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STAR WARS **Gamer**

THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

ISSUE NUMBER 5

THE DARKSIDE

13 SECRETS OF THE SITH

THE SEEDS OF VILLAINY

DARKSIDER ADVENTURE

ISSUE 05 \$6.99 US / \$9.99 CAN



EPISODE I SILENT DEATH ■ SPEAK HUTTESE ■ THE CHISS





ON THE COVER

Nothing says "The Dark Side" like this issue's cover by Tommy Lee Edwards. It has Darth Vader, stormtroopers, TIE fighters, more stormtroopers, and Blackhole. "Who's Blackhole?" you ask. Turn to page 44 to find out why he's on our cover.

STAR WARS **Gamer**

THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 5

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FORCE

THE GAMING
UNIVERSE

TECHNICAL
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THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

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Yoda Don't Preach

Picture it—Christmas, 1977. A little boy, taking the formative steps toward a lifelong obsession with *Star Wars*, wakes up to find under the tree not only an assorted stack of Kenner treats, but also a hand-sewn Obi-Wan Kenobi robe and a hand-drawn card rendering the bearer an official Jedi Knight. In case you didn't guess, that boy was me. Yes, it's true—my parents are personally responsible for all that has transpired in my life regarding *Star Wars*.

I have to confess, though: When they gave me the Jedi robe, they were barking up the wrong tree. Don't get me wrong—I loved it with all my heart. It's just that, well, Obi-Wan Kenobi *died* in the movie, and he was old. Not the character a seven-year old would readily identify with. Plus, he wasn't a humongous, black-clad, respirator-breathing villain who choked buffoons for failing to do as they were told. Yes, indeedly do, my hero was—and remains to this day—Darth Vader. So *what* if he turned wimp at the end and dumped that foggy down a shaft and saved the entire galaxy from indentured servitude and never-ending misery? He proved to me that he wasn't taking any poodoo from *anybody*. A good role model for *any* child.

It doesn't make you a bad person to root for the bad guy. The coolest characters are always the villains. They have the most impressive theme music, they talk down to people who deserve it, they take over worlds and subjugate huge groups of people just because they can, and they have the best outfits. Besides, this is *fiction*. No matter how malicious these characters are, you can rest assured that some jejune, idealistic twit is going to come along and save the day.

Not in this issue of *Gamer*, however. This is the DARK SIDE issue, remember? It's going to have the Jedi Council quaking in their burlap smocks. Who cares if the Emperor and all his little clones got dissed, or if Luke blasted Shira Brie into a pulp? You can find plenty of loathsome characters here, seething with enough of the dark side of the Force to make

up for the Emperor's untimely passing. You've got Lumiya (so Luke didn't blast Shira into a *complete* pulp), Blackhole, Maarek, Stele, Jeng Droga, and a bunch of meanies to spruce up your adventures. You even get gaming stats for both halves of Darth Maul. (Okay, that last one is a lie.)

Meanwhile, just in case you didn't notice, we've pretty much declared August 2001 Official Dark Side Month. There's so much dark side stuff going on this month that I wouldn't be surprised if Shadow Academy Home School ads start popping up on daytime TV. *What else is going on*, you ask? Well, let's see. There's a little old book coming out right around now called *The Dark Side Sourcebook*. I can assure you it will quench just about all the thirst for evil you and your compatriots might have. Buy this book, read it from front to back, create a dark side character, and kick the goodness out of those burbling light-siders who can get so annoying. Be warned, though: Too much of the dark side will make you wrinkly and baggy and icky. This is a *fact*.

Enough blathering. On a final note: For those of you who now envisage me to be a wretched, evil, hateful person, I'll let you in on a little-known tidbit. I like Ewoks. And Gungans, too. Don't ever insult them in front of me. Those little lambs sacrificed themselves for the betterment of the galaxy. Now read the dang magazine.



Lucas Licensing Editor Ben Harper spends quality time with his theremin, Jesse.

FORCE FEEDBACK



"I felt a great disturbance in the Force ... as if millions of voices suddenly cried out..."

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Don't Stop Now! We're Just Getting Started

Your letters are rolling in, and it amazes me that you're not afraid to ask the tough questions. This month's letters run that gamut from serious to ludicrous.

There are some keen-eyed hawk-bats out there, too. You've spotted all of our good mistakes from previous issues. We've been quick to lay the blame where it belongs and print corrections.

Like the headline says, keep sending us feedback. Every letter helps shape future issues of *Star Wars Gamer*. I know you don't want to miss out on being a part of that.

Michael Mikaelian
Managing Editor

To Each His Own...

My 10-year-old son really likes *Star Wars*. So when he wanted to purchase this magazine, I let him. Since it came in a plastic cover that did not allow us to look through the issue, we were not aware that it was full of what I consider to be grotesque and

sickening material. I had my son mark all of the revolting pages for you to see.

At first I was going to glue paper over the unacceptable pages so that he could keep his magazine, but there were too many. I read your editorial and cannot grasp how you can be so excited about this magazine. You are putting into the hands of young people murderous articles about "Anzati" inserting probosci into their victims' sinus cavities to drain mucoid medium (pages 92-93) and feeding kids stories about evil, hovering, taloned creatures. And then we, as a country of free people, wonder where kids get their ideas to bomb their schools or shoot whoever they choose because they carry so much hate and anger inside of them. The venomous media they have taken inside their minds has grown out of control, causing them to thirst for blood, murder, and what they think will be sweet revenge.

Yes, I know there is a myriad of media such as games, books, cartoons, and music available to plant this kind of junk into kids' minds; now your magazine adds to it all. We don't want your magazine! We'll

take the loss of \$6.99 and give you our opinion, as you asked for in your editorial. Thank you for your time.

Andrew Chapov
Gainesville, FL

Speaking for all the parents here at Wizards of the Coast, I am glad you are taking an interest in what your son is reading. That's what it takes to make sure he grows up to be a responsible adult.

Instead of censoring the magazine and other media, use them as tools to help your son explore right and wrong. Help him view things with an open mind so that he can learn to separate *fantasy* from reality. With your guidance, he can learn that it's okay to read about things that are revolting and grotesque, so long as he uses what he learns to be a better person in real life.

The *Star Wars* saga explores the struggle of good against evil, light against darkness. It is impossible to imagine one without the other. The *Star Wars* galaxy includes fictional creatures and characters that represent both good and evil,



from gentle Ewoks to cruel Hutts. There are heroes, and there are villains. Allowing your son to explore good and evil in the *Star Wars* galaxy might help him separate good from evil in real life. In the *Star Wars* movies, good triumphs over evil. Heroes resist the temptation to join "the dark side," and that makes them stronger.

One of the most powerful lessons that can be learned from *Star Wars* is that evil is more costly than it's worth. Ultimately, evil characters fall due to their own ambitions.

Every issue we publish is held to the to the same high ethical and moral standards as all *Star Wars* products. The content of each issue of *Star Wars Gamer* is intended to be the equivalent of a PG-rated movie.

The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* is about playing heroes and defeating villains; let your son imagine what it would be like to be a brave Jedi Knight, defending the galaxy against the evil Empire. Who knows? It might inspire him to pursue great deeds in his own life.



More, More, More!

Star Wars Gamer,

I love the way Wizards has remade the *Star Wars* RPG! I really liked the article about ship building. That helped me a lot. Tips on running games would be nice. I usually have to GM, and I have no clue what I'm doing. I'd really like to see more info about the ships themselves, like layouts. Pictures of them in space are nice, but what difference does it make if you don't know where the power generators are?

I don't agree with Megan ("Get Out of My Brain," *Star Wars Gamer* #1) about the fiction. I want more of it. I'm even willing to pay an extra buck if you have to make your magazine larger.

I also don't agree with Megan about computer and card games. They are just as much a part of *Star Wars* as the RPG and deserve equal coverage.

Keep up the amazing work!

Ben "Kloran" Wakefield
Litchfield, OH

I'll forward your words of praise to the RPG designers!

Gamemastering tips are now a regular feature in "HoloNet Transmission," our RPG advice column. You can also find excellent GM tips in Chapter 12 of the core rulebook. The best GM advice I can give you is, "Never let the game slow down because of the rules." If you get stumped, use your best judgment to resolve the problem and move on. Later, research the question so you have the solution next time it happens. You can, of course, always send questions to "HoloNet Transmission" if you need advice from the experts (see page 14).

As for what belongs in *Gamer*, let the debate rage on...



Craving Yuuzhan Vong

Dear Editor,

I really enjoy your magazine, but there is an extreme lack of information for the New Jedi Order era. I realize that the storyline is still incomplete, but you could publish stats for things that have already been introduced, such as the Chazrach, their slave soldiers, bonuses given by the presence of a yammosk, ship stats, and so forth. The Yuuzhan Vong are the most interesting beings I have encountered in any science fiction book, and they deserve more attention. At the very least, it would be cool to see a "Rogues Gallery" of Yuuzhan Vong faces and armor.

That's all, and thanks for printing my letter.

Dan Krouse
via Internet

The New Jedi Order Sourcebook is due out next year. Just like this issue's *The Dark Side Sourcebook* tie-in, we'll do the same thing for NJO. A Yuuzhan Vong "Rogues Gallery" is certainly not out of the question. Until then, you can be sure to see bits and pieces here and there in upcoming issues of *Star Wars Gamer*.

Thankfully, you didn't prattle on forever, and you're welcome.



Ladies' Man Speaks

Wuzzup SWG,

Awesome mag! It's about time we *Star Wars* fans got a mag that covers *Star Wars* games from CCG to RPG that's worth a

flip! This mag's got it all. Rad art, variety, fiction, a cocky editor's arena, it rocks! Yo Tim Barrera, be a gent', give da' ladies some room for their opinions too!!! If you don't share the girl's opinion, at least be polite about it. Hey Megan, I don't want a mag full of CCG and video games either, but it's nice have some here and there. Letting ladies share their thoughts is essential for a successful mag. This isn't *Boys Life* after all. I myself like the CCG and my N64 too, but I'm a gent', so peace-out.

Overall, great job *Gamer* staff. Keep it comin'!

Will Ragan
Longview, TX

Hey, it's the 21st century. As the next letter shows, the ladies can speak for themselves. Take it away, ladies.



Southern Discomfort

Hey Y'all (yeah, I'm southern),

I was reading the letters in *Star Wars Gamer* #3. I got to "He Really Likes Us" and was amused to see that it was from a guy who claims he can recognize a girl's letter by her opinions. Well, I say "Pfft!" to that!

I'm a girl—have been for several years now. I've been tabletop roleplaying since I was 11. I've been into electronic RPGs since I laid my hands on *Final Fantasy* 1, way back in the day of the original Nintendo. I've been playing *Magic: The Gathering*™ since I was 12 (and have a sizeable collection), and I have many other CCGs. I also read comics and enjoy action movies. Sound like a girl? Nope, didn't think so. Don't go judging us by those stupid stereotypes.

I'm really fond of the magazine. It's high quality. However, what I want to see is a good, tried-and-true set of conversion rules so that I can work any d20 system things into the old-school d6 system.

Now, I think the products WotC's producing are good, but I just don't like the d20 system. I've been playing with the d6 system for three years, and I've become slightly attached. What's more, I have a slew of my own house rules in place with the d6 system, and all my players enjoy them. For us, switching to a different sys-

tem would be like fixing what isn't broken.

So, what do you say? Is there any chance of ever getting a conversion manual printed?

May penguins never steal your sanity.
Katie Saracen
via internet

Speaking of debates, here's another hot-button topic. "Why doesn't WotC support the d6 game?" you ask. The answer is, "We do, from a certain point of view." Everything we produce that doesn't have a d6 equivalent is perfectly suitable for use in the d6 system. Many things translate directly, others need a little tweaking, and some just need to be rebuilt from the ground up. We've got our hands full just keeping up with all the new material from the prequels and the New Jedi Order, which is all stuff that die-hard d6ers can use.

As for my sanity, the penguins will have to pick over what the Jawas haven't already taken.



Jawas Made Me Do It

Let me just start out by saying your magazine is awesome!

With that aside, the *Guardian Mantis* in issue #2 ("State of the Arts") was just a copy of the *Havoc*. I would like to see other video games statistics in particular for Demolition and Jedi Power Battles (the enemies such as the binary lifter, flame droid and mercenary from level 6, not just the Jedi). I also would like to see a feature in every issue containing assorted used merchandise much like the one in issue #3 pertaining to droids. I believe it could make a good campaign tool if it had equipment

and starships too. Some Jedi prestige classes would be nice.

Bob Savela
via Internet

It's good to feel loved. Hopefully you've seen the corrections for the *Guardian Mantis* on our website by now. In case you haven't, see the below. I hear you when it comes to all those cool video game vehicles, starships, equipment, and characters. We strive to get as much of that stuff as possible into "State of the Arts" every issue. You never know—some future issue might have some of that good ol' stuff all RPGed out (hint, hint). I'm sure you haven't seen the last table such as the two you mentioned, though there are similar tables for buying used vehicles and starships in the core rulebook (Chapters 11 and 12).

Imperial Dispatch: Game Errata

Corrections and Clarifications from the *STAR WARS Roleplaying Game* core rulebook

Page 22, Table 1-3:
Notable Dexterity Scores

The modifier for Obi-Wan's score (16) should be +3, not +4; the modifier for Darth Maul's score (19) should be +4, not +5.

Page 56, under How Multiclassing Works in the multiclassing example at the bottom of the right column, "Her Reflex save, Fortitude save, and Reputation do not..."—"Fortitude" should be changed to "Will". Replace the sentence "Her Defense gets a +2 bonus." with "Her Defense remains the same, since the +2 bonus from her level of Soldier is negated by the -2 multiclass penalty to Defense."

Page 58, under Defense Bonus

Add the following sentence to the end of the paragraph:

"This -2 penalty only applies to levels in a heroic class. When multiclassing into a professional or prestige class, simply add the full Defense bonus from the new level."

Page 72, Computer Use
skill description, Ship Systems

The first sentence of the Ship Systems entry should end with "sensors and shields", not "sensors, weapons, and shields".

Page 81, Soft Fall

Falling damage is in Chapter 12, not Chapter 8: Combat.

Pages 87-88, replaces
current Move Object entry

Move Object (Int)

Requires the *Force-Sensitive* and *Alter Feats*

You can move objects using the Force.

Check: A Move Object skill check allows you to pick up and move an object from a distance. You must be able to see the object to be moved, and it must be

within 10 meters of your position.

Lifting and moving an object of up to 5 kilograms is a simple task, requiring a check against a DC 10 and costing 1 vitality point (and a standard action). For each additional order of magnitude (50 kg, 500 kg, etc.) of the object, the DC increases by 5 and the vitality-point cost doubles.

Weight	Vitality Cost
up to 5 kg	1
5-50 kg	2
50-500 kg	4
500-5000 kg	8
5000-50,000 kg	16
etc.	etc.

The target can either be an object, creature, or character, and receives a Reflex saving throw based on the Move Object skill check. Note that unattended objects never receive a saving throw. Attended items—objects held by a character (grasped, touched, or worn, for example)—receive a saving throw just as if the character were making the saving throw. Grasped items also gain the character's Strength modifier as a bonus to the Reflex save.

The Guardian Mantis

Craft: Unique XI Char creation; **Class:** Starfighter; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Tiny (14 m long); **Crew:** Unique (1 pilot, 1 hardwired astromech); **Passengers:** None; **Cargo Capacity:** 70 kg; **Consumables:** 1 week; **Hyperdrive:** x1 (x5); **Maximum Speed:** Ramming; **Defense:** 22 (+2 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 25"; **Hull Points:** 50; **DR:** 5.

Weapon: Laser cannons (2 fire-linked);

Fire Arc: Front; **Attack Bonus:** +10 (+2 size, +8 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB 0, S -2, M/L n/a.

Weapon: Nano missile magazine (10 missiles); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +8 (+2 size, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 3d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S/M/L n/a.

Weapon: Ion Encumbrance System (10 tags); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +6

(+2 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** Special"; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S/M/L n/a.

"Vana's shield replenish at double the normal rate (6 points per minute), thanks to Mod-3's help."

"Whenever Vana successfully hits a starship with the IES, the magnetic tag latches onto the craft. The ion effect (-2 penalty to all checks) does not fade after two rounds, but remains active until the tag is physically removed (DC 10 Disable Device or Repair skill check). The ionization effect of multiple tags stack. The ion tags also give the Guardian Mantis a +4 circumstance bonus to Pilot skill checks against the tagged starship when increasing or decreasing range at distances greater than Short. This bonus does not stack."



Sturm Drang-it!

You made a mistake in Issue #3 concerning Kardde's pets. Kardde had the boys' tails

cut off to make them more docile. Wild vornskysr still have their poisonous tails, but the boys are "neutered" in that respect.

shellyfett
via internet

Her story checks out. According to the *Star Wars Encyclopedia*, Sturm and Drang have no tails. What was printed in *Star Wars Gamer #3* was the vornskyr entry from the upcoming sourcebook *Alien Anthology*.

Anyone planning on using the real Sturm and Drang can feel free to ignore the game text about their poisonous tails. Look on the bright side; you've got the stats for an ordinary vornskyr, and the party responsible has actually been fed to vornskysr for perpetrating this injustice. I hear "the boys" don't like to be teased about their stumps.

(continued on page 128)

Result	DC
up to 20	10
21-30	15
31+	20

You can move the object within 10 meters of your position in a round. If two characters are contesting control of an object, use opposed Move Object skill checks, with the higher result gaining control for that round.

To use the Force to strike a target with an object, the Move Object skill check result (plus the Force-user's Dexterity bonus) must equal or exceed the target's Defense. (If the Move Object skill check is not high enough to move the object, the attack fails regardless of the target's Defense.) A character struck by a moving object suffers damage based on the object's weight. A 5-kg object inflicts 1d6 damage, and each additional order of magnitude (50 kg, 500 kg, etc.) doubles the damage dice (to 2d6, 4d6, and so on).

Example: Moving a rock weighing 25 kg requires a check against DC 15. If the character wished to strike a specific target (with a Defense 16) with the object, he would need to roll a 16 or better on his Move Object skill check to successfully hit the target.

Moving multiple objects simultaneously is possible, but more difficult (and requires a full-round action rather than a standard action). The heaviest object in the group sets the base DC and vitality cost, and each additional object (regardless of its size) adds +2 to the DC and 2 to the vitality-point cost. Multiple objects can't strike a target as part of the same action.

You can also telekinetically lift and move yourself with this skill, though the DC increases by 10. Thus, for characters between 51 and 500 kg, the check is made against DC 30.

Vitality Point Cost: 1 or more (see above)

Page 92, under *Ambidexterity* feat, *Special* The Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties table is table 8-3, not 8-4.

Page 94, *Frightful Presence* entry, under *Benefit*

Replace the phrase "DC 10 plus your level and Charisma modifier" to "DC 10 plus your Charisma modifier and one-half your level."

Page 98, *Weapon Finesse* feat description On the list of weapons to which this feat may be applied, insert "double-bladed lightsaber" between combat glove and knife.

Pages 99-100, replaces *Deflect Blasters* *Benefit* text

Benefit: You must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this feat. Whenever you are the target of a blaster shot (or other ranged attack), you can make a Reflex saving throw against a DC 15 plus the attacker's base attack bonus. A critical hit increases the DC by 10. If you succeed, you deflect the blaster shot and take no damage. You must be aware of the attack and not flat-footed to use this feat. Attempting to deflect a blaster shot counts as a reaction.

If the Reflex save result is 5 or more points above the DC, you can deflect the blaster shot at a target within one range increment of your position. Immediately make an attack roll using your lightsaber bonus with a -4 penalty. If the attack succeeds, the deflected shot hits the target and takes damage from it.

Deflect blasters only defends against personal-scale weapons; you can't deflect ship-scale weapons with a lightsaber.

Continued Next Issue



HOLONET TRANSMISSION

Answers To Your STAR WARS RPG Dilemmas

BY JD WIKER

Heroes seem difficult to kill in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. If I understand the rules correctly, a character can never go below zero wounds and always has a chance to stabilize—though it gets tougher as the hours go by. So you can crash your X-wing into a nuclear reactor, causing it to melt-down all around you and you still have a chance to survive? Am I missing something?

Well, yes and no. *Star Wars* is a universe of heroes and high adventure—not of slowly wearing them down until they drop. But that describes the best case scenario for unconscious and dying characters. Rolling a natural unmodified 1 on a saving throw is always a failure, and not every hero will automatically succeed a DC 10 Fortitude save on her first stabilization attempt—let alone the escalating save for subsequent hours. All that aside, there's no "massive damage" rule in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, but the GMs can always call for a Fortitude save just because the damage the hero took was catastrophic in nature. *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* calls for such a roll when a character takes more than 50 points of damage in one go, and there's no reason why you couldn't adopt a similar rule. And, of course, if a character is just plain, no-question-about-it, blown-to-smithereens dead, then the GM should probably rule that it's time to make up a new character, and not worry about saving throws.

The levels of the various character classes don't go above 20, but is there any reason I couldn't have a character who's a 3rd level noble and a 19th level Jedi guardian?

Nope, and you're welcome to do so—just bear in mind that the rules don't support such high-level play. While there are some extremely powerful characters—the Emperor, for example—levels above

20 are the domain of characters with godlike powers. And there just aren't that many in the *Star Wars* universe.

But if you're keen on playing 20th-level-plus characters in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*—or you want to throw such a character at the players in your game—you might want to check out the upcoming high-level campaign book for *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*.

Do characters have to rest an entire hour (or day) to recover one vitality (or wound) point if they recover more than one a hour (or day)? For instance, does a 4th-level character recover a vitality point every 15 minutes of rest?

If you want to go to the trouble of book-keeping in 15-minute (or even 1-minute) increments, you can decide that the healing rate for damage is based on a smaller time period. But using blocks of one hour (for vitality) or one day (for wound and ability points) is the easiest way we've found to keep track of recovery. Ultimately, of course, it's up to you and your gaming group how you want to handle it.

Along those same lines, how many wound points does a Wookiee receiving long-term care recover each day?

In the d20 system, anything that "multiplies" a number doesn't stack on top of other things that multiply as well. It adds one increment to the multiplier. Two effects that allow recovery at "twice the normal rate" combine to increase the recovery by three times the normal rate. If a third effect doubled the recovery rate the total would be four times, and so on. So a Wookiee receiving long term care recovers three times his level in vitality per hour, and 3 wounds per day.

What size category is "unarmed"? Page 148 of the core rulebook says that a character can attempt to disarm another character unarmed, but doesn't say what weapon size category "unarmed" is. Unarmed weapon size is also important if a character wishes to make a second punching attack using two-weapon fighting.

According to page 136 of the core rulebook, unarmed strikes count as light weapons for purposes of two-weapon attack penalties and so forth. The size category of a character's bare hands is two size categories smaller than the character. Thus, a Medium-sized character's hands (or other appendages) count as Tiny.

Is there a reason for fire-linking ion cannons on a starfighter? Normally, a single ion cannon inflicts a -2 penalty to all checks made on the affected ship. What happens when ion cannons are fire-linked?

Fire-linking ion cannons increases the penalty by one point. So the fire-linked ion cannons on a Y-wing, for example, inflict a -3 penalty to the target ship on a successful hit.

When using Heal Self or Heal Another, when do you choose if you're going to heal wounds or restore vitality? Do you roll first to see what your result is before choosing?

You should always declare before you roll—on any skill—the effect you're shooting for. In the case of Heal Another and Heal Self, you should declare whether you're trying to heal vitality, wound, or ability points before you roll the d20.

When a Force user rolls a high result for Heal Self or Heal Another, can the player reduce the result so they don't have to spend as many vitality points? This can be very important if the character using the



Game Mastering Advice

Whenever the group I GM meets to game, they aren't really into it. The first clue is that they joke way, way too much; the second is that the session is over before they ever accomplish anything. Do you have any tips for a more involving session? I'd like to throw some puzzles at the heroes, but the players are way too combat-oriented—they much prefer fighting to talking—or thinking. Help!

Group dynamics are always a tricky issue. If some players want to play one way, and the rest want to play another, it creates friction. If the players want to laugh and joke, but the GM wants to get some gaming done, then one or the other is liable to be very frustrated at the end of the session.

A good way to start any campaign is to sit down with all the players and decide—before anyone makes up a character—what kind of campaign the players want, and whether or not the GM is willing to provide that kind of campaign. In most cases, the players and the GM can come to some kind of compromise: “mostly combat, with the occasional roleplaying challenge or puzzle,” or “mostly puzzles and roleplaying, with some combat mixed in.”

Ask yourself, “Why do we get together in the first place?” The answer may seem like a no-brainer: “To game.” Games are a social event, and some people show up just to socialize. The gaming is secondary for them. If that's the case, go with the flow, and don't worry too much about how much you accomplish in a session. Just don't plan for long-term, intricate plots that require the players to pay attention every minute lest they miss something vital. It's a question of expectations—yours, and theirs.

Also, think about where you gather to play. If the players are spread out around the room, if there are a lot of distractions—computers, televisions, video games, some neat doodad—then their attention will naturally drift. Cut down the distractions, and try to arrange the seating so that the players are closer to the action, so they don't suffer from that “troublemakers at the back of the class” syndrome.

If you find that you do all this and they still joke around, consider getting a little hard-nosed: impose a moratorium on out-of-character conversations. Take a five-minute break once an hour, during which they can joke as much as they like, but when that five minutes is up, everyone gets back into character.

skill doesn't have enough vitality points for the rolled result.

For Heal Self and Heal Another, treat the amount healed as though it were limited to the result on the die, or the amount of vitality points the healer has—whichever is lower. Thus, a character with only 2 vitality points left effectively can't roll higher than 24 using one of these skills. If the hero has the Prolong Force feat, he can use the higher result if he wishes to spend the wound points.

When you spend a Force Point is it gone forever, or do you get it back after a while? If it's spent for good, what's the incentive for using the Force Point?

Once spent, a Force Point is gone forever. The only way you get more Force Points is to advance a level, or to perform a dramatically heroic deed. You do “get them back”—just not quickly. You could save them up, but then you're ignoring one of your character's resources, since having unspent Force Points doesn't do anything for you. You're better off spending them judiciously, and making sure you always have at least one—just in case you need it.

Why do stormtroopers, the ultra-elite of the Empire, have stats worse than an average human? I know they are blaster bait but, to use a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* analogy, you made them kobolds instead of orcs (I think they need to be ogres).

“Ultra-”elite may be overstating the capabilities of the average stormtrooper, but their statistics are average for a Human, not worse. Unlike ordinary Humans, they are fanatically loyal to the Emperor—and have more training than the average being on the street. A stormtrooper isn't likely to run when faced with overpowering odds, will score some hits, and do a lot more damage.

But if bigger, tougher, more dangerous stormtroopers are what you're after, then you'll find exactly what you want in the upcoming *Rebellion Era Sourcebook*.

Some of my players want to play a character of the same species as Yoda. There's obviously more than one of them, since another member of the Jedi Council—Yaddle—was the same species. What species are they?

Judge Yoda by his species, do you? Species matters not.

The serious answer is that Yoda's and Yaddle's species is a mystery, for reasons

George Lucas isn't telling. It really isn't important to *Star Wars* to know what species they are; Yoda represents the mysterious, wise, and wizened character that you see in so many heroic myths—the one who appears to guide the hero to his true destiny. His origins are not as important as his contribution to the story.

Feel free to create such a species for you and your play group. Yoda's and Yaddle's strength in the Force is not a factor of their species, but of their understanding and experience. Other members of their species—whatever it happens to be—won't automatically be Jedi masters, or even able to use the Force, necessarily. ☐

Got rules questions?
Send them to:

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or via email to:
swgamer@wizards.com
(include “HoloNet” in the subject)

ROGUES GALLERY

05: Darksiders

ILLUSTRATED BY RAMÓN PÉREZ

Rogues Gallery is a recurring feature that shows character portraits around a theme. Each portrait is sized to fit in the "character illustration" box on the back of the *Star Wars* character sheet. Players can use the portraits as depictions of their heroes, and GMs can use them as characters for the heroes to encounter. Have you got a theme you'd like to see in *Rogues Gallery*? Let us know!



The Crystal



BY ELAINE CUNNINGHAM
ILLUSTRATED BY MIKAEL NOGUCHI



Applause rolled through the Great Temple, reverberating from the vaulting ceiling and ancient stone. To Jaina Solo, the thunderous ovation held echoes of other days and other deeds—and not all of them from times past. The song of the future, her future, was there as well.

Or so Jaina assumed.

The question Uncle Luke has asked her before the ceremony played over and over in her mind like a malfunctioning hologram: "What are your plans for the future?"

A reasonable question, given that she was about to leave the Jedi academy, but nothing that came to mind felt quite right. She liked to fly fast ships. She liked to build things, to fix and improve what had already been built. But such skills seemed dwarfed by the grandeur of this place, this moment.

Much was expected of the niece of Luke Skywalker, the oldest child of Leia Organa and Han Solo. Jaina had always known and accepted this. Responsibility was her birthright, the inevitable result of her Jedi heritage.

Never had Jaina been more conscious of this heritage. She stood upon the dais of the Grand Audience Chamber, keenly aware of the nearby Force-presence of her two brothers and the friends who'd shared their years at the Jedi academy. They radiated exhilaration and pride, only slightly shadowed by the uneasiness that came from being the focus of so much applause, and so many eyes. Off to one side stood Uncle Luke, her parents, and several other heroes of their generation. All this Jaina sensed, though her eyes could perceive nothing but the dazzle of Jedi lightsabers.

The older Jedi Knights gathered in the first row had ignited their lightsabers, lofting them in blazing tribute to the graduating students. The multicolored weapons spoke of hope and power—a rainbow refracted from a hidden sun.

Then the ovation faded, the lightsabers dimmed. A lithe, silver-haired woman moved quietly toward a bench at the front of the dais. She settled down, raised her long-necked double viol, and began to play. Delicate music filled the hall like moonlight. Tionne had taught the young Jedi through tales of former glories; now her song celebrated their adventures and challenged them to create new legends.

Jaina's lips quirked in a faint, ironic smile. "The Ballad of the Jedi Mechanic." She'd bet the *Millennium Falcon* that Tionne wouldn't get many requests for that tune!

When song faded into silence, the new Jedi Knights filed from the dais and processed down the long hall. Their solemn mien dissolved the moment they left the Great Temple. Whoops of celebration mingled with the bright green music of Yavin 4's jungles.

Lowbacca let out an exuberant howl and swept Jaina into a hug. She wrapped her arms around the Wookiee's waist and buried her face in his ginger-colored fur. She was then spun

away into a strong, one-armed embrace, and the unexpected scent of exotic perfume.

Jaina pushed Tenel Ka out to arm's length and regarded her with a grin. For once the Dathomiri girl had exchanged her usual warrior garb—a bright, brief costume fashioned from supple reptile leather—for traditional Jedi robes, and her abundant red-gold hair had been tamed into an elegant crown of coils and braids.

"Except for the hair color, you look just like my mother," Jaina teased.

The girl's gray eyes brightened at what she clearly perceived as a compliment.

"My grandmother will be pleased. She often admonishes me to look and act like a princess," she said, slanting a glance toward the royal vessel. The former Queen Mother of Hapes traveled in a starfaring castle, a whimsical structure that towered high above the more conventional ships.

The lines of Tenel Ka's face hardened as she studied this symbol of her heritage and her family's expectations. A similar, subdued expression fell over the other young Jedi. It occurred to Jaina that she was not the only one perplexed over next steps.

To her surprise, Jacen was the first to give voice to their shared concerns. "Anakin and I will be traveling with Master Luke," he said, brushing aside the lock of brown hair that was forever creeping over his eyes. "And not just to Mon Calamari. After the vacation, we're going to become his apprentices."

Zekk's green eyes widened in surprise. "Both of you? Won't two apprentices be too much to handle?"

Jacen flushed, and Jaina got the impression the two of them had had this conversation before. "It feels like the right step to take." He flashed his crooked grin. "Seems to me I've got plenty left to learn."

"No argument there," Zekk agreed.

During the laughter that followed, Jaina considered her brothers' path. Apprenticeship was a great idea, and if Uncle Luke were taking on students, maybe Aunt Mara would consider one. Mara Jade was absolutely stellar—practical, confident, a crack pilot and a fighter who could mop a cantina floor with a couple of Black Sun thugs without messing up her auburn hair.

A delighted smile spread over Jaina's face. That was it—path selected, problem solved.

But Zekk, judging by the bemused expression on his face, was still trying to get his mind around this concept. "So you two are off to become famous Jedi warriors, like Master Skywalker."

"Those were different times," Jacen said thoughtfully. "Master Luke became a Jedi during the Rebellion, and his path was shaped by necessity. We've always known the Jedi are more than warriors, but we don't know what that 'more' might be. Maybe it's our task to relearn what was lost."

The Crystal

"Very philosophical, little brother," teased Jaina. "And what are the rest of us to do while you mine these gems of wisdom?"

He responded with a good-natured grin. "Save the galaxy. What else?"

"If that's our destiny, we're getting off to a slow start," Anakin said. "Mom was elected to the Imperial Senate when she was Jacen and Jaina's age."

"Our parents might say that the challenges they face today are no less than those of their youth," Tenel Ka observed, her gaze upon three people emerging from the Temple, a tall man and two veiled women in the elaborate garb of Hapan royalty.

Jaina nodded. Princess Leia had been Chief of State and remained a skilled diplomat who held together the increasingly contentious Republic. Han Solo—Jaina's personal hero as well as her father—was a retired general who seemed to find his way into the midst of one adventure or another. She watched with a full, fond heart as her parents emerged from the Grand Temple and rushed toward the young Jedi, their faces bright with pride.

Han slapped both boys on the back and swung Jaina off her feet as if she were still knee high to a wookiee.

"Have some regard for your daughter's dignity," Leia admonished with a smile.

"Dignity's overrated," he rejoined. "Trust me on this." Nevertheless, he set Jaina down and sent her an apologetic grin. "So. What's the next adventure?"

Luke stepped forward. Jaina noticed that Aunt Mara was not with him, and she sent her mother a quizzical glance. Leia shook her head, a slight, almost imperceptible gesture. Jaina caught a whiff of her mother's concern, sad and subtle as the perfume of a crushed flower.

"Jacen and Anakin will be working with me," Uncle Luke said quietly. "They will be apprentices, in the Jedi tradition."

Han nodded as if he'd been expecting this, but there was a certain sadness in his eyes. He worked up a smile and ruffled Jaina's hair. "What about you, kid?"

"I'm still thinking about it," Jaina said, glancing from her mother to Uncle Luke.

"Good. You've got time." Han looked over his shoulder at Chewbacca. "Did you get Jaina's graduation present unloaded?"

The big Wookiee shot a cautious glance at Leia and moaned a rather subdued-sounding affirmative.

"Present?" Jaina glanced from her father to her mother. A familiar expression—mingled exasperation and affection—was dawning on her mother's face.

Leia folded her arms and cocked her head to one side. "Present?" she echoed in a challenging tone.

Han treated his wife to his best roguish grin, then draped an arm around Jaina's shoulders. "C'mon, kid. Let's have a look at her."

Jaina's heart leaped with sudden hope. Her father's tastes and talents mirrored her own, and his gifts were usually spare parts or interesting gizmos he'd picked up in odd corners of the

galaxy. In Han's world, the only non-living thing worthy of the feminine pronoun was a ship. Jaina hadn't dared hope for her own ship so soon! She fell into step beside her father, in her excitement easily matching his long-legged stride.

Leia sighed and turned to Luke, who was hiding a smirk behind his hand and looking more like the boy hero he'd been than the Jedi Master he had become. "Are you coming?"

His grin broadened. "I wouldn't miss it."

Leia glanced at the cluster of young Jedi. The younger students had joined them. Oblivious to everything but each other, they huddled together in a maelstrom of animated chatter, as if determined to relive and define their time together.

"I think we can leave without causing offense," she said dryly.

Luke chuckled, and they followed Han and Jaina to the docking bay. Next to the venerable *Millennium Falcon* was a smaller vehicle, nearly as old and disreputable.

"She's got character," Han said, patting the dented metal fondly. "What do you think?"

Jaina's "new" ship was a late model Z-95. The fixed-position double wings gave it the look of one of the more primitive X-wing models. The hull looked decidedly battered—several panels had been replaced, not always with metal of the same color, and the canopy had been reinforced, also without regard for cosmetic value. Despite the patching, the ship still displayed an impressive collection of dents, creases, and carbon scoring.

"She's beautiful!" Jaina said, and meant it.

"I've made some modifications," her father said proudly. "Reinforced the hull, enhanced the motors, put in a hyperdrive, upgraded the maneuvering jets. She's got it where it counts."

Leia stared at her husband. "I can't believe you bought this... this thing without discussing it!"

A strange expression crossed Han's face. Leia's eyes narrowed in suspicion. "You did buy it, didn't you?"

"No one's going to tell you different," Han said glibly. His cocky expression suddenly faltered, and his gaze slid toward Luke as if he'd suddenly remembered his old friend's ability to read the truth of things.

The Jedi Master lifted both hands. "I'm keeping out of this."

Leia started circling the wreck. "Four laser cannons and a proton torpedo launcher? Isn't that a lot of fire power for a ship this size?"

"Hey, better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it," Han countered.

"Like carrying a lightsaber on a date," Jaina observed with a straight face and dancing eyes.

Her father's eyebrows lifted approvingly, and he pointed a finger at Jaina as if to award her points for logic and ingenuity.

The cockpit creaked opened and a lithe, red-haired woman swung herself out. She landed lightly and walked with cat-like grace toward the suddenly silent group.

"It might not be pretty, but it'll fly," she announced.

Suddenly Jaina understood her mother's concern. Mara Jade had always been slim; the belt cinching her flight suit was fastened several notches tighter. The sharp, elegant bones of her

face cast shadows upon the hollows below. There was an unhealthy gray cast to her pale skin, and her green eyes were fever-bright.

Jaina quickly shielded her shock and dismay. She ran forward and threw her arms—carefully—around her uncle's wife.

"Aunt Maral I'm so glad you came."

"Where else would I be?"

At least Mara's voice was the same: a smoky purr that always gave Jaina the impression of velvet over sheathed claws, like a Togorian warrior's offered handclasp. Her Force presence, however, was even more drastically altered than her appearance. Perceived through the Force, Mara had always reminded Jaina of a blaster—steel and strength, stealth and speed. But now her life force burned like a thin, fiercely determined flame.

With a sigh, Jaina put aside her newly conceived plan for apprenticeship.

She felt Mara stiffen. The older Jedi pushed Jaina off to arms' distance and fixed her with a steady gaze. "The answer to your question is yes."

"But—"

Mara cut off Jaina's objection with a curt shake of her head and stepped back. "Let's see your lightsaber."

The girl unhooked it from her belt and handed it over. Mara thumbed it on.

A brilliant blue-violet blade leaped from the polished handle. The battered metal of both ships reflected its light and color—an intense, restless hue that seemed poised on the edge of the visible spectrum. While most lightsabers awakened with a *snap-hiss* and illuminated in a swift, graceful glide, Jaina's blade popped into full and instant readiness. Jacen sometimes teased Jaina that hers was the only lightsaber in the galaxy that hummed even when it was off.

"Suits you," Mara said with a wry smile. "I hear you grew your own crystals."

The approval in her voice surprised Jaina. All the other students had used found crystals or gems as the foci for their lightsabers, and none of them understood why Jaina had been determined to create her own.

"I grew the crystals for my first lightsaber," Mara went on. "It connects you, gives you a different feel altogether. You are, almost literally, part of the weapon."

"A balance between mechanical and metaphysical?" Luke suggested.

"Something like that. But more to the point, it's about perception. Sometimes you need to focus, and sometimes you need to *become* the focus. Right?"

Mara directed this question at Jaina. She wasn't entirely certain what her aunt meant, but she nodded sagely.

"Since you've already come this far on your own, we can skip that part of your training for now and go straight to flying."

"Flying?" Han echoed incredulously, his gaze shifting between his sister-in-law and his daughter. "I already taught her to fly."

Mara sent him a wink. "I can probably work around that."

Her family's laughter rolled off Jaina as she ran loving hands over her new ship. While her aunt explained her plans for apprenticeship to the other adults, Jaina made a mental list of repairs and improvements. Her fingers itched for the feel of a hydrosponder, but that impulse was nothing compared to the urge to get into the cockpit.

"When can I fly her?" she broke in.

Han scratched his chin. "Well, we were planning to head straight to Mon Calamari. Why don't you meet us there? It'll be an easy flight—the coordinates are already programmed into the computer. And there's no easier landing than the docking bay at the Crystal Reef resort."

Jaina glanced at Leia, who was eyeing the battered ship with a dubious expression. "Mom? I know it's old, and that it's, um, got character, but Aunt Mara says it'll be fine. And Dad, too," she added belatedly.

"Hey, thanks," Han muttered.

While most lightsabers awakened with a *snap-hiss* and illuminated in a swift, graceful glide, Jaina's blade popped into full and instant readiness.

Leia threw up her hands in surrender. "I'm not exactly negotiating from a position of strength. How could I possibly object to my sixteen-year-old daughter traveling across the galaxy in a flying junk heap, when I'm in the *Falcon*?"

"Keep it up," her husband warned, only half in jest.



Jaina pulled steadily away from Yavin 4, her spirits soaring as she rose through the atmosphere. Her new ship rattled and shuddered a bit as it rushed upward through the heavy, humid air, but the sublight drive hummed with steady competence. It was a reassuring, almost complacent sound.

"An easy trip," Jaina said, repeating her father's words in a wistful tone. She supposed there was much to be said for that. The maiden voyage in her first ship was a grand adventure in and of itself.

So she settled in to enjoy the simple pleasures of space travel. The intense blue of the jungle moon's skies swiftly deepened to sapphire. Stars winked into life. The exhilaration of being hurtled through resisting air gave way to a floating sensation as the Z-95 left Yavin 4's atmosphere behind. Except for the information coming to her from the ship's sensors and the rapidly diminishing Yavin system, Jaina might have thought that the Z-95 was sitting still.

She pulled it into a tight turn, letting the G-force build as she got a feel for what the ship could do. The orange gas giant receded swiftly, its light fading with distance.

The Crystal

Jaina glanced back. Yavin was too bright to study from its moon's surface, but from this vantage she could make out its dancing atmosphere patterns. The silhouettes of a few minuscule ships crawled across the fading orange light as family and friends who'd attended the Jedi ceremony returned to their far-scattered homes.

A faint smile curved her lips. Leaving a part of her life behind was hard, but it helped to have a direction. After a few days of play and relaxation at the Crystal Reef, she'd start working with her new Jedi Master.

In a way, Jacen and Anakin had already started. Recently it seemed that they'd been practicing with their lightsabers every time she turned around. In light of their new apprenticeship, that made sense. Fencing improved physical condition, but its primary purpose was helping Jedi attune to the Force. Uncle Luke had probably given the boys exercises devised to move them toward the next level of strength and insight.

But Mara had decided to bypass that part of Jaina's training and focus on flying. That seemed an odd course for an apprenticeship to take, but Jaina didn't mind the idea one little bit.

As she turned toward the hyperspace coordinates, she noticed several moving pinpricks of light on a steady course toward the Yavin system.

"A little late, aren't you?" murmured Jaina. Curious, she pulled closer to the approaching vessel.

The ship was a modified X-wing, late model, a beautiful sleek thing with a gleaming hull patterned in bronze and black. It inspired admiration, but absolutely no envy.

Jaina patted the console of her battered Z-95 contentedly. The X-wing was stellar, no doubt about it, but her ship suited her just fine. She was fairly small, just short of her mother's size and height, which made her considerably smaller than most human pilots. But the new seat her dad put in placed her comfortably near the controls. The sensitive pressure pads that controlled direction and pitch had been replaced with the old-fashioned stick she preferred.

She flicked her cabin lights in a friendly hail and then veered away from the approaching X-wing. In no hurry, she settled in to enjoy the flight, looping and soaring as joyfully as a bird on the first spring day.

The first attack took her by surprise. Suddenly the sky blazed with livid pink light. A thin bolt, like a lethal sunset cloud, flared toward her.

The Z-95 shields took the hit, but the ship yawed sharply. Jaina wrestled it back into control, overcompensating and sending it into a spiraling dive.

Just as well—two more bolts streaked past in rapid succession, each missing by meters.

"That famous Solo luck," she muttered as she pulled the Z-95 out of its spin. She eased the stick gingerly to one side, and her ship shot off at a sharp angle away from its attacker.

With her free hand, Jaina fumbled for the comm system and switched to hailing frequency.

"X-wing, acknowledge."

Her ancient system crackled. "This is *Bail Jumper*, acknowledging enemy fighter."

The voice was male, probably human, and melodic and resonant enough for Coruscant opera. It was an unlikely voice for a pilot whose ship sported such a roguish name.

"*Bail Jumper*, I'm not your enemy," Jaina said as calmly as she could manage. She glanced at her sensors. The X-wing was giving pursuit, steadily closing in on her much-older ship. "My name is Jaina Solo, and I'm a student pilot on my way to a family vacation. It doesn't get much less threatening than that."

"Negative. My scanners identify you as *Onyx Star*, a ship stolen from my employer by agents of Icaris Tool and Drive."

Jaina slumped back into her seat and groaned. "Better start running, Dad. Mom is going to kill you when she hears about this!"

"A pathetic bluff. My sensors indicate no other ships within hailing frequency, much less lethal firing range," observed the disembodied voice.

"That's not what I meant, but never mind," Jaina said. "Listen, my only connection with Icaris is that I used to get parts from them. They went out of business about three years back."

"Negative. Icaris Corporation supplies parts and industrial intelligence to Subpro Corporation, which intends to replicate the *Onyx Star* in quantity."

"Sure, fifty years ago!" Jaina exploded. "Subpro hasn't been building the Z-95 Headhunter for years. There's lots of old Z-95's around. I don't have a copy of my ship's providence handy, but chances are, you've got the wrong ship."

"Negative. *Onyx Star* is unique, a prototype developed by Bahalian Shipyards."

Two things simultaneously occurred to Jaina, hitting her with a speed and force that reminded her of her last fencing match against Jacen and Tenel Ka. First, the pilot was not just misinformed, he was insane. According to him, the first Z-95 ship had yet to be built. Second, she'd heard her father mention Bahalian—a small, well-regarded shipyard that was known to smugglers as a front company for the Tenloss Syndicate.

"This isn't the Bajic sector," Jaina pointed out, naming the base for the powerful criminal organization. "You're a long way from home, *Bail Jumper*. Isn't it possible that you're confused about other things, too?"

"No confusion. My mission is clear: Destroy the prototype before it gets to Subpro. *Bail Jumper* out."

Silence replaced static. Blue flame exploded into the endless night. Jaina's warning sensors blinked and buzzed, confirming that the proton torpedo had a lock.

Instinctively Jaina reached out through the Force, sensing and then measuring the angle of approach. She clenched both hands around the stick and pulled back, hard.

As the Z-95 traced a tight upward circle, the hum of the sublight drive rose in pitch to a scream of protest. Pressure built in the cockpit from the rising G's until stars began to dance and explode at the periphery of Jaina's vision. More lights began to blink on the console, warning of possible system failure. The proton torpedo scorched past, a near miss.

Jaina eased up as much as she dared. Stars spun, and the orange gas giant whirled past. She abruptly pulled out of the loop and twisted to one side.

She glanced at the navigation computer. A glowing screen marked the coordinates for the hyperspace jump, as well as her current position. And directly between the two points was a tiny glowing icon, moving steadily toward her position. The X-wing was between her and the safety of hyperspace. She had to go around it . . . or through it.

Jaina rebelled against that idea even as her hand reached for the targeting device. The X-wing pilot had a madman's delusions. He wasn't about to be deterred by a couple of warning shots. If Jaina fired, she'd have to aim to kill.

Reluctantly she circled around to face the attacking X-wing. She pulled the targeting screen closer and activated her weapon systems. Blinking red arrows appeared on the screen, surrounding and then stalking the image representing the X-wing. They flared triumphantly to announce a target lock.

Still Jaina hesitated. "*Bail Jumper*, we don't have to do this. Turn aside and let me pass."

In response, a barrage of ruby fire exploded from behind the transparisteel canopy, coming from a place where no weapon should have existed.

Jaina instinctively jinked, moving away from the incoming missiles. She took a solid hit. The cabin lights winked off, then blinked uncertainly back.

"No astromech droid," she muttered. For some reason, the pilot had filled the compartment designed to hold a droid with another laser canon.

But that should have been impossible! The X-wing was designed for a single pilot, but its systems were too complicated for one person to manage. An R2 unit handled astromech navigation functions, plotted hyperspace jumps, and rerouted systems in response to damage. Maybe a droid pilot could manage to do all of that, but it would be hard pressed.

On the other hand, this possibility made her decision easier. Jaina had fewer problems with the idea of vaporizing a droid than reducing a living pilot to stardust.

Just to make sure, she reached out with the Force. There was a presence, faint but definitely alive, in the X-wing. The truth came to her suddenly.

"Cyborg," she murmured in a voice tinged with dread.

That would explain the lack of an R2 unit—a cyborg pilot would have neural implants, interface ports that hooked directly into the ship's computers.

This might also explain the pilot's confusion. Cybernetics vastly enhanced intelligence, but in time, the human mind receded under the constant assault of information. Some cyborgs became little more than flesh-and-blood droids, but the minds of a few protested this loss of humanity with a vehemence that drove the host insane. Occasionally, cybernetic psychosis set in, and the cyborg could no longer function as either a human or a computer peripheral.

This pilot was obviously suffering a few glitches in his interface. "Guess that rules out negotiation," Jaina said. Reluctantly she reached for her targeting controls.

She took a long, calming breath and opened herself up to the Force. Trusting her instincts, she fired.

Her first attack was a simultaneous burst from a pair of laser cannons, which the X-wing neatly dodged. Jaina caught her breath in mingled admiration and concern.

There was no way she could match that. She was a decent pilot, but the cyborg was quite literally an extension of his ship. His data banks might have been jumbled, but judging from the way he was flying, he still had perfect control over most functions. Even with the Force, she was definitely outclassed.

Jaina fired again, then juked sharply to evade the counter-attack. The two ships fell into a deadly dance, dipping and swooping like a pair of vahitian bats vying for territory. Streaks of laser fire illuminated the blackness of the void, so many that a tangled web of fading lines etched the sky.

Blue flame exploded into the endless night. Jaina's warning sensors blinked and buzzed, confirming that the proton torpedo had a lock.

The Z-95 took a hit to the port maneuvering jet. Sensors whined and flared in warning as the system began to sputter out. Before Jaina could react, her ship jolted again as another beam battered her shields.

Realization set in, knowledge as bleak and cold as space itself: *Sometimes, the Force wasn't enough.*

Then an image flooded Jaina's mind, one bright enough to counter this darkness—the memory of Mara Jade admiring the blue-violet blade of Jaina's lightsaber, and the crystals within.

"Sometimes," she'd said, "you have to find a focus, and sometimes you have to *become* the focus."

Suddenly Jaina understood what Mara had been trying to tell her. She reached out, not in an attempt to sense and focus the greater Force, but into every corner of her battered Z-95.

A new and yet familiar awareness filled her, like awakening to find herself in a remembered dream. She knew her way around the inside of a ship and was confident that, given time and parts, she could fix any damage to the Z-95. But now she saw and felt the ship in ways she had never thought possible.

Every bolt and rivet was as apparent to her as the lights on her control panel, as detailed as a zoom-in on a holographic systems report, as much a part of her as the color of her eyes, or the calluses on her small hands. The hum of the drives, the tensed readiness of armed weapons, the sputtering death of the port maneuvering jet all spoke to her in a language of sounds and sensations that she could understand.

And not just understand, but control. What a crystal was to a lightsaber, Jaina became to her Z-95.

The Crystal

A new attack cut short this epiphany. Jaina sensed the incoming proton torpedo an instant before the warning systems flared. She didn't need to look at the console to know it had a dead lock on her port engine.

Jaina poured power to her starboard maneuvering jets. The sudden, unbalanced surge spun the Z-95 on its horizontal axis like an empty bottle. The torpedo missed its target and grazed the faltering port jet instead.

The result was similar to what Han often achieved with an open-handed smack to various uncooperative systems in the *Falcon*. The sputtering jet flared as if in sudden temper, then settled down into a steady stream of available power.

Jaina made a slight adjustment that brought the ship out of its spin and sent it hurtling directly toward the X-wing. She fired two of her laser cannons. Both hit the target, but the sturdy X-wing merely shrugged off the blows.

The cyborg pilot countered with a barrage of incoming fire. Jaina put her ship into a complex evasive dance, as instinctively as she might have blinked, and with as little conscious thought.

When the lethal fireworks faded, she veered away, keeping enough distance to give her time to take stock of the situation. Her ship described a wide arc, beyond the practical range of the X-wing's laser cannons.

Cyborg: Male Human Sol 6/SA 5; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 22 (+8 class, +4 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 82/14; Atk +11/+6 melee (1d3+2, punch), +13/+8 ranged; SQ Starfighter defense, familiarity +2, starfighter evasion; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +5; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep 4; Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13. Challenge Code: C.

Equipment: Modified X-wing (*Bail Jumper*), flight suit.

Skills: Astrogate +12, Computer Use +10, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (systems) +6, Pilot +20, Profession (repossessor) +6, Read/Write Basic, Repair +10, Speak Basic, Survival +4.

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Sharp-Eyed, Spacer, Starship Dodge (starfighters), Starship Operation (starfighters), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

BAIL JUMPER

Craft: Modified Incom T-65B X-wing; **Class:** Starfighter; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Tiny (12.5 m long); **Crew:** 1 (unique); **Passengers:** 0; **Cargo Capacity:** 75 kg; **Consumables:** 1 week; **Hyperdrive:** x1; **Maximum Speed:** Ramming; **Maneuvers:** +2 (+2 size); **Defense:** 22 (+2 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 30; **Hull Points:** 120; **DR:** 5.

Weapon: Laser cannons (5 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +8 (+2 size, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 7d10 x 2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.

Weapon: Two proton torpedo launchers (3 torpedoes each); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +6 (+2 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 9d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S/M/L n/a.

The cyborg fired anyway.

Beam after beam followed Jaina along her sweeping path, like spokes in an elliptical wheel. At this distance, evasion required no more than a subtle undulation, as a small boat might rise and fall over gentle waves. Some of the bolts streamed past, some dissipated just short of their target.

A new solution occurred to Jaina. She had four laser cannons and very little weapon power remaining while the Z-95's modified engine tried to keep their recharge rate up. Most likely, the X-wing's firepower was similarly depleted.

She continued to dance and circle, teasing laser blasts from the cyborg pilot. Again and again, her sensors warned that the X-wing was arming its weapon systems. Finally, the warning flashed, but the cyborg's lasers did not. Jaina sank back with a sigh of relief.

Her ship was less optimistic.

Warnings pulsed and flared as the cyborg pilot repeatedly fired his depleted weapons.

"It's finished," she said with exasperation. "Get over it!"

But the single-minded pilot came on, setting a direct path for her Z-95. After a startled moment, Jaina realized his intent. He was going to stop the "prototype" ship even if that meant using his own ship as a missile.

Swiftly but reluctantly, Jaina shifted power to her forward shields and reached for the weapon controls. She splayed her fingers wide and tapped them in a sharp, rapid pattern over a four of her laser cannon triggers.

Ruby lights streamed forward, so rapidly that they seemed converge into a single devastating blast. Jaina leaned the ship sharply aside.

A brief, brilliant explosion lit the void. Jaina flinched instinctively as debris clattered into her ship. She continued her wide arc away from the potentially lethal shrapnel that was the cyborg's last remaining weapon.

Her heart thudded like Ewok battle drums as she circled back, carefully dodging the floating remnants of the ship. An entire wing formation spun by, and a chunk of twisted metal that appeared to comprise most of the cockpit.

Jaina sighed with relief. She'd aimed for the underside of the ship, trying to graze the ship and take out the cargo compartment. A breach of that magnitude would trigger immediate evacuation, whether the pilot liked it or not. She'd heard about the dangers of going EV—extra-vehicular—but the way she saw it, anything was better than getting vaped.

Her eye caught a small black shape that cut a void against the background of stars. She powered down and drifted close. Tumbling lazily through space, clearly visible through the translucent material of his sealed suit and helmet, was the cyborg pilot.

Once he had been a human male of exotic appearance and impressive condition. A fitted black flight suit emphasized muscles in fine trim. His clean-shaved face had sharply defined bones, and his skin was a coppery hue—so metallic in appearance that for a moment Jaina didn't notice the cybernetic parts. External ports of the same copper color had been placed

over each ear, and a metallic collar ringed his neck. His eyes were open and staring, as black as space itself and every bit as cold. Whatever warmth and emotion they might once have known was forgotten by the weird, solid-black photoreceptors that replaced the original orbs. Little remained of his humanity, but there was a good chance he was still alive.

But for how long?

The cyborg was torn from his ship, his host computer destroyed. There wasn't much left of him other than the body that he'd apparently decided was not enough.

"Sometimes you need to focus, and sometimes you need to be the focus," Jaina murmured as she considered the other side of the lesson she'd taken from her lightsaber's crystal. She was a part of this ship, the crystal focusing its power, but she was not the ship. Once this journey was over, she would swing out of the cockpit and shift her focus outward.

The Jedi had a perspective different from most people, but Jaina suspected that they were more alike than different. Everyone's reality was shaped by his perceptions. The cyborg had learned to be part of his ship long before she had; perhaps with time and care, he could also remember a life beyond.

Jaina circled back toward Yavin and opened her comm system to hailing frequency. Once she found someone who could pick up the EV pilot, she would continue on her course.

The journey ahead, and the future to which it led, seemed bright indeed.



Jaina eased her Z-95 into the docking bay of Crystal Reef and powered down the systems. The battered ship sighed off—an oddly human sound that coaxed a chuckle from the young pilot. She didn't need her newfound connection with the ship to recognize relief when she heard it.

A few new dents in the cockpit made it harder to open than Jaina expected. After a few attempts she shouldered it aside and rose stiffly from the seat.

The howl of an enraged Wookiee split the air. Chewbacca loped forward and plucked Jaina from the seat, holding her aloft and punctuating his scolding with an occasional teeth-rattling shake.

"I'm sorry you were worried, but I'm fine," Jaina told him as soon as she could speak. "The ship took a few hits, though."

As she'd expected, this captured Chewbacca's attention. The Wookiee set her down and began to take stock of the damage. Jaina reached in the pocket of her flight suit for her favorite multitool and put it into Chewbacca's outstretched hand.

"I'll be back to help as soon as I can," she said, turning her gaze to the small group of people that the long-legged Wookiee had outrun.

Chewie responded with a grumble. Jaina reached up to pat his shoulder, then strode forward to meet her family.

Her father was the first one to reach her. Relief and concern battled for supremacy on his face. "What happened to you? Problems with the hyperdrive?"

"Worked great," she told him with a grin. "But I thought it was illegal to put a Class Two hyperdrive on a ship this size."

Han glanced back to see if the others had heard. "Nice try, kid, but I'm not that easily distracted. Spill it."

She linked her arm in his. "I had a little problem in sublight, but nothing your modifications couldn't handle. But like you said, the rest of the flight was easy."

Jaina glanced toward her brothers, who were marveling at the damage her ship had withstood. Her mother and uncle came up slowly, probably in deference to Mara Jade's uncharacteristically slow pace.

Her aunt's bright green eyes met hers. "I'm not surprised you're late, seeing that you took off before giving your new ship a name. Hasn't anyone ever told you that's bad luck?"

"You already named her," Jaina said.

Mara raised a quizzical brow, but the expression on her face suggested she had a good idea what was on the girl's mind.

"You told me once that most ships were named after the pilot, one way or another."

"I thought you'd see it that way," Mara said. She reached into the pocket of her flight suit for a small metal disk. "It will take time to get exterior ID plates made up, but I made this for you on the flight over."

Jaina took the disk and studied it for a long moment. A simple design had been etched into the metal; a multifaceted gem as well as the symbols for the word that defined how Jaina, as a pilot, would always think of herself:

Crystal.

She thanked Mara with a nod, then turned back to her father. "Dad, you seem to know, well, everybody. I was wondering if you might know something about a certain pilot. Big guy, bald, coppery skin, gorgeous speaking voice. He probably got into trouble more than once—I'm guessing he jumped bail a time or two. Ended up working for the Tenloss Syndicate. Ever cross paths with him?"

Han Solo eyed her warily. "Maybe. Why do you ask?"

Jaina linked her other arm with her mother's, as much for the comfort of contact as for her desire to place herself as a buffer between the two. "Well, it's like this..."

THE CRYSTAL

Craft: Modified Incom/Subpro Z-95 Headhunter; **Class:** Starfighter; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Tiny (11.8 m long); **Crew:** 1 (unique); **Passengers:** None; **Cargo Capacity:** 60 kg; **Consumables:** 1 week; **Hyperdrive:** x1; **Maximum Speed:** Ramming; **Maneuvers:** +4 (+2 size, +2 engine quality); **Defense:** 22 (+2 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 30; **Hull Points:** 150; **DR:** 10.

Weapon: Triple blasters* (2 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +6 (+2 size, +2 fire control, +2 engine quality); **Damage:** 3d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L n/a.

Weapon: Concussion missile launcher (6 missiles); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +6 (+2 size, +2 fire control, +2 engine quality); **Damage:** 7d10 x 2; **Range Modifiers:** PB -2, S/M/L n/a.

*Triple blasters may be set to multifire.



Man Gario



DARKNESS SHARED

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

ILLUSTRATED BY MARC SASSO

A galaxy far, far away, six months before the Battle of Ruusan . . .

The *Golden Song* rode the shifting currents of color and light through hyperspace, covering vast distances with each click of its onboard chronometer. Crian Maru sat rigid in her chair, using every meditative exercise she knew to remain calm and in control. She wasn't sure how the Jedi Masters did it. They always looked so serene, so at peace. Perhaps she would eventually achieve such a constant state of quiet reflection and confidence, the conditions that she believed separated a Jedi Knight from a Jedi Master. But those were thoughts for another day. Now she had to prepare herself and her apprentice for the tests that lay ahead of them, while she tried to come to grips with the horror they had left behind.

Under the light of Harpori's sun, Crian Maru and her apprentice had landed the *Golden Song*. What was supposed to be a bustling Duros colony was silent and still. No one had come to greet them. The town square had been deserted. When Crian reached into the Force, all she sensed was sadness. All she felt was emptiness. Behind this emptiness lurked darkness.

The transport shuddered, and with a sudden shift in the stars, the journey through hyperspace came to an end. Crian tried to block out the images of Harpori. Slaughtered Duros adorned with the unmistakable wounds of a lightsaber. Men, women, and children massacred to appease the dark hunger and churning anger of the Marauder. The Madman. The Dark Killer.

With a deep, calming breath, the Jedi Knight banished the haunting images, at least for the moment. It was time to finish the job they had set out to do. They had to face the darkness. He was close, their quarry. Within this star system, Crian could feel his sinister presence in the Force. It was not a feeling she appreciated.

"Where are we, Dree?" Crian asked her Padawan learner.

The young Rodian, Dree Vandap—barely more than a child—was reviewing the *Golden Song's* nav computer display, anticipating her teacher's request. "Still in the Mid Rim," Dree said, "A system called Balowa." Dree frowned in the Rodian fashion,

crinkling her snout. She absently shook her head crest. "I see nothing out here."

"He's here," Crian said, adjusting the controls and engaging the ship's sublight thrusters. "Check the sensors, and be mindful for vibrations in the Force. It will tell you more than machines and computers ever will, if you listen to its song."

For Crian, the Force was like a constant melody that had been with her for as long as she could remember. It washed over the Jedi Knight like waves of sensation that few others could feel, an omnipresent hum that was at once grand and complex, simple and comforting, full of movement yet totally still. When she was at peace, she could feel the Force resonate within her. Like the echoes of a beloved song. That was how Crian perceived it. Other Jedi explained it differently. Her Master had described it as an omnipresent mist that swirled and drifted constantly around him. Dree described it as a still pond; when it rippled, it told her things.

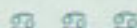
Crian closed her eyes, letting the Force guide her hands as they moved over the transport's controls. The song reverberated within her, changing, building. Now it was thunderous and cacophonous. Crian could sense the Dark One in the Force, could hear the terrible rhythm that made him tangible to her Jedi senses. His presence was full of anger. It vibrated with barely controlled rage.

He was coming.

The Marauder.

The Madman.

Kaox Krul.



The Marauder slipped his ship into the transport's wake, riding the thrust of its sublight drive like some sleek ocean predator angling for the kill. He was Kaox Krul, proud warrior of the Brotherhood of Darkness, devoted follower of Kaan, the Dark Lord of the Sith. A great war was about to erupt, pitting the



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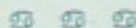
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DARKNESS SHARED

hate-fueled believers in the dark side of the Force against the

weak-willed Jedi who preached the hypocrisy of peace and tranquility. The Jedi claimed they never felt the raw wind of rage as it screamed through their blood. Liars! They denied the dark side, refused to harness its power. They made rules to stop others from accepting that strength if they so desired. How Kaox hated the Jedi and the sanctimony they preached.

This one, the human woman, had been hounding Kaox for more than a month. It was time to end their little game. He had to return to Lord Kaan's side. He could sense his Master's summons in the Force, and he could not resist the beckoning much longer. Lord Kaan was calling them all, the entire Brotherhood. The war of dark against light was about to begin. But Kaox had one more thing to accomplish before he returned to his Master.

The hunting transport moved in a deliberate search pattern, sliding closer and closer to a small, uninhabited world. Kaox didn't bother to check his nav computer; the Force told him that the unnamed planet teemed with life, none of it more advanced than a womp rat. There was nothing in this system to concern him. The Jedi were alone, without any possibility of assistance. Soon, Kaox thought, *they would be dead.*

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The Marauder pushed his starfighter into an attack vector and powered up his weapons system. The transport was in his sights—a slow, lumbering creature about to be ripped asunder by the fast predator swooping up behind it. He would have preferred to kill the Jedi and her apprentice in close combat, lightsaber against lightsaber, but the time for such contests had passed. He reached into the Force, pictured the transport exploding into a thousand fiery shards. He let his anger rise within him, filling him with rage and power. Now the Force was a crimson sheen before his eyes, bathing the transport in a targeting haze that would increase his accuracy and ensure the killing shot. Kaox triggered the starfighter's laser cannons, and bolts of energized death streaked toward the unsuspecting prey.



The Dark Killer had slipped behind them like a shadow. She felt his savage presence a fraction of a second before Dree cried out. Crian suppressed a smile. Her Padawan was very good, but now was not the time to tell her so. Instead her hands danced over the controls, coaxing the sluggish transport to veer from its current course before the Marauder's lasers burned through their hull or sliced open their sublight engines.

"Dree, hang on to something!" Crian commanded as the

Golden Song shook and groaned. With stern resistance—and a token measure of defiance—the transport rolled slowly to one side. Crian grimaced and hoped it would hold together.

"The Marauder is right behind us!" Dree shouted. "Closing fast ..."

The explosion that ripped through the transport drowned out Dree's voice. She might have finished her sentence, but Crian couldn't hear the words over the noise of the laser strike and the blaring alarms that warned her of a dozen imminent systems failures. The *Golden Song* was locked in a spin. As smoke poured into the cockpit, Crian frowned and fought the controls. Then, with a crash and a powerful jolt, the lights snapped out, leaving the Jedi Knight and her Padawan in total darkness.

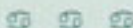


Kaox Krul felt his starfighter shudder as lances of laser fire erupted from its forward-mounted cannons. He used the dark side to aim true, pinpointing the precise spot where the lasers would rip through the transport's engines. His elation was momentary at best, however, because the transport had dodged the fatal fire. The insipid Jedi had sensed his presence!

There could be no other answer. His prey slid to the right, a maneuver far too ambitious and daring for such a lumbering craft. The Marauder's lasers sliced into the belly of the transport, carving a wound that bled atmosphere from the left ventral portion of its hull. Kaox leered. It wasn't the killing blow he had foreseen, but it was damaging nonetheless.

As the transport fell into an uncontrolled spin, Kaox realized with some alarm that his starfighter was too close. He had wanted to fly through the explosion, scattering the remaining shards of the transport in his passing as he sent the Jedi and her apprentice to their Final Jump. But there was no explosion, and the spinning transport's nose struck the starfighter a solid blow. The Jedi's ship hit the Marauder like a charging nerf plowing into a ripclaw.

Kaox's consciousness fled as the starfighter bounced away and fell toward the small planet below.



The transport tumbled end over end.

While Crian hoped that fate had spelled the end of the Marauder, she didn't believe that Kaox Krul could be dispatched so easily. The darkness was still out there. Regardless, she had more immediate problems. The *Golden Song* spiraled

toward the small planet that had greeted the Jedi shortly after they had emerged from hyperspace. Now it filled the viewport as Crian struggled to regain control of the vessel.

"Dree, what can you tell me about that planet?"

There was no response. Crian could sense nothing more than an impression of the Rodian Padawan. Dree was alive and probably unconscious. Anything else Crian imagined was purely speculation, and she didn't have time for that. The planet was coming up fast, and she still couldn't get the transport to respond to her commands.

"Come on," Crian urged the ship. "Your namesake is supposed to bring good luck and fortune. I could use a little of both right about now."

The *Golden Song* hit the planet's atmosphere hard. Crian could feel the ship breaking apart around her. "A little help here," Crian whispered, willing the stabilizers to come back on line or the repulsorlift engine to kick in. She hit the repulsor toggle again. Nothing. Once more.

There was a recalcitrant groan from somewhere deep in the transport. Suddenly, it was slowing, trying to level out. The repulsors were working! That was something, anyway. She might not be able to get the *Golden Song* up into space again, but maybe she could lead it relatively gently to the surface of the planet.

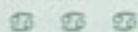
It wasn't going to be a pretty landing, Crian knew. The transport rocked back and forth as the repulsors pushed against the planet's surface. With great trepidation, the ship fought the clutches of gravity as it punched through the exosphere into the ionosphere, sliced across the stratosphere, and plunged into the sky. A weird realization came to Crian as she imagined the ship confronting its own destiny with a mixture of trepidation and valor, and it made her sad. The *Golden Song* had made its last journey. Their beautiful, faithful transport was diving to its death.

The transport raked the treetops, cutting a swath through the leafy canopy before plunging into the sea of dense foliage. It hit the ground, bounced off its repulsorfield, and bounced again. Through the cracked viewport, Crian saw impenetrable forest. The transport slid across a clearing and plowed into the base of a massive tree trunk, and then Crian saw nothing at all.



Kaox's senses cleared as his starfighter skimmed across the planet's atmosphere. He struggled to attain a vector that would allow the ship to glide toward the planet's surface in a more or less controlled fall. He caught sight of the Jedi's transport as it plunged toward the dense forest canopy, then focused his attention on saving his own craft. The starfighter's nose had been crushed, rendering its sensor array useless. Kaox was certain that other systems had been damaged as well, perhaps beyond repair, but he had engines and steering. He flew the starfighter toward the surface, looking for a place to set down.

Then he would head out on foot, locate the Jedi, and either dance on their dead bodies or finish the job—up close, where he could carve them into small chunks.



Dree Vandap knew she was alive because she hurt all over. A spirit on the Rodian Hunting World—the place good Rodians go when they die—couldn't hurt like this. At least, Dree had never heard of such a thing in any of the stories she had read. She hadn't been raised in the Rodian tradition, though, so there were probably a lot of things about Rodian theology that she didn't know. She grew up in the Jedi Temple, where she learned the ways of the Jedi from teachers such as Lord Hoth and Crian Maru. The Jedi didn't follow the Path of the Hunt, but Dree had read about her homeworld and the Rodian traditions. She felt that she had a good idea about the Hunting World and spirit hunters, and certainly no spirit that she had ever read about had a bruise the size of a shell-fruit on the side of its head.

The Padawan pushed aside the debris and stood up. The *Golden Song* was a ruin of shredded durasteel, melted plasteel, and exposed wiring. She loved this ship, but it was painfully obvious that it had flown its last mission. Thankfully, it hadn't been Dree's last mission as well.

"Just wait, Vandap," Dree muttered to herself, "the day isn't over yet."

The Rodian took a moment to assess the damage. It looked bad from the inside, but she didn't see anything that led her to believe she was in immediate danger. There was no fire, no sparking wires, no warning hum signalling a power cell overload. She stepped into a relatively clear spot on the tilted deck and checked that her lightsaber was still clipped to her belt. Then she remembered her Master.

"Master Crian?" Dree called out. Her voice was weaker and more frightened sounding than she had intended, so she called again, louder and—she hoped—with more confidence.

When she received no reply, Dree reached out with the Force. She probed the area, searching for any sign of her Master's presence in the Force. Dree wasn't very good at this sort of thing, though every Jedi had some rudimentary ability to sense vibrations in the Force. She concentrated, closed her eyes, and tried to open herself to the vibrations.

Nothing.

No, wait. There was something. Dree had a sense of impending doom. Death. The dark side. It made her convulse.

"Space this!" Dree muttered. She shook her head, clearing away the feeling. "I'll check on Crian the old-fashioned way."

She moved toward the forward part of the cabin, trying to ignore the shattered viewport and the crushed control panels. "Crian?" she called again, and she could feel the fear trying to well within her. Dree didn't let it.

Stepping over a piece of deck plating that had been ripped open, Dree saw Crian's boot sticking out from behind a twisted console. The Padawan took a deep breath to steady herself, then moved to her Master's side. She saw Crian lying there, and

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was unsure how to proceed. She didn't see any gaping wounds or

obviously broken bones. There wasn't any blood pooling around her Master, but that didn't mean she wasn't hurt just the same. *Should I touch her*, Dree wondered, trying to remember the rudimentary medical training she had received a few years earlier. *Shake her? Call out her name until she answers?*

But what if she's dead, Dree asked herself. *She certainly won't respond if she's already dead.*

"I'm not dead," Crian said in a hoarse whisper, blinking her eyes open to look at her student.

Dree couldn't help herself. She jumped back, banging her elbow on a twisted bulkhead.

"Fine," Crian said in an amused tone, "Don't help your old Master."

"You're not old," Dree said, coming to Crian's side and helping her sit up. "But you certainly scared a few years off my life."

Crian sat still for a moment. She closed her eyes, and Dree knew that she was reaching out with the Force. When Crian opened her eyes, Dree could see determination and purpose within them. The Jedi rose to her feet, placing a hand on the lightsaber dangling at her side.

"We aren't finished yet," Crian said. "The Marauder is still out there, and he's searching for us."

"I guess that makes us the prey."

"For the moment, Little Hunter," Crian said affectionately. "Let's let him think of us that way for a while longer."



Kaox Krul skulked through the forest like a stealthful prowler. His senses stretched before him, making him aware of every insect, plant and flower, every small creature that cowered in its burrow or fled as he approached. This world, its bountiful lower life forms, had never seen the likes of the Marauder, and he fed upon the fear that his presence garnered. He was still too far away to get an accurate feeling, but Kaox imagined that the Jedi and her apprentice were experiencing the same kind of fear as the fur-covered burrowers and the small leaf-eaters. That fear would grow as he got closer, and he would draw strength from their dread.

He would relish it.

The Marauder kept a steady pace. He didn't worry that he would misstep or stumble. Such were the concerns of lesser beings. Stealth fell away like a tattered cloak, a serpent's skin. He envisioned his prey shuddering under thick blankets of fear.

He wore black body armor of his own design. It consisted of protective padding and composite plates crafted into an intricate pattern that glorified the Sith and the Brotherhood of Darkness. He had also used Sith alchemy to imbue the armor with dark side energy, creating a barrier that provided some protection against the abilities of the Jedi. He was proud of the work he had done, both the menial construction and the application of Sith magic, and he wore the armor as a symbol of his faith in the dark side of the Force.

At his side, clipped to his belt, hung the lightsaber that he had used to kill more than a hundred foes. Kaox hadn't constructed the weapon. He had earned the lightsaber, taking it from the still-grasping hand of the first Jedi he had killed in personal combat. He diminished the Jedi every time he used the weapon to strike down an innocent—such as the pleading Duros he slaughtered at the Harpori colony—or a despised foe the likes of that Jedi, Karist Dem, or the Wookiee diplomat Rojarra. The weapon, cleansed in blood and used as an instrument of the dark side, was completely Kaox's now. Barely any of the Jedi taint remained.

Kaox would use this weapon to kill the Jedi woman and her young apprentice. He saw the battle to come in his mind. He would start by testing the two of them together, allowing them to team up against him to reveal the cowardice that typified the Jedi. Then he would break away, give them time to wallow in their fear as they contemplated his greater strength and power. When he struck again, he would kill the apprentice. It wouldn't be a clean, swift kill. He wanted her to experience agony, to intensify her fear. She would call to her Master for help, but she would also realize that help would not reach her in time. When she knew that death had set upon her to feast, he would end her life. His actions would drive the Jedi crazy with grief and anger. Perhaps she would accept the truth of the dark side then, but he had not found that to be the case in the past. The Jedi were stubborn, closed-minded. She would come close to the truth of the Force, but she would back away from the power that might actually give her a fighting chance. And then the Jedi would die as well.

When it was over and his lightsaber's blade was powered down, Kaox Krul would return to Lord Kaan, triumphant and ready to carry on the next phase of the Brotherhood's rise to glory. The Jedi and her apprentice were simply appetizers before the bountiful feast of darkness to come.

The Marauder was hungry. He increased his pace, letting the dark side flow through him and increase his endurance. He replayed the scene he had imagined as he ran. The Marauder was very hungry.



"We have to go," Crian Maru said, leaping down from the crumpled transport. "We have to go now."

Dree Vandap, a survival kit slung over her left shoulder, landed in the moist grass beside her Master. "Shouldn't we just go and face him? Get this over with?"

"The Marauder is powerful, Dree. Don't underestimate him. He knows that we've been following him since Harpori, and we've both felt his hatred—his darkness—through the Force. Something tells me that this isn't the place to confront him."

The Jedi and her apprentice ran to the back of the transport and examined the cargo bay door.

"The servomotors won't open that door. It's too badly mangled," Dree said.

"Then I'll have to improvise," Crian replied, drawing her

lightsaber and igniting it with a practiced motion. Gripping the lightsaber with both hands, Crian sketched a rough circle in the durasteel door. The metal glowed white hot as the lightsaber sliced through it, then the portion Crian had cut away fell inward, granting access to the cargo compartment.

Crian jumped easily through the opening. "Keep watch," she called back. "We won't be alone for much longer."



The Marauder watched the apprentice from his perch among the trees. He sensed that her Master was nearby, but Kaox couldn't see her. Was she still inside the wrecked transport? Or was she somewhere in the forest, waiting to strike at him while he went after the Rodian? Would the Jedi use her apprentice in that manner, as bait? He didn't think so, but sometimes the followers of the light surprised and confused him. He let the dark side swell inside him, using it to mask his own presence while simultaneously enhancing his senses to stay alert.

He glanced to each side, even though the Force revealed that he was alone in the trees. Then he unhooked his lightsaber from his belt and held it at the ready. He didn't like that he had lost sight of the Jedi. It made him uneasy. Had she anticipated his arrival? Was she more powerful than he had dared imag-

would use this one—a gift from her mentor. Crian had given it to her the day she had accepted the young Rodian as her Padawan learner.

"Learn to use this well," she remembered Crian instructing her. Since that day, she had practiced with the weapon during every spare moment. She wanted to show Crian that she was serious about her studies, about her commitment. Dree wanted to prove that she had what it took to be a Jedi Knight.

Dree caught movement out of the corner of her eye. It was as though a shadow had disengaged itself from the forest and was moving toward her at lightspeed. She turned toward the dark blur, reacting with Jedi reflexes but still feeling like she was standing still. There was a loud hum as the shadow's lightsaber flared to life. Dree brought her own lightsaber up in a defensive position while extending its energy blade to its full length. She didn't think. She didn't run. Dree stood her ground and held her lightsaber before her.

The blur took shape. It was a large human with hair cropped so close to his scalp that he was practically bald. His powerful form was covered in black padded armor that stung her eyes when she looked at it. The symbols etched into the armor resonated with the dark side. She had only seen him from a distance, but there was no mistaking this giant of a man.

It was the Marauder, Kaox Krul. He didn't say a word. His

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ine? No matter. The dark side was his ally. Kaox would strike fast and strike hard. He would take no chances.

The apprentice would die. Now. Without warning. It wouldn't be as satisfying as the game he had imagined, so he would just have to amuse himself later, against the Jedi.



Dree felt her heart beat fiercely in her chest. She was scared, and she couldn't help it. Her own ability to see into the Force, to feel its vibrations and read the patterns in the flow, was woefully inadequate compared to Crian Maru's. Even so, her intuition told her that there was a storm coming. A literal open-the-sky-and-let-loose-the-flood storm, full of lightning and wind and thunder. It would crawl across the sky like a great beast. She knew that before the first drop of rain hit the ground, the Marauder would be upon them. Her teacher sensed this, had warned her to be ready, and Dree tried to find her calm, her peace.

The Rodian slid her lightsaber from beneath her robes. It wasn't her lightsaber, not really. Someday, hopefully in the not-to-distant future, she would set out to build her own. She wasn't ready to take on that test, however. Not yet. Until then, she

hatred screamed at her with words of dour silence. It clung to him like a shroud. Dree was aware that somewhere, in the distance, a dagger of lightning cut the sky. Her multifaceted eyes, however, were locked upon his lightsaber's blood-red blade. He held it high, its hilt almost too small for his huge hand. The blade cut a rainbow through the air as it arced toward her.

Dree was dead. For a moment, she was as sure of that fact as she was of her own name. But then her training took over. She caught the Marauder's energy blade on her own, sending sparks flying in all directions. Then, before he could counter her defense, Dree tumbled to the side, closer to the open cargo compartment and momentarily out of the Marauder's reach. She regained her feet in one fluid motion, drawing on the Force to lend strength to her arms and legs.

"Even Jedi whelps can surprise me," Kaox growled, taking a cautious step toward her. "But in the end, it's always the same. The Jedi whelp is dead, and I score another kill."

Dree tried to steady her voice, but she knew she was no match for the Marauder. "You have a lot of deaths to answer for," she said, keeping her lightsaber's blade in front of her.

"Perhaps, Jedi whelp, perhaps." He took another step toward her. "But I won't be answering to you."

Crian Maru exploded from the cargo compartment astride

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Dree's repulsorlift speeder bike, bounced across the open field,

and made a sharp turn back toward the combatants. Gunning the thrusters, Crian let the bike lunge forward. She sent a command through the Force, mentally ordering her student to leap onto the bike as it passed by. Then she turned her complete attention to operating the speeder. She wasn't as good a pilot as Dree, so she had to try a bit harder.

Kaox Krul watched the speeder bike race toward him and smiled. Now he had both of the Jedi in his sights. He readied himself, preparing to strike as soon as the bike was close enough. *Perhaps this will be a challenge*, he thought.



As soon as the Marauder turned his attention to Crian and the speeder bike, Dree began to move. She was midway through the tumble that would place her behind the dark-sider when she felt Crian's voice enter her mind.

"On!" the voice shouted.

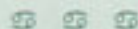
Dree would obey, but she had to buy time. She finished her roll, bunched her legs beneath her, and leaped. Her jump carried her past the Marauder's exposed back. She slashed with the lightsaber, hoping to at least wound the dark-sider. Kaox Krul responded quickly and perceptively. Instead of slicing into

found the invisible line that stretched between the lightsaber and his open hand. With a gesture, he plucked that line and the lightsaber returned to him. A few seconds had passed, but when he looked up the speeder bike was already disappearing into the forest.

"No!" Kaox shouted, his rage building. "I will not be denied this kill!"

Gathering the Force around him, the Marauder ran. Like a stroke of black lightning, he dashed across the clearing and into the depths of the forest, following the speeder's path. The Force-powered burst of speed might not catch the Jedi's vehicle, but it would keep him close.

He opened himself to the dark side, impossibly increasing his speed even more.



Dree held on to her Master as the speeder bike wove through the forest. She should be piloting the speeder. She was a better bike pilot than Crian, and navigating between these massive trees demanded keen instincts and sharp reflexes. There was no time to stop and switch places, however. The Marauder would be coming after them, and neither of them was ready for a fight. They had both been shaken up by the crash. Dree hurt in a few places, though she didn't think she had suffered

Gathering the Force around him, the Marauder ran. Like a stroke of black lightning, he dashed across the clearing and into the depths of the forest . . .

the dark armor, Dree's blade bounced off the Marauder's ignited lightsaber.

The Marauder had to spin around to protect himself, so he wasn't able to avoid the speeder bike. It sideswiped him, knocking him prone.

Dree finished her leap, landing perfectly behind Crian on the moving vehicle.

Crian didn't slow. She turned the speeder away from the wreck of the *Golden Song* and pushed the thrusters to full. As they raced toward the forest, away from the Marauder, Dree could sense that Crian sought every advantage. She, not the Sith warrior, would choose the battleground. She would dictate how the conflict would be waged. The Rodian Padawan could sense that her Master wanted to frustrate their adversary at every turn.

Dree hoped that was enough of an edge.



Kaox Krul rolled with the impact, rising instantly to his feet. He glanced around, saw that his lightsaber had fallen near the wrecked transport, and reached into the Force. He immediately

anything more severe than a deep bruise. Crian might have more serious injuries.

As the speeder completed a complex series of twists and turns and settled back onto a more-or-less straight course, Dree risked a glance over her shoulder. Startled, she almost let go of her grip on her Master. The Marauder was right behind them! He must have cloaked himself in the dark side, because Crian didn't seem to have noticed his proximity. He was moving with Force-boosted speed and was almost upon them.

"He's here!" Dree shouted, her words whipped away by the roar of the speeder bike as it cleaved the wind.

Crian had sensed her student's anxiety a flickering instant before Dree spoke. She pressed the footpads that regulated the thrusters until they wouldn't move any further, and the speeder shot forward. *That had to be enough*, Dree thought. There just wasn't any more for the speeder to give.

The Marauder's face twisted with rage as he summoned even deeper reserves of dark-side energy to bring himself within a few scant meters of the bike's mortified passenger. Even with the Force, could he really keep up with them? His lightsaber flared to life and he swung at the speeder. The stroke made him lose his balance, and he tumbled feet over

head and hit the ground hard.

The Marauder had struck his mark, the tip of his lightsaber blade sliced into one of the bike's power cables. The damage didn't prove immediately fatal, but the speeder would run out of power at an increased rate. Dree sensed Crian's concern and shared it. Could they reach a relatively safe location?

Dree looked back once more, but the Marauder didn't seem to be pursuing them any longer. Perhaps his resolve had finally given out, as well.



The dark clouds that had crept over the horizon earlier now filled the sky. Night was coming, and with the cloud cover it would be almost completely dark. The storm, when it hit, promised to be spectacular. Crian reached out into the Force. The dark presence was still there, but it wasn't close. At least not for the moment.

They had abandoned the speeder bike an hour earlier as its energy gauge dipped toward empty. Ditching the vehicle at the bottom of a deep ravine, they started running and kept their fevered pace until they had put a few additional kilometers behind them. When they reached the rocky hills that distinguished this part of the forest, Crian motioned for them to halt. They found a small cave, partially hidden by undergrowth, and settled inside it to rest.

"Will the storm come soon?" Dree asked.

"No," Crian replied, hearing the Force's song. "It's waiting."

They took turns keeping watch while the other tried to sleep. At best, they were able to slip into a fitful half-slumber, troubled by dark dreams and images of the Marauder. Most of the time, one or the other simply closed her eyes and tried to find some calm within the Force.

They ate rations from their survival packs and drank water from canteens. They didn't speak much, but each of them braced for the battle to come. The storm loomed threateningly but refused to spill its contents. The clouds above were dark and painfully bloated.

Time passed.

The Marauder drew closer.

And the storm waited with sinister anticipation.



Crian remained vigilant as Dree slept, apparently, at least for the moment, unfettered by nightmares. Crian wondered whether she would have held her ground had her Padawan learner not been with her. She had faith in Dree, but the young Rodian still had much to learn. She wasn't ready to face the Marauder, not yet. Their survival would almost certainly fall to Crian, but she held secret doubts as to whether she was ready to face Kaax Krul. He was insane, powerful, full of the dark side, hungry for the kill. Rage had made him strong, fearless. Could she do it? Could she defeat the Marauder?

Yes, Crian thought. But it would be better if she didn't have

to worry about her Padawan.

"Sleep well," Crian whispered, gently touching her student's forehead.

The Jedi Knight slipped out of the cave, into the cloud-shrouded night.

Behind her, in the cave, Dree Vandap rolled over and moaned. Her nightmares had returned.



For almost two days, Kaax Krul tracked the Jedi through the forest. After trying to disable the speeder bike, he had lost his balance and fallen with a bonejarring *crunch*. It was a sloppy miscalculation, the result of moving too fast to stop his momentum. The wind had been knocked out of him. He swayed in and out of consciousness for several long minutes before he was able to resume the chase. By then, the speeder was gone and he didn't have the energy to attempt another burst of speed. So he started walking, maintaining a casual pace as he let his body recover from the extreme effort of running in the Force.

It took more than a day to reach the place where the speeder bike was hidden. It was half buried in a mountain of dead leaves and branches at the bottom of a scar-like trench. He almost strode past the ravine and probably would have missed it entirely had he been moving faster. These Jedi were certainly hard on their vehicles, Kaax mused.

He dropped into the ravine to examine the speeder. The Jedi weren't nearby, and Kaax hadn't expected something as mundane as a crash to hinder them. It appeared that the speeder bike had simply run out of energy.

He spent the next day following their trail into the forest. What began as a simple matter turned daunting as their trail suddenly disappeared. Kaax plumbed the dark side, urging it to illuminate the path the Jedi had taken. His prey had their own lifelines to the Force, however, and they had somehow masked their course. The Marauder could do nothing but wander the forest, looking for physical signs of their passage or wait for the Force to betray them.

Or for them to betray themselves.

Kaax hid himself from detection as the Jedi had done. *No, not both of them*, he realized. The apprentice wasn't experienced enough to have such fine control over the Force. It was the Knight who was shielding them, wasting valuable energy to mask herself and the young one. *Just another sign of weakness*, Kaax thought. Just another indication of why the dark side would eventually triumph over the light.

More time passed. Kaax Krul took a few hours to rest and meditate on the dark side.

When he was ready to move out again, he became a tireless predator, a relentless stalker. He paused, sniffed the air, and opened himself to the Force. There it was. A tingle, a subtle vibration. It wasn't much, but he had found his quarry. With a smile that was both disturbing and hateful, the Marauder moved in for the kill.



Crian Maru slid through the forest like a quiet breeze. Overhead,

the clouds parted just enough to reveal a patch of clear night sky. The planet's twin moons shone through the break, painting the forest in a pale, ghostly light. Her senses tingled like live wires as the Force coursed through her, but she couldn't locate the Marauder in the Force. He was hiding, though she still had a vague sense of being watched, even if she couldn't pinpoint the source of her trepidation.

She pressed her search, eventually stepping out of the trees into a large clearing. In the moonlight, she saw that a calm, still lake filled the open space. The twin orbs above were luminously reflected in the water. Crian noticed that the clouds were tearing apart, and now she could see stars in the deep blue expanse around the moons. Perhaps the storm was dying. If so, it was a good omen.



Dree sat up in the cave, instantly awake and clear-headed. Crian was gone. She was alone in the small hollow. Crian had left her behind, had gone out to face the Marauder on her own.

Did she think so little of me, of my abilities? Dree wondered.

Part of her wanted to stay right where she was, safely hidden in this cave. She couldn't do that, though, not if she wanted to be true to herself and her Master. A Rodian hunter wouldn't cower, afraid, hidden in a cave. Certainly a Jedi Knight wouldn't. However, Dree was neither a Rodian hunter nor a Jedi Knight—not yet. Fear, though, led to the dark side. She wouldn't take that path—not willingly, at least.

Dree steeled herself with a calming breath and set her mind for battle. Crian needed her help, and Dree wasn't going to disappoint her.



Crian Maru, Jedi Knight, sat beside the quiet lake, under the glow of the twin moons. The heavy storm clouds framed the clearing, but the sky directly overhead was crisp and clear. She was calm, at peace. The Force's song vibrated through her, filling her with confidence and power. She was ready.

The shadow stood at the edge of the clearing, partially hidden by the thick clump of trees. She had been aware of the Dark One's presence for a few moments, but she made no move, gave no indication that she had spotted him. The shadow boiled out of the darkness, and in the pale glow of the moons' light, the Marauder was revealed. He moved toward her without a sound, waiting to ignite his lightsaber until the last possible moment. Crian decided not to wait.

The Jedi Knight stood without haste, calmly turning to face the onrushing darksider. He paused, momentarily confused by her unhurried actions. She drew her own weapon and locked her gaze with his.

"Your darkness betrays you, Kaos Krul," Crian said.

"And you deny the darkness within you, Jedi," Kaos retorted.

"Reject your Jedi oath and follow me to Lord Kaan's side."

"That will never happen."

"So you believe."

Two lightsabers flared to life. In the distance, thunder rumbled out of the clouds.

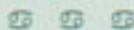
The storm was all around them, despite the clear sky above. Lightning flashed over the trees. *So much for a good omen*, Crian thought.

With the next clap of thunder, Kaos Krul roared. Crian Maru met his charge, lightsaber to lightsaber, dark side to light.



Dree Vandap watched the battle between Jedi Knight and Sith warrior erupt, horrified and fascinated. Their energy blades carved intricate patterns in the night, punctuated by frequent sparks as the blades collided, drew apart, and collided again.

The Padawan allowed the Force to fill her, calling upon a battle-enhancement technique. She ignited her lightsaber, drawing comfort from the familiar *snap-hiss-hum* of the weapon. Then she charged across the open field, rushing toward the lakeshore to aid her Master.



The Marauder and the Jedi danced to a life-or-death song only they could hear. It was a dance of violence that reverberated in the Force. The two combatants took each other's measure with the first series of strikes and counterstrikes. One gave ground, then took it back as they sliced and parried. More thunder, and then the wind picked up, swirling fallen leaves around them as they fought. For the Sith and the Jedi, time seemed to ebb and flow, each moment a complex clash of Force-enhanced attacks and blocks that played out in a kind of slow motion.

The Sith warrior launched a barrage of deadly strikes at the Jedi. Crian pulled deeply from the Force and countered each one. She flipped and somersaulted, looking for weaknesses in his defenses. He spun and tumbled, probing her own technique for an opening. For a time, neither found one.

The young Rodian leaped into the fray then, striking at Kaos Krul from behind. He countered this attack, but now he bore an enemy on each side. He let his anger build. This gave him strength, allowed the dark side to blossom within him. His lightsaber twirled from one side to the other, blocking a strike from the Jedi here, parrying a swipe from the apprentice there. What he could not do from this position was launch a meaningful attack at either of them. To do so would be to give the other an opportunity.

Kaos Krul switched to a one-handed grip, leaving his left hand free. He balled his free hand into a fist, squeezing tight and imagining all of his anger slipping down his arm to pool there. He imagined it was a tightly wound spring. Then, when the Jedi's weapon bounced away from his parry, turning her slightly to one side, he opened his hand and unleashed the power that was concentrated therein. The Force spread out like a wave,

striking the Jedi and knocking her backward, into the lake.

He called the Force to him again, let it surround him, and then he leaped. He was gone before the apprentice's weapon had barely begun its arc. By the time the energy blade passed through the place he had been, he landed softly behind her. His blood surged with triumph. The apprentice was off balance, just barely, but it was enough. He lashed out, the burning blade of his own weapon skewering the young Rodian.

Crian Maru gathered the Force around her and used it to lift her out of the water. She floated to the shore just as the Force turned dark and cold around her. Dree Vandap was dead. Stunned, she watched as her apprentice slumped to the ground. Sorrow flooded her, and she couldn't hold back its flow. Anger rode in on these waves, as did a hatred the likes of which she could not remember ever experiencing. She had failed her student.

Dree was dead.

The Marauder had to die, too.

Crian saw Kaox Krul smile as she charged toward him. She

going to kill her. He was going to win.

She knew where Kaox drew his power. The dark side of the Force. He wasn't afraid to let his emotions magnify his strength. He had no compunctions about using his anger and hatred as vessels to hold more power than his body or spirit could muster by themselves. He was a Sith warrior, trained to harness the intensity of his darker feelings. Crian parried another strike, then leaped out of the Marauder's reach. For a moment he didn't follow. He just stared after her, illuminated by the red glow of his lightsaber and the strobing bolts of lightning.

"I'm sorry, Dree," Crian said, letting the tears run down her sweat-stained cheeks.

Crian gave into her rage then, unleashing her hatred of the man who stood across from her. She let it sing inside her, a melody of unbridled fury that renewed her strength and determination. The clearing around the lake filled with the emanations of the dark side of the Force.

Kaox roared, giving himself completely to the dark side.

Crian returned the call, embracing her anger and hatred.

His lightsaber twirled from one side to the other, blocking a strike from the Jedi here, parrying a swipe from the apprentice there.

knew she should control her emotions. She was on dangerous ground. *But Dree wasn't supposed to die!* Crian wanted to hurt the Marauder. She wanted to make him pay.

Lightsaber blades collided once more.



Hours later, the Marauder and the Jedi were still locked in battle. They were too evenly matched for either to gain more than a temporary advantage. They hurled rocks and sticks on tendrils of Force. They sliced and slashed and hacked with lightsabers that hummed angrily at the continued exertion. They taunted each other when they could spare a breath. Punches, kicks, knees, and elbows, they pounded on each other with every weapon at their disposal.

Battered and bruised, covered in cuts and scratches, they both looked ready to drop. Even Kaox's dark armor had fallen apart in places. Whenever Crian felt her muscles weaken, she remembered her beloved student and found the strength to carry on. Where Kaox found such stamina, she had no clue.

The bloated clouds had returned, gathering into a singularly fearsome presence. Jagged streaks of lightning exploded from within as thunder crashed down with a terrible intensity. With every strike and parry, thunder peeled. With every punch and kick, lightning spread across the sky like fiery spider webs.

Crian was beginning to lose ground. She was faster than the Marauder, better trained, but he was stronger and called on reserves of the Force that were forbidden to her. He was

The bloated clouds splattered the ground and the lake with huge drops of greasy rain. In the downpour, Crian and Kaox each called upon the dark side. Invigorated by its power, they launched themselves, one at the other, and their struggle became even more devastating.

Thunder boomed around the two opponents with each punch and kick and lightsaber clash. Lightning danced over the surface of the lake and lanced into the ground around the warriors. Crian slashed, her anger amplifying the force of her attack. Kaox dodged, whirled, and returned with a deft counterstroke. Lightsaber blades cracked and sparkled, bouncing off each other again and again, and still black rain fell from the sky.

The Marauder, hoping to find a moment's respite, wrapped himself in the Force and hovered over the center of the lake. Crian refused to give Kaox even a moment's respite and followed him into the air.

"Your anger is impressive," Kaox called over the howl of the storm. "Join our Brotherhood of Darkness and renounce the life you have already given up."

"You don't understand, do you?" Crian called back, hurling her anger at him through the Force, thrusting him down toward the churning water below.

He shrugged off the attack and fortified himself with the power of the dark side. Crian did the same.

"Time to die, Jedi," Kaox roared.

Sith and Jedi flew at each other, converging above the roiling cauldron of water. Kaox's lightsaber aimed high. Crian's blade

DARKNESS SHARED

thrust low. A lightning panorama bathed them in harsh light for an

instant as each was felled by the other's killing blow.

Then they were gone, lost behind torrential sheets of rain.



Salen Toth, a Jedi Knight, stood on the shore of a stagnant lake. It was more swamp than lake, actually. The trees around it were twisted and black, with barren branches that reached like skeletal limbs toward the dark, muddy center. The whole place felt ill, deformed. Haunted.

"I found the Padawan," Salen said, speaking into his comlink. "She was killed by a single lightsaber strike. I haven't found any sign of Crian Maru or the Marauder, but I'm sure there was a battle here."

He looked out over the bleak lake, trying to make sense of what happened. All he found in the Force, though, was darkness and despair.

"I'm done here," he said, switching off the comlink.

This was a dead place. It was time for him to return to the living. He turned, lifted the body of the Padawan, and started back for his ship.

Behind him, the dank wind whistled through the twisted trees, and the shadows grew deeper. For a moment, he thought he heard the hum of lightsabers. He turned back, but there was nothing to see. ■

Itching to play a darksider? Check out the new *Dark Side Sourcebook* for RPG rules on the dark side and more secrets of the Sith.

Dree Vandap

Dree Vandap: Female Rodian Jedi Guardian 3; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 22/10; Atk +6 melee (2d8+3, lightsaber), +5 ranged (by weapon); SQ +2 species bonus to Search, Spot, and Listen checks; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 0; Rep 2; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Equipment: Lightsaber, comlink, Jedi robes, Rodian hunting totem.

Skills: Craft (lightsaber) +3, Jump +7, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +2, Listen +3, Pilot +6, Search +3, Spot +3, Tumble +4.

Force Skills: Battlemind +5.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Power Attack, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control.

CHARACTER CAPSULES

Kaox Krul

Kaox Krul*: Male Human Soldier 3/Dark Side Marauder 8; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 18 (+2 Dex, +6 armor); Spd 8m; VP/WP 80/16; Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (2d8+3, lightsaber), +13/+8/+3 ranged (by weapon); SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +3; SZ M; FP 6; DSP 16; Rep 5; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Equipment: Lightsaber, dark padded armor (+2 equipment bonus to saves against light-side Force skills and light-side Force Point use, damage reduction 5), starfighter.

Skills: Astrogate +5, Climb +5, Craft (armor) +9, Intimidate +8, Jump +5, Knowledge (Sith lore) +4, Move Silently +4, Pilot +6, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Speak Basic, Speak Sith, Spot +3, Tumble +5.

Force Skills: Alchemy +8, Battlemind +6, Enhanced Ability +6, Fear +4, Force Defense +6, Force Grip +3, Force Push +5, Move Object +5, See Force +6, Telepathy +3.

Feats: Armor Proficiencies (light, medium, heavy), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Emphasis (Alchemy), Skill Emphasis (Craft: armor), Toughness, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Burst of Speed, Control, Rage, Sense.

* Created using *The Dark Side Sourcebook*.

Crian Maru

Crian Maru: Female Human Jedi Guardian 8; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 24 (+2 Dex, +8 class, +2 lightsaber defense, +2 knight defense); Spd 10m; VP/WP 64/12; Atk +12/+7 melee (3d8+2, lightsaber), +10/+3 ranged (by weapon); SQ Jedi Knight; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6; SZ M; FP 5; DSP 5; Rep 7; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Equipment: Lightsaber (Crian constructed this lightsaber), comlink, Jedi robes, White Bantha transport.

Skills: Computer Use +6, Craft (lightsaber) +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +10, Pilot +4, Tumble +5.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +5, Battlemind +8, Enhanced Ability +6, Force Defense +8, Force Grip +4, Force Push +6, Heal Self +5, Move Object +7, See Force +6, Telepathy +6.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Heroic Surge, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Deflect Blasters, Knight Defense, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

HAGWA CHEESKA HUTT: WORDS TO LIVE BY

Excerpt from *Beeps, Bleats & Boskas:*

The Star Wars Galaxy Phrase Book and Travel Guide

BY EBENN Q3 BAOBAB

INTRODUCTION BY JASON FRY

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO A HUTT CRIMELORD LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF YOUR BLASTECH DL-44? HOW ABOUT *DOPO MEE GUSHA, PEEDUNKEE?* THAT'S HUTTESE FOR: "DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, PUNK?"

Gamemasters and players of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* will find this and more in *Beeps, Bleats & Boskas: The Star Wars Galaxy Phrase Book and Travel Guide*, by legendary sound designer Ben Burt.

Written by one Ebenn Q3 Baobab, this book offers an entertaining romp through such languages as Huttese, Bocce, Ewokese, and Gungan. Go ahead, tell the rental agency that the scratch was there when you rented the ship (in Bocce, it's *Zat x'ratch keexo bompax ha sheep*.) Push your luck in a seedy cantina by asking if you can visit the dancers backstage (in Huttese, it's *Kavaa kyoatopa bu whirllee backa?*) Or find out exactly what those Ewoks are trying to get across with the immortal *yub yub*. (They mean "Let's go.")

The *Phrase Book* plays situations for laughs—there won't be that many sessions where your character will have to say "Will the bill list the title of holo?" in Bocce—but it's not just a novelty. Burtt fills in some blanks in *Star Wars* history and offers some intriguing adventure hooks along the way. Perceptive fans will note that Ebenn Q3 Baobab shares a last name with Mungo Baobab, who was briefly Artoo and Threepio's master during several Burtt-penned episodes of the *Droids* cartoon series. But they probably didn't know that Bocce, the language Threepio assures Owen Lars he can't speak, was developed by the Baobab merchants as a *lingua franca* for the many species who crew their trade ships. Knowing Bocce, it turns out, could come in handy even for those travelers who skip the in-room holo.

Budding *Star Wars* linguists can try their craft not only with the list of common words in various alien languages but also with an appendix of scenes from *Star Wars* featuring alien languages. A well-chosen alien phrase or two can liven up a gaming session. The *Phrase Book* lets you add such phrases as "I am a friend!" (*Dolpee kikyuna!*) and "Don't shoot!" (*Ap-xmasi keepuna!*) to your sessions.

In this excerpt, Burtt offers an object lesson in why Hutts are tricky: They count in Base Eight, not Base Ten like Humans. So when a Hutt says "12," he means what a human would call "10"—and the divergence between the Hutt version and the Basic version grows rapidly as the numbers get larger. Try that on a few players and see whether they don't learn that there's more to fear from a Hutt crimelord than pet rancors.

In a section titled *Behind the Sounds*, Burtt offers the reader a behind-the-scenes tour of how he created all those alien noises,

from Chewbacca's barks and growls (they owe quite a bit to a young cinnamon bear named Pooh, as well as to dogs, lions, seals and one stranded walrus) to the squeaking of Ugnaughts (believe it or not, a bathtub full of baby raccoons played a role). Burtt also takes the reader through how he made alien languages sound convincing by using the sounds and patterns of a number of real Earth languages as raw materials.

CHAPTER 3: SURVIVAL IN HUTTESE

Huttese is so widespread that to travel and do effective business, you must possess some working knowledge of the language. Modern Huttese goes back more than 500 standard years. Its ancient origins, of course, can be traced to the Hutts on their native planet, Varl; the Baobab Archives have uncovered tablets in archaeological diggings on the moons of Varl showing ransom notes written in ancient Huttese at least 1,000 years ago.

The modern language is hard to speak properly without ejecting and receiving some spittle, so just accept this as a natural necessity and persevere. Huttese is, unfortunately, a language spoken by the rougher, less-refined, and—let's face it—outright criminal element in the system.

You may often encounter a diverse group of Huttese-speaking life-forms all at once, in a marketplace, a cantina, or a detention area. You may be abducted by some tribe or gang. If it's a hostile situation, common Huttese will almost certainly be understood by something in the crowd. Here are a few phrases to remember:



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO ARAGONÉS



I am a friend!
Dalpee kikyuna!

Don't shoot!
Ap-xmasi keepuna! (An X in Huttese is pronounced by making a wet snap of the lips, like an aggressive kissing sound.)

Or, in a situation where you have the drop on a group of hostiles:

Everybody, hands off your weapons and back up against the bar!
Mikiyuna! Pasta mo rulya! Do bata gee mwaa tusawa!

Do you feel lucky, punk?
Dopo mee gusha, peedunkee?

Don't anybody move or the Wookiee here will tie your legs into a taut-line hitch!
Kickeyuna mo Wooky doo tee puna puna! (This phrase has been the saving grace for many a weary space tourist.)

Hutt Arithmetic

Since the Hutts have eight fingers rather than the human norm of ten, their system of counting is base 8. This has led to much confusion when dealing with absolute numbers and historically has given the Hutts a tricky advantage when negotiating prices. For example, if a Hutt offers you twelve of something, counting by Hutt standards, it will amount to only ten of something in Basic. The skew in perceived value increases rapidly as you count, as the following table illustrates.



Counting in Huttese

Hutt Value	Huttese	Basic Value
0	nobo	0
1	bo	1
2	dopa	2
3	duba	3
4	fwanna	4
5	k'wanna	5
6	keeta	6
7	goba	7
10	hunto	8
11	beeska	9
12	boboba	10
13	gaboba	11
14	joboba	12
15	soboba	13
16	koboba	14
17	foboba	15
20	donocha	16
21	honocha	17
22	bahanocha	18
23	dohonocha	19
24	duhonocha	20
144	jujuman	100
etc.		

Numbers seem to increase more rapidly when one counts as a Hutt. A Hutt may offer you a given price for a deal, which is misleading, and you may be disappointed when the payoff comes.

A major cultural effect of Hutt base 8 has been the economic suppression of the Rodians by the Hutts. Rodians have ten fingers and evolved counting with base 10. When major Rodian land purchase contracts and communication franchises were set up, the Hutts took advantage of the confusion to basically squeeze out all Rodians from ownership. The result was their major financial subservience to the Hutts and the emergence of a nameless generation of Rodian lackeys.

Of course, there are other significant reasons why dealing with the Hutts can be non-profitable, but a full explanation of those phenomena would take another whole book. Be cautioned! The Hutts are tricky. And slimy.

Mastery of Huttese can come only with extensive exposure to fluent speakers of the language. Some of the best teachers of the language have been those long-term hostages who have really had a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the language for a period of two standard years or more. Several of these survivors have tenured as professors at the Baobab School of Speed-Learning, and their Huttese classes are continually wait-listed with eager students.

Bargaining For Your Life & Other Combat Situations

With the sheer number of racketeers, bounty hunters, smugglers, and alien bad boys out there that converse in Huttese, the chances are quite high that at some point you are going to find yourself facing a threatening situation in which a knowledge of Huttese—and a fully charged E-11 on autofire—may be the only way out. Although we don't endorse provocation and violence, alas, it has proven essential to survival to harden one's language at the proper moment. For example:

Hey you!
Chuba!

Who are you?
Ah'chu apenkee?

What do you want?
Hi chuba da naga?

You're a low-down Imperial fool.
Kava doompa D'emperiolo stoopa.

Don't go for that weapon!
Hagwa boska punyoo!

Turn around real slowly.
Maava dee boonkee ree slagwa.

Keep your suction cups where I can see them.
Ieeska do sookee koopa moe nanya.

Shoot!
Keepuna!

You bother me.
Kee baatu baatu.

Going somewhere?
Koona t'chuta?

Drop your weapon.
Kee hasa do punyoo.

Don't move!
Hagwa doopee.

Smile when you say that.
Smeeleeya whao toupee upee.

Hands up.
Kapa tonka.

Tentacles up!
Tonta tonka.

You're in trouble now.
Bona nai kachu.

It's too late.
Soong peetch alay.

You gonna pay for that?
U wamma wonka?

What took you so long?
Coona tee-tocky malia?

You disappoint me.
Keel-ee calleya ku kah.

Kill me, and ten more will rise in my place.
Je kililya um pasa doe beeska wumpa.

The last fool who called me that got his antennae stuffed down his throat.
Da beesga coo palyeeya pityee bo tenya go kaka juju hoopa.

Why haven't you paid me?
Wanta dah moolee-rah?

When can I expect payment?
Wa wanna coe moulee rah?

I've got the credits.
Ting cooing koo soo ah.

What are you doing here?
Kee chai chai cun kuta?

There will be no deal.
Bargon wan chee kospah.

Give it to me.
Cha wana do bota.

You are my kind of scum.
U kulle rah doe kankee kung.

Don't count on it, slimeball.
Cha skrunee do pat, sleema.

You weak-minded fool.
Coo ya maya stupa.

You will be rewarded.
Bargon u noa a-uyat.

Let's go.
Boska.

Out of my way.
Pushee wumpa.

Take him away.
Yacha neechu.

Bring her to me.
Koose cheekta nei.

Forward march.
Nudd chaa.

My lord.
Ma lorda.

Hopefully you won't need to use too many of the above phrases, and can get by with a more polite and civilized vocabulary, such as:

Greetings.
H'chu apenkee.

Welcome.
Chowbasa.

Good-bye.
Mee jewz ku.

Incredible!
Inkabunga!

Okay.
Eniki.

Yes.
Tagwa.

No.
Nobata.

Thank you.
No equivalent in Huttese.

Please
No equivalent in Huttese.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON HUTTESE WORDS

And here are some other appropriate phrases you may need to know:

How much is a room for the night?

Kava nopees do bampa woola?

I want the Hutt-size bed.

Jee oto ta Huttuk koga.

I will pay with credit. Here is my card.

Jee ho poka foo creeda. Vota myo creeta.

I would like room service.

Jee vopa du mooljee guma.

Can I visit the band backstage?

Kavaa kyotopa bu banda backa?

Can I visit the dancers backstage?

Kavaa kyotopa bu whirlee backa?

I will keep my weapon.

Jee oto vo blastoh.

Hello, my name is _____.

Achuta, my pee kasa _____.

How much for that item?

Kava che copah?

I'm not going to pay that!

Ees hoppoda nopa!

What's your final offer?

Hi chunkee fa goota?

Is that authentic?

Laboda na rowka?

Does that come with a warranty?

Va foppa gee wontahumpa?

Is this freshly dead?

Ne ompee doe gaga punta?

Do you offer vegetarian cuisine?

Chesko yo ho kimbabaloomba?

Is there a smoking section?

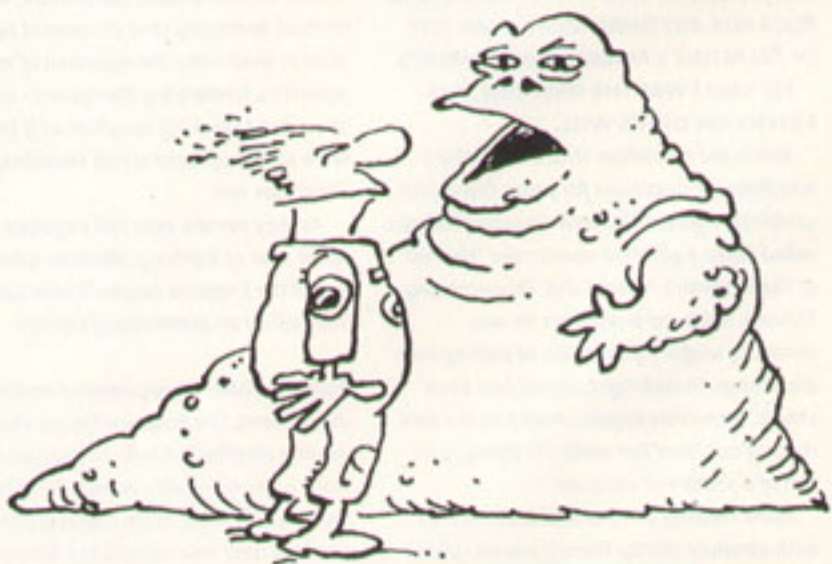
Tee ava un puffee lumpa?

Does this cause brain damage?

Dopa na rocka rocka?

activate	<i>rundee</i>
bargain	<i>bargon</i>
bet	<i>buttmalia</i>
boss	<i>lorda</i>
bounty hunter	<i>murishani</i>
boy	<i>peedunkee</i>
burp	<i>howdunga</i>
buy	<i>bedwana</i>
cake	<i>waffmula</i>
cheat	<i>cheeska</i>
contract	<i>nibobo</i>
dancing girl	<i>chik youngee</i>
dessert	<i>lickmoomoo</i>
die	<i>nee choo</i>
drink	<i>yocola</i>
droid	<i>droi</i>
drool	<i>sleemo poy</i>
enjoy	<i>panwa</i>
fool	<i>stupa</i>
friend	<i>pateessa</i>
go	<i>bolla</i>
gun	<i>wanga</i>
here	<i>wata</i>
home	<i>bunky dunko</i>
how	<i>kava</i>
I	<i>Jee</i>
idiot	<i>koochoo</i>
Imperial cruiser	<i>D'emperiolo teesaw</i>
Jedi	<i>Jeedai</i>
joke	<i>na yoka</i>
kidnap	<i>jujiminmee</i>
kill	<i>killee</i>

meal	<i>yafulkee</i>
message	<i>wankee</i>
money	<i>moulee-rah</i>
move	<i>yatuka</i>
naptime	<i>hunka be</i>
outlander	<i>ootman</i>
pay	<i>wamma</i>
payoff	<i>makacheesa</i>
pie	<i>patogga</i>
planet	<i>planeeto</i>
Podrace	<i>choppa chawa</i>
power	<i>pawa</i>
price	<i>che copah</i>
ransom	<i>gopptula</i>
sell	<i>dwana</i>
slave	<i>shag</i>
sleep	<i>winkee</i>
smuggler	<i>ulwan</i>
snack	<i>smak tella</i>
space	<i>doma toma</i>
spaceship	<i>pankpa</i>
steal	<i>moocha</i>
them	<i>hooah</i>
time	<i>tee-tocky</i>
we	<i>Jee-jee</i>
what	<i>haku</i>
when	<i>jappay</i>
where	<i>konchee</i>
who	<i>coo</i>
wine	<i>gocola</i>
you	<i>uba</i>





THE EMPEROR'S PAWNS

BY ABEL G. PEÑA & JUAN SCHWARTZ WITH PABLO HIDALGO • ILLUSTRATED BY JOE CORRONEY

MARA JADE COULD BARELY CONTAIN HER RAGE. SOLO HAD REVEALED THE IDENTITY OF THE EMPEROR'S OTHER HAND: ROGANDA ISMAREN. MARA KNEW HER BUT HAD NEVER CONSIDERED ROGANDA ANYTHING MORE THAN ONE OF PALPATINE'S FAVORITE AMUSEMENTS.

HE SAID I WAS THE ONLY ONE, THE EXTENSION OF HIS WILL. . . .

While the revelation struck hard, Mara had fostered suspicions for years. During his campaign against the New Republic, Thrawn called Mara a glorified courier, like "the rest of the Emperor's Hands." But Thrawn being Thrawn, none knew whether he was divulging useful information or pulling invisible strings. In such light, denial had been simple. Memories began coming to the fore, striking out from her mind like flying splinters of a shattered vibro-ax.

Mara recalled one particular encounter with absolute clarity. There'd been a cyborg covered head to heel in metallic circuitry, a woman Mara would encounter again on

Caprioril. Watching her, Mara had caught her own distorted reflection on the cyborg's metal crown. The Emperor asked Mara to leave then. As she passed the woman, Mara sensed an immediate, inexplicable, and mutual animosity that descended to an atomic level—like the repulsion of magnetic polarities. Underlying the cyborg's steel gaze, she sensed mocking laughter, as if the cyborg were aware of some secret knowledge that Mara was not.

As they parted, eyes still engaged in a silent duel of loathing, Mara peripherally heard the Emperor cackle: "Come Lumiya. You will be an extension of my will. . . ."

Palpatine had many powerful enemies. To crush them, the Emperor found allies among disaffected Jedi—like Jerec and Adalric Brandl—who were willing to betray the ancient order. From these traitors and his own dark side adepts, the Emperor formed an elite cadre of Force-users that included beings of great intelligence and

Force-sensitivity. These powerful and resourceful darksiders became known as the Emperor's Hands.

BLACKHOLE

For much of the Galactic Civil War there was an Imperial agent like no other, veiled in impermeable yet compelling layers of secrecy. An Emperor's Hand code-named Blackhole, no one saw his true face. Those who had close dealings with him could not accurately describe him. More withdrawn than even the infamously reclusive Palpatine, Blackhole used fronts, agents, and droids to deliver his orders whenever possible. When a matter required his personal input, he relied on technology to deliver his presence.

On the rare instances that he was 'seen', Blackhole appeared as a holographic avatar that was abstract in form. Varying in size from 1.8 to three meters, the hologram appeared as a vaguely humanoid silhouette, its insubstantial surface made of shift-

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE STAR WARS FANBOY ASSOCIATION



ing starcapes not unlike the shimmering robes of the Prophets of the Dark Side. The curved head bore no features. The voice accompanying the transmission was coolly modulated and eerily androgynous. The only other effect of the holographic transmission was an inexplicable wave of cold. Evidence of this phenomenon was largely anecdotal, and no scientific readings ever verified an actual temperature drop. Those few that had seen a transmission from Blackhole, however, swore to have felt an unsettling chill in their bones.

The Emperor granted Blackhole unprecedented control over the entire HoloNet. Since that star-spanning system of communication was dismantled for public use and instead given over to the military, this meant that Blackhole had direct communication with every ship in the Imperial Navy. Blackhole could appear aboard any vessel by commandeering its holocomm. In theory,

he could even appear on the few civilian HoloNet nodes throughout the galaxy.

Like Palpatine's other Hands, Blackhole was steeped in the dark side of the Force. Unlike the Emperor's agents who specialized in using the Force for martial prowess, Blackhole's specialty was fear. Paranoia is what fueled Blackhole's power.

Blackhole's talents for divination were unrivaled. Originally one of the Prophets of the Dark Side, his unerring visions impressed Palpatine. Too powerful to be ignored, Blackhole was moved from the Prophets to head of Imperial Intelligence. It was timely, as far as Blackhole was concerned, for he feared his fellow Prophets were only moments away from turning against him.

As the head of Intelligence, Blackhole had unparalleled access to the galaxy's unfathomable seas of information. He interfered little in the already smoothly running daily functions of Intelligence—few ever noted his addition to their ranks. Instead, he holed himself away in his sanctuary, meditating on the countless data-documents streaming through his office, awaiting dark side visions to act upon.

Adventure Seed:

Omnipotent Mastermind

Aside from his involvement in the Vorzyd 5 affair, chronicled in *Dark Horse's Classic Star Wars: The Early Adventures*, virtually nothing is known of Blackhole's activities during the Galactic Civil War. It is known that he was toppled from his position of power prior to the rise of Ysanne Isard. This makes him the perfect arch-villain for an ongoing Alliance campaign.

As he succumbs to dark side-induced madness and paranoia, the upper echelons of the Empire come to rely on Blackhole less and less. He is nonetheless cunning and coordinates critical strikes on Alliance forces. The heroes' superiors task them with infiltrating Blackhole's Star Destroyer and putting an end to his operation.

Ideally, the use of Blackhole as a campaign villain is something a gamemaster can gradually incorporate into her campaign. An early Rebel defeat can be attributed to unerring Imperial Intelligence, fostering the idea of Blackhole as an evil mastermind in the players' eyes.



Blackhole: Male Human FA 5/DSD 7/EH 3; Init +3 (Dex); Def 24 (+12 class, +3 Dex, -1 size); Spd 8m; VP/WP 146/20; Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+4, claw), +12/+7 ranged; SQ Force weapon +3d4, dark side talisman +2, resource access, authority, target bonus +1, sneak attack +1d6, DR 5; SV Fort +13, Ref +13, Will +13; SZ L; FP 3; DSP 28; Rep 10; Str 6 (18), Dex 12 (16), Con 7 (20), Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 17. Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Stygian-triprismatic-polymer coated life-support chamber with mechano-assembly, Imperial-Class Star Destroyer (*Singularity*).

Skills: Bluff +13, Computer Use +10, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +7, Disguise +5, Gather Information +7, Hide +3, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (galactic politics) +10, Knowledge (Imperial Intelligence) +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Basic, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +9, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Huttese, Speak Neimoidian, Spot +5, Survival +7.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +11, Control Mind +19, Drain Energy +15, Drain Knowledge +19, Empathy +3, Enhance Senses +12, Farseeing +12, Fear +20, Force Defense +12, Force Grip +8, Force Stealth +7, Heal Another -5, Heal Self +12, Illusion +14, Move Object +4, See Force +10.

Feats: Alertness, Frightful Presence, Force-Sensitive, Point-Blank Shot, Skill Emphasis (Control Mind, Drain Knowledge, Fear), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, primitive weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Mastery, Force Mind, Hatred, High Force Mastery, Sense.

THE SINGULARITY

Blackhole's command ship, as well as all forces onboard, is coated in a stygian-triprismatic polymer that makes it difficult to detect with sensor equipment. The coating makes treated starships impossible to detect at sensor range. All treated objects (starships, vehicles, and armor) confer a -5 penalty to Spot, Listen, and Computer Use checks made to find them. Against dark backgrounds (such as deep space, underground, or poorly-lit darkness), a treated object's lines are partially indistinct, providing it with the equivalent of one-half concealment (20% miss chance).

Craft: Kuat Drive Yards Imperial I Star Destroyer; **Class:** Capital; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Colossal (1,600 m long); **Crew:** minimum 5,000, maximum 37,085 (Skilled +4); **Passengers:** 9,700 (troops); **Cargo Capacity:** 36,000 metric tons; **Consumables:** 6 years; **Hyperdrive:** x1.5 (backup x6); **Maximum Speed:** Cruising; **Defense:** 12 (-8 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 250; **Hull Points:** 700; **DR:** 30.

Weapon: Turbolasers (60); **Fire Arc:** 4 batteries front, 4 batteries left, 4 batteries right; **Attack Bonus:** +8 (-8 size, +4 crew, +8 fire control, +4 battery fire); **Damage:** 5d10x5; **Range Modifiers:** PB -6, S -4, M -2, L +0.

Weapon: Ion cannons (60); **Fire Arc:** 4 batteries front, 3 batteries left, 3 batteries right, 2 batteries rear; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (-8 size, +4 crew, +5 fire control, +4 battery fire); **Damage:** Special; **Range Modifiers:** PB -6, S -4, M -2, L n/a.

Weapon: Tractor beam projectors (10); **Fire Arc:** 6 front, 2 left, 2 right; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (-8 size, +4 crew, +8 fire control); **Damage:** Special; **Range Modifiers:** PB -6, S -4, M/L n/a.



Blackhole's true form, that of a withered old man, was known to only a scant handful of individuals. Fewer still know his true origins. Theories speculated that he was once a talented senatorial page whom Palpatine took under his wing. Others ruminated that he may have been a minor functionary in the great library of the Jedi Temple who was seduced by the dark side.

Whatever the case, the man who became Blackhole cast away any vestige of his former self in favor of total abandon to the dark side. The sinister power ate away at him, leaving him shrunken and frail. So fragile was his health that he spent his days in a specialized life-support chamber. To afford him some mobility, Palpatine gave

Roganda Ismaren: Human Female Nbl 6/EH 4; **Init** +2 (Dex); **Def** 19 (+7 class, +2 Dex); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 58/13; **Atk** +6/+1 melee (1d3-1, punch), +9/+4 ranged (3d4, hold-out blaster); **SQ** Bonus class skill (Bluff), call in a favor (2), inspire confidence +2, command +2, authority, resource access, target bonus +2, sneak attack +1d6; **SV** Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +8; **SZ** M; **FP** 6; **DSP** 9; **Rep** 7; **Str** 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17. **Challenge Code:** E.

Equipment: Septsilk dress, hold-out blaster.

Skills: Bluff +14, Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +12, Entertain (dance) +6, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Imperial Court) +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Profession (concubine) +6, Read/Write Basic, Sense Motive +9, Speak Basic, Spot +4. **Force Skills:** Affect Mind +5, Empathy +10, Enhance Ability +5, Force Defense +5, Friendship +10, Heal Self +4.

Feats: Alertness, Force-Sensitive, Persuasive, Point-Blank Shot, Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons)

Force Feats: Alter, Control.

his agent the gift of a Neimoidian mechano-assembly that moved the orb-like chamber aloft on insectoid limbs. A few years into his position as head of Intelligence, Blackhole became possessed of the irrational fear that his life was in danger by staying on Coruscant. He moved his base of operations to his command ship, the *Singularity*, and spent the remainder of his career on the move.

Blackhole had an impressive amount of resources available to him. No less than an entire Star Destroyer and its complement of troops and fighters were under his command. Blackhole ordered his forces cast in obsidian to match his own particular eccentricities. His Star Destroyer, the *Singularity*, the assigned TIE wing, the 123rd Nightstalker Group, and his stormtrooper division appear entirely black. More than just decoration, the stygian-triprismatic polymer affords increased sensor-stealth.

Blackhole's abandon into the dark side continued to devour his sanity, leaving him more frail with each meditation, with each vision. Blackhole disappeared completely during the Galactic Civil War, a fate befitting his codename.

Some of his troops ended up with Imperial splinter groups, including Carnor Jax during the time of the resurrected Emperor's scourge. In Blackhole's absence, Imperial Intelligence fell under the capable stewardship of Ysanne Isard.

ROGANDA ISMAREN

Roganda Ismaren and her brother Lagan hid on Belsavis during the Jedi Purge, but they were captured, taken from their parents,

Adventure Seed: The Lost Art

Few have explored the obscure Sith discipline of *mechu-deru*—mechanical manipulation using the Force. Few remember it; even fewer have studied it. Most of the knowledge regarding this lost Sith “art” was committed to ancient scrolls that have since been destroyed or scattered across the galaxy.

After her son’s failure to control the *Eye of Palpatine*, Roganda somehow obtained a handful of Sith scrolls describing the *mechu-deru*. The implanted subelectronic converter in Irek’s brain has given him an accelerated mastery of *mechu-deru*. Left unchallenged, the pair could unleash a horde of mythological half-being/half-mechanical “abominations” on an unsuspecting galaxy.

and brought before Inquisitor Ameesa Darys. The merciless Inquisitor skewered Lagan and forced Roganda to watch.

Roganda vowed to accrue enough power to avoid a similar fate. Graced with exquisite beauty, Roganda realized her hold over men. Wielding her endowments like a Jedi battlemaster, Roganda pierced the hard shells of Imperial Center’s male elite, her crème skin and exotic black-irised eyes inflaming their imaginations, her childlike coquettishness and fragility playing to their chauvinism. Roganda’s mastery of carnal intrigue soon propelled her into the exclusive Imperial Court. There, her sights fell no shorter than the Emperor of the galaxy.

With her Force-sensitivity, Roganda quickly distinguished herself among Palpatine’s mistresses. When she became pregnant—something the other concubines had failed to accomplish—Roganda knew that her days as a mistress were numbered. That Palpatine wasn’t actually the father mattered little: In the Court, appearances dictated truth. Through great resolve and persuasion, she earned a place as one of the Emperor’s Hands.

Roganda used her seductive faculties to extract secrets from Palpatine’s enemies, a simple enough accomplishment during their rapture. Simultaneously, Roganda groomed her Force-strong son Irek to inherit Palpatine’s throne. She could imagine no sweeter vengeance against the man who destroyed her family than to usurp his empire using his own “son.”

Palpatine’s death came too soon. While growing in the dark side, eight-year-old Irek was unprepared to assume power—his legitimacy would undoubtedly be challenged, and he wasn’t strong enough to

repel all the Imperial warlords jockeying for control. Roganda could only grit her teeth as the imposter Trioculus was crowned Emperor as Palpatine’s legitimate son. She bided her time, retreating with Irek to Belsavis, waiting for opportunity to come.

LUMIYA

Shira Brie was born on Imperial Center and raised to accept the New Order doctrine. When Darth Vader sensed the Force within her, he placed her in accelerated Academy training for Imperial Intelligence.

Shira became proficient in all combat forms, from Echani to Noghri Stava, and her body was biologically enhanced. Upon Shira’s graduation, Vader arranged with Intelligence Director Isard to send Shira on a solo intelligence mission. Proving herself extremely able, Shira was charged with eliminating Luke Skywalker. Vader knew she’d prove a formidable challenge for the Rebel leader.

Shira was shot down by Skywalker in a dogfight. Her altered physiology coupled with her ability to enter a Force trance enabled her to survive in space. When Vader found her floating in a mangled TIE, the scene was eerily reminiscent of his own experience after being blasted from the Death Star. He felt an odd kinship with her, one he’d not felt since discovering his son. As with Vader’s age-old injuries, her survival required cybernetics. The woman that emerged was no longer Shira Brie. In her place emerged the Dark Lady Lumiya. Her Force instruction began.



Vader knew he couldn’t hide Lumiya from Palpatine indefinitely. Instead, Vader opted to hide her right under his nose by offering Lumiya as a “Hand.” Palpatine greedily accepted.

During the Battle of Endor, Lumiya was hidden away on the world of Zlost, where she crafted a lightwhip. The weapon was armed with lacerating tentacles formed from Vader’s Kaiburr crystal shard and near-imperious Mandalorian iron. Returning when she learned of her beloved master’s death, she joined forces with another Force-user named Flint. Together they faced the Nagai but were defeated. Left alone, Lumiya sought ships to supplement her decimated fleet. She also petitioned Ysanne Isard for Royal Guards. Isard agreed conditionally: in exchange, Lumiya had to “remind” Imperial researchers in the Cron Drift of their loyalties and capture a wanted criminal named Mara Jade.

Like Bane after the Battle of Ruusan, Lumiya plunged the Sith order back into secrecy. Having lost Flint, she sought a new

Lumiya: Human Female Scl 1/EH 3/SW 9/SL 5; Init +3 (Dex); Def 29 (+16 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 150/17; Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (6d6+2, reach 6 m, lightwhip*), +19/+14/+9 ranged; SQ Illicit barter, authority, resource access, sneak attack +1d6, target bonus +1, enemy bonus +3, uncanny dodge (Dex to Def, can't be flanked); DR 5; SV Fort +14, Ref +18, Will +12; SZ M; FP 9; DSP 15; Rep 12; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15. Challenge Code: G.

Equipment: Lightwhip*, Sith armor, Sith holocron.

Skills: Astrogate +9, Bluff +9, Computer Use +11, Craft (lightwhip) +10, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +7, Disguise +8, Gather Information +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (alien species) +7, Knowledge (Sith lore) +12, Knowledge (systems) +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +7 Pilot +13, Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Calamarian, Speak Huttese, Spot +9, Survival +11.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +11, Battlemind +18, Enhance Ability +15, Farseeing +7, Fear +12, Force Defense +15, Force Grip +13, Heal Self +10.

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber, lightwhip), Force-Sensitive, Frightful Presence, Heroic Surge, Quick Draw, Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Finesse (lightwhip), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Deflect Blasters, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Force Whirlwind, Hatred, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

**Lumiya's lightwhip gives her a +2 equipment bonus when attempting to trip or disarm an opponent. Lumiya constructed her own lightwhip.*

pupil. one of her new Royal Guards, Carnor Jax, demonstrated potential.

Lumiya has grown powerful in her seclusion, blending traditional Sith ways with new and dangerously innovative tactics.



SARCEV QUEST

A failed Jedi student working in the Agricultural Corps, Sarcev Quest was rescued from monotony by Palpatine.

Quest's service to Palpatine was two-fold: By day, he was a dashing playboy, working the Imperial Court as Roganda Ismaren would years later. (It comes as little surprise that the two Hands conceived a son together.) By night, Quest was Palpatine's infiltrator, spying on his political enemies like Jeti Ashgad and Moff Flirry Vorru. Sarcev's silky

Adventure Seed: Sinister Alliance

Lumiya's pupil, Carnor Jax, was approached by Nom Anor, a shadowy representative of an extragalactic race of conquerors interested in a Sith alliance. However, before Lumiya could react to the proposition, Jax was slain, and with him died all connections to Anor. Now, years later, the Yuuzhan Vong have invaded. Rumors abound that the invaders seek information about the Sith. The heroes might belong to the Vong-allied Peace Brigade and are seeking information about surviving Sith, or they might be NRI agents sent to investigate rumors of the Sith's reemergence and their alliance with the New Republic's greatest foe.

charm earned him many allies as he became the first darksider to infiltrate the Imperial Ruling Council.

After the death of Emperor Palpatine at the Battle of Endor, Sarcev sabotaged the Ruling Council's attempts to wrest control from the Imperial vizier, Sate Pestage. When Pestage left to immerse himself in his dark side experiments, he entrusted his clone to maintain order. When the rapidly gestated clone went mad, Sarcev abandoned the Pestage clone to the Imperial Ruling Council and Isard.

Sarcev Quest: Male Human JC 7/EH 7; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 21 (+10 class, +1 Dex), Spd 10m; VP/WP 88/13; Atk +12/+7 melee (3d8+1, crit 19-20, short lightsaber), +11/+6 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Jedi Knight, resource access, authority, target bonus +3, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +10; SZ M; FP 7; DSP 10; Rep 9; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 19. Challenge Code: F.

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol, short lightsaber, expensive clothing.

Skills: Bluff +15, Computer Use +11, Diplomacy +25, Disable Device +9, Disguise +6, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (galactic politics) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Pilot +7, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write High Galactic, Sleight of Hand +8, Speak Basic, Speak High Galactic, Spot +13.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +11, Enhance Senses +13, Fear +15, Force Defense +14, Heal Self +7, Illusion +10, Move Object +11.

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (short lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Trustworthy, Weapon Focus (short lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Mastery, Prolong Force, Sense.

Adventure Seed: Unfinished Business

Following his imprisonment and torture, Sarcev Quest disappeared without a trace.

Rumors of Quest's whereabouts surface occasionally, but no one has positively identified him until now. One of his little-known aliases recently purchased first-class passage on a luxury liner headed for the Corporate Sector from the Core. After years of hiding he must have finally decided to make a break for it. After all, he's not getting any younger.

The heroes can be New Republic agents, assigned to apprehend Quest and bring him in for questioning. Or, they can be bounty hunters, looking to cash in—whether it's the New Republic, the Imperial remnant, Kir Kanos, or Jeng Droga offering the bounty—100,000 credits is a big reward for some senile old politician. Finally, they can be darksiders assigned by Kanos or Droga to hunt down and destroy Quest.

Regardless of whom the heroes are working for, they can take virtually any approach to capturing Quest. They can book passage, stow away, or hijack the luxury liner.

Quest agreed with Pestage's oft-quoted maxim: "Without power, one dies." Hence, when Pestage failed to send word, Quest suspected he had perished in his dark side experimentations. Quest allied with Carnor Jax, an ambitious, charismatic, and Force-sensitive Royal Guard. Quest eloquently urged support in Jax, winning the favor of the Royal Guards and the Council and securing more power than he'd ever previously achieved.

When Palpatine returned, Quest reaffirmed allegiance, advocating the "loyal" Jax's promotion to Sovereign Protector, positioning Jax to eliminate Palpatine. Determined to maintain its hard-won authority, the Imperial Ruling Council supported Jax and Quest, supplying the bribe for the Emperor's physician to sabotage his clones. When Palpatine's clones expired, Jax and Quest seized control.

Under Jax's protection, Quest abused his power within the Council, betraying the remaining dark side councilors Sa-Di and Nefta and incarcerating his dissenters. His tyranny proved short-lived, however. Jax was killed by Kir Kanos. The Imperial Ruling Council immediately moved against Sarcev, dumping him like refuse at Nar Shaddaa after a week-long torture session that prompted uncharacteristically inelegant screams from the Hand.

ARDEN LYN

The Followers of Palawa were intense contemplators of existence. Consequently, they unwittingly mastered the Force trance.

The longest lasted an unbelievable seventy years, during which the Followers seemed to have hardly aged. It wasn't, however, until encountering the martial art *teräs kási* that these philosopher-hermits mined the Force's deepest channels and were seduced by the dark side.

Like the Jedi, there were masters of *teräs kási* who used the Force malevolently. One was Arden Lyn. She, along with her Kashi Mer exile beau Xendor and his minions, wreaked havoc during The First Great Schism. When Lyn was cornered by Jedi Master Awdrysta Pina, she used a powerful Kashi Mer talisman to annihilate him. Before dying, Pina used the horrific technique of *mortichro* to arrest Lyn's body functions, stopping her heart.

Through a freakish combination of events, Lyn survived. Mysteriously reemerging millennia later at the end of the Jedi Purge, Arden ran afoul of Jedi hunters. However, she handled herself well, severely injuring Inquisitor Tremayne and killing Inquisitor Darys before Grand Inquisitor Torbin cleaved her arm. Tremayne intended to kill her, but Torbin decided that Palpatine might find her rare martial arts skills useful.



Fortunately for Lyn, the Emperor saw in her great potential. Besides being a *teräs kási* adept, she could harness sound energy and create sonic shockwaves of immense power. By promising to call her lover's spirit back from Chaos, Palpatine tempted Arden into his service and replaced her arm with that of an ancient war droid.

For years, Lyn did Palpatine's bidding, sharing her training secrets with his Byss Mages and Sovereign Protectors. She realized, however, that Palpatine had no intention of keeping his promise. Thus, when the first Death Star was destroyed and he entrusted her with eliminating key Rebels, Arden used the freedom to plot her escape, finding and training students to eventually turn against Palpatine. Her attempt to kidnap Palpatine for rogue Grand Admiral Zaarin was foiled. Lyn fled, hunted by a still resentful High Inquisitor Tremayne.

Arden now searches for the relic (the Kashi Mer talisman) that once allowed her to cow the galaxy and cheat death, and possibly a means of returning Xendor to life.

Arden Lyn: Female Human FA 8/DSM 4/EH 3; Init +3 (Dex); Def 23 (+10 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 118/15; Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (3d8+2, droid arm punch), +15/+10/+5 ranged (3d8, droid arm blaster); SQ Force talisman +2, Force weapon +1d4, comprehend speech, authority, resource access, target bonus +1, sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +11, Ref +14, Will +10; SZ M; FP 8; DSP 12; Rep 6; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11. Challenge Code: G.

Equipment: Juggernaut droid arm, comlink, Palawan tunic, Kashi Mer relic.

Skills: Bluff +4, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Knowledge (Palawan Lore) +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Bunduki, Read/Write Old Galactic Standard, Repair +6, Speak Basic, Speak Bunduki, Speak Old Galactic Standard, Spot +4, Survival +7, Tumble +8.

Force Skills: Battlemind +14, Enhance Ability +9, Force Grip +11, Force Push +12, Heal Self +8, See Force +7.

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (droid arm), Force-Sensitive, Great Fortitude, Martial Arts, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Burst of Speed, Control, Force Lightning (sonic shockwave), Rage, Sense.

MAAREK STELE

The only son of Kerek and Marina Stele, Maarek grew up on backwater planet, racing swoops in his spare time. When the Empire invaded the Taroon system, he was separated from his family and conscripted into Imperial technical service. This gave Maarek the opportunity to learn about the Empire's TIE fighters, and he made many "test runs" after completing repairs. On one such test run, he had the good fortune of

coming to Admiral Mordon's rescue and was offered the chance to join the Imperial Navy.

Shortly after being commissioned in the Navy, Maarek earned the status of TIE fighter ace. His meteoric rise coupled with his strength in the Force attracted notice from the Secret Order of the Emperor, a shadowy cabal of darksiders known to some as the Prophets of the Dark Side. Recognized for his talents, Stele felt satisfied with his life. When he discovered that his beloved father was an

Imperial prisoner, his view of Imperial order collapsed. Still, when the former Emperor's Hand Arden Lyn attempted to kidnap Palpatine, Stele helped Vader rescue his master, thwarting an attempted coup.

The Emperor took great interest in Stele. When the Prophets learned of his attunement to the

Adventure Seed: Life After Death

The heroes are scouting the Unknown Regions. Landing planetside, they find a remarkably well-preserved human corpse from the Republic's early years. Near the body is a dark, oblong prism (the Kashi Mer talisman). If the stone is brought near the body, a searing scream pierces the air as the corpse's desiccated flesh rejuvenates. The heroes have inadvertently revived Arden Lyn! Twisted after 250 centuries of "death," Arden believes the heroes are responsible for killing her Xendor. They must survive Lyn's insanity, and keep her from reclaiming the Force artifact.

Force, they were entrusted with Stele's training. Maarek's talent quickly blossomed. The TIE fighter remained Stele's most effective tool, an extension equivalent to a lightsaber. He learned to probe starfighter enemies for weaknesses and anticipate their moves. Impressed, Palpatine bestowed his newest Hand with the title-rank Ta, and assigned Stele to his revered Emperor's Sword fighter wing escort. Imperial corruption, however, continued to plague Maarek.

With the Imperial backstabbing following Palpatine's death at the Battle of Endor, Stele questioned the Empire's validity more than ever. Amid the ensuing disorder and despair came Baron Soontir Fel. In Fel, Maarek recognized the dignified honor that had disappeared from the Empire. Joining the legendary 181st, Tan Stele's Imperial allegiance was renewed.

Maarek Stele: Male Frg 8/SA 5/EH 1; Init +3; Def 24 (+11 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 83/15; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d3+1, punch), +12/+7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Barter, adaptive learning (Astrogate, Sense Motive), jury-rig +4, starfighter defense, familiarity +2 (TIE/In), starfighter evasion, resource access; SV Fort +11, Ref +13, Will +6; SZ M; FP 5; DSP 5; Rep 4; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12. Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, flight suit, TIE/In.

Skills: Astrogate +13, Computer Use +7, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +5, Hide +7, Move Silently +7, Pilot +22, Repair +10, Read/Write Basic, Sense Motive +9, Speak Basic, Survival +7, Treat Injury +2.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +6, Empathy +6, Enhance Ability +10, Force Push +6.

Feats: Alertness, Force-Sensitive, Point-Blank Shot, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Starship Dodge (starfighters), Starship Operations (starfighters), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, starship weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter.



Adventure Seed: In Too Deep

The Yuuzhan Vong have just begun their invasion of the galaxy, and supply convoys are fearful of attacks from the alien invaders. The ever-increasing climate of paranoia has fostered a demand for flight escorts, especially in sectors near the invasion corridor. While flying a routine escort mission, the heroes encounter trouble from an unexpected Imperial flight group.

The Imperial remnant is cautiously guarding their borders to prevent the New Republic from dragging them into the war. The heroes have unfortunately stumbled upon one such patrol while flying escort for a freighter that's been forced out of hyperspace. They revert to realspace to find an Interdictor-Class Star Cruiser and a squadron of TIE fighters that don't look friendly. The reversion has damaged the freighter's hyperdrive.

"This is Tan Maarek Stele of the Empire. You are traveling through restricted space. Power down your weapons and prepare to be boarded." The heroes can choose to comply, resist, or wait for orders from the convoy's commander. What the Imperials are looking and how friendly they are in looking for it is up to you.

JENG DROGA

Of all Palpatine's Hands, of all his dark side elite, of all his Prophets, stormtroopers, and Royal Guards, none was more loyal than the somber and introspective Jeng Droga. He harbored a sincere love of the Emperor akin to a vornskr for its master. Droga's erratic past yielded a man of extreme emotions, manifested in his angry mastery of the lightsaber and the intensity of his perpetual solitude.

Sharing an acute psychic connection with Palpatine, Droga supervised the other Hands and guarded the Emperor's yacht, *Emperor's Shadow*. He accompanied Palpatine to Byss, ensuring the creation of the Emperor's clones, and to the Sith Lord tombs on Korriban. Shortly after the Battle of Yavin, Droga rescued his cowed master after Palpatine had enraged the mummified Sith by demanding dark side knowledge. Palpatine recovered from the assault in a bacta tank on Imperial Center while Droga

retrieved one of the Emperor's clone.

The moment the Emperor "died" at the Battle of Endor, Droga fell into an inexplicable insanity, butchering his crew and causing the *Emperor's Shadow* to plunge into Kaal's oceans. Even as he perished, Palpatine used the dark side knowledge the Sith Lords had granted him years earlier to rend space itself and transmigrate his essence across lightyears to Droga's body. The infusion of Palpatine's overwhelming dark energies reduced Jeng to incoherent madness. Eventually, Palpatine's Grand Vizier Pestage was able to find Droga and tear the Emperor's essence from Droga's body. Once again, Droga had saved his master.

Droga warned Palpatine against going to Onderon personally to capture the infant Anakin Solo for his new host body. Palpatine dismissed his advice. While Jeng waited for his liege, he

Adventure Seed: Droga's Destiny

Twelve years after his death at Onderon, Palpatine is once again resurrected to command a Second Imperium—or so it seems. Instilled with hope, Droga hurries to join his master as the Third Battle of Yavin rages between the Empire and Jedi. This time, however, the Emperor's return is a farce. When Droga realizes the truth, the strain proves unbearable. The weary heroes are forced to confront a berserk, expert swordsman with nothing to lose.

received a vision of Palpatine in peril and rushed to aid him, but he was too late. It's said that when Palpatine died his final death, Droga's mental scream echoed through the Force for days.

Jeng feels personally responsible for Palpatine's death, having considered it his duty—indeed, his destiny—to protect him. Droga returned to Kaal, where he was closest to the Emperor, waiting for his master's return from the dead once more. ■

Jeng Droga: Male Human JG 7/EH 9, Init. +4 (Dex), Def. 25, (+11 class, +4 Dex), Spd 10m; VP/WP 14/17, Atk +8/+17/+8 (Jd8+4, crit 19-20, lightsaber), +17/+12/+7 (range), SQ Jedi knight, resource access, sneak attack +2d6, target bonus +4, deadly strike, SV Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +9, SZ M, FP 8, DSP 12, Rep 10, Str 18, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12, Challenge Code: G

Equipment: Lightsabers (2), Sith Talisman

Skills: Bluff +5, Craft (lightsaber) +10, Demolitions +4, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +5, Hide +8, Jump +6, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +8, Knowledge (Sith lore) +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Pilot +12, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +11, Survival +6, Jumble +11

Force Skills: Affect Mind +5, Battlemind +20, Enhance Ability +8, Force Defense +11, Move Object +12, Telepathy +11

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force Sensitive, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point-Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting
Force Feats: Alter, Control, Deflect Blasters, Rage, Sense, Throw Lightsaber





The Seeds of Villainy

They are the opposition. They are what stand between the heroes and success. They are the impediments that challenge the characters. They are active foes and random encounters. They are figures of legend, like Darth Vader and Darth Maul, and less-impressive types like Greedo and Sebulba. They are the bad guys, and as the GM, you have a legion of them at your disposal. Which types of bad guys you use, and how you use them, will determine the tenor of your campaign.

In the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, the bad guys are the focus of the heroes' attention. Whether they are the motivation of the hero's actions or merely that what stands between them and their goals, the Villains are key to the story. So the challenge becomes—how do you present your bad guys in such a way that makes them interesting, and more importantly, how do you maintain bad guys over several gaming adventures?

A wise GM once said, "These guys have a lifespan of one encounter." Indeed, once you put the heroes into direct conflict with any single villain, there is a good chance that one or the other will not survive the encounter, unless you plan ahead. That carefully constructed crimelord of the Black Sun cartel, put into a room with player-run heroes, may suddenly experience a career-ending injury.

This is not to say you should always deny your heroes the pleasure of pummeling on your bad guys, both great and small. Rather, you should have an idea of how to use your villains to produce not only memorable encounters, but also continuing or developing conflicts for the heroes that may extend beyond the bounds of a single encounter or evening's adventure.

Bad guys come in a number of flavors, ranging from spaceport thugs to masterminds who move like shadows behind the scenes. Each type presents its own chal-

lenges and opportunities to the GM for interesting encounters, and provides more depth to your campaign.

Thugs

Starting at the very bottom, these are the everyday bad guys—the mooks, the toughs, and the palookas—that seem to thrive in droves in Starports. Sometimes these guys cross the heroes' path in order to "deliver a message" from the local crimelord. Sometimes they are just minding their own business when the heroes rile them. Sometimes they are just looking for trouble. Often they are nothing more than speed bumps in the path of more experienced heroes. In game terms, they are frighteningly fragile (any hit goes directly to wounds and calls for a Fort save), and when confronted by such Feats as Cleave and Great Cleave, they can go down in handfuls.



The Hierarchy of Villains in the *Star Wars* RPG

Thugs are in general good for the self-esteem of struggling heroes, and always something you can throw at them when they missed nabbing the mastermind by just a round, or if the heroes themselves are just looking for trouble.

Most thugs are pretty much unremarkable. So how do you make a handful of rowdies in a spaceport cantina interesting and distinct to the players, and a memorable encounter to their heroes?

A handy way is an obvious physical trait or mannerism to the toughs—any one may be the big one (the one with the highest Strength), the fast one (high Dexterity), or the tough looking one (high Constitution). Don't look for the smart or wise one—that's not always obvious (though Thugs with those traits might be ringleaders—see their entry below). Another easy piece is attributes such as species, or hair or skin color, or a distinct physical attribute or piece of equipment (The pale blue scarred Twi'lek

with a knife). In general, it should be something that's pretty darned obvious, since these guys aren't going to give up their life story or anything in the middle of combat.

The Reputation score can also be used as a springboard for their behavior. A thug's reputation is usually tied up with personal achievements. Being "The toughest spacer ever to ship out of Mos Eisley" is a typical boast. And there is the favorite line "I have the death sentence on twelve systems" that commands respect from Jedi knights and farm boys alike. Generally any conversation with the lot (a short prelude to mayhem) is along the lines of this bragging. Thugs are often hoping to establish who is boss (and they want it to be them).

Most of the thugs are little more than one-shot encounters—you will see them for one scene at best. An exception to this is "The One That Got Away." When you're doing a thuggish type of encounter (say, perhaps, a swoop gang trying to shake down

the heroes), one of their number hangs back, and at the first sign of trouble (perhaps when the first of the thugs falls to a hero's lightsaber), heads for the high country. If the heroes are quick (and not otherwise distracted), they might catch up with this one.



The Seeds of Villainy

If they fail, the next time the heroes run into a similar group of thugs, there should be a familiar face among them. This motivates the heroes to complete the set—no heroes like to leave a job unfinished.

As a final idea for the One That Got Away, consider a promotion for the Thug that survives dealing with the heroes. Let's say your heroes meet (and best) a swoop gang on Tatooine. One of their members, a pale green, muscular Rodian, gets away in the final battle. The next time the heroes are on Tatooine, a few months later, a gang jumps them on swoop bikes again. Now the gang's leader is the same pale green, muscular Rodian, perhaps raised a level in thug or even promoted to ringleader status, with a level of scoundrel or soldier for her experiences in fighting the heroes.

Organized Thugs

Just half a step above the standard spaceport band of thugs is an organized mob. This includes military groups like the Stormtroopers and combat droids. Unlike your typical thugs, these are identical in appearance (in their armor at least), and like the common thugs, don't normally last more than a single encounter. The highpoint in their careers is usually direct combat with the heroes, and few survive the battle. Like common thugs, they can be used to slow down more powerful heroes, and while their leaders are not expecting miracles, they are pleased when they bring down a hero or two.

The advantage of organized thugs is just that—they have a level of training (or in case of the droids, programming) that allows them to function well in combat. They will tend to be armed more often with missile weapons such as blasters, and be willing to keep the battle at a distance. Heroes who are fighting organized thugs are best off closing the distance as quickly as possible and engaging in melee combat. This limits their ability to fire among friendly targets, and organized thugs rarely have the Precise Shot feat.

Organized thugs usually have the advantage of decent technology. They not only tend to have better weapons—the ability to fill a corridor with blaster rifle bolts is not to be underestimated—but they have better communications as well. While a swoop gang may be operating on their own, or a bully in a cantina can be taken down in a single combat, organized thugs can (and do) call in reinforcements should they find themselves in trouble. For this reason, heroes fighting organized thugs need to dispatch them quickly—either to prevent them from calling in reinforcements or to keep them from pinning down the heroes until those reinforcements arrive.

When organized thugs have a reputation score, it is usually tied to their unit or organization as opposed to anything that they personally have done. Various military units have an esprit de corps that gives them bragging rights, as well as the ability to strike fear in the hearts of others. The appearance of the stormtroopers in their white armor should be enough to cow a

crowd of planetary locals (though it may be less effective on smugglers and their Wookiee companions).

The Ringleader

The next step up the evolutionary ladder of bad guys are Ringleaders—these characters usually have at least one level in a heroic class, which means Vitality Points in addition to Wound Points. As a result they have a higher chance of surviving one good shot. Scoundrels and soldiers are most likely found in this category, though at the highest levels can include prestige classes like elite troopers and crimelords.

At first blush, the ringleader figure is akin to the One That Got Away—he's the thug that orders others into combat, and then vanishes from the scene at the first sign of trouble. A ringleader that you want to survive is best seen ordering his thugs into combat, and then leaving before the first sign of trouble. Should his servants succeed in defeating the heroes, he gets to take the credit. Should they fail, well, he can always hire more leg-breakers.

A good example of a ringleader is Bib Fortuna, Jabba the Hutt's major domo. While not a warrior in his own right, Fortuna has Jabba's resources at his disposal, as well as permission to use them to aid in his own smuggling and slaving operations. Fortuna is not the hand that holds the blaster, but rather the eye that aims it.

A typical ringleader takes his reputation for things that he did, or at least supervised. His "boys" may be running a shakedown racket in the poorer sectors, or he may be the one that fingered a noted smuggler to the bounty hunters. He makes little bones about "his" accomplishments, and uses them to impress (and order about) less-influential beings.

A ringleader by himself should be a challenging encounter for the heroes, for example he would be a level four soldier when confronting four fourth level heroes. On first encounter, he may not even fight the heroes directly, and may survive more than one scene as a result. Good (survivable) ringleaders usually keep an aircar with its motor running, or blast doors that can be dropped into place in order to deter pursuit.

However, after a ringleader has left the heroes in the dirt once or twice, the players



may want to take direct action against this particular thorn. Ringleaders don't usually expect people to come hunting for *them*, and may be found in their favorite bar or cantina, with a few of their mates and lackeys around them. A well-prepared party can get the drop on a ringleader and deal out their own form of justice.

Ringleaders, unless they feel they have no other choice (they are trapped or challenged directly in front of their men) will sometimes try to talk their way out rather than battle. They will be glad to save their own mangy hides with information, and more than willing to send determined heroes off to bother someone else. They can be scared away by a show of force ("Never darken this planet's orbit again") but will usually just pack up and move to greener pastures.

The Good Bad-Guy

Now we're entering in the realm of bad guys that may make frequent appearances in the life of a character. These are characters that may appear frequently as foes, rivals, and sometimes-potential allies of the heroes over time and over several adventures. The first is the virtuous villain, the noble opponent, the honorable opposition. He (or she) is the good bad-guy.

The good bad-guy is a villain who operates under a noble (or at least understandable) code of conduct. Honorable and professional bounty hunters are a good example of this type of opponent—they have a set job (finding the individual they are hunting), and in general are not dangerous unless you happen to know someone willing to pay money for your arrest and/or elimination. If the heroes aren't wanted (and are not protecting someone who is wanted), the bounty hunter doesn't want to bother with them.

Boba Fett is an excellent example of a good bad-guy. He meets his obligations to both Lord Vader and Jabba the Hutt in bringing in both Luke and Leia for one and Han for the other. There is no double-dealing or backstabbing. It's a job for him, pure and simple.

A good bad-guy makes the most of his or her reputation, in particular if it can lower the barriers to getting the job done. If a bounty hunter is known for clean kills, high success rates, and a minimum amount of



collateral damage, the hunter is more likely to see more work. Take that into account when playing such a character. The good bad-guy may not wish to endanger innocents, or may go out of his or her way to save them if they are imperiled. This tends to make the good bad-guy a little more sympathetic, and that much more difficult for the heroes to just shoot.

When creating a virtuous villain, think about the villain's reason for being. It can be as base as monetary reward or as noble as vengeance for some age-old slight. Regardless, it colors how the villain behaves. A purely mercenary, but honorable opponent will not attack a group of innocents in order to reach his target. Knowing this will influence how you play the bad guy, and the players in turn will understand that.

The good bad-guy also creates the potential for situations in which the heroes and the villain are working alongside each other, working toward common goals, or at least not trying to kill each other at first sight. For example, the heroes may be leading a rebellion against a corrupt Imperial official. The honorable villain may be a mercenary who has been hired to find (and liberate) that villain's stash of ancient documents dating back to the Old Republic. Both the heroes and the good bad-guy have similar goals as far as removing the corrupt Imperial official.

Usually with good bad-guys, there is a point where the two paths diverge—where what the heroes want (overthrowing the corrupt official) and what the good bad-guy wants are at odds (Probably starting the

moment the corrupt official flees in panic). A good bad-guy will try to make sure he or she has the upper hand in this particular situation, or, failing that, that the heroes are off dealing with some other problem when it comes time to betray them and leave.

The good bad-guys tend to survive because, were the situations reversed, they would do the same for you. Their actions are at least understandable, if not always acceptable. If thrown into a direct conflict, either the villain or the hero would be walking away from the fight at the end, and unless forced into that direct confrontation, they are good as potential rivals and wild cards in your adventures.

The Bad Good-Guy

He's the card shark with a few aces up his sleeve. The smuggler who has a small package to be delivered to his sainted aunt on Coruscant. The swindler who has stolen a Sith holocron whose owner wants it back. The smiling old friend who didn't mention that he's being hunted by Boba Fett. He's the bad good-guy, the gold-hearted rogue, and he can often sow dissension among the party members.

Much as the good bad-guy can be trusted for his sense of honor and commitment despite his actions, the bad good-guy is a questionable rogue who often brings his own problems to the players. His intentions may be positive, but something often breaks down on the way to reality. Smugglers who portray themselves as trustworthy traders are a good example of these type of bad good-guy.

The Seeds of Villainy

A good example of this type of opponent is Lando Calrissian in his early years. A master at the sabacc table, he has gained and lost starships with his gaming abilities. And while he means no ill will to his opponents, he tends to irritate people with his continually hot hand at cards and his betting ability. Often, given any number of individuals in a casino a majority of them owe money/are owed money to Lando. And not all are happy about it.

A bad good-guy will use his reputation to stress his trustworthy, loyal, dependable, and honorable nature. If he has to polish the resume a bit and glom over some of the more unpleasant facts, that's part of the way the game is played, in his opinion. He may overstate his value to the Rebel Alliance or his loyal service to the Imperial Navy. Similarly, he will have the perfect excuse for that explosion aboard the space station, or the missing funds from the troop payrolls. Often the bad good-guy will take one step, or two steps, or perhaps ten steps beyond the truth, and get himself (and those around him) in trouble for it.

Encountering the bad good-guy tends to be non-fatal, at least at the start. He will forget to mention a few things, like the droidekas that are currently on his trail or

the bounty hunter that is after him or the fact that the Empire wants him for swindles on four different systems.

What keeps the bad good-guy alive is that he's often worth more alive than dead. He usually shows up like a bad cred, with some opportunity that may help the heroes or the causes that they believe in. He's the one with the holo-map to some ancient tomb, or the rumor of some new jump co-ordinates, or the information on Imperial Naval maneuvers. He's a good person to have around, but not to have around for too long.

The last trick for the bad good-guy is that he rarely outstays his welcome. At the first chance of a new mark or a new profit he is on his way, sometimes leaving his former comrades to pick up the pieces (and/or pay the damages) of his visit. Occasionally the rewards will be too great, and at that point he becomes dangerous. Calrissian gambled that Vader would settle for the Rebels and leave his operation on Bespin alone—he was wrong in that gamble, and the others suffered for it.

The Bureaucrat

The most irritating of opponents is one you can't directly hurt. The bureaucrat is that type, in that fighting him requires time, effort, and most of all knowledge.

The bureaucrat is a non-violent oppo-

nent that may not (initially) mean any direct harm to the heroes themselves. He is the venal politician seeking to feather his own nest, or the trader charging too much for wares, or regional governor who is skimming the top off Imperial taxes for his own retirement. Usually these types cross the heroes' path by accident—the heroes suffer from the bureaucrats' short-term decisions, or are cheated by some scam or are subjected to some oppressive regulation. Only over time does a bureaucrat become a dedicated enemy.

Watto the Toydarian is a slightly comic example of a bureaucratic foe. He has a wonderful collection of precious junk, any one piece of which would be worth a king's ransom. Of course, he asks for a king's ransom for any of it, and proves to be unmoved by pleas, threats, and other non-monetary contributions.

At a higher and less humorous level is a customs officer that demands bribes in order to protect ships from "sudden inspections". The first time the heroes refuse to slip some credits under the table they find their ship coming under a rigorous inspection, and themselves cited and fined for numerous small violations.

Neither Watto nor the customs officer know or care about the heroes and their actions at this point—they are both proceeding on business as usual for themselves. They have institutionalized their actions so that their abuses of the market (or of the traders) are nothing more than business as usual. Only when someone rebels against their way of doing things do they pay attention.

The heroes are usually put into the position of being attacked in a non-violent manner. If they react violently (attacking Watto or the officer), they are the aggressors, and the heroes are the ones at fault. Bureaucratic villains make a lot of noise about "rights" and "the law", but always when it benefits them. A number of crimelords fly under the false flags of legitimate enterprise, and can be considered bureaucratic villains.

The way to defeat the bureaucratic villain is with his or her own tools—knowledge and power. Gathering information on the customs officer and reporting it up the chain of command may result in that officer's



demotion. Beating Watto at a bet (causing him to lose money, his most precious possession) is the way to defeat the Toydarian.

Often the bureaucratic villain will have minions of his own, often ringleaders or thugs. Should the heroes prove to be too successful with their efforts, he can call them into play to "deal with the problem." In such cases, the bureaucrat may be giving the heroes the tools they need to embarrass and depose him—a captured ringleader that will rat to the authorities is often the very weapon to bring down such a villain. Indeed, once a bureaucrat villain reaches for physical solutions to his problems (like, say, bounty hunters), the gloves are off, and the heroes may react accordingly.


Sometimes the bureaucrat cannot be attacked, only endured. Should the heroes earn the enmity of a corrupt senator, they will suddenly find themselves at odds with the Republic itself. Inspectors snoop around their ships and their homes. They find themselves under obvious surveillance, and the senator's allies no longer welcome them. In such a case, the heroes have two likely choices—either relocating out to the Galactic Rim, or coming to terms with the senator (perhaps a small favor, or a minor mission) and settling accounts. This in turn provides a springboard to new adventures.

The Personal Villain

Not all bad guys are necessarily bad, or rather; they are not equally bad to everyone. Some people have personal enemies—rivals or foes that exist primarily for themselves. The villain in question doesn't worry about the others—they are instead focused on one opponent in particular.

Personal villains have a grudge, either real or imagined, against one individual in particular. That person may have cheated (or have been perceived to have cheated) the villain, or hurt the villain in some way. As a result, the villain is motivated by revenge against that one individual. Only the strength of that hatred will determine the lengths to which the villain will go to deal with his nemesis.

Jabba the Hutt is an excellent example as a personal villain of Han Solo's. The Hutt had little concern about the Rebellion or the Force or plots of Emperor Palpatine's. However, Jabba considered it unforgivable that



Han Solo would dump a load of his spice and cut out without paying him. As a result Jabba put a price on Han's head so large that it attracted the attention of a number of bounty hunters, including Boba Fett. Jabba wanted Solo made an example of, so others would not think of letting the Hutt down. Once he had acquired the smuggler from Fett, he displayed Han, frozen in a carbonite block, in his palace. The case of Jabba the Hutt is illustrative because it also shows the inherent weakness of a personal villain. Jabba did not take into account Han's allies, and while he captured Luke, Leia, and Chewie while they were trying to rescue Han, he underestimated their abilities and paid for that error with his life.

Over the course of adventuring, the heroes will have numerous opportunities to gain a personal villain. Indeed, going back to the Thug that Got Away, a personal villain may develop over time, graduating from one type of villain to the next. Against a group of heroes, a personal villain is a singular threat, as the heroes must pull together to protect one of their own.

The Organization Villain

One of the most nefarious type of villains is the one without a face. If your opponent is not a person but rather an organization, it is much more difficult to defeat. The Black Sun crime syndicate, the various Hutt clans, even the Empire itself is all examples of an organization as a villain.

Some organizations are structured like a pyramid—taking out the highest level will often cause the rest to fail. The problem

may be in identifying and reaching that highest level—The Emperor himself is hardly available on a regular basis. Often the leaders of an organization are masterminds, hidden from view, and can bring the organization's entire resources to bear on those that challenge it.

More frustrating are dispersed organizations, such as the Trade Federation or the Imperial Remnant following the Emperor's death. Destroying one leader or group of leaders does not cause the entire structure to fall apart. A particular plan may be defeated, a particular plot may be derailed, but the organization remains.

Sometimes defeating the organization villain may prove hazardous, as the organization provides some level of security and protection for an area. Removing a particularly noxious Hutt family from power does little good if there are three other Hutt families just waiting in the wings. Often heroes will have to choose between the lesser of two (or more) evils.

In game terms, this means that a organization villain can produce a regular cast of enemies to deal with. Destruction or defeat of one group does not entirely remove the threat of the villain. Indeed, Organization villains can learn from the mistakes of earlier parts of that organization, and plan accordingly to deal with interlopers and pesky heroes.

The Living Weapon

Everything is focused into their abilities, be they combat, force-related, or both. A Living Weapon villain is little more than a tool to be released on an unsuspecting (or

The Seeds of Villainy

slightly suspecting world). It has a mission, usually set by the Mastermind.

As a character, the living weapon is little more than a collection of stats gathered to one particular end. Most GM Characters have some level of balance to them, while a living weapon has dedicated itself to a particular mode of attack. It is a combat monster, either in melee, with missile weapons, or with the power of the force itself. Skills that are not directly related to its nature are not considered. Knowledge skills only exist to help it hunt its prey better, and Craft skills only to help it with its weaponry.

The living weapon is not subtle by any means, nor does it need to be. Others exist to research, to explore, and to develop. The living weapon's purpose is to destroy its opposition.

Given the nature of the living weapon, it is unlikely that the heroes will encounter him directly more than once, and then only at the climax (or near-climax) of the adventure. One way to set the stage for the final encounter is to have the living weapon style of villain strike around the heroes—

destroying their ships, their allies, their friends, before moving into the kill itself. Sometimes a living weapon will attack a hero's allies in order to draw the heroes out, to force them to come after the living weapon and fight him on his terms.

The Living Weapon moves through the universe, pushing its reputation ahead of it like the bow wave of a ship. Usually there will be only one combat with the living weapon, but it will be a powerful combat. The living weapon will choose its time and its place to battle its foe. Unlike the good bad-guy, the living weapon is rarely bound to a code other than hatred and violence—it is an unstoppable juggernaut of destruction.

The best known of such villains is Darth Maul, whose hatred of the Jedi has been carefully cultivated by Darth Sidious, such that he is an expert foe, capable of holding off two Jedi in a single combat.

The Mastermind

The ultimate villain is the one who lurks behind the curtain—the mastermind. This is the brains of the operation, who pulls all the strings and moves both heroes and villains across the stage at his whim. This one is the planner, the initiator of atrocities, who serves

his own ends and his own ends only. He is the ultimate ringleader, the force behind the organizational evil. Unlike the bureaucrat, he is very aware of the evil he commits—indeed, it is all part of his greater plan.

Masterminds always have a plan, have an ultimate goal. They are willing to endure much, even temporary setbacks, in order to achieve these goals.

Reputation means little to the mastermind—it is a side benefit to his growing power. A mastermind would be willing to hide behind the mask of a trusted ally or an innocuous bureaucrat, but only if that eventually leads him to power.

The greatest villains of the Galaxy are masterminds. Darth Sidious lives for the destruction of the Jedi, and has Darth Maul as his living weapon. The Emperor wishes nothing less than the domination of the universe itself under his iron grip.

Deception is a common tool for the Mastermind. The Emperor allowed the plans for the second Death Star to reach the Rebels, and created the impression that the battle station was unfinished, when in truth it was fully operational. The mastermind is willing to do his homework in order to play the unexpected card, to not only defeat the heroes, but to crush both their spirits and the bodies.

Masterminds are rarely met in the flesh, at least not at first. They may not be seen at—only their minions are visible. The heroes may take out this crime syndicate, or that slaving ring, and only over time realize that it is all part of some larger scheme.

When the mastermind is first seen, it may be through holographic transmissions, giving orders to their minions. Even then they work from the shadows, half-seen, completely feared even by those that follow them. They have a wide array of resources available—all the other villain types can be made as their lackeys.

Masterminds are patient as well. They will grow their plots, insinuating a spy in the midst of allies to gain their trust, or letting the heroes attack one part of their operation in order to keep them away from another. A mastermind always feels that he is in control of the situation, is always three moves ahead of his opposition.

Indeed, that need for control can often spell disaster for the mastermind villain, and



makes them vulnerable. The wheels within wheels can take some level of change, but sudden, unexpected attacks can derail them. A 'setback' may send the mastermind off licking his or her wounds, but it is a vulnerability that the heroes may exploit to wreck the mastermind's ultimate plan.

Masterminds are excellent at having an escape route planned from normal combats, and are willing to sacrifice followers, minions, and other resources in order to live another day. A final battle with a mastermind usually occurs close to the fruition of his or her plan, when the mastermind needs to be on the scene (and also when victory is within their grip). In that final battle, the Mastermind will use every power at his or her disposal to deal with the heroes once and for all. No pity will be asked, for none will be granted.

Growing Your Villains Along Side Your Heroes

The type of villains the heroes encounter will be determined in part by their own experience and interests. Early on, their foes would be of the thug variety, both with and without ringleaders. As they advance in levels, more powerful groups are discovered, and with that linkages between the groups as well. Soon the collected Thugs may belong to a larger organization, like the Black Sun, which is in turn led by a shadowy mastermind.

As the heroes develop, they begin to attract their own personal enemies as well, both as individuals, and as a group. Bounty hunters or living weapons may be sent out from the mastermind to "deal with the problem." This becomes part of the greater story of the heroes as the conflicts grow.

Another idea to keep in mind with your villains as your players gain in power and experience: Your heroes are not static—neither should be your villains. When first encountered, he or she may be a little more powerful than the heroes—perhaps a level above or so above. In future encounters, the bad guy may gain a level for every two that the heroes pick up. This accomplishes two things—it keeps the villain's chance of survival high in case of a direct combat, but it also keeps the players on their toes—they knew that this bounty hunter was of one power level when they met her months

before in the campaign, but cannot say for sure if the villain is still at that level.

Not every encounter should be tied back to one particular villain or group of villains. While the heroes may have one great foe, be in the Empire, the Black Sun Network, or even the minions of a Hutt family, there is always room for others. Breaking from one group of villains to another provides an interesting break, as the same tactics that work at eluding bounty hunters may be less effective in dealing with the hired legions of the Corporate Sector Authority.

The more powerful figures may often be defeated but not slain. They may flee, like Darth Vader after the destruction of the death star, to return more powerful on another day. They may also survive by the "obscure death rule"—A villain may be defeated, but the body is not found. Either it disappears (over a convenient edge of the cliff), or is taken (by loyal servants), or the heroes are prevented from making sure that the villain is well and truly dead. In these cases, the heroes may have bought themselves a respite from the villains' predations, but the villain may yet return to plague them again. If you as the GM wish to restore one of your villains in such a manner give the heroes a break for some time—it cheap-

ens their victory if Darth Vader reappears too suddenly after his apparent death.

Also, should the heroes have been responsible for upsetting a major plot of a mastermind, that villain would become a personal villain for all those involved. Yes, the galaxy must be subdued, and brought under a tyrannical heel, but first those that destroyed the villain's last plot must be dealt with. The mastermind may move behind the scenes, manipulating events until he is at last ready to strike against the heroes who caused his downfall.

As a final note, there is always the chance, regardless of careful planning and contingencies, that the heroes will get the drop on your choice bad guy and take him out. After a deadly, final lightsaber duel, your living weapon lay in two pieces on the floor, the mastermind dead from a Wookiee's hug. Your heroes are triumphant, which makes them feel pretty good, but you've lost a mastermind.

Just remember two words: Clone Vats. There's always another chance in the game. Let the heroes have their celebration. You will always have more villains to throw at them. ☐





The Sith Compendium

BY MICHAEL MIKAELIAN

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTHONY WATERS

Starships

It is unlikely that many of these ancient starships survived for very long after the Great Hyperspace War. Though the information required to build one can most likely be found in Sith holocrons and scrolls, their ancient technology is inferior to that which surfaced 3,000 years before the Battle of Yavin IV.

SITH PERSONNEL CARRIER

Throughout the Great Hyperspace War, the Sith Empire employed these transports for acquiring and maneuvering landing forces. During a battle, the personnel carrier would descend into the deployment zone's lower atmosphere and jettison its six troop containers. Upon impact, the containers spring open and unleash whatever forces are inside.

Outside of battle, the troop containers are lowered on massive chains while the starship hovers about 100 meters above the ground. Hoisting the containers up takes several minutes, during which time the personnel carrier is vulnerable to attack.

Each troop container can hold 60 troops, one Sith Slayer, or two Sith war behemoths. When dropped during combat, the single accessway allows eight troops or one Sith war behemoth to exit at a time. Passengers of a troop container delay their actions until the container accessway is fully open. The accessway opens one turn after the containers are released from the carrier, using the carrier's initiative count.

While in descent, troop containers can be targeted by starship weapons. They

have a Defense of 26 (+2 size, +2 speed, +12 armor), 90 Hull Points, and DR 5. Once landed, they may likewise be targeted by starship weapons with a Defense of 20 (+2 size, -4 speed, +12 armor) or by character or vehicle weapons with a Defense of 9 (-8 size, -5 Dex, +12 armor). Until all of the container's Hull Points are gone, it provides one-quarter cover to troops inside.

While still attached to the starship, troop containers can still be attacked, but destroying one does no damage to the starship (other than reduce the number of troops that it can carry). They use the starship's Defense + 3. If an attack targeting a troop container misses by three or less, the starship has been successfully hit instead.





Craft: Sith Personnel Carrier; **Class:** Space transport; **Cost:** not available for sale; **Size:** Large (215 m long); **Crew:** 12 (Skilled +4); **Passengers:** 360 (troops) or 24 (mounted Sith mammoths); **Cargo capacity:** 1,000 metric tons; **Consumables:** 6 months; **Hyperdrive:** x6 (x12 backup); **Maximum speed:** Cruising; **Defense:** 21 (-1 size, +12 armor); **Shield Points:** None; **Hull Points:** 375; **DR:** 20.

Weapon: 8 light blaster cannons; **Fire Arc:** 1 front, 3 left, 3 right, 1 rear; **Attack Bonus:** +6 (+2 fire control, +4 crew); **Damage:** 1d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB -2, S +0, M/L n/a.

SITH GUNSHIP

Sith gunboats were the hammer to the Sith battleships' anvil during the Great Hyperspace War. While the flying fortresses were slow and heavily armed and armored, the escort gunships were fast, maneuverable, and not without firepower of their own. Approximately one-third the length of a battleship, Sith Lords Naga Sidow and Ludo Kressh each had several hundred of these ships under their command.

Sith gunships encountered during the time of the Sith Empire were typically employed as escorts for battleships or personnel carriers. Naval maneuvers typically included a battleship carrying 24 Sith starfighters, two troop carriers, and four escort gunships.

Craft: Sith Escort Gunship; **Class:** Capital ship; **Cost:** not available for sale; **Size:** Medium-sized (75 m long); **Crew:** 18 (Skilled +4); **Passengers:** 30; **Cargo capacity:** 250 metric tons; **Consumables:** 1 year; **Hyperdrive:** x4 (x12 backup); **Maximum speed:** Attack; **Defense:** 22 (+12 armor); **Shield Points:** None; **Hull Points:** 350; **DR:** 15.

Weapon: 6 autoblasters; **Fire Arc:** 3 front, 1 left, 1 right, 1 rear; **Attack Bonus:** +8 (+4 fire control, +4 crew); **Damage:** 3d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB/S +0, M/L n/a.

SITH STARFIGHTER

The small, bulbous Sith starfighters zipping around massive Sith battleships were a common sight throughout the Great Hyperspace War. From the beginning to the bitter end of the Sith Empire, Sith starfighters provided the first line of defense.

Sith battleships can carry a complement of 24 starfighters. Lacking hyperdrive capability, Sith starfighters are never alone.

Craft: Sith Starfighter; **Class:** Starfighter; **Cost:** not available for sale; **Size:** Small (45 m long); **Crew:** 1 (Normal +2); **Passengers:** None; **Cargo Capacity:** 0.5 metric tons; **Consumables:** 5 days; **Hyperdrive:** None; **Maximum speed:** Ramming; **Defense:** 23 (+1 size,

+12 armor); **Shield Points:** None; **Hull Points:** 180; **DR:** 10.

Weapon: Triple blaster cannon;

Fire Arc: front; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +2 fire control, +2 crew); **Damage:** 2d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB/S +0, M/L n/a.

Droids

The schematics for a Sith sentry, Sith warbot, or Sith slayer can be found in most Sith holocrons. Though the inner workings are far inferior to droids produced thousands of years later, the alchemically treated Sith armor plating is the equal of a low-powered shield generator. It's unlikely that any of these ancient droids have been active since the fall of the Sith Empire.

SITH SENTRY, SECURITY DROID

Realizing early on the advantages of automated troops, the Sith Empire manufactured several different models of combat droids. The Sith sentries, the smallest and most common of these automated troops, were used as low-security guards. These droids were typically found pulling guard duty that organics would have bored quickly of.

Sith palaces, factories, warehouses, shipyards all commonly employed at least a handful of sentry droids. They also served onboard Sith battleships, gunboats, and troop carriers. In emer-

A Note About Eras of Play

The statistics provided here are for many items that were in common use during the Sith Empire. During most eras of play, these objects would be extremely rare, if they existed at all. The most likely places to find these items include ancient Sith sites of worship, long-forgotten regions of open space, and on the worlds most closely associated with the ancient Sith Empire or the newly-revealed Sith—Darth Maul and Darth Sidious.

The Sith personnel carrier, gunship, and starfighters, along with the Sith battleship provided in *The Dark Side Sourcebook* could reasonably be found in the deep reaches of space which used to be the Sith Empire. Whether they are operated by remnants of the ancient Sith Empire is up to the GM. Whether they are deserted and in disrepair, mysteriously

preserved, or operated by a Sith droid crew, an encounter with them could make an excellent side trek.

Similarly, Sith droids might be found guarding the tomb of a long dead Sith Lord, or reactivated by an unwitting scholar studying Sith ruins. Sith scrolls could sensibly be the reward for vanquishing the dark side spirit guarding them or the subject of an escort mission during any era of play. Not really knowing what the heroes have in their possession, this could be an excellent way to introduce ancient Sith secrets and Sith villains into your campaign. Locating a long-lost focusing chamber could also provide the seed for an epic adventure; especially if the heroes aren't the first to find it.

These statistics can also be used to jump-start a campaign set in the ancient Sith Empire.

The Sith Compendium

gency situations, Sith sentries were deployed in groups of six. Otherwise, they were stationed at predetermined posts or circulating in a preprogrammed patrol pattern.

Sith Sentry: Walking security droid, Thug 2; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex); Spd 8 m; VP/WP -/13; Atk +2 melee (1d6, punch), +5 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle); SQ DR 3; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ M; Rep 2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 6. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Arm-mounted blaster rifle, alchemically-treated Sith armor plating (armor check penalty -3), locked access.

Skills: Listen +1, Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic (understand only), Search +2, Spot +2.

Unspent Skill Points: 0

Feats: Weapon Focus (Blaster Rifle), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster rifles, simple weapons).

Cost: Not available for sale.

SITH ELITE WARBOT, ANCIENT BATTLE DROID

Unlike the Stingray, the elite warbot was not widely used. This had more to do with the expense of building them than

their effectiveness. Elite warbots were actually quite proficient in both melee and ranged combat.

Models with stun blasters and batons instead of Sith swords were commonly used for training exercises. Because of their less-lethal weapons, these droids were not reprogrammed to behave any differently, making them harsh teachers.

Though the name implies that these droids were used exclusively for waging war, elite warbots were often used as high-security forces. Many important figures throughout the history of the Sith Empire felt more comfortable knowing that there were two elite warbots guarding their chambers than they would were there a dozen living guards.

Sith Warbot: Walking military droid, Soldier 6; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 19 (+9 armor); Spd 6 m (armor); VP/WP 45/17; Atk +8/+3 melee (2d6+2, crit 19-20, Sith sword), +9/+4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol) or +7/+7/+2 ranged (3d6, 2 blaster pistols); SQ DR 6; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; SZ M; Rep 6; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8. Challenge Code E.

Equipment: Two arm-mounted blaster pistols, arm-mounted Sith sword, alchemically-treated Sith armor plating (armor check penalty -7),

vocabulator, locked access.

Skills: Intimidate +9, Listen +4,

Read/Write Basic, Search +4, Speak Basic, Spot +4.

Unspent Skill Points: 3

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sith Sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Cost: Not available for sale.

SITH SLAYER, ANCIENT WAR MACHINE

The rarest of Sith war droids, the Sith slayer is more like a tank with a droid's brain than anything else. Despite its brutish and slow-witted appearance, the slayer has an above-average intellect.

Building a slayer was a long, arduous process that was quite costly. The amount of alchemical materials that went into one slayer was almost as much as two Sith starfighters. Standing over 12 meters tall and weighing several metric tons, the slayer is the largest mechanical weapon other than starships in the Sith arsenal. Though not nearly as invulnerable, Sith war mammoths were more common than slayers.



Sith Slayer: Tracked military droid, Soldier 4/Thug 8; Init +0; Defense 15 (-4 size, +9 armor), Spd 6 m (armor), VP/WP 42/20, Atk +9/+9/+4/+4/-1 melee (2d8+3, 2 Sith spinning blades), +5/+5/+5/+0/+0/-5 ranged (6d8, crit 19-20, blaster cannon)* or +3/+3/+3/+3/-2/-2/-7 ranged (6d8, crit 19-20, blaster cannon)*; SQ DR 10, trample; SV Fort +15, Ref +3, Will +4; SZ G; Rep 10; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 9. Challenge Code G.

Equipment: Two shoulder-mounted blaster cannons, two arm-mounted Sith spinning blades, alchemically-treated Sith armor plating (armor check penalty -7), vocabulator, locked access.

Skills: Intimidate +11, Listen +7, Read/Write Basic, Search +7, Speak Basic, Spot +7.

Unspent Skill Points: 0

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sith spinning blades), Heroic Surge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (heavy repeating blaster), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Cost: Not available for sale.

* Attack bonuses include multi-fire and autofire; treat blaster cannons as E-Web blasters.

Creatures

CORRUPTED SNAKE

There's virtually no limit to the corruptive powers of the dark side. Places inhabited by dark side spirits, especially powerful ones, often become twisted by the dark energies that swirl around them. Over the years, almost every living thing becomes a grotesque mockery of its original form.

The corrupted snake is one example of such a creature. It is unknown whether this creature was always 10 meters long or if that's a result of prolonged exposure to dark side energy. Due to its size, the corrupted snake finds Medium-sized and smaller beings the perfect prey. Larger opponents may be enough to scare away a corrupted snake.

The corrupted snake's primary attack is its bite. Its fangs contain a naturally occurring variant of Sith poison that requires a DC 20 Will save. On a failed save the character suffers 1d6 points of Constitution damage. Like all Sith poisons, this one feeds the character's anger, drawing him closer to the dark side. Unless the initial save was successful, each time the character uses a Force Point, he must make another Will save. If that save fails, he automatically calls upon the dark side of the Force, earning a Dark Side Point. Unlike manufactured Sith poison, only one successful Will save is required to purge the poison from the character's system.

On a successful bite attack, the corrupted snake can use Improved Grab to attempt to start a grapple as a free action if the target is smaller than Huge. The corrupted snake does not lose its Dexterity bonus to Defense and may continue to bite normally when using this ability. If it chooses to deal damage to a held character as the result of a successful grapple check, the victim takes 3d6+11 damage.

Milking the venom of a corrupted snake is a dangerous proposition. To do so requires that the creature be subdued and milking sacks placed on the fangs. A Handle Animal check (DC 12) is required to extract the venom. For every 5 points the check exceeds the DC one dose of venom is extracted.

Corrupted Snake: Mutated predator 4; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative), Defense 17 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); Spd 8 m; VP/WP 45/44; Atk +15 (2d8+11/poison, bite), or +5 ranged; SQ Constrict, poisonous, improved grab; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +2; SZ H; Rep 3; Str 32, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 11. Challenge Code E.

Skills: Hide +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +11.
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

SITH WARBIRD

During the Sith Empire, domesticated creatures were commonly pressed into military service as mounts for heavy artillery. Like the Sith war behemoth, the

warbird was used in this way. In exchange for raw power, the warbird has increased speed and maneuverability. This flightless bird stands 6 meters tall and is approximately 10 meters long.

The statistics below are for the warbird as it is found in nature. When a Sith battle harness is added, the warbird gains a +6 armor bonus, DR 5, and +2 Reputation. The harness also contains a cockpit that provides the rider with three-quarters cover, reigns providing a +2 equipment bonus to Ride skill checks, and a blaster cannon (treat blaster cannon as an E-Web blaster). Mounted on the warbird, the blaster cannon is considered on a stable platform, conferring a reduced multi-fire penalty of -2 and autofire penalty of -4. The fusion generator onboard provides unlimited ammunition for the blaster cannon. The challenge code of a battle-ready Sith warbird complete with rider is increased to C.

Whether the warbird is wearing a battle harness or not, it has the ability to trample any opponent it threatens. As a full-round action, the warbird can run over an opponent at least one size category smaller than Huge. No attack roll is necessary. When the warbird begins its action adjacent to an enemy it may move over the enemy as if it weren't there. This attack deals 1d8+7 damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 20) reduces the damage by one-half.

Sith Warbird: Herd animal 3; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 15 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 28/22; Atk +7 melee (2d6+7, gore), or +1 ranged; SQ Trample, +2 species bonus to Survival checks on plains; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ H; Rep 4; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2. Challenge Code A.
Skills: Climb +9, Survival +6.
Feats: Power Attack, Run.

SITH FAMILIAR

One of the many lesser-known applications of Sith alchemy is the manufacture of a familiar. Making a familiar is expensive and time consuming, and the result is very fragile. Still, some Sith Lords have deemed it worthwhile an endeavor.



A Sith familiar looks like a small scavenger bird, with a wing span of one-half meter. A Force-sensitive character has a chance of detecting its true nature if within 10 meters. The character makes an opposed Wisdom check against the familiar's master. Both characters add their Force level to the check. If the character succeeds, they get the sensation that they're being watched, and a successful Spot check opposed by the familiar's Hide skill reveals that the source of that feeling is this unsuspecting bird.

The Sith familiar's most unique ability is its connection to its creator. By expending 1 vitality point per 10 minutes, the familiar's master can experience what the creature is experiencing. Additionally, the master can use certain Force skills and feats as if she was at the familiar's location. These include Alter, Empathy, Enhance Senses, Force Defense, Force Stealth, Friendship, Illusion, See Force, Sense, and Telepathy. The familiar's master can also use Affect Mind, Drain Knowledge, Fear, Hatred, and Summon Storm as if she was where the familiar is. If she does, the familiar must make a DC10 Fortitude save or be destroyed by the attempt. If destroyed this way, the attempted skill or feat lasts for one round, during which the familiar is consumed by the energy required to

maintain the Force conduit that long.

Creating a Sith familiar requires instructions found only in a Sith holocron or on Sith scrolls. These instructions can only be carried out with 10,000 credits worth of materials and an alchemical apparatus. To complete the creation of the familiar requires a DC 20 Alchemy skill check. See the Alchemy skill description for more details.

Sith Familiar: Airborne vermin 2; Init +6 (Dex, species bonus); Defense 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Spd 4 m, 15 m fly (good); VP/WP 10/4; Atk +0 melee (1d3-3, bite) or (1d2-3, 2 claws), or +7 ranged; SQ Force conduit, +10 species bonus to saves against mind-influencing effects; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +0; SZ T; Rep 1; Str 4, Dex 19, Con 7, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 3. Challenge Code A. **Skills:** Hide +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Search +2, Spot +2, Survival +4.

Force Skills: Enhance Ability +5.

Feats: Force-Sensitive, Skill Emphasis (Enhance Ability), Track.

Force Feats: None.

Equipment

MEDITATION CHAMBER

Throughout the ages Sith Lords have created many different versions of the meditation chamber. Though no two are the same, they share many similarities.

They usually provide a safe and secluded environment for weakened Sith Lords to regain their strength. The chamber allows recovery at rates much faster than mere rest, due in part to the carefully imbued alchemical properties of each meditation chamber. Darth Vader had such a meditation chamber onboard his command ship, the *Executor*.

A typical meditation chamber grants the user a +4 equipment bonus to Control Mind, Empathy, Farseeing, Heal Self, Illusion, and Telepathy skill checks. Each time this equipment bonus is granted, the user gains a Dark Side Point.

This unique piece of equipment also rapidly increases the rate at which the user recovers lost vitality and recovers from fatigue. The rate at which vitality points are restored is increased to 1 point per level every 30 minutes. Additionally, two hours of meditation will negate the effects of fatigue. The meditation chamber grants no additional bonus to recovering wound points. Whenever a character rests uninterrupted for any period of time, they gain a Dark Side point.

Meditation chambers must be custom-built for a specific person. If anyone else uses the chamber, the equipment bonus is reduced to +2 and the user gains an additional Dark Side Point. All other effects remain the same. To build a

meditation chamber requires schematics available only in a Sith holocron or on Sith scrolls. The materials to construct a meditation chamber cost 20,000 credits. This doesn't include any additional equipment such as life support, fusion generator for recharging weapons and armor, or communications gear. The hardness and wound point total of a meditation chamber depend upon what materials it is made out of. To complete the construction of a meditation chamber requires a DC 25 Alchemy skill check.

FOCUSING CHAMBER

During the Sith Empire, massive subterranean caverns were devoted to arrays of complex machinery with only one purpose: to amplify Force powers. These apparatus, called focusing chambers, increased the power of a Force wielder by many times. Typical focusing chambers resembled a sleek cylindrical tower with a crystalline chamber at the very top. Clever Sith sorcerers were careful to limit access to the chamber itself by providing no means of reaching it other than flying.

A typical focusing chamber amplifies the following skills and feats: Control Mind, Empathy, Farseeing, Illusion, Move Object, and Telepathy skills and Force Whirlwind, Hatred, Prolong Force, and Summon Storm feats. The vitality point cost of a skill or feat is doubled when amplified by the focusing chamber and any use of a focusing chamber gives the user an additional Dark Side Point. Using the focusing chamber to initiate an action requires total concentration for 10 rounds (one minute) during which time the user may only perform free actions. Likewise, sustaining a skill or feat requires the user's full attention.

Using a focusing chamber for 10 minutes causes the user to become fatigued. Using it for 30 minutes causes exhaustion. Evil acts performed using the focusing chamber cause users to gain Dark Side Points as they normally would.

Each of the Force skills and feats behave differently when they are amplified:

- **Control Mind:** This skill affects 10 times the number of targets for double the listed vitality cost to maintain; The maximum range is increased by one level of mastery. (For example, untrained users use the range for those with Force Mind, users with Force Mind use the range for those with Knight Mind, etc. Master Mind allows the user to affect an entire region, such as the Core worlds or the Out Rim.)
- **Empathy:** +10 equipment bonus to Empathy skill checks.
- **Farseeing:** +10 equipment bonus to Farseeing skill checks.
- **Illusion:** +10 equipment bonus to Illusion skill checks; The maximum range is increased by 10 times for double the listed vitality cost to maintain.
- **Move Object:** +10 equipment bonus to Move Object skill checks; The maximum weight that can be moved is increased by 10 times for double the listed vitality cost; A successful Farseeing skill check (DC 20) allows the user to affect an object anywhere in the same planetary system.
- **Telepathy:** +10 equipment bonus to Telepathy skill checks; The maximum range is increased by 10 times for double the listed vitality cost.
- **Force Whirlwind:** The area affected, duration, and range of this feat is increased by 10 times. An amplified Force Whirlwind deals 6d6 damage and requires a DC 30 Reflex save to reduce that amount by one-half.
- **Hatred:** Using this feat does not require a full minute of concentration; The affected area is doubled (20 m). Amplified Hatred deals 4d6 damage and invokes a -4 penalty to all attacks, skill checks, and ability checks. Damage can be reduced by one-half with a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC = 15 + 2 x user's Charisma modifier). Maintaining amplified Hatred is a free action that costs 8 vitality points per round.
- **Prolong Force:** If the user does not have the Prolong Force feat, they may spend wound points as if they did when paying the vitality point cost of an amplified skill or feat; If the user has the Prolong Force feat, a wound point provides four times the power that a vitality point would when paying the vitality point cost of an amplified skill or feat.
- **Summon Storm:** A successful Farseeing skill check (DC 20) allows the user to summon a storm anywhere on the same planet. The maximum and minimum storm radii are doubled, and penalties caused by an amplified storm are increased to -4. Maintaining an amplified storm is a free action that costs 1 vitality point per minute.



The Sith Compendium

Constructing a focusing chamber requires schematics found in some Sith holocrons, incredible resources, and a huge cavernous space. The materials to build this enormous device would cost 1,000,000 credits. A chamber that's at least 250,000 cubic meters and safe from the elements is also required. Alone, it would take a Sith alchemist three years to complete a focusing chamber; divide this time by the number of characters assisting in the construction. Characters without the Alchemy skill—usually slaves—can be used to reduce the construction time. Up to four other characters may aid the character performing the Alchemy skill check (DC 40). See the Alchemy skill description for more details.

Artifacts

SITH SARCOPHAGUS

Sith burial chambers can take on many forms. The most common is a humanoid-shaped sarcophagus. While these typically contain the physical remains of a Sith sorcerer, they can also be the final resting place of the spirit

as well. One example is the tomb of Freedon Nadd on Dxun, the beast moon of Onderon.

Though the sarcophagus is typically the center of a Sith burial chamber, the entire tomb oozes dark side energy. The result is often felt by the surrounding flora and fauna, which mutates over time. Unless a Force user makes a successful See Force skill check to detect Force (DC 15) within 10 meters of the tomb, they sense nothing other than the nagging feeling that they should watch their back.

Often the sarcophagus is a source of power for a dark side spirit. Disturbing a dark side spirit's sarcophagus will automatically transport it to the tomb. The sarcophagus emanates strong waves of dark side energy when the dark side spirit is within 10 meters. Force-sensitive characters within 10 meters must make a Will save (DC = 10 + dark side spirit's Charisma modifier + character's dark side point total) or succumb to feelings of anger, fear, aggression, and the like. If that character attempts to call on the Force within the next 24 hours, they automatically call on the dark side.

If a character somehow finds themselves lying in the sarcophagus for more than one full round—even against their wishes—they must make a Will save (DC = 10 + the dark side spirit's Charisma modifier). A failed save results in the dark side spirit possessing the character. Dark side spirits may instruct worshipers to find the perfect specimen to possess, use the Illusion Force skill to trick a hero into lying in his sarcophagus for a peaceful nap, or make promises of great power inside.

Transferring the essence of a living being into a sarcophagus requires one be custom built. The materials to do so cost 200,000 credits. The Force user must have ranks in Alchemy and another living being to sacrifice to complete the transfer. To complete the process, a Transfer Essence skill check (DC 30) is required. For every hundred lives that are willingly sacrificed for this process, reduce the DC by 1 (minimum DC of 10).

SITH SCROLLS

It is unknown whether Sith scrolls predate the invention of the holocron, are a result of losing the ability to create holocrons, or were simply created by Sith sorcerers who lacked the technology and know-how to create a holocron. What is known is that Sith scrolls are the stuff of legend. A complete library of Sith scrolls would be a priceless discovery.

These extremely rare scrolls are similar to a holocron in that they store knowledge. In contrast to the holocron, there is no "teacher" to help those searching for information find it. While this makes Sith scrolls less likely to lead the reader down the dark path than a Sith holocron would, it takes much longer to access information stored in a Sith scroll. An added obstacle is the language barrier—to decipher a Sith scroll requires that the reader have Read/Write Language (Sith) and a successful Knowledge (Sith lore) skill check with a DC of 20.

Sith scrolls are usually part of a library of scrolls. A single library contains 5d20 scrolls. Unless the GM wishes to outline the contents of each scroll, the chance that information the reader is searching for can be found in one of the scrolls is 1% per scroll. For example, a library of 50 scrolls has a 50% chance of containing the schematics for Sith battle armor. To determine if the library contains the desired information roll a d%. The amount of time it takes to search unlabeled scrolls is difference between the size of the library and die roll result (up to a maximum of the size of the library) in hours. If the scrolls are cataloged, it takes one-sixth that time. If the information is there, the reader receives a +2 competence bonus as if they were accessing the information from a holocron.

One place that Sith scrolls would likely turn up is the crypt of a long-dead Sith sorcerer. In a case such as this, it is likely that the Sith sorcerer is still hanging around, in the form of a dark side spirit. If this is the case, studying Sith scrolls may end up being more dangerous than accessing a holocron. □



BY MICHAEL ROGGE

ILLUSTRATED BY ADI GRANOV



THE CENTRALITY IS A LONG SLICE OF SPACE THAT LIES BETWEEN HUTT SPACE AND THE CRON DRIFT. IT IS THE PRIME BACKDROP IN L. NEIL SMITH'S TRILOGY OF NOVELS, *THE LANDO CALRISSIAN ADVENTURES*. IT IS A BARREN REGION, WITH TRACTS SO EMPTY THAT MANY TRAVELERS RUN OUT OF FUEL BEFORE THE HALFWAY POINT OF THEIR JOURNEYS. SECURE HYPERROUTES ARE INFREQUENT AND MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE WANDERED OFF THE BEATEN PATH HAVE BEEN STRANDED AND LOST IN THE DEEP WASTES OF SPACE.

Because of its remoteness, there is a popular saying among outsiders that the Centrality is not the center of anything. But to the Centrans, those who grew up there, it is the center. They embrace the harsh environment and see their history as a victorious struggle against it. Their ancestors settled here because they wanted a taste of true

freedom, away from corrupt governments like the Republic. Now the Centrans celebrate their liberty by their prosperity—hard work in the frontier can reap rewards.

Although Centran philosophy opposed overarching authorities, a simple one was necessary for safety and commerce. Consequently, what started as a series of trade

agreements and mutual defense programs developed into a cobbled together coalition of planets, dubbed, perhaps contemptuously, "the Centrality." The Scrinvir (High Trammic for "head writer") became the Centrality's supreme representative. While not as powerful as other regional governments, in light of recent empires and rebellions the Centrality has been able to hold onto its independence, the core of Centran identity.

The Centrality through the Eras

RISE OF THE EMPIRE

As the Republic crumbles, the Centrality lives up to its frontier reputation. It can be a dangerous place to visit. Economic depression has hit the majority of the industrial



planets and crop epidemics plague the agricultural worlds. The government is too weak to spread proper aid. Wealthier systems, like the Oseon, are not willing to help lift the others out of poverty.

THE REBELLION

In return for a degree of semi-independence and economic aid, the Centrality has sworn allegiance to the Empire. The Centrality military is put under Imperial control, but no worlds suffer invasion. This course of action revitalizes the mining and agriculture industries as they meet the needs of the Imperial juggernaut.

Palpatine, like the Hutts before him, regards the area as too remote to be of any importance. One could say he encourages this bastion of "freedom." He knows that the information gleaned about the affluent that holiday in places like the Oseon is worth more than direct control.

The Rebel Alliance operates a few cells in the region, but they are small and insignificant. The Centrality is too far removed from the Core to be of any great use to the Alliance.

THE NEW JEDI ORDER

The Centrality looks at the New Republic with skepticism. Although both sides have signed treaties of goodwill, the Centrality opposes joining the New Republic. Bolstered by old Imperial ships, the Centrality Navy is strong enough to provide ample defense of the region.

The loss of the Empire's huge appetite, however, has begun to show its effect. Planetary economies are slipping. Concurrently, the invasion of the Yuuzhan Vong in New Republic space has brought a flood of refugees. Areas are being overpopulated, jobs are scarce, and violent crime is rising.

Meanwhile, the Centrality government is experiencing its own turmoil. Renatasian terrorism and fear of the Yuuzhan Vong have incited the military to take a stand. Fleet Admiral Sris Lehhett has installed himself as Scrinivir in a bloody military coup. The former Scrinivir, Ottdefa Tavell Geen, barely managed to escape and now is in exile on Coruscant trying to drum up support for his reinstatement.

An intelligence veteran, Trallint, has adopted old ISB intimidation practices to uphold Lehhett's regime. Lehhett has ordered immigration to be halted and all refugees be conscripted into the military. Some systems, like Oseon, are protesting Lehhett's schemes and have gone to the point of declaring that they will secede from the coalition.

Places of the Centrality Oseon

The Oseon Asteroid Belt is the most popular destination in the Centrality. Scattered across the mid and upper belts are hundreds of thousands of casinos, pleasure parks, and palatial residences, running the gamut from the cheap and dirty to the most extravagant. From the standard approach vector, the million blinking lights overpower the glow of the sun.

There are only two major laws in the Oseon. Carrying or using a weapon is a capital offense punishable by exposure to the vacuum of space. However, a sea of insurance agencies and bondsmen has precluded a formal execution from ever happening. Secondly, all money gambled must first be transferred to chips at a branch of one of the major banks, for authentication.

GADFREY AND THE FLAMEWIND

Years ago, explorer Gadfrey Oseon was looking for an out from his life as a circus ringleader. Legend says he ran a crime syndicate within the circus, but got into a tangle when he performed on Nal Hutta. He fled the Hutts and landed on an asteroid in no man's land to refuel. There he found out he could not depart for three weeks because of an occurrence the local miners called the Flamewind.

The Flamewind is what coerced Gadfrey to stay in the asteroid belt, as it has many others. He dreamed if he constructed a casino and hotel, travelers would have something to do if they got stuck during the Flamewind season. They could be astounded by one of the wonders of the galaxy and in the meantime gamble away their credits.

The Flamewind is a spatial irregularity that passes through the Belt once each year and suspends trade and communication

Fleet Admiral Sris Lehhett

Sris Lehhett is a stringent advocate of Imperial doctrine. He was part of the original invasion force at Renatasia and is determined to end the terrorism with blunt force.

Sris Lehhett: Male Human Sol 10; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 72/18; Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+2, vibroblade), +11/+6 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 9; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, vibroblade.

Skills: Astrogate +7, Demolitions +5,

Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (Centrality Navy) +14, Pilot +14, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write High Trammic Repair +3, Sense Motive +6, Speak Basic, Speak High Trammic.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Dodge, Endurance, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, vibro weapons).

between the asteroids for three weeks. It fills space with arcs of shifting colors from a palette of a thousand rainbows, a movement of color that sends some watchers into hallucination. Many think that the Flamewind is a legion of ghosts, a soul-train of a long-dead species who passed from this universe unfairly. There are those who believe the Flamewind transmits messages to them and dispatches them on errands and quests to strange places in the galaxy.

Scientists conjecture that the Flamewind is caused in part by solar flares. Trade and communication are stopped because the radiation noise accelerates the decay of electronics. Those who do risk their necks and ships in such a firestorm must deal with inaccurate gauges and flaky sensors. They must be prepared to fly "by the seat of one's pants"—and through scores of asteroids.

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Stingbeams

Smaller than a hold-out blaster, the stingbeam can fit in the palm of most being's hands or be hidden in folds of clothing. It carries five non-lethal shots that can stun an opponent. Although technically illegal in places like Oseon (it is a firearm), many gamblers carry expensive models that can evade most security scanners.

Cost: 400 (1,500 for models with a +5 bonus to evading electrical detectors); **Weight:** .25kg; **Damage:** 1d2; **Stun Damage:** 1d6/DC 18; **Type:** Energy; **Size:** Tiny; **Group:** Blaster Pistols.

Flying During the Flamewind: The inaccuracy of sensors handicaps all skill checks onboard a starship with a -10 penalty. Furthermore, there is a 30 percent chance of ship failure every hour. Consult Table 11-1 in the rulebook for results of electronic decay.

Oseon 6845: 6845 in the sixth belt is the largest worldlet of Oseon, seven hundred kilometers in diameter, honeycombed with entrance and egress portals for tube cars and ships of all shapes and sizes. But 6845 is more than just a set of hotels and gambling parlors—it's a domed metropolis for the ultra rich and famous. Real estate on the tree-lined esplanade that stretches around the equator is among the most expensive commercial property in the galaxy.

Hotel Drofo is the premier lodging for visitors who can afford absolute indul-

gence. It outdoes all others in luxury and offers accommodation for every type of species. It attracts only the best: admirals, captains of industry, nobility, and the most flamboyant celebrities. The gaming saloon is one of the galaxy's finest, with millions, sometimes billions, of credits being thrown around every hour.

Drofo the Third, a Toydarian of no reserve and no limits to his imagination, owns the hotel. He has convinced the Centrality military of the necessity of the armed Akroec strike cruiser he keeps for protection against thieves and a clan of Hutts who would like to get their stubby fingers on his loot.

DROFO III: Male Toydarian Expert 6; Init +0; Def 13; Spd 6m, 10m (fly); VP/WP —/11; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, punch), +3 ranged (3d4, hold-out blaster); SQ Flight, immune to Sense (see Sense, page 101) and Affect Mind; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6; SZ 5; FP 0; Rep 8; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14. **Equipment:** Hold-out blaster, comlink, datapad.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +5, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Oseon street-wise) +10, Listen +3, Profession (hotel business) +10, Profession (gambler) +6, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Toydarian, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Toydarian, Spot +2.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols).

Oseon 8920: The Belt has its own dens of villainy, some of which thrive on their odious

reputation. 8920 is one of them, a miniature Nar Shaddaa that hides gamblers from loan sharks, hides loan sharks from racketeering charges, and houses the occasional tourist who's too cheap to pay for safer lodging. Oseon police forces once planned to eliminate this place, but it proved too valuable as an information source.

Oseon 5631: Thirty years ago, the residence of trillionaire Bohhuah Mutdah on 5792 was the most lavish of all the asteroid homes before it exploded. Now the honor belongs to Ema Slake's estate on 5631. The copper-skinned Albingi is one of the galaxy's great voices. She is a shameless self-promoter and the asteroid is a showcase for her success. It has three theme parks, a museum devoted to Slake's songs and life, and a library collecting a quarter of the available music in

Life Crystals

The life crystals are an enigmatic combination of advanced technology and nature. It is said that the crystals bring added vitality and intelligence to the wearer. The debate in science is inconclusive.

After the first week of wearing a crystal, roll 1d20 to determine its effect:

1-10	no effect
11	+1 Strength
12	+1 Dexterity
13-14	+1 Constitution
15-16	+1 Intelligence
17	+1 Wisdom
18	+1 Charisma
19-20	+1d4 temporary Vitality Points

Each successive year the wearer rolls again and can gain an additional bonus. These bonuses stack, as do bonuses awarded by multiple life crystals. The effects of a crystal are reversed 24 hours after it is removed (a bonus becomes a penalty). If the crystal is replaced within 1 week, all bonuses are restored (the wearer does not roll again). If the crystal is not replaced, the penalties wear off in 1 year. Cost: 5,000 credits for one crystal up to and during the rise of the Empire era, 25,000 credits on the black-market during later eras.

Adventure Hook: Sosten Freet, the Advosse agent of Ema Slake, hires the heroes to investigate the disappearance of over half of her silicate trophies. The investigation leads them to 8920, where Ema's past holovid director, the Kubaz O'lif Khaz, is holed up. Khaz is a paranoid wreck. He fears that one of the loan shark producers is after him for going way over budget on a holovid shoot. He tells them that Ema's retired manager, the Twi'lek Phaldri Nex, may know something about the thefts. While in Khaz's apartment, one of the heroes discovers a missing trophy. Almost by coincidence, Freet appears upon the scene and has Khaz arrested for burglary. Khaz screams that the trophy was planted.

Upon leaving 8920 with their reward and the Freet's thanks, Nex's toughs accost and capture the heroes. When Nex learns that Freet is involved, he gets suspicious and offers to free the heroes if they break into Freet's home on 5631. There the heroes find the trophies in crates ready to be shipped off. They must apprehend Freet and bring him and the trophies to Slake's home.

the galaxy.

Rafa

In the past, most tourists in the Oseon planned a getaway to the nearby Rafa system for three reasons: to purchase some of the renowned life crystals, walk through the glassy orchards where they are harvested, and see the pyramids of the ancient Sharu. However, things have changed since the "Awakening" of the Sharu. The Sharu are not eager to accept tourists. The orchards that remain on Rafa V are closed and life crystals are prohibitively expensive. Huge cities have taken the place of the pyramids.

THE CRYSTALS AND THE BROKEN PEOPLE

The Sharu did not intend to have their crystals separated from the orchards. When an unknown alien entity thousands of years ago threatened the Sharu, the orchards were their means of escape. They designed the crystal orchards as mind vacuums to absorb and collect their intellectual existence—their lives, intelligence, and memories. These life-energies were then stored inside the computer systems of the pyramids. Bereft of the intelligence, the Sharu became primitives. They called themselves the Toka, or the "Broken People," and sung in their mad verse that one day the Sharu would return.

LANDO CALRISSIAN AND THE MINDHARP OF SHARU

When the threat had passed and the time was safe again, the pyramid computers would restore the Toka to the Sharu. This happened a few years before the Battle of

Endor with the help and luck of Lando Calrissian, then a young gambler on a treasure hunt. He activated the Mindharp of the Sharu, which pulled together the culled energies and acted as a focal point for awakening the Sharu from their computerized slumber.

POST MINDHARP

For the next three decades, the Sharu kept to themselves. They halted the life crystal trade and discouraged tourism. They even placed an interdiction field around the system for the first year to reclaim it from Imperial-Centrality forces. The landscape of Rafa IV and V transformed radically. The pyramids erupted into kilometer-upon-kilometer of city that made rubble of the colonists' dwellings. Most colonists chose to leave, but scientists and archeologists came to the system by droves, excited by the new possibilities of knowledge and technology. They have learned little, however, from the Sharu.

Since the Yuuzhan Vong appeared upon the scene, the Sharu have begun to break out of their shell. Some of the life crystal orchards that still exist are being re-sown. The Sharu realize, as the colonists before them, that the life crystals they invented are valuable commodities. They could sell them at exorbitant prices to buy the few supplies they need from the galaxy. Under Lehgett, the Centrality has been very willing to supply a labor force of convicts to work in the orchards, as the Empire did in the past.

Sharu Technology: The Sharu have been reluctant to share the secrets of their tech-

A Walk through the Woods

Most of the remaining crystal orchards are on Rafa V. An orchard has about five hundred conical trees, each translucent and are of the same size and shape.

Exposure to the orchards for extended periods of time can have harmful effects on one's physiology and mental aptitude. For every 24 hours spent in the life orchards, a character must make a successful Will or Fortitude save (DC 10; use the higher bonus of the two). If failed, roll 1d6 and apply the penalties:

1-3	-1 Intelligence
4-5	-1 Wisdom
6	-1 Constitution

Once a character leaves the orchard, the penalties will last 30 days. However, if the character loses more than 2 points in one ability score during his stay in the orchards, the loss is permanent. A long and gentle exposure to the orchards, like the local staff, needs only a saving throw every month. The penalties affect Sharu as well, but not Toka. It is not known where the "energy" sucked out of victims goes, now that the Sharu computer databases no longer are tied to the orchards.

nology. They construct their buildings with a high-capacity plastic that cannot be replicated. They also use a matter transport system to move around in place of speeders. Since Sharu technology is vastly different from the norm, special skills are needed to operate it. Use base ability scores or special-



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izations when appropriate.

Rafa IV: The landscape of Rafa IV is littered with huge plastic constructions, like those of children's building blocks: tubes, cylinders, spheres, and even a few pyramids. Few non-Sharu have seen the insides. The inner dimensions confuse those who have.

Rafa IV used to be the center of civilization in the system, when the Empire and Centrality ran the penal colony. After the Awakening, the capital city, Teguta Lusat,

became an anemic version of its former self, resting in the lower levels of the Sharu's urban mountains. Those who could, fled. Those that remain are researchers, scientists, and the poor. The Sharu themselves show no concern for the welfare, health, or condition of those who live beneath them.

Rafa V: The Sharu first evolved on Rafa V and since the awakening it is the most populated. Chrome and plastic cities cover much of the planet, the rest is a desert of red sand. The best archeological clues to the

ancient Sharu are the orbiting bands of technological debris, the Sharu's first attempts at space flight.

In his memoirs, *A Toss of the Dice: This Gambler's Life*, Calrissian says that when he was confined in a pyramid on Rafa V, he was taken on a journey through the planet's center. There he was presented with images that showed the history and evolution of the Sharu, from single cells to what they resemble today. He does not remember much more, but writes that this historical gallery may still exist.

The Sharu

The Sharu appear as older near-Humans, not as withered as their Toka avatars. Many have tattoos on their foreheads of the Mindharp or other Sharu symbols. They claim to have not yet reached their true forms; that their humanoid bodies will change over the centuries to resemble the Sharu of old. Their minds do not work like any humanoid species, which is possibly why it is so hard to understand them.

Their society is based on rationality. They seem to have no competitive tendencies and no interest in exploring the stars or entering galactic politics. Each member serves a particular function of that society with no complaints. If badgered into combat, they are more than capable of defending themselves in a style of martial arts they have developed. They speak both Basic and a dialect of High Trammic, an indication that the language thought to have evolved on Trammis may be of Sharu origin.

Sharu: Expert 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12 (+1 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/12; Atk +2 melee (1d6, martial arts), +3 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Equipment: Variety of personal belongings.

Skills: Appraise +4, Computer Use +7, Craft (Sharu technology) +7, Disable Device +5, Knowledge (Sharu technology) +7, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sharu Trammic, Repair +6, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Speak Basic, Speak Sharu Trammic, Spot +3, Treat Injury +4.

Feats: Martial Artist, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Species Features: +2 Intelligence, -4 Charisma; Sharu Technology.

Sharu Technology: Vastly different from the galactic standard, Sharu technology is far more advanced than anything the Republic, Empire, or any known civilization has ever seen. Beings of species other than Sharu suffer a -8 penalty to skill checks when attempting to use Sharu technology. This penalty is ignored if a character has 5+ ranks of Knowledge (Sharu technology). Ranks in this skill can only be gained under the tutelage of a Sharu or another character that meets this requirement.

Adventure Hook: Corask Slen'da, Bothan head of the Obroan Institute for Archeology on Rafa IV, has disappeared. The heroes go to Rafa IV to find him. They rescue one of Slen'da's assistants from a local gang. She tells the heroes that Slen'da discovered the secret of the life crystals, but is now a prisoner on Rafa V.

If the heroes land in the desert on Rafa V they will not be detected. When they reach the orchards, they find a penal colony of mindless brutes harvesting crystals. If try to escape with Slen'da, Chief Supervisor Myle Jandler confronts them. Jandler tells the heroes that Slen'da attempted to stop Sharu-Centrality

relations by assassinating key Sharu who were friendly to the Centrality. Jandler allows the characters to take the Bothan, since the Slen'da is now a walking vegetable.

Upon returning to their ships, the heroes find that the Bothan is not mind-numbed at all: he wields a lightsaber and claims he is a Jedi. He tells the heroes that the Sharu feed off the energy that is sucked from laborers and are using it to accelerate their physical transformation process. Scrivnir Lehhett has agreed to provide workers if the Sharu open up the crystal trade. Slen'da demands that the characters can help him destroy the life-sucking orchards.

The Toka (pre-Sharu)

The Toka are almost indistinguishable from bent elderly humans. Tattooed with strange symbols, they look like branded prunes. They have little capacity to learn and are nearly devoid of passion and will. During the tenure of the Empire, they work in the orchards or serve as "domestic animals," even eating the food meant for such creatures. Tribes also roam free on Rafa V and hunt with simple crossbows (1d8 damage).

Toka Commoner: Init -2 (Dex); Defense 8 (-2 Dex); Spd 8m; VP/WP —/12; Atk +0 melee (1d3, punch), -2 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will -2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Equipment: Rags, few personal belongings.

Skills: Knowledge (Sharu legends) +3,

Speak pidgin Basic, Speak

Toka-Sharu Trammic, Survival +1.

Feats: Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, primitive weapons).

Species Features: +2 Constitution, -4 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom; +2 species bonus to Hide; +2 species bonus to Knowledge (Sharu legends).



Appendix: Other Systems in the Centrality

Antipose: The pleasure yacht *Arleen* runs a yearlong tour from the Oseon system to Antipose IX and the sparsely populated Antipose XII, a planet with the "most violet skies in the universe."

Dela: Dela III is the financial hub of the Centrality and home to a native species, the Ulorins. Most who stay for long periods of time in the Oseon Belt have accounts at one of the banks. The security in the system is tight, since authorities fear Renastasian terrorists and other pirate attacks on the banks.

Dilonexia: Dilonexia XXIII is the Centrality's main supplier of foodstuffs. Droids are valued here more than waged workers, because they can provide a tireless, complaint-free labor force. Giant weather satellites keep the weather from becoming too nasty with a proprietary tornado disruptor.

Douglas: The Douglas system is named after the famous hunter Mendel Douglas, who traversed the system's third planet to acquire the hide of the elusive jackelope. The jackelope made it back for his collection, although Mendel himself did not.

Erlinar: The capital planet of the Centrality is far from the urban sprawl of Coruscant. Three hundred thousand lakes break up the landmass and force transportation to go underwater. Unfortunately, the planet has

seen terrorist attacks, one of which destroyed much of the monorail and killed a million people.

Hosrel: Hosrel XI was rumored to have a top-secret research base.

Shield Camouflage

Capital ship "shield" camouflage is a sensor masking technology the Centrality Navy invented in the Hosrel system. The shield is not as advanced as the cloaking device that Grand Admiral Thrawn used, yet it has its advantages in special circumstances. In areas of stellar disturbance, like nebulas, the camouflage will blend the ship in with the dust. It adds a +10 to the DC for sensors to detect the ship. While camouflaged, shields must be powered down or the bonus is lost.

Lekua: Lekua V has the foremost university in the Centrality. The University's Department of Comparative Sapient Species is renown for its tenured "professor-adventurers," the Ottdefas, who risk all—academic credibility, savings accounts, their lives—for their research.

Paulking: Some of the most unusual creatures in the Centrality swim in the waters of Paulking XIV. The trout have fur, the crabs have wings, and the algae can speak.

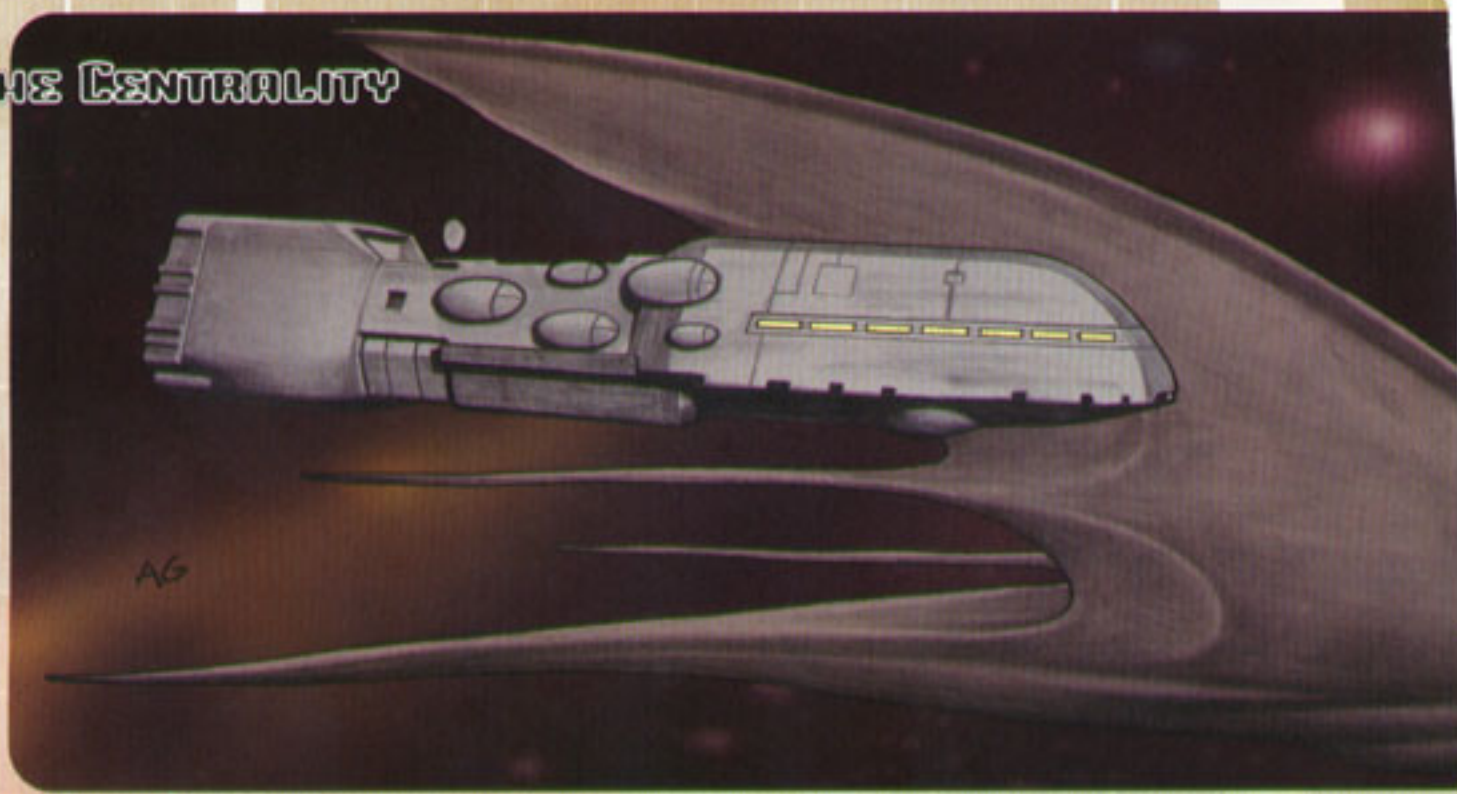
Renatasia: Renatasia is tucked away in a corner of the Open Sea, an isolated system cut off from the rest of the Centrality. Although the Renatasians speak a corrupted form of Basic, the time of their set-

tlement is judged to be long before the first colonists came to the Centrality. For an unknown reason, Renatasia slid into technological barbarism and had to build up its civilization. Over the next thousand years, the Renatasians colonized their system, but they could not achieve faster-than-light speeds.

A hyperdrive mishap sent a trader to the Renatasia system during the Empire's rule. He did not make contact with the Renatasians but reported back to the authorities. Upon further scrutiny, the Empire decided that Renatasia could be a valuable resource that far in the Open Sea. They classified Renatasia as socially retarded and ready for "forced redevelopment," a term in the Imperial lexicon that meant ruthless exploitation and eradication. The Centrality government says that it had no idea of the true Imperial motive. They were merely following orders, orders that included leveling the capital Mathilde on Renatasia III and exterminating two-thirds of the population.

The Centrality is still dealing with repercussions in the forms of terrorist attacks. The Renatasians have their "freedom," but it is on decimated planets that grow few crops and are hampered by disease. The Renatasians refuse all aid; they want to see nothing but an end to the Centrality.

Rigneldia: Rigneldia II is the backbone of the manufacturing industry. The factories make everything from fasteners to repulsorlift cores. What causes headaches is the measuring system the Rigneldians will not sur-



render. All measurements are standardized around the diameter of the Rigneldian beam.

Scillal: The Scillal system operates the Centrality's largest shipbuilding facility and is the headquarters for Scillal Designs. While nowhere near the size of the Corellian shipyards, Scillal nonetheless is able to handle most of the Navy's requests for warships. This makes it a hotspot for terrorist activity.

ThonBoka: Before Lando Calrissian swept through the Centrality, the Star-Cave of ThonBoka was thought to be just a strange nebula deep in the Open Sea, a kind of small island in a desolate desert. Trallint knew that sentient life existed there, but kept knowledge of it classified, even from the Imperials.

The sudden appearance of Oswaft outside the nebula changed the Centrality's strategy. The Navy observed first-hand the creature's abilities. If the Rebels could ally themselves with the Oswaft, it could be trouble for the Empire.

The Empire barricaded the nebula with a fleet of five hundred ships. They planned to starve these massive creatures. But Calrissian was able to slip through the blockade and advise the Oswaft. As a result, a quarter of the

blockading ships were destroyed. After that debacle, the Centrality has left the Oswaft alone, but does its best to make sure others are not interested in them.

The only architectural edifice in ThonBoka is the Cave of the Elders. A rotating sphere a thousand kilometers in diameter. The Oswaft hewed it out of precious gems that glitter like constellations as the cave turns.

Trammis: Giant reptilians ate the first and second waves of colonists who arrived on Trammis III. The third batch was better prepared. They almost wiped out the reptilians. Then the colonists realized that they could make a fortune: safaris for hunters, and zoos for the less bloodthirsty.

Akorec: Predator 4; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 21 (+12 natural, -2 size, +1 Dex); Spd 20m; VP/WP 50/40; Atk +10 melee (1d6+7, claws), +5 melee (2d8+7, bite), or +2 ranged; SQ Low-light vision, DR 12; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will -1; SZ H; Rep 4; Str 24, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 4, Wis 7, Cha 7. Challenge Code: D. Skills: Intimidate +4, Spot +2, Survival +2. Feats: Power Attack.

The most feared reptilian is the Akorec. It stands ten meters high on four feet and has a long head that is all teeth. Its scales are resistant to blasters; even speeder-scale weapons do little damage.

Tund: Tund is a legend, believed to be in the Open Sea. It could be a system, a planet, a star cluster, or an area of space that has been renamed. Strangely enough, no expe-

AKOREC STRIKE CRUISER

Craft: Scillal Designs 89lc Akorec Strike Cruiser; **Class:** Capital; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Large (250m long); **Crew:** min 70, max 220 (Normal +2); **Passengers:** 100-200 troops, up to 700; **Cargo Capacity:** 4,000 metric tons; **Consumables:** 1 year; **Hyperdrive:** x2 (backup x12); **Maximum Speed:** Attack; **Maneuvers:** +1 (-1 size, +2 crew); **Defense:** 19 (-1 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 180; **Hull Points:** 440; **DR:** 20.


Weapons: Laser cannons (12); **Fire Arc:** 6 front, 2 left, 2 right, 2 rear; **Attack Bonus:** +7 (-1 size, +2 crew, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB -2, S/M +0, L -2.

Weapons: Tractor beam projector (1); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (-1 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** Special; **Range Modifiers:** PB -2, S/M +0, L -2.



dition has ever tried locate it. This is in part due to the Empire, who discouraged such excursions and erased most references of Tund. Fear is another factor. Tund is legendary because it's connected to a conclave of which little is known, the Sorcerers of Tund.

Uauu: The chief planet of the Ua system, it is also the home of the avian Quor'sav who have a maligned past with the Centrality. Colonists introduced a virus—to which mammalian biology is an immune carrier—that was deadly to avian. Consequently, the Quor'sav do not trust or welcome non-avian species to their home. Even the insects seem to target offworlders with a vengeance.

Zebitrope: Zebitrope VIII is usually the next stop for smugglers after the finishing the Kessel run, because it has a commodity that is just as precious and just as illegal as spice—lesai. Lesai is a mold that grows on the backs of a rare species of lizard which uses it as camouflage. Heads of corporations, media stars, even higher-ups in the military are major lesai customers. It eliminates the need for sleep and consumes no vital chemical in the brain. Those who've used lesai claim that their lives are prolonged by a third, with no side effects. Whether that's true or not is unknown. 

THE OSWAFT

The Oswaft are enormous vacuum breathers whose brains are about two-thirds of their mass, the rest is muscle for their giant wings. They bear likeness to the Corellian sea ray, except are much larger. They will reach more than a kilometer wingtip-to-wingtip when they become Elders. They feed on the small carapace creatures and quasi-plants that swim on galactic currents into the nebula.

Their biology is organoelectronic, not electrochemical like most species. They have the ability to generate microwaves at incredible levels of power. With these microwaves, they can bend space and time, allowing them to "skip" through hyperspace. These microwaves can be used as weapons or transmitters by differing their modulation. They can also synthesize simple substances if given the proper raw materials.

The Oswaft never venture far into the Open Sea for fear of starvation. Content to stay at home, they've become conservative in outlook and culturally stagnant. Evolution found a way to inject chaos and curiosity back into the mix, when the young Lehesu decided to abandon the boredom of the StarCave and see what else could be out there. Calrissian also introduced the concept of gambling and games, which has become a species obsession.

Due to its enormous size and spacefaring nature, it's most likely that the Oswaft will only ever be encountered by starships. To incorporate an Oswaft into starship combat, treat it as Gargantuan (+4 to Defense and attack rolls) with a maximum speed of cruising. Oswaft receive a +8 species bonus to Pilot skill checks in starship combat. To use its bite attack the Oswaft must be pursuing the target at point-blank range. If the Oswaft attempts to grapple a starship, the pilot of that ship uses her Pilot skill to oppose any grapple attempts. The Oswaft's maser

beam operates just like a starship weapon (Fire Arc: Front; Attack Bonus: +0 (-4 size, +4 crew); Damage: 5d10x5; Range Modifiers: PB -6, S -4, M -2, L +0).

Adult Oswaft: Exp 4; Init +1 (Dex); Def 18 (-8 size, +1 Dex, +15 natural); Spd 100 m fly (good); VP/WP 35/92; Atk +9 melee (1d8+14, bite) or -4 ranged (5d10x5, maser beam); SQ Microwave manipulation, darkvision, swallow whole, can survive in vacuum, DR 25; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +6; SZ C (1 km across); Rep 2; Str 28, Dex 12, Con 23, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 12. Challenge Code: H.

Skills: Astrogate +9, Craft (simple matter) +8, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (games) +4, Knowledge (ThonBoka) +10, Listen +5, Pilot +8, Speak Basic, Survival +5, Treat Injury +5.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Track.

Species Features: Microwave Manipulation—Oswaft have the ability to manipulate microwave energy to bend space and time allowing them to travel through hyperspace as a starship with a x2 hyperdrive. They can also focus microwave energy into a maser beam with massive destructive capability. Oswaft can also transmit to and receive signals from standard electronic communications gear and change the molecular structure of matter, creating simple compounds. **Swallow Whole**—After a successful grapple check, the Oswaft can swallow opponents it holds (see chapter eight of the core rulebook). On a successful grapple check against a held opponent, it swallows the opponent. Oswaft can swallow a creature of Gargantuan size or smaller, or a starship of Huge size or smaller in this way. Swallowed opponents automatically suffer the Oswaft's bite damage each turn unless they can escape.

Get to Your Ships!

Episode I Starships for *STAR WARS* Silent Death Starship Combat Game

BY ERIK A. DEWEY

In *Star Wars Gamer* #3, a complete game of ship to ship combat using the Silent Death engine was featured. While the original article focused on the classic *Star Wars* fighters, this article includes ships from *The Phantom Menace*. Also included are new rules for gunboats, larger more powerful ships, and the formidable cloaking device found in the Sith Infiltrator.

Cloaking Device

A very rare and expensive piece of hardware, the cloaking device renders a ship near invisible to both sensors and the naked eye. It is a fragile piece of technology, using the scarce stygium crystal as its power source and thus is only found on important ships, like the Sith Infiltrator.

While a ship is cloaked, it cannot fire any weapons or move faster than half of its Drive (round up). Doing so would immediately reveal the ship's presence and destroy the crystal.

The cloaking device is activated during the Cannon Fire phase and must be done instead of firing a weapon. Starting on the next turn, the ship is now near invisible. Any warheads tracking a ship when it becomes cloaked immediately detonate and are removed from the board. The cloaking device may be deactivated at any time (including right before the Cannon Fire phase) and its benefits are immediately lost.

When a ship becomes cloaked, the player controlling the cloaked ship takes three more counters for the ship and places them

within two hexes of the cloaked ship. The player must then secretly mark down which counter is the real ship and which ones are the dummy ships. From this point on, the player moves all the counters as if they were the actual ship, using up to half their Drive to move. While a ship is cloaked it cannot be attacked nor can it perform damage control. When the cloaking device is deactivated, the player reveals which counter is the real ship and removes all the other counters.

As an option, if all players agree, instead of using the above method, the player with the cloaking ship can actually remove the ship from the map board. This requires the player to plot the movement of his ship each turn, either on a small map or with a separate piece of paper. When the ship deactivates the cloaking device, the player must show his opponents his movement plots.

Gunboats

Gunboat-class starcraft are generally larger than fighters but are smaller than escort-class vessels such as corvettes. Gunboats are usually used as heavy fighters, patrol ships, freighters, or transports. They differ from fighters in that the direction from which an attack comes affects the specific damage done. Refer to the Queen Amidala's Transport starcraft display. Note that there are four separate damage tracks and critical hit charts, one for the front, right, left, and rear sides.

GUNBOAT MOVEMENT

Gunboats move just as fighters do, except Normal Turns cost them 4 (not 3) movement points to perform, while Tight Turns are modified by +4 (instead of +3). Also, if they have less than 4 movement points at the beginning of any Movement Phase, gunboats can still turn one hexside as their sole move for the phase.

GUNBOAT ATTACKS

Gunboat cannons and warheads are no different from their fighter-mounted counterparts. However, gunboats usually carry a larger crew complement than most fighters, so they will have more weapons and firing opportunities. The mechanics for firing weapons mounted on gunboats are no different than those used for fighters.

GUNBOATS AS TARGETS

Gunboats are so much larger than fighters that they have a structural integrity that allows for a differentiation in hit locations. The placement of enemy fire on a given area will be more likely to affect nearby systems rather than those on the other side of the craft. To reflect this, gunboats have a separate damage track and critical hit chart for each of their four quadrants: front, rear, left, and right.

Gunboats are also too large to effectively avoid enemy fire. They cannot evade attacks like smaller, more nimble fighters can. However, they do carry more powerful deflector shields. Therefore, their Defensive Values



reflect a capability to resist substantial damage, rather than the ability to avoid attacks. Gunboats can dodge warheads, however.

RESOLVING DAMAGE AGAINST GUNBOATS

When a ship attacks a gunboat, it must determine which damage track is affected.

If the firer is using a cannon weapon mount and is in the gunboat's front quadrant, hits are marked off of the front damage track, likewise for hits from the left side, right side, or rear.

Note that each gunboat quadrant has its own Damage Reduction value representing the armor on that quadrant of the vessel.

Example: A droid starfighter swoops down on the Queen Amidala's transport's left side and fires with its laser cannons. The weapon hits and does 6 points of damage. Since the transport has a Damage Reduction of 2, 4 boxes are marked off on its left side damage track.

Which quadrant of a gunboat a proton torpedo or concussion missile damages depends on the direction from which the warhead enters the gunboat's hex. If a warhead enters through one of the two left side hexsides, hits are marked off of the left side damage track. Likewise for torpedoes entering from the right side, or the front, or rear hexsides.

THE GUNBOAT DAMAGE TRACK

Hits are marked off on the various damage tracks just as they are for fighters. Start at the top left corner of the track, and then

proceed along the rows from left to right.

The special damage codes in a gunboat's damage tracks are similar to those found on fighter damage tracks. However there are some important differences:

- : Drive number reductions are still indicated in small boxes, but the code inside the box is always -1 instead of a number. This means that whenever one of these is marked off on a damage track, the starcraft's current Drive number is reduced by 1. If the vessel's current Drive number is reduced below 0 there is no additional effect.
- ◇: The highest unmarked diamond value on a damage track still represents the vessel's Damage Reduction, but for attacks on that quadrant only. Each quadrant has its own Damage Reduction.
- w: Weapon hits are resolved normally, but cannon mounted in the damaged quadrant must be eliminated before other weapon systems can be affected.
- t: Warhead hits are resolved normally. Mounted warheads can be eliminated in any quadrant which takes damage.
- *: Critical hits are taken whenever an asterisk is marked off on a damage track, but the result is determined by the roll of 2D4 on the affected quadrant's own critical hit chart.
- X: Having a single X marked off has no effect on a gunboat. It takes two X results to destroy a gunboat. These two Xs can be marked off on the same damage track or on two separate damage tracks.

Scenarios

PATROL AROUND NABOO

Location: Orbiting Naboo

Background: The Trade Federation sends some droid starfighters to reconnoiter the area surrounding Theed palace before commencing its attack. The Naboo Royal Security Forces quickly scramble to deal with this obvious threat.

Trade Federation (178 points):

- Droid Starfighter A (Pilot 8, Gunner 7)
- Droid Starfighter B (Pilot 8, Gunner 9)
- Droid Starfighter C (Pilot 5, Gunner 10)
- Droid Starfighter D (Pilot 5, Gunner 6)

Naboo Pilots (178 points):

- Naboo N-1 A (Pilot 8, Gunner 7)
- Naboo N-1 B (Pilot 6, Gunner 6)
- Naboo N-1 C (Pilot 6, Gunner 10)

Setup: Divide the map in half. The Trade Federation place their ships first on one half of the map, on the edge, while the Naboo do the same on their half of the map.

Victory Conditions: The Trade Federation may withdraw at any time, although this does give a partial Naboo victory. Otherwise, the side with the last remaining ship wins.

Star Wars Silent Death Rules

Summary

The rules below are only a summary of how to play *Star Wars Silent Death*. The complete rules appear in *Star Wars Gamer #3*.

Rolling the Dice

The following format, used when determining damage, tells the player which dice to roll and how many: XdY (Low/Med/High). X is the number of dice to roll, Y indicates how many sides the die has, and Low/Med/High determines which number to use. Low uses the lowest number rolled, Med uses the middle number rolled, and High uses the highest number roll. If there is no middle number (due to doubles being rolled) then Med defaults to High (a roll of 3, 3, 8 would have a Med of 8). If doubles are rolled, add them together if they are the low dice for a Low value and the same if they are the high dice for a High value.

Turn Summary

1 Warhead Launch Phase

All ships can launch any number of Proton Torpedoes and Concussion Missiles at any target. Place warhead counters on the launching ship and declare each warhead's target.

2 Movement Phase

Each side rolls 1d10 and adds their highest Pilot skill to the roll. The loser of initiative chooses a ship and moves it, then the winner. Keep alternating until all ships have moved. Whichever side has the highest total saves one ship to move after all other ships have moved.

Each ship has a Drive value. To move forward one hex costs 1 Drive. Turning one hexside costs 3. To turn more than one hexside is a Tight Turn, which costs 3 + a die roll based on the Pilot's skill. A ship may use as much or as little of its Drive per turn as it wants. Ships cannot turn or end their movement in the same hex as an opponent ship.

After a ship moves, all warheads tracking that ship move. Proton Torpedoes have a Drive of 12; Concussion Missiles have a Drive of 14. Warheads may not per-

form a Tight Turn, but they may turn more than one hexside at a cost of 3 Drive per hexside. Any ship that enters the hex of a warhead that is tracking it is immediately hit by the warhead and cannot attempt to dodge it.

3 Warhead Result Phase

Any warhead that enters the hex of its target detonates. The target ship may try to dodge the warheads by rolling (1d10 + the pilot's Pilot skill - 10 - the number of warheads detonating). A positive number is the total number of warheads dodged. If not dodged, a Proton Torpedo does 3d12 (all dice added together) and a Concussion Missile does 1d12 (see below for how to resolve the damage done).

Any ship being tracked by warheads that did not impact this turn may try to jam one. Roll 1d10. If the number rolled falls into the ship's jam rating (usually 1-2) then the attempt is successful and the warhead is removed.

4 Cannon Fire Phase

Each cannon has a firing arc that shows what hexes it can fire into listed in parenthesis after the to-hit dice. Each firing arc is a 60° cone that extends out of a side of the vessel's hex in the direction indicated (F is the front hex). The arc covers all hexes between the cone's outer lines, as well as any hexes that the line crosses into. A target must be in the weapons firing arc to be attacked.

All Gunners fire first followed by Pilots in skill order: Gunner 10s fire then Gunner 9s down to Pilot 2s then Pilot 1s. Roll the cannon's two dice (usually 2d8) and roll the Gunner's die (called the Attack Die Bonus or ADB, based on the Gunner skill level). Total all three dice together and add any bonuses. If the target is in the weapon's short range (the first of the three numbers separated by slashes) add 1 to the total; if it is in the weapon's long range (greater than the middle number but not greater than the last of the three numbers) subtract 1 from the total. If the final total is equal to or greater than the target ship's Defensive Value, then the cannons hit. The damage done is determined using the Low, Med, or High die.

The target ship subtracts its Damage

Reduction from the damage it receives and then marks off that number of boxes (starting on the left) from the ship's Damage Track. If a box is marked off that has a square and a number in it, the ship's Drive is reduced to the number in the next unmarked Drive box on the Damage Track. Similarly if a box is marked off that has a diamond and a number in it, the ship's Damage Reduction is lowered to the next unmarked Damage Reduction box on the Damage Track. If an asterisk is marked off, the attacker rolls 2d6 (added together) and consults the target ship's Critical Hit chart. The effect rolled is applied immediately. Finally if a t is marked through, the ship loses a warhead (mark it off) while if a w is marked, the ship loses a weapon (if the w is lowercase the ship owner gets to choose, if the W is uppercase the attacker gets to choose). When the X is marked off the Damage Track, the ship is destroyed.

Ships can attack warheads in flight. The warhead has a DV of 10, a DR of 0, and requires only 1 point of damage to destroy.

5 Damage Control Phase

Each ship can attempt Damage Control at the end of the turn. Roll 1d10. If the result falls into the ship's Damage Control range, then unmark that many boxes from the damage track. Lost warhead and critical hit boxes can be repaired, but they are treated as being blank; the damage done by marking them off is not restored.

SKILL LEVEL TABLE

Piloting Skill	Tight Turn Cost	Gunnery Skill	ADB
1	1d10	1	1d4
2	1d10	2	1d4
3	1d8	3	1d4
4	1d8	4	1d4
5	1d6	5	1d6
6	1d6	6	1d6
7	1d4	7	1d8
8	1d4	8	1d8
9	1d4	9	1d10
10	1d4	10	1d10

THE SITH APPRENTICE ARRIVES

Location: Orbiting Naboo

Background: To assist the Trade Federation in its attack, Darth Maul flies his Sith Infiltrator to Naboo and begins destroying any Naboo ships that get in his way

Trade Federation (225 points):

Sith Infiltrator (Pilot 9, Gunner 9)
Droid Starfighter A (Pilot 8, Gunner 7)
Droid Starfighter B (Pilot 8, Gunner 9)
Droid Starfighter C (Pilot 10, Gunner 10)

Naboo Pilots (225 points):

Naboo N-1 A (Pilot 7, Gunner 7)
Naboo N-1 B (Pilot 5, Gunner 5)
Naboo N-1 C (Pilot 4, Gunner 5)
Naboo N-1 D (Pilot 8, Gunner 4)

Setup: Divide the map in half. The Naboo place their ships first on one half of the map, on the edge, while the Trade Federation places their ship along the edge of their half of the map. The Sith Infiltrator may be cloaked at the start.

Victory Conditions: If the Trade Federation loses the Sith Infiltrator, Naboo is victorious. Otherwise, the side with the last remaining ship wins.

BATTLE FOR NABOO

Location: On the surface Naboo

Background: The ground war has begun in earnest. A few Naboo pilots managed to take off before the palace was occupied by Trade Federation troops. The Trade Federation sends a flight of droid starfighters to destroy the N-1s.

Trade Federation (225 points):

Droid Starfighter A (Pilot 7, Gunner 5)
Droid Starfighter B (Pilot 8, Gunner 6)
Droid Starfighter C (Pilot 7, Gunner 8)
Droid Starfighter D (Pilot 5, Gunner 10)
AAT A (Gunner 8)
AAT B (Gunner 6)
AAT C (Gunner 5)

Naboo Pilots (225 points):

Naboo N-1 A (Pilot 10, Gunner 5)
Naboo N-1 B (Pilot 5, Gunner 5)
Naboo N-1 C (Pilot 4, Gunner 5)
Naboo N-1 D (Pilot 6, Gunner 5)

Setup: Divide the map in half. The Trade Federation may place its AATs anywhere on the map; only one AAT can be placed on the Naboo half of the map, the other two must be placed on the Trade Federation half. Each AAT has a Laser Cannon mount with a 360° arc of fire. They have a DV of 10 and a DR 0. If they take 3 points of damage, they are destroyed. The Trade Federation then places their ships on the edge of their side of the map. Finally, the Naboo place their ships anywhere in their half of the map.

Victory Conditions: The Naboo need to destroy all the Droid Fighters to win (they do not need to destroy the AATs). The Trade Federation must destroy all the Naboo ships to win.

SITH INFILTRATOR

Pilot Weapon:
TWIN LASER CANNON (F)
2D8+ADB (x2)
Low or 2D8+ADB+1
Low+1
RANGE: 3/9/10

Pilot Weapon:
TWIN AUTO BLASTERS (F)
2D6+ADB (x3)
Medium or 2D6+ADB+2
Medium +4
RANGE: 2/6/10

Damage Track

											13
											3
											2
											1
											X

TPU:

Crew: Pilot

PLT:

GNR:

BPV: 65

Critical Hits

- 2 Pilot killed. Infiltrator can take no further actions. DV is 5.
- 3 Radiator panels damaged. All turns cost 1 additional point.
- 4 Targetting system hit. Modify all To-Hits by -2.
- 5 Cloaking device hit. It no longer can be used.
- 6 Shield's damaged. Reduce DV by 1.
- 7 Smack. Armor absorbs all damage.
- 8 Engine sputters. Reduce Drive by 3 until the end of next turn.
- 9 Auto-blasters hit. Change damage from Medium to Low.
- 10 Jammer hit. Infiltrator may no longer jam warheads.
- 11 Maneuver thrusters hit. Infiltrator cannot turn right.
- 12 Reactor hit. Infiltrator destroyed.

DAM CON: 1-3
JAMMER: 1-3
CLOAKING DEVICE

DEFENSIVE VALUE: 15

DAMAGE REDUCTION: 3

DRIVE: 13

TIGHT TURN COST: +3

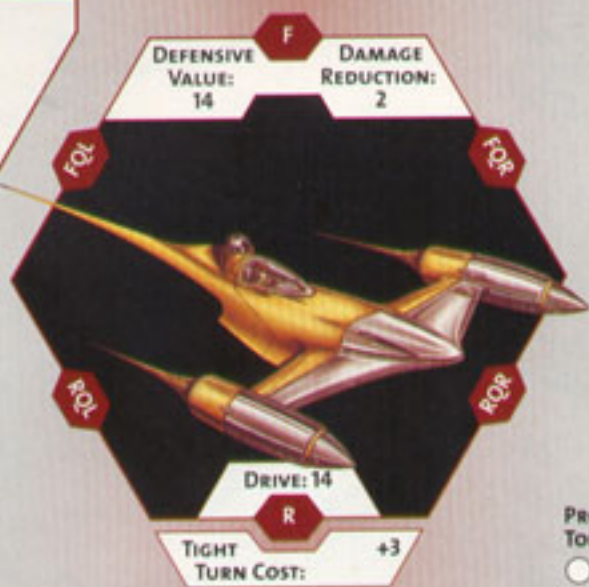
STAR WARS GAMER 79

N-1 STARFIGHTER

BPU: 45

Pilot Weapon:

TWIN LASER CANNON (F)
2D8+ADB (x2)
Low or
2D8+ADB+1
Low+1
RANGE: 3/9/10



TPU:

Crew: Pilot

PLT:

GNR:

PROTON TORPEDOES



DAM CON: 1-4

JAMMER: 1-2

Critical Hits

- Pilot killed. N-1 starfighter can take no further actions. DV is 5.
- R2 unit hit. Damage Control can no longer be used.
- Laser cannons overheat. Cannot fire until after the end of next turn.
- Proton torpedoes hit. Jettison all remaining torpedoes.
- Shields damaged. Reduce DV by 1.
- Targeting computer damaged. Modify all To-Hits by -1.
- Engine sputters. Reduce Drive by 3 until the end of next turn.
- Jammer hit. N-1 starfighter may no longer jam warheads.
- Controls damaged. All turns cost an additional Movement Point.
- Ship overheats. It shuts down until the end of the next turn. It's DV is 5 and it can do nothing.
- Reactor hit. N-1 starfighter destroyed.

Damage Track

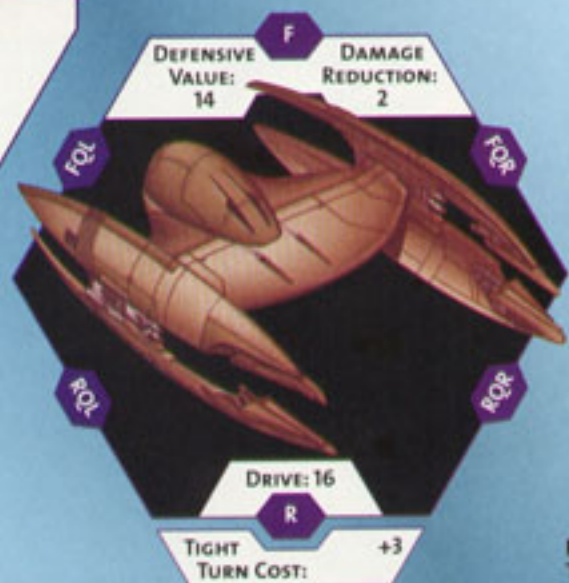
t	t	14	t	12	2	t	10	t
t	t	8	*	6	1	w	4	x

DROID STARFIGHTER

BPU: 30

Pilot Weapon:

QUAD LASER CANNONS (F)
2D8+ADB (x4)
Low or
2D8+ADB+1 (x2)
Low+1 or
2D8+ADB+3
Low+3
RANGE: 3/9/10



TPU:

Crew: Pilot

PLT:

GNR:

PROTON TORPEDOES:



DAM CON: 1-2

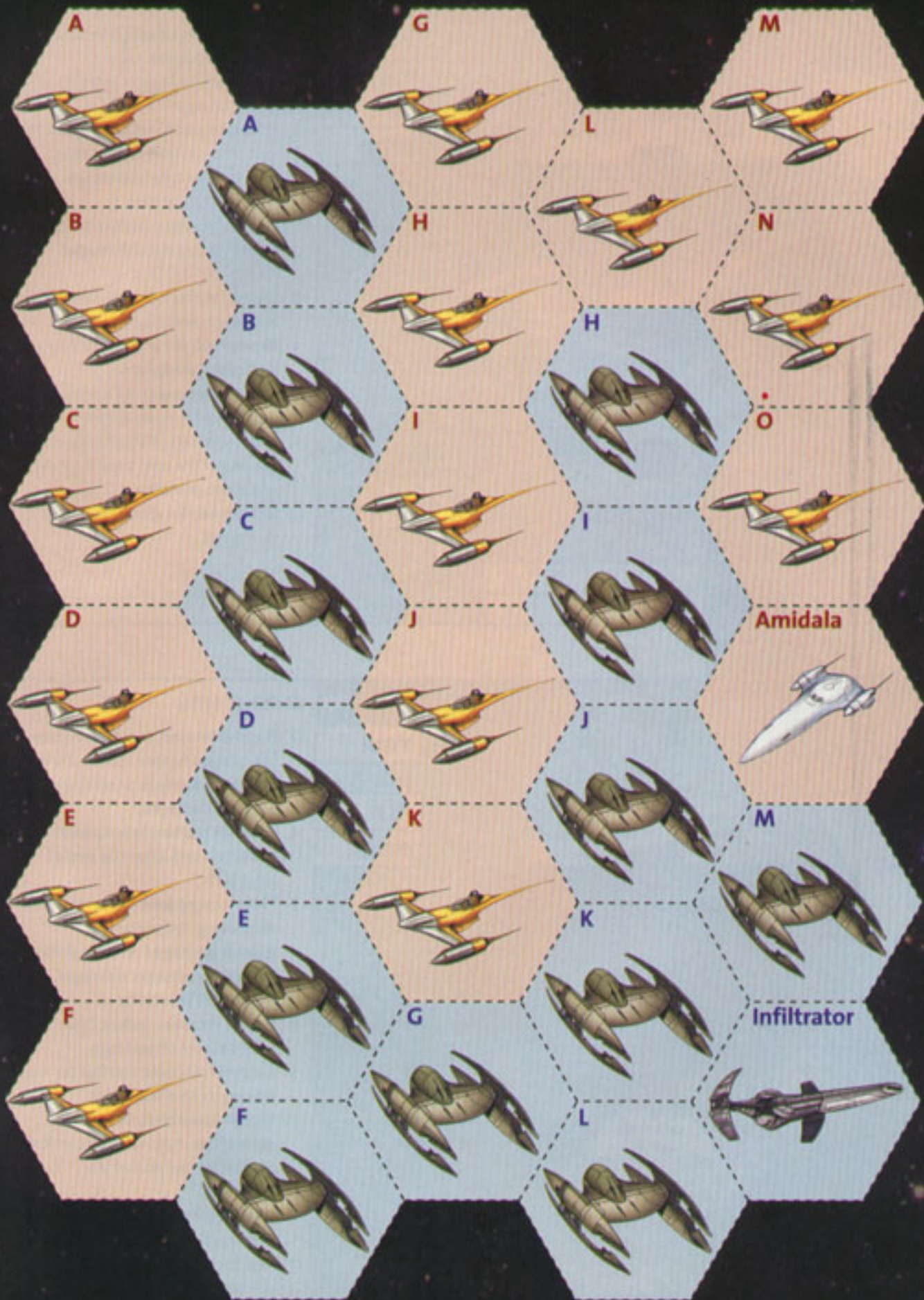
JAMMER: 1-2

Critical Hits

- Droid destroyed. Droid starfighter can take no further actions. DV is 5.
- Structural damage. Mark 1D4 more boxes as damaged.
- Cannons malfunction. Cannot fire cannons until after the end of next turn.
- Proton torpedoes hit. Jettison all remaining torpedoes.
- Shields damaged. Reduce DV by 2.
- Targeting computer damaged. Modify all To-Hits by -1.
- Engine sputters. Reduce Drive by 3 until the end of next turn.
- Jammer hit. Droid starfighter may no longer jam warheads.
- Signal scrambled. Droid starfighter may not move or fire until after the end of the next turn.
- Fuel slug empty. Droid starfighter cannot move, its DV is now 5.
- Reactor hit. Droid starfighter destroyed.

Damage Track

t	t	16	*	t	12	2	t	4	t
w	4	t	1	x					



THE HUTT HIT



BY JEFF GRUBB

ILLUSTRATED BY DANIEL VEESENMEYER

The Hutt Hit" is a *Star Wars Role-playing Game* adventure for four 6th-level darksiders set in the New Republic era. It can be played in other eras as well with minor alterations to the plot. It may also be played by light side "heroes" as well, though there may be some restructuring needed to make it work, and throw the heroes into morally ambiguous territory.

Adventure Synopsis

"The Hutt Hit" gives the darksiders the opportunity to recover an ancient Sith artifact. A world of the New Republic is willing to deal with a war criminal in order to gain the artifact for study. The artifact, a Sith holocron, has other ideas, and wants to find its way into the hands of a user of the dark side of the Force. This may or may not be the players' characters.

The Dug bounty hunter Langro Dis

has captured Krova, a Hutt wanted for war crimes on Alvorine. Krova has the Sith holocron in her possession, but will only reveal its location in exchange for her freedom.

The darksiders, or their superiors, want the Sith holocron for their own purposes. A tremor in the Force and a ghostly apparition warns them of the approach of the holocron. It is up to them to find it and get it away from the Hutt. The darksiders are not the only ones who the holocron has called for help, and they are being stalked by a devotee of the dark side.

Adventure Background

Krova the Hutt was a minor crimelord from Alvorine who, during the Rebellion, made a tidy profit selling information to both sides of the conflict. In the process she turned a number of rou-

tine missions into massacres for Rebel forces, sent a large number of Rebel soldiers to their death, and was personally responsible for the Imperial Massacre at Kolanda Station on Latharra. Declared a war criminal by the Rebel Alliance, she fled Alvorine after the collapse of the Empire and rise of the New Republic in this area of space. A bounty was placed on her head, and she was finally arrested three weeks ago near the Pluthan asteroid belt. She is being extradited to Alvorine for trial.

However, Krova thinks she has an out. In her flight, she has uncovered a Sith Holocron, damaged but still powerful. She sees this as a bargaining chip that she can use to buy her freedom. Neither the bounty hunter that brought her in nor the representatives of Alvorine know the location of the holocron, as she has swallowed it.



Balancing the Adventure

"The Hutt Hit" is designed for four darksiders averaging 6th level. If the darksiders average 7th level, add two additional Authority Troopers to the convoy on Speeder Bikes. If the heroes average 4th or 5th level, remove Langro Dis from the convoy (in this situation he is paid at his ship and turns the Hutt prisoner over).

Act One: The Vision

The players become involved as a result of the Holocron sending out a distress call through the Force. They can be on Alvorine itself, or a nearby system. Read the following to any players whose characters are Force-sensitive:

You feel it before you see it—a great tremor moving through the fabric of the universe. It feels like the bow-

wave of a great ship, and the movement of a dark reptilian swimmer from some primal ocean. It comes to you through the Force itself—heavy, oppressive, and malignant.

Then suddenly it is upon you, and you see a vaguely humanoid form, as brilliant blue as a holo transmission. It is indistinct, almost like a swirling of insects in human form. You feel both its power and its almost-incarnate evil.

The ghostly thing speaks into your mind. "Alvorine," it says, "Krova. Come, receive the power."

And then it is gone.

A quick check with the navigation computers shows that Alvorine is a world of the New Republic orbiting a stable triad of stars. It has one major city of the same name, and a separate spaceport.

Cast of Characters

Krova the Hutt

A former crimelord now under arrest, Krova is fairly sure of herself. Indeed, she sees her capture as a good thing, as she is willing to deal with the Alvorine Authority government. She hopes to escape not only with her hide, but with some of the resources she was forced to abandon restored to her.

Langro Dis

A Dug bounty hunter who captured Krova, he sees his name being made for bringing in the war criminal. He wants to make sure that his prey stays intact until he turns the Hutt over (and collects his bounty). His first concern is his fame, but he can be bribed.

Marshall Hundria Kast

Leader of the security forces of the Alvorine Authority, she is responsible for Krova reaching Alvorine City alive. Loyal, dedicated, and intelligent, she does not like the crimelord nor the bounty hunter. She knows that the Hutt will cut a deal once they reach the city, but believes that the New Republic is too honorable to deal with such

scum. Her job begins once the ship touches down, and ends when they reach Alvorine City.

Miera Lij

A petty computer operator in Kast's security office, she may be exploited for information.

Fallanji

A boisterous Twi'lek, Fallanji moved into the information-trading racket in Krova's absence, and is willing to sell information cheaply if it means that Krova gets put away.

Noth

A dark side devotee from the wilds of Alvorine, Noth has heard the siren call of the Sith Holocron himself, and is planing his own ambush to take the holocron.

The Holocron

The holocron is an ancient damaged Sith artifact, and has a number of personalities stored within it. It seeks rescue, and is not picky about who pulls it from the belly of the Hutt.

See the sidebar on Alvorine for more data. There would be no mention of Krova herself, but an applicable Knowledge skill (Hutts, or criminal organizations, for example) at DC 20 will pull up the information that Krova is the name of a Hutt war criminal wanted in the Alvorine system.

ABOUT ALVORINE

Alvorine is a mid-sized world orbiting three blue-white stars. The planet is known for its colorful jungles and its large native crystalline spires. These crystal monoliths dot the planet, usually surrounding sites of potable water. Archeologists from the Old Republic put forward a number of theories about the crystal monoliths—some believed that they are the remnants of

Hero Hooks

MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE FOR LIGHT SIDE HEROES

"The Hutt Hit" is designed for darksiders, and provides options suitable to those tainted souls. However, it can be modified easily for honorable heroes as well.

In this case, the tremors in the Force warn Force-sensitive heroes of the approach of an evil item of great power. Even with its best intentions, the New Republic should not be trifling with such devices, and the holocron should instead be dumped into low orbit around some star. Unfortunately, the planetary officials on Alvorine do not share that opinion, and seem to be willing to forgive Krova of her myriad sins if she will turn over the device. In this case, in order to protect the greater universe, the heroes are set on a course against a planetary government, a member of the New Republic.

Alternately, the heroes may become involved through agents of Noth. These agents pose as survivors of the Kolanda Station massacre, who are afraid that Krova will be able to buy her way out of her crimes. They state that if they can relieve Krova of her bargaining chip, then the wheels of justice will spin more smoothly. Of course, they want the heroes to identify and grab whatever Krova has. In actuality, Noth himself will try to liberate it from the heroes.

THE HITT HIT

an earlier civilization, while

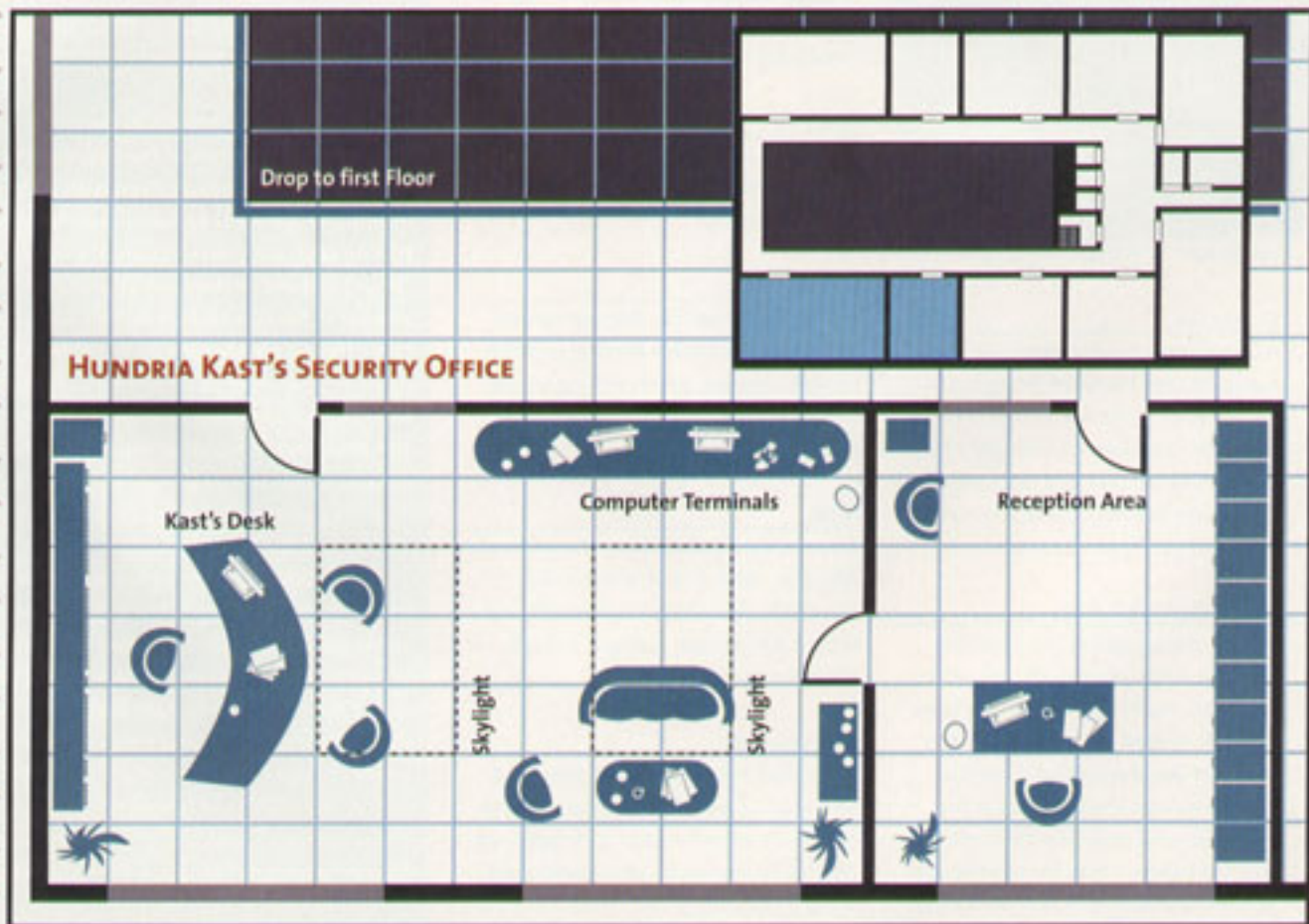
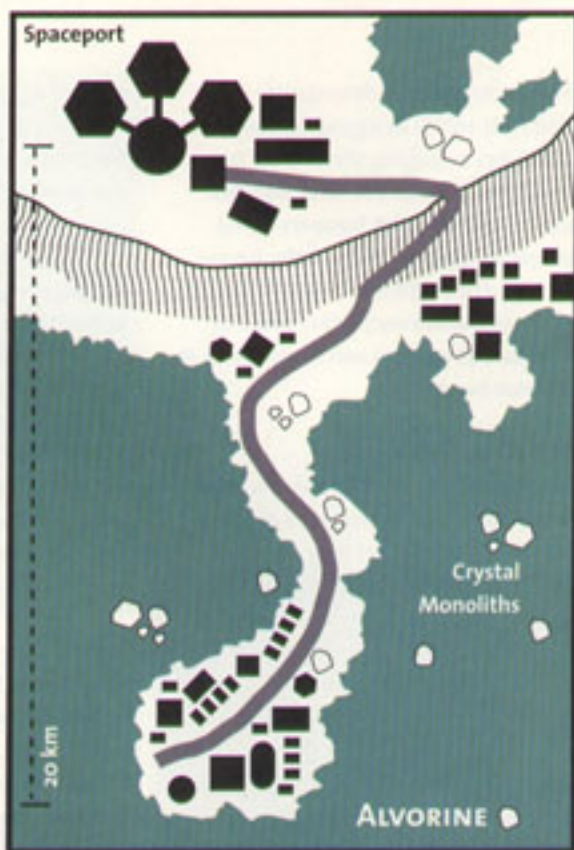
others that they are natural outgrowth of the clearwater areas of the planet. The crystals keep the water nearby safe from bacteria and viruses, which run rampant on the rest of the planet.

The crystal monoliths have no purpose within this adventure other than to provide a red herring for the players (who may suspect they are tied in the Sith, or the Holocron). However, they do prevent ships from landing directly in Alvorine city as well as the use of air cars, as the traffic would be detrimental to the water-clearing crystals. As a result, the Alvorine spaceport is located on a mesa twenty kilometers north of the station.

Act Two: Arrival in Alvorine

Coming into the Alvorine system, the first thing the heroes note is that a Corellian corvette is parked in orbit over the primary city. This is the *Soverien*, a New Republic ship that is in orbit for resupply. The planetary authority of Alvorine indicates that ships landing on the planet should confine themselves to the spaceport, about 20 kilometers north of the city (Map 1). The planet has a number of unique crystalline features that do not take well to starship landings.

At the spaceport, there are hacks running into the city (10 credits) or one can rent a speeder (50 credits/day). Individuals who bring their own ground transportation are allowed to use it as long as they obey local



regulations (no air cars, stay on the roads, keep to the left).

Once on the ground, a series of Gather Information checks (DC 15) will reveal the following information:

- Krova was a local crimelord, a Hutt who made Alvorine her base of operations. She sold information on the Rebel Alliance to the Empire and as a result was declared a war criminal.
- Krova fled Alvorine before she was captured, abandoning much of her wealth to the planetary government.
- Krova was captured in the Pluthan system by the Dug bounty hunter Langro Dis, and is being brought to Alvorine for trial. This much can be found out in a fairly straightforward manner. If the darksiders' result is 20 or more, they also discover:
- Krova apparently surrendered to Langro Dis without a fight.
- Word is that Krova wants to meet with the planetary authorities, and thinks she can beat the rap.
- Krova has something to trade for her freedom. Something powerful.
- Marshall Hundria Kast is arranging for Krova's arrival on Alvorine. No one other than she knows exactly when the Dug's ship will arrive, nor how she is being brought into the city.

Now things get a little trickier for the players. They've come up with the basics, but now the details need to be uncovered. For this the darksiders must dig further, to the point of breaking into a computer bank of the planetary authority, paying a sizable fund to an information broker, or calling in a favor.

BREAKING INTO A COMPUTER BANK

The information the characters seek is in the offices of Hundria Kast's security department. Only Hundria herself has all the details outside (and she is currently aboard the *Sovereign* until the Dug's ship arrives).

The Alvorine Authority Security Office is a three-story building in Alvorine city. The buildings on either side are two stories high (other government services and trading offices), and Kast's office is on the top floor (see Map 2). The first floor includes reception and interrogation rooms, the second floor the armory, evidence room, and additional offices. Holding cells are in the basement.

During the day there are usually eight troopers on the first floor, and four each on the second and third floors. At night, there will be eight troopers on the first floor, one on the second floor, but regular patrols of a single trooper and a patrol droid on the third. Patrols come around every ten minutes, and are attracted by lights, movement, and noise. The interior doors and windows are frosted light-weight transparsteel and easily shattered.

Kast's office faces the street, and has a large, polarized window with an opacity control panel. There is a skylight directly above the entrance, which has an electronic security system on it (DC 25 for Disable Device checks). All windows and emergency exits have the same security system as well. Setting off the alarm (or attracting attention once inside) will bring the other officers from the lower floors up.

The information is on Marshall Kast's computer on her desk. A successful Computer Use check (DC 25) allows the darksiders to bypass her security codes, followed by a simpler Computer Use check (DC 15) to locate and download the information.

PAYING FOR INFORMATION

The players have two options. They can either bribe a member of the local government for access to a computer bank, or they can contact someone in a criminal group for the information. Here are both options.

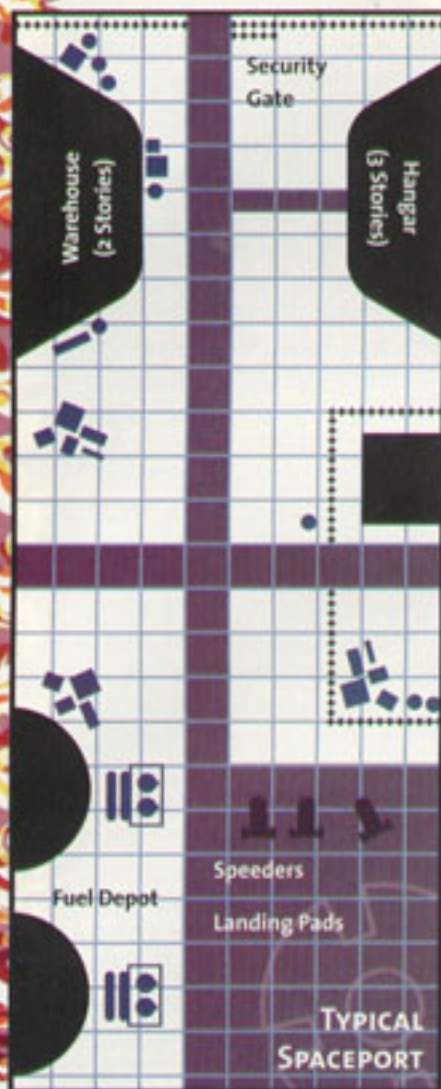
Miera Uj is a low-level programmer with the Authority, working within Hundria Kast's office. She is underpaid and has a taste for Rylspice. Asking around will identify her as a weak spot in the armor. The programmer can provide the heroes access to the computer terminals within the building after hours for 5,000 credits (she'll leave a door open) or get the information needed herself for 10,000 (as it involves greater risk—5,000 up front, 5,000 on delivery). Force skills such as Drain Knowledge may be used to pull the information from her mind once she gets it.

On the other hand, Fallonji is a Twi'lek information broker who has picked up much of Krova's old business, though has shown sufficient wisdom not to overstep himself as poor, poor Krova had. Fallonji will meet the darksiders in a public place, within shouting distance of Authority

The Data

Regardless of the methods by which it is gained, the information about Krova's arrival is as follows:

- The Dug's ship is the *Glorious Spectrum*, a standard YT-1300 transport (stats for a YT-1300 transport can be found in Chapter 11 of the core rulebook). It will be arriving at dawn in two days. Depending on when the darksiders gain the information, this means they have between 25 and 48 hours to prepare.
- The *Glorious Spectrum* will land at Alvorine Spaceport, and a convoy will be formed up for Krova's transfer. The road to the spaceport will be closed for an hour for "necessary repairs" during the transfer.
- The convoy will consist of an armored hovervan with four speeder bikers (two ahead of the convoy, two behind). There will be troopers on each bike. In addition, two officers from the *Sovereign* and Marshall Kast will be in the armored hovervan. (Langro Dis will also be present, but this is not mentioned in the plan. Kast plans on taking the Hutt from Dis at the spaceport—Dis wants to present the Hutt to the officials himself, and get full credit for her capture).
- Krova the Hutt claims to have access to a Sith holocron, and has offered it to the Alvorine Authority in exchange for the Authority dropping all charges. The files have numerous requests from Hundria Kast that the Authority reject this offer. The replies from the planetary government indicate a willingness to hear what the Hutt has to say.
- The Sith holocron is described, and fits the description of such devices. The darksiders will know from the description that this is a real holocron.
- The Hutt will not reveal where the holocron is. Kast assumes that the Hutt will reveal its location once a deal is made.



Police. Fallonji would hate to see Krova be forgiven for her crimes, and would really hate to see Krova return to Alvorine. He will charge a mere 5,000 credits for his information, and be able to deliver it that evening.

CALLING IN A FAVOR

A player whose character has the special ability call in a favor can gain the information needed (see the noble class description in Chapter 3 of the core rulebook). A contact on the *Sovereign* for example, may be able to get the data from the ship's computer banks, where Hundria keeps a back-up. While not illegal, the material is highly sensitive and protected, and as such the DC for calling in this particular favor is 15.

Note that an obvious break-in, kidnapping, or other assault on Kast's office will

alter the plans. Hundria will get reinforcements from the *Sovereign* and create a dummy convoy. The first convoy will leave as planned, with a team of eight troopers in the armored hovervan instead of Kast and the Hutt. She will keep Krova aboard the *Spectrum* for the day, and make a second run after dark (the road to the spaceport will be closed again for "additional repairs", and they will be particularly watchful for attacks of the same type as before).

WATCHING THE WATCHERS

While the darksiders are preparing their assault, someone else is watching them. Noth is a dark side devotee who received the call from the Sith holocron as well, but lacks both the manpower to take the holocron away and the ability to know exactly where item is.

Instead he will wait until the darksiders have it, then try to take it from them.

Noth will tail the darksiders soon after they arrive on Alvorine, and follow them around at a discrete distance. Make an opposed skill check of the darksiders' Spot against his Hide after the heroes have the data (met with Fallaji, broken into Kast's office, or bribed Miera Lij) with a maximum of three checks total before ambushing the convoy. Success indicates that someone is following the darksiders. They may seek to trap their pursuer. Noth, if discovered, will initially flee as opposed to fight, then hire others to maintain the tail. If captured or confronted, Noth will claim to be a native of Alvorine who heard they were asking around and wanted to sell them information (the information is useless or redundant). He will fight only if given no

other choice, and use his Force powers to the utmost.

Do not identify the rolls as being for Spot checks—this makes the players themselves very wary of their actions, effectively telling them they are being watched even if they fail the rolls. Instead you might want to use some red herrings, like a shifty-looking indigent wandering away, or a patrol droid beebbling past, talking to itself, a speeder bike roaring around a corner, or other distraction.

Act Three: The Ambush

There are three options for attacking Krova's convoy. At the spaceport itself, in the jungle, or on the city streets of Alvorine. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Maps 3, 4, and 5 are typical maps for the "best spot" for an ambush in each place, though you may come up with your own to meet the players need (for example, if their ambush plan requires a nearby stream, you can provide one if you wish).

SETTING THE AMBUSH

Should the characters attack the convoy before it even reaches the fringes of the spaceport, then there will be immediate reinforcements—within a minute (1d6+4 rounds). The convoy will not have to call for them—two squads of eight troopers each will show up. The advantage of attacking on the spaceport grounds is that the characters may be close to their own ship, and be able to escape quickly (They will still have to elude the *Sovereign*). Further, any preparation (digging pits, rigging traps) would be difficult without warning those in the area.

Should the characters attack the convoy on the road through the jungle, it will take longer for reinforcements to arrive (1d6 minutes, or 10-60 rounds). Further, preparations may be made in order to lay a trap (after all, they are supposed to be doing road work that morning). Numerous side roads exist that can allow an escape to the spaceport or the city, but not before the Authority locks down the spaceport.

Should the characters attack the convoy in Alvorine City itself, it will take 1d6+4 rounds for aid to show up (again,

two squads of eight troopers each) but they will have to be called. Otherwise it will take 1d6 minutes for them to show. Incapacitating those with comlinks (the forward cab of the hovervan and the hoverbikes) will buy the group more time to confront Krova.

Let the players plan the ambush as best they are able, making available (for a price) whatever reasonable resources they may need for the attack. Note that there may be a cost in addition to the credits—should the darksiders buy explosives, which are then used in the attack, the Authority will be able to track those explosives back to the seller, who will in turn be able to provide a description of the darksiders. Typical items that may be available include items like weapons, demolitions, electronic equipment, mines (surplus from the war), and most ground vehicles. Larger items, like hover tanks, walkers, and starships should not be available. Aircars are not available on Alvorine due to their affect on the crystal monoliths.

The ambush cannot occur before Krova's convoy leaves the *Glorious Spectrum*. The heroes may consider attacking it when it comes out of hyperspace, but the *Spectrum* has its own defenses and the *Sovereign* will come to its aid.

Similarly, the ambush cannot occur after the convoy reaches the Government Offices within Alvorine City. Once there, Krova will make a quick deal with the ruling powers, heave up the device, and leave a free Hutt, regaining some of her lost property. Attacking the Hutt now would be foolish, though it might make the darksiders feel better.

The nature of the ambush depends on the darksiders' tactics. They will have to stop and/or incapacitate the hovervan, take out the guards, then gain access to the van and get Krova.

There are a number of ways to stop the convoy. Blocking the road with a toppled crystal pillar or another vehicle is an option. Digging a deep-enough pit will also work. Stringing a wire across the road can cause the speeder bikes to crash. In general, indulge the players that come up with interesting or flashy ways of incapacitating the convoy.

SPRINGING THE AMBUSH

Once stopped (regardless of method), the driver of the hovervan will call for help (unless the stop is perfectly innocuous), while the trooper on the passenger side and the four mounted on speeders will dismount and engage any attackers. If the driver is obviously out of commission, one of the speeder bike troopers will call for aid instead of dismounting.

Those within the van itself will wait for the speeder soldiers to deal with any assailants, emerging only after they have been obviously dealt with, or someone tries to break into the cargo hold (Disable Device, DC 15 to open the lock from the outside, though more direct measures could be taken). Kast, Dis, and the two troopers will open fire on anyone opening the van (keeping the Hutt behind them), or emerge in three rounds if the fight is still going on, or the driver was incapacitated without getting a warning shot off.

Langro Dis will surrender if possible or fight if he must. He will fight defensively and try to take advantage of available cover (brush, buildings, etc), as his job was "officially" finished when Marshall Kast took possession of the prisoner. Upon taking his first wound he will leave the battle. Marshall Hundra Kast will call for the attackers to surrender, saying that reinforcements are on the way. None of the troopers will surrender.

Depending on the location and nature of the ambush, there may be reinforcements immediately on the way or coming soon. The darksiders will probably have to deal with the Hutt, one way or the other, very quickly.

CONFRONTING KROVA

Krova is in binders (DC 15 Disable Device to open, or the key is on Langro Dis) but otherwise unharmed. She will attempt to bargain with the darksiders once they break into the hovervan. She would prefer to be turned loose to cut a deal with the Authority as opposed to dealing with the darksiders.

If Krova feels she can get away with lying, she will do so, informing them that the holocron is on a small asteroid in the Pluthan system. She will provide

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the darksiders with the information if they agree to let

her go. She will agree to keep the Authority busy so the darksiders can reach their ship and get off-planet. If necessary, Krova makes a Bluff skill check opposed by the darksiders' Sense Motive skill.

The holocron is not in Plutha. Rather it is in Krova's primary gullet, swallowed there for safe-keeping. She can bring it up at will, and plans to do so once she has made her deal with the Authority officials (The image of handing over a Sith artifact covered with Hutt digestive juices amuses her).

Use of the See Force skill can detect the power of the holocron within Krova's mass of Hutt-flesh (DC 16). The Force, as they say, is strong within this one, a rarity for the normally Force-



KROVA THE HUTT

Krova the Hutt is a middle-aged Hutt who, previous to the fall of the Empire, built up a thriving information network. A poor choice of allies during the Rebellion resulted in her fleeing Alvorine. Krova considers herself to be sly, crafty, and an excellent judge of character. She's been wrong before.

Hutts are hermaphroditic, and Krova is currently exhibiting female characteristics. She is a pinkish Hutt with a pale yellow underbelly.

Krova the Hutt: Female Hutt Scl 5/Nbl 2/CL 1; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Def 17 (Dex, +9 class, -1 size); Spd 2 m; VP/WP 29/11; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch), +2 ranged; SQ +6 to Will saves against mind-affecting Force powers, bonus class skill (Bluff), illicit barter, better lucky than good, call in a favor (1), inspire confidence +1, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +10; SZ L; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep 7; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Equipment: Electronically-keyed restraints, Sith Holocron.

Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +14, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +14,

Forgery +7, Gather Information +14, Hide +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (criminal organizations) +13, Listen +8, Move Silently +2, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Huttese, Search +2, Sense Motive +12, Speak Dug, Speak Huttese, Speak Basic, Spot +8.

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Infamy, Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols).



LANGRO DIS, BOUNTY HUNTER

Langro Dis is a Dug searching for the big hit that will establish his reputation and bring him the renown previously given to the likes of Boba Fett and IG-88. He is dutiful to his job, and while a deadly opponent, will not risk his life unless there is a paycheck at the end of it. He captured Krova with surprising ease, but attributes it to his rising name-recognition.

Langro is a pale white Dug with flame-red eyes.

Langro Dis: Male Dug Scl 3/Sct 4/ BH 1; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 22 (+3 Dex, +8 class, +1 size); Spd 6 m; VP/WP 47/12; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4, knife), +11/+6 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Better lucky than good, great shout, illicit barter, target bonus +1, trailblazing, uncanny dodge (Dex to Def); SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +5; SZ S; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep 7; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Equipment: Backpack, comlink, medpac, survival kit, YT-1300 freighter (*Glorious Spectrum*).

Skills: Astrogate +5, Bluff +5, Climb +2, Computer Use +6, Demolitions +6, Gather Information +7, Hide +18, Intimidate +6, Jump +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +14, Pilot +10, Read/Write Dug, Repair +5, Search +7. Speak Dug, Speak Basic, Spot +6.

Feats: Fame, Improved Initiative, Starship Operations (space transports), Track, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, blaster rifles).



resistant Hutts. An individual with the Force-Sensitive feat (which includes all darksiders as a matter of course) has a feeling about Krova, but unless they succeed in the See Force skill they cannot determine why.

If the players succeed an Intimidate skill check or don't buy Krova's bluff, she will admit her deception, and will agree to hand over the holocron only if the darksiders get her off Alvorine. If they agree, Krova will cough up the holocron when she is back in the Pluthan system. The darksiders may want to negotiate with Krova to get it sooner—make an opposed skill check of Krova's Bluff against the negotiators Diplomacy or Intimidate skill (depending if the darksiders are being naughty or nice).

Of course, the simplest solution is to kill Krova and cut the artifact out



MARSHALL HUNDRIA KAST

Leader of the Security Forces for the Alvorine authority, Hundria is a capable, competent officer who survived the massacre on Kolanda Station as a young Rebel. She has a deep abiding hatred of Krova the Hutt, and wants to see her punished for her crimes. She is distressed that the Authority is taking Krova's offer seriously, but will still execute her responsibilities to the best of her abilities.

Hundria Kast is a short human female with dark brown hair and eyes. She has a presence that belies her size.



NOTH, DEVOTEE OF THE DARK SIDE

Noth is a dark side devotee who has also heard the call of the holocron, and as a result seeks its with a single-minded mania. While he may hire thugs to do his spying and other dirty work, he wants the holocron for himself, and himself alone. He will try to choose his battles wisely, but is relentless in his pursuit. Either he will gain the Sith artifact, or he will die trying. Noth is a male near-human, distinguished from most of the human population only by a pair of small bumps, one at the end of each eyebrow, and a bluish pallor to his skin.

Marshall Hundria Kast: Female Human Sol 6; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 17 (+2 Dex, +5 armor); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 34/15; Atk +7/+2 melee (2d6+1, vibroblade), +8/+3 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol); SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 2; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit, heavy blaster, comlink, field kit, medpac, badge.

Skills: Computer Use +9, Demolitions +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Alvorine system) +8, Pilot +11, Profession (law enforcement) +10, Read/Write Basic, Repair +11, Speak Basic, Treat Injury +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Blind Fighting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, vibro weapons).

Noth: Male Near-Human FA 5/DSD 4; Init +3 (Dex); Def 22 (Dex, class); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 54/19; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1, spear), +9/+4 ranged (3d4, holdout blaster); SQ Force weapon (+1d4), dark side talisman (+2); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +9; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 6; Rep 1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Equipment: Backpack, comlink, medpac, survival kit, dark side talisman +2.

Skills: Hide +15, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Sith lore) +7, Listen +6, Spot +5

Force Skills: Affect Mind +12, Drain Energy +12, Enhance Ability +9, Force Grip +12, Force Push +11.

Feats: Force-Sensitive, Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Force Grip, Drain Energy), Toughness, Weapon Group Proficiency (primitive weapons, simple weapons, blaster pistols).

Force Feats: Alter, Sense, Control, Rage, Sith Sorcery.

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from the remains. This may be the most expedient, particularly if negotiations break down and reinforcements arrive. Hundria Kast, if still alive, wants the Hutt to be punished, but not killed out of hand—she has no problem with the darksiders relieving the Hutt of the holocron and then leaving. Langro Dis, if still alive, will still insist he get paid since he did bring the Hutt to Alvorine—he was just sharing the ride in, as it were.

Confronted with Authority reinforcements, Krova will immediately call attention to herself and say that she is being kidnapped by bandits. She will seek what cover she can for her great bulk, use full defense, and wait out the gunfight.

Act Four: The Rest of the Story

Assuming the darksiders grab the holocron, they now have the problem of getting off planet. If the attack took place on the spaceport, they will be able

to take off immediately, though they will have to deal with (or elude) the *Sovereign* in orbit overhead. Otherwise, they will have to hole up until the heat blows over, which will take three days. The spaceport is sealed up tight and crawling with troops from the *Sovereign* itself. If the heroes have a ship present, they will have to sneak past several patrols (of six troopers each, or four troopers with a patrol droid) to reach the ship. There is no tractor beam holding the ship itself in place, so once it can lift off it must try to get past the *Sovereign*. If they have Krova with them, it will be that much more difficult.

The darksiders can find easy places to hide in Alvorine City, provided they do not attract too much attention. Alternatively, they can hide in the rough country between the spaceport and the city, though this is less comfortable. Regardless, the time provides an opportunity for them come to understand the holocron and its supposed value to

them. It also gives Noth a chance to set up his own ambush. Consider the players' request for a hideout—location, how many exits, watches, etc.—and provide with something that suits your needs.

Noth will attempt to sneak in, kill the darksiders, capture the holocron, and escape. He will use his Drain Power skill to deactivate watch droids and security systems, as well as energy weapons, and kill anyone on watch that he needs to. If the heroes are in a defensible position, he will try instead to kidnap one of the members of the group and trade their lives for the holocron. Barring this, Noth will report their location to the Authority, and while the Authority makes its assault on them—two squads of troopers and two AT-STs (found in Chapter 10 of the core rulebook)—he will use the assault as a distraction to attack the darksider with the holocron.

Noth, in his first and final attack, will be a living weapon. He'll use Enhanced Ability to increase his Strength, Sith Sor-

The Holocron and its Personalities

Krova's holocron, unknown to the Hutt, has been damaged. It has knowledge of numerous Sith devices, ranging from probe droids to battleships, but is unable to access the more useful areas. It is aware that the data is there within its matrix, but it cannot utilize it. In effect, it has the word it needs on the tip of its tongue, but cannot spit it out.

Of course the holocron is not going to admit its weakness to anyone. To Krova, it merely informed her she was not sufficiently dark to unlock its secret. After a few attempts, Krova settled into an uneasy relationship with the holocron.

One of Krova's minions—a Gungan Force adept who made a poor choice in traveling companions—originally activated the holocron. Once activated, Krova learned how to utilize the device. She suspects the device knows more than it is telling. Nonetheless it an excellent bargaining chip to buy her freedom.

The holocron provides a +2 competence bonus on Knowledge checks involved Sith weapons, armor, droids, vehicles, starships, and history. It provides this bonus only if in contact with one of these devices or in a situation where some information is already available.

MONDRAK, THE LIBRARIAN

An exotic humanoid of a now-extinct species, it is Mondrak who claims to hold the keys to the knowledge of the holocron. She presents herself as the "Judge of the Jedi" (A title she created herself), and will only reward those who truly follow the path of the Sith. She reached loggerheads with Krova months ago (The Hutt's natural resistance to Force powers is a continual irritant), and has been trying to find a more malleable owner ever since.

THE GHOST

Occupying one of the damaged sections of the holocron, the Ghost is a wispy creature that waves into and out of view. Once it was the dominant personality of the holocron, but most of its identity has leaked away over the years, leaving only its hatred. Mondrak has convinced the Ghost (using its hatred of the Hutt) to act as the messenger to reach out to other Force-users, in the hopes of bringing someone more worthy to possess the holocron. The Ghost hates Mondrak as well, and wishes to see that one's identity scrambled.

POXALL, THE POISONER

This personality holds sway over one of the few intact areas of the holocron—a section on Sith poisons. A bitter foe of Mondrak, who Poxall feels is trying to take over his area (he would be right), Poxall is paranoid and believes that anyone it comes in contact with is an agent (witting or otherwise) of Mondrak. She will try to out-think and destroy any who contact it. Mondrak portrays Poxall as mad, and downplays its knowledge is minor.

The holocron can be repaired—however that information would be within the inaccessible areas. A second holocron may be necessary for the repair information, and even then the second holocron (depending on its personalities) may choose to try to destroy Krova's holocron (through faulty information) than let the damaged holocron survive.

The holocron appears as a black pyramid resting on a jade base, with golden filigree lacing alongside its faces. One side (the damaged part) is colder than the others, almost freezing to touch.

cery (for a +3 competence bonus to attacks, saves, and dark side skill checks), and Rage (for an additional +4 strength, +18 vitality points, +2 bonus to Will and Fortitude saves, and -2 to Defense) that lasts for 8 rounds.

Noth has already fallen under the sway of the holocron at a distance—he believes that he is the chosen bearer of its knowledge, and that all others must perish for profaning it. If he escapes with it, he will retreat into the wilderness for a few weeks to learn what secrets he can, then smuggle himself off-planet. Should the darksiders leave Alvorine without confronting Noth, the dark side devotee will follow them, pulled by the siren call of the holocron.

Should the darksiders defeat Noth and elude the forces of the Authority (who, despite Krova's possible death, still want the holocron), they will escape with a powerful, though damaged Sith artifact. This holocron will in turn seek to get itself repaired as well as find more potent and worthy masters. Holding onto the holocron, and wresting from it its secrets, will take time and willpower for even a Force-user to pull off.

The darksiders earn 2000 XP for this medium-length adventure, whether they gain (or keep) the holocron or not. The Sith holocron is its own reward, and its own punishment. **E**

Supporting Cast

FALLANJI, INFORMATION BROKER

Fallanji was once one of Krova's snitches, and quickly oozed his way into the fragments of Krova's criminal empire when the Hutt suddenly decamped from Alvorine for parts unknown. He would prefer to see Krova locked up, or at the bottom of a tall cliff, because he believes that the crimelord could quickly muscle back in on his profitable operations. Fallanji presents himself as a charming, relaxed rogue who takes every challenge in stride.

Fallanji is brilliant green male Twi'lek. He has the tips of his head-tail pierced and often wears bells on the end of them. He does not keep to the shadows, but does most of his business in the streetside cafes of Alvorine City.

Fallanji: Male Twi'lek ScI 2/Sct 2; Init +1 (Dex); Def 18 (+1 Dex, +7 class); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 14/8; Atk +2 melee (1d3, punch), +3 ranged (3d4, holdout blaster); SQ Better lucky than good, illicit barter, trail-blazing; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Equipment: Datapad, fake IDs, electronic listening devices, whistle.

Skills: Bluff +11, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +4, Disguise +7, Forgery +4, Gather Information +14, Hide +7, Knowledge (Alvorine) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +3, Read/Write Ryl, Search +6, Sense Motive +4, Speak Basic, Speak Lekku, Speak Ryl, Spot +5.

Feats: Alertness, Skill Emphasis (Gather Information) Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, blaster rifles).

MIERA LIJ, DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE

Miera Lij is a computer operator for the Authority Security Forces, and answers ultimately to Hundria Kast. Miera has developed a taste for spice, and her growing addiction has made her vulnerable to criminal influence. She has sold information to Fallanji a couple times, and her weaknesses are known to the criminal population of Alvorine. The Security Forces are not aware yet, and Kast would have her transferred to traffic duty if she knew that Lij was selling information.

Miera Lij is a female human of average high with red hair worn in a bowl cut.

Miera Lij: Female Human Dip 2; Init +0; Def 10; Spd 10 m; VP/WP —/10; Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch), +1 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Equipment: Datapad, cred stick, secret stash of spice.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +4, Computer Use +8, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (Alvorine) +6, Profession (Clerk) +4 Read/Write Basic, Repair +4, Speak Basic.

Feats: Gearhead, Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

TYPICAL TROOPER

This stat block represents both troopers belonging to the Alvorine Authority security forces and those on loan from the New Republic ship *Sovereign*. They are identical except for appearance. The Alvorine forces wear green jumpsuits, while the New Republic forces will be in New Republic uniforms.

Typical Trooper: Human Thug 3; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Def 17 (+1 Dex, +5 armor); Spd 10 m; VP/WP —/12; Atk +3 melee (1d6, baton), +4 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Equipment: Blaster rifle, combat jump, suit backpack, comlink, medpac, speeder bike (for bike troops).

Skills: Intimidate +6, Pilot +4, Profession (security guard) +4, Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic, Treat Injury +1.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster rifles).

New Equipment

SOROSUUB HL-38 ARMORED HOVERVAN

The HL-38 armored hovervan, built by SoroSuub, is an enclosed vehicle operating on the same principles as the land-speeder. It is used to convey prisoners, funds, equipment, and other valuable cargo. It has an open cab in the front, which seats two, and can carry up to eight in the back (Or in this case two troopers, Marshall Kast, a Hutt and a Dug) The Authority hovervans are painted black, and have one-way transparasteel windows that let those within see what is going on without.

Craft: SoroSuub HL-38 Armored Hovervan; **Class:** Ground (speeder); **Cost:** 13,000 (new), 4,000 (used); **Size:** Huge (9 m long); **Crew:** Skilled +4 (1 pilot); **Passengers:** 10 or cargo; **Cargo Capacity:** 600 metric tons; **Ground Speed:** 70 km/hr (max speed 140 km/hr); **Altitude:** Up to 1 m; **Defense:** 14* (-2 size, +6 armor); **Hull Points:** 25; **DR:** 7.

*An armored hovervan provides one-half cover to those in the forward cab, full cover to those in back.

TALNAR'S RESCUE

BY STERLING HERSHEY

ILLUSTRATED BY MATTHEW HATTON



TALNAR'S RESCUE" IS A *STAR WARS ROLEPLAYING GAME* ADVENTURE FOR SIX 3RD-LEVEL OR FOUR 4TH-LEVEL REBEL HEROES. IT CAN BE USED AS PART OF AN EXISTING REBELLION ERA CAMPAIGN OR ADJUSTED FOR CAMPAIGNS IN OTHER ERAS.

THE HEROES ARE ASSIGNED TO RESCUE TALNAR, A REBEL AGENT WHO CRASH-LANDED ON NAALOL, A SPARSELY POPULATED PLANET OF THE MID RIM. LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE PLANET AND LESS ABOUT TALNAR'S CURRENT SITUATION.

Background

Talnar is an active Rebel procurement agent, who was returning to base with a shipment of droids. Over the planet Naalol, an Imperial customs cruiser attacked his ship. The ensuing battle left both ships critically damaged. Talnar managed to crash land on Naalol, leaving the Imperials stranded in orbit, unable to land.

A group of local bounty hunters short on cash but not initiative, known as the Oquan, observed the battle from the planet's surface. Recognizing an opportunity, they sent an air speeder to Talnar's

crash site, intent on capturing Talnar and selling him to the Imperials for a few quick and easy credits.

The Oquan discovered Talnar alive and full of fight. Another brief battle ensued. The Oquan managed to subdue the agent, but not before he wrecked their speeder. Since Talnar's ship was a total loss, the opportunistic bounty hunters were forced to call for a ride from their companions. A quick search of Talnar's hold made them call for a few extra cargo skiffs.

Getting Started

The heroes might be an active Rebel cell or agents who have worked together before, or might be a team newly assembled for this mission. They should be provided with transport if they do not have a ship of their own.

The heroes receive their briefing from Captain Res Nels, a Human male. The briefing can take place at the heroes' base, the local Rebel base, or any other private location you deem appropriate.

Captain Nels enters the room in a hurried manner. He quickly takes a seat and pulls out a battered datapad. He punches a few keys and then says, "I have a mission for you. We received this report from the Naalol System."

He sets a holoprojector on the table and activates it. An unfamiliar light freighter flashes by, pursued by a Guardian-class Light Cruiser. A brief



but spectacular battle ensues. The freighter pilot's skills are as impressive as his ship's armaments are more than the Imperials bargained for. They are evenly matched, as shot after shot hits home. In one final volley both ships are critically damaged. The freighter descends to the planet below. The Imperials are adrift, engines disabled and hull heavily damaged.

"The freighter is one of ours, called the *Golden Jewel*. Its captain is Lieutenant Talnar, one of our agents. We believe he dropped out of hyperspace to report in to our communications satellite in system. Either he had no chance to transmit or didn't want to tip off the Imperials to our satellite's presence. If his mission was successful he was returning to base with a cargo of droids."

"The *Golden Jewel* crashed on Naalol. We have the coordinates from the satellite. We want you to bring him and the droids back to us. He doesn't have much time. The Empire will send for reinforcements soon. You must get to Talnar before they do."

Captain Nels will entertain a few questions. Above all, he will stress how little time they have and encourages them to leave as soon as possible.

Nels can provide the following additional information:

- Naalol: The planet is a sparsely inhabited terrestrial world with few spaceports or major cities. There is an Imperial presence, though it is small. The inhabitants do not interfere with the regional government, keeping mostly to themselves. It's a backwater planet, but reasonably modern with little organized crime. The Naalol system has two other uninhabited planets, both in orbits extremely close to its star.
- Talnar: The Rebel agent is a procurement specialist. He is a human male of about 45 years. He typically works alone. A picture is provided.
- The crash site: The coordinates reveal Talnar went down in a mountainous region. It is late winter, so conditions could be

difficult. The heroes are provided with system and planetary maps.

- The Empire: There is a small garrison of about 30 personnel on Naalol, but reinforcements could arrive at any time.
- The Droids: Nothing more is known about them.
- Equipment: Nels can provide some basic equipment and transport if necessary. Anything overly expensive or rare is left up to the heroes to acquire as best they can.
- Communications: Nels provides a comlink through which the Rebels may be contacted via the spy satellite. However, he instructs the heroes to use it sparingly, as each use might reveal the satellite's presence to the Imperials.

To the Rescue

When the heroes arrive in system, their scans indicate some light starship traffic in the area. There is no sign of the damaged *Guardian* or any Imperial vessels.

As the heroes approach Naalol, Spaceport Control hails them. The controller asks them if they need landing coordinates, though in no way implies they are necessary. A successful Knowledge (systems) or Knowledge (spacer lore) check (DC 15) reveals that a landing permit is not necessary on Naalol. If no hero has an appropriate Knowledge skill, a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) makes it clear that the controller is merely offering them a service and not giving them orders. Otherwise, let the players assume what they will.

If the heroes say they are looking for the downed ship, the controller takes a greater interest in them and immediately presses for more information. He requests that the heroes land at the spaceport in Rigton.

Variations

Here are some ideas for modifying the adventure for other hero types or eras:

- Instead of Rebels, the heroes might be a group of bounty hunters hired to retrieve Talnar, a smuggler who has run into bad luck with a customs agent. Their employer wants Talnar and his cargo returned intact. In this case, local customs agents replace the Imperials in the adventure. This is suitable for any era.
- The players take the Imperial side, competing against the Rebels. To play this option, you will need to convert some Imperial characters to Rebels, or you may create new ones.

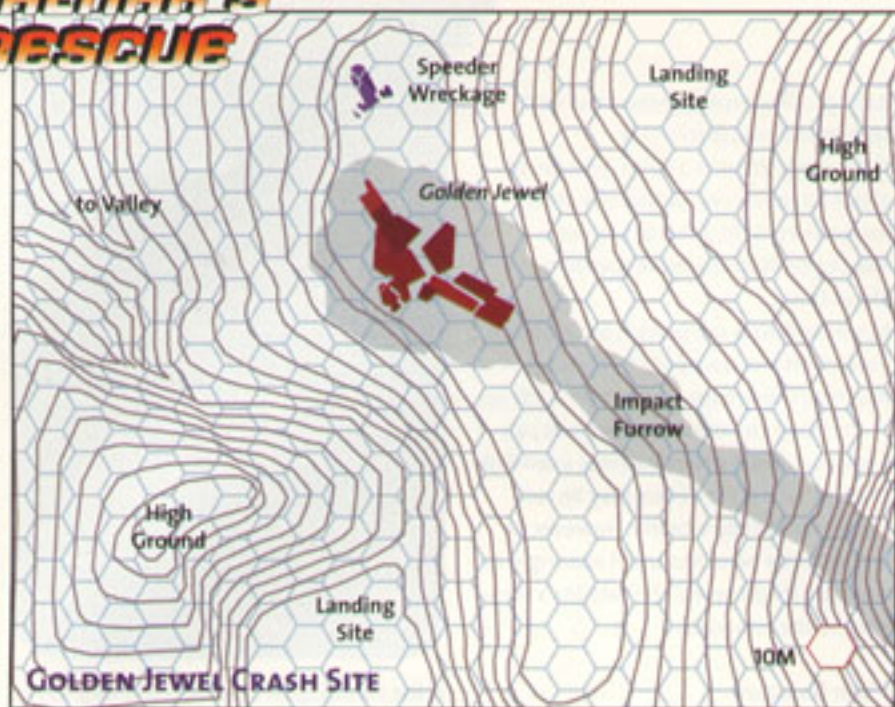
If the heroes ignore this request, they have plenty of time to land before any patrol craft reach them.

If the heroes have alerted Spaceport Control that they are looking for a downed starship and choose to land at the spaceport, they are greeted by a squad of eight stormtroopers (six are armed with blaster rifles, two with light repeating blaster rifles). Unless the heroes attack them, the squad leader asks them a few questions and lets them go about their business. If the heroes choose to attack

GOLDEN JEWEL CRASH SITE



TALNAR'S RESCUE



the stormtroopers, they automatically gain a surprise round, as the stormtroopers are not expecting trouble. If the heroes defeat them, there is a transport nearby that they can commandeer.

If the heroes' ship lands at the spaceport and hasn't drawn undue attention, the heroes can easily rent a speeder (100 credits/day) and, using the information provided by Captain Nels, reach the crash site in about two hours. A hero with the Trailblazing ability can attempt to shorten this time with a successful Survival skill check; the information provided by Nels gives the hero a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

If the heroes decide to land near the crash site, they discover the area is extremely rugged with high peaks and winding ridges. Making the approach even more hazardous is the fact that a strong winter storm is passing through the area. Fortunately, the crash site appears to be on the trailing edge of the front. The wind is very gusty and it is still snowing lightly. The conditions complicate flying, confound sensors, and hamper visibility.

Whether they use their ship or a hover transport, the heroes can survey the area with a low pass, requiring a Pilot check (DC 10) to avoid crashing. Sensors or a successful Search skill check (DC 15) reveals that the *Golden Jewel* impacted and skidded along a ridge, coming to rest in a fissure halfway

down a narrow valley. The wreckage of some kind of speeder lies near the ship. No one can be seen. Sensors don't show any signs of life. There are a couple of large clearings within 60 meters of the wrecks that would make suitable starship landing sites (landing requires a DC 10 Pilot check). If the group is using surface transport, they can land within 20 meters of the crash site.

There is no one at the crash site. The Oquan have removed Talnar and the droids. The heroes can make a single Search check, with each member aiding the hero with the highest Search bonus, or they can break off into groups and make individual Search checks. It takes thirty minutes (divided by the number of groups searching) to scour the entire crash site. The level of success determines what they find. Read all of the appropriate information below depending on the heroes' degree of success.

If the heroes decide to "take 20" on their Search checks or spend more than twenty minutes at the crash site, they encounter an Imperial patrol of four biker scouts. While on their way to the crash site themselves, the patrol observed the heroes' approach. Choosing to abandon their speeder bikes at the bottom of the valley, they've been making a slow ascent through the fissure to sneak up on the heroes. One of the biker scouts will try to gauge the group's num-

Searching the Crash Site

SEARCH

CHECK

RESULT INFORMATION

Up to 10	There was a battle at the site. Blaster and grenade damage is apparent all around the speeder, plus inside and outside the ship. Talnar most likely survived, though he might be wounded. Talnar's cargo is gone, although the damaged hold had to be cut open to remove it.
11-20	Many people have been in the area, leaving tracks throughout the ship and on the ground, all lightly covered by the recent snowfall. There are four medkits, some tools, and basic items aboard, but nothing of real value. There is little worth salvaging. The vehicle, a MandalMotors Shadow V Combat Airspeeder, was destroyed by weapon fire—it shows no sign of impact damage from a crash. It was a modified civilian craft, not Imperial.
20+	The tracks lead to various points around the site, then disappear completely, most likely onto waiting speeders. Within the wreckage of the cockpit are two portable control pads. Both are heavily damaged and neither seems to have anything to do with the ship. A successful Repair check (DC 10) or other appropriate skill check reveals they are droid control pads, likely for Talnar's cargo. Neither work, though it might be possible to cannibalize parts from one to make the other operational.

bers and strength, using the Hide and Move Silently skills as appropriate.

The patrol's main weapons are stealth and surprise. Their white armor also helps camouflage them in the blowing snow (+2 circumstance bonus to Hide skill checks), the cold weather muffles sounds (-4 penalty to Listen skill checks), and the ground is difficult terrain (movement is halved). The patrol has not reported in for fear of alerting the heroes with a comlink

transmission. They'll try to ambush the heroes as they exit the *Golden Jewel*. Make a Spot check for each hero and compare the result to a Hide check for the Imperials. Any heroes that fail do not act during the surprise round of this encounter. If the fight turns against the scouts, one attempts to call in the situation.

If the heroes quickly search the ship and depart, they do not encounter the biker scouts. The Imperials, however, have been alerted to the heroes' presence. They'll report in with a description of the group.

If they've already been to Rigton, the heroes can return there. If they haven't, it's easily the closest city according to their intelligence briefing. If they are traveling on land,

Imperial Patrol

Imperial Stormtroopers (8): Human Thg 3; Init +0; Def 16 (+6 armor); Spd 8 m (armor); VP/WP —/10; Atk +3 melee (1d3, punch), +3 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle); SQ Immunities*; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; SZ M; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Stormtrooper armor, blaster rifle, fragmentation grenade, grappling hook, comlink, utility belt.

Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +3, Knowledge (Imperial Army) +2, Profession (stormtrooper) +4, Spot +2.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, powered), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster rifles).

**Stormtroopers are immune to being bribed, blackmailed, seduced, or routed. Any such attempt automatically fails; no check or saving throw is necessary.*

IMPERIAL TROOP TRANSPORT

Craft: Nen-Carvon PX-7 Tracked Troop Transport; **Class:** Ground (Tracked); **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Gargantuan (13.25 m long); **Crew:** Normal +2 (1 pilot, 1 gunner); **Passengers:** 6; **Cargo Capacity:** 100 metric tons, **Ground Speed:** 60m (max. speed 130 km/h); **Defense:** 14* (-2 size, +6 armor); **Hull Points:** 30; **DR:** 10. **Weapon:** Twin light blaster cannon (fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (+2 crew, -2 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 2d10; **Range:** 100 m.

**This vehicle provides three-quarter cover to its passengers.*

they'll encounter the Oquan before they reach Rigton (see The Bridge below). If they travel by starship, any hero monitoring the sensors will discover the Oquan convoy with a successful Computer Use skill check (DC 15). If the heroes decide to leave Naalol, the mission is a failure. It'll be the last important mission they get for the Rebellion.

If the heroes decide to check out the convoy, there are many opportunities to do so along the route. The rocky outcroppings of Mount Mogaar provide many places to hide and observe or ambush anyone on the road. If the heroes hurry, they might be able to reach the mountain before the convoy clears the storm.

The Bridge

The Oquan are very familiar with the area. They are experienced bounty hunters and are not about to go walking into a potential ambush without checking things out. If the heroes decide to ambush or observe the Oquan, read the following:

Imperial Biker Scouts (4): Male Human Sct 4; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 18 (+2 Dex, +6 armor); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 32/16; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, knife) or +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Immunities*, trailblazing, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to Def); SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 1; Rep 1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, hold-out blaster, field kit, knife, frag grenades (2), scout trooper armor, Aratech 74-Z speeder bike. Helmet of scout trooper armor provides a +2 equipment bonus on Search and Spot checks.

Skills: Climb +1, Computer Use +4, Hide +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Pilot +6, Read/Write Basic, Repair +4, Search +6, Speak Basic, Spot +8, Survival +7, Swim +1.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (powered), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons).

**Biker Scouts are immune to being bribed, blackmailed, seduced, or routed. Any such attempt automatically fails; no check or saving throw is necessary.*

Late in the afternoon, the convoy reaches a bridge. They deploy two speeder bikes from one of the larger transports. Each bike carries a driver and a passenger. They zip across the bridge at high speed. Upon reaching the first switchback, the two passengers fire their jetpacks, launching themselves high in the air. Using sensor packs, the two hovering Humans sweep the area looking for any signs of pursuers.

If the Oquan discover the heroes or are attacked, they try to escape as quickly as possible.

If the heroes attempt to stop the Oquan convoy by creating a roadblock, read the following:

The convoy doesn't seem to slow down as it approaches the blocked section of roadway. The large armored hover trucks blast the roadblock with heavy weapons and barrel right through. The top hatch of both speeders pop open, and four Humans wearing jetpacks launch into the air.

Once the convoy clears the final switchback up the mountain, the speeder bikes form a rearguard. The landspeeders accelerate, trying to outrun their pursuers. If this proves impossible, the Oquan drop smoke bombs, hurl thermal detonators, and fill the tunnel with blaster fire as they flee. Finally, the Mogaar Tunnel divides into multiple branches before it reaches Rigton. The various branches lead to different areas of town. The Oquan divide up. If the heroes are close enough, they can still pursue one or more speeders, otherwise the chase is over.

If a battle ensues for more than a minute (ten rounds), it attracts the attention of three nearby TIE fighters (see Chapter 10 of the core rulebook), sent to the area to aid the Imperial search. The fighters fire only in self-defense as they close in for a better look. From the biker scout's report, the TIE fighters should be able to identify the heroes. If fired upon, the patrol will attempt to disable as many craft as possible, delaying any escape until reinforcements arrive. The fighters otherwise focus on stopping anyone from getting away.

TALNAR'S RESCUE

If at any point the

heroes attempt to contact the convoy and negotiate a deal, the Oquan play things very close to the vest and remain highly suspicious of the group. They will not admit to having Talnar or the droids. They constantly watch the heroes, waiting for a surprise attack. They will not negotiate on the road, insisting instead on meeting in a neutral location in Rigton. The Lieutenants are bluffing and have no intentions of dealing with the heroes.

Oquan Lieutenants ("Patch" and Selana): Use the 8th-level generic Bounty Hunter from Chapter 14 of the core rulebook, with the addition of a jet pack.

The Oquan (15): Use the 4th-level generic Bounty Hunter from Chapter 14 of the core rulebook, with the addition of a jet pack.

Speeder Bikes (2): Use the Ikas-Adno Night-falcon from Chapter 10 of the core rulebook.

MITRINOMON Z-6 JET PACK

Cost: 300 (fuel not included)

Weight: 30 kg

The Mitrinomon Z-6 jet pack is perhaps best known as the model used by the infamous bounty hunter Boba Fett. Though inexpensive to purchase, the Z-6 is costly to keep fueled.

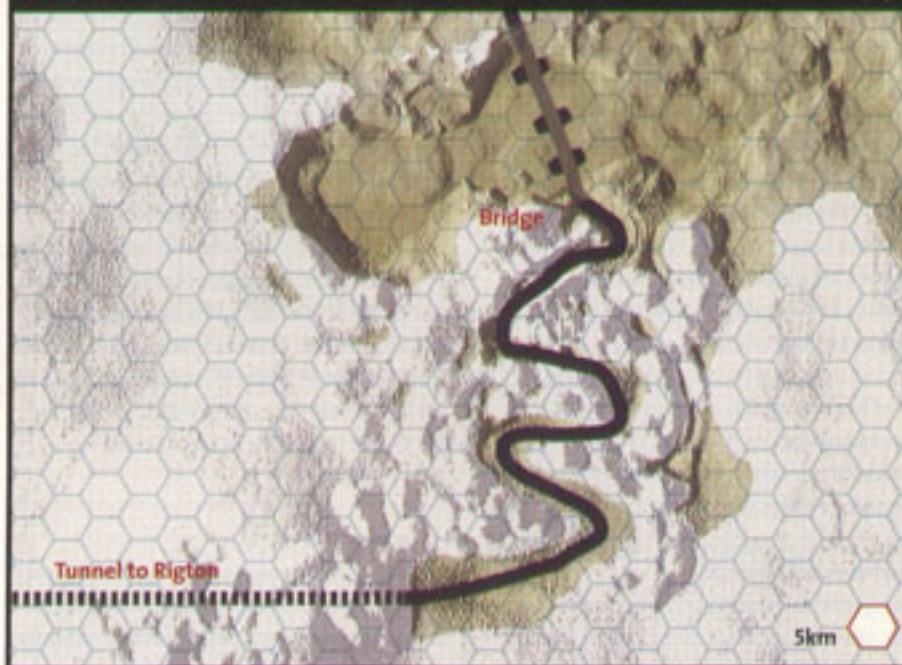
The Z-6 has enough lift to carry the user plus an additional 100 kg. A fully-charged fuel cell provides either 20 short bursts or enough fuel to travel 2 kilometers. One burst can carry the user up to 70 meters straight up or up to 100 meters horizontally as a full-round action. Multiple bursts can be used to sustain movement in the same direction or hover in place, both of which are move actions that use a burst of fuel. To land requires a DC 12 Pilot check. If the user fails, he gets no actions for one full round while trying to regain his bearings.

A fully-charged fuel cell for the Z-6 costs 150 credits.

LEAD SPEEDER

Craft: Modified SoroSuub LLS-3 Landspeeder; **Class:** Ground (Speeder); **Cost:** 12,000 (new), 5,000 (used); **Size:** Large (4 m long); **Crew:** Skilled +4 (1 pilot, 1 gunner);

CONVOY ROUTE



Passengers: 4; **Cargo Capacity:** 50 kilograms; **Ground Speed:** 100m (max. speed 200 km/h); **Altitude:** up to 2 m; **Defense:** 14* (-1 size, +5 armor); **Hull Points:** 22; **DR:** 5.

Weapon: Defense blaster; **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +7 (+4 crew, -1 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 3d8; **Range:** 20m.

**This vehicle provides one-half cover to its passengers.*

SPEEDER TRUCKS (4)

Craft: Modified Ubrikkian Speeder Truck QL-2a Landspeeder; **Class:** Ground (Speeder); **Cost:** 20,000 (new), 10,000 (used); **Size:** Huge (12 m long); **Crew:** Skilled +4 (1 pilot, 1 gunner); **Passengers:** 2; **Cargo Capacity:** 50 metric tons; **Ground Speed:** 70m (max. speed 150 km/h); **Altitude:** up to 2 m; **Defense:** 11* (-2 size, +3 armor); **Hull Points:** 25; **DR:** 5.

Weapon: Defense blaster; **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +6 (+4 crew, -2 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 3d8; **Range:** 20m.

**This vehicle provides one-half cover to its passengers and full cover to its cargo.*

Successful Heroes

If the heroes succeed in rescuing Talnar but not all of the droids, the Rebel will do all he can to convince them to obtain the droids. Continue the adventure at City Search.

If the heroes get one or more of the droids, they cannot activate them without a working control board.

City Search

Once the Oquan bounty hunters reach Rigton, they quickly take secret tunnels to their hidden hideout. If the heroes followed them in a ground vehicle, the Oquan simply seem to disappear around a corner. No matter how hard they try, the heroes will be unable to find the concealed tunnel entrance the Oquan used.

Rigton is a medium-sized city, built against a crescent shaped ridge. Tunnels honeycomb the mountainside, effectively giving the city two sets of streets—one above ground, one below. Fully half the city exists below ground, and many buildings have levels both above and below the surface. The tunnels are always busy, but especially so during the winter months.

With the exception of a few roads into the mountains, the main roads run down the valley to larger cities on the plains below. Like many cities on Naalol, Rigton is reasonably self-sufficient and isolated. There is no visible Imperial presence, although local officials cooperate with the Imperials and Imperial law is enforced, if leniently.

Rigton appeals to all kinds of isolationists: rich, poor, political refugees, criminals, basically anyone who wants to be left alone. The criminal underworld tends to be just that—operating under the surface, within the tunnels. Except for a few isolated areas, they don't dominate the city.

Late in the evening, the storm reaches Rigton. Snow falls heavily and the wind is strong. Temperatures plunge to well below freezing. Most of the city's inhabitants take to the tunnels, leaving the surface streets virtually deserted.

Talnar is impossible to find. If the heroes try looking for him or ask about the Rebellion, they get the cold shoulder. There are no Rebel operatives in Rigton, but you might want to invent one if the players need a hand. The Oquan, however, are infamous in Rigton. Though everyone has heard of them, few actually know how to contact them directly.

A Gather information check will provide the heroes with information about the Oquan. The level of success determines what they find. Read all of the appropriate information below depending on the heroes' level of success.

Prit's Free Pit

Prit's Free Pit is a hole—literally. Located deep in Tunnel 329, the establishment is carved from the surrounding mountain. The raw, unfinished rock face matches the Pit's clientele. Nominally a bar and restaurant, the Pit's actual business is to serve as a neutral location for 'sensitive' business deals. For a not-so-modest fee of 50 credits per person, the Pit provides a weapons-free environment for deals and discussions—over a drink or light meal, if so desired.

Aveton Prit, the owner, is an Imperial informer. The local ISB operative, Nir Rinit, pays Prit very well—so well, in fact, that the cash keeps Prit supplied with hi-tech surveillance and security gear. Prit uses the gear to monitor his clients and glean whatever information he can from them, then sells it. Prit's favorite ploy is to plant recording devices on his servant droids.

When the heroes arrive, Rinit is already inside. He knows that the heroes were poking around Talnar's ship and believes they could lead him to Talnar. When the heroes reach the Pit, read the following:

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Tunnel 329 proves to be dingy and dark. Flickering bluish lights provide a little illumination. A few beings hurry along, wishing to spend as little time in the tunnel as necessary. There are pockets of activity

around the various businesses along the way. A few speeders scream by, riding the boundary of the tight speeder lane.

A bright yellow sign advertises "Prit's Free Pit" above a smaller, flashing red sign declaring "Guaranteed Weapons Free" over a doorway. As you approach, the doors silently glide open. The lobby is brightly lit, utilitarian, and cold. To one side, two heavily armored beings sit behind a thick transparisteel barrier.

One of them says, "You're new here. Welcome to Prit's. If you want in, put all of your weapons in that box over there, close it, and key in your own combination. Then deposit 50 credits each—cash or chip—and go through that door," pointing to a door across from the entrance.

The Control Pad

An hour of work and a successful Repair skill check (DC 15) reveals that the droid control pad will not work without obtaining several new parts (an encrypted multi-signal transmitter, mini-viewscreen, keypad, and indicator lights). If the check result is 20 or more, the heroes also discover that the control panel contains a voice recognition package used to give verbal commands.

Heroes searching for replacement parts for the droid control pad can easily find shops selling all except the encrypted multi-signal transmitter. While not actually illegal, the transmitter is uncommon. The heroes have a couple of options. They can try to find a black market supplier (Gather Information DC 20), which takes three hours to locate, and pay him 1,000 credits for the device. Conversely, they can attempt to jury-rig a normal encryption transmitter (Repair DC 22). Though they don't know it at the time, this will only allow them to give identical orders to all the droids via the control pad.

The heroes must enter the correct access code (Talnar knows it) or make a Computer Use check (DC 20) to activate the pad. There is currently one voice pattern stored in the pad, but others can be added in 10 minutes with a Computer Use check (DC 15) once the pad has been activated. Once active, see *Controlling the Droids*.

Investigating the Oquan

GATHER

INFORMATION

CHECK

RESULT INFORMATION

Up to 4 "The Oquan, huh? I know a few things about that greedy crew. Some of the best bounty hunters around here, to be sure. Well, they were, anyway. I guess we'll see how they come off now that there's been a few changes. If you're looking to hire them, talk to an info broker named Cotan. The best place to find him is at Prit's Free Pit."

5-9 "They love money. They can't get enough credits. They even wear it like a badge of pride. Take a look at one of 'em you'll see a credit chip or coin stuck on their armor somewhere. It's supposed to be the first credit they earn when they join up. In fact, it's the only credit they get from their first job. Their Number-Two guy wears his on his eye patch. It's really disturbing to see. Like the credit's looking at you."

10-14 "They fly really well, though. Not ships. I'm talkin' jetpacks, here. They add a whole 'nother dimension to the Oquan's tactics. You think you got 'em cornered and BOOM! They shoot straight at you. Or up. Or whatever."

15-19 "From what I hear, the Oquan took on a high-paying job to capture a Hutt. The Oquan succeeded, but we figure they lost a third of their people, ships, and equipment in the final grab. I think they had to spend every credit fixing themselves back up and to pay off some Hutts who were suddenly very interested in seeing them eliminated."

20+ "Since Rel Acol took over, he's been tryin' to prove that the Oquan are still great. He's quick on the uptake—always after a quick credit, too. Acol would like a little fame to go with his creds. He's loud. He brags. He taunts. He loves to gloat over his captives. He's always wavin' his blaster around when he's on a tirade. Don't underestimate him."

TALNAR'S RESCUE

"Don't bother trying to hide anything. We'll find it. Our scanners are the best. We do this every day, all day, so don't even think about it." A notification near the inner entrance warns that cybernetic weapons must be deactivated.

"Your items will be returned to you," the guard assures you.

If the heroes ask about Cotan the information broker, a guard says he believes he's still inside. If the heroes delay, several individuals enter Prit's, obediently following the directions. They might provide a bit of information about the place, if questioned.

A large box sits in an alcove near the door. The box is very sturdy and has an electronic combination lock in its hinged lid. The heroes may type in any combination they wish, after which the panel reads, "Secured." The alcove closes and reopens with a new,

empty box. The heroes then pay their 50 credits to a control pad next to the door.

Passing through the doors (marked "Weapons Free Zone"), the heroes walk down a hall, through a series of scanners. Anyone concealing a weapon (or anything that looks like a weapon) is stopped by a guard and ordered to dispose of the item. Something very exotic (such as a lightsaber or organic weapon) might escape the detectors, at your discretion.

The next set of doors leads into the Pit itself. Read the following:

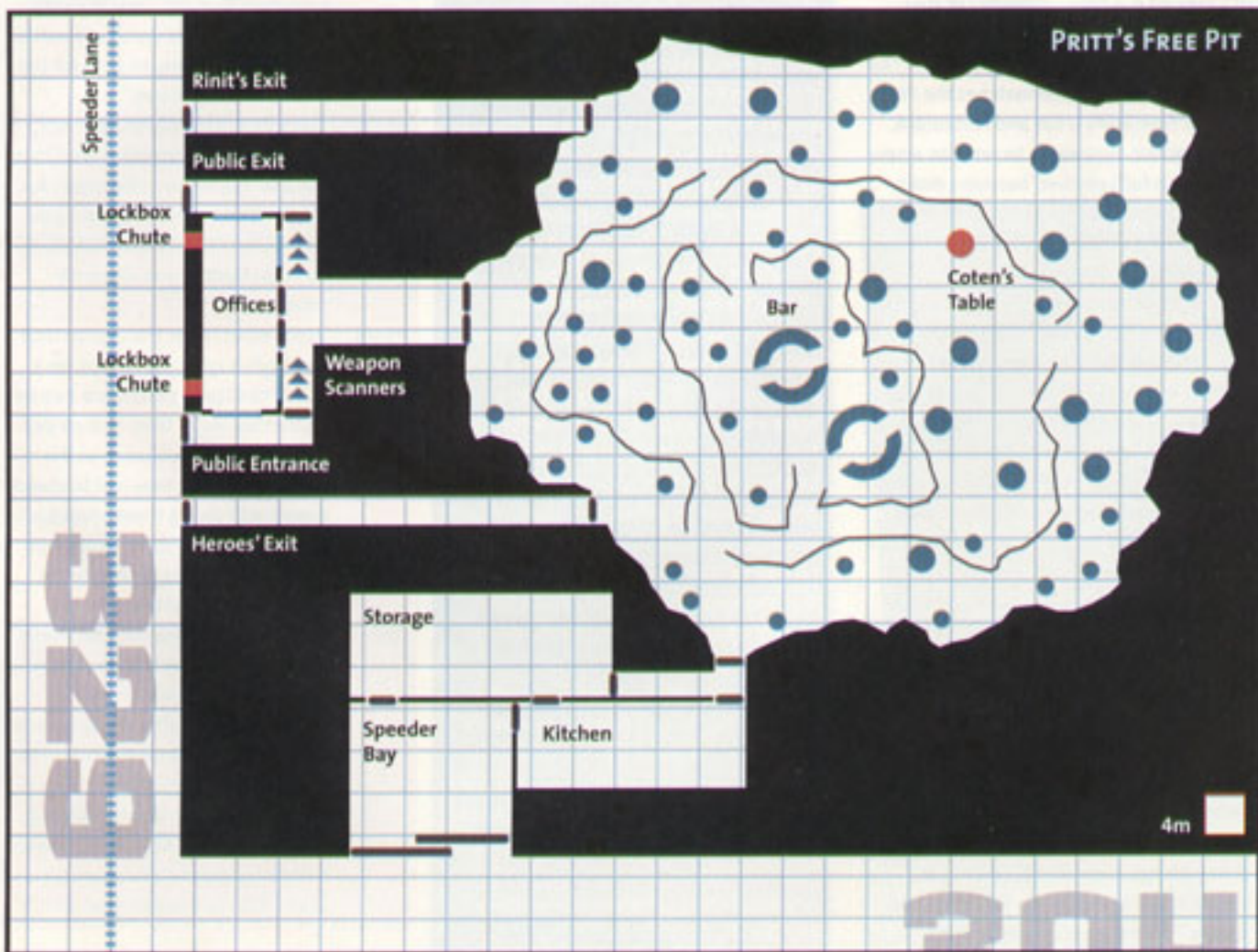
The Pit proves to be just that: a bowl-shaped cavern. The entrance overlooks a large room. Tables on concentric terraces surround two circular bars in the center of the room. The room is illuminated primarily by glowlamps on the tables. The place is busy but quiet. Some beings look nervously about, while others are talking intently in

hushed voices. Here and there, gleaming silver servant droids deliver drinks and food.

A SE-4 servant droid approaches you. "Greetings gentlebeings. How may I help you?"

The droid will take them to the bar or a table, if so desired. If the heroes ask about Cotan, the droid escorts them to his table. If not, Rinit approaches them after ten minutes or so.

Cotan is a pudgy male Twi'lek with pink-gray skin (use the stats for a 4th-level Generic Outlaw in Chapter 14 of the core rulebook). He's impeccably dressed and enjoys a constant flow of fine food and drink. Throughout his conversation with the heroes, droids constantly refill his plate and glasses. Nothing is offered to the heroes. Cotan is very direct with the heroes, once they declare their needs.



"You're looking for the Oquan. I can help you there, certainly. Easily. Right now. For 300 credits. I wish I could charge more, but my services are very limited where the Oquan are concerned."

If the heroes pay, he continues in a friendly manner. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 20) or successful use of the Affect Mind force skill allows the heroes to negotiate a lower price (although Cotan refuses to accept less than 150 credits). If they haggle, Cotan admires their negotiating acumen and gets down to business.

"Thank you. I'll let the Oquan know you wish to speak with them." Cotan gives you a comlink frequency that the Oquan will use to contact you. He then waves your credits at one of the servants. "Another plate of crushed oceshells please." Cotan looks past you at an approaching well-dressed Human 10 meters away. "Quickly, give me 100 credits and I'll tell you who that is."

If the heroes oblige, Cotan continues. If they haggle, he surreptitiously declares, "This one's on me."

"He's Nir Rinit, an ISB agent. I don't know whether he's looking for you or me."

The heroes have a moment to react. If they delay or do nothing, Rinit reaches the table.

The human stops next to the table. The Twi'lek looks annoyed. "I'm engaged at the moment. Come back later." The well-dressed man responds, "I have no interest in you. I have a great interest in them." He glances at you and proclaims, "You will come with me, now."

If the heroes attack Rinit or try to run for it, each must make a successful Spot skill check (DC 15) or be caught flat-footed by Rinit's hired goons, who are "mingling" nearby. There is one unarmed goon for each hero. Rinit fights defensively and lets the hired help take the brunt of the heroes' attacks. Fifteen of the Pit's armored guards will break up a fight after six rounds.

If the heroes defeat more than half of Rinit's goons, he'll attempt to escape while they're distracted. If he gets away, the remaining goons flee. If Rinit is captured, they make an attempt to free him. The next goon who is defeated will be enough encouragement for any remaining goons to

run, abandoning Rinit. If Rinit escapes, the heroes are marked as wanted felons by the Empire. Feel free to use that as an opportunity to arrange encounters with Imperial forces once the heroes leave Prit's.

Regardless of whether the heroes resist or agree to leave quietly, Prit doesn't want to be seen allowing free access to a known Imperial agent. Before they reach the exit, Prit's armored guards seize both groups. Go to Ejected, below. If they escape before they can be subdued by the guards, give them some time to collect themselves, then go to Meeting the Oquan.

Prit's Guards (15): Male Human Thg 4; Init +0; Def +15 (+5 armor), Spd 10 m; VP/WP —/17; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, baton), +4 ranged; SV Fort +7, Ref +1 Will +1; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep 0; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9. **Equipment:** Baton, combat jumpsuit, comlink. **Skills:** Intimidate +6.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapons Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Ejected

The guards throw the heroes and Rinit's goons out separate "troublemaker" exits at either side of Prit's and into the tunnel.



The Imperials

Nir Rinit

Nir Rinit is a local ISB operative. He keeps an eye on the local criminal population, passing useful information to his superiors and occasionally handling a few operations on his own. He anxiously awaits any opportunity to impress his superiors. He is arrogant and tends to underestimate his opponents. With a small Imperial presence on the planet, Rinit often must find his own help. With the reported Rebel activity, he's eager to make a big score.

Nir Rinit: Scl 2/Sct 2; Init +1 (Dex); Def 18 (+7 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 14/8; Atk +2 melee (1d3, punch), or +3 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Illicit barter, better lucky than good, trailblazing; SV Fort +1 Ref +6 Will +4; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 1; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, electronic listening device, Imperial ID, credstick (10,000 credits).

Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +9, Forgery +5, Gather Information +13, Hide +8, Knowledge (surveillance) +7, Listen +7, Search +6, Spot +5, Survival +7.

Feats: Dodge, Low Profile, Skill Emphasis (Gather Information), Track.

Rinit often hires a small gang of Human thugs when he needs some extra muscle. They know he's an Imperial agent, but he pays them well enough to forget about it. He also holds enough evidence on their criminal activities to insure their arrest, should they ever turn on him. And they know it.

Goons: Thug 4; Init +0; Def +11 (+1 class); Spd 10 m; VP/WP -1/8; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, punch) or +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +5 Ref +1 Will +1; SZ M; DSP 1; Rep 1; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, 400 credits.

Skills: Climb +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Toughness (x2), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

THE MINIAD

The *Miniad* is Rinit's modified freighter. A less popular Corellian craft, its appearance is ambiguous enough to pass for a light freighter, official transport, or a pleasure yacht, whichever Rinit needs for a cover story at the time. While on Naalol, the *Miniad* is berthed at docking bay 21 of the Rigton Spaceport.

Craft: Corellian Engineering Corporation FA-5045 Transport; **Class:** Transport; **Cost:** 100,000 (new), 30,000 (used); **Size:** Small (28 m long); **Crew:** 1 (Unique); **Passengers:** 10; **Cargo Capacity:** 100,000 metric tons; **Consumables:** 2 months; **Hyperdrive:** x1 (backup x12); **Maximum Speed:** Attack; **Defense:** 20 (+1 size, +9 armor); **Shield Points:** 60; **Hull Points:** 110, **DR:** 10.

Weapon: Laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.

The heavy blast door slams shut behind them. While the heroes are brushing themselves off, read the following:

Looking around, you see Rinit and his men similarly thrown out of a far doorway.

With a high-pitched whine, two small panels slide away between the center doors of the Pit. There's a loud bang as a rectangular metal box drops out of an opening 8 meters away from the door and smashes into the side of a passing speeder, knocking off its engine cowling. The speeder wavers and then accelerates down the tunnel. The box spins crazily through the air, ricochets off the far wall, and crashes noisily to the floor. It rests square in the middle of the speeder lane.

You see Rinit running for a similar box near the door his group came through.

The box closer to the heroes is the one they stashed their weapons in. If, by some chance, the heroes used more than one box, all of them are ejected in a similar fashion on their side of the tunnel. Rinit and his goons are running toward their own box. It takes them a round to open it and retrieve their weapons.

There is a 25% chance of a speeder screaming by while someone is in the speeder lane, forcing them to make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 10) to dodge out of the way or be run over (see *Ramming and Vehicle Collisions* in Chapter 10 of the core rulebook). The heroes' box is damaged. It takes a full-round action to force the box open with a Strength check (DC 15) or to disable the damaged lock with a Disable Device check (DC 15). The heroes cannot take 10 or 20 on these checks.

Rinit continues pursuit until he captures one or more of the heroes, or his men are defeated as described in *Prit's Free Pit* above. If the heroes flee into the tunnels, use the table below to run the chase. Each stretch of tunnel is 10 meters long.



1d20	TYPE OF TUNNEL
1-10	Straight (add +4 to the next roll)
11-13	Four-way intersection
14-16	Three-way intersection
17	Left Turn
18	Right Turn
19+	Lift tube to surface

If any of the heroes are captured, Rinit takes them to his ship at Rigton Spaceport. The remaining heroes can either try to rescue their captured comrades or wait to hear from the Oquan. If Rinit or any of his goons is captured, they voluntarily reveal nothing. If interrogated, the heroes learn that Rinit is an Imperial Security Bureau agent and has orders to detain the heroes. The goons also know the location of Rinit's starship.

If all the heroes can turn a corner without Rinit seeing them or reach a lift tube without being threatened by an opponent, they escape. Once they've had a chance to get their bearings, regroup, and rest for two hours, they receive a call from the Oquan.

Rel Acoi: Male Human. Sol 3/Sci 5/BH 4; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 20 (+1 Dex, +9 class); Spd 10 m, VP/WP 72/18; Atk +10/+5 melee (2d6, vibroblade), +11/+6 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol) or (2d4, laser gauntlet); SQ Illicit barter, better lucky than good, sneak attack +4d6, target bonus +3; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +5; SZ M; FP 3, DSP 3, Rep 9, Str 11, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol, laser gauntlet, vibroblade, heavy battle armor, comlink (built into gauntlet), binders, jet pack, medpac.

Skills: Astrogate +4, Bluff +7, Computer Use +6, Demolitions +5, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +2, Gather Information +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (organized crime) +5, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Pilot +15, Read/Write Basic, Repair +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +10, Speak Basic, Spot +8, Treat Injury +5.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Toughness, Track, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibro weapons, heavy weapons).

Meet the Oquan

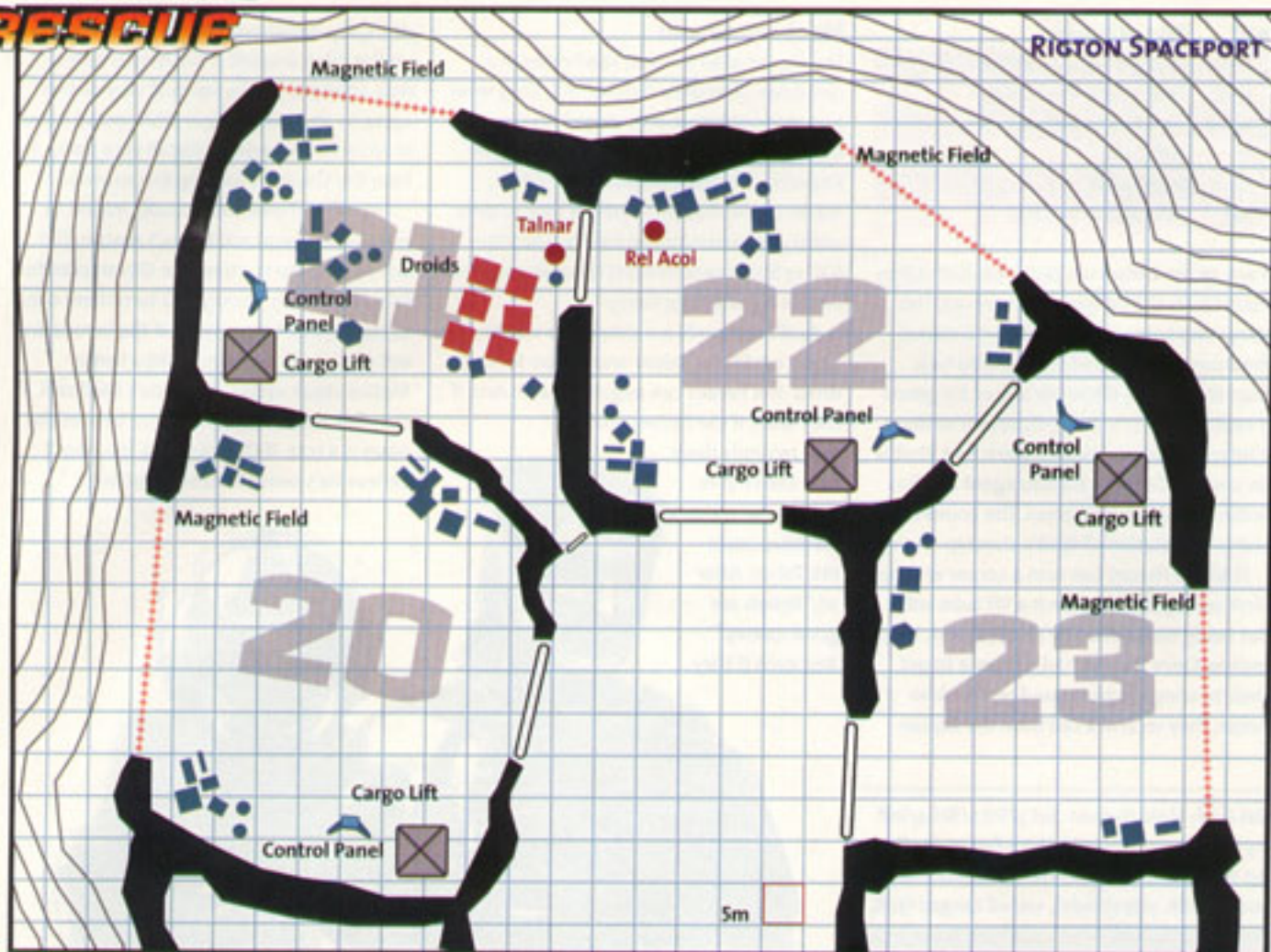
The Oquan plan to meet the heroes in a run-down abandoned storefront. They send one representative, fully armed, to discuss terms. Though the heroes have no way of knowing, the representative is Rel Acoi, leader of the Oquan. There are four snipers within 30 meters of the meeting location (DC 25 Spot check to detect) just in case the heroes try anything funny.

Acoi's demands are simple. He wants 5,000 credits for Talnar and 12,000 for each droid. The heroes can negotiate with Acoi if they wish. If the heroes protest, Acoi reminds them that the Empire will pay far more for Rebel scum like Talnar. After all, "Rebels are good money." And even if they

don't, the droids will fetch a pretty centiced on the black market. If the heroes agree, Acoi arranges for the swap. If they cannot agree to an amount, Acoi attempts to leave them with a warning: "Watch your backs. I hear the Empire is looking for you, too."

Whether the heroes actually intend to pay the Oquan or not doesn't matter. The arranged swap is a trap. The Oquan plan to take the heroes' money and turn them over to the Empire for a reward. If the heroes do not trust Acoi, let them make a Sense Motive check opposed by Acoi's Bluff skill. If they fail, they find no reason to believe the swap is a trap. If they succeed, they don't believe he's being honest with them.





The Swap

The Oquan instruct the heroes to meet in docking bay 22 of the Rigton Spaceport at midnight. If the heroes bring (or have already brought) their starship, they are berthed nearby. The spaceport is built into a large rocky outcropping, with bays lining each side.

When they approach docking bay 22 at the appointed time, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the docking bay, the 8-meter-wide door before you parts at the middle and slides noisily aside. You see an armored figure standing 5 meters before you. It's the same representative who arranged the meet. Like all of Rigton's docking bays, this one is irregularly shaped. There are two closed connecting hangar doors, presumably to the neighboring docking bays. Off to one side is a cargo lift in the floor. On the opposite side of the chamber, the glow of a magnetic containment field rings the large hangar exit. You see the weather has not improved this morning. Wind-driven snow evaporates as it hits the field. There are a few containers scattered about the bay, but little else.

The cargo lift is in its lowered position, 3 meters down. The lift leads to tunnels connecting the landing bays to warehouses within the spaceport.

Acol invites the heroes in. He stays where he is, near the door to docking bay 21. Built into his gauntlet is a transmitter that operates all of the doors in the room. Acol will move to another area of the bay if the heroes insist. Otherwise he tries to complete the transaction where he is.

When the heroes reach him, he asks to see the money. If the heroes insist on seeing Talnar and the droids, Acol obliges by opening the door to docking bay 21. Read the following:

The large doors to the adjoining bay slide open. Beyond, you see a hangar filled with containers of every size and shape. Near the door, however, you see a man bound to a chair and gagged. Six nearby crates have one side removed. Each contains what appears to be a droid. It is indeed Talnar and the droids. He's conscious, but helpless.

Acol knows he can take the money off the heroes after they've been captured but would prefer to have it in hand first in case they escape. Secretly make a Listen check (DC 26) for each hero to see whether any of them notice someone hiding behind the nearby crates. Once Acol is certain all the heroes have entered the docking bay, or one of the heroes makes a sudden move, read the following:

Suddenly, you hear docking bay 22's blast door slam shut. In the blink of an eye, stormtroopers appear from behind crates and through the adjoining door on the opposite side of the docking bay. You see a ship beyond them in docking bay 23. The magnetic containment field drops, and four Humans wearing jetpacks rise up from the mountainside below.

The Oquan agent looks at you and says, "I told you, Rebels are good money." He fires stun blasts from his wrist, aimed at you.

Before rolling initiative, each hero that failed to hear the stormtroopers must make a successful Spot skill check (DC 10) or be caught flat-footed by these new arrivals at the beginning of combat. The Imperials and the Oquan want to capture the Rebels, if possible. Each group of five or less opponents will combine fire (see Chapter 8 of the core rulebook) with weapons set to stun.

There are 10 stormtroopers hidden around docking bay 23. Five more run in from docking bay 21. Rinit (or an Imperial officer, if he has been eliminated) stands ready in docking bay 21, letting the stormtroopers handle things.

There are four Oquan hunters with jetpacks backing up Acoi. They fly into the hangar bay and either land or fly up to the high ceiling using lights and other equipment for cover while firing their weapons.

The heroes have plenty of cover, and the containers are strong enough to stop energy weapon blasts. There are also a few control pads and large pieces of equipment. If the heroes attempt to run from bay to bay using a narrow ledge outside the main hangar exit, they must make a successful Dexterity check (DC 10) or slide down the side of the mountain. At your discretion, you can kill any heroes who fall down the side of the mountain or give them a chance to survive with 0 wound points if they make a successful Fortitude save (DC 10).

If the heroes try to free Talnar, Acoi stuns him. He can be easily carried, however. The crates cannot be moved without a cargo sled, and there are none around. At some point, the heroes might try to activate the droids. They must have the control pad repaired or revive Talnar long enough to order the droids into battle.

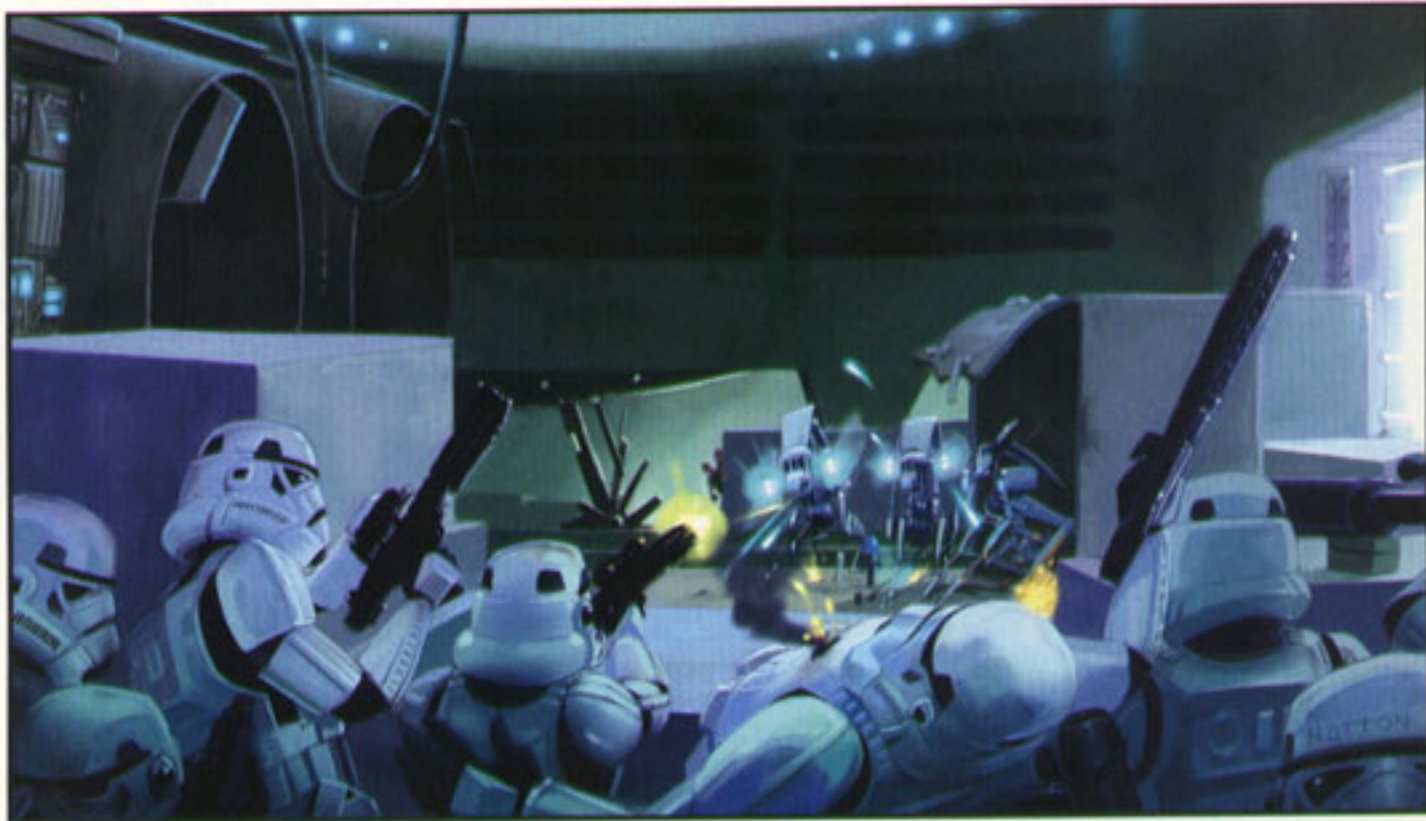
When they are activated, read the following:

Inside the crates, tiny lights start blinking. You hear the droids' servos whining louder, and the containers begin to bulge. The droids strain to unfold. With a loud bang, the crates split, sending panels and bolts flying in all directions. The droids stand at their full 2.5-meter height, snapping weapons into place.

Anyone standing within 2 meters of the exploding crates must make a successful Reflex save (DC 10) or be knocked prone by flying debris. The droids enter combat the following round using the initiative count they were activated on, firing immediately at any stormtrooper or Humans dressed as Imperials. The droids ignore Talnar and whoever is using the droid control pad. Anyone else is fired upon if they attack the droids. The droids cannot distinguish the Rebels from the bounty hunters and have no orders regarding them.

The droids will use their maximum firepower on their targets, unless ordered otherwise. They are quite capable of wrecking the hangar. See Controlling the Droids.

The Oquan fight until half their number are unconscious or Acoi is defeated. They



TALNAR'S RESCUE

Controlling the Droids

The droid control pad sends commands to one or more droids. The heroes have two problems using the control pad.

First, commanding the droids with the control pad takes practice. The heroes can learn a little by fiddling with the pad ahead of time. While various commands seem easy enough to send, in the heat of a battle they may not be specific enough or might be misinterpreted by the droid. Issuing commands manually with the droid control pad is a full-round action that requires a Computer Use skill check. Use the table below to determine the DC. Anyone except Talnar suffers a -2 competence penalty to this check.

Second, while the droids have been upgraded and modified, the control pad software has not. The droids will respond to voice commands, which require an attack action to issue. No skill check is required to issue verbal commands to the droids. However, they are programmed to respond to Talnar's voice only, unless the heroes have modified the voice recognition unit of the control pad.

Commands may be keyed in or spoken (using the built-in microphone). Voice commands can be paraphrased, but are more open to misinterpretation by the droid. The droid might even ask for clarification, though they will work out things on their own as well. The order, "Attack the stormtroopers" works. The order, "Attack the

bounty hunters" will fail, as the droids can't distinguish the bounty hunters from the heroes. A preferable command would be, "Attack anyone wearing a jetpack."

If a character fails a Computer Use skill check to command a droid manually, the droid ignores the command.

ORDER	DC
Simple command (Stop, Retreat)	5
Attack easily identifiable specific target	10
Cover another droid or person	10
Keep firing while you pick up Talnar, shield him, and bring him to me	20

Modified Baktoid Combat Automata Protector Series (6): Walking military droid Thug 15; Init +2 (Dex); Def 18 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, -1 size), Spd 8 m, VP/WP —/20; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+4, claw), +16/+11/+6 ranged (4d8, crit 19-20, 2 modified heavy repeating blasters); SQ DR 15, SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will+4, SZ L, Rep 3; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Equipment: Two heavy repeating blasters, armor, shield generator.
Skills: Climb+13, Jump +13, Listen +8, Speak Basic, Spot +7.

Feats: Multishot, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Group (heavy weapons).


flee the way they came. The Imperials fight until ordered otherwise. They'll flee on board the ship in docking bay 21.

Once the heroes have Talnar and have activated the droids, they can try to retreat at any time. If their ship is docked in Rigton Spaceport, a quick escape is possible. Otherwise, the heroes will have to figure out how to return to their starship with Talnar and the droids.

If the heroes do manage to get to their ship (or steal a ship in another docking bay) quickly, the remaining Imperials will dispatch three TIE fighters to shoot down the heroes' ship.

Ending the Scenario

Once away from the Imperials and the Oquan, the heroes are free to return to base with Talnar and the remaining droids. Talnar thanks the heroes for rescuing him and tells them he owes them one (this could be a 'favor' for noble characters).

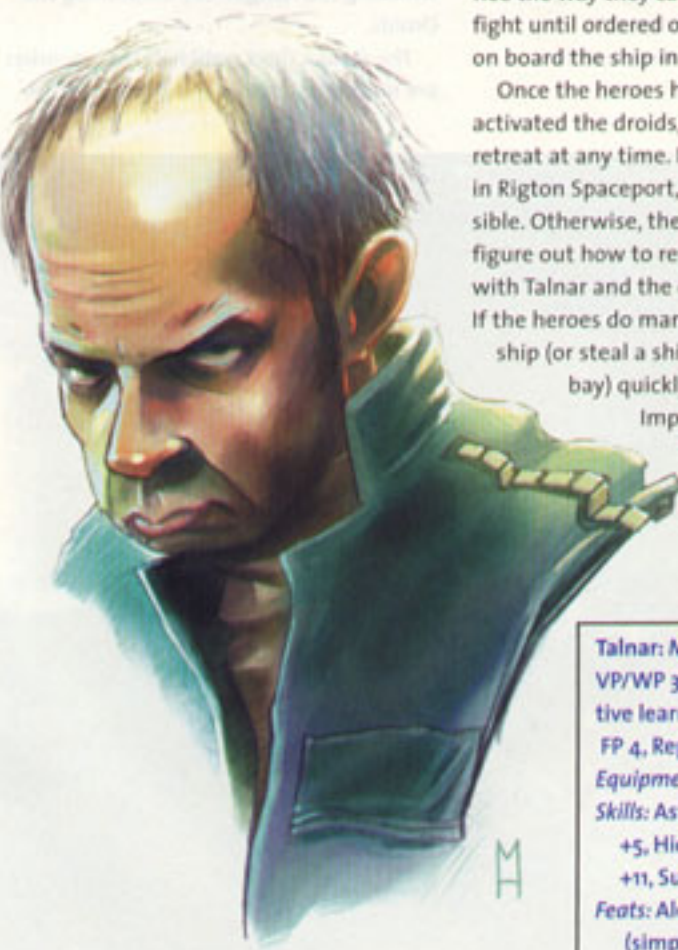
If the heroes successfully complete this adventure, they earn 2,000 XP multiplied by the average hero level and divided evenly among the surviving heroes. If they return Talnar and at least half the droids, you can also award each hero 2 Reputation points. If any of the heroes' actions were particularly heroic, feel free to award Force points at your discretion. 

Talnar: Male Human Frig 5; Init +1 (Dex), Def 16, (+1 Dex, +5 class), Spd 10 m, VP/WP 31/15; Atk +3 melee (1d3 damage, punch), + 5 ranged; SQ Barter, adaptive learning (Computer Use), jury-rig +2; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ M, FP 4, Rep 2, Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Equipment: None.

Skills: Astrogate +7, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Computer Use +12, Gather Information +5, Hide +5, Listen +8, Pilot +14, Repair +9, Search +11, Sense Motive +3, Spot +11, Survival +5, Treat Injury +4.

Feats: Alertness, Gearhead, Spacer, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Weapon Groups (simple, blaster pistols).



Appearance and Biology

The Chiss are tall, blue-skinned humanoids with eerily glowing red eyes, sparse blue-black hair and soft voices. All observed representatives of the Chiss species have been in very good physical shape, indicating an active metabolism that keeps a trim figure and prevents obesity found in sedentary humanoids.

Genetic sampling has recently confirmed that the Chiss are near-Humans, though their evolutionary divergence from baseline Humanity has not been pin-pointed in either time or space. Physiologically, the Chiss are quite similar to Humans, with comparable circulatory, neurological, digestive and reproductive systems. Their growth rate is accelerated; Chiss mature much faster than Humans. A 10-year old Chiss has the physical maturity of a 20-year old Human, and a culturally-imprinted emotional maturity many times beyond that of a Human counterpart.

The Chiss homeworld has been encased in a frigid ice age for millennia, though very few signs of evolutionary adaptation to these colder environments are evident in Chiss physiology. It is believed that since the extended period of glaciation began when the Chiss were already a technologically advanced people, the species dealt with their new survival challenges through technological adaptation.

The mineral content in the Chiss homeworld's hydrosphere causes the glacial formations to be a striking blue in color, as opposed to clear or white. This mineral content also contributes to the Chiss' distinctive pigmentation, though it does not appear to offer any notable evolutionary benefits.

Temperament

Chiss life is harsh and disciplined. Self-control and propriety are among the most lauded character traits a Chiss aspires to. While passions are recognized, they are done so with disdain. Such energy would be better applied elsewhere.

Chiss live in a very regimented society. Crime is abhorred as a weakness of an individual – the notion of blaming society is



BY JUAN SCHWARTZ

SPECIAL THANKS TO PABLO HIDALGO

ILLUSTRATED BY JEFF CARLISLE

completely alien – and justice is meted out with little compassion. The Chiss, however, do not believe in capital punishment, recognizing it as an irrational emotion-driven reaction rather than a true deterrent. Exile is the extreme consequence for the most heinous crimes. Given how important familial loyalty is to the Chiss, the expulsion from society is a very grave punishment.

So removed from their passions are the Chiss that they seem almost mechanical. They coldly weigh their options and calculate the most efficient and decisive course of action.

Chiss conflicts never become personal. Chiss are very rarely the aggressors since aggression has nothing to do with their altercations. The Chiss generally let conflicts come to them. To strike first is an anathema to Chiss discipline. Even tactically-sound preemptive strikes are deemed controversial.

Chiss are extremely loyal to their own kind and look down upon other aliens as barbaric and immature. Only by proving that he adheres to Chiss disciplines can a non-Chiss gain the loyalty and respect of the cerulean-skinned people.

History and Culture

Very little is known of Chiss history as their records are carefully guarded on their homeworld of Csilla, deep in the Unknown Regions. From the fragmented reports gathered by a few intrepid scholars, it is believed that the Chiss are the result of a forgotten colonization attempt, since they so closely resemble Humanity.

For the past several thousand years, Csilla has been locked in an ice age. Profound glaciation has enveloped the terrestrial world. The ancestors of the modern Chiss traveled along the ice front's leading edge, surviving in the temperate front as the glaciers spread across the planet.

Xenosociologists postulate that the harsh extremes of the ice age instilled in the Chiss their no-nonsense nature. Some legends tell of a decadent culture that lived in the tropics of Csilla who were utterly unprepared for the chilling temperatures that befell them. Other related parables describe the northern Chiss slaughtering the decadent ones when resources were sparse.

Whatever the truth of their ancient origins, it is obvious the Chiss adapted well to their world. Using geothermal energy as a



power source, the Chiss have built several populous cities among the glaciers.

The Chiss were quick to develop a global government, sidestepping the cultural adolescence marked by competing nation-states prevalent in many developing worlds. The Chiss adopted a planet-wide tongue as well. Cheunh is a dense, difficult language wherein complicated ideas are expressed by uniting related words into larger words. As such, the Chiss language has relatively few core words, but the syntax required to piece together compound words is complex and involved. Furthermore, written cheunh does not have an abstract alphabet. Ideograms represent concepts, and complex ideas are expressed by combining simpler ideograms. The Chiss take great pride in understanding and conversing in such a convoluted language.

The Chiss independently developed star-travel, perhaps by tapping ancient memories of the original colonization effort that brought them to Csilla. They now rule a sizable sector of the Unknown Regions.

The Chiss maintain impressive fleets dedicated to protecting Csilla and her territories. They have colonized over two dozen worlds. Chiss colonies are sparsely-populated production centers for resources that are then transported back to Csilla.

The Chiss motive for exploration and expansion is difficult to determine. They lack the passion for conquering the unknown common in Humans, and they do not claim new territory out of greed or hunger for power. The basic need to manage Csilla's population as well as gathering resources without upsetting their homeworld's ecosystem governs much of their space program. Since the worlds in their ter-

ritory more than suffice for the total Chiss population needs (estimated at just shy of five trillion), the question remains as to just what the Chiss are looking for. A leading theory is that the Chiss seek to impose order on what they see as a chaotic and barbaric region.

Despite their growing borders, the Chiss still foster a cultured contempt for other species, and believe in isolation and preservation of their heritage. The Chiss Expansionary Defense Fleet patrols the growing territory, keeping a glowing red eye on neighboring worlds.

It was this fleet, under the command of a young Chiss military genius named Thrawn, that made first contact with the Galactic Republic.

A secret taskforce – surreptitiously dispatched by Supreme Chancellor Palpatine – lay in wait to ambush the Outbound Flight project, an expeditionary force of Jedi Masters who sought to explore beyond the borders of the galaxy. The taskforce, led by Palpatine's trusted advisor Kinman Doriana, instead stumbled upon Thrawn's fleet. Despite inferior weapons and numbers, Thrawn decimated Doriana's ships.

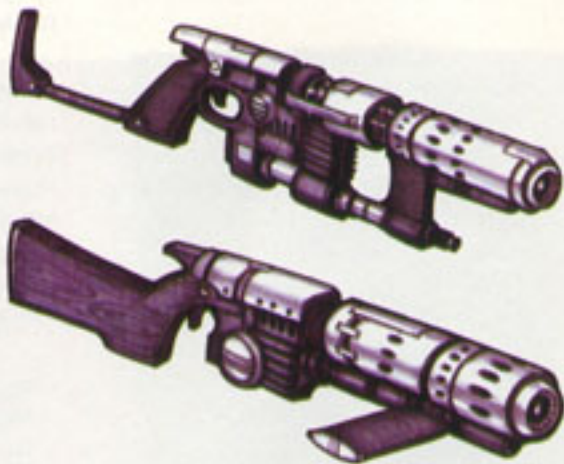
Doriana survived the battle, and set up a parley with the Chiss commander. He was able to impress upon Thrawn the inherent threat of the Outbound Flight project. Doriana also spoke highly of the order instilled by Palpatine. Appealing to Chiss sensibilities, Doriana was able to recruit Thrawn to complete the mission he failed.

Thrawn and his fleet destroyed the Outbound Flight vessel. Returning to

Thrawn's Justice

Records gathered aboard the Star Destroyer *Chimaera* demonstrate that Chiss standards differ when a crime or egregious error is committed by a non-Chiss. After a regrettable failure of a bridge crewman aboard his ship, the infamous Chiss Grand Admiral Thrawn ordered his Noghri enforcer to kill an incompetent officer. Had the offending party or the intended recipients of the lesson been a fellow Chiss, Thrawn would have likely been less overt.

Csilla, Thrawn explained to his superiors that his actions were a preemptive strike meant to preserve Chiss territory from an encroaching foe. Such a radical concept challenged many deep-rooted Chiss philosophies. Thrawn was reprimanded and placed under observation. Under his command, though, the Chiss Expansionary Defense Fleet continued to engage outlying aliens, which the ruling families did not view as the threat that Thrawn did. Eventually Thrawn was branded a criminal and exiled to a distant



Charric

In personal combat, the Chiss use two-handed rifle weapons called charrics. About the size of a blaster rifle, charrics emit a maser-guided particle discharge delivering both kinetic and thermal damage. The intense microwaves of the maser beam easily penetrate ceramic and polymer-based armor (ignoring armor bonus to Defense). Though metallic armor is effective against the intense microwaves, contact creates an electrical discharge that can often stun an opponent (as if the charric were set to stun). Some models come equipped with stun settings, wherein the particle beam is shut off and the maser is replaced with a green EM-charge specially tuned to neurological patterns.

A charric requires a power pack to operate. After 40 shots, the power pack must be replaced.

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range		Stun Damage		Type	Size	Group
				Increment	Weight	/Fort DC	/DC 16			
Charric	n/a	3d6	20	8 meters	4.5 kg	1d6/DC 16	Energy	Medium	Blaster rifles	

The Chiss

jungle world,
where he would

later be picked up by Palpatine's agents, and invited into the Imperial fold.

For Thrawn's entire tenure in the Imperial Navy, nothing was known of the Chiss. Even when Thrawn rose to prominence five years after the Battle of Endor, no one in New Republic Intelligence was able to determine his origins. It was not until a decade later that Luke Skywalker and Mara Jade returned from the frontier world of Niruaun with a species name and some sketchy information.

Since that time, the Chiss have become more visible. With the growing threat of the Yuuzhan Vong, an unprecedented partnership has appeared between the Chiss and the New Republic. A Chiss House phalanx of clawcraft fighters, led by a human no less, arrived to save the day at Garqi.

Politics

The heart of Chiss politics lies on Csilla, and in the four ruling families. At the House Palace in Csilla's capital city of Csaplar can be found the Cabinet and Parliament. The 28 outlying Chiss colonies are represented in the Parliament by appointed governors, or House leaders.

The four ruling families – the Csapla, Nuruodo, Inrokini, and Sabosen – represent bloodlines said to predate modern Chiss civilization. Every Chiss claims affiliation to one of the four families, as determined by tradition and birthplace. In truth, the family names are little more than cultural holdovers. Chiss bloodlines have become so co-meddled, that a Chiss could easily claim affiliation to any of the four. Since the four families are not in competition, and rivalries are rare, a Chiss' allegiance to one family does not typically affect his day to day living.

Though the Cabinet handles much of the intricacies of Chiss governing, all decisions of that body are approved by one of the four families. Each family concentrates on specific areas of concern. Csapla handles issues of colonial affairs, resource distribution and agriculture; Nuruodo handles the military and foreign affairs; Inrokini handles industry, science, and communication; Sabosen handles justice, health and education.

The Chiss government functions to siphon important decisions up the command chain to the families. Individual colonies voice their issues in Parliament. These issues are taken up by departments in the Cabinet, and finally distilled up to the families. Parliament

positions are democratically determined by colonial vote. Cabinet positions are appointed by the most relevant family.

Csapla's most pressing responsibility is the distribution of resources to the colonies and to the people of Csilla. It is important to note that the Chiss have no finances – they have no money. Everything is provided by the state.

The Chiss military is a sizable force. The Nuruodo family is ultimately in charge of the fleet and army. The military has never been required to act as a single unit, so it is partitioned into 28 colonial units called Phalanxes. Operation of these Phalanxes usually falls to an officer appointed by the House leader, called a Syndic. Separate from the Phalanxes is the Chiss Expansionary Defense Fleet, which is deemed a foreign affairs asset rather than a military asset. The CEDF patrols the borders of Chiss space while the Phalanxes handle any threats that get past the Fleet. In times of crisis, like the recent repulsion of Ssi-ruuvi forces, the CEDF bolsters its ranks by drawing upon nearby Colonial Phalanxes.

A significant portion of the CEDF, Syndic Mitth'raw'nuruodo's Household Phalanx, has taken an extended leave of the rest of the fleet to deal with encroaching threats.

Chiss Species Characteristics

Personality: Cool and calculating, Chiss rarely openly exhibit any emotions. They are very pragmatic and can be unwittingly condescending to those around them.

Physical Description: Chiss are blue-skinned humanoids, averaging 1.7 meters tall. They have thin builds and are quite attractive. Their most unsettling physical feature is their glowing red eyes.

Chiss Homeworld: Csilla

Language: Cheunh

Example Names: Thrawn (core name of Mitth'raw'nuruodo), Stent, Sorn, "Spiker", Brosh, Drael.

Adventurers: Because of their stern, controlled temperaments, Chiss rarely travel into the unknown for the romantic notion of adventure. Their no-nonsense demeanor cancels out the passion for excitement and exploration common in many humanoids. A Chiss adventurer, however, may be an exile cast away for her enthusiasm, or a fiery-

tempered young one (after all, even 10-year olds look like adults, so age is difficult to determine). Conversely, she may be on a mission for her House to gather as much information about a certain region or certain characters. She will still be all-business, but nonetheless have a reason to gallivant with trouble-seekers.

Chiss Species Traits:

- Medium-size. As Medium-size beings, Chiss have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Chiss base speed is 10 meters.
- 4 extra skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each additional level.
- 1 extra feat at first level.
- Low-light vision. Chiss can see twice as far as a Human in dim light (such as moonlight or underwater). They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Tactics: All Chiss possess the "Tactics" ability as per the Officer prestige class pre-

sented in Chapter 12 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. Chiss who have appropriate levels in the Officer prestige class gain an additional +4 modifier to their Charisma bonus when using either Tactics or Improved Tactics.

- Artistic Appreciation: The art of other cultures fascinates the Chiss, and they gain great insight from the study of the subject. A Chiss with at least five ranks in the Appraise skill gains a +2 synergy bonus to Craft and Sense Motive checks.
- Automatic languages: Cheunh and Basic.

Chiss Commoner: Init +0; Def 10; Spd 10 m; VP/WP -/10; Atk +0 melee (1d3, punch), +0 ranged; SQ Tactics, artistic appreciation; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep 0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Variety of personal belongings.
Skills: Craft (varies) +2, Profession (varies) +2, Knowledge (varies) +2, Sense Motive +2.

While some would call this action secession and treason, the ruling families have taken care not to stir the populace with such inflammatory talk. Thrawn's Phalanx has teamed with a cell of Imperials to guard the Chiss territory in a much more proactive manner than the Chiss would ordinarily be comfortable with. While the ruling families pretend to be oblivious to such actions, the average Chiss does indeed know.

Technology Level

The Chiss have independently developed analogs for many galactic standard technologies. The Chiss hyperdrive, while not as efficient as the latest model from Corellian Engineering Corporation, is nonetheless competent and capable for traversing the distances of their territory.

The Chiss star-travel era began with the ability to create hyperfields through precise irradiation of composite materials. The early Chiss pioneers were unable to sustain the field around a vessel large enough to carry a passenger. While Chiss scientists continued to work on enlarging a habitable bubble in the chaos of hyperspace as well as combating field decay, others began equipping automated drones with early hyperdrives. These drones, fitted with specialized beacons, were launched into the Unknown Regions.

Over time, the Chiss were able to erect a network of navigational anchor-points. It is further testament to their discipline that even though they had the capacity to venture into the unknown, the Chiss waited decades for their navigation network to be complete before leaving their planet. Modern Chiss spacecraft use this anchor-point network for hyperspace travel within Chiss space. Chiss vessels thus lack navicomputers and are unable to safely travel beyond

the Chiss borders.

Chiss homing beacons are reliable and require very little energy. They utilize the energized domain of hyperspace itself as a signal carrier. The transmissions generated by a Chiss beacon can only be detected by the Chiss. Grand Admiral Thrawn employed a tiny Chiss beacon in the Imperial Records Library so that his forces could track the location of the secret Imperial capital world of Bastion years after his defeat.

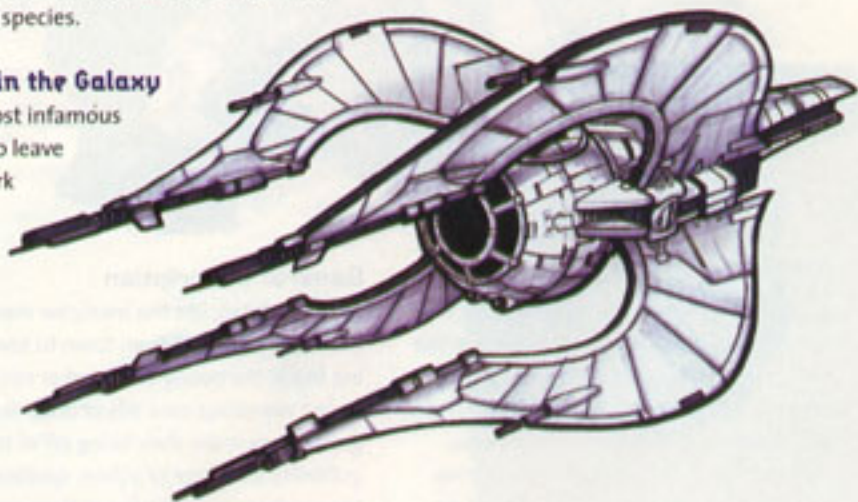
Recently seen in combat is the Chiss clawcraft. Information on Chiss capital ships remains sparse however, as none have been seen in action yet. It is believed that the Chiss do not have a starship larger than an escort frigate (about 300 meters in length).

Trade and Technology

The Chiss maintain tightly controlled borders, and are self-sufficient in the isolated territory they rule. Over two dozen worlds supply the Chiss with food and resources. They have developed technology comparable to the rest of the galaxy, and see no need for trade. Their culturally-encoded contempt for "lesser" aliens also prohibits them from friendly relations with neighboring species.

Chiss in the Galaxy

The most infamous Chiss to leave his mark



on the galaxy was Grand Admiral Thrawn. The only non-Human to achieve this Imperial rank, Thrawn's unparalleled skill and razor-sharp mind were such that the Empire overlooked its own anti-alien policies to grant him his position.

During his depredations against the New Republic, no one knew of the Chiss species or of Thrawn's origins. It was not until the Caamas Document incident a decade later that some insight into the Chiss was gained.

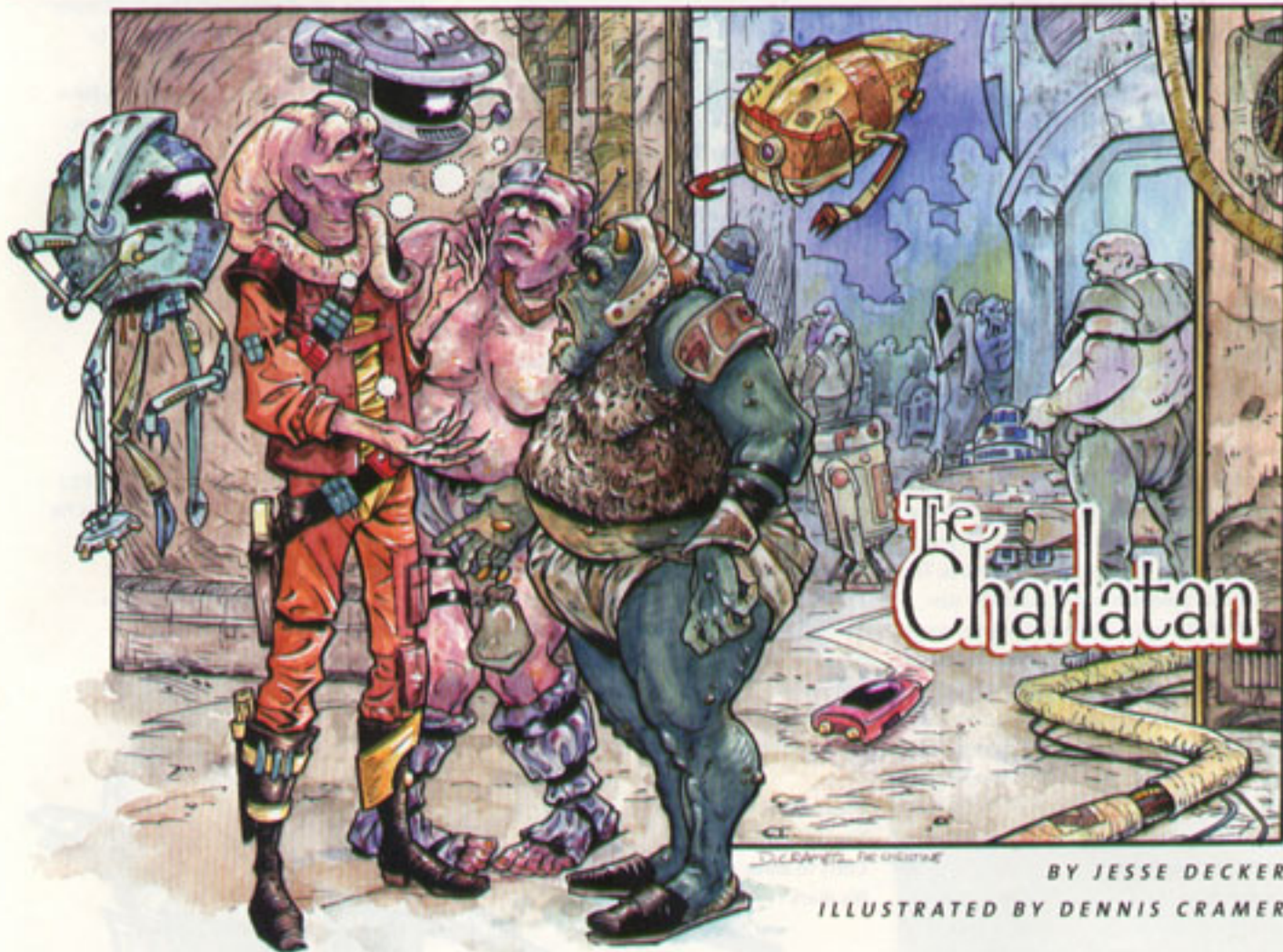
Now that the galaxy is under the pall of the Yuuzhan Vong, Chiss soldiers have appeared, committing their fearless pilots and deadly clawcraft in battle with this extragalactic menace.

There is another known Chiss living in the Outer Rim, though he does not know his own heritage. No one knows how the dim-witted swoop jockey Spiker made it to Tatooine, but evidence strongly suggests he is a Chiss, perhaps one afflicted with a learning disability. Spiker disappeared shortly after the Battle of Endor, when Jabba the Hutt's criminal empire on Tatooine collapsed. ■

Clawcraft

A hybrid of Imperial and Chiss technologies, the clawcraft resembles a TIE-ball cockpit pod with an extended twin ion engine bank. Reaching out from the junction of the cockpit and engine are four sweeping weapon arms bracketing the pod, splaying out in a formation similar to an X-wing's s-foils. The clawcraft is a single-occupant craft with a limited hyperdrive. Like other Chiss craft, it lacks a navicomputer, but often a lead vessel is equipped with both a navicomputer and Chiss beacon allowing its wingmates to follow.

Craft: Chiss clawcraft; **Class:** Starfighter; **Cost:** Not available for sale; **Size:** Diminutive (7.65 m long); **Crew:** 1 (Expert +8); **Passengers:** None; **Cargo Capacity:** 25 kg; **Consumables:** 1 week; **Hyperdrive:** x1.5; **Maximum Speed:** Ramming; **Maneuvers:** +14 (+4 size, +8 crew, +2 engine quality); **Defense:** 24 (+4 size, +10 armor); **Shield Points:** 40; **Hull Points:** 60; **DR:** 5; **Weapon:** Laser cannons (4 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +18 (+4 size, +8 crew, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 7d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB -2, S -4, M/L na.



BY JESSE DECKER

ILLUSTRATED BY DENNIS CRAMER

The Force is one of the most compelling aspects of the *Star Wars* universe. The Jedi Knights and Sith Lords in the films, along with other Force users in the expanded *Star Wars* universe embody many of the pathways that the Force provides. Between the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* and *The Dark Side Sourcebook*, players can choose between these concepts and more. Still, there are limitations to the class system, and only a limited, if admittedly very large, amount of variety to be had by choosing skills and feats. The multiclass rules, however, add enormous flexibility to the class system, allowing unusual character concepts of all types to exist. In this column, we'll explore a new multiclass combination and a character concept to go with it.

General Description

The charlatan, like the medicine men of the Old West, move from town to town trying to sell the poorly educated or easily fooled wondrous cure-alls or other faulty goods. They make their living off of the gullibility and hope of others, spellbinding their audiences with tales of their product or scheme. Charlatans have natural ability with the Force and a desire for easy money. Many relish their ability to fool others.

Cosmopolitan areas like the Core Worlds see fewer charlatans; most prefer the easier crowds and smaller audiences of the Outer Rim. Knowing that their schemes are more likely to fail the longer that they stay in one place, charlatans acquire transport as often as they can, keeping their identities, and hopefully their schemes, continuously fresh.

Roleplaying Notes

Deception is everything to a charlatan; he rakes in financial wealth while his ruse holds, and quickly loses everything if it fails. Bluffs of every kind come naturally to the charlatan, and his innate grasp of the Force makes his schemes even more likely to be successful.

Most charlatans live only to turn a quick profit, caring little of whom they harm along the way. For this reason, most should remain GM characters. A few, however, use their silver tongues and quick minds for more admirable purposes. A con artist is hardly the ideal hero, but some rise above their desire for easily acquired wealth to pursue nobler objectives. These heroes retain the easy confidence and polished social skills they learned on the streets, but



they begin to understand more of the Force and its mysteries. Such characters make usually cheerful, outgoing adventurers, though they aren't above taking a quick detour from their travels in order to make a quick profit.

Variant Abilities

Although the chart below shows the typical level progression and abilities granted according to the multi-class rules found in the core rulebook, your GM might allow you to substitute some of the existing special abilities for others that stick closer to the charlatan archetype.

VARIANT 1 ALWAYS MOVING

Instead of gaining Skill Emphasis, the charlatan earns a special +5 bonus to Bluff checks made to conceal his identity. This bonus offsets the penalty normally applied to such checks (see chapter six of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* core rulebook). Charlatans are adept at moving around and concealing their identities.

VARIANT 2 UNCANNY DODGE

Instead of gaining Skill Emphasis, the charlatan gains the Uncanny Dodge abil-

Multiclass Skills

When playing a multiclass character, there are three basic ways to improve her skills. Choosing a method of skill advancement is helpful in defining her background, goals, and abilities.

MAXIMIZE OVERLAPPING SKILLS

Applying as many ranks as possible to a character's overlapping skills provides the least variety but it is the easiest to execute and produces the highest skill ranks at every level. Find out which skills are class skills for both of the character's classes and assign as many ranks as possible in the skills most preferred each level.

MAXIMIZE NON-OVERLAPPING SKILLS

Gaining ranks in skills that are class skills for one class and cross-class for the other

allows for more flexibility than choosing those that are class skills for both classes. The only drawback is staggered skill advancement. Each level the character advances, max out the chosen skills that are exclusive to that class. You'll probably be able to keep a number of skills for each class equal to half of the skill points you gain at each level maxed out.

DIVERSIFIED SKILLS

Gaining ranks in the skills you want your character to have is the simplest, but often least powerful way of allocating skill points. Just choose ranks in class and cross-class skills as the need arises. With this method you'll have ranks in up to twice as many skills as a single-classed character, but you'll probably only have half as many ranks in each.

ity as if she were a 4th-level scout. Charlatans are always wary of unsatisfied customers seeking revenge.

VARIANT 3 INSPIRE WONDERMENT

Allow the charlatan a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Disguise checks when first operating in a new

area. Each week beyond the first that he continues to operate in that area, he suffers an additional -1 penalty to these skill checks. Charlatans are initially charming, but invariably, their deceptions begin to grow thin. **5**

The Charlatan

LVL	CLASS LEVELS	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REFLEX SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL ABILITIES	DEFENSE BONUS	REPUTATION
1	FA1	+0	+1	+1	+2	Starting Feats	+3	0
2	FA2	+1	+2	+2	+3	Sense	+4	0
3	Sch/FA2	+1	+2	+4	+3	Starting Feats, Illicit Barter, feat	+6	0
4	Scl2/FA2	+2	+2	+5	+3	Better lucky than good, +1 to attribute	+7	1
5	Scl3/FA2	+3	+3	+5	+4		+7	1
6	Scl4/FA2	+4	+3	+6	+4	Skill Emphasis, feat	+8	2
7	Scl5/FA2	+4	+3	+6	+4	Sneak attack +2d6	+8	2
8	Scl5/FA3	+5	+3	+6	+4	+1 to attribute	+8	3
9	Scl5/FA4	+6	+3	+6	+5	Control, Feat	+8	3
10	Snl5/FA5	+6	+4	+7	+5	Force weapon +1d4	+9	4
11	Scl6/FA5	+7	+5	+8	+6		+10	5
12	Scl7/FA5	+8	+5	+8	+6	Feat, +1 to attribute	+10	5
13	Scl8/FA5	+9	+5	+9	+6	Skill Emphasis	+11	6
14	Scl9/FA5	+9	+6	+9	+7		+11	6
15	Scho/FA5	+10	+6	+10	+7	Bonus feat, feat	+12	7
16	Schl/FA5	+11	+6	+10	+7	+1 to attribute	+12	7
17	Schl2/FA5	+12	+7	+11	+8	Skill Emphasis	+13	8
18	Schl3/FA5	+12	+7	+11	+8	Feat	+13	8
19	Schl4/FA5	+13	+7	+12	+8	Sneak attack +4d6	+14	9
20	Schl4/FA6	+14	+7	+12	+9	+1 to attribute	+14	10



The first image the word “slicer” conjures to mind is a 50-kg pasty-skinned post-adolescent hunched over a computer terminal surrounded by half-eaten convenience foods. The truth is that this stereotype is rarely ever accurate. The Rebel Alliance, New Republic, Empire, Core-Sec, and criminal empires alike have all employed computer experts to write and slice code. Many are true professionals, adept at stealing or safeguarding data few have and most want. Though much code

slicing is performed by droids, the sentient touch is often required for “special” jobs. The slicer is often called upon to forge documents, circumvent security systems, or scour the HoloNet for hidden information.

Keeping her true identity a secret is the mark of a successful slicer. She would rather not spend her time avoiding bounty hunters, maligned criminals, and judicious lawmen. In place of her true identity, the slicer has adopted a code name. Even regular clients are usually not privy to her true

identity. It doesn't really matter if she can get the job done.

Making her living in the digital world, the slicer uses a specialized computer to accomplish myriad tasks. She'll generally build her own computer from the base components and utilize it for almost everything. A freelance slicer will often charge her client for “necessary” modifications as part of a particular job. This computer is a carefully guarded object and constantly evolving work of art for the slicer. She typically does not discuss its specifics, except with like-minded individuals on occasion. She'll often use complex access codes or even a self-destruct mechanism to prevent the capture of her most prized possession.

Class Features

REQUIREMENTS

To become a slicer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack: +3

Skills: Computer Use 7+, Disable Device 3+, Forgery 3+, Read/Write Binary, and Repair 3+.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Computer Use).

Must build or modify a computer for slicing.

Building a computer requires a DC 20 Craft (computers) skill check. Modifying an existing computer requires a DC 20 Repair skill check. See the Craft and Repair skill descriptions for more information. Slicers constantly update and replace their computers

for better performance. A data pad-sized computer can be purchased for 10,000 credits; a less portable one can be purchased for as little as 3,000 credits.

CLASS SKILLS: The slicer's class skill (and key ability) are: Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), and Search (Int).

SKILL POINTS AT EACH ADDITIONAL LEVEL: 8 + Int modifier

IdB Vitality per Level

Pseudonym: At first level, the slicer becomes better known by her pseudonym than the hero's real name. She essentially has two identities. To represent this, the hero attributes any reputation points earned (or purchased with the Fame feat) when advancing a level as a slicer or awarded while acting under this secret identity to the pseudonym. Criminal slicers have flashy pseudonyms, while corporate and government slicers tend to have militaristic code names or alphanumeric designations.



The Slicer

LEVEL	BASE ATTACK BONUS	FORT SAVE	REFLEX SAVE	WILL SAVE	SPECIAL ABILITIES	DEFENSE BONUS	REPUTATION BONUS
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Pseudonym, decode +1 (+2)	+2	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Special ability	+3	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+2	+2	Virus (crack)	+3	+1
4th	+2	+1	+2	+2	Decode +2 (+4)	+3	+0
5th	+2	+1	+3	+3	Special ability	+4	+1
6th	+2	+2	+3	+3	Virus (screen)	+4	+0
7th	+3	+2	+4	+4	Decode +3 (+6)	+5	+1
8th	+3	+2	+4	+4	Special ability	+5	+0
9th	+4	+3	+4	+4	Virus (redirect)	+5	+1
10th	+4	+3	+5	+5	Decode +4 (+8)	+6	+0

Decode: Also at first level, the slicer gains an additional bonus to any skill checks involving Computer Use (including skill checks that gain a synergy bonus for 5+ ranks of Computer Use). This is +1 equipment bonus that increases by one every three levels (4th, 7th, and 10th) and only applies when using the slicer's customized computer. This bonus is doubled if the slicer built the computer.

Special Ability: At second level, and every three levels thereafter, the slicer gains one of the following special abilities:

- **Skill Mastery**—Choose either Computer Use, Disable Device, Forgery, Gather Information, or Repair. The slicer can take 10 when using that skill even if stress or distractions would normally prevent her from doing so.
- **Bonus Feat**—The slicer can gain Fame, Gearhead, Infamy, Low Profile, or Skill Emphasis (any class skill).

Virus: Beginning at third level, the slicer masters the ability to create more destructive computer viruses (see "Digital Warfare" sidebar). At third level, the slicer gets a +5 competence bonus when introducing a crack virus it into a computer system. At sixth level the slicer gains the same bonus for a screen virus, and again at ninth level for a redirect virus. ☐

Digital Warfare

WITH MICHAEL MIKAELIAN

Viruses can simply wipe out data, increase the DC of Computer Use skill checks, or cause specific things to happen normally controlled by a computer system. Writing a virus requires a Computer Use skill check and 8 hours of work. Though viruses are the specialty of a slicer, a character of any class can attempt this skill check. There's no consequence for failure, so a hero can take 20. Because viruses are difficult to test, this skill check can only be made when the virus is introduced into the system. If the hero uses a third party (ex.: an infected data card) to deliver the virus there is a -8 penalty to this check.

To introduce a virus into a system the hero makes a Computer Use skill check once she has access. Most secured systems can only be accessed from inside, much like R2-D2 does in *A New Hope*.

Removing a virus from a computer system require a Computer Use skill check (DC 20) and at least 8 hours of work. If an acceptable backup exists, the DC is reduced to 10 and the time to 30 minutes.

New Uses for Computer Use Skill

Crack Virus: This type of program corrupts a computer system, giving authorized users a

penalty to Computer Use skill checks. It also gives the crack virus's creator a bonus to Computer Use skill checks on the affected system. The result of the skill check determines the circumstance bonus and penalty provided by the virus.

Screen Virus: This type of program is commonly used to tap into or wipe out parts of a computer system's data banks. Screen viruses can copy data into hidden files or erase it and set up shell programs that are virtually identical to the casual observer. When a shell program is accessed, the user discovers that the data is not there. The result of the skill check determines the DC to recover deleted files or detect the virus. If a character fails a recovery attempt, only another character with more ranks in Computer Use can try again. If a backup exists, no skill check is required.

Redirect Virus: This type of program is used to conduct a hostile takeover of a computer system. Redirect viruses can override computer-controlled objects such as lift tubes, security cameras, and force fields. When writing a redirect virus, the hero must choose what effects the virus will cause. The base DC for this skill check is 15, modified by the table below. The more complicated the virus, the higher the DC. The result of the skill check determines whether the program is successful or not. ☐

Crack Virus

Result	Bonus	Penalty
16-20	+0	-1
21-25	+1	-2
26-30	+1	-3
31-40	+2	-4
41+	+3	-5

Screen Virus

Result	Recovery/ Detection DC
16-20	10
21-25	15
26-30	20
31-40	25
41+	30

Redirect Virus

Task	Modifier
one activity (e.g. a lift tube)	+0
multiple identical activities (e.g. all lift tubes)	+5
additional activity	+5 per additional activity
disable activity	+0
reprogram activity (e.g. disable force field at sunrise for 1 minute)	+2 per activity
remotely control activity (requires system access to control)	+4



Tour de Force Pyoonishin Your Opponent

BY CORY J. HERNDON

You will go to the Tatooine system. There you will learn from Qui-Gon Jinn, the Jedi Master who instructed me in the art of Podracing."

Welcome to Tatooine, the Planet that Timeline Forgot.

"Do, or do not." "Move along." "Point this end of saber away from face at all times." The Jedi don't like leaving anything to chance...of course, Master Qui-Gon Jinn is not your typical Jedi. This month, for instance, he's gathered all of his Jedi buddies and headed to the track. Don't worry about the Padawan payroll, though: Qui-Gon's betting on a sure thing.

As if there's such a thing as a sure thing when you're plunging down the Shaft...

The recently released Tatooine expansion truly lived up to the name, expanding the *Star Wars* CCG to include all four episodes in the saga. While it certainly is a bit peculiar to see, say, Leia Organa fighting side-by-side with her (presumed) Grandma Shmi, the only situation that would be truly difficult to justify—Anakin against Vader—is impossible, since Anakin

doesn't have a character card.

Timeline aside, Tatooine explodes with possibilities, especially in terms of theme decks. While they're no Jedi army, a force comprised of Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan (young or old), Luke, a Jedi-trained Leia, and even Yoda (assuming he can make the journey from Dagobah) can hold a line in the sand even against the Sith. Podracing is viable as the focus of a deck (although the Dark Side has a few more racers, the Light Side has the best racer: Anakin's) or can back up a number of other Tatooine-based strategies. Fear the dreaded Brisky Morning Munchen deck that throws a never-ending supply of Jar Jars at your opponent. And with a little effort, Padmé Naberrie can lead a contingent of the Old Republic that fights on well into the Battle of Endor era.

Decipher promises an Episode I-only tournament environment after the release of the next expansion (tentatively titled *Coruscant*), but why wait? This month's deck was built following one simple rule: no character or ship is allowed that could not have been around during the events of Episode I. This allows cards like Artoo, Chewbacca (age 200) and the *Millennium Falcon*, but no Light Side standards like Luke, Han, or Leia. They probably wouldn't get along with Jar Jar anyway.

This deck was remarkably easy to build even with the little timeline restriction—Tatooine is a well-rounded set with cards that complement each other (there's very little in the way of fixes for broken cards from past sets, for example). You'll be spending most of your time at Tatooine sites, although Chewie and a few Z-95s are available for space defense if needed. Start with Podrace Prep to get the Arena, the Boonta Eve Podrace, Anakin's Podracer, and Brisky Morning Munchen on the table. If your opponent faces you on the ground, chop 'em up with lightsabers or knock them over with a clumsy Gungan. And you'll have plenty of the classic Jedi interrupts like Sense, Control, and Alter to deal with threats that even a Jedi could not accurately predict.

Well, unless he cheats at chance cubes.

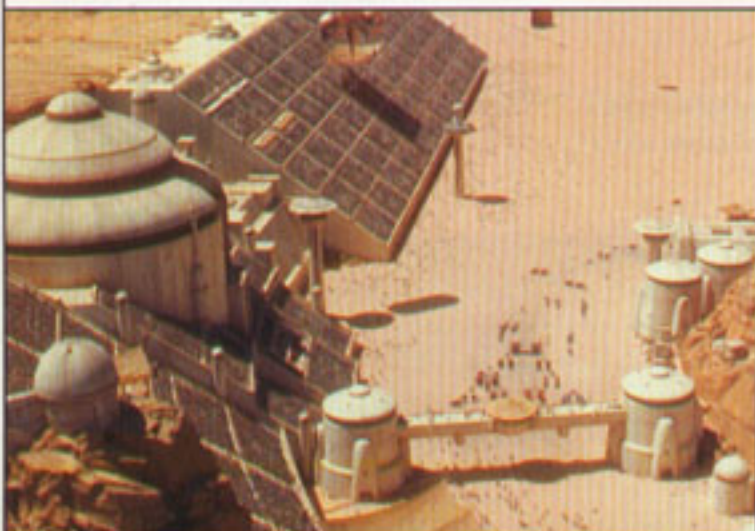


SHMI SKYWALKER & THREEPIO WITH

HIS PARTS SHOWING

In the absence of the Chosen One himself, his mom and naked droid combine to form a nice little card-drawing-and-destiny-manipulation

engine, as long as you keep them together. This isn't too hard, since Threepio can deploy from the Reserve Deck to Shmi's location. Then the unfinished protocol droid takes care of the rest. Just keep them well-defended—despite nice forfeit numbers and Shmi's attrition reducing text, the desert duo doesn't fight well on its own, and you'll need to battle to use the best part of Threepio's text.





JAR JAR BINKS & BRISKY MORNING MUNCHEN

It's no secret that many STAR WARS fans are...less than fond of this clumsy Gungan. That should change (within the CCG world, at least) with the release of Tatooine. This 'bombad' character can deploy to any (that's any) site, including those normally only open to spies. That means he can drop in on the Emperor in his Throne Room (for example), start a battle, and then use his more accident-prone game text (and a high destiny draw) take out Palpatine himself. Jar Jar can then hop back to Brisky Morning Munchen. Then repeat the process until your opponent begins to rave about "pyoonishin'" you, or you win.



BOONTA EVE PODRACE & ANAKIN'S PODRACER

This Epic Event powers the Podracing deck. Start with Podrace Prep to get the Boonta Eve Podrace on the table, and the high-speed

deathmatch can begin! Podracing can certainly be the focus of your deck, but in this case we're using it as a little "side game" that can swing the course of a game within a half-dozen turns. Although the Dark Side definitely has the most individual racers, Anakin's Podracer is a match for any of them.

QUI-GON JINN, THE OBI-WANS, & SWOOPS

All right, so adding "Old Ben" stretches the definition of an Episode I-era character, but hey, there's no Luke (which should frustrate an opponent with a lot of Luke-specific cards). Qui-Gon is just plain effective; he deploys cheaply to Tatooine, he's no slouch in a duel, and he's the Light Side's second Jedi Master (and the first

that can deploy wherever he likes). Young Obi-Wan can zip around Tatooine sites fighting the foot soldiers, or if you're con-



cerned about Maul or Vader showing up, use the Old Man instead and the Sith will think twice about dueling. Put either Jedi on one of the Air-2 Racing Swoops and they can cover the whole planet easily and avoid getting stuck in the desert. □



Mos Espa-ranta

STARTING CARDS (6)

- 1 Tatooine: Slave Quarters
- 1 Podrace Prep
- 1 Tatooine: Podrace Arena
- 1 Boonta Eve Podrace
- 1 Anakin's Podracer
- 1 Brisky Morning Munchen

LOCATIONS (6)

- 1 Tatooine: Cantina
- 1 Tatooine: City Outskirts
- 1 Tatooine: Docking Bay 94
- 1 Tatooine: Mos Eisley
- 1 Tatooine: Mos Espa
- 1 Tatooine: Podracer Bay

CHARACTERS (15)

- 1 Artoo
- 1 Artoo & Threepio
- 1 Ben Kenobi
- 1 Caldera Righim
- 2 Chewie With Blaster Rifle
- 1 Deneb Both

- 1 Jar Jar Binks
- 1 Obi-Wan Kenobi, Padawan Learner
- 1 Padmé Naberrie
- 2 Qui-Gon Jinn
- 1 Shmi Skywalker
- 1 Threepio With His Parts Showing
- 1 Yotts Orren

WEAPONS & DEVICES (7)

- 1 Electrobinoculars
- 1 Mercenary Armor
- 1 Obi-Wan's Journal
- 1 Obi-Wan's Lightsaber
- 1 Qui-Gon Jinn's Lightsaber
- 2 Stun Blaster

STARSHIPS & VEHICLES (6)

- 2 Air-2 Racing Swoop
- 1 Millennium Falcon
- 1 YT-1300 Transport
- 2 Z-95 Headhunter

INTERRUPTS (17)

- 2 A Jedi's Patience
- 1 A Step Backward
- 2 Alter & Friendly Fire
- 1 Armed And Dangerous
- 2 Control & Tunnel Vision
- 1 Either Way, You Win
- 1 End of a Reign
- 1 Eventually, You Lose
- 1 Losing Track
- 1 Rebel Barrier
- 2 Sense & Recoil In Fear
- 1 Sorry About The Mess & Blaster Proficiency
- 1 Too Close For Comfort

EFFECTS (2)

- 1 Bacta Tank
- 1 The Camp

EPIC EVENT (1)

- 1 I Did It



Who's Scruffy Looking?

A Han Solo Theme Deck for Jedi Knights

BY DOUG TAYLOR

Fne of the best things about the new Jedi Knights TCG is building a deck around one of the main characters from *Star Wars*. Does a deck based on the theme of that dashing rogue, Han Solo, have what it takes to make one of the toughest out there? You bet it does! Han may not have the Force abilities of his buddy Luke, a lightsaber like the Dark Lord of the Sith, or the command presence of the bureaucratic Tarkin, but he has strengths that none of them have. With some of the best support Characters and Events in the game, and a ship that "may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts," Han proves that he's a force to be reckoned with!

Be aware that this deck speeds through cards pretty quickly. Han always thought that there was "no match for a good blaster at your side," and this deck reflects that philosophy. Get lots of

weapons into play in order to fire them often and add cards to your hand. Play them as soon as possible and transfer them to the proper character later. Going through cards so fast, it's important not to play with a draw deck that's too small. Otherwise, you'll be drawing zeroes for destiny near the end of every game.

Having the highest Theme number, Han will always be the first Hero to play a site. He will always, therefore, be the one who determines where the Final Conflict will be. Hoth and Cloud City sites allow only Han (or the Light Side in a multi-player game) to play a character from the Theme Pile when they come into play, making them great selections for a starting location.

When selecting a Force card each turn, there are a couple of factors to keep in mind. First, deploy as many cards as possible. Holding back for later turns is rarely a

wise choice. The only time this strategy has some use is during the first turn on a planet, and then only when stuck with a hand of nearly all characters or all starships. In that situation, it is sometimes best to save a lone character or starship for the second turn, when it can go down with reinforcements. Second, always try to have the highest Force number, allowing Han to go first in every phase. With Han's Theme number of 12, he'll win all ties. More importantly, Han's best supporting Character (Obi-Wan Kenobi, Old Fossil) works best when Han is first to attack. When Obi-Wan supports Han (or

Going Solo

STARTING (14)

- 1 You Like Me Because I'm a Scoundrel
- 1 Han Solo • Smuggler for Hire
- 1 Bespin System • Cloud City Carbon-Freezing Chamber
- 1 Endor System • Back Door
- 1 Tatooine System • Mos Eisley
- 1 Hoth System • Frozen Wastes
- 1 Force 1
- 1 Force 2
- 1 Force 3 (Uncommon)
- 1 Force 4

- 1 Force 5
- 1 Force 6
- 1 Force 7 (Uncommon)
- 1 Force 8

CHARACTERS (22)

- 5 Han Solo • Unlikely Hero
- 5 Obi-Wan Kenobi • Old Fossil
- 5 C-3PO • The Professor
- 3 Leia Organa • Your Worshipfulness
- 3 Ellorrs Madak • Flight Instructor
- 1 Mornaw Nadon • Hammerhead Shepherd

STARSHIPS (11)

- 3 Millennium Falcon • Modified Transport
- 2 Tantive IV
- 2 Gold Two
- 2 Gold Five
- 1 Rancor's Tooth
- 1 Dodonna's Pride

WEAPONS (17)

- 5 Han's Blaster Pistol
- 5 Obi-Wan's Lightsaber
- 3 Proton Torpedoes

- 2 Leia's Blaster
- 2 Corellian Laser Cannon

EVENTS (14)

- 5 That's No Moon
- 5 Outrun Those Imperial Slugs
- 3 He Certainly Is Brave
- 1 Medal of Alderaan



Leia), he adds four to his power and is readied after he wins. Letting an opponent attack first gives that player the opportunity to attack Obi-Wan directly, negating his effectiveness as such a powerful supporter.

It's usually best to play aggressively, going after the Dark Side's Hero. If Han can eliminate the opponent's main Character before a Control Check, he'll probably win that planet. This strategy can backfire occasionally, eliminating Han's best characters or important weapons. Use caution if Vader has his Lightsaber or Tarkin has lots of Imperials supporting him.

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga, Han didn't often show much kindness towards Ben or C-3PO; in Jedi Knights he couldn't ask for two better allies. When the best version of Han has Obi-Wan and Threepio backing him up, he is power 11 plus a destiny. In addition, the cantankerous protocol droid can get rid of an enemy's Tactical bonuses, a very strong ability that could make all the difference in an important battle. Each member of this powerful triumvirate has a defense value of 5, which means that they won't succumb easily to weapon fire or Emperor Palpatine's Force lightning.

Each Event has both great text that gets more cards into hand and gives a nice tactical bonus (often +3). That's No Moon should be used as often as possible instead of being saved for its tactical bonus. Drawing three cards is huge, and will often yield another Event to replace it, which can then be used for the tactical bonus of +3. More cards in hand mean more options and more advantages over opponents.

Han is sure to make an impression with his ability to get out of tight jams and come through when he's needed most. **E**

Jedi Knights Survival Guide

By Michael Mikaelian

TEN TIPS TO TACTICAL TRIUMPH

With only one set available for Jedi Knights, the selection of cards may seem limited. The truth is that there are many different varieties of deck types possible. Here are ten tips for building a deck and playing it well.

10. WHIRLWIND TOUR OF THE GALAXY

Your choice of sites can figure prominently into your strategy. The order you play the sites is most important. Players take turns choosing sites during setup; take advantage of your two (one in a four-player game) choices available.

9. THEME PARKING

Carefully consider which cards to put in your theme pile at the beginning of the game. The composition of your deck, order in which the sites will be played, and choices your opponent's theme offers her must be taken into account. All of this information is available before you choose what goes into your theme pile.

8. UNCOMMONLY GOOD

The uncommon versions of the 7- and 3-Force cards are well worth playing. In exchange for one fewer credit, the uncommon Force cards allow you to play one specific card type for free. The 7-Force card lets you play your Hero for free; the 3-Force card lets you play a starship for free.

7. HEAD BACK TO BASE

If you must choose between losing your theme character (Han Solo • Smuggler for Hire, for instance) and a powerful character (Leia Organa • Your Worshipfulness, for instance), go with the theme character. It goes back to your theme pile, available to be played again next turn. Just don't confuse them with a better version (Han Solo • Unlikely Hero, for instance).

6. WATCH THE CLOCK

During a control check, the only thing that matters is that you have more power at the site than your opponent. If you are currently winning the control check at a site, wait for your opponent to attack. Don't do anything that could cost you control of the site.

5. WHEN LEADERS ATTACK

Use your leaders (presumably with a typical Blaster for the +1 bonus) to attack your opponent's characters that would be used to support their leaders. This is a great way to pick apart his defenses and knock off his most powerful non-leader characters one at a time. There are exceptions to this, such as Grand Moff Tarkin • Destroyer of Alderaan; he and four other Imperials are usually enough to take out even the toughest Rebel.

4. GROUND CONTROL

If you have to choose between controlling the system or the site, always choose the site. After all, that's the object of the game. If you can't compete in space, focus

on the ground. As long as you have more extra characters than your opponent has capital ships, you can make the site your personal playground.

3. SMART ROTATION

If you dominate a site (or system) your opponent can still pick you apart if you don't leave the correct characters (or starships) straightened. If your opponent relies on weapons, keep your high-defense cards straightened. If he relies on power, keep your high-power cards straightened.

2. DRAWING CARDS

The more cards you can add to your hand, the more options you have. Be wary of drawing your entire deck before the game ends. Though the minimum deck size is 40 cards, weapons, other destiny draws, card-drawing game text, and your normal allotment of card draws can easily conspire to sap your deck before the end of the second battle (four turns). Suggested deck size is from 50 to 75 cards.

1. WEAPONS

Weapons enable you to draw cards and eliminate character at the same time. Don't get too trigger-happy; once your deck runs out of cards, you can't fire anymore. Maximize your weapons' potential by including as many high-destiny cards as possible. This can reduce your tactical bonuses overall, so choose the cards wisely. **E**



The Future of *Star Wars* Electronic Gaming Revealed

Throughout February and April, LucasArts pulled the shades, closed the doors, and went to work preparing for the Electronic Entertainment Expo in May. To prepare for the trade show, which will be held in Los Angeles, teams entered into "mini-crunches," working long hours to polish the games that will be unveiled at E3. In order to better understand the significance of E3 and learn how the company prepares for the event, *Star Wars Gamer* played a round of poker with Tom Sarris, Director of Public Relations.

TS: Yeah. E3 began in May, 1995, and was created as way of focusing attention solely on the interactive entertainment industry. Up to that time, these companies used the consumer electronics show to promote their products.

SWG: From LucasArts's standpoint, why is E3 so important?

TS: E3 provides LucasArts with a way to formally showcase new titles for the coming year. With the top media and retailers present, E3 serves as the per-

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Gearing Up for E3: LucasArts Prepares for Annual Trade Show

BY HADEN BLACKMAN

fect mechanism to help create a buzz for a new game.

SWG: How does the company prepare for E3?

TS: Holy cow, where do I start? There's an immense amount of preparation involved with E3 each year. So much so, in fact, that we like to joke that our favorite day of the year is the day after E3 ends...

About two weeks after E3 ends, the LucasArts marketing department meets to discuss what went well and what didn't. From there we begin to build a framework for the next show, but don't really start thinking about it seriously until about six months later. At that point we then meet with our development department to determine what we're going to be able to announce. From there, the teams create demos for us to show at E3. The demos are a huge amount of work and require a ton of focus.

SWG: What do you consider when deciding which products to show at E3?

TS: The main consideration is the game's expected date of release. If it's within one year from E3, we'll probably show it. If not, it will have to wait until the next E3 to be unveiled.

"E3 provides LucasArts with a way to formally showcase new titles for the coming year."

Star Wars Gamer: We've heard a lot about "E3" lately. Can you tell us what it's all about?

Tom Sarris: E3 provides a forum for companies throughout the interactive entertainment industry to showcase hardware and software products on a worldwide stage to the media and retailers.

SWG: Do you know anything about the history of E3?



The Krayt Dragon is one of the many creature concepts revealed at E3.



A lone kaadu risks its neck to take a drink of water in the swamps of Naboo.



You can also expect to run into at least one herd of falumpasets while adventuring in the swamps of Naboo.

SWG: When is it considered "dangerous" to show a product at E3?

TS: It's only dangerous when you're showing a game you thought was going to release in six to nine months, reappears at the next E3. Then you have

to explain why it's a good thing that the game's been delayed...

SWG: What do you plan to unveil at E3 this year? Can you give us some hints? Any big announcements?

TS: We'll be announcing several new titles this year across a broad spectrum of platforms, including PC, PlayStation 2, Nintendo GameCube, and Microsoft Xbox. Additionally, a few lucky journalists will be able to see sneak peeks of *Star Wars Galaxies* and the BioWare *Star Wars RPG* (tentatively titled *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*).



(continued next page)

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

CHARACTER PROFILE

Jinkins: The "Wedge Antilles" of Starfighter

Background characters in *Star Wars* sources always seem to grab the attention of fans. Wedge Antilles, a young pilot first introduced in the original *Star Wars*, has become a fan favorite, despite his relatively few lines and limited screen time. In LucasArts' *Starfighter*, that role belongs to Jinkins, one of Nym's crew members who aids his captain at several key points in the game. During "Mission 7: Eye of the Storm", Nym must protect Jinkins, who in turn jumps into his own starship to turn the tide of the battle.

A Bith engineer, Jinkins (who was originally called "Ackbar Chavez" by the team) flies a powerful "Freefall bomber" when supporting Nym. Finding the right vehicle for Jinkins was difficult however. According to *Starfighter's* Level Design Tech, Ric Liu, Jinkins' original craft was a "death machine" that destroyed everything in its path. In the final product, Jinkins' craft is less formidable, but he is invulnerable

when in his starship. In fact, testers found amusement in dropping bombs on Jinkins' vehicle, just to see the neat effects that such "attacks" produced.

Jinkins: Male Bith Frg 5; Init +3 (Dex); Def 18 (+5 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 25/10; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, punch), +6 ranged (3d4, hold-out blaster); SQ Barter, Adaptive Learning (Repair), Jury-rig (+2), Survival (+2), Keen Smell, Micro-vision; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 2; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.
Equipment: Medpac, electrobinoculars, comlink, hold-out blaster, survival kit, tool kit.

Skills: Astrogate +11, Computer Use +13, Demolitions +11, Listen +11, Pilot +11, Repair +13, Spot +11, Survival +9, Disable Device +11.

Feats: Alertness, Gearhead, Starship Operation (starfighters), Weapon group proficiencies (simple, blaster pistols).



Special Qualities: **Keen Smell**—Bith can identify an individual by smell at a range of 10 meters with a Wisdom check (DC 15). **Micro-vision**—Bith have eyes so sharp they can see microscopic organisms. This gives them +4 to Search and Spot skill checks when searching an area up to 30 centimeters away. They receive a +2 bonus to Search and Spot skill checks when the area is 30 centimeters to 5 meters away. However, Bith are also myopic and suffer a -2 penalty to all Search and Spot skill checks within a range of 5-20 meters. The penalty increases to -4 for visual-related actions involving a range of 20-40 meters. They cannot see beyond 40 meters without special equipment like electrobinoculars.

Species Features: -2 Str, -2 Dex, -2 Con, +4 Int, +2 Wis.

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

STARSHIP PROFILE

The Freefall

Craft: Modified Freefall-class starfighter
Class: Starfighter
Cost: Not available for sale
Size: Small (30 m)
Crew: Unique (1 pilot, 3 gunners, 1 navigator, 1 bomber)

Passengers: 8

Cargo Capacity: 20 metric tons

Consumables: 4 weeks

Hyperdrive: x2 (x10)

Maximum Speed: Attack

Maneuvers: +1 (+1 size)

Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)

Shield Points: 50

Hull Points: 120

DR: 10

Weapon: Laser cannons
(4 fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Attack Bonus: +3 (+1 size, +2 fire control)

Damage: 6d10x2

Range Modifiers: PB/S +0, M/L n/a.

Weapon: Rotating laser turret (2 individually controlled)

Fire Arc: Turret

Attack Bonus: +5 (+1 size, +4 fire control)

Damage: 6d10x2

Range Modifiers: PB/S +0, M/L n/a.

Weapon: Bomb chute (20 bombs)

Fire Arc: Ventral*

Attack Bonus: +3 (+1 size, +2 fire control)

Damage: 8d10x5

Range Modifiers: PB +0, S/M/L n/a.

*Bombs are released from the bottom of the starfighter and fall onto targets below.



SWG: What's the best thing about E3?

TS: For me, the best thing about E3 is renewing relationships with the press. I've been in public relations at LucasArts for six years and most of my relationships with the media go back pretty far, and I know a lot of people.

development for a year or more, and to have that excitement shared by others who are seeing it for the first time. And we typically get very positive feedback about what we show at E3, which makes me realize just how lucky I am work for a company as well respected as LucasArts.

"The best thing about E3 is renewing relationships with the press. Much of what we're showing has not been seen before and they're usually pretty anxious to cover our games."

We typically speak to most of the media over the phone during the year, but there's no substitute for face-to-face interaction. It really helps bond relationships. Meetings also provide a great opportunity to strike future coverage deals with the media, since much of what we're showing has not been seen before and they're usually pretty anxious to cover our games.

One of the other great things about the show is that it allows us to get immediate feedback from the press about what we're showing. It's great to finally unveil a game that's been in

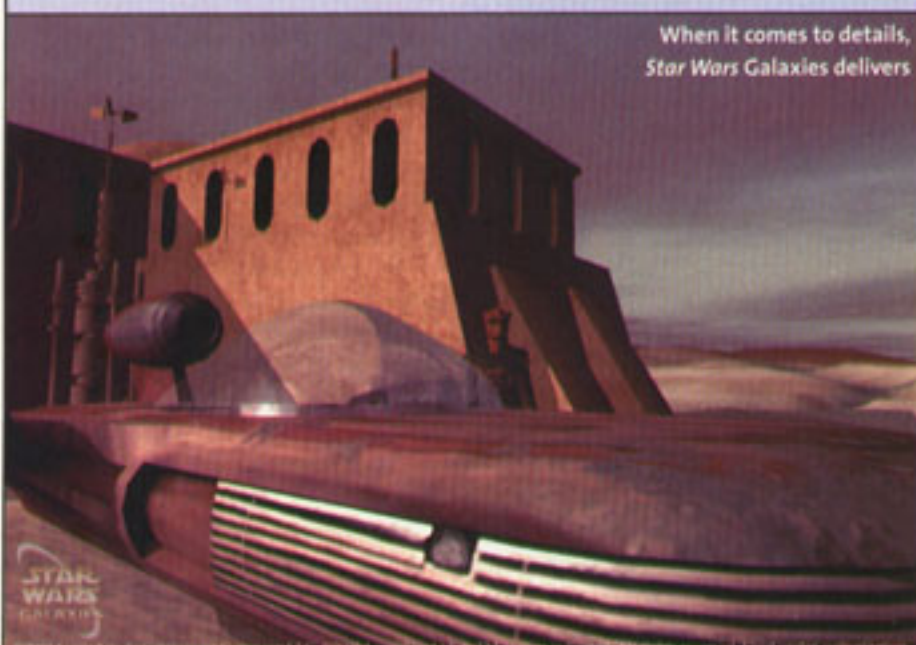
SWG: The worst thing?

TS: Lack of sleep. And that there's rarely any opportunity to walk around to see what other companies are showing. My staff and I typically have meetings with the press scheduled each half-hour of the show, for all three days of the show. So unfortunately, there's not a whole lot of downtime.

SWG: Thanks for enlightening us. We fold.

TS: No problem. Full house.

When it comes to details,
Star Wars Galaxies delivers



STAR WARS GALAXIES™

LOCATIONS



A forest outside the city of Theed.



Tatooine's famous Mos Eisley.



Tatooine at sundown.



Ancient ruins of the swamps of Naboo.

STAR WARS BATTLE for NABOO

STARSHIP PROFILE

The Naboo Bomber

LucasArts' action-flight game *Battle for Naboo* introduced *Star Wars* fans to a number of new vehicles, including the destructive "Naboo bomber." As envisioned by the development team, the Naboo bomber is slow and has a weak central laser cannon for limited protection against starfighters. However, it compensates for these defects with incredible armor and a payload that includes powerful ion bombs. In the game, few structures can withstand a direct hit from one of the starfighter's bombs.

The potential for mass-destruction was the team's primary reason for including the bomber in the game. "We wanted an aircraft that was primarily designed to attack ground units," explains Director Brett Tosti. In order to simulate a larger attack craft, the designers made sure that the bomber handled very differently than other starfighters in the game. In the final product, "the Naboo bomber takes a bit more skill to fly than the N-1 or the 'police cruiser,'" Tosti explains. The vehicle is also vulnerable to attacks from droid starfighters. Despite the bomber's weak spots, Tosti really enjoys flying it: "Nothing can quite match the thrill of eliminating a half-dozen ground units with a single well-placed bomb."

The Naboo Bomber is the perfect surprise for GMs to "drop" in their players' laps. This screenshot from *Star Wars: Episode I: The Battle for Naboo* shows what this fine piece of equipment looks like in action.

Naboo Bomber

Craft: Naboo bomber
Class: Starfighter (Bomber)
Cost: Not available for sale
Size: Small (20 m)
Crew: Unique (1 pilot)

Passengers: 2

Cargo Capacity: 5 metric tons

Consumables: 2 weeks

Hyperdrive: None

Maximum Speed: Attack

Maneuvers: +1 (+1 size)

Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)

Shield Points: 40

Hull Points: 150

DR: 10

Weapon: Laser cannons
(2 fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Attack Bonus: +3 (+1 size, +2
fire control)

Damage: 5d10x2

Range Modifiers: PB/S +0, M/L n/a

Weapon: Bomb chute
(30 ion bombs)*

Fire Arc: Ventral†

Attack Bonus: +3 (+1 size, +2
fire control)

Damage: 7d10x2

Range Modifiers: PB +0, S/M/L n/a

* The Naboo bomber can carry a wide range of explosives, but is usually armed with the "ion bombs" described here. The bombs are not true ion weapons and cause direct damage. The bomber can only release two bombs per round.

† Bombs are released from the bottom of the starfighter and fall onto targets below.



STAR WARS GALAXIES™



SPECIAL UPDATE

Over the past several months, LucasArts have been providing increasingly more information about *Star Wars Galaxies*, the first-ever Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) set in the *Star Wars* universe. The most recent news revolved around the playable species—those species that players can use when creating their characters.

As revealed on the official Galaxies web site (www.starwars-galaxies.com), selecting the eight playable species proved difficult. The designers started with a list of virtually every known *Star Wars* species, from Bith to Zabrak, and slowly narrowed it down to only eight. The semi-finalists included such diverse species as the breather-wearing Kel Dor, the bat-faced Chadra-Fan and even sluglike Hutts. Expanded Universe contenders were drawn from comics, novels, and games: Falleen (Prince Xizor), Chiss (Grand Admiral Thrawn), and Feeorin (Starfighter's Nym) were all considered at one point.

BOTHAN



“The designers started with a list of virtually every known *Star Wars* species, from Bith to Zabrak, and slowly narrowed it down to only eight.”

The eight finalists represent the diversity with the *Star Wars* universe, but were chosen with several criteria in mind. The *Star Wars Galaxies* team wanted to make sure that they included some of the most popular alien species, while also giving *Star Wars* fans something new and different. The species also needed to be balanced against one another so that no one species proved more successful than all the others. After months of debate, the team opted for these eight:

BOTHANS

The Expanded Universe choice, Bothans beat out such fan favorites as Noghri and Chiss to claim a spot among the eight finalists. Bothans were selected, in part, because they are actu-

HUMAN



"Bothans were selected, in part, because they are actually referred to by name in *Return of the Jedi*."



What a Bothan player will look like.

HUMANS

The dominant lifeform in the galaxy, humans will represent the "balance point" for all the playable species. Some species might be stronger, but slower; others might have an edge in intelligence, but will be physically weaker. Humans may also have

some advantages when dealing with non-player characters (NPCs), especially Imperials. A recent poll on starwarsgalaxies.com indicated that almost 33% of site's visitors want to play human characters.

MON CALAMARI

The developers really wanted a species that would excel in watery environment and considered Gungans, Quarren, and Mon Calamari for this role. Ultimately, the Mon Cal triumphed because the Quarren didn't seem as exciting visually and Gungans were too closely tied to Episode I (Gungans were, however, announced as a playable species as part of an April Fool's Day joke). The Mon Cal in *Star Wars Galaxies* will come in a variety of colors, from the salmon hues seen on Admiral Ackbar in *Return of the Jedi* to blue and yellow patterns, as show in comics. Mon Cal character traits will include high intelligence and an ability to survive underwater for extended periods of time.



A typical Mon Calamari explorer.

MON CALAMARI



RODIAN

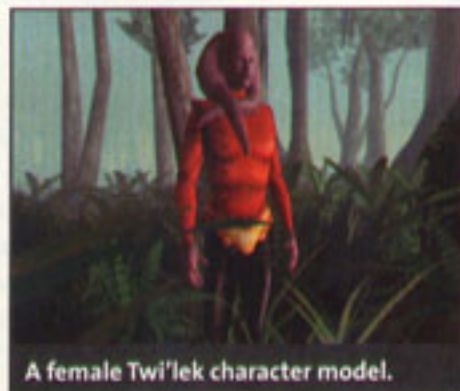


RODIANS

Nearly anyone who has seen *Star Wars* remembers Greedo, the slow-draw artist who lost a duel with Han Solo in the Mos Eisley cantina. Greedo's high profile trans-

"Thanks to the ever-expanded continuity, it's clear that Greedo was an unexceptional Rodian."

was an unexceptional Rodian—most are fast, wily, and well-versed in combat. In fact, the *Galaxies* team was attracted to the species because of the many ways in which they are depicted in the Expanded



A female Twi'lek character model.

"The Jedi Tott Doneeta is just one example of a Twi'lek character who defies Twi'lek stereotypes."

lates into instant recognition for Rodians, one of the most well-known *Star Wars* alien species. However, thanks to the ever-expanded continuity, it's clear that Greedo

Universe. This extends to appearance as well—expect Rodians in *Star Wars Galaxies* to display a spectrum of skin coloration and other variations.

TRANDOSHAN



TRANDOSHANS

Strong and resilient, Trandoshans are probably best known for their persecution and enslavement of Wookiees. However, as recent sources (including the *Star Wars* RPG) have pointed out, only a small percentage of Trandoshans have been at odds with Wookiees. Still, this reputation makes Trandoshans one of the most feared species in the galaxy. Although the species rivalry between

Wookiees and Trandoshans attracted the team, they were also interested in the Trandoshans' appearance—reptilian species have proved popular in other MMOs, making Trandoshans a logical choice for this title. In *Star Wars Galaxies*, Trandoshan characters will possess great strength and fortitude.

TWI'LEK



TWI'LEKS

A secret head-tail language and vast customization options (including a huge range of skin colors) are just two of the perks players will receive when they create Twi'lek characters. Another highly-visible alien species (thanks to both Oola and Bib Fortuna from *Return of the Jedi*), the team was happy to learn that Twi'leks have also played an important role in the continuity—the Jedi Tott Doneeta is just

"Reptilian species have proved popular in other MMOs, making Trandoshans a logical choice."

WOOKIEE



Basic, the galaxy's common tongue, they won't be portrayed as mindless or dumb. The team feels strongly that Chewbacca displays great intelligence in the films and Wookiee characters should have the same characteristics. Wookiee fur colors will range from white to black, with spots, streaks, and other variables thrown in to make each character truly unique.

ZABRAK


After surprising the fan community with the fake April Fool's Day announcement that Gungans would be player characters, the *Star Wars Galaxies* web site officially revealed Zabrak as the eighth playable species. Both Darth Maul and Jedi Council member Eeth Koth are Zabrak. The species proved very popular, garnering

"Wookiee fur colors will range from white to black, with spots, streaks, and other variables thrown in to make each character truly unique."

one example of a Twi'lek character who defies Twi'lek stereotypes. *Star Wars Galaxies* Twi'leks should have keen intelligence.

WOOKIEES

Perhaps the most recognizable of all *Star Wars* alien species, Wookiees are popular with fans thanks to the heroics of Chewbacca in all three original *Star Wars* films. Although the Wookiee perished in *Vector Prime*, Wookiee heroes will live on in *Star Wars Galaxies*. Like Chewbacca, Wookiee characters will be exceedingly strong. And while they won't be able to speak

25% of the vote during a recent poll on the *Star Wars Galaxies* web site. Players will be able to choose from a variety of subtle facial tattoos and horn patterns when creating Zabrak characters. However, the team warns that Darth Maul's over-the-top "Sith" tattoos will not be available to starting characters. 

ZABRAK



A Zabrak enjoying Tatooine's sundown.

Cheat Codes

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

PS2 HEAD-TO-HEAD ACTION!

As development on *Starfighter* came to a close in early 2000, the design team began experimenting with a handful of missions involving two player-controlled vehicles. In the final product, players who earn every gold medal are rewarded with the ability to replay some missions with an ally, or face a friend in head-to-head "death match" style combat. Fortunately, the team has also revealed a secret code that will allow players who don't (or can't) earn all of the gold medals to enjoy the multiplayer missions.

Unlock the multiplayer mode by choosing Options, followed by Passcodes. Then, enter "ANDREW" in the code screen. Now, all multiplayer missions will be unlocked.



N64: UNLOCK EVERYTHING!

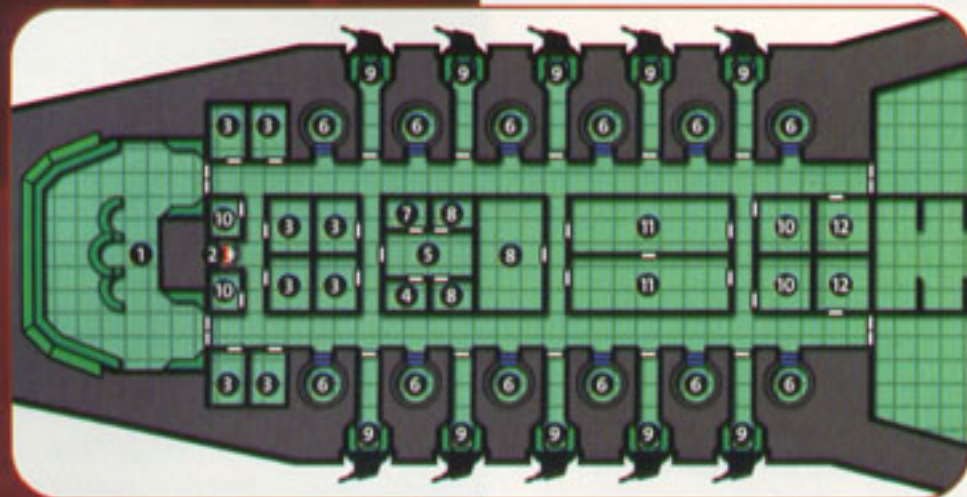
Having trouble beating *Battle for Naboo*? Use the following codes to arm your vehicles with the latest in Naboo technology. Or, use the ultra-secret password below to unlock every level! To activate codes, select Options from the Main Menu, then select Passcodes and enter any of the following:

BOOM!?: Having trouble taking out your ground targets? Use this code to equip Advanced Bombs for more destructive capability.

CANTMISS: Droid starfighters dodging your attacks? This code enables Seeker Torpedoes to hunt down your enemies.

?NUNAPWR: Need that extra edge in combat? Enter this code to unlock the Advanced Missiles.

TOOWEAK?: Want to see how the game ends without doing all the work? This code is your ticket—it unlocks all levels in the game.



Kuat Drive Yards Star Galleon

KEY

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. BRIDGE | 7. MED LAB |
| 2. LIFT TUBE | 8. STORAGE |
| 3. CREW QUARTERS | 9. GUNWELL |
| 4. GALLEY | 10. REFRESHER |
| 5. MESS | 11. BARRACKS |
| 6. ESCAPE POD | 12. WEAPONS STORAGE |

By the Numbers

Dear Gamer,

I have received Issue #4. So far, I am pretty happy with your support of the *Star Wars* RPG. I have to comment on some things:

1. "Deep Spoilers"—I can live without. Gungan dialect irritates me to no end. I can't stand it. I look forward to Episode II in the hopes of seeing Jar Jar kick the galactic bucket, horribly.
2. I remember "What They Called Me" from Dark Horse Comics's *Star Wars Tales*. I hope to see more of that kind of humor in your magazine.
3. "Alien Safari" was most excellent. I hope that it will be an ongoing article. When will the fauna of Myrkr be detailed? I know the vornskrs were detailed a little in Issue #3, but there were a couple of other species that are pretty interesting as well. Of course, you already knew that.
4. "The Starhoppers of Aduba-3" Yes!!! You have decided to use WEG's version of planet data! After witnessing what I saw on your web site and in the rulebook about the extremely vague planet data that was posted, I was worried that you weren't taking the game seriously. I am glad my fears are laid to rest. The info on the Lepi was interesting also. It reminds me of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* ("The rabbit's got

teeth like . . . Look at the bones!").

5. "Secrets of Kashyyyk"—Great job.
6. "Starfaring Jungles" was another welcome article.
7. "Ships of the Smuggler's Alliance"—another needed article. However, I must point out some things about the Kuat Drive Yards *Star Galleon* deck plans. I realize that the spacecraft was modified, but I seriously doubt that Galley Stores (9) would be positioned in the gun turrets and the mess (10) being these tiny rooms toward the bow and two larger rooms aft, while there are two small galleys and one large galley (8) surrounding the officer's quarters (5). I know rank hath its privileges, but come on.
8. "Kashyyyk In Flames" was good.
9. "Shaman Archetype"—nice touch.
10. "Critical Care"—Yes!!! Finally, Darth Vader can slice off Luke's hand in the d20 system ("Lost your vitality, farm boy?") I look forward to springing these charts upon my players.

All in all, I do enjoy most of what your *Star Wars* RPG and magazine have to offer. As a veteran gamer of over 20 years (5 years with *Star Wars*), I am used to playing many games. The d20 system is a good system. Like anything, it just needs a few kinks worked out of it (like the second half of the *Starships* chapter in the rulebook). I hope that the *Star Wars* RPG prospers and I look forward to seeing what comes out next.

William Wilson
Simi Valley, CA

1. Mesa thinkin yousa too hard on the Gungans.
2. So do we.

3. Check out the "Campaign Guide to the Centrality" (page 68), and look for more campaign guides in future issues.
4. We take this game very seriously. Can't you tell?
5. Thanks.
6. Thanks.
7. Ooh. I'm going to have to say, "The Ugnoughts are responsible for this snafu." If only we gave those guys Read/Write Basic as species trait, stuff like this would never happen. Here's the correct map and key.
8. Thanks.
9. We've got more comin'.
10. In the immortal words of Jeff Quick, "I'm sure they'll love that."



Just Can't Get Enough

Hi Guys,

Just wanted to say the magazine is really shaping up. As a roleplayer I would rather see more on the new system, including new ships, species, background, and especially a more detailed star chart. The one listed in the starship section of the rulebook leaves a bit to be desired. The new rules seem to work pretty well, and I have run into very few problems. Overall I would have to give it an "A."

Balrog2950
via internet

Every issue has more on the *Star Wars* d20 system. In this issue alone, we have two great stories with RPG stats, a new prestige class, a multi-class variant, everything you ever wanted to know about Chiss, the Huttese language, the many Hands of Palpatine, more Sith goodies, two adventures, a campaign guide, a stand-alone game expansion, a dissertation on the pyramid of villainy, CCG decks, electronic game secrets, luggage stickers, and, since you asked so nicely, a map of the *Star Wars* galaxy.

As for more detailed starship rules, keep your eyes open for the *Starships of the Galaxy* sourcebook, coming soon.



Armor Woes

Okay,

I'm excited about this new RPG book and the *Star Wars* d20 system. I've played WEG for some ridiculous length of time (like decade or so) and comprehend everything except this: What is up with armor?!

My 12th-level soldier, 7th-level Jedi guardian, and 4th-level scoundrel all have a class Defensive bonus greater than medium padded armor. Why?

Why would I wear armor past that level? And why does the armor not provide a DR rating? These are the questions my Padawan learners are asking me! And I have no answers.

By the way, I love everything else thus far. I just couldn't figure out why my 11th-level soldier would suddenly ditch his armor at 12th-level and go armorless!

Smaggler
via Internet

I hope you're not disappointed when I say that you're not the first reader to ask this question. Have you ever considered modifying the rules to fit your needs? I've heard many armor variants:

- Soldiers get a special ability at 1st level that allows them add half (or all of) their class bonus in addition to an armor bonus.
- Armor values provide damage reduction (DR) instead of a Defense bonus, permitting heroes to use their class bonus in addition to armor.
- An Improved Armor Proficiency (choose one) feat that works like the soldier's ability listed above, with the prerequisite of Armor Proficiency (same type).

Pick one that suits your needs, or make one up and see what your players think of it.

Until next time, may the Force be with you.

—Mike

Two Hot Products, One Cool Website

Visit www.wizards.com/starwars all summer long for previews and exclusives that help you get the most out of the new *The Dark Side* and *Rebellion Era* sourcebooks!

The Dark Side Sourcebook

Generate random dark side Gamemaster characters, or tailor them to suit your campaign in this new online utility. You'll also find a sneak peek at Exar Kun, an exclusive interview with *Star Wars* RPG guru Bill Slavicsek, and a new miniadventure—"Signal Interruption"—to use with the Invasion of Theed Adventure Game. We'll also treat you to a chat with the book's design team. Check out our chat site at www.wizards.com/community for the latest details on date and time.

Rebellion Era Sourcebook

Online we've got more sneak peeks, an interview with the design team, a dazzling

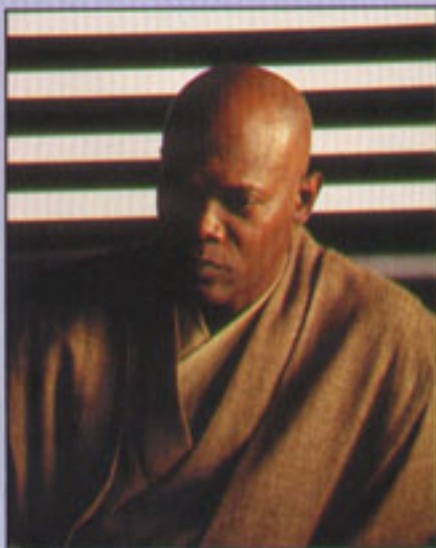
art gallery, desktop wallpaper, and the "Fall of Cloud City" miniadventure by JD Wiker. Our Creature Feature highlights the Killian Bantha, and our customizable adventure hook utility gives you lots of scenario ideas to use it in. You'll want to check in daily for our *Rebellion Era* game fact a day—just how many XP did Luke earn for blowing up the Death Star?—and don't miss our exclusive web enhancement: Duro Delta 12, a station briefly touched on in the book, and expanded online with descriptive text and detailed map. This fully operational station is ready to deploy into your campaign.



The official website of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* offers you all this, plus monthly LIVING FORCE campaign updates, a preview of the next issue of *Star Wars Gamer*, and post-show coverage

of this summer's ORIGINS Game Expo & Fair. We'll also bring you live reports from our Virtual HQ at the GEN CON Game Fair, August 2 to 5 in Milwaukee, WI. Log in at www.wizards.com/gencon. We'll say hi to Lando for you.

In Two Weeks *Star Wars Insider* #55



Prequel Update

More Episode II news

Interviews

Samuel L. Jackson (Mace Windu) and
Silas Carson (Ki-Adi-Mundi)

Star Wars on The Muppet Show Jedi Knights

An introduction to Decipher's latest
Star Wars card game

Next Issue

Star Wars Tales

Characters from the popular Dark
Horse Comics series

Bounties to Die For

Ten tempting targets

Combat Tactics

Fighting as a team

Custom Lightsabers

Build your own

Model Citizen

The Death Star

All-New Game

The Battle of Hoth

Sanbra's Guide to Intelligent Life

The Nikto

Special Ops—Archetype

The Mercenary

PLUS:

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Battle of Hoth Playmat