

# STAR WARS

ROLEPLAYING GAME

## DAWN OF DEFIANCE GAMEMASTER PRIMER

RODNEY THOMPSON

**WARNING:  
FOR GMS ONLY!**



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The **Dawn of Defiance** campaign is more than just a string of adventures. It is a complete story arc that takes in the saga, depth, and emotion of the *Star Wars* films and translates their core concepts into a unique roleplaying game campaign. Over the course of the campaign, the heroes will liberate worlds from the grip of the Empire, delve into the ancient secrets of the now-extinct Jedi, and feel the bitter taste of betrayal at the hands of a trusted ally.

This document presents an overview of each adventure and, by extension, the campaign as a whole. The descriptions provide Gamemasters with the basics of all 10 downloadable adventures.

Of course, each adventure will be far more involved and detailed than the simple descriptions below indicate. As the adventures are released, GMs will need to read them carefully to pick up on the little details of the campaign. However, this outline should give GMs an idea of the major characters in the campaign and keep them from getting into situations that disrupt continuity.

## THE TRAITOR'S GAMBIT

*By Rodney Thompson*

The story of the **Dawn of Defiance** campaign opens over the Core World of Brentaal, on a little space station called Sel Zonn Station. After a brush with some agents of Bail Organa, the heroes find themselves drawn into a conflict with the Empire. Delivering vital information to the Senator on Alderaan earns the heroes his trust, and soon Bail Organa sends them on a mission of his own. It seems that a former Imperial Admiral by the name of Gilder Varth has been funneling information about the Empire to the Senator for some months now, though he has gone silent since being arrested and imprisoned on the planet Felucia.

The heroes travel to Felucia, encounter some of the natives, and locate the Imperial prison facility where the Admiral is being held. After making their way through the facility, they rescue Admiral Varth and take him to a safe location. The rescue not only cements the heroes as trustworthy agents (earning them more aid and work from Bail Organa) but also marks the first step in building a resistance against the Empire.

## A WRETCHED HIVE

*By Rodney Thompson*

Freed by the heroes from the Imperial prison facility, Admiral Varth once again begins revealing valuable information on clandestine activities of the Empire. In particular, he mentions that he was responsible for funneling money and resources to something called the "Sarlacc Project." Among those he sent funds to was a Hutt crime lord named Darga, who operates out of a ruined city on Cato Neimoidia.

Traveling to the Neimoidian colony world, the heroes manage to infiltrate Darga's palace and step into a den of vile debauchery. While in the palace, the heroes attempt to obtain more information on the Sarlacc Project while avoiding the wrath of the Hutt gangster.

The heroes' searches lead them to a startling discovery: Darga has been keeping a Jedi Master and veteran of the Clone Wars in a coma in the dungeons of his palace. After the heroes free Master Denia, she helps them deal with the Hutt's majordomo, a Force-sensitive criminal who has been using the Force to rise in power within Darga's organization.

The heroes overhear a conversation between the majordomo and Imperial Inquisitor Draco, which introduces them to one of the main villains of the campaign. By the time they handle the majordomo, the Hutt has fled (not wanting to engage in direct conflict with a Jedi Master), and the heroes leave Cato Neimoidia.

## THE QUEEN OF AIR AND DARKNESS

*By Rodney Thompson*

After dropping Master Denia off with their Alderaanian allies, the heroes learn that Darga the Hutt has fled to the famous world of Bespin—more specifically, to Cloud City. Still needing the information the Hutt possesses, the heroes travel to Cloud City only to discover that their quarry has vanished. However, in their search for the crime lord, they discover that another Imperial officer who dealt with the Hutt will be visiting Cloud City to take part in its annual sabacc tournament.

The majority of the adventure centers around the tournament. The heroes can choose to enter the tournament, work for the tournament's administrator as hired help, or simply observe the tournament in order to get close to the dirty officer.

After a series of event-based encounters, the tournament ends and the heroes convince the Imperial officer to reveal the Hutt's location. When they go to confront the crime lord, they discover that he's attempting to make his getaway. The heroes face Darga in the hangar bay of his personal luxury yacht and learn the awful truth—the Hutt was using his contacts in the Tibanna gas industry to funnel large amounts of the gas to the Empire in exchange for slaves.

In fact, one such transaction was supposed to take place under the cover of the tournament, but the heroes' involvement spoiled those plans. Now, the Empire is determined to erase any trace of the transaction by crashing a slave ship into the Tibanna gas hauler in orbit, destroying them both. The heroes, commandeering Z-95 headhunters, race against time under fire from Imperial starfighters to stop the crash and save the slaves' lives.

## ECHOES OF THE JEDI

*By Abel G. Peña*

After a bout of downtime (during which Gamemasters can insert their own adventures, should they so choose), the heroes are gathered by Master Denia. Their encounter with the slave ship over Bespin indicates that the Empire is trafficking in slaves, but the slaves were members of a species that Denia had never encountered. To discover more about these mysterious slaves (and perhaps unravel the mystery of the Sarlacc Project), She sends the heroes to the planet Almas in the Cularin System, once home to a Jedi academy. There, the heroes must retrieve a lost Jedi holocron that can teach Denia special farseeing techniques, which she hopes will lead her to the mysterious aliens.

The heroes arrive at Almas to find the academy in shambles, having been destroyed from orbit when the Empire rose. The heroes dig their way down through the ruins to reach the academy's archives. Along the way, they discover that the dark side has grown strong in the ruins of the academy, and it has become a domain of evil—much like the cave on Dagobah where Luke fought the false Darth Vader. The heroes face dark side spirits and their own fears as they press onward into the wrecked temple.

As they approach the archives, they discover that they are not the first to explore the ruins. A small contingent of Imperial troops has arrived ahead of them and defends the archives with lethal force. Eventually, the heroes confront the leader of the Imperial contingent, Inquisitor Draco. They defeat him and retrieve the holocron, which they take back to Denia.

## THE FIRST TO STRIKE

*By Owen K.C. Stephens*

The holocron taken from the ruins of the Almas academy proves helpful, and Master Denia is able to use the Force to locate the mysterious alien slaves. They were members of the Nazren species from the planet Nizon in the Maldrood Sector. The heroes travel to that world to see if they can discover more about the Nazren, but they find the planet under Imperial occupation. Even more troubling, the Empire has allowed Trandoshan slavers to harvest slaves from the planet at will, provided that they also transport some of the slaves to Imperial projects. A core resistance group of Nazren has formed, but they seem to be waiting for some kind of catalyst to begin their open opposition. The heroes are just the catalyst they need.

Working with a charismatic Nazren resistance leader in the capital city, the heroes incite a riot against the Imperial oppressors. The city erupts into violence, and the heroes assist the Nazren in overthrowing the Imperial invaders, rescuing Nazren slaves from Trandoshan slavers, preventing the riots from claiming innocent lives, and seizing Imperial facilities to help defend the planet. The heroes help the Nazren reclaim their world for their own.

## THE CORE OF CORRUPTION

*By Sterling Hershey*

While on Nizon, the heroes discover Imperial transmissions regarding the Sarlacc Project. The messages indicate that the engineers of the project are in an Imperial facility on Coruscant—and that is where the heroes must go. Traveling to Imperial Center, the heroes sneak past the world's defenses and take their first steps on the capital planet of the Galactic Empire. Under the watchful eye of the Empire, the heroes pinpoint the location of the project's architects and travel to a massive skyscraper still under construction.

Moving up through the skyscraper, the heroes soon come face to face with the engineers of the Sarlacc Project. Unfortunately, they are all being watched by several members of the Inquisitorius, who fight the heroes to the death. When their defeat seems imminent, the Inquisitors detonate explosives at the base of the skyscraper, which begins to collapse. The heroes must fight their way back out of the collapsing building and make their way to safety.

However, the heroes finally learn the details of the Sarlacc Project. The Empire is constructing a massive new starship 12 kilometers long—many times larger than a Star Destroyer, and an early prototype (though not the final version) of the Super Star Destroyer. The new vessel will serve as the flagship of the Imperial fleet, and the Sarlacc Project nears completion.

## A RECKONING OF WRAITHS

*By Rodney Thompson*

After transmitting their knowledge of the project to Senator Organa's agents, the heroes are instructed to make contact with a group of loyalists in Coruscant's seedy underbelly. When they arrive at the meeting location, however, they discover that the loyalists are all dead. The heroes return to their safe house—only to fall into a trap set by the Empire! Fighting their way back to their ship, the heroes find the hangar being defended by a massive AT-AT. They must bring the AT-AT down (using whatever means necessary) before they can board their ship.

Blasting their way out of Coruscant, the heroes arrive at a rendezvous point where a Nebulon-B frigate (the *Resurgence*) waits for them. Unfortunately, when they arrive, they learn that the trap was sprung not only on them but also on their allies. As an Imperial Star Destroyer pounds on the *Resurgence's* shields, the heroes board the Nebulon-B and try to rescue survivors. Battling an Imperial boarding party on the ship, they fight their way to the main launch bay just in time to see Inquisitor Draco—apparently still alive after the confrontation on Almas, and now cybernetically enhanced—dragging Master Denia into his shuttle.

As Draco blasts off, the heroes must flee the crumbling ship and make their way into hyperspace. Worse, as they blast their way free of the exploding *Resurgence*, they discover the architect of their betrayal: Admiral Varth. They receive a transmission from the Admiral aboard the Imperial Star Destroyer, who reveals that he has merely been trying to uncover Organa's treachery all along. The heroes manage to escape the Empire, but only after suffering grievous losses.

## THE GEM OF ALDERAAN

*By Gary M. Sarli*

Following their betrayal at the hands of Admiral Varth, the heroes spend some time on the run from the Empire (again allowing the Gamemaster to insert other adventures). Eventually, word reaches the heroes that they have been summoned back to Alderaan by Bail Organa. Senator Organa has learned that Master Denia was taken to the planet Prakith, in the Deep Core, and that reaching her will be nearly impossible thanks to Imperial security along those hyperlanes.

However, the heroes learn that Lady Alya Aldrete, an Alderaanian noble, might have the means of getting them to the Deep Core. Apparently, Lady Alya employs smugglers, and she has managed to obtain passage for them through the Deep Core. She is the guest of honor on the first run of a new high-speed repulsortrain leaving the city of Aldera for a six-hour trip. The heroes board the repulsortrain and try to get an audience with Lady Alya, with little success.

Things turn sour quickly when a group of mercenaries attacks the repulsortrain. The heroes must deal with the mercenaries and protect the noblewoman to get the help they need. After the attackers are defeated, Lady Alya reveals that her connections in the Deep Core go quite deep, and she has been marshaling an entire fleet of smugglers and pirates right under the Empire's nose. She agrees to give the heroes the documentation they need to reach Prakith safely, and the heroes earn a new ally.

## SWORD OF THE EMPIRE

*By Rodney Thompson*

Traveling through the Deep Core to the Imperial Fortress World of Prakith, the heroes discover that Master Denia is being held in none other than the Citadel Inquisitorius, the newly built headquarters of the Emperor's Jedi hunters. Dealing with the planet Prakith is much like dealing with Coruscant, except that the majority of the citizens are members of the Imperial Navy. The heroes must discover Master Denia's location without revealing their sympathies, a balancing act that can have dire consequences if they fail.

The heroes sneak into the Citadel and make their way to the top of the building, using stealth and subterfuge to avoid detection or capture. When they reach the top of the Citadel, they find Inquisitor Draco torturing Master Denia. He has clearly grown in power since their last confrontation and seems unbeatable in open conflict. But Master Denia sacrifices her own life to weaken Draco, which makes the battle more of a fair fight. Rather than fall to the heroes, Draco flees the Citadel in his personal shuttle. The heroes manage to escape Prakith, having lost Master Denia but having defeated Draco—at least, for now.

## JAWS OF THE SARLACC

*By Rodney Thompson*

Lady Alya's allies in the Deep Core track Draco to the planet Byss, where the Sarlacc Project is under construction. The time has come to strike—if the Super Star Destroyer prototype isn't destroyed now, it will soon be fully armed and operational. Lady Alya and Senator Organa have hatched a plan to destroy the prototype, and the heroes will lead the attack. While the noblewoman's fleet of smugglers and pirates draw the Imperial defenses away from the prototype, the heroes board a defensive space station and seize control of it. They deactivate the station's weapons, which allows a small strike force of starfighters to make a microjump close to the prototype ship.

Joining the strike force in ships of their own, the heroes fly inside the Super Star Destroyer prototype. Among the strike force pilots are various characters who have helped the heroes during the campaign, including the captain of the *Resurgence* and a space transport pilot hired by Bail Organa. Pursued by TIE Fighters and with only a limited amount of time in which the pirate fleet can hold off the planetary defenses, the heroes fly to the center of the ship and destroy its power core. The heroes must race out of the collapsing vessel and make the jump to hyperspace before they are consumed by the massive explosion.

With the Sarlacc Project destroyed, the galaxy is free of at least one large threat (for now), and others across many worlds take note of the heroes' accomplishment. They have struck the first major blow against the Empire, laying the groundwork for the foundation of the Rebel Alliance.