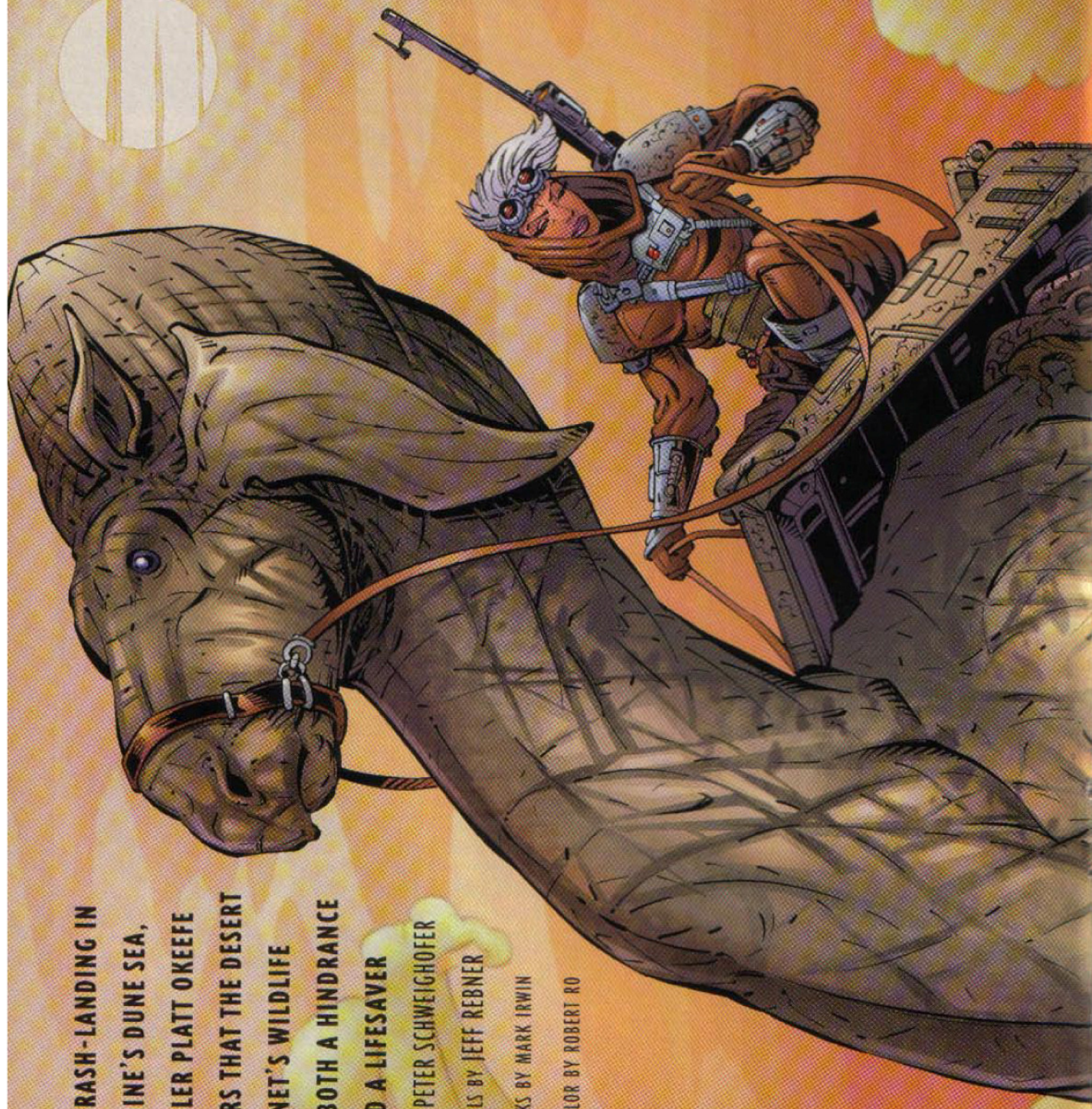


# STARBUCK



**AFTER CRASH-LANDING IN  
TATOOINE'S DUNE SEA,  
SMUGGLER PLATT OKEEFE  
DISCOVERS THAT THE DESERT  
PLANET'S WILDLIFE  
CAN BE BOTH A HINDRANCE  
AND A LIFESAVER**

STORY BY PETER SCHWEIGHOFER

PENCILS BY JEFF REBNER

INKS BY MARK IRWIN

COLOR BY ROBERT RO

# THE HORNED



**“Great . . . . .** Just fantastic.” Platt curses sourly. She raps her fingers on her freighter’s smoldering control console. “There’s nothing like trying to blast out of Mos Eisley, then your ship decides it’s ready for the junkyard.” She looks through the cockpit viewport. Sand. Not dunes, just sand, piling higher every minute. Platt had ditched her ship, *Pok’s Demise*, in a Dune Sea gravel storm.

Platt reviews her escape, trying to figure out what has gone wrong. She’d been having a few with Sovar, her “cargo solicitor.” The cantina visit was a sort of payment for the crummy cargo he’d traded with her. Then the bounty hunters showed up. Platt dashed back to Docking Bay 86, ran on board *Pok’s Demise*, sealed the personnel and cargo hatches and punched it. She was out even before the bounty hunters could get off a shot.

Of course, in those rushed takeoffs, there wasn’t really time to run a full diagnostic check on the ship’s systems. Platt found that out two minutes later, when her maneuverability jets cut out. Then her ion drives. Then the main generator. No doubt her shield generators were a mound of slag right now. The nearest uncontrolled landing area was a few kilometers below: the Dune Sea. Platt did her best to angle the ship for a smooth crash. At least she didn’t feel too banged up.

Platt looks out the viewport. The sand completely covers it. “Well, if I have to wait out the storm, I might as well check out what’s left of my ship,” she sighs. There isn’t much. The ventral gun mount was torn off during the crash. The underbelly sensors are gone. Sand has filled the forward maintenance crawlways. The cabins are a mess. Bee-Zerobee hasn’t been secured; his remains are scattered all over the main corridor. So much for the droid. He had suffered enough.

Platt expects to find her cargo bay smeared with glaze cakes, the almost worthless cargo Sovar has stuck her with. Flashing the glow rod over the bulkhead, she can’t find even the smallest morsel of glaze. The containers are still secured in their webbing, but something has gnawed the top web straps away. The crate lids have been unlatched and tossed off. Platt looks inside one and sniffs around. She smells glaze cake and something else... something animal.

Platt hears scratching noises in a maintenance duct beneath the deck plates. Pipes clatter in the aft engineering station. Somebody is crawling around in there. Platt has run into sneaky shipjackers or stowaways before, but none could ever eat all those glaze cakes and manage to smell as bad as the crates do now.

She cautiously approaches the hatch to the aft engineering station. Platt takes the glow rod with her other hand and draws her blaster. With a swift

## Who Is Platt Okeefe?

Some background on this well-established STAR WARS Roleplaying Game character

The massive commerce world of Brentaal has seen its share of space-faring heroes. Platt Okeefe is only the latest of many to leave the confines of her Core Worlds system and seek her fortune in the greater galaxy.

When she was 12, Platt ran away from home and signed on as a cabin steward aboard a Sullustan starliner. She later joined a tramp freighter crew plying the Anarid Cluster, and acquired a taste for fast ships, slick deals and living on the edge of the law.

In her early misadventures, Platt joined the infamous, Hutt-controlled Klatooinan Trade Guild, defaulted on payments for her first light freighter and was sold into slavery. Platt managed to escape her masters with the help of a fellow slave, a Twi’lek currently known as Tru’eb the gunrunner. The two became fast friends. Tru’eb helped secure funding for Platt’s new ship—the ill-fated *Pok’s Demise*—while in return Platt shared what she had learned about smuggling.

These days Platt runs illegal cargo to countless Outer Rim worlds. She’s distinguished by her platinum blonde hair, classy spacer outfits and a pleasant smile that reflects her easygoing nature. She’s a friend to fellow smugglers and a dangerous adversary to the bounty hunters and Imperial forces who seek to discontinue her “business” endeavors.

— P. S.

kick, her foot connects with the hatch’s controls. The metal door whines as it slowly opens. Platt flashes the glow rod and peers inside. Two large thumper feet pummel her to the deck. Several creatures with snouts pound over Platt. Some have nastily pointed horns. They skitter over her and off into some other part of the ship.

Platt pulls herself off the deck, cursing. *Pok’s Demise* has scurriers, vermin from Mos Eisley. She

shines the glow rod into the engineering bay. Bits of

machinery and star-

ship parts are

everywhere. The

ion coil ex-

changers have

been pulled

into lots of little

pieces. And two

power coupling

sheaths are gnawed

straight through. The

creatures have picked and

pulled apart important components of almost every system.

Platt must have picked up the scurriers when Sovar came by to take her for that drink at the cantina: She had left her freighter’s cargo hatch open. “Well, there’s not much I can do about it now,” Platt says to nobody in particular. “The best I can do is sell this old heap to the Jawas for scrap.”

## WHAT'S ROLEPLAYING?

Roleplaying is a form of the kids game “Let’s Pretend,” with slightly more sophisticated rules. Each person playing the game can take the part of his or her own STAR WARS hero (called a “character”): a Rebel pilot, a smuggler, a bounty hunter—even a Jedi Knight. One player is called a “gamemaster,” who acts as a storyteller. The gamemaster describes the scenes of the story to the players, who in turn decide what their characters are going to do. The players’ choices affect how the story unfolds. For details, read the STAR WARS Roleplaying Game sourcebooks from West End Games.



**From** deep within her ship, Platt figures the gravel storm has abated. The incessant hum outside has stopped. She presses the controls for the top-side hatch and stands back. It unlocks with a clank and groans open. An avalanche of sand pours in. When it stops (and Platt is relieved when it eventually does), she grabs a backpack of her personal and survival gear and pulls herself up through the hatch.

Tatooine's twin suns are just peeking above the horizon. From what Platt can see, her entire freighter is buried. With the transponder scrapped, nobody is going to find the starship in this wasteland. It will probably take the Jawas a few weeks before one of their sandcrawlers rumbles by this area. Platt knows she has to hike out of here on her own. But which way leads to the nearest settlement?

Platt jumps back in surprise as five scurriers pop out of the open hatch and race off into the desert. The pesky scavengers must be seeking out the nearest food source—garbage. Trash means there must be some kind of civilization around here. Platt kneels down and digs through her pack for the macrobinoculars. She climbs the nearest dune and focuses the macros, trying to track the scurriers.

There they are, already about a kilometer out, if her macrobinoculars' range readouts are correct. The numbers suddenly read four meters as a massive blur rises in her macros' viewscreen. A gigantic head and long neck burst out of the sand. Platt drops the macrobinoculars and stumbles backward in fear. She doesn't care if it's a sandworm, krayt dragon or worse. Platt just scrambles to clear her blaster of its holster. She's about to whirl and shoot whatever it is, when a warm snout playfully nuzzles her hair.

Platt looks up to see a ronto with an innocent smile on its snout. Its sand-flaps dangle from the back of its head. The beast coos as it rubs her hair again. "Hey, stop it," says Platt, gently pushing the ronto away. She gets up and dusts herself off. Platt notices a set of reins dangling from the animal's snout and a squarish saddle strapped to its back. She reaches up to scratch the ronto's neck. It bends down and licks her face. "Hey there, big fellah. Where's your rider? Poor creature, you must have been stuck out here during the gravel storm. I guess those sand-flaps helped protect you. Sometimes I wish I could curl up and wait out a sandstorm." The ronto just affectionately rubs its snout against Platt's hair.

Platt slings her backpack over one shoulder and approaches the ronto's saddle. There are no ropes or harnesses to climb. Turning its long neck to stare at her, the ronto knowingly kneels down on the sand. Platt grabs the saddle, steps onto the ronto's bent leg and swings herself up.

Settling into the awkward saddle, she pats the creature's neck. "Good fellah. Now, can you take me home?" The ronto looks back at her quizzically. "You know, *home*," says Platt insistently. "Food, water, civilization? Hello..." she says, patting its head. "Is there anything clicking in that tiny brain of yours? Look, fellah, if I don't find civilization, I can't hop a transport back to Mos Eisley. If

I make it that far, I have to find a new starship with bounty hunters all over my tail. But I'm not going *anywhere* unless you start walking. Get it?"

The ronto cranes its neck back and nuzzles her hair once more. "Look, you can mess up my hair as much as you want when we reach a settlement, okay?" Platt isn't sure if the creature understands. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. Maybe it just feels like moving on. Anyway, the beast abruptly stands up and begins stomping off over the sand, following the same path the scurriers had moments before. Platt sighs. She pats the ronto's neck. "Good fellah." ☺

*Peter Schweighofer is a STAR WARS editor and writer for West End Games. This is his first contribution to SWGM.*

## SCURRIER

**TYPE:** Scavenger

**DEXTERITY** 3D - Running 4D. **PERCEPTION** 2D+2 - Sneak 3D+2. **STRENGTH** 2D+1 - Climbing/Jumping 3D+2.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** **BITE:** Does STR damage. **HORNS (males only):** Do STR+1D damage. **MANIPULATION:** Scurriers' forepaws can manipulate small objects and pick apart machinery as if they had a repair skill of 4D.

**MOVE:** 15

**SIZE:** Up to 1.2 meters long

## RONTO

**TYPE:** Beast of burden

**DEXTERITY** 2D - Running 3D. **PERCEPTION** 3D. **STRENGTH** 5D - Stamina 6D.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** **HEAT ENDURANCE:** Rontos are extremely adaptable to desert conditions, though they still need water to survive. **SENSE OF SMELL:** Rontos have a keen sense of smell. They add +1D to any PERCEPTION roll involving smell. **SKITTISH:** Rontos are easily upset by any machines that move significantly faster than they. Add +3D to their ORNERINESS when around fast-moving vehicles.

**MOVE:** 10

**SIZE:** 4.25 meters tall

**ORNERINESS:** 1D