Where's the Adventure?

A letter which recently passed over my desk wondered where all the adventures were in *Star Wars Adventure Journal* #3. I paged through that *Journal* and realized to my own dismay we had only included one sortie adventure. Looking over issue #4, we did a little better with three adventures. And in this issue you’ll only find one adventure and one sortie adventure. So some readers might be asking, “Where’s the ‘adventure’ in the *Adventure Journal*?”

In theory, the *Journal* should be divided into thirds between game-related stories, source material and adventures. It doesn’t always work out that way — quite often the source material overflows into the adventure portion, because authors are writing more source material than adventures.

It’s a reflection of a trend in the gaming industry that’s been going on for some time — more game companies are producing source material for their games instead of adventures, allowing gamemasters to create their own adventures best suited to their players, characters and campaigns. Even West End Games has temporarily stopped publishing adventure products for *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, assuming most short adventures would go into the *Journal*.

Although several adventure projects are in the works for publication in the next year or so, the *Journal* remains the only place for *Star Wars* gamemasters to find new adventures. Most of those authors contributing to the *Journal* are writing source material because that’s what they like to do — people write better when writing something they want to, not something they have to.

But the *Journal* needs more adventures — and will publish more adventures — because that’s what our readers want, and that’s what the *Adventure Journal* is all about.

Commander Peter Schweighofer
Admiral’s Attaché
December, 1994
First There Was
Indiana Jones™
and Bloodshadows.

And Coming Soon ...
COMING IN AUGUST 1995

BRIAN LumLEY

NECROSCOPE

The Legend of the Undead

Parental Discretion Advised

Bantam Releases

Ambush at Corellia

Bantam Books bursts into 1995 with plans for another

Star Wars paperback trilogy
and more hardcover novels.

Ambush at Corellia is the
first paperback novel in Roger
MacBride Allen's Corellian
Triology. A trade summit
on Corellia brings Han
Solo back to his homeworld.
Arriving with Leia, their children,
and Chewbacca, Han finds
Corellia overrun with
agents of the New
Republic Intelligence
and finds himself part of
a deceptive plan whose
aim not even he
understands. One thing is
clear: the five inhabited
worlds of the sector are
on the brink of civil war
and the once peaceful
co-existence of the three
leading races — Human,
Selonian and Draflan —
has come to an end.

Suddenly all that Han,
Leia, and others of the
Alliance have fought for

February, 1995

Star Wars Adventure Journal • 9
is threatened. As jammerships block all communications with Luke Skywalker and the outside universe, Han and Leia find themselves trapped on a world about to explode in violence unless they can meet a fanatical Rebel leader’s impossible demands.

Haunted by ominous dreams and guided by a force he cannot identify, Luke Skywalker travels halfway across the galaxy to a remote asteroid field over the planet Prob. There he discovers the automated Dreadnaught Eye of Palpatine — from the days of all-out war. Camouflaged deep within a nebulous gas cloud and dormant for 30 years, the Eye of Palpatine is governed by a supersophisticated artificial intelligence known as the Will. The Will has awakened. The Eye of Palpatine is on the move. Its mission: the total annihilation of Belusvis.

Ambush at Corelia will be in bookstores this month.

In April Bantam will release Children of the Jedi, a hardcover Star Wars novel by Barbara Hambly. Hambly’s previous novels range from high fantasies to historical mysteries to vampire tales, including her recent books, Stranger at the

**Dark Forces to Take Over CD-ROM**

Get up close and personal with the deadliest stormtroopers and most vile aliens ever in LucasArts Entertainment Company’s upcoming first-person PC CD-ROM action adventure game, Dark Forces. Dark Forces introduces a compelling new Star Wars story fraught with danger and intrigue, and executes it in richly detailed full 3D environments. Successfully completing the game (and, of course, saving the universe from the clutches of the evil Empire) requires navigating through more than a dozen complex, multi-level worlds and harnessing the firepower of an arsenal of weapons including blasters, ion guns and plasma assault rifles in order to defend the Rebel cause.

The player takes on the persona of an elite special agent on the Rebel Alliance’s covert intelligence team. When the Rebels learn of the Empire’s devastating new battle station — the Death Star — you are assigned to infiltrate an Imperial Star Destroyer and cap-
blocks and squaring off against Admiral Mohc and his army of special dark troopers. During the game, the player’s alter-ego is extremely maneuverable. In addition to having 360-degree rotation, he can look up and down and execute enhanced movements such as jumping, ducking and crawling. The player can utilize a Personal Digital Assistant for easy access to mission briefings, as well as a heads-up display for status evaluation and an auto-mapping function for quick location reference. Game play can be customized to the player’s own skill with difficulty levels ranging from beginner to advanced.

The game visuals are detailed and realistic with challenging indoor and outdoor morphing environments and 3D texture-mapped, shaded objects. Digitized Star Wars and original sound effects, full speech and a compelling stereo musical score create a stirring audio complement to the 3D graphics and fast-paced game play.

LucasArts Entertainment Company develops and publishes entertainment and educational software for CD-ROM, personal computers, video game consoles and multimedia. LucasArts is one of three Lucas companies—Lucas Digital Ltd., which includes Industrial Light and Magic, and Lucasfilm Ltd.

Expand TIE Fighter with New Campaign

The most fearsome enemy is one that was once an ally. The Empire learns this harsh lesson as it defends itself and its starfighter fleet against the traitorous attacks of its former chief technology officer, the cunning Admiral Zaarin.

LucasArts Entertainment Company has released Defender of the Empire, the first campaign expansion disk for its successful Star Wars space combat simulator, TIE Fighter. In TIE Fighter, Zaarin’s initial attempts at overthrowing Emperor Palpatine were thwarted, but his forces have grown in number and strength. Previously in charge of the Empire’s R&D and weapons development, Zaarin now controls most of the Empire’s powerful TIE Defenders. In Defender of the Empire the Empire must continue to defend itself against the traitor, Zaarin, as he schemes to commandeer various TIE manufacturing facilities. The Emperor has his hands full between Zaarin’s attacks, pirates scheming to benefit from the turmoil between Zaarin and the Empire, and of course, the Rebel Alliance poised to strike the Empire in its distracted state. It will take the Empire’s most dedicated and skilled pilots to save it from ruin and secure its position as the most powerful force in the galaxy.

Defender of the Empire features a new TIE Fighter campaign comprised of three exciting battles. In total there are 18 individual missions, which are punctuated by four highly animated, cinematic cut scenes. Realistic bit-mapped special effects, gouraud-shaded polygon spacecraft, a John Williams inspired score, stereo sound, digital sound effects and significant speech are additional features. The campaign also introduces a new deadly starfighter. In answer to Zaarin’s fleet of powerful TIE Defenders, the Empire’s Admiral Thrawn builds a faster, more maneuverable fighter with potent firepower.

Defender of the Empire is available for IBM and compatibles, and TIE Fighter is required to play the game. The estimated sale price is $24.95. LucasArts plans to release a second TIE Fighter Campaign expansion program in the first half of 1995. TIE Fighter is the sequel to X-Wing, the best-selling computer game of 1993.
Betray your friends. Crush your enemies.
Control the world. Drink some coffee.

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THE ART OF

STAR WARS

A NEW HOPE

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

TM © Lucasfilm Ltd.
By Paul Danner
Illustrations by Doug Shuler

It had been a really bad day. Sconn sipped the Venaarian Cringe-Ale and one of his eyes was forced closed by the bitter taste of the yellowish liquid. He wondered if the “cringe” was supposed to come from the drink itself, or the obscene amount of credits the wake-up juice cost. That’s the price you pay for wild nights, he thought.

With a shrug, he took another swallow and scanned the Binary Bar’s late afternoon crowd. Sconn noted that he merged seamlessly with it, which for a thief was a good thing, especially on an Imperially held world like Venaari. If nobody could remember your face, they couldn’t give the authorities a good description ...
Scon prided himself on his skill as a social chameleon, but at the same time it annoyed him. The thief enjoyed being the center of attention, preferring to stand out, especially in the faceless parade of fearful drones that the Empire so enjoyed turning the local populace into. At the present time, however, he could ill afford nonconformity. The current lack of business was making his credits disappear faster than an Imperial slaver at a Wookiee family reunion.

Scon was also running out of time. The rent on his apartment was due by the next morning and his Devorarian landlord didn't take excuses—just solid Imperial credits. Scon needed a job and he needed one fast...

"Times are tough," he whispered into his mug, "when the greatest thief in this whole sector can't find work."

Scon glanced up at the high ceiling of the Binary Bar and stared at what he was considering to be his last resort. The thief wasn't crazy about stealing part of the decor from one of his favorite watering holes, but when times are tough... He studied the old swoop hanging from the quartet of duracables and began his appraisal. Mobquet Nebulan-R Racer, most likely. The swoop would definitely need its repulsorlift unit and turbobrush engine replaced, but even in its current shape, the vehicle would net him at least 500 credits. Maybe a thousand or more if he could get his hands on cheap parts. Expertly the thief began surveying the room, trying to figure out his best route of entry and escape should desperation force him to return after hours.

That's when he noticed her, slipping in from the street and into the crowded dive. She glanced about like a wary cat as she maneuvered to the bar. The woman seemed young, about Scon's age, and wore a cloak that hid most of her curves.

Scon soon found that he couldn't take his eyes off her, though he wasn't exactly sure why. Sure, she was pretty, but he'd certainly seen prettier. The thief just couldn't explain it. The dark-haired beauty just had a certain air of mystery about her. There was something going on. And if there was anything Scon was familiar with, it was intrigue.

She sat at the bar, but looked uncomfortable, taking sidelong glances at the beings around her. She's not a dive-hopper, Scon reasoned. The bartender approached and slid a mug of clear liquid over to her. As she reached for it, the overweight Venaian gave an almost imperceptible nod. Tossing a few credits onto the bar, she took a sip of the mug and walked over to a corner table. The one she selected was removed from the center of activity and well-shadowed.

Scon pursed his lips, and at this time it wasn't a reaction to the Cringe-Ale. Something was definitely up. The bartender was busy, yet quickly had a drink for the girl. One she didn't even order. The familiarity might be explained, though—the girl could be a regular, but her body language at the bar just didn't support that scenario. Besides, Scon had a feeling she wasn't a recurring patron, and his feelings usually kept him alive.

The thief's interest was piqued. Two of his favorite things, women and mysteries, had just surfaced right in front of him. Unfortunately, that's when the woman noticed him staring at her. As their gazes locked, Scon saw her eyes widen a bit, as if she was worried that he was somebody she shouldn't have seen her. Thinking quickly, the thief flashed his best grin and winked at her.

Relief swiftly crossed the woman's face, and as she looked down at her drink, Scon swore he saw her lips twitch into a smile. As Scon started to consider the possibilities, chaos erupted in the bar.

A young Venaian man burst inside, running at full speed and knocking over two customers in his hurry. A fresh blaster burn marred his right shoulder. His eyes, wild with fear, quickly scanned the room.

Scon saw the beauty look up and watched as a look of shock spread across her face. The thief also noted that the bartender wore an expression similar to the girl's.

As the wild-eyed man opened his mouth to yell something, the sizzling burst of a blaster bolt cut off the sound. He was thrown forward like a rag doll. The young man landed atop an occupied table, sending food and drinks crashing to the floor.

Five stormtroopers, their white armor gleaming, followed the bolt inside. Each one brandished a standard issue blaster rifle except for the leader, who carried a powerful BlasTech T-15. Scon figured it was the heavy T-15 snub rifle that was responsible for sending the Venaian on his short-lived aerial excursion.

The leader's cracking voice filtered through his helmet. "Nobody move! This establishment is officially sealed by the Empire!"

Most of the surprised customers obeyed, turning their fearful glances away from the troopers. The bartender quickly ducked down behind the bar, which Scon considered a smart move, until the man stood back up with a grenade launcher.

"Go!" screamed the heavy Venaian as he fired into the midst of the stormtroopers. The young woman bolted from her booth and
headed for the door leading to the kitchen.

Scoon dove from his chair, ducking under the table, as the grenade sailed overhead. The thief quickly reached under his cloak, feeling that familiar silver handle...
The stun grenade exploded with a deafening cry, and three of the stormtroopers, as well as a few unfortunate customers, went down.

"Take him! I'll get the girl!" After barking out his orders, the leader charged forward.

The remaining trooper opened fire, hitting the bar as the Venarian ducked back down behind it, presumably to reload. Bits of charred metal exploded into the air. Picking the wrong moment to resurface, the bartender took a blaster bolt to the chest and went down with a groan before he could fire off the fresh grenade.

The young woman saw him fall and stopped in her tracks, a look of horror on her face. "Noo!"

The leader charged her, turning the heavy T-15 rifle towards the unmoving target.

From his vantage point under the table, Scoon looked on. "I'm going to hate myself for this," he muttered.

With a snap of his wrist, the long silver handle exploded into activity, locking into a two-meter-long staff. With the tap of a hidden switch, both ends of the staff began to crackle and hum with stun energy.

The stormtrooper leader continued to move forward, taking aim at his quarry. The girl looked up just then, as if sensing the danger. Her eyes widened as she waited for the shot that, at that range, would bring her down for good.

It never came.

Moving with lightning speed, the crouched Scoon swung the staff with all his strength, catching the leader in the shins with the weapon. Using the leverage afforded him by his low center of gravity, Scoon drove the staff backwards and up, sending the stormtrooper flipping forward, literally head over heels. The heavy armored figure crashed atop a table with a surprised cry. Unable to support the applied force, the cheap plastic groaned and collapsed on itself, showering his pristine armor with Angerian Fishak Surprise.

The remaining stormtrooper whirled around, drawing a bead on Scoon. Caught out in the open, the thief knew he had one chance.

Scoon lifted his right arm, bending the hand at the wrist. The wide sleeve of his shirt fell back, revealing a silver wrist gauntlet. The condensed particle beam streaked high into the air, missing the stormtrooper completely.

The armored warrior chuckled and prepared to fire, but only got as far as lifting his gun when the swoop — previously hanging from the ceiling by the now severed duracables — hit him squarely across the back, driving him to the floor and pinning him there.

Scoon exhaled loudly in relief, then turned to the woman. She was trying to help the fallen bartender, who, to an emotionally unattached eye, was obviously beyond any help.

The dying Venarian reached up, his fingers grasping the edges of her dark cloak and pulling her close. "Shandria... must get it... to New Republic. Imperative... that..." The rest was lost to eternity. Tears welled up in Shandria's eyes and she shut them tight, trying to staunch the flow.

Shaking her head, Scoon ran over to her. "Look, I'm sorry about your friend, but you've got to get out of here."

A blaster bolt suddenly slammed into the wall behind the bar, barely missing Scoon's head and shattering a large mirror.

"Correction. We've got to get out of here." Scoon grabbed the dazed girl by the arm and dragged her into the kitchen as another flurry of bolts exploded into the bar.

Scoon peeked around the corner, spotting at least a dozen more stormtroopers approaching the entrance in standard cover forma-
Sienn Sconn

**Type:** Master Thief

**DEXTERITY 4D**
Blaster 2D, blaster: wrist lasers 7D, blawing parry 3D, dodge 6D-1, melee combat stun staff 6D, melee parry: stun staff 7D, pick pocket 6D-2, running 6D, vehicle blast 6D-2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**
Alien species 4D-1, cultures 4D, languages 5D-1, law enforcement 6D, streetwise 6D, value 6D, willpower 5D

**MECHANICAL 2D**
Repair 6D, operation: speeder bike 5D

**PERCEPTION 4D**
Bargain 6D, con 7D-2, gambling 5D, hide 8D, search 9D, sneak 7D

**STRENGTH 3D**
Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 6D

**TECHNICAL 2D**
Computer programming/repair 6D-2, demolition 5D, security 6D-1

**Force Points:** 4
**Character Points:** 18
**Move:** 10
**Equipment:** Stun staff (STR 3D-2 including stun charge, STR 2D without stun charge), thermal half-spheres and detonator device, wrist laser gun (5D)

**Capsule:** Sienn Sconn is a 23-year old master thief. Born on the planet Byxella in the harsh Asin-Bendala system, Sconn had to learn to be tough even as a child. At age 7, he lost both his parents when the Empire forcibly put down an uprising in the capital city of Vethaly. A turbolaser barrage from the Imperial Star Destroyers left most of his city block in ruins, and left Sconn an orphan. The incident sparked Sconn’s hatred of the Empire, which grew with each passing year as he witnessed one Imperial atrocity after another.

Luckily, Sconn’s hatred has been tempered by love, which he received from the man who took him in after he was orphaned. Cryle Cav is Sconn’s uncle, and a rogue if ever there was one. It was Cav who taught Sconn how to survive as a thief, trained him mercilessly, and gave him most of his unique equipment. Most importantly, though, Cav instilled ethics into Sconn, who already had a well-developed sense of right and wrong.

To this day, Sconn will not stoop from anyone except Imperials, crime lords, or the obnoxiously rich. What Sconn didn’t know, and still doesn’t know, is that Cav was once an operative for the Alliance, and passed on that idealism to his nephew. That idealistic morality, combined with his ferocious tenacity, makes Sienn Sconn a very tough opponent.

---

He dove forward, grabbing the reloaded grenade launcher from next to the bartender’s body. Lifting up, he fired the weapon out the door, then sprinted back into the kitchen as the stun grenade exploded. He was rewarded by a few mechanically filtered screams.

“That should slow ‘em down a little,” the thief said as he glanced back around the corner.

The stormtroopers were still coming. With another group of their comrades down, though, the approach was more cautious.

Sconn gently urged her forward. “Head for the back door.”

Shandria flashed him a worried look.

He returned a reassuring grin. “Don’t worry, I’m good at this kind of stuff. We’ll make it.” She still didn’t look overly convinced, so he quickly added, “I promise.”

They sprinted through the messy kitchen, passing a row of storage closets, and headed toward the back door. Sconn slammed his palm against the control panel and the door swung open.

“Wait here. I’ll check it out.” He dove outside, staff raised defensively. Sconn checked one side of the alley. A dead end. The thief turned to examine the other. It led to the street — where 10 stormtroopers were exiting a Venaari strike speeder.

Swallowing hard, Sconn stumbled back, tripping over the row of garbage containers awaiting removal. In the process, he managed to inadvertently knock the door closed. As he turned to pull it back open, he heard the locking mechanism kick in.

“Auto-lock. Great.” He stared at the keys on the panel. “And I have no idea what the code is.”

---

Inside, Shandria heard stormtroopers approaching. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw them carefully filing into the bar. When she turned back around, the young man who had helped her was gone and the door was shut and locked. She started pounding on it.

“Let me out!”

“Let me in!” Sconn’s harried voice echoed from the other side, accompanied by frenzied banging, then a barrage of blaster bolts.

Shandria started fiddling with the control panel, then balled her fists in frustration. “It’s jammed.”

Outside, Sconn shook his head. “Lovely.” He was being showered by more and more refuse as the troopers blew holes in the garbage containers he was using for cover.
“How did I get myself into this?” The thief shook his head and reached into his carry pouch. After fishing around inside, Scon pulled out a thin, half-sphere of metal with only a small crimson light marking its surface. “Better overprepared than under the ground.”

He crawled over to the door and attached the half-sphere to the control panel. Scon rapped his fist sharply on the door. “Get back! Get back!” he screamed.

Scon dove back into the center of the garbage containers and pulled out a small silver control unit. The thief tapped the button and closed his eyes. The half-sphere exploded in a shower of light. The door swung open.

Scon grinned in spite of himself, then was horrified to see Shandria stick her head out the door.

“What’s going on?” she demanded to know.

The thief dove forward, barely avoiding being roasted by a volley of blaster bolts, and shoved her and himself inside, pulling the door closed behind them. “You stick your head out where it doesn’t belong again and you’re liable to get it shot off.”

“Sorry.”

Scon shrugged, gesturing behind him. “The great white welcoming committee back there kind of rolls out that exit.” The thief sighed as he heard the familiar heavy armored footsteps approaching from the other direction. “It looks like we’re trapped.”

Shandria put her hands on her hips and glowered at him. “I thought you said you were good at this.”

Scon shrugged helplessly.

“This is some rescue,” she glanced around, looking over her shoulder at the storage closets. When she saw the sign that read “Danger — Gravdrian Ale,” she grinned.

Shandria grabbed Scon by the arm and led him toward the closet. “Come on. We’re getting out of here!”

Scon pulled the door closed and locked it. He listened at the door for a second then frowned. “They’re coming.”

A small glowlamp flickered weakly, offering poor illumination at best. Scon stared at the huge containers of ale, which were adorned with a series of large, vented holes near their tops.

He glanced at Shandria. “And you’ve got us cornered.”

“Hand me your staff, will you?”

“What for?”

“You looking forward to an Imperial interrogation?”

The thief reluctantly parted with his staff. “Just be careful with it. It’s one of a kind.” He flashed a self-satisfied grin. “Just like me.”

---

**Shandria L’hnnar**

_Type: _New Republic Operative_  
_Dexterity_ 3D  
_Blaster_ 8D+1, _dodge_ 5D+2, _melee combat_ 4D+1, _melee parry_ 4D+1, _vehicle blast_ 5D+2  
_Knowledge_ 4D  
_Alien species_ 5D, _cultures_ 5D+2, _languages_ 5D+1, _planetary systems_ 7D, _wildpower_ 6D  
_Mechanical_ 3D  
_Astrology_ 4D, _sensors_ 5D, _starfighter piloting_ 6D+2, _starship gunnery_ 5D+1, _starship shields_ 4D+2  
_Perception_ 3D+1  
_Bargain_ 6D, _blate_ 5D, _persuasion_ 7D, _search_ 4D+2, _sneak_ 5D  
_Strength_ 2D+1  
_Brawling_ 3D-2, _climbing/jumping_ 4D, _stamina_ 5D  
_Technical_ 2D+1  
_Computer programming/repair_ 6D-2, _demolition_ 5D, _security_ 6D-1  
_Force Points: _3  
_Character Points: _15  

_Move: _10  
_Equipment: _Hold-out blaster_ 2D, _stolen Imperial data card_  
_Capsule: _Shandria L’hnnar is a 24-year old New Republic operative. A native of Corellia, Shandria always dreamed of entering the Imperial Academy and graduating at the top of her class. She had always been an excellent student, with a natural ability to quickly learn and retain information. Her dreams were short-lived however, as she discovered the truth about the Empire.  

She experienced its brutality first-hand while attending the famed Imperial Institute of Higher Studies on Ferrostat. One of her closest friends, Celida Noerr, had just joined the Alliance, and related Imperial horror stories to Shandria. At first, she didn’t believe her friend, but one day they broke into the main computer banks and Celida showed her the truth.  

The incident served to open Shandria’s eyes — but unfortunately it also resulted in Celida’s arrest as a traitor to the Empire. Shandria never saw her friend again, but soon after joined the Alliance herself. The memory of Celida fuels Shandria’s actions and resolve every day.  

Though Shandria’s intellectual ability far outweighs her physical skills as an operative, the young woman’s sheer willpower, tenacity, and determination are enough to keep her superiors from suggesting she stay out of the field and remain behind an analyst’s desk._
Shandria took the staff and rolled her eyes. Sconn glanced around. He saw the warnings posted on the containers and the wall and frowned. "You picked a wonderful spot, too. If they don't get us, our hiding place will." The thief shook his head. "We're sitting mynocks in here." "Do you ever do anything but complain?" Shandria was climbing on top of a container. She reached up with Sconn's staff, and extended it towards the ceiling, which she began to poke at.

"What are you doing?"

"Do you know anything about Gravidian Ale?"

"Wonderful, We're about to die and you're playing Holo-Quiz."

She ignored that. "It tastes really good. Kind of sweet, really. Unfortunately, it gives off a very strong vapor until it properly ferments. In concentrated amounts, the vapor can be lethal."

"Oh, this just gets better and better."

Shandria continued to poke and prod in the shadows. "It's a hassle and a danger, which is why very few bars carry it. Those that do, however, have to take precautions. So, when storing it, they need a special room with enough..." She paused as she heard the staff hit something hollow and metallic.

She lifted the stick further, and raising up with it was a one-meter square grille, full of holes. It covered a shaft of similar size leading up into dim light.

"Ventilation," Shandria finished, and grinned.

Sconn knocked the top grille free and proceeded to crawl out of the open shaft onto the roof of the bar. Reaching back down, he quickly pulled Shandria up next to him. "That was pretty amazing," he said.

"Thanks. But you rescued me first. I was just returning the favor." A smile dawned slowly on her face, like a dazzling sun.

Sconn almost started to blush, averting his eyes. "Well, I... uh, that is..." He cleared his throat. "Thanks... And you're welcome." He glanced down the shaft. "We'd better get moving. It's not going to take them long to figure out where we disappeared to."

"So, now what?"

"Good question."

The thief crawled forward, peeking out over the edge of the roof. Two more strike speeders were parked out front. A sizable guard watched the front of the building, surrounding a tall, thin man with a hooked beak of a nose. By his uniform, self-important stance, and position of relative guarded safety, Sconn assumed the man was the Imperial-in-charge.

Frowning, the thief scuttled over the roof and checked the back of the building. The strike speeder he had spotted earlier at the mouth of the alley was still there. He could see two stormtroopers watching the back door.

Sconn motioned Shandria over and gestured at the vehicle. "Can you pilot one of those things?"

She nodded. "Why?"

Sconn grinned, taking the staff in two hands. He flipped the small switch in the center of the handle and with a soft hum, both ends of the weapon began to charge with stun energy once more.

Shandria pursed her lips. "My, my... we're full of surprises, aren't we?"

"You ain't seen nothing yet." The thief grinned, then turned and jumped off the roof. Shandria watched in amazement as he landed right between the stormtroopers, who weren't expecting any company to drop in.

The first trooper took the stun staff right to the helmet, sending him crumpled to the floor. The second managed to lift his blaster, but Sconn was faster. His staff struck like a steel death-sword. The tip of the weapon struck the trooper's gun, sending it spiralling into the air. Sconn delivered two quick strikes to the defenseless trooper's gut, dropping him like a rock.

Without missing a beat, the thief then caught the trooper's rifle in mid-air and turned around just as the strike speeder pilot exited his craft, blaster pistol in hand. The pilot took two quick bolts from Sconn's captured gun and tumbled to the ground.

Sconn spun back around to stare up at Shandria and bowed theatrically. As he lifted back up, he was utterly shocked to see Shandria holding a small hold-out blaster pointed right at him. Before he could even move an inch, she fired.

The bolt sailed right over his head and a pained grunt sounded from behind him. Sconn whirled around to see another Imperial, dressed similarly to the pilot, go down. The man was holding his chest with one hand and in the other held the blaster pistol that would have shot the thief in the back.

"You forgot the co-pilot, laser brain," Shandria said as she hopped down to join him.

Sconn slowly nodded, mumbling his thanks.
The hook-nosed Imperial, Major Daraada, waited in annoyance for the woman to be found. Unfortunately, his trigger-happy stormtroopers had eliminated two of the New Republic spies. The last two of the cell he had been trying to expose for months.

There was still the woman, of course, but she was the youngest of the group and would know comparatively little in a New Republic cell that was already veiled in secrecy. Not to mention the deaths meant two less interrogation victims for the Major. And as much as he would have enjoyed the extra torture sessions, taking the woman alive was much more important. She had the stolen data card. As well as plenty of other interesting facts just waiting to be released in a flood of pain, Major Daraada thought with a grin.

Daraada was infamous for not employing an Imperial interrogator. He enjoyed the task too much himself to give anyone else the pleasure. Simple pleasures were always the best. Since his promotion, he had less time to enjoy such things, which is why he relished live prisoners.

When the woman talked, and the data card was recovered, there might be another promotion in it. One that would take him off the stinking planet he was currently attached to. The Major paused his contemplation for a moment to sniff the stale Vasaarian air, laced with the stench of cheap ale. Not much longer, he thought gloomily. His troops had cut off all escape routes.

Shandria L'mhar was as good as his, and whatever fool had attempted to help her was trapped as well. Daraada didn’t need information from the would-be hero, so he would just have his head.

Maybe on a force pike, the Major mused, stuck outside the Imperial Command Center. A message to the rest of the city — to let the populace know that the Empire still meant business, its iron fist securely grasping the worlds still under its influence. Once that was accomplished, the upstart New Republic and the traitorous Imperial factions would be next in line to feel its unyielding grip.

Daraada grinned wickedly, his long nose bobbing up and down as he nodded to himself. Yes, that was indeed what he would do, just as soon as they were caught. Any moment and they would be in his clutches. How dare they even think of defying the Empire? Or of defying the great Major Gaevril Daraada, for that matter!

At that moment, the great commander Gaevril Daraada ceased
his musings as he noticed a strike speeder roaring away from the bar at full speed. He squinted at it, checking the markings.

It couldn't be? Could it? Daraada lifted his comlink to his lips. "Major Daraada to Group C. Report." His only response was silence. Daraada sprinted around the building, followed by a half-dozen surprised stormtroopers who hurried to catch up with their leader.

The Major ran around the corner and his jaw nearly fell open. The alley was empty, except for four of his men who were strewn across the dirty pavement and among the garbage containers. His eyes widened in shock and all he could do was offer an enraged scream.

"So what's your story?"
Shandria looked up from the controls and smiled. "You're New Republic, aren't you?" he asked.
"How did you know?"
"None of you guys ever give up any information easily. Ask for the time of day and you get looked at like you were an ISB agent. Habit from the Rebellion days, I guess ..."
"You know that old Human maxim — old habits die hard."
"And so do the Rebels ..."
Shandria widened her grin, then shook her head in wonder. "Why are you helping me? I mean, you're a complete stranger. You're risking your life for me and I don't even know your name."
Scoon extended his hand. "Sien Dannon. Nice to meet you."
"Shandria L'Hnmar," she said, taking his hand into hers. "And you didn't answer my question."
"What question?"
Shandria grunted. "And you think we're secretive?"
Scoon laughed for a few moments, then seemed to grow deadly serious. "I hate the Empire."
"So do a lot of people. But not all of them do something about it."
"Well, this kind of stuff isn't exactly a habit for me."
She stared at him appraisingly. "Maybe it should be ..."
"You seem to have mistaken me for a hero, lady. Scoon shook his head emphatically. "I'm just your average guy trying to make a living."
"What do you do, anyway?"
Scoon looked at her, then bit down on his lip. "Uh ... Well, I guess, I'm what you call a 'procurement specialist.'"
Shandria flashed a wry grin. "Oh. So, you're an ordinary thief."

Scoon's face flushed. "I may be a lot of things, but I am not ordinary. And other people may call me a thief, but other people still call you Rebels, even with your New Republic. That doesn't make the description true." He took a deep breath, then continued. "If someone wants something, they hire me to 'acquire' it. Which I do, if and only if I think the target deserves it. And they're usually obscenely rich Imperial sympathizers. If that makes me a thief in your eyes, well so be it."
"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you."
"Hey! I'm just a thief, remember? On a backwater planet, no less. I'm not easily offended."
"Not so backwater. If you knew what was going on here ..."
"Don't tell me. I don't want to know."
"That's why the Empire is still around. Too many people like the bliss of ignorance."

Silence pervaded the strike speeder. Finally, Scoon cleared his throat.
"So, where exactly does this transport stop?"
"Ven-Kavi Starport. I've got to get off this planet. I have information that must get to the New Republic immediately. Information that could save millions of lives."
"So that's what this is about. Looks like we're not so different after all."
"What do you mean?"
"I mean, I steal material goods. You steal data."
Shandria frowned. "It's not the same thing at all.
"Why not?"
"You steal for profit. I'm doing what I do for the greater good."
"Well, so am I." Scoon jerked a thumb to his chest. "My greater good."
Shandria sighed, slowing down the strike speeder. She pressed a button, opening the door as the vehicle pulled to a stop.
Scoon glanced at the exit and then back at her. "What are you doing?"
"Letting you out. This isn't your concern. You helped me escape. And for that, I'm grateful. If there's anything I can do to repay —"
"Wait just a minute."
"What?"
"I'm not bailing out here! You have to get your information back to the New Republic. He pushed the button and the door closed. "And believe me, you're going to need all the help you can get."
"But ..."
Venaari
Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
Hydrosphere: Moderate
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Urban, forest, plains, mountains
Length of Day: 28 standard hours
Length of Year: 330 local days
 Sapient Species: Humans
Shipyard: 1 stellar class, 2 standard class
Population: 2 billion
Planet Function: Manufacturing, hidden Imperial base
Government: Imperial governor
Tech Level: Space
Major Exports: Mid technology, metals
Major Imports: High technology
Capsule: Venaari is the third planet in the Vellaziya system. It has been under Imperial control for many years, but only since the events of the Battle of Endor has the Empire maintained a formidable presence on this Mid-Rim world.
This intensified presence has borne the seeds of rebellion on the world, which was used to living in the relative freedom of anonymity. Realizing this, the New Republic quickly dispatched a handful of operatives to Venaari, and soon a sizable cell was in operation. It soon discovered the underground Imperial base that was responsible for the mysterious Project Orad. Discovering its secrets quickly became the cell’s priority.
The seat of government and the palace of Imperial Governor Vaerganth are located in the capital city of Ven-Kav, which is also home to the largest starport on the planet, Ven-Kavy Starport.

"Back at the Binary, I made you a promise. And I always keep my promises."
"You're a difficult person to figure out, Sienn Scorn."
"I told you... one of a kind," he grinned at her and gave a quick wink. "Now, let's go."

"Hurry! Speed this thing up! That's an order.
Major Daraa da slaped the back of the pilot's chair and glanced out the viewscreen. The two strike speeders were in pursuit of the captured vehicle, but their quarry had a large head start. No matter. He would get them. "Where are they now?"
we need to do is close off the rear." Daraada grinned maliciously.
"And Graphyt will do the rest ..."

Sconn looked up from the nav terminal. "We're almost there. And
the other two strike speeders are still way behind us."
Shandra laughed, a surprised giggle. "I think we're actually going
to make it!"
A dull roar filled the cabin as something passed overhead. Sconn
and Shandra exchanged a look. The roof shook as something landed
on it.
"What was that?" Sconn said as he stared upwards.
Shandra looked up in alarm. "Someone's on the roof."
"Give me your hold-out. I'll check it out."
Shandra handed over the small blaster. "Be careful."
"I'm always careful," Sconn said as he unlocked the top hatch. As
it opened, the rushing wind whipped Sconn's hair back into his face,
blinding him. He pushed away the fallen locks, and brandishing the
blaster in front of him, lifted himself up.
There was nothing on the back of the speeder but the mounted
heavy repeating blaster, hanging uselessly on its stock waiting
to be fired. Shrugging, the thief turned to check the front of the
vehicle.
Strong hands locked around Sconn's blaster arm as well as his
neck, squeezed taut, and lifted him up with inhuman strength.

Shandra whirled around as Sconn was hauled up and out of the
strike speeder. His kicking legs lingered for a second, then he was
gone. Eyes wide, she turned back to stare at the road. Her voice came
out as a low whisper. "Oh, no ..."

Pentix Graphyt was huge. A mountain of a man, if that's what he
truly was. Sconn couldn't exactly tell, since the giant's face was
covered by a mirror-like helmet. All the thief saw was the reflection
of himself being choked to death.
One of the bounty hunter's heavy gloved hands was crushing his
throat, while the other was busy turning the bonds of his right wrist
into powder. Sconn roared in pain as he tried to aim the hold-out at
his captor.
Graphyt merely squeezed harder. The pain was too much, and
Sconn released the weapon. It clattered to the roof, then bounced
off, careening away. The gun finally hit the road and shattered into
a thousand pieces.
The thief figured that the bounty hunter's sizable mass, combined
with the heavy chitinous black armor he wore, kept him
standing upright even in the face of the buffeting winds. Sconn also
realized that if the giant released him, he would endure the same fate
as Shandra's hold-out blaster.
Sconn could barely breathe. He had to think of something fast.
Graphyt was holding his right arm, but the attached wrist laser was
still pointing in the necessary direction. If he could just stretch his
arm.
Sconn screamed in pain, but managed to twist his wrist enough
and fired off the laser. It struck the bounty hunter on the right shoulder-piece of his armor, but to Scoon’s shock and horror, didn’t even leave a scratch on the shiny surface.

From underneath the mirrored mask, a deep booming voice began to laugh.

Scoon was enraged. With his left arm, he reached back, under his nearly airborne cloak and wrapped his fingers around the familiar thick metal handle of his stun staff.

The bounty hunter was one step ahead of him, however, and slammed Scoon down on his back, wrenching the thief’s left arm painfully in the socket and pinning it behind him. Scoon was in agony as Graphty jammed the knee joint of his armor right into his midriff. All the while, the giant retained his hold on Scoon’s neck and wrist.

The thief was having trouble seeing. Everything was getting dark and he couldn’t draw a breath. Scoon began to realize that he was finally out of tricks. This is it, he thought angrily. This was the end. Done in by some armored idiot who dropped in out of nowhere . . .

Scoon’s eyes widened as he spotted the rocket pack on the big bounty hunter’s back. That explained the roar they had heard. That’s how the hunter got aboard! The thief watched as the cooling vents released tiny hisses of smoke and a plan began to quickly form in Scoon’s head.

The thief almost blacked out for a second, but fought off the darkness with sheer willpower. He focused on the cooling unit of the pack, locking his eyes on it. At the same time, he twisted his wrist and took aim with the laser. Waves of unconsciousness began to flow over him, a tide of darkness pulling him down. His eyes fluttered wildly. Now or never, Scoon thought — then he fired off the beam.

His aim was true. The laser punctured the cooling unit, and a burst of flame mixed with the escaping steam. Graphyt turned his head to look as a warning beep sounded, followed by a tinny computerized voice.

“WARNING! COOLANT CORE HAS BEEN BREACHED. ONE MINUTE TO DESTROY. PLEASE STAND CLEAR.” Flashing indicators were in the red. The pack was about to explode. Snarling, the hunter released Scoon and stumbled back, ripping desperately at the straps on his back and shoulders.

Scoon groaned and rolled over, grabbing onto the open hatch for support as the wind tore at his light body. He leaned his head down and saw Shandria staring up at him. Her face went from shock to relief. “Thank goodness . . .” She blushed a bit at the emotion that flooded out with her last statement, then her face was all business once again. “They’ve got the starport entrance sealed! And the other two strike speeders are right behind us!”

Scoon looked up right into the wind, and saw that it was true. A large array of stormtroopers, Imperial starport security personnel, and combat speeders blockaded the entrance. No two ways about it. They were trapped.

As he considered their options, the sound of a grunt behind him drew the thief’s attention. Scoon turned and saw that the bounty hunter was still trying to struggle out of the pack. The straps were caught in the jointed segments of the armor, which hampered the giant’s movements even further.

“Thirty seconds to destruct,” intoned the computer, and Scoon grined. He leaned down to yell at Shandria. “Speed up!”

“What?”

“Do it!”

“You’re crazy, you know that?!”

“It’s my best quality.

“What’s your worst? Never mind, I don’t want to know!”

Laughing, Scoon reached into his pouch and pulled out two silver half-spheres. He leaped onto the struggling bounty hunter’s back and locked them into place on the pack’s cylindrical body. Graphyt whirled around and swung at him, but the thief ducked under the arm and came up right in front of the bounty hunter using his large body as a shield against the wind.

“Fifteen seconds to destruct,” announced the voice.

Scoon reached for the rocket pack’s control unit attached to Graphyt’s right chest-piece and pressed the pressure button. The thief quickly dropped to the roof of the vehicle and rolled forward. Scoon’s motion drove his coiled body directly into the bounty hunter’s legs, toppling Graphyt forward just as the pack fired wildly, emitting a burst of incredible power.

Screaming, Graphyt and his runaway jet pack streaked forward at twice the strike speeder’s speed.

From the cockpit, Shandria watched in wonder as the struggling giant soared overhead, headed right for the Imperial blockade at full speed.

Grinning, Scoon hopped back down into the cockpit and pulled out the silver control unit. As the bounty hunter streaked into the front of the blockade, Scoon hit the control switch.

The explosion that followed shook the entire area, throwing two of the combat speeders into the air like toys. A gout of flame roared out from the center of the explosion.
Venaari Strike Speeder

- **Craft:** Venaari Enterprises SV-50 Swift/Strike Speeder
- **Type:** Military assault speeder
- **Scale:** Speeder
- **Length:** 9 meters
- **Skill:** Repulsorlift operation: Venaari strike speeder
- **Crew:** 1
- **Guns:** 3
- **Passengers:** 10
- **Cargo Capacity:** 1 metric ton
- **Cover:** Full
- **Altitude Range:** Ground level—1 meter
- **Maneuverability:** 2D
- **Move:** 90-260 km/h
- **Body Strength:** 2D
- **Weapons:**
  - Heavy Blaster Cannon
    - **Fire Arc:** Turret
    - **Crew:** 1
    - **Shell:** Vehicle blasters
    - **Fire Control:** 2D
    - **Range:** 50-300/500/1000
    - **Damage:** 6D
  - Double Laser Cannon
    - **Fire Arc:** Front
    - **Shell:** Vehicle blasters
    - **Fire Control:** 1D
    - **Range:** 50-200/300/750
    - **Damage:** 4D

**Capsule:** The Venaari strike speeder is one of Venaari Enterprises' greatest achievements as well as their largest contribution to the Imperial war machine. The strike speeder is a versatile, extremely reliable attack craft. It transports attack squadrons where they need to be quickly with enough firepower to protect their deployment.

The strike speeders are widely used on Imperial-held planets throughout the Mid Rim, where the Empire, the New Republic, and splinter Imperial factions are battling for supremacy.

Sconn gestured wildly at the hole. "There's our hole! Punch it!" Shandria pushed the strike speeder to its limit and the vehicle roared in response, tearing into the flaming hole at full speed. Sconn wrapped his arms around Shandria and both of them ducked down as the viewscreen exploded from heat expansion.

The strike speeder rumbled two more airspeeders, enduring minor damage from the collisions and flames. It finally roared out the other side of the blockade at full speed, streaming a trail of fire and wreckage behind it.

Sconn and Shandria looked up, amazed that they were still alive, and headed right for the docking bays. Sconn let out an excited whoop and Shandria couldn't contain her smile.

Their celebration was cut short, however, as the strike speeder began to shake and groan.

"This thing isn't going to make it much farther," Sconn said.

"Luckily we don't have far to go. My docking bay is right up there."

"Better hurry," Sconn warned as he checked the computers.

"Those Imperials don't look like they're ready to give up just yet."

"Don't turn, you idiots! Follow their path!" Daraada's scream echoed through the strike speeder as he dove for the controls. The pilot's instinct had been to try and avoid the flaming wreckage, but it was a tactical mistake, as Daraada realized. At the speed they were going, it would also be a deadly one.

The other pursuing strike speeder had already tried to swerve, but the maneuver resulted in the vehicle crashing into what was left of the blockade and exploding.

Daraada's quick thinking and action saved his vehicle and his life. The speeder screamed through the hole as easily as the stolen one did. The pilots exchanged relieved glances, but they didn't last long as Daraada barked orders in their faces.

"Now keep on them! They must not escape!" Daraada sat back in his chair and added in a threatening whisper, "But if they do, the interrogation rooms will still all be occupied."

"There it is," Shandria yelled. "There's my ship!"

The stolen speeder screeched to a halt at the entrance to docking bay 18, and Shandria nearly leaped out the door. Sconn followed, glancing at the Y-wing fighter inside.

"There's room for two, you know," Shandria added softly.

The thief smiled, then glanced over his shoulder as he heard the other strike speeder approaching. It would be on top of them very shortly.

"You'd better get going," he said quietly. "I'll hold 'em off as long as I can."
“Why don’t you come with me? We could use someone with your... talents.”


Shandria glanced at the approaching vehicle with a worried look.

“I can’t just leave you here. They’ll kill you.”

“If they catch me, maybe. It’s not you’re problem. You’ve got a job to finish. That’s your problem. Now, go ahead... get going.”

“I’ll never forget this.” Shandria hugged him tightly and whispered in his ear. “I’ll never forget you.” Before Scann could say anything, she kissed him on the lips. Softly and tenderly.

“You really are one of a kind, Sienn Scann.” With that, she turned and ran to her ship, but Scann was too busy letting her softlyscented smell wash over him to notice.

The pursuing strike speeder’s imminent arrival snapped him out of his reverie. Scann turned and hopped back onto the stolen speeder. He quickly made his way across the roof and hopped into the gunner’s niche. The thief grabbed a hold of the mounted heavy blaster cannon and turned the large weapon towards the other strike speeder. He opened fire, raking blasts across the approaching vehicle — which slowed down considerably.

The roar of powerful engines drew Scann’s attention upwards and he watched Shandria’s ship lift up from its docking bay. He saw her face for an instant and grinned, flashing a quick wink.

Inside the Y-wing, Shandria quickly wiped a tear from her cheek.

“May the Force be with you,” she whispered, and punched the engines.

The Y-wing roared up into the atmosphere, and was nothing more than a tiny set of twinkling lights.

Scann grinned and gave the disappearing craft a quick salute. Blaster fire streaked across his speeder, rocking it. As Scann climbed out of the gunner’s seat, the blaster cannon was hit. The heavy weapon exploded, and the force of the blast knocked him down into the cockpit of the vehicle.

Grinning in pain from his hard landing, Scann got to his feet and checked the speeder’s controls. It wouldn’t be going anywhere anytime soon. The thief looked out the side viewport.

The last strike speeder was closing in, followed by a large force that seemed to flow from every corner of the starport.

Scann frowned and quickly exited the useless speeder and checked the landing bay. He was definitely trapped. “Hmm. Better over-prepared than under the ground,” the thief said softly. “But how could you prepare for this?”

Scann began quickly backing up, into the docking bay and away from the approaching vehicles. “Think, think. Come on, Scann...” The back of the thief’s right foot hit a large fuel line and he fell backwards, landing on his rear end. “Great. Not only am I going to die, I’m going to die without a shred of dignity.”

As Scann got to his feet, he spotted what it was he had landed on. It was a locked, metallic access panel that read, “Caution: power/fuel maintenance conduit — official starport use only.” A grin slowly spread across the thief’s face as he powered up his wrist laser.

“Then again, maybe being under the ground isn’t so bad after all...”

The stormtroopers approached Daraada, who watched with a creased brow as his men literally tore the stolen speeder apart.

“No sign of anyone, sir,” reported the first trooper.

Daraada frowned, looking ready to explode into a blind rage. Nodding, he waved the two troopers off.

They had managed to escape — the woman had, at least, with the stolen data card. And her accomplice was nowhere to be found. The Major’s shoulders slumped. This was not his day...

Slowly, though, a smile crept across his face as he stared at the command team from the speeder. His interrogation chamber would have no Rebels, but it would be occupied nonetheless. Grinning maliciously at the thought of prisoners begging him to spare their miserable lives, Daraada started toward the group. The Major stepped right onto the maintenance access panel, but was so intent on his soon-to-be prey, he took no notice of it.
Sconn stopped crawling for a moment as he heard the heavy footfall on the access panel echo through the maintenance tunnel. He drew a deep breath and waited.

No other sound followed. Exhaling in relief, the thief continued to squeeze forward into the tight, dimly lit shaft, giving thanks every few meters that he hadn't inherited his uncle's eating habits.

Dirty and a bit disheveled from his tour of the maintenance tunnel, Sconn moved quickly through the crowded starport, never looking back. For the first time in his life, the one-of-a-kind thief was glad he had a face that didn't stand out in a crowd.

Sconn spotted a mirror and smiled at his image, smoothing his cloak as he passed. His fingers hit something rough at his side. The thief curiously checked into his pocket. Inside was a cred stick. Shocked, Sconn quickly examined the screen readout. Twenty-five thousand credits, and a message. He cycled it and read:

"Try not to steal from anybody for a while, okay?"
—Shandria

Sconn laughed all the way to his apartment, arriving as dusk fell—just in time to pay his landlord.

After the Devaronian had taken her credits and left, he snuck up to the roof and sat down under the blanket of night. As the cool breeze swept over him, Sconn stared up at the twinkling stars, wondering which one Shandria was heading for. And a warm smile slowly spread across his face.

It had been a really great day...
Bill Smith:

An Inside Look At ...

STAR WARS Gaming

By Ilene Rosenberg

The October 1992 release of the second edition of Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game may have thrilled fans of the movies and the game. But no fan of the first edition could possibly have been as thrilled as Bill Smith. "The first time I saw the book in the warehouse, it literally brought tears to my eyes. I turned into a complete sap."

West End Games' 26 year-old Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game line editor had every reason to be sentimental. In 1990, Mr. Smith, an avid fan of West End Games' Star Wars and Torg games, submitted his resumé to West End. Two years later, on the fifth anniversary of the first edition's release, he was in the warehouse looking at his project — a blue hard-covered revision of the roleplaying system. "That was a killer book. It was a lot of fun, but boy, what a bear to go through. It was tough, but it was worth it. Just to hold the book in my hands for the first time was just amazing for me."

Mr. Smith, who last month celebrated his fourth year on the West End Games staff, received his bachelor's degree in communications from the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York. But even then, what he really wanted to do was design games. And the Honesdale, Pennsylvania resident got his wish. He now works full time at West End Games as a staff editor and does a lot of freelance writing about the Star Wars universe.

"It's a great job. I love it. It drives me nuts sometimes, but I love it."

Q: How did you get involved with West End Games' Star Wars roleplaying game?

A: I was naturally a huge Star Wars fan. I had been involved in gaming since I was in about the eighth grade. Of course it started with Dungeons & Dragons, like everybody else. I heard that West End was doing a Star Wars roleplaying game and went out and bought it the day I saw it at a local comic book store up in Albany. I started playing it immediately and stayed with it very consistently up until 1990, when Torg, which is another West End game, came out. I started playing that very religiously.

In November of 90, I was sitting around with a bunch of my friends one night saying, "I like what I'm doing now" — which was editing a trade magazine — "But I really want to go work in games. I really want to go work for West End Games because I love their stuff." One of my friends looks at me and says, "Well, quit whining and send in your resumé," and I did. I was lucky enough to get an interview. The editing experience and the gaming experience were helpful, from West End's point of view. And I got offered the job and started working on Star Wars when I walked through the door.

Q: Did you start right off working on Second Edition?

A: I started off working on a couple of Torg products — a couple of adventures, and things like that. The first Star Wars product I did was Cracken's Rebel Field Guide. I did three or four adventures, basically small Star Wars supplements. The opportunity to do Second Edition didn't come up until after I'd been at West End for a year. The book was published after I was at West End about two years.
Q: Obviously, you are quite familiar with the first edition rules for the Star Wars roleplaying universe. What did you think of the original system?

A: I really liked it. One of the objectives from West End and from Greg Costikyan — who did the original design — was to come up with a game system that was easy for people to learn how to play — especially if they’ve never gamed — and that reflected the fun and heroic nature of the Star Wars movies and the Star Wars universe.

Basically, things worked out really well for Greg because he basically used a variant on the old Ghostbusters system, which West End published. He reworked a lot of the elements to fine-tune the game to Star Wars, and it worked really well.

I really enjoyed Star Wars, the first edition. A lot of Second Edition was to try to come up with things to round out the game, as opposed to change the game. The basic system worked really well, but there were a few things that people had pointed out that they wanted to see addressed in a different way.

The Star Wars Rules Companion — which was published in 1989 or ’90 and was written by Greg Gorden — was an attempt to address a lot of those problems, and did a pretty good job with it. When I did Second Edition, most of it was going back and consolidating a lot of those things, and then adding additional information on certain elements — lots of new skills, and adding things like skill specializations so you could really fine-tune a character to be what you wanted him or her to be.

We were providing more information about the universe. We were getting to the point where we were saying, “If you want to play Star Wars, you’re going to need these four books.” Basic information was spread across a bunch of different books; we wanted to try and get all the information you really needed to start in one book. That way we could tell people, “All you need is this one book to start.”

Q: What do you think is the most significant change made in the second edition of the Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game rules? Why did you make this change?

A: I would say probably the most significant change is the addition and the explanation of the various skills. What happened is we had several situations where characters were trying to do things and the skills didn’t quite fit what they wanted to do. So, we went through and we split up starship piloting, for example, into three different skills: space transports, starfighter piloting, and capital ship piloting. Just because Han Solo’s really good at flying the Millennium Falcon, that doesn’t mean he’s going to be good at flying an Imperial Star Destroyer, especially if he’s never done it before. But with the old game system, we had to decide what the ideas were that you might be really good with space transports like the Falcon, but might have never flown a fighter, and your skills should reflect that.

We added the opportunity to do specializations so you could get, “Well, I’m really good at my X-wing, but I’m not really good at anything else,” which is accurate in the real world. If you drive the same car every day, you might be really good at it, but you might not be able to drive anything else really well, because you’ve never done it.

The thing with Second Edition was there weren’t a lot of major revisions; there were a lot of minor overhauls.

The other thing that was important was finalizing the idea of the scale rules and specific movement rates into the game, which had been worked on with the Star Wars Rules Companion. I further took that basic system and refined it a little bit more to provide more detailed information about where your ship is going. But also to not get so technical that it was overwhelming. We wanted to give people a sense of where their ships or vehicles are in relation to each other when they’re running chases without fine-tuning it down to a blow-by-blow, almost tactical level game.

We put in the universe chapter, which is one of the things I’m most proud of with Second Edition, because that is the 10-page chapter that was really missing in the first edition that says, “This is how the universe works.” We put a lot of basic stats for a lot of the vehicles in, which was completely missing in the first rule book, because you really want to have some examples to refer to as benchmarks, so when you go out to create your own stuff, you have an idea of where they should be in relation to everything else.

Probably the most significant thing with Second Edition is opening the game up from just playing the Rebels fighting the Empire to cover the entire Star Wars time frame, including after the third movie, Return of the Jedi, and talking about the galaxy when the Rebels have had a chance to set up a government. And also saying, well yes, you can play Rebels, but you don’t have to. In the first edition, you had to be Rebel Alliance operatives, but in this game,
you can play anybody in the Star Wars universe — from a smuggler to a bounty hunter to a scout to a Rebel Alliance freedom fighter.

Because of that, you have a lot of game-playing opportunities, and there's a lot of opportunity to explore the Star Wars universe. I'm most happy with that development of the game line.

Q: What were the new character templates added in the second edition rulebook and what templates did you leave out from the first edition? Why did you make these character changes?

A: The ones that were left out were left out because of space limitations. The new ones that we added were things like the New Republic diplomat and the protocol droid. We wanted to add those to give people more of a sense of the variety of characters they could play. We wanted to do a couple of characters that were not specifically allied with the Alliance, or tied to the New Republic timeframe, that were independent of the Rebellion.

We dropped some of the existing templates again just because of space. The ones we kept from the first edition were the ones that had to be in there. The smuggler, the Wookiee, the bounty hunter and, of course, I kept the kid because I really like playing the kid.

Q: Did you have trouble writing or rewriting a particular part of the Star Wars roleplaying system?

A: Not really. A few things were kind of difficult. Working with the Force powers and the Force itself was probably the most difficult of the game. I decided to substantially revise the Force system because people were using it for so long, I felt there would have been a lot of resentment if we really, really changed how Force powers worked. We did institute the system where you have to have certain types of powers before you can learn others to reflect the idea that the Force is a learning process, where you have to learn certain elementary things before you can move up to the more powerful abilities. Beyond that, we didn't do a lot of additions. That was probably one of the hardest things to work with, because the Force is such a tricky subject, in terms of getting the game to reflect the universe.

One of the ways I look at things is the game rules are there to support the universe. The game rules are there to enhance your ability to tell a story, they are not there to dictate a story. So, you have to really work with the rules to give them the right kind of feel so they fit in with the story you want to tell. There's nothing worse than playing a game where everybody's saying, "But reality says this should happen, this is the way this universe works." But the game rules give you a completely different result. I wanted to get away from that with Star Wars and say, "The rules should be adjusted to fit the reality of what will happen."

There was a lot of trying to connect different subsystems together that sometimes worked really well and at other times were really frustrating. Vehicles were kind of a bear to work on. We went through a couple of different variants on the vehicle rules, and I'm personally still not really happy with what we came up with. But it was better than any of the other ones we came up with at the time.

Q: Aside from the vehicles, is there anything in the second edition you think could be changed or improved upon? If so, what and why?

A: I'd say vehicle rules are the most problematic area — movement and chase rules. We've actually come up with a couple of variants that we're play-testing now. They're just to make the game more lighthearted and get the game back to the storytelling elements, as opposed to being so technical.

The die-cap rules we're taking a look at. The other big thing is the Force power stuff and trying to come up with something that's a little bit more consistent.

Most of the other things work fairly well, because it's all pretty intuitive. The game system has one central mechanic — set a difficulty number, roll your dice, if you beat the difficulty number, you've succeeded. And 90 percent of the game follows that very simple core idea. So we're not really looking at revising anything, per se.

Q: In addition to the movies, West End Games has created sourcebooks for Dark Horse Comix's Dark Empire, as well as others for the novels. Are the authors and artists of the comics and novels involved in the process of creating statistics and back-grounds for their characters and aliens?

A: We like to have the original creators involved as much as possible. We really try to cultivate a good working relationship with the original creators. When we do our sourcebooks, we want the sourcebook to reflect the author's original vision while still showing people how to take an existing story line and incorporate it into the larger Star Wars universe.

With some authors, like Tim Zahn (author of Heir to the Empire,
An Inside Look At Star Wars Gaming

Dark Force Rising, and The Lost Command), we've been able to develop a very close relationship. Tim has offered a lot of suggestions and a lot of ideas with regards to the sourcebooks adapting his novels and explaining the backgrounds of the characters. He's provided a lot of information and a lot of really neat ideas. He's really a real pleasure to work with.

Kevin Anderson has also shown himself to be very interested in what is being developed and has offered to be helpful when we adapt his Jedi Academy novels to the roleplaying game.

We definitely try to work with the authors if at all possible, because we want the books to feel authentic.

Q: Was Lucasfilm closely involved with the creation of the second edition rulebook, as well as the supplementary books that followed?

A: Lucasfilm reads and approves everything that is published with the Star Wars name on it, whether it's a comic book, a roleplaying game or a novel. We bounced a lot of ideas off of them, going, "Can we say this, can we say that," as we were developing it. They read and looked over everything as it was going along.

A lot of time Lucasfilm will provide guidance on specific subjects to avoid or give specific comments to make sure a particular subject's in the right context. One of the areas they are most sensitive to is the nature of the Force, because that's going to figure prominently throughout any future installments in the Star Wars mythos. They're very sensitive about what we say about the history (of the galaxy), because the word is that they will be doing prequels. They don't want us to say anything absolutely definitive because they know that our fans are very serious Star Wars fans and will pay attention to what's said. They don't want anything getting too close to what may be happening in the new movies. They want the new movies to be a surprise.

Q: Was there anything you wanted to add to the second edition rulebook that Lucasfilm rejected?

A: Actually, there was nothing that I wanted to do that they rejected. There were a couple of things that I wanted to do that West End Games' management kind of discouraged me not to do. I wanted to do a larger map of the galaxy, and then the more I got looking at it, the more I realized it would be a really daunting task. West End management really encouraged me to stay away from that because that would have been a whole bunch more time. I was already running well over deadline.

We simply just ran out of time and ran out of space. The book came in a lot longer than it was supposed to be, word-count-wise. We really had to try and squeeze everything into that book.

Q: Have you received any criticism or compliments from role players of both editions? What were some of their comments — good and bad — on the second edition system in comparison with the first edition?

A: The overall consensus is that people really tend to like both editions. First edition they like because it's so fun, breezy and light-hearted. Second Edition they like because it takes a more serious look at the nature of the Star Wars universe and gives a more thorough attempt at really providing a good framework. The first edition was a cool set of rules that said, "Star Wars is fun and action adventure and just run with it." Second Edition is a little bit more, "Well, here's the universe you're running in." And people appreciate both elements.

They like Second Edition because it provides so many new options that you can do with the game, but it doesn't obligated to use them. The complaints about first edition were some people wanted specific movement rules, they wanted a refinement of the Force system. A lot of the changes that you saw in Second Edition were based on pretty consistent recommendations from people. They wanted to see simple fixes to problems that came up with the nature of the basic game system — things like Wookiee characters were basically unstoppable when they went up against squads of stormtroopers. So we introduced things like the Wild Die, which are very simple fixes to problems. Most of those things have gone over well. For people who have said, "Well, I don't like the Wild die," or, "I don't like the movement system, like the first edition movement system," or, "I don't like how you have a hierarchy for Force powers," I tell people, "Use whatever is more comfortable for your game system." Pick and choose from the things that you like the most. Do whatever's right for you and your game club.

Overall, both editions seem to have been accepted pretty well. Second Edition is selling very, very well. It's consistently restocked.
and it's got a long
shelf life in the game
industry, which is
good. A lot of games
come and go quickly.
Second Edition has
hung on there, as
well as first edition has.
The game line as a
whole is continually
growing, which is
nice. More people are
coming into the game
... discovering it af-
after picking up the new
novels, or hearing
about the game from
their friends.

Q: What new West
End Games Star
Wars products can
roleplayers expect to
see on the shelves of
their favorite comic shop or book store in the coming months?

A: Peter Schweighofer, who's the editor of the Star Wars Adventure
Journal, is going to be writing a book called Platt's Starport Guide,
which is going to be a big 160-page soft-cover book. There's going to
be different starports in the Star Wars galaxy, all new ones, de-
scribed from the point of view of Peter's character, Platt Okeefe, who
is a smuggler extraordinary. Chris Gossett, who's done some of the
artwork for Tales of the Jedi, and will be doing some of the artwork
for the Dark Lords of the Sith comics series from Dark Horse Comics,
is going to be doing a lot of the interior color art for this book. Just
reading Peter's drafts through, it's going to be a blockbuster. I think
it's going to be a really, really good book for the game line. I think it's
going to be a nice breath of fresh air.

In March, we're doing Fantastic Technology, which will be a guide
book to new and wondrous items of the Star Wars galaxy, including,
of course, the usual assortment of new weapons.

In April, we're doing a sourcebook based on the Lando Calrissian
novels, which were just reissued by Del Rey last summer. We're very
excited about that because the author's got a real good perspective.
He's writing the book as if Lando Calrissian had written an autobiog-
raphy. It's going to be very, very interesting. We're going to have a
lot of fun with that. The author, Brian Thomas, communicates
extensively with L. Neil Smith, who's the original author of the
novels. It's going to have an authentic feel to it.

In June, we're doing the Braak Sector Guide, which is going to be a
new sector of space that the characters can adventure in. This is a
sector where the player characters really determine the future of
the sector. The characters are not going to be pawns in this ongoing
struggle, where what they do really doesn't matter. They're going to
be the heroes of this sector.

We're doing a bunch of other projects for the fall. We're doing a
starship guide. We're doing a sourcebook based on Kathy Tyers'
novel, The Trace at Bakura. That sourcebook will be co-written by
Kathy herself and Eric Trautmann --- he wrote The Last Command
Sourcebook. We're doing a new galaxy guide on alien races, and
we're doing a big guidebook on characters of the Star Wars universe
for December. It will not provide an alternate character generation
system, but it's going to be a book that's going to include 50 or 60
new templates, and it's going to show players what they can do with
the existing character generation system.

Q: What makes Star Wars a timeless story which can be
enjoyed by all generations?

A: I think it's a timeless story for a lot of reasons. There are very
human characters that people can identify with. Whether you're a
young kid or a businessman or a college student, there's a character
in the Star Wars movies that you can really identify with.

The other thing that makes Star Wars timeless is it is a story told
against a larger than life setting that's somehow believable. It's the
same way that the Greek myths were told against a setting that was
somewhat familiar --- it was supposedly their world. But the things
were so fantastic. With the Star Wars stories there's this great galaxy-
spanning Empire that is just so fantastic --- it's a wondrous place to
visit, like Wonderland, or Oz. It's just amazing. Yet the elements of
that universe make it feel real --- the starships are dirty, everything's
banged and beat-up, people speak different languages, they act like
people. So you've got this incredibly dramatic setting for this very
human story. Whether or not the story's about saving the galaxy or
about one person’s decision about what they want their life to be, and whether or not they’re willing to take the risks to make that life happen. It’s something that people can identify with and still be caught up in. It’s larger than life, while not being so large that it no longer pulls at your emotional strings.

Every time I see that scene with the twin setting suns, when Luke’s looking out over the desert landscape, it really still gets me, even though now I’ve had to have seen it hundreds of times. It still very, very dramatically has its impact. And every time I watch the movie on videotape, I can sit back and remember what it’s like to be at the drive-in when I was eight years old and go, “Gee, I wonder what the other types of planets in this place are like. I wonder what other types of alien creatures and starships they have,” and being so caught up in those movies that I didn’t want to leave.

It is a story for the whole family. There isn’t a need to go for the excesses that other film-makers in Hollywood seem to be so happy to do. And it’s got a moral context, which is really nice. In this day and age, there’s a real reluctance to come out with a strong moral stand: “Why is he the good guy? Because he’s the good guy, okay?” With Star Wars, you see why these characters are heroes. They’re heroes not because they’re fighting the Empire. They’re heroes because they stand up for what they know is right and because they do what’s important. Being the hero is something that you do on a daily basis, standing up for the things that are morally correct. In a time when no one wants to take responsibility for their actions, it’s a movie that says, “No, you have to fight for what’s right.”

by Stephen Luminati

"Bwoop! Twiddle twiddle! Gro-boop, Beedy-beedy-beedy-thw-wweep." "For goodness sake, stop your chattering! He can’t understand your chaotic jabbering."

"Bwoop!"

"And don’t start on me, either. Why I put up with your nonsense is quite beyond my capacity."

"Bweep!"

"Oh, switch off! Oh, not you Sir. I’m terribly sorry, Sir. You see, I was just talking to my counterpart here, actually, when my sensors failed to detect your approach."
"Beep heep heep heep ..."

"I fail to see the humor in this R2! Ahem, Sir, permit me to introduce myself. I am C-D20, human-cyborg relations. And this ..."

"thunk: Breeeeeep!"

"... is my counterpart, R2-RD, starship specifications astromech droid. Captain Antilles has mentioned your need for another freighter for this upcoming mission, and has assigned us to assist you. Our facilities are at your disposal. Which, if I may say, are quite extensive. I am fluent in over six-million forms of programming languages, including astrogation computers, diagnostic intelligences, and ..."

"Boop!"

"Yes, I was just getting to that, R2. I’m dreadfully sorry, Sir, but Ordnance and Supply seems to be fresh out of YT-1300 light freighters.

"Yes, Sir. I know it’s the most popular light freighter. Yes Sir, I know it’s infinitely modifiable. Sir... Sir!

"Rest easy, Sir, there are plenty of other freighters to choose from. I’m quite confident you’ll find one to your liking. These starships engineers are quite clever, you know. Now, R2 ... R2?"

"Boop."

"R2-RD! Stop reprogramming that helpless power droid! Come over here and recall the starship databases."

"Raa-wooop?"

"The ones Commander Dauntast just showed us, you malfunctioning little twerp! The reason why we’re down in this hangar in the first place!"

"Wooop. Beep-woop."

"That’s better. Here it comes. Now, here’s one that’s similar to your YT-1300 in most respects. The HT-2200 medium freighter, by Corellian Engineering Corporation ..."

**Corellian HT-2200**

Released shortly after the tremendously successful YT-1300, the HT-2200 answered the need for a freighter capable of handling more massive and varied cargo loads than the 1300 could support. Not only was the YT-1300 limited to 100 metric tons of cargo space, but the entire cargo area was often contiguous and incapable of supporting a variety of environmental conditions (such as super-cooled compartments) without drastic modifications. The HT-2200 has four cargo bays, each one with the capability to be programmed with its own life support settings. In the same flight, one HT-2200 can carry cryogenic bio samples and zero-G crystalline chips. This capability, along with its overall cargo capacity, makes it easier for a pilot and crew to secure high profit margins.
Corellian HT-2200

Craft: Corellian Engineering Corporation HT-2200
Type: Medium freighter
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 54.8 meters
Skill: Space Transports: HT-2200
Crew: 2
Passengers: 8
Cargo Capacity: 400 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Cost: 240,000 credits (new); 116,000 credits (used)
Hyperdrive Multipliers: 2x
Hyperdrive Backup: x1.5
Nav Computer: Yes
Speed: 3
Atmosphere: 260, 750 km/h
Hull: 50
Shields: 10
Sensors:
  Passive: 10/10
  Scan: 20/30
  Search: 40/20
  Focus: 2/30
Weapons:
  2 Pulse Laser Cannons
    Fire Arc: Target
    Skill: Starship gunnery
    Fire Control: 20
    Space Range: 1-3, 12-25
    Atmosphere Range: 100-300, 1-2.5 km
    Damage: 40

Game Notes: Since this vessel is easily modified, engineers gain a +5 bonus to their space transports repair rolls when performing modifications on an HT-2200.

However, this capacity does not come without a performance cost. A ship with such high space displacement becomes infinitely less maneuverable. Since the Corellian Engineering Corporation was well aware that a large percentage of its customer base was involved in less-than-legal freight runs, it installed a NavalDEX GA21 shield generator to improve the freighter's defensive capabilities. The main superstructure has been reinforced, and trimantium plating lines the hull to provide the ship with unusually high tensile strength. Overall, the 2200 can withstand twice the punishment, both in terms of shear forces and focused energy, than the lighter YT-1300 can endure.

The factory weapons load-out consists of two Taim & Bak "Quello" single-barrel laser cannons, mounted on 360-degree tur-
access the singularity you call your memory store and recall another starship!"

**Starfield’s Seeker Z-10**

The Seeker Z-10 was originally slated to fulfill a major role in the scout force. The Z-10 marked the first entry of Starfield Industries into the starship market — Starfield believed it could easily design a ship to replace the aging Vanguard Pathfinder. The design scheme was simple: create a starship with powerful sensor arrays and a strong drive assembly. To keep the ship maneuverable and inexpensive to operate, designers refrained from installing complex weapon systems, relying on Seeker pilots to out-run trouble instead of confronting it. Albeit a reasonable hypothesis, Z-10s on the rim were often out-gunned by claim jumpers with far superior weaponry.

The ship soon fell into disfavor with scouts, but not before it

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**What You Don’t Know ...**

Debret stared at the stone-jawed Barabel, a two-meter-tall tower of muscle and bone, all without a sliver of emotion. No wonder they made such wonderful retainers.

"I was expecting to see Jarafok here," she addressed it.

The Barabel might as well have been a statue. Its blaster rifle, held across its torso, didn't even move with the breath in its chest. The deadly silence between the two of them was broken only by the power converters roaring the Sunland.

She took a step away from her trusted Starfield Z-10 Seeker. "I expect to know what I'm carrying," she demanded with arms akimbo.

Jarafok's goon didn't even twitch.

A deep voice echoed from across the landing bay. "He has his orders, Courier Nightmoon. As do you."

She had never liked Quarren, and particularly not this one. Nopan was as attractive as a sea slug, and just as trustworthy. As it glided across the docking bay, it continued to quiver its myriad of mouth-tentacles while it spoke.

"And you would do best to follow them," he said with a tone of finality. Behind him, Debret noticed a Starfield-compatible cargo module being repulsored in, no doubt from one of Jarafok's private warehouses. She strutted over to the pod as it was raised into position. With a bolt of surprise, she noticed that the module lacked standard life-support connections. Zyron, she couldn't even see an airlock collar.

"A sealed cargo compartment?" Debret inquired. She looked over the pod in disbelief as she noted the sensor-deadening nitorium alloy plating. *This thing has a thicker skin than my ship,* she realized.

"Although not a telepathic species, Nopan had guessed her thoughts. She felt his hideous presence draw nearer. "Jarafok wishes to be sure that his interests remain a secret, even to you."

Debret knew those last three words were a threat. The only way she could determine her cargo in-flight would be to burn her way in, and that intrusion would be easily detected at her destination. Albeit a long shot, she decided to try the diplomatic approach and forced a half-smile. "What? Jarafok doesn't trust me anymore?"

"Jarafok's trust is not a term in his contract with you, Courier Nightmoon."

The intense hissing of therma-bonders announced that the installation of the enigmatic burden was complete.

Nopan's mouth tentacles quivered in a hideous representation of a sarcastic smirk. "And in this case, what you might know would most certainly hurt you."
started making a name for itself in the courier business. Lightweight, yet possessing remarkable flight endurance, the Z-10 was the perfect ship for the quick delivery of perishable goods and information. Its impressive sensor arrays made it the perfect reconnaissance craft able to detect distant threats and personally speed the information to its dependents. Many private investors use Z-10s in some capacity, and several underground organizations have their own wing of Z-10 personal couriers.

The Seeker Z-10's hull layout consists of one long super-structure, just over 20 meters in length. The main fuselage holds all crew areas and drive mechanisms. Three stout starfoils project from the back of the Seeker, providing it with superior maneuverability in an atmosphere. When operating in space, the vector-redirecting Novaldex IV-71 ion engine provides agility without sacrificing interior system space. Cargo is carried in two pods attached to either side of the fuselage. These pods are linked to the Seeker's life support system, but can be detached in flight should the Z-10 need to relieve itself of dead weight.

The Z-10's sensor package is advanced for a ship of its classification. The Fabritech ANx/y/2 sensor cluster is identical to the module used in Incom's T-45 X-wing, save for the exclusion of the lateral scanning arrays. Although this exception reduces the detection range of the ANx/y/2 system, it still grants superior visibility to a relatively small ship like the Z-10. Dedicated energy receptors, full-spectrum transceivers, and life form indicators are the other detection modes that complete the Z-10's sensor package. (For a description of these modes, see the Star Wars Sourcebook, Second Edition.)

The Seeker's low design has some inherent disadvantages. The vessel is practically unarmored. Its sole weapon is a BlasTech Prm-3 pulse laser cannon. Mounted beneath the main fuselage, the cannon has a forward firing arc of 21 degrees. While a reputable company, BlasTech cut corners on the Prm-3 to make it affordable. As such, the weapon has a limited maximum output of 3,1 GP. This relatively low damage capability severely limits the number of ship designs with which a Z-10 can engage and expect to survive.

To save on space and cost, the Prm-3 does not have its own targeting system. Instead, it depends on targeting data fed to it from the Fabritech sensor array. While not as effective as a dedicated fire control system, this arrangement permits the Z-10 to have one of the lowest delivered costs in the space transports market. This fact may not comfort most captains when they lose their sensors, however, because such a failure also disables their only weapon's aiming capability. To make matters worse, the Z-10's original specifications do not include a shield generator. This design decision is widely regarded as a mistake, as its weapon emplacements and hull plating do not provide adequate protection.

The Seeker's flight control computer is notoriously picky about modifications. Since most of its systems are inter-dependent on one another, they all must be compatible with the Miradyne RCS-1. This company folded two years after the release of its RCS-6 (which was the same flight control computer used in the Imperial assault gunboat), orphaning many ship designs using Miradyne control computers. Only the most advanced starports have RCS-compatible parts in stock. Even worse, the RCS control computers enforce a
rigid set of inter-connectivity protocols. These electronic standards specify how data is to be shared between the computer and its dependent systems. If this data is not in strict compliance with these protocols, the connected starship systems will operate unreliable or fail altogether.

Regardless of its problems and its complaints, the Starfield Z-10 Seeker is a valued member of the space transports market for its low cost, high top-end, and superior maneuverability. It is especially popular in the Outer Rim Territories, where technological advancements are not as rapidly deployed as in the Core Worlds.

"Ah, if I understand your meaning, Sir, you find this option more preferable than the medium freighter. Allow me to show you a similar model from the same manufacturer. R2?"

**Starfield ZH-25 Questor**

Starfield Industries was quite pleased with the market's acceptance of the Z-10 Seeker, and doubly surprised with the adoption of the ship into its courier role. With one success in hand, Starfield executives began exploring design concepts for a larger ship to complement their growing product line. The prototype was to incorporate all the lightweight principles that made the Z-10 popular, but would boast stronger defenses and increased cargo capacity. Two years after the first Z-10 Seeker was delivered, development on the Starfield ZH-25 Questor was announced.

The conceptual design of the Questor started with the principles of the Z-10 and was then improved to produce a more reliable ship. The main fuselage is relatively unchanged, although it has been lengthened by 2.1 meters. The two cargo pods have been similarly modified, and are now protected by the same duranium hull plating as the rest of the ship. Two additional hull sections, similar in shape to the main fuselage, have been added on each side of the thrust axis. The layout of the entire superstructure is relatively transverse to its flight path, preserving most of the ZH-25's maneuverability characteristics.

Since one of the Seeker's appealing features was its prolonged flight-time, Starfield Industries decided to honor the Z-10's reputation for longevity. Not only can the Questor carry almost twice the cargo of the Seeker, but its life support plant can provide resources for six passengers and a full crew complement. Forty Imperial Mark IV fuel cells have been added, giving the Questor an average endurance of 2.9 standard months. These capabilities have been the major

focal point for Starfield Industries' advertisement campaign.

In an effort to offset the increased size and bulk of the ZH-25, the Nosalix JY-71 engine was replaced by the more powerful JV-74. Boasting three additional addition to the JV-74, the hyperdrive's specifications and performance metrics have gone unchanged.

Starfield Industries quickly became aware of their customers' need for a ship that could defend itself — raw speed and evasive capability weren't enough. Taking their cue from the Corellian Engineering Corporation, they replaced the low-power BlasTech cannon with twin fire-linked Taim and Bak pulse lasers. The lasers

**While Other Spacers Are Grounded in the Hangar,**

**You'll Still Be Making Money!**

Flight endurance. It's about how long you can stay in the sky. The ZH-25 Questor uses over 65 different types of bio-technologies in its life support system alone. It carries 75 Imperial Mark IV fuel cells, and is readily adaptable to many in-flight refuelling devices. Why? Simple. You've got a schedule to keep, and we know that it doesn't include fuel stops.

Starfield Industries' ZH-25 Questor. From the same company that brought you the highly acclaimed Z-10 Seeker. Because you aren't getting anywhere when you're on the ground.
are located on either side of the main fuselage, mounted directly fore of the cargo pods. While these weapons can only cover the forward fire arc, the ZH-25 is agile enough to maneuver itself into a killing position.

Since Starfeld abandoned the Miradyne RCS line as the ZH-25’s flight computer, the control system is much more forgiving toward additional system installations. Supplemental weapon systems are common modifications, two of which are a forward-firing concussion missile package and a rear laser turret. The ZH-25 also carries a Sirplex P-12 shield generator, further improving its defensive attributes.

While the ZH-25 prototype boasted improved shields, weapons, power generation, life support, and cargo capacity, its manufacturing cost was rapidly rising above the credit reserve of the private investor. To counter this trend, Starfeld Industries decided to down grade the Questor’s sensor systems. Since the ZH-25 could defend itself far better than the Z-10 could, it didn’t need such elaborate detection systems. The larger ship also had a much smaller chance of being used in scout duty, which was what the Z-10 was originally built for.
Many of the advanced sensor-interpreting computer systems were also unnecessary. A SoroSub sensor package was determined to fit the needs of the Questor. While not nearly as powerful as equivalent Fabritech systems, it was sufficient for most freighter roles. It is important to note that the ZH-25's weapon systems are independent of the main sensors, relieving the Questor of the fire control blackout problem that plagued the Z-10 seeker.

"I'm pleased that the most recent selection meets with your approval, Sir. Our inventory shows that the Vorpal Demise, a Starfield ZH-25 Questor, is within our ship stores and is ready for your..."

"Bloop twiddle-twiddle go-weep!"

"Oh, I'm sure they've fixed that by now, R2. Not repairing the collision chamber would be a rash... Sir? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Bee wee! Boop toweep deep."

"Captain Antilles said that was a last resort! He said specifically that he didn't want us to assign another ship with an illegal weapon load-out! (Especially to another... what did he say... 'hair-on-plasma-fire' bush pilot?)"

"Kathweep doop leep."

"I really don't care if it would be fun! I'm certain that Sir is not interested in that kind of racket. I,... Sir? Oh, I see, yes, Sir. No, Sir. Of course I'll elaborate, Sir. (See what you've done R2? Now he insists on seeing it.)"

"Deep beep."

"Very well, though I think we're going to regret this. Permit me to introduce the Interceptor-class Arakyd Helix."

**Arakyd Helix**

Arakyd Industries is a widely recognized leader of starship weapon systems and associated technologies. In the past, they had been only a traditional components manufacturer; selling their stock and customized equipment to industrial shipyards and private investors alike.

The Helix's superstructure emphasizes maneuverability in vacuum. Thruster banks are located along each of the six curved trusses that run half the length of the starship. To the casual observer, these trusses may appear to be an afterthought, as they noticeably project from the primary fuselage. However, by placing the thruster banks as far from the Helix's center of momentum as possible, each thruster rocket has a much greater effect on turning acceleration.

However, these relatively weak hull trusses cannot be easily reinforced and are easy prey to forces found in an atmosphere, namely resistance and drag. To ensure safe operation while in an
While they can be overridden in an emergency, it is likely that the maneuverability jet supports will be ripped asunder as they are buffeted by the atmosphere. All other hull plating is a duranium-kathor composite, capable of withstanding up to 75 Gs without alluvial dampering effects.

Four H4 Block ion drives provide the Helix with its primary propulsion. These drives are prominently mounted along the transverse wings, and are arranged in a staggered dorsal-ventral configuration for maximum maneuverability. Since the Arakyd Helix already has a strong energy signature, Arakyd engineers dropped heat and emission baffling from the engine schematics. As a result, the sensor return on an Arakyd Helix is notably strong. Surveillance station operators have little or no difficulty tracking a Helix as soon as it enters their system.

Arakyd released two versions of the Helix. The first was equipped with a standard Incom G6p-625 hyperdrive; the second “B” model was fitted with the faster G6p-629. Apart from hyperdrive performance specifications and minor configuration options, the two Helix models are identical.

It is a small miracle how Arakyd convinced the Bureau of Ship Services (BoSS) to classify the Helix as a transport vessel. Its weapon load-out for a ship of its size is clearly illegal. The primary armament consists of two Plasburst laser cannons mounted amidships. The Plasburst cannons are customarily fire-linked, but can fire separately at different targets if required. They are mounted on the ventral hull section, one on each side of the cockpit module. This gives each cannon a clear shot at any target within the ventral half of the Helix’s relative flight plane. Obviously, the thought of ground support had occurred to Arakyd designers, otherwise they would have positioned the laser cannons in a less obvious (and vulnerable) position.

Two linked ion cannons are shoulder-fired directly above the laser turrets. Their ionic discharge rate is consistent with military weapons of their class. A proton torpedo launcher lies directly amidships, with a capacity to hold up to five Mark V-rated torpedoes. The launcher is located at the most dorsal position on the entire starframe.

Six months after the first Arakyd Helix was delivered, the BoSS realized its critical mistake. An Imperial mandate was published that forbade the manufacture of further Arakyd Helixes or Helix modified design types. Arakyd Industries, not willing to risk their entire corporation by challenging Imperial rule, complied with the order, but not before thousands of Helixes were shipped.
Kizbon's Box

Resting his dark boots on the fire control pad, Larken glanced at the sensors. "Here comes our boy now."

A pinprick of light heralded the entry of a starship from hyperspace. The target, unaware of its classification as such, gently changed course toward the Darkmoon Space Station.

In the cockpit of the Pillage, Larken scratched his unshaven chin. "Easier than boiling Mon Cal, he thought. He checked the status of the other two pirate ships. Profit and Trust Me were ahead of him by 20,000 kilometers, but were still protected by the sensor-blinding magnetic storm. Larken's job was to make sure their mark didn't double-back in an effort to escape, although he secretly hoped that the flyboy tried to do just that. Larken desperately thirsted to spill some blood himself. He gave a thumbs up toward the gunnery well. Behind the polarized turret plating, a corpulent body quivered in laughter while returning the salute.

"Thanks for the tip, Sahr. We couldn't have set this one up without you."

The lithe figure, attired in white blouse and black pants, tousled her blonde hair behind the copilot's chair. She smiled pleasantly. "You offered a price I couldn't refuse." A flash in her eyes betrayed a second thought, but Larken missed it.

The dim circle on the sensor readout that was the Kizbon's Box moved placidly towards Darkmoon. It would only be out of the station's sensor range for another 10 minutes, but Larken enjoyed prying on the blissfully unaware for every possible moment. According to the pre-arranged battle plan, Trust Me emitted a quick binary pulse. Kizbon's Box was now at her best interception point.

"Harvest time!" Larken announced to the other ships as he ignited his engines. Through the viewport, he watched the thrust flares bloom from the other two ships. As Pillage secured the escape sector, Larken relayed instructions to his conspirators. "Remember, our mark's got a stripped-down discontinued bucket with external cargo pods. Feel free to blaze away at the cockpit section, but leave the aft free for bounty."

The chase was on. Although Pillage was still 60 seconds from engaging, Larken found his pulse accelerating with the thrill of the hunt. Licking his lips, he surveyed Sahr, enjoying his triumph. "Did you love him?"

Sahr shrugged as the forward ships closed to weapons range, claws extended and ready to kill.

Then Trust Me blossomed into an explosion of brilliant proton fire.

Druug was screaming in panic over the comlink. "Bak! It's a ... Blast him, moron! The framin' Crotok's got a ..."

This time Larken saw the brilliant green streams of light leap from their "helpless" target, followed by a shooting red star. Larken knew that the last volley was a proton torpedo. Druug never finished his sentence.

The Arakyl Helix deftly turned away from the Profit's burning hull, and charged full thrust towards the Pillage. Sahr gripped the fire control stick with a twisted face. The Helix's shields absorbed her volleys in perfect stride. Larken vectored Pillage away, hoping to clear the magnetic storm in time for a jump. But Kizbon's Box was already larger-than-life on the ship's sensor panels.

Their communications speaker crackled, "Nice to see you again, Larken, Sahr."

For the first and last time in his life, Larken knew what being on the other end of a laser barrel felt like.

The Imperial mandate also demanded that Helix operators register their craft with the ISB and modify their ship to ensure compliance with Safe Starship Regulations. These modifications included, but were certainly not limited to, stripping half the weapon systems and downgrading the shield generator to a Mark 1 equivalent. As most starship professionals predicted, the mandate was blatantly ignored by a wide variety of Helix owners. Most Imperial agents are aware of these facts, and are suspicious of any Helix they come into contact with. Most order an immediate inspection of the ship, and demand that all appropriate datawork and declarations be in perfect order. Naturally, the starship black market, and other treasonous parties, have developed a substantial industry in providing falsified documents for the Helix and ships like it.
Although Arakyd publicly claimed the Helix was designed to be a freighter, it is curious to note that the cargo section is notably small. The total space displacement of any payload can not exceed 35 cubic meters. In addition, the Arakyd Helix has one of the lowest life support reserves in the freighter classification. Carrying only four weeks of supplies for its maximum of six occupants, the Helix would be required to recoup its consumables long before its 80 fuel cells reached maximum discharge (assuming a normal power load for freighter operations).

Many veterans of the starlances nod and smile knowingly at the mention of the Arakyd Helix. While its defensive (and offensive) capabilities are impressive, the Helix's high price tag and sophisticated systems force it out of the independent operator's grasp. However, those fortunate enough to acquire a Helix are secure in their craft's ability to deliver on almost any contract.

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**HoloNet Hype**

**Criton's Point Mystery**

To the Editor:

I've just gone through your third publication of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. I love it and I'm looking forward to the next issue. But will you believe it? I found an error in your book. On page 157 of *Adventure Journal #3*, where Anthony Russo was talking about Criton's Point, you stuck an Adventure Idea. The error is that you forgot to finish the informative talk about Criton's Point. I would greatly appreciate it if you could somehow tell us how it ends. Thanks a bunch.

Sam McCord, Albuquerque, NM

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Oops. You and several other letter writers are correct. Due to an unforeseen layout error, the last few sentences of the Criton's Point section of *The Pentastar Alignment* were cut off. Writer Anthony Russo found it ironic that such a mysterious location should continue to be enshrined in mystery. You'll find the description of Criton's Point printed in its entirety in this issue's *Smuggler's Log*. Sorry for the inconvenience.

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**Que la Force Soit Avec Vous**

To the Editor:

A gamemaster and *Star Wars* fan for more than a decade, I had nevertheless never tried the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. It had always seemed to me that to play in a universe where the most heroic deeds have already been accomplished (and the bad guys
eliminated) was compelling the players to minor jobs. Then came Timothy Zahn’s trilogy, *Dark Empire* comic books, and other Bantam novels. All of a sudden, *Star Wars: The Empire* had lost its limited aspect (in game terms) and opened up. That’s when I began to take a closer look at the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* material, especially the New Republic line of products.

When I found the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*, West End Games’ *Star Wars* line definitely conquered me.

As a gamemaster, short stories and novels have always been my main source of inspiration. So to put in the same accessory both stories and related game aids is something I could only applaud, especially when it is accompanied by such interesting features as Ilene Rosenberg’s interview of Mr. Zahn in issue 1.

Please continue to deliver us such a brilliant line of *Star Wars* accessories, and do not forget to handsomely furnish European retailers with it.

*Que la Force soit avec vous.*

Guillaume Nonain, Carrières sur Seine, France

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**Tell Us What You Think!**

What do you think of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*? What would you like to see? Write a letter to the editor. We might print it in a future HoloNet Hype column! Letters must be no longer than 200 words, signed and should include your name, address and phone number.

Send your letters to: HoloNet Hype, West End Games, RR 3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA 18431.

For a guaranteed response, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your letter. All material (including letters) published in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* becomes the property of Lucasfilm Ltd. Letters are subject to editing for publication.

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By John J. Richardson III
Illustrations by Doug Shafer

The lights and colors of hyperspace swirled outside the cockpit of the Skyjumper. It had an almost hypnotic effect on her captain, Dru Jalok, as he stared out the viewport. His mind was occupied with what he would do with all the credits he’d get once he delivered his cargo to Altier. This was the big score he had been looking for. He would have enough to fast him for a very long time, even the way he spent credits.

Suddenly, a warning siren blared, indicating the ship was about to drop out of hyperspace. Jalok quickly snapped out of his reverie. That’s odd, Jalok thought. We’re nowhere near the Altier system. What could have ...

With a jolt, the Skyjumper dropped into realspace. Looming dead ahead and growing by the second was a large asteroid. “Son of a gundark!” Jalok grabbed for the controls, trying to ever away from the hulking rock.

Sullub Soomin, Jalok’s Sullustan co-pilot, appeared...
in the doorway to the cockpit, jabbering excitedly. Suddenly, his rubbery lips froze as he saw the asteroid. Soonin lunged for the control to help Jalok, but it was too late. While they managed to prevent the Skyjumper from totally slamming into the asteroid, the ship still swiped it.

Soonin looked at the damage readouts and gibbered to Jalok. Jalok knew they were in trouble without the central gun or shields. He then checked the sensors. Six fighters. Two old Z-95 Headhunters, two Zebra starfighters and two Yawings. And one capital ship — a Corellian corvette. "Lock and fire the dorsal gun while I try to set some new coordinates and get us out of here!" Jalok ordered.

The enemy fighters swarmed the freighter-like metal insects as the corvette moved into position. Soonin scored a hit on one of the Zebras, but they were overwhelmed. The Sultustan shook his head and muttered under his breath.

The corvette opened up on the Skyjumper with its ion cannon. The instrument panel was engulfed with blue lightning, ionizing the controls.

Another hit rocked the Skyjumper. A light on the instrument panel indicated the hyperdrive motocutor was damaged. Soonin groaned something about being helpless.

"The comm cracked to life. "Stand and deliver!" a triumphant and familiar voice boomed. Jalok gritted his teeth and slammed his fist on the control panel.

"Dreadnaut!"

Pirates are one of the many hazards of space travel — unscrupulous criminals taking advantage of lightly armed and shielded freighters and cargo transports. They make life miserable for the honest (and sometimes not so honest) traders trying to earn a decent living.

Meet Drek Dreadnaut, a flamboyant pirate who fancies himself the scourge of open space. No doubt his name was even changed to further enhance his reputation as the stereotypical vagabond pirate. He and his dangerous crew of pirates harass any kind of shipping, whether crewed by Rebels, smugglers, or tramp freighter captains. Encounters with Dreadnaut can be used in individual game campaigns between adventures or as a starting point for other adventures.

Drek Dreadnaut and his pirate crew have been pillaging starships for several years. They show no favoritism and attack just about anything that comes their way — independent traders, smugglers, Rebels, and Imperials. All are fair game for Dreadnaut, though he has enough sense not to attack the big Imperial warships. They prowl the space lanes in the Sabre III, a modified Corellian corvette, and a complement of old starfighters.

**Pirate Prowling**

The pirates have used a number of attack methods throughout the years, but Dreadnaut has settled upon one particular plan that serves them best.

The Sabre III first visits an asteroid field. The pirates generally use the Carto Asteroid Belt, as this is not too far from the courses of several hyperspace shipping lanes. They select suitably sized asteroids, large enough to cause disturbances in hyperspace. The Sabre's tractor beams lock onto the asteroids and tow them into the estimated positions of the hyperspace routes. The placement of these asteroids usually involves a good deal of guesswork, since hyperspace routes are relatively wide and not well-defined. However, the pirates' navigator, Tron Nuxx, has an uncanny navigational accuracy and the pirates' success rate has increased. The Sabre then pulls back and waits. Pirate pilots crew fighters and make patrol sweeps in preparation for a siege.

The asteroids' "shadow" in hyperspace often forces ships traveling in that hyperspace lane back into realspace. Unfortunate pilots caught in Dreadnaut's trap must quickly maneuver out of the asteroids' way once they fall out of hyperspace. After trying to avoid the asteroid, pilots notice the pirate fighters, which quickly descend to make sure the target knows it is outnumbered. If by chance Dreadnaut's trap suares a large Imperial warship — such as a Star Destroyer — the fighters that are not hyperspace capable quickly regroup aboard the Sabre III and the pirates make a hasty escape into hyperspace.

Dreadnaut sails the ship on a subspace comm channel with his signature demand, "Stand and deliver!" If the target tries to fight or escape, the fighters attempt to pinpoint their fire at the target's weapons and sublight drives. The Sabre uses its ion cannons to render the target helpless. Dreadnaut is interested in the cargo, not disintegrating the ship. The pirates only return deadly fire if it seems the battle is going against them. The key is to bring the prize under control before it can jump into hyperspace.

Once the target has been disabled, the Sabre locks its tractor beams on its victim and pulls it in for boarding. A universal airlock and magnetic seal are established and a boarding party tries to enter the ship. The boarding party first tries to open the airlock by
ordering the captured ship's crew to open the hatch, then tries bypassing security. If these attempts fail, the pirates are faced with cutting open the airlock. They use large fusion cutters, letting the crew of the target ship worry what to do with the breached hull when the Sable leaves.

The size of the boarding party depends on the resistance expected from the captured ship's crew. The boarding party is often armed with breath masks and stun and smoke grenades. This is often the safest and most efficient way to take a ship to avoid damage. The party is also armed with blasters and melee weapons. They also have some experience fighting in zero-G in the event their prize has lost its artificial gravity.

Drednar himself makes a grand entrance onto the captive ship once it's secured by the boarding party. He orders his prisoners to cooperate lest they "walk the airlock." Much of what he says is just part of his show — to maintain the stories that he is a dangerous and feared pirate. He really does not force prisoners out the airlocks and does not kill unless absolutely necessary. He strips his prisoners of any valuables and orders his crew to liberate the ship's cargo from its hold. The pirates sometimes scavenge items of value from the ship itself. If there are any important personalities aboard, he may take them hostage aboard the Sable III and hold them for ransom. Drednar does not kidnap passengers if there would be too much trouble attached with trying to obtain the ransom.

Once the pirates take everything of value, they release the ship and its crew and the Sable III jumps into hyperspace for some unknown part of the galaxy. The victims must try to repair their ship enough to limp to the nearest starport.

Lately, Drednar has become bolder. His crew has started attacking less remote areas of space. Where the logistics for using asteroids prove impractical, the crew resorts to creating their own asteroids. They fill the Sable III's hold with water and eject it into the hyperspace lanes. The cold vacuum of space freezes the water into ice asteroids.

This bolder strategy is related to current Imperial objectives. The Imperial Fleet's main goal has become crushing the Rebel Alliance. Drednar sees this and uses it to his advantage. While some pirates might try to disguise their attacks as Rebel attacks, Drednar uses the opposite reasoning. If Imperials believe an attack is Rebel in origin, they may use this attack to track down the pirates, thinking them to be Rebels. If Imperials believe an attack was the work of pirates, they might turn the other way and continue their search for Rebel activity. Drednar can now afford to make bolder attacks while he believes the Empire is preoccupied by the Rebellion. Naturally, the Empire has its limits. Drednar makes sure he does not get so bold as to provoke the wrath of the Empire.

**Running Encounters With Drednar**

Encounters with Drednar can serve a number of purposes. A pirate engagement can be used as an encounter between major adventures. It can be an interesting result of a failed astrogator roll. Pirates can be an effective way to keep characters from stockpiling too much equipment, supplies or wealth.

For smuggler or free-trader campaigns, Drednar can be used to capture cargo — putting characters in deeper trouble with those who have paid for the cargo. This trouble increases if their sponsor happens to be a crime lord who increases any debt they might already owe. Since Drednar disables ships out in the middle of space, characters might have to limp off to the nearest planet — possibly the location where the next adventure begins.
The Trap

When the characters’ ship drops out of hyperspace, they must avoid the asteroid. The difficulty for avoiding the asteroid is Easy — those falling hit the asteroid for between 4D to 6D damage in starship scale. While the characters are busy maneuvering away from the asteroid, the corvette and pirate starfighters move into position. The ship’s comm soon comes to life and Drednar orders the crew to “Stand and deliver!”

At this point, the characters have a few options, including surrender. Characters can also attempt to jump into hyperspace, providing their hyperdrive and nav computer have not been damaged. If they wish to attempt escape into hyperspace, one of the characters should make an astrogation roll. Calculating a jump from this remote position requires a Heroic astrogation roll — a character may attempt this once per round.

While the characters are preparing to flee, the pirates attack. The number and types of fighters used to help the corvette attack varies — gamemasters may use whatever combination works best for their campaigns. The Sable III prefers to disable targets before pulling them in with its tractor beams. However, it uses its tractor beam as soon as it’s in range to prevent the target from escaping.

Boarding Party

When the characters’ ship is captured, the Sable III comes alongside the ship and the pirates attempt to board the ship through the airlock. Drednar first orders the characters to open up. If they refuse, the pirates attempt to bypass the captured ship’s security at the airlock entry hatch. The team is headed by Vtrol Devin, the pirate band’s security expert. If these methods fail, the pirates cut through the hatch with fusion cutters.

Vtrol Devin. All stats are 2D except: Dexterity 3D+2, Blaster 4D, Brawling 3D, Security 5D; Security: Starships 6D+1. Move: 10. Character Points: 3. Blaster pistol (4D), breath mask, comlink, security bypass kit (1D to security rolls), vibroknife (STR+1D-1).

Gamemasters should determine the number of pirates in the boarding party based on the number of characters aboard the captured ship. This encounter should challenge characters, but make sure the battle’s outcome suits the adventure plot.

After gaining entry, the pirates toss in stun and smoke grenades to disorder the crew. The pirates resort to blasters if their grenades don’t work. Stray blaster fire may hit vital controls, including life support or airlock control — use whatever method is dramatically appropriate for a campaign.

Typical Boarding Pirate. All stats are 2D except: Dexterity 3D+2, Blaster 5D+2, Brawling 4D, Dodge 5D, Grenade 4D, Melee Combat 5D, Melee Parry 4D, Strength 3D, Brawling 4D. Move: 10. Character Points: 3. Blaster pistol (4D), breath mask, comlink, vibroknife (STR+1D-1).

"Stand and Deliver!

If the crew of the captured ship is subdued, Drednar often boards to inspect the cargo himself and supervise the crew unloading it into the Sable III. This is a good time for him to interact with characters. Drek Drednar is bold, dashingly arrogant — larger than life. He
Drednar and His Crew

Drednar’s pirate crew of 200 consists of humans and various aliens including Thorian, Sullustan, Getali, Quarren, and Duros. They include pilots, gunners, technicians, and, of course, fighters. Drednar has several underworld contacts, including a network of infochants who inform him of particularly profitable shipping runs heading in his direction. This gives the pirates a better idea where and when to set up their traps. Drednar also keeps in touch with black marketers who pay the pirates for the captured cargo and sell the goods again through illegal channels.

Drednar was a wide-eyed young man who craved excitement and was eager to see the galaxy. Young Drednar signed up for a job aboard the merchant ship Eclipse. Although Drednar did get to see the galaxy, it was far from exciting. He found work on the merchant ship to be dull and hard, and not terribly profitable. His tenure aboard the Eclipse gave Drednar experience aboard a starship and knowledge of shipping lanes, but he desperately wanted more out of life.

Just when Drednar was considering jumping ship, the Eclipse was attacked by pirates aboard a modified Corelian gunship called Sable II. Drednar felt sure the Eclipse was doomed. To Drednar’s amazement, the pirates did not come aboard, blasters blazing. They were only after the Eclipse’s cargo. There was something about capturing other ships and taking their valuable cargo that naturally appealed to Drednar. He decided to jump ship and become "con-scripted" into the pirate crew.

Drednar enjoyed the pirate life much better than the hard work on a merchant ship. He learned much from pirate captain Kark Granzor. He learned to use not only a blaster, but also to fight using melee weapons. In fact, Drednar preferred to use a blade rather than a blaster. He also learned methods of piracy. Soon the ambitious Drednar was no longer content to be just a member of a pirate crew. He watched how Granzor operated. While he did quite well for himself, Granzor had no style. He seemed more of a businessman when it came to operating. Drednar believed a pirate should fit the part. He felt he could do much better as a pirate captain.

Grazor also had a policy for keeping most of the profits from the pirate raids. While Drednar believed the captain should have the largest share, he felt Grazor’s share was overly excessive. He noticed that this bred resentment in Grazor’s crew. And Drednar saw this as an opportunity.

Drednar was popular with most of the crew. He soon left hints to his allies about how he would run things if he were in charge—and soon they began plotting a mutiny. Several starship thieves were among the many contacts he made with the crew. Drednar and some of his followers jumped ship when the Sable II made one of its stops in a backwater port. The starship thieves helped steal a Corellian corvette, and some of Drednar’s allies among the Sable II’s mechanics went to work modifying their new vessel.

Once the corvette was ready, Drednar and his skeleton crew set out after the Sable II. What followed was a battle between corvette and gunship. Several of Drednar’s loyal supporters had remained aboard the Sable II—they sabotaged Grazor’s battle effort and Drednar was victorious. During the battle, Grazor was killed and the Sable II was damaged beyond repair, but Drednar and his crew were able to salvage the ill-gotten gains Grazor had hoarded. Drednar dubbed his corvette the Sable III and he and his crew went into business for themselves.

Drednar still remembers the folly of Grazor’s greed brought him. Although he naturally takes the largest cut of captured booty himself, Drednar is fair in sharing the fortunes with his crew. This breeds fierce loyalty in his crew.

Drek Drednar

Drek is a well-built man with rugged good looks and shoulder length blonde hair. His pirate attire consists of a sleeveless shirt, vest, golden bracers, and fold-down boots. A heavy blaster and...
Cutlass are always strapped to his side. Early in his career, Drednar was in a battle with a bounty hunter and lost his left eye (“You should see the hunter,” Drednar quips when asked about the encounter). Rather than get a cybernetic replacement, he chose to wear a patch for the piratical effect.

Much of what Drednar does is for effect. He is a grand flamboyant pirate in the mold of the old holos. Although he may act bloodthirsty, it is only part of the show. He is not interested in shedding blood — it only happens when it becomes necessary.

Drednar has a passion for dueling, and prefers this type of combat to shooting everything up with blasters. He takes great pride in his cutlass. He constantly looks for worthy opponents and rarely turns down a challenge. He may even allow a captured ship to leave unmolested if a member of its crew can prove to be a worthy opponent.

Drek Drednar

Type: Pirate Captain

DEXTERITY 3D-2
Blaster 7D+2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D, grenade 4D+1, melee combat 6D, melee combat: cutlass 7D, melee parry 6D-2, missile weapons 4D-2, pick pocket 5D, running 4D+1, thrown weapon 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D
Alien species 4D, bureaucracy 4D-2, business 5D, cultures 5D+1, intimidation 6D, languages 5D, law enforcement 3D-2, planetary systems 6D-2, streetwise 7D-1, survival 6D, value 6D, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 3D-2
Astrogation 6D, beast handling 4D-1, capital ship gunnery 4D-2, capital ship piloting 5D, capital ship piloting: Corellian corvette 6D-1, capital ship shields 4D-1, communications 4D-1, repulsorlift operation 5D-1, space transports 4D-2, starfighter piloting 5D, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 5D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 6D+2, command 5D, command: pirate crew 7D+2, con 6D-1, gambling 7D, hide 6D, persuasion 5D, search 7D-2, sneak 6D

STRENGTH 2D-2

Brawling 5D-2, climbing/jumping 5D-2, lifting 5D-1, stamina 6D, swimming 4D-2

TECHNICAL 3D
Capital ship repair 4D, computer programming/repair 4D, demolition 4D-1, droid programming 4D, first aid 3D-1, repulsorlift repair 5D, security 5D, space transports repair 4D

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 0

Character Points: 10

Move: 10

Equipment: Breath mask, conlink, cutlass (STR-1D+1), eye patch, heavy blaster pistol (3D), hideout blaster (3D-1), pirate attire, Sabé II (modified Corellian corvette), vibroknife (STR-1D-1)

Chillo Sanpona

The Rodian Chillo Sanpona was one of the best pirates in Karn Granzor’s crew. Sanpona’s favorite aspect of piracy was the fight. He would happily destroy those who stood in the way of the pirates. What he liked least was how Granzor grabbed most of the profits. Sanpona decided to remedy this by stealing a larger cut. Granzor, naturally, did not appreciate this, and ordered the Rodian to be executed. Drek Drednar, however, intervened on Sanpona’s behalf, and talked Granzor into marooning Sanpona on an uncharted planetoid.

Shortly after dropping off Sanpona, Drednar diverted some of his allies to pick up the castaway. Chillo went into hiding and was involved in Drednar’s mutiny plot. When the plan was ready to be launched, Sanpona was smuggled aboard the Sabé II, where he led the sabotage effort. It is believed Sanpona killed Granzor himself.

Sanpona was grateful to Drednar for his rescue and decided to follow Drednar. Knowing Chillo’s abilities, Drednar made him his first mate, a position the Rodian serves in competently and loyally.

Chillo Sanpona is a typical Rodian — tenacious and bloodthirsty. Drednar has to keep Sanpona in line from February, 1995

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time to time, reminding him that he wants no unnecessary bloodshed. Sanpona abides Drednar's wishes, but when encountered alone, he has an itchy trigger finger. Chillo often hunts gornalaks when back on Taraloon to satisfy his hunter's instincts.

**Chillo Sanpona**

Type: First Mate  
DEXTERTY 4D-2  
Blaster 6D, blasterpary 5D, dodge 6D, melee combat 5D-2, melee parry 5D  
KNOWLEDGE 2D+1  
Alien species 3D+2, bureaucracy 4D, cultures 3D-1, intimidation 5D, languages 5D, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 3D-1, survival 4D-2, value 5D, willpower 4D  
MECHANICAL 2D+2  
Astrogation 4D-1, capital ship gunnery 5D-1, capital ship piloting 3D, capital ship shields 5D, repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 4D-2, starfighter piloting 4D-2, starship gunnery 5D-1, starship shields 4D  
PERCEPTION 3D+1  
Bargain 4D-2, command 5D-1, con 6D+2, gambling 6D-1, hide 4D-1, search 6D-2, sneak 5D-2  
STRENGTH 2D-2  
Brawling 4D-1, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 4D, stamina 4D-2, swimming 4D  
TECHNICAL 2D+1  
Capital starship repair 4D, computer programming/repair 3D-2, demolition 5D-2, first aid 3D, security 4D+2  
Character Points: 8  
Move: 10  
Equipment: Breath mask, comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D), vibroknife (STR*1D+1)

**Seely**

Seely left Ryloth like many female Twi'leks — shackled in slayer's chains. Her natural beauty made her a prized slave girl. During her enslavement, Seely learned many dances and was sold from one questionable establishment to another as a dancing girl.

Seely, however, was clever and calculating. She knew her effect on men and used it to her advantage. She managed to use her beauty and quick wits to escape and make a run for freedom.

As a free Twi'lek, she used her feminine wiles to obtain passage from one planet to another. She wanted to enjoy life and bounced around pleasure palaces and casinos throughout the galaxy.

During a layover on an orbiting casino working the Darlon Sector, Seely met Dek Drednar spending some of his pirate wealth on fancy ladies and high living. Seely soon became one of Drednar's hangers-on. She was smitten by the pirate and enjoyed his swashbuckling tales of daring pirate raids and stolen riches. These adventures were exactly what Seely craved.

Seely stowed away aboard the *Sable III* the night before it was due to jump back into action. Once the corvette was safely in hyperspace, Seely made her presence known. Luckily for her, Drednar's
PERCEPTION 3D-2
Bargain 4D, coerce 5D, hide 5D, persuasion 5D, persuasion: flirt 6D-2, sneak 5D
STRENGTH 2D-2
Climbing/jumping 5D, stamina 4D, swimming 4D
TECHNICAL 3D
Computer programming/repair 3D-1, first aid 3D-2

Special Abilities:
Tentacles: Tw'leks can use their head tails to communicate in secret with each other.
Character Points: 5
Move: 10
Equipment: Breath mask, comlink, hold-out blaster (3D), alluring attire, vibroknife (STR-1D-1)

**Tron Nixx**

Tron Nixx grew up on Corliss, a planet with a rich history of piracy since the days when the first ships sailed the planet’s waters. Nixx met Drek Drednar when he was young and was intrigued by Drednar’s prototypical pirate style. Nixx joined Drednar’s crew, where he found himself best suited as a navigator.

Nixx has an uncanny direction sense that rivals that of the Sullustans. This ability first manifested itself when Tron was a child. He was lost in the complex mazes of Quori City on Corliss. Somehow, he found his way safely home. This ability also extends to finding his way through the stars. Nixx discovered he had a terrific knack for astrogation.

He figured with this ability, and a desire to see the galaxy, he would become a navigator on a freighter. Shortly after becoming a navigator, Nixx met Drednar and defected to his crew. His terrific knack for astrogation won him favor with Drednar for finding a safe route through the Quintar Nebula to the pirates’ secret base on Taraloon.

Unknown to anyone, including himself, Nixx is sensitive to the Force. This helped him discover the route through the Quintar Nebula. Nixx has no Jedi training and has only increased his Force ability through use. Nixx has no knowledge of his Force ability—he normally attributes his navigational aptitude to phenomenal luck.

This innate sense in the Force also serves the pirate band when it moves asteroids into hyperspace routes. Normally this type of activity is hit or miss. But the accuracy increases when Nixx subconsciously uses the Force to determine where to place an asteroid. As a result, Drednar’s pirates are among the most successful to use this method.

Nixx is an unassuming young man. He is thin of build and his black hair is often disheveled. He usually wears a simple flight jacket. Although he likes the pirate life, Nixx is not bloodthirsty. He is more interested in astrogation and the shipboard operations of the **Sable III**.

**Tron Nixx**

Type: Pirate Navigator
DEXTERITY 2D-2
Blaster 3D-2, bladelight 4D, dodge 4D-2, melee combat 3D-2, melee parry 4D
KNOWLEDGE 2D-1
Alien species 3D-2, cultures 3D-1, languages 4D, planetary systems 6D-1, streetwise 3D-1, survival 4D-2, value 3D, willpower 4D
MECHANICAL 4D
Astrogation 3D, capital ship piloting 6D, capital ship shields 5D, space transports 5D-1, startfighter piloting 4D-2, starship shields 4D-1
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 4D-2, commnav 4D, gambling 4D, hide 4D-1, sneak 3D-2, search 3D-2
STRENGTH 3D
Blaster 3D-2, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 3D-2, swimming 4D
TECHNICAL 3D
Capital ship repair 4D-2, computer programming/repair 5D-2, first aid 3D-1, security 4D-1

Special Abilities:
Force Skills: Sense 2D-1
Sense: Instinctive astrogation
This character is Force-sensitive.
Character Points: 5
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), breath mask, comlink, vibroknife (STR-1D-1)

**Sable III**

The **Sable III** was originally the new Corellian corvette *Arito’s Star*. Though not on its maiden voyage it barely made a dozen jumps when it found itself in the wrong starport at the wrong time. A group of starship thieves working for Drek Drednar knew the pirate was planning a mutiny and needed a capital ship. *Arito’s Star* was liberated from its bay and some of Drednar’s loyal mechanics began...
modifying the corvette.

Shortly after the ship was stolen and modified, the plan for Drednar’s rise to power unfolded. In an epic battle, Anito’s Star bested its more powerful cousin, with the help of saboteurs aboard the Sable II. The Sable II was damaged beyond repair and Anito’s Star became the Sable III.

Drednar felt the corvette was better suited for piracy than the gunship because of its versatility. Although not as heavily armed, the Sable III could hold even more cargo than the modified hold of the Sable II. Even though the Sable II could no longer be used, Drednar’s crew managed to salvage one of its tractor beam projectors and two turret gun mounts. After selling the Sable III’s front turbolasers (to make room for the tractor beam), the revenue was used to acquire an ion cannon and an additional tractor beam projector for the turret mounts. The mechanics had also increased the Sable III’s hull rating and shielding.

Perhaps its most notable modification is its docking bay for snub fighters without hyperdrives. It holds six fighters, usually reserved for three Z-95’s, two Zebras, and an extra bay area for emergencies. The stolen X-wing and Y-wing fighters often come on pirate raids since they do not require the Sable III to transport them through hyperspace. Starfighters not brought along in the Sable’s docking bays remain at the base for patrol work and defense. The pirate band has a total of 10 Z-95 Headhunters, five Zebra starfighters, three Y-wings and one X-wing fighter.

Being fond of the pirate tradition, Drednar decorated the Sable III with the “blazing claw.” This icon has symbolized piracy for thousands of years. Its glamorization in holos made it the perfect choice for decorating Drednar’s ship.

Sable III

- **Craft:** Corellian Engineering Corporation Corvette
- **Type:** Modified multi-purpose vessel
- **Scale:** Capital ship
- **Length:** 150 meters
- **Skill:** Capital ship piloting: Corellian Corvette
- **Crew:** 14, gunners: 19, skeleton 40+10
- **Crew/Ship:** Astrogation 7D, capital ship gunnery 6D-2, capital ship piloting 6D, capital ship shields 3D, sensors 3D-2
- **Passengers:** 40
- **Cargo Capacity:** 2,500 metric tons
- **Consumables:** 1 year
- **Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x1
- **Hyperdrive Backup:** x10
- **Nav Computer:** Yes
- **Maneuverability:** 2D-1

**Taraloon**

Taraloon is an uncharted planet hidden within the clouds of the Quintar Nebula. Early in his career, Derm Drednar and his pirate band were desperately trying to escape the Imperial Star Destroyer Annihilator. The Sable III’s hyperdrive was damaged and the Annihilator was moving in for the kill. The Quintar Nebula was dead ahead. Being the daring pirate that he is, Drednar ordered his ship to dive into the nebula.

The nebula wreaked havoc with ships’ sensors. The colorful swirling clouds were thick and restricted visual scanning. Controls were randomly ionized by charged particles in the nebula clouds. The Annihilator lost the Sable III on its scopes and pulled away from the nebula to avoid damaging itself. Struggling with the controls, the pirate crew miraculously made it through the nebula and stumbled across a small planet. They headed down to make repairs to the ship.
The pirates discovered an almost barren, plateau-covered planet. Deciding that landing on top of a plateau would be too conspicuous if the Star Destroyer followed them through the nebula, the pirates descended into the canyons. They discovered a cave network which would be a more suitable hiding place while making repairs. While exploring the caves, they discovered a subterranean world. There were underground lakes, rivers and vegetation that did not require much light. With a little work, the pirates could carve out a base below the surface of the planet.

**Taraloon**

- **Type:** Terrestrial
- **Temperature:** Temperate
- **Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)
- **Hydrosphere:** Dry
- **Gravity:** Standard
- **Terrain:** Plateaus, subterranean
- **Length of Day:** 17 standard hours
- **Length of Year:** 285 local days
- **sapient Species:** Human, various aliens
- **Starport:** Limited class
- **Population:** 200 pirates
- **Planet Function:** Hidden pirate base
- **Government:** Pirate (led by Drek Drednar)
- **Tech Level:** Space (pirate base), primitive

One problem plagued the plan. While the nebula provided camouflage for the little planet, it would be risky to try to fly through the nebula again and again. But luck, which often found itself on the side of the pirate captain, was with Drednar again. A safe route through breaks in the nebula’s gas clouds was found. This route was miraculously discovered by Tron Nixx, the *Sable III’s* navigator, who seemed to have a special knack for astrogation. Nixx’s astrogation ability also helps the *Sable III* continually find the nebula, which is on few star charts.

Drednar and his crew set up a base beneath the planet’s surface. The planet was dubbed Taraloon in honor of Nixx. Taraloon was an ancient term that meant “buried treasure” on Corliss, Nixx’s homeworld.

Only a few creatures live on Taraloon’s surface and in the subterranean regions — few pose any threat to the pirate base. The large predatory gornalaks are the major exception. In time though, the pirates have managed to keep the gornalaks away from the base with high voltage fences and bright lights. With the appearance of the pirates, most gornalaks have retreated further into the caves.

**Gornalak**

- **DEXTERITY 3D+2**
- **PERCEPTION 3D+1**
- **Search 3D**
- **STRENGTH 6D**
- **Brawling 7D, stamina 7D-1**
- **Special Abilities:**
  - **Teeth:** Do STR-1 damage
  - **Claws:** Do STR-1 damage
- **Subterranean Vision:** Gornalaks’ vision is suited for dim conditions. In dark conditions they receive +1D to Perception and related skills. They suffer -1D to Perception, Dexterity and related skills in bright conditions.

- **Move:** 10
- **Size:** 3 meters tall; 6 meters long

**Capsule:** Gornalaks are large reptilian creatures native to Taraloon subterranean regions. Gornalaks were the lords of Taraloon until the pirates arrived. While the pirates could prove to be tasty treats, their weaponry and bright lights were bothersome and not worth the gornalaks’ efforts. They retreated further into the dark caves to feed on their smaller prey. Although gornalaks do not attack the pirates’ compound, they sometimes go after stray groups exploring the caves.

**The Pirate Base**

Drednar’s pirate base lies hidden below the surface of Taraloon. The minerals in the rock surrounding the base and the interference from the nebula make sensor searches very difficult. The pirates maintain occasional starfighter patrols for any ships that might wander through the nebula, coming too close to Taraloon. The base has no offensive anti-starfighter gun emplacements. Too many ships venture through the nebula near Taraloon, the pirates will probably build some.

The pirates rely on Tron Nixx for locating the base’s cave entrance on Taraloon. The outside appears to be a natural cave, but the entrance was actually cut larger to allow the *Sable III* to enter. Just inside the entrance, the walls are reinforced with durasteel. Incoming pirate craft contact the base upon arrival. Once the base verifies the identity of the approaching vessel, a homing beacon is broadcast to aid the ship in locating the base.

The pirates have set up perimeter sensors around the base to help detect any approaching ships. However, they are not always reliable due to the high mineral content of the surrounding rocks and interference from the nebula.

The base contains many facilities — maintenance bays and hangar for the *Sable III* and starfighters, medical facilities, dining rooms and recreation centers for the crew as well as comfortable quarters. The base is a place for maintenance and to restock and refuel. There
is a large cargo cache where pirate loot is stored. Much of the excess is sold on the black market. A good portion of these profits goes into the upkeep of the base. The base also serves as a place for the pirates to relax and rest before more pirating forays.

Drednar and some of the officers have constructed their own residences on the compound grounds. Drednar allows any pirate to build their own living quarters within the compound if they wish. Most of the pirates are “carefree bachelors” and are satisfied with the apartments of the base, which are quite roomy. Others have taken up Drednar’s offer, thankful for the space after being cooped up aboard the Sable III. Having a place they can call their own had been a dream for many of the crew — this further strengthens their loyalty to Drednar.
About the Authors ...

James Cambias is a free-lance writer and game designer who lives in North Carolina. He is the author of the forthcoming game supplement Arabian Nights from Iron Crown Enterprises. In addition to roleplaying games, he also writes non-fiction about history and aviation.

Paul Danner is a free-lance writer and Star Wars fan working towards a motion pictures/English degree at the University of Miami. Recently published in Dagger Comics, he enjoys movies, comic books, Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, and arguing that “writing actually does constitute work” to his friends who have real jobs.

Richard Hawran is a vice president at West End Games. He enjoys old movies, football, hunting and fishing in the wilds of northeastern Pennsylvania, and of course Star Wars.

Patricia A. Jackson is an administrative assistant at Jackson Elementary School in York, Pennsylvania. When not chained to a computer, she enjoys Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, where she perpetuates a love-hate relationship with her Jedi character. Her first Star Wars story, Out of the Cradle, was featured in issue two of the Star Wars Adventure Journal.

Stephen Luminati, a lieutenant in the United States Air Force, is currently assigned to the Air Force Pentagon Communications Agency in Arlington, Virginia. Originally from Ridgefield, Connecticut, he graduated from Lafayette College with a bachelor’s degree in computer science. When not troubleshooting computer systems, he enjoys hosting a radio show, designing games, playing roleplaying games, and running long distance.

Journal readers have been following Charlene Newcomb’s tales of Alex Winger since the Journal’s first issue. She is still a graduate student at the University of South Florida in Tampa studying library and information science. Her three children still can’t understand why their playroom is filled with Star Wars memorabilia.

Irene Rosenberg is a student at New York University studying for her masters degree in journalism. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and is spending her free time helping to promote They Might Be Giants.

John J. Richardson III saw Star Wars in 1977, and it has since influenced him into pursuing a career in film. While in high school, his Super-8 films Jedi Recruitment Film and Vader Knows Best won first place in the film division of the Official Star Wars Fan Club’s creativity contests. He has a bachelor of fine arts degree in film production from New York University and is pursuing a career in film editing. He lives with his wife Diane in New Jersey, and pursues such interests as Star Wars roleplaying, drawing, football, comic books, and 80’s music.

Tony Russo is a graduate of George Mason University with a degree in English, and is currently working as a technical writer and graphics specialist for a computer consultant in northern Virginia. He is also trying to branch out into other areas of fiction, including comic books and novels.

Paul Sudlow is a native of Floridaan II. He studied cross-cultural communications at the University of Meridian on Tenna Ce, and received a journeyman’s degree in trade economics at the University of Camalar on Esselles. He is currently a Fellow at the Teikoku Institute of Information Exchange on Brentala, where he studies the continuing evolution of the NewsNets at the Empire’s expense.

About the Artists ...

Kathy Burdette is a freelance artist living in Virginia enjoying the life of a shiftless science fiction addict. In her spare time she writes short fiction, swims and looks forward completing her Jedi training.

Matt Busch began drawing “stick” TIE fighters at the age of four. Currently living in Pasadena, California, Matt is studying illustration at the Art Center College of Design. Other recent freelance works include production sketches for motion picture companies and illustrations for various magazines. When asked where he gets his talent, Matt claims that, “The Force runs strong in my family…”

Joel Carroll hails from North Carolina and is currently an illustration student at the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Florida. He’s also working on self-publishing a comic book later this year.

Pablo Hidalgo is a beginning freelance artist from Winnipeg, Manitoba, who specializes in illustration and animation. He is a member of the Manitoba Society of Independent Animators, and co-constructs animation courses for young people. He has a disturbing amount of Star Wars trivia kicking around in his head, and does a mean Lobot impersonation.

Pieced together from choice parts of specially selected cadavers,
John Paul Lona is currently a graphic artist for the Paper Magic Group. There he produces artwork for various licensed products for Warner Brothers, Marvel Comics, and Disney. John lives in northeastern Pennsylvania with his wife and son living on chicken and Jif peanut butter.

Scott Neely is a self-taught artist from Pennsylvania who has grown up with Star Wars. “I’ve always been fascinated by the story and the ships,” he said. He started his art career doing freelance work, then moved into advertising art.

Doug Shuler has been a freelance artist for seven years and has done work for many prominent game companies, including GDW, Steve Jackson Games, ICE, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games. His illustrations continue to appear on new cards for Magic: The Gathering and Jyhad by Wizards of the Coast. Smugglers of the Outer Rim is Doug’s first written submission. A Star Wars fanatic, he lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Jordi, their infant daughter, Brianna, and five maniac cats.

Mike Vilardi works at a microelectronics plant in Rhode Island and freelances art for the gaming industry in his spare time. “I like the creation of the newer alien species,” he said. “Star Wars tends to be pretty free and open to allow new aliens to be used in the game.” He initially had to get used to drawing Star Wars art for West End Games: “It’s so strange getting paid for things I used to do in my teens just for fun,” he said.

Created and Illustrated by Doug Shuler

The Outer Rim Territories have been mercifully spared the attention of the Empire, especially in light of the Emperor’s recent death. With the imperial warlords vying for power in the regions of space closer to the Core Worlds, the Outer Rim has been virtually
ignored. As a result, the "might makes right" doctrine has become law, and survival often depends on how fast a blaster can be drawn. The frontier is a rough place, with many colorful personalities adding to the character of the Outer Rim.

**Jin-Jin**

Of all the down-on-their-luck spacers plying the trade lanes today, Jin-Jin is perhaps one of the downest. He began as an Imperial TIE fighter pilot stationed at the military training facility on Carida when, after several fist fights and a few Rebel-bottched reconnaissance missions, he realized his tarnished career had ground to a halt. Destined to be nothing more than Imperial fodder in a fighter without shielding, he decided to take it out on his own. The plan—steal an advanced TIE fighter and sell it on the black market. That's when things began to go wrong. Dreadfully wrong.

He was discovered trying to steal the fighter before he even entered the bay, and was left with no other option than to engage in a firefight. Blasting his way out of the military base, Jin-Jin fled toward the nearest ship—an impounded tramp freighter ironically called the Beggar's Solace. As a TIE pilot, Jin-Jin had a few tricks up his sleeve, but even he wasn't prepared when the hyperdrive motivator of the Beggar's Solace activated prematurely and sent him on a wild ride through hyperspace. Injured and lost, he was forced to sell bits and pieces of the run-down Beggar's Solace to recoup his losses and rebuild the hapless freighter from the ground up. Ever since, his original plan to be a wildly successful free-trader has been little more than a random uphill struggle, with each success met with greater disaster.

Over time, he has been able to build the Beggar's Solace back to a respectable level as far as freighters go. He has taken quite a liking to the ship that he happened upon, and although it's quite an eyesore from the outside, it sports a few tricks of its own. Despite his bad luck, Jin-Jin is not a man without means. With a little of his Imperial know-how and military-trained dogged determination, Jin-Jin has been able to stay a step ahead of his pursuers. The bounty on his head is ever increasing as he racks up a larger number of crimes against the Empire, and the name of Jin-Jin the smuggler has become commonplace. His exploits are legendary in some circles, not because of his efficiency, but rather his ill luck.

On one occasion, he was hired to rescue a princess from Imperial captivity, and later discovered that the princess was being held in her own palace. Breaking into to rescue her, he stumbled into the family's grand hall and was spotted by more than 700 of her closest relatives. Wanting to leave no witnesses to her escape, he kidnapped the entire royal family. During another incident in which he was to sneak into an Imperial garrison and plant a number of electronic bugs, he somehow managed to accidentally create a power feedback in the energy core, causing the entire base to detonate in a fiery explosion. A third occasion found Jin-Jin winning almost half a million credits in the Arenas of Mephis Prime, which he quickly invested in real estate. Unfortunately, the land he purchased was on the beautiful world of Alderaan a week before the Death Star arrived. With plenty of grease, sweat, and perseverance, Jin-Jin has been able to overcome these "minor" setbacks and continue forward. His ship is a little banged up and his age is beginning to show, but he is more than ready for his next job. After all, it can only get better.

**Methods**

Despite appearances, Jin-Jin is a capable individual, having been trained by the best pilots in the Empire. He is hardy and in excellent shape. His flying skills have remained well used over the years, and he can drive his ship to do things few others are capable of (or would dare). His demeanor is generally quite good in spite of his setbacks, and a positive outlook is one of the few things Jin-Jin has not lost.

He prefers to take the jobs that directly spite the Empire, whether it is a direct assault or a simple infractions of a few laws. He has little reason to work for or against crime lords, and has actually gone out of his way to avoid confrontations with particular factions. Other than these few self-imposed limits, Jin-Jin is willing and able to try most anything, as long as the patron is not too picky about the details or the results.

**Connections and Ideas**

Jin-Jin would certainly make a good connection for characters because of his experience. After all, he's been smuggling for nearly...
a decade and is quite familiar with many of the major players. If the characters are in need of transport, it might be interesting if he gives them cheap passage, and ends up tangling them up in some botched mission of his, or embroiling them in his own politics. Somehow, somewhere, something should go terribly wrong when he's around, and he should never leave a scene in better condition than the way he found it.

**Jin-Jin**
Type: Mercenary Smuggler
DEXTERTY 4D
Blaster 6D-2, dodge 5D, melee combat 3D-1
KNOWLEDGE 2D-1
Languages 6D-2, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 4D-2, survival 6D
MECHANICAL 3D
Astrogation 4D-2, repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 8D-2
PERCEPTION 2D-1
Baggage 5D-1, con 4D-2, forgery 3D, hide 6D, search 4D-1, sneak 4D
STRENGTH 4D
Brawling 5D-2, lifting 5D, climbing/jumping 5D-2, stamina 4D-2
TECHNICAL 2D+1
Armor repair 3D, blaster repair 4D, security 4D, space transports repair 3D-1

**Beggar's Solace**
Type: Light freighter
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 34 meters
Skill: Space transports
Crew: 2 (Jin-Jin uses an R2 unit to astroplane)
Crew Skill: See Jin-Jin
Passengers: 4
Cargo Capacity: 50 metric tons
Consumables: 3 weeks
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1
Hyperdrive Backup: x12
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 1D
Space: 7
Atmosphere: 350, 1,000 km
Hull: 5D
Shields: 2D

**Scanners**
Passive: 35/10-1
Sonic: 55/20-1
Search: 8D/3D-1
Focus: 3/4D-1

**Weapons**
Twin Blaster Cannons (fire-linked)
Fire Arc: Turret
Shield: Starship function
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-3/10-17
Atmosphere Range: 100/50/10/17 km
Damage: 5D
1 Proton Torpedo Launcher
Fire Arc: Front
Shield: Starship function
Fire Control: 3D
Space Range: 1/3/7
Atmosphere Range: 30-100/300/700 km
Damage: 9D

**Bora Boru**

Bora Boru is a member of the species known as the Bosphs. Beyond this, few facts are known about him, and the wild rumors often confuse the truths. The planet of Bosph was decimated by the Empire in an orbital bombardment several years ago. Some say the Rebellion was getting started there, while others speculate that it was a personal vendetta against Bosph royalty.

Still others claim it was in the name of a religious purge, one of the more likely stories. The Bosph were deeply philosophical and spiritual in nature, but their own self-exile made them an insignificant species compared to the greater whole, and their little planet and outdated technology posed no threat to the budding Empire. Perhaps they were used as a show of force, or perhaps they actually did betray the Empire. No one will ever know, and with so few Bosphs remaining, it's unfortunate that not many people care.

Bora Boru could have been one of the fortunate ones for surviving, but he feels quite the opposite. Having been denied the opportunity to die with his people, he has lost all remaining compassion for the Empire. His demeanor is one of peace — to embark on a quest for revenge would be futile. Instead, he is satisfied with simply ignoring the Empire altogether and going about his business as if it never existed. This sort of “disremembering” is the ultimate insult within Bosph society.

Over the last few years, Bora Boru has continued his smuggling operations with absolutely no regard for the Empire. He has also...
embarked on a mission of self-discovery, training himself in what few Force skills his once-exalted position in Bosph society granted him. He has earned the title of “Farseer,” allowing him to have free access to the teachings of Bosph philosophers and a glyph of his own. Bosphs are allowed no personal possessions, and what is owned by one is owned by all. Only the ranking officials are granted a glyph, signifying possession. If a Bosph with a glyph wishes to claim something as their own, they need only place their glyph on it for it to become theirs.

This has some unusual repercussions outside Bosph society, and it is in this way that Bora Boru claimed his ship, the Bosphon Forever. He needed a ship, and happened upon a small tramp freighter in a holding bay. When the true owner returned and found the smallish alien had drawn symbols on everything, he was outraged. Bora Boru was forced to defend his claim and took the life of the trader. Though it was against his way to kill outright, Bora Boru had claimed the ship by all rights and, in his mind, it was fully his.

The inside of the Bosphon Forever has been coated in glyphs and runes, some signifying ownership, while others recount the history and accomplishments of Bosph. The ship has become a virtual temple to the memory of his native planet, but because of his secretive nature, Bora Boru no longer shares his stories with outsiders. Only the truly trusted may enter his vessel unguarded, and any violation of the objects and artifacts inside is a violation of Bora Boru.

As a Bosph, Bora Boru holds the stars and those who walk among them in high regard. Early Bosph wanderers would find their way by the stars, and even with the advent of technology and electronic charting, the “way of the traveler” would dictate that the Bosph philosophers keep a record of their travels by tattooing intricate patterns onto their skin. In this way, they would have a permanent record of where they have been, and a detailed map showing them the way home. When the Bosphs took to the stars, the tattoo-maps became supreme star charts, with every last detail imprinted right onto the Bosph’s hide. Because Bora Boru has lived beyond the expected span for his species, his body is covered with star charts and maps beyond measure, and some worlds the Empire has yet to discover have been recorded. This explains his high ability to astrogate, and his supreme knowledge of planetary systems.

His favorite musical instrument is the challenging Bosphon Geddy, a combination wind and stringed instrument with an attached keypad. He always travels with his staff tipped with Bosph StarCrystals, and he prefers to wear loose robes which enable him to hide any number of things in their many folds. He is short and somewhat reclusive, but once his trust is earned, it is earned forever.

Methods

Bora Boru is slow and contemplative, but no less effective as a smuggler because of his seemingly tired demeanor. Rather, he has a unique way of seeing a situation from multiple levels — whenever faced with a new situation, he is capable of a thorough analysis within a few short moments. Because of his small degree of natural Force aptitude, he is also capable of occasionally having a “feeling” as to the success of a particular deal. This occasionally leads him to refuse what seems to be a sure thing, or accept a deal that seems impossible. There is little doubt that his position as a Farseer has enabled him to live well beyond the average lifespan for a Bosph.

He often takes a liking to other smugglers as they tend to share his hatred for the Empire. Occasionally, if someone shows total hatred toward the Empire, he cuts them a deal or even performs a charity run for them, making no money in the process. His methods can seem somewhat chaotic, but he always has secret reasons why he does things, though he rarely, if ever, shares them.

He has little reason not to use the Force to better his goals as a smuggler, and although he has not performed any outright evil, he still has a lack of adherence to the Jedi Code. He has never met a Jedi, and has no knowledge of lightsabers or the “Jedi Way.”
Connections and Ideas

Bora Boru might offer passage for a group of characters searching to get off world, allowing them a glimpse into the tragic effects of an Imperial siege on one species' homeworld. He might also be useful in imparting information of a mystic or cryptic nature to the characters, or even giving them an artifact of some sort. He can be used to give them warnings about what they are about to do. It might be interesting to see what characters do when a short, strange-looking alien tells them their life is in danger, or that the direction they have just chosen is fraught with danger.

As an alternative, he might not have his ship at all and might need passage of his own. If this is the case, supply him with a vast number of credits and have him guide the characters into danger after danger, only to constantly tell them that he sees nothing but success in their future.

Bora Boru

Type: Alien Smuggler

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 3D-2, dodge 4D, melee combat 6D

KNOWLEDGE 5D

Alien species 7D, business 7D-2, languages 6D-2, planetary systems 11D, streetwise 6D

8D, survival 8D, willpower 8D-1

MECHANICAL 5D

Astrogation 9D-2, repulsorlift operation 3D, space transports 3D-2

PERCEPTION 4D-1

Bargain 3D-1, hide 3D, search 6D, sneak 6D-1

STRENGTH 3D-1

Stamina 4D-2

TECHNICAL 4D-1

First aid 3D-1

Special Abilities:

Force Sense: Sense 3D, Control 3D, Alter 1D

Life Sense: Life detection, life sense, magnify senses, receptive telepathy, sense Force

Control and Sense: Mastering

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 3

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 7

Equipment: Bosphon Gecky, staff with Bosphon StarCrystals, 2,000 credits, stam

pistol (3D)

Bosphon Forever

Craft: Narromian L10 Heavy Freighter

Type: Heavy freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 50 meters

Skill: Space transports

Crew: 1

Crew Skill: See Bora Boru

Passengers: 10

Cargo Capacity: 120 metric tons

Consumables: 8 weeks

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: x16

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 10

Space: 6

Atmosphere: 338,950 km/h

Hull: 6D

Shields: 1D

Sensors

Passive: 3D/1D

Scan: 80/2D

Search: 120/3D

Focus: 4/4D

Weapons

Twin Blaster Cannon (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Turret

Skill: Starship gannery

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

Damage: 5D

1 Ion Cannon

February, 1995

Star Wars: The New Republic: Smugglers of the Outer Rim

Doug Shuler
Josephine and Jericho

Hailing from the politically influential planet of Mindabaal, these two sisters are as different as night and day. Jericho, the eldest daughter, was a rebel from day one. She refused to follow her father’s wishes and would do anything and everything to annoy and ignore him. She was summarily sent to a private boarding school when her father lost all hope of ever reforming her. Jericho’s list of conquered boarding schools grew monthly until she was finally dumped into the Mindabaal Royal Academy, essentially the end of the line for problem youths. Even the Royal Academy had troubles with her at first, but once she worked her way into the rigid caste system the other troubled teens had established, she realized that she was finally among her peers.

No longer were the other students engaging in petty thefts and simple pranks — at the Royal Academy, the true accomplishments came from smuggling weapons, stealing computers, and re-programming starship astrogation computers, all under the very noses of the proud academy instructors. Her father, Lord James Ortell Donovan, was finally feeling a sense of triumph at having tamed his eldest daughter when she thwarted him again. In a fit of anger and revenge, Jericho and several of her newly graduated classmates stole the modified yacht Royal Flower intended as a gift from her father to an Imperial ambassador. Once out of the Mindabaal system, she converted the pleasure yacht from the Royal Flower to the Jericho’s Pride and began on her long career of piracy.

Jericho hated her younger sister Josephine. Josephine was a symbol of all Jericho was not to her father. She dutifully followed in her father’s footsteps, becoming all Lord Donovan had ever hoped, and even occasionally surpassed his diplomatic abilities. Josephine was brought up to hate her elder sister and loathe everything for which she stood, not only as a personal strike against Jericho, but the entire concept of non-conformity. Josephine strove that much harder to please her father and quickly became the pride of the Mindabaal Diplomatic Corps. She engaged in every royal activity possible, from weekend beast riding to sport hunting, from language lessons to dance. It was not until Jericho’s graduation that Josephine had any hope for her sister, and after the theft of the Royal Flower, all ties between the two were severed.

Josephine went on to serve her planet as a peace negotiator and Imperial liaison. Always under the tutelage of her father, it was generally accepted that she would replace him on the senate as the Mindabaal representative. During the peace initiative in which Mindabaal would finally and formally join the Empire, the Donovan family’s private corvette fell under attack by pirates. Most of the crew successfully escaped in life pods, including Lord Donovan, but the pirates were still able to capture their true prize — Ambassador Josephine. It was not until much later that Josephine realized she was taken aboard a very familiar ship, the heavily modified Jericho’s Pride.

At first, the two sisters didn’t recognize each other. Years of separation and very different lifestyles made them total strangers. It was not until weeks later that they realized they were fighting for the same cause — the survival of Mindabaal. While Josephine was trying to gain acceptance into the Empire for the greater protection and political power the Empire could provide, Jericho was struggling against the Empire so her people and planet might remain free of oppression. Through very different methods, they had the same goals of furthering their homeworld’s position within the galactic community.

In time, Jericho’s security over her sister became relaxed, and she even once allowed Josephine to call their father and inform him she was in good health. When she transmitted her message, however, she was told by an Imperial communications officer that there was a state of emergency on Mindabaal and she was to avoid the
system. United by a similar cause, the two sisters defied the Empire and returned to their homeworld, only to find it in ruin. The once-proud planet had been utterly decimated by orbital bombardment, with only a few injured stragglers left to scavenge the smoldering rubble. What remained of the royal family was a complete mystery as the palace was barely left intact. To this day, the sisters hold a small degree of hope that their father remains alive, and will not rest until they find their answer.

Methods

Everything the sisters do is tangled in argument, and even if they know in their hearts they're working together, they're both too stubborn to admit it. Jericho always takes the shifty or illegal methods because she feels her ways are faster and trusts her connections. Josephine prefers the diplomatic route, using her money and prestige to influence people. They are both extremely attractive, and use their persuasion abilities as often as possible. Their ability to manipulate others often becomes a contest, with some handsome man caught between the two.

Jericho dresses in tight pants, boots and a flight jacket, keeping her blazing red hair tied back for convenience. Josephine dresses primarily in fancy dresses and slippers with exceptional amounts of jewelry, her dark auburn hair always in perfect condition. While Jericho's pilot training allows her to handle the controls of the Jericho's Pride with expertise, her inability to astrogate is covered by her much more traveled sister. Together, the dynamic pair are a perfect complement to each other, though they'd never admit it.

Connections and Ideas

As smugglers, Jericho and Josephine are very accomplished at what they do. As long as characters who meet them are obviously non-imperial, the sisters take very little time warming up to them. If there is a male smuggler in the campaign, it might be interesting to see how these two treat him. They tend to be fickle, however, and if one decides to move on to another companion, they are both likely to vie for the same person's attention. Though it is never directly overt, they are always competing. Even the name of the ship, the Jericho's Pride, has occasionally been changed to Josephine's Honor.

− Jericho
  Type: Rogue Spacer
  DEXTERITY 4D
  Blaster 6D, dodge 5D-1
  KNOWLEDGE 2D

− Josephine
  Type: Royal Spacer
  DEXTERITY 4D
  Blaster 5D, dodge 4D-2
  KNOWLEDGE 4D
Caught in a hail of deadly uncharted meteors, the Malba'an Eternal was nearly obliterated, but not before every escape pod ejected with the ship's biological passengers. The droids, however, were left to go down with the ship. The lumbering hulk of the once-grand pleasure cruiser streaked down through the darkened rainy atmosphere of Edoniaris, smashing to it's muddy grave. There the cruiser remained, forgotten.

But not every system aboard was destroyed. Those few droids not stuck in mud or caught under bulkheads were able to retain a small degree of automation. The luckier ones were still able to move about the shattered hull of the gigantic vessel, but unless the droids had legs or repulsor-motivators, there was no hope of ever leaving the protective shell. Scores of R2 units and the heavier power droids were doomed to slowly run out of power — and one by one, their glowing lights dimmed.

SCR-114 was one of the survivors, but not without severe damage. After a conduit shocked his outer shell, his power core never quite achieved balance and his inhibitor routine was forever fried. As a result, SCR-114 lost his ability to judge right from wrong, and no subroutine ever stopped him from making a decision. His only motivation was one of survival. This did him little good until the first scavengers came to the wrecked hulk to claim what equipment they could. When SCR-114 spotted the small transport approaching through the perpetual rains and lightning flashes, he decided he must survive at all costs. Setting up several ambushes and traps, he managed to “take care” of the Human salvage team members as they scavenged the large vessel, leaving their own transport wide open.
Having no crew himself, SCR-114 proceeded to repair and reprogram several other droids, removing their inhibitors and employing them in various positions aboard the now stolen transport according to their designs, from gunner to navigator to maintenance.

Leaving the rainy world of Edoniaris, SCR-114 changed his personal registry to "Skar" and the unregistered starship's name to the Efficient. He has since embarked on a twisted quest against all biologicals as a bounty hunter. A favorite tactic amongst his droid crew is to play the role of the derelict, the ship drifting lifelessly to lure in the target of the hunt. Needing no escape pods, living quarters, food processors, or entertainment consoles, the inside of the Efficient has been converted entirely to a droid repair and maintenance facility. As the years have passed, Skar has grown more and more ruthless and cunning, his quick-thinking droid mind allowing for instant decisions.

Methods

Skar is fully aware of his lesser status as a droid within society, and uses it to his full advantage, pretending to be a mere service unit in order to thwart would-be pursuers. Although he has a grudge against biologicals, he knows a random rampage of violence would only be met with his destruction, so he only kills for a bounty, or if another person is in his way.

One of his favorite tactics is if he is discovered on a hunt is to run into cover or a nearby alley and power down, allowing his pursuers to simply assume he's another dead droid and run past. He employs a wide array of built in and hand carried weaponry, never staying with a particular favorite or "trademark" weapon. In fact, the droid repair facility aboard the Efficient allows him to give himself a new assortment of gear, always rearranging his own configuration to suit the hunt, or even just his personal twisted whims.

Connections and Ideas

Skar and his vessel can become constant antagonists for characters, particularly if they have committed enough crimes against the Empire or other powerful agencies to warrant a price on their head. An all-droid hunting party might be difficult for the characters to detect, especially if the droids move in smoothly and subtly. After all, who would suspect a droid?

Skar

**Type:** Assassin Droid

**DEXTERITY 6D**

- Blaster 8D, dodge 6D-1, grenade 6D-2, melee combat 6D-2

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**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

- Intimidation 9D, languages 8D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 6D-1

**MECHANICAL 2D-1**

- Astrogation 4D-1, communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 3D-2, sensors 4D-1, space transports 5D

**PERCEPTION 4D**

- Bargain 5D, con 6D-1, gambling 5D, search 5D-2

**STRENGTH 5D**

- Melee 4D, stamina 7D

**TECHNICAL 2D-2**

- Computer programming/repair 6D, demolition 4D, droid programming 5D-1, droid repair 5D-1, security 3D-2, space transports repair 6D

**Equipped With:**

- Humanoid body (two arms, two legs)
- Two visual sensor recorders — Human and infrared range
- High-sensitivity audio receptors
- Fire extinguisher
- Armored torso (-1D energy, -2D physical)
- Built-in comlink
- Several built-in, concealed weapons
- Electronic lockpick in hand assembly

**Move:** 12

**Size:** 2.2 meters tall

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 5

**Equipment:** Blaster rifle (3D), 2 heavy blaster pistols (5D), grenade launcher (5D), 2,000 credits

**Quote:** "Droids are proven to be 27.1 times more efficient."

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**Efficient**

**Craft:** Modified Sublia-Ramos Medium Cargo Hauler

**Type:** Modified medium transport

**Scale:** Starfighter

**Length:** 75.5 meters

**Skill:** Space transports

**Crew:** 25 (Skar uses an all-droid crew)

**Crew Skill:** See Skar; astrogation 5D, sensors 4D, space transports 4D, starship Gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D

**Cargo Capacity:** 200 metric tons

**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x1

**Hyperdrive Backup:** x1

**Nav Computer:** Yes

**Maneuverability:** 1D

**Space:** 5

**Atmosphere:** 335-950 kmh

** Hull:** 6D

** Shields:** 3D-1

**Sensors**

- Passive: 30/1D
- Scan: 60/20/1
- Search: 110/3D
- Focus: 8/4D-1

**Weapons**

- 6 Blaster Cannons
  - Fire Arc: Turret
  - Skill: Starship Gunnery
**Smugglers of the Outer Rim**

- **Fire Control:** 20
- **Space Range:** 1/5/10/17
- **Atmosphere Range:** 160-500/1/1.7 km
- **Damage:** 60

**1 Proton Torpedo Launcher**
- **Fire Arc:** Front
- **Skill:** Starship Gunnery
- **Fire Control:** 30+2
- **Space Range:** 1/3/7
- **Atmosphere Range:** 50-100/200/500 km
- **Damage:** 90

**1 Ion Cannon**
- **Fire Arc:** Turret
- **Skill:** Starship Gunnery
- **Fire Control:** 20
- **Space Range:** 1/3/7/36
- **Atmosphere Range:** 50-100/200/500 km
- **Damage:** 60

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*Star Wars Adventure Journal*
A Bitter Winter

By Patricia A. Jackson

Illustrations by Mike Vilardi

In the unrelenting glare of Tatooine's twin suns, the Dune Sea appeared to be ablaze. Featureless interruptions of hardened loam and a massive expanse of desert swells created an infinite canopy of thermal combs. A low-lying wind blew across the dune crests, persistently pushing grit and sand into the Steadfast's docking boots.

On the advent of evening, the temperature pressed the indicator scales beyond maximum, stifling an anxious Drake Paulsen as he paced in the shadow of his Ghtroc light freighter, the Steadfast. Agitated, he snatched at the sleeves of his flight jacket and threw it up the ramp into the corridor. It was little comfort against the hot winds. The young Socorran brushed his hands through a shaggy brown mane of loose curls, subsequently fingering the golden earring at his left lobe.
Blowing in from the deep desert, the direction of the wind shifted abruptly. Like most of Tatooine, this particular place had no name, no merit, only a set of coordinates, which had reached him through the trusted mouths of fellow smugglers. *Get to Tatooine, a friend of your father's is in trouble.* Precise coordinates and vector planes had followed. Conveying an urgency that went beyond its cryptic meaning, the information had been in Soccorro, meticulously rehearsed by those ignorant of the language. Responding to that call, Drake had traveled half-way across the galaxy, arriving only moments before the prescribed hour.

A mournful wail echoed softly from the interior corridor of the **Steadfast**. Hands on his hips, Drake turned to the shadowed outline of his partner, the Wookiee Nikaede. Mentally translating words and phrases, he shrugged pensivey, noting the curved outline of the bowcaster clasped in her hands. "You'll never pinpoint anything with that storm coming in," he growled, his voice unintentionally harsh.

Beyond the dimming horizon, a wall of sand and dust had created a massive opaque cloud that was moving in their direction. Keenly, Drake could hear the winds, a distant rumble that reverberated against the low-lying back of the ridge. "Just keep your eyes open," he grumbled and resumed his pacing.

Within an hour, the storm's forefront had arrived, blowing sand and stinging debris. Prepared to face the brunt of the storm, Drake donned his flight goggles. "Nikaede!" he shouted from the ramp. "Seal up the thrusters! This might get ugly."

Reminded of the ash storms that plagued his birth world, Drake stared into the storm, dissecting Tatooine and replacing each image with a vision of his homeworld, Soccorro. These abrupt thoughts of home struck a nerve, stirring a terrible sense of misplacement and emptiness within him. Distracted, the young pirate did not notice the approach of danger until the sound of footsteps echoed above the wind. Startled, Drake turned, drawing his blaster in one fluid motion. "That'll be far enough!" he growled in Basc, recognizing the tattered robes and breath filter of a Tusken Raider. Cloaked in the violence of the wind, the desert scavenger paused briefly, regarding the pirate with cool arrogance before resuming his menacing advance.

"Move on!" Drake barked, as the intruder took another step closer, forcing him another step back. "I'm warning you," he hissed. His back met an abrupt resistance, the body of a second Tusken Raider. "Nikaede!" he shrieked, as other shadows began to move along the perimeter of his ship. Elbowing the desert scavenger, he bolted toward the ramp.

The raider stumbled back, doubled over, shedding rags and bits of cloth from its head. "Drake," its muffled voice cried, "It's me! Tait Ransom!"

Despite the raging dust cloud, Drake could not mistake the wild, black mane of hair that emerged from the disguise, nor the earthy brown face framed within it. "It is you!"

Roaring vehemently, Nikaede sprinted across the lowered ramp, cradling her modified bowcaster. She growled fiercely, moving protectively to her captain, who was surrounded by strangers.

"Relax, Nii," Drake chuckled. "Look who it is."

"Still keeping the same company, I see," the smuggler grumbled,
massaging a bruised rib. “Look, Drake,” he said curtly, “there isn’t much time. I’m glad to see you got my message.”

“You sent that distress call?”

“Not for myself,” Tait replied. Puraing his thick lips, he whistled sharply, a wavering note that transcended the wind. In answer, several figures scurried across the sand, through the darkness, and toward the ship. They carried a limp, unmoving body between them as they approached. Struggling weakly, the Human’s face was bloated and flushed with fever, heavily scarred and mutilated.

“Toooh!” Drake cried in horror. He recognized the hideous scars, knowing them to be nearly two years older than they appeared. One eye was missing, the socket smoothed over with a discolored patch of scaled skin. The other eye was not Human, but rather a cybernetic implant that flashed intermittently, as if malfunctioning.

“It’s a bitter winter when a smuggler reaches the end of his days,” Tait whispered sadly. He stepped to the side of the ramp, ushering his men onto the freighter.

“What happened?” The Wookiee snarled with menace — Drake silenced her with a stern glare. “Show them to my quarters!”

As the Socorran turned on him for answers, Ransom waved a dismissive hand before his face. “Forget the details, Drake. I don’t really know them. I don’t know what’s wrong with him or how he got that way.” Rending at the waist, he shook the sand from his breast filter, tapping it lightly against his heel. In an odd dialect, he motioned his people away from the Steadfast.

“Well what do you know?” Drake griped.

“He’s dying,” Tait whispered arrogantly. “And he’d be dead by now if I hadn’t stuck my nose in it.” He watched the Socorran carefully for a reaction. “Jabba has a quirk about people dying in his palace. A useless death is a senseless death. It’s going to be hard to find a suitable replacement.”

“Just what?” Drake demanded. “Toooh has never failed Jabba!”

“Let’s not do with failure, Drake.” Recognizing the Socorran’s temper, Tait hissed, “Don’t get any fancy ideas, kid! This isn’t Socorro and we’re not talking about Abdi-Badawi.” He snatched Drake by the collar, pleased by the brightened gaze that clouded the boy’s eyes. “This is the real league out here. Your daddy isn’t here to pick up the pieces if you mess up.” Releasing the Socorran, he whispered, “You’re better off on the other side of the galaxy.” Ransom donned his mask and breath filter. “Wait until the storm passes before you leave the planet.” As silently as he had come, he vanished into the sandstorm.

Sprouting up the ramp, Drake initialized the closing sequence. A sudden gust of wind shook the, Broadfoot, rattling through the ventilation ducts and open cylinders. "Nikaelo, anchor the landing struts
and lock down every vent!” His voice echoed down the passage, muffled by the howling windstorm outside. “Make sure the drive coil shields are in place!”

Exiting the captain’s quarters, the Wookiee roared her acknowledgement, pausing only briefly to stare at her partner and then into the cabin. A mournful wail escaped her toothy mouth.

“Don’t worry,” Drake whispered. “I’ll see to him myself. Just get those vents closed and make sure the hyperdrive is functional. We might need to use it in a hurry.” As the Wookiee retreated, the Socorran hesitated in the doorway of his personal quarters. Reluctantly, he stepped inside, forcing a long, shuddering breath into his lungs. Kneeling beside the built-in bunk frame, he stared at the withered figure beneath the blankets and watched as the old man shivered and moaned deliriously. Retrieving the medical kit and an antiseptic towel from inside, he gently dabbed at Toob’s feverish forehead, frowning as the dirt and grit rubbed off onto the cloth, leaving behind the mutilated, sunburned flesh of the Corellian’s face. “Toob?” he whispered.

Fluttering, the eye opened, its edges swollen and red with fever. Seated in the loosened socket of flesh, the cybernetic unit whirred noisily, focusing on the young pirate. Briefly, a thin smile parted Toob’s blistered lips. “Drake,” he mumbled hoarsely. “Is that really you, boy?”

“Who else?” Drake whispered. As he had so often done as a child, he took the smuggler’s hand and pressed the palm against his forehead. Fighting back tears, he recalled the strength of that hand only 10 years ago and how it had once been able to cradle and protect him. Drake stared, unflinching, into the Corellian’s ruined face, remembering how a traumatic encounter with a homemade thermal detonator had left seven men dead and two survivors, one missing a leg, the other his eyes. All the results of one bounty hunter’s failed attempt at fame. A smooth, yellowed patch of calloused skin covered what should have been the left eye and socket. Shortly after losing the right eye to radiation, it was replaced with the cybernetic optic.

Flushed with cold sweat, Toob stammered, “I... I knew that rascal ... Tait Ransom ... would find you,” he croaked. Seized with a violent spasm of pain, the Corellian cringed, coughing. Moaning miserably, he relaxed against the pillows, temporarily trapped between unconsciousness and waking.

“Easy,” Drake crooned. “You’re safe now. Save your strength.” His words fell on deaf ears as he gathered the covers beneath the old man’s neck. “Nik!” he hollered into the internal comm. “Raise my cabin temperature by 10 degrees.”

Drained and demoralized by the fall of a childhood hero, Drake held onto Toob’s hand, resting his forehead against the cold, unyielding flesh, as if anchoring the Corellian to the material world. Inundated by a flood of childhood images, he grinned, recalling the bawdy words of a smugglers’ bar song, one that Toob had often used in place of a lullaby. Remembering the warmth and power of the man’s embrace and the hoarse chorus of words, he began to sing.

“I’ve been on both sides of a blaster. I’m known by the enemies I keep. I’m punching up a jump to disaster. Sweet lady,” he yawned mildly, “sweet lady, kiss me, kiss me please.” Drifting, he mumbled, “I’ve run ... the Kessel ... and survived ...” As the stupor of exhaustion stole over him, he quietly fell asleep.

“... the Kessel and survived the show! Made the billboards in Mos Eisley, but I’m no hero, just a lonely rogue. Sweet lady, do you have something special for me?”

Startled by the blustering chorus, Drake awoke. Disoriented, he tumbled from the bunk, cocooned inside the blankets. As he raised his head to the lacing shadows, he soundly bashed his forehead against the bed frame. Invoking several Socorran curses, he massaged the raised bruise and sat up in a clutter of blankets and pillows. Mentally retracing his steps, he recalled the desperate message that had carried him to the distant world of Tatooine and his maddened attempt to break the rules of hyperspace to arrive at the prescribed coordinates at the appointed time.

Several hours had passed, according to his indicator, and the muddled Socorran could not remember giving the order to leave. Abruptly, his mind conjured the unsettling images of Toob’s bloated, gray face and the jumbled voice of Tait Ransom and the coming sandstorm. Stumbling through the door, he scrabbled into the corridor as the raucous chorus echoed from the aft section of the ship.

“Won’t vanish in no Imperial Census! No, won’t work the Emperor’s mines! Ain’t scared to make that Final Jump alone, as long as I bid all my mates clear skies!” A melodic verse of Wookiee broke in between the refrain. “That a girl, Nikoede! Now, I’ll go and get Drake,” Toob grunted. “You head up to the cockpit and set a course for Redcap.”

“Redcap?” Drake mouthed, listening to the hiss of deck plates sliding into place. Moving into the accessway, he spied Nikoede
Toob Ancher

**Type:** Aging Smuggler  
**DETERMINATION** 3D-2  
**LUNACY** 2D-1

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D-1  
Alien species 8D, languages 7D-1, planetary systems 5D-2, streetwise 8D

**MECHANICAL** 3D-2  
Astrogation 5D, sensors 8D-1, space transports 1D-2, starfighter piloting 1D, starship gunnery 8D, starship shields 7D-2

**PERCEPTION** 3D  
Bargain 5D, con 6D-1, persuasion 5D, search 3D-1, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH** 3D  
Brawling 5D, stamina 6D

**TECHNICAL** 3D-2  
Blaster repair 5D, first aid 4D-2, space transports repair 5D-1, starship weapons repair 7D

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 10

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**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink, 500 credits

**Capsule:** Toob Ancher’s reputation is synonymous with smuggling. When the Empire began pursuing and exterminating members of the Corellian militia, Toob, his brother Karl, and others fled, scattering across the galaxy. Starving and left with no means to care for themselves, they turned to smuggling.

For decades the brothers terrorized and looted galactic treasures, smuggled spice, and even enjoyed short excursions as bounty hunters. But their separation was inevitable. Toob’s reckless bravado got him in the way of more intellectual pursuits, which involved weapons trafficking, high-tech piracy, racketeering, embezzlement, and other organized crimes.

Discontent with other pursuits, Toob returned to smuggling, until a would-be bounty hunter’s faulty thermal detonator literally blew up in his face. Deformed and scarred, the Corellian retired. His eventual decline became obvious soon after he retired his YT-1300, the Glory, and took up traveling through space with a menagerie of old friends.

The two greatest tragedies of his life were the deaths of Kaine Paulsen, whom he viewed as a son, and the crippling Bitter Winter disease.

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“Drake!” Toob cried earnestly. His face was still flushed with fever, his voice scratchy, inflamed with infection. “What’s the matter, boy? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

Crossing his arms over his chest, Drake leaned against the bulkhead. “I’m not so sure I haven’t.”

Grinning playfully, Toob limped over to him, patting the young Socorran’s forehead with his hand. “Can a ghost do this?” he teased. He turned to the Wookiee, “Set a course for Redcap. With everything she’s got!”

Nikade hesitated. Though she liked the old man and had grown to trust him, even in the absence of her captain, she was reluctant to overstep the bounds of loyalty.

Drake grinned, his faith in friendship renewed. “Go on, Nik. Redcap.”

“You have yourself a fine first mate there, Drake. Finest mechanic I’ve seen this side of the Outer Rim.”

Not to be distracted from his question, Drake whispered, “What’s on Redcap, Toob? And don’t tell me it’s a rubber ball conversation and that it will bounce right over my head. This is my ship,” he stated matter-of-factly. “If you’re up to your neck in bantha fodder, I want to know how and why.”

“Fair enough,” Toob conceded. For a moment, Drake could see through the thick scars and scaling skin to the old Toob, brown-eyed, flushed, and always grinning with mischief. “It’s the biggest spice shipment you or any smuggler has ever seen. Enough spice to make me a king! Why with my share, I could buy this dustball and turn it into a retirement home. And I tell you what Drake, I’m gonna make sure Marji cuts you in on the deal.”

“Marji?”

“Saylor Marjan, a friend of mine from the old days... Abruptly his face darkened, showing the strain of illness and worry. “Speaking of those days, I have something for you.” Pulling the chain and metallic tags from his vest pocket, Toob handed the military IDs to Drake. “These were your pop’s, the Corellian whispered, “Heard he made some fortune years back and I thought you might want to have them.”

Drake took the chain, quietly staring into the metallic etchings of his father’s name, rank, and unit. “A colonel?” he scoffed. “He was one of the Black Bha‘lar? Is this real?”

“Does it feel real, boy?” Toob scoffed. There was a sharpness to his voice. “Your daddy could out-fly a TIE fighter with one hand on the throttle and the other on a bottle of Corellian whiskey. Called him the Socorran Scourge — ” The smuggler’s eye dimmed without warning. He collapsed to his knees, leaning heavily against the corridor wall.
“I gotcha,” Drake gasped, holding the slumped form against his body.

“What happened?” Toob grumbled.

“I think you better lie down until we get to Redcap.” Helping Toob back to his quarters, he fended off the smuggler’s coming protest by adding, “You can tell me all about the Black Bhal’ir and how my father ended up being a colonel.”

“Well, what you’ll hear is authentic,” Toob insisted. “On my bloodstripes, it’s a true story.”

Twelve kilometers behind and below the narrow mountain ravine, the sprawling mouth of Tyma Canyon began to vanish beneath a wandering blanket of lavender-pink clouds, a peculiar phenomena unique to the sullen gray skies of Redcap. The infamous chasm sloped and divided for several hundred kilometers, crisscrossing the barren, flushed face of the planet’s surface, forming the only possible landing ledges within a 20-kilometer range of the mountain settlements above the rim.

Leaving the Steadfast safely hidden in the basin region, Drake bartered a bottle of Socorran raava and a few power cells in exchange for a pair of olai. Left behind in the wake of dwindling mineral resources and mine closures, the creatures were late descendents of those that had worked in the mines. Aggressive yet enduring, the animals had spent nearly a decade evolving within Redcap’s hostile environment, multiplying and spreading over the planet’s surface.

Drake watched the olai’s ponderous head, bobbing left to right with each stride. The bulbous, hollow horns that grew and curled about the creature’s head and neck gave the impression that the animal was struggling to carry its own bulk. Exhausted and moody, the mare threw her head in protest, spraying her chest and legs with foam. Noisily rasping her teeth over the metal bit, she clenched and hauled at the reins, hurling herself and her rider over the final ridge.

Loosened in a fall farther down the mountain, a broken mountain cleat clattered noisily against the iron-mounted shoe. Drake listened to the dim rattle, reliving the near fatal spill. He shook his head dubiously, wishing that he had never accepted Toob’s impetuous challenge to race up the mountain. Chastising himself, Drake realized that in Toob’s shadow, he was still a little boy and the smuggler had used that to his advantage.

Still shaken by the crash, Drake pressed a confident heel to the mare’s side and urged her to gallop into the narrow ravine. Slumped over in the saddle, Toob’s leverish face glistened with sweat and the smuggler grumbled unintelligibly. Drake gently pulled the reins from the Corellian’s loose hands and attached a lead rope to the olai’s bridle.

Annoyed by the old man’s beguiling force over him, Drake planted a firm kick to the olai’s side, ignoring a streak of red clay across his flight goggles. His eyes followed an unerring path of vague childhood memories — obscure recollections that beckoned with the promise of help and security in the good will of an old friend. If his
instincts were accurate, he would find sanctuary in the small hunting lodge, which sat only meters from the main trail, nestled in the crook of the Jutane Settlement gates.

Beyond the rustic rooftop and the modest corral, Drake could see the veiled outlines of houses, shelters, and shops. Along the main road, several glow lamps had been activated, chasing away all but the most persistent shadows. From the dim, night skies, a light drizzle fell, lending an unnatural thickness to the footing. The click of the olai’s metal claw echoed noisily against the rutted trail, as he swung into the front yards. And despite the unmistakable sharpness of the mountain cleats, the animals stumbled frequently.

Drake guided the mare to the corral fence and halted. Stiff and saddle sore, he kicked free of the stirrups and dismounted. With deliberate slowness, he gently swept his hands over the olai’s broad back, surveying the extent of damage covering her black hide. Severely bruised by the fall, the mare flinched beneath his touch, nickering polite criticism to her handler. Vividly made aware of his own sores, emotional and physical, Drake grinned and scratched her velvet-smooth muzzle.

“Will, if it isn’t the Prince of Socorro himself,” a dim shadow whispered. “And one of the fallen crowns of Corellia.”

Drake snorted, recognizing the familiar accent of another childhood hero. “Ol’ olai. Fahs,” he greeted, accepting the Issori’s steady handshaker.

Far from his aquatic homeworld, Issori, Fahs’s white-blond mane had grown dingy gray from time and ill-health. He wore it proudly in a ceremonial braid, hiding the pale, balding spot at the crown of his head. The cost of vanity exposed the smooth, rounded sides of his face, where evolution had removed prionordial ears. Dressed in faded, beige pirate leggings, his skin and hair showed a lifetime of ordeal spent in the vermilion clay base of Redkap. Deeply tanned and prominent with muscle, the Issori’s long, slender limbs accentuated his elongated frame, lending a visible strength to the seemingly fragile stature. In the shadows, Drake noticed a slight tremor in the lean, webbed fingers, evidence of too much time spent in the local cantina, rather than in useful pursuits.

Fahs smiled generously — a genuine warmth spread through the measure of his wrinkled but charming face. “Still not a man, but living a man’s life. You look well for a common rogue, Drake Paulsen.”

“That’s because I’m not so common,” the Socorrano quipped. Inclining his head toward Toob, he whispered, “Do you have a place for us?”

“Always.” Moving to the olai’s side, the Issori gently cradled Toob against him and slid the unconscious smuggler from the saddle and onto his shoulder. “There, there, old man,” he whispered against the Corellian’s incoherent muttering.

Drake followed him to the lodge door, hesitating in the narrow frame. Acclimated to the darkness, he scanned the familiar interior, where he had spent countless summers in the company of his father’s most trusted friends. Reluctant to go any farther, he retreated to the shadows outside and to the olai, who were in need of some attention.

Nearly an hour passed before Fahs re-emerged from the lodge. “How long’s he been like this?”

“Ever since we left Tatouine and before that I’m not sure.” Drake leaned against the fence post, resting his forehead on the rutted wood. “Jabba ordered Tait to dump him somewhere in the desert. Something about bad luck if Toob died in the palace.”

Fahs laughed. “Jabba is as Jabba does, and no one ever accused him of being compassionate.”

“Someone ought to teach that slug —”

“Someone ought to leave it alone,” Fahs scolded gently. “You’ve got much potential, Drake. Get a few more light years under your belt and in time, you may yet give the old worm his due.”

“I could care less about Jabba. Right now, Toob’s my biggest problem. What’s going on, Fahs? What’s wrong with him?” Exasperated, Drake tossed a stone over the olai pens, into the brawbles on the opposite side. “It’s like he’s slowly going insane.”

“You might say that,” Fahs replied, gathering his thoughts.

“Oh my world, the poets call it melancholy, a sadness so far reaching that it drives men mad. Our cousin species, the Odenji, were nearly destroyed by it some centuries back.” The Issori shifted, glancing at the night sky. “When I began working on Corellia, the miners,” he sniffed with conceit, “who knew nothing of the arts, called it by another name ... brechhen vintnern.”

“A broken ... a bitter winter?” Drake translated.

“It’s a bitter winter when a smuggler reaches the end of his days. That’s where the saying comes from. They call it because few ever survive it.” Crossing his arms over his chest, Fahs yawned. “Back then, it was common to miners who worked the radiated core operations or smugglers who spent too much time working with contaminated engine parts.”

“So what happens to him?”

“Well, Drake,” Fahs pensively began, “men taken with it don’t
“Himself. He thought the Empire had impregnated him with thousands of tiny transponder beacons. So he started cutting them out.”

Drake swallowed with effort, struggling with the realization, “Isn’t there something ... anything we can do?”

“There is one thing.” Faws pursed his thin lips and stared into the thick clay beneath his feet. A stern, distant expression enshrouded his face, which was no longer handsome, but rather sinister in the shadows. “He’s in the final stages of the disease. In the last few hours, he may not even know you. May turn on you in an bad way. He’ll relive the past, mistaking it for the present, and he may even mistake you for an old foe.”

“And when it happens,” Drake probed, “What am I to do?”

The Issori never hesitated. Leaning into Drake’s face, he replied, “Make certain it’s your finger on the trigger and not a stranger’s.”

Faws moved away, taking refuge in the shadows. “There’s only two kinds of sacrifice in this life: those one willingly offers and those meant to be suffered. Sometimes, it’s hard to tell the difference.”

“How do you tell?”

“We take care of our own, Drake. When the time comes, you’ll know.”

Numb, Drake trembled, avoiding the Issori’s steady gaze. Staring out beyond the darkness of the olai pens, he watched a shadow move along the perimeter of the corral. The figure paused, watching them for a long moment before waving. “Who’s that?”

“Lieutenant Noble Calder,” Faws whispered. “He flies escort for the Aremin. They’re searching the area for smugglers.”

Winking playfully, he snorted. “Do you think he’s found any?” The Issori pulled Drake close to him, massaging the boy’s taut shoulders. “Calder’s a good man for an Imperial, Drake. Don’t judge him by what you see.”

“Eventide, Faws,” a smooth voice greeted. “How goes the night?”

“It goes well,” Faws replied, accepting the Imperial’s hand and imparting a firm shake. “Lieutenant Calder, this is a dear friend of mine, Drake.”

“Drake,” Calder welcomed, offering his hand in earnest friendship.

Drake waited for his smuggler’s sense to erupt with suspicion and alarm. As his eyes registered the black flight suit, an unexpected wave of calm coursed through him, pacifying his pounding heart. “I’m really not such a bad guy,” he heard the Imperial chuckle. “It’s all in the uniform.” Drake laughed, shaking hands with the officer.
Oddly at ease, he smiled into the handsome face and the shock of white hair crowning it. Deeply inset blue eyes were separated by an unusually angular nose, offsetting the cruelty of an aristocratic countenance.

Gently cuffing Drake’s shoulder, Calder teased, “What are you doing with this old scoundrel? You’re just a kid.”

“He’s 17,” the Issori said curtly. “That’s a man in our world.”

Straightening, Calder whispered, “Don’t smugglers believe in childhood, Fahs?”

The reply was unexpectedly sharp. “One tends to grow up fast on this edge of the Empire.”

“All depends on the choices you make.” Winking, he patted Drake on the head. “Good night.” He started back to the mountain road, retreating through the settlement gates and onto the commons.

Guardedly, Drake whispered, “Speaking of smugglers. Do you know a Saylor Marjan?”

“Know the name,” Fahs replied. “Haven’t seen the man in over a decade or more. I met him on Arapia when Toob and I went to collect on a debt for a crimelord named Saadoon-Kauldi.”

“Saadoon-Kauldi,” Drake laughed skeptically.

“You’d be surprised who we worked for back then, my young friend. Anyway, it just so happens that Marjan was the one who owed the money. Being friends, Toob let the fool talk him into running a load of spice through the Erood sector to help him pay off the debt and maybe turn a profit.” Pursing his lips, Fahs grinned with the memory. “We made it. Got the money for Saadoon. But what we made as profit couldn’t pay enough to fix one, let alone five hull breeces we sustained.” The Issori shook his head wearily. “Marjan was a fool. But who was the bigger fool, Toob or him, I can’t honestly say.”

“Tooob mentioned him and something about a large spice shipment. That’s why he insisted on coming to Redcap.”

“It’s the dees. Don’t worry yourself, Drake. Saylor and Toob were friends, long ago. They had a falling out almost 20 years ago and haven’t spoken to each other since.” Guiding Drake by the shoulders, Fahs led the exhausted Soconran to the lodge door. “I think you could use a sip of my soup, my old mother’s recipe,” he chuckled. “Just right for a cold, damp day.”

“Sounds good,” Drake replied sleepily. Quietly, they stepped inside the cabin and closed the door, barring it behind them.

Drake awoke from a troubled slumber. The heat blasting from the hearth was stifling, almost alive with a tangible essence. Unable to breathe, the Soconran quickly donned his boots and fled the lodge, escaping into the swarthy night mists. Climbing the corral fence, he stared into the great mouth of Tyna Canyon, mesmerized by the intricate labyrinth of semi-underground ravines and hidden mountain passes, each highlighted by ivory marble shading and open, black voids, exposed beneath the dim light of the stars.

The stillness of the night erupted with the distant shriek of a landspeeder engine, reverberating from the cliffs and projecting echoes farther down the mountain. As the vehicle approached, Drake jumped down from the fence, taking cover behind the water trough. He watched as the speeder’s head lamps pierced the darkness, lunging unsteadily from side to side as the craft swerved, narrowly missing the settlement gates before righting itself on the trail.

The Rodian driver shrieked as a bottle of daramu slipped from his grasp and shattered against the steering bar. Desperate to save the last few drops, the Rodian braked sharply, nearly launching himself and his passengers from the vehicle. Beside him in the front canopy, a Sullustan hooted several seething curses as his forehead connected with the dash, leaving a noticeable dent in the storage compartment.

From the back seat, two Human men howled with delight. “Don’t get the wind up your tail, Noo!” one of them bellowed in Basic. “Here,” he threw another bottle to the startled Rodian, “have another. There’s plenty where that came from!” Saylor Marjan swayed precariously before sitting back into his seat. Momentarily, he baked, “I can’t believe you brought a kid in on this thing, Toob. What were you thinking?”

“You let me worry about the boy,” a hoarse voice replied. “I’d take him over any one of you jet juicers.” The smuggler gagged as a fit of coughing assailed him.

“As long as he can fly escort in my Z-95,” Marjan recanted. “I’ll cut him in on a fair share.”

“That’s all I ask,” Toob wheezed. “Now let’s get going.”

Abruptly, the Rodian gunned the engine and the landspeeder veered, sideswiping the mountain wall and rattling its passengers. Marjan swore vehemently, baiting the driver over the head with a meaty fist. Grumbling obscenities, he snatched the bottle from the Rodian’s trembling hands and shattered it over his scaly head. “Now do it right!” he snarled. Weaving, but steady, the landspeeder
resumed its course, accelerating down the mountain road to the canyon trails below the rim.

Frantic, Drake sprinted across the small compound, hurdling a workbench of abandoned engine parts. Sliding to a halt as Fahs emerged from the doorway, he sputtered, “Did you —”

“How could he even get out of bed!” Drake asked, shrugging on his shirt.

“It’s the nature of the disease,” Fahs replied, anxiously staring down the trail. “Up, down, totally unpredictable, particularly in the last stages.”

“Where do you think they’re headed?”

“The Laughing Bantha, probably.”

Buckling his blaster around his waist, Drake stumbled toward the olai pens. “I’ll take Garish Ridge and head them off.”

“Rains washed it out,” Fahs warned, leading one of the olai behind him. “It’s certain suicide, even on an olai.” As Drake settled into the saddle, the anxious Issori whispered, “Watch yourself.”

Drake flashed a reassuring smile, charming the Issori’s fears and his own. “I’ll take care of him.” Activating the beacon light on the mare’s harness, he whistled encouragingly and spurred her onto the trail, galloping recklessly into the narrow mouth of the canyon passages beyond the settlement.

“I know you will, boy.” Fahs sighed, exhausted. He watched the beacon light dim over the ridge trail. “I know you will.”

 Barely an hour out of the rim, Drake leaned over the mare’s neck and slapped the reins against her lathered shoulders. He could see the Laughing Bantha just below him and could hear the characteristic shriek of blaster bolts coming from that direction. He reined the mare off the trail and into the rocky slopes above the tavern. Disengaging the light apparatus, he slowly worked his way down the hazardous slope, desperately scanning the shadows and the arc of laser fire from each side of the establishment.

On the left, he could make out the white-on-black armor of Imperial stormtroopers as blaster shots briefly illuminated the area behind the bar. Opposite them, he saw the smoldering remains of a Rodian and a Sullustan sprawled in the mud. The Sullustan was still alive, its arm badly wounded and dragging at his side as he crawled toward his companions, who were pinned down behind the landspeeder. A stray shot effectively ended his struggles.

“You’re on your own this time, Marijil!” a voice bellowed. “Ain’t up to me to fix this one!”

Recognizing the harsh quality of Toob’s voice, Drake guided the mare in that direction. From his vantage point, he could see that the stormtroopers were preparing to charge the outnumbered, outgunned smugglers. Using suppressive fire to their advantage, they delayed the attack as another detachment of stormtroopers moved into position on the outer flank.

Drake galloped out of the high ground, making a bold sprint across the field of fire as dozens of Imperial soldiers took aim. Lashing the mare beneath him, he dodged a frenzy of blaster salvos by spurring the temperamental olai up and over the disabled landspeeder. Fiercely checking her with the reins, Drake spun her about, balancing over her cumbersome neck as she reared, “Come on, Toob!” he shouted, momentarily making eye contact with Marijil. Pale with hysteria, Marijil screeched, “You can’t leave me, Toob!”

Pulling himself up by the stirrup, Toob hissed, “Curse your luck, Marijil!” Savagely, he struck the smuggler in the head with his boot, smearing red clay over his face.
Drake clicked his tongue against his teeth. The olai responded strongly, rearing slightly before galloping away from the muddle of shouting voices and blaster fire. Protesting the extra bulk, the mare bucked with serious intentions of throwing her riders. Irritably bouncing her hindquarters every few strides, she threw her head and kicked up her heels, stumbling in the unstable clay. Drake snatched the reins, guiding her back onto the road. It was a desperate struggle as the mare fought back, unable to compensate for the shifting weight and the reckless flight down the mountain. Lengthening her stride, she obeyed, galloping down the steep canyon slope, twisting her ankles and knees with every step.

Drake kept his heel at the mare's side, insistently spurring her. Behind him, he could hear the fading sounds of pursuit. Every few strides, the noise of stormtroopers trapped up to their knees in clay would lessen. The Socratic grinned wryly, praising a night full of torrential rainstorms that had precipitated and allowed their escape.

Making one last effort to resist, the olai mare violently threw her head. The blow connected with Drake's nose with the snap of bone. The Socratic fought to keep the mare's head under control, effectively keeping her on her feet. Behind him, Toob shifted to the side, nearly staggering from the olai's back as the mare hastily jumped an outcrop of rock. Squealing in terror, she landed in a quagmire of wet clay, desperately thrashing her hind legs to escape the bog. Despite her efforts, the mare staggered and collapsed to her knees. Sparks flew from her cloven shoes as she thrashed against the jagged rocks, which were scattered along the trail. Somersaulting into the air, she threw both riders before landing again with a bone-shattering impact against the hardened mountain road.

Controlling his fall, Drake tumbled and rolled. Trapped by momentum, he continued to plummet, head over heels, down the mountain pass. In the confusion of nausea and vertigo, he heard the mare's wretched cries behind him, as she crashed down the rugged slope and into the canyon basin. Accelerating down the incline in a maddening tangle of legs and reins, the olai bounced over and above him, striking him in the side with a flailing hoof. At the base of the mountain, he slammed into her, knocking his head against her unmoving body. His last sight was that of the late night sky, violet, pink, and then endless black.

Frightened by unknown injuries, Drake winced, making no attempts to move. Testing each limb, he was satisfied that there was no permanent damage and struggled to sit up.

"Drake?"

"Toob!" he gasped, recoiling as the sound of his own voice exploded within his skull.

"Who taught you how to ride, boy?"

"You did," Drake grumbled. "Remember, you bought me a dewback from Tatooine."

The Corellian chuckled with the memory. "Well aren't you a sight." He helped the boy to his feet. "Nothing broken?"

"No," Drake pouted, then curiously, he demanded. "Do you mind telling me what that was all about?"

"Gunfight," Toob huffed, pulling the saddle bags from the olai's body.

"A gunfight? With Imperial troops?"

"Well, I didn't start it!" the smuggler defended, grinning mischievously. "But I did intend to finish it. What the... whoa!"

Abruptly, the olai stirred, violently lurching to her feet. Broken in the fall, her front legs collapsed under her at a peculiar angle and she
fell, sprawling to the clay floor. Blood trickled from her mouth and ears, as a mixture of fluids seeped from her nose. Blowing and grunting in agony, she again struggled to her feet, succumbing by standing on her hind legs. Desperate and exhausted, she flopped back down to the ground and roared unsteadily. Whining pitifully, she stared at her human handlers, pleading for support.

"There now, old girl," Toob crooned softly. "Drake?"

Through a dark tangle of brown bangs, Drake stared past the mare into the shadows beyond her. Hesitating, he thumbed the restraint from his blaster and cocked the pistol against its holster.

"Go on, Drake, don't let her suffer," he heard Toob's soft voice against the wind. Taking strength from the familiar handle, he drew the blaster and fired, killing the mare instantly. Twitching briefly, her contorted limbs ceased their struggles — she was still.

Turning his back on the corpse, Toob rasped, "Might want to call your Wookiee partner and let her know we're coming."

"Can't," Drake replied in a meek voice. "Comlink's busted. Remember that fall up the mountain?"

Toob's ruined face mustered a look of confusion. "We did?"

"You don't remember?"

Shrugging it off, Toob started down the trail. "Doesn't matter now. Let's get back to the ship. I think we both could use a good stiff drink right now."

Troubled, Drake fell in behind the smuggler, following the starrid trail. "You know, Toob," he began gingerly, "being retired and all, you might want to consider slowing down. Maybe find yourself a few decent friends."

Without turning to look, Toob grumbled, "What? Just because I have one good eye and a few extra pounds, I have to take up farming?"

"Well no, but you have to admit, that little stunt up the mountain could have been fatal."

"You're starting to sound like my brother — careful, calculating ... dull."

"It wouldn't hurt for you to take a few lessons." Drake hesitated, then he added, "If you had listened to him, you would never have gone to that warehouse on Ottega."

Toob halted abruptly, growling. "Kar! went because he wanted to! No one asked him to go!"

"What was he supposed to do, Toob?" Drake probed. "He's your brother. Someone had to watch your back."

"Is that what he told you?"

"That's what happened, Toob, and everybody knows it."

In grim silence, they walked the last few kilometers down into the rutted canyon gorge, following the trail to the landmark Ruck's Rut, a geographic phenomena of multi-level rifts and fissures, which could hide and shelter any number of light freighters and small spacecraft. Moored on a sturdy ledge, only meters from the earthen clay floor, the Steadfast's support struts showed the vermilion tint of the soil base, evidence of her stay on the dismal red planet.

Nikaele loped across the ramp, her voice booming from the interior corridor, reverberating in the close quarters. Drake grinned. There was no mistaking a traditional Wookiee homecoming. Bracing himself, he did not resist and felt himself being lifted several millimeters from the ground in the Wookiee's powerful arms. Exhausted, he simply relaxed in the torrential splash of black and silver fur. Setting her captain back on the ground, Nikaele bellowed mournfully, eyeing the bruises and nicks all over his face. The smell of blood was pervasive and she whined for an explanation.

"Later," Drake whispered, glancing past her. Without comment, Toob walked by them and into the ship. Briefly, the Corellian reappeared, swinging a bandoleer of power packs over his shoulder.

"Toob?" Drake trotted after him, gently taking the smuggler by the sleeve. "What are you doing?"

Toob snatched his arm free. "I'm going to finish what someone else started." He resumed his walk toward the mountain trail, grumbling irritably to himself. Tapping his foot impatiently against the rock floor, he paused at the edge of the ridge. "Come on, boy! I'm ready to go!"

"Go?" Drake gasped, trembling.

Jamming his blaster into its holster, the Corellian growled, "It'll be just like me and your pop, when we shot it out with sector cops on Bonach."

"Toob," Drake swallowed, "Bonach is an Imperial prison planet. No one goes there —"

"Well maybe it was the Manda spaceport on a ... on a," he paused, flustered by the muddled memories. "Never mind. Doesn't matter. I'm not gonna stand around while good men like Ziv Banks, Lu Esi, and Tenke Hurn are gunned down in cold blood."

"Toob, those people are dead. You told me stories about them and what finally happened to them, remember? Ziv died in a shoot-out at the Orange Lady on Nar Shaddaa. Lu crashed his freighter over Vedris IV, running from sector authorities. And Tenke, he was with you when that detonator exploded on Ottega. He didn't make it out."

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Toob began to pace unsteadily, obviously disoriented. “Some of the finest smugglers this side of Corellia... who needs them!” he griped. “We can take that Imperial bunker ourselves!”

“Toob!” Drake pressed. “There is no Imperial bunker!”

“You’ve gone yellow, Marji! Curse your luck!” Toob snatched his blaster free of the holster. Set for a fatal burst, he aimed at Drake’s chest. “Yellow! But you’ve always been that way, haven’t you?”

Waving his first mate out of the way, Drake pleaded, “Look at me, Toob. I’m not Marjan.”

The Corellian’s face darkened as a wave of confusion overwhelmed his troubled senses. Faltering, he lowered the blaster. “Kaine? Kaine, my boy! What are we waiting for? Let’s go blast a few plastic soldiers. For old time’s sake!”

Remembering the Issori’s warnings, Drake cautiously replied, “Toob, please. Kaine was my father. He’s dead now, remember?” A profound sense of pity swept through the young pirate as he tried to bring the smuggler back to the present reality.

“Dead!” Toob mumbled incoherently, struggling with the concept. “Then... then who are you? Some punk kid?” he screeched, again raising the blaster to chest level. “You heard about me and you come to see if the old man still had the juice, eh! Thought you could earn a little blood money and make a name for yourself by taking out old Toob Ancher. Well not in this lifetime, boy!”

Agilely dodging the first blast, Drake grasped Toob’s arm and ducked beneath it as the second bolt went wild, narrowly missing Nikaele, who dropped to the ground for cover. Drake tried to shake the blaster from his grip, but the hold broke. Before he could sidestep the unbalanced Corellian, he felt the abrupt heel of the blaster strike him across the chin. Reeling, he fell to the ground, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth.

“Nikaele! Stay put!” Drake screamed over the Wookiee. Stumbling to his feet, Drake raised his arms in surrender.

“Who are you?” Toob whispered, fury abruptly diminished. “Wipe that blood off you face and let me see you.”

Drake rubbed the blood from his mouth. “Toob, it’s me,” he whispered, failing to hide the injury in his voice. “Drake, remember?”

“Toob?” Toob cried. “What are you doing?” Bewildered, he stared at the blaster in his hand and the swelling at Drake’s chin. “What have I... done?”


“Nothing?” Toob gasped. Turning away from the Socorran youth, he stared into the darkness beyond the ridge. Incensed by the thought of betrayal, he threw the blaster against the rocks. “Never should have left Tatooine. Should’ve... should’ve put a blaster to my head and...” Exasperated, he rasped, “Go on, Drake.”

“Make certain it’s your finger on the trigger... not a stranger’s.” Drake flinched, remembering the Issori’s advice. “Toob?” he croaked uncertainly.

“Go on to bed, boy,” Toob replied reprovingly. “We’ll talk again in the morning.”

Against better judgement, Drake surrendered to the little boy inside him, the awestruck child who admired and adored the brash Corellian. Disoriented and obedient, he retreated to the ship. “Come on, Nik.” Badly shaken, he strained to shove the infuriated Wookiee onto the ship, pulling fur and skin to coerce her up the ramp.

Rubbing a trembling hand over his bloated face, Toob cursed himself. Remembering the words from an old smugglers’ ballad, he softly sang, “Who fears the bitter breath of winter? A man who’s never known the cold. Sweet lady, there is nothing colder,” he paused, massaging his troubled brow, “than the heart of a smuggling man grown old.”

Experiencing the dying Corellian’s sense of loss and desolation, Drake accompanied him, silently whispering the chorus. “Night falls and I am far from my home. Caught between my cradle and my grave. Caught between the cradle and the grave.”

As Nikaele’s gentle hands shook him, Drake stirred. “What?” he mumbled, groggy and stiff from his adventures. The Wookiee barked softly, pushing the comlink to his lips. “Who?”

“Drake!”

Recognizing Fals, but not the panic in his voice, Drake snapped, “Toob! Not again! Where —”

“Never mind searching for him. He’s not even on the planet.” Fals paused for effect. “Somehow he managed to get hold of a Z-95 Headhunter. What’s he up to, Drake?”

“Haven’t a clue,” Drake replied, clambering for his boots. “He can’t be too far away.”

“Well hurry, the ruckus is all over the Imperial frequencies.”

“We’ll find him.” Tossing the comlink aside, Drake sprinted up the corridor to the flight cabin. “Boost the sensor array and scan for recent ion traces,” he ordered as the Wookiee settled beside him. Agilely, his hands began throwing flight switches and toggling control modules. “I know,” Drake whispered to her complaints.
about the old man. “Just bear with me.”

The Steadfast hovered precariously above the ridge floor, deftly sliding beneath the jagged ceiling and into the open mouth of the Tyna Canyon Basin. Despite the interference of Redcap’s dense stratosphere, Nikaede easily located the ionic blast trail. Examining the sensor data, she confirmed it and broadened the sensor sweep to include the surrounding space above the planet. With a forlorn groan, she made a disturbing discovery.

“You found him!” Drake cheered. “Where?” A capricious snap from the Wookiee unnerved him, as did the four unidentified blips on the sensor screen. “Punch into their frequency.”

“Veepal Squadron, where are you?” a desperate voice cried. “We are under attack! Respond immediately!”

Nervously, Drake watched the on-board flight computer flash through its library of schematics, confirming the presence of an Imperial Star Galleon and a Z-95 Headhunter. Approaching swiftly from the far side of the planet, two Imperial Assault Gunboats were closing at intense velocity to engage the intruder.

Nikaede groaned, a panicked whine reverberating in the back of her throat. Wistfully, she read off the information to her captain.

“Two ion cannons, two laser cannons, and two missile launchers with eight concussion missiles a piece.” It was Drake’s turn to groan. Throttling the Steadfast’s engines, he guided the freighter on an intercept course with the Imperial assault ships.

The Star Galleon had the look of manufacturing newness, its hull glowing ivory-white in the dimly hollow of space. The vessel had never seen true combat time—this much was obvious from the incompetent handling of its turbolasers. Galleon and crew relied heavily on its predatory escort now arriving from the planet. From the blast scoring across the galleon’s once pristine armor, it was evident that the Headhunter and its pilot had done their job well with several adroitly placed concussion missiles.

As Drake approached at speed, he recognized the wide, haphazard bootlegger’s turns and defensive spirals, which left the galleon’s gunners effectively stymied. The maneuvers were all characteristics of Corellia, the legendary homeworld that had created men like Toob Ancher, his brother Karl, and a number of colorful figures who now lived in the shadows of galactic law. Against such a pilot, the galleon’s defenses were all but useless.

Drake felt his heart sink as the gunboats swung into formation, pursuing the lone Z-95 on a straight vector. Dodging a wild shot from the frustrated gunners, Drake guided the Steadfast into the fray, deftly eluding blasts from the Imperial defenders. Increasing power to the aft shields, he left all weapons powered down. If the Imperials were monitoring him, they would see that the light freighter temporarily posed no threat.

Adjusting for the power surge in the shield generator, Nikaede brayed anxiously. The soft-spoken Wookiee disliked their close proximity to the Imperial ship. She snapped the modified heads-up display between them, showing Drake the incoming blips on the sensor’s array.

“I see them!” Drake grumbled, as the lead starfighter barred toward them, accelerating. “Open the comm. I want them to hear our transmissions.” Manipulating the guidance system, he slid the Steadfast into place behind the fleeing Headhunter, just as a blast from the gunboats struck his stronger shield defenses. “Toob!” Drake growled.

“What are you doing?”

“Making the score, boy!” the Corellian countered with laughter. “Point for point; life for life. Now get out of my way! You’re jamming my targeting scope!” He banked sharply, following through with an extreme dive, before leveling off in an attempted course back to the galleon.

Easily mimicking the maneuver, Drake fired, “You’ll have to do better than that, Toob. This is insane! Now stop —-” The starfighter’s maneuver jets abruptly sputtered, effectively stalling the small craft. To avoid a collision, Drake spun the controls, bringing the Steadfast up and away from harm, opening the way for the assault

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**Adventure Idea**

The characters are hired by a notorious crime lord to track down an old debtor who is long overdue in his repayment. Their investigation leads to the deep and twisted canyons of Redcap, where the debtor is being sought by Imperial officials who suspect him of smuggling stolen spice. Recently, a large shipment of spice vanished from the commercial shipping lanes and the Imperials believe that the debtor knows something about it.

The characters must find the debtor so the Empire does, possibly even freeing him from the local Imperial lock-up. Then they must help him retrieve the hidden spice shipment, deliver it, and collect his credits before he can pay off the crime lord.
Breathless, Calder guided his crippled gunboat back into the arena. "I'll give you one option, kid. The only option my orders allow." He paused. "Your trigger or mine."

"They got me, boy!" Toob cackled manically, freeing himself from the safety harness. He was so disoriented, he had not realized that the disabling shot had come from the Steadfast. "Shut me down, but not before I gave them boys a run for their money! Ha, ha!"

"Toob, listen to me."

Ignoring Drake's quivering voice, Toob shifted in the pilot's seat. "Got to make a run for it." He pulled the canopy latch. A warning siren blared insistently, signaling the imminent danger of decompression.

"Toob?"

"Clamp's locked in place," the Corellian grunted, as the device failed. He hailed at the switch, sweat clouding his cybernetic eye. "Can't wait around for them to come back." Examining the blast scoring, he laughed. "They've locked me in, boy. If I can just ..." he tugged at the seal, "work it ... loose. I might yet slip away." Still jiggling the welded clamp, he began to sing, "I've run the Kessel and survived the show ... ."

"Drake?" Calder grumbled impatiently.

Make certain it's your finger on the trigger and not a stranger's. Empowered by those troubling words, Drake whispered, "Standby."

Weaving slowly down the narrow corridor to the cradle of the ship, Drake slid down the gunner's ladder. Reluctantly, he strapped himself into the turret and powered up the heavy weapon. Focused on the crippled Z-95, he could feel the burn of the computer's targeting scope acclimating with his retinas.

In a frenzied panic, Toob continued his desperate efforts to escape the canopy, despite his lack of an environment suit. Enraged by the confined area, he removed his helmet and began bashing his head against the seal, smearing the reinforced glass. Abruptly, he paused and stared at the sun-smudged canopy. Seeing a great expanse of configurations and colors, toward the only recognizable shape, his mind could grasp, the Steadfast. "There now, old girl," Toob crooned, hearing the screams of the dying olal in his mind. "Go on, Drake," he whispered. "Don't let her suffer."

Drake squeezed the trigger. A burst of energy buffeted the disabled Z-95 and it erupted into a ball of imploding flames. The blast was deafening, propelling wreckage and shrapnel over a wide area of space. Massaging the bridge of his nose, Drake closed his eyes as a tear fell across his cheek.

"Aremin, this is Lieutenant Calder confirming one hostile dis-
Nikaede Celso
Type: Wookiee First Officer
DEXTERITY 2D+2
Bowcaster 9D, brawl parry 4D, dodge 3D, 1D, melee combat 3D, melee parry 3D, running 3D
KNOWLEDGE 3D
Alien species 3D-2, intimidation 4D, planetary systems 4D-1, streetwise 3D
MECHANICAL 3D
Astrogation 6D, beard riding 3D, communications 3D-2, sensors 4D-1, space transports 3D, starship gunnery 4D-1, starship shield 6D
PERCEPTION 3D-1
Con 3D-1, persuasion 3D-1, search 3D-2
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 6D-1, lifting 6D, stamina 6D
TECHNICAL 2D-2
Blaster repair 4D-1, drodger programming 4D, drodger repair 4D, first aid 3D-2, space transports repair 6D-1, space transport repair, drive systems 3D

Special Abilities:
Berserker Rage: An enraged Wookiee gains a +2D bonus to Strength for causing damage while brawling and suffers a -2D penalty to all non-Strength rolls.
Climbing Claws: Wookiee's claws give them a +2D bonus to their climbing skill.
This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 2
Dark Side Points: 1
Character Points: 15
Move: 13
Equipment: Bowcaster (4D), miscellaneous repair tools, leather satchel

Capsule: A formidable 2.4 meters tall, large even by Wookiee standards, Nikaede is a giant among her species. Despite her size, however, the Wookiee is an extremely clever and talented technician, working easily with numerous drive systems and small engine components. Her diligence and patience make her a primary candidate as first mate aboard the Stalwart. However, when pressed, the young Wookiee female has a tendency to whine and bemoan each crisis.

Born of a noble family on Kashyyyk, Nikaede was smuggled from her homeworld through the selfless sacrifice of her parents. An exile, she knows nothing of what happened to her family and friends on her homeworld. As a result, she has a tendency to bond with down-on-their-luck types. Usually cool and reserved, the sensitive Wookiee angers easily and shows little tolerance to those foolish enough to provoke her rage.

patched. Veerpal Squadron standing down.” As the second assault craft sped back to the planet, the imperial pilot lingered among the blast-scored debris. “Look, it’s any consolation to you, Drake, your friend didn’t leave you much of a choice. It was your trigger or—”
“I understand,” Drake interrupted. “Believe me, it was better this way.” Swallowing the lump in his throat, he whispered, “Thanks.”
“Clear skies, Stalwart. Calder out.” The assault ship staggered across space, returning to its command station, somewhere below the atmosphere.

Despite the heavy cloud cover, a few stray beams of sunlight managed to pierce the gray, spreading warmth across the cold, barren floor of Redcap’s notorious Tyma Canyon. Docked on the narrow landing strip, the Stalwart and her counterpart, a YT-1300 called the Glory, seemed oddly out of place: diminutive, insignificant inside the kilometer deep ridges and continental shelves of the great canyon.

The Glory’s hull was pink, stained by her two-year retirement on the surface of the planet, hidden away in the basin where no sector authority or rival could find her. And here she had remained, while her captain traveled the galaxy in the company of friends. Still spaceworthy, the matriarchal freighter seemed to cast an aura that Drake could only define as a smugging ship’s inner pride. Every crack in her armor, every discolored shield plate, every recognizable bleep to her frame held a wealth of history, symbolic medallions of her exceptional career.

Exhausted and demoralized, Drake leaned against the Glory, pressing his feverish forehead against the ship’s cool hull. With childlike naiveté, he threw his will and all his conviction against the light freighter, in an effort to imbue her with the life of her captain.
Any minute, if he concentrated hard enough, Toob would come strolling down the ramp and greet him with a hard slap on the back or perhaps a bawdy chorus from a smugglers’ ballad.
Beside him, Fafs lovingly caressed the freighter, realigning one of her docking boots with a swift kick. “She served him well, from the day he got her . . . to the day he retired her here in the valley.” Pursing his lips, he ran his fingers along the ragged edges of the freighter.
“You know, she once ran the Kessel in 20.5 parsecs.”
“Narrowing his eyes with suspicion, Drake stared at the Issori, wondering at the cruelty of this joke.
Fafs laughed with light-hearted spirit. “That’s a bantha’s pace today, I suppose. But back then,” he shook his head as the memories
flashed through his cluttered mind, "back then ... she was something. The Dame of Nar Shaddaa, they used to call her. That was before the days of Tait Ransom or Elia Halbert, even that young fellow, Solo. Them boys weren't even born when this very same ship," he slapped the freighter proudly, "was entertaining underground royalty and thumbing her nose at sector authorities across the galaxy." Scratching the back of his neck, Fahs nervously hummed a somber tune, "I don't suppose you want to fly her back to Socorro. I don't have much need for a ship nowadays and ... I know it would tickle Ancher to see her again."

"I'm not ready to go home, Fahs," Drake whispered, avoiding the Issori's eyes, "Not yet." He left Nikaede's shadow fall over him and listened to her mournful wail. Leaning into the Wookiee's supportive warmth, the young Socorran ran his fingers over the Glory's hull one final time.

"I understand, Drake. Old men dream dreams and young men live them." Standing on the ramp, Fahs posed as if on stage. "Youth makes every heart a king and every adventure a crown to be captured." Distracted, he laughed at himself, sighing, as if a great weight had been lifted from him. "Never been to Socorro. Heard Toob talk about it. Guess I could go there, stopping by way of Nar Shaddaa. Wouldn't mind sharing a moment with some old friends." Squinting, he stared into the morning sky. "There was this pretty little gal who used fancy me. She tended bar at this corner tavern called the Orange Lady ... " he flashed a roguish smile. "Well," the Issori chuckled, blushing profusely, "that was another time ... another adventure ... long time ago." Winking, he keyed the ramp closing sequence. "Clear skies, little prince—wear your crowns proudly."

Sheltered beneath the Steadfast, Drake and Nikaede watched as the antiquated freighter teetered precariously over the makeshift landing field, hovering unsteadily beneath Fahs's control. Relearning the subtle shifts of the flight module, the Issori settled the freighter, banking sharply over the canyon ridges and up into the clouded atmosphere above the planet.

Drake sighed, finding an inner peace imparted to him by the Issori's wit. "How fast do you think she is?" he asked, fondly glancing over the Steadfast. Nikaede shrugged, grumbling multiple quantum equations and theories. "Only one way to find out," the Socorran mused. Whistling a jovial tune from a smuggler's ballad, he met the pragmatic Wookiee's challenging snarl with a warm smile. "Set a course for the Kessel system."

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Star Wars Adventure Journal 152

February, 1995
**CRIMSON JAILBREAK**

by Peter Schweighofer

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

*Crimson Jailbreak* is a solitaire adventure for both long-time and new *Star Wars* gamers, as well as those who have never played a roleplaying game before. There are some short rules on how to accomplish certain tasks with your character (experienced *Star Wars* gamers can skip this and go directly to the section marked “Welcome to Byblos”). There’s even a sample character for you to try (or use your own protocol droid character).

Gamemasters can use this quick adventure to introduce the rules to new players. It’s designed for beginner-level characters.
Your Character: U-THR (Uthre)

The character provided with this solitaire adventure is U-THR, otherwise known as Uthre, a protocol droid. As a character, Uthre is described by a short capsule background and several attributes and skills. Attributes are things you're born with—innate abilities. There are six attributes—Dexterity, Knowledge, Mechanical, Perception, Strength and Technical. Skills are abilities you learn, and they include things like blaster, dodge and brawling.

Uthre has a die code for every attribute and skill. The die code is the number of six-sided dice you roll when you use the attribute or skill.

Example: Uthre's Knowledge is 3D, so if he tries to access information from his memory, his player rolls three dice and adds the rolls together.

If there is a +1 or a +2 after the "D," add that number to your total. For now don't worry what actions every attribute and skill covers—this adventure tells you when and what to roll.

All skills begin with the same die code as their respective attribute. Some are improved: Uthre's increased skills include dodge, languages, planetary systems, persuasion and droid programming. There are many other skills than those Uthre begins with—those listed here are the ones he has improved.

Don't worry about the listings for Force Points, Character Points and Move. These are stats used in the roleplaying game which are not necessary to play this adventure. They are provided here in case you wish to use this character in other Star Wars roleplaying adventures.

How Uthre Does Things

The gamemaster (or in this case, the adventure notes) assigns a difficulty number to the task a character is trying to complete—like shooting a blaster at stormtroopers, flying a starship, or fixing the hyperdrive. If your roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty number, you succeed. If it’s lower, you fail.

Example: Uthre wants to interpret what the babbling Rodian is saying to him. His languages skill is 5D+2. The gamemaster says the difficulty number for translating the Rodian's language is 15 (a Moderate difficulty level). Uthre's player rolls five dice and adds two more points to get a total of 19. Uthre understands that the Rodian is expressing his dislike of droids, especially of protocol droids.

You now know enough about the rules to start playing. But a roleplaying game is more than rules—roleplaying games are really about roleplaying and storytelling, usually with a group of other players and a gamemaster. Playing this solitaire adventure will give you a feel for how the game works so you'll be more familiar with it when you join other players.

Welcome to Byblos

You and your owner, Mistress Crimson, have just landed on the planet of Byblos, a world with an astonishingly immense population.
Most of the citizens live in large city towers which climb into the bright blue Byblos sky. Mistress Crimson has landed her ship, *Starlight Red*, in starport tower 214, level 3301, docking bay 789012634. You've never been to Byblos before, but you've heard wonderful stories of the architectural wonders of the city towers, as well as tales of the bustling city tower streets. What a fine opportunity to visit this engaging starport.

"You'd better stay on the ship," Mistress Crimson suggests on her way to the cargo bay. "Byblos can be pretty confusing for us organics, so it's got to be completely incomprehensible to droids like you. Besides, I don't want you getting lost out there and having some sleazy pirate steal you for spare parts."

Oh, my. Perhaps Byblos is a bit too dangerous for a droid like you. You decide it's best to stay with the ship — to monitor its systems while Mistress Crimson conducts business, of course.

You make yourself comfortable in the *Starlight Red*'s cockpit while Mistress Crimson unloads some crates of supplies. You're not quite certain what exactly you're carrying in the cargo hold — and you rarely make it your business to know. Mistress Crimson has involved herself in several less-than-legitimate schemes in the past which often involve transporting illegal cargoes. Smuggling is a profession best left alone by simple droids.

While you're sitting in the cockpit, your gaze wanders outside the transparisteel viewport to examine certain aspects of the docking bay. Through the wide entrance you can see outside onto the surface of Byblos — not too far away you can already count at least 10 other city towers at least as high as the one you're in now. You look along one wall where a technician is unfurling a power conduit, probably to recharge your ship's fuel cells. Near the entrance to the starport is a small office for the bay supervisor, who is standing near the entrance talking with an imperial stormtrooper sergeant.

Oh, my, was that a stormtrooper sergeant? Could Mistress Crimson be in some sort of trouble?

You shuffle from the cockpit and head for the ship's entry ramp. Proceeding cautiously down the ramp, you hear the rough voices of other stormtroopers coming from the cargo hatch — where Mistress Crimson was unloading her crates! You peer around one of the entry ramp's struts to see stormtroopers sitting through several open crates — although you can't see into them, you're almost certain the crates contain some kind of contraband substance. And then you see two stormtroopers placing restraining binders around Mistress Crimson's wrists! Oh, my!

As the stormtroopers lead Mistress Crimson out of the docking bay, she turns toward the *Starlight Red* and silently mouths some words to you: "Help ... me ... out ... of ... this." Oh, no! Mistress Crimson is in trouble!

Are you ready?

1

As you watch the stormtroopers lead Mistress Crimson out of the docking bay entrance, your voluminous droid mind becomes cluttered with worries and harried plans to rescue her. There are several rational options available to you, but you require more information before formulating any complete plan. Besides, you're not terribly good at this hero stuff.

- **If you access your memory about information regarding Byblos and the starport**, go to 7.
- **If you ask the technician out in the docking bay where the stormtroopers have taken Mistress Crimson**, go to 9.
- **If you consult the Starlight Red's computer for information on Byblos and the starport**, go to 5.

2

You recall that Byblos is a heavily populated world where the billions of citizens live in immense city towers. The particular tower you're in now is starport tower 214, an entire city tower dedicated to starship traffic. There must be millions of docking bays in this tower, and possibly services for all the spacers passing through here.

Unfortunately, that's all your planetary data stores reveal about Byblos.

- **If you ask the technician in the docking bay where the stormtroopers have taken Mistress Crimson**, go to 9.
- **If you consult the Starlight Red's computer for information on Byblos and the starport**, go to 5.

3

The starport corridors are bustling with buzzing aliens, zooming cargo skiffs, bargaining spacers, binary load lilter droids and grimy technicians. Everywhere you look you see entrances to docking hangars, repair bays, and storage areas. You pause at the entrance to one docking bay to ask directions to the nearest Imperial Customs office, but the angry Rodian there barks at you to go away. A nearby
binary load lifter droid unloading heavy crates from a cargo skiff is more than happy to give you rather simplistic (and hopefully accurate) directions.

You continue shuffling around the starport corridor until you reach the rather officious-looking facade to the Imperial Customs office, Byblos Tower 214, Level 301. Part of the facade is an open arch which leads into a main lobby and a desk. Inside are Imperial Customs officers and stormtroopers. Several stormtroopers have escorted Mistress Crimson to the lobby desk, where she is being interrogated by an angry Imperial Naval officer.

Your experience has demonstrated that trying any rational means to negotiate with Imperials often has rather unsuccessful and sometimes deadly consequences. It looks like you’re going to have to try this “heroic rescue” nonsense and formulate some kind of plan to break Mistress Crimson free of her captors. Perhaps the best way to do this would be to stage some sort of diversion...

Roll your Knowledge attribute of 3D to see if you can figure how to set up a diversion to distract the troopers in the customs office and allow you to rescue Mistress Crimson. Roll three dice.

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 19.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 6.

4

The binary load lifter droid is heading off at a good speed. To chase after it and catch up to reprogram the droid, you need to make a dodge roll to shuffle through the crowded starport corridor. This is a Very Easy task with a difficulty number of 5. Your dodge skill is 2D; roll two dice.

- If your roll is 5 or higher, go to 13.
- If your roll is 4 or lower, go to 8.

5

You consult the Starlight Red’s cockpit computer for information on Byblos and starport tower 214. This is an Easy task with a difficulty number of 10. To do this, you roll your computer programming/repair skill. Since your skill is 2D-2, roll two dice and add two.

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 15.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 12.

6

You look around and suddenly remember the binary load lifter you saw back near one of the other docking bays. If you could somehow reprogram it to cause a distraction, you might have a chance to free Mistress Crimson.

You head back the way you came until you find the immense load lifter droid standing idly next to a pile of large, heavy crates. Now, you’re familiar with over one million droid and computer communication languages. Binary load lifter droids are not terribly bright. They’re big and stupid, built for loading and unloading heavy cargoes from starships. This particular binary load lifter seems incredibly unintelligent. If you can reprogram it to load one of those crates into the back section of the Imperial Customs office — carefully stumbling through the crowd of Imperials there — the clumsy droid might cause enough of a distraction for Mistress Crimson to escape.

Programming the droid is a Moderate task with a difficulty number of 15. You need to roll your droid programming skill of 4D. Roll four dice.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 20.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 10.

7

You scan your droid memory for any information about Byblos and the starport here — a Moderate task with a difficulty number of 15. You must use your planetary systems skill of 4D-1 — roll four dice and add one.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 11.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 2.

8

The starport crowds are too thick for you to follow the binary load lifter droid. You are buffeted by spacers trying to get to docking bays, jostled by other droids, and are almost run over by a speeding cargo skiff. You’ve lost sight of the load lifter. You decide to search around for another way to distract the stormtroopers holding Mistress Crimson prisoner. Go to 19.

9

The docking bay technician is busy checking several power conduits near a refueling station. You emerge from the Starlight Red’s entry ramp and shuffle over to the busy tech.

"Excuse me," you say. "Hello, could you tell me where those Imperial stormtroopers were taking the captain of that ship?" You
point toward the Starlight Red, hoping the tech has some idea what you're talking about.

The tech doesn't even look up from his work. "Those stormtroopers are from the Imperial Customs office on this level," he says, "I think they're taking her down to the office for questioning or something. I guess they found some sort of violation or contraband." The technician looks up and surveys the ship. "Yeah, it was probably a weapons violation. See those quad lasers on the ventral gunnery mount? Illegal as a freight Wookiee. I'm surprised we haven't received a requisition to remove them...

You thank the technician. If you're going to rescue Mistress Crimson, you'd better head down to the Imperial Customs office. Go to 3.

10

After trying to reprogram this idiot droid in its own simplistic language, the droid lurches forward, lifts a heavy crate, and begins carrying it off in the opposite direction from the Imperial Customs office. That stupid droid is heading in the wrong direction!

- If you chase after the load lifter and try to reprogram it again, go to 4.
- If you search around for another possible distraction, go to 19.

You recall that Byblos is a heavily populated world where the billions of citizens live in immense city towers. The particular tower you're in now is starport tower 214, an entire city tower dedicated to starship traffic. This particular city tower consists of over 5,000 levels, each built around a central lighting well. Each level has docking bays for light, medium and bulk freighters along its outer and inner circumference. The area between the bays includes essential starport services — repair bays, eateries, cantinas, and Imperial Customs offices.

You believe it is very likely the stormtroopers have taken Mistress Crimson to either the Imperial Customs office on this starport level.

- If you ask the technician out in the docking bay where the stormtroopers have taken Mistress Crimson, go to 9.
- If you consult the Starlight Red's computer for information on Byblos and the starport, go to 5.
- If you exit docking bay 7B9012634 and head for the Imperial Customs office to see if the stormtroopers there are holding Mistress Crimson captive, go to 3.

12

My, what a rude computer! Perhaps you did something wrong while searching for information on Byblos. Still, the ship's computer didn't have to insult you for it.

Perhaps you'd better try asking the technician out in the docking bay where the stormtroopers have taken Mistress Crimson. Go to 9.

13

You finally catch up to the binary load lifter droid after being buffeted by spacers trying to get to docking bays, jostled by other droids, and almost run over by a speeding cargo skiff. You give the droid a simple command: stop. The load lifter halts and lowers its heavy load to the ground. You decide to give your plan another try, and make a second attempt to reprogram the droid to deliver its load to the back of the Imperial Customs office.

Reprogramming the droid is a Moderate task with a difficulty number of 15. You need to roll your droid programming skill of 4D — roll four dice.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 20.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 17.

14

"Golo le nochka, mootee ne linga sochak," you say in Rodian, delivering a particularly barbed insult regarding the Rodian's cultural and familial heritage.

The Rodian draws his heavy blaster pistol and jams it into your metallic chest. "Goodness gracious me!" you exclaim, stepping back. "I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean it like that. You see, I was simply trying to ..."

A burst from the Rodian's heavy blaster pistol cuts you short. Your photoreceptors blink out as your arms, torso and head are scattered across the starport corridor. Now you'll never be able to free Mistress Crimson from the stormtroopers. Oh, how did you get into this terrible situation? Unfortunately, it will take more than your abilities and skills to pull yourself back together again. For now your adventures on Byblos are over...

Go to 28.
You fiddle with the computer controls, and after a minute of slowly accessing its memory, the Starlight Red's computer provides you with a short planetary entry on Byblos:

**Byblos**
- **Type:** Terrestrial
- **Temperature:** Cool
- **Atmosphere:** Type 1 (breathable)
- **Hydrosphere:** Moderate
- **Gravity:** Standard
- **Terrain:** Urban
- **Length of Day:** 38 standard hours
- **Length of Year:** 402 local days
- **Sapient Species:** Humans, various aliens

**Starport:** 5 Imperial class
**Population:** 164 billion
**Planet Function:** Manufacturing, trade, academic
**Government:** Imperial governor
**Tech Level:** Space
**Major Exports:** High technology, military hardware
**Major Imports:** Raw materials, luxury items, foodstuffs

**Capsule:** Byblos is a densely populated world in the Colonies which is a major manufacturing center for high technology and military items. Its unremarkable geographical features — plains and barren wastes — are covered by clusters of hundreds of city towers, immense round constructions, some more than 5,000 levels tall, which house the industries and citizens of Byblos.

Each tower has its foundation in an industrial level. As it rises up, towers sometimes taper or flare outwards, varying the shapes of different towers. The center of each tower is hollow to allow light and sometimes airspeeder and starship traffic to enter. Some towers serve specific purposes — each city has several starport towers, many residential towers, corporate towers and even an Imperial garrison tower. Entire corporations might own a tower for their manufacturing and research needs, as well as homes, offices and services for their employees. Residential towers often contain homes, some offices, and commercial and entertainment areas catering to citizens' needs. Tubeways connect each tower with adjacent towers, allowing high-speed repulsorlift travel across a city.

The immense starport towers are perhaps the busiest, and the most likely to be visited by offworld spacers. Each level of a starport tower contains docking bays, repair bays, warehouses, cantinas, supply outposts and other starport services. Each level also contains a small Imperial post to oversee starport security, and an Imperial Customs office which conducts customs inspections at individual docking bays.

BlasTech, SoroSuub and Sienar Fleet Systems all maintain corporate towers on Byblos. The prestigious University of Byblos also occupies its own city tower.

Those stormtroopers must have taken Mistress Crimson to this level's Imperial Customs office for some sort of customs violation. You decide to exit docking bay 789012634 and head for the Imperial Customs office to see if the stormtroopers there are holding Mistress Crimson captive. *Go to 3.*

"Le nochka, tuo halack ne ladda buchat," you say in Rodian, commenting on the spacer's lack of common courtesy and his obvious lack of good looks. The Rodian turns to you and sneers. You try another phrase, "Toska ne linga voe bashkal."

The Rodian slowly reaches for the heavy blaster pistol at his side. You perceive this as a most opportune moment to head back to the
Imperial Customs office, baiting the Rodian with further insults as you trot along through the crowded starport corridor. "Toska ne linga voo bashika!" you call again, looking behind you to make certain the Rodian is following. You repeat the insult again.

Sure enough, the Rodian leaves his Twi'lek companion and begins following you, waving his heavy blaster pistol in the air and shouting something that loosely translates as "Come back here you rusty tin bucket." You quickly shuffle off to the Imperial Customs office as fast as your metal legs can carry you.

A blaster bolt sizzles past your head! The Rodian is shooting at you! If you're going to make it to the Imperial Customs office in one piece, you'll need to use your dodge skill of 2D; roll two dice.
- If you rolled 5 or higher, go to 25.
- If you rolled 4 or less, go to 22.

17

Your attempt to reprogram the binary load lifter has failed. Instead of doing what you asked, it just sits there like the idiotically simple droid it is, beeping out some silly and insulting message at you. Perhaps you'd better look around for a different distraction to use in freeing Mistress Crimson. Go to 19.

18

Luckily, nobody's really aiming for you. You manage to dodge past the stormtroopers' blaster fire and run after Mistress Crimson toward the Starlight Red's docking bay. Go to 21.

19

Looking around the starport, you notice the abundance of Human and alien spacers. Near the entrance to one docking bay you see the angry Rodian you asked directions from earlier. If you could rouse his temper again and get him to follow you toward the Imperial Customs office, he might prove to be a rather entertaining diversion.

You decide the best way to accomplish this is to bait the Rodian with some petty insult. Delivering this insult in the Rodian's native language would most likely enrage him even further. You head over to the Rodian and interrupt his conversation with a Twi'lek spacer.
"Ne linga ne hochka," the Rodian says to you. You're not quite certain what it means. No matter. You begin to berate him with insults.
To insult the Rodian in his native language is a Moderate task with a difficulty number of 15. Use your languages skill of 5D+2; roll five dice and add two.
- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 16.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 14.

20

You finish reprogramming the binary load lifter and step back, waiting for it to carry out its new program. The load lifter droid comes to life, turns and picks up a large crate with its heavy lifting arms. The immense droid then stumps off toward the Imperial Customs office to deliver its heavy load.

You quickly shuffle toward the customs office in the wake the binary load lifter is creating as it parts the busy starport crowds. The clumsy droid continues to head forward, directly through the main arch of the customs office.

The binary load lifter begins carefully negotiating its way through the throng of Imperial Customs officers and stormtroopers in the main waiting area, who are all trying to scurry out of the large droid's way. The Imperial Naval officer interrogating Mistress Crimson at the main desk is distracted and begins yelling at the troopers to get rid of the stupid droid. This is your chance to free Mistress Crimson!

Carefully working your way past officers and stormtroopers trying to get the binary load lifter droid out of the main customs room, you head toward the front desk and Mistress Crimson. You catch her eye, and she nods toward the stormtrooper closest to her. You're not quite certain what she means by that, but she distracts you again — just before you walk right into that particular stormtrooper!
"Watch where you're going," the stormtrooper orders. You back off and catch a glimpse of Mistress Crimson pulling her manacled hands away from the stormtrooper's utility belt — with the keys to open her restraining bands.

At this point, the binary load lifter droid has reached the back of the main customs waiting room and is attempting to deposit its heavy crate on top of a desk covered in customs computers. The computers flash and spark under the weight of the crate, providing another diversion for you and Mistress Crimson to sneak out.

But, Humans, they're terribly irrational. You're not certain how you manage to put up with their heroic antics. One of these days it's going to get you blown to pieces. Rather than attempting a quite escape, Mistress Crimson grabs one of the stormtroopers' blasters
and begins shooting the Imperials as she runs off toward her ship... leaving you inconveniently in the crossfire.

As you are shuffling after Mistress Crimson, you'll need to make a dodge roll to avoid being hit by blaster fire. Your dodge skill is 20, so roll 2 dice.

• If your roll is 5 or higher, go to 18.
• If your roll is 4 or less, go to 26.

21

You're almost to the Starlight Red's docking bay when you see the blast doors at the bay's entrance have been sealed! Mistress Crimson pounces her finger at the door controls, but the blast doors are locked. "Uh-oh, can you open the blast doors from here?" she asks.

You look around and find a nearby starport information computer station. You shuffle over and see if you can override whatever computer program is keeping the blast doors shut. You'll need to make a Very Easy computer programming/repair roll (with a difficulty number of 5). Your skill is 20+2: roll two dice and add two.

• If your roll is 5 or higher, go to 23.
• If your roll is 4 or less, go to 27.

22

"Goodness gracious me!" you exclaim as a burst from the Rodian's blaster hits you. Your photoreceptors blink about your arms, torso and head are scattered across the starport corridor. Now you'll never be able to free Mistress Crimson from the stormtroopers. Oh, how did you get into this terrible situation? Unfortunately, it will take more than your abilities and skills to pull yourself back together again. For now your adventures on Byblos are over...

Go to 28.

23

You successfully reprogram the computer and the blast doors open. You and Mistress Crimson rush into the docking bay just as a squad of stormtroopers rounds the bend and begins firing at you. Mistress Crimson runs up into the Starlight Red's cockpit while you shuffle up the entry ramp, closing it behind you. Before you even have a chance to strap yourself in, the Starlight Red blasts out of the docking bay and streaks out from starport tower 214. You've done it! You've saved Mistress Crimson and escaped from Byblos! Go to 28.

24

You are unable to log in the proper reports and datafiles to get the Starlight Red out of Imperial impound and open the blast doors. This time you won't get a second chance, as you and Mistress Crimson are quickly surrounded by heavily armed stormtroopers. You have little choice but to surrender. The two of you are taken prisoner and transferred to the jails in the Byblos' Imperial garrison tower. For now your adventures on Byblos are over...

Go to 28.

25

You dodge a few shots from the Rodian as you shuffle through the crowd. Soon you see the Imperial Customs office ahead. You burst into the main room where Mistress Crimson is still being interrogated at the front desk. "Help me!" you cry. "Someone help me. There's a deranged Rodian back there with a blaster, and he's shooting at everybody. I think he's taken some poor woman hostage." Almost as if on cue, the Rodian out in the corridor fires several blaster bolts into the air. Half the stormtroopers and customs officers run out to try and subdue the Rodian.

Mistress Crimson gives you a wide smile and nods toward one of the two stormtroopers guarding her while the Imperial Naval officer continues to batter her with questions. You're not quite certain what she means by that, but she distracts you again — just before you walk right into that particular stormtrooper!

"Watch where you're going," the stormtrooper orders. You back off and catch a glimpse of Mistress Crimson pulling her manacled hands away from the stormtrooper's utility belt — with the keys to open her restraining bands!

"Goodness gracious me," you exclaim. "I'm terribly sorry, sir. I should have been watching where I was going. Please accept the humble apologies of this terribly clumsy protocol droid. I am truly sorry..." You seem to have distracted the stormtroopers long enough for Mistress Crimson to escape from the restraining bands. While everyone is watching you prattle on about apologies, Mistress Crimson grabs one of the stormtroopers' blasters and starts shooting up the customs office!

Humans. They're terribly irrational. You're not certain how you manage to put up with their heroic antics. One of these days it's going to get you blown to pieces. You should have expected Mistress Crimson to try a heroic escape rather than trying to sneak
away with another diversion. She blasts the few guards left in the customs office, then grabs you by the hand and drags you out into the starport corridor, heading for her ship.
Go to 21.

26

"Goodness gracious me!" you exclaim as a burst from a stormtrooper's blaster hits you. Your photoreceptors blink out as your arms, torso and head are scattered across the starport corridor. Oh, how did you get into this terrible situation? Unfortunately, it will take more than your abilities and skills to pull yourself back together again. Hopefully Mistress Crimson will have time during her escape to pick you up and drag you to the Starlight Red to be reassembled later. But for now your adventures on Byblos are over...
Go to 28.

27

This blasted computer won't do anything you want it to. It just spouts bureaucratic nonsense at you. Wait a moment... rather than trying to actually reprogram the starport computer, perhaps you could try using the computer for its regular purpose: logging in bureaucratic reports and updates on starships. All you have to do is determine the correct bureaucratic protocols for getting this docking bay out of impound status...

To accomplish this Easy task (a difficulty number of 10), you use your *bureaucracy* skill of 5D: roll five dice.
- **If your roll is 10 or higher**, go to 29.
- **If your roll is 9 or less**, go to 24.

28

Now you can see how your character works in the game. Every time you wish to take an action, you roll the appropriate skill or attribute as listed on your character sheet. If your roll is equal or higher than the difficulty number, you succeed. If your roll is less, you fail.

In this adventure, the difficulty numbers are provided for you.

When gaming with other players and a gamemaster, the gamemaster provides the difficulty numbers. Now that you have some idea how your character works, find a group of people interested in playing *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* and get started creating your own adventures set "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away."

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**Tell Us What You Think!**

What do you think of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*?
What would you like to see? Write a letter to the editor. We might print it in a future *Letters to the Editor* column! Letters must be signed and should include your name, address and phone number. Letters may be no longer than 200 words.

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All material (including letters) published in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* become the property of Lucasfilm Ltd. Letters are subject to editing for publication.
A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away, I saw a movie and fell in love. From the moment that blockade runner came on to the screen to the celebration on Endor, I was hooked. But as the person who has the responsibility of running West End Games, with all its game lines and licensed products, I have to keep my "fanatiscism" under control. Then, Lucasfilm has a Star Wars Summit, and I lose it!

First, and foremost, I would like to thank the entire staff at Lucasfilm, especially Howard Roffman, Lucy Autrey Wilson, Julia Russo, Sue Rostoni, Kathleen Scanlon, Stacy Mollema, Allan Kausch and, of course, Mr. George Lucas for all their hard work in putting together a flawless show and performance. A show that brought tears to my eyes, made my hair stand up on my neck and made my heart leap with excitement. Thank you. Thank you from the bottom of that heart. Anybody got a hanky?

And now to you the readers, fans and collectors of Star Wars. First the news you've all been waiting for. Mr. George Lucas personally announced at the summit that he has started writing the outlines for the next three movies, that they will all be shot at the same time and that (here's the bad news) they will start to be released in 1998.

I know, I know. Everyone said '97 but it's '98. Mr Lucas also said that the reason he's waited this long was for the technology to be able to do what he wanted. Jurassic Park, with its great special effects, proved the technology is here. I'm sure the movie will be worth the wait. By the way, does anybody know where they got real dinosaurs?

Okay, okay. Stop crying about '98 and listen up. This is a hint. This is just a hint, but you ain't seen nothing yet!

The Star Wars Summit — besides bringing together all the Star Wars licensees and foreign agents to find better ways to work together and support each other — allowed some of the major licensees to present what they have planned through 1997.

If you're like me and would love to have one of everything ... get a second job. What's coming, not only in volume, but in quality, is mind boggling — from a Yoda figure which is almost actual size and looks like a double of the figure they used in the films to new ceramic mugs, video games (32-bit), action toys, ceramic collector figures, calendars, collector plates from Hamilton, post and greeting cards from Hallmark, a voice modifer so you can sound like Vader, metal figures, Galoob ship and vehicle figures, walkie-talkies, Topps collector cards in a new wide-angle format, more comics from Dark Horse, more new novels from Bantam including Shadows of the Empire, technical guides from Balfantine and new footage added to
Star Wars that will be released in 1997, to name just a few things.
Did everyone get that comment? Well here it is again just in case.
New footage added to the original movie for release in 1997.

**New Footage**

If you haven’t got your copies of Star Wars, (VHS, collector set, laser disc, whatever) get them now. They are all going away in 1996 never to be available again without the new footage!
So you want to know about the new footage. Well here’s as much as I know. When Mr. Lucas shot the movies originally, there were scenes that were left out because the special effects at the time didn’t allow him to do what he wanted. Well he has the special technology now … hello Jurassic Park.
How much new footage you ask? How does four to five minutes sound? Where is the new footage you ask? Well … I don’t know if … well, okay, I only know of one scene at this time, so here it goes.
After Han gives Greedo a new navel in the cantina, Solo and Chewie head for the Falcon. We now see the scene where Han faces Jabba at his ship to explain what he’s up to. Yes Jabba! In the first movie? Yes!
You see the technology to put a moving Jabba (that didn’t look real) with real people wasn’t available then. It is now. I know it. I saw a rough clip of one shot from the scene and it looks great! I also have no idea where the other scenes appear or how much the new set of films will cost.
Now, for what’s big in ’96. Repeat after me, Shadows of the Empire. This new novel from Bantam Books will be written by Steve Perry. This is not going to be “just another novel.” The story takes place between The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi and revolves around Palpatine, Luke and the “godfather” of the underworld. But like I said, this is not “just another novel.” This novel will be supported with a comic book series from Dark Horse, a boxed campaign setting and sourcebook (at least) from West End, along with products from many of the other licensees. It’s going to be hot!

**Galactic Travels**

Call your travel agent and get ready to book some flights and spend some bucks.
From December 27, 1994 to March 12, 1995, The Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena in San Francisco will be featuring a major exhibit called “The Art of Star Wars,” comprised of the Lucasfilm collection that just came back from Japan. They’ll be showing ship models, backdrops, props, costumes, pieces of this and that, and models of the characters.
For those of you who can’t make the huge California show, try Washington, D.C. That’s right, Washington, D.C.
Ever hear of the National Air & Space Museum? Well, for the entire year of 1997, they are planning a special display for Star Wars. They’ll have costumes, models, props and more, in a major 20-year retrospective.
At this time I want everyone to stand up and say “I’m going to Disney World”! You don’t want to go? You’ve been there before? Well, it’s up to you if you want to miss the First National Star Wars Collectors Convention in 1997. Your choice: See ya there!

**Summit Spectacular**

Now that you know some of the things to expect for Star Wars over the next couple of years, let me tell you what Lucasfilm did to knock my socks off.
Suffice it to say, the summit was held at “the place,” Skywalker Ranch. After checking in and getting our collectors badge and pin, we were served a continental breakfast while we got to mingle with other licensees. We were then escorted into the theater for private showings. The theater looks like it could seat 300 people. I mean, there were over 250 of us and there were seats to spare.
We were then treated to a viewing of Wowl, a series of clips from all the Star Wars and Indiana Jones movies as well as Willow. This short film is available (on laser disc) to people who buy a Home THX sound system. I’m sure many people have seen this before (not me). I’m also sure that seeing it on the big screen with a THX sound system cannot be compared. The impact, the sound, was so … I can’t describe it, so I won’t. Maybe I’m a softie, but it left me with tears in my eyes.
As the short ended, stormtroopers came marching in, followed by the Emperor’s Imperial Guard and, of course, Lord Darth Vader. Presentations continued through the rest of the morning until lunch. Twentieth Century-Fox had a presentation that was hilarious. They shot a movie with Tom Sherak, their head of marketing and distribution, dressed as Luke and spliced into the original Star Wars movie. What a trip!
To keep things light between presentations Lucasfilm showed clips of Star Wars parodies on TV shows. Things like Bill Murray singing “Star Wars, nothing but Star Wars …” on Saturday Night Live,
the Simpson clip we all saw recently, and many others. They also showed clips of devoted fans — you know, waiting in line at the movies, interviewing people who had seen Star Wars 20, 30, 100 times. You know — you and me.

At the close of the day we were treated to an appearance of C-3PO and R2-D2 along with Mr. George Lucas. If you don’t think that’s impressive, you’re not a fan.

That evening we had a reception in the scoring stage area of the building, which they referred to as the “cantina.” As we walked into the room we found out why. Once inside we saw Luke’s landspeeder and were greeted by a host of aliens from the Star Wars cantina, along with characters new and old, and a bar that was close to the one in the movie. The landspeeder and the costumes though were the originals.

As the reception ended we were handed gift bags of various licensed products. It was a most enjoyable day!

The next day after breakfast all the licensees separated into discussion groups to find better ways of working together to give you an even more consistent universe.

As a parting gift from Lucasfilm we were all given a large, special edition model of the X-wing that is numbered and dated. It was produced by Rawcliffe, who also does the Millennium Falcon as well as other pewter figures. It is — they all are — magnificent.

We were then taken to the archive building where they keep all the licensed products and (are you ready for this?) all the models and costumes. Not only did we get to see them, we got to talk to some of the archivists and discuss some of the “little secrets” and the “did you know.” What a treat.

Then, as if that wasn’t enough for my head to take, the curator of the Lucasfilm Archives pulled me aside and said that he had all the cantina actors read the West End write-ups on their character so they would know how to act at the reception the night before. He also said everyone used the West End material like a “bible” for Star Wars.

Some compliment, huh? Wow. But then, that’s what you, our customers, have been saying all along, every time you buy our product.

There’s more. There’s much more. Watch for the information in the New Horizons section of the Star Wars Adventure Journal — and until I get the time to write to you again ... (as a fan, there is no other way to say goodbye)

May the Force be with you!
CRITON’S POINT
Somewhat off the regular hyperspace routes in the Pentastar Alignment is Criton’s Point. The Point is a desolate world of ancient ruins that includes the Library of Xer, a vast storehouse of accumulated knowledge rigorously controlled by the Empire and now the Pentastar Alignment. Very little information is available on Criton’s Point or the library, but many historians are keenly interested in the planet. Rumors suggest that the library may have been erected before even the time of the Old Republic. The scientific teams residing on the planet has issued a public statement claiming that the contents of the library currently resist all translation attempts.

CRITON’S POINT/SUMMARY
Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I
Hydrosphere: Acid
Grav: Standard
Terrain: Traversable
Length of Day: 28 standard hours
Length of Year: 360 local days
Sapient Species: Human
Slaveport: None (landing is forbidden without proper clearance)
Population: 1,000
Planet Function: Archaeological site
Government: Pentastar Alignment planetary overseer
Tech Level: Primitive
Major Exports: None
Major Imports: None

Capsule: Criton’s Point is a restricted area. All entry into the system and planetary landings are expressly forbidden by the Pentastar Alignment and the Commerce Master Commissioner of the Veleran Free Commerce Zone.
A small scientific team is currently conducting excavations in and around the mysterious Library of Xer, and maintains a small settlement and warship landing field nearby.

MISH, LT.-CAPSULE
Lieutenant Mish is an energetic customs inspector of short stature. He patrols docking bays in the Yavin 2-14. During inspections, Mish is always nervously entering information on his databoard, scurrying to and fro, checking the most obscure areas for violations. He takes great offense at anyone joking about his small size, and threatens to write report them for failing to cooperate with an Imperial Customs officer.
Mish always check several random crates aboard each vessel. Should the cargo consist of any edibles, he will insist on sampling some. While he doesn’t accept bribes of credits, he’s very open to accepting gifts of food.

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL
OPINION
Mish is easily distracted by food—it puts him a little more at ease and allows him down, even momentarily. He eschews all but his own cargo, he generally ignores to inspect the rest. Sometimes carry a few cases of Loaccar candies and place them closest to the cargo bay entry hatch to distract Mish.
If it’s anywhere near meal time, Mish will even accept lunch, which distracts him just as well. The better the fare, the less time he spends prising about your cargo.
When a survey mission runs into disaster on a gas giant, the team's only hope of survival is to defeat the ...

WIND RAIDERS OF TALORAAN

By James L. Cambias
Illustrations by Joel Carroll

The Rebel characters have been temporarily assigned to the Alliance's Ordnance and Supply section, working at a supply base to maintain the flow of materiel to Rebel forces battling the Empire. This is a particularly appropriate assignment if the characters have failed a previous mission and are in bad standing with their Alliance commanders.

After a week or so of boring desk work, during which the characters nearly direct a vital ammunition shipment to an Imperial depot, they are summoned by Captain Eedan, the head of their section.

Read aloud:
“From these performance reports I can see that your talents are being wasted behind a desk. I’ve decided to assign you to field duty. It’s an important mission, and I think you’re just the ones to do it. Have you ever heard of Tiban gas? It’s a rare substance, which occurs in the atmospheres of certain gas giant planets.

“Tiban gas is very important to our war effort. It’s used in blaster weapons and lasers — and it’s much more efficient than Barigian or Thelton. The Empire has gradually gotten control of all the commercial sources. Until recently, we could still buy Tiban gas on the black market at Cloud City, on the planet Bespin. Now that the Empire has occupied that world, we need new supplies, and quickly.

“This is where you come in. There are several likely gas giant worlds in remote systems that might have the Tiban gas we need. I want you to survey those planets and find us a Tiban gas deposit. The Alliance recently acquired an old prospecting ship that’s perfect for the job. It’s in hangar bay G, ready to go.

“Now this may not sound like the most glamorous assignment, but it really is very important. If our Tiban gas supply runs out, the Rebellion will grind to a halt. Now get going, and may the Force be with you.”

Eadan gives the characters navigation data for the sector they will be surveying, and a technical readout for their new ship. He provides most other supplies the characters ask for, but is very reluctant to hand out heavy weapons or vehicles. “You’re going on a survey mission, not an orbital assault,” he says.

The prospecting ship is in hangar bay G, and at first sight looks fit only for the scrapheap. Its hull is dented and patched, and the drives look hopelessly obsolete. When the characters get aboard, however, they will see that their first impression is mistaken: the Jackpot probably was rejected from the scrapheap.

**Jackpot**
- **Craft**: Modified Corellian YT-700 Transport
- **Type**: Prospecting ship
- **Scale**: Starfighter
- **Length**: 21.7 meters
- **Skill**: Space transports: YT-700 transport
- **Crew**: 2, gunner: 1, pilot: 1
- **Passengers**: 3
- **Cargo Capacity**: 50 metric tons
- **Consumables**: 6 months
- **Cost**: 10,000
- **Hyperdrive Multiplier**: x2
- **Hyperdrive Backup**: x20

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Nav Computer: Yes
Atmosphere: 218; 500 km/h
Hull: 40
Shields: 1D
Sensors:
  - **Passive**: 20/1D
  - **Scan**: 40/1D
  - **Search**: 60/2D
  - **Focus**: 4/3D

**Weapons**
  - 1 Laser Cannon
    - **Fire Arc**: Turret
    - **Crew**: 1
    - **Skill**: Starship gunnery
    - **Fire Control**: 0D
    - **Space Range**: 1-3/12/25
    - **Atmosphere Range**: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km
    - **Damage**: 40

**Capsule**: The prospecting ship Jackpot is a unique design, based on the old Corellian YT-700 transport hull. Cargo and passenger space were reduced to make room for a powerful Gavatrionics 8-87 sensor suite. Over the years the ship has passed from owner to owner. Some maintained the Jackpot in good shape; while others barely kept it running. The ship has seen better days — the equipment is all old and unreliable, and annoying equipment failures are common during flights. Living quarters aboard are spartan and cramped.

**Episode One: Wildcatters**

The survey mission proceeds fruitlessly. The characters examine gas giant planets in a dozen systems scattered throughout the Inner Rim and Expansion Region. Gamemasters may invent suitable encounters for the various systems the characters visit. After finding no usable Tiban gas deposits in the Lequabis system, the K'tikata system, the Poviduza system, or the Shaslah Cluster, the prospecting party arrives at the planet Taloran.

**The Living Sky**

The explorers enter Taloran’s atmosphere, scanning for traces of Tiban gas. On an Easy sensor roll, the readouts reveal surprisingly high levels of free oxygen and water vapor. As the ship probes beneath the upper cloud layers, the characters are astonished to see life on Taloran! Drifting clouds of tiny single-celled creatures resembling algae soak up solar energy and produce oxygen. Herds of living balloons feed on the algae, and swift winged flyers prey upon the balloons. Characters with scientific training know that life-bearing gas giant worlds are extremely rare, and may wish to take recordings and samples for study.
Suddenly, the ship is buffeted by powerful winds as a storm system the size of a planet becomes visible ahead. Gusts of 500 km/h tear at the ship, sucking it towards the looming storm vortex. Cosmic lightning displays light up the sky. The Jackpot's pilot must make a Very Difficult space transports roll to retain control of the ship.

Just as the pilot stabilizes the ship and veers away from the giant storm, a burst of lightning strikes the vessel. Characters using the ship's shields can make a Very Difficult starship shields roll to intercept the lighting bolt. The lightning causes a generator overload. The crew can either shut down the power plant and plummet to their deaths, or be blown to bits when the power generator goes critical.

**Rescue!**

In the nick of time, the characters hear the "clunk" of a grapple on the outer hull. Through the viewports, they see five huge blimp-shaped creatures surrounding the ship. Each must be at least 200 meters long. They all have crude gondolas of hide and fabric slung underneath their titanic bodies. Cloaked figures in the gondolas are tossing ropes to the Jackpot. But the ropes don't look strong enough to hold up the ship for very long.

The gray-clad humanoids in the gondolas gesture frantically for the characters to abandon ship—and it doesn't seem that they have any choice. Taking hold of the ropes, the characters must make the harrowing climb from their ship to the nearest blimp creature, with nothing beneath them but 10,000 kilometers of air. The climb requires a Moderate climbing/jumping roll to avoid falling. Characters may only carry small personal items with them—each large object increases the difficulty of the roll by one level. If any character misses the roll and falls, one of the humanoids will grab him with a grappling hook and haul him aboard—all large objects carried fall. Once on board the gondola, the characters can only watch in horror as the humanoids grab a few items from the ship before cutting the ropes and letting it fall away out of sight. Without their ship, the characters are trapped in the clouds of Taloraan.

**Episode Two: People of the Sky**

One of the natives, who seems to be the leader, comes up to the characters and removes the heavy wrappings that cover his face. Beneath him he is perfectly Human. In an archaic and heavily-accented form of Basic he addresses the party, "I am Laspevar, leader of the Denfrandi. You are welcome here." The Denfrandi seem to be a friendly folk, but have only rudimentary technology. They live aboard their living airships, called sfeh-chuffni. This little squadron of five sfeh-chuffni is a scouting party for the main tribe.
Sleft-Chuff
Type: Giant Flying Herbivore
DEXTERITY 3D
PERCEPTION 3D
STRENGTH 6D

Special Abilities:
Tentacles: Do STR damage
Electrical Sense: Sleft-chuff can make a normal Perception roll to detect electrical buildup that preann a lightning bolt.
Move: 30 (flying)
Size: 200 to 300 meters long, 40 to 50 meters across
Scale: Walker
Orderliness: 1D

Capsule: The sleft-chuffi are large living gasbags that inhabit the upper atmosphere of Talonan. They stay aloft by storing lifting gas in their large hollow bodies. They can carry a load of up to 50 tons. The creatures graze on clouds of single-celled plants in the atmosphere, using long, slender tentacles covered with feathery hair to gather the food. Female sleft-chuffi give birth to dozens at a time, and males are solitary. The creatures are usually placid and calm, but become skittish when near lightning, as their lifting gas is highly explosive. All Denfrandi carry grappling hooks made of bone, which they use to move around between sleft-chuffi. They are all very skilled at throwing these hooks and catching them in the thick hides of the sleft-chuffi. Each grapple is attached to a long rope made from hides of other airborne animals — Denfrandi use these as both weapons and to catch and swing between their sleft-chuffi gondolas.

Typical Denfrandi Warrior. All stats are 2D except: Dexterity 4D, throw weapons 5D, survival: Talonan 4D, beast riding: sleft-chuff 7D, Strength 4D, brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D-2 Move: 10. Grappling hook (1D), knife (STR+1D).

After the characters have been rescued, Laspevar leads his scouting squadron back to the main Denfrandi tribe herd. During the voyage, he speaks with the newcomers and asks them questions. Laspevar is curious about where the characters have come from. He wants to know if they were searching for the other metal flyer. If the characters ask what he means, Laspevar explains. Read aloud:

"Forgive me, for I thought you had come in search of the other metal flyer. It came here a few months ago, with a man inside. He spoke kindly and gave us gifts, and said that others might follow him. But then he tried to befriend the Wind Raiders, though I warned him against them. They tricked him and killed him, and they have his metal flyer still."

Laspevar
Type: Denfrandi Tribal Leader
DEXTERITY 4D
Brawling 4D, dodge 4D-2, thrown weapons: grappling hook 5D-2
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Survival: Talonan 6D-1, willpower 4D
MECHANICAL 4D
Beast riding: sleft-chuff 7D
PERCEPTION 4D
Bargain 4D, command 6D, persuasion 6D-2
STRENGTH 2D
Brawling 3D, climbing/jumping 6D, stamina 4D
TECHNICAL 2D
First aid 4D-2
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 4
Move: 10
Equipment: Grappling hook, knife (STR+1D), macrobinoculars, rope, (30 meters), thalidamide vest (+1D against physical, -1 against energy, torso only)

Capsule: Laspevar is the aging leader of the Denfrandi. He is a graying man in late middle age, no longer as strong or quick as he was as a youth. His wisdom and experience make him a good chief, and for a generation he has led the tribe through good times and bad. Laspevar is a peaceful man who in the past has resolved conflicts by negotiation. Against the vicious aggression of the Wind Raiders he can do little, and there is talk among the other Denfrandi that maybe a more forceful chief is needed.

Wind Raider Attack!
Just then the Wind Raiders attack! The Wind Raiders are a different tribe of Humans who ride great swift-flying ray-shaped creatures. The characters must help the Denfrandi scouting party fend off the raiders long enough to reach the main herd. There are 25 Denfrandi warriors aboard five sleft-chuffi — the Wind Raiders have 10 sleft-waifu, each bearing two warriors. The raiders attempt to cut off the scouting party, then plan to board the gondolas to carry off loot and slaves. The main sleft-chuffi herd is two kilometers away. The Denfrandi's mounts are able to get within hailing distance in 15 rounds. If the raiders have not succeeded by then, they withdraw.

One or more of the characters may be captured during this running fight. The Raiders would love to have someone show them...
how to operate the scout ship they captured several months ago — which would give them the power to utterly enslave the Denfrandi forever.

**Wind Raiders**. All stats are 3D except: thrown weapons 4D, survival: Talorana 3D, beast riding: fleft-wauf 5D, Strength 3D, climbing/jumping 4D. Move: 10. Harpoon (STR-2D), leather bodysuit (+1 against physical).

The Wind Raiders are all armed with harpoons. They can use their harpoons either as a deadly weapon in combat, or else to attach a line to subdue and reel in a target.

- **Fleft-Wauf**
  - Type: Swift Aerial Hunter
  - Dexterity 4D
  - Perception 4D
  - Strength 6D
  - Special Abilities:
    - Bite: Does STR 4D damage
    - Tail Blade: Does STR 1D damage
  - Move: 70; 200 kuth
  - Size: 20-meter wingspan
  - Unfriendliness: 3D

**Capsule**: The fleft-wauf are the Wind Raiders’ powerful winged mounts. Normally they are pack carnivores, and hunt in groups of a dozen. They soar through the skies of Talorana at great speeds. In combat, fleft-wauf use their sharp barbed tails to slash at balloon animals as they fly past. As the wounded creature falls, the fleft-wauf snap off chunks of flesh to eat. Each one can carry up to six Humans, but the passengers must use sturdy harnesses to keep from falling off in flight.

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**Episode Three: Among the Denfrandi**

After fighting off the raiding party, the characters and the scouting squadron rejoin the main Denfrandi tribe. There are nearly 100 sleft-chuffni in the herd, of which 30 are equipped with gondolas carrying Humans. In all, the tribe has 500 people — about 200 men, 200 women, and 100 children.

The members of the tribe are peaceful people who normally go unarmed. All Denfrandi carry a rope and grapple at all times, allowing them to swing to other gondolas.

The tribe lives on the milk of the sleft-chuffni, on wind-plants gathered in huge nets, and on small flyers brought down by bows. All their tools and equipment are made of animal materials. A few of the tribal leaders have metal knives or grappling hooks, and the chief owns the Denfrandi’s most valuable relic — a pair of macrobinooculars. One thing which characters quickly notice is that the Denfrandi never use fire. All their food is eaten cold and raw, often chopped into a sort of hash.

If the characters ask how the Denfrandi came to live in such a strange place, Laspevar recites one of their tribal legends. Read aloud:

"Once, long ago, Humans lived above the sky, in palaces of metal that flew faster than the winds. They were mighty and proud, and this was their undoing. For the sky demons became jealous of Humans, and put a curse upon them, so that they were cast out of the realm above the sky.

"But the gods saw the Humans fall, and pitied them. They created the sleft-chuffni, and sent them to rescue the Humans, and be their friends and servants forever."

Apparently the tribes on Talorana were stranded here much as the characters were — but they somehow managed to survive. Laspevar’s earlier tale of another “metal flyer” now in the Wind Raiders’ possession should spur characters on — that other “metal flyer” is their way off Talorana.

Once Laspevar has told the characters about the captured ship in the hands of the Wind Raiders, characters are still faced with the problem of getting to it. None of the Denfrandi want to attack the stronghold of the Wind Raiders directly, for they have suffered too much lately from attacks by the flying bandits. But without help from the tribe, the characters are trapped on Talorana.

The characters must convince the Denfrandi that the Wind Raiders will never leave them alone — that their only hope is in
fighting back. A Difficult persuasion roll is needed to sway the Denfrandi. If the characters convince the tribe, they must then come up with a plan for attacking the stronghold of the Wind Raiders.

**Initiation**

During all the discussion about attacking the Wind Raiders, an elderly Denfrandi raises an objection. “Who are these strangers to speak of fighting? They are not even members of our tribe!”

Laspevar agrees. “You must prove yourself members of the Denfrandi before you may fight beside us.” He insists the characters pass the tribal initiation rite, to demonstrate their fitness to fight with the nomads in battle. It is a simple test — the characters must catch and tame a young sleet-chuff which has not yet been ridden. Teenage Denfrandi all must pass this test before being accepted as full adults.

To pass the initiation test, the characters must get a rope around one of the sleet-chuff calves, then stay aboard while the brightened beast tries to throw them off. Roping the creature requires a thrown weapon roll — staying aboard as the calf bucks and thrashes requires a Very Difficult stamina roll. To tame the beast, the rider must make an opposed beast riding skill roll against the calf’s Ormerness of 3D. Characters with Force powers can use projective telepathy or affect mind to calm and control the sleet-chuff.

If any of the characters are thrown off of the sleet-chuff and cannot be saved by the others, he or she can be captured by a Wind Raider flyer lurking below the cloud level. Naturally, the others do not discover the character’s capture until they find the missing character when they infiltrate the Wind Raider camp. The Denfrandi do not express much regret for the lost character, for among their people even children learn to avoid falling.

**Episode Four: Lair of the Wind Raiders**

After passing the initiation ritual and becoming accepted as full members of the Denfrandi tribe, the characters lead the nomads in an assault on the fearsome Wind Raiders.

The Wind Raiders were once a band of peaceful hunters who used their fast fleet-waau mounts to chase down and harpoon large creatures in Taloran's atmosphere. They traded with other tribes for things they could not catch or make themselves. But in recent years, the young chieftain Genogri has changed all that. He realized that his tribe had a great unused potential for war. Under his leadership, they have become a fearsome band of raiders, taking what they want from other tribes and forcing them to pay tribute. The ranks of the Wind Raiders have grown as bandits and outcasts from other tribes joined.

The Wind Raiders make their home within the body cavity of a colossal gasbag creature that floats slowly through Taloran's atmosphere. The animal is nearly a kilometer across, and dangles one to two kilometer-long tentacles to catch food. The Wind Raiders have patrols flying about constantly watching for intruders.

**Island-Beast**

**Type:** Colossal Floating Grazier  
**Dexterity:** 1D  
**Perception:** 1D  
**Strength:** 1D  
**Special Abilities:**  
**Tentacles:** Do STR damage  
**Move:** 25, 70 kmh  
**Size:** 1 kilometer across  
**Scale:** Walker  
**Ormerness:** 1D  

**Capsule:** The island-beast is one of the largest creatures inhabiting Taloran. It is a great disk-shaped gasbag, kept warm by trapped solar energy and the creature's own metabolism. Thousands of long tendrils hang from the gasbag, and these form a great strainer in the air, filtering out tiny organisms which the beast consumes. The Wind Raiders dwell within the island-beast's vast central cavity.

The Wind Raiders are not very worried about attack. The young chief Genogri believes the neighboring tribes have been too terrorized by his raids to fight back. During the day there are two fleet-waau warriors out on patrol, circling about the island-beast at a radius of two kilometers. At night only one flyer is on patrol.

Within the island-beast there are 50 Wind Raider warriors, with 30 fleet-waau — most of which are nesting half-way up the island-beast's central cavity. There are also 40 women and children.

The captured scout ship is kept in the Wind Raider camp, securely tied down with ropes. Only Genogri and a few other leaders are allowed to enter the ship. They have been unable to figure out how it works, as the pilot engaged all the security interlocks before leaving. The ship is a standard Sienar Lone Scout, capable of transporting one pilot and three passengers comfortably. The ship has suffered no damage, but has been stripped of food supplies and any portable items.

**Scout Ship:** Starfighter, space 5, atmosphere 295; 850 kmh, hull 4D, shields 1D. Weapons: 1 laser cannon (fire control 0D, damage 1D).
**Getting to the “Metal Flyer”**

The gamemaster should encourage the players to devise their own strategy for reaching the scout ship and overcoming the Wind Raiders. There are basically two approaches: direct assault and stealth.

If the Denfrandi tribe mounts a direct assault on the island-beast, a terrific battle ensues as the Wind Raiders come boiling out of their lair on their fleet-wauf mounts. The Denfrandi fight bravely, but the raiders can gang up on them, attacking each sief-chuff with several fleet-waufs. The characters must reach the island-beast quickly, before the Denfrandi are defeated.

The characters may also decide on a stealthy approach. They can try to land silently atop the island-beast and sneak down into the Wind Raiders’ camp unseen. To accomplish this, they must evade the patrols (make opposing skill rolls between the beast riding sief-chuff of the character pilot and the 2D Perception of the Wind Raider guards), or else defeat them in an attack.

Once inside the island-beast, characters have little difficulty finding the Wind Raider camp. The entire central cavity of the creature is a single vast open space. Since the creature stays aloft by filling its body with flammable lifting gas, any use of blasters inside the gasbag could be suicidal. A blaster shot piercing the creature’s soft interior skin would set the entire island-beast aflame. Unfortunately, the young chieftain of the Wind Raiders doesn’t know that—and he has the blaster pistol from the pilot they captured in the scout ship.

The characters may wish to try negotiating with the Wind Raiders instead of attacking them. This is very hard to arrange — the characters must allow themselves to be captured, or else slip into the camp and reveal themselves. Genogri doesn’t want to bargain—he and the more aggressive members of the band enjoy taking what they want. But some of the older members of the tribe are disturbed by the path Genogri has chosen, and might listen to reason.

**Epilogue: Departure and Further Adventures**

With the Wind Raiders defeated or subdued, the characters can leave Taloran. The sensor log aboard the captured scout ship shows the location of a rich Tibanna gas deposit in the vicinity. With the help of the grateful Denfrandi, the Rebels should have no trouble maintaining their supply of Tibanna gas.

This adventure does not have to take place at any specific point in the Star Wars timeline. The characters need not be members of the Rebel Alliance. A group of traders or mercenaries looking to get rich...
Genogi

Type: Wind Raider Chief
DEXTERITY 4D
Brawling parry 4D-2, dodge 4D-2, melee combat 5D, thrown weapon: harpoon 6D
KNOWLEDGE 2D
Intimidation 4D-2, survival: Taloraan 5D-1
MECHANICAL 3D
Beast riding: lift/walk 7D
PERCEPTION 3D
Command 5D-2, con 5D, persuasion 4D
STRENGTH 4D
Brawling 5D-2, climbing/jumping 5D
TECHNICAL 2D
Character Points: 2
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), harpoon (STR-3D), knife (STR-1D), leather body-suit (+1 against physical)

Capsule: Genogi is the leader of the Wind Raiders. He succeeded his father in the past, but had big plans to make the tribe powerful and feared by all others on Taloraan. Genogi is strong and quiet, but not as clever as he thinks he is. He doesn't realize that sheer force will not solve every problem. Genogi has the blaster pistol belonging to the murdered scout pilot whom they captured from the scout ship. He has test-fired it once or twice while leading war parties, but has never used it within the delicate inner walls of the island-beast.

might become involved in Tibanna prospecting and wind up on Taloraan. Alternatively, the party might have to take refuge in the gas giant’s atmosphere while fleeing Imperial ships or pirates. Anyone might come investigating a mysterious distress call emanating from the captured scout ship’s emergency beacon.

A follow-up to this adventure might involve the characters in setting up a mining platform in Taloraan’s atmosphere to collect the Tibanna gas. Perhaps the Empire could start arming and training the surviving Wind Raiders, making it necessary for the Rebels to aid the Denfrandt again.

During the New Republic era, Taloraan could serve as a hideout for Imperial forces or pirates. If the Tibanna mine is a commercial project, then rival businesses might try to sabotage it. Taloraan is a huge planet — who knows what other marvels remain undiscovered among the clouds?

Twin moons hung majestically in the evening sky over the Locura Ocean. The orbs lit the coastline, softly illuminating the Tahika Cliffs and creating what appeared to be an air of tranquility.

A gentle breeze brushed the face of the tall, dark-haired young man who leaned against the balcony rail on the cliff top. Dair Haslip knew that breeze only added to the illusion of calm. For closer to the water, treacherous winds and unforgiving surf pummelled the cliffs.

Dair loved this place on his homeworld more than any other. Here
he'd found solace in times of despair. He'd found inspiration. And now that he was preparing to leave Garos IV for the first time, he wanted every detail - the surf, the cliffs, the winds, the moons - etched into his memory. It might be a long time before he came home.

He'd grown up along these cliffs - he looked south toward the point - the lights of his grandmother's home were barely visible. He thought of Jos, his best friend, and the times they'd hiked the hillsides using those lights as a beacon to guide them home. On nights just like this one, they'd planned their futures together at the Rathal Academy - Dair shook his head glumly. Jos wouldn't be leaving with him now. The Empire did not look favorably upon someone whose father was wanted for treasonous crimes. Why did things have to turn out like this, he wondered?

Searching for an answer among the stars, Dair gazed skyward. There was no answer for Jos. But what Dair did see there filled his heart with pride.

Silhouetted against one moon, the Imperial Lambda-class shuttle descended through the clouds. It glided effortlessly toward the spaceport south of Ariana. That shuttle, and the Empire it represented, meant more to him now that he'd been accepted into the Academy. And with the Empire's interest in Garos IV growing more in evidence each day, there were promises of increased prosperity and jobs for Garosians. Opportunities for young men like himself.

"Have you ever seen a more magnificent sight?" someone said from behind him.

Dair turned around. He straightened his lean frame, pulling back his shoulders. The deep, rich baritone voice didn't seem to fit the short-statured gentleman who joined him on the patio. "No, sir," he answered. "How are you this evening, Minister Paco?"

"Good. Very good," Paco replied, taking a deep breath of the sea air. "You are Dair Haslip, am I right?"

Dair threw him a smile, amazed that the Assistant Minister of Defense Tork Winger and noted Sundari engineer Tiomthes Turi, a truce was finally struck. The city of Garan, which had seen the majority of the fighting, was rebuilt while Sundari and Garosian leaders began the lengthy peace negotiations. But there was evidence that some of Winger's own compatriots within the government had tried to sabotage attempts to end the war.
Minor violations of the truce occur regularly, though only two incidents stand out in recent history: the now infamous Whahalla Massacre, and the assassination of key business leader and advocate of peace, West Haslip. Haslip’s wife also died in that attack and. Tork Winger was wounded.

But Winger continues to work to end the violence. Now with the might of the Empire behind him, he feels that peace is inevitable.

and sighed. “Of course,” he said quietly, “there is a price to pay when the Empire helps a world.”

“Well, sure,” Dair said naively. “Higher taxes, a larger military presence. But then we’ll have peace on Garos.”

Paca looked over the railing at the sea pounding the cliffs far below them. “Peace,” he repeated.

There was sadness in Paca’s voice that caused Dair to turn and stare. But whatever he thought he’d heard quickly disappeared behind Paca’s broad grin. “So, Mr. Haslip, what are your plans now that your grandmother has sold the mines?”

“I’m enrolled at the university now, sir. But I’ve been accepted to the Imperial Academy for the next term,” Dair proudly replied.

“So you’ll be leaving Garos for the larger universe up there,” the older man said, pointing toward the stars. “Army or navy?”

“Army, sir. I like my feet on the ground.”

Paca laughed. “I understand.”

“All right, Magir Paca, I caught you! Are you corrupting my grandson?” Moonlight reflected off Kerlin Haslip’s long silvery hair. Her lined face hinted that she was no stranger to hard times. But there was a spark in her dark eyes, like a fire burning brightly, that even the bad times had not extinguished.

“Of course not, Madame Haslip. You know me better than that,” he teased her, kissing the hand she extended toward him. “We’ve been discussing Dair’s future. I’ve just heard his good news. Garos

will be proud to have one of its finest young men attend the Academy.”

Dair stood straighter, noticing the flash of pride that swept across his grandmother’s face. But her smile seemed almost forced. Though he had noticed she’d grown quieter on the subject of his leaving Garos as that time grew close. He was her only family after all— that would explain her lack of enthusiasm.

Kerlin looped her arm through Dair’s. “Tell me, Paca,” she said, clearing her throat, “is there any truth to the rumors I’ve heard about Minister Winger?”

“I believe we are looking at our first Imperial governor,” Paca said.

“Uncle Tork? I mean, Minister Winger?” Dair marveled. “That’s great, isn’t it, Gram?”

“Uncle?” Paca questioned.

“The Wingers have always been like family,” Kerlin explained to an amused-looking Paca. “And yes, Dair, Tork Winger would be a good choice given his knowledge of the current peace negotiations with the Sundars,” she added.

Paca nodded his agreement. “Yes, hopefully the Empire will not force a peace,” he said, shifting uncomfortably when he caught the puzzled expression on Dair’s face.

“Force a peace?” Dair frowned, looking from his grandmother to Paca as footsteps echoed across the old stone patio. He saw the tension drain from Paca’s face.

“Minister Paca? I’m sorry to interrupt.”

“What is it, Linza?”

“Senior Lieutenant Brandel’s shuttle has just landed. Minister Winger has been called away to meet with him.”

“This late in the evening? How strange. Excuse me, Madame Haslip. Dair. I must speak with Minister Winger before he leaves.”

“Of course, sir,” Dair said. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, my friend,” Kerlin called to him. “Well, Dair, I guess we’ll have to make other arrangements to get home this evening.”

Dair sighed. He’d been looking forward to the Winger’s visit all week. “Uncle Tork was going to tell me more about his days at the Academy,” he told his grandmother.

“Well, perhaps another night,” she smiled. “So, tell me, young man, did you come outside to escape from us old folks?”

Dair took a deep breath. “I guess I was thinking about Jos, Gram. He should have been here tonight.”

“He could have come with us, Dair.”

“I told him that. But he said everyone would be talking about his
Dair Haslip

**Type:** Student

**DEXTERITY 3D**
Blaster 4D, bladework 4D, dodge 3D-2

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**
Alien species 3D-2, bureaucracy 4D, languages 3D-2, planetary systems 4D, survival 4D, value 2D-1

**MECHANICAL 2D-1**
Astrogation 3D-2, repulsorlift operation 4D

**PERCEPTION 3D**
Bargain 3D-2, command 4D

**STRENGTH 3D-2**

**TECHNICAL 2D-2**

**Force Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 4

**Move:** 10

**Capsule:** Dair Haslip is an idealistic young man who has the entire galaxy at his feet. A member of Garos' wealthy, politically connected Haslip family, Dair is naive about the ways of the Empire. He feels that Garos will benefit from Imperial influence. Raised by his grandmother since the deaths of his parents six years ago, Dair's lifelong ambition has been to attend the Raithal Academy. But as the dream becomes a reality, and he waits to leave Garos IV for the first time, a chain of events unfolds that forever affects his view of everything and everyone around him.

father. And he was right, Gram. That's half the conversation I've heard. "Did they capture old Desto Mayda yet? They're gonna terminate Mayda for sure!"

"I know Jos must be hurting," Kerlin said. "Did you tell him that your acceptance had come through?"

"Yes. He was expecting it, but he really doesn't want to talk about it. But he did say he wants me to go."

"And you don't believe he's being sincere?"

"It's not that. It's just, I know how I'd feel if the situation were reversed. He's my best friend, Gram. A smile crossed Dair's face. One memory was so clear, like it had just happened yesterday. "Did I ever tell you what Jos and I did that summer after my tenth birthday?"

Kerlin shook her head.

"You know that stretch of cliffs just south of Mount Usca — we used to go climbing there all the time." Dair told her, noticing that even in the moonlight her face seemed to pale.

"I fell once," he continued. "I wasn't hurt bad, Gram. But I was so scared, I couldn't move."

"What happened?"

Dair chuckled. "Jos came down after me. I was gripping the rock face for dear life. Jos is next to me, dangling over the ocean from this rope. And he's carrying on a normal conversation like we were standing on flat ground. I bet he talked for 10 minutes, just dangling there! He had me laughing and before I knew it, we were scaling the cliff!" Dair sighed. "He was always there for me, Gram. And well, now I feel like I'm deserting him."

"Oh, Dair —"

"Kerlin?"

Dair turned impatiently, disappointed that they'd been interrupted. But Sali Winger's arrival made him temporarily forget his depression over Jos. Aunt Sali had been his mother's closest friend. And she'd grown even closer to his grandmother in the years since West and Nieka Haslip's deaths.

Dair could see why Tork Winger called himself the luckiest man
on the planet. A wife like Sali was the dream of every politician. Attractive, charming, and intelligent, she could turn a boring diplomatic affair into a tremendous success.

"Sali dear, is everything all right?" Kerin asked.

"Yes, everything’s fine," Sali replied, smiling sweetly at Dair and giving his arm a gentle squeeze. "But as you’ve heard, Lieutenant Brandel has asked Tork and I to join him at the medical center."

"At the medical center? How odd!" Kerin observed.

"Yes, I thought so, too. But he said he wants us to meet someone. If you don’t mind coming with us, we can still stop by your house just as we’d planned, only after this meeting."

"Well, of course, dear. That will be just fine," she smiled, "Maybe we’ll even invite the Lieutenant along."

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**Garos IV**

| Type: Terrestrial |
| Temperature: Temperate |
| Atmosphere: Type I (breathable) |
| Hydrosphere: Moderate |
| Gravity: Standard |
| Terrain: Forests, mountains, valleys |
| Length of Day: 25 standard hours |
| Length of Year: 362 local days |
| Sapient Species: Humans |
| Starports: 2 standard class |
| Population: 17 million Garosians, 3 million Sundari |
| Planet Function: Agriculture, manufacturing |
| Government: Parliamentary parliament |
| Tech Level: Space |
| Major Exports: Foodstuffs, metals, minerals |
| Major Imports: High technology |

**Capsule:** Garos IV is the fourth planet of six in the Garos system located near the Nyarikan Nebula. It was settled by Humans more than 1,000 years ago. Because of its isolation from the nebula, it has been a self-sufficient planet. Garos has established inter-system trade (which is bountiful) at best because of the Garosian civil war with the neighboring planet Sundari. Intergalactic trade has been insignificant, free-traders preferring less volatile and more easily reachable markets.

However, the Empire has begun to take a greater interest in the planet and is taking over mining operations south of Ariana, the government seat, on Garos' western coastline. To protect its interest in the mines, the Empire is making its presence "official" by appointing Garos' first Imperial governor. Additional troops are being assigned to deal with the radicals involved in the civil war that has plagued the planet for almost 100 years.

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**Tork Winger**

Type: Diplomat  
DEXTERITY 2D+1  
BIKET 5D  
KNOWLEDGE 3D+2  
Alien biology 1D+2, alien culture 1D, languages 2D, survival 1D, value 1D  
MECHANICAL 3D  
Astrogation, piloting 3D, repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 2D  
PERCEPTION 4D  
Bargain 3D, command 3D, con 3D  
STRENGTH 2D-2  
TECHNICAL 3D+1  
Force Points: 1  
Character Points: 4  
Move: 10  
Equipment: Datapad  

Capsule: Tork Winger is an extremely distinguished gentleman, the model diplomat. He was one of the first Garosians to enter the service of the Old Republic almost 40 years ago. After serving five years in the army, Winger returned to Garos, and thanks to his family's position, he moved up quickly through the diplomatic ranks.

Winger discovered very early in his career that he had a natural talent in the world of diplomacy. He is respected by his peers and by his enemies as well. The leading authority on the conflict between native Garosians and colonists from the neighboring planet Sundari, he has been involved in negotiations between the warring factions for years. Both sides have found him to be a just man, capable of sorting through all the intrigue that seems to dominate politics.

But Winger is torn apart by his inability to reach a true and lasting peace on Garos IV. He is hopeful that the Empire's involvement in local politics will expedite the peace process.

"What an excellent idea, Kerin," she said. "Dair, are you sure you don't mind leaving the reception?"

"No, not at all, Aunt Sali," Dair replied enthusiastically, excited by the prospect of meeting a naval officer from a Star Destroyer. He offered each woman an arm.

"Such a gentleman!" Sali said as they walked toward the door. "By the way, Dair, why haven't you and Jos been by the mansion lately? I hope Jos isn't embarrassed about the awful things I've been hearing about his father ..."
Brandei shook his head. "She's drifted in and out of consciousness, hasn't said a word."
"Who's the young man with her?" Winger asked.
"That's Lieutenant Chancellor. He's the one who dug her from the rubble. He seems to have appointed himself guardian."
"May I go in?"
"Of course, Sali."
"Keriin, come with me — please?" she implored.
Keriin nodded, motioning for Dair to follow. He wondered why she seemed so insistent that he go into the sick bay. She knew how much he disliked these places — too many memories of the time his parents died.
As the door slid shut behind them, Dair shuddered. Medical equipment hummed quietly, blinking sickening yellow and blue lights. The room was cold and unwelcoming. But only Dair seemed to notice.
"Lieutenant Chancellor, I was told you saved this child," Sali said as the young man slowly stood up and turned to face them.
Piercing blue eyes met Sali's eyes. "Yes, ma'am. I — I just couldn't leave her there to die."
"Thank you for watching over her," she told him.
"There's something special about this little girl, ma'am."
"Special?"
"It's like she was reaching out, drawing strength from everything around her, just trying to stay alive." He shook his head sadly. "Such a shame what happened to her home."
"A Rebel raid?" Sali asked.
"Oh, no, ma'am. We were looking for a Rebel stronghold right near this little one's home. Our forces destroyed half the city. He took the child's hand into his. "I never want to see anything like that again," he said quietly.
"Our forces?" Sali asked.
Chancellor's eyes were riveted on Sali. "Yes, ma'am. We did this," he said as a bitterness crept into his voice. "There were no Rebels there."
Sali stood speechless, her eyes widened in shock. Dair frowned, skeptical of what he'd heard. Surely there was some mistake. The lieutenant was exaggerating. "That can't be right," he said.
"I was there, kid. I know what I saw," Chancellor replied.
From the corner of his eye, Dair caught his grandmother's expression. Her gaze was transfixed on the child. And the silent nod of her head was more powerful a statement than any words. She believed
him! I don’t understand this!

Chancellor surprised Sali when he reached for her hand. “You take good care of her, ma’am,” he said. Gently he placed the child’s hand into hers.

“Yes, I will, Lieutenant,” she told him. “Thank you for giving her a chance to live.”

“A chance,” he nodded. “Yes, ma’am. Good-bye, ma’am.”

Wind rustled tree branches in the densely forested hillsides north of the mines. The baraka trees had taken on a purplish hue — the weather would turn cooler soon. And though it was still three hours until sunset, thick shadows had begun to claw upon the landscape. The mountains were alive with animal life, but it was the sound of Human predators that worried Dair.

“Shhh! Would you be quiet! We could get in a lot of trouble,” Dair whispered to his friend. He couldn’t believe he’d let Jos talk him into this.

“For what? We aren’t doing anything wrong,” Jos Mayda replied in a tone that was uncharacteristically defiant.

“I don’t know if those Imperial scout troopers would agree with you,” Dair told him as he peered through his macrobinoculars.

Jos shrugged, pushing long golden locks out of his eyes. “You worry too much, Dair. We’ve been hiking out here in these hills for years. Your grandma owns all this land anyway.”

“Yeah, but,” Dair reminded him, scanning the hillsides nervously.

Rolling his eyes, Jos scowled at that one minor detail. He leaned back against a tree, placed his hands behind his head, and sighed. “Remember the time we got lost in the caves, Dair?”

Dair grimaced. “Yeah, I thought your dad was gonna blast us both when he found — ” he paused, remembering the forbidden topic.

“I’m sorry, Jos. I didn’t mean — ”

Jos shook his head. “It’s okay. Gotta face facts, you know. We aren’t kids anymore. My father’s an outlaw, a traitor. I’ll never see him again!”

There was more than just anger behind Jos’ voice. “I know he cares about you, Jos.”

“If he cares so much, then why couldn’t he tell me, just explain to me, why he felt he had to work with the underground?” Jos exclaimed. He buried his face in his hands and suddenly burst into tears.

Dair sat silently sharing Jos’ loss as if it were his own. He placed his hand on Jos’ shoulder. He knew there were no words that would comfort his friend.

“You know, all I ever wanted was to go to the Academy,” Jos finally said. “Remember our plans, Dair? We’re gonna see the galaxy together! They’ll never let me go to the Academy now!”

“Maybe there’s still a chance, Jos. My gram could talk to Minister Winger — ”

“Oh, forget it, Dair! I’ll be stuck on Garos forever!”

Frowning at his friend, Dair watched him wipe the tears from his eyes. Jos had changed so much these last few weeks. He’d always been able to make the best of any situation.

“Well, maybe I’ll stay here, too,” Dair told him. “We can both go to the university and then we’ll open up our own business!”

Jos’ brow wrinkled in disapproval. “No, Dair. You have to go.” The frown on his face turned to a sly grin. “Yeah, I want you to go. Then you can tell me all about it, okay?” he said, picking up his macrobinoculars to scan the hillsides. “Yep, I want to hear all about crawling around in the muck and getting yelled at by drill sergeants!”

Dair laughed. “I won’t leave out any of the details!” he promised. He knew that behind the smart remarks it had been harder for Jos to tell him to go than it had been for him to offer to stay.

“Look! Two troopers at 1-2-0,” Jos said. “Boy, those speeder bikes sure are something. I heard they have top speeds of 300 kmh! Can you just imagine?”

“Quiet!” Dair whispered.

“I bet they’re looking for that naval officer who deserted.”

“Where’d you hear that tale, Jos?” Dair asked.

“Down at Chado’s Pub. They were talking about this lieutenant — I think his name was Chancellor.”

“Chancellor?” Could it really be the officer he’d seen at the medical center a few days earlier?

“One of the guys said he was an aide to some officer from the Indictor! Jos shook his head like he could hardly believe anyone would consider desertion. “C’mon, let’s take a closer look at those scout troopers!”

“Are you crazy? It’s too late anyway,” Dair said. “They just disappeared over the ridge. C’mon, let’s go home.”

Suddenly, Dair heard the whine of engines. Through a break in the trees he spotted the two speeder bikes. The scout troopers had circled around them and were moving in swiftly.

“C’mon, Jos! To the caves,” he said, scampering across the
hillside. Jos hesitated a few seconds then scrambled through the
trees in the opposite direction from Dair.

Shots rang out. A few meters ahead of Dair, a sapling cracked as
a blast ripped it in two. He dove into the underbrush just as another
shot whipped over his head. Crawling on hands and knees, he
fumbled through the bushes and into a cave.

Dair didn't even have time to catch his breath when he heard one
of the speeder bikes stop nearby. Fallen tree branches crackled
under armored footsteps. The scout trooper drew closer.

Dair's heart pounded. He crouched, unmoving, in a dark recess
of the cave, hoping the trooper would give up his search. From
experience Dair knew that the mineral content of the mountains on
this part of Garos played havoc with sensors. And inside the cave,
he'd be shielded from their probes.

The scout trooper batted aside some bushes near the entrance to
the cave. Then suddenly he stopped, and Dair realized that someone
was shouting in the distance. Blaster fire echoed through the hills.
The scout trooper bolted back toward his bike.

Dair cautiously poked his head through the bushes, catching a
fleeting glimpse of the speeder bike as it whipped over the crest of
a nearby hill. He was safe. But what about Jos? That blaster fire he'd
heard — what if they'd caught Jos?

Dair dashed up the hillside after the scout trooper. From his
vantage point a few minutes later, he spotted two deserted speeder
bikes halfway down the hill. He moved silently toward them.

Muffled voices floated through the air in a deathly litan. Then,
some 10 meters away from the bikes, he saw the white armor against
the greenish-brown backdrop of forest. One blaster rifle was trained
on a prone figure.

"Please, no," Dair whispered to himself as he moved behind the
bikes for cover. Jos' hand twitched. Dair breathed a sigh of relief as
his friend slowly rose to his knees.

"Where's your comrade?" one of the troopers asked Jos.

"Get up, spy!" the other one shouted.

Dair couldn't hear Jos' reply, but watched as he tried to stand.

"You're not? Then what are you doing out here near the mines?
Didn't you know this is a restricted area?"

Jos answered, but still too softly for Dair to understand.

"Hiking? Makes for a good story, spy?" the trooper grunted. "Let's
take him back to headquarters," he told the other trooper. "Move it!"

Suddenly, Jos lunged forward, taking one scout trooper down.
They rolled across the ground, and Jos struggled to gain control of
the man's blaster rifle. But as he ripped it away from his opponent,
the rifle flew through the air, landing only an arm's length from Dair.
Jos untangled himself from the scout trooper's grasp. He scrambled
to his feet and took off, not knowing that Dair had retrieved the
blaster.

The other trooper aligned his gun sight on the fleeing figure. One
deadly shot pierced the air. Jos collapsed to the ground.

"No!" Dair screamed. Two startled scout troopers turned simulta-
neously to face him. Another blast echoed across the mountainside.
Jos' killer was dead.

Visibly shaken, Dair kept the blaster rifle trained on the other
scout trooper. "Don't move!" Dair yelled at him. He didn't want to kill
an unarmed man.
The trooper ignored him, recovering his fallen comrade's rifle in a diving roll across the forest floor. Two shots were fired. And suddenly the mountain side seemed oddly silent.

The second scout trooper lay dead. Dair stared at the rifle in his trembling hands, then threw it to the ground.

"Jos!" he cried out, running to his fallen friend.

Dair took the lifeless hand into his. Stunned, he sat beside Jos for a long time unable to move, unable to think.

As darkness crept in upon the mountain, Dair wept. Through his tears he gently closed Jos' eyes.

Dair collapsed on the stone steps of the patio. He stared at the sea. It offered no peace for him tonight. A breeze swept gently off the water. It mingled with the smell of fresh-baked shrill, one of his grandmother's special treats, which waited from the kitchen. He could hear her working there.

There was no way he could sneak into the house. She'd hear him. He allowed himself a smile. He remembered that Jos had said his grandmother had ears as sharp as the wild boats that roamed the Garosian mountainsides. Jos. A tear formed in his eye. Jos was dead.

"Dair, is that you?" her voice rang out from the kitchen.

"Yes, Gram, it's me," he called, wiping the tear with a dirt-streaked hand as the door onto the patio opened.

She couldn't help noticing how filthy he was. "Good skies, son! What in the worlds happened to you?"

Biting his lip, Dair turned to look at her. She could see the pain in his eyes.

"We need to talk," she said firmly. "Get cleaned up. I'll make us some tea."

He nodded, his head hung low. Then he trudged up to his room.

Fifteen minutes later, Gram Haslip poured their tea and sat down across the table from her only grandson.

"Well, you look a whole lot better," she said, trying to cheer him up.

"Oh, Gram — " Tears welled up in his eyes.

She placed her hand on top of his. "What happened?"

"It's Jos, Gram. He's dead."

"What?" she exclaimed. "How?"

"We were near the mines. Two scout troopers thought we were spying. They killed Jos! They shot him in the back, Gram!"

If she was shocked by that revelation, he could see no sign of it in her face. "What happened to the scout troopers, Dair?"
“— I killed them.” He hesitated. “And I hid their rifles in a cave near the cliffs,” he said, trying to sort through his feelings — he wasn’t sure why he’d done it, but it just seemed the right thing to do at the time.

Kerlin Haslip pulled her chair around the table. She wrapped her arms around Dair and held him tightly. “It’s okay, Dair,” she reassured him. “Everything will be all right.”

“I can’t believe they’d shoot an unarmed man in the back, Gram?” Dair finally said when his tears stopped flowing. “Is that what I will become if I join the Imperial Army?”

“The Empire doesn’t follow the rules of civilized beings, Dair,” she told him. “It follows its own rules and changes them to suit its own needs.”

“Is that how you’ve always felt about the Empire, Gram?” he asked her.

“Yes.”

“But you sold the mines to them! And you were going to let me go to the Academy!”

“I was forced to sell the mines, Dair. I had no choice. And you had to make up your own mind about the Empire — what is right, what is wrong.” She paused, searching his eyes. Past the grief, she found what she was looking for. “In time, I knew you would find the answer.”

Dair nodded. “What do we do now, Gram?” he asked.

“The Imperials will assume the underground did this. I must get word to —” She stopped mid-sentence.

Dair stared at his grandmother and frowned. “Get word to whom, Gram?”

Kerlin Haslip studied her grandson’s handsome face, his dark eyes so like his father’s. He’d grown up quite a bit in these last few hours. He’d learned a hard lesson about life. About the Empire. It was time.

“Gram?”

“I have certain friends who will need to know what happened near the mines today.”

“Friends?”

“Dair, I think its time you knew the truth about your old Gram. C’mon, let’s go. There are some people I want you to meet.”

The chamber deep beneath the university library was dank, not unlike the caves where Dair had played as a child. Air whistled through a vent in the ceiling, and Dair could have sworn he felt the vibrations of the sea pounding the nearby cliffs.

Bare except for a table and some chairs, the room was lit by a holographic map of the city of Ariana and the area surrounding the mines. Even in the dim light, Dair could see the grim expression on a half dozen faces as they listened to his story.

Dair glanced around the table. He knew the two men on either side of his grandmother: Assistant Minister Magir Paca, whom he’d spoken to only a few days before, and Desto Mayda, his friend’s father. A third man he recognized from newsvid releases covering the Garosian civil war. Camron Gelerik, a leader of the radical Sundars, now sat peacefully with Garosians he once ordered his followers to hunt down. Garosian and Sundar united. Their fight against the Empire had begun.

“He was just a boy!” Mayda exclaimed as Dair finished describing what had transpired near the mines. “Damn them all!”

“You realize the Imperials will blame the underground for this,” Kerlin Haslip told the group.

“I can see the newsvid now,” Gelerik added. “Scout troopers shot while trying to protect innocent boy from underground hooligans!”

Several murmured their agreement, but Paca held his hand up to silence them. “Unlike the Empire, we don’t kill innocent people,” he reminded them. “Our friends know us better than that.”

“But we should still get word out,” Kerlin Haslip said. “Everyone should know what animals they are!”

Desto Mayda shook his head. “That could be dangerous for your grandson, Kerlin. Dair’s friendship with Jos is well known,” he said.

“Yes,” Paca agreed. “Desto is right. If word gets out that someone was with Jos at the time of his murder, the Imperials would no doubt investigate Dair.”

“That could lead to too many questions,” Gelerik said quietly. He studied Dair’s face. “And it could lead them back to us.”

“You mean we have to cover up the truth?” Dair asked. “You’re going to let them accuse you of murder?”

“I’m afraid so, son,” Desto said. “At least for now.”

Dair nodded, understanding these people were doing more than just placing their trust in him. This was a sacrifice that could make more enemies for the underground. It was a sacrifice for him. And he wasn’t even one of them. Yet. “Can I do anything to help?” he asked.

“Well,” Paca said, “we’ll need to send a team in to retrieve those blaster rifles that you hid.”

“I’d like to go with them, Minister, I mean, Paca,” Dair told him.
### Magir Paca

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**Capsule:** Magir Paca has been in government service for more than 10 years. He began his career as an aide to then Assistant Minister of Defense Tor's Winger. Winger has always taken a special interest in Paca, who is the son of one of Winger's good friends. Winger has served as the younger Pace's mentor, guiding him these last few years through the diplomatic service. He envisions Paca by his side, as they serve the Empire together.

But Paca has never agreed with the Empire's New Order. He became involved with the Garosian underground after realizing that the Empire was a greater threat to peace and justice in Garos IV than any Sundard bomb. He is one of the original underground leaders known as the Committee of Seven for Garosian Unification (COSGU). COSGU is working to end the violence and has been successful in convincing a few radical Sundards that the Empire is their common enemy.

"Good, son. We're glad to have you for as long as you're on Garos. You'll be headed to Raithal Academy soon, won't you?" Paca asked him.

"What?" Dair shook his head in disbelief. "I can't go to the Academy now. I don't want to be one of them!"

Dastan Mayda grabbed Dair's hand from across the table, startlling him. "Don't you see, Dair? You have the opportunity to work against the Empire from the inside, like Paca does at the Ministry."

"You can't turn down your acceptance now. Think how suspicious that might look," Paca said.

Dair began to see a career with the Empire in a whole different light.

"It may take you years. Undercover work can be a slow and tedious process. But little things, like supplies sent to the wrong command —"

"Minor computer glitches — " Mayda added.

"Orders not processed in a timely fashion — " someone else said.

"All will undermine Imperial efforts," Paca continued. "Just think of the possibilities."

"Eventually, you ask for a transfer back to Garos. You'll be invaluable to us," G intoler told him.

"Think about it, son," Paca said.

Looking at each face in turn, Dair's eyes finally came to rest on his grandmother. Her eyes glistened with tears. Kerlin Haaiip knew what his choice would be. She might be losing her grandson to the Empire, but it wasn't on their terms. It was on hers.

D...
no longer naïve about the true nature of the Empire, Dair still had to 
admire Uncle Tork. Winger had turned out to be the voice of 
moderation, calling for an end to the Imperial purge of radicals on 
both sides of the civil war. Dair understood now what Paca had 
meant by "force a peace."

"Good luck, son," Paca said, shaking Dair's hand firmly.

"Thank you, Minister Paca," he replied. They'd said their private 
good-bYES in the underground operations center only a few hours 
before.

"Dair, I couldn't be more proud if you were my own son," Winger 
said.

"Thank you, Governor," Dair replied. "I only hope I live up to 
everyone's expectations." He glanced toward his grandmother and 
Paca.

"You will, son," Winger said. "I've no doubt about that. You've 
been through some rough times here." He shook his head. "I'm still 
hoping they find those radicals who killed poor Jos Mayda — "

Kerlin Hislip nodded, almost imperceptibly, to Paca.

"I know you'll come through Raithal just fine," Winger said. "It's 
an experience you'll never forget. Or regret. Why, I remember when 
I was at the Academy on Carida — "

"Oh, Tork! None of your old war stories now! We're supposed to 
be celebrating," Sali Winger said, playfully pushing her husband 
aside to give Dair a hug.

"Ah, yes. Well, Dair, you show them we're a tough bunch."

"I will, Governor. How are you, Madame Winger?" Dair greeted her.

"Dair, I can't believe you're leaving us! Just look at you! Your 
parents would be so proud!" she said, reaching back to grasp an 
unseen hand. "Alexandra, come and say good-bye to Dair," she

Adventures Idea

Imperial activity on Garos IV has greatly increased in 
recent weeks. As a member of Garos' underground, the 
characters are assigned to watch the spaceport for Imperial 
traffic. Underground leaders interested in the movement 
of troops and materiel between the spaceport and the mines 
south of the city. The characters have heard that one of the 
spaceport techs is sympathetic to the resistance movement — they must seek him out, being careful to avoid undercover imperial spies.

Stepping back from him for a moment. Then she looked at him,

urged the dark-haired child.

Sparkling blue eyes peeked around Sali's gown.

"Hello, Alex."

"Hi," she said holding her hand out for him to shake.

"I'm gonna miss our weekly card games," he said.

"You promised to teach me to play sabacc, remember?"

"Yeah, so you could beat me at that, too!" he laughed. "C'mon, 
let's check out our favorite view one more time," he said, taking 
small hand into his and leading her outside onto the patio. He felt her 
fingers tighten around his.

"I bet you'll be all grown up when I come back," he told her as 
Garos' second moon made its debut on the horizon. And suddenly, 
a lump formed in his throat and his heart ached. He found himself thinking about Jos again.

"You miss him, don't you?" Alex asked quietly.

"Yeah," he nodded. "Huh? How did you know I was thinking about 
Jos?"

Alex shrugged. "Why do you have to leave?" she asked.

Dair picked her up in his arms. "You know I'm joining the Imperial 
Army."

Alex shrugged back from him for a moment. Then she looked at him,
studying his face with those blue eyes of hers. He'd never seen such intensity in someone so young. It was almost as if she could see right through him.

Crooking her finger to draw him close, Alex whispered into his ear. "I don't believe you," she said. "But I won't tell."

Dair stared in amazement, then smiled at her. "Okay," he whispered back to her. "Thanks."

A cold wind blew across the cliffs. Dair and Alex watched the sea pound the cliffs, the violent forces of nature at work. There were other violent forces at work on Garos, forces of a man-made nature — and they had changed Dair's life forever.
Fragments from the Mind’s Eye
by Pablo Hidalgo

When AT-AT pilots get bored...

Platt’s Starport Guide to...
Zirtran’s Anchor

By Anthony Russo
Illustrations by Matt Busch

This month West End Games releases Platt’s Starport Guide, a supplement for Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game which takes readers on a tour of seven original starports — all from the unique smuggler’s perspective of Platt Okeefe. Zirtran’s Anchor offers Journal readers a preview of what they can expect to find in Platt’s Starport Guide — it’s a completely new port, not found in the starport guide, but written to give you a feel of what you’ll find there. So sit back and enjoy your tour of Zirtran’s Anchor, a starport with a unique and mysterious past.
Welcome to Zitrans’s Anchor, Spacer

Zitrans’s Anchor is unique for a starport in that it consists entirely of stationary freighters and other vessels attached via pressure tunnels and interconnecting passageways. Over time, some vessels have been abandoned due to increasing age or difficulty in maintaining life support and artificial gravity systems. Although such abandoned segments might normally be discarded, the station’s owners, the Geelan, dictate that nothing should ever go to waste. And so the Anchor continuously grows in size, passageways leading to abandoned ships or sections are sealed, and new ships are attached to older ones. Many visitors have grown to compare the station’s appearance and layout to that of an insect farm or the complex tunnels of an underground burrow.

The Geelan own and operate the Anchor, permitting ships to come and go as they please. The Imperial presence on board is remarkably small, consisting of a single Imperial commander, customs personnel, platoons of Imperial Army soldiers, and several stormtrooper squads. A token force of four customs cutters (see Galaxy Guide 6: Trump Freighters for Imperial Customs ship information) and one squadron of TIE fighters patrol the immediate space around the Anchor. Imperial Customs reserves the right to search any incoming or outgoing vessel. Their jurisdiction, however, does not cover ships permanently attached to the Anchor. A private security force hired by the Geelan maintains personal safety and adherence to general laws.

A free-floating Golan battle platform defends the trade station from outright attack, although there has been no recorded case of aggression throughout the station’s peculiar history. The Golan platform is neither Imperial property nor operated by Imperial personnel — it was recently purchased by the Geelan to protect their investment (as well as soothe the fears of potential visitors). It can be reasoned that some of the vessels attached to the Anchor probably still have functioning shields or weapon systems, although this has yet to be proven.

Information regarding all of the ships and important parties on Zitrans’s Anchor could fill an intergalactic encyclopedia, and would require an almost daily update by a small army of accounting droids. In a simpler vein, descriptions of some of the Anchor’s more noteworthy sections and residents have been included in the following passages.

ADDENDUM/PERSOANAL
OKEEFE, PLATT...

If you’re tired of making the same old planet-full, as well as sorting out the kilometers of tariffs and regulations at most starports, check out Zitrans’s Anchor. Oh yeah, I know all about the “mysterious vanishing” part, but that’s the way the suckers cheat. Trip up the corrs. No one ever becomes a free trader to lead a boring life.

The beauty of the Anchor is that once you get past Imperial Customs, you’re on your own. A private security force, a firm called Defense Solar, keeps things surprisingly low and order-like without getting in your hair. The Anchor leaves all the credit-making up to you. But if you want the real low-down on the place, then you have to start with the Zitrans brothers...

A Tale Of Two Zitrans

If Lando Calrissian and Talon Karrde have etched their names as some of the more successful entrepreneurs of recent memory, then
Urbo and Teebo Zirtran are probably the galaxy's unluckiest. So it seemed that everything the poor Zirtran brothers attempted ended either in complete disaster or total ruin.

Their last venture was the purchase of a huge prototype space barge, identified only as KV-29235-44B. The ship was making its initial hyperspace jump when both the hyperdrives and the backup systems failed completely. At that exact and (some might say fateful) moment, the freighter's builder went out of business, leaving the Zirtran brothers with a huge empty vessel stuck in the proverbial middle of nowhere.

Already heavily in debt from purchasing the new ship, Urbo and Teebo had resigned themselves to leave it adrift, when an enterprising group of aliens proposed to take the stranded vessel off their hands. Settling for enough credits to offset most of their financial woes, the Zirtran brothers retired from business pursuits and vanished without a trace.

Enter the Geelan

The aliens who called themselves the Geelan converted the huge stationary barge into a trade station—a place where all free-traders and travelers, no matter what their species or loyalties, were welcome. Considering the Empire's attitudes against non-Humans, the trade station became a success. As time passed and the popularity of the station grew, wealthy merchants and representatives from numerous worlds attached their own vessels to the bulk freighter, thus creating a myriad hive of interconnected ships. The net result was dubbed in tribute to the one and only success of the Zirtran brothers: Zirtran's Anchor.

In the passing years, Zirtran's Anchor became a bustling trade point for ships passing through the Besberra system. The station's popularity grew in such proportions that several organizations, including a bounty hunter guild, several crime lords, and a modestly-sized pirate organization attached their own ships to Zirtran's Anchor. Friend and foe alike were close enough to blast each other from their respective vessels, but could do nothing as long as they remained a part of the neutral trade station.

At the center of this activity were the Geelan. A curious alien species of barterers known for their ingenuity and hoarding mentality, the Geelan established themselves over much of the business in the Anchor. On attached sections, most traders yielded to the Geelan method of doing business, an unwritten set of rules that meant anything was possible as long as it did not harm the station.

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

OKEEFE, PLATT...
The Geelan way of doing business can be quite annoying sometimes. It means "no-holds-barred" free enterprise. Some traders I know don't mind all the haggling and counter-haggling. Personally, I prefer the nice, cautious way of exchanging goods and credits. Too many times have I seen some nerve-tender get a little too excited and pull a thermal detonator just to make a point. That kind of behavior is tolerated on Zirtran's Anchor — as long as Defensor Solar doesn't catch you. But on some sections of the station, Defensor is nowhere to be found. And back before the station "vanished," the Anchor was a pretty rough spot. Of course, you can't find too many souls who remember those times.

The Vanishing

In time, the Empire began to exert more pressure on the Geelan and the denizens of Zirtran's Anchor to obey Imperial trade laws and taxes. The Empire first revoked the Anchor's mostly-neutral status, then ordered Admiral Venice Tabok to occupy the station.

Admiral Tabok arrived with several stormtrooper detachments and a small force of ships. He immediately invoked martial law and ordered the arrests of suspected Rebel sympathizers and outright criminals thought to be taking refuge on the Anchor.

The Geelan were alarmed by the sudden occupation of their most prized and profitable possession. An ancient Geelan who called himself Whisk the Elder stepped forward to confront the Admiral. The stooped-over Elder warned that a great tragedy would soon befall everyone on the station unless they left immediately. The Admiral laughed the diminutive alien right out of his office, believing it merely a foolish attempt to get rid of him and his men.

Several days later, a trading fleet from Corellia stopped at Zirtran's Anchor to sell goods before making their way to Dantooine. But the rumpled conglomeration of attached ships was no longer there. Even the Imperial ships and the dozens of other visiting freighters normally close by were nowhere to be seen.

The space lanes and communication frequencies across the galaxy soon became filled with tales of sabotage, a surprise Rebel attack, pirate revenge, and even secret Imperial weapons. It has been said that even the Emperor himself ordered an investigation into the missing trade station.

Many believed that the Zirtran brothers' bad luck had finally rubbed off on the Anchor. Some with more logical minds theorized that the original barge's faulty hyperdrive may have unexpectedly snapped back on. Others claimed that the Geelan had stolen an object from a powerful entity who lived beyond Wild Space — and
the entity had finally returned to collect.

Whether it was by the Empire’s hand, an errant hyperdrive, or through some unknown force, the mystery was finally resolved when Zitrán’s Anchor reappeared — as strangely and suddenly as it had vanished — light years away near the greenish wisps of the Phosphura Belt Nebula. Despite this news, another mystery was born. True, the trade station had returned intact. But nearly every inhabitant aboard, down to the last microbe, was gone.

**ADDENDUM/PERSONAL OKEEFE, PLATT**

A fairy tale for scoring small ones during their bedtime — that’s what I think about the story of the station’s disappearance. Every time I hear this tale, it gets more elaborate. The most recent version I heard said that this Admiral Tutok had been sent to Zitrán’s Anchor to search for the missing components of a miniature cloaking device and its inventor — both vanished along with the station. In another story, the Emperor had reportedly ordered an Imperial Inquisitor to search for a missing Jedi on Zitrán’s Anchor (I thought there weren’t any more of their kind left). Before the station vanished, the Inquisitor was killed by a Rebel agent (a doofus rumor at best). In yet another version, Whisk the Elder was none other than the Great Geel himself, one of the most powerful and seldom-seen representatives of the Geelans. I know for a fact that the Great Geel never leaves the Geelan homeworld.

What do I believe? The kooky hyperspace story sounds right. As for the missing people and other beings, I have a few theories about that. But don’t take my word for it.

**After the Return of Zitrán’s Anchor**

Without apparent care or concern for their strangely-departed brothers and sisters, other Geelan have come to run Zitrán’s Anchor. Various merchants and other brave entrepreneurs have also returned. Still, an air of foreboding fills the passageways and lonely corridors of empty ships. The Empire no longer concerns itself with the trade station and the odd events surrounding it — only a token customs force is stationed there.

Since its disappearance and subsequent return, Zitrán’s Anchor has had more than its share of Imperial commanders and officials who seem more than anxious to leave. Strange events and unexplained phenomenon still occur there from time to time, leaving many to believe that the trade station might vanish yet again.

**Station Layout**

Zitrán’s Anchor is unevenly divided into four regional sectors: Alpha, Beta, Delta, and Epsilon. Each sector consists of several attached ships, deserted passageways, and juncture points. Although all major docking and customs inspections take place at the

Hub, located in Sector Alpha, some “third parties” allow special visitors to dock with their vessels. Many vessels that comprise Zitrán’s Anchor are so-called independent zones, off-limits to public access and not patrolled by Defensus Solar station security. Any beings who travel the independent zones do so at their own risk.

**Sector Alpha**

**The Hub**

Deep in the station’s center lies the Hub — the original Zitrán brothers’ barge. Almost unrecognizable from all the makeshift tubes and passageways leading to other interconnected vessels, the Hub serves as the principal center of activity for the station and is open to all visitors and traders no matter what their planet of origin or loyalties. Much of the barge’s internal space has been converted into quarters and living spaces for the resident Geelans.

The lower hall of the barge houses starport docking control and several huge docking bays and maintenance hangars. From here, most visitors and traders may board the station vessel and access the other sectors — but not before the vessel has been scrutinized thoroughly by Imperial Customs. Once inside, Defensus Solar Station Security takes over, performing security and identification checks on arriving passengers.

The main passageway of the Hub traverses the ship along its central length. This passageway, one of the most famous on the Anchor, is referred to unofficially as the Spine Passage. So called for the large, exposed structural rib sections visible to either side, the

**Adventure Idea**

A university historian wishes to trace the mysterious vanishing of Zitrán’s Anchor from the Besberra system to its new location near the Phosphura Belt Nebula. The historian hires the characters to transport him to the Anchor to interview several Geelans. But the mysterious aliens want nothing to do with the historian or the characters. By accident, the historian uncovers a weapons deal between several Geelans and an Imperial governor, as well as several Rebel agents sent to the Anchor to prevent the transaction. The characters must decide whether to involve themselves in the Rebel cause or try to extricate themselves from the entire mess.
Spine Passage also acts as the unofficial central nervous system for the Anchor. Independent traders and merchants by the dozens have set up their shops and offices along its broad length. Space is at a premium here, and many a personal squabble has been settled by blaster fire over a choice site. Along some parts of its length, the Geelan have constructed secondary floors and walkways to permit even more usable floor space.

Along its darkened corridor, the Spine Passage provides a rich mixture of aliens, merchants, and entrepreneurs dealing in a variety of interstellar commodities and services. Almost anything is up for sale along this nefarious route of commerce, including slaves (although not quite so openly). Small bounty hunter organizations and independent privateers maintain “offices” in a few of the choice watering holes along the Spine Passage.

While foot traffic is the primary means of locomotion up and down the Spine, small, one or two person runabouts and hover scoots are permitted for some of the more encumbered residents. Scoots may be rented for a dozen credits per hour at vending points along the passage.

**Chabak’s: Spirits and Sabacc**

Chabak’s is, by far, the most popular gambling and recreation establishment along the Spine. Chabak himself, a head-tailed Twilek, purportedly vanished along with the rest of the Anchor’s previous inhabitants during the Imperial occupation. His relatives, a pair of cousins named Padda and Quink, have since picked up the reins of the casino cantina. “Chabak is the smart one,” one might suggest, “cause he’s always bailing Padda out of some jam.”

Chabak’s offers sabacc, motion rounder, and other games of chance. The refreshment center purportedly boasts a droid mixologist, “— who has yet to be stumped by a drink request, no matter how obscure.” A running house wager exists that if someone can name a drink the droid cannot make, then drinks are on the house — for an entire week. The only rule is that the drink must be a real beverage of some kind, and the challenger must be able to make the drink him or herself with existing establishment ingredients. So far there have been many challengers to Chabak’s prized droid, but no winners.

**Padda**

**Type:** Twilek Business Owner  
**DEXTERITY 2D**  
Blaster 4D, brawling 5D, dodge 5D-2, melee combat: vibroknife 5D  
**KNOWLEDGE 2D**  
Business 4D, languages 4D, value 4D-2

**Quink**

**Type:** Twilek Business Owner  
**DEXTERITY 2D**  
Blaster 5D-1, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 6D, brawling parry 4D-1, dodge 4D-1, melee combat: vibroknife 6D-1, melee parry 4D-1  
**KNOWLEDGE 2D**  
Bureaucracy 4D-2, business 4D, cultures 4D-2, intimidation 5D-2, languages 4D-2, law enforcement 6D, value 6D-2  
**MECHANICAL 2D**  
Astrogation 5D, repulsorlift operation 5D, sensors 5D-2, space transports 5D, starship gunnery 5D-2, starship shields 5D  
**PERCEPTION 1D**  
Bargain 6D, con 5D-2, forgery 6D, gambling 4D, hide 4D-2, persuasion 3D, sneak 3D  
**STRENGTH 3D**  
Blasting 5D-1  
**TECHNICAL 1D**  
Security 5D  
**Character Points:** 6  
**Move:** 10  
**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), vibroknife (STR+1D), datapad, 5,000 credits hidden in a safe behind the bar  
**Special Abilities:**  
Padda can use her tentacles to communicate in secret with each other through a non-verbal language all Twileks are fluent in.

**Capsule:** Quink is a grim-faced Twilek who has become very prosperous — exactly the sort of reputation younger Padda desires. Quink would have gladly sent Padda packing months ago if he were not family. Quink constantly receives messages from Padda’s powerful parents. They like...
to make certain Quink is teaching him everything he knows — they also warn him about letting Padda get into trouble. Quink prefers to use the "experience method" of teaching, mainly letting Padda dig himself into a hole and see how he squirms until Quink can bail him out.

Quink has befriended Kara Reenoga, one of the triplets from RPS. (See Sector Delta: The Death Mask below.) At Chabak's, the two try to outdo each other in exchanging colorful insults and barbs. Kara enjoys helping out Quink by throwing around customers who are bothering younger Padda.

**ST0-48 (EstTeeOh-Four Eight)**

Type: Musicologist Droid  
**DEXTERITY 1D**  
Dodge 5D  
**KNOWLEDGE 4D**  
Alien species 10D, Languages 6D  
**MECHANICAL 1D**  
**PERCEPTION 2D**  
**STRENGTH 1D**  
**TECHNICAL 2D**  
First aid 10D, (A) medicine 10D, mixology 16D  
Equipped With:  
• Four server arms and fine-work manipulators  
• Two auto-balancing legs  
• Two visual and two audio receptors — Human range  
• Vocalator speech/sound system  

Move: 5  
Size: 1.5 meters tall  

**Capsule:** Only Quink knows the secret of Esteeoh's amazing ability — the droid was a former medical droid attached to the Emperor's personal doctor in the Imperial City. How Esteeoh exactly came into old Chabak's possession is not exactly known. What is known is that Chabak was the one who originally modified the droid's extensive pharmacological programs to concoct drinks from around the galaxy. Chabak's secret almost vanished along with everything else aboard Zirran's Anchor, until Quink found Esteeoh's original programming codes hidden away in the bar's secret safe. The droid claims no knowledge of what happened to his former master or all the other occupants of the Anchor.

A black, bell-shaped droid with four server arms and fine-work manipulators, Esteeoh has no knowledge of his former duties in the Imperial City since his memory was wiped by Chabak. Recently, Esteeoh has started randomly speaking in gibberish and has described scenes that consist of endless rows of medical tanks and other strange things. Whether these are memories of his work with the Emperor's medical advisor or during the time when Zirran's Anchor mysteriously disappeared is not certain.

**Pandor's Hydrospanner**

Pandor's Hydrospanner is part of a chain of very successful repair and provision establishments found in certain starports across the galaxy. You can find almost anything at Pandor's, provided it is not restricted, illegal or contagious. Pandor's likes to run a strictly legitimate business. The Empire is less suspicious that way.

In addition to repair and restocking, spacers may also buy or sell their vehicles at the Hydrospanner. Pandor's maintains a small space in the Hub's vast docking bay for a tiny collection of reconditioned (but always warranted) light transports and snub fighters that are for sale (refer to Galaxy Guide 6: Trade Freighters for pricing guides for ships and equipment upgrades.)

As for characters selling their ship in the hope of getting something better, Pandor's agents always offer a fair price, if excruciatingly tiny, in exchange for characters' ships. Pandor is either the ship model's popularity or the level of wear-and-tear. This, and the lack of variety of models for sale, severely limits the characters' choices of new vessels. Pandor also offers to install vessel upgrades or any legal modifications. If characters choose, they may rent work space from Pandor's or from the Anchor's dockmaster droid to install or make their own modifications (at their own risk, naturally).

**The Geelan**

Geelans are short, pot-bellied beings covered with bristly dark fur. They have long snouts, pointed ears, and yellow eyes. Their home-
world is located in a dying system well beyond the Outer Rim Territories. Knowing that time is short for their home, the Geelan have become a species almost desperate to accumulate possessions, tangible or not.

Geelan prefer to conduct business in tribal social groups called nests. Each member of a nest has a certain purpose: treasurer, secretary, spy, assassin, nest negotiator, and so forth. While they are not physically threatening to most sapients (and downright intrusive sometimes), their accumulated wealth allows them to buy the services of certain types who can be particularly intimidating—such as mercenaries, bounty hunters or even assassins.

The Geelan are well known as barterers and treasure-hoarders. Any pretty or shiny new bauble catches their eye. But it is the more established forms of wealth—gems, spice, and hard credits—that brings out their true nature. No honest Geelan can resist an arrangement that involves some form of trade, barter, or bargaining. Simple contracts bore them mercilessly, as many merchants and enterprises approach them for assistance in obtaining a particularly rare or hard-to-find item. Most Geelan seem to thrive on the adventure of the deal—the pursuit of credits and the addition of shiny baubles for their hoards.

Geelan are especially proud of their treasure hoards. Seldom seen by outsiders, nests stuff accumulated fortunes inside uninhabited regions of Zitrans' Anchor's Hub. A few privileged observers have remarked about certain Geelan hoards filling entire shuttle bays, encompassing works of art, chests of spice and crystals, and caches of other items: both exotic and bizarre. Some claim that entire star fleets can be funded with the proceeds of a few average-sized Geelan treasure hoards.

There are those who claim the Geelan are little more than nosy, irritating hoarders who like to dabble in the affairs of others and profit from it. The Geelan are well known for their dealings with criminals, like the Anchor's residential criminal organization, the Bartog Syndicate. They have also involved themselves in the affairs of the Empire and the Rebel Alliance as information brokers—for both sides. Such is their reputation that many honest free-traders steer clear of the Anchor, believing the Geelan were somehow responsible for the disaster that befalls its initial inhabitants.

The Geelan have left much of the administrative duties of running Zitrans' Anchor in the hands of Delensus Solar and an appointed administrator who is referred to as the Chief of Affairs. Both the Chief of Affairs and the Delensus Security Chief are legally bound to defer to Geelan wishes, although the Geelan have rarely used such power.

The Geelan method of social rule and governance is based upon a loosely-connected series of nests under an appointed leader dubbed the Master Geel. The Master Geel is responsible for major business ventures and contracts that affect the entire Geelan race. The current Master Geel does not reside on Zitrans' Anchor, but visits the station occasionally in the company of his entourage of servitors and bodyguard—a huge, lumbering humanoid named, rather absurdly, Tiny. It was believed that the previous Master Geel was Whisk the Elder. It was his prophecies of the Anchor's imminent doom which fell upon the deaf ears of the Empire's officials.

Typical Geelan. All stats are 2D except: Dexterity 3D-2, blaster 4D, pick pocket 4D-2, business 4D, Perception 4D, bargain 5D, brawling 4D. Move 10. Special Abilities: Claws do STR-1D damage. Blaster pistol (4D), hoarding pouch.

ADDENDUM/PERSOINAL
OKEEFE, PLATT...
I was never one to trust those pesky Geelan, but they are a permanent and ever-present fixture at Zitrans' Anchor. It's hard to conduct almost any kind of transaction without a visit from one of their "handlers," a representative of a nest who is interested in getting a share of your hard-earned credits. Some of them get downright nervous, especially when everyone pulls their blasters. That's when Delensus Solar tends to make their grand entrance...
Sector Beta

Defensus Solar: Station Security

A private corporate security firm based in the Outer Rim Territories, Defensus Solar has been contracted by the Geelan to protect all inhabitants and uphold the generally-recognized galactic civil code on Zitrann's Anchor.

Defensus' main control center is located on an old Republic corvette attached to the main Zitrann freighter. From this position, Defensus is patched into all connected vessels and maintains tight-beam communications channels with all Imperial customs vessels and local space traffic. Defensus also monitors a small network of sensor buoys that orbits the station, checking approaching ships and their intentions. A small team is rotated constantly to occupy the Golan battle platform which is currently part of the station. The platform serves not only as the Anchor's primary means of defense but as the auxiliary control center should the main control area be overtaken as part of some hostile act.

Two older vessels attached near the Defensus Solar corvette are used for barracks, investigations and forensics, computer storage, medical bays, and equipment. A third vessel, an old passenger liner with a completely rebuilt interior, is used as a separate detention center for Defensus Solar prisoners.

A staff of over 100 security officers patrols the Anchor and its open sections. They are well-trained in a variety of defensive strategies, knowledgeable in criminal code and in investigative procedures, and are equipped to handle almost any possible contingency — from an all-out capital ship assault and radiation emergencies to general rioting and panic control.

Defensus Solar Security Officer (DeeSo). All stats are 2D except:
- Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+2, melee combat: stun baton 4D, law enforcement 4D, Strength 3D, brawling 4D. Move 10. Blaster pistol (4D), stun baton (STR+2D; STR+1D without using energy shock), blast vest (+1D physical, -1 energy, torso only), blast helmet (+1D physical, +1 energy).

Defensus is quite serious about its duty aboard the Anchor and works hard to keep its corporate name and all employees absolutely neutral on almost any position. Defensus does not participate or mediate disputes between factions, even if ordered to do so by the Geelan (which is unlikely.)

Defensus' main goal lies in maintaining order and public safety.

To accomplish this, Defensus Security Officers (DeeSoS, as they are called by the Anchor’s inhabitants) view all new arrivals with a healthy dose of suspicion. Each new arrival to the Anchor must undergo a security check before permission to board is granted. Those with adequate proof of diplomatic status may refuse such regulations.

Each new arrival must supply acceptable identification, a recent travel history, and must submit their belongings and person to a remote sensor search. Light blasters and personal weapons are permitted aboard the Anchor — heavy blasters, explosives or grenades of any kind and thermal detonators are not, however.

If security is still suspicious of a new arrival, or his or her intentions, a more thorough search and investigation is conducted. The new arrival must submit to a physical search. All belongings and luggage are scrupulously examined by physical and electronic means. All personal weapons, defensive or not, are confiscated. Background checks are conducted. And, worst of all, the Empire is contacted to check against any possible warrants or offenses. Anyone who fails any of these procedures is immediately detained in a holding facility until either the Empire claims the prisoner, or is expelled on the first vessel outbound from the Anchor.

Of course, all of this is inconsequential if the newcomer’s vessel fails to pass the Imperial Customs inspection as soon as they approach the Anchor’s local space.

ADDITIONAL/PERSONAL

OKEEFE, PLATT... There are ways to get around those tight-collared DeeSoS. Several ships are part of the Anchor but are considered “independent zones” — off-limits to anyone except to the owners. They can let people come on board and go as they please. Defensus has installed a couple of random checkpoints in hopes of catching these “insiders,” but people always seem to know when and where they’re going to pop up next. The Barag Syndicate’s ship is one such way in. But you have to pay the price — and it sure isn’t cheap.

Imperial Customs

Ironically (and some might say, deliberately), Imperial Customs is positioned on a barge located on the other side of the station from Defensus Solar’s corvette. This small barge acts as the Imperial base of operations for the entire station. A small docking bay allows for the storage and repair of one squadron of TIE fighters and two Snowspeeder blastboats. Imperial Customs frigates alternate between patrols, with at least one vessel docked with the customs barge for repairs and restocking.
The Imperials stationed at Zitrán’s Anchor, when seen aboard the station, carry with them a distinctively bored attitude. Quite distant from any possible “real action,” many of the Imperial officers stationed at the Anchor have resigned themselves to serving the end part of their careers as uneventfully as possible. Their subordinates, however, are a bit too eager to impress them—and are hoping for a transfer to a more centrally-located starport. Such junior officers sometimes go out of their way to follow customs procedures and protocols to the letter.

A reduced garrison, consisting of several Imperial Army platoons and two stormtrooper squads, is also stationed on the Imperial barge. The question of who really is in authority at Zitrán’s Anchor is highly dependent upon who you ask—and the situation. The Empire usually defers all law enforcement matters to station security, unless something happens which merits its attention. A forged document, a suspicious travel history, an illegally modified transport, a rather interesting criminal record—any or all arouse the curiosity of the current Imperial garrison commander. If the answers to such questions are not satisfactory to him, other higher-ranking Imperial officials may be notified.

**Addendum/Personal Okeefe, Platt . . .**

The Empire has probably learned its lesson since the last time it tried to install a major military force and occupy the station—and that was just before the Anchor flat-out disappeared. People who were around during that time have told me stories about Imperial assassin droids on the loose, a computer error attacking the old garrison’s internal controls, even an attempt to kill the Imperial Admiral and his entourage. Nowadays, the force on Zitrán’s Anchor is carefully small compared to most major starports. That’s because the Empire leaves the hard work—policing the place—to Deltosan Solar. But don’t let the size of the force fool you. Odds are that there is an Imperial Security Bureau agent hiding among them.

**Sector Delta**

**The Death Mark**

The *Death Mark* is a frigate that once belonged to a successful Imperial bounty hunter named Vygarr. Vygarr decided that even bounty hunters needed a place to call their own; to rest, make repairs, check contacts, and generally socialize with their own kind. In time, the *Death Mark* has also welcomed mercenaries, pilots-for-hire, protectors, and other freelancers. Many come here to hire the services of those who work the crimson trade.

Those who run the *Death Mark* offer medical services, armor

droids, and communication facilities to licensed bounty hunters or those with Imperial or hunter guild affiliations. These services are offered at a modestly-increased cost to non-guild hunters or spacers.

**Reenogga Personal Services**

Among the deluxe state rooms of the *Death Mark* are the offices of Reenogga Personal Services, Cubed. The Reenogga triplets—Kara, Vella, and Adri—are former members of the Skine Bounty Hunter College (see *Galaxy Guide 10: Bounty Hunters*) who have since formed their own elite firm of “equalizers.” For a moderate-to-large fee, the triplets can offer to protect a client against nearly any threat, whether from illegal bounty hunting or corporate assassination. The Reenogga sisters make it a point never to interfere with a legitimate bounty mark—their interests lie more in protecting those who cannot protect themselves.

RPS Cubed’s reputation for its work has grown sharply since its arrival on the Anchor. Sometimes the mere appearance of only one of the three sisters is enough to foil the plans of some would-be attackers. Since each of the three Reenogga sisters specializes in a different form of combat, and all three look completely identical, one is never quite sure what to expect.

RPS Cubed maintains several transports and starfighters for off-Anchor work. Adri, the best pilot and technician of the three Reenogga sisters, likes to keep all RPS craft in top condition and oversees their maintenance constantly. Vella, the company’s main spokesperson and business manager, accepts new clients and assigns priority according to their needs. Kara is simply well-known for her fiery temperament and stubbornness. Among the three sisters, Kara is perhaps the easiest to find—she loves to frequent Chabak’s at the Hub, out-drink the patrons, challenge newcomers to tests of unarmed combat, and gamble.

**The Reenogga Sisters**

- **Adri**
  - **DEXTERITY 2D**
  - Blaster 4D, blaster rifle 5D, dodge 5D, grenade 3D, vehicle blasters 4D-2
  - **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**
  - Alien species 4D, law enforcement 4D-1, planetary systems 5D-1, streetwise 5D-1, survival 5D-1, willpower 4D-1
  - **MECHANICAL 4D**
  - Astrogation 6D, communications 6D, power suit operation 6D, republic or Imperial starfighter piloting 7D, starfighter weaponry 6D, starship shields 6D, swoop operation 6D-2
  - **PERCEPTION 2D**
  - Hide 4D, sneak 5D-1

February, 1995
Kara

**DEXTERITY 4D-1**
Blaster 7D, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 6D-1, blaster artillery 5D-1, bow 5D-1, blunderbuss 5D-1, grenade 5D-1, melee combat 6D, melee parry 6D, missile weapons 5D-1, running 5D-1, thrown weapons: knife 5D-1

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**
Intimidation 6D, streetwise: Zirtran's Anchor 8D, willpower 6D

**MECHANICAL 2D**
Barge riding 6D, ground vehicle operation 3D, powersuit operation 3D, repulsorlift operation 4D, swoop operation 3D-2

**PERCEPTION 3D**
Gambling 5D-2, hide 6D, persuasion 4D, sneak 6D

**STRENGTH 3D-2**
Brawling 7D-2, brawling: martial arts 6D-2, climbing/jumping 6D-2, stamina 6D-2, swimming 3D

**TECHNICAL 2D**
Armor repair 4D, blaster repair 6D-2, ground vehicle repair 4D, security 4D

**Special Abilities:**
Combat Training: Kara is trained as a Fifth Ascend master in personal combat — add -1D to her Strength when determining damage from a blaster attack.

**Character Points:** 6

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Modified heavy blaster pistol (5D-2), throwing knives (STR-1D), comlink

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**The Rusted Cutlass II**

The *Rusted Cutlass II* is a bulbous, creaking freighter in the hands of the Phosphura Belt Pirates. The pirate ship is open to anyone who dares enter, but be warned — the inhabitants of this vessel scowl at Defensius Solar Security, and just about anyone else for that matter.

The life of the independent pirate can be fraught with danger and filled with loneliness. Hunted by the Empire and rival pirates, feared by local systems, and treated with disdain by the Rebellion, life can be a difficult challenge for the spacer who engages in one of the galaxy's oldest (and not-to-mention more dangerous) professions.

The alternative to solo pirating is to seek membership among one of the many large pirate rings operating in the fringes of the Empire. The Phosphura Belt Nebula near Zirtran's Anchor is one such place.

Its thick, greenish, belt of gaseous clouds and electromagnetic bursts make it difficult, if not impossible, to navigate through. That and the nebula's proximity to several major star routes makes it a perfect haven for pirates. It seemed almost inevitable that the Belters would attach a vessel of their own to the trade station.

Like almost all criminal organizations, the Belt pirates have a chain of command that allows it to thrive and function. For the prosperous Belt pirates, the chain of command involves a surprising system of honor among their fellow pirates. In this, the Phosphura
Belt pirates have forged their own unique reputation — mainly out of fear of their vast numbers and respect of their organization.

**ADDENDUM/PERSOHAL OKEEFE, PLATT ..**

Honor means everything to the Belt pirates. A Belt pirate who makes a promise fulfills that promise. A Belt pirate who makes a threat fulfills that threat. A Belt pirate who swears allegiance does not break that allegiance. In their eyes, there is no honor to be found in battle and in the taking of a prize. Crowns and captains of princes who refuse to fight back are considered cowards. Without honor, the entire pirate organization would come flying apart at the seams.

Still, it's a strange thing to see cutthroats and outright thieves — who would normally blind each other to slap — swear to uphold one another in battle and enterprise. But the Belt pirates have seen the Empire dismash whole pirate organizations just like themselves. Even though they are outnumbered, the Belt pirates have made up the difference by building a reputation for ferocity and swift revenge. Many Imperial officers have learned — the hard way — that seizing a Belt pirate vessel might be the last thing their ship's fog will ever record.

**Pirate Honor**

The pirate system of honor was created by the first Belt Pirate King, Arvo Norstrang. Since then, every Belt pirate has sworn loyalty to the current Pirate King and the Buccaneer Code:

*Take only that which you have won in battle. Take not from your allies. Take not from those who shield you. Respect and honor brother and sister pirates. Respect and honor their allegiance. Respect and honor those who fight against you. Relish in the taking of the prize.*

Assisting the Pirate King or Queen are the Buccaneers, loyal pirates who act as the King or Queen's eyes and ears among their fellow pirates. A Buccaneer also acts as their pirate leader's personal confidante and protector.

The pirate fleet still follows Arvo Norstrang's original order of battle. Much of the pirate force is concealed in the endless wastes of the Phosphorus Belt Nebula. Caches of stores and supplies have also been placed throughout the nebula so that Belt pirates may seek shelter in its gaseous shadows to repair and rearm.

Once a prize has been taken in battle, a Belt pirate captain may take its cargo and crew and either vaporize the vessel, abandon the vessel and let it drift, or take it intact. Prizes which are taken intact are towed to repair facilities inside the nebula. There they are either stripped down to their components for resale or upgraded to join the pirate fleet. Cargoes and components stripped from prizes end up in the hands of black marketeers and back-handed merchants. Although cargo taken by pirates may be relatively easy to find, very little is known what happens to the crews of such tragic consequences.

**The Rules of the Blade**

Early on, Arvo Norstrang decreed several laws for his fellow cutthroat and obedience to obey. His spoken words eventually became the Rules of the Blade, guidelines for his pirates to conduct business and settle disputes. Norstrang also believed that individuals or crews should settle grievances between themselves and not involve the remainder of the organization. A system of honor duels evolved from this decree and remains a popular form of settling disputes. As the duels became more ritualized, different forms of dueling and their own peculiar rules came about.

A *tente* is a simple duel where the first combatant to fall unconscious, either by blow or by hand weapon, is the loser. Tentes are used to settle simple disputes and are considered binding as long as others do not join in. Energy weapons of any kind are forbidden in the tente. Those who violate this rule are immediately brought to the attention of the Buccaneers or even the Pirate King. Many pirates have been known to lose various appendages, even their crews and ships, for failing to obey the rules of a tente duel.

A *rigora* is a more treacherous and dangerous form of duel. A rigora may be declared on another pirate if one feels his or her name or ship has lost honor and reputation. Rigoros can be fought either to unconsciousness or sometimes to the death, especially if the grievance was considered particularly heavy. Although energy weapons can be used in a rigora, the use of explosives is considered poor conduct. There are also several different forms of rigora — a “just rigora” has the defeated pirate admitting his or her fault or guilt before the Pirate King; an “honor rigora” pits a dishonored pirate against a champion of the defender’s choosing; and an “outrig rigora” can end only in death. Several of the experienced pirates among the Belters have long-standing, but unfilled, outrig rigoros with other hostile members.

The *negate* is, plainly enough, a duel to the death. Many who wish to fill the captain's chair of the Pirate King or Queen call negates against their rivals. A negate can be called only when two sides are so openly hostile to each other that outright warfare among the pirate band would erupt. Champions are selected from both sides to participate in the negate, usually these are the captains or squadron leaders from opposing sides. Up to four losers from among ship crew
or comrades can be chosen to fight with the champion in the negate.

Adding a bit of danger (or amusement, depending on one’s point-of-view) to the negate is that it must take place in the “Fire Ring of Fornax.” Named after a famous celestial phenomenon, the combats in a negate must battle to the death within a ring of blinding fire. No energy weapons of any form or type are permitted, but wagering on the winner is (they are pirates, after all).

The current Belt Pirate King, Leo Bellsfar, reigns on board the Rusted Cutlass II, which is attached to Zirtran’s Anchor. Bellsfar does not lend the impression of royalty, nor even as the leader of a band of cutthroats. He prefers to keep himself out of sight and directs most of his activities through his buccaneers. The Pirate King occasionally dabbles in business ventures with the Geelan and other interested parties on the Anchor. There are rumors that Bellsfar is working on a treaty with the Rebel Alliance, “procuring” ships and equipment for the Alliance in exchange for immunity if the Emperor should ever fall.

### Leo Bellsfar, King of the Phosphura Belt Pirates

- **DEXTERITY 3D+2**
  - Blaster 5D+2, blaster pistol 6D-2, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D-2, melee combat: vibroblade 6D-2, melee parry 5D-2
- **KNOWLEDGE 4D**
  - Bureaucracy 8D, business 8D, intimidation 6D, languages 8D, law enforcement 8D, value 8D
- **MECHANICAL 3D**
  - Astrogation 5D, sensors 5D-2, space transports 6D, starship weaponry 6D, starship shields 6D
- **PERCEPTION 3D**
  - Bargain 7D, command 8D-2, con 7D, forgery 7D, gambling 7D, hide 7D, persuasion 7D, sneak 6D
- **STRENGTH 2D+1**
- **TECHNICAL 2D**
  - Computer programming/repair 4D, security 5D-2
- **Character Points:** 8
- **Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), vibroblade (STR-3D), datapad, 10,000 credits hidden in secret compartments on the Rusted Cutlass II

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Defensus Solar has no authority or jurisdiction on the Rusted Cutlass II, but its personnel do try to keep a watchful eye for smugglers, weapons-runners, and other types who do business with aboard the pirate vessel. The Imperial commander on Zirtran’s Anchor is keenly interested in connecting Bellsfar or the Belt pirates with any Rebel activity. He would enjoy nothing less than seizing those ships and throwing Bellsfar and his pirate rabbles on the closest Imperial prison planet.

**ADDENDUM/PERSONAL OKEEFE, PLATT**

Rumor has it that Leo Bellsfar named the Rusted Cutlass II in honor of the original Rusted Cutlass, a battered old cruiser named the legendary Dread Pirate Mendel Cutter. I met the swashbuckler once as a drifting waif. By the time he had decided to hang up his saberdagger and retire at Zirtran’s Anchor, he and his crew had made quite a name for themselves. According to station logs, the Rusted Cutlass was permanently attached to the station before the disappearance, yet was not among the interconected ships when the Anchor reappeared. Some believe that Cutter had actually managed to escape the disaster. If so, I bid him good fortune, wherever they might be flying.

The Laughing Sullustan

Before the Anchor’s disappearance, the Laughing Sullustan belonged to a notorious crimelord named Quentin Bartog. Afterwards, a rather wretched community of hucksters and gangsters have

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**Adventure Idea**

One of the characters is revealed to have a close friend or family relative who is a member of the Belt Pirates. The friend or relative begs the character and his friends for assistance — he has been indicted in an oath rigara against a mad, blustery pirate named Starfall Flanders.

The players travel to Zirtran’s Anchor and the Rusted Cutlass II, only to discover the friend has not been entirely truthful. True, he stole a major fortune from the pirate, but he intended to pay the pirate back with interest! All the characters have to do is pick up the relative’s investment in rare crystals arriving at the main docking bay in the Hub and bring it back before Flanders exacts his revenge. But the investment turns out to be less “available” than previously believed. Imperial Customs agents have seized the shipment and stored it in the Imperial garrison, after which it will be transported away by armed escort!
settled into the former crimelord's domain. This collection of riffraff calls themselves the Bartog Syndicate — whether the naming of the organization was intended out of respect or merely a joke is not known.

Bartog's freighter once was a custom-built, deluxe vessel outfitted with the most comfortable accommodations. Much of it has either been ripped out or stolen, leaving only darkened corridors and the outlines where expensive hardware had once been installed.

Defensus Solar is constantly at odds with the Bartog Syndicate and those who thrive aboard the Sullustan. Among Anchor locals, the Syndicate has been best described as a carnival troupe, filled with carefree gamblers, rogues, thieves, forgers, renegade droids, discredited bounty hunters, and other lawless types. Parties and other celebrations fill the state rooms and corridors as the successful celebrants go on a good fortune.

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL
OKEEFE, PLATT

The motley scoundrels and other types aboard the Laughing Sullustan do serve one purpose. They have an ear on almost everything that's going on, not only on the Anchor but in local space as well.

Their unofficial leader is a grizzled tough who calls himself the Ace of Staves, a name from one of the cards in the regular sabacc deck. Ace, as he refers to himself, claims to be an "expendable" sort. If you want something, he can usually lay his hands on it in quick time. His small army of forgers, con artists, and pilfergums can whip up just about anything, from official spacer logs to an Imperial military identification. He just loves to poke holes in the Imperial bureaucracy, cramming the gaps with bogus counter transmissions, anti-Imperial slogans, and virus programs.

It's been said that one of Ace's more famous stunts involved forging copies of the Death Star battle station plans and selling them to tourists and other gullible fools. The technical plans, once loaded into a droid or computer terminal, would mutate and perform the most outrageous stunts. Some program mutations would generate holograms of a dancing Darth Vader. Other, meaner, versions would simply wipe the memory contents of the droid or the terminal.

A rough, unshaven young man whose personality reflects someone much older than his actual age, Ace (his real name is unknown) drifted from one nameless world to another until finally settling down on Zirtran's Anchor. On his own since he was young, Ace made a few credits repairing droids and other automatons in return for room and board. Discovering he had a knack for "improving" droid systems and programs, he began to modify simple labor and power droids at first for a small profit. Later he went after higher-level droids and advanced computer security systems. It was then that he decided he would use his abilities to undermine the very government which made his life so miserable.

Ace of Staves
Type: Criminal Ringleader
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 4D-2, brawling parry 4D, dodge 5D-2, grenade 3D-2, pickpocket 5D-2
KNOWLEDGE 3D
Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 5D-2, business 5D, languages 6D, law enforcement 7D, value 7D
MECHANICAL 3D
Sensors 5D-2, swoopoperation 4D-2
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 5D, con 5D, forgery 7D, gambling 5D, hide 6D, sneak 5D
STRENGTH 2D-1
Brawling 5D-1
TECHNICAL 2D-2
Computer programming/repair 6D-2, droid programming 6D-2, droid repair 6D, first aid 3D, security 5D-2
Character Points: 8
Move: 10
Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), datapad, medpac

Sector Epsilon

This sector is reserved for the newest arrivals to become a part of Zirtran's Anchor. There are many prime locations available — one only needs a ship and a willingness to pay a moderate "connection" charge to be permanently bolted to the station. Quarterly payments (depending on vessel size, age, and design) are required for technical maintenance, power, life support, security, and communications. All fees are negotiated through the Geelian, naturally.

One of the more interesting new arrivals to the Anchor is a unique vessel called the Destiny, populated by aliens known only as Kali.

The Kalai

The aliens known as the Kali have only recently attached a vessel and become a part of the population at Zirtran's Anchor. Their language is difficult to translate into Basic, but the closest approximation for the name of their oddly-shaped vessel is Destiny. The name seems more than appropriate considering the strange circle of events and mysterious circumstances that revolve around
the aliens and the Anchor.

To many outsiders, the Kalai appear as shy, almost unintelligible beings who are reluctant to stray into the general population at the Hub or other open sections of the Anchor. In fact, the only Kalai who have been seen on the Anchor are the fusion offspring of Kalai and Humans called lethagoes. Physically, a lethago is Human-like but quite tall, almost two meters in some cases. Their bodies look almost reed-thin in comparison, although their musculature suggests a high amount of physical strength. The most striking feature is the face: thin and pale, with a pronounced sharp nose, severe eyes, and a jutting chin. Many have compared the Kalai fusions’ appearance to that of birds or other flying creatures, which has lead some to speculate that the Kalai themselves might be avian in physical makeup.

What is known about the Kalai is a combination of rumor, speculation, fear, and very few facts. The lethagoes do not normally discuss life aboard the Destiny, the Kalai and their system of origin, or even their parents. Their interactions on board the Anchor are limited to business transactions with traders and freighter pilots for the procurement and delivery of goods. The remainder of these transactions are relegated to the employment of several independent mercenaries and scouts for missions beyond Imperially held space. The Kalai do not deal with the Geelan unless they have no other choice. In most cases, the Kalai have all but ignored the actions of the Imperial commander and other Anchor residents. Imperial Customs inspectors who have seized and searched the vessels of free-traders and others hired by the Kalai have found nothing incriminating. Many agree that the Kalai, despite their secret activities, are reasonably harmless.

However, there is little agreement about what lurks inside the Destiny and the nature of its mysterious inhabitants.

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL
OKEEFE, PLATT...

Deductions of the Kalai run like wild fire across the star lanes, as many a peddler has stepped forward claiming to have seen an actual Kalai. Such descriptions are too wild and varied for the most part. Some claim that the Kalai...

A Kalai Encounter

Horatio Varn-Kessler, news correspondent, switched off the recorder and pocketed the device inside his carry-all. He certainly had more than enough material here for a story, perhaps even a series of reports.

“Supporter?” The man stretched out his long frame. “Does this answer your questions about Zirtran’s Anchor?”

“Indeed. And then some. I’m hoping this article will appear in the stacks about starport travel. I’d say that you and a certain Miss Okeefe have been more than helpful.” Horatio pulled himself out from behind the table and paid the robo-tender the entire tab plus a sizable tip. He offered the man a chip of credit vouchers as well, but the man pushed the small cloth bag away.

“Unnecessary.”

“But you’re taking quite a chance, coming forward like this. Not everyone wants to talk about the Anchor’s disappearance — or the Kalai.”

“Everyone needs a little excitement every now and then.” he winked.

Horatio nodded and reluctantly left. He wished he could have listened to the man for a while longer, but he had a deadline looming. He put the hole-tapes in his bag with growing excitement. For the first time ever, the truth about Zirtran’s Anchor revealed!

The man smiled, laughing a bit to himself as he pulled out a steam pipe. The truth about Zirtran’s Anchor, indeed! The correspondent had only scratched the surface.

The chandelier of tiny lights over the man’s head seemed to shimmer. Droplets of light fell slowly from the ceiling. The other patrons in the dark cantina failed to notice as the lights began to coalesce and take form as a single bubble of dancing light. The bubble’s glow changed color as a thought took shape.

Does he suspect?

A trail of steam drifted from the pipe in the man’s hands. “He’s just a boy. Completely naive. He has no idea what was going on. Did you find out what you wanted to know?”

His memories as a young child were strong. He was raised on Coruscant, the Imperial capital. He provided much useful information about the Empire. In time, I believe he will join us.

The man’s features began to change as he continued to puff away on his pipe. His face became pale and thin, his nose sharp and pronounced, and his eyes thin and bright. The Kalai lethagoes from the bar laughed as he reclined back in his seat.

“Glad to be of service, father.”
**Adventure Idea**

The characters have journeyed far to take in the sights at Zirtran's Anchor. Reports of disappearances among station residents and travelers alike raise suspicions that whatever happened to Zirtran's Anchor before might be happening again.

The characters eventually learn through their own investigations that a rare creature has broken free from a security quarantine around a recently-arrived vessel — the creature is believed to be a powerful, predatory alien that delights in stalking and attacking its prey. By accident (or perhaps by the hand of an unknown or unsuspected third party), the characters are locked into a cordoned-off freighter with the horrible beast...

are notavian in appearance at all. Others say they appeared as balls of flickering light or dark, brooding shadows with telepathic powers. A few even believe the Kalai are actually Humans. I would be interested in seeing one myself. That's why I'm planning a trip past the Anchor soon. Hope to see you there.

The last question about the Kalai is perhaps the most important — why are they at Zirtran's Anchor, and what are their intentions? One lethoga fusion, when asked this question, would only reply that the Kalai are observers, content to watch the ever-continuing struggle between Humans and aliens, Empire and Rebellion. Rarely have they openly interfered in the galactic civil war. There are smaller ships housed inside the Kaiai ship *Destiny* — nimble, hawk-shaped vessels which have demonstrated an agility beyond that of other starfighters like the Alliance X-wing or the Imperial TIE fighter.

But so far, the Kalai have refused to join sides.

At least, for the moment.
the prestigious ISO. Now, with New Order party representatives more securely established in the political fabric of Mid-Rim governments, and with the establishment of all-powerful governments, many of the ideological and financial obstacles of past decades have been cleared away.

The tour program is expected to focus on recent Neoclassical compositions favored by the Emperor, including several selections from Harbin-Wei opera, waltzes and gaucho dances composed by Nabiari Futana, and various marches from the Clone Wars era.

Imperial HoloVision

35:10:24/IVH/G76D/COR.1.IPC/POL
Festival Public Executions Canceled: Officials Site Security Concerns

Imperial City, Coruscant

Celebrants of New Year Fete Week in Imperial City looking forward to the annual public executions of convicted Enemies of the Empire will be disappointed to hear that the executions will not be carried out as planned. Citing security concerns, officials announced today that the executions would be carried out in private for the first time in 11 years. No specific reason for the change in plans was provided.

Imperial HoloVision
35:10:22/ITI/TRD

Fondor Closed to Civilian Traffic

Unspecified Mid-Core Node

The Fondor system is currently the site of a massive Imperial construction project and has been closed to all civilian traffic, according to a member of the Corellian Merchant’s Guild who asked not to be named. A military blockade surrounds the Fondor shipyards, with orders to destroy trespassers.

A great deal of cargo traffic is passing between Fondor and Gandial. The CMG member surmises that new hyperlanes have been opened by the Empire to serve the system, judging by the number of bulk freighters passing into and out of the shipyards. The shipyard activity suggests that the system is now a Star Destroyer construction site, but this level of security is rather unusual in such a site. So, too, is the large number of flagships present in the system.

It is a shame that the system is sealed to independent traders. There are always opportunities for enterprising spacers in a situation involving a workforce with curtailed travel options. Workers in such an environment tend to develop a taste for items not to be found in an Imperial commissary. However, only heavy-duty space transports of Camura Lines and Entea Corporation have been awarded contracts to serve the system, and have permission to use the Code DENA-1101:224 permits which allow free passage.

Independent Traders’ Infonet

35:10:28/IVH/NDR6/CLF.2.DEN/POL

Dental Declares Independence, Expels Governor

Calif City, Dentaal

In a move that stunned political observers, the Dental Independence Party, with full public support, ousted the Imperial administration of Governor Taliff and took direct control of the Dentaal government it had vacated only nine months earlier. The commanders of the Dentaal Navy and Army, nominally under Imperial control, have declared their loyalty to the new government, and are moving to isolate and disarm Imperial garrisons.

The leader of the rogue government, Hanec Rellow, has declared Dentaal a free planet, and affirmed his desire to maintain cordial relations with the Empire. Governor Taliff has been deported from Dentaal by the new administration, and is under orders to report to Coruscant to explain himself.

The Emperor has made no official comment on the matter, though the Imperial Navy is demanding immediate action. With unrest a constant problem on peripheral Imperial holdings such as Sappire and Dakshee, experts do not expect the Emperor to remain neutral. Certainly the Dental affair is being watched very closely by the Rebel organization.

Imperial HoloVision
36:F1:1/CDN/G76D/COR.1.IPC/ENT
New Year Fete Week Launched in Imperial City

Imperial City, Coruscant

The festivities of New Year Fete Week were launched in the Imperial capital with a huge parade featuring floats and bands gathered from throughout the Empire. The beginning of the parade was marked by an overhead flyby of 300 TIE fighters, leaving columns of colored smoke and fireworks in their wakes.

The Imperial Palace Guards comprised the first display unit, followed by an entire armored division of Imperial walkers and their support troops from the Imperial Star Destroyer Death’s Head. Following were a dazzling number of colorful floats representing the stunning variety of cultures and societies united under the Imperial banner. Interspersed were more displays of Imperial might, including celebrated units from every branch of the Imperial military.

While all the displays were impressive, the Tion Hegemony’s display, three restored war droids from Xim the Despot’s fabled vaults, stole the show. This was the first public display of the droids since they burst out of obscurity in a self-destructive rampage on Delilah nearly two years ago.

The parade passed before the Patialal Balcony, from which Emperor Palpatine showed himself from time to time, flanked by Lord Vader and Grand Admiral Takel, as well as other privy councilors, officers, and guards. The parade ended in the Piaza di am Imperium, the site of the traditional Imperial Fair. Corellia and Corulag are co-hosting the Fair this year, and will unveil their Grand Display tomorrow. Rumors regarding the secret Grand Display are running wild, and many prognosticators are predicting a re-creation of Cyimarra’s Crystal Spires, since it is known that both worlds sent delegations to Cyimarra last season.

Coruscant Daily NewsFeed

36:1:2/COL/TO4H/BAK.4.SAL/MIL
Bakura Annexed by Empire

Salis D’aar, Bakura

As the Bakuran sun rises over the capital city of Salis D’aar today, it shines not upon the chaotic and politically fractured government it has warmed in past days, but on the newest, albeit modest, gem in the Imperial crown. Early last night, two Imperial Star Destroyers and supporting vessels emerged from hyperspace and quickly neutralized the planet’s futile defense grid. There was virtually no resistance as troops shuttled planetside and moved to seize strategic assets. There are rumors to have been brief struggles with the Salis D’aar militia, but reports are muddled and contradictory. It
Galaxywide News Nets

has been confirmed now that several troopers fell as they moved to secure the Bakuran Senate, but resistance ceased as soon as the senate members were placed under house arrest. Few local casualties have been reported.

Prime Minister Yeorg Captison appeared on the local holochannels to calm the restive populace, and assure the new Imperial citizens that they would come to no harm if they offered no resistance. Captain Brellar of the Imperial Star Destroyer Onslaught also made an appearance to welcome Bakura into the fold of the Empire. "Your world, your people, have long been unable to function as a healthy society should," he said. "Your government, the outgrowth of a mere mining corporation, is so torn by internal power struggles that it can barely function, let alone defend its people. We of the Empire strive for balance and harmony in all that we do, and order and rationality above all else. We have come to restore you to your natural place in the galactic balance, and hope you will help us achieve this goal."

The new Imperial governor of Bakura, Wilek Nereus, who was to have arrived with the Imperial vanguard, was detained by Grand Moff Tanniel to work on a short-term independent project, Brellar said. Nereus is expected to take up residency on Bakura within a few weeks, when he will begin the difficult task of supervising the orderly transition of the chaotic Bakuran government into the Imperial mainstream.

In the meantime, Captain Brellar will remain as acting governor of Bakura. His duties will include eliminating the inevitable pockets of resistance, interviewing the heads of all major political bodies and defense organizations, and establishing Imperial garrisons at factories and production centers determined to be of strategic value to the Empire and therefore worthy of protection against attacks by pirates and Rebel operatives.

Colonial News Nets


Neile Janna Returns to Adarlon for New Holo

Belraad, Adarlon

Actress Neile Janna, once famous throughout the galaxy for her role as the beautiful but deadly pirate queen Carma Dane in the long-running holo saga Scrooner's Revenge, has returned to Adarlon to resume her career after a two-decade self-imposed retirement. In her new holo, she is once again taking on the identity of a half-historical, half-mythical figure. In Kallea's Hope, Janna will play Freia Kallea, the trailblazing pioneer of Brentaal space who single-handedly established the Hydian Way hyperlane some 3,000 years ago, and went on to marry into and make dominant one of the great Brentaal House families.
Kallea's Hope is based on the Kallea Cycle, a classical three-part opera much revered in the Core Worlds, and is the first attempt in a hundred years to adapt the cycle to a popular format. Some critics wonder if Janna is up to the challenge of taking on the role of Kallea. In traditional opera, it is a demanding and complex role traditionally reserved for the Mistress of the Hall. Since Janna is best known for less demanding roles, the reservations seem well founded.

Human Events Network

36:1:16/CYN/NAR.A.SHD/TRD

Smugglers' Roster: Random Rumors

Nar Shaddaa Node

Han Solo surfaced on Ord Mantell long enough to really annoy the locals and then faded again. He wasn't running cargo. A regional bounty hunter named Skorr marked Solo, but didn't collar him. We're sure there is more to this whole affair, but our sources had a limited view of the proceedings. By the way, Solo seems to have picked up a new filly, who wears her hair in the Alderaanian High House style and from all reports looks rather like someone who used to lecture Palpatine on morals from the floor of the Imperial Senate. There's a blond kid too, possibly the same guy Jabba's informers saw him with in Mos Eisley. The Wookie, of course, is still first mate. Solo hasn't traveled with this much baggage since that Stars' End thing. What's next, Solo, babies?

Bettle and Jaxa have been busy marketing slug throwers to various warring primitive species in an undisclosed region just beyond the Corporate Sector. Apparently the Rallitir venture didn't pan out. They've rebounded nicely, though, returning to semi-civilized space with cargo holds bulging with canta salt and havano tabacc. The Malixieris is in need of repairs again. Last known heading was Bretta.

Speaking of repairs, Doc and his crew have packed up shop and vanished again. We assume he'll be letting the regulars know where he is in the usual manner when he's open for business again.

Platt Okeefe was wondering if spacers out the Lan Barell way might drop in on the Chyakk clan (the Wookies, not the Bentora Space people) at the Shullee spaceport and tell them she's found the parts they wanted already. She says she'll be out that way in about two months to drop them off.

Nada Synn is still Nada Synn. This must be a record. He just lost his main supplier of blackmarket repulsorlift components, poor fellow. On the bright side, he has a new ropaji dealer in pocket, and seems to be edging very close to the boundaries of Jabba's patch. Very casual-like.

Lando Calrissian won the coveted taxi-service license rights for Ord Wylan in a sabacc game, and lost them moments later in an idle bet concerning the brand of a liquor his party was consuming.
Though he obviously prefers gambling to shipping cargo these days, he does still dabble in transport. He's heading out to Taanab this season for a bit of under-the-table trading on the rhuum circuit, and says buddies who owe him credits can look him up at Wendle's.

Cynabar's InfoNet

36:1:13/IDD/LXMD/LIA.4.LIM/MIL

TIE/x2 Field Trials End: Features to be Phased into New Design

Lianna, Lianna Metro

The final field trials of the TIE/x2 starfighter prototype drew to a close last week as the last of the 32 test units returned to Sienar Fleet System's main facilities on Lianna, along with their teams of maintenance techs, field engineers, and diagnostics droids. The nine-month-long field trials — placing the prototype fighters in the hands of some of the best active duty TIE wing commanders in the Imperial Fleet — provided Sienar's TIE Mod Team with an excellent profile of the ship's capabilities and flaws. However, though pilots speak highly of the TIE/x2's performance, the design is not destined for active duty. Instead, like the TIE/x1 field-tested by Lord Darth Vader last year, the prototype will be retired in favor of a new design.

Imperial Defense Daily


Annual Regatta Held on Spira

Ataria Island, Spira

The tropical paradise of Ataria Island on the water world of Spira is once again hosting the annual Regatta Open, the famous marine yacht race which brings together enthusiasts and competitors from around the Empire to participate in a week of competitive racing.

The week of the regatta is one of the best times to vacation on Spira. The Tourist Guild sponsors a large number of festivals during this week, and
even those not interested in yachting will find something of interest. Ataria’s three Galaxy-class playhouses traditionally present their most magnificent works during Regatta Week, and the hundreds of dance halls and concert pavilions feature more high-powered acts than at any other time of the year. For those simply looking for rest and relaxation, Spira’s 11,000 kilometers of powdery beaches beckon, and Spira’s spectacular underwater reefs offer stunning vistas of beauty to the intrepid and adventurous.

Though the main hotels on Ataria Island have been booked for months, there are still plenty of vacancies on other islands along the Shinkai Abyss and race routes. Daily shuttle hops can whisk you right into the thick of things on Ataria Island, and right back to your secluded cove when you tire of the festivities.

By Tanda Marelle, Galactic Resorts textfile

36:1:30/GNS/TO7K/BAK.4.SAL/POL

Arrival of Bakuran Governor Disrupted by Rioting

Salis D’aar, Bakura

Festivities marking the arrival of Wilek Nereus, Bakura’s new governor, were disrupted yesterday by outbreaks of violence and rioting at several sites around the planet. Despite the best efforts of the conspirators who engineered the supposedly spontaneous riots, however, damage done was minimal, and the expected mass rebellion never took place.

The rioting began in several downtown areas of prominent Bakuran cities as Governor Nereus was accepting the badges of office from acting governor Captain Ales Brelar in a ceremony in the Bakuran Senate building (the Bakuran Complex) in Salis D’aar. Imperial troops and local law enforcement officials responded immediately, though due to an early foul-up in communications, several squads wound up protecting the wrong areas.

“It was not difficult to determine that the riots were engineered rather than spontaneous uprisings,” said Colonel Drelon, the commander of the Imperial peacekeeping force stationed on Bakura, in a press conference today. “The timing was too perfect, and the targets chosen for destruction were not the obvious ones disgruntled citizens might be expected to gravitate toward, such as military recruiting stations, New Order Party precinct headquarters, or even corporations with well-
known Imperial ties. Rather, the rioters targeted factories, holostations, and other sites in the infrastructure, the loss of which would impair the ability of the government to function."

An active investigation has been launched by Drelq's staff, and numerous citizens involved in the rioting are being interviewed. "Obviously, it's much too early to come to any concrete conclusions," Drelq said, "but it seems likely at this point, based on some of our interviews, that the conspiracy involves officials at the highest level of the Bakaran government. We'll just have to see." Nereus himself had no comments.

Galaxy News Service

36:2:4/HGN/TRXZ/TAN.3.KAM
Quakes on Kamori Sunder Cities: "Living Treasure" Dies
Tandaro, Kamori
Kamori's Zethusian plains were shaken by tremendous quakes this week, which caused serious damage to Jandal, Hyra, and Kimora City, and resulted in several hundred thousand deaths. Direct damage from the quakes all but dismantled the transportation infrastructure in both Hyra and Kimora, and several areas of the three cities are still without running water and power. Further damage was done to outlying coastal areas by tidal waves generated by the quakes. Chamber President Thane Dregond declared the disaster area eligible for government disaster relief, and is petitioning the governor for Imperial relief funds as well.

Among the dead was Glanthe master Dana Dregond (no relation to the chamber president), who was widely regarded as the Glanthe school's master painter in the sector. She was designated 10 years ago as one of Kamori's "living treasures," an honor sparingly accorded to the world's most accomplished masters of the arts.

Hypermedia Galactic News Service

36:2:8/DSN/T11R/ESS.3.ALA/ECO/D.Mips
Esselian President Pressured to Step Down in Face of Failing Health
Alabar, Eseles
President Ralle and his Forad Party are being challenged for domination of planetary politics by the up-and-coming Esselian New Order party. Ralle, though revered for his role in leading Eseles through the Clone Wars years ago, is fast aging and his support among voters is being split among ENO and Cardian candidates.

Jamson Freller, the charismatic leader of the ENO, held a press conference this morning, in which he asked Ralle to step down voluntarily.
“While all Esselians are eternally grateful to President Ralle for his leadership in the dark days of the decaying Republic, we feel that, with the restoration of order in the Core Worlds region, his job is done. We urge Ralle to consider retirement, so that he may enjoy his remaining years. He may rest assured that there are many ready and eager to take up his cause, and we of the New Order party are willing to shoulder our share of the burden.”

The rumor that Ralle might retire before his term is up has gained ground in the past few weeks, as polling shows the Foradians and Cardeans losing ground to the ENO in parliament. Publicly, the Ralle administration has stated that it has no intention of stepping down mid-term, but officials are privately worried about the president’s failing health. “We really don’t care for the idea of the neos taking over, but if the president’s condition worsens, we may have to consider how best we might handle some sort of transition,” said one high-ranking Forad official who asked not to be identified.

Many political analysts claim that without Ralle at the helm, the increasingly out-of-touch Forad Party cannot long maintain the coalition which keeps it in power.

By Deena Mipps, Darpa SectorNet

36:2:12/IDD/RAD/COR.1.IPC/MIL

Storm Commando C.O. Disappears
Imperial City, Coruscant

The Storm Commandos, the elite stormtrooper unit recently formed to combat Rebel guerrillas, have hit an unexpected and unfortunate early snag. While on routine training exercises in the Mid-Rim, Colonel Crix Madine, the unit’s commanding officer, disappeared. According to a spokesman for the unit, Madine was leading one of his squads in a wilderness exercise when he vanished in a series of caves. An extensive search was conducted in the cave network by rescue teams, but no sign of the colonel has been found. “We figure he just stumbled into one of the fissures in the caves. Some of them go for kilometers,” the spokesman said.

Madine was preparing his unit for its first assignment when he vanished. Madine, who had taken on the assignment at the Emperor’s request, has been replaced by Colonel Jenn Smeel.

Imperial Defense Daily
36:2:17/TRI/H5YT/PAN.3.TAA/MIL

Norulac Pirates' Latest Raid on Taanab Turns to Rout

Pandath, Taanab

The farmers of Taanab have long lived under the shadow of the Norulac pirates, but the constant threat of impending attack may have been permanently banished by the yeoman work of Lando Calrissian, a young merchant captain in seasonal residence in the Taanab system.

When word reached Taanab that the pirates had hit an oncoming rhuuum convoy on the system perimeter and were heading sunward, the small orbital defense fleet scrambled to defend the Bandhaal Company docking array in near orbit, where the massive cargo ships favored by the pirates were docked.

According to eyewitnesses, Calrissian, watching the commotion on the holo from the Pandath spaceport bar, boasted he could set the pirates back without too much trouble. When a skeptical fellow free-trader, Gathal Danager, offered him the deed to a small Cendoran brewery to see it done, Calrissian cumbered into his freighthawker mix much cheering and jeering, and lifted off.

Calrissian quickly passed the orbital defense ships assembling around the docking array, and hid in the ice ring orbiting Taanab's moon. When the raiders drew near and began their run on the cargo ships at the docks, he shot several hundred Conner nets into the midst of the pirate fleet. When the pirates slowed their snub ships to extricate themselves from the entangling webs of the nets, Calrissian tractored dozens of large ice chunks from the ring into their cockpits. He then led the orbit defense fleet in a mop-up session in which he single-handedly managed to destroy 19 of the remaining pirate craft, and went on to cripple the pirates' two supporting corvettes by shattering the dorsal coolant pipes on the engines pods. The ships were later captured with all hands, since Calrissian had also secured the escape pods' hatches with more Conner nets.

"Gambling is only risky when you don't know the odds," Calrissian said later as he accepted the brewery deed from Danager. "The bet only seemed like a long-shot to those who didn't know I had an advantage full of C-nets. As it happens, only I knew that."

Danill Captane, the Taanab portmaster, disagreed. "Captain Calrissian is being overly modest. The maneuvers he demonstrated are the work of a real master, and he showed a real flair for command when he rallied our pilots. He's more than welcome to stay on here and teach my pilots how to fly."

Calrissian seemed pleased at the suggestion, but politely declined the offer. "I'm not much for putting down roots," he said. When asked what he planned to do with his new brewery, Calrissian laughed. "I guess I'd better go see what kind of tinfoil factory Danager has foisted off on me. But it can wait a few weeks," he added. "I still have business here that demands my attention."

TriNebulon News
Plague Hits Dentaal; System Quarantined

Dentaal System Perimeter

An outbreak of the infamous Candorian plague on Dentaal has forced Imperial authorities to erect an immediate blockade around the system. The medical quarantine was erected around the entire system this morning, after experts determined that the mysterious disease which began striking hundreds of thousands of people down late yesterday in Calif City was the Candorian plague.

The plague, an airborne virus, is extremely contagious to Humans, and death is speedy, certain, and painful. The last known strains are thought to have died out 46 years ago when the total loss of the Bandorian colonies gave the virus no means of reproducing itself. There is no known antidote or cure. It is not currently known how the plague took root on Dentaal.

As of this posting, no ship is to enter the system or attempt to depart. Any ship attempting to escape the system will be summarily destroyed by the Imperial interment cruisers to prevent the spread of the plague beyond Dentaal.

Imperial HoloVision

Dentaal Ravaged by Outbreak of Candorian Plague

Dentaal System Perimeter

The horror continues to unfold on Dentaal as the Candorian plague continues to take its toll on the helpless populace trapped in the system. Sometime in the first night, death came for the millions of beings who live in Calif City, as they became the first victims of a plague that has not been seen for dozens of years. In the past two days, over 10 billion people have died, as the deadly airborne virus sweeps over the entire Kindelian continent.

Medical authorities from Coruscant, Raithal, and Rhinmal have gathered in a hospital frigate at the fringe of the system to study the plague, and determine whether any of the remaining Dentaalians might be saved. They do not have long to decide, say experts, since Dentaal will be an unpopulated wasteland within two weeks if the plague continues to spread at current rates.

Galaxy News Service
By Peter Schweighofer
Illustrations by John Paul Lona with Allen Nunis

Only an hour or so and Golthan will be dead.

High above Wroona, Dirk Harkness and Jai Raventhorn peered out their transport shuttle's viewport at the Vengeance, the Imperial Star Destroyer now berthed in Wroona's only capital ship stardock. Blast marks had scored parts of the Star Destroyer, and certain sections were entirely darkened. A host of mechanics in power suits floated around the ship, trying to effect repairs on damage from the vessel's last engagement with New Republic forces.

Jai hefted the gear bag over her shoulder while she shifted uneasily in her starport technician's uniform. She uneasily adjusted her cap, her hair bunched beneath it. Harkness picked up his case of starship tools, glancing casually at the other starport technicians aboard the shuttle. He returned his one-eyed gaze to the Vengeance. Golthan is aboard that ship, Dirk thought. Now it's time to pay our vengeance back.

For months after the Battle of Endor, Imperial Advisor Bregius Golthan and his spies had tried to keep Harkness and his team from collecting information about the crumbling Empire. They had even captured Harkness once, torturing him, blinding his left eye — but
his friends in the Black Curs had rescued him just in time. Now Dirk was determined to make Golthan regret all the misery he inflicted...

"Hey, are you feeling okay?" Jai asked, noticing the blank look on Dirk's face. He blinked himself out of the stare and nodded. Jai peered out the viewport as they drew closer to the hulking Star Destroyer, hoping that their contact aboard the Vengeance had set everything up for their diversion. She adjusted her gear bag on her shoulder, careful not to jostle the five heavy detonation charges concealed there.

Once the shuttle had docked, Jai and Dirk pulled their technician's caps low and marched with the rest of the starship mechanics past the stormtroopers on patrol in the Vengeance's docking hangar. Dirk slid his hand into one bulky pocket and pressed the small transmitter's button. Somewhere on the bridge, sensor system wires would be smoldering away until...

"Any sensors techs here?" an Imperial officer asked of the group leaving the shuttle. "Bridge reports main tracking sensors just blew."

"We're qualified," Jai said, flashing her fake ident badge. "We'll take care of it right away."

Dirk shivered and restrained himself as two stormtroopers were ordered to escort them to the bridge.

Tru'eb Cholakk, Platt Okeefe and Starter stood together in the Wroona starport docking bay, shaking hands. Their ships, the Ludrian Star, Last Chance and Starter's X-wing, waited patiently nearby.

"This is it," Platt said. "I sure hope Jai and Dirk know what they're doing."

"Aw, I only wish I could have gone," Starter said. "I bet it would make a great story..."

"We have all heard enough tales," Tru'eb said, smiling at Starter. "Now it is time to forge some legends ourselves."

"Just remember," Platt said. "All we have to do is sit around in Wroona's approach and departure patterns until that Star Destroyer's bridge blows, then we can roar in to finish the job and make sure those two get out safely."

"You don't suppose Harkness is going to try one of his stunts, do you?" Starter asked.

"Self restraint is not exactly one of Dirk's redeeming qualities..."

Peter Schweighofer

"Are you the sensors specialists?" the bridge officer asked.

Jai nodded. "Just show us where to go to work." She tried not to look toward the crew pit, where she knew the sensors had been sabotaged, right near that access panel near the outer bulkhead. The entire bridge was bustling with other officers, technicians, and a few security guards. Their stormtrooper escort from the docking bay was still around, too. This wasn't going to be easy.

"Up there, starboard crew pit, right up front," the officer said, pointing at the crew pit and the panoramic transparisteel viewports. He glared at Harkness as the two passed, then headed off to update Advisor Golthan on the repairs.

Dirk and Jai removed the sensor control panels quickly, tearing out clumps of fused wires. "Looks like some internal damage down near the control circuits," Harkness said for effect. The few technicians and officers nearby didn't seem to notice. The stormtroopers were interested in some activity outside the viewport. "You want to go down there and check it out?"

"No problem," Jai winked at Harkness as she carefully took her gear bag and maneuvered into the access area behind the controls.

Harkness continued to "repair" the damage while Jai crawled into the sensor housing and into the access crawway beyond. Pushing her gear bag ahead of her, she soon reached the area closest to the outer bulkhead. Jai set each of the five charges to blow, arming them so they'd blast a hole right through the bulkhead.

"We don't have much time," Jai whispered to Dirk as she pulled herself from the sensor housing. Harkness replaced several breakers and c-boards, then refit the sensor control panels into place.

"We're all set," he said, packing his tools into the case. The two emerged from the crew pit just as the bridge officer approached them for an update. "Forward sensors are functional again, Lieutenant," Dirk reported. The officer perked at him suspiciously again—probably the eye patch, Harkness thought.
“Good,” the lieutenant huffed. “Report down to crew 12 — they’re working on the hyperdrive control systems.”

As Dirk and Jai headed away from the crew pits, they began thinking of ways to ditch their stormtrooper escort. The two wouldn’t be going down to work on the hyperdrive — they had to get to the landing bay where Platt would be meeting them after the explosives went off.

The two were almost to the turbolifts when a door to a side chamber whooshed open. “Let us see straight on this matter, bounty hunter Beylyssa,” said the hulking skeleton dressed in ornate Imperial robes. “I want Harkness and all his Black Curs eliminated before I move against Sluis Van.”

The two figures emerging from the chamber almost bumped into the two figures passing the door. “Watch where you’re going, you incompetent technicians,” the tall Imperial Advisor barked.

Dirk looked up into Bregius Gothan’s thinning face. Jai peered up and saw her own reflection in Beylyssa’s polished faceplate. Four faces from the past stood stunned for a moment. Gothan broke the silence. “Fools! I’ve had enough,” he cried. “It’s them, the Black Curs! Kill them immediately!”

Dirk grabbed one of his stormtrooper escort, spun him around and pushed him at Gothan and Beylyssa. Jai kicked her stormtrooper down and quickly retrieved her heavy blaster. Before any other soldiers on the bridge could fire, she was moving toward the turbolift, laying down a deadly barrage of blaster fire. Sparks flew from control panels and two troopers fell back, wounded, into the starboard crew pit.

“Harkness, let’s go!” Jai cried. “This is no time for getting even.”

But Dirk had already grappled Gothan to the ground, the knife from his boot sheath poised to cut out the Imperial Advisor’s eye. A hard boot from nowhere threw Harkness back. He rolled out of the way just as Beylyssa raged the deck with her blaster rifle. Dirk threw the knife, but the bounty hunter’s armor deflected it. He tried lunging for one of the stormtroopers’ blaster pistols sitting unused on the deck — but Gothan reached up and grabbed his leg. Harkness looked up to see Beylyssa leveling her blaster sights on him.

Jai ran screaming at Beylyssa, her blaster blazing away, hitting control panels, Gothan, and the bounty hunter. Beylyssa’s blaster went off, sending stray bursts in every direction. But by the time Jai fell over onto her bounty hunter adversary, Harkness was sprawled on the deck, blaster shots smoldering in his shoulder and stomach.

“We’ve got to get out of here,” Jai said, keeping her eye on Beylyssa, sprawled prone and severely wounded nearby.

Harkness opened one eye and smiled, something Jai had never seen. She realized Gothan was dead beside him, his spindly neck snapped. “Just hand me a blaster,” Dirk said.

The turbolift finally arrived, its door sliding aside to reveal a
squad of stormtroopers ready for battle. Dirk opened fire as Jai pulled him inside the room from which Golthan and Beylyssa had emerged—Golthan's private chambers. The two took cover on both sides of the door and began picking off stormtroopers and bridge officers who returned fire.

Dirk turned to Jai. "Well, this is it," he said. "There's no way we're getting off the bridge before this whole place blows."

"Nice thinking," Jai snapped. She looked around the chambers,
kept dragging him toward the hatch. She had just opened it when the explosives went off.

Platt, Tru’eb and Starter had begun their attack on the Vengeance as soon as the long flame erupted from the Star Destroyer’s bridge. Tru’eb had flown his freighter into the stardock framework first, blasting away at turbolasers emplacements with his mass drive cannons. Starter had zoomed in next in his X-wing, proton torpedoes tearing into the Star Destroyer’s hull. But Platt had carefully flown in beneath the giant ship, maneuvering into the docking bay.

She had been waiting too long. The explosion had torn through the bridge five minutes ago, and the Vengeance was already listing within the stardock, slowly tearing it apart. Platt targeted the few groups of stormtroopers which headed for her ship, blasting them and parts of the docking bay deck with the ship’s guns.

An explosion in the bay ceiling above loosed a TIE fighter rack— it crashed to the deck, each fighter popping like a bomb. “That was too close,” Platt said to herself. Jai and Dirk were nowhere to be seen. Another moment and the bay would blow.

Platt’s face twisted into a sneer. If she didn’t leave her friends behind now, she’d be part of the Star Destroyer wreckage in another minute. After scanning the docking bay one more time, she punched the Last Chance’s ion drives and zoomed out of the bay. Behind her, the Vengeance twisted in on itself, small fires sprouting in parts of
Jai pulled her hair out of the bun she had concealed beneath the technician’s hat and let it flow out. She ran her fingers through it once to untangle it, then began searching the escape pod’s compartments for a medpac.

Through the tiny viewport she surveyed the Vengeance, its twisted and dying hull drifting further away as the pod made its way back to Wroona.

“If we ever get back, this’ll make one whopping story,” she said.

**Roleplaying Game Statistics**

- **Wroona**
  - Type: Terrestrial
  - Temperature: Temperate
  - Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
  - Hydrosphere: Moist
  - Gravity: Standard
  - Terrain: Oceans, plains, mountains, forests
  - Length of Day: 22 standard hours
  - Length of Year: 217 local days
  - Sapient Species: Wroonians (X), Humans, various aliens
  - Starport: Stellar class
  - Population: 7 billion Wroonians, 1.5 billion Humans
  - Planet Function: Homeworld
  - Government: Trade guilds
  - Tech Level: Space
  - Major Exports: Luxury trade goods, mid technology
  - Major Imports: High technology
  - Capsule: Wroona is the homeworld of the blue-skinned, blue-haired Wroonians, an offshoot race of Humans whose culture is centered around trade, exploration, and smuggling. During the reign of the Empire, an Imperial governor controlled Wroona and constructed the immense Wroona Stardock, a capital ship-sized repair facility in orbit. Although the governor was just, he cracked down on the Wroonians’ less legitimate businesses such as document replication, ryll smuggling and piracy. When news of the Rebel Alliance’s victory at the Battle of Endor reached Wroona, the local populace rose against the governor and took their planet back — including the Wroona Stardock.
  - In the time of the New Republic, Wroona has remained aloof from the new government and independent of other controlling forces. It has become a haven for smugglers, pirates, mercenaries, and other galactic vagabonds seeking refuge from the political turmoil of the New Republic and its conflicts with the remnants of the Empire.
  - The Wroonian Guilds offer innumerable services to visitors, and frequently charge a hefty sum for visiting ships to use the Wroonian Stardock’s facilities. Wroona’s principal starport is located along the coast of its largest ocean. It’s a colorful mix of docking bays, residences, businesses, repair facilities and guild complexes, and attracts an equally colorful mix of smugglers, free-traders, mercenaries and pirates from around the galaxy.

The explosion had been more than Jai anticipated. It was so powerful it had blasted both of them into Golthan’s private escape pod before depressurizing the entire bridge deck. Luckily the pod’s hatch seal and ejection controls hadn’t jammed.

Jai smeared some soot from her face, then looked to Dirk. He was curled up next to her in the cramped pod. Jai used some of her tattered technician’s uniform to try and tend to his various wounds and burns, but this first aid stuff wasn’t her specialty. Hardness was still warm, though, so he wasn’t dead.
**Wroona Stardock**

**Craft:** Koat Drive Yards Type IV-A Stardock  
**Type:** Orbital repair stardock  
**Scale:** Capital  
**Length:** 1,000 meters  
**Crew:** 200, gunners: 24  
**Crew Skill:** Capital ship gunnery 4D-2  
**Passengers:** 50 (technicians)  
**Cargo Capacity:** 5,000 metric tons  
**Consumables:** 3 months  
**Cost:** Not available for sale  
** Hull:** 4D  
** Sensors:**  
  * Passive: 25/1D  
  * Seek: 75/1D  
  * Focus: 3/2D-1  
** Weapons:** 8 Turbolasers  
  * Fire Arc: Turret  
  * Crew: 3  
  * Shell: Capital ship gunnery  
  * Space Range: 1/8/14  
  * Damage: 4D-2

**Capsule:** The Wroona Stardock was initially constructed by Wroona’s Imperial governor during the Empire’s stay on the planet. Since the Wroonian revolt just after the Battle of Endor, it has been run by the Wroonian Guilds as a repair facility for anyone who can pay the expensive berthing and repair fees. The repair facility is large enough to fit an Imperial Star Destroyer, or several smaller capital ships. Sections of the stardock house storage bays, quarters for the crew and technicians, space tug and shuttles, and repair bays. Only 50 technicians are on duty at any time — for more important jobs more technicians are shuttled up from Wroona’s surface to help with repairs. The Wroona Stardock is exclusively for use by capital ships unable to land at starport facilities planetside. Wroona starport can handle many repairs for starfighters, freighters and smaller capital ships. Using the immense Wroona Stardock facilities is a large and expensive undertaking.

**Adventure Outline: Wroonian Clean-Up**

“Look! There’s another explosion from that Star Destroyer.”

“Wow. Must be those New Republic commandos or something. That’s gotta be sabotage. They must have wanted to put that Imperial Advisor out of business really badly.”

“The Star Destroyer’s breaking up right there in the stardock. I wonder if there are any survivors... and if there are survivors getting out on escape pods, they’ll be landing here on Wroona shortly.”

“Think of all the pay the Salvation Guild will be offering for those escape pods.”

“And maybe we can find one with that Imperial Advisor. How much do you think the New Republic would pay for him?”

**Adventure:**

**Episode One:** During a layover in Wroona Starport, the characters witness the Black Curs’ strike against the Imperial Star Destroyer Vengeance. Now slowly breaking up within the Wroona Stardock. Several escape pods have already jettisoned and are headed for the nearest landing site: Wroona. The characters hear that the Wroonian Salvation Guild offers 100 credits for each escape pod retrieved in good condition. The characters quickly buy supplies they need — fusion grapples, duracord and lifting winches — and take off to begin homing in on escape pod beacons in the Wroonian ocean.

**Episode Two:** The characters find their first pod and are just about to finish securing their grapples when they’re ambushed by another salvage team. The competitors’ ship is a light freighter which quickly zooms up over the ocean, guns ablaze at the characters’ ship. The characters must defend their prize and damage the other ship, which tries to use its own tractor beam to snare the escape pod.

**Competitors’ Salvage Freighter:** Starfighter, space transports 3D, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D, manuevurability 1D, space 3, atmosphere: 200; 750 kmh, hull 3D-2, shields 1D. Weapons: 2 lasers cannons (fire control 1D, damage 4D), tractor beam (fire control 1D, damage 3D).

**Episode Three:** On their next foray in search of an escape pod, the characters pick up one with a different profile than the others, one showing lifefoms inside. But when they finally reach its position, they find the high tide has dragged it into a coastal cave, where it is lodged in the rocks. To retrieve it, the characters must enter the cave on foot and pry the escape pod loose.

However, living in this coastal cave are several Wroonian flycatchers. These beasts look like large spherical rocks attacked to the ceiling by long threads. The threads are actually adhesive — the flycatchers hunt avians flying through the cave by detaching from the cave wall, swinging down on their tongues, and scooping up any avians (or swiping at characters) with four immense webbed hands capped by claws. The flycatchers immediately assume characters passing through the cave as food, and begin to attack.

**Wroonian Flycatchers:**

- **Dexterity:** 20
- **Perception:** 3D
- **Search:** 4D

February, 1995
sneak 4D, Strength 4D, brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 6D. Special abilities: Claws may attack up to twice per round, no penalty, for STR x 2 damage; adhesive tongue has a range of 20 meters, sticks to most surfaces, hits specific target on Dexterity roll. Move 3/12 (ground/swinging).

Once the flycatchers have been defeated, the characters can dislodge the escape pod and roll it out of the cave to their ship.

**Episode Four:** Inside the escape pod the characters find two badly wounded technicians, one of whom requires immediate medical attention. The woman offers to pay the characters 1,500 credits if they transport her and her wounded companion to a friend in Wroona Starport. When they turn in the escape pod to the Salvage Guild, the characters get 1,000 credits for it — it was the Imperial Advisor’s escape pod and has several items of use inside.
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Other features in this issue include:

- Profiles of several new starships.
- Smugglers of the Outer Rim.
- An interview with Star Wars game writer and editor Bill Smith.
- The misadventures of Galactic News Service reporter Kella Rand.
- Zirtran's Anchor, a spaceport preview of Platt's Starport Guide.