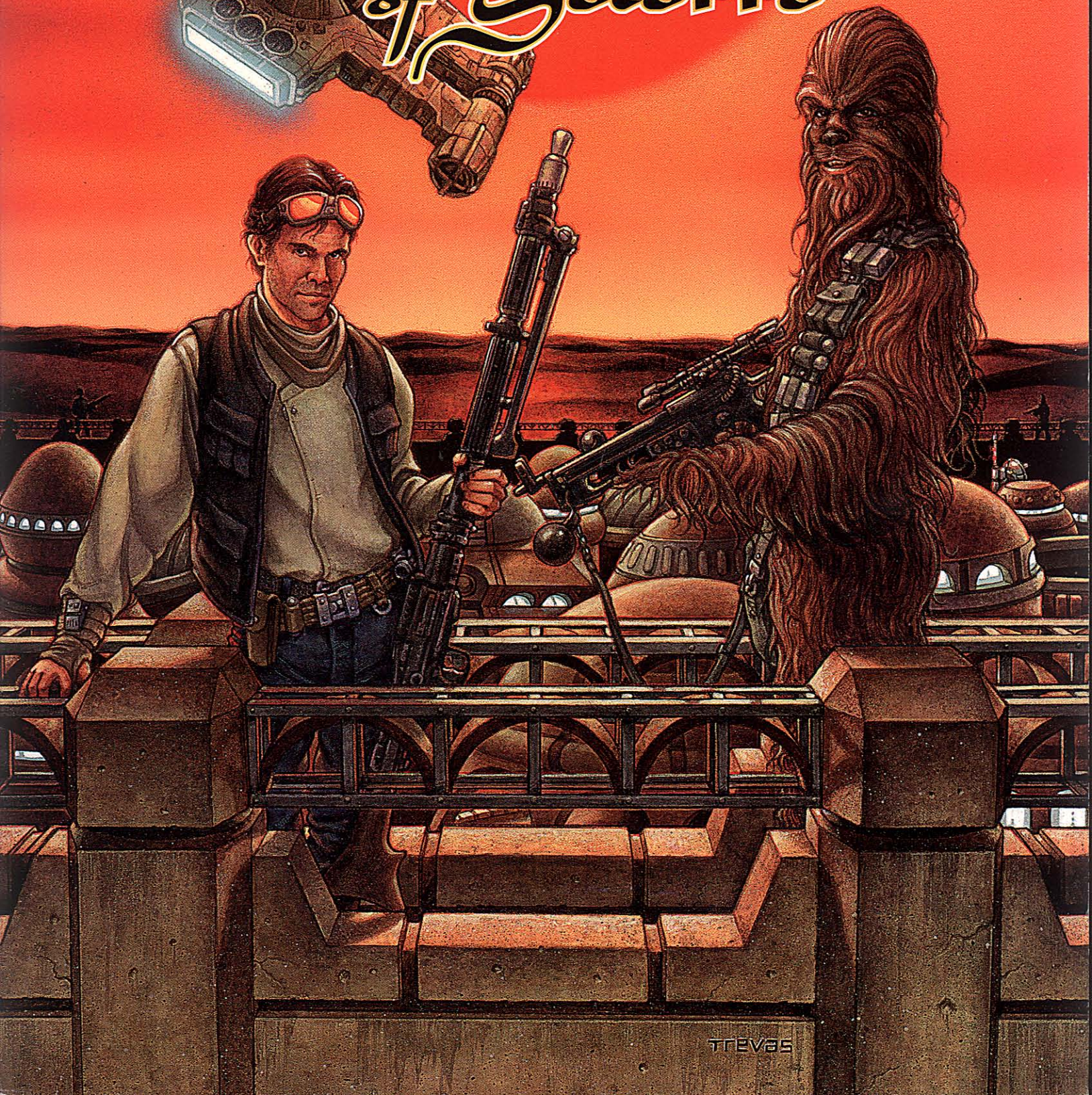


**STAR WARS®**

# *The Black Sands of Socorro*





# STAR WARS®

## XXX *The Black Sands of Socorro* XXX

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# STAR WARS

• Prologue •



**From:** Idris Ro  
**To:** Jobany Cyrs  
**Subject:** Socorro Acquisition  
**Confirmed:** REC'D

Jobany,

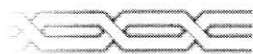
The Alliance is commissioning your talents in locating an appropriate world for garrison relocation. The speed of acquisition is unhurried, but that could change without notice.

There is some discussion about the world of Socorro. High Command asks that you explore this possibility. Your fee has been approved and will be forwarded as per our agreement when the datafile is complete and transmitted.

—Idris

"If there is a dark side to this galaxy, Socorro is on the hind side of it. Far beyond the notice of dominions large and faceless—where a man's word and the sweat of his brow are worth more than his scrip. This is truly a most splendid place to be."

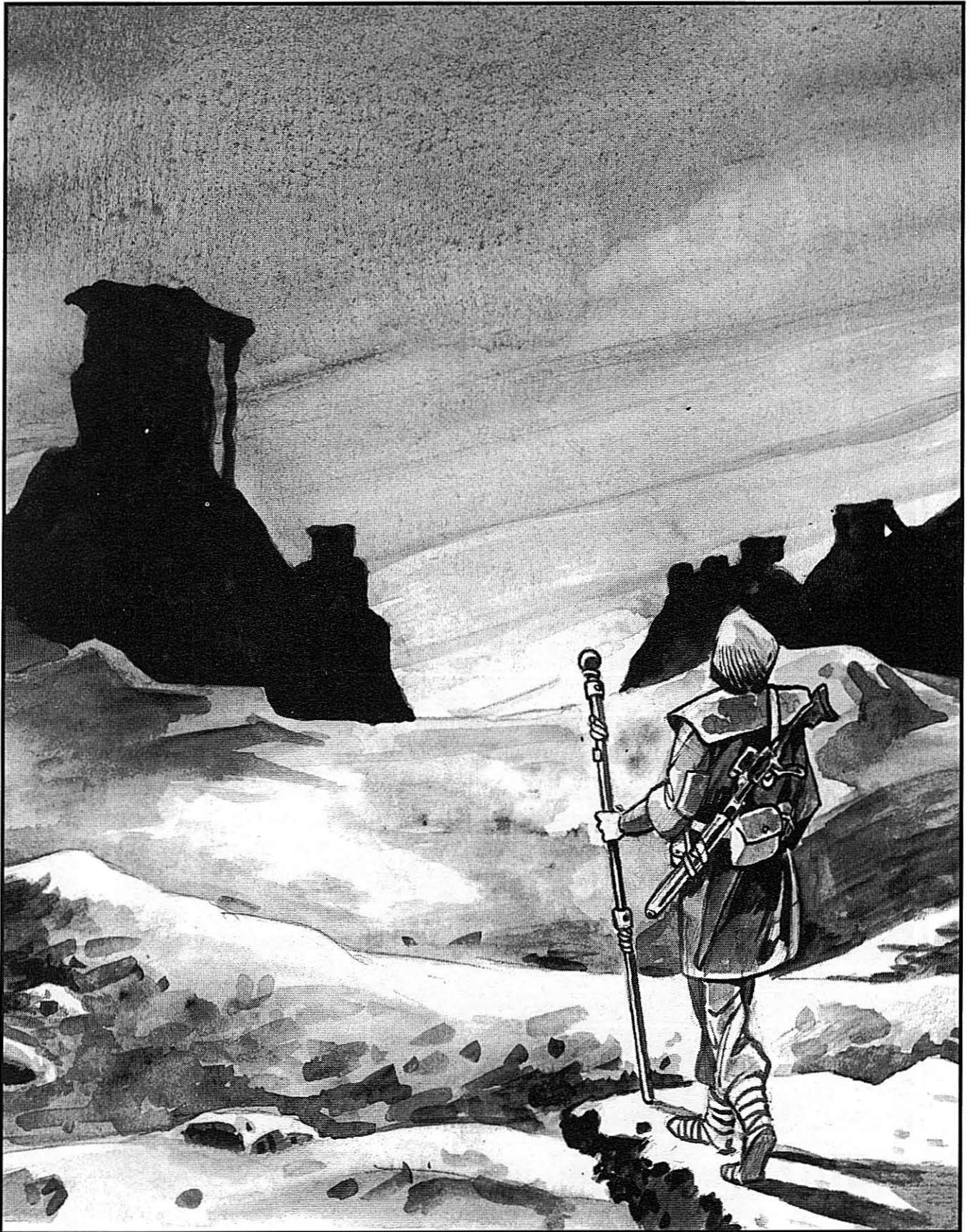
— Taken from the datapad journal of the colony historian and first scout, Kirr Cyrs





# STAR WARS®

• *The Black Sands of Socorro* •



Storn Cook







## FROM THE DATAPAD JOURNAL OF JOBANY CYRS:

Where do I begin, Idris? In the past? In the now? Socorro has been the home of my family for numerous generations. Though I've been away for some time, I am bound by some inner power that emanates from this strange planet. And I return every few years to sit in the black ash of its surface, to feel the heat of the distant red giant that dominates this system, and to relive the excitement of the first civilized humans to ever lay eyes on this desolate, lonely world.

My ancestor, Kirr Cyrs, once stated that all things born of Socorro are inevitably caught up in an intricate web of life here; in time, as life wanes, those that leave must return and render themselves unto the black sands of their birthworld. It is here in these ever-shifting dunes of shadow and ash that the past and present intermingle in such a way as to be indistinguishable.

As I stare into the vast expanse of the Doaba Badlands, I am reminded of just how vulnerable I really am. Within these seamless black tracts of desert are active underground volcanoes, hidden sand wells, and deadly gas fields. And yet, despite the hardships of this planet, people still live here, surviving as they did some thousands of years ago.

Soco-Jarel Spaceport and the city of Vakeyya are both testimonials to the advancement of civilization on this often uncivil world. Within those boundaries, spacers and native tribesmen walk the streets as easily as you and I might walk down the corridors of a Rebel garrison. These are kindred spirits, Idris, in more ways than any being could know or comprehend.

If you are to be welcome here, you must be willing to understand.





# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •

### Jobany Cyrs

Type: Scout

**DEXTERITY 2D+2**

Blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D+2, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D, running 5D

**KNOWLEDGE 4D**

Alien species 7D, cultures 6D+2, languages 6D+2, law enforcement 6D, planetary systems 7D+1, survival 5D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Astrogation 6D, communications 5D, sensors 5D+2, space transports: Pathfinder 7D+2, starship gunnery 6D+2, starship shields 5D+1

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Con 4D, gambling 5D, persuasion 4D+2, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 5D+2, stamina 5D

**TECHNICAL 2D+1**

Computer programming/repair 6D, security 5D+1, space transports repair 6D+2, starship weapon repair 5D

**Force Points: 2**

**Character Points: 9**

**Move: 10**

**Equipment:** Comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D), blaster rifle (5D), datapad, *Outward Bound* (scout ship), 350 credits.

**Capsule:** Jobany Cyrs is a freelance scout. A wanderer and accomplished traveler, he has a fondness for the ideals of the Rebel Alliance and works in earnest to seek out and appropriate worlds for bases. Only 23 years old, he is one of the finest scouts employed by the Alliance and one of the most successful. Fair-haired and handsome, he dresses in the typical garb of a smuggler and idolizes that type of dangerous lifestyle.

Coming from a long line of scouts and colonists, Jobany is something of a romantic. He finds nostalgia in nearly every aspect of life. As a result, his reports tend to be more travelogue than objective reconnaissance. He is an expert on alien cultures and enjoys immersing himself into strange situations.

### Outward Bound

**Craft:** Modified Vangaard

Pathfinder

Type: Scout ship

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 36 meters

Skill: Space transports:

Pathfinder

Crew: 1

Passengers: 2

Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons

Consumables: 6 months

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: x15

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D

Space: 4

Atmosphere: 350; 950 kmh

Hull: 3D+1

**Shields:** 3D

**Sensors:**

Passive: 30/0D

Scan: 45/1D

Search: 60/2D

Focus: 5/3D

**Weapons:**

**One Double Laser Cannon**

Fire Arc: Turret

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 2D+1

Space Range: 1-5/15/20

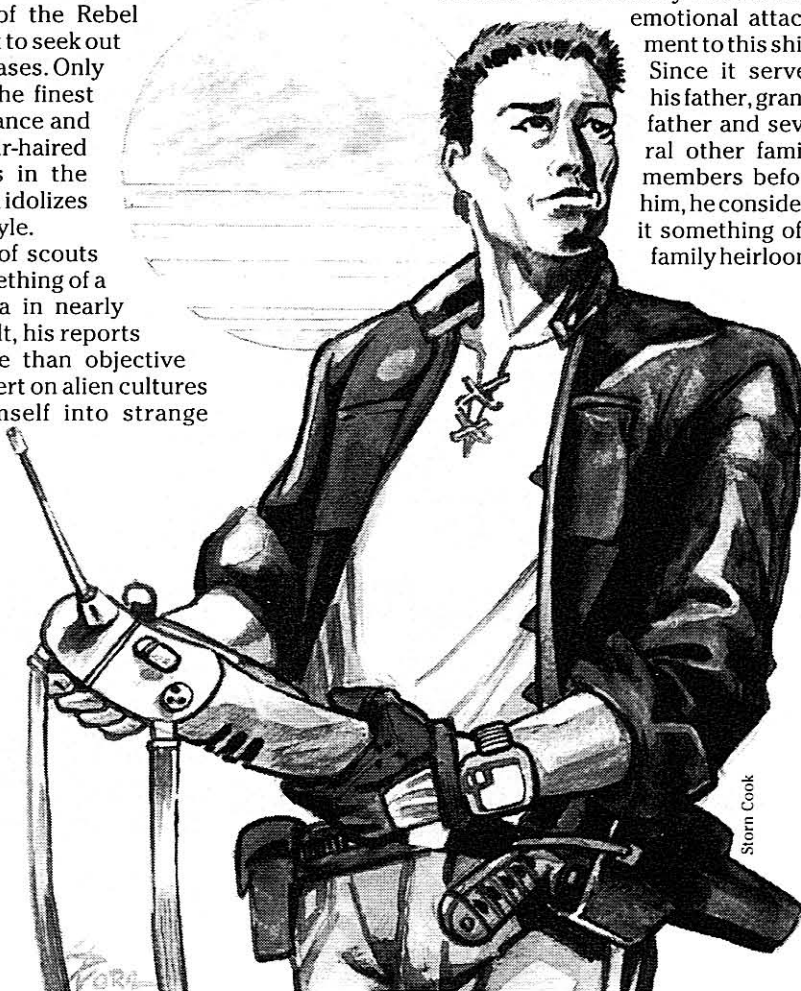
Atmosphere Range: 1-5/15/20 km

Damage: 3D (special)

**Note:** The *Outward Bound*'s shields absorb and channel energy into the ship's laser cannon. For each shot that the shields absorb (without decreasing the shield code), the laser cannon's damage goes up by +1 (up to a maximum of +3). If the shield die code is reduced—or automatically after 10 rounds—this shield generator overloads and shuts down for three rounds, resetting the bonus to zero.

**Capsule:** The *Outward Bound* is a standard Pathfinder scout ship with a few minor customizations. A relic that has been in the Cyrs family for several generations, the ship has undergone numerous engine overhauls and hull upgrades and remains a fine and reliable vessel. Jobany has a strong emotional attachment to this ship.

Since it served his father, grandfather and several other family members before him, he considers it something of a family heirloom.





## Chapter One

# Socorro

**Type:** Desert  
**Temperature:** Hot  
**Atmosphere:** Type I (breathable)  
**Hydrosphere:** Arid  
**Gravity:** Standard  
**Terrain:** Expansive desert swells and flats, mountain ranges, volcanic areas  
**Length of Day:** 20 standard hours  
**Length of Year:** 316 local days  
**Sapient Species:** Human  
**Spaceport:** Imperial-class  
**Population:** 300 million (estimated)  
**Planet Function:** Homeworld, service, criminal haven, trade  
**Government:** Organized crime and tribal councils  
**Tech Level:** Space/Stone (in remote areas)  
**Major Exports:** Socorran raava, Corellian whiskey, Zsajhira berries and by-products, nether ice, high-tech skills, smuggling talent  
**Major Imports:** Foodstuffs, minerals, metals, high technology (usually illegal)  
**System:** Socorro  
**Star:** Sokor (red giant)

### System Log:

Name	Planet Type	Moons
Thrugii Asteroid Belt (first three orbital rings)	—	—
Socorro	desert	—
Neftali	ice	—

## World Summary

Having no apparent value to the untrained eye, Socorro is an inhospitable world of rare black desert swells and flatlands. Its hardened, volcanic ash and sand surface determined its peculiar name, which in Old Corellian means "scorched earth." The largest of two planets in the system, Socorro orbits Sokor, a volatile red giant that dominates the system.

The Doaba Badlands, a vast expanse of desert wastelands, covers three-fourths of the planet's

sable surface. The Badlands are inhabited by a number of nomadic tribes. These native peoples are believed to be descendents of colonists who either rejected the technologies that landed them on Socorro or those who were cast out to die in the desert.

Thermal winds and sandstorms are common in the open desert, particularly in the polar regions, where temperatures remain an even 43 degrees centigrade. Normal desert temperatures range between 35 to 40 degrees centigrade. These readings drop drastically in the mountain regions to a near constant of 21 degrees centigrade.

Despite outward appearances, the majority of Socorro's dormant volcanic basements are full of hidden water reserves. These areas are renown for producing coveted Zsajhira berry crops, which are harvested in earnest over a three-month growing season and used in the preparation of Socorran raava, Zsajhira berry juice, extract, and a specially brewed tea.

Socorro is host to three distinct cultural groups. Early colonization efforts led to the creation of both the numerous nomadic tribes and their close cousins, the superstitious Socorrans who inhabit the cities and permanent settlements. While the nomads tend to be suspicious of outsiders and their technology, the Socorrans accept and embrace off-world ideas, items and peoples. The final cultural group is made up of smugglers, predominantly Corellians, who have relocated here in recent decades. While always a feisty bunch, most of these new arrivals have also accepted the Socorran ways of family, tradition and respecting the space of others. In the end, these three groups now form a single undivided culture united in its opposition of outside authorities.



Bharhulai Lands

Cjaalyscei

Doaba  
Badlands

Asilyr Lands

Mharigual Rife

Assila Rife

Socorro

2.5 centimeters = 5000 kilometers

Doaba  
Badlands

Madra

Judges of the Dead  
Badawzi Fortress

Vakeynya

Volmey Strip

Ndoni  
Lands

Norble

Rym Mountains



# STAR WARS

• *The Black Sands of Socorro* •



Due to this factor and its relative isolation—in the wilderness regions of the Outer Rim—Socorro remains wholly sequestered from the main space routes and hyperlanes, making it an ideal haven for pirates and smugglers.

## *Socorran Geography*

Socorro has a number of regions and readily identifiable landmarks. Visitors to this world would be wise to acclimate themselves lest they be regarded as ignorant outsiders by the natives.

**Asilyr Tribal Lands:** These territories are in the extreme western Doaba Badlands, near the treacherous region known as the Adsila Rifts. The Asilyr natives are efficient desert guides as well as survivalists.

**Bharhulai Tribal Lands:** These territories are located in the remote northern regions of the planet, extending to the polar cap: The wayfarer who dares to stumble into Bharhulai land meant to get there. In general, there is an overall reluctance to even go near the tribal land borders, where outsiders are welcomed by the sun-baked corpses of the Bharhulai's enemies. The tribe is the largest of the four native communities and is believed to be the surviving descendants of a lost colony ship.

**Cjaalysce'I:** Nearly 5,100 kilometers northwest of Vakeyya (Socorro's unofficial capital), Cjaalysce'I is a small city located in the western Doaba Badlands. One of the original settlements, Cjaalysce'I is a reminder of the harsh realities and dangers of pioneer life. It is surrounded by a great wall, approximately 15 meters tall and nearly a meter thick. The walls were constructed to defend against invading Bharhulai tribesmen—whose territories are a scant 115 kilometers away—and to ward off the violent sandstorms that plague this area. Cjaalysce'I is home to the Caelli-Merced Syndicate, Socorro's most famous starship repair and modification company—and a manufacturer of top-quality weapons. Strangers are not generally welcomed in this small, close-knit community.

**Doaba Badlands:** This vast desert wasteland covers three-fourths of the planet. The Badlands are inhospitable and unrelenting, and should be traveled by only the most experienced desert navigators. The majority of the indigenous, nomadic tribes that live on Socorro have made the Doaba Badlands their home.

**Ibhaan'I Tribal Lands:** The Ibhaan'I tribe are the most technologically knowledgeable



native tribe due to their close proximity to the spaceport at Vakeyya, which is located in the dead center of Ibhaan'I tribal land. It is not unusual to see groups of these nomads moving freely in the streets of Vakeyya, which has essentially become their *neftat* or their adopted "home out of the desert."

**Ndowi Tribal Lands:** The Ndowi homelands are easily recognized, even by the novice cartographer. These territories begin near the equator, in the heart of the Rym Mountains and extend south towards the pole. The Ndowi are the only indigenous, nomadic tribe who do not make their home in the desert wastes.

**Norble:** *Norble* is the Socorran word for wayward or stubborn. It is a fitting name for this ancient pioneer settlement, which is located 2,700 kilometers south of Vakeyya at the border of Ndowi territory. The Black Bha'lir maintain a retirement community here for smugglers who have fallen from the spotlight or have suffered debilitating injuries.

**Madra:** Possibly the most beautiful of all the desert settlements, Madra is nestled in the protected peaks of the Rym Mountains, in the shadow of a long dormant volcano. The city is home to a host of underground water pools that are legendary for their medicinal benefits. This settlement offers old world comfort for the homesick spacefarer—a pleasant departure from the harried pace and moody atmosphere of Vakeyya.

**Rym Mountains:** The most noticeable feature of the Socorran landscape, the Rym Mountain range extends 30,000 kilometers across the face of the planet, crisscrossing the desert. Besides Madra, which is situated at the northern part of the range, the closest major Socorran settlement is Vakeyya. The port city is located 150 kilometers from the main passage into the mountains.

**Vakeyya:** As the main port city and the largest settlement on Socorro, Vakeyya (via Soco-Jarel Spaceport) is the gateway to this desert world. With a population of approximately 74,000, Vakeyya is the center of commerce and trade for the planet.

## System Summary

Astrogation reports suggest that the asteroid belt scattered in the area between Socorro and its sun are the remains of three sister



Joel Carroll



# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •



Stern Cook

worlds. It is theorized that the three worlds were destroyed when Sokor blossomed into its current red giant state.

During the cataclysmic upheaval that destroyed the first three planets, the system's outermost planet, Neftali, was thrust into an erratic, elliptical orbit. The ice world plays a major role in Socorro's global temperatures on two occasions each year: *Tayaba'I*, the winter equinox; and *Sanohb'I*, the summer equinox. The advent of these periods brings on drastic temperature variations where Socorro can, respectively, be plunged into an icy vault of frost or baked like a searing oven for a 72-hour period of time.

The Socorran system has little to offer in the way of resources unless you happen to be a smuggler. The Thrugii Asteroids are mined for small deposits of doonuim and turminum by the Kanauer Corporation, which claims all rights to this desolate section of the system. Because there is no Imperial presence to complicate matters of ownership, freelance mining outfits are strictly prohibited and outsiders are often turned away at blaster point.

There is an uneasy peace between the Kanauer Corporation, which despises smugglers, and the smugglers and pirates

themselves, who abhor corporate conquest. Conflicts have been known to occur (some resulting in violence), but more often than not each faction tends to deny the existence of the other. This does not make commercial trading in the area any easier but it does tend to cut down on the bloodshed.

**Semler Tevez, Kanauer Corporate Executive.** Semler grew up in the culture of the Kanauer Corporation. His father, Jeoff Tevez, is director of the Thrugii mining division near Socorro. A talented pilot, Semler graduated from the Imperial Academy with high honors. Using his family influence and credits, he was released from military duty to pursue a more profitable career in mining. He now supervises one of the main Thrugii camps, but whenever the Kanauer territorial lines are challenged, Semler dons his flight gear and personally defends company boundaries, using the same single-minded determination of his Imperial TIE pilot counterparts.

Immaculately manicured and well-groomed, Semler wears the Kanauer uniform with pride. It is rumored that he handles worker revolts and trespassers with the same ruthless ire he shows in space battles.

### *System Datafile*

Socorro system, star: Sokor, red giant. Two planets survive in the system, with asteroid belts in the first, second, and third orbital stations. Socorro is in the fourth orbit, with Neftali in an elliptical, outermost orbit. Both planets have habitable ecosystems.

Socorro is a hot, arid world, with vast tracts of desert that are home to several tribes of nomads: Ibhaan'I, Bharhulai, Ndowi, and Asilyr. Descendents from several colony ships and a large Corellian smuggler community account for over 95 percent of the urban population on this world.

Despite first impressions, high technology is widespread on Socorro, both in urban areas and among the indigenous, nomadic populace. Visitors are cautioned against open field landings, which may violate territorial dictates.

Neftali is a remote ice world with one main spaceport, Cordel Cove. Considered neutral ground, there is virtually no Imperial influence or interest in this system.

## A Colony Lost and Found

Of the original six colony ships that landed on Socorro over three millennia ago, there is only evidence of four that survived. From accounts left behind by those early colonists, this world is an unforgiving entity that puts even the hardest of pioneer dispositions to task. The cities of Vakeyya and Cjaalsce'I, and the fringe settlements of Norble and Madra are believed to be located where the original colony ships landed.

There are several theories concerning the fates of the remaining two colony ships. According to colonial data-records, the fifth ship sustained considerable damage on entry into the planet's atmosphere, going down in the northern polar region. All attempts to find and rescue survivors failed. The settlers were simply unprepared for the harsh realities of sand wells, volcanic eruptions, and dangerous concentrations of Trauger gas, which permeate the northern polar area of the planet. Survivor descendants are believed to be members of the Bharhulai tribe, a rather unpleasant and territorial group that popu-

lates this area, which is considered to be the most inhospitable region on Socorro's surface.

The sixth colony ship was forced to deviate from its proposed course; whether this was by choice or accident is unknown. The colonists managed to establish a settlement nearly 14,200 kilometers from the western base of the Rym Mountains. Despite a safe landing and several weeks of contact with its sister colonies, the settlement vanished suddenly without any traces as to what became of its settlers.

Expeditions led by scout Kirr Cyrs discovered that this area is heavily compromised by "sand wells" or sink holes. Fascinated by the unusual phenomena, Cyrs conducted numerous experiments on these seismic aberrations. His reports recorded probe drones descending to depths of over 100 kilometers before the planet's volatile subterranean plates shifted to seal the rifts, leaving no surface evidence of their existence and apparently destroying the drones.

At a loss to explain the disappearance of their sister colony by any other means, the settlers on Socorro accounted their fates with a sand well that opened up beneath the colony, consuming all buildings and everyone within. As such, the name Adsila was given to this



**Semler Tevez.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 6D, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D+2, bureaucracy 4D, business 5D+1, intimidation 4D+2, languages 4D, Mechanical 3D+2, starfighter piloting 6D, starship gunnery 4D, investigation 4D+2, command 5D+2, brawling 4D, security 4D.* Move: 10. Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink.

## Socorran Economics

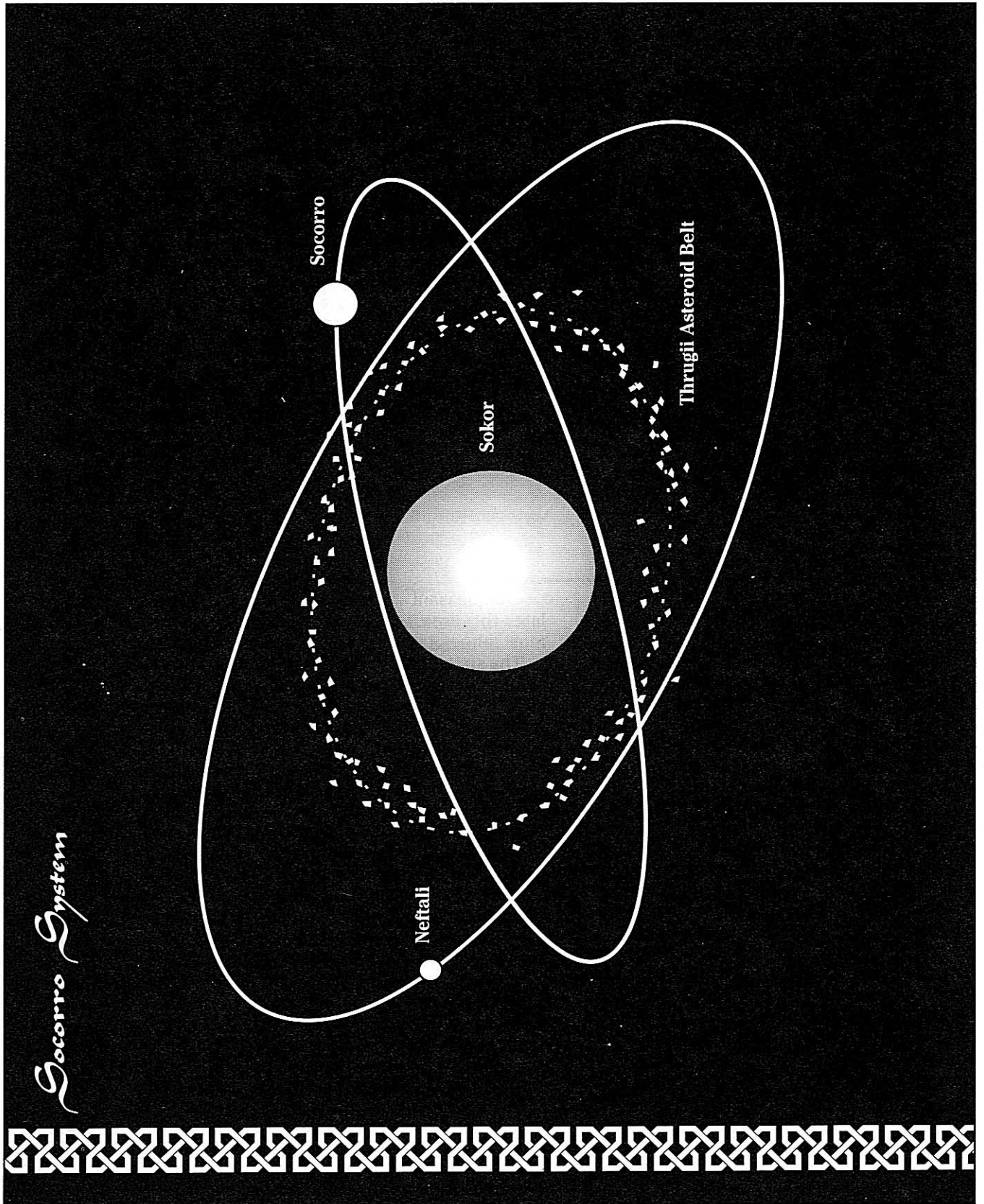
Socorro's chief commodities of ice (from Neftali), distilled spirits, Zsajhira berries, and Trauger gas are monopolized by current resident factions, excluding all off-world interests. The controlling powers of Socorro have greatly profited from the marketing of these resources and have redistributed that wealth to the planet's greatest resource—smugglers. Criminal elements comprise a large portion of the population, thus keeping Socorro a unique and largely closed society.

While the populace is heavily dependent on imported foodstuffs, life can be sustained with a diet of Zsajhira berries, water beetles, and druyza meat products. Not the best of provisions, but few people ever go hungry.



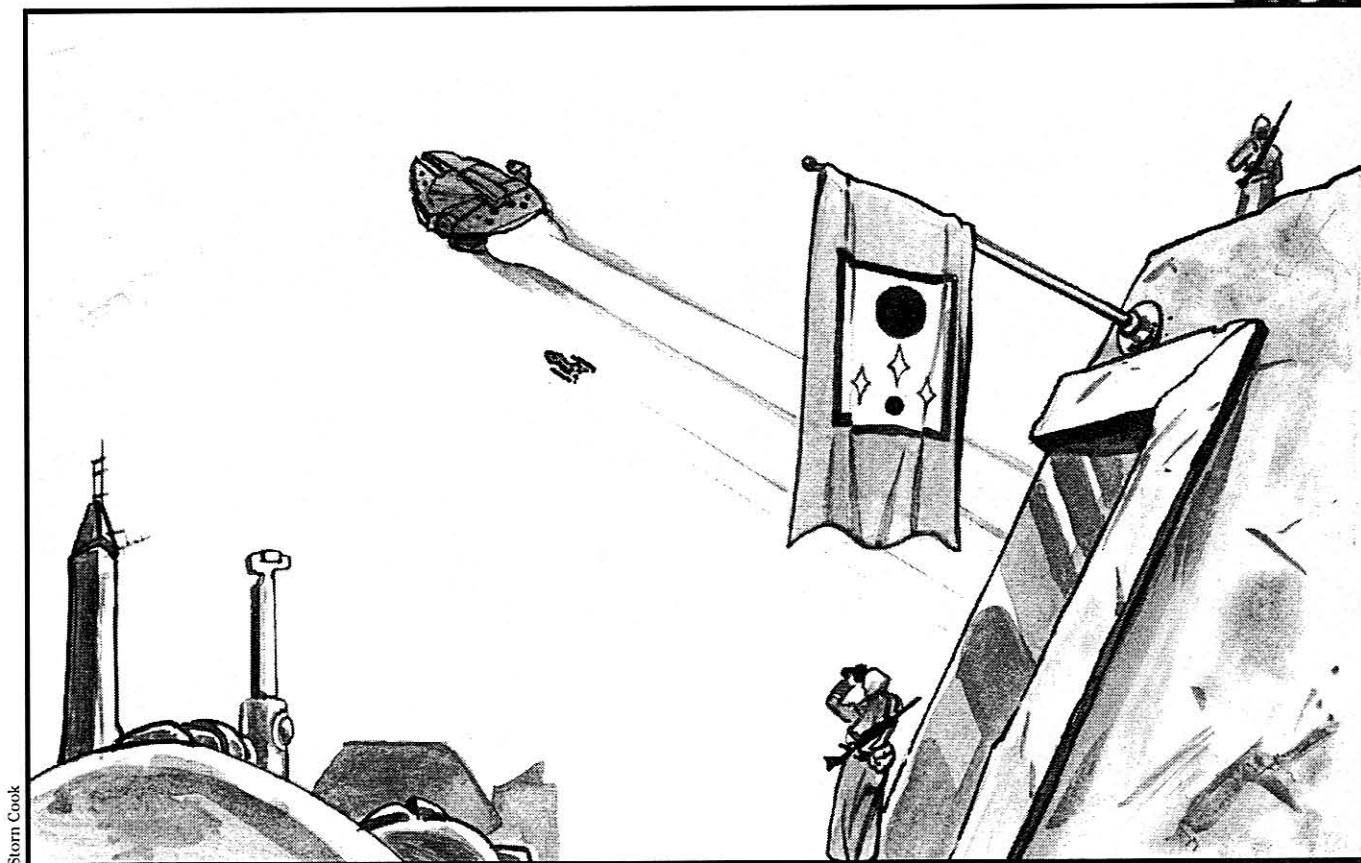
# STAR WARS

• The Black Sands of Socorro •



# STAR WARS®

• Socorro •



Storm Cook

treacherous section of the desert. It is an appropriate title, taken from an Old Corellian myth about a woman, one of four sisters, who controlled the inevitable dissension and uncertainty of life; the Adsila Rifts remain an unpredictable, seemingly malevolent region.

## *A Lifeless Illusion*

The ever-changing and seemingly lifeless face of Socorro is an illusion that has fooled many discerning eyes. Despite inhospitable heat, ash-storms, and an arid environment, the planet is home to an abundance of life. In the wake of its creation, through a significant network of volatile volcanoes, Socorro holds a life-giving secret: hidden caches of water occupy vast cellars of long-dormant volcanoes and hardened lava grottoes. As night approaches and the desert winds cool the sand, moisture seeps up from these hidden underground caches. For brief stolen moments before dawn, small pockets of water actually lay on the surface. Repeatedly filtered through the planet's ash mantle, the water possesses a rare natural purity for drinking and has a unique quality that brings out a remarkable flavor.

## *The Socorran Flag*

The Socorran flag is proudly displayed from the tops of spaceport towers and outbuildings in Soco-Jarel Spaceport (near Vakeyya) and the smaller port at Cjaalysce'I.

The resonant blood-red cloth is easily seen against the black surface of the world. Detailed in the upper border of the flag and placed on different alignments are three white stars. These are believed to be the three worlds that were mysteriously destroyed long ago and now comprise the Thrugii Asteroid Belt.

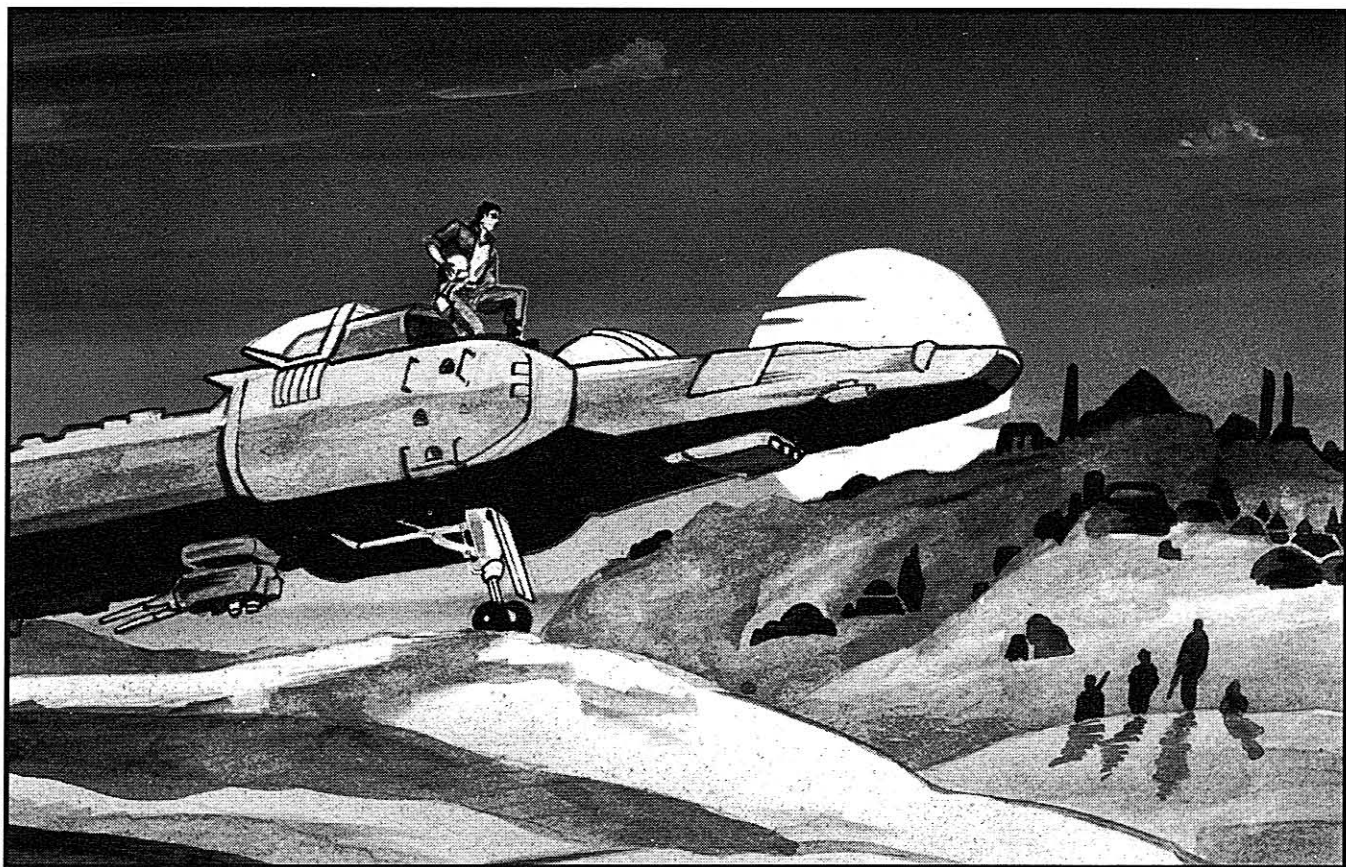
The large black orb in the upper left represents Socorro itself and the smaller orb encircling the planet at the lower right is the ice world Neftali. The red background is said to represent the red giant Sokor, whose size and power encompass the entire system.





# STAR WARS

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Storm Cook

### *A Way to See the World from Above*

Thermal gliding is a popular recreation on Socorro. Any high elevation of sand dunes or rocky outcrop will do as a launch point. Pilots of all species can experience the sensation of free flight for hours, sailing on the natural power of thermal wells.

Light-weight craft made from animal skins or artificial polymers are a frequent sight over the Doaba Badlands, particularly near the outskirts of Soco-Jarel spaceport, where the thermals tend to be the strongest. The gliders are capable of reaching speeds of over 45 kilometers per hour; extended trips into the deep deserts are not uncommon for the purpose of land survey or scouting suitable landing fields.

Pilots may drift down into the lowlands for a dangerous game of skimming-the-sands or in preparation for a landing. And then, having changed their minds, they may bank sharply into a thermal for a wild, spiraling ride back into the skies.

The largest thermals have been known to skyrocket gliders and their navigators 10 to 15 kilometers above the surface. Thermal gliding is a challenge for only the boldest hearts and is a fascinating way to see the world from above.

On occasion, sand wells create a rift in one of these underground grottoes and supercharged heat will cause secondary eruptions of pressurized steam spouts. Going from cool to blistering temperatures within seconds, the water boils to the top of the lower cellars and escapes through whatever means possible—normally superficial cracks in the rock. These spouts are extremely dangerous as the water exploding through these fissures is hot enough to burn the flesh off anyone caught in the blast. (These spouts cause 7D damage.)

Clouds are a rarity on Socorro, but there is a period (once or twice in a decade) where there is enough moisture in the atmosphere to bring on a rainy season. The period is known as *uldyr*, which is an Old Corellian term meaning “mucking out.” Covered with a two- to three-week shroud of rain water, the Socorran landscape is reduced to a dangerous obstacle course of quagmires and quicksand pits. Residents generally confine themselves to highland areas and venture outdoors only in cases of emergencies.

Sokor eventually appears from behind the blanket of cloud cover and quickly bakes that softened surface back to a solid permanence. Safe travel can usually be resumed within 24



hours of sunrise. Any person who has had the misfortune of being trapped or having animals and vehicles trapped in the sand as it hardens can tell you that it is much like being encased in duracrete.

After the rains, there is an explosive growing season. This productive period goes mostly unnoticed on the surface because it takes place inside the water-filled grottoes and cellars of dormant volcanoes. As the moisture recedes

back into the ground or evaporates, temperature and humidity levels are perfect for Zsajhira berries, triggering a growth cycle that can last for several years.

The oval-shaped, black berries are the main ingredient of Zsajhira berry tea. Concentrated berry extract is used in brewing Socorran raava. The berries are also an important dietary supplement for the creatures and nomadic tribes living in the desert wilds.

## Of A Man Called Trauger

As a young boy, I would often sit at the watch-fire and listen to Oceke, my great-grandfather, as he told stories about the naming of animals and desert things. He once spoke of a man called Trauger.

When Trauger came into my great-grandfather's tribal lands, he came without permission, without respect, bringing his off-world insolence, armored suits, and weapons. It was obvious to all what he was...a bounty hunter, a killer of men for profit. "The worst kind of man," Oceke would say.

My great-grandfather remembered Trauger as a very tall and gaunt man—the kind who might not eat or drink for days, if only to save a few coins for his pockets. The bounty hunter had come to the watch-

fire of the Ibhaan'I, looking for a guide. Among all the tribes of Socorro, there is no eye more discerning than that of an Ibhaan'I scout. Trauger knew this and demanded that the best among them come forward. He demanded because men like Trauger do not ask.

Even though he was but a boy, my great-grandfather remembered it clearly. Trauger came just before the dawn. And when none answered his call, the bounty hunter threatened to kill a woman who had strayed too close to his cybernetic arms. It just so happened that this woman was my great-great-grandmother, Oceke's mother. With his father long dead, she was his only family. So it was he who answered Trauger's challenge.

Despite the protests of several older men, who then volunteered to guide him, the bounty hunter stood by my ancestor. Perhaps he feared the others might betray and leave him for dead in the sands.





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## • The Black Sands of Socorro •

Perhaps it was Oceke's innocence that beguiled Trauger. In any case, that innocence would be his undoing.

Trauger was looking for a man. My great-grandfather could not recall the name, except to say that he was a man like any other on Socorro, who had broken some off-worlder's law in order to feed his family. Oceke led him into the Doaba Badlands, wandering deliberately in aimless circles while he thought of what to do. He told the bounty hunter of a great walled city, Cjaalysce'I, and that the man Trauger sought was living there among the smugglers.

After many days in the deep desert, my great-grandfather brought him to the highest dunes on the edge of the badlands and

showed him the great city of Cjaalysce'I. There were nearly 10 kilometers, or "khelters" as they were called then, between them and the city. Trauger grew anxious, anticipating the hunt and the kill. He thanked my great-grandfather with the back of his knuckles and started toward Cjaalysce'I.

My great-grandfather says he watched from the dunes as Trauger marched into the desert, never suspecting treachery until the surface gasses overwhelmed him. And by then, it was too late. He was dead before his body hit the ground.

From that day onward, when an Ibhaan'I referred to the poison beneath the sand, he or she would call it "traugi'ha" or Trauger gas.

—Benoni Ulte, Customs Official  
Extract about his earliest recollection of bounty hunters

## The Poison of Paradise

A large portion of Socorro's surface is beset with underground volcanic activity. The result of this is a rather dangerous side effect—the creation and expulsion of Trauger gas. Under tremendous pressure, the gas is initially expelled as a volatile steam. Combined with water, it is a corrosive acid that can liquefy even the hardest metals. Such occurrences of Trauger steam are rare in the open deserts, but happen frequently in the polar regions. Ships are cautioned to avoid these and other particularly volatile areas.

Once the water has evaporated and the steam cools, the Trauger compound evolves into a heavy, gaseous form. Odorless and invisible, the gas will kill an unsuspecting victim within minutes. There is no known antidote except to stay well clear of these areas. Fields of Trauger emissions are closely monitored and well-marked if they are near settlements.

Despite its dangers, Trauger gas has been harnessed and used as a tool of certain exclusive assassins throughout the galaxy.

**Erland Merich, Trauger Gas Trader.** Born into the pirate clans of Socorro, Erland Merich is a master of survival and subsistence. Orphaned at a young age, he was taken in by the Ibhaan'I tribe and raised as one of their own. Not much of a scout or hunter, Erland sought

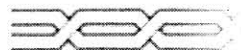
other ways to support the tribe that fostered him to manhood—dealing in Trauger gas. It is rumored that his clientele travel from all across the galaxy, eager to pay top credits for a vial or a tank full of the noxious vapor. His prices are exorbitant, ranging from 5,000 to 100,000 credits, depending on the size of the cargo.

A lifetime of dealing in Trauger gas has left Erland with slight deformities of the hands and face. He suffers from upper respiratory problems as a result of his unique occupation and is a chronic alcoholic. According to the 50-year-old nomad, drinking helps soothe his nerves as he goes about his dangerous work.

**Erland Merich.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 4D, dodge 3D, melee combat 4D, thrown weapons 4D+2, languages 4D, streetwise 5D+1, survival 3D, survival: Socorran desert 7D, value 5D+1, beast riding 5D+1, bargain 5D, brawling 4D.* Move: 8. Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink, several vials of Trauger gas.

## Of Creatures Great and Small

Beyond the dangers of the planet's unstable geography and some of its less-than-hospitable natives, there are other hazards posed by Socorro's many animals.



## Trauger Acid Effects

Exposure	Damage	Effect
Minor	3D+2	Normal injury effects
Moderate	5D+2	In addition to normal injury effects, roll 1D: on a 1-2, the victim suffers permanent nerve damage, resulting in -1D to all <i>Dexterity</i> , <i>Mechanical</i> , <i>Strength</i> and <i>Technical</i> skills using that particular limb.
Severe	7D+2	In addition to normal injury effects, roll 1D: on a 1-2, the victim suffers permanent nerve damage, resulting in -2D to all <i>Dexterity</i> , <i>Mechanical</i> , <i>Strength</i> and <i>Technical</i> skills using that particular limb; on a 3, the victim loses the limb in question.
Critical	9D+2	In addition to normal injury effects, roll 1D: on a 1-3, the victim suffers permanent nerve damage, resulting in -2D to all <i>Dexterity</i> , <i>Mechanical</i> , <i>Strength</i> and <i>Technical</i> skills using that particular limb; on a 4, the victim loses the limb in question; on a 5, the victim gets an infection which kills him in 1D days unless a doctor makes a Very Difficult <i>first aid</i> or Moderate (A) <i>medicine</i> roll.

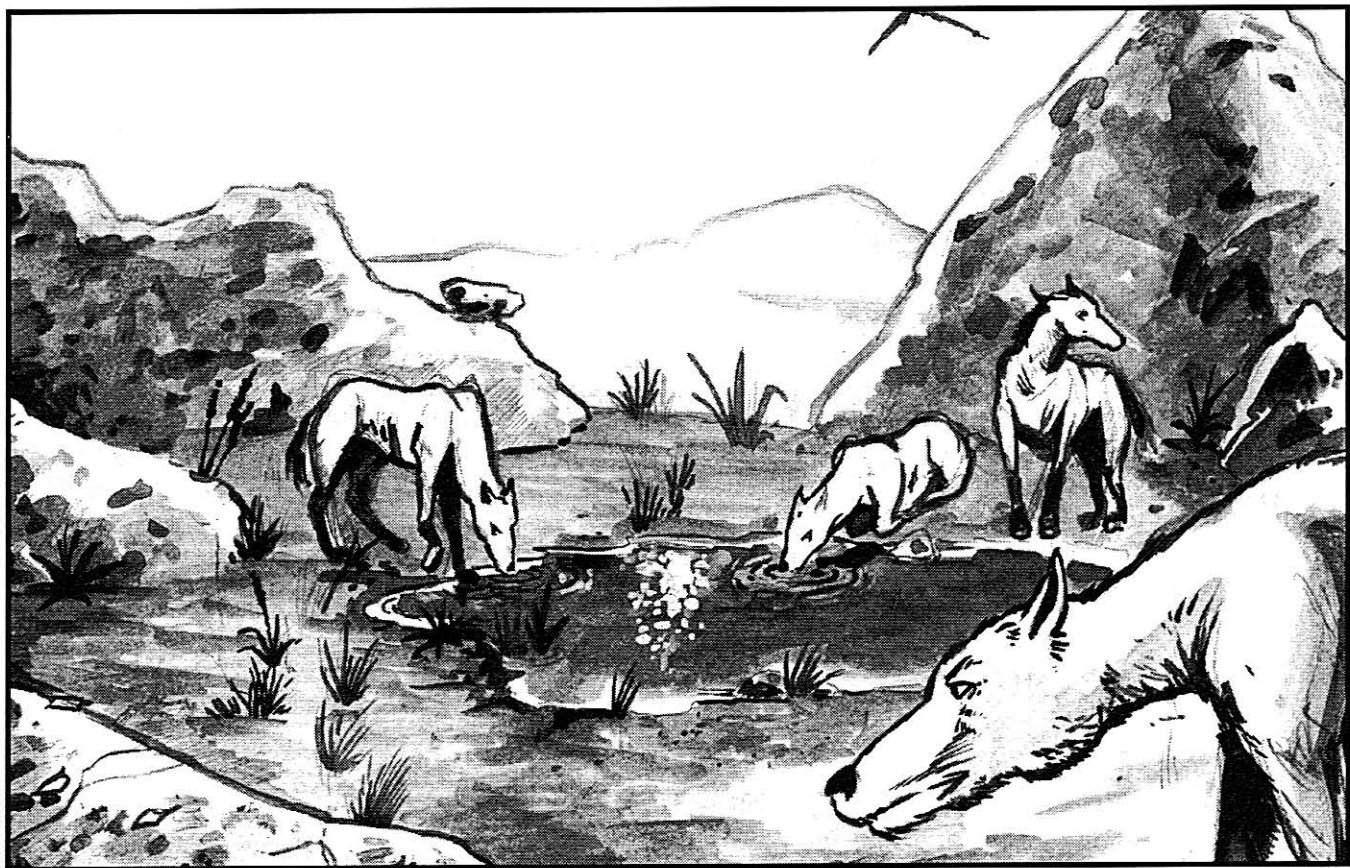
## Trauger Gas Effects

Exposure	Damage	Effect
Minor (10-30 seconds)	2D+2	In addition to normal injury effects, victims suffer light-headedness, dizziness, upset stomach, mild confusion, and weakness. Stunned victims are at -1D to all actions until they rest for 1D hours. Wounded victims are at -1D to all actions until they rest for 1D days.
Moderate (1-2 minutes)	4D	Stunned effects are as above. In addition to normal injury effects, wounded or worse victims suffer blurry vision, fever, vertigo, nausea, confusion, and muscle impairment, and are at an extra -1D to all actions. They must rest for 1D weeks to heal this damage.
Severe (3-4 minutes)	6D+2	Stunned effects are as above. In addition to normal injury effects, wounded or worse victims suffer shock, severe nausea, blindness, delusional episodes, and upper respiratory distress for 1D weeks after exposure; during this time, they are at an extra -2D to all actions. They permanently suffer -1D to all <i>Knowledge</i> skills.
Critical (5+ minutes)	8D+2	Stunned effects are as above. In addition to normal injury effects, wounded or worse victims suffer black-outs, convulsions, unconsciousness, respiratory failure, and cardiac arrest. After recovery, victims are at an extra -2D to all actions for 1D weeks; during this time there is a 2 in 6 chance the victim will suffer complications which causes death in 1D hours unless treated with a Very Difficult <i>first aid</i> or Moderate (A) <i>medicine</i> roll. Victims permanently suffer -1D to all <i>Knowledge</i> skills.



# STAR WARS®

• The Black Sands of Socorro •



Storm Cook

## Mutriok

Mutrioks are the slender, swift hunters of the open deserts. Long-legged and agile, these canine beasts are often found running in packs in the deep wastes of the Doaba Badlands. Gray or blue eyes are closely set at the base of a long snout and nose, lending a friendly, pleasant expression to the animal. With an uncanny sense of smell and direction, the lithe and docile hunters roam from one volcanic basement to the next in search of water and food, consisting of Zsajhira berries and chiru insects.

Mutrioks are able to withstand the tremendous heat of the open desert for extended periods of time. This has made them a favorite companion of desert guides and tribesmen, who use them to detect Trauger gas fields. They can also be used to find water grottoes or hidden caches of Zsajhira berries.

Mutrioks are fiercely loyal to their owners and bond with one specific person. In communities, they maintain a friendly, playful personality, particularly with young children. Though cherished by the native tribes, mutrioks have been captured and sold off-world by unscrupu-

lous traders. Adults sell for 200-500 credits, while puppies command prices of 50-200 credits, depending on age and birth weight.

## Mutriok

**Type:** Desert scavenger and hunter

**DEXTERITY** 4D

Dodge 4D+2, running 6D

**PERCEPTION** 5D

Hide 5D+1, search 6D+1, sneak 5D+2

**STRENGTH** 2D+1

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 5D+1, stamina 4D,

swimming 4D+2

**Special Abilities:**

**Paws:** Do STR damage.

**Teeth:** Do STR+1D damage

**Perception:** Mutrioks gain a +1D on all search and Perception rolls in the open desert.

**Move:** 12 (walking), 16 (running)

**Size:** 0.79-0.92 meters tall at the shoulder

**Scale:** Creature

## Socorran Tailring

Socorran tailrings, also known as Socorran sand dragons, are symbols of strength to the many pirate factions living on Socorro. These desert dwellers exist in abundant numbers in the volcanic regions of the Doaba Badlands. While native to Socorro, they have been known



to thrive in other ecosystems as long as the weather is hot and a plentiful supply of water is nearby.

Socorran tailrings live in hordes of seven to eight, with no more than two males co-existing at one time. These irascible creatures are surprisingly affectionate pets when domesticated. Once bonded to an owner, they are life-long companions whose loyalty endures even the most trying of times.

Black fur is most common among tailrings, but varying shades of fawn and gray can also be found. Tailrings go through several stages of maturity, molting at each stage. Evidence of their age can be read by the rattles on their tails—one segment for each 10 years of life. Life expectancies range from 50 to 80 years, depending on environment and developmental factors. These diminutive creatures are highly prized for their rattles and their supple skins, but hunting them is strictly forbidden. The punishment for poaching tailrings is banishment in the deep desert with no provisions—certain death.

Highly intelligent, perceptive, and inquisitive, Socorran tailrings are easily distracted by shiny objects; they are cunning thieves. They have few natural enemies, though on occasion tailrings have been known to attack and kill

mynocks. The reason for this peculiar behavior is unknown. Regardless, Socorran pirates value keeping one or more aboard ship in an effort to protect their crafts from infestation.

## Socorran Tailring

**Type:** Desert dweller

**DEXTERITY** 4D

Brawling parry 5D, dodge 4D+2, pick pocket 5D

**PERCEPTION** 4D

Hide 6D, search 8D+1, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH** 1D+1

Brawling 2D+2, stamina 5D, swimming 2D

**Special Abilities:**

*Claws:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Teeth:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Sting:* The bite of a tailring is extremely painful but rarely fatal. If untreated, it may induce nausea and high fevers. The sting has a damage of 4D, rolled against the victim's *Strength*. The worst injury possible is a wound, in which case roll 3D for the number of hours the victim is affected by nausea and fever.

*Tail:* Do STR damage. When frightened, tailrings rattle their tails before they strike.

*Constriction:* When extremely agitated, tailrings wrap their tails around the nearest limb and squeeze. Should this be the neck of a predator, death is certain even if the tailring is killed. The tailring rolls STR+4D damage once every minute with a constriction attack; the victim must make an opposed *lifting* or *Strength* roll and beat the tailring by five or more points to break free.

**Move:** 16

**Size:** 0.3-0.9 meters long

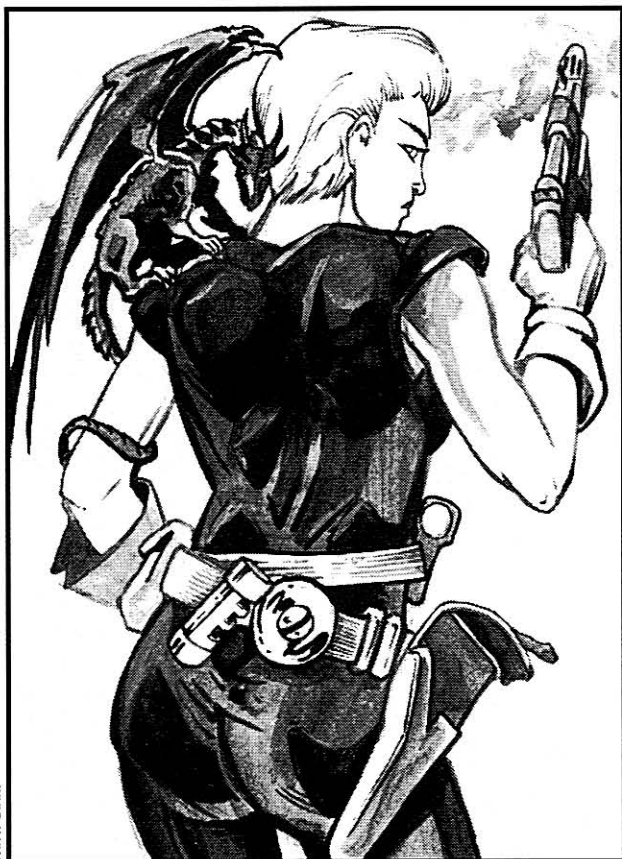
**Scale:** Creature

## Druyza

The druyza is a homely, ponderous beast that seems to have been put together from the miscellaneous parts of other creatures. This furless desert wanderer is compact, low to the ground, and moves with all the grace of a crippled dewback.

An extremely docile creature, the druyza is used by nomads for transportation and as beasts of burden. They excel in these tasks because of their very mild temperament and exceptional strength. Despite their great weight, the druyza are sure-footed and reliable, even in the most treacherous terrain.

Druyza vary in color from tan to dark brown, and travel in small herds of 10-15, with one dominant bull, a dominant female, and several calves. They feed on Zsajhira berries and dull mosses that grow inside the moist slopes of dormant volcanic cellars. They are often down in these shadowed grottoes, where they spend nearly 70 percent of their time underwa-



Storm Cook



# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •



Jerome De Crotie

talons and a gaping mouth with row upon row of jagged teeth. Though they often feed on mosses and water grasses that grow along the depths of their water grottoes, the tra'cors prefer to supplement their diet with a fair portion of meat, attacking stray mutrioks that wander too close to the water and the occasional druyza that is too weak or old to defend itself.

Tra'cors were discovered when a pair of scouts were moving through a low-lying ridge at night. In some areas of Socorro, moisture rises during the cool period of evening and pools on the surface. Tra'cors have been known to use these watery channels to migrate from one grotto to the next in search of food or better habitat. Only one of the scouts made it back to the camp to tell the tale of the tra'cor attack.

Tra'cors are ferocious creatures when approached or provoked, and attack without warning. They live in groups of no more than two or three and often lie in wait at the edge of a water cellar, ever vigilant as unsuspecting prey moves in to drink.

ter. When in danger, druyza retreat below the water's surface, and it is reported that the beasts can hold their breath for up to an hour.

### Druyza

**Type:** Domesticated laborer

**DEXTERITY** 2D

**PERCEPTION** 2D

Search 3D+2

**STRENGTH** 7D

Brawling 5D, lifting 9D+1, stamina 9D,

swimming 8D

**Special Abilities:**

*Head-Butt:* Does STR damage.

*Teeth:* Do 3D damage.

*Kick:* Does STR+1D damage.

*Swimming:* Druyza can hold their breath underwater for up to one hour.

**Move:** 6

**Size:** 1.5 meters tall, 2.44 meters long

**Scale:** Creature

**Orneriness:** 1D+2

### Tra'cor

The tra'cor is an underwater beast similar to the savage rancor beasts. Though smaller and restricted to water for the duration of its life, the tra'cor is no less a nightmarish creature, with massive clawed



Storn Cook

## Tra'cor

**Type:** Amphibious creature

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Brawling parry 4D+2

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Hide 4D, search 5D, sneak 4D+2

**STRENGTH 4D+2**

Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D, stamina

5D, swimming 5D+1

**Special Abilities:**

*Claws:* Do STR+2D damage.

*Teeth:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Dehydration:* Tra'cors can spend up to 24 hours out of water without suffering ill-effects, but after this period, they begin to suffer a -1D penalty to all skills for each additional 8-hour period out of water.

*Water Glands:* From time to time, water cellars dry up or drain into lower, inaccessible areas and the tra'cors are forced to migrate. Special glands along the underside of the creature's neck allow it to know instinctively the location of the nearest water source, up to 10 kilometers away.

**Move:** 5 (land), 13 (water)

**Size:** 2.7 meters tall (standing), 1.3 (on all fours)

**Scale:** Creature



Storm Cook

## Monnok

Savage and semi-sentient predators found in the most dangerous areas of the Doaba Badlands and the Rym Mountains, monnoks are swift-moving meat-eaters that survive on a diet of druyza and mutrioks. They are intelligent enough to fashion spears and other simple tools, although there are no indications that they have any kind of language; they are generally solitary creatures. They are respected by Socorran nomads, who know enough to give them a wide berth; some superstitious smugglers consider seeing these creatures as an omen of a dangerous journey—with fabulous rewards for those who survive.

## Monnok

**Type:** Desert predator

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat 7D, melee parry 6D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Search 4D, sneak 5D+2

**STRENGTH 5D**

Brawling 6D+2

**Move:** 13

**Size:** Up to 2.3 meters tall

**Equipment:** Club (STR+1D) or spear (STR+1D+1)

## Chiru (Sand Wasp)

The deep desert wastes of the Doaba Badlands are often infested by a serious danger—a small insect known as a chiru. *Chiru* is the

Socorran word for deadly, and it aptly describes the sinister sand wasps of Socorro. Congregated in vast underground hives of 100,000 to 150,000 members, these insects are fiercely territorial and swarm if provoked. Vibrations from landing or maneuvering jets—even the simple vibration of walking across the sands—can bring the chiru from their sandy lair and into the light for a kill.

There is an undetermined number of these hives across the planet. Most are located in the more desolate wastes of the Doaba Badlands, which are largely unpopulated. Hives within 30 kilometers of civilization are clearly marked by Old Corellian warnings—*ashoba* (“hidden hive”) or *rha'aid* (“danger”).

During Tayabi'l, the winter equinox, temperatures reach an all-time low and most of the chiru population dies. But over the next 72-hour period, as the sands warm again, the thousands of eggs left behind hatch, ushering in a new generation of the deadly wasps.

## Chiru (Sand Wasp)

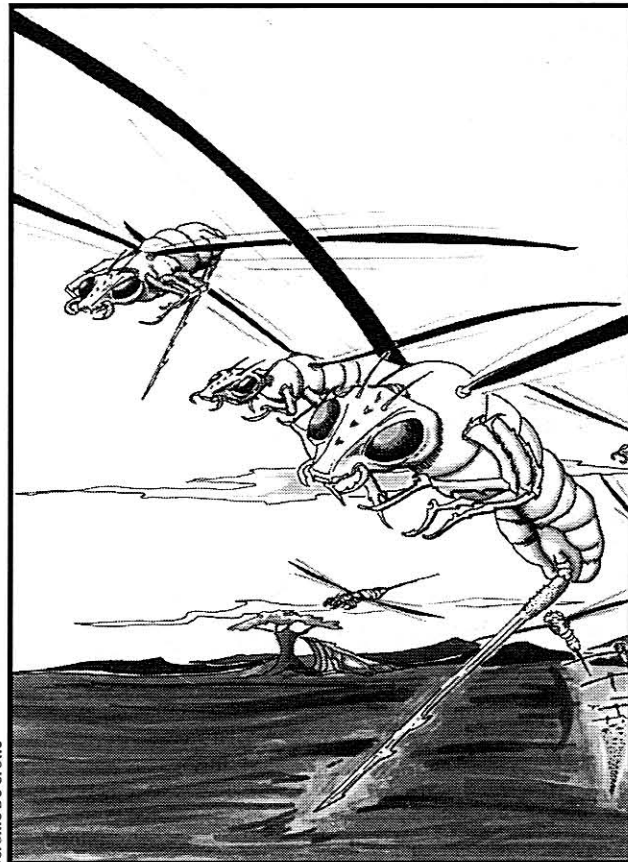
**Type:** Swarming insect

**DEXTERITY 4D+1**

**PERCEPTION 2D+2**

**STRENGTH 1D**





Jerome De Crotte

**Special Abilities:**

**Sting:** Poison does 3D damage. Characters stunned or worse by a sting suffer a -1D penalty to all actions for 1D rounds. The penalty is cumulative with multiple stings.

**Move:** 20

**Size:** 2.54 centimeters

**Scale:** Creature

## Open Desert Landings

Open desert landings should only be attempted by experienced desert navigators or the foolhardy. The Doaba Badlands are extremely perilous without proper seasoning and guidance. While such landings are not banned, those who do so are risking their lives, equipment, and ships.

Certain areas of the Badlands are prone to experiencing earthquakes that occur so deep within the planet's interior that they go unnoticed on the surface. However, the ripple effect of those quakes causes sand wells that suddenly open on the surface of the desert, swallowing any and all who are unfortunate enough to be in the way.

## Rude Awakening

My landspeeder's cooling systems malfunctioned and left me stranded in the middle of the Doaba Badlands. I had plenty of provisions, so I decided to wait out the night. By morning, the engines would be cool and I could get back to Vakeyya without further incident. So I propped my feet up on the windscreen and my head against the neckrest, and settled down for the night.

The quake struck just after dark. Socorro has a history of seismic activity, particularly in the deep desert. But nothing I had ever seen or heard prepared me for the violence of this tremor. I barely managed to crawl out of my landspeeder. The ground was opening up beneath my feet even as I scrambled for high ground. And though I was fortunate enough to escape, my landspeeder was not. The desert seemed to come alive and swallowed my vehicle, my provisions, and all my gear. If I had to guess, I would say over a metric ton of sand and ash fell into that rift and the ground just continued to collapse and buckle.

The quake cut a wide, jagged path toward the wastelands and abruptly stopped. Spewing clouds of black ash into the air, a sink hole formed in the bottom of a swirling mass of sand. I remember falling back into the dune, struck dumb by the sight of a ship being regurgitated from the depths of the

Depending on the season, freighter captains might find themselves setting down in the middle of tribal lands without the proper tribute or permission of the resident tribe. In general, the Socorran natives are quite friendly with strangers and well aware of the advanced technology that exists on their world. However, there are fanatical sects such as the Bharhulai who look with great disdain on strangers, particularly aliens, and will raid any intruders who venture inside their boundaries. Surprise and stealth have more than once been equal or superior to advanced technology. The skulls and preserved skins of past trespassers can attest to that fact.

planet's mantle. I had heard about Socorran sand wells but never imagined I would live to see one of such power.

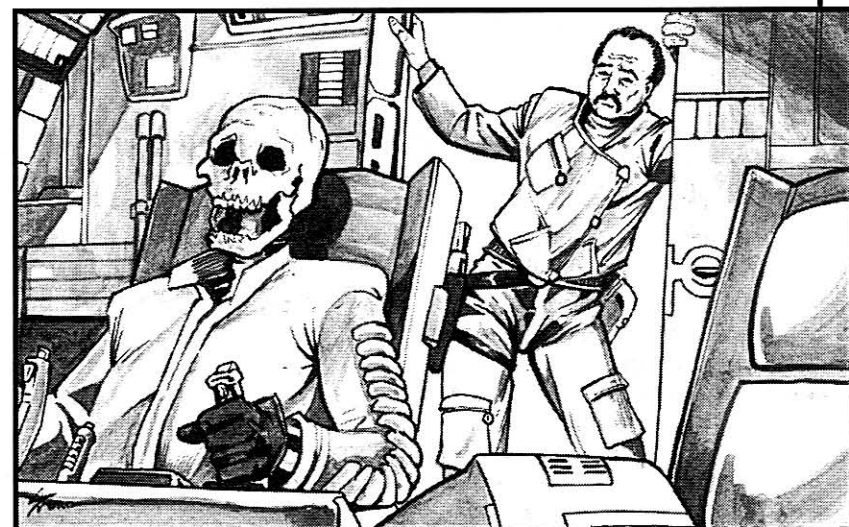
As abruptly as it started, the quake ended. It sealed up every evidence of its occurrence, except for the ship left behind in its wake. Leaning heavily to one side, the YT-1210's balance was compromised by a pair of bent landing struts on the port side. The YT-1210 model had been around for a while, so there was no telling how old it was or how long the ship had been buried in the sand.

There were no running lights, no sensors to indicate the power source was still viable. Tracing the landing ramp's edge with my fingers, I located the access pad under a non-descript mound of hardened ash and soot. It took several blows from my blaster grip to free the access panel so that I could input the code. With a hiss, the ramp lip unsealed.

Slowly the ramp dropped to the sand. Just then, a wind blew in from the Badlands and dissipated the cloud of stagnant air that escaped from inside the freighter. Caught in a draft of that contaminated air, I dropped to my knees, gagging and coughing. It was a sickening, bittersweet scent that lingered in my nostrils and dried out the back of my throat. It took pulling the collar of my coat over my mouth and nose before I could move or get anywhere near the interior corridor.

The ship's auxiliary power was functional, flooding the passage with soft, white light. A shallow layer of dust blanketed the inner hull walls and deckplates. As I looked at my footprints, I found myself wondering how long it would take for such minute particles to build up. Years, at least.

Moving toward the bridge, I paused in the shadows of the cabin's bulkhead. I was not entirely alone. Someone was sitting at the flight controls. Armed with a blaster, a gloved hand hung loosely from one side of the pilot's chair. The other hand held a half full bottle of Socorran raava. I swallowed a moment of apprehension and continued into the cabin.



Storm Cook

The stranger was dressed in traditional smuggling garb: a Corellian flight suit, black pants, and a flight jacket too small for his broad shoulders. His face was frozen for all time. The illusion of flushed cheeks permanently illuminated his desiccated facial tissue. Mummified, naturally preserved in his airtight tomb, he wore the pleasant expressions of the calm and control that belonged to all of us at the height of our youth.

I sat down beside him, leaning back in the co-pilot's chair. Propping my feet up on the console, I drank from his bottle and confessed my soul to this fallen compatriot. By dawn, the

bottle was empty and so was I.

As the morning sun broke over the shadow of the dune crests, I called my position into Soco-Jarel. Then, for whatever reason, a strange madness came over me. This ship—this grave—was meant to be left alone. I took a thermal detonator and planted it under the ship. Then, making like a dinko with its tail hairs on fire, I set the timer and ran.

The blast was more than enough to set off a chain reaction, signaling the return of the sand well. Its gaping maws opened and received its offer, burying the ship, its captain, and an emperor's ransom in spice. Some say I was crazy not to claim the ship or its cargo. As a younger man, I might have done it. All my life, I've made a living by underhanded means. But I ain't never stolen from a fellow smuggler, not even a dead one. And I wasn't about to start.

—Karl Ancher, personal datapad journal

## Chapter Two

# Symbiotic Economics

Despite its inhospitable nature, primitive cultures, and criminal elements, Socorro is a commercial success—even a world of wealth. Efforts to maintain the illusion of a mineral-poor, valueless world and a backwards, closed society are perpetuated by those in essential positions of power and the minions that serve them. The majority of profits made on Socorro fill the coffers of these particular individuals. However, the priorities of all are met to insure the success and mutual benefit of every person—smuggler, pirate, or nomad.

### *Ethra Brewery*

*Ethra* is a Socorran word for three. The name is a perfect designation to describe the triple profit split and partnership that is the Ethra Brewery. The company is owned by a triumvirate consisting of Karl Ancher (a Corellian smuggler who has made Socorro his home), Abdi-Badawzi (Socorro's resident crime lord), and Saadoon-Kauldi (an off-world associate brought in by Abdi to further their contacts beyond the Socorro system).

The Brewery is the exclusive producer of Socorran raava, a sophisticated yet popular drink among spacers, and Zsajhira berry tea, a much sought-after commodity on some Inner Rim worlds. Maintaining a choke-hold monopoly on the raava trade and the specially

brewed tea, Ethra Brewery also profits immensely from its extensive line of Corellian whiskies.

As the only beverage producer in the system, Ethra invested and bought full claim to the purified water and hot springs of Socorro's neighbor, Neftali. (The claiming of such rights is not permitted on Socorro in deference to the nomadic tribes. This hands-off ordinance is maintained to hold with the native tradition of no land ownership.)

The Brewery also benefits from a glassworks operation that uses the characteristic black sands of Socorro as the main element in the creation of the peculiar crystal bottles in which Socorran raava is sold.

### *A Guarded Recipe*

Only the purest water is used in the creation of Socorran raava. Huge blocks of ice are cut out of the surface of Neftali and boiled for several hours in mammoth, pressurized vats. Sand is brought from the Socorran desert by the metric ton and is used to distill the water and complete the purification process.

Once this procedure is complete, a vat of fermented Zsajhira berries is added and the mixture is brought to a slow boil. Specially treated leaf material and roots are selected from choice Zsajhira patches and mixed in for added blend and flavor. Then, once again, the





Storm Cook

brew is boiled and distilled through the fine sands.

The process is a highly traditional one—so much so that Ibhaan'Ishamen, the originators of the raava, are brought in from the badlands to bless the brew through every step of the process, as was the practice in more primitive times.

## Caelli-Merced Syndicate

Despite its menacing title, the Caelli-Merced Syndicate is not a criminal organization. Well, not really. Initially started by Vance Caelli and his partner, Lee Merced, this corporation is a leading manufacturer of illegal

weapons, starship upgrade components, and small ground vehicles. The exquisite excellence of their weaponry is well-known among the planet's smugglers and pirates. The modified swoop craft that come off the Caelli-Merced line are highly sought-after commodities on both the open and black markets.

## Boliscon Towers

Boliscon Towers is possibly the best known business on Socorro, simply because it is the most noticeable man-made feature on the surface of the planet. As spacers come in from the cold of space, it would be hard to miss the hazy shadow of the twin five-story docking hangars dominating the outermost perimeter of the Soco-Jarel Spaceport.

Owned and operated by Aquato Boliscon, the towers offer a variety of ship repairs and modifications—there's even a sales lot for prospective buyers. Located on a planet that seems to be on the edge of the galaxy, Boliscon is the destination for many pilots seeking to make their fortune by way of the smuggling trade. Here,

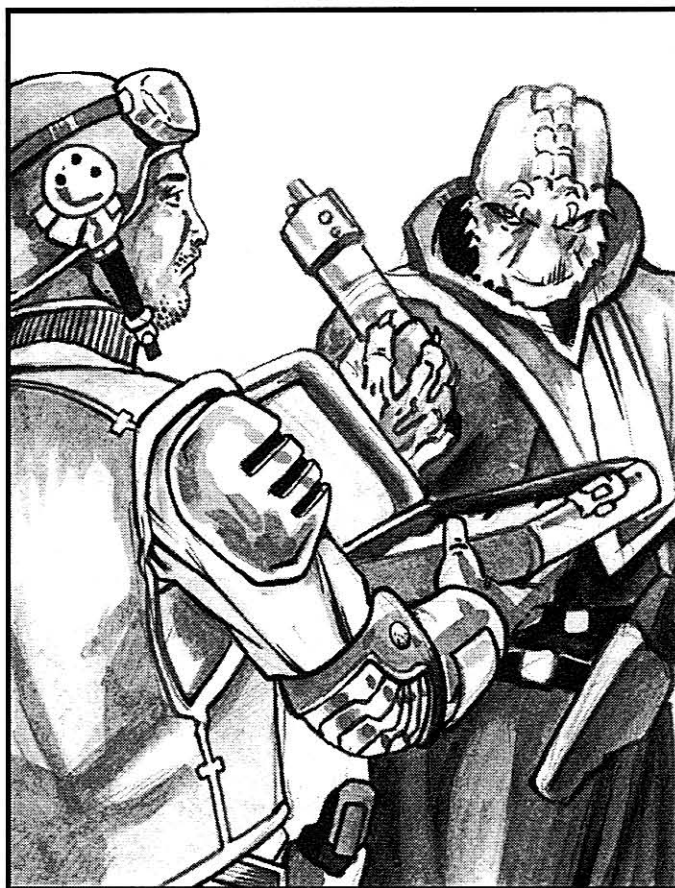
many take that first prospective step toward finding and purchasing a good ship at a reasonable price.

## Marbra Associates

This organization is not widely known except to the innermost masterminds of Socorro's criminal hierarchy. It is a money-laundering operation that processes a rumored 2.5 billion credits a year. Many notable criminal orders have been known to use the services of Marbra Associates to launder ill-gotten gains or for the exceptional service of conflict negotiation. Marbra's outside mediators are immediately available to waylay mob wars and to clear the air among rival syndicates.

## Black Bha'ir

The Society of the Black Bha'ir is a guild organization of smugglers and pirates that maintains a high standard of work ethics and moral codes by which all members are expected to adhere. It is one of the largest organizations of its kind in this corner of the galaxy and frequently extends itself beyond the bound-



Storm Cook

aries of the Socorro system. Supposedly, the Bha'lr began as a military order during the great conflicts that swept the galaxy during the downfall of the Republic. This unsubstantiated rumor is neither confirmed nor denied by members.

From the monies collected in tribute by Bha'lr members, a substantial portion finds its way to Socorro—the official adopted homeworld of the Black Bha'lr. A small percentage of that money supplements two Bha'lr retirement settlements in the townships of Madra and Norble. Since the life span of a smuggler is a relatively short one, these com-

munities are not densely populated, but they provide opportune rest homes or lay-up sites for wounded smugglers and their crewmen.

## *Black Dust Industries*

Black Dust Industries is the name for a coalition of legitimate business enterprises owned and operated by Karl Ancher. This association includes the Black Dust Tavern, substantial shares in Boliscon Towers, a third share in Ethra Brewery, immense land holdings on Neftali, and settlement donations from the Black Bha'lr.

## *The Spice Trade and Other Valuable Commodities*

Illicit pursuits, such as gun-running, hired muscle, unauthorized Corellian whiskey sales and production, as well as the manufacture and distribution of other illegal contraband (including spice) keeps the planet teeming with

criminal activity. Socorro is known for its underworld connections. Anything a pirate would need can be found here: ships, crew, contracts, contacts, even mentors.

## *Tribal Alliances*

Despite the technological leaps made from those early colonial days and the advances brought to the planet by outsiders, the people of Socorro are still very mindful of their indigenous cousins. Every aspect of life is geared toward avoiding even the slightest interference with the tribal mentality or the traditions of those nomads who still live as they have for millennia.

Many would suggest that the only real change has been in the thinking of the smugglers who live and raise their families on Socorro. The integration has been two ways. While the advancements and technological know-how of the smuggling communities has done much to protect and preserve the heritage of the indigenous tribes, the prevailing tribal traditions of family, mutual co-operation, and intolerance of hostile outsiders has found its way into the mindset of many established smuggling families and criminal elements.

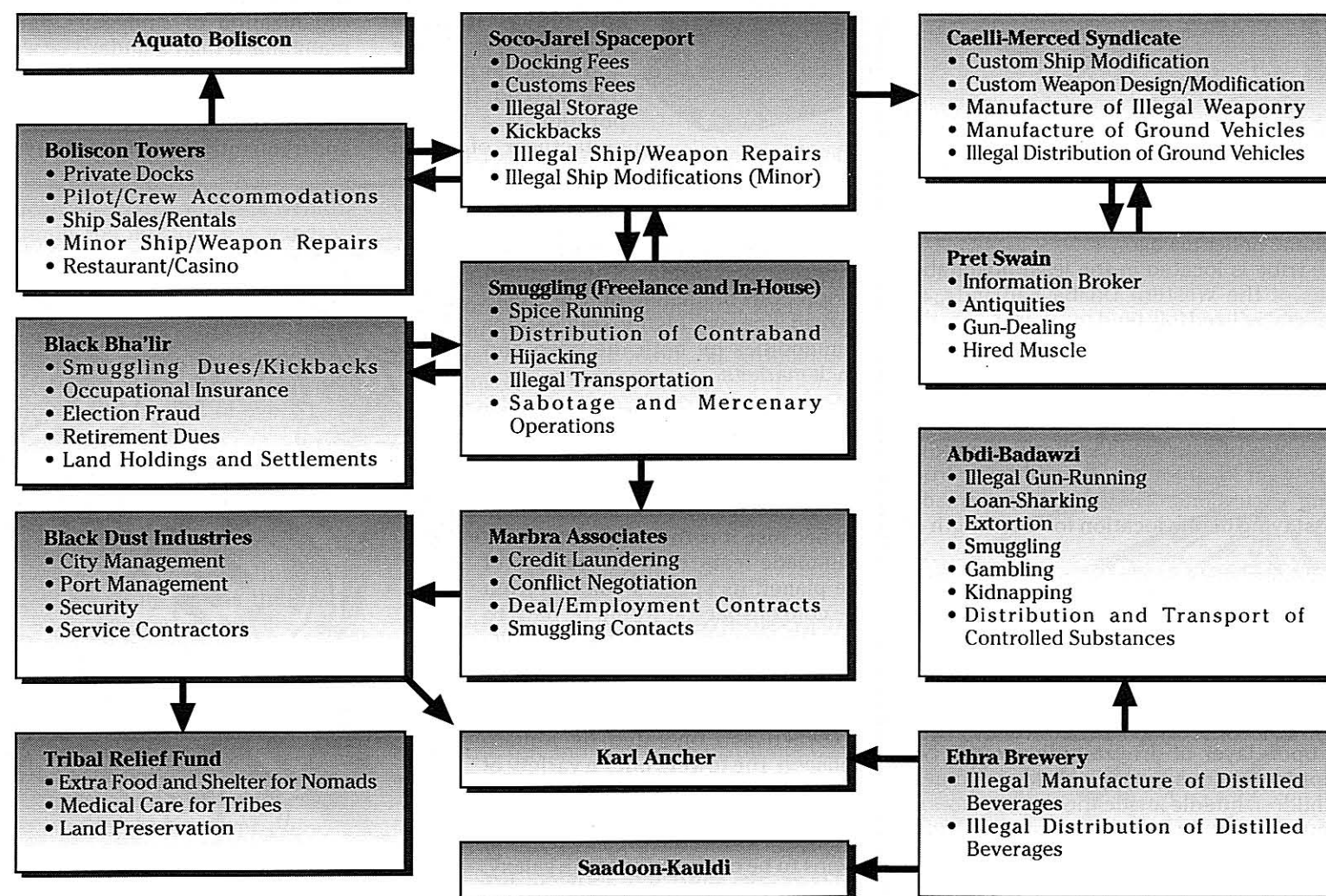
To understand the workings of the Socorran smuggler is to understand the innermost workings of tribal tradition. Many outsiders are at a lost to explain the bond and envious of the ties that bind these two dissimilar worlds so closely together.

## *Asilyr Tribe*

"I was camped out in the Badlands overnight, waiting for a client to drop a load of spice. He was a bit nervous, so I agreed to meet him at dawn near the Adsila Rifts. Before I closed up for the night, this kid, a little girl, stumbled across my camp. She didn't have much on her—a spear, couple of druyza skins. Supposedly, she got separated from her hunting party and was headed home, but it was a long walk. She didn't seem lost, or so she told me. I felt sorry for her and gave her a place to stay until nightfall—that's when the Asilyr like to move...at night.

"Just before nightfall, she came running into the cockpit, screaming and hissing. She kept making a motion for me to fly the ship, to get away from my camp. Heck, I didn't know what the girl wanted. Maybe a free ride into space? I was all ready to stun her, she was so out of control. That's when my sensors started acting funny. Next thing I know, my ship's bucking and jumping like a ronto walking across hot coals.

## *Where the Money Goes*





# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •



Storm Cook

*"I started my engines and raised ship, just as the sand erupted beneath my struts. As I looked out of the viewscreen, I saw a boiling mass of sand and rock. What I had taken for a dried-up water grotto erupted into a volcano. Lava boiled up out of the ground, under pressure, spewing hot ash and molten debris into the air. The spot where my ship had been was now a gaping open pit of pooling liquid from the planet's core. The shock waves from the explosion nearly took my ship out.*

*"I took the girl back to her tribe, personally. Despite some minor damage to my ship, I managed to keep my appointment with the client. Half of what I made on the score went to the kid. Clothes, supplies, that sort of thing. It was the least I could do for her. After all, she saved my life; and more importantly, she saved my ship."*

—Trep Winters, smuggler

After an encounter with the Asilyr tribe

The Asilyr tribe is one of the more amiable nomadic clans of Socorro. Despite an initial unease with strangers, tribal members soon grow accustomed to newcomers and welcome them warmly into their camps. Anthropologists believe that the tribe are the descendants of colonists who may have crashed in the Adsila

Rifts some millennia ago.

The tribe is located in the least hospitable regions of the Western Doaba Badlands, an area most civilized folk tend to avoid. Life in the unsteady region of the Adsila Rifts makes them ideal guides for traveling through active volcanic areas and through suspected areas of sand wells, particularly at night. The Asilyr live in large groups of extended families and survive primarily on Zsajhira berries and meat from hunting excursions. They are true nomads, never staying in one location for any length of time.

The Asilyr view Sokor, Socorro's sun, as a natural enemy. During daylight, men and women of the tribe completely cover themselves in tanned druyza hides, including their faces. Unless seismic aberrations threaten, it is difficult to rouse them from their tents. These temporary shelters are fashioned from layer upon layer of druyza hide, making the interior impervious to sunlight. Men, women, and children huddle inside these structures to wait out the day. As night descends, the Asilyr begin the normal routine of tribal life, often during the hours when other tribal communities are fast asleep.



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• Symbiotic Economics •

## Game Notes

### Special Abilities:

**Sensitivity:** Due to a life in the unstable region of the Adsila Rifts, members of the Asilyr tribe may roll *search* or *Perception* rolls to detect volcanic eruptions, sand wells, and other seismic disturbances on Socorro up to two minutes in advance; they receive a +1D bonus to this roll. The difficulty depends upon the size of the disturbance (larger events are easier to detect) and proximity (it's easier to detect a nearby event).

## Bharhulai

*"They were covered in black sand, head to bare toe, like they'd been rolling it. Hard to say where the ash ended and their skin began. It was near dawn when they attacked the ship. Black as pitch outside! And that's when they struck. All you could see was the white reflecting in their eyes. And they came—and they came in droves—one after the other.*

*"It wasn't until I set down at Soco-Jarel that I saw what they'd done to my ship. They managed to do more damage to my freighter than a reunion of drunken Wookiees on a family holiday...."*

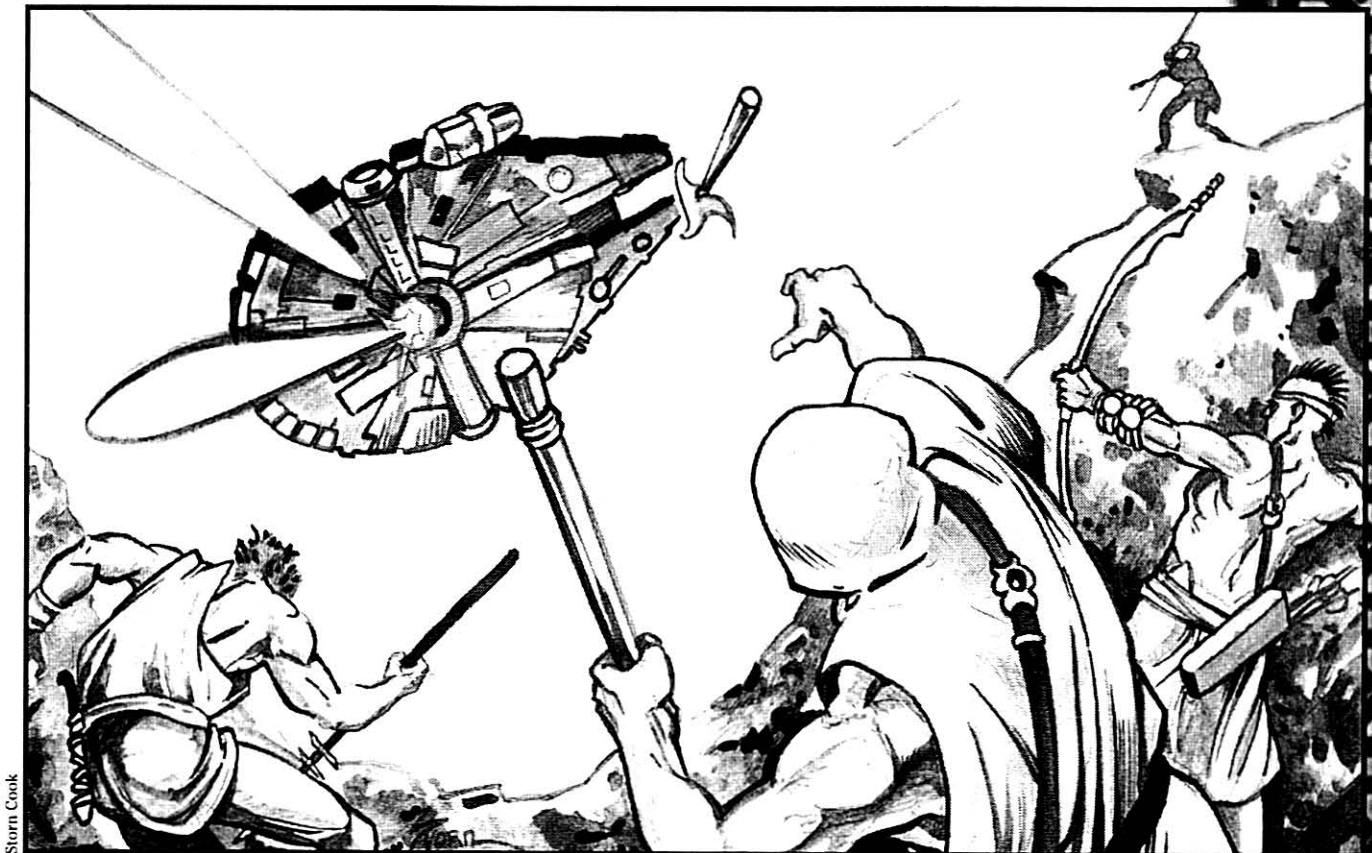
—Zalizar Zudii, smuggler

After a violent encounter with the Bharhulai

The most feared of the nomadic tribes is the Bharhulai. They are a fiercely territorial clan that will attack any stranger bold or foolhardy enough to come into their territories. Savage and brutal in their ways, the Bharhulai represent primitive man in his primordial environment. Anthropologists, who have only studied the tribe at a distance, claim the clan is an example of Arner Figgis' survival-regressive-isolationist theory. This controversial hypothesis assumes that the Bharhulai are descended from the survivors of a crashed colony ship and due to their isolation and being completely cut off from their sister ships and fellow colonists, they were forced to revert to primitive stages of humanity in order to insure the survival of the group.

The only evidence to support Figgis' theory is scant but somewhat credible. When faced with any component of technology, the Bharhulai immediately destroy the object. Field tests have repeatedly proven that the tribe rejects even the simplest technology with violent zeal—along with anyone who would tolerate such evil.

Aliens are not welcomed at all and may be attacked and killed without reservation. Fortunately, despite their war-like behavior and intolerance of outsiders, the Bharhulai rarely, if



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ever, come down out of their northern territories. In deference to this, most knowledgeable people do not venture into their lands unless heavily armed and with good reason.

The Bharhulai exist as one collective group of many extended families. They roam the desert following game and travel only in those territories well inside the northern polar region, which they fervently defend as their home. Their camps are tents made of hide. They maintain some semi-permanent warrens, dug out and fashioned beneath the sand. Their camps are formed in concentric circles, with the hunters and warriors living on the outer perimeter, thus insuring the safety of women, children, and older tribal members, who are kept closer to the center.

The Bharhulai dress in scant hides and coarse weavings. They wear such apparel until it literally falls off of them before preparing another set of clothing.

### *Ibhaan'I*

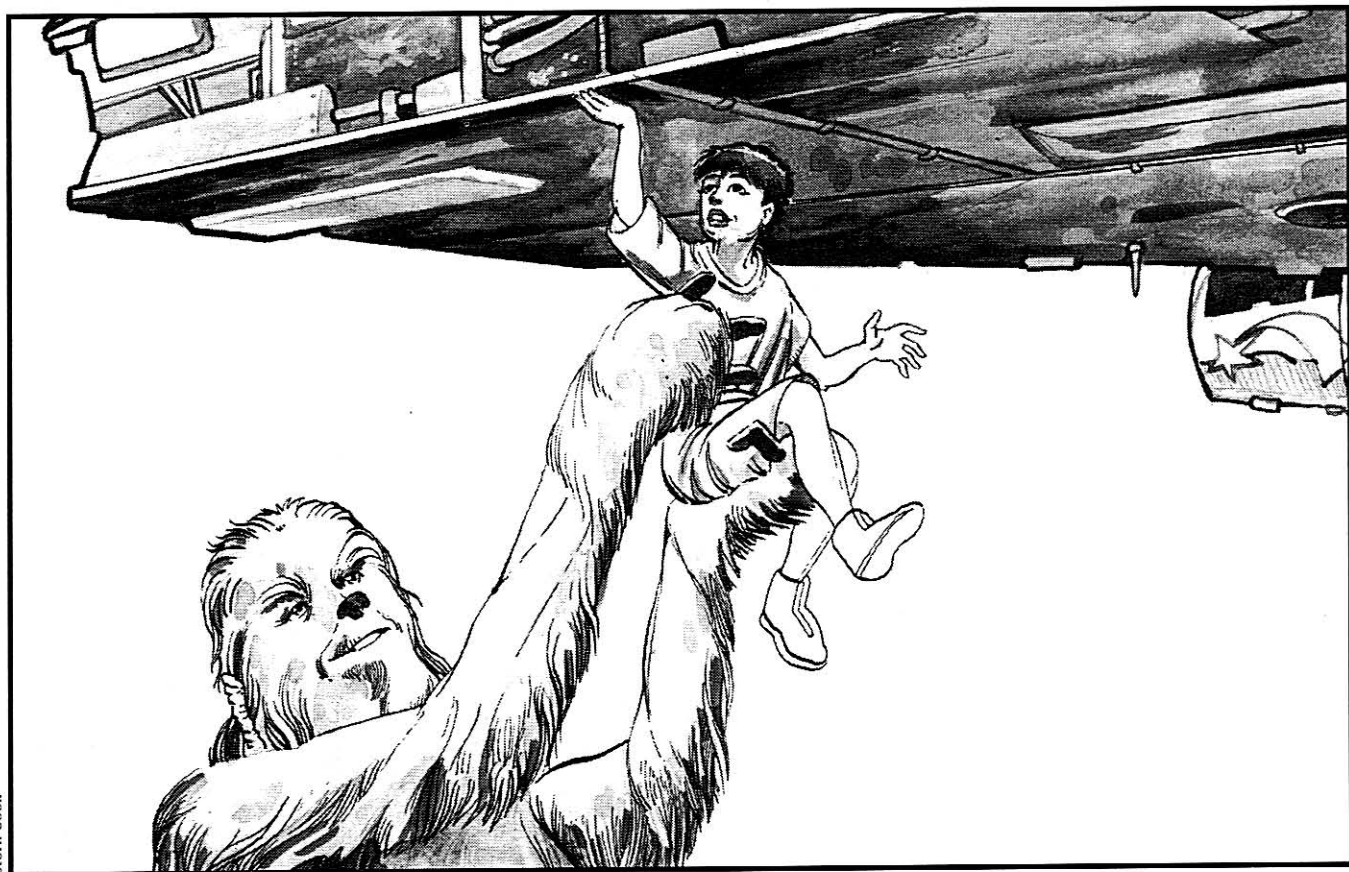
*"They're the closest thing to family that I know. I was raised by their elders, played with their children, grew up in their traditions—no different than any other Socorran, I suppose.*

*Only difference is, when I went off-world, I didn't forget their ways—the sharing, the integrity, and the camaraderie—everything they taught me about being, about leading a worthwhile existence. And when I come home to them, I'm more than just someone they knew from a long time ago. It's deeper than that, much deeper...I'm family."*

—Drake Paulsen, Socorran pirate  
On his experience with the Ibhaan'I.

Ibhaan'I tribesmen are well-known for their impulsive wandering. Their skills in successfully scouting the remote wastes of the Doaba Badlands are renown. Many explorers come to Socorro in hopes of luring Ibhaan'I scouts from their tribes to adventures on far-off planets. And for the most part, they are triumphant, as Ibhaan'I tend to be voraciously curious about the worlds beyond their home deserts.

Because of their exposure to advanced technologies, the Ibhaan'I are comfortable with space travel, mechanical equipment, and even alien cultures. They learn quickly and are eager to experience the greater universe. For this reason, they make excellent crewmen and first-mates. However, Ibhaan'I are determined, even while leading a life among the stars, to remain traditional to the dictates of their tribe.



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Ibhaan'I live in collective clans of extended families and have been known to adopt smugglers into their families. The majority of the tribe lives in the deep deserts of Socorro, while others dwell within a two-day walk from Socojarel spaceport. There are some Ibhaan'I who actually live inside the city of Vakeyya itself and work in the port. With the continuing development of the spaceport and its neighboring city, these Ibhaan'I have given up their nomadic lifestyle.

Several small Ibhaan'I villages are located within several kilometers of Socojarel. Their permanent buildings are built with sun-baked bricks made from the native sand and coated with druyza dung for lasting protection from the elements. The older the village, the more elaborate and complex the architecture. Having surrendered their nomadic lifestyle, these Ibhaan'I are given to changing the appearance of their homes with unusual frequency, such as adding rooms or joining two structures to make one common building. It is not unusual to find scrap metal, such as hull plating, used as a reinforcement wall.

The Ibhaan'I dress in a sundry of tanned hides and surplus clothing donated by their more advanced neighbors. Ibhaan'I women are celebrated for their weaving skills. Several lines of pirate fashions were inspired by Ibhaan'I dress, such as close-fitting but cool pirate leggings and oversized, billow-sleeved linen shirts; even the heavy fabric of the traditional Socorran desert duster is drawn from Ibhaan'I culture.

Many Socorrans, particularly those born into the pirating sects, identify more with the Ibhaan'I than any other tribe on Socorro. They believe that their lifestyle—subsistence as pirates—is akin to the hard, nomadic life led by their more technologically backward cousins. Wanderlust and devotion to tradition are other ties that bind the two cultures closely together.

### Game Notes

#### Special Abilities:

*Scouting:* Ibhaan'I get a +2D bonus to *search*, *sneak*, and *Perception* when scouting a known area. They get +1D when scouting unfamiliar territories, including alien worlds.

## Ndowi

*"Number one, they're businessmen. Number two, they're honest. And that's not the kind of combination you often find in this business."*

—Karl Ancher, smuggler  
Of the Ndowi tribe of Socorro.

The Ndowi are the most advanced of the

native cultures of Socorro. They are no longer nomadic and have established several mountain settlements in the mid-southern region of the Rym Mountains. Rarely coming into the desert (except to trade or hunt), they tend to stay secure in their rugged homes, using Zsajhira berries as the main staple of their diet.

The Ndowi live in an area where there are heavy concentrations of Zsajhira berries. When the growing season is at its peak, these hardy mountain people descend on the slopes of the Rym Mountains and pick berries in mass numbers. They trade their gain for materials brought in by the Ethra Brewery.

This is the smallest native tribe on Socorro, numbering less than 1,000 members. They live in natural and man-made caverns deep within the mountains. They have managed to carve an extensive network of tunnels and warrens below the rock surface. Outsiders are hard-pressed to keep their bearings when allowed to roam freely among these interconnecting tunnels, many of which wind in endless circles, or lead to abrupt dead ends or deadly cliff faces. The key to mastering the tunnels is a code of songs and ballads as intricate as the tunnels themselves: Socorran songs, partial stanzas, and refrains, are carved into the rock at every intersection. The proper order of phrases will lead into the inhabited sections of the Ndowi home, while the wrong path could lead to a series of traps and guard posts.

The uninformed observer might mistake the Ndowi as colonists struggling to etch out an existence in the rugged heart of the Rym Mountains. Their manner and dress is not unlike those isolated farming cultures of Omman or Tatooine. However, their lack of mechanical know-how and their awe of advanced technology is a clear indication of their native culture.

### Game Notes

#### Special Abilities:

*Climbing:* Because they make their homes in the treacherous peaks and canyons of the Rym Mountains, members of the Ndowi tribe are excellent climbers and receive a +2D when *climbing* in rocky areas.

## Government

A brief word on government. There is none—at least not in the terms civilization has known the structure. The Black Bha'lir are the main authority and share that reign with its more prominent members, crime lords, and tribal factions.





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There is no loyalty to the Old Republic, the Rebel Alliance, or the Galactic Empire. Those in power have made a consistent effort to remain well out of the political arena and out of the fight, while simultaneously profiting from the conflicts these great powers generate.

### *Aa'kua*

*Aa'kua* is a Socorran word meaning "respecting space." It is the term used in regard to territorial lines, property, and personal rights. The word can literally be translated to mean "his or her space." A violation of *aa'kua* is a violation of someone's space and is considered a heinous crime. The transgression may come in the guise of stealing; lying for personal gain where reputations or individuals come to harm; cheating on a business transaction; unreasonable breach of word or contract; premeditated murder; even harassment and certain forms of slander. While there is no true law on Socorro, the right of *aa'kua* is very much in

effect in all quarters of the planet. Punishment is harsh and swift for those who disrespect the tradition.

For well over three millennia, *aa'kua* has been a way of life among the nomadic tribes of Socorro. The continuance of the custom insures that no one infringes on their way of life. It is the unspoken rule of thumb among smugglers; violation of this tradition is an easy way for unenlightened outsiders to get themselves killed or thrown off the planet.

Even the smallest infringement of *aa'kua* is met by ridicule and disdain. Violators often find themselves in positions where they cannot profit or find employment. Only those people in power (for example, the crime lord Abdi-Badawzi) are permitted slight indiscretions of *aa'kua*, and only then against so-called peers or equals, such as smugglers. These small improprieties—in moderation—are considered acts of intimidation allowed to a person in a position of influential power.

Violations against the nomadic populace, for whatever reason, are not tolerated. They are punishable by death in most cases.

## Chapter Three

# Soco-Jarel Spaceport

### *Soco-Jarel Spaceport*

**System:** Socorro system, Vakeyya  
**Spaceport Type:** Imperial class  
**Traffic:** High  
**Control:** Controller  
**Landing:** Directional beacon, landing teams  
**Docking Areas:** Docking bays, exterior landing pads  
**Docking Fee:** 30-35 credits per day (prices tend to be much higher inside the Boliscon Towers)  
**Customs:** Inspection by local authority  
**Services:** Employment opportunities and contacts, entertainment, food, lodging, repair facilities, storage bays, vehicle sales and rentals

### *Soco-Jarel Spaceport*

A sprawling spaceport on the most remote of worlds, Soco-Jarel is where every visitor to Socorro begins his or her journeys. Soco-Jarel is an extensive port facility, catering to the needs of pilots, crewmen and technicians. With a professionally honed staff of mechanics and engineers, Soco-Jarel offers high-quality repairs and modifications. An adopted residence for smugglers and pirates, the port offers a comfortable place to lay up, avoid bounty hunters, hide out from crime lords, and make those

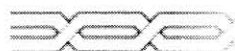
necessary and not-so-necessary repairs and modifications.

The port offers a variety of food, drinks, and entertainment at costs suited for the down-on-his-luck smuggler. A surplus of contacts and employment opportunities are available here for the asking.

Soco-Jarel is the dominion of Aquato Boliscon, the owner of Boliscon Towers. With a crack team of technicians, the Boliscon outfit offers many of those hard-to-find, illegal services, as well as referrals for major repairs or modification work. Docking platforms are available inside the immense Boliscon Towers themselves, but tend to cost more than the average spacer is willing to pay.

Soco-Jarel Spaceport is nearly as large as the neighboring city of Vakeyya and the port influences every aspect of life in Socorro's unofficial capital. For this reason, Soco-Jarel has been termed the "stargate of the city," through which every visitor must pass. The port employs nearly one-third of Vakeyya's 74,000 citizens.

Soco-Jarel extends for several kilometers in a sprawling mosaic of inner docking pads and outer flight moors. At any time, there can be as many as 2,000 small ships and transports on the inner pads, while 500 more ships can occupy the exterior landing pads on the looping perimeter of the main hangars. In the late after-





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Storn Cook

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## • Soco-Jarel Spaceport •

noon sun, the vessels appear to be banthas dozing in the desert haze.

The twin mammoths, the Boliscon Towers, are situated at the farthest end of the port, away from the city. Human controllers occupy the upper levels of each tower and the remaining levels are reserved for docking and repair purposes. The innermost repair bays, the luxurious private moors, and the Soco-Jarel port itself would make an Imperial technician drool with envy.

Docking in the towers is costly for off-worlders; the majority of bays are reserved for friends of the port owner and manager, Aquato Boliscon. The cost per dock is 1,000-1,550 credits daily and includes a variety of services such as pre-scheduled maintenance, repairs, interior and exterior hull cleaning, lodging, as well as transport to and from the city for crewmen, pilots, and passengers. These port-operated transports often feature hospitality drinks, food, and a generous credit line at the sabacc tables located in the port bar and restaurant.

**J-9SB, Protocol Droid.** While many protocol droids are privileged to serve as translators or attachés to diplomats and government agencies, J-9SB serves as Soco-Jarel's informal ambassador. Stationed inside the exclusive Boliscon Towers, J-9 offers drinks and refreshment to visiting dignitaries and guests.

With a sharp metallic black skin, the droid stands out in a crowd. The machine takes a serious interest in his job of greeting, serving, and guiding off-world charges and local gentry. Fluent in numerous languages and dialects, J-9 is often seen at the main disembarking docks, serving tray in hand. If his presence is requested, he normally arrives within moments. J9 also serves as Boliscon's watch dog, always searching for undercover Imperial law-enforcement officers or spies (he has a direct link into Boliscon's boot-legged security files). If a potential troublemaker is spotted, Boliscon is immediately alerted to the situation.

**J-9SB.** All stats are 1D except: *Knowledge* 3D, *alien species* 6D+2, *bureaucracy* 4D, *business* 5D, *cultures* 5D+1, *languages* 7D+2, *investigation* 4D, *computer programming/repair* 5D, *droid programming* 5D, *droid repair* 3D+2. Move: 7. Equipped with: Internal comlink, link to Boliscon Towers' database. Equipment: Datapad.

The more familiar personalities of Socorro who do not wish to dock in the Towers are given privileged docking ports, which are located closest to the city. These platforms cost

30-35 credits daily for regular customers with limited services. Strangers pay up 50 credits per day. Exterior lots are generally 20-25 credits, depending on location and distance from the city.

Boliscon can afford such low prices due to the heavy traffic into and out of the port. Despite its backwater status, Socorro's controller and landing teams operate the full 20 hours of the day. And there is rarely a dull moment, as ships queue up in the upper atmosphere, waiting for permission to land. The commercial success of his sales and rental shipyard, repair stations, and modification facilities (as well as kickbacks from the Black Bha'lir) all compensate for lower revenues generated by his landing bays.

Getting into Socorran space is simply a matter of credentials. The right transponder code, a reputable name or a recognizable ship can have a smuggler on the ground or in the main tower within moments. The wrong credentials—such as an Imperial code or a suspect transmission—can add up to 90 minutes of wait time, an earful of archaic Old Corellian blather, and even after a thorough check, a rejection that can be backed up by five KDY v-150 Planet Defender ion cannons. These massive and highly illegal weapons are well-hidden somewhere in the perimeter of the port. Each is equipped with its own power generators and is manned by a separate team of crews.

The personnel manning the control towers, the repair bays and the port itself are all smugglers, both past and present. They often rotate stations to insure that every operator is familiar with the people and ships that pass through the skies of Socorro on a given day. While no single person can know the name and reputation of every pilot and ship that transmits a request for permission to dock, the collective knowledge of the workers keeps Boliscon Towers largely clean of unwanted Imperial influence.

Imperial ships are stalled, delayed, detained, quarantined, and, in daring cases, boarded. However, Socorro is so remote a system that an Imperial presence is a rare complication—a large force of Imperial ships has never been sighted here.

## Aquato Boliscon

Aquato Boliscon is rumored to have the best eye for starships on Socorro. His expertise in locating and appropriating quality vessels at reasonable prices—and reselling them at a profit—is renown among the smuggling world.



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Once a noteworthy smuggler himself, Boliscon turned his spice- and gun-running profits to risky, but ultimately quite profitable investments; in time, this windfall allowed him to purchase Soco-Jarel Spaceport.

Since becoming a legitimate businessman, he has retired from the smuggling trade, but he encourages others to make their fortunes through the talents of his companions in the BlackBha'lr. As a member of this underground smuggling organization, Boliscon is in a prime position to render assistance to unproven talent, with the hopes of reinvesting that talent for his own material gain and the betterment of his fellow smugglers.

Rumors of his business connections and close friendship with alleged fringe operator Talon Karrde are largely unsubstantiated—even though Karrde's ship, *Wild Karrde*, is occasionally seen in the high-priority status docking bays in the exclusive heights of Boliscon Towers, a place long reserved for smuggling's underworld royalty.

### *Aquato Boliscon*

Type: Smuggler/Entrepreneur

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 10D, dodge 8D+2, melee combat 6D, running 6D



Storn Cook

### **KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 12D, languages 10D, planetary systems 12D, streetwise 11D+2, value: starships 12D+2

### **MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 11D, communications 9D+1, sensors 8D, space transports 11D+2

### **PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 11D, con 9D, forgery 8D+1, gambling 10D+1, persuasion 12D, search 11D, sneak 11D+1

### **STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 6D+1, stamina 5D+2

### **TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Blaster repair 5D, space transports repair 11D+2

**Force Points: 3**

**Character Points: 15**

**Move: 10**

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

## *Port Services*

Both Boliscon Towers and Soco-Jarel's repair facilities offer an array of repair bays and modification docks. Components and specialty parts are available at the spaceport or shipped from distributors in the city—most any starship component, both legal and illegal, can be located here.

Soco-Jarel is staffed round-the-clock by technical crews. Repair droids are often used to analyze damage and assess the costs for repairs or modifications. After studying the results of the droid surveys, crews of seven or eight technicians descend upon the ship, normally wrapping up their work right on budget and ahead of schedule.

Boliscon Towers offers fine quality repair work and modifications. This reputation alone is enough of a draw to bring smugglers and reputable techs to Socorro in search of expertise. However, there are some specific modification requests that are too difficult or too illegal even for the Boliscon crews. In these cases, a pilot may be fortunate enough to get a referral and a docking permit for the port in Cjaalysce'I, 5,100 kilometers away. The Caelli-Merced techs there can modify any ship and make it the envy of the hyperlanes. This referral comes with a hefty price tag, of course; not every prospective client has the credentials and the credits to afford the work...and the smarts to keep quiet about where said modifications were purchased.

## *The Custom Stop*

A favorite stop on the way into Vakeyya is the Custom Stop. Don't let the name fool you—behind the conservative front offices of a "customs bureau" is an impressive wrap-around

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retired bounty hunter, or a smuggler who grew tired of the risks and opted out for a more stable and lucrative career. There are those to believe that all three may be the case.

**Hhalyia Ahsane.** All stats are 2D+2 except: *Dexterity* 4D, *blaster* 5D+2, *dodge* 5D, *melee combat* 4D, *melee parry* 4D+1, *alien species* 5D, *languages* 4D+2, *streetwise* 4D, *beast riding* 3D+2, *Perception* 3D, *command* 4D, *investigation* 4D+1, *search* 4D, *sneak* 4D, *Strength* 3D, *brawling* 5D. Move: 7. Equipment: Caelli-Merced heavy blaster pistol (5D+2).

For the gambler, the Custom Stop features a grand array of sabacc and other games of chance. Everything from Bounce to Qul'bukie Joker can be found under one roof. And when the night runs a bit too long, there are luxurious suites available for 250 to 500 credits nightly.

Looking for a job? Don't have much time to spare? "Sordu the Job Doc" is the Rodian to see. If there is a job available—from legitimate cargo hauling to the most exclusive, illegal gigs—Sordu Gogg knows who to contact, how much the job is worth, and what risks are involved. For a fee, he will be willing to intercede on behalf of an able party and obtain the job; temporary

and permanent positions are readily available. Sordu can normally be found in a reserved booth in the back of the Custom Stop.

### Sordu Gogg

Despite the reputation of Rodians galaxy-wide, Sordu is well-liked by the smuggling communities of Socorro. A congenial sort, he has been a welcome addition to the gallery of infamous names at Boliscon Towers and enjoys a prominent standing among his peers. Unwilling to risk that status, Sordu is generally on the level with his knowledge of job offers; he will turn away any parties that he feels are unable to measure up to the task.

### Sordu Gogg

**Type:** Rodian Information Broker

**DEXTERITY** 3D+2

Blaster 6D, brawling parry 6D+2, dodge 6D+1

**KNOWLEDGE** 3D

Alien species 8D, bureaucracy 6D+2, business

8D+1, languages 9D, streetwise 9D+2, value 8D

**MECHANICAL** 2D+1

Astrogation 6D+2, space transports 7D, starship gunnery 6D+2

**PERCEPTION** 4D

Bargain 8D, con 7D+2, forgery 6D+1, gambling

7D+2, persuasion 10D

guest counter, which encompasses the entire restaurant gallery. Clients have but to pick a direction and head to the bar, where six protocol droids are waiting to take orders.

If there is anything to spook a smuggler here, it is the prices. The average drink goes for 40-50 credits—the price of an exclusive docking bay. That's quite expensive, even for a smuggler with a pocket full of cargo pay-off. Meals go for 50 to 60 credits, but are worth every credit spent, offering big portions and that special gourmet touch. The stellar-class kitchen features and prepares just about anything a spacer could ask for—even alien delicacies.

**Hhalyia Ahsane, Bartender/Hostess.** Dedicated, energetic, and unique are the words frequently used to describe Hhalyia Ahsane. The attractive hostess oversees nearly every aspect of the Custom Stop, from its kitchens to the outer bars, to the gambling tables themselves. Dressed in the trademark garb of a well-to-do smuggler, she works her way from table to table, greeting customers in the Old Corellian tongue. She carries a Caelli-Merced heavy blaster pistol—"Just an incentive to keep the peace," she calls it.

Many speculate on her origins: perhaps she was a chef for an elite Imperial noble, or a



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STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Force Points: 2

Dark Side Points: 2

Character Points: 17

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, datapad

### Customs and Port Protocols

Flight plans are rarely kept on file at the towers, registrations are never requested, and questions are kept to the basics. The only thing required of unfamiliar faces, besides the docking fee, is a small portion of their cargo.

On landing, pilots will be greeted by the man often referred to as "Socorro's Ambassador," Benoni Ulte. An Ibhaan'I shaman, Benoni is loyal to three things—his tribe, Aquato Boliscon, and Karl Ancher. Privy to the gossip and underbuzz in the port and city, Benoni keeps Boliscon and Ancher abreast of the goings-on in Soco-Jarel and any problems with tribal relations.

As the representative port manager, he will make an official inspection of any unfamiliar ship and its cargo on the pretense that he is checking to insure the safety of the Socorran tribes and the continued integrity of the planet's ecological system. At peak hours of business, with so many ships to inspect, it is not unusual to see Benoni and several of his attendants swiftly moving about the port to collect small tributes from the new arrivals.

Some smugglers try to hide the nature of their cargoes. Such treachery is met with animosity, resulting in responsible parties being thrown off the world—without their shipment (and often their ship). Benoni's portion of rendered cargo is slight, hardly noticeable in fact, and the accumulated goods generate funds to benefit the welfare of the nomadic tribes. If welcomed by the smuggler and granted his tribute, Benoni will offer a blessing over the ship and ask fortune to smile on its pilot and crew.

A word of warning—Benoni does not accept bribes, nor do any of his attendants. Any pilot who attempts to bribe the shaman or his men will be suspected of some treachery and will likely find themselves escorted off the planet.

### Benoni Ulte

On a first visit to Soco-Jarel, smugglers are visited by the tall, charming Ibhaan'I shaman named Benoni Ulte. Dressed in custom-tailored robes and sandals, Benoni is a handsome, alluring man in his late forties. His head is completely shaven, with the exception of a long braid on the upper right side. This he wears just over his shoulder. Deeply tanned by the Socorran sun, Benoni epitomizes the indigenous peoples of Socorro—agile, hardy, enduring, and spiritual.

Since coming out of the desert to learn more of his strange Corellian ancestors, Benoni Ulte has been a vital asset to the management of Soco-Jarel and Vakeyya. As an Ibhaan'I shaman, he is held in the highest regard by the indigenous peoples of Socorro, as well as the smugglers and pirates who make their homes on the planet. The highest ranking "Bronwen" (or holy man) among the Ibhaan'I tribesmen, he remains an exile from his people as tradition dictates. He achieves this by living side-by-side with his more technologically advanced compatriots, the smugglers and pirates who frequent Soco-Jarel and the nearby port city of Vakeyya.



Storn Cook

# STAR WARS

## • Socorro Spaceport •

### *Benoni Ulte*

Type: Ibhaan'l Shaman

**DEXTERITY 2D+1**

Bows 12D, dodge 8D, melee combat 7D+2, melee parry 6D, thrown weapons 8D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D+2**

Alien species 7D, bureaucracy 6D+2, cultures: tribal 9D+2, intimidation 6D, languages 5D, streetwise 6D+1, survival 8D, value 7D+2, willpower 8D+2

**MECHANICAL 3D**

Beast riding 9D+2, communications 5D

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 7D+1, command 8D, con 4D+1, gambling 6D, investigation 7D+2, persuasion 8D, search 8D+2

**STRENGTH 2D**

Brawling 8D+2, stamina 9D

**TECHNICAL 3D**

First aid 6D+2, security 8D

**Special Abilities:**

*Scouting:* Ibhaan'l get a +2D bonus to *search*, *sneak*, and *Perception* when scouting a known area. They get +1D when scouting unfamiliar territories, including alien worlds.

**This character is Force-sensitive.**

**Force Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 11

**Equipment:** Bow (3D+1), throwing knives (STR+1D), comlink, datapad

### *A Call to Arms*

Anywhere from 100-150 men are on security duty throughout the spaceport. They are well-armed and permitted to use their weapons accordingly to prevent or quell disturbances. Treachery is not tolerated on Socorro, where fair treatment among one's peers is expected and, in most cases, demanded. When trouble does rear its head, however, there are normally an additional 20 to 30 smugglers in the area who will happily join in the fun.

**Port Security.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 6D, brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D+2, running 4D, intimidation 4D+2, languages 4D, streetwise 4D, brawling 4D.* Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D), comlinks.

### *A Word of Warning*

Slaving is a bad idea. Of the few unwritten laws of Socorro and its peculiar underworld culture, slavery is the worst crime against aa'kua imaginable—and it is punishable by death. No trial, no jury of peers, no appeal.

The governing factions waste no time notifying proper authorities—they go straight to executing responsible parties, impounding ships, and confiscating equipment. Slavers are apt to find themselves at the unfriendly end of a blaster or locked in their own shackles.

In many respects, Socorro represents a symbol of freedom to slaves. To avoid recapture by slave hunters, many escapees hire themselves on smuggling vessels with the intent of arriving on Socorro to begin their lives anew. The Twi'lek crime lord Abdi-Badawzi is rumored to have once been a slave himself. Another of Socorro's resident crime bosses, Saadoon-Kauldi (whose bulk freighter orbits the moon of Neftali) is also believed to have made the "middle passage" from slavery to freedom.

The Black Bha'lir look unfavorably on anyone (including the Empire) who would engage in the enslavement of another sentient species and has been known to aid in causes that help free slaves. Despite their non-aggression stance with regard to the war between the Empire and the Alliance, the Bha'lir have more than once pooled their tremendous talents and resources to disrupt and dismantle Imperially funded slave camps or prisons.

Any Black Bha'lir member who engages in slave running is immediately punished by dishonourment (removal from the group), shunning by current members, and if not outright killed, a price will be put on their heads. Any smuggler who dismisses the consequences of bringing slaves to Socorran soil, thus violating the right of aa'kua, is likely to suffer the same retribution. Retribution is a Socorran edict that calls for some payment for a misdeed...act for act, injury for injury, life for life if necessary.

### *Blood Money Bankers*

The only thing worse than a slaver is a bounty hunter. Tracers, legitimate or otherwise, are openly discouraged from even setting foot on Socorro. Suspected hunters are detained, delayed, even assaulted, in an effort to harass and turn them away.

The bounty hunter who suffers through the routine and manages to land safely in port will receive the coldest possible welcome. Docking fees will miraculously quadruple. Supplies, repairs, and parts will become expensive, scarce, or simply unavailable. To make matters worse, the bounty hunter (and his or her ship, weapons, and any supplies brought in from other worlds) will be taxed to bankruptcy on a planet that has no taxes.





# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •

### The Tax Collector

Greed is a major vice by Socorran edict, nearly as corrupt as the betrayal of aa'kua. So when it comes to matters of avarice, the power brokers of Socorro leave this depravity to a member of a species known to excel at it, a Hutt by the name of Tiranga. When bounty hunters ineptly choose to land on the planet, they are sent before Socorro's own resident tax collector to pay their assessment duties.

These are exorbitant fees which run the gamut: mandatory permits for specialty weapons, environmental duties for the use of power armor, levies for expired or near-expired bounty hunting licenses, and penalty taxes for debase occupation, threatening reputation, and even affiliation to a guild. The majority of these taxes are spurious, but no one is prepared to argue with Tiranga, who has the full backing of the Black Bha'lir at his disposal.

Often, by the time the Hutt finishes with the accused perpetrators, they are barely able to afford their docking fees and on-world visas. To make matters worse for bounty hunters, Tiranga holds the assessment proceedings in a public forum inside his pleasure club, Tiranga's Loft. When the hearing concludes, every smuggler within a 100-kilometer radius knows that a bounty hunter has arrived.

Tiranga suffered a debilitating spinal cord injury as a young worm, which has left him partially paralyzed from his bulbous waist to his tail. The impairment also impeded his normal growth cycle: he is barely 2.5 meters long. Considered a runt among his own species, Tiranga is a stunted picture of what a true Hutt should be. However, what he lacks in stature, he makes up for in tremendous ego.

Despite his successes in the underworld, Tiranga is an exile. His sanctuary is Socorro, where few dare to oppose him. Many of his fellow Hutts consider him an abomination to the species and would kill him outright if given the opportunity. This has prompted a death sentence on Tiranga's head—the Hutt will never leave Socorro without the protection and backing of his criminal compatriots in the Black Bha'lir.

### Tiranga the Hutt

Type: Tax Collector

DEXTERITY 1D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 6D, bureaucracy 7D, business 6D+2, cultures 5D, intimidation 5D, languages 5D+2, streetwise 6D, value 7D, willpower 8D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 7D, command 6D, con 4D, gambling 6D, investigation 6D, persuasion 8D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, stamina 7D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Special Abilities:

*Force Resistance:* Hutts have an innate defense against Force-based mind manipulation techniques and roll double their *Perception* dice to resist such attacks. Hutts are not believed to be able to learn Force skills.

Character Points: 10

Move: 1

Equipment: Repulsorlift dais (Move: 20), comlink, datapad

### Commodities

Extremely limited by its lack of natural resources, Socorro is dependent on imports brought to the planet by way of bulk transports and smuggling ships. Once docked on-planet, it is not uncommon for a pirate to exchange a cargo of foodstuffs and perishable supplies only to load up with a hold full of weapons, spice, or illegal hooch.

However, Socorro does have a few trade goods—and all of them are quite valuable. Zsajhira berries are quite popular and almost guaranteed to make a sizable profit. The distribution of Socorran raava or Socorran-brand Corellian whiskey has made more than one clever pilot rich and independent. Running Caelli-Merced weaponry and

vehicles is also a lucrative business enterprise. Ship modifications add continual profits to the planet's coffers. A constant

flux of kickbacks from these and other sources keeps the Socorran economy strong, competitive, and readily capable of supporting the ever-changing populations that move through Vakeyya.



## Chapter Four

# Vakeyya

### *A City On the Edge*

Masked in the shadow of the Doaba Badlands, Vakeyya remains a sparkling bastion of old world quality and values. While the high-tech advancements of Soco-Jarel have added a dimension of progress to the port city, Vakeyya

retains much of its pioneer humility. The buildings are modest two-story dwellings, built from plasteel, concrete, and mixed elements of the indigenous sand.

Socorran sand is a natural insulator that can keep out the intense heat of the day. But Socorro's red giant will not be denied—by late afternoon, it is quite hot even in the most protected buildings. Ceiling fans are commonplace in every room and air blower units are used in businesses or areas of large gatherings.

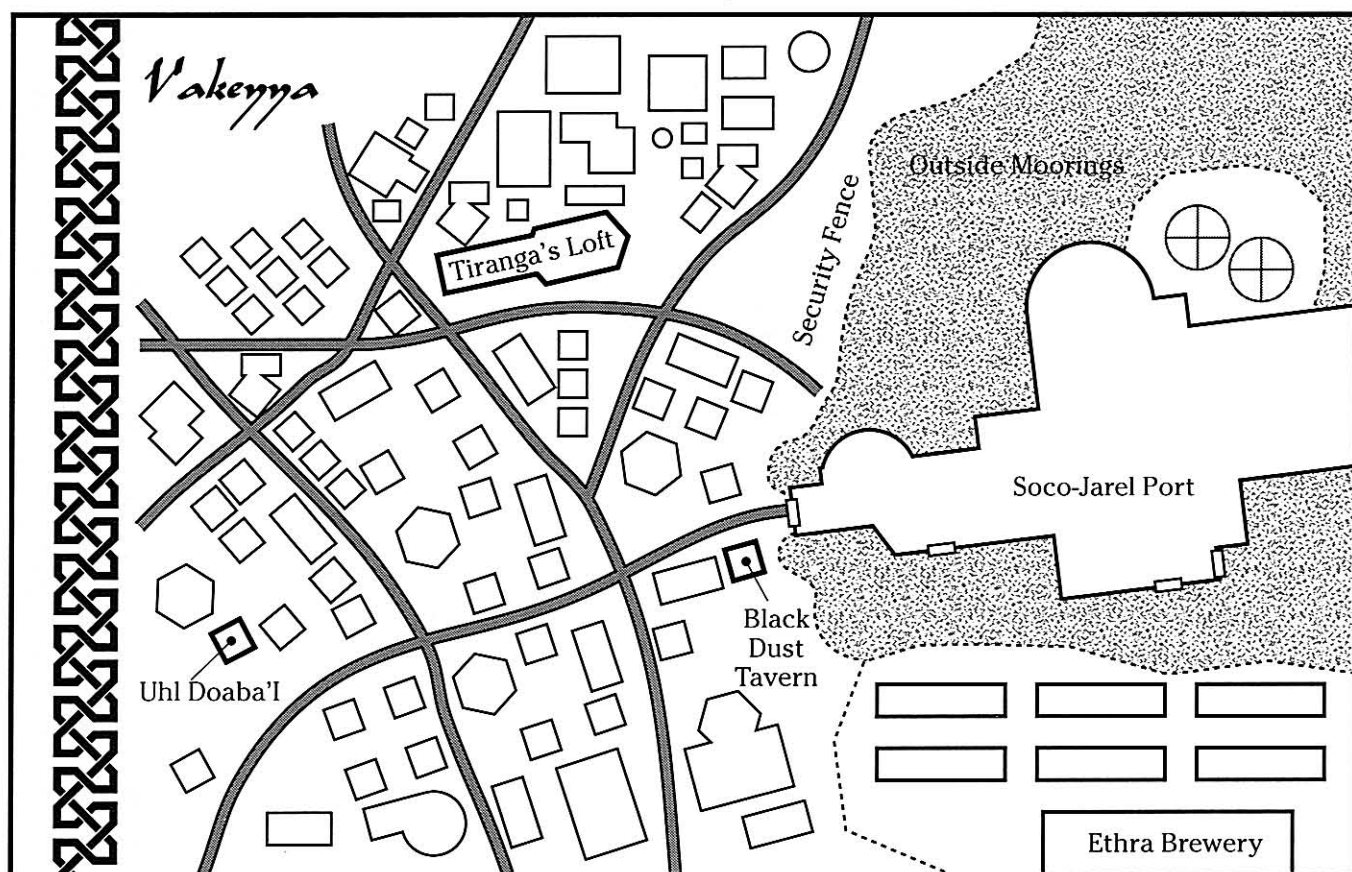


Storm Cook



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Total or partially underground foundations offer some comfort from the heat, but the expense of building such structures is often prohibitive. The majority of homes, particularly those in the older sections of the city, have running water that is supplied by the original pumps and wells built by the first colonists.

On first impression, the long-established settlement appears to be a city lost in the past. This is somewhat deceptive. While values and ethics are still honored traditions here, Socorrans have made great strides in keeping pace with advancing technologies and current events that may affect them.

Despite a plethora of alien ethics and mores, one rule prevails above all else—aa'kua—respect the individual. There is no formal law enforcement; rather, Vakeyya is a city where individuals are expected to carry themselves in a proper manner.

The Black Bha'lir have established a certain criteria of positive ethics among smugglers, such as honoring their word, keeping contracts, and respecting the rights of fellow smugglers. To break any of these unspoken dictates leaves a smuggler open to criticism and punishment by the group. Justice comes in many

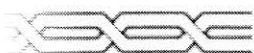
forms on Socorro, but the greatest is the retribution, which requires restitution for wrongdoing—act for act.

Disputes, personal or otherwise, are to be quickly settled either by available mediators or by duel. The results are final; any interference by on-lookers is not tolerated. Smugglers who put themselves above these dictates are likely to find themselves shunned by their peers or without back-up should their next venture go awry.

Vakeyya is a city of fairness. Equality is a moot concept, but fairness is another idea entirely. What you have and what you've got holds little weight in the eyes of natives. What you've done and the results of those actions, good or bad, for an individual or for a group, determine how you are judged.

## Black Dust Tavern

If Socorro is a hotbed for smuggling activity, then the Black Dust Tavern is the main source of that heat. Located across from the space-



port, the tavern is the first pleasing sight weary smugglers see as they pass through the gates into Vakeyya.

The Black Dust is open at all hours and offers an assortment of drinks and food so that smugglers from across the galaxy, Rodians to Sullustans, can find a small measure of home on the menu. In fact, the tavern boasts a sample mixture of liquor, whiskey, rum, brandy, and hooch from nearly every alien species. The collection is a hobby that owner Karl Ancher began towards the end of his smuggling career. If there should be a drink that Karl or his serving droid do not know, the customer gets the first three drinks on the house. That is, after Ancher has secured the recipe, of course.

Drinks are relatively cheap at the Black Dust, catering to the small pockets of smugglers. An overly proud Corellian, Ancher does not scrimp on serving his customers the best that is possible from his supplies. His reputation as an honest businessman is renown in smuggling circles. As a result of his popularity, there is always a generous crowd of Ancher's friends and acquaintances to keep the Corellian and his droid busy. Free rounds on the house are frequent, particularly when smugglers return to Socorro after a successful run.

Security at the Black Dust is minimal. Except

for the occasion fist fight, which the Corellian tolerates from time to time, Ancher's reported accuracy with a blaster keeps the peace. Coupled with a Caelli-Merced heavy blaster pistol at his side and a mean-spirited temper, the smuggler is the final voice in his bar. And if Ancher should need reinforcements, there are 10 to 30 smugglers in the bar at all times, willing to lend a hand in a pinch, no questions asked. As a rule, Ancher is to be treated with the utmost respect or the paybacks will be immediate and painful.

## Karl Ancher

Karl Ancher is a Corellian who bridges the gap between Corellian practicality and Socorran stubbornness and naive honesty. He has seen the better days of his career come and go. Years ago, a failed attempt by a bounty hunter left four men dead and Ancher with a cybernetic leg, but it has done little to slow the smuggler down. Considered one of the grandfathers of modern smuggling on Socorro, Ancher is one of the last pinnacles of honest business. He is highly sought after as a smuggling mastermind and a mentor for up-and-coming pilots. Though he appears quite rogu-





# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •



ish and cantankerous at times, with a booming voice he's not afraid to use in greeting or criticism. Anchor is one of the most respected fellows to ever grace the running trade.

Wearied from a life on the run, Karl retired to Socorro. Never content with quiet living, he still organizes and runs smuggling operations from his bar, the Black Dust Tavern. Known to keep a small stable of highly skilled pilots, Karl Anchor seems to have his finger in every illegal run in Socorro and neighboring systems. The Corellian's business beliefs and methods often conflict with those of the more traditional Socorran pirates, but he is still a highly regarded member of the Socorran community, on both the criminal and tribal level.

Anchor is predisposed toward hardship cases and will often persuade young smugglers to take on an easy gig, if only to boost their self-confidence. And the Corellian has been known to pull strings to make certain that the pilot makes his deliveries without incident.

*Karl Anchor*

Type: Old Guard (Advanced Smuggler)  
DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 9D+2, dodge 7D+1, grenade 7D, melee combat 6D, running 5D+1, vehicle blaster 7D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Alien species 10D, intimidation 9D, languages 6D, planetary systems 11D, streetwise 12D, value 11D+2, willpower 9D+2

### MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 8D, beast riding 8D+1, communications 9D, sensors 9D+2, space transports 10D+2, starfighter piloting 9+2, starship gunnery 9D, starship shields 10D, swoop operation 9D+2

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 9D+1, con 8D, forgery 9D+1, gambling 9D, persuasion 10D, search 9D+2, sneak 6D

### STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 7D, stamina 6D+1

### TECHNICAL 2D+2

Blaster repair 5D, first aid 7D+1, repulsorlift repair 6D+2, space transports repair 9D

Force Points: 2

Character Points: 10

Move: 9

Equipment: Caelli-Merced Sentinel heavy blaster pistol (5D+1), comlink

## Trep Winterrs

Trep Winterrs is a laid-back smuggler and outlaw. He is an amiable sort, with a tendency to blend in with a crowd. Despite his good looks and sense of humor, he has a fatal mindset that keeps him moving from one dangerous thrill to the next. To those closest to him, the smuggler's reckless antics are serious cause for concern, particularly when their lives are on the line. However, the soft-spoken outlaw has never been known to leave a friend in a bad spot.

Winterrs' ability to out-manuever and out-think Imperial strategies is a talent that brings the smuggler under fire with potential employers, who suspect that he is an Imperial infiltration agent working the space lanes in search of Rebel spies. Because his appearance in the criminal underground was so sudden, many have tried to trace the smuggler's origins and have come up short of information about his past. Many prominent crime syndicates have inquired about his history, but Winterrs remains tight-lipped about his personal life.

**Trep Winterrs.** All stats 3D except: *blaster 6D+1, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D, alien species 5D, intimidation 5D+1, languages 4D, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 5D, willpower 5D+2, Mechanical 3D+1, astrogation 6D+2, beast riding 5D, sensors 4D+2, space transports 6D+2, starship gunnery 5D+1, starship shields 5D, con 3D, gambling 3D+1, persuasion 4D, brawling 5D+2, security 4D.* Move: 10. Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink.

## Tiranga's Loft

When the drinking and conversation grows dull—even smuggling stories get old after a while—spacers often turn to Tiranga's Loft to liven up their evenings. This exotic spot features a live band, a spacious, multi-tiered dance floor, and various gambling venues.

From the outside, the Loft resembles a dilapidated warehouse in need of restoration and repair. In fact there are several "condemned" notices plastered against the outer walls. Except for a sudden blast of noise, dance music, and laughing voices as its double blast shield doors open, there is no warning of what treasures await inside the club. Due to its solid construction and layers of packed sand inside its walls, Tiranga's Loft is virtually soundproof.

The Loft is the proud creation of Tiranga the Hutt, working in collaboration with several unknown benefactors. It features a floating bar on every level (complete with attendant droids), and a small restaurant that serves full portions during the evening hours and consumable snacks well into the early hours of dawn. Most of the chefs and assistants are employees or trainees of the Custom Stop in nearby Soco-

Jarel Spaceport. As is typical of Socorro, costs are moderate, ranging from 5-15 credits for drinks and 20-30 credits for specialty dishes of food. To add a bit of humility to its extravagant features, there is usually a group of nomads standing transfixed in a corner, enthralled by the swirl of multi-colored lights and lasers that create the surreal, otherworldly setting of the Loft.

The club features only two-thirds normal gravity (or less), by directive of the host, Tiranga, who presides over every festivity from his dais above the dance floor. The victim of a debilitating spinal cord injury, Tiranga rarely leaves the premises, avoiding the pain and discomfort he suffers when subjected to standard gravity. The Loft is his alternate reality and he spares no expense in augmenting the elaborate world inside.

There are specialty dance contests every night with celebrity judges. But no matter how good the competition, Tiranga and his consorts always win. To soothe feelings, several rounds of drinks go to the contestants, on the house. Second- and third-place winners are given a substantial reward of house credits for Tiranga's in-house sabacc tables, which revolve above the dance floor in a satellite pattern, mimicking moons orbiting a planet.



Storn Cook



# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •

### Chase DeVitt

A frequently seen face at Tiranga's Loft, Chase DeVitt is a gambler who has more than just luck on his side—he's also in the Hutt's good graces. A Corellian, Chase came to Socorro with a few credits in his pocket, a head full of tricks, and a price on his head. His arrival on the planet coincided with a fateful misadventure with Drake Paulsen, who brought the gambler to Socorro to hide out.

Chase's boyish good looks and debonair style quickly earned him a place among Socorro's smuggler hierarchy; his skill at cards won him a position in Tiranga's exclusive court. Whenever a guest gets too lucky or experiences a suspicious winning streak, Chase is brought in to call the bluff. His imperturbable style at the table has brought the best gamblers to Socorro to challenge him, while simultaneously managing to keep the Loft's coffers brimming with enough capital to make even a Hutt delirious with joy.

**Chase DeVitt.** All stats 2D+1 except: *Dexterity* 3D+2, *blaster* 5D+2, *dodge* 7D+2, *Knowledge* 3D, *alien species* 6D, *bureaucracy* 5D+1, *business* 6D, *languages* 6D+1, *streetwise* 6D, *value* 5D, *Perception* 4D, *bargain* 5D+2, *con* 6D, *forgery* 4D+1, *gambling* 8D+1, *persuasion* 6D, *Strength* 2D+2, *brawling* 5D+2. Move: 10. Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), sabacc cards, datapad.

In the twilight hours, when things finally do slow down, Vakeyya's hottest night spot becomes the city's most prominent overnight hostel. Spacers in search of sleeping arrangements may register at the bar and be assigned a room. Nearly five stories beneath the main dance floor, there are reportedly 50-100 prepared rooms just waiting to soothe the weary spacer into a quiet slumber. Rates are 40-50 credits per night with specials for guests who stay more than one night. With an austere eye for detail, Tiranga has seen to the needs of numerous species (from Wookiees to Mon Calamari), providing creature comforts in an effort to guarantee repeat customers.

It took a great deal of money to create Tiranga's Loft—more money than the Hutt himself could have amassed alone. There are reported rumors that Lando Calrissian is a co-partner in the operation of Tiranga's Loft, thus a co-recipient in its profits. And though Calrissian has been seen on Socorro, frequenting the sabacc tables of both Tiranga's Loft and the Custom Stop, the rumors have not been substantiated.

### Points of Interest

There are various little bars and private parties all across Vakeyya that are open to smugglers and their credits. In a community of galactic highwaymen, it is not difficult to find friendly conversation, a place to sleep, or a good hot meal. However, the world of Socorro offers more than these simple pleasures. There are several places of interest that will tantalize the imagination and fire the mind with dark legends, extraordinary stories, and tales of wondrous lights.

### Uhl Doaba'I

The translation means "the peaceful place." Run by Ibhaan'I shamen, the run-down out-building on the edge of town is the last point of contact with civilization. From here, desert paths lead northwest toward the Walled City of Cjaalysce'l and south to Norble; they are treacherous paths, and visitors are advised not to enter the desert without experienced guides.

The small shelter is believed to be over two millennia old, although it is immaculately maintained by the Ibhaan'I shamen. The Ibhaan'I that run the shrine are all guides with much experience traveling the Doaba Badlands. They welcome the chance to speak with outsiders about the worlds and adventures beyond their native Socorro and have a keen interest in learning about the value systems of foreign beings. One has only to spend a moment of time in this quiet, secluded place to understand the cohesion that binds the tribal and smuggler worlds of Socorro so closely together.

For a donation, a shaman will thoughtfully put together an osma bag. An osma is small leather pouch filled with odd trinkets—generally a pinch of blessed Socorran sand and items that the shaman will pick out after speaking at length with the individual. These items will be chosen from a collection the shaman may have on hand or compiled from a journey that may take several days. The chosen relics will have some reverent meaning to the owner; with these items, the shaman will piece together a life-destiny path for the receiver.

Socorrans are avid storytellers and enjoy sharing the contents of their osma bags. One certain way to win the friendship of a Socorran





is to ask him or her the story of their osma. Objects range from mummified animal parts to mechanical scraps. There is a rumor that one person received an Adegan crystal, which is the alleged power source for the famed lightsabers of the ancient and extinct order of Jedi Knights. This, like many tales in the Socorran chronicle, has never been substantiated.

## Typical Ibhaan'I Shaman

**Type:** Primitive Nomadic Wanderer

**DEXTERITY** 3D+2

Bows 4D+2, brawling parry 4D, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D, running 4D

**KNOWLEDGE** 3D

Cultures 4D, languages 4D, survival 7D+2, value 3D+2, willpower 5D

**MECHANICAL** 2D+1

Beast riding 5D+2

**PERCEPTION** 4D

Bargain 4D+2, search 6D+1, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH** 3D

Brawling 4D+1, climbing/jumping 3D+2, stamina 3D+1, swimming 4D

**TECHNICAL** 2D

First aid 3D+1

**Special Abilities:**

*Scouting:* Ibhaan'I get a +2D bonus to *search*, *sneak*, and *Perception* when scouting a known area. They get +1D when scouting unfamiliar territories, including alien worlds.

**Force Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 11

**Equipment:** Bow with arrows (2D+2), water skin, osma bag and ointments, provisions for one week

## The Long Walk

Running into an Ibhaan'I shaman in the deep desert is an omen to many Socorrans. Whether it is a premonition of doom or good fortune depends largely on the current circumstances. Should it ever happen, the proper term of respect is *golnca*, which means "grandfather." Such an address means the speaker recognizes the shaman as an elder. A bowing of the head is a further display of deference and generally results in a blessing of good fortune and protection, a gift from the shaman to the traveler.

Ibhaan'I shamen, also known as "Bronwen," are self-exiles—outcasts from their tribe. The status is by vocation, not necessarily by choice. Cooperation and unity is a means of survival for the native peoples of Socorro. To risk desert life in isolation is a mark of distinction, thus Bronwen are held in the highest esteem and respect, even by the savage Bharhulai. It is rumored that as many as 150 Bronwen roam the deserts of Socorro, offering blessings upon any tribe or person they encounter in their nomadic wanderings.



## Chapter Five

# The Wilderness

### *The Rym Mountains*

When in Vakeyya, one can see the distant Rym Mountains on the horizon. While few outsiders venture to this area, the Rym Mountains are a source of power that inspires both lowly nomadic tribesmen and smugglers alike.

Located about 200 kilometers toward the interior of the mountains, accessible only by air, is the landmark Volmey Strip. This meeting place for smugglers is a dangerously narrow strip of landing space in a hollowed-out box canyon. To fly down into the gorge is a feat taken on by only the most experienced pilots. The descent begins with a gut-wrenching journey through subterranean caverns, heightens with a brief excursion through an active volcanic grotto, and winds downward into a narrow rift of plateaus before opening up into the base of the canyon.

### *Judges of the Dead*

*"If all the bodies in that place were to suddenly stand up, there'd be one heckuva an army. Even the Emperor would drool."*

—Anonymous

About 150 kilometers from Vakeyya, there is a wide expanse of desert and gentle dune swells that form a sandy estuary leading to the base of the Rym Mountains. It is marked by four 50-meter tall rock formations. These are natural rock formations, created by wind and erosion; their existence has been pre-dated in early settlement records. However, the superstitious inhabitants of Socorro swear that the formations appear to be the hidden faces and figures of hooded women.

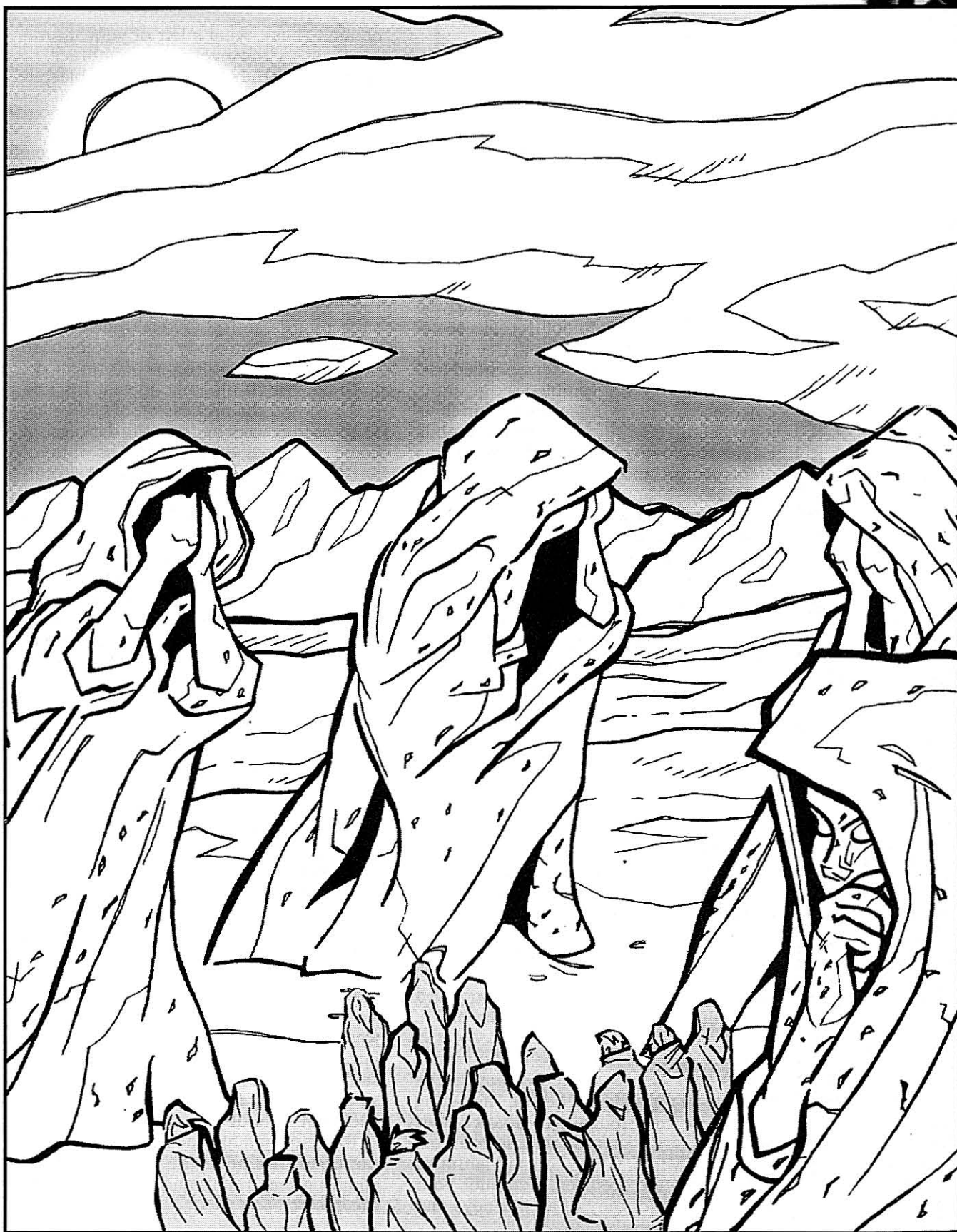
The shrine is a modern-day monument, littered with the belongings of those who have died, been buried, or been mourned there. Military ID tags, archaic powder weapons, bottles of raava and whiskey, and other personal mementos have been collected and entombed in the sand over the centuries as tribute to the deceased. It is a native Socorran belief that the spirit of the person who has expired will be judged by the four cowed figures of stone and released onto another lifepath befitting the quality of the life they left behind.

Speaking of the dead is considered taboo among Socorrans, who prefer to speak of the deceased as "traveling off-world." The Judges of the Dead is a hallowed place and it is the unspoken desire of many smugglers (including Socorrans) to be buried or remembered there.

The funeral is a Corellian tradition brought to Socorro by the constant influx of smugglers and the traditionalist beliefs of the Black Bha'lir.

# STAR WARS®

• The Wilderness •



Joel Carroll



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# STAR WARS

• The Black Sands of Socorro •

## Last Rites of A Smuggler

Drake Paulsen stood along the edge of the dunes, apart from the gathering shadows. A dusk halo crowned the distant peaks of the Rym Mountains, scattering a blend of dark crimson into the surrounding black landscape. Below him, the Judges of the Dead were immersed in shadow. Nearly 50 meters tall, the four monolith rocks stood at adjacent angles, marking the north, south, east, and west corners. Eroded and sand blasted, they resembled the gigantic, cowed figures of women dressed in flowing veils and robes. Heads bowed and hands clasped in sorrow, they were the guardians of this sacred land and held dominion over this place—a smugglers' graveyard.

On Socorro, it was taboo to speak of the dead. But the Corellian smugglers who lived among them took special pride in commemorating their fallen. Intrigued by the formal ceremonies, Drake watched from the dunes.

There were 60 or more smugglers gathered below him in the shadows of the judges. He recognized most of them as friends and colleagues of his father. He also knew them by reputation. They were all wanted men—hunted for a variety of crimes from spice-running to murder—some of the most notorious outlaws to ever fly the galaxy. *If suddenly dropped in the midst of this congregation, even the great Boba Fett would faint away*, Drake thought.

Aquato Boliscon cleared his throat, his voice thick with Corellian whiskey. "O Death, whereas you are the Mistress of all robbers and thieves—yourself the greatest of all rogues—and whereas Brii'n Dalei was a smuggler, a vandal, and a thief like yourself—a common rogue of no small means—look here and with good spirit upon him. For while we loved him much, you loved him best."

There was a slight pause in the assembly as Karl Ancher made his way to the front. "Brii'n Dalei," he began, "as acting counsel for the Tribunal of the Black Bha'lr Society at large, I hereby release you from your oath, which you swore and faithfully upheld to your brethren. I commit your spirit to that journey of all journeys and

commit these, what's left of your mortal remains, to the everlasting embrace of space, where the sector authorities blasted you into micro-cosmic bits. *Doaba ol'val tru.*"

"*Doaba ol'val tru,*" came the unanimous reply.

Escorted by Boliscon and Ancher, a small black box was carried out of the graveyard. One by one, the other smugglers retreated into the desert where a large congress of space freighters awaited them. As they departed, they left behind some token in the sand. Credits, blaster power packs, sabacc cards, and other items quickly piled up, falling into the sandy depths at the base of the largest monolith.

Drake rested his chin against his arm and watched the procession of smuggling ships as they vanished into the darkness of Socorro's upper atmosphere. The whine of ion drives and maneuvering thrusters carried into the stillness and caused the desert to tremble. When the last of them had gone, he walked down into the necropolis and sank down to his knees.

Digging a small hole, he dropped an antiquated rattle into the soil. Hand-crafted by an Ibhaan'I shaman for ritual and blessing, the instrument clacked as it came to rest. Beside it, he laid a small datapad—Dalei's journal. It held the words and adventures that had thrilled the child Drake was and shaped the man that he would become.

In the hollow stillness of the night, the yellowed screen crackled as Drake poured the loose sands on top of it. With no less ceremony than those who had stood here before, the young Socorran smoothed the soil over the treasure of his childhood, wondering if his debt to this man could ever be paid—in this life or the next.

At the mercy of no mortal whim, the night deepened and a cool wind blew in from the badlands. In the hollow of the graveyard, the tone mimicked the sound of women in mourning. When the darkness was complete, Drake stood up and stared into the shadows. "*Doaba ol'val tru,*" he said quietly. "Goodbye," he whispered in a small voice, for there was no such word in Socorran. "Goodbye and thank you."

Drake turned his back on the Judges of the Dead, resenting the stones for their enduring immortality, and walked back into the desert.

Socorrans tolerate the rituals simply due to a fascination with the rite itself. And while the rituals and beliefs have become more symbolism than religion, there is a certain mystic quality about the process of grieving that intrigues Socorran people.

This is the only place on Socorro where dueling is permitted. The winner of the contest is expected to properly dispense with the remains of the loser.

## Min Min Heights

The Min Min Heights are approachable on foot only. It is a treacherous mountain region where ground vehicles cannot pass and ships, even smaller conventional craft, are unable to land for lack of clearance. The area is inundated with small alcoves and shallow caves. Every seat is a good one and gives a magnificent view of the Socorran skyline and the endless expanse of the Doaba Badlands.

A strange phenomena known as the Min Min lights are responsible for the name of the site. The Min Min lights appear at late dawn and early dusk. The occurrence remains visible until the sun grows brilliant enough to white them out or the night grows dark enough to obscure them. They are millions of points of light which seem to move effortlessly across the horizon, lingering in groups and passing individually.

"Min min" is the Socorro term for "I," representing the essential spark or personality of the individual. It is believed by local inhabitants that the lights are the spirits of those who have died on Socorro. Other local beliefs suggest that these are the life essences of those born on Socorro but who died off-world.

Despite the numerous ghost stories and tales of interacting with the spirits of departed loved ones, the Min Min Heights is a romantic, quiet setting—a favorite spot for lovers who want to be alone.

## The Doaba Badlands

*"The greatest power of any desert is the power to reassure its inhabitants of their mortal vulnerabilities and their diminutive stature in the grand scheme of the cosmos."*

—Ibhaan'I saying



Storn Cook

A hostile, forbidding place, the desert landscape of Socorro holds remarkable beauty to the introspective eye. Many natives view desert life as a test of fortitude or as a means of spiritual cleansing. The Doaba Badlands are a collective entity with an extreme range of moods. These vary from common desert landscape to ravaging ash storms.

The rich black sand gives the affect of being cloistered, protected. When Socorrans want to be alone with their thoughts, a short walk in the desert puts their minds at ease and their spirits well within reach of the peace they may be seeking—thus the name *Doaba*, which in Old Corellian means "peace."

## Adsila Rifts

A natural-occurring phenomena on Socorro, the Adsila Rifts are a concrete testimonial to the powers of chaos and destruction that created this planet. Located in a region that is infamous for its sand wells, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, the Adsila Rifts is a geologist's paradise of planetary evolution.

Gigantic rifts in Socorro's sand and ash floor





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have created a motley mosaic of surface scars and gashes that literally crisscross this section of the Doaba Badlands. Some of these rifts are upwards of 20 kilometers deep and open directly into underground lava grottoes. During peak moments of volcanic activity, rivers of molten lava rise through these chasms and overflow onto the surface.

Other rifts open into dead volcanic areas, leading into hidden water reserves deep below the surface. Such chasms are excellent places to hide ships, weapon caches, and even large

shipments of contraband. One such rift, known as *Nhar'qual*—Old Corellian for “dark death”—is rumored to be bottomless. The rift is not large enough to allow a ship to explore down inside it, but probes have traveled down as far as 450 kilometers before losing sensor contact. In past times, *Nhar'qual* was an execution site where criminals were thrown to their deaths—a brutal example of frontier justice. The Black Bha'lir have been known to gather in this area to settle disputes among their membership.

## Undying Love

Drake Paulsen pressed his palms against the cold stone surface of the bar. The ornately carved sculpture resembled a cascading waterfall. Tightly curled waves overflowed in all directions, creating generous shelves and alcoves throughout the masterpiece, while at the same time simulating the current of running water. An enormous creation, it occupied the entire corner of the room.

More an archaic museum than living quarters, the darkened foyer of Benoni Ulte's home was filled with an eclectic collection of stone carvings, colored sand illustrations, and dyed tapestries depicting the history of Socorro's native peoples. It was a rich collection of ethnic treasures. For an *Ibhaan'I* shaman, he had an aesthetic, if not macabre, eye for artistry.

Lightly rubbing his fingers over the heavy blaster pistol at his belt, Drake swallowed the last of his Socorran raava and poured himself another. Benoni's failure to appear on schedule was unusual and kept his smuggler's sense tingling with unease. In an attempt to ward off the foreboding chill, Drake massaged the warmth back into his arms and shoulders, even as the hairs at his neck stood on end. There was a presence somewhere in the darkness, subtle and shaded. It was just on the edge of his awareness and his sensitive intuition could not account for it.

“Guess working as Soco-Jarel's chief custom official pays a mint,” Drake whispered, hoping to break the mood.

“An Emperor's small ransom, I'd bet,” Karl Ancher slurred. Feet propped over a dozen or more large seat cushions, the Corellian was chest-deep in a colorful pile of throw pillows. His wild, white hair was mussed and his eyes glazed with too much Socorran raava. The smuggler appeared quite drunk. Raising his head from a throne-high heap of pillows he stared at Drake, bewildered by the youngster's behavior. “What's eating you, kid? You look like the sarlacc got your tongue.”

“Bit spooked, I guess. This place...it's so...it's like...someone's watching me.”

Ancher sank back into his cushions and raised a half-empty bottle of raava to his lips. He drank deeply, spilling a bit over his chin. “Your old man said the very same thing. I had to drag him by the ear just to get him through the door. You Socorrans and your superstitions. I'll never, *ever* understand.”

“Perhaps it's not meant for the likes of you and your kind to understand,” a deep voice challenged. Benoni Ulte came into the room, bringing the dusk brilliance with him. Dressed in red and black robes, symbolic of the Socorran flag, he tightened a white sash at his waist and stood over Ancher, glaring at the Corellian. “It is because of the apathetic nature of our Corellian cousins that Socorrans so often find themselves up to their necks in mischief and trouble.”

“Up to your neck in bantha poodu, Benoni. And no Corellian ever had anything to do with it. Sides, without us, the rest of you would be one-sided DNA strands looking for a gene pool to call home.”

Benoni turned to Drake, his dark face nearly invisible in the shadows. Extending his hand, he whispered, “The Little

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• The Wilderness •

Prince of Socorro has come home at last. *Khasaani'I, sebla*. When last I saw you, you were but a young child. Let me see you."

Without hesitation, Drake went to the *Ibhaan'I*, wondering at the strange man. "Thank you, *golnca*. It's good to be home." He bowed his head to the shaman, who was nearly six centimeters taller. Regal and powerful, Benoni represented the highest ideals of Socorran strength and beauty. A single black braid swung from his shaven head, wrapped about his neck and shoulders with all the ceremonial prestige of a high priest. As Drake felt the shaman's hands at his forehead and listened to the blessing, he imagined Benoni's touch to be as gentle and delicate as a desert breeze by night.

"The presence you feel here is very real, *sebla*," Benoni whispered. "You are being watched, as all the children of Socorro are watched and protected by the spirits of the sands and skies. But these are different eyes, you feel. Come, let me show you."

Benoni lit a small passageway with dim light and walked toward the corner of the room. Drake followed him into a narrow recess, deftly hidden away along the far side of the bar. At the end of the short corridor, a candle lit the gilded frame of a large painting, what appeared

to be the main display in Benoni's collection. Drake approached with caution, feeling the hair at his neck rise with his anxiety.

"Why do you keep it back here? Away from the others?" he asked.

"There are reasons—my own and others."

The portrait was a work of artistic mastery, beautifully assimilated oils and other raw elements ingeniously combined, not the fabricated stock of holographic imitations. Framed in a background of cerulean blue, a young woman stared back at him. Long dark hair was draped over her shoulders, lending a melancholy, haunted expression to her alluring face. For a moment, Drake was certain that if he touched the portrait, he would touch the woman in it.

Despite the delicate smile at her lips, there was an undeniable sadness surrounding the image. It was a sense of emotion so tangible that Drake felt the unbearable agony of it pulling at his heart.

"Beautiful, isn't she?" Benoni whispered, as if baiting the young Socorran into a response.

"Seen a hundred just like her at the Naked Hutt Cantina on Omman," Ancher belched loudly.

Patient and unmoved by the



Storn Cook





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Corellian's brash manner, Benoni smiled. "She is the Lady Cjaalysce, the daughter of Commander Leniel Beal, the man responsible for the colonization of Socorro."

Again sensing that peculiar longing, Drake asked, "Why does she look so sad?"

"Well, now, that is an interesting story," Benoni replied. "You see she was in love, deeply in love with a young man named Iann Doaba."

"Doaba? Is that how the Doaba Badlands got their name? I heard the stories when I was a kid. He was supposed to be some great warrior or something that helped the colony ships find their way to this system."

"He was indeed a great warrior. And the Badlands were named for him, sometime after he vanished into them—never to be seen or heard from again."

"What? Did something happen?"

"He exiled himself for a crime too heinous for his conscience to bear." Benoni paused, taking a deep, reflective breath. "In men such as Doaba, conscience, particularly the Jedi conscience, is a powerful, unforgiving force, even self-destructive."

"A Jedi?" Drake probed. He eyed the shaman dubiously. "I wouldn't know about such things myself. You?"

"It is believed by the Ibhaan'I that Doaba was the first to take the long walk, the original wanderer, a true Bronwen. And it is because of this belief that all Bronwen are outcasts, exiles from their people."

"What did he do?"

"He killed a man. To be exact, he murdered a romantic rival who tried to sway Cjaalysce from his passion." Benoni met Drake's inquisitive eyes with the authority of his title and vocation. "Killed with a simple thought from his mind, according to the legend. And then he banished himself."

"Is that why she looks so sad? Because he left her?"

"The painting was commissioned shortly before Doaba's disappearance. It was finished three days before she died."

Drake's widened in horror. "She died? Well...how? Why?"

"As you well know, Drake, Socorro is

an unforgiving world. Despite the technology brought here from distant parts, we are still at the mercy of the elements." Benoni brushed a cobweb from the corner frame and polished a section of the frame with his sleeve. "When Cjaalysce heard the news of Iann's disappearance, she ran away from the settlement in search of him. She was gone for days, roaming the Badlands with no shelter, no water, no provisions at all. And remember, this was at a time when our ancestors did not know the whims of this world as we now do."

"She died in the wastes?" The idea of withering away to nothing in the deep desert brought a chill to Drake's arms and shoulders and dried out his mouth. As images of desiccated flesh and bones pervaded his senses, the young Socorran winced. "That's horrible."

"Her body was found a few weeks later, lying on an exposed outcrop of rock, perfectly preserved, perfectly intact, as if she were simply sleeping. A robe covered her, tucked beneath her head. A set of men's clothing lay discarded in the sand. And a lightsaber was clasped tightly in Cjaalysce's hands."

"Doaba's things?"

"Yes, but there was no trace of him...except a faint silhouette in the sand—a shadow that defied light. The Ibhaan'I believe that Doaba's grief was so great that it consumed him. This apparition was all that remained."

"Nice ghost story, Benoni, but let's get on with business, shall we?" Ancher drank the last of his Socorran raava. "Saadoon won't wait forever. He wants a genuine Ibhaan'I blessing on his ship and he's willing to pay a fortune for it. So gather your skirts, girls, and let's get moving."

"No ghost story, Ancher. It's no more a ghost story than your tales of Xim the Despot and his legendary wealth." Benoni straightened, staring down the length of his long nose with righteous indignation. "Even though the accounts of their love affair and the tragedy of that love is a matter of legend, the records of what happened after Cjaalysce's death are well documented."

He turned to the painting, examining the fine detail. "Cjaalysce's body was burned in the highest honor of Corellian ceremony. Her ashes scattered to the

winds. This portrait was hung in the council chambers, on display for all to see and remember. And there it remained—until the shadow appeared.”

“The apparition—it followed her?” Drake rubbed his neck, eager to soothe the anxious nerves beneath the skin. “So what did they do?”

“The painting was moved, several times. But unlike their Socorran descendants,” Benoni glared at Ancher, “our ancestors were not prepared to make peace with the spirits of the fallen as we have, Drake. Wherever they moved the portrait, Doaba would come as well. Nearly a year after Cjaalysce’s death, the portrait vanished. Supposedly, it was lost in transit.”

“Then how did you get it,” Ancher challenged. “Did you summon it with all that desert hocus-pocus you always preach about?”

“The portrait remained among the missing for nearly a millennia until Pret Swain’s father uncovered it in the ruins of Cjaalysce’I, the Walled City. It was given to me as a gift.” The lbhaan’I smiled modestly. “I was to be its guardian.”

“And what about the shadow?” Drake probed.

“See for yourself.” Benoni flipped a nearby light sensor, flooding the recessed corridor with warm light.

Drake momentarily closed his eyes, waiting for his vision to adjust to the sudden intrusion of light. Opening his eyes, he traced the outline of a shadow standing just to the right of the painting.

Head bowed in sorrow, the figure was apparent, even in the brilliance. Heart pounding into his throat, he reached for his blaster as the ghostly sentinel appeared to turn and gaze at him.

“Well I’ll be a one-eyed, one-armed Hutt with a case of the shingles!” Ancher bellowed. He caught Drake’s hand and moved it away from the blaster. “It’s an old shaman trick!”

“No trick,” Benoni replied. “At least not one that I am capable of producing.” He gazed on the apparition with reverence and bowed, as if waiting for the shadow to bestow some blessing upon him. “I’ve moved the picture a dozen times myself, testing the legend and my own shallow faith.” Benoni cued the sensor, bringing the return of darkness. “When I find myself questioning my convictions, doubting the ancient beliefs of my people—I look here and recapture the true meaning of fidelity.” He met Drake’s anxious eyes, with a soothing reassurance and smiled.

“What’s written there at the bottom? Socorran?” Ancher whispered. He held Drake’s shoulders, relieved as the shadow vanished into the interior darkness. “Is that a name? Never seen it before.”

“The painting’s title,” Benoni replied. “*Tejha Larel*.”

“What’s it mean?”

Drake bowed his head, succumbing to the sense of sadness and remorse. “Undying love.”



## *Chapter Six*

# *The Black Bha'ir*

### *Organization Profile: The Black Bha'ir*

**Type:** Syndicate

**Location:** Socorro and Omman systems

**Crime Boss/Leadership:** The Tribunal

**Principal Criminal Activities:** Transport of illegal contraband, extortion, manufacture of illegal goods, distribution of illegal goods, credit laundering, illegal storage of contraband, hijacking, gun-running, gambling, tampering with sector authority institutions and law enforcement agencies, coercion and corruption of Imperial officials.

**Criminal Affiliations:** Supported by dues and contributions from membership, as well as kickbacks from starport investments and large-scale smuggling operations.

**Territory:** Chief areas of interests are the Omman and Socorran systems, with operations in at least 70 systems across the galaxy, from Ottega to Nar Shaddaa.

**Payroll:** None. Employment by membership only.

**Violence Index:** 55; 95 (when provoked to action).

believe the Bha'ir started from a band of captured smugglers who managed to escape some dreaded prison world only to focus their efforts toward protecting and strengthening their position.

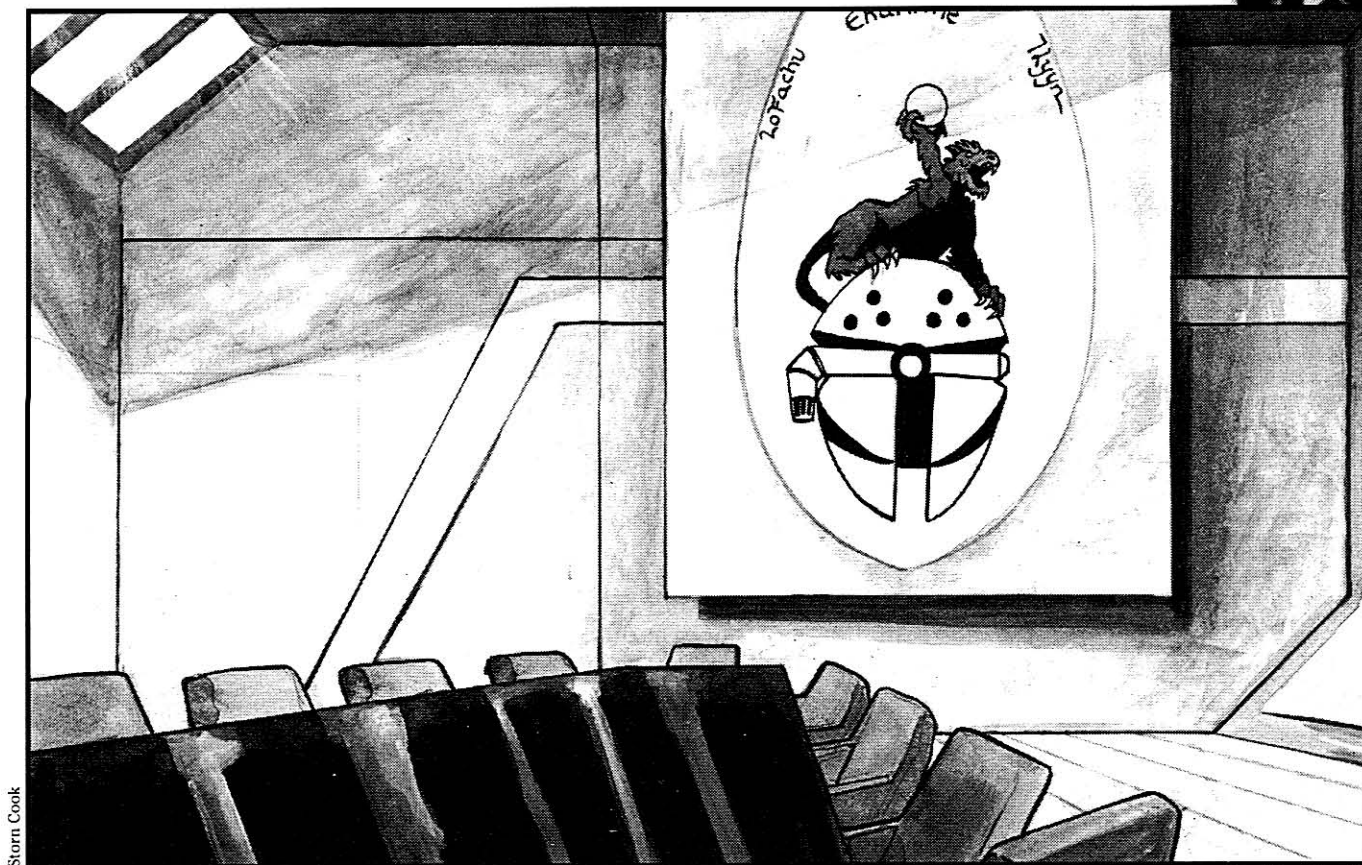
Whatever the case may be, the Black Bha'ir Society is now an exceptionally influential smuggling organization in and around Socorro and Omman, with influence in many other systems. Membership in the Society of the Black Bha'ir is based strictly on occupation: smuggling. Total membership would rival a small but formidable army when direct and indirect memberships are calculated. As such, the Bha'ir have a wealth of resources to pool and benefit from the assorted activities and talents of their diverse membership.

With such an array of talent among them, it's no wonder the Bha'ir have remained so deeply entrenched in the lives and dealings of smugglers. If the Hutt Empire has contributed more to the unseemly nature of crime throughout the galaxy, the Bha'ir have contributed more to the exemplary conduct of crime. This was accomplished by adhering to a strict code of ethics and operating policies, admonishing members who do not follow the dictates of the Society, and through strong-arming nonmembers into a code of behavior and ethics that bring the occupation of smuggling a step above simple thievery.

The origin of the Black Bha'ir is shadowy and uncertain. Outsiders speculate that the group was once a mercenary unit with ties to the government of the Republic, while others

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## • The Black Bha'ir •



Storn Cook

## A Smuggler's Code

The code of the Black Bha'ir is a simple one. There are four by-principles that even the most virtuous of people can admire.

1. *Never profit from the weakness of others.* This includes any business dealings with unscrupulous individuals who would sell out their friends and family for a credit.

2. *Honor the vyvya.* This is the honor of giving back, either to the group or society at large. This is the oath in which every Bha'ir swears to protect the reputation of the group and the lives of fellow members.

3. *Prepare the way of the Retribution.* In the event of deception or dishonor by a fellow member, by decree of the Tribunal or the Rite of the Retribution, the individual must be prepared to take the life of a former Bha'ir or to accept the decision of the Tribunal if said decision marks the member for death.

4. *Respect the right of aa'kua.* This is the all encompassing edict that pervades every ethical code from race to race, smuggler to smuggler, being to being. Respect the right of the individual and that individual's space. It is this final code of conduct that often brings the Bha'ir into violent clashes with slavers.

Certain Bha'ir members have been known to personally seek out and locate wayward parties in violation of these principles and eliminate them outright in accordance to the Rites of Retribution. Such members are said to be "bloodied" and are held in the highest esteem by the Tribunal and fellow members.

## Fenn Rizaar

When the rank-and-file Bha'ir members are unable to take Retribution on those who have dishonored the code of the Society, Finn Rizaar is charged with taking up arms and resolving the problem.

Fenn, once a prominent member of the Mantis Bounty Hunter Syndicate, found himself on the wrong side of blaster fire one fateful day. While in pursuit of prominent Black Bha'ir member Kaine Paulsen, he managed to wound the Socorran while inadvertently taking out an





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Imperial stormtrooper in the process. The result was a savage gunfight between Rizaar and a score of Imperial stormtroopers, who arrived on the scene to aid their fallen companion. There was no explaining the botched apprehension and Rizaar faced swift Imperial justice.

The tracer found an unlikely alliance with the man who was his prey only moments before. Paulsen helped Rizaar through the gun fight and eventually brought the tracer to a deserted scrapyards outside the city, where he'd hidden his ship. Facing imprisonment and death, Rizaar accepted Paulsen's offer of refuge and accompanied him to Socorro. His former employers at Mantis denied all knowledge of his existence and agreed to handle a 70,000 credit bounty for him, dead or alive. In the meanwhile, Kaine was fighting for Rizaar's life among the Bha'lir, who wanted to claim the 70,000 credits, if only for spite. In the end, it was Kaine's testimonial and Rizaar's own affirmations that

spared him swift judgment at the hands of his former adversaries.

Rizaar renounced his ties to the Mantis Syndicate, vowing to payback his employers for their betrayal but only after his life-debt to the Black Bha'lir was paid in full. Then, Rizaar surrendered his life to the service of the Bha'lir, pledging loyalty, devotion, and his full complement of skills to their cause until they saw fit to release him from his vow. Now, after a decade of devoted service to the Society, Rizaar became a full-fledged member of the Black Bha'lir and remains its most staunch supporter.

### Fenn Rizaar

Type: Bounty Hunter

**DEXTERITY 4D**

Blaster 6D+1, dodge 5D, grenade 4D+2, melee combat 6D, melee parry 6D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Alien species 5D+2, languages 6D, streetwise 4D+1, survival 4D

**MECHANICAL 2D+2**

Astrogation 3D+2, beast riding 4D, sensors 3D, space transports 4D+1, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 3D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Command 4D, investigation 5D+2, search 4D, sneak 4D

**STRENGTH 3D+2**

Brawling 6D+2, climbing/jumping 4D, lifting 4D+2, stamina 5D

**TECHNICAL 2D**

Armor repair 3D, blaster repair 4D+2

**Force Points: 2**

**Dark Side Points: 1**

**Character Points: 7**

**Move: 10**

**Equipment:** Protective vest (+2), two medpacs, heavy plaster pistol (5D), light repeating blaster (6D), knife (STR+1D)

### Penance

In rare cases of insubordination or where members have acted outside the graces of the Tribunal, but for the better good, Bha'lir members or potential candidates may *pveric'ell* or "do penance." This generally necessitates a hiding-out period, where the involved parties lie low until the crisis has passed. Pveric'ell is often served under one of numerous crime lords, particularly those of important name and stature, who will insure that the endangered parties stay alive. Payment for such services is often waived in lieu of favored compensations from the Society.

### The Benefits

The advantage of being a Black Bha'lir? *Coverage*. Coverage is the term used to imply insurance. A Black Bha'lir rarely stands alone. Should a member become ill or be seriously injured, there are safehouses all across the galaxy which afford a chance for smugglers to recover their losses and get back on their feet. Members who become the captive guests of the Empire or cognate systems of administration are privileged to the best defense teams money can buy. And it's a winning bet that any officials involved will look favorably upon the captured party due to heavy greasing of the servos. In those rare cases where bribery isn't an option, direct threats against judicial authorities and their families have been known to stay misfortune's hand from falling.

### Help in Many Forms

Being harassed by sector authorities? The Bha'lir have been known to disassemble a sector's leadership (through corruption charges or even outright assassination) and replace it with persons of favorable mind and inclinations



### Retribution

Reaching into the sunken basin, Drake Paulsen splashed cold water over his face and neck. Hands trembling, he shook the excess water from his fingers and smoothed a troubled curl from his forehead. Staring into the dark depths of the rippling water, the young Socorran leaned against the raised counter and despondently sighed.

A low, mournful howl reverberated in the close confines of the living area behind him. Recognizing the woeful voice of his partner, Nikaede Celso, Drake glanced into the corner of the room. The Wookiee was hidden in the shadows, her black pelt blending into the darkness. Only her eyes were visible, glaring from the shadows with a red gleam of sorrow.

The door of the shelter opened without warning, prompting Drake to move for his blaster and Nikaede for her bowcaster. Recognizing the outline of Karl Ancher's desert duster, the young Socorran relaxed and motioned for his first mate to do the same. "Ancher?" Drake whispered. "What's the word?"

Visibly disturbed by the events of the last 24 hours, Karl Ancher limped to the

bar in the back of his sitting room. He poured himself a generous portion of Socorran raava and drank deeply, pouring himself another without hesitation. Avoiding Drake's anxious eyes, he rubbed his hand over a two-day growth of beard and sighed wearily.

"Ancher? That Twi'lek killed my father," Drake hissed. "He was one of the people responsible. I don't care if he was a member of the Black Bha'ir. He killed one of his own. He had it coming to him."

"Deny no man his just retribution," Ancher whispered. He swallowed the raava in one gulp and turned to Drake. "No one faults you for what you did, Drake. They don't fault any of us. You were well within your rights."

"So what's the problem, then? Why are we hiding out here as if we did something wrong? If it was my right, my just retribution—why do I feel like I'm the one being punished?"

"Killing a sector authority snitch isn't like blowing away some turncoat in a bar, Drake. Izzat was very popular among the local law enforcement agencies, as well as those bounty-hunting guilds!" Disgusted by the thought, Ancher spat into the basin. "Dirty *emwhulb* is responsible for turning in as many as 12 of his fellow Bha'ir members."



Storm Cook



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"He was a cheat, a thief, and a traitor! He stole from the Society!"

"He was also working for the *Empire* when you blasted him."

"What?" Drake felt his stomach churn, building a volatile brew of bile that rose in his throat. "The *Empire*?"

Ancher nodded, staring into the cool surface reflections on the bar. "And they want the trigger man and everyone involved." The smuggler met Drake's eyes, a sentimental compassion in his gaze. "They've put a 40,000 credit bonus on our heads. That puts Ransom and Ross on the dead-or-alive list. Ross laughed when I told him. He said it was worth every credit to see the look on that backstabbing Twi'lek's face when you plugged him."

"And me? Nikaede?"

"Someone put up 50,000 for Nikaede." Ancher took a deep, long breath and exhaled. "They're offering 100,000 for you. Welcome to the Hundred Club, kid."

In shock, Drake held onto the bar as if he might faint with the news. Behind him, he heard Nikaede's despondent wail and saw the Wookiee bow her head in anguish. "Me...100,000 credits? Every bounty hunter in the galaxy'll be looking. Ancher, what—"

The Corellian waved his hands to calm the young Socorran. "The Tribunal is working on it, Drake. But it takes time. The Bha'lr have connections and may be able to get the bounty lifted or at least

reduced. It's the *Empire* that might cause problems."

"And what do we do in the meanwhile? We're not safe, not even here on Socorro."

"Ross and Ransom are already on their way to lay low with Saadoon-Kauldi. Before nightfall, I should be on my way to Nar Shaddaa to go underground until this blows over. You—" The Corellian's voice cracked momentarily with emotion. Drake saw the smuggler's lower lip trembling with effort. "You and Nikaede are to head directly to Tatooine. Jabba the Hutt is expecting you."

"Jabba!" Drake shouted over Nikaede's desperate roars. "For how long?"

"One year."

"One year! You call that *lying low*?" Drake snatched his jacket from the back of a nearby chair. "I call it a death sentence. I'm not going!"

"Drake!" The veil of emotion lifted from the old guard's face. Storming after the young Socorran, he jerked Drake by the arm and pulled him back. "This isn't up for discussion, boy! By killing that Twi'lek you initiated yourself into the ranks. You're one of us now—a Black Bha'lr like your daddy. And like your daddy, you'll do as you're told, when you're told!" Ancher released Drake and stepped back, his eyes narrow and cruel. "Or you'll be the next one on the list—to die."

toward the greater good of the Society. It is believed that the Bha'lr are responsible for nearly a dozen "tragic accidents" that resulted in the replacement of Imperial governors or planetary leaders. And it has also been rumored that the Bha'lr hold powerful connections within the *Empire*'s "incorruptible" institutions.

**Ana Vittorian, Attorney At Law.** Born and raised in the heart of high society, Ana Vittorian attended the finest schools, graduated from the Imperial Academy, served her duty as a legal assistant to the Senate, and then branched off to found her

own law practice specializing in prosecuting so-called enemies of the *Empire*.

After a tumultuous on-again/off-again love affair with Thaddeus Ross (a known smuggler), her beliefs changed to favor the working man—even if said individual tends to bend the law. In time, she was brought in as the head defense attorney for the Black Bha'lr. Her stern courtroom manner and austere presentation of the law are often more than a match for the up-and-coming Imperial lawyers she faces.

Ana's alluring beauty and sharp legal mind disarms witnesses. Her concise arguments coupled with her approach to

More a support group than an underground coven of hardened criminals, the Bha'lr take care of themselves. Being a Black Bha'lr means never having to face adversity alone as long as a fellow member is close by to overhear or watch the proceedings. Some Bha'lr members are known by name and reputation, but most are anonymous, allowing the organization to maintain a speedy but tremendously secure chain of communication. If a member is in trouble, even on the other side of the galaxy, it's quite possible that help will arrive in short order, as the nearest members rush to the scene while others relay the word to Socorro.

This is what is meant by coverage. More than once, outside powers have made appeals to the Bha'lr to extend a bit of that coverage to them, if only for a short time. Even the Rebel Alliance has, upon occasion, purchased breathing space from the Black Bha'lr.

The Bha'lr declare no love nor loyalty to the remnants of the Old Republic, the Galactic *Empire*, or the Rebel Alliance. They are reluctant to ally themselves to any faction. Of course, above all else, they would prefer to avoid notice. However on several occasions, the Tribunal, through pressure from key Bha'lr members, have authorized the rescue of lost Rebel field agents and even detained or attacked Imperial personnel to allow recovery operations to conclude. The Society has been well paid for such ventures and the Bha'lr have covered their tracks so that the *Empire* remains unaware who sponsored those actions.

The Society has also arranged large-scale weapon and spacecraft transfers to the Alliance; in peak profit seasons, the smugglers

have been known to donate or appropriate funds for the cause. Bha'lr members are easily beguiled by so-called underdogs and enjoy every opportunity to even the odds.

## Inner Circle

The power at the heart of the Bha'lr is the Tribunal, a ruling body made up of three members whose identities remain unknown to all but a privileged few. The Tribunal is called upon to make decisions for the body of the Society and to settle disputes between individual members and rival cliques. This powerful trio is elected through silent ballot by the Society and the knowledge of who assumes those offices is a coveted secret that many smugglers would die to protect. While political affiliations and agendas cause some friction within the Society from time to time, each and every member privileged to be elected to the Tribunal has one thought in mind: the preservation of the ethics and merits of their way of life.

A designation to the Tribunal is a lifetime appointment. For this reason, only those members held in the highest esteem by the Society will be nominated and elected. Only once in the history of the Bha'lr has a member been removed from this appointment due to devious transgressions. The name and deeds of that person have been lost—along with the body.

## The Society: Rank and File

All members of the Bha'lr hold a rank and privileged status within the Society. The Tribunal and their chancellors actually hold official military ranks, which lends some credence to the belief that the Bha'lr were a military organization at one time.

Within the Society, no member is permitted more privileges over another until such merit has been earned. Each member is expected to begin as did all the others: with nothing and at the bottom of the hierarchy. This has created a caste system among the Bha'lr that gives identity and purpose to each member and allows individuals to contribute to the whole in their best capacity.

smugglers as underdogs caught in the midst of galactic crisis is often able to sway opinion just enough to allow her case to be won.

**Ana Vittorian.** *Dexterity 3D, blaster 5D, dodge 5D+2, Knowledge 4D, bureaucracy 5D, business 5D+1, intimidation 6D, law enforcement 5D, law enforcement: Empire 8D, Mechanical 3D, beast riding 4D+2, Perception 4D, bargain 5D, command 5D+1, con 5D, investigation 6D, persuasion 6D+1, Strength 2D, Technical 2D. Move: 10. Equipment: Datapad, law library on datafiles, comlink.*

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• The Black Sands of Socorro •

## The Breakdown of the Society

An **Apprentice** is a new member in the Society, brought in by a relative or through a recognizable merit that was demonstrated to the membership. An Apprentice will generally serve as first-mate on a ship with a Bha'lir member; they are not permitted to own ships under the rationale that they are just learning the ropes and would best do this under the watchful eye of a Bha'lir member. This is also done to insure that the apprentice is experienced in the work ethics and morality of the Society. The Bha'lir are famous for taking responsibility for the actions of their members; members know that repercussions for dishonoring the name are generally severe, if not fatal.

The first rank above Apprentice is that of **Pilot**. It is a title bestowed with great ceremony and pride on the Apprentice who, over the course of a year, has learned the ins and outs of the business and performed with merit. Many Apprentices never make it to this point simply because they are not possessed of the right stuff which makes for capable Pilots; many Pilots do not advance beyond this rank be-

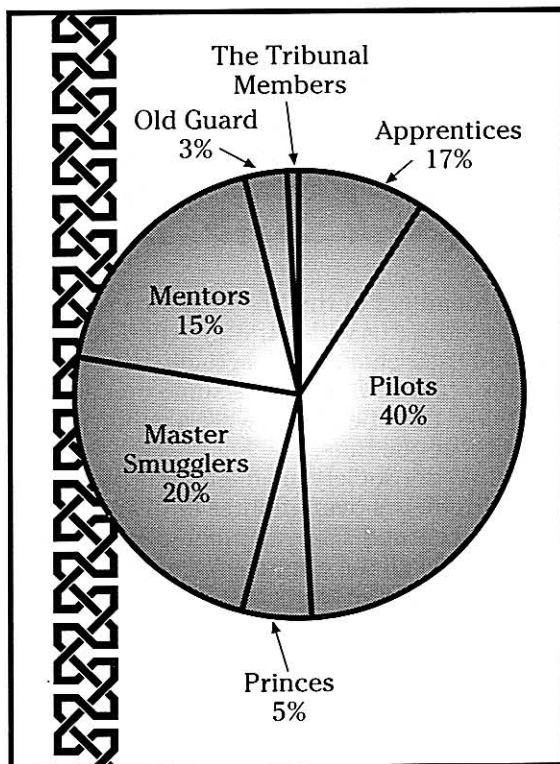
cause they lack the business sense needed to earn a living beyond shifting shields and toggling flight switches. The Pilot is generally a kept member, used in a stable of other Pilots, although there is no regulation against owning and operating one's own ship. He or she may have few business smarts, but they can certainly fly their choobs off!

A small minority, the rank of **Prince** is achieved only by those members who have made a name for themselves. Name recognition is a priority and as such, most Bha'lir members of this rank are well-known within the ranks of the Society and in the underworld's public eye. The Prince (there is no feminine variation) owns their ship and has the business smarts to go along with the flying prowess. They also have the guts and blaster skills to protect themselves and what is rightfully theirs.

The **Master Smuggler** may have been a Pilot who grew tired of the risks of being at the controls or who had just enough talent on the command deck to get by. For whatever reason, these ranked members have retired from the running trade and participate from the sidelines as information brokers, major contact makers, or minor crime lords. The Master Smuggler has paid his dues to the Black Bha'lir over a number of years. He or she may own one to three ships, perhaps more, and will keep a small stable of capable Pilots to fly them.

As with any avocation, smuggling is a learned trade. And, as with any learned trade, there are novices and journeymen who need to be taught the necessary skills to be successful. Those who teach and pass down these traditions are known as **Mentors**. The rank of Mentor is not arbitrarily bestowed on any smuggler who decides to take someone under their wing. A Mentor must first be a member in good standing with the Bha'lir; and second, the Mentor must have the skills and experience to provide a well-rounded seasoning of smuggler survival skills. Even then, the rank is not lightly given. The rank of Mentor is awarded only after the member has acquired and successfully trained eight smugglers and brought them successfully through the training and into the vault of Society talent.

The most respected titled that can be given to a Black Bha'lir is the rank of **Old Guard**. It is awarded to a smuggler who has gained the title of Mentor only to continue in some aspect of the smuggling world. The Old Guard is generally in some stage of retirement, but continues in the business of smuggling as a direct participant or indirectly in the position of a Master





## The Little Prince of Socorro

At 19, Drake Paulsen has lived the life that romantics only dream about. A legend among Socorrans, he followed in the footsteps of his father, Kaine Paulsen, one of the greatest pirates in Socorro's history. Even as a small child, Drake was deeply involved in his father's smuggling operations. And it is rumored that the young Socorran made his first deal at age three—supposedly this was an exchange of goods between himself and the infamous Jabba the Hutt. Drake traded the notorious Hutt three blaster packs for a basket full of warm Rishi honeystix. The Hutt was so immensely entertained by the child and the fact that Drake spoke fluent Huttese that Jabba dubbed him the "Little Prince of Socorro."

After the untimely demise of his father, many factions in the galactic underworld attempted to lure Drake into their ranks. Abdi-Badawzi courted the young smuggler's loyalties, as did Jabba the Hutt, Saadoon-Kauldi, and even some within Black Sun. Badawzi's interest was fueled by prior

association with Kaine Paulsen, but also by his daughter, Memcha, who had something of a crush on young Drake.

Using the carefully arranged maps and star charts left behind by his father, Drake mastered secluded trade routes and bypasses, becoming one of the most successful smugglers on the hyperlanes. He did so with the power and influence of Black Bha'ir: It was not long before demand for the "Little Prince of Socorro" grew to such an extent that Drake could not keep up.

Though never officially initiated in the ranks of the Black Bha'ir Society, Drake was forced into the membership after he shot and killed a dishonored Bha'ir member, who was one of the people responsible for the death of his father. Part of his pveric'ell was to serve one year under Jabba the Hutt.

Suave, charming, and good-looking, the young Socorran has grown to become a trustworthy man—a worthy successor to his father—and has become a powerful symbol of Socorran integrity and success.

### Drake Paulsen

Type: Young Pirate

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 7D, dodge 6D, melee combat 4D+2, pick pocket 5D, running 6D, vehicle blasters 5D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 5D+2, languages 6D+2, intimidation 4D+1, planetary systems 6D+1, streetwise 5D+2, survival 4D+2, survival: desert 7D

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 6D, beast riding 5D+1, communications 4D, repulsorlift operations 5D, sensors 5D+2, space transports 6D+2, space transports: Ghtroc freighter 8D, starfighter piloting 5D+2, starship shields 6D, swoop operation 6D+2

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 5D, con 4D+2, forgery 4D, gambling 4D, persuasion 4D+2, search 5D+1, sneak 6D

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 5D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Blaster repair 4D, first aid 4D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D+1, space transports repair 6D, starship weapon repair 4D

**Special Abilities:**

*Languages:* Drake gets +1D to understand and interpret unfamiliar alien dialects.

**This character is Force-sensitive.**

**Force Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 10

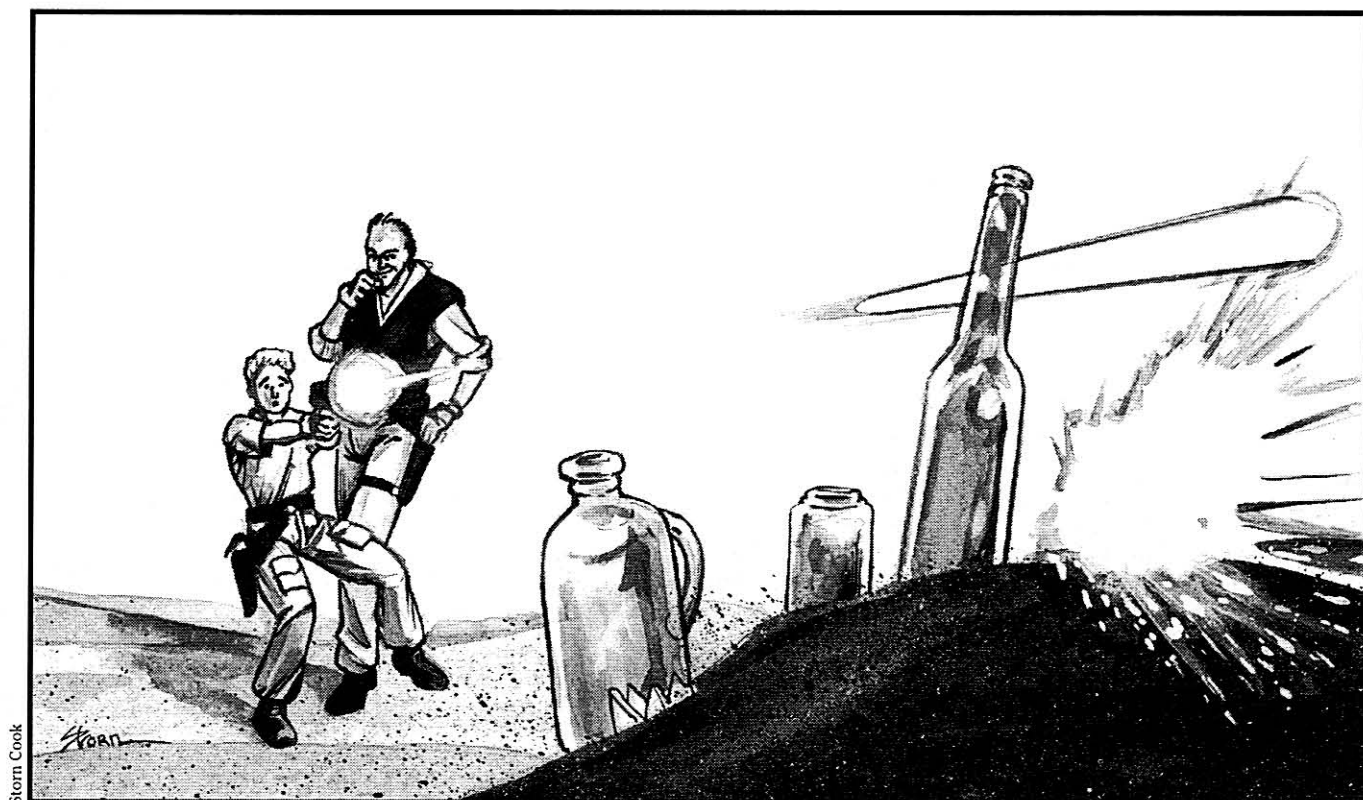
**Equipment:** Caelli-Merced Sentinel (5D+1), comlink, *Steadfast* (Ghtroc freighter)



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Smuggler. Only those members who have achieved the rank of Old Guard may serve on the Tribunal.

No matter where a smuggler stands in the ranks, they are entitled to a voice in the decisions of the group. The length of time imposed between ranks is ambiguous and given to extenuating circumstances such as age, family, reputation, and merits. Some members never advance beyond a certain rank, having fallen from grace in the eyes of the Society or due to a lack of talent. Others have no wish to advance beyond a certain stage.

### *The Tale of A Tiger and A Worm*

The rivalry between the Black Bha'lr and the Hutt Empire is almost legendary. The only thing that overshadows the conflict is the way in which the two powers have maintained the peace. Holding hundreds of star systems, the Hutts are definitely a greater power. However, the Black Bha'lr, holding only two systems, remain a constant spur in their sides. The Bha'lr are a persistent reminder to the Hutts as to how they got and keep their vast power—through the blood and sweat of smugglers.

The Socorran and Omman systems are fully under Bha'lr dominion. But at any given time, for whim, spite, or no good reason except to flex their muscles—but most often to establish who truly calls the shots in the underworld—the Tribunal may call for a boycott of a particular star system.

Within days, even hours—as word spreads to other smugglers and freighter captains—that targeted system will find its incoming traffic cut by two-thirds. Lack of traffic means no patrons to frequent the local watering holes, no docking fees, no repair fees—no profits. Supplies are left on outfitters' shelves. Security personnel find themselves facing lay-offs. Port cities find their revenue cut in half, with angry merchants demanding an explanation. There's no incoming freight and worse, no outgoing cargo.

The talent needed to safely haul spice and other illegal contraband from one destination to the next drops drastically, causing crime lords and dealers to risk their cargoes to less-talented individuals. In the end, the high cost of failure far outweighs the cost of a competent smuggler. Eventually, even those resources dry up as Bha'lr members wheel and deal and intimidate the free-traders who are initially willing to work. If necessary, the Bha'lr begin eliminating anyone who does not comply with



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the boycott order. This will eventually lead to a complete shutdown of the system, at least on a criminal level.

This leaves crime lords and territorial gangs at the mercy of commercial shipping interests, whose intolerance of illegalities is equaled only by their incompetence in handling precious cargo. And if things are particularly heated between the Bha'ir and the boycotted parties, the Bha'ir have been known to bring certain illegal activities to the attention of Imperial authorities and other law-enforcement agencies, who charge in, seize the contraband and arrest any responsible parties or available scapegoats. More than one Imperial officer has risen through the ranks on the broad back and shoulders of the Black Bha'ir.

There has only been one successful assassination attempt against a Black Bha'ir Tribunal member. It was the direct and caustic response of the Ramesh, a prominent Hutt clan that once occupied and ran the Omman system. If the name sounds unfamiliar, you needn't bother researching it: That clan no longer exists. Ask the details of their untimely demise and it will bring a wry grin from the older members of the Bha'ir, perhaps a round of drinks, and a story known only as "The Tale of A Tiger and A Worm."

At the time of the story, the boundaries of the Bha'ir were limited to the Socorran system. The Society was quietly making in-roads to Omman. The Ramesh clan, who controlled Omman, saw the Bha'ir as a threat. A test of strength was in order.

A docking fee dispute fueled the incident. The head of the Ramesh clan refused to pay a docking tax on a bulk freighter (and its illegal cargo) that had landed in the Meril Power Station, a secured facility run by the Black Bha'ir and kept quite safe from Imperial customs. The Ramesh invited a representative Tribunal member into their stronghold to discuss the situation. In typical Hutt fashion, the Bha'ir delegate was brutally assassinated. Apparently, the Hutts thought this move would trigger panic and perhaps even topple the Society. The act was a clear indication of Ramesh's intentions; the Bha'ir had a response.

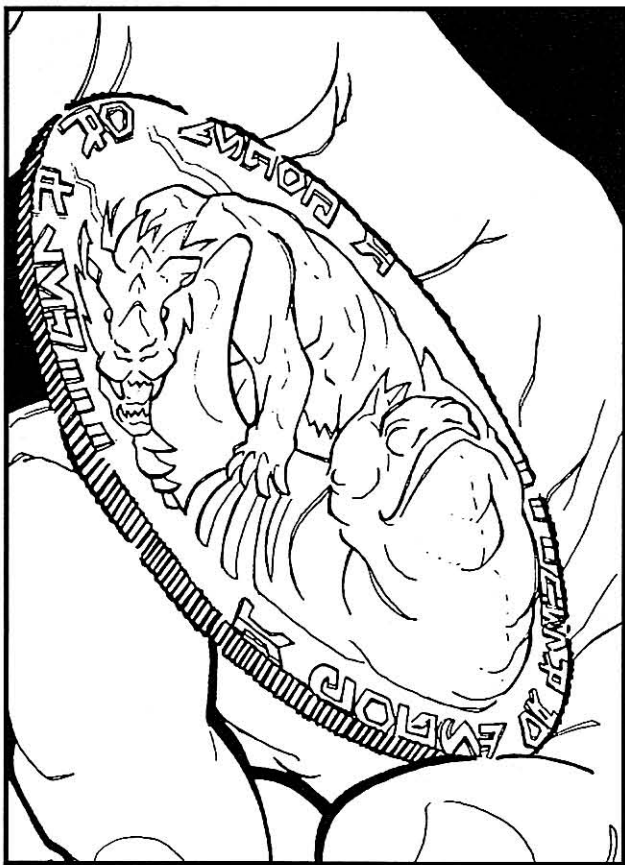
Hutts are well known for collecting things—people, allegiances, even exotic pets. The Black Bha'ir capitalized on this weakness in an ingenious plot of retribution. Soon after the death of the Tribunal member, the Ramesh clan was the recipient of a gift—a rare Black Bha'ir cub. Thinking the cub was a proposition of service, the Ramesh leader summoned his clan to make plans for their new monopoly in the starport and their newly acquired smuggling tool, the Bha'ir Society.

They were unaware, at least until the convulsions started, that the cub was host to a deadly secret surgically implanted in its lungs—Trauger gas. Needless to say, the message about the death of the Ramesh clan and the swift wrath of the Black Bha'ir was spread widely and had a profound effect on other's entertaining notions of challenging the Society.

## *Socorran Integrity and Corellian Profit*

It's the old story of the country cousin and his city-dwelling relative. The dividing line between profit and integrity has long been a sore spot among Corellian smugglers and the native pirates of Socorro. For many, smuggling is seen as a business, a profiteering venture in which Corellians excel. Pirating is a way of life and subsistence which Socorrans hold in high regard.

Socorrans often see their Corellian counterparts as ruthless and greedy, seeking only to turn a profit at the expense of the



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common man. Corellians view Socorrans as somewhat backwards and having little sense for business. This would appear to be true as Socorrans rarely become wealthy. They spend a large amount of their time in trouble and in debt—due in part to their belief in consistently aiding the underdog. Regardless, it is the Socorran societal dictates that win out when it comes down to the ethical structure of the Black Bha'lr.

While the differences of cultural perspective has caused some friction among the Bha'lr's membership, Corellians view themselves as protecting and educating their Socorran cousins. And Socorrans see themselves as adding depth and integrity to their otherwise apathetic, business-minded Corellian kinsmen.

### *Black Bha'lr*

The black Bha'lr is a native of Iyred and an opportunistic hunter of the tropical and terrestrial forests of that world. They tend to roam in small bands of one male, one female, and as many as six to seven cubs. The large cats are surprisingly docile when approached cautiously. However, they can be fiercely territorial and savage when threatened or while defending their territories and young. Bha'lr mate for life and are notorious in their loyalty to their

chosen mate: This is a primary reason for the failure of biologists to maintain bha'lr numbers in captivity.

The Bha'lr hunt in packs consisting of several families. The males—in packs of five to six—are the spearhead of the hunting party. Groups of 10 to 15 females run the perimeter until the target is run to exhaustion, cornered and brought down. Cubs eat first, then primary females and males, then subordinate members. This is where their apparent socialization instincts end. After the meal, each family goes its own way.

With the deforestation and desolation of Iyred, the Bha'lr faced starvation as their food sources were depleted. They eventually fell prey to the whims of greedy investors and the species is officially listed as extinct. However, there are small numbers of Bha'lr that have been raised in isolated refuges. The largest of these refuges, located on Duunir, is a charity of the Black Bha'lr, who have adopted the large cats as their mascots.



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### *Black Bha'lr*

**Type:** Jungle predator

**DEXTERITY** 5D+1

Brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 4D+2, running 6D

**PERCEPTION** 4D+2

Hide 5D+1, search 5D, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH** 4D

Brawling 5D, stamina 4D+1, swimming 4D+2

**Special Abilities:**

*Claws:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Teeth:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Stealth:* The creature gains a +1D to all sneak rolls.

**Move:** 18

**Size:** 0.9-1.0 meters tall, 1.22 meters long

**Scale:** Creature



## Chapter Seven

# Cjaalysce'I

### Cjaalysce'I Starport

The Cjaalysce'I starport is the home of the Caelli-Merced Syndicate. With extensive technical and repair facilities and the principle Caelli-Merced weapon manufacturing sites, the port occupies one whole corner of this ancient city. It was designed mostly underground to avoid marring the historic integrity of this ultra-conservative community.

These underground repair facilities and hidden platforms catacomb the entire city. (There are rumors that one of these guarded access tunnels leads directly to the secret hideout of Pret Swain, the man behind the Caelli-Merced fortune.)

Despite its inviting old-world charm, the inhabitants of Cjaalysce'I do not welcome strangers. The port is heavily secured by a variety of sentry droids, sensors, force fields, energy fences, and a crack team of Wookiee security agents. Port security is on alert all day, every day, and without the proper clearance, spacers are immediately turned away.

Caelli-Merced weapons and ship technicians are renown in smuggling circles. They are some of the best in the business and there is no

modification too difficult or too illegal. Small miracles are the order of the day at Cjaalysce'I. Techs may spend their time restoring antiquated vessels to modern excellence or repairing a heavily damaged ship that might otherwise go to the scrapyard. Of course, miracles do not come cheap. Repairs and modifications command premium costs that will make even a scattergood spender pause at the prices.

### Cjaalysce'I. the Walled City

Cjaalysce'I is a remote community located nearly 5,100 kilometers northwest of its sister settlement, Vakeyya. It is situated in the western sector of the Doaba Badlands and is the second largest settlement on Socorro. Cjaalysce'I is often referred to as the "Walled City" as it is surrounded on all sides by a 15-meter tall barricade. The construction of the walls was a response to the *Jyalma*—the Socorran wind season. During this time, powerful winds whip across the desert expanse exceeding speeds of 150 kilometers per hour. All air traffic is diverted to Soco-Jarel Spaceport during this period and ships currently in the port are under mandatory ground restrictions until the windstorm passes.

The name Cjaalysce'I is an ancient Old Corellian greeting which means "you are wearing the road well." In less colloquial terms, it means the recipient has made a reputation for him or herself and is doing well. Cjaalysce'I was the first established colony on Socorro. It is a

### Cjaalysce'I

**System:** Socorro  
**Starport Type:** Standard  
**Traffic:** Moderate  
**Control:** Controller  
**Landing:** Directional beacon  
**Docking Areas:** Docking bays, landing pads  
**Docking Fee:** 20-25 credits daily  
**Customs:** None  
**Services:** Food, repair facilities, storage bays

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closed society and few ever venture there without reason or an invitation. Most inhabitants make their living as they did some 1,000 years ago, as artisans. However, modern residents produce art that takes the shape of weapons, planetary defense systems and technical modifications for spacecraft, rather than sculpture, painting, or poetry.

The population of 3,000 is primarily made up of engineers, technicians, laborers, and their families. They comprise a strangely conservative community and do not initially take well to strangers. However, because most of the population are members of the Black Bha'li, strange faces are few and friendships abundant.

Other than sight-seeing and dusty museum collections, there is little else here to occupy offworlders while they are waiting for their ships to be finished.

### *"...Ever So Humble..."*

*"Personally, I believe that home is where you can take your blaster off and put it on the shelf without worry. For me, that's Cjaalysce'I on Socorro. It's a nice, quiet spot to go when the chips are down and your cards have played themselves out. You've always got a few friends*

*around to help you, no matter how bad a jam you're in. And it doesn't matter if you don't know their names. All they ask is that one day you return the favor.*

*"I never knew what it was like to sleep with both eyes closed, not worried about who might be sneaking up to blast me. At Cjaalysce'I you can sleep on the merits of a day's good work, knowing you've done something right. And if you're up for a bit of hard work, you can make a decent wage. That means making money without having to slip your neck through a noose."*

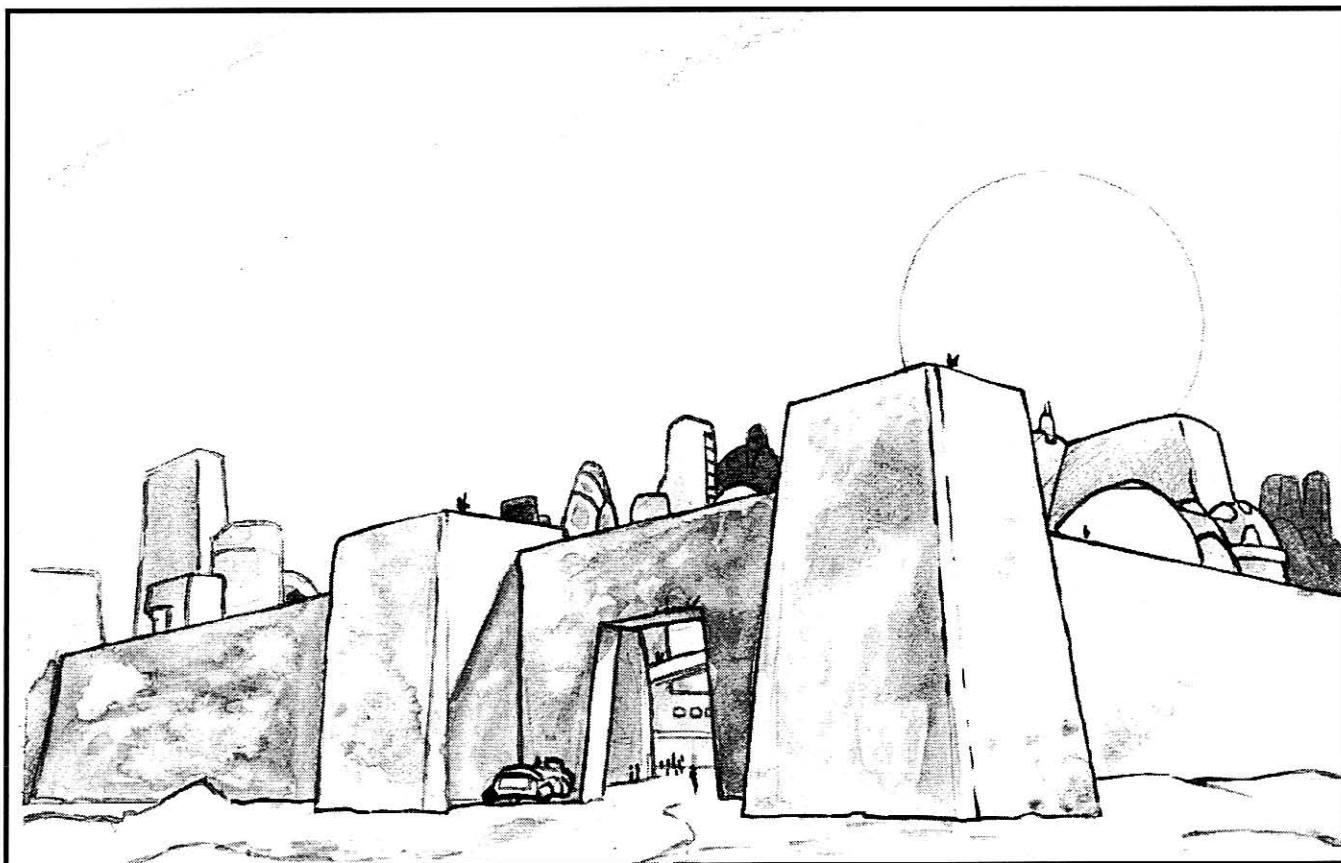
—Tully Owens

Extract from a datapad entry

### *Getting Around*

If you do not speak Socorran or some dialect of Old Corellian, it is best to keep your distance or hire an interpreter. Basic is rarely spoken here. Most alien dialects are understood and tolerated for the sake of business; however, the numerous aliens that move to and from the port town are expected to eventually learn Old Corellian. All signs and hardcopy information are printed or displayed in this vernacular.

Getting into the Cjaalysce'I docking pier is difficult. Unless pre-arranged by insiders from





Storn Cook

Soco-Jarel's Boliscon Towers, all incoming spacecraft are directed to Vakeyya. A ship that dares to land uninvited inside or outside the Walled City is likely to be confiscated, its pilot taken prisoner, and miscellaneous crewmen forced off the planet. The rights of aa'kua are very much in effect behind these walls and in the surrounding territories.

Spacers are warned to adhere to every rule and regulation with the utmost respect or they risk life, limb, and ship to the wrath and whim of the Wookiee Rakikta, Cjaalsyce I's resident security manager. A perfectionist, Rakikta (whose name means "strongarm") is not known for his benevolent handling of violators. Along with his six brothers, he is indeed the voice of authority in the starport, seconded by his eldest sibling, Kuykenda (Pret Swain's bodyguard) and then Swain himself.

## Rakikta

**Type:** Wookiee Security Controller

### DEXTERITY 3D

Bowcaster 9D, brawling parry 8D+1, dodge 7D, melee combat 8D+1, melee parry 8D, running 7D+2

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien species 8D, intimidation 7D+2, investigation

9D, languages 8D+2, planetary systems 10D, streetwise 8D+2, value 7D+1

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 6D+2, communications 5D, beast riding 5D+2, repulsorlift operation 7D+1

### PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 5D+2, con 3D, persuasion 6D+1, search 7D+2

### STRENGTH 5D

Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 5D+2, lifting 7D+1, stamina 8D

### TECHNICAL 3D

Blaster repair 7D+2, droid programming 6D, droid repair 6D, first aid 4D+1, security 9D+2, repulsorlift repair 5D+1

### Special Abilities:

**Berserker Rage:** If a Wookiee becomes enraged, there is a +2D bonus to *Strength* for the purposes of causing damage while brawling. The Wookiee suffers a -2D penalty to all



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non-Strength attribute and skill checks.

*Climbing Claws:* Wookiees have huge retractable climbing claws that add +2D to their *climbing* skill.

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Bowcaster (4D), comlink

**Rakikta's Brothers.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity* 3D, *bowcaster* 6D+1, *languages*, 3D+2, *intimidation* 5D+3, *investigation* 4D, *communications* 5D, *Strength* 5D, *brawling* 5D+2. **Move:** 10. **Bowcaster** (4D).

### Customs and Commodities

Traffic through Cjaalysce'I is so closely monitored by security personnel that every ship that lands is thoroughly scanned and inspected upon arrival. The pilot's identity and crew roster are checked before the ship is allowed to dock. Any discrepancy in credentials or permits is cause to be turned away or redirected back to Vakeyya at blaster point.

There are few amenities to be offered to off-worlders. Most taverns and restaurants are family-owned and cater only to familiar faces

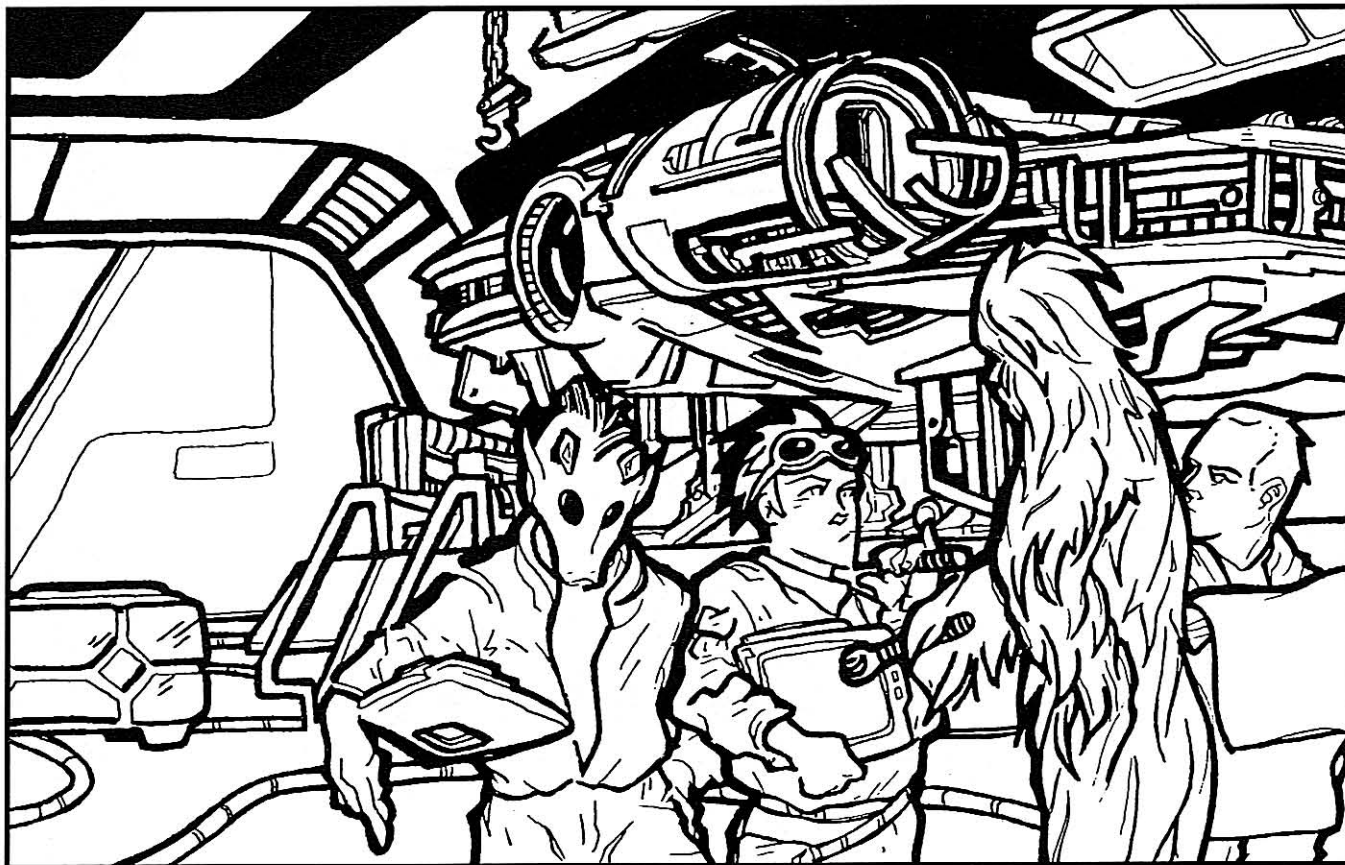
that frequent their establishments. A few non-descript bars are situated behind the main port. Strangers are urged to find their entertainment here, where Cjaalysce'I security staff can keep an eye on them. These businesses cater to off-world traffic and feature an assortment of food and drink.

Fighting of any kind is simply not tolerated inside the city walls. While there are no codes against carrying weapons, drawing a blaster in Cjaalysce'I is cause for investigation. Weighing the interests of his employer and the parties involved, Rakikta may choose to banish guilty parties or confine them to their ships.

Mischief *outside* the city walls is an entirely different matter. Rakikta rarely gets involved in personal disputes taken outside his jurisdiction as long as pertinent Caelli-Merced personnel are not involved.

Stealing is the worst possible offense. The punishment, an edict left over from the earliest days of colonial justice, is decidedly severe. If caught stealing or tampering with secure areas in the city, punishable parties are stripped of all but the most essential clothing and left stranded in the desert.

Besides harboring the Caelli-Merced Syndicate, Cjaalysce'I is a front for Pret Swain's expanding import/export business, which deals



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in exotics—furniture, artwork, food and drink, animals, weapons of all types, other collectibles, and even real estate investments on other planets. Swain's most prominent clients are Hutts seeking exclusive artwork from his studios. A devotee of the arts, Swain is an authority on rare artifacts and many seek his advice on acquiring exceptional, one-of-a-kind masterpieces. Because of his close and personal relationship with many Hutt clan leaders, Swain often acts as an ambassador between the Hutt Empire and the Black Bha'lir—a position not to be accepted lightly considering the ongoing rivalry between these two groups.

## Services

The tech crews of Caelli-Merced offer the finest modifications that can be had in Socorran space and neighboring systems. All mechanics are hand-picked for their skill and credentials. Just about every modification is available, from customized smuggling compartments to extremely efficient shield generators and sensor stealth systems. Turret mounts can be hidden away to avoid any nasty questions from Imperial or sector authorities. Repairs are expensive and one-of-a-kind modifications come at an even higher price. Several cargo loads of spice or other valuable contraband may be in order to pay for one modification. However, the work is first-rate and exceptionally reliable.

For the do-it-yourself mechanic, there is no end of advice offered by the capable technicians of Cjaalysce I. Hands-on assessments are costly, but can be avoided by way of a few drinks in the local tavern. Of course, these technicians are always on the look-out for new talent, so anyone showing a good amount of skill and a willingness to learn more may get an offer to join this exclusive group.

**Caelli-Merced Technicians.** All stats 2D+2 except: *Dexterity* 3D+1, *blaster* 7D, *business* 5D+2, *streetwise* 4D+1, *value* 5D, *Mechanical* 3D+1, *communications* 4D, *space transports* 6D+1, *Perception* 3D, *bargain* 3D+1, *brawling* 6D, *Technical* 3D, *armor repair* 6D+1, *blaster repair* 11D, *computer programming/repair* 6D+2, *droid programming* 6D+2, *droid repair* 5D, *ground vehicle repair* 6D, *hover vehicle repair* 5D, *repulsorlift repair* 4D, *space transports repair* 10D, *starfighter repair* 9D+2, *starship weapon repair* 10D+1. Move: 10. Equipment: Starship repair kit, tools, comlink, datapad (with comprehensive guide to repairs and modifications).

## Tully Owens

Tully Owens is Cjaalysce I's chief mechanic and operates the docking piers. He often inspects incoming ships for technical repairs and modification estimates before assigning his crews. Owens and his crews are dedicated to the reputation of Caelli-Merced craftsmanship. There is such pride in their work that most repairs and modifications feature a set of initials. This is done to lure prospective clients back to Socorro in search of a particular technician or engineer. Tully also oversees the weapons technical staff and the production of the much coveted line of Caelli-Merced starship weapons.

Owens came to his present position by way of reputation. His prowess as a smuggler is nothing short of legendary among the local populace. A genius at jury-rigging ion drive engines and overhauling battery-weapon emplacements, Tully was brought into the Caelli-Merced Syndicate by Tait Ransom, a friend of Pret Swain. After quickly proving his worth, Tully was given his run of the place. The success of the syndicate is due in part to his own extraordinary skills and his ability to pick out the best engineers to serve on his crew.

**Tully Owens.** *Dexterity* 3D, *blaster* 9D, *dodge* 8D, *firearms* 7D, *grenade* 6D+2, *vehicle blasters* 7D, *Knowledge* 3D, *streetwise* 6D+2, *value* 6D, *Mechanical* 3D, *astrogation* 4D+2, *space transports* 6D, *starship gunnery* 8D, *starship shields* 5D+2, *Perception* 3D, *bargain* 7D, *command* 6D+1, *con* 6D, *forgery* 5D+2, *persuasion* 7D+1, *Strength* 3D, *brawling* 6D, *Technical* 3D, *armor repair* 6D, *blaster repair* 11D, *capital starship repair* 7D, *capital starship weapon repair* 6D+2, *computer programming/repair* 6D, *droid programming* 5D+2, *droid repair* 5D, *ground vehicle repair* 6D, *space transports repair* 10D, *starfighter repair* 9D+1, *starship weapon repair* 10D. Move: 10. Equipment: comlink, datapad, analysis tools, and tech kit.

## Points of Interest

### The Bazaar

Once a year, the gates and ports of Cjaalysce I are opened to strangers. This week-long celebration is known as the Bazaar and is at-



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tended by as many as 15,000 beings. A variety of traditional Old Corellian foods and drinks are served and merchants set up shop in the ancient streets to peddle their wares, which typically include woven cloth, exotic foodstuffs, amateur art pieces, souvenirs, and odd collectible jewelry.

This is also a choice opportunity for outsiders to purchase repair and modification services at reduced costs. Starship parts and Caelli-Merced weapons and vehicles are also available at wholesale prices.

**Tahji Panagakos, Street Orphan.** One of the more recognizable faces in Cjaalysce'l is Tahji Panagakos, an orphan who came to the city by stowing away onboard a freighter. The 11-year old girl is a master of the con game and quickly won the hearts of the cloistered denizens of the walled city. The techs and engineers have adopted her and make certain that she has clothes, food, shelter, and comforts enough to interest the precocious youngster. When childhood antics get out of hand, it is often the Wookiee Rakikta that does the scolding, as he is the one and only authority that Tahji truly respects.

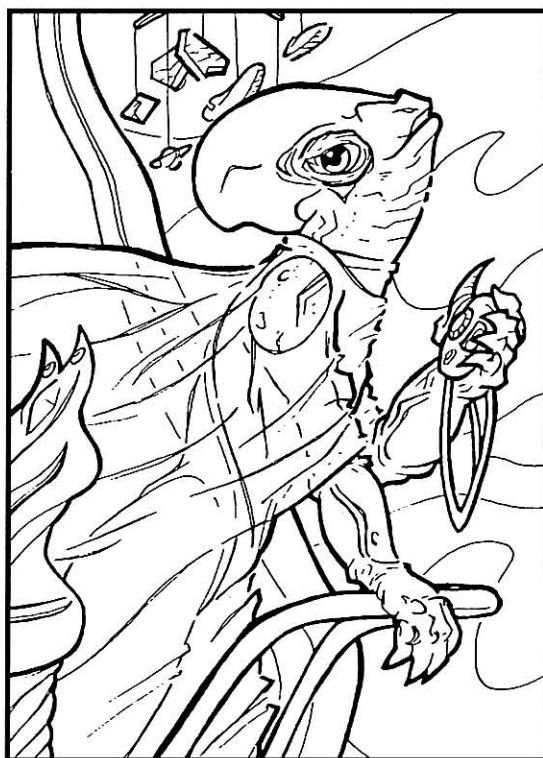
Tahji often acts as a messenger for Cjaalysce'l's many businesses. She has an uncanny ability to locate people. Once found, she delivers her communication with pride—and all for only five credits.

**Tahji Panagakos.** *Dexterity 3D+2, dodge 4D+2, melee combat 5D, melee parry 5D, pick pocket 6D+1, Knowledge 3D+2, languages 5D, streetwise 5D+1, survival 4D+2, Mechanical 3D, beastriding 5D, Perception 3D+2, bargain 5D, con 5D, hide 4D+2, search 6D+2, sneak 4D, Strength 2D, Technical 2D. Move: 8. Equipment: Two flasks of Zsajhira berry juice, 50 credits.*

## Swain Import/ Export Emporium

For the discriminating art buyer, this exquisite little boutique is the central place to shop for those rare-to-find items that are unavailable elsewhere in the galaxy, even on the black market. While the Emporium has a reputation as something of a museum, everything here is for sale. Dr. Uth Sulrowe, a Mon Calamari antiquities appraiser, runs the quaint shop and she welcomes everyone who ventures through the front portal, whether they are dressed in the richest suit or the most threadbare tunic.

Dressed in flowing white robes, Sulrowe is a vivacious hostess, offering drinks and pastries as she points out key pieces that may be of interest. A shrewd dealer and business-minded individual, Sulrowe personally checks out each customer. The overly anxious consumer will find her a formidable challenge as she cleverly



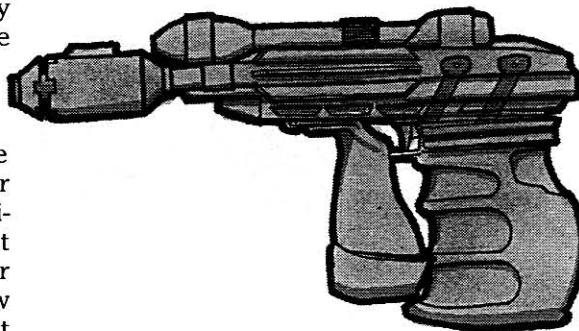
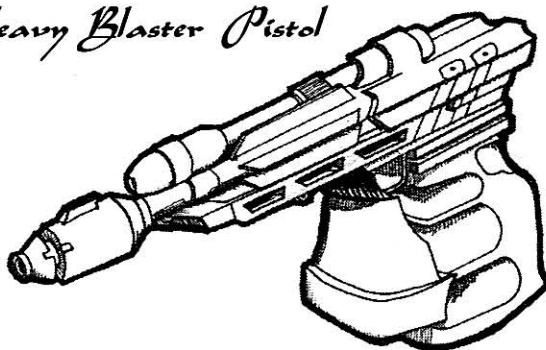
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spins and pirouettes about the show cases, avoiding mention of the real collectibles that bring customers to this shop—Caelli-Merced weapons.

Caelli-Merced blasters, blaster rifles, and ground vehicles are valued goods, but to get to them, one must first get to Socorro and then through Sulrowe. The Mon Cal has an excellent sense for profit—who can pay and who can't. Her intuitive senses have even seen through several Imperial infiltrators hoping to expose Swain's operation.

Should patrons survive Sulrowe's lengthy dissertations about the shop's objects, she may invite them to see some "truly rare" pieces in the back room. The room is actually a tubelift leading to an underground access tunnel. The small landspeeder there whisks Sulrowe and her clients away, all under the watchful eyes of heavily armed Caelli-Merced security personnel. Upon arriving at the manufacturing center—an isolated bunker under the starport—clients may peruse row upon row of Caelli-Merced blasters or try out Caelli-Merced swoop racers and land vehicles.

### Heavy Blaster Pistol



Jerome De Crotte

**Model:** Caelli-Merced Sentinel IV Blaster

**Type:** Heavy blaster pistol

**Scale:** Character

**Skill:** Blaster

**Ammo:** 100

**Cost:** 1,200

**Availability:** 4, R

**Range:** 3-10/30/60

**Damage:** 5D+2

**Game Notes:** The Caelli-Merced is a precisely designed weapon, intentionally designed for the advanced user. This weapon adds +5 to the difficulty for any user with a *blaster* skill of less than 4D, but anyone with a *blaster* skill of 6D or higher gets a +1D to hit.

**Capsule:** Of all the Caelli-Merced products, there is no other weapon that carries the distinction and reputation of the Sentinel IV heavy blaster pistol. It is so highly prized a weapon that they are almost never found for sale off the planet, even through the most well-connected black marketeers.

Carrying a Sentinel IV is a status symbol among the Black Bha'ir. Older variations of the weapon have been passed down

from one generation to the next and remain every bit as formidable as the new models coming off the line. (**Note:** While not a common weapon, the Sentinel IV is quite distinctive. Anyone who makes a Difficult *streetwise* roll and recognizes a Sentinel IV understands that whoever is carrying the weapon is not a person to be trifled with; smugglers, bounty hunters, assassins and people of a similar background get a +1D bonus to this roll.)

### Blaster Pistol

**Model:** Caelli-Merced Series III Blaster Pistol

**Type:** Blaster pistol

**Scale:** Character

**Skill:** Blaster

**Ammo:** 100

**Cost:** 900 (power packs: 30)

**Availability:** 4, R

**Range:** 3-10/

30/120

**Damage:**

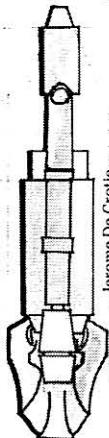
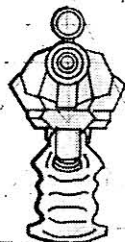
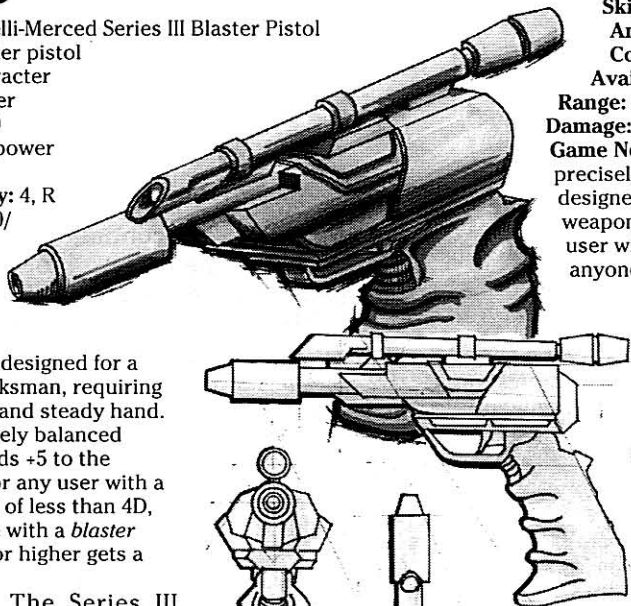
4D+2

**Game**

**Notes:** The

Series III is designed for a skilled marksman, requiring a keen eye and steady hand. This precisely balanced weapon adds +5 to the difficulty for any user with a *blaster* skill of less than 4D, but anyone with a *blaster* skill of 6D or higher gets a +1D to hit.

**Capsule:** The Series III blaster pistol packs considerably more punch than a standard pistol, yet retains the small, compact design typical to this type of weapon. It was the first weapon produced by the Caelli-Merced Syndicate and remains the company's best seller. Due to incredible demand and Caelli-Merced's limited manufacturing capabilities, the Series III is only available on Socorro and the black market.



Jerome De Crotte

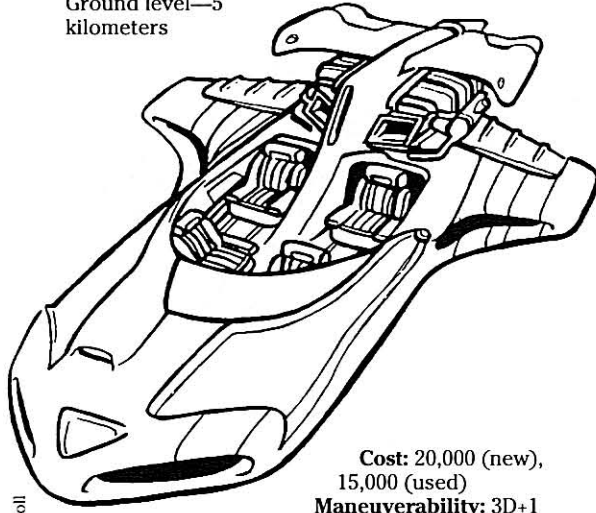


# STAR WARS®

• The Black Sands of Socorro •

## Caelli-Merced Sandpopper

**Craft:** Caelli-Merced Sandpopper Airspeeder  
**Type:** Airspeeder  
**Scale:** Speeder  
**Length:** 9 meters  
**Skill:** Repulsorlift operation: sandpopper  
**Crew:** 1  
**Passengers:** 3  
**Cargo Capacity:** 400 kilograms  
**Cover:** Full  
**Altitude Range:**  
 Ground level—5 kilometers



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**Cost:** 20,000 (new),  
 15,000 (used)  
**Maneuverability:** 3D+1

**Move:** 260; 750 kmh

**Body Strength:** 2D+2

**Shields:** 1D+2

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 1 km

*Focus:* 500 meters

**Weapons:**

**1 Double Laser Cannon (Optional)**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Skill:* Vehicle blaster

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Range:* 50-100/300/1.2 km

*Damage:* 4D

**Capsule:** The Caelli-Merced sandpopper is one of the most popular surface-to-air vehicles on Socorro. A true favorite among the twenty-something generation, the specialty airspeeder is a hot-seller due to its low cost, which keeps the orders piling in and the production line powered to maximum output.

The sandpopper received its unusual name from field testing. In the early stages of development, a technician forgot to cover the engine housing and sand got sucked into the repulsorlift chambers, causing a peculiar popping sound. The error was promptly corrected, but the name stuck. As a result, Caelli-Merced engineers added a special filter that allows a minimum of sand into the engine to replicate the peculiar sound without causing any damage.

## An Extended Crime Family

**Organization Profile:** Caelli-Merced Syndicate

**Type:** Crime Cartel

**Location:** Socorro

**Crime Boss/Leadership:** Pret Swain

**Principal Criminal Activities:** Smuggling, gun-running, manufacturing illegal goods

**Criminal Affiliations:** Black Bha'lr, various independent groups

**Territory:** Socorro

**Payroll:** 3,000 employees: techs, engineers, and security personnel

**Violence Index:** 45

While the Black Bha'lr control smuggling, they need weapons to back up their words. That's where the charming and charismatic Pret Swain and his Caelli-Merced Syndicate come in. Pret inherited the prosperous organization from his uncles, Vance Caelli and Rondale Merced. Both prominent Bha'lr members, they founded the company and made tremendous profits as the owners of the only weapons manufacturing company on Socorro.

Even after the mysterious disappearances of his uncles, Swain continued masterminding the efforts of the organization. Despite the unexplained absence of Caelli and Merced, there were few willing to cross the young upstart from Alderaan—not with the backing of the Black Bha'lr and Karl Ancher, who took Swain under his wing. It was Ancher's advice and influence that led Swain to cut a deal with Socorro's resident crime lord, Abdi-Badawzi.

For Badawzi, the opportunity to distribute Caelli-Merced weapons was too much to pass up. This successful alliance between Swain and Badawzi solidified the Caelli-Merced position on Socorro. And to insure continued, uninterrupted profits, Badawzi enlisted the criminal genius of Saadoon-Kauldi. Kauldi's resources and contacts opened up numerous opportunities for both Badawzi and Swain. The greatest advantage of all was the continued support of the "Socorran Shield"—the Black Bha'lr.

Despite his high-cultured ways and education, Swain, like his uncles, is a smooth, amiable character. A romantic, he is captivated by the rugged ways of smugglers and rogues. His



generous nature and fair dealings with Socorro's pirate community have won the admiration and loyalty of just about every smuggler in the system, especially those who dream of owning a Caelli-Merced blaster or vehicle.

Swain is quite secure in his status as controlling hand of the Caelli-Merced Syndicate. His close association to the Black Bha'lr keeps him open to the finest talent in the business, where he can acquire at the best prices simply by cashing in favors or offering a walk through one of his production warehouses. His contacts enable him to hire the best enforcers, which he has need of from time to time.

Swain himself is not known for making any weapons deals. This he leaves to Badawzi. Instead, Swain focuses on his import/export business, which is nearly as profitable as the Caelli-Merced production lines. A collector of rare antiquities, Swain occupies his time assessing and acquiring valuable art, from sculpture to holovids. It is rumored that the filmmaker Armennion Ullgusta, an "enemy of the Empire" because of his works, is a frequent guest at Swain's underground fortress near Cjaalysce'I. It's also reported that Swain put up the monies for Ullgusta's most successful and damaging documentaries, *The Edict of Jiaan*

and *Obeisance: Betrayal Within*. Both works chronicle the extermination of members of the fabled Jedi Knight sect and have been banned by the Galactic Empire.

Swain and the Caelli-Merced Syndicate are also proud sponsors of the Cjaalysce'I 500, the coveted third crown of a popular swoopchasing series. Considering that the last six winners of the race were riding Caelli-Merced vehicles, it's safe to assume that the syndicate's prize money is a good investment since the publicity certainly attracts many new customers.

### Pret Swain

Pret Swain is the academically talented son of two Alderaan University scholars. His mother, a prominent political scientist and theologian, made certain that Pret was exposed, even at a young age, to the world of diplomacy. His father was also a respected anthropologist and archaeologist.

By the time his parents were killed in the destruction of Alderaan by the Death Star, Pret Swain had seen and been in nearly every corner of the known galaxy, including wild frontier worlds like Socorro. He speaks over a dozen alien languages and knows a score of dialects.



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# STAR WARS

## • The Black Sands of Socorro •

At the time of Alderaan's destruction, Pret was visiting with his uncles, Vance Caelli and Rondale Merced—both of whom where notorious smugglers and weapons dealers. When the news of Alderaan's destruction reached Socorro, Pret was devastated. With nowhere to turn, he took up an offer from his uncles to help run the Caelli-Merced Syndicate as a full partner. Swain, who had always dreamed of the smuggling life, quickly adapted to this rough-and-tumble business.

Within one year, the ambitious son of academic scholars proved his worth. Under his direction, Caelli-Merced's reputation as one of the foremost producers of quality weapons and ground vehicles has grown, while the prominent repair facilities at Cjaalysce'I earn tremendous profits and provide a convenient front for the illegal weapons manufacturing operation.

Due to the unusual circumstances of his uncles' disappearances, the young entrepreneur is somewhat paranoid. He lives underground in a vast fortress of inter-linking labyrinths and tunnels. The wide-ranging complex is protected by a variety of beasts, security droids, and sentries.

During a run-in the Ottega sector, Swain came to blows with a small slave galleon, which he disabled and captured. In the cargo hold were six Wookiee brothers, among them Rakikta, Cjaalysce'I's security controller, and the eldest sibling, Kuykenda, who became Swain's closest friend and bodyguard. The two are rarely separated.

While Swain has no absolute loyalty to the Rebel Alliance, he is greatly opposed to existence of the Empire and offers his services and goods at a reduced rate to the beleaguered members of the Alliance. Except on these rare occasions, it is unusual for him to ever get personally involved in weapons dealing.

### Pret Swain

**Type:** Crime Lord

**DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 9D+1, dodge 5D, melee combat 5D+1, running 4D, vehicle blaster 5D+2

**KNOWLEDGE 2D+1**

Alien species 6D+1, languages 8D+1, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 6D+2, value 7D+1

**MECHANICAL 3D+2**

Astrogation 5D, beast riding 5D+2, communications 4D+1, sensors 4D+1, space transports 6D, starship gunnery 6D+1, starship shields 5D, swoop operation 9D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 6D, con 5D+2, forgery 4D, gambling 4D+1, persuasion 5D+2

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 4D+1, climbing/jumping 4D, swimming 5D+1

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

Blaster repair 8D, first aid 4D, space transport

repair 3D+1

**Force Points:** 4

**Dark Side Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 17

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Caelli-Merced Sentinel blaster (5D+2), comlink, *DeLucia* (modified YT-1300 freighter)

### Kuykenda

Kuykenda is a Wookiee of enormous size, presence and strength. His temper is equally intimidating. As Pret Swain's personal friend and bodyguard, the overly opinionated Wookiee is second-in-command of the flourishing Caelli-Merced organization. A former Imperial slave, the Wookiee has learned much in the way of interrogation and torture. When given the opportunity, he enjoys putting those skills to the test—particularly on captured Imperial infiltrators.

Kuyk is arrogant, abrupt with strangers, and generally indifferent to anything not directly related to Caelli-Merced's success. His brusque behavior is indulged by Swain due to his affection for the powerful Wookiee. In his spare time, the Wookiee enjoys wrestling with monnoks—at least 10 of these creatures guard the limited access areas of Swain's well-secured fortress.

### Kuykenda

**Type:** Wookiee Bodyguard

**DEXTERITY 2D+2**

Bowcaster 8D+1, brawling parry 6D, dodge 5D+1, grenade 4D, melee combat 5D+1, melee parry 5D, running 4D+1

**KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Alien species 4D, intimidation 7D, languages 5D+1, planetary systems 3D+2, streetwise 4D, survival 5D+1, value 6D

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 5D+1, communications 4D+2, repulsorlift operation 5D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 4D+2, starship gunnery 6D, starship shields 5D

**PERCEPTION 3D**

Bargain 4D, con 5D+1, persuasion 4D, search 4D+2

**STRENGTH 5D**

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 5D+1, lifting 6D, stamina 6D+1, swimming 8D+2

**TECHNICAL 3D+1**

Blaster repair 4D, first aid 4D+2, repulsorlift repair 5D, space transports repair 3D+2

**Special Abilities:**

**Berserker Rage:** If a Wookiee becomes enraged, there is a +2D bonus to *Strength* for the purposes of causing damage while brawling. The Wookiee suffers a -2D penalty to all non-*Strength* attribute and skill checks.

**Climbing Claws:** Wookiees have huge retractable climbing claws that add +2D to their *climbing* skill.

**Force Points:** 3

**Dark Side Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Modified bowcaster (5D), comlink



## Chapter Eight

# Abdi-Badawzi

*Monarch of the Sands*

*The Making of a Crime Lord*

### *Organization Profile: Abdi-Badawzi Crime Family*

**Type:** Expanding Crime Cartel

**Location:** Socorro system

**Crime Boss/Leadership:** Abdi-Badawzi

**Principal Criminal Activities:** Kidnapping, loan-sharking, illicit weapons trafficking, smuggling, forgery, gambling, assassination, and illegal sale and delivery of controlled substances.

**Criminal Affiliations:** Badawzi has the protection afforded by close association with the Black Bha'liir. He maintains solid connections to the criminal empire of Saadoon-Kauldi, his mentor.

**Territory:** Some sectors in the Outer Rim Territories

**Payroll:** 1,000 (estimated)

**Violence Index:** 80

The origins of Abdi-Badawzi remain shrouded in mystery, even though the gangster has made his home on Socorro for decades. Most smugglers believe the Twi'lek was a slave who found freedom when a slaver's ship inadvertently attempted to land in the desert. Some natives believe that Badawzi is a supernatural deity born of Socorro itself and there are accounts of the Twi'lek actually emerging from the black sands to gasp his first breath of the desert air. To an extent, all of these legends are true.

Badawzi was born to a family of merchants on the Twi'lek homeworld of Ryloth. The wealth of his family and the power of that monetary influence was not lost on the young Twi'lek, who took an early and keen interest in the family business. A successful plot against his family was very nearly thwarted by Badawzi, who attempted to warn his father of a move by a rival clan to assassinate him. Badawzi's father refused to believe him and assumed that Abdi was the would-be assassin behind the plot. As punishment, he was sold into slavery for his alleged crimes against his father and clan.

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• *The Black Sands of Socorro* •



While in transit, the slave ship experienced a drive malfunction. The pilot was forced to attempt an emergency landing on the nearest habitable planet—Socorro. Upon realizing the penalties for slaving on this world, the ship's crew tried to pull out of Socorro's atmosphere, but instead the vessel tumbled into the Doaba Badlands, landing with such impact that it was literally half buried in the black sand.

Badawzi was one of the few survivors to crawl his way to the surface. Believing the Twi'lek to be some newly risen deity, an Ibhaan'I shaman rescued Badawzi and took him to Vakeyya. During his recovery, Badawzi learned of his father's murder and of the massacre of his clan. From his sickbed on Socorro, the Twi'lek plotted his revenge against those who had turned his father against him and usurped the family business.

Badawzi was no fool. With seemingly endless resources and talent nearby, he gathered the best ships and smugglers to return with him to Ryloth to take back what was his. By promising a share in the estimated wealth of his family holdings, he was successful in luring several prominent Black Bha'lir members, including Karl and Toob Ancher, Aquato Boliscon, and a young Socorran pilot named Kaine

Paulsen. With their help, Badawzi took his retribution on the responsible parties and transplanted his family's wealth and resources to Socorro, where none would oppose him. The incident was cause for other Twi'lek clans to formally exile Badawzi, but this was of little concern to the Twi'lek, who now considered Socorro his true home.

Because of the power of the Black Bha'lir, none on Ryloth disputed the young Twi'lek's claims or the violence with which he took them. And to insure there would be no trouble, the Bha'lir instituted a month-long boycott of the planet. The message was not lost on the Twi'leks.

This series of events marked the beginning of a tenuous symbiotic relationship between Badawzi and the smugglers of Socorro. Through his near-death experience, Badawzi was essentially reborn into the peculiar culture of aa'kua and has been deeply influenced by the ways of the Ibhaan'I. Though occasionally his arrogance and greed overshadow that humility, Badawzi is morally bound to act within the dictates of the culture that gave him a second chance at life.

Reinvesting his capitol into the economic structure of Socorro, Badawzi quickly capital-



ized on the loyalty of his neighbors. The result was a relationship of genius and profit. Badawzi had the contacts (due to his family influence) and the smugglers of Socorro had the talent. There was nothing to stand between them and bountiful profits from smuggling ryll spice, racketeering, distributing illegal contraband, and trafficking weapons.

At first, this new operation remained small enough to go unnoticed by the larger criminal enterprises. However, the Hutt Empire was very interested in securing Badawzi's loyalty and wooed the Twi'lek with the promise of riches if he secured a foothold for them on Socorro. Initially, coercion was not an option because any aggressive move against Badawzi would be seen as a move against the Bha'lr. Threats to the smuggler culture of Socorro were always met with the worst kind of resistance. "The Tale of A Tiger and A Worm" is a fable that many Hutts take to heart.

When Badawzi blatantly refused them, several attempts were made to remove the Twi'lek and replace him with more Hutt-sympathetic operatives. In reply, the Black Bha'lr converged on several star systems in force and taught the Hutt Empire a few painful lessons about aa'kua. Their message was clear to all—"leave Socorro alone." Despite his ego and peculiar eccentricities, Badawzi was, for the moment, family. His operations provided a convenient and tractable proving ground for young smugglers. This, and a generous reinvestment of Badawzi monies into the Socorran economy, obliged the Bha'lr to extend a small measure of security to the crime lord and temporary toleration of his behavior.

With his "Socorran Shield" fully in place, Badawzi's organization branched out into several enterprises, legitimate and otherwise. From his fortress deep in the desert, Abdi-Badawzi controls a criminal empire, with a full-third partnership in the Ethra Brewery and active participation in the illegal distribution of contraband produced by the brewery. His organization sponsors prize-monies and gambling rackets for the swoopchasing circuit and it is the main distributor of Caelli-Merced weapons. (Blaster smuggling accounts for the majority of Badawzi's wealth.)

## Abdi-Badawzi

Abdi-Badawzi is unusual, even by Twi'lek definitions. His rare black skin reflects the darkness radiating from his cruel, criminal genius. Many would say that Badawzi and his organization hold the troubled reins of Socorro,

but if sufficiently provoked, the other criminal elements would no doubt eliminate Badawzi. The Twi'lek clearly knows his limits and the limits of his benefactors, the Black Bha'lr.

With a reputation for doting upon his subjects, Badawzi portrays himself as a kindly monarch. His lavish praise and gifts to members of his court have earned him great loyalty—not to mention high profits and the respect of his rivals. No one dares to challenge or deny him, for while one hand rewards, the other disciplines with a firm and merciless wrath.

## Abdi-Badawzi

**Type:** Twi'lek Gangster

**DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 6D, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D+2, melee parry 4D

**KNOWLEDGE 3D**

Alien species 8D, bureaucracy 7D, business 9D, languages 7D, streetwise 12D, value 9D

**MECHANICAL 2D+1**

Astrogation 3D, space transports 3D+1

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Bargain 8D, command 10D, con 9D, gambling 9D, persuasion 8D

**STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 5D, lifting 6D, stamina 4D

**TECHNICAL 2D+2**

**Special Abilities:**

**Head-tails:** Twi'leks can use their head-tails to communicate in secret with each other, even in a room full of individuals. The complex movement of the head-tails is, in a sense, a "secret" language that all Twi'leks are fluent in.

**Force Points:** 2

**Dark Side Points:** 4

**Character Points:** 12

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Comlink, datapad, hold-out blaster (3D+1)

## Growing Pains

Without his family to support and guide him, Abdi was forced to rely on outsiders. Still reeling from his betrayal at the hands of his father, the crime lord was determined to find loyal subordinates whose greed, tastes for fine living, and need for profit would equal his own. It was his ambition to prevent even the mere thought of betrayal. He found all of these qualities and more in a Sluissi territorial gang run by Secles Uslopos.

Secles, a sniveling despot, had made quite a name for himself and his small organization. He masterminded several profitable but dangerous cons involving forging flight documents, cargo manifests, and false credentials for smugglers. On several occasions, the Sluissi even

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posed as a customs official and skimmed lucrative portions of spice from both legitimate and criminal shipments. When he sabotaged a cargo of spice meant for Jabba the Hutt's coffers, Jabba put a sizable bounty on Secles' head. The Sluissi gang quickly took shelter with Badawzi and Secles immediately endeared himself to the Twi'lek. Abdi's profits doubled almost instantly, as Secles opened up new markets for Badawzi, bringing in revenues from real estate scamming, swindling, and loan-sharking.

### *Secles Uslopos*

Secles is usually found one step behind Badawzi or at the crime lord's throne. Having expensive tastes, he is usually dressed in fine robes and jewelry that he has shipped in from all points of the galaxy. Fastidious about hygiene and his appearance, the Sluissi is often at odds with the less meticulous members of Badawzi's organization, such as the Gamorrean bodyguards.

Serving as chancellor, Secles oversees the perverse court of Badawzi's underground fortress and handles the majority of the Twi'lek's petty crime. Though he appears to be a close

advisor, Secles is more often the court buffoon and Badawzi's whipping boy when plans go awry. Secles keeps a circle of potential scapegoats around as insurance and uses his own special brand of treachery and deceit to keep them between himself and Badawzi's wrath.

### *Secles Uslopos*

**Type:** Criminal Henchman

**DEXTERITY** 2D

Blaster 2D+2

**KNOWLEDGE** 3D+1

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 5D+2, business 4D+2, cultures 4D, languages 6D+2, streetwise 6D+2, value 5D

**MECHANICAL** 3D

**PERCEPTION** 3D+2

Bargain 5D, command 4D+2, con 5D+2, forgery 5D, gambling 6D+2, hide 7D, persuasion 4D

**STRENGTH** 3D

**TECHNICAL** 4D

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 9

**Equipment:** Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, sabacc cards (with illegal skifter card)

## Trouble with the Bha'ir

It was not long before Abdi's success and arrogance got the better of him. When he began cheating and abusing the local talent, the Black Bha'ir pulled their resources, leaving Abdi without a way to transport his goods. More importantly, without the Bha'ir to cover him, the Twi'lek was open to further attacks by the Hutt Empire.

During this time, the Twi'lek hired a bodyguard, a Coynite named Tra'Parr'Sratt, who was an honorary Bha'ir member. Though Sratt was not necessarily a smuggler, he served as first mate and extra muscle aboard many Bha'ir owned ships. A friend to most of the more reputable smugglers on Socorro, Sratt's presence in Abdi's underground hierarchy served as a catalyst toward Badawzi's reinstatement in good standing with the Bha'ir.

While this ploy worked to some degree, the damage to Badawzi's reputation was too great to repair easily. The message Abdi had sent with his arrogant abuse against smugglers was clear and no reputable pilot was willing to risk his neck or his ship...that is, until Jabba the Hutt's organization began making waves.

Jabba had always employed the best of the best smuggler pilots, but his ways were always heavy-handed. Rather than risk running afoul of the Hutt, many Bha'ir pilots took the chance of flying under Badawzi's banner.

One such pilot was Elias Halbert. Long regarded as a drunken burn-out, Halbert hadn't seen glory in many years. In his prime, he was one of the best...but that was a long, long time ago. A succession of destroyed ships and dead crewmen was more than enough to put a price on the smuggler's head and a curse on any chances for future employment.

Abdi saw something in Halbert that even his comrades in the Black Bha'ir could not see. A potential buried so deep that Abdi was willing to risk his ships and his profits on nursing the smuggler back into form. Although it cost the Twi'lek a ship and three workers, the effort paid off in several ways. One, Halbert can now give most any smuggler a run for his money. Two, Halbert is a Black Bha'ir member, though in questionable status. By accepting him into the fold, Abdi granted the smuggler a second chance at life, thereby granting himself a second reprieve with the Bha'ir.

Now, there is renewed interest in Badawzi's organization, smoothing relations with the Black Bha'ir. Though the Twi'lek's arrogance has changed little and his treatment of pilots is frequently less than agreeable, Bha'ir mem-

bers accept small doses of his eccentricity, knowing that Abdi has the best intentions (and profits) at heart.

## Tra'Parr'Sratt

Tra'Parr'Sratt, whose name means "my father's promise," is a towering 2.8 meter tall Coynite with brown fur. His black mane is intricately braided. In order to save the honor of his family, who were plagued by a mysterious, maddening disease that led to insanity, Sratt was bound by his father's word to kill his seven brothers, his mother, and finally his father. This left him the only living member of his family. Among Coynites, the act was heralded as the greatest loyalty of a devoted son. For this reason, Sratt was courted by the noble families and offered the great honor of serving the Coynite king. Haunted by the massacre of his family, Sratt refused the offer and left his homeworld of Coyn to pursue a life among the stars. He is a self-proclaimed exile, dwelling in the shadows of Socorro's criminal underground and serving as Abdi-Badawzi's personal guard.

## Tra'Parr'Sratt

**Type:** Coynite Warrior

**DEXTERITY 5D**

Blaster 6D, brawling parry 7D, dodge 6D, melee combat 9D+1, melee parry 8D

**KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Alien species 4D+2, intimidation 7D, survival 4D+2, willpower 6D

**MECHANICAL 2D**

Beast riding 5D+2

**PERCEPTION 4D**

Command 6D, hide 5D+1, search 6D, sneak 6D

**STRENGTH 4D**

Brawling 8D, lifting 6D, stamina 7D+1

**TECHNICAL 2D**

Blaster repair 4D, demolitions 3D+2

**Special Abilities:**

*Sneak:* +1D to sneak.

*Claws:* STR+1D+2 damage, +1D to brawling skill.

*Intimidation:* +1D to intimidation.

**Force Points:** 4

**Dark Side Points:** 2

**Character Points:** 15

**Move:** 12

**Equipment:** D'skar (STR+1D+1), coyn'skar (STR+2D), blaster pistol (4D), Coynite armor (+2D to physical and energy, -1D to all Dexterity actions), 2 medpacs, comlink

## Elias Halbert

Elias Halbert used to be a reputable freighter pilot, before he allowed his "occasional social drink" to take over his life. He fell prey to his own arrogance and became the very thing he despised most: a burn-out. Selling his services



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to pay off numerous debts, Halbert was traded from one criminal organization to the next, a broken thoroughbred with no heart. He finally ended up in the underworld of Socorro, where he has finally managed to reclaim some of that former glory while piloting the freighter *Seldom Different*.

Halbert is a large individual who rarely escapes notice. Many have underestimated his agility in a fist fight and paid the price. Dressed in traditional Corellian flight garb, he is quite fond of spice cigars and gambling.

### Elias Halbert

**Type:** Burned-Out Smuggler

**DEXTERITY** 3D+1

Blaster 7D, dodge 6D+1, running 4D+2, vehicle blaster 5D

**KNOWLEDGE** 2D+1

Alien species 5D+2, languages 6D+1, planetary systems 7D, streetwise 6D+2

**MECHANICAL** 3D+2

Astrogration 7D+1, sensors 6D, space transports 9D, starship gunnery 7D, starship shields 6D

**PERCEPTION** 3D

Bargain 5D, con 4D+2, gambling 5D+2, sneak 4D+1

**STRENGTH** 3D

Brawling 6D, stamina 6D+2

**TECHNICAL** 2D+2

First aid 4D, space transports repair 6D+2

**Force Points:** 1

**Dark Side Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 7

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink, 500 credits, *Seldom Different* (modified YT-1300 freighter)

### Squig

Squig is the mechanical mastermind who maintains Badawzi's vehicle and freighter fleet; the Jawa's advice is often sought by Caelli-Merced technicians. Much to Halbert's horror, however, the Jawa has taken to making repairs or impromptu modifications to the *Seldom Different* without telling him and often at the worst of times, such as when the smuggler is running from Imperial patrol craft or in the middle of a battle.

Squig makes it a personal challenge to keep Halbert's ships spaceworthy no matter how badly the smuggler abuses them. He can repair even the most extensive damage, although his chaotic methods and odd mannerisms are sure to draw comment from observers. Where Squig and Halbert go together, disaster and mayhem are certain to follow.



A true romantic, hardy adventurer, and a chronic gambler, Squig has taken a liking to Elias Halbert and his comfortable life among the denizens of Badawzi's monarchy. Squig can often be found in his home away from home: the abandoned engine casing of a bulk freighter hidden somewhere in the dungeons of Badawzi's underground hangar. An avid story-teller, the Jawa technician enjoys relating his adventures among the stars to anyone who will tolerate his high-pitched voice.

## Squig

Type: Jawa Technician

### DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, dodge 5D+1, pick pocket 6D, running 5D+1, thrown weapons 7D, vehicle blasters 4D+2

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien species 4D+2, languages 6D, streetwise 4D, survival 6D+1, value 5D+2

### MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 5D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 4D+1, space transports 6D+2, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D+1

### PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 4D, con 4D+2, hide 5D, search 5D, sneak 5D

### STRENGTH 2D+1

Brawling 3D, climbing/jumping 5D+2

### TECHNICAL 4D

Armor repair 6D, blaster repair 6D+1, computer programming/repair 9D+2, droid programming 8D+2, droid repair 8D+1, repulsorlift repair 9D+2, security 6D, space transports repair 11D+2

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 17

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, blaster pistol (4D), throwing knives (STR+1D), restraining bolts, personal scrap pile, assorted tools, Caelli-Merced sandpopper

## S'oele Khiss

Khiss is the nephew of Sluissi chancellor Secles Uslopos, Abdi-Badawzi's right-hand henchman. A promising lackey himself, S'oele is slated to take his uncle's place in case of Secles' untimely termination by the ill-tempered Twi'lek monarch. When Secles is out performing on Badawzi's behalf, S'oele often runs the court and has fortified his position in the crime lord's good graces.

An idealist, the young Sluissi has transcended the corrupt morals of his environment and yearns to serve under the famous Mon Calamari hero, Ackbar. In a chance meeting with the Mon Cal, S'oele voiced his praises and support for the Rebel effort. As a result, he was given an assignment to keep contacts open between the Rebel Alliance, Badawzi's crime network and the Black Bha'lr.

**S'oele Khiss.** All stats are 2D except: *blaster 4D, dodge 5D+1, Knowledge 3D, alien species*

*6D, business 3D+1, cultures 4D, languages 5D+2, streetwise 4D, value 4D+2, Perception 3D+2, bargain 4D, con 5D, forgery 4D+1, hide 4D, persuasion 5D, sneak 6D, Technical 3D, computer programming/repair 6D+2. Move: 10. Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), datapad, comlink.*

## The Coming of a Mentor

Badawzi's crime family grew to such an extent that it began reaching well beyond Socorro, with activities in far and remote areas of the galaxy—places where even the Bha'lr could not protect him. To cover himself and his organization, the Twi'lek monarch enlisted the influence and advice of a long-time family friend, the criminal lord Saadoon-Kauldi. It is rumored that Kauldi shared the "middle passage" (slave trip) on a slave ship with Badawzi's great-grandfather. Supposedly, the ship was en route to a prison world when pirates, hired by the Badawzi family, captured and released all the prisoners.

Using this debt to manipulate Kauldi, Badawzi further enticed the crime lord's interest by offering a full-third partnership in the lucrative Ethra Brewery. He arranged for the Kadri'Ra gangster to take up residence in orbit about Socorro's neighboring world, Neftali. Here Kauldi could enjoy relative safety from the Empire, which sought to return him to slavery. Eager to begin his own relationship with the Black Bha'lr, Kauldi accepted. With Kauldi backing him, Badawzi had the protection and influence he needed to further expand his interests.

Despite pressure from the Hutt Empire and other organizations, Badawzi and his criminal monarchy have fared well. With the backing of both Saadoon-Kauldi and the Black Bha'lr, he is in a position where his organization can only grow. Hidden somewhere at the base of the Rym Mountains, Badawzi's fortress is as large and opulent as the Twi'lek's ego.

A ruthless criminal, Badawzi's only gentle side is reserved for his daughter, Memcha, who oversees her father's brewery operations on Neftali. It is believed that Badawzi also held a soft spot for Kaine Paulsen, the most successful smuggler to emerge from his ranks. After Kaine's death, Badawzi actively recruited his son, Drake Paulsen. Thus far, he has been unsuccessful in wooing the Socorran into his perverse underground court.

Chapter Nine  
Security Addendum:

# Saadoon- Kauldi

*"When does a smuggler know he's good? The day you have a face-to-face meeting with Saadoon-Kauldi and leave with your mind and limbs intact."*

—Karl Anchor

## *The Limits of Greatness*

**Organization Profile:** Saadoon-Kauldi  
**Type:** Criminal Empire  
**Location:** Neftali  
**Crime Boss/Leadership:** Saadoon-Kauldi

**Principal Criminal Activities:** Loan-sharking, credit laundering, illicit weapons trafficking, smuggling, gambling, and illegal sale and delivery of controlled substances.

**Criminal Affiliations:** Close affiliation with the Black Bha'lir, allegiance with Abdi-Badawzi. Numerous other unknown criminal contacts.

**Territory:** Arapia system and Socorran space.

**Payroll:** 5,000 (known); numerous other operatives across the galaxy.

**Violence Index:** 48

Saadoon-Kauldi's criminal empire is vast and powerful. Saadoon came by this greatness with an intellectual stealth that has earned him the respect and admiration of the galactic criminal community, including the Hutt Empire. Some of his wealth is from a monopoly of long-established and immensely profitable spice runs, which includes smugglers held on retainer, processing facilities—even shadowports to service freighters! However, the true source of Saadoon's riches and power are in his allegiances.

The Hutt clans respect Saadoon, a strange being of devious cunning—perhaps that respect exists because he is not unlike the Hutts themselves and measures time in spans of centuries. Many of Socorro's Corellian smugglers actively pursue employment with Saadoon, who is well-known for rewarding his subordinates with credits and preferential favors for jobs well done. It is also rumored that,





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despite severe punishments, the Kadri'Ra is even well-disposed toward those who fail him—at least the first time.

The most powerful allegiance—accounted in numbers, not power—consists of the slaves and prisoners that Saadoon has freed. A former slave himself, Saadoon was released by the Badawzi family. He indentured himself to the Badawzis in gratitude and left on good terms several years later to begin his own business enterprise. He remembers the respect he was shown by the Badawzis and continues that respect to those he frees, believing that his generosity will be remembered and rewarded.

## *Saadoon Takes Revenge*

The turning point of Saadoon's career began with an act of revenge. Smugglers who were working for the then-fledgling crime lord inadvertently boarded a slaving vessel. Enraged by the conditions found on the slave galleon, Saadoon killed the slavers and released the slaves. All but a few of the newly freed captives turned their loyalties and service to Saadoon,

thus broadening the scope of his dynasty.

Eager to further expand his influence and personnel, Saadoon pulled all of his resources from his lucrative spice-smuggling operations and, for a brief time, went into the hijacking business. His target: slave ships. His objective was to free as many slaves as he could. The Slavers' Guild reacted by pressuring their allies, including some Imperial officials, resulting in a sizeable bounty for Saadoon's head.

Choosing to ignore the bounty, Saadoon turned his attentions back to spice-running, gambling establishments and loan-sharking. As the crime lord grows more and more infamous, his appearances in the public eye become fewer and fewer. After a failed assassination attempt on his homeworld of Arapia, Saadoon has been constantly on the move. However, with his advancing growth—he will soon reach a length of nearly 75 meters—constant relocation became increasingly difficult. Pret Swain answered Saadoon's need by offering him a bulk cruiser at a wholesale price. The cruiser offers mobility while giving him a secure residence. By allying with Abdi-Badawzi, Saadoon and his minions found a more permanent home, orbiting the planet of Neftali in the Socorro system. Here Saadoon can operate his

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spice smuggling operation under the protection of the Black Bha'ir. The Socorran abhorrence of slavery was an overwhelming endearment to Saadoon and the integrity of the Socorran pirating and smuggler culture was an asset he could not refuse.

Now that Saadoon has settled in, he focuses his efforts on expanding his organization. He is a full third partner in the Ethra Brewery and receives a share of all Caelli-Merced exports off the planet. The real money is made through his extensive knowledge of criminal diplomacy: Saadoon is often called in as a negotiator to halt gang wars and similar forms of unrest that tend to affect criminal society.

### Saadoon-Kauldi

Saadoon-Kauldi is considered royalty among his criminal associates. Aside from hostilities originating with the Slavers' Guild, he has few enemies in the galaxy's criminal society. He even holds a measure of respect with legitimate law-enforcement agencies.

However, he deeply grieves the holocaust sponsored by the Empire that is consuming his species. For this reason, Saadoon is a great supporter of the Rebel Alliance and was instrumental in arranging regular weapons shipments to the Alliance by way of the Caelli-Merced Syndicate of Socorro.

As he continues to physically grow and expand, Saadoon is becoming restless and actively desires more permanent roots. It is believed that once he out-grows his bulk freighter, the *Merkel*, that he will settle into one of the massive ice fjords of Neftali to live out his days, possibly vanishing from the criminal scene altogether.

The language of the Kadri'Ra has been long forgotten as the "indigent dialect of an intellectually inferior species" (at least according to the Imperials writing the textbooks). Because of this, Saadoon refuses to speak Basic; all but the most learned of criminals needs an interpreter. He is served in this capacity by a former slave named Guzald.

### Saadoon-Kauldi

Type: Crime Lord

DEXTERITY 2D

Brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 3D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 6D+1, bureaucracy 5D, business 4D+1, cultures 5D, intimidation 5D+2, languages 6D, planetary systems 6D+1, value 5D+2, willpower 5D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D+2, command 6D, persuasion 6D+2

STRENGTH 5D+2

Brawling 6D+2, lifting 7D, stamina 6D+2

TECHNICAL 2D

Special Abilities:

*Space Survival:* Kadri'Ra can survive in the vacuum of space for up to eight days.

*Ramming:* When threatened, Kadri'Ra may ram people or objects, even small spacecraft. A toughened exoskeleton and cranium gives them STR+2D damage.

*Armor:* +3D physical and +1D+1 energy.

*Trampling:* Trampling damage is STR+1D.

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 3

Dark Side Points: 3

Character Points: 10

Move: 3

Equipment: *Merkel* (modified bulk freighter)

### Guzald

Unlike many Devaronians, Guzald has lived to an age where wisdom and reason replace flare and verve. Many years as a slave aboard an Imperial garbage scow has taught the Devaronian humility and forged in him the determination to survive no matter what he is subjected to. Saadoon rescued Guzald and several hundred others from Imperial brutality, essentially giving these beings their lives back.

Having no connection to his own family, all of whom were slaves for the Empire, Guzald considers Saadoon both savior and sovereign. He is rarely seen away from the Kadri'Ra's side and performs the duties once bestowed upon him by his Imperial slavers—translating the incredibly complex Kadri'Ra tongue. However, instead of giving orders, Guzald now proudly handles all discussions for the one being who saved him from a lifetime of misery. His loyalty to Saadoon is as great as his translating skill.

**Guzald.** All stats are 2D except: *Knowledge* 3D, *alien species* 6D+2, *cultures* 5D, *languages* 9D+2, *survival* 6D, *willpower* 6D+2, *Perception* 3D+2, *bargain* 5D, *command* 4D, *con* 6D+1, *persuasion* 6D. Move: 8.

### Merkel

The *Merkel* is an ominous ship with a black hull; in space, it appears to be no more than a ghostly outline—a free-roaming nebula devoid of stars. Most of its potent armaments are hidden, lending the appearance of a typical bulk freighter: the facade has served the ship well over the years. Several attempts on Saadoon-Kauldi's life have left the crime lord more than a little paranoid. Thanks to Pret Swain and the technicians of the Caelli-Merced Syndicate, the *Merkel* was the answer to Saadoon's highest priority—security.



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• Saadoon Kauldi •

The modified freighter has been adapted inside and out to meet the needs of the ever-growing Kauldi and his minions. A majority of the cargo areas have been converted to passenger cabins, galleys, recreation centers, and a private sanctuary for the crime lord himself. There is even a hangar bay, which houses a small squadron of Z-95s. The ship's proximity alarm systems are locked into the control boards of the Cjaalysce'l traffic towers as well as Soco-Jarel Spaceport. Any attacks against the freighter instantly sounds alarms at these spaceports and a number of vessels stand ready to streak to Saadoon's defense. The freighter is rarely seen out of Socorran space, remaining in a secured orbit around Neftali.

## Merkel

**Craft:** Modified Corellian Action V Transport  
**Type:** Medium bulk freighter  
**Scale:** Capital  
**Length:** 115 meters  
**Skill:** Space transports: Action V Transport  
**Crew:** 8; gunners: 23  
**Passengers:** 350  
**Cargo Capacity:** 80,500 metric tons  
**Consumables:** 4 months  
**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** x2  
**Hyperdrive Backup:** x15  
**Nav Computer:** Yes

**Maneuverability:** 1D+2

**Space:** 2

**Atmosphere:** 225; 650 kmh

**Hull:** 3D+1

**Shields:** 3D

**Sensors:**

*Passive:* 20/0D

*Scan:* 30/1D

*Search:* 40/2D

*Focus:* 1/3D

**Weapons:**

**6 Turbolasers**

*Fire Arc:* Turret

*Crew:* 2

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D+1

*Space Range:* 3-15/35/75

*Atmosphere Range:* 300-1.5/3.5/7.5 km

*Damage:* 5D

**4 Quad Laser Cannons**

*Fire Arc:* 2 front, 1 left, 1 right

*Crew:* 2

*Scale:* Starfighter

*Skill:* Starship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D+1

*Space Range:* 1-5/10/17

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-500/1/1.7 km

*Damage:* 5D

**1 Tractor Beam Projector**

*Fire Arc:* Front

*Crew:* 3

*Skill:* Capital ship gunnery

*Fire Control:* 2D

*Space Range:* 1-5/15/30

*Atmosphere Range:* 100-500/1.5/3 km

*Damage:* 4D



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### Kadri'Ra

The Kadri'Ra are a species of immense sentient beings; it's possible that they are distantly related to the Duinuogwuin (or "Star Dragons"). Capable of free existing in space for limited amounts of time, the Kadri'Ra have a reported life span of 1,000 to 1,500 standard years. However, as they are often enslaved, their average life expectancy is now only about 70 to 500 years.

They are gigantic, leviathan-like creatures who continue to grow throughout their lifetimes, protected by a hardened exoskeleton that cracks and expands with each growth cycle. At some juncture during their lives, they become so large as to be a danger to themselves. This is the time when the Kadri'Ra answer a natural instinct and take residence in a deep cavern or asteroid cave where they continue to grow, their exoskeletons conforming to the restraints of their surrounding habitation.

The Kadri'Ra are great thinkers and wise beings of exceptional sensitivity; many of them speak Basic and scores of other languages. They often express themselves in creative venues such as art, poetry, debate, and philosophy. Some have shown Force-sensitivity, but they must hide their ability lest they be targeted for termination by slavers or those within the Empire.

### Kadri'Ra

**Attribute Dice:** 12D  
**DEXTERITY** 1D/3D  
**KNOWLEDGE** 3D/6D  
**MECHANICAL** 1D/3D  
**PERCEPTION** 1D+2/5D  
**STRENGTH** 2D/7D  
**TECHNICAL** 1D/4D

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Attribute Bonus:** For every 50 years of life, Kadri'Ra may add +1D to any attribute (but may not exceed species maximums).

**Space Survival:** Kadri'Ra can survive in the vacuum of space for up to eight days.

**Ramming:** When threatened, Kadri'Ra may ram people or objects, even small spacecraft. A toughened exoskeleton and cranium gives them STR+2D damage.

**Armor:** +3D physical and +1D+1 energy.

**Trampling:** Trampling damage is STR+1D.

#### **Story Factors:**

**Enslavement:** Because of their size and strength, Kadri'Ra have been prime targets of slavers. They are often forced to work as living earth movers or as laborers in large-scale construction projects. Because they can exist in space for limited periods of time, they have also been used as laborers in space docks. They are not considered sentient by the Empire and are not protected by any type of law. During the time of the Old Republic, there were an estimated 140,000,000 Kadri'Ra living on their adopted homeworld, Arapia. By contrast, when Emperor Palpatine dissolved the Imperial Senate, there were less than 14,000 remaining Kadri'Ra.

**Move:** 8 (decreases with age)

**Size:** 5-200 meters long

**Scale:** Character

## Chapter Ten

# Neftali

### Warm Welcome

"I don't remember much about the crash itself," Jobany Cyrs said. "Just these huge, white furry arms reaching in to get me." The amiable scout laughed, then winced suddenly, touching the bruise at the corner of his mouth. "You really had me going there for a minute," he whispered, offering his hand to the Wookiee. "Thanks."

Against a backdrop of frozen wastes and steadily falling snow, only the pink of the Wookiee's nose could be seen against the mantle of perfect white. An albino, her shaggy coat matched the frigid landscape, making her practically invisible. Even the placid red hue of her eyes was buried in a layer of snow-freckled fur and ice. A bowcaster, wrapped in white camouflage gear, was slung from her shoulder—the only evidence that she was real.

"Her name's Syychi. Mine is Memcha. Memcha-Badawzi, I'm the port manager."

Recognizing the family name of Abdi-Badawzi, Socorro's resident crime lord, Jobany turned to the sensuous voice behind him. He adjusted the goggles over his eyes and met the Twi'lek woman's suspicious gaze with a pleasant smile. "Jobany Cyrs."

"Or so it says on your registration." She leaned against the wreck of his scout ship, surveying the extensive damage to the left wing and engine housing. At odd intervals, she would enter information into the datapad in her hands.

It was early dusk and the sun was setting quickly. A chilling wind blew across the flat expanse of an ice-covered ocean and threw

back the hood of her winter parka. Falling to her shoulders, dark sable head-tails framed an alluring, but cynical face. "Look, Captain Cyrs, I'm not very good at apologies."

Memcha brushed a fleck of downy fur from her forehead and glared at him. "My directional beacons must have gotten realigned in last night's storm. We nearly had another crash this morning. The best I can offer you are repairs for your ship, at no charge, and a place to stay while the work is completed." She shrugged, again studying the damage. "Of course, we'll have to haul your ship to the nearest repair bay and that's off-world."

"Socorro? I just came from there."

"Good, then you already know how things work in this corner of the galaxy. Your ship will be good as new, probably better. Until the repairs are made, you'll be my guest."

"Does that include a bottle of your best Corellian brandy? Perhaps a quiet dinner with the resident port manager and," he glanced at the Wookiee, "her second-in-command?"

The Twi'lek rolled her eyes, a smile rising from her cynical features. "All the amenities are extra, Captain Cyrs, and I do mean *all* of them."

"Fair enough," he offered his hand to her. "It's a deal."

Memcha shook his hand with an authority that was second nature to her. "Welcome to Neftali."

### Neftali

Type: Ice World

Temperature: Frigid

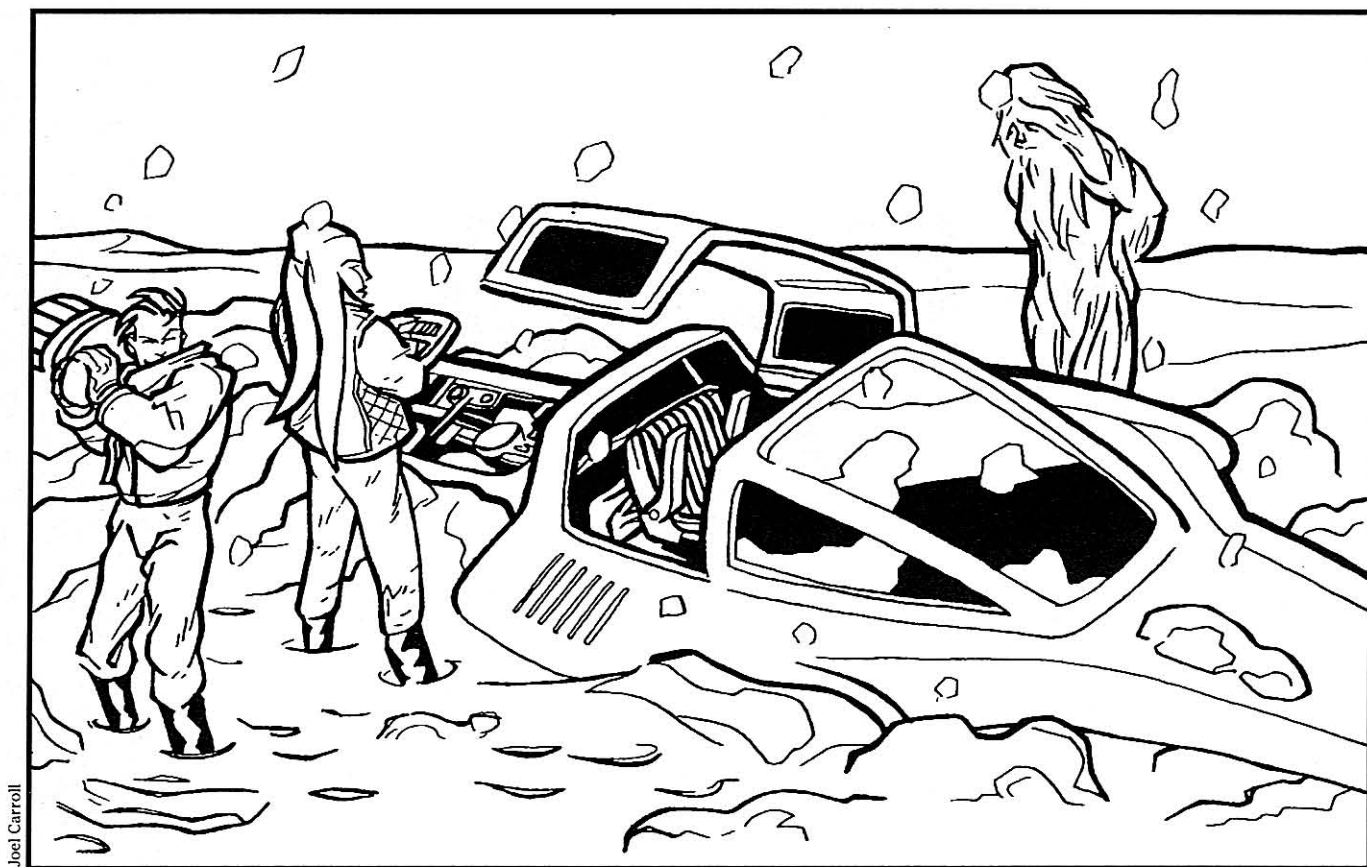
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)

Hydrosphere: Moderate

Gravity: Light

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**Terrain:** Barren glaciers, vast mountain regions, extensive fjords and ice canyons, frozen oceans  
**Length of Day:** 15 standard hours  
**Length of Year:** 754 local days  
**Sapient Species:** Human, Whiphid  
**Starport:** Standard class  
**Population:** 15,000  
**Planet Function:** Entertainment, manufacturing/processing, natural resources (limited), foodstuffs  
**Government:** Organized crime family  
**Tech Level:** Space  
**Major Exports:** Minerals, foodstuffs, contraband, nether ice, water, minerals  
**Major Imports:** Foodstuffs, high technology

## World Summary

Neftali—or Neftali'l as it is often called by native Socorrans—is a small planet in the outermost orbit of Socorro system. In Old Corellian, the planet's name means "home or safe place." And this is what it came to represent to certain nefarious factions among those early colonists—prisoners, political radicals, and social outlaws—whose exodus brought them to the Socorro system.

The frigid wastes of this desolate world are no less inhospitable than the scorched sands of its companion world. A barren, frozen wasteland, Neftali has little to offer to the aesthetic

eye or to the weary space traveler in search of permanent roots. However, to the less desirable, unwanted individuals who first settled on this planet, it offered food, shelter and a chance—albeit a slim one—for survival. It was welcoming enough to call home. After several precarious weeks, the settlement of Cordel Cove was established on the shores of the Beija Seas.

Completely covered by layer-upon-layer of ice and drifting snows, the surface of Neftali maintains a constant temperature well below freezing. While these harsh conditions bring a chill to even the hardest pioneer spirit, they do not make Neftali entirely unlivable. In fact, there are several species of wildlife that make their homes in the desolation of the Jhunia Snow Plains and in the icy depths of the Beija Seas.

Connected only by a kilometer long canal of ice and snow, the Beija Seas are surrounded by solid rock and glaciers. The larger of the two oceans is known as Beija Major: it is nearly 10,000 kilometers at its widest breath and covers one quarter of Neftali's surface. Its companion, Beija Minor, is only one-third that size.

Neftali has no indigenous, sentient life but the planet now boasts 15,000 permanent residents.



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• Neftali •

While life on Neftali is a constant struggle, the first settlers discovered a rare treasure that made life on the planet not only tolerable, but an outright pleasure—naturally fed hot springs.

Like Socorro, Neftali's underground is seething with seismic activity. There are vast chains of underground volcanoes. These volatile phenomena are buried so deep in the planet's crust that the only evidence of them are periodic earthquakes and tremors which are detectable only by sensors. During these tremors, boiling hot water explodes into cave pockets beneath the icy surface. By the time the water actually reaches these areas—having traveled through thick strata of ice—the temperature of the water has cooled to a tolerable level. In some subterranean areas, there is a constant influx of hot water, making for delightfully warm cavern areas beneath the frozen surface of the planet.

*"It is the belief of some righteous-minded individuals that every star, every planet, every moon in the galaxy is enveloped by some force, some entity, which watches over it. Such is not true of Neftali. This diminutive world is an entity within itself—and none but the shadows care to watch over her. We are those shadows, my friends."*

—Drexler Ambar

Extract from personal travelogue

## Cordel Cove

**System:** Socorro

**Starport Type:** Standard

**Traffic:** Slow

**Control:** Droids

**Landing:** Directional beacons

**Docking Areas:** Docking bays, limited exterior landing pads

**Docking Fee:** 30-150 credits per day

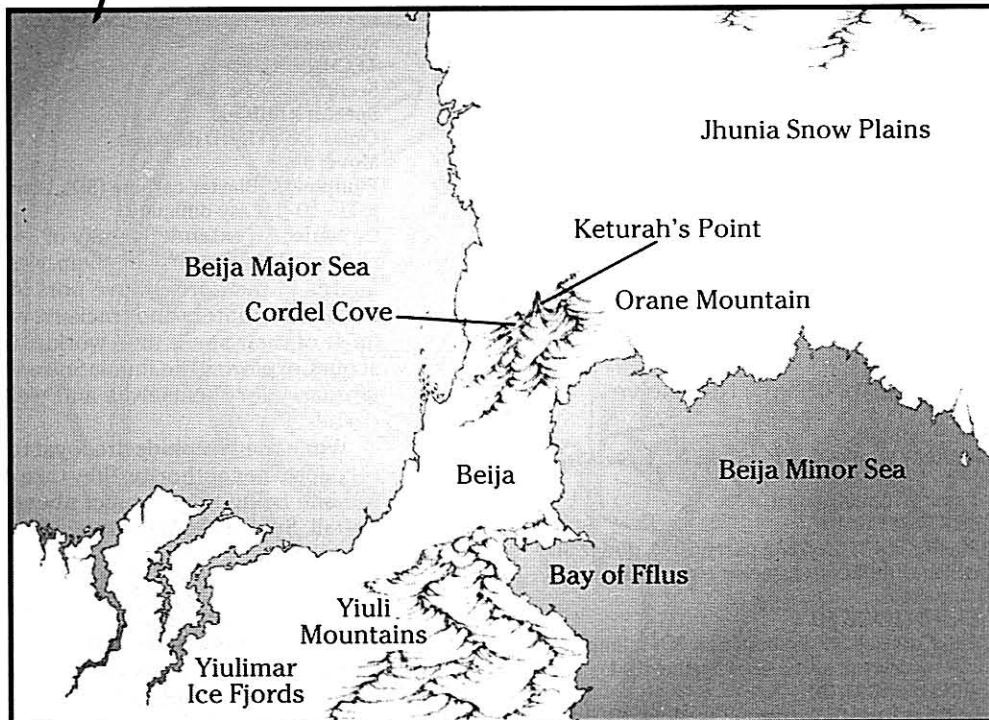
**Customs:** None

**Services:** Consumables restocking, food, lodging, entertainment

## Cordel Cove

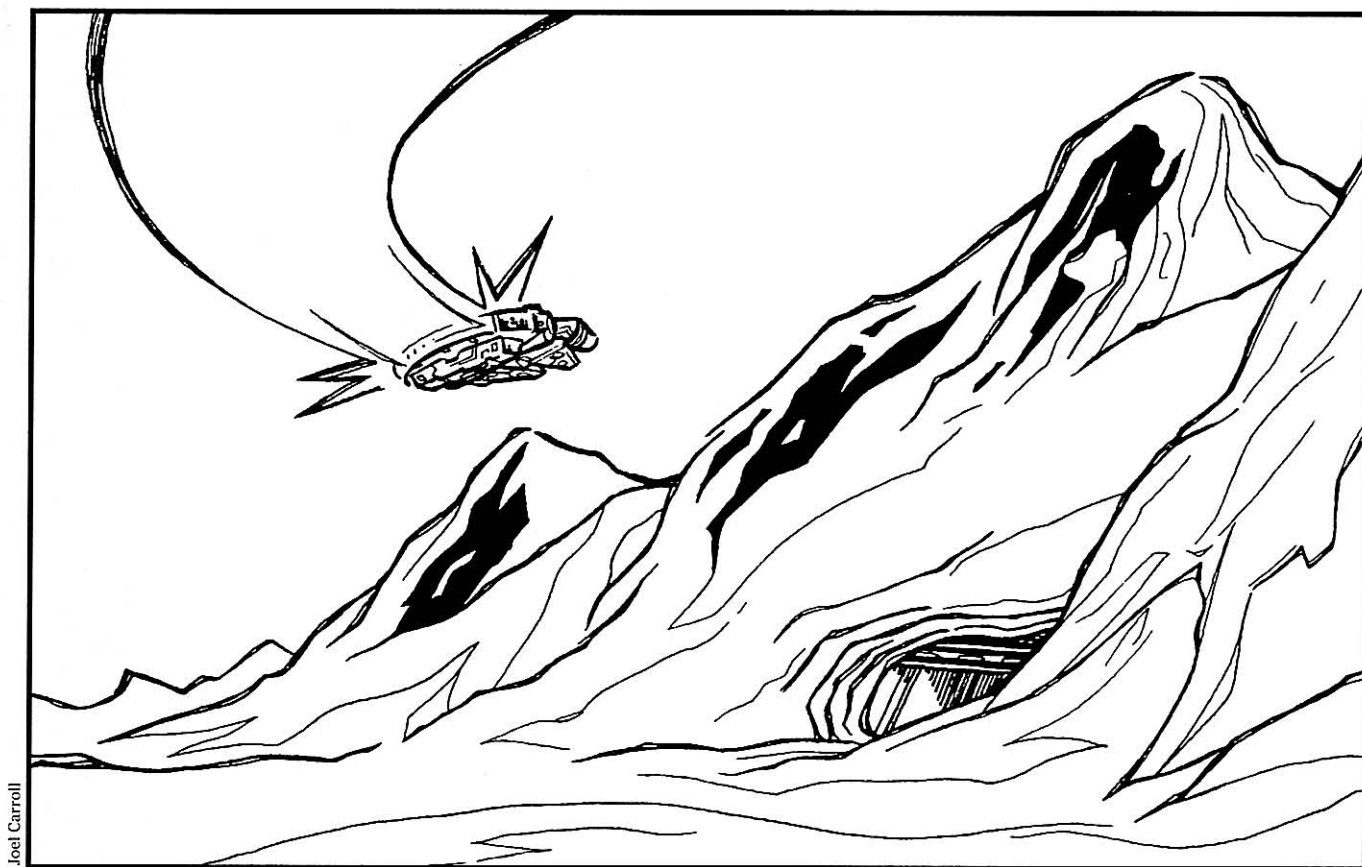
Cordel Cove is the only true spaceport on Neftali. Built down inside a massive network of ice fjords, the Cove itself marks the northernmost shoreline of the Beija Seas. Ships are guided by tower instructions and directional beacons to the edge of the cove, down through a maze of interconnecting tunnels, and into a subterranean basement where the port and its facilities are located. Only spacers worth their spice fly to Neftali: navigating the narrow pas-

## Neftali



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sages and sudden drops into the docking bay is a challenge even for experienced pilots.

In a rounded arena of ice and transparisteel, Cordel Cove offers docking bays on a multi-tiered platform cut directly into the ice walls of the fjord. Docking fees are minimal (especially considering the hospitality offered) but tend to increase the farther down a pilot wants to get towards the main bay floor. The port can house over 500 ships and small transports, but services are extremely limited; with the exception of swoopchasing weeks, there are seldom more than a dozen ships here.

Pilots and crew are greeted by one or more Whiphid security staff, who patrol the docking tiers and the port floor to make sure that newly arrived guests behave themselves.

### *Cordel Cove Whiphid Guard*

Type: Whiphid Guard

#### **DEXTERITY 3D**

Blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D+2, dodge 5D, melee combat 6D+1, melee combat: spear 6D, running 5D

#### **KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Alien species 3D, intimidation 5D+1, languages 3D+1, survival: arctic 6D+2, value 4D+1

#### **MECHANICAL 3D**

Beast riding 5D+2, communications 3D+2

#### **PERCEPTION 3D**

Persuasion 4D+2, search: tracking 5D+2, sneak 4D+1

#### **STRENGTH 4D**

Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 5D+1, stamina 5D

#### **TECHNICAL 2D**

Security 5D+2

#### **Special Abilities:**

*Claws:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Move:* 9

**Equipment:** Blaster carbine (5D), comlink, spear (STR+1D+1, Easy difficulty)

**Capsule:** An extended family of 34 Whiphids live on Neftali, and most of them work as security guards in the Cordel Cove port. All of them are dedicated hunters and trackers, and they spend most of their spare time working as guides and scouts, exploring the Jhunia Snow Plains in search of quarry for themselves and well-paying third parties.

While the Whiphids are loyal to Memcha and recognize her authority, they take direction from the one being they respect above all others on Neftali, Syychi the Wookiee.

### *Grenal*

Grenal is more than just the chief security officer of Neftali: he is also the tribal and spiritual leader of the Whiphids who live here. A shaman

born on Toola (the Whiphid homeworld), Grenal earned the prestigious title of Spearmaster shortly after his arrival on Neftali. Standing nearly 2.7 meters tall, Grenal is an intimidating presence as he patrols the multi-tiered docking arena at Cordel Cove. As one of the most successful hunters on Neftali, Grenal is in high demand as a guide into the frozen wilderness.

**Grenal.** All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 5D+2, dodge 5D, melee combat 6D, melee parry 5D+2, running 4D, thrown weapons 7D+2, Knowledge 2D+1, intimidation 5D+2, languages 4D, survival 6D+1, willpower 5D, beast riding 5D+1, Perception 4D, hide 7D, investigation 6D, search 5D+1, sneak 5D, Strength 4D+1, brawling 6D, security 5D+1.* Move: 11. Equipment: Blaster rifle (5D), spear (STR+1D+2, Easy difficulty), comlink.

### *The People in Charge*

If a crack team of Whiphids is not enough to deter delinquents, the disarming presence of Syychi, an albino Wookiee, is often enough to put even the most rowdy guests in check. Though a quiet individual, her temper is fierce

when provoked and she won't hesitate to summon any Whiphids within roaring distance.

And if this is still not enough to deter troublemakers, there is the port manager, Memcha-Badawzi. Few people care to find themselves on the wrong side of her blaster. A dead-shot marksman, she has little problem pulling the trigger on unwelcome strangers who disrupt the peace on Cordel Cove. As the only daughter and heir of the infamous Abdi-Badawzi of Socorro, Memcha is considered royalty in certain underground circles. Few dare to challenge her in this small but much coveted kingdom—particularly with her father and his minions so close by. The bodies of the few that have questioned her authority were quickly consumed after being dumped in the neighboring fishing estuaries.

Neftali and Cordel Cove are more than just another smuggler haven. The planet is neutral ground for anyone willing to adhere to the code of aa'kua. Bounty hunters are welcome to spend their credits, unlike on Socorro where tracers are rudely turned away. However, there are some rules that keep the peace for all—no violence is permitted within the jurisdiction of the Cove and its surrounding territories, no acquisitions are allowed without the consent



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of the Black Bha'lir, and no illegal transactions—such as spice smuggling—occur without the direct permission of Neftali's resident port manager.

### *Memcha-Badawzi*

Memcha-Badawzi is the only daughter (and heir to the criminal empire) of Abdi-Badawzi. An alluring, sensual figure, Memcha has the delicate, graceful movement of an accomplished dancer, yet she shares the hardened, cynical disposition of her father.

The spoiled lone offspring of a doting parent, the young Twi'lek's reputation for vengeance is rivaled only by her father's. Born on Socorro, the young Twi'lek left shortly before her 18th birthday to wander and explore (much to her father's dismay). She became entangled in the efforts of the Rebel Alliance and some believe she acts as an operative in the war against the Empire.

An excellent fighter pilot and marksman, Memcha began her career as an outlaw within her father's organization, honed her skills as a smuggler for the Alliance, and then brought her talents back home when her father offered her control of his operations on Neftali. It was

an offer too good to refuse and she has certainly made herself at home. She is the unquestioned ruler of Cordel Cove and her word is law.

Memcha is tall and thin. Her sable skin is striking and her beauty is an alluring trap. When not entertaining guests at the Cordel Cove Hostel, its bar, or restaurants, Memcha can often be found in the port's headquarters with her companion, Syychi.

### *Memcha-Badawzi*

Type: Outlaw

#### **DEXTERITY 3D+1**

Blaster 9D+1, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D+2, running 5D

#### **KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Alien species 6D, intimidation 5D+1, languages 5D+2, planetary systems 6D, streetwise 5D+2, value 6D

#### **MECHANICAL 3D**

Astrogration 4D+1, beast riding 5D, communications 4D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 5D+1, starfighter piloting 6D, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 5D, swoop operation 5D+2

#### **PERCEPTION 3D+1**

Bargain 4D, con 5D, gambling 4D+2, persuasion 5D, search 5D+2, sneak 4D

#### **STRENGTH 3D**

Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 4D, lifting 3D+1, swimming 4D+2

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## • Neftali •

### TECHNICAL 2D+2

First aid 4D+2, space transports repair 3D+1, starship/weapon repair 3D

### Special Abilities:

**Head-tails:** Twi'leks can use their head-tails to communicate in secret with each other, even in a room full of individuals. The complex movement of the head-tails is, in a sense, a "secret" language that all Twi'leks are fluent in.

**Force Points:** 5

**Dark Side Points:** 1

**Character Points:** 13

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Heavy blaster pistol (5D), comlink, datapad, and arctic survival gear

## Syychi

A towering figure, Syychi is an albino Wookiee that stands nearly 2.4 meters tall. She has been a victim of Imperial exploitation and slavery since her birth on the prison world of Vizcarra; she has never seen the Wookiee homeworld of Kashyyyk, which is a source of great pain to her.

Syychi's life took a dramatic turn when she was placed in a cell with Memcha-Badawzi, who was being sent to the Imperial prison on Vizcarra for spice-smuggling and suspicion of conspiracy with the Rebel Alliance. During the long trip aboard the slaving ship, the Twi'lek inspired the Wookiee to seek her freedom. The two managed to overpower the ship's crew with the help of other prisoners and they all escaped to freedom. When Memcha returned to Neftali at the bidding of her father, Syychi followed, taking on the post of second-in-command of Cordel Cove. Incidentally, Syychi's name is Old Corellian for "quiet."

## Syychi

**Type:** Wookiee Outlaw

### DEXTERITY 2D+2

Bowcaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 4D+2, melee combat 5D+2, melee parry 5D, running 4D+1

### KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien species 3D+2, intimidation 5D, languages 5D+1, planetary systems 4D, value 4D

### MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 6D+1, communications 5D+1, sensors 5D, space transports 4D+2, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 4D+2

### PERCEPTION 2D

Persuasion 5D, search 4D+2, sneak 3D

### STRENGTH 5D

Brawling 6D+1, climbing/jumping 5D+1, stamina 5D+1, swimming 6D

### TECHNICAL 3D+1

Blaster repair 5D+1, first aid 4D, security 6D, starship/weapon repair 4D

### Special Abilities:

**Camouflage:** Because of Syychi's unique color, she gains a +1D to *sneak* when in an arctic

environment.

**Berserker Rage:** If a Wookiee becomes enraged, there is a +2D bonus to *Strength* for the purposes of causing damage while brawling. The Wookiee suffers a -2D penalty to all non-*Strength* attribute and skill checks.

**Climbing Claws:** Wookiees have huge retractable climbing claws that add +2D to their *climbing* skill.

**Force Points:** 3

**Character Points:** 10

**Move:** 10

**Equipment:** Bowcaster (4D), comlink, datapad (uplink to security grid), blaster rifle (5D)

## Cordel Cove

A notably isolated settlement, Cordel Cove is built inside the vast, hollow bottom of Orane Mountain, one of the largest natural structures on Neftali's surface. The town is the largest settlement on the face of the planet.

The Cove has a reputation as a luxury resort, with a pleasant atmosphere and comfortable guest accommodations. However, due to its remoteness and its close proximity to Socorro, few travelers come to this world. The permanent population is only 15,000, although during the peak of swoopchasing season that number doubles. One of the three infamous triple crown races takes place on Neftali in an area known as the Yulimar Fjords. During this time, the Cove is swarming with guests eager to relax in the hot springs, enjoy home-cooked meals, and revel in the town's legendary hospitality.

An extended trip to Neftali can be costly, ranging in price from 50 credits per night for an average docking fee to 75 credits for an overnight stay in the Cove hostel; decent hotel rooms can cost well over 400 credits per night. Of course, those prices include drinks, food, trips to the hot springs, and entertainment. Amenities such as festival activities and exotic dinners are extra.

Cordel Cove is a nice, quiet place to kick back and relax. Many people seem to experience a kind of second childhood while here. The Cove offers a variety of winter sports, including turbo-sledding, ice-sailing, and amateur swoopchasing where would-be champions can brush up on their skills. There is even a month-long snow-sculpture competition where contestants vie for money and other prizes.

For big-game hunters, there is the promise of deep-ice fishing or excursions into the Jhunias Snow Plains for more elusive game such as the mariqar snow q'lk and the elusive d'oemir bear.



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### Game

Neftali is home to several creatures that are targets in sport-hunting. While some, such as the d'oemir bear and the ice modrol, are deadly predators, creatures such as snow q'lk are passive herd animals which tourists are often content to observe from a distance.

### Marigar Snow Q'lk

The snow q'lk is an elusive creature that populates the snowy plains and lower fjords of Neftali. Masters of arctic adaptation, they are covered in a billowing shag of white fur, with pale gray antlers; they excel at both camouflage and escape. They are noble, peaceful animals known for their strength as well as their speed. In rare cases, they have been domesticated and used to pull sleighs.

Q'lk travel in large herds of 150 to 300; these numbers are a tremendous advantage in defending their young from predators since their stampedes can be quite effective. However, these animals are also easily panicked—there have been reports of whole herds leaping to their deaths as they tried to traverse a wide fjord.

When first born, q'lk have solid black fur; it

lightens and thickens as the animal matures. At one time, black q'lk fur was a novelty on the Inner Rim worlds, but Memchi has since outlawed hunting immature q'lk. Hunters must pay exorbitant licensing fees even for the privilege of hunting adult q'lk.

### Marigar Snow Q'lk

**Type:** Arctic Herbivore

**DEXTERITY** 3D

Brawling parry 6D+1, dodge 6D+1, running 6D+2

**PERCEPTION** 3D+1

Hide 4D, search 4D+1

**STRENGTH** 4D

Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 5D+1, stamina 5D

**Special Abilities:**

**Awareness:** Q'lk are extremely perceptive. In open areas with no cover, they gain +1D to all search and Perception rolls.

**Antlers:** Head antlers do STR+1 damage.

**Hoofstrike:** Kicking does STR+1D+2.

**Move:** 17

**Size:** 1.4 meters tall (at the shoulder); 1.53 meters long

### Ice Modrols

Ice modrols, seeded here on Neftali decades ago, are ferocious predators with an incredible ability to unerringly track their prey. A modrol's



claws are long sabers capable of slicing prey with one blow. They are a favored target of hunting expeditions—but all too often the hunting party falls victim to the modrol's claws.

## Ice Modrols

**Type:** Arctic Predator

**DEXTERITY** 3D

Brawling parry 5D

**PERCEPTION** 4D

Search 6D, sneak 5D

**STRENGTH** 7D

Brawling 9D

**Special Abilities:**

*Claws:* Do STR+2D damage

*Camouflage:* Ice modrols have white skin, to perfectly blend in with Neftali's terrain, receiving +1D to *sneak*.

**Move:** 18

**Size:** 5 meters tall

**Scale:** Creature

## D'oemir Bear

Before the arrival of sentient beings to Neftali, the d'oemir bear was emperor of the frozen wastes. But with the arrival of settlers—including the seeding of ice modrols—this reign came to an abrupt end. The bear population must now share food and territory with the newcom-

ers. In recent years, attacks on settlers spawned a hunting spree that nearly drove the bears to extinction.

Now limited to desolate areas of the planet, the d'oemir bear is making a comeback. Big-game hunters come from all over the galaxy to snare the animal. Because the bears live in such desolate isolation, guides are an essential aspect of the expedition, which can last upwards of several weeks. The cost of licenses and funding such expeditions is at least 10,000 credits, running upwards of over 50,000 credits for a full contingent of guides, carriers and gear. The prestige of bagging one of these magnificent animals is enough to lure many hunters even though most of them know they will return to Cordel Cove empty-handed.

A solitary animal, the d'oemir bear lives in ice caves below the surface, where they frolic in the hot springs or hibernate in the ice labyrinths beneath the mountains. Females live in groups of two to three and may permit one male to live with them for brief periods of time. During especially hard periods of weather, the bears hibernate. They hunt in small packs and despite their cumbersome size and weight, they are swift and agile hunters, generally making two to three kills per hunt. Their main diet is q'lk and frozen vegetation found in the lower, more sheltered areas of the ice fjords.

## D'oemir Bear

**Type:** Arctic Predator

**DEXTERITY** 2D

Brawling parry 4D+2

**PERCEPTION** 2D+1

Hide 3D, search 3D+2, sneak 3D+1

**STRENGTH** 6D

Brawling 6D+1, lifting 6D+1, stamina 6D,

swimming 6D+2

**Special Abilities:**

*Hibernation:* When food gets scarce, the d'oemir bear goes into hibernation, sometimes staying in this state for up to a year.

*Claws:* Do STR+1D damage.

*Bite:* Does STR+2 damage.

**Move:** 10

**Size:** 1.3 meters tall (on all fours); 1.98 meters tall (standing)

## Customs and Commodities

Cordel Cove is well supplied by Memcha's father, who takes pride in caring for his daughter's needs. Most of the non-essential, cargo-capable ships going to Neftali are empty—unless there are prior arrangements, they also leave that



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way. However, if a spacer has plans to leave the planet with a full hold, he or she had better bring a large cache of credits since nothing comes cheap.

There are few valuable resources on Neftali. The two greatest exports are water and nether ice. Neftali's water supply is among the purest in this sector and it is the chief ingredient in Socorran raava and Zsajhira berry tea. Socorran-made whiskies, brewed with Neftali water, are expensive items, particularly on the black market.

Nether ice is mined from the deepest bowels of Neftali's ice fields and contains unusual compounds that greatly extend its frozen state. A small cube of nether ice can last up to a month, even in the warmest conditions. The ice has been used by smugglers to keep their engine systems cool during emergencies. The ice is sold in bulk, but it is also available in small quantities as souvenirs; it has even been customized into jewelry.

### *Repair Services*

There are no ship or weapon modification services offered in Cordel Cove. Limited repairs are available, but expensive (up to 30% above normal costs; see *Galaxy Guide 6: Tramp Freighters and Star Wars, Revised and Expanded*). Those who come looking for such services are immediately referred to Soco-Jarel Spaceport on Socorro.

### *Points of Interest*

It is always winter on Neftali. Residents have found that the best way to beat the cold is to celebrate it. The Cordel Cove Winter Carnival is possibly the largest carnival of its type in this sector.

There are daily events and outbound excursions to bring even the timid out into the cold to celebrate. Most of these activities are centered on or near the Beija Seas. There are a variety of winter sports available to challenge the advanced enthusiast and delight the beginner.

Neftali is a rugged land of dark, sinister beauty. For every marvel, there is a danger to keep the inhabitants alert and aware of those surroundings. In the polar regions and in many mountainous areas, five meters of lightly packed

snow can be all that stands between an explorer and a 10-kilometer drop into an ice fjord. For this reason, trails are marked and checked daily. Guests and visitors are cautioned to adhere to these paths for their own safety.

### *Swoopchasing (Yiulimar Ice Fjords)*

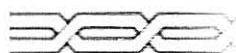
For the thrill-seeker, swoopchasing is offered in the nearby Yiulimar Ice Fjords. There are several open courses of varying levels. The tracks are fast and intricate, making for hazardous turns—and spectacular wrecks for those who aren't up to the challenge. Support and emergency personnel are always on-call here should the need for medical attention arise. Fatal accidents are rare, but not unknown. Coaches and experienced riders are also on hand to help guests avoid such catastrophes.

### *Hot Springs (Cordel Cove)*

There are literally thousands of tunnels beneath Cordel Cove, many of which feature galleries of deep, hot springs along their narrow corridors. These pools are closely monitored and temperatures are adjusted (by adding ice) every 15 minutes to insure that no one is burned by the water. Of course, tastes and sensitivities vary from species to species and this is always kept in mind by Jengus, the caretaker, and his twin sons. This peculiar trio of Jawas makes their home in the subterranean labyrinths beneath the port. Beings that despise cold temperatures, the Jawa caretakers can be seen scurrying from one section of the springs to the next; they rarely leave the caverns to venture out into the cold.

Temperatures are regulated by the use of nether ice and maintained between 25 and 45 degrees centigrade (temperatures are marked for the comfort of clients of various species). Jengus has invented and installed a peculiar system of levers and pulleys to load ice from the surface, bring it down into the caves via wires and cable, and dump it into the pools—all with a simple tug or twist on a foot pedal. For those who do not mind the heat, there are pools in the lower caves that remain a constant temperature of 50 to 65 degrees centigrade.

The springs are open to everyone free of charge and offer a delightful change from Neftali's hostile exterior surface.





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**Jengus, Inventor.** A transplant from the deserts of Tatooine, Jengus left behind a prosperous scrap-metal business and moved his family to Neftali. This was due in part to the massacre of a Jawa clan by Imperial stormtroopers. While en route to Socorro to join his prosperous nephew Squig, Jengus's transport landed in Cordel Cove. During the four-hour layover, Jengus repaired several faulty platform lifts and a malfunctioning analysis droid, and jury-rigged the resort's malfunctioning heating conduits. The port manager offered the Jawa and his family free run of the Cove, including the hot springs, if Jengus would take on the job of head technician. An inventor by ambition, Jengus graciously accepted and now oversees all the machinery within the Cove.

**Jengus.** *Dexterity 3D, blaster 3D+2, dodge 5D, thrown weapons 5D+2, Knowledge 3D, business 4D+2, languages 4D, streetwise 6D, survival 6D+1, value 5D+2, Mechanical 3D, communications 4D, Perception 3D, bargain 4D, con 4D, hide 5D+2, search 5D, sneak 5D, Strength 3D, Technical 3D, computer programming/repair 7D, demolitions 6D+2, droid programming 5D, droid repair 5D+2, ground vehicle repair 5D+2, machinery repair 7D, repulsortlift repair 5D. Move: 9. Equipment: Datapad, comlink, technical tools.*

## *Ice Sailing (Beija Major)*

Beija Major, the largest of Neftali's oceans, offers a huge plain for ice sailors to test their skills. Each vehicle is equipped with a homing beacon to insure that sight-seers eventually find their way home; more expensive models are equipped with repulsor engines in case the pilot tires of nature's whims and decides to come home early under a more reliable source of power.

## *Phrenbi Courts (Beija Minor)*

The most popular recreation among the Whiphids, *phrenbi* is a combative sport that's definitely not for the faint of heart. Phrenbi is an Old Corellian game that is a contest of four teams, each trying to get the *b'rrsk* (normally a ball, puck, or rock) into an opponent's goal. Incidentally, the word *b'rrsk* is Old Corellian for "head." And *phrenbi* can literally translate



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to mean “decapitate,” which gives a grisly view of how the sport may have originated.

The game begins with 15 to 20 players on each team, but as casualties mount a team may finish with less than 10 players. When a player is removed from the game, either for injury or because they’ve been thrown out for excessive malice, they are referred to as “dismissed.” Replacement players are forbidden. When fewer than five players are left standing, a team must forfeit the game or bring back a dismissed player (assuming any of them are conscious).

Phrenbi is played on a circular or oval court which must be at least 137 meters long by 49 meters wide. Goal cages, or *g’riles*, are located in four equidistant arcs of the game arena. Any type of terrain is acceptable—ice, sand, grass, rock, or solidified lava flows—as long as the area is of the appropriate size.

The game has only three general rules:

- 1) Never touch the b’rrsk with anything but the *urran* (the playing stick).
- 2) Never aid the *jeboe’i* or neutral teams.
- 3) Teams score by placing the b’rrsk in the opposing team’s goal. The winner is the team with the most goals.

Due to the erratic nature of the game, offici-

ating referees observe via holo-monitors or from out of bounds.

There game requires no special equipment, except for a safety helmet, goggles and a 2-meter-long, transparisteel playing stick, the *urran*, which has a three-pronged hook at the bottom of the shaft.

Four teams vie at once for the coveted b’rrsk. However, only two teams are paired off as rivals. For example, Teams One and Two are *osk’y* (enemies or rivals) while Teams Three and Four are their *jeboe’i* (neutral contenders or, translated literally, “thieves”). Teams One and Two can score against each other, but cannot score on Three or Four. However, they may hinder Teams Three and Four, who are vying against each other. There is only one b’rrsk, which makes for an intense game. There are two winners in each game: one from each pair of *osk’y*.

The action is fast, furious, and heavy on injuries, particularly when played in winter-style fashion on the thick ice. Artificial means of gripping the ice are prohibited, although players may make use of claws and other natural digits. A single game has three quarters, each lasting for 30 minutes or until a total of 15 injuries resulting in dismissal have occurred.

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Players need to reserve a court weeks in advance, although particularly ruthless games may result in an early conclusion, freeing up a court for any teams that happen to be nearby. Two lighted courts are now available.

On other worlds, phrenbi is commonly played with long sticks, while players ride an animal such as a bantha or an olai. However, Neftali's environment is too harsh for such animals and players are left to move under their own power.

As one might suspect, Cordel Cove's Whiphids absolutely dominate local play: they are undefeated in their last 72 games. Heavy betting has led to several major skirmishes—on the courts and in the stands!

## Deep-Ice Fishing (The Bay of Fflus)

Despite outward appearances, Neftali is rich with a plethora of aquatic wildlife. But to get at these elusive prizes, game fishermen are forced to use not only the rod and reel, but also explosives to get through the thick layers of ice. Careless off-worlders have been known to drop explosives in thin ice areas, resulting in hypothermia-related deaths. Fisherman have

also been pulled under and consumed by the very quarry they were seeking. The added expense of a guide is a valuable investment to keep an entertaining day of deep-ice fishing from becoming a disaster.

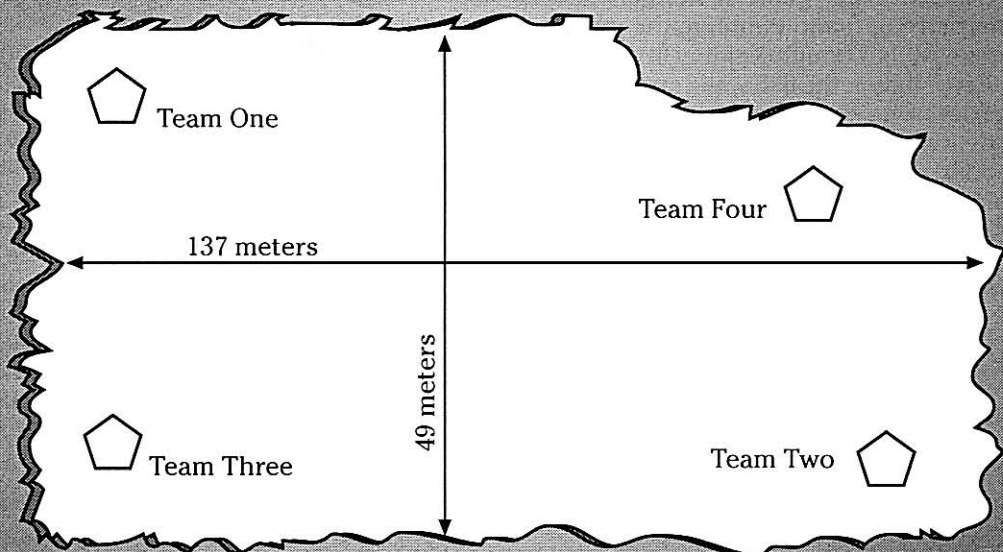
## Guda Fish

Not much is known about the creatures that lurk beneath the frozen surface of Neftali's oceans except to say that they account for more deaths per year than the q'lk and d'oemir bears combined. Truth be told, the guda fish, believed to be Neftali's largest aquatic animal, is quite deadly.

Averaging three meters in length, guda fish are thin, bony and muscular. Their cartilage is favored by native fishermen for hooks. Completely blind by millennia of evolution in watery darkness, the guda fish possesses an innate sonar ability. This is an adaptive faculty that can second as a motion detector. In other words, the animal can feel minute tremors in the water, such as when an animal might walk over the ice.

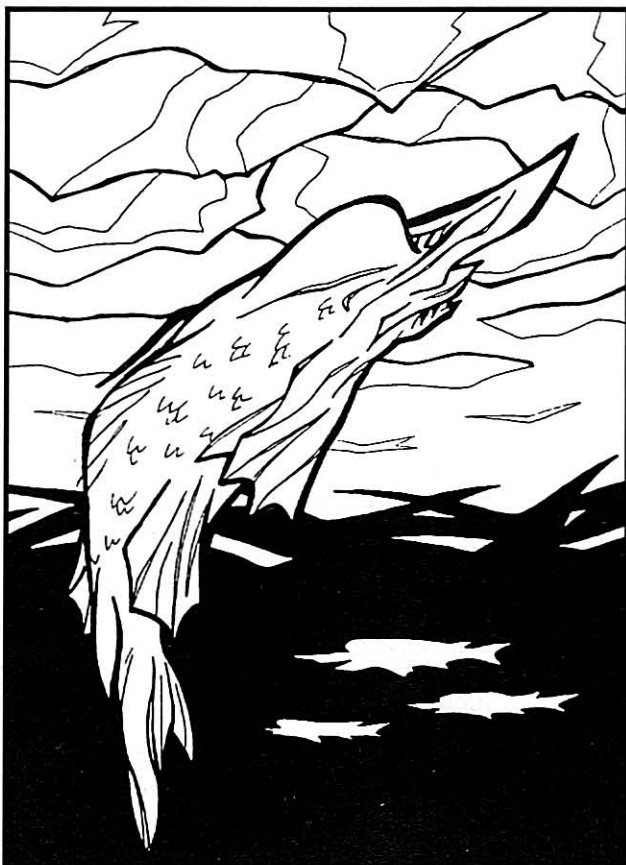
Once motion is detected, schools of 15 to 20 guda fish use their powerful nose spurs to hack through the ice: They can reduce a three to eight meter section of ice to slush in a matter of

## Typical Phrenbi Court



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moments. Any animal unfortunate enough to slip through the ice and into the water will never see daylight again. The guda fish's spur is a prized trophy among fishermen and is a sign of fortune and good luck to Neftali's natives.

A favorite of game fisherman because of their strength and cunning, the guda fish is a prize catch. Though yielding little in the way of meat or flavor, the fish was a staple for the early settlers who colonized Neftali; it is considered a delicacy by many residents.

Guda fish are hatched from eggs, which are laid into the undersurface of the ice. These eggs and the supple young fish are morsels that command exorbitant prices because they are believed to have medicinal value.

### Guda Fish

**Type:** Aquatic predator

**DEXTERITY** 2D

**PERCEPTION** 2D+1

Hide 4D, search 3D, sneak 3D+1

**STRENGTH** 3D

Brawling 3D+2, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 5D, swimming 6D

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** Does STR+2 damage.

**Escape:** When attempting to escape fishing hooks,

a guda fish gains +1D to *brawling*.

**Spur:** Does STR+1D damage.

**Sonar:** Guda fish receive +1D to detect objects below water or walking on the surface by way of homing in on sound and vibration.

**Move:** 16 (swimming)

**Size:** 3 meters long

### Ice Spike

**Model:** Caelli-Merced Ice Detonator

**Type:** Fragmentation grenade

**Scale:** Character

**Skill:** Demolitions

**Cost:** 800

**Availability:** 2, F, R

**Range:** 1-2/5/8

**Blast Radius:** 0-1/4/6/8

**Damage:** 8D/6D/4D/2D

**Capsule:** The

Caelli-Merced

Ice Spike is a

specialty

explosive

made popular

by the fisher-

man of Neftali.

The fist-sized

explosive is

bottom heavy:

Fisherman drill a

hole into the ice

(approximately half

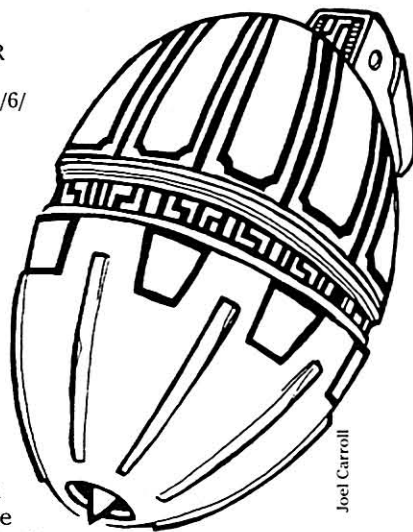
a meter deep) and then

drop the ice spike, bottom first into the shaft.

While the timer counts down, the fisherman rush

to get beyond the eight-meter blast radius of the

explosive.



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### Ambar's Big Game, Tackle, and Gear Shop

If you're looking to rent an ice sailing craft, a turbo-sled, skis, snow boots, or any other winter gear, the best (and only) place to go is Ambar's Big Game, Tackle, and Gear Shop. Founded many years ago by avid adventurer and fisherman Drexler Ambar, the store offers anything you could need for an outdoor expedition.

Besides survival gear and equipment, the shop also provides experienced guides and trackers, and up-to-date maps for fishing holes, bear sightings, and q'lk migrations.

### Keturah's Point

Keturah's Point is a look-out area located on the highest peak of Orane Mountain. From here, visitors get an uninterrupted view of the





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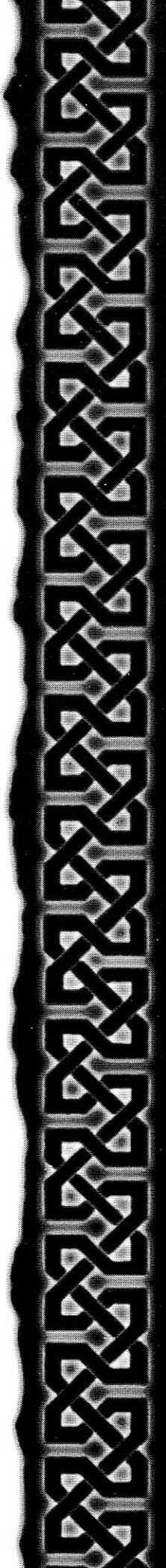
frozen wastes of Neftali's shadowy surface. It was named for Neftali's oldest living resident, Keturah Ambar.

Born to indigent fishermen, Keturah was born, grew up and married on Neftali. Her husband, Drexler Ambar, was a famous local outdoor and hunting enthusiast. They raised seven sons and a daughter while running the family business. On the evening of their 60th wedding anniversary, Drexler Ambar set out on his daily routine of checking ice pools and traps. He never returned.

Extensive searches of the wilderness revealed nothing about his fate. After months, the search was abandoned, but Keturah did not give up. For nearly a decade after his disap-

pearance, she would rise with the sun, hiking to the highest point on the mountain and waiting out the daylight in hopes of finding some sign of her husband.

Now nearly blind and crippled by overexposure to the cold, the old woman can be found sitting in the back of the Ambar family's shop. She rocks back and forth, knitting torn fishing nets and staring into the hearth unit, as if waiting for her husband to return. She rarely ever speaks, except when children enter the store. She entertains them with stories of how the animals of Neftali got their names and tales of her husband's hunting expeditions in the Jhunia Snow Plains.



Chapter Eleven  
Scout's Addendum

# Swoopchasing!

## Up the Odds

(A report from Jobany Cyrs on the sudden procurement of emergency Rebel funds.)

Several large, amorphous objects moved across the upper atmosphere above Jobany Cyrs, darkening the already failing light of Najiba's skies. An asteroid belt—the Children of Najiba—momentarily passed into the dusk horizon, ushering in the fall of night. Shoulders aching, Jobany leaned forward in the seat of his Caelli-Merced race swoop and concentrated on the course. An illegal outing of swoopchase racing was not his idea of effective fund-raising, but with two of his Rebel contacts locked up in a Najiba jailhouse and Imperial authorities arriving in less than three hours, he was desperate to raise the bribe money to get them out.

Gritting his teeth, Jobany resisted the urge to tear off the helmet strap biting into his throat. He strengthened his grip on his swoop's maneuvering bar and

toggled the accelerator. An abrupt backdraft buffeted him, slamming his head against the steering shaft. The resulting bump, though painful, managed to adjust the bulky helmet, which had rested uncomfortably after a close call on the track had nearly dislodged it—and his head.

To escape the breath-stealing force of the wind, Jobany flattened his body against the swoop. He accelerated around a sharp bend and set himself up for the next obstacle. The barrier was commonly known as a Repulsor-In, a standard fence for swoopchase courses. As Jobany approached it, he could hear the powerful repulsorfield engines activate beneath the fence, creating an enveloping field of repulsor energy. There was enough charge in the reactor to manipulate objects with the strength of a small gravity field. Pulled in towards the repulsorfield at a dangerous velocity, the vehicle shook under the pressure. The swoop's speedometer maxed out at 300 kilometers per hour; with the power indicator buried on the far side, Jobany was certain the swoop was traveling much faster.

On a straightaway or an open area of desert, the sudden burst of acceleration would have meant little to him. But bearing down on a 5-meter tall obstacle of plasteel and concrete at 450 kilometers per hour called for a certain amount of concern. Jobany braked sharply, hearing the forward air jets hiss against the opposition of their forward momentum. He bit his tongue as the swoop lurched backwards and then up as he adjusted the altitude setting.

There was a certain artistry in manipulating the swoop through this obstacle. If he brought the vehicle up too soon, it would descend abruptly, crashing into the top of the fence. If he waited too long, he risked tipping in and cuffing the top of the wall, which would somersault him into the air and certain disaster.

These racing swoops were governed, modified off-street models with a cruising altitude of just over three meters. In the darkness of Najiba's Byzal Canyon, Jobany stared at the ground passing below his feet. It seemed as if the surface was alive with motion. Shaking the unsettling sensation, he leaned forward in the seat as his swoop arced through the air. The racer crested the fence, struggling against the repulsorfield, and then settled back down on the course.

*Swoopchasing.* Jobany had heard the name before in a passing reference, but never fully associated it with this reckless sport that called for an impossible amount of daring and talent to even survive a run on the course. Only five obstacles into the race and his hands were sweating.

"The odds are invariably stacked against the riders," Memcha-Badawzi had warned him. When he enlisted the Twi'lek's aid to run this race, she could only shake her head in shock at his proposal. "It's all about accountability. The ability to survive, collect your money and account for what's left of you after the race."

Three kilometers deep into the course, with five riders down or dead and his own life in danger, the Rebel scout finally understood. A bounty hunter, Feyyaz Ferdusi, had already set his sights on winning the prestigious purse of 15,000 credits; no one and no

thing was going to stand in his way. Somehow, Badawzi had known about the treacherous tracer and with that foreknowledge she had made special preparations.

"How ya feeling, Captain Cyrs?" Above the continuous shriek of the swoop engine, Jobany heard the Twi'lek's reassuring voice, as if she were standing just behind his left shoulder.

The small comlink receiver in his left ear caused a moment of unstable equilibrium, but he quickly recovered, replying, "How am I supposed to feel? There's a bounty hunter trying to kill me. There are other riders trying to kill me. And that's only if I don't manage to kill myself!" His voice was lost in the roar of the swoop engines. "I nearly bought it back there in that...what do they call that one again?"

"The Rancor Pit."

"I could have been killed!"

"I saw that," Badawzi replied. "But you did okay—for a rookie."

Jobany stared into the encroaching shadows of the highlands as the swoop course changed direction and moved from the elevated plateau of wetlands and down into the winding canyon at the base of the mountains. Somewhere among those sinister peaks, the Twi'lek was keeping close tabs on him through macrobinoculars and transmitting advice or warnings as he moved over the course. "Who's idea was this anyway?" Jobany shouted.

"Yours, remember? You said spice smuggling was beneath you. And accepting a temporary loan from a crime lord was against your principles. So here you are. Who knows, Cyrs, you might decide to make a career in this sort of thing."

Jobany heard her soft laughter and smiled despite himself. The Twi'lek's calm and pleasant manner was contagious. "Now what, Memcha? I'm counting on you to get me through this thing—alive, thank you. For 10,000 credits, it better be worth it."

"Profit, my good Captain. That's 10,000 credits over and above what you'll have to pay me for my expertise. Now listen up, the next fence is the Grand Moff Bank. Nothing too spectacular, but there's a Gravity Well dug in at the bottom. So make sure you gun your engines



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to make it across to the other side or you won't have to worry about the Imperial patrol ship coming to pick up your friends. Good luck! I'll be watching."

"Good luck," she says," Jobany growled. He tightened his grip on the maneuvering bar and opened the throttle.

Towering up to a height of 55 meters and sloped at an impossible 35 degree angle, the shadow of the Grand Moff Bank loomed down on him. As he arrived at the base of the steep slope, Jobany winced beneath the piercing shriek of the swoop engines as the vehicle struggled to make the sheer climb. Despite being at full power, the swoop was hampered by the abrupt angle and the force of the Repulsor-Out fence sitting at the top of the complex.

A counterpart to the last obstacle, the Repulsor-Out barrier used a reverse polarity repulsorfield to repel objects away from it, making the approach to the crest of the bank increasingly difficult.

Jobany could feel his body being pulled off the swoop. Pressing himself flat against the racer, he adjusted the altitude range with hopes of adding some forward thrust to the engines. The quick maneuver was successful and he crested the top of the barrier. However, the rapid momentum carried him too far. Free of the barrier's impeding repulsorfield, the swoop's sudden burst of velocity launched them into the night skies above Najiba.

"What are you doing?" Memcha complained over the comlink. "Drop your altitude, Jobany! This is a negative-gee drop. Any higher and you'll knock yourself unconscious!"

*That's easy enough for her to say,* Jobany thought. Dropping the altitude setting, he felt his stomach kick up into his throat as the swoop descended sharply. He fought off a bout of nausea as he struggled with the craft, slowly bringing it back under control. But at the rate he was falling, he would not be able to maneuver the swoop over the final obstacle of the challenging bank, the Gravity Well.

"Memcha?" he whispered, hoping for some encouraging pointer.

"Just keep your weight back—way

back. From here, it's all up to you."

Jobany shook his head, throwing it all up to chance. With the unanticipated launch at the top of the hill, he had lost valuable time to set up and calculate the maneuver. In the darkness at the base of the hill, the 30-meter-wide pit of the Gravity Well seemed to grin up at him. As Jobany watched, the racer just ahead of him miscalculated the speed and pitch necessary to clear the obstacle. The rider was thrown from his swoop racer as it struck the side of the pit. His vehicle crumpled in a muffled explosion. Trapped in the grasp of the Gravity Well's field, both swoop and rider were sucked down into the 100-meter deep pit.

Jobany closed his eyes as the sounds of the explosion and the rider's agonized screams rose above the shrill whine of his swoop engines. "No rescue crews for that one," he thought aloud. The grisly image of the struggling rider reminded him of the notorious sand wells of Socorro.

"Pay attention!" Memcha bellowed. "Or you'll be next."

Jobany could not fault the biting edge in the Twi'lek's voice. He settled his hand by the altitude adjuster and flipped the switch. The swoop lurched beneath him, taking to the air as he guided its ascent over the Well. Almost instantly, he felt the tremendous downward snatch as the concentrated repulsorfield attempted to pull him down into its dark clutches.

"Hang on, Jobany."

As the swoop raced over the pit, he snapped, "That was almost perfect!"

"That was a little too early. Just ride it through."

Staring down over the Well, Jobany realized that Badawzi was correct to warn him. He had indeed miscalculated and was descending into the far end of the Well. The same mistake that had claimed the competitor before him. The black mouth of the Well seemed to open wide as if anticipating his mistake.

Jobany stood up, rounding his back and shoulders to force the swoop's nose up and out of the Well. The act brought him a scant half meter beyond the rim of the pit, where he impacted with a resounding thud against the turf. Nearly thrown from the acceleration seat, he

quickly recovered. Gunning the swoop's half stalled engines, he limped away from the Well and back onto the course.

"Whew! That was close. You all right?"

Jobany struggled to take a deep breath. The abrupt slam into the bank had knocked the wind out of him and he panted in an effort to catch his breath.

"Jobany?"

"I'm all right," he wheezed. "A little shaky, but I'll manage."

"Okay, that puts you in second place behind Ferdusi."

"What's next?"

"My favorite, the water complex. Now listen carefully, I want you to drop back."

"What?" Jobany wheezed. "It's taken me all this time and trouble to catch up to that low-life bounty hunter. Now you want me to let someone else—"

"Just do it, Jobany! Trust me. Hang back until you're inside the complex, then you can let go." There was just a hint of concern in Memcha's voice, enough to unnerve him. Shaking his head, Jobany cut the acceleration and dropped back.

The Byzal Canyon narrowed as the shadows of twilight deepened. A cold, cold wind swept through the menacing ravine. Jobany felt a numbness moving through his fingers and over his face as the damp air blasted him. His swoop rounded the beginning turn into Tarkin's

Shears, the notorious water complex; he braked sharply, watching as the third-place rider shot past him into second place. Jobany noted the odd expression on the man's face as he flew by, but his advantage lasted all of a few seconds.

A blaster bolt ricocheted off the ravine wall and struck the rider's swoop. There was an explosion as the vehicle's engines detonated, shattering into minute, molten splinters that glowed fiercely in the darkness. Red hot shears of metal and debris embedded themselves into the rock, acting as hazard lanterns to warn off approaching riders. Ejected by the blast, the pilot was catapulted from the seat and propelled head-first into the ravine wall.

"What was that?" Jobany screamed.

Somewhat breathless, Memcha replied, "That was Ferdusi's brother making sure the competition doesn't get too close to his big brother." She panted, as if she were involved in a foot pursuit. "He's headed toward the next juncture, no doubt looking for another chance at you. Now gun your throttle and get your choobies out of there before he can squeeze off another round. I'll see if I can distract him."

With a renewed sense of value for his own life, Jobany quickly put his thoughts and mental initiative back on the course. Leaning into the second bend, he felt his



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knee slam into the churning waters below and threw his weight against the sloop in an effort to clear the hazardous turn.

Ferdusi moved into the third turn, uncontested by any rivals, but Jobany soon moved alongside the hunter in a daring display of courage. Dodging a sudden swipe from the reptilian bounty hunter's clawed fingers, Jobany flipped the altitude adjuster and flew up and over his attacker's shoulders. The maneuver forced Ferdusi to duck or risk being decapitated. Jobany laughed as his sloop pulled ahead of the Nduuati bounty hunter. Rash confidence brought him a mouthful of river water as one of the nozzle units, alerted by his approach, activated and blasted him with a pressurized burst.

Gagging on the putrid water, Jobany gasped. His sloop started to cuff the surface of the water, losing power as he struggled to clear the water from his throat, nose, and lungs. As he berated himself for that moment of foolishness, he risked a brief glance over his shoulder. The spray of water kicked up by his sloop engines had created a wall of foam spray that splashed back on the bounty hunter, temporarily blinding him.

Jobany increased power to the engines and cuffed the surface of the water one last time. The wall of spray was enormous—enough to make Ferdusi fall back a considerable distance to avoid the impromptu bath. Using that extended lead, Jobany swept through the final four turns on the course and managed to maintain that lead into the final leg of the race.

"We might make a swoopchaser out of you yet, Cyrs!" Memcha laughed, having seen the last stretch of the water complex. "Ditch the comm-gear after this transmission. From what I can tell, you're free and clear. Just the Shooting Gallery to go. Remember, keep your head down and your eyes on the prize. I'll be there at the finish to make sure you get your money. The rest is up to you."

From the backwoods and winding mountain passages, the course moved into the more civilized outskirts of Surma, Najiba's port city. The sprawling

arena was the last major complex before the finish line. As the distance to victory closed, Jobany could see row upon row of spectators gathered on both sides of the track's final stretch. Their excited voices were muffled behind a thick, protective barrier of tranparisteel that ran the length of the peculiar straightaway.

The final leg of the race was known as the Kessel Run in the lower competition levels. But at the Outlaw level, his present designation, the complex was referred to as the Shooting Gallery and with good reason—eight manned E-Web heavy repeating blasters were randomly placed through the complex. The Shooting Gallery was one of the most exciting attractions on the course, or so Memcha had told him, and possibly the most challenging.

In simulating the notorious smuggling run, the track fairway was cluttered with piles of scrap metal, discarded engine parts, blast-scored hull plating, and the wreckage of sloop vehicles that never managed to make it through the multiple hazards. Swerving left, Jobany kept his head low as Memcha instructed. That advice proved sound as the first blast from an E-Web exploded over his shoulders, incinerating the wreckage of a small shuttle craft. The concussion from the blast tipped him dangerously out of control. With a minor adjustment, he was able to toggle the altitude switch and the sloop jumped over the burning wreckage to safety.

Ferdusi was following closely behind him, gaining ground. From the corner of his eye, Jobany could see a heavy blaster pistol in the bounty hunter's hand. Heart pounding in his throat, Jobany headed into the field of firing E-Webs. Subsequent blasts rained down around both of them from a second and third repeating blaster emplacement, keeping the riders separated.

Between evasive maneuvers, Jobany reached up to the comlink and tore the apparatus loose, discarding it along the course. With Ferdusi comfortably out of the way, he hunched down behind the maneuvering bar and pulled the throttle wide-open. Abruptly, a strangled cry caused him to glance back over his shoulder. Ferdusi's sloop had taken a direct hit. His skin lightly blackened by the



resulting blast, the bounty hunter threw himself from the swoop just as it exploded. He hit the ground, tucked, and rolled, narrowly missing a wrecked transport that lay in his path. His swoop accelerated, careening wildly across the track.

Jobany boosted the power settings on the altitude adjuster, going for a full acceleration burst. The swoop engines bucked in protest but gave up the indicated power surge. Its dials and gauges were buried in the red, indicating an imminent engine meltdown. As he swerved high and to the left, Jobany turned his head as the pilotless swoop crashed into the transparisteel barrier on the near side of the track. Despite its reinforced integrity, the plate shielding was no match for the force of impact.

In slow motion, or so it appeared to Jobany's frantic senses, the entire wall shattered. Moving out in gigantic stress fractures and cracks, the ripples burst into minute fissures along the barrier and then exploded with dynamic force. Shattered glass and particles rained down onto the track, although it did its job: it appeared that no one in the crowd was injured.

Jobany shook his head, concentrating on the insistent rattling of his labored swoop engine. The finish line beacon was just ahead of him. Its pulsating lights quickened, triggered by his approach. A wide-beam shaft of light shot into the air to signal that a winner had survived the course.

Adrenaline still pumping, Jobany guided his swoop off the main track and into the staging area. He was off the vehicle and moving into the crowd before the vehicle had come to a complete stop. His legs shook uncontrollably and he was forced to rub the circulation back into the fatigued muscles.

"Thanks," he whispered to well-wishers, as a host of alien dialects bombarded him. A heavy pat on the back from an overjoyed Wookiee nearly sent him face first to the ground.

"Ceremony? No, I can't—I really don't have—" He tried to resist as the racing officials, two nobly dressed Ithorians,

nearly carried him to a raised platform above the track. While emergency crews worked to put out fires and rescue injured pilots, the officials presented him with a ceremonial wreath and a garland of flowers to celebrate the victory. No one seemed interested in the catastrophe in the background.

Jobany nearly fainted from the flash of holo-recorders and the steady, rhythmic swaying of the crowd as they flocked to the edge of the platform to have a look at the winner. The cold metal of the prize chit against his palm brought him back to sober reality. He straightened abruptly, closing his fingers around the prize money. "Thank you," he whispered, bowing to the Ithorians. "Thanks." He nodded to the roaring multitude of spectators, already thinking of his friends and the jailer that stood between them and their freedom.

The crowd below the platform parted as a speeder bike pulled up alongside of the stage. Dressed in a brown, dusted flight jacket and black pirate leggings, Memcha Badawzi raised the goggles from her blue eyes and arrogantly grinned up at the officials. Winking at Jobany, she pulled the maneuvering gloves tighter about her hands and fingers. "You did all right, kid. But how about letting an old pro show you a few tricks you might not have thought of."

Jobany secured the credit chit in his vest pocket and hopped down from the stage. Gently pushing the Twi'lek back into the passenger cradle and handing her an armful of victory flowers, he adjusted the crash helmet on his head and sat down behind the controls.

Memcha tucked her feet into the security grips on the sides of the bike, holding onto her flowers in one hand and tightening her grip on the panic bar with the other. "Sure you know how to handle one of these things? This isn't swoopchasing, you know?"

Jobany winked at the roguish smuggler and gunned the speeder bike's engines. "I guess you'll just have to trust me."

## *Swoopchasing: A Proud History*

Swoopchasing began as a leisure activity among the farmers of Omman. When bored with the normal routine of maintaining moisture units on the outer perimeters of their often vast land holdings, local farmers and land owners would put their boasts to the test in impromptu, long-range competitions. Varying in distances of 10 to 32 kilometers, the farmers raced over desert and plains, and through crowded woodlands and mountain canyons. This races challenged both the piloting skill and cunning of the riders.

These personal contests offered minimal prizes—the meager funds the farmers could pool—and more often than not the purse was spent during victory celebrations. However, once the sport was discovered by small-time gangsters and crime lords, swoopchasing underwent a complete face-lift, offering lucrative cash prizes and substantial income from betting.

Swoopchasing differs from typical swoop racing in that maneuvering around obstacles and hazards is more important than sheer speed. Geared to spectator appeal, swoopchasing capitalizes on a morbid sense of danger. Fatalities are commonplace, depending upon the level of competition. The chance to see each disaster as it unfolds brings thousands of spectators to events.

The length of the courses is dictated and varied by competition levels. A rookie outing is generally three to five kilometers long and may consist of no more than 10 to 15 jumps. In comparison, the notorious Outlaw or illegal courses can be up to 30 kilometers long, with 20 to 32 jumping opportunities for the participants.

The sport's regulations are quite simple. Participants may enter at any appropriate level, using specially modified, or "governed," swoop vehicles. While most standard swoops can maintain an altitude of 50 meters, race-modified vehicles are not permitted to go above a cruising altitude of 3.05 meters; temporary altitude bursts may elevate the swoops to a height of 6.5 meters for short periods of time.

Speeds have also been regulated for the safety of the participants. While many swoops

can reach speeds of 750 kilometers per hour or more, a governed swoop is limited to a top speed of 350 kilometers per hour. Too slow for your tastes? Well than imagine moving at 750 kilometers per hour, with only half a kilometer—two and a half seconds—between obstacles. Imagine having to decelerate, adjust altitude, and than duck, jump or maneuver around a barrier. With ungoverned swoops, there is no time to think; with governed swoops, pilots may have a second or two to get their bearings.

What besides romanticism and fool's courage would prompt any sane individual to attempt swoopchasing? The lure of easy money! Even the smallest purses at the Rookie level offer 500 to 1,000 credits to the lucky winner. As the degree of difficulty increases, top prizes increase dramatically. The purse for a Limited or Advanced feature can be 5,000 to 10,000 credits. Outlaw feature winners can collect upwards of 15,000 to 25,000 credits in one night! Special "suicide" outings have reported purses of 50,000 to 90,000 credits, but even the winners often need replacement limbs!

The allure of such easy gain has enticed more than a few ambitious swoopchase racers to an early grave. But if one has the tenacity to brave the course, the obstacles, and the temperament of fellow riders, there is more than enough incentive to drive the ambitious swoopchaser to the winner's circle and a small fortune in prize money free of Imperial tariffs, sector taxes, and even crime lord tributes (if you manage to leave the race grounds quickly enough).

## *The Language of the Track*

Swoopchasing is full of colorful language and slang that endears itself to the racing enthusiast, but which often precludes the casual observer. For an in-depth look into this exciting sport and its terminology, please familiarize yourself with these terms:

**Approach:** Coming into a fence.

**The Crew:** The field of racing participants.

**Crowd:** To hit a rival competitor, forcing them to crash. As in, "he crowded him into the rocks."

**Docking:** The act of jumping or clearing an obstacle.

**Flare out:** To be hit or disabled by an ion flare.

**Gear-Tampering:** Fixing the race by tampering with vehicles or participants on course.

# STAR WARS

## • Swoopchasing! •

**Gone to the Winner's Circle:** Said of those who have died on-course during the race.

**Gone to Ground:** Said of those who did not complete the race due to accident or technical failure.

**Governed:** Modified; generally indicates that a vehicle has been modified to meet race standards.

**Jumping Efforts:** The number of jumps and/or maneuvers needed to complete the obstacle. (For example, the standard Repulsor-In fence requires one jumping effort, while the Rancor Pit requires three efforts.)

**Landing:** Successfully clearing a fence and moving on to the next obstacle.

**Mock-:** Designation of a race whereby the goal or outcome is to practice, i.e. mock-outlaw would feature the challenges of the Outlaw level, but with more distance between obstacles, greatly reducing the danger for inexperienced riders.

**Outing:** Another term for a race or the actual course.

**Pop:** To drop down in front of a competitor, buffeting him or her with the thrust from the swoop's ion drives.

**Propping:** Gunning the swoop's engines in an effort to build up necessary acceleration.

**Swap Paint:** Two or more swoops bump into each other while at high speed. Often, a rider "swaps paint" with another swooper to force the rival off-balance, allowing the aggressor to swing past and gain a position.

**Tipping In:** To jump too closely to an obstacle or hit the fence while in the act of jumping.

**Slogging It:** Approaching a fence too slowly or cautiously. (Rookie and Novice riders are often referred to as "Slog-Heads" because of their excessive caution, which can often lead to wrecks on challenging obstacles.)

**The Survivors:** Those racers who manage to obtain second through sixth place.

**The Victim:** The winner of the race.

**Wrecking out:** To crash.

## Levels of Competition

There are a number of levels for the swoopchase racer to compete at, each with ascending degrees of difficulty. While there are no restrictions prohibiting a first-time rider from entering an Outlaw feature, it is always best to try your hand first at the Rookie level

and from there decide what would be the next best (or safest) rung of competition.

The Rookie is the beginning level and as such offers the easiest and safest courses. Generally, a rider is considered to be a rookie or a slog-head if they have ridden fewer than five races. This level allows the rider to learn the basics of handling and maneuvering. Fences can be expected to be intimidating to the youngster, but not impossible; they're generally at a sub-regulation height of four meters.

Next up the ladder is the Novice level, which is generally for riders heading into their sixth or seventh race. The Novice course is considered only moderately dangerous and some first-time riders have earned a fair share of respect by competing at this stage.

At the Limited level, the rider is expected to have mastered the basic obstacles at lower levels. Racers with 12 to 15 races tend to move to this level; in some systems, three to five victories are needed before the rider is even permitted to advance to this rung of competition. At this level, the racer is encountering more challenging obstacles and standard-sized fences, which stand a formidable 5.0 to 5.5 meters tall. This is a level of dubious distinction, with the highest number of fatalities and injuries due to high fences, specialized complexes, and the added course length, all of which often prove to be too demanding for lesser riders.

The Advanced level is the proving ground for the emerging talents of the sport. At this level, fences are maxing out at regulation 6.3 meters and riders are expected to remain on course for upwards of 60 to 90 minutes. The Advanced level requires a high degree of skill and riders at this level learn the tricks, maneuvers and handling efforts needed to round out the swoopchase racer's education.

The Expert level is aptly named and requires a mastery of the skills that are required of a true champion. At this level, many Outlaw fences appear to further test the mettle and skill of the expert riders. With the appearance of new fences and greater challenges, there is almost always one (and probably more) fatalities, which makes the Expert level quite popular with the "sophisticated swoopchasing connoisseur." At this level, many riders are seen and recruited by reputable racing stables and crime lords looking to sponsor the next circuit champion.

Open is a competition designation that allows any level rider to race on a Novice to Limited-level course. The degree of difficulty is sharply down-graded in favor of skills-orienta-



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tion. This is a choice opportunity for trainers to take their riders on-course and teach them techniques and skills that are required to be successful at the more extreme levels. It also gives old pros the chance to freshen up, while rookie and novice riders have the freedom to compete against accomplished riders with less risk.

The Outlaw feature is the most notorious level. While swoopchasing is strictly regulated in many planetary systems, the menacing Outlaw feature is held only in the darkest of places, far from the scrutinizing eyes of the sport's sanctioning bodies. Bets are high, the stakes enormous and the odds invariably stacked against the participants—fatalities and crippling injuries are the expected norm. It is not unusual to find a little gear-tampering, where local or outside interests hire a bounty hunter to eliminate favorites from the race.

### *Types of Fences*

There are a number of fence types on swoopchasing courses. For your general knowledge, here are descriptions of fence types that riders may be required to meet during the course of a race.

A Bank fence is built into a pre-existing natural rock or earth formation that maintains a permanent ascending and/or descending slope. These natural-type obstacles are challenging in that racers must approach with deliberate slowness or at high speeds in order to surpass additional efforts (obstacles) that may lie at the top or the bottom of the bank.

A complex is any obstacle that requires no less than three but no more than 10 jumping efforts or skill maneuvers. Generally, complexes are highly involved and specialized with regard to location, environment, and skill levels. For instance, the Arena is a fully enclosed complex that tests the rider's ability to maneuver in close quarters. The Tube complex tests the same ability, but at higher speeds and adds complicated, problematical situations. Labyrinth complexes test analytical skills on the part of the rider, who must maintain a cool head and a steady hand on the maneuvering jets to survive the sharp turns and sudden dead-ends within this obstacle. The "Emperor's Palace" is an example of a labyrinth complex.

A Gate is any standard fence, generally a vertical fence, where the special action or feature has been deactivated for safety.

A standard fence is any obstacle that re-

quires no more than three jumping efforts or skill maneuvers to complete. It is an upright, vertical fence with few special features. The term standard is used almost interchangeably with the term vertical. While there is some similarity between the two, there are notable differences. Standard generally indicates a regulation, where vertical is actually a fence type.

The Vertical is a standard fence which is upright and requires riders to jump over it in one action. The counterpart of this fence is the Shift-Vertical, which is upside down on course, requiring riders to dive or duck under it to complete the maneuvering or handling action.

The Repulsor Buoy is not an obstacle that must be jumped, but rather a hazard of the course. In most cases, it is used as a boundary marker that riders may not cross. The buoy can also be used as a hazard at fences to increase the level of difficulty. The liability of going off-course is a short burst of energy, commonly known as an ion flare, which may disrupt the swoop and often causes a wreck for all but the most experienced riders. A rider hit by an ion flare seldom walks away and often the swoop itself is best taken for spare parts.

## The Challenges of the Course

### Obstacle Descriptions

**Type:** The obstacle (or effort) category.

**Jumping Efforts:** The number of maneuvers needed to complete the obstacle.

**Difficulty:** The difficulty level of the obstacle.

**Level:** The types of courses the obstacle may be found on, ranging from Rookie to Outlaw.

### Repulsor-In

**Fence Type:** Standard Vertical

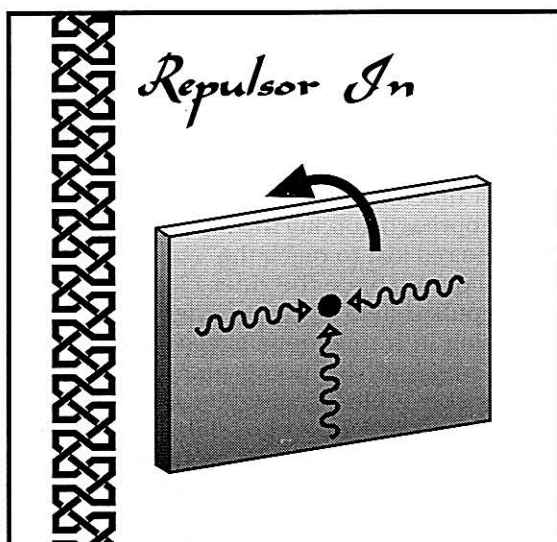
**Jumping Efforts:** 1

**Difficulty:** Easy—Moderate

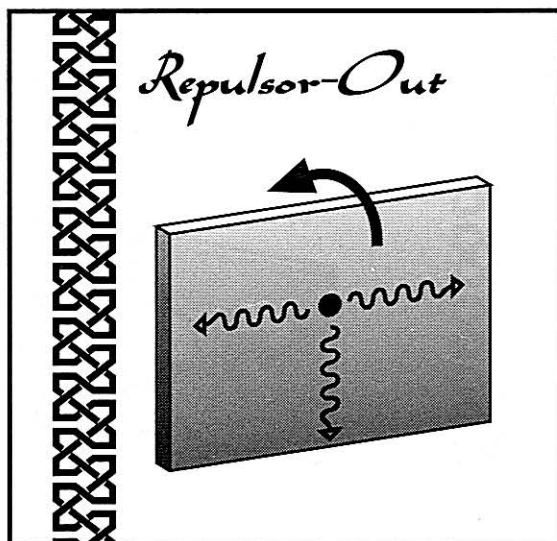
**Level:** All

The Repulsor-In fence, also known as an R-I, is among the most common and simplest obstacles encountered on the swoopchasing course. The standard R-I barrier is a simple vertical, with a regulation height of no more than five meters.

The unusual feature of this fence is the pecu-



liar use of repulsorfield technology. Once within range, approaching swoops are rapidly drawn towards the barrier by the repulsorfield, resulting in spectacular acceleration. While this might not seem too intimidating, imagine yourself approaching a fence at 250 kilometers per hour and being suddenly catapulted—for no apparent reason—to speeds upwards of 350 to 400 kilometers per hour! More than a few daring riders have dismissed the intensity of the repulsorfield at this fence and that is why, despite its commonality, the Repulsor-In is home to some of the more spectacular wrecks in swoopchasing.



### Repulsor-Out

**Fence Type:** Standard Vertical

**Jumping Efforts:** 1

**Difficulty:** Easy—Moderate

**Level:** All

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Like its counterpart, the Repulsor-Out obstacle (or R-O) is also one of the more frequented fences on swoopchasing courses. It is regulated at four meters in height, but can have an increased difficulty with the inclusion of ion flare pits and repulsor buoy traps. The unusual feature of this fence is that it repels the racers as they approach, forcing them to gun the throttle into the red just to reach the "spot" for take-off.

Of course, once the rider clears the fence, the repulsor field no longer affects the swoop, resulting in tremendous acceleration. Racers often wreck at this point; novice riders have the most trouble bringing the swoop back under control and are often unable to cope with the abrupt increases in velocity that are achieved on the landing. This fence is most commonly used in turns and changes of direction, only adding to the danger, forcing the rider to handle both acceleration and turning in one smooth, fluid motion.

## *Rancor Pit*

**Fence Type:** Shift-Vertical

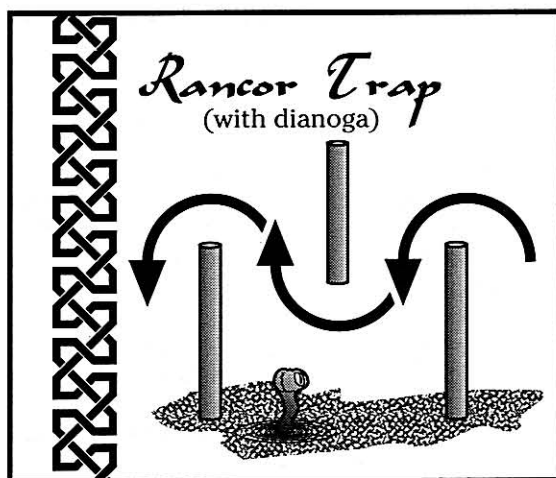
**Jumping Efforts:** 3

**Difficulty:** Moderate—Difficult

**Level:** Novice and above

After facing Repulsor-In and Repulsor-Out fences as a warm-up, most courses confront racers with the Rancor Pit. This obstacle is generally the first real challenge on the course.

The Pit consists of three walls, each constructed of transparisteel scaffolding or plasteel concrete, making for a formidable, unforgiving obstacle. The first and third fences are stan-



dard verticals, requiring the racer to jump over them. The second fence, built inside the others, extends down into the racer's path from an inverted section of track, thus requiring the rider to duck or dive under to clear it.

The rider docks over the first fence, is forced to dive under the second (or be decapitated) and then must jump over the third and final fence without wrecking. Effectively, the handling maneuver is known as a "bounce" technique, where the rider literally bounces in and then out of the structure. (For an Outlaw variation of this fence, see the "Dianoga Swamp Trap.")

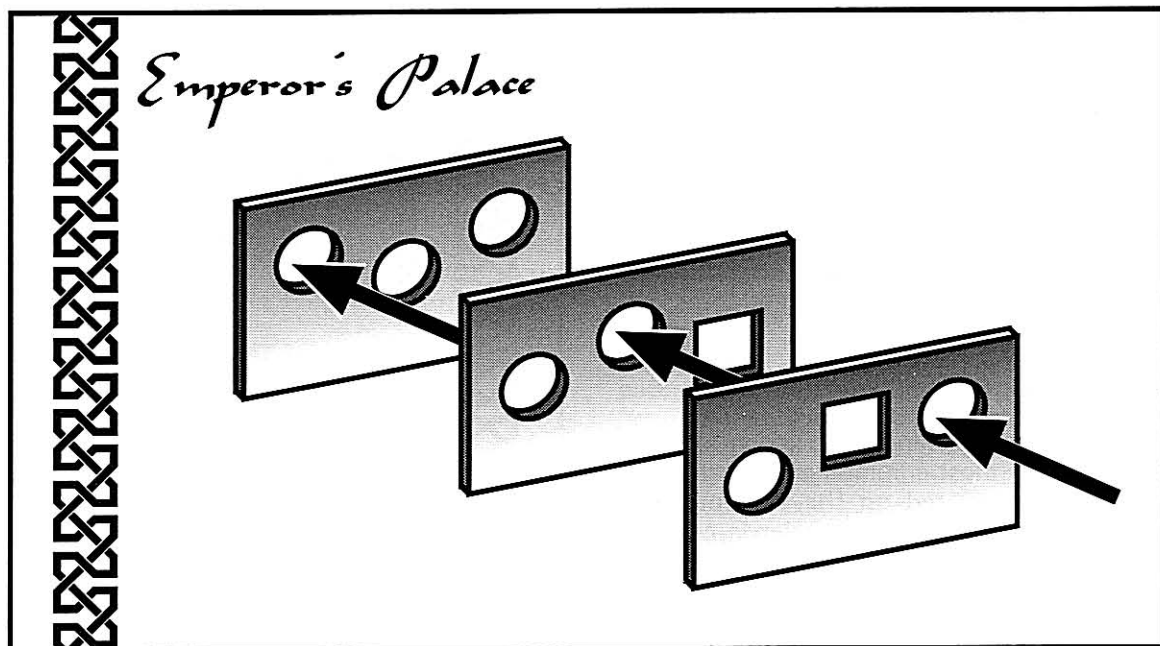
## *Emperor's Palace*

**Fence Type:** Arena Complex

**Jumping Efforts:** 5 to 7

**Difficulty:** Moderate—Difficult

**Level:** Any





With only half a kilometer to catch their breath after the Pit, racers encounter their first complex on the course, aptly known as the Emperor's Palace. It is a challenging arena found at any level of competition and is considered a stepping-stone to the more ambitious complexes on more difficult courses.

The fence is composed of five to seven vertical walls constructed from plasteel concrete. The entire obstacle is a practice in patience, quick maneuvering, and steady manipulation of the side thrusters.

As the riders come into the complex, they must decelerate or crash into the opposing wall. And once having decelerated, the rider must find and maneuver through the next available opening without stalling the engines. This complex becomes increasingly difficult in the final maneuvering efforts.

## Grand Moff Bank

**Fence Type:** Bank Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** 3  
**Difficulty:** Moderate—Difficult  
**Level:** Novice and above

This fence is one of the more notorious obstacles simply because it is often taken for granted by rookie and novice riders. Built on an extreme angle of approximately 35 to 45 degrees, the imposing bank forces racers to really gun the engines in a desperate drive to make it to the top of the bank. Generally, a somewhat intimidating R-O fence is positioned at the top

of the complex to further hamper their efforts.

Having cleared the upper barrier, however, riders must endure a dangerous, five seconds of negative-gee drop that puts them on the backside of the bank and headed into an R-I fence at the bottom of the bank. (For an Outlaw variation of this complex, replace the R-I fence with the Gravity Well.)

## The Channel

**Fence Type:** Labyrinth Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** Varies  
**Difficulty:** Difficult—Very Difficult  
**Level:** Limited and above

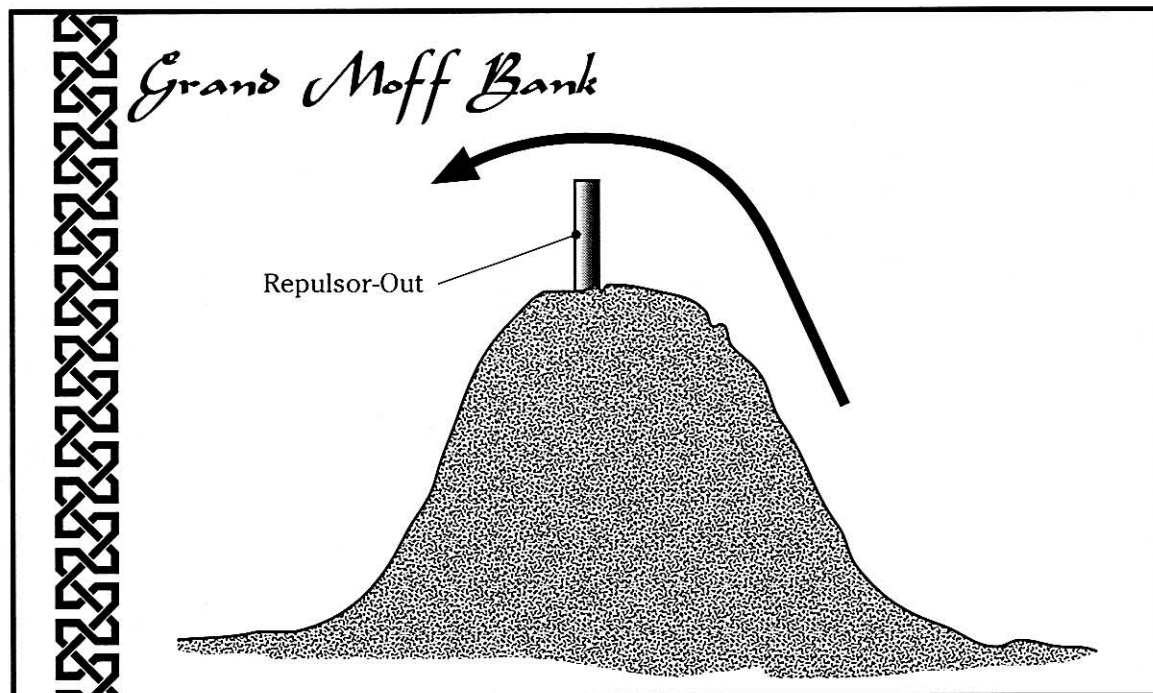
The Channel is a labyrinth complex in which the rider must make repeated split-second maneuvers. It is a plasteel monstrosity of narrow turns, sharp inclines, and sudden drops. Ion flare pits and repulsor buoys are used to make the course even more demanding.

The Channel is a fully enclosed arena: once inside, the racer must navigate a way out. There are many possible routes, with one or two short-cuts. The other passages are tricky, time-consuming—and booby-trapped.

## Dianoga Swamp Trap

**Fence Type:** Shift-Vertical  
**Jumping Efforts:** 3  
**Difficulty:** Very Difficult—Heroic  
**Level:** Outlaw

This is clearly an Outlaw fence. It is a twin of



the Rancor Pit, but with swamp water below the down-turned fence. If the rider should over-compensate for the second fence, he or she may find themselves up to their necks in stagnant swamp water and they won't be there alone! In many cases, the water is inhabited by one or more dianogas who have been starved and are just waiting for a careless racer to tumble into the drink.

In special mock-Outlaw features, race officials allow Expert level riders to compete over such an obstacle, minus the dianoga.

### *Bootlegger's Slide*

**Fence Type:** Tube Complex

**Jumping Efforts:** 0

**Difficulty:** Moderate—Difficult

**Level:** All

The Bootlegger's Slide is the most popular and thrilling attraction for racers and spectators alike. It is an open-air anti-gravity channel in which racers experience the exhilaration (and repercussions) of total weightlessness. Moving into the turn at speeds approaching 300 kilometers per hour, the racers are forced to hold on to their swoops as the lack of gravity increases their velocity, in many cases forcing the rider to use the maneuvering jets to angle

the swoop sideways, sliding through the turn.

The zero-gravity area allows the swoops to top out at speeds over 600 kilometers and it's not unusual for swoops to "swap paint" in this complex. Only skillful maneuvering of the side thrusters and the acceleration dampeners, as well as a fair share of guts, allows riders to get through safely. Keep in mind that racers have been on course for nearly 25 to 60 minutes by the time they reach this complex; they're quite tired by now.

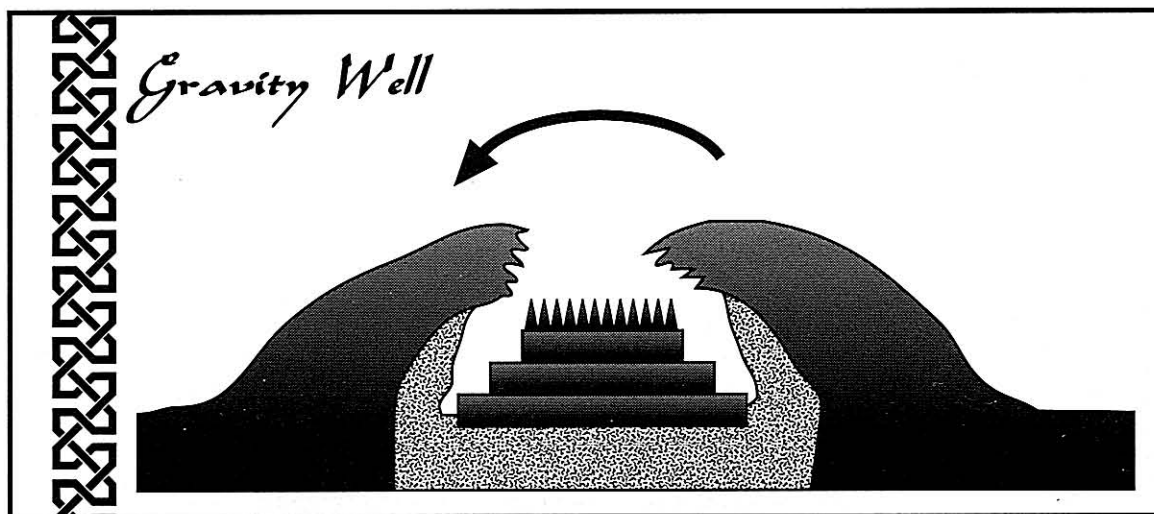
The Bootlegger's Slide is equipped with a safety railing along the sides to insure minimal injuries should a racer lose control and go down. Serious casualties are rare as the added effect of weightlessness keeps vehicles and pilots from great harm. In the Outlaw features, however, these rails are often removed. The absence of the safety device allows for an added dimension of danger, particularly when racers move back into the abrupt resistance of normal gravity. On more than one occasion, riders and vehicles have been catapulted with spectacular and often fatal consequences.

### *Gravity Well*

**Fence Type:** Bank

**Jumping Efforts:** 1





**Difficulty:** Difficult—Heroic  
**Level:** Expert

The Well is a ditch with repulsorfield engines buried deep inside. It is designed to draw objects that move over it down into the pit. The obstacle originated on the Outlaw circuit where it thrives as a stand-alone or as a combination challenge with another fence. It is a particularly formidable obstacle when coupled with the Grand Moff Bank or as the centerpiece of the Pop'N'Drop.

If the rider does not achieve maximum height and speed over the Gravity Well, the outcome can be rather grisly—inside the pit are piles of jagged debris left over from previous casualties. Summoning rescue crews to a crash at this site is generally a waste of time.

## Otherspace

**Fence Type:** Tube Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** Varies  
**Difficulty:** Very Difficult—Heroic+10  
**Level:** Expert and Outlaw

With only a kilometer or two to regain their confidence, racers are confronted by the most notorious of the maneuvering complexes on course. Otherspace is very similar to the Channel in that it is a fully enclosed arena of the track. Otherspace is a spacious labyrinth of tubes and connected networks where the riders are required to navigate by infrared tracking lights: turns, dips and straightaways are marked by the special lighting, which can only be seen with infrared goggles. Without the aid of the goggles, the racer is literally blinded and destined for disaster. Sometimes the arena features ion flare pits and repulsor buoy traps

at odd intersections, making for an even greater degree of danger and difficulty.

While Otherspace is allowed in Expert and Outlaw tracks, the obstacle is strictly prohibited at every other level due to high casualty ratings.

## Pop'N'Drop

**Fence Type:** Bank Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** Varies by level  
**Difficulty:** Heroic+10—Heroic+40 or more  
**Level:** Advanced and above

With less than a kilometer to recoup from the winding networks of Otherspace, the racer than encounters the last of the bank complexes, the Pop'N'Drop. The racer's ability to recuperate their normal vision will be tested on this perversion of the Grand Moff Bank, which begins with a 45 degree slope that breaks up to a gate at the very top. Beyond the gate lies a gaping expanse of 30 meters, where the racer must work to maneuver the swoop over a 10 to 15 meter drop to the safety of another bank on the opposite side.

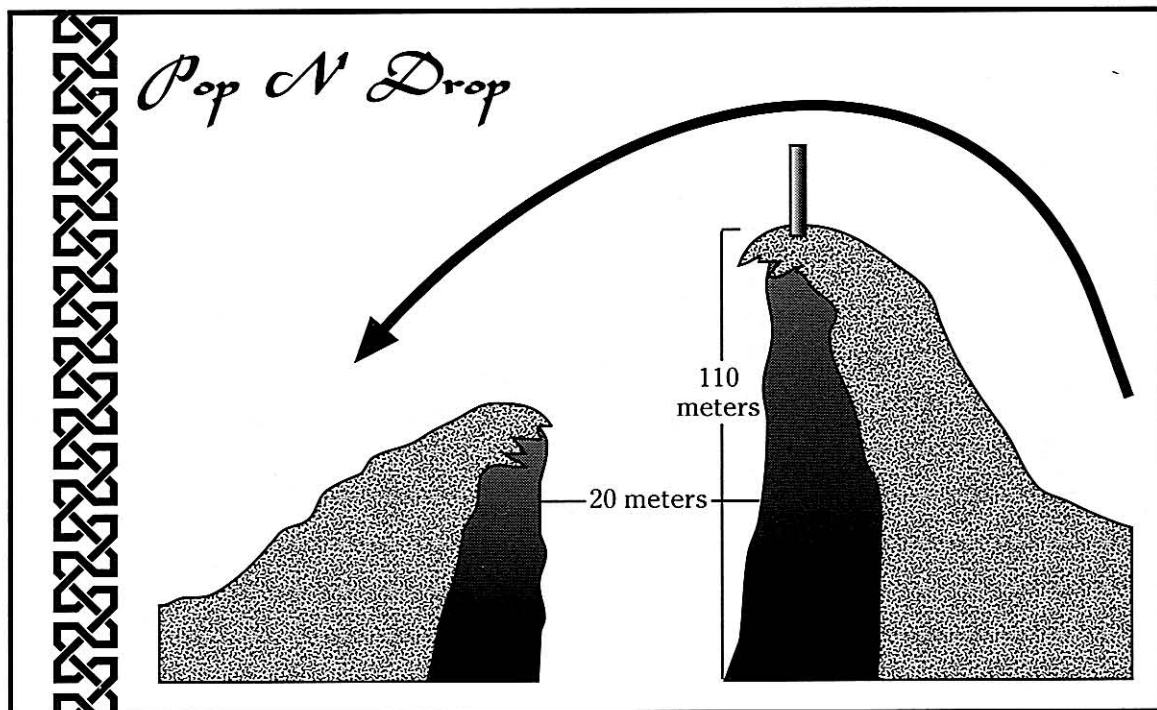
If the rider is successful, the swoop only drops 10 to 15 meters to the bank deep. If there is the slightest miscalculation, riders drop to their doom in the pit, which is at least 100 meters deep (and often lined with spikes at the bottom for good measure).

In the Outlaw features, there is a dangerous variation of this fence known as the Suicide Peak. The initial bank slopes upward at 15 to 25 degrees and the opposing bank, across the ravine, drops 20 to 25 meters below its counterpart. The distance between the banks is an eye-popping 50 meters.



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## Luzitall

**Fence Type:** Water Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** Varies  
**Difficulty:** Moderate—Very Difficult  
**Level:** All

And what is the greatest spectator attraction of all the challenging fences on the course? The water complex! Built deeply into a ravine of rock and dirt, the 5-kilometer channel is transformed into a winding arena of increasingly difficult hairpin turns and zigzagging curves that test the rider's ability to navigate under duress. Spectators watch from the security of the bluffs some 50 meters above the water as racers speed into the complex.

Repulsor buoys are set up every few meters (at varying heights) to increase the difficulties. If that isn't enough to trouble the racers, a series of water jets and hose units are activated whenever a rider approaches a certain area of the complex, spraying a powerful water stream at the startled racers as they speed by.

Powerful turbines and water generators, buried beneath the surface of the shallow river bed, churn the water, making for additional difficulty. Some riders have become so skilled in the water complex as to kick up a spray of water to deter opponents from following too closely.

The Luzitall is the largest of all the complexes and contains seven to ten hazards. Rescue squads and medical droids are often heavily

concentrated in this area. While the water offers a soft landing for unseated riders, the sheer cliff walls tend to make this a deadly obstacle.

## Tarkin's Shears

**Fence Type:** Modified Water Complex  
**Jumping Efforts:** Varies  
**Difficulty:** Very Difficult—Heroic+20 or more  
**Level:** Outlaw only

The Shears is a unique Outlaw complex. It is a variant of the Luzitall water complex except that the walls of the complex are covered with three- to five-meter-long transparisteel pikes. What might be a close call with a channel wall on the Luzitall spells certain doom for the rider who miscalculates on this attraction. On the Outlaw circuit, this is one of the more popular attractions.

## Cantina Hangover

**Fence Type:** Shift-Vertical  
**Jumping Efforts:** 1  
**Difficulty:** Moderate—Difficult  
**Level:** Any

With only half a kilometer to get their confidence back, riders are confronted with a deceptively simple obstacle known fondly as the Cantina Hangover. It is a simple shift-vertical fence built in the shape of a large tube. Riders speed into the dimly lit shaft and experience

the illusion of riding through the back section of a cantina bar. Tables, stools, and bar fixtures are nailed solid to the oblong tube, which rotates in a circular motion for a dizzying effect. The obstacle was aptly named since many riders tend to miscalculate the narrow, spatial dimensions or suffer vertigo and rap their heads against the outer edge of the barrier. A consequence of failure in this course is (at a minimum) a tremendous headache. There have been few casualties at this obstacle, but neck and head injuries abound.

### *Kessel Run*

**Fence Type:** Complex

**Jumping Efforts:** Varies

**Difficulty:** Difficult or more

**Level:** Any

Racers can begin to breathe a sigh of relief as they move into the straightway known as the Kessel Run. Aptly named for its smuggling lane counterpart, the Run is anything but straight. Scattered along the course are gutted starships, space debris and miscellaneous trash to im-

pede the riders' progress. Racers must swerve and dodge in order to maneuver through the area. The complex is supposed to simulate the smuggler's need to dodge from point to point in an effort to avoid sector authorities. (For an Outlaw variation of this fence, see the Shooting Gallery.)

### *Shooting Gallery*

**Fence Type:** Complex

**Jumping Efforts:** Varies

**Difficulty:** Heroic or more

**Level:** Outlaw

In the Outlaw features, the Kessel Run complex is known as the Shooting Gallery. Interspersed between the debris and scrap parts are five to eight mounted heavy weapons (such as E-Web heavy repeating blasters) set to fire as soon as a racer trips the sensor line. The guns are often camouflaged. Needless to say, their presence puts something of a dark variable in this complex and adds a high degree of excitement to the final leg of the race.



Joel Carroll

## *The Triple Crown of Swoopchasing*

And just where does it all lead? Fifteen minutes of fame, the experience of a lifetime, a small fortune in prize money—and for the finest riders, a chance at the coveted swoopchasing triple crown!

Swoopchasing is considered a haven for underworld crime and gangster-related syndicate activity, adding to the sport's infamy. Fortunes are made through betting and it's widely rumored that the main sanctioning organization is controlled by the Hutts.

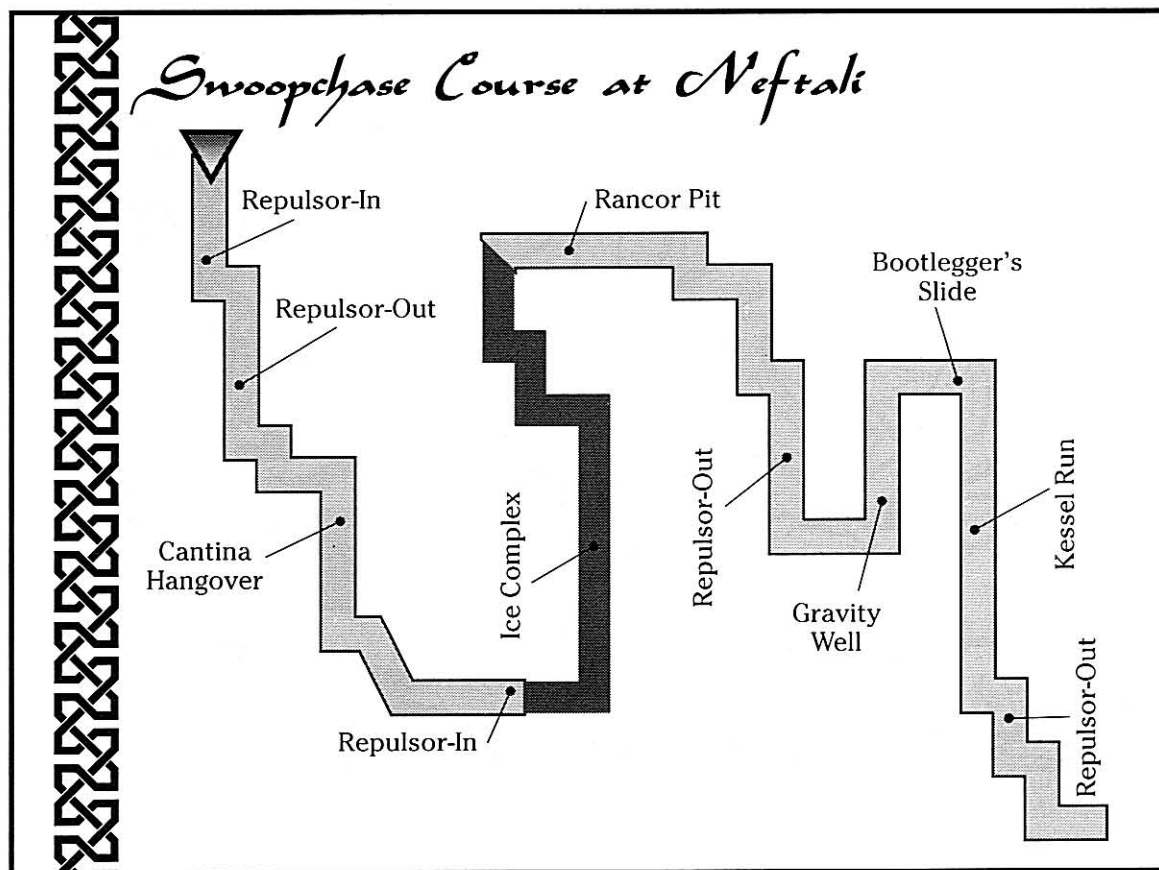
Though many would consider its popularity a boon, swoopchasing is found only in the most indiscriminate, isolated of places. Far from civilization (and the intrusive eyes of the law), swoopchase courses are restricted to wilderness areas such as ice canyons, forests and mountain ranges. In fact, the so-called Triple Crown races are held on some of the most inhospitable, backwater worlds in the galaxy: Socorro, Redcap, and Najiba. A fourth, hotly contested racing feature is held in the frozen

fjords of Neftali, Socorro's sister world. Qualifying races are traditionally run on Tatooine, Omman, and in a few isolated sections of mountain and forest on Garos IV. Blizz Pinnix, owner of The Pits on Stend VI, is bidding for a qualifying race, and considering the respect he has within the swoopchasing community, he's almost certain to get a prime race date.

Each world offers a variety of challenges and pitfalls, complete with a choice of landscapes and hazards to traverse. Unable to resist the lure of excitement, spectators are willing to pay the exorbitant prices of interplanetary transport and lodging, as well as enduring the inherent risks of pirates and troublesome sector patrols, to be a part of the spectacle.

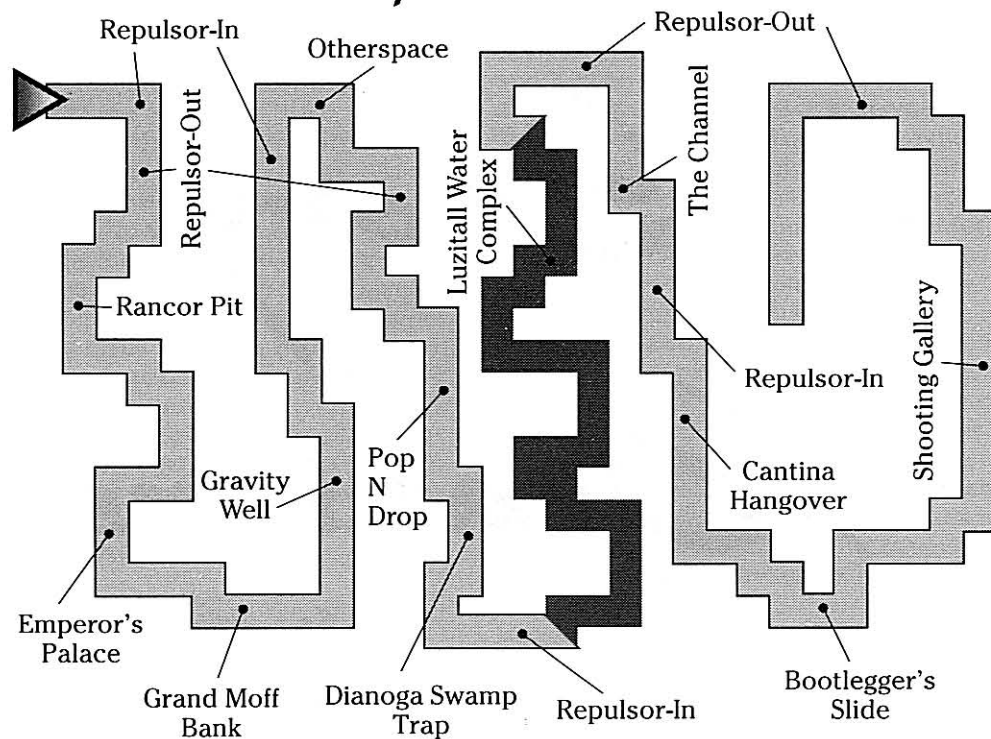
### *Wryk "Wreck-Out" Jobones*

A long-time veteran of swoopchasing, Jobones retired from the racing circuit, taking up the gauntlet of promoting the sport. Having spent the majority of his career at the Outlaw level, Jobones is well-versed in the glories and tribulations of champions. As a promoter, he has become a one-man crusade to improve the safety and quality of advanced level courses. (After all, dead heroes don't sell race tickets nearly as well as live ones.)





## Advanced Sample Outlaw Course



Dressed in the traditional flight suit of the swoopchase rider, he is a common sight at the main tracks. In the off-season, he trains rookie and tourist riders at his home-base on Neftali.

**Wryk Jobones.** *Dexterity 3D+1, blaster 5D, dodge 6D+1, vehicle blaster 6D, Knowledge 2D+1, streetwise 5D+2, value 5D, Mechanical 3D+2, sensors 5D, swoop operation 10D, Perception 3D, bargain 5D, con 6D, Strength 3D, brawling 5D+1, stamina 5D, Technical 2D+2, swoop repair 8D. Move: 9.*

### Caelli-Merced CR-43 Low-Ride

The Caelli-Merced CR-43 Low-Ride Gossbey Racing Edition is the vehicle of choice for swoopchasers. Though there are other popular models on the market, such as the Ikas-Adno 950 series and Kodoos Mac-15s, the Caelli-Merced model retains its popularity with the top racers year after year.

The swoop comes custom-modified for the track, with a regulation cruising altitude of 3.05

meters. In accordance with the regulations, the engines are governed at 350 kilometers per hour, but the composite frame is designed to withstand velocities of up to 800 kilometers per hour. Spin-off vehicles—marketed as street-legal versions of the course racers—include the Caelli-Merced CR-43XA, with a maximum altitude of 55 meters and a top speed of 800 kilometers per hour.

### Caelli-Merced CR-43 Low-Ride

**Craft:** Caelli-Merced CR-43 Swoopchase Racer  
**Type:** Racing swoop  
**Scale:** Speeder  
**Length:** 2.44 meters  
**Skill:** Swoop operation  
**Crew:** 1  
**Cargo Capacity:** 3 kilograms  
**Altitude Range:** Ground level—3.05 meters  
**Cost:** 8,000 credits  
**Maneuverability:** 5D+1  
**Move:** 120; 350 kmh  
**Body Strength:** 2D+2

## Chapter Twelve

# Story Starters

### *All Too Quiet in the Wilderness*

Under the pretense of research, the Mrissi science ship *Zidth* requests permission to land and begin geological studies near the treacherous Adsila Ridges. Seeing nothing too peculiar about the ship or its intentions (the Mrissi are well known for their advanced universities), Soco-Jarel Spaceport allows the ship to land in the open desert, deep in Asilyr tribal territories.

Several thousand kilometers from Soco-Jarel's watchful eye, the ship and its crew have been unusually quiet—too quiet. Port authorities dispatched a four-person team to investigate, but no one has seen or heard from them in 48 hours. The area where the ship landed is plagued with Trauger gas fields, chiru nests, and other hazards. Have the science crew and the investigative team fallen victim to a natural disaster—or was their fate decided by more purposeful means?

In truth, the port guards were captured by personnel from the *Zidth*, who are actually members of an intergalactic slaving ring. The slavers have come here to procure precious cargo—namely, members of the Asilyr tribe, who are noted for their hypersensitivity to

ground tremors. If taken from their homeworld, the nomads will be put to work as slaves in mining operations, in the hopes that their special skills will lead to discoveries of rich ore veins.

Newly hired by Soco-Jarel Spaceport authorities, the characters are brought to the front offices of Aquato Boliscon, who personally asks them to investigate the situation. Once they find the *Zidth*, they learn that the lives of more than 300 Asilyr tribesmen are at stake!

### *Restless in Vakeyya!*

The natives are restless and with good reason. Forty people have vanished without a trace during the last several days. The disappearances have occurred all over—in the open desert, in the cities, in the port, and in the settlements—and always at night. Tensions are high among the tribes of Socorro, who suspect their radical neighbors, the Bharhulai, in the north. However, Benoni Ulte, an Ibhaan'l shaman, reports the Bharhulai have been hardest hit by the disappearances. And if something is not done to explain the abductions, the Bharhulai have threatened war on the neighboring tribes and Vakeyya.

Suspicious signs point to the Kanauer Corporation, which has recently tripled its mining

operations in the Thrugii asteroid belt. Kanauer ships have been frequenting Soco-Jarel Spaceport and a large contingent of Kanauer Corp employees, led by Semler Tevez, are loitering in the city. When questioned about their intentions, Kanauer representatives claim innocence and state that they are simply recruiting local talent to work in the asteroids.

Unknown to all, the Kanauer Corporation has cemented a deal with the Empire to provide substantial ore deposits to Imperial ship manufacturers. The company has to drastically increase its manpower and is doing so by abducting people from Socorro. If Kanauer impresses its Imperial allies, no doubt an Imperial occupation force will soon be headed for Socorro: this operation could threaten the planet's smuggling culture.

Without causing a "diplomatic" incident that might warrant an Imperial investigation and without disrupting the integrity of the native Socorran tribes, the characters are asked to investigate the allegations.

## *The Bodyguard*

The funeral of a prominent Corellian smuggler has brought together the planet's finest smugglers. The ceremony is planned for sunset at the Judges of the Dead. However, among the guests is the person responsible for the recently departed's death: A bounty hunter known only as Kael. The hunter's appearance is unknown.

According to a tip from a Bha'lr infiltrator in the Mantis Bounty Hunter Syndicate, the mystery guest plans to strike again and the next target will be Karl Ancher!

Little is known about Kael, except that his, her, or their apprehension record is near flawless. Is the hunter the bereaved daughter, the disgruntled brother, or the indifferent son—or someone else entirely? How will Kael strike and then escape this gathering of over 300 smugglers?

The characters are secretly hired by the Tribunal of the Black Bha'lr to protect Ancher, without letting him know that he's in danger. The fate of the Black Bha'lr rests on their success.

## *When the Weather Outside is Frightful...*

Abdi-Badawzi has hired the characters to do him a little favor. (He will use any means of coercion to get his way.) It seems that the Twi'lek monarch and his daughter have had a falling out and she's not talking to him. Abdi requests (demands) that the characters go immediately to Neftali, find his daughter, and bring her back to Socorro to see him so that they can solve their problems face to face. Abdi has two warnings: one, Memcha won't come quietly; and two, if they harm her in anyway, Abdi promises to make them pay dearly for it.

As they arrive on Neftali, finding Memcha is the first problem. The feisty port manager does not often consort with the tourists. When they do manage to locate and talk with her, Memcha is so furious with Abdi that she refuses to set foot on Socorro, particularly if it means having to see her father. Memcha will lead the characters on a merry chase through Cordel Cove, from the steamy underground hot springs to the Yiulimar swoopchasing course.

Perhaps if the characters can defeat her Whiphid security team during a friendly game of phrenbi, Memcha might come along quietly. Or maybe, if they survive the daring Yiulimar swoopchase, she might be obliged to help them please her father. If they fail, Abdi is certain to put a price on their heads for pure spite—after all, one does not fail Socorro's most prominent crime lord!

## *Fast Lane Revenge*

After a bit of trouble involving an Imperial Customs inspector, an indigent bartender and his two small children have been thrown in jail and detained as suspected Rebel spies. Nothing could be farther from the truth, but the prosecution of scapegoats is standard Imperial protocol.

Two of the local guards will release the prisoners for a bribe of 5,000 credits each! That kind of money is hard to come by in a few hours—but the swoopchase races have come to town. A 20,000 credit purse is offered to the winner of an exclusive Outlaw feature race. Unfortunately, the characters must face off against Feyyaz Ferdusi, a bounty hunter who has his eyes on the lucrative prize and is willing to use any means to win, especially after being beat by that punk Cyrs in the last swoopchase race!





From: Jobany Cyrs  
To: Idris Ro  
Subject: Socorro Prospects  
Confirmed: REC'D

Socorro's isolation would be a boon to the Alliance in our struggle against the Empire—but at what price? There is a cohesion on this world that outsiders cannot easily comprehend.

Our presence could adversely affect the natives who make this world their home. And worse, by usurping or threatening current authorities, the Alliance risks creating new and dangerous enemies.

As it stands, we are not alone in our fight. The Alliance has friends here—powerful friends—anonymous faces and personalities that lurk in the shadows of this dark planet.

I do not endorse Socorro as a potential site for a base, but it still offers us tremendous benefits. This world is truly the eye of the storm for a large group of smugglers. To interrupt that safe calm would undermine the very definition of freedom—the kind of freedom the Alliance is fighting to revive. We may look on this isolated world with envy, but we should not touch. Indeed, as my ancestor put it, "Socorro is...truly a most splendid place to be."



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# MOS EISLEY

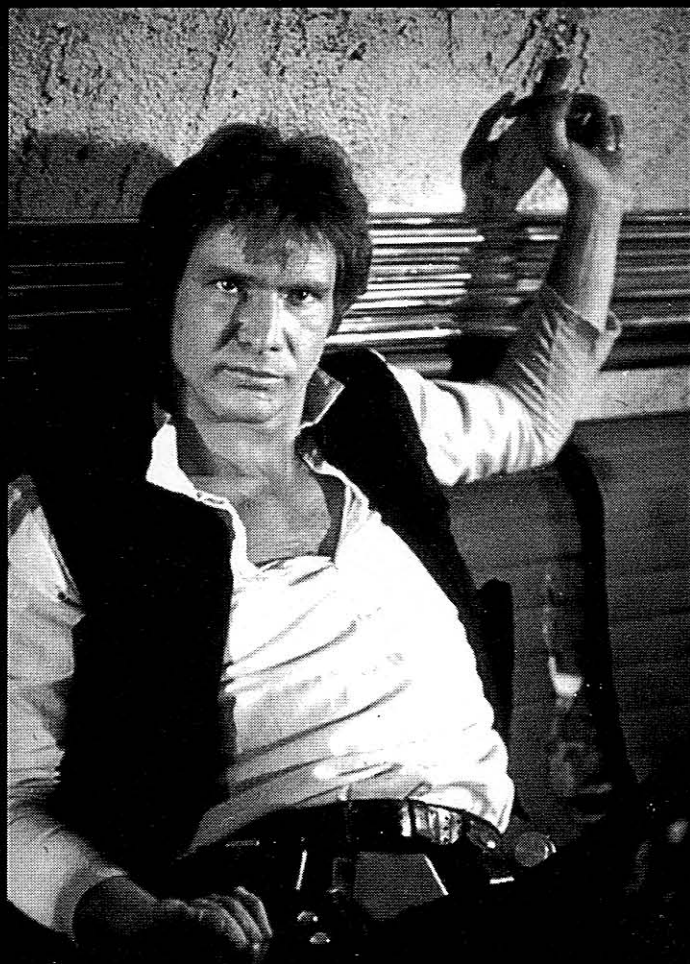
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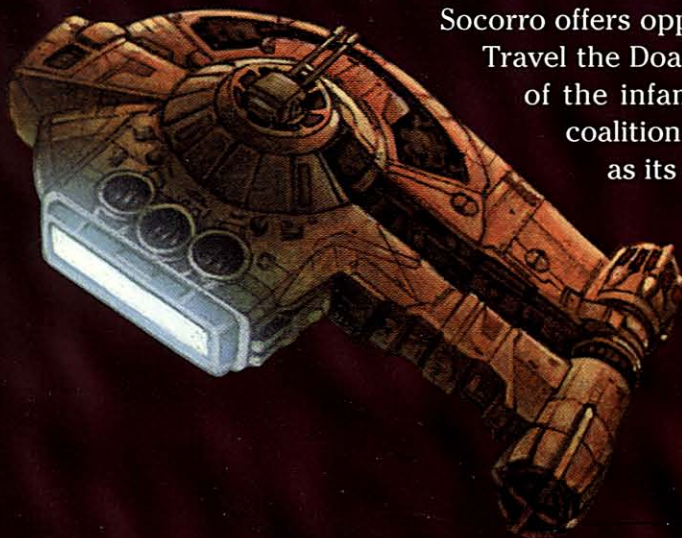
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by Patricia A. Jackson

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