

The Eye

**Episode III of the EndTimes Trilogy
A One-Round LIVING FORCE Tournament**

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An old enemy has made his presence known in Cularin, and has begun his endgame. Armed with a familiar map and a cryptic warning, the heroes must find their enemy and stop him from bringing his plans to fruition. An adventure for LIVING FORCE heroes levels 4-12. This scenario **MUST** be played after “The Heart” and “The Hand” (Episodes I and II of the EndTimes trilogy). To play it prior to either of them will make playing those modules impossible; done, after all, is done.

The Eye is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event but the actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a nametag 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.

Reporting the game for RPGA: The RPGA tracks adventures for the Player Rewards program. The Senior GM or Event Coordinator should provide a form to the GM for this purpose. Both the GM and the players need to list their name and RPGA number on the form.

GMs of RPGA tournaments are expected to be familiar with the RPGA Rules and Penalty documents. These are available as downloads from the RPGA web site at www.rpga.com.

A note about the text: Some of the text in the module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text intended for the players is 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.

House Rules

There are a large number of players throughout the world playing *LIVING FORCE*, and it's impossible to supervise them the way one might in a home campaign. As a result, we have a few house rules. These are outlined here for you.

Atoning for Dark Side Points

Heroes may, at the discretion of the GM, atone for Dark Side Points acquired during play by spending one Force Point to atone for one Dark Side Point. Heroes may only atone for one DSP per scenario played, and only if, in the judgment of the GM, the hero shows proper remorse and understanding of the dangers of the dark side. Players are required to keep a running total on their log sheets of all Dark Side Points ever acquired, even if the hero has atoned for them.

Dissipate Energy

Dissipate energy only works against energy damage to Wounds. It has no effect against vitality damage or stun weapon attacks. Also, the DC for the Fortitude saving throw should be "10 + damage dealt," not just "damage dealt".

Illusion

Use of the Illusion skill allows a save when the hero views or otherwise interacts with the illusion. If the player succeeds at the save, the illusion is seen as an outline only, and anything that might have otherwise been hidden inside or behind the illusion is visible. Illusion cannot be utilized to create "an illusion of nothing"; it cannot make something invisible.

Stun

If a hero hit by a stun attack makes his or her Fortitude save, the hero is unaffected by the stun attack and takes no damage. A hero who fails the Fortitude saving throw is unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds. This ruling includes heroes in the area of effect of a stun grenade. This house rule supersedes the rules in the *SWRPG-RCR*.

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 may not have more than one employer. Heroes who are not employed but who have Entertain, Gamble, or Profession skills may roll against those skills to see how much they have earned in the last week. Rather than using the method in the core rules for Entertain or Gamble, however, use the method described for the Profession skill on page 96; that is, roll the check, and then multiply the result by 100 credits to determine the amount you made that week. Note that heroes may use only one of the above methods each round and must choose which before rolling (Employment, Entertain, Gamble, or Profession). Per the rules, you may take 10 on Entertain or Profession checks, but not on Gamble. 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, you may issue a Force Point. 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. 178) 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 *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Dark Side Sourcebook*... "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.

Wookiees, Rage and Dark Side Points: Per the sidebar on page 182 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rule Book*,

Wookiee Force users do not gain Dark Side Points for following their natural tendencies and using the Wookiee rage species ability. They do receive a Dark Side Point, however, if they incorporate Wookiee rage with any of their Force skills.

In addition, while in a Wookiee rage, a Wookiee Force user can't call upon the Force (except for calling upon the Dark Side when using a Force point). All other uses of the Force require more calm and peace than the Wookiee can manage while in the natural frenzy.

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 mechanical 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.

LIVING FORCE adventures are not designed purely to kill characters. If you believe a combat is genuinely 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. What we want to avoid are the "dumb" deaths that result from a string of bad dice rolls. That's not cinematic, and it's not what *Star Wars*, or LIVING FORCE, are about. That being said, this is the finale trilogy for the campaign. If there's a time for characters to go out in the proverbial "blaze of glory," this is probably it.

This is an adventure for to mid- to high-level LIVING FORCE heroes, and therefore characters levels 4 through 12 are appropriate. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for hero creation instructions).

GM Overview

If you're reading this, then you've either already played the scenario, or you're never going to. If it's the former, we hope that it lived up to your expectations. It's hard to write a module that's worthy of the spirit several thousand players have put into this campaign over the past five years, but we did our best. If it's the latter, and you've been playing LIVING FORCE for a long time, we're truly

sorry; give yourself a Force point for making the heroic sacrifice! If you're not an LF player and are doing some of our players a favor by running it, then thank you. All we ask is that you do everything in your power to make this the most moving, memorable experience of your players' gaming lives. That's not so much, is it? Besides, five years from now, nobody will remember who wrote any given module – but everybody remembers a great GM.

So, the story... for the last five years, Len Markus has been pulling strings. His early attempts to overthrow Nirama failed miserably, so he took the initiative and went after the thing that had brought him to Cularin, the darkstaff. A student of Sith magics, Markus had spent his life searching for that elusive "something" that would make him all-powerful. His skills with the Force were not inconsiderable, but were never strong enough to earn him the attention of the Sith Lord – whomever that might be. The darkstaff soon decided to fall into his hands, if not exactly his possession, because no one can ever truly "possess" that particular artifact. Forged ages ago by a Sith whose name has since been lost, the darkstaff was ancient when Darth Rivan came to Cularin. It has destroyed worlds, killed millions – and still, it *wants*.

Markus has delusions that he is in control of the object. For the most part, he moves as if in a dream, doing what the thing wants him to do, inching closer with every passing day to the darkstaff's goal – the destruction of the lush, life-filled planet of Cularin. He's adopted that goal as his own, believes in it, because he finds it easy to hate the people of Cularin.

An artifact this powerful had to be kept in check by something for all those years it floated in the Asteroid Belt. In all things, after all, there must be balance. That "something" is what, even now, keeps the darkstaff from sucking all the life out of Cularin. Buried on Cularin, beneath the sacred Heart Tree of the Tarasin, is a light-side artifact every bit as powerful as the darkstaff. This artifact, the Eye of the Sun, is what drew the Tarasin to Cularin, millennia ago. It is what imbued them with their natural affinity for the Force, and it is what protected them when the darkstaff shattered the world of the Oblee.

For the darkstaff to complete itself, to complete the cycle of destruction it began years ago, it needs the Eye of the Sun. If the darkstaff touches the Eye, it can drain the Force essence out of it and become the most powerful weapon in the galaxy. With that much power, if the darkstaff were placed upright in the soil of Cularin, it would suck all life from the planet in a matter of minutes, leaving the

planet as barren as Tatooine.

That is what Len Markus believes will happen, and it is true that the darkstaff *could* do this. He believes he will empower the artifact and use it to suck the life out of the planet he has come to despise. The reality of the situation is much more straightforward, though; if the darkstaff and the Eye ever come in contact with one another, the resulting explosion will shatter the world. Cularin will not simply cease to exist – it will erupt with sufficient force to send moons and planets hurtling into the twin suns of Morasil and Termadus. Markus will die. Everyone on Cularin will die. And the darkstaff will spin off into space, where one day, another servant of darkness will find it.

Its nature is destruction. It is what the heroes have to stop. Their lives, and the lives of everyone they know and love, hang in the balance.

The story begins the day after the events of "The Hand." Nirama, either dead or comatose, left the heroes a clue as to how to destroy the darkstaff.

That clue has since been decrypted, and revealed an address. The address is for a long-abandoned warehouse on the river in Hedrett. That the warehouse has recently become occupied by a handful of survivors of the destruction of the Almas Academy (and their friends) is less important than the fact that this is a warehouse the heroes may have visited before. In the second LIVING FORCE module, "The Resistance Within," they saw a mural painted on the side of the warehouse, a mural that popped up again in the mines of Tilnes in "Tilnes Rising."

The surviving Jedi have been studying the mural, but there is another, a scholar of sorts, who has been staying with them, studying the mural day and night, who has finally, it seems, managed to decode it. The heroes arrive just as the scholar is hurriedly packing his things to depart Cularin; something bad is going to happen in the jungles of Cularin, and it's going to happen, if he's right, by sundown.

In many ways, this event takes the heroes back to the beginning. Our story began in the jungles of Cularin, and in those same jungles, it's going to end. We have mystery, we have prophecy, we have a speeder chase through the jungle, we have the final confrontation with Markus and the darkstaff – and most importantly, we have a choice for the heroes. Because for all they have seen, for all they have done, a new threat has arisen in the galaxy. Even if they succeed in stopping Len Markus, somewhere out among the stars the Sith have named a new lord. Every hero must make a choice about how their story will end – in a glorious battle where the remaining Jedi have decided to face

down Vader and his forces, or on Cularin, protecting their homes from whatever may come.

The ending will come, regardless. But where, and how... that remains in the hands of the heroes.

May the Force be with them. Always.

Encounter 1: Jax Warehouse

As soon as the heroes find out what the message was that Nirama had encrypted, the one he died to make sure they got, they're off. The Jax Warehouse, a location they may have visited long ago, has become home to a Jedi and two of her friends who have gone into hiding to protect themselves from the enemies of the Jedi. They need to be reminded of what it is to be a hero, or a Jedi. What they don't know about is the darkstaff, nor have they found anything interesting since they've been staying here. There's the mural on the wall outside that Klide has been working on deciphering, and he said a little while ago that he had figured it out... but he seems to have disappeared, and taken everything he owns with him. All that he left behind is a travel itinerary – purchased one hour ago, and leaving one hour from now out of the Hedrett Groundport.

Encounter 2: The Eye of the Sun

The heroes chase down Klide at the Hedrett Groundport. He wants nothing so much as to just leave Cularin. He explains why he came to Cularin – research for a project on the essential nature of balance in the Force led him to a short document describing something called the “Eye of the Sun.” He believed it to be in Cularin, and the mural on the side of Jax Warehouse to be the key to finding it. The fact that the mural was replicated in the tunnels beneath Tilnes, along with a message left by lost Jedi Master Nerra Ziveri, only strengthened his suspicions. He managed to decipher the meaning of the mural, and half an hour later, his datapad and all the details of his research were stolen. What he knows, however, is that if he doesn't get off-planet quickly, he's going to die. He tells the heroes what he knows – that the Eye is buried beneath coordinates they may recognize as corresponding to the sacred Heart Tree of the Tarasin (Klide doesn't know this), and that something is going to happen there – today – that could snuff out all life on Cularin.

Encounter 3: Welcome to...

Markus's agents have been watching Klide, but do not (for a variety of reasons) act against him. When the heroes start into the jungle, though, the mercenaries attack, leading to a

running/flying/speeding battle through the jungle, with the future of Cularin at stake.

Encounter 4: ...the Jungle

Should the heroes manage to defeat the speeder-riding thugs, they eventually find Markus's speeder, abandoned at a point past which speeders will not function. In fact, no mechanical device larger than a blaster seems to be functioning past this point, which is different than any other time the heroes have been here. Heading deeper on foot, the heroes find themselves confronted with a number of mulissiki that have been transformed after being brought into close proximity of the darkstaff.

Encounter 5: Wrong place...

Further up the path, the heroes come across two dead bodies. Initially, the bodies look as though they may have been dead for years – but these individuals are San Herrera and Nia Reston, young would-be heroes of Cularin that the hiding Jedi in the first encounter saw just this morning. They are mummified, drained of any semblance of life, and each bears a circular black scar on the left cheek. And then they stand up and attack.

Encounter 6: ...wrong time

Beneath the Heart Tree, the heroes find Len Markus. For all they know about the Eye of the Sun, and for all Markus thinks he knows, he doesn't know exactly how to get at it. And that's a good thing. But the heroes know, or at least, they have the one clue (Ziveri's message) that Markus lacks. They must defeat Markus once and for all, destroy the darkstaff, and quite literally save the world. Markus does everything in his power to drain the heroes with the darkstaff, and when he succeeds, the darkstaff learns what the heroes know – the location of the Eye. If Markus manages to get to it before the heroes kill him and destroy the darkstaff, it's all over.

Important Note to Judges: This needs to be an intense experience, and if you have the chance to take more than four hours to run it, that might not be a bad thing. If you're playing this at a convention, we recommend putting it in the last slot of the day; that way, if it runs long, nobody will be late for their next game. Throughout the scenario, we'll try to give you cues, and there should be a different emotional chain rattled in each encounter. In the first, we have Lora, a frightened Jedi afraid of failing what remains of her order. If you can squeeze out some tears, it wouldn't be inappropriate. In the second

encounter, we have a panicked Klide who seems to only want to survive. We have the menacing hitmen on speeders, the malformed mulissiki, and the loss of two more familiar faces, in encounters three through five. Everything is wrong. Everything is pushing to an inevitable confrontation, and my friend, let me tell you – there can be no more appropriate time to crank “Duel of the Fates” up to 11 than during the combat with Markus and his minions (you didn’t think he’d be alone, did you?). Finally, though, comes the last decision – and one final celebration, the night before our heroes go their separate ways. Nyub-nyub, my friends. Nyub. Nyub.

Clarification regarding tiering notation: when you see something like “DC 15/20/25”, use the lowest DC for the middle tier, the middle for Tier 2 and the third for Tier 3. In this scenario, tiers are for character levels: 4-6, 7-9 and 10+. In some cases the DC do not follow the usual progression from tier to tier to reflect that higher level character stop being challenged by some things or that they actually find something easier than they did when they were lower level.

Opening Crawl

The smallest messages can hold the greatest meanings. As a shadow creeps across the face of Cularin, the system’s heroes gather together once more. On the jungle planet’s surface, in one of the cities, waits a building. In that building is the answer the heroes have been seeking.

Len Markus has brought the darkstaff to Cularin, leaving bodies in his wake. Now, if he is not stopped, there is no way to know how many he will kill before he is done.

The message that will lead the heroes to Markus and his Sith artifact, when decrypted, was two words:

Jax Warehouse.

Encounter 1: Jax Warehouse

Key ideas of this encounter: get the heroes to Jax Warehouse in search of information and give them the opportunity to remind a “lost” Jedi what it

means to be a hero

Because nothing is ever simple or straightforward, we are both going to begin the module in the middle of things, and not. Here is what it is assumed the heroes know, or have been involved in:

Yesterday they received Nirama’s distress call and traveled to Red Sector to find him. Now, depending on what happened for the majority of players at the table, Nirama is either dead (the higher probability outcome) or comatose and NLAITC (No Longer Appearing In This Campaign).

Nirama’s body, breathing or not, was recovered, and a chip was retrieved from a wound on his hand. This chip was heavily encrypted, but has since been decrypted. The decrypted message, in fact, is presented in the opening crawl. It is assumed that the heroes either found this chip, or have been informed of its contents by whoever decrypted it so that they can maintain their involvement in what’s going on. Because, let’s face it – if the heroes don’t want to go after Len Markus now, they probably never will.

Thus, we begin in the middle of things, with the players being told that the heroes now know the message. It’s time for them to act on it. But it’s not going to be quite that easy, because this first encounter is but one in a series of trials the heroes are going to have to endure. In some ways, it’s the least important; in others, it’s the most important of all.

Jax Warehouse. Two words that Nirama put his life on the line to make sure you learned, two words that he needed to keep from Len Markus.

The warehouse has been abandoned for two years and stands, derelict, on the riverfront in Hedrett. This, unfortunately, does little to distinguish it from much of the rest of the Hedrett warehouse district. After recent incidents brought a number of buildings crashing to the ground, only the sturdiest and the most desperate find themselves here.

You see them scurrying away in the shadows as you hurry toward Jax. An emaciated Trandosha stares at you, pulling a ratty cloak around his shoulders. A plump Ithorian growls drunkenly from a doorway. A too-tall, too-thin Twi’lek shoulders a pack and does his best to stay out of your line of sight.

Nobody here wants to see. Nobody here wants to be seen. Overhead hang Morasil and Termadus, much closer together than usual. As ever, they see it all.

Find out if any of the heroes present took part in the events of either “The Resistance Within” or “Tilnes Rising,” two of the scenarios from the first year of LIVING FORCE.

Those who played “The Resistance Within” receive an Intelligence check, DC 15, if the player doesn’t remember the warehouse. (If the player remembers, we’ll just assume the character does.) Succeeding on the check allows the hero to remember that they came to Jax Warehouse once before, while searching for “missing” individuals who turned out to have disappeared on purpose to form the Cularin Resistance, a movement dedicated to getting the Metatheran Cartel moved off-world.

“Tilnes Rising” will become relevant when the heroes see the mural for the first time.

The entrance facing the street the heroes use to approach is marred by old scorch marks, clearly blaster fire. The door is mostly hidden behind a pile of refuse, but is there for the noticing (no Spot check required; they’re looking for a DOOR on the side of a BUILDING; it ain’t particle physics). The heroes can either use the door and go inside, or wander around and find the mural. They’re going to need to do both, so it doesn’t matter which they choose first.

The Mural

If the heroes wander around the outside of the warehouse first, on one of the other exterior walls they find a mural. The mural gets its own box text.

With all the dirt and grime and scorch marks on the other faces of the building, you’re shocked to find this face covered with an intricate mural. The entire side of the building is taken up with a starscape, criss-crossed with red and white lines that converge on two brilliant blue-white stars and three paler blue stars scattered across the mural. In the center of the mural is what can only be Morasil, the ancient yellow sun that even now hangs above Cularin. Delicately etched into the swirl of yellow and red that makes up Morasil is a very distinct, human-shaped eye. All the colors look as though they were painted yesterday.

This mural is one heroes who played “The Resistance Within” have seen before, and ones who played “Tilnes Rising” have seen as well, carved into the stone in one of the many mine shafts beneath Tilnes. It hasn’t changed. Literally.

Not a bit. No graffiti added, nothing removed. Every color is as bright as it was when they first saw it.

This is definitely what they came here for. But what does it mean? That’s something they have to go inside to find out. If they’ve already gone inside, they can stop by here, get the description, and then rush off after Klide.

Or not, we suppose.

Inside

The door to the warehouse opens with a creak and a groan. Some sort of rodent scurries across the floor as the light seeps in.

As your eyes adjust, you hear a voice. “Lora, just take your lightsaber – they might be hostile!”

Behind a pile of crates on the far side of the warehouse huddle three young woman. As the heroes approach, one of them is trying to shove an unlit lightsaber into the hands of another, who pushes it away. Give everyone in the party Spot checks (because we really can’t think of what other skill would be useful to notice this); the DC is 18/21/24, but Jedi get a +5 circumstance bonus. The young woman who is refusing the lightsaber is Lora Nadad; she was a student, then a Knight, at the Almas Academy. She also published a number of papers and short documentaries on Cularin’s holonet, which is where non-Jedi may have seen her. If no one makes the DC to recognize her, just pick a random Jedi and tell him or her that this is a Jedi Knight from the Academy; if you have no Jedi in the party, just tell **someone**.

She’s a pretty enough young woman, beneath the layers of dirt and grime. Her face is vaguely heart-shaped, and a row of small hoop earrings run from the top of her left ear down to her earlobe. As the party comes into view she holds up her hands and, in one motion, flings herself on the ground.

“Please, don’t kill me, don’t kill any of us, there’s been too much death, please!”

It’s not time for you to work up the tears yet. That comes soon. For now, Lora is pleading for her life. She was a short distance from the Academy when it was destroyed and saw the walls caving in, listened to the screams of the dying. She then ran back to Cularin, to the streets that had sheltered her before she became a Jedi, ending up in this warehouse.

The other two young women are Noelle and

Ledis. Noelle is tall and big-boned, with dirty blonde hair and vacant eyes. Ledis is small, with bright red hair and what are either freckles, or splatters of pale mud all over her face. In this light, it's hard to tell. Ledis is the one holding the lightsaber, and when Lora refuses to take it Ledis turns and tries to hold the lightsaber menacingly.

“Stand back!” She’s holding the lightsaber backward; if she ignites it, she’s going to impale herself.

This is not a combat. This is a roleplay encounter. The heroes need to accomplish one thing: They need to convince Lora that the fight is not lost. They need to remind her what it means to be a Jedi, and a hero. Lora hasn't gone over to the dark side. She has, however, given in to her fear, retreating into a very un-Jedi-like shell.

Lora has three brief soliloquies that you should use, in turn, to make it clear what the heroes are dealing with. Asking her about the darkstaff triggers the first. Asking Noelle or Ledis about the darkstaff triggers blank looks.

- ***It was horrible. All the burning, all the death. I couldn’t do anything, all I could do was stand there and listen while the Academy crumbled! Was it the darkstaff that did it? You should be hiding. We should all be hiding. They’ll come, they’ll kill us all!***
- ***For every patch of shadow that exists, there is a ray of sunlight; the sunlight makes the shadow possible, and ultimately keeps it in check. This is the nature of balance, but the battle of light and dark is one that can only be lost by one side. If the light should ever fade, if the suns of Cularin should cease to shine, then everything would be shadow. Don’t you see? We can’t ever win, but we can lose.***
- ***I learned that there’s only one way to break the hold of the dark side. You have to use the Force. Minos used to say, “The Force is your ally. Call on its power and it will sustain you.” He said it’s in all of us. Master Lanus said it, too. I used to believe they were right; now I’m not so sure.***

It's during these that the tears would be most effective. Lora needs to seem hopeless. We're not going to give you guidelines for how the heroes can convince her to come back to the fight; they're heroes, they need to figure that out on their own. If they roleplay it well, then great. Lora can be made

to see the light. And if you happen to get a bunch of anti-Jedi PCs (we will not deign to call them “heroes” in that instance, since we’re unclear what kind of “hero” would be anti-Jedi in this era) who berate Lora and tell her she’s typical of her weak Order, she immediately leaps to the defense of the Jedi, swearing that she will go out and prove her visitors wrong. They’ll see her again in Encounter Seven.

Once Lora is convinced, she has one more thing to say.

“Maybe there is hope. Klide said there was, he said he was going to find the truth in that mural. He said there was a way for the light to beat the darkness once and for all, and the answer was in that mural. Yesterday, he said he was getting close.”

At this, Ledis speaks. Her voice is soft. “He said he got it. He said it this morning. He looked scared. Then he took his pack and left.”

Klide is a scholar who had been living in the warehouse for the past couple of months, studying the mural on the outside of the building. He’s a Twi’lek, a little too tall and a little too thin, with pasty grey skin. (Yes, this is the Twi’lek the heroes saw skulking in the shadows on their way in.) His living space is between two nearby crates; a quick Search of the area reveals (DC 15/20/25) a printout of a travel itinerary. Reservations were made an hour ago for a shuttle that will depart the Hedrett Groundport one hour from now. If the heroes don’t find the itinerary, Ledis does, and gives it to them.

And at this point, the chase is on.

Encounter 2: The Eye of the Sun

Key ideas of this encounter: the heroes track down Klide and learn what he has learned – and that his research notes were stolen not long ago

We could give you a long narrative account of how this encounter could run – but that’s not the right way for the encounter (or to some extent, the adventure) to be laid out. What’s important in this encounter is emotion; Klide is fearful, he has finally solved a puzzle he’s been working on for fifteen years, and the answer is NOT something he wanted to hear.

Some tips for playing Klide: He stutters. It’s not a speech impediment in the classic sense –

the guy is SCARED. He has a voice that's a little on the high side, and he takes a lot of deep breaths. He keeps feeling at the pocket of his vest where he used to carry his datapad before it was stolen from him. He doesn't need the datapad – he knows its contents by heart – but he misses it. That was fifteen years of work that just disappeared on him. Klide also has a secret: He knows who took the datapad. He was approached by a pale man and, having spent some time in Cularin, recognized Len Markus. There was no way to say “No” to Markus, so Klide said “Yes,” fully intending to never turn over his data.

Unfortunately for Klide, in the battle of “evil mastermind vs. academic researcher,” the evil mastermind tends to have a slight advantage. It's that whole “evil” thing. Academics aren't very good at it, nor can they predict it.

Catching up with Klide isn't difficult. The heroes saw him once, they have a description of him, and most important, they have his itinerary.

In terms of setting the mood, the Hedrett Groundport is even busier than usual. Travelers are rushing back and forth, repulsorsleds loaded with cargo weave in and out of the crowd, and OPS officers seem to be on heavy patrol. (If the players flag down an OPS officer and ask, having been given the information that there are a lot of OPS around, the orders for today apparently came down last night. It's only a slight increase in the patrols, but there was a rumor Nirama was back in the system, and while no one believes Nirama would cause trouble, his return might precipitate such. OPS has no knowledge of the whereabouts of Len Markus, nor confirmation that he's in the system.) The mood should be frenetic, and when the heroes reach docking bay 13, it's easy to spot Klide. Tall and gaunt, pale to the point of looking corpse-like, sitting on a bench and twitching. He knows what he's on the lookout for, and it's not the heroes, especially not if there's an obvious Jedi among them. As they approach he looks up, eyes wide, and waits for them to speak.

The things Klide can tell them are below. They're presented in no particular order (read: whatever order we happened to think of them), so you should be sure you're familiar with what he **can** tell them as the heroes come up with questions. The one thing he's not inclined to share is his visit from Len Markus. Markus is a Bad Person, and the “heroes of Cularin” might not like Klide quite so much – or be quite so inclined to let him leave the planet – if they knew he'd met Len.

- *Um... yes, I'm Klide. Who are you?*
- *I'm a research scientist. I did my higher education in the core. [It doesn't matter exactly where. If you want, or if he's grilled, just make something up. He isn't about to lie.]*
- *My field of study is kind of a combination of xenoarchaeology and cryptography.*
- *I first came to Cularin fifteen years ago to study that mural. I was gone when the disappearing happened. I came back as soon as Cularin came back and have been here ever since. Give or take. The Hedrett warehouse district wasn't exactly a great place to be for a while there.*
- *That mural has got to be a message of some kind. I've been working on deciphering it for most of my adult life.*
- *Did you know there's another copy of it, almost identical, on Tilnes? There's an inscription, too. I have a rubbing of it somewhere in my pack. [The inscription is included as Player Handout 2. Heroes who played “Tilnes Rising” would have seen it there, in all likelihood. Whether anyone wrote it down and kept it over 4 years is another matter entirely.]*
- *I finally deciphered the mural's meaning this morning.*
- *Half an hour later, my datapad was stolen. All my notes were taken, along with the solution.*
- *It's all up here, though. [He taps his head.]*
- *The mural is a map. Well, kind of. It's a map and a puzzle.*
- *I'm pretty sure it leads to the Eye of the Sun. There's not a lot written about the Eye. What little I had wasn't even electronic. It's hard copy. I found it in a library on Corellia and wrote it out by hand. [This is Player Handout 1. He's happy to share it.]*
- *I'm pretty sure the Eye isn't supposed to be found. I never wanted to, I just wanted to understand the mural...*
- *The thing that got me when I started studying the mural is that there was no way that the stars would ever be in that configuration viewed from anywhere on Cularin. I ran the model using every point on the planet and every angle of the sky. It wasn't possible. I almost didn't finish my dissertation because of it.*
- *Then the disappearing happened. Cularin was gone for almost ten years, and when it came back, the planets hadn't moved from*

their positions in space. But the galaxy hadn't stopped moving. I only realized that last week, and I felt dumb. The stars are in a different alignment than would have ever been possible if everything had kept moving, if the disappearing hadn't happened. It's subtle, but it's real. And the chart that is in that mural? It lines up in exactly that form just before sunset. Tonight. If you view the sky from the right spot on the planet.

- *I don't know what's in that spot, but I have coordinates. [If the heroes have played the "Heart of Evil" trilogy, anyone with any kind of navigation skills recognizes those coordinates; that's the approximate location of the sacred Heart Tree of the Tarasin.]*
- *I'm not leaving because my research was stolen. I'm leaving because if my calculations are right, there's a good chance that something bad is going to happen. [His voice drops to a whisper. He doesn't want to create a panic.]*
- *If you interpret the coordinates right, the relative positions of the stars on the chart and the distances between them... there's a message. "If darkness finds the light, the shadow will engulf the planet and all will be destroyed." It sounds like if the wrong person gets to the Eye first, I'm pretty sure it could destroy the planet. It's a really powerful light side artifact. And someone stole my notes, which means they can find it.*
- *I'm not a hero. I'm not going after it. I just want to get off the planet and stay alive.*
- *If something bad happens, somebody needs to be alive to write about it and explain it – right?*

You can improvise anything else. Just remember that Klide is scared, and unless the heroes have a pretty good Sense Motive skill (treat Klide's Bluff as being +19; he's had to talk his way into a good number of locations and is quite the "social engineer" when he puts his mind to it) they won't pick up on the fact that Klide is withholding anything. If forced, Klide comes clean about his interactions with Markus and his fear of the man, but swears on anything the heroes want that he never, ever, intended to help Markus out.

Klide has no idea about the true nature of Cularin's ch'hala trees (no one other than the heroes and the Tarasin elders does), and no knowledge whatsoever of the World Tree's ability

to shield Force-users from detection. If he did, he would likely speculate that the Eye of the Sun must have given rise to the World Tree, and even now is nestled somewhere beneath the roots of the Heart Tree itself.

Which, of course, is exactly the case.

Encounter 3: Welcome to...

Key ideas of this encounter: a running combat through the jungles of Cularin

We're going to make some players very unhappy for a very short period of time, but we've got to say it: There is no way for them to take their much-loved starships to the coordinates they obtain from Klide.

There. We've said it. Let the stomping and shouting commence, since we've had very little for pilots to do in this final trilogy. There wasn't a whole lot for pilots to do in the introductory trilogy either, if you'll recall, so we can't feel all that bad about it. And there **is** still piloting to be done. It's just not ship-based piloting.

The players are likely to want to know why they can't take their ships. The answer is very simple: After recent incidents around the Heart Tree, the Tarasin asked that the area – and approximately the surrounding 100 square km of jungle – be treated as a no-fly zone. To say nothing of the fact that the jungle is thick enough in that area that there's nowhere for a ship to set down. Heroes who played "Plague of Darkness" are familiar with the problem – that section of the jungle is so thick, so overhung, so dense and so likely to have the trees strung with nets to catch flying predators, that there is literally no way for a ship to make any meaningful kind of headway without blasting through the trees – and that tends to be taken rather poorly by the Tarasin.

But, never fear. For there are speeders, and speeder bikes, to be had. If the heroes don't have a speeder (your typical landspeeder works fine), they can get a modified SoroSuub X-34 (as detailed on page 198 of the RCRB) that can seat a pilot and 3 passengers, for 300 credits a day, plus a 1500 credit security deposit (it's a weekend rate). Nightfalcon speeder bikes (per page 200 of the RCRB) can be rented for 150 credits a day, plus a 1000 credit security deposit. Or used ones can just be bought for 2000 credits, leading us to suspect that anyone who wants one of these already has one. Since all of these are used, we recommend the table on page 201 ("Used Vehicle Flaws") be used to add flavor, time permitting. If

you have a group who aren't that into the "roleplay" aspect of the game and are itching to shoot something, feel free to apply the E.G. rule and just skip over the "flavor" in this instance.

So, speeders are the only way to go. Short of walking, that is. And given that the distance is not inconsiderable, and given that somebody already has Klide's notes and is probably on their way out into the jungle even now, walking is probably not the best approach.

Once the heroes are done interviewing Klide, have everyone roll Spot checks, DC 23/26/29. Anyone who succeeds notices a small droid, the approximate size and shape of the training remote Luke used in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, hovering nearby. As soon as it's noticed, it attempts to dart away. The droid is an early prototype of the Mark VII "Inquisitor" series (stats included in GM Aid #1, along with all other combat stats), and was heretofore not noticed because it was behind a repulsorsled that just got moved. It's been recording the audio of the heroes' conversation with Klide and transmitting it to Markus's men. Klide has been under constant surveillance, since only his knowledge could lead anyone to the Eye. The only reason Klide is still alive is that Markus fears that he might be more than he seems. Having dealt with the infamous "Sot-sirc" in the past to obtain information, Markus is uncertain whether Klide might actually be that rather notorious individual.

He's not, but it's good for Klide that Markus thinks he might be.

Markus has no compunctions, however, about going after the heroes. Once they get a short distance into the jungle on their speeders, several other individuals on speeders begin their approach. Go ahead and give the heroes Listen checks (DC 15), since there is a new sound in the jungle, the sound of a speeders that are coming up behind them very rapidly. Heroes who make the checks, obviously, will not be surprised when the next box-text hits them, nor will anyone who has told you they are watching behind the speeder and can make a DC 10 Spot check.

Suddenly, two blaster bolts rip through the air on either side of your speeder!

The first shots are freebie misses. The rest won't be. You can go to initiative, as a number of mercenaries on reconditioned military Aratech 74-Z speeder bikes come out of the jungle. There are a number of mercenaries equal to one more than the total number of vehicles the heroes have brought with them.

It's a tough combat, made all the tougher by the fact that Aratech 74-Z's have front mounted laser cannons. A number of possible obstacles that you can throw in to make the combat even more exciting are enumerated below. You can roll randomly for obstacles, or just drop them in when you feel it would be cinematically interesting. The DCs can be scaled at your discretion to challenge particularly adept pilots. Failing a check results in damage to the speeder equal to the amount by which the check was failed, divided by two. (This makes it perhaps too easy to destroy some speeders, so be sure to never tell the players what the DCs are, or how we're assigning damage. You may need to fudge. Scare them, maybe crash them, but do try not to kill them yet. The darkstaff wants to suck their souls.)

The feel of the combat, obviously, should be reminiscent of the chase through the jungle of Endor in *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*. Keep that in mind, and have fun with it!

Obstacle	DC
A partially fallen tree is blocking the path; a quick adjustment should allow the speeder to go above, or scrape beneath the trunk.	15
Two trees have grown together, blocking your path – sharp turn to the right!	20
A huge boulder looms in front of you – sharp turn to the left!	22
Hanging vines swing toward the speeder, twitching like they want to entangle you!	25
A kilassin, which had been sleeping, stands up – directly in your path!	28
A narrow chasm gapes in front of you – your speeder can't be that far off the ground!	30
The ground is rocky and uneven, with spiky stones sticking up between the trees – very dangerous!	35
Okay, that's not a narrow chasm, it's a good fifteen meters wide!	40

Ultimately, this should be a cinematic combat. If you're not a huge fan of the ship combat rules or you don't have any hardcore pilots in the group, just make it into a classic running fight. Exciting and interesting, with lots of flavor. This is the kind of fight where Force points can be come and go faster than dancing girls at Jabba's palace. And it's the first of several combats the heroes are going to have to endure as we soften them up for Len...

Encounter 4: ...the Jungle

Key ideas of this encounter: another of the threats that stands in the way, the first of two that are direct byproducts of the darkstaff's presence, confronts the heroes

As soon as the combat with the speeder-riding mercenaries is completed, two things happen. We'll provide both of them as box-text, and you should present them in the following order.

Your heart begins to slow as the sounds of battle fade. Then you realize that other sounds are fading as well, the most noticeable being your speeder's engine. You drift to a stop at the edge of a clearing. Another speeder, converted military by its design, sits abandoned a few meters in front of you. A speeder bike – a rental, by the look of it – lies on the ground beside it.

Something feels... odd. The air crackles like it does just after a lightning strike – or just before.

Any character with the Sense feat definitely feels that there's something wrong here. There's a tension in the air, a pulling, a straining in the Force itself. It's not just a dark side feeling, either. It's as if light and dark are struggling against one another.

This feeling is only going to get more intense, the deeper into the jungle they go. But it was right here, where their speeders died, that they first felt it.

A great deal of technology just failed. This is new. This isn't something that would have happened if the heroes have ever been in this part of the jungle before. There's every reason to suspect that the disturbance in the Force is tied to the disturbance in the inanimate objects. Which, of course, is very odd.

In terms of game mechanics: Nothing with a power source bigger than that in a light repeating blaster or blaster rifle is going to function (lightsabers and most blaster weapons are, in other words, fine). All engines are dead. They cannot be jury-rigged. Anyone in a space ship would have been crashing at this point, or at least had their sensors go out and have to turn back before they **did** crash. Both the other vehicles (the military speeder and the speeder bike) are in the same condition. Nothing on them functions.

In other words, no big-big guns for the rest of the event. Sorry. (Okay, not really.) Frankly, big-

big guns don't matter all that much. Big-big brains, and more importantly big-big hearts, are much more critical in surviving the next three encounters.

Once they've come to a stop and realized that things have gone wrong, any hero who has been in the presence of the Heart Tree (that is, anyone who played "Plague of Darkness") receives a telepathic message from the Tree. It comes as a vision, sudden and perfectly clear.

The jungle swims, and for a moment you see a great tree, its bark rippling with color, its trunk wider than a dozen starships. A pale man stands at the base of the tree, a dead-black rod in his hand. On the ground before him lies a pulsing orb, its light so pure and white that it almost hurts you to look at it. Then he touches the rod to the orb and the light fades. The jungle wilts, trees and flowers crumbling to dust, the great canopy of the jungle falling away to reveal a single pale sun, low on the horizon. The man seems to be laughing as the ground erupts around him. Then... nothing.

The feeling they get isn't that this has happened. Not yet. But it's going to, if they don't hurry.

The darkstaff has begun to twist Cularin's jungles. As the heroes are checking their engines, or those of the other vehicles, or looking around for a trail (Survival check, DC 20/25/30 allows them to find the tracks of several individuals who headed deeper into the jungle, on the exact course the heroes were traveling when their engines went ker-plooeey), a number of stubby quadrepedal creatures shamle out of the jungle.

The creatures that emerge from the trees are short and squat, their brown skin streaked with yellow and green, their long noses twitching. You've seen mulissiki before, the scavengers of Cularin's jungles. But you've never seen mulissiki with blood-red eyes, or green ichor dripping from twisted lips. And you've certainly never heard a mulissiki roar – but these are!

Normally, mulissiki would not bother with humanoids, but these have been touched (literally) by the darkstaff. They are now (wait for it...) Sithspawned mulissiki. Which means they're angry and mean, in addition to smelling really, really bad. Oh, one other thing: When the mulissiki roar, that's their attempt to use their

terrifying presence ability (the effects of which technically aren't known until we get to the mulissiki's turn in the initiative, but you can go ahead and roll checks now to determine who is going to need to make a Will save). They don't have much of a bonus to their Intimidate checks, but there are several of them, so you'll probably have someone needing to save. The rules for terrifying presence are on p. 331 of the RCRB.

Go ahead and roll initiative. The mulissiki's first action when combat begins and the free-action terrifying presence gets resolved? They breathe on the heroes.

Now, the clearing is only ten meters wide, so depending on where the mulissiki come out, some of them may breathe on each other. It's probably safer for them to all come out from the same area, but since they're only recently Sithspawned, they may not quite know their own strength yet. In other words, if you have a really weak party, it would be fine to have the mulissiki emerge from opposite sides of the clearing and accidentally catch one another in the cones of fire or lines of acid that are about to start flying. (Aren't templates fun?)

This, again, is a tough fight. Fortunately, the mulissiki aren't that hard to hit – and because we're feeling benevolent, they can't breathe every round. It would be kind of crummy for someone to die to a mulissik, but this will probably do some damage to the heroes. That was the darkstaff's idea, when it caused Len to twist the cute-and-stinky creatures. It wanted anyone who came after them killed, or at least significantly weakened, by the time they caught up. As authors, we don't necessarily want anyone dead. Yet. We want them scared, though. These smelly little dragon wanna-be's are pretty far outside anything the heroes have experienced on Cularin.

Oh, and yes – when the fire-breather cuts loose, it DOES set surrounding vegetation on fire. (Use that for another chance for heroism; please do us a favor and don't burn Cularin's jungles to the ground.)

In the spirit of LF, we should point out that if your heroes come up with a plan that is truly heroic and manage to deal with the mulissiki without combat, that's fine. With these creatures, for example, Force Light has the potential to daze them for 1d4 rounds (they do get a WIL save). In addition, it may still be possible to get them under control with some near-epic animal handling rolls. We don't want to step on anybody's skills, so if someone has something they want to try, let them. The worst that can happen is that it just won't

work.

Encounter 5: Wrong place...

Key ideas of this encounter: the heroes find the remains of two other individuals who seem to have been trailing Len Markus, who fell afoul of the darkstaff in a somewhat different way

We're hopeful that the heroes are a little jittery by now. After all, they're coming up on the final combat, the fight with the Big Bad, and they just ran into something completely new. We're not going to do that to them two encounters in a row – but we are going to hit them with another fight.

Heroes who played the Year 2 LIVING FORCE event "Philology" (often called the "Conversion" module, or the "Time jump" scenario) should recall being attacked by unpleasant skeletal creatures that had been animated by dark side energies. That was the darkstaff, infusing dead things with a semblance of life. This means that when our dead NPCs stand up and attack in a couple of minutes, it won't be anything new to the heroes.

After the mulissiki are dealt with, the heroes can follow Len Markus's trail into the jungle. After about a half-kilometer, they see something in the path ahead of them.

You come around a bend and a few meters ahead of you a pair of bodies lie across the path. Their clothing, while scuffed and torn, looks relatively new. The bodies themselves look ancient. The skin is a mess of wrinkles stretched across bone, their eye sockets are shrunk and empty, and their arms, stiff and reaching for the sky, end in hands whose gnarled fingers seem to have been clawing at the air until the end. A dead black circle four centimeters in diameter has been burned into the left cheek of each body.

For all that, these mummified bodies look somehow... familiar.

You've read the GM summary, so you already know that the bodies belong to San Herrera and Nia Reston. San and Nia have appeared in numerous LF scenarios; they attempted to bring technology to the Tarasin in the very first LF trilogy, they were trapped beneath Tilnes in "Tilnes Rising," they led a rival hunting party after a rogue droid in "Something Uffel," and they were later captured by the Thaereians and slated to die in the arena on Burnout before being rescued by the heroes. Crusades for a number of causes

(detailed in various articles on the Wizards.com website) kept them in the public eye, everything from droid rights to the dangers of a Clone Army (they never did say, "We told you so"), until their recent accidental creation of an angry mob sent them into hiding. Searching the bodies turns up identification, so that even if the heroes have never met San and Nia before, they now know that (a) these are citizens of Cularin and (b) as of last week, when they updated their identification cards, they were alive. They don't much look like they were alive that recently. There is also a recording stick in Nia's pocket. Most of the data is irrelevant, but there is a short recording that was made less than an hour ago.

When you activate the device, a young woman's voice speaks. "We are currently in pursuit – San, keep up! – of an individual we believe to be Len Markus. If he's back on Cularin, it can only be trouble. We're having trouble with our transmitter, but will continue trying to reach someone to give us backup. It looks like it's just him, though, so we're going to catch him and contain him. We have to protect Cularin."

Their crusading days are officially over. Spotting Markus heading into the jungle, San and Nia decided to chase after him. They are the ones who brought the speeder bike into the jungle that the heroes found beside Markus's speeder. They also had the misfortune to catch him. Containing him was another matter entirely.

Good intentions don't matter much, to the darkstaff. San and Nia, young Force Adepts that they were, were sucked dry by the Sith artifact. Everything that they were has been taken in by the darkstaff and destroyed. Everything but their bodies, which the darkstaff decided to leave behind to animate if anyone made it past the mulissiki.

San and Nia were good kids. Idealistic to the point of wrong-headedness sometimes, but basically good all the same. Hopefully, their loss will mean something to the heroes.

At a time that is dramatically appropriate, the trap springs. We won't define criteria for when San and Nia sit up, although right after the recording finishes playing would be good. Whenever you feel like it, read the following, then go to initiative.

The wind dies down, and the smell of death in the air becomes stronger. With a moan, the two bodies stand, empty eye sockets opening

as the creatures that were once San Herrera and Nia Reston attack!

Realistically, this isn't much of a fight. It isn't designed to be. It's designed to give the heroes a little more information about what the darkstaff can do, or at least, to remind them of something they may have forgotten. San and Nia's bodies, for all that they've been animated by dark side energies, weren't all that impressive in life. They still have their weapons, and can utilize dark side Force skills, but most of their facility with those comes from the darkstaff. Which doesn't make a Force zombie using Fear or Force Grip or Force Lightning on you any less scary, but it does make it easier to resist at least some of the effects.

There is, in this case, also a way to stop San and Nia immediately. If anyone decides to spend a Force point and channel the light side of the Force directly into either body (this requires a touch attack), the body immediately crumbles to dust. No save. Just gone, and as at-rest as it's going to get.

Not too far ahead, Len Markus has found the Heart Tree. The time is coming...

Encounter 6: ...wrong time

Key ideas of this encounter: the heroes confront Len Markus and the darkstaff beneath the Heart Tree

This encounter has been a long time coming. We won't bore you with what it means to us; you probably don't care. But everything in LIVING FORCE has been building toward this climactic battle, deep within the jungles of Cularin, with the fate of the planet at stake.

Len Markus's plans have always involved the destruction of Cularin. The assistance he provided the Wyrds in their attempt to poison the Heart Tree and turn it to the dark side was not, however, something he expected to succeed. It was a way for him to learn more of the jungle, to find the source of the energy that the darkstaff so desperately wanted to absorb. As an added bonus, if the meddlesome "heroes of Cularin" hadn't stopped the plague in the jungle, it probably would have been even easier for him to find what he was looking for.

The heroes have now experienced two of the unnatural things the darkstaff can (and will) do, in addition to everything else they've seen of it over

the past couple of years. The mood as they proceed through the jungle should be tense. You can use the following box-text as a guide.

The suns are sinking toward the horizon; what little light has managed to squeeze through the weave of branches and leaves has a pale orange tint. Most of the jungle around you is shadow. Creatures scurry through the leaves, thick groundcover rattling beneath countless tiny, unseen feet.

There is a feeling in the air. Familiarity? Not quite. You take a deep breath, and it's like inhaling the unsettled air in a speeder's wake. The jungle is quiet – but not peaceful. Something has disturbed it, something dark, and you don't need to guess what that might have been.

Or some such. As with any box-text, feel free to paraphrase. The important thing is, it's starting to get dark, but the suns are NOT down. It's just that the jungle canopy is thick enough that the heroes may be slightly visually impaired.

This is going to be a long encounter. We suggest you read it thoroughly, and probably highlight some of the sections. We're going to provide you with the opening box-text for the arrival at the Heart Tree. Then we'll give you information about (1) Options for Help for the Heroes, (2) Len's Tactics, and (3) How to Destroy the Darkstaff. We'll also throw in anything else that may be helpful in running the combat.

Oh, and we do apologize for the number of combats, since we know that they can be a lot of work to prep.

Scratch that. We don't apologize. The players have long been expecting to fight tooth and nail through the finale, and most of them don't think they're going to survive anyway. Most of them, we hope, are wrong – but some of them are right. They won't survive. We are well and truly into the time of the purge now, and Jedi – and those who associate with Jedi – are going to become much, much scarcer. Whether they hide beneath a tree or head off to parts unknown or get their Force-essence sucked out by an evil artifact, there are going to be a lot of endings. Which is our way to say: Unless it looks like the party is just flat-out going to LOSE, do not pull punches. The darkstaff is evil and unpleasant, and when Len latches onto the first hero and sucks him or her dry while doing his best to parry incoming attacks with his off-hand lightsaber, things should get very interesting.

Len doesn't have that much in the way of help.

He has a few kilassin that are currently under the sway of the darkstaff, but they haven't actually been "converted" to the dark side. Heroes adept at dealing with animals can win the creatures over, one at a time, and maybe even earn some allies. Beyond that, there are a few random goons, with the competence of the goons depending on the tier for which the party qualifies.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Len Markus is not tiered. However, we recommend the following modifications be made to Len, for low-tier groups or ones that are just combat-incompetent. First, the darkstaff is feeling petulant, and has denied Len the ability to heal himself using the Force. He begins the combat down 40 vitality points (this is taking into account the bonus vitality from what comes next) and has been enraged (that is, under the effects of the Rage Force feat) for three rounds because he can't find the way into the Heart Tree, to what he is certain lies beneath. He lost his cool. Beyond that, Len is nasty. It's going to take the heroes working together to beat him, and it's definitely not going to happen without at least one of them dying. Maybe more.

The Box-Text

The path winds its way through the jungle, through beams of sickly orange sunlight that slant down across the ground before you. Then you round a curve and the path ends in a great clearing, in the center of which is an even greater tree.

Fully two hundred meters in diameter, the tree and its pulsing bark stretch high into the jungle canopy, its topmost branches lost amidst the vines and leaves of a thousand, thousand plants. All the life of Cularin seems to pulse in time to the shifting colors of the great tree's bark.

The orange light grows brighter then, and looking up you can see Morasil and Termadus, locked in their slow descent, through a gap in the canopy. They stare down at you, two brilliant eyes in the sky. As you watch, a shadow moves across the face of the white star. Tilnes slips between Cularin and Termadus, leaving only the pale light from Morasil to suffuse the jungle landscape. For the first time since Reidi Artom came to Cularin, a single sun shines down on the Heart Tree.

Then you hear a voice.

"Find it, you fools! Now! The time is now!" A pale man stalks into view, emerging

from between two great roots of the Heart Tree. He holds a dead-black rod in his right hand. Then he sees you and laughs humorlessly.

“Well, this was inevitable, wasn’t it?”

Len Markus is 50 meters away from the heroes. He has the darkstaff in his hand, and his mercenaries just behind him. They’re trying to clear the ground enough to find a way beneath the Heart Tree, to where Markus believes the Eye of the Sun is hidden. What they’re going to find first is the sanctuary the Tarasin have offered the heroes, the way for them to survive the coming purge. But the Eye is there as well, and the darkstaff fully intends to lead Len directly to it.

“So be it,” he growls. “To me!” And with that, several figures emerge from the hollow behind him – and a dozen roaring kilassin rumble from the edge of the jungle, red eyes blazing, staring hungrily at you.

Options for Help

The heroes are not completely on their own, here. Markus has help, both in the form of his mercenaries and in the form of kilassin who have been twisted to assist him. When he calls his forces, though, more creatures come than he wants.

What **we** want is to induce a moment of panic. We want this to look, for at least a brief instant, like the heroes are up against insurmountable odds. Ultimately, though, the odds are 1:1. There will be one threat per hero, and the hero can deal with that threat in whatever way makes the most sense for him/her. If it’s fighting, that’s fine. If it’s trying to calm or befriend the enemy, that’s good, too. **PLAY TO THE STRENGTHS OF EACH HERO.** This is meant to be their finest hour, and there’s no reason to force a non-combatant to find the climax of his/her existence throwing ineffectual punches.

The Heart Tree is here. The essence of Master Lanius Qel-Bertuk is here. The heroes – assuming they played the summer trilogy – have been here before, and may have helped to save the Heart Tree from turning to the dark side.

It doesn’t forget, and it’s much more tightly tied to the jungle and its inhabitants than Len Markus ever could be.

We will emphasize this now, though we could have said it any number of times before. You **must** know the characters to structure this

encounter appropriately. Know who is focused on combat, who is skilled at diplomacy, who is attuned to nature and animals, and so forth. The point here is to provide a closure encounter (pilots got one with the speeder combat). Yes, there’s a deadly combat going on, and yes, whoever goes after Len first is likely to get smoked, for reasons that will become clear very soon. But it’s unlikely that someone who’s not combat-focused is going to go after the Big Bad for the entire campaign and expect to survive. Call it natural selection. The Heart Tree would.

The Heart Tree won’t be taking many actions, but during the first round of combat, when an initiative of 20 comes up, the Heart Tree takes the action that matters most. It calls one of the biggest kilassin the heroes have ever seen, the sole purpose of which is to deal with the imbalance created by Markus and the darkstaff when they twisted the lesser kilassin to the dark side. When you get to 20 in the first initiative sequence (or immediately after the first hero acts, if none of the heroes go above 20 on initiative), read the following:

A familiar voice speaks in your mind. “Help comes.” Then you hear a great rumbling, and a cracking as something crashes through the forest. The ground quakes beneath your feet with each thunderous step. One of the great trees at the edge of the Heart Tree’s clearing crashes to the ground, and the biggest kilassin you’ve ever seen steps through. All teeth and claws, the thing must be forty meters tall. Anywhere else in Cularin its eyes would rise above the canopy. It looks at you, looks at the other kilassin, opens a mouth big enough to swallow a speeder whole and lets loose a roar that shakes the ground as it charges into their midst!

Yes, the big one just went after the ones Len called. No, the big one doesn’t have red eyes. And no, that wasn’t Lanius’s voice. It was Mother Dariana’s; she’s not directly in contact with the Heart Tree, but because her voice is one that the heroes know, the Tree chose to have her “speak” for it.

You are not to bother rolling dice for the kilassin-on-kilassin combat. It is cinematic background noise. Do not take up valuable table time with game mechanics that don’t involve the heroes.

It is important to note that the King Kilassin (think t-rex on steroids) under no circumstances

approaches Len Markus. The Heart Tree's orders to it were explicit: Stop the tainted brothers from harming the small fleshy things. (It's a big lizard. Details are wasted on it.) If it starts to approach Len, the Heart Tree can and will back it off; the last thing that needs to happen is Len trying to take it over with the darkstaff. (We've elected not to provide a game mechanic by which Len can do this. It's fun to have the possibility scare the heroes ("If he can turn the little ones, what happens if he turns the big one?") but it would stink to have it actually occur. So, no mechanic, no possibility of Things Going Horribly Wrong.) He's not particularly interested in what the lizards are doing to one another, regardless; he HATES Cularin's heroes, and wants to kill each and every one of them himself. Or, barring that, allow some of his minions to do so. As long as the "so-called heroes" die horribly and painfully, it doesn't much matter whether he did it himself.

In addition, the first time each hero spends a Force point in this encounter, it (a) functions at double effect and (b) is not expended. If this is redundant with another ability granted by a class or certificate, the redundant ability is **not** used and can be used later on. All subsequent Force points are expended normally, but the first one is a doubled freebie.

Beyond that, every hero – Force-sensitive or not – is treated as having one rank in the Force Light skill, if they didn't already (and, for non-Force-sensitives, they should be considered to meet the requirements for using that skill, but no other Force skill). Those who had the skill gain a +1 bonus to checks using the skill. The Heart Tree has also made this temporary augmentation, since it would rather see the twisted kilassin freed than killed, if possible.

The heroes can also make their own "help." Leaving aside things like Plant Surge, the kilassin that are under Markus's power can be released through an application of Force Light. Each burst, assuming it achieves at least DC 15 power, frees one kilassin, which proceeds away from the King Kilassin and either runs for the jungle or, if it was released by someone with animal handling skills, may be willing to help out in the combat.

Len's Tactics

Throughout the encounter, you need to keep Len's goal in mind: He is trying to find a way to get to the Eye, which he knows (via the darkstaff) is very, very close. He's looking for a way under the Heart

Tree, and the tree is blocking him at every turn. (It could be fun, if you have the opportunity for more description, to have Len notice openings in the ground between the roots, rush toward them, and have the roots close over the openings as he comes. If this leads to him smacking the Heart Tree with his lightsaber, so be it. He can't do any kind of meaningful damage to the Tree.)

The Tree cannot, however, keep him out indefinitely. The darkstaff is twisting the jungle around it in ways that even the Wyrds' poison could not. The darkness in that object is deeper, more intense, than anything that has ever been brought to Cularin. The Tree is strong, thanks to Master Lanius's sacrifice, but it cannot be strong forever. It can call help to itself, but it is very easy for the darkstaff to take over weak-minded jungle creatures. Eventually, the concentrated darkness of the Sith artifact will overwhelm the Heart Tree, the Eye will be found, and life will end on Cularin. The heroes are the best hope for the survival of the planet.

Len is very, very hard to kill. The darkstaff has imbued him with some of the powers of a Sith battlelord (see his stat block for a full explanation). The short form is, so long as his bodyguard (Kluuus) is alive and within 30 meters of Len, any wound damage Len would take goes to Kluuus instead. Vitality damage affects Len normally.

Len's grand plan was to call in the kilassin that had been exposed to the darkstaff, and use them and his mercenaries to protect him while he continued to search for a way beneath the Heart Tree. This plan didn't involve the appearance of a much bigger, more willful kilassin, but Len can adapt. If it becomes clear that someone wants to close to melee with him, he pulls a green-bladed lightsaber from his pocket and ignites it, to hold in his off-hand.

This lightsaber is the same size as that used by Master Yoda, or the younglings. Feel free to have Len taunt the heroes (***"I was told this came from the corpse of a child; appropriate, that I should wield it against a child-like fool in his final hour!"***). He's lying. He looted it off a small adult Jedi himself, but given events of the recent movie, we thought it would be fun to see if we could get any of the heroes to fly into a rage and earn some dark side points. Len certainly doesn't mind people oozing hatred around him – it's what the darkstaff wants!

Here's the thing: Len lacks the feats to actually **attack** with both the darkstaff and the lightsaber and look like anything other than a

buffoon. The saber is a mind game he's playing. As mentioned above, he wants the heroes angry, because angry good-guys aren't quite so good. More importantly, if people are focused on the saber, he may be able to get a solid attack in with the darkstaff. It's not rational – seriously, who's NOT going to attack the Sith artifact first? – but one of the things driving Len is a need to protect the darkstaff. The saber is just another way to do so.

If we know the LF players (and we'd like to think we do), it will take all of one initiative sequence for somebody to be in Len's face, trying to kill him. This is not something for which Len is unprepared. He takes all of his attacks with the darkstaff, attempting to touch the attacking hero and initiate life draining (see GM Aid #2, "The Darkstaff"). If he succeeds at initiating the grapple, what the hero sees – what anyone who is looking at the hero sees – is black, smoky tendrils emerging from the darkstaff, wrapping themselves around the affected hero. The hero must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or lose 1d6+2 points of Constitution. Succeeding on the save means they only take half. (Be kind. Round down.) Every round the hold is maintained, it's another 1d6+2 Con and another save for half. Remember, zero Con equals "Dead."

On the bright side, Len can't take any other attack actions while he's maintaining the darkstaff's lifedrain. He is, however, bright enough to break the hold if it becomes apparent that the victim has received a message from the Heart Tree (see "Destroying the darkstaff" below), at which point he resorts to other tactics. He uses Force powers liberally, so long as he has vitality remaining, and may also try his skills with a lightsaber (and yes, the damage is not a typo; it's a small-size saber) against lower-tier groups. Obviously, anyone who poses a melee threat to him will be subjected to Fear (all you have to do is look at the dice and the target gets –8...), and you should bear in mind that with Force Mastery, he can use Fear as a free action once per round (for double vitality cost, of course). Fortunately for the heroes, Fear penalties don't affect saves.

Run Len to be challenging and scary for any group; he's big enough that he should be a threat to almost any hero in the campaign. But remember: The point is not to have the villain win. You can kill a few characters (in fact, you're probably going to have to), but if you find yourself in danger of killing all of them, you may have to let the Heart Tree step in and provide sufficient healing to a downed hero that we see that the

individual wasn't **quite** dead.

Grand and heroic. That's the order of the day. And Len? Evil and twisted. And in the end, kind of pathetic. But we'll get to that shortly.

Destroying the Darkstaff

The things that make Len scary – truly scary – mostly come from the darkstaff. It is what has given him the power to control some of the kilassin. It is what has made him nigh-invulnerable, so long as his bodyguard remains alive. It is what allows him to very quickly, very painfully, kill his opponents. It is also what threatens Cularin. Remember, Len is the enemy – but he's not the biggest threat. What the heroes need to do is destroy the darkstaff. Doing that is both very easy, and very difficult. We're going to describe the actual mechanic first, then deal with the contingencies surrounding it.

The way to destroy the darkstaff is to take hold of it (initiate a grapple, if it's still in Len's possession) and channel Force points into it. The hero must maintain the hold for two rounds, dumping half of his/her Force points into the object in the first round, and the rest in the second round. Note that this **ONLY** works if the hero is calling on the light side of the Force. Calling on the dark side strengthens the darkstaff, for what we hope are obvious reasons. After the first round, take the player aside and read the following:

You call on the Force and feel your essence begin to drain away, into the black of the darkstaff. You feel... tired. The world arounds you starts to fade. The darkstaff is weakening – but so are you.

Ask if they want to hold on. Tell them that they are fairly certain that if they keep doing what they are doing, it will destroy the darkstaff – but that they will probably not survive. If they want to hold on, take them back to the table and allow them to describe to the other players what their heroes are seeing, in terms of the reaction of the hero holding onto the darkstaff.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A hero that has grabbed the darkstaff and is dumping Force points into it **DOES NOT** lose Constitution. The darkstaff is weakening, is fearful of being destroyed, but it is about to get an unpleasant surprise: The teleportation ability that saved it in at least one other event cannot function this close to the Eye. In other words, it can't get itself away, and has to count on Len.

There are no game mechanic penalties applied to the hero in the second round, should he or she choose to maintain the hold. Assuming the hold is, in fact, maintained (remember the mantra: Keep it cinematic. If it's dramatically appropriate for the hero to succeed in maintaining the hold, you have our permission to fudge a little bit.), read the following, with appropriate substitutions of names and pronouns.

[Hero's name] throws back [his/her] head, an expression half-pain and half-exultation on [his/her] face. Then – and you can't quite be sure of the order, it all happens so fast – the jungle shakes as a CRACK louder than a thousand thunderbolts rips through the air, [hero name]'s clothing crumples to the ground, and the world goes still.

If Len was holding the darkstaff, also read this:

Len Markus staggers backward, the hand that held the darkstaff an empty mass of blackened flesh. He raises both hands to his head and wails. "No!"

The hero is dead. Gone. One with the Force. Len, on the other hand, has just been permanently cut off from the Force. Every Force ability he had, every Force feat he had – all gone. His Force-user levels have gone away, leaving him a Soldier 3/Scoundrel 2. He's not going to be fighting back, if anyone comes after him. He's stunned, whimpering and drooling and staring at his mangled hand.

So, that's how the darkstaff gets destroyed. Now, let's deal with some contingencies.

How are the heroes supposed to figure out what to do? C'mon, you two – it's NOT obvious.

Of course it's not obvious. If it were obvious, someone would have done it already. The heroes receive two clues. On the Tree's initiative (20, or whatever you ended up using for the "Help comes" message) on the first round after a hero makes a melee attack on Len, that hero's player should be taken aside. ***As Markus brandishes the darkstaff at you, you have a brief flash of your hands, closing around the darkstaff, and you hear Master Lanius's voice. "Use the Force."***

Now, "Use the Force" could mean a lot of things. The hero may think, "Oh, I should use Force Light." Wrong answer. The darkstaff is immune to all Force powers. Besides, Lanius didn't say, "Use the Force Light." He said "Use the

Force." This same message comes to each hero who enters melee with Len, the first round after they make their initial attack.

The second clue is a bit less subtle. If, two rounds later, a hero who has been told to use the Force has (a) not figured out what to do and (b) managed to stay alive, take the player aside again. ***Another vision comes to your mind, of a Jedi meditating over the pieces of a lightsaber. She picks up the focus crystal and concentrates on it for a moment; she sighs, and the crystal begins to glow. Then Master Lanius's voice comes once more. "Use the Force!"***

We can't get much more blatant than that. You channel a Force point into the crystal to make a lightsaber, and they need to channel their Force points into the darkstaff. You can feel free, if your group is particularly clue-challenged, to just tell them that they need to channel their Force points into the darkstaff. We hope it doesn't come to that.

What if they don't have any Force points left? This is potentially four combats in a row.

Calling on the Force is something anyone can do, but from a game mechanic standpoint, this poses a problem. Or would, if the Heart Tree weren't around. A hero who has spent all of his or her Force points defending the Heart Tree or trying to save Cularin finds, when the time comes to make the sacrifice and save the planet, that he or she actually has two Force points remaining.

You mentioned Markus trying to protect the darkstaff if the heroes get a message. How's that work?

The darkstaff goes into full panic mode if someone starts calling on the light side and channeling Force points into it. After the first round it happens, it instructs Markus to get it away from that individual, prompting Markus to do his best to break the hero's hold on the darkstaff. Standard grappling rules apply.

And if he breaks the hold, is the sacrifice of Force points wasted?

Not at all. If the same hero gets hold of the darkstaff again later on, it only takes one more round of dumping Force points to destroy the darkstaff.

Is that two rounds total? Like, one round for one hero, one round for another?

No. That's two rounds for any individual hero. What's important in destroying the darkstaff isn't

the amount of Force points spent – it's the willingness to sacrifice yourself to protect the innocent, and the act of completing that self-sacrifice. This is quite simply something the darkstaff cannot comprehend, and the compassion demonstrated by the act is what it takes to destroy the Sith artifact. Beneath the branches of this tree, Lanius made quite a sacrifice – but the sacrifice of the hero who destroys the darkstaff is much bigger, since for all he or she knows, s/he could just be getting sucked into a Sith artifact for all eternity.

Can two heroes work together to destroy the darkstaff?

If two heroes both grab hold and both dump all their Force points into the darkstaff, then two heroes die. Again, it's not the number of Force points spent – what destroys the darkstaff is compassion, love, and self-sacrifice.

Don't you think that self-sacrifice thing is a little predictable?

Everyone knew Anakin was going to fall to the dark side and become Darth Vader, too. What's your point?

Can the heroes take the darkstaff from Len?

They can literally pry it from his cold, dead fingers. He's not giving it up, otherwise. It's immune to all Force powers, and its wielder cannot be disarmed. And no, they cannot cut off the arm that holds it, since LF doesn't use hit locations. And besides, that would be icky.

You know, you can only spend one Force point a round. How are the heroes supposed to know to try multiples?

Ask them how many they want to spend. If they say, "I can only spend one," just tell them, "You think that might not be the case, here. How many would you like to spend?" If the response is, "All of them," tell them they are now at half what they started with, and give them the first-round box-text from the previous page. Give them the option of how many to spend again in the second round. If they go with less than all, improvise; let them know that it feels like the darkstaff is almost broken, but it's probably going to take everything they have to destroy it.

How come the Heart Tree doesn't just smash Len like it did Lanius?

A number of reasons. These include, but are not limited to: It's no longer leaning toward the dark side; it recognizes that this is a fight the

heroes need to fight, for their own sakes; and it doesn't want to bring itself into that direct contact with someone so twisted by the darkstaff (to say nothing of the Sith artifact itself). The Heart Tree is an entity of peace and protection; killing is antithetical to its nature.

From a narrative perspective, it's not smashing him because that would be a crummy way to have the final fight with the Big Bad end.

The Aftermath

Len, if he's still alive, is a pitiable shadow of himself. Killing him would be an act of kindness.

"Can you see it? I can't find it... the Force is gone. Can you even comprehend? The FORCE is GONE!"

Anyone else who is Force-sensitive absolutely still feels the Force. It's just Len who doesn't.

Len is cowering and helpless. But he's also evil. While we certainly don't condone killing the cowering helpless, we get the distinct impression that Len, if he's lived this long, isn't likely to live much longer.

Anyone who wants to *coup de grace* him can do so. He's not going to resist. However, make sure you ask the key question: Knowing that Len Markus is helpless, are you certain you want to kill him?

If the answer is "Yes," resolve the death blow, award the dark side point, and let the hero savor the moment.

The hero (or heroes) who sacrificed him/herself to destroy the darkstaff is gone, the classic "Nothing but the clothing and gear left" kind of gone. This is very different from what was left after people got lifedraind (the mummified husks that were San and Nia, for instance). Hopefully, this makes it clear that the hero did not, in fact, go into the darkstaff. You can feel free to take the player of that hero aside and clarify that he or she did, in fact, become one with the Force.

Most of what's left here is mopping up. There is, however, one other event of import.

As the last of the kilassin wander back into the jungle, Tilnes slides from the face of Termadus, and two suns again shine down on Cularin, pale shafts of orange twisting their way through the canopy to caress the bark of the Heart Tree.

Give everyone who's still around Spot checks. Whoever rolls the highest notices that the Heart Tree's bark has swirled around two perfect circles created by rays of fading sunlight. If the heroes approach, they see a dome-shaped rock, perhaps a half-meter in diameter, wedged between two of the Heart Tree's roots. For a moment, the rock glows pale silver... then it's once again just a rock.

You should neither confirm nor deny, but if the heroes conclude that this rock is part of the mythical Eye of the Sun, they're probably not wrong. Markus actually stepped on it, at one point – stepped on it, but never knew it was there.

Conclusion

As the saying goes, "When the monster's dead, the movie's over." But there is one more thing to deal with, and that is providing closure for the heroes.

The destruction of the darkstaff did not go unnoticed on Cularin. The Mothers of the various irstat around Cularin knew that something had threatened the Heart Tree. They also knew the moment it was destroyed – the Heart Tree made sure. While the heroes are picking up their wounded and grieving their dead, they begin to notice something.

The suns have almost slipped beneath the horizon when you hear a rustling in the leaves, and a Tarasin steps from between two trees. She smiles as she walks to each of you, greeting you with a hug. She doesn't speak, just proceeds to the Heart Tree, where she kneels, bowing her head. Other Tarasin come as well, moving slowly out of the jungle as if in a dream, smiling or nodding in greeting, sometimes approaching you, sometimes not.

If the heroes insist on interrupting the box-text (and why, we might ask, would they stop now?) to find out why the Tarasin are here, the answer they receive is simply, ***We heard the call.*** With that established, you can continue the box-text.

The numbers grow, some of the Tarasin bringing with them beings of other species. You find yourselves staring at the throng, making their way out of the jungle and to the Heart Tree. Then the music begins, bright and lively, and small fires spring up throughout the clearing. The Tarasin begin to dance, pulling you in with them, their bright eyes aglow with

the joy of life.

There always had to be a celebration in the jungle at the end of the campaign. We don't even care that it was predictable. The jungle has always been the center of Cularin – even before the Heart Tree was introduced, the jungle was at the heart of the campaign. It had to end here. No other way. (By the by, we recommend the original *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* "Ewok Celebration" music here. If you feel a need for music. Which you might.)

Various important people are circulating through the crowd. Mother Dariana is present, as are Mothers of other irstats. Mother Dariana has a younger Tarasin with her, a female with a familiar tattoo running up her jaw. This is Sa'arli, one of Senator Wren's senior aides, garbed in traditional Tarasin clothing for the first time since the heroes saw her in the introductory LF trilogy. Senator Wren is around as well. There are a number of Jedi present, including Lora, from the first encounter of this scenario. She's wearing her Jedi robes, with her lightsaber at her belt, and when the heroes notice and approach her, she's speaking with a male Jedi of middle years. Jedi heroes recognize him as Master Minos Fel'Kona, an individual who taught piloting and military history at the Academy. He was badly burned when the Academy fell, but survived. (Minos also has a web article coming out; in the article, he left his datapad behind in the Hedrett Groundsport. That incident takes place the morning after this event ends, so the web article "What are we, then?" has yet to become public knowledge.)

Lora looks up as you approach. "I'm glad to see you. You were right." She touches her lightsaber and smooths her robes. "I'm still needed. Minos is leading a group of Jedi against the person who's said he's going to hunt down all the Jedi. We don't want him to come to Cularin, so Cularin's Jedi are going after him. The ones who want to, at least, and anyone else who wants to come. We leave at dawn, from the Hedrett Groundsport."

There are no more details to be had. The basic plan is to hunt down Darth Vader, and kill him. They know him only as Vader, based on the message that went out from the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, and do not know his true identity.

The players have to know that this will fail. A hero who goes Vader-hunting isn't coming back. But if that's the way the player wants his or her

character's arc to end, that's fine with us.

Speaking with Mother Dariana, the heroes learn something completely different.

"What happened here, today, was wonderful. But it changes a great deal. The destruction of the darkstaff will draw attention to Cularin. We must hide our young, hide as many of our Force-users as we can, and we must do it soon. Tonight, we celebrate – but in the morning, if you wish to take refuge beneath the Heart Tree, you must be here. The Heart will open itself to us, and when it closes, it will not open again until the long night has ended. Be here at dawn, if you wish safe harbor."

Here as well, there are no more details to be had. The Heart Tree will shelter and protect those beneath it, but they are, as has been noted elsewhere, effectively gone from the galaxy. The whole of their world will be the twisting tunnels beneath Cularin's greatest sources of life, until the Empire falls.

The heroes have been presented with two options, both of which have a great deal of finality to them. Other options are available – we are not going to write the ending of every hero in the campaign. That is up to the players. What we are going to do, however, is write the end to the story.

The celebration seems to have hit its stride, with laughing and dancing and singing, when the music settles into a soft drone, and all eyes turn to a shape floating before the Heart Tree. Senator Wren looks more than a little nervous, but the Tarasin standing around her, concentrating to keep her aloft, are the very picture of poise.

"My friends," the lady senator says, her voice rising above the fading music, "today is a glorious day. For all the defeats suffered by those who fight for freedom over the past year, today we saw a glorious victory. A tool of the darkside exists no more!" The crowd cheers. As the cheering subsides, she continues. "And we have to thank for it these individuals." She gestures, and the crowd parts around your group. [Name each of the heroes by name.] "We must never forget [name or names of heroes who died fighting Markus and destroying the darkstaff], in particular, nor any of the other individuals who have given their lives to protect our home.

"When I came to Cularin," her voice gets

softer, "I didn't know what to expect. But never in my wildest fantasies could I have imagined a people so brave. A people so willing to sacrifice themselves. A people who refused to allow the darkness to settle over their homes, even as it settled over so much of the galaxy.

"I know in my heart that Cularin will survive whatever comes. The dark side may be strong, now, but in this place, in this hour, I KNOW that we will always prevail. Because I have seen the faces of true heroes, I see them now, all around me, and I know this:

"The Force will be with us. Always!"

Here Ends, "The Eye"

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for LIVING FORCE events.

- 1) Experience awards in the SWRPG 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 of 1500 xp.
- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-750 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC 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 destroy the darkstaff and defeat Len Markus? If so, each hero who survived receives 1500 xp.

Adventure Experience:	1,500 xp
Roleplaying Experience:	0-750 xp

Total Possible Experience:	2.250 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 ½ adventure experience. If the heroes succeeded in destroying the darkstaff but allowed Len to escape, award them ¾

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 encounter in the scenario.

Noble Sacrifice (to the player of any hero that died in this event): The hero named above gave his or her life in an effort to destroy the darkstaff. In recognition of the valiant, selfless sacrifice, the hero's name has been permanently inscribed on a plaque at the base of Reidi Artom's Statue in Gadrin. The plaque reads as follows: *For the love of their home and the protection of innocents, these individuals gave their lives. There can be no nobler sacrifice.*

Ultimate Sacrifice (to the player of any hero that actually gave his or her life to destroy the darkstaff): The hero named above became one with the Force in the act of destroying the darkstaff. In so doing, the hero's Force essence permanently merged with the Heart Tree, the source of protection and life for all of Cularin. The hero will be able to aid in the teaching of countless generations of Tarasin, or can recede into the background, as he or she wishes. But none among the Tarasin will ever forget the sacrifice made.

Note that a player who receives the "Ultimate Sacrifice" certificate also receives the "Noble Sacrifice" certificate.

Every hero receives one of the three following certificates. Ask whether each hero plans to join the hunt for Vader, to take shelter beneath the Heart Tree, or to do something else entirely.

Hunting Vader: The hero named above joined an expeditionary team led by Jedi Master Minos Fel'Kona to hunt down and kill Darth Vader. After the expeditionary team left Cularin, they were never heard from again. The fate of the hero remains unclear.

Taking Shelter: The hero named above elected to take shelter beneath the sacred Heart Tree of the Tarasin, to help protect the lives of those the Heart Tree would shelter, to aid in teaching and training them, and to assist in retaining the culture of the Force-users during a time of great darkness. When the time of darkness passes, the hero may emerge

once more into the light of Cularin's suns.

An Ending All Your Own: The hero named above took action when the Tarasin decided the time had come to hide many of their Force-users beneath the sacred Heart Tree. You may use the space below to describe your character's actions (for example, "Headed for a swampy planet to lay low for a while"), with the obvious caveat that you cannot change, through your actions, any of the events in *Star Wars Episodes IV-VI*, nor can your hero betray the nature of the Heart Tree and what it hides. Beyond that, the ending of your hero's story is completely in your hands.

A Hero of Cularin... Always: The hero named above defended Cularin at great personal risk, always striving to keep the forces of darkness from overwhelming the system. These efforts, while they may not be recorded on Coruscant, will never be forgotten on Cularin. Deep within the jungle, the hero's name has been permanently inscribed in the Tarasin Book of Memories, wherein are recorded all those who have protected Cularin and its secrets. Whatever happens in the galaxy, whatever the future may hold, the individual named on this cert will forever be remembered as a true Hero of Cularin.

Player Handout 1: The Eye of the Sun

There is, in all things, balance. On a world in the Outer Rim, buried in a library beneath a stack of ancient texts that were either waiting to be scanned into a more useable form, or waiting to just fall apart, I found reference to what I believe to be one of the ultimate tools for balance. For all that we hear of the Sith and their great power, no one ever speaks of how the light side should counter it, aside from force of will and faith in the bond shared by all living creatures. It is my belief that the object mentioned in the text I transcribe below, the so-called “Eye of the Sun,” may have been created specifically to counter the depredations of the dark side.

Begin Transcription:

In the weeks before the Battle of Ruusan, when it became clear that the warriors of the dark side would have with them a great many weapons of the Force, the Jedi gathered together and adopted the task of creating a countermeasure. This countermeasure would be less a weapon, and more a defense. The form this defense might take remained unclear; it was decided by the Masters present that those among them who best understood the act of creation would convene in a quiet place on a distant world. There, they would let the Force guide them. They would create whatever the Force bade them create, and when they were done, they would take their creation and use it against the Sith.

It was never clear that this would work, nor was it at all clear what form it would take. The task itself was the thing. The task, and the goal: To find a way to return balance to the battle, to undo the advantage the Sith “wizards” seemed to have, by virtue of their twisted creations.

The world they found was remote and barren, all rocky soil and craggy peaks. The Masters set themselves to work, alternately meditating and shaping, with their hands and with the Force, the thing that would become their finest work. They felt the rightness of the thing; born of need, to be a defense against a looming dark, it wanted to be made. It wanted to be in and of the galaxy. So there, amidst the rocks, among the tiny lizards that were the planet’s only life, lizards that scurried up and over boots as if they were nothing but more rocks to be climbed, the Masters worked. They trusted in the Force to guide them. The Force guided much, much

more.

As they worked, the world grew around them. Green shoots began to emerge from between rocks that seemed older and less likely to breed life than the pale suns that hung in the sky. Flowers bloomed. The earth around them trembled, and water began to flow from the base of one of the great mountains, forming a stream that grew into a river. The tiny lizards hurried from rock to plant, nibbling at the vegetation, nibbling at one another. There was excitement in them. Even they felt the connection to the Force. Even they knew that their world was changing, would be changed forever.

All of this was not lost on the Masters. They saw their work, and saw that the Force was with them. The thing itself, the object of their creation, had begun to take form. A glowing orb, it rested atop a bowl-shaped rock, hovering micrometers above the surface of the stone. It radiated warmth, light. Vines crawled across the ground toward it, twined with one another, wrapped themselves around nearby rocks and shook them down to dust. The rocks disappeared, crushed or consumed or covered by the growing vegetation.

And still, the Masters worked.

Asked later how long the creation took, none of them could say. The rising and setting of the sun became meaningless to them. The Force was all around, tangible in the growth of the world as much as the growth of the sphere. As the rocks were ground to nothing, more greenery emerged, more shoots, more leaves, more flowers. Thin stalks with thinner branches began to grow, shimmering and glistening, rinds shifting color with the pulsing of the sphere. The sphere was not done, but it was close, and it seemed to both feed and take nourishment from the growing world. Closer they came, and closer still.

The work was tiring. The Masters woke with their minds filled with the sphere, closed their eyes still feeling the Force moving through them, creating, and dreamed of the sphere as they lay in the new-grown grass, beneath pale clouds shrouding a starscape that sometimes peered through, silver eyes between folds of a misty blue-black curtain.

Then, one morning, just after dawn, they woke. The suns hung low in the

sky, creeping above a horizon that had been grey-brown when they landed on the world, but which now shimmered, green and wet. The Masters stood and walked to the sphere, where it hovered above the stone bowl. They gathered together, and they felt the Force very strongly with them, and the surface of the sphere shivered. The sky grew brighter, then dimmed. The Masters looked up as one sun slid behind the other. The ground shook beneath their feet and they looked down at the sphere.

The sphere looked back at them, one brilliant yellow eye – and then it blinked. It blinked, and the ground trembled and cracked. The stone bowl turned, and the sphere slid to the ground, and it sank, and as it sank the stalks grew into trees, and massive trunks of great trees sprang complete from the ground, trailing vines and dripping leaves that fell like green rain.

Then the second sun emerged from behind the first, and the jungle was still, and the sphere was gone. Only the stone bowl, now a gentle grey hump beneath a tree whose bark shifted and shimmered, marked where it had been.

This was, the Masters saw, where the sphere needed to be. The Force had brought them here, the Force had guided their creation, and the Force would see their creation well-used. In time. Now they would return home, to find the Battle of Ruusan two years gone. They would only tell the story of the world they had seen once, to an archivist, because they believed that someone must know what had been created. The sphere, with its power of life, they named the Eye of the Sun. They spoke of it with reverence. They spoke of a feeling of safety in its presence, a feeling that the dark side could not touch them, could not see them at all. They spoke these things of the Eye... Later generations spoke of it not at all.

End Transcription.

Other references to the “Eye of the Sun” are scattered. I’ve not found this detailed a narrative anywhere else. Obviously, it’s largely metaphorical. But the Eye itself... it’s mentioned in other ancient sources as well. I am certain it’s out there. I even think I know what planet it’s on.

Player Handout 2: Message from Tilnes

A day will come when darkness threatens Cularin. The darkness will begin within the confines of this moon, and will rise to encompass all of the system, and the stars and moons and planets will know fear. Seek out the darkness. Where the focus is found, look to the stone beneath for the missing piece of the picture. Through stone and star, find the darkness, and bring it to the light. Only through the forces of goodness and hope can the darkness be kept from destroying all that we love. This is the future as I have foreseen it.

– NZ

GM Aid #1: Combat Statistics

Encounter 3

Prototype Mark VII Series Inquisitor: Hovering seeker droid, Thug 8; IM +5 (Dex); Def 22 (+3 class, +5 Dex, +4 size); Spd 20 m; VP/WP 0/17; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4-2, slam) or +17/+12 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; SZ D; Face/Reach 0.5 m by 0.5 m/0 m; Rep +2; Str 6, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Equipment: Comlink, data probe, locked access, recording unit (audio), repulsorlift unit, sensors (infrared vision, improved sensor package, motion sensors, sonic sensors), vocabulator.

Skills: Computer Use +11, Hide +18, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +9, Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic, Speak Caarite, Speak Dosh, Speak Filord, Speak Tarasinese, Spot +11, Survival +11.

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Skill Emphasis (Survival), Toughness, Track, Weapons (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Speeder Pilots: Fringer 4/Scoundrel 4; IM +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 18 (+5 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 48/14; Atk +7/+2 melee (2d4+1, vibrodagger) or +9/+4 ranged (3d6 or DC 15 stun, blaster pistol) or +12/+7 ranged (4d8, bike laser cannon); SQ Barter, illicit barter, lucky (1/day), jury-right +2, precise attack +1; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +1; FP 2; DSP 0; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, vibrodagger, speeder bike.

Skills: Bluff +7, Gather Information +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Listen +4, Pilot +14, Repair +8, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +5.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Weapons (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Aratech 74-Z Military Speeder Bike

Class: Groundspeeder; **Size:** Large (4.9 meters long); **Crew:** 1; **Passengers:** 1; **Initiative:** -1 (-1 size); **Maneuver:** -1 (-1 size); **Cargo Capacity:** 4 kg; **Speed:** 150m; **Max Velocity:** 360 km/h; **Defense:** 12* (-1 size, +3 armor); **Hull Points:** 22 (DR 5).

Weapon: Laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +3 (-1 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d8; **Range Increment:** 20 m.

* The speeder provides no cover to its pilot.

Encounter 4

Tier 1

Sithspawned Mulissiki (4): Scavenger 3; IM +4 (+4 Dex); Def 17 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +2 natural); Spd 25 m; VP/WP 22/16; Atk +6 melee (1d4-2, bite); SQ terrifying presence, low-light vision, stink gas cloud when wound damage taken (Will save DC 12 or flee for 1d4 rds), breath weapon (see below); SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will -1; SZ S; FP 0; DSP 5; Rep 0; Str 7, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +8, Spot +5, Survival +4, Intimidate +2.

Feats: Rugged, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Breath weapon: The darkstaff granted each of the mulissiki a breath weapon; two of the mulissiki breath acid, in a line 20 meters long and 2 meters wide, doing 3d6 damage (Reflex save, DC 14, for half damage); one of the mulissiki breaths lines of lightning, same dimensions, 3d6 damage, DC 14 Reflex save for half; and the last breaths a cone of fire ten meters long and ten meters wide at its widest point, again doing 3d6 damage with a DC 14 Reflex save for half. Once a mulissik uses its breath weapon, it must wait 1d4 rounds before it can use it again.

Tier 2

Sithspawned Mulissiki (4): Scavenger 6; IM +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 18 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural); Spd 25 m; VP/WP 56/18; Atk +9 melee (1d4-2, bite); SQ terrifying presence, low-light vision, stink gas cloud when wound damage taken (Will save DC 12 or flee for 1d4 rds), breath weapon (see below); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +0; SZ S; FP 0; DSP 5; Rep 0; Str 7, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +8, Spot +5, Survival +4, Intimidate +3.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Rugged, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Breath weapon: The darkstaff granted each of the mulissiki a breath weapon; two of the mulissiki breath acid, in a line 20 meters long and 2 meters wide, doing 6d6 damage (Reflex save, DC 17, for half damage); one mulissik breaths lines of lightning, same dimensions, 6d6 damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half; and the last breaths a cone of fire ten meters long and ten meters wide at its widest point, again doing 6d6 damage with a DC 17 Reflex save for half. Once a mulissik uses its breath weapon, it must wait 1d3 rounds before it can use it again.

Tier 3

Sithspawned Mulissiki (6): Winged Scavenger 8; IM +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 18 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural); Spd 25 m, fly 25 m (average); VP/WP 75/18; Atk +9 melee (1d4-2, bite); SQ terrifying presence, low-light vision, stink gas cloud when wound damage taken (Will save DC 12 for anyone within 5m or flee for 1d4 rds), breath weapon (see below); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +0; SZ S; FP 0; DSP 5; Rep 0; Str 7, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +8, Spot +5, Survival +4, Intimidate +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Rugged, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Breath weapon: The darkstaff granted each of the mulissiki a breath weapon; two of the mulissiki breath acid, in a line 20 meters long and 2 meters wide, doing 8d6 damage (Reflex save, DC 18, for half damage); two breath lines of lightning, same dimensions, 8d6 damage, DC 18 Reflex save for half; and the last breaths a cone of fire ten meters long and ten meters wide at its widest point, again doing 8d6 damage with a DC 18 Reflex save for half. Once a mulissik uses its breath weapon, it must wait 1d3 rounds before it can use it again.

One general note: We chose to deviate from the Sithspawned template because per the template, a Sithspawned creature could breath every round. That struck us as a little problematic, with this many of them in one place.

Note on the top-tier combat: The mulissiki aren't about to stand on the ground and get whacked by lightsabers. Like good little stinky dragons, after breathing in the first round they take to the air, breath, and circle until they're ready to breath again, when they do a "swoop and whoosh" on the heroes. They're not smart, but the darkstaff has made them cunning and evil. Use those traits, but don't play them **too** smart. Int of 3 is still Int of 3, after all.

Encounter 5

All Tiers

Nia Reston: Animated Female Human Force Adept 5; IM -1 (+1 Dex, -2 animated); Def 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 40/15; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, slam) or +5 melee (1d6+2, baton) or +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Force training, Force weapon (+1d8), DR 5, terrifying presence, can only be affected by Force skills that can affect droids or inanimate objects, immune to critical hits; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; SZ M; FP 6; DSP 5; Rep 1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con -, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Equipment: Clothing, blaster pistol, baton.

Skills: Hide +3, Knowledge (Tarasin Force Skills) +4, Knowledge (Tarasin Oral Traditions) +4, Listen +8, Profession (Missionary) +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +2, Survival +4, Treat Injury +2; Read/Write Basic,

Speak Basic, Speak Ithorian, Speak Tarasinese.

Force Skills: ~~Battlemind +4, Enhance Ability +6, Farseeing +5~~, Fear +8, Force Grip +8, Force Lightning +8, ~~Force Stealth +3~~, Force Strike +8 (+12 if used to harm a living being), ~~Friendship +3, See Force +7~~.

Feats: Alertness, Force Sensitive, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Sense.

San Herrera: Animated Male Human Force Adept 5; IM +3 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, -2 animated); Def 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP: 40/14; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, slam) or +4 melee (1d6+2, +1 mastercraft baton) or +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Force training, Force weapon (+1d8), DR 5, terrifying presence, can only be affected by Force skills that can affect droids or inanimate objects, immune to critical hits; SV: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6; SZ M; FP 3; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con -, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Equipment: Clothing, blaster pistol, +1 mastercraft baton.

Skills: Bluff +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Relief Work) +5, Knowledge (Tarasin History) +5, Listen +7, Profession (Trader) +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +5; Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic, Speak Tarasinese, Understand Tarasin silent language.

Force Skills: ~~Battlemind +4, Empathy +5, Enhance Senses +3~~, Fear +8, Force Grip +10, Force Lightning +10, ~~See Force +4, Telepathy +4~~.

Feats: Alertness, Force Sensitive, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Weapon Group Proficiency (primitive weapons, simple weapons, blaster pistols).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Sense.

Note that while they have no Constitution score, animated creatures retain the wound points they had in life as an indication of how much physical damage they can take.

Encounter 6

All tiers

Len Markus: Dark side Human male Force Adept 3/Soldier 3/Dark Side Devotee 4/Dark Side Marauder 4/Scoundrel 2; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 24; Spd 10m; VP/WP 125/14; Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+5/18-20, darkstaff*) or +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+3/19-20, +1 mastercraft lightsaber) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (3d8+2/19-20 or DC 18 stun, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Dark side talisman +2 (not included below), Illicit Barter, Lucky 1/day, Wounding Bond; SV Fort +13, Ref +15, Will +11; SZ M; Rep 6; FP 4; DSP 9; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Equipment: street clothes, lightsaber (green blade, looted from a Jedi corpse), heavy blaster pistol, the darkstaff*.

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +3, Disable Device +3, Gather Information +4, Hide +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +3, Knowledge (Sith lore) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Listen +12, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Sense Motive +13, Spot +11, Tumble +9; Read/write Basic, Ryl, and Sith; Speak Basic, Ryl, and Sith.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +8, Battlemind +10, Drain Energy +13, Enhance Ability +13, Fear +25, Force Grip +17, Force Lightning +23, Heal Self +11, Move Object +7.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force Sensitive, Improved Initiative, Infamy, Power Attack, Sharp-eyed, Skill Emphasis (Fear), Skill Emphasis (Force Lightning), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Hatred, Malevolent, Rage, Sense.

Wounding Bond: The darkstaff has given Len a small boon. While he holds it, he functions as a Sith battlelord in one respect: So long as his bodyguard, Kluuus, is within 30 meters and alive, Len cannot take wound damage. Any wound damage done to Len is automatically transferred to Kluuus (technically, there is a save; Kluuus voluntarily fails his save, because of his devotion to Len). You may give Spot checks (set a DC appropriate to the heroes' tier) to notice that someone else is damaged when Len

should be wounded. It is important to note that the exact range of the wound transference is not something the heroes have any way to know. (The web article describing the ability referred to it being line of sight, and only specified 30 meters in the GM-only section.) You may feel free to remind any player who mentions the 30-meter distance that this is not in-character knowledge. The distinction was **very** clear, in the article. It is also important to note that Len is **only** bonded to Kluuus. If Kluuus is killed or separated from him by more than 30 meters (Kluuus will not willingly go more than 10 meters from Len, so this shouldn't be an issue), Len can be wounded/killed normally.

* See GM Aid #2, "The Darkstaff," for details. In addition to listed powers, the darkstaff gives Len a +2 morale bonus to attacks made with the object. This bonus is already included in his attack sequence.

Tier 1

Kluuus: Gamorrean Male Soldier 4; IM +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 16 (+4 Class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 34/15; Atk +9 melee (2d10+7, vibroaxe wielded two-handed) or +6 ranged (3d8, 19-20, blaster rifle); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; FP 2; DSP 3; Rep +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit (DR 3), blaster rifle, +1 mastercraft vibroaxe, vibrodagger.

Skills: Computer Use +5, Demolitions +5, Intimidate +3, Survival +4, Treat Injury +5.

Feats: Armor (light), Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (vibroaxe), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Support Goons (enough to provide one dedicated opponent per hero): Fringer 2/Scoundrel 2; IM +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 16 (+4 Class, +2 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 27/14; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1, knife) or +4 ranged (3d6 or DC 15 stun, blaster pistol); SQ Barter, illicit barter, lucky (1/day); SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will -1; FP 1; DSP 2; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, knife, business suit.

Skills: Bluff +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +4, Pilot +6, Repair +4, Search +4, Spot +5, Survival +3, Speak/Read/Write Basic.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons).

Tier 2

Kluuus: Gamorrean Male Soldier 8; IM +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 18 (+6 Class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 64/18; Atk +13/+8 melee (2d10+7, vibroaxe wielded two-handed) or +10 ranged (3d8, 19-20, blaster rifle); SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; FP 2; DSP 4; Rep +2; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit (DR 3), blaster rifle, +1 mastercraft vibroaxe, vibrodagger.

Skills: Computer Use +5, Demolitions +6, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +6, Treat Injury +6.

Feats: Armor (light, medium), Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Sunder, Toughness, Weapon Focus (vibroaxe), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Support Goons (enough to provide one dedicated opponent per hero): Fringer 4/Scoundrel 4; IM +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 18 (+5 Class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 48/14; Atk +7/+2 melee (2d4+1, vibrodagger) or +9/+4 ranged (3d6 or DC 15 stun, blaster pistol); SQ Barter, illicit barter, lucky (1/day), jury-rig +2, precise attack +1; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +1; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, vibrodagger, business suit.

Skills: Bluff +7, Gather Information +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Listen +4, Pilot +11, Repair +8, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +5, Speak/Read/Write Basic.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Tier 3

Kluuus: Gamorrean Male Soldier 12; IM +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 20 (+8 Class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 106/22; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d10+8/19-20, vibroaxe wielded two-handed) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (3d8, 19-20, blaster rifle); SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; FP 2; DSP 4; Rep +2; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit (DR 3), blaster rifle, +1 mastercraft vibroaxe, vibrodagger.

Skills: Computer Use +5, Demolitions +8, Intimidate +6, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +6, Treat Injury +8.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, heavy), Cleave, Great Cleave, Heroic Surge (3/day), Improved Critical (vibroaxe), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Sunder, Toughness x 2, Weapon Focus (vibroaxe), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Support Goons (enough to provide one dedicated opponent per hero): Fringer 6/Scoundrel 6; IM +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Def 20 (+7 Class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 84/14; Atk +8/+3 melee (2d6+1, vibroblade) or +11/+6 ranged (3d8 or DC 18 stun, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Barter, illicit barter, lucky (2/day), jury-rig +4, precise attack +1; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +3; FP 3; DSP 3; Rep +5; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol, vibroblade, business suit.

Skills: Bluff +13, Gather Information +9, Hide +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +11, Listen +7, Pilot +11, Repair +15, Search +8, Spot +8, Survival +7, Speak/Read/Write Basic.

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Infamy, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

GM Aid #2: The Darkstaff

The darkstaff, a dead black rod about one meter long and six centimeters in diameter, is a powerful and heretofore mysterious Sith artifact which, some years ago, came into the hands of Len Markus. Markus, who never sought anything so much as power, was exactly the tool the darkstaff needed to make its way back into the galaxy. The darkstaff is a creation whose sole purpose is to destroy. It was responsible for the destruction of the homeworld of the Obilee (a world that, shattered, became Cularin's asteroid belt), and has wiped from existence other species throughout the galaxy. Everything about them has been erased from existence. The darkstaff, however, remains.

It was the intervention of the Jedi, shortly before the Battle of Ruusan, that allowed the darkstaff to be held in check for so long. A light side artifact, the Eye of the Sun, was created; the Eye had two purposes. One, to create. In that, it is the opposite of the destructive Sith artifact. The second purpose, though the Jedi did not quite understand it at the time, was to shield. The Eye of the Sun has the potential to shield Force-users from detection, to cause any searchers to look in a different direction; it was this shielding that allowed the darkstaff to remain hidden from the galaxy for so long, until Len Markus came upon it.

That the darkstaff is dangerous there can be no doubt. Darth Rivan, the Sith Lord who took up residence on Almas for some time and who built the Sith fortress that even now rises out of the desert, feared the darkstaff. He sensed its presence, even through the veil of the Eye, and did everything in his power to keep it from ever being loosed on the galaxy once more. Because he knew that if it were released, it could destroy everything. That, even the Sith Lord could not allow. If everything were destroyed, what would be left for him to rule?

The darkstaff plays on greed and ambition. No one comes in contact with it accidentally. It is found by those by whom it wishes to be found, and the power it provides is such that taking it from its wielder is extremely difficult. What follows are the defensive and offensive capabilities of the darkstaff.

Defense: The darkstaff is immune to all forms of energy damage, including lightsaber strikes. It has DR 40 and 200 WP, with a break DC of 80. It cannot be affected by any Force ability (including Move Object). An individual wielding the darkstaff is immune to disarming. The darkstaff has the capability to teleport itself out of threatening situations. (This teleportation ability is unable to function when the darkstaff is within 1 km of the Eye of the Sun.)

Offense: In addition to dealing damage as a mastercraft baton with an increased threat range (1d6+3/18-20), the darkstaff has a number of potent offensive abilities.

Lifedrain: On a successful melee attack, the darkstaff not only deals its normal damage, it attempts to ensnare the individual struck. When an attack succeeds, shadowy black tendrils emerge from the darkstaff and allow the wielder of the darkstaff to attempt to start a grapple without provoking an attack of opportunity. This grapple attempt does not require a separate touch attack, and is made by the wielder with an additional +8 bonus to the grapple check. Creatures up to one size category larger than the wielder can be grappled in this manner. Each round a creature remains ensnared by the darkstaff, it loses 1d6+2 points of Con (Fortitude save, DC 20, for half). A character reduced to zero Constitution by the darkstaff is slain utterly, its life essence having been drained by the artifact. On the wielder's action each round, he can elect to either release or maintain the grapple, following the normal grappling rules. The wielder of the darkstaff can take no other attack actions while wielding a draining darkstaff.

Animate corpse: The wielder of the darkstaff can, as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, cause the darkstaff to animate any nearby corpse. Individuals killed using the darkstaff's Lifedrain ability animate 1d3 rounds later. Animated creatures created by the darkstaff apply the template in GM Aid 3.

Festering Wounds: An individual who takes wound damage from the darkstaff cannot benefit from either the Heal Self or Heal Another Force skills for a number of rounds equal to the amount of wound damage inflicted by the darkstaff's strike. The wound pulses red and black, but does not provide any penalties beyond the usual for the wounded individual.

GM Aid #3: Animated Creature Template

The animated creature retains all of the abilities of the original creature (the “base creature”) except as noted below:

Defense: As the base creature.

Vitality points/Wound points: Vitality dice all shift to d10. Wound points are as the base creature, minus ten for each size category larger than M. (Note that while an animated creature has no Constitution score, it retains the wound points it had in life as a measure of how much physical damage it can take.)

Attacks: As the base creature.

Saves: -2 penalty to Reflex saves; uses Charisma modifier instead of Constitution modifier for Fortitude saves; +6 bonus to Will saves.

Skills: -2 to all skills. An animated creature created by the darkstaff that was a Force-user in life can only use dark side Force skills, and gains a +6 bonus (net +4) to all dark side Force skill checks. It is also treated as a dark side creature.

Feats: As the base creature.

Ability Scores: +2 Strength, no Constitution score.

Special Qualities: Can only be affected by Force skills/abilities that would affect droids or inanimate objects; DR 5 (+3 per size category over M); not subject to critical hits; Terrifying Presence; -2 penalty to initiative.