THE BEST OF THE

STAR WARS®

Adventure JOURNAL

Issues 1–4

Featuring Works by
Timothy Zahn and Kathy Tyers

ADMIRAL'S COMMUNIQUE

A Continuing Journey

So what's it like working on the *Star Wars Adventure Journal?* Well, I'm sitting here trying to think of some kind of introduction to write for our "Best of the *Journal*" collection, my desk is covered with pencil sketches for *Journal* #10 artists have faxed me, I'm trying to get on with editing Kathy Tyers' story for *Journal* #10, several proposals are hiding in my office clutter, and the 10-inch-high pile of first draft manuscripts in my "in" basket has spawned a second pile which has somehow migrated from my work table to my desk.

Things are *busy* around here. But we get the job done, and we do it right. If we didn't, you wouldn't be reading this book.

This collection of stories represents the best of *Journal* articles from 1994. It's the result of a lot of hard work on the part of several people — our gifted writers, talented artists, and our patient approvals liaisons at Lucasfilm. Oh, and that editor guy hiding behind that stack of unread first drafts …

Despite the innumerable hassles, deadlines, and technical difficulties, working on the *Journal* has been a blast. I've had the privilege of working with many talented individuals. Some of you may know of them from their other exploits in the *Star Wars* universe. Both Timothy Zahn and Kathy Tyers have continued their association with the *Star Wars Adventure Journal,* and indeed with West End Games, contributing to such projects as the *DarkStryder* campaign and *The Truce at Bakura Sourcebook* respectively. But I've also had the pleasure of working with other authors who haven't yet had the honor of making the *New York Times* bestseller list. Most of these are avid roleplaying gamers or aspiring writers who've published a few tidbits here and there. But their passion for writing *Star Wars* has shined in the *Journal* through the high quality and creative effort of their articles. You can read more about them and their views on *Star Wars* in short essays following their articles in this collection.

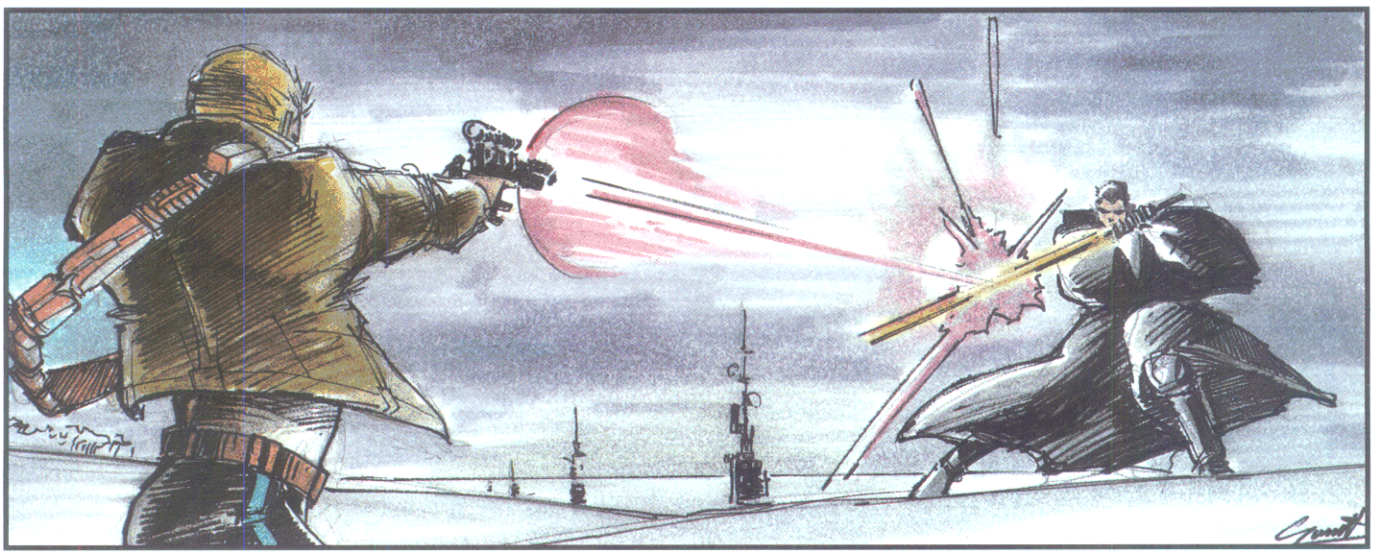
The *Journal* has been exciting because it travels all over the vast expanse of the *Star Wars* universe. The Empire alone spans the "thousand-thousand worlds" — and that's large enough for a handful of heroes to save the galaxy several times over. The *Journal* has brought readers to remote locations like Sevarcos and right to the heart of the Empire in the Core Worlds. It has introduced new aliens, villains and starships, and woven them together with characters to form interesting plots. There's always plenty of room for new ideas and stories. The *Adventure Journal* has explored the infinite bounds of the *Star Wars* universe — and it will continue to do so in future issues packed with new material readers cannot find anywhere else.

But perhaps the most fun has been watching authors create their own legendary heroes. *Journal* articles have avoided including too much of the main characters like Luke, Han and Leia — that's the province of other authors and publishers. Along the way, the *Journal* has managed to create a few heroes who stand up in their own right as *Star Wars* characters. Alex Winger has fought hard to free her world of Garos IV from Imperial oppression, all while being the dutiful daughter of an Imperial governor. Tinian I'att has struggled with life's changes after losing her grandparents and fiancé to a ruthless Imperial Moff. And we've seen how Talon Karrde and Mara Jade met — a duo we're sure to see more of in a future novel from Timothy Zahn. And, of course, my favorite, Platt Okeefe, has garnered a small fan following, and readers enjoyed hearing about her exploits with Dirk Harkness and the Black Curs.

But the *Journal's* travels through the *Star Wars* universe aren't over yet — they're just beginning. This collection of the best articles from 1994 show you where it's been. And future *Journals* will take you to even more fantastic places with more unique *Star Wars* characters. We've got some great ideas waiting off in the wings — read on and see where it all began.

Commander Peter Schweighofer
Admiral's Attaché
January 1996

STAR WARS



Adventure Journal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Admiral's Communiqué 1
Artist Spotlight: Chris Gossett 3
First Contact *by Timothy Zahn* 9
From *Heir* to *Last Command* 24
Tinian on Trial *by Kathy Tyers* 28
Personal Influences Affect *Bakura* 43
A Free-Trader's Guide to Sevarcos *by Anthony Paul Russo* 46
The Spira Regatta *by Paul Sudlow* 61
A Glimmer of Hope *by Charlene Newcomb* 75
Recon and Report: The Journey to Coruscant *by Peter Schweighofer* 87
The Final Exit *by Patricia A. Jackson* 97
Rebel Privateers! *by Timothy S. O'Brien* 114
The Void Terror *by Peter Schweighofer* 127

Contributors: **Patricia A. Jackson, Charlene Newcomb, Timothy S. O'Brien, Ilene Rosenberg, Anthony Paul Russo, Peter Schweighofer, Paul Sudlow, Kathy Tyers, Timothy Zahn** • Editing: **Peter Schweighofer** • Cover Design: **Tim Bobko**
Graphics: **Tim Bobko, Stephen Crane, Richard Hawran, Tom ONeill, Brian Schomburg**
Cover Illustration: **Lucasfilm, Ltd.** • Interior Illustrations: **Chris Gossett, Doug Shuler, Mike Vilardi**
Special Thanks To: **Allan Kausch, Sue Rostoni, Julia Russo and Lucy Wilson, Lucasfilm Licensing; Daniel Scott Palter and Richard Hawran, West End Games; Kathy Tyers; Timothy Zahn.**

Publisher: **Daniel Scott Palter** • Associate Publisher/Treasurer: **Denise Palter** • Associate Publisher: **Richard Hawran** • Senior Editor: **Greg Farshtey**
Editors: **Peter Schweighofer, Bill Smith, George Strayton, Paul Sudlow, Eric Troutman** • Art Director: **Stephen Crane** • Graphic Artists: **Tim Bobko, Tom ONeill, Brian Schomburg** • Sales Manager: **Jeff Kent** • Licensing Manager: **Ron Seiden** • Warehouse Manager: **Ed Hill**
Accounting: **Karen Bayly, Wendy Lord** • Billing: **Amy Giacobbe**

West End Games • RR3 Box 2345 • Honesdale PA 18431
40129

®, TM & © 1996 Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL). All Rights Reserved. Trademarks of LFL used by West End Games under authorization.

Featured Artist: Chris Gossett

When the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* interviewed artist Chris Gossett with other Dark Horse Comics personalities, he sent along some of his concept sketches for his upcoming work in the *Tales of the Jedi* comic book series. We were so impressed we asked Chris to illustrate several articles for the *Journal.*

Chris' work is very vibrant, his marker sketches reminiscent of the early production drawings from the *Star Wars* films. There was only one problem with reproducing his sketches in the *Journal* — Chris illustrates in full color markers, but we could only run the sketches with the articles in the black-and-white section.

So readers were treated to Chris' fabulous vision of the *Star Wars* galaxy, but in black-and-white. Those of us working at West End Games' offices would occasionally pull the original illustrations out of the *Journal* art drawer and admire them longingly, wishing we could somehow share them in their true full-color splendor with *Star Wars* fans.

Now you can enjoy some of Chris' illustrations from the early *Journals* in full-color and large size, complete with captions about the characters and scenes illustrated in his distinct style.

Lady Selnia Harbright is the young senatorial who encounters a strange beast in Keller's Void. She's the main character of a solitaire adventure, "The Void Terror," which begins on page 127.

This Great Inquestor and his two intimidating guards interrogate a prisoner — this scene originally opened an article on

Empire? When had it changed?

At the weed field's edge, dilapidated duracrete buildings formed a toothy perimeter. Tinian slapped off the field projector and stumbled toward an abandoned warehouse. Its door hung askew. Two maybe-Human derelicts scrambled deeper into shadows inside.

Tinian tried to imagine what they'd seen: the top half of an armless, unhelmeted stormtrooper? She pushed away from that warehouse and ran two more turns around bends in the alleys, but didn't find any better cover.

She shoved the flapping armor pieces up over her head, then shed the black glove like an old reptile skin. She was about to abandon it when a thought bigger than fear struck her: Moff Kerioth wanted this protection field badly enough to kill for it. She must use it to hurt Eisen Kerioth.

She dug her utility vibro-knife out of another jumpsuit pocket. Painstakingly she sliced vital components off the breastplate — three electronic c-boards, controls, conduits — then the carapace — insulation, plus the projector itself.

Overhead movement snagged her peripheral vision. A silent repulsorcraft sped over the warehouse row.

Tinian shrank into the nearest building's shadow. She stuffed everything small into her pocket along with her vibro-knife. Then she bundled the rest of the vital parts together. Dashing barefoot around the next corner, she stepped on something sharp and almost fell into a rubbish heap ready for droid pickup.

That gave her another idea. Limping, she hurried back to the debris she'd left. She scooped shell fragments into the body glove and flung them behind the rubbish, safer from detection. Then she limped deeper into Il Avali's bad quarter.

Happy's Landing must be nearby. She and Daye had visited the ale house several times, thinly disguised in working-class coveralls, looking for good music and flamingly spicy food. Luck and adrenaline got her there after only one wrong turn. She paused in the doorway, then plunged into its dark interior without giving her eyes time to adjust. It sounded nearly vacant. Late afternoon had never been Happy's busy hour.

She tripped over a bench. Nobody protested, so it must be vacant. She sank down, exhausted and ashamed. She had to get off Druckenwell, the only world she'd ever known.

But how? And ... alone? Daye would meet her here, if he could.

She swallowed on a parched throat. Mustn't use her credit account. She dug into a third jumpsuit pocket and found a few credit tokens worth a cold glass of Elba water. She dropped them onto the table.

Then she pillowed her sweaty forehead on her arms and tried to think. She couldn't've gotten this far unless Kerioth had sent most of his troopers chasing Daye. Therefore, Daye must be a prisoner. (Her mind writhed again: *Daye! Wrrl, oh, Wrrl!)*

On second thought, she'd worn the invaluable armor. They'd've all chased her.

No, he'd codeveloped the anti-energy field. They needed Daye alive. Kerioth was undoubtedly tracking them both —

▪ ▪ ▪

Daye Azur-Jamin flattened on the floor of a narrow service tunnel, scarcely breathing. During his first moments of flight, he'd been clipped by blaster fire halfway down his left thigh. It'd stopped throbbing several minutes ago. Now it simply felt dead.

Three pairs of white boots scurried past, outside the shaft's access panel.

They'd find him sooner or later.

Daye dragged himself past the panel, deeper toward the center of I'att Armament.

Using his tiny comlink, he'd monitored Eisen Kerioth's command frequency. Poor Wrrl had paid off his life debt in full, and enabled Tinian to elude pursuit, but Kerioth — who'd escaped his transparisteel cage by talking a trooper through code permutations — had ordered repulsorcraft. They'd catch Tinian quickly unless he could divert them.

Daye's comlink also let him follow stormtrooper teams as they hunted him. Kerioth had ordered all personnel off factory grounds — he meant to use IR scanning, and fewer warm footprints inside the factory would help.

It would be a race, then. I'att Armament's power grid lay under a force shield, open to the sky; the plant was built around it like a vast open square. In half an hour, Daye could crawl to the main power station. In two minutes more, he could backfeed the force shield into the power grid. That would take out the whole factory. Daye had hesitated to endanger innocent bystanders, but Kerioth was clearing bystanders away.

He probably wouldn't escape. But at least Eisen Kerioth wouldn't steal I'att Armament's anti-energy field — Daye and Strephan's own brainchild — and get away with it.

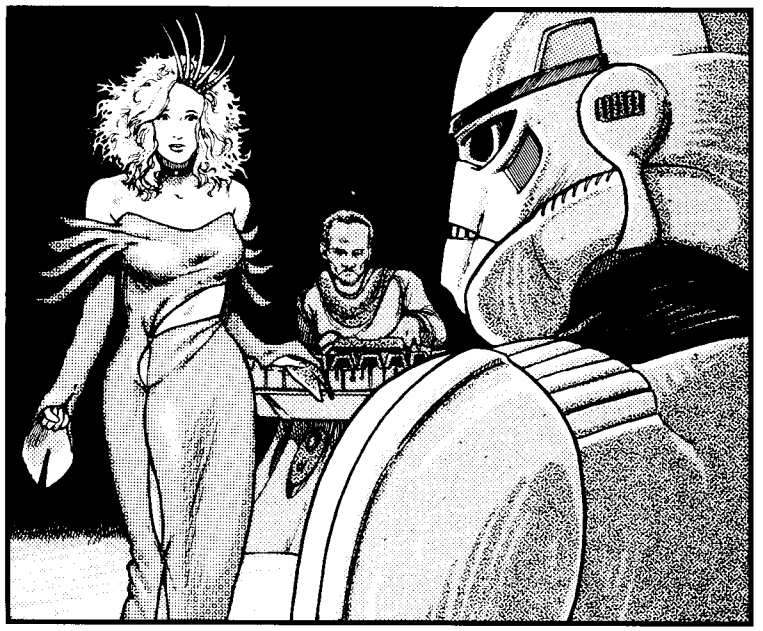
No one would ever know what Daye had done, either, except Tinian. She knew him too well.

The thought made him smile. He crawled on.

▪ ▪ ▪

"Why, hello, Princess Tinian."

Momentarily terrified, Tinian flung herself upright. She breathed again when she saw two familiar people standing over her. Happy's



Landing's current torch singer, Twilit Hearth, wore a scandalous, shimmering sapphire-blue gown. Twilit's mate, Sprig Cheever, sported a short, neat goatee and nondescript clothing. He set a glass of Elba water in front of her.

Tinian dashed tears away from her eyes and guzzled it.

Twilit touched her shoulder. "Hey. Hey, what's wrong?"

"I — " Tinian gulped. She needed allies, and Daye — deft reader of strangers' intentions — had liked these two. *(Where was he?)* "I've got to hide. I'm in big trouble."

"Hey, it couldn't be that ba — "

"Stormtroopers. They've shut down the factory."

"No," whispered Twilit. "Where's ... you know, your prince?"

"I don't know," Tinian groaned.

Twilit seized Tinian's elbow. "Come with me. There's no time to lose."

Twilit pulled her through a dark, cluttered hallway behind the kitchen, then up one flight of stairs to a cramped little dressing-sleeping room.

"Twilit, thanks," Tinian objected, "but they'll search up here." She laid her valuables under an old boot rack, then startled. She'd sliced three c-boards off the control panel. Now she had only two.

"We'll hide you in plain sight." Twilit grabbed a shimmering red gown. "But we've got to move fast. Put this on."

She'd dropped one c-board! *Concentrate, Tinian. First you've got to survive.* Tinian eyed Twilit's curves, then glanced down her size-one jumpsuit. "Twilit, it won't — "

"You've only got minutes," said the singer. "Are you going to walk into their gunsights wearing that uniform?"

Tinian skinned out of her jumpsuit and yanked up the extravagant gown. To her shock, padding slid into position over all the right places. The singer was no more voluptuous than Tinian, not in the flesh. She glanced into the room's only mirror. Her face and someone else's body looked out.

"Not bad," said the singer, "but we can do better." She spun a pair of shoes across the floor toward Tinian and rummaged in a tattered duffel. "I assume you can sing."

"Not like you." Tinian gratefully pulled on one shoe. Too big, but it would protect her throbbing foot.

"Most Imperials wouldn't know a song sparrow from a cloud crupa. You know all my songs, I've watched your lips move." Twilit opened a jar and smeared something onto Tinian's face. Tinian submitted to several layers of paint and a rapid, hair-pulling fluff job before Twilit announced, "Break's over, Princess. Get down there and show your stuff."

Tinian eyed the mirror again. Only the stranger looked out at her now. "Why are you doing this?" she asked. The stranger's lips moved when she spoke.

Twilit's face appeared beside the stranger's. Fire blazed in Twilit's blue eyes — the same shade as her own, Tinian realized. "The Empire and I had a disagreement four or five systems ago," Twilit answered. "Now get down there."

"But you — "

"I'm deathly ill. Couldn't sing another note for at least an hour. Go. Cheeve and Yccakic'll help."

Tinian tottered down the steps. Now that her eyes had adjusted, she could make out the ale house's interior. Two Human customers sat at one table, a lone Devaronian at the bar. On a clear, triangular stage raised above table level, Sprig Cheever crouched cracking his knuckles over the black, white, and green keys of a KeyBed that almost enclosed him. The other sentient band member, a Bith named Yccakic, plucked his Bottom Viol's five strings as he adjusted buttons along its tall upright neck. Redd Metalflake, the group's self-contained droid sound system, sat behind them audibly tweaking his circuitry.

"I'm ... singing?" Tinian croaked. "Twilit feels poorly."

Cheever grinned down through the stage at her. "That'll work."

Tinian climbed up to stand beside him. He played two chords she recognized, and she launched into "All I Can Ever Do" with all the guts she could muster. Now that she'd slowed down, she could only think of Daye. How could she sing, with Daye in terrible danger ... if he was alive?

Without warning, two stormtroopers sprang through Happy's front door. Tinian gulped. She covered the beat she'd missed by ad-libbing a lyric. One trooper glanced at her. Immediately he swiveled away. She felt relieved ... and hurt, too. Was she that unattractive in real life?

The troopers bustled from table to table. Just as they vanished into the kitchens, a seismic rumble rocked the ale house. Patrons slid under tables. Tinian flailed, trying to grab something, and connected with Yccakic's arm. "Off the stage!" Cheever commanded. Yccakic laid down his Viol and towed her down clear, narrow stairs, then out into the dusk-darkening street.

Three gargantuan fireballs lit the northern sky, rising under low clouds precisely where I'att Armament had stood.

Both stormtroopers dashed out of Happy's Landing. Passing without a backward glance, they sprinted up the street. A customer who'd followed Yccakic outdoors saluted the fireballs with a raised fist. "Down the rich!" he hooted. "Down the Empire! Up anarchy!"

"Hey," burbled Yccakic. "You okay, kid?"

Tinian's ears sang. Her vision blacked out from the edges inward.

She collapsed in a heap.

▪ ▪ ▪

A beefy stranger stumbled into Happy's Landing near dawn. Tinian, still masquerading as Twilit, drooped on a bench close to Cheever. The stranger demanded a TrooperBreath, downed the chartreuse glassful, then looked around for company. Spotting Tinian and Cheever, he wobbled over. "That oughta help. I've been hunting and lifting all night," he declared.

"What's up?", Cheever set a hand casually on Tinian's shoulder.

"I just spent four hours slaving for the Empire. The head trooper rounded up all the muscle he could find out on the streets."

"What for?"

"He had us searching I'att Armament ... or the crater that usedta be I'att Armament ... for survivors."

The ale house spun around Tinian.

"Find any?" Cheever squeezed her shoulder.

The bulky newcomer shook his head. "The Big Moff's speeder was the smallest wreckage we could identify. Other than that, nothing. Totality. Looked like an inside job to me." He burped, then grinned toothily. "Some brave, suicidal lunatic musta wanted to take it away from the Empire pret-ty badly." He raised a glass in wordless tribute.

Tinian stared. Daye, gone? All that promise ... *broken?*

Not only Daye, but Grandfather, Grandmother, and Wrrl.

All her life.

She lost track of time after that. Some hours later, the band held council upstairs over the kitchens. "Time to leave Druckenwell." Cheever draped his long legs over a packing crate. "This place is too hot for me."

"Me, too," put in Twilit.

"We'll never get away," lamented a metallic monotone. Cheever had lugged Redd Metalflake upstairs and set the boxy sound droid on a stretch of floor. "Everyone picks on musicians."

Twilit folded her arms. "We'll go," she said firmly. "The last time we ignored Cheever, we nearly lost our instruments in an apartment fire. Is somebody onto us, Cheeve?"

"Not yet."

Tinian barely listened. She was in shock. *Nothing will ever touch me again. Nothing. No one. Ever.*

Yccakic flicked a series of folds around his tiny mouth. "Has anyone looked up outside? We've got a blanket of repulsorcraft sitting over Il Avali. Security will be double; at customs, triple. And we promised Tinian — "

"We'll make it," Cheever predicted.

Twilit cleared her throat. "Fix my ID for her. I'll lie low here for a few days."

Cheever raised an eyebrow.

Twilit shrugged. "If Comus can make my ID cover Tinian, he can run me a dupe, easy. I'll be okay."

Cheever stroked his short beard. "That'll work. But Princess, about that ... luggage of yours. I don't think we can risk taking it out through Imperial Customs."

That cracked Tinian's introspection. Even with a c-board missing, those pieces might help someone recreate the anti-energy field. "Wait," she begged. "The customs people will have no idea what your instruments are supposed to look like ... right?"

Twilit shrugged. "They're musical morons," she agreed. "What are you driving at?"

"It's already in pieces," Tinian answered. "Attach them to your instruments."

Cheever stroked his goatee. "Ye-es," he drawled. "I can fit most of it to look like it's part of the KeyBed's insides."

"I'm good for a c-board or two," proclaimed Redd. A touch of reverb added confidence to his voice.

Tinian wondered if she were going crazy. She didn't care if she lived or died, but she must get that field transmitter out through customs. "Couldn't you get it off Druckenwell safer without me? If they catch me trying to pass Twilit's ID, it's the spice mines for all of us."

Affectionately, Twilit mussed Tinian's hair. "We know good people offworld," she said. "People who can use that stuff against the Empire. They'll want to talk to the I'att Princess. Guaranteed."

■ ■ ■

A door slammed. "She was there, all right," declared Woyiq.

Daye shuddered. The huge, beefy man's voice jabbed daggers through his injured head.

The other human — or was he a Gotal? Daye's eyes wouldn't focus — turned to shush Woyiq. "Hey, keep it down!"

"Sorry." Woyiq slunk toward Daye's bedside. "Sorry." The huge Human had dragged Daye out from between jagged duracrete slabs, laboring in near-total darkness at the bottom of Il Avali's deep new crater. "Really, I'm sorry —

"Daye squeezed his attendant's hand. "Did you — "

"Wait," said the ... yes, with horns like those it had to be a Gotal. "Get over here, you big battlewagon."

Woyiq shuffled even closer.

"You found her?" Daye whispered. "She's all right?"

The beefy man laid a hand on Daye's synthflesh-bandaged shoulder. Both of his legs had been crushed, too, and one hand ... and they didn't dare carry him out to a medic. "She was at Happy's Landing, hanging out with the band. You guessed it right."

Daye swallowed. Even that small movement hurt. "Did you — "

"I told her we found no survivors. She — "

"Thanks. Thanks, both of you." Daye shut his eyes. He couldn't bear to hear how Tinian had taken the news of his alleged death, not yet. He half wished he could dissolve his body into nothingness and turn Woyiq's fatal pronouncement into fact.

But evidently the universe had spared him ... most of him ... for a while. He couldn't drag Tinian into the furtive existence he meant to lead now. Woyiq and his Gotal accomplice promised to sponsor him straight to the Rebellion as soon as Il Avali calmed down. The Rebellion needed his talents. They might be able to fix him up, too ... somewhat.

In the meantime, he had decided it had to be kinder to let Tinian think him dead. She'd leave Druckenwell. Witty and capable, she'd make a new life.

He would never love anyone else, though. "Goodbye, Tinian," he murmured toward the wall. "May the Force be with you."

■ ■ ■

Customs bustled, quadruple anything Tinian had ever seen — but they passed, just as Cheever predicted. Tinian followed him up a stale passageway into the transport's fourth-class hold. They found seats close to Yccakic's. Redd rode in the cargo hold, guarding the doctored instruments.

Tinian slumped down, glad this hold had no viewport. No last glimpse of Druckenwell would linger in her memory.

Alone in the galaxy except for two virtual strangers and an armload of illicit electronics, she'd find some way to help bring down the New Order. Every time she hurt Palpatine's Empire just a little bit, she'd dedicate that small victory to the memory of Daye Azur-Jamin and the life they could have had.

Force be with you, love. Leaning back, Tinian squeezed tears out of her eyes and braced for takeoff.

Roleplaying Game Statistics

■ Tinian l'att

Type: Young Heiress
DEXTERITY 3D+1
Blaster: hold-out blaster 5D, dodge 4D, grenade 4D+1, running 4D+2
KNOWLEDGE 3D
Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 5D+2, business 6D, languages: Wookiee 6D+1, streetwise 3D+2, survival 4D, value 4D+2, willpower 4D+2
MECHANICAL 2D
PERCEPTION 3D+2
Bargain 6D, command 6D, con 4D, hide 4D+2, persuasion 5D+2, search 6D, sneak 4D+1
STRENGTH 2D
Climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 4D
TECHNICAL 4D
Computer programming/repair 5D+1, demolition 7D+2, droid programming 5D, droid repair 4D+2, security 6D
Special Abilities:
Explosives Expertise: Tinian is especially knowledgeable about explosives, including their composition, construction and applications. She gets a +1D bonus to any skill rolls involving explosives.
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 10
Move: 10
Equipment: Bits of fuse wire, vibro-knife (STR+1D), 23 credits

Capsule: Tinian is the 17-year-old granddaughter of Strephan and Augusta l'att and is the heiress of the l'att Armament corporation on Druckenwell. Since growing up in the l'att Armament tradition, she served in almost every capacity at the company's chief research and production facility in Il Avali. Tinian worked on droid programming, material procurement, line inspections, quality control and

even security. Through her involvement in I'att Armament, she gained an intimate knowledge of the workings of explosives, including the ability to identify certain explosive compounds by texture and odor.

Although her grandparents loved her dearly, Tinian found it hard to relate to them. Likewise, her Wookiee bodyguard Wrrl could not give her the Human touch and empathy she needed. Tinian completely opened herself to Daye Azur-Jamin, a promising supervisor at I'att Armament's facility in Il Avali. The two quickly became friends and aspired to someday marry when they achieved financial independence.

Tinian is a hard worker who knows the value of fun and leisure time. She and Daye often disguised themselves as members of Druckenwell's worker class to frequent Il Avali's ale halls, enjoying the spicy food and taking in the upbeat music.

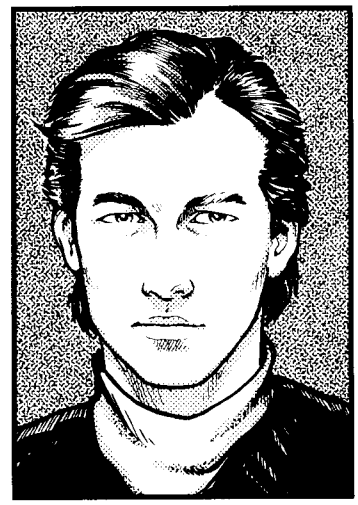
However, Tinian's spirit was torn when Moff Kerioth tried to seize I'att Armament's prototype personal shield device. With her grandparents and her Wookiee bodyguard dead, and believing Daye to have been killed in the ensuing explosion, Tinian has turned cold — her ability to open herself up to others as she did with Daye is gone. She considers herself completely alone in the galaxy, overshadowed by her own grief.

With the help of Twilit Hearth's band, Tinian hopes find and join the Rebel Alliance. Armed with the pieces of the personal shield system she managed to retrieve and her knowledge of explosives, Tinian has set off into the galaxy to exact her revenge against the Empire.

■ Daye Azur-Jamin

Type: Young Intellectual
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 4D+2, blaster: hold-out blaster 5D, brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 5D+2, grenade 4D, melee combat 5D, melee parry 4D+2
KNOWLEDGE 3D
Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 6D, business 5D+2, languages 4D+1, streetwise 6D, survival 5D+1
MECHANICAL 2D+1
Beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, starship shields 4D
PERCEPTION 4D
Bargain 6D+1, command 5D+2, hide 7D, persuasion 4D+2, search 6D+1, sneak 7D
STRENGTH 2D+2
Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 5D+2
TECHNICAL 3D
Computer programming/repair 5D, demolition 6D, droid programming 4D+2, droid repair 5D, first aid 4D, repulsorlift repair 3D+2, security 5D
Special Abilities:
Force Skills: Control 1D, sense 2D
Control: Control pain
Sense: Life detection, magnify senses
This character is Force-sensitive
Force Points: 3
Character Points: 12
Move: 10
Equipment: Comlink, datapad

Capsule: Daye Azur-Jamin is a youthfully lean young man who cares deeply for Tinian I'att. The two intended to get married when Tinian inherited her family's armaments corporation on Druckenwell — but that was before the Empire stepped in and changed their lives.

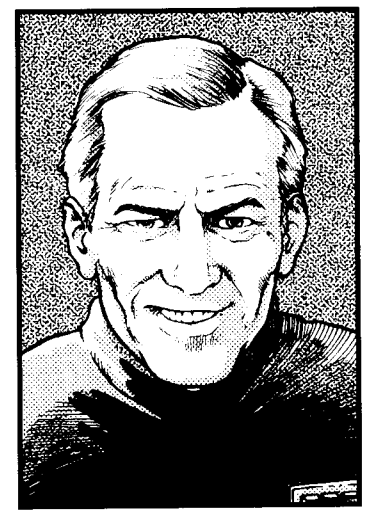


Daye worked diligently for I'att Armament and quickly rose through the corporate ranks from lowly worker-class assembly droid maintenance technician all the way to Tinian's Second Undersupervisor. He also quickly became Tinian's friend, as he perceived her to be lonely in her management position and her life with her grandparents.

Daye is sensitive to the Force. Although he does not know how to completely control the Force, he has felt faint manifestations of it, and it has allowed him to extend his abilities, especially in stressful times. Daye also knows that those who use the Force are considered criminals by the Empire, and keeps his beliefs in the Force to himself and Tinian. The Empire's campaigns against those who use the Force — as well as other rumors of the Empire's abuse of power — have made Daye suspicious of Imperial motives. He has a passionate belief in doing what's right — even if it means putting himself in danger.

■ Moff Eisen Kerioth

Type: Imperial Moff
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 6D, blaster: hold-out blaster 7D+1, brawling parry 4D, dodge 4D+2, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Alien species 5D+2, bureaucracy 7D, cultures 5D+1, intimidation 6D, languages 4D+2, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems 6D, streetwise 5D, survival 4D+2
MECHANICAL 2D+1
Astrogation 5D+2, capital ship piloting 4D, communications 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, sensors 4D+2
PERCEPTION 3D+2
Bargain 5D+2, command 7D, con 5D, investigation 6D, persuasion 4D+2, search 5D
STRENGTH 2D
TECHNICAL 3D
Computer programming/repair 4D, droid programming 4D+2, droid repair 4D, security 6D
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 10
Move: 9
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, swagger stick



Capsule: Moff Kerioth is a cunning and ambitious Imperial dictator who will stop at nothing to develop new technology to improve the effectiveness of Imperial stormtroopers. His obsession with improving stormtrooper armor stems from an incident several years ago, when he and his stormtrooper escort were ambushed by Rebels. Pre-

Druckenwell

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
Hydrosphere: Moderate
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Urban, industrial, wetlands
Length of Day: 32 standard hours
Length of Year: 309 local days
Sapient Species: Humans
Starport: Imperial class
Population: 9.3 billion
Planet Function: Manufacturing/processing, heavy industry
Government: Corporate guilds
Tech Level: Space
Major Exports: High-mid technology, manufactured goods
Major Imports: Foodstuffs, raw materials

Capsule: Druckenwell is a highly industrialized world with distinct classes of workers and corporate elite. Few of the planet's 9.3 billion people live in the countryside — most are members of the worker class living and toiling for industries in the planet's overcrowded cities.

Overcrowding and Druckenwell's emphasis on corporate stability necessitate several social rules which apply to all on the planet. For instance, couples may not legally marry and bear children without first proving financial independence. Long ago cities were planned out with the social and corporate order in mind. Most cities contain specific districts for corporate offices, worker class quarters and services, heavy industry, and park-like rural sections for homes of the corporate elite.

Druckenwell's several large cities and industrial regions are divided by vast oceans — whatever solid land is available was developed centuries ago. The planet's corporate guilds have gone to great lengths to insure that industry does not pollute what few natural resources Druckenwell has — cleansing air, soil and water is now one of the planet's major industries. Other major corporations on Druckenwell serve the defense, computer and transportation industries.

cise blaster fire from Rebel snipers killed most of his escort and wounded him in the leg. To this day, Moff Kerioth's limp is a constant reminder of the vulnerability of stormtrooper armor.

Moff Kerioth stalks around with a swagger stick in hand, which he swats about to add to his already oppressive air of authority. His outthrust head hunches over his two-meter tall body — gaunt as a corpse — like an avian carrion feeder waiting for a beast to die.

Enemies of Moff Kerioth are quickly eliminated, as was shown in his recent purge and brutal public execution of a Rebel cell on his sector capital on Doldur. He has no hesitation eliminating competitors for the Emperor's favor, and aggressively takes anything he desires.

Twilit and the Band

Twilit Hearth and her band travel the space lanes, jumping from one system to the next, taking on whatever gigs they can get. They're not particularly famous, except to the poor locals who frequent the dives they perform in. Twilit's voice is strong and melodious, and her backup from Sprig Cheever on the KeyBed and Yccakic on the Bottom Viol makes for a good, wholesome sound, even after everything's augmented, amplified and processed by Redd Metalflake, the group's antiquated sound droid.

The band rarely settles down. The group hits a planet, plays a few gigs in a city, stays maybe a week, maybe three months, and moves on when everybody has enough money to head off to the next system. Sometimes, however, the band becomes entangled in other activities — most often involving criminal elements or the Empire — and leaves the system for safer prospects.

Since it's always on the move, the band has made good friends and contacts throughout this section of the galaxy. While these might not be the most influential contacts, they are still good to have around when the band gets into a bad situation.

Twilit is a good-natured and caring woman with a beautiful voice. She has a soft spot for those in trouble, and is always willing to help a friend in need. In a time when she herself has little to lose, Twilit makes it her business to help others in need by whatever means she can.

When Twilit performs, she appears to be a attractive woman — her hair styles are grand, her dresses just past the cutting edge of fashion, and her face the dreamy visage of a holovid princess. But without her teased hair, painted makeup and custom, form-padding dresses, Twilit is simply a rather plain woman. Her most beautiful quality is unseen, but can be heard every night when she sings.

Adventure Idea

The characters hear rumors that somebody escaped from the I'att Armament compound on Druckenwell with an experimental personal shield device before the entire place blew up. The device is rumored to be hidden somewhere in Il Avali's warehouse district between the industrial regions and the worker class quarter.

The characters, as Rebels or free-traders, try to retrieve the device. They comb through Il Avali's warehouses and dilapidated buildings searching for the device and avoiding stormtrooper patrols, the vagrant denizens of the warehouse district, and other competitors seeking the device. The only evidence the device ever existed is a cracked, useless c-board embedded in a junk pile the characters discover beneath a ruined warehouse — the nest of a large sewer predator living in the city's service sublevels.

Twilit Hearth. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+2, brawling parry 4D, dodge 5D, Knowledge 3D, artist: song 6D, bureaucracy 4D+2, planetary systems 4D+2, streetwise 5D, survival 4D+2, Perception 3D+2, con 4D+2, gambling 5D, hide 6D, sneak 6D.* Move: 10. Hold-out blaster (3D), trunk of fancy clothes and makeup.

Twilit's mate, Sprig Cheever, is a slender Human sporting a neatly trimmed goatee. His easy-going nature is shown through his fluid posture. If Cheever isn't leaning on something he's slouching in a chair or comfortably draped over his KeyBed.

While he share's Twilit's concern for others in need, Cheever also thinks through the logistics and implications of Twilit's actions helping others. His first concern is for Twilit, then for the band. He also handles most of the band's business arrangements, although he rarely exhibits too much outward concern about anything.

Sprig Cheever. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 2D+2, musical instrument operation: KeyBed 5D+2, Knowledge 3D, bureaucracy 4D, cultures 4D+2, languages 5D, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 5D, Perception 3D, con 5D, gambling 4D+2, sneak 4D, musical instrument repair 4D+2.* Move: 10. Portable KeyBed.

The band's Bottom Viol player is a Bith named Yccakic. He and Redd Metalflake share the distinction of being the worriers of the band. Yccakic is always concerned the group won't make enough credits for passage to the next system, fears his instrument will be damaged in the cargo hold, and wonders if the band should rehearse a few new numbers now and then to keep the show fresh.

Yccakic is also a very good Bottom Viol player, and keeps the bass line and the tempo going for the band's songs. He's also responsible for hooking up Redd Metalflake before each show and fixing the ancient droid whenever he breaks down.

Yccakic. All stats are 2D except: *dodge 3D, musical instrument operation: Bottom Viol 4D, Knowledge 4D, bureaucracy 5D+2, streetwise 5D, droid programming 3D+1, droid repair 4D+2.* Move: 8. Bottom Viol, droid repair tools.

Redd Metalflake helps process the band's music so everything sounds professional. Unfortunately, his ancient speakers and crumbling innards don't always help, and he requires constant maintenance from Yccakic. Redd usually propels himself on a set of malfunctioning treads, but Yccakic has installed a handle on the droid's top side so band members can easily and quickly pick him up and carry him when he lags behind.

Redd Metalflake. All stats are 1D except: *Mechanical 2D, communications 3D, sensors 3D.* Can manipulate music and sound wired through him as a skill of 4D. Move: 3.

Tinian, Tchaikovsky, and Firebird

By Kathy Tyers

I'm honored and tickled to see "Tinian on Trial" in this *Best of the Journal* collection. "Tinian" was an experiment in miniaturizing one of my favorite stories.

In my first novel, *Firebird,* I tried to write a space opera in the extravagant style of Tchaikovsky's fifth symphony: planetary invasions and a princess in peril (named for Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite).* In plotting a story for the *Journal,* I wondered if the conversion story would play as well with several elements turned down, like a spot of chamber music played *mezzo-piano* instead of *fortissimo con fuoco.* Lady Firebird became Tinian ("tine" is Gaelic for "fire"; "éan" means "bird").

I began with power structure. Firebird is the third daughter of a reigning queen. Tinian's family has authority over most inhabitants of her home planet, but their power is purely economic.

Each main character is a competent young woman, but I reduced Tinian from Firebird's heroic level. Firebird is trained as a fighter pilot and sent on a suicide mission; Tinian is simply skilled with explosives.

Both stories deal with conversion: when you realize your mindset is based on false assumptions, you must change it. Reducing this element affected plot rather than characters. Firebird is taken prisoner, convinced to renounce her citizenship, and finally sent on a mission against her own family. Tinian's rebellion against the Empire begins with simple self-preservation; enhanced by grief and revenge over what she believes to be a triple murder, it crystallizes. She is just as determined as Firebird to damage her enemy, but she's not yet in a situation to make much of a splash against the Empire (she'll get closer in "The Prize Pelt," scheduled for 1996 release in the Bantam anthology *Tales of the Star Wars Bounty Hunters).*

Then there's the romance element, that splendid Force-sensitive guy (almost off the subject: I'd suspected that the most dramatic, if not the most suitable, romance for Luke Skywalker would be with an Imperial princess, until Timothy Zahn and Barbara Hambly gave us Mara Jade and Callista). This required a major change. Firebird's counterpart is a super-competent intelligence officer, a trained telepath. Tinian's is a steady, hard worker with high ideals, secretive about his sensitivity; and he's not only catastrophically injured, but forced into hiding (for now).

Other parallels? A firing squad scene provided the climax of Firebird's first novel (*Firebird,* 1987, was followed by *Fusion Fire* in 1988); in "Tinian on Trial," the real threat was elsewhere. Irrelevant to Firebird but deeply relevant when I conceived Tinian, my grandmother's health had begun to fail. I was increasingly responsible for her well-being until she died — therefore Tinian's grandmother and her need for special care.

Not even Tchaikovsky always wrote symphonies. We are drawn to the trials of the famous and powerful, but a small person's testing matters just as much. Tinian I'att — now a character in her own right — deserves a Tchaikovsky finish.

I'm working on it.

Kathy Tyers

Kathy Tyers:

PERSONAL INFLUENCES AFFECT *Bakura*

by Ilene Rosenberg

Dentists and dinosaurs once roamed the *Star Wars* universe.

Actually, their terrestrial selves never appeared, but the influence of the dentist, the dino and other subjects of interest to Kathy Tyers can be found in her Bantam novel, *The Truce at Bakura.*

The Truce at Bakura was this self-described full-time mom's first appearance on the New York Times' hardcover fiction best seller list, but it was not her first science fiction novel. She has also written *Firebird, Fusion Fire, Crystal Witness* and *Shivering World,* all of which were published by Bantam Spectra.

Tyers lives in Bozeman, Montana, with her husband, Mark, and their 13 year-old son Matthew. She plays the flute and Irish harp, teaches private flute students and performs and records folk music with her husband.

■ ■ ■

Q: How were you chosen to write a *Star Wars* novel? Why do you think Bantam Books and Lucasfilm chose you?

A: My editor at Bantam, Janna Silverstein, has known for a long time that I was a raving *Star Wars* fan, and when the first book in Tim Zahn's trilogy came out, I leapt on her for an advanced copy.

The fact that I had published four science fiction novels with Bantam Spectra when the contract with Lucasfilm for the next 12 novels became available maybe had something to do with it.

Q: How closely did you have to work with Lucasfilm to do this project? Did you have to work under any restrictions from Lucasfilm? Was there anything you really wanted to do in the story that had to be changed or tossed out completely?

A: I really, seriously, would have liked to have left Luke Skywalker a married man at the end of my novel. Other than that, the restrictions were very straight forward. I could not do anything that would conflict with Timothy Zahn's novels, which take place five years later. Other than that, it was a matter of being given a few guidelines.

I was supposed to write a novel that would take place immediately after the third movie. They asked me to have all of the characters in one place, rather than going off on several different plot-lines. And, they asked me to have the fate of the universe at stake.

I submitted my outline to Lucasfilm. They made a couple of minor changes and sent it back, and I worked from that. When the novel was finished, again it was submitted to Lucasfilm and they asked for a couple of minor changes. But I was happy to make them. They didn't conflict with anything I was really trying to do with my novel, and they helped it tie in that much better with the *Star Wars* universe. I was pleased to do that.

Q: How did you come up with the novel's plot?

A: When Janna suggested that I do a *Star Wars* novel, she said that she and another editor who, at that time, was working on the *Star Wars* series, would call me five days later. She wanted me to have five ideas ready — high concept ideas where you could basically tell the plot of the novel in one sentence.

When I spoke with them again, I had come up with the five concepts. But the one that I liked the best was the idea that there would be an alien menace so terrible that the Empire and the Rebel Alliance would temporarily, in one corner of the galaxy, lay down their conflict and turn to fight the common foe together.

Q: What did you do to prepare yourself for writing a *Star Wars* tale?

A: I made a big bowl of popcorn and sat down to watch all three videos again for the thirty-somethingth time. Everything that I have done and been and seen in my life has gone into that novel, too. My first degree was in microbiology, and I did some work in parasitology. One of Governor Nereus's other hobbies is alien dentition. My father is a dentist, and I'm up on teeth.

The whole *Star Wars* mythos is one I'm really comfortable in, so I didn't feel that I had to do any extra work to make the novel that I would write fit

in with it. I honestly felt that that was going to be the easy part.

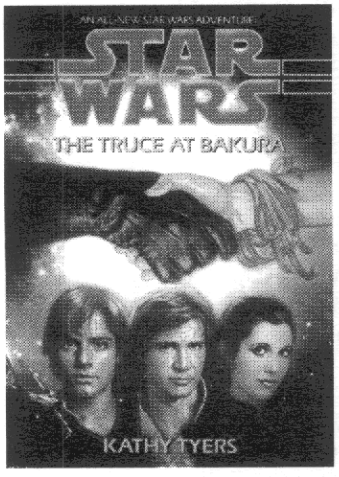
Q: What did you enjoy most about writing *The Truce at Bakura?*

A: There wasn't a single thing I didn't enjoy. I loved working with Lucasfilm. I loved working on a plot that I would have liked to have been writing for 10 years. When I got the bug to write science fiction, I wanted to write a *Star Wars* novel. They weren't licensing *Star Wars* novels back then, so my career took a different course. But maybe, if I had to give a brief answer, it would be finally getting to write a *Star Wars* novel because I wanted to for so long.

Q: There was nothing that you enjoyed the least about writing your novel?

A: There was one thing I didn't enjoy: I wanted poor Dev to survive. Other than that it was fun from concept all the way through the book signings.

Q: Since *The Truce at Bakura* came so soon after *Return of the Jedi*, the only template for your characters was created by George Lucas, although you had to be careful not to disturb future story-lines already created by Timothy Zahn, Dark Horse Comics and others. Was it a challenge to write about characters who had a preconceived future?



A: Yes and no. In real life, we have to follow certain guidelines in order to survive. My day is scheduled. I know that on a given school day, my husband and son will show up at 4:30 p.m. and my flute students will show up at 4 p.m. and dinner has to somehow be fixed. Things like that.

So it was very much like simply being alive. There was an end-point toward which we were aiming, so the characters already existed and had personalities. Walking them through the plot, they surprised me occasionally, but it wasn't difficult to make them function with a reasonable forecast of their future already made.

Q: The Ssi-ruuk may be one of the only things that could force the Empire and the Alliance to work together. Where did you come up with the idea for these heinous reptilians?

A: These "heinous reptilians" are more closely related to dinosaurs than any other species. They're sort of pocket dinosaurs. My son, being 13, has outgrown the dinosaur phase, but we still have a lot of dinosaur books lying around the house. Current scientific theory puts the dinosaurs as closer kin to birds than reptiles. So I made as many of their characteristics bird-like as possible — from the way they balance their bodies to the sound of their speech, it reminded people of bird-song in the bass range.

The idea for them kind of came in from everywhere.

Q: One of the major conflicts in Gaeriel Captison's life pits her interest in Luke against her religious beliefs that Jedi destroy the balance of the universe. How did you come up with this idea?

A: I've had a little bit of that kind of conflict in my life — being an evangelical Christian, I have a number of friends who look askance at me for writing science fiction. But writing in the *Star Wars* universe, it was a challenge to take the all-encompassing concepts of Jedi Knights and the Force — which seem to take in everything — and try to invent a faith that refuses to be taken in: something that would take the dark side of the Force/light side of the Force concept just a little too far, and become an extreme form of cosmic dualism. This is what Gaeriel follows, the idea of the "cosmic balance:" anytime anybody enjoys any kind of privilege in the universe, they are unconsciously diminishing someone else, whether they know it or not.

Q: Dev Sibwarra is a teen who falls in with the wrong crowd and doesn't realize it until it is almost too late. How did you create the mixed-up Dev?

A: Dev, to me, was the abused character. Both partners in an abusive relationship becove addicted: the victim becomes addicted to abuse as much as the abuser becomes addicted to having a victim. So while Dev really would have liked to have gotten away, he was trapped by his own personality as much as he was trapped by being an alien prisoner.

Q: Did you base the politics between the Imperials and the Alliance on any terrestrial events?

A: No. As a matter of fact, politics is really my weak spot. I just let a novel die on my computer because it had too many political ramifications, and I don't enjoy broadcasting my ignorance. I'd rather write about something where I can appear at least reasonably knowledgeable.

Basically, it just came out of little threads from here and there. Reading Will Durant's *The Story of Civilization*, I got a lot of good ideas for civilizations and how they work.

Q: How did you meet the challenge of creating explosive battles and intense chases worthy of the *Star Wars* trilogy's name for print?

A: I have written space opera since I started writing science fiction. My first protagonist in my first novel was a female fighter pilot.

One of the cool factors that came together in my life when I started writing was a visit to Bozeman, Montana, by the Air Force Thunderbirds. The minute they flew over my apartment in close formation — six planes basically wing tip to wing tip — I fell head-over-heels for fighter craft. I have studied as much as I could, mostly Air Force jets.

I have a friend who is a retired four-star Air Force general. He's a neat guy and a big technical reader, so he has always given me feedback — whether my flight scenes were actually working, whether people were doing something impossible.

As for making them move quickly, the idea, as far as I'm concerned, is to follow a battle as much as possible from one character's point of view. If I were thrust into a battle, what would I be seeing at every point, what would I be thinking, how scared would I be, and how would I be able to concentrate on what was actually going on? Taking that a step further, now it's not just me in the battle, but it's Luke Skywalker or some other character coming in with all of the training and knowledge and experience he has. How would he react?

I've read up on the Israeli Air Force and recent developments in air-to-air combat. Of course, space combat won't be like air-to-air combat, but it's similar enough that we can take what we know and take it two or three steps farther.

Q: As a woman writer of a *Star Wars* novel, do you think you to perceive Luke, Han and especially Leia differently than a male novelist would?

A: Perhaps. I might have empathy for certain different shades of situation than a male writer would have. But when it comes right down to writing characters, a good male writer can write good female characters. A good female writer can write good male characters. What you simply have to do is make them human, believably human with strengths and weaknesses and emotional baggage from past events, and hopes and aspirations and goals.

I do a three to four-page character analysis of every main character in all of my novels before I even start writing. So I have to know these characters as well as possible.

Q: How did you use West End Games' roleplaying game sourcebooks as a basis for the *Star Wars* universe?

A: Bantam sent me a box of basic materials as soon as Janna and I had hung up. I was able to use the correct blue-prints for the *Millennium Falcon*, for example, or to get an idea of relative speed of the starfighters. I used West End Games' material a lot.

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

A: *Star Wars* draws on mythological concepts that go so deep into human nature that there's hardly anyone who can't find something to relate to: the lost sibling, the lost parent, good against evil, coming of age, the passing of the torch from the aged mentor, wanting desperately to end up on the side of the universe that is good. These are common threads of human experience. They lend deep gut-level credence to the *Star Wars* mythos, so that all of the wonderful human adventure has solid ground to stand on.

Q: What other science fiction projects are you working on?

A: My current novel is a space opera called *One Mind's Eye*. It is another alien invasion story, but these aliens are significantly different from the Ssi-ruuk. The main character is a young woman who spent two years hardwired into a virtual reality unit. Nobody knows exactly where it came from — or where *she* came from — when the novel opens.

Q: How is writing for *Star Wars* different from your other writing?

A: I had to remember that it's okay to use to use other peoples' terms. I had to remember that it's okay to use other peoples' characters. When I'm writing my own material, I have to make a conscious effort to try to be new and different and creative. Writing in the *Star Wars* universe, it's not only okay, it's accepted and desirable and a lot of fun to take the universe as other people see it and play with it in that way — the gaming material, the movie material, the other writers' novels. Every writer brings in his or her material, otherwise the book wouldn't be worth writing. But, for example, calling the building material transparisteel instead of making up my own term — that's so easy, it's so enjoyable.

Q: Do you have any other plans to write for *Star Wars?*

A: I have hopes and dreams. I have a piece of short fiction in each one of the three anthologies that Bantam is going to be bringing out; *Star Wars: Tales from the Star Wars Cantina, Star Wars: Tales from Jabba the Hutt's Palace*, and there's going to be a third anthology on the bounty hunters that Darth Vader sends out hunting Han Solo and the *Millennium Falcon*. I've been asked to contribute to each of those.

In terms of writing more novels, I have not been asked. I'd love to. I guess that — so far — the people at Lucasfilm have liked what I have written. If there were more *Star Wars* novels to be had, I'd jump at the chance.

STAR WARS
SOURCEFILE

The Free-Trader's Guide to Sevarcos

© LFL 1996

By Anthony Paul Russo
Illustrations by Doug Shuler

System Datafile: Sevarcos

Sevarcos system, star: Lumea, spectral orange class sun. Twelve planetoids: four solid, eight gaseous.

Only one life-supporting world: Sevarcos II.

Primary economy: spice mining colony.

This is a highly restricted system! Imperial customs blockade is in effect. Entrance, landing, and exit permits are required. Trade authorizations granted by invitation only. Limited travel zone access on Sevarcos II. Access is forbidden to all other planets. Energy and other weapon forms are not permitted in the mining regions.

In almost every free-trading starport across the galaxy, just the mention of the word spice is enough to spawn many a spacer's story. Although Kessel is perhaps more infamous among the numerous spice worlds, the wind-swept planet of Sevarcos has earned itself a reputation where both fortune or failure can happen in the blink of an eye. It has been said that those poor souls sentenced to toil in the spice mines of Sevarcos are forever doomed. And if not for the great wealth lurking there, one might believe that no responsible free-trader would dare travel there — deliberately, that is.

The myths surrounding the dreaded spice mines of Sevarcos serve the Empire and its minions well — a constant reminder to enemies and wrongdoers alike that perhaps there are fates worse than death. Still, many smugglers have been tempted to penetrate the system's layers of security and protection. Then there is the mystery of Sevarcos spice — is it true that some beings would kill their closest relatives to possess it? Why is one kind of spice worth more than another? And who really controls Sevarcos and the spice trade — the Empire or some other power?

Free-traders and other independent spacers often consider the lure and danger of the Sevarcos spice trade and the immense amount of profit lurking behind it. But be warned — Sevarcos is not a place for the meek or the novice. What follows is a compendium of experience and information about Sevarcos, the mines, and the spice trade for either the plainly curious or the seriously business-minded.

System Summary

Smugglers and pirates alike love to weave tales concerning the Sevarcos system. But contrary to belief, Sevarcos is not some mysterious blip in the nav computer that pops up randomly across the galaxy. In fact, its coordinates are easily available for astrogation purposes. The fact remains, however, that one should not even *think* about entering the Sevarcos system without the proper permits or trade authorizations, or one might as well consider their space-faring career at an end.

Because its main export is spice, a highly restricted commodity, the Sevarcos system is under permanent customs blockade by the Empire, meaning that any incoming or outgoing transport without the correct permits or trade authorizations is immediately impounded. The Empire monitors all system traffic with perimeter sensor satellites and a large force of customs cutters, cruisers, and frigates. TIE fighters and smaller assault vessels are in abundance the closer one approaches the spice planet itself, and it is not all that unusual to see one or two older *Victory*-class Star Destroyers cruising the outer system boundaries. Do not confuse these Star Destroyers with their slower or undergunned siblings of pre-Empire days: these ships have been completely overhauled, with better shields and more long-range gunnery.

Sevarcos picket duty has long been considered a luxury compared to most other posts. So confident is the Empire in the combined firepower of its capital ships that some free-traders claim it borders on laziness. A few old blockade runners know how to exploit the weaknesses of the *Victory*-class Star Destroyer, especially around their sensor and tractor beam packages. Even so,

Sevarcos

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Hot during the day, cool during night
Atmosphere: Type II
Hydrosphere: Arid
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Plains, desert, mountains
Length of Day: 26 standard hours
Length of Year: 378 local days
Sapient Species: Humans; others in mining regions
Starports: 2 Imperial class, 4 standard class
Population: 1 million, not including mine population or Imperial personnel
Planet Function: Spice mines and prisons
Government: Council of Spice Lords
Tech Level: Industrial with vestiges of feudal
Major Exports: Andris and carsunum spice
Major Imports: Low technology

Capsule: Sevarcos is known for its varieties of spice and its infamous spice mines. Although the native Sevari have grown accustomed to the tiny granules of pure spice carried into the atmosphere by the wind, visitors are quickly affected by this spice, and often wear breath masks to negate its effects.

Sevarcos is under an Imperial blockade. All ships landing and departing are monitored and inspected by Imperial Customs officers.

Sevarcos Spice Eel

Type: Carnivorous sand-boring slug
DEXTERITY 2D
PERCEPTION 3D
Search 5D
STRENGTH 4D
Brawling 5D
Special Abilities:
Bite: Does STR+1D damage.
Tail Lash: Does STR+1D+2 damage.
Move: 12 (surface), 6 (boring underground)
Size: 10-15 meters long
Orneriness: 5D

Capsule: The spice eel's prenombric lobes permit it to orient itself as well as sense vibrations through rock and water. These lobes, however, are very sensitive. If the eel encounters a loud enough noise, like that from a stun grenade, there is a good chance the spice eel will run directly away from it.

For giant spice eels, add 1D to the creature's *Strength* and *Perception*

the Empire maintains a firm grip on Sevarcos and its spice trade.

Between the sixth and seventh planetary orbits in the Sevarcos system is an immense asteroid field, believed to be the remnants of a thirteenth planet. The field is not difficult to navigate if one follows the proper beacons and nav-buoys, but it makes an excellent hiding place for spice smugglers and other less-scrupulous types. For this reason, the Empire has several barges in the asteroid field. These barges house TIE interceptors and Skipray blastboats for the purpose of scouring the field of undesirables.

The pilots of these fighters are trained exclusively for asteroid navigation, and the reputation of their piloting skills is such that they have been given their own special squadron designation: Fate's Judges. Acceptance to the squadron requires flying through the field without instruments and under certain stresses.

Sevarcos, World of Endless Wind

Sevarcos II is the only planet in the system capable of supporting life, the three remaining solid worlds having long since lost their atmospheres. Sevarcos is a dry, rugged planetoid — its northern latitudes are quite mountainous, the southern regions are vast deserts, while the equatorial belt consists of endless plains. Harsh winds whip the ever-present sand into frenzied storms. During certain yearly equinoxes, the winds can reach gale forces. Sevarcos' bright orange sun, Lumea, paints the roughened features of the landscape in shades of cinnamon brown and burnt amber.

If Sevarcos' surface climate can be judged quite harsh by the newcomer, its atmosphere can be downright dangerous. The moment a whiff of air is inhaled, one can immediately sense the odor of spice, a combination of sweet, dusky, and tangy sensations. The presence of spice is everywhere on the planet's surface, lurking in small, useless quantities among the rocks and rubble, and carried aloft as tiny granules by the winds.

Even though the amount absorbed by respiration is drastically tiny, the unprotected visitor is exposed to pure, raw spice. This affects almost all new arrivals in small, almost indiscernible ways — feelings of dizziness, nausea, and a slightly euphoria are quite common. Some species and races are less susceptible to this effect, sometimes called "catching the wind." There is no medical prevention for it, except by using breath masks and protective outer garb.

Other than the deep canyons, high escarpments, and kilometers of dark desert, life is nearly non-existent on the planet's surface, with the exception of a few firmly entrenched settlements. To find water, one must burrow beneath the hardened rock. The planet's substrata are porous, forming an arterial network of water and natural tunnels. Opposed to the endless plains above, Sevarcos' underworld is bristling with life. Small underground lakes and pools host an assortment of plant and animal species that thrive in total darkness.

This underworld paradise has its price, however. Below the surface, down in the mines, the amount of pure spice in the atmosphere increases. If exposed for an extended time, perhaps over years, the buildup of toxic levels of spice in the body typically results in a lingering and painful death. It is no wonder that many consider penal servitude on Sevarcos a death sentence.

Spice Eels

Few of the native creatures on Sevarcos present any real danger. The exception is the spice eel. Spice eels can reach lengths well beyond 15 meters, while some older varieties can achieve sizes up to 30 meters in length and 5 meters in height. Their bodies are ridged with powerful, leathery segments and their mouths contain several rows of crushing molars used to burrow through rock.

Spice eels spend their early lives in subterranean water pools. After several life stage growths, similar to moltings, the creatures burrow through rock and sediment in search of prey. Spice eels have no eyes, relying instead on pressure-sensitive organs in their heads that not only supply them with a natural sense of direction and orientation (much like the canals and membranes of the Human middle ear), but locate vibrations that indicate potential meals. Spice eels eat other small borers and diggers like itself, but spice mining activities also manage to attract it.

Nomadic Sevari tribes often hunt spice eels for meat, hides and other parts used as trade items. Somehunters brave treacherous caverns to find spice eels, while others have methods of luring them to the surface. Most nomad clans on Sevarcos are scavengers, scrounging sand-besieged wrecks of Imperial vehicles and other discarded equipment for salable materials.

The Sevari

Besides the presence of the Empire and the various species enslaved in the spice mines, Sevarcos also has an original humanoid population who call themselves the Sevari. Very little is known about the Sevari's past, although it is believed that they are not natives of the planet but descendants of an expedition dating from the earliest days of the Old Republic. (Certain ancient records make note of the existence of a colony ship named the *Sevari Cabal* that was lost during those times.) Over time, these colonists formed the numerous clans that oversee the planet's spice trade (although the processing, purchasing, and distribution of Sevarcos spice is controlled directly by the Empire).

The Sevari clans, with some exceptions, have a surprising lack of interest in advanced technology. Much of their equipment dates back from ancient Old Republic days, including their use of wind-powered repulsorcraft — which they call wind riders — to float across the landscape.

Each Sevari clan has a rigid social class structure dating back to the colony's founding. Customs between clans vary greatly by region — from the use of spice in religious ceremonies to arranged marriages to unite clans and avoid feuds.

Adventure Idea

While on a spice expedition to Sevarcos, the characters' ship is damaged and makes an emergency landing during a blinding sandstorm. They are rescued by nomads who ask the characters for help. Imperial forces are hunting the nomads because of their raids against spice mining platforms.

The platforms are mining spice against the wishes of the nomads' clan lord. Deep below the nomads' territory is an underground lake that serves as a breeding ground for giant spice eels — the nomads' only source of food and trade goods. The characters must somehow resolve the nomads' dispute and persuade them to supply the parts necessary to repair their ship.

Those who dwell in the southern deserts tend to travel in clan ships—huge family wind carracks passed on with each new generation. Many clans of the rugged Northern Frontier live in the protection of mining settlements built directly into the side of mountains.

The Sevari have extraordinary respect for their leaders, and turn to them for guidance, wisdom, and strength. Each leader, in turn, pledges their loyalty to a clan lord, who provides stability over the many argumentative clans. The strongest of the clan lords receives the title of spice lord. The spice lords of Sevarcos devote themselves to establishing trade and profit across the stars in the name of the clans they represent. The spice lords set the market price of spice, regulate production, negotiate trade agreements with spice merchants, and select regions for continued spice mining and extraction.

Sevari Tribe Member. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 2D+2, archaic guns 3D, Mechanical 2D+2, repulsorlift operation: wind rider 3D.* Move 10. Flashpistol (4D+2), vibroblade (STR+3D damage).

Spice Narcosis

Not surprisingly, present generations of Sevari have developed a tolerance for pure spice over the many millennia spent on Sevarcos, although most cannot tolerate other worlds' atmospheres without a special spice-breather apparatus. In fact, Sevari or long-time residents (including prisoners) who are suddenly brought into a different atmospheric environment may succumb to a strange coma known as spice narcosis. Treatment for the effects of the coma is available only from the most knowledgeable of doctors or medical droids.

If exposed to any non-Sevarcos atmosphere, a character with a tolerance for airborne spice

Blaster Weapon Mishap Table

Die Result	Blaster Mishap
1–2	Weapon shorts, power pack is completely drained and needs replacement.
3–4	Power pack overloads and destroys internal control circuitry, weapon is use less.
5–6	Power pack immediately detonates and inflicts its normal amount of damage to every character within a six meter range of the detonation.

must make a Difficult *Strength* check every hour, or else the character lapses into spice narcosis. A Moderate *medicine* roll must be made to revive the character.

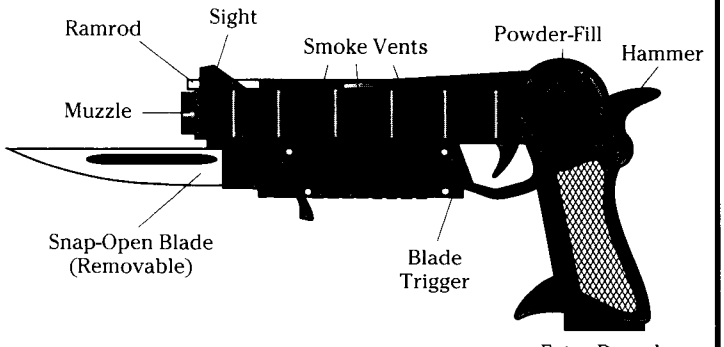
Flashpistols

The Sevari display a considerable lack of trust in most energy weapons. This is probably because almost all energy weapons, such as blasters, can suffer from reduced effectiveness, dangerous backlashes, and even power pack detonations on Sevarcos. These effects have been attributed to flying sand particles that become highly charged during Sevarcos' wild windstorms.

During such storms, all attacks using blasters should reduce the amount of damage by half at medium range. Blasters have no effect at long range. If a one is rolled on the wild die when firing a blaster during a sandstorm, there is a possibility that blowing charged sand particles can send powerful energy arcs back to the weapon. The gamemaster should roll 1D and consult with the mishap table for the effect.

The clans of the Northern Frontier first perfected the design of the flashpistol. Flashpistols are muzzle-loaded, archaic projectile weapons that fire a single, rounded metal bullet or even a small stone if necessary. Once fired, they require at least one full round to be reloaded. Two-barrel and even four-barrel versions are known to exist (using a separate trigger for each barrel), while other variants have a cutlass-like blade slung underneath the barrel for use after the weapon is fired.

Sevari Flashpistol



Anthony Paul Russo

Model: Custom-Made Sevari Flashpistol
Type: Archaic projectile weapon
Scale: Character
Skill: Archaic guns: flashpistol
Ammo: 1
Cost: 50 to 500, depending on model, number of barrels, ornate design work, etc.
Availability: Available only on Sevarcos
Fire Rate: 1/2
Range: 3-10/30/60
Damage: 4D+2

Game Notes: A one rolled on the wild die indicates a premature detonation of the flash chamber. The gamemaster should roll 1D if this occurs. On a roll of 1 or 2, the gun has misfired this round and must be reloaded. On a 3 or 4, the weapon's barrel has been damaged and is useless until repaired. On a roll of 5 or 6, the weapon explodes in the user's hand, causing 4D+2 damage. Flashpistols with blade extensions can be used in melee combat with an Easy difficulty to hit. The blade does STR+1D damage.

Sevari Wind Riders

A wind rider consists of a long hull outfitted with two outrigger repulsorlift units to either side. Forward motion is provided by the craft's large sail. A wind rider is flown ("soared" is the more accepted local term) by two people. The sails are controlled by a single person wearing a harness that keeps the sailor in an upright position. While the sailor ensures that the wind rider's sail is always filled with wind, the other person operates a tiller in the back end of the craft. The tillers consist of two oversized paddles that project below the hull like rudders. Twisting the tiller arms in a particular direction forces the craft to slip sideways, just like the rudder of a sailing ship on water. Both sailor and tiller must make certain the craft does not dip below a certain altitude, else the tiller paddles or repulsorlift units will be dashed against the rocks below.

Certain wind riders come equipped with a variety of ordnance to prevent, or assist in, boarding actions. The ballista or giant crossbow is typically mounted in the bow of the craft. By attaching a line to the arrow's tail, it may be used to grapple or snare an opponent's ship. Set the arrowhead on fire with a flammable substance, and the weapon may be used in a deadly fire attack. Spinblade arrows are used to cut control ropes, sails, and even crew members.

Larger wind ships, like carracks and brigands, use catapults to launch glasslike spheres that explode and set wind riders afire on impact.

Slave galleys, the largest of the wind ships, mount spectacular broadsides of muzzle-loading flashcannons. Even Imperial vehicles might be daunted by the approach of such a massive and ponderous behemoth.

The Imperial Presence on Sevarcos

The Empire directly controls the flow of spice from Sevarcos, regulating its consistency, level of purity, export, sale, and availability. That Sevarcos also doubles as a major Imperial prison facility is one of the few success stories Commerce agencies within COMPNOR can actually brag about. The prison mines and the spice they extract are ominous reminders of Imperial efficiency. There is currently no post of Imperial Governor on Sevarcos. The spice lords are agreeable to most Imperial activities on their world, and several contract out certain regions of their lands exclusively for prison use.

The highest-ranking Imperial office on Sevarcos belongs to the planetary commandant, a position that carries both military and political duties. The commandant is directly responsible for the customs blockade around the system perimeter, and is considered commanding flag officer for all naval and close orbit actions (an honorary duty at best, since the commandant usually defers to his fleet group captain for most naval and system defense decisions).

A greater portion of the commandant's concern lies with enforcing planet-side security and protecting Imperial interests on Sevarcos. In this matter, an Imperial "interest" could consist of the discovery of falsified transit documents, construction of new prison mines, interpretation of new Imperial spice trade regulations, or a prison mine uprising. The commandant has immediate access to a full range of Imperial Army personnel and top equipment, including a walker battalion, repulsorlift battalion, artillery, and line armor regiments. There are also a number of stormtrooper units assigned specifically to the prison mines. The commandant is charged with using whatever means at his disposal to ensure that spice flows from Sevarcos and the prison facilities are running at maximum efficiency.

The Spice Lords

"Crossing a spice lord is not the smartest thing to do, since there's the distinct possibility it'll be the last thing you'll do."

— Anonymous Spice Trader

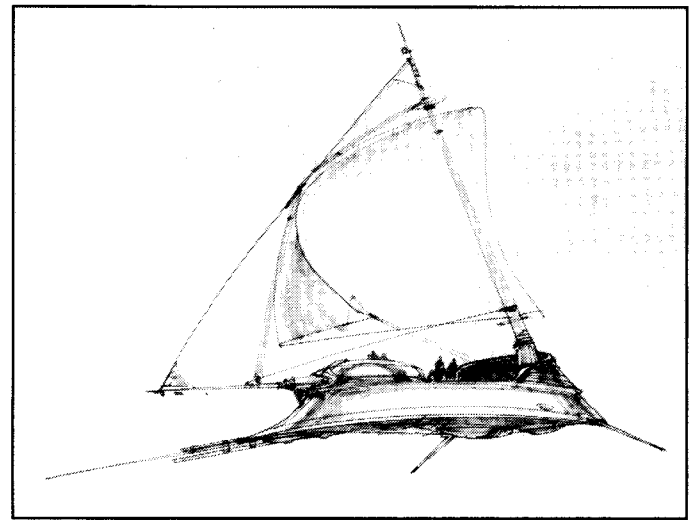
The spice lords of Sevarcos are a mysterious, seldom-seem lot, claiming allegiance to no power but their own, not even the Emperor's. Some lords openly contract the Empire to mine their lands with prison labor, despite the toll to life and limb. Other spice lords shun Imperial contact entirely, preferring to mine and sell spice by themselves, and have little to no interest in the politics of power throughout the galaxy.

When disputes concerning the cost of spice and mining arise, most Sevari clans defer to the three most powerful of the spice lords: Lord Quintas of the Southern Deserts, Lady Trevael of the Northern Frontier, and Lord Cassius Nolath Rha, undisputed master of the planet's highly profitable Equatorial Belt and its feared prison mines.

Lord Rha's Spice Blades

Lord Rha maintains an elite force of personal guards, known with some trepidation and fear as

Sevari Wind Rider



Craft: Typical Personal Wind Rider
Type: Wind-propelled repulsorlift vehicle
Scale: Speeder
Length: 11 meters
Skill: Repulsorlift operation: wind rider
Crew: 2, gunners: 2
Passengers: 4-8
Cargo Capacity: 0.25 metric tons
Cover: 1/4
Altitude Range: Ground level–10 meters
Cost: 2,500–5,000 credits
Maneuverability: 2D
Move: 35; 100 kmh
Body Strength: 2D
Weapons:
Ballista
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 2
Skill: Archaic Weapons: crossbows
Fire Control: 0D
Range: 3-25/75/100
Damage: 3D

Planetary Commandant Velpar Raftin

Type: Imperial Planetary Commandant
DEXTERITY 2D+2
Blaster 3D+2, blaster artillery 3D+2, dodge 4D+2, vehicle blasters 3D+2
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Bureaucracy: Sector Plexus 7D, bureaucracy: Sevarcos 6D, culture 5D, law enforcement 5D, planetary systems: Sevarcos 6D, value 5D, willpower 5D
MECHANICAL 3D+1
Repulsorlift operation 4D+1, sensors 4D+1
PERCEPTION 3D
Command 5D, hide 5D, persuasion 5D
STRENGTH 2D+2
TECHNICAL 2D+1
First aid 3D
Character Points: 6
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, medpac, sandsuit (sealed against atmosphere intrusion)

Capsule: Velpar Raftin has recently been appointed planetary commandant of the Sevarcos system. He is a successful operatician who worked his way quickly up through the ranks of the Sector Plexus Intelligence network. It is believed the previous commandant lost the post after failing to stop a smuggling ring from using some of his force's own Imperial capital ships to transport illicit cargoes of spice.

During the investigation of the previous commandant, then Security Major Velpar Raftin's position within Sector Plexus gave him access to vital information on the smuggling trade, information he gladly used to suspend the transit licenses of several major shipping companies and put a stop to a flourishing trade of independent small-time smugglers. While the action hardly put a dent in the widespread spice smuggling trade, Raftin's superiors were suitably impressed and had him promoted to the position he helped vacate.

Raftin is a reedy thin, hawk-faced administrator who puts little trust in excuses and explanations. He has recently implemented a broad strategic plan that includes an intrinsic check of all customs officers responsible for examining ships that enter and leave the system (which he obtains through his contacts at Sector Plexus), relentless drilling of prison security methods and techniques, and a change in close-orbit tactics.

Several new Imperial garrisons have been erected at his order, much to the chagrin of the spice lords, along key trade routes frequented by the Sevari and at all Imperial spaceports and cargo loading centers.

Commandant Raftin is becoming more concerned with the power of the Sevari spice lords, and wonders why the Emperor has not decided to strip them of control of their precious lands and award Raftin full governorship of the planet he has regulated so well.

the Spice Blades. The Blades wear black and blood-red tunics, trousers, and boots. They have been trained exclusively to use heavy vibroblades and wear distinctive respirators that pipe humidified black spice into their lungs. The black spice not only enhances the soldiers' fighting abilities, it also weakens their minds, turning them into absolutely loyal fighting machines — perfect for Lord Rha's needs.

The Spice Blades do not know the meaning of the words, "set to stun." They kill. If their swords won't do the job, then they resort to long-barreled flashrifles they carry on their backs.

Because of the black spice and the rigorous mental training to ensure their loyalty to Lord Rha, Spice Blades are not as susceptible to other characters using the *command* or Jedi *affect mind* skills on them. Jedi or other students of the Force trying to use *receptive telepathy* or *projective telepathy* detect very little mental presence or emotion in the mind of a Spice Blade — only a great empty void filled with bits of fervor and fanaticism.

The effects of the black spice also allow Spice Blades to enhance *Strength* or *Dexterity* by 1D for the length of one combat round.

Lord Rha's Spice Blades. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 4D, archaic guns: flashpistol 5D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 7D, melee combat: vibroblades 7D, melee parry 6D, Strength 4D+2, brawling 6D+2, stamina 6D+2.* Move: 10. Flashrifle (5D damage), heavy vibroblade (STR+3D+2, maximum damage 6D+2), spice respiratory apparatus, 4 throwing knives (STR+1D).

All attempts to use *command, con, intimidation,* or *persuasion* to encourage Spice Blades to ignore, change, or contradict Lord Rha's commands are Heroic tasks. The Jedi *receptive telepathy* or *projective telepathy* skills detect only loyal fanaticism to Lord Rha. Successfully using the Jedi *affect mind* power requires a Very Difficult roll when trying to use simple one-word commands on a Spice Blade — as long as they do not contradict the orders of Lord Rha. Trying to use the *affect mind* power to make the Jedi or another character *appear* as Lord Rha is considered a Difficult task.

Adventure Idea

Hoping to find profit on Sevarcos, the characters stumble across the beautiful daughter of a Sevari clan leader who is running away to avoid an arranged marriage to another clan leader. The characters are accidentally mistaken for kidnappers by one side and spies by the other, and soon find themselves involved in a pitched war between the two clans! The adventure can include a battle using the Sevari's unique wind riders, complete with rollicking boarding actions, noisy flashpistols, and clashing vibroblades as the characters try to untangle the mess and escape the clan leaders' wrath.

The Festival of the High Winds

"And you thought swoop bike racing was a scary sport — these guys do this sort of thing for fun!"
—Birdigan Nasalle, TransGal Champion Swoop Racer

Each year, the spice lords meet with their clans at the late season equinox, also known as the Festival of the High Winds. Many representatives from other interested parties attend the ceremonies — powerful spice merchants, crimelords and slavers, as well as Imperial representatives.

While the lords bicker and set the price for spice for the coming year, the clans race their wind riders through the nearby canyons in tribute to their former ancestors. These races are filled with danger and peril, as the crews of the wind riders use whatever means (including weapons and fists) to stop the others from winning.

Sevari Spice and Trade

"Sevari andris spice — preferred 10 times out of 12 in blind sample tests by the Imperial Board of Foodstuffs and Consumables ..."
— COMPNOR Advertisement

Any discussion of Sevarcos is not complete without mention of its spice. Although its harshest critics tend to refer to all spice as some form of addictive drug, others regard it as a harmless seasoning and food preservative used since the earliest days of the Old Republic. Spice is so commonplace it can be found in nearly every settled region that conducts interstellar trade, and sometimes serves as currency where other monetary systems, like credits, don't exist.

Andris

The different kinds of spice are as numerous as the worlds where it can be found. Kessel spice, is naturally quite popular, and yet very different from Sevarcos spice. There are two forms of Sevari spice. Andris, the white spice, is the most common. When mined, andris first appears as a light tan, crumbling substance. In its raw form, andris spice was used in many of the slower starships of the Old Republic to help preserve food. Later, a refinement step was added using powerful electrical charges that turn the raw spice into a white, crystalline powder. This refinement process is said to double andris spice's effects against food spoilage and enhances andris' flavoring of food.

Commercially refined andris, reduced to 25 percent in purity, is used across the galaxy in the preparation of foodstuffs and is easily available. The use of andris has even received the approval of COMPNOR and other Imperial regulatory agencies, and has found its way into military garrisons and the Imperial Navy.

A bitter debate has been steadily growing that refined andris spice is the leash that the Empire uses to stifle the galaxy into subordination. Medical research has long since proven that andris of 100 percent purity is quite toxic. Just living on the planet of Sevarcos itself can prematurely end a life. But those who use large quantities of spice have made many ludicrous claims about the

Lord Cassius Nolath Rha

Type: Spice Lord
DEXTERITY 3D
Archaic guns: flashpistol 7D, blasters 5D, bows: heavy ballista 4D, dodge 7D, melee combat: vibroblades 6D+2, melee parry 6D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Business 6D, cultures: Sevari 9D, planetary systems: Sevarcos 10D, survival 7D+1, value 7D, willpower 6D+2
MECHANICAL 2D+2
Communications 4D, repulsorlift operation: wind rider 6D+1, space transports 4D
PERCEPTION 3D+1
Bargain 5D+2, command 6D+2, hide 5D, persuasion 5D+1, sneak 5D
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 5D+2, stamina 5D
TECHNICAL 2D
Repulsorlift repair: wind rider 3D

Character Points: 10
Move: 10
Equipment: Comlink, datapad, flashpistol (4D+2 damage), macrobinoculars, 2 recording rods, vibroblade (STR+3D)

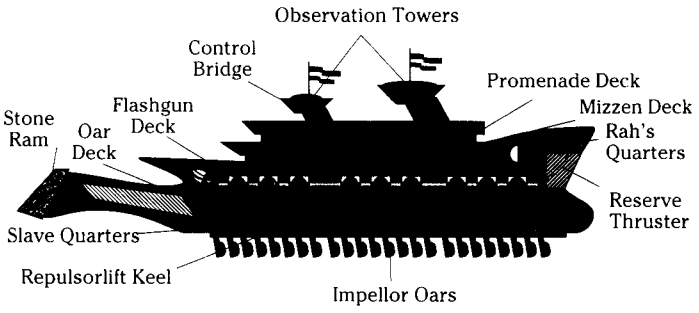
Capsule: Of the three spice lords, Lord Cassius Nolath Rha is noted for his ruthlessness. An athletically trim and powerful man for his years, Rha is the very picture of health and strength. He travels in a huge, extravagant, floating spice galley, the *Andris Moon*, which is manned by hundreds of prisoners who row oar-impellers. He also owns several fortresses and retreats located in the rugged canyons near the Northern Frontier of Lady Trevael.

Rha controls the Equatorial Belt of Sevarcos, reaping vast profit from both his spice mines and the Empire for using the spice mines as prison camps. Hundreds of Rha's mining platforms dot the barren plains, the wasted rock from the spice refining process pouring like soot into the orange-tinted sky. Lord Quintas and Lady Trevael are quite envious of Rha's mastery of the planet, and both are quietly biding their time, hoping for an opportunity when the greatest of the spice lords falls from power. So far it has been a wait in vain, as long as Rha continues his typical courtesies toward Planetary Commandant Raftin.

The last thing Lord Rha wants is an interruption of the spice trade. The Empire's struggle against the Rebellion concerns him only in the increasing number of prisoners sent to the spice mines for acts of treason against the Empire. In truth, his allegiance to the Empire is quite fickle. The spice trade existed long before the ascent of Palpatine as Emperor, and as long as the spice flows, it will continue to do so long after his demise or replacement. Rha and the other spice lords have also mostly ignored the Emperor's demands to reduce the cost of spice.

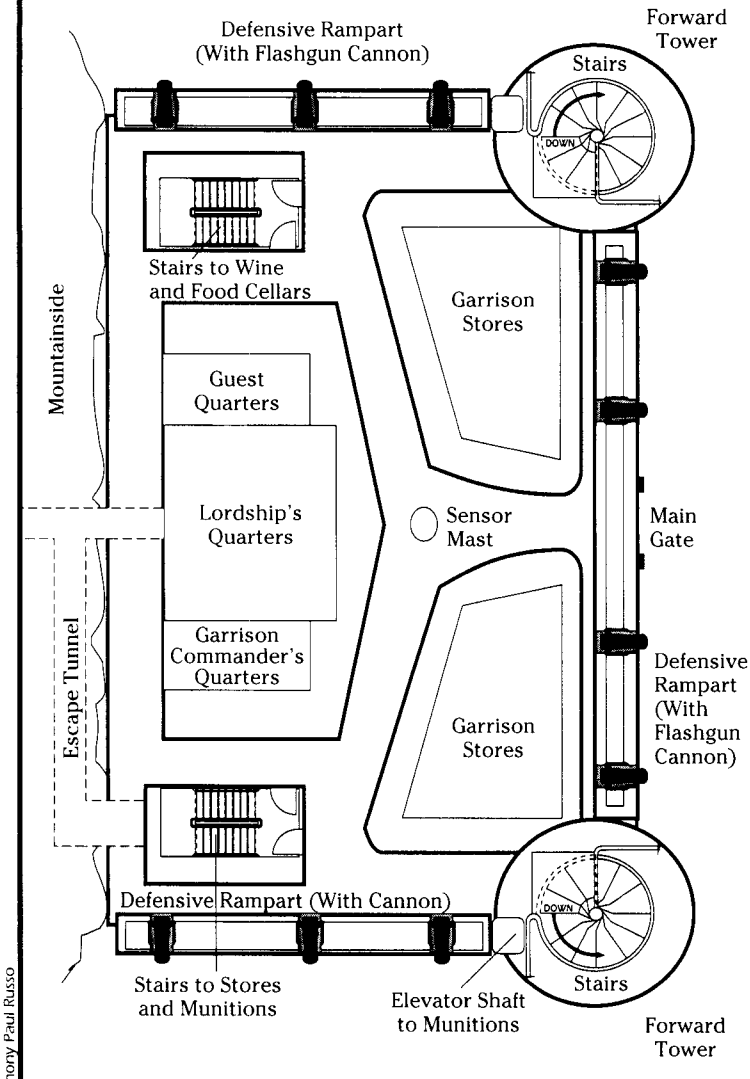
Lord Rha maintains a small unit of personal bodyguards, the Spice Blades, who are fanatically loyal to their liege.

Lord Rha's Slave Galley, Andris Moon



Anthony Paul Russo

Lord Rha's Mountain Keep



Anthony Paul Russo

physical and psychological benefits of high-purity andris.

Carsunum

The other Sevari spice, carsunum or black spice, has an even more mythical past. Carsunum is very rare and difficult to mine on Sevarcos. It is sometimes found under solid layers of hard rock deep in the mines.

The stories surrounding carsunum and the Old Republic have little to do with food preservation. One tale concerns the Healer's Guild, a somewhat secretive and mysterious ancient alliance of beings from many different worlds dedicated to preserving life. The guild used carsunum in their formulas to help control and prevent the spread of deadly hive viruses, including a variant of the one that maddened the crews of the Old Republic's Katana Fleet before they slaved their ships together and jumped into hyperspace for parts unknown. When the Empire emerged, the Healer's Guild mysteriously vanished along with the remains of the Old Republic.

The prestigious and the powerful can be seen wearing tiny golden vials of carsunum as symbols of their wealth. Despite the Imperial prohibition on its distribution, many species seek out carsunum for medicinal, religious, and other requirements. While obtaining pure andris might be difficult for the independent spacer, securing a store of carsunum is almost as easy as navigating Sevarcos' asteroid field at full speed.

The Spice Mines of Sevarcos

"The whole damn planet's a death sentence."
— Former Spice Mine Prisoner

It is not known exactly when criminals and the unfortunate were first used to mine spice on Sevarcos. Perhaps there is no worse punishment than to spend the remainder of one's existence toiling below the surface of such an unforgiving planet like Sevarcos, forever striking at the unyielding rock with low-power laser torches and sonic hammers.

The prison population of the spice mines can be described as the worst assortment of villainy thrown in together with the politically unacceptable and the misfortunate who cross the Empire. Even droids have been sent down into the shafts as sources for circuits and parts to keep mining equipment functional. There is no solitary confinement or time off for good behavior on Sevarcos. There is only hard work, and those who aggravate their jailers are only sent deeper into the mine shafts — usually without a breath mask.

The mining process begins with vast, self-contained mining refinery platforms that cruise

the planet's surface. Upon reaching a surveyed location, shafts are extended into the surface. Chunks of spice-encrusted rock are dislodged by torch and hammer, then loaded into grav-carts and conveyed up to the refining platform. Here raw spice is converted into refined spice. Huge sifters and electrostatic chambers send rippling charges of energy across the passing spice, altering the spice's molecular structure slightly and changing its color from brown to white.

Life in the Mines

Life in the prison mines is both cruel and heartless. Cave-ins from the somewhat delicate substrata are frequent, as well as attacks by spice eels who are drawn to the thundering sonic hammers. Taskmasters keep a watchful eye on the prisoners. Taskmasters are typically prisoners who have demonstrated a menacing flair for forcing others to work harder.

Taskmasters and prisoners all come under the authority of elite minetroopers, Imperial stormtroopers with special tan-colored armor sealed from the toxic mine atmosphere. The minetroopers are not necessarily there to stop spice eels or even to suppress revolts, but to protect valuable mining equipment from harm and theft.

Imperial commissars oversee the prison mines, ensuring that spice production is kept high while prisoner revolts are kept to a minimum. A commissar has the authority to force rebellious or troublesome prisoners to work at levels even Sevari natives find dangerous, and can strip a prisoner of a breath mask without explanation. This type of work detail is often referred to as "the death shift" since so few hardy souls can withstand working at such toxic levels of spice in the mine shafts.

In the spice mines of Sevarcos, there is no honor among prisoners — all remaining respect and hope having been stripped away for self-preservation. Some prisoners easily turn other prisoners in to taskmasters and stormtroopers for favors. Many escapes or revolts often fail because one prisoner, recognizing the futility of such attempts, turns the others in for lighter work duty. And with murderers and violent criminals side-by-side with innocents who were sent to Sevarcos to "disappear," the chances for the weaker's survival are quite slim.

Escape

Is there escape from Sevarcos? Contrary to what the Empire might claim, escapes can and do happen quite regularly. With the exception of the minetroopers, Imperial prison commissars do not have nearly the same caliber of personnel as the Imperial Army. Imperial troops assigned to the mining platforms are usually recruited from less-capable constabulary forces from other systems, often with incentives of higher wages and more down time. Sometimes spice lords provide soldiers for mining platforms and perimeter patrols. Bribery and mix-ups do happen, allowing brave prisoners opportunities to escape aboard cargo haulers, automated barges, and sometimes even in the holds of capital ships!

It is rumored that the Rebel Alliance maintains several agents on Sevarcos who are given the suicidal task of rescuing Rebel ship crews, starfighter pilots, and operation teams captured

Lord Quintas of the Southern Deserts

Type: Spice Lord
DEXTERITY 3D
Archaic guns: flashpistol 5D, bows: ballista 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat: vibroblades 4D, melee parry 4D, thrown weapons: curva blade 5D
KNOWLEDGE 3D+2
Business 5D+2, cultures: Sevari 6D+2, planetary systems: Sevarcos 4D+2, survival 5D+2, value 6D+2, willpower 4D+2
MECHANICAL 2D+1
Repulsorlift operation: wind rider 4D+1
PERCEPTION 4D
Bargain 6D, command 5D, con 6D, gambling 5D, hide 5D, persuasion 5D
STRENGTH 3D+1
Brawling 4D
TECHNICAL 1D+2
Repulsorlift repair: wind rider 3D
Special Abilities:
Curva Blade Skill: Quintas and his people are skilled in the use of the "curva blade," a deadly circular blade thrown in combat. Quintas and those of his clan gain +1D when using this weapon.
Character Points: 7
Move: 10
Equipment: Curva blade (STR+1D).

Capsule: Lord Xerxes Quintas of the Southern Deserts is a bearded, large-bellied individual with a hearty laugh who some say is as large as his appetite for food. His good nature hides a shifty sense of business, and he often trades sides with other spice lords or pits one against another to advance his own trade propositions. Quintas lives and travels in a large wind carrack of the type favored by the clans of the southern deserts, a majestic craft with colorful sails and numerous wind kites flying from it.

Quintas' clans often form huge villages consisting entirely of family ships that move as the winds shift them. The Southern Deserts that are his domain are among Sevarcos' most profitable, with nearly half of the lord's spice mines using Imperial prison labor. Recently, Quintas has been having some difficulty with the nomadic clans that wander across his deserts. The nomads claim Quintas is misrepresenting them, permitting whole regions and potential giant spice eel nests to be devastated by relentless spice mining.

Lady Trevael of the Northern Frontier

Type: Spice Lord
DEXTERITY 3D
Archaic guns: flashpistol 6D+2, blaster 4D, bows: ballista 6D, dodge 6D, melee combat: vibroblades 5D+1, melee parry 5D
KNOWLEDGE 2D+2
Business 5D+2, cultures: Sevari 5D+2, planetary systems: Sevarcos 5D, survival 6D, value 6D+2, willpower 6D+1
MECHANICAL 3D
Communications 4D, repulsorlift operation: wind rider 6D
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 5D, command 5D+2, hide 4D+1, persuasion 5D, sneak 5D
STRENGTH 2D+2
Brawling 4D, stamina 4D+2
TECHNICAL 2D
Repulsorlift repair: wind rider 4D, demolition 4D
Character Points: 8

Move: 10
Equipment: Flashpistol (4D+2), vibroblade (STR+3D), wind catamaran.

Capsule: The Northern Frontier of Sevarcos consists of many kilometers of forlorn mountains and deep canyons. Lady Trevael and her people can be similarly described as rugged individuals who run their spice mines without prison labor and prefer little Imperial interference.

Lady Trevael's clans populate small mountain villages and mining towns protected from the fierce winds. An accomplished wind rider handler herself, Lady Trevael often leads her clans at various festival wind rider races, and hardly hesitates to leap into battle when one of her ships is attacked by smaller clans.

Her dark beauty and serious manner have the appropriate effect on many who meet her, even when Imperial officials try to coerce her into using prison labor or reducing the price of spice. Her own personal wind ship is a sleek black catamaran named for the spice that is found deep within her mountain lands — the *Carsunum Chariot.*

by Imperial forces. The risks are tremendous and almost completely thankless.

Not all the spice mines on Sevarcos use prison labor. Many Sevari clans mine their own regions and hire free-traders and privateers to haul it to distant starports. While the Sevari clans would never openly question Imperial authority on their world, they manage to be quite ignorant where it concerns escape attempts.

Spice Smuggling

"There are two way of doing business with spice. Lie, and then lie some more."

— Anonymous smuggler

The demand for high-purity andris and rare carsunum has created an extensive black market — a network of smugglers, crafty merchants, and traders who move the spice using a myriad of methods intended to deceive and confuse. Spice is often disguised among shipments of ore, stone or some other general commodity, while smugglers sometimes use shielded compartments on their freighters to get past sensor sweeps and customs ships.

The high profits associated with the demand for spice has been associated with some of the galaxy's most infamous crimelords. Jabba the Hutt, Bengis Tok, and many other infamous gangsters all possess spice merchant licenses, despite their reputations. Whole deadly space battles have involved pirates or corrupt officials jumping legitimate cargo haulers just for their containers of spice.

In the days of the Old Republic, spice smuggling was considered a capital offense that sent many a ship captain to toil on the very world where they had obtained their lethal cargoes. The Empire also displays an intolerance for such activity, but puts considerably less effort into catching the perpetrators.

Adventure Idea

The characters are hired by a fairly honest spice merchant to transport him to Sevarcos and protect him during the Festival of High Winds. Among the pageantry of the spice lords, murder and intrigue enter the picture when the spice merchant mysteriously dies, leaving the characters with a cache of valuable black spice and facing the merchant's killers during a wild wind rider race.

Adventure Idea

The characters have been enlisted by the Alliance on a desperate mission to rescue an agent whose identity has been compromised. They arrive as spice traders, only to discover that the agent refuses to leave until the characters agree to rescue a group of war orphans working in a restricted section of the mine.

The Imperial prison commissar has "recruited" the innocent children to search the mine tunnels for a Sevari relic. The clan relic dates back from the days of the Old Republic, and was supposedly on the colony ship *Sevari Cabal.* The commissar is using children because they have no idea how valuable the relic is, or how he will use the relic to rob Spice Lord Rha of his claim of control over his valuable regions of spice.

Doing Business

More words of caution cannot be said when the reasonably honest free-trader considers getting into the spice business. Read the fine print from the datafile note at the beginning of this log: trade authorizations by invitation *only*. Only spice merchants or their authorized representatives are allowed to enter the Sevarcos system. To be a spice merchant, the free-trader needs a spice merchant's license. Want a license? Just knock over the likes of Jabba the Hutt or Ploovo Two-for-One. If the free-trader is unwilling to mount such a crusade, then it's much easier to simply go to Sevarcos as someone's representative.

Finding someone who wants spice cheap is ridiculously (and deceptively) simple. The free-trader might start to wonder why they did not get into the spice smuggling business earlier. The reason is also quite simple: the cost of getting caught outweighs most natural survival instincts. Smugglers caught with illegal loads of spice can lose just about everything: their ship, their piloting and trading licenses, even their life. Some systems, like Mantooine and Coruscant, consider spice smuggling a *capital* offense. Even the best smugglers, like Han Solo, have been forced to dump a load or two to avoid being caught.

Obtaining Permits

But the lure of thousands of credits for a single run remains firm in many minds. While finding someone to buy spice is no problem, getting the permits to enter the Sevarcos system is. The free-trader will need several permits for Sevarcos: entry, transaction, and exit permits.

There are two solutions to obtain these. One is to march up to the local office of the Ministry of InterGalactic Transit and ask for the permits ... and wait three months for background checks of all participants involved and for your ship's log entries to be examined. There is no guarantee this will even get the permits — a free-trader with any kind of criminal background or suspicious travel history is immediately arrested for further inquiry by the Empire.

Forging Permits

The other more promising and quite popular route is to forge the necessary data-transmits. Free-traders can either attempt this on their own or pay for the services of a forger. While using a forger is expensive, in many ways it saves the free-trader from a one-way trip to Sevarcos..

Finding a forger is relatively easy among the well-traveled starports and back alleys of commerce — wherever forms and permits are required to do anything, some being out there is probably making a profit from it. Whether the forger is good depends on what the free-trader wants — economy or safety. Economy is cheap, but sacrifices validity for speed of delivery. Valid permits are expensive ... and time-consuming.

Cost Table — Forging Permits for Sevarcos

Time	Permit Quality	Forgery Difficulty Level	Cost
1 day	Poor	Easy	3,000
1-1/2 days	Fair	Moderate	4,500
2 days	Good	Difficult	6,000
3 days	Excellent	Very Difficult	10,000

The permit quality determines how the forgeries stand up to scrutiny by customs or other inspection officials. For example, if the free-trader spends 3,000 credits for a day's worth of work, the free-trader gets poor forgeries.

Free-traders may also spend twice the original cost to speed up the process by one day. If the free-trader is willing to spend 6,000 credits for good forgeries in two days, spending 12,000 credits will take only one day.

If the forger fails the *forgery* skill roll, then the forgeries are reduced by one level from the level purchased. If the free-trader purchases good forgeries and the forger fails the roll, then the results are only fair forgeries. If the free-trader purchases poor forgeries and the roll fails, then they are considered *abysmal* forgeries and customs officials might laugh rather than become angry (instead of the seal of the InterGalactic Transit Office, the forgeries might have the Emperor's seal, or the Death Star seal, or the seal of Alderaan).

Customs officers can spot forgeries by making *Perception* or *search* rolls. The difficulty is based on the quality of the forgery, and may be affected by modifiers (see page 84 of *Star Wars: The Role-playing Game, Second Edition*).

Game Note: Whether free-traders purchase permits from a forger or make their own, the gamemaster should make the *forgery* rolls and *Perception* or *search* rolls in secret, so players are not alerted how good or bad the documents are.

After obtaining the forgeries, it's a matter of getting into the Sevarcos system, praying the forged permits hold up, landing and buying a

Detecting Forged Permits

Forgery Quality	Detection Difficulty
Poor	Easy
Fair	Moderate
Good	Difficult
Excellent	Very Difficult

load of spice. Some spice smugglers develop their own intricate connections to Sevarcos distributors, enabling them to pick up loads for reduced cost or to trade spice for other valuable materials.

Getting Around Customs

Other smugglers go so far as to bypass the forged entrance and exit permit business entirely, and for good reason. Imperial custom officials are relentlessly suspicious, and sometimes backtrack permit signature codes, ship's logs, and pilot identification. Many inspectors are prone to simply hauling in any light freighter at random and having it dismantled before the owner's eyes for hidden cargo compartments, falsified transponders, boosted hyperdrives, suspicious weapons loads, and the like.

One way to get around this is to join a consortium of smugglers and rent a big cargo cruiser. Imperial customs officials just do not have the time to take something that big apart. The dangers of forged permits and identification, however, are just as obvious as going in alone.

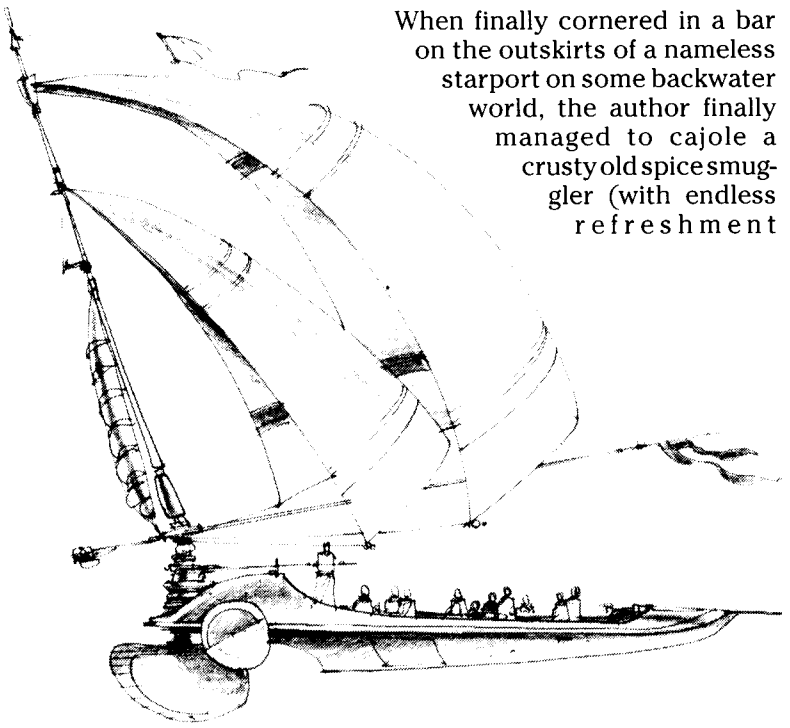
The last way to avoid all the usual entanglements is far, far more dangerous for the free-trader — to blatantly run the customs blockade around Sevarcos, pick up a load of spice from a waiting automated barge, and scramble back out with the free-trader's backsides only slightly scorched. This can be done using a maneuver known as the infamous Sevari Sidestep.

The Sevari Sidestep

"Never tell me the odds!"

— Han Solo

When finally cornered in a bar on the outskirts of a nameless starport on some backwater world, the author finally managed to cajole a crusty old spice smuggler (with endless refreshment from the local mixicologist) into explaining the specifics of the Sevari Sidestep maneuver. His words have been summarized in the following paragraphs for your perusal.



Warning: The author does not wish to imply that this is *exactly* how to get into the Sevarcos system, nor is it a substitute for good old common sense or years of star piloting experience. In plain Basic, it might not work. Free-traders beware. Read and use the following at your own risk!

"The asteroid belt that rings Sevarcos from the sixth orbit is vital to the success of any jump. Jump too far out of the system, and you'll be seized by custom cutters faster than you can say 'Oops.' Jump too close in, and you're just so much space junk. Getting an accurate astrogation picture of the local system before jumping in is crucial, since it will tell you of any planetary bodies that are in proximity to the asteroid field. Most data slicers can obtain a local-time picture of the Sevarcos system for less than 1,000 credits.

"Next, temporarily disable (yes fellow spacers, you heard that right) the astrogation mass-overrides on your nav computer. If it screams at you for doing so, and it will, stick a fuse jump at the sensor responder circuit. Of course, no sane star jockey would do this, but then, the Sevari Sidestep is not exactly for the faint of heart.

"Just before you jump in, glance at the slice and plot a local astrogation course straight for the biggest, most direct hunk of space rock in the asteroid belt. If you're smart, you'll come in with only your forward navigational shields on to deflect any local cosmic debris you might encounter. Any more deflection pattern and a sensor probe might get a lock on to you. Remember to turn all ship transponders off and to turn any counter-measures on passive mode only.

"Course, for years, the Imperials tried running Interdictor cruisers to stop just this. But they couldn't build enough Interdictors to lay grav-shadows on every possible jump angle into the system. So they rely on a grid of sensors satellites that look for anomalies in local space that signal a too-close-for-comfort jump. Usually by the time they detect one, it's too late, and the ship's gone right on by and made a hundred different possible course changes since then. Last thing I heard, the Imperial's are using concussion mines near the asteroid belt with close-prox sensors ...

"Anyway, if you manage to survive the trip in, then all you have to do is dodge the Fate's Judges Squadron by ducking from asteroid to asteroid. There's a pattern to their patrols, so watch for it. TIE interceptors travel in pairs, Skipray blastboats almost always operate alone. TIE interceptors are scary snubfighters — they can bring a lot of

firepower down on you and take more damage than a normal TIE. They're also faster at sublight than any hulk you're probably flying (unless you got an A-wing handy).

"The Skiprays are slow and less maneuverable, but are loaded down with torps, cannons, and they even have shields. At this point in the game, always avoid a fight, no matter how enticing the target. Blowing up one always brings two more to replace it. Exponentially speaking, them's lousy odds."

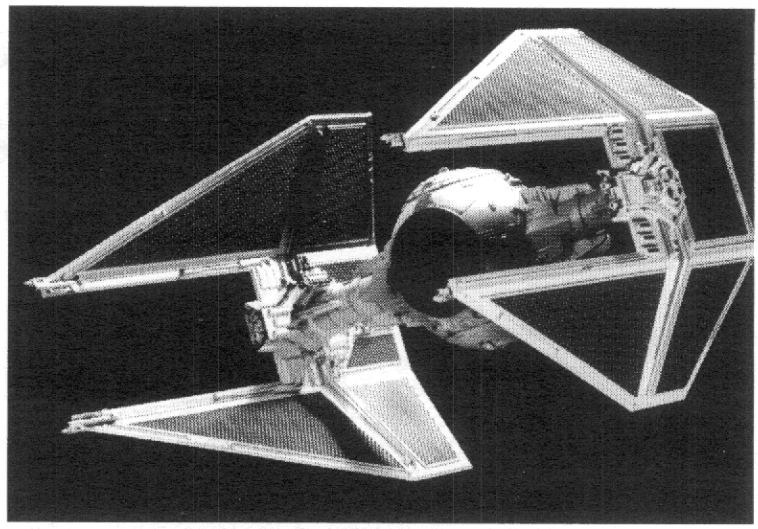
Fate's Judges TIE Interceptor. Starfighter, *starfighter piloting 6D, starship gunnery 5D+2,* maneuverability 3D+2, space 11, hull 3D. Weapons: 4 laser cannons (fire-linked; fire control 3D, damage 6D).

Fate's Judges Skipray Blastboat. Capital (due to power output), *capital starship gunnery 4D, capital ship piloting 4D, capital ships shields 4D, sensors 4D,* maneuverability 1D+2, space 8, hull 2D+1, shields 2D. Weapons: 3 medium ion cannons (fire linked; fire control 3D, damage 4D), twin laser cannon turret (fire control 1D, damage 5D), proton torpedo launcher (fire control 2D, damage 9D), concussion missile launcher (fire control 1D, damage 6D).

"Docking with your spice pickup is the most dangerous part since it leaves you and your ship completely vulnerable. If you managed to avoid Fate's Judges and your pickup is in sight, take the risk and try docking. You'll know all too soon if your contact's a phony or a trap — by then it's too late, but that's all part of the job. Never confuse business with trust — when it concerns spice, the stakes are way too high.

"Now the pull-out. This is when things start getting a little interesting. By now, the Empire's wise to you and called up an alert. Larger capital ships will start performing double-parabolas trying to second guess which way you'll poke out of the asteroid belt. The Judges don't take kindly to anyone flying through their personal rock pile without asking, so they'll be sending TIEs and Skiprays with orders to swat you first and ask questions later.

"The trick is not to head directly out of the asteroid field. They're expecting you, so let them



© LFL 1996

wait. Turn your ship's transponder on to let them know exactly where you are in the belt. At the same time, launch a drone that broadcasts your ship's transponder code. Turn your ship's transponder off and let them chase the drone while you hide among the rocks.

"The drone gambit will give you enough time to pull a double-reverse through the asteroid field and head back towards Sevarcos II. I hear some folks call this Solo's End Run. Never met the man, but it's the last thing they expect, I tell you! When you break from the asteroid field, they'll be plenty of capital ships around, but don't fret, they're more surprised than prepared because most of the snubs and blastboats are looking for you on the other side of the asteroid belt by now.

"Go full blast perpendicular from the closest planetary body's orbital plane. You're going to need every ounce of your ion engines for this one, so remember to make those motivator inspections before you come to Sevarcos. Everyone by now will be chasing you, triangulating in hopes to box you in. But you got both distance and speed on them, so just pull back on the little magic lever and pray to the higher power of your choice that your hyperdrive decides to work today. You're free and clear. All that's left is to make your spice drop and collect your fee. Not bad for a day's work, I'd say."

Coming Back to Star Wars

By Anthony P. Russo

I went through my first *Star Wars* phase when the films were released. They were so inspiring that I proceeded to fill several notebooks with my own characters, worlds and spacecraft. (Ever hear of the Z-wing? Well, now you have.) Little did I realize that George Lucas had nine movies already planned out and I was just plain out of luck. *Star Wars* eventually faded to a warm, fuzzy memory and all I wanted was to get my own ideas in print.

Like most aspiring writers, breaking into the mainstream science fiction market (*Analog, Omni, Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine,* et al.) is little short of impossible. I collected rejection slips as a side hobby. After finally publishing a short story in *Aboriginal Science Fiction Magazine,* I didn't know what to do next. Should I write for the comics? The greeting card industry? ("Thank the Force it's Your Birthday! ...")

As it happened, roleplaying games were another part of my life that was making a comeback. My friends were interested in starting up a game or two, and I wanted to try running a *Star Wars* game. A friend pulled out some books. Lots of books.

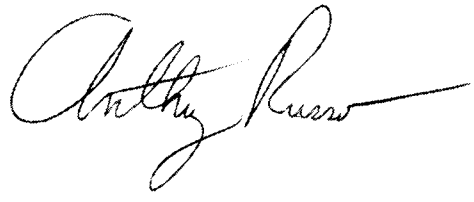
The sourcebooks were interesting because they brought the tiniest details to life. Now I knew the difference between a Victory and an Imperial Star Destroyer. Admiral Ackbar was a Mon Calamari who helped design the B-wing fighter. Greedo was a Rodian bounty hunter. The *Millennium Falcon* was a heavily modified YT-1300 light transport. The sourcebooks, and the novels that followed, breathed life into the films and made them fun again.

My ever-vigilant friend showed me a flyer for a new publication called the *Star Wars Adventure Journal.* Better still, they were looking for material. The old thrill came back. Here was my chance to use those old characters, worlds and spacecraft.

I took something from the films that was never fully detailed — the spice mines of Kessel. Surely there was no other exciting place in the universe than this sprawling desert prison world ruled by Spice Lords.

Three days after I submitted it, I got a message on the answering machine. West End Games wanted to publish my manuscript! There was only one problem: I could not use Kessel. Kevin Anderson was writing about Kessel in his *Jedi Academy* trilogy and his interpretation looked nothing like mine. So I received my first lesson working in George Lucas' universe — story continuity counts. I changed Kessel to something severe-sounding. "Sevarcos" did nicely.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the "Free-Traders" article, and the others that Peter Schweighofer has graciously published, is the response. Readers are using Sevarcos and building on it, even submitting their own adventures. It's amazing. Even my six-year-old son is hooked on the films. For a small book that is occasionally crammed between larger tomes on the bookstore shelf, the *Adventure Journal* is a quality piece of work. I'm glad I came back.



STAR WARS
ADVENTURE

The Spira Regatta

by Paul Sudlow

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

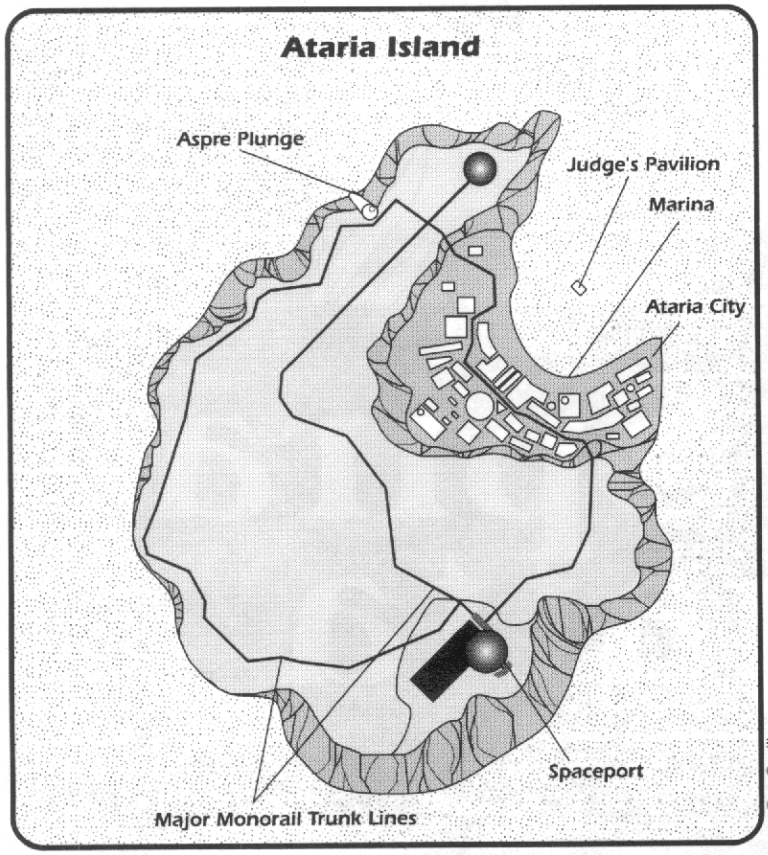
Adventure Background

Imperial activity in the characters' sector has greatly increased recently. Indeed, the blockade runner that was to have delivered a much-needed shipment of medical and military supplies to the local Rebel cell group was seized and impounded by Imperial customs vessels.

In desperate need of the supplies, the cell hastily set a backup plan into motion. Another shipment was sent to a drop point on Spira, a pleasure world situated close to the Inner Core. Unfortunately, the smuggler making the delivery was intercepted in Spira's lower atmosphere by security forces, and had to abort the delivery. The pilot dumped the crates containing the supplies into Spira's giant sea, and blasted back into space, six blastboats hot on his tail.

The Force was with the Rebels, for the supplies came to rest in shallow water, and near the wreckage of an ancient alien spacecraft frequented by tourist divers. The two Rebel agents on Spira donned diving suits and spirited the supply crates into the underwater wreck, but lacked the personnel to raise and recover them. Under cover of vacationing tourists, the characters must travel to Spira, secure the supplies, and smuggle them back to their base.

To integrate this adventure into a campaign, the gamemaster should fill the crates with items needed by the characters' group that the Alliance can provide. In a one-shot scenario, or if no specific items are in demand, the supplies might be a cache of specialized weapons, or medical supplies. In either case, the characters may come to realize that the military toys they take for granted do not grow on trees.



Episode One: Living the Good Life

The characters will be undercover for the duration of the adventure, posing as wealthy tourists from the Core. They arrive dressed to the nines in what they imagine rich people wear on vacations (they may be wrong, of course). Each has been allotted a bankroll of 1,000 credits (along with stern warnings to spend as little of it as possible) to further the illusion of being big spenders.

The characters will be arriving on Spira armed only with small stun guns (3D stun damage). Generally, the weapons ban applies to all lethal weapons (damage rating above 2D), though stun guns are permitted as personal defense weapons. The ban does not extend to sports weapons (so the gamemaster may let characters bring such weapons if they have them).

Remember, Spira is largely a pro-Empire world, and the people vacationing here are doing very well in the New Order system. There are a few aliens among them, but not many. Gamemasters should remember that the New Order line on aliens is less enlightened than it could be. Alien characters will certainly stand out, and may even be snubbed or insulted while on Spira. At the very least, they will be frequently mistaken for waiters and janitors.

Welcome to Ataria Island

Ataria Island isn't the only resort island on Spira, but it is the best and most exclusive. Ataria boasts beautiful beaches on the east side, and spectacular sheer cliffs to the north and west. Thousands of small bungalows are scattered across the gentle slopes of the interior, and a small tourist city thrives near the resorts on the eastern beaches. The southern inlet also boasts a large marina. The island is linked in an extensive web of monorails.

Ataria Island's spaceport is the only one on the planet which receives passenger liners. It is not at all the dreary wasteland of fuel-stained and exhaust-blasted concrete and steel one might expect on other planets. Here the landing pads are plated in red marble coated and super-sealed. Planters full of exotic trees and flowers frame the landing cradles, invisible force fields protecting them from the blasting winds generated by the

"The Spira Regatta" Adventure Script

Use the following script to start the adventure. The gamemaster will tell you what part (or parts) to read:

Gamemaster: You are all aboard the luxury starliner *Madallo*, bound for the tropical pleasure world of Spira. Your mission is to pick up a badly needed shipment of technical and medical supplies, which, for a variety of complex reasons, are now at the bottom of the Spira sea. The liner is now orbiting Spira waiting for landing clearance. You have retired to your private compartment for the final approach.

1st Character: *This* is the way to go: first class accommodations to one of the hottest planets in the Core! I've heard the resorts here are the classiest this side of Coruscant!

2nd Character: We'll have little time for diversions, I'm afraid. We're here to pick up the supplies and get out.

1st Character: Well, we're supposed to be tourists, right? We have to look the part, right?

3rd Character: If "looking the part" consists of wearing loud floral-patterned shirts, you are certainly ahead of the rest of us.

4th Character: Well, I've got a bad feeling about the whole deal. This whole project has been jinxed from the beginning. First that Imperial blockade shuts down our regular supply line, then the backup drop on Spira goes sour...

5th Character: Yeah, it might have helped if the delivery crew hadn't cut and run at the first sign of an Imperial blastboat. They might have at least ditched our supplies on some little island or in space, instead of dropping them into the *ocean*.

6th Character: Hey, that's what we get for subcontracting to smugglers. If they'd at *least* done a bit of homework, they would have known Spira is off limits except for registered transports and chartered passenger liners.

4th Character: These little stun guns we get to carry don't exactly fill me with confidence. I kind of feel naked without decent weapons.

3rd Character: You feel...? What about *me*? I had to leave my ship behind! I still say we could have posed as merchants and brought it along! What if we have to leave in a hurry?

2nd Character: You know very well there was no time to hack a fake ship ID that would have gotten us on the ground with no questions asked. And since our contact has his own weapons cache, it really isn't worth the risk of smuggling banned guns through customs.

6th Character: Ah, our contact. Seth Cambriel, beach-bum playboy extraordinaire, and Rebel spy on the side. Not a bad sort, from what I've heard.

5th Character: Really? Well, he's certainly got the plum job, eh? We're supposed to meet him in the Aspre Plunge casino on Ataria Island, right? I've heard *legends* about the card games that go down in that place. And now that we have money...

2nd Character: The Alliance gave us those funds to establish our identities as wealthy tourists, *not* to bankroll your exploits at the Liar's Cut table.

1st Character: Yeah, but 1,000 credits each... How better to show off our wealth than by blowing huge sums in the casino?

5th Character: I don't plan on *blowing* anything. I plan on getting rich.

4th Character: Look, this is all neither here nor there. We'll be spending most of our time at sea, in case you've all forgotten.

3rd Character: I'm trying to. I have trouble floating.

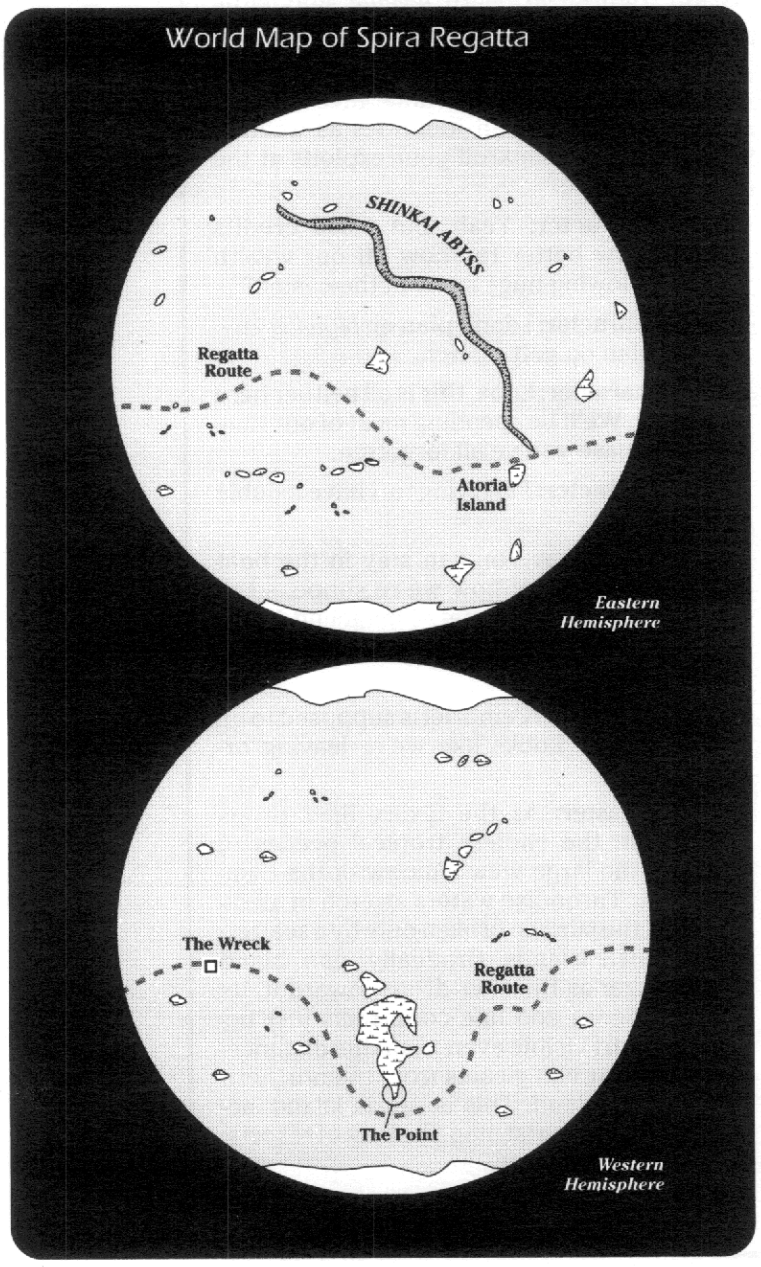
6th Character: You can stay in the boat then. Anyone know how we're supposed to get the goodies offplanet? Smuggling Rebel contraband out on a passenger liner is certainly a novel idea.

2nd Character: Cambriel is supposed to be handling that. Looks like we're leaving orbit...

Gamemaster: As the luxury liner drops from orbit, the endless tropical oceans of Spira fill the large view window of the compartment. Turquoise waters stretch in all directions, the surface broken only by a scattering of small islands. Gradually, one island grows larger as the liner drops toward it, its sandy beaches and fine coral reefs just beyond the surf visible even from this distance. A spectacular cliff gleams from the northern flank of the island. This is Ataria Island, according to the tourist map, the best of resorts, and your destination...

Planet Log Terrain Key

Mountains	Plains	City
Hills	Desert	Spaceport
Volcano	Swamp	Site of Interest
Craters	Forest	Urban/Industrial
Ice	Jungle/Rain Forest	Plateau
Barren Rock	Water	Canyon



mighty liners. Thousands of service droids roam the pads, maintaining the spaceport and the spaceships in their cradles, and carrying baggage back to the terminal. There is a somewhat less impressive compound to the side of the spaceport housing a number of shining Imperial TIE fighters, blastboats, and shuttles.

The passenger terminal is as fanciful and steeped in luxury as the landing platforms. Comfort and class are apparent everywhere one looks. The decor is a tropical style full of arcing white walls inlaid with brilliant mosaics depicting scenes of underwater life. Fountains, potted palms and ceiling fans abound. Prominently placed banners welcome the participants of the 345th annual Spira Regatta Open.

Customs is brief and will go smoothly as long as none of the characters are carrying banned weapons. Travelers caught trying to smuggle weapons past security are let off with a stern warning not to cause trouble while guests of Spira—and the offending weapons are impounded.

The customs officials are relaxed but competent-looking, and wear the sharp tropical uniform of the Spira Security Police—an off-white tunic, pressed khaki knee-length shorts, brown leather shoes, and thick tan socks. They carry small blasters in hip holsters.

Spira Security Police. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 3D+2, melee 3D+1; Knowledge 4D, law enforcement: Spira 6D, streetwise 5D+1, Perception 3D, search 4D, Strength 3D, brawling 3D+2, security 4D.* Move: 10. Blaster (3D damage), uniform security sweeper.

Use the police at other points in the adventure if the characters' actions demand an official security response. Stormtroopers will not be seen at all outside their compound area (until the adventure climax, that is).

If the gamemaster feels like developing the spaceport scene, the characters might see Snopps arriving on the planet, or meet an obnoxious but rich tourist, a regatta participant, or some sort of official.

The Aspre Plunge

The most exclusive resort on the island (not to mention on the planet and in this sector) is the Aspre Plunge, a huge complex built into the north cliff. The characters are to meet their contact in this resort complex.

The Aspre Plunge is an impressive structure of steel and transparisteel, set into the wall of a cliff on the northern side of the island. It is dozens of stories high, and drops right into the surf and down 100 meters into an underwater ravine. Underwater windows provide a panoramic view

of marine life to the merrymakers in the dance rooms, casinos, hotel rooms, spas, and dining rooms of the complex.

The casino is the major attraction for those seeking the jet-set nightlife. Millions of credits are lost and won here every night, and properties and companies change hands constantly. It is a three-tiered room of immense proportions, spanning the entire width and breadth of the Aspre Plunge. The three tiers overlap, each forming a sort of balcony overlooking the tier below it.

The walls, paneled in highly polished greel wood, glow with a warm vermilion luster, and brass gleams from fixtures, railings, and service droids. A huge, curved 30 meter transparisteel window forms the outer wall, and provides a stunning panoramic view of the coral reefs and the colorful fish that flit about in them. Flood lights and special filters in the window provide a well-lit scene even at night.

The casino games vary by level. The upper level is devoted to the card players, and is filled with large polished tables with velvet tops, around which sit silent gamblers wreathed in chak-root smoke. Noise-dampening fields surround each table, and the cards have a treated surface which makes them impossible to read from more than a meter away or from an indirect angle. Liar's cut and sabacc, the classic spacer games, are popular, as are more genteel variants.

The middle tier features the noisier games of chance, such as the slot machines, the Spatz tables, and the Jubilee Wheels. A small restaurant specializing in light meals is located under the shadow of the upper tier.

Games of a more physical nature are reserved for the lower level, such as Null G-Ball, Bounce, and Reflex Races. The lower tier also features an astonishingly well stocked bar. Bar droids circulate throughout the establishment.

Meet Snopps the Great

If the characters tarry to play a bit in the casino, they soon meet Regenald Hanniper Snopps III. Snopps is a handsome and wealthy young dandy, and a crashing bore. Arrogant, petty, and domineering, he insists upon being the center of attention. Happily for him, his loud, penetrating voice and braying laugh help him succeed for all the wrong reasons.

Unfortunately, nature endowed him with a certain skill in gambling and sports, and he makes the most of it. When the characters first see Snopps, he is basking in the center of a fawning group of lesser fellows, fresh from some gambling victory.

Given the natures of Snopps and the characters, it shouldn't take much to set the two parties at odds. The goal here is to introduce the group to Snopps, and give them reason to dislike him.

Spira

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Warm Temperate
Atmosphere: Standard
Hydrosphere: Saturated
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Ocean, small island chains
Length of Day: 25 standard hours
Length of Year: 377 standard days
Sentient Races: Humans
Starport: Standard
Population: 500,000
Planet Function: Tourism
Government: Tourist Guild leases planet from Empire
Tech Level: Space
Major Imports: All (economy is not self-sufficient)
Major Exports: none

Capsule: Spira is a water world with a low axial tilt, giving it a huge temperate zone over much of the planet. The tropical environment and lack of dangerous flora and fauna have made Spira one of the premier vacation spots within easy reach of the privileged Core Worlds elite. Thousands of islands speckle the surface of the oceans, many bearing tourist resorts. Many of the oceanfront bungalows, once occupied by wealthy citizens of the Old Republic, now house political officers and powerful servants of the Empire. Surprisingly, the official Imperial presence on Spira is minimal and low key. There is a small Imperial Army garrison on Ataria Island, but it exists more to provide honor guards to vacationing Moffs, Adepts, Governors, and such, than to impose the will of the Emperor on the inhabitants. Indeed, as on most Core Worlds, the Imperial garrison is well-mannered and largely deferential. Most significantly, its troopers and officers always honor the spirit and letter of Imperial law.

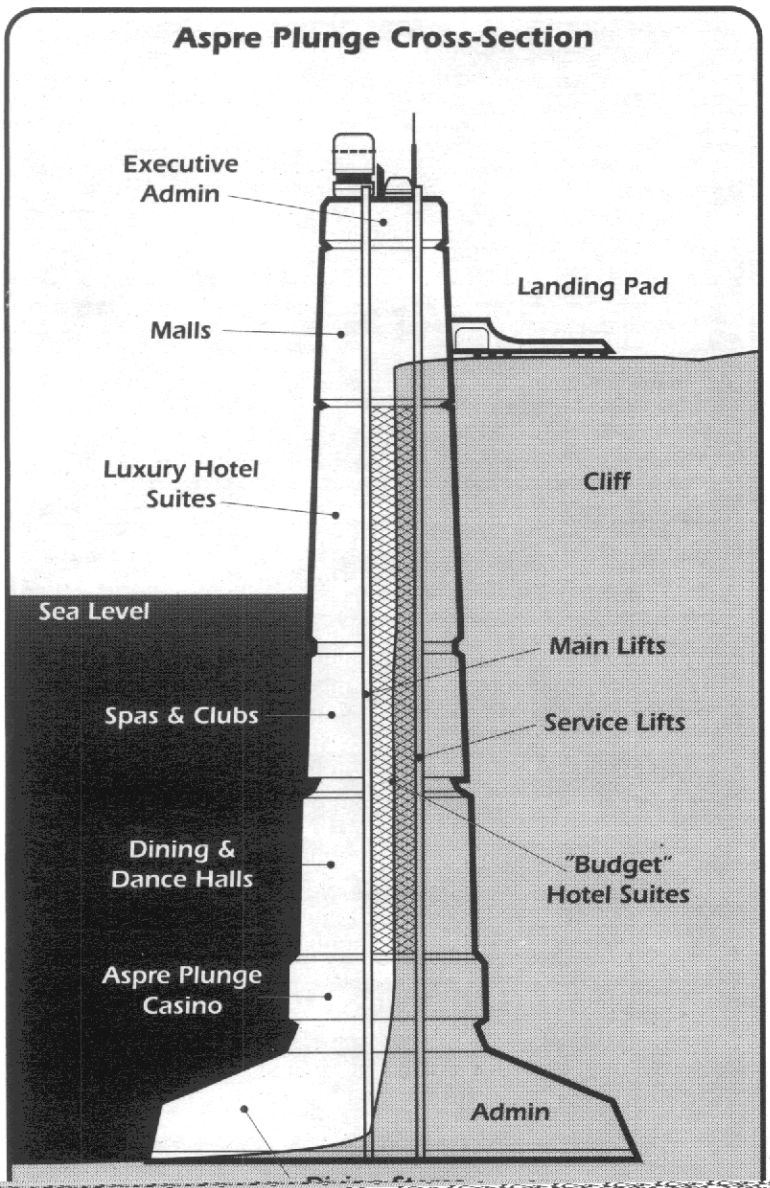
While the Empire patrols and protects the airspace of the planet, there is a larger, independent police force which manages the day-to-day law enforcement affairs of Spira. It answers to the Spira government, not to the Empire, though there is of course a great deal of cooperation between the two forces.

Due to a unique arrangement between the Empire and the Tourism Guild governing Spira, only passenger ships contracted supply shuttles and Imperial vessels may land and take off on the planet.

Getting Down to Business

The characters are to meet Seth Cambriel in the casino as soon as they arrive. They've seen his picture, and he's seen theirs, so linking up should be no problem.

Moving to a quiet booth in the restaurant, Cambriel informs them that the supplies have indeed been moved inside the hull of the undersea wreck. It was he and Harbold Taft, the other Rebel agent on Spira, who recovered the supplies



Since the Rebels can't tolerate another week's delay in getting the supplies, Cambriel has entered the group in the race, and made plans to smuggle a sailing droid aboard their yacht. They'll do terribly in the race, but if they reach the wreck quickly, they should be able to get the supplies with no one the wiser.

The race begins in two days, which will give the group a chance to get in some sailing practice and set up the operation to get the supplies off the planet at the same time. Since privately owned starships are off limits, the group must smuggle the goods off the planet on a registered passenger vessel. Inspections being what they are, Cambriel has devised a method of discouraging a close investigation of the crate holding the supplies: the Camray eel.

Camray eels are long, snakelike marine animals native to Spira that are popular trophies among upper class game hunters. Processed and preserved by a taxidermist, they make impressive wall trophies. Until they are preserved, however, dead Camray eels have an incredibly potent smell, and must be sealed in special storage tanks. Cambriel plans to transfer the goods into an eel storage tank, since he knows the inspectors are reluctant to brave the smell long enough to completely inspect the containers.

But before he can do so, he needs an eel. So, not only do the characters have to participate in a yacht race and dive and recover a large container of illegal supplies, they must also hunt a dangerous predator.

Cambriel has reserved a modest suite in the Aspre Plunge resort for use by the characters during their stay ("modest" only in this economy—it still costs a fortune). However, the characters will be spending little time in the pleasure palace resort.

The characters may eventually meet the other

Alex Winger squatted behind a maze of boulders overlooking the roadway that led up to the mining center complex. These jobs didn't make her nervous normally, but something gnawed at the back of her mind. Something just didn't feel right tonight. The number of Imperial personnel in Ariana had nearly tripled in the last few weeks. And all their energies seemed to be focused on the mines of Garos IV. Something deep inside her told Alex that whatever the Imperials were doing with these ore shipments was going to have a profound effect on her life.

"Look, Doro, they're loading a second cargo skiff," she said, peering through the macrobinoculars. Last night, they'd observed one sled being transported from the mines to the spaceport outside Ariana. Tonight, it looked like the Imperials were doubling their load. But these two skiffs would never make it to the spaceport.

"What in the worlds are they doing with all that ore?" her companion wondered. Doro was 28 years old and this was only his second mission in the field. Alex had been involved with the underground for two years, but her experiences made her feel a lot older than her 18 years.

"I count a dozen scout troopers on speeder bikes," she told Doro. "Plus the two man crew on each sled." Alex pulled her comlink off her belt and sent a signal to her comrades who were waiting in ambush about a kilometer to the north. "C'mon, let's move out," she said.

Suddenly, blaster fire punctuated the stillness of the forest. "What's going on," Doro whispered.

"Team Two, come in," Alex called into her comlink as she headed for the wooded hillside.

"They found us," the voice on the other end of the comlink calmly reported over the static. "AT-STs! And some—"

There was more blaster fire, then the comlink went dead.

"C'mon, Doro, move it," Alex yelled to her companion as another round of blaster fire rang out through the woods. They were definitely getting closer.

Alex and Doro turned westward toward the Tahika Cliffs. The terrain here was too rugged for the AT-STs. Even the Imperial speeder bikes would have a difficult time traversing the area, especially during the middle of the night.

Several shots whipped past Alex's head, igniting a nearby tree. Then she noticed she didn't hear Doro's footsteps behind her. Alex slowed her pace for a few seconds and looked to see his prone body 10 meters back. She could hear the speeder bikes moving closer.

Alex took a deep breath, turned around, and reached Doro in 10 seconds. He'd been hit in the shoulder by a blaster and had fallen, cracking his skull on a rock. Alex could find no pulse. Another shot rang out to Alex's left. She touched Doro's forehead to wish him well wherever death had taken him, then headed farther up the hillside.

Alex could hear footsteps coming up behind her and search lights lit the side of the mountain. She felt confident that she could outwit these scout troopers. She was much more familiar with the terrain than they.

But at the top of the crest, Alex took a misstep, and tripped over some fallen branches. She went careening down the hill. Every rock and every fallen tree branch seemed to find a mark on her body. She came to a stop, bruised and aching, a bright light shining in her eyes. She squinted and could just make out the uniform of a scout trooper.

"Get up!" he yelled at her. "Slowly, now!"

Alex had no problem following that order. Ever so slowly she rose, first to her knees, her hand shielding her eyes from the bright light.

"Over here!" the scout trooper called to his comrade who was hidden from view by the dense underbrush. His light pointed away from Alex for no more than a second. That second was all she needed to grab a fallen limb and send it crashing into the trooper with every bit of strength that she could muster. Alex grabbed the trooper's blaster as he tumbled to the ground and she sprinted the three meters to his speeder bike. Another blast shot past Alex's head and she returned fire as the scout trooper's companion came into view. Two shots from her blaster and the man had crumpled to the forest floor.

Suddenly, blaster fire punctuated the stillness of the forest.

Alex jumped on the speeder bike and took off toward the Cliffs. The going was slow, the darkness hampering her vision, but she decided to stick with the speeder bike to put as much distance as possible between the pursuing scout troopers and herself. She finally deserted the bike about one kilometer south of the landspeeder she and Doro had come in.

It was right where they'd left it, fairly close to the cliffs that overlooked the most gorgeous, yet deadly, view anywhere on the planet. The Tahika Cliffs—for over one hundred kilometers they stretched the coastline, steep and forbidding. From this point they dropped vertically almost 200 meters. Few had attempted to climb them. Of those, fewer than half had survived. Alex had never attempted the climb, but in her dreams she saw herself scaling the sides of the Cliffs. It was a most unusual dream. She was always in the company of a man with sandy brown hair and blue eyes. He was there every time. He seemed famil-

Alex Winger

Type: Underground freedom fighter
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 7D, brawling parry 3D+1, dodge 5D, grenade 4D, heavy weapons 5D, melee 5D+2, melee parry 5D+1
KNOWLEDGE 3D+1
Alien races 5D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 3D+2, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 4D+2, survival 5D+1, technology 5D
MECHANICAL 3D+1
Astrogation 4D+2, beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 6D
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 5D, command 6D, con 5D+1, hide 5D+2, search 5D+1, sneak 5D+2
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 3D+1, stamina 6D+1
TECHNICAL 3D
Computer programming/repair 5D+2, demolition 5D, droid programming 5D+1, repulsorlift repair 4D+2, security 4D+1
Special Abilities:
Force Skills: Sense 1D
Sense: Life detection
Force Sensitive?: Yes
Force Points: 4
Character Points: 10
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), blaster rifle (5D), comlink, landspeeder with hidden compartments, macrobinoculars

Capsule: Alex Winger, or Alexandra as her foster father calls her, has long dark hair and almond-shaped blue eyes. She is poised and graceful when a situation calls for it, but privately is all tomboy. Though some men find her combination of beauty and intelligence intimidating, those who know her well agree that the 18 year-old Alex is bright, quick-witted, and loyal—someone you can always count on.

Alex was six years old when an Imperial task force raided her homeworld, killing the only family she knew. She was being raised by her grandparents after her mother, whom she remembers being named Ana, died in a freak accident. It is believed that her father may have been involved with the Rebel Alliance, but if she has any memory of him, she has buried it deep within her subconscious.

Alex was taken captive by that Imperial raiding party, as was not an uncommon practice. She was "given" to a childless couple, Imperial Governor Tork Winger and his wife Sali, of Garos IV, who had shown their loyalty to the Empire. Though they raised her in a loving environment, someday Alex hopes to gain access to Imperial records that may help her identify her homeworld and track down her father, who, more than likely, believes she died during that raid.

For several years Alex experienced vivid nightmares of the raid. She remembers, in startling detail, the death and destruction caused by the Emperor's troops. It is those memories, and the witnessing of a close friend's execution at the hands of the Imperials on Garos IV, that have led her to join the underground freedom fighters in their fight against Imperial domination. Alex's position as the adopted daughter of the Imperial Governor has allowed her not only the luxury of the finest education, but also the ability to infiltrate the political and military structure of Garos IV and its relationship with the Empire. She is truly fond of her foster father, but feels he is misguided in his espousal of the Empire, whether it be from a fear of retribution or just his inability to see a better way to end the Garosian conflict. Alex will never pledge allegiance to a government that rules by threat of force.

Alex is something of a genius, entering the University of Garos before her sixteenth birthday. Her natural curiosity and intelligence have made her an expert on many subjects. She is an accomplished pilot, receiving her wings at the age of 11. Her biggest desire is to someday pilot an X-wing starfighter.

As a member of the underground, Alex has not been content to merely spy on Imperial activities, but regularly takes part in search and destroy missions. Her comrades have recognized her special talents, and though they would prefer that she stay out of the most dangerous operations, they have been unable to convince her otherwise. Alex is wholeheartedly committed to every aspect of the freedom fighters' struggle, and willing to risk her own life in these troubled times.

Alex is a Force-sensitive individual, though she is only beginning to realize that her "dreams" may be visions of a possible future. At times, she has been able to sense danger, but she has not learned how to call on this power at will.

Ultimately, Alex and her friends in the underground realize they will need the help of the New Republic to remove the Imperial threat from Garos IV. But every little dent they can make, every weapon they can steal or supply line they can disrupt only furthers their resolve to continue the fight for freedom and justice.

Quote: "Hey, have you ever known me to take chances?"

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: 382 local days
Sapient Species: Humans
Starports: 2 standard class
Population: 20 million Garosians, 4 million Sundars
Planet Function: Agriculture, manufacturing
Government: Imperial governor
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. It was settled by humans more than 4,000 years ago. And until recently, it was a self-supporting planet with little contact outside the system.

The seat of government is located in Ariana on the western coast, known for the forboding Tahika Cliffs, on the larger of two continents. Ariana is an intellectual and business center, dominated by the prestigious University of Garos.

For more than 100 years a civil war between native Garosians and colonists from the third planet in the system, Sundari, engulfed Garos IV. When the Empire intervened in the struggle, it ended the conflict—violently—executing hundreds of known "troublemakers" on both sides.

But the Empire has generally left Garos IV alone since establishing a quiet presence on the planet 12 years ago. Only in the last year has the number of troops begun to grow. Their chief concern seems to be the mining of hibridium in a region south of the city of Ariana. Only a few fleet captains, under direct orders from the late Emperor Palpatine, seem to understand the significance of the Empire's presence on Garos IV. But it is obvious to the underground that the Imperials intend to exploit whatever knowledge they can acquire on the cloaking properties of the ore which comes from the mines.

iar to her, yet she'd never met anyone like him. So she waited for the day he would come into her life.

It was quiet now except for the call of the crupas that dwelt in the trees. Alex heard no speeder bikes, no footsteps on the forest floor. She revved up the landspeeder and turned north, heading back toward Ariana.

She avoided the main roads and followed the paths that hugged the Cliffs—no need to risk running into the heightened patrols in the area.

Thoughts of Team Two came to her mind—she wondered if they'd been killed, or captured. She wasn't worried that they'd identify her. No one knew her real name. That's how the underground cells were set up. Mostly nameless faces, usually four to six people in each cell. If one were captured, they'd never be able to betray more than a handful of people.

Normally they worked efficiently. Tonight was the first time in months something had gone wrong. Alex wondered if the Imperials had been tipped off somehow. Or if the increased activities at the mines, which meant increased patrols, had just caused their bad luck this evening. She'd have to discuss it with her cell leader in the morning.

For now, she made her way up to the governor's mansion and parked the landspeeder. Fortunately, her stepfather hadn't felt the need to have security guards patrol the grounds around their home. So Alex was able to slip in through the back door unnoticed. The house was quiet. She tiptoed upstairs past the darkened wing where Tork Winger slept. Safely behind the doors of her own room, she stared at herself in the mirror, shaking her head. "What a mess you are, Alex!" she told the reflection. Her face was smeared with dirt, her clothes were ripped and filthy from her tumble down the mountain. She'd have to get rid of them tomorrow. She chuckled to herself, glancing at her chrono. Not tomorrow, she thought, today, as she cleaned the grime from her face.

Five minutes later, Alex fell into her comfortable bed, exhausted. Within minutes, she slept. But her sleep was restless. A disturbing dream intruded into her thoughts—*Explosions ripped through a building—everything was so hazy—it looked like a barracks. A man lay wounded in the corridor, stunned by a blast—a woman bent over him, cradling his head in her arms...*

Alex awoke with a start, as light streamed in through the window. *Who are these people?* Something seemed vaguely familiar about the man, but she couldn't really place his face. And who was that woman?

She nearly jumped out of bed when her servant droid entered the room. "Good morning, Mistress Alexandra," he chirped cheerily. "Your father would like you to join him for breakfast in the solarium in one-half hour."

She groaned as she sat up in bed. "Is it time to get up already?"

"Yes, indeed, Mistress. You don't want to keep the Governor waiting."

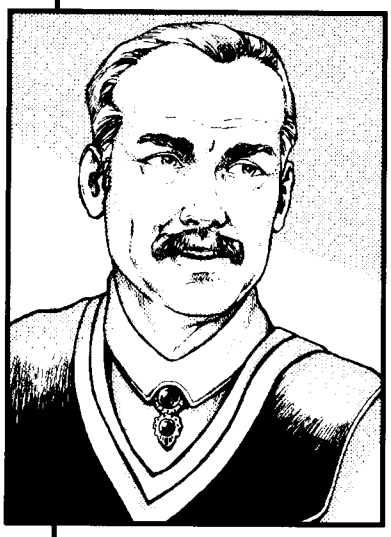
Alex rolled her eyes, and glanced at the chrono. 0700. Time to get up. It was going to be a busy day.

▪ ▪ ▪

"Good morning, Father," she greeted Tork Winger with a kiss on the cheek.

"Alexandra," he said, noticing the dark circles under her eyes. "Didn't you get any sleep last night?"

Tork Winger



Type: Imperial Governor
DEXTERITY 2D+1
Blaster 6D
KNOWLEDGE 3D+2
Alien races 8D, bureaucracy 9D+2, cultures 8D+2, languages 8D, planetary systems 8D+2, survival 5D, technology 6D
MECHANICAL 3D
Astrogation 5D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, starship piloting 5D+2
PERCEPTION 4D
Bargain 10D, command 10D+1, con 9D
STRENGTH 2D+2
TECHNICAL 2D+1
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 4
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster (4D), data pad

Capsule: Tork Winger is an extremely distinguished looking, gray-haired gentleman, the epitome of a diplomat. For the past 12 years he has served as Imperial Governor on his homeworld of Garos IV.

He was one of the first Garosians to enter the service of the Old Republic almost 50 years ago. After serving five years in the army, Winger returned to Garos, and thanks to his family's position, he moved quickly up through the diplomatic ranks. By his 30th birthday, he was a top aide to the highest authority on Garos.

Winger discovered very early in his career that he had a natural talent for diplomacy. He was respected by his peers, and by his enemies as well. He became the planet's leading authority on the conflict between native Garosians and colonists from the neighboring planet Sundari. He mediated negotiations between the warring factions for years. Both sides found him to be a just man, capable of sorting through all the intrigue that seemed to dominate politics.

But Winger was also a man torn apart by his inabilities to reach a true and lasting peace on Garos IV. He felt he'd been closest to achieving that goal when the Empire stepped in and forced an end to the conflict. Winger felt dismayed by their methods, but he accepted them, seeing the sacrifices that were made had actually stopped most of the random violence.

Because he was held in such high esteem by his people, Emperor Palpatine chose Winger to be Imperial governor. But Winger soon discovered that many of his countrymen found his acceptance of the Empire a traitorous action. Many went underground to fight against Imperial control, though Winger strived to convince them that such actions were fruitless.

Now, three years after the Battle of Endor, Tork Winger watches as the Empire loses ground to the New Republic. He wonders what will become of Garos IV, and of the life he had envisioned for his daughter Alexandra. For she is the one truly bright spot in his life. Though she is adopted, he adores her, and wants only the best for her. He would do anything for her.

Quote: "I only want what is best for all the people of Garos."

Alex rubbed her eyes, trying to wake up, and took a sip of tea. "Big exam today, Father. Chemistry. I was up until after one studying."

He shook his head. "Six hours' sleep? That's not too bad. But I imagine you dreamed of formulas all night long. That would be enough to keep me from a restful sleep."

Alex nodded in agreement.

They ate breakfast in silence. Typical, Alex thought, smiling to herself. Her stepfather always wanted to dine with her, but he saved most of the conversation for the end of the meal. Winger reviewed his schedule for the day, and read the morning updates. Alex could tell he was disturbed by something—it had to be a report of the underground's unsuccessful activity. He finally spoke just as Alex took the last bite of her meal.

"Alexandra, I'd like you to help me host dinner this evening."

"Special company tonight, Father?" she asked.

"The Imperial Star Destroyer *Judicator* is making orbit this afternoon," Winger told her. "You remember my old friend Captain Brandei, don't you?"

Alex felt her heart skip several beats. An Imperial Star Destroyer at Garos. "Yes, of course. He was here about three years ago, wasn't it right after the Battle of Endor?"

Winger grimaced. "Alexandra, please do not bring that subject up tonight." He hadn't said it to admonish his daughter, but only to remind her that any mention of that disaster should not be discussed in the presence of any Imperial officers.

"Of course not, Father," she said. "Dinner, this

evening? What time?"

"Seven," he said, smiling at her. "Your mother would be so proud of you, Alexandra. You really should consider a career in the diplomatic corps. You carry yourself so well at functions like these. And you are such a brilliant young woman!"

"I know, Father! You've told me this a thousand times! But I hate politics!"

Winger chuckled, taking one last sip of his tea. "All right, my dear, I won't try to talk you into it over breakfast." He got up and turned to leave the room, giving her one last peck on the cheek. "I'll see you this evening, Alexandra."

When she looked up, she caught Lej Carner giving her a sly look.

"Yes, sir."

He was almost out the door of the solarium when he called back to her. "Oh, and good luck on that chemistry exam."

She smiled at him. He really had been good to her all these years. Alexandra did love him, but wished there was some way she could convince him that the Empire's method of controlling the Garosian conflict was not the solution to the problem.

Tork Winger didn't necessarily agree with the Empire's use of force, but at least the random bombings, assassinations, and outright fighting between towns controlled by the different factions seemed to have ended. Of course, the populace soon found itself with a common enemy—the Imperials. The more conservative elements of both groups united to form the underground. This small group of freedom fighters tried to make life miserable for those unfortunate people the Emperor had sent to their world. Little did Tork Winger know that a member of his own family was a part of that underground organization.

▪ ▪ ▪

Alex tried to stifle a yawn. But this latest lecture at the university on Imperial military structure had to be the dullest offering of the term. Unfortunately, it was required for all students since the Empire had established a presence on Garos.

And Alex, unlike many of her classmates, had the potential, but not the desire, of going on to the Raithal Academy. Being a woman could have put a damper on that idea, but Alexandra Winger was the daughter of an Imperial governor. And she was a brilliant student. Had the times been different, she certainly would have been at the Academy by now.

But that was the crux of the matter. The Emperor was dead, and the Imperial fleet was in a state of disorganized confusion. Admirals, gover-

Magir Paca

Type: Underground leader
DEXTERITY 4D
Blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D+1, grenade 6D, heavy
weapons 5D+2, melee 5D, melee parry 6D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Alien races 4D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 4D+2,
planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 7D, survival 8D, technology 6D
MECHANICAL 3D+2
Astrogation 4D, beast riding 5D, repulsorlift operation 6D
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 6D, command 6D+1, con 6D+1, hide 7D, search 6D, sneak 7D
STRENGTH 3D+2
TECHNICAL 4D
Force Points: 1
Character points: 5
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), data pad

Capsule: Magir Paca is one of the original underground leaders known as COSGU (the Committee of Seven for Garosian Unification). Paca was a close friend of Imperial Governor Tork Winger, and had grown up calling him "uncle." Winger had high hopes for Paca and planned to groom him for an important position in Garos' political structure.

Paca had been working as an assistant to the Minister of Commerce when the Empire established itself on Garos IV. This gave him access to all types of useful information. For 10 years he covertly passed information to the underground until the Imperials realized there was a leak in the system. Paca fell into their trap and only by a stroke of fate was he able to elude arrest. Alex Winger, then only 15 years old, was forever fiddling with computer files. She accidently uncovered an Imperial file on suspected underground figures and the cases being built against them. She was able to warn Paca, and he disappeared hours before Imperial troops came to arrest him.

Paca has remained in hiding for the last two years, and now coordinates much of the underground's activities.

Quote: "We're going to have to hit them where it hurts. Even if its only one little bit at a time."

nors, and fleet captains all jockeyed for position trying to bring order out of the chaos. The thing was, there didn't seem to be much order.

Now there were even rumors that the New Republic was advancing deeper and deeper in the Core Worlds toward Coruscant. Some said that nearly half the galaxy was in their hands. Garos IV wasn't that far off the beaten track—a mere four days from Coruscant. Alex prayed for the day when the New Republic made its appearance on Garos. It was a day all who worked for the underground looked forward to.

The commander's voice droned steadily on. Alex had to rub her eyes just to stay awake. Just a few more minutes, she thought, glancing at her chrono. When she looked up, she caught Lej Carner giving her a sly look. She'd met him a year earlier when his father, a major general in the Imperial army, had been assigned to run the mining center complex. And she'd had the misfortune of having him in at least one class for each of the last three terms.

Agh! She tried to smile. She found Lej disgusting, one of the most arrogant men she had ever met. But she'd cultivated his friendship to uncover as much as she could about the increased Imperial activities at the mines. Unfortunately, Lej had little knowledge, by choice as far as Alex could discern, of his father's command.

The buzzer sounded indicating the end of class. Alex stood up, trying to collect her things when Trad Mays slammed into her.

"Sorry, Alexandra," he said. "Here, let me help you with those." He bent down to pick up her data books that had crashed to the floor, and Alex could have sworn he was blushing.

She smiled at him, overlooking his clumsiness, and let him pick up her things as Lej walked up to her.

"Alexandra, there's a group of us meeting at Chado's in a half hour. Can you come?" he asked.

She feigned disappointment. "Sorry, Lej, I've got some work to do."

"Aw, come on Alexandra, You know what they say—all work and no play ..."

"Lej, this is something my father asked me to do. I can't put it off," she tried to explain.

He rolled his eyes. "Oh, yeah, the great governor himself! You know, Alexandra, you don't work for him!"

Trad handed a stack of books to Alex and grinned sheepishly at her. "See you tomorrow," he called as he left her alone with Lej.

"I'm just trying to be helpful, Lej. Since my mother died last year I've picked up some of her unofficial duties."

"Oh, I see your plan! Trying to get extra points so they'll *have* to admit you to the Academy. Too bad you can't go this year with me!"

Carl Barzon

Type: Professor, underground leader
DEXTERITY 2D
Blaster 4D, brawling parry 3D, dodge, 2D+2
KNOWLEDGE 3D+1
Alien races 6D, bureaucracy 5D, cultures 5D+2 languages 6D,
planetary systems 4D+2, survival 4D+1, technology 6D
MECHANICAL 2D+1
PERCEPTION 3D
STRENGTH 2D
TECHNICAL 3D+2
Computer programming/repair 4D, droid programming/repair 4D+2
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 4
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster (4D), data pad

Capsule: Dr. Carl Barzon is a professor and research scientist at the University of Garos in Ariana. He has spent 25 years quietly researching the natural cloaking properties of the ore hibridium, which is only found on the western coastline of the main continent on Garos IV.

Barzon was born on the third planet in the Garos system, Sundari, but came to Garos IV as a student doing graduate work at the university. He stayed on to teach, becoming one of the most well-respected people in his profession.

Barzon became involved with the underground shortly after the Empire established a presence on Garos IV. His greatest fear is that the Imperials will complete the research he began on hibridium and develop weapons which would help secure their hold on the galaxy.

Quote: "You can imagine the consequences for the galaxy should this knowledge fall into the wrong hands."

"Yeah," she hid the relief in her voice, "too bad."

"Well, guess I'll see you later."

Alex hurried from the MillnDoc building toward the University Library. She stopped at one of the central comm terminals to check for messages, punching in her ID. Within seconds, the message she anticipated appeared.

Study group meeting in L-25 at 1015.

She glanced at her chrono. Five minutes. She signed off the terminal and headed for her "study group."

They were already waiting for her deep in the bowels of the library, through a maze of corridors to the secret entrance into an underground system of tunnels. It was said you could travel the entire length of Ariana underground, if you knew your way around.

The men sat at the conference table in the small room. Dr. Carl Barzon and Magir Paca were two leaders of the resistance movement on Garos IV. These men were part of the handful of people whom Alex knew the identities of. Barzon had been Alex's first contact with the underground. And Paca was an old family friend, at least until his traitorous activities had been uncovered.

"What happened?" Paca asked Alex.

"There were extra guards at the mines. And they must have been set up on the perimeter before we even got there. I never spotted anyone until the shooting began," she told them. "Any word on Team Two?"

"Scat was captured. He is being held in the detention center. And because of the incident last night, the skiffs are under heavy guard at the mining center."

She nodded. "What's going on at the mines? Have they discovered something we don't know about?"

Adventure Idea

The characters, working as members of the resistance on Garos IV, are assigned to place small, remote sensor packages around the Imperial hibridium mines in the region south of the city of Ariana. However, patrols and troop strength have recently been increased. Characters must dodge Imperial scout patrols as well as AT-ST walkers while making sure the sensors are well-placed, well-hidden and operational.

"We were hoping you might be able to find out more about that," Dr. Barzon said. "They've confiscated all my research notes. I don't dare add any new data to what they already have."

"Your research on the ore?" Alex asked.

"Yes. We made a breakthrough—isolated the component in the ore that creates the natural cloaking abilities. I'm getting close to refining a technique which will allow us to manufacture cloaked weapons at a fraction of the cost it now requires to build cloaking devices, and with none of the energy requirements the current devices use. You can imagine the consequences for the galaxy if such knowledge fell into the wrong hands."

Alex didn't even have to imagine. It was all quite clear that this new technology could put the Empire back on the offensive.

"I wonder if your research has anything to do with the Star Destroyer *Judicator's* visit to Garos," Alex said.

"The *Judicator* is here?" Barzon asked.

"Yes. I'm helping my father host a dinner tonight for her senior officers. Maybe I'll be able to find out something useful."

"I wouldn't doubt it," Barzon said. "Just be careful."

"What about Scat?" Alex asked. They'd broken other people out of detention before, but there were a lot fewer Imperial stormtroopers to deal with during those missions.

"Team Five is going in at 0400."

"I'd like to help," she offered.

"It's too risky, Alex."

"Risky's my middle name!"

"With the increased Imperial activity, I just don't..."

"Paca, I know what I'm doing," she insisted.

"All right. Rendezvous with Team Five at 0300 in tunnel C-21," Paca said.

She nodded. "You said the supply skiffs are still at the mine?"

"Yes. Our contact at the Defense Ministry said they're moving out at 1230 today. They are supposed to arrive at the spaceport at 1300."

"So they *are* taking the ore off-planet."

"Yes."

"Where?"

"We don't know yet. Our contact is working on that. Maybe you'll hear something tonight."

"That must be why the *Judicator* is here," Alex commented. "So, what time do we hit the spaceport?"

"We can't hit them there, Alexandra."

"Don't we have anyone who can get to the shuttle that's taking the ore? Sabotage it?"

"Security's really tight—we've had a difficult time infiltrating the spaceport. But we're working on that," Paca said. "For now, we have to hit the convoy on the road, before it gets to the spaceport."

"In broad daylight?" Barzon asked.

"We have no choice," Paca replied. "Are you in?"

Alex nodded, a grim determination in her face.

"Okay. Here's the plan..."

▪ ▪ ▪

Alex's landspeeder zipped along the winding mountainous road south of the spaceport. She had such natural instincts for piloting, she could almost fly blindfolded.

From the corner of her eye, Alex spotted a movement off to her left in the trees.

No signs of increased activity through here, she thought. It surprised her that the Imperials didn't seem overly concerned about their ore shipment, even after that

incident last night. *Well, hopefully that will make our job a little easier.*

Alex turned the landspeeder off the main road and stopped about a kilometer to the west. There were a series of caves here she'd discovered as a child, perfect for hiding landspeeders, or any weapons the underground might find useful. She pulled her landspeeder into a cave, the running lights illuminating the darkness, and moved about 50 meters from the entrance before stopping.

The cave was deserted; her comrades had taken the stolen Plex missile launcher from its hiding place. They would be set up about two kilometers to the southeast lying in wait for that supply convoy. Alex pulled on some camouflage clothing then grabbed her blaster rifle and macrobinoculars from the hidden compartment in the landspeeder. She took off at a trot to get in position for the coming attack.

Alex carefully made her way through the densely wooded terrain, over one rise, down the other side and back up another. She watched her back—she didn't want a repeat of last night—but she saw no sign of scout troopers in the forest.

From her position at the summit of Hargon's Hill, Alex had a clear view of a small portion of the road about 150 meters away. She knew that all around her in the hills 30 members of the underground lay in waiting, each with a slightly different angle on the road. Each person was assigned a specific target. They'd be lucky to get off more than two shots, so each shot had to count.

Alex checked the sight on her blaster rifle aiming for a spot on the road where she expected two scout troopers to appear. She glanced at her chrono. *Won't be long now,* she thought.

The forest muted the sounds of the two advance scouts, but Alex spotted them as they followed the winding road toward the spaceport. *Right on time.* She took a deep breath, trying to relax and get into a comfortable position. Another tense minute passed. Then, through the gunsight, she watched two, then four more scout troopers, appear on the road. The first skiff was behind that group. Suddenly, an explosion shook the mountainside as the Plex missile found its first mark. Alex immediately fired her first round, hitting the third scout trooper. Another shot and she'd taken out the one next to him as well. Another explosion lit the forest, as the second skiff exploded into flames. Alex peered through her macros and from her vantage point, she could see four dead scout troopers. A fifth one seemed to be wounded, crawling away from his wrecked speeder. Parts of the skiff had been blown for meters in every direction, probably killing a few other troopers.

But for now, Alex's job was done. She slung the blaster rifle over her shoulder and headed down the mountainside back toward the northwest where her speeder was hidden. She was almost within sight of the caves when someone stepped out from behind a tree and tackled her, throwing her to the ground. She tried to pull away from him, but he was much stronger. She was flat on her stomach on the ground when he pulled her headgear off and turned her over.

"Holy empire!" he said. It was Lej Carner. What in the worlds was he doing out here? *He must have followed me, probably wondered why I went past the turn for the Governor's mansion.* She wondered if he knew about the caves. *Alex,* she thought to herself, *you've got to be more cautious!*

"Get off of me!" she yelled at him, hoping to throw him off balance.

"Alexandra," he said, moving off her, but pulling a blaster from his belt, "those are awfully strange garments you're wearing." He paused, then pointed at her blaster. "Nice rifle. Standard underground issue?"

Alex sat up glaring at him. If only she could remain calm for a few minutes, surely some of her comrades would show up. She had to stall him. She started to get up.

"Watch it," he said. "Move away from the rifle. Slowly. Gee, Alexandra, bet you didn't hear those two explosions, did you?" His tone was dripping with sarcasm, but Alex held his stare. She moved a step closer to him. "Lej, I..."

"Don't bother, Alexandra. I don't want anything to do with traitors."

From the corner of her eye, Alex spotted a movement off to her left in the trees. She looked off toward the right, and Lej's eyes followed hers. Obviously, this wasn't his line of work. He'd forgotten she probably had companions. He looked around nervously, then moved closer and pushed Alex toward his landspeeder.

Alex stumbled to the ground, and heard one shot ring out. She looked behind her as Lej crumpled to the rocky floor, dying instantly from the blaster shot.

A man she knew as Chance appeared from behind a tree. "You okay?" he asked her.

She nodded, but felt more shaken up than she cared to admit. "Thanks," she said, not wanting to look at her classmate's body, but forcing herself to do it.

Chance placed his hand on her shoulder. "It's all right," he told her.

Alex took a deep breath. "Yeah. I'll move the landspeeder into the cave," she told him.

"I'll get rid of the body," Chance said. He lifted the lifeless form over his shoulders and headed toward the Cliffs.

After Alex moved Lej's landspeeder deep into the caves, she changed her clothes, returned the blaster rifle and macrobinoculars to their hidden

compartment, and moved her landspeeder out of the cave.

She knew the main road would be crawling with Imperial troops soon, but the back road to the governor's mansion was deserted. It was only a kilometer to the main drive near the mansion. Everything seemed perfectly normal as she pulled the landspeeder under the front portico of the mansion. She parked, grabbed her books and headed into the house. She glanced at her chrono. It was 1310.

▪ ▪ ▪

The ancient timepiece in the front hall chimed midnight as Alex and Tork Winger bid goodnight to their guests. It had been a fascinating evening. Not surprisingly, the main topic of conversation had been the attack on the supply convoy.

Alexandra doted on Captain Brandei, hoping to learn where the Empire was shipping the ore. She was careful not to ask too many questions, but found that everyone else at the dinner party asked almost everything she needed to know. Unfortunately, the captain was tight-lipped about the location of the manufacturing facility. But he did explain to a group of diplomats that the late Emperor had seen this vision of Garos' contribution to the war effort, and had left specific instructions concerning the ore.

Amazing, Alex thought, *the Emperor had had visions of the future.* She'd grown up hearing stories about the Emperor and his mystical powers—the powers of the Force. And his destruction at the hands of the young Jedi named Luke Skywalker was a story that no one would ever dare to forget.

Alex had tried to learn more about the Jedi Knights, especially this power to see the future. Many of her own dreams—she never really called them visions—had come true. But she could never imagine herself with the other powers ascribed to those few people known as Jedi. Yet, somehow, it all seemed so familiar to her.

I hope the Jedi come to Garos. Come to help my people, she thought as she mindlessly waved goodnight to a group of commanders boarding a landspeeder back to the spaceport.

Far off in her mind, she saw another group of people—*They were saying good-bye—they were in the landing bay of a starship. And she saw herself there, sitting in the cockpit of an X-wing starfighter! An X-wing? How in the worlds? Another pilot was standing on the ladder of her ship. It was the man from her dream—the man on the Cliffs! He touched her hand and she was sure he called her name...*

"Alexandra?"

The voice seemed distant. It took a moment for Alex to realize that her stepfather had taken her hand. She smiled at him.

"I think I'll go to bed, Father." She yawned. "I'm really tired."

"It's been a long day, Alexandra. Thank you for being such a charming hostess." He kissed her on the cheek. "Captain Brandei was extremely impressed with you this evening," he said as they walked back into the foyer arm in arm. "I believe he's going to give you a recommendation to the Academy."

"Oh, Father, do you really think so?" *Just what I always wanted,* she thought sarcastically.

"Yes. I'll be sure you get it before the *Judicator* departs," Winger added.

"When is that?"

Adventure Idea

Magir Paca believes his freedom fighters need the support of the New Republic. The characters, working as members of the underground, are asked to journey to a nearby sector where a New Republic task force is engaging the rag-tag forces of an Imperial Moff. Paca hopes the characters can interest the New Republic in Garos' plight, and perhaps gain some supplies and equipment.

But finding the New Republic fleet in a sector could be difficult. When the characters do evade Imperial forces and find the task force, the New Republic officials are too busy with their campaign against the Imperial Moff and are short on supplies themselves. The characters must try to convince the New Republic to take a minor interest in activities on Garos IV and help support the resistance there.

"A day or two. The captain said they'll try again tomorrow to move another shipment of ore to the spaceport."

"I imagine security will be much tighter. I still can't believe the underground attacked that convoy only three kilometers from here!"

"Yes," he said, a touch of concern in his voice. "You know, Alexandra, perhaps you should make arrangements to stay at the university until this business is concluded. It worries me to think of you travelling alone from the city. I may even have to think about requesting guards for the governor's mansion."

"Oh, Father, please. I hate to think of us living in an armed camp," Alex said, wondering about the difficulties of sneaking in and out of a mansion guarded day and night by stormtroopers.

"These are difficult times, Alexandra. I don't want you to come to any harm."

"All right, Father. Let's not discuss this now. I'm way too tired," she said, stifling another yawn. "Will I see you at breakfast?"

"Yes, of course, my dear. Good-night, Alexandra."

"Good-night, Father."

■ ■ ■

Three people silently entered the building through a maintenance room deep within Imperial Headquarters. The secret entrance had been there long before the Imperials' arrival on Garos IV, but only a few members of the underground even knew of its existence.

Alex checked her blaster one last time. Set for stun. The two men with her checked their own weapons, standard stormtrooper issue blaster rifles which had been confiscated during an earlier raid.

"Ready?"

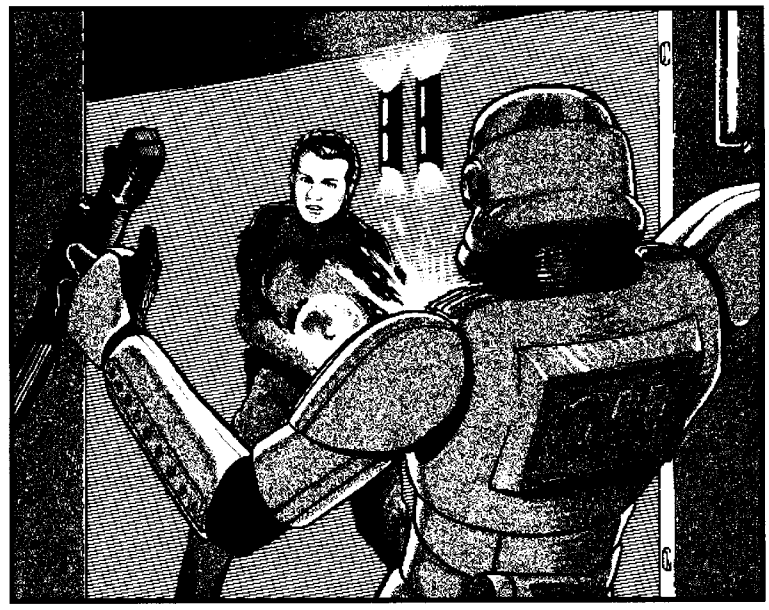
The one man nodded and was about to tap the panel to open the door when Alex felt a tingling sensation crawl up her spine.

"Wait..." she whispered to her companions.

No one dared to breathe. At first they heard nothing. Then the distinctive echo of footsteps sounded through the corridor outside the door. At the end of the hallway, the footsteps stopped, a door slid open, then closed. The corridor was quiet.

The freedom fighters moved silently through the corridor toward the turbolift. Their objective was the detention block one level up, where their comrade Scat was being held prisoner. Two guards would be on duty at this time of night. They expected to move in quickly and surprise the Imperials before they had a chance to call for help. Then they would locate Scat and get out of the cell block. The whole operation shouldn't take much more than a minute.

Of course, things didn't always go as planned—muted voices from that last room near the turbolift



caused Alex to pause. She held up her hand, signalling the other two men to stop. She pointed at the door.

"How many?" one of her companions mouthed.

Alex held up two, then three fingers, shrugging her shoulders. They nodded, moving toward the turbolift, but cautious of this threat at their backs.

Alex pressed the panel for the turbolift and realized it was already headed toward this lowest level of the headquarters.

"Someone's coming," she whispered.

Pressed against either side of the turbolift doors the three freedom fighters waited. The door slid open and a young man was shoved into the corridor. From the corner of his eye he saw the three masked figures clad in black. Instinctively he fell to the ground.

Across from them, another door slid open and the lieutenant who was supposed to be interrogating a prisoner this evening found himself facing the members of the resistance. Alex moved out into the open and fired at the stormtrooper in the turbolift who had been guarding Scat. Her friends blasted the lieutenant, who never even had time to reach for his weapon. They rushed into the room where they'd heard voices a few moments earlier. The blaster fire had alerted the other Imperial officers inside. One was caught, his own blaster half-drawn, and the other had clicked on his comlink to call for help.

Within seconds it was over, both Imperials stunned by their enemies' blaster rifles. An alarm sounded as the four freedom fighters headed down the corridor back toward the maintenance room.

By the time security arrived, Alex and her companions were nowhere to be seen. In the maintenance room, Alex felt for the indentation on the back of one section of shelves and pressed it,

The Librarian Who Was A Spy

By Charlene Newcomb

Sounds like some B-grade movie, doesn't it? Hmmm ... maybe there *is* a story there. And you thought all librarians wore glasses on the edge of their noses, looked at you over the top rim of those specs, and had a vocabulary that consisted entirely of the word "shhh!" Well, have you ever heard of a librarian who writes science fiction? Okay, so I don't officially graduate (finally) with the degree until May, but here I am.

Oh, you're wondering about the spy bit. I've heard that writers often imbue their characters with traces of themselves ... is there a little touch of Charlene Newcomb in Alex Winger, underground freedom fighter? (Char looks around suspiciously.) Shhh! (Sorry, that's the librarian in me, or perhaps it's really the spy.) Before a move from Maryland necessitated a career change, I worked for six years as a communications technician (also known as a "voice language analyst") with the United States Department of Defense. And in case you wonder what a communications tech does, just pick up a Tom Clancy novel and use your imagination. (And no, I didn't work for the same agency that Mr. Jack Ryan is employed by.)

But back to Alex and my short story, "A Glimmer of Hope." I'll have to confess, "Glimmer" was only the second story I'd ever seen through from beginning to end. What inspired me? I lay all the blame on another *Star Wars* author — Timothy Zahn.

Perhaps it was fate (or the Force) that led me down the science fiction aisle of the bookstore that spring day back in 1992. There they were — Luke, Han and Leia — staring at me from the paperback version of Tim Zahn's *Heir to the Empire*.

I was hooked. Again. I had always been a big fan of the *Star Wars* movies, but Tim's story recaptured for me the magic that George Lucas had created on the big screen. After devouring *Dark Force Rising* a few months later, I decided to write my own *Star Wars* story.

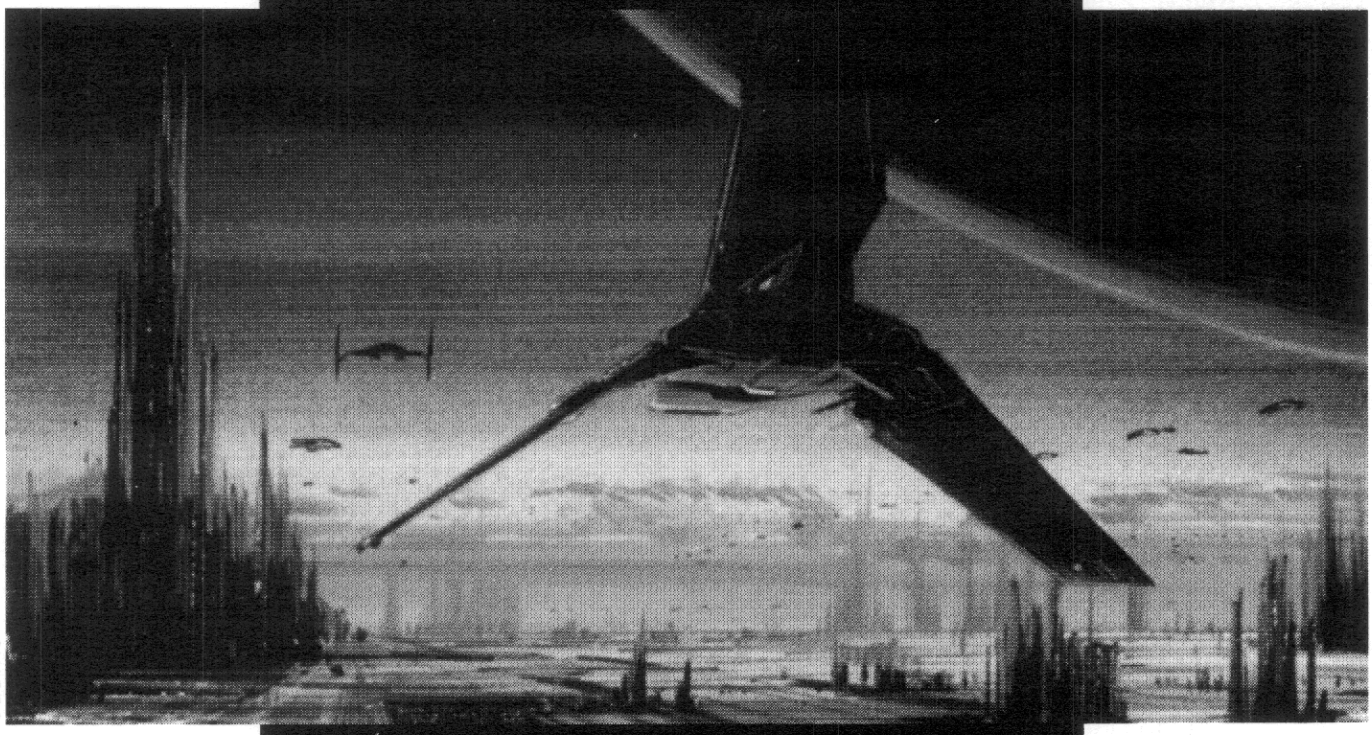
Alex Winger was born, a mixture of the characteristics that make Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia so appealing. I imagined Alex to be a lot like Leia — beautiful (thank you Mike Vilardi for your gorgeous artwork), intelligent, and full of spunk, as Han would say. Inspired by experiences from her past, Alex has taken a fierce stance against the Empire. Like Luke and Leia, she doesn't remember much about her parents, but she is devoted to the man who has raised her. She cares deeply for her friends and she is sensitive to the Force. With training, she could become a great Jedi.

And I'll admit it ... in my own mind, Alex represents the perfect girl for Luke. (I'm a romantic at heart, what can I say?) Hey, Tim ... if Luke and Mara aren't destined to be together, what do you think of the name Alex Skywalker?

May the Force be with you ... always.

Charlene Newcomb

Recon & Report:



© LFL 1996

The Journey to Coruscant

by Peter Schweighofer

To: General Airen Cracken, New Republic Intelligence
From: Dirk Harkness, Black Curs Base
Regarding: Coreward Reconnaissance

During the past six months, a team of close associates and I have been wandering the space lanes between the Expansion Region and the Core Worlds, quietly observing the state of the crumbling Empire as news of the Emperor's death made its way to Coruscant. The Battle of Endor has had greater implications than we imagined: the Imperial military machine is in disarray and many worlds are rebelling against their oppressive overlords.

During our travels, we met with other Rebel operatives and friendly government and military leaders, collecting information on the status of Imperial military forces, sector governments, and tactical objectives. I have summarized our findings in the following report.

I believe the New Republic can use a combination of diplomatic and military tactics to wage a campaign against the fragments of the Empire, with the ultimate goal of reaching Coruscant. By liberating Imperial worlds and capturing facilities of strategic importance, the Provisional Council could be meeting in the Emperor's palace within four years.

My people remain at your disposal should you ever require any independent intelligence work.

With respect,
Dirk Harkness

Introduction

In the six months since the Battle of Endor, news of the Emperor's death and the defeat of the Imperial fleet has spread from the Expansion Regions to the Core Worlds, bringing confusion and conflict. Some Imperial military personnel have abandoned their posts, either to reinforce defensive positions around strategic targets, or to join their commanders in carving out a portion of the Empire for themselves (in the Emperor's name, of course). Others have returned to the Core Worlds, preferring to make a last stand with the Imperial Advisors who have assumed the Emperor's role on Coruscant.

The Empire is in disarray and Imperial forces are scrambling to protect themselves and their resources. While this might seem like the best time to attack in the Empire's moment of confusion, the New Republic must approach the task of destroying the remnants of the Empire with caution.

Siege Preparations

Several high-level generals and admirals have accepted the leadership of the Imperial Advisors, who recently forced power-monger Sate Pestage, Imperial Grand Vizier, into exile. Operatives have reported hearing rumors that the advisors have sealed themselves inside the Imperial Palace on Coruscant. Other operatives have managed to damage or destroy several HoloNet installations, which were apparently very active with communications from Coruscant to Imperial commanders stationed throughout the galaxy. It seems the Imperial Advisors are preparing for a siege against major Core World systems.

About half the remaining Imperial naval forces have been re-deployed to defend key systems throughout the Core Worlds. Most of these systems have starship repair and construction facilities, heavy industry which supports the Imperial war machine, and high productivity agricultural worlds. The advisors have also ordered contingents of Star Destroyers to patrol certain systems which have little strategic value, yet would damage Imperial morale should they fall to New Republic forces.

Corellia and Kuat

Perhaps the most fortified systems we encountered on our wanderings were in the Corellian and Kuat Sectors. The Imperial Advisors are concerned that their power would evaporate if the Empire lost its ability to construct and repair the navy's starships. Kuat Drive Yard's facilities and Corellian Engineering Corporation's stardocks are viewed as the most likely targets of an imminent assault by a New Republic fleet.

There are at least 15 Imperial Star Destroyers patrolling the Kuat system itself, and 25 patrolling the Corellian system. Numerous smaller vessels — Dreadnaughts, Strike cruisers, and Interdictor cruisers — also patrol these systems. The schedules and routes of TIE fighter patrols are changed daily. Any ships entering or leaving these systems are boarded and thoroughly searched. Recently intercepted transmissions from Coruscant suggest that the Super Star Destroyer *Aggressor* has been recalled from the Inner Rim with its escort of five more Star Destroyers to help defend the Corellian shipyards.

Admiral Jaeffis is currently in command of the Imperial forces protecting the Corellian shipyards, but it is assumed he will be reporting to the more cunning Admiral Roek when the *Aggressor* arrives. We were unable to learn who was commanding the Kuat defense fleet, but rumors indicate he is a Kuat native.

While the Empire has loosened most of its control of the planets themselves, any starship facilities, both planetside and orbital, have undergone an extreme security crackdown. Any workers of questionable loyalty to the Empire, from chief engineers and security commanders to supply clerks and hull wielders, have been imprisoned or relieved of their duties, replaced

by Imperial Navy technical personnel.

Rebel operatives on Kuat have learned that every stardock and vessel under construction has been rigged to blow if the defense fleet commander issues the order to scuttle the shipyards. While some areas have been rigged with any available explosives, the arrival of a team of power core specialists from Corellia could indicate that most of the scuttling will be done by overloading the cores of stardock power facilities. We can certainly assume similar precautions have been taken with the Corellian shipyards.

In addition to the high concentration of Imperial Star Destroyers in the Kuat and Corellian systems, other shipyard facilities throughout those sectors have been fortified with anywhere from two to five Star Destroyers and numerous smaller naval vessels.

Kelada

Kelada is an important system for the Empire because it is a major producer of repulsorlift and Imperial walker components. The Imperial Advisors are especially worried of losing Arakyd's giant assembly factory, which creates components for and assembles Imperial speeder bikes and other repulsorcraft.

A contingent of 10 Star Destroyers patrols the system with a myriad of smaller support craft. Imperial stormtroopers have been added to the regular starport security forces, and customs officers have cracked down on all regulations to prevent saboteurs and New Republic sympathizers from halting production of components necessary for the Imperial Army to maintain it's grasp on the many worlds still under Imperial control.

Construction of repulsorlift and walker systems has increased dramatically. Perhaps the Imperial Advisors know they cannot possibly control the galaxy using their shrinking fleets, and are attempting to give Imperial Army equipment priority to maintain ground-based control of less vital worlds.

Adventure Idea

The characters are assigned to destroy one of the new Imperial factories on Kelada while coordinating with New Republic sympathizers there. They must smuggle their demolitions equipment past stringent Imperial customs officers, seek out their co-conspiritors and evade heavy security at the factory. A traitor among the New Republic sympathizers jeopardizes the mission, and the characters must set their explosives while Imperial troops hunt them down.

To: Mon Mothma, Commander-in-Chief
From: General Airen Cracken, New Republic Intelligence
Regarding: Harkness Report

Please circulate this reconnaissance report among the members of the Inner Council and others involved with planning the campaign against the Empire. Although Harkness is no longer an official member of New Republic Intelligence, I believe this report to be fairly reliable. Harkness has no love for the Empire, and wants to see it crushed.

After reviewing his report, it's obvious we must increase Intelligence activity. I am requesting additional support from the Inner Council to train and supply operatives to infiltrate Imperial systems. These agents — like Harkness — must be our eyes and ears, guiding our military decisions and helping to undermine the Empire from within.

Should you have any questions I will try to answer them the best I can. Should you doubt the validity of Harkness' report or loyalty, I would be more than happy to vouch for him.

General Airen Cracken

Where Kelada once had a peaceful balance between industry and the ecology (including several large forested regions and a large savannah), now that balance is threatened. The forests and plains are being cleared for more industrial facilities to support the Empire's defensive efforts. Before abandoning some worlds, Imperial engineers dismantled factories and shipped major components and raw materials to systems closer to the Core Worlds. Several factories are already under construction on Kelada using many of these components.

As a defense against orbital attack on these factories, Imperial engineers have already set up a KDY v-150 Planet Defender near the large industrial wasteland quickly growing outside Kelada starport. Engineers are also preparing a site for a planetary-scale shield generator nearby.

Sluis Sector

The Sluis Sector contains several other key shipyard facilities, including the extensive Sluis Van stardocks. The Empire has not concentrated much naval power here, preferring to protect starship facilities closer to the Core Worlds. This sector in particular is also closer to other systems where the New Republic holds greater influence.

Despite thinning Imperial support, the Sluissi have not yet rebelled. We spent several days meeting with Luiss Nevs, an influential member of the Sluis Van Congregate, urging him to help oust the Empire. He explained that the Sluissi are caught in a dilemma. The Empire is their primary

To: General Airen Cracken, Intelligence
From: Admiral Ackbar
Regarding: Harkness Report

Harkness' observations of Imperial fleet deployment will be extremely useful in planning future attacks. The side with the most starships will be victorious. The more we can deny the Empire the ability to construct and repair military vessels, the more we can push them back to Coruscant.

I agree with Harkness that now is not the time for an all-out New Republic fleet assault on Corellia and Kuat. We still have very few ships capable of surviving such confrontations. Instead, we should concentrate on smaller and less defended starship facilities (including the shipyards at Sluis Van), while infiltrating Corellia and Kuat with as many agents and commandos as possible.

Admiral Ackbar

patron. Imperial funds keep the shipyards running. To turn away Imperial ships would be to turn away 90 percent of their business.

The Sluis Van Congregate has been debating whether or not to publicly lodge complaints against the Imperial Navy for labor contract violations. This debate could last months, and is not the sort of rebellion which would deny the Empire use of Sluis Sector facilities. The Sluissi are terminally indecisive on whether to support the Empire or the New Republic.

Other factions among the Sluissi each have their own slant on rebellion. They do not seem prone to do anything about it now other than debate the possibilities and the ramifications of certain very passive actions.

These starship facilities could be taken by force. They are not rigged to be easily scuttled and they are not as heavily protected as Corellia and Kuat (there are perhaps one or two Star Destroyers for each major facility, and maybe four at the Sluis Van shipyards). Diplomacy, preferably carried out by high-level New Republic diplomats, would seem to be the proper Sluissi solution.

Adventure Idea

The ambassador from Chandrila desperately wants to meet with New Republic diplomats, and Mon Mothma in particular, to discuss the liberation of Chandrila. The characters are assigned the task of transporting the ambassador from Chandrila to the New Republic command fleet near Calamari. Using their own ship or one provided by the New Republic, they must evade the warships of the Imperial blockade, save the ambassador from an Imperial assassination plot, and escape past the seven Imperial Star Destroyers.

Salliche

Besides fortifying systems providing military might in starships and war machines, the Imperial Advisors are improving security on several key agricultural worlds. Those fertile worlds nearest Coruscant are coming under greater military scrutiny than before. Salliche is receiving the most attention, since it is the home of the Salliche Ag Corporation, which administers many agricultural planets throughout the Core Worlds.

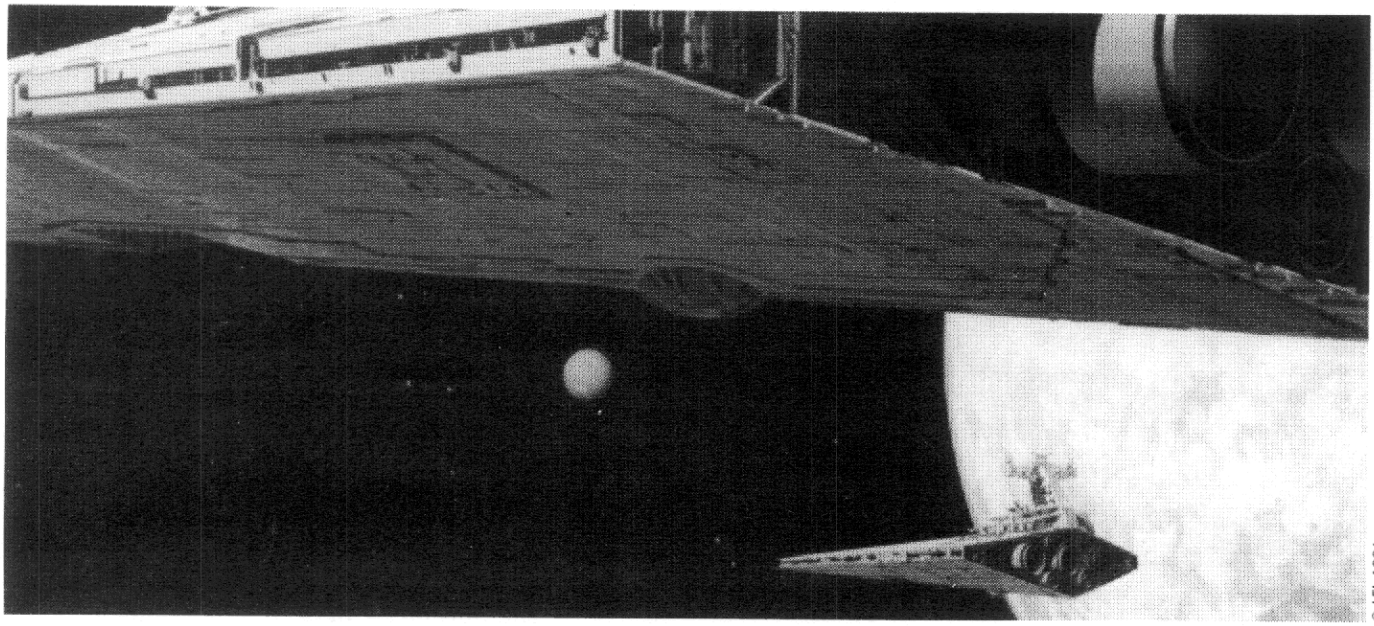
The governing body of Salliche, the Legislature, has been disbanded. Now an Imperial Moff is heading the incredibly complex bureaucracy which keeps the system and the Salliche Ag Corporation running smoothly. Major officers and bureaucrats have been replaced by Moff Gegren Throsen's senior staff, while stormtroopers have replaced the corporate troops which protected company facilities. Bureaucrats who openly challenge Imperial rule or who are caught discussing revolt have already been jailed in hastily built prison facilities outside Salliche starport.

Moff Throsen has sent the equivalent of an Imperial garrison and two Star Destroyers to each of the 18 worlds under the Salliche Ag Corporation's control. In three of those systems — Yulant, Ruan and Broest — workers have already revolted against increased Imperial control, burning crops, scuttling hydroponics facilities, and bombing storage warehouses and processing plants. Previously-established Rebel cells helped instigate those revolts, and they will continue to depend on shipments of arms to resist an imminent Imperial crackdown.

Throsen's takeover was unexpected and hasty. It created a discontent crowd of unemployed bureaucrats and corporate security soldiers on Salliche itself, and showed the true nature of the tyrannical Empire to citizens. Several New Republic agents are working with these disgruntled factions to stir an all-out rebellion. Until the Imperial presence is wiped from Salliche, these groups plan to ambush key Imperial personnel, bomb offices which help expedite the distribution of food products to other Core Worlds, and space-jack freighter convoys filled with supplies. Throsen already has his hands full keeping Salliche's bureaucratic machine running — the rebels will help hinder his efforts and pave the way for liberation by the New Republic.

Chandrila

Although Chandrila is not a key strategic world in the crumbling Empire's defense, seven Imperial Star Destroyers have been deployed in picket formation around the planet. Informers report that ground troops have been completely with-


© LFL 1996

drawn and all Imperial facilities cleared out and abandoned. However, starship traffic to or from any starport on Chandrila has been forbidden, the Star Destroyers and their support vessels mercilessly enforcing the blockade.

In the absence of Imperial forces on the planet's surface, a provisional government allied with the New Republic has been set up. This government is maintaining order on Chandrila, but has little power over the Imperial blockade. We were not able to successfully escape from the system with their ambassador.

Our intelligence sources could not confirm the reason for this blockade, and especially why the seven badly-needed Star Destroyers are in a system which is clearly of little military value. Rumors from other informants in the Core Worlds indicate the Imperial Advisors are following a plan initially devised by Sate Pestage to hold Chandrila hostage in case New Republic forces threatened Coruscant. Orbital strikes from the seven Star Destroyers would cause uncountable deaths and immense destruction.

While an all-out assault on the picket ships would be futile until New Republic fleets grow in strength, the Star Destroyers could be diverted to more important targets depending on New Republic military actions.

Imperial Warlords

With the absence of one true heir to the Emperor's power and the cessation of HoloNet communications from Coruscant, several Imperial warlords have risen to power. These ambitious Moffs and admirals saw the Emperor's demise as their own opportunity to seize power and run their sectors and fleets as they pleased and to their own benefit.

Imperial warlords are concentrated in the Mid-Rim, with a handful taking advantage of the chaos in the Expansion Region and the Inner Rim Planets.

Many of these charismatic leaders are motivated by their own lust for power, while others feel they can do a better job resisting the rise of the New Republic than a fragmented Empire. Despite their motivations, these warlords have brought greater oppression and hardship to the systems they rule, taxing both the populations and the resources to further their own war machines.

Those fighting under these Imperial warlords believe they are serving the cause of the Empire by constricting their holds on systems within their patrol sectors. The true intentions behind these rogue Moffs and admirals are carefully guarded secrets, and are kept at all costs from the rank and file Imperial soldier.

Several warlords have already clashed over key industrial worlds bordering their spheres of control. A common explanation commanders give when Imperial warships attack other Imperial vessels is that they are engaging an Imperial warlord no longer loyal to the Empire. While this is true, they fail to mention (or don't even realize) that they, too, are part of a renegade warlord's forces.

Warlord Resources

Imperial warlords concentrate most of their military power in those systems they formerly ruled or patrolled. Here they are most familiar with the temperament of local peoples, the strategic importance of their systems, and advan-

To: General Airen Cracken, Intelligence
From: General Crix Madine
Regarding: Harkness Report

Harkness' reconnaissance is fairly complete regarding starship deployment and overall politics in the crumbling Empire. However, his observations of ground troops and Imperial Army forces are obviously lacking. Should the New Republic move to take systems from Imperial hands, we must know more about the military situation on the surface of these worlds.

In addition to infiltrating future targets with intelligence operatives, I advise sending undercover teams of commandos to undermine Imperial industrial and military power on the worlds they still occupy.

General Madine

tages and disadvantages of traveling and waging war within a sector.

The warlord forces we observed were usually of two varieties. Each important system in a sector (any with agricultural or industrial value) was protected by a small fleet of ships which blockaded the planet, regulated freighter traffic, and protected against pirate raids and other warlords. Each Imperial warlord also kept at least one standing fleet to aid in defending key systems and in carrying out campaigns against loyal Imperial forces, the New Republic, and other warlords.

Using small fleets comprised of smaller capital ships (*Carrack*-class cruisers, Strike cruisers, system patrol craft and Dreadnaughts) and headed by one or two Star Destroyers, ambitious or desperate warlords often raid other systems governed by other warlords, the New Republic and even the Empire. The targets of these raids are often supply stations, factories and shipyards which provide resources unavailable in a warlord's home sector.

These raids also provoke attacks between warlords as well as loyal Imperial forces. So far New Republic ships have not retaliated against these raids. Perhaps it is wise simply to raise defenses, allowing Imperial and warlord forces to undermine each other's power.

Warlord Allies

Some warlords have joined with previously unacceptable Imperial allies: bands of smugglers, crimelords, pirates and mercenaries. Most of these alliances are sealed with credits, but others are sealed with certain privileges. Crimelords are allowed to continue and increase illegal activity (unless to the detriment of the warlord), pirates are supplied with ships and weapons to prey on enemy vessels, and smugglers are paid handsomely to steal valuable cargoes and misinform rival warlords.

Some warlords have banded together, pooling their resources and military might to control a small region of space. By cooperating, they become almost as powerful as loyal Imperial forces defending the Core Worlds.

There are many warlords busily setting up their own independent empires, including Captain Iolan Gendarr (commander of the Star Destroyer *Reliance*), Moff Par Lankin of Lambda Sector, and Admiral Gaen Drommel, who has control of the Super Star Destroyer *Guardian*.

Many of these men and other warlords have control of small fleets which form the backbone of their strength.

Free Systems

The abrupt changes in Imperial military deployment has brought chaos to many worlds. To free up personnel, equipment and vessels for the Empire's defense, many commanders have withdrawn military, diplomatic and bureaucratic personnel from worlds with lesser strategic importance. Some systems are left with little or no government at all, and no protection against warlords and independent marauders.

The Imperial Advisors and their strategic staffs examined which systems they could afford to abandon when withdrawing forces to defend the Core Worlds. Most of these abandoned systems are located in the Mid-Rim and Expansion Region, where New Republic and Imperial warlord activity has steadily increased.

Provisional Governments

The Empire formerly played a great role in government in these systems. In many cases Imperial forces were the only means of defense, and Imperial personnel saturated the layers of

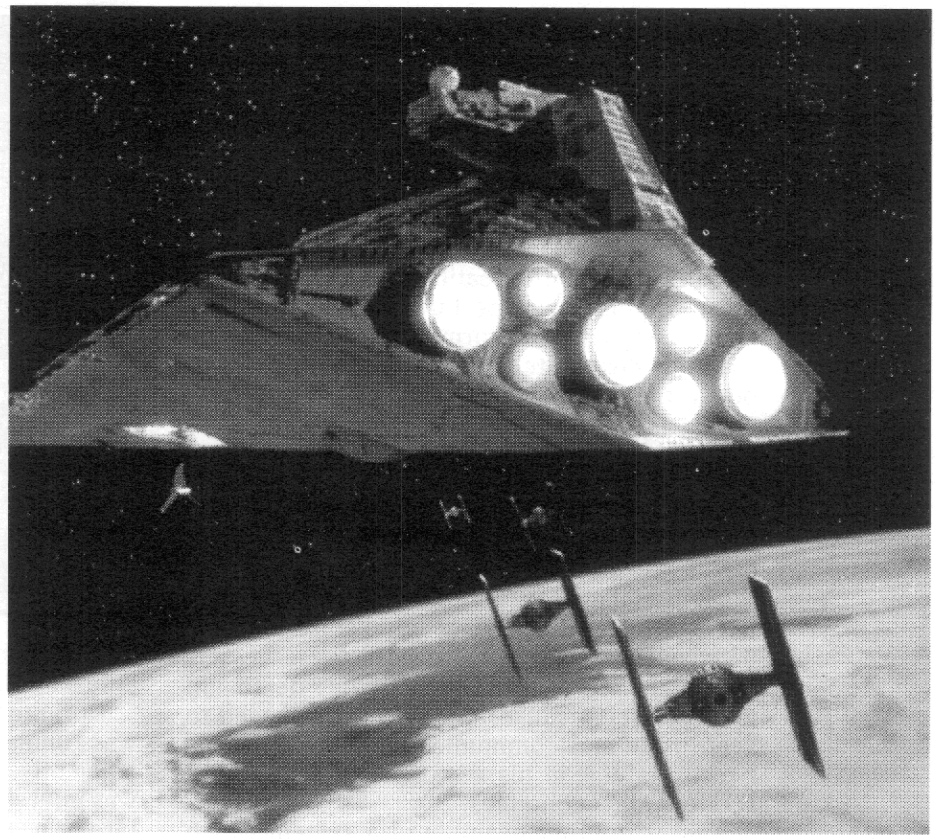
Adventure Idea

The characters are sent to Wornal Sector, where two Imperial warlords — Moff Eyrgen and Moff Prentioch — are vying for supremacy. Characters must misinform the two warlords, feeding false information to their spies on the other's systems and bombing facilities to fuel the conflict. They establish several intelligence contacts in both camps. But soon one contact becomes suspicious and discovers the characters' true identities, forcing them to flee the sector with an angry Moff's fleet in pursuit.

bureaucracy. The Empire controlled, administered and staffed most Imperial and standard class starports, and in some cases policed cities and operated government agencies.

Provisional governments have sprung up on these planets in the absence of Imperial rule. These hastily formed groups are trying to maintain services provided by the Empire. Some are creating their own groups — starport authorities, police militias and the like — to fill these gaps, while others are hiring mercenary groups and private corporations to run these services.

On a few worlds, crimelords, pirates and other fringe groups have assumed the role of government. In these cases, such groups are the only ones capable of providing the necessary services to maintain order.



© LFL 1996

Supply and Communication

Abandoned systems depended heavily on Imperially influenced or controlled corporations to supply goods not normally available to that system. A heavily industrialized system depended on these corporations to import food, while agricultural worlds required new machinery and parts to maintain their economies.

These supply companies, often under pressure from the Empire, responded to the need to supply the Core Worlds and support the Imperial military machine. They stopped freighter runs to these systems when their primary customer — the Empire — retreated.

Free-traders quickly cashed in on the needs of abandoned systems, but could not come close to filling the market with the quality of imports these worlds required. Piracy also denies certain vital imports to those systems without local defense fleets to guard against marauders.

These worlds were also cut off from the rest of the galaxy when communications — previously monopolized by the Empire — stopped. HoloNet stations were sabotaged by New Republic operatives to slow communications between Imperial forces, but this also severed the lines to abandoned systems.

Free-traders are helping to re-establish communication lines by carrying messages between systems. Some freighter captains are making tidy sums carrying diplomats from these systems to meet with New Republic forces, or to band together systems within a sector or along certain trade routes.

Economic Troubles

Systems freed from Imperial rule were also freed of all Imperial business. Factories were shut down or scuttled, and the entertainment districts of major starports suffered a drop in business without droves of off-duty Imperial mili-

To: General Airen Cracken, Intelligence
From: Mon Mothma, Commander-in-Chief
Regarding: Harkness Report

Any accurate information the New Republic receives is appreciated. Harkness seems to have summarized the situation in the Empire well, but more specific information is required before we plan and execute an offensive.

I would like to stress his recommendation that we establish diplomatic and economic ties with systems abandoned in the Imperial retreat. We must welcome these systems into our New Republic and help them throw off the yoke of Imperial oppression. Their support will help us in our struggle to return peace and order to the galaxy.

Mon Mothma

tary personnel spending credits in their spare time.

Many systems the Empire abandoned depended heavily on supporting the Imperial military machine for their economies. These worlds were not great players in galactic commerce, and based their economic well-being on local resources and industry. Now they face unemployment problems and a declining economy.

With the Empire creating an economic void, these systems are ripe for the New Republic. Many seek guidance in forming new governments, and they desperately need outside business to boost their economies.

Successful Free Systems

The most encouraging region abandoned by the Empire is the Boeus Sector in the Expansion Region. Darvon Jewett, the charismatic governor of that sector, turned to the New Republic when the Imperial military withdrew. Jewett managed to retain several Imperial capital ships for local defense (some say the crews of these vessels mutinied on hearing of the Emperor's death and joined Jewett's cause). He has also managed to keep trade and communication lines open between systems in his sector, maintaining both services and economies.

Kaal is another example of a system which survived after the Empire left. It was formerly a major food production world and a resort for Imperial personnel on leave in the Yushan Sector. When the Empire retreated, local crimelord Tirgee Benyalle stepped in and began running Kaal's government. She administered Kaal's agricultural industry, which harvested and processed food products from the planet's immense oceans. Benyalle was able to provide several small capital ships to defend the system from attacks by pirates and Imperial forces, and guard food shipments headed to other systems which could afford her high prices.

During our visit to Kaal we discovered Benyalle was running the agricultural production rather efficiently, and we heard disturbing rumors she was interested in selling the produce to the Empire or nearby Imperial warlords.

To: General Airen Cracken, Intelligence
From: Borsk Fey'lya, Bothan Councilor, New Republic
Provisional Government
Regarding: Harkness Report

I am appalled that you are giving so much consideration to an intelligence report from a rogue and mercenary. Harkness disappeared unexpectedly after the Battle of Endor, and now he suddenly returns bearing seemingly accurate and detailed information regarding Imperial forces. How do you know he isn't simply misinforming us?

Everyone knows the campaign to end the Empire will be won through superior intelligence efforts. Harkness is simply trying to divert our energies by suggesting additional means for undermining the Empire.

Borsk Fey'lya

Adventure Idea

Biivren was formerly a minor industrial world controlled by the Empire. When Imperial forces withdrew, they scuttled several large factories and chemical plants, contaminating the planet's water supply. The characters are free-traders who hear of Biivren's fate and try to cash in by shipping large amounts of drinking water and selling it to the highest bidder. They must find a source for their water, fly it past pirates plaguing the system, and find sales contacts in Biivren's sprawling starport. They might run afoul of greedy government officials, other competing traders, or crimelords intent on controlling the water trade.

Recommendations

After examining the situation throughout the former Empire, I recommend several strategies to continue to undermine Imperial power. While a military campaign will eventually be necessary, it is not the first step.

The New Republic should contact worlds freed when Imperial forces retreated. These systems are desperately seeking guidance to solve government and economic problems. Now they are isolated systems struggling to survive. As part of the New Republic, they would join the galactic economy and contribute to the downfall of the Empire.

The rogue Imperial warlords are a different problem. The most likely solution would be military action against them, but this could be costly in terms of personnel and ships. I recommend infiltrating their systems with New Republic Intelligence operatives to disinform them of our own strategic plans, stir up the populace against their continued tyranny, and encourage infighting between warlords by spreading rumors and false intelligence reports. By setting these warlords against each other, and by stirring up discontent on their home systems, we would significantly undermine their power before attacking in their time of weakness.

The remaining loyal Imperial forces pose the

Adventure Idea

The characters, working as diplomatic agents of the New Republic, are sent to Kaal to offer Benyalle a deal to sell her food products to the New Republic. Wandering the streets of Kaal's exotic resort starport, they must find and negotiate a deal with Benyalle while evading the minions of the Empire and several warlords competing for the best deal for food. The characters are involved in a waveskimmer chase through the starport resort's bay, and fleece credits off Imperial officers in Kaal's casinos. When they finally come to signing a deal, one Imperial admiral decides to make his own deal ... at blaster point.

greatest challenge to the New Republic. Our primary targets should be shipyard facilities, but we should start small. By taking smaller stardocks in the Mid-Rim and Expansion Region, we can slowly build a fleet and deny the Empire ships. While our ultimate goal would be the Corellian and Kuat shipyards, these will not be taken by direct force. We must try to infiltrate these facilities, disable their ability to scuttle ships and stardocks, and carefully plan an assault.

New Republic Intelligence should play a vital role in all these actions. An uninformed or misinformed force will fail.

About the Artists

Chris Gossett is an illustrator who was born in New York City and is currently living on the west coast. His work has appeared in Dark Horse Comics' *Tales of the Jedi* and *Dark Lords of the Sith* series. Chris has been drawing images of the Star Wars galaxy long before he was ever getting paid for it.

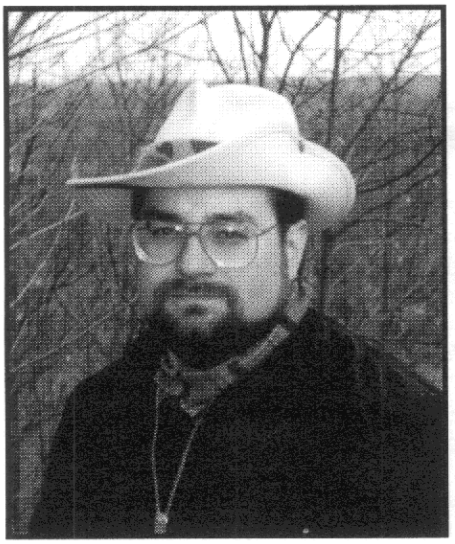
Doug Shuler has been a freelance artist for eight years and has done work for many prominent game companies, including GDW, Steve Jackson Games, ICE, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games. His illustrations continue to appear on new cards for *Magic: The Gathering* and *Jyhad* by Wizards of the Coast.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

Mike Vilardi has been freelancing as an illustrator for eight years, breaking in with Game Designers Workshop and Digest Group before catching on with West End Games. "My very first WEG project was doing some pencils for *Paranoia* (*The Bot Abuser's Manual*)." While he may have grown up with *Star Wars,* Mike didn't buy much of the merchandise. "I've had to scramble to get whatever I can since much of it is a great help in producing illos ... and it's an excellent excuse to buy some really cool toys!" Of course, he has to share them with his two young children.

Between Endor and Zahn

By Peter Schweighofer

When the roleplaying game sourcebook for Timothy Zahn's first *Star Wars* novel, *Heir to the Empire,* was published, I was excited. His book was the first to venture beyond what we had seen in the classic film trilogy. It was the first published foray of the main heroes after their victory at the Battle of Endor. And it offered a glimpse of what the New Republic was like. For years *Star Wars* fans had been waiting for this.



But H*eir to the Empire* was set five years after *Return of the Jedi.* The *Heir* sourcebook covered the novel, but it didn't really say anything about how the Rebel forces got from Endor to Coruscant — it summarized the events leading to the Rebels' victory against the second Death Star, then skipped right to the emergence of Grand Admiral Thrawn. *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition's* excellent chapter outlining the facts and feel of the *Star Wars* galaxy gave readers a few more hints about loyal Imperial forces and rogue Imperial warlords. But it still didn't give readers many ideas of what happened during this five-year gap in the action, a gap that filled approximately the same number of years in which the films had taken place.

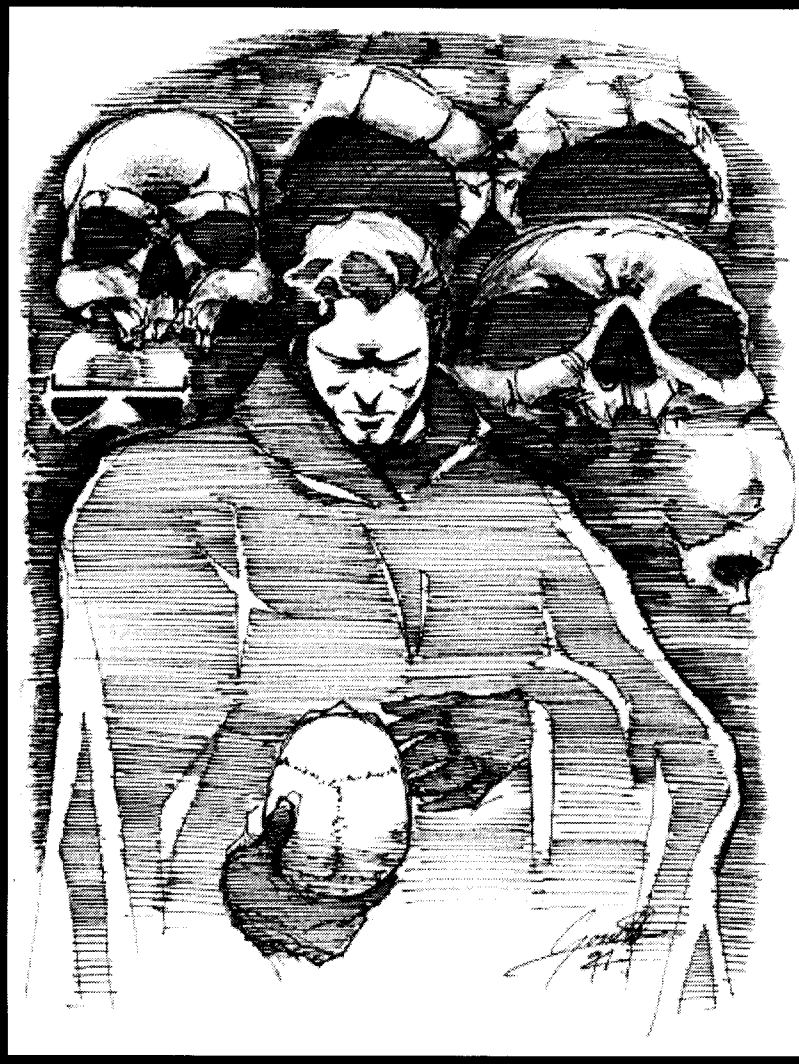
In writing "Recon and Report," I wanted to fill in that five-year gap a bit more, make it an interesting place in which gamers could adventure, and provide some locations, personalities and adventure hooks gamemasters could use in their own campaigns. I didn't want to nail down the adventures of Han, Luke and Leia, nor did I want to detail the New Republic's battle-by-battle campaign against Coruscant — that would be up to later authors, from Kathy Tyers and Dave Wolverton to Michael A. Stackpole.

And that's one of the fun aspects of writing for the *Star Wars* universe — authors make their own individual contributions to the whole, but no one author can ever tell the entire story. It's a big universe out there. Some authors concentrate on the main characters, or on characters of their own creation. Others focus on units like Rogue Squadron. And each group has its own perspective and biases. "Recon and Report" is based on some espionage work done rather hastily by a band of independent mercenaries willing to aid the New Republic. Check out other perspectives in *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal:* "Galaxywide NewsNets" are always slanted to the biases of news agencies, and any article narrated by a particular character, from Platt Okeefe's "Smuggler's Log" to General Cracken's "Wanted By Cracken," includes the speaker's unique point of view.

As a writer and an editor, I've had the privilege to work with some fantastic authors, including some promising up-and-coming writers, and some who've made the *New York Times* bestseller list. All *Star Wars* writers have certain qualities in common: we're all good writers, and we all have great ideas. But one thing helps maintain the high quality of material in *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal* — we write because we all love *Star Wars.*

The Final Exit

by Patricia A. Jackson
Illustrations by Chris Gossett



Najiba

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
Hydrosphere: Saturated
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Wetlands, limited forest regions
Length of Day: 18 standard hours
Length of Year: 215 local days
Sapient Species: Humans, Najib (N)
Starport: Limited services
Population: 3 million
Planet Function: Agricultural, homeworld, limited natural resources
Government: Tribal democracy
Tech Level: Space (around starport), feudal
Major Exports: Low technology, minerals, foodstuffs
Major Imports: Mid technology, agricultural innovations

Capsule: Najiba is a remote world, relatively isolated from its neighbors. An extended, elliptical orbit offers a long growing season and shortened days. However, due to the mysterious asteroid belt which the planet passes near during one half of the orbital cycle, the planet is unreliable for continuous space traffic and is often bypassed by all except the most curious tourists and of course, smugglers.

The inhabitants of Najib are superstitious and wary of outsiders — but only the warmest reception can be expected from the locals who value their reputation for hospitality. Easily adaptable and hardy workers, the Najib are renown for their loyalty. Despite their own lack of technology, they are quite knowledgeable and adept at using and repairing high-tech weaponry and spacecraft. This is partially due to a constant influx of illegal goods being smuggled to the surface.

A planet of interminable extremes, Najiba existed in a state of perpetual spring, delineating seasons in terms of electrical disruptions and torrential rainstorms. Ross stared into the maturing squall, intrigued by the erratic veins of lightning which arced across the obscure, night skies. Sheltered beneath his YT-1300 light freighter, the *Kierra,* the Corellian searched the turbulent atmosphere above the open flight pad, following several amorphous shapes that loomed above the heavy cloud cover.

Clipped with military precision, soft spikes of blond hair glistened with the rain as miniature drops accumulated in the longer length above his ears. Yawning, the smuggler leaned against one of the support struts. His sleepy, blue eyes stared from the shadows, regarding several natives who were huddled beneath the storm eaves of Reuther's Wetdock.

"194?"

Pressing the comlink against his cheek, Ross responded, "194."

Alluring, a feminine voice replied, "What's the deal, Ross? We've been sitting here for over an hour."

"Are you bored, darling?" he teased, grinning handsomely in the dim light.

"Do you want an honest answer or just my opinion? Come on, flyboy," she pleaded, "Let's get moving."

"Don't get your circuits in a bunch." Affectionately he brushed a hand over the lower turret wondering in what section of the onboard systems she was hiding. Fondly named after his ship, the feisty droid intelligence had a tendency to focus on the optical sensors, possessed by an unusually feminine curiosity.

"*Ol'val,* Ross," a voice greeted from nearby.

Despite the familiarity of the Old Corellian dialect, Ross tensed, casually thumbing the restraint from his blaster. Propping the heavy pistol against the holster, he stared into the closest shadows and focused on the stooped silhouette. "Reuther?"

The aging Najib bartender stepped into the rain, humbled beneath the onslaught of cold drops. Sheltered below the *Kierra,* he straightened, staring into the young Corellian's face.

Vivacious with old world charm, his eyes were discerning and perceptive, contemplating Ross from head to toe. Meeting the smuggler's mischievous eyes, a proud smile played across his lips. "I see where you made the billboards in Mos Eisley last week. The Imperials are offering 5,000 credits for your head."

"Is that all?"

"Indeed," the old man chuckled. "Not nearly enough for a rogue with your credentials." Billowed red sleeves ballooned from Reuther's frail shoulders and arms, clashing with an oversized native tunic. Dampened by the rain, thinning gray hair was tightly braided against his freckled scalp. "It's good to see you, boy," Reuther whispered. Uncorking an intricately carved bottle, he poured a generous portion into a crystal goblet and handed it to the smuggler.

"Corellian whisky?" Ross questioned, sniffing the bitter aroma. "What's the occasion?"

"Growing old," Reuther croaked, nervously glancing over his shoulder, "and to having the strength to face tomorrow."

Suspicious, Ross followed the bartender's anxious eyes. "Quiet night, Reuther?" he asked, cautiously moving a hand to his blaster.

Sadly, the old man shook his head. "This is a desolate place when the Children of Najiba come home."

Familiar with the Children of Najiba, Ross scanned the night skies, well acquainted with the peculiar asteroid belt that had mysteriously claimed an orbit around the small planet. As ominous as the shattered rock moving above their heads, Ross discerned the somber tone of Reuther's voice. "Your message said it was urgent."

Muffled by the warm bodies crowded at the

narrow blast door, a strangled scream suddenly erupted from the bar. The despondent cry fluctuated, a cacophony of sobs, which peaked above the violence of the storm.

"Just watch, my boy," Reuther cautioned. "I brought you here for a reason."

The crowd broke ranks, scattering away from the bulkhead frame. A Najib man, wearing the clumsy beige uniform of a port control steward, staggered from the bar, collapsing in the street. Cradled in his arms, he carried the slender, motionless body of a Twi'lek woman. Her pale, blue skin glistened with rain, faultless and smooth despite the cruelty of the shadows. With the delicate poise of a dancer, elegant arms swayed above her head, exaggerating the gentle arch of her neck and shoulders. Scantily clad in a faded tunic, her frail form convulsed in the steward's arms.

"That's Lathaam," Reuther began, "our port official, and that," he hesitated, "that used to be his woman, Arruna."

Ross shrugged the tension from his chest and shoulders, massaging a pinched nerve in his neck. "What happened?"

"Adalric Brandl happened," he replied evenly. "He blew in about 10 hours ago, demanding a ship with a pilot who could shoot as well as fly." Sighing, he added, "Well, you know the rule, Ross. When the Children of Najiba are home, no traffic on or off the planet. Lathaam, being the choob-head he is, made the mistake of informing Brandl of that fact." The anxious Najib rubbed the narrow ridge between his eyes. "Lathaam always did lack diplomacy skills."

"So Brandl killed the girl?"

"I ain't saying what he did." From the safety of the shadows, Reuther watched the lurid scene. Dubious, he averted his eyes, throwing his hands up with exasperation. "Truth is, Ross, Brandl never touched her. Never laid a hand on her," he puffed, "yet there she lies, dead. And there ain't nobody on the planet, not even you, who can tell me Brandl *didn't* do it."

"You've been living with the natives too long."

"I know what you're thinking, boy," Reuther scoffed. "Remember, I was once a bounty hunter, too. Brandl never pulled a blaster. Doesn't even have one." The bartender cleared his throat noisily, spitting into the wind. "His kind don't need blasters to kill." Shuddering visibly, he mumbled, "He's a 10-96 if I ever saw one."

"A 10-96?" Ross whispered.

"If you don't know, you better look it up," Reuther snorted. "Your life may depend on it."

Ignoring the patriarchal cynicism, Ross crossed his arms over his chest. "Where do I fit into all of this?"

"Brandl wants a pilot who can handle himself. I told him I knew a dozen or more suicide jocks who would come through the asteroids just to make an easy 1,000 credits ... then I told him about you."

"Come on, Reuther," Ross snorted musically. "One man comes along and has the whole town running scared? Whatever happened to your militia?"

"Is that what it's called?" Reuther scoffed. Staring at the backs of the prying mob, he spat, "Farmers! All of them! Eager to bite every stranger, but afraid of stepping on their own tails. Look at them!" He stared into the small assembly gathered around the body. "It's easy to look into another man's misery and do nothing."

Grumbling among themselves, the crowd abruptly retreated into the street as a shadow moved from the back of the bar. Eclipsing the dim light radiating from the bulkhead, the stranger faltered in the doorway. "That'll be him," Reuther

Thaddeus Ross

Type: Ex-bounty hunter and smuggler
DEXTERITY 3D+1
Blaster 6D, dodge 5D, grenade 4D, melee combat 3D+2, melee parry 3D+2, running 4D
KNOWLEDGE 2D+1
Alien species 6D, languages 5D, planetary systems 6D+1, streetwise 4D+2, survival 4D, value 4D
MECHANICAL 3D+2
Astrogation 5D, beast riding 4D, space transports 6D, space transports: YT-1300 7D+2, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 5D
PERCEPTION 3D
Command 4D+2, investigation 4D+2, search 3D+2, sensors 6D, sneak 3D+1
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 3D+1, lifting 3D+1
TECHNICAL 2D+2
Blaster repair 4D, space transports repair 5D+2
Special Abilities:
Investigation: Gains +2 when his investigations involve any Imperial business.
Force Points: 3
Character Points: 16
Move: 10
Equipment: Heavy blaster (5D), comlink

Capsule: Thaddeus Ross is a handsome, easy-going spirit of 28 who comes from a long line of smugglers. A non-traditionalist, he broke free of the family legacy and became a bounty hunter. His ability to capture particularly dangerous criminal personalities quickly gained him a reputation as a good enforcer. However, the notoriety quickly wore off and he returned to the family tradition of smuggling.

Despite a ruthless, occupational edge, Ross is easily provoked by senseless violence. Cynical and self-righteous, he has a weakness for protecting the underdog and often interferes to even the odds, ignoring any possible endangerment to himself.

The Kierra

Craft: Modified Corellian Engineering YT-1300 Transport
Type: Modified light freighter
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 26.7 meters
Skill: Space transports: YT-1300 transport
Crew: 1 or 2
Passengers: 10
Cargo Capacity: 135 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1
Hyperdrive Backup: x10
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 2D
Space: 4
Atmosphere: 260; 750 kmh
Hull: 3D+2
Shields: 2D+1
Sensors:
Passive: 15/0D
Scan: 30/1D
Search: 50/3D
Focus: 2/4D
Weapons:
One Double Laser Cannon
Fire Arc: Front
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 1D+2
Space Range: 1-3/12/25
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km
Damage: 4D
One Laser Cannon
Fire Arc: Turret
Crew: 1
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-3/12/25
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km
Damage: 4D+2

Capsule: The *Kierra* is Thaddeus Ross' modified YT-1300 freighter. As one of the previous modifications it was given a droid intelligence to monitor ship's systems. The intelligence, also named Kierra, has developed its own personality.

whispered. "I'll pay you 2,000 credits on top of whatever he offers you. Just get him off the planet!" Stepping back into the rain, he hesitated. "There's a bad noise about this one, Ross. Watch yourself."

Captivated by the peculiar events surrounding this outsider, Ross cautiously observed the reaction of the locals as Brandl swept past them, drawing the shadows in his wake. Struck by the unusual beauty of the stranger's face, the smuggler found it difficult to believe that such a man was capable of violence. Handsome, almost cavalier by appearance, Brandl's nose and chin were chiseled with stony nobility, polished by a quiet arrogance that aroused the smuggler's suspicions. Faded laugh lines framed a narrow mouth and thin lips.

Thick, dark waves of hair glistened with rain, interspersed with strands of white, which ran from his temples to the nape of his neck. As foreboding as the shadows of Brandl's face, the robe draped from his shoulders seemed to absorb the darkness about them, concealing any weapons and his hands from view. "Captain Thaddeus Ross?"

Wincing with mention of his first name, Ross brushed his duster aside, revealing his blaster and his hand poised over the heel. "Adalric Brandl?" he replied curtly.

Cordial, a genteel smile played across Brandl's pale lips, drawing a sharp angle over his prominent cheekbones. "I'll be brief, Captain. I need transport to the Trulalis system."

"Trulalis? You could catch the local skipper for half of what I'm likely to charge. Private transports don't come cheap."

"Integrity comes without price, Captain Ross. The bar owner assured me that you were a man of integrity." Squaring his shoulders, Brandl probed the smuggler's calculating eyes. "I'm offering 5,000 credits for transport to Trulalis, where you will accompany me to the Kovit Settlement."

"I don't leave port for less than 6,000," Ross countered, narrowing his eyes. "If you want company, it'll cost you extra: 1,500 credits."

"Agreed," Brandl whispered. Graceful, his long fingers retrieved a sealed credit chit. "Three thousand now and the rest on completion of my business."

Eyeing the sealed chit, Ross gushed, "Right this way." The smuggler extended his arm toward the freighter's lowered ramp. "Kierra, prepare to raise ship."

"Well it's about time!" she hissed. "I thought my docking struts were going to take root here."

Ross cast a final glance to the bar, saluting Reuther and the others who were watching from the sanctuary of the shadows. Confidently pocketing the credit chit, he flashed a reassuring smile and jogged up the ramp. Initializing the hatch seal, he moved along the familiar corridor toward the flight compartment. The Corellian grinned impishly, listening to Kierra's vindictive voice, as she engaged their peculiar passenger.

"Who the hell are you?" she demanded. "Never mind where I am. I'm where I belong, but you — "

"Kierra," Ross whispered, "meet our new client."

Seething with the brunt of Brandl's initial arrogance, Kierra vehemently blustered, *"Halle metes chun, petchuk!"*

"Koccic sulng!" Ross scolded, shocked by the scathing Old Corellian insult.

Pleasantly, Brandl returned his thanks for the rude statement and offered a challenge. *"Onna fulle guth."*

Before the droid intelligence could recoup for

the invitation, Ross glared into one of her optical lenses. "That's enough!" he fired at her. "Open the power coupling and charge the main booster," he ordered. "Now, Kierra!"

Discharge static hissed over the internal comm, similar to the indignant gnashing of teeth. "Affirmative, boss," she replied.

Crossing his arms over his chest, Ross leaned against the interior hull wall, listening for the ignition of the ion engines. Focused on Brandl's insidious eyes, he whispered, "There aren't too many people who remember the Old Corellian dialect."

"In the course of my career, I've had to speak many languages." Cautiously, Brandl added, "I was .... am ... an actor."

"I don't usually transport passengers," Ross confessed. Stepping through the low bulkhead, he activated the interior corridor lamps. "You're welcome to use my quarters."

Brandl's gaze swept the length of the modest passenger cabin. Hesitant to enter, he paused in the bulkhead frame. "How long until we reach Trulalis?"

"An hour?" Ross shrugged dubiously. "I'll notify you when we arrive."

"Thank you, Captain, your hospitality is appreciated."

"Yeah, I bet it is," the Corellian mumbled under his breath. As the hatch automatically sealed behind him, he retraced his steps to the flight compartment. "Kierra, set the astrogation system for Trulalis."

"Check."

Sitting down in the acceleration chair, Ross quickly glanced over the flight console. "Okay, darling, bring up the emergency auto-pilot program we installed this morning."

"Not today, Ross," Kierra pouted. "I have a headache." Observing his reaction from several optical lenses, she dampened his fury, whining, "You forgot to cut the restraint servos, flyboy. So don't blame me for the glitch." A hushed snicker translated across the internal comm. "By the way, where'd you dig up the spook? He gives me the chills, Thadd."

"I told you not to call me that!" Ross hissed. Glaring into an optic sensor, he roughly booted the throttle, causing the freighter to shudder and slide on the pad.

"Gently, gently," Kierra cooed. Vexed by his dark mood, she added, "I hate it when you get this way. Your manners —"

"Never mind my manners!" Curbing his temper, he flipped a series of flight switches. The freighter shifted beneath him, resisting the planet's gravity as it rose from the external dock. "You just think about minding your manners," he scolded. Checking the data readouts for the latest asteroid activity, the Corellian grumbled, "Brandl's paying 8,000 creds for this trip, that's almost half a load of spice. You could at least try to humor him."

"Whatever you say, boss."

"And while I have your attention, run a code check on a 10- 96."

"That's easy. It's listed by Imperial enforcement protocol as a mentally imbalanced person."

"No, there's got to be something more to it," he contemplated. "There must be something else. Research the dead files on all 10-codes with that designation."

"That could take some time."

"Good!" he snapped. "I want every description for a 10-96, everything from Imperial databases to Old Republic records."

Resistantly, Kierra replied, "Affirmative, boss."

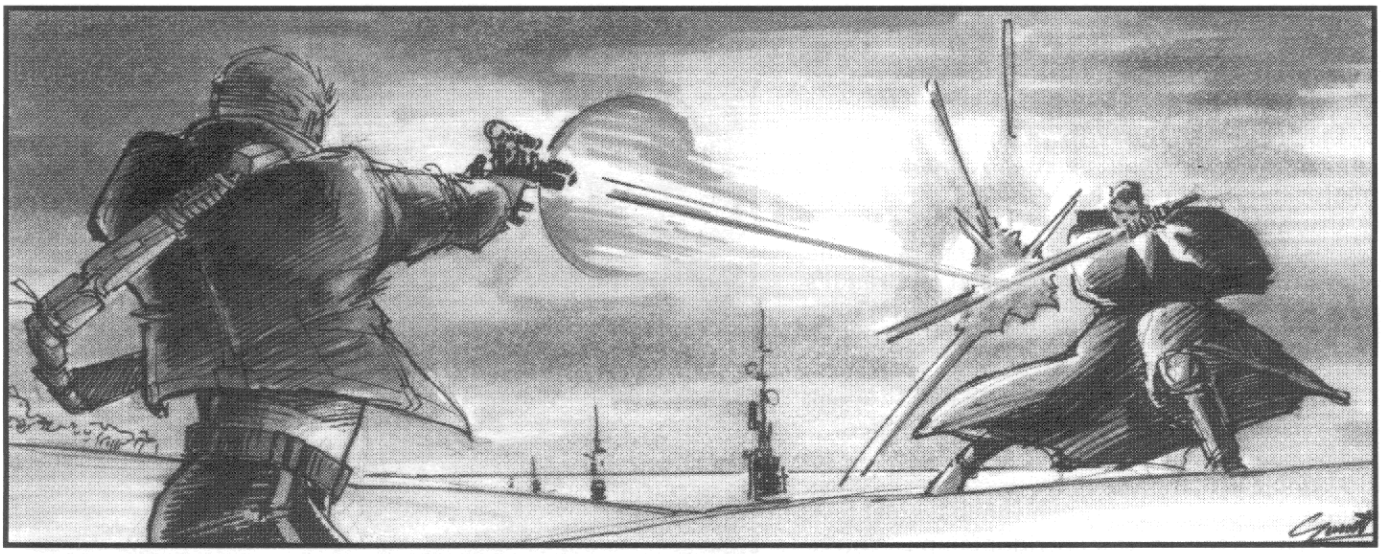
Accompanied by a low hum, the hyperdrive cue flashed intermittently, recalculating the jump to hyperspace. Checking the on-board systems, Ross observed hyperactivity in the library programs, where Kierra was researching the peculiar 10-code. "Stand by, hyperdrive engaging," he announced, piping into the ship-wide intercom. Bracing himself against the acceleration chair, Ross activated the motivator, propelling himself, his passenger, and his ship into the multicolored explosion of hyperspace.

Kierra

Type: Droid intelligence
DEXTERITY 0D
KNOWLEDGE 3D
Alien species 6D, cultures 6D+1, languages 7D, law enforcement 7D+1, planetary systems 6D+2, value 6D
MECHANICAL 3D
Astrogation 7D, communications 8D+2, sensors 8D, starship shields 7D+1
PERCEPTION 3D
Bargain 5D, con 4D+1, gambling 4D, investigation 4D
STRENGTH 0D
TECHNICAL 3D
Computer programming/repair 7D, droid programming 7D, droid repair 6D+2, security 8D, space transports repair 7D, starship weapon repair 6D+1
Character Points: 7

Capsule: How and why Kierra got into the onboard systems of the light freighter are not known. However, it is certain that she either was trapped inside the ship or hidden there sometime after the construction of the freighter. While inspecting the ship, Ross accidently awakened her and thus began a long partnership with the eccentric droid. While Kierra can manipulate certain ship functions like sensors and communications, she had to learn astrogation and shields from her Human mentor. She is continually learning new functions by way of self-programming and additional input from Ross.

Her uncanny ability to imitate Human behavior is disarming to strangers and has been heavily influenced by Ross and prolonged contact with other intelligent (often eccentric) species.



■ ■ ■

In the lower cradle of the ship, Ross sat in the swivel gunner's chair, swinging side to side, absently strumming his fingers against the turret firing controls. He closed his eyes and massaged a muscle spasm in his shoulder, wincing as the clenched tendon tightened then released. Oblivious to the spectacular display of light and color beyond the narrow viewscreen, he relaxed against the cool leather brace, drifting into the serenity of sleep.

"You know," Kierra whispered, "you make the cutest faces when you're asleep."

"I wasn't asleep," he lied, suppressing a yawn.

"Well heads up, flyboy! I have some intriguing data for you."

Ross sat up, rubbing the circulation back into his ears. "Let's hear it."

"Well, it seems that your mysterious 10-96 dates back long before the 10-code setup even existed. Now, according to the description, and I must admit I'm perplexed, the 10-96 came from an Old Corellian word, *ke'dem."*

Staring into the hyperspace vortex, Ross mentally mouthed the word. "Go on."

"Go on?" Kierra snorted. "That's it! Since before the Empire, a 10-96 has had two definitions, an imbalanced person and a *ke'dem."* Hesitant, she whispered, "Now without overinflating your ego ... what's a *ke'dem?"*

"It's a variation of Old Corellian that means condemned or fallen."

"Well that would explain the modern terminology."

"Yeah," he whispered, "it would also explain what happened down there on the planet." The smuggler cupped his hands together, supporting his head and neck. "Kierra, darling, Adalric Brandl is a Jedi Knight."

"A Jedi? That *would* explain a lot of things." Momentarily, her optic sensor dimmed. "Stand by. Hyperdrive about to disengage. Three ... two ... one."

Leaning against the gunner's panic bar, Ross felt the vibration of the ion drives, set to ignite once the transition was complete. "Easy on the drive coils, Kierra."

"Aren't you coming to the bridge?" she asked.

"On my way," he replied, "but first I have to collect our unusual guest."

Blanketed by a protective cloud layer, the planet Trulalis was richly embellished with a spectacular landscape of verdant green. A mosaic of rolling grasslands, sprawling forests, and spacious oceans stood as an invitation to paradise for the space-weary traveler. Crisscrossed and separated at irregular intervals by feral wilderness, Trulalis offered innumerable flat fields for small transports to dock. Ross made a mental note to mark this planet as a potential checkpoint on his smuggling runs. A brief sensor scan pinpointed the closest, suitable landing field. Compensating for the subtle shifts on the ground surface, he set down near a small hamlet.

On the surface, Ross shouldered his travel tote and secured an extra power pack to his holster. From the top of the ramp, he hesitated in the corridor, glimpsing Brandl from the corner of his eye. The eccentric Jedi was waiting for him outside on the trail, shadowed by the towering visage of the black trees. A seemingly invincible statue, the strange man stood with solemn conviction, staring into the hazy silhouette of the late afternoon sun. "Kierra, I'm still not sure what Brandl's up to. Keep your eyes open."

"Keep your comlink open," she replied. "You know how I worry."

"That's my girl," the Corellian chuckled.

Testing the soft earth beneath his boots, Ross

strolled up to the familiar silhouette of his passenger. For the first time since leaving Najiba, he noted that both of Brandl's hands were visible, one of them swathed haphazardly in a black bandage. Through gaps in the makeshift dressing, he saw the tender pink of raw flesh and yellow seepage draining into the thick fabric.

Before Ross could question him, Brandl turned and started along the trail. "What did the Najib tell you about me?"

"He said you killed a Twi'lek girl," Ross blurted. After a moment he pressed, "Did you?"

The Jedi's reply was abrupt and forthright. "Yes." Brandl hesitated as the Corellian snorted reprovingly. "Please Captain, your contempt is small reward for a repentant pilgrim."

"You call murder a penance?" Ross spat.

"When it has become the least of one's crimes," the Jedi paused dramatically, "yes."

Brandl's apathy toward the woman's death was chilling, sending shudders throughout the Corellian's body. "How? You never touched her." Ross grasped Brandl's sleeve and pulled. "How did you do it!"

"I asphyxiated her."

"She suffocated? In an open room?"

"A sophisticated talent," Brandl sneered, "not meant for the faint of heart."

"You sound proud of yourself, Jedi!" Ross spat with contempt. "Makes you feel good to kill an innocent woman?"

"Evil springs from weakness and weakness from ambition; by this grand order every ambitious man is undone!" Deliberately, the Jedi challenged, "Tell me, Captain, you too are an ambitious man. Which of us is truly innocent?"

"Should I applaud now!" Ross taunted.

"If you wish!"

"Well before I hand over your accolades, tell me something. Was that a real line or just something you made up to ease your conscience?"

Petulant with the smuggler's indignation, Brandl turned on him. "If it's retribution you wish for me, Captain Ross, then I suggest you stay close at hand." Scowling furiously, he stared down his long nose. "You may yet have your satisfaction."

Provoked by the sinister edge in Brandl's voice, Ross drew his blaster. The Jedi apparently heard him, and spun around to face the blaster. Ross fired a three-round burst at the Jedi. Honed by several seasons as a bounty hunter, he centered the bolts to explode in the square of Brandl's broad shoulders. Before the deadly energy could land their mark, Brandl deftly snatched a cylindrical object from his belt. Momentarily, a narrow shaft of white brilliance ignited from the base, feinting and parrying with the precise motions of the Jedi's wrists. Deflected by the lightsaber, the blaster bolts were harmlessly shot off into the field.

Aghast, Ross could only watch as the destructive rounds dissipated into oblivion. Abruptly, he felt the crushing pinch of invisible fingers clenched against his throat, constricting his airway and lungs. Choking, the smuggler dropped to his knees as the serene landscape of Trulalis blurred before him. Gradually, the sensation faded, leaving the Corellian gasping to catch his breath.

"There is one rule of theater that applies to real life, Captain Ross," Brandl declared. "*Only heroes die.* Villains and cowards are left to suffer." Turning his back on the panting pilot, he snarled, "Now come along."

Ross shook the haze from his vision. "Is that another line?" he slurred lethargically.

Brandl trembled, visibly drained as he disengaged the lightsaber with required effort. "Not just a line, Captain, but an astute warning to the less-than-humble pilgrim." Securing the lightsaber to his belt, the Jedi momentarily scanned the pale skies. "The settlement is less than a kilometer away. We had best move along. It will be dark soon."

Swearing off bruises, Ross bitterly wedged his pack against his shoulder and jammed his blaster

Trulalis

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
Hydrosphere: Moderate
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Forests, grasslands, lakes, mountains and oceans
Length of Day: 23 standard hours
Length of Year: 310 local days
Sapient Species: Human
Starport: Landing fields
Population: 1 million
Planet Function: Homeworld, theatrical training/entertainment
Government: Participatory democracy
Tech Level: Information (remains largely agricultural and communal)
Major Exports: Mid technology, entertainers
Major Imports: None

Capsule: While the system's core planets, Issor and Cadezia, have become thriving centers of technology and commerce, Trulalis remains isolated and remote. Sanctioned as a low-tech world, Trulalis is protected by Issori laws forbidding middle or high technology, which is generally shunned by the communal inhabitants. However, the planet is not closely monitored and many infractions go unmentioned.

In the Republic's golden age, Trulalis boasted one of the finest schools of liberal arts education. Lavish theater productions, dramatic performances and other fine arts made this now rural, backwater world a thriving center of cultural literacy. All that remains now a few abandoned theaters, with a few dusty classrooms, dilapidated stages and a few holovids advertising faded glory.

Adalric Brandl

Type: Dark Jedi
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 4D, lightsaber 7D, melee combat 5D+2, running 4D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 5D, business 5D, cultures 5D+1, intimidation 6D, languages 5D+1, planetary systems 5D, survival 5D, willpower 6D+2
MECHANICAL 3D
Astrogation 3D+1, beast riding 4D, communications 5D+1
PERCEPTION 3D+2
Command 5D+1, investigation 5D+2, persuasion 4D, search 5D
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 4D, stamina 5D+2
TECHNICAL 3D
First aid 5D
Special Abilities:
Force Skills: Control 4D, Sense 3D+2, Alter 4D+1
Control: Absorb/dissipate energy, accelerate healing, resist stun
Sense: Combat sense, danger sense, life detection, life sense, receptive telepathy, sense Force
Alter: Injure/kill
Control and Alter: Inflict pain
Control and Sense: Farseeing, lightsaber combat, projective telepathy
Control, Sense, and Alter: Affect mind, control mind
This character is Force-sensitive.
Force Points: 5
Dark Side Points: 9
Character Points: 17
Move: 10
Equipment: Lightsaber (5D), dark robes, comlink, transponder link

Capsule: Adalric Brandl is a highly intelligent, self motivated individual whose grim obsession with tragedy stems from his career as a tragic actor. Even before his seduction by the dark side, he was a callous, moody man preoccupied with the visage of the next star-crossed character he was meant to play.

An apathetic murderer, he kills without remorse and moves on to his next target, which has made him an invaluable resource to the Emperor.

into the holster. Quickly brushing past Brandl, he hissed, "Can't imagine why you'd be afraid of the dark."

Nestled within the dominant embrace of a mountain range, Kovit was well-protected from the harsh weather conditions of the northern highlands and the wind-swept plains of the coastal region. Staring down the mound into the modest farming community, Ross could vaguely discern movement in the dusty streets. Drawn by diminutive banthas, wagons creaked through the wide avenues. Dozens of people walked the streets, pausing to chat with a neighbor or to haggle over the local street merchant's wares. From a side alley, three boys grunted and sweated behind a battered landspeeder, coaxing the vehicle's engines to briefly ignite. Nearby, above the sporadic choke of the repulsorcraft, laughter betrayed a trio of children playing with an obsolete astromech droid.

Brandl hesitated at the crest of the mound, staring down into the settlement, as if reconsidering his options. Wilted, the Jedi's shoulders exposed a reluctance to continue. "Where are you from, Captain Ross?"

Startled by the abrupt question, Ross stammered, "Corellia originally."

"Do you find returning there difficult?"

"Homecomings are always hard." The Corellian shrugged, pursing his lips doubtfully. "At least for some of us."

Without further reply, Brandl continued down the trail, deliberately slowing his stride. Vacillating, he stepped through the settlement gates, as if expecting some invisible force field to bar his path. Nostalgically passing through the prudent rows of farm cottages, the Jedi admired the mastery of native architecture, as sculpted from the indigenous lumber. Herb gardens and prized flower beds adorned the private lawns, each tenderly manicured and maintained with fastidious care. As they approached the dry, dusty oval of the settlement common, Brandl covered his eyes, protecting them from the fading sun, as he stared into the rich, agricultural outback of the settlement, which extended far beyond the limits of the community to the base of the mountains themselves.

From the near center of Kovit, a macabre specter of architecture loomed above the rustic rooftops. Flyaway buttresses supported the main construction of the theater, unfurling like stony wings from the base. Packed with chalk-white limestone, the obelisk was unequivocally straight, seeming to elongate into the obscuring skies. Established intentionally in the heart of the settlement, the theater captured the waning rays of the sun, momentarily stealing the glory from the picturesque village. There was a somber sense of belonging that drew Brandl toward the structure, ignoring the startled glares of the settlement denizens.

As they passed through the outskirts of the community, Ross nervously observed a makeshift hangar and the crude snout of a Z-95 jutting from the narrow bay doors. The starfighter appeared operational, though crowded by its diminutive shelter, and eager for a skirmish. Distracted by the presence of strangers, several men gathered just beyond the shadows of the small livery, watching intently.

Thumbing the restraint from his blaster, Ross cautiously whispered, "Your adoring fans?"

"Neighbors, patrons, old friends." Brandl abruptly paused in the street, as if awakening from an illusion. "But that was another lifetime."

"Where do they stand in this lifetime?" the smuggler growled.

"Strangers."

Weaving through the haze of the fragrant gardens surrounding the theater courtyard, a woman and a young boy moved along the grainy, stone paths. The echo of their voices chimed with laughter as a private joke was shared between them. Brandl watched intently as they walked through the haze and into the dusty streets.

Fiery, auburn spirals cascaded from the woman's head, crowning her oval face. Unusually pale skin flushed in the faded brilliance, betraying an aversion to excessive sunlight. Tall but gangly, the boy was no older than 11 or 12 years. Broad shoulders framed his upper torso, seemingly too heavy for his slender form. Coordinated and rhythmic, his long legs showed nothing less than the promise of sharp, steady growth.

Startled by the dark apparition of Brandl, the woman hesitated and stood motionless in the street, meeting the Jedi's friendless eyes. The smile parting her full lips was quickly forgotten. Puzzled by her peculiar behavior, the child swept his gaze from her stony face to Brandl. Registering nothing more than a stranger, the boy leaned over his mother's arm and whispered something in her ear.

Obviously distraught, she pulled the child snugly against her and hurriedly continued their trek across the common. Brandl sighed remorsefully, then without explanation, resumed his walk toward the old theater. Beyond the archaic gate a decade or more of wild flowers had claimed the inner recesses of the theater yard, staggering the once straight path to the massive bulkhead doors. Residing over the darkened antechamber, bronze statues and sculpted metalwork lined the interior corridor.

Adalric Brandl moved gracefully into these familiar shadows, intuitively stalking the darkened corridors and spacious hallways beyond. The hollow shell of his memories traced the outlines and silhouettes of each molded tapestry, a display case of tarnished prop swords and shields, and finally the grand hall, where past audiences had come to experience the stage productions.

Ignoring the Corellian behind him, Brandl quickened his steps, moving into the immense auditorium. Deafening, the familiar resonating of applause and encouragement thundered and echoed inside his ears; but this illusion was short-lived. There was no audience to applaud, no actors to bow, no stage settings, nor props as he remembered them. The yawning mouth of the stage was disgracefully bare.

"Who is there?" a voice whispered from the darkness.

Brandl faltered, supporting himself in the elaborately carved doorway.

A thin, frail figure emerged from the darkness of the inner aisle. "Come closer," he gently commanded.

From the shadows along the back wall, Ross scanned the theater for other signs of movement. Thumbing the restraint from his blaster, he waited quietly in the musty wings of the chamber as Brandl continued into the hall toward the shadowy form.

"Adalric Brandl, is that you?" the old man croaked pleasantly.

"Master Otias," Brandl whispered, kneeling at his mentor's feet. "I am ashamed that you care to remember me."

Otias ignited a glow rod, casting a warm beam of light across his scaling face. He was dressed in a faded gray tunic, stained with lamp oil and sweat. The veins and muscles of his arms were pronounced and defined, built up from a lifetime of toil and lean with age. Clouded gray eyes were nearly imperceptible against a splash of dark spots and freckles. "Since when did shame ever come between an actor and his task director?" Brushing a trembling hand through his thinning silver mane, Otias whispered, "It's been 12 long years, Adalric. What brings you back to this stage?"

"Master O—" Brandl fell silent, cutting himself short.

"Come, come lad ... there is nothing more obvious than an actor with a need to confess."

Abruptly, Brandl cowered beneath the glow rod. "I ... I live my life ... in a whirlwind!"

Dignified, Otias beamed proudly, recognizing the famous line. "Old Soveryn's final words of the fourth act. How closely you've come to rivalling his life." Resigned, the aging taskmaster sighed, a lifetime of exhaustion evident by his labored breathing. "Actors are granted license to live a thousand lives, Adalric; but you, you chose to live a thousand lies. If you have come to me as your advocate then speak from your heart, not from the void of a tragic character who has never been born."

Spittle flying from the corners of his mouth, Brandl raged, "I cannot!"

"Every tragic figure is tainted by a flaw, possessed by a need to save the world or himself from some unpardonable crime. No man can set himself before humanity and judge it, not without himself being judged." Otias gently unwrapped the makeshift bandage swathed about on Brandl's left hand, wincing at the severity of the burn. The lightsaber's cauterizing bite was undeniable. "When we pursue shadows, we are destined to find the darkness." Staring into Brandl's face, Otias whispered, "And as you well

know, the dark side has always had its price."

"What happened to me?" Brandl implored.

"You stared into the collective pith of all beings and judged it, without first looking into your own heart. Frustrated, you went looking for the tragic flaw without much success. When the Emperor came calling, you couldn't resist!" Otias whispered, "No one knows darkness better than a Jedi Knight, and no one was more suited to play such a role than you."

"I killed a woman!" Brandl gasped. "Suffocated her! I could feel her heart in my hand ... in my mind! And I squeezed and squeezed —"

"You've killed many," Otias accused. "The Emperor has no blood on his hands; but he keeps an army of others who do."

"Otias, please, help me find the way."

"The way of the Force brings balance to the anarchy of life; but you Adalric," he shook his head reprovingly, "you didn't want balance. Your pride was so great and despite my warnings, you went in search of the unatoneable crime, which inevitably separates the hero from the indigent masses. And you found it, didn't you?"

Gasping for breath, Brandl croaked, "Yes! It was within me, within my black heart the whole time."

"It lies within all of us," Otias whispered, "if we dare to see." Exhausted, he sighed bitterly, again brushing a hand through his thinning hair. "I cannot vindicate you of the evil that you have brought upon yourself, an evil that you have wielded in the name of the Emperor for so long. I've spent the last decade watching, waiting for your return, rehearsing what I would say to you." Sadly, he whispered, "What you ask, I cannot give you. There can be no redemption for your crimes. The dead cannot forgive." Extinguishing the lamp, Otias turned his back on the distraught Jedi and moved away toward the stage.

Brandl slowly turned from the familiar silhouette, stung by the reality of Otias's words. Pressing the damp bandage against his wounded palm, he stepped into the outer arena, moving into the darkened wings in the rear of the theater. Without comment, he retraced his steps through the spacious corridors, past the archaic displays, and into the courtyard beyond the doors. Steeling himself against the violent images sparking through his mind, the Jedi surrendered to Trulalis's last waning sunlight, imagining that the impotent rays had the power to burn into his flesh.

Angrily, he fumbled beneath his robes, producing a large cylindrical object. Ross flinched momentarily, traumatized by his encounter with the Jedi's lightsaber. With recovering confidence, he noted that this object was much larger and was covered with minute control levers and data screens. As if wrenching the neck of an invisible foe, Brandl twisted the object before replacing it within his robes. Lightly, he heard the smuggler's footsteps behind him, moving with guarded discretion, as if to avoid disturbing his troubled thoughts. "I prefer your contempt, Captain," he whispered, his eyes flashing with violence. "Your pity disgusts me." Extending his long stride, he stormed out of the theater yard, unhindered by the thickened dust at his feet.

▪ ▪ ▪

Framed by the dark cowl of the forest canopy, the *Kierra's* ivory hull gleamed, a smooth, round tooth jutting from the heath. Guided by these moonlight reflections, Ross stumbled through the rutted trail, twisting his ankles against unseen rocks. "Kierra, lights!"

Squinting into the brilliant array of search beacons, the smuggler shivered, pulling the collar of his duster across his neck. A potent wind was descending from the high country, bringing with it the promise of rain. Inside the ramp corridor, Ross brushed a hand through his hair, reassured by the warmth flooding the freighter's interior. "Pump up the main boosters," he ordered with distraction, noting that Brandl had not followed him onto the ship.

Growing accustomed to the Jedi's erratic mood

swings, Ross peered from the protection of the ramp door. Below him, standing at the foot of the ramp, Brandl stood motionless staring into the darkness as pale mists crawled over his shoulders and beneath his feet. "Brandl?" With his smuggler's sense aroused, Ross ordered, "Kierra, kill the exterior lamps."

"You can come out now," Brandl whispered, as the austere beacons were extinguished. "No one will harm you."

Ross pressed himself against the interior hull wall, propping his blaster and steadying his arm and shoulder to draw a clear shot. Hearing him, Brandl stared up into the darkened passage, disarming the Corellian with his sharp gaze. As the lanky figure of a boy emerged from the heath, Ross could feel the tension fade and stepped off the ramp, recognizing the child from their brief encounter in the settlement. Dressed in dark green clothes to match the forest at night, the child's face was flushed and sweated. Cautiously, he approached the two men and the freighter.

Awed by the sight of Brandl, enshrouded by darkness, yet haloed by the moon, the child moved gingerly toward the ship, compelled by an insatiable curiosity. He made no effort to shield his wonder, noting every measure of the figure before his eyes, as if committing his mere presence to memory. "It's true," the boy whispered. "You are a Jedi Knight."

"Who are you?" Brandl demanded, but there was no strength in words. Even Ross could detect the half lie of denial trembling in his voice.

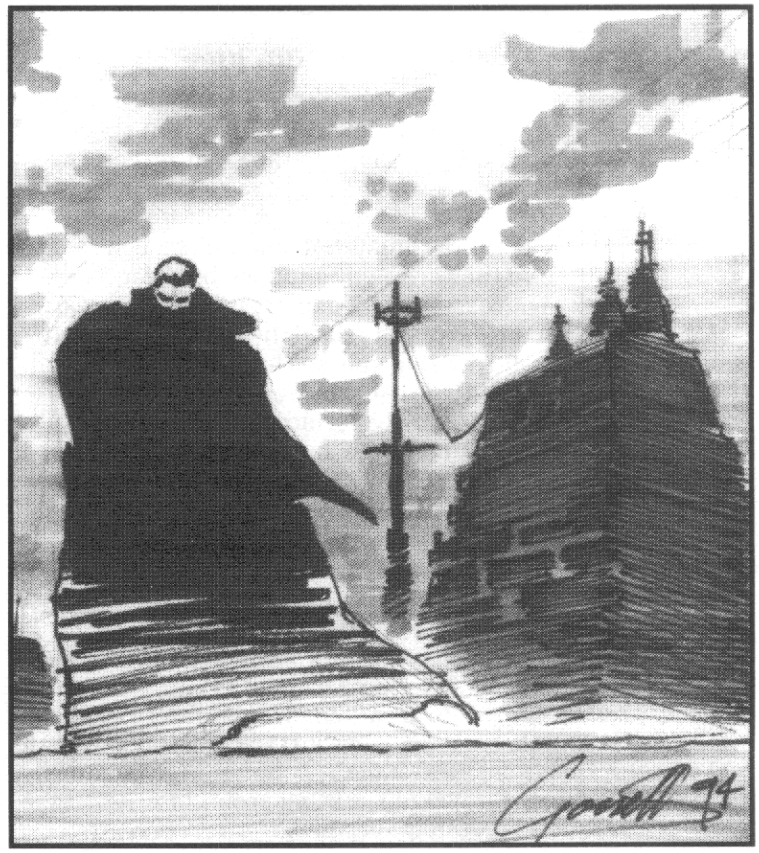
Handsome, the child grinned, turning his face up to meet his father's eyes. "Don't you know me?" he asked. Staring intently at the lightsaber swinging from the Jedi's belt, the boy angrily cried, "You named me! Jaalib, remember?" Recovering his manners, he rubbed the toe of his shoe into the yielding earth. "My last name is Brandl too."

Gently, Brandl caressed the boy's hair and cheeks, feeling the smooth skin beneath his fingertips. It was a peculiar sensation, which fired every nerve across his body. Despite the tenderness of that caress, Ross felt a sense of unease crawling into his belly.

"Is that a real lightsaber? I've never seen one." Chatty, the youngster added, "I've seen props for the stage, but ..." His soft, tenor voice fluttered, prey to the silence as Brandl handed the weapon to him. Staring at it, Jaalib reached hesitantly for the lightsaber, then dropped his hand.

"Don't be afraid," Brandl urged.

"I'm not afraid," Jaalib said with confidence, taking his father's hand, rather than the lightsaber. A thin film of tears glistened in the corner of his eyes. Swallowing the emotion, Jaalib whispered, "I've come to warn you. I heard Menges and the



others talking. They're angry that you came back to the settlement. Mother doesn't think they'll do anything; but I know that Menges has a ship."

Overhearing the boy, Ross snapped, "Kierra, check the sensors!"

Abruptly, the interior corridor lights went dark. "I suggest that you all duck!"

A tremendous explosion erupted near the aft of the ship and forest perimeter, accompanied by the afterburn blast of an outgoing starfighter. Dodging churned up roots, debris, and stone particles, Ross slid under the ramp, diving for cover beneath the freighter's hull. Sparks and molten debris scattered about his head and shoulders, singeing his clothing and hair. Thrashing wildly, he swiped the heated material from his skin. Nearby, Brandl was helping the frightened boy to his feet, whispering encouraging words to the traumatized child.

"Damage report."

"They got us, boss," Kierra pined. "Concussion missile." There was a brief pause as she analyzed the incoming data. "Shields are out. Engines are at 70 percent. There's a good chance the ion coils may seize if we push them too far."

"Can we lift off?"

"With you at the reins, flyboy," she chuckled, "anything's possible."

Protectively embracing the boy against him,

Adventure Idea

The characters experience engine trouble that forces them to land on the isolated world of Trulalis, near the Kovit Settlement. While scavenging for repair materials, the group experiences a sense of foreboding among the humble community members, as if they are being shunned by the natives. The reason for their distress becomes clear. A dark Jedi has seized the local theater and is terrorizing the settlement inhabitants. His aim is to gain more power from the dark side by slowly tormenting the townsfolk and planning the murder of several residents. When the characters arrive, the dark Jedi's intentions take on a new motive, the seduction of a Jedi within the characters' party.

Brandl whispered, "As long as we don't make ourselves known, he will pass."

"Look," Ross barked, "this is all very touching, but that last pass was just to get an approximate location. Next time —" he snorted anxiously, "forget it, I'm not waiting around for next time. Let's scratch gravel, now!"

Agitated by the sudden turn of events, Brandl cupped the boy's face in his hands. "Does your mother know you're here?"

"No."

"Then ..." Brandl stammered, "how did you know?"

Playfully holding his father's hands, Jaalib smiled, "Otias told me the truth a long time ago. He let me watch the holos of your stage work. Mother didn't like it at first, but she came with me and she cried the whole time." Sadly, the boy glanced away, avoiding Brandl's eyes. "When we saw you in the settlement common, as soon as we got home she started to cry. So I knew it was you." Staring at Ross, the boy frowned, knowing the inevitable parting was soon at hand. "Will you ever come home?"

Brandl cradled Jaalib's smooth cheeks and gently kissed the child's forehead. "I can make no promises."

Jaalib forced a smile. "I understand. Otias said that you had other important roles to play, parts that a small world like Trulalis could never offer." Clinging to his father's presence, the boy whispered, "When I'm old enough, I'm going to act offworld too. Otias said that he would help." He hesitated. "I want to be as great as you are, father." The thin film of tears returned, threatening to spill over his cheeks. "I won't ever forget you." Using the thick canopy of the forest as a shield, Jaalib sprinted down the trail and vanished into the night shadows.

"They never told him the truth," Brandl swallowed desperately, fighting back his emotions.

"Why didn't you tell him?" Ross snarled, sealing the outer hatch.

"You give me credit for courage? A man of courage is a man of conviction, Captain Ross." Brushing past the Corellian, the Jedi whispered, "I lost mine the moment I chose to believe in old legends."

Throwing himself into the acceleration seat, Ross frantically began throwing the flight controls. His hands moved diligently across the console with consummate skill. Roused by the threat of a hostile starfighter swinging in on the sensor scope, he initialized the booster ignition, cradling the crippled ship in his hands. A low whine engulfed the flight cabin in static echoes and vibrations as the ion drive labored to lift the freighter. The metallic rattle of the deck plates reverberated through every corridor and in the spacious cargo bay.

"Oh," Kierra groaned, "that sounds bad."

"Never mind how it sounds, get started on bringing the shield generators on line!" Struggling to maintain control of the freighter, Ross brawled with the partially ionized throttle, maximizing the power output through the damaged engine.

"The hard part will be getting through the atmosphere," Brandl whispered, glancing over the readout screens.

"We may never get off the ground!" Ross grumbled. "Kierra, where is he?"

"One Z-95 Headhunter, headed right for us and according to my readings, the ship exceeds the normal weight ratio for its class."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning more concussion missiles. He's fully loaded."

"Power up the main sentry turret," Ross mumbled, concentrating on the hampered freighter. "When will the shield generator come on line?"

"Give me five more minutes. Hydraulic pressure is building to functional levels."

"Well hurry it along. At this rate, we won't even get into space before he catches us." Ross stared into the underlying blanket of the lower atmosphere, shrouding his departure in the frenzy of night mist. "What can you do about fixing the ion drive?"

"Think happy thoughts," Kierra replied. "We have no cargo. We have no surplus material. And," she added with a hint of feminine pride, "this ship has always been under its weight ratio. We're lighter than a Gamorrean brain sack."

"How long before he intercepts us?"

"Let's just say I'm putting up the shields now."

Abruptly, the modified light freighter shook with the impact concussion of another direct hit. Bucking beneath the powerful blow, the *Kierra* drifted beneath the cloud cover as the destructive energy ricocheted over the aft shields, dissipating harmlessly against the hull.

"Damage?" Ross panted.

"The shields took it," Kierra replied wearily, still accessing the information from her multiple systems. "But the hydraulic level is already dropping. We won't survive much more of that."

Angling across the stratosphere, the Headhunter aggressively continued its pursuit. Hampered by the thickened atmosphere of Trulalis, it swayed from side to side, approaching for another strafing run.

Arming the lower turret, Kierra interfaced with the sentry gun, timing a sporadic burst across the forefront of the attacking ship. Not expecting retaliation from the crippled freighter, the fighter stuttered through the atmosphere, its left wing section erupting into flames. Avoiding the turret's deadly accuracy, the Z-95 dropped back, barrelling out of range. "That should keep his head down for a while."

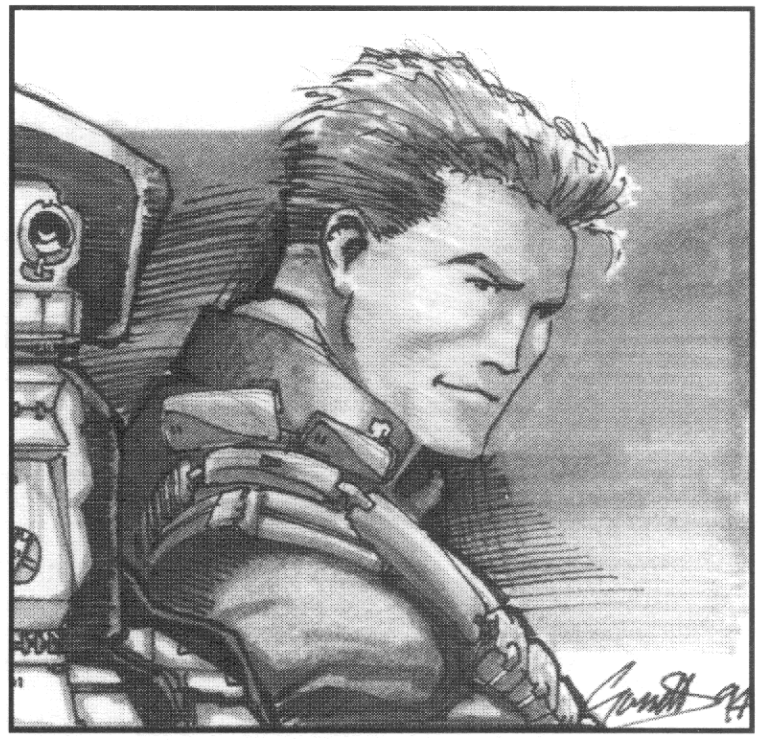
"Not long enough," Ross argued. Eluding Brandl's cautious eye, he grumbled, "If there's something in your Jedi survival book, now's the time to spring it."

Brandl nodded, his face notably drained and haggard. Reaching inside the fold of his robe, he again produced the peculiar capsule. The cylindrical-shaped device was cleverly fitted for concealment as a hydrospanner or mechanic's tool. Staring at the object, Ross recognized it from their brief excursion at the theater. As he watched, fascinated, the control head flashed intermittently from a hidden power cell.

"What's that?" Kierra crooned. Intrigued by the odd unit, her optical orb brightened, extending the focus on the transmitter.

"It's a transponder," Brandl replied. "And it's been transmitting for nearly an hour." The Jedi sighed with effort, leaning against the broad back of the acceleration chair. In the harsh light of the flight cabin, his arrogance could not hide the gaunt cheeks and stress lines that had begun eroding the handsome visage of a once proud man. The morbid signs of resignation and surrender were easily read in his noble face.

Without warning, the Headhunter broke off the chase, banking sharply toward the planet. Its aft engines betrayed haste, glowing with the throttle thrown full open as the fighter vanished into the dense cloud cover above the planet. Suspicious, Ross glared at Brandl, feeling the constriction of fear in his throat. "What's the catch?"



"You had better prepare yourself," Brandl whispered.

The proximity alarms blared, sending a deafening echo into the freighter's corridor and accessways. Exploding with tactical data and imminent warnings of ship-to-ship collision, the sensors closed on the gigantic structure of the massive Imperial Star Destroyer, newly emerged from hyperspace.

As the Star Destroyer moved across the viewscreen only a scant 100 meters from him, Ross slumped against the back of his chair, defeated before one shot could be fired. Slowly, scores of turbolaser batteries turned on them, targeting his freighter. Still hampered by a faulty ion drive, the *Kierra* bucked and lurched toward the Star Destroyer.

"Have they got us?" Ross moaned, massaging his eyes and forehead.

Kierra snickered nervously. "Does Boba Fett enjoy his job?"

"Could we outrun them?"

"We couldn't even out-think them at this point, flyboy. They've got us locked in tight."

Resting his head and arms against the flight console, Ross sighed, accepting the inevitable. "You've managed to sign my death warrant!"

"On the contrary, I've guaranteed your reprieve." The Jedi's mouth hinted at a sly grin.

"I have a price on my head! An Imperial bounty!"

"You are about to discover that the Emperor is quite generous, especially when one of his citizens sees fit to return his property."

"You're one of the Emperor's freaks?" Ross argued. "What were you doing on Najib ... You were running!" Staring at the Imperial Star Destroyer, he gasped, "You were running from the Empire? Why?"

"It no longer matters," Brandl whispered. "The time has come to confront the darkness and forsake it for what it is ... just so many shadows."

"Well some shadows can kill!"

As they passed into the outer docking field, the freighter was engulfed in darkness. "Then let all be perfected in death."

Prying the forward deck plate from the flight console, Ross quickly unbuckled his blaster, stashing the belt inside with a hidden cache of thermal detonators and other illegal weaponry. Motivated by Imperial penalties for unauthorized equipment and arms, he retreated to a general utility closet in the corridor beyond the command cabin. Retrieving a small stash of blaster power packs, the flustered Corellian returned to the bridge to find Brandl peering curiously into the hidden compartment. "Kierra, make certain the shield housing is intact. I don't want them finding your power cell."

"A girl's got to have her privacy," she quipped. "Good thinking, boss."

Closing the hidden panel, Ross tripped the contamination seal. If the Imperial sensors went over the ship, they would bypass this area for contaminated mechanic's tools. Abruptly, the interior lights fluctuated as the power levels dropped, shifting to auxiliary mode. "All clear," Ross hollered.

"I've switched over my power couplings to a subordinate cell. Even if they do find my main generator, they won't know what it is. But," she teased, "that means I can't eavesdrop over the comlink or scan the perimeter!"

"For your own safety," Brandl began, "I advise you not to mention Trulalis."

Remembering Brandl's wife and son back on the planet, Ross nodded pensively. "Kierra, sweep all records and logs since we left Najiba, input data from a previous job. Where does that put us?"

"We dropped that baby tris off on Tatooine, remember?"

"Don't remind me," Ross replied wistfully. "Just erase the reasons and submit an addendum about engine trouble above Trulalis."

"Right, boss."

"And Kierra? Lose yourself. They'll probably go over every centimeter of this ship."

"Is that a hint of concern in your voice, flyboy?"

"Yeah," he grumbled. Shrugging the tension menacing his shoulders, he walked through the corridor to the hatch and deactivated the seal.

Before the ramp could fully lower two Imperial stormtroopers charged aboard the ship, leveling their weapons at Ross, shoving him against the hull wall. The force of the blow knocked the wind from his lungs and the Corellian doubled over, coughing desperately to catch his breath. Twenty or more stormtroopers were staggered outside the freighter, their weapons pointing into the ramp lift, trained on the dark Jedi.

Undaunted by the show of Imperial might, Brandl scanned the parade of white-on-black armor, until he met the familiar face of an Imperial officer beyond the periphery of armed soldiers. Stepping aside, the Jedi allowed three stormtroopers to rush past him into the ship.

"I trust you will cooperate," the officer announced. Pompously, he adjusted the brim of his black cap. "If not for your own sake, then for the sake of your companion."

Disguising a hint of defeatism with dramatic poise, the Jedi proclaimed, "How can I cooperate?"

"Think nothing. Do nothing. Say nothing until you are told." Offering a hand to the panting smuggler, Brandl grinned slyly, his back to the Imperial entourage. "Captain Grendahl, you'll find that I do nothing very well."

Grendahl's face was menacing. "We're scheduled to rendezvous with the *Interrogator* within the hour. Inquisitor Tremayne is eager to see you again, Lord Brandl ... very eager." Pointing to Ross, Grendahl demanded, "Take him to the isolation area for questioning." Changing his demure with obvious fraudulence, Grendahl tipped his hat with mocking respect, "Please, Lord Brandl, your quarters have been prepared."

▪ ▪ ▪

Massaging the bruises swelling on his chest and arms, Ross leaned his head against the antiseptically clean wall of the holding cell. Several hours had slowly passed, marked with isolated sessions of routine questioning. Abruptly, the door opened, admitting two stormtroopers and Captain Grendahl, who he recognized from the hangar bay. Pleas-

antly, the Imperial officer sat down across from him, setting a large datapad on the table between them. "Do you recognize this gentleman?" he asked, keying up a picture on the small screen.

Ross laughed softly, recognizing the distinguished curves of his own face. "Would it help if I said I didn't?"

Grendahl smiled generously. "No." Folding his hands against the table top, he sneered, "Interfering with an Imperial investigation is a crime punish-

"The damage to your ship?"

"We were attacked by pirates," Ross replied rhythmically. "My hyperdrive failed and we just barely managed to arrive here."

Grendahl hesitated. "You keep accurate ship records, Captain Ross. Your flight log and manifests substantiate your story."

"Call it a throwback to my bounty hunting days," Ross offered. "If you wanted your expenses, exact documentation was a necessity."

Corporate Targets

The ships, cargoes, and space-borne property of the following corporations are considered legitimate targets for Alliance privateers:

Any Imperial vessel. This includes ships of the Imperial Navy, COMPNOR, or the Imperial government.

SoroSuub Corp. One of the largest manufacturers and retailers in the galaxy. Headquarters: Sullust. (CSA)

Kuat Drive Yards (KDY). Major shipwright of the Imperial Navy. (CSA)

The Tagge Company (TaggeCo). Owner of Bonadan Industries, Tagge Mining Company, GalResource Industries, Mobquet Swoops and Speeders, Trast Heavy Transports, Gowix Computers, the Tagge Restaurant Association, which owns the Biscuit Baron chain and several macrofarms. Major supplier to the Imperial Governments, COMPNOR and the Corporate Sector. (CSA)

Nebula Consumables. An Imperial military food supplier. Headquarters: Tyed Kant.

Imperial Meats and Produce. A corporation nationalized by the Empire. Headquarters: Tyed Kant.

Zone Supplies, Ltd. Produces security systems for the Imperial Army.

Merr-Sonn Mil/Sci. Heavy weapons, armor, siege equipment, military gear. Subsidiaries: Merr-Sonn Munitions, MerrWeapons, Merr-Sonn Industrial Equipment. (CSA)

BlasTech Corp. Czerka Weapons. Blethern Gas Industries. Norsam Corp. Munitions and weapons systems suppliers to the Imperial Military.

Arakyd Corp. Produces weapons and droids systems for the Empire.

Santhe/Sienar Technologies and subsidiaries. Santhe Passenger and Freight, Curich Engineering, Sienar Fleet Systems. Research, development and manufacture of several Imperial military systems and technologies, including the TIE fighter. Warning: this company has state of the art military quality defense systems. Headquarters: Lianna. (CSA)

Imperial Mining Corp. Imperial corporation with branch offices in several sectors. Headquarters: Coruscant.

Fabritech, Inc. Sensor and control systems manufacturer, supplies Imperial military.

Drever Corp. Small arms and tool manufacturer. Supplies the Phoenix Plasma Punch, a boarding tool, to Imperial Customs.

Imperial HoloVision, TriNebulon News, Nova Network. Distributors of pro-Imperial propaganda.

MerenData. Droid and security system manufacturer. Supplies military and interrogation droids and targeting drones. (CSA)

Corporate Sector. The ships and properties of the Corporate Sector Authority.

Note: (CSA) indicates a contributor to the Corporate Sector Authority. CSA and CSA contributors on this list are targets, but CSA contributors not on this list are not targets.

Capital Ships

Capital scale ships are for those who wish to raid container and super-container ships, star galleons, and other capital ships with a chance to survive. The new small capital ships, such as blastboats or gunships, are more suited to this work, being both heavily armed and maneuverable. However, they are reasonably difficult to acquire. They also lack the cargo space to carry away booty. The more commonly available medium ships — corvettes and frigates — make up most pirate, privateer and mercenary fleets. Capital ships usually carry up to one year's supplies.

Corellian corvettes are very popular as privateer ships for the same reason they are commonly found in Rebel fleets: they are extremely versatile. The corvette designation is the smallest and least armed capital ship in wide use, with four to eight guns and medium speed and maneuverability. The easily modified corvette can also be refitted to replace a gun mounting with ion cannon or tractor beams (both are tools of the raiding trade).

Frigates are popular but less common pirate ships. A frigate-class ship is fast, nimble, and usually armed with a mix of capital and starfighter scale guns. While some frigate models — like the Nebulon-B and *Lancer*-classes — are less available to pirates, there are a number of serviceable older models available. A light frigate designation is often used for a frigate with no capital scale weapons.

Large ships — light and heavy cruisers — are even less common, but not unknown, as privateer vessels. This class of starship requires a crew of several hundred, often several thousand. Most of the cruisers in pirate hands are Imperial mutiny ships or are salvaged wrecks.

Mutiny ships are usually in good condition, but often lack enough crew members to control the ship, as many among the surviving crew wish to return home or leave space-faring life.

Salvaged ships must be quickly repaired before other salvage crews arrive. Sometimes wrecks are simply stripped for parts. Most of the outlaw cruisers currently at large are made from the remains of several others. Privateer cruisers often have more than 20 guns, of either starfighter or capital scale, are somewhat slow and less maneuverable, and are well armored.

Characters in a privateer campaign should not simply start with a cruiser, or stumble onto them. Cruisers, if allowed into the campaign, could be a goal of the players to be won only after many hard sessions of play. Cruisers usually require considerable and expensive repairs and refitting. An older light cruiser, such as the *Carrack*-class light cruiser (described in the *Imperial Sourcebook*) is ideal for this sort of campaign.

Targets

As mentioned earlier, most targets are commercial freighters of one sort or another. These are usually only lightly armed and their main defense is to escape into hyperspace or rely on system patrols. Small freighters are favorites, as they usually carry small, valuable cargos which are easy to grab quickly and sell quickly.

Larger ships — bulk freighters and container ships — are usually only targeted by the capital ship-using raiders, mainly because capital ships have enough space to carry the booty. Large ships typically carry generic, hard to trace cargos.

Tactics

Privateers use several common tactics to capture and board their target ships.

The Barricade

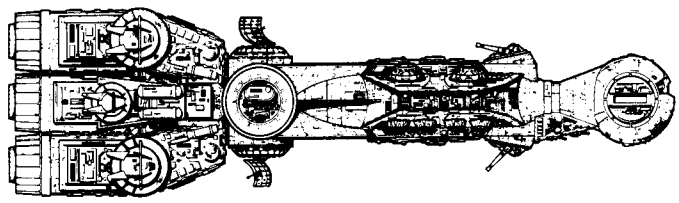
A pirate vessel can use a tractor beam to drag a mass barrier — any object more massive than the target ship traveling through hyperspace — into a space lane and hope for a rich prize.

This tactic has varied success. Even the narrowest space lanes are kilometers wide, leaving the odds of a ship passing through the right coordinates rather low. When a ship is snared in such a fashion, it could easily be a military or heavily armed corporate ship. Using relatively small mass barriers can narrow the odds of such a rude surprise, but this correspondingly lessens the odds of netting prey.

Despite these problems the barricade is an old and surviving pirate tactic, used by those who don't care what they snare if the prize doesn't put up much of a fight.

Privateers only use the barricade when they are sure that a target will travel a lane at known coordinates at a specific time.

Privateer Corvette



Craft: Corellian Engineering Corporation Corvette
Type: Modified corvette
Scale: Capital
Length: 150 Meters
Skill: Capital ship piloting
Crew: 50, gunners: 12, skeleton: 20/+5
Crew Skill: Astrogation 3D, capital ship gunnery 4D+2, capital ship piloting 3D+2, capital ship shields 3D, sensors 3D+1
Passengers: 20
Cargo Capacity: 3,000 metric tons
Consumables: 1 year
Cost: 1.5 million (used)
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2
Hyperdrive Backup: x12
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 2D
Space: 6
Atmosphere: 330; 950 kmh
Hull: 4D
Shields: 2D
Sensors:
Passive: 40/1D
Scan: 80/2D
Search: 100/3D
Focus: 5/4D
Weapons:
4 Double Turbolaser Cannons
Scale: Starfighter
Fire Arc: 1 front, 1 left, 1 right, 1 back
Crew: 1 to 3
Skill: Capital ship gunnery
Fire Control: 3D
Space Range: 3-15/35/75
Atmosphere Range: 6-30/70/150 km
Damage: 4D+2

1 Ion Cannon
Scale: Starfighter
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 to 3
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 3D
Space Range: 1-3/7/36
Atmosphere: 100-300/700/3.6 km
Damage: 3D
1 Tractor Beam
Scale: Capital
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 or 2
Skill: Capital ship gunnery
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-5/15/30
Atmosphere Range: 100-500/1.5/3 km
Damage: 3D

Lurking the Zone

Space lanes usually enter and exit a system via well-charted jump zones. There is usually a half-hour or more transit time to the planet from the zone. Raiders often jump an arriving ship before it has a chance to defend itself or jump back into hyperspace. Both pirates and privateers use this tactic.

This tactic has certain advantages. The raider can pretend to be an arriving or departing vessel, can pick its targets more carefully and, if a system patrol arrives, the raider can quickly depart from the area. The raid needs to be very fast — jump zones are high traffic areas and armed help is not far away, assuming a system patrol isn't on post guarding the area.

Light Privateer Frigate

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems Light Frigate
Type: Converted customs vessel
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 40 meters
Skill: Space transports: light frigate
Crew: 6, gunners: 6, skeleton: 3/+10
Crew Skill: Astrogation 3D+2, sensors 3D, space transports 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D
Passengers: 6
Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons
Consumables: 2 months
Cost: 1 million (used)
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2
Hyperdrive Backup: x15
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 2D
Space: 8
Atmosphere: 365; 1050 kmh
Hull: 3D+1
Shields: 3D
Sensors:
Passive: 30/1D
Scan: 60/2D
Search: 90/3D
Focus: 4/4D
Weapons:
4 Heavy Laser Cannons
Fire Arc: 2 front, 1 left, 1 right
Crew: 1
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-3/12/25
Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km
Damage: 5D
1 Ion Cannon
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 to 3
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 3D
Space Range: 1-3/7/36
Atmosphere: 100-300/700/3.6 km
Damage: 3D
1 Tractor Beam
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 or 2
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-3/12/25
Atmosphere Range: 2-6/20/40 km
Damage: 3D

Dirtside Raid

Well-armed and numerically strong pirates occasionally strike against poorly defended colonies, and similarly advantaged privateers raid corporate and Imperial factories and storage facilities when possible. The profits can be tremendous in either case.

Corporate and Imperial installations are better defended than easily raided colonies. Even the smallest and most poorly defended Imperial installations has a flight of TIE fighters and shields and turbolasers, while corporate installations have Headhunters, Gauntlets or IRC fighters and the standard complement of ground defenses. Such targets are rarely taken by assault, and privateers can rarely afford a siege. These ripe plums are plucked by skill and ingenuity.

Code Black Hole

Virtually every ship in the known galaxy has a transponder code imprinted in its sublight engine that identifies it by name, owner and type. These codes are registered by BoSS — the Bureau of Ships Services. The transponder codes are intended to identify ships and help make piracy, smuggling and other illegal ship activities difficult. The codes act as a nametag — what robber will rob if his name is tattooed on his forehead?

Unfortunately for the authorities, advancing technology has made it possible to mask or alter these codes. (A more complete treatment of this can be found in *Cracken's Rebel Field Guide*.) Pirates and privateers use this to their advantage by creating a double identity for their ships. Most of the time the ship uses the "innocent code" with innocuous data. When raiding, the ship uses the "pirate code" with the other name, owner's alias and an identifier code called "code black hole," intended to frighten the target into surrendering.

Rebel privateers transmit a variation of this, known as "code quasar," meant to assure the target of just treatment upon surrender.

Engagement and Surrender

Once the raider has closed to attack range and transmitted code black hole or code quasar, the raid becomes almost formal. The target may fight or surrender. The pirate captain almost always accepts a surrender, no matter how bad a fight has developed. If the ship promptly surrenders the crew is usually not unduly harmed, even by the most bloodthirsty pirates.

A ship that has been captured after a fight can expect the worst. A pirate captain prefers the reputation that he treats the cooperative well and the resistant without mercy. This sort of reputation increases quick surrenders, raises profits, speeds up raiding time, and cuts crew loss.

If the prize resists, as most do, then the raiders' work is cut out for them. Raiders must bring the prize in without too much damage and before it can jump to hyperspace, or the cargo will be lost. Ion cannons and tractor beams are favored for this task. If the prize is disabled but still refuses to surrender, the real work begins.

Boarding Actions

The boarding is the heart of space piracy. A disabled ship is often full of hostile, armed crew members who have taken exception to being

attacked. Usually every able crew member on both sides is thrown into the boarding. On large raiders there is sometimes a military-style marine unit used for gunners and boarders.

The first problem of boarding is getting from the raider to the prize. If possible a raider uses a tractor beam or magnetic grapples to anchor the prize in place while a universal airlock is attached. The boarders then charge across the airlock, blast or cut their way in, and take the ship. Shaped charges (and a really good demolitions expert) are the preferred method of entry. Fusion cutters or a plasma punch are also popular keys. In desperate situations a well aimed blaster can be used, but caution is advised: one bad shot and you're floating home.

If an airlock is not possible, another boarding action is to suit up and jump. Many vacuum suits come with basic thrusters which make it easy to hop from one stationary ship to another. Some enterprising raiders try to jump to an unanchored ship, but this isn't a very bright idea.

The main problem with this method of entry is how to get into a sealed environment without evacuating the atmosphere. Most pirates simply blow the airlock or a bulkhead and let the prize crew fend for themselves, but privateers are supposed to avoid wanton loss of life.

The boarders must now subdue the crew, usually in close-quarters, section by section battle! At what point a prize is finally taken is often up to the defending crew — how long can they resist and survive? For an example of a successful boarding action see the opening scenes of *Star Wars: A New Hope*.

Once the crew has surrendered, been subdued or eliminated, the booty can be collected, transferred and divided according to the ship's articles. In the case of pirates the booty includes the cargo, the valuables of the subdued crew, and whatever they can scavenge from the prize ship itself.

Privateers confine themselves to the cargo in accordance with their letter of marque to maintain their reputation. Assigning prize booty is left up to the gamemaster, based on the corporation owning the ship and the cargo. A cargo from a food producer will be some sort of food, not weapons, while Imperial Mining ships won't be carrying electronics. Assign rough tonnage and value to best suit the campaign.

A Privateer Campaign Sector

Most gamemasters will wish to run a campaign using a sector as the campaign background. Excellent advice is available in the *Star Wars Gamemasters Handbook*.

The sector can be one published for *Star Wars* or developed from the planet generation system presented in *Planets of the Galaxy: Volume One* and *Galaxy Guide 8: Scouts*. In addition to the normal considerations of planet building be sure to include target corporations active in the sector (one or two will do), infochants (information merchants), and corrupt port officials willing to sell shipping departure schedules and patrol frequency in the system.

Systems with target corporations are favorite hunting grounds for privateers. Infochants, bribable port officials and Alliance intelligence contacts are necessities to well-informed privateers.

System Patrols

Note whether patrols are Imperial, corporate, or local. Local patrols are usually single ships which monitor jump zones for several days at a time. A standard class starport has at least two patrol vessels, either of which may be unavailable due to maintenance or repair. In addition to zone duty, a patrol vessel remains busy "running the orbits" between in-system colonies and outposts (if any) and maintaining orbital presence. Patrols cannot be everywhere and patrol schedules are closely held secrets, although an infochant might be able to acquire one at a high price.

A corporate dominated world is patrolled by corporate vessels or not at all (aside from random Imperial Navy appearances). Any stellar class port or better has at least occasional Imperial patrols as well as several patrol vessels of its own. Many Imperial class ports have permanent Imperial Navy facilities and appropriate system security.

Privateer Captain

Character Name: _____

Player: _____

Species: Human

Sex: _____ **Age:** _____

Height: _____ **Weight:** _____

Physical Description: _____

Background: Forced into piracy at a young age, you rose from cabin boy through the ranks to captain of your own ship! Now you want to make more of your life and someday retire on some luxury world. You have contracted your services to the Rebel Alliance as a privateer in return for a pardon and half the profits.

Personality: A dashing rogue at heart, you never acquired the bloodlust that consumes many pirates. You love outwitting prize ships and patrols while raiding the Empire's ill-gotten gains. You're experienced enough to keep a level head in battle and keep your rowdy crew under control.

Objectives: To amass enough credits to retire in style.

A Quote: "Gently, gently ... Fire the ion cannon! Tractor beam on! Prepare to board! Blasters on stun, lads!"

Connection With Other Characters: _____

DEXTERITY	2D+1
Blaster	
Brawling Parry	
Dodge	
Grenade	
Melee Combat	

KNOWLEDGE	3D+2
Business	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Law Enforcement	
Streetwise	
Value	

MECHANICAL	3D+1
Astrogation	
Cap. Ship Gunnery	
Cap. Ship Piloting	
Space Transports	
Starship Gunnery	
Starship Shields	

PERCEPTION	4D
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Gambling	
Investigation	

STRENGTH	2D
Brawling	
Stamina	

TECHNICAL	2D+2
Blaster Repair	
Cap. Starship Rpr	
Demolition	
First Aid	
Security	
Space Transp. Rpr	

Special Abilities: None

Move: 10

Force Points:

Force Sensitive?: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Dark Side Points:

Character Points:

❑ Wounded
❑ Incapacitated
❑ Mortally Wounded

Equipment: Flashy clothes, gaudy jewelry, comlink, vacuum suit, modified Corellian Corvette and no credits or light frigate and 1,000 credits, blaster pistol (4D)

Space Lanes

Space lanes connect the systems and link each sector to its neighbors. Almost every sector has a major trade route running through it to other main trade sectors. Each Imperial class port in a sector is connected to the other Imperial class port by a major trade route or equivalent, all well patrolled by Imperial Navy warships.

Most other space lanes in a sector are secondary or worse and appropriately patrolled. Only the boldest, most well armed (or stupidest, most ignorant) raider hunts in a major trade route. The keys to success in raiding space lanes are to remain mobile and disguised, stick to lightly patrolled areas the raider knows well, bribe accurate port informers lavishly and scout independent hyperspace routes.

Criminal Contacts

One of the factors in a privateer's life is other criminals of different natures. Infochants are a regular contact in any raider's life. Infochants are the intelligence network of professional criminals (and privateers). A good infochant has contacts with black marketeers, smugglers, crime lords, pirates, mercenaries, and assassins. A bad infochant sells rumors and lies as much as the truth, is probably selling to and for the local system patrol and may well be selling you! Most infochants fall between these extremes.

Black marketeers and smugglers (often the same people) are another regular feature in privateering life. If privateers don't sell the remaining booty to the Alliance, they must find some way of selling their booty. Black marketeers are the usual answer. Once the delicate formalities of starting up a business relationship are dealt with (setting up the first buy, usually in an out of the way location, with a small group, often not in the raider's favor) a raider sells to the same buyer until circumstances dictate otherwise. Business deals sometimes go bad, or one of the parties might run into "Imperial entanglements" or trouble with a crime lord. These fragile relationships often simply fall apart.

Outlaw Stations

Every illegal starship needs a place to restock, refit and receive other port services. For some ships that have kept a low profile and are not obviously suspicious, this is not a real problem. There are dozens of ports that cater to any questionable ship, so long as it isn't actively wanted. Mos Eisley, Celanon City, and Cloud City regularly service such ships.

Many pirate and privateer vessels can dock in no such port — they are too infamous, or too obviously outlaw. Outlaw stations are their only recourse. Ports on Korbin, Lanthrym, and Uogo'cor are known to sell services to any ship, regardless of registry, history, or crew. Prices are high, but there is little choice for the raider on the run. Port services vary with the quality of the port, but often a small outlaw station has services even an Imperial class port doesn't offer, such as transponder code alterations, ID forging,

heavy weaponry repair for private vessels, illegal specification engines, and no questions asked, for the right price.

The outlaw station is usually a busy place. More and more ships find themselves in need of illegal services. The streets are crowded with smugglers, pirates, infochants, gangsters, black marketeers, port employees, peripheral servicers (like technicians and "entertainers"), the occasional mercenary and a very few (very good) bounty hunters. Uogo'cor, in the Trax Sector, is such a system, hosting space stations that service the pirates of the Trax Tube, a major shipping lane in the Outer Rim.

The Empire snuffs out blatantly illegal stations, when convenient or necessary, but quietly-run stations are often not noticed. Some stations' coordinates are closely held secrets in the fringe community, and those who know them only give them to acquaintances they think will be equally careful. There are a few deep space stations that move locations on a regular basis, ensuring safety.

Of course, an illegal outpost is often very dangerous, especially for the inexperienced, desperate, or famous. The population is mostly transient, often dangerous and always outlaw. The best gun makes the rules and violence is part of daily life. There is usually no security force, unless there is a powerful crime lord running the station as part of a syndicate, in which case the thugs acting as security patrols deal with troublemakers as efficiently as possible.

Pirate and Privateer Bases

A really successful raider often builds a base of operations or takes over an existing facility. These bases range from extensive fortified colonies to a single prefabricated utility hut adjacent to a landing pad. In the former case the base might be fully shielded with powerful surface-to-orbit weaponry. In the latter there are no defense beyond obscure location and small size. In many respects a raider's base is like a Rebel base.

A base is primarily a place to relax, refuel and repair. At its best the base maintains port facilities up to standard class, with a small technical staff, standard spare parts and a fuel processing station. Even the smallest base keeps fuel stores and spare parts.

The raider base is also used to plan operations, store booty, keep prisoners (usually for ransom), and hide from the Imperial Navy. The location of the raider base is always a closely kept secret, often known only to the captain and senior officers. Choosing the location is important and difficult — it must be close enough to major shipping to raid, but in an uncolonized (preferably uninhabited), rarely visited system.

Pirate

Character Name: _____

Player: _____

Species: Human

Sex: _____ **Age:** _____

Height: _____ **Weight:** _____

Physical Description: _____

_____

_____

Background: Maybe piracy isn't the most honorable profession in the galaxy, but Imperial oppression has driven most of the small traders out of business. The Empire creates pirates — and then destroys them. Most of your shipmates are in the spice mines of Kessel now. You barely escaped by the skin of your teeth. You plan to revenge them. You hope that one day, you'll be captain of your own ship — a privateer in the service of the Rebellion.

Personality: You have a flair for colorful clothes and raucous arousing.

Objectives: To plunder enough so you can buy your own ship.

Quote: "Arrr, matey. Make 'em walk the airlock, har har har ..."

Connection With Other Characters: _____

_____

DEXTERITY	3D+2	MECHANICAL	3D+2	STRENGTH	2D+2
Blaster	____	Astrogation	____	Brawling	____
Blaster Artillery	____	Cap. Ship Gunnery	____	Stamina	____
Brawling Parry	____	Repulsorlift Ops	____		
Dodge	____	Space Transports	____		
Melee Combat	____	Starship Gunnery	____		
Melee Parry	____	Starship Shields	____		
KNOWLEDGE	**2D**	**PERCEPTION**	**3D**	**TECHNICAL**	**3D**
Business	____	Bargain	____	Armor Repair	____
Intimidation	____	Command	____	Blaster Repair	____
Languages	____	Con	____	Demolition	____
Streetwise	____	Forgery	____	Droid Repair	____
Value	____	Gambling	____	Security	____

Special Abilities: None

Move: 10

Force Points:

Force Sensitive?: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Dark Side Points:

Character Points:

❑ Wounded
❑ Incapacitated
❑ Mortally Wounded

Equipment: Blaster (4D), comlink, flashy clothes, jewelry, saber (STR+1D+1), vacuum suit, 2,000 credits

The Imperial Navy

One of the primary missions of the Imperial Navy is to protect shipping and suppress piracy. Usually the Imperial Navy is too busy suppressing independence-minded systems and Rebels to actually pursue piracy to any great degree. In

Outlaw Tech

Character Name: _____

Player: _____
Species: Human
Sex: _____ **Age:** _____
Height: _____ **Weight:** _____
Physical Description: _____

Background: You have always been good at fixing up systems and discovered it paid well, especially if you were willing to stretch the bounds of equipment a little. People trying to avoid Imperial entanglements are willing to pay big credits for high quality work, and you give them their money's worth.

Personality: You're more comfortable with engines and droids than people. Considering the rough group you often have to deal with, you have to keep pretty sharp.

Objectives: To be the best, and richest, technician you know.

Quote: "I can fix that! Let me get you an estimate."

Connection With Other Characters: _____

DEXTERITY	2D	MECHANICAL	3D+1	STRENGTH	2D
Blaster		Communications		Brawling	
Brawling Parry		Powersuit Ops		Climbing/Jumping	
Dodge		Repulsorlift Ops		Lifting	
Melee Combat		Sensors		Stamina	
Melee Parry				**TECHNICAL**	**4D**
Pick Pocket				Blaster Repair	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**	**PERCEPTION**	**3D+2**	Cap. Ship Rpr	
Business		Bargain		Cap. Ship Wpn Rpr	
Streetwise		Con		Computer Prog/Rpr	
Value		Hide		Demolition	
Willpower		Investigation		Droid Programming	
		Search		First Aid	
		Sneak		Security	
				Space Transp. Rpr	
				Starship Wpn Rpr	

Special Abilities: None

Move: 10
Force Points:
Force Sensitive?: ❑ Yes ❑ No
Dark Side Points:
Character Points:
❑ Wounded
❑ Incapacitated
❑ Mortally Wounded

Equipment: Comlink, coveralls, medpac, pocket computer, tool harness, tool kit, vacuum suit, 1,000 credits

fact, piracy flourishes in sectors where the Rebels are the most successful, at least until the Empire clamps down with full force. Enforcement actions include the basic patrol, convoy escort, and traps.

Patrols

The Imperial Navy patrols major trade routes heavily. The basic patrol is not intended to capture or destroy pirates. The patrol's main function is to frighten raiders away from major shipping routes so legal shipping is more confined to routes controlled by the Empire. This allows the Empire to easily track commercial activity and keep the large corporations under Imperial protection. When the Imperial Navy does venture out to patrol the minor routes, the ships using those routes are more likely to be illegal and trying to avoid the Imperial patrols on the major routes.

A frequently used patrol tactic is the "post patrol," where a strong force is stationed at each of several hyperspace crossing points, either in deep space or at a well trafficked port. An Interdictor cruiser is often used in deep space to force ships out of hyperspace. All suspicious ships are rigorously searched, their computer records and logs examined and cross-checked, and all crew inspected. The slightest error can lead to arrest or impounding. Any ship that attempts to run is engaged and often destroyed. Destroyed ships are logged as "Rebel" or "pirate," depending on the best guess of the commanding officer.

Escort

Convoy escorts are becoming a much-demanded service. Occasionally a Moff prods the Imperial Navy into performing escort service, and the Navy gathers up as many freighters as possible and assigns a line, usually blastboats or gunships, to protect them. This is a fairly effective tactic, as well-armed ships with low mass will be stopped by a pirate blockade, where a larger ship would not, and can muster enough firepower to deal with the situation.

Traps

An occasional enforcement tactic is to leak information of a valuable cargo to suspected pirate informers and send out a well-armed freighter with considerable backup, such as a blastboat line. When the pirates engage the trap-ship they encounter a considerably well-prepared target.

The Rebel Alliance and Privateers

The Alliance has had mixed relations with privateers since the early stages of the Rebellion. The Alliance was hesitant at first to allow mercenaries with no ideological drive to associate with their cause. After some consideration, and after a few sector commanders took it on themselves to engage privateers to acquire the supplies that High Command could not, Mon Mothma decided to issue letters of marque with restrictions acceptable to her. After a trial period, with mostly favorable results, guidelines were developed so that

Ministries could grant letters of marque, with Executive approval.

The Alliance has found privateers to be a useful resource when properly watched after, but does not trust the basically mercenary nature of the privateer captains. Privateers could be a weak flank for the Alliance and they are carefully watched. The rank and file of the Rebellion tends to treat privateers coolly, as employer to employee.

Nevertheless, the Alliance does render services to their privateers, including offering port facilities, ships supplies, refueling and intelligence, all at reasonable prices, but only as available.

Privateers in the New Republic

After the Battle of Endor, the privateer ranks shrink considerably, with most of the former privateers retiring with their pardons and whatever funds they managed to salt away. There are still a few privateer ships raiding in the Outer Rim Territories, mostly privateers who simply don't want to give up the life. Some have found within themselves a commitment to the New Republic and continue to fight against the crumbling Empire. These are given considerable respect by the New Republic. Less respected are those privateers who joined in with the "winners" after Endor.

During this period the resource hungry Empire issues its own letters of marque and reprisal, mostly from Moffs along the border. Grand Admiral Thrawn ignores this practice, having other things to occupy him. Other Imperial warlords hire pirates and privateers as mercenaries against the New Republic and other adversaries within their small holdings.

After Dark Empire

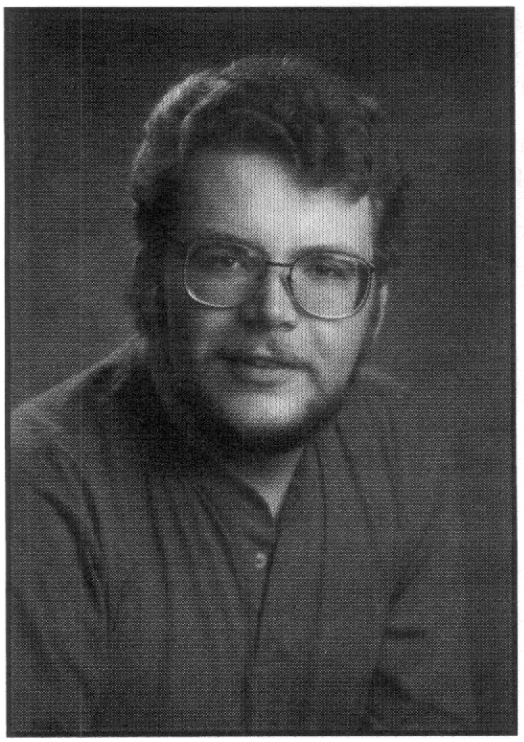
During the battle for Coruscant and the resulting chaos, there is a new resurgence of privateering and piracy. Some privateers from the early days remain loyal to the New Republic, and new privateers are recruited. Other privateers and pirates spring up, feeding off the renewed fighting between Empire and New Republic.

Pirates, Arr!

By Timothy O'Brien

Avast ye there! Shiver me 'pulsors, a groundlubber! What'll ye be doing with me privateers scan, matey?

I first discovered pirates in a Readers' Digest book, *American Folklore and Legend,* when I was about seven or eight. Pirates, arr! Buccaneers, aye! I had a lot of fun with the idea, then moved on to some other childhood fascination. Pirates occasionally popped up in my life. I read *Treasure Island* when I was ten or eleven. I suffered through a couple of bad pirate movies, mostly spoofs. Overall, though, the '70s, '80s and so far the '90s aren't very pirate-rich periods.



So, the pirates of my imagination languished, until...

The inspiration for "Rebel Privateers!" came from a throwaway line in a description of the Nebulon-B Escort Frigate, where it's mentioned that the Nebulon-B is a favorite ship among privateers.

Privateers? Interesting idea. At the time, the only options the roleplaying game gave for players were Rebel agents or free-traders. Playing privateers appealed to me. It had the advantages of Rebel agents and the independence of free-traders. It gave me a great excuse to charge into combat, restricted the players from descending into pure piratical raiders, and had quite a bit of legendary swashbuckler appeal. (That said, I've yet to play a privateer character myself.)

In the fall of 1993 I found out that West End Games was going to start up a quarterly journal for *Star Wars,* and was looking for writers.

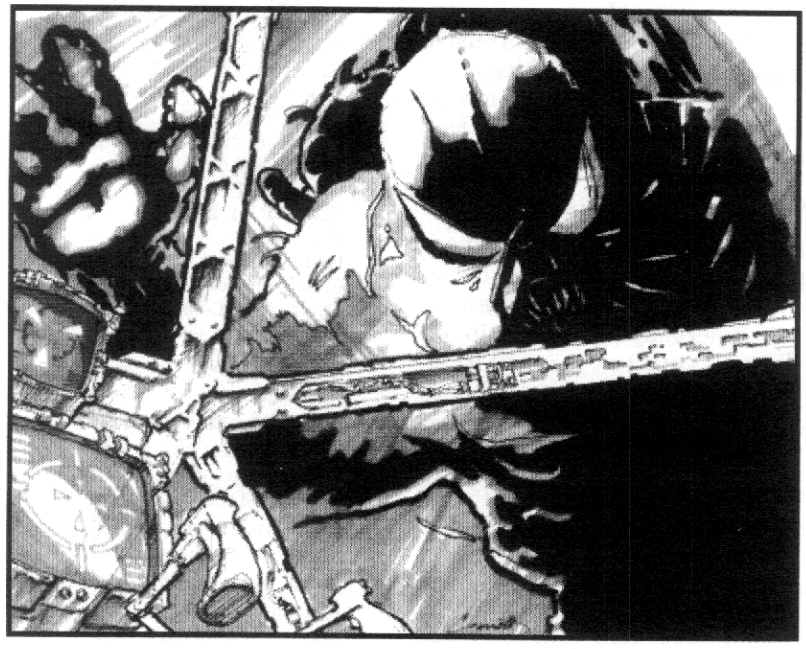
Perfect! I quickly found myself gripped in the excitement of writing, not the sourcebook I had originally envisioned, but at least an article. I got in touch with West End and sat down to write.

It took far too long, writing in my sparse spare time, but I had fun writing it. I playtested some of the notions I had about commerce raiding, at first by springing pirates on my players and later by turning my players into privateers, and slowly ground the article out. As a last minute thought, I asked Pete to add an exclamation mark to the otherwise dull "Rebel Privateers" title.

Looking at it now, I realized that "Rebel Privateers!" reflects my ongoing interest in *Star Wars.* It fills in a few gaps of the *Star Wars* universe, takes a look at other areas of the Empire and the Rebellion, and peoples them with the sort of larger-than-life characters space opera requires.

Overall I'm still fairly satisfied with the piece. Sure, I'd change few elements, but I think it keeps its space legs fairly well. It's had an impact. Game line editors who otherwise have no idea who I am remember the article. Since "Rebel Privateers!" was published, privateers are mentioned in passing in about a tenth of the new material West End puts out, especially the *Journal.* A number of alternate campaign articles and sourcebooks have been published since. I can't claim credit for all of this, nor probably most of it, but I am honored to have had an impact.

Arr!



THE VOID TERROR

by Peter Schweighofer
Illustrations by Chris Gossett

The Void Terror is a solitaire adventure for both longtime and recent *Star Wars* gamers, as well as those who have never played a roleplaying game. There are some short rules on how to do certain tasks with your character (experienced *Star Wars* gamers can skip this and go directly to the section marked "Keller's Void"). There's even a sample character for you to try (or use your own).

Gamemasters can use this quick adventure to introduce the rules to new players. It's designed for beginner-level characters.

Your Character: Lady Selnia

The character provided with this solitaire adventure is Lady Selnia Harbright, a young ex-senator. As a character, Lady Selnia 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.*

Selnia 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: Selnia's *Dexterity* is 3D, so if she tries to juggle something, her 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: Selnia has increased skill in *blaster, dodge, planetary systems, starship gunnery, command, con* and *brawl-*

ing. There are many other skills than those Selnia begins with — those listed here are the ones she 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 Selnia 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: Selnia wants to know if the atmosphere on Axtria is breathable. Her *planetary systems* skill is 5D. The gamemaster says the difficulty number is 15. Selnia's player rolls five dice and gets 18. Selnia remembers that Humans require a breath mask in Axtria's atmosphere.

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. Playing this solitaire adventure will give you a feel for the game.

Lady Selnia Harbright

Type: Young Senatorial
DEXTERITY 3D
Blaster 4D, dodge 4D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
Planetary systems 5D
MECHANICAL 2D+2
Starship gunnery 3D+2
PERCEPTION 3D+1
Command 4D+1, con 4D+1
STRENGTH 3D
Brawling 4D
TECHNICAL 2D
Move: 10
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 5
Equipment: Comlink, hold-out blaster (3D damage), stylish clothing, 1,000 credits

Capsule: For three centuries your family served the Republic. Your family has selflessly sacrificed for the good of the state and society. You have served loyally and well, and because of it, the citizens of your home planet of Salliche are loyal to your house. Since the Empire was established, your family has tried to fend off its evil ways, to hold the Emperor to his promise to promote the public good. Even now, you are reluctant to turn against the galactic government which your family helped establish so many years ago.

Yet you have no choice. The Empire has truly become a tyranny. Your home planet is occupied by stormtroopers. If civilization is to be saved, you must act now. Your family will provide leadership to the Rebellion, as once it did to the Republic.

You are intelligent, confident and energetic. You are more interested in getting things done than in theory. Sometimes others are awed by your lineage, and you are proud of it; yet you do not consider yourself class conscious. Great men and women come from all walks of life, and everyone can contribute to the Rebel Alliance.

Keller's Void

The Rebel Alliance always needs supplies. You were sent to Droecil to help the local Rebel cell divert some medical supplies from an Imperial stock depot. You contracted freighter captain Roark Garnet to haul the cargo to a collection site in the Calus system. Garnet and his co-pilot, Hawk Carrow, own the *Dorian Discus,* an inconspicuous tramp freighter.

You were just loading the last of the medical supplies into Captain Garnet's ship when the stormtroopers burst into the docking bay. So the captain blasted off immediately, with all the cargo and one extra passenger ... you.

It was a pretty quiet trip. Then the captain decided to take a shortcut by jumping through Keller's Void. Everything went fine, until the hyperdrive cut out in the middle of the void ...

"Looks like we pulled out of hyperspace just before we slammed through an asteroid field," Captain Garnet says. "It's not on any of the charts."

There's a heavy thunk outside against the hull. "Great. I hate asteroids. Why don't you get yourself up into the topside gun and blast any chunk of rock that comes close enough to hit us. I'm shutting down some of the other main systems so Hawk and I can check out the hyperdrive, make sure nothing's wrong."

Ready?

1

As you head toward the gun turret, you try to recall what you know about Keller's Void. You can do this by rolling your *planetary systems* skill of 5D. Roll five dice and add them up. Recalling this information is a Moderate task with a difficulty of 15.

- *If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 7.*
- *If your roll is 14 or less, go to 12.*

2

Flipping on your tracking computer, you don't see any asteroids from the distant field heading toward the *Dorian Discus*. Everything's all clear. *Go to 4.*

3

Flipping on your tracking computer, you don't see any asteroids from the distant field heading toward the Dorian Discus. But wait ... something's moving near the long range sensor dish! Peering through the viewport, it looks like some black-scaled humanoid. And it's fiddling with a black box it's attached to the hull near the sensor dish!

- *If you tell Captain Garnet of the mysterious figure, go to 5.*
- *If you want to try to shoot the figure with the ship's blaster cannon, go to 9.*

4

You check the weapon's tracking computer: still all clear. You look back out through the viewport ... and see a monstrously ugly face staring back at you from outside! It's got huge fangs, bulbous eyes and a warty snout. You scream, and the face disappears.

- *If you call for Captain Garnet, go to 5.*
- *If you want to see if that "thing" is still out there, go to 8.*

5

"Captain Garnet!" you call over the ship's intercom. "There's something out there on the ship's hull! I think it's alive."

"Let me check the sensors ..." Captain Garnet says. After a moment, he replies, "Nope. Nothing on the sensors. Everything's clear around the ship. Maybe you're seein' things. Happens if you're not used to space travel."

You click off the intercom. *Go to 8.*

6

You climb up into the gun turret and peer out over the hull into space. You're scanning for any asteroids heading toward you, and anything out of the ordinary, so you roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. To spot anything is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

- *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 3.*
- *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 2.*

7

You remember Keller's Void is named for the trader who discovered it as a shortcut between the Wroona and Calus systems. It's a void, so it's not supposed to have an asteroid field running through it. You do recall the nearby uninhabited Udine system has a high concentration of asteroids.

You continue on to the gun mount. *Go to 6.*

8

You peer out the viewport, trying to find the creature on the hull. You're certain it's out there somewhere. There. The thing is now at an exterior maintenance port. It seems to be clawing at the components inside! The creature rips out a handful of wires, then turns to stare directly at you! It watches you with its bulbous eyes over its warty snout.

- *If you warn Captain Garnet of the terrible creature and have written "Sensors Blasted," go to 11.*
- *If you warn Captain Garnet of the terrible creature, go to 10.*
- *If you want to try to shoot the figure with the ship's blaster cannon, go to 14.*

9

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. Since the creature is partially hidden by the long range sensor dish, this is going to be a Difficult shot (with a difficulty number of 17). If you miss, you might blow up the sensor dish. Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- *If your roll is 17 or higher, go to 15.*
- *If your roll is 16 or less, go to 13.*
- *If you decide the shot is too risky and want to inform Captain Garnet of the intruder on the hull, go to 5.*

10

"Look, I'm tellin' you nothin's out there," Captain Garnet replies. "Sensors show nothing. You haven't been dipping into my stash of Wroonian ale, have you?"

• *If you want to go down to the cockpit and check out the sensors yourself, go to 17.*

• *If you want to shut off the intercom and watch the creature through the viewport, go to 16.*

11

"Look, I'm tellin' you nothin's out there," Captain Garnet replies. "You haven't been dipping into my stash of Wroonian ale, have you?"

You shut off the intercom and watch the creature through the viewport. *Go to 16.*

12

You remember Keller's Void is named for the trader who discovered it as a shortcut between the Wroona and Calus systems. Ha, some shortcut.

You continue on to the gun mount. *Go to 6.*

13

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the sensor dish into thousands of tiny glowing particles. Oops. You don't see any signs of the creature.

"What was that?" cries Captain Garnet. "Are we under attack?"

You explain you were shooting at a strange creature fiddling with a black box near the sensor dish.

"Nice job," he says. "You've just fried our long range sensors and our short range sensors. The blast shunted power right through the sensor computer. Thanks."

"But I saw something out there!" you plead.

"Maybe you're seein' things. Happens if you're not used to space travel. Look, if something was near the sensor dish when you blasted it, it's probably gone. Not that we can tell ... Look, try shooting the asteroids, not my ship."

Write "Sensors Blasted" and go to 8.

14

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is a Moderate shot (with a difficulty number of 15). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

• *If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 18.*

• *If your roll is 14 or less, go to 22.*

15

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the creature from the sensor dish. Nice shot. Whatever it was, it's gone now.

Go to 25.

16

You watch the strange creature move from the exterior maintenance port to the aft airlock. After fiddling with the controls, the hatch opens and it enters the ship!

• *If you warn Captain Garnet of the intruder, go to 21.*

• *If you leave the weapons station and run to the airlock, go to 27.*

17

You storm into the cockpit. Captain Garnet is leaning over the nav computer, apparently calculating another hyperspace jump. "Let me see those sensors," you say, pushing your way into the co-pilot's seat. You notice a small red light flashing. "What's that?"

"That's the internal systems monitor for the aft airlock. Looks like it was opened and is cycling. Maybe there is something wrong. Go check it out ... I'm working on astrogation coordinates to get us out of here ..."

You leave the cockpit and run to the airlock. *Go to 27.*

18

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the creature from the exterior maintenance port. Nice shot. Whatever it was, it's gone now.

Go to 25.

19

You listen carefully. Someone has powered up the ship and engaged the ion drives! You also here someone pacing out in the corridor near the cabin door: a guard!

• *If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 46.*

• *If you try to trick the guard into letting you out, go to 51.*

20

You fire your blaster at the creature. Since you are much closer, this is a Very Easy shot with a difficulty number of 5. Your *blaster* skill is 4D: roll four dice.

• *If your roll is 5 or higher,* you hit the creature. It slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 30.*

• *If your roll is 4 or less,* your shot goes wild. The creature's fist comes down on your head and you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 41.*

21

"Look, there's nothing out there to come in," Garnet says. "Wait a minute. I've got an internal systems monitor saying the aft airlock was opened and is cycling. Maybe there is something wrong. Go check it out. I'm working on astrogation coordinates to get us out of here ..."

You leave the weapons station and run to the airlock. *Go to 27.*

22

The blaster cannon flashes and hits the hull near the maintenance port. The creature scurries along the hull ... toward the aft airlock.

"What are you doing?" Captain Garnet cries over the intercom. "Don't shoot the ship, just the asteroids!"

"But I saw something out there!" you plead.

"Maybe you'd better come down here into the cockpit," Captain Garnet suggests, "away from the blaster cannon."

Go to 17.

23

The creature swings a huge fist at you. Rather than get hit, you decide it's best to dodge. The creature's *brawling* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for the creature. Your *dodge* skill is 4D. Roll four dice and compare them with the creature's *brawling* score.

• *If your* dodge *roll is the same as or more than the creature's* brawling *roll, you jump out of the way and may fire your blaster. Go to 20.*

• *If your* dodge *roll is lower than the creature's* brawling *roll, you are knocked unconscious. Go to 41.*

24

You are free of your bindings! Someone tied you up with a striped sash. You listen for a moment. Roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. This is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

• *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 19.*

• *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 42.*

25

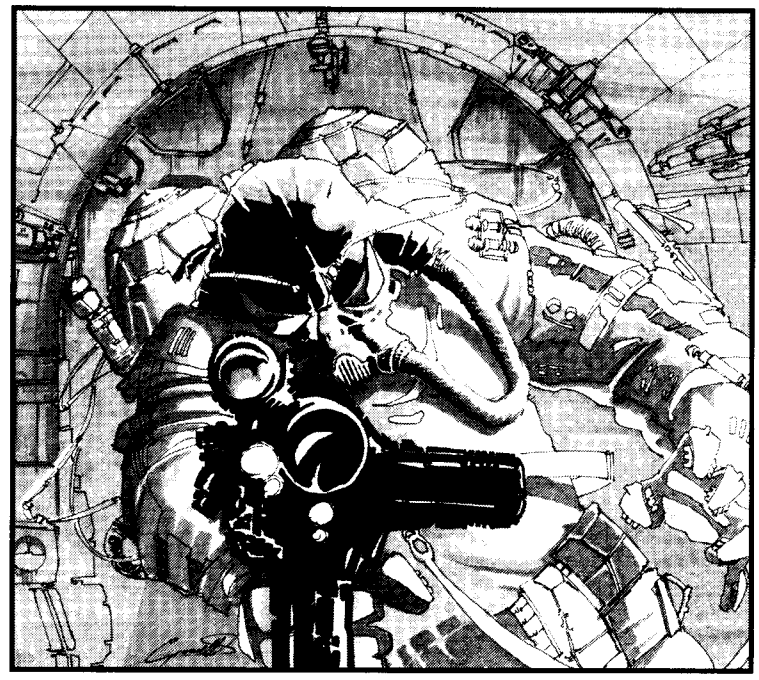
"Looks like the hyperdrive is okay," you hear Hawk declare over the intercom.

"Great," Captain Garnet replies. "I'll start calculating hyperspace coordinates."

You continue to scan the area for asteroids. Roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. To spot anything is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

• *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 32.*

• *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 29.*



26

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is an Easy shot (with a difficulty number of 10). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

• *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 31.*

• *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 28.*

27

You remove your blaster from its holster as you head for the aft airlock hatch. You're determined to capture this creature alive, so you set your blaster to stun. When you arrive at the inner hatch, the creature steps out, it's blaster rifle raised and ready. It's expecting you! You prepare to fire.

The creature shoots back. The creature's *blaster* skill is 4D. The difficulty for both shots is 10. Roll four dice for the creature. Your blaster skill is 4D. Roll four dice for yourself. Whoever gets the highest roll shoots first.

• *If you both roll 9 or less,* you both miss. The creature advances and tries to knock you over. *Go to 23.*

• *If the creature shoots first, and rolls 10 or more,* you're hit before you get your shot off. All goes dark as the creature fires its blaster rifle into you. *Go to 41.*

• *If you shoot first, and your roll is 10 or more,* you hit the creature. It slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 30.*

28

The blaster cannon flashes and hits the hull near the intruders, but the two figures continue scurrying toward the airlock hatch.

"What are you doing?" Captain Garnet cries over the intercom.

"We've got intruders," you reply. "They're heading for the airlock."

"Right. Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men spin away from the hull, floating in space. *Go to 34.*

29

Everything looks clear. Thunk. Thunk. Two more things have hit the hull. *Go to 33.*

30

You step back and examine the stunned creature lying on the deck. It's no frightening creature at all! The face is a stylized pressure helmet: the eyes are sensor units, the snout and ferocious teeth are part of the breather apparatus. The creature's black skin is a textured space suit! It even has a jet pack strapped to its back!

You unlatch the helmet and yank it off. There's a man underneath. Looks like an unsavory pirate or outlaw.

"There was someone in the airlock," you triumphantly declare to Captain Garnet. "Maybe he was trying to board us to spacejack the ship."

"No matter," Garnet says over the intercom. "We're ready to jump to hyperspace. Hang on to your pants!"

From the engineering compartment you hear the disappointing whine of the hyperdrives failing. "It's not my fault!" Garnet cries. "Hawk, what's the matter."

The intruder must have done something to the hyperdrives while crawling around on the hull. "I think our intruder might have tampered with the hyperdrive from outside," you tell Captain Garnet.

"Possible," he says. "Hawk, can you find the problem and reroute the hyperdrive command systems?"

"Sure thing, Roark."

You secure the intruder and lock him in one of the cabins.

There are two more loud thunks on the hull.

"Better get back to the gun and see if those are asteroids or more intruders," Captain Garnet suggests. "Just watch where you shoot."

You run back and strap yourself into the gun turret. *Go to 33.*

31

The blaster cannon flashes and blows both men off the hull. Nice shot. *Go to 34.*

32

You notice two small flashes out in space. Soon two figures become visible; men in black space suits maneuvering with jet packs. They are heading straight for the *Dorian Discus.*

- *If you blast them, go to 39.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 35.*

33

Two more creatures — no, they're actually men in black space suits — have landed on the *Dorian Discus'* hull. They quickly scramble for the aft airlock.

- *If you blast them, go to 26.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 37.*

34

As the *Dorian Discus* prepares for the hyperspace jump, you see a bulk freighter with a few extra guns pull out of a loose orbit within the asteroid field — possibly a pirate ship!

"I see her," Captain Garnet says. "Say goodbye to our would-be spacejackers." Garnet engages the hyperdrive, the stars stretch, and the pirates are left behind in Keller's Void.

Go to 40

35

"We've got company," you say into the intercom. "Two men in black space suits and jet packs. They're heading for the ship."

"Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men ignite their jet packs again, but they can't catch up.

Go to 34.

36

The blaster cannon flashes and one of the men explodes from a direct hit. The other one fires his jet pack and begins to back away from the *Dorian Discus. Go to 34.*

37

"We've got company," you say into the intercom. "Two men in black space suits. They're heading for the aft airlock."

"Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men spin away from the hull, floating in space.

Go to 34.

38

The blaster cannon flashes, but your shot misses. They land on the *Dorian Discus'* hull and quickly scramble for the aft airlock.

- *If you blast them, go to 26.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 37.*

39

To fire the blaster cannon at the approaching men, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is an Easy shot (with a difficulty number of 10). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 36.*
- *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 38.*

40

The *Dorian Discus* arrives on Calus and you safely deliver your supplies to the Rebel Alliance. Good work! Despite your "short cut" through Keller's Void, you've managed to get your cargo into Rebel hands in time to save the lives of many brave soldiers.

41

You wake up with your hands tied behind your back. You're locked in a cabin with Captain Garnet and Hawk. You've been space-jacked by pirates! There's a chance you can wriggle your hands free from your binding. This is an Easy *Dexterity* task (the binding was tied hastily) with a difficulty of 10. Roll three dice.

- *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 24.*
- *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 45.*

42

You listen carefully. Someone has powered up the ship and engaged the ion drives! You're definitely going somewhere.

- *If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 46.*
- *If you try to open the cabin door, go to 53.*

43

You dash to the cockpit. Sitting in the pilot's and co-pilot's seats are two more pirates. One turns around and sees you, then begins drawing his blaster pistol! You fire. The pirate's *blaster* skill is 4D. The difficulty for both shots is 10. Roll four dice for the pirate. Your *blaster* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for yourself. Whoever gets the highest roll shoots first.

- *If you both roll 9 or less,* you both miss. The pirate advances and tries to punch you. *Go to 48.*
- *If the pirate shoots first, and rolls 10 or more,* you're hit before you get your shot off. All goes dark as the pirate fires its blaster rifle into you. *Go to 58.*
- *If you shoot first, and your roll is 10 or more,* you hit the pirate. He slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 44.*

44

You train your blaster on the other pirate. He puts his hands on his head and surrenders. Captain Garnet and Hawk, who managed to free themselves, rush into the cockpit and regain control of the *Dorian Discus*. "Good work," they say. You've managed to capture the infamous pirate Black Jack! When you turn him in on Calus, the three of you get 2,000 credits each for his capture. *Go to 40.*

45

You don't manage to slip out of the bindings. Captain Garnet and Hawk are still stunned. Wait! You notice that Captain Garnet has a knife concealed in a boot sheath. But can you reach it and free yourself? This is another Easy *Dexterity* task with a difficulty of 10. Roll three dice.

- *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 24.*
- *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 49.*

46

Moving quickly, you untie the sashes binding Captain Garnet's and Hawk's wrists. Hawk wakes up while you're untying him. "You won't get anything out of me! I'll take this ship back one way or another ... oh, it's you. Sorry, I thought you were a pirate."

Hawk's cries wake Captain Garnet up. "Ow," he says, rubbing the back of his head. "I hate being stunned."

The cabin door opens and a red-haired woman with a wry smile and a blaster rifle enters. "You'd better get to liking it if you're trying to escape," she says. "But that won't happen while I'm on guard!" She stuns Captain Garnet, Hawk and you with her blaster rifle. *Go to 50.*

47

Rising and standing near the cabin door, you begin screaming. "Help! Fire! Somebody let us out of here, the cabin's caught fire!"

The cabin door opens and a red-haired woman wearing a flashy tunic and and boots enters. She's lowered her blaster rifle. The time to strike is now! Using your *brawling* skill of 4D, this is a Moderate task (a difficulty of 15). Roll four dice.

- *If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 52.*
- *If your roll is 14 or lower, go to 57.*

48

The pirate swings his fist at you. Rather than get hit, you decide it's best to dodge. The pirate's *brawling* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for the pirate. Your *dodge* skill is 4D. Roll four dice and compare them with the pirate's *brawling* score.

- *If your* dodge *roll is the same as or more than the pirate's brawling roll,* you jump out of the way and may fire your blaster. *Go to 54.*
- *If your* dodge *roll is lower than the pirate's brawling roll,* you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 58.*

49

You make a little noise shuffling over to Captain Garnet, then cry out a little when you accidently cut yourself. You're almost free of your bindings when the cabin door opens and a red-haired woman with a wry smile and a blaster rifle enters. "Trying to escape, eh?" she asks. "Not while I'm on guard!" She stuns you with her blaster rifle. *Go to 50.*

50

Despite several attempts, you are unable to escape these pirates. Perhaps you can escape when you arrive at their hidden base. But that's a tale for another day ...

51

Tricking the guard is a Moderate task using your *con* skill of 4D+1. The difficulty number is 15. Roll four dice and add one.

- *If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 47.*
- *If your roll is 14 or less, go to 56.*

52

Your fist swings into the pirate's face, and the woman crumples to the ground, stunned. You hear voices coming from the cockpit.

- *If you grab the pirate's blaster rifle and head to the cockpit, go to 43.*
- *If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 55.*

53

No matter how hard you press the control panel, the cabin door does not open. "Don't try escaping," you hear a voice say from the other side, obviously a pirate guard. "If you try anything funny, I'll blast you." *Go to 50.*

54

You fire your blaster at the pirate. Since you are much closer, this is a Very Easy shot with a difficulty number of 5. Your *blaster* skill is 4D: roll four dice.

- *If your roll is 5 or higher,* you hit the pirate. He slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 44.*
- *If your roll is 4 or less, your shot goes wild.* The pirate's fist comes down on your head and you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 58.*

55

Moving quickly, you untie the sashes binding Captain Garnet's and Hawk's wrists. Hawk wakes up while you're untying him. "You won't get anything out of me! I'll take this ship back one way or another ... oh, it's you. Sorry, I thought you were a pirate."

Hawk's cries wake Captain Garnet up. "Ow," he says, rubbing the back of his head. "I hate being stunned."

Hawk's cries have also alerted one of the pirates in the cockpit who suddenly appears in the doorway. He kicks his pirate friend's blaster rifle out into the corridor, out of your reach. "Nice try at escaping," he says as he stuns you all. *Go to 50.*

56

"Uh, say there," you begin, "Can we have some food or something; I'm starving."

"No way," the pirate outside says. "I'm not giving you any chance at escaping. Not during my watch." *Go to 50.*

57

You swing and knock the blaster rifle out of the pirate's hands, but the woman quickly recovers, swings at you and knocks you unconscious. "Hah!" she says. "Thought you could escape from me." *Go to 50.*

58

You wake up again in the cabin with Captain Garnet and Hawk. This time you're tied up a bit better and there are two guards at the door. *Go to 50.*

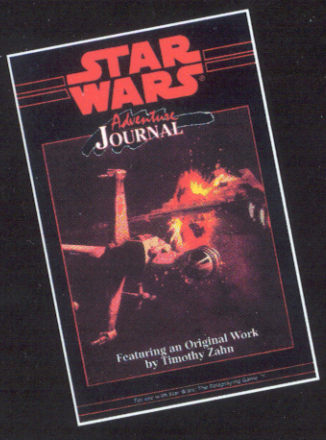
The Best of the Continuing *Star Wars* Saga!

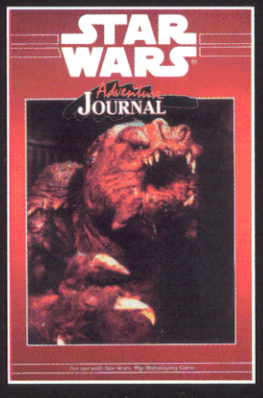
For two years the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* has brought *Star Wars* fans new adventures and source material about their favorite science fiction universe. Now the best articles from the *Journal's* first year — all of which are out-of-print — are reprinted in this special collector's edition.

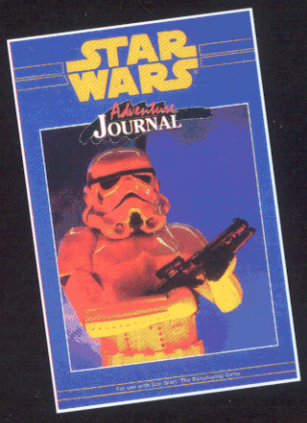
This collection includes "First Contact" by Timothy Zahn, "Tinian on Trial" by Kathy Tyers, "The Final Exit" by Patricia A. Jackson, "A Glimmer of Hope" by Charlene Newcomb, "Rebel Privateers!" by Timothy O'Brien, "A Free-Traders' Guide to Sevarcos" by Anthony Russo, "The Void Terror" and "Recon and Report" by Peter Schweighofer, and "The Spira Regatta" by Paul Sudlow.

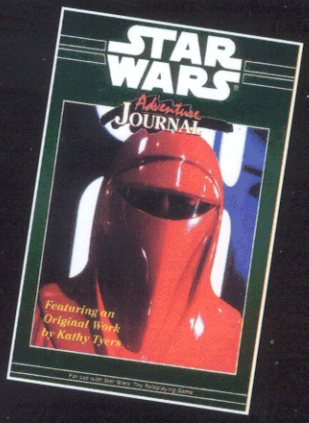
The Best of The Star Wars Adventure Journal features special essays from the authors themselves with insights on their inspirations, story origins and views on the *Star Wars* phenomenon. And don't miss the special section showing original color artwork only seen in their initial *Journal* articles in black-and-white — all by Chris Gossett, artist for Dark Horse Comics' *Tales of the Jedi* and *Dark Lords of the Sith*.

Sit back, open up, and celebrate some of the outstanding articles which have opened up the *Star Wars* galaxy.









WEST END GAMES®

For ages 12 and up.

A STAR WARS SUPPLEMENT

for use with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*

®, TM & © 1996 Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL). All Rights Reserved.
Trademarks of LFL used by West End Games under authorization.

0-87431-272-8 $20.00

0 18874 40129 8

40129