

STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Art for Art's Sake

A Free *Star Wars* Mini-Adventure
for the Rise of the Empire Era

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“Art for Art’s Sake” is a *Star Wars* adventure for four 7th-level heroes. It is set on Coruscant during the Rise of the Empire era. If you’re the Gamemaster who will be running the adventure, you’ll need the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook, and the accessory *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* also will be helpful. Before beginning, you might want to review the rules for airspeeder movement and maneuvering, which start on page 217 of the core rulebook.

For campaigns set in the Rebellion era, substitute Imperial forces for Coruscant Security. For campaigns set in The New Jedi Order era where the Yuuzhan Vong have transformed Coruscant, you might consider moving the adventure to another heavily populated, industrialized Core World such as Metellos or Nubia.

“Art for Art’s Sake” can be modified for higher- or lower-level heroes by adjusting the levels of the gang members appropriately. The pierceskimmer in Scene 3: The Drop-Off is already challenging for 7th-level heroes, and it remains a suitable challenge for heroes two or three levels higher. For lower-level heroes, assume that the creature’s head spike is broken, and it can attack only with its tail spike.

Adventure Synopsis

The heroes are on hand for a museum artifact heist and get dragged into the thieves’ getaway. They chase the thieves in speeders through the crowded skies of Coruscant, until the criminals’ vehicle crashes into the Royal Iquai Aquaria. There, the heroes must contend with the carnivorous denizens within.

Background

The Blank Look Gang, or “Blankers,” is a mid-level criminal organization known throughout the lower elevations of Coruscant. Blankers specialize in petty theft, but they have the means for bigger heists—just not the opportunity.

The Coco District is home to the Galactic Museum’s extensive archive. Security is lighter here than at the museum itself, although many of the pieces in storage are easily as valuable as those on display.

A few months ago, the Blankers were contacted by an offworld art dealer who showed interest in acquiring certain pieces from the museum’s archives, notably a set of pots made by an early Twi’lek civilization on Ryloth. Since the museum wasn’t using them anyway, certain buyers expressed interest in admiring these works of art up close, in private display.

The buyers were willing to pay exorbitant amounts of money for the privilege, in fact, and a good portion of that money would be paid to the enterprising sorts who arranged to transport the works to a certain interplanetary delivery service. The Blankers, being consummate art lovers (loving the art of the deal) gladly obliged when approached about the job.

The museum archives use hundreds of ASP labor droids to move and store artifacts. It was a simple job for the Blankers to reprogram one to help them steal the pots.

Getting the Heroes Involved

No particular classes or races are preferable for this adventure. If the heroes have a reputation as helpful or law-abiding types, they might be approached by the museum security chief, Ket Durgo (Human Soldier 3/Diplomat 1). Ket has heard through underworld sources that someone might try to steal artifacts from the museum archives in the near future. He's alerted the police, but he'd also like a little extra insurance.

Durgo doesn't want to look like he's hiring mercenaries. However, if the heroes would agree to hang around the Coco District for the next few days and conveniently be available in case anything goes wrong, he would pay them 100 credits each per day just for their presence. He offers up to 1,000 credits each if they actually engage in any rough stuff.

Durgo doesn't want the heroes to investigate, because they could just as easily stir up trouble as solve it, and it could jeopardize his informant. Further, if the theft rumors are false, he doesn't want to give anyone ideas. He just wants them to be handy for a few days in case anything goes wrong.

If the heroes are roguish or aggressively self-serving in such a way that the establishment wouldn't come to them for aid, then a representative from the Lost Ones (a rival gang on Coruscant) tries to hire them to bust up the heist and make the Blankers look bad. The amount is negotiable, but they'd be willing to pay up to 2,000 credits each, half up front.

Scene 1: The Heist

About eight weeks ago, one of the Blankers was hired by the company that performs droid maintenance for the museum archive storage facility. During routine maintenance, she modified one of the ASP labor droids that works there. First, she added heavily padded internal storage space. Then she programmed the droid to search for the Ryloth pots that the buyers want and stow them in its internal storage.

When it has the artifacts stowed, the labor droid is programmed to "accidentally" walk off the edge of the loading dock and fall onto a speeder idling several stories below. The Blankers in the speeder then take off with the droid. The loading dock is a broad, flat stretch of duracrete 80 meters long and 30 meters wide. The last 2 meters of its long side hang out over open space 60 stories above ground level. Boxes and crates full of museum treasures are stacked in various places, and dock workers command ASP droids to load and unload speeder trucks all day long.

If the heroes casually wait in the neighborhood as Ket Durgo requested, they hear blaster shots from the direction of the archive, and 3 rounds later, they hear a loud crash when the droid hits the speeder. Unless they specify their locations, assume that they're 200 meters away and around a corner when they hear the first shot.

If the heroes decided to take direct action before the

theft, such as staking out the archive or stalking the Blankers, they can notice the airspeeder idling eight stories beneath the loading dock with a DC 15 Search check. A tougher find (Spot check DC 30) is a Blanker sniper in the building 50 meters away, across the open "street."

When the ASP droid steps onto the loading dock, the sniper opens fire with a blaster pistol. (Use the mid-level thug stats on page 355 of the core rulebook for the sniper.) The sniper isn't actually trying to kill anyone; he's just there to draw attention away from the droid.

Any heroes in the archive or near the loading dock may attempt a DC 25 Spot check. Success allows them to notice the ASP droid trudging toward the edge of the dock during the shooting. The droid is determined to follow its programming, but it won't fight back if anyone tries to stop it. It just does its best to lumber toward the edge and throw itself over the side. (For ASP droid statistics, see page 375 of the core rulebook.)

Once the ASP droid hits the speeder, the pilot swerves around to pick up the sniper, and then guns it to get away. Note that while the pilot will try his best to pick up the sniper, he won't jeopardize the mission to save him.

The heroes probably will want to give chase. Assume that the ASP slows the Blankers down enough for the heroes to grab another airspeeder and close to pursuit range within a few rounds. The heroes can take a cab (Nibber Swoop can be available for the chase at a moment's notice), or they might decide to commandeer a speeder from one of the archive employees. The speeder parking lot is conveniently located one story below the loading dock. Most airspeeders here are two-seaters, so you might subtly encourage the heroes to take more than one vehicle to start the chase.

Scene 2: The Getaway

The Blankers' airspeeder is a stolen hot rod. Two people are in the speeder: a hotshot Duros pilot named Urnon, and a Human riding shotgun named Hewpaj. Urnon's job is to pilot the speeder to the rendezvous point and lose any followers along the way. Hewpaj's job is to get the pots out of the ASP droid and shoot back if anyone starts any trouble.

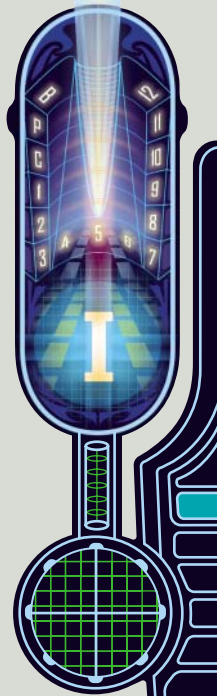
Urnon is a great pilot, so he doesn't sweat trying tricky stunts in the speeder. He can take 10 for most stunts, unless the heroes are shooting at him. Remember to use Urnon's Lucky ability to reroll any colossal piloting failures.

Urnon Mossu: Male Duros, Scoundrel 7; Init +7; Defense 18 (+5 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10 m, VP/WP 34/13; Atk +5 melee (1d3, fist) or +8 ranged (3d6, holdout blaster pistol); SQ Illicit barter, lucky 2/day, precise attack +1; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +3; SZ M; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 14. Challenge Code D.

Equipment: Airspeeder, holdout blaster pistol, 500 credits.

Skills: Astrogate +12, Bluff +12, Escape Artist +13, Forgery +10, Gamble +9, Listen +9, Pilot +18, Spot +9.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Skill Emphasis (pilot), Spacer, Starship Dodge (space transport), Starship Operation (space



transport), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Hewpaj: Use the mid-level thug stats on page 355 of the core rulebook.

The stats below are an abbreviated version of those found in *Coruscant and the Core Worlds*. You can use them for Urnon's speeder, as well as whatever the heroes arrange to use.

Hot Rod Airspeeder

Class: Speeder [Air]

Size: Huge (6.23 m)

Passengers: 1

Cargo Capacity: 0 kg

Defense: 8

Hull Points: 20 (DR 5)

Atmospheric Speed: 12 squares/action (720 km/hour)

Altitude: 5 km

*The speeder provides ½ cover to its occupants.

In the first round after the labor droid hits the speeder, Urnon moves at cruising speed to pick up Hewpaj. Once he's either got the Human or given up on him, he goes to attack speed for 3 rounds while Hewpaj pries the pots out of the droid. Urnon can't move faster than attack speed as long as the droid's weight is on the speeder. Once Hewpaj has the artifacts, he dumps the ASP droid (preferably onto any trailing speeders), and Urnon kicks the speeder up to ramming speed.

To shake any pursuing heroes, Urnon tries a series of tricks escalating in difficulty. Each round, he either flies through an obstacle or attempts a movement stunt, betting that the heroes can't or won't follow him through. The DC listed is for the Pilot check that Urnon and anyone who follows him must make successfully to continue the chase. Remember to subtract the appropriate modifiers for speed (found on Table 11-13 in the core rulebook).

Powerful Updraft (DC 15): Urnon flies over a heat vent that shoots a hot updraft into the air. Failure means that the speeder involuntarily flies up 4 squares. Flying around this obstacle instead of through it requires a chasing speeder to go around the square.

Quick Turn (DC 20): Urnon tries a 180-degree turn. Failure means that the speeder turns only 45 degrees.

Play In Traffic (DC 25): Urnon flies perpendicular through a lane of traffic. Failure means collision with another car. Resolve damage according to rules on page 221 of the core rulebook. Flying around this obstacle instead of through it requires a chasing speeder to go around the square.

Loop Back (DC 25): If the heroes enter his speeder's square, Urnon attempts a tight loop to get behind them, before jinking away next round. Failure means that the pilot can't perform a loop this round.

Smoke Screen (DC 30): Urnon cuts the throttle to cruising speed for a round as he flies through a curtain of smoke and pulls up tightly to avoid a wall hidden on the other side. Failure means collision with the wall. Resolve damage according to rules on page 221 of the core rulebook.

If things are going well, and the players are enjoying it, you might also consider other tricks such as flying through a crowded mall area, flying into a narrow opening between buildings where a larger airspeeder couldn't follow, or flying against the flow of traffic for short distances.

Presumably, the heroes will fire at Urnon's speeder throughout the chase, and Hewpaj will fire back. When Urnon's speeder has taken enough damage from blaster fire and collisions to reduce his speeder's hull points below 5 (or when Urnon runs out of Vitality or Wound points), the speeder begins a rapid descent, plummeting into a nearby building. If Urnon is killed, Hewpaj wrestles with the controls enough to prevent himself from being trapped in a deadfall. Otherwise, Urnon brings the speeder in for a controlled crash into the Royal Icqui Aquaria.



SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Throughout the chase, escalating levels of Coruscant Security will join the line behind the heroes. The standard Police Cruiser Backup Units (PCBU) won't possibly be able to keep up with Urnon and the heroes, but new ones will join the chase as others drop out. For every hazard that Urnon and the heroes successfully navigate, add another PCBU to the chase.

The PCBUs might add nothing more than dramatic tension as the chase escalates. Their presence alone may be all you need. However, if Urnon gets too far ahead of the heroes, have the PCBUs fire at his speeder to slow him down. If the heroes are having too easy a time, have the PCBUs fire on *them*. They don't know or care who the "good guys" are in this scenario; they just want the flying hazards to stop.

For PCBU stats, see page 17 of *Coruscant and the Core Worlds*.

Scene 3: The Drop-Off

Crashing through the skylight of one wing of the aquaria's several buildings, Urnon's speeder, along with Urnon, Hewpaj, and the museum artifacts, splash into an enormous tank of water. The relatively soft fall allows them to avoid death, but the collision with the water knocks them both unconscious. (You might want to consult the drowning rules on page 287 of the core rulebook.) The speeder displaces an enormous amount of water, but more importantly, it gets the attention of the tank's occupant, a lone pierceskimmer.

Vicious predators with four dorsal fins and a long spike growing from their foreheads, pierceskimmers are believed to have originated on Drexel II. This one is relatively small at only 16 meters in length, though the spike growing out of its forehead is a little over 5 meters by itself.

Pierceskimmer: Aquatic predator 7; Init +6; Defense 13 (+8 natural, -4 size, -1 Dex); Spd swim 20 m, VP/WP 123/140; Atk +18 melee (3d6+15, head spike) or +18 melee (1d8+15, tail spikes) or +1 ranged; SQ Low-light vision, spiked scales; SV Fort +17, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ G; Face/Reach 4 m by 16 m/4 m; Str 40, Dex 8, Con 35, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 6. Challenge Code E.

Skills: Jump +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +6,

Survival +6, Swim +12.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack (bonus feats).

Special Qualities: *Spiked Scales*—Any creature making a grapple attack against a pierceskimmer takes 1d6 points of damage each round it remains in contact.

The pierceskimmer's tank is 50 meters long and 20 meters wide. The walls of the tank are made of 10-cm-thick transparisteel. It has a hardness of 10, 120 wound points, and a break DC 35.

The pierceskimmer arrives on the scene quickly. Unless the heroes are right behind Urnon, it begins to explore the wreck with its head spike immediately, while drenched aquarium patrons look on in horror.

The Blankers' bodies are in the speeder wreckage. Each round the pierceskimmer is left alone with them, it attempts a DC 20 Spot check. If successful, it identifies an organic gang member among the metal and plastic of the speeder and attacks. Neither one will last long against the predator.

At this point, the heroes don't technically have to do anything. The pierceskimmer will eat the gang members and destroy the pots if left to its own devices. Those of a heroic stripe might want to follow Urnon and Hewpaj through the hole in the tank and attempt to save them before the pierceskimmer decides they're edible. If the creature notices something moving apart from the wreckage, it diverts its attention to the newcomer. The pierceskimmer is a vicious opponent, and it's probably a faster swimmer than any of the heroes—going into the tank to rescue the gang members is a life-threatening proposition. Anyone who does so can expect a fight.

Scene 4: Wrap-Up

If the gang members survive the pierceskimmer, Coruscant Security arrives to arrest them. Unless the heroes have someone in a position of authority to vouch for them

quickly, Security picks them up as well until Durgo can bail them out.

The Ryloth pots were protected well enough to survive the jolts they took in the chase and the fall, but the water did serious damage. If the pierceskimmer gets to Hewpaj before the heroes do, the pots are destroyed.

If the characters are of a mind to follow up, tracking down the art broker and the buyers could be an adventure all its own. The museum might be willing to back their efforts in this vein, although they'd need to do so quietly to avoid attention. The buyers (whoever they are) live on a Core World, but finding them and then bringing them to justice could take a while.

Anyone who dove into the water to save Urnon and/or Hewpaj deserves a Force Point for the heroic effort. Whoever hired the characters thanks them for their assistance. Durgo approaches them quietly after the fact, to avoid negative publicity for the museum, while a Lost Ones representative makes contact with the rest of whatever payment they negotiated. The heroes have definitely earned an enemy in the Blank Look Gang, whose members might cause trouble for the characters in any future adventures on Coruscant.

About the Author

Jeff Quick is an Expo award-winning game designer and editor. He has written and developed game products for Wizards of the Coast, WizKids Games, Green Ronin, and White Wolf. He has served as editor of *Polyhedron Newszine*, senior editor of *Star Wars Gamer*, and editor-in-chief of *Star Wars Insider*. Despite being a writer in the Pacific Northwest, he owns no cats.

