

Philology

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

Philology (fi-LAH-luh-jee), *n.* 1. The study of language, especially in a philosophical manner and as a science; the investigation of the laws of speech, the relation of different tongues to one another, and historical development of languages; linguistic science; 2. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge; Middle English *philologie*, from Latin *philologia*, *love of learning*, from Greek *philologia*, from *philologos*, *fond of learning or of words*

by Morrie Mullins & Christina Nichols

Edited by Jae Walker

Individuals have gone missing in the asteroid belt before, but when the individual is Len Markus, even Nirama begins to worry. Anything that can harm Len is a threat to the entire system – are the heroes of Cularin up to a search-and-rescue mission? An adventure for LIVING FORCE heroes levels 1-9. This scenario must be played after *Below the Belt 1 – Philanthropy* and *Below the Belt 2 – Philosophy*.

©2002 Lucasfilm, Ltd. & TM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. RPGA is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc, a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Used under authorization. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without the approval of the RPGA Network.

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

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

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

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

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

A note about the text: Some of the text in the module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the heroes.

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. Characters 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 and the player must choose which before rolling (Employment, Entertain, Gamble, or Profession). There is no pay for unskilled labor in the LIVING FORCE campaign. Per the rules, you may take 10 on Entertain or Profession checks, but not on Gamble.

When running this at Gencon 2002, use these (preconversion) rules. After Gencon 2002 (August 12, 2002) please use the rules above.

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

Issuing Force and Dark Side Points

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

Not everything is that extreme, and you don't have to jump from a moving speeder to earn a Force Point, but if a hero does something that makes you, the judge,

hear the music and say, 'Wow,' then the hero should probably get a FP.

The core rules (pg 179) define “Dramatic Heroism” as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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 details of what they are doing. Describe things in sweeping statements, and recall scenes from the movies when necessary to help players visualize what is going on. More than anything else, have fun.

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

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

GM Overview

The time has come for Len Markus to make his move. Just as Nirama existed for so many years in the shadow of Riboga the Hutt, so has Markus, in his role as Nirama's right-hand man, held his tongue, bided his time, and waited for the right moment to seize power in Cularin.

Having studied the inscriptions in a number of asteroids over the last few months, Len has discovered that a secret of great power lies hidden within I-9, an asteroid near the center of the belt, and he is determined to retrieve it.

What Len believes he has found is a means to utilize a variant of the Affect Mind ability on any creature, even one without the capacity to understand the speaker or who might be naturally resistant to such influences (like a Hutt, or a Toydarian). The notes he left behind are encrypted, but can be deciphered and offer at least a glimpse of what Len believed he was going after.

Some of this Nirama knows, though he wants independent confirmation of the conclusions his own people reached. After the incident with the Cell a year ago, he is very cautious, and not all that inclined to immediately discount Len. After all, Len has been his right hand for some time. Nirama is not a fool, however, and is more than a little concerned that Len did not share more explicit information on his agenda in the Asteroid Belt before he left. Nirama fears that he may be under the control of another agency – perhaps the Metatheran Cartel, or the Thaeirican Military, both of whom Nirama distrusts and despises.

Len, however, knows exactly what he is doing, and plans to use the device to supplant Nirama in the system

– and then some.

Unfortunately for Len, his research is flawed. His translations of dead languages from deep within the Belt contained errors, and his interpretation of the translations have left out several key points. For instance, the item he seeks – its name translates loosely as *darkstaff* – has nothing at all to do with affecting minds, and everything to do with warping and destroying them. This might not change Len’s approach to the search, but it might make him less likely to take the *darkstaff* out of I-9. It is only the last vestiges of order, the heart of a species the *darkstaff*’s power helped destroy millennia ago, that have kept it from lashing out at the galaxy.

The *darkstaff* is not an artifact of the Force. It was created to feed off the Force, and once it is out of its containment, it is one of the most dangerous and unpredictable objects in the galaxy.

It remains unclear what purpose it served in the world that once orbited Morasil and Termadus where the Asteroid Belt now lies. But it is not at all good that it has been found, and the secrets it was given so many years ago have fallen into the hands of Len Markus.

Encounter 1: Conspirators

At Nirama’s request – and for a payment of 500 dataries, in advance – the heroes of Cularin once again find themselves in an audience with the multi-eyed alien who controls smuggling in Cularin. He explains that his right-hand man, Len Markus, has gone missing, having left a great deal of information in encrypted files. Nirama is mounting a search, and needs individuals he can trust to add to the search teams.

Encounter 2: Instigators

The heroes are assigned asteroid I-9 as their search domain. They arrive, and immediately feel that the place is powerful in the Force. It is not stable, though; it moves around them in waves, and is almost nauseating to any Force-sensitive hero. There are two other ships docked in the main cavern of I-9. One bears the markings of the Brotherhood, a pirate faction. The other bears the markings of the Metatheran Cartel. As soon as they disembark their ship, the maddened pirates attack; their own ship has been drained of its power, and they want to escape.

Encounter 3: Defenders

Waves of Force energy continue to wash over the heroes as they explore the asteroid, in search of Len. The creatures that drained the power of the other ships did so because they felt the hostility inherent in the ships’ passengers (both ships, in reality, were brought to this place by the pirates; the Cartel ship was stolen by the Brotherhood some time ago). These creatures seek to defend the asteroid, and what lies within, but unlike some

denizens, do not actively try to harm those who come to the place with peaceful intentions. They mislead everyone; though, or at least attempt to do so, in the tunnels far below the asteroid’s surface.

Encounter 4: Seekers

Once the heroes come to an understanding (good or ill) of the shadow lurkers, they are led to a room of six shadows. One of these shadows leads to the dark center of I-9, where the *darkstaff*, the item Len sought, was kept. Some of them lead back, to other portions of the asteroid, and one leads to death.. The heroes must decide, based on a voice each of them hears in his or her head, how to proceed.

Encounter 5: Finders

Once they choose correctly (assuming they all don’t simply die), they find themselves passing through a corridor that is increasingly strong in the dark side. Everything grows clouded, and the waves of Force energy come more quickly; it is angry energy, and very much out of control. When they step through, into a small room that glows pale green on all its walls, those waves stop – and the Force is gone. In this place it does not exist, because this is where the *darkstaff* was kept, hidden away by the dark side. Only two other individuals have ever entered this room – Len Markus, who was here a short time ago, and who now has the staff, and a creature who made its way here centuries ago, whose life was sucked away by the *darkstaff*, and which now wants to take the essences of others as its was taken.

Encounter 6: Pursuers

After defeating the unfortunate guardian-creature, the heroes make their way out of the central room and receive a holoprojection from Len Markus. He has a bar of blackness in plain view, and taunts them, telling them that he is now the ultimate power in the universe. With the *darkstaff* he can control anyone, any time. With that, he departs in his ship. The heroes can make their way back to their ship and give chase. When they come within sight of him, shortly after clearing the Asteroid Belt, he is above Almas.

The dark side tried to destroy the *darkstaff* before, and was kept at bay. However, it never had a weapon the magnitude of a Sith fortress to do its dirty work before. When Len’s ship comes in range, the Sith fortress lashes out with a burst of dark side energy that removes Len Markus and the *darkstaff* from Cularin – and removes Cularin from the galaxy.

Encounter 7: Peace-keepers

In the aftermath of the explosion, the heroes must do

damage control on Almas. Len's ship exploded over Forard, and may have come crashing down in the city. If not, there is still a great deal of debris, both from orbit and thrown around dirtside by the burst of energy from the Sith fortress, that has caused a lot of damage in Forard. People are panicked, and it only gets worse when two ships arrive. First is Nirama, to find out what happened and offer his assistance. Then come the Jedi from outside the system, who have spent ten years trying to recover the entire star system – which for ten years completely ceased to exist. All of the space occupied by Cularin's suns, moons, planets, asteroids – everything inside the comet cloud – simply disappeared.

Important Note to Judges: At various points, we will present things like, “Will save, DC 10/15/20.” This refers to the tiers of the module; if you are running it at low tier, the Will save is DC 10, in this case. In middle tier, it is DC 15, and in upper tier, it is DC 20. All such sets of numbers should be read as “lower/middle/upper.” This module is a lot of things, so read it carefully. It is, more or less, the module that explains “why the universe changed” (the conversion module), as well as being the first module that is completely written using the RCRB (Revised Core Rulebook) and a means to move the entire campaign into the Episode II time period. If you had to eat it – we're sorry, convert your character and s/he was in the background while this all happened. One of the things to keep in mind is not to run the heroes over with the story. While key things will happen no matter what the heroes do – Len and his ship have to get blown up by the Force Lightning, for example – there are a lot of other things that they still completely control. How much damage gets done to Forard, how people handle the news that they have just missed ten years of the lives of people they love, how to prevent mass panic, how to deal with the threats left behind by Len, and by the creatures within I-9 – all of these are things that can, and should, be determined by the actions of the heroes.

Opening Crawl

Sometimes, darkness lingers.

The creatures in the Asteroid Belt are much more varied than anyone in Cularin might have expected. Most of them thrive in the darkness of the belt; some of them ARE the darkness.

Now, the creatures, or something else that makes its home in the dark places, have reached out and taken someone of importance – or have they...?

Encounter 1: Conspirators

Key ideas of this encounter: introduce the heroes to the problem(s) and let them begin to draw some of their own conclusions about what is going on before being sent off to search for Len

The heroes begin the event 500 credits richer than before, having been paid that amount – each – to come and speak to Nirama about a problem he's having. They message they received was simple:

I would speak with you about a matter of some importance. If you will come and hear what I have to say, I will pay you for your time. Further payment may be possible, if you show interest, but it will take more than talk. ~N

There will be no roleplaying of negotiations; that all occurred prior to the actual beginning of the event. Any hero who would not have taken 500 credits to come and speak to Nirama is welcome to have stayed home (without the money), and the player can either create a new hero who would be willing to go and listen to what is sure to be an offer of employment, or go find something else to do during this slot. Nirama isn't going to arm-twist (nor are we!), and the 500 is what they were able to get if they attempted to bargain him up; no one is going to get more than 500 credits just for showing up. That would be silly. Anyone who would prefer to have his or her share donated to some worthwhile cause (the Jedi Academy, for example, or the Cularin Children's Youth Support Network) can certainly do so; Nirama is more than willing.

The adventure begins in a waiting area outside Nirama's quarters, in his personal asteroid headquarters. The heroes are seated together, having either arrived together or separately; they were not allowed to bring their own ships to this part of the Belt (Nirama really doesn't want the precise location of this base known), though they were allowed to dock them elsewhere in the Belt, and can be ferried back to them to use on the job, if they so desire.

The setting is spartan, little more than comfy chairs and a few holo-paintings on the walls. Set the stage, allow the heroes to introduce themselves, and describe what they look like to the others. Once this is completed, read or paraphrase the following:

The blast doors in front of you slide open, revealing a room strewn with chairs and sofas. Nirama is seated on a bench at the far side of the room, a datapad in his lap. He glances up, his two sets of eyes drinking in every detail of your presence, and nods.

Many of the heroes have met Nirama before. Some of them, if they played the “Between the Worlds” trilogy, have even been in this very room. It was here that Nirama first received the heroes, in *TopWorld*. He seems tense; the thick fingers of his third hand (which is on the left shoulder, oriented toward the rear of his body) absently twirl a stylus he’s been using with his datapad as he talks.

Nirama is unfailingly polite, and greets any hero who has worked with or for him before by name. He treats everyone with respect, until they demonstrate that they deserve something else.

He offers the heroes beverages – almost anything is available, and will be brought in by one of a trio of astromech droids within 30 seconds of Nirama requesting it for his guests. Once everyone is settled, he gets down to business. The entire encounter can be run as question-and-answer, since Nirama, as ever, is not much on formality.

Why are we here? *I need assistance. One of my senior people is missing in the Belt.*

Anyone we’d know? *Len Markus.* [The heroes may have met Len before, in “*The Price of Business*,” “*UnderWorld*,” or elsewhere. Anyone with Knowledge (Streetwise: Cularin), or who has met him before, knows that Len is Nirama’s right-hand man, a near-albino Human who has long served as Nirama’s enforcer.]

And you have a group of search parties, and you’d like us to help? *I want your assistance, yes.*

You’ll pay? *Of course.* [The maximum amount that he is willing to pay is 500 credits/tier per hero. If it’s going to be a difficult negotiation, you’ll be able to tell, and you can start the offer lower. But the maximum is set.]

Can we use one of your ships? Can we use our own ship? *If you want to use your own ship, you can. If you want to borrow a ship, you can. Given recent problems – power cells failing at inopportune times – I will understand if you do not want to take your own ship.*

If we borrow a ship, can we check it out first? *Of course. You may run all the diagnostics you wish. I would expect no less.*

Where is he? *If we knew that, I wouldn’t need help.*

How many groups are you sending out? *You will be the eighteenth.*

Do you suspect foul-play? *I always suspect foul-play.*

Who do you suspect? *The Thareians, perhaps. Or the Caarites. Obnoxious creatures. I have no particular reason to believe them involved in this, other than my basic perception that they are both the*

scum of the universe.

Is it possible Len left on his own? *He likely did. But he should have reported in by now, if something hadn’t happened to him.*

When was he last seen? *Yesterday.*

You can’t track his ship? *No. That is one of the causes for concern. We should be able to do so.*

What information do you have about where he might have gone? *I have this.* [He hands the party the datapad he’s been studying, at this point. It is Len’s personal backup, taken from his quarters this morning to be analyzed.]

What other resources can you offer us? *Within reason? Anything.* [Game mechanic translation: He can loan them heavy blaster pistols, blaster rifles, power packs, medpacs, and things of that nature. He has no military-grade weaponry (light repeating blasters, blaster carbines, etc.) on hand right now, nor does he have any thermal detonators – though he does have both frag and stun grenades, which he will loan the heroes on the condition that any that get used will have half their market value deducted from the heroes’ final pay.]

Is it possible he’s betrayed you? *Anything is possible. I would prefer not to believe that. If you find evidence that he has... do not get too close to him. He is a very, very dangerous man.*

What kind of ship does he have? What’s its name? *Len has a custom designed ship – matte black and all sharp points and angles. Starfighter sized – it’s fast and deadly, not unlike its owner.*

What’s the status of the creature [either referencing the creature from “*Philanthropy*,” the sibilaari, or the shadow creature from “*Philosophy*”]? *I’ve got people looking into it, but nothing further has come up.*

Any word on why there were Caarites in the Belt? (Referencing the Cartel ship, and dead Caarites, in “*Philosophy*.”) *Many pass through here. What the Caarites were doing there, I don’t know. I can’t say that I’m sorry all of them didn’t make it out.*

What’s up with Yara Grugara? *The woman is an idiot. She is the journalistic equivalent of a space-slug’s trail. Offering her an interview was a mistake.* [This is in reference to an interview Yara conducted with Nirama. This interview was published on the Wizards of the Coast Website, on the LIVING FORCE page, and you are encouraged to review it prior to running the event.]

What is your agenda, if you don’t mind our asking? *I want what is best for Cularin. Now, don’t you want to look at that datapad?*

Nirama has already had his own people looking at the datapad, and they have managed to retrieve some information from it. There is a basic description of something Len was after, and a set of asteroids that he

speculated might contain it. The heroes can very well obtain more information, depending on how well they are able to get through Len's security.

What is needed, then, is a *disable device* check. Absenting anyone of the pure slicer variety, a *computer use* check is sufficient, though the DC required to get the same information based on a computer use check is proportionately higher.

Anyone who spends a charge from Baylan's datapad automatically gets all of the information below. Note that for checks with Len's pad, a hero can take 10, but cannot take 20 because of the possibility that all of the data in the pad could be lost if something went wrong. No more than 2 other heroes can attempt to assist in the check. Making a high-value check means the hero receives the information that corresponds to that check, and all information that is "easier" to obtain as well.

Nirama knows everything up through DC 20 on the *disable device* chart, so at a minimum, the best of the heroes should be given at least one piece of information that Nirama doesn't have. In other words... the heroes never see the chart, so it won't hurt to have the DCs get "morphed" a little bit to allow them to get information Nirama's people couldn't. In addition, there is more information in the pad than what is listed here; these are simply the most interesting things the heroes come across.

| DD DC | CU DC | Information Gained |
|-------|-------|--|
| 10 | 15 | "This datapad property of Len Markus. Unauthorized access is punishable by death." |
| 15 | 20 | "Search parameters indicate that object in question is located in one of approximately 20 asteroids." The asteroids are then listed by coordinates in the Asteroid Belt. |
| 20 | 25 | "I have been approached by representatives of the Cartel, who wish to claim territory in the Asteroid Belt. I do not believe N. will take kindly to this idea, and have yet to respond." |
| 25 | 30 | "Translations of glyphs throughout the Belt reference what I believe is, roughly, 'the <i>darkstaff</i> .' It sounds like an object of great power." |
| 30 | 35 | "I cannot find reference to a <i>darkstaff</i> in any of my files. It likely predates the settling of Cularin by several millennia." |

| DD DC | CU DC | Information Gained |
|-------|-------|---|
| | | Who, aside from the Tarasin, was here before Reidi Artom?" |
| 35 | 40 | The heroes find a file with scans of several thousand different images – glyphs from around the Asteroid Belt. Deciphering them will, in the estimation of the most computer-savvy individual in the group, take somewhere in the neighborhood of three months. |
| 40 | 45 | "Whoever possesses this item – this ' <i>darkstaff</i> ' – can, I believe, control the thoughts and actions of any living creature." |

Note: "DD DC" = Disable Device Difficulty Class; "CU DC" = Computer Use Difficulty Class; it is your right to scale the se DCs down for parties that are all low-level

The questions raised by Len in his datapad are not, largely, ones the heroes have ready answers to. Heroes who have Knowledge: Sith Lore (and this **MUST** be certified; there is no way to learn about the Sith, normally, in LF), may roll when they hear the term *darkstaff*. On DC 15/20/22, they are almost certain that there has never been a Sith weapon with that name. Otherwise, they are uncertain. The glyphs are not in any known language (and, while no hero in LF can read it anyway, for the same reason as above, it's also not written in the Sith language), which is why it will take so long to translate them. They are very ornate and complex, and it is unclear how one flows to the next.

Try not to let the information exchange drag on for too long. Nirama shares what he knows, he compares notes with the heroes, and then he gives them their assignment – they will be traveling to asteroid I-9, and searching it for any sign of Len's presence.

"He may have been there. He may not. If he was, I need to know. We have to find him. I fear he may have fallen under the sway of someone who does not have our best interests at heart, and I hope he can be found and brought home."

If the heroes need a ship but have their own pilot, Nirama provides a stock light freighter (pg 230, RCRB). If the heroes need a pilot as well, Nirama is happy to provide Teeloo and his ship (see Appendix A). This does not count as redeeming a favor from Teeloo.

Encounter 2: Instigators

Key ideas of this encounter: arriving at I-9, the heroes are greeted by maddened pirates and a pair of ships

that have had their power cells drained, and discover that the Force does not flow easily in this place

Whether they use Nirama's ship, or one of their own, doesn't matter. In either case, they are provided the coordinates, and can make their way to asteroid I-9 with no difficulty. Now is not the time for the pilot to shine; that comes later.

Scanning the asteroid – for life forms, or anything else – is possible. The individual manning the sensors needs to roll their *computer use*, and if they make a DC 10/15/20, they can detect life forms on the asteroid. Very faint, but definitely present. No count or type can be determined. Attempts to use the Force – Farseeing and the like – if successful, (DCs at your discretion) allow the heroes to determine that this place is strong in the Force, although it is not consistently light or dark. It is, however, unpleasant. As they set down inside one of the craters of the asteroid (they must go toward the interior to find a place that is smooth enough to land), give everyone who is near a viewport *spot* checks. Anyone succeeding at a DC 15 check notices a glint of metal as the ship settles to ground – there is another ship nearby.

The other ship is actually a pair of ships, both abandoned. One, the *Rightful Eran*, is property of the Brotherhood, a pirate organization in the system. Its name cannot be determined from a distance, and requires the heroes to actively go and investigate to learn of the ship. The second ship, behind the first, is the *Caarimon Splendor*, and is adorned with the markings of the Metatheran Cartel. Scans of the ships from a distance only indicate that there are no life forms on board, and that the ships are completely powered-down.

When the heroes leave their ship to investigate, read or paraphrase the following.

The air outside your ship is thick with moisture, tendrils of heavy fog clinging to your arms and legs, making it difficult to see where to put your feet. The shadows made by your glowrods shift and jump, and your stomach moves with them. The place feels... wrong.

Force-sensitive get another set of feelings entirely.

From a distance, you sensed that the Force was strong in this place. Somehow, that description falls short of what you're feeling now. It comes in waves – not the gentle presence that has so long occupied a place inside of you, but something that rushes in, threatens to overwhelm your senses, and then falls back into a pleasant stasis. Every rush threatens to wash darkness over you; every retreat brings you back to the light.

Trying to do anything with the Force while on I-9 is difficult, although it is more difficult in some places than in others. In this cavern, where the ships have been landing, use the following rules to adjudicate Force use.

When a hero attempts to use the Force, she must make a Will save (DC 10/14/18). If she succeeds, she can use the Force normally; if not, she must roll percentile dice, and you should consult the following chart to determine the outcome.

| % range | Effect |
|---------|--|
| 01-25 | The Force ability costs its normal vitality point cost, plus 1 wound point. This manifests in the hero bleeding from the eyes, ears, or nose (roll dice, or take your pick). This does not force a Fortitude save to avoid being knocked out, nor does it cause the hero to become fatigued or to suffer any other standard effects of wound damage. |
| 26-30 | The Force ability activates without any vitality or wound cost. |
| 31-75 | The Force ability activates, but costs double standard vitality. |
| 76-00 | The Force ability operates as normal. |

There probably won't be time to utilize Force abilities initially, though, since as soon as the heroes disembark and you set the mood, you can let them roll their *listen* checks (DC 10) to hear the screaming pirates charging them from the edge of the cavern.

Stats for the screaming pirates are included as DM Aid #1. They have been made insane by the *darkstaff* (though they cannot say why they are insane, they very clearly are). Their stat blocks reflect the following bonuses for having been driven insane: +4 morale bonus to attacks and Will saves, and +3 morale bonus to initiative. In middle and upper tiers, the insanity also confers the bonus feat Power Attack on all of the pirates. The goal of the screaming pirates? To get aboard a ship that actually works, since theirs have been completely drained, and GET OFF THIS ROCK. They are not in a mood to negotiate. Because the pirates are insane, using *friendship* on them stops them for one round – and on their next action, the insanity kicks in again, and they attack once more, trying to steal the heroes' ship. During the round that they are not attacking, they do not become lucid – they simply stand and drool.

Tactics, Lower Tier (Average Level 1-3)

Never, in any tier, throw more pirates at the party than you have party members. Remember, these guys are

min-maxed for combat. Not every hero is, so even a one-to-one fight may not be fair.

The thugs come out blasting, but their blasters give out after one volley (the shadow lurkers do not like these men) and they resort to either makeshift clubs, or punching. If they are completely disarmed, they resort to using their combat gloves, but they do not have the Martial Arts feat, so they will provoke lots of attacks of opportunity. (See pp. 157-8 SWRCRB.) The three named thugs – Detiz, Szep, and Limmiz – are present regardless, and if you have a larger group, you can include more thugs as well. This is not the point in the module where you are most likely to end up killing heroes, but this should be a very challenging fight – especially with the Force not working as it usually does for Jedi and other Force-users. Do your best to NOT kill anyone. Yet.

Tactics, Middle Tier (Average Level 4-6)

Again, use your judgment on how many insane pirates to throw at the heroes, but do not throw more pirates at the party than you have party members. Remember, these guys are min-maxed for combat. Not every hero is, so even a one-to-one fight may not be fair.

In this tier, they don't even bother with blaster pistols unless the heroes entrench and force them to fight at range. The pirates charge, swinging their vibroblades and using Power Attack (doing their maximum, 4 points) every time. If they are completely disarmed, they resort to using their combat gloves, but they do not have the Martial Arts feat, so they will provoke lots of attacks of opportunity.

Be sure not to tell the heroes how much you're power attacking for. 2d6+6 can take a lot of heroes out on a crit. You can knock them down, but again – don't kill them just yet.

Tactics, Upper Tier (Average Level 7-9)

These guys get substantially scarier at this tier, moving from one attack to three attacks. Again, they start with the melee charge, and only pull back if forced. None of them has more than one blaster pistol, but they will pick up pistols from fallen comrades and utilize their two-weapon fighting abilities that way, if forced to do so.

As with the other two tiers, include enough pirates to challenge the party, but not overrun them. Never, in any tier, throw more pirates at the party than you have party members. Remember, these guys are min-maxed for combat. Not every hero is, so even a one-to-one fight may not be fair. Use your judgment, but everyone *should* live past this encounter. Aside from the pirates, that is.

The pirates make useless captives. Their brains could not handle whatever they saw, and they babble about darkness, and six shadows, and creatures that move where there's no light. They respond to the name

“Len Markus” with fear, but no sign of recognition, and cannot tell the heroes where he is. Their minds are filled with fear, and any images the heroes are able to get (via *telepathy* or other creative means) are jumbled and dark.

There are a number of passages leading into the asteroid. Any prisoner pirates refuse utterly to go with the heroes, and beg to be put aboard a ship and taken far, far away.

When the fight ends, have everyone who is able to do so make *spot* checks. On DC 15 or higher, they notice a shadow slipping along the far wall, headed for one of the passages. Anyone who has played “*MidWorld*” may recognize this shadow as the same kind of creature that lived in the asteroid dark side that subsisted off energy packs from weapons and so forth. What are they doing here? Well, the heroes can either investigate them, or be investigated by them. The decision is theirs.

Encounter 3: Defenders

Key idea of this encounter: searching I-9 for evidence of Len Markus, the heroes interact much more closely with the shadow lurkers than they might have planned

Note that this encounter can be glossed over, if the first two took a great deal of time. It is primarily a roleplaying and information-gathering encounter, and in the grand scheme of things, is not the most central element of the scenario's plot.

The heroes, once they are here, should want to search for evidence of Len Markus. The two ships present – the *Rightful Eran* of the Brotherhood, and the *Caarimon Splendor* of the Metatheran Cartel – do not offer any clues. Both have been gutted for parts, and every powered source in both ships has been drained. There is nothing to find in either ship, although individuals with either (a) spacer background, or (b) medical background should notice that the seats in the command pod for the Caarite ship have been re-designed in such a way that makes them too large for the standard Caarite. While it is probably not something they should be wasting time on right now, the heroes can eventually learn that the *Splendor* was stolen from the Cartel some time ago.

Have everyone who is bothering with the search – either of the ships, or of the bodies of the pirates – roll Search checks. Heck, they can even Take 20. The individual with the highest result finds a datacard which, when fed into a standard datapad, produces the following message.

It is on I-9. Meet me there. ~L

None of the pirates (if they survived) know what “it” is, and they couldn’t tell the heroes if they did. Remember... they’re insane.

The next step in the search should take the heroes into the caves of I-9, which is where the shadow lurkers were trying to lure them to begin with. The shadow lurkers, as in “*MidWorld*,” have no harmful intent toward the heroes. In fact, they want to help, having seen the “bad men” come in and become, if anything, worse. (Translation: The pirates made it to Encounter 4, and chose poorly.)

Shadow Lurkers: Vacuum scavenger 3; Init +2; Defense 18 (+6 natural, +2 dex); Spd 20m; VP/WP 18/12; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, chilling claw) or +8 melee (touch attack energy drain on any weapon with a power cell) or +4 ranged; SQ darkvision, blaster resistance 10, shadow leap (can move from one shadowed region to another no more than 10 meters away), shadow use (+7 species bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks in shadow-rich environments); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; SZ M; Rep 0; FP 5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills: Hide +10, Move Silently +15, Disable Device +10.

Force skills: Telepathy +7.

Force feat: Sense.

Feats: Stealthy.

One important difference between these shadow lurkers and the ones encountered before is that these, by virtue of living for so long in the Force-flux environment of I-9, have gained minor telepathic abilities. These enable rudimentary communication with the heroes, usually in images, although a Force Adept of sufficient level can understand the “speech” of the creatures.

It is not as easy as that, though. No, the heroes must attempt to make first contact, and if that contact involves shooting at the shadow lurkers, energy cells begin to be drained.

As you make your way through the tunnels of I-9, the shadows pull back, revealing uneven rock walls roughly cut from the asteroid’s core. The further you go, though, the smoother the walls become, and you realize you may not be alone.

Spot checks would be good. The highest-rolling hero notices a pair of shadow lurkers – vaguely humanoid-shaped shadows, without any body – standing in the corridor ahead of them. The shadows then move off to either side and disappear among the shadows of the rocks.

The second-highest roll allows a hero to notice that

there are carvings on the walls. They are faint, but look a great deal like the glyphs in Len’s datapad. (If the heroes did not get access to that portion of his pad, describe the glyphs as very foreign, very old, very unfamiliar-looking symbols. Lots of wavy lines, lots of circles, lots of slashes. Nothing that looks like any written language the heroes have ever seen, or that is contained in any kind of translation software they happen to have. The Force Adept’s *Comprehend Speech* ability does not work with written or printed matter.)

The Force seems to be relatively normal, in these tunnels. It still comes and goes in waves, but the darkness is not nearly as threatening as it was in the cavern where they landed.

If the heroes seem at a loss as to what they should do next (and that’s possible, although there are a number of options they can explore here, including trying to puzzle out the glyphs, or trying to find the shadow lurkers), you may club them over the head as follows:

As you stand in the corridor, you notice that one of the symbols on the wall seems to be expanding. As you think this, though, you realize that it’s not the symbol – it’s the shadow just beside it. Before you can react, a man-size shadow steps out of a shadow that couldn’t have been more than ten centimeters in height, and stands before you.

The heroes can take any of a number of approaches here. The less hostile they are, and the more they attempt reasonable communication with the shadow lurkers, the more information they receive about how to pass the test in Encounter 4.

If the heroes attack (a silly option, since the creature simply appears and stands, waiting for them to make the first move; you should definitely watch anyone who takes this “shoot first” mentality, since they should be able to earn several Dark Side Points in any given event; but the lack of information that goes along with being dumb, in this case, makes awarding a DSP unnecessary), the shadow lurker flees, but not before slamming an image into their minds via *telepathy*. We went ahead and rolled the shadow lurker’s *telepathy* check, and it got a 23, so unless an unwilling target gets a DC 23 or higher on a Will save, they get the images described in Player Handout #1.

If the heroes attempt to parlay, the first attempt at communication on the part of the shadow lurker is still Player Handout #1, but now it waits around to see if they are willing to try to communicate with it.

The more effort they put into this, the more they get out. If they attempt something like *friendship* or if a particularly good Diplomacy check is made (with accompanying roleplaying), you can give the heroes

any or all of the information below. Remember, the shadow lurkers do not “speak” any known language (though again, a Force Adept of at least 7th class level can understand “speech” through the telepathic link with the creatures, which will expedite things somewhat). Basically, the shadow lurkers know the following, which should be primarily communicated through visuals and emotions. The heroes can pose their questions in whatever way they want.

- The black rod that sucks light is bad and scary. It is destructive. The lurkers fear it.
- A pale man came through here. (DC 5 intelligence checks to put the image of the pale man together with the fact that Len Markus is an albino; the image doesn’t have facial features beyond the paleness, because the lurkers don’t really pay much attention to mortal details like that.) He went to a room with six shadows, and then walked through one.
- The black rod is beyond the room of six shadows.
- The six shadows move. The shadow that is correct is the shadow of the lost. [There is no good way we can think of to convey this in images, aside from perhaps showing the image of the planet exploding again.]
- Guardians wait in the room of six shadows. [Suggested image: Vaguely shadowy forms, much wispier than the shadow lurkers, hovering in the air in front of six shadows against a rock wall.]
- The shadow lurkers, and the guardians, are the shadow remains of some of what lived on the lost planet. [Image: Creatures blasted with enough energy in the explosion of a world that only shadows remain.]

Perhaps obviously, heroes who elected to take the “shoot first, kill the thing we don’t understand” route, they’re obviously going to have more trouble in the next encounter.

The shadow lurkers cannot translate the glyphs. They can, however, direct the heroes to the room of six shadows – which the group that decided to shoot first will wander into, after chasing off their help.

Encounter 4: Seekers

Key ideas of this encounter: making their way through the appropriate shadow, after dealing with the guardians, the heroes find themselves in a dark place – in many ways

You have to duck your head to avoid scraping it on a low-hanging rock, and as you look up, you see that the tunnel has widened before you. On the far wall,

five meters away, are six vaguely door-shaped shadows. Between you and the shadows on the wall, a black mist hovers. In your head, in your native tongue, you hear ten words: “Life to death. Death to life. All else to madness.” Then the shadows on the far wall shift, moving one atop the other, until they settle into place once more.

Force-sensitive characters find this room uncomfortable. While the dark side is not exactly strong here, it does have an unmistakable presence – very much like soot in the air, or oil on top of a pond.

There are no life-forms present (other than the heroes), but there is a sentience in the mist at the center of the room. Several sentiences, actually. These are the guardians the heroes may or may not have been warned about in the previous encounter, and there is no way to get to the far wall without going through the mist.

Of course, we say that, and players are going to come up with a way. But it’s not corporeal, so cannot be affected by anything that is designed to move physical objects or air, and is so diffuse that the shared sentience that allows it to function is cannot be meaningfully altered by the *affect mind* (suggestion) power. Still, it may be possible for players to find a way to avoid it, and if so, well, far be it from us to punish creativity.

The interaction with the mist is one of the things that can be cut, for time purposes. If you have time, though, it’s interesting to hear what the heroes have to say.

When someone enters the mist, read the following:

Cold. The shimmering black around you is cold. Then you half-hear, half-feel something. It tugs at you... a question in a voice that sounds more alien than anything you can imagine, not so much a word as a questing thought... [[WHY??]]

In other words, why does the hero need to pass through? This is a chance for the heroes to explain their motives, to the guardians. It is purely a roleplay opportunity, and can easily be glossed over, but it is one of those chances for the heroes to move beyond “just doing” something, and to offer someone else a perspective on *why* these things should be done.

The shadows shift constantly, but examining them reveals that each has an image above it. The image follows its shadow as they shift. The images, in no particular order:

- A planet, lush and green and full of life.
- A planet, rocky and barren and small.
- An emptiness, through which small rocks

sometimes float.

- A planet, craggy and oddly shaped, which wanders back and forth, up and down.
- A frozen desert planet, orbited by a frozen moon.
- A swirling gas giant.

These are, in order: Cularin, Acilaris, the Asteroid Belt where the planet used to be, Morjakar, Almas, and Genarius. Individuals with *spacer lore, knowledge: Cularin*, or any other skill you deem relevant, can make a roll when they examine each of the symbols (if the players don't figure them out on their own). The DC to correctly identify Cularin, Acilaris, Morjakar, and Genarius, is 5/10/15. The DC to correctly identify Almas is 15/20/25, because the image was created a long time ago – before Almas, much less its moon Dorumaa, was terraformed. Before then, Almas was a desert, covered in ice. Process of elimination should allow the heroes to deduce that the remaining symbol represents the Asteroid Belt, and lacking deductive powers, you can give them a roll (whatever you feel is appropriate) to figure it out. Hopefully, that won't be necessary.

The clue means the following.

“Life to death.” Planets that naturally support life, lead to death. Going through the shadow of Cularin requires that the hero make a Fortitude save (DC 10/15/20) or be reduced immediately to zero wound points and dropped back into the room of six shadows. Making the save, the hero takes five points of wound damage, with all appropriate consequences.

“Death to life.” The correct path is through the shadow whose symbol represents the Asteroid Belt, the remnants of the dead planet. An individual with Dark Side Points who attempts to go through this shadow must make a Will save (DC 12/17/22 plus the number of Dark Side points the hero has) or be thrown back away from the shadow, taking 1d3 damage per Dark Side Point possessed. All others present get the definite impression that the individual in question was thrown back because of some impurity related to the dark side. Only current Dark Side Points count; an individual who has earned Dark Side Points, but atoned and bought them off, can pass through just fine.

“All else to madness.” Going through any of the other shadows – the ones corresponding to Acilaris, Morjakar, Almas, or Genarius – leads to the same effect as what happened to the poor pirates unless a Will save (DC 10/15/20) is made (saving negates the insanity). Individuals who step through one of the madness shadows emerge back at the entrance to the room of six shadows (regardless whether or not they made their saves), and if they failed their saves, they are now insane (+3 morale bonus to initiative, +4 morale bonus to attacks, +4 morale bonus to Will saves, virtual Power

Attack feat; these benefits remain until they are cured, which at the outside, is the end of the event, but should not take quite that long) and have a single-minded drive to accomplish their current goal – to find Len Markus. Until this is done, or until they get treatment, they are completely insane, and suffer a –4 penalty to any activity that calls for mental clarity (like piloting starships, slicing computer systems, and so forth; in other words, most skill checks), and cannot use any Force power that requires concentration or that would be disrupted by the Rage ability.

Once everyone is through, into the area beyond the shadow of the dead planet, read the following:

Everything is dark. Unpleasant. The dark side is strong in this place, though you know you made the right choice. It surrounds you. It wants to be in you, part of you.

Then, move to the next encounter.

Encounter 5: Finders

Key idea of this encounter: finding the room where the darkstaff was kept, the heroes also find an animated guardian that they must pass to exit the room; when they do so, they find a transmitter left by Len to tell him when someone came after him

The heroes find themselves in a long corridor, with a light far in the distance. The dark side is very strong here; it is, in fact, here in an attempt to destroy the *darkstaff*, but could approach no closer than the far end of the corridor. The dark side could not enter the room where the *darkstaff* was kept, in spite of years of trying.

It takes five rounds of walking (call it three if they elect to run after the first round) to get to the other end of the corridor, to a pale green light that awaits.

Each round, the power of the dark side grows, and there is no going back; all that is behind the heroes, after they step through the shadow, is a black wall. Any Force-sensitive hero gets the distinct impression that if they tried to use the Force here, they would be drawing on the dark side.

The first round the heroes are in the corridor, read the following.

The darkness calls to you, beckons. It would be easy to open up to it. It would be easy to give in. Everything would be easier if you gave in. Now, the waves of darkness are all around, and you can't concentrate... Do you embrace the darkness, to clear your mind?

The mechanic in this hallway is very much like a *fear*

effect. The emotions that swirl through this place are powerful – anger, fear, and hatred. If the heroes embrace the darkness, they will suffer no penalties – but they will gain a Dark Side Point. If, however, they press on, trying to ignore the darkness, in that first round they will take a –2 penalty to all attacks, skill checks, and saves. Tell them they have this penalty, and that you will tell them when it no longer applies.

In the second round in the corridor, the pull of the darkness gets stronger. The fear grows more palpable, and the heroes may break out in cold sweats. Ask again if they want to embrace the darkness, which promises relief; if they do, any penalty goes away, but they gain a Dark Side Point. Once a hero gains a Dark Side Point in this corridor, he or she is immune to further negative effects; the darkness is satisfied. But a hero who refuses to embrace the darkness in the second round has their penalty rise, from –2 to –4.

In each of the five rounds, the penalty gets progressively more severe. It goes to –6 in the third round, –8 in the fourth round, and –10 in the fifth and final round, when the darkness is practically screaming at them to be accepted. If, at any point, the heroes accept the darkness, the penalties go away – and they get the Dark Side Point.

Get creative. Scare them. They don't know what they're going into, and the heroes can't concentrate – and the players know that this lack of concentration is REALLY going to hurt them, in the fight to come. It is your job, as the gamemaster, to tempt them with the dark side. And if you give out some Dark Side Points, so be it.

Being steadfast and having faith in the Force is rewarded. At the end of the event, award any hero who made it the entire way down that corridor, who took the penalties all the way up to –10, a Force point. In addition, the penalties don't actually matter, because they disappear when the heroes step through the archway into the room beyond. In that room, there is no dark side energy.

That's the good news. The bad news? There is also no Light Side energy. The room beyond is Force-dead.

You step out of the corridor into a small room, a cube five meters to a side. The walls of the room are perfectly smooth, and glow pale green. In the center of the room is a pedestal topped with two U-shaped slots that might, at one time, have held a rod of some kind. Opposite the door through which you entered is another doorway, a pile of bones in front of it.

Something feels different here. Empty.

This is the point where Force-sensitive heroes may blow a gasket, as they realize that they can no longer feel the Force. This room was designed by the

darkstaff to protect itself, and no Force powers or abilities work here. This means, among other things... lightsabers that were lit suddenly shut off, and no lightsaber can be ignited here; no Force skills or feats can be used; and Force points cannot be spent.

It is, perhaps, the worst feeling a Force-sensitive hero can imagine. It's like being dead inside.

Only this room is affected. Heroes can step back into the corridor and use Force abilities, but they will, by necessity, be calling on the dark side. Make this clear to them, if they choose to do so. They can tell that they are not touching the Light Side of the Force, and will likely end up tainted if they continue (i.e., they will get a DSP).

Heroes who played “*MidWorld*” may recognize this room. It is very similar to the room, deep within dark side, that traveled throughout the asteroid. Of course, they probably won't have much time to reflect on this, since as soon as someone takes more than one step into the room, the pile of bones by the far door animate.

Notes on the combat to come: In all tiers, the bones belong to a creature that stumbled into this asteroid, long ago, and was trapped in this room. It died, and now, is animated by spirits like the guardians in the previous encounter. It looks like a pile of bones, with no discernible anatomy, and we have provided the base creature from which the stat blocks were built for your reference, not because what is left resembles these creatures at all. The “Animated” template has been applied to the creatures; for a copy of this template, feel free to contact lfplots@living-force.net.

Because of the long exposure to the *darkstaff*, the remains have an additional mutation. They become stronger when hit with energy weapons, especially blaster fire. Every two points of energy damage done to the creature actually gives it one vitality point – so shooting it is a bad idea. Give the heroes *spot* checks every time someone shoots the creature; on a 15 or higher, they notice that when the bones are hit with energy, they grow new spurs, and look like they're getting stronger, rather than weaker. The creatures all start off slightly damaged, and we have provided their maximum vitality in (parentheses) after the current vitality; the creatures cannot exceed their maximum vitality scores through the pseudo-healing of the energy weapons. Perhaps obviously (or not), the best way to kill these creatures is with raw physical damage. Beating on something with the butt of a blaster, for example, does club damage. Hopefully, it won't take too long for the heroes to figure out that this pile of bones – which doesn't want to move – is going to just have to be beaten down.

Lower Tier

Skeletal Massiff: Animated Predator 3; Init -1; Defense 16 (+5 natural, +1 dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 15(24)/12; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, bite) or +4 ranged; SQ Scent, can only be affected by Force skills/abilities that would affect droids or other inanimate objects, not subject to critical hits, Terrifying Presence; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; SZ M; F/R 2x2/2 m; Str 17, Dex 13, Con -, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 11; Challenge Code C.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +2, Jump +5, Move Silently +2, Listen +1, Intimidate -2.

Feats: Run, Track.

Middle Tier

Skeletal Nexu: Animated Predator 4; Init +6; Defense 16 (+2 natural, +4 dex); Spd 16m; VP/WP 22(32)/17; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d8+4, bite), or +8 ranged; SQ +2 Species bonus on Listen and Survival checks, can only be affected by Force skills/abilities that would affect droids or other inanimate objects, not subject to critical hits, Terrifying Presence; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +9; SZ M; F/R 2x2/2 m; Str 19, Dex 18, Con -, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 12; Challenge Code D.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +2, Survival +2, Intimidate -1.

Feats: Run, Improved Initiative.

Upper Tier

Skeletal Gundark: Animated Predator 7; Init +2; Defense 19 (+5 natural, +4 dex); Spd 12m; VP/WP 39(56)/20; Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+6, 2 punches) and +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, bite), or +13/+8 melee (1d6+9, 2-handed club) and +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, bite), or +11/+6 ranged; SQ Constrict (see description, p. 337 of the RCRB), low-light vision, run-by attack, Scent, +6 Species bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search, can only be affected by Force skills/abilities that would affect droids or other inanimate objects, not subject to critical hits, Terrifying Presence; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +9; SZ M; F/R 2x2/2 m; Str 23, Dex 18, Con -, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 13; Challenge Code F.

Skills: Climb +9, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Listen +8, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +4.

Feats: Blind-fight, Multiattack, Power Attack.

And yes, we know Gundarks normally have four arms. But this one has lost two over the years. Bones do, sometimes, crumble to dust. It does *not* re-grow those lost arms if it gets healed to full VP with blaster fire. And shame on you for thinking it.

Once the heroes defeat their foe (and it may not be easy, and staying alive will be much more difficult without the ability to use Force-based healing; *Heal Another*, because it is a Light Side skill, is the *only* Force skill that can be used in the dark side corridor leading to this place without earning a DSP, although

heroes do have a penalty of -4 to any *Heal Another* check because of the strength of the dark side in the corridor), they can enter the corridor beyond. In this corridor, they can feel the Force again (if they ever could), and it's still waves of light and dark, though the dark isn't as powerful. Sitting in the center of the corridor is a small metal box, with a blinking red diode.

No, it's not a bomb, although it certainly *could* be, if we were cruel authors. It's a transmitter, to let Len know when someone else came through behind him. A few seconds after they enter, the box whirs to life, and a holographic image of a very pale, light haired man – Len Markus – stands before them.

The man blinks. "You're not my people. That makes you even more expendable. I imagine you're here because of Nirama. Shame you won't be able to bring back his pet human, isn't it?"

Len isn't going to converse with them. He actually has the audio off, on his end. Give everyone *spot* checks. DC 10 is enough to notice that he is sitting in the cockpit of a ship, fiddling with the controls in preparation for take-off. DC 15 is enough to notice that behind him, on the control panel, is a meter-long black rod. Or at least, it might be a meter-long black rod. It manifests as a blank blackness, a meter long, in the holoprojection – there is no light for the holorecorder to capture around that thing.

"Blasted creatures." He slams a hand down on the control panel of his ship, then closes his eyes and concentrates. The engines whir to life as a twisted grin spreads over his colorless lips, then the ship begins to move and the projection ends.

Yes. That did look like Len might have been using the Force, if anyone asks. No one has ever heard of him being Force-sensitive, though, and it's hard to say what, exactly, he might have been doing...

Now, the heroes have to find their way back to their ship. It is their good fortune that, even if they were idiots and attacked the shadow lurkers, the lurkers dislike Len even more, because he has taken the *darkstaff*. This offers a means for the heroes to get to their ship, and give chase.

Encounter 6: Pursuers

Key ideas of this encounter: chasing after Len, the heroes aid in his apparent destruction, and provide the means by which Cularin may be saved

The heroes have been left with little, if any, way to get back to their ship. They can track Len (it's not that

difficult, since Len disturbed dust that hadn't been moved for countless centuries; the DC for the check to track him, if anyone has the feat, is only 15, and must be made 3 times to find where his ship had docked, in a side cavern off the cavern in which the heroes left their ship). We encourage you to encourage the tracking option, if possible. If the heroes lose the trail part-way through, a shadow lurker can appear and provide hints – the lurkers want their asteroid back, and want Len dealt with for stealing the *darkstaff*.

Another option is the use of *farseeing*. This is a standard “see the present” check, DC per the book, to give them an idea of how to get back to their ship.

Other creative options should also be encouraged. If they come up with something that should work, let them roll the appropriate dice, and if the dice agree, well, so be it.

But if all else fails, the shadow lurkers are more than motivated to help out. If the heroes have been pains, the lurkers want them gone. If the heroes have been kind, the lurkers want to help. They either lead the heroes to their ship, create a shadow that teleports them to a shadow near their ship, or something of the sort. Try to avoid this.

If time is seriously short, then the corridor that leads away from the strange green room, with the bony guardian, takes them straight to the cavern where their ship is docked. It shouldn't – based on how far they'd come, and in which direction – but the room moved while they were in it, and took them nearer the ship. This is the timesaving option, and should not be used if you have time, and someone who wants to use a skill or ability like tracking or *farseeing*, you should. This game is about the heroes doing things, after all.

Remember, after the heroes entered that green room, all the penalties from the dark side tunnel went away.

Once the heroes are in their ship, they can try to follow Len. If they contact Nirama (and they may have, by now; nothing says they can't, he just can't get to them, in the interior of the asteroid), he tells them to go after Len, and if they explain what he has, Nirama wants Len dead, and offers a bounty if the heroes mention that Len has something that was involved in the destruction of a planet. He's not going to negotiate it now – he is likely to be generous if Len is either captured or killed, though.

Now it's time for the pilots to shine. Len currently has +3/+6/+10 to his *pilot* checks. His distance from the heroes is approximately 10 range increments, because he is dodging in and out among the asteroids, heading for the edge of the Belt. He can be found on sensors (whomever is manning the sensors, and this can be multiple people, depending on the ship – it can be at least 2 if it's Nirama's ship – needs to make a DC 13/18/23 *computer use* check to locate his ship; it is a

one-man vessel on a course that will take it to one of the main paths through the comet cloud, and out of the system, passing very close by Almas on the way), and pursuit can begin.

It is not possible to get a clear shot on him while he's in the Asteroid Belt. What the heroes should be concerned with is catching up to him. This requires opposed *pilot* checks; if the hero pilot beats Len's roll (and you should encourage the use of “Heroes as crew” option on pp. 224-225 of the RCRB), they close by one range increment. When Len wins the check, he pulls away by one increment. He's going to be worse than the average hero pilot, so they should be able to close with relative ease. When they get within six range increments, Len breaks free of the Asteroid Belt, and heads for the edge of the system.

If the heroes have no pilot (ah, the ignominy; *Star Wars* without a pilot...), then skip the dice-rolling portions of closing. Teeloo is competent, and this is about the heroes, after all! When the heroes get to weapon range (or when you can describe them breaking out of the Belt and seeing Len's ship ahead of them, near Almas), they can open up on him.

There are two forms of that phrase, we suppose. One, they can attempt to open communication with him. Len laughs at them and threatens to kill their families if they interfere with him any further. He taunts them until they open fire, because honestly, he doesn't think they will. He also doesn't know that they have seen what the *darkstaff* can do.

Alternately, they can just open fire. He's a threat, and must be dealt with. Treat the ship they're on (if it's a loaner) as having two sets of turreted laser cannons of the kind found on the standard YT-1300 (see p. 230, RCRB). See Appendix A for stats on Teeloo's ship.

Len's ship is not armed with anything other than forward lasers. He can't shoot back, but he is quite intent on getting away, and continues to threaten the heroes with death if they don't leave him alone.

Give anyone who is not actively engaged in flying or combat a *spot* check if they're near a viewport. DC 10/15/20 allows them to notice swirling black clouds on the southern half of Almas – a huge storm if there ever was one. If no one notices this, that's fine.

On the round that the heroes do the 100th point of damage to Len's ship, he just happens to be passing closest to Almas. Read the following:

Your lasers slam into the rear of the smaller ship, and as they do, your ship begins to shudder. Silver-black lightning fills the sky of Almas, far below, and then shimmers out in an enormous silvery web that encircles the globe, crackling and dancing. The lightning pulls together in a ball of brilliant energy and shoots straight up, a bolt kilometers wide, and SLAMS into Len's ship!

Any Force-sensitive hero (particularly one with the Sense feat) knows immediately that this is an incredibly strong burst of dark side energy, Force Lightning on a global scale that must have been powered, somehow, by the Sith fortress on Almas. Even non-Force-sensitive heroes get chills from the lightning.

Beyond that, this would be a good time for Fortitude saves, DC 12/17/22 to negate the 2d6 minutes of blindness anyone who sees this burst will suffer. A pilot who succeeds at a DC 15/20/25 *pilot* check when the bolt comes crashing up, into Len's ship, provides all of the heroes with a +2 circumstance bonus to this saving throw.

When the heroes look again, Len's ship is in pieces that are falling toward the planet – along with lots of rocks and other debris, a great deal of which is headed straight for Forard!

Encounter 7: Peace-keepers

Key ideas of this encounter: keeping the peace in Forard – through falling debris, a crime lord, and several Jedi from outside the system with news of war

What the heroes could not know – because it felt to them as though no time passed at all – was that when the huge Force Lightning arced up from Almas, the release of dark side energy was great enough that it removed Cularin from the galaxy entirely. For a decade, only empty space occupied the area that had been the Cularin system. Planets, moons, suns, asteroids – everything simply disappeared. Jedi from the temple on Coruscant have been working at it for the entire duration of the event, and various other scholars have come and gone. A few short months ago, the galaxy fell into civil war – it is a very different universe than the one the heroes knew, and to them, no time has passed at all.

All of that information is necessary as a frame to this encounter. None of the citizens of Cularin – not Lanius, not Nirama, not the politicians on Cularin – have any idea. Only the Jedi from outside the system, who bring the news, know what is going on.

A number of things take place in this final encounter; how many of them the heroes are involved in depend on their interest, and the amount of time you have available.

Shooting at Debris (Optional)

A great deal of debris is falling out of orbit. Much of it burns up on re-entry, but some of it may pose a threat to Forard. The heroes are welcome to attempt to shoot any such threats and break them up before they hit the ground. Treat dangerous meteors and debris as having

Defense values of 10, and variable values of hardness and wound points. If your heroes really haven't had enough shooting in the event thus far, this is a good way to get the urge out of their systems.

Calming the Throng (Optional)

Time permitting, the heroes may find that when they land, the people are in a panic. This is not too surprising, given that the dark side of the Force just unleashed an enormous amount of energy into the atmosphere of Almas. The people need to be calmed, either by roleplaying (use of *diplomacy*, etc.) or judicious use of abilities such as *friendship* or *affect mind* on key individuals in the panicked crowd. If the heroes really haven't felt like they had the opportunity to roleplay or make a difference in the event, this is a good time for them to stop a rampaging mob, and protect innocent lives. This is free form. Be creative.

Searching the Area

A thorough search of the area is conducted, with or without the heroes. If they choose to participate, have them roll *search* checks. It is permissible to take 20 on this check. The hero who obtains the highest result locates the remains of Len's ship on the outskirts of Forard. There is no sign of Len's body – not even any blood – nor is there any sign of the *darkstaff*.

Talking to the Jedi

Master Lanius himself is making his way through the streets of Forard, assisting in healing anyone who was injured by falling debris or who was harmed by the jostling crowds of panic-stricken citizens. He looks paler and more distracted than usual, and gratefully accepts any offer of assistance in healing. He does not know what happened; he was in meditation, then he felt an enormous surge of power from the far side of the planet, then the air around him came alive. He attempted to use *farseeing* and the result, in his words, ***"It... was... was like seeing everything at once. Past, present, and future, all forced into a space smaller than the head of a pin. I nearly lost consciousness."*** He is fine now, physically, though the experience clearly shook him. Most of the Jedi from the Academy are making the rounds, assisting the injured and keeping one another refreshed.

If any of the heroes are suffering from insanity, Lanius finds Mother Missira, the Tarasin matron who lives at the Academy, and has her prepare an herbal cure. It tastes awful, but is able to work since Len's ship was apparently destroyed and the madness has abated, if only a little.

Arrival of the Ships

Once the heroes have shot the debris and/or calmed the crowds, and when the initial search and attempts to talk

to the Jedi have been completed, a pair of ships arrives.

A commotion to the north announces the descent of a pair of ships. One is Nirama's personal yacht; the other bears the markings of the Jedi temple on Coruscant. The crowd mills, then pulls back from Nirama's vessel as the crimelord himself descends the ramp.

From the other vessel, a trio of Jedi emerges. In the lead is a human female, tall, with light red hair in a braid that descends halfway down her back, and lightsaber-blue eyes.

Nirama has come to find out what happened, in the pursuit of Len. The other Jedi are envoys from the main temple. Their leader may be familiar to any hero who has played "Coruscant Dawn." Give any hero who has played that event an intelligence check (DC 10/13/16). Succeeding in the check means that they recognize the leader – or think they do, at least. She looks like Devan, the young Jedi Knight who met and escorted them on Coruscant. This woman, though, looks ten years older than Devan.

It is, however, her. Heroes who recognize and approach her, she greets by name, with a look of mild wonder – after all, she's ten years older than she was when last they met, but the heroes of Cularin have hardly aged at all.

What Nirama knows:

- We lost Len's transponder signal over Almas.
- If there is no body, I can't pay the bounty.
- I will find that Hutt slime, and I will kill him myself, if need be.
- You will be paid double our agreed-upon amount. I am indebted to you.

Devan's news is substantially more complicated. Master Lanius steps from the crowd, and Lanius, Devan, and her entourage head for the Academy to speak privately. They invite the heroes along, because they have intimate knowledge of what just occurred.

Once you all arrive at Lanius's chambers and the doors have slid shut, he turns to the head of the Jedi delegation. "Devan – your pardon. Master Devan, what happened?"

"The short form? We aren't exactly sure."

Someone should prompt her for what she does know. If none of the heroes do so, Master Lanius does.

(If the heroes did not fire at Len, substitute a comm signal, or whatever makes sense based on their actions – the point is that it is due to the heroes of Cularin that the system was saved.)

"Ten standard years ago, by the galactic calendar, Cularin ceased to exist. All of the planets, all of the moons, all of the asteroids – everything, and everyone, inside your comet cloud – vanished. Where the system had been was nothing. Empty space.

"For ten years, the Jedi and a team of scientists have worked to find Cularin. There was no death that we detected, just a surge of dark side energy strong enough that it nearly hospitalized Master Yoda. He saw that the people of Cularin survived, but were no longer in the galaxy. Not as we knew it.

"I wish I could say it had been a flash of brilliance or a leap forward in technology that brought Cularin back, but it wasn't. There were two signals in the instant Cularin disappeared. One was the enormous burst of dark side energy. The other, mostly masked, was a burst from a laser cannon. We were able, only a short time ago, to actually detect and scan that burst, and no sooner did our scanners lock onto it than Cularin reappeared. I have a suspicion you might know something about that burst." She looks directly at your group.

The text can be changed, if the heroes attempted to talk, rather than shoot, at Len, but the bottom line remains the same. The signal that the heroes created that coincided with the destruction of Len's ship is what allowed all of Cularin to return from whatever strange time vortex the interaction of the dark side energy with the *darkstaff* created. It gave the scientists outside Cularin something to "latch onto," which allowed the system to slip back into temporal phase with the rest of the universe.

One other thing that Devan tells any Jedi hero...

"We have need of Jedi, to aid in the conflict. Many of you will remain here, to train the next generation of Jedi Knights. But we will be taking all but two Jedi Masters from Cularin, and giving them rank in the Army of the Republic by order of the Supreme Chancellor. Master Lanius and Master Kirlocca will oversee the Jedi Knights who do most of the training, here; all other Jedi Masters must do their duty to the Order, and to the Republic we serve."

In other words... any hero who takes the Jedi Master prestige class is immediately retired, because the hero has gone off to serve in the Clone Wars.

Conclusion

Ten years, lost. A galaxy at war. A system destined to struggle to rediscover her place, with a senator who

has been busy on Coruscant, representing a lost constituency for ten years. No trace emerges of the mysterious darkstaff, and no body is found for Len Markus. Nirama, at least, seems to believe him alive – if the 1,000,000 credit bounty he offers has any meaning at all.

When you woke up this morning, the future seemed years away. Now, without warning, the future has arrived.

More will become clear, about Cularin, about her role in the Clone Wars, and about what has happened in the absence of the heroes, in future events.

Players who wish may roll percentile dice to see what has happened in their absence. A lot can change, in ten years. This is not required, and players may NOT examine the chart prior to deciding whether to roll. Once they decide, and roll, they are stuck with the results – good or ill.

Happy conversion!

Here Ends, “Philology”

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 (600 XP for core LF plot scenarios, 350 for non-core LF scenarios).
- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-400 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the 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 discover the secret of the *darkstaff* without earning the enmity of the shadow lurkers? If so, each hero who survived receives 600 XP.

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

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Possible Experience: | 1,000 XP |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|

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 discovering the secrets of the darkstaff, but attacked the shadow lurkers on sight and alienated them, award them ¾ adventure experience.

Loot Summary

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it. This is a house rule that overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario.

From the pirates

Vibroblades, vibrodaggers, blaster pistols, blast helmets & vests, combat gloves (# equal to # of pirates present).

From Nirama

500 credits, plus double any agreed-upon payment (not to exceed 1000 credits/tier per hero)

Favor of Nirama – Illicit Goods Assistance: Nirama recognizes the hero named above as one who has done him a significant service. To show his appreciation, when the hero wishes to acquire something...difficult...to obtain, Nirama has arranged for his organization to ease the hero's path. In game mechanic terms, this provides a one-time +10 circumstance to a Diplomacy check made to acquire illicit or restricted goods.

From the Jedi

Appreciation of the Jedi: The hero named above has been recognized by the Jedi as doing significant good in the service of the system. In any interaction with Cularin Jedi, this hero will at least be given the benefit of a doubt, no matter how bad things may look.

Everyone who goes through this event should end up gaining at least one DSP, or one Force point, in Encounter 5.

Player Handout 1: What you see in your mind's eye

...a chart of a solar system...six planets, one far out of the plane of the others...

...a gas giant, visible at noon near the horizon, her colors bright and glorious...

...a humanoid creature, in a protective suit of some kind, carrying a meter-long black rod; the rod seems to suck light from the room around it...

...the black rod, fitted into a huge machine, a panel slamming shut, the machine whirs to life...

...a planet shudders...

...waves rise...

...mountains fall...

...an explosion, and terror, and painful silence...

...a chart of a solar system...five planets, one far out of the plane of the others, and an asteroid belt ...

Appendix A: Important Non-Player Characters

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

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

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

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

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

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

GM Aid #1: Insane Pirates (Encounter 2 Combat Stats)

Lower Tier (Average Character Level 1-3)

Detiz, Szep, Limmiz (and friends, potentially): Insane Male Human Thugs 1; IM +5; Def 13 (+2 dex, +1 class); Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP -/15; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, makeshift club) or +7 melee (1d3+4, combat glove, no crits possible) or +3 melee (2d6+2, vibroblade), +7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ insane, DR 2 (armor); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +7; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Profession (Pirate) +5, Speak Basic.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols), Armor (light), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: blaster pistol, blast helmet & vest, vibroblade, vibrodagger, combat gloves.

Middle Tier (Average Character Level 4-6)

Detiz, Szep, Limmiz (and friends, potentially): Insane Male Human Thug 2/Soldier 2; IM +5; Def 15 (+2 dex, +3 class); Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP 21/15; Atk +11 melee (2d6+2, vibroblade) or +10 melee (1d3+4, combat glove, no crits possible), +10 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ insane, DR 2 (armor); SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +7; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Profession (Pirate) +6, Demolitions +2, Repair +3, Treat Injury +2, Pilot +5, Speak Basic.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, vibro-weapons), Armor (light), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus: Vibroblade, Combat Reflexes.

Equipment: blaster pistol, blast helmet & vest, vibroblade, vibrodagger, combat gloves.

Upper Tier (Average Character Level 7-9)

Detiz, Szep, Limmiz (and friends, potentially): Insane Male Human Thug 2/Soldier 5; IM +6; Def 18 (+3 dex, +5 class); Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP 50/15; Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+2, vibroblade, on-hand) and +11 (2d4+1, vibrodagger, off-hand) or +11/+11/+6 melee (1d4+4, combat glove, 20) or +14/+9 melee (2d6+2, vibroblade), +14/+9 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ insane, DR 2 (armor); SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +8; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Profession (Pirate) +6, Demolitions +5, Repair +8, Treat Injury +3, Pilot +11, Speak Basic.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, vibro-weapons), Armor (light), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus: Vibroblade, Combat Reflexes, Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Martial Arts, Power Attack (virtual feat resulting from being insane).

Equipment: blaster pistol, blast helmet & vest, vibroblade, vibrodagger, combat gloves.

Note that only in upper tier can the insane pirates actually score a crit with their punches, and they do not provoke attacks of opportunity in this tier either, though they do in both lower and middle tiers. The preferred attack mode in upper tier is vibroblade-vibrodagger, beginning with a Power Attacking charge on someone who looks like a threat. Only one attack on the charge, so it will be at +9 when they Power Attack for 7 (so, damage will be 2d6+9; scary, huh? Fudge the dice if you accidentally crit on this attack, you don't want to make it too ugly too quickly).

GM Aid #2: OPTIONAL “While You Were Out”

Here’s how this works. Ask each of the players to consider the following...

It has been ten years. A great deal has happened in the galaxy, including the recent onset of a civil war. In that time, people you knew outside of Cularin have changed. Lives have begun, lives have ended, fortunes have been made and lost. IF YOU SO DESIRE, you may roll percentile dice to find out what kinds of things have happened to people you know and love, who were not in Cularin at the time of the shift. You are not required to make this roll, but if you do, the results are binding. Everyone who wishes to roll will roll, and I will secretly record your results. Once the first result is read, no one else may roll.

Then give them a minute to think about it. For those who want to roll, find out whom they know outside of the system – family, friends, etc. Find out if any of their relatives are dead (we don’t want to go killing off relatives who were already dead, after all), ages of siblings, and so forth. Note that if some of the heroes have family members who are also LIVING FORCE heroes (that is, player characters), they were *in* Cularin at the time of the shift.

If you get duplicate rolls, re-roll (aside from the “everyone is fine” option; that can occur multiple times). Share the love.

| % roll | Effect | % roll | Effect |
|--------|---|--------|---|
| 01 | Your parents (or a sibling, or someone else who was alive) were killed in a shuttle crash on Corellia. 20,000 credits in life insurance has been deposited to your account. | 46-50 | Several outstanding debts have accrued significant interest in your absence. You will not be able to finance anything (ships, droids, etc.) for one year (real-time) after getting back. Pay cash, or get nada. |
| 02-05 | Your life, and “untimely death,” was the subject of an underground holovid circulated through the Outer Rim five years ago. Most of the details were wrong – well, all of them – but at least they got your name right. | 51-55 | A poem describing your beauty (whether you’re male or female) was written by an admirer after you disappeared. Every time you encounter an NPC from your homeworld, roll 1d20; on a 1 or 2, they start spouting bad poetry about you. |
| 06-10 | While you were gone, a beloved childhood pet passed away. Poor Fluffy... | 56-60 | Marko, your 15-year-old cousin, died last year from deathsticks. |
| 11 | Roll again. If result is 38, you learn that someone attempted to slice all the funds out of your accounts in your absence, but failed, accidentally increasing your net worth by 5,000 dataries. If the result is not 38, there is no effect. | 61-65 | A younger sibling you barely knew was taken for training at the Jedi Temple on Coruscant. Four months ago, she was killed in a strike against the planet. |
| 12-15 | The warrant for your arrest on Coruscant is revoked, since you clearly could not have committed the string of robberies seven years ago. The search begins for your evil twin. | 66-70 | Someone co-opted an image of you to use in a holo-simulation. No one you meet believes you’re real. Subtract 2 points from your reputation score (minimum of zero). |
| 16-25 | Two members of your family have disappeared, and rumor has it they have joined the Separatist movement. | 71-75 | You’re an aunt (or uncle)! |
| 26-30 | A rich uncle died, leaving you 1 million credits. Of that million, your family has managed to not spend 10,000. | 76-80 | Upon your return, 10,000 credits is deducted from your accounts to pay fines against your rebellious, troublemaking siblings. If you don’t have 10k, it’s all gone. |
| 31-37 | Two words: Library fine. You owe 6,000 credits to an info depository on Coruscant. | 81-95 | Everyone is fine. Your family and friends are going to be happy to have you back. |
| 38 | Roll again. If result is 11, someone sliced your accounts while you were gone, and you are dead broke. Otherwise, there is no effect. | 96-99 | Your parents bankrupted themselves paying for a continuously-rotating holo-billboard of your face on Coruscant. For ten years, it rotated. Add +3 to your reputation, and watch people gawk at you. |
| 39-45 | On a visit to the Outer Rim, a friend you grew up with was captured, along with his wife, and sold into slavery by the Hutts. | 00 | An investment you made paid off in merchandise. To learn the specifics, your judge must return the critical event summary to us, and you must mail a SASE to LFAdmin at PO Box 838, E. Lansing, MI 48826. |

Critical Event Summary

Philology

1. Did the heroes attack the shadow lurkers on sight?

Yes

No

2. Did any heroes die in the challenge in Encounter 4?

Yes

No

If so, list player name, character name, and RPGA # below.

3. Did any of the heroes get the 00 result on the "While You Were Out" table? If so, list player name, character name, and RPGA # below.

Convention Coordinator:

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

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

Or email to: LFPlots@living-force.net

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

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