imperial forces jammed all transmissions out of Agapos' defended headquarters, trying to silence the priestly firebrand. But manifestos kept appearing. Chen's Rebel contacts had deduced a secret transmitter. They'd found a remarkably straight ore vein, precisely twice as long as his outsystem transmission frequency, 70 kilometers away. It must be functioning as a mammoth dipole antenna.

"Prennerin." Tinian sniffed. Even through her filter, she must've scented the Sunesis' explosive. "Not the best linear control."

He suggested it may have been all they could afford.

She rolled her eyes. Wisps of red-blond hair dangled over her breath filter's strap.

Chen's source had insisted Agapos would transmit tonight, and Chen had seen no vehicle tracks. Agapos' entourage must be avoiding scanner-visible mechanization.

He rumbled an order.

"What, Chen?"

Growling, he corrected her.

"All right," she sighed. "What, *Ng'rhr*?" She copied his inflection well, for a human.

Uncle. He must be her family. She'd never had a clan, not even parents.

He repeated his instruction, then plucked a tiny, silvery cube from between the quarrels on his lizard-hide bandolier. Tinian slid a hand along the wall. "I'm looking," she murmured, "but I don't see



a power point."

"Keep looking," chirped the cube.

Chen patted Flirt good-naturedly. Smaller than a restraining bolt, Flirt was a functioning droid. Chen's previous hunt partner had programmed Flirt to seduce an intelligent computer, subvert its security, or change commands. She needed only a nearby power access.

Chen returned her to her bandolier perch.

"Guess you'll want me, then." Tinian dug in a cargo pocket.

"That depends," piped up Flirt. Chen hushed her.

Seconds later, Tinian sprinted away from the cliff. "Get back," she urged. "Count 10."

Chen crouched behind thick, succulent greenery that gave off a floral scent. Another alien fragrance, biting with a sea-tang, must be the Sunesis, closer to amphibians than mammals.

He told Tinian to recheck her blaster.

She peered down. "Stun," she agreed. Chen hunted by tough rules. It would take skill, luck, and timing to snatch Agapos from his bodyguards without injuring anyone.

Thunder rattled the tropical night. Chen rushed the door. It hung loose on one side. He thrust in his climbing claws and tore it off.

They sprinted down a steep, misty tunnel. He hoped he didn't lose Tinian. If she lasted five minutes under fire, she might survive her apprenticeship. He'd have liked to just lob in a gas grenade, but he distrusted Sunesian biology. He couldn't risk killing Agapos.

"I must study war," Agapos had written, "so that my offspring may study economics and astrography. They ought to study economics and astrography, philosophy and agriculture, to give their offspring a right to study painting, poetry, and porcelain." With very little editing, Chen could have quoted that on Kashyyyk.

Tinian waved her small luma at gray-flecked white stone. "Their blast points aren't bad," she conceded, whispering. Another massive door ended the tunnel. "Here, Flirt." She spotted a metal circle near floor level.

"About time," chirped Flirt.

Grunting satisfaction, Chen pressed her prong into the power point. Inside her titanium shell, every non-positronic centimeter bulged with sensor and antenna windings. Her only downfall — besides being jealous — was inconsistency. Occasionally, simple-seeming tasks took the tiny droid hours to accomplish.

"You're in, boss," she squeaked. "All security systems are down."

He asked two more questions.

"Nope," she answered primly. "No other way out. And you've got six people inside."

"Layout?" Tinian asked.

"One room. Transmitter against the left wall. Eight chairs. Don't trip."

Chen passed Flirt to Tinian. Flirt buzzed protest, but if they needed her inside, Tinian — built lower — could plug her in quicker. He brandished his blaster and yipped an order.

The door slid open. Cirrifog glittered to life in the corridor. Someone shrieked.

Tinian dropped to the dirt and crawled forward. "Careful!" screeched Flirt. "You'll scratch me!"

Chen counted five. Then he leaped into the center of the doorway and whirled, firing stun bolts at anything turquoise.

The Sunesis brandished primitive weapons. *Avoiding scanners*, he observed calmly. Arrows whizzed. He dodged, spun, kept shooting.

Fire plunged through his bandolier into his chest.

"Boss!" shrieked Flirt.

**T**inian shrieked, too. She'd lost home, love, and family. If she never cherished anyone or anything again — not even survival — the Empire couldn't hurt her.

But without Chen, she'd have no reason to fight on. She dropped Flirt, sprang up, and gripped her miserable Merr-Sonn blaster. Blood gushed from Chen's grizzled chest. A dark green stick protruded from the wound.

Feeling more Wookiee than human, she pumped out stun bolts. The chamber was so small she barely noticed the fog. "Look out!" trilled a voice at one side. "Two of them!"

She glanced at the silver-robed alien. Unarmed. Two turquoise figures sprawled on the dirt. Stunned. But another perched atop a metal chair, brandishing a forearm-length knife. He shifted gangly legs to leap. Chen had rolled away to grope for the blaster he'd dropped.

She fired. The alien fell short. His knife clattered on the stone floor.

A blaster bolt whizzed over her head, no diffuse stun bolt, but focused to kill. *Now* who — ?

"Stop!" trilled the voice again. "Leave us in peace!"





She swung her blaster, searching for that final target. The transmitter console, a wall of primitive knobs and dials, stood out a meter from the rock wall.

Chenlambec ripped out the bloody shaft. Its barbed point glistened red. Much to her relief, he roared defiance. Blood streaked his silver-tipped fur.

"Behind the transmitter," Tinian shouted.

Chen roared again. He seized the transmitter bank and rocked it. Tinian stunned the final Sunesis as their protection crashed away.

"Now," she panted, turning, "we'll deal with *you*."

Agapos stood unflinching. She had to admire his composure. Over round black eyes, silvery crests and bulges set off his turquoise skin like jewelry.

"There's a price on your head," she panted. The breath filter was choking her.

"You have won it."

Chen growled.

"Come on," Tinian translated. "Hurry."

"Your partner is injured," trilled the priest-prince.

"Right," Tinian snapped. "The sooner we're back on board our ship, the better." And where on that rustbucket were the medpacs?

"You move."

Chen roared agreement.

"I am ready to die," Agapos said calmly, "but I will not be taken."

She shoved hair out of her face. "We're not that kind," she insisted, "but we don't have time to chat."

The Sunesi strolled toward Chen. Almost slaverling, Chen heaved deep, shaking breaths. The Sunesi extended a four-fingered, turquoise hand and shut his eyes.

Chen bared his teeth.

Agapos touched his bleeding chest. Chen rubbed it. Then he cooed.

"You're kidding," she exclaimed.

She glared at the Sunesi. "What did you do?"

"My last gift to my executioner," he said steadily, "besides forgiveness. He will carry no scar but the memory of his crime. If I had a weapon, I would shoot you both down. Having none, I can only refuse to cooperate." He raised both long hands over his bulbous head. "Earn your blood money, and murder me. But my words live."

Evidently he'd rather be blasted than go with a raging Wookiee and a half-crazed human girl.

Her trigger finger twitched. "Have it your way," Agapos crumpled.

Chen shook his shaggy head as if wrested from rapture. He crooned a question.

"I'm fine," she snapped. "Come on."

Recovering, he pulled a large medjector from his bandolier pouch. He drew 20 mils of Agapos' bright pink blood and squirted the chairs, walls, and transmitter wreckage. After capping the collector, he returned it to his pouch. He hoisted the limp, stunned alien over one shoulder and sprinted toward the shaft.

Tinian scooped up Flirt and followed.

"Dirt!" Flirt screeched. "Don't forget dirt!"

She paused at the tunnel's entry to scabble a handful of soil mixed with settled cirrifog. If anyone challenged them, they could prove they'd been to Kline Colony.



The *Wroshyr's* landing lights flashed on. Cirrifog danced in their beams.

Daye would have called it exquisite. He'd had a keen eye for beauty. It'd overjoyed her when he called her lovely. His long, strong hands had held her so gently ...

She would never stop grieving him. Never. Never.

Chen's roar drifted out the hatch.

"Coming!" Blinded by tears, she groped toward the light. "I'm coming, Ng'rh!"

**D**aye eyed a mottled gray blotch on the floor. This duracrete had cured so poorly that even without his monolens he had no trouble seeing it — but he hadn't been able to pound through. An anemic lumipanel lit the air filter. He couldn't reach either of them.

Administrator Brago hadn't announced the impounding of Una Poot's weapons. Maybe the Sunesis still stood a fighting chance.

Maybe Brago was just busy eating.

"There is something odious in government from off planet," Daye remembered from Agapos' essays. "We demand leaders of our own kind, whose juveniles pupate alongside our own. Only they will consider our future." With a little minor editing, he could have rebroadcast that on Druckenwell.

He wished he might have met one of the Sunesis. He'd heard that metamorphosis predisposed them to believe in life after death. He wished he believed it now. He'd be glad for a rest, but here, he'd realized that he dreaded extinction.

Footsteps stopped outside his door. He braced himself against the wall.

Two lanky, turquoise-skinned people burst in, carrying blurs that resembled blasters. A silver shape followed, roughly humanoid, obviously mechanical. Finally appeared the young, red-haired trooper. Daye's apprehension metamorphosed into hope. In the Force, this youngster felt brave — determined — and helpful. "Conor?" It couldn't be ...

"My name is Urek. We've got to get you out of here."

He recognized the name: Una Poot's Rebel contact, who'd infiltrated during Fuguee's tenure! He'd been the one who "spotted" their message pod, too.

"Come on," the youth urged. "The men I stunned won't stay down forever."

"Can't use my legs," Daye warned him. "Hardly at all."

Urek glanced through the open cell door. "Carry him, Aiteff."

The droid rolled closer on narrow treads. Urek and one Sunesi lifted Daye. The droid bent his arms to a chairlike angle. "Try to be comfortable," Aiteff intoned, "but secure. We must hurry."

Daye sat sideways and wrapped both arms around Aiteff's shoulders. "I'm on," he urged. "Go."

The long-limbed Sunesis highstepped out. Aiteff followed. In the corridor waited another group: several more turquoise blurs, two metallic droid-shapes, three humans — one with a burly wrestler's build — and a Gotal.

"Hurry." One Sunesi beckoned with a gray-clad arm. Daye squinted so hard it made his head ache. This one had delicate brow crests and was probably female. "In courage is strength!" she hissed.

"Praise the Maker," responded Daye's droid — and his biological companions. Aiteff rolled forward. The others sprinted.

But only droids served the Maker ... or so Daye had believed. He'd heard that Agapos' people let droids and humans live among them as equals. Had they also adopted the droids' quasi-deity?

"I usually carry Daye," Woyiq offered.

"No time," Urek puffed. "Keep running. Got to get back to my post. Sorry about stunning you. Shipboard. Self-defense!"

"No harm," Woyiq grunted.

The group turned right, away from Brago's office. Daye watched behind. They took another right turn. Black blurs appeared from a side passage. "Troopers!" he cried.

"Go!" exclaimed the small Sunesi. Most of the group pelted on. She and two droids fell behind, drawing weapons. Woyiq lingered with them. Daye clung to his droid. His helplessness humiliated him.

Aiteff plunged into a lift shaft. They rode up several levels, then dashed along another corridor. "Where is everybody?" Daye asked.

"They were eating." The droid sounded smug, having no such need. "Administrator Brago promised a feast. Urek knew it was our chance."

The lead runners reached a door. Stunned troopers lay scattered around it. "Trade entry." Aiteff maneuvered between uniformed bodies. "Hold your breath!"

They plunged through. Daye went totally blind in a dense gray fog. Feathery crystals caressed his cheeks and hands as the droid rolled ahead. He heard — or was he imagining? — high-pitched squeals in all directions. Ultrasound would be helpful in murky air.

Aiteff clanged through a hatch Daye hadn't seen coming and



dropped him on a seat, then extended a blocky arm and snatched a pair of nostril filters off a bulkhead. Daye jammed them in, then squinted at another dark shape. Toalar stood beside a hatch, brandishing an alien-design blaster. This small shuttle had four seating rows. He hoped it had shields.

One Sunesi guarded the airlock with Toalar. "Nee's coming," the alien shrielled.

"The small one?" Daye asked.

The Sunesi nodded. He wiped his bulging forehead.

"Is she your leader?"

The Sunesi nodded again. "One of Agapos' close disciples. A light in our darkness. We will not leave her to the enemy."

Another Sunesi clenched the transport's controls. "He will not abandon thee, but will guide thee and strengthen."

"Through the thickest of nights," three others whispered.

Daye was glad the Sunesis spoke Basic. Evidently he wasn't going to die, after all ... not yet. "Toalar, are you all right?" Brago had ordered Toalar interrogated.

The Gotal shrugged. "Nothing I haven't been through before. He's no —"

Two droids barreled on board; then Woyiq, carrying the small, slender Nee. "Medpac," he rasped. "They got her."

Nee's left arm hung limp. Pink fluid dripped from her four long fingers. She slapped an airlock panel with her uninjured hand, trilling loudly.

The transport lurched. Nee's huge eyes closed, and her thin silver lips moved. Another Sunesi struggled toward her against acceleration.

She bled from her upper arm, near her shoulder. What kind of weapons were the Imperials using on these people? Daye flushed, wishing he could ease her pain. He knew what it meant to be injured.

"Got a medpac?" growled Woyiq.

"Hush." A Sunesi slipped him two nostril filters.

Nee was singing. "*Viumbay, viotay. Sifu.*" A long pause, then she sang again.

Distraction technique, Daye guessed. It might be a long flight to her medic. Her companion laid a hand on her arm. "*Sifu,*" she sang. "*Sifu.*"

"Toalar," Woyiq exclaimed. "Got a medpac?"

"Wait!" Daye squinted harder. Beneath Nee's scorched sleeve, turquoise skin was knitting before his eyes. Blood stopped dripping. What were they doing?

"Praise this making," Nee's compatriot intoned in Basic.

Nee raised her head. "Glory greater than the stars," she sang. "Ye are never forsaken."

Woyiq gaped. Daye stretched out through the Force. Nee's presence pulsed powerfully. She'd just healed herself ... and come through refreshed, not weakened.

"Put me down," she directed.

"Whatever you say, lady," Woyiq obeyed.

Nee staggered toward the pilot's console. The shuttle bucked. Daye guessed they were dodging fire. If Sunesis used ultrasound for everyday communication, their radar must be exceptional.

And they *healed* themselves. He stared at Nee's bulbous head. This disciple did, anyway. Daye clenched his legs. Could he do the same ... using the Force?

Jedi had, he knew from whispered folklore. Nee was obviously strong in the Force.

Was he?

He couldn't even imagine restoring his atrophied legs. But one medic had said his good eye might refocus in time, even if he did not reach a surgical droid. The worst damage had affected nerves deep in his skull.

He closed both eyes. He tried grasping the Force and bringing it to bear on the throbbing ache behind his temples.

Nothing happened.

Nee's song hung in his mind. Maybe the Sunesis' local deity, or spirit, or healing field might take pity on an injured human. "*Viumbay,*" he sang silently, "*viotay. Sifu.*" The transport jolted. He grabbed his narrow armrests and opened his eyes.

Between his seat and the pilot's, tiny crystals swirled and glittered.

He blinked. He squinted. Neither made any difference. Both of his eyes had focused — he was seeing three dimensions!

Toalar moaned and rubbed his perceptor cones.

"What is it?" Daye asked, only half believing.

"Headache," answered Toalar. "But it's fading."

Gotals felt the Force through those cones. Daye leaned back. What had he done? Or had he? Was there an outside power here, as his grateful instinct suggested? Could he ... could it ... heal his legs?

He shut his eyes and repeated the song, stroking them. Nothing.

Why be greedy? He could see! If only he sat closer to a viewport. The little craft seemed to be leveling out. They were probably headed for another continent.



He was going to meet Agapos. Nee's spiritual leader. Possibly a greater healer.

Something touched his shoulder from behind. He looked up into Nee's delicate turquoise face. Her silvery brow crests and small, round ears glistened. "He touched you," she murmured, her voice a sopranino trill. "*Sifu mungu.*"

"Who?" Daye whispered. "Who is it?"

She laughed softly, a trill of shared joy, not derision. She raised her hand from his shoulder and touched his forehead. Suddenly exhausted, he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

**T**he shuttle had stopped. Daye's bloody pantlegs had crusted to his joints. Nee stood in front of him, haloed by cabin lights in the cirrifog. A sense of terrible shock slapped him awake. "What's wrong?" he asked.

She swung a long arm. "Come. Aiteff will carry you."

The flat-chested droid rolled into position. Nee scurried to the hatch and vanished through, leaving Daye alone with Aiteff. He pulled up into the droid's metal arms. "What happened?" he asked. "What's wrong?"

"Distress call," Aiteff answered. "Agapos was due to transmit today. Someone else found his transmission site."

Hairs prickled at the base of Daye's neck. "Imperial?"

"We hope not." Aiteff set off. "His escorts were virtually unarmed."

"Why?"

"To avoid detection. He says his defense is the Maker."

Agapos ... missing. With a price on his head.

Aiteff wheeled up a long, curving corridor, its ceiling obscured by sparkling haze. Immediately he doglegged into a room jammed with droids, humans, and gangly Sunesis. Console lights flickered, creating half-spheres of shimmering, colored air.

Aiteff rolled to a large viewing well. A humanoid protocol droid stood beside it, close to Toalar and Woyiq. "Aiteff," greeted the droid. "Daye, I am Bee-Kay-Four, Agapos' second in command. Thank you all for the weapons you brought, but we cannot recover them yet. Our search team just reached Agapos' bunker. His aides are rousing from stun. Agapos' blood is everywhere." Outraged, Daye clenched his fists. "We did not track an incoming ship," continued Bee-Kay-Four. "Without Agapos to bless our battles, we

cannot survive."

Under other circumstances, Daye might have distrusted an unrestrained droid. This one seemed to have taken charge without anyone objecting.

"There's one outgoing." Toalar pointed vehemently at the viewing well.

A round red bogey streaked outsystem. Four gold darts followed. From the other side of Monor II, eight more ships rose in pursuit.

"That must be the bounty killers," agreed Bee-Kay-Four. "We've hailed. They do not respond."

Daye pointed at the darts. "Those are yours?"

"And the others are Brago's." Nee fingered her scorched sleeve. The intensity of her grief made Daye wish Una had not coached him. The silvery droid swiveled. "Magnify target zone."

Bogey and darts filled the well. Daye no longer needed to squint. The darts were closing.

Bee-Kay-Four's fingers pinged against his sides. "If we don't take them, Brago should."

"Vengeance belongs to the Maker," Nee objected.

The droid answered, "We need not let murderers escape."

"Get 'em," muttered Woyiq.

Daye glared at the bogey. Abruptly he saw its distinct saucer-shape. His throat constricted. "What reading do you get on that ship's shields?"

Another droid touched the well's interface point, then answered, "Marginal. Particle shielding is only 37 percent of standard, and the energy shields have frequency gaps. This will not be difficult."

Tinian! But why here?

Because of the death bounty! *Chenlambec was no ordinary bounty hunter.* Una had refused to explain further. The little saucer wasn't even trying to shoot back. "Hold fire!" he cried. "That's a Rebel agent! How many lifeforms on board?"

"I beg your pardon?" Bee-Kay-Four's head swiveled.

"Lifeforms," snapped Daye. "How many? That bounty hunter may have faked Agapos' death, to save him from the Empire!" Blue firing-range wedges appeared in front of the Sunesian darts.

Bee-Kay-Four touched in. "Three lifeforms. What gives you this odd idea?"

Chenlambec ... Tinian ... and another. Una's friend hadn't slaughtered Agapos! "Your leader's on that ship," Daye insisted.

Every Sunesi, every droid, every human in the room froze and stared at him. Their shock pounded him.



"But the Empire posted a death bounty." Bee-Kay-Four swept out silvery arms.

"So they faked his death." Was Toalar picking up his panicky thoughts? *Inadequate shields!* "Can you risk killing Agapos if he's on board?"

"No!" trilled Nee. "Beekay, change orders!"

Bee-Kay-Four cocked his metal head, maddeningly calm. "If those are Rebel agents, why didn't you tell —"

"I just recognized their specs!"

One blue firing-range wedge nearly brushed the unshielded saucer. "Hold fire," Daye pleaded. "We'll chase them down. Give us a ship."

"That's our entire defense force," Nee trilled.

"Recall one, then," said Daye, "but let us pursue. If those Imperials reach Agapos, he *will* be slaughtered."

Bee-Kay-Four touched the interface. "Reprogram orders," he intoned. "Disable but do not destroy. Then stand by to escort a weapons retrieval."

One blue wedge flashed red. Daye swallowed panic. Had Bee-Kay-Four changed his orders too late?

The blue wedges winked out. The red saucer continued to flee. Bee-Kay-Four held the interface. "Minor damage," he observed. "They are slowed but not crippled. Aiteff, take these people to my personal shuttle." His head rotated toward Toalar. "I arrived on Monor as booty, stolen from a cruel master. Serving Agapos is freedom enough. You must bring him back."

Daye worried: How badly was Chenlambec's ship damaged? Would they need rescue? "We'll try," he promised. *Let's go, let's go!*

"But if you are mistaken," continued the droid, "if Agapos is dead, then those bounty hunters must not live to collect their reward. Rebel agents or not."

"We swear," Toalar declared, "but consider this. Agapos might want to stay in hiding."

"Hoil!" Beekay turned aside. "Help them. Report back."

A Sunesi near a door hatch rippled off a salute. His skin was greener than the others', his brow crests wider. "Follow me," he exclaimed.

Finally! Woyiq reached toward Daye, but Aiteff was already swiveling. Grinding his treads, he chased Hoil and Toalar out the dome's outer walkway, then up a spiralling ramp. Woyiq hustled alongside. The three-finned shuttle on deck had distinctly Imperial lines. "Pretty," Woyiq grumbled. "But is it fast?"

"Our fastest." Aiteff deposited Daye in a second-row seat, then retreated. "Go with the Maker!"

Daye passed a hand over his eyes. There'd been no pain, no gradual improvement. Just instantaneous healing. "We will," he answered. "Thank you." Whatever the Sunesis believed in — healing, or life after death — he wanted to know more. If they didn't intercept Agapos, he'd return.

The hatch shut. Woyiq plunked down in back beside Daye. Grasping the controls with clawed hands, Toalar launched.

What if it wasn't Tinian? Daye peered over Hoil's shoulder. The main sensor glowed green. "Radar?" he asked, remembering his guess.

"Beekay refitted this ship." Hoil stroked the console. "Ours have shorter range than most scanners, but we can calibrate jump acceleration."

"What do you mean?" Toalar's monotone throbbed.

Hoil's bony fingers danced on the panel. "We'll read their momentum as they jump. That'll give us a good guess as to its length."

Was it Tinian? Daye tried relaxing into the Force. On impulse, he begged, *Please ... whoever you are ... show me if —*

Her presence pierced his mind like a dart. Then the saucer-blip vanished.

The damage wasn't too bad, then. They'd jumped. But it *was* Tinian, up there! ... and Agapos. Maybe Agapos could heal his legs. But how would Tinian react if she saw him this way?

Daye glanced at the aft screen. Beekay's ship was easily outrunning the Imperial squadron. This must be a Core Worlds shuttle. Who had owned Beekay?

"Clear of the gravity well," Toalar announced. "Are we programmed?"

Hoil jabbed a key. "There."

"Hang on!" Toalar ordered.

Stars turned to brilliant threads.

**T**ell me, hired killers: Have you made peace?"

Tinian whirled her flight chair. Agapos stood framed by the aft bulkhead's pitted retractable hatch. Chen had dumped him on a bunk, still stunned, and locked the aft cabin; the *Wroshyr* had two tiny cells hunters called "meat lockers," but Chen refused to confine Agapos there.

"What do you mean?" she cried. She couldn't stun him; she'd



shelved her blaster. "Flirt, did you let him out?"

"No!" hiccupped Flirt, installed on the main console. "He used sonics!"

Chen's head popped through the deck hatch. He'd patched a deadly pinpoint breach, but now he had to restart life-support. Onboard oxygen would take them only halfway to Tekra Point. Already the air tasted rusty.

"Make peace with the one who made you." Agapos folded his fingers over his silvery tunic. "We will shortly die."

Chen roared. "You're right," Tinian translated hastily. "Agapos, if he doesn't fix the scrubbers we're all dead."

"I disapprove of killing," Agapos assured her. "But I have sworn eternal hostility against every form of tyranny. I will not be used for foul Imperial purposes. I would —"

"Shut up!" she cried. "We're not Imperials! We're trying to save your wretched life."

Agapos glanced toward Chen, then back. "You speak truth," he declared. "I feel it on the Force. But how can this be? At my bunker, you acted savagely."

"We were scared," Tinian snapped. Agapos felt the Force, like Daye? Oh, Daye ...

Chen corrected her, then ducked back down.

"I was scared," she admitted. "He was wounded. Chen has an Imperial bounty license, but if the Empire finds out what he does with it, his life will be worth twice yours."

Agapos tilted his bulbous head. "Why is that?"

Tinian explained rapidly. "I see," said the Sunesi when she had finished. "Then I am in your debt. But my followers will grieve deeply."

"They'll avenge your death against the Empire," Tinian pointed out.

"I hope not," said Agapos. "Vengeance belongs to the Maker. Only liberty is worth bloodshed. I am not liberty."

Tinian frowned. Once, she'd believed in a larger cause. She'd been ready to run l'att Armament for the Empire. It was vengeance she served now, not the Rebellion. "But they'll be good and mad," she argued. "They'll fight on without you."

Chen roared a suggestion.

"Right," she said. "They'll be safer without you. Look, we're in trouble ... if you don't mind."

The tall alien dropped onto the deck and peered down the hatch. "What is your need?"

Chen spouted technical jargon. Tinian crouched and tried to

translate. "You're going to suffocate," piped up Flirt. "That's the long and the short of it. Then what happens to me?"

"We've got less than an hour of air left," Tinian sniffed. *Maybe less.* "We lost a lot."

Agapos raised up on long arms. He looked like a long-legged, tailless turquoise newt. "You have oxywater tanks."

Tinian bristled. How had he known *that*? Inside the largest compartment, Chen's small cloning cylinder wasn't a genuine Spaarti, but the homebrew apparatus gave good, fast-and-dirty results. Chen had squeezed the last drops of Agapos' blood out of his medjector into its production chamber. It would create enough differentiated tissue to convince pay agents that Chenlambec, known in hunt circles as "the Raging Wookiee," had once again brought in all that was left of the corpse.

Maybe Agapos could smell oxywater, the way she smelled explosives. "Yes," she said, "but we need that tissue."

Agapos drew in his long legs and unfolded himself upright. "We need oxygen first. I can cavitate dissolved oxygen from oxywater."

Tinian had supervised cavitation at l'att Armament: high-energy ultrasound could energize dissolved gases out of a liquid. "Chen!" She bent down. "Did you hear that?"

He wurfled and kept working.

An alarm klaxon shrilled. "Twenty seconds!" she cried.

Chen leaped through the hatch, silvertip fur flying. He swung into the pilot's seat as easily as if he were climbing a tree.

"Get secure," Tinian ordered Agapos. "We're about to drop out of hyperspace. Just for a minute. This is an intermediate jump."

"To put off pursuit?" Agapos scrambled aft. He moved well for a mystic.

Tinian left the hatch open. "Exactly. But we can't jump three times. Not if we want to get to Tekra Point breathing." Tekra Point was an aging colony ship, stolen from the Empire and refitted with one Rebel's family treasure. Chen often dropped "acquisitions" here, close to a populated world. So he claimed. She hadn't seen it yet.

Her seat lurched. The starlines shrank to points. Chen bent over the nav computer.

**T**oalar strained, listening through his perceptor cones for any faint buzz of the Force. The elegant Imperial shuttle's onboard relays almost deafened him. Hoil gripped the throttles, preparing to



drop back into real space. Agapos' presence had lingered in the Sunesian control room. Here, Toalar hoped he might sense — Pain! "They're here!" he exclaimed. "Track them again!"

**M**ost of an hour later, Tinian stood at Agapos' shoulder, Chen beside the pilot's station. They'd all donned oxygen masks and pony bottles. Chen's bottle indicator already glowed red.

It'd been close — scary close — when they dropped out of hyperspace to find an Imperial ship right on their tail. Chen had rushed his second jump. They might miss Tekra Point by light-years.

Flirt had isolated the oxywater tanks. Chen had strained tissue into a sample jar, then turned over the tanks to Agapos.

"Protect your ears." Agapos upended a collection bottle and snapped down connectors.

Tinian backed to the opposite bulkhead and smashed both hands against the sides of her head.

Then Agapos screamed. Ultrasonic vibrations echoed off elliptical bulkheads. Her body vibrated. Her cheeks flushed. She felt woozy. Chen keened.

Agapos drew a deep breath. "Are you all right?"

So that was how he'd have killed them. Chen howled. "I'm fine," she retorted. "Are you?"

"Is it working?" chirped Flirt.

Agapos flicked the collection bottle. "From this much oxywater, I can get you there. Yes. Another gift. This one, of appreciation."

"If we're on course," Tinian muttered bitterly. "Go ahead."

Agapos opened his mouth as if to address her again, then shook his head and turned away.

Tinian braced herself.

**C**hen was easing the *Wroshyr* into a docking cradle when another ship appeared on its sensors. "Him again!" Tinian cried around her oxygen mask.

Chen growl-barked.

"Get ready to run," she warned Agapos. He'd kept her talking while the collection bottles emptied again, shielding her from boredom and fear. He understood sorrow; his bondmate had also died. He'd sympathized with her recurring dream of frantically

running, dodging blaster fire, never daring to look back. And he'd left her something to chew on: "Love and loyalty must both be sustained by sacrifice. Until we can learn to return good for evil, there will be no tranquility."

Impractical, but it ennobled her memory of Daye. She would've liked to embrace Agapos, but her hands were full of maneuvering throttles. She was still learning to fly this rustbucket.

"They will refit you?" Agapos asked.

"They're standing by." Chen had explained his need, and the rush.

The side hatch clanged. Tinian released the lock. "Good-bye," she called over her shoulder. "Good luck."

"I thank you —"

The hatch popped. Agapos jumped offship. Three humans leaped on. Chen barked.

"Underdeck," Tinian translated. "Hurry."

**S**tationers jammed Tekra Point's lounge corridor, some unwashed and unkempt and others in uniform, all trying to get into the lounge. Toalar sighed. "No use," he droned. "We'll have to come back."

"No, we won't," muttered Woyiq. "If I have to hike up a level and rip out the deck, we'll see Agapos."

"Follow me." Hoil plunged into the crowd.

Daye clung to Woyiq's shoulders. His legs dangled over Woyiq's arms. Grumbling stationers backed off when they saw that Hoil was Sunesian. Daye swallowed his pride and hung on.

They reached an open area designed to accommodate 20 or 30. Daye guessed this crowd at 50 or more. On one of several loungers near a bulkhead sat another Sunesi. Through the Force, Daye felt his presence like a damped energy furnace.

Agapos spotted Hoil. "Friend," he trilled, and then, "Let these people through."

Hoil stalked across a sea of cross-legged stationers. Behind Woyiq, Toalar was probably coming.

Daye saw only Agapos. The priest-prince's presence prickled like bacta. Agapos' long, silvery-gray, sleeved tunic draped in long folds over the faded brown lounge. His brow crests stood out strongly, more like Hoil's than Nee's. "Who are these people?" he asked.

Hoil touched one knee to the deck. "Rebels and friends," he answered. "Beekay's ships would have destroyed you."



"Understandable mistake." Agapos extended his palms. "The Tekrans supplied my ... abductors with replacement parts. They remained docked for less than a minute."

"I know," murmured Daye. He'd been relieved and heartsick, a crazy-making pair of emotions.

"You were the ones who followed us?" Agapos asked.

"Yes. This one —" Hoil pointed up at Daye. " — realized you were shipboard. He seems to know the hunters who abducted you."

Agapos eyed Daye. "Your name, brother-son? No, wait. You are uncomfortable." He flicked his tunic folds closer and beckoned to Woyiq. "Seat him beside me."

**"There is much good in you, but your pride and your pain make you a lesser man. Give your life to service, and you will save it."**

Woyiq let Daye slip out of his arms. Daye could scarcely believe this was happening. He had met Agapos. He was sitting beside Agapos.

"Now," said the priest-prince. "Your name?"

"Daye Azur-Jamin."

Agapos stared. Tinian had undoubtedly told the priest-prince he was dead. What else had she said?

Agapos rocked onto his feet and raised his arms. "Friends and brothers," he called, "thanks for your welcome. I must speak with these persons. May we continue our fellowship later?"

The crowd dispersed quietly, as if Agapos inspired politeness. The seedy lounge emptied except for Agapos, Hoil — seated at the priest-prince's left hand — Woyiq, cross-legged at his feet, and Toalar ... who stood several paces away, pressing one hand to his head as if it ached miserably.

Agapos laid a hand on Daye's shoulder. "She is sick with grief," he murmured. "Why have you deceived her?"

Guilt jabbed Daye. "So I could give myself to the Rebellion. It was better, sir — to let her think I had died — than to let her see me like this." He splayed both hands on his legs.

"You too are grieving, for the loss of your old life. She would care for you as you are."

"Yes," Daye began, "but —"

"You made a great sacrifice, brother-son. But you are too proud of it."

Daye blinked. Proud? "The Imperials did kill her grandparents."

"Yes. Poor child. And what of her parents?"

"She never knew them." From a fellow employee, Daye had learned only that Tinian's mother abandoned her before vanishing. "You say she is ill?"

"She is trying to kill her capacity to love. She may succeed."

Daye stared at his hands. It might've been better to have died than to hear this.

"It is not all your doing," said Agapos. "She chooses this. Chenlambec tries to dissuade her."

Daye had tried to imagine that unconventional bounty hunter. "What is he like?"

"Courageous. Intelligent. She does not realize how deeply he cares for her."

Daye covered his eyes. He ached all over, especially his heart.

"How were you injured?" Agapos asked quietly.

Telling his story gave Daye no pleasure.

"You made certain you would harm no one else," Agapos observed.

Daye nodded, warmed against his will by Agapos' presence. "I tried. I didn't try to save myself."

"Are you still in pain?"

"Always," he admitted. His legs were nerve-blocked, but the shoulder throbbed almost constantly.

"Pain is easy to control with the Force. You are already doing it ... somewhat."

Daye laid his hand over Agapos'. "I believe you can help me. Your disciple, Nee, showed me how to heal my sight."

Agapos turned to the others. "Excuse us for a moment. You, particularly," he addressed Toalar. "We have not spoken, but I know you helped move events. Thank you."

"Pleasure is mine," grunted Toalar.

"I will not be offended if you leave," Agapos assured him. "We will speak over the comlink. I hold you in highest regard, but my presence pains Gotals."

Toalar's red eyes brightened. "Thank you," he exclaimed. He galloped out.

"Now," Agapos turned back to Daye. "You can do much yourself, using the Force. Try ..."

Ten minutes later, Daye sat straighter. As Agapos claimed, pain control was not difficult. He'd needed only to be taught.

"Join the Sunesi way," Agapos said gently. "You could eventually heal yourself."

"Eventually?" Daye's spirit sank again.



"Your eyes were healed by the Maker," insisted Agapos. "To show you it could be done. *Sifu mungu*," he sang, smiling.

It had to be true. He'd expended no effort. "Yes," said Daye.

"Your spirit needs healing, too. There is much good in you, but your pride and your pain make you a lesser man. Give your life to service, and you will save it."

Daye hesitated. Was this destiny, or a heartwarming temptation?

"I would be pleased to teach you. The greatest gift is serving individuals, not —" He opened his hands to the empty room. "— transmitting to the teeming galaxy."

"Tinian and Chenlambec save one life at a time," Daye agreed. "Agapos, please stay in hiding. For the sake of your safety ... and theirs. Chenlambec and Tinian risk their lives to save others." He should have known she wouldn't make a judgment error!

"My people will grieve," Agapos objected.

"Send Hoil back." Daye glanced past Agapos at the other Sunesi.

"He can relay the secret."

"Deception is never wise," Agapos answered. "I myself might have killed your dearest friends."

Hoil raised a hand. "Master, the stationers have kept this place secret."

"True."

"When we must protect information from Imperial intelligence, it can be done."

The priest-prince folded his hands. "Very well. I shall remain in hiding. I shall take another name. But I shall double my writing speed."

"Wonderful," murmured Hoil.

"I will have nothing to distract me. I will have no followers to nurture. Unless this brother-son will help me?" He raised a brow crest at Daye.

Agapos would need a new identity, and a technologically knowledgeable aide to help transmit his essays. Daye wanted to agree; he felt deeply honored; but how much of this longing was a selfish desire to be whole, one day ... and reveal himself, healed, to Tinian?

"Good," said Agapos softly. "That sense is humility. The Tekrans tell me they maintain a safeworld. There we could disseminate my writings. And I hear they build arms for the Rebellion." Agapos crinkled his silvery lips. "I'm told you were a skilled researcher."

Tinian had smuggled two of his c-boards off Druckenwell, hoping someone might redevelop I'att Armament's anti-energy field. Some day. She'd left them with Una Poot ... and Toalar would shortly



report back. Suddenly he saw his future. "Take me as your aide, then," he said, "or your acolyte."

Agapos inclined his head. "In time, perhaps, my disciple. But count the cost. Some day, I will ask a difficult penance."

Daye raised an eyebrow.

"We must seek out your Tinian, brother-son."

**C**hen scrambled up the deck hatch.

"All patched in?" Tinian still quivered, but Agapos' screams hadn't injured her permanently. Already the *Wroshyr* — the *Wrusty*, it ought to be called — smelled better.



Chen tossed his head and howled.

"Good as new," echoed Flirt. Tinian had polished her until she shone ... and made a new friend. "Better, in some places. Did you see that second mechanic? What a hunk —"

Tinian had no patience with hunks. "Fine," she interrupted. "Next stop, Ookbat. Payday. Is this the best bounty you ever took?"

Chen tucked his dark chin to his silvery chest and chuckled.

"Right," she sighed. He was infuriatingly generous. "Most of it goes to Una Poot. But may I make a request?"

Chen woofed and laid his hand on her arm.

"No, *Ng'hrh*." Fondly, she tugged his soft fur. "Not that. I don't need pretty things. But the *Wroshyr* could use better shielding."

Howled laughter rattled its pitted bulkheads.

"That's funny?" Flirt squeaked. "Boss, you owe her an I'att blaster at least! She saved your life again. Remember Agapos' transmitter room."

Tinian glared. "Flirt! Never say that to a Wookiee!"

Chen crooned a soft reproach.

"Well." Tinian shrugged. "Okay. If it makes you want to upgrade!"



**Author's note:** Most of Agapos' "sayings" are based on the words of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, who fanned a revolution not-so-long ago in this galaxy. As Jefferson wrote, "I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."

## Roleplaying Game Statistics

### ■ Daye Azur-Jamin

**Type:** Young Intellectual

#### DEXTERITY 1D

Blaster 4D+2, blaster: hold-out blaster 5D, brawling parry 2D+2, dodge 2D+2, grenade 2D, melee combat 2D, melee parry 2D+2

#### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 6D, business 5D+2, languages 4D+1, streetwise 6D, survival 5D+1

#### MECHANICAL 2D+1

Beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, starship shields 4D

#### PERCEPTION 4D

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

#### STRENGTH 1D+2

Brawling 2D, climbing/jumping 2D+2, stamina 5D+2

#### TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D, demolition 6D, droid programming 4D+2, droid repair 5D, first aid 4D, repulsorlift repair 3D+2, security 5D

#### Special Abilities:

**Force Skills:** Control 2D, sense 2D+2

**Control:** Control pain

**Sense:** Life detection, magnify senses

## Monor II: Kline Colony

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Temperate

**Atmosphere:** Type III (breath mask required)

**Hydrosphere:** Dry

**Gravity:** Standard

**Terrain:** Mountain, plain, plateau

**Length of Day:** 28 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 378 local days

**Sapient Species:** Sunesi (N), humans

**Starport:** Standard class

**Population:** 18 million Sunesis, 5,000 humans

**Planet Function:** Homeworld, Imperial colony

**Government:** Imperial administrator

**Tech Level:** Space

**Major Exports:** Cirrifog

**Major Imports:** Mid and high technology

**Capsule:** From space, Monor II is a pristine opaline globe. But when visitors descend into the atmosphere, they find that glow comes from microcrystals floating and shimmering in the air: cirrifog. The local Sunesis can survive in cirrifog, and the process by which their juveniles transform into adults depends on the microcrystals. While the cirrifog particles are harmless when in contact with skin and ocular organs, they are quite dangerous if inhaled by non-Sunesis. The microcrystals shred delicate internal respiratory organs, so visitors going outside protected structures on Monor II wear breath masks or at least nostril filters. Protective polarized goggles are also helpful during the bright days, as the cirrifog brilliantly reflects sunlight everywhere. Humans and adult Sunesis live together in sealed buildings with filtered air, although juvenile Sunesis cannot survive without cirrifog.

Yet cirrifog was the reason humans first came to Monor II. Many came to the planet seeking sanctuary. But the Empire was not far off. Led by prospector Eujustus Kline, miners working for the Solgg Chemical Company soon established a colony in his name. Supported by Imperial forces, the colonists began extracting cirrifog from Monor II's atmosphere, processing and shipping it off to the Core Worlds. The processing and extraction plants are protected by guarded perimeters, and Rebel analysts suspect the Empire has found a military use for cirrifog. If this large-scale extraction continues, it will make it impossible for the Sunesi to live outdoors — pupating juveniles will only survive in domes only where cirrifog environments are maintained.



This character is Force-sensitive

**Force Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 2

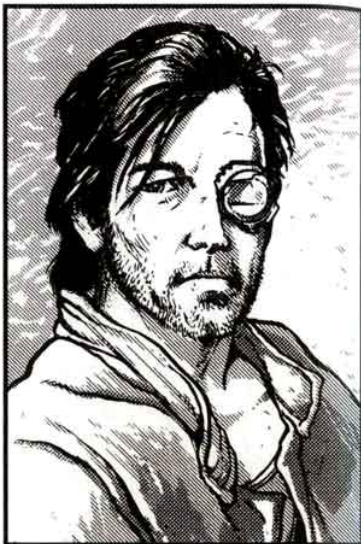
**Capsule:** Although severely injured, Daye is a young man of undiminished determination and intelligence, with a passionate belief in doing what's right — even if it means putting himself in danger again. He and Tinian intended to marry on Druckenwell, but when the Empire stepped in, he personally sabotaged l'att Armament's research and production facility to keep the prototype shielded armor out of Imperial hands. Toalar, a Gotal freedom fighter, and Woyiq, Toalar's Human companion, pulled Daye from the rubble. Unfortunately, they could not get him proper medical attention in time, and Daye has subsequently lost a great deal of mobility. After reaching Una Poot, a Rebel contact, Daye decided he would continue the fight against the Empire whatever way he could, despite his broken body.

Daye is sensitive to the Force, and is a shrewd judge of character. Although untrained in the ways of the Jedi, he has slowly been learning to manipulate the Force from others more experienced with the mystical energy than himself. Una Poot helped set him in the right direction, but Agapos just might be the right teacher for him.

### Toalar and Woyiq

This Gotal and Human pair secretly work for the Rebel Alliance. They began as scouts and gunrunners and are now working with Daye Azur-Jamin to smuggle arms to the Sunesis. The two have been trying to forge new Rebel contacts and start Rebel cells on new planets where resistance could hinder the Empire.

**Toalar.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 5D+2, *dodge* 3D+2, *streetwise* 4D+2, *survival* 5D, *Perception* 5D, *command* 6D, *investigation* 7D, *search* 6D, *sneak* 6D+2, *Strength* 2D+1. **Move:** 10. Energy sensitivity (+3D *search*), fast initiative (+1D on initiative), mood detection (for more information on Gots, see *Galaxy Guide* 4: *Alien Races*, page 48). **Force Points:** 3, **Character Points:** 11. *Blaster pistol* (4D), *datapad*, 250 credits.



Woyiq is Toalar's sidekick, offering his strength while relying on the Gotal's cunning. He is a hulking, good-hearted human — when asked about his past, he has been known to weep, but never talks.

**Woyiq.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 4D, *brawling* parry 5D, *melee combat* 5D+2, *melee parry* 5D, *intimidation* 4D+1, *Strength* 4D, *brawling* 6D, *lifting* 5D. **Move:** 10.

### ■ Sunesis (adult phase)

**Attribute Dice:** 12D

**DEXTERITY** 2D/4D

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D/4D+2

**MECHANICAL** 1D/3D+1

**PERCEPTION** 2D/4D+2

**STRENGTH** 1D/3D

**TECHNICAL** 1D/3D

**Special Abilities:**

**Ultrasound:** Adult Sunesis' cranial melons allow them to perceive and emit ultrasound frequencies, giving them +1D to *Perception* rolls involving hearing. Modulation of their ultrasound emissions may have other applications than for communication, but little is known of these at this time.

**Move:** 8/11

**Size:** 1.5–2.1 meters tall

**Capsule:** The natives of Monor II are called the Sunesis, which in their language means "pilgrims." They are a unique alien species which passes through two distinct physiological stages, the juvenile and the adult.

This metamorphosis from juvenile stage to adult Sunesi has predisposed these aliens to concepts of life after death. They view their role in the galaxy as pilgrims, traveling along one path to fulfill a destiny before they are uprooted, change, and are set along a new path.

To outsiders Sunesis in the juvenile phase seem to be little more than mindless beasts on the verge of sentience. They are covered in black fur, and have primitive eyes and ear holes with no flaps in their head region. The juvenile's primary function is eating, and they are ravenous creatures. Monor II is covered with lush, succulent plant growth, and the Sunesi juveniles drink nectars and sap from many species of long stringy plants. To tap into these nutritious plants, juveniles have long, curling feeding tubules they thrust through drilling mouthparts. These specially shaped mouths do not allow formation of speech; however, juveniles are intelligent, particularly during the later years in their state.

When juveniles approach adulthood, they enter a metamorphosis stage. Just before late-juveniles enter the change, they begin to excrete a cirrifog-derived "sweat" that hardens like plaster. When they awake from metamorphosis, they must escape the hardened shells on their own, without adult assistance.

The length of pupation in these cirrifog cocoons varies. Some pupae mature fully and discover how to use their new mouths; any pupa who cries for help is assisted to freedom. Some, however, neither cry out nor develop the strength to break through. They generally starve to death inside the shells. Although some juveniles die in metamorphosis, they all look forward to it, because the adult phase is more mobile, has speech



and prehensile digits.

In the adult phase, Sunesi have hairless, turquoise skin and a vaguely amphibian yet pleasing appearance. Silvery ridges show through the skin where bone is present just beneath the surface, and muscles are attached to the sides of bony ridges. Their foreheads sport two cranial melon lobes which allow them to communicate using ultrasound, giving the local Imperials cause to call Sunesi adults "lumpheads." Sunesis have large, round dark eyes framed by brow crests, and their ears are round and swivel. They clothe their slender bodies in long-sleeved tunics.

## ■ Agapos IX

**Type:** Sunesi Priest-Prince

**DEXTERITY 3D**

**KNOWLEDGE 4D+2**

Alien species 5D, scholar: religions 5D+2, willpower 6D

**MECHANICAL 2D**

**PERCEPTION 4D+2**

Command 5D, persuasion 6D, persuasion: debate 7D, persuasion: oratory 8D+1

**STRENGTH 2D**

**TECHNICAL 1D+2**

**Special Abilities:**

*Force Skills:* Control 3D, sense 4D, alter 3D

*Control:* Accelerate healing, control pain, reduce injury, resist stun

*Sense:* Life detection, life sense, receptive telepathy, sense Force

*Control and Alter:* Accelerate another's healing, control another's pain, return another to consciousness

*Ultrasound:* Adult Sunesis' cranial melons allow them to perceive and emit ultrasound frequencies, giving them +1D to *Perception* rolls involving hearing. Modulation of their ultrasound emissions may have other applications than for communication, but little is known of these at this time.

**This character is Force-sensitive.**

**Force Points:** 5

**Character Points:** 16

**Move:** 9

**Capsule:** Even before metamorphosis, Agapos was atypical—even for an offspring of the priestly, often Force-sensitive caste. During his early juvenile stage, when most Sunesi doze for days or weeks with their feeding tubules thrust into one Monor's lush, succulent rawuh stems, Agapos was known to feed quickly so he could spend more of his days "drinking up knowledge"—normally a characteristic only of older, pre-pubescent juveniles. He stopped eating earlier than his contemporaries, pupated



nearly twice as long, and emerged without struggling. He was immediately inducted into the priesthood. His obvious talents in leadership, healing, and communication brought Agapos early recognition. His father and predecessor, Agapos VIII, took early retirement in favor of his gifted son.

As ruling priest-prince, Agapos was one of the first Sunesis to oppose Imperial prospecting under Eujustus Kline. He objected vehemently to Monor's annexation as a "mineral resource." Once cirrifog removal began in earnest, he was forced to spend less and less time advising his followers in spiritual matters, devoting himself to political writing.

## ■ Bee-Kay-Four (Beekay)

**Type:** BK-series Administrative Protocol Droid

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Bureaucracy 6D, business 5D+2, law enforcement 5D, streetwise 5D

**MECHANICAL 1D**

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 4D, investigation 5D, persuasion 4D+2

**STRENGTH 1D**

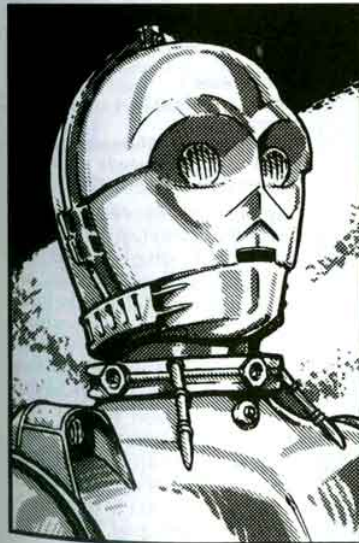
**TECHNICAL 1D**

**Equipped With:**

- Humanoid body (two arms, two legs, head, torso)
- Two visual and aural sensors
- Vocaluator speech/sound system
- AA-1 VerboBrain
- Comnet uplink

**Move:** 8

**Size:** 1.8 meters tall



**Capsule:** Manufactured in the Core Worlds, Bee-Kay-Four is a top-of-the-line protocol droid. He was originally programmed for planetary management, ordered to secure the highest good for the greatest number of individuals. His programmer particularly weighted assistance to persons who were otherwise "helpless," like minority groups and abandoned young.

When Senator Palpatine consolidated power, he granted dictatorship of a minor world to one of his friends, who promptly purchased Beekay. The new dictator enhanced Beekay's knowledge and memory functions to illegal levels, but he also subjected Beekay to frequent (and, to a droid, hideously painful) memory flushes; otherwise, Beekay's original programming would have un-



dermined the new dictator's operations.

When one of the dictator's aides heard of a plot to replace him with a more enthusiastic supporter of Palpatine's policies, he stole Beekay and a shuttle and fled. Hoping only to hide, he programmed a random hyperspace jump that placed him near the Monor System. Agapos VIII gave them refuge. Beekay's owner no longer needed a protocol droid. He gave Beekay to the Sunesian dynasty in return for amnesty and provisioning. Shortly thereafter, Agapos VIII retired. He gave Beekay to his son, Agapos IX.

## ■ Tinian l'att

**Type:** Young Refugee

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster: hold-out blaster 5D, dodge 4D+2, grenade 4D+1, running 4D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 5D+2, business 6D, languages: Wookiee 6D+2, streetwise 5D, survival 4D+1, value 4D+2, willpower 4D+2

**MECHANICAL 2D**

**PERCEPTION 3D+2**

Bargain 6D, command 6D, con 4D+2, hide 4D+2, persuasion 5D+2, search 6D, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH 2D**

Climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 4D**

Computer programming/repair 5D+1, demolition 7D+2, droid programming 5D, droid repair 4D+2, security 6D

**Special Abilities:**

*Explosives Expertise:* Tinian is especially knowledgeable about explosives, including their composition, construction and applications. She gets a +1D bonus to any skill rolls involving explosives.

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Bits of fuse wire, blaster pistol (4D), homemade explosive charges (5D), several outfits

**Capsule:** Seventeen-year-old Tinian fled the industrial world of Druckenwell, where the Empire took over her grandparents' armament factory. Killed in the takeover were both of her grandparents, her beloved Wookiee bodyguard Wrrl, and — she believes — her fiancé, Daye Azur-Jamin. Tinian has turned cold — her ability to open herself up to others as she did with Daye is gone. She considers herself completely alone in the galaxy, overshadowed by her own grief, and seems



to care about nothing. Tinian insists she'd just as soon die as live. But before she dies, she wants to hurt the Empire as badly as possible.

She's channeled this revenge into a bounty hunter apprenticeship with the Wookiee hunter Chenlambec. Although Tinian frequently lapses into her cold feelings, Chen tries to veer her toward a more promising outlook on life.

Growing up in the l'att Armament tradition, Tinian served in almost every capacity at the company's chief research and production facility on Druckenwell — droid programming, material procurement, line inspections, quality control and even security. Through her involvement in l'att Armament, she gained an intimate knowledge of explosives, including the ability to identify certain explosive compounds by texture and odor.

## ■ Chenlambec

**Type:** Wookiee Hunter

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Bowcaster 11D, dodge 7D+2, grenade 3D+1, melee combat 7D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 5D+2, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 5D+2

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Starfighter piloting 4D

**PERCEPTION 2D**

Investigation 2D+1, search 2D+2

**STRENGTH 6D**

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 6D+1, stamina 6D+2

**TECHNICAL 1D**

Security 2D

**Special Abilities:**

*Berserker Rage:* +2D to Strength or brawling in berserker rage

*Climbing Claws:* +2 to climbing

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 13

**Move:** 15

**Equipment:** IPKC bounty hunter license, comlink, datapad, light repeating blaster (6D), magnetic binders, medpac, neural inhibitor (5D stun), synthrope, Wookiee bowcaster (4D), black leather bandolier studded with apparently decorative silver cubes, small aging ship (*Wroshyr*), 500 credits

**Capsule:** This determined Wookiee was once a peace-loving being far removed from galactic politics. One night he killed an Imperial officer he found beating a defenseless Wookiee child. Forced to escape Kashyyyk, he emerged in the galactic underworld with





a false identity: Chenlambec the Wookiee bounty hunter. He refuses to speak of his previous life.

Chenlambec accepts only "dead or alive" assignments for Rebels and escaped slaves. The Empire believes he has never brought back an acquisition alive. In reality, the Wookiee helps his "victims" escape to freedom. No one has ever connected the mysterious deaths of several Imperial officers to the "raging Wookiee," as he is known. Contrary to his often intimidating appearance, Chen can be a very caring individual, as shown recently in his foster relationship with the wayward human, Tinian I'att.

Chenlambec's appearance is stunning—he is 2.2 meters tall with blue eyes. His dark brown fur is tipped in silver, projecting a shimmering, grizzled "silvertip" image.

**Wroshyr.** Starfighter, maneuverability 2D, space 5, atmosphere 295; 850 kmh, hull 3D, shields 1D. Weapons: 2 laser cannons (fire control 1D, damage 4D).

### Star Wars Adventure Journal: Under Construction

The *Official Star Wars Adventure Journal* will be undergoing some changes. The new *Journal* will bring you even more great *Star Wars* short stories by your favorite best-selling and up-and-coming authors, with supplemental game and source material.

In order to facilitate this change, the *Journal* will be published only three times a year: February, May and November. No issue will be published in August 1996.

Thanks for reading *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal*. We hope you'll join us again when the *Journal* returns in November 1996.



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# Cracken's Rebel Operatives

The Divis Arm, known for its considerable Rebel activity, is renowned for generating some of the quite infamous operatives in service of the

Alliance. Among these groups is the Shroud Team, a rag-tag group under the command of the legend Dutra Zeneta, a veteran of the Scandium Team

and survivor of the Wellte-ir Massacre. The Shroud Team serves in many capacities, among them as Foster Agents, one of the most dangerous positions for Alliance agents. Welcome to the ranks of the team and their stomping grounds ...



## The Shroud Team

The Shroud Team, based in the heart of Corinth City, is an effective Foster unit that returns "orphaned" (displaced) Rebel operatives to their original base of operations, or provides them a means of returning to the Alliance (for more information on Foster Agents, see page 21 of *Galaxy Guide 9: Fragments from the Rim*).

The group has been stationed in Corinth City for only the last seven standard (11 local) months, but in that time has relocated — and thus saved — an amazing 16 orphaned agents. Their rate of success has earned the Shroud operatives a great deal of respect among other Foster Agents, and that is often a feat in itself.

### ADDENDUM/PERSONAL CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*The Shroud Team has been a blessing to those agents in the Divis Arm in need of Foster Agents. Agent Tynan's recent assignment in the region turned for the worse when some of her sources proved unreliable, and only through the efforts of Lieutenant Zeneta and his team did she survive.*

*It is also refreshing to see a veteran of the Scandium Team set aside his pain and memories and use his abundant skill and knowledge to train a new generation of Alliance agents.*

In addition to their duties as Foster Agents, the Shroud Team also occasionally manages to steal provisions and equipment for the Alliance. The team acquires the equipment not only for their own use, but for the use

of those operatives under their care. Some of the equipment is distributed to other units and cells operating within the Divis Arm (the team is the only unit operating within the Pirik system at this time).

## Dutra Zeneta

**Operative Role:** Foster Agent, team commander

**Current Location:** Corinth City, Pirik

**Species:** Jin

**Sex:** Male

**Age:** 74

Lieutenant Dutra Zeneta is the leader of Shroud Team and a highly decorated operative. A middle-aged Jin male, Lieutenant Zeneta requested a Foster Agent assignment soon after serving his twentieth mission with Alliance Intelligence. Facing retirement or a desk job, Zeneta convinced Alliance High Command to not only approve his request, but to grant him the command of an entire Foster unit, among the first of its kind. Such a position is an extremely perilous undertaking — General Vernan expressed a suspicion that Zeneta was trying to get

himself killed with such a request.

Upon confirmation of his new assignment, Zeneta quickly formed the unit and the team was inserted into Corinth City: a prime source of Alliance sympathizers and potential recruits, but also one of the refuges of many Alliance operatives on the run.

When Dutra Zeneta joined the Alliance shortly after the subjugation of his homeworld, little was known about him. His life virtually began with the Alliance, and he considers himself a Rebel before all else. His reedy body is



a collection of ragged scars and once near-mortal wounds. As one of the few surviving members of his former unit, the Scandium Team, he is known to have survived some of the more perilous assignments given an Alliance operative, including not only the Wellte-ir Massacre, but also the Vidicx and Loac Campaigns. For the majority of his service with the Scandium Team, Zeneta commanded



the team's Unit Theta, a group of crack operatives known for their extremely high success (and mortality) rate.

As Dutra's body shows evidence of his past, so does his psyche. A skilled tactician and

effective infiltrator, Lieutenant Zeneta exhibits much of the cynicism inherent in members of his tragedy-marred unit. He is often depressed and short of temper, and suffers from recurrent nightmares. Despite these difficulties, he believes in the Rebellion and its potential to achieve victory, and is (overall) a warm figure. He treats those under his command and those who come under his care extremely well, but prefers to spend much of his off-time alone.

Those under his command and those to whom Dutra Zeneta answers have the highest respect for the Jin operative, particularly in light of his past experiences. He is often able to relate a situation the Shroud unit encounters to one his former unit dealt with, and use those skills or lessons quite well. Many of the valuable lessons Dutra learned during his difficult years with the Scandium Team have saved his new team from similar disasters. He makes a very sincere effort to not only relate those experiences, but any and all advice. He knows all too well he has much to offer his companions.

#### ■ Dutra Zeneta

Type: Jin Commando

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 6D+1, blaster: heavy blaster

rifle 8D, brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 6D+1, grenade 5D, melee combat 6D+1, melee parry 5D, vehicle blaster 4D+1

#### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 4D, bureaucracy 5D, cultures 4D+1, intimidation 5D+2, languages 6D, law enforcement 5D+2, streetwise 6D+1, streetwise: Corint City 6D+2, survival 6D, survival: urban 6D+1, willpower 6D+2

#### MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 4D+2, beast riding 3D+2, beast riding: Cracian thumper 4D+1, capital ship gunnery 3D+2, communications 4D+2, powersuit operation 3D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, sensors 4D, space transports 5D+2, starfighter piloting: Z-95 Headhunter 3D+2, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D+2, swoop operation 3D+2, walker operation: AT-ST 4D+1

#### PERCEPTION 3D+2

Command 5D+2, command: Shroud Team 6D, con 4D+2, forgery 4D+2, hide 7D, search 5D, sneak 6D+2

#### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, lifting 4D, stamina 5D+2, swimming 3D+2

#### TECHNICAL 2D+1

Computer programming/repair 4D+1, demolition 5D+1, droid programming 4D+1, droid repair 4D+1, first aid 5D+1, repulsorlift repair 4D+1, security 6D+1, space transports repair 4D+1, starship weapon repair 3D+1

#### Special Abilities:

**Vision:** Jin can see in the infrared spectrum, allowing them to see in complete darkness with no penalties, provided there are heat sources.

#### Story Factors:

**Depression:** Zeneta often suffers from nightmares and depression as a result of the trauma suffered while a member of the Scandium Team some years ago. Zeneta must make a Moderate willpower check every day to avoid falling into depression. When he fails that roll, all his skills and attributes suffer a -1D penalty.

**Force Points:** 2

**Dark Side Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 17

#### Move: 10

**Equipment:** Civilian clothes, 2 grenades (5D), headset comlink, holo of his former unit, modified heavy blaster rifle (6D+1)

### Scandium Team

Scandium Team was a unit formed in the earliest days of the Alliance, some time before the formal Declaration of Rebellion. The unit was based in the Tharin sector, though it worked in virtually every corner of the galaxy. At its peak the unit had 28 operatives divided into four units. Through a series of tragic missions and perilous adventures, all but six of the operatives died in the line of duty. In Alliance SpecForces, the Scandium Team is legendary, and in light of the missions it accomplished, highly regarded for having any surviving members.

Those remaining members of the Scandium Team continue to serve the Rebel cause, though they seldom — if ever — work with their old partners. The team's tragic history makes it difficult for the former operatives to be in one another's company for too long, as the topic of conversation always seems to turn to their old days and to the bitter memories of friends lost.

### The Jin

Zeneta's species, the Jin, are seldom-encountered aliens indigenous to the Zchtek worlds in the Mid-Rim. Gangly reptil-



ians with a culture rich in the arts and literature, their homeworld was brutally subjugated by the Imperials during the early days of Palpatine's New Order. Many of their younger numbers joined the Alliance to help combat the Empire, and their population has therefore dwindled in recent years.

Jin stand an average of 2.1 meters tall, and have long, almost frail-looking legs and arms. Despite their appearance, they are a resilient species. The Jin have short snouts and small teeth, which are evolved from their herbivorous ancestors and therefore less fear-inspiring than some other species' teeth, such as the Barabels. The large black eyes of the Jin are sensitive to

the infrared spectrum, and they can therefore see in the darkness with no difficulty as long as there are heat sources.

The Jins' coloration most often ranges from a ruddy yellow to a dark green, though some of the Jin inhabiting the equatorial regions of the homeworlds tend to sport more brown or orange.

### ■ Jin

**Attribute Dice:** 12D  
**DEXTERITY** 2D/4D+1  
**KNOWLEDGE** 1D/4D  
**MECHANICAL** 1D/3D  
**PERCEPTION** 2D/4D+2  
**STRENGTH** 1D+2/3D+1  
**TECHNICAL** 1D/3D

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Vision:** Jin can see in the infrared spectrum, allowing them to see in complete darkness with no penalties (provided there are heat sources).

**Move:** 8/12

**Size:** 2-2.2 meters tall

## Dheendo

**Operative Role:** Foster Agent

**Current Location:** Corint City, Pirik

**Species:** Rodian **Sex:** Male **Age:** 24

The Rodian Dheendo was once a mediocre bounty hunter under the employ of the minor crimelord Tyu of Kazlin 5. He now serves as Shroud Team's primary Foster Agent, since he is the agent most "orphanned" Rebels know of in the Corint area.

As a bounty hunter Dheendo was never really driven, and therefore never really became very good at his profession. He has found



a new place in the ranks of the Alliance, where he now serves as Lieutenant Zeneta's first officer. He idolizes his Jin commander, and hopes to someday be as "wise" (as Dheendo puts it) as Dutra.

Though the group's chief Foster Agent, Dheendo is extremely fond of Corint City's Lowtown social scene. He spends much of his time in the various establishments in the subterranean regions of the city, and it is often there where he meets with Alliance operatives in need of relocation or redirection. He has a haphazard (but planned) schedule of where he will be when and on what days, so agents in need may find him. The regular patrons of the many places Dheendo frequents, however,

just take him to be a highly social Lowtown denizen ... which is also true.

### ■ Dheendo

**Type:** Rodian Foster Agent

#### **DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 5D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D+1

#### **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Alien species 3D, streetwise 4D+2, streetwise: Corint City 6D, survival 3D+2

#### **MECHANICAL 2D+2**

Astrogation 3D+2, space transports 4D, starship gunnery 4D+2, starship shields 3D+2

#### **PERCEPTION 3D**

Search 4D+2, sneak 5D

#### **STRENGTH 3D+2**

Brawling 5D+2, stamina 4D+2

#### **TECHNICAL 2D**

Security 5D+2

#### **Force Points:** 1

#### **Character Points:** 7

#### **Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, datapad, numerous false IDs, protective vest (+1D+2 physical, +2 energy, torso only), security tool kit.

## Thilis-Brin

**Operative Role:** Foster Agent Technician

**Current Location:** Corint City, Pirik

**Species:** Ishi Tib **Sex:** Female **Age:** 36

Thilis-Brin joined the Alliance just over two years ago, and has progressed rapidly. She graduated first in her class during recruit training, even placing fourth in the desert training seminar — quite an impressive feat, especially considering her species' aquatic nature.

Driven to succeed on a personal level and to do her most to aid in the destruction of the Empire, Thilis-Brin had been

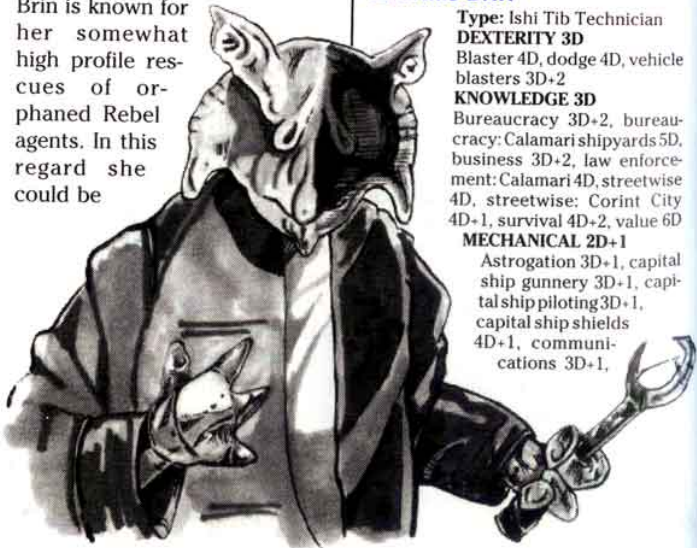
touted as SpecForces material since the day she completed her training. Now with the opportunity to serve under the respected operative Dutra Zeneta and charged with the very perilous mission of Foster Agent, she is more than fulfilling her promise.

Thilis-Brin serves as Shroud Team's chief technician and "procurement specialist" (thief) when some of the more needed



items, particularly vehicles and rations, are in short supply. Prior to her service on Pirik, she worked the Calamari shipyards as a troubleshooter, but eventually wished for a more active role. Thilis-Brin now serves as the secondary Foster Agent in Corint City, after Dheendo. She has not yet decided in what capacity she would like to serve for the duration of the Rebellion, but she has so far very much enjoyed her work with Shroud Team. Her only difficulty is finding the time to make it to the Uloitr Sea every day—some 14 kilometers outside of Corint City's limits—as her physiology requires (see Special Abilities below).

A natural thrill seeker, Thilis-Brin is known for her somewhat high profile rescues of orphaned Rebel agents. In this regard she could be



considered somewhat different from the normal Ishi Tib, a people known for their very mild temperaments. Thilis-Brin is far from mild, and she loves to show it off.

Thilis-Brin is especially proud of the recent high-speed chase in which she led Imperial troops through the Talamp Industrial Sector with a high-ranking Alliance officer her team was protecting. She evaded an entire squadron of Imperial scout troopers, avoided positive identification, and safely delivered her charge. Thilis-Brin credits her many similar successful escapes to her speeder bike, a modified Ikas-Adno Sunwolf, which she uses for her personal transportation.

### ■ Thilis-Brin

**Type:** Ishi Tib Technician  
**DEXTERITY 3D**  
 Blaster 4D, dodge 4D, vehicle blasters 3D+2  
**KNOWLEDGE 3D**  
 Bureaucracy 3D+2, bureaucracy: Calamari shipyards 5D, business 3D+2, law enforcement: Calamari 4D, streetwise 4D, streetwise: Corint City 4D+1, survival 4D+2, value 6D  
**MECHANICAL 2D+1**  
 Astrostation 3D+1, capital ship gunnery 3D+1, capital ship piloting 3D+1, capital ship shields 4D+1, communications 3D+1,

repulsorlift operation 4D+1, repulsorlift operation: speeder bike 5D+1, space transports 4D

### PERCEPTION 3D

### STRENGTH 3D

Stamina 4D+2, swimming 5D

### TECHNICAL 3D+2

Capital starship repair 5D+2, capital starship repair: Nebulon-B 6D+1, capital starship repair: MC-80 7D+2, capital starship weapon repair 5D, computer programming/repair 4D+2, droid programming 4D, droid repair 4D+1, repulsorlift repair 6D+2, repulsorlift repair: speeder bike 7D, security 5D, space transports repair 5D+2, starship weapon repair 5D

### Special Abilities:

**Beak:** The beak of an Ishi Tib does STR+2D damage.

**Planners:** Ishi Tib are natural planners and organizers.

**Immersion:** Thilis-Brin must fully immerse herself (for 10 rounds) in a brine solution similar to the oceans of Tibrin after spending 30 hours out of the water. If she fails to do this, she suffers 1D damage (cumulative) for every hour over 30 that she stays out of the water (roll for damage once per hour, starting at hour 31). The Uloitr Sea near Corint City fulfills this need.

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, speeder bike, tool bag

**Note:** For more information on the Ishi Tib, see pages 54 and 55 of *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races*.

### ■ Sunwolf

**Craft:** Ikas-Adno Sunwolf speeder bike

**Type:** Speeder bike

**Scale:** Speeder

**Length:** 2.8 meters

**Skill:** Repulsorlift operation: speeder bike

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** see Thilis-Brin

**Cover:** 1/4

**Altitude Range:** Ground level-15 meters

**Cost:** 5,500 (new), 1150 (used)

**Maneuverability:** 3D

**Move:** 150; 425 kmh

**Body Strength:** 1D+1

**Weapons:**

#### 1 Laser Cannon

**Fire Arc:** Front

**Skill:** Vehicle blasters

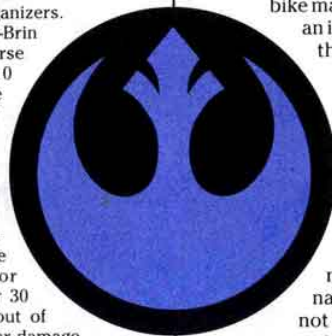
**Fire Control:** 2D

**Range:** 3-50/100/200

**Damage:** 2D+2

**Capsule:** Ikas-Adno's first venture into the military speeder bike market, the Sunwolf is an improved version of the popular civilian Starhawk. While no competition to the faster, more powerful and more expensive Aratech 74-Z, the Sunwolf has found a loyal following among planetary governments and mercenary groups that do not have the Empire's

extensive financial resources. Where the Starhawk has room for a second passenger, the Sunwolf is a one-seater. Aside from the upgrade the Sunwolf has undergone for its military applications, it is nearly identical to its predecessor in appearance. For this reason it has become very popular with many Rebel agents, mercenaries and other such individuals, as it is often mistaken by others for its civilian (and thus harmless) cousin.





## Tamo Lan

**Operative Role:** Foster Agent medic

**Current Location:** Corint City, Pirik

**Species:** Carosite **Sex:** Male **Age:** 28

Tamo Lan, Shroud Four, serves as the unit's medic. He is frequently called upon to not only treat his fellow operatives, but more often to help "orphaned" agents who have been wounded in their flight.

Dr. Lan was raised and trained on Carosi XII, the Carosite homeworld. There he learned the skills that make him an excellent field medic. He has served in a number of locales with the Alliance, including a short campaign on Baes Logia and a brief stint at the Headquarters Base at Yavin shortly before the destruction of the first Death Star.

Tamo left his home system for a combination of two reasons. He wished to enter into the service of the Rebellion, but

he also was pressured out of the area after having killed a Twi'lek slaver who had threatened one of his patients. Like any good Carosite, Tamo protected his charge, but in doing so took another life. While he had not been banished, he knew it would be best if he moved along. The Alliance is where he landed.

Tamo's experience in the Galactic Civil War has changed him a great deal. When he first joined the ranks of the Rebellion, he, like most Carosites,

was considered a hopeless optimist. The ravages of war and the tyranny of the Empire have changed this disposition, and though he is still an optimist, he is not blindly so. He is extremely dedicated to his work, and especially protective of his recently-acquired charge, the Aqualish adolescent Gondara, the



younger sister of Tamo's best friend who recently perished fighting Imperial forces.

Tamo is a young Carosite with dark brown fur and small dark eyes. He carries equipment that would be considered typical of his profession, but also carries a heavy blaster pistol and a knife—not the kind intended for surgical incisions.

### ■ Tamo Lan

**Type:** Carosite Medic

**DEXTERITY 2D+1**

Blaster 3D+2, brawling parry 4D+1, melee combat 3D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien species 6D+2, cultures 4D, languages 4D+2, survival 4D, survival: urban 4D+2

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Astrogation 3D, communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 3D+1, sensors 3D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 3D+2, persuasion 4D

**STRENGTH 2D+2**

Brawling 3D+2, stamina 4D+2

**TECHNICAL 4D+1**

Computer programming/repair 5D+1, droid programming: 2-1B series surgical droid 5D+1, first aid 8D+1, (A) medicine 5D+1, repulsorlift repair 4D+1, security 5D

**Special Abilities:**

**Medical Aptitude:** Carosites automatically have a first aid skill of 5D; they may not add additional skill dice at the time of character creation, but this is a "free skill."

**Protectiveness:** Carosites are incredibly protective of young, patients and other helpless beings. They gain +2D to their brawling skill and damage in combat when acting to protect the helpless.

**Force Points: 1**

**Dark Side Points: 1**

**Character Points: 9**

**Move: 9**

**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, diagnostic computer, heavy blaster pistol (5D), knife (STR+1D), 3 medpacs

**Note:** For more information on the Carosites, see pages 204-206 of the *Star Wars Planets Collection*.

## Gondara

**Operative Role:** Foster Agent

**Current Location:** Corint City, Pirik

**Species:** Aqualish **Sex:** Female **Age:** 17

Gondara is hardly a veteran Rebel agent. She was raised by her older brother Karlon on the Aqualish homeworld Ando until her brother joined the Alliance. Her parents having been killed by Imperial troops months earlier, Gondara was placed on an Alliance safeworld to prevent the Empire from getting to her for her brother's actions. Karlon was recently killed on the fields of Bresnia, and Gondara has

since entered active duty with the Alliance under the guidance of the Shroud Team's medic, Tamo Lan.

Gondara is a skilled thief, but is also quickly developing some of the skills that enable her to serve as Tamo Lan's assistant.

### ■ Gondara

**Type:** Aqualish Teenager

**DEXTERITY 3D+2**

Dodge 4D+1, pickpocket 5D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Alien species 3D+2, languages 3D,





## Corint City

Corint City is a relatively small city by galactic standards, but its dense population and strong economy make it one of the most important urban centers of the Divis Arm. The city is anchored by the Jalor docking facilities. Most of its commerce consists of either the administrative business of the various ytterbium and corintium extraction fields throughout the system, or catering to smugglers and those who work in the mines.

A largely urban sprawl, Corint City is a soaring range of high tower buildings. Most edifices are at least 15 floors, and some, such as the Strak Tower in the financial district, exceed 220 floors. The city also sports extensive subterranean architecture and residences, known locally as Lowtown. Lowtown is where most of the cantinas, bars

streetwise 3D+2, streetwise: Corint City 4D

### MECHANICAL 3D+1

Repulsorlift operation 3D+2

### PERCEPTION 3D+1

Con 4D, hide 5D+1, sneak 5D+1

### STRENGTH 2D+1

Brawling 3D+1, lifting 3D, stamina 4D

### TECHNICAL 2D+2

First aid 4D+2, security 3D+2

**Character Points:** 4

**Move:** 10

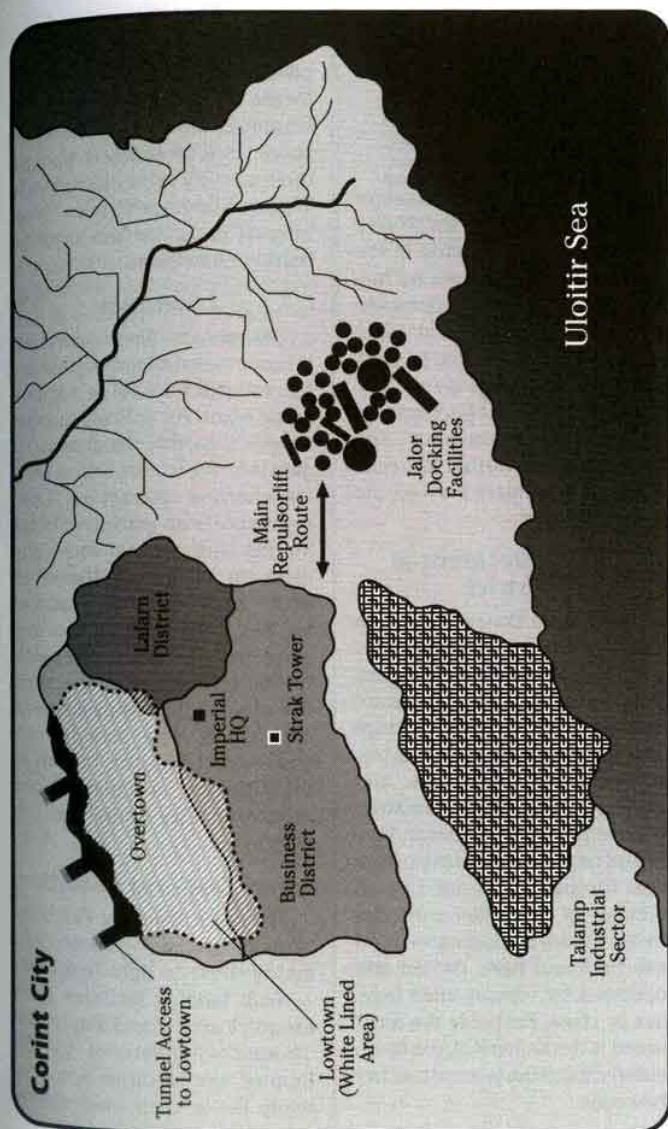
**Equipment:** Club (STR+2), comlink

**Note:** For more information on the Aqualish, see pages 13 and 14 of *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races*.

and such seedier establishments can be found.

Corint City's population is overwhelmingly alien: only approximately five percent (500,000) of the city's estimated 10 million inhabitants are human. Thousands of other species roam the metropolis; the largest alien communities in Corint consist of Rodians, Duros and Trandoshans. The city's high diversity makes it easy for the all-alien Shroud Team to blend in.

Corint City is divided into only a few distinct zones. The business district, the largest of them, is home to a number of mining corporations and other such companies which profit from the rich ore content of the nearby systems. Between the business district and the industrial area (the Talamp District) is a strip



Tim Bock



or rocky, barren land that remains relatively undeveloped. The strip is referred to locally as the "Bounds."

## Talamp Industrial District

Corint City's industrial sector skirts the shores of the Uloitr Sea. Officially designated as the Talamp District, the area is a run-down and dangerous environment that houses several urban gangs, among them two particularly vicious swoop gangs. The area is for the most part ignored by the local bureaucracy, and continues to fall further into ruin. Most Corint citizens avoid the area altogether.

## Lafor Residential District

The Lafor District houses a number of alien denizens, and is very important to Rebel logistics because many of those aliens are Alliance-allied species. A large Wookiee population inhabits one corner of the Lafor area, and there is every so often some strife between those Wookiees and the rather large Trandosha population throughout Corint City. A number of inexpensive restaurants with surprisingly good food can be found here, owned and operated by various alien families or clans. Probably the most noted is the Kalien Kol, run by an elderly Sullustan woman and her two sons.

## Overtown

Overtown is Corint City's pleasure spot for tourists and locals relaxing after work or whatever their daily toils involve. It is populated for the most part by pro-Imperial individuals who have absolutely no interest in the lawless zone directly below them.

## Lowtown

Densely populated, Lowtown is home to just about everything the smuggler, Rebel or fugitive could want. An entirely subterranean area, this dangerous region is home to some extremely treacherous characters. Lowtown sports an extensive black market and several food and drink establishments that often prove to be excellent sources for ill-gotten information and employment. The local Imperial troops seldom patrol the area, but when they do they are swift and harsh. The primary entrances to Lowtown, known as the "Tunnels," are just beyond the Corint City limits, west of Overtown.

## Jalor Docking Facilities

The Jalor Docking Facilities provide spacers — most commonly those in light freighters — with landing facilities ideal for quick arrival and departure. Though administered by the Empire, the facilities are relatively lax in their customs in-

spection. Several repulsor-shuttle systems ferry spacers directly from Jalor to Corint City.

The Jalor area is just outside Corint City proper, in an area that was once rolling grass plains and rocky outcroppings before development paved it over for the starport. Many of the control facilities were built upon these rock formations, giving the facilities a somewhat eerie appearance when lit by the night illumibanks.

## Jalor Docking Facilities

**System:** Pirik system, Pirik  
**Starport Class:** Standard  
**Traffic:** Moderate  
**Control:** Controller  
**Landing:** Directional beacon  
**Docking Areas:** Landing pads  
**Docking Fee:** 50 credits per local day  
**Customs:** Imperial patrol  
**Services:** Food, lodging, repair, entertainment

*This issue's Cracken's Rebel Operatives were created by C. Robert Carey and illustrated by Kathy Burdette.*



## DO NO



## HARM

By Erin Endom

Illustrations by Christopher Trevas

It all seemed pretty straightforward the day I was called into Commander Briessen's office. "Temporary detached duty," he called

it. Naturally I wondered what kind of detached duty a hospital-ship medic warranted, but I didn't have to wonder very long — only until Lieutenant Haslam showed up.

I have to say he didn't look like a topnotch commando. A couple of centimeters taller than I, light brown hair thinning on top, pale blue eyes, roundish face, slender build; he looked like an accountant. But everyone in the Rebellion knew his reputation by then. What could he possibly want with me?

I found out in short order. Gebnerret Vibrion, the political head of another Rebel cell, had been captured by the Imps and was undergoing interrogation on Selnesh, a notorious prison planet in the Irishi Sector. He knew too much to be left in custody; he had to be either broken out or killed quickly. Okay, I could understand that. I hadn't been with the Rebellion very long, but even I knew that given enough time, anyone could and would break under interrogation: physical torture, drugs, threats to loved ones — everyone has a breaking point. So where did a medic come into the picture? It turned out Vibrion was a rather elderly human male with Zithrom's syndrome, a kidney problem requiring him to take continuous doses of Clondex in order to stay alive. It was a pretty sure bet the Imps wouldn't be taking tender care of his medical problems. Even worse, before he died he'd go into delirium. And who knew what secrets he'd give away then?

So I reported to the mission briefing with no small amount of apprehension. I hadn't joined the Rebellion for a life of adventure; I'd signed on to save lives. (Skies, that sounds pompous. It's more accurate to say I'd signed on for a steady job doing what I'm good at, for the benefit of the Good Guys.) I felt even more out of place when I met the other team members, commandos all: Melenna, a tiny, cheerful, exquisitely beautiful woman with a cap of loose golden curls and the coldest blue eyes I've ever seen; Gowan, a big dark guy, definitely the strong silent type; Enkhet, a tall, skinny, pale kid whose appearance fairly screamed "slicer"; Liak, a (relatively) small Wookiee with long golden-brown fur and an almost palpable aura of calm about him; and Haslam, regarding us all with his coolly analytical gaze.

"The plan," he said after a long moment, "is to get in, get Vibrion, and get out as quietly as possible. We're not going to take down the Interrogation Center; we're not going to slaughter Imps; we're not out for glory. We're gonna get Vibrion. Period."

His tone of voice was making me uneasy. "Get him in what sense?" I asked.



"In whatever sense we have to," Haslam replied calmly. "If we can evacuate him, fine. If we can't, we can give him a quicker and easier death than the Imps will, and we can keep him from talking. Have you got a problem with that, *Doctor Leith*?" He stressed the title just a little.

Actually, I did. I could see his point: burdened with a nonambulatory rescuee, there was almost no chance the team would make it out intact. On the other hand, I was a doctor, and my job was to do everything I could to save my patient. I kept my mouth shut for the moment, but the twisting sensation in the pit of my stomach was picking up considerably.

"So," he addressed the others. "Basic very-dumb-orphan scoop-and-run — you've done it a hundred times. We infiltrate the center incognito — Melenna, Liak, you're the prisoners; standard smugglers-suspected-of-Rebel-sympathies scenario. Gowan and Enkhet are stormtrooper guards, I'm the officer in charge. Aurin —" he turned to me, "you'll have to be another prisoner. You're taking passage with Melenna and Liak to Sestooine, you've been picked up by mistake, and you don't know anything about anything. Just keep your mouth shut and you'll do fine. How much equipment will you need to bring?"

Luckily I'd had the foresight to think this out ahead of time. "I can manage with one medpac," I replied a little shortly. "I'll need to pack it with extra Clondex and some special equipment."

"Good. We'll get to the prison sector, find out where he is, then get rid of the guards and break into his cell. Once we get in, your job is to get him alert and moving quickly if at all possible. If you can't, we'll have to ... break out without him." The others nodded casually; I had the feeling his hesitation was entirely for my benefit. "Once he's up, we get back to the shuttle. For this part, we'll take the repair access tunnels." He touched a button on the tabletop console, and a holographic schematic of an Imperial-style installation leaped out of the center of the table; another adjustment, and a series of passages were outlined in red. The route from the prison cells to the docking bays was long, tortuous, and confusing.

Melenna chuckled. "This is where Liak comes in. His people are tree-dwellers; he can find his way through any strange maze of branches with never a wrong turn. For some reason it works on space stations as well. We don't understand it, but we don't argue with it."

"The tractor beam's just a single," Haslam continued. "Weak design — says they don't think anyone can escape. Gowan, you'll

## Doctor Aurin Leith



**Type:** Rebel Medic  
**DEXTERITY** 3D+1  
 Blaster 3D+2, dodge 4D+2  
**KNOWLEDGE** 3D+2  
 Alien species 4D, languages 4D, survival 4D+1  
**MECHANICAL** 2D  
**PERCEPTION** 3D  
 Command 3D+2, persuasion 4D, search 4D+2  
**STRENGTH** 2D  
**TECHNICAL** 4D  
 Droid repair: Emdee series droids 5D, droid programming: Emdee series droids 5D, first aid 6D+2, (A) medicine 4D, (A) medicine: surgery 5D  
**Force Points:** 1  
**Character Points:** 7  
**Move:** 10  
**Equipment:** Customized medpac, datapad

**Capsule:** Aurin grew up on Coruscant during the last years of the Old Republic, the daughter of two minor bureaucrats who suffered reversals of fortune during the political upheaval surrounding Senator Palpatine's rise to supreme power. Consequently, her distaste for politics was — and remains — acute. At 18 she was accepted as a student at the Academy of Medicine at the University of Byblos, and graduated six years later with a large amount of book-knowledge and very little practical experience. She returned to the Core Worlds and began work in the emergency department of the University Faculty Medical Center on Ralltiir, providing care for those who could not afford the more prestigious Ralltiir Diagnostic Center. In the endlessly busy environment of the UPMC, Aurin became a physician.

Aurin's decision to join the Rebellion was neither simple nor straightforward, but stemmed from a combination of factors: the disappearance of an outspoken co-worker and close friend following Imperial interrogation; her frustration over the sufferings of her patients under the Emperor's new system of administration and health care; a desire to simply practice medicine without worrying about how her patients were going to pay for their medicines, or where they were going to sleep that night, or what they were going to eat. She currently serves in the triage bay of the Alliance medical frigate *Pharos*.

break into the main computer and disengage it while our medic here is fixing Vibrion. At full power and with some of Enkhet's fancy shiphandling, we should be able to break free long enough to make the jump to hyperspace. Questions?"



## Reconnaissance Report: Selnesh

**From:** Jaliq Ramas, Scout

**To:** Alliance Command

**Subject:** Selnesh Imperial Detention Center

Selnesh is the sixth planet of Sela, the primary star of the Seltaine system. The planet has no moons or other satellites. With the exception of the Imperial Detention Center, the planet appears to be devoid of any life, sentient or otherwise. The surface is rocky and pale gray in color. No free water is present. The atmosphere consists of 82 percent nitrogen, 18 percent oxygen, and traces of other gases; this is sufficient to sustain oxygen-breathing life forms for only limited periods of time (four to six hours for most humans during minimal activity). Ambient temperature ranges from -23 degrees in direct light from the primary to -67 degrees in darkness; little seasonal variation exists.

The Selnesh Imperial Detention Center is a domed, self-contained enclosure 1.2 kilometers in diameter, located on a plain in Selnesh's southern hemisphere. The atmosphere inside the dome is similar to that outside, with the addition of supplemental oxygen to bring the concentration to 22 percent. The oxygen is part of the routine supply requirements for the Imperial base; supply ships visit the system at intervals of 38 standard days. Gravity has also been standardized within the domed area.

An entry bay blast door opens to permit the passage of shuttles and other small ships in and out of the complex. Inside

the dome is the prison, built on the lines of a standard Imperial garrison, but consisting of only two levels rather than the standard seven (high-altitude building in such a forbidding environment is apparently considered impractical). Sensor suites, weaponry, flight deck, landing platforms and the detention block are located on the upper level; the lower level, sunken partially into the stony surface, houses the stormtrooper and security barracks, officers' living quarters, the medical bay, maintenance and repair bays, and computer center. The detention center is staffed by 20 Imperial officers, 100 guards, 150 stormtroopers, and a squadron of 12 TIE fighter pilots.

Because of the enclosure and the forbidding terrain outside it, escape from the center is theorized to be impossible or nearly so. Certainly it appears that any attempt to leave the enclosure is doomed, unless supported by supplemental oxygen, shelter, and by air rescue within hours of exit from the prison facility.

### Selnesh

Type: Terrestrial

Temperature: Frigid

Atmosphere: Type II (breath mask suggested)

Hydrosphere: Dry

Gravity: Light

Terrain: Barren, mountain

Length of Day: 37 standard hours

Length of Year: 489 standard days

Starport: Limited Services

Planet Function: Imperial prison

Government: Imperial military

Tech Level: Space

Major Imports: Prisoners, prison supplies

If anyone else had any, they weren't admitting it; the only response was a series of crisp nods from the other team members. I had one, and it was bothering me enough that I didn't even react to the interesting fact that Gowan and not Enkhet was the computer jock. Haslam looked at me sharply, but only said, "Okay, dismissed. We'll meet outside the shuttle at 0600 tomorrow, bay 36. Get some sleep, everyone. Aurin, stay a moment, please."

Once we were alone, I said, "You left something out of the briefing. What if I can't get him moving? I don't think you mean for us to just go off and leave him alive. Who gets to do the dirty deed?"

"Frankly, I'd rather have a medical droid along," Haslam said

coolly. "Put a glitch in its programming, and it does exactly what the mission calls for and it doesn't develop any moral scruples at the last minute. Unfortunately, Emdees are expensive. Human medics are a lot cheaper and easier to replace."

"Nice to know I'm expendable," I murmured under my breath. Haslam ignored the comment, but after a moment some of the coldness faded from his face, leaving a look of — almost — helplessness.

"Aurin, I don't get any thrill out of killing. I've got a job to do here, just like you. The fact is, we can't leave him to die at the hands of the Imperials, or of his disease. And it's not just because of the informa-



tion he'll spill. Interrogation is ... well, not a pleasant way to die. I want to get him out as much as you do, but it may not be possible. The question is, if it comes to that — can you give him something to make it quick and easy for him?"

"You're asking me to kill him. I can't do that." If I was sure of nothing else in this confusion, I was sure of that much. Apart from any other considerations, I'd sworn an oath before they let me out of the Byblos Academy of Medicine: boiled down, it consisted of "First, do no harm."

Haslam wasn't surprised. "Okay," he sighed, "it's my responsibility. I'll take care of it." Then, in a whisper, "Blast it, I wish they wouldn't do this to me."

I hesitated. I didn't like the train of thought developing in my mind: *Look, if the guy's gonna die anyway, isn't it your job as a physician to make sure it's as easy as possible? If we can't get him out, Haslam is gonna shoot him. If you can't square your conscience enough to overdose him with potassium and make it fast and painless, can you at least sedate him enough so he sleeps through it?*

*But that means I'm helping Haslam kill him. I'm being dragged along on this mission to save his life if it's at all possible, not to help end it.*

*You're on this mission to serve your patient as best you can, whether it means saving his life or helping him die as easily as possible.*

*Skies, I hate this!*

"I can give him some conergin," I heard myself saying abruptly. I was dimly surprised to hear that my voice was flat, steady; my insides certainly weren't. "It won't kill him, but it'll put him down deep enough to let you do what you have to."

Haslam looked up sharply. "You'll help me?"

"I'll help you. But only after I've tried everything I can to get him moving and out of there. And this is a medical problem, not a military one. It has to be my decision. Not yours." I held his eyes with my own, feeling sick. "If that's not acceptable, you and the Rebellion can find yourselves another medic. Or a droid."

"Done," Haslam replied, grasping my wrist as if closing a business deal. Which, of course, we were.

**T**he flight to Selnesh was relatively short, only four days in hyperspace. Of course, four days with the dilemma I had hanging over my head is an eternity and then some. I spent them packing and repacking my medpac for greatest efficiency, mentally reviewing the resuscitation plan, and getting used to the weight of the hold-out



blaster up my left sleeve. Melenna had handed it to me just after boarding as a matter of course.

"Wait!" I'd blurted. "I don't want this. I don't even know how to use it."

"Real simple," Melenna shrugged. "Point and shoot."

"But I don't want it! I'm a doctor! I don't shoot people!"

"This go-around, you may have to." Disgustedly, Melenna pushed up my tunic sleeve, fastened the little holster around my forearm, and snapped it down with a final-sounding click. "If you can't, don't. Just try not to shoot any of us, okay?"

We popped back into normal space over Selnesh about the midafternoon of the fourth day. If I'd set out to build a prison planet from the core outward, this would have been it: a gray rocky ball in the middle of nowhere, its sun no more than a bright bluish star. "Bleak"



did not even begin to describe it. The surface was totally bare of color or vegetation. The sterile white plasteel dome of the prison sat like a fungus directly below us as we descended. There was literally nowhere else to go on this world that would support life for more than a few hours. I could see why nobody escaped from here.

While Enkhet, already in his stormtrooper armor, exchanged code strings and pleasantries with the docking bay, the rest of us lined up in preparation for deception. Melenna wore free-trader's gear, Liak only his fur, and I a plain civilian tunic and trousers; the precious medpac was fastened around my waist under the loose, long tunic. All three of us wore wrist binders. Gowan, also in armor, held a blaster rifle carefully pointed at the floor. Haslam was in a gray officer's uniform and looked, at least to me, thoroughly official and intimidating.

The jar of landing in the bay was slight; evidently Enkhet was as good a pilot as everyone said he was. I clenched my fists tightly, the cut of the binders into my wrists announcing, *I don't like this. I want to go home. Right now. I'm not cut out for a life of adventure.* Somehow sensing my nervousness, Liak turned around and growled something incomprehensible but reassuring-sounding.

"Pretend you're in a holovid," Melenna suggested brightly. "Playing the part of a prisoner. That's what I do. Just don't say anything. Let the Lieutenant do the talking — it's what he's here for."

"Thanks," I muttered. Nerves always take me in the stomach, and mine was turning somersaults just then. Better the stomach than the hands, anyway — a doctor had better have steady hands, whether she's nervous or not.

Enkhet joined us from the cockpit. "All clear," he announced casually. "No challenge. They sound bored."

"Good enough," observed Haslam. "Let's move out."

Getting past the docking bay was a lot easier than I'd expected. Haslam, doing a perfect imitation of an Imperial officer — clipped speech, formal stance and all — identified himself as one Lieutenant Grallant, operating number 13398247, and us as smugglers and possible Rebel sympathizers. The base commander, who looked as if he'd heard it all one too many times before, waved us tiredly back toward the passage I figured had to lead to the holding area.

We filed down the gray hallway, ending up in a large bay with cell-lined hallways branching off at regular intervals. The central com-

## Melenna Seltrayne



**Type:** Commando

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 6D+2, blaster: hold-out blaster 7D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D, melee combat: knife 6D, melee parry 5D, pick pocket 5D+2, thrown weapons 5D, vehicle blasters 4D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 5D, intimidation 4D, languages 4D+2, streetwise 6D, survival: urban 6D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Communications 4D+2, ground vehicle operation 4D, hover vehicle operation 4D, starship gunnery 6D, starship shields 4D, swoop operation 5D

**PERCEPTION 3D+2**

Con 5D, gambling 4D, hide 4D+2, persuasion 6D, search 5D, sneak 5D+2

**STRENGTH 2D+1**

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D**

Blaster repair 4D, first aid 3D+1, starship weapon repair 4D+1

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 11

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, hold-out blaster (3D), knife (STR+1D), throwing knife (STR+1D)

**Capsule:** Melenna grew up a street urchin on Ord Mantell. She joined the Rebel Alliance in a rather roundabout way; she was recruited by Haslam after a failed attempt to pick his pocket. Once having made the decision to join, she has been — in her toughened, cynical way — an unswervingly loyal and dedicated soldier who answers first to Haslam, and only after him to the powers-that-be in the Alliance command structure.

She is small, slightly built, and exquisitely beautiful, with short, curly golden-blond hair and vivid blue eyes — traits she's not above using to gain an edge over the enemy ... or slitting his throat afterward if necessary.

puter bank was inhabited by four stormtroopers holding blaster rifles at least as big as the ones Enkhet and Gowan wielded, and a crisply pressed officer type wearing captain's insignia who looked a whole lot more alert than his commander. The officer glanced up as we came in, and the troopers all shifted slightly to aim their rifles not precisely at us but definitely in our direction. I suddenly found it harder to breathe. Part of my brain was seriously considering saying "Count me out, thanks, I don't want to play anymore," turning



## Lieutenant Koris Haslam



**Type:** Commando Team Leader

### DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 5D, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 7D+2, blaster: hold-out blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 6D, dodge 7D+1, grenade 6D, vehicle blasters 5D

### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy: Imperial 7D+2, intimidation 4D, law enforcement 4D+2, survival 4D+1

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, capital ship gunnery 4D, capital ship shields 4D, communications 5D, hover vehicle operation 3D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 5D, starship gunnery 5D+2

### PERCEPTION 3D

Command 5D+2, con 8D, hide 4D+2, persuasion 6D, search 5D, sneak 6D

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 6D, stamina 4D+2

### TECHNICAL 2D

Droid programming 4D, first aid 3D+2, security 5D+2

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 14

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, BlasTech DL-18 (4D), datapad, hold-out blaster (3D)

**Capsule:** Haslam is a quiet, reserved individual with an air of authority to even his lightest utterance. It's hinted that he may be a former Imperial — it would certainly explain his uncanny knowledge of the Empire's military structure — but no one really knows for sure; Haslam isn't a talker. What is sure is that his unprepossessing appearance, combined with his ability to impersonate Imperial officers, free-traders, planetary dignitaries and almost any other imaginable role, has made his commando team one of the most successful in the Rebel Alliance.

Haslam is in his mid-thirties — thinning, light-brown hair tops a roundish face, and he has a general appearance of phlegmatic calm about him. Only the glint in his cool pale eyes reveals there's more here than a mid-level bureaucrat.

around and walking back to the ship. Since this would have ruined Haslam's pretty scenario, and I was too frozen to move anyway, I kept still and silent.

Haslam repeated the name-rank-and-operating number business for the officer, who (thank the skies) didn't seem inclined to be challenging. Instead, he helpfully fired up the computer and assigned the three of us cell numbers. Prisoner processing apparently

took place inside the cells, rather than in the open area — to reduce the incidence of breaks, I guessed. Since a break was precisely what we had planned, I didn't find this information encouraging.

Enkhet pressed the muzzle of his blaster into my back, pushing me forward. Captain Whoever stepped forward to help get us hardened criminals into cells for processing. Haslam stopped him with an upraised hand.

"I'm going to have to ask you and your men to leave for a few minutes."

"What?" the captain asked blankly.

"I need you and your men to leave the area temporarily," Haslam spoke even more quietly, with an air of complicity. "I'm with Intelligence. We suspect these prisoners have had access to top-secret information about the movements of various Rebel cells. It's not that we don't trust a loyal Imperial officer, but the presence of these prisoners here has to be kept absolutely top secret until interrogation is complete. I'm sure you understand."

"Does Commander Caton know about this?"

"No, and it's important to the war effort that no one knows just now. I can't tell you any more. I shouldn't even have said this much. The reason I brought them here is because I know the reputation of this base's officers and men. There's no more secure place in the galaxy."

"I understand," the captain said gravely, and motioned the troopers to follow him out the door. Evidently flattery went a long way.

"I'll also have to disable the security cameras temporarily. Just until they're processed, you understand. No one must know of their presence here."

"Understood." And it was as easy as that. The Imps simply walked out and closed the doors behind them. Gowan, helmet off, was already slicing into the computer; after a moment, the cameras mounted around the ceiling went dark.

Haslam moved lightly around the room checking for I didn't know what, while Enkhet removed our binders. Melenna stretched her arms and hands forward to remove the stiffness. "You didn't have to tighten them quite so much," she complained mildly. "My hands are aslep."

"You're the one wanted to be convincing."

Liak growled an admonishment, and the squabble — probably the latest chapter in an ongoing saga — ceased. Meanwhile, I was digging into my medpac again, assuring myself one more time that none of the precious equipment or drug vials was damaged. The



ticklish clenching of my muscles, the usual prelude to a full-bore resuscitation, was beginning to push through my fear. "Where is he?" I demanded.

"I'm looking," Gowan replied absently, his attention entirely occupied by the flashing images on the screen. "Okay, here it is. Cell 2826."

"Well, come on, let's go!"

"Aurin," Haslam spoke quietly. "I'm in command of this mission. We go when I say."

"Haslam," I said in the same tone, "you got us past the Imps. Now it's a medical mission. That's my department, remember? There's a man dying in one of these cells. I've got work to do. Let me do it." The words "or else" hung in the air. I didn't know quite what "or else" would involve, but Haslam realized I was serious anyway. He half-laughed, half-sighed, and gave the move-out signal.

The cell was at the far end of the center hallway. While Enkhet stood guard near the hall entrance — Gowan had stayed behind to compute some more — Haslam entered a complex code into the keypad at the side of the door. It slid open to reveal a thin, gray-haired human male lying on the pallet at the far end of the small room. He rose half up on one elbow, eyes widening at the sight of us. I absorbed details as I moved quickly to his side, unstrapping the medpac from around my waist: he was very pale, his eyes sunken and his lips dry, indicating dehydration, but he was awake, alert and aware. I'd been prepared for a patient at death's door, and was surprised at how relatively good he looked.

"Is this the rescue party?" His voice was soft and hoarse, but held a hint of wry humor.

"That's us." Melenna had followed close behind me, and gave him a dazzling smile I suspected would get any man off a deathbed in short order. She'd probably intended it that way. "Anything to make the mission a success," she'd commented briefly during the ride in. If flirting with the rescuee would help, she'd do it.

"I wasn't ... expecting you." He had to breathe in the middle of the short sentence; yes, he needed some help. During the exchange I had been rapidly unpacking my equipment; now I placed the IAU — Intravenous Access Unit — on his upper chest and pressed the activation switch. While the catheter burrowed through his skin in search of the large subclavian vein leading directly to his heart, I opened two ampules of Clondex, one of endogenous steroid, a cordine patch, and a liter of serum-replacement solution, and laid them down ready to hand. Liak crouched beside me, ready to help

## Gebnerret Vibrion



**Type:** Rebel Cell Leader

**DEXTERITY 2D**

Blaster 3D+2, dodge 3D

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Alien races 5D+2, bureaucracy 7D+1, cultures 4D+2, languages 5D, law enforcement 6D+2, planetary systems 5D, survival 4D+2, willpower 6D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Astrogation 4D, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, space transports 3D+1

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 6D+1, command 6D, con 5D, investigation 5D+1, persuasion 6D+2

**STRENGTH 2D**

Stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 3D**

First aid 4D, space transports repair 3D+1

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 3

**Move:** 8

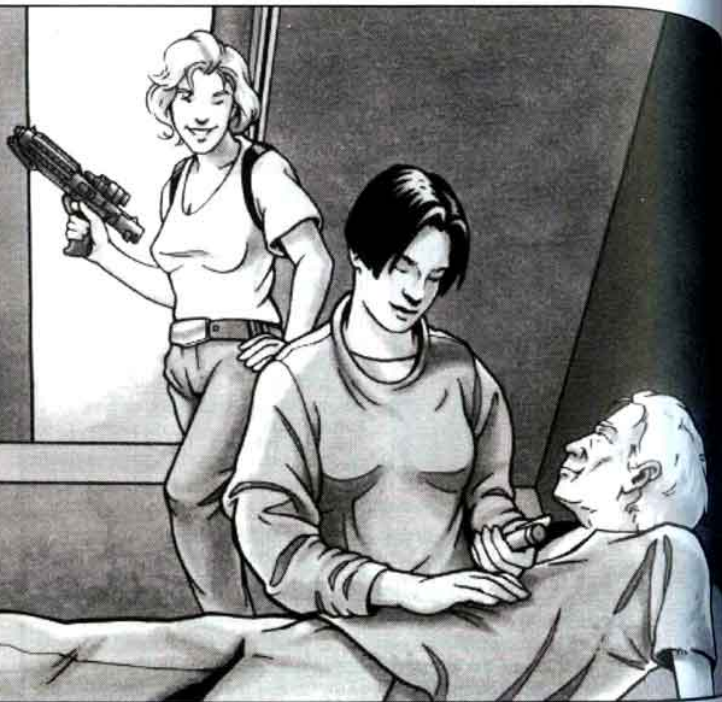
**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, recording

rod, supply of Clondex vials and infusion pad

**Capsule:** Gebnerret Vibrion is a former Old Republic, then Imperial Senator from the small Sern Sector world of Ghorman. In the early years of his career, Vibrion's primary aim was to safeguard the lives, property and peaceful existence of his homeworld. However, when hundreds of Ghormanian citizens were killed or wounded by Imperial troops intervening in a peaceful tax protest, Vibrion realized that Ghorman could not remain neutral in the burgeoning conflict between the fledgling Empire and those who protested its methods and goals.

Vibrion began, more and more openly, to side with Mon Mothma of Chandrila and other Senate members opposed to Palpatine's political machinations. When Mon Mothma disappeared amid rumors of her impending arrest for treason, Vibrion realized it was time for him to drop out of sight as well. He eventually surfaced as the leader of a resistance group which eventually joined the Rebellion. He has suffered through much of his adult life from Zithrom's syndrome, a disease affecting the kidneys and adrenal glands, necessitating continuous treatment with the drug Clondex. Although he is a thin and deceptively frail-looking old man with a shock of gray hair on his head, Vibrion's strength of personality shows in his eyes and determined expression. Despite his seemingly fragile health and his age, Gebnerret Vibrion has become a hard-working member of the Alliance in its struggle for the freedom of the galaxy.





if needed; Haslam stayed alert at the door.

"Hey," Melenna remarked, "never underestimate the power of a woman."

"You're in better shape than I thought you'd be," I commented as I worked.

"I had three vials of ... Clondex when I got here ... been underdosing myself. I only ... ran out two days ago."

"How'd you get them past the body search?" Melenna demanded.

"Swallowed them." Weak as he was, Vibrion winked at her. Melenna followed this statement to its logical conclusion and grimaced; funny, I wouldn't have thought her the squeamish type. I ran the scanner over his body, noting the small heart — another sign of dehydration — and the shrunken kidneys and adrenals, which went along with the Zithrom's. Blood pressure was a little low, heart rate a little fast, but otherwise everything looked pretty normal. I allowed

myself a sigh of relief. *This isn't going to be as bad as I thought, thank the skies. And remember, the next time Briessen wants to send you out on one of these things, say no.*

The IAU clicked, and a backflow of darkish venous blood appeared in its access chamber, indicating the catheter was in the vein. I injected the first unit of Clondex and the steroid rapidly, then started feeding in the serum solution as fast as I could. I had to be careful here; giving a large volume of fluid too fast could tip him over the other way into lung and kidney failure.

"How're we doing?" Haslam asked. "We've gotta move out soon."

"I need a few more minutes. Have they caught on to us?"

"No sign yet," he said, "but let's not push our luck. Liak, go open the access tunnel entrance and stand by." Liak lumbered up from my side and out the door, ruffling my hair with his big paw as he passed.

The fluid bag was nearly empty; I squeezed it to get the last few drops into my patient, then disconnected it. Already Vibrion was looking better, his eyes less sunken and color coming back into his face. I gave him the second round of Clondex, then slapped the cordine patch onto his neck. He flushed red, a hand going shakily to his forehead as the stimulant took hold.

"The headache will pass in a minute," I said. "This'll help you keep up. We need to get out of here. Can you sit up?"

Vibrion nodded, wincing as I helped him to a sitting position and rechecked his blood pressure; it was holding steady. So far, so good.

"Liak's got the tunnel open," Haslam said, calmly but with a note of underlying urgency in his voice. I hauled Vibrion to a standing position, Melenna stepping in to get a shoulder under his arm for support, and rechecked the scanner's readings; his pulse had gone up 10 beats per minute to compensate for the change in body position, but blood pressure remained stable.

"Okay?" I asked him.

"Okay." He smiled wanly. "Let's go."

**T**he access tunnel ran parallel along the hallway, a brightly lit, dusty passage just tall enough to stand up in (Liak and Enkhet had to slouch) and just wide enough for one. Melenna, Vibrion and I, linked in the tail position, shuffled sideways. Liak led, followed by Enkhet and Gowan; Haslam was in the middle, where he could monitor everyone at once. It was slow going, with a couple of back-up-and-start-over maneuvers at first. I hadn't the slightest idea where we were going, and wasn't sure if I cared. I'd done what I came



to do, and the post-code ebb of unused adrenaline had left me drained, flat, and hungry. Melenna, on the other hand, was looking keyed-up and nervous.

"This is taking too long," she hissed at Haslam, just ahead of her. "How long do you think it'll be before the Imps figure out something's up? They're not all idiots, you know."

"I'm aware of that, Melenna," Haslam said with careful calm. "It's only been eleven minutes. We have time." Eleven minutes? How could it only have been eleven minutes? It felt like hours since I'd walked into that cell.

Liak grunted something from the head of the line, and we kept shuffling along. I glanced repeatedly up at Vibrion, reassessing his condition; after a few minutes he was dripping sweat — it was hot in the tunnel — and noticeably paler as the cordine flush wore off, but he gently squeezed my shoulders and kept moving. It occurred to me that fragile as the old man appeared, anyone who — at his age, and burdened by chronic illness — could found and run an entire cell of the Rebellion had to be tougher than tempered titanium. He was certainly proving it now.

After a long few minutes more of this business, we all stopped at a signal from Liak: we were nearing the docking bay. The plan was to throw a concussion grenade into the bay while we remained under cover in the tunnel; with the guards incapacitated and the tractor beam hopefully deactivated, we would scurry to our stolen shuttle, take off, and evade pursuit long enough to complete the run-to-jump for hyperspace.

At least, that was the theory.

We all crouched down on the dusty floor of the tunnel, except Vibrion, who sat down rather suddenly, as if his legs would no longer hold him. Melenna propped him up against the wall while I scabbled in the medpac for another cordine patch. I wasn't sure of the wisdom of giving him another round — it might send him into heart failure — but I wanted it handy if he did need it. A flash of white caught the corner of my eye at the far curve of corridor, and I glanced up.

A stormtrooper, flattened against the curving wall, was just edging around the corner, blaster up and pointed directly at me.

*Ambush*, I thought, very coldly and clearly, as time slowed to a halt around me. I couldn't seem to get in a breath — the nauseated stunned emptiness was almost exactly what I'd felt at age six, after falling off a balcony flat onto my stomach. But my mind, trained to function logically in a crisis, kept clicking right along: *There isn't time to warn Haslam. You're blocking the others — they can't shoot around*



## Liak

**Type:** Wookiee Commando

### DEXTERITY 3D

Bowcaster 5D+2, brawling parry 6D, dodge 4D+2, grenade 5D, missile weapons 4D, thrown weapons 4D+2

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Streetwise 3D+2, survival 4D

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, hover vehicle operation 3D+2, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, space transports 4D, starship gunnery 4D+1

### PERCEPTION 2D

Command 3D+2, search 5D, sneak 4D+1

### STRENGTH 5D

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

### TECHNICAL 3D

First aid 3D+2, repulsorlift repair 5D+1, starship repair 5D

### Special Abilities:

*Berserker Rage:* Enraged Wookiees receive +2D to *Strength* for brawling damage, but

suffer -2D to all non-*Strength* attribute and skill checks. To calm down, the Wookiee must make a Moderate *Perception* roll at only -1D, minimum roll of 1D.

*Climbing Claws:* +2D to *climbing* rolls, but cannot be used honorably in combat.

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 6

**Move:** 11

**Equipment:** Ammo bandolier, bowcaster (4D), comlink, 2 concussion grenades (5D), medpac

**Capsule:** Just past middle age by Wookiee standards, Liak lived long and peacefully in the upper levels of the jungles of Kashyyyk — until Zherriak, a hunting companion and friend with whom Liak had sworn an honor bond, was killed during an Imperial slave raid. Liak and his surviving companions managed to overpower their captors, take possession of their ship, and escape. Most of the survivors returned to Kashyyyk, but Liak, impelled to seek revenge against the enemy soldiers who had killed his friend and enslaved his people, offered his services to the Rebel Alliance.

Liak is small for a Wookiee, with pale blue eyes and long golden-brown fur. His value to Haslam's commando team lies in his calm assessment of difficulties as much as in his uncanny sense of direction and hand-to-hand combat skills.

*you. If you fall, Vibrion's next in line.*

*You've got a blaster.*

My right hand pulled the little hold-out blaster from its holster





under my left sleeve, leveled it at the trooper, and fired. The shot angled upward just enough to pass between the breastplate and the bottom of the helmet; it took him square in the throat, and he let out a choked gurgle and dropped to his knees. His helmet flew off as he went down, allowing me a brief glimpse of a very young man, light brown hair damp with sweat and clinging to his skull, clear gray eyes wide in amazement, before he toppled flat onto his face.

I had just time to be amazed that I'd actually hit him before I was surrounded by blaster shots: Haslam and the others had caught on to the fact that something was going on behind us, and were shooting over my head in a perfectly choreographed blast-and-duck pattern that said they'd been in situations like this before. The rest of the troopers, their cover blown, had moved around the corner

into the open and were blasting away at us. I started to turn back, with some confused idea of shielding Vibrion with my body, but Melenna hissed at me, "Stay down!"

Her statement was punctuated by a dull, but extremely loud, explosion from the direction of the docking bay that shook the walls around us. I swallowed to equalize the pressure in my ears and got off a couple of random shots toward the troopers, at the same time groping behind me with my left hand for Vibrion's wrist. His pulse was rapid and slightly irregular, but strong; he squeezed my hand in weak reassurance.

During all this, I'd forgotten to try to breathe again. I gasped, and air rushed into my lungs, making me suddenly dizzy. I dropped my forehead onto my wrist; curled awkwardly in a semi-fetal position on the floor, there wasn't much else I was capable of. I stayed there, clutching Vibrion's hand, until someone sharply wrenched at my shoulder.

"Come on!" a voice shouted roughly. "We're going!"

I looked up to see Gowan bending over me, helmet off and a charred crease of blaster burn slanting across his forehead where a bolt had winged him. He grasped my wrist, hauled me to my feet, and slung me forward toward the docking bay. Behind us lay only a heap of white armor, the gray-eyed boy hidden beneath his comrades. The floor of the bay was similarly littered with the limp bodies of troopers and officers, all knocked unconscious simultaneously by the blast of Liak's concussion grenade. Haslam, at the entrance waiting for us, grabbed my arm and dragged me up the shuttle ramp just behind Melenna and Vibrion; he was leaning heavily on her shoulder, knees buckling and plainly on the verge of collapse. Gowan, following us in, hit the door latch and headed for the cockpit at a dead run; the engines were already roaring in startup sequence. Haslam dumped Vibrion and me onto the passenger seat, rapidly strapped us in, then turned to follow Melenna aft.

"Where are you going?" I gasped.

"To man the guns," he flung back over his shoulder, not missing a step.

"Guns? I thought shuttles didn't have guns!"

No answer but the jolting rise of the craft; then we were flung backwards by the steep drag of acceleration as the shuttle shot forward. The next few minutes were a rough approximation of a whirling repulsorlift ride I'd gone on once during a Coruscant Fete Week: moving straight up, down, sideways, in a corkscrew, and several less-conceivable directions, all at breakneck speed, in pitch



## Barsoulentiniel Enkhet



**Type:** Commando Team Pilot

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 4D+2, dodge 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 4D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 3D+2, survival 4D

**MECHANICAL 4D**

Astrogation 5D+2, communications 5D, repulsoflight operation 6D, space transports 7D+2, starfighter piloting 6D, starship gunnery 5D+2, starship shields 6D+1, swoop operation 5D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Gambling 4D+2, search 5D, sneak 4D+1

**STRENGTH 3D**

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Blaster repair 3D+2, repulsoflight repair 4D, space transports repair 5D, starfighter repair 4D+2, starship weapon repair 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** BlasTech DL-18 (4D), comlink, lucky sabacc deck, SoroSuub Stormtrooper One blaster rifle (5D)

**Capsule:** A former cabin boy for a notorious smuggler group, Enkhet learned on the job how to fly just about anything. Assigned to Haslam's commando team after he was deemed too reckless and undisciplined for a fighter squadron, Enkhet can talk a smooth line and shoot straight, but his real value to the team emerges in his cool piloting during laser-breadth escapes. The 19-year-old is tall, thin and gawky, and it's amazing how he can fly at all with his long, stringy brown hair falling over one hazel eye. He and Melenna share a "live for the moment 'cause it may be your last" attitude. They are only occasionally a couple, but both know they can't afford to think about a long-term commitment.

darkness (the cabin lights had gone out during the second high-speed maneuver), and this time with the added thrill of people shooting at us. I could dimly hear Haslam and Melenna's casual crosstalk as they shot back; evidently this shuttle did have guns. Vibrion was too far away for me to reach, but sat crumpled in his restraints, his eyes sunken again into his head but sparkling. People say emergency medics are excitement junkies, but this was getting ridiculous. Haslam was right about Enkhet's piloting, though; even I could tell he was doing a superb job of keeping us in one piece. Finally the ride turned into a high-gravity Aurin sandwich, pressing

the breath out of my lungs as the shuttle made the star-stretching jump to hyperspace.

The next few minutes were a blur, as I got Vibrion settled more comfortably and gave him some more fluid and another half-dose of Clondex. Haslam had taken a blaster shot to the left shoulder, which had managed to miss the great vessels and nerve plexus; I cleaned and dressed his and Gowan's wounds. Melenna, who'd been in plain view of the troopers and without armor or any other form of protection, didn't have a scratch on her.

"That's why we keep her around," Enkhet quipped cheerfully, strolling into the common room from the cockpit. "She's our luck." Melenna thumped him lightly on the top of the head with a derisive chuckle, and Enkhet tugged teasingly on a curling golden strand.

I finished Haslam's dressing and was halfway through repacking the medpac, thinking a hot drink sounded like a good idea, when the shakes hit. I always get a little trembly after a code; usually it passes off after a few seconds, but this time it got steadily worse. I knelt on the deckplates in the corner of the common room, face turned to the wall, while the ugly, jeering thoughts crawled around in my brain.

*You shot that trooper. You killed him. I thought you were supposed to be a doctor, remember?*

*I had to! It was him or us.*

*Yeah, right. All that pious moralizing about your oaths, and do no harm, and the sanctity of sentient life — and none of it really meant anything, did it?*

*It wasn't just me, not just my own life. I had a patient to protect. I had the whole group to protect.*

*Oh, come off it! You had to protect them? Who appointed you Hero of the Universe? Face it — you can mouth off all you want to about morality, but when it comes right down to it, you took a life. You're not a healer, you're a killer.*

"Aurin?"

A hand touched my shoulder, and I turned. Gowan knelt next to me, looking tired and battered and absurdly young, open concern in his dark eyes. I just looked at him, unable to get any words around the hessa-ball that had suddenly taken up residence in my throat.

"You know," he said slowly, "you did a good job in there."

"I killed him." A deep breath let me speak, but couldn't keep the tremor out of my voice.

"I know. And I'm sorry you had to ... but I can't say I'm sorry you did." His voice was even, quiet. "Listen to me. Aurin ... this is a war. The point of war is that if you can kill enough of the people on the



## Gowan Ch'lessan

**Type:** Commando Slicer**DEXTERITY 2D+2**

Blaster 5D+2, brawling parry 6D+1, dodge 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 4D, languages 3D+2, survival 4D+2

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Ground vehicle operation 3D+2, hover vehicle operation 3D+1, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, starfighter piloting 4D, starship gunnery 4D

**PERCEPTION 2D+1**

Bargain 3D+2, search 4D+1, sneak 4D

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 6D+2, climbing/jumping 4D+1, stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 4D**

Computer programming/repair 8D, droid programming 6D+2, droid repair 5D+2, first aid 5D

**Force Points:** 1**Character Points:** 9**Move:** 10**Equipment:** BlasTech DL-44 (5D), comlink, datapad, medpac, recording rod, SoroSuub Stormtrooper One blaster rifle (5D)**Capsule:** Gowan Ch'lessan is a native of Chandrila — inspired by the example of Chandrilan senator-turned-Rebel leader Mon Mothma to join the Rebellion at the age of 18. He is fairly tall and muscular, but opted to concentrate his Rebel training in the computer field than in combat techniques (although he's still pretty good in a brawl).

Gowan is quiet, calm, reserved, and more of an idealist than his teammates, for whom he exhibits a great degree of concern. His expertise with computers has been as much of an asset to the team as his prowess at hand-to-hand combat.

other side, they'll quit. That's a hard thing to live with. What's even harder is, sometimes people get caught up in the killing who don't really belong there. And I think you're one of those people."

"You can say that again." A shaky half-laugh, half-sob escaped me. "I'm supposed to keep people alive, not ... this."

"Exactly. And that's what makes what you did today so valuable. The Rebellion doesn't have anything like as many troops as the Empire does. If we can't stay alive long enough to win this war, we've thrown our lives away. Look at it this way: you helped keep all of us alive a little longer to fight this thing. And you kept Vibrion alive, and

that's even more important, just because of who he is. Because he can bring in others who believe what we're doing is right."

I hadn't expected such gentleness, such eloquence out of this dark man who had barely spoken during the entire mission. The hard knot in my throat promptly dissolved into tears. Gowan put an awkward arm around my shoulders as I cried, hot tears of shame, of self-recrimination, of grief, and of sheer reaction to the events of the day.

The tensions and pain gradually drained out of my body along with the tears. After a few minutes I simply stopped crying and slumped exhausted against the wall, dashed my sleeve across my eyes and smiled shakily up at Gowan.

"I'm okay now. Really," I added at his doubtful look. "Sorry I cried all over you. I'd just ... like to be alone for a while."

He nodded and stood up. "Do you want anything? A drink?"

"Not now, thank you."

He nodded and moved forward toward the cockpit.

"Gowan?"

He turned.

"Thanks."

He nodded again and walked away. I just sat there for a while, eyes closed, mind drifting. For the most part, I'd done what I came to do. I'd gotten Vibrion out of the prison alive; I'd made it out myself, and so had the rest of the team. And if all that was partly due to my having violated my oath to do no harm ... well, maybe allowances could be made for having done a wrong thing for a right reason. Maybe the pretty rules of medicine don't hold up as well in war. Either way, there was nothing I could do about it now ... except to wish that gray-eyed boy oneness with the Force that binds us all, and to go on with my life and my job as best I could. I sighed, got up — aching like the aftermath of a stun blast — and went in search of that hot drink.

**T**hey gave me a medal when we got back — the Field Achievement Award, the one they give all the field operatives who make it back from their first mission. I still have it. I threw it in a drawer and haven't looked at it since. But like a half-healed wound, I always know it's there.



# A Free-Trader's Guide to the Planets

By Timothy O'Brien  
Illustrations by Steve Bryant



"Come on, To'iir! We've no time to hang around here!" urged Liadden. "Roff will have hunters on us in no time!"

To'iir gazed calmly at Liadden over his old-fashioned reading spectacles from the datacomp station. "Young one, we have no time to spare indeed. I waste not time. I plan." To'iir gestured at the screen. "Witness."

Liadden marched over with the frustrated patience of a child humoring a parent.

The screen read: *Welcome to the Free-Trader's Guide.*



This service is provided by the Lantillan Spacers Brotherhood and the information was compiled by members in good standing. The basic service is free. Certain features are available to Lantillan Brothers at a minimal charge. Although the Brotherhood has verified facts where possible, no guarantee of accuracy is assured or implied. The Lantillan Spacers Brotherhood will not be held responsible for lost profits or harm befallen, directly or indirectly, as a result of ventures arising herefrom. Enter parameters to search."

To'ir typed an entry: "Trader's gamble."

*Restricted Feature.* Enter your Brotherhood registration number and password.

The Twi'lek entered his code.

*Accepted. Warning:* The Trader's Gamble feature is intended to alert Brethren in good standing of potentially lucrative markets. These markets are usually dangerous, remote, and generally unpleasant. The Brotherhood wishes you luck. 4112 entries found. Retrieve or Refine?

To'ir entered his specifications: "Refine; Outer Rim."

682 entries found. Retrieve or Refine?

"Refine; Slice."

312 entries found. Retrieve or Refine?

"Refine; Starport of Limited Services or less," To'ir typed.

13 entries found. Retrieve or Refine?

"Retrieve list."

*Altor 14, Barab I, Baros, Byss, Chad, Dar'Or, Gamorr, Garban, Kirdo III, Kubindi, Laboi II, Lasat, Ossell II, Toola. Retrieve entries?*

"So what, To'ir? We need to bolt out of here!" Liadden fumed.

"Yes, but where bolt to?" replied the amused and patient To'ir. "Hyperspace travel not like driving down road or flying airspeeder, young one. Must have destination. Safe enough out here, but can not stay forever." The wizened little trader briskly tapped in commands.

On the icy edge of the system, the *Seventy-Seven Stars* sat as patiently as its master. Liadden, full of the fire and speed of youth, couldn't sit at all, and paced as To'ir reviewed his data.

"Come on, To'ir! We'll just go to the first place on the list!" she urged after a short respite.

"Altor 14? No, I not like Altorians. Lizards too passive, birds too violent and unpredictable. You get in fights so easy, you be in danger." To'ir reflected absently as Liadden bristled. "Must be careful to go to place with little Imperial presence, also. Do not forget that Moff. Here. What you think?"

Liadden stopped pacing long enough to examine the entry.



## Chad

Chad is a hot, moist world inhabited by the rodentine Chadra-Fan, a technologically primitive species. The planetary geography is dominated by immense oceans divided by ridge-like mountainous continents, with a broad band of tidal marshes separating the two other terrains.

Chad is characterized by great hydrodynamism — water activity of all sorts. The planetary tide, ruled by nine moons interacting in a fantastic and intricate dance, is a complex and hard-to-chart phenomenon, varying in severity from a deep ebb to a deadly flood tide. The relatively high planetary mean temperature combined with a narrow axial tilt results in an even climate and little seasonal change. The polar areas freeze winterly, and in the summer the equatorial ocean steams, but this is a relatively mild variation. Storms are a dynamic byproduct of this orbital stability. Squalls are a common annoyance, and hurricanes roll through the deep ocean almost monthly. In most latitudes rain and fog are daily occurrences, and the native Chadra-Fan rely on fog-rise and rainfall to tell the time of day.

Only the mountain caps are regularly dry. Even the highlands are subject to regular rainfall, and are covered in clinging foliage in all but

## Chad

Type: Terrestrial  
 Temperature: Hot  
 Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)  
 Hydrosphere: Moist  
 Gravity: Standard  
 Terrain: Wetlands, mountains, oceans  
 Length of Day: 20 standard hours  
 Length of Year: 380 local days  
 Sapient Species: Chadra-Fan (N), humans  
 Starport: Landing field  
 Population: 20 million Chadra-Fan, 15,000 humans  
 Planet Function: Homeworld, aquaculture  
 Government: Anarchistic clans, local ranches  
 Tech Level: Pre-industrial  
 Major Exports: Bldog and proop meat, unusual mechanisms  
 Major Imports: Homestead supplies



the most extreme latitudes. Beginning in the foothills and lowlands the ecosystem becomes wetland; bog in middle elevations and genuine deep swamp along the coasts. Tens of thousands of square kilometers of shallowly submerged flood land taper off into moderate seas, then deep ocean. On Chad, "land" and "water" is a less than useful comparison; "depth" and "height" have far more meaning.

### Chadra-Fan

The wetlands are home to the Chadra-Fan, a rodentine species with extraordinary olfactory senses, who house themselves in simple arboreal shelters and live day-to-day trying to survive. They have no major predators, but occasionally suffer highly destructive tidal waves, caused by planet-quakes or rare conjunctions of the planet's nine moons. The Chadra-Fan are primarily interested in food, simple shelter and entertainment. A primary entertainment comes from tinkering with mechanical artwork, which occasionally performs some useful function. This artwork is usually powered by methane, a common gas in the bayous. (For further information, see "Chadra-Fan" in the *Imperial Catalog of Intelligent Life in the Galaxy* — *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races*.)

The Chadra-Fan are an almost hyperactively industrious species, and build impressively complex tree villages out of simple raw materials. These villages are temporary constructions, since they rarely last more than a few months before being battered apart by storms. Made from wooden poles, grass-mat partitions and platforms, suspended above the bayou by building them in the swamp trees, these villages wax, wane, and flow according to the whims of the weather and terrain.

Villages are primarily built by family-clans. One to five tangentially related clans build a village together. Each clan constructs a settlement in a swamp tree, and connects it to the next nearest settlement by primitive suspension bridge.

Occasionally several nearby villages will merge via suspension bridges and shared platforms, leading to a boom in trade and social interaction. These short-term cities usually only last until the next hurricane, but new cities sometimes grow near the sites of the old ones.

Chadra-Fan have little government as most off-worlders would describe it. The concept of institutionalized government is as foreign to the Chadra-Fan as any other concept of permanence. Most regulation or large scale "governing" is democratic in a very pure sense: if an individual wants to do something, for instance, build an



extension bridge, then that person lets everybody he can think of know that he is going to build a new bridge, and starts building it. If enough other Chadra-Fan think it's a good idea, or that it will be fun, or that they have nothing better to do, they'll join him and the project will be finished. If a too-small group of Chadra-Fan join, the project will eventually be abandoned as the natives' short attention spans drift to other interests. No votes, no taxes. No long-term projects are likely to survive the next hurricane anyway, so this works for the Chadra-Fan.

### Ocean Ranchers

The oceans are home to a loose collection of hardy individualistic ranchers — technically an unchartered colony — who nomadically herd native species of semi-domesticated bildog and proop. These homesteaders collect in small fleets of barges and follow and nudge herds as they migrate along their ancient sea-paths, the long, broad currents of the deep ocean.

The ranchers, mainly human, follow, nudge, and protect the herds from the native predators — mainly wystoh — and cull the herds as they migrate to seasonal waters. The nomadic fleets are



composed of motley collections of raft-barges and houseboats, generally referred to as ranch-arks. A ranch-ark is usually a family concern, although ranch hands are sometimes hired or exchanged from other fleets. Some ranchers use seaskimmers to quickly move about, but most ranchers rely on native mounts; the spirited tsaelke or their calmer cousins, the methnaps. The rancher-fleets are small, few, and far-separated. Though the market for bildog and proop meat is small, and the ranching life precarious, they struggle on.

## Creatures of Chad

Chad is home to a variety of sea creatures, which the ranchers either herd or ward away. Very few creatures of note exist on Chad's few habitable areas of land—the ocean depths are far more stable than the storm-swept bayous where the Chadra-Fan eke out their existence.

### ■ Bildog

**Type:** Docile oceanic herd-beast

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 1D**

**Search:** listen 4D

**STRENGTH 5D**

**Swimming 6D**

**Special Abilities:**

*Thrash:* Does STR+2D damage.

*Gel Armor:* Thick sub-dermal tissue absorbs hits and functions as armor, adding +2D to resist physical damage.

**Move:** 15

**Size:** 150 meters long, 15 meters wide

**Orneriness:** 1D (in this case Orneriness reflects the difficulty to herd these creatures)

### ■ Proop

**Type:** Docile oceanic herd-beast

**DEXTERITY 3D**

**PERCEPTION 1D+2**

**Search:** listen 3D

**STRENGTH 3D**

**Brawling:** tentacle 4D

**Special Abilities:**

*Tentacle Attack:* does STR+1D+2 damage.

**Move:** 8

**Size:** 15 meters long, 5 meters wide

**Orneriness:** 3D (in this case Orneriness reflects the difficulty to herd these creatures)

**Capsule:** Bildogs and proops are the two most commonly herded Chadean sea creatures. Both species are semi-domesticated, fairly docile and migrational. They are herded along their migration routes by the deep-water ranchers. Herds are gathered together using a foo-twitter, a device which mimics the species' herding sounds. Both creatures stay close to the ocean surface, where they can bask in sun-warmed waters far from the colder depths.

Bildog are huge sea-slugs that gather in pods of five to 50. Gentle, graceful, and abysmally stupid, they are quite harmless unless attacked. Even if attacked, their main defense is to thrash their tails and swim away, relying on their thick sub-dermal gel to protect them from an immediately crippling attack.

Proops are multi-tentacled, with small heads and gelatinous bodies. They are smaller than their distant cousins, the bildog, and somewhat more intelligent. Proop herds number 50–300.

Both species feed on nutritious micro-organisms that form huge cloud-colonies near the ocean surface. These sea-clouds need vast areas to grow in, if they are to remain self sustaining. Although these small clouds sometimes do grow close to shore, a proop herd would quickly obliterate a colony. Both species generally stick close to the rich deep ocean clouds, although a rancher will sometimes have to rescue a bildog that has followed a food cloud too close to shore for its size.

### ■ Wystoh

**Type:** Territorial ocean predator

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 3D**

**Search 5D**

**STRENGTH 4D**

**Brawling 5D, swimming 5D**

**Special Abilities:**

*Bite:* Does STR+2D damage

**Move:** 18

**Size:** 4–7 meters long, 0.8–2 meters wide

**Capsule:** Wystoh are deadly predators of Chad's oceans. Territorial pack hunters, they locate and shred any prey that wanders into their hunting territory. Sinewy and long, they propel themselves at a terrifying speed by a slithering motion. They have beady black eyes, and large mouths filled with serrated teeth. The ranchers usually trick the wystoh away from an area they must enter by sending an automated foo-twitter, mimicking prey sounds, through the wystoh territory, temporarily clearing a path as the predators follow the false signal.

### ■ Tsaelke

**Type:** Spirited cetacean

**DEXTERITY 3D**

**PERCEPTION 3D**

**STRENGTH 3D**

**Swimming 4D**

**Special Abilities:**

*Sea-Singing:* Tsaelke, cy'een, and methnaps all have a long-range form of communication, allowing reasonably complex exchanges of information. Each species has a different "language," but some cross-communication has been noted.

*Rudimentary Thumb:* Tsaelke have long "hand"-fluke with a semi-opposable thumb, which could be used to roughly manipulate objects.

**Move:** 14

**Size:** 9–12 meters long, 3–4 meters wide.

**Orneriness:** 3D+2

**Capsule:** Tsaelke are spirited, but generally friendly, mounts used by the ocean ranchers to tend their herds. They are barrel-bodied, with long





necks and small heads, brass colored with mottled camouflaging. Each tsaelke has a unique pattern of stripes, spots, and rings. Tsaelke have a rudimentary hand and semi-opposable thumb. Tsaelke are never fully domesticated, and even the most reliable of them will occasionally play pranks on their riders. They are able to carry up to 75 kilograms of cargo, or 25 kilos and a rider. Tsaelke feed on fish, and browse through the fish schools as they romp through the waves.

Wild tsaelke are the only cousins of the Chadean cetacean group known to travel into Chad's shallow seas and bayous, and the only cetaceans known to the Chadra-Fan, who regard them as sea-spirits. The tsaelke may be a sentient precursor species.

### ■ Methnap

**Type:** Domesticated cetacean

**DEXTERITY** 2D

**PERCEPTION** 2D

**STRENGTH** 3D+2

**Special Abilities:**

*Sea-Singing:* Tsaelke, cy'een, and methnaps all have a long-range form of communication, allowing reasonably complex exchanges of information. Each species has a different "language," but some cross-communication has been noted.

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 12–15 meters

**Orneriness:** 2D

**Capsule:** Methnaps are the calm cousins of the tsaelke and cy'een. On average less intelligent than their cousins, they are loyal, collected, and more dependable mounts.

Methnaps generally resemble tsaelke, aside from being larger and less well camouflaged. Methnaps can bear up to 125 kilograms or a rider and 75 kilos. Methnaps are fish-grazers, and often dip their heads beneath the ocean surface to nibble at passing fish below.

### ■ Cy'een

**Type:** Large wild cetacean

**DEXTERITY** 2D

**PERCEPTION** 3D

**STRENGTH** 4D

**Swimming** 5D

**Special Abilities:**

*Sea-Singing:* Tsaelke, cy'een, and methnaps all have a long-range form of communication, allowing reasonably complex exchanges of information. Each species has a different "language," but some cross-communication has been noted.

**Move:** 16

**Size:** 21–26 meters long, 4–7 meters wide

**Orneriness:** 6D

**Capsule:** Cy'een are the wild, untamable cousins of the Chadean cetaceans. They have barrel-bodies, long necks and small heads, and are a dark bronze on the ventral side, shading to black on the dorsal side. Cy'een are carnivores, mainly feeding on fish, but occasionally snatching eloag (a white-furred gliding bird) when the chance presents itself.

Although cy'een are not domesticated, young ranch hands sometimes jump on and ride them. Cy'een hate to be ridden and seem to regard the riders as a challenge to be overcome. "Riding the cy'een" has become a local metaphor for any challenging and dangerous endeavor.

## Chad Landing Facilities

Chad has no Imperially sanctioned landing facilities and no known permanent local landing facilities.

There are, however, occasional landing platforms erected by the Chadra-Fan in hopes of attracting star traders (many Chadra-Fan are aware of the existence of life off planet, although they lack details).

### Trader's Gamble

Chadra-Fan mechanical art has recently come to the attention of critics and collectors in the Core Worlds. Traders may be able to sell Chadra-Fan art pieces for a high price. The Chadra-Fan might trade for interesting food, methyl alcohol (a choice and harmless drink to the Chadra-Fan), and interesting mechanical devices to toy with.

The ranchers are usually interested in trade, if you can find them, although they're always wary of shoddy goods or dishonest traders. The ranchers are often credit poor and prefer to barter meat or meat contracts for goods.



These temporary landing platforms are constructed either above the swamp canopy or in clearings. Visiting traders often leave their repulsorlift generators running at low levels when they land at these platforms; the platforms are constructed from local vegetable matter — wood, vines, and grass — and simply can't take the weight of even a "light" freighter. These temporary platforms are noticeable from the methane-torches set around the area in a roughly triangular formation.

There is a recurring landing field facility on an large island in the southern hemisphere's extensive swampland. This island mesa seems to be the remains of an ancient volcanic plug and is a natural landing pad — flat, durable, above water, and easy to spot from altitude. It is surrounded on all sides by swampland dotted with Chadra-Fan villages, and access to the mesa is granted by vine-and-pole ladders. A small shelter on the mesa is regularly maintained by local Chadra-Fan clans and rebuilt after the storms sweep it away. The shelter offers food, a small assortment of drinks (mainly methyl alcohol), and trinkets and odd trade goods from across the galaxy (mostly junk, but occasionally including an interesting item). The facility offers no repairs or fuel, although the swamps themselves offer vast amounts of fuel in the form of methane, freely available to any who own fuel converters.

The ocean ranchers usually have few landing facilities capable of supporting the mass of a light freighter. Generally, traders wishing to deal with ranchers have to locate a ranch fleet and hover over the waves while exchanging goods. As yet, no rancher is known to have begun a trading post, and the local economy is probably too unstable to support one.

Chad has always been administered by the Old Republic and Empire in a hands-off fashion. Today the planet is only one of several under the administration of an Imperial prefect, who annually dispatches sub-prefects to collect revenue as they are able, although the Chadra-Fan are typically credit-poor, and the ranchers are highly transient and hard to track down.



"Great! Let's go!" exclaimed Liadden.

"Hm." To'ir mused. "Humid and hot. Bad for my joints."

"Oh, come on! It's just a bolt hole! We won't be there long!" Liadden pushed.

"We may be there some time. Ship break down, fuel run low, local trouble maybe. Plan ahead. Maybe go to Chad, but I keep looking." To'ir scanned the next entry.



## Gamorr

Gamorr is a standard world in most physical aspects. Although the hydrosphere is not wet enough to justify a Moist rating, the free water in the atmosphere is slightly high, leading to a high incidence of rain forests and dynamic, fierce weather. A high percentage of the land mass is covered in forest and jungle, often overgrowing mountainous terrain. Gamorrean forests are typically dense and damp, and host an amazing variety of fungi on the dark forest floor, sheltered by the thick hardwood trees.

## Creatures of Gamorr

No animals larger than a meter long or high are known to inhabit these dense Gamorr forests. Larger animals may have existed previously, and were hunted to extinction by the Gamorreans. It is possible larger animals are unable to compete with some of the deadlier fungi. Several smaller animals, including birds, rodents, and primates, inhabit the upper levels of the forest, among them the curious quizzers (see *Creatures of the Galaxy*, page 56). However, the planet is not totally devoid of animal life.

### ■ Morrts

**Type:** Small topical parasites

**DEXTERITY** ID

**PERCEPTION** +2

**STRENGTH** +1

**Special Abilities:**

**Bloodsuckers:** +1 damage due to blood loss. Gamorreans are immune to this effect.

**Move:** 4

**Size:** 1-5 cm.

**Capsule:** Morrts are small slug-like bloodsucking parasites that Gamorreans host as pets and status symbols. Gamorrean physiology is adjusted to host these parasites, but other species lose -1 pip of *Strength* for every morrt hosted. Morrts attach themselves painlessly — their skin exudes a slime that acts as a local anesthetic. The Gamorreans often use the slime as the base for a pain-killer. Morrts usually remain in place until found visually, and can be easily detached by lifting them off by the tail.



Wild morrts are quite aggressive about attaching themselves to hosts, and group in clusters up to several dozen. A morrt swarm could easily drain a Gamorrean dry. Tame morrts are docile creatures, usually so fat from feasting on their host that they can barely move.

### ■ Algark Stalks

**Type:** Carnivorous Fungus

**STRENGTH +2**

**Special Abilities:**

**Spore Plume:** Algark plants attack by forming a fungus colony on a living host. Each hour following exposure, those infected should make a *stamina* roll against progressively increased difficult levels. The first test is Moderate, +5 to the difficulty each hour thereafter. If the *stamina* roll fails, the victim becomes wounded. If the *stamina* roll beats the difficulty by more than five, the colony is wiped out by the victim's immune system.

**Size:** 2-4 meters (stalk), 0.5-10 meter radius (spore plume)

**Capsule:** Algark stalks produce a dangerous, highly sporific fungus found in Gamorr's deep forests. An algark colony grows in high stalks and the cap forms a wind-catching sail-bulb, which disperses spores when agitated by a strong wind or disturbed by a passing animal. Algark spores are highly opportunistic and root in soil or organic tissue. If an animal is exposed to a spore-plume it often becomes a host for a new colony as the fungus consumes it. Thus, new colonies are formed miles away from the parent colony, on the site of the host animal's death.

### ■ Snoruuk

**Type:** Mobile Mushroom

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 1D**

**STRENGTH 1D** (per meter of height)

**Special Abilities:**

**Mobility:** Snoruuk are able to shuffle from feeding ground to feeding ground.

**Move:** 1

**Size:** 1-5 meters tall

**Orneriness:** 1D (in this case Orneriness reflects the difficulty to herd these creatures)

**Capsule:** Snoruuk are edible slow moving mobile mushrooms native to Gamorr. They group together in "rings" of five to 30 and collectively creep across the forest floors of Gamorr on their single foot. Snoruuk can be herded, if one has the patience for it, by tapping one of the mushrooms in the ring. The ring moves away from the tap. Gamorreans consider snoruuk a staple food, and keep snoruuk as herd-fungi, guiding their rings with a herding staff. Although utterly blind, they instinctively form a circle and randomly wander in an ongoing search for food and moisture. In fall the snoruuk rings take root to last out the winter, and in spring new mushrooms bud in the rooted ring. As summer begins, the snoruuk rings uproot and begins to wander again.

## Gamorrean Society

Gamorr is famous for the incessant clan wars of the native porcine Gamorreans, and the Gamorrean mercenaries it produces. Gamorreans are omnivorous, highly adaptive, with a feudal-level



technology and a feudal society.

Gamorrean clans are ruled by clan chieftains, called warlords, and a council of important females, called matrons. Clan females are all related and trace their ancestry to a common matriarch. Males are exchanged between clans at a young age. Clans range in numbers from a few dozen to several hundred or more, but typical clans number about 20 sows and 50 boars, plus young. Clans control areas of land and are always interested in acquiring more. Traditionally, land can be acquired by either colonizing an area unclaimed, or by taking it away from another clan. Unfortunately, most arable land on the planet is already claimed, at least in name, and often by more than one clan. Gamorreans spend a fantastic amount of time fighting over it.

Females (sows) do all the useful work, and own or lease all property. The sows can be as rough and violent as the males (boars), and encourage boars to bloody deeds to prove their virility. Only



## Gamorr

**Type:** Terrestrial  
**Temperature:** Temperate  
**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)  
**Hydrosphere:** Moderate  
**Gravity:** Standard  
**Terrain:** Forest, jungle, mountain, plain  
**Length of Day:** 28 standard hours  
**Length of Year:** 380 local days  
**Sapient Species:** Gamorreans (N)  
**Starport:** Landing field  
**Population:** 500 million  
**Planet Function:** Homeworld battleground  
**Government:** Clans  
**Tech Level:** Feudal  
**Major Exports:** Mercenaries  
**Major Imports:** Melee weapons

about half as many sows are born as boars, although a high fatality rate among boars results in a preponderance of elder sows. Sows can expect to have up to a dozen husbands over the course of a lifetime, and to have dozens of offspring. Gamorrean genealogy is an amazingly complex subject, attended to by a small class of sow scholar-lawyers, who memorize long sagas listing genealogy, wars, heroic deeds, and property exchanges of all kinds.

All sows either own property or will, since land is divided among daughters evenly upon inheritance. Even unlanded sows have an income, since mothers lease out land to daughters to cultivate. These pieces of property range from small plots of land to vast acreages, or perhaps a portion of a business. Over generations these holdings are split into smaller and smaller sections, and matrons consolidating land are a chief factor in the ongoing Gamorrean wars.

Clan matrons are a small and select group of sows who own great tracts of land. Although boars battle to seize land from rival clans, they do so in the name of their clan matrons. These matrons usually have a number of household boar admirers, smitten with their beauty, grace, and personal power. Groups of matrons are led by a head sow; the most powerful, richest, and important matron in the clan. Matrons can be told from ordinary sows by their small, devoted bodyguard, and the high number of morrts they host.

### Gamorrean Boars

Boars come in four basic varieties — warlords, clan boars, household boars (or tuskers), and veterans.

Warlords are the most powerful boars of a clan, married to the clan matrons. The greatest warlord of the clan is the general of all the clan armies, absolute ruler in all matters of war, and picked by the head sow for his skill at arms and past successes. The other warlords serve as clan warrior captains. Warlords almost always come from the ranks of the tuskers. A warlord can host up to 20 morrts at a time, and sometimes favors greatly heroic boars with a morrt from his personal trove.

Clan boars are the married boars. They are important and respected because they have an income from their wives' lands and can afford good weapons and armor. Their relatively high position is also reflected in the 10 or more morrts they proudly sport. Clan boars form the core of both the clan-guard and the clan armies. Clan boars cannot expect to become warlords, unless either their wife dies — a relatively rare occurrence — and they then happen to marry a matron, or their wife inherits a matronage, an even rarer occurrence.

Household boars, or tuskers, are unmarried boars who have hired on to a clan. They form the bulk of the clan armies, and aside from a small stipend from the clan matrons, they live off the plunder they seize from rival clans. While usually poor, a successful tusker can hope to catch the eye of a sow, perhaps a matron. A typical tusker hosts only about a half-dozen morrts, although certain successful tuskers can amass a larger trove of morrts which they usually give to their clan matrons as tribute. Tuskers aren't completely loyal, and occasionally drift away to another clan matron, especially if the matron is looking to swell the ranks of her clan.

Veterans are retirees, sometimes from great age, but much more commonly from being maimed or crippled in some fashion. Veterans are usually amazingly tough, experienced, and respected. Veterans are the main trainers of young boars until they march off to war for the first time. Veterans serve as advisors to warlords, who respect them as they respect no other boars, and often command the clan-guards. Veterans can be identified by the lack of an important body part and the dozen or so morrts they boast.

Gamorrean boars do not trade, but sows will. Their main interest is in hand weapons or long-lasting food supplies, and they pay in gold or other precious metals, if they have it, or mercenary contracts if they don't. The safest time to visit Gamorr is in the late fall through the early spring while the boars are comparatively calm, and the sows still flush from last season's plunder.



## The Gamorrean Year

Seasons dominate the activities in Gamorrean society. Spring is planting season for the sows, and training time for the boars. Veterans whip younglings into shape, and tuskers roam looking for adventure. Local fairs spring up, and serve as places for sows to trade and boars to match muscles in semi-formal personal combat. Fair tourney combats are almost always to first blood. Most of the year's births come in spring. Marriages are arranged and performed, and clan alliances and mercenary contracts for the upcoming war season are proposed, negotiated, and finalized (by personal combat). Young boars are exchanged, and sows ready their boars for the coming war season. In late spring clans begin to raid the lands of their rivals.

Summer is for war. The boars march off to battle, ostensibly in reprisal for raids, accompanied by unwed sows and young boars still in training. Married sows, younglings, elders, and a small clan-guard of reliable boars remain at the clan fortress. Gamorrean strategic goals are modest and straightforward — plunder and pillage, and occupy land as able. Early summer typically sees a number of testing battles, as each clan probes the strength of the others. By mid-summer the clans have settled down to the business of besieging each other, and with the heat of late summer comes grand battles and siege breaks, crescendoing in mass slaughter. Gamorrean combat is almost exclusively hand-to-hand, since Gamorreans have little interest in ranged combat. The only way for a Gamorrean to prove his boarishness is in close combat.

By autumn the clans have spent most of their strength. A few late mopping-up actions dwindle with the heat, and by mid-season the clans have retired to their fortresses. Sows harvest the crops and

### Trader's Gamble

Our last gamble for Gamorr was the idea that the boars might not be as dumb as most people thought, but you should approach them in the winter; heard how old Karadbria made out with that Gamorrean board game of his?

This time: replica weapons have become popular souvenir goodies lately. How much more popular would real Gamorrean weapons, with real battle scarring be? You can probably get tons of the old junk just by trading them shiny brand new axes and swords.



tend the wounded. Autumn fairs briefly appear as newly wealthy clans trade crops and plundered goods. Early seeds for new alliances are planted at these fairs. Tales of the last season's battles and heroics are told in verse and song, new widows advertise their availability, new veterans join their peers, a crop of new marriages (called "widow weddings") are performed, and everyone feasts for the last time before winter.

Winter is a harsh season. Fierce storms are common and a clan too badly depleted in the summer may find itself starving and freezing. Winter raids sometimes result from this shortage, but they are usually more desperate than violent. In more successful and powerful clans, boars and sows settle into a calm home life. Boars, ordinarily quite attentive, become positively docile, romantic, and cuddly. Boars sing songs and bring gifts to their wives, and court them in the same fashion as unmarried males of other species would a prospective mate. This continues into early spring, when whole flower fields are stripped of their blossoms to serve as gifts to wives. Tuskers spend their winters worshipping a select sow from afar, usually one of the clan matrons, making up songs, planning the next war season, and playing table games.



## Gamorrean Settlements

Gamorrean fortresses vary in size tremendously, but the basic pattern is the same.

The simplest fortress is nothing more than a wooden stockade surrounding a small village of huts and long houses. Gates control access, and the clan-guard keeps suspicious-looking strangers away. A well-constructed, heavily fortified house is typically located near the center of the village. This is the clan-house, where the matrons and warlords reside. About 10 sows and 20 boars inhabit a fortress of this size.

The average fortress is a village surrounded by a stockade, itself perhaps surrounded by a moat, with an internal sub-fortress, on a natural or built-up hill. The sub-fortress walls are usually thick and stout, sometimes constructed of stone, and jealously guarded. This sub-fortress is actually a larger version of the clan-house. A village houses 30 to 50 sows and a little over twice as many boars. Villages often have a common area just inside the main gate, used for a market place and safe ground for members of other clans. Violating the taboo against violence in the commons is a serious crime, and even fellow clan members turn against a boar violating this prohibition against combat.

A large fortress is more of a township. The town is surrounded by the inevitable wall and usually a broad moat. Often the town is divided by internal walls to limit the advantage of enemies breaking through any one gate, of which there are usually two or three. The internal fortress resembles a village unto itself. There are several clan-houses inside the internal fortress, and yet another sub-fortress, the last refuge in the event of a successful siege. There are only a dozen or so towns of this size on Gamorr, belonging to the most prestigious and powerful clans on the planet. A many as 100 sows, sometimes more, inhabit such a town, with up to 300 boars attending them. Several of these towns have instituted a foreigners' quarter inside the walls — a commons with permanent buildings, where foreign clan members can deal with each other safely. Offworlders can sometimes be found here, trading with the natives. The planet has no landing facilities, per se, but most of these towns have a large landing field outside the walls, maintained on the order of shrewd clan matrons.

Several clan-towns of this size have formed sub-clans, each sub-clan holding a town section. The sub-clans still consider themselves members of the same clan, although local rivalries have been known to develop. Whether these sub-clans herald a societal change or will



cause these towns to collapse under population and social pressures is a matter of hot debate in certain xenosociologist circles.

Gamorrean mercenary clans are an inevitable by-product of the regular warfare. While all clans occasionally fight for other clans for pay, certain clans form small professional mercenary bands, and move from area to area selling their services to the highest bidder. Not completely driven by greed, the warlords of mercenary clans adhere to the ancient tradition of fighting a blood-battle to seal the deal. These clans will go anywhere to fulfill a contract, and form the bulk of Gamorrean mercenaries commonly seen in the galaxy at large.



"Sounds pretty dangerous," Liadden said. "I didn't think Gamorreans traded at all, though."



"Oh, they trade," said To'ir. "Gamorreans not stupid, just simple. They trade, fight, sing, work, make families. Just like everyone else. This entry right about going to winterside. Much safer. I surprised that not figured out before now. Maybe, maybe not go there. Lots of room to hide, and I think I still remember Gamorrean."

He scrolled to the next entry anyway.



## Kubindi

The planet Kubindi is a searingly hot world on the edge of known space, discovered by Imperial scouts only a few years ago. The planet's sun is Ku'Bakai, a blue giant given to irregular bursts of radiation. Millennia ago, Ku'Bakai flared up in a spectacular fashion, searing the first four planets in the system, and causing an ecologic catastrophe on Kubindi. Most of the then-dominant lifeforms fell to extinction, plant life was nearly eradicated, and only a few small animals survived. Native insect life, on the other hand, thrived in the radiation-induced natural vacuum. New species mutated into existence and formed the basis for a new ecosystem.

Most of the surviving non-insect species evolved to consume insects. One of these species invented simple tools to catch their new food, evolved intelligence to cultivate insect hives, then a culture, and ultimately an industrial civilization. These intelligent insectivores call themselves the Kubaz.

Insect life still dominates Kubindi. Plant life soon returned to the planet, from deep-buried seeds and rapidly evolving survivors. The broad variety of life extant before the great solar flares has been replaced by a deep variety of mutant insects and primitive hardy vegetation.

Ku'Bakai continues to emit radiation storms at a subdued level, and mutations create new species of insects regularly. The less radiation-adaptable species have evolved characteristics to cope with the radiation flares; some have evolved thick epidermal layers to absorb the radiation, others have become nocturnal, a few have evolved to become genetically radiation resistant, and one, the Kubaz, evolved intelligence.

Today, Kubindi is dominated by extensive desert, plains, and light forest. The deserts are gradually shrinking as Kubaz reclama-



tion efforts turn them into grassland. The percentage of grassland is static, as the reclamation efforts are also turning roughly as much grassland into forest as desert into grassland. This gradual process has been underway for hundreds of years, but is expected to finish in the next century, barring another great solar storm, as the reclamation can only progress as far as the available water allows.

The forests of Kubindi come in two basic varieties. The thickwood forests are primarily composed of trees and underbrush with tremendously thick, radiation-absorbent bark. Thickwood trees are home to a wide variety of bark-burrowing social insects (a staple of Kubaz cooking). Silverwood forests are composed primarily of trees with a highly reflective bark. Although not mirror reflective, these silvertrees glow with reflected light. Most insects and animals in these forests are nocturnal, as very few creatures can withstand the broiling reflected heat. The trees themselves absorb enough heat to allow photosynthesis. Silvertree wood is dark and thick, with a fairly high metal content.

## Creatures of Kubindi

There are virtually millions of insect species on Kubindi. Most of them are relatively harmless and small, useful to the Kubaz mainly



as food staples. However, several exceptional insects are worthy of note.

## Sun Beetle

**Type:** Insect of burden

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 1D**

**STRENGTH 5D**

**Brawling:** pincer 7D, lifting 9D+2

**Special Abilities:**

**Pincers:** Do STR+3D damage.

**Move:** 9

**Size:** 2 meters to carapace ridge, 6 meters long

**Orneriness:** 2D

**Capsule:** Sun beetles were formerly very common beasts of burden on Kubindi. They have largely been replaced by machines, but are still used as burden carriers in remote backward areas. In more developed regions of the planet, they are used as show and racing animals. In the past sun beetles were widely used in combat, and may still be used in this way in remote areas. Wild sun beetles, most common in the vast dry plains, have been known to duel over territory in pulling matches; the beetles lock pincers and pull against each other until one beetle has ripped the other's pincer out of its socket. An illegal beetle-fighting underground has developed on Kubindi, where the participants gamble on which beetle can pull its opponent to death.

## Kuret Swarm

**Type:** Armored swarm insect

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 2D**

**STRENGTH 1D-5D\***

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** Does STR+2 damage.

**Move:** 6

**Size:** 1 cm.

\* Kuret swarm *Strength* is 1D for every hundred kurets in a swarm. Kuret swarms can number in the thousands, but only a few hundred can occupy a roughly human-sized area at a time and so are limited to 5D *Strength* at most.

**Capsule:** Kurets are one-centimeter-long bronze-colored insects with a bristle of short feathery antennae and large sharp pincers. A kuret swarm acts as a group-entity, communicating via pheromone transmission. The swarm has no "royal insect" issuing orders, and acts in overall instinctive consensus. Kurets are wild insects and have never been tamed by Kubaz farmers. They are valued as a rare delicacy by gourmets, and kuret-trappers can demand a high price for a bushel of kurets.

## Kubaz Society

The Kubaz have developed a high culture independent of galactic influences. Many arts, especially cuisine and sculpture, crafts, and sciences are Kubindi special interests, and great societal support is granted to experts in such fields.

Kubaz are technically omnivorous but insects and other small arthropods form such a large and important part of their diet that even they consider themselves insectivores. Kubaz cooking is an unusual branch of high cuisine, being centered primarily on the fine preparation of insect meals, such as filleted decalegs, fieldhopper on the quarter-shell, micromite pate, and greenfly soup.

Kubaz society is very family oriented. Kubaz extended families include all descendants of a living Kubaz, and their spouses. Families thus overlap, and every married Kubaz belongs to two families; their own original and their spouse's. Marriage is the traditional method of strengthening long-term, inter-family peace. Kubaz families are large and strong, but they are not clans in the usual sense. Clans trace their descent from a common ancestor, Kubaz families trace their descent strictly to their eldest member.

Kubaz family elders are very highly regarded, and are the focus of the care and attention of the entire family. Family elders seem to live a considerably longer life than other Kubaz, although whether this long life is a physiological reaction to being an elder, or they simply outlive their siblings is not known.

Usually such an elder watches over the family in semi-retirement, advises and sometimes puts a foot down about some important subject — but for the most part elders reign without ruling. While some elders do oversee day-to-day family business, others are so old that their grasp on current events has slipped, and some have descended into senility.

Ordinary family business is usually handled by the first-born

## Kubindi

**Type:** Terrestrial

**Temperature:** Searing

**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)

**Hydrosphere:** Dry

**Gravity:** Standard

**Terrain:** Desert, plains, forest

**Length of Day:** 48 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 420 local days

**Sapient Species:** Kubaz (N)

**Starport:** Limited services

**Population:** 2 billion

**Planet Function:** Exotic skills, resources

**Government:** Family oligarchies

**Tech Level:** Information

**Major Exports:** Exotic cuisine

**Major Imports:** Medium to high technology



child (the First), with the assistance and advice of the two eldest siblings (the Second and Third). Collectively this group is known as the Three. If one should die, then the eldest child of that individual inherits the Third position as the other two advance in inheritance position. This arrangement is not always fair, nor optimal, but it has served the Kubaz reasonably well.

The Three control the normal affairs of the family as a group. The eldest offspring of the Three stay in the family compound and marry younger members of another family. Younger family members marry the elder members of another family. While family membership is lifelong and dual, an individual Kubaz holds primary allegiance to the family they are in residence with, then to their second family regardless of genetic considerations, at least in theory. This has led to familial conflicts of interest for countless generations of Kubaz, as personal preferences war with dual family pressures. Entire genres of Kubaz literature and theater revolve around this theme.

This cross-attachment of families has led to an overall peace in modern Kubaz society in several ways. By keeping most families related one way or another there is little incentive for large scale conflict with neighbors — it's one thing to fight an enemy over land or hive rights, but quite another to shoot at your second-family cousin who whipped up that wonderful tharaxix quiche at the last family reunion. Also, every family structure realigns itself every few decades as elders die, preventing any one family from acquiring and holding too much power over many generations. While families do become very important, they also lose a great deal of that influence as their elders die.

When an elder dies, the Three unevenly divide an inheritance. The eldest sibling gets one third of their parent's (or grandparent's) assets, the second eldest one quarter and the third one fifth. The remaining assets are scattered among the rest of the family as per

### Trader's Gamble

Kubaz chefs sometimes demand native Kubindi stock to keep their insect supplies up, and their employers are willing to pay top credit for a load full of real Kubindi bugs. Make sure you know a Kubaz chef first, and that your ship has the containment facilities to keep alien bugs safe, sound, and out of your wiring.



a will. The new elders then set up shop as the heads of new families.

Families ordinarily cooperate in business, working toward family advancement. Strong identification with family equaling business has kept industrialization slow, but has not prevented the creation of an information age technology.

Until approximately 300 local years ago most families were rural insect farmers raising food by manual labor. Industrialization led to an increase in food production efficiency, allowing (and requiring) more families to branch into other economically viable areas, which led to further advances. Atomic technology was discovered about 100 years ago, and information technology reached a peak about 25 years ago. The Kubaz have already developed in-system space ships, explored their system, and even colonized some of their system's planets. This is a typical technological cycle, and probably would have led to a Kubaz hyperdrive in 100 to 200 years, had the Ku'Bakai system not been discovered several years ago by an Imperial scout.

The commander of the contact expedition, Admiral Spitar P'ton, was highly cultured and a gourmet. He quickly came to appreciate the advanced culture, art, theater, and most especially the high cuisine of the Kubaz people. P'ton quickly "hired" a staff of Kubaz



chefs and introduced Kubaz cuisine to the highest circles of Imperial society, where certain connoisseur circles have taken to the new gourmet form with great gusto.

### Kubindi and the Galaxy

Imperial intervention in internal Kubindi affairs has been slight. While the Kubindi are subject to Imperial regulation and taxation, the high regard some ranking officials have for Kubindi culture — seen as a great accomplishment for a non-human species — has spared it more overt and rapacious attention. The Kubaz are trying to acquire hyperspace technology so they might explore the alien cultures of the galaxy independently, but Imperial technology restrictions have been rigidly enforced for protection of the Kubaz culture. Ordinary interstellar trade is allowed access to the Ku'Bakai system, but thus far is sluggish. Information on the Ku'Bakai system has not been widely disseminated, and traders who have heard of it have not yet had adequate reason to make the journey to the system. Kubaz travel off-planet is rare, although occasional Kubaz have made a life in the galaxy at large.



"Bugs. I hate bugs." Liadden said, with a slight shudder. "Let's not."

"Kubaz cooking can be delicious, but Kubindi looks too busy and advanced. If Imperials present, not safe for us. Some other time." To'ir said absently.

Liadden shuddered again.



### Toola

Toola is a bitterly cold world on the edge of the Outer Rim. Wind-swept ice plains surround glacier-encrusted mountains. Whole regions are snowy desert covered in shifting snow dunes. Equatorial regions are home to 90 percent of the planet's lifeforms, amazingly hardy animals that scrape a living from the tropical tundra.

The Toolan year is not determined as much by the planet's axial tilt as it is by Toola's slightly elliptic orbit around its sun, Kaelta. Toola's orbit isn't wildly erratic, but it is oblong enough to plunge the whole planet into winter most of the year. During two-fifths of the year, the planet endures deep winter, a period of harsh cold and dim days. For about a fifth of the year Toola approaches Kaelta and the planet enjoys spring. Summer lasts slightly less than a fifth of the year, and doesn't warm beyond the tropical regions, but the tundra blooms with life, herd-animals feast and multiply, and the predators cull the weak. Then, the final fifth of the year leads Toola into autumn and another deep winter.

The only other real source of heat is the hot springs that burst out of the cold ground in isolated areas. Some hot springs are constant, others are periodic. Heated by the hot core of the planet, subterranean pools of water expand and hiss out onto the frigid surface, where they warm and melt the surface ice until they force their way into the cold air. Wherever they appear they draw life as water holes do on hot worlds. Mastmot and cariboose herds, Whiphid tribes, tuggle packs, and flocks of snow demons all gather around the hot springs in peace, to warm themselves and drink melted water. As if by ancient treaty, no hunting is done here (although the herds remain skittish) and no personal grudges are pursued.

### Whiphid Tribes

Toola boasts a native sentient species: the ferocious Whiphids, a tusked and furred predator species. The Whiphids group together

#### Toola

Type: Terrestrial  
 Temperature: Cool  
 Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)  
 Hydrosphere: Moist  
 Gravity: Standard  
 Terrain: Glaciers, tundra, frozen ocean  
 Length of Day: 23 standard hours  
 Length of Year: 423 local days  
 Sapient Species: Whiphids (N)  
 Starport: Landing field  
 Population: 8.4 million  
 Planet Function: Homeworld  
 Government: Tribal  
 Tech Level: Stone  
 Major Exports: Ice, furs, tusks  
 Major Imports: Low tech



in small nomadic tribes of three to 10 couples. Whiphids are perfectly adapted to their cold world, and have an instinctive physiological response to the summer season. During most of the year Whiphids are insulated by a thick fur-coat and layers of fat, but in late spring they shed most of their fur and burn off inches of fat. Most Whiphids encountered off-planet are in their summer coat.

Whiphids on Toola hunt an assortment of creatures, especially the mastmot, which has a particularly rich and well-priced fur, and caraboose, a staple food and raw material source.

In winter tribes are nomadic, moving across the ice fields in their great tuggle-drawn sleds, and camping in their round hide tents near hunting grounds. In summer the Whiphids return to a permanent base, constructed of stone and insulated by hides on the inside and earth on the outside. The tribes are led by an older, learned Whiphid called the Spearmaster, who decides where the tribe is to camp and what it hunts.

Whiphid sleds and load-bearing sledges are interesting examples of low tech achievement. Rugged and flexible, yet light-weight, these native contraptions are built by hand using only bone, horn, hide, and leather thong. Drawn by tuggles, a medium-sized draft animal, they smoothly glide over ice and snow by spreading their load over the broadest possible surface.

Tribes are loose collections of individuals, and the Whiphids have little attachment to the tribe of their parents. Tribes are a survival necessity, not an ideological abstraction or family unit, and exist as long as they are successful. Survivors of an unsuccessful tribe have no compunction about joining another tribe, nor do most tribes object to new members.

Tribes usually meet at hot springs to trade and deal and combine forces for big hunts. The tribes do not make war and do not raid each other. That would, in the Whiphid mind, reduce the number of hunters available to hunt mastmots and lead to bad hunting luck for the attacking tribe. Individual Whiphids do have disagreements, sometimes violent ones, some that last for years, but it is strictly a personal issue and others do not become involved. Bullies are rare; elders usually take a young bully on a long hunt and straighten the young one out. Sometimes the bully does not return — Whiphids who cannot learn the ways of the elder are not allowed to undermine society.

### Whiphid Stories

The Whiphids have a rich oral history, told around the hide tents to pass the long winter nights. Hunting sagas are the most common



stories, usually stories about the greatest hunters and their best hunts against fantastically big and clever prey. The hunters don't always win in these tales, but usually they do finally bring home their quarry; enough food to last through the winter.

Years-long grudges are another favorite subject in Whiphid sagas, only slightly less common than hunting stories. These are tales of the bone-hard wills of the fiercest hunters and the long fights they pursue in the deep wastelands, usually over a minor insult that grew out of proportion and took over their lives.

These stories are told by the elders of the tribe at certain times and under certain conditions. Some stories aren't told at some times of the year. Hunting stories are told before and after a hunt. Grudge stories are told at meetings of two tribes, partially as a caution against letting a hunter's ego get in the way of a good hunt. Personal stories of adventure and skill are told in the summer camps by mate-seeking young hunters, and in the autumn wisdom stories are told by elders about their dead parents and ancestors.



## Creatures of Toola

The savage, snow-covered wastes of Toola are home to many creatures in varying levels of the food chain. To the Whiphids most of these are prey, although there are several predators. These creatures play great roles in the Whiphid stories, often as the subject of a hunt, or as obstacles to be overcome and tests of their bravery.

### ■ Snow Demon

**Type:** Aerial wasteland predator

**DEXTERITY 3D**

**PERCEPTION 3D**

**Search:** tracking 5D

**STRENGTH 4D**

**Brawling 5D, flight 5D**

**Special Abilities:**

**Fangs:** Do STR+1D+2 damage.

**Flight:** Snow demons can fly using a combination of gas bladders and their wings; do this they roll their *flight* skill.

**Talons:** Do STR+1D damage.

**Move:** 6 (walking), 20 (flying)

**Size:** 1.2–1.6 meters long, 2.4–3.2 meter wingspan

**Capsule:** Snow demons are dangerous predators that hunt over the ice fields of Toola. Their main prey is the shaggy mastmot, although they can and do take down any other prey that presents itself.

Snow demons have gray-white hair, long fangs and a long purple tongue protruding from their extended muzzles, sharp talons, and long hairy wings. They are large creatures, but their volume belies their mass. A snow demon weighs only about 20 kilograms, and lofts itself more through the use of methane gas bladders than wing power. The demon's wings are used for thrust and attitude control, but the lift is mostly provided by the copious gas produced by the demon's digestive tract and shunted into tubular bladders. This methane is vented occasionally and lends the demon an awful stench.

The demons attack in flocks, raking a target with claws as they swoop past until the prey is weakened, when the flock lands and rips into the victim with their great fangs. Snow demons are very clever and use simple tools in their mountain aeries, and may be a pre-sapient species.

### ■ Arabore

**Type:** Seagoing rodent

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 2D**

**STRENGTH 4D**

**Special Abilities:**

**Blubber:** Adds +2D to STR against physical damage.

**Bull Ram:** Does STR+2 damage.

**Tusks:** Do STR+2D damage.

**Move:** 2 (walking), 8 (swimming)

**Size:** 2.3–2.8 meters long

**Capsule:** Arabores are fish eating sea rodents with great flat tusks protruding from their short snouts. They are covered in layers of fat, but

manage to convey an impression of sleekness from their overall tapering aquadynamic shape. Bull arabores collect a harem of between two and 12 females (cows) and acquire a fishing territory by dueling with neighboring bulls. Bulls are very territorial and regard any creature that stumbles across the arabore pod to be potential threat. Such a threat is dealt with by a charge, often punctuated with a tusk attack, while the cows dive into the safety of the sea.

Whiphids hunt the arabore only occasionally. A young hunter will traditionally kill a bull with bare hands and tusks, to prove himself a mighty hunter, and a new Spearmaster usually does the same. Aside from this, the arabore are in no more danger from the Whiphids than any other creature.

### ■ Mastmot

**Type:** Giant Herbivore

**DEXTERITY 1D**

**PERCEPTION 1D+2**

**STRENGTH 8D**

**Special Abilities:**

**Fatty Hide:** +2D against physical damage, +1D energy.

**Trample:** Mastmots stampeding in a group of five or more inflict STR+3D damage on anyone in their way.

**Tusks:** Do STR+1D damage.

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 10–12 meters at the shoulder, although exceptionally rare specimens can be larger

**Capsule:** Mastmots — also called motmots in some Whiphid tribal dialects — are the preferred prey of Whiphids and snow demons, not because the mastmots are easy to kill, but because mastmots are such a wealth of food and resources. They stand up to 12 meters at the shoulder, more than 15 meters long, and weigh several tons. A single mastmot can provide enough meat for a tribe for a month, and hides and

## Trader's Gamble

In certain galactic circles food one has never heard of from a planet halfway across the galaxy is considered a delicacy, anything from insects to fungus and probably including mastmot and caraboose meat. Brush up on your salesmanship and convince some chef that you've got a new taste for their client's jaded palate.

One of the native herbivores, caraboose, is big, hardy, seems to survive on minimal fodder, and may even be good eating. Try finding a maverick bantha rancher, and see if you can swing a deal to start caraboose herds. Of course, acquiring the caraboose — a big, horned, wild, and defensive herd animal — on a planet full of Whiphids, snow demons, and assorted other unpleasant surprises is your problem.



furs to provide everyone a snow cloak and tent for each family. Mastmot rib bones are carved with Whiphid stick-letters to record lineage, and the ivory of their tusks becomes jewelry. Snow demons typically gorge themselves on mastmot meat and camp at the site of a kill until driven off, the meat rots, or on rare occasions until all the edible portions are consumed.

Mastmots are fairly difficult to kill, even by a strong group of hunters. Their thick fur and hide is padded by a thicker layer of fat. They use their spike-tusks to slash and stab at attackers, and can trample even the strongest hunter under their splayed feet. Other members of the herd will defend an attacked member. Usually hunters will try to take a calf, or sick or old adult, but they must be found away from the herd, or the rest of the herd will rampage through the hunting party. Mastmot gather in herds of five to 12 adults.

### ■ Caraboose

**Type:** Hardy herbivore

**DEXTERITY** 2D+1

**PERCEPTION** 2D

**STRENGTH** 3D+1

Stamina 5D

**Special Abilities:**

*Antlers:* Do STR+2D damage.

*Trample:* A stampeding heard inflicts STR+2D+2 damage on anyone in their way.

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 2 meters at shoulder

**Capsule:** Caraboose is another favored prey of the Whiphid, mainly because it is a bit easier to take down. Caraboose gather in herds of 10 to 30 adults. The main caraboose defenses are antler slashes and a herd stampede away from danger. This doesn't always work to their advantage, as Whiphids sometimes stampede caraboose into traps or off cliffs, but the Whiphids' cleverness sometimes backfires if the herd surges the wrong way and stampedes the hunters by accident.

Caraboose are amazingly hardy, and seem to be able to survive privations that would starve even the toughest of the other herbivores.

### ■ Tuggle

**Type:** Domesticated sledge beast

**DEXTERITY** 2D

**PERCEPTION** 1D

**STRENGTH** 2D

Lifting 4D, stamina 4D

**Special Abilities:**

*Bite:* Does STR+2D damage.

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 0.5 meters tall, 1.5 meters long

**Orneriness:** 2D

**Capsule:** Tuggles are draft animals used to draw the Whiphid sledges. They are lightly colored, long, wiry, with short powerful legs and a thick sleek fur. Six of these carnivores, hitched to a sledge in tandem, can pull two Whiphids, a hide tent, and all their gear. Wild tuggles are pack hunters, and have developed considerable stamina, which they use to harry, drive, and pull down prey. Domestic tuggles can draw their sledges all day with only a couple of rest breaks, for days on end if fed regularly.



### The Great Hoary Mastmot Trading Station

Toola came into contact with the galaxy many years ago, but has never developed a technological base. Whiphids seem satisfied with their lives as they are. They trade mastmot hides for useful technological items on occasion, and quickly adapt to new devices, but for the most part are more concerned with the practical matters of hunting and surviving.

Whiphids love to wander, and some adventurous Whiphids have ventured off-planet in pursuit of greater challenges or a better fight, or sometimes to find a warmer life. These Whiphids sometimes become bounty hunters, trackers, mercenaries, or other professional forms of hired muscle.

The Whiphids' main contact with the galaxy is through a few small trading posts set near the equator, each near hot water springs. The Great Hoary Mastmot Trading Station is a prime example of these small trading enclaves. It consists of two large prefabricated shelters tended by a retired free-trader scout named Haaken Baranar, and his staff; a transient population of about six seasonal workers,



and a handful of droids. Trade goes on all year long, although in winter the station is only periodically busy. During summer, though, the station's population booms with Whiphid and off-world traders. Dozens of tribes converge on the station over the summer and two or three free-trader freighters land each week.

## ■ Haaken Baranar

**Type:** Trading Post Keeper

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 5D, blaster: carbine 6D+2, melee combat: knife 5D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 4D, alien species: Whiphids 6D, business 4D+2, intimidation 3D+2, languages 4D, survival 5D, survival: arctic 6D, value 4D

**MECHANICAL 2D+1**

Ground vehicle operation 4D, space transports 3D+1

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Bargain 4D, search 4D, search: tracking 5D

**STRENGTH 3D+1**

Brawling 5D+1, stamina 5D

**TECHNICAL 2D**

First aid 3D+1

**Force Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster carbine (5D), cold weather suit, fur cloaks, knife (STR+1D), medpacs, sledge and 6 tuggles, survival kit

**Capsule:** Haaken Baranar was an independent scout and free-trader until he got mauled by a snow demon during a stop-over on Toola about 10 years ago. While he recovered at the trading post, the former proprietor, a Wookiee named Spetbecca, was captured by a team of bounty hunters, leaving the station unattended. Haaken was unconscious when the Wookiee was abducted, and felt he owed Spetbecca a debt for tending his wounds — so he took over the station in the unlikely event the Wookiee should return. The staff has turned over several times since then, but Haaken remains, faithful to his missing friend.

Haaken is a big man, 2.1 meters tall and 110 kilos heavy. He has a broad flat face and long beard. His whiskers have gone gray, and he's older than he ever expected to be, but he's had 10 years of experience dealing with the wilderness on Toola and years more experience on dozens of other worlds. He's a shrewd but honest trader, and keeps an eye out for the inexperienced. He seems gruff, but has a soft spot for the honestly inept. He is surprised to be content staying on one planet, but even if Spetbecca returns someday he'll probably stay on.



"Well?" Liadden asked.

To'ir rubbed his chin and stared out into space. "Gamorr," he

said at length.

"Gamorr! Those barbarians? You're kidding! Tell me you're kidding! They'll rip us to shreds!" she exclaimed.

"Hmm, probably not. We do alright. Gamorr is long enough away that Roff forget about us a little. Besides, they pay cash," To'ir said. "Now," To'ir turned back to his datacomp, "where we go to pick up vibro-axes? Or maybe shields. Don't think Gamorreans use shields. Wonder if they just never thought of it ..."

Liadden threw up her hands in frustration, and stomped to her bunk.

## ■ To'ir

**Type:** Old Twi'lek Trader

**DEXTERITY 2D**

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D+2, pick pockets 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 4D+2**

Alien species 7D+1, bureaucracy 5D+1, business 6D+2, cultures 6D, languages 6D+1, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 6D+1, survival 5D+1, value 7D

**MECHANICAL 2D+2**

Astrogation 5D+1, beast riding 4D, sensors 3D+2, space transports 5D, starship shields 4D

**PERCEPTION 3D+2**

Bargain 7D, con 6D, gambling 5D+1, hide 4D+2, persuasion 5D

**STRENGTH 2D**

**TECHNICAL 2D**

Computer programming/repair 4D, droid programming 4D, first aid 4D+2, security 5D, space transports repair 4D+2

**Special Abilities:**

**Tentacles:** Twi'leks can use their tentacles to communicate in secret with each other, even if in a room full of individuals. The complex movement of the tentacles is, in a sense, a "secret" language that all Twi'leks are fluent in.

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 8

**Equipment:** Robes, 500 credits, sling bag with odds and ends including engine tape, hold-out blaster (3D), ball bearings (assorted sizes), 5 meters of wire (rolled), datapad, eating knife, snack fungus, polycarbonate-lens reading spectacles

**Capsule:** To'ir is an old spacefaring Twi'lek trader, owner of the *Seventy-Seven Stars*, and mentor to Liadden. He left Ryloth many years ago as a spice trader, acquired the modified light freighter *Seventy-Seven Stars*, and travelled the known galaxy. In the meantime he has earned and lost several fortunes, traded many commodities, and survived a handful of partners. He claims he will never retire.

To'ir can't return home to Ryloth, as star travelling Twi'leks are outcasts. His years of "riding heatstorms" have taught him much, and he is currently trying to teach some of his lessons to Liadden, a young human female and current partner, whom he looks on as a favored niece, and tries to keep out of trouble.

His age, experience, and withered body combine to make To'ir a patient and paternal figure. To'ir continues to suffer from an old blaster wound to the hip, and limps considerably.



## Liadden

**Type:** Young Free-Trader

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+2, brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 3D+2, melee combat 3D+2, melee combat: knife 4D+1, melee parry 4D, running 4D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Streetwise 4D

### MECHANICAL 3D+2

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

### PERCEPTION 3D

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

### STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 3D+2

### TECHNICAL 3D+2

Droid repair 4D+1, first aid 4D, security 4D+2, space transports repair 5D

**Force Points:** 1

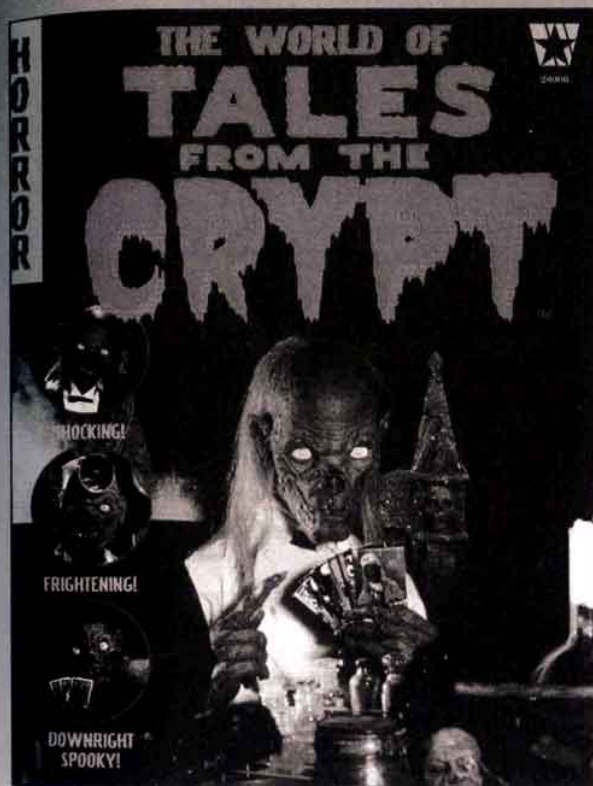
**Character Points:** 9

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster (4D), jumpsuit, 100 credits

**Capsule:** Born on Moer, in the Dalon system, this perky, energetic, and impatient 18 year-old human girl is To'ir's latest partner. She pilots, maintains, and fusses over the *Seventy-Seven Stars* as if it were a sibling. She looks on To'ir as her favorite uncle and tries to keep him out of trouble. Liadden plans on acquiring her own ship someday, to travel around the galaxy, especially the really interesting sounding areas that To'ir avoids.

**Seventy-Seven Stars.** Starship, maneuverability 2D, space 6, hull 3D+2, shields 1D. Weapons: 1 laser cannon (fire control 2D, damage 3D).



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# Cracken's Rebel Field Guide SLICING AIDS

The ability to modify equipment to suit our needs has been a great asset to the Alliance. Some of the most commonly-modified or jury-rigged items are computer and droid components. This field guide entry provides a number of items that are often used in missions involving droids, computer security and slicing. Some, such as the altered transmission core, must remain in its original housing after modification in order to perform its desired function. Others, such as the Intellex IV and other similar systems, can often be used independently.

As I have stressed so many times, our ability to manipulate and modify many standard items of technology aids greatly in our battle against the Empire. Read this carefully, and may the Force be with you.

## Other Sources

A number of *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* supplements provide detailed information on additional items that can be used in such applications as those listed here. *Fantastic Technology* and *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide* can be the most helpful. Other specific sources include pages 84 and 85 of *Galaxy Guide 11: Criminal Organizations* for more information on anti-security apparatus, and pages 121 and 122 of *The Last Command Sourcebook* for items often used by Alliance Intelligence.

For upgraded rules on jury-rigging equipment, see pages 3-6 of *Fantastic Technology*. These rules replace the first edition rules originally presented in *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*.

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## UNITECH "PATCH"

The UniTech "Patch" is a small device that, when applied to a computer system or network, reroutes any security or similar programming so that a break cannot be detected. This device is commonly used by tech teams and some Imperial technicians during emergency repairs when a breached or damaged subsystem is seriously affecting the operations of the whole. The "patch" emulates the signals and responses of the damaged system, effectively tricking the master computer core into thinking that the subsystem is unaffected.

The patch consists of a master, or base unit, and eight slave units that the user places at the junction points between the subsystem to be bypassed and the outside system. Some of these "patches," now in the hands of the Alliance, have proven extremely useful in the acquisition of classified Imperial documents: they allow a user to enter and utilize a specific part of a system and remain relatively undetected.



### ■ UniTech "Patch"

**Model:** UniTech Diagnostic Systems Diverter

**Type:** Interfacing System Bridge

**Skill:** Computer programming/repair

**Cost:** 5,200 credits

**Availability:** 2, R (restricted to governments)

**Game Notes:** The patch requires a Moderate computer programming/repair roll to apply, and adds 1D+2 to the character's security or relevant skill.

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

### ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*The patch is one piece of equipment that can be a blessing if utilized properly, and a curse if an agent becomes dependent on it. I had an opportunity to use one during operations in the Tragan Cluster some time ago; it functioned very well until an Imperial tech started sending remote inquiries directly into the logistics system I had sliced. The patch has a difficult time dealing with sentient inquiries from another system, and it was unable to keep up. While the patch does keep routine security sweeps from triggering an alarm, it wasn't very useful in aiding our escape from the Imperial Security Bureau agents whose files we had downloaded.*

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## TEREXCOMM DATASEARCH 9C

The TerexComm DataSearch 9C is a valuable administrative tool for any being needing to search through thousands of data screen units (DSUs) in as little time as possible. The device is made even more valuable to the Alliance through a discovery by a field agent on Dix'thaar — when coupled with a simple power condenser, the 9C is capable of locating lower-level encrypted files. The drawback to this is that the additional power to the 9C will virtually destroy any programs it searches.

### ■ TerexComm DataSearch 9C

**Model:** TerexComm Deluxe (Data-Search Engine 9C)

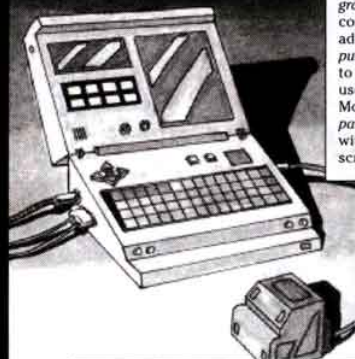
**Type:** Administrative datasearch device

**Skill:** Computer programming/repair

**Cost:** 600 credits

**Availability:** 2

**Game Notes:** An Easy computer programming/repair roll is required to connect the unit. When connected, it adds 1D+2 to the character's computer programming/repair skill and 2D to the character's security skill when used to search for information. A Moderate computer programming/repair roll is needed to modify the 9C with the power condenser as described above.



■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL  
■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

A fine tool for searching for something that has been encrypted, but not extremely so. The main thing to remember when using a modified TerexComm 9C is that you need to have your escape craft ready and waiting. When the 9C starts searching, it starts tearing the programs and scandocs it searches into little tiny electronic bits. It won't take them long to figure something is wrong ... unless you happen to have laid a patch across the system you are searching ...

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## TEREXCOMM DATASEARCH 12C-A

The TerexComm DataSearch 12C-A searches a system for information related to search specifications. A general query, such as "stormtrooper," will yield a large amount of useless information. A more specific clue, such as "stormtrooper garrisons in the Yartexx quarter" will yield much more useful data.

The TerexComm DataSearch 12C-A is similar to the 9C, but with two major differences. The 12C-A does not function with the power condenser modification. It often shorts out if it is modified. The second is a matter of speed. The 12C-A is capable of searching through thousands of DSUs in less than three seconds.

### ■ TerexComm DataSearch 12C-A

**Model:** TerexComm Executive (Data-Search Engine 12C-A)

**Type:** Administrative datasearch device

**Skill:** Computer programming/repair

**Cost:** 850 credits

**Availability:** 2

**Game Notes:** Using the 12C-A requires an Easy computer programming/repair roll. The 12C-A adds 2D to the character's computer programming/repair skill when searching for information.

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

The 12C-A can search through more information faster than most any other search engine available, and it won't destroy the information. All the agent needs to do is gain access to a secure terminal, hook up the 12C-A and give it some search specifications. Within a matter of seconds, it will have found anything pertaining to the search specifications it was provided with. Quite a handy piece of electronics.

## ACCUTRONICS ENCRYPTION PACKAGE

Modified and upgraded by the Alliance Cryptology division, the AccuTronics Encryption Package is another item intended for civilian use, but with the proper modifications has proven a useful tool for the encryption of some lesser-security datafiles.

### ■ AccuTronics Encryption Package

**Model:** AccuTronics Encryption Package 1a.44.87

**Type:** Datafile encryption device

**Skill:** Computer programming/repair

**Cost:** 500 credits

**Availability:** 2

**Game Notes:** Any datafile encrypted with the AccuTronics Package gains a +5 modifier to its difficulty number to be found, and requires a Moderate computer programming/repair roll to crack the encrypt code if the password is unknown.

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

A rather handy item for anyone not wanting or needing to go to enormous lengths to encrypt a datafile. AccuTronics' Encryption Package does just fine for securing the wanted files we circulate throughout the systems ... but I would hardly use it to safeguard the location of Delta Base.

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## ANALYSIS/ENCODING COMPUTER

Analysis/encoding computers, or a/e units, are an important link in the Empire's intelligence network. One of the primary functions a/e units perform as part of the "crew" of a Plexus Droid Vessel (PDV) is to code and decode Imperial Intelligence messages (see page 33 of the *Imperial Sourcebook, Second Edition*). A/E units are designed to take a file, open the encryption, analyze the information, and recode the file. Because of the security and secrecy around these units, a few theories about possible uses within the Alliance for them have risen. Since no one has yet managed to capture a complete working unit, these theories remain untested.

### ■ Analysis/Encoding Computer

**Model:** Analysis/Encoding Docu-Server

**Type:** Analysis/encoding computer

**Skill:** Computer programming/repair

**Cost:** Not for sale

**Availability:** 2, R (Restricted to Imperial use)

**Game Notes:** A Moderate computer programming/repair roll enables a character to connect the a/e unit to another system. Once connected, a Moderate computer programming/repair roll activates the unit. Reduce the difficulty level of encryption on Imperial scandocs or files that have been transferred to the system with the a/e unit by one level (from Difficult to Moderate, etc.).

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*A suggestion has been made by Grolodii Slataav, one of our technicians, that if we can capture the crewing droids from a Plexus vessel, we might just be able to intercept some fraction of the millions of messages handled by Sector Plexus on a daily basis. This is one case where I am going to remain skeptical; I've seen the intelligence scandocs we have on Sector Plexus and what we know of their organization. I prefer the second possibility these units may be able to offer us ... a way to help slice some of their encryption techniques.*

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## MODIFIED TRANLANG III MODULE

The Alliance has developed a modification of the common translation module of most protocol/translation droids to also deliver coded messages to Alliance operatives. Rebel technicians have constructed and installed approximately a dozen of these new units into various espionage droids throughout the Empire.

The modified unit uses pre-specified keywords in a specific language understood by the receiving agent (usually an organic), so that any translator droid or opposed agent monitoring communications takes the exchange as a simple conversation. An integral portion of the modified unit's function is that the host droid is "influenced" to utilize particular words in any given dialogue in designated intervals. These specific words (and in some cases phrases) each have a specific definition assigned to them by Intell when used in a specific order (each droid is given a different encoding). One of the primary reasons this method of transmission has been adopted in some areas is because of the Empire's recent developments in intercepting and decoding the tight-beam transmission most espionage droids utilize.

The modification of the TranLang module is a secondary program, and is directly routed to the portion of the droid's CPU that aids in the droid's choosing of specific words, so the droid does not question why it chose any particularly obscure word. Unfortunately, the unit's being linked to such a major component makes it relatively easy to detect (a Moderate droid programming roll, and the individual making the roll must be looking specifically for secondary programming). For this reason droids containing the unit tend to have shorter terms of existence.

### ■ Modified TranLang III Module

**Model:** TranLang III communication module (modified)

**Type:** Modified droid and systems organic and electronic translation module

**Cost:** 1,500 credits (market version)

**Availability:** 2 (market version), modified Alliance Intell version is strictly illegal

**Game Notes:** The modification of a standard unit to the specifications above requires a Difficult droid programming roll, followed by a Moderate droid repair roll to install the unit without damaging the droid. Planting the droid in the desired locale afterwards is another matter...

### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*The modified communication modules have proven very valuable in several key areas where we have planted espionage droids. The module with which Lieutenant Zeneta confers has provided his unit with some very valuable information. With the data, we have been successful in capturing two command frigates along the Sisar Run. The unfortunate side is that this modification is not as easy to conceal as most — our droid recently captured in the Ghorm system has probably been melted down by now ...*

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## SUBSPACE TIGHT-BEAM TRANSMISSION CORE

The subspace transmission core is one of the integral portions of an espionage unit's secondary programming, for it relays the information to its planter. Upon receipt of a prearranged high-frequency signal, the droid downloads the information via the tight beam to the signal's source.

The espionage unit's secondary programming consists of a number of hard chips of which the host droid has no knowledge. These chips are quite difficult to detect during routine maintenance. They can be programmed for passive recording, or with some newer, sophisticated flag programming, the droid can even be subconsciously programmed to record particular events or information.

The tight-beam core assures relatively secure transmission of the information recorded by the droid, as the narrowness of the beam makes it able to evade nearly all sensor types. The one type the transmission can not evade are the dedicated energy receptors (DERs) which when in scan mode may just happen upon the transmission (see pages 9 and 10 of the *Star Wars Sourcebook, Second Edition*). Once detected, it is relatively easy to triangulate and discover the source of the transmission.

The most common droid the transmission core and its complement programming are installed in are protocol droids, though astromechs and even medical droids are often used for this purpose. For more information on espionage droids, see pages 118-120 of the *Rebel Alliance Sourcebook, Second Edition*. Also see the boxes on pages 29 and 30 of the *Imperial Sourcebook, Second Edition* for more information on the drawbacks of espionage droids.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

*Though we make use of espionage droids, particularly in the Core Worlds, the Empire also uses them against us. More than once we have had a base location compromised or a convoy ambushed because of such a droid. I recently headed an investigation into the droid that compromised our security at the Sinjan Outpost. While extremely helpful in undermining Imperial security, we must also be careful they do not threaten our own.*

### ■ Subspace Tight-Beam Transmission Core

**Model:** MendenData 45-T InfoCore

**Type:** Subspace tight-beam transmission core

**Cost:** 900 credits

**Availability:** 2, R

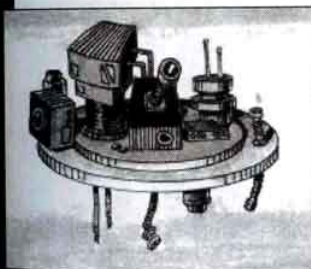
**Game Notes:** It takes a Very Difficult droid programming roll to detect an espionage droid, and the programmer must specifically state that he or she is searching for the secondary programming. Once the secondary programming is detected, it requires a Moderate droid programming roll to remove the chips without damaging the droid. The chips must be physically removed, as the espionage programming will withstand a normal memory wipe.

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## INTELLEX IV

The Intellex IV is the internal computer and analysis program package found in a number of the better astromech units, among them the Industrial Automaton R2 units and the V1-series pilot droids. Extremely popular with consumers, the Intellex IV is capable of a wide variety of functions. When part of its intended droid package, the Intellex IV is particularly valued for its ability to scan technical files to pinpoint potential problems, find data patterns or debug computer codes—performing over 10,000 MPF operations a second. The Intellex IV also supports sophisticated analysis programs, such as lifeform identification subroutines (LFIs) and many low-level scanner tasks.

When removed from its astromech droid, an independent Intellex IV can be used to enter restricted-access files and slice through a number of security systems. This can also be done with other Intellex series computers (such as the V or VI), but with greater difficulty.



### ■ Intellex IV

**Model:** Industrial Automaton Intellex IV internal computer

**Type:** Astromech droid internal computer

**Cost:** 800 credits

**Availability:** 2

**Game Notes:** As the Intellex IV's primary function is to scan technical files and find data patterns, it is very useful to characters who have improved *Technical* skills and a need to retrieve restricted files and information. A character can use an independent Intellex IV unit as a tool when trying to enter restricted systems or files; computer programming/repair difficulty numbers should be determined by the gamemaster.

If the Intellex IV is part of a non-cooperative astromech droid, a Moderate droid repair roll must be made to remove the unit without damage. This procedure usually takes about half an hour to complete. Allied astromech droids, however, are often willing to execute such operations upon their owner's request. If attempting to do this with an Intellex V or VI, raise each difficulty one level.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL  
 ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

*The fact many astromech droids carry the Intellex IV certainly was a great asset to Alliance operations in the Periphery some time ago; our agent Shaparo was able to take the unit from his companion, R2-Q8, and analyze the prisoner files at the Dnalvec garrison on Sriluur. Had it not been for Shaparo's quick thinking and R2's equipment, we never would have been able to rescue our captured companions.*

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## DATAPAD REMOTE LINK UNIT

The TaggeCo TC-40 Padlink is a unit very popular with those executives and other civilian systems users who have little desire to spend their time mulling about a terminal. It enables any authorized user to access and work from a conveniently-sized datapad, while still keeping the user hooked into the primary system. The unit is commonly used by executives who keep systems in their business suites. While the comm attachment is installed to the master system, the mobile unit connects to the datapad through the pad's two minor coupler ports, still allowing for a constant power source to be routed through the primary port.

In recent months Rebel technicians have begun to utilize the datapads with the link system to enter restricted systems. If successful, the hacker is able to download the preferred files in a matter of moments, and do so with minimal risk. To be effective, the comm unit must be installed on the master system. Because of this, one can only break into systems for which the owner (or the operative) has already installed the padlink device.

For a detailed technical guide of a datapad, see page 106 of the *Heir to the Empire Sourcebook*.

### Datapad Remote Link Unit

**Model:** TaggeCo TC-40 Padlink

**Type:** Remote two-piece datapad/system interface unit

**Cost:** 1,000 credits

**Availability:** 2

**Game Notes:** The padlink has a range of 100 meters. An easy computer programming/repair roll must be made to use the device in its intended fashion; a +5 modifier in addition to the assigned difficulty number is applied when characters determine their computer programming/repair roll when slicing into the target system. Installation of the comm unit onto a master terminal requires an Easy computer programming/repair roll.

### ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

### CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

I had the opportunity to use the TC-40 during a recent operation on Arsteni. With a little bit of help from one of the techs, we were able to download crucial troop reports from the constable's personal system, and never even enter the building! The ability to conduct such espionage a good distance from the target system is invaluable to agents in the field.

This issue's "Cracken's Rebel Field Guide" was written by C. Robert Carey and J.P. Pietrzak, and was illustrated by Matt Busch.

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TORIA  
TELL'S

# Droid Journal

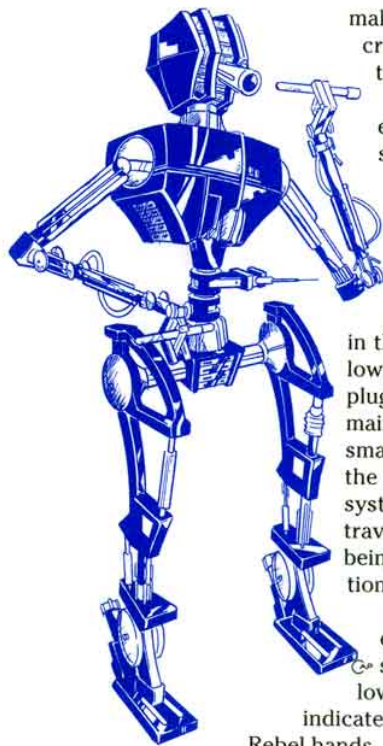
Text and Illustrations by Christian Piccolo

The following is the report of Toria Tell, droid inventor and collector. Tell publishes a small, private scandoc which has limited distribution around the galaxy. The following is an excerpt from her most recent work. In this report she discusses several droids she's most recently discovered in her own travels, providing notes on generic droids of these types as well as some individual droids of note.

## TelBrinTel Science Research Droid

The Empire commissioned TelBrinTel's science droid for research into new kinds of chemical compounds needed for armor and biological weapons. The final prototype is 1.9 meters tall. Equipped with a variety of useful features, the droid is a valuable part of the laboratory environment. An advanced protocol chip installed in the droid's brain facilitates communication with organics. The chip





makes the droid a vital part of a creative brainstorming scientific team.

The eyepiece contains a powerful, high-level molecular microscope. All vision equipment has the capability of receiving data in a variety of spectrums. A large databank receives detailed olfactory data and identifies the information. The remarkable "endosystem," located in the upper torso of the droid, allows dockable accessories to be plugged into six ports on the droid's main vertebrae. Additional arms and small injection needles are a few of the devices that can link with the system. The droid's legs cushion travel to prevent compounds from being disturbed by harmful vibration.

The first large group of these droids reached Imperial research centers immediately following the Battle of Hoth. Rumors indicate a large part of the shipment is in Rebel hands.

### ■ TelBrinTel Science Research Droid

**Type:** TelBrinTel Science Research Droid

**DEXTERITY 2D**

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Scholar: chemistry 6D, scholar: physics 6D, scholar: science 7D

**MECHANICAL 1D**

**PERCEPTION 2D**

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 2D**

**Equipped With:**

- Enhanced protocol chip
- Molecular microscopic eyepiece
- Olfactory sensors (+1D to *Knowledge* to identify any odor)
- Two fine control manipulating arms (+1D on any *Dexterity* roll which requires precise movement)
- Suspension system (+2D on any *Dexterity* roll which requires smooth movement)
- Endosystem (provides six ports into which additional accessories can be plugged. These could include additional arms, injection needles, work surfaces,

### Geth Type: Modified TelBrinTel Science Research Droid

**DEXTERITY 2D**

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Scholar: chemistry 6D, scholar: physics 6D, scholar: science 7D

**MECHANICAL 1D**

**PERCEPTION 2D**

**STRENGTH 1D**

**TECHNICAL 2D**

**Equipped With:**

- Enhanced protocol chip
- Molecular microscopic eyepiece
- Olfactory sensors (+1D to *Knowledge* to identify any odor. His databank enables Geth to identify individual species and people by their smell.)
- Two fine control manipulating arms (+1D on any *Dexterity* roll which requires precise movement)
- Suspension system (+2D on any *Dexterity* roll which requires smooth movement)
- Endosystem (provides six ports into which additional accessories can be plugged. These could include additional arms, injection needles, work surfaces, and small tools)

**Move:** 8

**Size:** 1.9 meters tall

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Capsule:** Rebel General Reesen Jivrak stole a TelBrinTel research droid from an Imperial convoy and named him Geth. Ejected from the rest of the Rebel Alliance because of his unethical conduct, Jivrak's cruel tactics against his enemies have earned him a reputation.

The General and his small band of followers have a base on the planet Ohratuu. The small group is extremely short on supplies. They herd docile mounts called deripors and use them to support the bulk of their land attack force. The creatures must undergo a serious transformation before they can become violent enough to serve the General's war needs. Jivrak uses Geth's science and chemical knowledge to formulate proper ingredients to construct harmful toxins. Upon completion the droid injects the toxins into the creatures' nervous systems, changing the deripors' chemical balance. The beasts become stronger and more violent, the perfect tools in hit and run attacks.

He accompanies his master where ever he goes and serves as his aid.

and small tools)

**Move:** 8

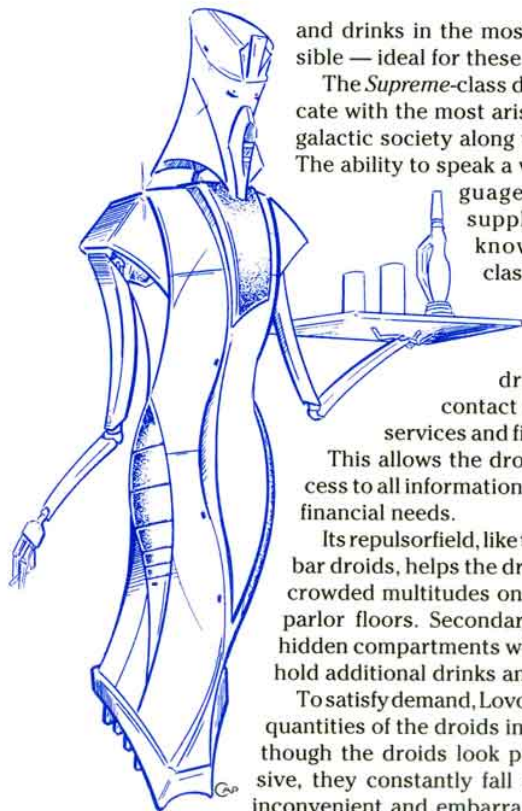
**Size:** 1.9 meters tall

**Cost:** 12,500

### Lovolan Supreme-Class Servant Droid

In the beautiful lounges and bars in the depths of Coruscant, Cloud City and other high-class locations, etiquette is vital to social life. Lovolan designed its *Supreme*-class servant droid to serve food





and drinks in the most elegant way possible — ideal for these luxury markets.

The *Supreme*-class droid can communicate with the most aristocratic groups of galactic society along with serving them. The ability to speak a wide variety of languages and dialects supplements a strong knowledge of upper class interests and hobbies. Special communication systems allow the droid to remain in contact with galactic news services and financial databases.

This allows the droid's customers access to all information on their social and financial needs.

Its repulsorfield, like those used on other bar droids, helps the droid float above the crowded multitudes on dance and lounge parlor floors. Secondary arms, stored in hidden compartments when not in use, can hold additional drinks and collect credits.

To satisfy demand, Lovolan produced large quantities of the droids in record time. Even though the droids look pristine and expensive, they constantly fall apart, creating an inconvenient and embarrassing situation for the owners.

In an effort to be generous to some of their customers, the *Supreme*-class droids have allowed some unscrupulous customers to take advantage of their gracious manner by manipulating the droids' advanced communication and data access systems. The droids have been used to launder credits from corporate databases, place bets elsewhere in a system, and listen in on private conversations. Such misuses have brought the droids to the attention of Imperial Intelligence.

#### ■ Lovolan Supreme Class Servant Droid

Type: Lovolan *Supreme*-class Servant Droid  
DEXTERITY 3D

### Threna

Type: Lovolan *Supreme*-class Servant Droid

DEXTERITY 3D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Cultures 5D, languages 5D

MECHANICAL 1D

Communications 4D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 3D+2, gambling 3D

STRENGTH 1D

TECHNICAL 2D

Equipped With:

- Lovolan network communication package
- Repulsorlift propulsion system (20 meter flight ceiling)
- Secondary serving arms

Move: 12

Size: 2 meters tall

Cost: Not available for sale

**Capsule:** Threna is a misplaced Lovolan servant droid. After construction the droid's shipping destination accidentally changed amidst the vast confusion of Lovolan's computer network. Instead of receiving scorched parts for waste storage, the people of the planet Grathus received a new droid. Xig Rollem brought Threna to one of the planet's huge mud basin settlements and ordered her to serve refreshments at his tavern.

Threna discovered her situation was much different than she was originally programmed, but she quickly adapted to her new duties. As time passed she started to appreciate the straightforward manner the denizens used in their dealings. The customers of the tavern started to appreciate Threna's courtesies, too. A friendly hostess welcoming newcomers and offering to help was a good lesson. With Threna's example the rowdy crowd has learned some manners. Because things are so good, Xig has even changed his mind about reprogramming Threna to be a well-armed bouncer.

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Cultures 5D, languages 5D

MECHANICAL 1D

Communications 4D

PERCEPTION 2D

STRENGTH 1D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- Lovolan network communications package
- Repulsorlift propulsion system (20 meter flight ceiling)
- Two secondary serving arms

Move: 12

Size: 2 meters tall

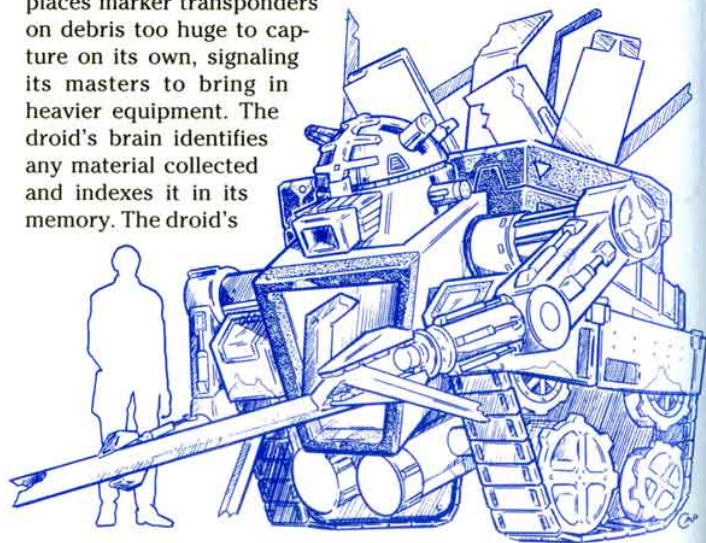
Cost: 3,500



## Scavenger Series Labor and Recycling Droid

The Scavenger Series Labor and Recycling Droid is one of the few projects where underworld groups worked together. Several groups of pirates, scavengers and outlaw techs agreed they could all benefit from each others' knowledge. The droid was originally designed to take advantage of the tremendous amounts of refuse left in the battles of the Galactic Civil War. The groups decided to gather the material, recycle it, and make a profit. Not only could they use it for their own organizations, they could sell the raw material to various interested parties — including the people who built and destroyed it — for a much higher price. With the current rawmat shortage created by increased Imperial war machine production, basic rawmats are in extremely high demand in any quantity.

The droid uses two large arms to grab the rubbish and drop the material into a large break-down chute. After being compacted by powerful beamcutters, the material is deposited in a storage container. For increased efficiency, a special tool handles pieces that are too tiny for the droid's main arms to grip. Six small tractor beam projectors mounted on the droid's head serve as invisible nets, drawing the tiniest fragments into the breakdown chute. The droid places marker transponders on debris too huge to capture on its own, signaling its masters to bring in heavier equipment. The droid's brain identifies any material collected and indexes it in its memory. The droid's



owners use this information to know what resources are rare and the most profitable.

Two types of locomotion systems help the droid travel in all kinds of environments. In a gravity environment, the droid employs a heavy duty crawler system. In zero-gravity environments such as asteroid fields, the crawler system can be retracted and a repulsorlift system employed.

### ■ Scavenger Series Labor and Recycling Droid

Type: Scavenger Series Labor and Recycling Droid

DEXTERITY 3D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

### Bruthus

Type: Scavenger Series Labor and Recycling Droid

DEXTERITY 3D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

MECHANICAL 1D

PERCEPTION 2D

Hide 3D, search 3D

STRENGTH 4D

Lifting 7D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- Crawler system
- Repulsorlift propulsion system (Move score is reduced to 3 if used in a gravity environment, flight ceiling of 25 meters)
- Two heavy duty arms (+1D on *lifting* rolls)
- Basic lighting package
- Beamcutter breakdown chute
- Storage area (3 cubic meters of space)
- Six tractor beam projectors (Strength 1D total)

Move: 6

Size: 2.9 meters tall

Cost: Not available for sale

**Capsule:** Bruthus is a Scavenger series droid used by a small group of pirates under the control of the Svivreni, Torsteen. Bruthus' orders are to pick up space junk in an operation on the borders of the Corporate Sector. Torsteen wonders why such a huge site is yielding so little profit. He accuses his fellow smugglers of stealing the lost resources and selling it on their own. Little does he know Bruthus is hiding bits of junk away himself.

Bruthus takes great pride gathering material for his masters. Some space junk he collects is very important to him. To the droid, each special piece is a prized possession, with its own important characteristics. Bruthus considers it an extension of his programming to save the best finds and store them in hidden niches around the work site. Other droids have seen what Bruthus is doing and are beginning to collect their own junk.



**MECHANICAL 1D****PERCEPTION 2D**

Search 3D

**STRENGTH 4D**

Lifting 7D

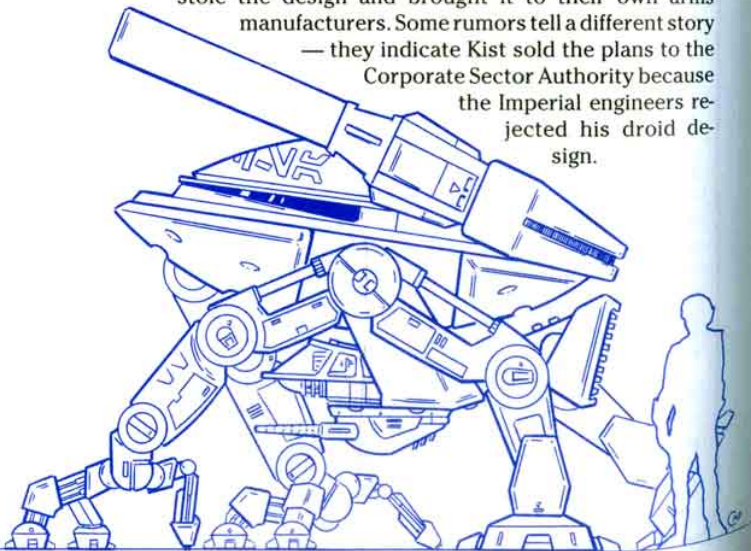
**TECHNICAL 1D****Equipped With:**

- Crawler system
- Repulsorlift propulsion system (Move score is reduced to 3 if used in a gravity environment, flight ceiling of 25 meters)
- Two heavy duty arms (+1D on lifting rolls)
- Basic lighting package
- Beamcutter breakdown chute
- Storage area (3 cubic meters of space)
- Six tractor beam projectors (Strength 1D total)

**Move: 6****Size:** 2.9 meters tall**Cost:** 10,500

## Ulban Arms Class I Defense Droid

Imperial Army Captain Kist originally conceived the design of the Class I Defense Droid. He thought it was necessary for the Empire to possess stronger unmanned defenses to supplement Imperial ground troops. But Imperial engineers disagreed and rejected the idea. The Empire believes spies within the Corporate Sector subsequently stole the design and brought it to their own arms manufacturers. Some rumors tell a different story — they indicate Kist sold the plans to the Corporate Sector Authority because the Imperial engineers rejected his droid design.



Although the Corporate Sector Authority flatly denies the Empire's allegations, it is obvious that the engineers and designers at Ulban Arms remained loyal to the captain's vision. The droid is six meters long by more than three meters high. The intent of the four-legged design is to have the maneuverability and power of the Empire's AT-ST, but reduce the vulnerability of the leg sections. The round, upper section of the droid contains its huge processor center, housed in an armored shell.

The processor section is full of redundant layers of components, making the droid a very efficient killing machine. The droids' sensors gather huge amounts of visual and tactical data. The powerful information matrix center (IMAC), the core of the droid's processor, receives the information and relays it to its masters at a mobile command base or a fixed bunker complex. A complex communications module enables the droid to send a protected transmission and allows it to receive, decrypt and carry out coded orders.

Mounted on the armored sides of the brain section is a medium anti-vehicle laser cannon, the droid's primary weapon. The large cannon is highly maneuverable, rotating 30 degrees downward and 105 degrees upward. The top section of the head moves left and right, enabling the weapon to be aimed horizontally.

The anti-vehicle cannon is only part of the defense droid's arsenal. A medium repeating blaster is mounted on the center pylon of the droid's armor-clad belly to decimate enemy infantry. A heavy duty lighting system is also located on the pylon. Although not needed by the droid, the lights assist ground forces if necessary.

Several security divisions of the Corporate Sector Authority have put the droid to use. The Class I Defense Droid exceeds the Authority's performance standards and is slowly being integrated into Corporate Sector defense forces.

The droid is not perfect despite its excellent performance record. A few saboteurs are able to break through the droid's defenses, discovering that the processor is vulnerable to foreign manipulation. These terrorists overrode the IMAC and reprogrammed several droids to do their bidding. Ulban Arms admits this threat is a consideration, but promises that if the Class I continues being successful, the series will expand. Higher classes may offer more specific functions, larger sizes, and even countermeasures against saboteurs.

### ■ Ulban Arms Class I Defense Droid

Type: Ulban Arms Class I Defense Droid  
DEXTERITY 2D



Blaster 5D, blaster artillery 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 1D

MECHANICAL 1D

PERCEPTION 2D

Search 4D

STRENGTH 5D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- 4 Heavy duty legs

- 1 Medium anti-vehicle laser cannon (Speeder, blaster artillery, 10-500/1.5/2.5 km, damage 5D)

- 1 Medium repeating blaster (Character, blaster, 3-75/200/500, damage 7D)

- Lighting Package

Move: 17

Size: 3.2 meters tall

Cost: 20,000

## Publictechnic 850.AA Public Maintenance Droid

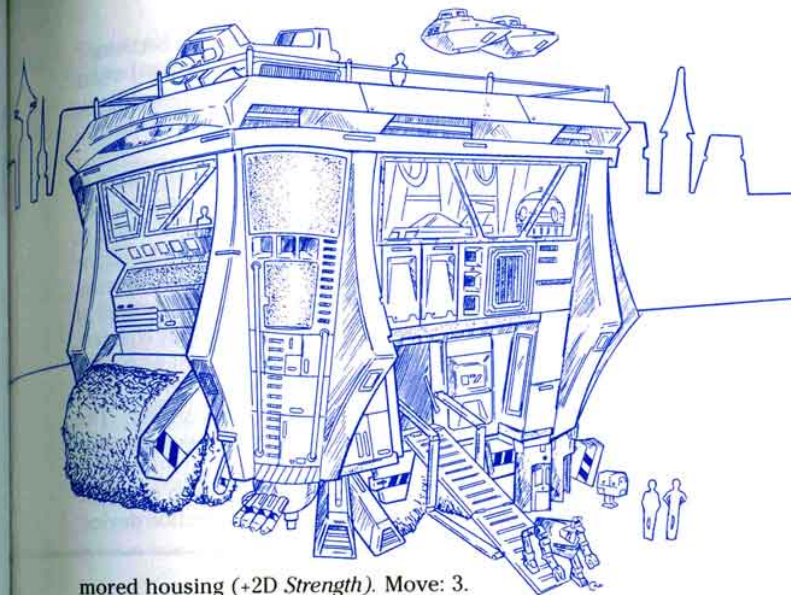
The Publictechnic Model 850.AA Public Service Headquarters and Maintenance Droid maintains huge urban centers within the Corporate Sector and the Empire.

Using sensorlinks, the droid monitors the condition of roads and various public equipment, including lighting, waste receptacles, and commbooths. It assigns priorities to each task and sends the right type of equipment to take care of the job. Inside its massive casing, nearly 13 meters wide and 13 meters high, the machine stores all the droids and equipment it needs, and has facilities for human technicians using the droid as a repair base.

The immense equipment bay contains 25 square meters of storage space. The lowest level is used to house droids and can hold approximately 30 droids of various sizes. The droids enter and exit through hatches on both sides of the bay, tending to various repair and maintenance jobs their larger base droid assigns them. A typical complement of droids it carries includes:

**5 Accutronics B-1 Worker Droids.** All stats are 1D except: *Strength 8D, lifting 10D, stamina 4D*. Suction/magnetic tipped digits, retractable third leg (+1 *lifting*), spectrum scanner. Move: 6. (From page 120 of the *Rebel Alliance Sourcebook*.)

**5 EG-6 Veril Line Systems Power Droids.** All stats are 1D except: *Knowledge 2D, languages: droid languages 4D, energize power cells 5D+2, search 4D+2, Technical 3D, machinery repair 5D, repulsortlift repair 4D+1, systems diagnosis 5D*. Video sensor, bipedal locomotion, ultra-fine manipulation arm (+1D *Technical*), systems diagnosis package (+1D *systems diagnosis*), Cybot acoustic signaller, ar-



mored housing (+2D *Strength*). Move: 3.  
(From page 58 of *Galaxy Guide 7: Mos Eisley*.)

**10 Industrial Automaton MN2D General Maintenance Droids.** All stats are 1D except: *Mechanical 2D, Strength 2D, Technical 2D*. Refuse recycling unit, vibro-shears (STR+2), extendable arm with buffer and polisher attachments, extendable cleanser application, refuse collection scanning computer. Move: 7 (From page 126 of the *Last Command Sourcebook*.)

**10 Cybot Galactica WED 15 Treadwell Droids.** All stats are 1D except: *Dexterity 2D, languages: droid languages 4D, Perception 3D, search 3D+1, Technical 2D, computer programming/repair 4D+2, machinery repair 6D, repulsortlift repair 4D*. Video sensor, dual-tread locomotion, fine manipulation arms (+1D to *repair skills*), extendable video microbinoculars (+2D to *search* for microscale work), various tools, Cybot acoustic signaller. Move: 8. (From page 59 of *Galaxy Guide 7: Mos Eisley*.)

Sometimes the droid may call on human-crewed equipment to accomplish certain duties. A small vehicle bay inside the base droid's second level holds several land vehicles. The area can hold two land vehicles each approximately 10 meters long. The vehicles



enter through the back of the droid and can use a ramp if necessary.

The third level is a landing platform on the top of the droid which can accommodate airspeeders. The platform can hold two airspeeders, each approximately 10 meters long. All these features make the droid a service equipment headquarters.

Massive repulsorlift engines keep the droid afloat over the urban landscape and allow it to maneuver above most road obstacles. The Model 850.AA can plug into any main power artery when it needs to recharge. Because the machine needs so much power, Publictechnic has equipped it with an advanced energy conservation system. Reserve fuel cells store a small portion of energy with every hour of operation, increasing the droid's self-sufficiency. When fully charged, the 850.AA has enough power to recharge all equipment on board.

While it levitates above the road, the droid can lower huge cleaning systems that scour debris and litter off the surface. The machine is able to clean huge portions of road with a combination of beamcleaners and abrasive systems.

Publictechnic offers a variety of different packages to make the basic 850.AA frame an effective fire fighting or construction device.

## Enell

**Type:** Publictechnic Model 850.AA Public Service Headquarters and Maintenance Droid

**DEXTERITY 1D**  
**KNOWLEDGE 2D**  
**MECHANICAL 1D**  
**PERCEPTION 1D**

Command 4D

**STRENGTH 7D**  
**TECHNICAL 1D**

**Equipped With:**

- Repulsorlift system (flight ceiling of 20 meters)
- Publictechnic power cell system
- 14 Beamcleaners
- 3 Coarse cleaning brushes
- Sensorlink network system
- Equipment bay
- Various repair droids

**Move:** 30

**Size:** 13 meters tall

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Capsule:** Enell is a loved and respected part of the spacers' community on the planet Lo'Uran. The droid reciprocates their admiration by making sure she does her job perfectly. Her orders are to maintain the massive facilities of the Landing Nest, one of the planet's major spaceport facilities. Enell considers the droids and equipment in her possession an important responsibility. Enell is a mother figure to the smaller droids, nurturing them with fresh power and the proper maintenance.

The versatility of the Model 850.AA has made it a valued part of many urban landscapes in the galaxy.

## Publictechnic 850.AA Public Maintenance Droid

**Type:** Publictechnic Model 850.AA Public Service Headquarters and Maintenance Droid

**DEXTERITY 1D**  
**KNOWLEDGE 2D**  
**MECHANICAL 1D**  
**PERCEPTION 1D**

Command 4D

**STRENGTH 7D**  
**TECHNICAL 1D**

**Equipped With:**

- Repulsorlift system (flight ceiling of 20 meters)
- Publictechnic power cell system
- 14 Beamcleaners
- 3 Coarse cleaning brushes
- Sensorlink network system
- Equipment bay
- Various repair droids

**Move:** 30

**Size:** 13 meters tall

**Cost:** 75,000

sion an important responsibility. Enell is a mother figure to the smaller droids, nurturing them with fresh power and the proper maintenance.

Imperial forces in control of the planet originally brought Enell to Lo'Uran. The corrupt Imperial Governor Blithane ruled the planet with an iron fist. The abuse Enell and her droids received at his hands is something the droid's memory circuits will never allow her to forget. Later, the Imperial Security Bureau took Governor Blithane into custody for stealing Imperial equipment and fencing it to underworld crime syndicates. Enell maintained the ISB shuttle bay perfectly. She did not want his shuttle to have any trouble leaving. The Governor never returned.

The Empire saw the planet as a burden because of Lo'Uran's unimportance, far out location and tremendous reliance on imports. It decided to allow Lo'Uran to govern and supply itself under an Imperial prefect—all with the understanding that the planet would still pay Imperial taxes and receive frequent visits from an Imperial delegation. Only a small crew of Imperial forces remained on the planet.

After the Imperial departure Enell was a major part of the effort to clean up the planet. Her duties have been very pleasant since then. Spacers who visit Lo'Uran call her by name and enjoy speaking to the droid. Fearing Enell's reaction, they all know that it is better not to mention the Empire in their conversation. If Imperial forces ever returned to Lo'Uran in great numbers, everyone knows Enell would hamper them in any way her programming would allow.



## About Toria Tell

Toria Tell is a highly dedicated droid inventor, historian, and collector. Her large home, located on the rocky Outer Rim planet of Tebru, houses her huge droid collection, massive research library, and workshop. Toria's collection is full of some of the oldest and rarest automata ever made.

Toria does more than quietly tinker at her home on Tebru. She travels in her own stock light freighter, investigating new kinds of droids, adding pieces to her collection and chronicling findings in her scandoc. Toria's adventures have earned her the reputation as a resourceful, persistent, troublemaker.

Toria loves collecting, constructing, and learning about droids for two reasons. She has a fascination with the way efficient machinery operates and how it interacts with its environment and living beings. The second reason is that she trusts machinery more than people in completing tasks. A machine programmed to do a specific task will not have the annoying or sometimes dangerous quirks that living beings have.

No one is sure how Toria funds her exploits. Some speculate that she inherited a huge fortune, while others maintain she is really working as a spy. Imperial officials suspect she is a small link in the ever growing chain of traitors in the Rebellion.

### ■ Toria Tell

**Type:** Droid Inventor

**DEXTERITY** 3D

**KNOWLEDGE** 3D

Alien species 4D, languages 4D, languages: droid languages 5D

**MECHANICAL** 3D

Astrogation 3D+2, communications 4D, space transports 4D

**PERCEPTION** 2D+2

Con 4D, investigation 4D, persuasion 3D, search 3D, sneak 3D

**STRENGTH** 2D+1

Stamina 3D, swimming 3D

**TECHNICAL** 4D

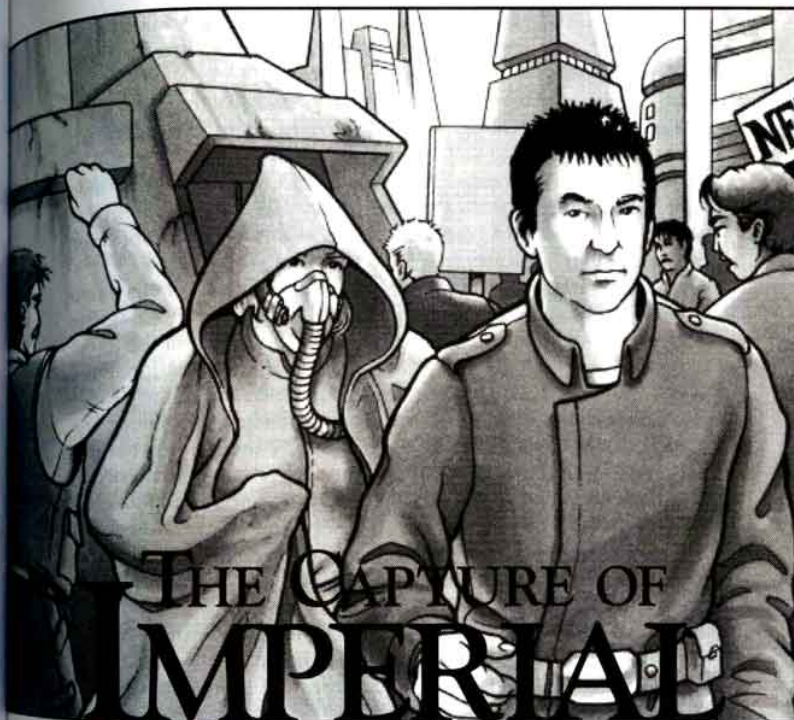
Droid programming 6D, droid repair 7D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 3

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, hold-out blaster (3D), light freighter, portable computer, tool kit



# HAZARD

By Nora Mayers

Illustrations by Christopher Trevas

Madame Mon Neela was not safe, not even in the security-tight bases from which she was being constantly relocated. The Rebels' continuous struggle to keep their leaders' locations hidden from the Empire was becoming as difficult as their attempts had been during the Great Purge to hide the Jedi Knights. Despite their best efforts during those dark times, the Knights had been all but extinguished.



The Rebels were determined that the same fate would not befall their experienced war strategists and leaders, or their cause was surely lost.

Mon Neela, a former assistant barrister general of the Old Republic, was among those at highest risk. She hardly seemed a militarist, with her lovely face and kind eyes. The face that had been beautiful in youth was still attractive, but it had mellowed by mid-life into softer, gentler lines. Judging her with only a glance, no one would ever have thought her a great leader. But when she spoke, her voice possessed such authority that those who listened followed.

Her political profile had always been high. In the Senate, when Senator Palpatine had begun to exceed the polite rules of the Council, she had protested. Now she was a strategist of the Rebel Command, her battle tactics were renowned, her dedication to the Rebel cause without question ... and Palpatine wanted her dead.

"We have a ship, Neela, but we haven't much time," explained the Bothan, Polo Se'lab, her Senate contemporary and now a general of the Rebellion. Urgently he thrust an atmospheric oxygen mask and a shoulder cloak into her hands. "These will conceal your identity until you're safely off Horob. Now that this world's natives know that the Empire has found us here, they are no longer friendly."

Neela made an impatient sound and pushed the disguise back into his hands. "I have no need of these. I'm staying! Listen to me! This base is made up of physicists and engineers, with a few soldiers to protect them. A band of barely protected scientists working on computer and droid sensors, Polo! There aren't enough troops here to withstand a full Imperial assault. The field commanders need me. Without me, they are unprepared for —"

"Neela!" Se'lab's upper lip curled in frustration. He drew a deep breath to regain control of his temper, and continued. "Don't make my tasks more difficult. The troops on this world are not alone in needing you. It seems unlikely we'll have time to evacuate before the Imperials arrive. If we are taken your experience will be needed on other worlds, other bases. We can't afford to lose you."

Neela's even expression didn't alter, her posture became no more or less rigid, but something undefinable signaled her even greater defiance. "My sons died for this Rebellion," she answered. "My own life has been dedicated to it, and yet I am continually being asked to run away. Not this time — I will see *this* battle through."

Neela's guard, Stasheff — a handsome young man, despite the habitual sternness of his expression — stood a pace behind her. He could not see her face, but he watched Se'lab curiously, expecting

to see him wilt beneath Neela's persuasive rhetoric.

But the Bothan was used to (and impervious to) Neela's oratory prowess. "What do you think, Madame?" he challenged. "That I make this request of you lightly? That what I do, I do out of disregard for this unit? If you are as concerned about it as you claim, then you'll leave now and let *me* try to save it. You can do no more here. Think again where your loyalties lie. Are they with the Alliance, or are they more self-serving than even you realize? Is it honor you seek now?"

Neela glared defiantly at her old comrade, then reluctantly glanced at the garments he again offered.

The Bothan gave a sigh of relief as she took them. "The natives are afraid; some threaten to fight against us when the Imperials come. Hysteria has brought things to this impasse, but it is not beyond repair. I'll redeem what I can."

Neela didn't look at him as she swirled the cape around her shoulders and donned the mask. "Fight for it then," she insisted. "We didn't struggle so hard and so long to see our goal shattered now. *Fight for it!*"

Se'lab extended his hands to Neela in the human gesture of friendship. As she accepted them, he slipped a data chip, no larger than a speck, into her palm.

She glanced in surprise at him, then turned the tiny chip between her finger tips. "This is the sensor under development here for —?"

"Yes." Se'lab closed her fingers around the chip, then covered her hands with his own. "It's all I have to send with you, and I'm afraid it isn't much. It's only experimental, but the scientists are very proud of its potential." He gave her an encouraging smile and released her hands, stepping back a pace.

"If you please, Madame," Stasheff urged, "we haven't much time."

"May the Force be with you," Se'lab said. "I'll do what I can."

As Neela and Stasheff emerged from the crumbling stone building that housed a medical clinic for the planet's poor (and only recently the clandestine operations of the Rebel Alliance), it seemed that a celebration was in progress. But it took only seconds to recognize the riotous commotion as far from jubilant. A contingent of the planet's natives, realizing that their city would soon be invaded by the Empire, were in violent turmoil. The Rebels had come offering a better future, and the Horobians had been willing to fight for it — or so they claimed. But now the Empire was coming, and the idealistic Rebel words seemed more like a death sentence. Through the chants and shouts of the people, Neela recognized her name. They were shouting for her release — calling for her to be given to the



# Sayer Mon Neela



**Type:** Alliance War Strategist

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Bureaucracy 8D, cultures 7D, languages 5D, law enforcement 8D, planetary systems 5D

**MECHANICAL 2D**

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 7D, command 6D, con 5D+2, persuasion 6D+2, persuasion: debate 7D+2

**STRENGTH 2D+1**

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Computer programming/repair 3D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 18

**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** Sayer Mon Neela is now a war strategist (and a very good one) for the Rebel Alliance, but she was a former Assistant Barrister General of

the Old Republic, which placed her among some of the highest desk-bound law enforcement officials in the former government. She is approximately 50 years old and was a stunning beauty in her youth. She is still very attractive, but the pressures of her former office in the Old Republic, her subsequent public opposition to Palpatine in the Senate, the loss of two sons during the Rebellion, and her current position as a major war strategist for the Alliance have added "character" to her face. The war against Palpatine has become a consuming obsession.

There is nothing more important in her life than seeing the Emperor defeated. Consequently, she often has blinders on and in her fervor is capable of "running over" others — even those with whom she is in league — to see her objective obtained. Unfortunately, this has also robbed her of duties to herself. Neela is in need of close friends, a romantic interest, a confidant, but she does not believe she has time for such "frivolities." Nevertheless, Neela has a wry sense of humor, and enjoys teasing her stern young bodyguard, Stasheff.

Empire in atonement for their own treason.

Stasheff hurried Neela around the side of the dilapidated building and rushed her into a waiting airspeeder.

The roar of the engines drowned out the sound of the crowd; as the small craft became airborne, Neela slumped against the seat. Until the moment Se'lab insisted she leave, she'd desperately hoped for this particular unit. There weren't many soldiers on Horob. The

best ground troops and X-wing pilots were situated where the fighting was heaviest and the threats most severe. By comparison, the troops protecting the base scientists on Horob were few, but they were among the bravest she'd encountered. Now when she closed her eyes, she saw their young idealistic faces and despaired at how many would be lost when the Imperials arrived.

Bitter tears stung her eyes and she allowed herself private grief. The Rebellion had become her existence; any chance she might have had for normalcy had been swallowed up in her fervent desire to see the Empire overthrown and the Republic restored. Now she wondered if she had been tragically idealistic.

Stasheff piloted in silence, his attention riveted on the flight path and surveillance instruments that would alert him if they were being followed. But despite the nervousness that prickled his spine, he knew they were not being tracked. The Imperials were hours away, and the Horobians — still at the beginnings of industrialization — hadn't yet developed transportation beyond primitive ground cars.

After a short time Stasheff set the airspeeder down on an empty expanse of field.

Their escape ship waited, fired and ready to go. It was a glaringly incongruous private yacht, painted in pleasant, unmilitary shades of blue; the name *Starcrossed* was painted in elegant, slanting letters on its side. The ship's avian-like lines had been designed for beauty, not wartime efficiency.

The ship's human captain, Heedon, waiting impatiently outside, looked ready for a jaunty mid-afternoon cruise, not a desperate Rebel escape. His hair was slicked back and plastered tight against his head in a fashion popular with wealthy humans on several of the more financially progressive worlds. Even the smart cut of his tailored jacket and his crisply laundered trousers suggested socialite tendencies.

Neela stepped out of the airspeeder, glanced from Stasheff to the ship and her captain, and opened her mouth in protest.

"Intelligence highly recommends him," Stasheff rapidly explained. "His loyalty is with us, and no one will expect you to escape in something like this."

Neela gave the ship another doubtful look. "You may have to convince me, Stasheff. Does it even have shields?"

Before Stasheff could reply, Heedon advanced on them, stridently protesting. "Where have you been! My comm line says the natives are getting unfriendly! For all I know, they've followed you!" If he was awed in the presence of so renowned a Rebel as Neela, he



## Captain Heedon



**Type:** Rebel Yacht Captain  
**DEXTERITY** 2D  
 Blaster 3D, dodge 3D  
**KNOWLEDGE** 4D  
 Alien species 5D, business 5D, cultures 5D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 6D  
**MECHANICAL** 4D  
 Astrogation 5D, space transports 6D  
**PERCEPTION** 3D  
 Bargain 5D, command 4D, con 5D, persuasion 4D  
**STRENGTH** 2D+2  
**TECHNICAL** 2D+1  
**Force Points:** 1  
**Character Points:** 5  
**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** Captain Heedon (first name unknown — he despises it so much, he'll never tell) is a fop, an aristocrat, a socialite and an astute businessman who operates his own luxury

cruise business (although he only has one ship). He is in his mid-thirties, but looks older — probably because of his perpetual expression of boredom. Underneath all that snobbery, however, is a Rebel. Heedon is not only brave and determined, he is also dedicated to the overthrow of Palpatine. Unfortunately, his motives are not entirely philanthropic. Heedon wants the Empire overthrown so the wealthy families that the Emperor has subjugated can afford to take luxury cruises again.

hid it well.

"Escapes don't run on schedule," Stasheff irritably reminded him. Heedon snorted and cast an eye at Neela. "This her? She looks older in person."

Neela's brows ascended sharply.

"If you'd gone through what she has, you'd look old, too," Stasheff answered, then realizing his lack of tact, he turned to the Rebel leader, aghast.

Neela held up a hand. "Never mind. We'd better go. Once we're aboard, you can tell me our destination."

"Do you think you're cutting it close enough?" Heedon sarcastically inquired. "Or do you want to wait just a few more minutes to *really* get the adrenalin going?" He snorted, turned, and marched indignantly up the ramp.

Neela exchanged unhappy glances with her bodyguard.



As much as he hated to admit it, Heedon was beginning to understand how and why he'd allowed himself to be dragged into the Rebellion.

"Look at me," he muttered, vehemently stabbing coordinates into the computer. "Transporting a person like that! I must be out of my mind!"

But it was false grumbling. His exotic cruise business had once flourished, with aristocrats and socialites as clientele. But since Palpatine's rise to power, the aristocracy had begun to crumble on a galaxy-wide scale; many had become impoverished puppets. They still lived in their pretty houses and gave their pretty parties, but only as far as Palpatine would allow it, and only as it suited his purpose. Their wealth now belonged to the Emperor — he bought their allegiance and maintained their pampered lifestyles in exchange for their loyalty. Terrified at the thought of losing the only way of life they understood, they'd agreed, almost to a person. Unfortunately, not many of them could afford luxury cruises anymore.

And so, as much as Heedon hated to admit it, this revolution — this Neela — was his cause. It didn't make him less resentful that it had to be his cause, but there it was.



"It's time you told me our destination, Stasheff," Neela thought she'd been admirably patient — not the easiest thing for a leader of a galaxy-wide Rebellion to be. She was accustomed to quick answers, rapid decisions, and instant solutions.

Within an hour, Stasheff had seen her patience erode into petulance.

"In light of the circumstances, Madame, General Se'lab and Intelligence thought it best that you attempt to go as far out on the Rim as you can," Stasheff explained. "Despite appearances, we have an excellent pilot, and you ..."

Neela raised an eyebrow, her expression indicating that whatever he said next had to go a long way toward meeting her approval.



Stasheff's mouth hung suspended between word and thought. "There's no where else you can safely go," he finally concluded. She raised the other eyebrow.

"And — well, Madame, you're too well known on sight on nearly all the worlds from holovids alone, and that being the *obvious* case, your safety is —"

"Secondary to the survival of that base," she answered, not bothering to disguise her irritation. "Stasheff, occasionally I'm astonished by your limited thinking. I left Horob as Se'lab requested. That doesn't mean I've given up. He should have realized that."

"Madame Neela!" Stasheff exclaimed. "I have my orders!"

"And I have my conscience. I refuse to run another parsec. I won't make a mockery of the Rebel blood that's been shed in this war; too much of that blood was personal."

Stasheff stared in disbelief. "With all respect, Madame, how can you possibly change that?"

"There's a way to turn every trick, Stasheff." She made a knowing expression and turned, beckoning for him to follow as she strode toward the cockpit.

Heedon was sitting at the console, feet up, his lean frame languid in the pilot's seat — almost indolent, as though he was, indeed, transporting a vacationing tourist instead of an escaped Rebel.

"I've plotted a course for the Rim," he said without looking up or adjusting his posture. "It's going to take us forever to get there, and the next stop is probably oblivion, but what the crock, right?"

"We're not going to the Rim," Neela answered.

Stasheff's face went red with alarm. "Madame, I must protest!"

"Stasheff, do stop calling me that," Neela sighed. "It makes me sound old. Neela will do."

Stasheff's tongue staggered over the name, unable to articulate so familiar a sound at so profound a person. He finally stopped trying. "General Se'lab gave me implicit instructions to transport you safely to —"

"I am not subject to the orders of General Se'lab," she smoothly answered. "Nor have I ever been, and since when has the Rim been safe?" She shook her head. "You're much too young to be so rigid, Stasheff. I certainly hope it's something you'll outgrow."

Heedon thrust out a lower lip and nodded in approval.

Stasheff was appalled. "You're an escaped Rebel leader! They'll kill you if they find you!"

"I've been prepared for death since I joined the Rebellion."

Stasheff clamped his jaw shut.

Heedon realized he was grinning, admiring her despite himself. "So you're not going to the Rim." He sat forward and asked in a conspiring tone. "What do you have in mind instead?"

Neela took a seat opposite him. "We're going to intercept the Imperial Star Destroyer on its way to Horob and hold them long enough to give our ground troops time to safely evacuate."

Stasheff choked.

Heedon stared at her, waiting for the punchline. When it became obvious that she had said all she meant to, he sat back in his seat and crossed his arms. "Is that all?"

"For the time being."

"You wouldn't, perhaps, care to try for something a little more challenging?"

"Oh, I think this will do to begin with."

Heedon massaged his temples delicately with his fingertips.

"You're giving me a headache."

Stasheff finally found his voice. "Madame Neela, you've lost your mind!"

"Very likely," she agreed. "But, Stasheff, didn't you once tell me you were curious to see the inside of an Imperial warship?"



Heedon stared in dismay at the nav screen where the red scrawl representing an approaching Star Destroyer had just appeared. "There they are," he said, tapping the screen with an index finger. He turned in his seat and fixed Neela with an uncertain eye. "I really like the idea of living, you know? We're small — they probably haven't seen us yet. It's not too late to —"

"Just remember what I told you to do, and you'll still live to be an old man," Neela promised. She took a seat beside him to study the computer.

Stasheff braced a hand on the back of Neela's chair and glanced over her shoulder at the screen. "This is insane."

"Undeniably," Neela agreed. "I never claimed otherwise."

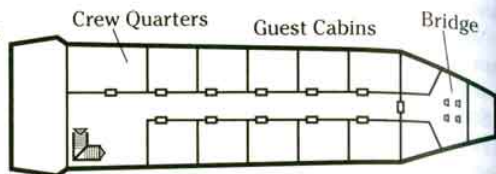
Stasheff was annoyed by her cheerfulness. "Madame, please. They have a ship the size of a small city, stormtroopers, war advisors, officers and heavy duty weapons. What do we have?"

Heedon fixed her with a jaundiced eye. "Don't say we've got 'truth' or I'll get sick."

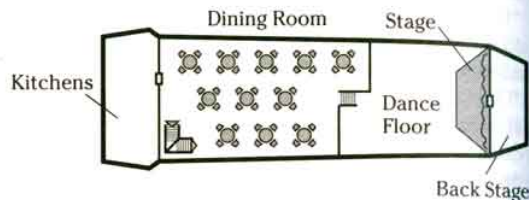


## Starcrossed

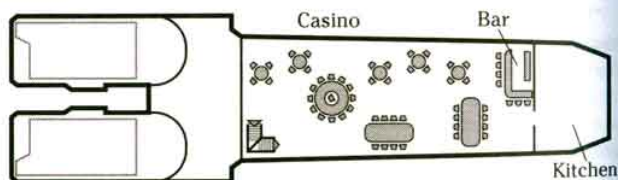
### Main Deck



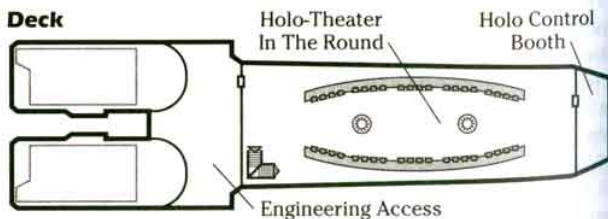
### A Deck



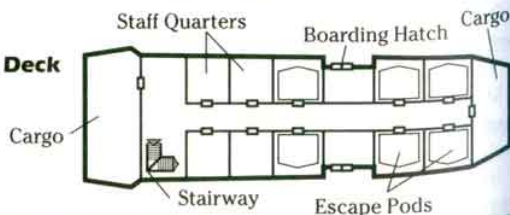
### B Deck



### C Deck



### Boarding Deck



## Starcrossed

**Craft:** SoroSuub Luxury Cruiser 200

**Type:** Yacht

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 100 meters

**Skill:** Space Transports

**Crew:** 2, skeleton: 1/+10

**Crew Skill:** See Captain Heedon

**Passengers:** 28

**Cargo Capacity:** 15 metric tons

**Consumables:** 3 months

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x2

**Hyperdrive Backup:** x12

**Nav Computer:** Yes

**Maneuverability:** 1D

**Space:** 4

**Atmosphere:** 480; 800 kmh

**Hull:** 6D

**Shields:** 1D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 10/0D

*Scan:* 25/1D

*Search:* 40/2D

*Focus:* 2/3D

**Capsule:** Captain Heedon's luxury ship, the *Starcrossed*, was built as a getaway ship for the galaxy's affluent. Her purpose is not to get well-heeled vacationers from here to there; rather, *Starcrossed* is, in and of herself, a luxury attraction. Designed to look like an exotic and beautiful bird, she boasts spacious suites, in-cabin meals, a holothrater that spans an entire level of the ship, a gambling deck, an elegant ballroom for dancing, and gourmet meals. At least she tried to provide these services — before the Empire, before the dark times — when people could afford to take luxury cruises. Now Heedon has placed himself and *Starcrossed* at the disposal of the Rebellion in hopes of seeing the Republic (and more importantly to him, his business) restored.



Neela laughed despite herself. "Truth is the *last* thing we have in this particular gambit! No, gentlemen, our sabacc card in the hole will be that despite *Starcrossed's* diminutive size, she is still too large to fit into the docking bay of a *Victory-class* Star Destroyer."

Stasheff and Heedon exchanged bewildered expressions, then with a fatalistic sigh and a shrug, Stasheff glanced back at the computer. The red dot on the screen had come to rest in a steady orbit around Horob.

"We need do no more than hold the Imperials long enough for the ground troops to evacuate," Neela reminded them. "Several hours should be sufficient."

"I trust you also have a plan for getting us out alive?" Heedon asked.

"There is *always* a plan," Neela assured him. "Open a line."

Heedon stared hard at her, then transferred his gaze to Stasheff. The young guard licked his lips, hesitated, then nodded.

With a sigh, Heedon turned back to the communications board. "Imperial ship, this is the *Starcrossed*. I'm an independent entrepreneur and captain of this ship. I have a passenger aboard who wants to talk to you."

Neela leaned toward the console "Star Destroyer, this is Sayer Mon Neela of the Rebel Alliance. I order you to surrender your vessel."

The Imperial silence was understandable.

Heedon leaned toward the console. "She really means it," he offered.

Stasheff put himself in the Imperials' position, wondering how he would have responded to such an outrageous claim.

"Surrender to *you*?" came the final, incredulous reply. "Mon Neela, indeed!"

"You need only bring me aboard to prove it," Neela answered.

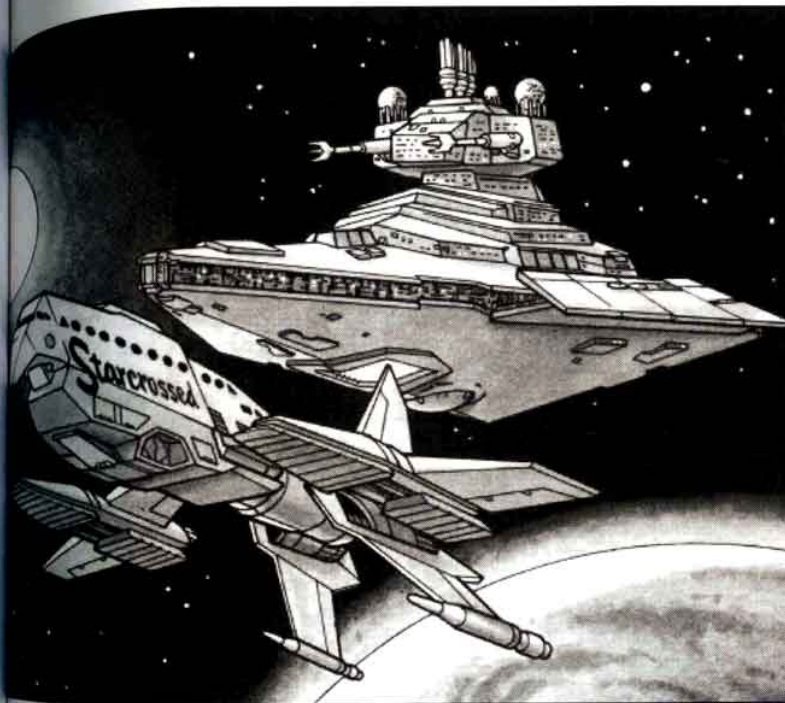
"Without any tricks," Heedon added. "I'll be over here, monitoring her the whole time. This ship's rigged to blow at the first sign of trouble. And if *Starcrossed* blows, she could take out a small moon, never mind your puny Star Destroyer."

There was a burst of laughter on the other end. "Am I to understand that *you* are threatening an Imperial warship?"

"Something like that," Heedon answered. "You willing to take a chance on the threat? The Alliance has got a few tricks you guys still don't know about."

"I doubt it."

"Doubt all you want, but you'll never know 'till you wake up dead, will you?"



There was an audible snort over the comm. "It's not every day we receive such an outrageous threat, and the voluntary surrender of someone on the Imperial extermination list."

"This is not a surrender," Neela answered. "Quite the reverse, sir. You are my prisoner. You may take Captain Heedon at his word when he says the ship is rigged to detonate at the first sign of aggression. I will come aboard to confer. Our ship is obviously too large to fit your docking bay. We require a docking claw and umbilical — we will enter through the artificial corridor. Furthermore, you will see to it that the umbilical connecting our respective vessels is equipped with blast doors at each entrance to prevent invasion from either side. Take my offer or disregard it, but don't waste my time."

There was a long silence.

"Gentlebeings," Heedon finally said. "Did I mention how impatient we can be?"

The ship shuddered, rocking the deck beneath them. Neela



grasped the back of Heedon's chair. "Yes, I know," she said before either Stasheff or Heedon could speak. "Tractor beam."



Captain Sergus Lanox politely extended a hand as Neela and Stasheff entered the access bay from the umbilical corridor. "Welcome aboard the *Imperial Hazard*, Madame Neela; this is quite an honor."

Sergus was a handsome man in mid-life, with a serious expression and gray eyes that were too large for his face.

*Is it only that hideous uniform that makes them all look the same?* Neela wondered.

She nodded without taking his hand.

"Captain Sergus Lanox at your service, and delighted to discover that it is you, after all," he continued. "It's a pleasure to finally meet you in person. I, like everyone else in the civilized galaxy, recognize your name because of your involvement in the old Imperial Senate." He smiled, bowed, and sardonically raised an eyebrow. "Although I daresay, more know of you now because of your traitorous inclinations. The Emperor will personally reward me for your capture."

"You have yet to capture me," Neela reminded him.

"Ah yes, of course," Sergus smiled. He straightened from his bow. "You've threatened me with your little pleasure boat. I must be careful." He grinned, not unpleasantly.

Neela indicated Stasheff with a gesture. "This is my aide, Raan Stasheff."

Lanox acknowledged the young man with the barest flicker of a gaze, then turned his attentions back to Neela. "Is he essential to our negotiations?"

"I am essential to her safety," Stasheff tightly answered.

Lanox ignored him. "If I understand correctly," he said to Neela, "your ship is your first, best assurance of safety. If that is true, then you won't mind that I have your guard removed to guest quarters or returned to your ship until our meeting is complete."

Stasheff's jaw set like stone. "Not on your —"

"Of course, Captain," Neela interrupted. She laid an encouraging, almost motherly, hand at Stasheff's collar. "I'd have it no other way."

Stasheff snapped her a disbelieving glare. "I'm not leaving this ship without you." He put a hand on the butt of his holstered blaster. The doors snapped open as though the bodyguard's action had activated them, and three stormtroopers entered, rifles drawn.

Lanox smiled wryly at Neela. "You understand that diplomacy can be carried only so far. We'll talk, Madame, but our conference will consist of two, and only two."

Stasheff cast Neela a last angry glance as he was led away.



For a time Neela sat across a feast-laden table and listened as Lanox extolled the glories of the Empire and sang the praises of Palpatine. She was almost amused; Lanox was spouting Imperial propaganda so freely that one would have thought the conference had been *his* idea. So far, Neela hadn't had an opportunity to present her own proposal.

Finally, when it seemed likely that the Imperial would carry his recitations indefinitely, she interrupted. "I am not a wholehearted admirer of the Empire, sir."

Lanox chuckled. "If you were, I would not be quite so ardent. It's never very enjoyable to preach to the already converted, Madame." He gave a genuine smile, devoid of sarcasm — perhaps even a bit self-deprecating, Neela thought. He'd embarrassed himself by rambling on about his devotion to the Empire.

Neela was surprised and annoyed by this glimpse into his humanity; she'd grown accustomed to despising anyone in allegiance to Palpatine, particularly officers of the line. She instantly dismissed her next thought that the smile made him look almost handsome.

"I'm beginning to think you don't trust me," Lanox continued. "Considering you claim to hold my life in your hands, I'm surprised." The Imperial's smile expanded into a grin, and she saw it, then — the mockery in his eyes.

"A military leader of the Rebellion *not* trust the commander of an Imperial warship?" she parried. "Why Captain, now it is *my* turn to be surprised."

Lanox sipped his wine. "It seems rather stupid of the Alliance to allow you to wander so far from their protection. But, I have always said they were fools."

"They had enough wisdom to destroy the Death Star."

"But they do not have enough to maintain their strength. The Rebellion is a bothersome insect to be swatted and destroyed at the Emperor's whim."

"Some insects have a poisonous sting, sir."

For the barest instant she saw admiration in his eyes, but it was



## Captain Sergus Lanox



**Type:** Victory-class Star Destroyer Captain

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, blaster artillery 5D, dodge 4D

### KNOWLEDGE 4D

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 6D+1, business 5D, intimidation 5D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 6D, tactics: capital ships 7D

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, capital ship piloting 5D, communications 4D, sensors 4D

### PERCEPTION 4D

Command 7D, investigation 5D, persuasion 5D

### STRENGTH 2D

Running 3D

### TECHNICAL 2D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 9

**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** Middle-aged, handsome, Sergus Lanox is the Captain of the Victory-class Star Destroyer, *Imperial Hazard*. Although he has sworn loyalty to Palpatine, he is (if truth be told) more proud of being in command of a starship than of being in the service of the Empire. He is very good at command, is a natural leader, and inspires loyalty in his subordinates with his fairness and self-confidence. He can be sharp and uncompromising in a crisis, but on the whole Lanox is just toward his crew.

Lanox is also a bit of a romantic. He is not above admiring an enemy with scruples — even if they are not his own. He is a reader of poetry and fine literature, a lover of good food and drink, and other such fineries. Lanox has ambitions to move up to the command of a larger Imperial starship.

quickly masked again by that infuriatingly superior gaze that made all Imperials seem to be glaring down their noses, even if they weren't.

"For your sake, Madame, I do hope whatever negotiations you have in mind meet my approval, or, threats of a suicide protectorate ship notwithstanding, you may find yourself my guest longer than you'd supposed."

"My proposal is quite simple," she answered. "Return with me to a Rebel base and turn yourself, your ship, and your crew over to the Alliance."

He gave her a look of mock disapproval. "With answers like that, you're ensuring captivity." He stood. "I'll send an armed contingent

to take control of your little boat."

"The *Starcrossed* is programmed to detonate at the first unfamiliar presence."

"I doubt the Rebels would risk you so casually."

"You said it yourself — my ship is my best assurance of safety. You haven't destroyed it or taken me hostage, have you?"

"Only because I have chosen not to. I will inform your pilot that you and your aide will be executed unless he cooperates."

Now it was Neela's turn to look disapproving. "My life and the life of my aide are nothing. Obviously, for us to have come this far, there is more at stake than a mere two lives."

Lanox lifted one hand in a show of mock resignation. "Every gambit must be tried." He studied her a moment, thinking it a great pity she'd turned against the Empire. Though he'd never before met her, he'd appreciated her cunning mind for years. Before the war, she'd been well enough known in the Old Republic to be seen on almost every daily holoreport and news broadcast, and it was usually because she'd bested some notable opponent, or somehow got the Senate around to her way of thinking.

She was really quite an attractive woman ... if one were to be attracted to Rebels, which he reminded himself he was not. "It seems we are at stalemate," he sighed. "I'll have you escorted to the detention cell."

"I think not," she answered, "Stasheff and I will return to our ship now and await your decision. Please remember that if it is the wrong one, it will be the last you make. I would be most appreciative if you would have my aide brought to me here, and then you can accompany both of us back to the umbilical corridor."

She watched as his expression alternated between uncertainty and chagrin. Finally, he glanced down at the table and picked up a long-stemmed glass. "Did you find the wine to your liking?"

"I have always appreciated fine Alderaani wine."

"Yes." He took a sip, then smiled at her over the rim of the glass. "What a pity Alderaan will make no more wine. I'll have your aide brought."



The stormtroopers escorting Neela and Stasheff back through the umbilical corridor were stopped at *Starcrossed*'s hatch by Heedon



and his drawn blaster rifle. "Far enough," he warned, simultaneously pounding his fist on a raised wall panel. The blast door slammed down, separating Imperials and Rebels on their respective sides.

"Just *what* did you think you were doing letting him separate us like that!" Stasheff exploded, forgetting in his anger that Neela was someone he revered.

Neela gave him a genuine smile. "Why, Stasheff, look at you! You can unbend when you try, can't you?"

Stasheff was in no mood for humor. "Look, *lady*, I was sent by some pretty blasted important people to keep you safe!"

"Well, you're certainly doing a very poor job of it." She took advantage of his momentary outraged stupor to turn to Heedon and say, "I trust you did as I asked while we were away?"

"Of course," Heedon sniffed. "I sent a message to the base on Horob, telling them to come and pick you and your Imperial prisoners up for transport. They're to send their largest ships, or even three of four."

Stasheff was beyond anger; he could barely speak. Instead he steadied himself against a console chair and hissed, "*What?*" He leaned as far toward her as he could across the seat, his eyes protruding. "Their *largest* ships? If the troops on Horob send a convoy of any size against that Star Destroyer, they'll be wiped out! I thought you were trying to buy those troops time, not murder them yourself!"

"Stasheff, if you please," Neela attempted.

But Stasheff wasn't listening. "We don't have the kind of ships on Horob it takes to fight a *Victory*-class Star Destroyer! At the most we've got a few X-wings! Have you forgotten that Horob is a research base?"

"Stasheff," Neela tried again, more firmly this time. "The base on Horob will never receive the message, because it will be intercepted by the *Imperial Hazard* first, then jammed. This ploy not only reinforces the lie that we are holding them captive, but it gives us more time to plot our own escape."

Stasheff gaped. "And what makes you think Lanox won't call for reinforcements when he intercepts that message?"

"If you were an Imperial Captain commanding a *Victory*-class Star Destroyer," Neela answered, "would *you* call your superiors and tell them you were being held hostage by a pleasure yacht?"

*This boy is too much fun*, Neela thought at the confused mix of emotions that flitted across Stasheff's face. She reached across the chair and took hold of his lapel. When he jerked reflexively away, she

## Raan Stasheff



**Type:** Alliance Intelligence Officer

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 6D, blaster artillery 4D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D, grenade 4D+2, running 5D

### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Cultures 4D, intimidation 4D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 5D, survival 5D+1

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, ground vehicle operation 3D+2, hover vehicle operation 3D+1, repulsorlift operation 4D

### PERCEPTION 4D

Investigation 6D+1, sneak 6D

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 4D

### TECHNICAL 2D

Demolitions 5D, security 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 11

**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** Raan Stasheff is only in his early twenties, but he is already a top-notch security expert and has been assigned as bodyguard to one of the Rebellion's major war strategists, Madame Sayer Mon Neela. Espionage, security, and protection is really Stasheff's family business. Stasheff's grandfather was a member of the Corellian Security force; Stasheff's father was an agent during the Yavin incident, and Stasheff yearns to live up to their ideals. He is, therefore, quite rigid and very serious. Stasheff has become so good at being stern that he's misplaced a fairly good portion of his sense of humor. Underneath it all, he's really a likeable young fellow (even vulnerable), but his desperate desire to live up to family expectations, and his own fervor to see Palpatine overthrown, have made him rather inflexible.

held between her thumb and forefinger a small datachip she'd taken from beneath his collar. "You didn't know it when I let Lanox take you away," she said, "but I planted this little marvel of Alliance technology beneath your collar; it recorded every detention and security code on your level." She grinned at his look of astonishment and turned the chip between her fingers. "At least I hope it did. I don't really know if it works. This is the prototype of a sensor chip that was being developed on Horob; it's only experimental, and the finished product will undoubtedly be much more sophisticated than this, but we work with what we have." She handed it to Heedon





who slipped it into a slot on the comm board. "Because this is a prototype, it uses a simple receiver," she continued.

"You mean you had this planned all along?" Stasheff demanded.

"Not all along," she admitted. "Not until we left Horob."

"You're willing to risk our lives on that flimsy little piece of junk, and you don't even know if it works?"

"Risk, Stasheff," Neela quietly reminded him, "is what war is about. And besides, I wouldn't have missed seeing you forget your manners for all the worlds."

"Well," Heedon said, turning from the console, "prototype or not, what we now have scrolling up on the screen, lady and gentleman, is not only the codes for the detention cells, but all 10 of the tractor beam projectors, too."

Neela looked at Stasheff with a smile. "Thank you, Stasheff; you make a remarkably practical prisoner. Captain Heedon, will you kindly begin?"



Hazard lurched violently, spilling most of the hot drink Lanox was nursing into his computer. The Captain cursed and jumped to his feet, scowling as the machinery hissed and snapped in protest.

The holographic image of Sayer Mon Neela that Lanox had projected from the small computer wavered with the uncertainty of fouled machinery, but as the overload and protection circuits kicked in, the image once again stabilized.

Lanox pounded his fist on the comm button. "Control, what happened?"

"Sir," an uncertain voice responded, "We've lost a bit of altitude, but it's nothing serious. We're on it, sir."

"Why did we lose altitude?" Lanox demanded.

"Checking now, sir."

Lanox irritably closed the channel and resumed his seat, continuing to study Neela's image. Once again he was bothered by distinctly unmilitary impressions of her. She was attractive, there was no denying it. Even in holograph, her beauty — and yes, her determination and strength of character, as well — were apparent. How many of her enemies, he wondered, had underestimated her? What an Imperial she'd have made! The Empire did not make it a practice to utilize women in politics or military matters, but there were the extraordinary few — and Neela was, indeed, extraordinary. What an asset to the glory of the Empire she'd have been! And what a tragedy such a talented, intelligent woman had chosen to waste her skills on the Rebel Alliance.

Lanox transferred his gaze to the list of statistics displayed on the screen. She'd been an assistant barrister general of the Old Republic, and, therefore, one of the highest placed desk-bound law enforcement officials of the previous government. She'd been an active voice in the Senate against Palpatine, as well. Since then she'd become one of the Rebellion's chief war strategists. The computer suggested that her battle plans were responsible for a significant number of Rebel successes.

Lanox turned off the display and sat back, considering his options. Contacting Command for further instructions was out of the question. They would laugh him to scorn, and he would probably be demoted (or worse) for incompetency when he returned. Besides, if he could best Mon Neela where others had failed — even take her prisoner — it would be a significant victory.

He realized that once she was in the Empire's hands, her fate would not be pleasant, and that darkened his mood. But he scornfully dismissed the feelings. War was not a pleasant game, but Neela had



chosen to play. Any consequences would be her own fault, not his. His reflections were interrupted by a junior officer, who stood hesitantly in the hatch, awaiting acknowledgement.

"What is it?" Lanox demanded.

"Sir," the young man replied, "I've been sent to inform you that there is a malfunction in the security computers on the detention level."

"What kind of malfunction? Come, man, don't stand there gaping like an imbecile, out with it!"

"The computer codes appear to be confused, sir. They've started a communications loop that the technicians can't stop, and they don't know what's causing it."

"The detention level, you say?"

"Yes, sir. But, it's not confined to that vicinity. The computers throughout the entire ship are showing signs of corruption; already we've lost altitude."

"Are we falling into atmosphere?" Lanox demanded.

"Yes, sir. But the technicians are working on it, and they've told me to inform you that they should have the problem corrected soon."

"Why didn't they tell me this themselves?"

"Sir. They're preoccupied, sir."

*That Rebel she-nashtah is responsible for this!* Lanox thought, and found himself irrationally amused at the thought. He had no doubt that his capable technicians would find the difficulty and set it straight. In the meantime, admiring his opponent's ingenuity would do no harm. It would, after all, be one of her last strategies of war before he (somehow) took her prisoner.



"What do you mean you don't know how to stop it?" Stasheff stood over Heedon's chair, glaring at him with all the intensity of his accumulated frustration.

"Look," Heedon snapped. "I didn't design this blasted chip. All I did was stick it in the computer and tell it to do its job. If it's got more ambitions than that, it's not my fault."

Neela sighed. "You're saying that it's retrieving and sending the information too quickly? That the Imperial computers are going into overload?"

"That's what I'm saying."

"Well," she shrugged. "That's not bad. If their computers are confused, they'll still release us from the tractor beams."

"They would," Heedon countered, "if they could get the message straight! The problem is that the chip is reading and sending the information back into their computers several hundred times per second! Turn off the tractor beam, turn on the tractor beam, turn off the tractor beam' ... like that."

"Oh, that's not good," Neela mused.

Stasheff glared at her. "No kidding."

"Stasheff, you're becoming insubordinate," she reproved. "Can you repair it?" she asked Heedon.

The socialite gave her an incredulous stare. "You don't expect much from a cruise director, do you? If your so-called brilliant Rebel scientists couldn't get the bugs out of this thing, how do you expect me to do it?"

"Of course," Neela answered. "Forgive me. I am accustomed to working with people who know their jobs."

Heedon wasn't sure whether he'd been insulted or commended, but there was no time to dwell on it. "We've got other problems, too."

"What a surprise," Stasheff muttered.

"The Imperial ship is losing altitude, and dragging us with it. We can't turn the tractor beam off, and we can't disengage the umbilical corridor or claw, either, which means if they go splat on that planet below, we go splat, too. And that's not all; that little electronic monstrosity is making our computers loop back on us, as well! The blast door at the umbilical hatch is wide open."

"Well close it!" Stasheff yelled.

"You want to tell me how?" Heedon growled.

"I don't care how, just do it! With that blast door up, we're wide open to Imperial attack!"

"Look, I'll say this once more," Heedon said, as though explaining complex math to a child. "I push buttons, I don't do computers."

"Can we close the door manually?" Neela demanded.

"Can't hurt to try," Heedon shrugged.

Neela grasped Stasheff's shoulder and yanked him with her toward the hatch. "Stay here and see if there's anything at all you can do to stop the loop," she called to Heedon over her shoulder, "While Stasheff and I try to make the blast door drop."

Heedon watched them run down the short corridor and round a corner, where they were lost to view. Disgruntled, he turned back to the console. "Didn't I just tell her I don't do computers?" he muttered.





"Captain Lanox, there's no mistake, sir. The surveillance eye in the umbilical says their blast door is open, and they appear to be trying to close it manually."

Lanox swivelled in his chair to face his officer. "Not so strong as they've led us to believe, then." He tapped his fingers on the edge of his chair. "What is the condition of the ship?"

"We're losing altitude rapidly sir, falling closer to the planet. Engineering also reports that the power loops are creating dangerous overloads. We're in danger of implosion unless we find the originating cause, sir."

"I know the originating cause," Lanox growled. Adrenalin urged him to his feet. "Take an armed contingent of troopers and storm that corridor while their blast door is still up. I don't care about the others, but I want Mon Neela taken alive. She claims that her ship is rigged to detonate at the first illegal entry, so do not — I repeat, do not — board the ship itself!"

The officer saluted. "Understood! We'll report back via comlink when the capture is complete, sir!"

"No need," Lanox crisply answered. "I'm coming with you."

The officer looked alarmed. "Forgive me, sir, but ... but the situation is extremely dangerous, and we —"

"I intend to personally arrest that woman in the name of the Empire," he answered, then recognized himself as a liar. *She's notorious*, he thought. *She's female, and she's humiliated me. I want to best her, no more and no less.* "It is your responsibility to keep her alive, and me protected," he continued to his officer. "Assemble your troops."



The blast door obstinately refused to budge.

"We've come too far to be defeated by something as absurd as this!" Neela protested. She clenched her teeth and kicked the door, then pounded it with a closed fist. "Drop, blast you!"

Stasheff grasped her arm. "Madame, this isn't going to work! We've got to have another plan, and we have to find it *now*! It's not going to take them long to realize we're this vulnerable, and when they do —"

An explosion of blaster fire from stormtroopers, still shielding themselves at the sides of *Hazard's* open blast door, interrupted him, impacting on the hull so close to his head that Neela could smell his singed hair.

Stasheff threw himself at Neela, wrapping his arms protectively around her as he launched both of them back into the questionable safety of the ship.

"Let me go, Stasheff!" she demanded. But still he held her. "Stasheff, *get off*!" She pushed hard and he rolled onto his back.

Neela gasped. Stasheff's tunic was saturated with blood; his eyes held a pained, dazed look she'd seen too often in the eyes of wounded soldiers. "I'm sorry, Madame," he rasped.

Neela had no time for comforts. She snatched the blaster pistol from his fingers and positioned herself at the side of the open hatch.

The whiteshells were still positioned at either side of the blast door; she saw a flash of gray uniform behind them and recognized Lanox.

"Advance!" The Imperial Captain roared. "Don't stand here protecting yourselves like children!" Impulsively, he pushed past them into the corridor, waving them forward.

He was a perfect target, and Neela had him perfectly in her sights. But in the hairbreadth's time it would have taken her to squeeze the trigger, she spared his life.

The instant following left no time for regrets. An explosion fired *Hazard* from within, rocking with violent force both ships and the unstable umbilical.

Lanox was thrown off his feet and hurled headlong even as *Hazard's* blast doors thundered shut behind him, separating him from his troopers.

A second, immediate explosion made the Star Destroyer lurch and plunge like a wounded bird. Lanox careened off a far wall and fell, gracelessly sliding the length of the corridor into Neela at the opposite end.

They went down together in a tangle of arms and legs. Unable to regain balance, they clung to one another, eyes wide with horror as the corridor rocked and swayed, threatening to collapse with each new explosion.

After what seemed an eternity, the convulsions and noise stopped, the corridor ceased its wild vibrations and settled into a deceptively gentle sway. Ahead — still confused by the erratic commands of the computer — *Starcrossed's* blast door slid quietly shut, while behind, *Hazard's* snapped open.



For a dazed moment, Neela and Lanox gaped at one another, then Lanox shot to his feet and threw her off, bolting toward his ship as quickly as his legs would carry him.

Neela turned and threw herself onto her knees in front of *Starcrossed's* closed portal, squeezing her fingers between the tightly sealed cracks as she tried against all hope to make it open.

The hiss of atmosphere escaping through cracks in the corridor's inner bulkhead taunted her.

"Open!" she demanded of the door from between clenched teeth.

Lanox lurched onto the landing ledge of his ship, gasping for breath, bending at the waist to brace his hands on his knees. Around him, emergency klaxons blared, his crew scrambled and screamed to one another as they fought to save their dying vessel.

But through the overwhelming confusion and noise, it was the sound of Neela at the end of the corridor, cursing the blast door, the Empire, and his own name, that caught all of Lanox's attention.

He straightened, turned, and saw her on her knees, still struggling to open the door to her ship before the inner bulkhead breached.

*This is your chance, fool!* he thought. *You should have taken her when you had the opportunity! Capture her now, take her back to the Emperor, and redeem yourself from this debacle. But can I? The bulkhead in that corridor will blow at any moment! He squared his shoulders and gathered what remained of his courage. Better to take the chance and die here, than to return to the Emperor, defeated by this Rebel. His Majesty's punishment would be far worse.*

Cautiously, he stepped back into the corridor, edged his way along one creaking wall, and stepped up beside Neela, laying a firm hand on her shoulder.

She glanced sharply up, all fear evaporated from her face. Only anger and resentment remained, as though she had resigned herself to her destiny, but would not give fate the satisfaction of her fear.

Conflict and inexplicable guilt roiled in Lanox's chest as he stared down at her — long-time admiration of her battling with his loyalty to the Empire. He was humiliated to realize that, enemy or not, she had more courage than he would ever have.

Before he realized his own changed intentions or even fully knew what he was doing, he was on his knees beside her, forcing his fingers into the cracks of the door, grimacing with the effort to force it open.

Neela glared. "Why are you helping me?"

"Madame," he grunted, pausing only long enough to glare back. "With all due respect, this is hardly the time for questions. This is your escape. Would you care to assist me?"



Under the strength of their combined efforts, the door catch finally gave way and it flew open with a forceful *snap!*

Lanox shot to his feet, dragging Neela with him. He grasped her shoulders and pulled her toward him for a full, generous kiss. "My payment," he explained, then he spun the flabbergasted Rebel forward and thrust her through the hatch into the safety of her ship.

The corridor gave another dramatic groan and a corner of the bulkhead ripped violently apart. The sudden decompression sucked the duty cap off Lanox's head and out the aperture, swirling his hair, whipping his uniform tunic.

Neela clutched a strut in *Starcrossed's* hatch with one hand, while reaching out to him with the other. "Here!" she cried.

Lanox gave her a despairing glance but turned instead and fought his way down the rapidly deteriorating corridor toward his own ship.

Neela watched in horror, unable to look away, as he pushed himself resolutely forward. More than once he fell and crawled forward on his belly, his hands clawing the deck for some meager purchase against the suction of the rapidly depressurizing corridor.

Then somehow, miraculously, he was at *Hazard's* blast door. He struggled to his feet, grasped the edges of the hatch with white knuckled hands, and hauled himself into his ship.



It was the last Neela saw of him before *Hazard's* blast door slammed down, closing him from view.

Only then did Neela turn and run back towards the cockpit of her own ship.

Heedon, white-faced and shaken, was at the helm, with Stasheff barely conscious, in a low-slung chair behind him.

"We're free of the claw and the tractor beam!" Heedon cried. "The computers have returned control!"

"Back into space then, man, and make the jump as soon as you can!" Neela cried.

As Heedon obeyed and they were finally soaring back toward the safety of the stars, Neela glanced desperately out the port.

*Hazard* had somehow stabilized; she no longer appeared to be in danger of crashing, but still she listed helplessly. To all appearances, the Star Destroyer was dead.

*Starcrossed* reached point and streaked into lightspeed.



"It may sound treasonous, but I have a grudging admiration for that Imperial," Neela admitted. She walked beside Se'lab on the grounds of the Rebel base on Carosi XII. The citation that she — along with Heedon, and the recovering Stasheff — had only just received for saving the base on Horob, was clutched in her hand. "He believes as fervently in the Empire as I despise it," she continued. "Yet he risked his life to save an enemy who almost destroyed him. If our roles were reversed, I doubt I'd have done the same."

"Before you become too sentimental over the enemy, remind yourself of the lives he's *destroyed*," the Bothan reminded her. He stopped walking, forcing her to do the same, and placed his hands on her shoulders. "Don't let others hear you talk this way, they may not be as understanding as I am."

Neela grimaced. "Se'lab, please understand. It's not that I approve of Lanox, I merely ..." she sighed, thought a moment, then gave a resigned shrug. "He saved my life. If he survived the explosions aboard the *Hazard*, I can't help wondering if the Empire will deal harshly with him for losing his ship to the likes of us. I pity *anyone* who falls into Palpatine's hands."

Se'lab shook his head. "One less Imperial is no tragedy. Come now, or you'll miss your own celebration."

## General Se'lab



**Type:** Bothan General

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 5D, brawling parry 4D, dodge 4D, thrown weapons 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Bureaucracy 4D+2, intimidation 4D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 4D, streetwise: Bothawui 5D, survival 4D, willpower 4D+1

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Astrogration 4D, repulsorlift operation 4D

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 5D, command 6D+2, hide 4D, investigation 4D+2, persuasion 5D

**STRENGTH 2D+2**

Brawling 4D, stamina 3D

**TECHNICAL 3D**

Security 4D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** General Se'lab was once a Junior Senator in the Old Republic, and frequently found himself on the same side of a debate as Assistant Barrister General Sayer Mon Neela. Consequently, the two have formed a friendship that transcends their political bond. Quite by coincidence, the two old friends often find themselves on the same military bases (Neela as war strategist, Se'lab as a commander), and they tend to look out for one another. Se'lab is not unlike most of his people in that he considers the acquisition of power and wealth a challenge and a duty, but his dedication to that goal has been supplanted by a desire for revenge against the Empire. Se'lab's wife was killed during an Imperial raid on a Bothan spy net installation.

When Neela entered the mess hall, a cheer went up. She accepted a hearty round of congratulations, then spotted Stasheff and Heedon at a corner table, surrounded by what appeared to be their own enthusiastic fan club.

Stasheff, his right arm and shoulder encased in a bacta cast, gave her a reproving smile as she joined them.

The crowd politely dispersed, giving the three champions of Horob time to themselves.

"I never thought of myself as a hero before," Heedon mused. He raised his glass in the direction of the departing revelers, "but *they* say I am, so who am I to argue?"

Neela laughed, nodded, and turned her attentions to her body-



guard. "I can't say the cast becomes you, Stasheff. I do hope you'll be wearing something a little more fashionable in the near future."

"That depends upon you," he answered.

"Ah," she smiled. "Then you've decided to stay on as my body-guard?"

"Only if you confine all your bluffs to sabacc, ma'am."

"No promises," she smiled, then leaned confidentially toward him.

"Actually, Stasheff, you're really quite handsome with your shirt off." He blushed.

"Speaking of bluffs," Heedon interjected. "You missed the news that just came over the net." He tapped the table and a holoprojector elevated through the middle. "But we saved it for you."

"What ...?" Neela began.

"Just watch," Heedon ordered.

There was a momentary blur of static, a crackle of noise, then the holographic image of Sergus Lanox appeared on a grand spectator stage, with the renowned Imperial Grand Admiral Takel, himself, standing opposite him.

"Why, he's receiving a citation!" Neela yelped.

Takel placed the ribbon around Lanox's neck. "For extreme heroism, and for not relinquishing your ship, even when faced with the latest and most heinous example of Rebel terrorism since the destruction of Alderaan," Takel was saying. "I present you with this, the Distinguished Medal of Imperial Honor."

There was applause from an unseen audience.

"What do you think of that!" Stasheff exclaimed.

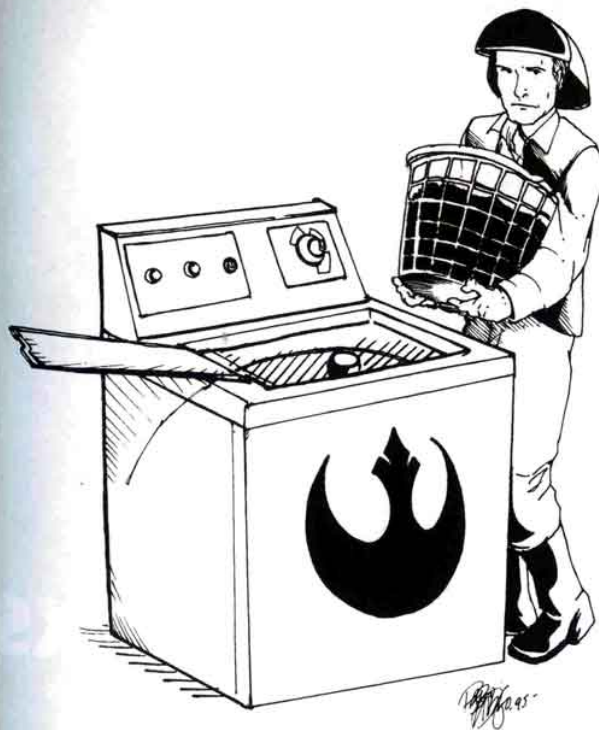
Neela flicked the holoprojector off and settled back in her chair.

"I think," she answered, "that we may not have seen the last of Sergus Lanox after all." She raised her mug in salute. "To improbable victories, gentlemen."

And she drained her glass.

# Fragments from the Mind's Eye

by Pablo Hidalgo



## Rebel Appliance



# STAR WARS

## THE KATHOL RIFT



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**STAR WARS**  
ADVENTURE



## DESPERATE MEASURES

By Carolyn Gollodge

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

The steady beeping of the vital signs monitors played counterpoint to the rhythmic hiss of the respirator. Listening as he had done almost constantly for the past day and a half, Squadron Leader Stevan Makintay found the sounds both reassuring and irritating. Rubbing at his aching eyes, he turned and looked down again at



Ketrian Altronel's pale face. *Wake up, Ket, please*, he begged silently. *Talk to me. Please don't die.*

A strong, warm hand squeezed sympathetically at Makintay's shoulder, and he jumped, turned to see Eyrie Base Doctor Tarrek leaning over him.

"You really should go get some sleep, Mak," Tarrek repeated. "I'll let you know immediately if there's any change."

Makintay shook his head. "I'm staying," he said stubbornly. An upsurge of anger and grief set his jaw muscles twitching and he fought for control. "I got her into this mess. That Imperial mongrel, Pedrin, never would have had her poisoned if I hadn't ..."

Tarrek sighed loudly, cutting him off. "That's not true and you know it." He bent down to the still figure on the bed, peeled back Ketrian's eyelids and tested her pupil dilation response. "Imperial High Command had already figured the value of her new alloy and suspected she'd escape here to us with it. They'd have wanted her drugged and shipped to Coruscant whether or not you and the team had ever showed up."

"Fine," Makintay snapped. "But she wouldn't be lying here ..." He refused to say "dying." Tears stung his eyes and he wiped angrily at them as he finished, "like this. She'd be on Coruscant safe and sound. They'd have treated her for the security drug and she'd be enjoying her new-found celebrity status. If only I had let her be!"

"We," Tarrek corrected calmly as he straightened up again. "It was an Alliance Command decision to contact her."

"It was my idea," Mak insisted. "Well?" he asked, leaning forward to peer at the datapad on which Tarrek was making another entry. "Did it work any better than the last one you tried?" He was referring to the ever-growing list of antidotes Tarrek had injected into Ketrian during the three days since her arrival at Eyrie Base sick bay.

Tarrek couldn't meet Makintay's desperate eyes. "No," he admitted sadly. "She's still losing ground to the poison." Frustrated, angered by his inability to help, he threw the datapad down on a nearby table. "I just can't understand it. She seemed to be fighting it off okay when we first treated her."

"I've been doing some thinking about that," Makintay said. His tone was so murderously chill that Tarrek turned and looked at him anxiously. "You don't know Pedrin; I do. Unfortunately. But you do know what he did to me when he interrogated me."

Tarrek flinched, remembering the medical evidence — and what he'd heard when he'd placed Makintay in hypno-trance and tried via standard anti-trauma de-programming to help the man over the

## Stevan "Mak" Makintay



**Type:** X-wing Squadron Leader

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat 5D, melee combat: sword 7D+1, melee parry 6D+1, running 4D

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 5D, languages 4D, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 6D, survival 6D+2, tactics: starfighter 6D, willpower 6D

### MECHANICAL 4D

Astrogation 5D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, space transports 5D+2, starfighter piloting 5D+2, starfighter piloting: X-wing 6D+2, starship gunnery 6D, starship shields 5D

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 6D, persuasion 5D, search 5D+1, sneak 6D

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 4D

### TECHNICAL 3D

Security 5D, starfighter repair 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, heavy blaster (5D), knife (STR+1D), pilot's flight suit

**Capsule:** Lean and agile, with a distinctive duelling scar running along the right side of his face, Stevan Makintay is a 28-year-old extensively educated man. Born into the royal family on Hargeeva, Mak was raised in a palace and studied noble pursuits. He has been on both sides of the Empire, attending the Imperial Naval Academy, imprisoned in a harsh penal colony, and working as a tramp freighter pilot and smuggler. Of a gentle nature, he is roused to anger by injustice and cruelty. He prefers an egalitarian manner and is often teased about his royal birthright. He is an excellent swordsman, his duelling scar a legacy of trying to prevent his lover, Ketrian Altronel, from carving up a rival.

Mak's contrastingly stern demeanor on duty hides a great depth of protectiveness for his pilots. An idealist, he is also practical and highly resourceful. He has always opposed his Imperial Governor father's oppression of his native people. Mak was disinherited and kidnapped when he refused to abandon his marriage proposal to lowborn Ketrian. The failure of his later impulsive native peasant revolt on Hargeeva taught him the value of patience and planning.

He has all the attributes necessary to win him a place in the Alliance command structure, and dreams of using political power to free his people from their almost feudal existence. Until then, he is considered an escaped felon who has the death mark on Hargeeva.



psychological effects of his torture. "Pedrin is a sadist," he agreed. "And then some." Makintay squeezed Ketrian's limp hand, bent and kissed her tenderly on the forehead. Her flesh seemed as smooth as wax and was beaded with sweat. *You're not going to die, Ket*, he vowed silently. *We're not going to let that Imperial slime-spawn win.*

Makintay got to his feet. "Pedrin must have designed a special poison. He's smart enough. And evil enough. Ketrian told me he really hated the thought of her going to Coruscant and not him. I'll bet right now he's bragging to his high command about how he personally made sure she'd never survive to pass on her new technology to us." Makintay's fist closed about the butt of his holstered blaster and his burning gaze held Tarrek's appalled eyes. "Well, he's not going to get away with it. I'm going back to Hargeeva and I swear I'll make him talk! You just make sure Ket goes on breathing until I get back with the right antidote."

"But, Mak," Tarrek protested, "you can't just ..."

"Oh no? Watch me." Makintay turned sharply to leave the small room and immediately bumped into a medic's assistant who was coming in, her hands holding a tray. She dropped it clattering to the floor. Mak picked it up and apologized, recognizing the slightly-stooped, brown-haired assistant as a fellow Hargeevan. She was one Mak's high lord father would have sneeringly referred to as a lowborn, a poor peasant from the squalid back streets of Arginnall City. Mak preferred completely egalitarian terms — that differing attitude along with Mak's insistence on proposing marriage to lowborn Ketrian Altronel had inspired his father to disown him and dump him on a penal world.

Assistant Medic Astina Griek it seemed had been thoroughly cowed by High Lord Makintay. She kept her eyes lowered and all but curtsied as she refused the younger Makintay's apology. "Was me own fault, m'lord."

"No," Mak ground out irritably. Surely the woman knew how much he hated to be called "m'lord." It was a running joke among Mak's pilots. "It was not your fault, Astina. We're not on Hargeeva anymore. We've been friends since we joined the Alliance. Please, drop the 'm'lord,' okay? You've been working so hard taking care of Ketrian these past three days. You must be exhausted."

Finally Griek looked up at him, her blue eyes not showing as much intimidation as her voice. She was much shorter than he, her twisted back making her more so. A legacy of her days in an Imperial labor camp. A few strands of long brown hair fell free of the neatly pinned

buns at the nape of her neck as she leaned back a little to smile nervously at him. "You're so different to your father and the rest of 'em," she said. "I keep forgettin'. And it's you must be exhausted. I got some sleep at least." She turned and looked at Tarrek. "Did you convince him to go t'bed then, doctor?"

"No," Tarrek said, eyeing Makintay in disapproval. "Now he says he's going back to Hargeeva to get the antidote."

"What?" Griek stared.

"I'll rest when I get back and see Ketrian healed."

Doctor and assistant medic could make no further comment, Makintay was out the door even as he spoke.



"What do you mean, no?" Makintay shouted in angry disbelief. Surely he couldn't have heard what he thought he'd heard from Eyrie's little beady-eyed rodent-faced intelligence officer.

Commander Biros Baran was fully human but his squint-eyed, snivelling expression and habit of hiding behind a littered desk in his back-tunnel office had most of the base personnel think of him otherwise. Unfortunately he was rodent-like in appearance and manner only — he had none of the usual keen intelligence of the rodent species. Makintay wondered if the man knew everyone on Eyrie referred to him as "Barren-Brain" Baran. And this was the officer Makintay had been forced to have approve his proposed return mission to Hargeeva? Eyrie Base commanding officer, Colonel Farland, also Makintay's good friend, would choose today to be off-world! Slag sector command for calling the man away just when Makintay needed him most!

"You heard what I said, Makintay," Baran said, adding insult by not looking up from the datapad on which he was encoding. "Your proposed mission would gravely endanger this base. You almost brought the Imperials down on us during your last visit to Hargeeva. It was only the lack of competence of your backwater Imperial interrogators that had them fail to break you and get the location."

Makintay's jaw dropped in outrage. Pedrin had been a more than competent interrogator — as Makintay was sure Baran knew after reading the medical report Tarrek provided on Mak's combat status. Mak's fists clenched and he trembled from head to toe as he



## Commander Biros Baran



**Type:** Alliance Intelligence Officer  
**DEXTERITY 3D**  
 Blaster 3D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 3D+1  
**KNOWLEDGE 4D**  
 Alien Species 5D, bureaucracy 6D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 5D  
**MECHANICAL 2D**  
 Repulsorlift operation 3D, astrogation 3D  
**PERCEPTION 3D**  
 Bargain 4D, command 4D, con 3D+2, hide 5D, investigation 4D+2, persuasion 4D, sneak 4D  
**STRENGTH 3D**  
**TECHNICAL 3D**  
 Computer programming/repair 5D, droid programming 4D+1, security 3D+2,  
**Force Points:** 1  
**Character Points:** 2  
**Move:** 10  
**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), datapad, recording rod

**Capsule:** Biros Baran is a middle-aged human from Corellia. His self-opinion has always been much higher than his true worth. He would have preferred to have been born into an aristocratic heritage, and resents those who legitimately have such a background. A somewhat cowardly, incompetent bureaucrat, Baran joined the Alliance chiefly because he believed his talents were ignored by Imperial governors. His beady eyes, outsized nose, and habit of hiding behind a littered desk in an isolated corner has given rise to his peers comparing him to a rodent. He has always resented and envied Stevan Makintay's princely bearing and birthright.

fought the urge to reach across the desk and strangle the petty bureaucrat. He hoped Colonel Farland was at this very minute laying down the law with sector command in regard to having Baran replaced. They'd lost too many good pilots because of Baran's inaccurate reading of incoming intelligence probe reports.

"Look... Commander," Mak said as politely as possible. "I already explained how we could get around the security risk. I'm the only one who'll be going and if things go bad I'll make sure they never take me alive." Mak's last experience of being held prisoner, waiting to be interrogated by the Imperials' expert inquisitors on Coruscant, had given him plenty of time to come up with various means of insuring he'd be incapable of talking.

"You are wasting my time with your grandiose schemes to make

yourself a hero, Makintay." Baran picked up another datacard from the stack and fed it into his computer. "As I have maintained from the very beginning, you are far too much emotionally involved. You should never have been permitted to return to Hargeeva in the first instance. Now Altronel is dying because of your bungling and you want to make it all better by getting yourself killed. Well, I won't have..."

Whatever else Baran might have said was lost to choking sounds as Makintay caught him up in a death grip, hauling him by the uniform collar up onto the desk.

"You snivelling little insect!" Makintay spat out, his face mere centimeters from Baran's goggle-eyed horror. "If you think I'm going to let Ketrian die just so you can play games with me you can think again! Enjoy your nap!"

Makintay could have drawn his blaster and stunned the man, but that was nowhere near as satisfying as the feel of his fist impacting with the soft flesh about Baran's prominent nose. The intelligence officer's eyes rolled up in his head and he took a second jolt as Makintay let him go and the force of the punch sent him crashing into the wall behind his desk.

Makintay hurried out into the underground corridor before the guards — who were also more loyal to Makintay than to Baran — could come to investigate the noise. He was sure they'd be in no great hurry to report their superior's well-deserved unconscious state. Mak should have more than enough time to fire up his X-wing and take off for Hargeeva. *Hang in there, Ket. Help's on its way.*



With Commander Farland off-base, there were no fighter missions planned. It was very early morning and the main hangar bay was unusually quiet, which suited Makintay's purpose. He strode briskly toward Green Squadron's allotted area. His X-wing was silhouetted against the rising sun beyond the open hangar mouth, its sleek metal body gleaming in the pale yellow light. Makintay came to a sudden halt, only now seeing the impossible flaw in his impulsive plan. He cursed soundlessly and swung about, eyeing the other ships clustered beyond the X-wing squadrons.

"Got a problem there, wouldn't you say, Mak?" an amused voice drawled from nearby.



Makintay jumped as a short stocky figure dressed in drab gray tech's uniform crawled out from beneath an X-wing access port. "Slaggit, Merin!" Mak scowled. "Don't sneak up on me like that."

"Only a guilty man jumps out of his skin. What are you up to now, oh great and lofty leader?" Chief Tech Merinda Niemeh, a Sullustan, was impish by nature and she grinned at her joke as she stepped closer. Her wide, thick-lipped mouth seemed to split her face from one huge ear to the other. But the glint of mischief in her oversized dark eyes faded as she read her life-time friend's expression. "That scientist lady-friend of yours is no better then?"

Mak flinched and looked away, shaking his head. He didn't want to say just how bad it was.

Merinda reached up and squeezed Mak's arm. "It'll be okay. You and the team will be back with the antidote before you know it." Merinda had stopped by sickbay several times and Mak had told her his contingency plan. She waved an arm toward the assembled X-wings. "I've been giving your squadron a final going over. They're all set to give you ..."

"They won't be going," Makintay said softly. "I just punched out Baran-Brain."

Merinda blinked but recovered quickly. "Good for you. With Farland off-base I knew that idiot would get delusions of grandeur. He's been looking to clip your wings for a long time, Mak. He turned down the mission I take it?"

Makintay was still staring off into the shadows of the hangar bay. "I'm not going to let him kill Ketrian, Merin'."

"I love it when the aristocracy talks mutiny!" Merinda snorted wryly. "I'm one step ahead of you, my Prince. Come this way. I have a little surprise for you."

"Huh?" Makintay said distractedly, still lost to his scheming.

Merinda sighed and grabbed at his arm, tugging him forward. "Over on the far side of the bay. I've got a small freighter waiting for you. The one Red Team captured on Ongella, remember? Takes a two person crew." Makintay stared. "Yeah, I know it was a wreck," she flashed another grin, "but not any more! The guys and I have been working on her in our — you should pardon the expression — free time. She's all fuelled and ready to go. New registration too." Makintay had come to a halt now, his jaw hanging comically low. "Keep it moving, your Royalness. We are about to go AWOL."

"We?" Makintay sounded dazed but he moved as instructed.

Merinda shook her head in mock exasperation. "It's sad to see our mighty Prince reduced to monosyllables. Yes, 'we'." She knew he'd

argue fiercely against endangering her, so she kept talking. "It took you long enough to figure you'd stick out like a beacon in your nifty X-wing over Hargeeva. And just how far did you think you'd get wandering around an Imperial-garrisoned city in your Rebel officer's uniform?" She tut-tutted and tisked, all the while propelling him toward the freighter. "Lucky for you that you have a sneaky Sullustan buddy! I've got everything you need on board — including your R2 unit. We shall all hope that you will be thinking sharper after you've had a few hours sleep en route to Hargeeva."



Imperial Major Niall Pedrin had never been noted for his cheerful disposition, but presently his administrators were all but drawing straws in hopes of avoiding their duty to tend him. He sat brooding in his office inside the high guarded walls surrounding Arginall City Refinery and garrison, disgraced by the last communiqué he'd received from his high command off-world.

Pedrin had always believed his talents were wasted on Hargeeva, a backwater planet useful only for its exotic mineral deposits and its genius metallurgist scientist Ketrian Altronel. Pedrin had hoped her discovery of a new heat-resistant alloy might also bring him favor. He'd further hoped that his capture of Alliance Commander Makintay would have earned him a promotion if he'd only succeeded in torturing the Rebel into revealing his base location.

But none of Pedrin's plans had borne fruit. He'd failed to break Makintay and the Rebel had been shipped out, along with Altronel to Coruscant. Now Pedrin had been informed that both valuable Imperial assets had been lost en route, their transport apparently attacked by pirates. In a fit of sheer pique, Pedrin's superior had decided to hold him responsible. Pedrin was to be demoted and shipped to an even more isolated backwater world than Hargeeva. So much for all Pedrin's dreams of winning a posting back to his beloved AT-AT command.

And so he ensconced himself in his office, desperately trying to uncover a means of avoiding his ignominious fate. And finally, just as parsecs across the stars, Makintay and Merinda left Eyrie Base, Pedrin found a solution. He was certain the pirates had in fact been Rebels. Which meant Altronel was probably still suffering the effects



## Major Nial Pedrin



**Type:** Imperial Garrison Commander

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D, dodge 4D+1, running 4D, vehicle blasters 5D

### KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy: Imperial 6D, cultures 5D, intimidation 6D, law enforcement 5D, scholar: geology 5D, survival 4D+2, tactics: ground assault 6D+2

### MECHANICAL 2D+1

Communications 4D, sensors 5D, walker operation 5D

### PERCEPTION 3D+2

Command 6D, con 5D, investigation 6D, persuasion 4D+2, search 6D

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D, lifting 5D

### TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair 4D, demolition 3D, droid programming 5D, security 6D, walker repair 3D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 9

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, datapad, Imperial uniform

**Capsule:** Short and stocky, Major Pedrin has compensated with an almost fanatical dedication to physical fitness. Always immaculately groomed, he is fastidiously neat and has a habit of continually pressing flat his already smooth, neatly trimmed black moustache. He has a somber expression and rigid posture, and his low dark brows add to his midnight-black eyes and disapproving stare.

Pedrin has an obsessive/compulsive personality, and is fearful of change and unpredictability. His ideal world would be populated entirely by soldiers, all identical and trained to unquestioning obedience.

Pedrin revelled in his former position as commander of an AT-AT walker platoon. However, his background training in geology brought him an unexpected promotion as garrison commander on Hargeeva, a backward world he despises. Pedrin was responsible for the cruel suppression of the Hargeevan uprising, and he remains vigilant for any resistance activity in Arginnall City.

His recent failure to deliver highly prized scientist Ketrion Altronel and valuable Alliance prisoner Commander Makintay to Coruscant has caused Pedrin's demotion and pending transfer.

of the Imperial security drug he'd made certain she'd received before leaving Hargeeva. What would the Rebels do with an ailing, much-valued scientist? They'd send someone to search Pedrin's files for the antidote.

Chuckling wickedly to himself, Pedrin called his aide and had him arrange a communication with high command. Pedrin would get that base location and win himself a combat posting — this time there were no flaws in his scheme, no way for the Rebel agent to avoid his trap. Pedrin chuckled again, making his aide flinch. He hoped they'd send Commander Stevan Makintay. This time Pedrin would cause his Rebel prisoner far worse than physical pain.



The tech's coveralls Merinda had provided for Makintay were more Wookiee-sized than human. He'd rolled up the cuffs of the sleeves but the pants legs kept falling about his heels and tripping him. As he stumbled yet again, and almost lost hold of the repulsorlift sled controls, a nearby Hargeevan stepped hurriedly out of the way, his hand covering his nose. The man crossed to the other side of the narrow Arginnall City backstreet that wound about the industrial sector bordering the harbor-front.

"Have these coveralls ever had a wash?" Mak complained as he checked the straps keeping his R2 unit securely covered on the sled as he followed after his technician friend. "They smell like someone died in them."

"Gripe, gripe," she muttered, pausing to check the corner that gave admittance to an alley-way. "So I couldn't find any jewel-encrusted cloaks! You're mixing with the peasantry now, my Prince."

"Will you please quit calling me that? Maybe I can get used to the smell — maybe — but you'll have some problems carrying me when I trip and break a leg! Something in my size would have been nice."

"It's not my fault you look as tall as a mountain from down here. Besides, you need all that stumbling. Honestly, the way you usually walk with your nose stuck in the air anyone'd know right off you're one of the high and mighty."

"I do not walk with ..."

"Shh ..." she cut him off as she halted by a doorway. "C'mon. This is the place. Get that repulsorsled in here. Your little droid friend's



going to do some very fancy slicing."

So far so good, Makintay thought, following her inside. The local populace, generally unaccustomed to the sight of repulsorlifts and non-humans, hadn't been too much unsettled, assuming the two figures in coveralls were strangers delivering some piece of technical equipment from off-world to Arginall's industrial center. And such was indeed the cover-story he and Merinda had devised during their journey here. Mak had done his best to dissuade his friend from accompanying him on what could be a suicide mission, but Merinda had said she would come alone if need be.

They had no trouble getting by various bored supervisors inside the communicator factory — Merinda was a genius at producing fake IDs and work orders. Makintay unloaded the droid in an empty sales office and watched as Merinda's deft hands expertly worked to check for the correct connector. Despite all his protesting, Mak could feel only intensely grateful and relieved she was here to help with things he'd have only been guessing at.

"C'mon, Brain-Barrel," she waved at the droid who rolled forward, computer-coupler extended. "Do your stuff."

This factory supplied the garrison with repairs and replacements for much of its high-tech equipment. The droid beeped and chattered to itself as it found its way past one security code after another. Makintay hoped for success — if they could tap into Pedrin's files and locate the poison formula here and now, they could be off-world again within the hour and Ketrian would be saved. Makintay dreaded the thought of endangering Merinda's life any further than he had already.

The little droid's cheerful beeping gradually altered to worried-sounding whines. Finally it fell silent completely and removed its link to the computer.

"Well?" Makintay prompted impatiently from where he stood guard watching the outer offices. He turned about as he heard Merinda utter a foul curse.

"No go," she said wearily. "Your little friend got by all the security codes fine, but ..."

"No poison file?" Mak finished glumly.

"Fraid not, my Prince. There is some good news however — your charming former acquaintance, Major Niall Pedrin, has been demoted. He's being shipped out tomorrow on the same transport that's bringing in his replacement." Dismayed by their failed slicing, Makintay merely shrugged. Merinda sighed. "Come on, we gotta get outa here before someone gets suspicious."

When they were safely outside again, Merinda asked, "So what do we do now?"

"Not we, Merin." Mak turned and gave her a warning glance as she drew breath to argue. "No more, I shouldn't even be allowing you to wait for me at the ship."

"Okay, okay," she muttered, but looked relieved he hadn't told her to take off without him. "I take it this means you're going to Plan B?" He nodded. She cursed. "I've been meaning to tell you something, your Regalness, but I didn't want to wound your delicate sensibilities."

"Ha!" Mak snorted and smiled wryly, glad as always of his friend's ability to cheer him just when he needed it most. "That never stopped you before!"

"True," she grinned but was deadly serious as she added, "Plan B is as loopy as a mynock's flight-path. It'll never work."

Mak patted the top of her head — a gesture he knew she disliked as much as he did her calling him royal titles. "You just hate it because you're not part of it."

"No," she said softly, "I hate it because it could get you killed."

He turned and held her gaze. "I could get killed every time I fly a fighter mission, Merin." He winked. "Hey, at least I'd die a happy man. Plan B has some very nice fringe benefits."

"Yeah, I suppose," she agreed grudgingly. "When you catch this Pedrin creep will you be bringing him back to the ship?"

"Only if I can't get him to talk immediately."

Merinda's dark eyes took on a feral gleam as she looked up at him again. "Well then, be sure to give him plenty of inducement and add a few from me!"

"My pleasure," he responded in the same savage tone.

They continued on toward the docking bay area, and came to a halt at a major cross-street. "I'll see you later then," Makintay said, his eyes keeping watch on the traffic flow. Most of the vehicles were out-moded ground cars. The Imperial military had the bulk of the available airspeeders in Arginall City. "I hope I can find a hire-car, or it'll be a long walk."

Merinda squeezed his arm so that he looked down at her. "Promise me you won't try to break into the garrison, Mak." He made to shake his head and she squeezed harder. "Please! They'll have you arrested the moment some trooper recognizes you as their escaped number one important prisoner."

Mak gently pried her fingers away from his wrist. "Take it easy, I know you're right. I shouldn't have to go anywhere near the garri-



son. I told you Ketrian gave me a lot of inside info on Pedrin's habits. If they're shipping him out of here tomorrow, he'll be sure to want to say good-bye to his lady-friend in town tonight. And ..." he held up a finger to forestall her interruption, "Ket says Pedrin's embarrassed to admit he's human, so he never takes a guard with him."

"That was before you and ..." she began.

"... before the Alliance team and I caused some stir here, yeah. But Merin, they killed every one in that team and wiped out the underground cell we contacted. Pedrin's got no cause to believe there'd be more trouble."

"I hope you're right, Mak," Merinda said softly. "I'll expect you back at the ship tomorrow evening then." He nodded and turned to go and she added, "May the Force be with you."



It was Season-Turn on Hargeeva, rust-colored leaves were torn loose from skeletal branches whipped by the howling wind. The storm had rushed down on Arginal City just as the last light left the sky. Makintay hunkered down into his coveralls, the alleyway in which he hid doing little to shield him from the cold wind. It must be close to midnight now. Had Pedrin decided not to visit his lover after all?

A brilliant burst of light suddenly illuminated the alley and Makintay squinted in reflex, his hand going to the butt of the blaster hidden beneath his long coat. A loud rumble of thunder followed, then a torrential downpour of icy rain.

"Oh great," Mak hurried across the narrow alley into the shelter of an overhanging safety exit ladder that gave access to Pedrin's lover's apartment. Muddied leaves rustled about Mak's boots and a scavenging rodent scuttled back into its hole. At the joint of wall and pavement there were several broken planks exposing wall-struts and a deeper darkness that must be a basement. This was far from a prestigious part of town. "Apartment" was too fancy a word for the squalid quarters surrounding the safety exit ladder two floors up.

Amid all the lightning flashes, Mak almost missed the lights of the airspeeder until they steadied and filled the outer street. Darkness returned as the engine was turned off and there was a hiss of hydraulics as the passenger door came open. Mak didn't need visual

verification to know it was Pedrin who entered the building. Mak checked his chrono — he'd wait just long enough to catch Pedrin off guard.

Mak moved to watch the room above but had to hurry back into hiding as he heard footsteps approaching the alley-mouth. There was a gleam of white-armor as two stormtroopers appeared, one coming forward to check the safety exit ladder. Cursing silently, Mak released his hand-hold on the broken wall-planks and dropped down into the narrow basement opening by the rodent's nest. Tiny sharp fangs sunk into Mak's calf and one of the animals squealed and bolted up and out, almost tripping the stormtrooper who was peering up at the safety exit ladder.

The trooper kicked at it, and called disgustedly to his partner, "Vermin-infested stink-hole! There's no-one back here t'see nuthin'. C'mon, let's go. He wants privacy, he can have it!"

The troopers left and a while later the airspeeder lifted off and disappeared into the rain-dark sky. Makintay hoped Pedrin had told them not to return for him before dawn. Huddled in his dank-smelling hiding place, Mak waited, then cautiously began climbing the safety exit ladder.

He was only half-way there when he heard upraised, angry voices, one male the other female. Then came a sharp smacking sound, a scream, and a woman's curses mixed with her sobbing. *Not enough Rebels for you to beat on these days, huh?* Mak cursed, hurrying up the remaining steps.

At the grimy glass-paned window he paused, peered inside. A dull light shone from a small bedside lamp. Pedrin stood with his back to the window, his tunic-coat draped over a nearby chair. A woman dressed in a night-robe was sitting huddled on the floor before him. She looked up at the Imperial and Mak saw her face was bruised and streaked with tears, her eyes flashing pure hatred.

Pedrin lifted a threatening fist as he, too, noted that expression of defiance.

"No, please," the woman begged, backing away on her hands and knees.

Makintay took his chance. Prying open the window, he scrambled inside, pulled his blaster and stunned Pedrin just as another lightning-bolt lit the room.

The woman's head turned to follow Pedrin's toppling form, then looked up again, eyes wide with horror as she gaped at the shadowy figure by the window. Her jaw dropped and she clapped her hands over her mouth to stifle a scream.





Mak holstered his blaster, and lifted a pleading hand. "Take it easy. I came for him. I'm not going to hurt you. Okay?"

She gulped then nodded. As Mak bent and slapped binders about Pedrin's wrists, the woman stumbled to her feet and retreated to sit on the bed. She trembled from head to toe but made no further sound, her nervous eyes watching Makintay's hands.

"Slaggit," Mak muttered. "He'll be out at least an hour. So much for asking him any questions."

"Q-questions?" the woman stuttered.

"Yeah," Mak said, flicking her a glance then staring murderously back at the unconscious Imperial. "He poisoned a lady-friend of mine."

The woman snorted bitterly and lifted a hand to examine the painful bruise on her cheek. "Sounds like his style."

Mak turned to her, saw her pushing her long disarrayed hair back about her shoulders and securing it with some kind of clasp. Her left eye was already swelling shut and there were finger-sized welts across her cheek. "Are you okay?" he asked, taking a step closer. "Is

there something I can do to help you?"

"You already did," she said and nodded toward Pedrin. "Thanks. He wouldn't have stopped until I needed a doctor."

"Tell me about it," Mak said sourly. "I was his prisoner."

"Oh." There was a wealth of sympathy in that one small word.

Mak flashed her a wry smile. "Here, let me tend those bruises. Is that a washroom through there?"

As Makintay applied first aid, Thera Capens told her story — Pedrin had threatened her friends, forcing her to become his mistress. She fell quiet and began trembling again.

"Here," Mak pulled a blanket about her. "It's over now. He won't ever hurt you again."

"You're going to kill him?" she asked, still shivering.

Mak stared. He hadn't really considered that. Could he kill a defenseless man in cold blood, even someone like Pedrin? "I don't know," he answered softly. "I meant, he's being transferred out."

She shook her head, wincing over her bruises. "Not now, he won't be. They'll have to investigate all this first."

Mak let out a sighing breath and collapsed to sit by Thera on the bed. "Of course. I hadn't thought."

There was a long moment's silence and Thera asked, "You need him to tell you how to cure your friend, right?" Mak nodded. She patted his hand, the one that still held the cotton swab he'd used to clean her face. "You have a gentle touch, Rebel. How do you plan on making him talk?" Mak shrugged and she gave him a wry smile. "You're new at this, aren't you. Interrogating people, I mean."

Mak snorted. "It's not something they taught at the Palace."

Thera's good eye widened. "You're one of the King's men?"

"Ahh ... well ... sort of. Once."

Thera sighed and looked back to Pedrin. "Threats won't work with him. It'll take a long time to break him, and you don't have time. His guards will be here by dawn."

"I know," Mak said heavily. "I was just hoping I'd get lucky. Now I have no choice, I'll have to take him someplace else to work on him."

"You gotta get him outa here first. I don't recommend the front door, too many snoopers and spy-eyes. I can have a friend of mine bring a motor-sled round back if you can carry that creep down the safety exit ladder."

"No problem, I was thinking I'd have to lug the mongrel all the way back to my ship."

"You have a ship?" Thera stared at him hopefully. "Can you take



me off-world? I don't want to be here when his thugs come round asking questions."

Up until now Makintay hadn't stopped to consider what might happen to Pedrin's lover after the Imperial disappeared from her life. He certainly couldn't leave her for Imperial interrogation. "Right," he said grimly. "Pack your things, and have that vehicle ready. How do you feel about joining the Rebel Alliance?"

By way of answer Thera threw her arms about him and hugged him delightedly.



When Major Nial Pedrin finally got his blurred vision back into focus, he definitely didn't like what he saw. On the other side of a small ship-board cabin, standing slouched insolently up against the bulkhead, and wearing Alliance uniform, was Commander Stevan Makintay.

"Enjoy your beauty sleep?" Makintay sneered, moving closer. "I'm afraid it didn't help, but there wasn't much to start with, now was there?"

Pedrin ignored the insult. He turned to check his surroundings and immediately regretted it. His head felt ready to split. Clothed only in his rain-damp uniform shirt and trousers, he was bound painfully tight to a chair before a small desk in an otherwise empty cabin. The deck and bulkheads reverberated with the unmistakable feel of hyperdrive engines at full throttle.

Momentary panic caused Pedrin's pulse to race. Hyperspace! The experts who had implanted the transponder micro-beacon in his arm had assured Pedrin they could follow it to the other side of the galaxy if need be. Pedrin had told them there had best not be a need or they would answer for it. He'd ordered them to capture the Rebels before they could leave Hargeeva. Panic became rage as Pedrin realized someone higher up had pulled rank to force his team to allow Makintay to leave Hargeeva with him. Obviously High Command had decided they could not rely on their inquisitors getting the information, so they'd opted to follow the Rebel ship all the way to its base. Easy enough for them, but that left Pedrin in Rebel hands for at least the next few hours.

Pedrin tried to find moisture enough in his dry mouth so as to

speak. "You'll never get away with this, Makintay," he began.

The Rebel commander cocked an eyebrow at him scornfully. "Oh really? You make too free with that word, 'never,' Major. You also told me I'd never see Ketrian again, remember?"

"So she betrayed us after all," Pedrin sneered. "That would surprise only my superiors. It is as well measures were taken to ensure she would be of no use to your pitiful Rebellion."

"And I didn't think I'd enjoy hitting a bound man." Makintay's green eyes glinted like ice in a snowbank. "But then you're no man, are you, scum!" He swung a powerful right fist and connected with the side of Pedrin's head. "Tell me what you used on her or you'll get a beating that'll make the one you gave me look easy!"

Pedrin sucked at the inside of his split cheek and swallowed blood. He hoped this ship wasn't far from its destination. Those fools in Intelligence would pay for getting him into this! "And you Rebels pretend to have such pure ethics," he taunted. "You see? Torture comes as easily to you as to us."

Makintay flushed and turned away then said quietly, "You're wrong." He swung back to face his prisoner. If his eyes had been icy before they were deadly cold now. "But you can be sure I'll do whatever is needed to keep Ketrian alive. You think you can withstand my desperation, Pedrin? You know how much she means to me. Do you truly believe you can hold out against whatever her dying drives me to do to you? And she is dying, scum. Slowly, breath by breath, she's failing. She dies and you die too. But I guarantee your death won't come any faster or less painfully. I'll keep you alive a long time, Pedrin. My grief will know no bounds."

Staring up into those death's-head eyes, Pedrin flinched. He swallowed hard and tried to tell himself help wasn't far off. It didn't work. "Look, Makintay," he said nervously. "I don't want Ketrian to die. She's worth a lot to the Empire, and ..."

Makintay leaned forward, grabbed at the front of Pedrin's undershirt, pulled him closer and shouted, "Forget your cursed Empire!"

"Right, right," Pedrin nodded, squirming frantically to free himself. "I was only trying to say that it was their idea to poison Altronel. I told them it could go wrong. I warned them ..."

Makintay let go, stepped back, his expression calmer. "What did they give her?"

"Just the standard drug, it's easily cured with a dose of Trypanid."

"Liar!" Makintay roared. "I should kill you, you filthy coward." He drew his blaster and flipped the stun setting to kill. "No more stalling. Tell me now or I blast you." The weapon snout pointed at



## Chemical Security Protocols

**From:** Imperial Intelligence

**To:** All Garrison Commanders and Field Operatives

**Classified:** Top Security Clearance

Garrison command officers and field operatives will be supplied with specially created poisonous chemical substances to prevent loss of information from individuals posing a security risk. Those citizens classified as Class A Security Risk (research scientists, weapons manufacturers, and others carrying top priority information) are to be injected with one or more of the substances listed below should their classification alter to Class A Code Red (for instance, during transfer from native worlds to secure areas).

These substances are slow-acting and time-released, and will serve as a safeguard should the individual be abducted or interrogated by terrorist insurgents. During transfer Class A Code Red individuals should be provided with regular supply of the appropriate antidote. Without such antidote the active ingredient of the security substance will more rapidly become lethal. Intelligence Command therefore recommends the implementation of necessary cover story to provide the individual with sufficient cause to seek regular medical checks or other means of introducing the antidote at the required intervals.

**Note:** These substances are *mandatory* for all Code Red Class A individuals. Please ensure that your supply is constantly upgraded to avoid terrorist counter-intelligence. The provided chemicals are continually varied and also include a bio-masking agent to prevent easy detection.

Currently available substances and their antidotes include:

Xebonica — Trypanid 20mcg at 10 hourly intervals for standard humans and as directed for other lifeforms.

Mangoriza — Alaswal-XT 40mcg at the above rate.

These substances are neuro-toxins. Symptoms of invasive poisoning will follow the standard pattern for such agents in human and similar life-forms.

Pedrin's heart. He gulped and paled. "And this time, be sure you get it right."

It took Pedrin several tries to find his voice. "I swear, that is the truth," he pleaded. "Trypanid will fix her ..."

Makintay's finger shook on the trigger and the blaster barrel wavered from side to side as he struggled for control. "Our doctor has already tried Trypanid, scum. We've known the formula for the standard Imperial security drug for months. That's not what you used on Ketrian. You get one more chance, then I start ventilating your body."

Pedrin's eyes bulged and his jaw worked convulsively. He couldn't look away from that threatening blaster muzzle. "It's the truth, I tell you! There must be something else wrong with her!" Makintay's knuckles flashed white about the trigger. "Kill me and she'll die too!"

Makintay uttered a foul curse, turned his back, holstered the blaster and hit the door release.

Pedrin caught a quick glimpse of a brightly lit outer corridor before the door slid closed again. He sagged against his bonds and tried to ignore the sweat streaming into his eyes. His heart was pounding so hard that it hurt his ribs. He'd told the truth. Why was Makintay refusing to accept it? Altronel must have caught some strange disease. Pedrin hoped fervently that the Rebel base was not far off. The moment the ship landed there the Sector Fleet would follow to demand the Rebels' surrender. Picturing what he'd do to Makintay shortly thereafter set Pedrin giggling as he waited.



"Well?" Merinda asked from the rec table in the middle of the common room. She and Thera had been playing a hologame. "We heard a lot of shouting. But you don't look happy."

"I'm not," Mak scowled. He poured himself a cup of water and swallowed it down. "You were right, Thera. I'm not much at this interrogation business. He's calling my bluff." Mak put down the cup and turned to them. "And I don't have the stomach to try anything worse on him than a few punches. Even for Ketrian." He swung an arm and knocked the cup to the deck. "Some friend!"

"She wouldn't want you as her friend if you were any different, Mak," Merinda said softly. "Does this mean we go to plan C?"



Mak nodded then waved off Merinda as she got to her feet. "No, stay there. I'll do it. I'm the one got us into this mess. I hope Colonel Farland is in a good mood. He should still be at Sector headquarters."

"Good thinking," Merinda said, "You wanna avoid home base, Baran's probably looking to have you shot on sight."

Mak sighed. "Something else to make my life interesting."

"What's this Plan C?" Thera watched Makintay disappear into the cockpit.

Merinda explained. "We call for help. Mak's going to transmit to headquarters and have them send an interrogation team out here to us. That way we don't endanger Rebel lives if anyone's tracking us."

"Tracking?" Thera started. "Can they do that?"

"Yeah, it's been done before. They plant a miniature transponder on a ship's hull. Sometimes they do it as matter of course on any freighter that docks on an Imperial-controlled world. But I don't think we have anything to worry about. I set up a vid-scan and I know no-one came near this ship while I was gone."

They looked up as Makintay returned and slumped dejectedly into a seat opposite them.

"Cheer up, my Prince," Merinda reached over and squeezed his arm. "The interrogation team will crack your prisoner in no time."

"Prince?" Thera sat up straighter and peered suspiciously at Makintay. "You're not, you couldn't be, *the* Makintay?"

Merinda enjoyed the reaction as she said, "Yep, it's him, the one and only, Lord Stevan Makintay."

It took a moment for Thera to find her voice. "Your father says you're dead."

"To him, I am," Mak said casually. He had other things on his mind. "I'm sure Pedrin's up to something. I thought he'd crack as soon as he saw who had him prisoner, but he wasn't even surprised to see me. He didn't so much as blink when I told him Ketrian's with the Alliance. He's so slaggin' smug about something."

"He told me there was a big push to uncover Rebel information," Thera put in. "He's desperate for a promotion back to AT-AT command. You're right, he probably is scheming something."

"Oh great," Makintay said glumly. "Any ideas?"

She shook her head, then looked up suddenly. "Wait! What was that you mentioned about tracking, Chief? How big are those things? What do they look like?" Merinda indicated. Thera jumped to her feet excitedly. "That's it then! Got to be!"

"What?" Makintay and Merinda demanded in unison.

## Merinda Niemeh



**Type:** Sullustan Technician

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D, melee combat 5D

### KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Cultures 6D, planetary systems 5D, survival 6D, value 4D

### MECHANICAL 4D

Astrogation 5D, communications 6D, repulsorlift operation 6D, sensors 6D, space transports 5D

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 4D, con 5D, hide 5D, search 5D, sneak 5D

### STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 5D, stamina 6D

### TECHNICAL 3D+2

Computer programming/repair 8D, droid programming/repair 6D, first aid 5D, repulsorlift repair 6D, space transports repair 5D+2, starfighter repair 7D, starship weapon repair 7D

### Special Abilities:

**Enhanced Senses:** Sullustans get +2D to search and related *Perception* checks in low-light conditions due to their vision and hearing.

**Location Sense:** Sullustans cannot get lost in a place they have visited before. They get +1D when making *astrogation* rolls for a planet they've visited before.

### Force Points: 2

### Character Points: 6

### Move: 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, starship tool kit (+1D to *space transports repair*), vibro-knife (STR +1D)

**Capsule:** A middle-aged Sullustan female, Merinda has an impish sense of humor and a lively disposition. Her avid curiosity and keen intelligence led her to a life seeking adventure among the stars. Her natural aptitude for technical repairs earned her a position as advisor to the Hargeevan High King who needed to equip his palace to space tech standards after that world allied with the Empire. During her years of service, Merinda became fast friends and mentor to the young prince, Stevan Makintay. When her new friend was kidnapped and hauled off to a penal colony, Merinda doggedly traced him and played a major part in Makintay's rescue. When the young prince's attempted coup failed on Hargeeva, Merinda followed him into the ranks of the Alliance.

"Last night, when Pedrin kissed me, I tried to push him away," Thera explained, pausing significantly before she added, "And I felt a strange hard bump on his left arm. He yelped, and got mad because



I'd hurt him, must have hit a tender spot. I asked him what was wrong with his arm. He said he'd had surgery. Then he got this real nasty look in his eye and he said, "But it'll hurt the Rebels a lot more than it hurts me."

Makintay and Merinda stared at one another. "A tracker!" Mak said, his face pale. "I should have guessed. We got off-world with him too easy." He got to his feet. "Come on, Merin, and bring the medkit. Pedrin's about to have more surgery!"

Thera followed, but then suddenly blocked her companions as they were about to open the cell door. "Wait!" she urged eagerly, "I've got an idea. Maybe we won't need your interrogator friends after all." Her lips pressed into a thin hard line. "And I can exact a little vengeance into the bargain."

Makintay frowned at her. "The Alliance doesn't torture prisoners, Thera. Not even him. I'm not going to use this transponder removal as an excuse to ..."

Thera went a little green at the thought. "No, no," she assured. "Nothing like that. Just listen and follow my lead."

Pedrin all but had heart failure when he saw Makintay return with a medkit in his hands. But that was nothing compared to his reaction when he discovered his safety net — not to mention any hopes of future promotion — were about to go out the airlock. He might never escape now! His only consolation had been the local anaesthetic Makintay had applied to his arm before cutting him. As soon as the transponder had been removed, Merinda dispatched it into the vacuum of space. Shortly thereafter she sent the ship into another hyperspace jump.

"Your friends will never know what happened to you, Pedal-Head," Merinda announced as she returned to the common room and leered down at the Imperial officer tied spread-eagled across the rec table. Makintay was slapping some synth-flesh over the wound in the man's upper left arm.

"He doesn't have any friends," Thera put in maliciously.

Pedrin turned awkwardly to glare at her. So she'd been involved in his capture too. She'd pay for that! If only he could find a way out of this mess.

"So how did it feel to be on the sharp end of the knife for once?" Thera moved to stand over him. "If I'd been doing the cutting I wouldn't have used a local."

Makintay unlocked the left manacle and the Imperial sat up though his right hand remained chained to the table's side. "I should have thought of that earlier," Mak said, eyeing the woman thought-

fully. "You wanna cut on him, be my guest. There are plenty of places he'll still feel it." He handed the scalpel to Thera, who nodded her thanks and ran an appraising finger along the flat of the blade. "Maybe you better take him back into his cell first — I don't want blood all over the decks out here."

"Fine by me," Thera said coldly. "You drag him in there and tie him up and I'll be along in a moment. There's a few other things I want to try on him too." She turned to Merinda. "Can I borrow your tool kit, Chief?"

"Sure," the Sullustan nodded. "I'll go get it."

"Move it along," Makintay freed the chains from the table and Pedrin's hands went protectively to his stomach. "Back to your cell, scum, the lady wants to play catch-up. I saw the scars you left all over her. I'd reckon she'll be busy with you all the way back to base." Makintay shook his head with mock regret. "And no one's gonna come rescue you no more. Such a shame."

"Wait!" Pedrin pleaded, all self-control vanished in a melting tide of sheer panic. "She might kill me, and then you'll never get that cure for Altronel."

"Oh, I'll be sure to keep you breathing, hero," Thera spat. "I wouldn't want to deprive Makintay of his turn."

"But, but ..." Pedrin spluttered, his eyes rolling frantically as Makintay propelled him toward the cabin. "Altronel won't die if I give her the antidote in time."

Makintay spun Pedrin round to face him. "What antidote? You said we'd already tried the only one."

"I, I lied," Pedrin stammered. "I thought the fleet would be here soon to free me. Now, well, maybe we can do a deal."

"What kind of deal?"

"I cure Altronel and you guarantee my freedom." Pedrin waited, growing more nervous as Makintay looked none too happy and Thera fidgeted with the scalpel. "Think of all those Rebel lives you can save with Altronel's new technology. What do you lose by letting me go? I don't know where we are."

Makintay drew a deep breath. "You have a deal," Pedrin sagged in relief and Mak lifted a threatening forefinger, "but we don't let you go until we're certain Ketrion's fully recovered."

"Of course," Pedrin's tried shakily to wipe away the sweat trickling down his brow and making a soggy mess of his normally perfectly groomed moustache.

"That means we'll have to take him to the base," Merinda pointed out.



Makintay frowned and before he could change his mind, Pedrin said, "I'll never see the nav coordinates or even the view from the cockpit. I could never identify your world. But I do have to go there — the antidote will need continual adjustment. It's a complicated poison. There will need to be frequent blood tests and ..."

"You better know what you're talking about," Mak interrupted. "If Ketrian dies, Thera gets to do trauma therapy with you as the stress release."

Pedrin gulped hard, nodded and looked at the deck. He could hardly believe he'd won a second chance. He had no idea what was wrong with Altronel, but her friends had just given him the chance to redeem himself with his high command. He could play doctor for as long as it took to find his opening for escape — and a hostage who knew the base location. "Will your commanding officer agree to my release on these terms?" He kept his eyes lowered as if cowered, but needing to hide the cunning he knew they'd read from him.

Thera was staring aghast at her companions. Mak gave her a wink to assure her he had no intention of ever freeing Pedrin. Her bruised mouth formed a surprised and pleased "O" as she caught on.

"We won't be involving my commanding officer," Mak said. He was already in enough trouble with Baran. "No one but we three will ever know you were on base."

"I see," Pedrin nodded. He flinched as Makintay's powerful fist clamped about his jaw, forcing him to meet the Rebel's eyes.

"I hope so," Makintay glared. "You do exactly as we tell you down there or some trigger-happy Rebel is going to enjoy frying you a piece at a time. We recruit from Hargeeva, as you know. You keep your head down and your mouth shut or someone will recognize you and there'll be no deals from them. They remember the families you enslaved and murdered."

Suddenly, Pedrin no longer needed to hide his true feelings. Makintay looked much happier as he read the genuine fear in his prisoner's eyes. Then he shoved Pedrin back into the cabin cell for the duration of the journey to Eyrie Base.

Makintay waited until it was late night on Eyrie Base before contacting the deck officer — one of his former pilots who'd been temporarily retired from combat service after being severely wounded in battle. Mak didn't like lying to the man, and found little consolation in Merinda's theory that it was only a half-lie. It was true enough that Makintay needed to keep his presence on base a secret until Colonel Farland returned to overthrow Baran-Brain's reign of terror. The deck officer had laughed at that description and said he

and his crew would be happy to help in any way possible. Mak explained there would be two newcomers with him, refugees from Hargeeva. They too should remain in hiding for a few days.

And so it was that Mak found himself with a disguised Pedrin in tow, standing before sickbay entrance. The deck officer had told him Ketrian was still alive but he knew no details. Mak hoped she had not deteriorated much further than the terrible comatose state he'd last seen.

"Remember," he warned Pedrin quietly, "mind your manners in there. I'll have this aimed at you every second. You don't want another stun headache." He prodded Pedrin in the back with the blaster barrel. The weapon was carefully concealed beneath the blanket Mak had thrown over his arm — he'd often brought one with him during past vigils at Ketrian's bedside. Built into the cliff-face above the sea, Eyrie Base was always damp and cold despite the struggling generator's attempts to provide heating.

Pedrin pushed against the door release and stepped into the much brighter light of the sickbay, Makintay following close behind.

Doctor Tarrek turned quickly away from his work, a grin lighting his tired face as he recognized the taller of the two visitors. "Mak!" he greeted. "Thank the stars you're back. She's hanging in there, but just barely." He frowned as he noted Makintay wasn't smiling. "You did it, didn't you?"

"More or less," Makintay shoved Pedrin forward. "My prisoner here says he knows how to cure her. He should — he's the one poisoned her in the first place."

Pedrin flinched as the doctor turned furiously accusing eyes on him. "It will take some time," Pedrin said nervously. "To cure her, I mean. We must work as a team. I'll need you to interpret blood tests so I can determine what combination of the time-release substances are currently present and devise the correct antidote."

"I've been taking blood tests every hour," Tarrek said coldly. He was pleased to see Makintay had a blaster beneath the blanket he now put aside. "And I've been unable to find any effective counter-agent. The blood test readings never change."

Pedrin swallowed against a dry throat. There was only one gun on him now, he'd never before been so lightly guarded. Makintay had sent Merinda on some errand. He must make a break for freedom soon. He moved close to Altronel's bedside, pretended to read the life-sign monitors. "The test readings never seem to change," he corrected. "Your computers would not scan for the substances we have recently created. You will need to reprogram for their chemical



markers then take another blood test. May I use this datapad to list the entries?"

"The sooner the better," Tarrek nodded. "If we're going to be running such sophisticated scans, we'll need more power than this simple machine can provide. I'll go borrow some data chips from Baran's fancy computer. I know exactly what I need." He gave Makintay a worried look. "Do you need more guards?"

Mak shook his head. "Baran doesn't know I'm here, and I want to keep it that way."

Tarrek's lips twitched. "I had to treat him for concussion. That must have been some punch."

"Actually," Mak grinned, "I think he hit his head on the wall."

"Whatever," Tarrek said cheerfully, "He had it coming. Good work, Mak." He moved to the door, paused and said, "I'll be right back. If you're sure you can manage?"

"It's set for stun," Mak lifted the blaster. "I've only got to squeeze the trigger."

"Right." Tarrek left and the doors whooshed closed behind him.

Makintay watched while Pedrin punched keys on the datapad. Still watching his prisoner, Mak edged closer to Ketrian. She looked as still and white as death and a thrill of fear went through him. "I'm here, Ket," he said softly, touching her face with his free hand. "We're gonna make you well."

From out in the corridor came the sound of clicking heels on duracrete and close behind the heavier footfalls of marching boots. A woman's voice complained, "I'm sure I don't need no guard just t'bring these supplies down to the doctor."

"Any medical supplies are worth a fortune on the black market, assistant," a trooper's deeper voice answered. "We've had medics attacked in the past. It never hurts to be careful."

"Slaggit!" Mak cursed. "Sounds like a couple of Baran's Nervous Ninnies." He looked about for a hiding place, spotted a free-standing privacy screen. "Get over there," he waved Pedrin toward it and the Imperial hurried to obey. Mak had only just taken his place in the cramped but concealed space beside Pedrin when the door opened and Assistant Medic Griek and two security troopers entered.

"We'll wait for you here, Assistant Medic," the senior of the guards said, and he and his partner took up a rigid at-attention stance by the door.

"I tell you all this worryin' is not needed," Griek sounded almost at the limits of her patience. "But if you insist, then don't come no closer. Goodness only knows what germs you're trackin' in here on

those filthy boots."

Makintay almost dared not breathe as the assistant medic crossed to a shelf on the wall no more than a hand's span from his and Pedrin's hiding place. She stacked the supply packages, then took two or three steps to stand at Ketrian's bedside. Makintay watched as the woman bent down and placed her hand to Altronel's pale forehead, apparently testing for fever. Then Griek began fidgeting with the bedclothes.

Mak flinched as a loud beep sounded from one of the guard's comlinks. The guard called to Griek. "If you have those supplies safely stored, we've got to be going. Someone's trying to mess with Major Baran's computer."

"Fine," Griek said, sounding glad to be rid of them.

Mak bit back a groan as he realized the doctor was having problems getting hold of the needed equipment. Mak wished he'd hit Baran harder. He waited impatiently for Griek to leave, but she continued her fidgeting.

"We're all alone now, Ketrian," Griek said and her leering tone made Makintay's flesh crawl. "How does that make you feel? I'm sure you can hear me, people often do when they're in coma."

Baffled and not at all sure he liked what he was hearing, Makintay watched as Griek pulled some object from her pocket, her free hand pinching at the exposed flesh of Ketrian's arm.

"One more injection," Griek continued. "That's all it would take and I'd have my vengeance for the husband and son you lost to me. Do you know how many people died because you brought those Imperial savages to Hargeeva, Ketrian? No, of course not, all you cared for was your precious work! Well, you're not the only clever one. I almost killed you and the doctor never found no trace of my poisons."

Makintay drew a sharp breath and moved forward, but stopped again as Griek added, "But I can't kill you, can I? You're holdin' hostages just as Pedrin did. But mark my words, some day you will be brought to justice." She lifted the object and Makintay saw it was a loaded hypo. "I have the cure here, I'll make you well, but only for the sake of the Rebel lives your work can help. When this war is over, you die."

"You scheming traitor!" Makintay hissed, stepping clear of the screen. Griek jumped and dropped the hypo. "What's in that thing?" Makintay demanded, reflexively reaching for it. As he bent down, searing pain exploded in his lower back. Gasping in agony, he clutched at himself, and suddenly nerveless fingers released their





hold on the heavy blaster.

Pedrin released his hold on the scalpel he had driven into Makintay's back and snatched the blaster before it could fall to the floor. Then he stepped back as Makintay made a groggy grab for him. Behind the Rebel commander, Griek stood frozen in horror, her skeletally thin hands clasped to her mouth, and her wide blue eyes staring transfixed at the bright spray of blood spilling from Makintay's wounded back. Pedrin hoped savagely that he'd hit the kidney as he intended. By the look of all that blood he'd succeeded.

Makintay took another stumbling step then folded, groaning and barely conscious to the deck.

"Now, I have my hostages," Pedrin announced calmly. He levelled the blaster at Griek. "Find some bandages."

Griek blinked, then stared from the blaster barrel back to Makintay's bloodied hands which were ineffectually trying to stem the flow of blood. Assistant medic's instinct took over and she hurried to find some pressure bandaging then bent to tend the wounded man.

Pedrin sighed. "Not those kind of bandages. Something to tie him

with." Griek looked up in confusion. "Get away from him!" Pedrin ordered sharply.

"But, he ... he could bleed to death," she stammered, still on her knees. She pushed a pressure bandage into Mak's hands.

"Oh really?" Pedrin sneered down at her. "I take it he's not on your death list then, woman!" Impatiently, he reached out with his free hand and dragged her away from Makintay. She fell back and the only sounds in the suddenly still room were her sobbing breaths and Makintay's desperately muted groans mixed with the background beeping of the life-signs monitor.

"Who are you?" Griek managed to ask after a moment. Makintay had somehow managed to secure the pressure bandage and hold it to his side, the bleeding was not so heavy. Though she hated Ketrian with a passion, Griek had always liked the young Hargeevan prince who'd tried so hard to bring reforms for her people.

"I'm so disappointed you don't recognize me," Pedrin answered somewhat distractedly, his glance flicking from his prisoners to the door and back. That doctor would be returning soon, and by the sound of it, would bring several guardsmen with him. "I realize these coveralls are hardly flattering, but still I'd have thought you know the man who rated such a vehement mention in your little speech for Altronel's benefit."

"Pedrin," Makintay gasped out.

Griek forgot her concerns for the Rebel prince beneath a rush of loathing. "You!" she hissed.

"Quite so," Pedrin gave her a slight, mocking bow. "Stay back! This weapon is set for stun, but I could make an exception in your case." His lip lifted in an ugly, curving sneer. "After all you are but a mere peasant and of little worth as a hostage — or anything else."

Griek's fists bunched and her fair face flushed with rage. Pedrin flicked the stun setting to kill and aimed for her heart. She backed away, rage altering to terror. "Better. It would be a shame if I had to kill you, after all you were doing my work for me so well, poisoning our good scientist friend there." The blaster barrel wavered toward Ketrian. "Or at least you were killing her until you changed your mind. And that is the cure?" He took a step toward the hypo still lying on the floor.

Makintay made a feeble grab for it and Pedrin kicked his hand aside.

"Still with us, commander?" Pedrin leered. "Good, I wouldn't want you to miss the last act in this little drama. All your efforts to save Miss Altronel were for naught, you see? One of your own kind was



the murderer." He glanced at the hypo. "Or would-be murderer."  
 "You ... lied ... about ... everything," Makintay tried woozily to glare up at the man.

Pedrin shook his head. "Not everything. When I told you the truth, you wouldn't believe me."

"Now what?" Mak asked.

"I need a ticket off this planet. Preferably one carrying the coordinates so the fleet can find its way back here."

Mak snorted painfully. "No one's going to let you ..."

"No?" Pedrin cocked his head as he heard footfalls in the outer corridor. "Perhaps you are right. But then if your friends won't bargain, at least I can make sure Altronel does die." He lifted his boot and made to crush the hypo.

Makintay grabbed feebly at Pedrin's leg and the Imperial turned and kicked him in the ribs. Makintay fell heavily back against the wall, dazed and bleary-eyed, but Griek had reclaimed the hypo.

"Give that to me now, peasant," Pedrin turned to her. She shook her head and backed away.

The door whooshed open and Doctor Tarrek entered. He was pushing a cart on which was balanced a spectrograph and a pile of datacards. Behind followed the same two troopers who'd been with Griek earlier. Further back, unnoticed because of her short stature, came Merinda.

"What in all the fires ...?" Tarrek began. He made to move to Makintay.

Merinda stepped forward, saw her wounded friend and made to draw her blaster and shoot Pedrin.

"Stay back or she dies!" Pedrin shouted. His hand shook as he waved the blaster roughly in the direction of Ketrian's head.

Griek, seeing the Imperial's distracted attention, dropped the hypo to the bed and made a grab for Pedrin's blaster. His fingers came down hard on the trigger and she took the full force of the blast in the chest. Her blue eyes widened in shock, then glazed over as she crumpled, a hole charred in the front of her white tunic.

Pedrin tried to recover in time to realign his aim on the newcomers, but Makintay lashed out, kicking him hard on the shin and upsetting his balance. It was all the opening Merinda needed. She fired and felled the Imperial with a stun shot. As Pedrin hit the deck, the tiny Sullustan checked her blaster and cursed.

"Slaggit! I thought I was set for kill. Well, I can fix that." She altered her weapon's setting and moved toward the unconscious Imperial.

"Forget that ..." Mak gasped. "Help ... Ket."

"Ketrian?" Merinda repeated in confusion. The guards moved to secure the prisoner and Merinda shook her head with mock regret. She looked across at Altronel and spotted the full hypo lying on the bed by Ketrian's bare arm. "This?" she said, picking it up and displaying it to Makintay.

"It's the cure," Mak said. He tried to push the doctor away from him. "Fix her ... first."

Tarrek sighed but decided it would be easier to obey. Quickly he took the hypo, injected Altronel, and moved back to tend Makintay. "Happy now?" he said sourly. "You're bleeding all over my floor."

"Sorry." But there was a smile on Mak's face as he fainted.

"Would someone mind telling us what the slag's going on here?" one of the guards asked irritably.

"Don't look at me," Merinda backed away. "I'm only a lowly technician."



"Wake up, Mak."

Someone was stroking Makintay's face with smooth, warm hands. It felt so good, he didn't really want to wake up. Then he recognized the voice that belonged to the hands. "Ketrian?" he said with groggy hope. He forced his eyes open and tried to sit up but could only groan as pain flared in his wounded side.

Ketrian Altronel shook her head in exasperation and turned to the doctor, who was pushing Makintay back into the pillows of his sickbay bed. "Two days we've been waiting for him to wake up, then he wants to jump right out of bed. Typical."

"Ketrian!" Mak exclaimed as finally his vision settled and he realized he wasn't dreaming. "You're awake! Are you okay?" He turned clumsily to eye the doctor. "She is okay, isn't she?"

"She's fine," Tarrek admonished. "Now keep still. I don't think there's one drop more of your type blood in store on this base."

Mak just stared at Ketrian who was grinning down at him, her green eyes alight with mischievous good humor and her cheeks flushed with the rosy glow of good health.

"I hear you saved my life," Ketrian said, bending to kiss him.

"Well, I had help." Her warm lips closed over his and as she drew back Mak added, "but not much help. I think I deserve another kiss."



"Ahem," Merinda cleared her throat and stepped closer. "Before you two go any further with the celebrations, I'd like to point out that you, my Prince, are in big trouble."

"Baran's gonna court-martial me?" Makintay sounded not in the least unhappy. He reached up and took Ketrian's hand. She kissed his fingers.

"Oh," Merinda said impishly, "I think he'd rather wait until you can stand up, then have you shot by firing squad."

That got Mak's attention. He turned and stared at his friend.

Tarrek choked back a laugh. "She's kidding, Mak," he said. "But it's probably just as well you were in my charge until Farland got back and changed the orders."

"Then everything's okay again?" Mak asked.

"Not quite," Ketrian said. "There's talk of demoting you and confining you to base for a while."

"Oh, well," Mak noted his condition, and declared, "looks like I won't be going anywhere for a while in any case."

"You can count on that," Tarrek said sternly.

"But," Merinda held up one stubby finger and grinned from ear to ear, "Fear not, mighty Leader, Ketrian's already got them backpedalling."

"She has?" Mak smiled up at Ketrian, still revelling in seeing her restored to health.

"Oh indeed," Tarrek put in. "There are those who would call it blackmail."

"Blackmail, doctor?" Ketrian tried an innocent expression which failed miserably. "I only said I'd be happy to provide that new alloy for their X-wings just as long as Mak gets to lead them into battle."

"You did?" Mak grinned.

"She did," Merinda put in, "Word is Colonel Farland has succeeded in having Baran posted out to some obscure desk job on a safe world." Mak looked set to cheer but Merinda continued, "and the new intelligence officer is very grateful to you for providing him with a high-ranking Imperial prisoner who knows all there is to know about AT-AT battle strategies and call signs."

"Mission accomplished," Mak sighed contentedly and settled back into the comfort of his bed.

## About the Authors ...

**C. Robert Carey**, a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and **J.P. Pietrzak**, a graduate of USATC-FJSC, share the coveted TOCM (Trandoshaan-occupied Cacti Marksbeing) Medallion. Although the former Mr. Carey had been enrolled in the Federal Gamemaster Protection Program, he was recently spotted by his players on the Flannan Isles off the coast of Scotland, where he was trying to avoid the vengeance of his campaign members. J.P. is soon to be a student at UCSB (Universal College, Sector Bon'nyuw-Luq), where he will major in Ithorian studies with a minor in Togorian taxidermy.

**Erin Endom** practices and teaches pediatric emergency medicine at a major southwestern medical school. She's put much of her experience into "Do No Harm," her first *Star Wars Adventure Journal* story.

**Carolyn Gollodge** has been a prolific *Star Wars* writer in the fanzine field, publishing more than 40 *Star Wars* stories, four of which won awards. She lives in Ettalong, New South Wales, Australia. "Desperate Measures" is her second article for *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal*.

**Pablo Hidalgo** is a freelance artist from Winnipeg, Manitoba, who specializes in illustration and animation. He is a member of the Manitoba Society of Independent Animators, and co-instructs animation courses for young people. He has a disturbing amount of *Star Wars* trivia kicking around in his head, and does a mean Lobot impersonation.

**Nora Mayers** is a freelance writer from Glenn Dale, Maryland — for amusement and the sheer joy of it she also herds lawyers in her capacity as a legal secretary in Washington, D.C. (it beats bussing tables while waiting to sell the first novel). The rest of her time is spent providing for the comfort and convenience of her Corellian-mannered Arabian horse, Oz.

Kidnapped as a boy by space pirates, **Timothy Squire O'Brien** rose from a lowly cabin boy to become the captain of a pirate fleet, scourge of the spaceways, dreaded across the galaxy! After retiring to an obscure backwater world, he now writes memoirs cleverly disguised as space opera and roleplaying games.



**Christian Piccolo** received his bachelors degree in industrial design from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1995. He is now working in New Jersey as a conceptual designer and artist. Christian has been a loyal *Star Wars* fan for as long as he can remember, and owns a large collection of *Star Wars* memorabilia.

**Paul Sudlow** maintains a full schedule of freelance and full-time game design and editing for West End Games. Between bouts of writing, he files regular newsnet reports on Imperial activity in this sector for Imperial Defense Daily.

**Kathy Tyers** is the author of *The Truce at Bakura* — her *New York Times* best-selling *Star Wars* novel — and co-author of *The Truce at Bakura Sourcebook*. She has written five other science fiction novels published under the Bantam Spectra line, including her latest novel, *One Mind's Eye*. She is a flutist and Irish harper, and has made two recordings of folk music. She lives in Bozeman, Montana, with her husband and teenage son.

## About the Artists ...

"Who do I have to kill?" was **Steve Bryant's** response when asked if he wanted to do *Star Wars* work for West End Games — leading to his work in *Galaxy Guide 12: Aliens — Enemies and Allies*, *Heroes and Rogues*, and *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal*. In addition to the movie trilogy, Steve cites Al Williamson's seminal *Star Wars* work as a major influence. A former art director for Game Designers Workshop, Steve currently works on staff at FASA and lives in the suburban wilds of Chicago with his wife and four companion animals. He looks forward to illustrating more *Star Wars* stuff for West End (yes, that is a hint).

**Kathy Burdette** is a freelance artist living in Virginia enjoying the life of a shiftless science fiction addict. In her spare time she writes short fiction, works part-time at the College of William and Mary, and smuggles nerfs onto Wroonia.

**Matt Busch** spent a great deal of his childhood creating his own *Star Wars* comic books, fan clubs, "pop-up" books, fanzines and graphic novels. His first real job creating *Star Wars* art began in the *Journal*. Matt also designed and illustrated 20 items for the *Star Wars* game supplement *Fantastic Technology*. Currently living in Pasadena, California, Matt freelances for various magazines and motion picture companies.

In his spare time **Robert Duchlinski** enjoys illustrating and escaping into the *Star Wars* and TSR realms through various role-playing games and novels. He is a graduate of the duCret School of Art and Design, and hopes to someday become a special effects artist for Industrial Light and Magic.

**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. He started his art career doing freelance work, then moved into advertising art.

**Doug Shuler** has been a freelance artist for eight years and has done work for many prominent game companies, including GDW, Steve Jackson Games, ICE, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games. His illustrations continue to appear on new cards for *Magic: The Gathering* and *Jyhad* by Wizards of the Coast. A *Star Wars* fanatic, he lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Jordi, their infant daughter, Brianna, and five maniac cats.

**Christopher Trevas** has long admired that galaxy far, far away ever since that fateful day in 1977 when a three year-old boy stared in awe as a Star Destroyer passed overhead. Now as a graduate from the Center for Creative Studies in Michigan, he is an professional illustrator contributing what he can to the *Star Wars* universe. His work can be found in West End Games' *Heroes and Rogues*, *Kathol Outback* and *Kathol Rift*.

**Mike Vilardi** has been freelancing as an illustrator for eight years, breaking in with Game Designers Workshop and Digest Group before catching on with West End Games. "My very first WEG project was doing some pencils for *Paranoia (The Bot Abuser's Manual)*." While he may have grown up with *Star Wars*, Mike didn't buy much of the merchandise. "I've had to scramble to get whatever I can since much of it is a great help in producing illos ... and it's an excellent excuse to buy some really cool toys!" Of course, he has to share them with his two young children. ♫



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# Cynabar's InfoNet

37:3:26/CYN/COR.1.IPC/GEN

## Cynabar's Back! Did You Miss Us?

CORUSCANT NODE: Well, troopers, as you can see, we have returned from our vacation. Or exile, as you prefer. Spent a few lovely weeks knocking around here and there in some fairly remote areas of space. We'd rather not go into specifics (in case we decide to do this again sometime), but one tip to the very well traveled: avoid the monk ships if you're hitching a ride with slavers. Aside from that momentary unpleasantness, we had an enjoy-

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able expedition.

And now, back to work, in a fresh new office in fresh new digs. The Imperial search and destroy mission against us has flagged a bit with the tragic accidental deaths of the three most recent head investigators (nothing that we did ourselves, mind you — but it seems we do have a few enthusiastic but anonymous fans in the bye-bye business).

Like our new address? We thought we'd ruin some poor ISB grunt's day by setting up shop a few offices down. Not that they'll ever actually find us. We're Cynabar, after all.

News? Well, we're just getting caught up, so things are a bit slim until our networks are back on line. Still a few interesting items have already crossed our desks. It seems Nada Synnt has finally shed that ridiculous name and fallen back on, well, even more ridiculous pseudonyms — Tosin Dise and Benner Dunnit are two of the less painful. He's flying a new ship, too, a nice little Corellian Desslin number called *Pareesh D'Thot*. He is doing rather well, though, since he seems to be helping the Empire misplace rawmat shipments.

Bettle and Jaxa are back to running guns to Ralltiir, though we can't figure out why, since the crackdown there has made such runs especially risky. Rumor has it that Jaxa isn't too thrilled at the idea, especially since the *Mallixer* nearly got snagged running the blockade a few weeks back, but Bettle is in an insistent mood.

Rumor has it Platt Okeefe is lying low for a while — although we've heard she's used some of her rainy-day credits to take out a contract on a puny little amateur newsnets reporter. No doubt there'll be more word about her soon.

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## HOLONET FREE REPUBLIC

37:4:3/HFR/ALX4/ODN.5.IZZ/MIL/A. Drax

### Airon Imperial Supply Lines Crippled by Alliance Strikes

IZIZ, ONDERON: Alliance forces hit the Imperial Army-Navy Ordnance Center on Onderon early this week in a surprise attack which has all but crippled Imperial abilities to resupply its forces in Airon sector for the foreseeable future, according to Alliance analysts.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of the Onderon underground, the Imperial sensor nets surrounding the system dropped for 12 minutes early on Kagstag, long enough for a Rebel strikeforce to slip into the system undetected. Twenty minutes later, the planetary shields surrounding the Iziz region on Onderon itself also dropped, again the work of the Onderon Resistance. Within minutes, the starfighters of Shandor Squadron struck Jyrenne Base near Iziz, the site of the main ordnance center in the sector.

Imperial defense forces scrambled during the second attack pass, preventing a total destruction of the depots, but Alliance intelligence experts estimate a 67 percent loss of total ordnance overall, an overwhelming success. Shandor Squadron and supporting vessels pulled out of the system within an hour of insertion, suffering only minimal losses.

The Onderon attack is the first major military opera-

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tion initiated by Alliance High Command this year. Sources in the command chain intimate that the Alliance has finally acquired the resources to make direct military confrontation possible under certain circumstances. Holonet Free Republic will continue to cover upcoming strikes against the tyranny of the Empire as they occur.

Holonet Free Republic would like to take this opportunity to remember the men and women of Onderon who gave their lives for the cause of independence and freedom. Thanks to their sacrifice, the Empire has suffered a serious blow to its military infrastructure in a major industrial sector. The Republic will rise again!

## Cynabar's InfoNet

37:4:11/CYN/COR.1.IPC/GEN

### Imperial Crackdowns Make Kessel Run Even Riskier

CORUSCANT NODE: Word has come back from our sources on Kessel that the Empire has begun another crackdown on squatter mines and smugglers who make their living producing and transporting illegal shipments of glitterstim out of the Kessel system. Over 50 squatter mines were raided and shut down last week by the Kessel Mining Authority. At the same time, smugglers who had established regular Kessel runs over the past year were intercepted as they made their pickups, and arrested. Overall, some 30 smugglers (none of them CYN regulars, thankfully) were arrested and either executed or sent down into the spice mines.

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With the illegal glitterstim pipeline all but shut down for the time being, glitterstim prices are already going through the roof. Enterprising smugglers who think they have what it takes to run the Imperial blockade can make a killing if they move now, and several are already reportedly establishing contacts on Kessel to do just that.

Cynabar advises against entering Kessel space at all at this time, however. The crackdown has all the hallmarks of an inside job, and we believe that there is an Imperial informer somewhere within the glitterstim pipeline. Until this person is found and removed, we will consider the pipeline compromised.

Avoid Kessel for now.



## Imperial Defense Daily

37:4:19/IDD/NA4W/KUT.2.ITP/MIL

### Rawmat Shortages Lead to Red Ships — Commanders Outraged

IMPERIAL TRANSFER POST, KUAT SHIPYARDS: When a 100 aging *Victory*-class Star Destroyers entered the spacedocks of Kuat Drive Yards two years ago for extensive system upgrades and refitting, they were, as reported in our 35:4:13 report, scheduled to roll out of the docks by late last year. Unfortunately, the rawmat shortage hit the Imperial Navy, and the hull plates designated for these ships were reallocated to more modern Imperial Star Destroyers being serviced nearby.

For nearly five months, the *Victory* Star Destroyers

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have languished in their docks, new engines, weapon systems, boosted shielding, and TIE hangars ready for action, lacking one important component — primary hull plates. In an extraordinary display of resourcefulness, Admiral Kendel of the Kuat Yards has produced an alternate source of hull plating — havod metal alloy. The reddish alloy, which fits all military specs but is deemed too difficult to process for standard operations, was processed by special order of the Admiral, and is now being welded to the frames of all 100 Star Destroyers. "We expect the ships to be ready for space trials by the end of the year," a spokeswoman for Admiral Kendel said in an interview with Imperial Defense Daily.

Word of the renewed construction is fast spreading through the ranks, and the officers and men who will be serving aboard these ships are not pleased. Admiral Kendel's office has reportedly been inundated by transfer requests from men who weeks ago were eager to serve aboard a refurbished Star Destroyer. "I used to be real charged up to be serving on one of the Essdee Vics," said a gunnery chief assigned to one of the refurbished ships. "But I sure as tundin' didn't sign up to kick Rebel butt in a pink ship!"

Harold Crimmier of the Historical Battleship Preservation Association is appalled at the change. "Doonium has been the metal alloy of choice for nearly 10 centuries in capital starship construction. The distinctive white-gray cast of the battlecraft constructed with doonium has become synonymous with serious naval power. It would be a shame to see the classical appearance of the *Victory*-class destroyer marred by red hull plating."

Fortunately for traditionalists, thousands of red Star Destroyers are not in the future for the Imperial Navy.

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"We have no plans to employ havod alloy in future projects," said Admiral Kendel's spokeswoman. "This was simply an interim measure to clear the docks for new projects. By next quarter, we expect to have regular doonium shipments coming in from new Outer Rim sources." This is, of course, of little consolation to those who must serve on these particular ships.

## Nal Hutta Kal'tamok

Basic Edition

37:4:28/HUT/NAR.4.SHD/TRD/  
 S.Moshuddaa

### Spaaga Makes Stealthy Move Into Corusca Stone Market

NARSHADDAA NODE: Spaaga Core, Inc. quietly moved this week to secure mining rights to an unspecified gas giant in the Minos Cluster. Publicly, the acquisition of the mysterious system was announced without fanfare as a move by Spaaga into the Tibanna gas industry. However, an inside source has told *Kal'tamok* that Spaaga has discovered another extremely rare gas giant which produces corusca stones in its turbulent atmospheric storms.

The discovery of a new world generating corusca stones is a major find, since only one in four million gas giants do so. Companies discovering such worlds seldom reveal their locations, since pirate mining concerns quickly move in to poach their valuable commodities.

That Spaaga — known primarily for the production of

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industrial gems used in laser technology — is entering the corusca market is major news, since it will be the first company to mine corusca stones outside the consortium headed by the Damarind Corporation. How this will affect the current pricing and distribution of the gems has yet to be seen.

## IHV IMPERIAL HOLOVISION

37:5:3/IHV/EN17/MOA.5.RIV/MIL

### Government Forces Eradicate Rebel Training Base

ISD *MOTIVATOR*, MALDRA SYSTEM: Imperial forces lead by Captain Briera of the Star Destroyer *Motivator* moved into orbit around Maldra IV yesterday to investigate reports of a pirate base. What they found was a Rebel training base and munitions plant, complete with a sizable attack force of starfighters. The Rebels, who gave the appearing ships no time to identify themselves, indiscriminately attacked all of them at once.

Captain Briera attempted several times to contact a commanding officer at the Rebel base to give him a chance to peacefully surrender, but received no replies. After bearing the brunt of the Rebel attack for a quarter of an hour, he ordered the ground base bombed and the starfighters shot from the sky. The ground base, protected by regional shielding, held out for five hours before Imperial Army special operative forces could disable the shield generators. The Rebels, rather than be

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taken alive, retreated to the munitions plant and detonated all of its ordnance at once, destroying themselves and taking out several squads of brave Imperial stormtroopers.

Hyperspace lanes to the little-known and unexplored planet of Maldra IV do not appear on commercial navigational charts, which is probably what made it attractive to the Rebel enclave which set up camp there. Imperial intelligence observers assigned to the *Motivator* estimate that the military force concentrated on Maldra IV had enough firepower to threaten legal and sanctioned shipping in the entire Shadola region of the Outer Rim.

## ALDERAAN Expatriate Network

37:5:7/AEN

### Alliance Refugee Camp Razed by Stormtroopers

UNSPECIFIED NODE: Until this week, the greatest defensive weapon the Alliance safeworld of Maldra IV had was secrecy. This protection was snatched from the thousands of noncombatant personnel living in the colony — the husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and children of Alliance freedom fighters — earlier this week when Imperial forces appeared in the skies of Maldra IV and rained death down on the defenseless.

The attack came late in the evening for the colonists. Imperial forces, led by Captain "Butcher of Baummu" Briera, rained death and destruction down on thousands

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of families and children refugees who had fled the tyranny of the Empire and found shelter on Maldra IV. The colony was protected only by a token force of starfighters and two ion cannons, as well as a modest planetary shield capable of only resisting direct orbital attacks. Against the might of the Empire, the colonists stood no chance of escaping the conflagration, and alas, did not.

The only testament they have passed on to the rest of us is a holorecord of the foul deeds perpetrated by the Imperials on Maldra IV, which came to us via a messenger droid. An edited version of this holo transmission is being made available to Alliance cell leaders for local viewing, to counter the propaganda claims regarding Maldra IV made by the Imperial lapdog media. If the sacrifice made by the men, women, and little children of Maldra IV is to mean anything, we must all do what we can to reveal the Imperials as the lying gunctas that they are.



37:5:15/TRI/SUL.3.SHU/GEN/A. Javin

### Prehistoric Sullustan Cave Art Prophesied Rise of Emperor!

SHUBNUUB, SULLUST: Here in the underworld of Sullust, your intrepid investigator Andor Javin has run down another amazing find which may well change the way you look at the universe! Deep in the long-abandoned caverns of prehistoric Sullust, far above the bustling

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caves employed by modern-day Sullustans, lies a mystery of amazing proportions.

Archaeologists recently discovered a crude chalk painting on the gritty walls of a prehistoric dwelling which predicts the rise of the Empire, and the coming of the Emperor! I was the first human to view these amazing drawings, and can now confirm that a true prophet once lived in this crude cave.

Yes, there in the crude chalk images painted on the wall by a tribal shaman over 8,000 years ago, we can make out blurry images of soldiers in white armor going among the people and driving out Triakk, the ancient Sullustan god of chaos. Figures in red bow in supplication before a tall figure in dark robes, who is holding forth a jeweled orb in one gnarled hand. The orb is shedding light on the masses, providing illumination and showing the path to enlightenment. From the edges of the pool of light twisted figures, the twisted servants of Triakk, peer anxiously at the figure in black. The imagery is unmistakable!

The archaeologists, all Sullustans, state that they have not seen any of these elements in previous cave art, except for Triakk. This reinforces the notion that the artist was inspired by a vision of some sort rather than the traditional stories passed from one generation to the next.

Another amazing find, brought to light by Andor Javin in another TRI exclusive! Those interested in viewing the cave drawings and drawing their own conclusions may purchase Image Series AA-103-AJ-45 in care of TRI. Be the first in your population center to see the greatest archaeological find this century!

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## Independent Traders' Infonet

37:5:24/ITI/S7YM/LCP.7.RMC/ECO

### New Mines Opening Means Big Business for Spacers

RAPORA MINING CENTER, LITTLE CAPELLA: The Mid-Rim and Core have been experiencing a crippling rawmat shortage for nearly a year now, as Outer Rim shipments dry up or are given military priority. Since prices for manufactured goods have gone through the roof in the Core and Mid-Rim as a result, there has been a huge scramble by investors and mining concerns alike to open new mines to meet the new demand. *Rally's Daily Investor* estimates that over the next quarter, 9,000 new system-wide mine facilities will enter full production.

The first of these mines are now coming on line, and new crews of miners and support staffs are shipping out to remote locations all over the Outer Rim. These isolated communities will soon be desperate for entertainment to get their minds off the monotony of their backbreaking jobs.

Spacers who are there to sell them their dreams will come away with a hefty profit. Most of these mining concerns have not yet even begun to think of established company stores, which means that the independent spacer will not be restricted from selling goods directly to the miners. There is always the chance, too, that previously established shippers will be in a better position to win a coveted exclusive import contract when the

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company store inevitably does open.

Spacers interested in market research break-downs of goods and services which sell well in mining communities can purchase ITI's fact sheet 12-LX-33224 through normal net channels. Some items known to be in high demand are entertainment holos of all sorts, small-scale battle droids (one meter or smaller, unarmed), pets on the ImpDoc Export Unrestricted list, and of course, intoxicating substances of all sorts. The latter items require special permits, except for the item most in demand, and yielding the greatest profits — spice, which is of course, very illegal.

## SEKTOR NEWSLINE 242

37:6:8/242/KD88/SND.6.QUO/GEN

### Infamous Pirate Gang Fades from Sight in Outer Rim

QUEO CITY, STEND VI: Sector law enforcement agencies have noted a sudden decrease in attacks by the small but deadly Khuiumin Survivors band which haunts the lesser-traveled hyperlanes in the Outer Rim Territories. Several theories have been put forth to explain their abrupt disappearance.

According to Kail Reimo of the Bazzel Crimewatch Association, they've simply retired for a few months. "They're probably holed up on some mudball of a planet, upgrading their ships and waiting for the local systems to relax their guard," he said. Reimo notes that the band has

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had some impressive successes lately, and if they are flush with credits, might be inclined to keep a low profile for a while. The other theory offered by Reimo is that the Khuumin Survivors have simply split their booty and disbanded.

Grady Mannd, Defense Minister of Stend VI, is not convinced. "They've gone somewhere else," he said. "Why? Beats me. But if they had packed it in and split up, some of them would have washed up here. The split-offs always do." Despite the best efforts of Mannd's forces, Stend VI remains a favorite neutral meeting place for some pirate groups.

The once-mighty Eyttyrmin Batiiv pirate armada was reduced from 8,000 to less than 275 members in one crushing Imperial attack just a year ago. The remaining pirates banded together as the Khuumin Survivors, and have slowly been rebuilding their forces, which has greatly worried local law enforcement agencies.

## Colonial News Nets

37:6:20/COL/ALB.4.DRX/GEN

### JAN Strike Leaves 4,000 Trapped Underwater

DRAEO-KAX, ALBRAE-DON: Rescue workers have been working around the clock to reach some 4,000 passengers and workers who were trapped in a monorail traveling through the Pica Rim Pipeline after a series of bombs ruptured a 4,000 kilometer section of the undersea transit

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tube. The Justice Action Network has claimed responsibility for the bombing, and claims that the strike is in retaliation for the recent Imperial execution of JAN founder and leader Earnst Kamiel.

The undersea tunnel has ruptured and flooded, surrounding the monorail train with tons of water. Transit officials in contact with workers on the trapped train say that water seepage into the passenger cars is light at the moment, and that there is enough air on board for the people to survive for several days. They estimate the rescue effort will take place well before the situation grows more desperate. The manufacturer of the monorail train and system says that standard emergency measures and procedures worked as designed, but that they are designed to respond to catastrophic system failures, not terrorists bombings on this scale.

Meanwhile, investigators are hard at work attempting to locate and apprehend those responsible. So far, law enforcement representatives have made no comments regarding the progress of the investigation.

## Corellian Sector NEWSFEED

37:6:26/CSN/C1PR/CLA.7.CRT/POL

### CMG Expelled from CSA Space

CORONET, CORELLIA: The Corellian Merchants Guild, the Corellian spacer's home away from home, welcomed on a hundred hundred worlds, has been banned from the Corporate Sector. The terse announcement came today

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in a press release from Viceprex Tanna Odann of Territory Administration.

According to the press release, CMG offices throughout the CSA have two months to shut down and pull out of CSA space. All CSA work visas granted to registered CMG employees will expire at that time as well. CMG members are free to continue trading within the CSA, but will derive no significant benefits from their memberships.

The release gave no reason for the ban. The announcement took the shipping community totally by surprise, and CSN has not yet isolated the reason behind the move.

## CORE NEWS DIGEST

37:6:30/CND/CNBA/COR.3.CUR/GEN

### Slungerhounds Banned on Corulag

CURAMALLE, CORULAG: Due to an unusually high number of attacks against humans, slungerhounds have been banned on Corulag and the entire Corula system. The half-meter-tall beasts have become popular pets for those desiring a little extra security, but it seems that the furry mammals cannot always distinguish between friend and foe; studies show that 20 percent of victims of fatal slungerhound attacks are the owners themselves.

Micja Corneli of Friends of Slungerhounds, a support organization for owners, is incensed at the edict, which he claims was enacted with no prior notice by the Moff's office. "Slungerhounds are sweet, affectionate creatures," Corneli

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said. "For many of us, our pets are our only family. How would you feel if the government banned your family members?" When asked about the high record of brutal attacks, Corneli said that properly trained slungerhounds are perfectly safe. "The answer is to have a licensing procedure to ensure that every owner is properly caring for their animal, and not penalize those who keep safe pets because a few individuals can't handle the responsibility of looking after their animals."

The Moff's office had no comment.

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# Alliance Intelligence Report:

## TIE Fighters

By Timothy O'Brien

Diagrams by Stephen Crane

TIE fighters are one of the most common tools of the Empire. This report is intended to introduce the reader to the TIE, its variants and employment. For a more in-depth examination of starfighters, agents are referred to Commander Wedge Antilles' lectures 134-140 in holovid series "Alliance Strategy and Tactics," available from the Ministry of Education.

TIE fighters are the subject of derision by Alliance personnel. Popular opinion aside, TIE fighters are indeed an effective weapon in the Imperial arsenal; fast, deadly, and numerous. TIE pilots are generally the equal of our own, and pilot a craft only somewhat less effective than Alliance starfighters. If TIE forces were allowed to operate on their own terms, the Alliance starfighter forces would surely vanish from space.

We do not allow the Empire to operate on its own terms, and so we keep an edge. Read this report and hone that edge. Clear skies!

Filed by Lieutenant Commander Bakki Sourthol, Red Squadron Commander, Fakir Sector, on special detachment.



## TIE Fighter History

The modern TIE is the third generation of a starfighter commissioned in the waning days of the Old Republic. After the chaos of the Clone Wars, the Old Republic Navy needed to standardize and economize its starfighter branch. Several famous and important starfighter designs and concepts sprang from this need, and the final primary design contract was awarded to Republic Sienar Systems for their Twin Ion Engine starfighter (T.I.E.), a small, fast, and inexpensive short-range fighter that could be easily based in the limited hangar space then available in the ships of the Republic Navy.

The T.I.E. served its purpose well in the Navy, and when the Empire rose it was retained by the New Order. When the Imperial military began to expand, a call arose from some military personnel to replace the T.I.E. with a more impressive, longer range, hyperspace-capable starfighter. Several corporations, thinking that this call would be answered, invested a fortune in developing new space superiority starfighters, including Incom. Many of the basic designs used by the Rebel Alliance were developed in this period.

However, the full extent of the Emperor's military expansion plans were not appreciated by those corporations. The Imperial Star Destroyer promised to cost vast amounts, and the remaining Navy budget could not be spent entirely on such expensive projects as hyperspace-capable starfighters. Instead, the Republic T.I.E. was upgraded to the Imperial TIE, under direct Imperial control, by the

### TIE Fighter Models

After the initial T.I.E. fighter and the Imperial TIE, several models of mission-specific TIE fighters were developed:

**TIE/ln** — currently the standard fleet-based TIE fighter.

**TIE/rc** — a special reconnaissance fighter with sensitive sensors and long-range communications equipment.

**TIE/fc** — a fighter used to coordinate fire control and target designation for long-range naval bombardment of ground or space targets.

**TIE/gt** — an early version of the TIE bomber still in varied use throughout Imperial forces.

**TIE/sh** — a TIE shuttle, a kind of ship's boat used to ferry small numbers of personnel between naval ships and ground stations.

renamed Sienar Fleet Systems. This upgraded model cost the military budget hundreds of trillions of credits, but at about one third the estimated budget of a long-range fighter. Furthermore, the Empire can rely on their TIE pilots to return to base with the short-range fighter, something they may not be willing to trust if the pilots had a hyperspace-capable fighter.

The TIE has been further modified into dedicated mission models since the Imperial TIE made its debut. New designs and series are constantly being proposed, and the TIE is likely to remain the Imperial standard so long as the Empire remains.

## TIE Maintenance

*"Keep your weapons well and they will keep you well."*

— Ancient military proverb

Starfighters are under great stress in ordinary flight conditions, and extreme stress during combat. Anyone familiar with the demanding maintenance schedule performed on Alliance starfighters might expect TIE maintenance to be equally demanding. Unfortunately for the Alliance, this is not the case. Less than five percent of TIE losses are for mundane field attrition, and the majority of these are considered to be pilot error. Indeed, TIE fighters are far more likely to be shot down than break down, an enviable maintenance record, if not combat record.

The main reason for this is the sturdy ion engines the TIE uses — there is little opportunity for breakdown to occur. This pays dividends. TIEs log more flight hours per fighter and more training hours per pilot than any other fighter. Fewer spares per hour of flight are required for TIE fighters than any other Imperial Naval vessel, and fewer hours of maintenance, leading to vast savings over the budget of the entire fleet.

While spares are used less often, they are considerably more difficult to acquire, being primarily available from Sienar Fleet Systems and certain licensed corporations. The market for TIE spares is small and limited, and it can take weeks for an out-of-stock part to be shipped to where it is needed. In such a case, the TIE will often be rotated out of duty and replaced by a fresh fighter.

The solid nature of the TIE engines leads to some unique maintenance headaches, of course. When a TIE engine does finally break down or is shot out, it can take days or weeks to repair, leaving the TIE out of service anywhere from three to 10 times longer than other starfighters. To avoid this, the TIE maintenance technicians obses-



## TIE Starfighter

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE

**Type:** Space superiority starfighter

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 6.3 meters

**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** Starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D

**Cargo Capacity:** 65 kilograms

**Consumables:** 2 days

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Maneuverability:** 2D

**Space:** 8

**Atmosphere:** 365; 1,050 kmh

**Hull:** 2D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 20/0D

*Scan:* 40/1D

*Search:* 60/2D

*Focus:* 3/3D

**Weapons:**

**1 Double Laser Cannon**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

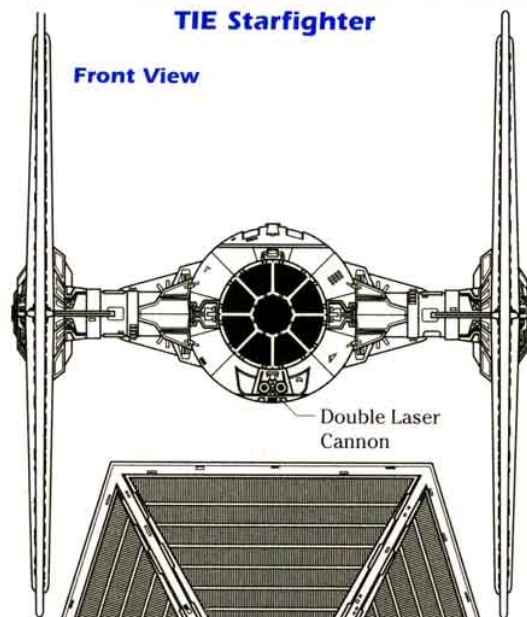
*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 3D

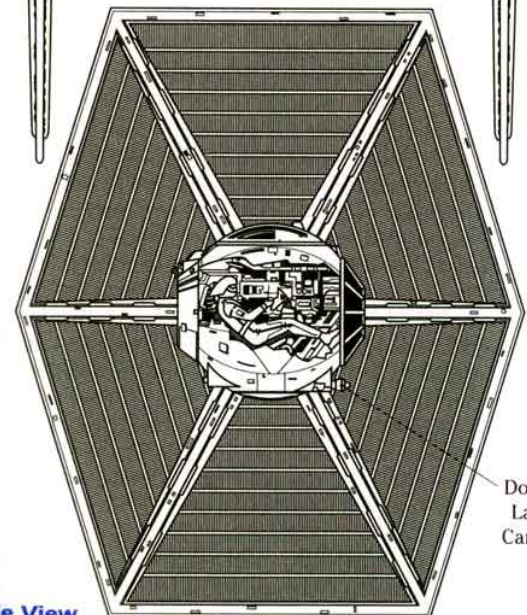
**Capsule:** The second TIE fighter model, an upgrade from the original T.I.E., is the base from which the TIE variants were built. It is still found in the flight decks of some remote Imperial garrisons, outlying Imperial Navy fleets, corporate security forces, arsenals of local system governments, and warlords.

## TIE Starfighter

### Front View



Double Laser Cannon



Double Laser Cannon

### Side View

(Starboard solar array removed for clarity)



sively test systems from the moment the thrusters cool until the fighter launches from the docking racks. Overall, this preventive testing and maintenance schedule keeps the fighter downtime relatively low.

Intelligence reports in regards to TIE maintenance are contradictory, however, and should not be relied on extensively.

## TIE Strategy and Tactics

*"Understand the enemy's way and conquer."*

— Ancient military proverb

TIE fighters serve Imperial strategy as short-range fighters. All strategic TIE functions are defined by the TIE's limited range and numerical strength.

**Attack Missions:** The TIE's primary mission — space control — is best reflected in attack. In an attack a TIE is supported by the full might of the attacking Imperial forces and conducts well-planned specific missions. In both space battles and planetary assaults the TIE is used to engage enemy fighters, conduct pinpoint attacks, and sweep up remaining resistance.

The TIE is tremendously effective against ground targets. A TIE/ln is typically used against infantry, armor, and artillery positions. TIE/gt models and TIE bombers are primarily used to destroy hard targets, such as armored bunkers and large buildings.

**Defense:** TIEs are also used to defend fleets and orbital space. In the case of space-based TIEs, they serve as anti-starfighter screens, intended to engage and destroy an attacking force. They perform this function quite well, usually through superior numbers. The usual response to overwhelming numbers of TIEs is to flee.

At least one TIE flight per squadron is always on alert (Ready One), and in the case of Star Destroyers, this can mean four flights launched in as little as 10 minutes. By the time the Ready One, Two, Three, and Four flights are launched the remainder of the wing can be brought up to full alert and launched in turn. Ordinarily, Ready One flight is actually in space and able to immediately respond to an alert. Ready Two pilots usually await action in their cockpits, and the Three and Four flights usually wait in the pilot's lounge.

Ground-based TIEs follow a similar procedure, and have the additional challenge of guarding orbital space from illegal entry by smugglers, pirates, and Rebels, and preventing "gravity dives," as fast hyperspace-to-gravity well landings are referred to. This is very difficult, as the diving ship can usually land before a TIE flight

scrambles an interception flight. "Sky-diving" from a surface to hyperspace jump point is somewhat more likely to be intercepted, as the TIEs usually have several minutes more warning, but even at their very high speed a TIE is lucky to arrive before the illegal ship escapes.

**Reconnaissance:** TIE reconnaissance missions are of two types: short-range and long-range. Short-range recon missions are constant in defense of the fleet. TIE flights, especially TIE/rc models, often go on system patrols and relay data to the fleet to maintain space control.

Long-range recon missions are usually in concert with recon lines, in support of attack missions, or to flush out Rebels or other quarry. Typically, a TIE/rc squadron is ferried into a system by a capital ship, which then jumps away to safety — the TIEs race through the system gathering information, and rendezvous with the carrier at a second point.

## Combat Strategy

Most people don't consider the idea that TIEs use an overall strategy. The widely held impression is that TIEs swarm a target, shoot a lot, and quickly dodge away. That is true. This does not indicate a lack of strategy — rather the reverse. TIE combat strategies are often to outnumber, shoot first, hit, and escape their quarry, outclassing them in every aspect of performance.

**Outnumber:** TIE fighters can usually outnumber a given enemy. Even when attacking a concentration of enemy starfighters, the TIEs often achieve parity, if not an outright advantage. Under ordinary circumstances TIE wing command can expect at least a 2:1 numerical advantage in attack or defense.

**Shoot First:** TIE fire control is, overall, quite average, but if coordinating with TIE/fc models and sensor data from base ships, TIE/ln elements can fire at the enemy at maximum range with decent odds of hitting. This means a TIE force can fire effectively at the earliest opportunity rather than wait for the enemy to close to the enemy's optimum engagement range. TIEs are often supported by reconnaissance missions, usually conducted by TIE/rc and capital ship sensors, allowing the TIEs to keep the overall initiative.

**Hit:** It may seem obvious, but hitting enemy targets is crucial to a successful engagement, and should not be allowed to escape notice. TIE fighters increase their odds of hitting via a higher overall firing rate due to superior numbers.

**Escape:** The TIE fighter remains among the fastest starfighters in



## TIE/In Fighter

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE/In

**Type:** Space superiority starfighter

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 6.3 meters

**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** Starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D

**Cargo Capacity:** 65 kilograms

**Consumables:** 2 days

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Maneuverability:** 2D

**Space:** 10

**Atmosphere:** 415; 1,200 kmh

**Hull:** 2D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 20/0D

*Scan:* 40/1D

*Search:* 60/2D

*Focus:* 3/3D

**Weapons:**

**2 Laser Cannons (fire-linked)**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

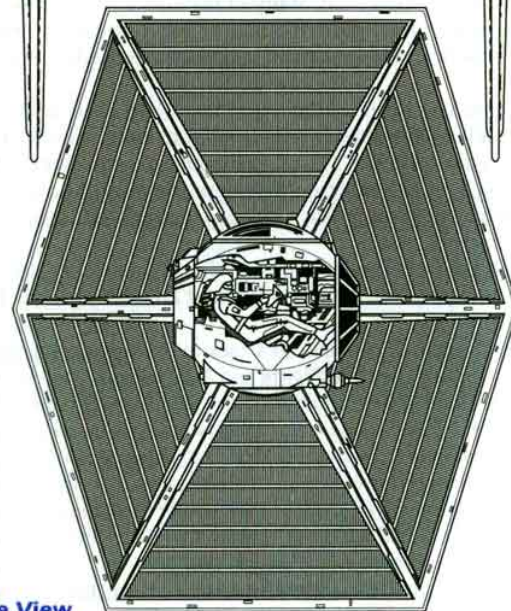
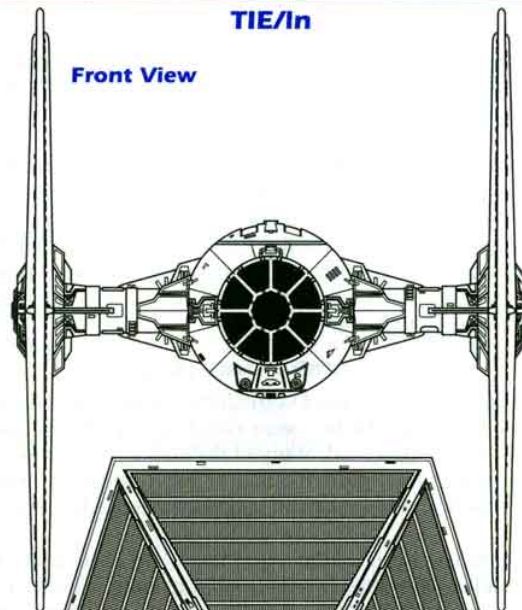
*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 5D

**Capsule:** The workbeast of Imperial fighters, the TIE/In is now the standard Navy fighter in service. Faster than the basic TIE and mounting a more powerful weapon system, the TIE/In is a powerful tool and symbol of Imperial power.

## TIE/In

Front View



Side View

(Starboard solar array removed for clarity)



the galaxy. Although the new A-wing is about 20 percent faster than TIE/ln, TIEs are the standard Imperial fighter, while A-wings are a rare, elite, and cutting-edge asset. This high speed is used both in attack runs and in blindingly fast escapes. Escape from combat is crucial to any battle. If allowed to keep the initiative, TIE fighters routinely escape to regroup and re-engage.

**Outclass:** Alliance pilots generally have a low opinion of TIE fighters, primarily because the Alliance starfighters seem to be superior in design. This attitude ignores the development of the TIE fighter in competition with the fighters of the late Old Republic era. The TIE remains superior to most non-Alliance fighters, especially the Z-95 Headhunter, one of the most common system defense fighters of the pre-Imperial period.

### Combat Tactics

Adar Tallon's five stages of starfighter combat, from his classic *Treatise on Starfighter Tactics*, were carefully considered when the original T.I.E. was designed. Many of the strategic elements of TIE employment are an outgrowth of this. (For an extended discussion of Tallon's tactics, review pages 73–82 of *The Rebel Alliance Sourcebook*.)

**Detection:** The brunt of detection was lifted from the front line TIE/ln models by dispersing sensor responsibility among supporting fleet sensors and the TIE/rc. Command decisions are made by flight controllers in a position to assess the overall flow of battle. While this is against the grain of Alliance strategic philosophy, it can be very effective.

**Closing:** Speed is fundamental to TIE tactics. Concealment and deception in approach, however, are not an issue in Imperial military theory.

**Attack:** Overall, TIEs prefer to attack in overwhelming numbers, with fleet support. (See "Dogfights and Attack Runs," below, and the relevant sections of *The Rebel Alliance Sourcebook*, pages 77–78.)

**Maneuver:** Where Alliance starfighters often maneuver singly, TIE elements maneuver in element (a unit consisting of two TIE fighters, flown by a leader and his wingman). TIE elements are a tighter unit than in other starfighter wings, and generally prefer to maneuver as a flight. (See "Dogfights and Attack Runs," below, and the relevant sections of *The Rebel Alliance Sourcebook*, pages 78–81.)

**Disengagement:** TIE disengagement relies on their speed for a rapid retreat, often to regroup well outside the combat zone. Chasing a running TIE can be quite effective, as the starfighter may

### Glossary of Terms and Slang

Rebel terms pertaining to TIEs vary according to area of operation. Some of the more common terms are listed below.

**Breakfast:** A TIE element, two TIE fighters.

**Clutch:** A TIE flight.

**Eggs, Eggshells:** TIEs, from their fragility and cockpit shape.

**Egg Basket:** A TIE wing.

**Egglayers:** Originally TIE/gts, now TIE bombers.

**Emperor's Dozen:** A TIE squadron.

**Eyeballs:** TIE starfighters of any kind, especially the TIE/ln, from the main pod shape.

**Dupes:** TIE bombers, from the double pod configuration.

**Motherbird:** A ship carrying TIEs.

**Nest:** A TIE ground base, generally a garrison.

**Peepers:** TIE/rc starfighters.

**Sharps:** TIE/fc starfighters.

**Squints:** TIE interceptors, from the streamlined bent-wing configuration.

Slang used by Imperial TIE pilots is relatively standardized. Pilots learn it quickly in the Academy, and these terms are reinforced on the line.

**Aurebesh Soup:** Rebel starfighters.

**Crosses:** X-wings.

**Edges:** A-wings.

**Groundhogs:** Ground-based TIE pilots (derogatory).

**Piles:** Y-wings.

**Spinners:** B-wings.

**Targets:** Any ground target. TIE pilots make little distinction between vehicles, tanks, infantry units, or buildings.

**Vacheads:** Space-based TIE pilots (derogatory).



disrupt a regrouping flight, but is quite risky as the Alliance fighter may run into a large force.

**Dogfights:** The TIE is a maneuverable fighter, although the TIE/ln is no longer among the most maneuverable fighters, having been out-engineered by more recently designed starfighters. It is able to meet the demands of pilots, but this is due as much to their skill as to the inherent quality of the TIE design. The main advantages TIEs currently enjoy in combat are the generally high skill of the pilot, the TIE's speed, and the number of supporting TIEs. TIEs routinely engage in dogfights as part of their defense mission, but often come out the worse. TIEs often soften up enemy fighters with several high-speed attack runs before engaging in dogfights.

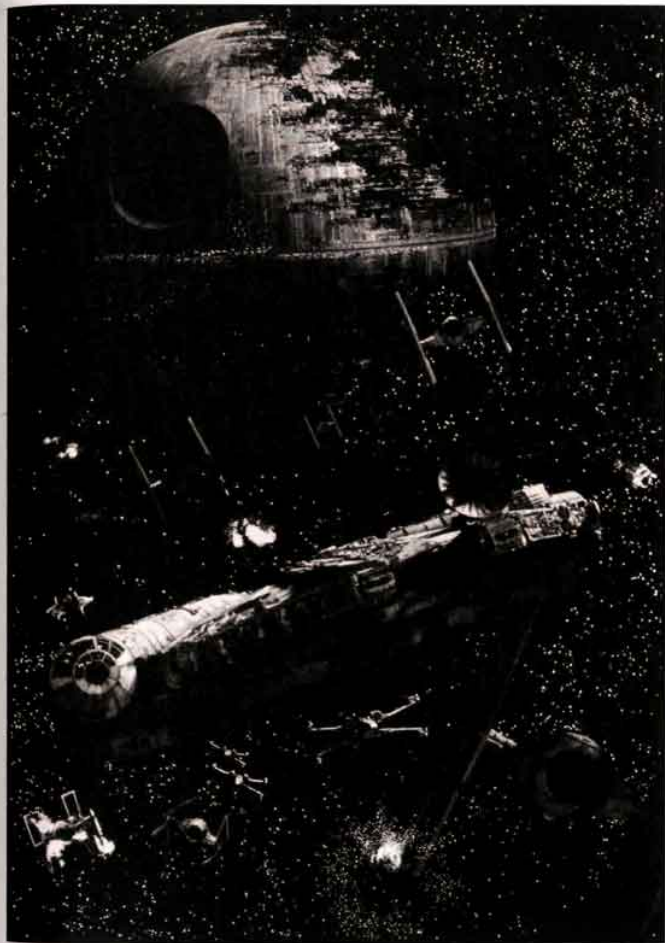
**Attack Runs:** The TIE excels at high-speed attack runs. If supported by TIE/fc target designators, a TIE/ln can approach at top speed, slow to high speed to fire with a good chance of hitting, then escape the zone of engagement at top speed, to regroup and re-engage on their own terms. Once several attacks have reduced the enemy numbers — further enhancing TIE numerical superiority — TIEs sweep up the remaining resistance with overwhelming dogfights.

## TIE Organization and Deployment

The TIE fighter is, by most estimates, the most common starfighter ever produced. Imperial and Sienar Fleet Systems data on the subject is top secret, but simple calculation shows that a minimum of approximately 4.6 million slots exist for TIE fighters, spread among Star Destroyers, other Imperial Naval vessels, and Imperial garrisons and defense stations.

The *wing* is the basic starfighter configuration of navies based on the Old Republic model. A starfighter wing in the Old Republic was a nebulous concept, ranging from 3 to 6 squadrons of short- or long-range starfighters. A wing was usually dispersed in a line, one squadron based on most cruisers, or two based on the *Victory*-class Star Destroyer. The wing could not be any more standardized than it was because the Navy lines of the period were so highly variable. Wing commanders were attached to line flagships, and as lines tended to vary with each mission, a wing commander might find himself with a wing of two squadrons in one month and six squadrons in another.

With the rise of the Empire, this changed. The new *Imperial*-class Star Destroyer was designed, in part, as a TIE carrier as well as a super-dreadnaught. This concentrated the TIE fighters in battle squadrons, in support of the *Imperial*-class Star Destroyers. Other squadron



commands quickly found this objectionable, as they also required starfighter support to perform their missions. Sienar manufacturing plants went to round-the-clock schedules to meet the new demand. These new wings were assigned to attack and heavy attack lines.

Currently, an Imperial attack line is partially defined as a line able to fly at least a short wing of starfighters, and a heavy attack line is



## TIE/rc Fighter

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE/rc

**Type:** Reconnaissance starfighter

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 6.3 meters

**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** Sensors 4D+2, starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D

**Cargo Capacity:** 65 kilograms

**Consumables:** 2 days

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Maneuverability:** 2D+2

**Space:** 10

**Atmosphere:** 415; 1,200 kmh

**Hull:** 2D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 30/1D

*Scan:* 60/2D

*Search:* 90/3D

*Focus:* 6/4D

**Weapons:**

**1 Laser Cannon**

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

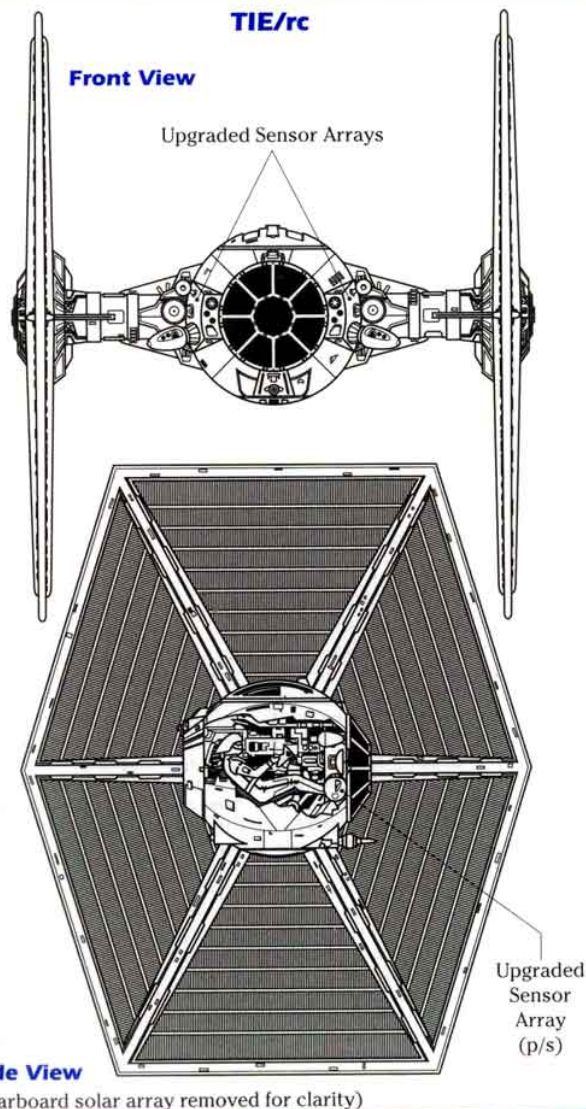
*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 2D+2

**Capsule:** The TIE/reconnaissance is a variant model used for starfighter wing and fleet scouting. Upgraded thrusters make the TIE/rc as fast as the TIE/ln, and upgraded sensors allow it to make fast passes at considerable range and escape, or to range ahead of a main starfighter force and relay vital pre-engagement data to the wing's assault force.



**Side View**

(Starboard solar array removed for clarity)



## TIE/fc Fighter

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE/fc

**Type:** Fire control starfighter

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 6.3 meters

**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** Sensors 4D+2, starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D

**Cargo Capacity:** 65 kilograms

**Consumables:** 2 days

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Maneuverability:** 3D

**Space:** 8

**Atmosphere:** 365; 1,050 kmh

**Hull:** 2D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 30/0D

*Scan:* 40/1D

*Search:* 80/3D+2

*Focus:* 6/4D

**Weapons:**

**1 Laser Cannon**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 2D+2

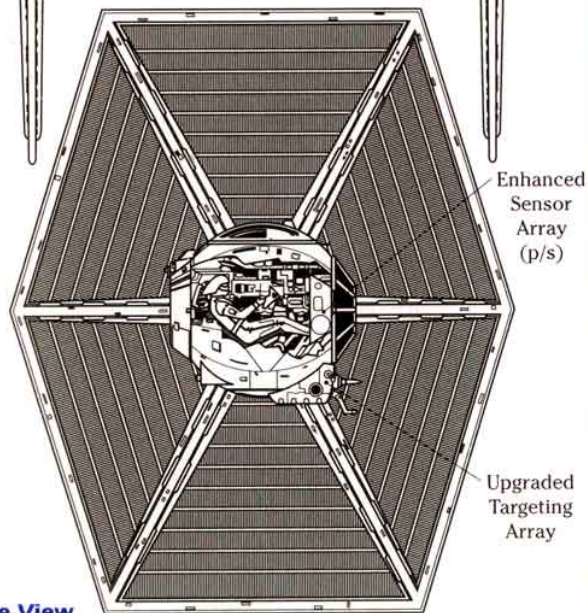
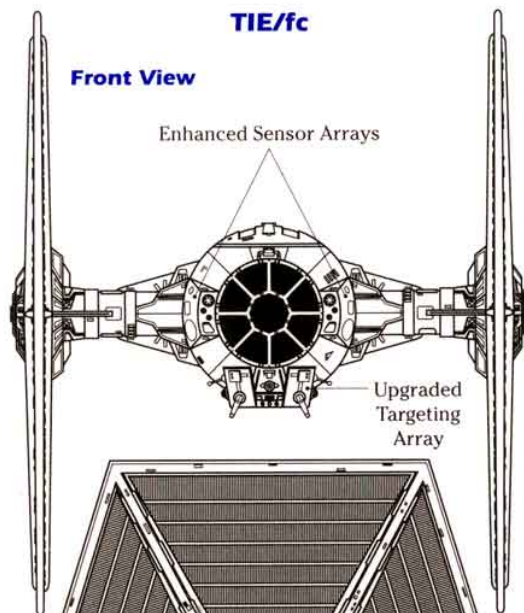
**Capsule:** The TIE/fc variant is primarily used to improve the fire effectiveness of long-range capital ship guns, although its secondary purpose is to improve fire accuracy of other TIE models. Other TIEs are used to lining up their own targets, while capital ship guns constantly rely on sensor information from a variety of sources. The fire controller in the TIE/fc uses a target-designating sensor to guide precision shots, known as "painting" or "illuminating" a target.

The TIE/fc improves the fire control of another capital ship gunner by +2D, or a starfighter gunner by +1D. The TIE/fc must make a search scan of the designated target — a Moderate *sensors* skill difficulty, as modified by circumstance and the TIE/fc's search value of 3D+2 — and be within sensor search range (80 units). Target acquisition can be dodged as if it were enemy fire. The improved fire control has no effect on the firing gun's range. Only one target can be painted and one gun guided at a time. New targets can be acquired and different guns guided in any round, as actions.

The TIE/fc is also one of the most maneuverable fighters in the series, which can be a nasty shock to Alliance pilots used to having the maneuvering edge. The TIE/fc is 20 percent slower than the TIE/ln, but the considerable range of its sensors helps make up the difference.

## TIE/fc

### Front View



### Side View

(Starboard solar array removed for clarity)



## TIE/gt Fighter

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE/gt  
**Type:** Ground-targeting starfighter/bomber  
**Scale:** Starfighter  
**Length:** 6.3 meters  
**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE  
**Crew:** 1  
**Crew Skill:** Starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D  
**Cargo Capacity:** 10 metric tons  
**Consumables:** 2 days  
**Cost:** Not available for sale  
**Maneuverability:** 1D  
**Space:** 4  
**Atmosphere:** 280; 800 kmh  
**Hull:** 2D  
**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 20/0D

*Scan:* 40/1D

*Search:* 60/2D

*Focus:* 3/3D

### Weapons:

#### 1 Laser Cannon

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 2D+2

#### Concussion Missile Launcher

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery: concussion missiles

*Fire Control:* 1D

*Space Range:* 1-2/8/15

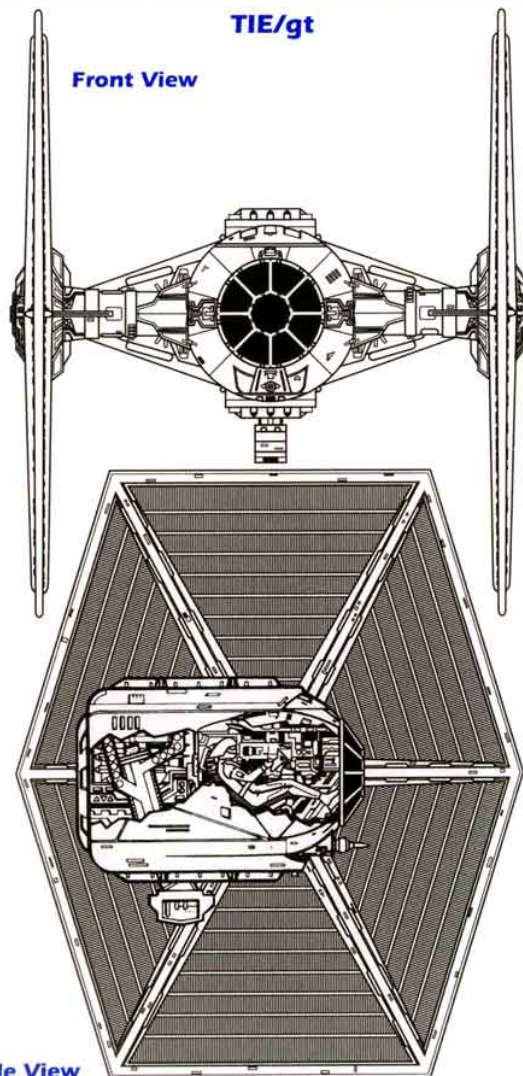
*Atmosphere Range:* 100-200/800/1.5 km

*Damage:* 8D

**Capsule:** The TIE/gt is being replaced in the Imperial arsenal by the TIE bomber, but it is still in widespread use, especially in low-priority deployments. Precise targeting is achieved through use of TIE/fc fighters, but most large structures can be destroyed without aid. The usual payload is 12 concussion missiles, but the missile launcher can also handle other specially packed payloads, including six proton torpedoes, 18 air-deployed mines, two cluster bombs, and, in unusual cases, 20,000 plastic leaflets.

## TIE/gt

### Front View



### Side View

(Starboard solar array removed for clarity)



## TIE/sh

**Craft:** Sienar Fleet Systems TIE shuttle

**Type:** Priority personnel shuttle

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 7.8 meters

**Skill:** Starfighter piloting: TIE

**Crew:** 1

**Crew Skill:** Starship piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D

**Passengers:** 2

**Cargo Capacity:** 1 metric ton

**Consumables:** 2 days

**Cost:** Not available for sale

**Maneuverability:** 2D

**Space:** 8

**Atmosphere:** 365; 1050 kmh

**Hull:** 2D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 20/0D

*Scan:* 40/1D

*Search:* 60/2D

*Focus:* 3/3D

**Weapons:**

**1 Laser Cannon**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-3/12/25

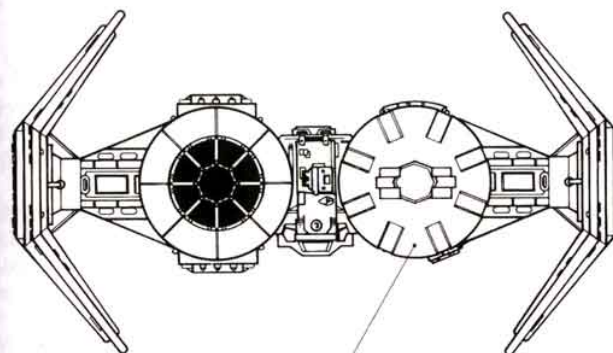
*Atmosphere Range:* 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

*Damage:* 2D+2

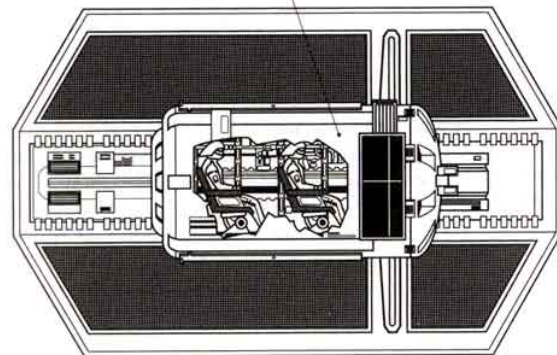
**Capsule:** This TIE variant is a specialized priority shuttle, used to quickly ferry command rank officers or other priority cargo ship-to-ship. Although not intended for combat, the TIE shuttle is able to protect its important passengers. There is typically one TIE shuttle on each ship in a line carrying TIE fighters. Lower ranking officers use other shuttles and higher ranking flag officers usually use the larger *Lambda*-class shuttle.

## TIE Shuttle

Front View



Passenger Pod  
(modified Ordnance Pod)



Side View

(Starboard solar array and command pod removed for clarity)

expected to fly at least one full wing of starfighters. (See pages 103–107 of *The Imperial Sourcebook* for relevant information on Imperial Navy organization.)

A short wing is considered to have two TIE/ln fighter squadrons for each other squadron consisting of specialized TIEs, like the TIE/rc or TIE/fc. Other squadron types are added and subtracted as resources allow.

Imperial TIE wings are more standardized than any other navy's wings. An Imperial Navy wing consists of 72 TIEs in six flights of varying models — three fighter squadrons, one recon, one interceptor, and one bomber squadron. An Imperial Army wing consists of 40 TIEs in 10 flights of varying models — two fighter squadrons, a bomber squadron, and a recon squadron.

When TIE squadrons are deployed for particular sorties, the squadron consists of different TIE models to better accomplish mission objectives. Naval TIE fighter deployment squadrons consist, on average, of two TIE/ln flights and one TIE/fc flight. Army fighter squadrons consist entirely of TIE/ln.

When deployed, TIE recon squadrons consist of two TIE/rc flights, with a TIE/fc flight in support. Army recon squadrons are in fact only a flight of TIE/fc.

TIE bomber squadrons formerly consisted of TIE/gt models, but currently mix TIE bombers with TIE/gt as availability demands. Naval bomber squadrons are transferring TIE/gt models to outlying posts and the Imperial Army as fast as the datawork can be filed, but Army resistance (and legitimate lack of demand) slows the process considerably. Current squadron mixes are of either type in both branches, although Star Destroyers have largely purged themselves of the TIE/gt models, and often include a TIE/fc flight.

TIE interceptor squadrons are almost exclusively assigned to Star Destroyers, and usually consist entirely of TIE interceptors. In wings without interceptors, the interception squadron either does not exist and the slot is filled with another fighter or specialized squadron, or the slot is filled entirely with TIE/ln.

Each squadron is made up of three flights, each flight having two elements of two fighters each. Four fighters per flight, 12 TIEs per squadron, 72 in a wing. Of these, 48 are TIE/ln (often mixed with 2–4 TIE/fc and eight TIE/rc), 12 are interceptors, 0–12 are TIE/gt or TIE bombers. Often, one of these is a training squadron. (See *The Star Wars Sourcebook*, page 29, for a breakdown of TIE fighter deployment on Star Destroyers.)

## TIE Rotation

TIE pilots don't get attached to their fighters. In the Alliance, pilots of all kinds personalize their cockpits with stickers, 2-D vids of mates or offspring, and other odd affectations. Not so in the Imperial Navy. TIE pilots are in constant rotation, serving shifts in turn in each of every kind of TIE, in order to maintain proficiency with each model. Training squadrons as well as experienced pilots take their turn with each squadron (except the TIE interceptor squadron, which is accessible only to experienced pilots), and there is little point in making a TIE homey. Even if a TIE pilot were to break regulations against "defacement," the maintenance crew would soon repair or replace the altered item.

There is one exception, technically against regulation, but cherished as a tradition. Each kill the TIE racks up is marked on a panel on the inside hatch by a one centimeter-long score. Every TIE pilot in Imperial service is believed to follow this old tradition, which has parallels in nearly every other starfighter service. On the rare occasion that the hatch is filled, it is replaced and retired with honors, and welded above the TIE hangar rack. The TIE in question is logged as retired, and its serial number gains a letter prefix indicating its status. These "lucky" TIEs are the object of some internal wing politicking. It is assumed, although impossible to confirm, that Darth Vader's personal TIE Advanced x1 Prototype has its own set of kill marks on its hatch.

## TIE Weaknesses

The major weakness of the TIE design is its fragility. Only about half as durable as Alliance starfighters, and less durable even than starfighters of previous generations, TIE fragility is a well-appreciated feature among enemy pilots. This fragility is compounded by the TIE's lack of shielding, considered too expensive to retrofit into the TIE design.

The TIE has a reputation for being a highly maneuverable fighter, but this is a relic from the early days of the Empire, when it was indeed a very agile starfighter. Since the adoption of the TIE by the Imperial Navy, it has been the standard to beat among starfighter designers. One of the TIE's most commonly trumped features is its maneuverability, so recent starfighter designs have tried to outclass the TIE's maneuvering capabilities. A more successful design strategy has been to try and match the TIE's speed — something designers have already accomplished with the A-wing fighter.



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## MIHALIK

Species: Svirvreni Sex: Male  
Homeworld: Svirvren  
Height: 0.85 meters Age: Unknown  
Crimes Against the New Republic: None  
Reward for Capture: 5,000

The Svirvreni miner Mihalik is not wanted for any crime or seditious activity against the New Republic. Rather, he is wanted for unsanctioned military and police activity: he has taken it upon himself to track down and capture those three individuals who made the recent meleenium heist at

Qua Tahc. (A report on those individuals wanted for the meleenium heist follows.)

Mihalik has worked as a mining and extraction manager for Toxis Metals for nearly a decade, and is extremely loyal to both the missing Colonel Caleb Hctaqsas and the Colonel's son, the Alliance operative Sasnaq Toxis (Hctaqsas). Immediately following the meleenium heist at Qua Tahc, Mihalik was overseeing an equipment transfer from one of the central Uhur'qah mines when he came upon the group of Republic operatives who had been wounded during the heist. After attending to the wounds of Kichir the Wookiee and the other agents and

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PREVIOUS

DATAPAGE: 268

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## MIHALIK/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

alerting the nearest medical facilities, Mihalik boarded his personal craft, the *Epoch*-class freighter *Resolve*, and pursued the thieves' craft. Neither Mihalik nor the thieves have been seen since.

Mihalik is considered an upstanding New Republic citizen and a valued member of the mining facilities throughout Af'El, but is not authorized to exercise any police activities such as he has. He served for quite some time as constable of the Milatvac mines on his native Svirvren, and is therefore quite knowledgeable in law enforcement procedure. This expertise may make him difficult for New Republic law enforcement agents to return.

Mihalik is a Svirvreni male of average build, with long copper-colored hair about his arms and head. As his long hair could prove to hinder him in his work, he has fashioned it into several thick braids behind his back. The braids are bound by thick Nalvar grass indigenous to his home continent. He has the hardened look of a being who has spent a lifetime in the mines, but is a kind and caring individual despite his rough profession. He wears the dark gray and black mining uniforms typical of Toxis Metals employees and miners on Af'El.

### ■ Mihalik

Type: Svirvreni Miner

#### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 4D, melee combat 5D, melee parry 4D+2

#### KNOWLEDGE 3D

Bureaucracy 4D, intimidation 4D, languages 4D+2, law enforcement 4D+2, law enforcement: Svirvreni mines 6D+2, law enforcement: Af'El 5D, planetary systems 4D+1, scholar: geology 7D, scholar: metallurgy 5D+2, streetwise 3D+2, survival 5D, survival: mines 6D, value: minerals 7D, willpower 4D

#### MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 3D+1, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, space transports: *Epoch*-class 4D, starship gunnery 3D+2, starship shields 3D+2

#### PERCEPTION 2D+2

Bargain: minerals 5D, command 3D+2, search 4D+2

#### STRENGTH 4D+1

Brawling 6D+1, lifting 6D+1, stamina 7D+1

#### TECHNICAL 2D+1

Demolition 4D+1, droid programming: B-1 worker droid 4D+1, droid repair: B-1 worker droid 4D+1, first aid 3D+2, security 3D+1, space transports repair 3D+1

#### Force Points: 1

#### Character Points: 6

#### Move: 7

Equipment: Blaster rifle (5D), comlink, Toxis Metals mining uniform

#### Special Abilities:

**Stamina:** Due to the harsh nature of the planet Svirvren, the Svirvreni receive a +2D bonus whenever they roll their *stamina* and *willpower* skills.

**Value Estimation:** Svirvreni receive a +1D bonus to *value* skill checks involving the value of ores, gems and other mined materials.

**Note:** For more information on the Svirvreni, see pages 108 and 109 of *The Last Command Sourcebook*.

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# Resolve

**Craft:** Shobquix Yards *Epoch*-class  
**Type:** Modified light freighter  
**Scale:** Starfighter  
**Length:** 23 meters  
**Skill:** Space transports: *Epoch*-class  
**Crew:** 1  
**Crew Skill:** see Mihalik  
**Passengers:** 7  
**Cargo Capacity:** 200 metric tons  
**Consumables:** 2 months  
**Cost:** Not available for sale  
**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x1  
**Hyperdrive Backup:** x7  
**Nav Computer:** Yes  
**Maneuverability:** 1D  
**Space:** 4  
**Atmosphere:** 280; 800 kmh  
**Hull:** 4D  
**Shields:** 2D

## Sensors:

**Passive:** 10/0D  
**Scan:** 25/1D  
**Search:** 40/2D  
**Focus:** 2/3D

## Weapons:

**1 Laser Cannon**  
**Fire Arc:** Turret  
**Crew:** 1  
**Skill:** Starship gunnery  
**Fire Control:** 2D  
**Space Range:** 1-3/12/25  
**Atmosphere Range:** 100-300/1.2/2.5 km  
**Damage:** 5D

## ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL...

For those who may attempt to locate Mihalik, I cannot stress enough the fact he is not a criminal: he has proven to be one of the New Republic's staunchest supporters. His anger at Quanic and company for both their theft and injury to his companions, particularly Kichiir, gives him reason enough to pursue the perpetrators — his strong sense of justice and duty further complement it. Officially, I must condemn his taking the law into his own hands. But personally, I would very much like to see those who have stolen the meleenium captured and the shipment returned by this extremely loyal and proud miner...

The *Resolve* is one of the few *Epoch*-class freighters still in operation. The *Epoch* line was produced by Shobquix Yards several years ago, shortly after the Gauntlet starfighter (for more information, see pages 62 and 63 of the *Star Wars Planets Collection*). A hardy design patterned somewhat after the highly-regarded Corellian YT-1210 and to a lesser extent the newer YT-1300, the *Epoch*-class is a sturdy craft well-suited to the considerable wear and tear commonplace in the mining and ore hauling industry. The *Resolve*'s lift/mass ratio is nearly unheard of in a craft so small, but it has been fitted with some of the most powerful Koonsayr and KapriCorp thrust packages available. A gift from Caleb Hetaqsas to Mihalik for an undisclosed "favor" some time ago, the *Resolve* appears well-worn, but has many light years yet to go.

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# OSTAN ATUR

**Species:** Near-Human (Lowen) **Sex:** Female  
**Homeworld:** Low'n  
**Height:** 1.6 meters **Age:** 29

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Sabotage, destruction of New Republic property, accessory to theft of New Republic property, accessory to assault of New Republic personnel, espionage against the New Republic, resisting arrest, accessory to smuggling of stolen goods, aiding and abetting known criminals

**Reward for Capture:** 25,000 (15,000 offered by the New Republic; 10,000 offered by the New Republic-aligned Af'El government)

Ostan Atur is a skilled Lowen saboteur who has proven to be a hindrance to several key Republic installations, most recently the Qua Tahe meleenium mines on Af'El under the jurisdiction of the New Republic.

Atur was born on Low'n, a populous world in the Mid-Rim. At an early age, surrounded by cutthroat mercenaries, smugglers and others of such ques-

## ■ Ostan Atur

**Type:** Lowen Saboteur  
**DEXTERITY 2D+2**  
Blaster 3D+2, dodge 4D+2  
**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**  
Alien species 4D+2, languages 4D, value 5D+2  
**MECHANICAL 2D+2**  
Astrogation 3D+2, beast riding 3D+2, repulsorlift operations 4D+2, starship shields 3D+2  
**PERCEPTION 2D**  
Con 4D, hide 5D, search 4D, sneak 5D+2  
**STRENGTH 3D**  
Brawling 3D+2, stamina 4D+1  
**TECHNICAL 4D**  
Computer programming/repair 6D+1, demolition 5D+2, droid programming 5D, droid repair 5D, first aid 4D+2, repulsorlift repair 5D, space transports repair 6D, security 6D+2  
**Character Points:** 7  
**Move:** 10  
**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (3D+1), comlink, datapad, pocket computer, security tool kit





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#### ■ ATUR, OSTAN/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

tionable character, she learned there was a high price to be paid for saboteurs, and decided to pursue such a career. Having learned a great deal about technology of all sorts while frequenting Low'n spaceports and tech shops, the young Lowen woman eventually found employment with several underworld figures in the Lesser Plooriod Cluster. She eventually landed a generous contract with the Ithorian gangster Tolad Dor of the Nilg system.

Ostan worked for Dor for nearly two years, disabling equipment and allowing her companions in crime to enter various installations for looting, or, as in the infamous case of Imperial Colonel Sil Ompren's demise, rigging detonators to certain repulsoircraft. She also crippled many starships, allowing Dor's minions to collect goods from the stores and sell them on the invisible market. She was an invaluable part of Dor's growing syndicate.

But Ostan Atur knew the Ithorian's criminal empire could only bring her so much profit. In that light she began to look for bigger and better opportunities and more challenging assignments. She relocated to the little-known Minos Cluster, and after entering a partnership with the Reigat bruiser Talak, was chosen by Rani Quanic to aid in the theft of a valuable shipment of 100 kilograms of meleenium from New Republic mines.

Using her considerable technical skills, Atur disabled several of the security monitors, emergency repulsoircraft, and the several B1 worker droids on duty in one of the Qua'Tahc tunnels' southeast shafts. The lack of surveillance enabled Atur and her companions to escape relatively easily.

Atur's list of crimes against the New Republic increased when a group of three Republic operatives came upon the fleeing trio of thieves. In the ensuing battle, Ostan and her companions forced the New Republic agents to take cover by spraying the area with blaster fire. All three of the Republic operatives were injured, two quite seriously by a subsequent attack by Talak.

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

Ostan Atur and her companions, though most likely unknowingly, have done a good deal of harm to our efforts to replenish the Fleet. The 100 kilograms stolen from the Qua'Tahc mines is meleenium enough to provide for the laser actuators for an entire MC80 cruiser, or nearly seven entire starfighter squadrons. Meleenium is also used in the construction of durasteel hull plating and some of the phototropic shielding in the T-65s, and as it is so rare, any loss is a severe setback for our forces. The only other substitutes that could perform as well in our cruisers are cubrian and thoranium, and their sources are still held by Imperial forces.

## W RANI QUANIC

Species: Sullustan

Sex: Female

Homeworld: Sullust

Height: 1.4 meters

Age: Unknown

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Smuggling stolen goods, destruction to New Republic property, theft of New Republic property, assault of New Republic personnel, espionage against the New Republic, resisting arrest, aiding and abetting known criminals

**Reward for Capture:** 30,000 (20,000 offered by the New Republic; 10,000 offered by the New Republic-allied A'El government)



The Sullustan smuggler Rani Quanic has been a hindrance to the Alliance, and now the New Republic, for some time. Quanic began her career as a freighter pilot along the Ison Corridor, but soon learned smuggling spice and other valuable commodities was more profitable.

Not one to engage herself in galactic politics, it apparently bothered Quanic little that the Empire had seized her homeworld and enslaved or imprisoned many of her people: she simply continued to ply her trade, trying to make as many credits as she could before the final jump. She left the Ison Corridor after an encounter with a number of Imperial customs frigates, and worked for some time with her old partner Chordak in the remote Minos Cluster (see *Galaxy Guide 6: Tramp Freighters, Second Edition*).

Quanic and her Rodian friend tried to catch the attention of more lucrative cargoes than the small hauls they commonly received. Eventually the Sullustan smuggler yearned to return to the "big time" and returned to the Ison Corridor, assuming the heat had lowered. She was wrong. Less than a week after her return to her home lanes, Rani was captured by Imperial forces and imprisoned.

She was released due to a pardon granted her by the Sullust system Moff and Sin Suub, chairman of the SoroSuub corporation. The conditions of her

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#### ■ QUANIC, RANI/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

pardon were simple: in return for her "freedom," Rani Quanic would work for SoroSuub (and therefore indirectly for the Empire), disrupting suspected Rebel smuggling operations without the attention and obvious intent an Imperial frigate would attract.

Willing to do just about anything to be released from prison, Quanic agreed, and embarked on a relatively successful career as a contraband cargo and weapons hijacker with the Imperial prefect's protection. When the Empire fell at Endor, SoroSuub still remained, but Rani's job description changed. SoroSuub was now an illegal corporation, as it remained Imperial-allied, and Quanic was given the loose assignment of stealing New Republic starship construction materials. She contacted one of her friends from her brief stay in the Minos Cluster, the Reigat bruiser Talak, and was introduced to the Lowen saboteur Ostan Atur. The trio conceived of a plan to hijack a shipment of meleenium from its source in the Ka'Dedus system, an operation Quanic knew would bring a large reward.

She and her companions were successful in their operation, and nearly escaped without incident until a group of three Republic operatives led by Kichiir the Wookiee appeared on the scene. Quanic and company were forced to make quick leave of the situation, and in the escape her prized ship, the *Lathien Leth*, received minor damage.

Rani Quanic is a thin, short female Sullustan criminal who has little regard for the law of the New Republic. Her primary interest in life is the "big haul," and eventually earning enough to retire comfortable in a locale the likes of

#### ■ Rani Quanic

Type: Sullustan Smuggler  
**DEXTERITY 2D+1**  
Blaster 4D+1, dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**  
Alien species 3D+1, cultures 3D+1, languages 4D, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 5D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**  
Astrogation 5D, space transports 5D+2, space transports: Nella 342 6D+2, starship gunnery 4D+2

**PERCEPTION 3D+1**  
Bargain 4D+1, con 4D+1, gambling 3D+2

**STRENGTH 2D+2**  
Brawling 3D+2

**TECHNICAL 3D+2**  
Computer programming/repair 4D+2, droid repair 4D, security 4D+1, space trans-

ports repair 4D, space transports repair: Nella 342 5D

**Special Abilities:**  
*Enhanced Senses:* Sullustans have advanced hearing and vision. Whenever they make *Perception* or *search* checks involving vision in low-light areas, they get a +2D bonus.

*Location Sense:* Once a Sullustan has visited an area, she always remembers how to return to the area. When making an *astrogation* total for a place the Sullustan has previously visited, add +1D to the die roll.

**Character Points:** 5  
**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D+2), com-link, modified Nella 342 light freighter (Lathien Leth), 500 credits

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#### ■ QUANIC, RANI/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

Cloud City or Alassa Major. She commonly dresses in the flight suit of a Republic Y-wing fighter pilot: she received the suit from the SoroSuub Corporation during one of her first jobs for the company, and has used it since. She is quiet and reserved, but somewhat cynical in her outlook on life. Her past incarceration and current fugitive status do not help her attitude.

#### ■ Lathien Leth

Type: Modified Nella 342 light freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 29.7 meters

Skill: Space transports: Nella 342

Crew: 1

Crew Skill: see Rani Quanic

Passengers: 5

Cargo Capacity: 50 metric tons

Consumables: 2 months

Cost: Not available for sale

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1

Hyperdrive Backup: x12

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D+2

Space: 7

Atmosphere: 350; 1,000 kmh

Hull: 4D

Shields: 3D

Sensors:

Passive: 15/1D

Scan: 40/2D

Search: 50/2D

Focus: 2/3D

Weapons:

1 Dorsal Quad Laser Cannon

Fire Arc: Turret

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 2D+2

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

Damage: 5D

The *Lathien Leth* is a Nella 342 light freighter that is in remarkably good condition given the considerable punishment received under its current owner. No longer in production, the Nella series of freighters is known for rugged design and dependability, and the *Lathien Leth* is no exception. The SoroSuub Corporation often repairs the craft for free as part of Rani Quanic's employment, and it goes without question the craft has some of the most modern and tested components.

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

#### ■ CRACKEN, AIKEN/GENERAL..

Rani Quanic is generally regarded as the leader of the trio responsible for the recent theft of the Qua Tahc meleenium shipment. She has in the past stolen numerous important components from Alliance/New Republic construction yards and cargo craft and shipped them back to SoroSuub. Her recent actions have galvanized the general contempt of her character throughout the New Republic shipyards of the Tharin and Arkanis sectors, and Commander Nunb has personally offered to take up the matter of apprehending Quanic.

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## TALAK

**Species:** Reigat  
**Homeworld:** Reigalius  
**Height:** 2.1 meters

**Sex:** Male  
**Age:** Unknown

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Assault of New Republic personnel, assault with intent to kill, resisting arrest, aggravated assault, aiding and abetting known criminals, accessory to theft of New Republic property, accessory to destruction of New Republic property

**Reward for Capture:** 10,000 (5,000 offered by both New Republic; 5,000 offered by the New Republic-allied A'El government)

The Reigat strong man Talak is something of a departure from the normal Reigat. Whereas most Reigat are solitary individuals, Talak, though not overly social, has been known to work with others. Such is the case in the recent meleenium heist on the Defel homeworld A'El.

Talak is believed to have previously frequented Malthor, a world with a relatively large Reigat population (among them the Rebel operative Bakku: for more information, see page 13 of *Cracken's Rebel Operatives*). Alliance Intelligence believes Talak resided in Malthor's city Fabrillan for some time before deciding to hire out his considerable strength and combat abilities. It is known for certain the Reigat moved from job to job, and that he eventually found himself in the Minos Cluster, where he worked for some of the various underworld elements. His stay in the Minos Cluster lasted nearly three years.

During his stay in the Cluster, Talak made acquaintance with the Sullustan smuggler Rani Quanic. After Quanic reappeared on the Minos scene (following some time in prison) looking for accomplices in a recently-devised heist, Talak and his most recent partner, the Lowen saboteur Ostan Atur, agreed to accompany her.

His "protecting" the thieves who made away with the Qua'Tahc mines shipment has brought him considerable trouble with New Republic law enforcement agencies. During the raid, the trio was pursued by a group of Alliance security opera-



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### TALAK/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

tives. While Quanic secured the escape craft and loaded the stolen meleenium, Atur covered her with heavy fire from the craft's gun emplacements. Talak, though, preferred to deal with the New Republic operatives in his own style.

He engaged all three agents in a fierce brawl, and seriously wounded Agent Oolj and the Ug'Geran technician Cith Sninif. Only Kichiir the Wookiee, a member of the elite Lightning tech squadron of the SpecForces Eclipse Team, was able to match the Reigat's immense size and strength. But with the combined ferocity of Talak's attack and the constant cover provided the Reigat by Atur's guns, even Kichiir was beaten. Before reinforcements could be called, Talak rushed back to the *Lathien Leth* and the thieving trio fled the Ka'Dedus system with 100 kilograms of meleenium.

Talak, for a Reigat male, is relatively nondescript: he has the mottled gray skin and blue facial features and hair indicative of his species, and an immense physique. He thoroughly enjoys his occupation, and has in recent months become increasingly overconfident of his abilities. Having recently defeated a Wookiee, though with the aid of the *Lathien Leth*'s blaster cannons, has only increased his already considerable ego.

#### Talak

**Type:** Reigat  
**DEXTERITY 3D+2**  
 Brawling parry 5D+2, dodge 5D+2, melee combat 7D+2, melee parry 7D+2  
**KNOWLEDGE 2D**  
 Intimidation 5D, streetwise 4D, streetwise: Gallisport 5D+1  
**MECHANICAL 2D+1**  
**PERCEPTION 3D**  
 Command 4D  
**STRENGTH 5D+2**  
 Brawling 9D+2, climbing/jumping 6D+2, stamina 7D  
**TECHNICAL 2D+1**  
**Special Abilities:**  
*Intimidation:* Reigats are frightening to many beings and receive a +1D bonus to intimidation.  
**Force Points:** 1  
**Dark Side Points:** 2  
**Character Points:** 9  
**Move:** 11  
**Equipment:** Blaster pistol (4D)

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL.

*Talak is generally a high-profile character, as he enjoys drawing attention to himself and his physical prowess. His image of himself has certainly been further inflated since his "victory" against Kichiir. Tal-Yannar Najjan, one of our medics at Delta Base where Kichiir and the others are being treated, has informed me there is talk of sending one of the Eclipse Team's agents to cool Talak's increasing self-regard. My credits would be on Tiranna, or possibly Kichiir, if he is up and about sooner than the medical staff has predicted. It is my hope Talak's overconfidence will ultimately lead him to make a mistake, allowing us to apprehend him and his accomplices.*

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## BORUN CALL

**Species:** Quarren **Sex:** Male  
**Homeworld:** Calamari  
**Height:** 1.7 meters **Age:** 72

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Assault on New Republic personnel, kidnapping, theft, smuggling, transportation of slaves, conspiracy to deprive sapient of their freedom

**Reward for Capture:** 45,000

Borun Call is an aging Quarren slaver who has been plying the slave trade since the ages of the Old Republic. Mentor to the rising Twi'lek slaver Slar-dan ti Gardi, Call is one of the most infamous slavers in the Borderland regions, and is believed to have been among those slavers who catered to Imperial General Tagge during the construction of the first Death Star.

Call grew up on the rough undercity streets of Sar Galva, a small mining outpost in the Murul Trench on Calamari. Arrested for various crimes during his youth, Call's leadership abilities were recognized by wardens and he was given a position as labor crew coordinator, where he developed the skills that eventually made him the extremely efficient slaver he is today.

He indirectly aided in the enslavement of the Talz on Alzoc III (see pages 85 and 86 of *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races, Second Edition*), and on more than one occasion has promoted the enslavement of the Mon Calamari. He also recently participated in the more current Zygerian Conference. He has enslaved and sold members of over a hundred different species, but seems to have a preference for the larger species: those which ensure a greater profit. Call has also been known to collaborate with numerous other slavers—he will form a temporary alliance with any individual for the sake of profit.

A stable fixture within the corrupt economy of the Empire, Call's continuation of his profession after the establishment of the New Republic imme-



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### ■ CALL, BORUN/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

diately made him a wanted being. A general notice for arrest was issued, but his criminal status was not upgraded until several recent incidents in which he and his Twi'lek companion resumed their despicable trade.

Shortly following the quelling of the Vallin Labor Camps Insurgency, Slar-dan ti Gardi captured two Wookiees whom he did not know were Kashyyyk representatives. New Republic Sergeant Tauran Nartol of Vodran, a SpecForces operative, headed the investigation of the matter, and eventually cornered Call's friend in Jinorota City on Werncin 3. But Sergeant Nartol did not take into account the cunning of the elderly Quarren, and Call incapacitated the New Republic operative with relative ease.

Soon thereafter, Call and his companion sold Nartol to representatives of the Kessel mines, and have since continued to enslave sapient species throughout the Listehol Run and surrounding territories. His companion has gone into hiding to avoid capture for the recent incident on Werncin 3, but the

### ■ Borun Call

**Type:** Quarren Slaver

#### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+2, brawling parry 4D, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D, melee parry 3D+2, missile weapons: spear gun 5D

#### KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien species 6D+2, bureaucracy 7D+2, cultures 4D+2, intimidation 5D+2, languages 3D+2, languages: Huttese 5D+2, languages: Wookiee 4D+2, law enforcement 5D+2, planetary systems 4D, streetwise 6D+2, survival 4D+2, survival: aquatic 6D+2, value: slaves 7D+2

#### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrostation 4D, beast riding 3D+2, beast riding: gl'or'ag 5D, repulsorlift operation: waveskimmer 4D, space transports 4D, starship gunnery 3D+2

#### PERCEPTION 3D+1

Bargain 7D+1, command 5D+1, con 4D+1,

gambling 4D, hide 5D, persuasion 6D+1, search 5D+1, sneak 4D+1

#### STRENGTH 3D+1

Brawling 4D+1, lifting 4D+1, stamina 4D+1, swimming 6D+1

#### TECHNICAL 2D+2

Computer programming/repair 3D+2, demolition 4D+2, security 5D+2

#### Special Abilities:

**Aquatic:** Quarren can breathe both air and water and can withstand extreme pressures found in ocean depths.

#### Force Points: 1

#### Dark Side Points: 4

#### Character Points: 16

**Move:** 10 (walking), 11 (swimming)

**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, stun pistol (4D stun), heavy blaster pistol (5D), partial armor (+2 physical, +1 energy, torso only), spear gun (3D+1)

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# ■ CALL, BORUN/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

headstrong Borun Call is confident he will avoid capture as he has for nearly four decades. Call is also not presently concerned about being captured by New Republic forces because he spends a good deal of his time in areas still held by the diminishing Empire, where he sells his slaves to the highest bidder.

Borun Call is an elderly Quarren male with a lavender complexion. He is missing one of his facial tentacles, the result of a brief melee during his attempt to capture a Trianii operative working for the Alliance. He has the light blue eyes typical of his people, but his face is heavily wrinkled from both his age and his infrequent contact with his natural aquatic element.

Call tends to dress in dark clothing and always has one of his Esoomian bodyguards by his side. Despite his wealth, he attempts to maintain a low profile, and in doing so makes a point to never flaunt his material goods. Though he commands a large group of slaving craft, his personal ship, the *Vanquisher*, is a modified Sydon Vehicle Works MRX-BR Pacifier (see page 42, *Galaxy Guide 8: Scouts*).

## ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*Borun Call is one of the most despicable slavers to have ever denied others their freedom. His contemptuous attitude in the face of his warrant for arrest is irritating, and I cannot wait for the day the Empire's territory shrinks to such a point that Call is simply squeezed into the jurisdiction of the New Republic. Perhaps then, if our current attempts to free the Wookiee representatives and Sergeant Nartel are successful, Nartel can personally apply the handcuffs to Call's wrists.*

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# ■ DROLEN ANTIG

Species: Nalroni

Sex: Male

Homeworld: Celanon

Height: 1.6 meters

Age: 32

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Smuggling, accessory to smuggling stolen goods, murder, treason, theft of New Republic military property, aiding Imperial forces

**Reward for Capture:** 20,000

The Nalroni Drolen Antig is a cunning con, thief and smuggler. He has plied (and survived) such infamous trades routes as the Kessel Run, the Sisar Run and the Sanrafsix Corridor. Prior to the Alliance victory at the Battle of Endor, Antig was known to have smuggled everything from jellied cannon to spice, and had on occasion smuggled weapons to the Alliance cell in Corint City. He commands a troupe of approximately 30 other smugglers and low-lives, none of whom trust the Nalroni entirely.

Following the destruction of the second Death Star, Antig spent considerable "down time" on his homeworld Celanon (see the *Star Wars Planets Collection*). When he returned to the smuggling scene, he was contracted for some work by Kuat Drive Yards, the giant manufacturer of such Imperial

war machines as the AT-AT and AT-ST walkers and Imperial-class Star Destroyers. Following its defeat at Endor, the Imperial Navy has increasingly suffered from a critically short supply of combat-worthy craft. As New Republic forces continue to push the once-indomitable Empire further and further, the Imperial forces lose more and more craft. Kuat Drive Yards has attempted to increase their production, and to advance the effectiveness of many of their current designs.

Drolen was offered a rather lucrative contract to acquire for Kuat Drive Yards materials that would aid in increasing the manufacturer's output. Drolen Antig knew exactly the place: rumors around the bar were that a few Advosze thieves Drolen had worked with back on Fresia were planning a heist of the New Republic-allied Roche Asteroid Field, and



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#### ■ ANTIG, DROLEN/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

that they were looking for a transport. Drolen took the deal with Kuat, located his former partners and arranged a deal in which his Advosze friends would infiltrate the Roche Field, make off with various high-tech items and prototypes, and then sell them to Kuat for a high price.

When all the intricacies of the plan were agreed upon, Drolen and his accomplices infiltrated the Slayn & Korpil hive design complexes, and made off with four complete gyroscopic stabilization systems (used in the B-wing starfighter) and a number of weapon prototypes. The Nalroni smuggler and Advosze thieves fled the Roche system aboard Antig's transport, the *Trustworthy*, and made their way to the Kuat system Yards (see *Platt's Starport Guide*). While preparing to land the *Trustworthy*, Drolen and some of his cronies killed the three Advosze.

Drolen and his crew arrived at the Kuat office with the stolen goods minutes later, delivered the goods and received the payment. The Advosze's bodies were later discovered jettison in the nearby Relarr system.

The gyroscopic stabilizers Drolen Antig stole are an integral part of the B-wing's composition, and were a carefully-guarded technological secret.

#### ■ Drolen Antig

Type: Nalroni Smuggler

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, dodge 3D-2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Languages 3D, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 5D, value 5D

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 4D, capital ship gunnery 4D-2, capital ship shields 4D, repulsorlift operation 4D-1, space transports 5D+2, space transports: Etti lighter 6D+2

PERCEPTION 4D-1

Bargain 6D+1, command 5D+1, gambling 5D, hide 5D+1, persuasion 6D-2, sneak 5D-21

STRENGTH 2D+1  
Brawling 3D-1

#### TECHNICAL 2D+2

Capital ship repair 3D+2, computer programming/repair 3D, security 4D-2, space transports repair 3D-2

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 2

Character Points: 8

Move: 11

Equipment: Blaster carbine (5D), blaster pistol (4D), comlink, datapad, 700 credits

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

#### ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

Drolen Antig's collaboration with the thieves who aided him in the sale of our valued technology is damaging to our struggle to maintain our ever-strengthening position. His murder of his accomplices so he could receive all of the payment was despicable. Drolen's actions could cost the Republic dearly if KDY utilizes the technology they have acquired in a new design. It is for that express reason that Crix and I have decided we must send a team of SpecForces infiltrators into Kuat to retrieve our equipment before their techs make too much progress...

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#### ■ ANTIG, DROLEN/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

Other Imperial-allied corporations such as Hydrospeare (see *Alliance Intelligence Reports*) have developed similar technology, but none compared to the quality of the Verpine designs. The New Republic now fears Kuat Drive Yards may be developing a new assault starfighter that will utilize the designs Antig sold them.

A group of operatives is currently preparing to locate and detain Antig, as he has recently been sighted in the Ethav Regions without his crew or the *Trustworthy*. The New Republic is also considering sending a team of infiltrators directly into Kuat Drive Yards to retrieve the stolen stabilizers and prototypes, but as such a mission is extremely perilous — the many considerations and plans are taking some time.

Drolen Antig is a middle-aged Nalroni male with orange-red fur. He typically carries a long blaster carbine and concealed blaster pistol, and wears a pair of trousers that have obviously been stolen from a Corellian, as they sport the broken gold stripe of the Second Class Corellian Bloodstripe. He is missing a number of the teeth that usually define a Nalroni's sharp mouth, believed to have been lost in the struggle with one of the Advosze thieves he killed. His crew is typically loud and crude, but works well together.

It is unknown where Drolen Antig acquired the *Trustworthy*, though it most likely was stolen from the Corporate Sector some time ago. The craft has been very useful to Antig in the short time he has owned it. Though somewhat slower than most other smugglers' freighters, it has considerable cargo capacity, ample weaponry, and a competent crew.

**Typical Smuggler from Drolen Antig's Crew.** All stats are 2D except: blaster 3D+2, dodge 3D+2, streetwise 3D, value 3D+2, Mechanical 3D, space transports 4D, starship gunnery 3D+2, bargain 3D+1. Move 10. Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, 50 credits.

#### ■ Trustworthy

Craft: CSA Etti Light Transport

Type: Modified medium freighter

Scale: Capital

Length: 125 meters

Skill: Space transports: Etti Lighter

Crew: 20, gunners: 10, skeleton 12/-10

Crew Skill: Capital ship gunnery 4D, capital ship shields 3D+2, space transports 4D-2, starship gunnery 3D+2

Passengers: 20

Cargo Capacity: 300 metric tons

Consumables: 2 months

Cost: Not available for sale

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: X16

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 2D

Space: 4

Atmosphere: 280; 800 kmh

Hull: 4D

Shields: 2D

Sensors:

Passive: 30/1D

Scan: 50/2D

Search: 80/3D+2

Focus: 4/4D

Weapons:

8 Quad Laser Cannons

Fire Arc: 2 front, 2 left, 2 right, 2 back

Crew: 1

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 1D

Space Range: 1-5/10/20

Atmosphere Range: 100-500/1/2 km

Damage: 5D

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## KEA RA-LAN

Species: Gran Sex: Female

Homeworld: Kinyen

Height: 1.9 meters Age: 26

Crimes Against the New Republic: Theft, trespassing, entering restricted space

Reward for Capture: 57,500 (7,500 offered by New Republic, 50,000 offered by Kashyyyk Embassy)

The thief Kea Ra-Lan presents a strange case to the New Republic: as a Gran, she absolutely abhors violence and has never physically harmed



another being in all her years as a thief. Unlike the murderer Ree-Yees (see the *Star Wars Movie Trilogy Sourcebook*), a Gran cast from the Kinyen homeworld, Kea was actually arrested by New Republic forces on Tasrin for an earlier break-in when she was cornered and refused to struggle. Her compliance with the authorities reduced a potential prison term to a stiff fine.

Kea Ra-Lan has made a successful career out of her questionable means, and is known to own a rather luxurious retreat in the Dal forests on Kinyen, though a recent raid

by the Kinyen planetary constabulary on New Republic orders found the abode empty. It is known, however, that she has in the past thrown lavish parties and spent a great many credits to ensure that her guests thoroughly enjoy themselves. Kea, though she had committed some minor crimes against New Republic-allied bodies in the past, has only recently landed herself among some of the most hunted fugitives. Two months ago, she managed to infiltrate the current New Republic occupational blockade about the Wookiee homeworld Kashyyyk and the Imperial forces currently holding out on the world.

Evading both forces, Kea managed to secret herself in the abandoned Wookiee city Kamarkia on the island continent Wartaki. There, she somehow was able to enter the sacred vaults of Neocomora and make off with an

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### ■ RA-LAN, KEA/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

undetermined number of the ancient texts held there, thought destroyed some years ago. It is unknown what she intends to do with the texts, but the New Republic forces of law, in concurrence with pending Kashyyyk Ambassador Kerrithrarr, have offered a substantial bounty for their return.

Several high-stature Kashyyyk citizens — among them Alliance and New Republic benefactors Tarkazza and Motamba — have requested the actual contents of the texts not be divulged to those who may attempt to retrieve the works and apprehend Kea Ra-Lan. They have assured the New Republic that the texts contain no information pertinent to the Gran thief's capture. They are religious texts originally believed to have been lost during the initial Imperial occupation; now that they have been discovered intact, they have been stolen.

Kea Ra-Lan is a younger Gran woman who commonly sports the brown and tan padded clothing often associated with her people. She has been thieving since shortly after the Battle of Yavin, and in that time has made a considerable

fortune. Unlike many brutal thieves who do not give a second thought to killing any who oppose their activities, Kea absolutely refuses to harm any being, even droids, or even defend herself against a those who would capture her. It is strange she has decided to anger the Wookiee community, a people not known for such restraint.

#### ■ Kea Ra-Lan

Type: Gran Thief

DEXTERITY 3D

Dodge 5D, pick pocket 6D, running 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien species 3D+2, cultures 3D+2, law

enforcement 4D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+1

Astrogation 3D+1, repulsorlift operation 3D+1, space transports 3D, starship shields 4D+1

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 5D, con 5D, forgery 5D+2, hide 6D, search 5D, sneak 8D

STRENGTH 3D

Climbing/Jumping 4D

TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D, demolition 4D, security 7D

Special Abilities:

Vision: Grans' unique combination of eye-stalks gives them a larger spectrum of vision than other species. They can see well into the infrared range (no penalties in darkness provided there are heat sources), and gain a bonus of +1D to notice sudden movements.

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 2

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, datapad, lectroticker (see *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*), security tool kit

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

#### ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*It is not known why Kea has chosen to raid the Neocomora vaults, and expose herself to both New Republic and Imperial military forces and the general contempt of the Wookiee populace. Kerrithrarr suggests she may have been hired by a Trandosian faction attempting to further the Wookiees' plight, but this has yet to be proven. I do not have any sympathy for this thief, but if one of the Wookiee teams Kerrithrarr and Tarkazza have sent searching for Kea locates her before one of the New Republic teams, she may very well regret never having learned to fight (and fight well).*

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## MAR BALAYAN

**Species:** Shistavanen **Sex:** Male  
**Homeworld:** Uvena  
**Height:** 1.53 meters **Age:** 61

**Crimes Against the New Republic:** Aiding Imperial forces, smuggling, transportation of slaves, conspiracy to deprive sapient beings of their freedom (as yet unconfirmed)

**Reward for Capture:** 20,000

Former Republic scout Mar Balayan, a native of the Shistavanen-controlled Uvena star system, is believed to have recently reappeared in the

Periphery Regions ... selling slaves to Imperial forces and independent interests. Mar Balayan was believed killed nearly five years ago, prior to the debacle at Hoth, as all signs of him and his activities abruptly vanished soon after he was reported fighting a group of Stalimur pirates. It appears Mar has resumed his immoral trade in recent months.

Upon Palpatine's ascension and declaration of the New Order, Balayan, one of the Republic Scout Service's most renowned scouts, began his own slave trade. Mar enslaved many defenseless sentient species from the many planets

he had surveyed but not yet reported. According to preliminary findings, Mar Balayan has again banded with several other slavers and provides slaves to virtually all those who engage in the illicit sale of sapient beings.

New Republic Intelligence has been unable to gather any substantial information on Balayan, as he has proven extremely difficult to keep under surveillance, and operates in many areas of the Periphery still held by the Empire. But from his activities prior to the Battle of Hoth, it can be assumed he has arranged a system in which he scouts out new worlds with sentient



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### BALAYAN, MAR/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED

Inhabitants, and before any New Republic authorities can register the find, relocates the entire population to slave auctions through Imperial-held space. The recent influx of several previously-unseen species into Periphery and Outer Rim slave inventories appear to confirm the Republic's suspicions.

Mar Balayan is an extremely aged Shistavanen male whose once-thick black fur has grayed considerably. He has a noticeable limp that favors his left leg, a result of a "misunderstanding" with a Frimm bi-tail, one of the creatures indigenous to a world he discovered for the Empire years ago.

#### ■ Mar Balayan

**Type:** Shistavanen Wolfman Scout

**DEXTERITY 1D+2\***

Blaster 3D+2\*, brawling parry 2D+2\*,  
dodge 3D+2\*, melee combat 2D\*

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Alien species 6D, business 5D, planetary  
systems 6D+2, survival 5D, value: slaves  
6D

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Astrogation 4D+2, space transports 3D+2,  
starship shields 3D+1

**PERCEPTION 2D**

Search 5D, search: tracking 6D

**STRENGTH 2D\***

Brawling 3D\*, climbing/jumping 3D\*,  
stamina 2D+1\*

**TECHNICAL 3D+1**

Space transports repair 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Move:** 8\*

**Equipment:** Hold-out blaster (3D), mac-  
robinooculars, survival gear

\* Note: Some attributes and skills have  
been lowered to reflect aging.

#### ■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

#### ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

*I wish there was more I could provide our agents concerning the very real threat Mar Balayan undoubtedly presents to those species who have no means of defense against slavers, but Intell simply does not at this time have any more information regarding the Shistavanen. If any individual units in the Periphery or adjacent territories become available to conduct a further investigation, I have intentions of directing them to do so immediately.*

*This issue's "Wanted By Cracken" was written by C. Robert Carey and illustrated by Rob Duchinski and Kathy Burdette.*

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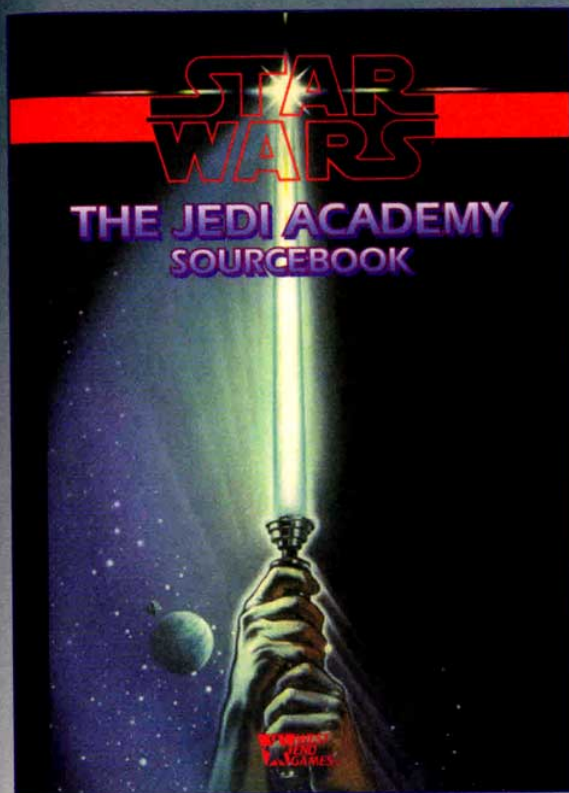
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