

STAR WARS®

THE

KATHOL-RIFT



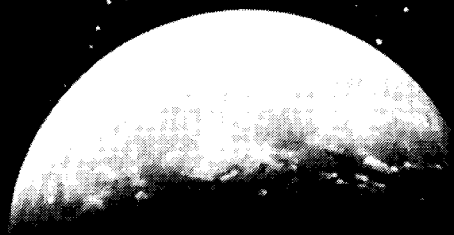
THE

DARKSTRYDER

CAMPAIN

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



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

The New Republic ship *FarStar*, crewed by a mix of soldiers and scoundrels, has left the settled worlds of the galaxy behind. The pursuit of their enemy, Imperial Moff Sarne, has led them deeper and deeper into the unknown, plunging them into adventure and intrigue at every turn.

Sarne's trail has led the *FarStar* to the feared "Kathol Rift," a massive cloud of energy spanning entire parsecs. Now, having endured overwhelming odds, bizarre alien technology and betrayal from within, the *FarStar* must pass through the Rift, and ultimately, face Sarne on his own ground ...


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CAMPAIGN UPDATE

THE STORY SO FAR

Four years after the Battle of Endor, the struggle against the remnants of the Empire rages on. A New Republic task force was dispatched to the distant Kathol sector to topple Moff Kentor Sarne, a vicious and cunning despot and a loyal adherent to Palpatine's New Order.

The battle was not without its share of surprises.

As victorious New Republic ships battered aside Sarne's defenses, the Moff made good his escape, assisted by unusual, unexplained technology that was totally unlike any the New Republic has ever encountered. A handpicked team of New Republic troops (accompanied by some of the angriest former subjects of Sarne's regime) has been sent in pursuit of the fleeing Moff. Their orders: locate and neutralize Sarne and if possible, determine the source of his "DarkStryder" technology.

The team has minimal resources: a handful of starfighters and the *FarStar* (an aging warship that Moff Sarne had procured and modified for his own shadowy purposes). In addition, Sarne completely obliterated all Imperial computer records in the sector, making it possible for collaborators, spies and saboteurs to infiltrate New Republic positions (including the *FarStar*) with relative ease. Cut off from the chain of command, unable to requisition additional support troops and supplies, the *FarStar* is effectively on its own.

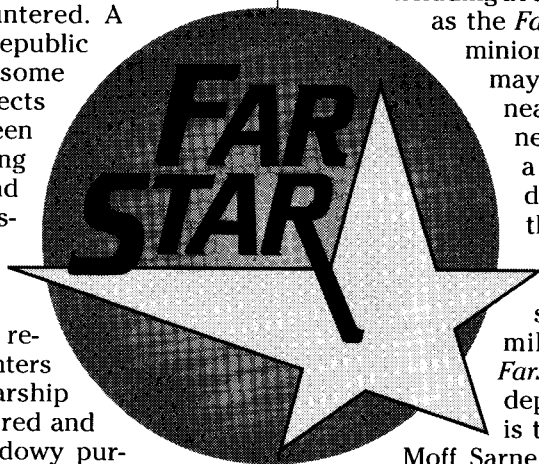
Thus far the battle has gone fairly well, but it has not been without casualties; Captain Keleman Ciro — the leader of the mission — was among

the first to fall prey to Sarne's forces. Kaiya Adrimetrum, the second in command of the *FarStar* and a seasoned veteran of the war against the Empire, has assumed command and continues to lead the *FarStar's* crew deeper into the unknown regions of Kathol sector.

After a series of adventures in which it has been alternately ambushed, sabotaged, and threatened by disease and internal bickering, the *FarStar* arrived in the Outback, a remote region of the Kathol sector that at his prime, Sarne exercised only marginal control over. In the Outback, the *FarStar* encounters enemies and allies alike, including a renegade Imperial ship posing as the *FarStar* itself. Battling Sarne's minions and gathering clues that may lead to the Moff, the *FarStar* nears the next step of its journey: the legendary Kathol Rift, a long-feared and generally dangerous region of space that most sane sentients regard as impassible.

Having acquired a skilled navigator who is familiar with the region, the *FarStar* is about to traverse the depths of the vast unknown that is the Kathol Rift in pursuit of

Moff Sarne and his mysterious, alien tools of destruction ... the source of DarkStryder technology.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Kathol Rift is the next chapter of the storyline begun in the *DarkStryder Campaign* Boxed Set and continued in *The Kathol Outback*. If you have not read the *DarkStryder* Boxed Set, it is strongly recommended that you do so before playing the adventures contained in this book.



INTRODUCTION

"The *FarStar* has entered the Kathol Rift, sir," Captain Brannij reported, standing stiffly at attention. Brannij was in the observation room of the Imperial Star Destroyer *Bastion*, a chamber that had been converted into a Moff's ready room several months ago. The walls of the chamber had been covered with status displays, comm interchanges, holopods and any other form of data relay that Imperial technicians could install. "Apparently, they had a run in with the *Lialic II* — the 'Lance of Endor' — but there has been no word from Captain Treidum since."

Brannij, a ten-year veteran of the Imperial military, was somewhat surprised by Moff Sarne's reaction to the news ... or rather, by his lack of a reaction. Sarne remained seated behind his desk, staring at the status monitors that lined the chamber. A small holographic model of a Corellian corvette — the *FarStar* —

was spinning lazily above a holopod on the desk. Brannij, nervously clutching the intelligence scandoc in his hand, frowned. This was not the way he had expected this meeting to go.

"Apparently," Brannij continued, shifting nervously from one foot to the other, "they are following some kind of navigational information that was missed when we deleted the sector's computer records, sir."

Sarne stirred a bit, brushing a fleck of lint from his otherwise immaculate Moff's uniform. "I would hope so, Captain," the Moff growled. "I had to exhaust nearly every intelligence asset I have to keep those New Republic grubbers in the race. At last, it's paying off."

"Yes, sir," Brannij replied, stiffly. "However, I respectfully submit that my duty would be more clear if I had a better idea of what your overall strategy is, sir."



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Sarne chuckled, the first human emotion that Brannij had seen the Moff display.

"But of course, Captain. My strategy is quite simple: the *FarStar* is bait."

Sarne turned his chair to one side and gestured at several status boards in the rear of the room. One board showed Kal'Shebbol, the sector capital, currently overrun with New Republic warships.

"As you can see, Captain," Sarne continued, "the New Republic is crawling across our capital. I mean to take it back." Sarne paused, pushing another button on the control panel that sprawled across his desk. A duplicate of a scandoc — obviously pirated from New Republic sources — appeared on the status board. Brannij realized it was orders for the crew of the *FarStar* — their entire mission profile, in fact.

"According to this 'Lieutenant Page,' they are to call to their New Republic backup for support when they find us. I simply mean to choose the time and place of the eventual battle."

"And what does that have to do with the ... thing we're guarding?" Brannij indicated yet

another screen in Sarne's ready room. It displayed a massive, circular construct — clearly non-human in origin — in orbit around a large planet. Twin stars blazed in the background, and two rings of asteroids circled the entire system, reflecting ambient light in twinkling pinpricks. Just visible in the distance was the heavy, oppressive glow of the Kathol Rift.

"The construct? Quite simply," Sarne replied, "our 'benefactor' on the surface has persuaded me that it can be quite useful to us when the time comes to battle the New Republic."

"But what *is* it, sir?" Brannij asked, wincing at the mention of the shadowy "benefactor." A decade in Imperial service had not prepared him to playact courtesy to an alien. "According to our tech survey, the device is apparently thousands of years old and its overall purpose — assuming it even *had* one — has not been determined."

"All will become clear in time, Captain," Sarne said, smirking. "Suffice it to say that the New Republic will pay dearly for the invasion of Kal'Shebbol. And the 'valiant' *FarStar* crew will be the instrument of my vengeance."

THE KATHOL RIFT

The Kathol Rift is a tremendous cloud of volatile gas several parsecs across; since its boundaries are constantly shifting, an exact size reference is impossible to determine. Similar in composition to nebulae, it is considerably larger than is average for this type of phenomenon. In addition, the gasses that make up the Rift are extremely unstable, given to generating ionic charges as well as emitting electromagnetic interference and sensor-diffusing particles at a great rate.

The Rift is also the birthplace of thousands of infant stars, which increases the ambient radiation of the cloud immensely. This combination of radiation, and the buildup of ionic charges in the particles of the Rift contribute in the formation of titanic electromagnetic storms that frequently sweep through the Rift. These “lightstorms” — often hundreds of lightyears in diameter — are capable of swallowing an entire fleet whole and leaving behind only miniscule amounts of debris. Obviously, the Rift is an exceedingly dangerous region to travel.

Conventional wisdom states that the Rift is impassible, but this is not strictly true. A species of mystics called the Aing-Tii Sanhedrim frequently traverse the Rift in response to mysterious “calls from beyond the Rift” that the Aing-Tii claim to hear. While the Aing-Tii are an inscrutable, eccentric group, they nonetheless travel the Rift with relative ease.

There are currents and eddies — referred to as “corridors” — that twist through the Rift, and the Aing-Tii are highly adept at locating these currents, allowing ships to pass through the Rift without being destroyed. Rift currents often change position, sometimes dozens of times in a single day. There is presumably some pattern to the shifting of these currents, though none has yet been discovered except by the Aing-Tii monks.

While it is possible to travel through a corridor, it is not advisable: shield strength is depleted by particle buildup, sensors are reduced to minimal resolution, and weapons systems are also rendered nearly non-functional. In addition, lightspeed jumps must be carefully executed; jumps often last no more than a few seconds in the Rift. If not, the ship attempting lightspeed travel runs the risk of reentering normal space

inside a lightstorm or being knocked out of hyperspace by the mass shadow of a newly formed star or one of the thousands of planets inside the Rift. The corridors themselves can shift position while a ship is travelling in hyperspace, forcing the vessel into realspace in the dense, impassible regions of the Rift.

Several of these safe areas are located around planets formed in the Rift, allowing life forms to survive on many of the worlds in the anomaly. Unfortunately, the effects of the Rift have touched these places as well; the life forms that inhabit Rift worlds are often primitive, unstable and generally on the verge of extinction. The radioactive and electromagnetic instability of the Rift has only allowed these life forms to exist, not to thrive.

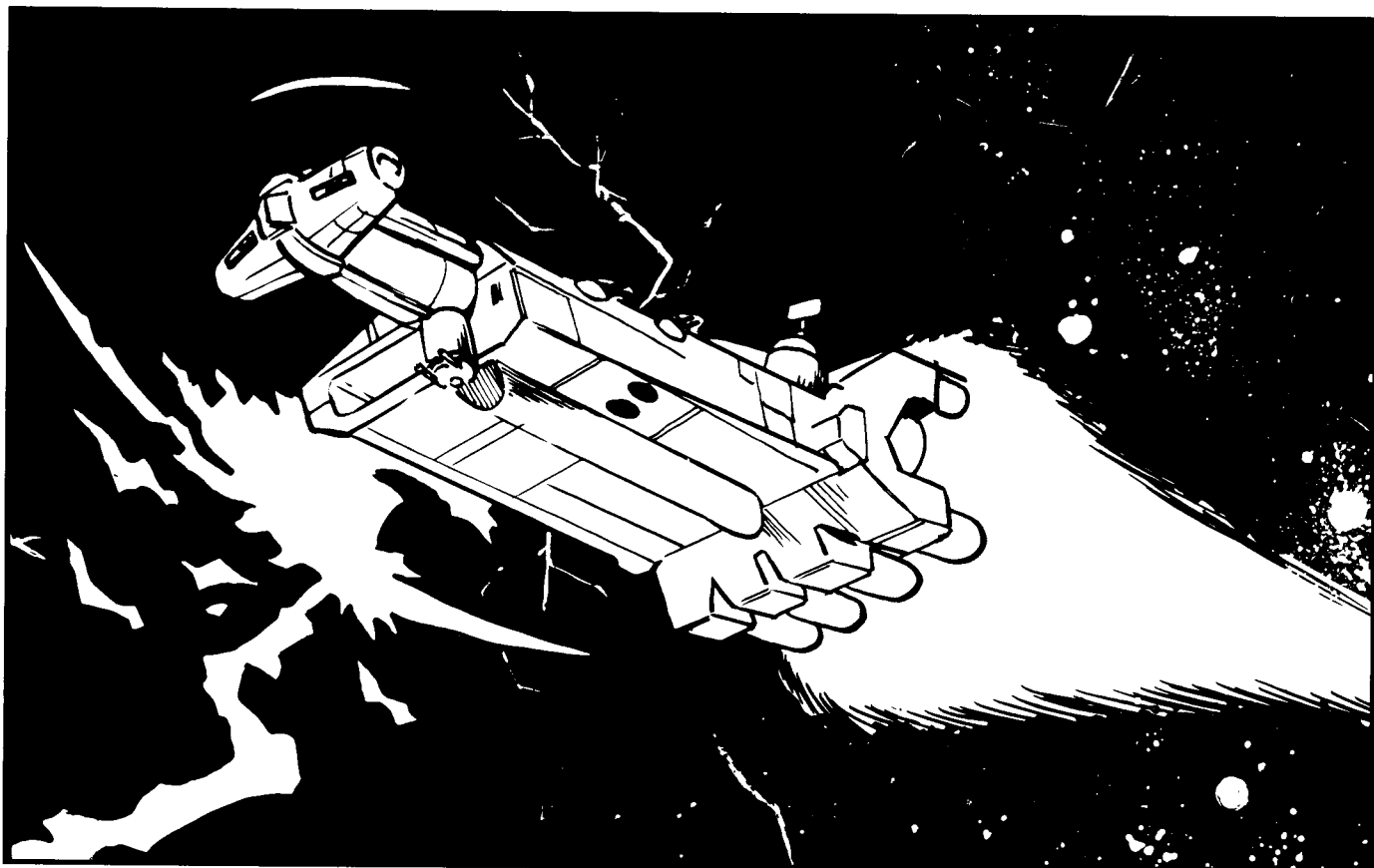
NAVIGATING IN THE RIFT

The Kathol Rift poses a major problem for navigators; since it is constantly changing in size and shape, and since the navigable “corridors” that allow passage through the cloud change position at random, it is virtually impossible to plot a stable course through the phenomenon.

At least, that’s what most people believe. Makezh (the Aing-Tii-trained navigator of the *FarStar* “acquired” during its adventures) has a gift for sensing safe routes through the Rift. Because of his training, he is capable of handling the controls of the *FarStar* as it passes through this dangerous region. In addition he is a valuable source of information on the Rift; gamemasters can use Makezh to reveal the information in this section to the players.

Because Makezh considers this skill more of an “instinct,” he tends to perform his duties with some alarming eccentricities (such as plotting courses with his eyes closed, or activating the hyperdrive for microjumps without warning). In general, navigating through the Rift — particularly with an unstable man like Makezh at the controls — is a harrowing experience.

For the adventures in this book, gamemasters can assume that Makezh is successful in his navigation attempts. However, since gamemasters can use the Rift to guide players in a particular direction, it is easy to incorporate



Storn Cook

original adventures into this portion of the *DarkStryder Campaign*. When attempting to navigate in the Rift, use the following as benchmark difficulty numbers for *astrogation* and *piloting* rolls in the Rift:

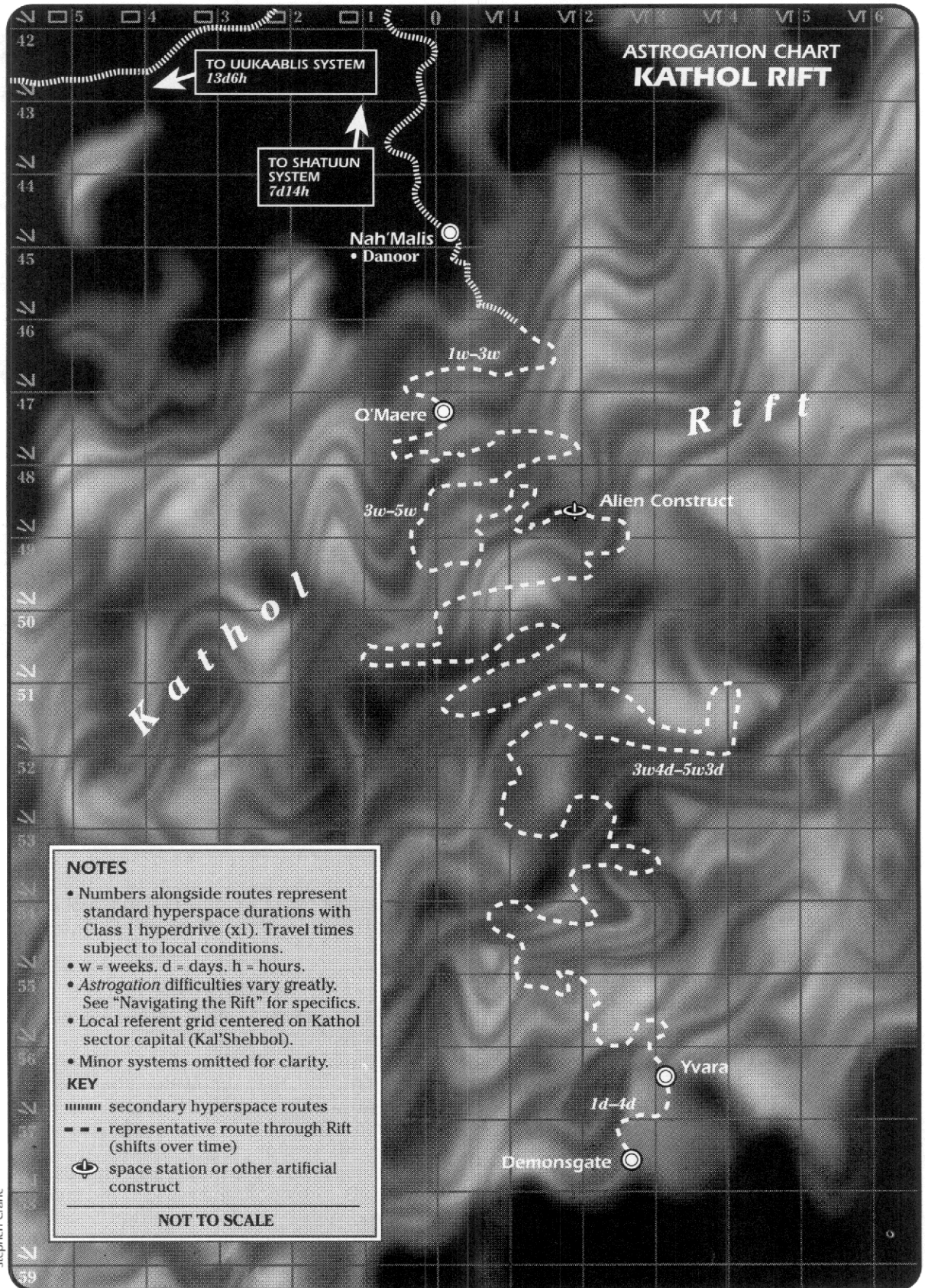
Distance	Astrogation Difficulty*	Capital Ship Piloting Difficulty*
Short microjump (1-3 light years)	Moderate	Difficult
Medium microjump (4-6 light years)	Difficult	Very Difficult
Long microjump (6-8 light years)	Very Difficult	Heroic
Standard Jump (8+ light years)	Heroic	Heroic +50

* Note that any player character who does not have the *astrogation: Kathol Rift* specialization will have a much harder time guiding the *FarStar* through the Rift. Increase the difficulty on all *piloting* and *astrogation* rolls by a minimum of *three* levels for characters who lack this specialization.

Characters navigating in the Rift will likely spend a great deal of Character Points to reach their eventual destination. However, failure of any of these rolls means that the *FarStar* has plunged into a section of the Rift that can severely damage the ship. The energy discharges in the Kathol Rift inflict 10D capital scale damage for each round that the *FarStar* strays from a safe corridor. Gamemasters should hammer this point home: simply plowing into the Rift without a good *astrogation* plot will be almost instantly fatal.

CORRIDORS

The “safe corridors” in the Rift are not quite as harmless as the term implies. They are not devoid of the radiation and charged particles that make up the Rift; they simply don’t have as high a concentration of them as other areas. While in the Rift, the *FarStar* is in a tactically dangerous position. All weapon ranges are halved, as are their damage codes (rounding up). Shields only provide 1D protection, and sensors and communications equipment do not perform well. All *sensors* and *communications* checks are increased by three difficulty levels.



In addition, the presence of the starship acts as a sort of “lightning rod” to the energy discharges of the Rift. When moving at sublight speeds, the *FarStar* is pounded with energy bolts and swirling radiation vortexes. These discharges perpetually hammer the *FarStar*, but they are typically of low strength; a “normal” discharge does +2 damage.

Since the energy signature of the Rift can affect ship’s systems — particularly computers and navigational systems — the gamemaster can use these energy discharges to make passage through the Rift more challenging. If the person piloting

the *FarStar* rolls a one on the Wild Die — or at a dramatically appropriate moment — an energy discharge may be more powerful: these discharges can inflict up to 6D capital scale damage, at the gamemaster’s discretion.

Please note that the “Kathol Rift Starship Damage Chart” is only necessary if gamemasters wish to use it. If the gamemaster considers a particular moment dramatically appropriate for the *FarStar* to suffer damage from an energy discharge, they are encouraged to direct the scenarios as he or she sees fit.

KATHOL RIFT STARSHIP DAMAGE CHART

Damage Roll

≥ Hull Code

Roll By:	Effect
0-3	Shields blown/controls ionized
4-8	Lightly damaged
9-12	Heavily damaged
13+	Severely damaged

A *controls ionized/shields blown* result indicates that the ship’s controls have been damaged. The ship loses 1D from its *maneuverability*. In addition, all weapons and sensors are off-line for that round and the next round.

If the *FarStar* suffers from two *ionized controls/shields blown* results, the controls are frozen for two rounds, maintaining the same speed and direction.

If the *FarStar* is *lightly damaged*, roll 1D:

1-2 — The *FarStar* loses 1D from *maneuverability* (which may not drop below 0D)

3 — Computer system glitch; all astrogation plots currently in memory are garbled and must be re-plotted (requires a Very Difficult *astrogation* roll).

4 — Shield polarity shifts; the new shield frequency attracts charged particles, which inflict 1D damage per round until shield polarity is returned to normal (requires Moderate *capital ship shields* roll).

5 — Sensor overload; causes feedback loop into the *FarStar*’s comm system, resulting in upper-frequency white noise blasting from all comm systems (inflicts 1D damage to anyone within 2 meters of comm system speakers).

6 — The *FarStar*’s movement is reduced by one. If the *FarStar*’s movement is reduced to one, it must reduce speed (to half-speed). If its movement is reduced again, the engines give out completely.

If the *FarStar* is *heavily damaged*, roll 1D:

1-2 — The *FarStar* loses 2D from *maneuverability* (which may not drop below 0D).

3-4 — Computer glitch; all targeting computers on one weapons system are damaged, rendering them inoperative (requires a Very Difficult *capital ship weapons repair* roll to repair, and takes 2D minutes).

5 — Engine flare; sudden power-surge in engine systems wrenches *FarStar* out of control; all *capital ship piloting* rolls increase one difficulty level until engines are repaired (which requires a Moderate *capital ship repair* roll, and takes 1D hours).

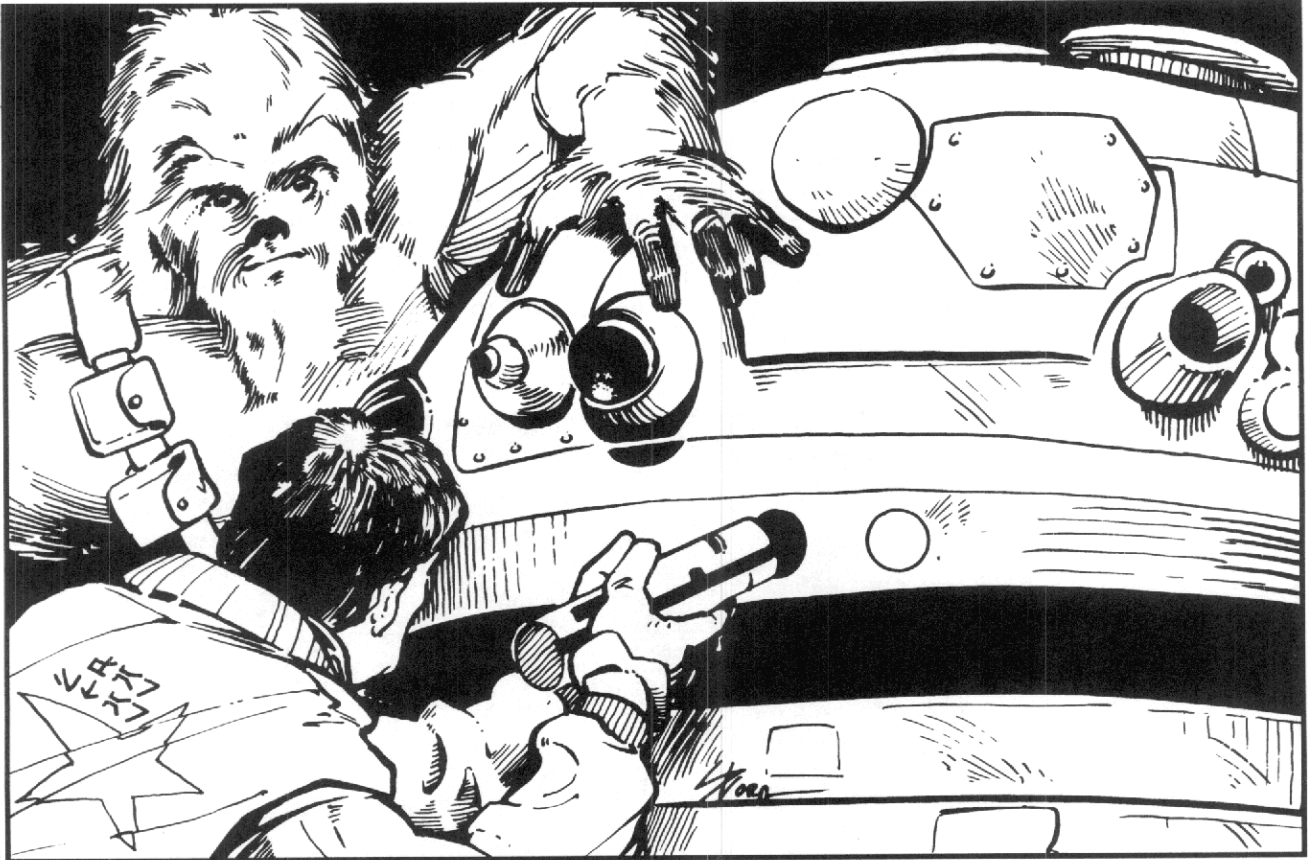
6 — The *FarStar*’s movement is halved. The same guidelines apply as for when a *lightly damaged* vessel’s movement is reduced.

If the *FarStar* is *severely damaged*, roll 1D:

1-3 — Disabled weapons; all weapons are rendered inoperative and require a minimum of two Very Difficult *capital ship weapons repair* rolls, and 3D days to fix.

4-5 — Hyperdrive cutout; the hyperdrive is damaged, requiring two Very Difficult *capital ship repair* rolls and 2D+2 days to repair. In addition, the current hyperdrive multiplier is doubled until the *FarStar* can be completely overhauled.

6 — Hull breach; one compartment has been opened to the vacuum of space. The crew has 1D rounds to evacuate that section and seal it off. The breach will require three Very Difficult *capital ship repair* rolls, and 4D days to fix. While the breach is unrepaired, the *FarStar* cannot enter hyperspace without risking further structural damage.



Storm Cook

THE "LIFELINE" PROJECT GAME NOTES

Each probe droid that will be used in the "Lifeline Project" must be heavily modified. The project also requires a minimum of five probe droids be used. Use the following guidelines for base difficulties when modifying the probes:

- Each probe droid must have its armor augmented to withstand the punishment of the Rift. This requires 1D days, and a Moderate *droid repair* roll for each probe so modified.
- The navigational sensors of the probes must be reprogrammed. The new droid protocols include a scanning subroutine to measure the safe corridor and maintain a relative position in the safe area's center. The nav sensors will also maintain contact with at least two other probe droids in the lifeline. This requires 1D days and two Very Difficult *droid repair* rolls for each droid so modified.
- A communications booster/relay device must be added to the droid. This allows simple messages from the *FarStar* to reach the other side of the Rift, and (hopefully) the New Republic. Fabrication of the relays takes 1D hours and requires a Difficult *computer programming/repair* roll for each relay constructed. Installation of the relay requires 1D+2 hours and a Moderate *droid repair* roll.

THE "LIFELINE" PROJECT

Lieutenant Page's orders to the *FarStar* crew included a notation about mustering any New Republic forces in the area before attacking Sarne. Captain Adrimetrum believes that Sarne has far more assets at his disposal than he has let on; the presence of the *Lance of Endor* indicates that the Moff can afford to send a capital ship away from the bulk of his fleet. Maintaining a communications link with the New Republic has become a top priority. According to the *FarStar's* scans, the radiation and energy bursts within the Rift will disrupt long-range communications completely.

However, Sergeant Brophar Tofarain and Lofryyhn have suggested an alternative. The *FarStar* carries six Imperial-issue probe droids that can be modified to serve as communications relays and signal boosters. Brophar and Lofryyhn believe it is possible for the probes to be reprogrammed to scan the Rift and maintain relatively safe positions within the Rift's corridors.

The communications boosters can be coded to stay in contact with each other, forming a chain of comm relays. Unfortunately, if any link in the chain is damaged, the communications lifeline through the Rift will be cut. Because the Rift

throws out a great deal of interference, communication with the New Republic will be one-way; the *FarStar* will be unable to receive any reply.

Adrimetrum accepts this plan as a last-ditch, desperation ploy; if things go so badly that they need to signal for immediate assistance, the New Republic will probably arrive too late to help the *FarStar*. Still, she believes this is a good plan and it will keep her techs busy instead of dwelling on some of the strange things that have occurred since entering the Rift.

OTHER EFFECTS OF THE RIFT

The Kathol Rift has long been a source of tales about weird phenomenon, spectral apparitions, lost colonies, derelict alien ships and other pieces of folklore common among the superstitious peoples of the galaxy. While many of these stories are obvious fabrications, a good number of them contain a nugget of truth as well.

Individuals often complain about severe headaches, nausea, and hallucinations during travel through (and even occasionally *near*) the Rift, particularly Force-sensitives. Often these hallucinations are eerie, spectral images of small, hairless, robed bipeds with large eyes, slit noses and tiny mouths set in a large rounded skull. Other "common" visions are of an arachnid creature that is constantly grasping at everything around it. At its best, the Rift tends to make those who pass through it nervous, irritable and uneasy. Odd noises echo through ships passing through the Rift, noises that have no visible source. Unexplained system malfunctions strike non-essential ships' systems. Navigational equipment often displays conflicting data. In short, the atmosphere of the Rift is sinister and disorienting.

Gamemasters hungry for an unusual setting, one particularly suited to a more "creepy" tone than the standard science-fiction environment, should find the Kathol Rift ideal for their *Star Wars* campaign.

Legends abound about how the Rift was formed; some claim it is merely a natural phenomenon and that its unusual effects are simply the result of the radiation and electromagnetic interference, others claim that the region was once the site of a catastrophe that was so terrible that it physically warped surrounding space. In truth, no one knows for certain how the Rift was formed.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Several of the effects described above (hallucinations, odd sounds, and so forth) can all be effective tools for a gamemaster looking to "spook" players. In general, the key to making these elements work in a *Star Wars* campaign is timing. By throwing hallucination after hallucination at the players, the gamemaster will only succeed in blunting the impact this phenomenon can have. By using these techniques sparingly, introducing them only in dramatically appropriate moments, the gamemaster can easily create an atmosphere of menace in the campaign.

Luke's vision in the dark side cave on Dagobah in *The Empire Strikes Back* is an excellent example of how to set a mood. Rather than take the traditional tactic of startling the audience with a sudden shock, *Empire* used slow motion, unusual lighting and strange camera angles to highlight the "weirdness" of the scene. Similar techniques can be used in the Kathol Rift; if a character is experiencing a hallucination, describe the scene completely. The lights may seem to change color, the position of the floor may appear to change slightly, the character may appear to be moving in slow motion, or can't seem to speak or yell ... the stranger the effect, the better.

In addition, the Rift's odd effects can be used as a way to fill time during the inevitable lags in play that many gamemasters are forced to combat. For example, if the players are struggling to decide on a course of action, and actual roleplaying has stopped for a few minutes, randomly determine which player character experiences a hallucination or hears an odd, unexplained noise (or other such oddity). By graphically describing the event and timing it for a moment that the players are simply not expecting it, the situation will have a great deal more impact and certainly be more memorable.

These scenes can also be more effective than the typical tactic for moving play along: action, action, action. The *DarkStryder Campaign* is already full of combat, intrigue and adventure; the Rift's effects can provide the gamemaster with a different option to speed play, one that will in all probability surprise the players. (Besides, if the hallucination scene is described effectively, the players may endeavor to speed play *themselves*, rather than suffer from another such "trauma," thus saving the gamemaster additional work.)

Another method for using the Rift's effects becomes apparent if the player characters are having too easy a time with the adventures. Often advanced characters can speed through pre-written adventures with ease. Making a player character become distracted during a critical or

NOTE TO GAMEMASTERS

It is not necessary for gamemasters to use the following Rift "effects" and hallucinations in the *DarkStryder Campaign*. They are provided as guidelines on how to run a suspense/horror-themed adventure in the *DarkStryder* storyline, though gamemasters who prefer the more traditional, action-oriented structure of *Star Wars* adventures are by no means bound to follow the suggestions in this chapter.

In addition, gamemasters are not required to use *only* the suggestions in this chapter. Gamemasters should feel free to include any other Rift effects that suit his or her existing campaign and allow the most flexibility.

As in *The Kathol Outback*, gamemasters are encouraged to add their own chapters to the *DarkStryder Campaign* story. By using the Rift as a storytelling device, the gamemaster can insure that the *FarStar* ends up where he or she desires it. Since the *FarStar* must travel inside safe "corridors," the gamemaster can simply say the corridor passes the planet/space station/pirate base, etc. that the new adventure is set on.

While the eventual conclusion of the *DarkStryder Campaign* does not hinge on the darker tone of *The Kathol Rift*, gamemasters may be looking for a change of pace; if not, simply follow the adventures as written.

dangerous moment can add to the suspense of the situation. For example, a player character engaged in starfighter combat suffers a brief hallucination for a round or two ... just long enough for an enemy pilot to take up position behind him. Rather than simply facing off against enemy fighters, this character must battle the hallucination as well, and has a much more challenging problem to solve after the hallucination passes. Again, this technique only works well when used in *extreme* moderation, but in a situation similar to the one described above, it can help improve game balance and make the gamemaster's job easier.

GAMING IN THE RIFT

In game terms, when the gamemaster determines a player character should suffer a hallucination or other Rift effect, that character should roll their *willpower* dice or their *Perception* dice (whichever is higher).

If a *very easy* or *easy* result is rolled, the hallucination the player character suffers is severe. After the hallucination has ended, the player

character must again make a *willpower* or *Perception* roll. Any character that does not make a Moderate result on this check suffers a -1D penalty on all skills and attributes for 1D hours.

If a *moderate* result is rolled, the hallucination the player character suffers can also be considered moderate.

If a *very difficult* result is rolled, the hallucination can be considered minor.

If a *heroic* result is rolled, the player character suffers no hallucination.

In these situations, the gamemaster should roll for the players without their knowledge.

Please note that any character who is Force-sensitive suffers a -1D penalty on the *willpower* or *Perception* check. Any character who spends a Force point automatically suffers a moderate hallucination. Force-users who roll a one on the Wild Die during any *Perception* attribute or skill check, or during any *Sense* roll automatically suffers a severe hallucination.

SAMPLE HALLUCINATIONS AND RIFT EFFECTS

The following are provided as examples of hallucinations and other odd effects for gamemasters to use during play in the Kathol Rift. Gamemasters are also encouraged to develop their own; they are by no means limited to the ones described below.

(**Note:** there is no fixed "duration" to these visions; some last a few seconds, others last minutes. Some could conceivably last hours, though hallucinations of that length should only be used at most once or twice during the campaign.)

Disorientation. If a minor hallucination is called for, the player character suffering from the effect loses track of his or her current location for 1D seconds, becoming momentarily "lost" and dazed. If the effect is intended to be moderate, the player character can become disoriented for 1D rounds. If a severe hallucination is needed, some role-playing is needed.

Example: *When using a disorientation effect as a full-blown hallucination, one way of describing the situation is as follows:*

"As you {the player character} are moving towards the control station for the weapons systems on the bridge, you experience a momentary sense of vertigo, and you black out for a moment. When you open your eyes, you are no longer standing on the bridge, but rather, near the edge of a long, deep crevasse several kilometers deep. Purple-blue sky is overhead, and swirling aquamarine



Mike Vilardi

clouds dot the horizon. A fierce wind is pushing you closer and closer to the precipice.”

Roleplay the situation for several rounds, forcing the character to make Strength and Dexterity checks to avoid falling off the precipice (against a Heroic+30 difficulty). After they fail the Strength and Dexterity rolls, describe the air rushing past them and their tremendous rate of descent. When the character hits the “bottom” of the crevasse, the character immediately wakes up where they were standing when the vision began.

Example: *Another variation on the disorientation hallucination involves the layout of the FarStar. As the player character is moving through the ship, describe a “morphing” effect on the bulkheads and deckplates, as they begin visibly metamorphosing into a different section of the FarStar. The player character is actually in the same space they previously occupied, but are seeing another part of the ship they are familiar with.*

Past Events. The Rift is an area with a murky, possibly violent, history and often images of the horrific events that have occurred there (or even

in the traveller’s own history) are “replayed” for unwary passers-by.

For example, the player controlling Jessa can experience a “replay” of a prior landing mission, though it has been subtly altered; Loh’khar, Kl’aal and Jessa had landed the *Muvon* on a fertile planet in the Outback, hoping to find new food supplies. Originally, the mission was a success, and was uneventful. In Jessa’s replay, however, something unexpected and bizarre happens. Perhaps the ship starts sliding down the hill they landed on and Loh’khar is struggling to pull Jessa out before it smashes on the rocks below. Perhaps a huge fire breaks out on the prairie they are exploring and they must race to reach the *Muvon* before they are engulfed by the conflagration. Or perhaps a flock of native birds swoops down on the trio and begins savagely attacking them. Literally anything can happen in one of these visions, and gamemasters should try to tie one of these visions to events that have occurred in previous adventures.

If a minor hallucination is called for, describing a scene from the characters history is often effective; auditory hallucinations are often typical in this case (the voices of the character’s parents or siblings, for example).



Stern Cook

Another effective “trick” is to make characters aboard the *FarStar* replay the scene they just completed. Without warning, simply repeat the scene description and give the players the same choices. If they act *differently*, something immediately goes horribly wrong: the room caves in, the hull breaches and they are sucked into space, or anything else sudden, unexpected and fatal. Then tell the players that only a few minutes have elapsed and that they just *shared* the hallucination. (This is ideal for non-crisis situations, when play may be lagging a bit.)

Nightmares. While passing through the Rift, the crew suffers from a series of nightmares. Ranging from vague night terrors to horribly detailed dreams, the overall effect is beginning to wear on the crew. Several common “themes” in these dreams are feelings of oppression, claustrophobia, and fear of pursuit.

Gamemasters are encouraged to make the most out of these nightmares; they are essentially an unexplained psychological phenomenon and have little bearing on the *DarkStryder Campaign*, though they can be used to keep players on their toes. For example, gamemasters can tell two different players that they experienced the same nightmare. Passing each player a note explaining the nightmare in detail and letting them discover on their own that it was some sort of shared vision can be quite unnerving.

This type of effect can also describe the waking hallucinations that are among the most common in the Rift. Unnerving sounds or visions that are bizarre, random and unexplained occur rather frequently when travelling through the Rift. Some crewmembers complain of hallucinating horribly real visions of terrible events that fade away a moment later.

Example: Brophar is walking through the hangar bay. Suddenly, the magnetic shield in the dock fails, and he is sucked into open space. As he tumbles into the void, Brophar experiences explosive decompression, blindness and numbing cold. A moment later, he recovers, realizing that the whole incident was merely a hallucination (albeit a very convincing one).

Example: Varel DeVay is working on a xenobiology experiment, trying to find a method of better preserving the *FarStar*'s food supply. As she examines a plant sample, it suddenly starts to move, wriggling around on her sensor apparatus. With almost supernatural quickness, it sprouts several vines which grow at impossible speed, ensnaring the timid biologist, crushing the breath from her lungs. A moment later, she recovers, standing in her lab, with the plant sample lying motionless and harmless on her sensor apparatus.

Example: Captain Adrimetrum is moving through the *FarStar* and notices suddenly that the normally crowded deck she is walking through is totally deserted. Moving throughout the ship, she cannot find anyone. Pausing to collect her thoughts she leans against a nearby bulkhead, which is surprisingly warm. She suddenly hears a mechanical, rhythmic whooshing of air as the bulkheads seem to bend and buckle in time with the strange air current. The *FarStar* appears to be breathing. A moment later, the vision fades, and Adrimetrum is standing among a crowd of *FarStar* crew, who are moving about their normal duties.

Psychological Trauma. Often, deeply buried fears can be thrust to the surface while passing through the Rift. Some characters may not even be aware of the minor phobias they possess, until the effects of the Kathol Rift hammer the point home. Bouts of vertigo, claustrophobia, agoraphobia and any other type of fear can suddenly flare up, hampering a character's abilities. Overcoming these phobias — in the case of a "severe hallucination" result requires a Very Difficult *willpower* roll. Failure indicates that all die code penalties are doubled for a duration equal to the length of the hallucination.

Example: *Krudar may feel somewhat agoraphobic; normally, though, this is not a full-blown phobia. Rather, it manifests in Krudar's preference of staying in his quarters when not on duty, rather than socializing with his crewmates. However, if Krudar suffers from this Rift effect, he now finds it difficult to even leave his quarters. The scene can be described to the player any number of ways, the more unusual the better.*

Perhaps when leaving his quarters to head to his duty station, the corridor Krudar is in suddenly seems to stretch to the horizon infinitely, no matter which way he turns ... unless he turns and heads back to his quarters.

Perception Shift. Another interesting — and disconcerting — effect gamemasters can inflict on the *FarStar* crew involves an individual's "shift in perception." In the case of a severe hallucination, the character may believe they are seeing things through another character's eyes. The character is not *actually* seeing things through another's eyes, though the hallucination is remarkably convincing. In general, the character experiencing a perception shift "sees" from the eyes of someone or something in their direct line of sight. (A character in the engineering section will not "see" things through the eyes of a character in cee-cee, for example.)

Example: *Cobb Unser is moving through a corridor of the FarStar when he suffers from a severe hallucination. As he is walking past a Treadwell repair droid, he suddenly experiences a moment of dizziness. When his vision clears, he finds he is not actually controlling his movements. His eyesight seems oddly distorted, as if looking through a pair of macrobinoculars. His line of sight changes and he sees himself, leaning against a bulkhead. After a moment, the dizziness returns*

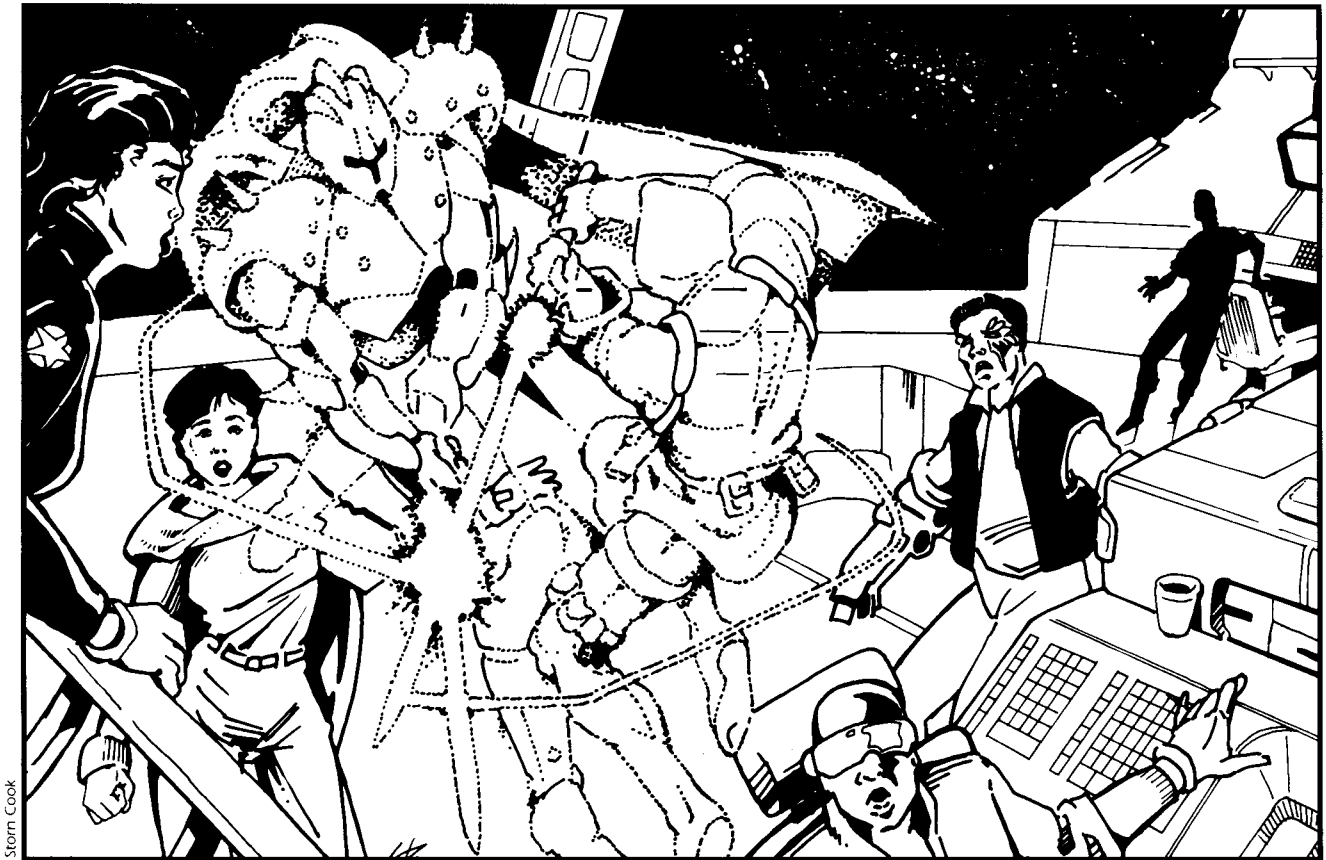
and he is leaning against a bulkhead, watching the Treadwell roll by.

Visitors. Members of the crew occasionally see strange, shadowy figures moving furtively throughout the ship. (This has driven Scoryn to distraction as she struggles to maintain security against these phantom figures.) Some claim to have seen small, humanoid aliens with extremely large craniums dressed in ornate robes. Others have seen a hunchbacked, arachnid-like phantom that hisses and snarls when approached. Still others have seen long-dead family members or friends. Other unidentified forms have been seen, from cyborged, piratical-looking humans to lightsaber-brandishing Ithorians, to shadowy, indistinct forms that vanish almost instantly.

A character experiencing a severe hallucination may actually engage in conversation with one of these figures, though there will not be a coherent response. In general, these figures will respond as if they can hear the character, but cannot understand or reply. For moderate hallu-



Storn Cook



cinations, these figures abruptly vanish when approached.

Gamemasters are encouraged to use these visions — particularly those of the humanoids with overdeveloped craniums — to convince the *FarStar* crew they are being overrun or experimented on. While this is not actually the case, maintaining a significant level of paranoia will help increase the stress of this perilous journey.

HISTORY OF THE KATHOL RIFT

There has been no definitive explanation concerning the cause of the hallucinations and other odd effects, though many historians believe that the Rift is near the site of an ancient battle between Old Republic Jedi and a dark Jedi named Halbret. While this has never been proven, there are sketchy records concerning a race called the Cthol who were wiped out by Halbret before or during his struggle with the Jedi order. (Note: the records that refer to the “Cthol” are in error; “Cthol” is a mispronunciation of “Kathol” which literally translates as “Precursor.” In truth, a sloppy historian probably misspelled the word

in his documents; “Cthol” is still in common usage because the erroneous documents are among the few still available to researchers.)

The Precursors have been the subject of much conjecture and debate among scientists and scholars until the days of Palpatine’s rise to power. Folklore common to the Kathol region indicates that the Precursors were a highly advanced race that predates humans, and that they flourished in the Outer Rim Region for centuries before being wiped out; whether or not the Precursors actually existed remains an unknown (though many reputable researchers believe the Precursors did in fact exist).

Most Old Republic records of the period (particularly during the days of dark Jedi uprisings) were destroyed or deeply hidden during Emperor Palpatine’s reign, so no proof exists concerning the Kathol or dark Jedi Halbret. If the Precursors did exist, no theory has yet been proven explaining their destruction (though several plausible scenarios have been forwarded). The problem with most of these theories assume that the Precursors existed, an assumption that has no concrete facts behind it. In short, the Precursor myth is a tantalizing enigma that scholars have spent years unsuccessfully trying to unravel.

GAMEMASTER CREW NOTES

The *DarkStryder Campaign* has an evolving storyline, and several of the key characters featured in the original *DarkStryder Campaign* Boxed Set have played — and will play — pivotal roles in the story’s development.

As indicated in the Boxed Set, several characters have mysterious agendas that may or may not be in the best interests of the *FarStar*’s overall mission. Gamemasters should use the information in this section to help steer the *DarkStryder Campaign* towards its eventual conclusion.

Information in this section is broken down into several categories:

Player Guidelines: This information is intended to help the player “get into character.”

Directed Development: This section provides hints, suggestions and specific directives for developing a character and keeping that character wedded to the campaign plotline. The information in this section can act as an informal “story guide” for gamemasters, as it reveals enough information to help the gamemaster keep the story flowing in the intended direction, without giving away the “plot twists” of future supplements.

Suggested Development: This section contains suggestions on how to develop characters and how to integrate these developments into the *DarkStryder Campaign*. Please note that these suggestions are not *requirements*; if these suggestions do not suit an existing campaign, feel free to ignore them.

KAIYA ADRIMETRUM

Player Guidelines: Kaiya, who has always been a dedicated and tenacious fighter, has slowly accepted the reins of command. However, she is still somewhat unsure of herself, and tends to surround herself with individuals with startlingly different viewpoints, a tool she finds very helpful in commanding the *FarStar*. (This also explains her promotion of Scoryn to second-in-command.) In addition, she is extremely tired of Jessa Dajus’ secrecy, and Khzam’s allegation that the ex-Imperial was a Colonel (not a minor shuttle pilot as she had hitherto claimed) has made her very

angry and determined to get a straight answer out of Dajus once and for all.

Directed Development: Again, Kaiya should survive the events in the Kathol Rift; she will play a pivotal role in the campaign storyline’s conclusion. However, the events of “Rogue Elements” should sow some seeds of doubt in her, particularly where her command abilities are concerned.

Suggested Development: Adrimetrum is beginning to realize that she may face a serious problem if and when the *FarStar* locates Sarne. She has no idea what Sarne’s forces consist of, or how long it will take for New Republic ships to arrive. In addition, she has recognized that many members of her crew — including Dajus, Kl’aal, and Qesya Vth’naar — all have personal scores to settle. In a face-to-face conflict with the Imperial warlord, she’s going to have her hands full trying to restrain the more volatile crewmembers and make them stick to a coherent battle plan ... a plan she has yet to formulate.

LIEUTENANT DARRYN THYTE

Player Guidelines: Thyte is still the same sour, ill-tempered man he was when the mission began. However, some of the rough edges are starting to soften. In fact, he is becoming somewhat infatuated with Ranna Gorjaye, the hot-shot X-wing pilot.

Directed Development: Over time, Thyte begins to conquer some of his personal problems, though he is still bitter about his current status as a “desk jockey.” Thyte will not play a pivotal role in future supplements, though gamemasters are encouraged to keep Thyte in the thick of things if it suits the ongoing campaign.

LIEUTENANT JESSA DAJUS

Player Guidelines: When Gorak Khzam (the *FarStar*’s former second-in-command) revealed publicly that she is not all that she seems, the crew has viewed Jessa with increasing distrust. The friendships she had slowly formed have again become distant and cold. In addition, since entering the Rift, her dreams have become increasingly terrifying and bizarre. As a result, she

is becoming extremely fatigued.

In addition, Adrimetrum is growing increasingly impatient with Jessa's secrecy. If pressed, she will reveal a bit more about Sarne and DarkStryder. Unfortunately, she doesn't know all that much.

Sarne has been interested in the Outback and the region beyond the Rift for as long as Jessa has known him; by discreetly probing his records, she learned some clues as to why.

Years ago, on one of his earliest missions as part of a three-man scout team, Sarne was declared missing. His scoutship and fellow officers were declared missing and presumed dead after failing to check in by several weeks.

After a few months, then-Lieutenant Sarne resurfaced, claiming that a navigational mishap in the Kathol Rift claimed the lives of his fellow scouts. Sarne, according to his story, barely made it back to Imperial space with his badly-damaged scout ship. In addition, the scouting mission was ultimately unsuccessful, as there was nothing of any intrinsic value in the Rift, or in the space directly beyond it.

Sarne was then transferred to a Core Worlds posting, but over time maneuvered himself back to Kathol Sector. (Not that there was a great deal of competition, since Kal'Shebbol was considered a backwater posting.)

Jessa believes that Sarne discovered the source of his "DarkStryder" technology on his early scouting mission, and in fact murdered his fellow scouts to protect his secret. The actual location of DarkStryder or the nature of the mysterious technology is unknown to Jessa, though she believes that Sarne — always a shrewd planner — has something nasty in store for the *FarStar*.

Directed Development: Jessa is not reacting well to the Kathol Rift; she is highly distracted and her attention span has been reduced considerably. Gamemasters should have the player running Dajus occasionally asks for instructions to be repeated, or other somewhat out-of-character questions.

During the events of "Waystation," Jessa is rendered comatose, suffering a severe hallucination that will eventually lead the *FarStar* to Moff Sarne.

LOH'KHAR THE FINDER

Player Guidelines: Loh'khar is still the shrewd, calculating manipulator he has been since joining the *FarStar* crew. In his time aboard the ship, he has managed to endear himself to many of the crew, including Captain Adrimetrum. In general, Loh'khar is attempting to generate goodwill and friendships with his shipmates.

Directed Development: There is a reason that Loh'khar has worked hard to ingratiate himself with the crew. In short, Loh'khar intends to jump ship, much like Gorak Khzam. In fact, Khzam and Loh'khar plotted this whole scheme shortly after leaving Kal'Shebbol.

During "Harm's Way," the *FarStar* crew finds a battered YT-1300 freighter, which is in desperate need of repair. Loh'khar will argue that the bashed-up vessel is useful, as a source of spare-parts, as an additional reconnaissance platform, as a secondary landing vehicle — whatever will convince Adrimetrum that the ship is of some value to the *FarStar's* mission. Loh'khar will then attempt to convince Brophar and Lofryyhn to repair the wrecked freighter.

Loh'khar intends to use the ship as a getaway vehicle when he eventually jumps ship. He plans to bring the remaining two Turazza — Rizzal and Vizzal — with him when he finally defects. The actual moment of his defection is still somewhat up in the air; the Twi'lek won't leave without a guarantee of high profit, and his original plan has been altered considerably. Khzam's defection was an unfortunate result of equally unfortunate circumstances. Still, a deal is a deal; Loh'khar still plans to locate the source of Sarne's DarkStryder technology and capitalize on it, splitting the profits with Khzam — even if that means betraying his New Republic allies in the process.

LIEUTENANT RANNA "WING-RIPPER" GORJAYE

Player Guidelines: Gorjaye is the epitome of a fighter pilot: brash, cocky and arrogant. She's also as good at her job as she claims, which tends to make her even more insufferable. Still, she tends to be somewhat lonely; her infrequent sabacc games with Darryn Thyte and Dasha Defano have only underscored her solitude. She has formed an unlikely friendship with Thyte (that may blossom into something of a more romantic nature over time), but given the abrasive nature of the pair, it is likely to be an extremely turbulent relationship.

Suggested Development: Gorjaye has gained a grudging respect for Adrimetrum, though she is loathe to admit it. In turn, Adrimetrum is coming to understand her firebrand X-wing pilot better. Gorjaye will silence any negative comments about Adrimetrum, even if she happens to agree with them; if pressed Gorjaye will claim that such dissension is counterproductive. If Gorjaye continues to perform well (and if the *FarStar* survives the conflict with Moff Sarne), she will be promoted to the rank of captain and given her choice of assignments.

KL'AAL

Player Guidelines: Kl'aal is growing more and more restive aboard the *FarStar*. The oppressive nature of the Rift is making it harder for him to interact with other crewmembers, and he has had to hold his temper in check.

Directed Development: Kl'aal was promoted to a security position in the wake of Khzam's defection. While he has not "inherited" Khzam's position, his hunter's instincts may prove useful in day-to-day security matters. He answers to Adrimetrum and Scoryn.

Suggested Development: During the events of "Rogue Elements," Kl'aal will be needed in the cee-cee. His natural tendencies will prompt him to drop into the thick of battle, however; in addition, his temper has frayed to the point where he will be tempted to kill any mutineers he finds. If this happens, he should be relieved of his security position and returned to his scouting duties.

SERGEANT BROPHAR TOFARAIN

Player Notes: Brophar is bluff, loud and outgoing. He is generally good-natured, but if a blustery manner that can be hard to take in large doses. Since the theft of his beloved freighter (the *Muvon*, stolen by Gorak Khzam during his defection), he is much more surly than is typical for him. Attempts to cheer him up are all doomed to fail, though most people that know him are probably going to attempt it anyway; he is one of the best-liked members of the crew.

Directed Development: Brophar will be interested in the repair work on the battered YT-1300 freighter captured in "Harm's Way," though he may require some cajoling. Fixing the vessel — and renaming it the *Muvon II* — will become an all-consuming activity.

LOFRYYHN

Player Notes: Lofryyhn has come to enjoy working with his crewmates, though the constant pressure of keeping the *FarStar* operational with (as he puts it) "syntherope, cold rivets and good fortune" are beginning to grind him down. Lofryyhn is furious that a former slaver like Khzam got away; if he figures out that Loh'khar is in league with Khzam, things will go badly for the Twi'lek.

Directed Development: Lofryyhn will be discreetly asked to assist Brophar in repairing the *Muvon II*, since Brophar is likely to need the assistance.

Suggested Development: Playing Lofryyhn and Loh'khar off against each other could prove very

interesting, particularly once the Finder's true motives become apparent.

DASHA DEFANO

Player Notes: Defano is an excellent pilot, proud of her abilities and her accomplishments. Like many Wroonians, she is somewhat aloof, though she prefers the term "easygoing." She has become a close friend to Ranna Gorjaye, and the two spend many of their off-hours playing sabacc.

Directed Development: Defano is forging a relationship with Thanis Gul-Rah, one of the more "rough-and-tumble" members of the crew. Thanis has told her that the new second-in-command, Scoryn, is using her position on the command crew to settle an old score, something that Defano finds particularly distasteful. As Gorjaye and Adrimetrum resolve their differences, Defano finds herself somewhat estranged from her closest friend. However, during the mutiny that occurs in "Rogue Elements," Defano will likely side with those loyal to Adrimetrum.

Suggested Development: The relationship with Gul-Rah is far from a romantic one; Thanis claims he just needs someone to talk to. However, Defano has a soft spot for the downtrodden, and that is how the bounty hunter appears to her in this situation. A romantic link between them should remain a tantalizing possibility, though one that will take more time to develop.

COBB UNSER

Suggested Development: After being reunited with his sister, his stake in the *FarStar*'s mission is greatly reduced. Unfortunately, he has no way to leave, and will likely resent it greatly. However, he will listen to his sister, and if she elects to stay, he will too.

KRUDAR

Player Information: Like Kl'aal, Krudar is growing extremely impatient and surly. Repeated scuffles with crewmembers have led to a somewhat precarious position with the command crew; if he is involved in another altercation with a crewmate, he will be relieved from duty and confined to his quarters.

Suggested Development: Since Krudar is temperamental and occasionally violent, gamemasters are encouraged to present the gunner with situations sure to infuriate him (such as a human crewman nearly knocking him over in the mess hall, saying "Sorry 'bout that, greenskin," or other such insulting remark). Since he knows he'll be busted in rank and removed from his post if he is involved in another brawl, gamemasters can test his resolve in this manner.

BOOM

Suggested Development: Boom has developed from a minor irritant to a *major* irritant. Crewmembers are rapidly tiring of his constant experiments with fire. Consequently, he is becoming a source of tension in a crew with already-fraying tempers. Krudar in particular, is having difficulty dealing with the diminutive pest, which is unfortunate, since it was Krudar who persuaded the New Republic to take Boom aboard. Gamemasters can use Boom to further antagonize Krudar.

RIZZAL AND VIZZAL

Player Guidelines: The two remaining Turazza still stay near Loh'khar, though they outwardly appear sad that Nizzal fled the *FarStar* with Khzam. However, they are aware of Loh'khar's plan to defect and are eager to participate.

Directed Development: The pair of Turazza should assist Loh'khar in his defection plan, though it is possible that they may let something slip inadvertently. However, these slips should be *very* subtle, so the impact of the Twi'lek's eventual betrayal will not be blunted.

BRANDIS TURGAH

Player Information: Turgah is growing increasingly uncomfortable with his role as a spy for the Bothans. He is terrified of imprisonment — a fate the Bothans have promised him if he fails in his mission — but he is convinced that his *FarStar* crewmates will lock him up or maroon him on some horrible world in the Rift if he's discovered. However, he is one of the chief techs on the "Lifeline" project, which suits his cover just fine; since he is constantly working on the comm relays that — in theory — connect the *FarStar* to New Republic reinforcements, he can communicate with his Bothan handlers at will.

Directed Development: At some point during the adventures of this book, Turgah should be caught transmitting a message to the Bothans. (The message will most likely indicate the *FarStar*'s current position and the difficulty it will have contacting reinforcements.) The Bothans have ordered him not to reveal their involvement and will make sure he suffers if he talks (or so they claim). Whether or not the threats are genuine, Turgah believes them. Since he refuses to identify the people he has been contacting, Adrimetrum assumes that Turgah is working for the Empire and locks him up.

GUNTAR

Player Information: As the *FarStar* travels deeper into the Kathol Rift, Gunthar's behavior

changes subtly, as he exhibits a bit more intelligence than he has hitherto demonstrated.

Directed Development: In "Home," Gunthar will rejoin his people and the reasons for his apparently sluggish intellect will become clear; Gunthar's people are a hive-mind. When separated from others of his kind, Gunthar's thought processes suffered immeasurably. As the *FarStar* nears his homeworld, Gunthar will occasionally speak in more sophisticated sentences, though only sporadically. He does not regain full use of his mental faculties until he physically rejoins his people.

TANNER CARZYN

Suggested Development: Tanner Carzyn, a naive human with pro-Imperial leanings, will see Brandis Turgah as a potential ally after his arrest. Carzyn will attempt to form an unlikely friendship with the captive, believing him to be pro-Imperial. Turgah will in turn attempt to manipulate Carzyn in order to keep abreast of current events.

Directed Development: The relationship between Carzyn and Turgah will be pivotal in the final *DarkStryder* supplement. Carzyn should remain intact throughout *The Kathol Rift*.

QESYA VTH'NAAR

Player Information: Qesya has become increasingly concerned about her friend Gunthar. Since entering the Rift, the burly alien has changed slightly. Occasionally, Gunthar — who generally displays a childlike intellect — appears to be feverishly intent when staring out a viewport. Sometimes, he will respond to questions in complete sentences, instead of his typical one-word answers. This unexplained change in Gunthar is very worrying to Qesya, worrisome enough to distract her from her impending pregnancy.

Directed Development: Because of her concern for Gunthar, Qesya will remain very close to him. Qesya's part in the *DarkStryder Campaign* will be developed in "Home."

SCORYN

Player Information: Scoryn, the bitter, relentlessly competent outlaw, is no longer answerable to Gorak Khzam. Since his defection, Adrimetrum has been looking for a replacement, and chosen Scoryn. Despite Scoryn's brusque manner and "questionable" past, Adrimetrum feels some sort of kinship to the older woman. Scoryn is certainly happy for the promotion, and is using the position to her advantage.

In particular, an old score between Scoryn and

Gul-Rah might finally be settled; Gul-Rah had crossed her path a few times over the years, trying to claim the price on her head, but couldn't claim the bounty on at the time. Scoryn managed to endear herself to an Imperial officer, who protected her from the bounty hunter. The Imperial officer was Captain Brannij, one of Sarne's chief aides.

Scoryn learned of Gul-Rah's involvement in the death of Adrimetrum's husband, however, and will reveal this information to the captain if she's threatened. The pair had reached an impasse, but now, the situation has changed: Scoryn is the second-in-command of the *FarStar*, which makes it very tempting to finish with Gul-Rah once and for all.

Suggested Development: Scoryn should try to undermine Gul-Rah where she can, without blatantly singling him out for such treatment.

"GAMMER" FIRDAAZ

Directed Development: "Gammer" will elect to remain on the planet Demongate in the final adventure of this book, in order to maintain the communications lifeline through the Rift. Otherwise, gamemasters should feel free to develop the character as desired.

GENNA SEEDAR

Player Information: Genna is extremely uncomfortable with her role aboard the *FarStar*. Her medical duties are demanding, but even more troublesome is the dissension she senses among the crew. She looks up to Captain Adrimetrum, and will likely report directly to her if the situation warrants it.

Directed Development: During the mutiny in "Rogue Elements," Genna will be very uncomfortable treating any wounded mutineers, particularly those that may have wounded or killed any of Adrimetrum's loyalists. This conflict should be roleplayed out for maximum effect.

VEGATH TIST

Directed Development: This character should remain intact and will be developed in the final *DarkStryder Campaign* supplement.

THANIS GUL-RAH

Player Information: Gul-Rah is extremely bitter; his personal nemesis aboard the *FarStar* has just been promoted to second-in-command. Now, Scoryn is using her position to undermine him, and there's precious little he can do about it, particularly since Scoryn knows that he was involved in the death of Adrimetrum's husband.

Faced with this stalemate, Gul-Rah decides to sow some seeds of dissension among the lower ranks, particularly the fighter pilots; Gul-Rah knows the *FarStar* is a sitting target without fighter cover, and if he can manipulate the pilots to accept him as a close friend and confidante, he believes he will have a stronger position to counter Scoryn. But the temptation to just put a blaster bolt into Scoryn's back is *tremendous* ...

Directed Development: The tension between Scoryn and Gul-Rah should be maintained as long as possible. In the final *DarkStryder* supplement, these two adversaries will have their showdown, but for the time being, gamemasters are encouraged to keep playing them against each other.

GAELIN

Suggested Development: Gaelin could prove useful to Brandis Turgah, who may attempt to use his Bothan connections to bribe the slicer. Gaelin's computer skills will likely prove valuable to both the Bothans and to Turgah.

BRESLIN DRAKE

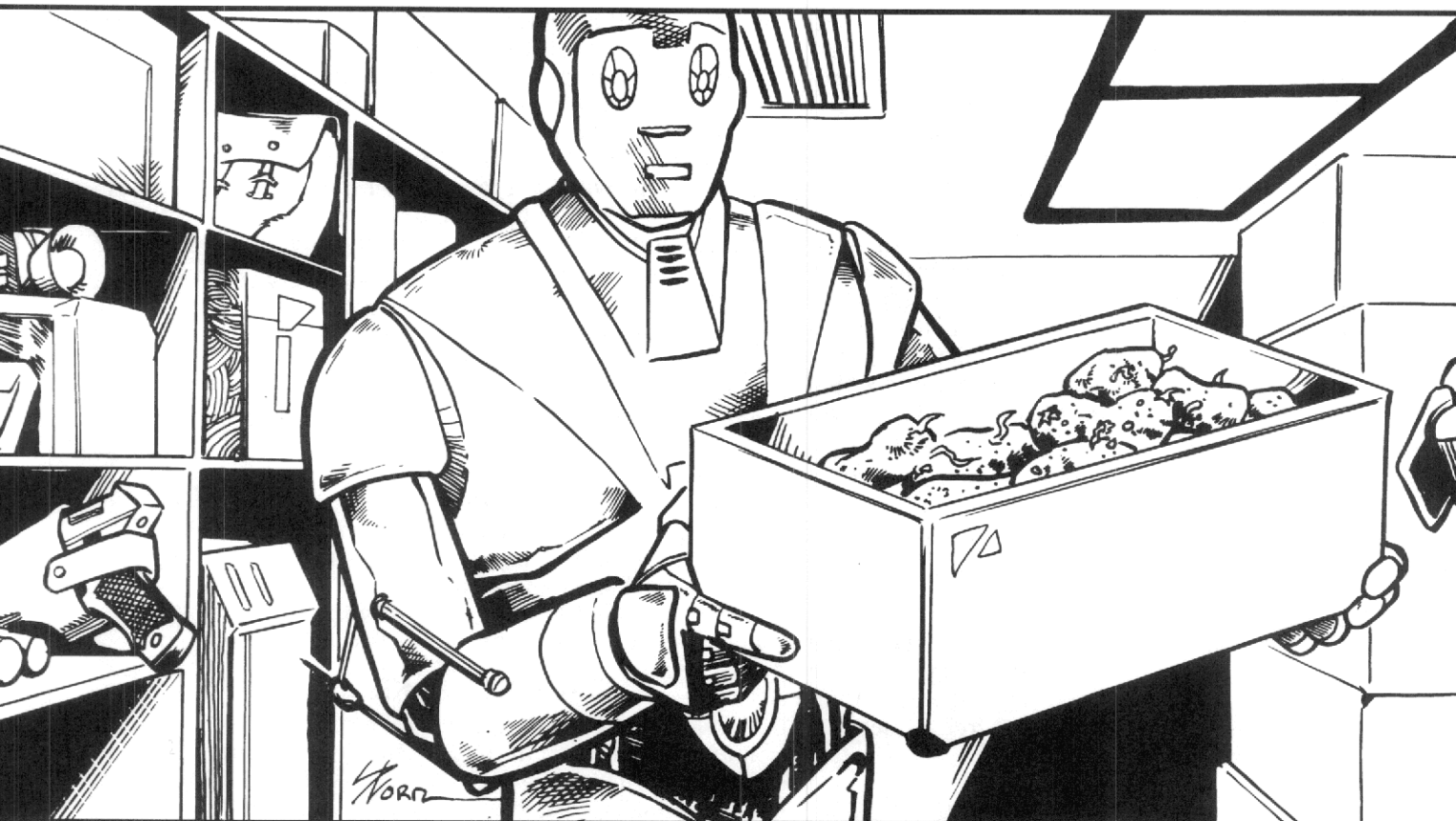
Suggested Development: Drake has become something of a counterintelligence asset to the *FarStar*; with his skills, he is ideal for sniffing out spies and saboteurs, though this makes him something less than popular among the *FarStar* crew. Drake is suspicious of Turgah, and keeps an eye on the technician; in all likelihood, it is Drake who catches Turgah sending messages to the Bothans.

VAREL DEVAY

Suggested Development: Gamemasters have free reign to develop DeVay as they see fit; please note that her xenobiology background may prove very useful to the crew in later adventures.

MAKEZH

Directed Development: Makezh, the Aing-Tii-trained navigator, is perhaps the most important member of the crew at the moment. Despite his erratic — often alarming — behavior, the navigator is the only chance the *FarStar* has of passing through the Kathol Rift. However, as they move deeper into the Rift, Makezh becomes more and more erratic, and is prone to horrible nightmares and hallucinations. Nonetheless, he has made an attempt to blend in with the crew, cutting his hair in what he (mistakenly) believes is a military style, wearing what he (wrongly) feels is a proper uniform, and trying (unsuccessfully) to master military protocol. Still, Adrimetrum gives him credit for *trying*.



HARM'S WAY

R-97 cycled open the belly hold of the *FarStar* and stepped in with the air of a hunter. While most droid manufacturers would likely claim that it was impossible for a droid to be "grumpy," the unlucky *FarStar* crewers who had been forced to deal with R-97 would probably disagree.

"Good morning, R-97," said the SE-4 unit assigned to tend the supplies in this hold. "How are you today?" the unit asked in carefully cultured tones.

Though it was impossible for a pained expression to cross a droid's face, R-97 managed to convey the impression that one had.

"I am functioning within standard parameters, SE-4-LQ3," replied R-97, scanning the hold. It had little use for the programmed social responses the SE-4 units used to maintain relations with their organic masters, but had no reason to object to the pleasantries.

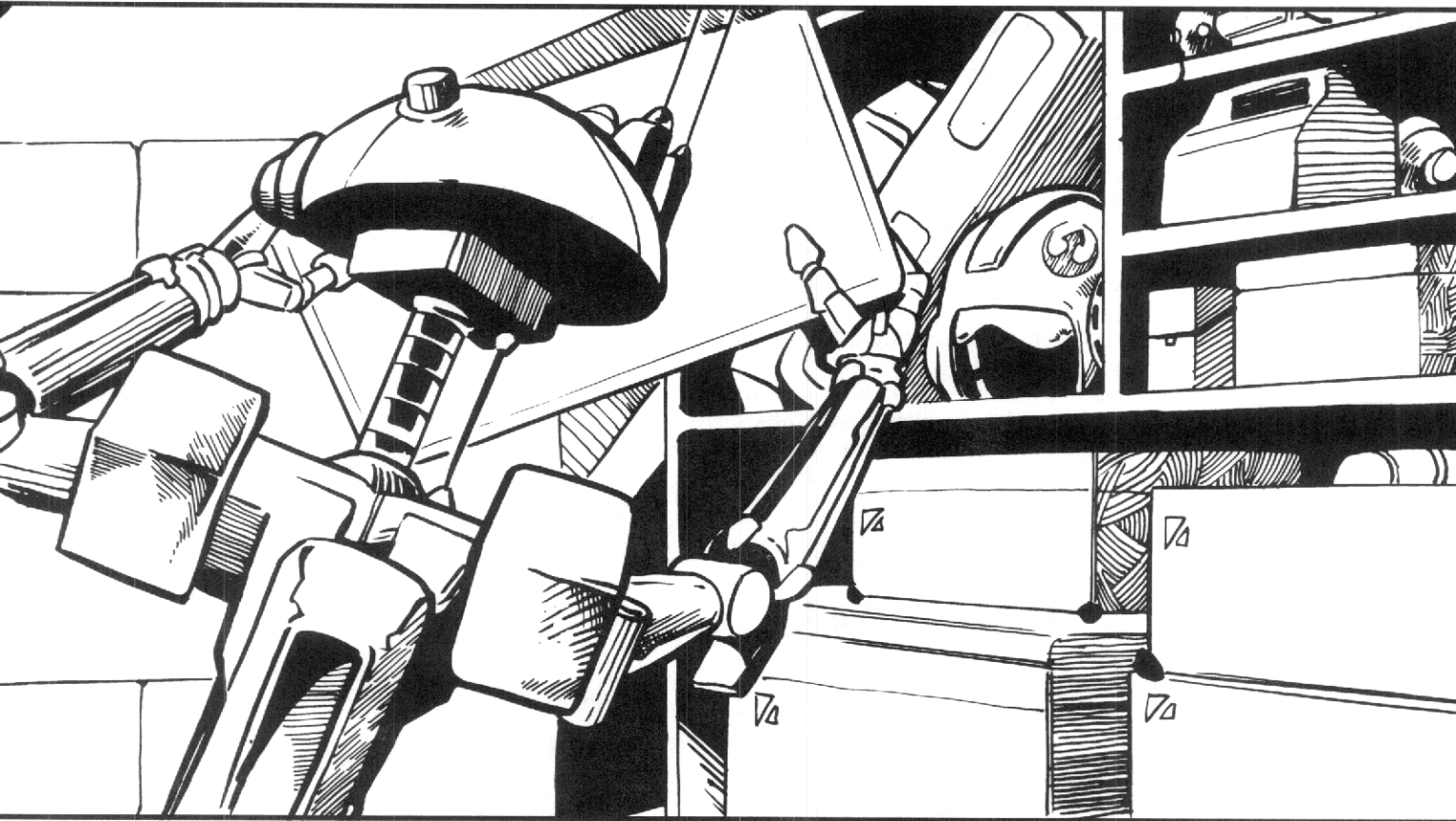
Besides, LQ3 so rarely had the chance to exercise its social functions down here in the belly hold.

"I am inspecting the supplies," said R-97. "I have randomly selected bins 2544-A, 6889-L, 7845-D, and 85528-Q for inspection. I have already noted that the belly hold is within acceptable organization parameters."

"I'm glad you approve," replied the servant droid. "I will locate the bins." It walked into the maze of shelves and crates that R-97 required of it to keep organics from being able to find anything.

SE-4-LQ3 had a perfect map of the current hold configuration in its memory and shortly returned with bin 2544-A, a tool kit for repulsorlift repairs. R-97 carefully examined the kit and found nothing missing. Bin 6889-L, thermal uniforms, showed no wear.

Bin 7845-D, a case of blaster pistols, was



Storn Cook

sealed by former Security Officer Khzam's order. The seal was inviolate, and R-97, unable to open the bin under its own authority, was satisfied with that.

R-97 opened bin 85528-Q, a food crate marked "vegetables." The bin's contents were brown, and bits of the food matter were actually crumbling away.

"Is this food matter usually brown?" asked the SE-4 unit, tilting its head in a close approximation of human curiosity.

"Not according to my files," replied R-97. "We will inspect the remainder of the food bins."

The pair of droids moved through the laby-

rinthine stacks of crates, boxes, storage drums and cargo containers arranged in the hold. All containers flagged as food storage were opened and examined: vegetables first, then moving to grains, pre-packaged rations and meats.

An hour later, SE-4-LQ3 shook its head. "I have failed my duty," it said mournfully. An estimated 27% of the food stores in the hold had spoiled.

"Negative," corrected R-97. "I have reviewed your logs and find no error. Records show that these food bins were all loaded simultaneously. This organic matter must have already been spoiling when we received it. I will note the problem in my daily report."

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The food supplies of the *FarStar* have been contaminated by a highly opportunistic mutant bacteria, a strain of a bacterium common to the Kathol Outback.

This strain appeared several days after the *FarStar* entered the Rift; the strange energies of the Rift caused the mutation. The strange bacteria actually exhibits characteristics of a virus as well, making it virtually impossible to classify, let alone cure.

Almost all of the stored food supplies, which mainly consist of locally acquired foodstuffs, have decomposed, including all the frozen food. Only a small reserve of vacuum-packed emergency rations have survived, enough for one last meal.

EPISODE ONE: SAVAGE HUNGER

Gamemasters can reveal the events covered in the accompanying timeline all at once or by

roleplaying the key moments. Regardless, the *FarStar* begins this adventure with no food.

Captain Adrimetrum makes the following announcement to the crew:

“The *FarStar*’s food supplies have been badly contaminated by a highly aggressive form of bacteria. Our available food stores have dwindled to almost nothing. Medical staff will concentrate on developing an antidote. All crew will reduce vacuum packed food rations, which should buy us a day”

Captain Adrimetrum will make the procurement of new food supplies a top priority. Searching through the navigational information the *FarStar* acquired in the Nah’Malis system (in *The Kathol Outback*) may reveal a food source.

A Moderate *computer programming/repair* check reveals that the *FarStar* stands only 36 hours from Q’Maere, according to the available charts. Q’Maere hosts a science outpost established years ago by the University of Sanbra. The second nearest settlement on the charts is behind them, more than eight days away.

Faced with the prospect of starvation, Captain Adrimetrum decides to continue to Q’Maere,

EPISODE ONE TIMETABLE

• **Day One.** R-97, the brusque quartermaster droid, notes after a random inspection that the secondary bulk food storage bins in the belly hold have spoiled, and notes it to the captain in its regular report. Food stored in the forward lower hold, if anyone checks, is in the process of spoiling. Captain Adrimetrum notices this report on a Moderate *Perception* check.

• **Day Two.** The food in the forward lower hold has completely spoiled at this point. The seeds, however, are quite unblemished. Late in the day hydroponics lab B reports that their compost rate has tripled and that all harvested produce has rotted. This report is red-flagged, and the Captain automatically notices it. A visual check of the other non-refrigerated food supplies shows that they are untarnished by any obvious blight, but testing the food reveals a high level of bacterial infection.

The medical staff reports a rash of minor epidermal infections in cuts and wounds. This report is also red-flagged.

It is possible that the players will try to seal off sections of the food supplies, or even entire decks, to prevent cross-contamination. This is a perfectly sound idea, but unfortunately it won’t work since the bacteria are spontaneously mutating all over the ship.

• **Day Three.** In the next 24 hours all the unfrozen food supplies have spoiled. 25% of the frozen food is spoiling more slowly. R-97 calculates that the frozen food will be ruined within 24 hours. He recommends eating the unspoiled food as soon as possible. A small cache of sterilized, frozen, and vacuum-sealed food is uncontaminated. If it is opened it begins to spoil quickly.

The medical staff reports that they have identified the responsible bacteria and that it is apparently a spontaneous mutation. It is airborne and highly opportunistic, but fairly fragile: it can’t penetrate epidermal layers, but can quickly infect small cuts or abrasions. It is most effective against unresisting tissue (like food) but can also attack living tissue, if it can find a foothold in a skin break.

If the gamemaster requires the players to roleplay this event, the bacteria can be isolated with a successful Very Difficult *medicine* check.

• **Day Four.** The ship is now without food supplies. All of the bacteria cultures vanish over the course of the day, with no food supply to support them. The rash of infections vanish as the crew’s immune systems crush the annoying bacteria.

GAMEMASTER NOTES

Some groups may be more cautious than others; maybe the *FarStar* will turn around and bolt for the edge of the Rift at an early sign of trouble. Perhaps the *FarStar* will perform a series of scouting ventures into the Rift before committing to an extended journey.

Another possibility is that the crew will decide to go all the way back to the Known Galaxy regardless of the time wasted.

There are a couple of options in this case. One is to let them go back. This adventure will survive the *FarStar* not going directly to Q'Maere. If they resupply with fresh food, the bacteria mutates again (it's a common bacteria, present on most foodstuffs and harmless in it's unmutated state) and they're back in their original situation. Even if they go to the extreme of vacuum-sealing new supplies, they won't be able to carry as much food, and will need to stop off to acquire supplies at every opportunity.

Once Q'Maere is introduced as a concept it's likely to be visited anyway, since it's one of the only known inhabited points in the Rift. As long as they go to Q'Maere, the remaining episodes should work with some minor adjustment.

Another option is to flatly tell the players (or have a gamemaster character do it) that their characters have more common sense than that, that turning around now is counterproductive, especially with a known outpost only 36 hours away. The outpost must surely have some food supplies and probably a production facility.

since it's more-or-less on the way anyway, rather than return to the more distant edge of the Rift.

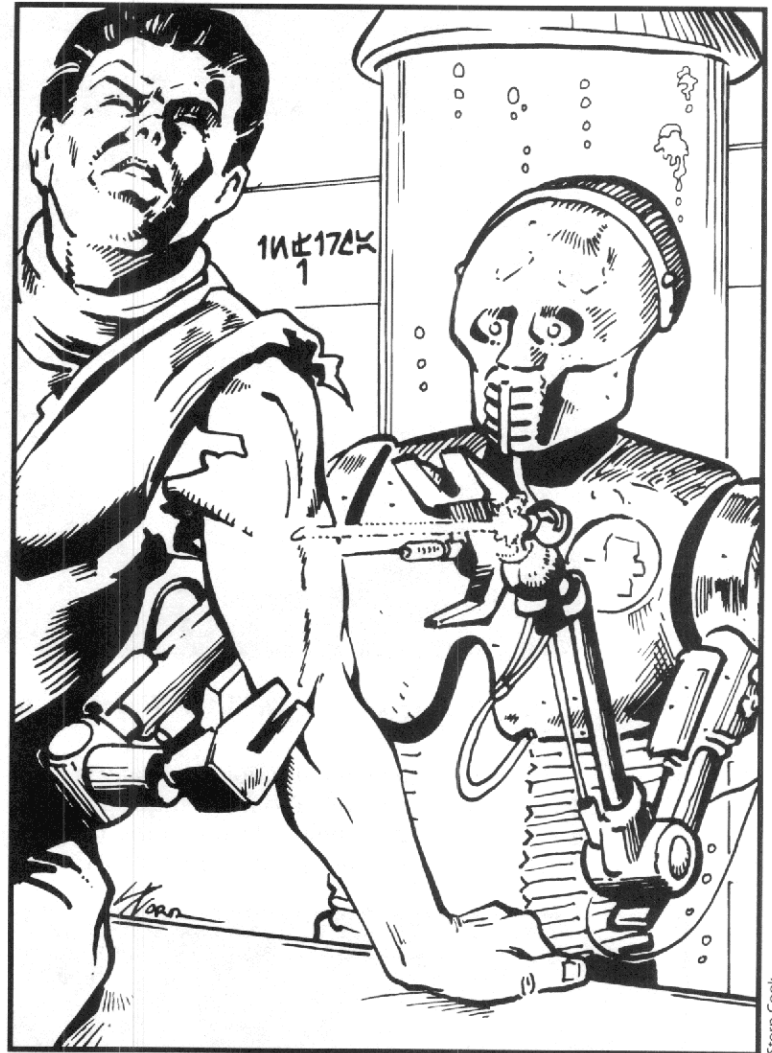
EPISODE TWO: WELCOME, WELCOME

The *FarStar* exits hyperspace only an hour away from Q'Maere. The comm unit immediately picks up a landing beacon and tunes in the Q'Maere flight channel.

Read the following aloud:

The beacon that the *FarStar* has detected follows standard procedure and contains a METOSP which states:

"The Q'Maere Research Facility is a planetol-



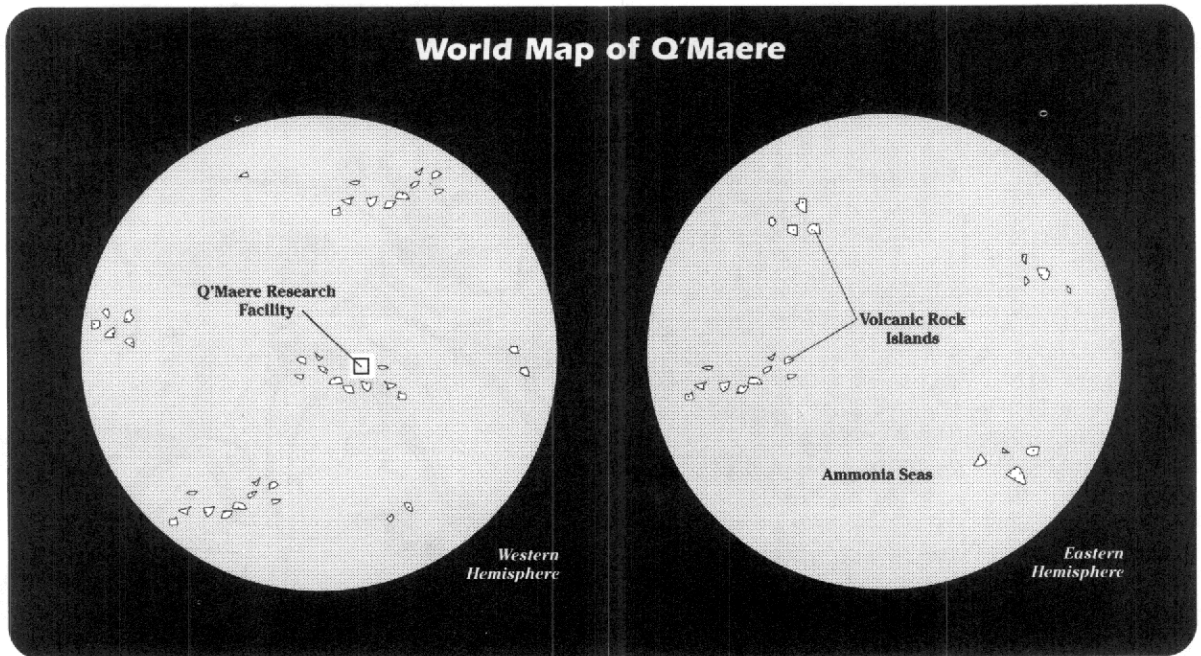
ogy research outpost funded by the University of Sanbra. All scouts investigating the Rift are welcome to land at the Facility to trade or relax. Inquires should be transmitted ahead. We regret that our facilities do not allow for capital ship landings."

It takes several tense minutes to raise a response from Q'Maere. On a successful Moderate communications roll, a frequency to the facility is cleared.

Read the following aloud when communications are established:

The whining background static that is typical of Rift comm signals has not lessened since the initial location of the Q'Maere Facility's beacon. Suddenly, the channel clears somewhat, and a crackling message hisses from the comm. A cultured, well-measured voice crackles from the comm system: "New Republic vessel *FarStar*, this is Doctor Langstyn Kraay, chief

World Map of Q'Maere



administrator of the Facility. Welcome to Q'Maere."

In the ensuing conversation Dr. Kraay is quite friendly and, once told about the ship's problem, is quite willing to help. He mentions that the bacteria mutation is quite normal, and that they've

come up with a cure. Dr. Kraay invites the *FarStar* to send a supply shuttle to the facility. Kraay offers to restock the *FarStar's* stores from the Facility's extensive food supply. Dr. Kraay also expresses his hope that the *FarStar* can assist Q'Maere: the Facility is cut off from the rest of the galaxy, he claims. They have no long-range communications and their only hyperspace capable ship is crippled and unable to jump to lightspeed. Kraay will ask the *FarStar* for assistance.

Inquiries about the Facility are deferred until a delegation from the *FarStar* can meet face to face with Kraay. Inquiries about Moff Sarne are answered directly, along the following lines:

Kraay claims that a number of Imperial Navy vessels scouted the system several weeks ago. Kraay also claims that he was not aware of the fall of Kal'Shebbol or Moff Sarne's flight, and that he is very interested in hearing about the New Republic. ("Very exciting news!")

Any other in-depth questions are politely avoided, deferred, or ignored.

THE Q'MAERE RESEARCH FACILITY

Originally a legitimate research station with cutting-edge projects in planetology, the Facility was covertly converted to a penal colony and re-education center by Moff Sarne shortly after the Qektoth scientists left the station.

Among these scientists was Drigor Tarrens. After a disappointing end to a series of experiments with silicon biology, Tarrens and his team of Qektoth scientists left the Facility to the Uni-

The *FarStar's* information on Q'Maere is as follows:

■ **Q'Maere**

- Type: Hostile Terrestrial
- Temperature: Cool
- Atmosphere: Type IV (poisonous)
- Hydrosphere: Moderate
- Gravity: Heavy
- Standard Terrain: Ammonia oceans, volcanic rock islands
- Length of Day: 36 standard hours
- Length of Year: 344 local days
- Sentient Species: Human, various aliens
- Starport: Limited Services
- Population: 500
- Planet Function: Research Station
- Government: Academic
- Tech Level: Space
- Capsule: Q'Maere is a deadly world with a poisonous atmosphere and no known native life forms. The dominant terrain is actually a caustic ammonia ocean, dotted with rocky, salt-caked islands.

It hosts a long-term research facility established by the University of Sanbra, dedicated to several exotic branches of planetology and xenobiology. Several of the original Sanbra scientists at Q'Maere were extremely radical and eventually left the facility, forming a loose group of militant biotech engineers: the Qektoth Confederation.

versity of Sanbra scientists that founded it.

Currently, the Facility is a cross between a penal colony and a mental hospital: inmates are referred to as “patients” and are treated as “mentally deficient and unbalanced.”

The Facility is a hexagon of six sealed habitat domes, connected by access tubes, numbered clockwise. Each dome has three levels, and except for the prison domes emergency supplies stored in the lower level. The domes have armor plating that provides 5D starfighter-scale protection. Any breach in the dome will trigger an automatic-seal mechanism, closing off access to the adjacent domes.

- **Dome One.** Dome One is the Administrative Center. Operations and communications are housed on the upper level, and other office functions are handled on the middle level. Currently, it also houses the interrogation and “punishment” quarters (euphemistically referred to as the “disciplinary wing”) on the lower level.

- **Dome Two.** Dome two is the Botany Center. The Facility has extensive food supplies, but fresh foods are welcome at any remote outpost and these are grown here. The output is small and reserved for the staff. A surplus has accumulated over time; it is frozen in Dome Six. Most of the work is done by droids, supervised by the eccentric botanist, Dr. Vin Emil. All three levels are devoted to plantlife.

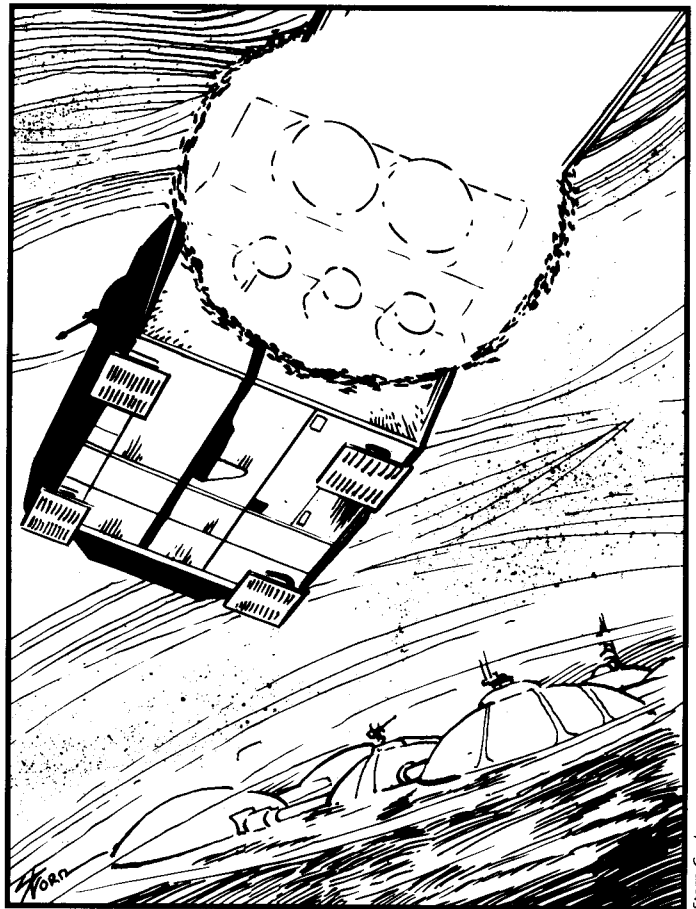
The corridor in this dome is a transparisteel tube, allowing passersby to see the luxurious growth around them.

- **Dome Three.** Dome Three was the Xenobiology Center, though it no longer serves that function. Now it serves as staff housing. The lower level serves as personal storage. The middle level has recreation centers that should appeal to a wide variety of tastes. The upper level houses the actual sleeping quarters.

- **Dome Four.** Dome Four was the Climatology Center; currently it is a prison block. Any check of the Q'Maere computers will still designate the dome as Climatology.

- **Dome Five.** Dome Five, formerly the housing dome, is now also a prison block, and includes the Special Detention and Interrogation Center on the upper level, though these are not currently in use.

- **Dome Six.** Dome Six is Maintenance, Repair, and Storage. The station's five technicians can often be found here, on the upper level. The lower level houses the main generators. Turning these off will



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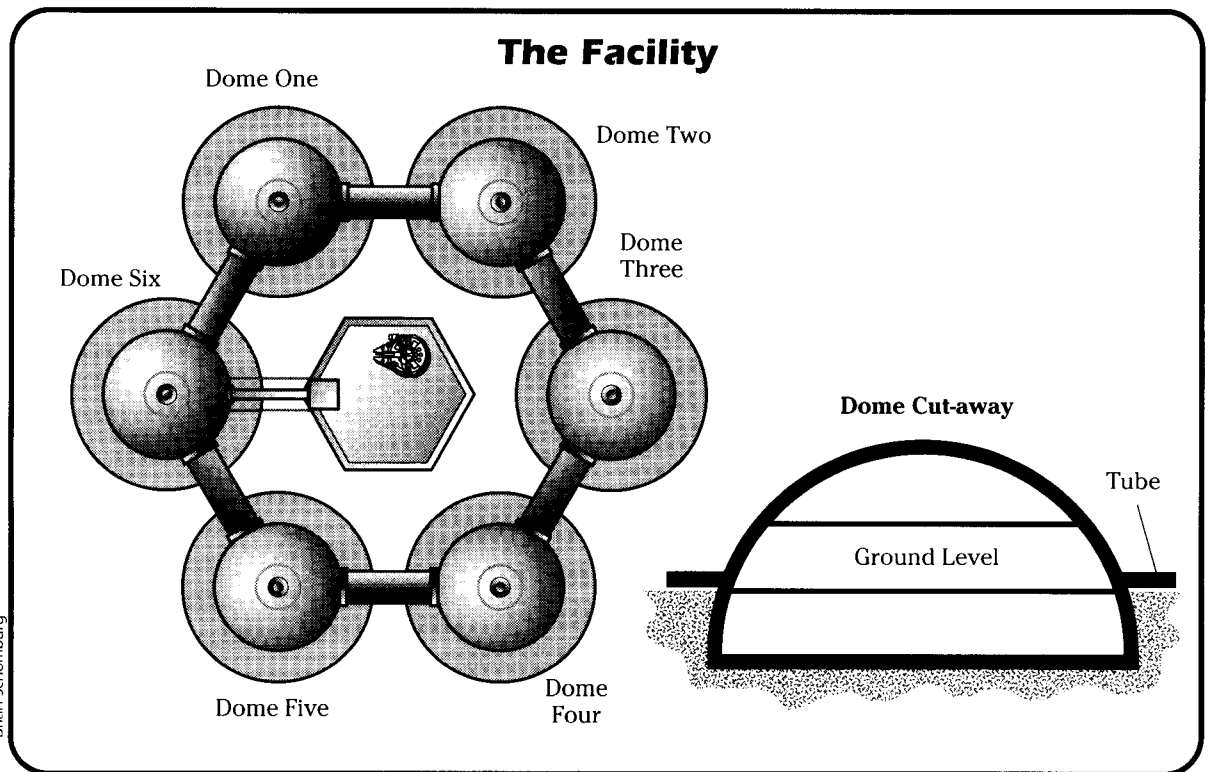
inconvenience the other domes, but not particularly harm the inhabitants, except for the prison domes, which have no other power source. Temperature will drop in the prison dome, and life support will fail if the generators are deactivated.

- **Access Tubes.** The access tubes are 50 meters long, straight, and have blast doors at both ends, controlled by internal and external panels and remote controlled from Dome One. The corridors are used for all traffic, and water, air, and power are piped from dome to dome via conduits under the metal floor.

THE Q'MAERE FACILITY STAFF

Originally, the Q'Maere Facility had a complete staff and small military contingent, mostly drawn from the remains of COMPNOR.

When Sarne retreated into the Rift, the military personnel and several key staff figures were transferred to his forces. Much of the remaining staff fled shortly thereafter, seeing no future in the Facility and feeling no loyalty to the Moff who



had abandoned them. The fleeing staff took the few remaining hyperspace capable ships, leaving the Facility cut off from the rest of the galaxy.

The remaining staff is a strange mix of the intensely loyal, the fundamentally stupid, and the basically sadistic.

■ Doctor Langstyn Kraay

Type: Q'Maere Facility Director

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, brawling parry 4D, dodge 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Bureaucracy 3D+1, intimidation 5D, languages 3D+1, streetwise 4D

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Repulsorlift operation 4D+2

PERCEPTION 2D+2

Bargain 4D+2, command 4D+2, hide 3D+2, search 4D+2, sneak 3D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D+1, stamina 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Computer programming/repair 3D+1, first aid 5D, (A) medicine 3D+2, (A) medicine: psychology 6D, security 4D

Character Points: 9

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), hold-out blaster (3D), medpac, interrogation kit (contains a variety of tools that inflict pain with minimal physical damage, provides +2D to persuasion)

Capsule: Doctor Langstyn Kraay was a lackluster medical student with fam-

ily connections to COMPNOR, until he interned at a COMPNOR hospital's psych ward. There, he discovered his true calling: "personality re-construction." Kraay quickly pulled his grades up and graduated in the top quarter of his class. On graduation, he joined the ISB's Re-Education branch and rose quickly in rank and responsibility.

After the collapse of the Empire and the fracturing of COMPNOR, Moff Sarne hand picked Kraay to head his personal gulag. Kraay eagerly accepted, looking forward to new challenges and strong minds to break. Kraay is an indifferent administrator (he leaves most of the actual administration to department heads) but an enthusiastic "personality engineer" who loves to "cure" the "dangerously unstable and traitorous" patients in his keeping.

When Sarne fled Kal'Shebbol, he stopped at Q'Maere and collected the stations complement of security troops, as well as the majority of the Imperial-issue weapons Q'Maere possessed. Sarne left behind a skeleton crew at Q'Maere, and those he left behind — Kraay included — he considered to be inept ... and told them so. By damaging the only ship capable of leaving the Rift, Sarne effectively marooned the Facility's staff and prisoners.

Kraay is quite upset and afraid of the current situation, but masks this with a cool exterior, broken with flashes of panicky anger.



He presents himself as a helpful and friendly independent scientist until he seizes the landing party.

Kraay is not a military man, and doesn't realize the tactical mistakes he is making in his current situation. However, he is desperate to leave the Rift — and Sarne — behind, and is willing to do anything he has to in order to get away from Q'Maere.

Administration. Very little administrative staff remains. Since little *other* staff remains, this happens to work out fine. Dr. Kraay has taken on most of the titles and divided the work among the remaining administrative assistants.

Councilors. Once a large group of psycho-assemblers, interrogators, and personality engineers, the remaining three councilors have their hands full with the current patient load.

Very little progress toward making the patients productive members of society — the Facility's nominal goal — is now being made.

DR. EGAMO

Dr. Egamo is a second-rate "psycho-assembler," better suited to treating neurosis than reconfiguring whole personalities. He constantly spouts his assessment of other people's behavior patterns, and, if left with no one else to examine, analyzes himself aloud. He is a tall, slightly out of touch man, with swept back salt and pepper hair.

Dr. Egamo. All stats 2D except: *Knowledge 4D, first aid 5D, (A) medicine 2D, (A) medicine: psychology 3D, Move 10.* White tunic, medpac. Character points: 2.

DR. RHU

Dr. Rhu is a psycho-pharmacologist, charged with maintaining the patients neuro-pharmaceutical needs: in other words, keeping them drugged and compliant. He attends to this haphazardly, partially from lack of supplies (the patients are currently on one-quarter dosages), partially from sloppiness, and partially because he is mentally ill as well. His pharmpac contains a variety of medicines, usable only if a character has at least *first aid* of 4D. Dr. Rhu has a remote, detached air about him — he has some trouble distinguishing what's real around him. He is a medium sized man with short, crew-cut brown hair.

Dr. Rhu. All stats 2D except: *Knowledge 4D, first aid 5D, (A) medicine 3D, (A) medicine: psychology 2D+2, (A) medicine: pharmacology 3D+2.* Move 10, White tunic, medpac, pharmpac.

DR. PHALLA

Dr. Phalla is the Patient Facilitator. This innocuous term means that he is the main torturer: he breaks down patients resistance to "treatment."

He greatly enjoys his work, and both volunteered to stay when Moff Sarne swept up the cream of the Facility staff and pointedly refused to join the staff that abandoned the Facility.

Dr. Phalla is a small, intense man, unfailingly polite and cheery even in the darkest moments of facilitation. He is a short, rotund, cherub-faced cheery little monster with thinning blond hair.

Dr. Phalla. All stats 2D except: *Knowledge 4D, first aid 5D, medicine (A) 3D, medicine (A): psychology 3D+2, interrogation 5D+2.* Move 10, White tunic, medpac. Character points: 2.

Support. The support staff consists of four technicians and 30 droids. The human technical staff is made up of "re-brained" former COMPNOR members, who underwent personality reassembly themselves at some point after coming under the ISBs suspicion for disloyalty.

DR. VIN EMIL

Dr. Emil was one of the original scientists at the Facility before the conversion to gulag. When Sarne offered him a top secret post at Q'Maere, he jumped at the chance. Emil has always been a nervous, introverted man, but his time at the new Facility and the horrible things he knows happens here has caused him to almost completely withdraw.

Dr. Vin Emil. All stats 2D except: *Knowledge 4D, (A) xenobotany 7D, (A) medicine: bacteriology 6D.* Move 10.

TECHNICIANS

The technicians are Elma, Phloid, Hoke, and Dyril. They're all mildly obsessive, dislocated, detached, and socially inept. Since their personality reassembly they are awkward and socially inept.

ELMA

Elma is the chief droid technician at Q'Maere. He is meek and shy and will cower at the first sign of trouble.

Elma. All stats 2D except: *Technical 4D, droid programming 5D, droid repair 4D+2.* Move 10. Overalls, tool kit, billed hat.

PHLOID

Phloid is a shy, retiring, squat man, Phloid rarely says anything, but he keeps the computer system running.

Phloid. All stats 2D except: *Technical 4D, computer programming/repair 5D+1.* Move 10. Overalls, tool kit.

HOKE

Hoke is an impressively fat man, in charge of maintaining the habitat domes with his partner,

Dyril. Hoke is somewhat pompous, but genial.

Hoke. All stats 2D except: *Technical 4D*. Move: 10. Overalls, tool kit.

DYRIL

Dyril is a thin, gangly, gawky man, who is a general handyman and keeps the habitat domes running along with his partner, Hoke. Dyril is innocently clumsy and often accidentally creates problems that he and Hoke must then repair.

Dyril. All stats 2D except: *Technical 4D*. Move 10. Overalls, tool kit.

DROIDS

Most of the droids at the Facility are maintenance droids — R4s, MSEs, and SE4 servant droids.

Other droids include a half-dozen AC1 surveillance droids, a 2-1B medical droid, and one partially functional IT-O interrogation droid. In addition, there are six marginally functional Imperial-issue probe droids at the facility, but none of them are active during this adventure.

AC1 surveillance droids. All stats are 1D except: *Dexterity 2D, dodge 4D, Perception 3D, search 6D, sneak 4D, Strength 1D+1*, equipped with repulsorlift (3 meter ceiling), holocam with transmitter. Remote controllable. Move: 10.

2-1B medical droid. *Dexterity 1D, Knowledge 2D, alien species 5D, Mechanical 2D, (A) bacta tank operation 5D, Perception 3D, (A) injury/ailment diagnostics 6D, Strength 1D, Technical 3D, first aid 6D, (A) medicine 9D*. Equipped with medical computer (+2D to medical skills), hypodermic injectors (4D stun). Move: 4 (within medical suite).

IT-O interrogation droid. *Dexterity 1D, dodge 3D, melee 3D, melee parry 3D, interrogation devices 4D+1, Knowledge 3D, intimidation 4D+1, Mechanical 2D, Perception 4D, search 5D, Strength 3D, Technical 2D, first aid 4D, security 4D*. Equipped with laser scalpel (3D), hypodermic injectors (4D stun damage) power shears (5D) grasping claw (+1D to lifting). Move: 3.

ORDERLIES

The main force of authority in the Facility is provided by the 18 orderlies, largely a mob of thugs. The orderlies are big, strong, dim, cruel, brutal, and humorless. They usually travel in groups of four, unless a "Code White" is called — Code White being an alert for all on-duty orderlies to put a rowdy patient under control. The orderlies generally use stun weapons to control the patients, but have access to a cache of blasters in the administration dome, under Kraay's identi-lock, in the event of emergencies.

SUGGESTED LANDING PARTY

Gamemasters should encourage the selection of Cobb Unser as pilot of the *Aegis* shuttle, since Captain Adrimetrum feels his dour mood may be lifted by some time away from the ship.

In addition, Jessa Dajus, Genna Seedar, Loh'khar and Kl'aal are logical choices to visit the facility. Jessa possesses information on the Empire that they may be able to trade for additional foodstuffs, Seedar has the medical skills needed to adequately utilize Kraay's professed "cure" for the bacterial infection plaguing the ship, Loh'khar will likely be able to "swing the best deal" with Kraay, and Kl'aal's security skills would be useful to *any* landing mission.

Other characters can be substituted at the gamemasters discretion.

Orderlies. All stats 2D except: Strength 4D, blaster 3D, brawling parry 4D, melee 3D, brawl 4D+2. Move 10. Heavy stunner (5D stun damage), stun baton (STR+2 stun damage), comlink, white uniform. Character points: 1.

WARM WELCOME

The landing is uneventful, but eerie. The skies of Q'Maere are a bilious green, thick with poisonous chlorine, and the livid, swollen light of the Rift refracts in bizarre patterns through the thick atmosphere.

As the player characters attempt to land on Q'Maere, read the following aloud:

The thin clouds part to reveal the Facility, a hexagonal ring of six habitat domes at the edge of a white salt desert. The landing zone is in the center of the ring, a retracted walk-way tube offering safe access to the Facility. A battered YT-1300 freighter sits on the edge of the landing zone.

The *Aegis*-class shuttle — never the most aerodynamic of crafts — is bucking and yawing in response to the planet's violent wind. It's going to be a rough landing.

Landing at Q'Maere requires a Moderate *pilot-ing* roll, as the turbulent atmosphere affects the way the landing craft handles. Failure indicates that the landing has been missed and must be attempted again. If the pilot fails three landing attempts, the landing is aborted, and the *Aegis* returns to the *FarStar*. After 1D hours have passed, another landing can be attempted,

Once on the ground, the access tube attaches itself to the shuttle, and the party can walk to the airlock, where Dr. Kraay meets them.

Read the following aloud:

Dr. Kraay is a middle-aged, balding human male, with wisps of medium-length white hair neatly falling down his back. He is of average height and build, and possesses a vaguely distracted manner. "Ah," he exclaims, grinning broadly. "Welcome! Welcome! The Q'Maere Facility receives few guests! Please, follow me."

He invites the group to his office to discuss their respective problems. The access tube extends into the storage dome, Dome Six, and on the way to the Administration Complex he will show the group that the Facility has a considerable surplus of stored food, mostly pre-processed, but including some grains and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Dr. Kraay escorts the group to Dome One and his office, where he offers the group some 20-year-old Corellian brandy, and does an excellent job setting the group at ease. Kraay's office is a round, well-decorated chamber, with a shielded viewport that looks out over the facility.

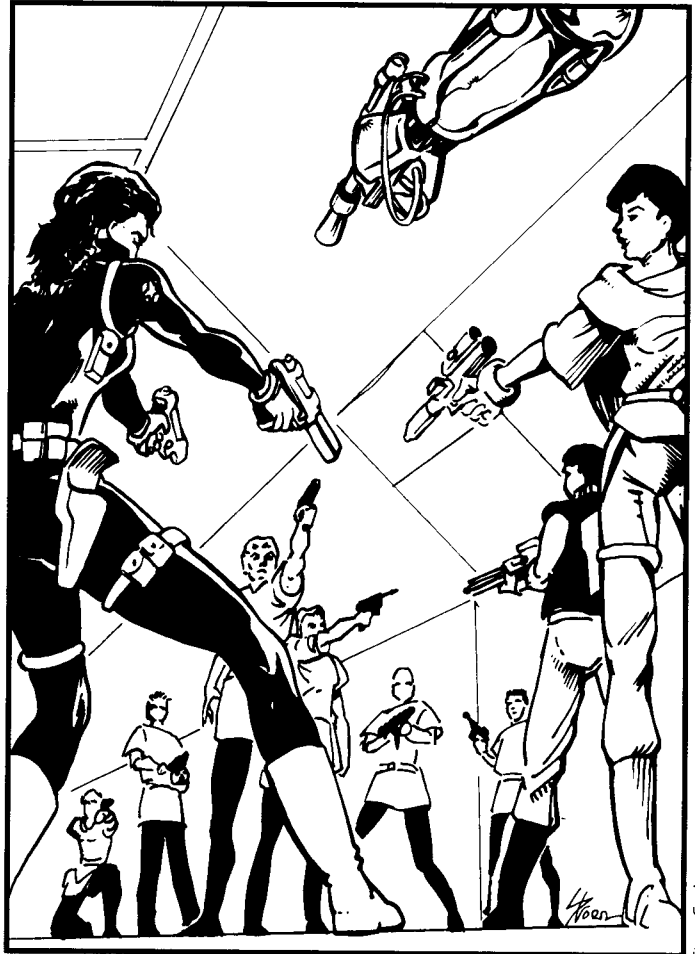
Maintaining his friendly demeanor, Kraay asks about the New Republic. He pretends to be enthusiastic about this change of power in the galactic government, and seems quite isolated from news about the galaxy at large (which, in fact, he is).

On a Moderate *Perception* check, a character will notice a significant lack of office personnel — only four administrative assistants are evident, despite the large number of offices in the complex. If a player character mentions this, Kraay will explain that the office is in it's night cycle, and that the Facility is designed for more staff than it currently houses anyway.

He asks how much food the ship will require, about the expected length of their expedition, the crew size, are they doing any scientific work, the ship class, and the nature of their mission.

These questions are mainly to size up the ship and crew — and the force it can bring to bear — in hopes of seizing it. As the discussion progresses, Kraay will realize he has little defense against the *FarStar*.

He will avoid questions about the Facility's work by saying that he should show his work rather than explain it, and that the Facility has had some interesting breakthroughs. He will also offer the *FarStar* crew a glimpse of the cure for the mutant bacteria that is ravaging the ship's food supplies.



Storn Cook

GUIDED TOUR

Whether or not the *FarStar* landing mission agrees to see the cure right away, Kraay will offer a tour of the facility. Read the following aloud:

Kraay begins the guided tour in Dome Two, the botany lab. The lush, green labs are mainly given over to food production, he explains, but some pure research is done. He doesn't allow you into the labs (for fear of contamination) and you can see that most of the work is done by agriculture droids — in fact you can only see one technician, a nervous man in a white lab coat.

The tour quickly moves on to Dome Three, the housing dome. This dome is dark and quiet, except for a light at the middle of the corridor.

As the characters move through the hall, any who make an Easy *Perception* check notice six male humans, four tensely watching a game of g-pockets, two actually playing. These men are all uniformed in stark white tunics. "Staff lounge," Kraay mentions in an offhand manner.

“The next dome is our destination,” Kraay says. You enter the access corridor and make it a quarter of the way down, when someone behind them calls for Dr. Kraay.

“Doctor Kraay! Could I speak with you for a moment,” calls one of the men from the staff lounge. Kraay excuses himself and asks you to wait here, leaving you in the corridor. As soon as Kraay steps out of the corridor, the six orderlies who had been playing g-pockets step in, blasters drawn.

Kraay’s voice comes over the comm system. “Drop your weapons and surrender, you New Republic scum,” he growls.

Orderlies. All stats 2D except: *Strength* 4D, *blaster* 3D, *brawling parry* 4D, *melee combat* 3D, *brawling* 4D+2. Move 10. Heavy stunner (5D stun damage), stun baton (STR+2 stun damage), comlink, white uniform. Character points: 1.

If the characters surrender, they will be thoroughly searched for weapons and tools, and taken to the Dome Four prison block.

If they fight and are stunned into submission, they will awaken without weapons or tools in Dome Four.

If they fight and are victorious over the orderlies, they will find themselves trapped in the access corridor by a set of formidable blast doors (treat them as having a *Strength* of 4D to resist damage). Kraay will then flood the corridor with odorless stun gas. The gas hisses into the room for one round, after which it begins to take effect, which will render the victims unconscious if they do not make Heroic *Strength* checks for each round they are exposed to the gas.

Breath masks are effective for up to one hour. Kraay will not open the corridor until the surveillance monitors show resistance has stopped. The characters awaken without weapons or tools in Dome Four.

Blasting into the other end of the corridor lets them into Dome Four, one of the prison blocks, which leaves them stuck in Dome Four, but with weapons and equipment.

Breaching the tube (which has a *Strength* of 3D to resist damage) will expose the group to the toxic atmosphere. If they voice the idea, point out that they’ll die before they have a chance to regret it.

Comlinks are jammed from the

instant they enter the shielded corridor.

At approximately the same time, any characters left at the shuttle find themselves on the receiving end of stunners, leveled by a group of four orderlies.

EPISODE THREE: THE WARDS

The characters awaken to a crowd of unknown faces peering curiously at them. The large room they find themselves in is apparently a recreational room in a hospital facility.

Read the following aloud:

You awaken in a well-lit, sterile-looking room. You are lying on the cold metal deckplates and each of you has a splitting headache ... no doubt an after-effect of Kraay’s gas.

You are surrounded by dozens of strangers, each one peering at you curiously. At the moment, however, no one seems to be threatening you.

Cobb is overjoyed to find that the first face he sees is his sister’s. The rest of the group finds their attention drawn from this touching reunion as the crowd parts to allow a tall blond man to approach — this is the leader of the community, Lowen Chase.

■ Corla Unser

Type: Free Trader

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 3D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

MECHANICAL 4D

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

PERCEPTION 3D

Sneak 4D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Lifting 3D+1, stamina 3D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Repulsorlift repair 4D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 6

Move: 10

Equipment: Overalls, club (STR+2)

Capsule: Corla Unser is Cobb Unser’s younger sister. A bright, cheery, optimistic young woman, Corla is the motivator in the relationship between herself and her brother; Cobb needs her to operate effectively.

When Corla was working as a repulsorlift delivery driver on Kal’Shebbol, she met Moff Sarne when delivered a package to his palace. Sarne was fascinated by this bright blossom, and courted her with expensive gifts and lavish attention.



Storn Cook

Corla was repelled, and after a few weeks Sarne's patience ran out.

He had the girl arrested and shipped her to Q'Maere to be re-trained to "appreciate him." A few days after she vanished, Sarne became embroiled in the New Republic's assault on Kal'Shebbol, and Corla was forgotten.

Corla was at first well treated by Kraay — his orders were specific that she was not to be harmed — but after Sarne fled, Kraay dumped her in with the general prison populace.

Corla has since fallen in love with Lowen Chase, who returns the feeling, but they have deferred pursuing their relationship until they escape. Nevertheless, Corla will remain loyal to Chase to the bitter end.

Corla is a petite woman in her mid-twenties, with short light brown hair, hazel eyes, clear skin, and a sunny disposition.

■ Lowen Chase

Type: Starfighter pilot

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D+1, melee combat 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Languages 3D+1, planetary systems 4D+2, survival 3D, willpower 5D

MECHANICAL 4D

Astrogation 5D, starfighter piloting 6D+2, starship gunnery 6D+1, starship shields 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 3D+2, command 5D+1

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, stamina 4D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 3D+2, first aid 4D+2, security 3D+1

Force Points: 2

Character Points: 8

Move: 10

Equipment: Prison overalls, club (STR+2)

Capsule: Lieutenant Lowen Chase is a New Republic pilot captured two years ago by Moff Sarne. After a standard interrogation failed, Sarne transferred the stubborn pilot to Q'Maere and logged Chase as "terminated."

Several months of sophisticated break-down techniques failed to crack Chase. Since Sarne's flight Kraay has essentially treated Chase like any other prisoner.

Kraay may never know how close Chase came to breaking. Through a fantastic feat of will, Chase has managed to keep his personality intact, but the delayed effects of Kraay's break-down technique are beginning to affect Chase — he is starting to develop a schizoid personality, becoming paranoid and egomaniacal. The full effects of this personality shift will not come into play until the next adventure, "Rogue Elements."

Chase is ordinarily a brave, charming, forthright, upstanding, and charismatic New Republic officer with blond hair, dimples, and a cleft chin. No obvious sign of his personality breakdown should make itself known, although gamemasters may want to drop a subtle hint or two. Remember that Chase

is indeed a highly qualified fellow, a natural leader, and would likely seize the station without the players assistance; some of his ego is well-deserved. Any paranoia should be presented as caution; it's good sense to be suspicious of new prisoners. They might really be spies for Kraay, after all.

Chase introduces himself, and, seeing New Republic insignias on the group, asks how the New Republic is faring. Overly enthusiastic or depressing reports will be taken as a sign that these new prisoners are actually spies. Moderate reports of victory will be better taken: Chase is a realist about the Republic, and can accept the idea that the Empire is crumbling much more easily than the idea that it's been easily crushed.



Starr Cook

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN CIRO

After he's been convinced of the characters, Chase will point at the *FarStar* patch on someone's jacket, and say that he's seen it before. He leads the group to a corner cell, and ushers them inside.

Here, they find the bruised and battered form of Captain Keleman *Ciro*. He has been savagely treated and has retreated into a catatonic state. He can walk if assisted, but otherwise cannot function.

His body is bruised and burnt all over, and ugly scar lines are evident, although he has apparently been treated and has not been tortured for at least a few weeks. The physical damage can be cleaned up with extensive bacta treatments. The mental damage will take considerably more.

Chase says that *Ciro* was brought in and dumped into their care several weeks ago, shortly after the staff shakeup. He then explains about the local situation.

Read the following aloud:

Chase explains that Domes Four and Five are prison blocks. They were once rigidly controlled and held in a grip of fear — but currently the Facility lacks the brute force to maintain such a grip. The prisoners have free run of Domes Four and Five, and so long as they don't act up they will continue to move with relative freedom.



Storn Cook

Kraay maintains his grip on the prisoners by controlling the food, air, and water supply, keeping an eye on corridors through the use of random-patrol AC1 surveillance droids (the mounted cameras were quickly sabotaged), and sending in armed orderlies to enforce his will. As a last defense, Kraay has command codes to detonate explosive charges set at weak points in the dome hulls. If a full-scale riot erupts, Kraay can explode the charges, killing the inhabitants of any or all of the domes.

Gamemasters should encourage the players to roleplay to learn the following information. Any character who effectively uses the *bargain*, *persuasion* or *investigation* skills can extract further information from the prisoners.

- The food supplied by Kraay is drugged, though the current dosage is significantly below the minimum to keep the prisoners docile. The result is a group of slightly out-of-touch and thoroughly bored prisoners. Unfortunately for Kraay, there's little for the prisoners to do except plot to escape.
- Except in unusual circumstances, and mainly to punish overt resistance, the "therapy sessions" have been suspended for the duration of the emergency. Ciro was one of the last inmates "treated" by Kraay, and Kraay himself supervised the interrogation.
- The prisoners are aware that there's no way off the planet. Considering the risks involved, the long-planned takeover attempt will wait for a time when the rewards are worth it.
- This has been the state of affairs here since Sarne's visit, several weeks ago. The *FarStar's* arrival is just the opportunity the inmates need.

The patients are all slightly off balance, either from personality damage (from "therapy") or from the drugged food. Chase has trained them to have at least a passing familiarity with melee combat over the past weeks, realizing that the eventual escape will likely pit hand weapons against energy weapons.

Q'Maere Patients. All stats 2D except: *melee combat* 3D. Move 10. Patient's coveralls.

While the landing party crew is busy trying to get a handle on the situation at the Facility, Kraay transmits the following to the *FarStar*:

"FarStar, this is Doctor Kraay. I have seized your landing party and will hold them against violence on your part. If you attempt to attack this station, I will execute them. If you continue to attack, I will destroy the food supplies.

"I require you to surrender your vessel within 12 hours.

"Failure to do so will result in the death of a randomly selected prisoner, every hour you delay.

"Your ship is without food supplies. Eventually, you will starve and we will simply take your ship. Surrender now, while you still can."

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS

Shortly after he's convinced that the player characters are on the level, Chase will quietly explain his escape plan.

Chase realizes that a riot will bring punishment down on everyone. Any obvious escape attempt will result in the domes being sealed and the prisoners denied food, water, or even air until they obey, unless the escape happens too fast for Kraay to react, or is too subtle to immediately be noticed.

Even with a successful escape, there's really nowhere to go, and without a way to get off the planet, the risks are far too great. The landing party's arrival tips that balance.

Chase's original plan had been to thin out the orderlies by having one prisoner attack and, with luck, seriously injure an orderly or two. That would put those two orderlies out of action for about an hour or so. Another four orderlies would be kept busy by dragging the attacking prisoner off to "therapy" — the orderlies travel in packs of four or five. With six orderlies out of the picture that leaves only 12 to maintain order, a dozen orderlies to guard over 100 prisoners. ("Sounds like good odds to me," Chase grins.)

The rest of the prisoners should be able to overwhelm the orderlies and rush the far end of the corridor. Each corridor is guarded at by anywhere from two to eight orderlies at varying times.

That still leaves a number of problems. The corridors are long enough that the orderlies could simply sound an alarm and seal the blast doors. The shortest route to Dome One from the prison domes is by travelling from Dome Five to Dome Six, and from there into Dome One. It is several hundred meters, and the odds of making

it to Six without an alarm being raised are very small. Kraay can control over all blast doors and life support, and is, in Chase's opinion, willing to kill all the prisoners via life support denial.

Chase plans to limit the effectiveness of the orderlies' stunners by using sheet metal shields stripped off the flooring and interior bulkheads. The leading line of the charge is to have a shield wall to protect them from the stun-fire. Since the stunners have little penetrating power, this should work quite well — shields add +2D to *Strength* rolls against damage, on a Moderate *melee combat* roll. There will only be six shields available.

Each dome is capable of independent survival, except the prison block, and has its own emergency water and air filters, and its own food rations. The prison domes do not, and all life support is piped in. The air ducts are 10 centimeters tall and 20 centimeters wide: too small to fit through.

Chase isn't too egotistical to take suggestions, or even a whole new plan if it sounds better than what he's come up with. He does appreciate the need for a quick escape, realizing that Kraay won't stay on planet any longer than he absolutely has to.

It should be quite obvious that the prisoners, including Corla, all follow Chase. The newcomers may be respected, and Chase clearly expects them to be of great help, but Chase is in charge. In the absence of Chase or Corla, however, the prisoners will probably obey the player characters' orders, as long as they aren't too strange.

OTHER ESCAPE IDEAS

Chase's plan is workable, but other ideas may appeal to the players. If they're stuck for ideas, have gamemaster characters suggest these:

One notion is to fake illness to get admitted to medical care shortly before a general riot breaks out, giving the prisoners an agent inside Dome One. Ordinarily, the orderlies won't believe a prisoner is sick until they're almost dead, but the *FarStar* hostages are very important and need to be demonstrably unharmed.

Another idea is to overpower some orderlies and replace them. The switch will be easily noticeable at close range, but by then the replacements will be close enough to open fire and rush them.

Then again, what's wrong with subtlety? Maybe the characters can talk some of the orderlies into joining them, especially after the orderlies hear about the firepower orbiting overhead. After all, the orderlies basically want off the planet alive like everyone else. Difficult *persuasion* check may

swing an orderly into the prisoner's camp.

In general, however, someone is going to have to lead the sluggish, drug-slowed inmates through the access tubes out of the prison domes.

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

During the planning stages of the riot, the gamemaster should use the following outline to add an air of tension to the adventure. (In general, the players should be allowed to argue about the best method for staging the riot, and when play lags, an encounter outlined below occurs.)

Also, gamemasters are encouraged to cut back and forth between characters on the *FarStar*, and characters in the prison. If Adrimetrum is on Q'Maere, Scoryn — as second in command — will speak for the New Republic.

Regardless of *who* is in command on the *FarStar*, that character will not simply sit in orbit and wait for something to happen. Kraay will not coolly await the *FarStar's* surrender.

Read the following aloud to the player characters in the Q'Maere prison block:

You hear a commotion, as several burly orderlies wade through the frightened crowd of inmates, liberally swinging stun batons and blasting away with their stun weapons to clear a path. They are bellowing that any single *FarStar* crewer should be brought forward. Chase is keeping a tight rein on the more aggressive inmates, but the situation has the potential to turn very ugly.

If the player characters resist, the one nearest to the orderlies will be stunned and rendered unconscious. If combat ensues, allow the battle to run until it looks like the *FarStar* crew and the inmates may win. If this happens, Kraay will announce that he is going to detonate the explosives on the prison domes if the *FarStar* crew does not surrender.

If there is a scuffle, one of the orderlies drops a datapad. Any character who makes a Moderate *Perception* roll notices and can make a grab at the datapad. If the *FarStar* crew does not resist, Chase arranges a distraction and uses his *pick pocket* skill to steal the datapad. Any character who makes a successful Heroic *computer programming/repair* roll can decode the encrypted data within, which includes the remote data codes for the explosives on the domes. If the *FarStar* crew can rig a sufficiently powerful transmitter, they can defuse the bombs. As soon as the player

characters have procured the datapad, move to Episode Four.

Orderlies. All stats 2D except: *Strength 4D, blaster 3D, brawling parry 4D, melee combat 3D, brawling 4D+2.* Move 10. Heavy stunner (5D stun damage), stun baton (STR+2 stun damage), comlink, uniform. Character points: 1.

EPISODE FOUR: PRISON RIOT!

Whatever plan is used, it is necessary to leave through the access tunnel; the player characters can also attempt to deactivate the explosives.

A successful Very Difficult *communications* roll will allow the player characters to cannibalize the comm systems in this dome to build the transmitter necessary to transmit the deactivation codes to the bombs. There are a total of three explosives on this dome (one per level), and once the transmitter is assembled, a Moderate *communications* roll will allow the characters

to deactivate the bombs. Once the bombs are deactivated, the riot can begin in earnest.

In addition, a Difficult *computer programming/repair roll* will allow the player characters to override the blast doors that Kraay will close in an attempt to contain the riot. (Apparently, the same kind of code algorithm that Kraay used as a failsafe on his explosives is almost identical to his security control codes; original thinking is not the Facility Director's strong suit.)

Once the bombs are deactivated, read the following aloud:

"Let's go!" Chase is shouting, rallying his fellow inmates, and passing out makeshift shields to those willing to take the lead. "Remember," he says urgently, "if someone falls, the next person in line should just pick up the shield and keep moving."

In the background, you can hear the distant voice of Kraay, shouting "Code White! All orderlies! Code White!"

"That's our cue," Chase says, his charismatic grin flashing across his face. "Let's go get 'em."

TIMETABLE [FROM THE SEIZURE OF THE FARSTAR LANDING PARTY]

- **0.5 hour** — Kraay issues his demands to the *FarStar*.
- **1 hour** — The commanding officer on duty aboard the *FarStar* holds an emergency planning session. Gorjaye is ordered to keep her fighters on standby alert. Scans of the Facility are ordered, to mark targets.
- **3 hours** — Kraay reissues his demands, taunting the *FarStar* about their lack of food.
- **4 hours** — The initial sensor reports on the Facility are available. A successful Heroic *sensors* check reveals the location of the explosives on each dome.
- **5 hours** — The *FarStar* communicates with Kraay, primarily to assess his willingness to follow through on his threats.
- **6 hours** — The *FarStar*'s fighters make a close pass near the facility, to show force, visually scout the Facility, and test Q'Maere's atmospheric effects.
- **6.1 hours** — A randomly selected player character is hauled out of the prison block by four orderlies and taken to the Dome One communication center. Kraay threatens to execute that character right then if the fighters do not withdraw. Kraay further threatens to execute a player character the next time any aggressive move is made. The character is allowed to speak with the *FarStar* to assure the crew that the landing party is relatively unharmed.
- **6.25 hours** — The character is returned to the prison block.
- **8 hours** — Kraay reissues his demands.
- **9 hours** — The *FarStar*'s commander demands to see that a particular character — other than the hostage seen earlier — is unharmed.
The *FarStar*'s current commander must make a successful Very Difficult *persuasion* roll to convince Kraay to comply with this request. If this roll is failed, Kraay refuses.
If Kraay relents, the situation will play out as it did previously. If no one manages to steal the orderly's datapad, they now have another opportunity.
- **11 hours** — If nothing else has happened in the meantime, the *FarStar* launches a fighter attack against the Facility. Dome One, the most likely location for Kraay, his staff, and any command and control elements, is the primary target. The access tubes are secondary targets, struck in hope of preventing harm to come to the hostages — if they can't be got to, they can't be murdered. The fighters approach low to the ground, below the basic sensor fields, and strike with pinpoint accuracy. If X-wings are available, they use proton torpedoes, while the Defenders are limited to their laser cannons.



Storm Cook

Chase will gladly give a shield to any *FarStar* crewer who volunteers to take the lead.

All remaining orderlies are moving to the access corridor. The orderlies will resist unless the situation is obviously hopeless, but they aren't too stupid to surrender, given a moment to think about it. Once captured, they are very roughly treated by the prisoners.

The technicians at Q'Maere immediately swing to the prisoners side, who they're quite sympathetic with. They're very likely to help in the escape itself, if asked.

The administrative assistants will simply surrender if threatened.

Dr. Egamo frightens easily, and continuously mutters about the escapee's maladjustment to sociological conditions.

Dr. Rhu considers the escape an interesting hallucination for several hours, then gradually descends into paranoid insanity as his withdrawal sets in.

Dr. Phalla is instantly set on by any of the escapees — unless the characters intervene, he'll be beat to death. If he survives, the cheery little man graciously accepts his fate.

Dr. Emil, the botanist, is too scared of the

prisoners to speak, but will nervously obey orders. Any of the technicians will know that Emil is terrified of everyone except plants and droids. Emil is also terribly afraid of being alone, however, and follows anyone who is kind to him around like a puppy. Emil is the only person besides Kraay to know how to get around the Rift Mutation; in fact Emil developed the cure. (See "The Cure" on page 38.)

The medical droid has no interest in politics or the current situation, and will treat anyone brought to it.

IT-O is found stored in a locked office in Dome One and is only partially functional (Elma saw to that weeks ago). It now considers all organics as prisoners and immediately moves to interrogate.

The other droids accept this change of masters with no difficulty.

EPISODE FIVE: END GAME

By using their cobbled-together transmitter, the inmates can defuse the bombs on each dome, finally cornering Kraay in his office. Once the

rioters have reached the Administration Complex, read the following aloud:

Kraay — brandishing a blaster pistol — fires in your general direction as he cowers near a computer terminal. The Facility Director is a terrible shot; the bolts splash harmlessly off a nearby bulkhead, but it provides him with the distraction he needs. He appears to be attempting to access the Facility's computer.

Turning towards you he screams, "Don't come any closer! I've accessed all the records about the cure to the Variant bacteria! I'll erase every trace of Alpha if you come any closer!"

Kraay is obviously panicking, and any attempts to bargain with him increase one level in difficulty. His attention is divided between the computer records he is methodically deleting and keeping an eye on the rioters. Chase, realizing that the information Kraay is deleting is very important, is busy keeping the inmates back, and will not be able to assist the *FarStar* crews. After three rounds, Kraay will have succeeded in deleting the Variant Alpha records.

If the player characters attempt to stun or wound Kraay, run combat as per *Second Edition* rules. However, if they shoot at him and miss, he will blast the computer terminal, effectively elimi-

nating the information the *FarStar* needs saved.

Once he has completed deleting the computer information, read the following aloud:

With a yell of triumph, Kraay turns from the computer terminal and removes a small vial from his lab coat, pointing his blaster at it.

"This is the last sample of Alpha left, and if you ever want to solve your food problems, you'll stay put!" He is highly agitated, and his hands are shaking. The blaster is as likely to go off by accident as it is by design.

"Now," he says, nervously eyeing you, "All I want is access to your shuttle, or I'll see to it that you starve!"

The player characters can attempt to bargain with Kraay, though he will be adamant, insisting that they surrender the Aegis shuttle. If they agree, Kraay will leave, fleeing back towards the Kathol Outback. The *FarStar* may attempt to capture the shuttle, but Kraay will detonate the Aegis' engines rather than be captured, destroying himself and the Alpha sample if needed.

If the players elect to attack Kraay instead, run combat normally. When combat begins, Kraay must make a Moderate *Dexterity* check or he will drop the vial due to his shaking hands, giving the players an opportunity to overcome the Facility Director and recover the Alpha strain.

THE CURE

All the species that travel through the Rift have to deal with the Rift Mutation, called "Variant" by Imperial scientists. The original Facility almost failed due to an inability to raise it's own food. The bacteria eventually burns itself out from lack of food, and the botany lab could raise crops, but every time a new ship came by, they would usually reintroduce the bacteria, which consumed the food supplies yet again.

Dr. Vin Emil finally figured out how to eliminate the problem: by running the mutant strain through several million generations over a period of many weeks, he finally bred a strain that was only 10% more voracious than the original, unmutated, strain, and sprayed the whole facility with it. This strain, "Variant Alpha," having already mutated, is not likely to re-mutate into a killer bacteria, and since bacteria routinely share genetic information the dominant tendency of Alpha to live longer by not consuming everything around it, quickly dilutes Variant's suicidal behaviors and advances Variant into Alpha in just a few hours.

Nevertheless, the Facility is very cautious about cross contamination, and freezes it's food into small, vacuum sealed bins.

OUTCOMES

If the prisoners successfully revolt, the food supplies go unharmed, and can quickly be loaded aboard the *FarStar*. Most of the prisoners are not in any shape to join the crew, but about 40 of them volunteer to join the *FarStar*, including Lowen Chase and Corla Unser. These volunteers may be much needed to replace crew, or might simply crowd the ship even further. The rest of the prisoners remain on Q'Maere to recover from their ordeal. One of the technicians reveals a hyperspace distress beacon that Kraay was apparently unwilling to use, for fear of who might find them.

Note: If Doctor Akanseh has survived this far he should volunteer to stay on Q'Maere to treat the injured and psychologically scarred. None of the staff or former prisoners know him from his days as a torturer, and Akanseh hopes to atone for his past crimes in this way.

If the *FarStar* must attack, the *FarStar* will have to find room for the whole complement of prisoners, since there's no protection from Q'Maere's atmosphere now.

The YT-1300 freighter on the edge of the land-

ing zone is pronounced repairable. If the players don't think of it, someone on the command staff suggests that having a hyperspace capable ship is a good idea, if only for the extra space for crew it can provide. After some minor hull patches, it is possible to maneuver it to one of the *FarStar's* external docking tubes. Loffryyn and Brophar tinker with it occasionally thereafter.

Finally, Vin Emil can be "persuaded" by the New Republic to prepare a new version of Alpha, though it will take several weeks. In the meantime, the *FarStar* should have enough food from the Facility to survive.

■ Battered Freighter

Craft: YT-1300 transport

Type: Damaged light freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 26.7 meters

Skill: Space transports: YT-1300

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons

Consumables: 1 week

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2 (non-functional)

Hyperdrive Backup: None

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 0D

Space: 2

Atmosphere: 80; 230 kmh (usually 480; 800 kmh)

Hull: 4D

Sensors:

Passive: 10/0D

Scan: 25/1D

Search: 40/2D

Focus: 2/3D

Weapons:

Laser cannon

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 1D

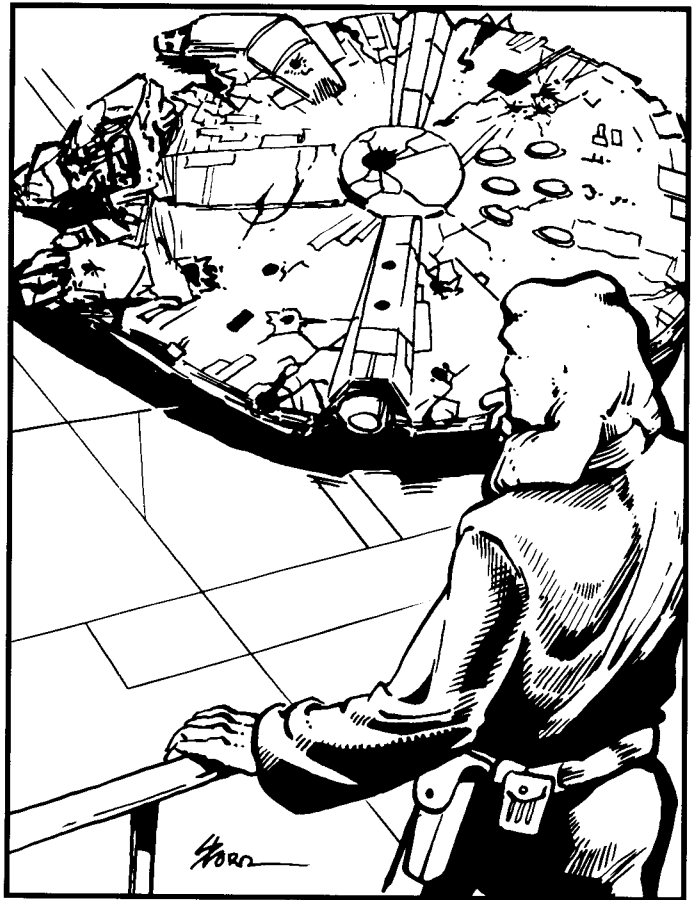
Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

Damage: 4D

Capsule: This freighter was seized from a lost free-trader, who had been trying to scout out the Rift in hopes of finding a new civilization to make a fortune off. The trader was thrown in with the prison population, and subsequently killed while trying to escape.

Kraay intends to repair the ship and use it to escape Q'Maere with select staff and prisoners, since there are no other hyperspace capable ships at his disposal.



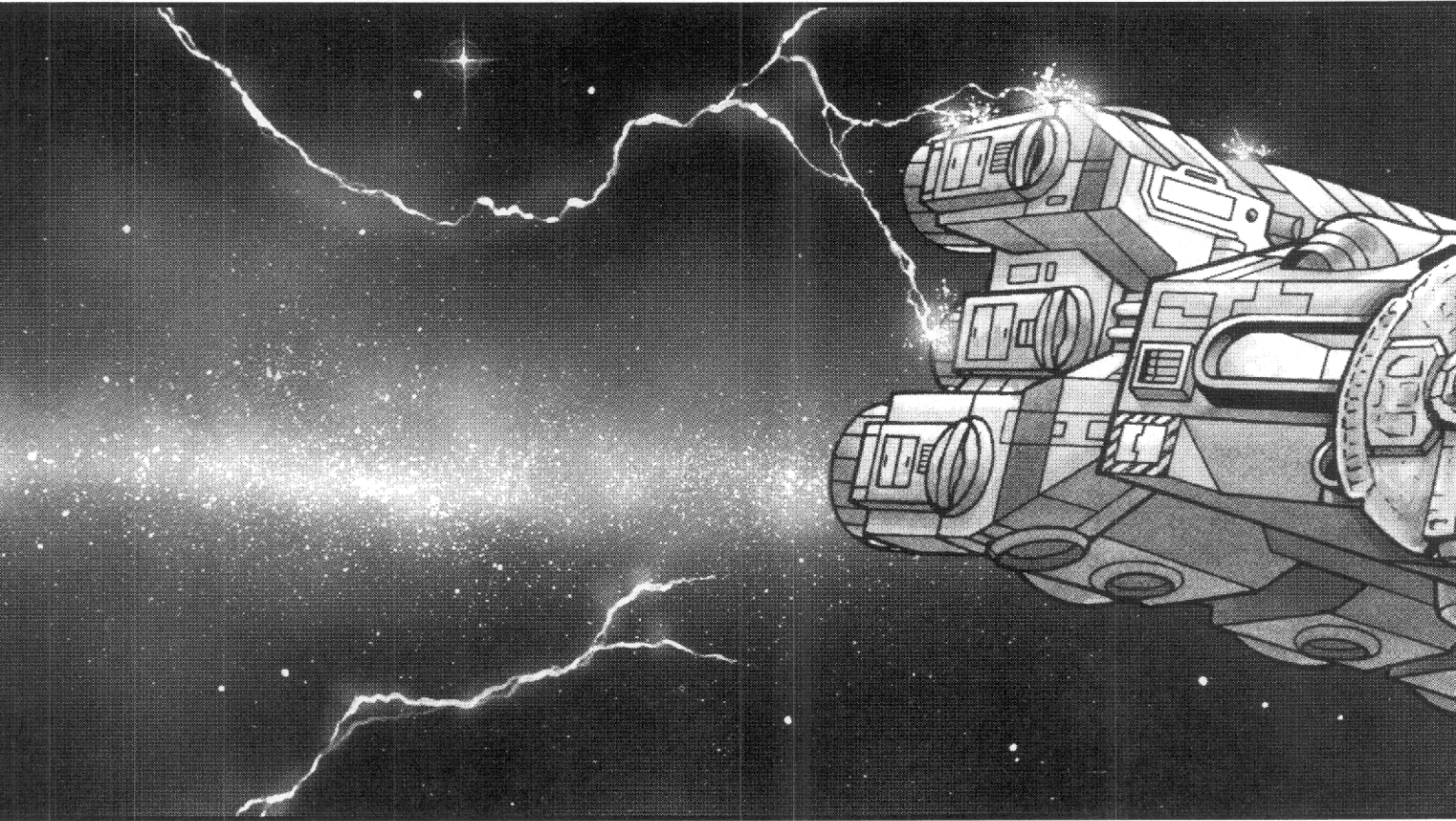
Storn Cook

REWARDS

If the characters use Chase's plan and succeed, award at least three Character Points, and up to five for superior role playing. If the characters come up with their own plan (and succeed), award five Character Points. If the characters fail under either plan, award no more than three Character Points. If the *FarStar* must attack, the characters should receive no Character Points.

In addition, if the player characters manage to capture Kraay, award an additional Character Point. If they managed to prevent Kraay from deleting the computer records or destroying the Alpha sample, award them two Character Points. (Also, the food stores of the *FarStar* can be immediately inoculated against the Variant bacteria, solving the problem of the infected food supply.)

Finally, the *FarStar* can use the facility's probe droids to augment the "Lifeline Project."



ROGUE ELEMENT'S

"Captain, I'm telling you — it's tantamount to mutiny," Scoryn said.

Captain Adrimetrum had had enough. The past two days had been riddled with minor ship malfunctions, crew disputes, and near crashes into the plasma that made up the Rift. She didn't need another problem.

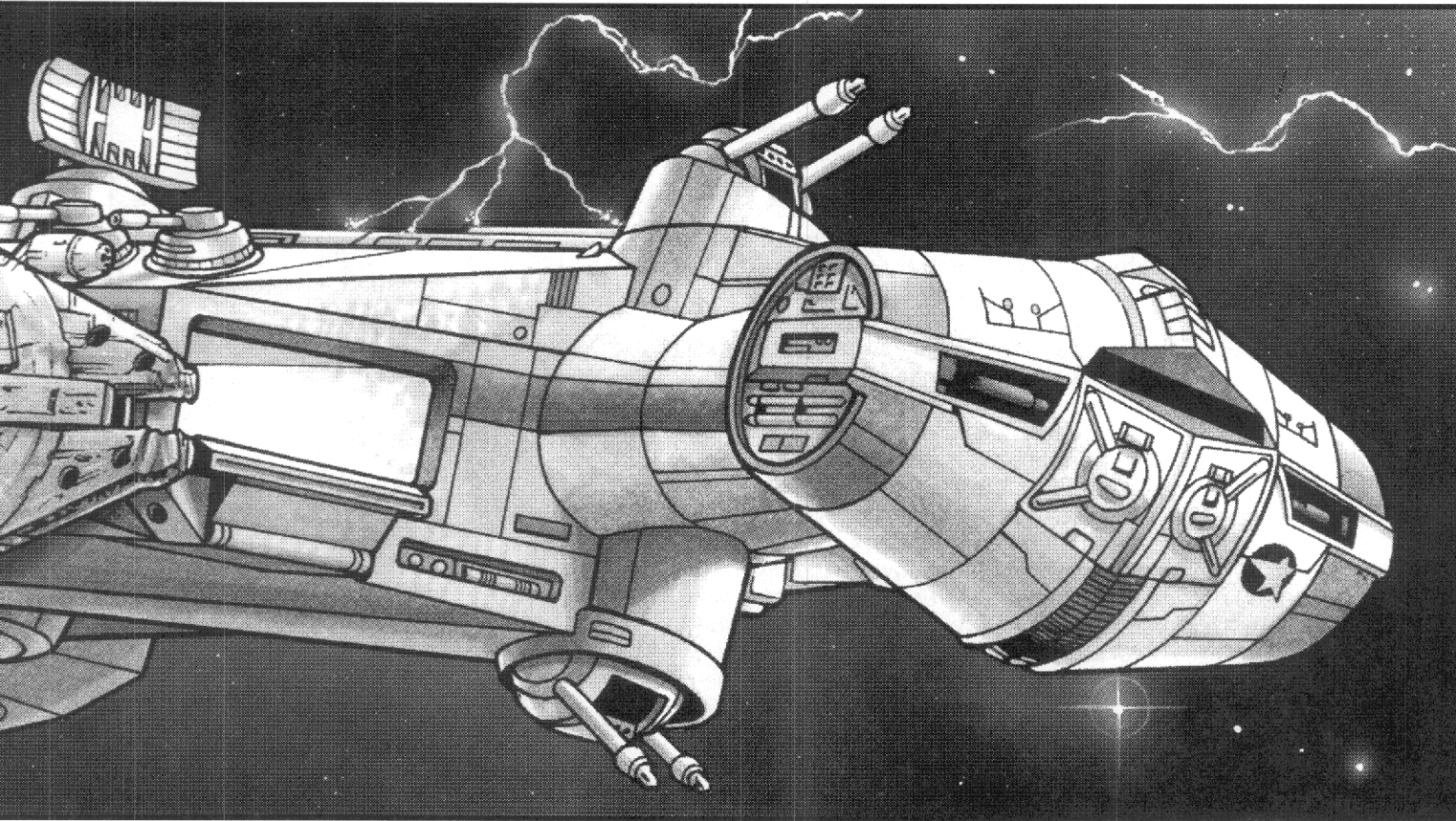
"Scoryn, listen. I don't care if Crivor refused to wash the mess kits according to New Republic procedures. And I don't care that he won't take orders from anyone but Lowen Chase. These are good men, and if you haven't noticed, we need as many of them as we can get. It seems to me that we should resolve this situation by giving Chase a command position, not by throwing him and his whole crew into the brig." She could see Scoryn's face flush with boiling blood, but she knew that the by-the-book woman would never speak against her superior —

"Then you leave me no choice. I had hoped you would listen to reason, Captain, but now I'm going to have to take this over your head." She spun on her heel and stormed toward the exit.

"To who, Scoryn? We're out in the middle of nowhere. Who are you going to take it to?" Adrimetrum could feel her own blood beginning to simmer. She had to remind herself to stay in control — there was so much on her mind, so much she was responsible for, and it was starting to take its toll. She had to handle this situation so she could be ready for the next explosion, but she also had to make sure she did what was right for the ship, and for the mission.

Scoryn had stopped halfway to the command center's exit and was standing there, apparently fuming, yet unable to decide her next move.

Adrimetrum let out the breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding and walked to



Christopher Trevas

Scoryn's side. "Look, I understand your concerns, but —"

She was interrupted by a tug on the back of her sleeve. "We're going to hit a lightstorm, Captain," said Makezh, who was wobbling where he stood. His eyes were slits, as if he were about to fall asleep.

Adrimetrum abandoned Scoryn and rushed to the nav station. "Taska, change heading immediately — we're on a collision course with a lightstorm." As Taska adjusted the controls to alter the ship's vector, Adrimetrum felt another tug on her tunic.

"Captain, you don't understand," Makezh said. "We're going to hit a lightstorm —"

"I heard you the first time, Makezh. Now leave me alone so I can get us out of the way."

"No, you did not hear me." He shook his head. "Try to listen — listen hard this time. We are going to hit a lightstorm."

And then she understood. "Full alert! Prepare for impact!" she shouted.

The emergency klaxons buzzed loudly as the crewers in cee-cee scrambled to their assigned battlestations and strapped themselves

in. As Adrimetrum headed to her own station, she saw Scoryn looking around, confused.

"Scoryn, just take an empty seat," Adrimetrum yelled across the chaotic command center. Scoryn nodded and started across the deck plates toward one of the open stations —

And then the *FarStar* slammed into the lightstorm like a fist into duracrete. The main viewport came alive with intense streaks of blue, red, and green brilliance. Everything that wasn't part of the ship or locked down went flying — including Scoryn.

Her body flipped over once and then smashed into a bulkhead, crumpling like a used rations container. Adrimetrum winced as sympathetic pain overcame her senses.

The lightstorm battered the *FarStar*, knocking it so hard that the stabilizers could do nothing to reorient it. With the horrible sound of rending durasteel, the ship shuddered, and Adrimetrum's mind flashed a vision of the *FarStar* tearing apart at the seams and tossing her entire crew into the violent tumult that was the Rift ...

INTRODUCTION

After final arrangements have been made for those remaining at the Q'Maere facility, the *FarStar* resumes the hunt for Moff Sarne. While the *FarStar* may have left the Q'Maere facility behind, many former captives find that the facility's effects are more difficult to escape. Though the worst cases remained at Q'Maere, several escapees still suffer from physically and mentally from their "treatments." Captain Ciro, if brought along, will be the most obvious case aboard. However, the effects of some "treatments" are more subtle and, in the short run, more damaging to the *FarStar*. Though Moff Sarne did not anticipate the *FarStar*'s rescue of the Q'Maere captives, he could not have devised a better outcome: a mutiny aboard the *FarStar*.

Lowen Chase, the popular leader of Q'Maere's captives, is similarly embraced by some *FarStar* crewmembers. However, unknown to them, Chase is beginning to suffer from the effects of his own "treatments." As the adventure progresses, he will transform from a charismatic, capable leader, into a paranoid mutineer. Chase comes to believe that only he is capable of leading the *FarStar* safely through the Kathol Rift and after Moff Sarne.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Before running this adventure, the gamemaster should be familiar with the *FarStar*'s deck plans and locations. How the player characters counter the mutiny will depend on which sections they control. For instance, many of the ship's functions are controlled from one area, but some may be transferred to other stations. The gamemaster must know which functions or stations may be switched, and where this is done. Also, the equipment available to the player characters is restricted by what cargo holds they have access to.

EPISODE ONE: CONFLICTS

With the addition of the Q'Maere escapees, the *FarStar* is more crowded than ever. Though the ship has lost crew members along the way, the escapees more than fill those vacancies.

For Captain Adrimetrum, integrating the Q'Maere escapees into the *FarStar* proves more difficult each day. Many of the escapees only follow orders given by Lowen Chase, and his popularity is growing amongst the *FarStar*'s crew. In the days following the departure from Q'Maere, tensions rise between the escapees and the

RECOMMENDED CHARACTERS

During the first few days of this adventure, any character may be used. The incidents that occur can be tailored for individual player characters without too much difficulty. Players using Adrimetrum and Scoryn should be coached into their roles for Episode Two. Also, players should be encouraged to use Lofryyhn and Cobb Unser, as these characters will be heavily involved in retaking the *FarStar*.

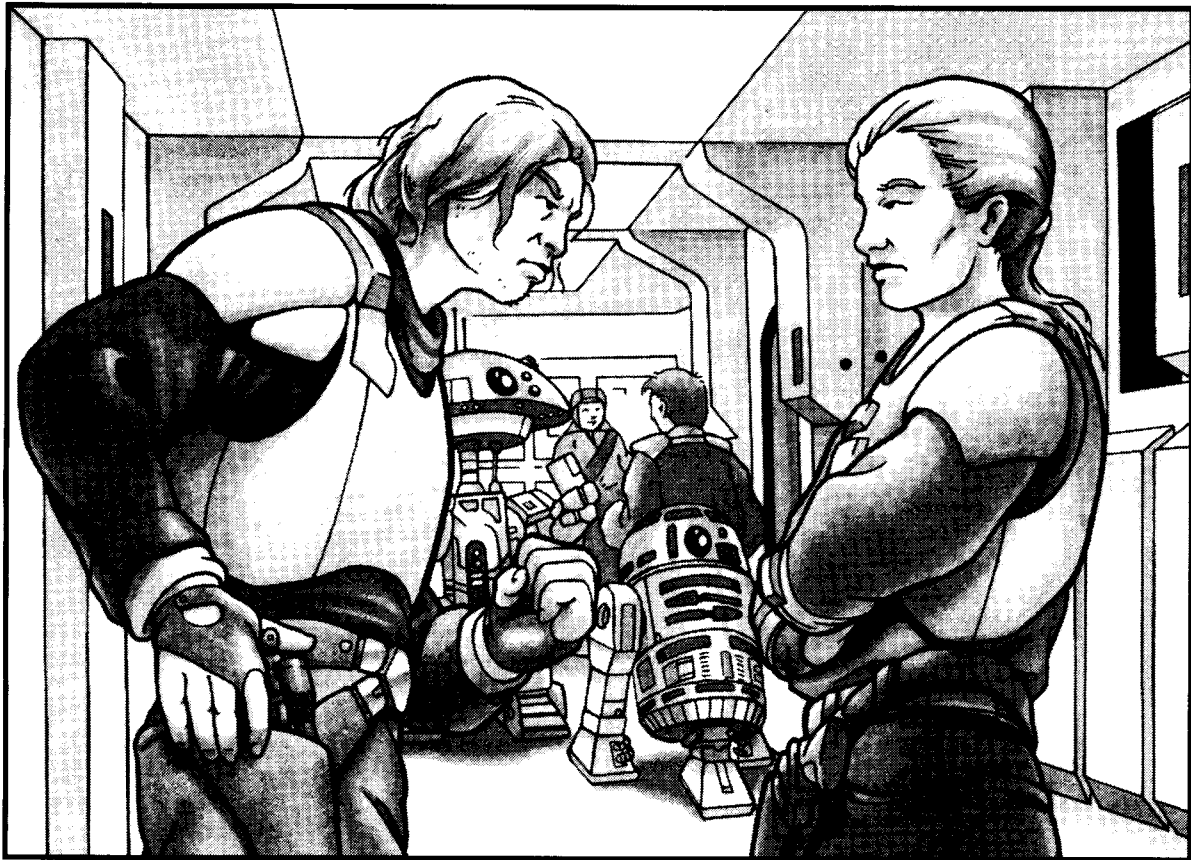
During the mutiny, however, the command crew will be incapacitated and/or captured (except for Lofryyhn). Players should then continue the adventure using support crew characters to retake the *FarStar*. Some players may want to side with (or play one of) the mutineers. The gamemaster must approve this, since the adventure assumes that the players characters will be loyal *FarStar* crew members. Note that mutineer player characters must suffer the same punishments as the gamemaster-controlled mutineers at the end of the adventure.

A few players may wish to use multiple characters to participate in different events around the ship. Bouncing between scenes is a good cinematic way to keep the action and suspense levels high. Also, it might be entertaining to show scenes of Chase occasionally ranting and raving at the captured officers. Banter should be encouraged between Chase and the captives.

FarStar crew. While some difficulties are mere personality conflicts, others are spurred on by the effects of the Q'Maere treatments. Arguments turn into brawls as tempers flare on the crowded ship.

The following incidents should occur over the course of a few days (either involving the player characters or within earshot of them):

- A small group of escapees protests the conditions of their living quarters, claiming the conditions are triggering flashbacks and nightmares of their Q'Maere "treatments." They complain that the clusters are too cold, damp and crowded. The group demands to trade with some of the original crew (who do have marginally better accommodations). When the *FarStar* crew rejects their request, the escapees take their complaint to Chase. Chase, in turn, immediately demands that the Captain rectify the situation.



Captain Adrimetrum refuses, noting that the rest of the crew lives in similar conditions. She does, however, request that escapees still suffering from their “treatments” report to Sick Bay for help.

- One former captive storms out of engineering after arguing with Lofryyhn. The escapee disagrees with the Wookiee’s demanding pace and methods. He refuses to work any more shifts until he is placed under Chase’s direct command.
- Arguments between the escapees and *FarStar* crew become common at any post where both are assigned.
- Grumbling begins amongst the escapees about Captain Adrimetrum’s command abilities. Most want Chase in command, or at the very least, as First Officer.
- A brawl starts in the mess hall when a *FarStar* crewman (fed up with the escapee’s “whining”) antagonizes a group of escapees about running to Chase “like children to their mother,” whenever ordered to do something they don’t like. The hall is full at the time (around 40 beings) and the sides are about even. Scoryn, Lofryyhn and security break up the brawl (with stun bolts, if necessary).

- Cobb Unser and his sister Corla argue over her love and loyalty to Chase. Corla believes Chase is the one to command the *FarStar* (or at least be First Officer, removing Scoryn from her “probationary” appointment). She’s torn between her loyalty to Chase and her trust in Cobb (who knows the Captain’s abilities). However, she’s used to pressuring Cobb into doing things her way. If Cobb doesn’t give in to his sister’s wishes, Corla’s loyalty crisis worsens. The argument should occur in a public place where it can be overheard. Should either obviously win the argument, word will spread about the loser’s loyalty shift. If neither obviously wins, then rumors will constantly question both Unsers’ true loyalties. The outcome of this argument affects how both Corla and Cobb are treated throughout the upcoming mutiny.

PLANNING

As tensions mount, Lowen Chase becomes the intermediary between the escapees and the *FarStar* command crew. He knows that the First Officer position is not “officially filled” and believes he is the best (and only) person for the job.

However, as Captain Adrimetrum holds to her orders and expectations concerning the escapees, Chase becomes paranoid and unstable. He doesn't realize that his Q'Maere treatments are affecting him.

At first, Chase's paranoia is unnoticeable. He is constantly worried that his people are being mistreated. He's also sure that the *FarStar* is heading into certain doom with Adrimetrum as Captain. As Chase becomes more outspoken and insubordinate, most should attribute his outbursts to the tensions aboard ship. However, as decision after decision goes against him, Chase realizes his "chances" of becoming First Officer are slipping away. Believing that the ship is doomed if he doesn't take command soon, Chase formulates a mutiny. Chase meets privately with small groups of his followers. His growing paranoia is easily transferred to the trusting escapees. They too, begin to fear for the safety of the ship under Adrimetrum's command. Chase assigns each group to quietly investigate separate areas of the ship and devise a plan to take control.

Thanks to their experience in preparing for the Q'Maere revolt, the escapees are good at subtly gathering information. However, now they lack the time to completely hide their investigations.

Player characters may make Difficult *Perception* rolls to notice escapees taking unusual interest in the *FarStar*. If questioned, the escapees will claim that the more they learn about the ship, the sooner they will become valued members of the crew.

OTHER MATTERS

Loh'khar the Finder is working on his recently acquired freighter. In order for repairs to proceed, Loh'khar concludes that he needs advice from the best mechanic on the *FarStar*. The Twi'lek seeks out Lofryyhn and cuts a deal with him (if he hasn't already).

Loh'khar arranges to meet Lofryyhn aboard the freighter on the morning of the third day out from Q'Maere (during the opening events of Episode Two). Once aboard, the two intend to make a general inspection of the ship's interior. Tofarain is asked to join them. The ship is currently docked at one of the *FarStar*'s docking tubes.

Loh'khar also seeks out Cobb Unser. Cobb owes Loh'khar a favor for discovering Corla's fate back on Kal'Shebbol. Loh'khar has found an old, disused droid brain aboard his freighter. He wants Cobb to modify it for use as a rudimentary

autopilot (to aid in quick getaways) and wants it to act as built in security. The Twi'lek won't hesitate to intimidate Cobb into doing the job and keeping it secret — Loh'khar knows Cobb can be pushed around.

To insure Cobb's familiarity with the ship, Loh'khar insists that Cobb accompany him and Lofryyhn on the inspection tour.

EPISODE TWO: MUTINY!

On the third day out from Q'Maere, Captain Adrimetrum follows her plan to "officially" promote Scoryn to First Officer (as she's only been "acting" First Officer until now). Although Adrimetrum briefly considered Chase for the position, the escapees' conduct over the past few days has changed her mind. While unaware that Chase is planning a mutiny, Adrimetrum has heard enough reports and rumors to know that he is challenging her authority. As a result, Adrimetrum assigns Chase to the Flight Operations post in the Command Center — a duty that suits his piloting skills and a post where she can keep an eye on him.

While Scoryn isn't Adrimetrum's ideal First Officer, the Captain has decided that she is trustworthy enough for the job. Also, unlike most on board, Scoryn hasn't visibly sided with any single group. She has remained aloof from the crew and able to keep order aboard ship.

When Adrimetrum announces Scoryn's promotion, Chase explodes in a paranoid rage. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

At the beginning of the day shift, Captain Adrimetrum walks into the cee-cee, momentarily glancing at the K4 security droids as they fail to announce her presence yet again. She sighs and walks to her station. Scoryn and Lowen Chase wait below her on the cee-cee's lower level. Over the buzz of activity, she announces:

"Captain Adrimetrum to all hands. Effective immediately, I'm promoting Scoryn to First Officer. We've gone too long without one and I know she'll do a good job. Also effective immediately, I'm assigning Lowen Chase to Flight Operations, here in the cee-cee. That's all. Back to your duties." Adrimetrum shuts down the comm.

Chase stands in total shock, then barks out, "Her? You're making this rogue your second?" Chase scrambles up the ladder to the Captain's station, yelling "You're going to get us all killed! We had better chances back at Q'Maere!" Chase spins around as he notices the K4 security

droids moving to defend Adrimetrum. Suddenly, he runs from the cee-cee, screaming "No! Stay away from me!"

As the Captain starts to order Scoryn to go after Chase, the entire ship is rocked by an energy storm from the Rift. The cee-cee crew, momentarily distracted by Chase's outburst, snaps their attention back to their posts. Unfortunately, the damage is done: the *FarStar* is already within the edge of the storm.

The storm's sudden strike instantly affects the *FarStar*. Primary power immediately fails in the lower deck of the cee-cee, most of deck three and the forward section of deck four. Auxiliary systems activate several seconds later, but only emergency lighting is available. Power fails completely in some sections of the ship, including many crew quarters. The gravity and life support systems also begin to act erratically. Damage to the airlocks and docking tubes cause them to close and seize up, trapping anyone inside ships docked to them (such as Loh'khar, Lofryyhn and Cobb in the freighter). It takes a half hour and a Difficult *capital ship repair* roll to force an airlock open. It remains open until another hour of work and a Moderate *capital ship repair* roll is made to fully repair the lock. Open airlocks are extremely hazardous: should the ships docked outside detach for any reason, the *FarStar's* interior would be exposed to open space.

Most threatening, however, is the damage to the sublight engines. The storm's first energy wave shorts out the main power feed from the reactor core to the engines. As the feed burns out, power surges fuse circuits and destroy components within the sublights. Until repaired (see "Repairing the *FarStar*"), the *FarStar* has no working propulsion systems. It is adrift and at the mercy of the Rift.

After the first jolt, Adrimetrum orders all hands to alert stations. The message concludes with a hissing crackle which signals the end of the comm system. Only comlinks may be used for ship-board communications until the main system is repaired. The *FarStar* crew rushes half blinded and stumbling to their alert stations.

THE MUTINY BEGINS

The storm catches Chase halfway to his quarters (located in the Crew Quarters cluster nearest the Training Room). Chase's mind screams his worst fears: Adrimetrum's mistakes have finally doomed the ship! There's only moments to act! When the Captain calls everyone to alert



Storn Cook

stations, Chase orders the start of the mutiny via comlink.

As the *FarStar* crew rushes to their stations, no one notices the escapees assembling near their assigned targets. It takes only minutes for the mutineers to get into position. All teams signal ready and the attacks begin. The mutineers attack three areas: the Command Center, engineering and Environmental Control. Chase has ordered that stun settings only be used, except against security droids. He wants no bloodshed on either side, if possible. Player characters should make Easy *Perception* checks to realize that all mutineers are using stun bolts, and should be encouraged by the *FarStar* crew to follow suit. All gamemaster characters use stun settings, unless battling droids.

However, any group of mutineers that is not directly under Chase's control will resort to firing full power blasters at the *FarStar* loyalists if the tide of battle is turning against them.

The mutiny takes the cee-cee completely by surprise, as the storm holds everyone's attention. Chase personally leads the attack on the cee-cee. Five escapees enter via the lower level while ten burst through the doors on the upper level. Two mutineers on each level target the K4 Security droids with blaster rifles while the remainder of the attackers stun the cee-cee crew. Chase will stun Adrimetrum personally (or temporarily take her hostage to force the cee-cee crew to surrender). Also, three escapees will rush through the cee-cee and take over Environmental Control.

Once in control of the *FarStar's* life support system, the mutineers quickly adjust engineering's air supply to incapacitate the crew there. The escapees also use the gravity field generators to defend against counter attacks. Tactics include rapidly switching between zero-g and heavy gravity, changing field orientation and setting areas to high gravity. Gravity in all halls leading to engineering and the cee-cee are increased to three times Standard. However, the gravitational system has sustained damage in the storm and is not functioning correctly in all areas. The mutineers attack engineering once Environmental Control signals the change in air composition. Kiakt Losron leads this group. Corla Unser is along, as well. All mutineers in this area protect themselves with breath masks. If cee-cee managed to get any kind of warning to engineering about the mutiny, the crew there will have couple of minutes to prepare. However, most of the engineers are desperately working to restore power to the engines and fight the ravages of the storm. As a result, engineering will be in a state of disarray. Two rounds after the air changes, the crew begins to pass out (a Difficult *stamina* roll is required each round to resist). Once the mutineers have captured engineering, they return life support to normal.

The mutineers attack engineering on all decks. Seven mutineers attack from Deck Two, ten mutineers attack from Deck Three, and eight attack from Deck Four. Those attacking from Deck Four must first take over the Armory and Machine Shop (sealing the blast door to the Maintenance and Repair Bay). As the mutineers enter engineering, they activate the blast door's emergency seals behind them, locking out reinforcements.

Each team sweeps through its deck compartment by compartment, stunning all beings there. The open grating between engineering decks allows beings to see attacks in compartments directly above and below them. Shooting at tar-

ERRATIC GRAVITY

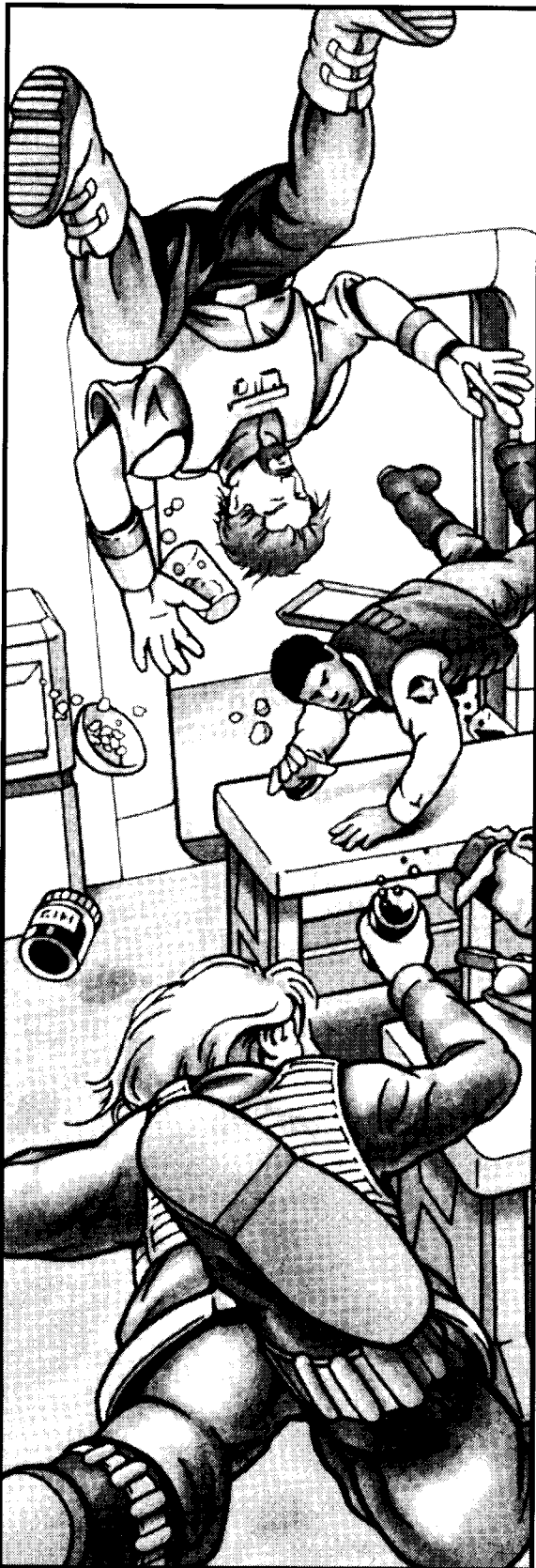
At various times, the *FarStar's* gravity may range from zero to three times standard gravity. Gamemasters should remember that changes in gravity will affect *everything* in the area. Sudden changes in gravity strength or orientation are very dangerous. A shift from zero-g to heavy gravity sends everything crashing hard to the deck. Tools, droids and beings take falling damage.

Under zero-g conditions, unsecured items float into the air: tools, food, droids, crewers, etc. As a result, some sections of the ship may have lots of debris floating about. Starships in the Hangar Bay remain in place — mechanical, magnetic or energy clamps hold the ships down to the deck. In zero gravity, all difficulty numbers for *Dexterity* attribute and skill checks are increased by two. In addition, no combined actions are possible and any character trying a full *dodge* smashes into an obstacle for 3D stun damage. Normal *dodges* count as two actions. Characters trained to work or fight in zero-g conditions receive no penalties. Firing blasters in zero gravity sends the shooter off in the opposite direction that the weapon is pointing (this may be used as a tactic for moving in zero gravity — characters must make Moderate *Mechanical* rolls to control flight).

Under heavy gravity conditions, characters suffer -1D to *Strength* and *Dexterity* rolls (but not to resist damage). They must make a minimum of a Moderate *stamina* check after every minute of heavy exertion, although checks may be made more difficult or frequent at the gamemasters discretion. Characters who fail must rest for double the amount of time they were active or suffer a -3D penalty to all actions except resisting damage in combat. Also, walking counts as an action and damage from falling or collisions is increased by 1D.

gets through the gaps in the grating increases the difficulty by three levels. The grating has a strength of 6D (character scale)

40 Escapee Mutineers. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 3D, brawling parry 3D, melee combat 3D, melee parry 3D, brawling 4D*, any three skills 4D. Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D, set on stun), comlink. Character points: 2.



Christopher Trevas

■ Kinakt Losron

Type: Engineer

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

MECHANICAL 3D

Capital starship shields 3D+2, sensors 4D

PERCEPTION 3D

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

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 3D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Capital ship repair 5D+1, capital ship weapon repair 4D+2, computer programming/repair 3D+2, security 4D+2, space transports repair 4D

Character Points: 2

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (set on stun, 4D), comlink, jumpsuit, starship repair kit, glowrod, datapad.

Capsule: Kinakt Losron first arrived in Kathol Sector as a research engineer for Kiharaphor Engineering. The company had some interest in setting up a new facility on Kal'Shebbol, and Losron was part of the evaluation team. It took them little time to decide that the planet was unacceptable under Moff Sarne's rule. However, before the team could depart, the Moff "drafted" them into his research team. Losron was one of the first to research an actual DarkStryder device. He was intrigued, but unsuccessful in learning any of the object's principles.

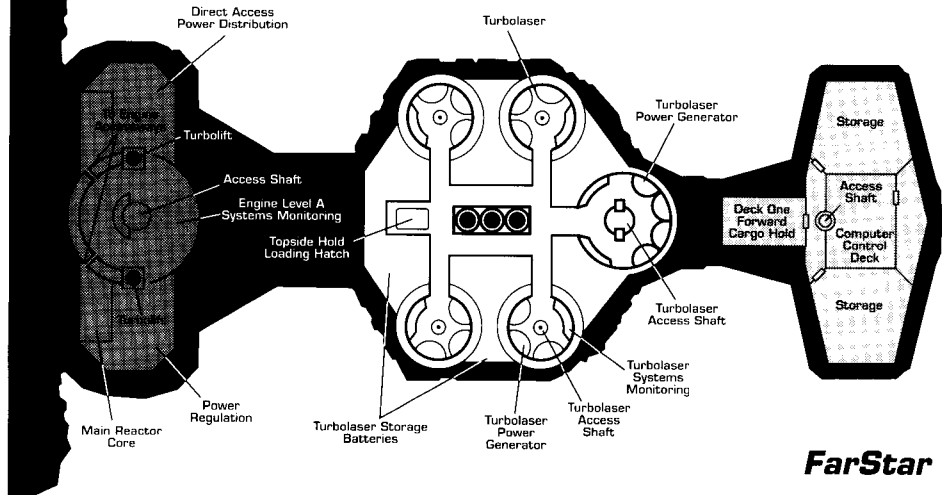
After reporting failure after failure to Sarne, the Moff eventually decided that Losron was either incompetent or lying. Losron was shipped to the Q'Maere facility to find out which. The Q'Maere techs discovered that he was neither, but reported "incompetence" back to Sarne. The Moff, distracted with other matters, never responded. Eventually, Losron was placed with the other prisoners. He became a trusted companion of Lowen Chase, and helped in the Q'Maere overthrow. He is the most experienced engineer amongst the Q'Maere escapees.

Losron is a middle aged human with black hair, streaked with gray. He has a politeness that can be exceedingly sarcastic, though he is usually enjoyable to be around. His manner of speech indicates he is from one of the Core Worlds. The escapees trust his engineering decisions completely.

RUNNING THE MUTINY

As with all *DarkStryder Campaign* adventures, the events described here must be adapted to the characters the players use. However, it is recommended that the players be afforded little opportunity to prevent the mutiny. The idea is to make the player characters responsible for retaking the ship. In the beginning, the battle does not fare well for the *FarStar* crew. Chase and his followers work quickly and their attacks are fast

Rogue Elements: *FarStar* Deck Plans

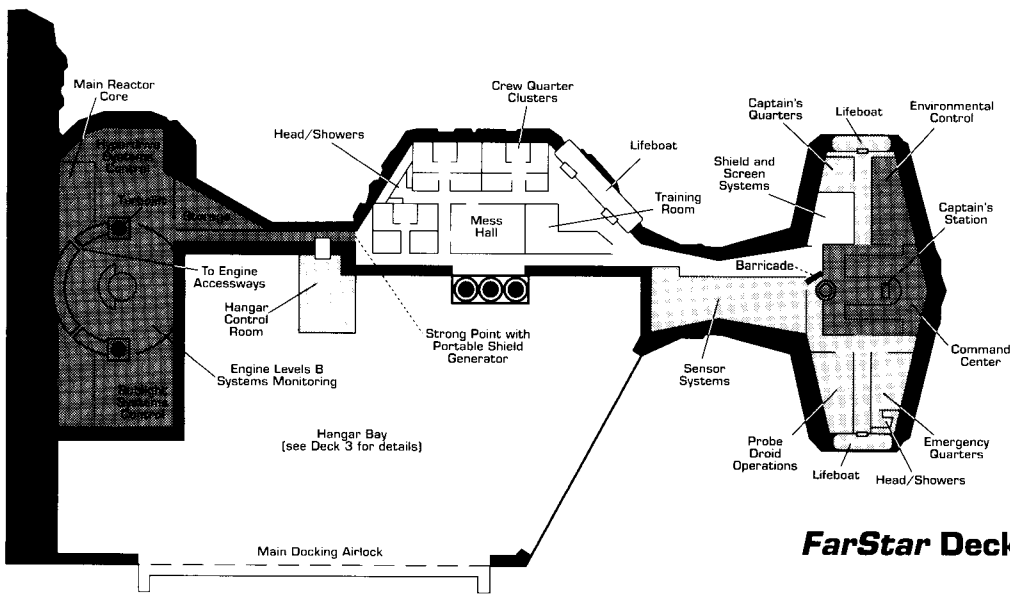


KEY

Areas Isolated by Mutineers (cut off)
 Areas Controlled Directly By Mutineers

Mutineers have isolated the Forward Hold and Sensor Suite of the Upper and Lower Weapons Decks (not pictured).

FarStar Deck 1



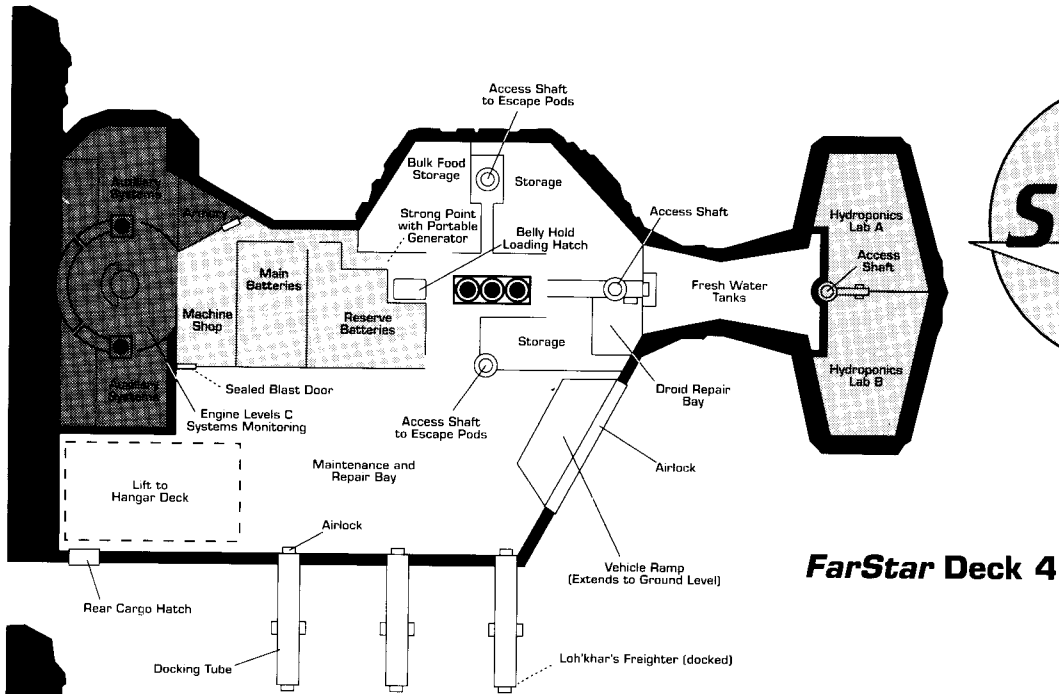
FarStar Deck 2

Brian Schomburg

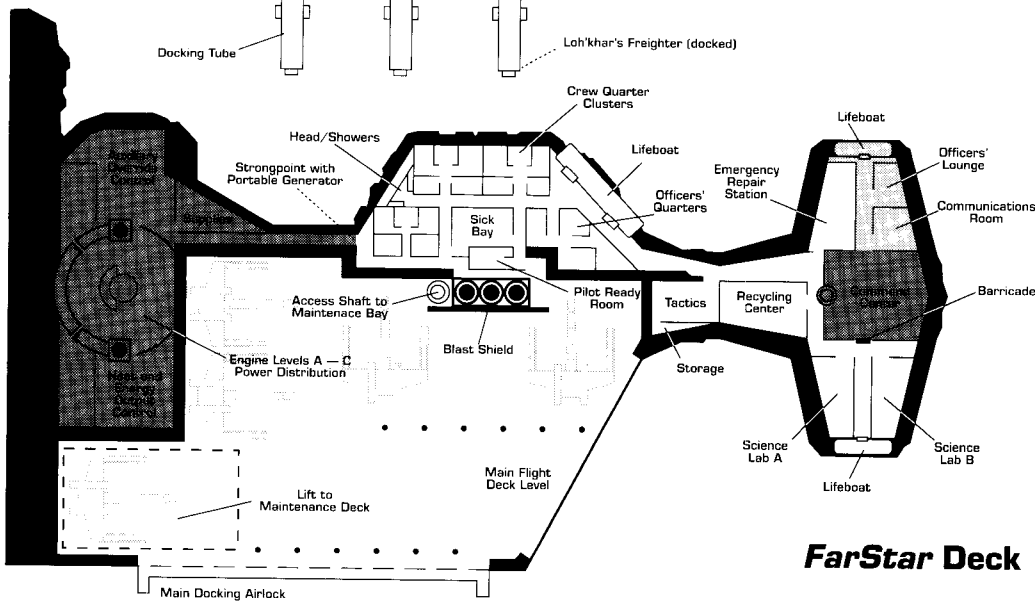
and furious. Player characters in the cee-cee should be kept busy with the raging storm until the minute the mutineers burst through the door. Characters in engineering should be similarly engrossed in repairing the engines. Those player characters that do well during the attacks soon find themselves facing more mutineers, as the gamemaster characters fall victim to the escapees' tactics.

Player characters in other areas may hear word of the mutiny, but by the time they arrive at the cee-cee or engineering, it is too late. The blast

doors are sealed and the gravity fluctuating. As the adventure progresses, the characters must constantly contend with ship's erratic systems and sudden jolts as the rift storm buffets the drifting ship. Gamemasters should use the storm to give the characters a sense of impending doom. They must succeed *before* the storm destroys the ship. Not only does the storm give them a rough ride, but affects the ship's systems throughout the adventure. For example, in order to use a given system, the character must first restore the system by either repairing it or by activating



FarStar Deck 4



FarStar Deck 3

its backups (see "Repairing the *FarStar*"). Other hints and suggestions for storm affects may be found throughout the adventure.

DEFENDING THEIR POSITIONS

After the mutineers capture their objectives, they set up strongpoints to defend their positions. Engineering and cee-cee blast door security codes are changed. Heavy gravity is also maintained in all halls.

Chase orders that some of the portable shield generators (stored in the Forward Topside Hold and the Deck One Forward Cargo Hold) be placed to provide forward defensive positions for engineering. The teams hauling the generators to engineering work closely with Environmental Control, who returns the gravity to normal while the teams pass through. The mutineers are counting on the adverse gravity to keep the *FarStar* crew from intercepting them.

The teams consist of two people each — one to move the generator on a repulsorled (26) and one guard. They travel about 15 meters apart and are



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INCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Usually, stray blaster fire is assumed to have harmlessly struck a wall or other object. However, with all the exposed conduit and wiring aboard the *FarStar*, careless blaster fire could cause major damage. This is especially true in engineering (where many computer panels are left open for easy access) and in the cee-cee (where a few missed shots could destroy a vital station). The gamemaster is encouraged to use incidental damage to heighten tension or provide brief, humorous moments. However, characters should be penalized if they ignore the consequences of filling a compartment with blaster fire (lights fail, doors jam, equipment goes berserk, etc.). Before firing, the player characters may make *Perception* checks to notice anything vital or dangerous. Characters firing carefully add +5 to their difficulty. Characters who roll a one on their Wild Die automatically hit something important (power cables, equipment, etc.).

expecting to be ambushed. The player characters get no warning that the teams are moving the generators, though they may be in the area or hear reports of it from *FarStar* loyalists. The teams follow the main hall on Deck Two from the cee-cee to engineering. If all three generators make it, the mutineers set up strongpoints where the hall to engineering meets the halls from the Crew Quarters Clusters (on Decks Two and Three), and the hall leading from the Belly Hold Loading Hatch to engineering on Deck Four. Once established, the strongpoints have five defenders each. The teams may return to the cee-cee if needed.

■ Portable Shield Generator

Model: Imperial Munitions Rampart II Shield Generator

Type: Portable shield generator

Scale: Character

Skill: Computer programming/repair

Crew: 1

Game Notes: Provides 6D character-scale protection to those behind the shield. These shields are currently configured to one of two settings, either closing off an entire corridor, or standing roughly 1.5 meters high, and stretching 6 meters wide, allowing ample protection while permitting return fire. When the shield is struck, roll 6D versus the damage code of the weapon fired at it. If this total is lower than the weapon's damage roll, the generator's protection score drops -1D; when the shield reaches 0D, it is destroyed.

Some areas of the *FarStar* will be isolated from the loyal *FarStar* crew simply because of the areas the mutineers captured. The Upper and Lower sensor suites, the Hangar Control Room, the Machine Shop, Armory, and the Main and Reserve Batteries fall under the control of the mutineers in engineering. The forward sections of the Upper Weapons Deck, Decks One and Four, and the Lower Weapons Deck are isolated by the mutineers since they control the Access Shaft. The mutineers capture these areas as they have time. Meanwhile, they keep watch on those compartments.

Chase orders the captured crewmen to be bound and locked in a convenient compartment under guard. Most of the cee-cee crew is kept in the Command Center, where Chase can keep his eye on them and use them to discourage drastic attacks against him. Most of the engineers will be locked in a supplies room, under guard.

Chase irrationally hopes that the captives will join him once they see how well he runs the ship.

NEW WORRIES

Once the mutineers have fortified their positions, they turn to the task of saving the *FarStar* from the storm. However, as they begin repairs, it becomes obvious to Kinakt Losron in engineering that the *FarStar* is in real trouble. Though the mutineers have some engineers (and some *FarStar* crewmen that sided with them), the ship's extensive modifications make repair procedures very difficult to figure out. Also, the loss of the main power feed makes simple repairs impossible.

To make matters worse, calculations show that the *FarStar* will drift into the most violent section of the storm in only three hours. Reports to Chase only antagonize his paranoia. He screams into the comlink, accuses them of plotting against him, and demands they fix the engines at all costs.

EPISODE THREE: RETAKE THE FARSTAR

With the command crew captured by the mutineers, the support crew must regroup and retake the *FarStar*. However, once Lofryyhn escapes from the freighter, he is the ranking officer loyal to the *FarStar*.

Since many beings do not understand Wookiee, deciphering orders and complex repair instructions is challenging for most crewmen. Have characters make appropriate languages skill rolls to understand Lofryyhn.

TACTICS FOR RETAKING THE FARSTAR:

- **Breaking the mutineers' comlink frequency.** Though not a tactic that will end the mutiny in itself, it can give the *FarStar* loyalists an advantage. Locating the frequency takes a Difficult *communications* skill roll.

- **Negotiation.** Eventually, concluding the mutiny requires negotiation with Chase and/or the escapees. When negotiating with Chase, much depends on the success of the mutiny. If the escapees hold all their objectives, Chase will demand the surrender of the remaining *FarStar* crew. When Chase holds the upper hand, he will remain calm and rational. He will also be alert for any tricks or traps.

As Chase's situation worsens, his mental state deteriorates (-2D to his *Perception* and *Knowledge* attributes and related skills). He becomes more paranoid with each defeat. As sections of the ship are recaptured by the *FarStar* crew, Chase's instability takes control of him. He rants and raves at bad news, but good news temporarily calms him down. While in this state, Chase is apt to try something abrupt, dangerous and foolish. However, if the mutineers question any orders, Chase chews them out and accuses them of undermining his attempt to save the ship and themselves. If they continue to doubt him, Chase has them bound and placed with the captives. Negotiating with mutineers in other areas may be more successful, if they can be convinced that Chase is mad or that they must cooperate to save the ship. The engineers will be most susceptible to this type of persuasion, as engine repairs appear nearly impossible without Lofryyhn to speed things along. They will allow Lofryyhn inside to direct repairs. They will surrender engineering if: Chase orders them to, Chase orders them to do something dangerous and foolish, or it becomes clear that the storm will destroy the ship.

A negotiations wild card is Corla Unser. Usually, she will side with Chase. If she can be convinced that the mutineers are doing more harm than good, she can influence Chase to surrender. However, if Chase believes that Corla is in danger, he will stop at nothing to help her. This could produce some very foolish acts on Chase's part.

- **Cutting power to Environmental Control.** In an effort to alleviate themselves of the environmental problems the mutineers are causing, the characters may decide to cut the power feeds to Environmental Control. Lofryyhn can automati-



Christopher Trevas

cally locate the feeds, anyone else must make a *Difficult search* roll (if in the right area), a *Moderate capital ship repair* roll, or an *Easy computer programming/repair* roll (to locate the feed on schematics). When the primary feeds are cut, all air circulation and gravitational systems fluctuate for a moment, then resume using battery power. Once the characters cut the auxiliary power feeds (again, locate as above), all heating and air circulation fails. Gravity immediately reverts to zero-g throughout the ship. The *FarStar* has several hours worth of heat and air, though characters may activate emergency heating units and grab breath masks or enviro suits (removing enviro suits from their lockers activates an alarm on the security board in the cee-cee).

- **Using the Emergency Repair Station or Auxiliary Override Control to reroute ship's functions from the cee-cee and Computer Control.** The characters may try to reroute various ship's functions from the cee-cee to other computers around the ship (requiring a *Moderate computer programming/repair* roll). Once the mutineers detect the attempt, they immediately inflict heavy gravity and order engineering to cut power on

the compartment. Note that Environmental Control cannot be transferred by this station.

- **Retaking engineering.** Capturing engineering by force is not an easy task. The mutineers respond to any attack with help from Environmental Control (though not within engineering itself). First, the characters must get at it—forcing them to deal with one or more strongpoints guarding the halls. Next, they must get through the blast doors. A *Very Difficult security* roll may open the door, or the doors may be burned through using blasters or equipment from the Repair Bay or Machine Shop. Since burning through blast doors is neither subtle nor quick, the mutineers inside will be prepared for the attack.

Once inside, the characters' first target should be the Power Regulation room. From there, they may cut power to the Command Center and the gravity generators in Environmental Control (see above for effects). They may cut power to life support if they wish. Power regulation attempts typically require an *Easy to Moderate capital ship repair* roll.

- **Retaking the Command Center.** Environmental Control provides the cee-cee's primary de-

fenses. If the mutineers have enough followers, or if power has been cut to Environmental Control, the escapees set up barricades in the halls outside. On Deck Two, the barricade is placed between the cee-cee and Sensor Systems. On Deck Three, it is placed between Science Lab A and the cee-cee. Note that these positions are the last ditch defenses. If possible, the mutineers set up smaller barricades in the halls leading to the cee-cee falling back as necessary. Again, the blast doors provide the final physical line of defense. Unlike other sections of the ship, the cee-cee holds both Lowen Chase and the *FarStar* command crew. So far, the mutineers have held to only using stun bolts and non-lethal tactics against the crew. However, the player characters should be extra cautious with the cee-cee. They should suspect Chase's instability could cause him to use the captives as shields if he is backed into a corner.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

At some point, the characters may decide that the halls are too dangerous and will opt for crawling through maintenance shafts and similar accessways. Given the ship's irregular modifications, few of these shafts go very far before being blocked by conduit, pipes and "creative maintenance." Those shafts that are clear (and large enough) will be around engineering and in the two meter space of the ship's hull. How far a character can travel in these areas are left to the gamemaster. The shafts have standard gravity which can be changed if the mutineers suspect someone is in there.

If asked, Lofryyhn knows where most accessways are, but will recommend against using them. The Wookiee knows that most contain many fragile and irreplaceable parts. He wants to minimize damage as much as possible. He knows that most shafts don't lead from compartment to compartment.

Characters may also attempt to outflank the mutineers by exiting the ship and reentering via airlock. However, the storm is extremely dangerous and gamemaster characters will discourage anyone from trying to leave the ship. Ion energy strikes and volatile gasses greet persistent characters when they open the airlock — only one or two strikes (at 8D damage each) should demonstrate the folly of such a plan.

EVENTS

These encounters may occur anytime during the mutiny.

- **Corla and Cobb Unser.** The roles that Corla and Cobb Unser play during the mutiny depend on the outcome of their earlier argument. If neither was convinced to join the other, they will be on opposing sides. Anytime they encounter each other, they try to persuade the other to join them. These Arguments or negotiations may take place in person, or via comlink. If their loyalty is questionable, both will be closely watched by their associates. Both Corla and Cobb are irritated by this, when they notice. During the conflict, Cobb quickly discovers that Corla is with the engineering group. Cobb's pull with Corla could improve negotiations with engineering (and even with Lowen Chase). Each trusts the other — a bond that no other mutineers have with the *FarStar* crew.

- **Turbolaser Storage Battery Explosion.** A surge from the rift storm overloads one of the batteries, causing it to explode. Characters at the power allocation station in the appropriate Turbolaser bay (on either the Upper or Lower Weapons Deck) may make a Very Difficult *capital ship weapons repair* roll to neutralize the surge. Anyone standing near the battery (located on Deck One) receives 15D damage. Several other batteries are damaged in the explosion, but their casings prevent them from detonating. There are no spare batteries on board, though the damaged ones may be patched back together. For more information, see pages 31-32 of the *DarkStryder Campaign Book*.

- **Local Life Support Failure.** Life support fails completely in the section of the ship the player characters are in. Though they may believe it is the mutineers attempting to flush them out, the failure is caused by storm damage. A Moderate *capital ship repair* roll is needed to reactivate the system.

- **Energy Surge.** Another storm generated surge threatens to overload the ship's power system (note that a similar surge already disabled the comm system). Characters in the Heat and Energy Output Control bay must make a Difficult *capital ship repair* roll to dissipate the surge (two characters may combine actions). See page 38 of the *DarkStryder Campaign Book*.

CONCLUDING THE MUTINY

The mutiny can only be concluded with the defeat of Lowen Chase. Chase holds out as long as he can, even when faced with impossible odds. He hopes that his command skills will so impress all involved that they will side with him. He desperately tries to persuade his opponents to the end. Chase will only surrender when faced with proof that he is endangering the ship. Player characters will generally recapture the *FarStar* in one of two ways, determined by which they retake first: engineering or the cee-cee.

If the characters retake the cee-cee first, captures Lowen Chase (or he surrenders), engineering quickly capitulates. If engineering is recaptured (or they surrender) first, Lowen Chase refuses to give in. The cee-cee must be taken separately. However, the characters may take the necessary steps to save the *FarStar* from the ravages of the Kathol Rift.

SAVING THE FARSTAR

Once Lofryyhn is back in engineering, he may direct the temporary repairs to the sublight engines. The *FarStar* needs at least one functional sublight engine to escape the storm. Three hours after the storm's first strike, the *FarStar* will be in the center and most violent part of the storm. At this point the ship takes 8D capital scale damage every 2 minutes (24 rounds). Kinakt Losron automatically surrenders engineering to Lofryyhn if the *FarStar* crew hasn't recaptured it one hour before reaching the storm's center. When the sublights are back online, the *FarStar* may move out of the storm. The time required to escape the storm depends on how far inside the ship is, and the *FarStar's* Space rating (see the Damaged *FarStar* below). The distance from the storm's center to a safe corridor is 15 units. Maneuvering the *FarStar* out of the storm requires Moderate *capital ship piloting* rolls each round. The difficulty may be increased by five to 10 if the pilot tries to avoid highly ionized areas. These areas may damage the ship further (3D capital ship scale damage): the *FarStar* has been drifting in and out of these pockets since the storm's strike. Also, if helm control has been transferred from the cee-cee to another station, increase the difficulty one level.

REPERCUSSIONS

Once the *FarStar* is free of the storm and back under Captain Adrimetrum's command, she gets

the unenviable task of deciding what to do with the mutineers.

Lowen Chase is ordered to undergo therapy to rid him of the treatment's effects — as best as can be administered aboard the *FarStar*. Chase agrees. Since little can be done for him, he elects to remain in Sick Bay. His confidence has been badly shaken and he no longer trusts himself. The escapees must have permission from the captain to visit Chase. No one can visit more than once per week, though Corla may be an exception if the ship's doctor is convinced that her visits help Chase.

The mutineers are placed under house arrest. They must remain in their quarters when not on duty or taking meals. They may not serve in the cee-cee or engineering without specific approval from Adrimetrum, Scoryn, or Lofryyhn. They may only serve at other stations with loyal *FarStar* crewmembers. None of the former mutineers will be allowed to carry weapons. Their weapons are placed in the armory for safe keeping. If there are many wounded or if the battle turned excessively violent, Adrimetrum may decide to return to Q'Maere. There she will leave anyone that cannot be cared for aboard the *FarStar*, as well as any that are deemed too untrustworthy to continue. This may include traitorous *FarStar* crewmen, as well as escapees.

The captain orders Scoryn to investigate any deaths that occurred during the mutiny, and convene courts marshal as necessary. The captain will preside over any court marshal and pass sentences as she sees fit.

Unless fierce fighting broke out during the mutiny, the escapees will agree to Captain Adrimetrum's conditions (not that they have any choice). Any of the mutineers may be removed from house arrest as the captain so desires.

Regardless of the former mutineers' official status in Captain Adrimetrum's eyes, much tension will remain aboard ship. The *FarStar* loyalists watch the mutineers whenever they are around. For weeks, the mutineers are made scapegoats for anything that goes wrong aboard ship. Some *FarStar* crewmembers may even refuse to work with the mutineers, especially if the fighting turned tragic. The *FarStar* loyalists treat treasonous *FarStar* crewmembers even worse (at least those who were thought to be trustworthy before).

Unrelated to the mutiny in general, but something that could affect events afterwards, is the relationship between Scoryn and Thanis Gul-Rah. Gul-Rah knows Scoryn's secrets (that she has a death mark on her). He will attempt to use this information to his benefit, especially if she

REPAIRING THE FARSTAR

Completely repairing the *FarStar* takes several weeks of work, though the main systems can be fully functioning within a few days. Between the battles and the storm, much of the ship is surviving on backup systems. Given the *FarStar's* limited supplies, some systems may never be completely repaired. Many of the *FarStar's* primary electronics have been damaged in the storm. Backup systems can cover part of the load while repairs are made. However, some backups may not have engaged automatically and must be reset or repaired by the crew. Restoring backups typically requires a Moderate *capital ship repair* roll and may take from a few seconds to several hours to complete. The most damage has occurred to the ship's propulsion and internal comm systems. The comm system requires extensive, time consuming repairs. Damaged stations and relays throughout the ship must be located and replaced. Parts shortages are a problem. The crew must decide which sections require hardwired communications and which can go without.

Damage to the propulsion system is concentrated in three areas: the main power feed regulation (Engine Levels A-C Power Distribution on Deck Three), the main power feed itself and many power couplers that connect the feed to individual engines. Fortunately for the *FarStar*, the main reactor was adequately protected from the energy surges and not damaged in the storm. Power to the sublight engines may be temporarily restored by jury-rigging bypass lines from the main reactor to the engines via one of the Auxiliary Systems control rooms. The job is dangerous and complicated. With enough people, it can be accomplished in one to two hours, depending on the

number of sublights hooked into the bypass lines. Rigging the bypass lines requires a Heroic *capital ship repair* roll (up to 25 characters may combine actions). Failure burns out the bypass lines or damages at least one sublight engine. Lines must be run to each engine that the crew wishes to power, up to a maximum of five. The lines must be strung to the sublight via engine accessways. Engines that are connected to the bypass lines must have damaged power couplers replaced (requiring a Moderate *capital ship repair* roll). Bypass line power regulation takes place in the Auxiliary Systems room. Controlling the power flow is touchy and requires a Very Difficult (1-3 engines) or Heroic (4-5 engines) *capital ship repair* roll. Up to two characters may combine actions (three if one is commanding). Failures may burn out one or more bypass lines, damage the sublights further, or overload the Auxiliary Systems station.

Full repairs to the *FarStar's* propulsion system take several days. The main power feed must be completely replaced, taking two days. This requires a Very Difficult *capital ship repair* roll, with up to 10 characters combining actions. Repairing damaged regulation units requires a Difficult *capital ship repair* roll and takes one day. There is also minor damage to many engineering subsystems.

While undergoing repairs, the *FarStar's* stats will be modified as follows:

■ The damaged *FarStar*

Hyperdrive: Off-line until main power feed is restored

Maneuverability: 0D (1-2 engines), +1 (3-4 engines), or +2 (5 engines)

Space: 1 (1-2 engines), 2 (3 or 4 engines), or 3 (5 engines), only one move per round is allowed

Atmosphere: 70 (200kmh), 105 (300km), or 140 (400 kmh)

accuses him of any wrong doing during the mutiny.

However, it turns out that Scoryn knows Gul-Rah's shadowy past, as well. Gul-Rah was one of several Imperial officers involved in murdering Captain Adrimetrum's husband years ago. She won't hesitate to use the information to manipulate him as she wishes.

REWARDS

Characters receive three skill points for participating. If the characters retake the *FarStar* with few casualties, they receive an additional two character points. If they prevent the *FarStar* from entering the storm's center, they receive two more character points.



WAYSTATION

Darryn Thyte scowled at the main viewport, watching the now-familiar spectacle outside. The *FarStar* was moving through a “safe corridor” in the roiling mass of the Kathol Rift, and — for a change — this corridor was relatively free of Rift matter. Unfortunately, Thyte felt that moving through this corridor was terribly claustrophobic, the oppressive, baleful light of the Rift constantly beating down on the ship. *Another week or two of this*, he thought bitterly, *and I’ll go as nuts as our navigator*. Checking the nav console, Thyte cursed under his breath.

“Makezh, we have a two degree yaw to starboard again,” Thyte groaned.

Makezh merely grunted, absently staring at the viewport.

“Hey, Makezh,” Thyte called again, “you listening?”

Makezh appeared startled, his head snap-

ping around to face Thyte. “Oh, er, sorry,” he mumbled. “What’d you say?”

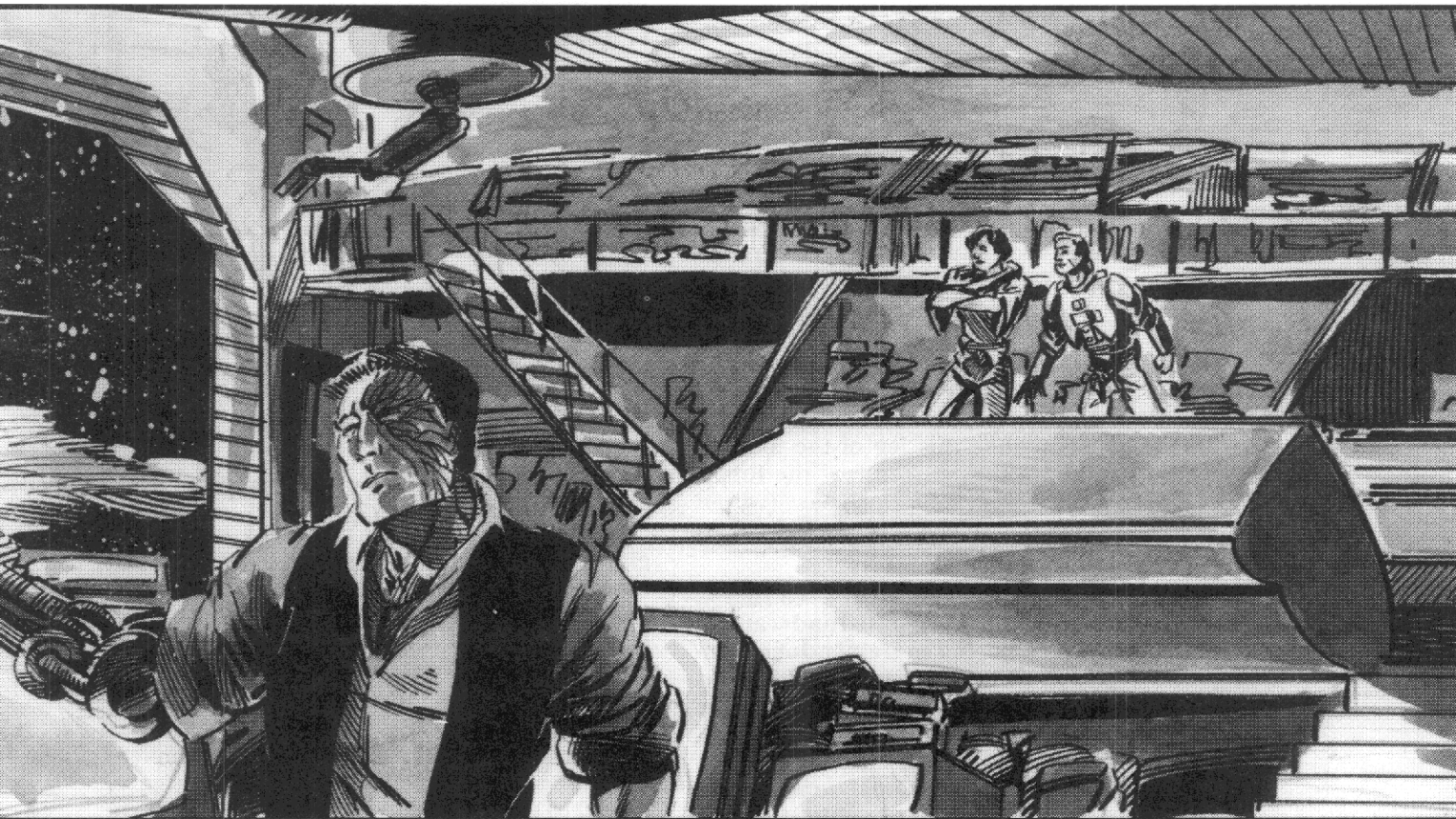
“Great, just great,” Thyte growled. “I can’t believe our lives in in *your* hands.” Pushing past the navigator, Thyte entered the necessary course correction, and turned back to Makezh. “What is *wrong* with you? If that drift got any worse we could’ve ended up in a whole new world of hurt.”

“Haven’t been sleeping well,” Makezh said softly. “Been dreamin’.”

“Oh, really? Me, too. What are yours about?” This was the longest conversation Thyte could recall having with the erratic navigator.

“The Aing-Tii,” Makezh replied. “They ... taught me, taught me the skills needed to listen to the Rift. But lately,” the navigator added, mournfully, “the Rift hasn’t been talking. It’s been *shouting*.”

Uh oh, Thyte thought, grimly. *This does not*



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bode well.

“‘Shouting,’ huh?” Thyte was more than a little skeptical about Makezh’s professed mysticism. “And what’s the Rift ‘shouting’ about?”

“I don’t know, I can’t quite make it out. But I think,” Makezh was almost whispering now, “that it wants me to find something.”

“Oh, really? What does the Rift want you to find?” Thyte was becoming more and more worried about Makezh. “And where are you supposed to find it?”

“I don’t know, Lieutenant. All I know is that whatever it is, it is very important to the Aing-Tii.” Makezh — his swarthy features dappled with the light of the Rift — looked very alien to Thyte at that moment. “And I know I’ll find it very soon.”

Makezh’s voice trailed off, and he looked sharply up at the main viewer. He was mumbling under his breath in a language that Thyte didn’t recognize. Clearly, something was wrong.

Suddenly, Makezh grabbed the controls, and lurched the ship hard to port. The sudden acceleration took the crew by surprise, as the *FarStar*

plunged out of position in the corridor and headed straight at a more energy-dense section of the Rift. A *much* more energy-dense section.

“Makezh, what the blazes are you doing?” Thyte was frightened and angry, and was convinced that Makezh was going to destroy the ship.

Just as Thyte was about to wrench Makezh away from the nav station and attempt to pull the *FarStar* back from the brink of destruction, a sudden flurry of motion on the main viewport caught his eye. The corridor was moving.

And Makezh had placed the *FarStar* in the exact center of the corridor’s new position.

A sudden beeping sounded from the navigational console. Makezh immediately resumed his station and activated the long-range scanners. “There’s an anomaly on the periphery of our sensor range,” Makezh said. “A very large anomaly.”

“Captain Adrimetrum to cee-cee,” Thyte announced over the comm, “repeat, Captain to cee-cee.” He paused, clicking off the comm and glancing nervously at Makezh, adding, “And tell her it will probably be a very long day.”

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

While traversing the Kathol Rift, the *FarStar* discovers a free-floating structure of unknown origin. It is primarily spherical, and is covered in a tangled mass of tube-like structures similar to vines or tentacles. Larger, bubble-shaped opaque domes dot the upper portion of the station, the largest of which faces the *FarStar*

THE SET-UP

At the *FarStar*'s present position, long range scans are ineffective; the distortion caused by the Rift's energy signature have wreaked havoc with the sensors since this leg of the journey began. In addition, the "current" of the Rift is forcing the *FarStar* to make a close pass (within 20 kilometers) of the object.

Read the following aloud:

Dead ahead, a large spherical construct is floating in space. The object is pitted and scarred, as if it has been subjected to tremendous damage. Strange rope-like tendrils cover the surface of the object, punctuated by large, opaque domes. Despite the heavy damage, the construct looks relatively intact.

According to the navigational sensors, the "corridor" that the *FarStar* is travelling through will force the ship to pass uncomfortably close to the massive object.

"This is gonna be tight," Thyte mutters.

As the *FarStar* moves closer to the station, either to make a scan or simply to avoid destruction in the Rift, the vine-like structures lash out and ensnare the ship. The largest of the bubble-like domes begins to open, as the construct begins pulling the *FarStar* closer. The dome does not slide or swing open like a typical space station hatchway; instead, this dome splits along a star shaped seam and "peels" open. Since attempts to blast free are unsuccessful (the object appears to be impervious to blaster fire) and thrusters are ineffective, a boarding party is organized.

The *FarStar* can use its engines to stabilize its position, but the construct is likely to win out in the end. A successful Difficult *capital ship piloting* roll will keep the *FarStar* roughly 20 kilometers away from the object. However, the ship is dangerously overtaxing its engines. If the ship is not released, the engines will overload and shut down within 10 hours.

In addition, a Moderate *sensors* roll reveals that the dome that the *FarStar* is being pulled towards is considerably smaller than the Corellian

SUGGESTED CHARACTERS

While any characters can be used in the boarding party, Kl'aal, Lofryyhn and Scoryn are recommended. Regardless, Adrimetrum will insist that at least one security officer, one technician and one higher-ranking officer be part of the boarding team.

corvette; if the *FarStar* is pulled inside, it will be crushed when the dome closes. This sensor roll also reveals that there is a structure on surface of the construct that may in fact be some kind of airlock.

EPISODE ONE: A WAY IN

Leaving the *FarStar* is not going to be easy either; the "vines" have encircled the ship and blocked significant portions of the landing bay and docking tubes. All attempts to sever them fail.

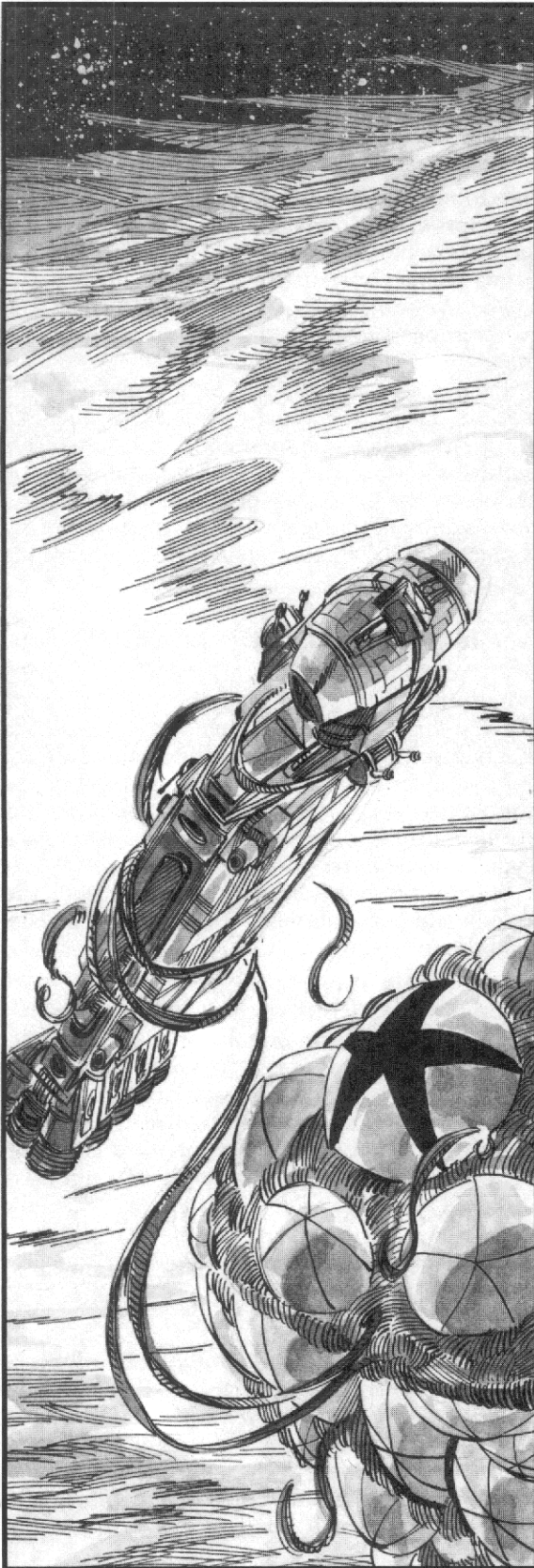
However, the *Aegis*-class shuttle will fit through a slight gap between vines with a successful Difficult *piloting* roll. Failure of this roll indicates that the *Aegis* is damaged and cannot complete the trip to the alien construct. If this is the case, roll 1D to determine how many hours it will take to repair the shuttle.

DOCKING WITH THE CONSTRUCT

Upon approaching the airlock the player characters see that it is similar to the dome-like structure that the *FarStar* is being pulled into. The *Aegis* can "land" on the surface of the construct with a Moderate *piloting* roll, or they can leave the *Aegis* floating nearby and spacewalk to the airlock; if this option is taken, leaving a pilot aboard the shuttle is recommended.

The player characters can poke and prod the hull of the object as much as they want, but once someone takes any kind of scan or uses a higher energy communications band (to communicate with the *FarStar*, for example), smaller vine-tendrils suddenly stir and lash at the person using the equipment. The vines entangle the character and damage that character's air supply. The boarding party must now scramble to find a way inside or back to the shuttle, or they will lose that character within 3D minutes.

A successful Moderate *Perception* check or Easy *search* roll reveals a patch of wall (about two meters square) to the right of the airlock. If the character attempts to shoot or cut into the station, the vines lash out, envelop the character



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GAMEMASTER INFORMATION: THE CONSTRUCT

The alien construct was apparently built as a staging area for an alien species. Precisely which species is impossible to say, as the station is several thousand years old—possibly much older—and this region of space is largely unexplored.

Judging by some of the chambers that the player characters encounter as they pass through this bizarre construct, they may gather clues as to the station's purpose. *The following information is intended for the gamemaster only, and should not be revealed to the players.* Allow the players to make their own deductions, but do not confirm or deny their theories.

- The station was designed to act as a staging area for some kind of space program, possibly a colonization program. The storage areas contain remnants of plant matter and seeds, indicating that it was self-sufficient, and capable of providing a colony ship with basic materials.
- The station was civilian, not military. There are no indications that the station has offensive weaponry; the tendrils assailing the *FarStar* are merely an automated docking mechanism that is malfunctioning.
- There may be some link to “DarkStryder” and this station; several bizarre alien machines are still functioning, and the method of their operation is beyond the scope of imperial-level science.

Again, gamemasters should maintain some sense of mystery about the station's true origins, as it will have some bearing on the next *DarkStryder* supplement. In the war against the Empire, answers don't always come easily ... or immediately. The station should remain an enigma.

and pull him or her inside the airlock dome. One by one, the player characters are pulled in in this manner.

The last character passing through the wall of vines must make an Easy *Dexterity* check or be crushed in the tangled plant-like mass. The vines should be considered to have 3D+2 *Strength* to inflict damage, and (obviously), the character will have to be removed from them as quickly as possible. (In opposed *Strength* check versus the



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vines 3D+2 will allow the player characters to free the trapped individual.)

A scan of the inside of the airlock reveals that it possesses a Type I (breathable) atmosphere after 1D rounds.

EPISODE TWO: INTO THE UNKNOWN

The alien construct is extremely ancient, and has been subjected to tremendous damage. Only small portions of the construct are intact and capable of maintaining a breathable atmosphere, since there a series of micropunctures throughout the hull. However, the unique radiation signature of the Rift, combined with the station's own strange energy frequency has some side effects.

- The ranges of all energy weapons used in the station are halved, and damage codes drop by 1D

- All sensor and communications ranges are also halved, and any *sensors* or *communications* check is automatically one difficulty level higher.

- Communication with the *FarStar* is effectively cut off.

See the map on page 62. Player characters are free to explore as they so desire. The following descriptions include encounters that can occur as the boarding party makes its way through the bizarre alien construction.

For the purposes of navigating through the twisting passageways, the station possesses a magnetic north pole.

Please note that "doors" do not exist on this station. They are actually a mass of vine-like tendrils, smaller-scale versions of the massive tentacles holding the *FarStar*. They appear to be set off by the proximity of a heat source; body heat is enough to trigger a door open or closed. A blaster bolt will also toggle the door mechanisms.

ALIEN CONSTRUCT: LEVEL ONE

1. **Entry Airlock.** The airlock is quite large, capable of housing a large number of humans. As the *FarStar* crew is pulled inside the dome-like mechanism, the tendrils performed some sort of microcellular scan to determine an appropriate atmospheric mix. Within minutes, the portions of the station that are still functional possess a Type I atmosphere.

Shortly after the boarding party enters the airlock and has a moment to get their bearings, read the following aloud:

You are in the middle of a large airlock, oblong in shape. Unlike the outside of the station, a strange resin-metal appears to be the main structural support. The walls are formed out of a strange, organic-looking resin that has amazing tensile strength. Plant life and mildew are present on the floor, but the deck is primarily bare, as if it has been walked on frequently.

2. **Null-Gee Chamber.** This chamber, also quite large, is capable of maintaining a zero-gee environment. The room is totally dark, and the air is musty and cold. If the boarding party enters the room, read the following aloud:

The chamber is large, roughly 250 meters long and 150 meters wide. It has a high domed ceiling and, barely visible in the dim light of your glowrods, several bars and hoops are partially embedded in the ceiling, forming intricate patterns. Vine-doors are visible in the northeast and northwest corners of the chamber.

If they proceed inside, have each character make a *Perception* or *search* check. A Moderate result reveals a strange, alien keypad near the door they entered. Flowing alien script covers its surface, though no one in the boarding party recognizes the language. Pressing any of the buttons floods the chamber with light and reduces the gravity in the room to zero, making movement extremely difficult.

A Heroic+10 *computer programming/repair* roll will deactivate the null-gee setting and restore normal gravity.

Players can also use the hoops and rods embedded in the ceiling to guide themselves towards one of the doors, requiring a Moderate *Dexterity* check.

3–4. Ancient Holotanks. These chambers, each roughly the same size as the null-gee chamber, are actually ancient holographic projectors. The western holotank (4) does not function, but is outwardly identical to the holotank on the eastern side of the station (3). The floor is made of the same resin-like material as the walls, and sound echoes strangely—somewhat muffled—in these chambers.

Each chamber has large hexagonal tiles on the floor, containing strange alien hieroglyphics inlaid in silvery metal.

As the player characters investigate the eastern holotank (3), read the following aloud:

This chamber seems surprisingly functional considering the condition of the station. The lights in the room immediately brighten as you enter and the temperature is comfortably warm.

As you move around the chamber, you notice the silvery-inlay in the floor is actually glowing and is in fact providing the bulk of the illumination in the room.

With a hissing of static, a figure seems to spring into existence in the center of the chamber, though it is hazy and indistinct.

The figure is an ancient holographic recording, though it has been badly degraded over time. It flickers and hisses with static and is virtually impossible to identify, although for a few seconds, it appears to be a small humanoid. A successful Difficult *Perception* roll reveals that this apparition is similar to reports of hazy, indistinct figures seen by *FarStar* crews during the passage through the Rift. After several minutes, the hologram fades and the light in the chamber dims. The hologram has succumbed to the effects of time and cannot be reactivated.

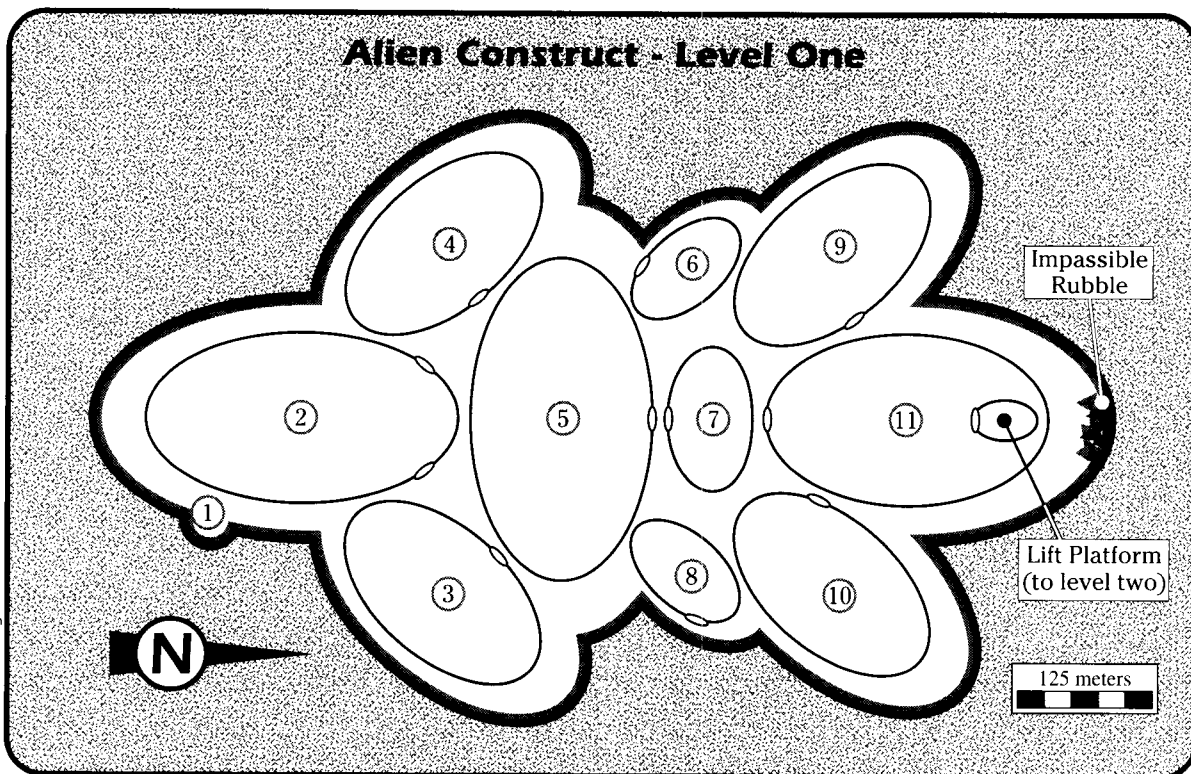
5. Amphitheater. This massive chamber in the center of this level of the station acted as some

sort of amphitheater. Metal and resin benches circle the chamber, looking down onto the center of the oblong room. In the center of the room, a large raised dais, several meters high stands alone, carved with more strange hieroglyphics that are similar to those on the floors of the station's holotanks. If the player characters try and sit on one of the hard, unyielding benches, they are surprised to find that they conform to the shape of the person sitting on it. They are surprisingly comfortable. Closer investigation reveals no mechanism are power source; there is no obvious means for the bench to alter its shape.

Any character who makes a Moderate *search* roll also discovers a small, intricately carved medallion in the room. The medallion is hexagonal in shape, and only measures a few centimeters.



Jordi Ensign



6–8. **Storage Bays.** These smaller chambers acted as storage bays of some kind. A number of metal-resin crates that may once have been neatly stacked are jumbled across the floor. They contain little more than dust, although any character who makes a Moderate *Perception* check notices a footprint on some of the dust spilled on the floor of one of the Storage Bays (7). A Difficult *Perception* total reveals that the footprint was caused by a heavy boot that conforms to the structure of a human foot. A Heroic *Perception* total reveals that the footprint was created by someone wearing an the same type of boot as an Imperial stormtrooper.

One storage bay (6) also houses something of interest: a small metallic pyramid, covered in flowing, alien script. This device is pivotal to the *DarkStryder Campaign*, and if the player characters do not enter this chamber and retrieve the device, the gamemaster should have them “stumble” across it a later date.

This device is called “The Codex” and it is the reason that the Aing-Tii trained Makezh to navigate in the Rift. The Aing-Tii know of this strange station but consider it sacred, a remnant of “Those Who Dwell Beyond The Veil.” They are forbidden by their beliefs from setting foot on the station, but Makezh — an “infidel” — does not suffer from this restriction.

The device is a form of DarkStryder technology, though it is different — and far more ancient — than the other artifacts the *FarStar* crew has encountered.

■ The Codex

Type: DarkStryder artifact

Scale: Character

Game Notes: The Codex provides +2D to all Force skills that the user possesses. In addition, the Codex allows a Force-sensitive to automatically locate “galactic” scale disturbances in the Force (i.e. the destruction of a planet or other such cataclysm). Characters who attempt to use the device for more than three rounds a day are subject to some penalties: any DarkSide points the character receives while using the Codex are doubled, and other Force-sensitives can locate the device fairly easily, often over distances of more than 100 light years. The Codex has a body strength of 1D to resist damage. If the device is roughly handled or otherwise damaged, it will break and cannot be repaired.

Capsule: The Codex is a small, metallic pyramid that can easily be lifted in one hand. The device is thousands of years old and has a number of Force effects (see Game Notes).

When this device is brought aboard the *FarStar*, reveal the following information to the player controlling Dajus only. This information should not be given to the rest of the players until the end of “Showdown.”

Jessa experiences a horrifying hallucination when the Codex is brought aboard. Wherever she is, the voices and images that have been

troubling her suddenly swirl into a chaotic sensory explosion that renders her unconscious.

Read the following to Jessa *only*:

You feel as if you are floating free in the vacuum of space; the bright pinpricks of distant stars surround you. You feel yourself turning, as if pivoting in the vacuum, and sliding into your field of view is a pair of Imperial Star Destroyers, firing their weapons directly at you.

Massive blasts of turbolaser fire flash past you and as panic begins to set in, you see movement in the distance. A planet, featureless and grey, orbits twin suns. The light from these blinding orbs glitters off the Star Destroyers, off the planet and off the twin rings of asteroids that seem to surround the entire system.

Suddenly, a dark shadow falls across the planet, and to your horror, you see long, arachnid-like legs creep over the planet, as if the world was being devoured by a monstrous, impossibly-huge spider. It's glowing eyes stare directly at you, and the hairy, midnight-black legs reach for you as the creature — radiating calculating intelligence and bottomless evil — hisses at you, venom dripping from it's fangs.

The terrifying apparition draws you into its dark embrace, and you feel your mind retreating, as your last conscious thoughts are to run, to flee this hideous beast before your are swallowed in impenetrable blackness.

Jessa immediately drops and cannot be revived. This character cannot be used again until she awakens in "Showdown." The *FarStar* crew will not be able to determine the cause of her coma, knowing only that it coincided with the arrival of the Codex on the ship, and that she screamed in pain and fear before collapsing to the deck.

9. **Antechamber.** This room contains some rather puzzling devices. As the boarding party enters the antechamber, read the following aloud:

The vine-curtain door parts and admits you into a large, chamber — oblong, like every other room you have so far entered aboard this station — that is devoid of any features except several metallic spheres that are hanging, unsupported, in mid-air.

There are literally hundreds of these spheres; some no bigger around than a blaster power-cell, some up to a half-meter in diameter.

The spheres have a very precise arrangement, though that may not be readily apparent. The largest pair of metal spheres float in the center of the room, roughly 1.5 meters off the ground. Within two meters of this pair of spheres, floats

a smaller metal ball, perhaps 10 centimeters in diameter.

Around the perimeter of the chamber, hundreds — possibly thousands — of tiny metallic balls, roughly one centimeter in diameter, float in a jumble. They part to admit anyone who moves towards the center of the room, then resume their original positions after the group passes through.

As the player characters continue searching, they discover some rather startling things. If anyone passes near any of these spheres, they emit a chime-like tone. These tones do not stay the same, however; each individual elicits a different note from *each* sphere. As the player characters move through the chamber, the chimes are oddly soothing.

If anyone touches any of the spheres, they begin to move, the staccato chimes blending into a single, beautiful tone. The floating objects seem to be orbiting the twin-disks in the center of the room.

A character who makes a Difficult *Perception* check will believe that the entire room is an intricate model of a star system, though which one is impossible to say.

In addition, if the boarding party examines the spheres themselves, they can find no mechanism or energy source. Whatever is holding the objects aloft, it is very different than a standard repulsorlift. It is impossible to budge the spheres from their preordained orbits; they are impervious to blaster shots and brute force.

10. **Vacc-sealed Library.** Across the corridor from the antechamber (9), this chamber is vacuum-sealed. There is no atmosphere at all inside, and the vine-doors themselves do not respond to the proximity of a heat-source — namely a player character. However, it is possible to open the door by generating more extreme heat. A blaster shot should suffice, though when the vacc-seal is broken, the rush of air will suck any player characters within 10 meters of the doorway into the chamber.

Any characters sucked into the room should immediately make a *Dexterity* check. Failure to make a Moderate *Dexterity* check indicates that the characters suffers 3D damage when he or she slams into the floor. A successful Moderate *Dexterity* check indicates that the character suffers only 1D damage.

After the player characters have recovered from the effects of sudden pressure change, read the following aloud:

You are in yet another oblong chamber, though this one is extremely cold. The room is

filled with hundreds of thin storage boxes, each neatly stacked in shelving units that line the walls.

If the player characters elect to open up any of the boxes, they notice a slight hiss of air; the boxes are also vacuum sealed. Inside each box is a packet of hexagonal, flimsy material that appears to be very leaflike. Covering each hexagonal sheet are more of the flowing alien glyphs that festoon large portions of the station. Obviously, these are written records of some sort, though they are remarkably well preserved given their estimated age.

Closer examination of these records reveals the following information:

The material that the records is written on is actually plant matter, a strangely shaped leaf that is surprisingly durable.

The language that the documents are written in is untranslatable. No two symbols seem to be alike, so common themes cannot even be determined. It will take years of patient study to learn the barest rudiments of this language.

Any character who makes a Moderate *Perception* roll notices that the first document handled begins to badly degrade after 2D minutes. It eventually crumbles into dust, as the writing fades. Characters may believe that this is the result of the documents' age, but it is the *FarStar* crew that is the problem. The Rift Variant bacteria covers their clothing and equipment, and they just dragged it into this sterile environment. Any documents exposed to this bacteria are contaminated and will be destroyed in minutes.

11. Operations Room. This is one of the largest chambers on this level, and is certainly the least "organic" in appearance. In the center of the chamber stands a hexagonal dais, standing roughly one meter high. The ceiling overhead is a large, dome-like affair, almost 200 meters high. Protruding from odd angles, six strange control seats are suspended on gantry-like construction, each apparently controlling a different function. The gantries are all joined at a central "joint" overhead, but each moves independently of the others.

Each character in the room should roll their *Perception*; the character who makes the highest *Perception* total feels compelled to investigate the hexagonal dais in the center of the chamber. Read the following aloud when this character approaches the dais:

The hexagonal dais is engraved with more of the alien glyphs, and seems to hum as if it has an internal power source. As you approach, you feel a strange, unexplained pressure in your

temples that dissipates a moment later.

At the same moment, the metal seems to flow and twist, forming a seat that is perfectly configured to your body.

If this player sits in the strange chair, he or she experiences the following:

- A thundering pain erupts in the character's head. Several bizarre, alien visions flash through the character's mind, but despite the unpleasant feeling, the character can neither articulate or identify these images.

- The lights in the chamber dim, as several cunningly-hidden viewports open, revealing the light of the Kathol Rift. Silhouetted against the backdrop of the Rift, the characters can just make out the *FarStar* as it is inexorably reeled into the dome. Time is clearly running out.

Any character who makes a Difficult *communications* roll will be able to transmit one short message to the *FarStar*, if desired. The reply from the *FarStar* will be riddled with static, and will probably only consist of confirmation of reception.

- The character is held immobile in the chair. It takes a successful Difficult *willpower* total to vacate the seat. Attempts to pull the character out will be unsuccessful.

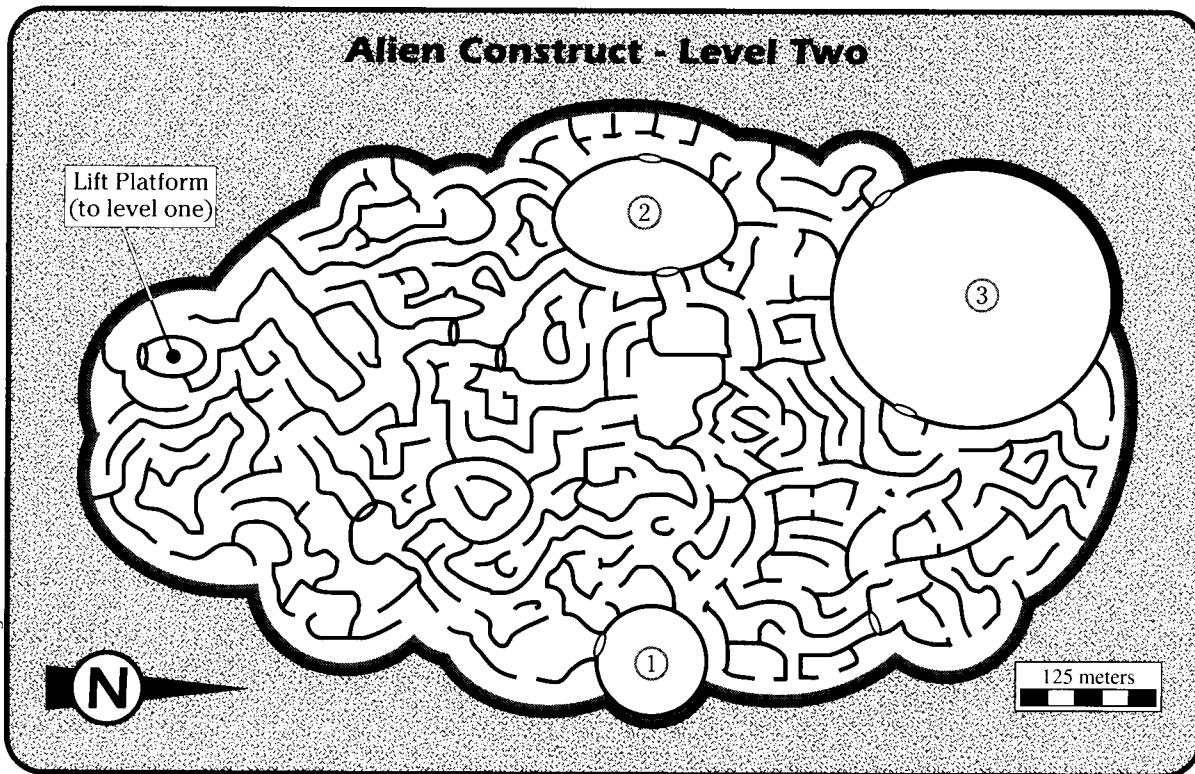
- The character now has a clearer understanding of what the station is: some kind of civilian staging area for an alien colonization program. He or she also knows roughly where the controls for the docking mechanism can be overridden: one level down, and several hundred meters to magnetic north.

In the northernmost portion of the chamber, a large lift platform stands unattended. If the player characters step inside, it moves down to the lower level after a moment. There are no visible controls; the lift seems to "sense" the appropriate time to move.

ALIEN CONSTRUCT: LEVEL TWO

The lower level of this section of the station is not as well preserved as Level One; the air is much more humid, and the temperature is considerably warmer. The dark-green walls are glistening with condensation, and the resin-metal deck lies below several centimeters of water.

The walls are much more organic in appearance, and the corridors are an intestinal jumble. There are few "rooms" on this level; there are a number of docking domes that run along the perimeter, and vine-hatchways can be seen at regular intervals. However, the other side is comprised of hard vacuum, and the last remaining security systems will not allow the players to



Brian Schomburg

breach the environment; the doors cannot be opened with the tools at the players' disposal.

The encounters on this level are keyed to the diagram above. Players should be allowed to wander through this level as they desire, until stumbling onto the prearranged encounters indicated on the diagram. The character who was briefly seated in the "control chair" believes the controls to the docking mechanism can be located somewhere to the north.

LEVEL TWO ENCOUNTERS

ENCOUNTER ONE: "THERE'S SOMETHING ALIVE DOWN HERE ... "

As the boarding party slogs through the damp tunnels and accessways, they are unaware that they are being stalked. As they approach an intersection in the corridor, they realize that the water is growing deeper, almost knee-high.

With awful suddenness, the group is attacked by a translucent, wormlike creature. Read the following aloud:

The water is getting deeper in this part of the tunnel, and the footing is growing treacherous. You can see some flickering light ahead, but you cannot immediately identify the source.

A Moderate *Perception* roll indicates that the flickering light is being generated by something under the water. If the players approach the light source, the creature attacks. Otherwise, the light grows closer — and brighter — until it is roughly six meters away from the boarding party. When it reaches this distance, the light is immediately extinguished. The creature attacks at that moment.

■ Tunnel Worm

Type: Mutated Bio-experiment

DEXTERITY 3D

Brawling parry 5D

PERCEPTION 2D

Search 6D, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 5D

Special Abilities:

Internal luminescence: The "tunnel worm" can generate an internal phosphorescent glow. Generally it uses this glow to blind the underwater lifeforms that have developed over thousands of years in the flooded tunnels of the alien construct. It will appear dim to human eyes, however.

Absorption: The "tunnel worm" absorbs its prey through its permeable outer membrane. Its internal digestive acids have 4D *Strength* for the purposes of damage.

Permeable body: Attempts to puncture the translucent creature will be unsuccessful, since it can adjust its outer membrane to let solids pass through it. However, energy weapons will inflict major damage on the creature. All blaster hits on the "tunnel worm" receive a +1D bonus to damage.

Move: 15 (swimming)

Size: 3 meters

Scale: Character

Capsule: The “tunnel worm” is the result of an ancient experiment; the designers of the station originally intended to introduce small (1 centimeter) versions of the creature into the water supply to ingest bacteria and other undesirable elements. After centuries of evolution and the mutagenic effects of the Rift, the transparent, viscous-looking worm has evolved into its present form.

ENCOUNTER TWO: IMPERIAL AMBUSH

The player characters have stumbled into — of all things — a patrol of Imperial stormtroopers. There are six stormtroopers, all armed with blaster rifles, and they are moving furtively through the damp corridors, apparently on guard for something.

Read the following aloud:

As you turn the bend in the corridor, you see the stark white armor of an Imperial stormtrooper, his blaster rifle sweeping methodically back and forth, covering the corridor ahead of you. He gives a sudden yelp of surprise and pegs a shot in your direction.

“Intruders on point,” the trooper yells, summoning reinforcements.

Things just got a lot worse.

The characters can retreat and try to lose their pursuers, split up and try and lure the stormtroopers into an ambush or fight it out in the corridor. Run combat as indicated in *Star Wars: Second Edition*.

If three stormtroopers are killed or wounded, the rest will retreat, heading back to the north. The stormtroopers are not taking prisoners; they are shooting to kill. If the players lose or try to surrender, they’re dead.

Imperial Stormtroopers. All stats 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 4D, *grenade* 4D+2. Move: 10. Blaster rifle (5D), stormtrooper armor* (+1D energy, +2D physical, -1D *Dexterity* and related skills).

* For complete information, see page 157 of *Star Wars: Second Edition*.

ENCOUNTER THREE: REUNION

As the player characters near the largest chamber in the section, read the following aloud:

You have a huge chamber, with a domed ceiling. You can just make out the star-shaped seam in the dome overhead; this is one of the docking bubbles like the one the *FarStar* is being pulled into!

And this particular dome is occupied. An Imperial assault shuttle — the kind used to ferry around spacetroopers — is in the center of the chamber.

You hear a pair of blaster shots hiss past you from behind, and in the entranceway you see Mist — the bounty hunter the *FarStar* has tangled with on a number of occasions — accompanied by a half-dozen Imperial army troopers. In an amplified voice you hear the hunter growl, “Intruders! Troopers to ready position!” You are now trapped *inside* the dome.

With a hand signal from Mist the troopers fall into defensive stance and begin firing!

The player characters’ only course of action is to dive for cover and fight back. The troopers are also moving for cover behind the ancient crates and other debris scattered around the chamber. Mist activates a jet pack and flies towards the highest point of the dome, where the bounty hunter can get a clearer shot at the player characters.

In the northernmost part of the room, there is a large dish-shaped depression, surrounded by a number of tiles, each engraved with a number of alien glyphs. The player character who sat in the “command seat” in the operations chamber believes that the “dish” can somehow override the tendrils that have snared the *FarStar*.

The player characters are pinned down wherever they were when Mist arrived, but there is very little cover, except around the dish and under the crates that are scattered around the room.

■ Mist

Type: Bounty Hunter

DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 9D, blaster: blaster rifle 9D+1, brawling parry 6D-2, grenade 5D, melee combat 5D+2, melee parry 5D+1

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 5D, languages 7D, planetary systems 6D+2, streetwise 8D, survival 5D+2, value 7D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 6D, jet pack operations 5D+2, powersuit operation 7D+1, repulsorlift operation 7D, space transports 6D, starship gunnery 6D+2, starship shields 6D+2

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 7D, command 4D+2, con 5D, hide 5D, search 7D+2, search: tracking 8D, sneak 6D+1

STRENGTH 3D+2

Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D

TECHNICAL 3D

Armor repair 4D, armor repair: photo-reactive armor 7D-2, blaster repair 6D+2, security 8D

Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (5D damage), blaster rifle (5D damage), hold-out blaster (3D+2 damage), 2 smoke grenades (5D damage), 2 paralysis cannisters (20 meter radius, instant paralysis for 1D rounds for opponents who do not make a successful Difficult *Strength* roll), thermal flare, medpac, modified Kraill Photo-reactive Armor, binders, datapad, Imperial Peacekeeping Certification, man trap



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Capsule: Mist will try and maintain altitude in the dome in order to pick off the player characters. However, if the *FarStar* crew's shots start hitting too close, Mist will land and engage them on the ground.

■ Mist's Bounty Hunter Armor

Model: Modified Krail Armory Model 1010 Photo-reactive Personal Armor

Type: Modified personal battle armor

Skill: Powersuit operation: Krail 1010 armor

Cost (with all modifications): 80,000

Availability: Basic suit is "X" (illegal) on most planets; modified suit is unique

Game Effect:

Basic Suit: Protection +2D to Strength for energy attacks, +2D+1 to physical attacks; -1D to Dexterity and related skills. Suit has a Move of 15, with movement rolled on powersuit operations skill.

Power Suit: +1D to lifting

Sensor Pod: +1D+1 to search

Integral Flechette Launcher: 20-meter range, rolled on blaster skill. (Causes 3D stun damage).

Jet Pack: Has a Move of 100 meters horizontally, 65 meters vertically. Uses *jet pack operation* skill, base difficulty is *easy*, modified by obstacles. Has 16 charges, two of which can be expended per round.

Sealed Enviro Filter: Filter system can block out harmful molecules, or in case of insufficient or deadly air supply, the unit can completely seal, drawing upon a three hour supply of oxygen. In addition, the filter on the armor's blast helmet contains a voice disguiser, rendering attempts at voiceprint identification futile.

Photo-reactive Coating: The armor has been treated with a coating of photosensitive, microscopic crystals that reflect the ambient colors in a given area, making the armor difficult to see in virtually any situation. This modification adds +2D to *sneak*.

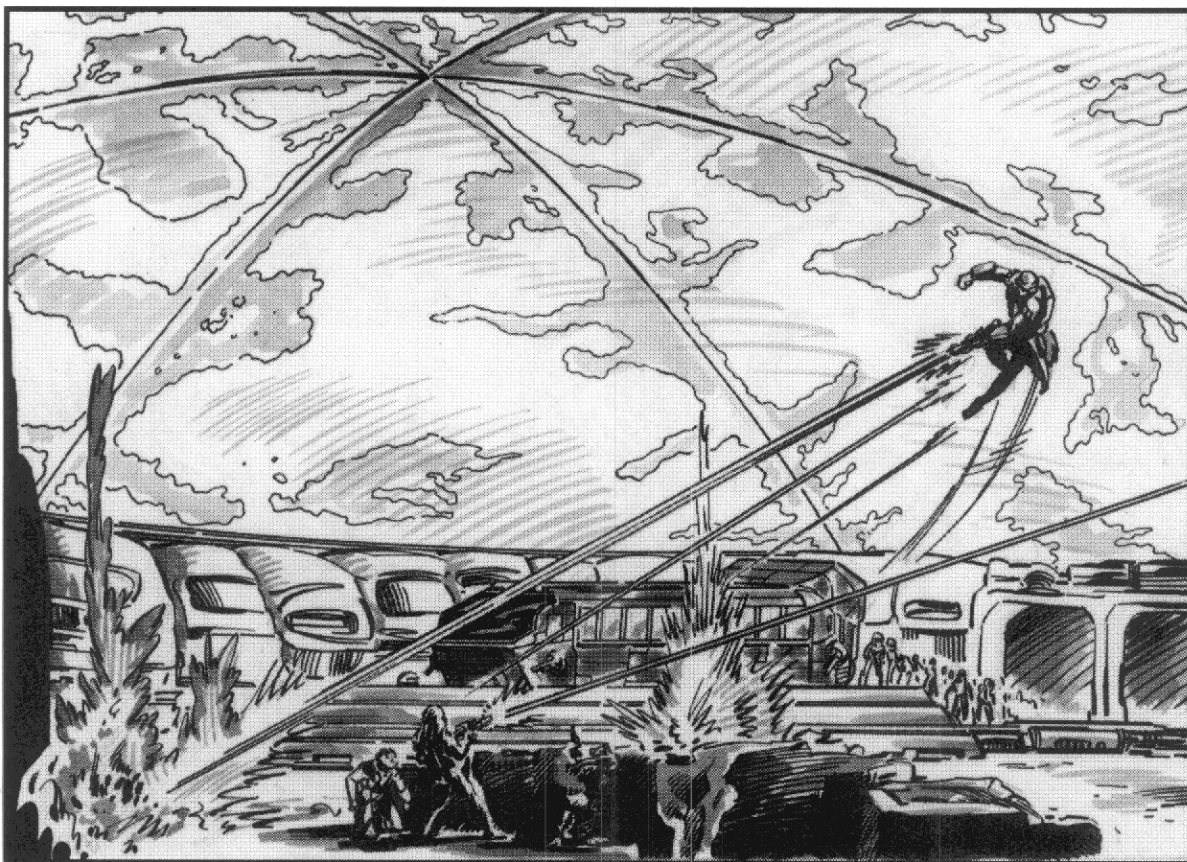
Reflec Plating: In addition to enhanced camouflage, the armor has been covered in a fine mesh of *reflec*, a sensor-absorbing material favored by the Imperial Storm Commandoes. This adds an additional +1D to *sneak*.

Imperial Army Assault Troopers. All stats 1D except: *Dexterity 2D+2*, *blaster 4D+2*, *blaster artillery 3D+2*, *vehicle blasters 5D+2*, *survival 2D*, *Mechanical 3D+2*, *ground vehicle operation 5D+2*, *Perception 2D+1*, *search 3D+1*, *Strength 1D+1*, *brawling 3D*, *ground vehicle repair 2D*. Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D+2), helmet comlink, shock suit and helmet (+1D physical, +1 energy), survival gear, utility belt with supplies. Character Points: 2.

EPISODE THREE: WHERE'S MIST?

As the battle progresses, read the following aloud:

Mist steps into the open for a moment, blaster holstered. The armored figure raises both hands and seems to be gesturing for a cease-fire.



Coiled around the bounty hunter's arm is a silvery-white metallic cord that suddenly begins to glow red as the armored figure swings a gauntleted arm towards you. "What a waste," Mist snarls. Then the "wire" does its job ...

Roughly ten meters away Mist a cone-shaped burst of fire erupts. Glowing deep-red at its edges, the unnatural apparition reaches almost 20 meters into the air, and stands 20 meters wide. It starts moving towards you at a rapid pace. Discernable in the fire is an eerie, monstrous face, with eyes that glow like embers and huge, ravenous jaws that gleefully open and close as it descends on you.

As you look behind this horror, you see Mist back off, heading back to the shuttle, after tossing you a jaunty wave.

Mist has just unleashed a DarkStryder artifact against the player characters. Treat the "fire apparition" as a creature that will attack anyone who it can catch. The effect will only last for 1D rounds, and has the following stats. After the appropriate number of rounds have elapsed, the fire dissipates. Blaster fire will not effect the creature.

The DarkStryder device on Mist's arms controls the creature, and the bounty hunter will use it to clear a path to the assault shuttle. The creature will herd as many characters as possible towards the vine-door leading back the way the players came.

As the boarding party nears the door, the heat from the fire creature will seal the portal shut, and cannot be opened. Any characters still inside the dome are trapped.

While the players are struggling to cope with the fire creature, Mist is trying to free the shuttle from the grip of the station; Mist and her Imperial cohorts were snatched by the station in the same manner that the *FarStar* is currently enduring. However, the Imperials have had more time to investigate the station and have managed to find the tendrils' override control. Four rounds after boarding the shuttle, the bounty hunter will activate the vessel's engines and trigger the override. The dome overhead will open and the chamber will depressurize. Any characters still inside will die (unless he or she is still wearing a vacc suit).

■ DarkStryder "Fire Creature"

Type: Fiery apparition

DEXTERITY 3D

PERCEPTION 1D

Search 4D

STRENGTH 2D

Special Abilities:

Fire: The DarkStryder-created fire inflicts 6D damage.

Move: 15

Size: 20 meters

Scale: Speeder

EPISODE FOUR: FINAL BATTLE

After Mist flees, the chamber re-pressurizes and the player characters can reenter the docking dome. The character who believes that the dish-like depression is the key to releasing the *FarStar* will likely approach the dish.

Read the following aloud:

The dimple in the surface of the dome's floor is large, roughly 10 meters across and four meters deep. At the bottom of the hole, a series of small hexagonal hatches — all closed — can barely be seen.

The "dish" is ringed with small hexagonal tiles, each engraved with a different glyph.

Direct the following at the character who believes he or she knows how this device works:

You move forward, tentatively stepping on one of the tiles. Instantly, the dome overhead becomes translucent, and you can barely make out the familiar bulk of the *FarStar*, creeping closer and closer to the alien station. The tiles on the floor appear to be some sort of bizarre computer interface.

Stepping on a second tile, you provoke quite a reaction from the system. The hexagonal hatches on the bottom of the dish swing open, and suddenly, you hear the sound of running water. From the bottom of the dish a geyser erupts into the air like a rocket. The stream of water blasts upward, splashing into the ceiling. Surprisingly, no water trickles down; it is as if the station's walls are absorbing the moisture. Through the now-transparent dome, you can see the vines holding the *FarStar* slowly unravel until it is freed.

The players must now race back to their shuttle and try and assist the *FarStar*; through the dome they can see Mist's shuttle, launching four spacetroopers — more than enough to handle the *FarStar* in its current state of repair. By retracing their steps, the group can make their way back to the Aegis in a matter of minutes. It will take an additional 1D rounds for the boarding

party to don their vacc suits if they removed them) and an additional 1D rounds to board the Aegis.

Mist will engage the Aegis shuttle and the *FarStar* for 1D rounds, until a fast microjump can be plotted. After this time has elapsed, the Imperial vessel jumps to lightspeed, abandoning the four spacetroopers. Realizing that they've been left behind, the four spacetroopers split up and fight to the last. At this point the *FarStar* can launch fighters to deal with them, but the closest ship to the troopers is the Aegis — a poor match for the heavily armored Imperials.

Run combat as directed in *Star Wars: Second Edition*. Note that the spacetroopers will not surrender and will try to inflict as much damage on the *FarStar* as possible.

Zero-G Stormtroopers (Spacetroopers). *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 4D, grenade 5D, missile weapons 5D, Knowledge 2D+1, survival 5D+1, Mechanical 3D+2, astrogation 4D+2, powersuit operation: spacetrooper armor 6D, repulsorlift operation 5D+2, space transports 5D+2, starship gunnery 4D, starship gunnery: proton torpedo launcher 5D+2, Perception 2D+2, search 5D+2, Strength 2D, brawling 3D, stamina 4D, Technical 2D, demolitions 3D+1, security 4D+1, powersuit repair 4D+1.* Move: 11. Equipment: Spacetrooper armor (see below).

■ Spacetrooper Armor

Model: Imperial Zero-G Assault Stormtrooper Armor Mark I

Type: Personal Battlesuit

Scale: Character

Skill: Powersuit operation: spacetrooper armor

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: X

Game Notes:

Basic Suit: Provides +4D physical, +3D energy to resist damage, but reduces *Dexterity* and all related skills by -1D. Has four hours of power and 10 hours of oxygen. Has a Space Move of 1; in normal gravity, Move is only 8. Magnetic couplers allow spacetroopers to attach themselves to any metal surface.

Grenade Launcher: Uses *missile weapons* skill, ranges: 5-50/100/200 (in space: 0/1/2).

Concussion Grenades: Ammo: 30, 5D/4D/3D/2D (stun), blast radius: 0-2/4/6/8.

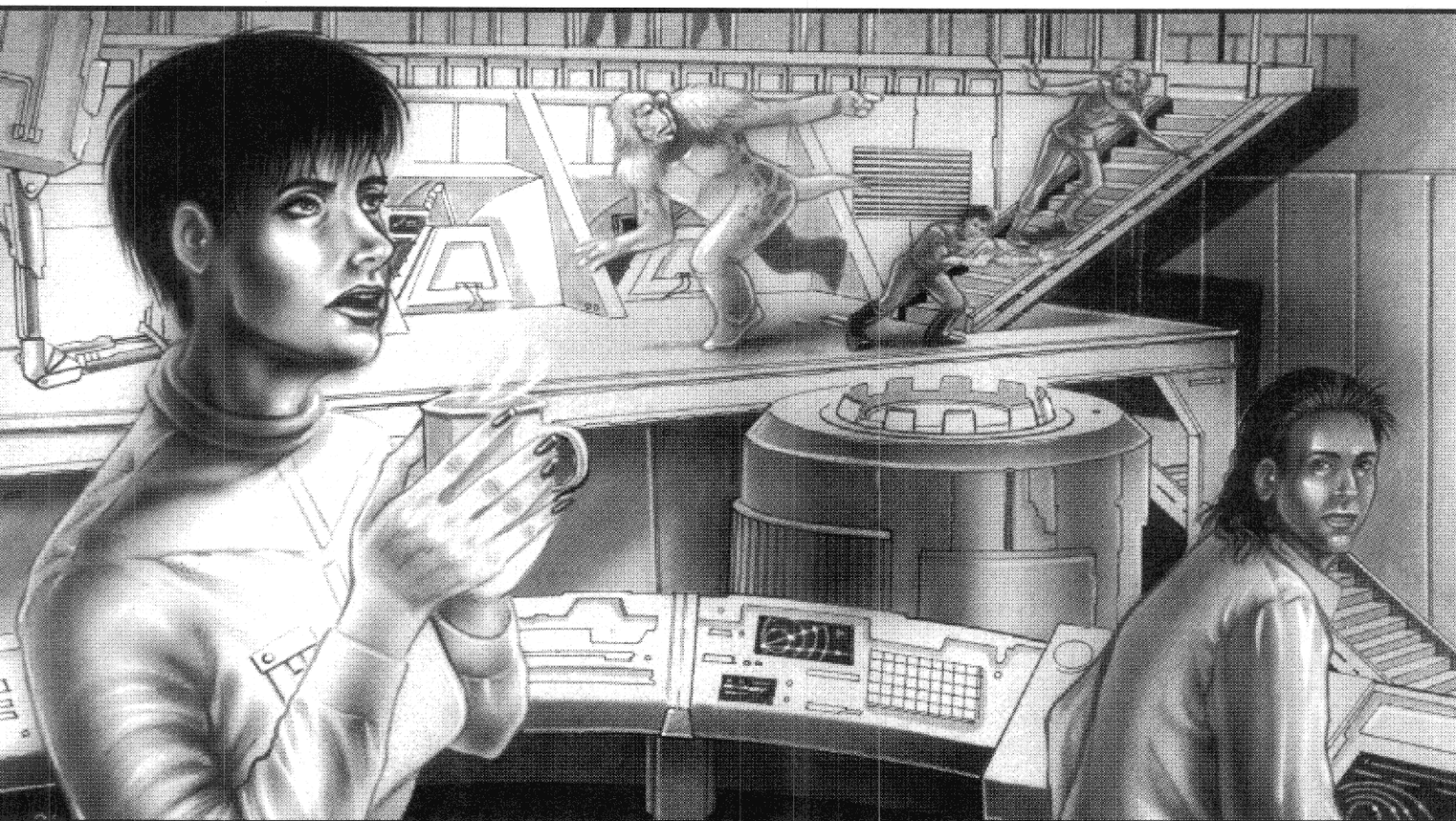
Mini-Proton Torpedo Launcher: Uses *starship gunnery* skill, 6D damage, ammo: 6; ranges: 25-100/300/700 (1/3/7 in space).

Blaster Cannon: 6D damage, uses *blaster* skill, ranges 10-50/100/150.

Laser Cutters: 0.3-meter range, 3D damage (starfighter scale).

REWARDS

Each character who participated in the boarding party receives two Character Points. The character who figured out the docking mechanism receives an additional Character Point.



HOME

Captain Adrimetrum sat back after approving Lofryyhn's request for some down time. The *FarStar's* sublight drives needed to be scrubbed of the heglum and iridium build-up that traveling through the Rift caused.

Makezh breathed deeply, "feeling" the micro-jump he was computing. The *FarStar* was en route to an area of the Rift the sensor operators had nicknamed Blue Swirl. It was a relatively clear area, with minimal chaotic activity. It promised, at least, a few lifeless planetoids where the ship could land.

Adrimetrum took a moment to reflect, sipping from her cup of hot chav. With Dajus and Khzam gone, the bridge had a certain lifelessness to it. *I can't believe this ship is holding together*, she thought, wincing as she remembered each instance where the *FarStar* had been damaged. Near-famine, mutiny and alien space stations trying to "eat" her ship was not

exactly what Adrimetrum had in mind when the mission began.

And then, there was Captain Ciro.

Those Imperial butchers will pay for what they did to you, Kel, she vowed. *It's one more score I have to settle with them, and I promise I'll take Same down.*

Adrimetrum had not served with Ciro for long; in the short time since the *FarStar's* mission began, however, she had learned to respect his genial, gentle command style, a style very different than her own. Still, in moments of doubt or crisis, Adrimetrum still caught herself thinking, *what would Captain Ciro do?*

"I guess that means he's part of the reason we've made it this far," she whispered to herself.

She was shocked the first time she saw her former commander being led by the hand into



Christina Wald

the *FarStar*'s medical bay. He was scarred, beaten and nearly catatonic. When she had tried to speak to him, he didn't respond; rather, he simply stared, unblinking, at the sterile white walls of the room.

Makezh finished his contemplative calculations, and pulled back the triple-levers that controlled the hyperdrive. The few visible stars streaked off into infinity, and the plasma clouds seemed to funnel and swirl as they too became distorted by superluminal velocity.

Suddenly, the door to the cee-cee slid open, and running the into room as fast as his stubby legs could carry him was Gunthar. "Cap'n! Cap'n!" he shouted between his panting.

Adrimetrum slid down from her command chair, placed her cup on the armrest, and approached Gunthar with caution. She noted something odd; Gunthar seemed to be emitting a sharp, sweet odor — not unpleasant, but *different*. And if this mission had taught her anything, the unknown was dangerous. "What is it Gunthar?"

Their knees swayed a bit as the *FarStar* emerged from its lightspeed skip, and its ac-

celeration compensators caught up to the vessel. Gunthar was immediately transfixed, staring out to the viewport. He was trembling. Adrimetrum had never seen the child-like alien so agitated.

"Gunthar! Gunthar, what is it?" Adrimetrum tried to shake the massive alien out of his shock. This met with little success; trying to shake someone as massive as Gunthar was a task similar to shaking a bulkhead. After a moment, Gunthar registered Adrimetrum's presence again.

"The Horns of Waryl, their very presence beckons me. Across the seas of mists they light the path to home, to glorious Yvara wherein the Majjvara dwells," quoted Gunthar, as if from a text long-forgotten but suddenly remembered.

Adrimetrum followed his gaze, to the distant twin stars, and the red planet below them. She slowly turned back to the alien. "Gunthar ... what in blazes did you just say?"

"Captain," said the alien, pointing at the main viewport, "I am home."

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Orbiting a blue-white star in an empty expanse of Blue Swirl, is the planet Yvara. Visible from the system is a constellation — called the Horns of Waryl — which is made up of three stars set in an inverse pyramid. The planet Yvara has evolved its own intelligent species, the Yvarema, a space-faring hive-mind species that has remain isolated for millennia. One of their members, Gunthar, was separated from his people in an attempt to explore beyond the few worlds they knew of. Gunthar, stripped of his people's hive-intelligence was found by slavers, and sold to Moff Sarne for

his gladiator arenas.

As the *FarStar* dives deeper into the Kathol Rift, Gunthar has been gaining more and more intelligence, and now, his long quest for "home" is finally at an end. But Gunthar is not the only person searching for Yvara. As part of a trade off for astrogation routes and some new tech, the slavers gave the dreaded Qektoth Confederation Gunthar's bio-specs. Analysis of this information showed the Qektoth the closest thing to a human-hive mind, a long-sought after bio-technological goal. After their run-in with the *FarStar* in the Qu'mock system, Qektoth scouts have been shadowing the New Republic ship through the Rift in hopes of finding more test samples among the Yvarema.

THE YVAREMA

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

* These attributes vary per Yvarema class. See individual classes for attribute ranges

Special Abilities:

Hive intelligence: Yvara intelligence is dependent on the number of Yvarema present. For game purposes, the hive intelligence affects all attributes except *Dexterity*, *Perception* and *Strength*. Yvarema separated from the Majjvara suffer penalties (indicated below) applied to their *Knowledge* and *Technical* attributes.

Number of Yvarema Present	Knowledge Penalty
10,000+ (without Majjvara or royal explorers)	-1
5,000-9,999	-1D
1,000-4,999	-1D-2
500-999	-2D
100-499	-2D-2
below 99	-3D

The attributes can fall to 0D in *all* Yvarema classes with the exception of the royal explorers. Although *Perception* is not affected, Yvara with less than 1D in *Knowledge* cannot use skills other than hide, search and sneak.

Pheromonic and empathic link: The bond of the Yvarema hive-mind is based partly on pheromonic communication, and partly on some as-yet unexplored empathy. The Yvarema are capable of empathic perception with other species, although it is far less accurate than the link shared with other Yvarema. Yvarema can identify the emotions of others around them, in general terms (angry, happy, afraid) and can tell whether an individual is friendly, indifferent, or hostile. This check requires a Moderate *Perception* check, which may be modified depending on

the intensity of the emotion. Yvarema receive a bonus +1D to *Perception* to make this check.

Enhanced Vision: The explorer classes of Yvarema have exceptional vision in low-lighting and receive +1D+1 to *Perception* and search in darkness. Explorer-scouts receive a +2D bonus.

Move: Varies per class, see below.

Size: 1.5-2 meters.

Capsule: The Yvarema are a rare example of a hive-mind that has evolved from a non-insectoid, mammalian culture. The Yvarema are unlike most hive-minds, in that there are no mindless drones, and each individual is imbued with a distinct and unique personality, like those of other cultures. Their intelligence, however, is dependent on their Majjvara, or monarch, ruling them, and their continued living together in an integrated society. The Majjvara, similarly, is completely dependent on the rest of the Yvarema for her survival.

WORKER YVAREMA

The most common type of Yvara is the worker class, a neuter sex of strong bipeds. These Yvarema are skilled in labor tasks, such as building, sanitation, and simple maintenance. As more and more droids are being developed by Yvarema engineers, the Majjvara has ceased producing workers in the numbers she used to. Yvarema droids are clunky, clock-work affairs with limited intelligence.

Worker Yvarema

Attribute Dice: 12D
KNOWLEDGE 1D/2D+2
PERCEPTION 1D/2D
STRENGTH 2D+2/4D+2
TECHNICAL 1D/2D

Move: 8/10

■ Yvara

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Cool
Atmosphere: Type I
Hydrosphere: Dry
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Mountain-chains, fungal plains, river networks
Length of Day: 36 standard hours
Length of Year: 453 local days
Sapient Species: Yvarema
Starport: Limited Services (only at the Yvara plateau).
Population: 200,000
Planet Function: Homeworld
Government: Hive-mind
Tech Level: Lesser Space
Major Exports: None
Major Imports: None
Capsule: Yvara is a world of varied topography,

with the poles being capped in ice and snow. Along the lower latitudes, the ice breaks up into large lakes and river networks. Mountains line each continent's shores, creating a barrier between the inland and the three oceans that cover the world. The inland varies from desert plains, to hectares and hectares of fungal growth. Where these two environs meet, just north of the planetary equator, is where the Yvarema live, in deep underground warrens. While the Yvarema have developed technology, very little of it is visible from the surface. Their use of steam and fluidics for many of their systems leaves little pollution in the planet's atmosphere, and they have no noticeable sensor or comm signals emanating from their population centers.

EXPLORER-SCOUT

The second class of Yvarema is the explorer-scout. More slender, and quicker than the workers, explorers can be easily identified by their water and fat-retaining hump on their backs for extended voyages. Yvarema explorer-scouts have less perceptive tactile senses, so the dangers presented to them cannot threaten the hive. They do, however, have vision that aids them in low-light conditions. Their empathic link can join them over slightly greater distances than the worker Yvarema. These Yvarema are usually found exploring the plateaus and fungal plains, scouting for additional food and resource sites for the workers to gather.

■ Explorer-scout Yvarema

Attribute Dice: 12D
KNOWLEDGE 2D/4D
PERCEPTION 3D/4D+2
STRENGTH 1D/3D+2
TECHNICAL 1D/2D
Move: 10/12

LORE GATHERER YVAREMA

The third class is the lore gatherers, with enlarged minds, that serve as librarians and scholars to the Yvarema. They are the longest lived on all the Yvarema, except for the Majjvara. These Yvarema have enlarged craniums, holding large brains. As a result of the lore gatherers' enhanced mental faculties, they have enhanced empathic sensitivity. To avoid the pain and threats that explorers and workers face, these lore gatherers often enclose themselves deep in underground chambers, cut off from the others until their particular area of study is needed.

■ Lore gatherer Yvarema

Attribute Dice: 12D
KNOWLEDGE 3D/4D+2
PERCEPTION 2D/4D+1
STRENGTH 1D/2D+2
TECHNICAL 2D/4D
Move: 8/10

ROYAL EXPLORERS

A fourth class, very limited in number, is a new deep space explorer. As Yvarema technology advanced to the point where Yvarema could be travel light years away from their Majjvara, their empathic nature proved to be a liability. Rather than stagnate their growing space program, the Majjvara produced only 12 royal explorers. She imbued them with stronger personalities, and a limited intelligence buffer built into their brains. In game terms, it means that these Yvarema's attributes cannot drop below 1D, even when alone. A standard exploration team consisted of a scholar, three workers, two explorers, and one royal explorer. The team would never separate by more than 100 kilometers.

■ Royal Explorers

Attribute Dice: 18D
DEXTERITY 2D/4D+2
KNOWLEDGE 1D/4D
MECHANICAL 1D/3D+2
PERCEPTION 1D/4D
STRENGTH 2D+2/4D+2
TECHNICAL 1D/3D
Move: 9

THE MAJJVARA

A class to herself is the Majjvara, or royal leader of all the Yvarema. Her roleplaying stats and capsule information can be found in Episode Two.

EPISODE ONE: A WORLD OF PROMISE

Read aloud:

The *FarStar* slows to a near stand-still, its nose pointing to the center of a three-pronged constellation. Dead ahead, circling a blue-white star is a world striped with red mountain ranges, fields of yellow-green fungus, white ice-caps, and deep blue oceans. A single, black moon orbits the world, spinning slowly against the faded background of the Kathol Rift.

Lieutenant Thyte taps at the keys of his sensor board, wrinkling his nose at the sickly-sweet smell filling the cee-cee. "Reading a Type I atmosphere, Captain. Gravity, pressure and temperatures all in the green along the equatorial zones and adjacent latitudes." Thyte says, his lifeless tone betraying his boredom with routine.

All the while Adrimetrum looks carefully at Gunthar, standing on the bridge, transfixed on the world outside the viewport. "Life signs, Lieutenant?" she asks.

"Indeterminate, captain," says Thyte, frowning from his readout and Gunthar's smell. "I am reading evidence of technology, below the surface just north of the equatorial zone. No comm signatures or networks, minimal pollutants. It looks abandoned."

"Surely, a man in your role recognizes the importance of peering past the shells of illusion, and searching for the truth that lies underneath," says Gunthar, reaching over and touching the normally off-limits sensor board. Thyte seems too awestruck to even stop the alien.

"Good point ... " stammers the Captain, looking incredulous.

The planet, Yvara, offers the crew of the *FarStar* numerous amenities. Not only do they get a chance to leave the ship, breathe some fresh air, and stretch, the fungal plains offer replenishment for the *FarStar's* food stores, the freshwater lakes allow the *FarStar's* water supply to be renewed, and the engines need maintenance. The captain should assign teams for these tasks, while she and a small team plan to make contact with the Yvarema. Players are free to assign teams, making sure Gunthar is with the diplomatic team.

FOOD IN THE HILLS

The team or teams assigned to gather food and water should take the vehicles out for a spin, something that will make T'achak T'andar happy

for the attention. Spare storage tanks can easily be loaded into the SRV-1.

If the team waits for the first contact mission to return, a Yvarema team of explorer-scouts aids the characters. These Yvarema are a jovial, boisterous lot, happy to share the world with people with no experience on Yvarema. Their lack of shared knowledge with these new offworlders excites these explorers, and they constantly ask about developments outside their world. No description is good enough for them and they demand as much sensory detail as possible.

Gathering the water is a simple task as the storage tanks have the necessary filtering hardware to make it drinkable. Gathering food is a bit more complicated, as Moderate *survival* roles will produce the most succulent, youngest roots that will last the longest aboard the *FarStar*. Kl'aal will probably want to go hunting, and the fungus plains offers abundant wildlife. If the Yvarema guides are there, they will describe the animals, but find the idea of hunting very alien. Running across the stretched, rope-like fungus increases *running* difficulties by two levels, except for the native animals, which have adapted to these environs.

■ Owr'apa

Type: Predatory animal

DEXTERITY 4D

PERCEPTION 3D

STRENGTH 3D+2

Brawling: claws 5D+1, swimming 4D+2

Special Abilities:

Claws: slash does STR +1D.

Leap: Owr'apa can leap up to 12 meters with a Moderate jumping roll.

Amphibious: Owr'apa have a pair of extra nostrils on a snorkel-horn that allows them to swim just below the surface indefinitely.

Move: 10 (running), 12 (jumping), 6 (swimming)

Size: 1.5 to 2 meters long, 0.9 meters at the shoulder

Capsule: The owr'apa is the deadliest predator stalking the fungal plains of Yvara. A large feline, with a thick, dark pelt, the owr'apa submerge themselves in the various watering holes found on the long, dry treks taken by the zeebucks. Owr'apa conceal their breathing snorkel among the reeds of the lakes and creeks, and use their claws and incredible leaps to surprise the zeebuck herds. Owr'apa are territorial animals, and will attack any who stray too close to their watering holes to hunt.

■ Zeebuck

Type: Grazing ruminant

DEXTERITY 2D

Running 4D

PERCEPTION 4D

STRENGTH 4D

Move: 11

Size: 1.5 meters at the shoulder

Orneriness: 3D



Christina Wald

Capsule: Zeebucks are knobby boned ruminants that feed off the fungal plains on Yvara. These three-eyed, four-legged animals have tan to cinnamon-brown fur, and are always on the move. These animals often gorge on the fungus as much as possible when predators aren't around. Proteins and essential nutrients that the zeebuck can't process immediately are diverted to tubular sacks that grow down the length of the zeebuck's necks. These tubular sacks are eaten by the young when food is scarce, or re-assimilated into the zeebuck after a certain period of time. While the Yvara do not hunt, they do occasionally tame zeebucks, and harvest the protein sacks.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Scrubbing the engines clear of the various deposits gathered from the Rift is a matter of taking the engines off-line. Since this is most likely the first time the *FarStar* has put down in quite some time, the gamemaster may play up the uncertain landing gear and landing procedure angle for some color.

The hundreds of engine access hatches will have to be opened, and methodically scrubbed by both organic and droid technicians. Lofryyhn

will want to oversee this procedure personally. Besides the engines, the sensor dishes and particle shield generators will also need some adjustments.

These require Moderate to Difficult *capital ship repair rolls*. Consider Lofryyhn to be commanding, and he can have up to five techs coordinating at a time. While failures at these rolls are not crucially important at the moment, the gamemaster should note which roles were failed, and consider having a malfunction in one of these systems in the future. It can be a complication during combat, or could even spark an adventure.

MAINTAINING ORBIT

Captain Adrimetrum may opt to place a contingent of Defenders or X-wings in orbit, depending on the general paranoia level of the crew. Conversely, Lieutenant Gorjaye may order her pilots to practice maneuvers in orbit. The moon is uninhabited, and the pilots could practice their starship weapons skills by performing strafing runs on specific craters at varying distances. Whether or not there are pilots in orbit plays a role in Episode Three.

GAMEMASTER NOTES: HANDLING CHANGING CHARACTERS

The characters of Gunthar and Qesya Vth'naar deserve special mention in this adventure, and playing their roles will require extra effort from both players and gamemasters. The players of these roles should be taken aside before play begins, and the gamemaster should explain the change each character will undergo.

In order to keep suspense and the sense of surprise to a maximum, no one but the gamemasters, and the specific players should be informed of the following.

In short, Gunthar is a highly placed Yvarema among his people, and is gaining more intelligence and personality as he re-immersed into his hive-mind culture. Qesya is pregnant, and can no longer hold her fetus. She will give birth in this adventure.

After the *FarStar* sets down, and the diplomatic team sets out, cut to them and read the following aloud:

A cool wind blows off the curving plains, and an early morning mist clings to the fungus growing like strings of flexor cord stretched taut over the landscape. A rocky mesa is off about a kilometer to the south, and in the morning chill, steam can be seen escaping from carved notches along the mesa's side. Gunthar steps forward, and points to a patch where the normally striated fungus whirls into a circular shape, and terminates in a dark opening of brick-red dirt. A now-familiar sweet odor comes from the opening. Gunthar looks back at the Captain, and says, "The Majjvara's emissary has returned, and I must report to my monarch." He then steps down the incline leading to underground.

EPISODE TWO: HOMECOMING

Gunthar will lead the *FarStar* diplomatic mission to the Yvarema's underground warrens. Read aloud:

Inside the carved passageway leading underground, the sweet smell mixes into an ever-present haze. Gunthar steps down the flat steps, into an anteroom of sorts. Interspersed with the packed dirt and clay of the walls are metal braces with lighting sources, a strange mixture of high and low technology. From the shadows, three aliens approach, looking like smaller,

ROLEPLAYING TIPS: PLAYING GUNT HAR

Gunthar is a royal explorer, a member of an elite class of Yvarema meant to pilot their scout vessels into the Rift. When he was captured by slavers on his maiden run, his crew was killed. Cut off from the hive-mind, his intelligence suffered greatly.

Since returning home, his intelligence has been returned, as well as a great deal of personality. Gunthar is the equivalent of nobility, and speaks in refined tones, quoting ancient Yvarema texts. The player should be encouraged to roleplay this change as much as possible, inventing new but plausible Yvarema cultural terms when he or she sees fit (the "Horns of Waryl" and the "seas of mists" are examples).

All Yvarema are completely loyal to their Majjvara. While not mindless, they do realize it is in their best interest to support their monarch, and have never had reason to refuse her. Gunthar is unswervingly loyal, and will want to report to her and complete his mission. Gunthar views his time imprisoned on Kal'Shebbol and his voyages with the *FarStar* simply as an extension of his mission to explore the unknown. Gunthar's first order of business is to report to the Majjvara. This is his single, over-riding goal.

Gunthar's attributes and skills increase to the following. If the player controlling Gunthar has advanced the character with new skills, they are replaced by the higher die code, not added on.

■ Gunthar (New attribute profile)

DEXTERITY 4D

Melee combat 6D+2, thrown weapons 5D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Languages 5D+1, survival 4D+2, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 2D

Archaic starship piloting: Yvarema explorer craft 5D+2, astrogation 5D,

PERCEPTION 3D

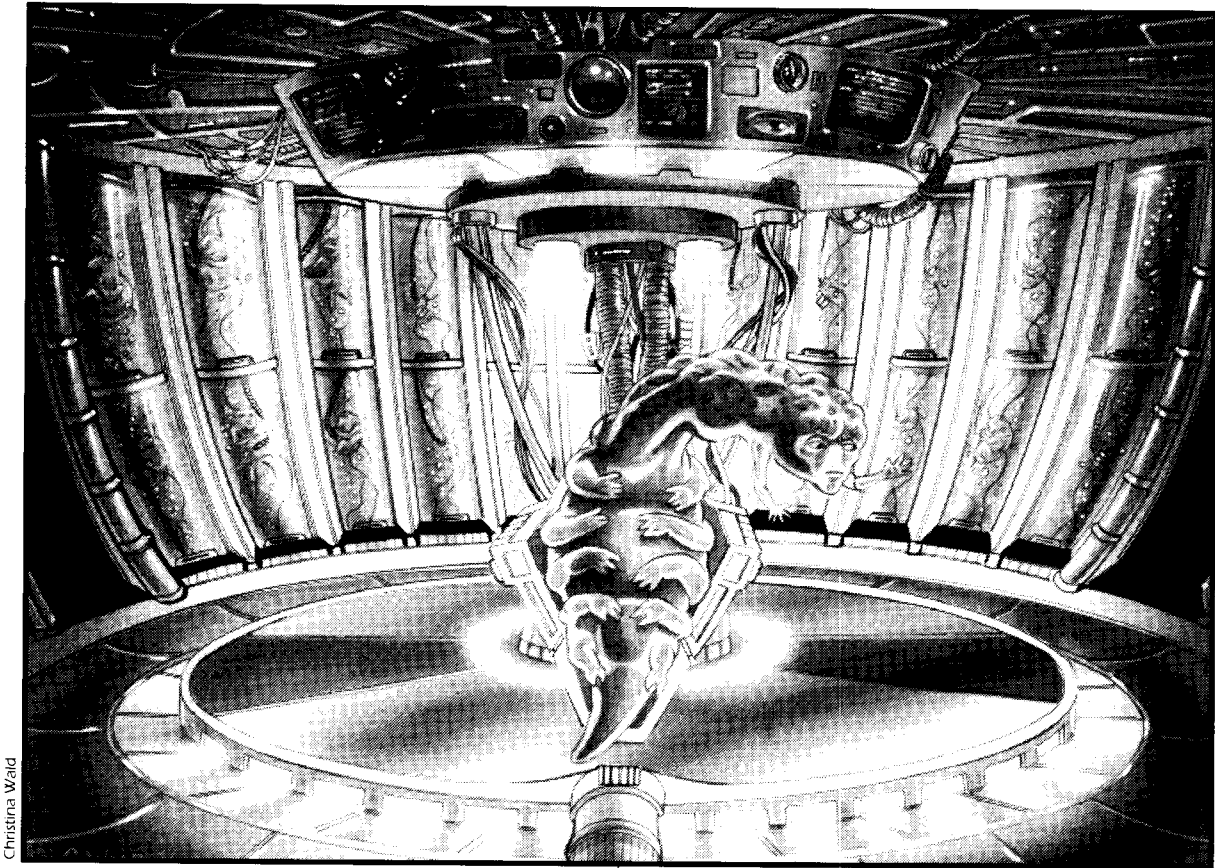
STRENGTH 4D+2

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

TECHNICAL 1D+1

Move: 9

thinner versions of Gunthar but with hunched backs. They peer around the corner curiously, and when their eyes lock on Gunthar, they collectively jump and run towards the long-lost alien. "Gunthar!" they shout, clearly pleased to see the burly alien.



Christina Wald

Gunthar explains (his player is free to know) that these are Yvarema explorer-scouts, patrolling the outskirts of the hive for any intruding predators. These scouts are friendly and curious about the off-worlders, and always touch them while talking to them. At this point, their language is a mixture of their undeveloped native tongue, and some Basic that they've already picked up from Gunthar.

This may cause some confusion at first, since the *FarStar* crew's lack of empathy makes the Yvarema assume they are just uncommunicative. As Gunthar explains that they do not communicate the same way the Yvarema do, the scouts (and others) do their best to "tone down" their conversations so that the off-worlders can follow along.

Gunthar leads the way to the Majjvara's court. As he passes by different alcoves and chambers, more and more Yvarema learn of his return and rejoice. They drop their current task, and join a growing crowd cheering their lost explorer's return.

MEETING THE MAJJVARA

Read aloud:

After what seems to be an unending throng of cheering Yvarema, the crowds thin as Gunthar's stride quickens. An intricately carved heavy door slides open, revealing a huge, dimly lit interior. Lining the walls of the oval chamber are hundreds of incubation cubicles, filled with green-lit protein baths. Floating inside the baths, collected in different groups, are a variety of Yvarema fetuses. Some are nearly full-grown, while others are too tiny to be seen. A web-work of cables and tubes line the spaces between the cubicles, leading to a huge silver ring lined with monitors and status screens. From this ring, drops a massive trunk of cables that feeds into the back of a huge throne.

In that throne is the Majjvara. An immense being that is anything but humanoid. A worm-like fluke has replaced legs, but the grotesque form tapers off to a regal, angular face of concerned composure. A smile has crept across the lips of the Majjvara's face. "Gunthar, my child, welcome. Please, report."

Gunthar steps forward and touches his hand to one of the Majjvara's arm. The chamber is absolutely silent, but characters making a Difficult *Perception* check will spot familiar scenes playing on the monitors near the room's ceiling. These scenes include gladiatorial combat which Sarne has forced Gunthar to partake in, and scenes from the *FarStar's* adventures involving Gunthar. Once Gunthar has finished reporting to Majjvara, he will inform Captain Adrimetrum that his leader is ready to talk.

The results of parleying with the Majjvara are entirely dependent on what the players ask for. The Majjvara is definitely the most capable Yvarema of talking lucidly with off-worlders, and she will express her hive's gratitude for returning Gunthar. If Adrimetrum asks for food or water, the Majjvara will explain that they have little to spare. Because the needs of the hive are known exactly, the efficient Yvarema rarely keep surplus food or water in the caves. The Majjvara will gladly assign explorers to accompany any New Republic teams to gather food and water from the wilderness. These scenes are similar to those described in Episode One, though with additional Yvarema assistance, the foraging operation should proceed much more quickly.

If the players ask for medical supplies, the Yvarema will spare their equivalent of medpacs. The Yvarema have no weapons beyond clubs or staves. As for starship technology, the Majjvara will agree to provide whatever the *FarStar* needs, keeping in mind that the Yvarema fleet have few weapons, and most of their technology is based on fluidics, not the latest New Republic hardware.

The Majjvara now knows about Sarne and the Imperials, since Gunthar has given her this information. Now that she is familiar with Sarne and his atrocities, the Majjvara will ally herself, in principle, to the New Republic. She stresses that they are a peaceful people and have no warriors. Furthermore, because of their hive mind, the Yvarema do not like leaving the confines of their caves. If asked, she will report that her explorer-scouts have spotted starship traffic that matches the description of Imperial ships (mostly *Carrack*-class cruisers and *Strike*-class cruisers) but none of these ships have bothered the Yvarema.

Remember that when playing the Majjvara, she can unequivocally speak for her people, as she knows what they are all feeling. She knows Gunthar's mind, so she knows to respect Adrimetrum and her officers. She will distrust any individual who may have mistreated Gunthar, but as a whole, she respects the New Republic. Treat her as a concerned mother of a huge family.

■ Majjvara

Type: Alien leader

DEXTERITY 1D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Alien species 5D, cultures 5D+2, intimidation 4D+1, languages 5D+2

MECHANICAL 1D

PERCEPTION 5D

Bargain 7D, command: Yvarema 8D+2, investigation 6D, persuasion 6D+2

STRENGTH 3D

TECHNICAL 3D

Special Abilities:

Hive intelligence: The Majjvara is the nexus of the Yvarema hive-mind. As a result, she may have access to any skill that any Yvarema has. For instance, she may use a lore-gatherer's *languages* skill in place of her own. While she may use *Knowledge* skills as her own, she may also see and understand other skills like *melee combat*, *first aid*, or *archaic starship piloting*. While she cannot actually perform these skills, she does understand them.

Pheromonic and empathic link: The bond of the Yvarema hive-mind is based partly on pheromonic communication, and partly on some as-yet unexplored empathy. The Majjvara can sense the general emotional state of other non-Yvarema by making a Moderate *Perception* check, which may be modified depending on the intensity of the emotion. The Majjvara receives a bonus +1D to *Perception* to make this check.

Helpless: The Majjvara cannot move on her own power, and must be fed and tended to by workers. Physically, she is defenseless, and can only use her loyal underlings to protect her.

Force Points: 3

Character Points: 12

Move: 0

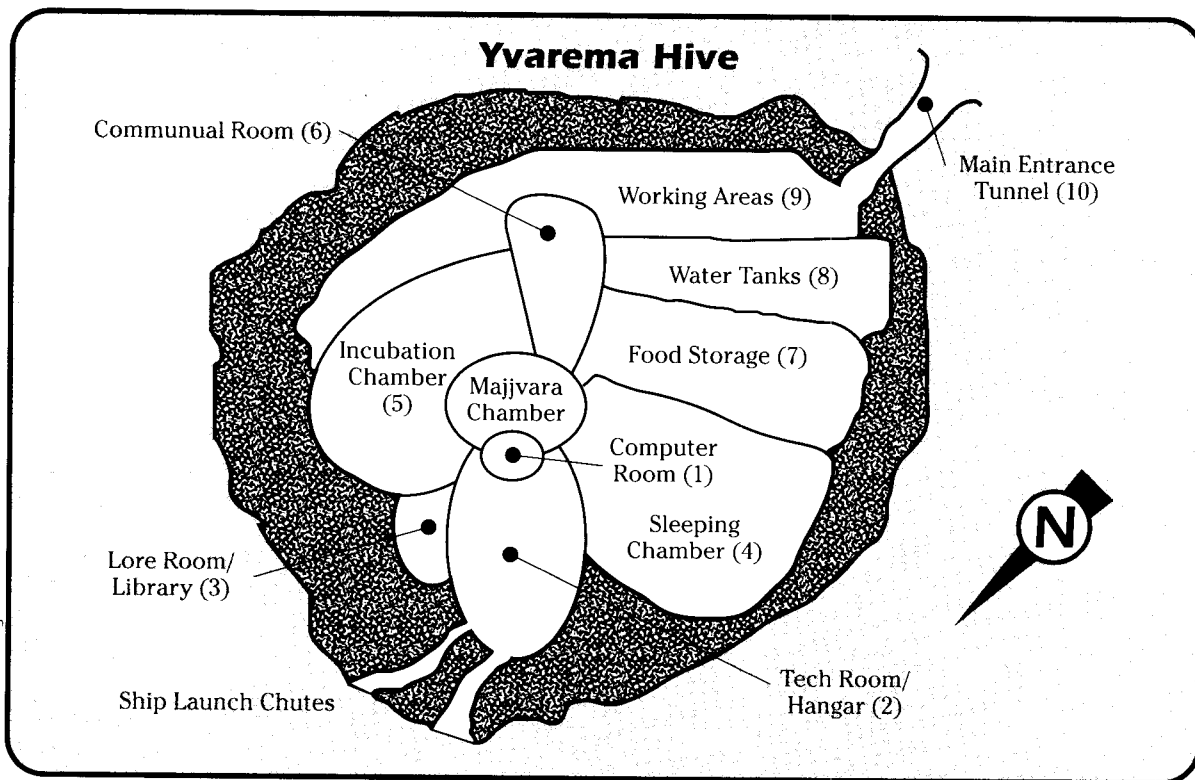
Equipment: The Majjvara has access to anything possessed by any Yvarema.

Capsule: In ancient days before the Yvarema developed technology, the Majjvara would live in a protected area of the hive, laying eggs and creating the various classes. Now, the egg-laying process has been eliminated, and the massive Majjvara instead produces embryonic cells that are developed in scientifically-advanced incubator-chambers. The elimination of egg-laying has greatly increased the Majjvara's lifespan.

This current Majjvara is nearing the end of her 400-year lifespan, and is busily preparing a new Majjvara egg to replace her. The Majjvara has the ability to introduce new classes of Yvarema, but generally avoids doing this as Yvarema society is at a desirable, self-sufficient state, and the production of new classes is very taxing to her.

HAVEN

The following descriptions are keyed to the accompanying map. Feel free to let the team explore, and let Captain Adrimetrum allow a short shore leave for the crew of the *FarStar*. Now that friendly relations have been established with the Yvarema, let the players take out their reserve players and have some relaxation. Encounter descriptions are provided throughout.



1. Computer room. The Yvarema computer system is very primitive by New Republic standards. Old magnetic-based storage drums are used to handle information, and these computers primarily monitor and maintain the life support systems located throughout the hives. The sensor and diagnostic stations found in the tech room and hangar are tied into the central computer. It should be noted that all Yvarema read-out screens are two-dimensional video-terminals. Yvarema have never developed holographic technology.

2. Tech room and hangar. Yvarema technology is simple, and their tech room has little more than the sensor ties and life support systems of the hive. Replacement parts for the Yvarema agricultural chambers and other tools are also found in storage pods in this massive room.

The hangar takes up much of the open space, with launch chutes reaching out to the surface of the mesa. These chutes handle smaller starships, the largest being able to handle a vessel several meters short of a corvette. Yvarema vessels use fluidics instead of the standard technology found on ships throughout the galaxy. Fluidics are a computer control system that uses microvalves and pipes of pressurized liquids and gases. While incredibly inefficient, and delicate, fluidics cannot be overcome by the electronic interference that can wreak havoc on unshielded circuitry.

The hangar bay actually stretches down deep into the mesa, and deep underground. Although only a dozen small scout ships are visible in the bay, the Yvarema actually have many more, which they do not let onto. Steam-driven catapults launch the scout ships from the hangar, as the Yvarema have no repulsorlift technology.

Replacement parts: If the *FarStar* needs replacement parts either during or after this adventure, the Yvarema can spare some of their technology. It takes a Difficult *capital starship repair* roll to incorporate the technology. Because of the space restrictions of fluidic technology, the *FarStar* can only have up to 1D less of its normal stats replaced, or up to 2 of its normal space units if the drives need refurbishing. This new technology is one difficulty level higher to maintain, but these systems cannot be disabled with ion weapons or the energy discharges of the Rift. (However, they can be punctured or burst if penetrated by a solid object or blaster bolt.)

3. Lore room. Stone-wrought and wooden cases hold dozens and dozens of scrolls and tablets of ancient Yvarema texts. Gamemasters may want to reveal little-known facts about the Rift (as outlined in the Introduction chapter) through this library, keeping in mind that Yvarema have not traveled very far. The lore room is tended to by scholars.

Item: There is a spent piece of DarkStryder

technology located in the library. Appearing as a dull-gray cube of smooth metal, the piece has no energy in it. It requires a Moderate *search* total to spot. If asked, the Yvarema explain they found it in the Rift on their first exploratory voyage. They do not know of its power, and will not reveal that it is spent. If Loh'khar is present, he will want the piece, but the Yvarema will not want to part with it. Only the trading of some impressive technology (no weapons) will stir the Yvarema into parting with the piece, but only with a Difficult *persuasion* or *bargain* roll.

4. Sleeping chambers. There are 300 Yvarema asleep in here at any given time. Shifts change every fifteen hours. Yvarema seem to have no concept of day/night cycles outside of their shifts. At the rear of this chamber is the medical center. Specialized workers and lore-gatherers treat the wounded, and the chamber features a unique pheromonic dampening field that keeps the pain receptors from a wounded Yvarema to spill over to the medics. The medics always, in practice, outnumber the patients, so that they can empathically calm the wounded.

5. Incubation Chamber. Extending past the Majjvara's chamber are hundreds of protein-bath filled coffins with fetal Yvarema. These are tended by a special class of workers, and this area is off-limits to the players.

6. Communal chambers. For characters leaving the *FarStar* for some free time and recreation, this is the place to go. While Yvarema lacks posh nightclubs or glitzy casinos, the communal chamber is still a fun place to relax and have a game or two of sabacc. The Yvarema use this room for conversation, socializing, sharing of hobbies, and physical contests. Mental contests (such as trivia games) are useless in a hive-mind culture, but Yvarema are intrigued if any players break out sabacc decks.

Interaction: The communal chambers offer a great chance to test your players' roleplaying abilities. Remember, the Yvarema are absolutely fascinated by the newcomers, and do not understand such concepts as privacy and secrecy. They will ask awkward questions, especially to characters who are trying to be deceptive since they do not recognize this state of mind. If players try to play sabacc, the Yvarema practically line up to join in. Since the culture has a minimal competitive streak, this should be played for laughs. The concept of keeping a hand secret is completely alien.

Conversely, the Yvarema invite players into their physical competitions, requiring opposed tests of *Strength*, *lifting*, *running*, *dodge*, or whatever else the gamemaster envisions.

7. Food storage. A huge indoor field of the rope-like fungus plants grows in this chamber, in a woven criss-cross pattern. A mix of workers and clock-work droids tend these growths. The Yvarema have no food to spare from these stores, since they grow only what they need, but they will allow scouts to accompany player characters out foraging in the wilderness, as described in Episode One.

8. Water tanks. A huge indoor tank provides water for the Yvarema, and the food storage chamber. The Yvarema do not have water to spare, but they will accompany any players acquiring water from the lakes.

9. Working area. The start of underground mines for workers pulling ores out of the crust are found in these zigzagging chambers. The gamemaster can stage an accident to bring characters to the rescue of Yvarema workers, and witness first-hand the perils of being a hive-mind as several Yvarema are incapacitated with pain.

10. Entrance tunnel. A carved tunnel leads to the surface, and this was how the player characters entered. A few friendly zeebucks wander around the tunnels, looking for a few scraps of food. The Yvarema do not have the hunting instinct to chase off the beasts, and let them be as

PLAYING OFF PARANGIA

The first half of this adventure may throw players off balance, particularly since their last few adventures have been on the grim side. These opening episodes stress roleplaying over combat, and represent a relaxing reprise for the players.

Of course, they're going to be extremely suspicious. And as gamemaster, you should take advantage of this.

For instance, the spent DarkStryder piece in the scroll room is actually not part of any upcoming event in the campaign, but if players are overly curious about it, play it up. Likewise, if they are uncomfortable with the inquisitive nature of the Yvarema, deluge them with more questions. Given the number of characters with secrets aboard the *FarStar*, this will allow them to stretch their roleplaying as they try to avoid the questions.

If the players are lulled into a sense of false security, or are getting bored interacting with the Yvarema, cut to hunting-type scenes in Episode One, or to the scuffle aboard the *FarStar* on page 81 ("Captive Bloodline").



Christina Wald

long as they do not wander into the interior chambers.

CREATURE IN THE DARK

The action then cuts to a section of the *FarStar*, in a darkened stretch of corridor next to the living compartments on deck two. Play this up similar to a horror movie, where odd sounds, growling and scratching, are coming out of darkened corners. Use reserve characters to play this scene. Characters investigating the scene will be attacked by an enraged Qesya Vth'naar.

Explain to Qesya's player that she does not want to kill any of her companions, but rather cannot really control her actions. Her immediate goal is to be left alone, and will attack anyone who comes near her. Also explain to Qesya's player that her life shouldn't be threatened, but that is ultimately up to the other characters. Ideally, the other characters should stun Qesya into unconsciousness.

CAPTIVE BLOODLINE

This information is for the gamemaster and Qesya's player. Qesya and her brother Quyik were not the only Vth'naars present in Moff Sarne's gladiator pits. There was another Sludir, Rokarn Vth'naar, her mate. Sarne had often toyed with the idea of pitting two Sludir against one another. His first "experimenting" resulted in Rokarn and Quyik fighting one another. Since Qesya was already pregnant, Rokarn knew his bloodline would be continued. He spared Quyik, hoping that some day he too would have an heir. Quyik was forced to kill his brother-in-law. Quyik was freed from his guilt when Qesya was forced to kill him.

The Sludir, a species to which violence is as an everyday event, have developed an interesting gestation period. Female Sludir in the final stages of their pregnancy can keep their fetuses in a form of "stasis," where its life-cycles are reduced to near zero, but enough of the mother's nutrients and blood keep the developing Sludir brain alive. When a relative peace is established, and it is safe to give birth, the Sludir mother can then revive her fetus.

The fetus can only remain in "stasis" for about a year. After that, the fetus automatically removes itself from stasis, and begins developing normally. If not, the fetus would die in its protected state. A short time later, the Sludir gives birth. Qesya's child actually came out of stasis about a week ago, and now she must give birth.

Qesya's current enraged state precludes her from using Character or Force Points in combat.

IN THE MEDICAL CHAMBERS

After she is stunned, Qesya should be taken immediately to the medical center. If none of the players think of it, have the Captain or closest officer order it. If the Yvarema, especially Gunthar, learn of this, they will volunteer their medical center found in the sleeping chamber.

The *FarStar's* medical officer, or the Yvarema medic, determines, on a Moderate *first aid* or Very Easy *medicine* roll that Qesya is pregnant, and about to give birth!

EPISODE THREE: IN THE BALANCE

THE QEKTOH CONFEDERATION ARRIVES

Suddenly, Captain Adrimetrum and the command team receive the following comm-call. If

the X-wings are in orbit, they report the following, so paraphrase the below text to make it fit.

“Captain, this is Lt. Thyte, (or other officer if Thyte is off the ship). We’re picking up a vessel, pretty big one too, coming out of lightspeed in the system. It could be Imperial, it’s a small cruiser. Wait, I’m getting pretty strange energy readings. They’re consistent with the readings we picked up near Qu’mock. Captain, it looks like the Qektoth Confederation is back.”

The Qektoth have longed to find Yvara, as part of dream of creating a human hive mind. By following the *FarStar*, the Confederation has found it. They plan to enslave the Yvarema and perform experiments. If the Qektoth ship escapes with the coordinates of Yvara, the entire species is doomed. If none of the players realize this fact, have Gunthar or the Majjvara explain this to them.

THE BATTLE

The Qektoth force consists of a single biotechnologically modified strike cruiser, *The Heart of Flesh*, which carries five modified Zebra-class fighters. *The Heart of Flesh* plans to do a high orbit sensor scan of the world, and then head to a “clear” spot so it can jump to hyperspace, and return to the rest of the Confederation.

Once the Qektoth find the *FarStar* on the surface, it will send the fighters to do a quick strafing run (one shot each), since it doesn’t want to risk their capital ship weapons damaging the hive. If the X-wings are in orbit, the Qektoth will skip the

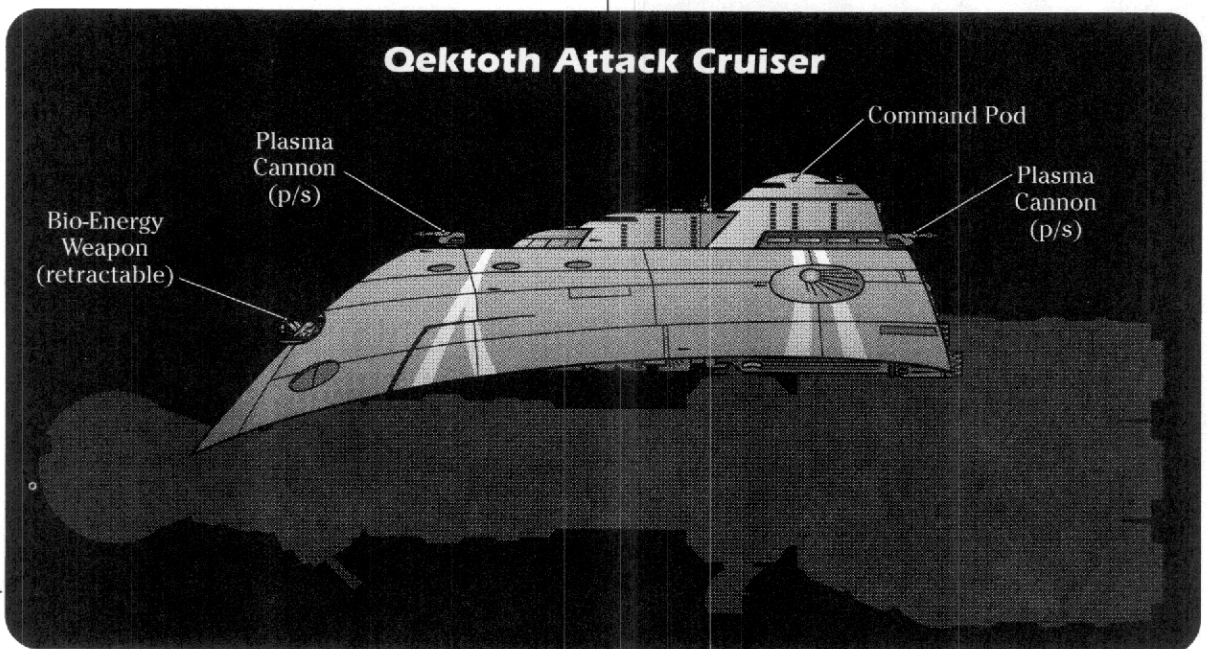
strafing run, but scramble the Zebras to cover *The Heart of Flesh’s* retreat.

The *FarStar* will require rushed prepping to get it space worthy in time. A Difficult *command* roll will get the ship ready in five rounds. A Moderate *command* roll will get the ship airborne in ten rounds, while an Easy roll results in a wait of fifteen rounds. Now might be a good time to pull in any complications suffered during the refurbishing of the *FarStar’s* systems. While the *FarStar* is on the surface, X-wings and Defenders are going to have to provide cover.

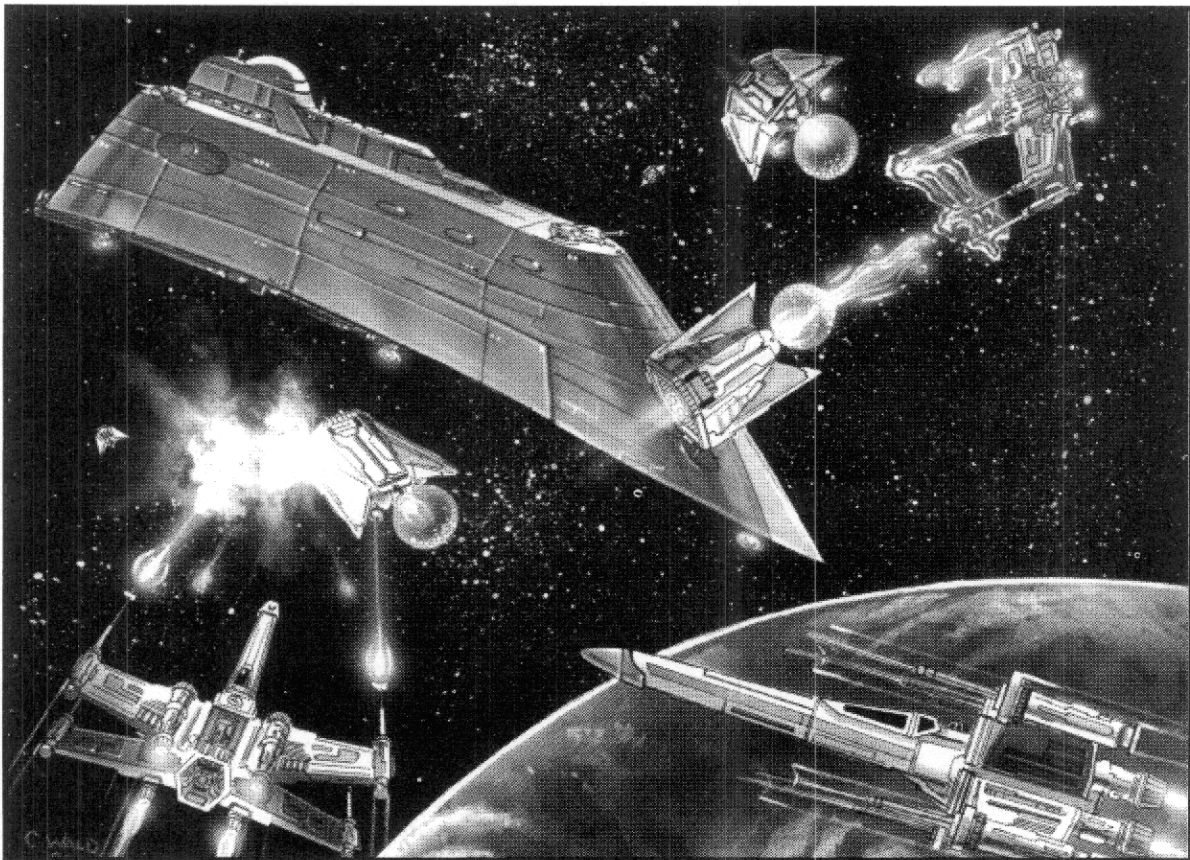
As a safety precaution, the characters may want to jam the Qektoth Confederation’s communications. This requires an Easy *communications* roll (the Rift already hampers long-range subspace electronic communications), but also means that no coordinated attacks between the *FarStar* and its starfighters are possible.

As long as the Zebra fighters are engaged, the cruiser will not take more than two moves per round. The Qektoth Confederation does not want to leave their valuable technology stranded behind. If all Zebra fighters are destroyed, then the ship will make a run to clear space, making up to four moves per round.

The clear spot is about 80–100 units away from the planet (varying for dramatic effect). The *FarStar* and other ships can use the charged clouds of the Kathol Rift for cover, by making Difficult *piloting* rolls as part of their movement. Failed rolls mean the ship takes 1D–6D (roll a die) ionization damage from the Rift. Success means that the ships receives 1D–6D (roll a die) cover



Stephen Crane



Christina Wald

from the gases. Remember that Yvarema ships and fluidic systems do not suffer ionization damage, though fluidic systems may be punctured or ruptured in combat.

Gamemasters may want to emphasize the drama of the last episode by cutting back to the medical chamber where Qesya is giving birth during the battle. If it is aboard the *FarStar*, this can be particularly effective, calling for *medicine* and *stamina* rolls. Keep track of these rolls, so the players think they are important, even though Qesya's labor should go smoothly.

■ The Heart of Flesh

- Craft:** Qektoth Attack Cruiser
- Type:** Modified strike cruiser (24)
- Scale:** Capital
- Length:** 105 meters
- Crew:** 38, gunners: 10, skeleton 6/+10
- Crew Skill:** Capital ship gunnery 4D+2, Capital ship piloting 5D, capital ship shields 4D+2
- Passengers:** 50
- Cargo Capacity:** 100 metric tons
- Consumables:** 1 year
- Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x3
- Hyperdrive Backup:** x12
- Nav Computer:** Yes
- Maneuverability:** 1D
- Space:** 3
- Atmosphere:** 260; 750 kmh

- Hull:** 4D+2
- Shields:** 2D+2 (can only cover two arcs at a time)
- Sensors:**
 - Passive:* 45/2D
 - Scan:* 55/2D+1
 - Search:* 100/2D+2
 - Focus:* 4/3D+2

Weapons:

Four Plasma Cannons

- Fire Arc:* Turret
- Crew:* 1
- Scale:* Starfighter
- Skill:* Starship gunnery
- Fire Control:* 2D+2
- Space Range:* 1-7/20/35
- Atmosphere Range:* 100-700/2/3.5 km
- Damage:* 5D (not affected by shields)

Bio-energy array

- Fire Arc:* Forward
- Crew:* 6
- Skill:* Capital ship gunnery
- Fire Rate:* 1/3
- Fire Control:* 1D+1
- Space Range:* 1-30/55/75
- Atmosphere Range:* 2-60/110/150 km
- Damage:* 4D+1 (not affected by shields)

Capsule: *The Heart of Flesh* was designed at the same time as the *Scourge*, the strike cruiser the *FarStar* faced at Qu'mock. While the *Scourge* was the first vessel to be completed, *The Heart of Flesh* was being perfected in a hidden facility within the Rift. *The Heart of Flesh* features the same plasma cannon and bio-energy weapons as the *Scourge*. Like the

Scourge, these weapons pass through shields without loss of power, and these weapons cannot sustain ionization damage as their power systems are independent of the ship's reactor. The shields of *The Heart of Flesh* are limited in that they can only be directed in two arcs at a time.

■ Qektoth Confederation Starfighter

Craft: Qektoth starfighter
Type: Modified Zebra starfighter
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 12.3 meters
Skill: Starfighter piloting: Zebra
Crew: 1
Crew Skill: Starfighter piloting 5D, starship gunnery 5D+2
Cargo Capacity: 65 kilograms
Consumables: 1 day
Maneuverability: 2D
Space: 7
Atmosphere: 350;1,000 kmh
Hull: 2D
Shields: 1D
Sensors:
Passive: 15/0D
Scan: 25/1D+1
Search: 45/2D
Focus: 3/2D+2

Weapons:

Two Laser Cannons (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 1D
Space Range: 1-5/10/17
Atmosphere Range: 100-500/1/1.7 km
Damage: 5D

THE QEKTOTH DREAM

The Confederation has changed a great deal in the last 24 years, from an innocuous group of scientists disparaging inorganic tech to a dangerous group of radicals developing unwholesome biological weapons. One of the driving goals of its current leaders deals with the human brain. This group believes that reliance on technology has sapped the human intellect, and stagnated human evolution. Why else, after over 25,000 years of galactic civilization has the human changed so little? Where is the promised enlightenment, the opening and expanding of the human's brain power? The Qektoth Confederation provided their own answer, foreseeing a human future dominated by a hive-mind culture. Their experiments with insectoid hive-cultures like the Flakax and the Fefze (30) failed to translate to a human analogue. When they first saw bio-specs of Gunthar's people, the Qektoth realized the potential of a hive intelligence. That it was a warm-blooded organic species that used this form of intelligence made the discovery all the more profound. The Confederation wants to carve a new human order, with the Confederation serving as the center of the hive.

Bio-Plasmatic gel launcher

Fire Arc: Front
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 1D
Space Range: 1-3/6/10
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/600/1 km
Damage: 5D (see game notes)

Capsule: These *Zebra*-class starfighters feature a new weapon designed by the Qektoth Confederation. Each fighter carries three torpedoes armed with a bio-plasmatic gel. This gel clings to the hull of a starship, and continues burning until it freezes in space, or burns off in an atmosphere. While stuck to a ship, the gel does 5D damage for the first round, and 1D less damage each additional round. Resourceful pilots can remodulate their ship's particle shields to "buck" the gel off the ship. This requires a Moderate starship shields roll, during which the vessel's particle shields are down. While the gel does no damage that round, any hits sustained are rolled against a hull -2D for the lack of shields.

■ Yvarema scout ship

Craft: Royal Yvarema Scout ship
Type: Medium-range exploration craft
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 20 meters
Skill: Archaic starship piloting: Yvarema scout ship
Crew: 2
Crew Skill: Archaic starship piloting 5D, astrogation 4D, starship shields 4D+1
Passengers: 3
Cargo Capacity: 20 metric tons
Consumables: 1 month
Cost: Not available for sale
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x4
Nav Computer: Yes, limited to three jumps
Maneuverability: 1D
Space: 5
Atmosphere: 295;800 kmh
Hull: 2D+2
Shields: 1D
Sensors:
Passive: 25/0D
Scan: 35/1D
Search: 50/2D+1
Focus: 3/3D

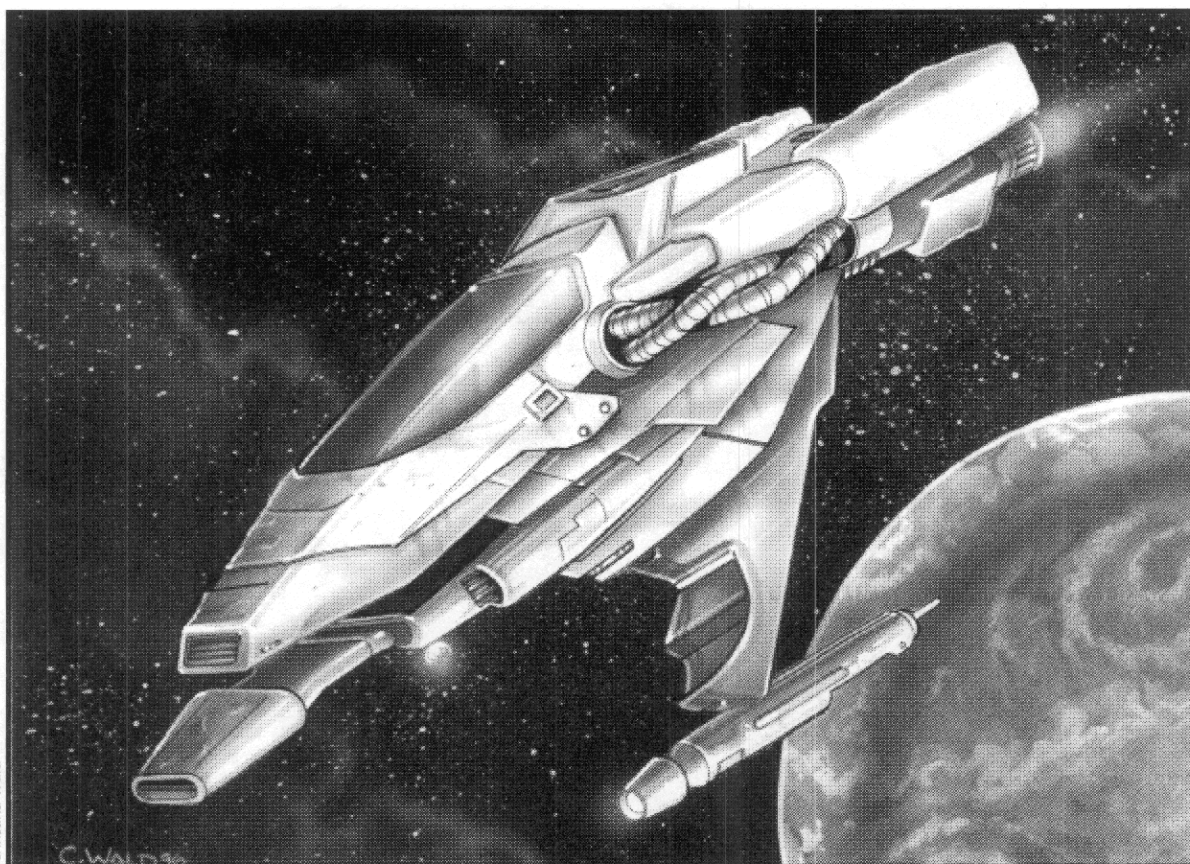
Weapons:

Navigational Deflector

Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1
Skill: Starship gunnery
Space Range: 1-3/8/15
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/800/1.5 km
Damage: 2D

Capsule: The Yvarema ships are primitive by galactic standards, but serve the small alien fleet well in their exploration of their small patch of space. While unarmed, the Yvarema feature a powerful navigation deflector meant to clear a path in the dust and gas-shrouded Rift. In a pinch, these deflectors can be used as make-shift weapons, but are limited in range and not very effective. The Yvarema ship feature fluidics based control systems, meaning that they are immune to ionization damage.

Christina Waid



ALTERNATE ENDING, SAVING YVARA

It is imperative that Yvara be saved, since it will play a role in future DarkStryder adventures. If the players fail to stop *The Heart of Flesh*, the gamemaster can invoke “script immunity” to save the day. An Aing-Tii vessel appears at the last moment and destroys the Qektoth ships. It is a plausible conclusion, given the area, and the Qektoth Confederation’s intentions. The Character Point rewards given at the end of the adventure should be lowered if the gamemaster had to step in to save the day.

EPILOGUE: A NEW BEGINNING

Any damage sustained by the New Republic ships can be repaired by Yvarema mechanics, keeping in mind the limitations of fluidic-based technology.

Qesya gives birth to a large, 40-kilogram baby boy. Players are free to name the child. Now that she is a mother, Qesya will not want to continue on the dangerous trip through the Rift. She will instead stay on Yvara, raising her young.

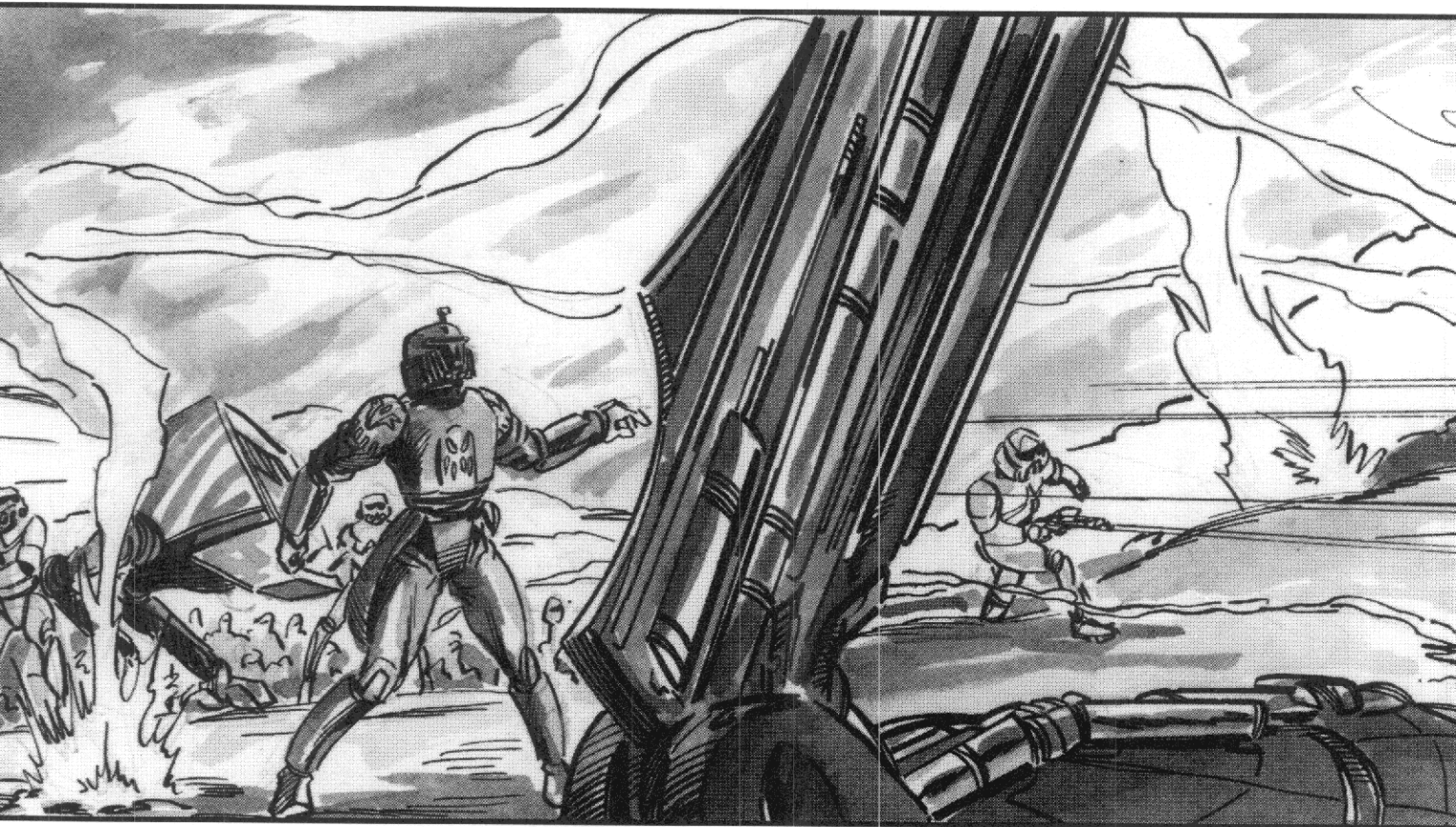
Gunthar, likewise, will want to stay now that he has found home. He may feel guilty for neglecting Qesya during all his excitement. He suggests to the Majjvara that she consider creating a warrior class to protect the Yvarema, and Qesya agrees to teach these people combat skills.

Shortly after the battle, if the *FarStar* stays around long enough, the Majjvara produces a new warrior class, looking like a cross of Gunthar and Qesya. In honor of the Republic, the Majjvara names this new class the *FarStar* warriors. This new class shortens the Majjvara’s life, and she may not be around the next time the players visit Yvara.

Any unfinished business on Yvara may be wrapped up at the gamemaster’s discretion, but Captain Adrimetrum is eager to continue their mission.

REWARDS

Each character should receive two to four Character Points. One or two additional points may be in order for heroic actions during the final battle, or exceptional roleplaying while interacting with the Yvarema. If the Yvara had to be rescued by the timely intervention of the Aing-Tii, lower the Character Point total by one to two points.



SHOWDOWN

The planet looked like a sphere of fire. Though it was capable of supporting life, it certainly didn't look very hospitable; the planet's violent, turbulent appearance earned it the nickname "Demongate" from the *FarStar's* sensor operators.

"Will you *stop* that!" Thyte growled. Loh'khar had been tapping his spike-like nails against the top of the comm station for the past ten minutes, and the sharp, rhythmic clicking was driving Thyte crazy.

Loh'khar stopped, flashing Thyte a needle-toothed smile. "I am sorry, Lieutenant. I did not mean to disturb your *important* work."

Flexing the fingers of his good hand, Lieutenant Thyte wondered how long it would take to strangle the Twi'lek. The sarcasm in Loh'khar's voice was too thick to miss. For some reason, Loh'khar had been singling Thyte out for verbal abuse and sarcastic remarks for

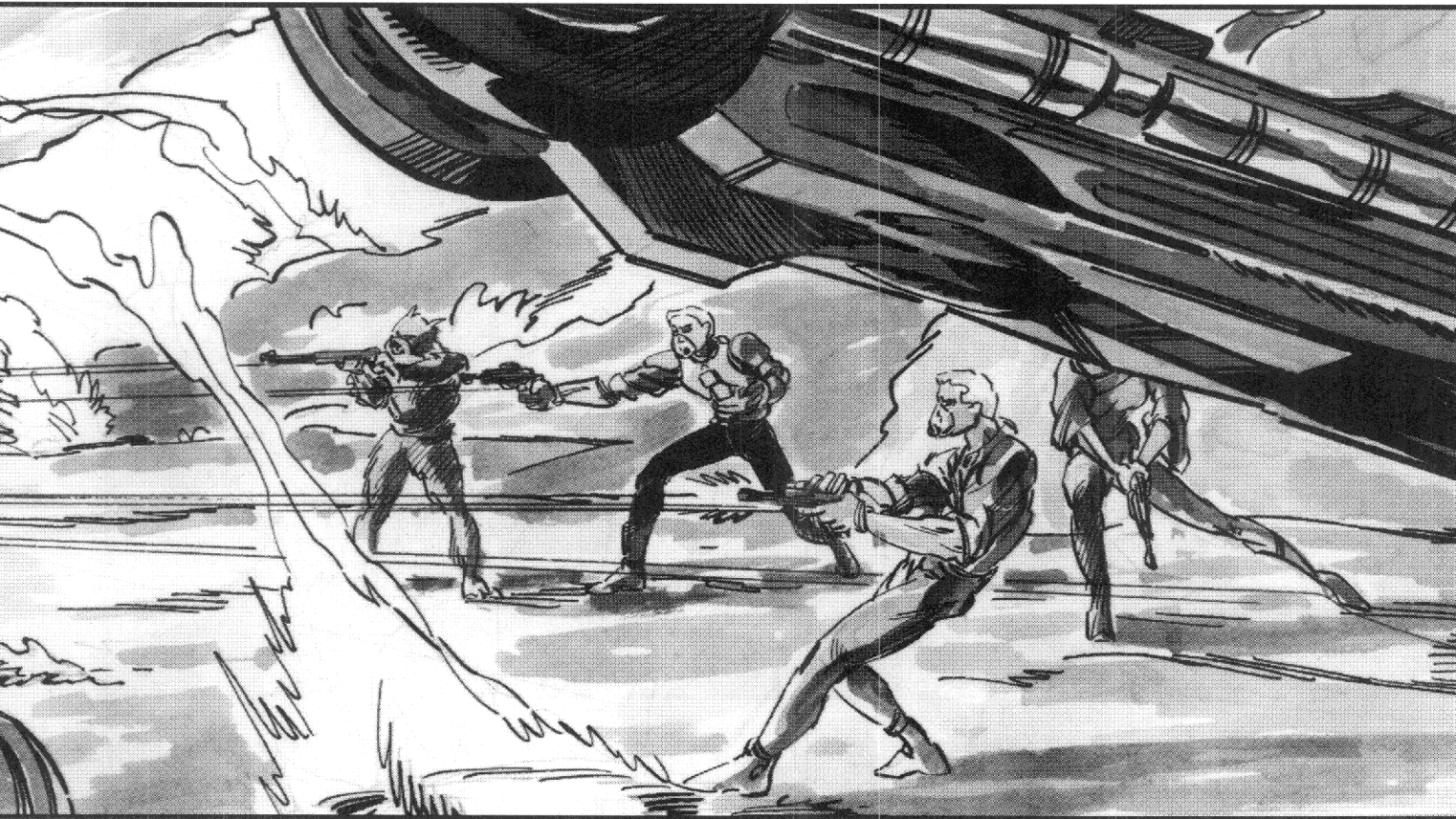
days. It was almost as if the Twi'lek *wanted* Thyte to slug him.

Loh'khar slipped around to Thyte's other side. "Lieutenant," he said, condescendingly. "You are obviously overworked. Why don't you return to your quarters while I finish up the diagnostics?"

When Thyte didn't answer, Loh'khar walked around the comm station to put himself directly opposite the man. He crouched to bring his pale, knobbed head into Thyte's line of sight. "You do not want your exhaustion to jeopardize this ship, do you, Lieutenant? And I believe I heard Captain Adrimetrum asking you the same question earlier. Shall I inform her of your refusal to comply with orders?"

Thyte looked up and stared into Loh'khar's bright yellow eyes, unable to hide his anger. "What are talking about, Finder?"

Loh'khar straightened to his full height.



Jordi Ensign

"I'm talking about your refusal to obey orders," he said loud enough for the crews three stations away to hear. "You are at this station every moment of every day. You ignore daily shift changes. You chase away anyone who offers you assistance." The Twi'lek's fingers were dancing in rhythm with his voice. As he spoke he slowly moved backward, putting distance between himself and Thyte so that he was "forced" to speak louder. Thyte noticed that several crews had looked up from their stations to glance in Loh'khar's direction.

"It has become obvious," he continued, "that it is nothing more than obsession. And I personally do not believe that an individual in such a state can be trusted to —"

Thyte stood up and maneuvered around the comm station. "That's it. You've used up all my patience, Finder."

Loh'khar slid behind a nearby console. "You see? He cannot even tolerate some friendly advice," Loh'khar said. "Face it, Lieutenant, you are sick. You need help. Do you really wish to lose your ability to handle *another* line of

work?"

Thyte snapped around — the Twi'lek's insinuation was not lost on him. It was the loss of his arm that had prevented Thyte from returning to active flight duty, not some psychological dysfunction as Loh'khar — and others — believed.

He lunged forward and grabbed Loh'khar with his cybernetic pincers. The Twi'lek choked loudly, though Thyte had barely applied pressure ... yet.

Taska Rorn, seated between them, reached up and put her hand on Thyte's durasteel arm. "Sir, you're going to hurt him," she said.

For a moment Thyte thought about crushing the worthless Twi'lek's windpipe. He could blame it on a malfunction in his cybernetic circuits to avoid recrimination.

And it would be Loh'khar's own fault, anyway. If Thyte allowed him to get away with insinuating — if not directly stating — that he was incompetent and unfit for duty ...

He released his hold on Loh'khar, who stumbled backward several steps gasping for air. *No*, Thyte thought. *That will only prove the*

slimy grubber is right. Slowly Thyte lowered his prosthetic arm to his side, staring at it as if it belonged to someone else.

Before he could even start thinking of a rational explanation for his behavior, the comm station's message intercept alarm buzzed from his console. Thyte silenced the alarm, and examined the incoming message queue.

Thyte heard Captain Adrimetrum enter cee-cee and for a status report.

"Captain, we've intercepted some sort of communication on channel 133A" Thyte called out.

Thyte busily worked the controls. "The message is garbled, like some kind of interference must have — wait a second." He adjusted several switches and then jacked into the comm suite with his cybernetic. As he probed the data, trying to sort it out, he felt Adrimetrum's presence behind him.

"I think we've intercepted two messages on the same frequency," he said, his altercation with the Twi'lek temporarily forgotten. Though

he was absorbed in his efforts, he couldn't help but feel that everyone in cee-cee was staring at him. *Well, for those of you who think I've lost it, just watch this.*

"Got it," he half-shouted. A dribble of sweat traced a meandering line down his temple. "One seems to be civilian — maybe Vaathkree Trade Language. The other ..." He turned to look up at Adrimetrum. "Imperial code, origin point: Demonsgate."

Again, an uneasy silence fell upon the command center. Thyte glanced around — and immediately noticed that Loh'khar was slipping out of cee-cee, carrying something the size and shape of a data cylinder. Behind him one of the Turazza scampered across the deck plates. *That's interesting,* Thyte thought. *I don't remember seeing Loh'khar's pet —*

"All right, Lieutenant," Adrimetrum said. "Run that message through decoding."

I know you're up to something, Finder. And I'm going to find out what it is. He returned to the controls. "Decoding sequence initiated."

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The *FarStar* is finally approaching the edge of the Kathol Rift, though the clues leading to Moff Sarne have thinned out somewhat.

In addition, Makezh has become more and more erratic, and — since the Rift is more easily navigated in this area — has been placed on restricted duty. Makezh was babbling about "voices screaming at him from the Rift" for several days and eventually lost control on the bridge.

Anyone who makes a Difficult *Perception* check realizes that Makezh's breakdown began within hours of the Codex being brought aboard the *FarStar* (see "Waystation"). The Aing-Tii had trained Makezh to retrieve this artifact which — they believe — will allow them to communicate with "Those Who Dwell Beyond The Veil." The "voices" screaming in Makezh's mind are the result of his brainwashing by the Aing-Tii; the alien mystics placed a tremendous compulsion to steal the artifact in the mind of the hapless navigator. Unfortunately, Aing-Tii knowledge of the human psyche is extremely limited, and their "experiment" led to Makezh's current state of ... eccentricity.

As the *FarStar* nears the outer edge of the Rift, Makezh's peculiar skills are not needed; the *FarStar* can navigate with comparative ease (all

astrogation checks have a base difficulty of Moderate). Microjumps are still required, but the *FarStar* is now a mere three days from the edge of the Rift.

Currently, the *FarStar* is nearing a large, volatile planet that has been nicknamed "Demonsgate" by the sensor crew. The planet is capable of supporting life, but the fiery-looking world certainly doesn't *appear* all that hospitable.

■ Demonsgate

Type: Terrestrial

Temperature: Hot

Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)

Hydrosphere: Arid

Gravity: Standard

Terrain: Volcanic plains

Length of Day: 31 standard hours

Length of Year: 224 local days

Capsule: Contrary to its appearance, this planet possesses a temperate biosphere full of life. The ionized particles that orbit it bleed off into space, throwing off radiation across the spectrum, the visible portion of which falls primarily into the red, orange, and yellow wavelengths, making the debris attracted from the surrounding Rift simulate furious, writhing flames; hence, the planet's nickname: "Demonsgate."

In general, the planet has little surface water; the bulk of Demonsgate's water supply can be found beneath the surface of the planet. Many creatures thrive in that environment, however; an abundance of life forms burrow through the rock strata to the water underneath.

In addition, the planet suffers from extremely violent geologic upheaval. Volcanoes and underground lava flows strike the massive subterranean lakes and rivers, causing massive steam geysers to blast through to the surface.

EPISODE ONE: DISTRESS CALL

Read the following aloud:

The *FarStar* has picked up an oddly distorted communications signal in the Rift. Early indications show that this transmission is actually a pair of signals, piggybacked together. One transmission is a garbled message fragment in some form of alien language, and the other is an encrypted Imperial code.

A Moderate *languages* roll reveals that the alien language in the first message is Vaathkree Trade Language. A Very Difficult *languages* roll reveals that the message is gibberish, as if there was some sort of internal code that jumbles the message's text into what appear to be a random series of letters.

A Moderate *communications* roll allows the player characters to decipher the Imperial code. (If a character rolls *higher* than a Difficult total during the attempted decoding, he or she realizes that this message was a little too easy to decode, as if the sender wanted it to be decrypted. This message may very well lead into a trap.)

Once the Imperial signal is decoded, read the following aloud:

The hissing static in the Imperial message is impossible to filter out; despite the lessening of Rift energies in this portion of space, communications are still spotty. However, you can make out the following as the message broadcasts over the cee-cee's comm system:

"Imperial Shuttle *Blade* ... crashed, planet ... perial Survey 1982376. Planet habitable ... endeavour with Sarne, repeat unable to complete rendezvous with Moff Sarne's flagship ... request assistance. Message repeats ..."

Apparently, this is an automated distress call aimed at Moff Sarne, and it is coming from below.

Captain Adrimetrum will most likely want to send some kind of mission to the planet's surface, as she is unwilling to land the ship again; since it was nearly caught on the service of Yvara, she is not prepared to land the *FarStar* again if absolutely necessary. If the players are aware that the message may have been faked,

GAMEMASTER NOTE

Roleplaying the scenario described in this adventure's fiction introduction is recommended. Loh'khar is attempting to distract Thyte and the rest of the crew in cee-cee while Vizzal the Turazza "fetches" the pirated comm transmission from the communications station.

The message is in Vaathkree Trade Language, but it is badly garbled ... or so it would appear. In fact, Loh'khar and Khzam worked out this particular code early in the *FarStar*'s mission, and Loh'khar will immediately know how to translate it.

The translation of this message can be made into a future problem for Thyte to solve; the lieutenant will probably be extremely mistrustful of the Twi'lek from now on. To decode this transmission, a player character will require a Heroic+10 *communications* roll, a Very Difficult *languages* roll and 2D days to decode. Gamemasters should not make the decryption of the secret message a top priority; Captain Adrimetrum will be more interested in the Imperial code that the *FarStar* receives.

The message (when translated) reads, "Have gathered the flock; will rendezvous when signalled. Be ready to duck, cover and bolt. Khzam."

SUGGESTED CHARACTERS

The following characters are recommended for use in the landing party: Scoryn, Kl'aal, Adrimetrum, Gul-Rah and Genna Seedar. Since Imperials are involved, Adrimetrum will likely reason that a well-armed, combat-oriented team should be sent to the surface, along with one officer and someone with medical skills. Adrimetrum may hate the Imperials, but she would not refuse wounded pilots aid.

Captain Adrimetrum will order a well-armed contingent to the surface of the planet.

The players are encouraged to roleplay the preparation for the launch: gathering equipment from ship's stores, prepping fighters or the Aegis shuttle for launch, planning a strategy for finding and dealing with the Imperials on the surface of Demonsgate.

If the characters requisition any weapons or equipment from the R-97 quartermaster droid, *each* team member will be issued one blaster pistol (4D), one blaster rifle (5D), two grenades (4D), and one smoke grenade.

In addition, any medical personnel can draw one trauma kit from medical stores.

■ Trauma Kit

Model: Imperial-issue Medical Resources Kit

Type: Trauma Medpac

Scale: Character

Skill: First aid

Cost: 200 credits

Availability: 1,F

Game Notes: Provides +1D to *first aid* or *medicine* when used to treat severe physical trauma, such as burns, cuts, contusions, abrasions and other external physical injuries. Provides no bonus for other types of injury (such as internal injuries) or the treatment of toxins or poisons.

Capsule: The trauma kit is a medpac designed for physical injuries common in a crash. It features medicines and treatments for burns, contusions, broken limbs and other such injuries.

After the initial preparations have been made, and the characters are gathered on the flight deck, read the following aloud:

An alert klaxon sounds, and Thyte's frantic voice sounds from the comm system.

"Security Alert! Security Alert! Navigator Makezh has attacked a crewmember and should be considered dangerous! All personnel, avoid interaction with Makezh, repeat avoid interaction with navigator Makezh. Security to Deck Three."

You begin to feel somewhat uneasy: you are on deck three.

The player characters have several options at this point. First, they can ignore the alert and board the Aegis shuttle. Or, they may decide to make sure the flight deck is secure, assisting the security detail that is surely moving their way. Finally, they may decide to leave the flight deck, and assist in the search for Makezh.

- If the players decide to ignore the alert and board the shuttle, read the following aloud:

You are throttling up the Aegis' engines, when Thyte's voice crackles over the comm: "Aegis shuttle, power down! Power down! We're locking down the flight deck!"

As you look out the viewport, you see Makezh, clutching a small object to his chest. He is running towards one of the many X-wings docked on the flight deck. A maintenance tech — possibly Brophar — steps out to grab the navigator, only to be savagely struck down with a ferocious blow of his fist. You've never seen Makezh this bad before.

The crazed man lunges for one of the X-wings, climbing inside and activating the vessel's engines, just as a squad of crewmembers — hastily pressed into a security detail — burst onto the flight deck, firing at the X-wing.

The player characters don't have many options here: if they fire the Aegis' weapons systems, they are likely to hit — and kill — the *FarStar* crewers arrayed against Makezh, as well as damaging something vital aboard the ship.

Makezh, however, has no such compunctions: he fires his X-wing's blasters, raking fire across the magnetically shielded main docking airlock, causing the bolts to ricochet madly throughout the flight deck. Crewers begin diving for cover or running back behind the flight deck's blast shield; miraculously no one is injured. Two of the X-wings on the flight deck explode spectacularly, however, causing a substantial fire.

When this occurs, the characters hear Thyte over the comm system, ordering the magnetic shield be dropped before Makezh causes any more damage. The X-wing shoots out of the docking bay and into open space.

- If the player characters start to secure the flight deck, Makezh attempts to sneak past them to the X-wings. If discovered, he will attack the nearest crewman and bolt for the fighters. Anyone who makes a Moderate *Perception* check after he's discovered will notice Makezh is clutching the Codex to his chest and appears highly agitated. Because of his dementia, Makezh will receive +2D to his *sneak* score and +2D to *brawling*. His *Knowledge* attribute (and related skills) and *willpower* suffer a -2D penalty, however. If he manages to get his hands on a weapon, he will not hesitate to shoot at the player characters, using whatever setting the weapon is currently on.

Please note that for the purposes of this adventure, it is necessary for Makezh to escape unharmed, *and* to destroy two of the X-wings parked on the flight deck. However, gamemasters are encouraged to make it an exciting hunt if they so desire, having the characters split up and begin searching the flight deck.

If the player characters leave the flight deck to search Deck Three, read the following aloud:

As you are exiting the flight deck, Makezh bursts into view and — running at full speed, with a crazed look on his face — elbows past you. A number of *FarStar* crewers are chasing him, and — not expecting to see anyone but Makezh — collide with you and send you all to the ground in a tangled mass of flailing arms and legs. A few moments later, you hear the sounds of an X-wing engine firing up, and the muffled whine of blaster bolts ricocheting around the flight deck.

Again, Makezh has blasted his way out of the flight deck. If the player characters have the presence of mind to inquire as to what exactly is

going on, they will learn that Makezh burst from his quarters, attacked someone who tried to calm him down, and stole the Codex.

If Adrimetrum is with the group, she will immediately order pursuit, since — with two X-wings destroyed — the *FarStar* will need the ship Makezh stole and the Aegis shuttle is the only other vessel ready for flight, the player characters are “elected” to chase him.

EPISODE TWO: PURSUIT

As the Aegis shuttle leaves the flight deck, read the following aloud:

You set a pursuit course for Makezh and the stolen X-wing, though it is more than a little difficult: the fighter is bobbing and weaving insanely.

With no regard for his own safety, Makezh plunges his ship into the turbulent atmosphere of Demonsgate, the ionized particles sparking off his ship and forming a glittering trail behind him.

The Aegis is unable to overtake Makezh’s ship, though it is possible to follow the vessel’s sparkling wake through the multi-hued atmosphere.

Unfortunately, his current course will place him within a kilometer or two of the source of the Imperial distress call and the glowing trail he’s leaving in his wake is sure to spotted from the surface.

So much for the element of surprise.

The Aegis’ pilot should have no trouble finding the wake left by the X-wing as it passes through Demonsgate’s atmosphere. An *Easy sensors* roll and a moderate *piloting* check enable the pilot to land near Makezh’s ship; Adrimetrum’s first priority is the recovery of the X-wing and her missing navigator, and she will order the Aegis to begin a search for Makezh.

Read the following aloud:

The X-wing is not all that difficult to find. It has plowed a huge furrow in the ground where Makezh crashed it, and the plume of smoke from the fighter’s badly-damaged engines can be seen for kilometers. The craft is on fire, and looks like it might explode at any moment.

The player characters can attempt to put out the fire and search for Makezh. However, the flames from the engine housing are very severe, and will detonate within 1D rounds, inflicting 9D damage on anything within 100 meters. An *easy sensors* roll reveals that the explosion is imminent and that the ship contains no life forms: either Makezh bailed out or died in the cockpit of

his stolen fighter. The flight records — indicating that Makeah ejected can be recovered with a *Moderate search* total.

Closer examination of the X-wing reveals that the ejection seat is missing; an *Easy Perception* or *search* roll will reveal this information. A search party will have to be organized to find the downed navigator.

A *Moderate search* roll reveals the remains of the ejection seat roughly 400 meters to the north. The footprints — obviously Makezh’s — also lead away to the north. He only has (at most) a half hour lead on the player characters, so pursuit is possible.

CLOSING IN ON MAKEZH

The players have a number of options, largely dependent on how thoroughly they prepared for the landing mission; if they had the foresight to bring along an SRV, ULAV, or speeder bikes from the *FarStar*, they will be able to catch up to Makezh in 1D rounds. (Alternately, they can lift off in the Aegis and pursue.) If this is the case, read the following aloud (otherwise assume the player characters are on foot and cut to Episode Three):

You catch up with the stumbling figure of Makezh with relative ease. He seems less agitated now, though he was apparently injured in the crash; blood is streaming from a large cut in his forehead, and his face is blackened from the fire and smoke of the botched landing.

He is cradling the Codex in his arms, and appears to be talking to it, though his language is certainly not Basic. His speech is a series of clicks, hisses and snorts, sounding very alien. When he sees you approach, he does not resist. He merely keeps stumbling to the north.

The player characters can try and use persuasion to convince Makezh to come quietly, or they can simply subdue him and bring him back to the Aegis. Makezh will patiently listen to anything reasonable that the players try and tell him, but will keep moving to the north. If stopped, he will become very agitated, screaming that he “must bring ‘the gift’ to his teachers.”

As the players characters struggle to deal with Makezh, have each make a *Perception* roll; any character who makes a *Moderate Perception* total notices that the volcanic plain that they are standing on seems to be vibrating slightly, and a distant, hollow rumble is just barely audible. After 1D minutes, one of the steam geysers erupts. When this happens, read the following aloud:

With a massive, explosive crash, a column of water and steam burst from a newly formed crack in the ground, a hissing geyser spraying



Jordi Ensign

superheated vapor in all directions!

The force of the geyser sends you sprawling, and for a moment, you feel the hot pinpricks of the water droplets splashing against your skin. Fortunately the brunt of the blast seems to be angled away from you slightly, sparing you serious injury.

EPISODE THREE: AMBUSH IN THE GEYSER FIELD

If the player characters followed Makezh on foot, gamemasters are encouraged to give them a very rough time; steam geysers erupt with a great deal of regularity on Demonsgate.

As they move in pursuit of Makezh, they stumble across a volcanic plain that seems to be a “hotbed” of geologic activity. Characters will have to run across the plain, which will take them

roughly four rounds. Any character who does not make a Moderate *running* roll is struck by superheated water vapor; no dodge is possible since it is impossible to predict where a geyser will appear. Geysers inflict 6D damage, and cause blistering and burning that will require medical treatment when the injured character returns to the *FarStar*.

In addition, the geysers throw out a great deal of steam, which impairs the search party’s vision. All *search* rolls or vision-based *Perception* checks suffer a -1D penalty at distances greater than 20 meters.

After crossing the geyser plain, read the following aloud:

After taking a moment to recover, you hear a strangely familiar, mechanical-sounding voice echo across the plain. The steam from the geyser obscures your vision somewhat, but there is no mistaking the malice the speaker feels towards you.

“Well, well, well,” the voice chuckles, “the valiant *FarStar* crew again. This time, I’d like to introduce you to some friends of mine!”

Squinting through the steam-fog created by the geysers, you see several indistinct hazy figures moving. A mild gust of wind parts the haze somewhat revealing your adversaries.

Mist, the bounty hunter that you have tangled with on several occasions, is flanked by almost two dozen stormtroopers and — behind them — an Imperial AT-ST and AT-PT.

Mist is holding a blaster pistol, though for a change the bounty hunter doesn’t have it aimed at you. Instead, the armored figure is pointing it at Makezh, who has apparently stumbled into this ambush as well.

“Throw down your weapons and surrender,” the armored figure intones, “or I’ll kill your crewmate.”

The players have a moment to try and decide on a course of action, but — just as they are about to embark on it, whether they plan to fight or surrender — Makezh gives out an incoherent yell and knocks the bounty hunter to the ground, running to the north. Mist, indicating the player characters, yells, “Kill them!”

Blaster fire begins tracking on the player characters position, and the battle is joined. (See page 66–67 for Mist’s stats.)

22 Imperial Stormtroopers. All stats 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 4D, *grenade* 4D+2. Move: 10. Blaster rifle (5D), stormtrooper armor* (+1D energy, +2D physical, -1D *Dexterity* and related skills).

* For complete information, see page 157 of *Star Wars, Second Edition*.

AT-ST Walker. Walker, maneuverability 1D, move 30; 90 kmh, body strength 3D. Weapons: one twin blaster cannon (fire control 1D, 50–200/1/2 km, damage 4D), one twin light blaster cannon (fire control 1D, 50–300/500/1 km, damage 2D), concussion grenade launcher (fire control 1D, 10–50/100/200, damage 3D)

AT-PT Walker. Walker, maneuverability 2D, move 21; 60 kmh, body strength 2D. Weapons: one twin blaster cannon (fire control 1D, 10–50/200/500, damage 4D), concussion grenade launcher (fire control 1D, 10–50/100/200, damage 2D).

The Imperials will fight until 10 of their number are wounded, or until the AT-ST and AT-PT are destroyed. If this occurs they will surrender.

Gamemasters are encouraged to use the “geysers” at dramatic moments in this combat scenario, though it should be fairly clear that the New Republic crewers are hopelessly outgunned and outnumbered.

As the battle on the surface continues, read the following aloud:

The battle is not going well, and you are forced to take cover behind some large, volcanic rock outcroppings. Several of these rock formations dot the landscape; some small and

GAMEMASTER NOTES

While the combat on Demonsgate is raging, events are not standing still on the *FarStar* either. As the *FarStar* awaits word from the Demonsgate landing team, Jessa Dajus — who has been languishing in an unexplained coma — suddenly awakens. She immediately demands to see Captain Adrimetrum, and will explain that she believes she knows the location of the “DarkStryder Planet,” and Sarne’s hidden lair.

If Adrimetrum is on the surface of the planet, the *FarStar* will attempt to contact her by comlink, though it will require a Difficult *communications* roll to pierce the Rift’s interference.

If she is aboard the *FarStar*, she will speak to Jessa directly; Jessa’s player is free to reveal her “vision,” and the certainty she feels that Sarne’s lair is nearby.

Gamemasters are encouraged to cut back and forth between the battle on the planet and Jessa’s revelation and attempts to persuade Adrimetrum to listen to her.





Jordi Ensign

almost pod-like, and others large, craggy and solid.

As the Imperials close in, you hear a message from the *FarStar* crackle through the radiation interference of the Rift: “*FarStar* to landing party, *FarStar* to landing party. We may be leaving orbit shortly. Proceed with rescue mission if possible, but the window of opportunity is closing.”

Clearly, your situation has not improved.

Gamemasters should allow the players to struggle to come up with a plan. Should they go after Makezh? Or should the player characters cut their losses and return to the *FarStar*?

In addition, gamemasters should make their situation look very bleak: the player characters are cut off from their vessels, their weapons are running low on power and the Imperials are closing in. When all appears lost, however, the situation changes.

Read the following aloud:

As the Imperials close in on your position, you notice something extremely peculiar: the pod-like rock formations on the ground appear to be moving.

Suddenly, they seem to unfold themselves,

moving with surprising speed and grace, and pounce on the unsuspecting Imperials. You vaguely recognize the edentate creatures—the Aing-Tii Sanhedrim!

The Aing-Tii attack the Imperials, stunning them with strange club-like devices that seem to impart a stun charge on their target. Fortunately for the player characters, they seem to be dispatching the Imperials handily. Unfortunately, any *FarStar* crewer near an Aing-Tii is also attacked.

At the same time, a trio of Aing-Tii seem to be dragging Makezh with them, back towards the direction of the X-wing crash site. He is screaming pitifully that he doesn’t want to go back with them, until they stun him with one of their strange weapons. One of the Aing-Tii with Makezh is carrying the Codex triumphantly.

■ Aing-Tii Monk

Type: Alien Mystic

DEXTERITY 1D

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Planetary systems 2D, planetary systems: Kathol Rift 5D+2

MECHANICAL 1D

Astrogation 3D, astrogation: Kathol Rift 7D, capital ship gunnery 5D, capital ship piloting 4D+2, capital ship shields 4D+1, sensors 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 3D-1, command 3D-1, con 4D, hide 4D, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 2D

Climbing/jumping 4D

TECHNICAL 2D

Capital ship repair 3D

Special Abilities:

Armor: +2 against physical attacks.

Tail Slap: Inflicts STR+2D damage; can only be used once every other turn.

Hyperspatial Perception: +2D to astrogation rolls in Kathol Rift

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 2

Character points: Varies, typical 1-3

Move: 8

Equipment: *Vor'cha* stun stick (4D stun)

EPISODE FIVE: MISSION'S END

The player characters have a few options at this point. They have been ordered to return to the *FarStar* as soon as possible, so they are within their rights to abandon Makezh and the Codex to the Aing-Tii.

Conversely, they can try and negotiate with the Aing-Tii for Makezh's release. This will ultimately be unsuccessful. The Aing-Tii either can not or will not speak Basic. Attempts to communicate with them are met with outright hostility.

Finally, the *FarStar* crewers can attempt to rescue Makezh, though they will have to fight their way through 12 Aing-Tii monks. If combat ensues, after 3D rounds, the *FarStar* signals again, ordering the landing party to abort its mission and return to the *FarStar* immediately. Adrimetrum has decided to cut her losses. The landing mission is a failure.

WRAPPING IT UP

After the events of the landing mission have played out, the *FarStar* has a brief respite. Needed repairs on the ship can be implemented, and "Gam-mer" Firdaaz offers to remain on Demonsgate to man a semi-permanent maintenance facility for the "Lifeline" project.

Initially skeptical about leaving Firdaaz behind, Adrimetrum is convinced by reports of the Aing-Tii actually *abducting* the Imperial forces on

the planet. The Aing-Tii, surprisingly passive after the encounters on the planet, leave the system and plunge back into the Rift taking the Imperials with them.

Read the following aloud after allowing the players after these items have been resolved:

All eyes in cee-cee turn to the main viewport, watching with relief as the last glowing tendrils of the Kathol Rift drift by, leaving only the majestic expanse of star-filled skies visible. Everyone aboard the *FarStar* feels more than a little relief as the ship leaves the Rift behind; it is as if a great weight lifted off your shoulders.

Jessa Dajus — still weak from her ordeal — examines the sensor readouts in Probe Droid Control, as one of the *FarStar*'s last remaining probe droids searched for something only Jessa could identify ...

... and finding it.

"Captain," Jessa's voice crackles through the comm system, "I believe I've found it."

Adrimetrum examines the sensor readings herself: a computer-augmented representation of a binary system, ringed by asteroids and housing one large world.

Turning to the navigation station, she orders the *FarStar* underway.

"Set course as indicated on Dajus' console," she barks, eager to get the *FarStar* moving again. "I believe it is high time we pay Sarne our respects."

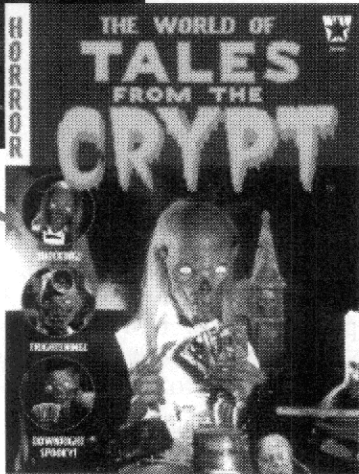
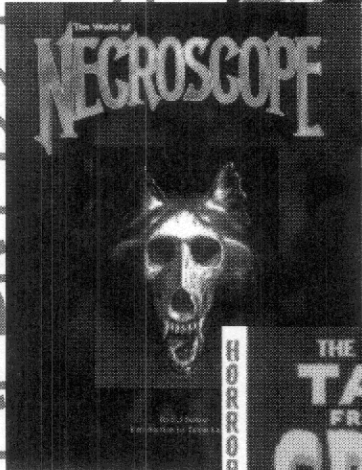
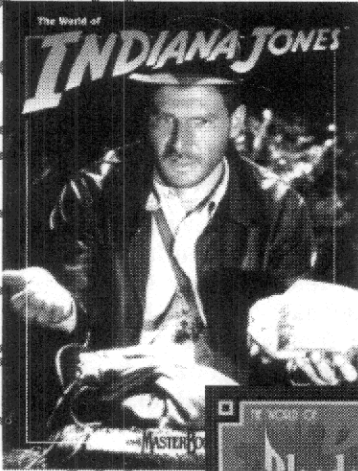
REWARDS

Characters who participated in the landing party each receive two character points. If they rescued Makezh, give them each an additional character point. If the Codex was recovered as well, award an additional three character points.

If Makezh was left behind, the landing party members will feel more than a little shame at being forced to abandon the man that got the *FarStar* through the Rift.

If the Codex was recovered, the Aing-Tii can now be considered totally hostile to the *FarStar*. As their ship leaves the system it will fire on the New Republic vessel (inflicting only cosmetic damage) before jumping to hyperspace.

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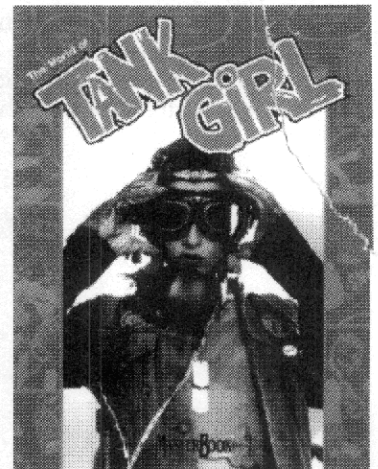
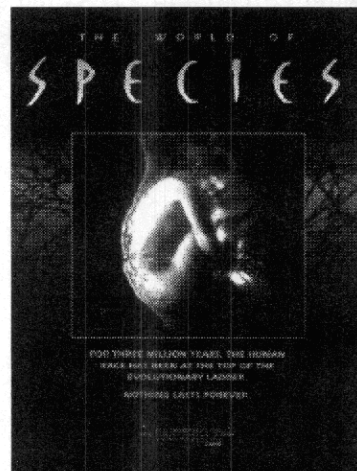
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