

Steal of a Deal

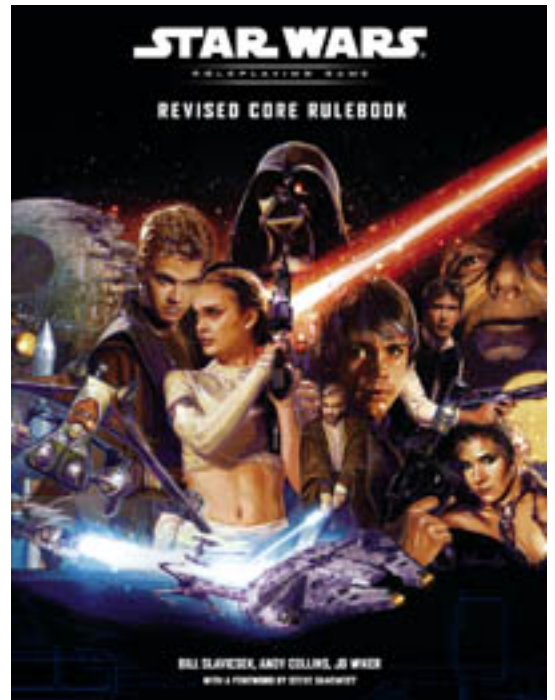
A Free *Star Wars* Mini-Adventure For Any Era

By Jeff Quick

"Steal of a Deal" is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* mini-adventure for four 4th-level characters that can be played in any game era. It's easily scalable for characters of any level by raising or lowering the levels of the opponents. Higher-level Force-using heroes will probably uncover the main villain, while lower-level heroes are set up for a recurring foe.

The adventure is designed to give players some action after a talking heads adventure on a civilized world and put them at odds with a minor criminal organization. It requires that the heroes have a ship that they travel in (as opposed to chartering flights).

If you plan to play a character in this adventure, don't read any further. The information below is meant for the Gamemaster's eyes only.



Adventure Synopsis

As the heroes return to their ship, a Twi'lek approaches them with an offer to buy their vessel. When negotiations inevitably break down, the Twi'lek's confederates attack. This is mainly meant as a distraction while the Twi'lek's *other* confederate attempts to steal the heroes' ship. At the same time, representatives of the port authority get mixed into the confusion.

The entire operation is being run by a Force adept who has succumbed to the dark side and runs a starship theft and chop shop ring. The Force adept might not directly appear in this adventure, allowing you to introduce him later or let him continue to work behind the scenes.

Scene 1: The Twitchy Twi'lek

The heroes have been out doing something necessary and are now returning to their ship. At the entrance to the starport, the heroes are approached by Esm Arkhee, a Twi'lek in expensive robes. One of his rear teeth is capped in a silvery metal, and his head-tails spasm occasionally.

Any hero who understands Lekku can see that the Twi'lek says the word "go" at random intervals. With a successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15), a hero knows that this can be an indication of a rare muscular disorder that affects Twi'leks, often garbling their Lekku speech patterns with nonsense words. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 25) indicates that the Twi'lek is doing it unconsciously.

If asked about it, the Twi'lek has no idea what he's doing with his head-tails. He has never heard of a rare muscular disorder and doesn't know of any medical condition affecting him. The twitch stops as soon as someone draws attention to it.

In actuality, he is chafing under the effects of the Affect Mind skill. The Lekku twitch is a tic expressing his subconscious desire. A Force-sensitive hero with the Sense feat might feel the Force at work, but the Force-user is kilometers away, well out of the See Force skill range.



After necessary rolls are made, information conveyed, and suspicions confirmed or allayed, read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

Greetings, my fine people. I hope the day finds you well. My name is Esm Arkhee, a branch manager for Interplanetary Acquisitions. Perhaps you've heard of us? No? We're new in this system, I'm afraid. I have a business proposition for you. You could stand to make a substantial amount of money. Please, walk with me to our offices. I won't take up more than a moment of your time."

Arkhee won't take "no" for an answer; Diplomacy and Intimidate checks are strangely irrelevant. If anyone attempts one of these skills, a hero with the Sense feat might again feel the Force at work. (Only allow this if the skill-user would have otherwise succeeded.)

Arkhee walks all the way to the heroes' ship with them, continually trying to convince them to speak to him. As he walks, he stays between the heroes and their ship, physically blocking their way. The closer the heroes get to their ship, the louder he speaks. If the heroes don't stop or talk to him, or if a Force-user successfully uses the Affect Mind skill on him to make him go away, skip down to Scene 3.

Interplanetary Acquisitions

If the heroes go with him, Arkhee leads them to a run-down office building very near the starport, practically across the street, nestled among warehouses. In fact, the office is in a building that looks like it used to be a hangar. The Twi'lek leads the heroes in through a normal door that opens onto a large room 10 meters wide and 20 meters long. The door is in the south wall of the room, close to another, larger hangar door. A half-assembled fighter (appropriate to the era) sits in the center of the

room. Hooks and chains dangle from the ceiling, one with half a wing hanging from it.

At the north end of the room, opposite the hangar door, a dirty chair is pulled up to a desk that holds a computer terminal. There are no other chairs; if the heroes want to sit down, they must use barrels and crates scattered around as makeshift seating. Another normal-sized door in the west wall is 6 meters away from the desk. As the Gamemaster, you can sketch the room for the players or simply describe it.

When the heroes are settled, the Twi'lek speaks:

"I beg of you, please forgive the conditions of our offices. Interplanetary Acquisitions has just expanded to this system. We haven't had an opportunity to move into more suitable offices yet, but we needed a place to do business. I hope you'll understand. Now, to business. What we'd-that is, I, on behalf of the company-like to do is offer to buy your ship. We think it has great potential in the resale market."

Arkhee is somewhat vague about what Interplanetary Acquisitions does, but he mentions that they're a reseller to buyers on the Outer Rim. If anyone asks more than superficial questions, the Twi'lek begins waving around handsome figures, starting at list price for a used ship of the heroes' kind and moving up to as much as one-and-one-half times the ship's worth.

He talks as long as the heroes seem to be listening. If the characters agree to his terms and decide to sell their ship, Arkhee becomes a bit flustered. He never expected to run into someone actually willing to sell.

If the heroes reach a point where they're either going to walk away or close the deal, read or paraphrase the following:

"All right, all right. Here is my final offer." He pulls a blaster from his sleeve. "Give us the ship, or we'll shoot you repeatedly."

At this point, Arkhee fires at the ceiling and ducks behind the desk, trying to hide.

Esm Arkhee: Male Twi'lek Diplomat 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 11 (+0 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10 m; WP 10; Atk +1 melee (1d3, unarmed) or +2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; FP 0; DSP 1; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15. Challenge Code A.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink.

Skills: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +4, Profession (servant) +5, Sense Motive +5.

Feats: Persuasive, Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols).

All by himself, Esm Arkhee is the very picture of a weak-willed coward. This makes him the perfect stooge for his boss, the Force adept Pal-Nada. Arkhee was terrified during his contact with the heroes but was compelled to carry out his master's wishes, regardless of any social pressure they might put on him. Once combat begins, his "programming" ends, and he tries to hide or escape.

If Arkhee has an opening, he runs for the door in the west wall. If he gets away, he contacts Shurgg (the ship thief in Scene 3) via comlink to tell her where the heroes are and what they're doing.

Scene 2: Blast Away!

When Arkhee fires, that's the cue for four thugs outside to come in and mop up. The hangar door flies open, and the four bruisers burst in, blaster pistols drawn. They quickly fan out, trying to catch the heroes in a crossfire. Use the mid-level thug statistics on page 355 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. (You can also use the low- or high-level statistics if those are more suited for the heroes.)

Keep a running tally of how many rounds this encounter takes. Events here occur simultaneously with some events in Scene 3, and the more time heroes spend here, the less time they have to spend on events there. This whole encounter is largely a stalling tactic for the ring of thieves. The number of rounds spent here is the number of rounds Shurgg, the ship thief, has in which to steal the heroes' ship in Scene 3.

After six rounds of combat, port authority officials arrive. All remaining thugs stop shooting and begin complaining loudly that the heroes started everything. If he has not done so already, Arkhee tries to make a break for it.



Ben knew how to deal with a bunch of thugs...

The lead thug, a human named Gorg Pomar, produces documents that show his ownership of the hangar and accuses the heroes of breaking and entering. (If he couldn't get away, Arkhee backs their story up.) The documents are forged, but they're good forgeries. Detecting them requires a successful Forgery check (DC 25).

Things would look bad for the heroes if Pomar's gang weren't known troublemakers, and if Arkhee weren't known for being a shifty little cuss who skulks around with suspected ship thieves. After several minutes of posturing, Pomar magnanimously chooses not to press charges, and the port authority officials tell the heroes to finish their business and leave the planet.

If the heroes aren't known or connected on this world, the worst that happens to them legally is that they gain a reputation for associating with a bad element. However, they might also lose their ship in the process . . .

Scene 3: Didn't We Park Right Here?

If the heroes come here straight from Scene 1, they arrive just as Shurgg, a female Quarren, is beginning her attempts to open their ship. She's wearing port authority overalls and tries to pass herself off as a safety inspector. But because she's a terrible liar, she tries not to talk much (if at all). If she hears the heroes approaching - probably because Arkhee insists on following them, loudly trying to get them to make a deal - she collects her equipment and leaves before anyone sees her.

If the heroes come here after Scene 2, take note of how many rounds passed during the staged combat, and compare that number with Shurgg's progress.

Shurgg must make Disable Device checks to get onto the ship. If the heroes don't routinely take special precautions, and if their ship has no antitheft devices, the Disable Device check is made against DC 20. Using her security kit, Shurgg can take 10 and pop it open. For simplicity's sake, assume that each attempt takes 5 rounds (rather than rolling 2d4 each time).

If the heroes took pains to secure their ship, or if they left a competent droid on board to protect it, assume that the droid tries to counteract Shurgg's Disable Device attempts and have her roll against DC 25. If the droid has appropriate skills (such as Computer Use or Repair), you might also consider making Shurgg's attempts opposed checks.

Once on board the heroes' ship, Shurgg has to wing it. She cautiously makes her way to the cockpit, expecting resistance. She either fights or runs as appropriate, given what she finds. Even if the heroes leave no one behind to defend the ship, she spends one minute (10 rounds) taking a quick look around before she heads for the cockpit.

If she gets to the cockpit safely, she attempts to steal the ship. She checks carefully for locks, booby traps, or other precautions the heroes may have left on their ship, which takes another 2 rounds (she makes two separate Search checks just to be thorough). Once she's ready to go, assume that takeoff procedures, getting clearance from the port authority, and firing up the engines takes 5 rounds. If the heroes aren't back by then, Shurgg flies away with their ship.

During the entire process, she keeps her comlink open for a call from Esm Arkhee. She doesn't really expect to hear from him, but if he does contact her, it would be good to know how much time she has to finish the job.



Shurgg's Progress Timeline

of Rounds Task

5	Each Disable Device attempt to board ship
10	Exploring the ship

- 2 Checking for traps in cockpit
- 5 Each Disable Device attempt in cockpit
- 5 Take-off procedures

Shurgg: Female Quarren Tech Specialist 4; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 15/10; Atk +3 melee (1d3, unarmed) or +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Research, instant mastery (Knowledge [technology]), tech specialty (mechanic +1); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Comlink, security kit.

Skills: Computer Use +14, Craft (electronic devices) +9, Disable Device +9, Knowledge (technology) +7, Pilot +9, Repair +12, Search +9.

Feats: Gearhead, Skill Emphasis (computer use), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Wrapping Up

Even if Shurgg steals the ship, she doesn't go far with it. She flies far enough away to make it look like she's leaving the planet, then circles back to land at a different port where associates begin dismantling the ship. Allow reasonable attempts to locate the ship to succeed.

The puppet master in all of this is a Cerean Force adept named Pal-Nada. He's been running a starship theft ring for some time and will be unhappy if the heroes meddle in his business. He won't get revenge today, but he'll plot to do so in the future.

Pal-Nada's direct involvement in this adventure is so slight that he's practically invisible, but his indirect involvement is everywhere. If the heroes question one of his lackeys, they might break and talk about their boss.

Unless the heroes make a manhunt out of it, they won't find Pal-Nada now. If the heroes decide to hunt him down immediately, make them work for it. The Cerean goes out of his way to stay hidden and has no compunction about using Affect Mind to cover his tracks.

Pal-Nada: Male Cerean Force Adept 5; Init +3 (+2 species, +1 Dex); Defense 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 27/10; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1d8, club) or +4 ranged; SQ Force-imbued club; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; FP 2; DSP 6; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 11. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Club (made from landing strut).

Skills: Affect Mind +10, Craft (space transports) +3, Illusion +10, Force Stealth +7, Force Strike +8, Hide +9, Listen +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Alter, Burst of Speed, Control, Force-Sensitive, Low Profile, Mind Trick, Sense, Weapon Group Proficiencies (primitive, simple).