

STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME

A WRETCHED HIVE

EPISODE II OF *STAR WARS: DAWN OF DEFIANCE*

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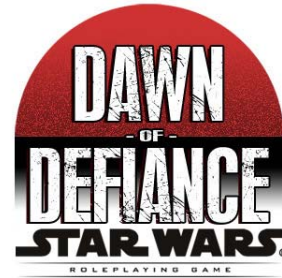
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2

WRETCHED HIVE

A Wretched Hive is the second 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 lets the heroes delve deeper into the mysterious plot surrounding former Imperial Admiral Varth, and the heroes should advance to 5th level by the conclusion of the adventure. Over the course of this adventure, the heroes get to see what the galaxy is like in the wake of the rise of the Empire, and they discover a bit more about the Empire's secret plans and how they involve a Hutt crime lord named Darga.



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.

Some rules mechanics are based on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rulebook* by Bill Slavicsek, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker, the original **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and the new **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed under the assumption that you have run your heroes through the first **Dawn of Defiance** adventure, *The Traitor's Gambit*. The heroes should already be acquainted with Admiral Varth, Captain Sirona Okeefe, and Captain Adrian Verana of the Alderaanian starship *Resurgence*. Beyond that, the heroes need to know only that there is much to be gained in working for Bail Organa, even indirectly, and that the Galactic Empire is up to something big.

If you aren't running **Dawn of Defiance** but would like to use this adventure in your home campaign, the heroes might be hired by an existing NPC in your campaign to investigate the dealings that a Hutt crime lord has with the Empire. They can try to discover what the Empire is trading with the Hutt and report back to their employer.

Additionally, it is highly recommended that you read the entire adventure thoroughly before running it. Some of the events can take place at varying times, and having full knowledge of the potential events can save you many headaches.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

At a briefing aboard the *Resurgence*, Admiral Varth explains that part of his responsibility in a secret Imperial scheme known as the Sarlacc Project was to arrange the covert exchange of resources through a Hutt crime lord on the planet Cato Neimoidia. Captain Verana orders the heroes to travel aboard Captain Okeefe's transport to Cato Neimoidia, make contact with Darga, the Hutt gangster, and discover what he's trading with the Empire.

First, the heroes must find one of Darga's underlings—a Devaronian named Warrick Raden—at a ruined warehouse. Though Raden does not

wish to help them, the heroes must convince him to lead them to a hidden location in the city of Zarra. The building is in fact Darga the Hutt's palace, which the crime lord took over after its previous Neimoidian inhabitant (a high-ranking member of the Trade Federation) vanished, leaving it abandoned. The heroes enter the palace and are granted an audience with the Hutt. Darga has ordered them brought to him so that he can size them up, and he offers to let the heroes stay in his court for a few days, giving them a chance to impress him and gain his trust.

The heroes stay in the palace's guest quarters. During the final night of their stay, any Force-sensitive characters begin to hear whispers, as though someone were trying to communicate with them telepathically, and they feel a tugging in the Force toward one of the other rooms. Following the whispers, they discover a secret set of chambers below the guest quarters. Inside is a comatose woman, older and gray with weathered features, who is hooked up to machinery that is keeping her unconscious. Once the heroes revive her, they discover that she is a former Jedi Master named Denia who has been kept comatose ever since she fell in battle during the Clone Wars. Unfortunately, the heroes' meddling hasn't gone unnoticed, and Darga calls the palace guards, leaving the entire building in an uproar.

As the heroes fight their way back to the upper levels of Darga's palace, they quickly discover that the Hutt is living up to his species' reputation for cowardice. Terrified at the prospect of having a Jedi loose in his palace, Darga flees to his space yacht and takes off for the planet Bespin. Though the Hutt leaves town in a hurry, his minions remain behind to try to finish off the intruders.

OPENING CRAWL

For Gamemasters who wish to have an opening crawl before the adventure, consider using the boxed text below.

STAR WARS: DAWN OF DEFIANCE

Episode II

A WRETCHED HIVE

Between the stars in the blackness of space, the Nebulon-B frigate *Resurgence* floats silently away from the prying eyes of the Empire.

Meanwhile, the galaxy continues to sink further into darkness. Each day, remnants of the Old Republic are crushed and a New Order is more firmly established.

Former Imperial Admiral Gilder Varth has provided Alderaanian agents with vital information on secret projects, and even now events are in motion to reveal the Empire's misdeeds to the galaxy . . .



PART 1: CATO NEIMOIDIA

In *A Wretched Hive*, the heroes must travel to the world of Cato Neimoidia, a planet ravaged by the Clone Wars and one of the many colony worlds of the Neimoidian people. Since their last adventure, the heroes have spent some down time aboard the Nebulon-B frigate *Resurgence*, which is apparently owned by Bail Organa. The ship spends all of its time in deep space, between worlds and away from major hyperspace routes, and it currently serves as a mobile safe house for former Imperial Admiral Gilder Varth.

Varth was recently rescued from an Imperial prison facility (either by the heroes, if they played in *The Traitor's Gambit*, or by other agents of Bail Organa if they didn't) and brought to the *Resurgence* to be debriefed. Captain Adrian Verana is the commanding officer of the *Resurgence*, and he has overseen Varth's safety and debriefing over the last few weeks. The whole time, Captain Verana has made it clear that no one should mention Bail Organa's name because the Senator cannot risk being known to be involved in case the Empire happens upon the *Resurgence*. Even Gilder Varth does not know for certain that it was Organa who had him rescued (unless the heroes told him, of course).

In the time between the end of *The Traitor's Gambit* and the beginning of *A Wretched Hive*, you should feel free to include encounters with Captain Verana, Gilder Varth, and Captain Okeefe (the owner and operator of the *Baudo*-class Star Yacht, the *Banshee*). The heroes should get to know these three characters a bit better because all of them will have roles of varying importance throughout the campaign.

When *A Wretched Hive* opens, the heroes should be fully healed and have had a chance to obtain needed supplies and resources. The *Resurgence* is a well-stocked ship and can provide the group with most mundane items.

THE BRIEFING

The adventure begins when the heroes are summoned to the briefing room aboard the *Resurgence*. When they arrive, they find that Gilder Varth awaits them, now dressed in the uniform of an Alderaanian ship officer. At his side is a small yellow-and-silver astromech droid that whistles softly as it interfaces with a computer system. Once the heroes arrive, read the following boxed text aloud:



Captain Verana

The briefing room aboard the *Resurgence* is clean and white, with several benches wrapping smoothly around a holographic projector seated on a raised dais in the center of the room. The projector springs to life, and the blue-tinted hologram of a Hutt appears to hover a few inches away from the projector's three curved prongs. With a brusque clearing of his throat, former Imperial officer Gilder Varth begins to speak, wasting little time on pleasantries.

"Before the Empire decided my conscience was a liability," he says, "I was involved peripherally in a top-secret plan known as the Sarlacc Project. While the details of the project are unknown to me, I was involved in the transfer of large sums of credits and resources to the project. Whatever the project entails, it is taking up a lot of the Empire's time and effort. Moreover, I believe that this Sarlacc Project is destroying the lives of thousands of sentient beings; casualty reports crossed my desk on a regular basis.

"Unfortunately, I don't know much more than that. However, during my brief brushes with the project, I discovered that the Imperial Navy was hiding the program's existence from the Senate by transferring resources through secondary sources. Resources were routed through the Corporate Sector, through fake contractors, and through the criminal underworld to keep a trail from leading back to the project.

"One such secondary source was a Hutt crime lord named Darga. Like all Hutts, Darga is a slimy gangster whose love of credits is exceeded only by his love of power. Part of my job involved transferring resources to Darga, and in turn arranging for Imperial agents to take control of other resources from the Hutt's organization. These were not simply transfers of credits. The items being traded were not specified, but physical resources were definitely being exchanged. Though it's not much, this is the only lead we have.

"Captain Verana has charged me with helping to uncover more about the Sarlacc Project, and he has authorized me to use you as my agents. We need you to travel to the planet of Cato Neimoidia and find Darga the Hutt. See if you can learn what he is trading in and how it relates to the Sarlacc Project."

Varth keeps the briefing short and sweet. He has an air about him that immediately recalls his military past; though he is not unfriendly, he spares no time for idle chatter. It should be clear to the heroes that Varth has not adjusted to life outside of the Imperial Navy; he still acts with the same rigidity that is characteristic of all Imperial officers. He seems uncomfortable in his Alderaanian uniform, but his professionalism won't allow him to voice any complaints. The man is all business, and though he seems genuine in his assertions, he remains largely unreadable.

After the briefing, the heroes might have some questions about their mission. The following section provides answers to common questions:

Why should we do this for you? "In exchange for your assistance, Captain Verana has authorized me to pay each of you a modest sum. Additionally, this may be a chance to discover what the Empire is planning with the Sarlacc Project—which could have big repercussions, if I am right."

What else do you know about the Sarlacc Project? "Not much more than I've told you. My only involvement came in managing resources, and most of those transactions were encoded."

How are we supposed to find Darga the Hutt? "Unfortunately, Darga's exact whereabouts are unknown. However, he has been seen in the Cato Neimoidian city of Zarra. Chances are that someone in the city knows where he is."

How do we discover the extent of Darga's involvement in the Sarlacc Project? "Darga is not one to give up his secrets easily, but he has been known to take associates into his trust. If you can get inside his palace, he might reveal what is going on—or you might be able to find out by snooping around."

What can you tell us about Zarra? "Zarra was heavily damaged during the Clone Wars, and half of the city is still in ruins. The few residents that have chosen to remain inhabit a cluster of settlements on one end of the city."

How are we supposed to get to Cato Neimoidia? "Captain Verana has chartered passage for you aboard the *Banshee*, the transport vessel captained by Sirona Okeefe. After helping you rescue me from my prison on Felucia, Captain Okeefe quickly found herself on retainer."

ARRIVAL

The trip to Cato Neimoidia is uneventful, and when the heroes arrive, they find a planet that is far from its former glory in the days before the Clone Wars. A world in the Colonies, Cato Neimoidia should be far more populated than it is. When the *Banshee* drops out of hyperspace, any heroes in the cockpit can see that there is very little traffic traveling to and from the world. As the *Banshee* descends toward the planet, the ship flies through layers of clouds and zooms over cities that are built on massive bridges between rock arches. However, the bridge cities are all but abandoned, seemingly left to rot after the Clone Wars.

The heroes land on Cato Neimoidia with no difficulty and no visible Imperial presence. The *Banshee* docks at a spaceport in the city of Zarra, and though propaganda posters line the spaceport walls, there is no sign of stormtroopers or other Imperial officials. Regardless, Captain Okeefe cautions the heroes against acting foolishly. The Empire still controls the planet, and though its current presence is not strong, the situation could change quickly.

Zarra itself is dilapidated to the point of being hazardous. As the heroes walk the streets, they see little in the way of authority or commerce. Several large buildings that appear to have been lavish palaces of Neimoidian merchants lie half toppled and mostly destroyed. Rubble litters the streets, and landspeeders must veer sharply to avoid chunks of permacrete lying haphazardly in the road. Though a number of beings, mostly shabby-looking Neimoidians, roam the streets, it is clear that Zarra has been nearly abandoned since the Clone Wars.

SAMPLE CITIZENS

During this part of the adventure, the heroes might come into contact with members of the local populace. Below are several Cato Neimoidian citizens to use as quick reference when the heroes begin moving about the city of Zarra. Each uses the typical statistics block below. Feel free to invent your own NPCs or introduce other characters here as well.

- **Krett, Cantina Owner:** Male Neimoidian, owns the Federation's Folly, a cantina in Zarra. A veteran of the Clone Wars, Krett once commanded a *Lucrehulk*-class battleship but was exiled to Cato Neimoidia and is still bitter.
- **Nillia, Spaceport Administrator:** Female Neimoidian, keeps tabs on all the ships coming and going from Zarra. She is

bored with her job and longs to leave, and she seems wistful, as if seeking something more.

- **Vigro, Speeder Repairman:** Male Neimoidian, operates Vigro's Repulsorlifts, a landspeeder repair shop. He is suspicious of outsiders and believes that even honest customers are out to swindle him.
- **Salitt, Beggar:** Male Neimoidian who begs on the streets of Zarra. He claims that he was once the Viceroy of the Trade Federation (he wasn't) and seems distinctly deluded and paranoid.
- **Shass, Trader:** Female Neimoidian, owner of Zarran Imports and Exports. A shrewd businesswoman, she had aspirations of rising through the ranks of the Trade Federation until the blockade of Naboo, when she refused to go any further in a corrupt organization.
- **Desson, Laborer:** Male Neimoidian who works to rebuild Zarra. Desson seems like a man whose aspirations have been trod on for too long, such that now he is merely going through the motions.
- **Borlo, Imperial Informant:** Male Neimoidian who earns his keep by feeding information to the Empire about any unusual happenings. He seems friendly and outgoing, but his eyes glisten with the promise of Imperial credits.

Typical Cato Neimoidian Citizen

CL 0

Medium Neimoidian nonheroic 1

Init +0; Senses Perception +6

Languages Basic, Bocce, Neimoidian, Pak Pak

Defenses Ref 10 (flat-footed 10), Fort 10, Will 11
hp 2; Threshold 10

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed -1 (1d4-1)

Ranged blaster pistol +0 (3d6)

Base Atk +0; Grp +0

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

Feats Skill Focus (Deception), Skill Training (Perception, Persuasion),
Weapon Proficiency (simple weapons, pistols)

Skills Deception +10 (may reroll, keeping the second result even if it is worse), Knowledge (galactic lore) +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +5

Possessions blaster pistol, clothes, comlink, 20 credits, various personal belongings

A VISIT FROM THE VIPERS

As the heroes arrive on Cato Neimoidia, they are hassled by a local swoop gang. The Vipers, a rough gang of thugs who terrorize Zarra on a daily basis, always look for fresh prey when an outlander starship arrives. The swoop gang's leader is a violent Human woman named Kessra. She is the only female member of the gang, but she bears the scars of several past battles. From the Vipers' demeanor, it is clear that they follow her unquestioningly. However, they don't realize that Kessra sometimes takes small jobs from Darga the Hutt. She uses her gang to achieve the crime lord's goals in Zarra.

As the heroes depart the spaceport where the *Banshee* is docked, the Vipers ride in quickly and surround the party. Kessra taunts the heroes from the back of her swoop bike, claiming that they've failed to pay for a landing permit from the Vipers. If they wish to pass unharmed, they'll have to dole out 1,000 credits each. The heroes can pay the outlandish extortion fee, and if they do, Kessra pegs them as easy targets and leads the Vipers away—for now. But the whole time that the heroes stay in Zarra, gang members continue to shake them down for more money. They might even try attacking the *Banshee* if the heroes don't eventually put up a fight, and Captain Okeefe is not pleased about having to drive off a gang of bikers.

If the heroes refuse to pay the exorbitant amount that the Vipers demand, the swoop gang launches an attack. See "Swoop Marauders" (page 17) for more information on running the encounter.

Ad-Hoc XP Award: If the heroes cave in and pay off the Vipers, they receive no XP for this encounter. They receive normal XP for other methods of dealing with the swoop gang, including diplomacy, deception, or combat.

LOCATING DARGA'S PALACE

With nothing more to go on than a city and the name of a Hutt, the heroes don't have many leads to follow. Asking questions about a Hutt crime lord can be a dangerous business in Zarra, and most citizens rebuff the heroes if they try. However, after a few attempts to find Darga, the heroes should come to realize that the Hutt lives in the city and is, in fact, well known, even if no one will reveal his exact location.

But there is one way for the heroes to learn where Darga resides. One of his flunkies, a young Devaronian thief and errand boy named Warrick "Womp Rat" Raden, spends a great deal of time in the city. If the heroes can locate Raden, he can lead them directly to the Hutt's secret palace. Below are some suggestions on how to handle the search for Raden.

Gather Information: Heroes who are trained in the Gather Information skill have an advantage in trying to find the Hutt. Though they cannot locate Darga with the skill, they can find Raden, who takes pains to keep his movements low key (if not secret). A hero can use the Locate Individual application of the Gather Information skill to find him; the DC is 25 and the information costs 500 credits in bribes. Success indicates that the heroes are told where to find Raden—a nearby ruined warehouse.

False Pretenses: The heroes might try to gain the attention of the Hutt and his associates through deception. This might include pretending to be a rival gang eager to start trouble or posing as fellow criminals looking to work with (or for) the Hutt. However, most citizens of Cato Neimoidia want nothing to do with the underworld, so if the heroes identify themselves as criminals of any kind, the residents shun them or refuse to do business with them.

If the heroes spread rumors in an attempt to draw the Hutt's interest, it takes two days before they see results. Provided that they didn't spread rumors likely to provoke the crime lord (such as "We're here to kill that slimy Hutt and take over this planet for our own!"), they receive an anonymous message telling them to meet Warrick Raden at the ruined warehouse at midnight. The message actually comes from one of Darga's informants in Zarra, not from Raden himself, so the errand boy knows nothing of the heroes' impending arrival.

Bribery: No matter how much the citizens fear dealing with the criminal underworld, the right amount of credits can always open doors. If the heroes visit traders, cantinas, spaceports, and even security offices

searching for information on Darga, the right bribes can get them the information they need.

- A bribe of 100 credits or less reveals no information regarding Darga, only that "some Hutt" has been terrorizing the people of Zarra.
- A bribe of 101 to 500 credits earns the heroes the name of the Hutt's associate, Warrick Raden, and grants a +10 circumstance bonus on a Gather Information check (see above) to locate the errand boy.
- A bribe of more than 500 credits earns the heroes not only Warrick Raden's name but also the location of the abandoned warehouse where he can be found.

Threats and Violence: Though more in line with the Empire's tactics, the heroes can use threats and violence to get information about Darga. Most of the population of Zarra is already cowed by the Hutt's thugs and associates. Combined with occasional Imperial intervention, which never goes well even for law-abiding citizens, the locals have very little fight left in them.

Using the Persuasion skill to intimidate citizens of Zarra only goes so far. A successfully intimidated citizen can say only that a Devaronian named Warrick Raden works for Darga and sometimes comes around to collect extortion money or deliver messages on the Hutt's behalf. This information grants the same +10 bonus on Gather Information checks that bribery does.

If the heroes use violence to find Darga, such as abusing local business owners or picking a fight in a cantina, they eventually get a message from one of the Hutt's hidden agents who believes that the heroes are auditioning to join the organization. This message is identical to the one described under "False Pretenses," above.

However, violence does not sit well with the citizens of Zarra, and eventually one becomes scared enough to alert Imperial authorities to the heroes' activities. An Imperial patrol consisting of six stormtroopers and an Imperial Junior Officer (see page 27 of *The Traitor's Gambit* for statistics) arrives on a transport skiff and attempts to take the heroes into custody. The Imperials call for reinforcements if the heroes resist arrest, and soon Zarra might be crawling with a large percentage of the Imperial forces on Cato Neimoidia, attracting attention the heroes do not want.

FINDING RADEN

When the heroes finally locate Warrick Raden, they quickly discover that he does not want to be found or to talk about Darga. The Devaronian is willing to fight his way free and is not afraid to fire a few blaster bolts to put the heroes off his scent. See "Darga's Cronies" (page 20) for more information on running this encounter.

EMBRACING YOUR DESTINY: DISCOVERY

Heroes with the Discovery destiny take a major step toward that destiny when they successfully take part in locating Warrick Raden and convincing him to lead them to Darga's sanctuary. When they set off to reach Darga's palace, grant those heroes the 24-hour destiny bonus.

PART 2: DARGA'S PALACE

Once the heroes have subdued Warrick Raden, it is not hard to convince him to lead them to Darga's palace. The Devaronian is clearly terrified of what awaits him at the palace, but he is also afraid of the heroes, and as such he does not make any escape attempts. Raden has a speeder that can fit three passengers (or six, if they pile in on top of one another), and he wastes no time in zooming through the bridge city, weaving in and out of ruined buildings and taking shortcuts through the rubble. The trip to Darga's palace takes half an hour, and Raden's winding course leads the heroes into a dense cluster of buildings that blocks out their view of the Cato Neimoidian sky.

DARGA'S COURT

As the heroes approach Darga's palace, they see that it is cleverly hidden among the ruins of several destroyed Neimoidian palaces. In fact, on first approach, there seems to be nothing of importance in the area. But on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the Hutt's palace is cobbled together from former Neimoidian estates. The entrance to the palace is a pair of massive blast doors, 5 meters tall and carved with elaborate Hutt runes, set into the front wall. The doors appear to be unguarded.

Raden walks timidly up to one door, which has a small communications panel. He presses a button, sputters some phrases in Huttese ("This is Raden. I've come to deliver news to the mighty Darga. With all due respect, I require an audience."), and steps back, fidgeting nervously. A long, quiet moment passes before two Nikto with hunting blaster rifles appear on battlements above the doors, weapons at the ready and pointed down at the visitors. A metal panel in the blast door scrapes as it is pulled aside, and a pair of glowing red eyes appear in the slit. A gravelly voice echoes from within the doors, again in Huttese ("You're in for it now, Raden. Darga is expecting visitors, all right, but those creatures are not them."), and the panel slams closed. A moment later, there is a heavy clank of metal on metal, and the blast doors part

to either side. A rush of cold, dry air flows outward from the Hutt's palace, and Raden motions the heroes to follow him inside.

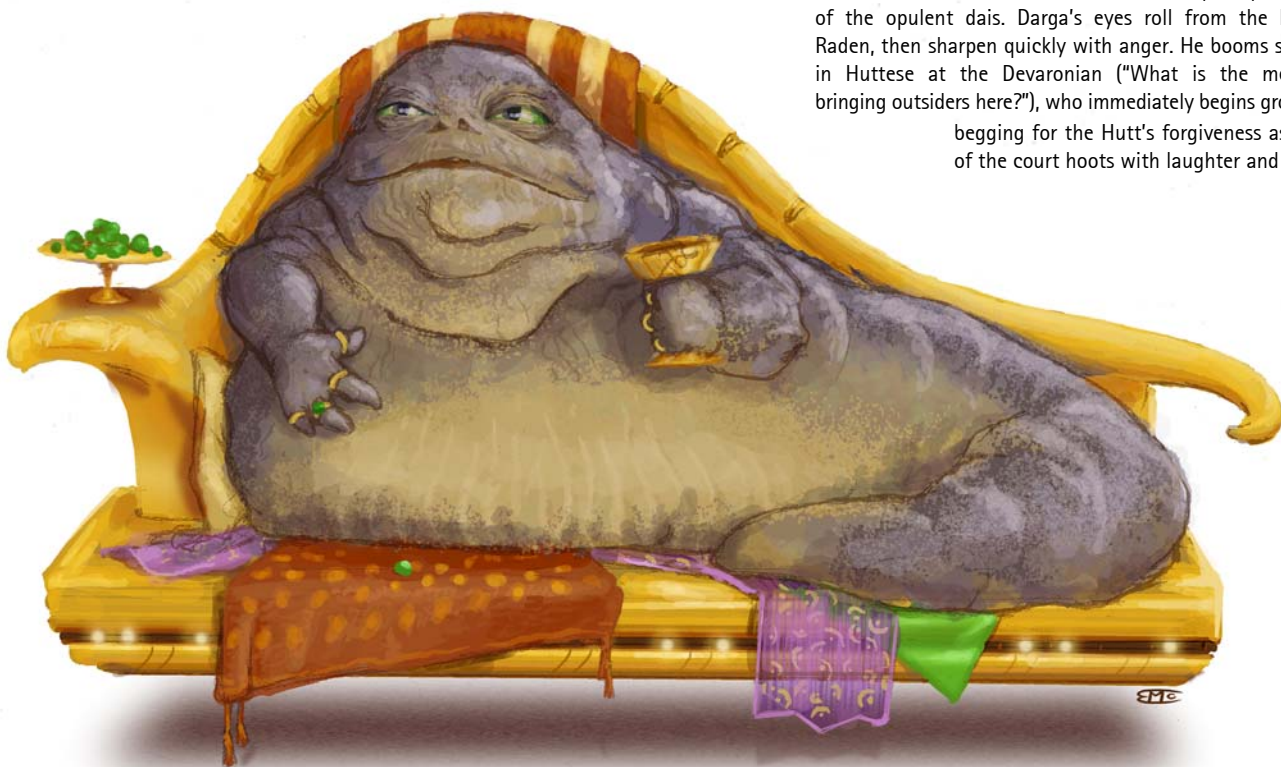
Entering the palace, there is no sign of who or what might have owned the glowing red eyes seen through the door panel. (They belong to Igren Demos, the Neimoidian majordomo, though the heroes won't learn that until later.) The heroes follow Raden down a long, dark hallway illuminated at seemingly random intervals by torches set in sconces on the walls. Anyone passing through this hallway, including the heroes, feels that something is watching them from the darkness. Unmarked metal doors are set into the walls at various points, and the air is thick with the smell of dust and rotting wood.

Moving deeper into the palace, the heroes get the sense that the building was once bright and beautiful. Any character who makes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (social sciences) check can tell that much of the architecture and trim is Neimoidian in design, and it becomes clear that the palace probably once belonged to a high-ranking member of the Trade Federation, perhaps an advisor to Nute Gunray.

Eventually, Raden leads the heroes toward the soft sound of music and voices, which come from the Hutt's throne room. When the heroes arrive in the room, read the following boxed text aloud:

Darga's throne room is both opulent and repulsive. A thick layer of oddly scented smoke drifts through the air, rising out of braziers in the corners of the room. Once-beautiful tapestries line the walls, though most of them have been torn, burned, or stained to the point that they are almost unrecognizable. A raised dais in the center of the room supports the massive bulk of Darga the Hutt, and behind his dais a large, open balcony seems to extend into darkness.

When Warrick Raden leads the heroes into the room, the sounds of conversation and music come to a halt. Silence reigns as every eye turns to watch Raden lead the visitors into an open space in front of the opulent dais. Darga's eyes roll from the heroes to Raden, then sharpen quickly with anger. He booms something in Huttese at the Devaronian ("What is the meaning of bringing outsiders here?"), who immediately begins groveling, begging for the Hutt's forgiveness as the rest of the court hoots with laughter and derision.



Darga cuts him off with a harsh word ("Silence!") and calls for his protocol droid, TC-663. From this point on, Darga begins addressing the heroes directly, using TC-663 as a translator.

Darga's giant eyes rest on them all for a long moment before the Hutt demands to know why they have come to his palace and how they convinced Raden to escort them. Darga is satisfied with any answer that is not confrontational. He really isn't looking for trouble with the heroes; he just wants to feel them out and see if they could be useful in some way. He's already impressed with their ability to locate his hidden palace (though it may not seem like much of a feat, there are many in Darga's own organization who couldn't manage it) and wants to discover whether they have any skills that he could exploit.

Darga begins this encounter indifferent to the heroes. If they can shift his attitude to friendly somehow, he welcomes them into his court. Any flattery grants the heroes favorable circumstances on Persuasion checks to alter the Hutt's attitude, as do bribes or gifts of any kind. If the heroes mention that they are seeking employment or are interested in providing their services, they gain favorable circumstances on Deception checks against the crime lord. Darga is still building up his power base and is always on the lookout for potentially valuable members of his organization. If the heroes fail their Persuasion check to join the court, they can still join by offering bribes or other incentives, though Darga expects at least 1,000 credits' worth before he even considers it.

Once the heroes have satisfied his curiosity, Darga invites them to join him at court for a short while. He has many matters to attend to over the next few days, and he is expecting visitors besides, but he is more than happy to let them stick around. Darga plans to impress the heroes with his wealth and power, hoping to convince them that a business relationship would be profitable. This is exactly the kind of thing the heroes need to get close to the Hutt and snoop around. If the heroes agree to remain at the palace, Darga calls for a feast and offers them a large amount of delicious (and expensive) food and drink. As the feast begins, two of Darga's Gamorrean guards drag Warrick Raden off to the dungeons so that he can "think about his betrayal."

During the feast, Darga asks many questions about the heroes: who they are, where they come from, what their exploits are, and so on. He also gives them a chance to ask questions, but he graciously deflects any questions about his business practices for now. He lets one thing slip, however—if the heroes mention the Empire, Darga boasts that one of the visitors he is expecting is an Imperial agent. The Hutt seems to think that this will impress the heroes, though he reveals little more than the fact that the Empire is sending a delegate to his court sometime in the next few days.

Over the course of the meal, the heroes get the impression that, while Darga is trying to win them over with his opulence, he is also testing to see whether they have anything to offer *him*. He drops hints with remarks such as, "We will see how you enjoy your time in my court—and how much I enjoy your company," or "The next few days will give us a chance to get to know each other and see how much I have to offer you—and you to offer me!"

Members of Darga the Hutt's Court: At least 12 Gamorrean guards (nonheroic 6), three bounty hunters (nonheroic 3/soldier 2), three Quarren assassins (nonheroic 6/scoundrel 1), Six Six (TC-663, noble 1), Igren Demos (noble 5), and other assorted beings. Full statistics blocks for some of these characters appear in the detailed encounters that follow Part 2.

DARGA THE HUTT

Darga Jiramma Mionne is a young Hutt crime lord who has carved out a small empire on Cato Neimoidia. Though he is nowhere near as successful or mighty as other members of his clan, he believes that his dealings with the Empire will put him on a fast track to power. Darga can smell which way the wind is blowing, and he believes that as the Empire's influence grows, so will that of its allies.

Though Darga understands several languages, he always speaks in Huttese, letting his protocol droid TC-663 translate. He considers all languages other than Huttese to be beneath him.

Darga the Hutt

CL 8

Large Hutt noble 5/scoundrel 2/crime lord 1

Force 3; **Dark Side** 16

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +17

Languages Basic, Bocce, Dosh, Huttese, Neimoidian, Pak Pak, Quarrenese, Rodese, Ryl

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 17), Fort 20, Will 26 (31 vs. Use the Force)
hp 50; **Threshold** 30

Speed 2 squares

Melee unarmed +6 (1d6+6)

Ranged blaster pistol +1 (3d6+4)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Special Actions Fool's Luck, Impel Ally I, Inspire Confidence, Weaken Resolve

Abilities Str 14, Dex 4, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18

Special Qualities Force resistance, supreme stability

Talents Fool's Luck, Impel Ally I, Inspire Confidence, Presence, Weaken Resolve

Feats Improved Defenses, Improved Damage Threshold, Linguist, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Deception, Knowledge [galactic lore], Perception, Persuasion), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Deception +18, Gather Information +13, Initiative +6, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +12, Knowledge (galactic lore) +17, Knowledge (social sciences) +12, Perception +17, Persuasion +18 (may reroll, keeping the better result), Use Computer +12

Possessions blaster pistol, gaudy jewelry (estimated value of 400 credits)

ENCOURAGING THE HEROES

During the scenes in Darga's court, you should encourage the heroes to get involved in the various encounters by reminding them of their mission. When they enter the palace, they know very little about the Hutt's involvement with the Sarlace Project, and they should be eager to follow up on most leads. Encourage the heroes to take any opportunity to impress Darga, reminding them that gaining the crime lord's trust might help them discover the truth behind his involvement in the Imperial plot. If you're having trouble motivating the heroes to participate in the encounters, you might even go so far as to state that each encounter increases their chances of earning the crime lord's favor (though you shouldn't provide specific details).

CURRYING DARGA'S FAVOR

For the next few days, the heroes spend time in Darga's court, learning about the Hutt and his dealings by observing, participating in encounters, and snooping around. (Knowing that an agent of the Empire will be arriving should give them further incentive to stick around.) Though Darga seems eager to show them a good time, he remains wary of outsiders, so he plans to keep the heroes close. As such, they must not only uncover the Hutt's involvement with the Sarlacc Project but also ingratiate themselves with Darga to gain his confidence.

Five major events occur during the heroes' time in Darga's court, each of which can affect how the crime lord feels about them. Each event is considered a noncombat encounter that gives the heroes a chance to showcase their ingenuity and skills (though combat may well break out at any time). Each event has a primary challenge and one or more secondary challenges. To win the Hutt's favor, the heroes must succeed in the primary challenge of at least three of the five events. If they do so, the heroes gain XP as if they had defeated a CL 6 challenge. Additionally, they gain favorable circumstances when making skill checks against Darga or any member of his organization except Igren Demos. Finally, the Hutt has TC-663 distribute datacards to the heroes that grant them access to a secret entrance to the guest quarters. These datacards might come in handy when they find the comatose Jedi hidden in the dungeon (see "Discovering Denia," page 14).

If the heroes do not succeed in the primary challenge of at least three of the five events, they still can learn what they need to know, but it will be more difficult.

Treat each of the five events like an encounter. You won't need to use Initiative unless combat breaks out, but once an event starts, treat the entire event like a single encounter for the purposes of per-encounter resources, such as Force powers or talent uses. If the heroes succeed in a specific event's challenge, they gain XP as if they had defeated a CL 5 challenge. If an event turns to combat (particularly Event 2: Gladiators), the heroes instead gain XP as normal for defeating enemies in battle. Keep in mind that engaging in combat during some of the events could cause the heroes to fail to overcome the associated challenges.

These events are designed to be spread out and run in nearly any order, allowing you to decide when to use them. As a general rule, the events should occur over at least two days (to allow Master Denia to make contact with the heroes during the night), and perhaps more depending on the flow of the game. Though most of the events can be run in any sequence, the event with the Imperial agents should be last,

JOINING DARGA

There is always a chance that one or more of the heroes truly will want to join Darga's organization, and that's fine—it might present a few complications, but it will also offer good story opportunities. As the adventure progresses, heroes who want to join the Hutt will probably be very eager to curry his favor, but they should also learn that Darga's hold on his criminal empire is tenuous at best. By the end of *A Wretched Hive*, when the Hutt flees to Cloud City on Bespin, the heroes should have an inkling that they could seize control of Darga's organization for themselves. Indeed, that becomes a very real possibility when Darga meets his untimely demise in the next adventure, *The Queen of Air and Darkness*.

since it is likely the heroes' main reason for staying in the palace. Additionally, several encounters from "Exploring Darga's Palace" (page 13) work best when used to break up the action between the five events or when used during time spent away from Darga's court.

EVENT 1: THE EXECUTION OF WARRICK RADEN

By this time, it's no secret that Darga is displeased with Warrick Raden for leading the heroes to him. True, the Hutt is interested in the heroes now that they're here, but he doesn't want Raden bringing just *anyone* to his secret palace, and he wants to make an example of the Devaronian. Darga has the errand boy dragged before his court and makes a declaration: Raden is to be executed, and since the heroes are new, they will perform the execution.

Primary Challenge: The Hutt wants to show his court that those who betray him to outsiders will be punished severely. Additionally, he sees an opportunity to test the heroes' mettle by seeing if they truly are willing to do his dirty work. Two Gamorrean guards dump Raden unceremoniously in the open floor before the dais, and one of them holds out a vibro-ax for the heroes to use in the execution.

The heroes' primary challenge is to satisfy Darga's need to punish Raden while proving their worthiness to be in his court. Of course, they can simply perform the execution—Raden is clearly a degenerate criminal, and the heroes might be tempted to remove such a person from the galaxy—which will satisfy Darga on all fronts. However, the killing would certainly increase the executioner's Dark Side Points, since Raden is helpless and at their mercy.

If the heroes suggest an alternative fate for Raden, Darga is willing to listen, particularly if their idea involves violence. If they propose setting Raden up in some kind of fight, Darga is very agreeable and will include the Devaronian as one of the combatants in a gladiator match (see page 10).

If the heroes outright refuse to take part in Raden's punishment without attempting to be diplomatic about it, they automatically fail to overcome the primary challenge. Darga sees them as weak and unwilling to do his bidding.

Alternatively, if the heroes can make Darga *think* that they killed Raden, he will likely fall for it. Knocking Raden unconscious will help, though the heroes should take care that Darga doesn't look too closely at the Devaronian's "corpse" or he might figure out their ruse. The heroes can make a Deception check against Darga's Will Defense, and each character who contributes to the ruse can use the aid another action to improve the group's chance of success. If the heroes fail to convince Darga that they have killed Raden, he is disappointed but takes no actions against them, and he orders one of his Quarren assassins to do the job instead.

Secondary Challenge: This event presents an opportunity for the heroes to learn more about Igren Demos, Darga's Neimoidian majordomo. Demos is far more than the simpering sycophant that he appears to be. Any hero who succeeds on a Perception check (DC equal to Demos' Deception roll result) can tell that the Neimoidian watches them very closely during the event. For the most part, Demos is just studying the heroes, though he seems to linger his attentions longer on any characters who are Force sensitive—as if he senses a kindred spirit. Any hero who makes a successful Use the Force check to sense Force can determine that Demos is indeed Force sensitive, though if approached, he denies it.

EVENT 2: GLADIATORS

Darga, like all Hutts, has a short attention span and demands entertainment, usually of the more sadistic sort. The balcony overlooking the darkened area to the rear of Darga's throne room is actually his viewing box for a moderately sized gladiator arena. From the looks of it, the arena was once a garden of some kind, likely filled with rare plants cultivated for a wealthy Neimoidian noble. The ceiling appears to be made entirely of transparisteel, though it has been crudely painted over, and gaudy lamps have been set in the walls all the way around the perimeter of the arena.

At Darga's command, the lights go up, and the heroes are invited to the viewing box for gladiator matches. Darga explains that he always enters a team of gladiators in an annual competition on Rattatak, and that over the course of the year, various teams challenge one another for the right to be Darga's sponsored gladiators. After a few brutal matches during which several combatants are maimed or killed, Darga offers the heroes a chance to prove their own mettle in the combat arena.

Primary Challenge: This is another chance for the heroes to curry Darga's favor, this time by besting his current crop of champions. If the heroes express any concerns about participating, particularly if they feign concern for injuring Darga's prized gladiators, the Hutt agrees to let the heroes fight with their weapons set on stun, promising that his gladiators will do the same. However, any match with weapons set on stun is destined to spiral out of control because the Hutt's gladiators won't take kindly to being defeated by newcomers and will switch their weapons back to lethal mode.

If the heroes manage to defeat the opposing gladiators, they succeed in overcoming the primary challenge. If they choose not to take part in the match, they fail to impress Darga, who makes snide comments about their delicate sensibilities. However, if they present a reasonable alternative—such as offering to pay for half of the gladiator team's sponsorship fee, or calling in favors on Rattatak to ensure an advantage for Darga's team—they can still gain the Hutt's favor.

See "Gladiator Match" (page 23) for more information on running this encounter.

Secondary Challenge: The heroes can earn a few credits by placing wagers on the gladiator matches that precede their own. Characters wishing to do so may use the gambling rules; see the sidebar on page 47 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*. Darga is more than happy to place bets with the heroes, though his relatively high Wisdom score makes him a formidable opponent.

Secondary Challenge: Darga goes on at length about how tough his gladiators are, and how he selects only the best for the games on Rattatak. He even mentions how his sponsorship earns the gladiators the finest weapons and armor that money can buy, again hoping to entice the heroes to enter the arena. If any of the heroes has displayed an aptitude for machinery or mentioned a penchant for technology, Darga makes a few circumspect inquiries as to the availability of that hero's skills. Any character with the Tech Specialist feat* who offers to upgrade a few weapons for Darga's gladiators immediately earns the Hutt's favor. Such a character may grant himself, as a free action, a one-time +10 circumstance bonus on a skill check made during interactions with Darga.

* See *Starships of the Galaxy* or search for "Saga Edition Web Enhancement 1" in the full archives at www.wizards.com/starwars.

EVENT 3: THE SLAVERS

Darga the Hutt has many contacts on many worlds, but few are as unsavory as a band of slavers known as the Iron Ring. These slavers are small-time—at least, compared to some of the more dangerous slaving rings in the galaxy—but what they lack in influence, they make up for in zeal. Most of the Iron Ring's jurisdiction is on former Confederate worlds ravaged by the Clone Wars, where the Empire's influence is minimal. Cato Neimoidia is one of their many planets of operation.

A delegation from the Iron Ring comes to Darga's palace during the heroes' stay there, and the slavers are not happy. The delegation consists of three tough-looking Humans, a Rodian with a large blaster rifle, a black-furred Wookiee, and a scarred Zabrak leading two Twi'lek slaves by their collars. They arrive seemingly unannounced, and as the audience chamber falls silent, it becomes apparent that Darga is less than pleased to see them. Taking up space in the middle of the chamber, the slavers offer everyone in the room, including the Hutt, a hard glare. After Darga spurts out a question in Huttese ("What are you doing here?"), the Zabrak steps forward and spits on the floor before speaking in heavily accented Basic. Read the following boxed text aloud:

"The slaves you have been selling us are worthless, Darga! They have been dying before we can even get them to market. They are used up—second-rate! I want my credits back for the last four shipments!"

Darga lets out a low, rumbling laugh that sounds sinister even for the gluttonous Hutt. He rolls his eyes toward the heroes, utters a side remark ("See what ungrateful business partners I have?") and then gives the slavers an angry response, translated by his protocol droid. The crime lord tells them that they have had the same business agreement for years now and that he is not responsible if they don't know how to take care of their own product. He says that if they do not apologize and leave, he will have no choice but to dispose of them. The Hutt seems unconcerned that they are all heavily armed because he believes that the slavers are just trying to talk tough and wouldn't dare attempt to harm him.

Primary Challenge: At this point, the slavers and the Hutt descend into a seemingly fruitless argument about slaves and payment, with neither side budging. In truth, Darga could appease the slavers easily, since he actually pays nothing for the slaves he passes on. However, he is stalling the delegation, waiting to see if the heroes will intervene on his behalf.

If the heroes do nothing, Darga eventually turns a disappointed eye on them before granting the slavers their wish. Similarly, if the heroes intervene on the slavers' behalf, Darga grumbles about his guests not knowing when to keep their mouths shut, but again he acquiesces to the slavers' demands. In both of these cases, the Hutt grudgingly invites the slavers to remain for a time in his court.

If the heroes intervene on the Hutt's behalf, they can impress Darga by convincing the slavers not only to withdraw their request but also to continue buying slaves from the Hutt. The Zabrak leader (nonheroic 3, Will Defense 13) begins the encounter unfriendly toward the heroes. Shifting his attitude to indifferent or better will earn the heroes a chance to convince him to keep his business with Darga. Unfortunately, the slavers are correct—Darga has been selling them slaves who have very little life left, and they have every right to be upset. Convincing them to continue buying from the Hutt is no easy task, and the heroes will need to present a solution that is beneficial for the slavers.

If the heroes present a reasonable solution to the negotiations, grant them favorable circumstances on Persuasion checks to convince

the slavers to keep their bargain with Darga. If the heroes succeed on a DC 18 Persuasion check, they convince the Zabrak to accept the deal, and they earn Darga's favor for this challenge.

Secondary Challenge: During the discussion, the heroes might notice that one of the delegation's Twi'lek slaves is more than she appears. As a servant enters the throne room with a large goblet of wine for the crime lord, the heroes can make a Perception check to notice the Twi'lek slave surreptitiously dropping a powdery substance into the goblet as the servant passes by. Determine the DC of the check by rolling 1d20+8; you may reroll, but you must accept the second result, even if it is worse. This number represents the Twi'lek's Deception check to slip the substance—which happens to be poison—into Darga's drink.

If the heroes stop Darga from drinking the poison, they immediately succeed on the primary challenge. Furthermore, if they reveal the Twi'lek's guilt, Darga becomes enraged and threatens to throw the slavers in the dungeons. The Zabrak leader immediately withdraws his request for a new deal and apologizes profusely. Though he convinces Darga that the slave was acting of her own accord, the Hutt remains furious and declares the discussion over. The slavers beat a hasty retreat, except for the Wookiee, who secretly remains in the palace for a later encounter (see "A Knife in the Dark" on page 28).

If the heroes fail to notice the poison being slipped in Darga's drink, the Hutt drinks it down and becomes ill. The poison isn't strong enough to kill him, but it does sicken him—the slavers were hoping to gain an advantage in their negotiations. Darga declares an end to the day's audience and retires to his personal chambers, though the heroes take no penalties and the event resumes the following day.

EVENT 4: DROID RACING

All work and no play makes Darga a dull Hutt—a motto the crime lord firmly stands by—and at a certain point, he calls for some diversion. One of Darga's favorite activities is droid racing, wherein several members of his court compete for his favor while controlling droids in a race around the gladiator arena. Some years ago, a smuggling ship in Darga's employ returned from the edges of the Unknown Regions with advanced droid interface technology. Instead of turning the technology over to scientists, Darga had his own technicians use it to create toys for his amusement. The result is a set of racing droids, each of which can be controlled remotely by donning a visor that allows the pilot to "see" out of the droid's electronic eyes.

Unfortunately, the droid interfaces have some drawbacks. They are notoriously difficult to control and require intense focus and mental acuity to get any kind of result. Worse, in some cases, major damage to one of the racing droids has produced dangerous sensory feedback that has nearly scrambled the minds of the pilots. Despite this, Darga insists that members of his court take turns piloting the droids. He rewards the victor handsomely and makes no secret of his delight when a droid is wrecked and the pilot's mind damaged.

The races take place in Darga's gladiator arena; barricades are set up to create a winding track that doubles back on itself to form a large, bending course. Within the course, artificial ramps and pits make it all the more likely that a racing droid will crash. As the course is being set up, Darga invites one of the heroes to pilot his personal racing droid. When pressed, Darga reveals that his last pilot has yet to recover from an injury he sustained during the race ("But you shouldn't have anything to worry about. Ho, ho, ho, ho!"). He promises a reward to the winner, and three more members of his court come forward to try their hand at a racing droid: one of the Quarren, a Gamorrean guard, and the Neimoidian majordomo Igren Demos.

Primary Challenge: At this point, one of the heroes has a chance to pilot a racing droid. Each of the droids seems fragile, and Darga allows

the hero who volunteers some time to get acquainted with the interface. During this time, the other members of the party might be able to provide assistance (see the first Secondary Challenge, below). The droid is piloted through a simple system of visual commands, but managing those commands while keeping an eye on the track is challenging.

The race consists of three laps around the track. For each lap, each pilot makes an Intelligence check. The highest result earns 4 speed points, the second highest earns 3 speed points, the next highest earns 2 speed points, and the lowest earns a single speed point. Additionally, a roll of a natural 1 on the Intelligence check automatically comes in last place, causing the pilot to lose 1 speed point. At the end of the race (after three Intelligence checks), the pilot with the highest number of speed points wins the race.

However, no underground race would be complete without a few dirty tricks. Once per lap, any pilot can make his droid attack another racing droid. To do this, the pilot declares that his droid tries to attack another droid and wagers 1 to 4 speed points. The pilot can wager more speed points than he currently owns, but failure has its consequences (described below). The pilot then makes an attack roll for his droid (1d20 + the number of speed points wagered) against a Reflex Defense of 13. Success indicates that the target droid is damaged by the attack; the attacking pilot gains a number of speed points equal to the number wagered, while the defending pilot loses that same number of speed points. Failure indicates that the attacker loses the number of speed points wagered. Regardless of whether the attack succeeds or fails, the attacking pilot earns 1 less speed point on his next lap.

Any racing droid that has fewer than 0 speed points crashes and is destroyed. The control visor overloads, making an attack roll (1d20+5) against the pilot's Fortitude Defense; success moves the pilot -1 persistent step down the condition track. The persistent condition can be removed only after 8 hours of rest. If the "Hidden Enemies" or "Discovering Denia" encounters (page 14) happen later the same day, the race might be a chance for the piloting hero to impose a persistent condition on the Quarren assassin or Igren Demos. That would give the heroes a small advantage when dealing with those opponents in the later encounter.

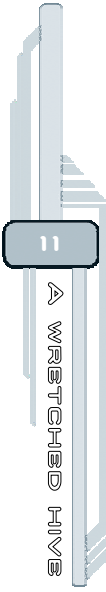
The winner of the race receives a gaudy necklace valued at about 200 credits. In truth, a hero who enters the race does not actually need to win to curry Darga's favor; participation is enough to gain the Hutt's approval. If the heroes refuse to participate, the race proceeds without them, and Igren Demos wins handily. Darga is not impressed with the heroes, remarking on their timidity, but it does not hurt their chances in other events.

Secondary Challenge: Before the droid race starts, the heroes can study the technology that makes the race possible: the control visor. Any hero who makes a successful Knowledge (technology) check can examine the visor and learn something about how it works. The information learned depends on the DC of the check, as shown below. Note that DCs higher than 15 are considered expert knowledge, and thus only a character trained in Knowledge (technology) can obtain that information.

DC 10: The droid control visor reads the eye movements of the user and translates them into commands, while simultaneously providing an in-droid view of the action. A successful Intelligence check is necessary to control the droid.

DC 15: The control visor is a bit unstable and could damage the user under some circumstances. During catastrophic failures, the visor makes an attack roll against the user's Fortitude Defense.

DC 20: The control visor's software is full of errors, indicating that it is probably a prototype. A successful DC 20 Use Computer check can



smooth out some of the programming bugs, granting the wearer a +2 equipment bonus on Intelligence checks to pilot the racing droids.

DC 25: The problem with the control visor's interface is that it was designed for a non-Human species. A successful DC 20 Mechanics check can alter the visor to better accommodate humanoid species, reducing the visor's attack bonus to +2 (as opposed to the normal +5) if it experiences a catastrophic failure.

Secondary Challenge: The heroes can earn a few credits by placing wagers on the droid race. Characters wishing to do so may use the gambling rules; see the sidebar on page 47 of the *Saga Edition Core Rulebook*. Darga is happy to place bets with the heroes, though his relatively high Wisdom score makes him a formidable opponent.

Secondary Challenge: Any character who examines the droid control visor can tell that the technology is fairly sophisticated, and that its ability to translate the pilot's commands is uncanny. During the race, allow this character to make a DC 10 Perception check to notice TC-663, the Hutt's droid translator, during the race. Each time a droid slams into a wall or is smashed by another droid, TC-663 seems to flinch a bit. If a hero approaches him and inquires about the flinching, he explains that the racing droids are not merely remotely controlled shells, but actual droids with intelligence and awareness, much like himself. TC-663 thinks it is barbaric that the control visors are used to directly usurp the racing droids' self-aware functions. If the hero shows any sympathy, that character gains favorable circumstances on all skill checks made on TC-663 from this point forward. This benefit might come into play later, when TC-663 approaches the heroes with a message from Switch.

FINAL EVENT: IMPERIAL VISITORS

The final event of the heroes' visit to the court is the arrival of an Imperial liaison who comes to discuss the resources being transferred through Darga's slimy hands on behalf of the Sarlacc Project. This is probably the event that the heroes have been waiting for, since it is their best chance to learn more about the secret project.

When this event begins, three people are ushered into Darga's audience chamber: two men and one woman. Though none of them is wearing any kind of Imperial uniform, whispers of "Imperial agents" ripple through the court. The two men are dressed in basic laborer's clothing, and their eyes scan the room as if they expect an attack at any moment. The woman is also simply dressed, but it is clear from her bearing that she considers herself well above this assignment.

Allow any of the heroes present to make a DC 15 Perception check. Success indicates that they notice that each of the men carries an identical blaster carbine, and in fact the two men could be twins, other than a few small differences, such as the placement of scars. The two men are actually stormtroopers who have removed their armor; each is one of the few remaining clones of Jango Fett left over from the Clone Wars.

Primary Challenge: Before the Imperial liaison arrives, Darga summons the heroes close and quietly explains that he expects the Empire to try to double-cross him. Deals with the Empire have great potential rewards, he says, but one must always be careful when negotiating with such powerful allies. He implores the heroes to watch the proceedings and help him retain the upper hand in negotiations.

If the heroes agree, the Hutt is very pleased, and he asks them to wait off to one side while he deals with the Imperial agent. When she arrives, flanked by her two guards, Darga rolls his eyes meaningfully in the heroes' direction and then greets the newcomers ("Always a pleasure to serve the Empire! What can I do for you today?"). Neither the agent nor her guards seem to notice the Hutt's glance toward the heroes.

The Imperial liaison wastes no time and launches into a spiel about the transfer of Tibanna gas from Darga's holdings to the Empire. She insists that while Darga's supplies have been sufficient thus far, the Empire needs him to step up his production of refined Tibanna gas immediately. As the heroes should come to understand, Darga has been shipping the gas (which is used in producing blaster and turbolaser bolts) to the Empire in substantial quantities, and now they want *more*. The liaison offers the Hutt an 80% increase in payments for a 100% increase in output, claiming that it is more than fair since he will be making more money overall.

Additionally, she makes two other propositions. First, the Empire is willing to offer a further 20% increase in payments if the Hutt accepts the increase in "biological" resources. Though she really means slaves, she does not come out and say so, and the heroes might not connect this statement with the complaints of the Iron Ring slavers. (It's fine if they don't; the full extent of the sordid deal will be exposed in the next adventure, *The Queen of Air and Darkness*.)

Second, the liaison offers to provide Darga with a personal Imperial security retinue as a sign of their continued good faith. The Hutt would have an Imperial regiment stationed in the city of Zarra, and a flight of Imperial starfighters would escort him when traveling off-world.

At this point, Darga turns to the heroes for advice. If the heroes have not set up a private method of communicating with the Hutt, Darga dismisses the Imperials temporarily so they won't overhear the discussion. If the heroes provide him with the advice he wants to hear, they can earn his favor. Of the three proposals, Darga believes that the first one is sound (more money coming in at only a slight discount) and the latter two are not. The slaves he has been getting from the Empire are used up, and payments in credits are more reliable in the long run. Additionally, the promised security retinue seems like little more than a plot to expand Imperial influence on Cato Neimoidia and keep the Hutt under the Imperial Security Bureau's watchful eye.

If the heroes make the correct recommendation ("yes" on the increased production, "no" on the increased payment in biological resources, and "no" on the Imperial retinue) for two out of the three options, Darga is suitably impressed by their keen minds, and they will have gained more favor with the crime lord.

Secondary Challenge: As the encounter with the Imperial liaison goes on, grant a DC 15 Perception check to any heroes who were in the company of Bail Organa before the trip to Felucia in *The Traitor's Gambit*. Success indicates that the heroes recognize the liaison as someone they spotted in the halls of Organa's palace on Alderaan. (Alternatively, if the heroes did not play *The Traitor's Gambit*, they might recognize the liaison as one of the crewmembers of the *Resurgence*.)

In truth, the liaison is a double agent who secretly works for the Imperial Security Bureau. Her real name is Victra Sinde, though the name she uses when posing as a member of Bail Organa's security force is Alysa. She has been spying on Organa for several months now, though she has been unable to uncover hard evidence of his involvement in treasonous activities. She was called away from her assignment to assist the Empire in continuing their arrangement with Darga the Hutt, and she was not expecting to run into anyone who might recognize her.

If the heroes confront Sinde, she denies any involvement with Bail Organa. If the heroes continue to make accusations, she threatens them with immediate arrest. Mentally, she notes the faces (and names, if possible) of the heroes and vows to ensure that the Empire becomes aware of their activities. If the heroes allow Sinde to leave after such an exchange, she might become a thorn in their side down the road, particularly if they journey to worlds under tight Imperial control, such as Coruscant or Nizon. Though such repercussions are beyond the scope of this adventure, feel free to have Sinde show up later.

Informing Bail Organa that he has a double agent in his midst certainly causes an uproar on Alderaan. If this occurs, Sinda does not return to Organa's service, having learned ahead of time that her cover has been blown, and Organa is grateful for the heroes' efforts.

COUNSELING DARGA

The heroes might be unsure of how to provide Darga with counsel during the encounter with the Imperial liaison, and they might look to their skills as a means of determining the correct course of action. Though you should be careful not to give away the right answers with simple skill checks, you can steer the heroes in the right direction. For example, a successful DC 15 Knowledge (bureaucracy) check can reveal that the Empire has made offers of security retinues to nobles and powerful administrators in the past, most of the time on worlds where Imperial forces were particularly thin. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (life sciences) check can tell the heroes that biological resources of any kind are notoriously unstable, and rarity is one of the only things that can drive their value up. Lastly, a successful DC 15 Knowledge (social sciences) check can tell the heroes that Imperial contracts are almost always spread very thin, and that the Empire rarely offers substantial contract increases to individuals.

EXPLORING DARGA'S PALACE

Since the events above are likely to take place over the course of several days, adventurous heroes might want to explore Darga's palace between sessions in the court. Similarly, you might wish to encourage them to poke around so that they can learn valuable pieces of information. At the end of the first day in the palace, the Hutt gives each hero his or her own room in the guest quarters, which were actually the servants' quarters when the building was owned by Neimoidian nobles. The rooms are surprisingly clean, though sparsely appointed, and Gamorrean guards casually patrol the halls during the evenings. The heroes have a few amenities at their disposal—servants bring food or drink to their quarters—and if they have done something to impress the Hutt during the day, he might send them evening gifts, such as fine foods, spice, or even entertainment (in various forms).

Below are several encounters that can take place in any order during the time between events in Darga's throne room.

THE AVIARY

When the heroes arrived on Cato Neimoidia, they tangled with Kessra, the leader of the Vipers swoop gang. If they defeated her but left her alive, she follows the heroes to Darga's palace to exact her revenge upon them. During their audience with the Hutt, she hid and observed them from a distance, and at some point she decides to whittle them down a few at a time. Late one night, one of Darga's servants (a Neimoidian who seems afraid of everything) visits the rooms of one or two heroes who are particularly charismatic or who had some kind of special interaction with Kessra during the swoop gang encounter. The servant tells the heroes that Darga has summoned them to a secret meeting in his aviary because he cannot trust anyone else with what he has to say. As far as the Neimoidian knows, this is correct. The message was relayed to him by Kessra, dressed as one of Darga's dancing girls, who claimed to be passing the information on from the Hutt.

The Neimoidian servant leads the heroes out of the guest quarters and to an upper level of the palace. Once there, he points to a set of sliding double doors and says that Darga waits inside. When the heroes pass through the doors, read the following boxed text aloud:

The interior of the aviary is quiet, and rising up from either side of a winding path are numerous trees, each with many colorful birds sleeping while perched on their branches. The aviary is dark, and a number of small orange lamps illuminate the trail. High above, one of Cato Neimoidia's moons shines down through the canopy of trees, casting a faint silvery hue over everything within.

Hiding in the shadows deep inside the aviary, Kessra activates a remote trigger that shuts and locks the sliding double doors. Once the exit is sealed, Kessra has four Neimoidian kreehawks attack the heroes. See "Aviary Attack" (page 26) for more information on running this encounter.

THE MONEYCHANGER

Poking around the lower levels of Darga's palace eventually brings the heroes into contact with Darga's moneychanger, an elderly Duros named Gome. He handles all of Darga's finances and ensures that no trails lead to the Hutt. Gome has been working for the crime lord for decades now, ever since Darga first rose to power, and he is exceptionally good at his job. Unlike others who have benefited from Darga's wealth, Gome is mostly indifferent about his work. He seems to have no emotional investment in Darga's crime syndicate and is puzzled by the idea that someone might try to meddle in the Hutt's affairs.

Gome resides in a small apartment just off of the guest quarters, which serves as both his home and his work space. The Duros has little daily contact with anyone other than the servants who bring him food and drink, so when the heroes show up at his door, he is more than a bit surprised. (The heroes might be drawn to his apartment by the loud Neimoidian opera echoing from behind the door, or because they saw a Gamorrean guard from Darga's court bring a transparent bag full of credit sticks to Gome's room.)

Primary Challenge: Gome presents a good opportunity for the heroes to learn more about Darga's involvement in the Sarlacc Project, particularly the nature of what he trades to the Empire. Though Gome is surprised to see the heroes, his attitude begins as indifferent toward them. If they can shift his attitude to friendly, he is happy to discuss all manner of secrets with them—at least, the ones he knows about. Gome is older and probably nearing the end of his days, so he tends to ramble and get distracted. The heroes will need to keep him on track if they are to learn anything from him, so you should portray him as absent-minded to encourage the heroes to steer him back to their conversation.

Gome knows the following: At the conclusion of the Clone Wars, Darga took over a Tibanna gas smuggling ring after its leader was slain by Separatist mercenaries. Since that time, he has managed to increase the amount of Tibanna gas that is being smuggled away from its normal channels, and the smuggling ring has proven to be his most profitable venture, even ahead of his slave trading. The Empire approached Darga a few months ago with an interest in obtaining some of his Tibanna gas supplies off the record—though Gome recalls that they threatened to bring down the Hutt's crime syndicate if he didn't play nicely. Since then, Darga has been funneling every canister of Tibanna gas to the Empire for a secret project. The gas, which is refined on the planet Bespin, is loaded into large starships and handed over to the Empire in the space above that world. In return, Darga receives some kind of goods (Gome does not know what), and their transaction is ended. The

exchange takes place quickly and seems private because few people even know that Bespin exists; it's too small to have an Imperial presence. Darga has made a handsome profit from the arrangement, and he maintains a remote headquarters in Cloud City, where he can personally oversee the transactions and enjoy the amenities of the floating city.

HIDDEN ENEMIES

Being guests of Darga the Hutt confers a small amount of protection on the heroes, but some would still rather see them eliminated than left alive to meddle further. During one of the nights that the heroes sleep in the guest quarters, a cadre of assassins tries to kill them.

If any of the heroes previously revealed themselves to be Force-sensitive while in Darga's court, the assassins are sent by Igren Demos. In this scenario, the majordomo fears that the heroes might expose his own Force sensitivity and wants to curtail any potential threat to his ascension to power. Sending a message through a lackey, he tricks Darga's Quarren assassins into thinking the order to kill the heroes came from the Hutt. He also enlists the help of two members of the Iron Ring slaver delegation—the Wookiee and the Twi'lek poisoner.

If no hero revealed himself to be Force-sensitive, the assassins are sent by the slavers. In this scenario, the slavers want the heroes dead as punishment for interfering with their negotiations with Darga. The same group attacks the heroes—three Quarren, the Wookiee, and the Twi'lek poisoner. However, if the heroes discovered the Twi'lek attempting to poison Darga, she does not take part in this attack.

See "A Knife in the Dark" (page 28) for more information on running this encounter.

A VISIT FROM SIX SIX

One member of Darga's court that the heroes have interacted with but might not have thought much about is the translating protocol droid, TC-663. Unremarkable during the heroes' time in Darga's palace thus far, TC-663 is occasionally seen wandering the halls of the palace on one errand or another. At some point when the heroes are all together away from the Hutt's court, the shiny silver droid approaches them and asks to speak with them in private.

When he is certain they are alone, TC-663 (who insists that the heroes call him Six Six) explains that in addition to serving as the Hutt's translator, he also serves another master—a droid crime lord named Switch, who lives on Sel Zonn Station above the world of Brentaal. If the heroes played through *The Traitor's Gambit*, they have probably already encountered Switch and perhaps even offered to act as his agents in the field.

Six Six reveals that he has come to convey a small piece of information on Switch's behalf. The droid tells the heroes that he has been monitoring communications leaving Darga's palace, and it seems that someone has been transmitting information to the Empire while the Hutt sleeps, receiving instructions in return. Six Six has been sending these messages on to Switch, but the droid crime lord has been unable to break their encryption. Switch has ordered Six Six to turn the encrypted transmissions file over to the heroes and see what they can make of it. If the heroes are willing to share their findings with Six Six (who will share them with Switch), they can have the file at no charge.

Any hero who makes a successful DC 25 Use Computer check decrypts the file and retrieves the contents of the message. It reveals that late at night, the Hutt's majordomo, Igren Demos, has been contacting an Imperial communications relay somewhere in the sector. The heroes cannot be certain who he is communicating with, but they know that Demos has been transmitting information about Darga's dealings—particularly his slave trading—on a regular basis. The most recent communication specifically mentions that the slavers that Darga has been dealing with are unhappy with their merchandise. Additionally, several messages mention "the prisoner" but provide no further details.

If confronted about his communications with the Empire, Igren Demos staunchly denies it. Presenting the decrypted file does not help because Demos claims that it must be a forgery, and Darga is inclined to agree with his trusted advisor. If the heroes remain adamant that the majordomo is doing something untoward even after Darga dismissed this claim, the Hutt might become upset. To represent his shifting attitudes, you might wish to treat a previous incident in which the heroes successfully curried Darga's favor as a failure instead.

DISCOVERING DENIA

One of the most critical events that happens during the heroes' stay in Darga's palace is their discovery of a comatose Jedi Master named Denia. This event should occur only near the end of their stay in the palace, and most likely after the heroes have gone through the five events in Darga's court (and perhaps obtained the datapad granting access to the guest quarters). Since the discovery of Denia will probably conclude the heroes' time in Darga's palace, do not rush in introducing this event.

During the Clone Wars, Denia was fighting on Cato Neimoidia when she was injured in an explosion. One of the Separatist generals had her unconscious form brought to this palace and placed in an artificial coma while they decided what to do with her. When the Clone Wars came to

an abrupt end, the Separatists fled the palace and left the Jedi behind. Darga moved in soon after and discovered Denia's comatose body. Never one to throw away a potential resource, Darga had her moved to the lowest levels of the palace and kept unconscious, thinking that there might come a day when she could prove useful. When the heroes arrived, Denia could sense their presence even while unconscious (either because one or more of the heroes is Force sensitive, or because destiny swirls about them), and she reaches out to them for help.

This first becomes apparent when the heroes (particularly any Force-sensitive heroes) start hearing whispers in their heads. If the heroes stay in Darga's palace after their time in his court, one or two of them begin to hear whispers in their sleep, so strongly that they awaken. If the heroes appear to be making plans to leave, you can have them hear the whispers while awake. The voice, clearly that of a woman, says things such as, "Help me," and "I know you can hear me." If the heroes attempt to ignore the whispers, the voice becomes more insistent, begging for help and pleading with them to find her.

If the heroes search for a way to find the whispers, they discover that the voice becomes stronger if they descend through the guest quarters into the lower reaches of the palace. If the heroes curried Darga's favor and were given the datapad to access the secret way in and out of the guest



Master Denia

quarters, they can also use it to access a turbolift to the lower levels of the guest quarters. The turbolift leads them directly to the chambers where Denia is being held.

If the heroes never obtained the datacard, they can still reach Denia by finding a stairwell that leads down into the lower guest quarters. However, this path passes through an antechamber where some of Darga's Gamorrean guards await. The guards tell the heroes to turn back, and if they refuse, a fight ensues. See "Into the Dungeons" (page 31) for more information on running this encounter.

Denia is being held in a dank, disgusting area directly beneath the guest quarters that resembles a dungeon. The chamber is in disrepair, and structural damage to the palace has allowed rainwater to leak in, giving the place a musty feel. If the heroes step out of the turbolift, they see a narrow hallway filled with pools of stagnant water, with cells off to the right. The whispers grow louder in their minds, urging them on and giving them directions to a large metal door.

Pushing a button on the door causes it to creak and stutter as it slides open, revealing a chamber that resembles a dilapidated hospital room. It has the same musty smell as the outer hallway, but in this room is a large bed on which lays a woman well into her older years, connected to a variety of machines that seem to be monitoring her vital functions. A large tube of semitransparent liquid is connected to the woman intravenously, and her chest rises and falls slowly. Once inside the room, the whispers in the Force-sensitive heroes' minds become stronger, and the voice claims that she can feel them close to her. Denia telepathically begs the heroes to free her, though the limitations on her telepathy keep her from asking or answering any more questions.

Any hero can disconnect Denia from the machines that are keeping her in a coma. A hero who makes a successful DC 15 Treat Injury check can bring her out of the coma gently, and she regains consciousness at the -5 position on the condition track. Otherwise, she regains consciousness at the -10 position on the condition track, and she has a persistent condition (even with a successful Treat Injury check) that cannot be removed until she receives extended medical treatment for at least a week (which she will be able to get aboard the *Resurgence* between adventures).

When Denia has been brought out of her coma, read the following boxed text aloud:

The eyes of the older woman on the bed flicker open and then seem glazed for a long moment before drawing into sharp focus. She lifts her head slightly to look you over before raising herself to a sitting position.

"Thank you. I've spent too long trapped inside my own body. Tell me, how fares the war? What planet is this? Has the Jedi Council sent you to find me?"

Clearly, the woman has no idea that the Clone Wars are over, nor how much time has passed since she was placed in her coma. She tells the heroes that she is a Jedi Master and that she was assigned to Plo Koon's battle group here on Cato Neimoidia. She was engaged in a pitched battle against the Separatists when a droid starfighter crashed near her, sending her into blackness. When her mind had recovered from the damage done to her body, she found herself unable to awaken or to purge her system of the drugs that were keeping her in a coma. She has been trying to reach out for help, but the only visitor to her room has been someone who seems shrouded in darkness. She doesn't know who this person is (in truth, it is Igren Demos, the majordomo) or why he or she enters the room, but she did not attempt to make contact.

Denia asks the heroes to help her escape, since she has clearly been held prisoner for a while. She has many questions for them and wants to learn what has happened since she was knocked unconscious. If the heroes tell her honestly what has transpired since the conclusion of the Clone Wars, she senses the truth of their words and seems disheartened, but she vows to press on and escape from the palace. If the heroes attempt to deceive her, Denia tries to sense their true motives (her Perception score is high, even when penalized, and she has a good chance to see through their ruses), but she plays along for the time being. She is eager to leave and has no desire to stay in these dungeons any longer than necessary.

The heroes probably have some questions for Denia. Below are some answers to common questions:

Do you know anything about Darga the Hutt or the Sarlacc Project?

"No, I've been trapped here inside my own head for too long. I'm afraid those names mean absolutely nothing to me."

You were a Jedi; how did you escape Order 66? "It wouldn't surprise me if I was thought to have been killed in battle. It's likely that this . . . *Empire* doesn't even know that I exist."

Can you help us get you out of here? "I will do what I can. However, I can already feel panic rising above us. I'd say that by now, they know you've set me free."

Can you tell us anything more about the dark presence you sensed? "Only that whoever it was seemed to be afraid of me as well. I don't know who it was, but I sense that he or she is still nearby."

Jedi Sage Master Denia

CL 15

Medium middle-aged Human Jedi 7/Jedi Knight 5/Jedi Master 3

Force 6; Strong in the Force

Init +14; Senses Perception +20

Languages Basic, Bocce, High Galactic, Neimoidian

Defenses Ref 31 (flat-footed 29), Fort 29, Will 34; Deflect, Improved Defenses

hp 108; Threshold 29

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +15 (1d4+7)

Base Atk +15; Grp +17

Atk Options Improved Disarm, Melee Defense

Special Actions Adept Negotiator, Skilled Advisor

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +20): *battle strike* (2), *farseeing*, *force disarm*, *force slam* (2), *force stun*, *force thrust*, *mind trick* (2), *move object* (2), *negate energy*, *rebuke* (3), *surge*, *vital transfer*

Force Secrets Distant Power, Shaped Power

Force Techniques Improved Sense Force, Improved Telepathy

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 16

Special Qualities build lightsaber, fearless, serenity

Talents Adept Negotiator, Deflect, Disciplined Strike, Force Perception, Force Persuasion, Gauge Force Potential, Redirect Shot, Skilled Advisor, Visions

Feats Force Sensitivity, Force Training (3), Improved Defenses, Improved Disarm, Melee Defense, Skill Focus (Use the Force), Strong in the Force, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (lightsabers), Weapon Proficiency (lightsabers, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +12, Initiative +14, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +15, Knowledge (galactic lore) +15, Knowledge (social sciences) +15, Perception +20, Persuasion +20, Use the Force +20

Possessions tattered Jedi robes

EMBRACING YOUR DESTINY: RESCUE

Heroes with the Rescue destiny take a major step toward that destiny when they take part in successfully awakening Master Denia from her forced coma. Grant those heroes the 24-hour destiny bonus. (If you wish, you can wait to grant the bonus until the first day of *The Queen of Air and Darkness*, the next adventure in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign.)

THROUGH THE DUNGEONS

As soon as Denia was freed from her comatose state, Igren Demos sensed it and awoke his Hutt master. Darga, unprepared for having a full-fledged Jedi Master on the loose in his palace, ordered Demos to ready his personal starship for immediate departure and headed to the planet Bespin within minutes. Demos remained behind, charged with eliminating the heroes and Master Denia as well.

Igren Demos is no fool, and though he tries to stop the heroes, he doubts that he can do it alone (see below for more on his plans). Many of the Hutt's guards are mobilized, and a contingent of warriors moves toward the dungeon area to make sure the heroes do not escape with Denia. Demos locks down the doors in the lower guest quarters area and the dungeon area, shutting off power to the turbolift and sealing the blast doors over the stairwell exit up to the guard room. Using a secret passage from Darga's throne room directly to the dungeon level, the guards open the secret door in the hallway outside Denia's chamber just as the heroes emerge.

See "Out of Captivity" (page 34) for more information on running this encounter.

THE MAJORDOMO

As soon as Igren Demos learned that the Hutt was abandoning his palace and that the Jedi Master had been freed, he began putting a plan into motion to prevent the prisoner from escaping. Demos has secretly been in contact with Imperial Inquisitor Valin Draco, a former Jedi who pledged himself to the service of the Empire after witnessing the horrors of the Clone Wars. Demos has hidden his Force sensitivity from the Inquisitor thus far, and he hopes that his alliance with the Empire will help him supplant Darga and seize control of the organization for his own. When the Hutt flees aboard his personal yacht to Bespin, Igren Demos dispatches the Gamorreans to delay the heroes and Denia while the majordomo makes contact with Inquisitor Draco via the Holonet. Demos implores the Inquisitor to come to Cato Neimoidia quickly because he has cornered a surviving Jedi Master. Demos hopes to turn Denia over to the Inquisitor in exchange for their assistance in making sure that Darga never returns to Cato Neimoidia.

Unfortunately for Demos, he did not plan on the heroes' resourcefulness. When they make their way up through the secret passage (as all other avenues are currently blocked), they arrive in the

throne room just as Inquisitor Draco finishes telling Demos that he is on his way. Read the following boxed text aloud:

As you make your way up the winding secret passage, the dank smell of the dungeons fades, and the acrid smell of Darga's throne room again becomes prevalent. Just as the passage turns and opens up into the massive audience chamber, you see Darga's Neimoidian majordomo bowing deeply before the holographic image of a tall man dressed in dark robes with a lightsaber hanging at his belt.

"The Hutt has fled aboard his personal yacht," Demos says respectfully.

"I am on my way now, with the *Assiduous*," the hologram of the handsome man says. "Pray that you have not summoned the Empire on a fool's errand, for the Inquisitorius is not gentle with those who deal with Jedi."

The hologram fades, and the Neimoidian straightens slowly, looking pale.

After finishing his communication with Draco, the majordomo waits in the throne room with his Trandoshan bodyguard and four Gamorrean guards. The heroes need to pass through this room if they want to leave the palace. If the heroes are spotted, Demos orders his guards to attack and attempts to stop them from leaving with Denia.

See "Confrontation With Demos" (page 37) for more information on running this encounter.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Denia in tow and the Empire on the way, the heroes probably want to leave Cato Neimoidia quickly. Once they make it past Demos, no one in the palace or the city beyond attempts to stop their escape. If, for some reason, they decide to hide in Zarra instead of blasting off immediately, they might have to deal with the Empire, but such developments are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Based on what they learned from Demos or Gome the moneychanger, the heroes should know where to go next—Bespin. However, while they will likely want to pursue Darga immediately, they must consider Denia. She is in no shape to fight and seems weakened just from the escape. Since Darga already has a head start, the heroes should have time to return to the *Resurgence* first so that Denia can receive proper medical attention.

NEXT ADVENTURE

In *The Queen of Air and Darkness*, the next adventure in the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign, the heroes pursue Darga to Cloud City. There, they must infiltrate a sabacc tournament to unearth the Hutt crime lord and discover exactly what deal he struck with the Empire.

SWOOP MARAUDERS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 3

SETUP

When the encounter begins, the heroes have been surrounded by members of the Vipers swoop gang in the middle of a street in Zarra. The heroes should be in the center of a circle of Vipers on swoop bikes, with Kessra slightly inside this larger circle so that she can confront the heroes. No characters (including the heroes) should be placed on any of the open holes in the city street.

READ-ALOUD TEXT

Before the encounter begins, the heroes should have a chance to talk their way out of the conflict with the Vipers. However, if the two sides come to blows, read the following boxed text aloud:

A low wind causes deep bass sounds to waft up from the gaps in the city's streets, which open into short shafts before continuing on into the open air beneath the bridge city. The sounds of repulsorlifts fill the street as five swoop bikes circle around you, then turn as though to attack. The swoop bikers' leader, a tough-looking Human woman with spiky black hair, urges the thugs on as they rev their bikes' engines.

VIPERS SWOOP GANG MEMBER (5)

All members of the Vipers have their own swoop bikes, which they ride into battle. Though they do not have weapons on their bikes—the Empire wouldn't allow such a blatant flaunting of the law, even on a world so lightly occupied—each of the Vipers carries personal weapons (usually vibroblades and blaster pistols). Separate statistics are included below for Vipers on swoop bikes and for Vipers on foot, though most of the encounter is likely to feature just the gang members on swoops.

One of the grinning thugs clutches a battered vibroblade in one hand while revving the engine of his swoop bike with the other. The sputtering bike looks cobbled together from a dozen other bikes, but it has a menacing quality nonetheless.

Vipers Swoop Gang Member

CL 2

Medium Human nonheroic 3/scoundrel 1

Force 1; **Dark Side** 4

Init +9; **Senses** Perception +1

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 15), Fort 14, Will 11

hp 19; **Threshold** 14

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibroblade +5 (2d6+3)

Ranged blaster pistol +4 (3d6)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Running Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 11

Talents Skirmisher

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Point Blank Shot, Running Attack, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Initiative +9, Pilot +9

Possessions vibroblade, blaster pistol, swoop biker's garb (as padded flight suit), 20 credits, various personal belongings

Viper on Swoop Bike

CL 2

Large ground vehicle (swoop)

Init +15; **Senses** Perception +1

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 10), Fort 13

hp 20; **DR** 5; **Threshold** 18

Speed 12 squares (max. velocity 600 km/h)

Melee vibroblade +5 (2d6+3)

Ranged blaster pistol +4 (3d6)

Fighting Space 1 square; **Cover** +5

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +14

Abilities Str 16, Dex 24, Con —, Int 10

Skills Initiative +15, Mechanics +2, Perception +1, Pilot +15, Use Computer +2

Crew 1 (gang member); **Passengers** 0

Cargo 2 kg; **Consumables** —

Availability Licensed; **Cost** 5,500 (new), 1,050 (used)

Vipers Swoop Gang Member Tactics

The Vipers are decent pilots and will always use their swoops to their advantage. Though they carry blaster pistols, the Vipers prefer to use their vibroblades, particularly in conjunction with their Skirmisher talent, which increases their attack bonus well over what they would gain with their pistols. Additionally, the Vipers make extensive use of the Running Attack feat while piloting their swoop bikes. They move far enough to

make a melee attack and gain a bonus on attack rolls with the Skirmisher talent, then move out of range of any heroes who might try to make a melee attack against them in return.

KESSRA

Kessra is the Human leader of the Vipers. She built the gang out of a band of former Separatist mercenaries who were stranded on Cato Neimoidia after the end of the Clone Wars. Rather than be taken captive by the newly formed Empire, Kessra led her mercenaries into hiding under the guise of being a swoop gang. After a while, Kessra realized that her Vipers could live well on Cato Neimoidia, and they took over the streets of Zarra. When newcomers arrive, she makes sure that the Vipers are there to demonstrate who runs the show in the city.

This slender Human woman is clearly a veteran of many battles, as she has numerous scars and marks of combat across her face, arms, and hands. Her spiky black hair matches the dark armored clothing she wears, and a perpetual sneer adorns her face.

Kessra

Medium Human soldier 1/scoundrel 1

Force 1; **Dark Side** 6

Init +9; **Senses** Perception +6

Languages Basic, Huttese

CL 2

Defenses Ref 21 (flat-footed 18), Fort 18, Will 14

hp 36; **Threshold** 18

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +2 (1d4+2)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +6 (3d8+3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Talents Skirmisher, Weapon Specialization (pistols)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Improved Defenses, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +7, Initiative +9, Mechanics +7, Perception +6, Pilot +9

Possessions heavy blaster pistol with improved accuracy, Separatist commando armor (as armored flight suit), swoop biker's garb, comlink, 100 credits, various personal belongings

Kessra's Tactics

Unlike her companions, Kessra prefers to stay away from the heat of battle. Though she is also quite handy with her swoop bike (and gains the benefits of the Skirmisher talent when attacking from the vehicle), she favors her custom heavy blaster pistol so that she can take shots at her enemies without getting too close to the thick of things. While the Vipers run interference between her position and the heroes, Kessra tries to assist her companions by taking shots at enemies who are also the focus of melee attacks by her followers.

CONCLUSION

Though the Vipers are arrogant enough to fight to the bitter end, Kessra is a bit more conservative. If the heroes reduce her to less than half her hit points, or if they eliminate all of her Vipers, Kessra flees at top speed on her swoop bike. If it looks as though she might be captured or killed,

Kessra surrenders peacefully, albeit grudgingly. If the heroes interrogate her, she reveals that she is on the payroll of Darga the Hutt. However, she doesn't know anything useful about him or his dealings, and she doesn't have the influence necessary to get the heroes into his palace. If turned over to the authorities, Kessra is free within hours—she calls in a favor from Darga to get out of prison—and retreats into hiding to lick her wounds.

Regardless, if Kessra survives the encounter, she appears in Darga's palace in Part 2 of the adventure (see "Aviary Attack," page 26). If she dies here, you should plan to replace her in the later encounter.

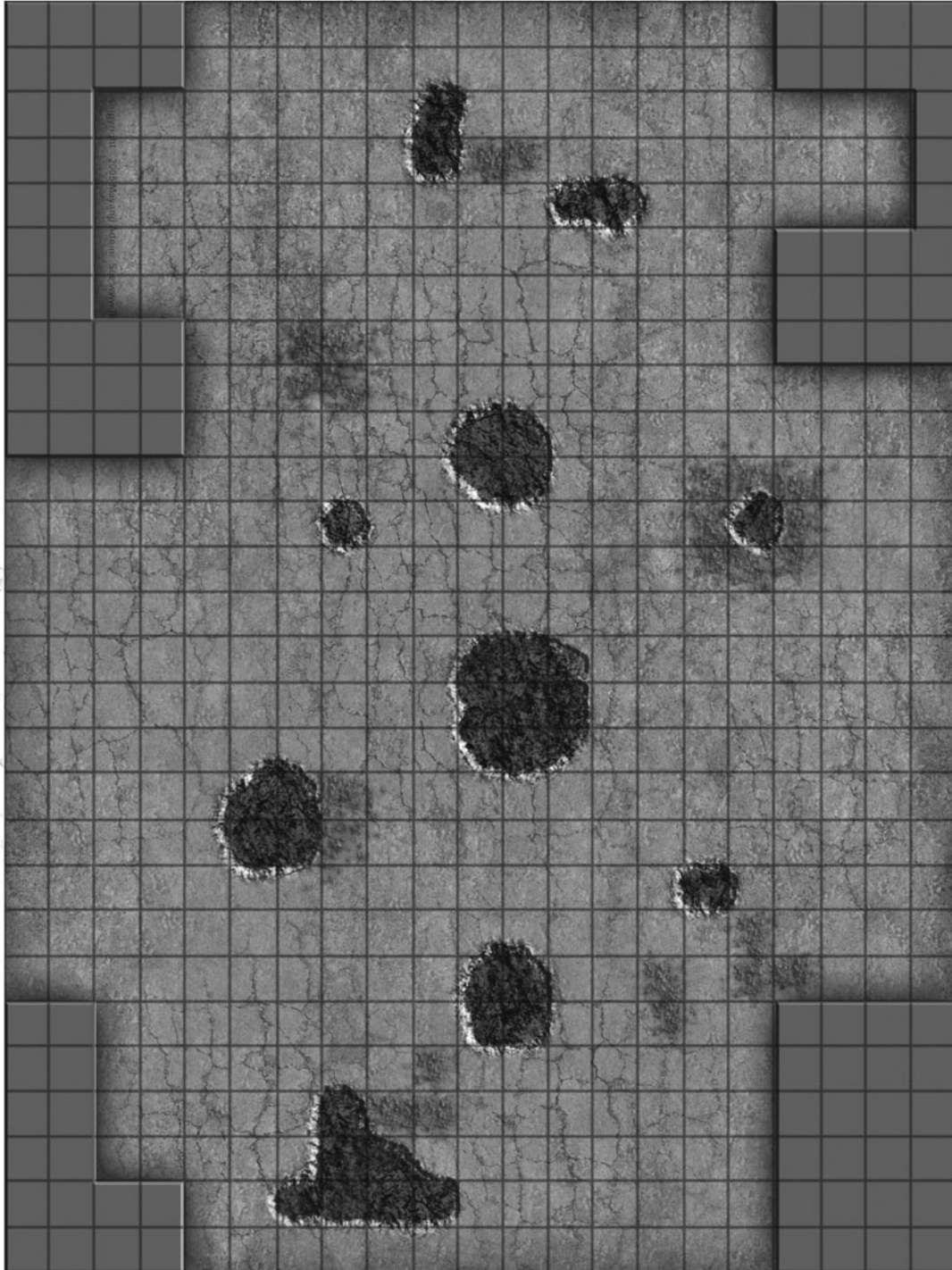
FEATURES OF THE AREA

This fight takes place on a damaged street in the Cato Neimoidian bridge city of Zarra. The area features several spots of rough terrain, but more importantly, there are numerous gaps in the street (resulting from battles of the Clone Wars) that simply open up into the air beneath the city. Any creature that passes through a gap square must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or Jump check to avoid falling through the gap and plunging thousands of feet to the planet's surface. Flying creatures and repulsorlift-operated vehicles (such as swoop bikes) ignore this terrain.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

SWOOP MARAUDERS ENCOUNTER MAP



DARGA'S CRONIES

CHALLENGE LEVEL 3

SETUP

The heroes have traced Warrick Raden to a hideout in an abandoned warehouse in the city of Zarra. Warrick and his cronies are holed up in the warehouse, and the heroes can approach from either end of the street. Two excavation droids, secretly under Raden's control, appear to be sifting mindlessly through the rubble in the street. These droids serve as lookouts, and one of Warrick's companions watches what is happening on the street through the eyes of the droids. Therefore, if the heroes approach from the street, their quarry will not be surprised.

READ-ALoud TEXT

As the heroes approach the ruined warehouse, allow them Perception checks (opposed by the excavation droids' Stealth checks) to determine whether or not they notice the droids taking an unusual interest in them. When Warrick or his goons spot the heroes on the street, or if the heroes move up and see Warrick and the thugs inside the warehouse, read the following boxed text aloud:

Most of the buildings on this street look half destroyed or collapsed, and none of the damage is recent. Dominating one side of the street is a crumbling warehouse, which has the half-buried wreckage of a landspeeder jutting from its front. The walls of the warehouse have large chunks taken out of them, exposing the building's interior to the street.

WARRICK RADEN

Warrick Raden is a bully and an errand boy in Darga the Hutt's organization. For the most part, Raden is content to throw his weight around, but he is far too paranoid to draw too much attention to himself. A surprise visit by a group of strangers new to Cato Neimoidia is enough to spook Raden, causing him to suspect the worst. Like most other Devaronian males, he's spent a good amount of time exploring the galaxy, but some close run-ins with the authorities have made him extremely wary of dealing with authority figures.

This disheveled Devaronian male is hunched over slightly, as if trying to make himself less visible. A twist to his lip bares his jagged teeth, and he seems to be more content skulking about than walking out in the open.

Warrick Raden

CL 3

Medium Devaronian scoundrel 3

Force 1; **Dark Side** 4

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +7

Languages Basic, Devaronese

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 15), Fort 14, Will 15

hp 30; **Threshold** 14

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +2 (1d4+1)

Ranged blaster pistol +6 (3d6+3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sneak Attack +2d6

Special Actions natural curiosity

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13

Talents Sneak Attack +2d6

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Deception)*, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Deception +12, Perception +7, Persuasion +7, Stealth +14

Possessions blaster pistol with improved damage, shabby clothing, comlink, datapad, 50 credits, various personal belongings

* *Bonus feat.*

Natural Curiosity—Once per encounter as a standard action, a Devaronian can make a Perception check against a single target within line of sight (DC 15 or the result of an opposed Stealth check, if the target is actively attempting to hide). If successful, the Devaronian gains a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls against that target. Because of their natural curiosity, Devaronians are very attentive to small details that can reveal weaknesses.

Warrick Raden's Tactics

Raden wants nothing to do with the heroes and is more concerned with saving his own hide than anything else. When the encounter begins, he immediately makes a Stealth check to hide, then picks out the most dangerous-looking hero and uses his natural curiosity on that hero to gain the insight bonus on attack rolls. Warrick allows his hired muscle to engage the heroes directly, while he remains hidden to gain his bonus sneak attack damage against the heroes. When possible, Raden makes a Stealth check as a move action to remain hidden after taking a shot at one of the heroes.

WARRICK'S HIRED MUSCLE (6)

Warrick keeps a number of thugs with him at all times. These thugs are in the employ of the Darga the Hutt and feel no real loyalty to Raden other than the fact that Darga ordered them to accompany the Devaronian. They know that Darga would be displeased if anything happened to his errand boy, so they fight to protect him for fear of what

the Hutt would do to them if Raden were captured or killed. (The statistics block for the thugs does not include a species. Feel free to customize this encounter by assigning species to the thugs; just remember to adjust the stats to account for the presence of species traits.)

This street tough looks as though he is the veteran of many cantina brawls and street fights, with scars adorning nearly every part of his body. He seems to radiate violence and lawlessness.

Darga's Thugs

Medium nonheroic 3

Dark Side 3

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

Languages Basic

Defenses Ref 16 (flat-footed 16), Fort 15, Will 11

hp 14; **Threshold** 15

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +4 (1d4+2)

Ranged blaster pistol +3 (3d6)

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

Abilities Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Defenses, Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +8

Possessions blaster pistol, knife, makeshift body armor (as armored flight suit), 10 credits, various personal belongings

Warrick's Hired Muscle Tactics

The thugs aren't very smart, so their favorite tactic is simply to find a place to hunker down and take shots at the heroes from behind cover. They know that the excavation droids are under Warrick's control, so they do their best to distract the heroes to give the droids a chance to sneak up on the intruders.

EXCAVATION DROIDS (2)

After the devastation of the Clone Wars, what was left of the Cato Neimoidian government decided to turn some of the Confederacy's droid production power toward rebuilding their bridge cities. One of the droids manufactured under this initiative is the TaggeCo XK-V8 Excavation Droid, produced in partnership with TaggeCo specifically for use on Cato Neimoidia. The excavation droid has climbing claws and magnetic feet that allow it to work on the top and the underside of the planet's bridge cities. The droids in this encounter have been reprogrammed to obey Raden's commands (sent with his comlink and datapad) and to ignore their usual restriction against attacking living beings.

This spiderlike droid resembles a massive arachnid with three-pronged claws at the end of each appendage. The droid's underbelly bristles with tools, such as circular saws and arc welders. Atop the droid sit several large visual sensors, facing forward and glowing a faint blue color.

Excavation Droid

CL 2

Medium droid (5th-degree) scout 2

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

Languages Binary

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 14), Fort 14, Will 13

hp 22; **Threshold** 14

Immune droid immunities

Speed 6 squares; climb 3

Melee circular saw +3 (2d6+2) or
plasma cutter +3 (2d6+2)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +5

Atk Options leaping strike, Running Attack

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con —, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities droid traits

Talents Surefooted

Feats Running Attack, Weapon Focus (simple weapons), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Climb +7 (may reroll, keeping the better result; may take 10 even when threatened), Jump +7 (may reroll, keeping the better result; may take 10 even when threatened), Mechanics +5, Stealth +10

Systems basic processor, walking locomotion, climbing claws, jump servos, magnetic feet

Possessions circular saw, plasma cutter

Leaping Strike—The reprogrammed excavation droids have special commands in their combat routines that allow them to perform a leaping strike against a target. Once per encounter, each droid may choose to deal double damage on a successful attack against a single target, provided that the droid already climbed or jumped during its movement on the same turn.

Excavation Droid Tactics

The excavation droids might seem like no threat when combat begins because they are simply chipping away at the rubble on the street. Once Raden gives them the command, however, they literally leap into action. Each droid tries to use its leaping strike as quickly as possible, and though the droids aren't very strong, they provide a distraction that can give Raden a chance to get off a few more sneak attacks.

CONCLUSION

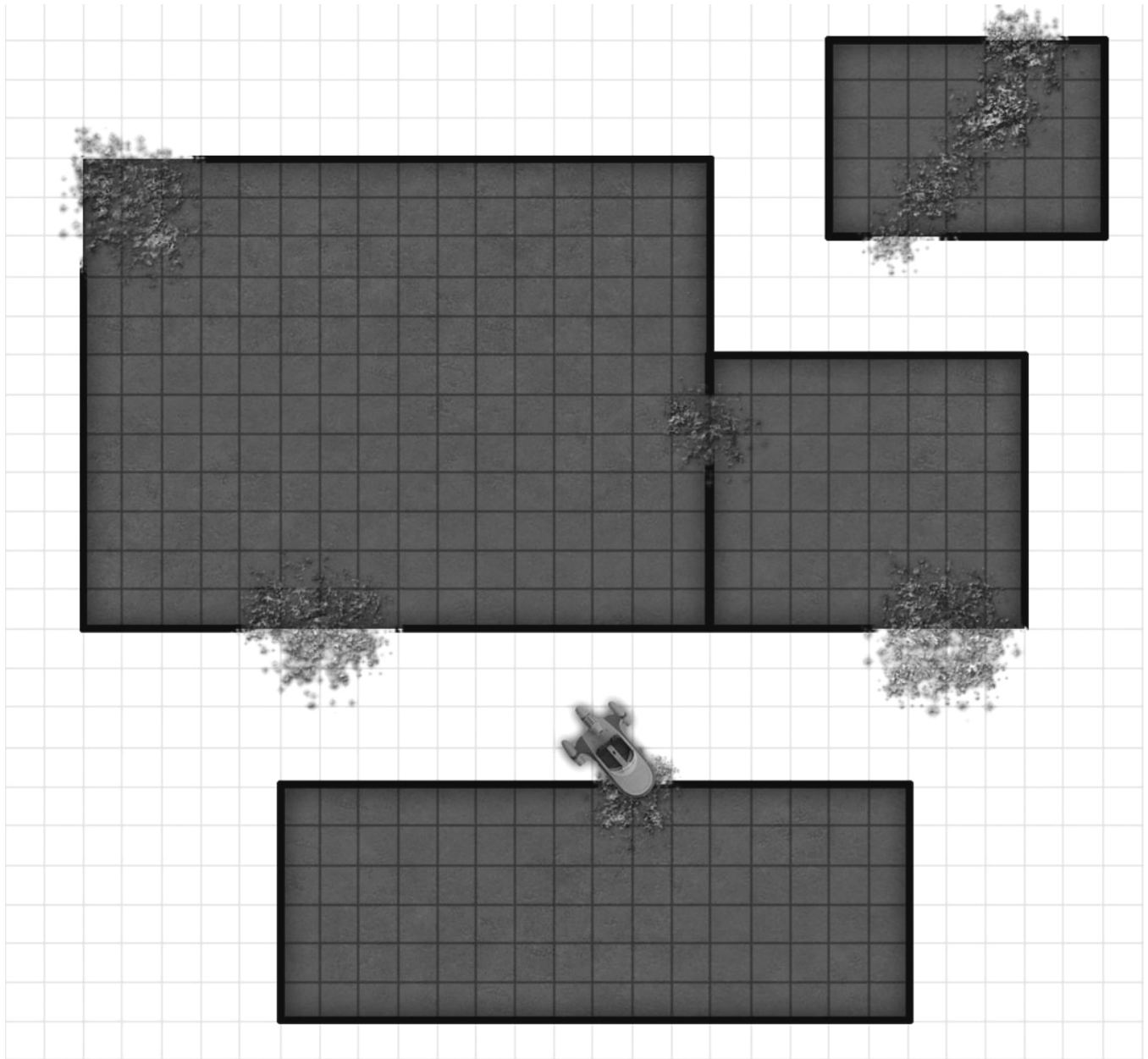
Though Raden is willing to fight initially, his will quickly erodes if the heroes gain the upper hand. The heroes should realize that they need the Devaronian alive, but in case they try to use lethal force, he surrenders if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points. If this occurs, Darga's thugs attempt to flee.

Raden is reluctant to help the heroes. He begins the encounter hostile to them, but if he is captured, his attitude shifts to merely unfriendly. If his attitude can be shifted to friendly, or if he is successfully intimidated, he agrees to take the heroes to Darga's secret palace.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

DARGA'S CRONIES ENCOUNTER MAP



FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area around the ruined warehouse is littered with debris, which counts as difficult terrain. Additionally, the buildings in this area are crumbling and unstable, and chunks of the walls and ceiling often fall when damaged. If a ranged attack against a target standing adjacent to a wall misses that target by 5 or less, a chunk of the wall is dislodged. The debris makes an attack roll (1d20+3) against the target's Reflex Defense, and if it hits the target, it deals 1d6 points of damage.

GLADIATOR MATCH

CHALLENGE LEVEL 5

SETUP

The heroes and the opposing gladiators begin the encounter on opposite sides of the gladiator arena. The three Gamorrean gladiators set up close by one another (though far enough apart to be difficult to hit with stun grenades and Force powers) while the Rodian and the droid set up much farther away. The heroes may arrange themselves in any position they wish, but they should be close to the wall farthest from the other gladiators.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Just before the battle with Darga's gladiators begins, read the following boxed text aloud:

High above the gladiator pit, Darga the Hutt presides over the beginning of the match, looking down on you with a slimy grin. Standing just to his left is the protocol droid translator, who relays the Hutt's decree down to you: "Fight for the chance to be my personal gladiator team! Riches and fame for all who are strong enough to seize them!" With that, the Hutt blows a massive horn that echoes throughout the open gladiator pit. Dirt crunches underfoot, and flickering light shines on you from the lamps mounted around the perimeter.

GLADIATORS (5)

Darga has a crop of interesting and dangerous gladiators, culled from the ranks of his previous teams and as eclectic as they come. The Karg brothers are three Gamorreans who may or may not really be brothers; no one has dared investigate the claim further. They specialize in melee combat, wielding extremely deadly vibro-axes, but they use energy balls as ranged weapons. The Rodian gladiator Zayda is an exile from his homeworld who tried his hand at bounty hunting before realizing that he just wanted to blast people for a living. His personal combat droid assistant, RX-7246, is a custom-made battle droid with an extensive library of heavy weapon combat routines. These five gladiators have already survived several rounds in the arena against other opponents and are eager to prove themselves against the heroes.

The five gladiators are an odd mix, making a team that seems as mismatched as it is diverse. Three Gamorreans wielding vibro-axes snort and drool hungrily, pounding on their armored chests and looking as though they were preparing for a feast. A sly-looking Rodian paces back and forth casually, gripping a blaster at his hip, clenching and unclenching his fist as he waits for the fight to start. A cobbled-together battle droid with three photoreceptors and a massive grenade launcher stands stock still, its only movement the occasional twitch of an electronic eye swiveling to examine you from a different angle.

The Karg Brothers

CL 3

Medium Gamorrean soldier 3

Force 2; **Dark Side** 8

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +2

Languages Basic (cannot speak), Gamorrean (speak only)

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 19), Fort 21, Will 14

hp 47; **Threshold** 26

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibro-ax +6 (2d10+9) or

vibro-ax +7* (2d10+17) with Powerful Charge

Ranged energy ball +3 (2d8+1)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Power Attack, Powerful Charge

Abilities Str 17, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8

Special Qualities primitive

Talents Devastating Attack (advanced melee weapons), Weapon

Specialization (advanced melee weapons)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Improved Damage Threshold,

Power Attack, Powerful Charge, Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee

weapons, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +8, Initiative +6

Possessions vibro-ax, 3 energy balls, battle armor, trophies of past victories

* Includes 3 points of Power Attack.

Zayda

CL 3

Medium Rodian scoundrel 3

Force 3; **Dark Side** 5

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +2

Languages Basic, Rodese

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 15), Fort 14, Will 15

hp 28; **Threshold** 19

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +3 (1d4+2)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +5 (3d8+3) or

stun grenade +5 (4d6+1)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Careful Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Special Actions Fool's Luck, Fortune's Favor

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities heightened awareness, low-light vision

Talents Fool's Luck, Fortune's Favor

Feats Careful Shot, Improved Damage Threshold, Point Blank Shot,

Precise Shot, Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +4, Initiative +9, Perception +2 (may

reroll, keeping the second result even if it is worse), Stealth +9

Possessions heavy blaster pistol with improved damage, knife, 3 stun grenades, gladiator's garb

RX-7246

CL 3

Medium droid (4th-degree) soldier 3

Force 1; **Dark Side** 4

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +7

Languages Basic, Binary

Defenses Ref 22 (flat-footed 20), Fort 18, Will 15

hp 41; **Threshold** 18

Immune droid immunities

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +5 (1d4+3)

Ranged grenade launcher with stun grenade +6 (4d6+3 stun) or grenade launcher with frag grenade +6 (4d6+3) or blaster carbine +5 (3d8+1)

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

Special Actions Tough as Nails

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Special Qualities droid traits

Talents Tough as Nails, Weapon Specialization (heavy weapons)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Improved Defenses, Weapon Focus (heavy weapons), Weapon Proficiency (heavy weapons, pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Initiative +8, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Perception +7

Systems walking locomotion, heuristic processor

Possessions grenade launcher, blaster carbine, duranium plating, 6 stun grenades, 6 frag grenades

Gladiator Tactics

The gladiators are willing to adhere to Darga's decree that stun weapons be used in lieu of blaster bolts, though Zayda is particularly displeased because that limits his range. The Karg brothers are disappointed that they are not allowed to deal killing blows, and if they down a hero, they try to make sure he *stays* down if they can do so surreptitiously. RX-7246 opens with stun grenades, hoping to knock a hero or two down the condition track so that the Karg brothers can carve them up more easily.

If at least two gladiators are knocked unconscious, or if all of the gladiators fall below half their hit points, they are angered and cast aside Darga's decree, setting their weapons to fire normally. RX-7246 switches to frag grenades at this point, and Zayda retreats to make ranged attacks. The Karg brothers' tactics do not change.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes survive and win the match, they are congratulated by Darga, who also awards them 1,000 credits' worth of jewels. Since the heroes have likely depleted many resources (including hit points), Darga agrees to end the session of his court for the day, allowing the heroes to retire to their rooms and recuperate.

If the heroes lose the match, the Hutt bestows honors upon his gladiators and does not end the day's session in court. If any hero decides to go to the guest chambers to recuperate, Darga continues on without him or her. Feel free to let that hero have a solo encounter with Six Six or the moneychanger so that his or her time away from the court is not wasted.

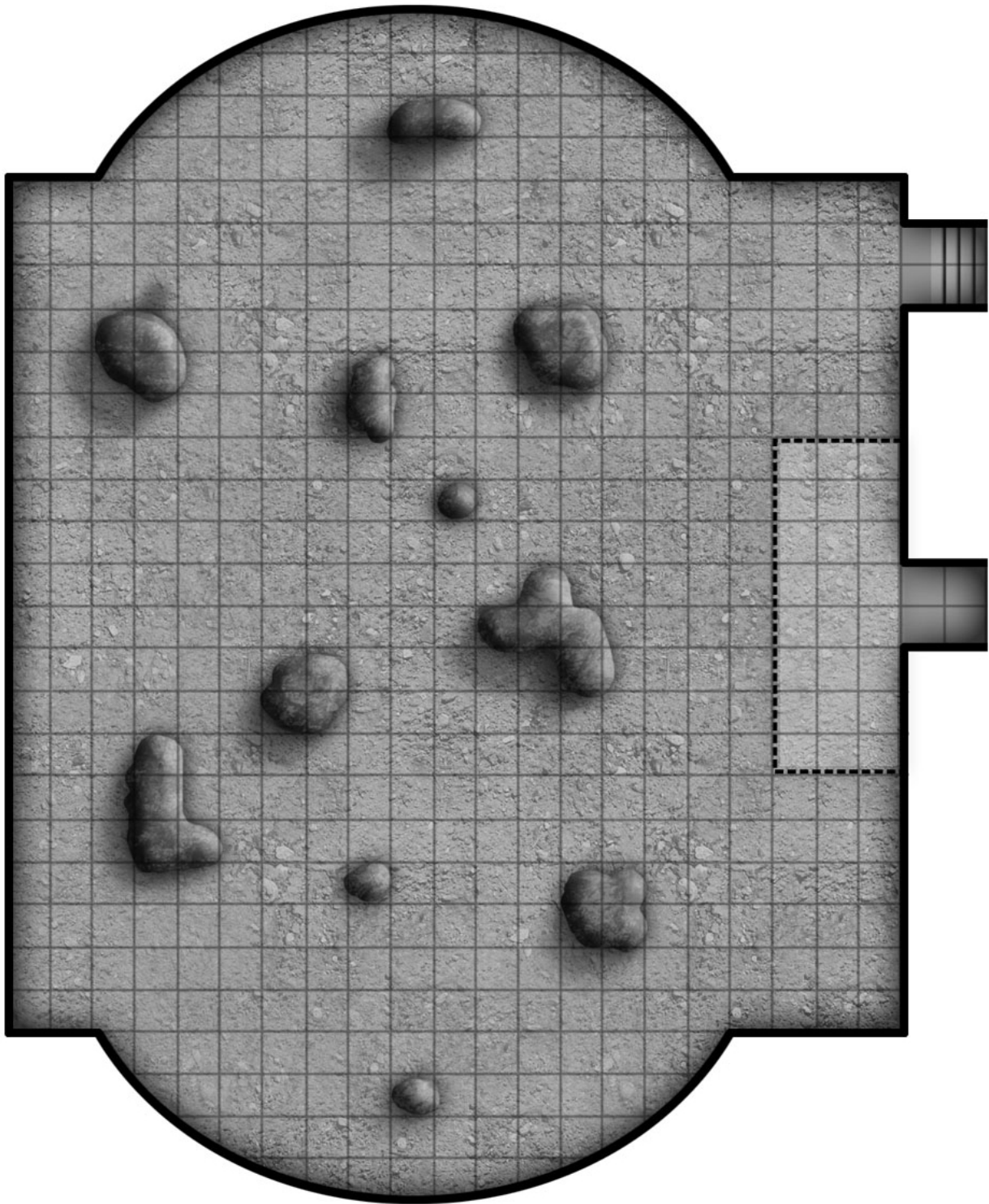
ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The gladiator arena is a late addition to the palace, and one made at Darga's decree. It's far from professionally constructed, and large swaths of the arena have rough terrain (slowing movement as usual). Additionally, several large stones that were too big for the Hutt's minions to drag off remain in the center of the arena, each one providing cover. Lastly, the arena is illuminated by flickering lamps placed at intervals around the perimeter. Any hero who destroys a lamp creates darkness in a 2-square radius around it, which grants concealment to any character in that area. There are 22 such lamps, spaced out around the arena walls.

GLADIATOR MATCH ENCOUNTER MAP



AVIARY ATTACK

CHALLENGE LEVEL 4

SETUP

The encounter begins with Kessra well back into the aviary, waiting nearly at the far end of the chamber away from the entrance. She has made an untrained Stealth check to hide here. The four Neimoidian kreehawks sit to either side of the winding path, perched up in the trees. Two kreehawks are on each side of the path, and they are spaced out so that they form something of a tunnel leading the heroes to Kessra.

READ-ALOUD TEXT

When the heroes enter the aviary, allow them Perception checks to notice Kessra hidden in the shadows at the back of the room. When the encounter begins, read the following boxed text aloud:

Shadows flicker across the floor of the aviary as the swaying trees within block out the moonlight shining down through the ceiling. The occasional flutter of wings or gust of air can be heard faintly as a bird takes flight or lands on a nearby branch. The soft rustle of leaves provides a thin background noise, masking the sounds of your footsteps as you pass down the dimly lit winding path, flanked on either side by the trunks of large trees.

hide at the beginning of the encounter. Her first action is to call in the kreehawks (by blowing a whistle, which signals them to attack), and if she can remain hidden, she does. If forced to fight, or if the kreehawks are all taken down, Kessra emerges and attempts to kill the heroes with her heavy blaster pistol.

NEIMOIDIAN KREEHAWK (4)

The Neimoidian kreehawk is a large avian creature with razor-sharp talons that is native to the forests of Cato Neimoidia. Each of these birds has the potential to reach great speeds and is extremely nimble. Neimoidian kreehawks have black feathers and large, reflective eyes that allow them to see even in near darkness. Darga keeps four of these creatures in his aviary, and sometimes when he needs to dispose of an unruly associate, he has that person sent here, where the kreehawks eliminate the victim—and devour the remains.

This large black bird has a smooth, sloping head and reflective eyes, its black-feathered body looming large in the darkness. Razor-sharp talons cap the end of its claws, and the creature's massive wingspan makes it seem nearly the size of a small Human.

26

A WRETCHED NERVE

KESSRA

Kessra

Medium Human soldier 1/scoundrel 1

Force 1; **Dark Side** 6

Init +9; **Senses** Perception +6

Languages Basic, Huttese

Defenses Ref 21 (flat-footed 18), Fort 18, Will 14

hp 36; **Threshold** 18

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +2 (1d4+2)

Ranged heavy blaster pistol +6 (3d8+3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Talents Skirmisher, Weapon Specialization (pistols)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Improved Defenses, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +7, Initiative +9, Mechanics +7, Perception +6, Pilot +9

Possessions heavy blaster pistol with improved accuracy, Separatist commando armor (as armored flight suit), swoop biker's garb, comlink, 100 credits, various personal belongings

Kessra's Tactics

Kessra is still angry at the heroes for humiliating her in front of the other Vipers, and she has called in favors with her friends on the inside to set up this confrontation. She is not very stealthy, but she tries to

CL 2

Neimoidian Kreehawk

CL 3

Small airborne beast 4

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3

Defenses Ref 15 (flat-footed 11), Fort 11, Will 11; Dodge, Mobility hp 22; **Threshold** 11

Speed 8 squares (fly)

Melee talons +5 (1d4+4)

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

Atk Options Running Attack

Abilities Str 14, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11

Special Qualities airborne traits, swoop

Feats Dodge*, Mobility, Running Attack

Skills Acrobatics +11, Initiative +6 (may reroll, keeping the second result even if it is worse)

* *Bonus feat.*

Swoop—Whenever a Neimoidian kreehawk moves in the same round that it attacks, it gains a +2d4 bonus to damage.

Neimoidian Kreehawk Tactics

The Neimoidian kreehawks have been trained to fight at Darga's command, but since Kessra has obtained the command whistle, she has the same ability to control them. The kreehawks are extremely mobile fighters, and they take advantage of that fact by remaining in constant motion, using the Running Attack feat to move, strike, and move again. Though they prefer to avoid attacks of opportunity, they don't shy away from moving past an enemy thanks to the bonus they receive to Reflex Defense from the Mobility feat. Additionally, every round, each kreehawk

changes the target of its Dodge feat to the hero that it plans to attack, gaining an additional bonus as it swoops in and then moves away. If possible, a kreehawk always moves before it attacks, especially given that the bulk of its damage comes from its Swoop ability.

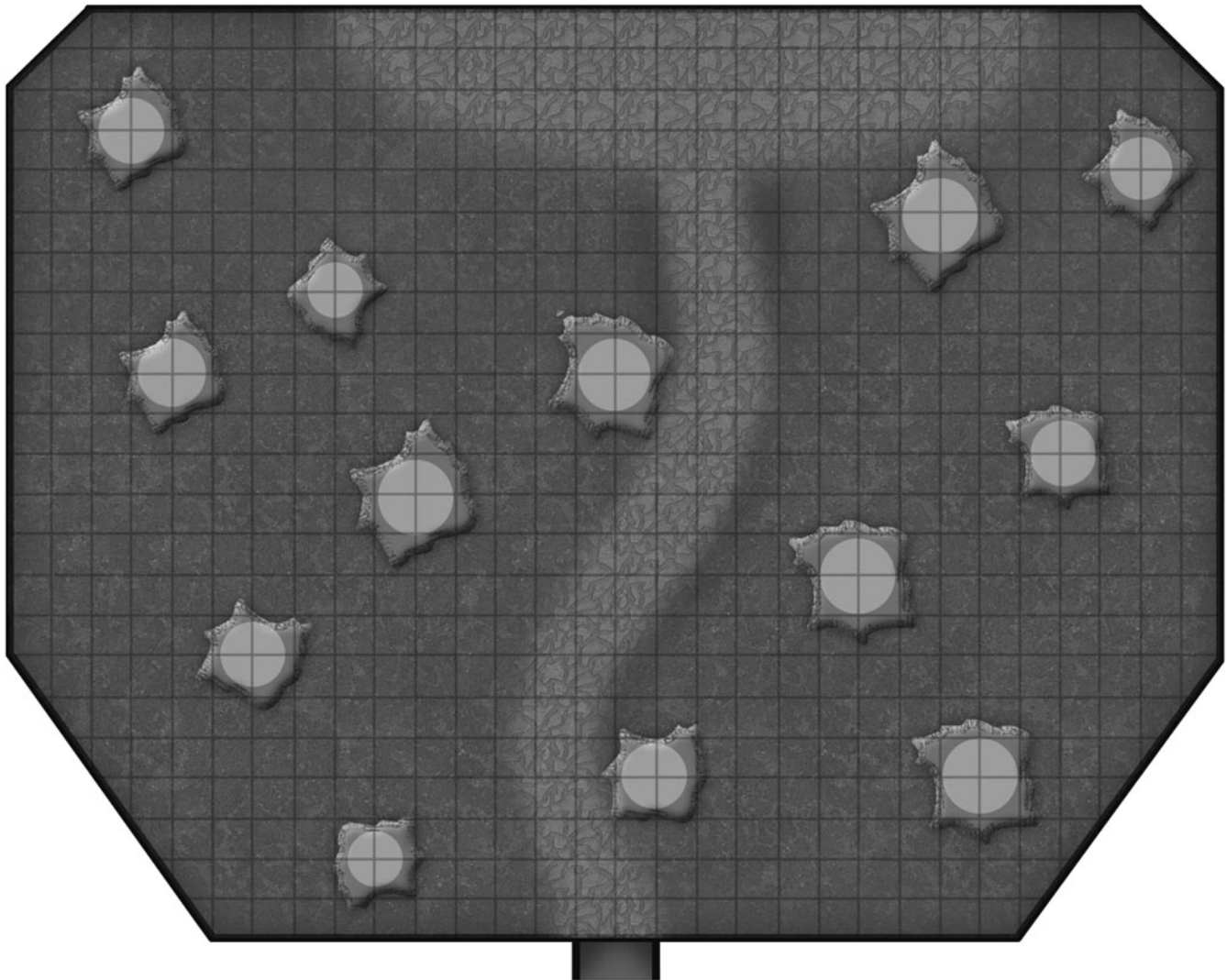
CONCLUSION

If the heroes defeat the kreehawks and Kessra but leave her alive, she takes the first opportunity to flee. Having been defeated twice, she has lost her defiance and won't bother the heroes again. If they take her to Darga, he has the Gamorrean guards in his audience chamber drag her off to the dungeons, placing her in a cell but hardly giving her a second thought. More than anything else, Darga is disappointed that he didn't get to see the fight. He considers himself even with the heroes if they killed any of his kreehawks, since they were attacked while guests under his roof.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The entire aviary is considered to be under shadowy illumination conditions, granting concealment (but not total concealment) to anyone within the area. Heroes with light sources cast their own light as normal. Additionally, the trees throughout the aviary provide cover and no one can move through their squares, since the trees stretch almost up to the ceiling. The path through the middle of the aviary is normal terrain, but the area off the path contains some squares of difficult terrain (where debris from the trees makes passage difficult).

ENCOUNTER MAP



A KNIFE IN THE DARK

CHALLENGE LEVEL 4

SETUP

The assassins in this encounter were sent either by Igren Demos or by the slavers, depending on whether the heroes revealed themselves to be Force sensitive or not. The three Quarren work for Darga, but the Twi'lek and the Wookiee came to the palace as part of the Iron Ring delegation.

When combat begins, the assassins have moved into the guest quarters and have access to the heroes' rooms. Each of the Quarren moves into a different guest room (if the heroes are grouped into one or two rooms, some of the Quarren will move into the same room) to try to kill the heroes in their sleep. The Wookiee slaver stands guard at one end of the guest quarters hallway in case a hero tries to escape, while the Twi'lek poisoner hides in the common area, waiting to strike at anyone who emerges from a room.

Remember that if the heroes previously caught the Twi'lek trying to poison Darga's drink and exposed her, she does not take part in this encounter.

READ-ALoud TEXT

Read the following text aloud to the heroes:

Late in the evening, the guest quarters of Darga's palace are quiet and peaceful. Small lights faintly illuminate the common area of the guest wing, and a stillness permeates the area, as though the building itself were in a deep sleep. Only the occasional shuffle of a servant's footsteps breaks the silence of the night.

When the Quarren enter the heroes' rooms, let the heroes make Perception checks to notice their arrival. The DC equals the Quarren's Stealth check results, with a -5 penalty because the Quarren have concealment; apply an additional -10 penalty for heroes who are asleep. Any heroes who fail the check are surprised and do not act during the surprise round.

QUARREN ASSASSIN (3)

Darga the Hutt employs a trio of Quarren assassins who also double as bounty hunters, tracking down the crime lord's enemies or agents that fail to do his bidding. These assassins are paid well, and though they are of relatively low level, they have been trained to attack quickly and precisely. The Quarren act without speaking a word, using the cover of darkness to sneak up on the heroes.

This slender Quarren wears gray overlapping robes and brandishes a customized blaster pistol. Eyes closed to menacing slits, the Quarren seems to radiate danger as he prepares to pull the trigger.

Quarren Assassin

CL 3

Medium Quarren nonheroic 6/scountrel 1

Force 2; **Dark Side** 6

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +4

Languages Basic, Quarrenese

Defenses Ref 19 (flat-footed 16), Fort 12, Will 13

hp 25; **Threshold** 12

Speed 6 squares

Melee knife +5 (1d4+1)

Ranged blaster pistol +8 (3d6+2)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7

Atk Options Dastardly Strike, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

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

Special Qualities breathe underwater, expert swimmer, low-light vision

Talents Dastardly Strike

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (pistols), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Stealth +16

Possessions blaster pistol with improved damage, knife, combat jumpsuit

Quarren Assassin Tactics

The Quarren assassins use their high Stealth modifiers to keep the heroes unaware of their presence and gain the benefits of their Dastardly Strike talent. Able to see in the shadowy illumination of the guest quarters, the Quarren take every possible opportunity to remain hidden and to knock the heroes down the condition track with each successful attack.

TWI'LEK POISONER

An agent of the slaver delegation that came to meet with Darga, this Twi'lek pretends to be a slave to better hide her true role. Skilled with a variety of poisons, she is the slavers' clandestine way of dealing with enemies. Igren Demos knows this, but he does not tell his master. In exchange for his silence, the majordomo requires a favor, which he calls in to have the Twi'lek poisoner and the Wookiee slaver (detailed below) assist the Quarren in taking out the heroes.

Though she might have been beautiful once, this young, green-skinned Twi'lek woman looks like she has seen her fair share of hard times, and now she seems more worn down than youthful. However, her face is hard and her eyes cold, and there is a distinct air of hatred around her.

Twi'lek Poisoner

CL 3

Medium Twi'lek scoundrel 3

Force 3; **Dark Side** 6

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3

Languages Basic, Ryl, lekku

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 15), Fort 15, Will 16

hp 25; **Threshold** 15

Speed 6 squares

Melee vibroblade +5 (2d6+2 plus poison) or vibroblade +3 (3d6+2 plus poison) with Rapid Strike

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Rapid Strike

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 14

Special Qualities deceptive, great Fortitude, low-light vision

Talents Fool's Luck, Skirmisher

Feats Point Blank Shot, Rapid Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +8 (may reroll, keeping the second result even if it is worse), Initiative +9, Stealth +9

Possessions vibroblade, slave garb, 4 vials of distilled trihexalon

Trihexalon Poison—The Twi'lek poisoner carries four vials of a distilled and refined chemical weapon called trihexalon. Normally used as a chemical weapon, trihexalon can be refined and altered to react (or fail to react) with certain biochemical compositions. The Twi'lek poisoner's trihexalon is engineered to affect all non-Twi'leks, preventing the poison from being used against her. This particular variety of trihexalon is a contact poison that attacks the Fortitude Defense of any target damaged by the weapon to which it is applied, making its attack roll with a +5 bonus. If the attack succeeds, the target takes 2d6 points of damage. If the attack fails, the target takes only half damage. The poison attacks each round until cured with a successful DC 15 Treat Injury check.

Twi'lek Poisoner Tactics

The Twi'lek is a dangerous woman who seeks only to injure her opponents, letting the poison on her vibroblade do the rest. During the first round of combat, she remains hidden, spending a Force Point to activate Fool's Luck and granting herself a bonus on attack rolls. In subsequent rounds, she makes extensive use of her Skirmisher talent, being sure to move to gain a bonus on attack rolls and using Acrobatics to tumble and avoid attacks of opportunity.

WOOKIEE SLAVER

An exile from his homeworld of Kashyyyk and a reviled member of the Wookiee species, this slaver has abandoned the honor of his heritage and embraced a life of violence and destruction. Part of the muscle of the Iron Ring delegation, the Wookiee slaver is a big, brutish warrior who fought as a mercenary for the Separatists in the Clone Wars. His bowcaster is the only evidence that he embraces any aspect of his past, and his ability to drop foes quickly has made him an invaluable addition to the slaver ring.

This towering Wookiee warrior seems to ooze malice and hatred. His matted black fur has been burned or slashed in some places, giving it an uneven look, and a permanent snarl seems to grace his lips. He wears battle armor and has a bowcaster slung over his shoulder, and his narrowed eyes seem to be looking for a fight.

Wookiee Slaver

CL 2

Medium Wookiee soldier 1/scoundrel 1

Force 2; **Dark Side** 7

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

Languages Basic (understand only), Shyriiwook

Defenses Ref 21 (flat-footed 20), Fort 19, Will 14

hp 38; **Threshold** 19

Speed 4 squares

Melee stun baton +5 (2d6+5 stun)

Ranged bowcaster +3 (3d10+1)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Devastating Attack (rifles), Point Blank Shot

Special Actions Fortune's Favor

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 11

Special Qualities extraordinary recuperation, rage, weapon familiarity

Talents Devastating Attack (rifles), Fortune's Favor

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (rifles), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Initiative +7, Perception +7

Possessions bowcaster, stun baton, battle armor, 100 credits, various personal belongings

Wookiee Slaver Tactics

The Wookiee slaver is primarily concerned with making sure that the heroes do not escape from the guest quarters, but if things go badly for the other assassins, he joins in the fight. He prefers to stand back and take shots at approaching heroes with his bowcaster, taking the aim action whenever possible to ensure that cover does not block his dangerous bolts.

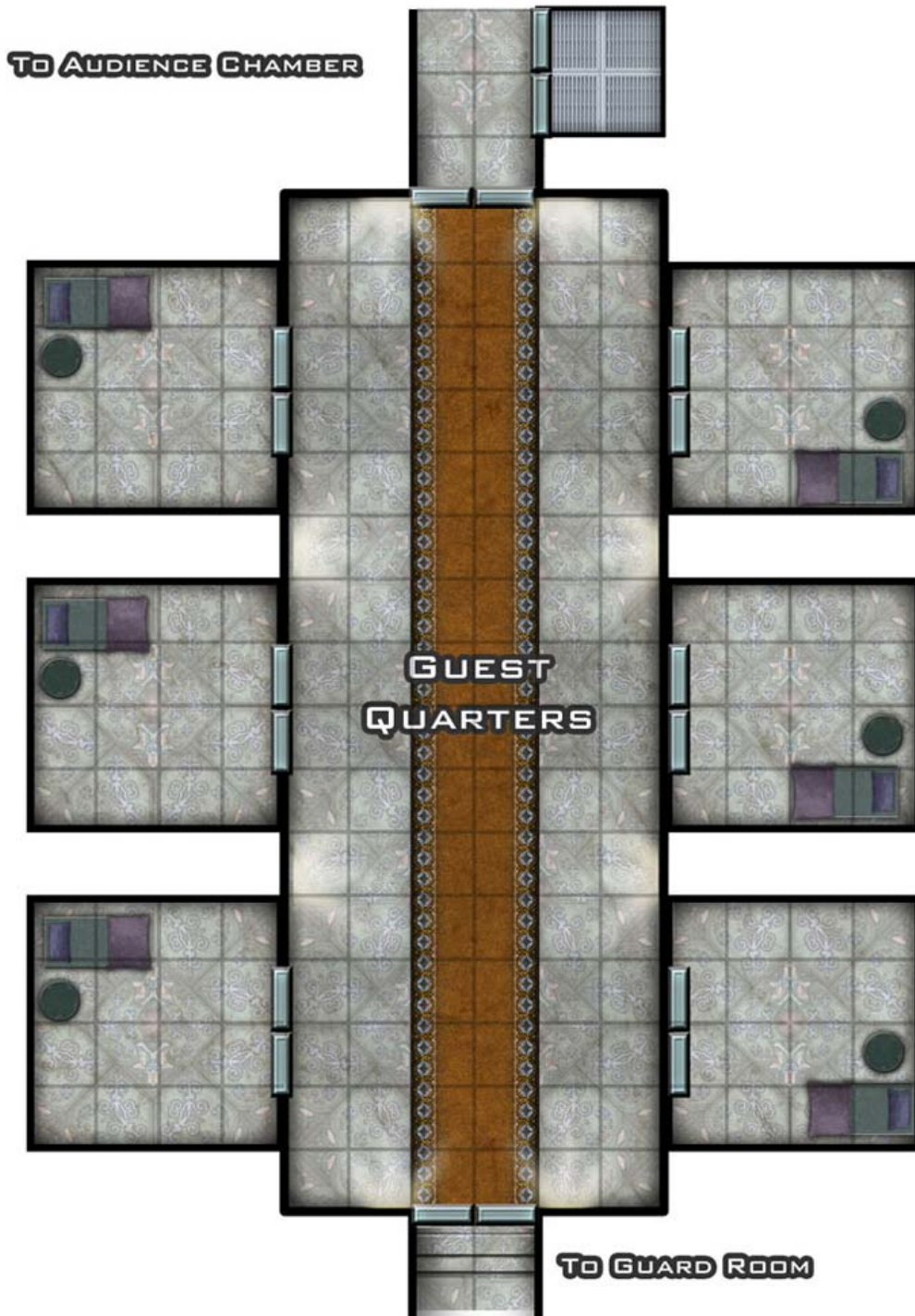
CONCLUSION

When the fight is over, if any assassins remain alive, they refuse to reveal who hired them. In truth, the Quarren assassins believe the order was handed down from Darga (though the Hutt has no knowledge of the assassination attempt), and the Twi'lek poisoner and the Wookiee slaver know only that their Zabrak leader ordered them to assist. If Darga is confronted, he tells the heroes plainly that he had nothing to do with it, and if the heroes investigate further, they find the servant who delivered "Darga's" order to the Quarren dead in his quarters—killed by Igren Demos to keep him silent. The Zabrak slaver similarly claims that the servant brought him the order to have his comrades join in the assassination attempt. If Darga finds out about the slavers' involvement, he expels them from his palace immediately, warning the Zabrak to keep his minions on a tighter leash for their next visit.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

A KNIFE IN THE DARK ENCOUNTER MAP



FEATURES OF THE AREA

The most challenging feature of the area is the tight space in which the heroes find themselves fighting. With small guest rooms, narrow hallways, and only the common area as a wide open space, battling the assassins becomes a matter of movement and positioning. There are many items behind which a hero can take cover, though most of them (including chairs, beds, and tables) are considered low cover and can be moved over easily.

A set of double doors leads to the main area of the palace, and another set at the far end leads to stairs going down to the guard room. These doors are usually sealed and can be opened only by the guards from below.

A turbolift sits just outside the guest quarters, in the hallway that leads back to Darga's audience chamber. Only someone with the right datacard can use it. The Hutt has TC-663 give such datacards to the heroes if they successfully curry his favor (see page 9). When activated with one of these datacards, the turbolift grants access to the guard room (and subsequently the back entrance to the palace), as well as the dungeon level.

INTO THE DUNGEONS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 5

SETUP

Two Gamorrean bashers, the toughest guards in Darga's retinue, stand near the center of the room. Three Gamorrean guards wait in the wings, lurking in the shadows near the walls to hide their presence. The Gamorrean warlord stands in a corner close to the stairs leading up to the guest chambers, making it impossible to see him from outside the room.

READ-ALOUD TEXT

Read the following text aloud when the heroes enter this area for the first time:

This large area has been cleared of any furniture or other accoutrements and turned into a guard room. At one end is a set of doors that appear to be sealed shut with large metal plates welded over them. At the other end, a heavy blast door blocks off what appear to be stairs leading down to the next floor. Another door sits in one of the side walls.

GAMORREAN GUARD (3)

Gamorrean Guard

CL 2

Medium Gamorrean nonheroic 6

Dark Side 2

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

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 17), Fort 14, Will 10
hp 27; **Threshold** 19

Speed 4 squares

Melee vibro-ax +9 (2d10+8)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8

Abilities Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 8

Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Bantha Rush, Improved Damage Threshold*, Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +10

Possessions vibro-ax, ceremonial armor

* *Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Guard Tactics

The Gamorrean guards fight with rather straightforward tactics, simply moving up to the heroes and swinging their heavy vibro-axes. Not exceptionally intelligent foes, each guard attacks the nearest enemy, though if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, they try to flee and seek reinforcements from elsewhere in the palace.

GAMORREAN BASHER (2)

These burly Gamorreans are some of the most powerful thugs in Darga's employ. Strong, tough, and devastatingly powerful, the bashers are two of the greatest warriors that Gamorr has ever produced. Each basher uses a Gamorrean warmace (an oversized mace that is size Large and that deals 1d10 points of damage) and wears a suit of armor similar to those of the other Gamorrean guards in the palace. Darga uses the bashers to guard his dungeons, especially when visitors to the palace might wander down into the lower reaches of the guest wing.

This hulking Gamorrean is more than a head taller than most others of his species, with a heft and bulk that makes him seem nearly twice as wide as well. The brutish warrior clutches an oversized mace in his hands, and whereas other Gamorreans seem fat and sluggish, he seems to be made of solid muscle.

Gamorrean Basher

CL 3

Medium Gamorrean soldier 3

Force 1; **Dark Side** 3

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 18 (flat-footed 18), Fort 20, Will 12
hp 50; **Threshold** 25

Speed 4 squares

Melee Gamorrean warmace +8 (1d10+10) or
Gamorrean warmace +5 (1d10+16)*

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7

Atk Options Melee Smash, Power Attack, Stunning Strike

Special Actions Extra Second Wind

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 11

Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude

Talents Melee Smash, Stunning Strike

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Extra Second Wind, Improved Damage Threshold**, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (simple weapons), Weapon Proficiency (simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +9

Possessions Gamorrean warmace, ceremonial armor

* *Includes 3 points of Power Attack.*

** *Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Basher Tactics

Gamorrean bashers do one thing well: make melee attacks. Even their simplest attacks deal an average of nearly 16 points of damage, and when using Power Attack, their damage increases by another 6 points. Against armored enemies or foes who are particularly dexterous, the bashers do not use Power Attack, preferring to make more deliberate swings and deal less damage. If an opponent proves easy to hit or damage, the bashers try to increase their damage in any way possible,

hoping to exceed the target's damage threshold and knock him 2 steps down the condition track (with their Stunning Strike talent).

GAMORREAN WARLORD

Originally a clan chief on his homeworld of Gamorr, the warlord is the commander of Darga's Gamorrean security force. Though less formidable in straight-up combat than the bashers, the warlord knows not only how to get the best out of his allies, but also how to keep them in the fight. The warlord is a commander of soldiers and treats the Gamorreans in Darga's service like his own private army. Though Darga has had to warn him in the past about getting too ambitious, the warlord's resolve to defeat any threat to his new clan's dominance ensures that the Hutt always has a dangerous security force at his disposal. The Gamorrean warlord has been so successful in whipping his comrades into shape that other Hutts have secretly tried to lure him away from Darga with promises of power and glory.

An uncharacteristic intelligence shines in this Gamorrean's eyes, though he seems to be just as savage as the other guards. Adorned in elaborate battle armor that appears to be custom made to fit his stout figure, this warrior has a commanding presence that seems to cause the other Gamorreans to fall into line.

Gamorrean Warlord

CL 3

Medium Gamorrean nonheroic 3/soldier 1/noble 1

Force 2; **Dark Side** 5

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 21 (flat-footed 21), Fort 21, Will 15

hp 32; **Threshold** 26

Speed 4 squares

Melee mace +6 (1d8+7)

Ranged blaster rifle +3 (3d8+1)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6

Special Actions Draw Fire, Inspire Confidence

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude

Talents Draw Fire, Inspire Confidence

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Improved Damage Threshold*, Skill Focus (Persuasion), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Persuasion +14

Possessions blaster rifle, mace, heavy battle armor, 50 credits, various personal belongings

* *Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Warlord Tactics

First, the Gamorrean warlord uses his Inspire Confidence talent to increase the attack and skill bonuses of his allies, ensuring that they have the best chance possible to take down the heroes. After that, he uses his blaster rifle to attack the heroes. However, if any of the guards or bashers look as though they are in danger of going down, he moves close to that ally and uses his Draw Fire talent to give that ally a chance to recover (for the guards) or use its second wind (for the bashers).

CONCLUSION

When the fight ends, the heroes can gain access to the dungeon one level below them. Additionally, they can use the secret exit (the side door, which leads out into the city of Zarra) and the turbolift, which leads down to the dungeons and up to the guest chambers.

ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Though this area does not have many special terrain features, it has a few computer consoles (for monitoring security throughout the palace) that can be used for cover. Additionally, any hero can look at the security monitors to notice that the rest of the palace seems unaware of the battle taking place in the guard room. The Gamorreans do not sound an alarm right away, believing that they can take the heroes down without assistance (and thus garner more glory for themselves). However, if the fight goes poorly, a Gamorrean next to a computer console spends a swift action to activate the alarm. If this happens, Darga sends reinforcements—six more Gamorrean guards, who take 10 rounds to reach the guard room. This will add a sense of urgency to finding Master Denia.

INTO THE DUNGEONS ENCOUNTER MAP



OUT OF CAPTIVITY

CHALLENGE LEVEL 5

SETUP

When the alarm sounds and Igren Demos orders the dungeons sealed off, the encounter begins. The doors leading up the stairs to the guard room seal shut, and the turbolift is powered down, making it impossible to return to the upper levels that way. Five Gamorrean guards burst into the chamber via the secret passage to the throne room, and two jailers emerge from cells (where they had been sleeping). The jailers emerge from the two cells closest to the door of the secret passage.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes enter the room, read the following text aloud:

This dank, musty area used to be nice (if bare) servants' quarters, but it has since fallen into disarray. Where plain doors likely stood at the entrance to each room off of the main chamber, barred prison doors have been crudely forced into place. A water pipe has ruptured, flooding parts of the floor with water, and thick mold has grown on the walls. Many of the lights in this area flicker or are simply missing, casting shadows about the room.

When the heroes exit Denia's cell into the larger dungeon area, let them make DC 15 Perception checks to notice the pounding of footsteps coming down the secret passageway. If they fail the check, they are surprised when combat begins.

GAMORREAN GUARD (5)

Most of the Gamorrean guards in Darga's palace were originally part of a clan of warriors on Gamorr. When the Gamorrean warlord led them off-planet on a foolish mission of conquest during the Clone Wars, much of the clan was wiped out. Fortunately for these Gamorreans, the remaining clan members found their way to Cato Neimoidia, where Darga recruited them to be his personal guards. Though the Hutt has hired a few Gamorreans from other clans since that time, the bulk of his security force has known one another for decades.

This stout Gamorrean guard shares the porcine appearance of other members of his species. Massive, fleshy green arms hoist a vibro-ax, while thin strands of drool trickle from his exposed tusks.

Gamorrean Guard

CL 2

Medium Gamorrean nonheroic 6

Dark Side 2

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

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 17), Fort 14, Will 10

hp 27; **Threshold** 19

Speed 4 squares

Melee vibro-ax +9 (2d10+8)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8

Abilities Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 8

Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Bantha Rush, Improved Damage Threshold*, Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +10

Possessions vibro-ax, ceremonial armor

* *Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Guard Tactics

The Gamorrean guards fight with rather straightforward tactics, simply moving up to the heroes and swinging their heavy vibro-axes. Not exceptionally intelligent foes, each guard attacks the nearest enemy, though if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, they try to flee and seek reinforcements from elsewhere in the palace.

GAMORREAN JAILER (2)

Two members of Darga's contingent of Gamorrean guards act as jailers and permanent observers of the dungeons. Though most of the time the Hutt has only one prisoner (Master Denia), he keeps the jailers on hand for rare occasions when he has to throw an unruly agent or other visitor into the dungeons until they see his point of view. Gamorrean jailers specialize in the use of the stun baton and usually try to subdue their charges rather than kill them—though accidents do happen.

This lumbering Gamorrean hefts a stun baton in one hand, its length crackling with energy. Eyes twitching from one side to the other as though trying to look in both directions at once, the Gamorrean advances with an air of caution that comes from experience in preventing enemies from escaping.

Gamorrean Jailer

CL 3

Medium Gamorrean nonheroic 3/scoundrel 2

Force 1; **Dark Side** 5

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

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 20 (flat-footed 19), Fort 16, Will 14

hp 24; **Threshold** 21

Speed 4 squares

Melee stun baton +7 (2d6+4) or

stun baton +5 (3d6+4) with Rapid Strike

Ranged blaster pistol +4 (3d6+1)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Rapid Strike, Running Attack, Skirmisher

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9

Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude

Talents Skirmisher

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Improved Damage Threshold*, Rapid Strike, Running Attack, Weapon Focus (simple weapons), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Perception +8

Possessions blaster pistol, stun baton, ceremonial armor, datacard

* *Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Jailer Tactics

Since the Gamorrean jailers specialize in stunning and subduing prisoners, they attempt to use the same tactics on the heroes. Though they are not particularly quick or nimble, they try to rush up to the heroes (charging when possible) to gain the benefits of their Skirmisher talent and reduce the penalty from the Rapid Strike feat. If the jailers do not have a clear line of movement to the heroes, they use their blasters, though they do not drop their stun batons. Instead, they hold one weapon in each hand, though they do not attack with both weapons at the same time.

CONCLUSION

With the guards and jailers defeated, the heroes should have a clear avenue of escape through the secret passage leading up to Darga's audience chamber. As they approach the tunnel mouth leading into the chamber, be sure to read the boxed text on page 16 so that they learn of Darga's flight and see the hologram of Inquisitor Draco.

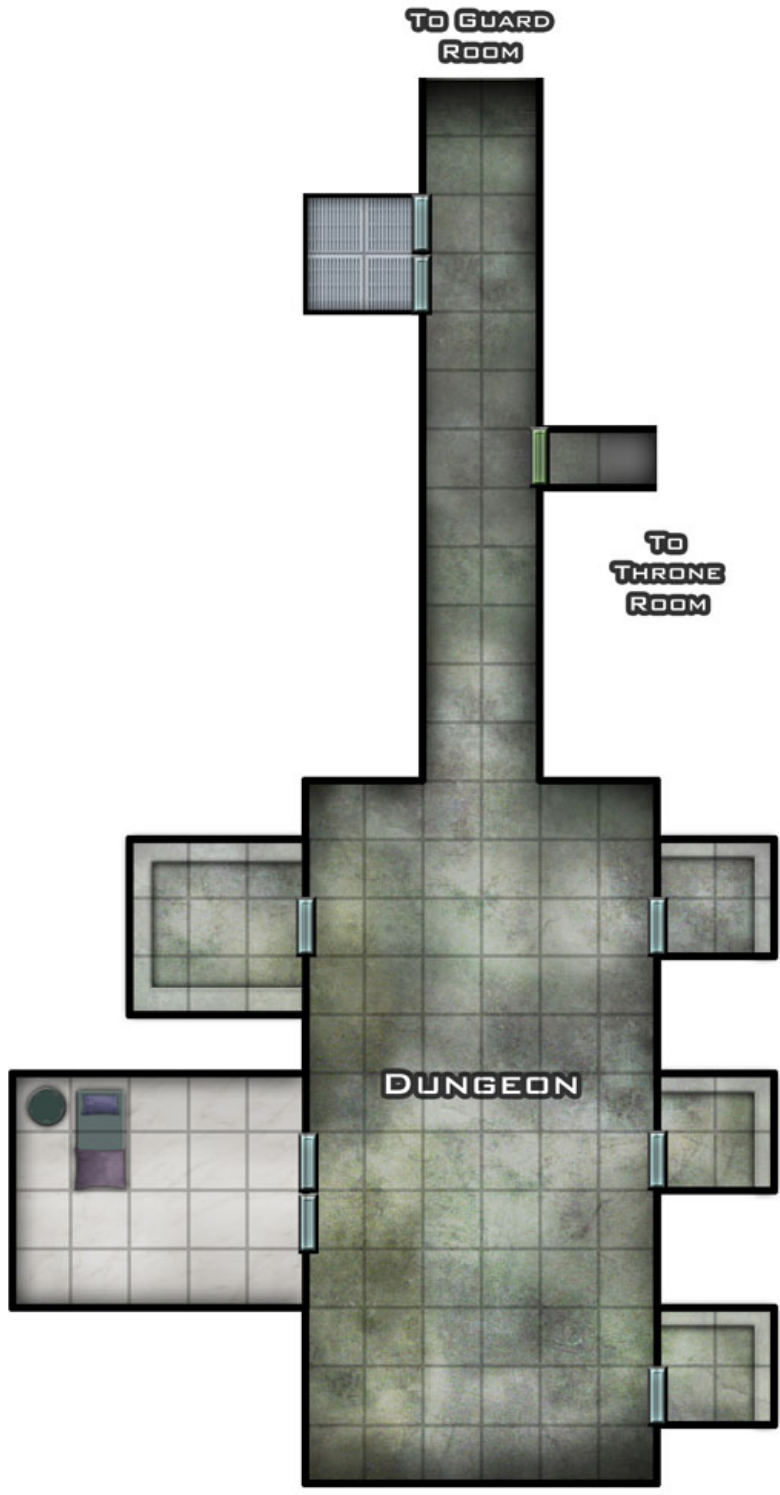
ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The dungeon area, formerly servants' quarters for the Neimoidian noble who once owned the palace, is a disgusting place where Darga keeps prisoners to teach them a lesson. The water pooled on the floor makes moving through the area treacherous; anyone moving across a square with water in it must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone. Additionally, all squares adjacent to the walls have shadowy illumination, granting concealment to characters in those squares.

OUT OF CAPTIVITY ENCOUNTER MAP



CONFRONTATION WITH DEMOS

CHALLENGE LEVEL 6

SETUP

After overhearing the conversation between Demos and the Imperial Inquisitor, the heroes must either sneak by the occupants of the audience chamber (a difficult prospect) or simply barge in and fight. Igren Demos begins the encounter in the center of the chamber, near where the hologram of Inquisitor Draco was standing. His Trandoshan bodyguard stands nearby (within 6 squares), and four Gamorrean guards linger near the walls, expecting to hear that their comrades below have subdued the heroes.

READ-ALoud TEXT

When the heroes enter the audience chamber, read the following text aloud:

The darkened audience chamber is much different than when the Hutt crime lord holds court in it. Gone is the cacophony of music that Darga normally has piped in, and the smell of smoke has all but dissipated. Instead, the chamber remains nearly silent, dimly lit and free of the excess that the Hutt brings to the room. The dais sits empty, and small shafts of light shine down from the ceiling, creating brightly illuminated circles on the floor that provide only faint light around them.

IGREN DEMOS

Igren Demos has been Darga the Hutt's majordomo for some years now. Even before Darga came to Cato Neimoidia, Demos served him faithfully and helped build the criminal organization into what it is today. In fact, it was Demos who discovered the ruined palace in Zarra, allowing Darga to seize it for his own. Over the years, Demos has been plotting to overthrow Darga and take control of the organization, but for the time being, the majordomo is content to influence events in ways that even the Hutt does not suspect.

The secret to Demos' success is his Force sensitivity. Though he has never shared the truth with anyone, the Jedi identified him as a potential recruit when he was a child, but his Neimoidian parents refused to let the Jedi take him. Growing up, he learned to use the Force to exert his will over others, and when he came into Darga's service, he brought the same skills into play to build a criminal empire. Demos is not powerful enough to influence his Hutt master, but he continues to use his Force sensitivity in secret to ensure that events occur according to his desires, not necessarily those of the crime lord.

This slender Neimoidian is dressed in robes of dark greens and blues, with a ceremonial headdress that makes him seem taller than he truly is. The majordomo moves with grace, radiating both elegance and superiority, and his red eyes seem to focus on a distant spot, as though seeing something that no one else sees.

Igren Demos

CL 5

Medium Neimoidian noble 5

Force 4; **Dark Side** 9

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

Languages Basic, Dosh, Gamorrean, Huttese, Neimoidian, Pak Pak

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 16), Fort 15, Will 20

hp 32; **Threshold** 15

Speed 6 squares

Melee unarmed +2 (1d4+1)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Special Actions Inspire Confidence

Force Powers Known (Use the Force +15): *Force slam*, *mind trick*, *move object*, *rebuke*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17

Talents Disciplined Strike, Inspire Confidence, Telekinetic Savant

Feats Force Sensitivity, Force Training, Linguist, Skill Focus (Deception), Skill Focus (Persuasion), Skill Focus (Use the Force), Weapon Proficiency (pistols, simple weapons)

Skills Deception +15, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +8, Knowledge (galactic lore) +8, Perception +10, Persuasion +15, Use the Force +15

Possessions majordomo robes, 300 credits, various personal belongings

Igren Demos' Tactics

When he realized that his guards had failed to stop the heroes from freeing the Jedi Master, Demos summoned his personal bodyguard, and throughout the encounter he remains close to the Trandoshan. If several heroes approach Demos at once, he uses *Force slam* to damage them, spending a Force Point if necessary to gain enough power to take a hero down. He always uses *rebuke* to turn aside Force powers, spending Force Points to recover the power if necessary. Otherwise, he uses the Move Light Object application of the Use the Force skill to deal small amounts of damage to the heroes. If an enemy seems to be vulnerable to a heavier attack, Demos uses *move object* to hurl one of the Medium-size braziers in the room.

GAMORREAN GUARD (4)

Gamorrean Guard

CL 2

Medium Gamorrean nonheroic 6

Dark Side 2

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

Languages Basic (understand only), Gamorrean

Defenses Ref 17 (flat-footed 17), Fort 14, Will 10

hp 27; **Threshold** 19

Speed 4 squares

Melee vibro-ax +9 (2d10+8)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8

Abilities Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 8
Special Qualities primitive, great Fortitude
Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Bantha Rush, Improved Damage Threshold*, Weapon Focus (advanced melee weapons), Weapon Proficiency (advanced melee weapons, simple weapons)
Skills Endurance +10
Possessions vibro-ax, ceremonial armor
** Bonus feat.*

Gamorrean Guard Tactics

The Gamorrean guards fight with rather straightforward tactics, simply moving up to the heroes and swinging their heavy vibro-axes. Not exceptionally intelligent foes, each guard attacks the nearest enemy, though if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, they try to flee and seek reinforcements from elsewhere in the palace.

TRANDOSHAN BODYGUARD

Igren Demos' Trandoshan bodyguard is one of the only denizens of Darga's palace that is not on the Hutt's payroll. The bodyguard serves Demos personally and has done so ever since the palace on Cato Neimoidia was established. The bodyguard is all business, and unlike most Trandoshans, he seems to have abandoned some of his brutal and bloodthirsty nature in favor of protecting his charge at all costs.

This tall Trandoshan is armed with a blaster rifle and wears battle armor decorated with a variety of traditional Trandoshan sigils. His talons click on the floor as he moves, and his face shows no sign of concern as he grips his weapon with practiced calm.

Trandoshan Bodyguard

CL 5

Medium Trandoshan soldier 5

Force 1; **Dark Side** 2

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision; Perception 8

Languages Basic, Dosh

Defenses Ref 22 (flat-footed 20), Fort 22, Will 16

hp 72; **Threshold** 22

Speed 4 squares

Melee unarmed +7 (1d6+2)

Ranged blaster rifle +7 (3d8+2) or
 stun grenade +7 (4d6+2 stun)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Special Actions Commanding Presence (see sidebar), Draw Fire, Extra Second Wind, Harm's Way, Shake it Off

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities darkvision, limb regeneration

Talents Commanding Presence (see sidebar), Draw Fire, Harm's Way

Feats Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Extra Second Wind, Shake it Off, Skill Training (Persuasion), Skill Focus (Persuasion), Toughness*, Weapon Proficiency (pistols, rifles, simple weapons)

Skills Endurance +10, Initiative +9, Perception +8, Persuasion +12

Possessions blaster rifle, battle armor, 2 stun grenades, comlink, 200 credits, various personal belongings

** Bonus feat.*

COMMANDING PRESENCE

The Commanding Presence talent is part of the new Mercenary talent tree included in *The Force Unleashed Campaign Guide*. Details of the talent are given below:

Commanding Presence: Once per encounter, you can activate this talent as a swift action. Until the end of the encounter, all of your enemies within 6 squares of you take a -2 penalty to Will Defense. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Additionally, Persuasion is now considered a class skill for you.

Trandoshan Bodyguard Tactics

The Trandoshan bodyguard tries to protect Igren Demos at all costs. He uses his Draw Fire talent on every round that he can, and if he fails to use the talent on an enemy, he uses Harm's Way to put himself between Demos and an incoming attack. Given his high number of hit points and his Extra Second Wind feat, the Trandoshan can take quite a beating. Though he attacks if the opportunity arises, he never moves more than 2 or 3 squares from Demos, and he prefers to remain adjacent to the Neimoidian whenever possible.

CONCLUSION

When this encounter ends, so does the adventure. The heroes should have no trouble escaping the palace once Demos is defeated, though the Neimoidian pleads for his life if his allies are killed. However, Demos is strong-willed and does not submit to interrogation easily. He knows of the deal between Darga and the Empire (they trade slaves to the Hutt in exchange for large quantities of Tibanna gas), but he does not know why the Empire wants the gas. If he thinks it will cause the heroes to spare his life, Demos reveals that Darga has fled to Cloud City, but not even the majordomo knows the exact location of the Hutt's safe house there.

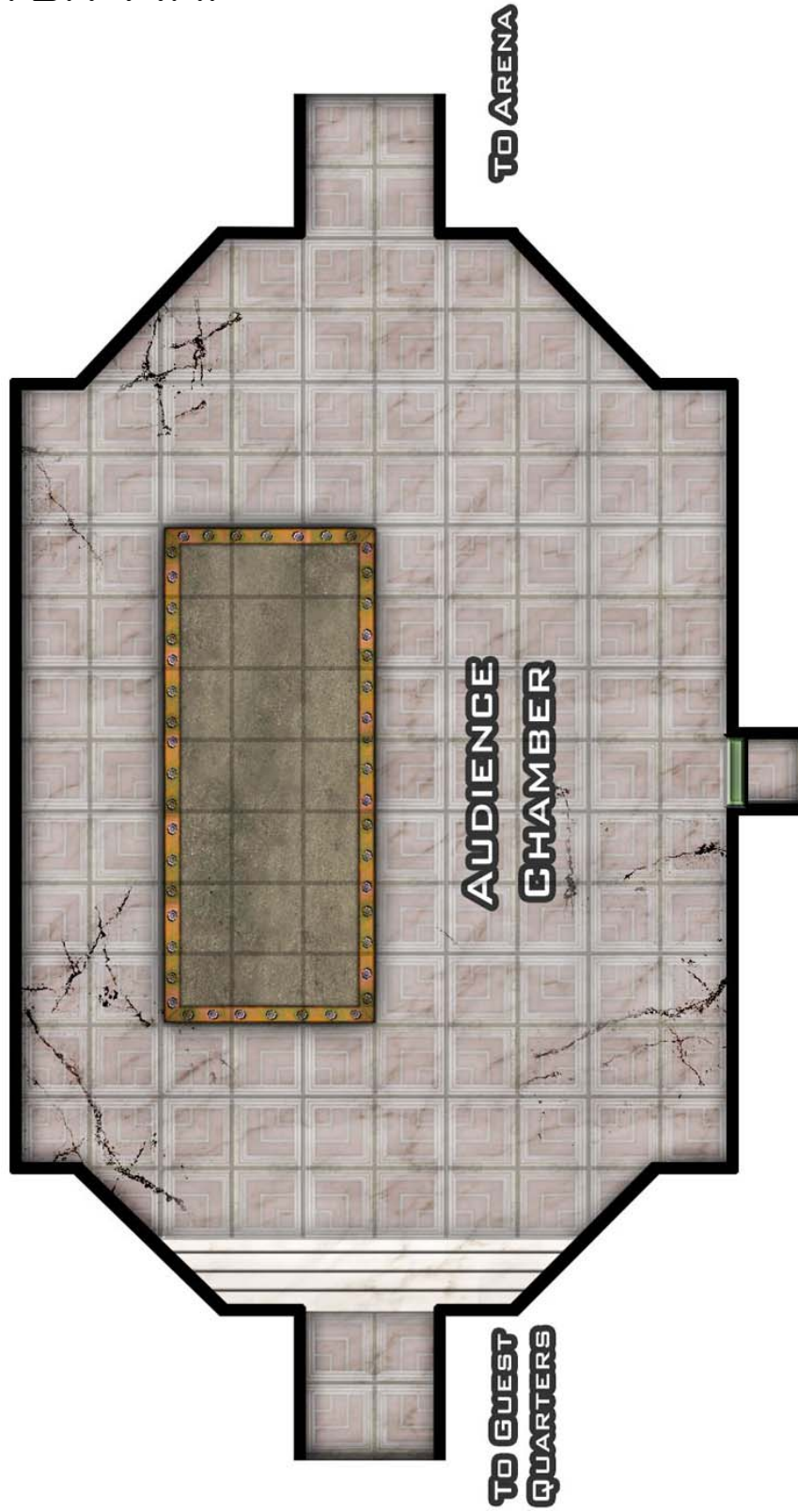
ENCOUNTER MAP

A map of the encounter appears on the next page.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

During this encounter, most of the audience chamber is considered to be under shadowy illumination, with a few exceptions. All squares adjacent to the walls are considered to be in darkness, granting characters in those squares total concealment. The squares where the lights shine down from above are illuminated, as are all adjacent squares (creating a 3-square-by-3-square area of illumination for each light). The dais can provide cover from attacks, but it is considered low cover, allowing characters to step up onto the dais as part of their movement.

CONFRONTATION WITH DEMOS ENCOUNTER MAP



Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the senior GM when the event was sanctioned.)

Adventure Title: A Wretched Hive (Dawn of Defiance, Part 2) Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only.)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal RPGA table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

Player Name	RPGA Number
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GAMEMASTER

DM Name: _____

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