

STAR WARS[®]

ROLEPLAYING GAME

ECHOES OF THE JEDI

EPISODE IV OF *STAR WARS*: DAWN OF DEFIANCE

ABEL G. PEÑA AND JF BOIVIN



CREDITS

DESIGN

Abel G. Peña and JF Boivin

DEVELOPMENT

Rodney Thompson

EDITING

Ray Vallese

TYPESETTING

Ray Vallese, Gary M. Sarli

PRODUCTION

Chad Laske, Matt Burke

CARTOGRAPHY

Corey Macourek, Jason Engle

ART ON PP. 5, 21

Elizabeth McLaren

LUCAS LICENSING EDITORS

Leland Chee, Frank Parisi

DESIGN MANAGER

Christopher Perkins

DIRECTOR OF RPG R&D

Bill Slavicsek

Authors' dedication: To Jim Bambra and all the unsung authors of the early *Star Wars* Expanded Universe.

Map on page 43 constructed with tiles from *Dungeon Tiles 5: Lost Caverns of the Underdark*, designed by James Wyatt and illustrated by Jason Engle.

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WIZARDS OF THE COAST, INC.
P.O. BOX 707
RENTON, WA 98057-0707
QUESTIONS? 1-800-324-6496

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HASBRO UK LTD
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T HOFVELD 6D
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Echoes of the Jedi is the fourth adventure in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign, which will take heroes from 1st level all the way through 20th level in a continuous storyline designed to give both players and Gamemasters a complete *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Saga Edition experience. This adventure begins the second act of the campaign, which consists of four adventures: *Echoes of the Jedi*, *The First to Strike*, *The Core of Corruption*, and *A Reckoning of Wraiths*.

By now, the heroes have been on a series of adventures together and should be well acquainted with one another. Several months have passed since the last adventure, and the heroes should start *Echoes of the Jedi* at 7th level and reach 9th level by the conclusion. With some modifications, this adventure can also be used as a stand-alone scenario or as part of your existing campaign. Over the course of this adventure, the heroes will visit the ruins of a Jedi academy on the planet Almas in search of a Jedi holocron, confront evil forces brought forth by a Sith holocron gatekeeper, and come face to face with Inquisitor Valin Draco.



WHAT IS DAWN OF DEFIANCE?

Dawn of Defiance is the name given to a series of 10 linked adventures that Gamemasters can use to create an entire campaign for their players. Set in the months after the events of *Revenge of the Sith*, the adventures in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign are designed to provide players and GMs with the iconic *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* experience, set against the backdrop of the tyranny of the Galactic Empire. The **Dawn of Defiance** campaign takes the heroes all the way from 1st level up to 20th level, and features an ongoing storyline that progresses over the course of the campaign. Each adventure can also be played individually, and should provide the heroes with ample challenges to gain two levels per adventure. Gamemasters should feel free to use the **Dawn of Defiance** adventures either as an entire campaign or as fillers for their own home campaigns.

If you are a Gamemaster wishing to run the campaign, read the GM's Primer, which summarizes the overall plot of the campaign and the events of each adventure. The GM's Primer is available at the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Web site (www.wizards.com/starwars). The site also features other articles related to the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign, including the official campaign standards and an FAQ.

Warning! If you will be playing in a Dawn of Defiance campaign or in a campaign utilizing its adventures, read no further.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Echoes of the Jedi opens some months after the last adventure, *The Queen of Air and Darkness*. The few Jedi who managed to survive Order 66 are in hiding, hunted down by the Emperor's Inquisitors and stormtroopers—and by bounty hunters encouraged by the large sums offered. One Jedi was recently found inside Darga the Hutt's palace on Cato Neimoidia, but luckily it was by an organization opposed to the Emperor's tyrannical rule. Thus, Jedi Master Denia joined Senator Bail Organa's small rebellion, now headquartered in a secret fleet of ships spearheaded by the Nebulon-B cruiser *Resurgence*. The fleet's focus is the investigation of a top-secret Imperial military operation called the Sarlacc Project. The existence of the project has been revealed to Organa by an Imperial defector, Admiral Gilder Varth.

The heroes who rescued Master Denia have spent the past months investigating the Sarlacc Project and pursuing other ventures to further their individual careers, though they never lost contact with Senator Organa. However, Captain Sirona Okeefe, who transported the heroes aboard her ship the *Banshee* during their early adventures, has decided to part ways and take her chances with a more lucrative smuggling business. Left without a fast transport, the heroes should have been able to purchase their own starship in recent months, either with credits they acquired or by getting a bank loan. (If necessary, Senator Organa used his influence to smooth out any difficulty the heroes might have had and recommended a reputable banking institution. He might even have lent them the credits for a down payment, which could have unfolded as part of a side quest.)

For the heroes' new ship, you can use the stock YT-1300 statistics in the Saga Edition Core Rulebook or the Ghtroc 720 statistics in *Starships of the Galaxy*. (If you don't have *Starships of the Galaxy*, you can download the Ghtroc 720 from the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* Web site at <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=starwars/article/SotG1>.)

Aside from furthering the training of Jedi heroes, Master Denia, now back to full health, has been meditating on the possibility of a link between the Sarlacc Project and the slaves rescued by the heroes (at the end of the last adventure). But her ability of *farseeing* through the Force is limited, and she has encountered road blocks where there should be answers. One possible solution has been revealed to her: If she were to obtain a rare Jedi holocron, she might be able to augment her Force abilities. By doing so, she could better assist Senator Organa and the heroes with their goal of foiling the Empire's nefarious plans. To accomplish this, she requests the heroes' help.

Unknown to the heroes, Inquisitor Valin Draco felt a strong tremor in the Force while they were all in close proximity over Bespin—a tremor the Inquisitor hasn't felt since in the presence of his old master. In the course of *Echoes of the Jedi*, the heroes will come face to face with the Inquisitor for the first time inside the ruins of the Jedi academy on Almas. Although the meeting appears to be one of pure chance, there might be a greater force at work.

Over the course of the campaign's second act, the heroes will learn a bit more about Denia's past, her tutelage of Inquisitor Draco, and the Sarlacc Project. Additionally, this campaign arc concludes much like *The Empire Strikes Back*, with a series of bad things happening to the heroes. The events of this act are darker in tone but shouldn't be a series of nothing but down notes. The heroes should reel from their battles, but they also should have a chance to succeed and make progress.

Echoes of the Jedi will give existing Jedi heroes a chance to use their abilities to the fullest and allow new Jedi trained by Master Denia to practice what they have learned. But the adventure is not designed for Jedi alone. Heroes of other classes will also contribute their unique talents and skills to resolve conflicts.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Abandoned and half buried in the sands of Almas for more than a millennium, Darth Rivan's fortress has been recently invaded and pillaged by Jedi and Sith cultists. His tomes, amulets, and other artifacts have been stolen. Even the corrupt spirit of his failed apprentice Darsin, left behind as the stronghold's guardian, has been defeated. But Rivan's sarcophagus has been found empty.

In truth, the remnants of his dark influence has lingered for centuries in a diluted state in the cold, desert wastes surrounding the fortress, inching gradually toward the Force nexus over which the Jedi built their academy. This dark energy is responsible for the death of the world's kaluthin plant—which Rivan himself engineered so long ago—as death and decay slowly spreads outward from his fortress. The recent destruction of the Almas Academy has strengthened this evil energy in this region. The spread of the dark side across Almas has left behind a blight of withered kaluthin that is visible from orbit. The power of the dark side in Almas has also attracted other creatures that feed on the Force, and they have followed it to its source in the bowels of the ravaged Jedi academy.

The residents of the city of Forard, still reeling from the destruction of the academy at its center during Order 66, made an effort to go on with their lives, but they couldn't escape the impact of the dark side. Over a few short months, many local citizens inexplicably became violent, crime rose far beyond what local police could handle, and some people simply dropped dead. Fear and death quickly left the city deserted as residents relocated to other planets in the system with help from the now-independent Cularin Militia.

After months of interrogating Force-sensitive prisoners, Inquisitor Draco learned of a holocron in the Cularin system that supposedly contained ancient Sith knowledge. He swept the system for Jedi who might have survived the Almas Academy bombardment but did not find the refugees protected by Cularin's natives, the Tarasin. Draco arrived at the academy ruins and was immediately entranced by an intoxicating surge of the dark side. Attempting to locate the source of this power, Draco went into the sublevels of the Jedi academy, where he chanced upon a fortunate discovery.

Deep within the academy was the Sith holocron he sought, which once belonged to the Sith Lord Darth Rivan. Moreover, the growing dark side energy on Almas had suffused the Rivan holocron with a powerful evil. As a result, the holocron's gatekeeper took on a life of its own, believing itself to be the actual spirit of Darth Rivan, and it gained the power to activate itself and act of its own free will. Draco learned much from the faux Sith Lord spirit, and he remained in the academy to study the holocron further.

Master Vhiin'Thorla, a Twi'lek Jedi, who had been away on his homeworld when Order 66 took place, visited the Almas Academy with his Padawan in hopes of finding survivors. When Draco encountered them, a fierce lightsaber duel ensued, and Draco's protégé Raik Muun used trickery to induce Thorla's Padawan into a murderous rage directed at his own master. Thorla was forced to kill his own Padawan in self-defense, and, wracked with grief, was easily captured. Draco imprisoned the Jedi Master in a Force-annulling Universal Energy Cage. For a week leading up to the heroes' arrival, Draco has conspired with the holocron gatekeeper to break Thorla and turn him to the dark side.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Echoes of the Jedi opens with the heroes being sent to the planet Almas, in the Cularin system, to retrieve an ancient holocron from the ruins of the Jedi academy that once stood there. En route they are attacked by pirates, and eventually they make their way down to the surface of the planet. Delving deep into the ruined academy, they fight off evil dark side creatures, zealous followers of an ancient Sith lord, monstrous

beasts, and the crumbling ruins of the academy itself. Finally they encounter Inquisitor Draco, who has fallen strongly under the sway of an evil Sith holocron gatekeeper. After doing battle with Draco, the heroes should recover the holocron and escape the collapsing academy, returning with the artifact to the *Resurgence*.

OPENING CRAWL

If you wish to have an opening crawl before the adventure, consider using the boxed text below.

STAR WARS: DAWN OF DEFIANCE

Episode IV

ECHOES OF THE JEDI

It is a dark time in the galaxy. The Jedi Knights, peaceful guardians of the Old Republic, are all but extinct, exterminated by the Emperor's sinister agents.

But a few Jedi still survive, exiled from the galaxy they once protected and leaving echoes in the Force behind. The Emperor has sensed these remnants and seeks to control them, leaving no chance for future Jedi to arise from the ashes.

Most Jedi stay in hiding, some try to foil the Empire without revealing their existence, and others seek links to their former way of life, risking the wrath of the Emperor in hopes of re-igniting the flame of their ancient order . . .

PART 1: MISSION TO ALMAS

Before starting the adventure, you should bring the players up to speed about what their characters have been doing since the end of *The Queen of Air and Darkness*. Afterward, read the following text aloud to them. It takes place in a briefing room aboard the *Resurgence*, where Master Denia briefs the heroes on a new mission.

"Your help to our cause in the last few months has been invaluable and your dedication exemplary. During my recovery, I had time to reflect on our goal—to discover the purpose of the Sarlacc Project.

"While studying at the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, I learned about holocrons—recording devices into which Jedi stored their wisdom to pass on to future generations. Some holocrons, such as the prized Tedryn Holocron of Jedi Master Ashka Boda, were tailored toward helping Jedi Masters penetrate the secrets of the Force. Even beings already trained in the Jedi ways, like myself, greatly benefit from such a source of learning.

"I summoned you because the Force has pulled together threads of knowledge to reveal the location of a holocron similar to the Tedryn. Shortly after the fall of the Republic, Master Ashka Boda contacted me with news that he had joined the former Almas Academy student Halagad Ventor in trying to form a network between the scattered Jedi survivors of Order 66. During the Clone Wars, an orbital bombardment decimated the Jedi Academy in the Cularin system, and if any artifacts have survived, common sense suggests that they have since been stolen. But the Force tells me that the holocron we require is there.

"I've never been to the planet Almas in person, but I knew the headmaster there, a serene Jedi Master named Lanius Qel-Bertuk. I have no current information on the planet, but I can provide you with coordinates and a path through the treacherous comet cloud that surrounds the Cularin system. These were obtained at great expense thanks to Senator Organa's vast connections.

"I feel this is crucial to our cause, because I have sensed a link between the Sarlacc Project and the slaves that you rescued above Bespin. But I have probed the Force tirelessly and at last reached my limits. With this Jedi holocron, however, I might expand my ability to see through the Force and find the answers we seek. Furthermore, I will be able to pass on the lessons it contains to a future generation of Jedi, thus coming one step closer to restoring peace and justice to the galaxy."

The coordinates to Cularin are programmed into the nav computer of the heroes' ship, which should be consulted for additional information about the system. If the heroes have more questions before the mission starts, you should clarify or repeat only what Master Denia already told them. Don't reveal too much, aside from what the heroes' Knowledge checks entitle them to know about Almas (see the sidebar on page 7). The trip takes approximately one day. When they drop out of hyperspace near the Cularin system, the heroes can use the coordinates supplied by Master Denia to navigate the evershifting comet cloud that blocks the entire system.

Several hours after leaving the Corellian Run, your starship exits hyperspace at the calculated point just outside the Cularin system. Exactly as you were warned by Master Denia, you notice innumerable comets of all shapes and sizes occasionally colliding with each other, forming an enormous cloud around the system. Fortunately, you were supplied with a sensor package that analyzes their erratic patterns and calculates a safe path through the cloud. Once past that danger, another jump must be calculated to avoid flying for weeks at sublight speeds. However, this time the calculations are trickier due to large, overlapping gravity wells created by the system's dense planet cores. But you know people who've made the Kessel Run, and this can't be worse than skirting the Maw cluster. An hour later, you again emerge from hyperspace and the planet farthest from Cularin's twin suns comes into view, lambent and mysterious: Almas.

The first thing you notice from orbit is the strange luminescence that emanates from the planet itself. The twin suns are too distant to illuminate the planet, and you are approaching from the side facing away from them. Yet most of the surface emits a faint glow, except for one dark spot where the Jedi academy happens to be located according to your nav computer.

ALMAS

As soon as they near Almas, the heroes' starship sensors start beeping, alerting them to a nearby ship. A modified *consular*-class cruiser was hiding in orbit close to planet's moon Dorumaa and is now coming at them fast, with cannons and tractor beams trained on the heroes' ship.

THE RED FURY BROTHERHOOD

Since the destruction of the Almas Academy, the pirates of the Red Fury Brotherhood emerged as the dominant corsairs in the Cularin system. Inquisitor Draco cut a deal to have them patrol the orbit of Almas while

he investigates the darkness saturating the planet. Policing duties have fallen to one of the Red Fury's most hardhearted and arrogant swashbucklers, the pirate Reddjak. His menacing scarlet vessel, the *Blood Brother*, tries to ensnare and board the heroes' ship within moments of its arrival.

See "Seeing Red" (page 23) for more information on running this encounter. It might turn into a space battle, but the pirates prefer boarding the heroes' ship and fighting them in person. Either way, the heroes should land (or crash) in or near the city of Forard and make their way toward the Almas Academy ruins (see the map of Forard on page 6).



Master Denia

LANDING

The nav computer instructs the heroes to land near the abandoned cluster of buildings formerly comprising the city of Forard. There is no spaceport control to direct them—the landing beacons have been extinguished for close to two years. Landing the ship is not difficult, since the terrain around the town is flat for hundreds of kilometers. However, if the ship was damaged during the "Seeing Red" encounter, the heroes need to make a few Pilot checks to land without incident.

The ship's sensors detect only a few life forms in the vicinity. The planet's atmosphere is cold and has a very high oxygen concentration. The air contains traces of toxins (such as methane and phosphorus), and a DC 15 Survival check reveals that the heroes should wear breath masks, at least while outside the ruins, to avoid being affected.

If they ignore this warning or fail the Survival check, use the Atmospheric Hazards rule for Toxic Atmosphere (see page 253 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook), except the heroes must make the check once per day. In addition, due to the large amounts of oxygen, heroes recover hit points equal to 1.5 times their character level (rounded down) after resting for eight hours (see Natural Healing, page 148 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook).

The academy ruins are located in the city center, and since kaluthin doesn't grow in the immediate vicinity, the heroes must use glowrods (or ignited lightsabers) to light the way. Heroes who have the Use the Force skill automatically detect a strong presence of the dark side as soon as they get within 1 kilometer of the ruins (no check required). Due to the dark side interference, other uses of the Sense Force option of the skill are unavailable to any Force-using character or beast remaining within that range.

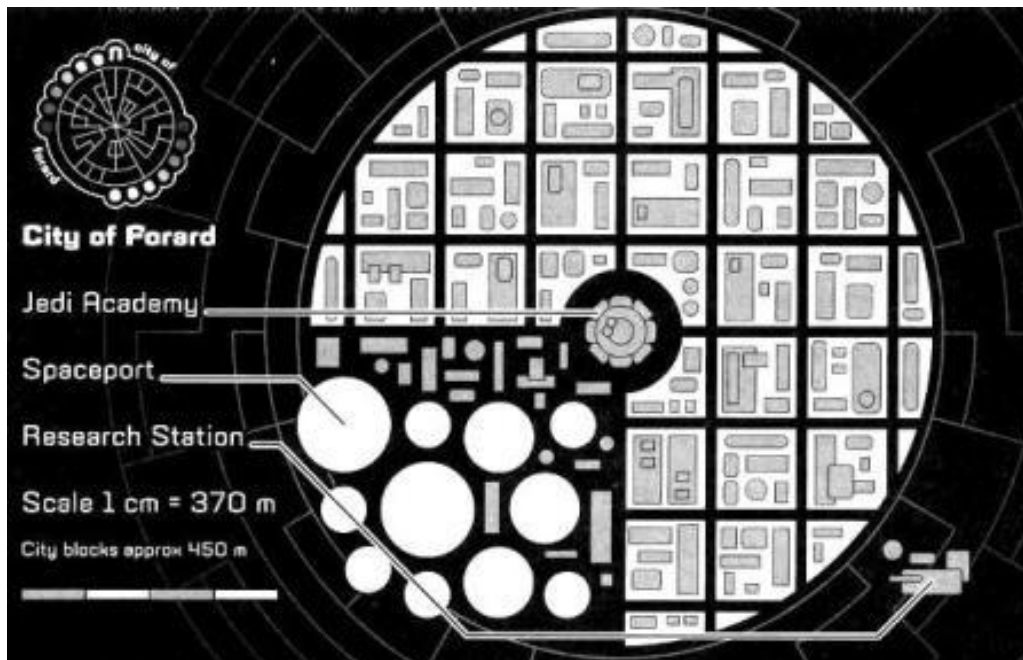
SQUIBS . . . WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE SQUIBS?

The nearly circular city of Forard escaped the fate of the Jedi academy around which it was built. Citizens of the urban sprawl watched in horror and awe as fire rained down from the sky with remarkable pinpoint accuracy, utterly annihilating the academy. But if the people thought they were safe after this precision strike, they were dead wrong. With the destruction of the academy, a series of mysterious calamities befell the city, and now it remains all but lifeless.

Whether the heroes land in this area as part of the encounter with the Red Fury Brotherhood or come to it afterward, read the following:

The city is empty of men, women, and children. Hostile winds whip through the lifeless streets and between the alleyways of abandoned buildings. Unlike most of the planet, here the unchecked kaluthin has taken over, growing up to 2 meters tall in some parts of the city. And yet, the plant fails to mask strewn debris and the occasional decomposing body—the calling cards of looters and bandits who plundered the city after the unexpected attack almost two years ago.

As you walk through the discarded remnants of old lives, you notice the empty twin buildings housing the local children's school. To your left, you see faded graffiti on the wall, below a sign that reads "Remembrance Hall." A collective chill runs down your spines as you make out suspiciously red letters that say, "DEATH TO THE UNFAITHFUL." When you get within a hundred meters of the academy ruins, you realize that all the kaluthin inside this radius has died off. This area is as dead as the entire planet was millennia ago.



ALMAS

Region: Expansion Region

Climate: Desolate wasteland, temperate kaluthin grasslands (high oxygen)

Gravity: Normal

Moons: 1 (Dorumaa)

Length of Day: 38 standard hours

Length of Year: 5,547 local days

Sapient Species: 66% Human, 14% Tarasin, 20% other species

Government: None

Capital: Forard (abandoned)

Major Exports: None

Major Imports: None

Knowledge (Social Sciences)

DC Result

- 10 On the opposite side of the planet from the city is a vast wasteland where no kaluthin has grown for two hundred years. This dead zone is cold and lifeless, and full environment suits are required to survive in it. The area has grown steadily for centuries and now has reached the academy's doorstep.
- 15 In the heart of the wasteland is an ancient Sith fortress, which was abandoned about a thousand years ago. The wasteland has grown at an estimated radius of 1 meter per year, though the death of kaluthin was further accelerated recently, starting about 13 years ago with sabotage by a dark side cult called the Believers. Since the razing of the Almas Academy, however, a radical surge in the dead zone has occurred. The wasteland now encompasses a radius of 5,000 kilometers, with a trail that leads straight to the ghost town of Forard.
- 20 It is rumored that the Sith Lord who built the fortress around 1,150 to 1,400 years ago also created the kaluthin, combining his knowledge of bioengineering with the power of the Force. The kaluthin ability to synthesize the atmosphere of an entire planet is still considered an amazing achievement today. Until recently, scientists researched ways of transplanting the glowing grass to other worlds, but met with little success.

Knowledge (Galactic Lore)

DC Result

- 10 Almas is the fourth and outermost planet in the Cularin system. Over a thousand years ago, a plant named kaluthin took root on the icy, lifeless world, nourishing itself from large underground lakes. Over time, the kaluthin synthesized the planet's poisonous atmosphere (composed in large part of methane and phosphorus) into enough oxygen to sustain carbon-based life. Still, prolonged exposure can be hazardous to one's health due to trace amounts of toxins, and breath masks or atmospheric regulators are strongly recommended.
- 15 The local nights on Almas are not determined by the distant twin suns. Wherever kaluthin grow (everywhere except in the dead zone), their phosphorus-filled leaves absorb the moonlight and make the surface of the planet glow. It takes a while for newcomers to adjust to the dusk to dawn cycles, which are determined by the kaluthin's leaves being either spread open or closed.
- 20 A century and a half ago, the Jedi established a training academy on Almas. The town of Forard was subsequently built, forming a circle around the Jedi academy. Several sadrin farms were found wherever kaluthin grew. All were recently abandoned, however, shortly after the academy was destroyed. Now the academy ruins and the surrounding town buildings are regularly despoiled by salvagers looking for valuable loot.
- 25 The academy was attacked at the end of the Clone Wars by three starships, which took the resident Jedi by surprise. One was a Cularin Allied Force ship that was brought down by Jedi starfighters and crashed into the academy grounds. Another was a mercenary vessel destroyed by allies of the Jedi. The third was a black starfighter that fled shortly after the assault, possibly carrying the party responsible for the attack.

If a hero makes a successful DC 10 Perception check (–5 modifier due to distance), he notices that they are being watched, though he can't determine who or what is spying on them. He catches only shadows or overhears noises of jostled metal and debris. These are Sith worshippers and their Dark Lizard pets that, up until the bombardment, had relegated themselves to Almas' Sith fortress and its immediate vicinity, where the lingering presence of the dark side used to be strongest. The heroes will encounter a pack of Dark Lizards before entering the Almas Academy (see "Dark Lizards of the Sith," page 9) and the Sith "Believers" later within the ruins' obscured depths.

As the heroes make their way to the city center, they reach the outer buildings that surround the Almas Academy—or what *used* to be the academy (see the map of the academy area on page 11). Extrapolated from the Coruscant Jedi Temple's original design, only a few crumbling walls of the Jedi learning center are still visible.

As the heroes near what might have been the entrance to the academy grounds, a cacophony of barely intelligible voices assails their ears. When the heroes get even closer, they spot three rotund beings in space suits towering over five aliens that look like rabid canines with

blue fur. A member of each group is engaged in a tug-of-war over what looks like the upper half of a tarnished silver protocol droid.

"Ged your unholy pseudopoda off dis Holy Artifact, Zquib-thing," the big one says.

The little guy retorts, "From our dead, cold paws, ugly Ugor fiend-being! We did the location finding of this silver-ish, prettissime treasure pre-secondary!"

"It is unfortunate," the half-droid says, "that Jedi Master Lanis never programmed me for a denouement of this particular design."

"Hey, byu!" One of larger ones yells, popping off its helmet and turning part of its flabby amoebic body into an arm to wave you over "Hey byu, tell Zquib zimmers we find dis Holy Artifact infinitely dimes infinitely before dem. Blease!"

Scavengers. Given the scum that usually shows up in the wake of a battle or planetary catastrophe, these foragers seem relatively harmless. This should be evident to the heroes based on the exchanges they overhear. Based on the droid's reference to his relationship with Jedi Master Lanius (whom Master Denia mentioned to the heroes), they should realize that the droid might have information that can help them with their mission. If the heroes do not catch on immediately, feel free to offer them other incentives to recover the droid for themselves, such as having the droid mention knowledge of the academy's ruins ("This never would have happened if I'd stayed in the ruins!") and so forth. When the heroes approach, all parties react with a degree of restrained but visible hope, each trying to share its side of the story before the others.

SplrMuck, the unicellular Ugor holding the droid's left arm, explains that his group found the droid first, fair and square, dragging it out from the Almas Academy ruins. SplrMuck set the droid down in front of the academy entrance for just a second when he saw the heroes' ship set down nearby. SplrMuck's story, if true, seems to be news to Jiminaldomabramsti (or Jimi)—the feisty Squib with a death grip on the droid's right arm—and his furry compatriots. They work for the Squib salvager Squeerie, and Jimi insists that no Ugors were around at the time he found this "treasure" near the temple entrance. Possession is nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine one-thousandths of High Squibbian Law, so if SplrMuck set the droid down, for whatever reason, it's fair game. By contrast, Ugors have turned garbage gathering into a religion, and Ugorian Divine Law decrees that the first being to find a piece of junk consecrates it with his slime on contact, a mark of ownership instantly identifiable and respected by any other Ugor.

As for the half-droid himself, he explains respectfully that he is 7-A39, or SevenAy, a former protocol droid for the Almas Academy. The heroes should not only feel inclined toward helping the hapless droid, but also recognize that SevenAy might have crucial information about the academy's sublevels and perhaps the holocron they're after.

The heroes have multiple challenges in their interactions with the scavengers, but only acquiring SevenAy or a special data cube is critical to the success of their mission. The heroes must negotiate with the Squib and Ugor parties for the droid. The following challenges show how the heroes can affect the outcome of the encounter.

Primary Challenge: The heroes must either save 7-A39 so that they can question the protocol droid or obtain a data cube that will grant access to the computer inside the academy's control room. Although the scavengers begin the encounter hostile toward each other, each group begins with an attitude of indifferent toward the heroes, whom they hope can solve their dilemma. As both groups are really less interested in SevenAy than in getting as many credits as they can, they are receptive to any deal the heroes try to spin in exchange for the droid. If pressed, SplrMuck will give up his claim to SevenAy for 2,000 credits, and Jimi will settle for any spare breath masks the heroes might have (the Squibs didn't realize that the Almas atmosphere was technically poisonous). Once the heroes have acquired SevenAy, the Squibs throw in a net, free of charge, so that one of the heroes can carry the half-droid on his or her back.

If the characters don't barter for SevenAy, the data cube can be used instead to splice into the academy's computer. However, the data cube won't offer the same advice that SevenAy can. The droid has intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the academy, even after the attacks, and can provide directions and explanations of how some systems inside the academy work—for example, that the backup generator can power only one sublevel at a time.

Auxiliary Challenge: If the heroes' ship is in need of repairs after the encounter with the *Blood Brother*, either the Squibs or Ugors have the

necessary components among their junk. A DC 10 Knowledge (technology) check reveals that some of the parts can be used to repair the heroes' ship, and a DC 15 check reveals the exact parts. Any hero who has the Knowledge (technology) skill realizes that the spare parts were taken from the remains of the Cularin militia ship that crashed into one of the outer buildings surrounding the academy.

Award: Obtaining those parts grants any heroes favorable circumstances when repairing their ship.

Auxiliary Challenge: In addition to obtaining components for their ship, the heroes can haggle with the scavengers for other items. The Squibs have the following:

- a battering ram
- a box of eight glowrods
- a beat-up children's holobook of *Busteromuchmacho and the Vermillion Shadow* (Vol. 3 in the *Squib Jedi* series)
- a broken lightsaber that belonged to Dorv'Tilsta, the Padawan of Master Vhiin'Thorla, which will be of use to the heroes later

Meanwhile, the Ugors have these items:

- a clone trooper utility belt (with a medpac and syntherope)
- a Stokhli spray stick (identifiable with a DC 25 Knowledge [technology] check)
- a "holy holocron"

If the heroes show excitement over the holocron, the Ugors demand, in exchange, either a sizeable sum (5,000 credits) or something precious to the heroes. If the characters acquire the holocron, they quickly realize that it's a "holocron" in name only—a cheap marketing ploy used to boost the appeal of everyday data cubes. If the Ugors allow the heroes to inspect the "holocron" before sealing the deal, a DC 25 Knowledge (technology) check reveals that it is fake.

Auxiliary Challenge: Finally, the heroes should try to resolve the scavengers' dispute peacefully, with creative uses of the Persuasion skill (giving nobles and scouts with the Barter talent a chance to shine) and the Force power *mind trick*. This should involve getting the Squib and Ugor parties to understand each other's sacred laws, resulting in apologies from both sides for the misunderstanding. If the heroes anger one or both sides, they fail the challenge.

Ad-Hoc XP Award: If the heroes successfully resolve the Squib-Ugor dispute, award them XP as though they had defeated a CL 6 opponent.

7-A39 (SevenAy)

CL 1

Medium droid (3rd degree) nonheroic 4

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +8

Languages Basic, Binary

Defenses Ref 11 (flat-footed 10), Fort 10, Will 11

hp 10; **Threshold** 11

Immune droid immunities

Speed 0 squares (immobile)

Melee unarmed +3 (1d4)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14

Special Qualities droid traits, immobile

Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge [galactic lore]), Skill Focus (Persuasion), Skill Training (Knowledge [bureaucracy]), Skill Training (Knowledge [galactic lore]), Skill Training (Persuasion)

Skills Deception +9, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +9, Knowledge (galactic lore) +14, Perception +8, Persuasion +14
Systems heuristic processor, 2 hand appendages, translator unit (DC 10), vocabulator

Squib Scavenger

CL 3

Small Squib nonheroic 4/scoundrel 2

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +2

Languages Basic, Squibbian, Old High Squibbian (Squib Trade Language)

Defenses Ref 16 (flat-footed 15), Fort 12, Will 12
hp 20; **Threshold** 12

Speed 4 squares

Melee unarmed +3 (1d3)

Ranged blaster pistol +5 (3d6+1)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** -2

Atk Options Coordinated Attack, Point Blank Shot

Special Actions Knack (Persuasion)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities natural diplomat

Talents Knack (Persuasion)

Feats Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Knowledge [technology]), Skill Focus (Persuasion), Skill Training (Deception), Skill Training (Gather Information), Skill Training (Use Computer), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Deception +9, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (technology) +9, Persuasion +14, Use Computer +9

Possessions assorted junk, blaster pistol

Natural Diplomat—Members of the Squib species are naturals at negotiating. They have a species trait that grants a +5 competence bonus to their Persuasion skill when using the Haggle option.

Squibs are small, furry humanoids with tufted ears. Their fur ranges from deep red to brilliant blue, and they have large yellow or red eyes. They are known for their fearless curiosity, shameless overconfidence, and love of haggling. They are enthusiastic scavengers, and often find fistfuls of credits in the detritus that others discard.

Ugor Forager

CL 3

Medium Ugor scout 3

Force 2

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +7

Languages Basic, Bocce, Squibbian, Ugor

Defenses Ref 15 (flat-footed 5), Fort 16, Will 14
hp 35; **Threshold** 16

Speed 4 squares

Melee mace +3 (1d8+2)

Ranged blaster pistol +3 (3d6+1) or
 ion pistol +3 (3d6+1 ion)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Atk Options Trip

Abilities (default) Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 12

Special Qualities amorphous nature

Talents Barter, Jury-Rigger

Feats Extra Second Wind, Shake It Off*, Skill Training (Persuasion), Trip, Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +7, Initiative +6, Knowledge (technology) +8, Mechanics +8, Perception +7, Persuasion +8, Pilot +6, Survival +6

Possessions blaster pistol, ion pistol, mace, flight suit, various items of value

Amorphous Nature—Ugors are amoebalike shapeshifters and may alter their abilities at will. As a full-round action, an Ugor can raise or lower any physical ability by a maximum of 5 points, but each point must be transferred from another similar ability (such as Str, Dex, and Con). Abilities cannot be altered more than 5 points above or below the Ugor's original scores. Bonuses and penalties (to skills, defenses, attacks, and so on) have to be adjusted accordingly.

** This feat cannot be used if the Ugor lowers his Con score below 13.*

Ugors are single-celled beings. However, that single cell grows to be 2 meters across. An Ugor can extrude as many as thirty distinct pseudopodia, which serve as limbs, manipulators, or sensory organs. Ugors often have a "default" appearance, roughly humanoid, to deal with multicelled beings. Ugors see scavenging as their business and their religion. They are often selfish, unfriendly by nature, and concerned only with garbage and food. Lying and cheating are Ugor virtues, and they are highly competitive with Squibs, whom they consider their mortal enemies.

DARK LIZARDS OF THE SITH

Immediately after the heroes resolve the conflict between the Squibs and the Ugors, all are besieged by dark side reptiles that emerge from behind the broken chunks of the academy tower. The heroes' only warning before the assault is a spine-chilling snarl and SplrMuck's gurgling vociferation, "Holy irreducible garbágina!" See "The Believers' Pets" (page 25) for more information on running this encounter.

If the scavengers were receptive to the heroes before, they consider the heroes comrades now that they have shed dark side blood together. After killing the Dark Lizards, if the heroes had not already secured the items they wanted from the scavengers, the Squibs and Ugors turn them over with glee—at a meager 50 credits each. There's nothing they wouldn't do for a friend, after all.

Once the heroes have secured their prize (either the half-droid or the data cube), they can head directly into the Almas Academy ruins. (See the map of the academy ground floor on page 11.)

ENTERING THE RUINS

If the heroes do some reconnaissance outside, they can see that the ruins of eight rectangular buildings surround the tower like ragged teeth. The grounds between them and the main building used to be gardens, but are now littered with ferrocrete hunks of blasted wall and the remains of a military ship that crashed into the north side of the tower. Read the following text aloud:

Soon, you pass the outer buildings and grounds that surround the academy proper. The remains of the circular structure are immediately identifiable as Coruscanti in design. The majestic white marble tower lies toppled on the ground.

Once you pass the yawning entrance, where the 5-meter-high double doors were ripped from their hinges by someone who valued only their material worth, you find yourselves in the entry hall. Even with all the surrounding devastation, the wonder of this place remains palpable. The few interior walls still standing are also made of white Selonian marble, lined with thick veins of silver that form into knots where wall and floor meet. Inlaid cases carved into the entry hall walls are set at about a meter off the floor. Dust-free spots inside them show that their contents were stolen rather recently.

Only some sections of the ground floor remain accessible. Most of the corridors were blocked when the upper floors caved in during the bombardment. You must make your way over or under a row of once-dazzling columns at the hall center, now shattered into pathetic fragments. At the other end, past the cracked bust of a venerable Twi'lek Jedi, the only unobstructed path leads to the fountain chamber.

Once there, you find yourselves in a large, circular room, half of which is completely caved in. There are five marble benches lined up along the curving wall on the left and an exit at the other end, which leads to another dark corridor. While the farthest half is filled with debris, in the middle of the room sits a magnificent fountain. From its center extends an impressive sculpture of a large humanoid hand, palm out in a welcoming gesture. The work of art is cracked from the impacts it suffered during the attack. The fountain waters stopped bubbling a long time ago, and at the bottom of the dried-up pool is a dark, viscous substance that seems to slightly alter its shape. Must be a trick of the light. There seems to be nothing of interest in this former contemplation chamber.

If the heroes go directly to the exit, skip to the next encounter. If at least one hero tries to touch the black substance, add the following:

As you approach the black substance that lies at the center of the fountain, a tendril of ooze lashes out faster than the eye can see, and a profound cold engulfs you for a second. Before anyone realizes what has happened, the puddle of ooze disappears down the fountain water shaft.

Each hero in a square that is adjacent to the ooze is attacked by one tendril. The attack is considered a surprise, so the heroes are flat-footed (no Dexterity bonus to Reflex defense) and cannot act in the surprise round. Each tendril attacks at +10 and deals 1d8 points of damage. The creature is a t'salak and will be encountered in the lower levels of the academy. It has been lying in wait as a sort of sentry, but it doesn't use its powers on the heroes just yet.

CAVE-IN

The right path on the ground floor is pretty clear-cut. The holomap contained within SevenAy or the data cube is useful only once the heroes reach the sublevels. Still, if the heroes ask, the droid reveals that the inaccessible rooms on the ground floor used to be offices and classrooms, the lightsaber training room, and the grand lecture hall. The only way downstairs is via an empty turbolift shaft located past the fountain chamber and to the left. But before they reach it, the heroes' passing causes a wall to cave in—a wall that was sustaining the ceiling by a hairpin.

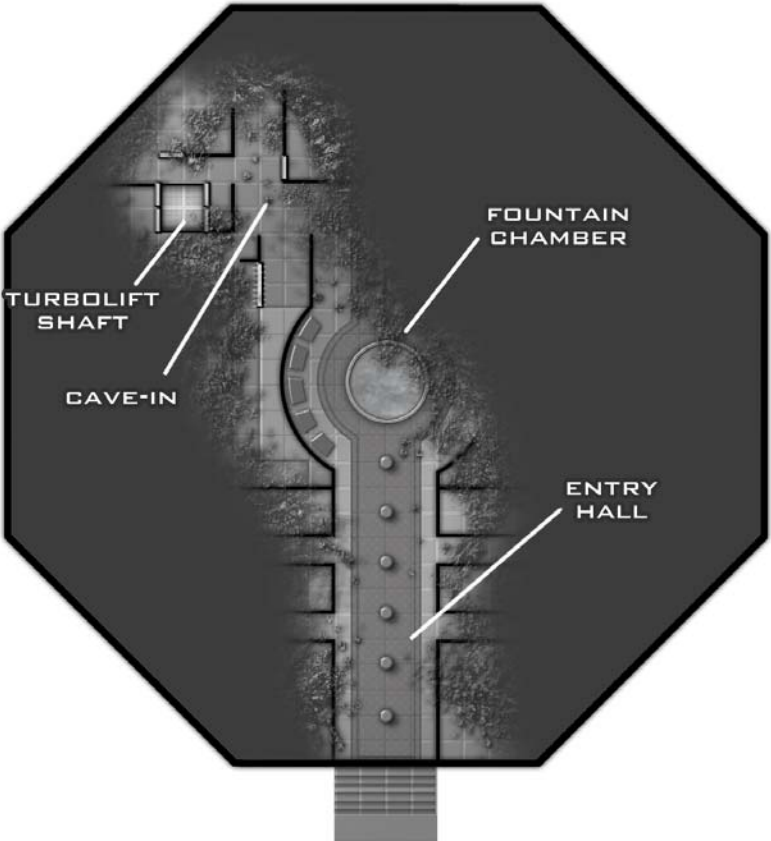
The falling debris attacks at +5 and deals 8d6 points of damage. Heroes can make a DC 15 Acrobatics check as a reaction to tumble out of the way and take half damage. Any hero who fails the check by 5 or more gets caught beneath a lump of ferrocrete. A successful DC 15 Strength check or DC 25 Move Object check is required to remove it (up to four characters may combine their efforts).

If the heroes survive, they reach the turbolift shaft. It shows signs of recent activity, and heroes who make a Survival check will know that there were several humanoids (DC 23) who passed here in the past few days (DC 27). There are no handholds inside the shaft. To descend, the heroes must climb down or use an item such as a syntherope. The turbolift shaft descends for 15 meters (10 squares) before reaching the first sublevel.

**ALMAS
ACADEMY
AREA**



**ALMAS ACADEMY
GROUND FLOOR**



PART 2: DOMAIN OF EVIL

While the ruined ground floor above had at least some reflected light streaming in, the underground level is pitch black. As the heroes scurry down the empty shaft, they must rely on their glowrods to light the way. You should keep in mind the effects of blindness for any area that is not illuminated (see *Blindness*, page 254 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*, and *Visibility*, page 257). Beneath the heroes is a rubble pile that fell inside the shaft, blocking the path north to the vehicle hangar, but the south exit out of the turbolift is clear.

Once outside the lift shaft, the heroes find themselves at the intersection of two corridors that form an "L" shape (see the map of sublevel 1 on page 19). A thin coat of dust covers the floor, disturbed in places where several beings have recently traveled. The walls are constructed of reinforced white duraplast. The corridor going east leads to several small study chambers and the remains of a control room, before being blocked by a cave-in (see "Control Room," below). The corridor going straight (south) has two blast doors (see "Generator Room," below) and turns left about 30 meters down (see "Library," below).

CONTROL ROOM

All meditation chambers (each about 4 meters wide by 10 meters long) are empty, so the main feature of this northern area is the control room. There is no power to this level, so the blast door must be opened manually. Heroes can jury-rig an external power source (such as a datapad or blaster power pack) on a successful DC 20 Mechanics check. They can also pry open the door on a DC 20 Strength check or simply break it down (DR 15, 20 hit points). If the heroes enter the control room, read the following:

The blast door yields, and you find yourselves in a dark, dank room about 4 meters by 12 meters. On the opposite wall is a large, cracked transparisteel window with a view blocked by enormous boulders and slag. The far side of the room is also filled from floor to ceiling with rubble where the wall and window were not strong enough to hold back the collapsing academy structure. Below the window is a bank of consoles and computers; some have been damaged, with broken screens and severed wires hanging from underneath. But one console seems intact. It has a standard input for datapads and astromech droids.

The heroes might have turned on the power to this level (see "Generator Room," below). If not, they can power up the console with an external source on a successful DC 15 Mechanics check. If 7-A39 is with them, the droid suggests it to the heroes. If the check fails by 5 or more, the console short-circuits and requires extensive repairs. If the check succeeds, the computer turns on. It has a Will defense of 15 and has an indifferent attitude (–2 to Use Computer checks). The heroes can make Use Computer checks as normal to adjust the computer's attitude.

However, the Jedi had locked down the system with restricted access, so the heroes have to plug in either SevenAy (at his suggestion) or the data cube they obtained from the Ugors. The information that can be accessed includes a map of sublevel 1, descriptions of functions for each room (the most important of which is the library), and a dated log showing what vehicles were borrowed from the hangar (located behind the debris-blocked window) and by whom.

Access to the map shows a stairway leading down at the end of the corridor outside the control room, but the heroes noticed earlier that this route is blocked. They must circle the perimeter of the meditation rooms and arrive at the other side of the blocked passageway to access these stairs (unknown to the heroes, that stairway is also blocked by debris; see "Storage Rooms," page 14). The last log entry, dated around the same time as the attack on the Almas Academy, shows that all vehicles were evacuated from the hangar due to an emergency.

To access information about the second sublevel, the heroes must succeed at a DC 20 Use Computer check. (See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19. Draw a version of the map that has no labels, and show it to the players.)

The heroes can issue routine commands, such as turning on the power and opening unlocked blast doors, for either sublevel, but they can do so for only one sublevel at a time. If they turn on the power, the ceiling lights flicker on in the corridor outside. However, the lights are very dim and strobe unpredictably. Be sure to describe this phenomenon to unnerve the heroes as they move about the sublevel.

GENERATOR ROOM

Halfway across the corridor, on the west side wall, are two blast doors. If the heroes turned on the power in the control room, the doors whisk open with the push of a button. If not, they need to be powered up using an external source or forced (see "Control Room," above). Behind both doors, the rooms are of equal size, roughly 12 meters by 20 meters. The first room used to be a repair and maintenance area. Salvagers have picked it clean, but some pieces of junk are still lying around, including empty fuel containers, damaged repair tools, and all kinds of nuts, bolts, and hull plates.

The second room houses the academy's power generator, a huge cylindrical turbine. Close inspection reveals that it is damaged beyond salvation. A smaller turbine nearby is the backup generator, and it is mostly intact. It can be powered on from the computer in the control room or by connecting a datapad directly to it and issuing the activation commands. The backup generator has only enough juice to power one level of the academy at a time, and since the top floors no longer exist, the heroes can use it to power one of the two sublevels.

Once activated, the backup generator will run for six hours before shutting down for a recharge. But the heroes won't know this, so you can surprise them with this fact once the approximate time has lapsed (or at any particularly dramatic moment). The largely empty room also has a functioning repulsor sled, which the heroes can use to haul their gear around or as a battering ram to beat down doors (requiring a DC 10 Pilot check and dealing 2d6+5 damage to any rammed target).

LIBRARY

The southern corridor parallels the one to the north, where the control room is located, except that it is not blocked by debris. This corridor is 42 meters long. Along its left (north) wall are numerous doors that lead to more meditation rooms, and in the center of the opposite (south) wall is a single door. The heroes can ignore the doors, swing left around the outside of the meditation chambers, and go directly toward the stairwell (see "Storage Rooms," page 14). Each meditation room is 4 meters by 10 meters and totally empty aside from a few personal effects, now caked with dust, that were left behind in a hurry. These inexpensive items (not worth more than 5 credits) might include a personal groomer, a

planetary landscape holo-mag, and a recording rod loaded with relaxing music sound slugs.

The most important area of sublevel 1 is the library, located directly across from the southern meditation rooms. The blast door to the library is locked, but it must be forced or powered on (see "Control Room," page 12) before a DC 20 Mechanics check can bypass the lock.

The library is 24 meters by 20 meters. If the heroes expect to find hints about the holocron that Master Denia sent them to retrieve, they will be greatly disappointed. Half the library has been blown away by blaster fire, while the rest has fallen victim to looters, Sith cultists, Almasians, and, finally, Inquisitor Valin Draco. Draco learned the specific hidden location of the Qornah Holocron from Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper and took the ancient teaching apparatus down to the deepest sublevel.

When the heroes enter the Jedi library, read the following:

This library isn't as large as its austere counterpart on Coruscant, but the ruination that greets you is no less dismaying. Even in dim light, you can make out a room that once was filled from floor to ceiling with shelves that housed hundreds of holobooks overflowing with Jedi wisdom. Now, the repository has been pulverized into dust by blaster fire, and the shelves rest toppled at precarious angles throughout the chamber, shattered against research stations and the marble floor. The shelves are kept company by overturned chairs and damaged computers spitting sparks.

About 2.5 meters above you is an open second floor, where even more despoiled shelves, holobooks, and datacards lie. More blood-scrawled graffiti again attests to cultist desecration. The second floor has a catwalk that cannot be reached without a hoversled.

Beneath the walkway ledge, at the eastern wall, a wooden door has been splintered open. Framing it are two bronzium busts, presumably of noble Jedi, one of them decapitated. A small plaque identifies the bust as Jedi Master Qornah. The head lies on the floor, severed in half. Oddly, the inside of the sculpture appears to have sheltered something cubical.

If the heroes inspect the bust of Master Qornah, they notice a hidden compartment that is in the shape of a cube 9 centimeters to a side—just the right size for a Jedi holocron, as described by Master Denia. At the time of the attack on the academy, the Jedi librarian was studying the Qornah Holocron and quickly tucked it away at the first sign of danger. The Sith holocron gatekeeper told Draco exactly where to find the Qornah Holocron, and the Inquisitor cleaved the bust and claimed it.

The splintered east door leads into a study where older documents were held. Unlike datacards, flimsiplast burns easily (even more so in Almas' oxygen-rich atmosphere), so the destruction here is worse. The study also served as the analysis room, and destroyed computers sit on collapsed desks.

Behind the west wall is another room, hidden behind a bookshelf, with no visible entrance. The heroes can determine the existence of the secret room by comparing the map (which combines the three rooms of the library into one large room with no walls or doors) to the size and shape of the actual room. The heroes might also notice the distance between the library door and either end of the corridor outside. A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that a hidden room exists behind the west wall, but not how to gain entrance. A successful DC 20 Use the Force check to sense surroundings reveals the entrance. Otherwise, a successful DC 15 Perception check to search the wall—

coupled with a lot of patience—reveals the mechanism that activates the shelf.

The door has to be powered on or forced (see "Control Room," page 12). If the door is powered on, a successful DC 20 Mechanics check allows the heroes to bypass the lock. Failing the check by 5 or more triggers a silent alarm, which alerts Inquisitor Draco on sublevel 2. Forcing the door automatically triggers the alarm.

QUOTH THE RIVAN

When the heroes find a way inside the secret archive room, they stumble upon a grisly scene. Approximately a dozen corpses of different species, all in various states of decomposition, lie scattered about the room. A descending stairway is in plain view at the other end. When the heroes jury-rig the secret door, read the following:

As the blast door whooshes open, the unmistakable odor hits you like a punch from a Barabel shockboxer: decaying flesh. Strewn before you are about twenty cadavers representing the gamut of alien anatomy and osteology, from Besalisk to Dug to Pinurquan. Judging from the death grip that the deceased have on their weapons, you surmise that two different parties met here a while ago, possibly to cut a deal or as rivals of some sort, and wound up wiping each other out.

You spot the descending stairway on the other side.

This stairway leads to the archives level below and was reserved exclusively for Jedi Masters. (There was a backup stairway access farther north that was sealed up like a bunker, but it is now blocked to the heroes, anyway). To reach it, the heroes must traverse the obstacle course of corpses. A successful DC 30 Perception check (or DC 20, if they actively search the room before going inside) lets them notice motion sensors along the walls in the center of the room, a failsafe installed by the Imperials. If the heroes do not notice the sensors, they automatically trip them, and the blast door comes crashing down. Proceed to "Army of Darkness," page 14.

While tiptoeing through the archive room, if the heroes make a successful DC 10 Perception check—perhaps to see what valuables or weapons the dead bodies possess—they notice a scrap of durasheet at the center of the north wall. If they try to get a closer look, read the following:

A cold breeze from the opened blast door behind you whips into the repository, sweeping up the burnt ashes of ancient Jedi texts. One item stands out, however. At a cursory glance, it appears to be nothing more than a scrap of durasheet, except that it seems to glow eerily. You head over to inspect it and find that it contains a solitary passage, written in a language you don't understand. You lift the unexpectedly heavy fragment, and among the only laser-pen burned words written in a recognizable tongue are two defiled parts of a name: DA-TH R-V-N.

The scrap is all that's left of a tome that belonged to the Sith Lord Darth Rivan. If the heroes have SevenAy with them, the droid can translate the text. It was referred to by Rivan as "the creed of ruin" and is written in Sith. SevenAy translates as follows:

"This appears to be a dead language. Yes, definitely—the Sith tongue is such a peculiar one. The passage appears to . . . oh my. Quite a bleak extract. It reads:

'There is no passion . . . there is solely obsession.

There is no knowledge. There is solely conviction.

There is no purpose. There is solely will.

There is nothing . . .

Only me."

If SevenAy translates this text, a deafening rumble, like that of a giant waking from its slumber, thunders through the surviving academy structure before a violent quake throws everything into chaos. In the library outside, shelves that were still standing shatter as they crash to the floor. The archive room's blast doors slam closed, casting the room into utter darkness.

If the heroes do not trip the sensors or read the text, proceed to sublevel 2, below.

ARMY OF DARKNESS

If the heroes are inside the archive room when the doors shut, they participate in the following encounter. If any heroes are elsewhere at the time, they will not be able to get inside until the encounter is over.

The heroes have triggered a trap involving powerful parasites that animate the corpses of the dead in this room. See "Jacen and the Stalfonauts" (page 27) for more information on running this encounter.

After the heroes neutralize the infected corpses, they can proceed down the staircase. If some heroes were trapped outside the archive room during the encounter, the blast door becomes unlocked 10 minutes after the sensors were tripped. The stairway leads to the second sublevel of the Almas Academy. Once the heroes descend the stairs, proceed to sublevel 2, below.

STORAGE ROOMS

At the end of the corridor, past the meditation rooms and library, the heroes can turn left. At the other (north) end of this corridor, another cave-in blocks the utility staircase leading down, which the heroes might have seen on the map or learned about from SevenAy. Unfortunately, unless they want to spend a lot of time digging through the rocks (12 hours, minus as many hours as the highest Strength bonus in the group, minus 1 hour per extra hero who assists), the utility staircase is not accessible. The heroes might give up or look for another way down (see "Library," page 12).

Along the corridor, halfway to the utility stairway, are two blast doors. They are unlocked but need to be powered on (see "Control Room," page 12). The first room was a storage space for supplies—anything other than food that was needed by a small, self-contained community such as the Almas Academy. This room was heavily pillaged by thieves and salvagers, who left little behind but empty containers. Describe various containers of soap and torn articles of clothing.

If the heroes make a successful DC 15 Perception check, they also notice two surprisingly light strongboxes, each 30 cubic centimeters in size, that are made of smooth, black iron. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (galactic lore) check reveals that the containers are made of Mandalorian iron, which was believed to be impenetrable by the Force. If the check beats a DC 20, the heroes also realize that the claim is false—the iron cannot stop the Force, but the strong alloy is resistant to many types of energy. The boxes have a very strong lock, equivalent to an ultrahigh security lock (see page 151 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook).

The second room is where the Jedi received and kept their food supplies. Most food has been stolen; the rest spoiled long ago. In the

southwest corner of the room is a small kitchen where the residents prepared meals and processed foods. Describe some unidentifiable blackened mounds of rubbish, leftover kitchen appliances, a heating unit, a broken-down refrigeration unit, various utensils, and small spice containers.

SUBLEVEL 2

This sublevel can be reached only via the staircase in the library's secret archive room. The other staircase down is blocked (see "Storage Rooms," above). Upon reaching this area, the heroes immediately feel a deep unease that tempts them to turn back. Force-sensitive heroes must resist a 1d20+5 attack against their Will Defense or take a –5 penalty on their Use the Force checks when using Light Side Force powers. The effect lasts as long as they are on this sublevel. Spending a Force Point can negate this dark side influence. Also, the Sense Force option of the Use the Force skill cannot be used while within range of the dark side nexus that has developed here due to Rivan's lasting influence. (This restriction applies to Draco as well.)

This sublevel is bigger than the floors above, so the map must be consulted as the heroes progress. Encounters are labeled on the map but don't have to be followed in the sequence presented. The encounters marked "Crazed Believers" and "Dreambeast" can happen in any number of rooms at your discretion. You can decide that all unused rooms are empty or permanently locked, or you can detail them as you wish (see the sidebar below for suggestions).

Unless the heroes patch power through to sublevel 2 from the control room, the sublevel is completely dark. The heroes start in the room labeled "stairs up" on the map. From this point, at the end of the corridor on the right, they can access the weapons room (see below). If they go to the left, they pass the refresher (see page 15), travel down a corridor, and finally come to an arch that leads into the underground park (see page 15).

WEAPONS ROOM

This room was visited recently, but the blast door controls were destroyed. Opening the door requires spending 1 hour performing a major repair with the proper tools, followed by a successful DC 20 Mechanics check (see the Repair use of the Mechanics skill, page 70 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook).

If the heroes take the time to repair the door and open it, they find something surprising: a blaster shooting range. After all, lightsaber-wielding Jedi have to practice their shooting skills, too. If the sublevel has power, several holographic targets appear when the heroes enter the room, startling them. There are representations of Gungans, Jawas,

SUBLEVEL 2

Sublevel 2 contains a number of rooms that are not described in this adventure. You can choose to have them empty or locked, or you can detail them as desired. Use the following as quick examples:

Surgical Bay: The walls are sterile white. The room reeks of bleach and, faintly, mildew. A half-dozen tables clutter the center. Optionally, a blast door leads to a smaller nursery room.

Research Laboratory: Here, countertops and transparisteel cabinets contain various instruments and decayed samples of vegetation (such as lichens, fungi, kaluthin, and so on).

Meeting Room: This room contains several chairs and a large oval table with a broken holoprojector on top. Jedi Masters held important meetings here.

Squibs, and various small beasts.

Another blast door leads to a back room. If the heroes have not restored power and unlocked the doors to sublevel 2, they must open the blast door manually (see "Control Room," page 12). If they do so, they find that the back room is an armory. Transparent plexi on the ground shields a small stream that runs along just under floor level. This room has several usable blaster pistols (7) and power packs (20). Everything else has either been stolen or rusted beyond use.

REFRESHER

This is a fairly standard washroom for both men and women. It contains effluvial rinsers as well as refreshers. Along the floor runs a narrow natural stream, covered by transparent plexi.

CRAZED BELIEVERS

As the heroes approach the west arch leading to the underground park, they are attacked by the first of many crazed Humans who wander this level, looking for blood. See "Crazed Believers," page 29, for more information on running this encounter. Feel free to run this encounter more than once in any of the labeled rooms.

Critical Challenge: The heroes must defeat the Believers cultists, who have fallen under the influence of the nearby t'salak. Most cultists have killed each other already, but the few remaining groups (as many as needed, in your judgment) wander about and attack the heroes on sight. They have been exposed to the t'salak's touch so many times that the rage it induces is almost permanent (see the "Oozing Madness" encounter, page 31, for the effects of the t'salak's ability to induce raging madness).

Auxiliary Challenge: The heroes might try to subdue one or more Believers without killing them. They can accomplish this by grappling them and tying them up, stunning them with blasters, or rendering them unconscious. However, this doesn't cure their madness, and as soon as they recover, the Believers will attack again. They must be alleviated of their delirium to be of any use. To do this, the heroes must make a successful Persuasion check against a Believer's Will Defense. Treat the enraged Believers as hostile targets that cannot understand speech and must be converted to a friendly state to break out of their rage. Some very convincing roleplaying by the players might substitute for a skill check (by offering food, for example). A successful *mind trick* check while spending a Force Point also works.

Award: Alleviating the raging madness in one or more Believers provides the heroes with some information. The grateful victims negotiate their release by giving up details on the t'salak. They know where it is and what it does, but they do not know how to defeat it.

UNDERGROUND PARK

All water on Almas is underground, so the academy's Jedi custodians reasoned that building an underground park with a running stream would be in tune with the will of the Force. The stream was discovered while digging the academy foundations. Instead of diverting it, the Jedi requested that the architects integrate the stream into the design—it was they who had intruded on the water's natural course, after all. The Jedi then planted local trees and kaluthin and created a garden around the stream. Occasionally, they took blind coboko fish out of the pond that formed in the park center, adding them to the academy menu.

Of course, all the park vegetation is now dead, blackened by the intense presence of the dark side. The park also contains several bodies of Believers who managed to find the secret stairwell in the library and turned viciously on one another after encountering the t'salak. At the center of the room, beside the pool, is a large pump used to force water to the levels above. It looks like it hasn't functioned in a long time. The

heroes don't have much time to admire the scenery, however. When they reach the park center, read the following text:

You walk into the impressive chamber, crossing a bridge that runs over a clear and soothing stream. To your left is a large pond, beyond which is an artistic elevation made of simple mud and rock. Disharmoniously, dead vegetation and dead bodies surround it all.

As you take in your surroundings, your companions suddenly disappear from view, and you are alone. Solid walls seem to have materialized out of nowhere and separated all of you, at the same time blocking the entrance from which you came. You feel a deep sense of dread when a cruel figure from your past appears right in front of you—someone you never imagined you would see again. You look around for a way out, but your feet don't respond. You try to cry out, but the attempt yields no sound. As if in slow motion, the heartless figure prepares to attack.

This encounter is similar to Luke's experience inside the cave on Dagobah. Each hero finds him- or herself face to face with his or her worst nightmare. The heroes are caught in a combination of *mind trick* (which makes them believe that they cannot walk away or speak out) and a Force illusion (which makes them believe that they are facing an old enemy).

For each hero, choose a character or creature that poses a threat and has some significance to that hero. It could be an enemy, living or dead, from a previous adventure or even from the current adventure. It could also be someone from the hero's past (for instance, an unlikable former employer or a cruel family member). Determine the appropriate encounter for each hero in advance, without worrying about statistics.

The effects of the dark side nexus permeating this place, in combination with the influence of the t'salak (which feeds on the heroes' feelings of hate and fear), create this Force illusion. Heroes who make a successful DC 15 Wisdom check realize that their enemy is an illusion, but this knowledge does not dispel the illusion. The twist is that behind each "illusion" hides one of the other heroes. The trap is designed to cause the heroes to fight each other unknowingly.

Prior to the adventure, ask the players for their character sheets, and record their most important scores (weapon damage dice, attack bonuses and types, defenses, hit points, damage thresholds, Initiative and Perception skills, and so on). Then, when each hero faces an illusion, describe what weapons or items the opponent carries—in other words, the weapons or items used by the other hero. There is no need for an illusion to wield the same exact weapon as the hero behind it, but the weapon should resemble something in the same class (such as a vibrosword, blaster, lightsaber, and so on).

If the number of heroes is uneven, one of the heroes is met by a crazed Believer instead of by another hero (for statistics, see "Crazed Believers," page 29). In this case, the Believer hides behind the illusion of a friend, such as Senator Organa, Master Denia, or even one of the other heroes.

Explain to the heroes that they are all inexplicably isolated from one another. Ask for initiative rolls, and record the results beside each hero's name. As soon as an attack occurs, use the attacker's opposing defense bonus as a target. If damage is dealt, record the number. Pretend that the next initiative turn belongs to the opponent of the hero just attacked, describe the attack, and reveal the damage dealt. If one hero is fighting a Believer, this fight can be incorporated with the others in order of initiative but treated as regular combat.

Allow each character a DC 18 Perception check at the beginning of their turn to realize that something is not right. Success indicates that the hero can tell that what he sees before him is not real, though it

looks as if it could become real at any moment. If a matched pair of heroes goes for 3 consecutive rounds without attacking each other, the entire illusion is dispelled for the whole group, and the angry t'salak attacks. See "Oozing Madness" (page 31) for more information on running this encounter. If the heroes took a lot of damage during the illusion fight, the weakened t'salak does not use its Induce Raging Madness ability. Once the t'salak is reduced to 0 hit points, it stays inert until it regenerates. The heroes don't know this, so if they linger, the creature soon attacks them again.

The only way to contain the t'salak is to imprison it in a Mandalorian iron box (found in one of the storage rooms on sublevel 1) while it is inert. If the heroes leave the underground park while the t'salak is motionless, it won't pursue them, not knowing where they went.

Encounter Example

Here's an example of how this encounter could be run. Assume that the party contains five heroes, so four of the heroes fight each other, while the fifth fights a Believer.

- Vor'en the soldier (Init 20) versus Arani the noble (Init 14)
- Kelko the scout (Init 16) versus Sia-Lan the Jedi (Init 28)
- Deel the scoundrel (Init 24) versus a Believer (Init 8)

Round 1

Sia-Lan is up first, and she's face to face with Count Dooku. But Sia-Lan makes her Perception check and knows that Dooku is dead, so she realizes that the encounter must be a trick. She decides not to attack.

Next, Deel finds himself facing one of his friends, Kelko, who runs madly toward him. Deel asks him what is going on, but his voice is mysteriously soundless. He fails his Perception check and doesn't realize that it's a trick.

Next, Vor'en fails his Perception check and thinks that he's run into a stormtrooper. He pulls out a blaster and fires at the enemy, striking Arani and dealing 8 points of damage. (From Arani's perspective, she's shot by an old friend, who wields a hold-out blaster that she gave him long ago.)

Next, Kelko (who also failed his Perception check) takes out his two vibrodaggers to attack a green, tentacled alien that he once encountered on Zlarbv IV. He slashes at it, dealing 12 points of damage to Sia-Lan. (From Sia-Lan's perspective, Count Dooku attacks her with two lightsabers. The Jedi doesn't understand what's happening—she was sure that the appearance of Dooku was some kind of trick!)

Next, Arani succeeds on her Perception check and tries to convince the phantom that she is no threat, but he doesn't seem to hear her. She has to defend herself, so she pulls out her own blaster and shoots him, dealing 12 points of damage. (From Vor'en's perspective, he's shot by the stormtrooper.)

Finally, the Believer acts, rushing Deel and pummeling him to the ground, dealing 15 points of damage. (From Deel's perspective, he's being attacked by his friend Kelko. Has he gone crazy? Regardless, Deel decides that he must defend himself.)

Round 2

Sia-Lan can't believe it. Count Dooku just attacked and nearly killed her. Maybe "Dooku" is a clone, a doppelganger, or something else, but whatever it is, Sia-Lan was hurt for real and must defend herself. She ignites her lightsaber, preparing to attack Kelko . . .

THERE'S SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THIS PLACE

When the heroes enter one of the rooms labeled "Dreambeast" (your choice), an extreme cold envelops them. The heroes immediately fall into a profound sleep without realizing it. Read the following text:

As you enter the room, your vision fogs momentarily. You shake your head vigorously and feel slightly dizzy. You blink your eyes in rapid succession, then scour your surroundings suspiciously, looking for anything amiss. But everything seems normal. Your friends are all here, and you feel fine now.

Still, there is something familiar about this place . . .

The room is an illusion, a trap devised by the Sith holocron gatekeeper and created by Inquisitor Draco. As the heroes proceed through the sublevel toward the nexus of evil, they are unwittingly immersing themselves more and more fully within Rivan's aura of influence. This is doubly true now that the holocron gatekeeper of the Dark Lord has found a cohort in the Inquisitor, augmenting Draco's powers significantly.

Wherever this encounter plays out, the sleeping heroes discover that the room looks identical to one they've previously visited. If they attempt to exit the room, they stumble into another familiar area of the academy, but not one normally connected to the room they are leaving, creating a disorienting effect. You should try to create the claustrophobia of a recurring nightmare from which the heroes cannot seem to wake. To drive the point home, you can repeat descriptions of academy chambers that the heroes have visited already. Each time, preface the description with one of the following three phrases (preferably in this order):

- There's something's not right here . . .
- There's something familiar about this place . . .
- You've got a very bad feeling about this . . .

The longer their minds remain under Draco's power, the more despair eats away at their confidence and motivation. For every encounter that the heroes relive in the dreamscape, their "dream persona" moves –1 step down the condition track. However, the heroes can have a maximum of three encounters in the dreamscape. During each encounter, the heroes have a chance to break free of the illusion. With their minds playing tricks on them, they need to overcome their own senses; each hero can make a Perception check against his or her own Will Defense once per faux-encounter. If they succeed, they wake up, preventing Draco from further sapping their moral strength. Otherwise, after the third encounter, the heroes awaken regardless, though their condition is persistent.

If any hero avoids Draco's trap entirely—that is, if a hero does not enter the room at all—she does not enter the dreamscape. Instead, she realizes that she nearly fell to a dark side trick and can see her friends lying unconscious in the room. Heroes caught in the dreamscape take note of the "missing" party members, and their interaction with them is limited.

Any hero who avoided Draco's trap sees her sleeping friends writhe and groan in mental anguish. She can't shake them awake, but once per dreamscape encounter, she can try to communicate with them. However, her words will be distorted. The dreamer should be baffled by the gibberish, but a successful DC 15 Intelligence check deciphers the words. If that occurs, the hero can make a DC 15 Perception check (with

favorable circumstances) to realize that he is trapped in a dream state and escape immediately. If the hero fails the Perception check, he goes on to have another déjà vu experience.

Regardless of the manner by which the heroes awaken, immediately thereafter, they must battle a fearsome k'kayeh dreambeast that has anchored itself to the heroes and pursued them into the waking world. See "The Dreams Beasts Are Made of" (page 33) for more information on running this encounter.

When the heroes defeat the k'kayeh dreambeast and its spawn, it disappears as if it never existed. A true k'kayeh will make a stunning appearance at the end of the adventure, but for now, heroes can continue exploring the area.

JEDI PRISONER

At some point, the heroes reach the room where Master Vhiin'Thorla is held. If they pass the room without entering it, they are attacked by the nighthunter that guards Thorla. The blast door is open, and the Twi'lek Jedi Master's powers are kept in check inside a Universal Energy Cage designed to contain Force-users. See "Draco's Best Friend," page 35, for more information on running this encounter.

Once the heroes dispatch the guardian beast, read the following:

The door is completely open. In fact, burn damage all along the 4-meter-wide entrance appears to have enlarged it. A pulsating glow within lights up the darkened room. Inside, you find a spherical energy cage floating on repulsorlifts. The glow comes from a force field that surrounds the portable prison, and behind the bars lies a crumpled humanoid form.

The man, a Twi'lek, meets your gaze with a look of utter despair. Instead of exhibiting hope at the sight of potential rescuers, he quickly looks away, as if to say, "Leave me alone."

This room also contains a thick plasteel table, with traces of a black substance on it and a Jedi robe sprawled across it. Master Thorla is in very bad shape, both physically and mentally. His body is emaciated, and he sports several burns and cuts. To run this dramatic encounter, you must understand the Jedi's backstory (see the sidebar on page 18). The heroes might suspect that the prisoner is a Jedi and decide to free him. If they interrogate him, Thorla tells them to leave him alone and that he is beyond redemption.

The Universal Energy Cage was designed specifically to contain a Force-user's powers. Prisoners in the cage can, however, use the Force at very low levels, such as to heal themselves. The cage's functions are controlled by a handheld remote that is currently in Draco's possession. The cage has no visible controls, and the only way to open it is to destroy it, which endangers the life of the prisoner within. Each reinforced durasteel bar has a damage reduction of 20, 150 hit points, and a damage threshold of 25. The cage is also built with a contact shock field, and every time it receives an automatic miss or a blow that deals 15 points of damage or more, the Jedi inside receives a shock that deals 2d8 points of stun damage (see Stunning, page 162 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook). When this happens, Thorla yelps in pain, but does not otherwise react.

Once the Jedi is free, whether he is conscious or not, the heroes notice that his skin is charred in multiple places, showing that he has suffered many shocks. He has a persistent condition that has moved him -4 steps down the condition track, which can only be removed by receiving extensive, long-term medical and psychological care. If Thorla is conscious, he does not run away or try to escape, but he won't answer the heroes' questions, either, wanting only to be left alone. He's been

fighting off Draco's attempts at turning him to the dark side and has fallen into despair. Since the loss of his Padawan, Thorla has become disconsolate, and any mention of Jedi or Imperials angers him. In game terms, he has an attitude of unfriendly. If the heroes physically push or restrain him, he becomes violent and attacks.

This encounter is a chance for heroes with the Persuasion skill to be very useful. With some good roleplaying and a change of attitude to indifferent, Thorla might be coaxed into revealing that he *was* a Jedi, but that he no longer has the will to go on. If the heroes change his attitude to friendly, Thorla answers questions about his captors. One way to accomplish this is by showing Thorla his Padawan's broken lightsaber (if the heroes obtained it from the Squibs).

Thorla can provide the following information:

- He knows Inquisitor Draco and Raik Muun, and he suspects that they are inside the archives room in the southwest corner of the sublevel.
- If asked about a holocron, he reveals that indeed the Inquisitor has one in his possession.

Thorla refuses to accompany the heroes willingly. He says that all the Jedi are dead and there is no reason to go on—not with sadistic torturers like Draco running the galaxy. If told of Master Denia, the Twi'lek says he's never heard of her, and besides, one more Jedi won't make any difference.

In any case, when the heroes realize that the broken Jedi will not budge, they should move on. Proceed to Part 3: Draco's Lair (page 20). As long as the heroes leave Thorla alive, he might appear again later in the adventure.

EMBRACING YOUR DESTINY: DISCOVERY

Heroes who have chosen (or secretly been given) the Discovery destiny take a major step toward it when they free Master Thorla from his cage. After the encounter ends, grant those heroes the 24-hour destiny bonus.

VHIIN'THORLA, SURVIVOR OF ORDER 66

A green-skinned Twi'lek, Vhiin'Thorla studied at the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, where he befriended fellow student Devan For'deschel. Thorla eventually became a Jedi Master and a skilled duelist, participating in many missions. One of these missions changed his life.

About a year before the Clone Wars sparked, he and his Padawan Kritz Drassarb were sent to investigate a band of pirates in the Mid Rim. After two months, the ruthless organization was dismantled, but at the cost of Kritz's life. Thorla blamed himself for his student's death and exiled himself to his homeworld of Ryloth. He sought solitude in the planet's badlands but soon found a new purpose.

A few months into the Clone Wars, Master Devan sent envoys to Ryloth to invite her old friend to join her at the Almas Academy as the new Master of Lightsabers. When the envoys finally found Thorla, they discovered that he had spent the last year rescuing Twi'lek prisoners from slavers and had formed a community called the Enclave. Thorla had also taken on a new Padawan, a young Lethan Twi'lek named Dorv'Tilsta. Witnessing all the good that Master Thorla was accomplishing, the envoys respected his decision to decline Master Devan's offer.

Increasing slaver attacks forced Thorla to delay a visit to the Almas Academy. Then Order 66 came. Thorla felt the death of his fellow Jedi through the Force and moved the Enclave to a more secure location, but after two long years, he risked exposure to learn more about the current state of the galaxy. Repulsed by what he discovered, he decided to investigate the fate of his old friend Devan on Almas, taking his 10-year-old Padawan with him. What he found was a demolished academy at the heart of a ghost town. He probed the ruins, winding his way down to the deepest sublevel, where he knew the secured archives were located.

Fate was not on Thorla's side. Inquisitor Draco and his retinue arrived shortly thereafter, and a fierce lightsaber duel ensued. However, Draco's Dark Jedi lapdog Raik Muun held Thorla's inexperienced Padawan hostage and induced a murderous rage into young Dorv with her evil t'salak, forcing him to attack his own master. A tortured Thorla fended off his Padawan, while Draco threatened to turn the boy to the dark side if Thorla refused to fight. Remorsefully, Thorla finally severed Dorv from life and misery. At that moment, the Twi'lek master snapped and fell to the dark side, racked with guilt over losing another Padawan. He desired to die, but the Imperials denied him this wish. He's been held in a Universal Energy Cage ever since, meditating on how he lost his way as a Jedi.

Vhiin'Thorla

CL 13

Medium Twi'lek Jedi 7/Jedi Knight 5/Jedi Master 1

Force 5; **Destiny** 1; **Dark Side** 4; Strong in the Force

Init +15; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +11

Languages Basic, Huttese, lekku, Ryl

Defenses Ref 31 (flat-footed 26), Fort 30, Will 26

hp 147; **Threshold** 30

Immune fear effects

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +13 (1d6+6) or

lightsaber* +18 (2d8+6) or

lightsaber* +13/+13 (2d8+6) with Double Attack

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +13

Atk Options Double Attack*, Martial Arts I

Special Actions Melee Defense, Deflect*, Redirect Shot*, serenity, Juyo*, Soresu*

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +11): *battle strike*, *sever Force*

Force Techniques Force Power Mastery (Sever Force), Improved Force Trance, Improved Sense Surroundings

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11

Special Qualities deceptive, great Fortitude (+2), fearless, serenity

Talents Acrobatic Recovery, Block, Deflect, Force Perception, Juyo, Lightsaber Defense, Redirect Shot, Soresu

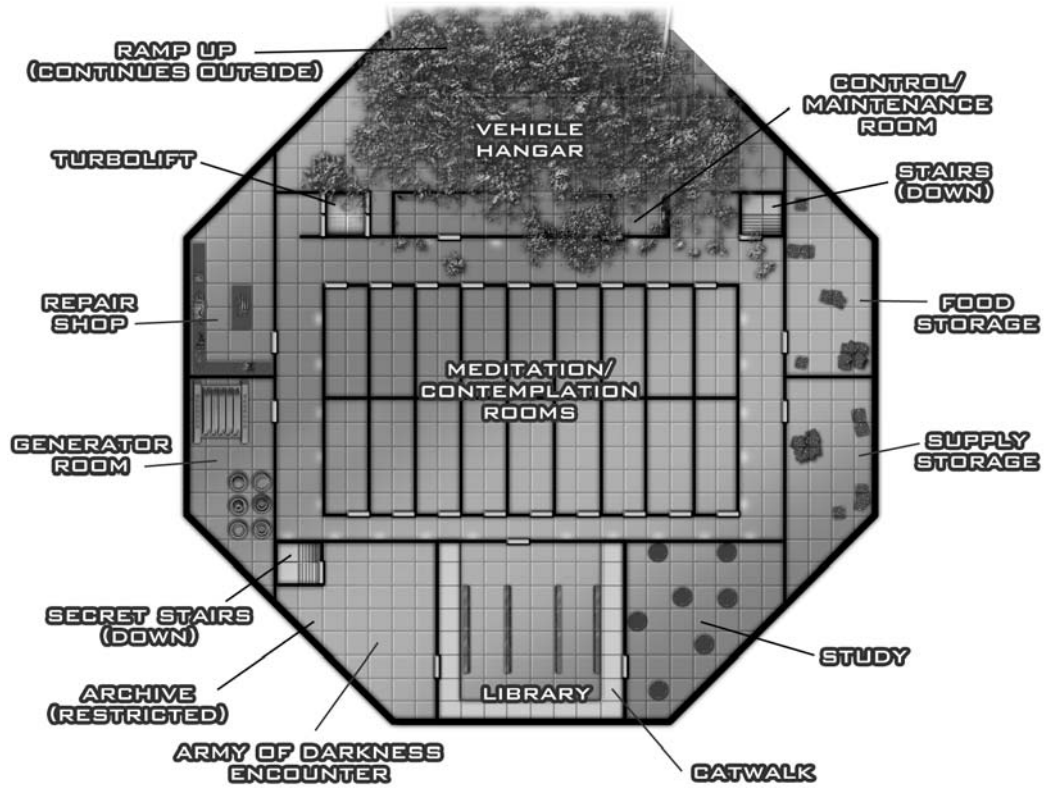
Feats Double Attack (lightsaber), Force Sensitivity, Force Training (2), Martial Arts I, Melee Defense, Strong in the Force, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Proficiency (lightsabers, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Initiative +15, Perception +11, Use the Force +11

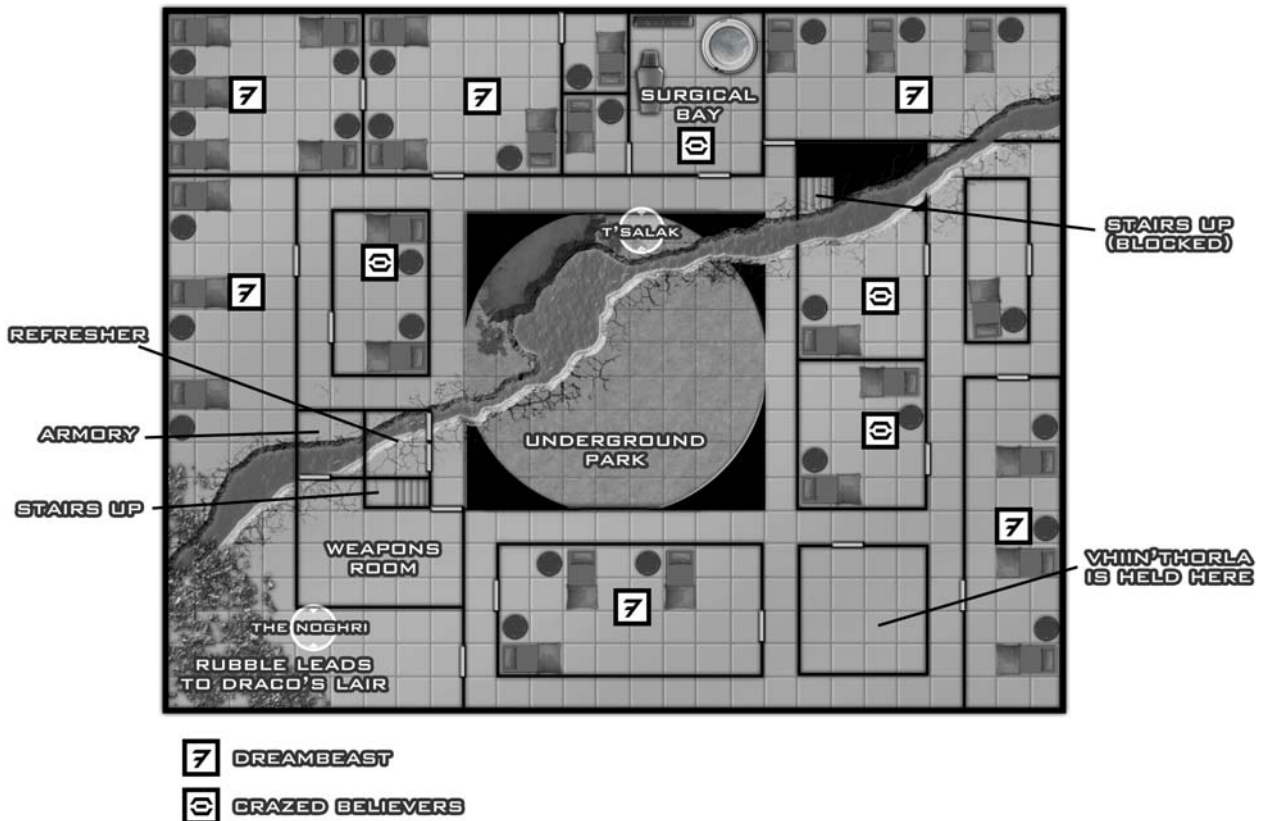
Possessions Jedi robes

* *Vhiin'Thorla does not start out with a lightsaber. Stats are included for practicality.*

SUBLEVEL 1



SUBLEVEL 2



PART 3: DRACO'S LAIR

As the heroes descend into the depths of the Jedi academy, they draw closer to the nexus of dark power surrounding Inquisitor Draco. You should emphasize the growing sense of dread the heroes feel, including a strong sense of danger for any heroes who use the Search Your Feelings application of the Use the Force skill.

ARCHIVES ROOM

When the heroes reach the archives room (whether they found it themselves or were informed by SevenAy or Master Thorla), they find the door tightly shut. They can open the door by following the procedures described in "Control Room" (page 12).

If the heroes enter the archives room, read the following:

You find yourselves in a long room, 12 meters wide by 36 meters long, with the chamber forking to the right about 20 meters in. Leaning against the smooth walls are cases containing fascinating and rare artifacts and weapons that were of interest to the Jedi. It is surprising that most of them seem untouched.

The most glaring features of the room are the far wall and floor, which have crumbled away to reveal a cavernous opening that leads into a dark tunnel. This obviously wasn't part of the room's original design and seems to be a consequence of the orbital bombardment.

This chamber was forbidden to Padawans. It was where the Jedi Masters kept their most precious Force artifacts, including the holocron the heroes seek (until it was hidden in the bust of Master Qornah). It also contains the entrance to the underground caves where Draco is consulting with the holocron gatekeeper of Darth Rivan. To keep intruders from interrupting his studies, Draco left behind some of the deadliest henchbeings in the galaxy to guard the cave entrance. Several creatures await the heroes here, as motionless as statues in their hiding places among the shadows. Masters of stealth, these steely, gray-skinned warriors are all but undetectable in the dim light.

As the heroes enter the archives room, have them roll Perception checks against the creatures' Stealth checks, with a -5 penalty for concealment. If the heroes succeed, one of their glowrods illuminates what appears to be a meter-high statue resembling a gargoyle in one of the corners. This is enough warning for the heroes to avoid being ambushed, and a second later, six repulsive "statues" pounce on them from all sides. If the heroes fail their roll, the creatures take them by surprise and catch them flat-footed.

If the heroes make a successful DC 25 Knowledge (life sciences) check, they can identify the species of their attackers. These squat killing machines are called Noghri, aliens seldom seen away from their home planet. If there is no appropriate light source, heroes without low-light vision or darkvision suffer the effects of blindness (considered flat-footed, with a -2 penalty on Reflex defense and on attacks against the Noghri).

See "Death Commandos" (page 36) for more information on running this encounter. After the heroes defeat the Noghri, they can proceed to the final part of the adventure.

NEARING THE NEXUS

When the heroes investigate the opening in the far wall, they see that the crumbled floor and wall have revealed a tunnel. It slopes downward into utter darkness, and the rocky ground is made slippery by the natural spring that runs across the second sublevel of the academy. The slope is 1.5 meters (1 square) wide and 18 meters (12 squares) long, which means that heroes who move 6 squares per round must make six DC 20 Climb checks if they move at half speed. A hero who fails a check by 9 or less suffers a slip. A hero who fails a check by 10 or more also causes a rockslide, dealing 2d6 points of damage to himself and anyone below him. If the heroes have no light source, they must move even more cautiously and make twice as many Climb checks.

The heroes might try to use a rope to descend the tunnel (see page 64 of the Saga Edition Core Rulebook).

ENTER THE DRAGON

When the heroes arrive at the bottom, Valin Draco is waiting for them, literally surrounded by darkness. He has the controls to Thorla's Universal Energy Cage in his possession and is studying the Qornah Holocron with the Rivan holocron gatekeeper. As the heroes approach, read the following:

You make out a figure in a flowing scarlet robe of septsilk. You recognize him from the message you received many months ago after your adventure on Bospin: Inquisitor Valin Draco. He is flanked on one side by a stern-looking female whose lightsaber gives a red tint to their surroundings. There is a glint in Draco's eye and a chilling smile on his lips, as if he already knows more about you than you know about yourselves. Just behind Draco, an incandescent object floats in the air, seeming to grow out of a small cube strapped to Draco's forearm.

Hiding behind rocks on either side of the Inquisitor are two black-armored Imperial shadow troopers (Perception check against 1d20 + 11 Stealth to notice the four troopers, with cumulative penalties of -5 for concealment, darkness, and every 10 squares of distance). Draco has the Dark Jedi Raik Muun flanking him, red lightsaber ignited, and directly behind him hovers an indistinct blot resonating with evil. This is the holocron gatekeeper of Darth Rivan, which provides Draco with advanced knowledge of Sith techniques throughout the fight.

Draco is a methodical villain. His preferred method of dealing with his enemies is to convert them to his cause, a tactic that has worked equally well on Raik and the nighthunter, and that nearly succeeded on Jedi Master Vhiin'Thorla. Draco knows that to have reached this far, the heroes must have defeated challenges that would have sundered less formidable foes.

However, before Draco invites the heroes to join him, he greets them with a single word: "Crant?" This is the name of Draco's nighthunter. It's unlikely that the heroes will know this, so Draco elaborates:

"Crant—my companion. Have you come to tell me that my nighthunter is dead?"

The heroes can tell Draco whatever they wish. If they confirm that they have killed the beast, Draco betrays no emotion, though the glint in

his eye dulls. However, he immediately gathers his composure and begins his entreaty as follows:

"I am Valin Draco, and, like you, I once thought myself a hero. During the Clone Wars, the brave men and women I commanded called me the 'Valiant Dragon' as we fought in epic conflicts for the corrupt Republic. But after I was left for dead on the battlefield of Parein II 4, flattering titles lost their meaning for me.

"These are dark times, and I know that you've suffered great losses, that you wrestle with the same concerns of virtue and compromise that I did as a Jedi, the same concerns that have plagued the conscientious since time immemorial. Surrender yourselves to the Empire. I promise your treatment will be gentler, and you might even be given the chance to serve me. Surrender yourselves—or face your destiny."

Draco's offer is sincere. Here are some possible answers to common questions that the heroes might have for the Inquisitor:

Why do you serve the Empire? "Beware rash judgments. The difference between an enemy and a friend is not as obvious as we'd like to think. My allegiance to the Galactic Empire is born of necessity, and you will reap the benefits if you recognize that your destiny lies with me."

What is your view of the dark side of the Force? "The dark side exists. Only the naïve and demented believe otherwise. It's found in each of us without exception—Sith, Jedi, soldier, smuggler, noble, rogue, and romantic. I will show you how to control it so that you needn't fear or deny it."

Why don't you join us? "I have already found my true self. I embraced my destiny when I took this Inquisitor's garb. Now, quit this cowardly stalling, and reflect on my invitation, for this is the last time I extend it. Decide swiftly and without regret, for your choice and its effects were predetermined before these words ever obligated you to speak."

It's highly unlikely that any of the heroes will take Draco up on his offer. However, this could be an opportunity for some dramatic storytelling. Perhaps one of the players has grown bored with her character. If so, collaborate with her in secret ahead of time so that her character joins Draco's retinue for a devastating twist, similar to Vader's revelation of Luke's parentage in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

In all likelihood, the heroes reject Draco's supplication or simply attack him. Once they do, the disquieting glint in his eye returns, as if he's foreseen their response. Draco ignites his lightsaber, Raik Muun takes up a protective position in front of him, and the shadow troopers prepare to snipe from their hiding spots. As soon as the heroes attack, Draco allows the holocron gatekeeper of Darth Rivan to instruct him, teaching him some of the Dark Lord's powers. See "Shadows of the Empire" (page 38) for more information on running this encounter.

If the heroes managed to free Master Thorla earlier in the adventure, he arrives at the beginning of the encounter to assist the heroes in their fight. If no heroes discover the means of separating Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper from its connection to the holocron, Thorla uses

the *sever Force* power to grant the heroes a reprieve from the Sith holocron's influence over Draco. Thorla has 1 Destiny Point, which he saves until the heroes reduce Draco to half his hit points or fewer. When that occurs, on his next turn, Master Thorla recovers a use of *sever Force* with a Force Point, then uses it against Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper, spending a Destiny Point to peel the gatekeeper from the holocron. The gatekeeper howls in rage as it is stripped from the holocron. As the faux Rivan dissipates, the holocron begins to overload, and Draco rips it from his arm and hurls it at Thorla. The holocron shatters, unbalancing Thorla and knocking him into the chasm below.

If the heroes did not free Master Thorla, he does not come to the rescue. However, he might contact Force-using heroes telepathically instead. A Force-using hero in telepathic contact with Thorla can use the Jedi Master's pool of *sever Force* powers as though they were in his own pool. Additionally, if the Force-using hero does not think to use a Destiny Point with *sever Force*, the Jedi Master tells the hero to do so when Draco is below half of his hit points.

If Master Thorla is dead, the heroes receive none of the above benefits.

BEHEMOTH FROM BELOW

At any point when Draco finds himself below half of his hit points, or if his apprentice and shadow troopers are dead, he retreats to a back entrance that opens into an immense cavern that is spectacularly lit by bioluminescent, multicolored lichen coating the walls. Draco retreats onto a natural rock overpass bridging a wide chasm that appears as bottomless as it is black. Even in flight, the Inquisitor still tries to push heroes off the ledge. But Draco is growing desperate, and his connection to Rivan weakens as his resolve does the same. He is prepared to make his last stand here as long as he deprives the heroes of the object they desire—the Qornah Holocron.

However, there is one factor Inquisitor Draco hasn't accounted for. Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper has not been completely forthcoming with him. If the gatekeeper couldn't retain control of Draco, he planned to summon the real k'kayeh dragon, which has grown to a massive 200 meters (as big as some space slugs) since the Dark Lord first created the monster more than a thousand years ago.

If the gatekeeper is stripped from the holocron, his final howl of rage awakens the k'kayeh and draws it upward. If the gatekeeper is not separated from the holocron, he chooses to summon the beast at this moment. Either way, the behemoth is unleashed.

When Draco flees onto the bridge formation, he threatens to destroy the Quornah Holocron, holding it out over the chasm as tendrils of *Force lightning* flash from his hands. Though the beast has been released, it is not completely uncontrolled. Still seething with the dark side of the Force from his tutelage under the Sith holocron gatekeeper, Draco is able to control the beast—at least enough to keep it from devouring him. Likewise, he bends the massive strikes of *Force lightning* to his will, causing them to lash out at the heroes while he nimbly steps between them. Draco plans to destroy the heroes here, and unless they can defeat him, they will lose the Qornah Holocron forever. See "Draco's Last Stand" (page 42) for more information on running this encounter.



Valin Draco

LEAVING THE ECHOES BEHIND

The giant dragon causes major tremors, and the academy's foundations, already weakened by a major bombardment and several years of misuse, start to collapse. This is a good time for the heroes to exit.

Describe the ground shaking and falling rocks at random points. Reuse the "Cave-In" encounter (page 10) a few times as the heroes make their way back up toward the surface. Appropriate points on the map would be the tunnel leading to sublevel 2, the stairs leading up to sublevel 1, and any corridor on sublevel 1.

If the heroes survived their encounter with Draco relatively unscathed, feel free to run more encounters on sublevel 2. For example:

- Some Believers might have escaped the heroes' first trip through the level.
- The nighthunter or the t'salak might have survived.
- The library on sublevel 1 might have some guardian spirits still roaming around.
- Some Dark Lizards might still be stalking the ruins on the top level.

These encounters should be run in the corridors, delaying the heroes from escaping and creating a rising sense of urgency. If none of these encounters is appropriate, or if the heroes overcome the challenges easily, they might encounter more pirates as they return to their ship.

Once the heroes climb up the turbolift shaft and are out of the ruins, read the following:

As you run through the ruins of the academy's ground floor, the remaining walls of the fountain room and the columns in the entry hall collapse around you, showering you with dust. As you leap for the exit out of the academy, huge clouds of dust billow into the air, obscuring your view as the ground quakes and devours the ruins.

As the dust clears, you could not have imagined how good Almas' toxin-filled air would feel in your lungs. It's a good thing you rescued the holocron, because no one will be able to go back down there for a long, long time.

Looking away from the falling rubble, you see the familiar buildings of deserted Forard city. You feel like resting a bit before walking back to your ship. You can't wait to reunite with your uncomfortable bunk bed.

Master Denia will be grateful that you've recovered the holocron. You should return to the *Resurgence* soon, before more Imperial agents come looking for Inquisitor Draco.

The heroes shouldn't have too much trouble reaching their ship. If it needs repairs, they have to perform the work uninterrupted for a few hours. The Imperial dungeon ship that Draco brought is still in the system, accompanied by his Star Destroyer, the *Assiduous*, but they are outside the comet field. The heroes detect the Imperial ships once they clear the comet field, but the ships are too far out of weapons range to attack. If the heroes scan the ships, they identify one as the *Assiduous* (which they should recognize from the battle over Bespin) and the other as a *Lictor*-class dungeon ship named *Revelator*. They could not detect the ships on their way in because the Imperials were stationed in Cularin's shadow. But now, not having received a report from Draco in several hours, the *Revelator* approaches the limits of the system to launch another shuttle. It does not pursue the heroes, but it attacks if they are daring enough to come within range.

EMBRACING YOUR DESTINY: DISCOVERY

Heroes who have chosen (or secretly been given) the Discovery destiny take a major step toward it when they recover the Qornah Holocron. Grant those heroes the 24-hour destiny bonus while they race to escape the crumbling ruins. If desired, you can wait and instead grant the bonus at the beginning of the next adventure, *The First to Strike*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the heroes leave the Cularin system, they can reach the last known coordinates of the *Resurgence*. The trip back takes one day, giving the heroes time to rest, treat their wounds, and study the holocron. Any non-Force-sensitive heroes find the cube unresponsive, but a Jedi hero can conjure the holocron's gatekeeper, Master Qornah, who answers a few basic questions but insists on the presence of another Jedi Master.

When they finally approach the *Nebulon-B* frigate, the heroes receive a communication from Captain Verana asking if their mission was successful. He greets them as they dock underneath the large ship and walks them to their quarters. When the heroes are ready, they are instructed to go to the briefing room to meet with Master Denia.

Denia asks the heroes for the holocron and activates it. She then listens as the heroes recount their adventure. At the mention of Draco's name, Denia displays a brief look of shock and becomes very pensive thereafter, as if distracted by something far away. Gathering her composure, she states the following:

"This sounds like quite an ordeal you experienced, and whether you follow the Jedi ways or not, you have contributed greatly to the enlightenment of the Force. With this item, I will seek answers about the slaves that you rescued at Bespin, and hopefully some clues about the Empire's Sarlace Project. I am also curious about the creatures and evil forces that you encountered in the academy, and if I find information about them, I will advise you. But now if you'll excuse me, I must meditate."

If any of the heroes have 7 levels in the Jedi class at this point, the defeat of Draco and the recovery of the holocron serve as a trial of sorts that shows their resolve. The Jedi Knight prestige class is now available to those heroes, as they are fulfilling their obligations to be a part of the Jedi tradition. For other Force-sensitive heroes who have fewer than 7 levels of Jedi (or perhaps none at all), Master Denia offers to continue training them in the Jedi ways, teaching them new abilities with help from the holocron.

EMBRACING YOUR DESTINY: RESCUE

Heroes who have chosen (or secretly been given) the Rescue destiny take a major step toward it when they return the holocron safely to Master Denia, which will aid them in rescuing Denia later in the campaign. Grant those heroes the 24-hour destiny bonus at the beginning of the next adventure, *The First to Strike*.

SEEING RED

CHALLENGE LEVEL 8

SETUP

The fight starts with the heroes on one side and the pirates on the other. If the heroes' ship has been boarded, combat takes place in an interior portion of the ship. Otherwise, it takes place as a space battle between the *Blood Brother* and any ships possessed by the heroes.

READ-ALoud TEXT

As soon as the heroes spot the pirate vessel in orbit, their ship's subspace transceiver pings, and an image appears on their viewscreen:

As the ruby-dipped *consular*-class cruiser fills the viewport, suddenly on your ship's viewscreen, in all his preposterous glory, is a pointy-eared, male near-Human with thick, flaring eyebrows, a patch of fur on his jutting chin, and a razor-thin mustache that would be the envy of any holodrama villain. He's wearing an open crimson blouse, strapped down at the waist by a gold sash, and he brandishes a menacing vibrorapier. His gloating smile says it all.

"Let's not waste time, you starforsaken spawns of space slugs," the man says. "By the authority of the Red Fury Brotherhood, you're now Captain Reddjak's prisoners. Cut all power to your weapons and shields, and the *Blood Brother* won't blow you out of the stars. Prepare for the pleasure of being boarded."

BLOOD BROTHER

The Red Fury Brotherhood is currently the most potent buccaneer organization operating out of the Cularin system. Reddjak's cut a deal with Inquisitor Draco to guard the space above Almas while the Imperials investigate the Jedi academy ruins.

The *Blood Brother's* paint job may seem like a natural eccentricity of its captain, but the ship came that way. It was formerly the *Dura-Khan III*, a Republic diplomatic vessel coated stem to stern in crimson to denote its status of neutrality. After Reddjak claimed the ship as booty, he kept it for himself, modifying it for piracy.

The Blood Brother

CL 8

Colossal (frigate) space transport
Init +0; Senses Perception +6

Defense Ref 18 (flat-footed 14), Fort 39; +14 armor, Vehicular Combat
hp 960; DR 15; SR 100; **Threshold** 139

Speed fly 3 squares (starship scale)

Ranged medium turbolaser battery +8* (see below) and tractor beam +4* (see below)

Fighting Space 1 square (starship scale); **Cover** total
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +51

Abilities Str 69, Dex 18, Con —, Int 14

Skills Initiative +0, Mechanics +6, Perception +6, Pilot +0, Use Computer +6

Crew 8 (skilled); **Passengers** 16

Cargo 1,000 tons; **Consumables** 6 months; **Carried Craft** none

Hyperdrive ×2, navicomputer

Availability Licensed; **Cost** 1,250,000 (400,000 used)

* Apply a –20 penalty on attacks against targets smaller than Colossal in size.

Medium turbolaser battery (3 gunners)

Atk +8 (–12 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** 5d10 × 5

Tractor beam (gunners)

Atk +4 (–16 against targets smaller than Colossal), **Dmg** — (Grapple +51)

Z-95 Headhunter

CL 7

Gargantuan starfighter
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

Defense Ref 14 (flat-footed 12), Fort 26; +7 armor
hp 120; DR 10; SR 15; **Threshold** 46

Speed fly 16 squares (max. velocity 1,150 km/h), fly 4 squares (starship scale)

Ranged triple blasters +1 (see below)

Fighting Space 4×4 or 1 square (starship scale); **Cover** total (crew)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +31

Atk Options autofire (triple blasters)

Abilities Str 42, Dex 14, Con —, Int 12

Skills Initiative +2, Mechanics +5, Perception +5, Pilot +2, Use Computer +5

Crew 1 (normal); **Passengers** none

Cargo 85 kg; **Consumables** 1 day; **Carried Craft** none

Hyperdrive ×1

Availability Restricted; **Cost** 80,000 (45,000 used)

Triple blasters (pilot)

Atk +1 (–4 autofire), **Dmg** 3d10 × 2

BLOOD BROTHER TACTICS

Reddjak would like to be able to claim the heroes' cargo as booty by boarding their ship, and if the heroes are caught by the *Blood Brother's* tractor beam they may have no choice. However, he's already receiving a handsome compensation from Inquisitor Draco, so Reddjak will not hesitate to blast the heroes' ship into smithereens if they struggle.

A ship is only as effective as its captain, and Reddjak is both overconfident and anxious to make a name for himself, making the *Blood Brother* vulnerable to hero ingenuity. The first thing Reddjak does is try to get a tractor beam lock on the heroes. If they try to escape, he aims to disable their engines. If the heroes flee, a pair of the *Blood Brother's* Z-95 headhunters gives chase to the planet below, again taking aim at the heroes' engines and trying to force them to land.

RED FURY PIRATES (5)

The Red Fury Brotherhood is as cutthroat as they come. Reddjak has taken on many violent outcasts and turned the alien pariahs into stone-hearted killers. These corsairs are trained to board in space with space suits or force their victims onto a planet surface where they can fight in the open. Complete with cybernetic eye patches, vibrorapiers, blasters, and a stench that could bowl over a bantha, these pirates are seasoned pros, anxious to loot their first catch of the day.

These are pirates from straight out of the holodramas. Dressed in red and swinging vibrorapiers, they stink of Corellian ale and other unknown substances. The only thing missing is a cry of "Ahoy, mateys!" This motley collection of individuals flash their stained teeth as they start shooting at you.

Red Fury Pirate (4)

CL 5

Medium Human nonheroic 6/scoundrel 3

Force 1; Dark Side 8

Init +11 Senses Perception +5

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 17), Fort 17, Will 15

hp 47; Threshold 17

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibroblade +10 (2d6+4)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +9 (3d8+1)

Base Atk +6; Grp +9

Atk Options Hyperdriven, Point Blank Shot, Running Attack, Skirmisher

Special Actions Dodge, Mobility

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Talents Hyperdriven, Skirmisher

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Running Attack, Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Initiative +11

Possessions heavy blaster pistol, vibroblade, armored flight suit (+5 armor, +2 equipment), comlink, various personal belongings

Reddjak, Pirate Leader

CL 7

Medium Human soldier 4/scoundrel 3

Force 1; Dark Side 8

Init +8; Senses Perception +8

Languages Basic, Huttese

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 19), Fort 20, Will 18; Dodge

hp 60; Threshold 20

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibrorapier +8 (2d6+7)

Ranged blaster pistol +7 (3d6+3)

Base Atk +6; Grp +8

Atk Options Devastating Attack, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack

Abilities Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11

Talents Devastating Attack, Spacehound, Starship Raider, Weapon Specialization (advanced melee weapons)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Endurance +9, Initiative +8, Mechanics +9, Perception +8

Possessions slugthrower, comlink, vibrorapier

RED FURY PIRATES TACTICS

Unless the heroes voluntarily open the cargo door for the boarders, the pirates make their own entrance with a fusioncutter or similar device. They initially try to stun the heroes, hoping to capture them and sell them as slaves, but the boarders switch tactics to shoot to kill as soon as anyone in their party gets injured.

CONCLUSION

When the heroes defeat the Red Fury pirates, they can take time to survey the damage to their ship and repair it if they have the requisite parts. They should then proceed towards the town of Forard and the academy.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This encounter can take place in one of two locales. If the heroes' ship is boarded, use the deckplan for the heroes' ship (if available). Otherwise, the battle takes place in the space above Almas.

THE BELIEVERS' PETS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 5

SETUP

The heroes should be more or less facing away from what's left of the Jedi academy entrance, while the Squibs and Ugors face in the opposite direction. Large and small chunks of the academy ruins are scattered around all three groups. When the encounter begins, the Dark Lizards come rampaging out of the debris directly behind the heroes.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the Squibs and Ugors spot the onrushing horde of Dark Lizards, read the following:

Your only warning is the gurgling exclamation, "Holy irreducible garbágina!" from one of the Ugors, followed by a loud, inhuman growl. As you turn around, there, in broad daylight, appear horrors wrenched from the realm of darkness. Giant reptilian, slaving monsters, black as the void and just as soulless, burst from the concealment of the academy ruins, galloping toward you!

DARK LIZARD

The Dark Lizard is a species of reptilian hssiss drenched in the dark side to such to a degree that its eyes shine coral like those of a Dark Lord, and the ebony beast literally glows with darkness. Even its drool is black. Encased in its bony skull is a mouth filled with black stiletto teeth and a charcoal prehensile tongue (earning the beast its alternative sobriquet, "Dark Tongue"). Along the back of the creature's 3-meter-long body run two rows of sharp spikes, and its four appendages end in huge ivory claws.

Popular as exotic pets among crimelords and other beings insane with power, Dark Lizards on Almas have found their masters in the Sith cultist Believers.

The Dark Lizards' hungry, inky tongues unfurl from gullets that seem bottomless, thanks to the 10-centimeter ebon teeth lining their mouths, which dribble tarlike drool. These beasts resemble living shadows, and only their ivory claws indicate that their origin is not supernatural. Their obsidian hides radiate incalculably vile energy. There is no sign of intelligence in their primeval gazes, only the brand of distilled evil—their eyes smolder with the orange-red glow of the dark side.

Dark Lizard (3)

CL 5

Large aquatic beast 6

Dark Side 12

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +9

Defenses Ref 16 (flat-footed 15), Fort 15, Will 11
hp 54; **Threshold** 20

Speed 6 squares; swim 12 squares

Melee 2 claws +8* (1d8+11) and
bite +8* (1d8+11)

Ranged prehensile tongue +10 (grapple +14)

Fighting Space 2×2; **Reach** 1 square

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +15

Atk Options Pin, Power Attack

Special Actions prehensile tongue

Abilities Str 22, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12

Special Qualities natural armor (+5), Swim

Feats Pin, Power Attack, Skill Training (Initiative)

Skills Initiative +10, Perception +9

* Includes 2 points of Power Attack.

Prehensile Tongue—A target hit by a prehensile tongue attack is grabbed and must succeed on an opposed grapple check. If the target fails, it is pulled to the nearest open square adjacent to the dark lizard. The prehensile tongue has a reach of 2 squares.

Dark Lizard Alpha

CL 8

Large aquatic beast 9

Dark Side 14

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +11

Defenses Ref 20 (flat-footed 18), Fort 22, Will 13
hp 95; **Threshold** 22

Speed 6 squares, swim 12 squares

Melee 2 claws +14 (1d6+12) and
bite +14 (1d8+12) or

Melee bite +14* (1d8+20) with Powerful Charge

Ranged prehensile tongue +14 (grapple +19)

Fight Space 2×2; **Reach** 1 square

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +19

Atk Options lashing tail, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Pin

Special Actions prehensile tongue

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14

Special Qualities natural armor (+8), Swim

Feats Improved Defenses, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Pin

Skills Perception +11

* Includes 2 points of Power Attack.

Lashing Tail—Once per round, when an adjacent opponent makes a melee attack against the dark lizard alpha, the dark lizard alpha can make an immediate melee attack with its tail as a reaction. The attack is made with a +14 bonus, dealing 1d6+12 damage on a successful hit.

Prehensile Tongue—A target hit by a prehensile tongue attack is grabbed and must succeed on an opposed grapple check. If the target fails, it is pulled to the nearest open square adjacent to the dark lizard alpha. The prehensile tongue has a reach of 2 squares.

DARK LIZARD TACTICS

The Dark Lizards might not be sentient, but they know a thing or two about hunting. They quickly try to corral the heroes and scavengers between them, making an effort to capture them with their prehensile tongues. This attack is a grapple action, and if it succeeds, the lizards reel their victims in to attack them with claws and bite. Alternatively, the lizards try to trample their victims and pin them to the ground, lashing at them with bite attacks.

CONCLUSION

After the Dark Lizards are defeated, the Squibs and Ugors are so grateful that they'll give the heroes anything in their possession.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of the Almas Academy area on page 11.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The surrounding academy debris can provide both cover and obstacles for the heroes. Additionally, at your discretion, any attacks that exceed a hero's damage threshold might rip off his or her breath mask, causing the victim to suffer the ill effects of Almas' atmosphere.

JACEN AND THE STALFONAUTS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 8

SETUP

Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper convinced Draco to release a two Force-sensitive parasites in the library archive room, where their telekinetic powers seemingly bring the corpses to undead life. If any of the heroes fails a DC 10 Perception check, the animated corpses take their surprise round to stand up from their prone positions. If the check succeeds, no surprise round occurs.

READ-ALOUD TEXT

Once the heroes enter the area, read the following:

An unexpected chill runs through your spine, and you hear moans coming from somewhere behind you. Impossibly, the cadavers that were littering the floor earlier are now shambling toward your group. One of them vaguely resembles a Kel Dor. Many of the corpses hold blaster pistols in bony hands that are blemished with chunks of spoiled flesh. You have to go through them to reach the stairs.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT

Called guardian spirits due to primitive cultures' belief that they were the spirits of the dead come back to life, these creatures are actually parasites with telekinetic abilities. Each parasite can inhabit one corpse at a time (top right statistics block), giving the body a semblance of undead animation. Simultaneously, each parasite can also reanimate other corpses without actually being in their bodies (bottom right statistics block), but they do so less efficiently, and only to help kill the heroes.

The parasites cannot live outside of a host body for long. If the heroes kill a host body, its parasite inhabits one of the remaining animated corpses, turning it into a guardian spirit. If there are no animated corpses close enough to inhabit, the parasite has nowhere to go and is destroyed.

These cadavers are actually made up of two distinct groups: the salvagers known as the Stalfonauts and bounty hunters led by the Kel Dor Jacen Yar, who had been out to capture Jedi survivors of the orbital bombardment. The two parties ran into each other in the academy library and wound up killing each other in the archive room. Now, controlled by the parasites like string puppets, their skeletal remains remember nothing of their former lives.

You're surrounded by the approaching corpses. Along with their putrefied organic remains, the dark side drips from the reanimated cadavers like saliva from a predatory nexu.

Dancing light fills the cavernous eye sockets of their decomposing general as the Kel Dor corpse levels its blaster pistol at you. The undead horde charges.

Guardian Spirit (2)

CL 9

Medium nonheroic 9/Jedi 5/Force Adept 1
Force 4; **Dark Side** 14; Strong in the Force
Init +14; **Senses** Perception +14
Languages none

Defenses Ref 21 (flat-footed 19), Fort 19, Will 23
hp 69; **Threshold** 24
Immune disease, fear, poison, radiation

Speed 6 squares
Melee unarmed +14 (1d4+5) or
 unarmed +12 (2d4+5) with Rapid Strike or
 unarmed +12* (2d4+16) with Powerful Charge and Rapid Strike
Ranged blaster pistol +13 (3d6+3)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +13
Atk Options Power Attack, Rapid Strike
Force Powers Known (Use the Force +13): *Force grip*, *Force lightning*,
 Force slam

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 12
Special Qualities already dead, body swap
Talents Force Power Adept (*Force grip*), Power of the Dark Side, Revenge,
 Swift Power
Feats Force Sensitivity, Force Training, Improved Damage Threshold,
 Improved Defenses, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Rapid Strike, Skill
 Training (Use the Force), Strong in the Force, Weapon Focus (simple
 weapons), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)
Skills Deception +13, Endurance +13, Initiative +14, Perception +14, Use
 the Force +13
Possessions blaster pistol
 * Includes 4 points of Power Attack.

Already Dead—This creature does not fall unconscious when it reaches 0 hit points. If the attack that reduces the creature to 0 hit points also equals or exceeds the creature's damage threshold, it dies. Otherwise, the creature continues to act normally at 0 hit points until a successful attack deals damage that equals or exceeds the creature's damage threshold. If the creature is pushed to the bottom of the condition track by damage, it is automatically destroyed.

Body Swap—When a guardian spirit's host body is destroyed, the parasite automatically enters another corpse within 10 squares (effectively transforming that creature into a guardian spirit, though any damage or conditions that the new body has already suffered transfers over to the new form). If no bodies are nearby, the parasite's energy dissipates, and it is truly destroyed.

Animated Corpse (4)

CL 3

Medium nonheroic 9
Init +11; **Senses** Perception +3
Languages none

Defenses Ref 13 (flat-footed 11), Fort 12, Will 10

hp 31; **Threshold** 17

Immune disease, fear, mind-affecting, poison, radiation, stun

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +9 (1d4+2) or

unarmed +7 (2d4+2) with Rapid Strike

Ranged blaster pistol +8 (3d6)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Atk Options Rapid Strike

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities already dead

Feats Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Defenses, Rapid Strike, Skill Training (Endurance), Weapon Focus (simple weapons), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +10, Initiative +11

Possessions blaster pistol

Already Dead—This creature does not fall unconscious when it reaches 0 hit points. If the attack that reduces the creature to 0 hit points also equals or exceeds the creature's damage threshold, it dies. Otherwise, the creature continues to act normally at 0 hit points until a successful attack deals damage that equals or exceeds the creature's damage threshold. If the creature is pushed to the bottom of the condition track by damage, it is automatically destroyed.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT TACTICS

Guardian spirits are very slow, so they use their numbers to their advantage. They flank the heroes, using the aid another action if necessary. They keep attacking until they no longer have the limbs to do so.

CONCLUSION

Once the corpses are eliminated (or dismembered), the heroes see small clouds of parasitic organisms rise out of them, searching for other host bodies nearby. If there are none within 10 meters, the parasites dissipate with a dying howl. Heroes need only wait a moment until the blast doors open to have easy access to the stairway leading down to sublevel 2.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 1 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The library archive room contains shelves along the walls, a few desks in the middle, and a large table on the north side (where Rivan's document is resting).

CRAZED BELIEVERS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 8

SETUP

This encounter can be repeated several times throughout sublevel 2, but each time, only one group of Believers attacks the heroes. Use as many times as appropriate.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes enter a room labeled "Crazed Believers," read the following:

As you turn the corner, you hear a cry of incoherent rage and see several beings lunge at you. They have demented looks in their eyes and are foaming at the mouth.

BELIEVERS CULTISTS (6)

The Believers cult is a group of Sith worshippers that got its start in the Cularin system. They are males and females of different humanoid species, and they come from all walks of life. Some are even trained in the Force. They were aided in their organization by the Sith scholar Murk Lundi, and they had grown into a formidable force by the time of the Clone Wars.

The ones encountered on this sublevel have been driven mad by repeated attacks from the t'salak. They are encountered in small groups, though, since two large groups of Believers in the same room would kill each other. Many Believers have fallen victim to their crazed companions.

Believers Cultist (3)

CL 3

Medium nonheroic 9

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +8

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 12 (flat-footed 11), Fort 14, Will 10
hp 50; **Threshold** 19

Speed 6 squares

Melee spear +9 (1d8+6) or

spear +9* (1d8+18) with Powerful Charge

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Power Attack, Powerful Charge

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13

Special Qualities**

Feats Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Defenses, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Skill Training (Perception), Skill Training (Persuasion), Weapon Proficiency (simple weapons)

Skills Deception +10, Perception +8, Persuasion +10

Possessions spear, tattered clothes

* Includes 4 points of Power Attack.

** Modify stats depending on species traits.

Believers Cult Leader (1)

CL 6

Medium scout 6

Force 1; **Dark Side** 8

Init +10; **Senses** Perception +8

Languages Basic, any two others

Defenses Ref 20 (flat-footed 18), Fort 18, Will 16
hp 50; **Threshold** 23

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +5 (1d4+4) or

Melee electrostaff +5 (2d8+4)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Powerful Charge

Special Actions Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Melee Defense*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities**

Talents Hidden Movement, Improved Initiative, Power of the Dark Side

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Force Sensitivity, Improved Damage Threshold, Melee Defense*, Powerful Charge, Shake It Off, Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Climb +9, Endurance +9, Initiative +10, Knowledge (galactic lore) +10, Perception +8, Pilot +11*, Stealth +11, Use the Force +8

Possessions electrostaff, knife, tattered clothing

* Extra feat or skill granted to Humans.

** Modify stats depending on species traits.

Believers Zealot (2)

CL 6

Medium nonheroic 9/soldier 3

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +10

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 16), Fort 19, Will 13
hp 50; **Threshold** 24

Speed 6 squares

Melee spear +13 (1d8+8) or

spear +13* (1d8+20) with Powerful Charge

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Stunning Strike

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14

Special Qualities** rage (as per Wookiee species trait)

Talents Melee Smash, Stunning Strike

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Defenses, Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Skill Training (Perception), Skill Training (Persuasion), Weapon Focus (simple weapons), Weapon Proficiency (simple weapons)

Skills Deception +13, Perception +10, Persuasion +13

Possessions spear, tattered clothes, cobbled-together armor (as combat jumpsuit)

* Includes 4 points of Power Attack.

** Modify stats depending on other species traits.

BELIEVERS TACTICS

Believers zealots attack with little strategy. They simply charge at the nearest target in their line of sight and engage in melee. They begin their attack with a Powerful Charge, first flying into a rage to boost their effectiveness. Believers cultists and their leader use more straightforward tactics, but try to swarm individual heroes with melee attacks.

CONCLUSION

Once a Believer is incapacitated, the heroes can search him or her for items. Some of them might carry ID cards, datapads, or other personal items tucked in the pockets of their dirty and ripped vests. They carry whatever weapons they were able to find in their mindless wanderings.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Believers can be encountered in several different rooms around the sublevel. Refer to the sublevel 2 section of the adventure and the accompanying map for descriptions.

OOZING MADNESS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 3

SETUP

The heroes can enter the underground park via one of two arches. The t'salak is hiding behind the pond on an elevated slope at the room's northern side. The heroes must cross the pond to get to the creature, or shoot it from a distance (which is a much wiser option).

READ-ALoud TEXT

Evil. That's the first word that comes to mind as you look at the featureless pool of black ooze. Suddenly, a tendril snaps at you, attacking from the creature's central mass, almost too fast to see. You barely avoid it, but as you dodge, the creature tracks you move for move. It seems filled with hate and bent on pure destruction.

T'SALAK

A Force-sensitive creature of unknown origin, the t'salak is an oozing, black mound of evil. A specimen was first encountered in the jungles of Cularin and subsequently imprisoned inside a Force-imbued urn. The urn was buried inside a cave and guarded by a Tarasin village for generations, until recently stolen by the Dark Jedi Raik Muun. With the help of scientists, Raik discovered a way to divide the t'salak into independent entities of equal power. It is unknown how many more specimens remain in existence.

The t'salak has no sensory organs but leaves no question as to its strength and cunning; it lashes out with sticky tendrils that have surprising accuracy and power. Filled with chaotic thoughts born of malignity, the t'salak can induce a blinding rage in its targets just by touching them, permeating their souls with darkness.

Its spawn appear to be small pieces that have broken away from the main body. They are weaker and more easily destroyed, but they still impart some madness on their targets.

You've seen the effects of this creature's touch, and you certainly don't want to suffer the same fate as those poor souls that you encountered earlier. It seems wiser to skirt around the beast and hope that it doesn't follow.

T'salak

CL 8

Medium beast 8

Dark Side 14

Init +8; Senses darkvision, Perception +6

Defenses Ref 14 (flat-footed 10), Fort 12, Will 12

hp 50; regenerate; Threshold 12

Immune mind-affecting, disease, poison, radiation

Speed 8 squares

Melee tendril +10 (1d8+4) or

tendril +8 (2d8+4) with Rapid Strike

Fighting Space 1 square; Reach 1 square

Base Attack +6; Grp +10

Atk Options Rapid Strike

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 12

Special Qualities induce raging madness, regenerate

Feats Force Sensitivity, Rapid Strike, Skill Training (Stealth), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +9 (may reroll, keeping the better result), Stealth +13

Induce Raging Madness—Whenever this creature damages a target with a melee attack, it infuses the target with raging madness. At the beginning of the target's turn, the madness makes an attack against the Will Defense of the target at +11. If the attack succeeds, the target must include the nearest ally in an attack on this turn. If the attack against the target's Will Defense misses, the target may act normally. If the attack misses by 5 or more, the target shakes off the madness and is no longer subject to this effect. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Regenerate—When a t'salak reaches 0 or fewer hit points, it does not die. It becomes an inert puddle for a number of rounds equal to half its maximum hit points (rounded down), after which the t'salak regenerates 1 hit point per round until fully healed. It cannot regenerate in a vacuum nor while contained inside a Force-blocking item.

T'salak Spawn (3)

CL 5

Small beast 6

Init +6; Senses darkvision, Perception +4

Defenses Ref 15 (flat-footed 12), Fort 12, Will 12

hp 33; Threshold 12

Immune disease, mind-affecting, poison, radiation

Speed 4 squares

Melee tendril +7 (1d4+3)

Base Atk +4; Grp +2

Atk Options Running Attack

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities spike of anger

Feats Improved Defenses, Skill Training (Jump), Weapon Finesse

Skills Jump +8, Stealth +16

Spike of Anger—Whenever this creature damages another living target, compare the results of the attack roll to the target's Will Defense. If the attack roll equals or exceeds the target's Will Defense, the target must make an immediate attack against the nearest ally, if possible. This is a mind-affecting effect.

T'SALAK TACTICS

The t'salak moves toward the heroes and tries to hit them with its tendrils to induce rage in them. The creature hopes that the heroes will be too distracted by killing each other to attack it, so that it can go back to its hiding place.

CONCLUSION

The t'salak cannot be killed by solid objects, but it can be wounded and is highly susceptible to cold and vacuum. Unless the t'salak is trapped within a container imbued by the Force or in a cold vacuum while it is inert (0 hit points), it regenerates itself and attacks anew.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The lake in the middle of the room is an obstacle to the heroes. It is only about a meter deep in the center, but it slows the heroes' movement if they try to cross it. Once across, they can climb the slope on the other side. To reach the area where the t'salak is hiding from across either stream area, the heroes must climb up the 2-meter high muddy hillock that forms the north shore of the pool. It is slippery, requiring a successful DC 25 Climb or DC 24 Jump check to get atop it. There are some slim trees scattered about the gardens, but they provide very little concealment.

THE DREAMS BEASTS ARE MADE OF

CHALLENGE LEVEL 8

SETUP

Though the heroes have snapped out of their dream daze, they are still under Draco's influence and come face to face with an enormous dark side apparition. This semi-incorporeal creature has chased them into the physical world, and the heroes find themselves under assault almost immediately.

READ-ALOUD TEXT

As soon as the heroes revive from their collective nightmare, read the following:

No sooner have you gathered your wits from your feverish collective dream than a huge monster spawned from nightmare slithers in through the entryway. Double the size of even the biggest bull rancor, the reptilian colossus drags its golden body into the chamber, scales shifting along its hide like impenetrable plates of anvilstone. As it lets rip an ear-splitting roar, double rows of goring fangs leave little to the imagination.

K'KAYEH DREAMBEAST

The k'kayeh dragon is the greatest product of Darth Rivan's dark arts. A Force-sensitive abomination, this Sithspawn's sandy scales match the color of Almas' desert wasteland and are as tough as armor plating. The serpentine creature is also amphibious, as comfortable in open air as swimming in the planet's hidden underground lakes. The k'kayeh's maw is a steely-toothed deathtrap, and its claws are eviscerating razors. As if that weren't enough, instead of breathing fire, this dark side abomination can shoot Force lightning from each nostril of its monstrous snout.

This "dreambeast" is only a tenth the size of the truly gigantic k'kayeh that lurks in the depths of the Almas Academy, but it is still enormous. Similar to Sith doppelgangers, this k'kayeh dreambeast is an illusory clone of the actual living entity, spawned by Inquisitor Draco under the guidance of Darth Rivan's holocron gatekeeper. Despite its partially insubstantial state, the dreambeast can still hurt its targets.

The most disturbing thing about the beast is its snout. Sure, you've read the fairy tales about fire-breathing monsters. You may even have fought a dragon-slug on Corulag. But as you watch dark side lightning dance wickedly from one of the creature's mammoth nostrils to the other, you know only one thing for certain . . . you're in trouble.

K'kayeh Dreambeast

CL 8

Gargantuan beast 9

Force 2; Dark Side 12

Init +7; Senses darkvision, Perception +10

Defenses Ref 11 (flat-footed 13), Fort 30, Will 19

hp 176; DR 25; Threshold 50

Immune mind-affecting

Speed 8 squares

Melee 2 claws +18 (2d6+16) and

bite +18 (3d6+16) or

Melee slam +18 (2d6+16)

Fighting Space 4×4; **Reach** 3 squares

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +33

Atk Options Pin

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +10): *Force lightning* (2)

Abilities Str 34, Dex 6, Con 34, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13

Special Qualities sensor immunity, surface camouflage

Feats Force Sensitivity, Force Training, Pin, Skill Training (Initiative, Perception)

Skills Initiative +7, Perception +10, Use the Force +10

Sensor Immunity—K'kayeh dragons cannot be detected by life-form scanning sensors.

Surface Camouflage—K'kayeh dragons receive a +5 bonus on Stealth checks while in a desert environment.

K'KAYEH DREAMBEAST TACTICS

The k'kayeh dreambeast has many weapons at its disposal. Besides its teeth and claws, it uses its body as a bludgeon to crush the heroes. Any cover in the room can be crushed (or appear to be crushed) by the enormous beast. Any hero grabbed by the creature winds up in its mouth to be consumed, taking damage from its arm-length teeth.

LIVING NIGHTMARE (4)

Living nightmares are manifestations of Force energy that appear in shifting, horrific forms. They usually take on the forms of monstrous beings from their targets' memories and attack the minds of their opponents. The k'kayeh dreambeast creates these nightmares from the dark energy suffusing the remains of the Almas Academy.

This creature is horrific in its visage, yet looks as though it is only partially in our world. Its form continually shifts from one monstrous appearance to another, and it drifts through the air as though it has no mass of its own.

Living Nightmare

CL 6

Medium beast 7

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision, Perception +17

Defenses Ref 14 (flat-footed 10), Fort 13, Will 11

hp 53; **Threshold** 13

Immune fear, mind-affecting

Speed 6 squares (fly)

Melee slam +9 (2d6+2)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +9

Atk Options attack the mind

Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 16

Special Qualities semi-corporeal

Feats Running Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +17

Attack the Mind—This creature's melee attacks target the opponent's Will Defense instead of its Reflex Defense, and the creature's damage (treated as energy damage) ignores SR and DR. The creature's attacks target the mind of the opponent, though the damage it causes can kill just as easily as physical damage. This creature's attacks are considered mind-affecting.

Semi-Corporeal—This creature is a manifestation of Force energy and is only partially vulnerable to normal attacks. It takes half damage from weapons other than energy weapons. If a weapon deals energy damage *or* another type of damage, the creature takes full damage from that weapon. If a weapon deals energy damage *and* another type of damage, the creature takes only half damage from that weapon.

LIVING NIGHTMARE TACTICS

Given their semi-corporeal nature, living nightmares tend to focus their attacks on opponents without energy weapons. However, if they discover that an energy weapon-wielding foe has a particularly low Will Defense, they will target that opponent instead. They completely ignore any creature that is immune to mind-affecting effects, as they know that their attacks will be fruitless.

CONCLUSION

When defeated, the k'kayeh dragon and the living nightmares fade away. The room returns to its original state, and any feature of the area that appeared destroyed is returned to normal. Any hero who has been "eaten" is found on the floor where the creature disappeared.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The k'kayeh dreambeast and the living nightmares can be encountered in several different rooms around the sublevel. Refer to the sublevel 2 section of the adventure and the accompanying map for descriptions.

DRACO'S BEST FRIEND

CHALLENGE LEVEL 5

SETUP

The heroes are attacked in the corridors outside the prison room. The nighthunter lunges directly at them and runs away when hurt, only to attack again from another direction.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes near the room where Master Thorla is held prisoner, read the following:

There is a burnt-red blur, like the flash of a lightsaber, and the face of the friend nearest you nearly winds up sliced off and on the floor. But your attacker is no Sith. Crouched in front of you are 2 hulking meters of quadrupedal, ravenous instinct. The crimson predator is a nighthunter, believed to be as extinct as the Jedi. You consider that the creature might be a good omen in a way—that is, until it bellows a spine-tingling howl.

NIGHTHUNTER

Perhaps it's the blood-red, blaster-resistant hide. Maybe it's the claws, which are nearly as long as the fangs protruding up to its eyes and down to its chin. Or maybe it's the fact that these creatures ambush their prey using the Force. Whatever it is, nighthunters give even Jedi pause. Xenobiologists believe that nighthunters are a mutant offshoot of another species, with Myrkr's vornskrs ranking high on the list due to their whiplike tails, Force-sensitivity, and variety of subspecies. Some contend that nighthunters inspired the hellhounds of Corellian myth. No one really knows.

The Force-using predators have been hunted almost to extinction, but the one guarding Master Thorla shares a peculiar history with Inquisitor Draco. The creature hunted an injured Draco in the aftermath of the Battle of Parein II 4, and they nearly killed each other. However, after wounding the nighthunter, Draco nurtured it back to health, and the beast bonded to its savior. Draco kept the animal and gave it the name Crant.

The creature's hide looks blaster resistant. Its huge anterior claws rake at the floor in tandem with those of its hind paws, grinding out a symphony that hurts your ears and chills your blood. Five immense fangs jut out and over both of its lips, almost concealing its face, except for its two tiny, hungry eyes. As you watch its whiplike tail dancing like a vine snake about to strike, you realize that in this confined space, the beast has a good chance of ripping you into bite-sized chunks.

Nighthunter

CL 5

Medium beast 6

Force 1; Dark Side 17

Init +4; Senses scent, Perception +11

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 16), Fort 19, Will 18
hp 40; DR 20; Threshold 19

Speed 8 squares

Melee 2 claws +5* (1d4+6) and
bite +5* (1d6+6)

Fighting Space 1 square; Reach 1 square

Base Atk +4; Grp +6

Atk Options Pin, Power Attack

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +8): *battle strike* (2), *surge* (2)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 17, Cha 10

Special Qualities energy resistance (fire and blasters), Force stealth, keen hearing, scent

Feats Force Sensitivity, Force Training, Pin, Power Attack

Skills Perception +11, Use the Force +8

Force Stealth—Nighthunters may use their Use the Force check modifier instead of their Stealth modifier when making Stealth checks.

Keen Hearing—Due to their incredibly sharp hearing, nighthunters are considered trained in the Perception skill.

Scent—Nighthunters ignore concealment and cover when making Perception checks to notice opponents within 8 squares. This can vary depending on wind conditions and the strength of the smell. They also gain a +10 bonus on their survival checks to track by scent.

*Includes 1 point of Power Attack.

NIGHTHUNTER TACTICS

The nighthunter runs at the heroes, makes a bite or claw attack, and runs away before they retaliate (the heroes can make attacks of opportunity). The beast circles around and stealthily comes back from another direction, perhaps several rounds later. You can create tension by having the heroes make Perception checks if they are not searching for the nighthunter. They might think it's gone and proceed with their exploration, only to be attacked in a different area.

CONCLUSION

After defeating the beast, the heroes can enter the room it guarded.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Use the corridors around the prison room. If the heroes find refuge inside a room and lock it, they prevent the creature from attacking. But they must come out eventually, and the nighthunter is very patient. The room in which Master Thorla is detained doesn't have a working blast door.

DEATH COMMANDOS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 10

SETUP

The archive room has no light sources. Even if the heroes restored power to the sublevel, only the faint light from the corridor comes through the open door. The various shelves and cases do not offer cover. The Noghri are perched on marble columns in the far corner of the room.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes arrive in this area, read the following text aloud:

It's darker here than in any of the other areas you've visited so far. A chill breeze hits you from directly in front. How can there be a draft in an underground level? On the map, this room shows as an "L" shape, but you can't see anything at all around the bend. As you advance, you have the sneaking suspicion that you're being watched.

NOGHRI WARRIORS

The gray-skinned and compact Noghri are among the most recent and deadly additions to the Imperial ranks. Though an acute xenophobia has begun to manifest within the Galactic Empire, Darth Vader readily recognized the value of the species during a visit to their homeworld Honoghr. When the meter-tall warriors proved a match for his 501st Legion stormtrooper escort, the Dark Lord immediately found a way to enslave the species. Destiny arguably brought the two together, for the Noghri's frightful faces so resemble the masked visage of their new master, the likeness seems uncanny.

Dubbed "Death Commandos," the Noghri are perfectly evolved killing machines—quick, quiet and deceptively strong. In unarmed combat, they excel at *stava*, their martial art named after a ferocious native predator, and they wield Stokhli spray sticks or simple knives with deadly efficiency. Vader bestowed Draco with this squad of Noghri assassins in gratitude for the Inquisitor's assistance in torturing the captured Jedi Knight Halagad Ventor.

In a flash, you are assaulted by aliens that look like gargoyles. They are short and blindingly fast. As the chaos of combat ensues, you can't be sure, but the frightening faces of these warriors look like they might have been inspired by the armored mask of a certain Sith Lord—or vice-versa.

Noghri Warrior (3)

CL 6

Small Noghri scout 3/soldier 3

Force 2; **Dark Side** 3

Init +11; **Senses** scent, Perception +9

Languages Honoghran

Defenses Ref 23 (flat-footed 18), Fort 19, Will 17; Dodge hp 56; **Threshold** 19

Speed 4 squares

Melee unarmed +6 (1d6+5) or
knife +6 (1d4+5)

Ranged Stokhli spray stick +9 (3d6+3 stun)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +3

Atk Options Devastating Attack (rifles), Point Blank Shot, Running Attack

Special Actions Dodge, Shake It Off

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Special Qualities primitive, scent

Talents Devastating Attack (rifles), Hidden Movement, Improved Stealth, Melee Smash

Feats Dodge, Martial Arts I, Martial Arts II, Point Blank Shot, Running Attack, Shake It Off, Weapon Focus (rifles), Weapon Proficiency (rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +9, Initiative +11, Jump +9, Perception +9, Stealth +11

Possessions knife, Stokhli spray stick, dark clothing

Noghri Assassin (2)

CL 7

Small Noghri soldier 3/scoundrel 3/scout 1

Force 2; **Dark Side** 2

Init +12; **Senses** scent, Perception +10

Languages Honoghran

Defenses Ref 24 (flat-footed 20), Fort 20, Will 19
hp 63; **Threshold** 20

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibrodagger +10 (2d4+8) or
vibrodagger +8 (3d4+8) with Rapid Strike

Ranged vibrodagger +10 (2d4+7) or
vibrodagger +8 (3d4+7) with Rapid Shot

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Acrobatic Strike, Devastating Attack (advanced melee weapons), Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Rapid Strike, Running Attack, Skirmisher

Special Actions Fool's Luck, Shake It Off

Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 7

Special Qualities primitive, scent

Talents Devastating Attack (advanced melee weapons), Fool's Luck, Long Stride, Skirmisher, Weapon Specialization (advanced melee weapons)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Rapid Strike, Running Attack, Shake It Off, Weapon Finesse, Weapon

Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, simple weapons)
Skills Endurance +9, Initiative +12, Perception +10, Stealth +12
Possessions vibrodagger with improved damage modification (12), dark clothing, comlink

Noghri Strike Team Leader

CL 8

Small Noghri soldier 7/elite trooper 1

Force 2; **Dark Side** 4

Init +11; **Senses** scent, Perception +11

Languages Honoghran

Defenses Ref 24 (flat-footed 21), Fort 24, Will 20

hp 86; **Threshold** 24

Speed 4 squares

Melee unarmed +8 (1d4+4)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +12 (3d8+6) or
heavy blaster pistol +13 (3d8+6) with Careful Shot

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Careful Shot, Devastating Attack (pistols), Point Blank Shot,
Precise Shot, Running Attack

Special Actions Battle Analysis, Cover Fire

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13

Special Qualities delay damage, primitive, scent

Talents Battle Analysis, Cover Fire, Greater Weapon Focus (pistols),
Devastating Attack (pistols), Weapon Specialization (pistols)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Careful Shot, Martial Arts I,
Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Running Attack, Weapon Focus
(pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Initiative +11, Perception +11, Stealth +11, Treat Injury +11

Possessions heavy blaster pistol, dark clothing, comlink

NOGHRI TACTICS

The Noghri use the darkness to their advantage. First, they try to capture the heroes in a net from their Stokhli spray sticks. If they stun or incapacitate the heroes, they bring the prisoners before Draco. Otherwise, the Noghri fight fiercely to prevent intruders from interrupting Draco, but they will be reasonable if they see that they are outmatched. They prefer to fight in melee, using their stealth and martial arts to devastating effect. If the heroes try to escape by entering the tunnel, the Noghri give chase.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes defeat the Death Commandos, they are free to enter the tunnel leading down to Draco's location. The heroes can retain the weapons wielded by the Noghri.

ENCOUNTER MAP

See the map of sublevel 2 on page 19.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The Noghri's small size allows them to perch on 4-meter-tall columns in the farther part of the room, an area inaccessible to the heroes. The room also contains some ancient Jedi items, none of which offer much help to the heroes aside from a few wooden shields and lances. The items are held inside transparisteel display cases along the south and north walls.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

CHALLENGE LEVEL 11

SETUP

The heroes start on the east side of the map, at the exit from the tunnel that leads back to the sublevel 2. The opponents are near the opposite side, as indicated on the map, at the end of a ledge that is 8 squares by 2 squares. Raik Muun is in front of Draco, and the four shadow troopers are hiding behind rocks, aiming at the heroes. There is another, narrower ledge on the south side of the map, but if the heroes take that route, the shadow troopers shoot at them. In the center of the room are two cavernous pits, at the bottom of which lies a body of water.

READ-ALoud TEXT

If his invitation to join him is rebuffed, Inquisitor Draco undergoes a sinister transformation and attacks with his minions.

"As you die, rest assured that I reflected on you as on all enemies: despising that you must be wrong and I right, but reveling in the triumph of my convictions while whatever species of maggot indigenous to this world expedites the transition of your carcasses from this existence to the next."

INQUISITOR VALIN DRACO

Nearly 2 meters tall, with closely cropped hair and a lantern jaw, Valin Draco looks every bit the heroic Jedi he once was. The former Padawan of Master Denia, Jedi Draco, the "Valiant Dragon," embraced his role as a Republic commander in the Clone Wars wholeheartedly. However, at some point during the conflict, his heady determination to defeat the Separatist threat evolved into something pernicious, and he turned to the dark side.

Draco was thought lost in the chaotic Battle of Parein II 4, but he emerged after the Clone Wars as one of the new Empire's Jedi hunters. Left for dead and stranded on Parein II's fourth moon, a weakened Draco was stalked by a nighthunter. Ultimately, Draco subdued the beast in a vicious confrontation, but not before the creature bit off his left thumb and clamped its massive fangs down around his throat. Draco has since replaced the missing thumb with a cybernetic substitute, while masking the glaring scars around his neck with the high collar of his Inquisitor's tunic.

Draco arrived in the Cularin system in the *Imperial I*-class Star Destroyer *Assiduous*, accompanied by a *Lictor*-class Imperial dungeon ship, *Revelator*. However, unable to traverse the comet field in the vessel, Draco and his entourage made the journey to Almas in a *Theta*-class shuttle, tucked safely away at what's left of the Forard spaceport.

Inquisitor Valin Draco

CL 10

Medium Human Jedi 7/noble 1/Force adept 2

Force 5; **Destiny** 2; **Dark Side** 16; Power of the Dark Side, Strong in the Force

Init +12; **Senses** Perception +8

Languages Basic, Bocce, Dosh, High Galactic, Honoghran, Huttese

Defenses Ref 24 (flat-footed 22), Fort 22 (vs. Force powers 24), Will 27 (vs. Force powers 29)

hp 71 **Threshold** 22 (vs. Force powers 24)

Speed 6 squares

Melee lightsaber +12 (2d8+5) or

lightsaber +13 (3d8+5) against targets with Force Sensitivity

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Acrobatic Strike

Special Actions Damage Reduction 10, Deflect, Power of the Dark Side, Redirect Shot, Telekinetic Savant

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +18): *dark rage*, *Force grip*, *Force lightning*, *Force slam*, *move object*, *rebuke* (2), *surge*

Force Techniques Force power mastery (*Force grip*)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17

Talents Damage Reduction 10, Deflect, Inquisition, Power of the Dark Side, Redirect Shot, Telekinetic Savant

Feats Acrobatic Strike, Force Sensitivity, Force Training (2), Linguist, Skill Focus (Persuasion), Skill Focus (Use the Force), Skill Training (Persuasion), Strong in the Force, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (lightsabers), Weapon Proficiency (lightsabers, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Initiative +12, Persuasion +18, Use the Force +18

Possessions lightsaber (self-built), Inquisitor's robes, comlink, various personal belongings

DARTH RIVAN'S HOLOCRON GATEKEEPER

Darth Rivan is an enigma of the New Sith Wars. A Zelosian, he defied nearly every stereotype of his gregarious people except for his knowledge of plant biology, and his Sith moniker is believed to have been culled from a corrupted Sith text, possibly written by Darth Revan. As the reigning Dark Lord of the Sith sometime between 1,150 and 1,400 years ago, Rivan's story is intimately tied to an object he called the Darkstaff. Drawn to this dark side artifact, Rivan erected a stronghold on the poisonous planet Almas, using the Force and his biological knowledge to terraform the world into a paradise. At first, Rivan desired to possess the Darkstaff, but when he learned that it was a malevolent vacuum of power, he became bent on destroying it.

During the New Sith Wars, Darth Rivan consolidated many dark siders into an army. To circumvent the betrayals common among Sith, he pioneered the creation of Battlelords. This radical process bonded one of Rivan's Sith commanders—the Battlelord—through the Force to his or her troops, such that if subordinates tried to injure or kill their superior, the

alchemical bond insured that the traitors would instead be the recipients of the damage they intended to inflict.

During a pivotal battle, Rivan simply vanished from the combat zone in a catastrophic and violent way. Legend relates that Rivan at last obtained possession of the Darkstaff that he both craved and feared, and that it created a hyperspace wormhole, known as a Force Storm, that annihilated Rivan's Battlelord army. Caught in the eye of this unnatural tempest, Rivan was flung to a time and place far removed from Almas. He found himself on the planet Ruusan, caught in the War of Light and Dark between Lord Hoth's Army of Light and Lord Kaan's Brotherhood of Darkness. The Darkstaff left Rivan bereft of the Force, and when he encountered a Force-user of inconsequential power, the Dark Lord was easily dispatched.

Under the influence of dark Force energies on Almas, the gatekeeper of Darth Rivan's holocron has been given the ability to function independently and of its own free will, acting as the real Rivan would.

While Draco speaks, the sinister blot hovering behind him seems to pulse and seethe with rage. Before your eyes, the wraith seems to transfer some of its dark energy into the Inquisitor, wreathing the Human in shadows. The evil holocron gatekeeper hovering in the room seems to writhe with malevolence, and there is clearly some vile connection between it and the Inquisitor. Draco's eyes acquire a sickening gold hue, and his voice plummets in pitch as he gives a command to the woman and soldiers at his side. "My brave companions—kill them."

Darth Rivan's Holocron Gatekeeper

CL 10

Medium Sith holocron gatekeeper Jedi 7/Sith apprentice 5/Sith lord 3
Force 5; **Dark Side** 16; Strong in the Force
Init +12; **Senses** darkvision, Perception +10
Languages Basic, Sith, Zelosian

Defenses Ref — (flat-footed —), Fort —, Will 31
hp —; **Threshold** —
Immune fear, physical effects

Speed 8 squares (fly)
Base Atk —; **Grp** —

Abilities Str —, Dex —, Con —, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 20
Special Qualities aura of malevolence, dark side bond, Sith holocron gatekeeper, temptation, vulnerability to *sever Force*
Talents Power of the Dark Side, Dark Presence
Feats Force Sensitivity, Skill Focus (Use the Force), Strong in the Force
Skills Initiative +12, Knowledge (galactic lore) +14, Use the Force +22

Aura of Malevolence—All creatures within 3 squares of the gatekeeper take a –2 penalty to Will Defense.

Dark Side Bond—The gatekeeper has been instructing Inquisitor Draco and can lend him the strength of his knowledge. As a standard action, Rivan can grant any one of the following benefits to Inquisitor Draco until the beginning of Rivan's next turn:

- +1 Force bonus on attack rolls
- +2 Force bonus to any Defense of his choice
- +1 die of damage with lightsaber attacks
- +5 Force bonus to Use the Force checks made to deflect incoming ranged attacks

- +5 Force bonus to Use the Force checks made to activate the *rebuke power*

Sith Holocron Gatekeeper—As a Sith holocron gatekeeper, Darth Rivan cannot interact with the heroes the same way that normal opponents do. While the gatekeeper occupies a space on the battlefield, he cannot make physical attacks or use Force powers because he is merely a construct of the holocron. The gatekeeper takes no damage from attacks (weapons just pass through him), though he can be affected by mind-affecting abilities and skills.

Vulnerability to *Sever Force*—The holocron gatekeeper can be disrupted by light-side Force-users. Whenever a character targets Inquisitor Draco with a successful application of the *sever Force* power, the gatekeeper loses the ability to use the Dark Side Bond special quality on his next turn. If a character instead targets the gatekeeper with *sever Force*, the gatekeeper loses his standard action on his next turn. If a character spends a Destiny Point when using *sever Force* on the gatekeeper, the dark Force energies dissipate, destroying the gatekeeper and the holocron alike. Using *sever Force* on Draco while the holocron is still functioning has only the above effect and does not affect Draco as per the normal use of the power.

SHADOW TROOPERS (4)

It's believed that when the curse "Emperor's black bones" was coined, it was at the sight of these ashen-armored soldiers. Imperial shadow troopers might be mistaken for regular clone troopers, except that their stealth armor and red visors give them the appearance of demonic silhouettes. They are trained for reconnaissance and occasionally serve as guardians to vital facilities and personnel. Inquisitor Draco reasons that if they're good enough for the Emperor's secret Utapau storehouse, they're good enough for him.

Unlike that of other stormtroopers, shadow trooper armor retains its distinctive pre-Imperial appearance. There is talk of eventually streamlining shadow trooper armor, but for now, their scarlet T-visors remain a haunting reminder of Palpatine's bloody ascension to the rank of Emperor. Like all other stormtroopers, shadow troopers cannot be bribed, blackmailed, or seduced. Any such attempt automatically fails.

The shadow troopers' scarlet T-visors give the impression of demonic silhouettes, but their coordination and synchronization of movement reminds you that that these clones are highly trained killers.

Shadow Trooper

CL 3

Medium Human nonheroic 4/scout 2
Force 2; **Dark Side** 2
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision, Perception +7
Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 18), Fort 16, Will 11
hp 26; **Threshold** 16

Speed 6 squares
Melee vibrodagger +5 (2d4+2)
Ranged blaster rifle +5 (3d8+1)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Careful Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Abilities Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Talents Improved Stealth

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Careful Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Training (Stealth), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Initiative +9, Perception +7, Stealth +11

Possessions comlink, shadow trooper armor (+6 armor, +2 equipment, +2 Stealth, darkvision, immune to detection), "Stealth" blaster rifle (see sidebar), vibrodagger

NEW WEAPON: DC-19 "STEALTH" CARBINE

Weapon Group: Rifles; **Size:** Medium; **Cost:** 3,500; **Damage:** 3d8; **Stun:** No; **Rate of Fire:** S; **Weight:** 5 kg; **Type:** Energy; **Availability:** Restricted

This weapon is equipped with a sound suppressor for silent operation, and it has an optional mode that uses an expensively refined Tibanna gas mixture that makes a bolt invisible to the regular visual spectrum. This mode comes at a high cost. The mixture must be reloaded after 10 shots, and the weapon must cool down after each blast to prevent damage to the dampeners. Shadow trooper snipers use the invisible bolts to great effect.

RAIK MUUN, DARK JEDI

A former Padawan at the Almas Academy, Human half-breed Raik Muun once fell in love with a fellow Jedi student. When her affections were not reciprocated, love turned to obsession, and Master Killocca dismissed her from the academy. Angered at these rejections, Raik became bent on revenge. She attempted to undermine the Jedi by impersonating members of the Jedi Order while publicly performing acts of sabotage and chaos. Muun also learned of the existence of an evil creature called a t'salak, and by kidnapping and impersonating a Jedi, she gained possession of the beast. Successfully fissioning the creature into multiple entities, she attempted to use two t'salaks to turn some Jedi into crazed killers during a peace conference. Her plan failed, but Master Killocca lost his life defeating the t'salaks, and Raik escaped.

When Raik returned to her base on the planet Tilnes, she learned about the decimation of Jedi throughout the galaxy as a result of Order 66. Her revenge was now denied, but she could still fuel the rumors of the "Jedi Rebellion." Raik went to Coruscant to confront those responsible for the destruction of the self-righteous Force-users, not sure if she should thank them or kill them. That's when she met Valin Draco. The Inquisitor saw enormous potential in the wild-eyed Dark Jedi and asked her to join him. Raik felt that she had finally found someone who would love her back.

Raik has accompanied Draco on various assignments, indulging in the opportunity to hunt Jedi. When Draco travels to Almas, Raik's familiarity with the academy proves essential, as does the t'salak she brought along.

The fire-haired woman stalks toward you, clad in a dark version of the Inquisitor's attire. She appears Human, but something about her says otherwise. Then you see it. Draco's gaze shows ruthlessness and calculation, but this Dark Jedi's entrancing, green-slitted pupils harbor only murder and dementia.

With the flick of a thumb, the red blade of her lightsaber streaks into existence, casting her body into a bewitching vermillion glow. Each syllable of her death sentence tumbles like wisps of smoke from her lips.

"Come at me one at a time or all at once. All shall pass from this world."

Raik Muun

CL 6

Medium near-Human Jedi 6

Force 2; **Dark Side** 14

Init +10; **Senses** Perception +5

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 17), Fort 20, Will 19
hp 76; **Threshold** 20

Speed 6 squares

Melee lightsaber +9 (2d8+5) or

lightsaber +9* (2d8+15) with Acrobatic Strike

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Atk Options Acrobatic Strike, Power Attack, Running Attack

Special Actions Deflect

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +9): *dark rage*, *rebuke*, *surge*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

Talents Elusive Target, Deflect, Weapon Specialization (lightsabers)

Feats Acrobatic Strike, Force Sensitivity, Force Training, Power Attack, Running Attack, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (lightsabers), Weapon Proficiency (lightsabers, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Initiative +10, Use the Force +9

Possessions lightsaber, comlink, robes, various personal belongings

* Includes 5 points of Power Attack.

IMPERIAL TACTICS

Shadow troopers use their Improved Stealth talent to hide and take their opponents by surprise. At a distance, shadow troopers use their Precise Shot feat and aim at a specific target (their special armor negates the Perception bonus granted by scanners and sensor packs). Their helmets grant them darkvision, so they have an advantage in the dark. Once detected, shadow troopers take move actions to get within 30 squares of their target in order to use their Point Blank Shot feat bonuses.

Raik Muun deflects blaster shots if the heroes shoot at her, but she does not move from the spot where she is protecting Draco. If the heroes do not advance, at the end of 2 consecutive rounds, she moves to engage them along with her master.

On the first round of combat, Draco activates his Damage Reduction 10 talent, draws his lightsaber (if he has not already done so), and prepares to deal with the heroes. On the second round, he activates his *dark rage* Force power, spending a Force point to make it last for the duration of the encounter, and moves to engage the heroes.

Once the heroes move within range, Draco, Raik, and the shadow troopers engage in melee. During the battle, Draco saves his Destiny Points to make devastating attacks automatically miss; he might need them to escape and make his way to the second cavern. Similarly, he uses his *surge* power only to flee to the adjacent cavern.

CONCLUSION

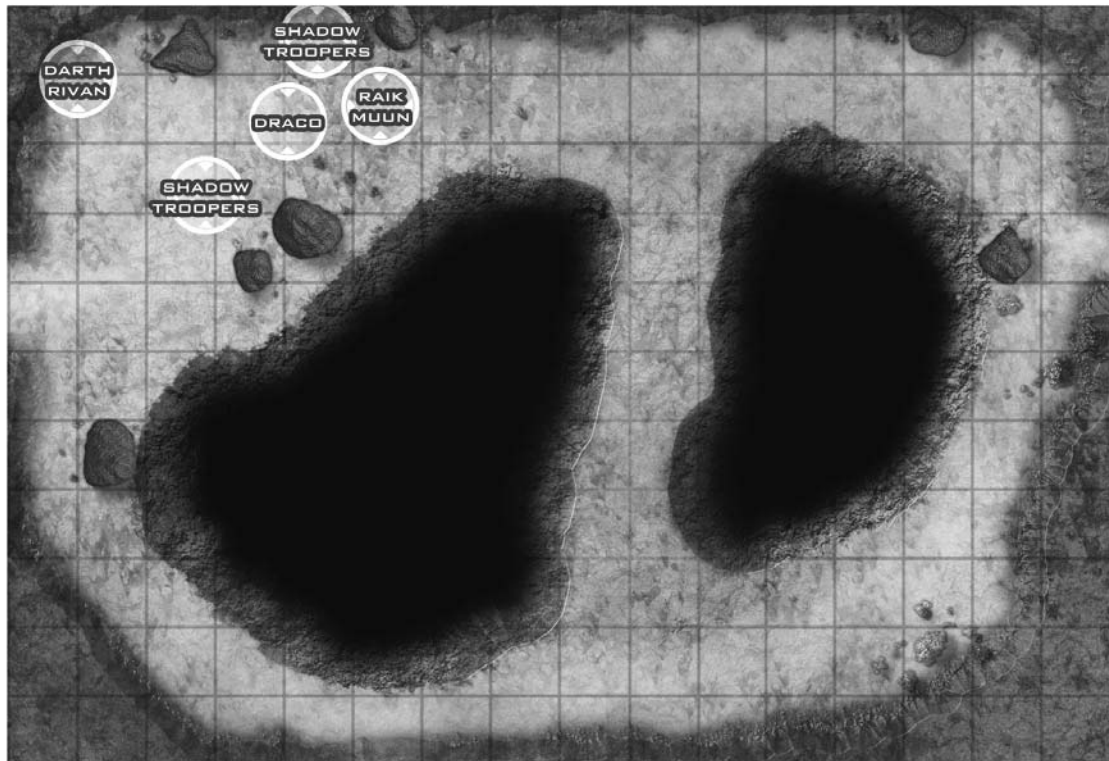
If Draco is reduced to fewer than half of his hit points, or if all of his allies are dead, he retreats to another cavern for the final encounter. See "Behemoth From Below" (page 21) for more information on what happens next.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the cave area appears below.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Aside from ignited lightsabers, this room has no light source. The shadow troopers have the advantage of darkvision. A few large rocks scattered about the cave can offer concealment, or they can be lifted with the Force and thrown at opponents. Anyone standing too close to the openings in the center of the area risks falling over the edge.



DRACO'S LAST STAND

CHALLENGE LEVEL 10

SETUP

This encounter begins with Draco entering the room and moving to the middle of the large stone bridge that stretches across this canyon. After the events described in the boxed text below, the heroes should be at the entrance to the cavern, with Draco across the bridge, waiting for them.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the first heroes enter the cavern where this encounter takes place, read the following text aloud:

Draco makes a stand midway on the overpass traversing the black gulf. A red lightsaber hisses in his right hand, angled down and away from him, while he extends the precious holocron over the abyss in his left. Then a sound like rolling thunder causes the caverns to shudder, as if the planet itself were growling in fury. Abruptly, as if the sky's been turned upside down, two blue bolts of lightning the size of starfighters explode toward you from below.

One of the seething electrical masses smashes into the ceiling high above, producing a shower of man-sized boulders. The other mammoth blue bolt sideswipes the bridge, missing you by a mere meter.

On the heels of that familiar, unnatural lightning comes a monster straight out of your nightmares—200 meters of golden sinew and obscenity, led by a gaping maw lined with teeth bigger than the tallest Wookiee. It looks identical to the dreambeast you fought earlier, and for a heartbeat you hope that you're still dreaming. But this is real, and this leviathan makes the illusion you battled earlier look like a tame womp rat.

INQUISITOR DRACO

Draco, now without the aid of the Sith holocron gatekeeper, has gained some control over both the dreambeast and the *Force lightning* erupting from the abyss below. Before the encounter begins, Draco catches his second wind to regain some hit points, knowing that he'll need them in the coming fight. As a free action once per round on his turn, Inquisitor Draco can make a Use the Force check against an opponent's Reflex Defense. On a successful hit, an arc of *Force lightning* lances out at that target, dealing 4d6 points of energy damage with a 1-square splash (follow the standard rules for splash damage). As a result, he never uses this against targets in which he is engaged in melee.

Inquisitor Valin Draco

CL 10

Medium Human Jedi 7/noble 1/Force adept 2

Force 5; **Destiny** 2, **Dark Side** 16; Power of the Dark Side, Strong in the Force

Init +12; **Senses** Perception +8

Languages Basic, Bocce, Dosh, High Galactic, Honoghran, Huttese

Defenses Ref 24 (flat-footed 22), Fort 22 (vs. Force powers 24), Will 27 (vs. Force powers 29)

hp 71*; **Threshold** 22 (vs. Force powers 24)

Speed 6 squares

Melee lightsaber +12 (2d8+5) or
lightsaber +13 (3d8+5) against targets with Force Sensitivity

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Acrobatic Strike

Special Actions Damage Reduction 10, Deflect, Power of the Dark Side, Redirect Shot, Telekinetic Savant

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +18): *dark rage*, *Force grip*, *Force lightning*, *Force slam*, *move object*, *rebuke* (2), *surge*

Force Techniques Force power mastery (*Force grip*)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17

Talents Damage Reduction 10, Deflect, Inquisition, Power of the Dark Side, Redirect Shot, Telekinetic Savant

Feats Acrobatic Strike, Force Sensitivity, Force Training (2), Linguist, Skill Focus (Persuasion), Skill Focus (Use the Force), Skill Training (Persuasion), Strong in the Force, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (lightsabers), Weapon Proficiency (lightsabers, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Initiative +12, Persuasion +18, Use the Force +18

Possessions lightsaber (self-built), Inquisitor's robes, comlink, various personal belongings

* If Draco took damage in the previous encounter, remember to use his current hit points instead of his full hit points.

INQUISITOR DRACO'S TACTICS

Draco knows that, alone, he could easily be overwhelmed by a group of heroes. As such, he takes a much more defensive position than he did in the previous encounter. He uses the ambient *Force lightning* to keep multiple enemies from getting too close to him each round. Similarly, he will use *Force grip* to shut down one hero, letting the k'kayeh dragon do the attacking for him (while still shooting an arc of *Force lightning*). If no heroes are engaged in melee, Draco uses his standard action to fight defensively, choosing to make no attacks (the *Force lightning* does not count as making an attack) to gain a +5 bonus to Reflex Defense. Draco uses his Deflect talent to deal with any attacks that get by his Reflex Defense, hoping to draw one or two melee attackers to him at a time so that he can whittle them down rather than face a barrage from all of the heroes at once.

CONCLUSION

When the heroes deal the killing blow to Draco, he drops the Qornah Holocron at his feet. With a gasp, he goes wide-eyed and tumbles from the side of the bridge into the abyss. As Draco plummets into darkness, the *Force lightning* stops, and the k'kayeh dragon descends into the abyss once more, presumably after the body of the Inquisitor. With Draco defeated and the holocron recovered, the heroes need to escape from the collapsing academy with haste.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the bridge area appears below.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Two environmental features make this encounter challenging for the heroes. First, most of the combat will take place on a large stone bridge with no railings. Any heroes pushed off of the bridge must attempt to catch themselves or they will fall into the abyss.

Second, the k'kayeh dragon stretches up to menace the heroes. Though the dragon would normally be far too powerful for them to face, in this encounter, it acts more like an obstacle than a true opponent. The dragon has an Initiative bonus of +6 and a Reflex Defense of 18. If successfully hit by a ranged attack, the beast takes a cumulative -2 penalty to its bite attack for each ranged attack that hits it. (You should make it clear to the heroes that their combined efforts are having a combined effect, giving ranged attackers a role in the encounter while melee combatants deal with Draco.) Once per round, the dragon snaps at any heroes in the chamber who are not engaged in melee with Draco, making an attack at +10 against the target. A successful hit deals 1d8+14 points of piercing damage to the target and moves the target 1 square in any direction.

