STAR WARS®

Otherspace II: Invasion

An Adventure for use with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*
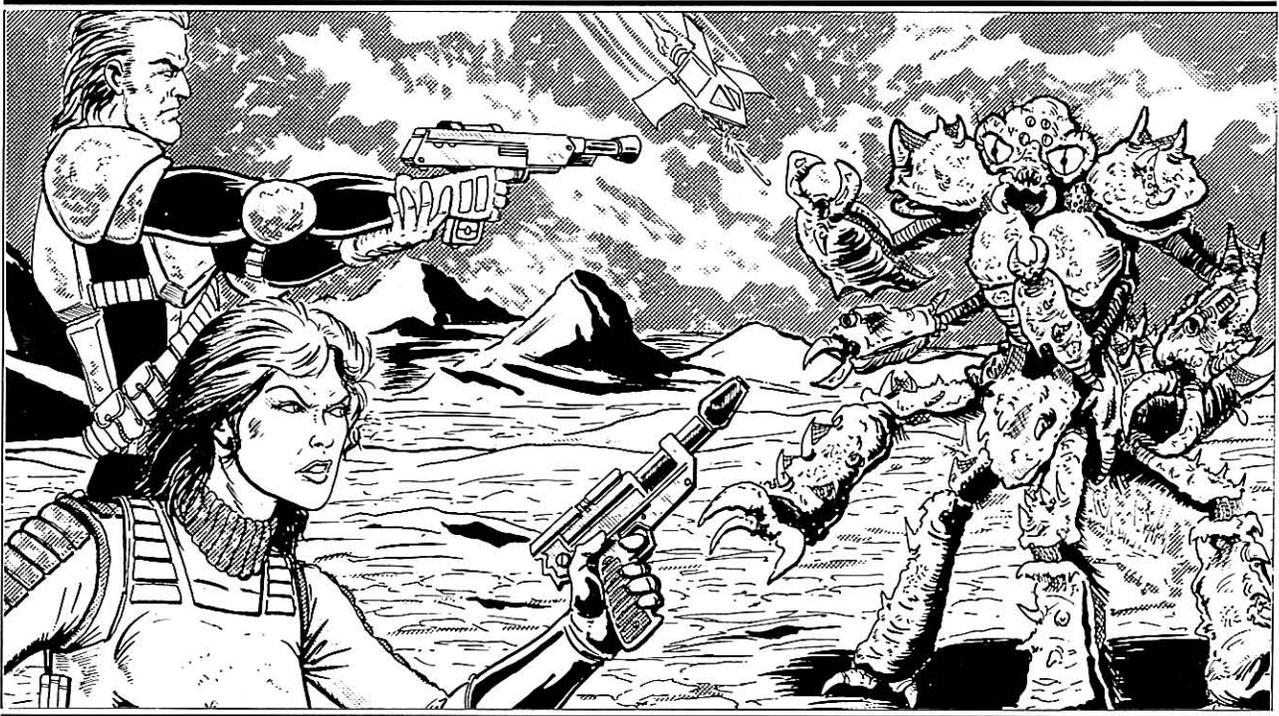

WEST END GAMES

On a remote Alliance safe-world, Rebel heroes battle terrifying alien invaders from another galaxy.

STAR WARS®

Otherspace II: Invasion

by Douglas Kaufman

Introduction

Lights dim ... a hush falls over the crowd ... a beam of light shines forth, and as the music swells to a crescendo, another episode of *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* begins!

Invasion is a *Star Wars* adventure for one to six players plus gamemaster. Gamemasters should read the entire adventure before play begins so the action and storyline can progress naturally (and rapidly!), without a lot of page flipping and undramatic pauses.

Players, however, should stop reading this booklet now. The information contained herein is for gamemasters (GMs) only.

In This Adventure ...

... a group of Rebel heroes go on a dangerous scouting and reconnaissance mission, attempting to unravel the secret of Stronghold, a lost Alliance safe-world. Immediately upon their arrival in Stronghold's system, they encounter a terrified and completely incoherent Rebel, fleeing in terror from ... what? No one knows.

Hardly an auspicious beginning!

As the mission progresses, the Rebels slowly discover the fearsome truth behind the loss of Stronghold. The mission climaxes with a desperate battle against an unimaginable terror from beyond the stars — a battle whose outcome could decide the fate of the galaxy ...

Adventure Materials

In addition to this adventure booklet, *Invasion* includes:

The Pullout Section: This four-page folder contains the adventure script, maps of the Alliance base, and the non-player character templates.

Strip of Counters and Deck of Battle Cards: For use with the *Assault on Hoth* game.

Additional Materials

Other items needed to play this adventure include *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, pencils, paper, and lots of six-sided dice. Almost as necessary is *The Star Wars Rules Companion*. While the adventure is technically playable

without *The Companion*, these rules additions and clarifications are an important addition to *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* and we strongly suggest that you incorporate the new rules into your gaming sessions.

The *Star Wars Sourcebook, The Star Wars Campaign Pack* (which features an updated game-master screen), and *Star Wars Miniatures Sets* are useful but not necessary for play. Also useful is the *Assault On Hoth* adventure boardgame. (See the "Adventure Background" section for an additional suggestion.)

Difficulty Numbers and Game Balance

As GM, you must adjust the difficulty numbers in this adventure to fit your group of players. Use the Difficulty Number Scale to accomplish this.

Difficulty Number Scale

Very Easy	3-5
Easy	6-10
Moderate	11-15
Difficult	16-20
Very Difficult	21-30
Impossible	31-40

For example, if the text calls for an Easy *con* roll to perform a given task, you would assign a number between 6 and 10, depending on the level of skill of your player characters (PCs). See the *Star Wars Rules Companion* for more details.

Note that in the text, attributes are capitalized and italicized; skills are only italicized.

Remember that the number and template types of your PCs affects the outcome of each encounter. This adventure is designed for six beginning to moderately-experienced player characters with a good mix of skills. If you have fewer or more experienced PCs, you may need to scale the encounters down or up accordingly.

Adventure Background

This adventure is a sequel to a previous *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* adventure, *Otherspace*. If you have not played *Otherspace*, you may wish to consider running that adventure

first, although it is by no means necessary for enjoyment of this adventure.

Summary of Otherspace

For those who have not played *Otherspace,* we present this brief summary to add to your enjoyment of this adventure.

The Rebel transport *Celestial,* carrying prisoners of the Alliance (Imperial Commanders and Moffs, bounty hunters, and pirates), was involved in a hyperspace accident which brought it into a realm beyond the normal, beyond the sane:otherspace.

Here the Charon, a mysterious and ancient race dedicated to worship of the Void, were the only living creatures remaining in a galaxy decimated by their destructive jihad. They slept the sleep of thought and death, waiting for their fulfillment from the eternal Void. Their sleep would have been eternal as well, had not the denizens of realspace arrived to awaken them.

The *Otherspace* adventure told of the epic journey of a handful of brave Rebel agents across the length of the mighty *Desolate,* the Charon's half-living ship.

Once the Rebels found the key pieces needed to rebuild their shattered hyperdrive, they escaped back into realspace, after narrowly avoiding the Charon bio-fighter attack and apparently sending the Imperial soldier Bane Nothos to his death in the depths of the *Desolate.*

Having learned of the existence of other dimensions filled with the evil that is life, the Charon have realized that their holy mission will not be fulfilled until *all* dimensions are made desolate. When we left them, they were integrating the Imperial Moff Ravik into their biological computer, reading his thoughts and knowledge to learn to build their own hyperdrive....

Subsequent Events

Though the Charon biocomputer was mighty in its knowledge, nothing it had ever encountered was quite like the mind of Moff Ravik. Strong-willed and powerful, Ravik fought the biocomputer, and was able to resist the total destruction of his personality, storing his thoughts, memories, and ambitions intact within a large section of the computer's memory banks. A bodiless entity, he waited, floating in a sea of data and probability, biding his time.

Meanwhile, the Charon continued to work feverishly on their dimension-spanning hyperdrive, led by the burning fanaticism of their leader and prophet, Ber'asco. After months of labor, they were ready. On that day, Ber'asco mind-linked the biocomputer for the final jump coordinates.

Ravik was there, waiting for him.

An epic struggle followed. The sanity of both combatants was flayed and rent in the battle ...

but finally Ravik triumphed, taking over the Charon leader's body, and banishing Ber'asco's mind to the depths of the biocomputer's memory. And now it is Ravik who leads the Charon on a quest for the destruction of the galaxy.

Recent Events

Before entering realspace, Ravik ordered his new subjects to build him a construct (the Charon bioscience is based upon what amounts to sculpting of living beings) resembling his old human body, long since dismantled for study. The Charon, did their best, but they did not really understand the human form.

In short, the bioscientists built him a creature out of nightmare, a terrible cross between a human being and a Charon warrior. Already greatly unbalanced by his travails, Ravik was actually pleased with his monstrous new body. Once his mindforce was transferred to the construct, Ravik ordered the jump to our galaxy.

Very unfortunately for the Rebellion, the *Celestial* had been *en route* to the Rebel safe planet Stronghold when it entered otherspace. Before the accident, Ravik had memorized the prison planet's hyperjump coordinates, hoping that, in the event he effected his escape, Ravik would be able to lead Imperial forces directly to the Rebel world.

Thus, when he led the Charon from otherspace into realspace, he inputted the jump coordinates he knew best — those of the Rebel planet Stronghold. Virtually defenseless against space attack, the Rebel planet would be at Ravik's mercy.

But then a new factor entered the game. During the events portrayed in *Otherspace,* the Rebels fought an Imperial Commander named Bane Nothos, who they sent plunging to his (apparent) death off of one of the *Desolate's* upper levels into the depths of the Charon ship. Though the Rebels did not know it, Nothos survived, his fall broken by the ubiquitous webs strung all over the alien vessel. Shortly thereafter he was captured and placed in cryogenic sleep in one of the ship's storage pods.

After months of inhumanly-patient searching from within the memory banks of the biocomputer, Ber'asco discovered the computer link to Nothos's cryo-storage pod. Just as the *Desolate* made the jump into hyperspace, Ber'asco transferred his mind into Nothos's body, and activated the pod's waking cycle.

As the mighty *Desolate* entered realspace, the now mobile Ber'asco made a final bid for power, attempting to wrest control of the great living ship's biocomputer from Ravik. He did not succeed, but his efforts caused the biocomputer to mistime the entry into realspace — emerging perilously close to the planet, burning out the

vessel's hyper- and sublight engines.

All control gone, the giant ship screamed through the planet's atmosphere and smashed onto the surface — hard. But the *Desolate* was built well. Though most of the Charon perished, around 200 warriors and bioscientists survived, as did Ravik and Ber'asco. Recovering quickly from the great disaster, Ravik's much-diminished forces moved quickly to secure this strange planet.

The defending forces were caught completely unprepared, and the Rebel soldiers were easily overcome and captured — though they did buy the civilians precious time to get into hiding. Many civilians were captured, to be used in the Charon construct experiments, but the bulk of them fled into the secret tunnels and chambers prepared for the eventuality of an Imperial attack.

Only one thing has gone badly wrong for the Charon. The Rebels' hyperdrive-equipped ships were hidden, to prevent Imperial spys from spotting them, and the aliens haven't been able to find the secret shipyard. The remaining Rebel forces wait in hiding for relief, hoping that the Charon warriors do not find the hyperdrive ships before help arrives.

But despite this setback, the Charon's plans are proceeding apace. Bioscientists are using parts cannibalized from the now-dead *Desolate* to make a death mist generator (a sort of poison-gas factory creating a hallucinogenic mist) and other artifacts of conquest. They plan to secure Stronghold first, then look for hyperdrive-equipped ships to carry them to other battles. When they do, the galaxy will die.

Setting the Tone

Invasion is a horror story. Ugly, disgusting, infinitely *evil* aliens from another galaxy have taken over a planet, butchered hundreds of unarmed civilians, and are performing the most terrible experiments on others that they have captured. If the Charon escape into space, untold billions on other planets will suffer the same fate.

As gamemaster, it is your job to emphasize the nastiness of the situation to the players. When describing settings and encounters, think about all of the horror movies you have seen, and liberally incorporate the scariest bits into your narrative. Be colorful — almost lurid — in your descriptions, and don't be afraid to overdo it:

Don't say: "Okay, this big spider-guy leaps out of the doorway and rushes toward you. What do you do?" Say: "A huge creature lunges out of the doorway. It's covered with some kind of night-black chitinous exoskeleton, and it stands on four clawed legs. Two sets of arms reach out from its upper body, one set with three short finger-like appendages, the other with huge pincer claws which drip ichor and clash open and shut menacingly. It has four eyes, two large ones set on either side of its narrow head, and two smaller ones above and behind the larger. Its mouth is an obscene hole in the middle of its face, filled with drooling tentacles and bracketed by sharp mandibles. Seeing you, it emits a high-pitched, chittering scream and stalks toward you with inhuman speed. What do you do?"

Don't say: "The corridor is empty." Say: "The corridor stretches away from you into the darkness. A warm, damp breeze blows into your face, carrying the smell of old blood, along with the sickeningly-sweet scent of something quite unnatural and alien. The walls are scored and pitted as if by blaster-fire, and there's a rust-brown stain at about the level of your head. Faint sounds of movement — and is that a scream? — echo from down the corridor. You feel as if you are being watched."

Other tips on setting the tone are scattered throughout the text.

The Main NPCs

Here are brief descriptions of the plans, motivations and backgrounds of the major non-player characters. More information is available in the pullout section and in the episodes in which the characters appear.

Ber'asco: Former leader of the Charon warriors; now Ber'asco is imprisoned within the body of Bane Nothos. He plots to kill Moff Ravik. Somewhat unbalanced by his own ordeal, he sees the Charon loyalty to Ravik as a betrayal, and has vowed to send all but himself to the Void. He will aid the Rebels, but only to further his own demented ends.

Moff Ravik: Ravik is a former Imperial Governor and Grand Moff. He came to otherspace as part of the hyperdrive accident chronicled in *Otherspace,* and while there learned enough of Charon history and culture to realize what a potent fighting force they would make. He seeks to lead them against Alliance and Empire alike, and establish himself as Emperor. Failing in his first bid to wrest control from Ber'asco, he was integrated into the Charon biocomputer — but he was able to keep his personality intact within the computer's memory banks.

Now Ravik controls the Charon, having overcome Ber'asco's mind force in a titanic mental struggle within the microscopic pathways of the computer. Ravik, his construct body encased in specially-grown Charon battle armor, sees his plans coming to fruition just as he had first envisioned them. He is almost totally mad.

Markos Tor: A valiant Alliance fighter, Tor is the only uncaptured combat veteran on Stronghold. The *de facto* leader of the surviving Rebels, he is very concerned for his family and friends — less so for himself. He knows that if the Charon find the hidden starships, many millions of lives will be lost … and he will not allow that to happen. Whether he lives or dies is unimportant.

Charon: Charon are spider-like beings from a faraway portion of otherspace. They are tall and thin with multiple appendages. Their sharp claws secrete a nerve poison which they use to paralyze their enemies. Charon are excellent climbers, and spin webs much the way spiders do. The death-cult which has come to realspace was once led by Ber'asco, worshipping the Void and the eternal destruction it represents.

The Charon have long ago lost the free will to think or act independently of the dream. Their one goal is to carry the Void (death) to all portions of the galaxy. Then and only then will they be fulfilled.

The Adventure Timetable

In this adventure, certain events occur regardless of what actions the Rebels take (although some other events will occur, no doubt, *because* of the Rebels' actions). The Charon are working with a specific plan in mind, and if the PCs tarry too long, the plan will be executed — as will the remaining Alliance forces on Stronghold.

Event One (0800 hours): Ravik establishes a defensive perimeter and sends out groups of Charon warriors to patrol the base. As of 0800 hours, Charon battle patrols of two warriors each randomly move about the corridors of Stronghold, seeking the hidden shipyard and stray Rebels to be questioned and brought back to the bioscientists.

Event Two (1030 hours): Charon bioscientists repair/recreate the death mist generator salvaged from *Desolate.* By 1030 hours, the red mist begins to seep from the machine.

Event Three (1130 hours): Stronghold is a mountainous world of high peaks, mighty waterfalls, plunging chasms — and terrible storms. At 1130 hours, a great storm begins moving in from the east. Its effects will be felt throughout the rest of the adventure.

Event Four (1200 hours): Bioscientists activate the Alliance command computer, learning the whereabouts of the Rebel shipyard.

Event Five (1230 hours): Ravik sends minor forces to the shipyard to cordon the area, and prepares a mass attack. Bioscientists complete the initial wave of constructs made from captured Alliance soldiers, and add them to the attacking forces.

Event Six (1300 hours): The death mist begins to permeate the area, flowing through the base and ultimately blanketing the surface in the hallucinogenic Charon poison, affecting all humans (except Nothos/Ber'asco and the Ravik construct) in the area.

Event Seven (1315 hours): The storm breaks with full force, slowing the Charon and partially washing away the death mist, bringing a spectacular lightning storm to the area.

Event Eight (1330 hours): The Charon attack the Rebel forces near the shipyard, and attempt to capture the hyperdrive ships.

The above timetable assumes that the PCs do nothing significant to thwart the Charon. If this were to happen, the Charon would most likely capture the ships and begin their conquest of the galaxy. Your PCs should accomplish one or more of the following (the consequences of each action are explored in full in the appropriate episode):
• Access the Alliance computer, locate the remaining Rebel forces (and the shipyard), and then destroy the computer, delaying the Charon's discovery of the shipyard's location.
• Rescue the remaining Rebel soldiers from the bioscientists.
• Contact the hidden Rebel forces (especially Markos Tor), and lead them to the rescued soldiers, thus creating a potent fighting force.
• Explore the remains of the crashed *Desolate,* and speak to Nothos/Ber'asco, enlisting his aid against Ravik.
• Put the death mist generator out of action.
• Locate the Charon armory, and either sabotage their battle armor or destroy it outright.
• Destroy as many Charon as possible.
•Get a message to Alliance High Command, warning them of the situation.

Episode One
To Meet a Madman

Summary

The adventure begins as the Rebel heroes approach Taldot sector. Their mission: investigate the mysterious loss of contact with Stronghold, and report back to Alliance High Command. Immediately upon entering the system, they are confronted by a half-mad Rebel pilot — and a sinister and foreboding silence from the planet below.

Read Aloud

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away ...

The Alliance safe world of Stronghold has not communicated with Alliance High Command for a week. A small group of Rebel heroes makes its way to Taldot sector, fearing that the secret Alliance base has been discovered by the Empire. Their mission: investigate, and report to Alliance High Command.

What they find on Stronghold will test their abilities to their limits — and beyond. If they fail, then the galaxy may die ...

Start the Adventure

Locate the script in the pullout section. Assign each player a part, from "1st" through "6th" Rebel.

Note that "Rebel 1" has an additional reason for wanting to find out what is going on at Stronghold — he has a family member on the planet! Before play begins, take "Rebel 1" aside, and together decide exactly who is on the planet below, a brother, sister, or parent. Throughout the adventure, you can use this relative as a goad if the players are dawdling, either by having the PC make faint contact with the relative through the Force, or simply by wondering aloud what is happening to him or her from time to time.

If the players do well, the Rebel and his or her relative will be joyfully reunited when the Rebels rescue the prisoners in the Construct Chamber. If not, they will meet on the field of battle, under much more unpleasant circumstances.

If you have fewer than six players, assign additional parts as necessary. Pass out the script (we suggest that you photocopy it six times, but if you don't have access to a copy machine you can all share the copy from the pullout), and begin after you have read the read-aloud. When the players finish the script, the adventure is underway!

The Mad Pilot

The ship the Rebels meet is piloted by Piret Akarias, a Rebel pilot stationed on Stronghold for R&R. When the Charon ship crashed on the planet and began its attack, Piret joined the defenders. His band of fighters were quickly overwhelmed and captured, and their group was carted off for the bioscientists' construct-making experiments.

Luckily, he was able to escape and make his way to the Rebel shipyard, but the horrors he has endured have driven Piret mad. Somewhere in his terror-filled mind, he realized that the invaders must not find the base's ships and, with the cunning of the truly mad, he was able to take off in secret, without revealing the location of the shipyard to the Charon.

Now all he wants to do is to escape. Given enough time, he will recover his senses (and

remember very little of what occurred), but for now he is willing to fight anyone in his way — even an Alliance crew.

Standoff

Piret is piloting a modified stock light freighter, and the Rebels are manning the modified short hauler *Long Shot* (unless your PCs have their own ship). Roleplaying stats are given below for the two ships.

But it need not come to blows. Give the Rebels a chance to talk Piret out of firing: he will listen to reasonable arguments that do not delay him for too long in this system, and a Difficult *command* or *con* roll helps put him in a more receptive frame of mind. If the Rebels do exceptionally well, Piret may even say something about what has happened on the planet. For example:

PCs: Unidentified Alliance vessel — this is the Alliance ship *Long Shot*. Cease hostilities, repeat, cease hostilities. We're on the same side!

Piret: You're not … them? Then hurry, let me go! I've got to get out of here right now! And you'd better do the same!

PCs: Whoa, just a second (make Difficult *command* roll). There's no danger here now. Just tell us what happened and then you can go.

Piret: No time! They'll kill us all! We've got to run!

PCs: Well, we'll go with you in just a second. But we've got to go down to the planet first to, uh, pick up something important.

Piret: Go down! You can't! They're everywhere — they've killed everyone! Don't land or they'll kill you too! And then they'll have your ship and they'll come after *me!* Nooooo …

No matter what the Rebels do, Piret will not give them any hard information. His mind has been severely damaged by his terrible experiences; even Force skills have little chance of penetrating the haze of fear and terror. He refuses to stick around (and will absolutely not come aboard the Rebels' ship), and jumps to hyperspace at the earliest opportunity.

If the Rebels are trigger happy, or the conversation takes a combative turn, Piret will open fire on the Rebels while moving away at full speed. If they do not follow, he jumps away. If they force him to, he fights to the death. If the Rebels somehow take him aboard, he raves about the horrible monsters on the planet, and then lapses into deep unconsciousness.

If the Rebels' ship is seriously damaged or destroyed in the battle, it spirals toward Stronghold, and they can effect a crash landing. Go directly to episode two. Otherwise, continue with "A High Reconnoiter."

The Distress Call

If, after their meeting with Piret (or at any time thereafter), the Rebels contemplate leaving the system and making an incomplete report to High Command, insert the following read-aloud. You may use this read-aloud anyway, even if the Rebels intend to stay and reconnoiter further, to heighten the tension. It is a cry for help from "Rebel 1's" family member.

You (point to Rebel 1) **feel a little odd all of a sudden, a little disoriented. You seem to … you've lost it.** (Pause, let someone else start to speak.) **There it is again!**

Suddenly, you're somewhere else! You're standing in a darkened room, pinned against a wall by a shimmering band of — something. It hurts. Its taking something from you — draining you somehow. Around you you can hear moans and screams — your friends, your comrades are in trouble!

To your right, you hear a strange, alien chittering noise, followed by a particularly loud and piercing scream. You struggle against your bonds, but in vain — you're too weak, dying maybe. As you lapse into unconsciousness, you murmer, "please hurry, (brother, sister, son, as appropriate), we're dying here."

Then, as suddenly as you left, you're back on the ship.

If that doesn't work, and the Rebels insist upon leaving the Taldot system, Alliance High Command takes their report, seems mightily concerned, and requests that they return to gather further information. Advance the Charon Timetable by one hour (for instance, the PCs begin their investigation at 0830 hours instead of 0730 hours).

Rebel Modified Short Hauler *Long Shot:* Hyperdrive multiplier x1. Sublight speed 3D; maneuverability 1D; hull 4D. Weapons: Two laser cannons (fire separately); fire control 3D; damage 5D. Shields 3D.

Modified Stock Light Freighter *Meandering Star:* Hyperdrive multiplier x2. Sublight speed 3D+1; maneuverability 1D; hull 4D+2. Weapons: One laser cannon; fire control 2D; damage 4D+1. Shields 2D+1. *Star Warriors* stats as *Millennium Falcon.*

Piret Akarias: DEX 4D; KNO 2D; MEC 3D+2, Piloting 3D+2, Gunnery 4D, Shields 4D; PER 2D+1; STR 3D; TEC 3D.

A High Reconnoiter

Scanning the surface of Stronghold reveals little, for the base is almost entirely underground and very well shielded. A very weak com signal and some kind of minor atmospheric disturbance seems to be coming from one of the mountain peaks. An Easy *Technical* roll reveals that the com signal is coming from an Imperial personal comlink, not strong enough to reach off the planet's surface. The atmospheric disturbance is the remnants of the Charon death mist, now dissipating in the breeze.

The players don't know it yet, but that is Ber'asco and the wreck of the *Desolate.*

Down to Stronghold

The most logical thing for the Rebels to do is make the descent to Stronghold. If the Rebels show no caution (land right near the *Desolate*, or at the Stronghold entrance), the Charon become aware of their presence and patrols begin immediately (advance the "Charon Timetable" by 30 minutes). Assuming the Rebels exercise a modicum of caution (land outside the perimeter of Stronghold proper, make a gliding landing, etc.), the Charon remain on schedule. If the Rebels want to leave, or wait until dark, or do something equally cautious, use the "Cut Away", below, to make it clear that there is no time to waste. Advance the timetable as necessary.

The Charon Timetable

If the Rebels move quickly and decisively, they land on Stronghold at 0730 hours. This gives them half an hour before the Charon patrols begin. If they move slowly and cautiously, add up to one hour. If their landing is not stealthy, move the timetable up an additional 30 minutes.

R ewarding Fast-Moving Players

Sometimes players have a tendency to mull over evey plan for hours, to ask innumerable questions, and generally take the slow and careful approach. This is anathema to *Star Wars,* which is at its best when run with fast, high-speed action.

One reason players do this is that in other roleplaying games, GMs are told to punish players if their plans aren't perfect. This encourages players to try to anticipate every little detail.

So one way to speed up the game is to reward the players for fast, exciting-sounding ideas — even if they are somewhat flawed in execution. Without being ridiculously lenient, allow bold but slightly flawed plans to succeed. This encourages your players to think fast (translate: exciting) rather than carefully, thus speeding up the action and adding to the thrill!

C ut-Away

As the Rebels make their descent to Stronghold, cut to the following scenes.

Read the character voice of the first cutaway in your best Darth Vader imitation (hollow voice, rasping breath after a few sentences, etc.) With any luck, you'll scare your players half to death. In actuality, the voice is Ravik's, masked by the construct-mouth and the Charon battle armor. Read:

INTERIOR: A DARKENED ROOM ON STRONGHOLD. *The camera pulls in close to a fearsome battle-masked face. The eyes on the facemask seem to glow red.*

"All is proceeding according to plan. Our loss is not a great one; the weak ones here have everything we need. Continue your efforts, and soon this planet shall be ours."

INTERIOR: A NARROW CHAMBER ON STRONGHOLD. *The camera pans across a group of three women and one man clad in Alliance uniforms.*

"Have we any hope at all?" *a woman asks.*

"Yes!" *the man says fiercely.* "There's always hope! When we don't leave the standard messages, they'll send someone to investigate."

He fingers a small scar on his cheek and mutters to himself, "May the force grant they are in time."

Episode Two The Surface of Stronghold

Summary

In this episode, the Rebels have the opportunity to encounter the wreck of the *Desolate* and meet Bane Nothos/Ber'asco. They must conquer several hazards — including mountain peaks and a Charon warrior patrol testing one of the new constructs — in order to gain aid vital to their success.

Background

The Rebels explore the planet's surface, a rocky and mountainous area reminiscent of our own Himalaya range. Though not quite as high or as vast, there are still some forbidding peaks in the Stronghold mountains.

While on the planet's surface, the Rebels encounter a Charon patrol testing one of the first of the new human constructs. Afterwards, if they so choose, they can visit the *Desolate.*

Having learned all there is to be learned on the planet's surface, the heroes eventually enter the base. Access to the underground base is available through several emergency hatches located near the wreck of the *Desolate.*

Encounter Order

As the Rebels make their way across the surface of the planet, they encounter first the chasm, then the Charon patrol, and finally, the *Desolate.* If the Rebels decide to skip the *Desolate* and immediately enter the underground tunnel complex, use the Charon patrol section anyway — before they reach the tunnel entrance. Then skip to episode three. Otherwise, use the following sections in order.

The Chasm

The *Desolate* lies in the middle of a big, open plateau. If the Rebels land there, their ship will be visible for kilometers (advance the timetable by 30 minutes). If they look for a more suitable landing area, an Easy *search* or *planetary systems* roll reveals a good spot a few kilometers away — an enclosed valley just big enough to take their ship. If they fail the roll, the closest area they find is twenty kilometers away, a full day's walk.

In either case, before the Rebels reach the wreck of the *Desolate,* their path is blocked by a great fissure in the rock, extending for kilometers in either direction. Unless they are willing to make a two hour or longer detour, they must make their way across. Once the PCs reach the fissure, read:

> **You round a bend in the path, and are confronted by a gaping chasm in the rock floor. The chasm extends for kilometers in either direction**
>
> **The chasm is 6 or more meters wide — it's hard to tell. You can't see the bottom from here, but it must be a long drop. Protruding rocks make a passage seem possible, if you've the courage.**

If anyone asks, an Easy *planetary systems* roll suggests that the chasm is fresh. This suggests that care must be taken not to further aggravate the fault line with explosions, loud noises, etc. (Although the Rebels have no way of knowing, this fault line was opened by the crash-landing of the *Desolate.)*

The chasm can be crossed by a variety of methods *(climbing* rolls, cutting handholds in the sides with lightsaber or vibro-weapons, slinging ropes from the rock protrusions). If your PCs are particularly clever, allow them to cross unharmed, while, of course, pointing out their extreme vulnerability. (In fact, if your group is very tough, now might be a good time for the Charon

Setting the Tone

The surface of Stronghold is bleak, cold, and depressing. The mountains seem to loom over the Rebels. There is little or no plant or animal life of any kind around; it feels as if the Rebels are the only living beings on the planet. The silence is oppressive. A cold, stiff wind blows from the east, where a huge storm system is visible, rumbling inexorably toward the heroes.

patrol to wander by ...) Keep in mind the weight of Wookiees and equipment, and other limiting factors such as wounds and amount of rope available.

If the Rebels' plan is reasonable, call for Moderate *climbing* rolls as people cross. A failed roll means a heart-stopping clutch for handholds. Perhaps a piece of equipment is lost in the scramble, tumbling from the character's belt or backpack into the darkness below, but nothing more catastrophic occurs. There is certainly no point to wounding or killing the characters this early in the adventure — particularly in an incidental encounter — *unless* they are being outrageously foolish.

The Charon Patrol

This is the first meeting between player character and Charon warrior. If all has gone according to plan, this will be the first inkling the Rebels get that they are up against the Charon. Run this event just before the PCs reach the wreck of the *Desolate,* after the chasm (unless you want them to occur simultaneously). Read:

The rocks all about you are nearly man-sized, making the going difficult. Bumps and scrapes are a matter of course by now, and small cascades of pebbles rattle away despite your best efforts to be quiet. After a particularly loud rattle of stones, you all stop and look accusingly at one another. Then the rattle comes again! A hissing scrape starts up all around you, getting closer and louder!

Give each player a chance to say what his or her character is doing. In between their descriptions of their actions, tell them that the noise is getting louder and nearer and seems to be coming from all around — and above and below! Then, when the last player has spoken, two Charon warriors and a construct attack from the nearest hiding place.

The warriors' statistics are in the pullout section; the construct's are below. The patrol (including the construct) fights to the death.

Construct (The Spiderwalker): DEX 3D, Brawling Parry 4D+1; KNO 2D; MEC 2D; PER 3D, Search 4D+1; STR 4D, Brawling 5D+2; TEC 2D. An obscene meshing of human and Charon genetic material, the construct resembles an ape with eight spider-legs and a cluster of frighteningly human eyes. The creature possesses some of the agility of the spider-beings, but relies mostly on its great strength. It may take two *brawling* attacks per round with no reduction to die codes.

Ending the Battle

The Rebels should easily triumph over this small enemy force. If, somehow, they are all incapacitated, they are carried to the construct chamber and woven into the walls of the room (see episode three). If you wish, they may escape (battered and unready to fight) back to their ship, where they may attempt healing. Two hours' rest lets them recover from the worst of the damage (wounds are healed) but time is now very, very short.

More likely, they will defeat the patrol. An examination of the construct reveals (on a Moderate *alien races* roll) that it is part human, with artificially grown fur and spiderlike appendages grafted on. The poor creature was in terrible pain — as will be all the human captives on Stronghold if the Rebels don't act fast!

The Wreck of the *Desolate*

When the Charon entered realspace, Ber'asco caused the ship's computer to malfunction, causing the vessel to emerge too close to the planetary mass of Stronghold. Badly damaged by the jump, the *Desolate* plunged slowly and terrifyingly toward the planet's surface. The *Desolate* was superbly designed, however, and a great number of Charon (and Ravik and Ber'asco) survived the crash to carry out their campaign of conquest.

The ship itself, however, is damaged well beyond repair, most of it scattered across many hundreds of meters of Stronghold's surface. The main command center is the only section still partly intact. It rests serenely on the surface of the planet, mute testimony to the terrifying exis-

tence of otherspace.

The general area is reminiscent of a post-eruption volcano: a faint red mist still clings to the rock in some areas, pooling mostly in hollows and depressions. Small bits of metal and rock are scattered everywhere.

As the characters approach, read the following:

You top a rise and see a strange, otherworldly vista spread out in the shallow valley below you. A huge bluish-yellow mound rests, tilted at a bizarre angle, amid scattered wisps of a noxious red mist. The mound appears to be made of normal rock, but a great gash in its side reveals a strange orange glow within.

If the Rebels venture inside, read:

Inside, everything is bathed in a pale orange light, which emanates from a half-machinelike growth on the far wall. An orange column runs through the center from floor to ceiling, and several yellow nodules cling to the walls at various points. The rest of this "chamber" is dark and dead.

In another room within the mound, the body of Bane Nothos (now containing the personality code of Ber'asco, former leader of the Charon) lies pinned under a slab of the ship's material. When the Rebels enter the mound, they hear a groan coming from a doorway beyond the column. If they investigate, they see a human arm protruding from beneath a large slab of rock. It

takes a Difficult *Strength* roll to lift the slab; three characters may combine actions in the narrow space.

Once the slab is lifted, the Rebels find "Nothos." He looks like a normal human, weak and emaciated, wearing an Imperial uniform. A Difficult *sense* roll reveals that there is something decidedly strange about his thoughts. It appears to the Force user that there are two distinct entities within that body.

Ber'asco was badly wounded in the crash. He cannot move without help, and cannot function normally without being healed (treat as incapacitated). A medpac works normally on him.

Ber'asco tries to hide his true identity by saying that he is Bane Nothos, an Imperial commander who was imprisoned on board the Charon ship. Now he wishes only to aid the Rebels in destroying the Charon; then he will gladly surrender to the Alliance. (Note: Ber'asco is carrying the comlink the Rebels picked up on their scanners; he explains that he was carrying it in the hopes of contacting someone — anyone — to warn them of the danger of the Charon.)

Though cleverly able to mask signs of his mental disorder, Ber'asco has gone mad. He sees Ravik's takeover as a betrayal by his own former followers, and he plans to send all betrayers (including the Rebel PCs, when the time is right) to the Void. Thus, he will gladly help the Rebels until he defeats Ravik.

Suspicious (or Force-using) Rebels might question Nothos's story. If he discerns that the Rebels are suspicious, he admits that he is the mind of Ber'asco.

"I am one of the race that you call Charon. I now possess this body, as the traitor Ravik possesses my body. I am Ber'asco. I led the Charon in otherspace, but was deposed before our attack on your realm. Still, I can help you.

"The disease is strong. Ravik-culture leads the Charon. I battled his mind-construct — I was the weaker and was banished into this weak body for all eternity! Yet, there is aid I can give."

Ber'asco will answer other questions in keeping with the following guidelines:

1. Time is short, and Ber'asco knows it. He cannot spend too long discoursing with these humans, or Ravik will find hyperdrive ships and escape into this galaxy — before he, Ber'asco, has a chance to bring the Void upon them all.

2. Ber'asco might live again if only he can come into contact with his old body, and engage in mental battle with Ravik once more. The outcome is not certain, but he must try.

Ber'asco is at best a dangerous ally. He is mad, and wishes to destroy the Rebels as much as he wishes to destroy Ravik and his traitorous warriors and scientists. He will help the Rebels only to help himself. On the other hand, his aid will be invaluable later in the adventure. If the PCs decide not to trust him, he is easily imprisoned on board the Rebels' ship.

If the Rebels *don't* reach *Desolate,* you will have to come up with another way for them to meet Ber'asco/Nothos. Perhaps, later in the adventure, when they are deep inside the underground base, they meet him stumbling about, nearly dead, but still attempting to reach Ravik. He will tell the Rebels that he has just recently escaped the wreck, and is looking for other humans to help him kill the Charon. If pressed, he will admit who he really is, as above.

Going Underground

There's nothing more to be learned on the planet's surface. Now the Rebels must penetrate the underground tunnel complex and battle the Charon on what has become their home territory. After making their way down the path and back across the chasm, they arrive at the entrance to the tunnel complex. The entrance is not guarded (Ravik is more worried about attack from within than from without). If the Rebels have moved rapidly and decisively, the time is now 0815. If they have been slow and cautious, it is 0845 or later.

Proceed to episode three.

E pisode Three Stronghold

Summary

In this episode, the Rebel heroes must search the tunnels of Stronghold and remain hidden from Charon patrols, all the while engaged in a desperate race against time to find the hidden shipyard and unite the Rebel forces. All of Stronghold is open to exploration, and the Rebels' accomplishments are limited only by their ingenuity — and their courage.

Information About Stronghold

The Stronghold base is a vast underground tunnel complex, carved from the living rock by Alliance engineers. Though of little direct military value, it is an ideal hiding-place for the families of Rebel front-line soldiers; while in Stronghold, they are protected from Imperial discovery. Stronghold is also employed as a prison planet from time to time, though there are no Imperial prisoners currently incarcerated there.

Stronghold base is a series of interconnected tunnels spread over an area of about eight square kilometers. About 250 men, women, and children live in Stronghold at any one time; 150 have been killed or captured by the Charon. The survivors have fled into the tunnels; they now wait, terrified in the dark, for someone to lead them.

Stronghold's shipyard is located about three kilometers from the base proper. It contains a rather motly collection of fighters and short haulers — of dubious military value, except to the Charon, who are desperate for *any* spaceworthy craft to get them off this planet.

An underground secret passage leads directly from Stronghold to the shipyard. The entrance to the passage is right near the Charon control center, and though the Charon haven't discovered it yet, Charon patrols in the area are extremely heavy, keeping the Rebels from accessing it to escape or to set the self-destruct mechanism.

Charon Patrols

Charon patrols begin at 0800 hours. A patrol consists of two Charon warriors (templates can be found in the pullout section). If either warrior is incapacitated or killed, the other attempts to escape and report to Ravik. If a warrior survives to make its report, Ravik increases subsequent patrols to four warriors each.

The patrols continue until the Charon bioscientists break the Alliance computer code and discover the whereabouts of the shipyard, at which time all warriors assemble for the final assault.

Death Mist

Once the base was secured, the Charon immediately began construction of a new death mist generator. Death mist is a Charon weapon, and the primary tool in their mission to eradicate life from the universe. In small doses it causes pain, madness, and hallucinations as it attacks the nerve cells in the brain. Larger doses lead to death. The Charon themselves are immune to the lethal mist.

Ravik is patient and shrewd. He realizes that with his limited resources, a concerted attack by a united foe could defeat him — his initial victory owed much to the element of surprise. Thus, to strengthen the defensive position of Stronghold, he plans to flood the entire underground complex with death mist. The hidden Rebel forces will be overcome without the need for a costly campaign of eradication, and future attackers would be at a great disadvantage fighting within the mist. If left unhindered, the Charon bioscientists will complete the new generator at 1030 hours.

The Great Storm

Regardless of any other actions (no matter how clever your players are, they can't change the weather), a huge storm moves into the area at 1130 hours. Any PCs above ground at or near this time notice the deteriorating weather conditions, which grow in severity as time passes.

The Constructs

The Charon are able to mold and change living tissue, creating whatever they need from the

Setting the Tone

Once a bustling, happy place, filled with light and with the laughter of children, Stronghold has been turned into a charnal house. Over 50 Rebels have died fighting in its hallways. The air is filled with the smell of fire, blood, and the stench of the Charon themselves.

Though still quite sound, the base was damaged during the battle. The main power supply is down; emergency lighting—dim and red—provides the only source of illumination in the dark hallways. The entire base is damp from the firefighting sprinklers which came on automatically during the battle, and live wires spark and jump constantly as they come into contact with the water.

Even when the PCs are alone, the base is never quite silent. The high-pitched chittering of the Charon can always be heard echoing down the corridors, accompanied by a very low, very heavy, breathing noise (the death mist generator) and punctuated occasionally by human screams from the Construct Chamber.

The rooms and hallways are pitted and scarred by blaster fire; here and there the bodies of Rebels lie in pathetic, lifeless heaps on the floor.

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flesh of captured races. These "constructs" are near-mindless slaves, in constant pain, and with but a shadow of a memory of what they once were.

In a chamber within the Stronghold complex, bioscientists labor to complete human constructs built from captured Alliance soldiers. If they complete this process, the Charon will have additional forces to aid them in their campaigns — and 100 Rebels will have died in agony.

Events, Locations, and the Map of Stronghold

The map of Stronghold base found in the pullout section details the upper layer and interior passages and chambers of the safe world's main complex. Other side tunnels (which crisscross each other and lead nowhere) are not shown.

Allow the PCs to travel wherever they wish within or above Stronghold. The moment the adventure tempo loses its fast, exciting pace, use one of the marked events or a Charon patrol to spice things up. Also, as the Rebels take time to accomplish things, advance the Charon timetable and use those events as well. Game time advances about 15 minutes for every room the

Rebels visit, or every rest-stop or full-fledged encounter they have.

Event One: A Rebel Group

Run this event when the PCs have explored about half the map of Stonghold, or shortly after a party member is incapacitated. As usual, experienced gamemasters may run this event whenever they wish.

The Rebels hear a scrabbling noise in the rock, similar to the Charon Patrol event in episode two. Up ahead, three terrified and very young Rebel "soldiers" (15 years old and under) cower in the rubble, waiting for the party to pass. A Moderate *search* check reveals a young Mon Calamari peeking out from behind the rocks. An Easy check tells the character that something is hiding.

If the Rebel PCs get trigger-happy, let them come up just short of firing (or let them waste a few shots) as the young faces are seen for the first time. The PCs have to roleplay to get the children to trust them enough to come out.

This group of "Rebels" has only one blaster between them, but they have three medpacs. They will follow the PCs and do as they say—as long as there is no danger involved. If a fight breaks out or similar danger occurs, they freeze, run or hide (or the most annoying combination of the preceding) as appropriate. Treat them more as pets or liabilities than as traveling companions. Don't let the heroes use them to their advantage.

The young Rebels know the general layout of Stronghold (give the players the schematic), but don't know where the other survivors are hiding — or, in fact, if there are any other survivors. Though the Rebels normally travel to and from the shipyard above the ground, the kids know approximately where the secret entrance to the

shipyard tunnel is — "uh, somewhere near the Research Labs, I think ..." "You're crazy. It's just outside of Admin. I know 'cause my best friend's father's brother's clanmate helped dig the thing and her grandson's cousin told my sister ..."

Event Two: The Charon Find the Shipyard

Read the cut-away below at 1200 hours if the PCs have not destroyed the Alliance computer, at 1300 hours if they have. Alternatively, read it once the Rebels have accomplished everything there is to do, or once they have set the self-destruct mechanism in the shipyard.

Event two ends episode three, as the Charon prepare to attack the shipyard. When this event occurs, use the cut-away below.

Gamemaster Map Key

Empty Rooms

In some of these rooms, the Rebels find evidence of hasty evacuation rather than full-scale battle. A Moderate *command* roll suggests that there are still Rebel forces hidden about the base. In each room, have searching Rebels make a Difficult *search* roll. If they succeed, roll one die on the table below (or pick an entry) to determine what the character has found.

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ut-Away to Charon Command Central

Read aloud:

INTERIOR: STRONGHOLD, THE CHARON COMMAND POST. *The camera follows a Charon warrior as he strides purposefully up to an imposing figure in black battle armor. All about, Charon warriors and bioscientists move to unguessable locations with great speed.*

The warrior stands before the awesome figure, which hisses a command in the Charon language. The warrior replies.

Subtitled: "The location of the shipyard has been discovered, my lord and prophet."

Subtitled: "Very good. Very, very good indeed! Recall all patrols, send a scouting party to make certain of your find, and assemble the line of battle. Soon we shall be free of this planet— free to spread our Holy War across this tainted galaxy! Go!"

Room Search Table

Roll one die:
1. Charon patrol (stats are in the pullout section).
2. Nothing.
3. Blaster and one extra energy pack.
4. Medpac.
5. Computer Access Card (see the "Alliance Computer Command" entry).
6. Copy of the Stronghold schematic on holo; give the players the pullout schematic map when this is rolled for the first time.

Surface Tunnels

In the marked positions, disguised hatchways provide surface access to the tunnel complex of Stronghold. The hatchways are not superbly engineered (they are designed mainly to pass a cursory inspection) so it takes only an Easy *search* roll to notice the proper mechanism.

Death Mist Generator

In this chamber, the Charon bioscientists labor furiously to rebuild their death mist generator. Once the Stronghold corridors are flooded with death mist, Ravik believes he will have nothing further to fear from the scattered Rebel forces. Read the following aloud as the PCs enter this room:

This chamber is vast, damp, and gloomy. From the far end you can barely see shapes moving about in the dim light, clustering around a larger shape that could be a boulder or a machine. The shapes move silently, with speed and purpose. No one has noticed your entrance.

If the Rebels duck back out of sight, they will not be discovered. If they attack, one bioscientist flees by the other entrance to find a patrol of warriors. The remaining six scientists adopt a defensive posture (full dodge) and wait for the warriors, attacking only if the generator is threatened. A patrol of two warriors arrives five rounds after the scientist flees, or 10 rounds after the first shot is fired.

When they enter this room, let each Rebel make a Difficult *cultures* roll. For PCs who have been through the *Otherspace* adventure, the roll is Moderate. Give any who succeed more details: it appears to be a cross between a machine and a living object, with extending pipes as though it is intended to circulate air or water. Any who make a Difficult *Perception* roll see small wisps of red mist collecting around the base of the machine.
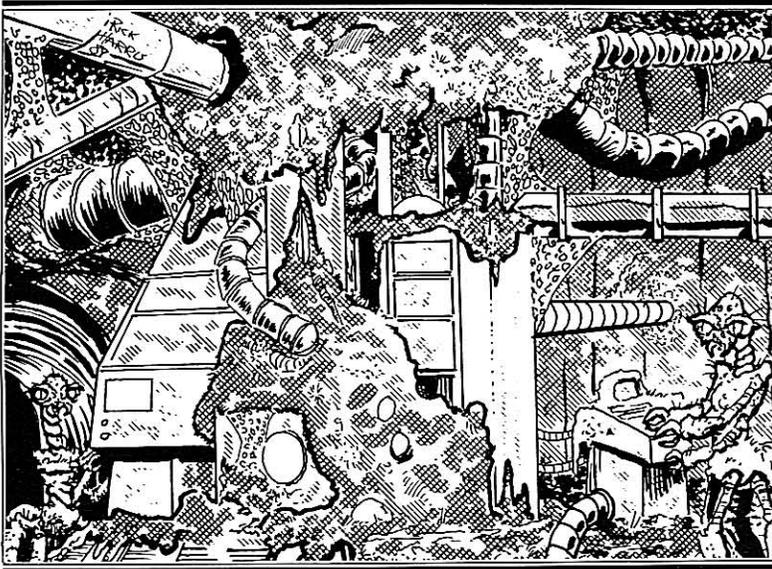
To cross the chamber without being spotted requires one Easy and one Moderate *hide/sneak* roll. If the first roll fails, the character is spotted as he enters the chamber. If the second roll fails, he is spotted five or 10 meters in. If both rolls succeed, the character reaches his objective without being seen.

Once the scientists are disposed of, the machine can be destroyed with a well-set detonator (Easy *demolition* roll), or 15 rounds of concerted breakage/blaster bolts.

Alliance Computer Command Room

This is the room the heroes have been looking for: the Computer Command room holding the secret to the shipyard's location. Several Charon bioscientists are here, trying to break the codes, a task made more difficult by their inability to understand human thought-patterns. Once they succeed, they will access the computer for the location of the shipyard.

When the Rebels approach, they hear much claw-clacking and hissing, as the scientists consult one another over problems. When they reach the chamber itself, read:

This is a very large, very well-lit room, although the Charon have made a half-hearted attempt to break some glowtubes to reduce the glare. There are many Charon here, bustling about importantly — mostly bioscientists, but you also see four warriors.

You have no doubt that this is the Alliance command center. The computers, the communications console, and the holotank make it obvious. It's not clear what the Charon want here, but they are working feverishly on the computer. No one apppears to notice your arrival.

If anyone makes an Easy *bureaucracy* or *technology* roll, give them a hint as to what the Charon

are up to (if the players haven't figured it out on their own already). Make sure they understand the urgency of the situation: if the Charon get their claws on hyperdrive ships, they could spread their destruction across the galaxy in a matter of days. If Nothos/Ber'asco is with the Rebels, he strongly urges them to stop the scientists, without explaining why.

There are four warriors and seven bioscientists in the room, working to understand and crack the Alliance computer codes. The Rebels may take them on in a straight firefight (one warrior and two scientists break for the exits to try to warn Ravik), or they may try a diversion (Ber'asco suggests this if he is asked).

Any unusual noise in the corridor draws two warriors (where they can be ambushed); or a Force-user may try to make everyone in the room believe that an order was just issued to report to Ravik. The Force-user gets to double his or her skill roll (the Charon follow commands without question). If anyone makes a Very Difficult *languages* roll and a Moderate *con* roll, he can issue such an order verbally from the darkened hallway, or through the base's communications system from a nearby wall-mounted comlink.

Ber'asco will issue such an order perfectly, if asked. If the Rebels haven't discovered that this is Ber'asco, "Nothos" explains that he picked up the language while hiding on the alien ship.

M aking Sneaking Around Exciting

One of the most thrilling (and often terrifying) experiences possible is to move about in the dark, not knowing what is around you. This is why amusement park "tunnels of horror" are so popular. It is difficult, however, to capture this feeling in a roleplaying game.

To help make your *Star Wars* adventures more exciting, try to make even the empty rooms a heart-stopping experience. Use your voice as though you were telling a ghost story; don't be afraid to call for, say, a Moderate *Perception* check even when there's nothing there. Tell any players who miss the roll that their characters sense something moving up behind them, about to strike. After they dive away (or whirl around with blasters blazing, or whatever), tell them it was nothing after all — must have been the darkness playing tricks on their senses. Even though nothing happened, the possible danger will add immeasurably to the roleplaying experience.

In other words, in *Star Wars*, even when nothing happens it should be exciting!

Note: The "false order" ruse will work only once — or for a short time, at best. When Ravik figures out what happened, he orders all of his forces to respond only to commands issued by another fully-visible Charon.

Assuming the Rebels are able to clear the room, they have about 15 minutes before another patrol shows up (20 rounds if anyone got away to warn Ravik), and an hour before another squad of four warriors and seven bioscientists arrives to relieve the first group. During that time, they may attempt to accomplish any of the following (each takes 15 minutes):

1. Contact Alliance High Command and drop a report into the hidden-satellite communications loop (see *The Star Wars Campaign Pack* for a detailed explanation of this communications method — essentially it involves dropping a message at an agreed-upon point, rather than beaming the message direct and risking Imperial discovery). This earns them greater skill rewards at the end of the adventure, but has no immediate benefit; in fact, it will alert Ravik to a human presence in the command room, and seven warriors arrive in five minutes.

2. Access the Computer to Find the Shipyard. This requires a Difficult *computer programming* roll. If they have found a computer access card, the roll is Easy; a Droid succeeds automatically.

3. Access the Computer for a Datapad Display of the Base Layout. This succeeds automatically. Give the players the schematic from the pullout section.

4. Destroy the Computer. Easy *demolition* roll, or Difficult *computer programming* roll if they want to leave the computer intact and just wipe the shipyard's location out of memory. This delays Charon discovery of the shipyard location by one hour — from 1200 to 1300 hours, pushing back the timetable (except the storm, of course) by an equivalent amount.

5. Replay the Holo-Record of the Charon Attack. Easy *programming* roll. The *Desolate* appears very near the planet's surface, crash-lands, and disgorges the attacking Charon hordes. The view cuts to the base command room, where the Rebels see the personnel scrambling to lock the computer controls, then fleeing out the various exits. A man stops in front of the holo-cameras and says, "This is Markos Tor. Using our third-level code, look for us at the 'gowcara.' If you can, get to the shipyard and set the self-destruct. I'm going to try, but I think there are too many of them." All the Rebels know the code: the word Tor used is Sullust for "cascade." (See the pullout for Tor's physical description.)

6. Access the Holocameras for Realtime Viewing of Rooms within the Base. Moderate *computer programming* roll. About half of the base's internal holocams were ruined in the battle — most victims of the firefighting system, rather than outright blaster damage. When the players tell you where their character are looking, roll a die: on a 4-6, the holocam is operational. See individual room entries for descriptions of what is happening within.

The holocams within the shipyards are operational (no fighting took place there); there are no holocams in the Rebels' hiding place within the caverns.

The Cascade

In this great natural cavern, which is open to the planet's surface, a cascade of water tumbles from a river above, forming a clear, lovely pool in the center of the cavern. Because of the way the light from the sun strikes the crystals in the cave wall, the cascade sparkles with the colors of a thousand rainbows.

The cascade is more than beautiful, as perceptive Rebels and those who have been to the Alliance Computer Command room will find: behind the water, cunningly concealed, is the entrance to the tunnel complex where the remaining free Rebels are hiding.

When the heroes near this chamber, read the following:

Up ahead you hear a hissing, roaring sound that is hard to identify. It gets louder as you approach: if there is anyone in the chamber up ahead, you couldn't possibly hear them, nor they you, over the noise.

When the PCs enter the chamber, they see:

A mighty torrent of water rushes from a gap in the ceiling of this huge chamber, and tumbles down a sparkling, sun-lit path to a pool below, where it rushes away into a crevice in the chamber floor. A channel has been etched into the north wall of the cavern by the millennia's passing of this rainbow cascade.

Rebels who heard the holotank message in the Alliance Command room should have no trouble finding the secret door cut in the rock behind the cascade. Others require a Very Difficult *search* roll, or Moderate *search* roll if they declare that they are looking behind the waterfall specifically. Once found, the door opens easily with a gentle push.

Markos Tor and the Remaining Rebels

Just behind the cascade door is a group of five Rebel "soldiers:" two wounded troopers, two oldsters, and a young mother. However, a blaster is a blaster, and all five are armed and concealed behind medium cover, in the dark. A PC who makes a Difficult *Perception* check hears a slight rustle as the guards move into position; otherwise, once all the PCs are inside, they are quite startled when a voice rings out:

"Hold it right there before we blast ye," grates an old human voice. "What's the password? Friend or foe?"

Let the players roleplay their way out of this one. There isn't actually any password; the old commander of the scratch guard unit is simply scared nearly to death. The guards certainly won't shoot at humans without severe provocation (though you might call for an Easy *command* roll to keep the players nervous). If the PCs get itchy trigger fingers, the guards will execute a fighting retreat and run to find the other Rebels hidden nearby.

Stronghold Rebels: DEX 2D+1, blaster 3D+1, dodge 3D+2; PER 2D+2, hide/sneak 4D. All other attributes and skills 2D. Blaster damage 4D.

Once they know who the PCs are, one of the guards escorts the heroes through a twisting, turning maze of tunnels, to a chamber where Markos Tor has set up an impromptu command post. Tor greets the Rebel heroes warmly, fills them in on any details of the invasion they may not know, and asks gravely if they can spare one medpac for a wounded Alliance fighter. If the heroes have the "Rebel group" (encounter one)

Darkness on the Battlefield

D Darkness and other battlefield conditions can obscure targets, making combat more difficult. Firing at a fully obscured target adds +10 to the difficulty number; darkness in a cave would fully obscure a target. The darkness inside a dimly-lit tunnel within the Stronghold complex would partially obscure the target, adding +5 to the difficulty. If the target has been spotted (if the attacker has seen the defender fire a blaster, for example), the environment acts as medium cover, adding +2 to the difficulty number.

Spotting an obscured character requires a *Perception* check, which counts as an action. If the obscured chracter is silent and did not move last round the check is Difficult; if the character made noise or moved last round the check is Moderate; and if the character fired a blaster last round the check is Easy.

The Charon are used to the gloom inside the tunnels (being underground dwellers themselves) — their difficulty number to hit does not change.

or the freed prisoners with them, there is a joyful reunion.

Markos Tor is the only able-bodied Rebel fighter on Stronghold still free; the others have all been captured and taken to the construct-chamber. Tor was on leave at the safe-world visiting his wife and new baby when the attack occurred and, as the highest-ranked warrior, he naturally took command. He is a noble and heroic man, but a little out of his depth. He knows the tunnels fairly well, but will bow to the PCs' decisions at all times, frankly rather gratified to be able to turn over command to somebody else.

If the Rebel soldiers are still imprisoned in the construct chamber, Tor suggests making that the first priority. If they are already free, Tor explains the danger of the Charon finding the Rebel shipyard. He tells the Rebel heroes its location (if they haven't learned it themselves), and gladly joins them in an attempt to break through the Charon patrols to set the self-destruct.

At the PCs' request he sends a lieutenant to gather the Rebel forces for a rendezvous at a time and place of the PCs' choosing. The NPC Rebels have enough blasters for 10 of their people to go armed (though there are many additional weapons in the shipyard). Tor and two other Rebels will accompany the PCs immediately to provide fire support; the other Rebels will stay behind to protect the civilians and get ready for the upcoming fight.

Otherspace II: Invasion Adventure Script

The following script begins the adventure. Your gamemaster will tell you what part (or parts) to read.

Cut to Rebel Ship

GM: *Interior: Rebel vessel in hyperspace. Camera pans across six Rebels busily working the controls of their vessel preparatory to re-entering realspace, then focuses in on one Rebel, who is clearly worried.*

1st Rebel: Look sharp, people. We'll be coming out of hyperspace in a couple of minutes. I want an immediate reading on the local traffic — and keep your finger on the blaster controls: the place might be crawling with Imperials!

GM: *Cut to different section of ship.*

2nd Rebel: Swell. "Join the Rebellion!" they said. "It's fun!" they said. "Shoot up a billion stormtroopers, hijack a couple hundred freighters, blow away a Star Destroyer or two — then, when the constant brushes with death get you down, you can always go for a nice, relaxing vacation on one of our calm, luxurious safe-worlds!" they said. How come the only time *I* get to go a safe-world, it's crawling with Imperials?

3rd Rebel: Yeah, yeah, very funny. My circulatory organ leaks for you. Just remember — there's a lot more at stake here than just your vacation. There are a lot of wounded Alliance personnel on that planet, not to mention husbands, wives, and children. If the Imperials have found Stronghold …

GM: *Cut back to first Rebel. Rebel winces as if in pain. His hands clench, and he speaks through gritted teeth.*

1st Rebel: They can't have found it. They just *can't.*

GM: *Cut to different part of vessel.*

4th Rebel: *(Softly.)* I forgot: he has family on Stronghold, doesn't he? Gods …*(Louder, with false cheerfulness.)* It could be nothing, right? We don't know of any Imperial ships in the area — so maybe Stronghold has failed to leave messages at the satellite drops because … because … maybe their transmitters are out!

5th Rebel: Or lots of sunspot activity, right?

4th Rebel: It could be — sure. Anyway, it could be lots of things besides Imperials.

GM: *Cut to viewport. The hyperspace lines waver, then truncate dramatically into individual stars as the vessel drops back into realspace. Cut to Rebel at scanners.*

6th Rebel: Well, whatever it is, we should know soon. Scanners are clear.

5th Rebel: So are the com channels — not a thing. The base communications center is not responding. That's bad.

6th Rebel: No sign of Imperial ships, though — in fact, there's no sign of any ships at all.

3rd Rebel: All right. We've got work to do. We're here to investigate — so let's go investigate! Make a quick scanning pass, then down to the planet, I guess.
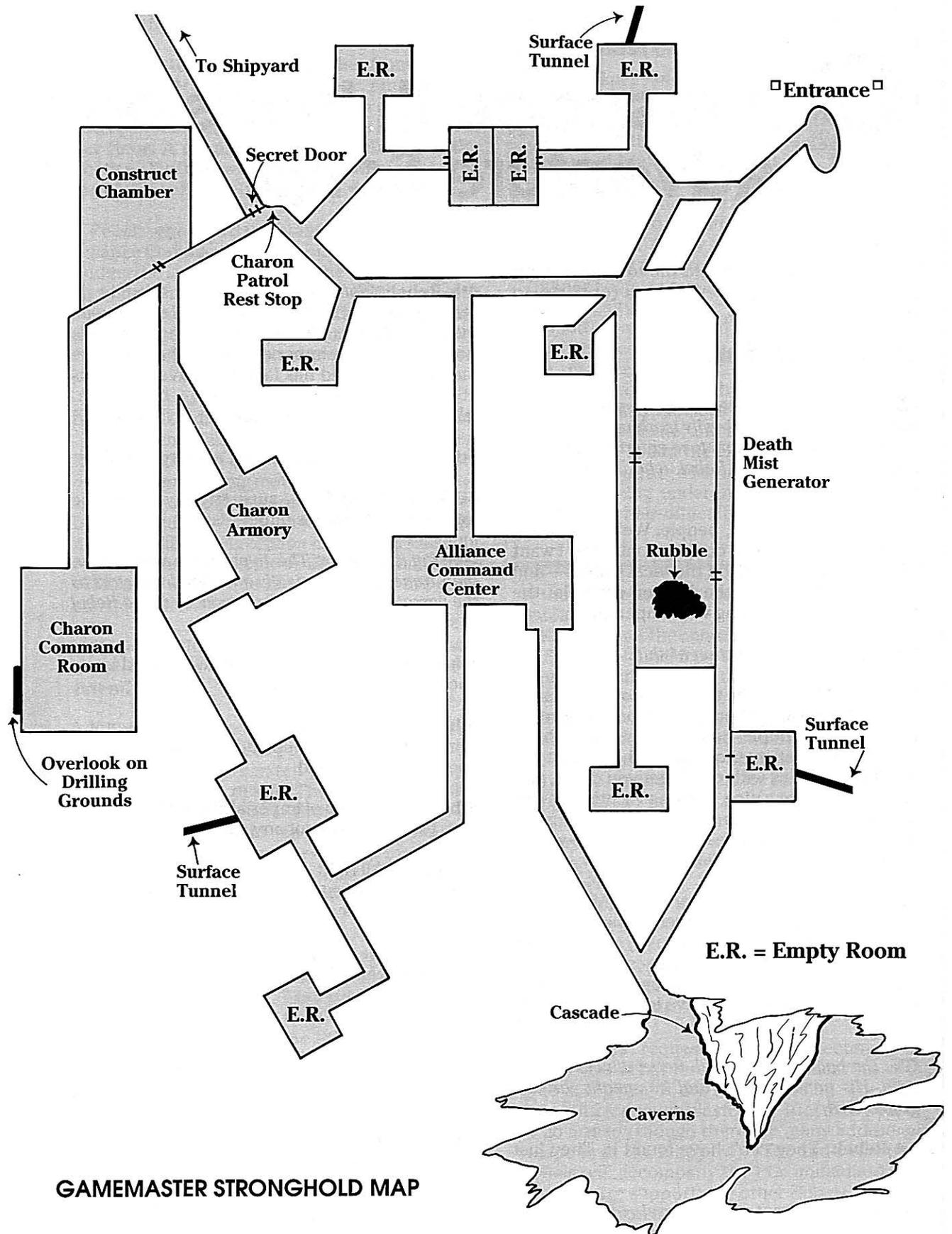
2nd Rebel: And if we run into Imperials?

1st Rebel: They'll wish we hadn't …

6th Rebel: Something on the screen! It's a two-man Alliance cargo ship, if I'm any judge … moving fast … and right at us!

GM *(as com voice):* This is the Alliance vessel *Meandering Star!* Get out of my way or I'll shoot!

4th Rebel: Energy fluctuation! He's arming his weapons! He's gonna fire!

To Shipyard

E.R.

Surface
Tunnel

E.R.

☐Entrance☐

Secret Door

E.R.

E.R.

Construct
Chamber

Charon
Patrol
Rest Stop

E.R.

E.R.

Death
Mist
Generator

Charon
Armory

Charon
Command
Room

Alliance
Command
Center

Rubble

Overlook on
Drilling
Grounds

E.R.

Surface
Tunnel

E.R.

Surface
Tunnel

E.R.

E.R. = Empty Room

Surface
Tunnel

E.R.

Cascade

Caverns

GAMEMASTER STRONGHOLD MAP

Entrance

Access

Power and Air

Access

Caverns

To Shipyard

Computer Command Center

Recreation Center

Access

The Brig

Admin.
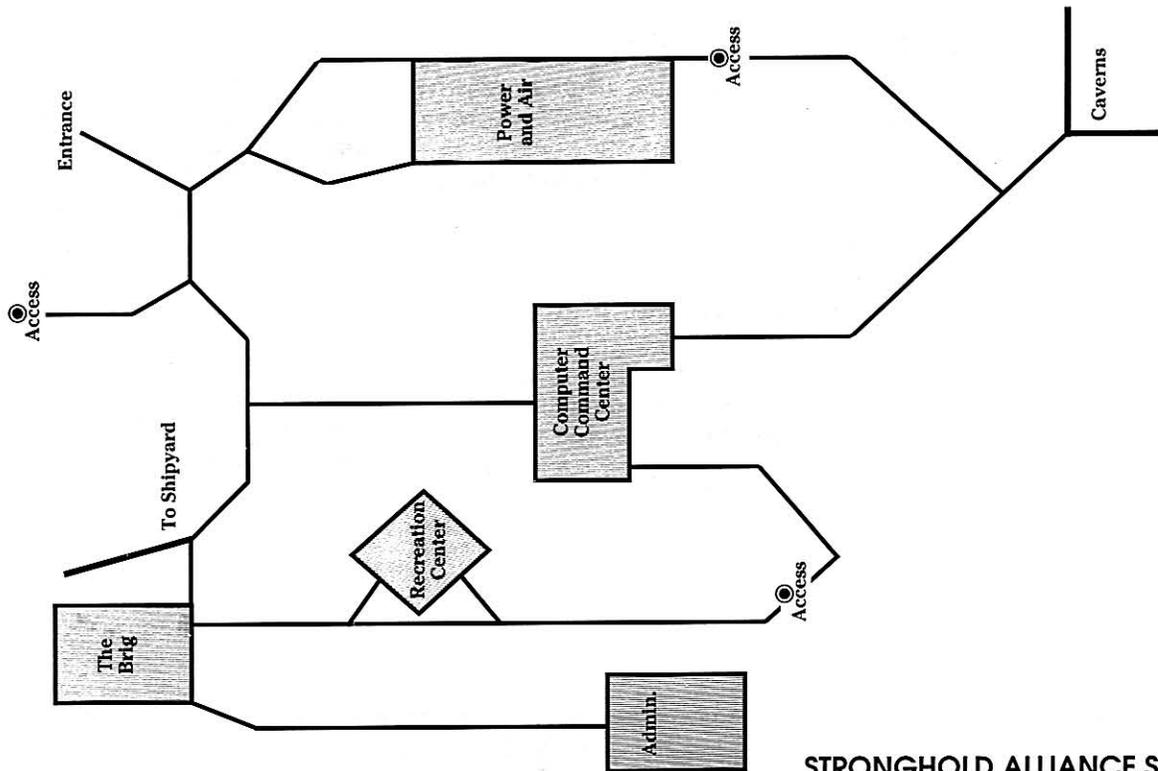
STRONGHOLD ALLIANCE SCHEMATIC

Charon Warriors

Template Type: Charon Warriors
Ht: 2.3m **Sex:** Male (Immature)
DEX 4D   **PER 4D**
Blaster 4D   Dodge 5D
Search 4D+2   Hide/Sneak 6D
KNO 2D   **STR 4D**
Survival 3D   Brawling 4D+1
MEC 2D   Climbing/Jumping
    TEC 2D

Description: Charon warriors are spiderlike beings with eight appendages that can be used as both arms and legs. Usually they stand upright on four legs, towering over all but the tallest opponents. Dark, shadowy masters of stealth, Charon are not often seen unless they want to be.

Equipment: Web spinneret (traps victim, STR 3D+1); plasma blaster (damage 4D); clawed arms (brawling damage 5D), poison: targets taking non-stun damage from poisoned claw make a Moderate *stamina* roll; failed roll means target takes additional wound. Charon must spend one round secreting poison.

Background: Hailing from a planet which orbited a black hole, the Charon adopted a religion which worshipped the Void, and through the Void, death. Tens of thousands of Prophets have led them on a crusade destroying millions of worlds. Now, Ravik has led them to a new galaxy to conquer.

Personality: They believe unfettered life is a blasphemy, and seek to send all life, including themselves, to the Void. They are hunters, and all living things are their prey.

Quote *(translated):* "To serve is to obey the Void. To obey is to die."

Charon Bioscientists

Template Type: Charon Bioscientists
Ht: 2.1m **Sex:** Female (Immature)
DEX 2D   **PER 4D**
Brawling Parry 4D   Hide/Sneak 6D
Dodge 5D   Search 5D+2
Melee Parry 5D   **STR 2D**
KNO 4D   Brawling 3D+1
Alien Races 5D   Climbing/Jumping 6D
Languages 4D+2   **TEC 4D**
Planetary Systems 5D+1   Comp. Prog./Repair 5D
Technology 6D+1   Construct Design 7D+1
MEC 2D   Medicine 6D

Description: Charon bioscientists are smaller than warriors. In contrast to the uniform, dull coloration of the warriors, most bioscientists have iridescent cilia on their forelegs.

Equipment: Web spinneret (traps victim, STR 3D+1); clawed arms (brawling damage 4D); medprobe; diagnostic sensor; plasma scalpel; neuro-replacement chips.

Background: Bioscientists use their extensive knowledge to create motile, thinking biological constructs which lack the blasphemous free will and variability of life-forms. On Stronghold, they must also rebuild the death mist generator and crack the Alliance computer codes.

Personality: Bioscientists are smarter than warriors and have more distinct personalities. They are fervently devoted to the work of eradicating all life.

Quote *(translated):* "It is the great paradox of existence that we must live so that all others die."

The Charon Timetable

Event One (0800 Hours): Charon battle patrols of two warriors each begin moving about Stronghold at random, seeking the hidden shipyard and stray Rebels to be captured and questioned.

Event Two (1030 Hours): Charon bioscientists complete the death mist generator.

Event Three (1130 Hours): A great storm moves in from the east.

Event Four (1200 Hours): Charon bioscientists access the Alliance command computer, learning the location of the Rebel shipyard.

Event Five (1230 Hours): Ravik orders minor forces to the shipyard to cordon the area, and prepares a mass attack. Constructs are completed and added to the Charon forces.

Event Six (1300 Hours): Death mist begins to permeate the area. The Charon launch their attack.

Event Seven (1315 Hours): The storm breaks with full force, slowing the Charon and partially damping the effects of the death mist, bringing driving rain and a spectacular lightning storm to the area.

Event Eight (1330 Hours): The Charon attack the Rebel forces near the shipyard, attempting to capture the hyperdrive ships.

Grand Moff Ravik

Template Type: Charon Construct
Ht: 3.2m **Sex:** Male

DEX 3D	**PER 4D**
Dodge 5D+2	Command 6D+2
Heavy Weapons 4D	Con 5D
KNO 4D	Interrogation 5D+1
Alien Races 6D	**STR 4D**
Languages 6D	Brawling 5D
Survival 5D	Climbing/
Technology 5D+2	Jumping 5D
MEC 2D	Stamina 5D+1
	TEC 2D
	Comp. Prog./Repair 4D

Description: Inhabiting a Charon construct, Ravik looks like a cross between a mature Charon male and a human being. The combination is easily described as horrible.

Equipment: Energy cannon built into torso of construct (damage 6D); rocket pack (allows Ravik to move quickly about in open spaces — important in the climactic battle, but useless in the low corridors of the underground base). Ravik carries his old pocket computer for sentimental reasons.

Background: Once a Grand Moff, Ravik was one of the humans carried to otherspace, where he was captured by the Charon and underwent absorption into their biological computer. Ravik now inhabits the construct body and leads the spider-beings in their conquest of the galaxy.

Personality: Ravik is quite mad. He alternates between megalomania and paranoia.

Quote: "You shall all die — and quite painfully, I assure you."

Markos Tor

Template Type: Brash Pilot
Ht: 1.8m **Sex:** Male

DEX 3D	**PER 3D**
KNO 2D	Command 4D
Technology 3D+1	Hide/Sneak 4D
MEC 4D	**STR 3D**
Starship	**TEC 3D**
Piloting 5D+2	Comp. Prog./
	Repair 4D+1
	Security 4D+1

Description: Tall, rugged and handsome, Tor is everything a Rebel pilot should be. He has a small battle scar on his cheek that he rubs in times of stress.

Equipment: Light blaster, access key to Alliance computer.

Background: A captain in the Alliance navy, Tor is a good fighter pilot. He was injured in his last battle and sent to Stronghold to recuperate near to his wife and new baby.

Personality: Tor is noble, self-sacrificing, and holds the ideals of the Rebellion high (and has often been kidded about his idealism). His is not a battle against the Empire, but against repression and lack of freedom; thus, the Charon represent to him an even greater epitomization of evil than the Imperials.

Quote: "I regret that I have but one life to give for the Rebellion."

If the PCs have been fairly successful at bollixing up the Charon (destroyed the death mist generator, etc.), Tor suggests an immediate fighting withdrawal to the shipyard and evacuating the base, if a feasible plan can be decided upon.

The Charon Armory

In this chamber, the Charon are preparing their remaining stores of battle armor for the attack on the Rebel shipyard — or failing that, the eradication of human life on Stronghold. At the moment, two bioscientists are alone in the room, running checks on the 10 suits of armor here.

Once the bioscientists are taken care of, the PCs can destroy the suits with relative ease. A single thermal detonator will take out three suits (Easy *demolition* check); destroying the suits with blaster fire or by merely pounding on them enthusiastically is a little more difficult, taking five minutes per suit.

If the Rebels have Ber'asco with them, he can attempt to teach a PC how to sabotage the armor so it will appear normal, but fail to function after only a few minutes' use. To do this, the PC must make both an Easy *alien races* roll and a Moderate *Mechanical* roll. A Rebel can accomplish this without Ber'asco's help, but then both rolls are Difficult. If Ber'asco is still pretending to be Nothos, he does not volunteer this information.

Clever Rebels may attempt to don one or more of the battle suits. The Charon are not at all humanoid in shape; it is nearly impossible for humanoids to twist into their battle armor (Moderate *Dexterity* roll). A Rebel attempting to wear and operate Charon battle armor must make a Difficult *technology* roll to even get the thing to move; while in the suit, +2 is added to all difficulty numbers to reflect the awkwardness of using equipment designed for radically different bodies and minds. In addition, the character in the suit must make a Moderate *stamina* roll every 15 minutes, failure indicating exhaustion and heat prostration. Subtract 1D from all skills and attributes until the character has at least an hour's rest.

Charon Battle Armor: DEX 4D+1, dodge 4D+2, plasma cannon 4D+2; STR 5D, brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 5D+1, lifting 6D. Armor attacks: the armor can make no more than two attacks in a combat round. Plasma cannon (damage 4D+1), armor claws (damage 6D). Charon biosensing technology gives the battle armor the ability to automatically acquire targets which are obscured by the environment, and to make a free 6D *search* roll against any *hiding/sneaking* characters.

The Construct Chamber

This room is formerly "the brig," the chamber where Imperial prisoners were kept, though at the time of the Charon invasion there were no Imperials incarcerated on Stronghold.

The Charon are using the brig for a far more sinister purpose. Here, captured Rebel soldiers are being surgically and genetically altered, turned into mindless slave warriors. If the scientists are not stopped, the captured Rebels will suffer a horrible fate — their bodies twisted and mutilated, their minds warped and destroyed. This is what drove Piet mad.

There are seven Charon bioscientists and four warriors monitoring the progress of their construct experiments. When the Rebels reach this chamber, read:

Within the chamber, you see a vision of pure horror! Lining the room, right up to the door, so close you could reach out and touch them (if you dared) are the captured Rebel soldiers. Each is held to the wall by a band of bright yellow energy, which appears to pulse in time to the heartbeat of the prisoner. Smaller balls of colored light run from the center of the band back into the walls, as if the restraints were sucking the life energy out of their prisoners.

From the looks of the Rebels, this may not be far from the truth. Some Rebels are more far gone than others — but they all look weak, exhausted, and in pain. It looks like this is where the Charon build their genetic constructs: there are spiderlike limbs grafted to some of the bodies.

Charon bioscientists move slowly about the room, examining each Rebel carefully, like interns in a hospital. They click and flutter among themselves, occasionally prodding the inert body before them, or performing obscene acts of surgery without the benefit of anesthetic. Several warriors lounge at the far end of the room, absorbed in a conversation of their own.

Let "Rebel 1" make a Moderate *search* roll. If he's successful, he sees his missing relative, imprisoned against the opposite wall! a Charon bioscientist is finishing up work on the Rebel next to the relative; it is obvious that it will be ready to move to the relative shortly.

As though sensing "Rebel 1's" scrutiny, the relative slowly looks up—directly at Rebel 1! The relative's eyes widen in recognition, a small gasp escapes his or her lips, then, glancing over at the bioscientist next to him or her, the relative looks deliberately away. Just then, the bioscientist finishes mutilating the adjacent Rebel and moves on to the relative. With great courage, the relative does not call for help, does not make a sound.

Impress on the players the nightmarishness of the scene, and the casual attitude the scientists have toward the suffering they are inflicting. Then find out what the players want their characters to do.

Rescuing the Prisoners

The Charon force here is strong, and random blaster firing will almost surely wound the imprisoned Rebels lining the walls. Despite their horror and anger at the terrible things happening within, the PCs have to plan their attack very carefully.

With a little daring, the PCs can actually infiltrate this room. The Rebel prisoners line the wall right up to the doorway, so a PC could simply step in while the scientists were absorbed with their next subject, and stand with his back to the wall so he looks at a distance like a prisoner, moving up the line when the Charon are not paying attention. The bioscientists spend about a minute with each prisoner, so a full circuit of the room takes them nearly an hour.

As long as they are reasonably careful, the PCs can do this one at a time, moving like soldiers infiltrating a building, until they are all in position posing as prisoners. Call for an occasional *hide/sneak* roll to build tension, but allow this plan to succeed.

Once they are in place, the bioscientists reach their part of the room and begin examining a PC. When they discover that the "prisoner" is not restrained, and in fact is carrying weapons, they click and hiss with alarm and back off as quickly as possible. This is the PCs' cue to open fire at

point blank range. If they do, don't even call for rolls — the bioscientists are mowed down in the first second.

Now the PCs need to contend with only the four warriors. Because of their anger and righteous fury at the atrocities they see before them, all Rebels receive a bonus of +1D to their *blaster, melee,* and *brawling* skills for this combat only. However, if anyone misses a blaster shot, roll a die: on a roll of 1-3, a prisoner is injured.

Once this room is cleared of Charon, the prisoners can be freed. Many are able to move on their own power, and will accompany the PCs. However, they are still weak and disoriented, and are of no use in combat (-2D to all skills and attributes until rested). If the PCs have brought Tor and the hidden Rebels, the prisoners are escorted back to the cascade. If this encounter occurs first, one of the prisoners suggests that they be taken to the secret hiding place, saying apologetically, while almost fainting, that they "are a little worn out, and need some time to rest up before we will be able to fight." If the PCs have some other plans, the prisoners will follow any orders the PCs give them.

Allow "Rebel 1" a touching reunion scene with his or her courageous relative.

Charon Command Central

This is where Ravik has set up his command center. The place is literally crawling with warriors (about 25 of them, in fact), and would be very difficult to approach unnoticed, unless the character was in Charon battle armor (which might arouse some curiosity) or very strong in the Force. A character may reach the chamber door on a Very Difficult *hide/sneak* roll

If the character fails the roll, but his or her roll is good enough to pass a Moderate check, the character realizes that he or she cannot make it and returns unnoticed. If the roll is less than Moderate, the character is spotted.

If a character does make it into this area, read:

The first thing you see is a tall Charon warrior, larger and more ponderous than any you have seen so far, completely encased in gleaming black battle armor. All the hustle and determination in the corridor and in the room is focused on this individual. The rasping and clacking of claws is truly terrifying.

A thermal detonator could cause a lot of damage here, but the armor-encased Ravik automatically survives (he has to live until the adventure's climax, after all!), and the character throwing the grenade would be spotted in an instant. If the detonator is left on time delay, have the character's egress slowed by a sudden influx of

warriors. Make him think he won't make it out in time — then he slips through and from behind him comes the explosion. Again, the Charon warrior strength is reduced, but Ravik survives.

If the character is spotted, no less than 20 warriors give chase. If the thermal detonator is used, the surviving warriors mull around in confusion for three rounds, then give chase. Five warriors are killed per each detonator employed.

The Shipyard

The Rebel shipyard can be reached in one of two ways. From the interior of the Stronghold base, the passage leading to it is very well concealed in the rock at the corner of the tunnel shown. A Charon rest station has been set up in the marked location, and 10 Charon warriors block access to the hatchway.

The shipyard can also be reached from the outside, through the hangar doors. The only approach aboveground is across a large open space; once the Rebels are half-way across, a Charon patrol spots them and relays a report to Ravik. Finally, a tell-tale in the command center lights up and beeps when the hangar doors are opened, immediately telling Ravik the shipyard's location.

The inside of the shipyard resembles the Rebel base on Yavin or Hoth: a large, dark hangar deck with six skyhoppers, five two-man Y-wing fighters, and 17 short-hauler freight ships without weapons. On one wall is the self-destruct activator. Using this starts a 30-minute delay sequence, at the end of which the hangar explodes spectacularly (it was designed, with Imperial attack in mind, to destroy the base's usefulness rather than to prevent capture of a few ships).

The skyhoppers can be made ready to fly in 10 minutes; the Y-wings and other vessels need 45 minutes of prep time.

The Charon Timetable

This episode extends from 0730 hours (although the PCs might arrive later) to 1200 or 1300 hours — when the Charon discover the whereabouts of the shipyard. Along the way, the following events occur:

0800 Hours: Regular patrols begin. Before then, the Rebel heroes won't meet a patrol except for the one testing the construct. After that, use Charon patrols whenever the adventure's tempo slows.

1030 Hours: The death mist generator begins producing mist. Mention to the Rebels at that time that they smell something sickly sweet and very unpleasant. The effects of the mist don't begin at once.

1130 Hours: The storm moves in. If the Rebels are on the surface at or after this time, they see the rain and darkness and occasional flashes of lightning, and hear the thunder echo from the mountain peaks. It is cold and wet when traveling on the surface during the storm.

1200 Hours: The Charon bioscientists break the Alliance computer code and learn the shipyard's location if the computer has not been destroyed; if the Rebel heroes destroyed the computer, this event occurs at 1300 hours.

If the Rebels open the hangar doors, activate the self-destruct, or have accomplished everything they feel is possible, the Charon immediately find the shipyard. When this happens, go directly to episode four.

Episode Four
The Storm Moves In

Summary

In this episode the heroes see the Charon battle plans unfold, as Ravik prepares to attack the Rebel shipyard. All the plot timing elements come together now: Charon battle-armored warriors, supported by washes of death mist, battle Rebel heroes and survivors against the backdrop of a raging storm. At stake: the fate of the galaxy!

The Charon Prepare

Episode three ends when the Charon discover the location of the shipyard, either via the computer or by patrol. This episode covers the Charon battle preparations. If the Rebel heroes seek to monitor the Charons' activities, this section describes what they find in various parts of Stronghold. If the PCs remain with the Rebel forces (or hide away in some other area) during the entire battle preparation period, skip the episode and use the optional cutaway.

The Charon Command Center

If the PCs are monitoring or make their way to the command center after the shipyard is located, they see the Charon preparations for battle. In the corridors just outside the center, warriors and bioscientists run to and fro, gathering up resources, making last-minute patrol sweeps, or reporting in from their former duty stations. Characters in battle-armor have no trouble blending into the crowd, but only Force-using characters not in armor have a chance of sneaking in.

In the command chamber itself, Ravik sits patiently, snapping an occasional order to those that pause and salute before him. His plan is simple: The warriors will approach the shipyard from the surface in loose formation, giving ample time for the death mist to affect the defenders once the shipyard bay doors are open. (If the self-destruct is activated, Ravik knows he has little time. The attack is made more quickly, and in tighter formation.)

Once inside the hangar, the warriors will destroy any opposition and create a defensive perimeter while the bioscientists dismantle the self-destruct, if necessary. Once all of that is

accomplished, the scientists will fuel and ready the ships for hyperspace. Unless stopped, the Charon will then leave this world behind and seek more populated areas to purge.

If the PCs hang around the command chamber and watch further, require some skill checks and roleplaying to avoid detection: a warrior snaps an order to an armor-clad PC, or a bioscientist stops and stares for a moment at a Force-user's hiding place. Build the tension; the character can escape detection most easily by doing nothing at

Optional Cut-Away to the Charon Preparations

Read aloud:

EXTERIOR: THE SURFACE OF STRONGHOLD. *The wind whips in from the east, pushing before it a driving rain. Lightning flashes in the distance, followed shortly thereafter by the long ominous roll of thunder. The camera pans across row after row of Charon warriors, mandibles and claws clacking horribly. Pan to a stone facing and through a tunnel mouth to ...*

INTERIOR: STRONGHOLD BASE. *A great battle-armored figure sits on a rock, facing a small desk upon which plays a holo-image of the Rebel shipyard. A warrior enters the chamber and salutes.*

Subtitle: "The preparations are made, lord and prophet. The warriors are ready for battle."

Subtitle: "Good. We will sweep aside all opposition and take immediate control of the vessels — then our scientists shall lead us to planets teeming with disease-cultures to be obliterated! Come."

The figure rises ponderously from his seat and strides to the door. For one brief moment we see its face: a human caricature on a Charon body. Cut to ...

all: the busy/suspicious Charon moves on. But if the character acts rashly, he may be discovered and forced to flee.

If, after this, the PCs decide to push their luck and stay longer, they hear an important piece of information: Ravik orders a small patrol of warriors to make their way through the newly-discovered secret tunnel to the shipyard, attempting to take the defenders by surprise and hit them from the rear.

Once these various orders have been given, a warrior approaches and informs Ravik that the small army is ready on the drilling field. Ravik rises ponderously from his seat, and the remaining Charon in the room follow him out the rear exit to the surface. The Charon command center is empty.

The Drilling Grounds

The Rebels can reach the drilling grounds from either the Charon command center after it is abandoned, or directly over the surface from the shipyard. Remember to mention the deteriorating weather if the latter is the case.

When they reach a safe vantage point, they see:

Spread out in row upon row of horror are, most probably, all the Charon on Stronghold: fully 100 warriors and an equal number of bioscientists stand in orderly formation upon the rocky field. Their cilia vibrate in chilling unison; their claw-clashes are dreadful, echo-

ing hollowly in the cool air. Rain is falling, and the rumble of thunder can be heard in the distance. A great battle-armored figure stands before the troops in silent review.

If this is the PCs' first view of Ravik and they have Ber'asco with them, he identifies this one as the target: during the battle, Ber'asco must confront this figure. If Ber'asco is still pretending to be Nothos, he says nothing.

If the heroes have not destroyed or stolen all the battle armor suits, read the following as well:

One small unit of warriors is clad in the fearsome Charon battle-armor. They practice combat moves on one another, standing easily against blows that would fell an ordinary foe. The crash of armored claw on armored body is terrible to hear.

And, if the Rebels have not destroyed the death mist generator, read this as well:

A reddish mist swirls all about the legs of the nightmare assemblage. Even from your vantage point, through the steady rain, you smell a sickly sweet odor that cloys in your nostrils and makes your skin tingle most unpleasantly.

And, if the PCs have not freed the Rebel soldiers from the construct chamber, read:

At one end of the row of bioscientists are a collection of horrible beings that look like a cross between human and Charon. They leap about like capering demons, waiting for battle.

If by some chance the PCs have assembled troops and wish to attack here, go immediately to episode five and run the "surprise attack" battle set-up. Otherwise, the Charon soldiers begin moving forward, toward the shipyard entrance and galactic conquest.

Death Mist Generator Room

If the Rebel PCs have not already destroyed the generator, they find the whole room boiling with thick clouds of red mist. No human can survive entry into this room without Force powers, space suits or Charon battle-armor. If a PC has any of these, he or she can enter the room and destroy the generator. Otherwise, they are too late.

If they have already destroyed the generator, the Rebels find two bioscientists here, making a half-hearted attempt to effect repairs; they can be killed or driven off easily.

Construct Chamber

This room is abandoned. All that can be found here are traces of blood and a lingering taste of pain and misery echoing through the Force.

Other Areas of Stronghold

The rest of the base is completely empty and quiet. The Charon armory is empty. The Alliance Computer Center is still intact and can be accessed as in episode three; though destroying the computer is totally pointless, the Rebels can now use the communications equipment without fear of detection. The Rebel forces are still behind the cascade if not yet discovered. The secret tunnel to the shipyard is unguarded (the sneak attack has not yet been launched).

Timing the Adventure Elements

If the Rebels have moved with reasonable speed, the adventure elements will come together of their own accord. The Charon discover the shipyard's whereabouts at 1200 or 1300, and the Rebels learn of their discovery via direct observation or cut-away. The storm, the death mist, and the PCs themselves are all in position for the final battle.

But what if the players are not so cooperative? This section gives guidelines for troubleshooting if the players act in an unusual sequence, or are unusually fast or slow.

The Storm

This is the easiest adventure element to handle, since the weather is inevitable. The storm arrives at the allotted time and stays around for as long as necessary. The purpose of the storm is to provide a dramatic background (thunder and lightning and rain) for the final battle, to hamper PC movement on the surface, and to explain why the effects of the death mist are diminished.

The only problem comes if the Rebels reach the shipyard very early, thereby alerting the Charon to its presence very early, as well. In this case, simply bring the storm in ahead of schedule: when the PCs reach the shipyard and open the hangar doors/set the self-destruct, it begins to rain, and by the time the Charon attack, the storm is in full swing.

The Death Mist

The death mist generator has two states: intact and destroyed. If it is intact, it begins producing death mist at 1030 hours, as listed. The Rebels notice the odor, but suffer no ill effects until the battle. If the generator is destroyed, then there is no mist to worry about. Effects of the death mist are described in episode five.

The Remaining Rebels on Stronghold

If the PCs do not find the hidden Rebels and fail to encounter the group of youngsters and free the captured soldiers, then you must find another way to introduce them to Markos Tor and the Alliance forces.

This isn't particularly difficult. The Alliance forces aren't needed until the Charon launch their attack, and once the Charon do so, they cease patrolling the base. At that point, the Alliance forces begin making cautious reconnoiters of the base and surrounding areas. They can then run into the PCs in the base, on the planet's surface, or at the shipyard itself.

The meeting can be very dramatic indeed, if timed to coincide with the appearance of the Charon on the field of battle.

Finding the Shipyard

It is entirely possible that the Charon will find the shipyard before the PCs do. If the PCs have met Markos Tor by then, he can tell them where it is. If they have not, however, things get more difficult.

Use the cut-away to alert the Rebel PCs to the danger. If their next action takes them to the Computer Command center or to the cascade, simply assume that the Charon battle preparations took longer than expected and allow the PCs to reach the shipyard before the Charon launch their assault. If the Rebels are more or less at a loss and seem unlikely to go anywhere useful, then have them run into a Rebel group as in the "Remaining Rebels" section above.

Another timing problem might occur if the players have accomplished everything they can think of. This is simple to solve: if they truly have accomplished everything, move the Charon discovery of the shipyard up in time (and the storm as well, if necessary). As a bonus for their speed, halve the number of Charon constructs or battle armor warriors which are scheduled to appear in episode five: the Charon haven't had time to complete their preparations. If the PCs have already freed the captured Rebels and destroyed the battle armor — well, they don't *need* any additional bonuses. They're doing great on their own!

Bringing it All Together

Here's a summary of the sequencing, so that you can make sure everything comes together in the most dramatic way:

The Charon discovery of the shipyard triggers episode four; episode four ends when the battle is ready to begin. In episode four, the PCs meet and organize the Alliance forces and find the shipyard. They can reach the shipyard at about the same time as the Charon forces do; if the PCs are already there, the Charon forces (and Stronghold Rebels, if necessary) arrive when there are 15 minutes left to go on the self-destruct.

The storm rages on up above as battle-suited figures and hundreds of fighters line up on both sides. Then....

The Battle Begins

Once the Rebels hear the optional cut-away, or observe the Charon attack forces moving toward the shipyard, they must defend the shipyard (or attack from the rear) or all is lost. Allow a few minutes for the players to make battle plans, but not too long: they'll have more time to plan while you explain the rules.

Finally, before moving to episode five, allow the characters to attempt Force-healing or med-pac use, or to perform any other important last-minute activities such as communicating with Alliance High Command. Then go to the battle.

E pisode Five
The Battle Begins

Summary

In this episode, the player characters and the Rebel forces battle the Charon warriors for possession of the shipyard. This battle can be run using the normal *Star Wars* roleplaying combat system or, for maximum excitement, rules are provided for using the *Assault on Hoth* boardgame to resolve the epic conflict.

Leading into Battle

The final battle is the climax of this adventure. If the players have done well, their characters should be able to triumph with a modicum of good planning and a little luck. If, however, they have failed to accomplish the objectives of the first four episodes, the battle will become a desperate struggle against a deadly opponent.

It is important for you to set the stage so that the battle can be the focus of attention, rather than having to switch back and forth between the battle scene and other PCs off doing something else.

Positioning the Rebels

If, as the battle is beginning, PCs are still wandering the corridors of Stronghold, or examining the wreck of the *Desolate,* or hiding in the hills, or attempting to bring their ship into the battle ... it may be difficult to run the multiple actions at the same time.

Complete the separated characters' actions as much as is feasible, then bring them into the battle later if the situation warrants. For example, if some PCs split from the group and go to retrieve their ship (hoping to use its weapons in the battle) complete their trek and warmup, then switch to the battle. Halfway through the battle, the ship can make a dramatic arrival to save the day.

Or suppose a group of PCs are still in Stronghold, trying to destroy the red mist generator. Run that entire encounter, then start the battle. When the "Red Mist" Event card comes up (see "Using the Event Cards," below), mention that the mist seems to have diminished; then have the separated group meet the sneak attack in the tunnels when that Event comes up. If at all possible, it is best to get all the PCs back to the battle scene before the battle starts.

Note that, under any circumstances, the Rebels have to fight. If they decide the best tactic is to close up the shipyard doors and hide, the Charon will simply array all their forces in front of the doors, batter the doors down, and then swamp the Rebels with overwhelming numbers. The Rebels will have no chance against the superb infighting skills of the Charon in the enclosed spaces of the shipyard. If the PCs seem intent upon such a suicidal course of action, Markos Tor strongly urges against it, citing his previous unpleasant experiences in close combat when the Charon first attacked.

Battle Plans

Having never planned a military engagement before, your players may not know how to set up for the battle. If they seem at a complete loss, call for *command* rolls from each PC, and then give

them the appropriate information from the list below.

Very Easy: The Charon will attack en masse, attempting to break into the shipyard to secure the hyperdrive ships

Easy: As above, plus: If battle armor is working, the battle armor will be in front to soften the defenders. The Charon will also rely on death mist to weaken the Rebels. Hiding in the shipyard is a bad idea; the Charon are terrific infighters. Once they batter the shipyard's doors down, anyone inside is in serious trouble.

Moderate: As above, plus: The warriors and bio-scientists have no ranged weapons, but can move with awful speed to close with and melee an opponent. Since the enemy must attack, keep just out of range and conduct a fighting withdrawal.

Difficult: As above, plus: The Charon will not break regardless of casualties taken, unless their leader is destroyed. Concentrated fire or getting Ber'asco to Ravik are their best bets.

Very Difficult: It is possible that the Charon have discovered the secret entrance to the shipyard by now. If so, they may be planning a simultaneous attack throught the tunnel while the surface attack progresses. Smart PCs might leave a contingent in the shipyard to deal with that threat.

Running the Battle

If you do not own the *Assault on Hoth* boardgame from West End Games, use the standard roleplaying combat rules to run the battle. However, this can be quite time-consuming since there are so many combatants. To help speed things up, use the following guidelines.

Each round, the Rebel forces and the Charon engage across the field of battle. Describe the scope of the battle to the players: the rain, the lightning, the thump of Charon battle armor, the sizzle of blaster bolts, and so on. If the PCs did well in the early encounters and found all the Rebels in time to arm them and so forth, describe how the Rebels begin to get the upper hand as the battle goes on. If the PCs didn't do so well, describe how the Charon are beginning to overwhelm the defense. See "The PCs in the Battle" and "Using Event Cards" below for tips on how to make the battle dramatic and exciting.

The PCs in the Battle

To involve the player characters in the battle in a more direct fashion (without getting too bogged down in detail), let them face individual foes on the field, starting with a mixed group of warriors and bioscientists equal in size to the PC group. The encounter takes place on mostly flat terrain, lightly covered with boulders and small hillocks, providing poor to good cover for the defenders.

The Charon approach from long range, full-dodging all the way up to the PCs' position, at which time the warriors attempt to close and melee, while the bioscientists try to slip past the PCs and reach the shipyard.

Run the fight to its conclusion, then use your judgment (and the hints supplied below) to decide whether the Rebels are winning or losing. If they are winning, run a second round of combat, but with one less warrior in this wave. If the Rebels are losing, there is one additional warrior.

Encourage the players to make daring, heroic plans, such as attempting to get Ber'asco near Ravik, acting as bait to lure a large number of Charon into an ambush, or single-handedly delaying the attackers long enough for a flanking attack to succeed. If the PCs are attempting something heroic, throw a lot more Charon at them — but if they succeed, the tide of the battle swings dramatically in their favor.

Using the Event Cards

Even if you are not using the *Assault on Hoth* battle system, you can make use of the Event Deck provided in this adventure to chart the course of the battle. Simply shuffle the deck and turn over one card at the beginning of the battle, and two additional cards after each wave of assault. Use the "Event Card Key" below to understand what each card means: increase Charon power after events beneficial to the Charon, and decrease it after events beneficial to the Rebels.

The Climactic Moment

The battle climaxes when the PCs face Ravik himself. At first, Ravik stays out of the fighting as much as possible, using his rocket pack to move behind his lines, keeping his forces moving forward rapidly. If the Rebels are losing, he eventually tires of waiting for the warriors to crush the last kernel of resistance (the PCs) and strides over to take care of it himself. If the Rebels are winning, he leads his remaining forces in a last, desperate charge, scattering the Alliance forces in his path, moving inexorably toward the shipyards, until all that stands in his way are a small group of Rebel heroes...

The climactic moment of the battle comes when the player characters confront the massive battle-armored figure that is Ravik. As they get nearer, tell the players that the storm has grown more fierce, the battle more intense. All that they have done here, all the pain and suffering that the Alliance forces have gone through, boils down to this:

Ravik must be destroyed.

But first, the PCs have to deal with his bodyguard. The size of the bodyguard is determined by the success the Rebels have had up until this point. If they are winning, they must face a bodyguard of six warriors — the last-ditch Charon defense. If they are losing, Ravik is accompanied by only three warriors; the others are all off helping to win the battle.

When the PCs meet Ravik, they can either try to overpower him with conventional weapons, or allow Ber'asco to close alone if he is along. Run the encounter normally ... be sure to describe the swirl of battle all around them, the rain, the death mist, and Ravik's roaring battle cries as he contests the PCs. When Ravik is nearly defeated (Force point use would be appropriate here), or Ber'asco confronts the armored figure, the climax occurs.

Ber'asco Confronts Ravik

If the PCs have brought Ber'asco with them, read the following when Ber'asco confronts his enemy:

Through the smoke and rain, the hated Ravik approaches, ready to destroy the last group of Rebels standing in his way.

"You fought well, my young friends!" his voice rings out, his madness plain for all to hear. "But now it is time to join the Void. Come. I will be merciful. You will die quickly."

Suddenly, Ber'asco stands up and strides toward Ravik. Ravik stares, then laughs, wildly, evilly.

"Is there no getting rid of you, Ber'asco? I thought I had seen the last of you when I stole your body and locked you in the computer. Oh, I was quite surprised when you turned up alive and tried to take back the *Desolate* — but I was *sure* you died in that unpleasant crash landing! My, you are a hard spider to kill, aren't you? Well, if at first you don't succeed..."

Ber'asco reaches Ravik, and the construct wraps his huge arms about the smaller figure, seeking to crush it in an obscene embrace. Then, Ber'asco attacks Ravik with his mind, attempting to wrest control of Ravik's body. Both figures freeze.

An eternity passes. Across the battlefield all fighting ceases, as both sides strain to see the outcome of the battle.

Silence. Then:

"You lose again, my friend." It is Ravik! You hear a sharp *crack!* as he crushes Ber'asco's spine.

Ber'asco screams, then, with his last ounce of strength, reaches up and slams a fist into the rocket pack control panel on Ravik's battle suit. There is a flash of light, a shower of sparks, then the rockets ignite in an uncontrollable burnout, sending the two figures arcing over the battlefield, trailing smoke, flame, and Ravik's shout of surprise and pain.

High in the sky, the two figures separate. One continues on its cometary path, racing through the air out of sight beyond the hills. The other falls to the ground near you, a shapeless bundle of blood and tissue and bone. Seconds later there is a bright flash and the ground shakes.

Then, nothing.

The PCs Fight Ravik

If the Rebel PCs fight Ravik on their own, without Ber'asco, use the following ending:

Through the smoke and rain, the hated Ravik approaches, ready to destroy the last group of Rebels standing in his way.

"You fought well, my young friends!" his voice rings out, his madness plain for all to hear. "But now it is time to join the Void. Come. I will be merciful. You will die quickly."

Continue the battle. Ravik moves forward rapidly, seeking to crush the Rebels to death in his lethal embrace. He ignores any stun results, his suit easily able to absorb all but the most damaging shots. He continues to fight when wounded. When the Rebels get incapacitate or killing damage against him, read:

Your shot slams into the rocket pack control panel on Ravik's battle suit! There is a flash of

light, a shower of sparks, then the rockets ignite in an uncontrollable burnout, sending your opponent flying high into the air, trailing smoke, flame, and Ravik's shout of surprise and pain.

Ravik tears through the sky, arcing over the hills and out of sight. Seconds later there is a bright flash, and the ground shakes.

Then, nothing.

Using the *Assault On Hoth* Rules

If you own West End's *Assault on Hoth* boardgame, you can use the board, pieces and dice from that game with the cards and pieces provided in this adventure to recreate the Battle of Stronghold as a wargame scenario. Follow the rules of *Assault on Hoth* for movement and fire, except where specifically altered below.

Before Play Begins...

New Counters: Glue the 12 new counters together and, once dry, cut them apart. You will also need to make some additional counters:
• Six counters to represent the Rebel heroes (or, even better, use *Star Wars* miniatures).
• Three counters to represent Charon constructs.

Put the new counters in stands. There should be a number of extra stands in your copy of *Hoth;* if you need more, you can use the stands from all the Walkers, all Towers, six Light Rebel Troopers, four Heavy Rebel Troopers, all the Imperial Heavy Troopers and two Snowspeeders; they aren't used in this scenario.

New Action and Event Deck: Carefully separate the cards and place them in two piles. Shuffle each pile.

Lay out the Map and Dice.

The Map

The map represents the battleground outside the shipyards. The Power Grid hex and all of the Base Entry hexes have no effect upon play; treat them as clear hexes for all purposes. The Shield Generator hex is where the shipyard is located.

The Base Box represents the interior of the Shipyard; when activated, a unit may move from the Base Box to the Shipyard (Shield Generator) hex, or back, for a cost of 1 MP, unless an enemy piece occupies the Shield Generator hex.

Combat in the Base Box

If both Charon and Rebel units are in the Base Box, they may fight each other. For combat purposes, think of the Base Box as a single, completely clear Macrohex. A unit cannot fire from the Base Box to the map, or *vice versa*.

Forcemix

Rebels (The Players Run these Pieces)

• **Heroes:** The Rebels get one Hero piece for each player character. If Ber'asco is accompanying the Rebels, the Rebel player secretly notes which hero Ber'asco is traveling with on the hero's character sheet. Ber'asco cannot be assigned to a PC piloting a Skyhopper (see below).
• **Troopers:** If the PCs have rescued the prisoners in the construct chamber and met Markos Tor on their own initiative, they get five Light and two Heavy Troopers. If they rescued the prisoners but Markos Tor had to come out and look for them, they get three Light and two Heavy Troopers. If they didn't rescue the Troopers, they get three Light Troopers only.
• **Skyhoppers:** The Rebels receive four Skyhoppers (use Snowspeeder counters). The heroes may pilot the Skyhoppers, Rebel troopers may do so, or any combination of both. Remove one Hero counter per hero piloting a 'hopper (and write down which 'hopper he or she is piloting on the PC's character sheet).

Charon (The Gamemaster Runs these Pieces)
• **Leader:** You receive the new counter representing Ravik.
• **Constructs:** If the PCs didn't rescue the captured Rebel warriors in the construct chamber, you receive three Construct counters. If they did, you receive one Construct.
• **Bioscientists:** You receive five bioscientists. Use Imperial Light Troopers to represent the bioscientists.
• **Warriors:** If the PCs were cautious and didn't engage in a lot of combat with the warriors, you receive eight Warrior counters. If they killed a lot of the Warriors in battle in the halls of Stronghold, you receive only seven.
• **Warriors in Battle Armor:** If the PCs destroyed the battle armor outright, you get no battle armor counters. Otherwise, you receive two Warriors in Battle Armor (even if the PCs sabotaged them — though they probably won't do you much good!). If you get any Battle Armor, remove one Warrior counter (the warriors are inside the suits). Use AT-ST counters to represent warriors in battle armor.

Set-Up

In the standard set-up, the Rebel troops begin in a defensive position while the Charon march onto the board and attack, much as in *Hoth*. If the Rebels have chosen to strike from behind, the set-up is different, as given below. If the battle conditions are significantly different from both of these two options, you'll have to use your judgment.

Standard Set-Up (Rebels set up first):
• **Rebel Forces:** All Skyhoppers begin in the Base

Box. To determine where the Rebel Troops and Heroes start, have the PC with the highest *command* skill make a roll:

2 or Less: In the Base Box.

3-5: Within three Macrohexes of the Shield Generator (Shipyard) hex.

6-10: Within six Macrohexes of the Shield Generator (Shipyard) hex.

11-15: Within nine Macrohexes of the Shield Generator (Shipyard) hex.

16 or Greater: Within 12 Macrohexes of the Shield Generator hex.

Note: Tell the players that mechanics are working feverishly to get more Skyhoppers operational; they might want to leave one or two Troopers in the Base Box to fly them if they get fixed.

• **Charon:** The Charon set up in the Imperial Reinforcement Sector, or off-map, adjacent to the Imperial Reinforcement Sector. An off-map unit must move onto the map as soon as possible, paying 1 MP to enter the first hex. Off-map units cannot fire nor can they be fired at.

Surprise Attack Set-up (Charon set up first):

• **Charon:** The Charon set up within five hexes — *not* Macrohexes — of either (or both) of the two northernmost Base Entry hexes.

• **Rebels:** The Rebel units set up in any hexes adjacent to a map edge, or in the Base Box. In addition, the Rebel player gets to immediately move all of his pieces 5 MPs, before play begins.

Units' Fire Strength, Armor Strength, and Special Abilities

	Fire Strength	Armor Strength
Charon Units:		
Leader	5	3*
Battle Armor	4**	2
Warrior	4†	1††
Bioscientist	3†	1††
Construct	4†	1††

*No defensive bonus for rough terrain. The first successful hit has no effect; the second destroys Ravik's rocket pack (read "The PCs Fight Ravik," above)

** If sabotaged, battle armor self-destructs if any Saber symbols are thrown when unit attacks.

† No ranged attack allowed: may attack only units in same macrohex.

†† Free range modifier (all attacks against them are at -1 die).

	Fire Strength	Armor Strength
Rebel Units:		
Heroes	?*	1**
Heavy Troop	4	1
Light Troops	3	1
Skyhoppers	4*	2†

* Rebel heroes have a variable Fire Strength when firing on the ground or from a Skyhopper; see below.

** Free range modifier (all attacks against them are at -1 die).

† Skyhoppers take damage in the same way as Snowspeeders, except that they are much more fragile, and have no gunner. When a 'hopper is hit, roll the damage dice, *add +3 to the roll*, and apply the result as per the Snowspeeder Damage Table on the map. Note that a PC can spend a Force Point to change a Critical Hit into a Body Hit.

Rebel Heroes

Heroes and Difficulty Numbers: When an Action Card activates a Hero, the Hero must make a skill check in order to perform an action — whether the Hero wishes to move, shoot, pilot a 'hopper, or fire the 'hopper's weapons. The player picks the level of difficulty he or she wishes to attempt and rolls the dice, and then checks the appropriate chart below. The Heroes can, as always, expend Force Points to double their die codes when making a skill check.

• **Hero Moves (Dex Roll)**

Difficulty (Number)	Result
Easy (6)	5 MPs
Moderate (11)	6 MPs
Difficult (16)	7 MPs
Very Diff. (21)	8 MPs
Impossible (31)	9 MPs
Failed Roll	4 MPs

• **Hero Fires (Blaster Roll)**

Difficulty (Number)	Result
Easy(6)	Fire Strength 2
Moderate (11)	Fire Strength 3
Difficult (16)	Fire Strength 4
Very Diff. (21)	Fire Strength 5
Impossible (31)	Fire Strength 6
Failed Roll	Fire Strength 1

• **Hero Flies Skyhopper**

Difficulty (Number)	Result
Easy (6)	5 MPs
Moderate (11)	6 MPs
Difficult (16)	7 MPs
Very Diff. (21)	8 MPs
Impossible (31)	9 MPs
Failed Roll	4 MPs

• **Hero Fires from Skyhopper**

Difficulty (Number)	Result
Easy (6)	Fire Strength 4
Moderate (11)	Fire Strength 5
Difficult (16)	Fire Strength 6
Very Diff. (21)	Fire Strength 7
Impossible (31)	Fire Strength 8
Failed Roll	Fire Strength 3

Heroes and Wounds

A Hero who is hit once is "wounded" and suffers all of the appropriate penalties to his skills and attributes. If the Hero has a medpac (or is adjacent to another Hero with one), the Hero may make a medicine skill check to heal himself in place of his next Movement action. If a wounded Hero is hit, the Hero is incapacitated and removed from play. If a Hero is in a Skyhopper when it is destroyed, the Hero is also incapacitated and removed from play.

Heros Command

A special Action card has been added allowing Heros to *command* Rebel Troopers to move and fire out of sequence. Only Heroes on the ground can choose this option; Heroes in Skyhoppers cannot *command*. In addition, only Rebel Trooper units (Light or Heavy) can be *commanded*; other Heros and Skyhoppers cannot be *commanded*. The *command* attempt takes the place of other actions for the Hero: he or she cannot *command* and take other actions.

To *command*, the player picks a level of Difficulty and rolls the PC's *command* skill. If successful, the Hero may *command* the listed Troopers; if the roll fails, the *command* had no effect and the PC's action is wasted. Heroes can *command* Troopers to move or fire; if multiple Troopers have been *commanded*, some can move, others fire, or they all can do the same thing. An individual Trooper can be *commanded* only once per Action card.

Command Attempt

Difficulty	Troopers Commanded
Easy	One Trooper in Hero's Macrohex
Moderate	All Troopers in Macrohex
Difficult	All in Macrohex, plus all in one adjacent Macrohex
Very Diff.	All Troopers on the board
Failed Roll	No Troopers

Event Card Explanations

Death Mist:

If the death mist generator is not destroyed, the Charon player removes any two Rebel Troopers on the board (he cannot remove them from the Base Box) and all Heroes receive a minus 1D penalty to their *command* skill for the remainder of the game.

Storm Breaks:

The effects of Death Mist Event card are negated (return Heroes to normal command dice; they don't get the two Troopers back, however). In addition, ignore the next Action card: place it in the discard pile and go immediately to the next.

Charon Warrior Reinforcements:

One or two Charon warriors appear. They may be placed in the Imperial Reinforcement Sector, or, if the second Charon Sneak Attack Event has occurred and the Base Box contains no Rebel Troopers or Heroes, in the Base Box.

Charon Battle Armor Reinforcements:

One warrior in battle armor appears in Imperial Reinforcement Sector. Does not occur if armor sabotaged; does occur if armor blatantly destroyed (bioscientists pieced a suit together).

Rebel Reinforcements:

Two Skyhoppers in the Base Box — if there are Rebel Troopers or Heroes in the Base Box to fly them. Remove a Trooper counter or the Heroes and replace them with Skyhoppers.

Rebel Reinforcements:

Two Rebel Heavy Squads appear in the Base Box — unless there are Charon in the Base Box.

Regrouping Charon:

One, two, or three slain warriors are placed in any empty hexes in Ravik's macrohex. If there is no room, they do not appear.

Regrouping Rebels:

Three slain Rebel Light or Heavy Troopers appear in any Heroes' macrohexes (except Heroes in Skyhoppers). If no Heroes are on the board or there is no room, these forces do not arrive.

Charon Sneak Attack Launched:

Set aside the first card. When the second such card is turned up, the attack has been launched on the shipyard, from within. If the Rebels have Troops or Heroes within the hangar, this event has no effect. If there are no Troops or Heroes in the shipyard, the Charon can now bring Reinforcements into the Base Box, and from there, if they so choose, onto the battlefield. (Note: considering the "Victory Conditions", below, this is a disaster!)

Ber'asco's Attack:

The Rebel player keeps this card until he wishes to use it. If the Hero with Ber'asco is in the same Macrohex as Ravik when the "Rebel Heroes Move, Fire or Command" card comes up and the Rebel player plays this card, he wins automatically — go to the section entitled "Ber'asco Confronts Ravik," above.

Victory Conditions

The battle ends in a Rebel victory when Ravik is destroyed or the last Event card is drawn. The Charon win if three Charon (warriors or bioscientists) and Ravik have reached the Base Box or if all the Rebel forces have been eliminated.

Warning: If the PCs have done their job well in the early parts of the adventure, you may find the Charon forces are pretty well outclassed in the boardgame. This is as it should be. Remember that the game is part of the adventure, and it is certainly to be hoped that the good guys win. The players have an awful lot of emotional energy tied up in their characters — it would be patently unfair to wipe them out in a boardgame, where the players' roleplaying skills could not be used to their best advantage.

If, for fun, outside the context of the adventure, you want to rebalance the boardgame to make it more "fair" to the Charon side, give them the maximum force-mix, remove two to four Rebel Troopers, and take away the Heroes' medpacs. That makes things a bit more even.

Battle Aftermath

If the Rebels win the battle, it is still a sad victory, for some valued friends have fallen during the fighting. Describe the continued sullen rain, the utter stillness of the field of battle. The Rebel forces are subdued as they tend the wounded and gather up the dead. Use the following section to "wind up" the adventure.

Hunting Charon

There are still Charon in the tunnel system, but they are disorganized and demoralized. A group of Rebels volunteer to enter the tunnels and hunt the stray warriors; the PCs may join them if they wish. You can use this as a time-filler to end the evening. When the evening is about over, the last Charon are killed and the Rebels return to say their farewells.

Good-Bye to Markos Tor

The Rebel heroes make their farewells to Markos Tor. He promises to keep in touch, and to make sure High Command is made aware of how valuable the PCs' help was. You can use Markos Tor again in later adventures, as a "known" NPC Rebel. If any PC particularly befriended Tor (remember that he is married), Tor gives him or her a deluxe high-memory datapad (+1 to all *Knowledge* rolls except *streetwise*).

Transition to Episode Six

Episode six? But the adventure is over, right?

Wrong. But it's important for your players to think so. That way, they will be truly shocked by the exciting conclusion to *Otherspace II: Invasion.*

Keeping the Secret

One way to keep the secret is to give out the adventure awards now. Restore all used Force points as per the standard rules, and give from three to five skill points to each player. Be conservative — remember, the adventure's not really over. Just don't tell the players that!

After giving the awards, end the evening. Tell your players you've been working on an adventure of your own, and you'll run it next session. If you want to, use the read-aloud below to "wrap things up."

False Ending

Read aloud:

EXTERIOR: REBEL VESSEL. *Rebel flight crew-men grin and shake the hands of the Rebel heroes as they prepare to board their ship.*

"Good journey," *says one.* "May the Force be with you."

"We've fueled her up and checked her over," *says another.* "Everything's in good condition. I hope to see you again one day."

Fade to ...

INTERIOR: REBEL VESSEL. *The camera peers through an observation portal, as the world of Stronghold slowly fades away until it is a tiny point of light. Cut to ...*

INTERIOR: DARKNESS. *A large shape moves restlessly in the darkness, as though hiding ... hiding ... cut to ...*

CREDITS AND CLOSING THEME.

E pisode Six Aftermath

Summary

In many action movies, the climax appears to have been reached, but a final shocker awaits the audience. As we all know (from being scared out of our seats), this can be a very effective cinematic technique. Unfortunately, this is quite difficult to accomplish in a roleplaying adventure, since it is usually obvious that there are more pages to go. But in this adventure, with any luck, your players will be completely unprepared for the final encounter.

R avik's Flight

The following information is for you, the Gamemaster. The player characters will most likely never learn any of this, but it will help you envision Ravik's state of mind.

Pain!

He did not remember such pain, ever. There had been pain, of a different sort, when the first contest with Ber'asco had been fought ...and again, the second time, when victory had been his ... but never like this!

The Rebel scum had brought pain to the very core of his being. He had not given in to the pain, as they must have expected him to, so in a way he had triumphed again. The thought brought new strength.

He awoke, but not from sleep, and found himself running, legs pumping, breath coming in ragged gasps, red mist that was not death mist floating before his eyes. Where was he? He could not remember. But he knew where he wanted to be.

He slowed his flight carefully, moved silently among the rocks, drawing ever closer to his quarry. Food and water were not necessary; this body could operate for long periods without nourishment. He had time. He knew where the hated ones' vessel was. He would board it. And when the time was right, they would die.

In this episode, the PCs must defeat Ravik, who has hidden aboard their ship, making one last attempt to kill those who have foiled his well-laid plans.

Preparing for the Final Encounter

To maintain the suspense and surprise element of Ravik's attack, it is important to prepare for the final encounter without giving away the fact that something is about to happen, while at the same time giving the players a chance to influence the outcome.

Leading Into the "Next" Adventure

If you run adventures in consecutive time-frames, the final episode can be integrated smoothly into your campaign. Simply give your players whatever preliminary information you usually provide — but before they actually leave Stronghold, work in a few details in a seemingly innocent fashion, as described below.

If, on the other hand, you are in the habit of runnng disjointed adventures, or perhaps even adventures that feature other characters, you will have to "give the show away" a little by continuing the current adventure past the point where it appears to be over. In this case, a little misdirection can come in handy, as described below.

The Rebels Take their Ship

The Rebels return to thier ship (or whatever means of transport has been arranged for them, if their own vessel was destroyed); if they are on their way to their next mission, the Stronghold denizens tell them that the ship has been overhauled and made ready for flight, and wish them good luck on their next assignment. If this is "the end" of the adventure, the Stronghold mechanics turn over the vessel after a day or two of refit. If necessary to get the PCs away from the ship (while Ravik sneaks aboard), a minor emergency can occur in the tunnels (rockslide, group of Charon warriors, etc.).

A Little Misdirection

If the players suspect something is up (because, for instance, you don't usually play mission sequentially), have Markos Tor warn the PCs to be careful when they prepare the jump for hyperspace, because a couple of Charon biofighters were launched just before *Desolate* crashed, and they have not been accounted for — for all anyone knows, they are still up there, ready to attack any ship that takes off from Stronghold. This ought to get the Rebels a little nervous and looking in the wrong direction.

All is Quiet

When the PCs take off, all is quiet. They make their jump into hyperspace without incident. If the misdirection scene above was used, let the Rebel operating the scanners make several Easy *Technical* rolls. Tell him that all appears quiet, but there may be a sensor ghost on the long-range scanners ... or it may be a small vessel. Keep the tension up and keep them guessing.

If they think to scan their own ship, require another Easy *Technical* roll — but check without comment to see if the roll is actually Moderate. If the PC fails the Easy roll, tell him he sees nothing unusual. If he makes an Easy roll but fails the Moderate, tell him there's a minor fluctuation in the hyperdrive engines. With any luck, the heroes will send one of their number down to fix it. If the sensor operator makes the Moderate roll, tell him there is a faint lifeform reading down in the hyperdrive section. They might have a child stowaway. (This could be quite plausible if one of the "Rebel Group" took a fancy to one of the Heroes during the adventure).

The Attack

Now it's time for Ravik to attack. Having chosen the right moment, and almost impervious to pain because of his derangement, he only has one goal: destroy those who brought about his downfall. If you actually stun your players into shocked disbelief when Ravik first attacks, you have successfully created the mood of this scene.

Choosing the Right Moment

If someone is traveling alone to the hyperdrive section to repair it, he is an obvious target. Take that player aside, out of earshot, and run the first attack.

If the Rebels are aware that something is wrong, but are not so foolish as to send one lone character, Ravik avoids the larger group and attacks the smaller (he will circle those going to "repair the engine" or "find the stowaway" and attack the bridge, for instance).

If the Rebels are blissfully unaware that there is any problem, Ravik starts sabotaging the hyper-

drive to attract attention. A red light appears on the engine panel — one of the drives has a power leak at the source. Continue from there.

If the Rebels seem to be on to you (refuse to split up, pass out weapons and begin to organize a search party, and so on), Ravik has no choice. With a bloodcurdling scream, he attacks the party with whatever advantage of surprise and position he can muster.

Force Points

During the battle, the Rebels have full Force Point complements since they were replenished at the "end of the last adventure." This gives them an unfair advantage. To keep them from blowing away too many Force Points on this battle, tell them that this encounter is actually the beginning of the next adventure. Force Points used now will not be replenished until the end of the adventure.

The Fight

If he can, Ravik takes the Rebels on one at a time until he has incapacitated them all, at which point he pilots the ship to a nearby Imperial base, and the PCs will be captured. Presumably the PCs do not go along with this plan.

Ravik's statistics are in the pullout section. His tactics are to attack with surprise, and close as quickly as possible, relying on the battle-armor's strength and defense in melee. If outnumbered and unable to drop a character in one or two rounds, he tries to retreat and strike with surprise at a later time.

If the Rebels attempt to speak with Ravik, his

madness causes all persuasion attempts to be at the least Very Difficult.

Ravik's Wound

Ravik is wounded, and thus suffers a minus1D penalty to all actions. However, the alien body and the lurking insanity combine to make Ravik very hard to kill. He must be incapacitated or killed from a single shot — ignore cumulative damage effects during the battle.

The Real Aftermath

After this battle, the adventure is over. Use the sections below to help you end on an upbeat note.

R&R

Alliance High Command, impressed with the PCs' performance, allows them a brief stint of rest and relaxation on the resort world of Ord Mantell. This will give them time to recover from wounds received in the battle with Ravik.

Additional Rewards

Although Force Points used should not be restored until the end of the next adventure, award your players one to three additional skill points immediately, since these are part of their award for the previous adventure. Then go to the final cut-away.

F inal Cut-away

INTERIOR: STRONGHOLD CAVERN. *Markos Tor stands in the Rebel Command Center, watching the repair work via the holotank. A woman strides into the chamber and salutes.*

"The last Charon warrior was captured a few minutes ago, sir. Our instruments detect no further enemies in the tunnels."
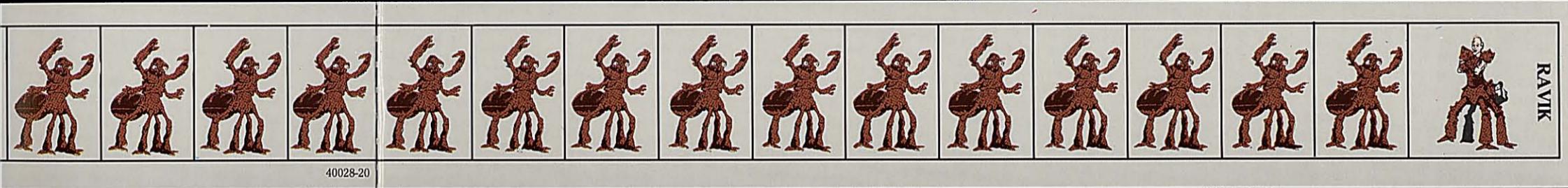
"Good work," *exclaims Tor. Then he frowns.* "There may still be some on the surface. Arm all surface patrols and double security at the tunnel entrances until further notice."

"Yes sir. That was a close one, wasn't it, Markos?"

Tor rubs the small scar on his face, looks pensive for a moment, then smiles. "Yes it was. But the Force was with us ... as well as a few good friends."

Cut to ...

EXTERIOR: STRONGHOLD'S SURFACE. *A Rebel patrol strides slowly across a narrow valley. After they pass, all is silent for a moment; then a cascade of pebbles slides down the steep rise above the valley. Somewhere there is a faint rustling, clicking noise. The music rises. Fade to credits and closing theme ...*

RAVIK

40028-20

Otherspace II Invasion — Counters for use with *Assault on Hoth*™ scenario.

RAVIK

40028-20

Charon Action
Bioscientists Move
- 5 MPs.

Charon Action
Bioscientists Melee
- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 3.

Charon Action
Warriors Move AND Melee
- 5 MPs.
- In any order.
- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 4.

Charon Action
Warriors Melee
- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 4.

Rebel Action
Heroes Move
- 4-9 MPs; see rules.

Rebel Action
Troopers Fire
- Heavy Troop Fire Strength 4.
- Light Troop Fire Strength 3.

Rebel Action
Troopers Move
- 5 MPs.

Charon Action
Leader Moves or Fires
- Use rocket pack to move to any unoccupied hex within 2 macrohexes.
- Fire Strength 5.

Event Action
Draw Event

Event Action
Draw Event

Rebel Action
Skyhoppers Move or Fire
- 5 MPs.
- Fire Strength 4.
- If Hero pilots:
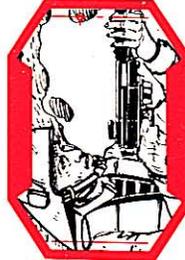- 4-9 MPs; see rules.
- Fire Strength 3-8; see rules

Rebel Action
Skyhoppers Fire
- Fire Strength 4.
- If Hero pilots:
- Fire Strength 3-8; see rules

Charon Action

Warriors Move AND Melee

- 5 MPs.
- In any order.
- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 4.

Charon Action

Battle Armor Move or Fire

- 5 MPs.
- Fire Strength 4.

Charon Action

Battle Armor Fire

- Fire Strength 4.

Charon Action

Battle Armor Move

- 5 MPs.

Charon Action

Leader Moves

- Use rocket pack to move to any unoccupied hex within 2 macrohexes.

Charon Action

Constructs Melee

- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 4.

Charon Action

Constructs Move

- 5 MPs.

Charon Action

Bioscientists Move or Melee

- 5 MPs.
- May attack only target in same macrohex.
- Fire Strength 3.

Charon Action

Leader Fires

- Fire Strength 5.

Rebel Action

Skyhoppers Move

- 5 MPs.
- If Hero pilots:
- 4-9 MPs; see rules.

Rebel Action

Skyhoppers Move

- 5 MPs.
- If Hero pilots:
- 4-9 MPs; see rules.

Rebel Action

Heroes Move, Fire, or Command

- 4-9 MPs; see rules.
- Fire Strength 1-6; see rules.
- May command Rebel Troopers; see rules.

Rebel Action

Heroes Fire

- Fire Strength 1-6; see rules.

Event — Death Mist!
If Generator not destroyed, GM removes any 2 Rebel Troopers from map. All Heroes -1D command skill for remainder of game.

Event — Rebel Reinforcements!
Two Skyhoppers in Base Box (if Troopers or Heroes available to pilot them; see rules).

Event — Regrouping Charon!
One slain Warrior in Ravik's macrohex.

Event — Storm Breaks!
Death Mist command penalties negated. Skip next Action Card.

Event — Rebel Reinforcements!
Two Heavy Troopers in Base Box (unless Charon in Base Box; see rules).

Event — Regrouping Charon!
Three slain Warrior in Ravik's macrohex.

Event — Charon Reinforcements!
Two Warriors in Imperial Reinforcement Sector (or Base Box; see rules).

Event — Charon Reinforcements!
One Battle Armor in Imperial Reinforcement Sector (unless Armor sabotaged; see rules).

Event — Regrouping Rebels!
Three slain Light Troopers in macrohexes with Heroes.

Event — Charon Reinforcements!
One Warrior in Imperial Reinforcement Sector (or Base Box; see rules).

Event — Regrouping Charon!
Two slain Warriors in Ravik's macrohex.

Event — Charon Sneak Attack!
If this is second Sneak Attack, Charon reinforcements may now enter play through Base Box, if no Rebels in Base Box.

Event — Charon Sneak Attack!
If this is second Sneak Attack, Charon reinforcements may now enter play through Base Box, if no Rebels in Base Box.

Event — Ber'asco's Attack!
Rebel player holds until played. Rebel may play this if Hero with Ber'asco is in Ravik's macrohex when "Heroes Move, Fire, or Command" Action card turns up. (See rules for effects.)

STAR WARS®

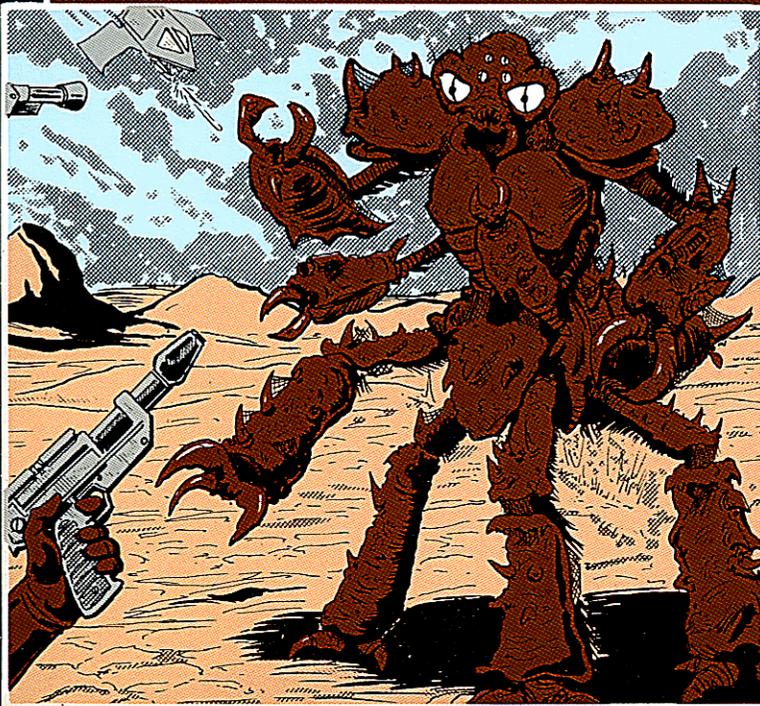## Otherspace II: Invasion

by Douglas Kaufman

Death stalks the galaxy. The dread Charon, destroyers of worlds, killers of galaxies, have found their way into realspace. If they are not stopped — and soon — the Rebels' galaxy, too, will die.

In a remote, little-traveled corner of the galaxy, the Alliance safe-world of Stronghold floats serenely against the bloody backdrop of Rebellion and Empire. Here, families of Alliance warriors hide, safe from Imperial attack.

But something has gone wrong on the safe-world. Terribly wrong.

There has been no contact with Stronghold for weeks. No comm reports, no ship traffic. Nothing. It is as though the entire planet has vanished. Six Alliance personnel race to Stronghold to find out what has happened to the planet — and to their friends and loved ones hiding there.

Six Rebels — against the Invasion!

Otherspace II: Invasion is a sequel to the *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* adventure, *Otherspace*. This adventure can be played and enjoyed on its own, or as part of an *Otherspace* campaign.

40-page booklet features:

- *Assault On Hoth* battle system scenario, complete with new counters and deck of 42 Action and Event battle cards.
- Pullout section with non-player character templates, maps and player hand-outs.
- Extensive gamemaster notes and guidelines.
- Character script that plunges the players into the thick of the action.

A complete adventure for *StarWars: The Roleplaying Game*. For gamemaster and one or more players.