

Philanthropy

Episode I of the Below the Belt Trilogy
A One-Round Living Force Tournament

by August Hahn

Opportunities abound when the asteroids belt is opened up for exploration by the Smugglers' Confederation. Asked to participate in this historic occasion by someone in need of a favor, you'll soon learn the rewards of philanthropy...or its terrible price. An adventure for Living Force heroes levels 1-9.

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Below the Belt: Philanthropy is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event but the actual playing time will be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom and the hero's name, species and gender at the top. This makes it easier for players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best among them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually require advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

A note about the text: Some of the text in the scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the

text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Hero Earnings

At the beginning of the round, if the heroes are employed, they receive their pay. No matter how much time has passed since the previous round, they receive pay for one week. Heroes who are not employed but who have profession or craft skills may roll against those skills to see how much they have earned from their profession or craft in the last week. Use the method in the core rules (Craft: pg. 72 *Check result times 20 credits*; Profession: pg. 80 *Check result times 50 credits*). Note that players may use only one of the above methods and must choose which before rolling (Employment, Craft or Profession). There is no pay for unskilled labor in the LIVING FORCE campaign.

Issuing Force and Dark Side Points

Issuing Force Points: When heroes perform cinematically heroic actions, don't forget that you may issue a Force point for such activities. Because this is a heroic campaign, we expect heroism - and encourage judges to reward it. In the course of a standard LIVING FORCE event, there are many opportunities for heroism. If a LIVING FORCE hero performs in a way that is heroic, dramatic, and cinematic, then a Force Point is definitely in order. Our favorite story involved the hero at the premiere, who leapt from a moving speeder, grabbed a vine, and swung on that vine to attack someone in another moving speeder. THAT is dramatic, cinematic heroism!

Not everything is that extreme, and you don't have to jump from a moving speeder to earn a Force Point, but if a hero does something that makes you, the judge, say, 'Wow,' then they should probably get a FP.

The core rules (pg 157) define "Dramatic Heroism" as follows:

To qualify as an act of dramatic heroism, an action must fulfill three criteria:

- It must accomplish a significant task in the defense of good or the defeat of evil;
- It must occur at a dramatically appropriate time (usually the climax of the adventure); and
- It should require significant risk on the part of the hero.

Issuing Dark Side Points: Unfortunately, it is impossible to produce an exhaustive list of all the possible ways people can get Dark Side points. There are just too many ways that the beginnings of "evil" can manifest themselves.

To quote the Dark Side book... "Evil is not

always easy to recognize. An innocent act may ultimately result in great suffering. An act of revenge may save the lives of millions of people. The pure at heart can lash out in anger. Evil may lurk beneath a mask of virtue. Whether an act is evil or not often boils down to a question of motivation, and motivation can be hard to identify.

"When a Gamemaster is in doubt about whether to award a Dark Side Point to a character, he or she should consider the character's motives: Did the character act out of anger? Hatred? Cruelty? Vengeance? Pride? Did the character choose an option simply because it would allow her to spill an enemy's blood? Was greed or envy involved? Jealousy?" (Great section, beginning on page 41, which illustrates the problem fairly precisely.) The GM must assess the motivations of the character, and if those motivations derive from the base emotions that are the path to the dark side, then a DSP is appropriate.

General Notes to the GM

When running this adventure, or any *Star Wars* adventure, keep in mind the *Star Wars* adventures should seem like the *Star Wars* movies. The action should flow quickly and the players should not get caught up in too many details of what they are doing. Describe things in sweeping statements, and recall scenes from the movies when necessary to help players visualize what is going on. More than anything else, have fun.

The point of LIVING FORCE is not to kill characters. If you believe a combat is too tough for a group you are running, scale it down. If you believe it will be far too simple, scale it up – within reason. Do your best to keep fights cinematic and interesting, and if someone dies because they made a glorious sacrifice, that's fine. But let's not have any "dumb" deaths. That's not what *Star Wars*, or LIVING FORCE, is about.

This is an adventure for low- to upper-level LIVING FORCE heroes, and therefore heroes levels 1 through 9 are appropriate. If a player brings a higher-level hero to your table, explain that he or she must use a lower-level hero to play in this event. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for hero creation instructions).

GM Overview

Philanthropy is an exploration scenario set amid the turmoil and boundless possibilities of a land rush. The Smuggler's Confederation is in desperate need of good publicity after recent setbacks. Nirama and the others have decided to accomplish this by opening up their

hold on the asteroid belt and allowing limited exploration.

This has created a land rush atmosphere and drawn nearly every tramp freighter and system ship in Cularin and from several surrounding systems. When the heroes reach the starting markers, they are part of a vast array of ships, all eager to rush into the spinning rocks in search of the unknown.

The heroes have a different task in store for them. Called here by Nirama, they have been given coordinates deep within the asteroid belt and asked to explore that point thoroughly. For reasons of their own, the Confederation needs that point examined without raising suspicion from certain other "business interests" in the area.

The race begins and the heroes speed into the asteroid belt along with dozens of other ships around them. As they travel to their mysterious coordinates, they come across a weak signal. Skillful use of ship's systems can enhance the signal and reveal it as a distress call. Answering it puts them off course but allows them to rescue four people before their powerless vessel crashes into an oncoming asteroid.

Once the destination is reached, the heroes find a strange dark rock, massive but well hidden in a dense field of other asteroids. One side has an aperture of nearly black steel that looks like a double-slitted pupil from some alien eye. Attempting to contact or otherwise scan the 'pupil' causes it to open and allow entrance inside the asteroid.

Within, a maze of dark tunnels awaits. So does utter silence. The walls of the complex seem to absorb any form of vibration or ambient electronic signals. The exploration of this complex must be done in absolute quiet.

In the tunnels, the heroes come across dozens of ancient bodies, too desiccated to be identifiable. Implements of the same dark metal as before can be found in the chamber as well, brittle and falling apart. One of the artifacts is still in salvageable condition, however, and this can be taken back with them. While the heroes are discovering these things, something has discovered them.

A survivor of this place, an alien creature called a Sibilaari, has awoken from stasis and is exploring what is left of its home. When it finds the heroes in a room surround by long dead members of its race, its reactions will be determined by how respectful they are being to the corpses and how they react to it, should it be seen. Quite capable of defending itself, combat with the Sibilaari is not advisable.

Assuming the heroes survive a fight with the last guardian of this ancient complex or never discover its presence at all (which is more likely), they move from the crypt and into a gun battle. Another explorer vessel with a crew more inclined to loot someone else's

discovery than to make its own, has trailed the heroes here and would now like to “claim” their property.

This fight can occur more than once, depending on party composition and combat desire. Eventually, the battles stop and the heroes find the heart of the complex, a huge chamber patterned in dark steel and filled with faint, harmonious music.

The center of the spherical chamber is a vast crystalline node encased in an intricate cage of metal. The crystal seems to be emanating the music and a thousand different variations of the tune reverberate along the patterns on the walls.

Careful examination of the sound allows the heroes to hear their own words and noises in the music, all sounds that were seemingly silenced earlier. The complex has been absorbing their sound and turning it into coherent power.

Unfortunately, the core has been damaged by the same catastrophe that turned this place into a spinning asteroid and killed all the other aliens aboard. It can no longer properly hold all the energy it has absorbed. The heroes can see sections of the dark metal beginning to break down as the songs within them grow too loud. Entire girders of songsteel (what this strange metal is called) start to glow dangerously bright from within. Heat begins to flood the chamber.

Most heroes are likely to realize they need to run at this point. Those who don’t can be helped along by explosive detonations in the chamber. Fleeing back to the ship results in another battle in the hanger itself. The pirates were dropped off by their ship and have been desperately trying to break into the one that brought the heroes here. The battle is likely brief, but it causes even more sound to be absorbed by the failing node.

The sound of the ship’s engines is more than the complex can take and as they fly away from the asteroid, it implodes with a flash of light and pulse of pure energy. As the pulse passed over the ship, it chimes a single, sorrowful note for all the heroes to hear; a swansong from the dying node.

The heroes return to Nirama and present their findings. Though dismayed at the loss of the complex, he is overjoyed for reasons of his own with what they found. They receive their reward and hearty congratulations for a job well done.

Philanthropy does have its price though, and the heroes may have paid it without realizing it. The Sibilaari has likely escaped the destruction of its home by stowing away aboard their ship. It lurks there, undetected, for some time while it heals and mourns...

Encounter 1:

The heroes are brought into a momentous occasion when they are invited to participate in the first

approved exploration of Cularin’s asteroid belt. This invitation, sent by Nirama, grants them use of a ship and all the provisions they require in return for them using their time on his behalf. His request is for the heroes to travel to a specific set of coordinates in the belt and investigate what they find there.

The heroes are only part of a vast conglomeration of ships, each eager to get underway. Some vessels try to outrace the other, more cautious ships but are taken out by the dangerous spinning asteroids before they make it very far. This keeps the rest of the line compliant until their starting signal. Once that goes off, it’s a mad rush of engine wakes and fleeing ships each time clearance is given.

The heroes eventually receive their clearance permission and are now free to continue with their mission.

Encounter 2:

Entering the dangerous course presented by the asteroids, the heroes make out a weak signal nearby. Reachable only if they have a skilled pilot with them (or are willing to take the chance with less than stellar skills), the heroes discover a ship drifting very close to an asteroid. Its engines are a charred wreck and it has no maneuvering power at all. The signal is a distress call and if they don’t act fast, it will be in vain.

One of the crewmen they rescue is badly wounded and needs quick medical aid if he is to live. The wounded man can tell the heroes what he knows of why their ship failed. The survivors are quite grateful and gladly serve the heroes as an expert ship’s staff as repayment.

Encounter 3:

Proceeding to the coordinates given, the heroes see several ships passing them or cutting across their flight path. In the distance, they can see the glow of exchanged laser fire here and there. Things are heating up in the asteroid belt. An excited cheer on the comm now and then lets them know when a team has found an asteroid they wish to claim for exploration. Eventually, the heroes reach their assigned destination.

The asteroid is a dark shard of rock more cragged and jagged looking the other asteroids in the chain. Remote and surrounded by a dense field of other stones, it would have been extremely difficult to find without the coordinates. One side of the dark rock has a strange carving over a quarter kilometer wide: a sigil in the shape of an abstract eye. Scans reveal the carving to be lined with a strange steel alloy that refracts energy and refocuses the result in its double-slit pupil. Attempting to hail the asteroid

activates something within and the pupil irises open, revealing a large abandoned landing bay.

Encounter 4:

Once inside the asteroid, an effect takes hold that may plunge the heroes into confusion until they sort things out. The focusing metal that makes up the inside structure of this place does the same thing to vibrations of all sorts, including sound. From the moment they enter the place, no one can make any sound of any kind. Footfalls are silent, control readouts are silent, and all their voices are stilled.

From the landing chamber, the heroes, in absolute quiet, can make their way to the interior of the asteroid. Each door in their path spirals open as they approach. Those who think to check find no apparent way for the doors to be sensing their proximity and no electronics or complex machinery are evident. It's as if the place *reacts* to them, like a living thing.

Encounter 5:

The heroes find what could almost be termed a mausoleum if the bodies were arranged in any sort of order or pattern. They find dry, desiccated husks scattered around a single chamber, the bodies unidentifiable. Xenobiologists and people with similar skills can make some preliminary discoveries from the remains.

While the heroes are discovering the bodies, a body is discovering them. The sound absorption is not a simple byproduct of the metal. Instead, it is a deliberate mechanism designed to take sonic energy and store it elsewhere as power. That power has now reached a high enough level to begin activating some of the complex's systems. One of these is a stasis chamber and upon activation, the creature awakes.

Curious and not immediately hostile, the alien being moves to where the heroes are. Capable of great stealth, it observes the heroes and, if not detected, merely follows them as they move about the complex. If seen, it tries to flee their superior numbers and find somewhere dark and private to regain its bearings. It is alone, confused, and over 500 years from its time.

Encounter 6:

The center of the complex is a huge chamber girdered in the strange metal. Spokes emerge from the walls and surround a node of crystal and steel the size of a small house, suspended in the middle of the chamber. The first thing the heroes will notice about this place is not what they see, but what they hear.

They can hear again. Their own voices and motions can finally be heard. What's more, they can

hear echoes of every sound they have made since arriving on the asteroid. Blaster shots, the hum of lightsabers, words, and electronic noises all ring through the chamber in a strangely hypnotic rhapsody. The closer they get to the node in the center of the room, the louder and more intense the sounds get. Making contact with the node will be very difficult, as it is surrounded by a field of intense sound that can actually do damage to those exposed to it.

The heroes should be able to observe that the longer they stay here, the more noise they make and the louder the echoes get. An observant hero can surmise that if the sounds grow too loud, this place may catastrophically fail. The only way to keep it (and themselves) intact is to leave as quickly and as quietly as they can.

Encounter 7:

The heroes may have been the first to find this place, but they are not the only ones. Another ship, following their trail in the hopes of a quick claim, has found the asteroid and been similarly admitted by the front portal. Ignoring the heroes' ship for now, they disembarked and entered the complex.

The first sign of these newcomers the heroes have is a blaster shot that passes silently by them and impacts a far wall. This precipitates a shooting war with the claim jumpers that can occur anywhere in the complex (or at any time in the storyline) before the heroes reach Scene Seven. These pirates are shooting to kill; out here in the dim reaches of Cularin law, there is no threat of retaliation. No threat, of course, but the heroes themselves. The combat is dangerous, intense, and difficult to win easily.

Encounter 8:

Leaving the complex is not as hauntingly quiet as when the heroes first came in. Stragglers from the pirates may be encountered on the way out of lurking near the heroes' ship. Each blaster shot they fire is more energy urging the core of this asteroid to explode. Every passing moment, especially the ones spent in combat, feels like time ticking off the clock of their lives.

The heroes should be able to get to their vessel and blast out of the asteroid before the node absorbs more energy than it can handle. The sound of the engines firing sends it over the edge and as the heroes escape, the asteroid begins to tremble and detonate. A wave of energy passes over the ship as it flies away, resulting in the ship chiming out a song of sorrow.

Conclusion:

The heroes fly their now damaged but functional vessel back to where Nirama is waiting, give their report, offload their rescued crew mates—if they indeed rescued them—and collect their promised reward.

It is quite possible that the heroes brought back far more than they intended to. The ship still rings with that last, soulful, perfect note. Quietly mourning in the depths of their ship, a Sibilaari may be lurking....

Important Note to Judges: The Sibilaari is a very dangerous creature and combat with it is *not* advised. If the heroes insist of fighting it after it is clearly trying to flee, let them. It is possible to slay the Sibilaari, but doing so will likely earn the killer(s) a Dark Side Point for the murder. Adjudicate carefully.

There is also mention in Encounter 2 of a mysterious transport with what sounds like an array of laser cannons along its front end. The heroes do not encounter the ship during this module, but be sure to find a way to let the players know about it. It sets the stage for the next scenario.

Opening Crawl:

Past the world of Cularin, closer to the edge of the system, a ring of asteroids drift in the quiet void of space. For years, these silent stones have been a bane and a blessing; a bane for those wishing to travel the system, and a blessing for those who control them – the Smuggler's Confederation. Recent events have reflected poorly on the Confederation, prompting them to improve their image by opening up the asteroid belt to any with the skill and spirit to brave its dangers. Now, on the eve of this momentous occasion, news comes of employment for those who would be heroes in this dark time...

Encounter 1: Out of the Starting Gate

Key ideas of this encounter: Gather the heroes together, give them Nirama's job offer, and send them underway amid the spectacle of the Confederation Rock Rush.

The best way to open the game and run this scene is to simply start play with all of the heroes in whichever ship they will be using for the Rock Rush. Read or paraphrase the following text:

The glimmer of starlight surrounds your vessel, twinkling through the windows around you. Hundreds of starships of different styles move into position along the seemingly endless line of space buoys that mark the starting line of the Rush.

As the comptroller aboard the nearby barge, The High Hand, starts to list the launch order amid dozens of static-filled protests and shouts of joy, you think for a moment about why you are up here among the bright stars and a million hurtling asteroids...

Then, as a flashback, let them play through the next part of this scene: Nirama's job offer. Reasons for getting the heroes together for the offer can vary as widely as the heroes themselves, but several are likely to be in Nirama's debt and this is a good way to repay some of it.

Others may wish to curry favor with the smuggler lord. Still others would seemingly have no interest in his request for them to investigate something amid the asteroid belt. Jedi may be swayed by Nirama's truthful claim that whatever is out there may prove dangerous to the Cularin system if it isn't identified and dealt with.

If no rationale works for a given hero, allow the player to select a hero of theirs that does work for the scenario at this point. If they do not wish to change heroes, thank them for playing and ask them to leave the table so you may continue with the scenario.

Once you have determined how Nirama pitches his offer, proceed with the following text:

Responding to a couriered message, you have been brought by a lavish shuttle into orbit around Cularin. There, you docked with a small but luxuriously outfitted passenger barge called the High Hand.

Now you sit in a lounge, surrounded by exotic plants, tanks of bizarre fish swimming in tinted water of every hue, and several well-dressed and equally well-armed "guards".

Your host has arrived and proves to be none other than Nirama himself, a powerful figure in the Cularin underground. With a sip of his drink, he smiles and welcomes you to his vessel.

"Good of you to come. I have a proposition for you all -- one I think you may find very interesting."

Roleplay the conversation between the heroes and Nirama. He openly explains his reasons for the Confederation Rock Run and his desire to see what lies at the mysterious set of coordinates in the asteroid field.

He also suggests that those heroes currently in

his debt might have a good portion of that debt disappear if they do him this favor. To those who do not owe him anything, he offers either 1,500 (this is as high as he is willing to go) credits each or a future favor “as valuable as whatever you bring back”. Even Jedi or other heroes not interested in material gain should realize the value in having a being as powerful as Nirama in their debt.

Again, do not force anyone to participate. If a hero does not wish to consort with Nirama in any way, that is their right. Allow them to play a different hero or leave the game altogether.

Once the heroes agree to Nirama’s terms, take a moment to discuss the vessel they will be using. If one of the heroes has a ship, they are welcome to use it. In fact, Nirama will offer to upgrade the heroes’ ship’s control systems as payment for not having to use one of the Confederation’s ships. If two or more heroes have a vessel, let the heroes decide which ship to use (and only one ship will be allowed, as Nirama does not want to arouse too much suspicion).

Now proceed to the next set of text. This gets the heroes underway and into the rest of the adventure. The rest of the scenario assumes the heroes are using the *Neeva-Beelo*, a ship assigned to them by Nirama.

You may need to paraphrase the text if the heroes are in a starship of their own.

It might be a good idea to mark all the sections with Teeloo, the pilot assigned to the heroes, with a highlighter and ignore them if the heroes have their own ship.

Heroes who played *The Price of Business* should remember Teeloo, and he most assuredly remembers them—they saved his life and his ship, after all! For judges unfamiliar with *The Price of Business*, in capsule the heroes rescued Teeloo from a beating by a gang of toughs and helped him win a race to keep his ship. Teeloo gratefully promised to take them wherever they might want to go (a favor with a certificate) and works for Nirama now. His services in this scenario do not constitute use of the favor—Nirama is paying him. Teeloo’s stats (and those of his ship, the *Neeva-Beelo*) appear in the Appendix. Teeloo offers to cook the heroes a fantastic victory feast—those who know him undoubtedly remember that Teeloo is an abysmally bad cook.

The line of eager ships has slowly diminished to your left. Vessel after vessel roared off into the asteroids. Most of them veered sharply and dove into the spinning rocks to vanish from sight into the depths of the belt.

Those that didn’t veer sharply enough made the risks of this Rush abundantly clear. Fireballs of twisted steel and lost hope burned brighter than the stars more than once while you’ve waited...

“No worrying needed here!” The voice of your Rodian pilot Teeloo is practically bubbling with enthusiasm. “I can’t die yet; Lord Nirama hasn’t released me from my contract!” His laughter is oddly catching amid the occasional bursts of final flame.

The ship off your port side gets its command to begin and careens forward between a pair of looming stones. Its twin sets of triple exhausts glow brightly and leave a pair of streaks through the black of space as the asteroids cross harmlessly behind it.

That just leaves you. After a two-minute pause, the comptroller contacts your bridge and gives you your clearance to start. The vector you’ve been given is right in the path of an oncoming asteroid. If the navigational readout on your console is any indication, this is going to be very, VERY close!

This lets the heroes start out with what seems like a close shave right out of the gate. If Teeloo is piloting, let whoever has decided to act as co-pilot (if anyone) make a Piloting check (DC 10) to assist him. A failed check does not keep Teeloo from making the hard bank required to avoid the asteroid, but it might make the heroes good and nervous!

If the heroes are piloting their own ship (or a ship provided by Nirama), have the pilot (and anyone else trying to assist) make piloting rolls. Do not disclose the DC, as this is not a check they can really fail. If the rolls are truly botch-worthy (under 5s in all cases), have the ship take some minor damage (1d10 hull) but make the maneuver regardless. The more hair-raising you can make the description of the near-collision, the more thrilling the scene will be to the players.

With the heroes underway and flying amid the asteroids, move to Encounter 2. The elapsed time for Encounter 1 should not have been more than 20 minutes or so.

Encounter 2: And In To The Fire

Key ideas of this encounter: Kindness may be its own reward, but a bunch of grateful ship crewman can rock too.

The idea behind this encounter is heroism. The heroes are on a mission, but if they are willing to deviate and risk themselves to save a crippled vessel, they can save a crew that would have perished without them.

You can run this scene at any time before the heroes reach the black asteroid (or even afterwards, with their ship damaged and barely functional; that might make for even better heroics, depending on how much time you have left in the scenario slot).

Before you run this scene (unless you are opting to do it after the black asteroid), have the heroes make a few Piloting checks to avoid asteroids and other ships. Take about 5 minutes to give the heroes the feel of piloting their vessel (or co-piloting, if they are aboard the *Neeva-Beelo*) through a harrowing field of endless asteroids.

When the mood feels right for you to begin the action in this scene, proceed to the text below:

Sensors begin to report an intermittent signal. It seems to be a communication attempt, but it is barely strong enough for the comm to pick up. With each attempt, the signal seems to get weaker.

Any hero who wishes to try may attempt a DC 20 Computer Use check to lock in on the communication signal. This roll may be retried, but every try adds 2 to the difficulty. If the roll is failed at a difficulty 30, the signal is lost and this encounter is likely over.

Assuming the signal is brought in clearly:

“...help...need...engines ionized...We are... toward four...can not manuev...help...ambush...need hel ...”

The signal ends there after transmitting a set of nearby coordinates. The data on the location is similarly garbled, but the ship’s computer manages to pinpoint the downed vessel.

Unfortunately, the location of the other ship is in the heart of a densely packed asteroid cluster. To get to the ship will require a set of very difficult maneuvers to keep from damaging the heroes’ own vessel.

Begin with a Piloting check DC 15 to avoid the hazard. This check can be aided by one other hero if they are in their own ship. If Teelo is the pilot, another hero can try to aid as co-pilot.

This check, if successful, gets the ship into the cluster and on the way to the wrecked vessel sending the distress call. From here, the rolls only get harder.

Have the heroes aid or attempt 3 Piloting checks in a row. Each is at DC 20, 25, and finally 30. The DC 30 roll may be far too difficult for some groups; too easy for others. Feel free to alter these DCs as you need to for a challenging but appropriate set of rolls.

A failed roll during any of these checks except the last one results in some cosmetic damage to the ship. Don’t worry about numbers; just describe some

serious hull shearing and bits of broken metal and stone flying away from the impact points. Let the heroes think they are being shaken to pieces, but don’t seriously endanger them.

The last check has to be made, but the heroes can take as many tries as they dare. If they consistently fail the roll, start applying some real damage to their vessel: 10-20 hull damage per failed attempt should suffice.

Alternately, Teeloo can make these checks with ease, but he must be convinced by the heroes to try. A good Diplomacy roll (DC 15) goes a long way, but he resents any attempt to use Force powers on him if he notices them. In fact, any failed attempt to use Force powers on him results in him aborting any attempt to go after the damaged ship.

It takes serious use of Diplomacy or bribes (1000 credits or more) to change his mind. The Force is seen as very intrusive and unwelcome by some people, Teeloo included.

Assuming the heroes make their way to the wounded ship, read or paraphrase the following:

As the asteroids tumble out of sight, you can see the object of your search, a charred and battered old transport with several outer hull plates torn away by the shards of rock that still circle it. Blackened deckplates along one side reveal its name as the “Daring”. Drifting in space, it looks more like a derelict.

It is not, however, drifting motionless. It still has a small amount of forward momentum, just enough to move it along its present course toward the edge of this clear patch and back into the asteroids. Within minutes, the ship will likely be torn apart by the silent, sheering stones.

This is where heroics are called for. Getting to the damaged ship is easy; getting inside and rescuing the survivors is not. This part should not require dice rolls, but the clock is ticking.

Try to have some sort of watch or timepiece handy when running this scene. Immediately after reading the text above, glance pointedly at the watch and announce to the players, “You have eight minutes. What do you do?”

This should keep them focused. As long as their attempts are reasonable, let them work. Note that most ships (including the *Neeva-Beelo*) are not equipped with tow lines, tractor beams, or grapnels.

Once a hero boards the *Daring*, an old in-system transport re-outfitted for the Rush, describe the masses of fused wires and shorn-open hull plates that line the inside. Rescue operations are very difficult, but possible.

All three crewmembers can be saved, though one

is in horrible condition and is likely to die soon without medical aid.

Captain Dindau, a human 4th-level fringer, is found up in the cockpit. His voice was the one heard in the distress call and he has been making the call ever since. He has nearly passed out from lack of life support by the time he is found.

Getting to him requires cutting away parts of a fused and buckled bulkhead between the entry hall and the cockpit. (Demolitions DC 10 or other appropriate skill as determined by the GM.)

First Mate “Frost”, a Wookiee 3rd-level soldier whose real name is Kohlbacka, is in the hold where she was trapped by a fried door lock and then pinned under several heavy crates. While easily capable of freeing herself, she is unconscious and needs assistance. She is called Frost because of an unusual trait for a Wookiee, albinism.

Getting to her requires bypassing the hold’s auto-lock (Disable Device or Repair check DC: 15).

Lastly, there is Herren. Herren, a 4th level Human scout, serves as the ship’s engineer and gunner. He was in the engine room, trying to maintain the *Daring*’s less than top-of-the-line sublight engines when all chaos broke loose. He has the most to tell the heroes, but he also needs the most help.

When the engines went dead, he was caught in the ionic backwash that killed them. As such, he is in cerebral shock and has severe electrical burns.

Getting to him requires only brute strength or easy demolitions, but keeping him alive requires a medpack, Force healing powers or a Treat Injury check DC 15 (first aid).

Herren also has to be moved out of the engine room, which should be described as a smoldering wreck with dozens of shattered consoles and electrical scoring everywhere.

Once the rescue operation is successful, the heroes can escape the ill-fated *Daring*. Beyond repair and too large to tow, it is swept into the asteroid field and is torn apart moments after the heroes return to their own ship.

Blasting free of this death trap, let the heroes escape its clutches without needing any more rolls (unless the pilot/co-pilot heroes are enjoying making the checks). A few minutes of skillful flying should put them back on course with a handful of new passengers and another good deed to their credit.

Note: Please be sure to award a Force point to any hero who willingly risks his or her life to save one of the crew during this scene. Such heroism is the stuff of Star Wars.]

Once Herren is stabilized, he can tell the heroes what happened. The other two crewmembers can tell

a similar story, but only Herren knows what originally hit them.

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes ask Herren what happened:

“<cough> I was checking the output on the... <cough> ...engines when I saw... <cough>... a shape on the aft sensors. It was... <cough>... there and then gone again. I ain’t never seen nothin’ like it... <wheeze> ...in my life. It was like it was invisible or something!”

“Anyways, I... <cough> ...flipped open the blast plating on the main housing to... <cough, hack> ...get a better look. All I saw was space for a second, then I... <wheeze> ...saw this ship just appear behind us! I guess it was a ship... It was all this silvery black, like a Naboo night pearl.”

“<cough, cough, cough!> The whole front end of the thing was covered in gun ports. Big, wide flat ports! I tried to reach my comm, but... <cough> ...they all went white. Ion cannons, point blank.”

With a grateful look up at you, he finishes. “I am... <cough> ...lucky to be alive. I owe you. <cough> I owe you...”

He passes out from the strain.

The other two members of the crew, assuming they were rescued, echo the sentiment. Each of them has a skill to contribute (Dindau is an excellent pilot, “Frost” is well trained as a navigator and slicer (Astrogate and Computer Use), and Herren is a crack mechanic and engineer (Repair, Disable Device, and Craft [starships]) and is willing to do so. None are well enough to leave the ship during this adventure, but they can offer enough advice over communicators (if possible) to provide a +2 circumstance bonus to skill checks in their fields.

Once this scene has played out and the heroes are content to continue with their mission, proceed to the next encounter:

Encounter 3: The Black Eye Opens

Key idea of this encounter: The Rush goes on around the heroes while they make their way to the coordinates deep within the asteroid field. They find their destination and manage to get inside.

The first part of this scene should take about 5-10 minutes and is purely descriptive. Tell the heroes that they have made it a good distance into the field and that as they travel, shouts of joy and frustration have been coming over the comm unit from prospectors all

around them.

Then let them know that sensors are reading energy discharges at medium range. Looking out the windows of their transport, the heroes can see the colored stabs of laser fire dotting the rocky horizon. No one is sending out any distress calls, but things certainly seem to be heating up out there.

Scenes like the one suggested below are a good way to illustrate the tension and claim jumping going on during the Rock Rush:

The stars around you are blocked out by the shadows of an infinite stony sea. Occasionally the pulsing light of laser cannons illuminates one of these floating islands.

“Get off my asteroid!” crackles over your communicator.

“I do not see your name on it, Human,” answers the calm voice of a Cerean pilot.

“Then let me mark it for you, coney!”

More laser fire glimmers in the night as both comms go silent...

If the heroes want to go out and get involved in the shooting war, let them do so, but be sure to remind them of their mission out here. The longer they delay, the more likely someone will find what they are looking for before the heroes do.

Still, if this does not dissuade them, use the YT transport stats and starship combat sections of the main book to run battle after battle for the heroes until they tire of it or are blasted from the stars.

In any case, the objective is lost to them if they do this as the raiders from Encounter 6 find the asteroid, mess around inside, and get it and themselves blown up. All that remains for the heroes find when they finally arrive is floating debris. End the adventure at that point and thank the heroes for playing.

Assuming you do not have to do that and the heroes stay on target, continue describing the chaos in the asteroids for a while, then talk them through going even deeper still into the seemingly endless asteroids. Silence reigns once they pass a certain point, with the storm of heavy stone blocking out most communication signals and any sight or trace of other ships. Background radiation in some of the stone here, combined with super-dense elements, makes sensor readings of any kind unreliable (which allows the pirate vessel to follow the heroes without them noticing).

After a period of time describing this solitude to them (probably no more than another minute or two), move to the main scene text below:

The proximity sensor on your navigational

computer chimes loudly, indicating that you are nearing your destination. At first, nothing seems different. You are surrounded, as you have been since this trip began, with tumbling stones and very little else.

Then, as the distance to your preset coordinates grows shorter, the scene outside your vessel changes. In the heart of a dense grouping of asteroids ahead, one in particular seems... different. It seems darker, more ominous.

You steer your craft closer past the rocks that seem to orbit the dark monolith like silent sentries. It takes a bit of tricky flying to clear them, but once you do, the coordinates Niram gave you verify your location and your goal...

Whatever you seek lies somewhere inside this massive black asteroid.

The heroes are likely to want to scan and search the surface of the asteroid with ships sensors before trying to go out onto its surface. If they do try this latter option, let them spend some time doing so to no avail. There is no atmosphere around the asteroid (of course) and no way inside that can be reached on foot. The only entrance is “the Eye” as described below, and only energy wavelengths like the kind a ship’s active sensors can produce will open it.

Once the heroes are back inside their ship (assuming they left it at all), you can proceed to the finding of the Eye below.

Along one side of the asteroid, you see a huge sigil cut in the stone; an engraving inlaid with oddly dark metal. Bands of silvery gray run along either side of this construction, which seems to taper at either end.

At a distance, it resembles a massive slit pupil, like the iris of some gigantic eye. The center of the eye is seemingly crafted of several overlapping plates. The rest of the immense pattern is nearly seamless, as if somehow the “pupil” is the focus of the design; although you have no clear indication how or why.

Opening the Eye is remarkably easy if the heroes are fortunate enough to do the right thing. All that is needed here is any form of active sensor sweep. Use your discretion on what qualifies, but even attempting to send a communication into the asteroid while outside the Eye should suffice.

If the heroes do not do anything of the sort, getting inside is very difficult. The building has 500 hull points and a DR of 25 due to its oddly energy-resistant metal construction. Thus, blasting their way in is an option, but a time-consuming one, and their time is limited, whether they realize it or not.

Demolitions might suffice to blow a hero-size hole in the doors. That should only be allowed if the heroes think to try it and the scenario is stalling. Otherwise, virtually anything else the heroes try can qualify as an active sensor sweep (even trying to slice into the asteroid's computer systems (which it doesn't really have).

When the heroes manage to get the doors open, read the following. Be sure to paraphrase if the heroes have had to use some alternate method.

The overlapping plates of the iris doorway slide open in several different directions, making it seem as if the dark serpent's eye were widening to focus on you. Within moments, the way in to the asteroid is open.

Beyond, eerie glows begin to form. Strange patterns and markings glimmer into visibility in a vast chamber beyond the slit pupil entryway. These marks flare around a long flat platform large enough for any seven ships your size.

The way is open. The path is lit. Do you enter?

This is the heroes' last true choice before becoming committed to the rest of the scenario. If they turn back now, they can report what they found to Nirama. They have fulfilled at least part of their contract and proceeding on may seem very daunting to them (especially lower level parties). If they do turn back now, the pirates following them stumble into this place and cause it to explode, but the heroes do not know that.

If, as is almost certainly the case, the heroes choose to press forward, guide them through the iris of the Eye and into the landing chamber. Proceed to the next encounter.

Encounter 4: Silence of the Grave

Key ideas of this encounter: Exploration begins amid the utter silence of the sound-absorbing asteroid. Heroes notice that the complex seems to be reacting to them like a living thing.

This text describes the chamber they have just landed in. Read or paraphrase the following before continuing:

Your ship has docked in a huge room with a domed ceiling and strange serrated columns running up the rounded walls. Patterns of the same silvery gray metal from outside run along every exposed surface, like an asymmetrical web over the entire chamber.

Above you, the slitted eye that opened to let you in is now closing again. Plate after plate of dark steel slides closed until, within moments, your only way out has been blocked. The landing vault is plunged into darkness...

...but only for a moment. The gray pattern along the walls and ceiling begins to pulse with a soft, slowly building white light. A few seconds later, the room is fully illuminated.

Several of the lines of light culminate along one wall near the floor. Within the gleaming pattern, a round doorway irises open, revealing a shimmering wall of light motes and a metal door beyond.

With only the one apparent exit, the path before the heroes seems pretty clear. Let them explore this landing chamber thoroughly if they wish to, but there is little to learn.

Ship's sensors do not reveal much about this place. The stone here is an extremely dense form of basalt, and the metal columns and web pattern defy analysis. The light is a true mystery, as sensors cannot discern any form of electrical activity occurring.

Aside from the glow itself, there is no apparent power source, nor can the sensors detect anything outside this room. The web seems to be blocking sensor reading and communication attempts. If the heroes want to explore, it is going to be on foot.

When the heroes disembark to explore, read or paraphrase the following:

Gravity does not seem to be an issue, as you do not feel any lighter or heavier as you cross the landing chamber. The floor, except for the glowing lines, is perfectly smooth, yet you have no trouble getting traction on its polished surface.

Once you reach the doorway, you can see that the motes of light are slightly in motion, like a curtain of dancing fireflies. Each mote is pure white, with a corona of pale flares around its edges.

Past the wall of motes, a circular door of dark metal irises open as you approach, soundlessly rolling into the walls and vanishing.

If any hero is trying to use sensors or other equipment to analyze this room, they immediately note that there are no sensors in the room, especially nothing that should have detected the presence of the heroes near the doorway.

Any hero watching the motes carefully can make a DC 15 Spot check to notice that they seem to react when the heroes get close, flaring brighter and moving slightly faster the closer they get.

Not that the heroes know this yet, but the motes and the glowing lines around the chamber are

manifestations of the sound-absorbing field they are about to enter. The sound of the heroes approaching have activated the door, just as the tremendous noise of their ship landing in the bay has awoken the sound field throughout the chamber.

When the heroes are ready to proceed through the wall, which does not hurt in the slightest to touch, read or paraphrase the following:

The motes dance away from you, allowing you to move through the curtain of light without harm. You move past and into the hallway beyond.

The hall is made of the same dark metal as the door and is also overlaid by the web of strange gray, glowing lines. They pulse and grow brighter as each of you enters.

The hall continues on in one direction for quite a ways, but you see it turn off to the left after about 70 meters or so. Doors similar to the one you just entered can be seen along both sides of the hallway. One on the right side has a faint curtain of motes in front of it; the others do not. The walls are uneven, with alcoves every few feet between the doors.

What the heroes are seeing is the damage this complex has sustained. At one time, each of these doorways would have been covered in a field of motes. As it is, only the one with a curtain of lights can be opened. The others do not budge and have to be forced open (Hardness: 15, Hit Points 100 per door) if the heroes want access.

The heroes can now explore the complex. Refer to the Asteroid Map (GM's Aid #1) and its marked encounter numbers if you wish to let them wander freely. If you want to guide their progress, use the following encounters in any order you deem appropriate to the mood. It is recommended that you run them in order, but the flow of the game may dictate otherwise.

The last important game play note in this scene is the following: From here on out until the heroes either leave to go back into the landing chamber or reach Encounter 7, they cannot hear anything. The complex around them absorbs all of the sounds they make.

You must enforce this. The players should not be allowed to talk to each other in character, nor can they use communicators to do so, as even electronic sound is absorbed.

This is a real test of teamwork...

Suddenly, you notice... nothing—nothing at all. No footfalls, no breathing. No rustling of clothing or voices. None of you are making any sound at all.

Once the heroes have coped with this new change,

either run the exploration of the complex freeform or proceed to the next Encounter.

About the Black Complex: No descriptions have been given for the unnumbered chambers. This is only a small part of what was once a much larger construction. When whatever cataclysm struck this place occurred, only the core survived. Assume that any chamber with working doors is essentially empty. Describe the dust of centuries long past, strange shapes in the walls, and the occasional glimmering light mote that pulses when the heroes get near it but does not otherwise do anything.

Only the numbered sections actually matter in this scenario, but allow the heroes to explore for as long as they like (within the constraints of the slot) before moving on to the other encounters.

Encounter 5: The Chamber of Sleep

Key idea of this encounter: In this part of the complex, the heroes find the bodies of whatever once lived here. They also attract the attention of the only survivor of this place.

When the heroes reach this part of the complex, read or paraphrase the following text:

The door slides open in utter silence. This time, the quiet seems appropriate, for it seems you have literally entered a tomb.

Several shapes lie draped over smooth, low-backed stone chairs. Others are simply sprawled on the floor, limbs outstretched in odd angles. One body is nearly upright, supported by the extended section of wall it is leaning against. Long dried and desiccated, the corpse is practically part of the obstruction, shielding most of it from view.

This is where any scientists among the heroes can gather a great deal of information about the former inhabitants of this place. Even if none of the heroes have the needed skills to do a full analysis, some things can be learned.

Let the heroes investigate as thoroughly as they wish. The bodies are safe to approach, though that might not be apparent at first. Once the heroes have examined the first body, tell them the following based on the skills they've used:

- If none of the heroes have an appropriate Knowledge or skill, give them this basic description: *The bodies are not symmetrical, with two forward limbs, a third rear limb, and a pair of slightly smaller limbs about midpoint on*

what might be its back. A row of eyes, six in total, line the center of a rounded bulge on the end of the body near the front appendages. There doesn't seem to be any true orifice anywhere on the corpse.

- If members of the heroes' group have skills like Knowledge (xenobiology, forensics, or something else appropriate to the task) and succeed at a check between DC 10-25, give them the above information plus: *The smaller limbs are definitely dorsal appendages and, from the shape of the digits, probably served as arms. All of the limbs were likely manipulatory, but the dorsal arms were in all likelihood primary for that task. The skin of these creatures had an efficiently porous nature, likely allowing them to breathe without any kind of mouth or central lungs.*
- If the heroes qualify for all of the above and can achieve a DC check higher than 25, add the following: *The eyes look to be three pairs, each pair serving a different function. If the shapes and surviving masses in the optical bodies are any indication, these creatures could see in several different spectra at once, had near perfect peripheral vision, and could likely perform double-triangulation, allowing them to perceive spatial geometry with extreme accuracy.*
- Lastly, if the party has Force Sensitive members, let them roll a See Force check. A DC 15 or better will give them the following: *A lingering echo in the Force around these creatures could indicate that they communicated through telepathy. The resonance of their thoughts still clings to them, even in death.*

If this prompts any heroes to try and sense the Force around this place, tell them: *What happened here was sudden and violent. A darkness lingers here, though death has long since passed. Shadows are all that remain now.*

Investigating the furniture reveals only that it was built for creatures of this body type and would be uncomfortable for humanoid heroes to try to use.

The console the one body is draped over can tell the heroes something, but they have to literally break the corpse off of it. There is no roll required for this, as the body is dried and brittle.

Once it is off the console, describe this to the heroes:

The obstruction seems to be a console of some kind, though the shapes in the formed stone make no sense to you. Pieces of inset crystal are glowing dimly with patterns and markings that also extend

forward above the gauge and into its depths.

Three such crystals seem to have a different purpose. They are set equidistant from each other; lit with an pale, even glow. All three are still covered with a thin layer of detritus from the body.

If the heroes clean the three crystals:

Within moments, the glowing crystals project their light above the console. Each by itself would only be a field of indistinct light, but the three combined form a coherent image.

You see a sphere of silver metal mesh connecting crystals and nodes of dark stone. Light passes between the shapes on the sphere. Occasionally, one of the pulses of light seems to blaze brighter than the others and rebounds off the inside of the sphere. The entire shape shakes violently for a moment. Then, it comes back to rest and the lights calm down.

What the heroes are seeing, not that they know it now, is the core from Encounter 6. It is damaged, and the blazing lights are the first clue the heroes have that all is not well in the complex.

Unfortunately, there is not much else the heroes can learn here. While they are investigating, however, something is learning about them.

From a cyst deeper in the stone of this asteroid, a single sibilaari from the complex has been awakened from its long hibernation by the entry of the heroes' ship. The energy coursing through the complex's core after so long has roused it and it has come to do some investigating of its own.

It first finds the heroes when they enter this chamber. Safely phased into the walls, it can watch them without fear of being detected...by anything but the Force. If any hero tries to See Force specifically to detect life while here, the sibilaari can be found. It instantly senses the use of the Force and goes back into the solid stone of the asteroid to hide.

This should make the heroes paranoid, but they are unlikely to be able to get to the sibilaari after it phases like this. The sibilaari uses Farseeing to watch the heroes until they leave the chamber and then follow them.

Phasing is tiring for the sibilaari right now, since it has just awakened and is not completely recovered yet. Thus, it has to use its stealth abilities (which are considerable) to remain unseen as it follows the heroes.

Once the heroes move out of the room, move on to the next encounter when the heroes reach it. If the heroes manage to locate the sibilaari before reaching Encounter 6, run the contact as follows:

The sibilaari is curious about the heroes and tries to remain unseen while it watches them. If they find it, it does not approach but it won't attack either.

Peaceful contact lures it closer, but it does not come within 20 feet of the heroes in any event. If they try to come closer, it phases into the rock and does not reappear until Encounter 9 (or Encounter 7 if needed).

If the heroes try to communicate at a distance, the sibilaari lingers long enough to touch each of their minds and send the concepts of "curiosity" and "long sleep" and "trembling stone". Then, it slips away into the stone to watch the heroes from safety. If it does this, it is available to help the heroes if they are outmatched by Encounter 7.

Of course, if the heroes attack the bizarre black-skinned alien, it defends itself. Violence it understands, since it was originally one of the three protectors of this place (and the only one to survive the centuries in deep sleep). Before it actually kills a hero, it tries to retreat and hide. If the heroes pursue it after that, it attacks without mercy (and may well annihilate the entire group, as it hunts down any hero that actively attacked it).

If the heroes get themselves killed by the sibilaari, Encounter 5 ends here, as does the scenario.

Encounter 6: Deafening Echoes

Key idea of this encounter: The heroes find the core of the complex and see that it has become unstable. The need for speed becomes apparent.

When your party reaches this point on the map, or if they seem to have tired of exploring, run this scenario. It is a fairly easy scene, mostly comprised of descriptions.

The glimmering door slides open to reveal a brightly lit chamber. Unlike the other rooms here, this one has a field of glowing motes on the inside of the doorway as well.

Past them, you see a massive structure hovering in the spherical room. Crystals embedded in the rounded walls pulse with light, seemingly suspending a huge globe of silver metal webbing.

At every junction along the globe, more crystals blaze in settings of dark steel. Between the jewels, waves of light move along the strands in irregular patterns before leaping up off the globe to flow along the walls.

Orbiting the globe are several flying shards of the same black metal that makes up so much of this

place. The shards are pointed on both ends and seem to fly at different speeds in never-ending spirals around the room.

The heroes have found the core of the complex and, as quickly becomes evident, a great deal of trouble. If the heroes move carefully into the room past the second field of motes in the doorway, read:

All at once, the sound returns. All around you, echoing through the chamber along the arcs of the globe and whispering up from each of the spinning shards, noises surround you.

Describe for the heroes sounds that mimic the kinds of things they've been doing while in the asteroid. Be sure to include the dim roar of starship engines, but don't call it that directly. The players should have to determine the source of the sounds themselves.

Also, add in sounds they haven't made. These are the sounds of the pirates that have followed them into the asteroid. If the heroes can figure out that these mean they are not alone here, they deserve to be forewarned.

If the heroes get too close to the core, the spiraling shards of black steel cut them for 1d6 points of damage, automatically hitting. This occurs with any casual contact, making it quite evident that trying to force one's way to the globe is an exceedingly bad idea.

If a hero insists on trying to force his or her way to the core, assume it takes one full move action to reach the core with a total combined damage of 20d6 points each round. Even if the hero survives getting to the core, he or she takes the same damage getting back out.

Any interaction with the core itself only hastens the damage it has taken, which you should describe to the heroes as soon as they have figured out what the echoing sounds mean (give the heroes Listen checks at DC 15 if they seem stuck):

The globe shudders for a moment and one of the pulses of light inside it flares brighter than the others. It rebounds into the globe, causing the entire sphere to shake violently. Then, it launches outward to slam into one of the wall crystals.

With a hissing crack, the crystal goes dark and burns out. Seeing this, you notice that several of the gems embedded into the walls look to have similarly burned out. From the faint wisps of smoke trickling some them, all of this damage looks recent.

At the same moment, the room trembles and a long crack spreads along the domed ceiling. It doesn't seem very deep or very wide, but it is only one of several....

If the heroes are particularly loud after seeing this, have it occur again. If they try to remain quiet, describe the globe calming down. They should be able to make the correlation that the more noise they make, the more violent the globe becomes.

If the heroes experiment, the globe seems to react to sounds made outside the room as well (though the heroes can't hear any noise in the hallway, of course).

Lastly, whether the heroes make much noise or not here, the pirates aren't being quiet and their sound energies are also causing the core to become unstable. Have the globe misfire at least twice while the heroes are here.

That should convince them it is time to go. If they linger too long here and the scenario begins to stall (or if time is running out in the slot), have Encounter 7 occur right here in the hallway outside the core.

A few well-placed blaster shots from the pirates should nicely "accelerate the plot."

Encounter 7: A Shot in the Dark

Key ideas of this encounter: The pirate interlopers have finally caught up with the heroes and they don't seem to be in a sharing mood. A fight more than likely ensues. No matter what the outcome, the need to flee becomes much greater.

The best time for this scene is when the heroes are trying to make their way back to their ship. The pirates have been tracking the party with the aid of their dark side Force Adept Reeyah and have picked this spot for their ambush.

Refer to the Ambush Corridor map in the GM Aid #2 for a layout of the battle site. The pirates have done this before and it's a tried and true tactic. They expect to waste the heroes quickly and continue ravaging this complex for all it's worth.

Unfortunately, they just might succeed. They have numbers on the party, are well armed, have a good grasp of discipline (due in no small part to the Force Adept and their leader back at their ship). This encounter can be very deadly, but the purpose here isn't to kill off the heroes.

It is mostly to let the players know that there are competent villains out there and also introduce them to the brutally effective pirates of Cularin. These are just a small sample of what awaits Cularin's heroes in future scenarios.

When you are ready to run the ambush, let any appropriate hero (but not necessarily all of them, as only heroes who are pointedly watching for danger should be allowed to) make a Spot check at DC 22 (the result of the pirate's collective and well practiced Hide check). Success allows that hero (and any others he can effectively warn in one second; remember that the heroes are still utterly unable to talk) to act in the surprise round.

Then, begin the surprise round immediately. Heroes who get to act (if any, and it is likely that none will) will be able to do so, but otherwise, all of the pirates will take one shot with their blasters from behind cover before anyone can react.

Then, normal combat begins. Begin everything by reading or paraphrasing the following:

The long, soundless trek back to your ship is interrupted suddenly. Ahead in the darkness of the corridor, more motes of light appear.

These, unlike the others, are extremely bright and are moving faster than the others were. Moving... toward... you...

Blasters!

Run the combat as outlined below from this point. This encounter ends when the pirates are defeated or flee (remember that Dorel-Kan and Reeyah flee as soon as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the thugs go down). Encounter 8 likely occurs immediately thereafter once the heroes get to the landing bay.

Combat Information:

First, a look at the opposition:

Tier 1

8 Pirates: Human Thug 1; Init +2; Defense 16; Spd 10m; VP/WP 12/15; Attack +3 melee (1d6+2 club or 1d3+2 unarmed), +3 ranged (3d6 blaster pistol [or stun, 1d6/DC 15]); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Chr 9.

Equipment: Flight suite, blaster pistol, club.

Skills: Intimidate +2, Spot +1, Hide +3

Feats: Toughness, Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Armor (light)

These pirates are part of a much larger organization that is taking control of a growing area in the Cularin system. More information on this group appears in future scenarios, but for now it remains a mystery. The members of this Pirate organization are well disciplined and have military training.

Dorel-Kan: Human Scoundrel 6; Init +6; Defense

18; Spd 10m; VP/WP 36/12; Attack +4 melee (2d4 vibrodagger), +8 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ better lucky than good, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +5; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 1; Rep 3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Chr 15.

Equipment: vibrodagger, heavy plaster pistol.

Skills: Profession (Pirate Leader) +5, Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +4, Repair +4, Hide +8

Feats: Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Iron Will

Dorel-Kan is fast becoming a high-ranking member of the Cularin Pirates. His drive to succeed, ambitious desires, and his willingness to do whatever it takes to further the pirates' goals have made him an invaluable leader in just a few short years. He regrets only one thing: that his brother Vel (from *Oblivion's Kiss*, a prior scenario) isn't here to stand beside him as his first mate.

He doesn't really hold any animosity toward Vel for what he sees as his brother's lack of courage. Vel is one of only two people he cares about at all, and he is sure he'll be able to get Vel to join him once the power of the Pirates is seen throughout the Cularin system.

Reeayah: Twi'lek Force Adept 3; Init +3; Defense 18; Spd 10m; VP/WP 26/12; Attack +2 melee (2d6 vibroblade), +5 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ force user; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 3; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Equipment: vibroblade, heavy blaster pistol.

Skills: See Force +6, Intimidate +4, Fear +4, Force Push +4, Force Grip +6, Hide +4, Force Stealth +4

Feats: Weapon (primitive), Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Force Sensitive, Alter, Sense, Track, Heroic Surge

The other person Dorel cares about, Reeayah is a Twi'lek female with connections to a circle of Dark Side Twi'lek witches on her homeworld. Not wishing to be a slave like so many of her race, she fell in with the witches and learned to harness the darkness and rage in her heart.

After joining up with other leaders of the Pirates, she was introduced to Dorel and the two of them became instantly obsessed with each other. Love might be a strong word to describe their relationship, but they are both about as dedicated as two self-absorbed criminals can get.

Reeayah adores using her dark side powers, and always chooses them first in combat. She has no compunctions at all about killing and is, in truth, more bloodthirsty than Dorel.

Tier 2

9 Pirates: Human Thug 2; Init +2; Defense 16; Spd 10m; VP/WP 20/15; Attack +4 melee (1d6+2 club or 1d3+2 unarmed), +4 ranged (3d6 blaster pistol [or stun, 1d6/DC 15]); SQ none; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Chr 9.

Equipment: flight suits, club, blaster pistol.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Spot +3, Hide +5

Feats: Toughness, Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Armor (light)

These pirates are part of a much larger organization that is taking control of a growing area in the Cularin system. More information on this group appears in future scenarios, but for now it remains a mystery. The members of this Pirate organization are well disciplined and have military training.

Dorel-Kan: Human Scoundrel 6; Init +6; Defense 18; Spd 10m; VP/WP 36/12; Attack +4 melee (2d4 vibrodagger), +8 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ better lucky than good, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +5; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 1; Rep 3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Chr 15.

Equipment: vibrodagger, heavy blaster pistol.

Skills: Profession (Pirate Leader) +5, Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +4, Repair +4, Hide +8

Feats: Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Iron Will

Dorel-Kan is fast becoming a high-ranking member of the Cularin Pirates. His drive to succeed, ambitious desires, and his willingness to do whatever it takes to further the pirates' goals have made him an invaluable leader in just a few short years. He regrets only one thing; that his brother Vel (from *Oblivion's Kiss*, a prior scenario) isn't here to stand beside him as his first mate.

He doesn't really hold any animosity toward Vel for what he sees as his brother's lack of courage. Vel is one of only two people he cares about at all, and he is sure he'll be able to get Vel to join him once the power of the Pirates is seen throughout the Cularin system.

Reeayah: Twi'lek Force Adept 5; Init +3; Defense 17; Spd 10m; VP/WP 32/12; Attack +3 melee (2d6 vibroblade), +6 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ force user, force weapon +1d4; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +6; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 4; Rep 1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr

15.

Equipment: vibroblade, heavy blaster pistol.

Skills: See Force +6, Intimidate +4, Fear +4, Force Push +5, Force Grip +7, Hide +4, Force Stealth +4

Feats: Weapon (primitive), Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Force Sensitive, Alter, Sense, Control, Track, Heroic Surge

The other person Dorel cares about, Reedayah is a Twi'lek female with connections to a circle of Dark Side Twi'lek witches on her homeworld. Not wishing to be a slave like so many of her race, she fell in with the witches and learned to harness the darkness and rage in her heart.

After joining up with other leaders of the Pirates, she was introduced to Dorel and the two of them became instantly obsessed with each other. Love might be a strong word to describe their relationship, but they are both about as dedicated as two self-absorbed criminals can get.

Reedayah adores using her dark side powers, and always chooses them first in combat. She has no compunctions at all about killing and is, in truth, more bloodthirsty than Dorel.

Tier 3

10 Pirates: Human Thug 3; Init +2; Defense 16; Spd 10m; VP/WP 25/18; Attack +5 melee (1d6+2 club or 1d3+2 unarmed), +5 ranged (3d6 blaster pistol [or stun, 1d6/DC 15]); SQ none; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Chr 9.

Equipment: flight suits, club, blaster pistol.

Skills: Intimidate +5, Spot +4, Hide +6

Feats: Toughness x 2, Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Armor (light)

These pirates are part of a much larger organization that is taking control of a growing area in the Cularin system. More information on this group appears in future scenarios, but for now it remains a mystery. The members of this Pirate organization are well disciplined and have military training.

Dorel-Kan: Human Scoundrel 6; Init +6; Defense 18; Spd 10m; VP/WP 36/12; Attack +4 melee (2d4 vibrodagger), +8 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ better lucky than good, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +5; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 1; Rep 3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Chr 15.

Equipment: vibrodagger, heavy blaster pistol.

Skills: Profession (Pirate Leader) +5, Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +4, Repair +4, Hide +8

Feats: Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Improved Initiative, Precise Shot, Iron Will

Dorel-Kan is fast becoming a high-ranking member of the Cularin Pirates. His drive to succeed, ambitious desires, and his willingness to do whatever it takes to further the pirates' goals have made him an invaluable leader in just a few short years. He regrets only one thing; that his brother Vel (from *Oblivion's Kiss*, a prior scenario) isn't here to stand beside him as his first mate.

He doesn't really hold any animosity toward Vel for what he sees as his brother's lack of courage. Vel is one of only two people he cares about at all, and he is sure he'll be able to get Vel to join him once the power of the Pirates is seen throughout the Cularin system.

Reedayah: Twi'lek Force Adept 7; Init +3; Defense 18; Spd 10m; VP/WP 32/12; Attack +3 melee (2d6 vibroblade), +6 ranged (3d8 heavy blaster pistol [or stun, 1d8/DC 18]); SQ force user, force weapon +1d4, force talisman +2; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +6; SZ M; FP 4, DSP 5; Rep 2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Equipment: vibroblade, heavy blaster pistol.

Skills: See Force +6, Intimidate +5, Fear +5, Force Push +5, Force Grip +10, Hide +4, Force Stealth +4

Feats: Weapon (primitive), Weapon (simple), Weapon (blaster pistols), Force Sensitive, Alter, Sense, Control, Track, Heroic Surge, Force Lightning

The other person Dorel cares about, Reedayah is a Twi'lek female with connections to a circle of Dark Side Twi'lek witches on her homeworld. Not wishing to be a slave like so many of her race, she fell in with the witches and learned to harness the darkness and rage in her heart.

After joining up with other leaders of the Pirates, she was introduced to Dorel and the two of them became instantly obsessed with each other. Love might be a strong word to describe their relationship, but they are both about as dedicated as two self-absorbed criminals can get.

Reedayah adores using her dark side powers, and will always do so in combat. She has no compunctions at all about killing and is, in truth, more bloodthirsty than Dorel.

Next, a look at group tactics:

The pirates have arrayed themselves along the alcoves in the corridor walls. This gives them half cover, translating into a +4 cover bonus and a +2 to any Reflex saves they need to make.

Dorel and Reedayah are at the alcoves farthest back. That gives them three-quarters cover (+7

Defense, +3 Reflex) if they need it, though that assumes they are not shooting that round. See Reeayah's tactics in the first round for more on that.

If the thugs take a severe beating (more than 3 drop in the first round after surprise, more than half of them drop during the combat, or if Reeayah and/or Dorel go down), they flee. They all head back to their ship in the landing bay. If the thugs flee, Reeayah and Dorel go with them.

It is important to Reeayah and Dorel that they live through this scene. They are not afraid to run and they can be deadly enough to survive long enough to do so. If the heroes kill or stun them, so be it, but try as hard as you can to keep them alive.

Oh, and just in case it isn't clear yet; all blasters are set to kill.

Lastly, a look at this combat's strategy:

Surprise Round: Every pirate takes a single blaster shot at one of the heroes. These shots should be pretty random, though any hero that obviously would not be a likely target (far in the back, concealed for some reason) is not a target yet.

Dorel knows a bit about Jedi and any one of them that appears flat-footed is his target, preferably one without an ignited lightsaber.

Reeayah does not attack this round, as she is observing the heroes to see which one is the best candidate for her Force Grip. She opts for the most capable looking warrior, assuming his or her Will to be weak...

Round One: Assuming the heroes have not yet caused them to rout, the pirates continue to fire at their chosen targets. They only switch targets if it is obvious they have little chance of hitting their current victim.

Dorel, if he gets initiative on his target, keeps firing at him or her. He's a good shot and he knows it all too well.

Reeayah begins Force Grip. This can be lethal as it does not require an attack roll and it can easily go straight to wounds if the victim fails a Will save.

Round Two: More of the same from the pirates. By now, the heroes may have closed the distance. If they have, the pirates switch to stun settings if they can take shots at all. Melee may ensue here.

Dorel is likely to get great use out of his Precise Shot feat here. Also, depending on the heroes' progress, he might be in range to get his Point Blank bonus as well.

Reeayah continues using Force Grip on her chosen victim. If her victim made the save last round, her temper rises and she burns a Force point to call upon the Dark Side to aid her attempt.

Round Three: Past this point, tactics vary widely because of the heroes' actions. The pirates keep fighting as best they can, though remember their

breaking point. Running is always an option for them and they aren't too proud to do so.

Dorel keeps blasting. If the heroes are in Point Blank range now, he only has half cover if he has any at all. If he gets caught in melee, he only fights for one round with his vibrodagger before fleeing.

Reeayah tries desperately to bring down her chosen foe this turn. The only thing that sways her from this course is personal danger or if Dorel is engaged in melee. Then, she uses Force Push to get the both of them some running room and flees with her Heroic Surge.

Round Four+: Make logical assumptions for the pirates and their two leaders after this. None of them are incompetent and all of them want to save their skins.

Note: This is a very tough fight, and the heroes may be quickly overwhelmed. If they are and they haven't offended or driven off the sibilari, it can come to their rescue by phasing out of the stone and attacking Reeayah.

This occupies her and Dorel, who immediately turns his blaster on the terrifying black alien. After a full round of this, Reeayah successfully Force Pushes the sibilari away and flees. This breaks the pirate's morale and they flee.

As long as the heroes have survived this fight and can get to their ship (whether they are pursuing pirates or not), move on to Encounter Eight.

Before you do though, have the most intelligent or wise hero make an Intelligence or Wisdom check (DC 10). If he or she makes it, mention to them that if the core was becoming unstable because of sound, this combat must have... well...

They should get the hint. Proceed to Encounter 8.

Encounter 8: Like a Bat Out Of....

Key ideas of this encounter: The heroes have good reason to flee this complex. There may likely be another fight waiting for them, but it will be cut short by the complex collapsing around them.

By now, if the heroes haven't gotten the hint that they need to run, the complex begins to provide them with all the clues they need. Read or paraphrase the following:

In the dark hallways, things begin to shift. Plates of black stone and metal buckle around you and sections of the ceiling look like they are about to

give way. The lines of light sprawling over every surface here are flaring bright and beginning to burn out violently.

Spider web cracks are appearing everywhere. Tiny fragments of rock are tricking in through the sudden holes. All of this is occurring in utter silence, but the message is clear...

The heroes can get back to their ship if they don't dawdle needlessly. This place can withstand a lot of abuse, and it isn't going to instantly explode. It is on its last legs, however, and the heroes need to hurry.

Once they make it back to the landing bay, they see the following:

Your ship is as you left it, though the flares of light everywhere and the spreading fissures are an unwelcome addition to the view.

Another new feature is the second ship docked close to yours. An obviously modified YT transport, it has its main gun battery trained on your ship and several figures clustered around its landing gear.

One of them says hello with a blaster shot that sprays across the stone nearby.

Combat ensues again, but this one is much easier to run. Use the same statistics as before in Encounter 7, including Reeayah and Dorel if they were able to escape the heroes.

This combat only lasts one full round. No matter what has occurred during that time, read or paraphrase the following text:

The chamber is coming apart around you. Every moment you fight is another moment gone in what little time this entire complex has left.

Above you, the great black eye shudders as all the lines of light across it burn out at once in a spectacular blast of white fire.

Several of the sliding plates along it are blown free by the detonation. They come raining down like scything blades, shrieking as they fall.

Let the heroes dive for cover or do whatever they wish for a single round. The pirates all try to board their ship in a mad dash. Reeayah Force Pushes them all out of the way as she and Dorel get aboard just before the plates hit. The sudden desperate bailout makes Dorel drop his beloved custom blaster, which spirals across the landing bay toward the heroes' ship.

If the heroes want, any or all of them can make a grab for the blaster. It is a Reflex save, DC 15, to catch it as they are running past. Each hero only gets one try, then:

The plates of black metal smash into the ground with terrible force. Shattering metal fills the air in a deadly storm of razors.

Two huge shards slam into the pirate's vessel. The first takes out the cockpit, shearing it off in a spray of glass and sparks. The second one buries itself into the hull, pinning the ship to the bay floor.

Your vessel does not escape unharmed. Nothing large hits it, but several of the smaller fragments score vicious strikes along your hull plating and one of the engine housings is impaled.

Above all of this, the void of space begins to tear its way through the massive hole in the eye...

None of the damage keeps the heroes' ship from taking off. It won't be pretty, but it can get them off the ground. If Teeloo is piloting, they may have to listen to Rodian cussing all the way out, but they'll live.

As for Doran and Reeayah, they are diving into an escape pod just as the next section of text is read to the heroes on their way out. They should live to fight another day, and they are going to remember their defeat at the hands of the heroes...

With a grinding protest, your ship lifts off the ground and up toward the ragged hole in the center of the black eye. Sharp edges rim the opening like fangs and without great care; they may tear your vessel apart...

This calls for a Piloting check (DC 20). If none of the heroes can pilot and Teeloo is at the stick, he makes it barely and the ship escapes with only a single deep furrow along the upper hull.

If the heroes can perform the check themselves, let them roll. This is one of the few instances where a bad die roll can legitimately kill the entire party. If the roll is failed, the ship is torn asunder by the rim of the eye.

If the dice fail them, all is not lost. The heroes have a few moments to cram themselves in an escape pod. Suggest this if they don't think of it themselves. Let each hero attempt a Reflex save (DC 10). Success means they make it to the pod. Failure means death in the uncaring cold of deep space. (Die Bump certificates and Force Points would be a very good call on this roll and should be encouraged.)

Assuming success, read the last text section below. Be sure to paraphrase it if the heroes are hurtling away in an escape pod instead.

The disintegrating complex blasts past you as you rocket out of the eye and push past into the darkness beyond. Behind you, the entire surface of the asteroid is alive with thousands of growing,

glowing fissures.

Moments after you break free, it shudders violently and detonates. Sections of glimmering stone hurtle out into the night before further shattering into a hundred burning stars.

A wave of silver light surges out of the center of the explosion and overtakes your ship. Everything electrical around you discharges and overloads, showering you in sparks and broken glass.

Then, as the light passes you, every metal surface on your vessel begins to vibrate at the same time. In the space of a heartbeat, a single ringing chime surrounds you and fades away; one sweet, perfect note that fades as the wall of light dissipates into nothingness...

Another note about this scene is that the heroes have a stowaway. The sibilari is on the underside of the ship, phased into the hold or another likely hiding spot. It is nearly comatose from the loss of its home and the mental shock of the explosion. As such, it is nearly impossible to detect (DC 30 See Force check) even if the heroes for some reason search for it.

Also, one of the girders of songsteel lining the landing bay detonates just as the heroes' ship is taking off. A large fragment is embedded above the ship's engines and another pierces the vessel and lodges in the crew quarters. Emergency systems seal the hull.

Move to the Conclusion when ready.

Conclusion

Key ideas of this encounter: The heroes limp their ship back toward Nirama and the High Hand. All they have to do is report back.

Of course, events in game may have altered this conclusion, but under normal circumstances, the following should suffice.

At some appropriate point after the heroes land, the sibilari slips away from their ship and onto to the *High Hand*. It has a lot to learn about the galaxy, and a lot has changed since it went to sleep...

It was a long trip back. While the death of the asteroid left your ship functional, there was a lot of damage to deal with. The most severe damage was to your maneuvering systems, and that made getting back very difficult.

Still, you managed to limp your way back to the High Hand. Nirama takes your report and has his medical droids attend to your wounds. The weight of his attention feels as heavy as the silence of that strange complex, and almost as impenetrable.

The rest depends on what he is told. If the heroes make a full report and don't hold anything back (his ability to Sense Motive is likely to tell him if they are), he is satisfied with their work and thanks them for their time with the full reward below. He is obviously disappointed that the complex was destroyed, but he doesn't blame the heroes. Moreover, he seems as interested in the news of the pirates as anything else.

If the heroes don't tell him everything, he is irritated, but he won't show it. He thanks them for their time and sends them on their way with full repairs and medical attention. They do not, however, earn any reward out of the deal and their favors are not reduced at all.

Rude or hostile behavior is a poor idea here and results in the heroes being expelled from the *High Hand* with no repairs, reward money, or reduction in favor. That is, if they don't foolishly attack him. If they do, well... That's what the Hero Creation Guidelines are for, since the players are going to need new heroes.

The reward for dealing fairly and openly with Nirama is 2,000 credits and a reduction of 1-3 (GM's decision) on the Debt to Nirama certificate (from "The Price of Business") which some of the heroes might have.

Also, while the songsteel in the ship's engine bay is removed by Nirama's techs, they miss the sliver in the hold. This shard of metal can be kept by the heroes and fashioned into something useful or sold.

With (hopefully) reward in hand, ship repaired, and a bizarre adventure behind the heroes;

Here Ends *Philanthropy*

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for LIVING FORCE events.

- 1) Experience awards in LIVING FORCE are not made for achieving objectives, but instead for successfully completing an adventure of a given length. Thus, if the heroes survived and accomplished the primary goal of the adventure, they receive full Adventure Experience (600 XP for core LF plot scenarios, 350 for non-core LF scenarios).
- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-400 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the hero interacted socially. Do NOT automatically award max roleplaying XP,

consider carefully how well the players stayed in-character. This is your opportunity to reward appropriately cinematic behavior, so use it!

Adventure Experience Award:

Did the heroes explore the complex, escape, and tell Nirama of everything that occurred there? If so, each hero who survived receives 600 XP.

Adventure Experience:	600 XP
Roleplaying Experience:	0-400 XP

Total Possible Experience:	1,000 XP
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If the heroes did not complete the scenario because of time constraints, but were “on the right track,” you may award half adventure experience. If the heroes succeeded in exploring the complex but did not disclose all of their adventure details to Nirama, award them $\frac{3}{4}$ adventure experience.

Loot Summary

If it's not on this list, the Heroes cannot keep it. This is a house rule that overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario. Certificates are not supplied for standard equipment, but it should be assumed that any equipment the heroes find which is not listed here cannot be kept or is non-functional for one reason or another.

- **Encounter 1:** If the heroes have their own ship, Nirama gives them an upgrade to their control systems. This is certified.
- **Encounter 7:** As many blasters, clubs and flight suits as there are pirates attacking the group. Also, Dorel and Reeayah's equipment can be salvaged if they are defeated: 1 heavy blaster and vibrodagger from Dorel, one vibroblade from Reeayah. The heavy blaster is certified.
- **Encounter 8:** Dorel's heavy blaster, which is certified. The shard of songsteel can be recovered as treasure by the heroes. This is also certified.
- **Conclusion:** Nirama rewards each of the heroes with 2,000 credits for a job well done, if the job was well done. Also, any hero with a certified Favor owed to Nirama has its severity lowered by 1 to 3 points. This cannot reduce the favor below 1.

Certified:

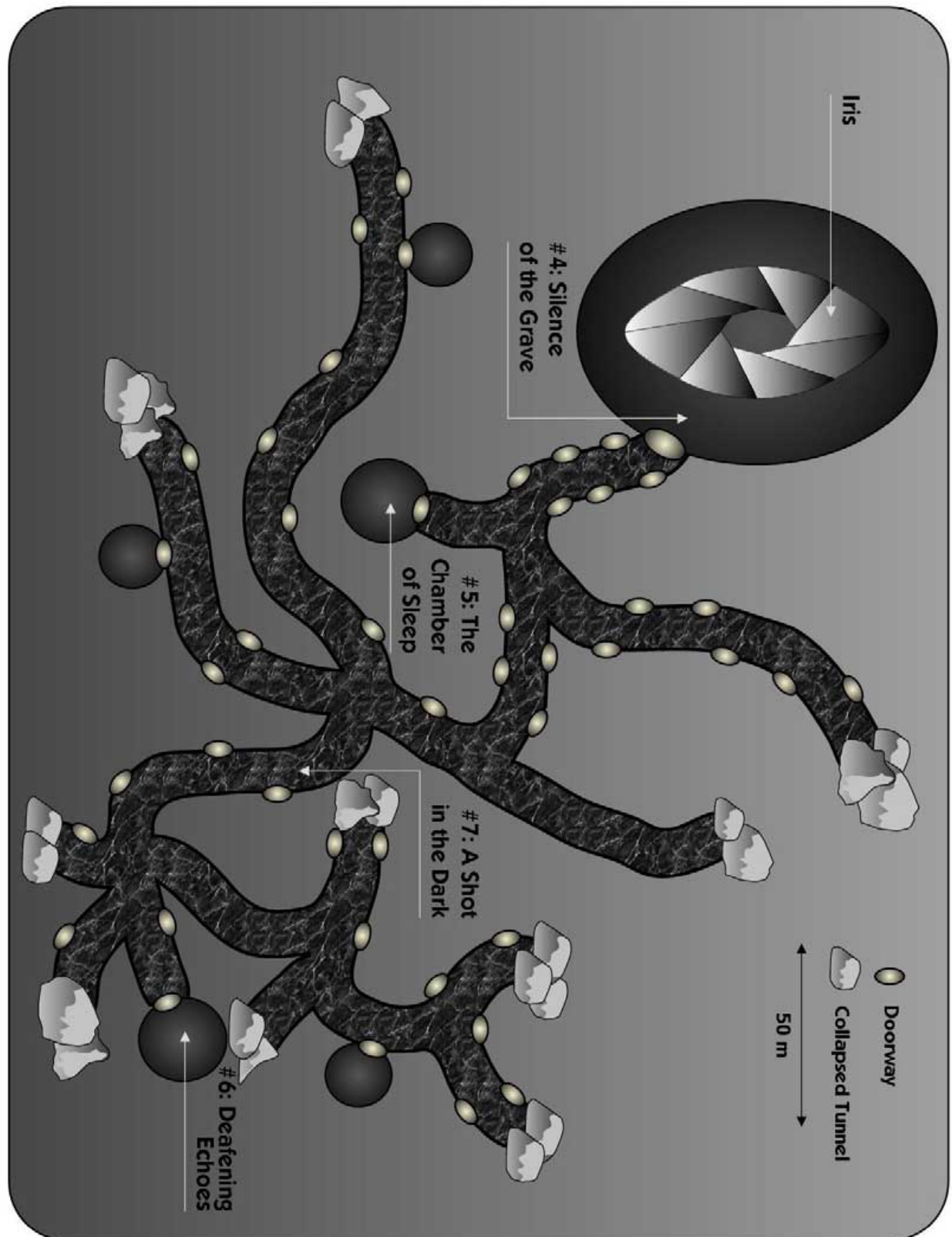
Upgrade from Nirama: As a reward for services rendered and as an incentive for using the hero's own

ship to perform said services, this vessel has been upgraded. All piloting checks made by the pilot and/or co-pilot gain a +2 equipment bonus. Any time the owner of the vessel has to pay for repairs, this upgraded equipment must also be recalibrated; the modification adds 10% to the cost of repairs.

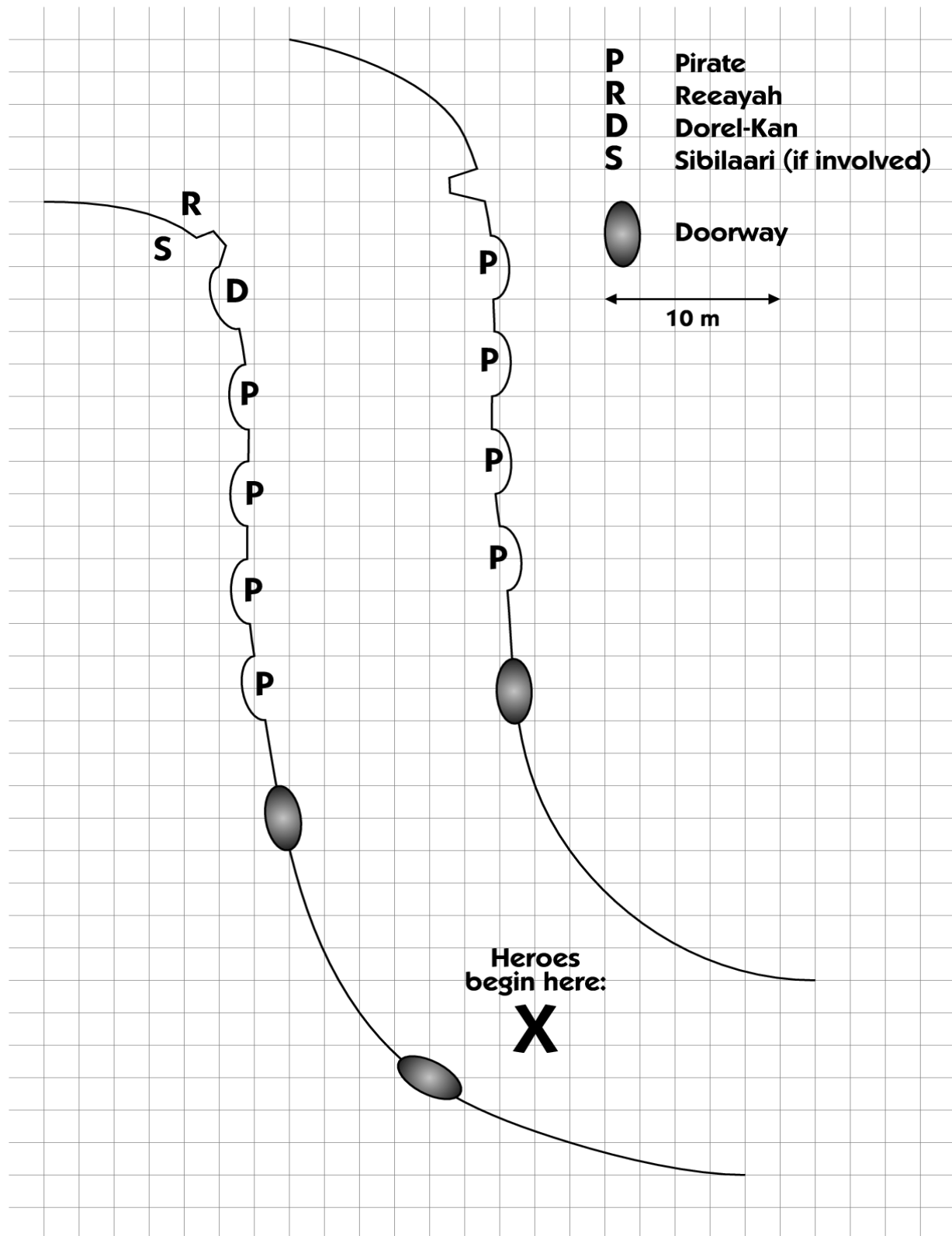
Dorel-Kan's Heavy Blaster: This heavy blaster has been custom fitted with black rancor bone handles and bright silver vents. The name “Dorel-Kan” is imprinted on the underside and the barrel has 19 small notches along it. Heavy blasters require a permit to own and use throughout the Cularin System.

Songsteel Shard: This strange piece of silvery-gray metal always rings softly, like a continuously echoing tuning fork. It has an extremely sharp edge and can only barely be cut or reworked by tools or lasers. Enough modifications can be made to turn it into an extremely effective weapon for a cost of 1,000 credits (a hero with Craft: Exotic Weapon - Sword can do so for only 500 credits in shop fees and materials). The resulting songsteel sword has all the same statistics as a vibroblade (Dmg 2d6/Crit 20/x2, slashing), but is considered nonpowered.

GM Aid #1: Asteroid Map



GM Aid #2: Pirate Ambush!



Appendix A: Important Non-Player Characters

Teeloo: Male Rodian Fringer 4; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 17 (+4 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 30/12; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, unarmed), +6 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Track, Barter, Adaptive Learning (*Repair*), Jury-Rig +2; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 1; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Equipment: flightsuit, blaster pistol, 250 credits, freighter “*Neeva-Beelo*”.

Skills: Astrogate +4, Bluff +4, Climb +4, Computer Use +2, Knowledge (*streetwise* – *Cularin*) +4, Listen +6, Pilot +10, Repair +5, Search +4, Spot +7, Survival +4; Read/Write Rodese, Speak Basic, Speak Rodese.

Feats: Alertness, Low Profile, Starship Operation (*space transports*), Track, Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, simple weapons*).

Neeva-Beelo: Craft: Modified CEC YT-1300 Transport; Class: Transport; Cost: Not available for sale; Size: Small (26.7m long); Crew: Teeloo; Passengers: 6; Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons; Consumables: 2 months; Hyperdrive: x2 (backup x12); Maximum Spd: Attack; Maneuver: +11 (+1 size, +10 Teelo); Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor); Shields: 30; Hull Points: 115; DR: 10.

Weapon: Laser cannon; Fire Arc: Turret; Atk Bonus: +5 (+1 size, +4 fire control; cannot be fired from cockpit); Damage: 4d10x2; Range Modifiers: PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.

Appendix B: New Alien Race [Sibilaari]

Sibilaari come from a distant planet near the Senex-Juvex sectors. Their natural ability with the Force allowed them to foresee a coming disaster that would destroy their world. As they lacked any interstellar travel capability, they created shielded complexes in the most stable parts of their doomed planet. Through the force of the cataclysm, sections of the surviving land mass were flung through space, drifting through the galaxy with comatose members of the Sibilaari race safely shielded within.

The sibilaari are roughly three meters long, with three lower limbs and two smaller upper appendages. Each of these “arms” ends in four thick, fully opposable digits capable of delivering crushing blows and manipulating fragile implements with equal ease. The body of a sibilaari has a dark black, dense, resistant flesh and has no apparent mouth or other orifice. The only openings on a sibilaari’s body are the six eyes arrayed in a line between the front two large limbs. Each is functional independently and acts in unison with the other five to provide incredible triangulation of distance objects and an excellent estimation of spatial geometry.

The immediate area of space around a sibilaari is utterly silent, as it body metabolizes sound to generate motive energy. This absorption also functions on light to a limited degree and even makes the sibilaari sensitive to emanations of the Force. This odd metabolism allows for the sibilaari’s special abilities and also allows them to exist virtually anywhere that light, sound, and the Force exist.

The guardian is alone, confused, and mourning the loss of its people after so long an enforced sleep. It is not naturally hostile but it will defend itself if pressed.

Sibilaari: Predator 4; Init +5; Defense 22 (+7 natural, +5 Dex); Spd 16m; VP/WP 28/16; Attack +8 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d6+2, 2 upper hands) or +11 ranged (3d6 energy lance, see below); SQ darkvision, phasing, natural stealth, dissipate energy, energy lance; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; SZ M; FP 1; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 12, Chr 10. Challenge Code G

Explanation of Special Qualities:

Phasing: For an expenditure of 5 vitality, a sibilaari can make its body shift “out of phase” with normal space. This power lasts until the sibilaari wishes to interact with solid objects or use any other special quality other than its natural stealth or darkvision. While “phased”, a sibilaari can move through solid objects, is immune to any physical attack (though lightsabers and other energy attacks are still effective), and is transparent enough to be considered three-quarters concealed (30% miss chance).

Natural Stealth: The silence and clinging darkness that surround a sibilaari provide a +10 circumstance bonus to Move Silently checks and a +8 bonus to Hide checks when in shadowy or dark areas. Similarly, their ability to subtly absorb the Force allows them to immediately make a Force Stealth roll against any attempt to use See Force against it.

Dissipate Energy: This functions just like the Force feat of the same name, save that it exists as a constant defense and only costs 2 vitality per use. When this power successfully defends the sibilaari, the attack dissipates into a glowing spray of light motes.

Energy Lance: Once per round, a sibilaari can focus some of its internal energy into a beam of energy. The beam is directed as a ranged attack and does 3d6 damage, just like a blaster pistol, except that it travels 30 meters and fades out, making a separate attack roll on every being occupying a 2 meter hex in its line of effect. This energy can be dissipated, deflected, or otherwise countered in exactly the same way as a blaster can.

Critical Event Summary

Below the Belt: Philanthropy

1. Did the heroes have to use Nirama's "loaner" ship, the *Neeva-Beelo*?

Yes

No

2. Did the crew of the **Daring** get rescued in part or in whole?

Yes

No

3. Did the sibilaari Core Guardian survive and escape the asteroid?

Yes

No

4. Did Dorel-Kan and/or Reeyah survive? (Circle the survivor(s))

Yes

No

Did the heroes try to attack Nirama? If so, record player name, rpga# and hero name below.

Convention Coordinator:

To report these results (for events during the month of June, 2002 only), you may US mail them to:

RPGA - LIVING FORCE, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707

Or email to: LFPlots@living-force.net

Or fax to: (425) 687-8287 Attention LIVING FORCE Critical Events

Check <http://www.living-force.net> for other methods.