

# Dead Man's Hand

A Stand-Alone Adventure for the Star Wars: Edge of the Empire  
Roleplaying Game by Fantasy Flight Games

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#### **Star Wars**

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# Dead Man's Hand - Overview

*Dead Man's Hand* is a stand-alone adventure for the Star Wars: Edge of the Empire Roleplaying Game, designed to introduce new players to the rules, as well as give experienced players a unique adventure filled with mystery and fear. It can also be inserted into an existing campaign, to provide a break from an adventuring group's normal story arc.

Included are six pre-generated player characters, who already have an adventure or two "under their belt" and whose abilities are well suited to this adventure. But if the players wish to come to the table with their own characters, they may create their own, following the rules for creating beginner characters in the Star Wars: Edge of the Empire. The adventure assumes the use of the pre-generated characters, so player-created characters may necessitate adjustment of the scenarios in regards to the use of Obligation.

The pre-generated player characters are a group of explorers and treasure hunters, hot on the trail of an ancient secret, but beset by dark forces at every turn as they unravel an old mystery. If you are planning to act as Game Master, then read on. You should read through the entire adventure prior to the start of the game. If you are planning to play a hero in the adventure, then STOP READING NOW to avoid spoiling the adventure for you and your group. Instead, turn to the last section of the adventure, where the Player Character biographies are located.

## Adventure Summary

*Dead Man's Hand* involves a group of heroes who comprise one of the "acquisition" arms of a well-known university in the core worlds, braving the wilds of space and mysteries of the past to gather knowledge and exhibit-quality relics for their patron institution. Often working "under the table", they specialize in going into dangerous locales and sometimes skirting local laws and customs to investigate history and bring back their finds.

The adventure begins at the time of unusual events in the Arah System, where recent attacks on ships near the Arah Asteroid Belt have garnered galaxy-wide media attention. Survivors claim the attacking vessel is a ghost-ship, *Dugan's Hand*. A notorious pirate vessel in the days of the Old Republic, *Dugan's Hand* disappeared within the Arah Asteroid Belt centuries ago, without a trace. As media speculation abounds, the university has seized on the opportunity to capitalize on it, and has sent our heroes to explore the Arah Belt and discover the remains of *Dugan's Hand*.

The party will have to investigate clues and the history behind the ship, as well as the recent attacks. In reality, The Empire has begun a mining operation inside the Arah Belt to search for oridium ore (for the production of a new model of Phantom TIE fighters), and have been using a charlatan ship and the legend of *Dugan's Hand* to scare off unwanted visitors. But things took an unexpected turn for the Imperials, who began encountering an unknown ship attacking their own forces inside the belt.

Tracking down these leads, the heroes will ultimately brave a treacherous route through the asteroid belt to

find the truth – and potentially discover the secrets of a long-dead pirate and his mysterious demise!

## Preparing for the Session

The *Dead Man's Hand* adventure is designed to be run as a single 4–5 hour session for an experienced group of players. But a lot can happen in a session, so be sure to consider the following, perhaps reviewing necessary points with your players at the start of the game.

### Planning for Healing

Cautious players may not take any wounds until the finale of the adventure, but if healing is needed, characters should have access to Stimpacks (or Emergency Repair Patches) for basic healing (the pregen characters have several as a part of their standard gear). If more extensive medical care is required, consider providing the party the use of a medical bay onboard their ship or a trip to a professional facility. But such actions should eat up hours of the characters' time, possibly impacting the outcome of the adventure.

Strain suffered during a scene can be removed through Resilience checks, after a character has had ten or twenty minutes of rest to attempt to shake it off. Several hours without stress should reduce a character's current Strain by half, automatically; and a full night's rest should remove all Strain.

### Obligation

Roll obligation results for the party prior to the start of the session, as detailed in the Star Wars: Edge of the Empire Core Rulebook. An Obligation Tables is provided at

the start of the adventure, and assumes the game is running with a party of six PCs. (The Game Master should adjust the table according to the party makeup.) Accompanying the Obligation Table are suggested consequences for the pre-gen characters, should their obligation be triggered. Additionally, certain areas of the adventure will receive complications if a specific PCs obligation is triggered at the start of the session (as detailed in the obligation side-bars within the adventure). If your players are using custom PCs, be sure to review these side-bars prior to the start of the session and adjust them accordingly.

### Destiny

At the start of the session generate a Destiny Pool by asking each player to roll a Force die .

## Running the Adventure

As you read through the *Dead Man's Hand* adventure, you will notice several side-bars inserted throughout. These are designed to provide context and ready information for the Game Master.

### Read Aloud Text

Several areas of the adventure will contain green side-bars (as seen below). These represent optional narrative text to be read to the players to establish mood, explain a scene, or relate events.

Read-Aloud Text will appear in a text box like this, and you are encouraged to read this text to your players.

But feel free to substitute your own narrative description as needs arise. The Read-Aloud text is merely meant to provide an aid to the GM.

### Obligation Effects

Some scenes have the potential to get more complicated when a player character's obligation comes into play. If a specific PC's obligation is triggered at the start of the adventure, then certain encounters and interactions may be modified by that obligation, as noted by an orange side-bar (as seen below).

#### Obligation Effect

- Modifications to the scene will be detailed here.
- This might be a penalty to checks made during the scene by the impacted character, or the party.
- It might also be a shift in attitude of key NPCs, or increased difficulty.

### Rules Reminders

Sometimes, an encounter or scenario might involve certain rules that aren't commonly remembered off the top of your head. In anticipation of this, the adventure will sometimes include blue side-bars (as seen below) to provide quick references to certain rules we anticipate being used – to prevent you from having to dig through a book.

#### Quick Rule Summary

- Rather than spending precious time searching through your book the GM will find quick summaries of anticipated rules for each encounter.
- These summaries are not meant to replace the proper rules, however, but to simply remind the GM of how a rule works.
- When in doubt, remember to err on the side of fun! YOU are the GM, and your rulings should be what are best for your group.

### Triumph & Despair

In certain encounters and scenes, you might find a yellow and red side-bar (as seen below). This represents suggested Triumph and Despair results for the scene. Remember: while you, the GM, determine how Despair is spent, Triumph results are suggested by the Player. *The Triumph suggestions listed should simply represent solid suggestions you can offer your player, if they are having a tough time deciding what to do with their Triumph.*



- Triumph results, unique to the encounter area and scene, will be present here to provide a quick suggestive tool to inspire your players.



- Recommended Despair results, unique to the encounter area and scene will be present here, to give the GM creative options ahead of time.

### Encounter Maps

Many encounters in *Dead Man's Hand* are accompanied by a map, which is referenced in the encounter details, and presents recommended locations of PCs, threats, and other features detailed in the encounter.

- Many of these maps can be located for purchase at [www.mapsofmastery.com](http://www.mapsofmastery.com)
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# STAR WARS

## DEAD MAN'S HAND

Recent attacks on trading ships in the ARAH SYSTEM have plagued merchant vessels, but the EMPIRE has paid no heed.

Survivors of the attacks describe a phantom starship that appears to be DUGAN'S HAND, a legendary pirate vessel that disappeared almost three centuries ago.

While rumors spread of ghost ships and ancient curses, flocks of media and treasure hunters from around the galaxy have come to the Arah Asteroid Belt hoping to unravel the mystery of DUGAN'S HAND...

# Dead Man's Hand

## Obligation Check

For the start of the adventure, the party has a much higher obligation total than normally expected. This represents the PCs' extremely sordid pasts and the group's continual dealings with the underworld. Prior to the start of the session, roll potential obligation effects on the chart below. Since this is a pre-written adventure and an obligation is highly likely to trigger, the GM is encouraged to use the Obligation Sidebars throughout the adventure which will affect the narrative of the story, in lieu of more typical obligation effects (such as reduced Strain Thresholds).

Obligation Chart

VALUE	TYPE	CONTROLLING CHARACTER
1-15	Addiction	Garner Rel
16-25	Debt	Nukri Sandor
26-40	Family	Slussk
41-55	Criminal	Dr. Jessa Moro
56-65	Betrayal	Jek Tassom
66-75	Bounty	R2-F4 "Whistler"

### Suggested Obligation Effects

If your obligation check is above the group's total threshold, no special obligation effects occur for the adventure. If a PC's obligation is triggered, however, refer to the special Obligation Sidebars that relate to that PC at the appropriate points in the story.

## The Stage for a Mystery

Before the adventure begins, the GM needs to set the stage and story for the group. The team's patron university has given them an unusual task: seek out the remains of a long-disappeared pirate vessel, *Dugan's Hand*. A standard dossier was transmitted to the team with the following known details, prior to the start of the adventure:

- 8 weeks ago, a series of violent attacks began on merchant ships in the Arah Belt. Most of these attacks left no one alive, but one survivor was rescued before dying of his wounds in a med bay. With his dying words, he spoke of a ship with pirate markings that appeared "out of thin air" and, with no warning, destroyed their vessel with sustained turbo laser fire before vanishing as mysteriously as it appeared.
- In the past 4 weeks, however, the attacks have intensified in frequency, and have left several survivors.

- These survivors have told similar tales of what they called a "ghost ship" appearing out of nowhere. They were also able to describe the markings and silhouette of the vessel, and records indicate that their descriptions fit the known markings and make of *Dugan's Hand*, a notorious pirate vessel that disappeared without a trace inside the Arah Belt almost 300 years ago.
- Merchant traffic through and around the belt has come to a near halt, and news outlets and reporters have picked up on the story, which is making headlines across the galaxy. Skeptics insist that modern brigands are masquerading as the long dead pirates, while "true believers" insist that the vile pirate, Dugan, has returned from the beyond with his ghostly crew!
- The university doesn't believe in any supernatural occurrences, of course, but wants to strike while the iron is hot – and has sent the PCs to locate the remains of *Dugan's Hand*, which they believe must be somewhere within the asteroid belt where it disappeared.
- Finding the relic of a ship (or parts of it) would make for an exciting exhibit, and would help the university capitalize on the current media frenzy.

The GM should be sure to communicate the above details to the players as the game begins, to appropriately set the stage for their adventure and expected tasks. However, the PCs may have several additional questions. Use the sections below to guide the narrative.

### Details of the Job

If the party is mercenary enough to quibble over their payment for the job, the GM should make it clear that the party would receive their standard recovery fee, unless a massive find (such as a fully intact ship) is brought to the university. The university will likely pay the team 1000 credits for previously unknown historical data and anywhere from 2000-4000 credits for exhibit-worthy artifacts, such as pieces of the ship or equipment from the era. Should the PCs locate and recover the full wreck of *Dugan's Hand* (if it exists); the university has promised the team an extremely large bonus of 15,000 credits.

### The Arah System

Some solid knowledge checks by a PC can clue the party into a lot of detail about the Arah System and its infamous asteroid belt. A PC can make an average (◆◆) Knowledge (Lore or Outer Rim) check with ✨ revealing that the Arah System is the Dantus sector of the Outer

Rim, and has no habitable planets or civilized life forms. However, there is one space station in operation, a place called *The Back Room*, which serves as a refueling and supply port for merchants passing through the system.

Each 🌀 on the check can be spent to gain one of the following additional pieces of information:

- The Arah System is strategically useful for merchants (and some say, smugglers) as it sits between 2 minor hyperspace trade routes. Daring pilots willing to drop out of hyperspace in the system can manually navigate through the vast and dangerous asteroid belt and then re-enter hyperspace, shaving a week off of travel time through this sector.
- Rumors are that *The Back Room* is more than a simple refueling and supply station, but also a fairly active shadow port for smugglers. As a result, the system is on the Empire's "Restricted List", even though it remains well outside of Imperial space.
- The owner of the *Back Room* is a human male named Navin Brody, who purportedly has a penchant for crude jokes and fine Corellian brandy (the PCs might leverage this knowledge for 🟦 on interactions with Navin).

Should the PCs generate a 🌀 on a successful check, they can also recall that Navin Brody put the station up for sale about 4 months ago – but since the attacks started, has declined every purchase offer.

### Dugan's Hand

One or more of the PCs might also want to research details of the pirate, Dugan, or his ship prior to dropping into the Arah System. A PC can make an average (🔹🔹) Knowledge: Lore or Knowledge: Underworld check with ✨ revealing that Dugan was a notorious pirate in the days of the Old Republic, and his ship famously disappeared without a trace near the Arah Asteroid Belt almost 300 years ago.

Each 🌀 on the check can be spent to gain one of the following additional pieces of information:

- Dugan's ship, the *Dugan's Hand*, was a state-of-the-art battle cruiser in its day.
- Dugan was a Tof, and he and his men took pride in the image of "the noble brigand" and the mythos of classical piracy; they relished leaving behind survivors of their attacks to "tell the tale" and spread their legends.

### What if...?

Some PCs might suggest a Computers check to research the above data on the holonet, and this is perfectly acceptable, with the GM's discretion. But if the group is playing with the pre-generated characters, realize that these characters are geared towards classical research and

Knowledge Skills – and this kind of research should be encouraged by the GM.

It's entirely possible (and likely) that your players may not decide to make any of these checks at the start of the adventure. That's okay, as they'll get the chance to glean these details later on. But if a player decides to make these checks at advanced points in the adventure, be flexible, but consider asking them to return to their ship where they have access to research materials.

## The Back Room

Once the players are informed and ready, the adventure begins with the party's ship, *The Dark Raider*, jumping out of hyperspace at the edge of the Arah Asteroid Belt. Read the following to the party to set the scene:

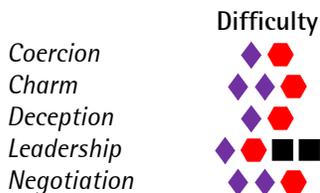
With a familiar jolt, your ship exits hyperspace into the remote Arah System. In the distance, you see the infamous and vast asteroid belt stretching into blackness past range of both your sensors and your eyes. Ahead of you is the unusual form of the only point of civilization in the system, *The Back Room*, a space station that appears to be built into and around a large asteroid towed out of the belt a very long time ago. Ancient flight bays carved into the surface are overtaken by a large docking ring moored around the rock by several thin spokes.

What you weren't expecting was the sudden blaring of comm traffic and sensor signals all about you. This remote station and system is beset with dozens of ships making their way towards *The Back Room*, several in an apparent queue for docking. A quick glance at the scene gives you pause; there's no way there's enough berths on this little station to dock all of these ships...

The party's first task will be a simple social encounter to try and gain a docking berth aboard *The Back Room*. If the party hails the station for docking clearance, they are immediately told by the dockmaster that the station is full, but they're welcome to wait in queue until a berth opens up (there are 10 ships ahead of them). The PCs can, of course, opt to bargain with him. Keep in mind that this outer-rim station is well out of Imperial space; so not only are bribes almost expected, but tossing around "core systems" rank and weight has little meaning out here on the edge.

The party can attempt to bribe the dockmaster with a variety of opposed influence checks, as long as they can

justify the narrative. Negotiation should require the least amount of justification, as it would represent a straightforward bribe; Leadership carries extra ■ in its difficulty, due to the nature of the station and dockmaster's attitude.



Regardless of the check, ✨ means the dockmaster will give *The Dark Raider* an immediate berth for a bribe of 100 credits, but the narrative dice results will modify this amount accordingly:

- Every 🎲 reduces the bribe amount by 20 credits.
- Every 🎲 increases the bribe amount by 20 credits.
- A 🎲 on a successful check will eliminate any credit cost.
- A 🎲 on a successful check means the dock master will dock the party's ship, but foolishly push another ship out of queue to do so (and inform that captain his spot was taken by the PC's ship). This could have severe consequences later on, in the Freefall Cantina, leading to a confrontation with the angry captain and his crew!

Should the party fail (▼) this check, they're stuck outside the station. The dock master informs them it will be about 12 to 24 hours before they can get a berth. The party can't wait that long - but there *are* enterprising station personnel that are running a "shuttle service" from the station to ships that have chosen to simply stay in far orbit of the station (relying on automated safety thrusters or a left-behind crew member to keep orbit) for a mere 40 credits. If the party accepts this option, it will simply make returning to their ship a lengthy and inconvenient process (research performed away from the ship's store of archives will add ■ to any check).

### Arrival at the Docking Bay

If the party is able to gain a berth, they dock in a very crowded bay housing 7 other ships (there are several such bays along the ring of the station). Dozens of humans and aliens are milling about, and the party should be able to recognize a few somewhat familiar faces and ships: those belonging to other treasure hunters (nowhere near the party's caliber). There is the chance for the party to scan about for noticeable things, or some *real* competition. Read the following to the party to set the scene:

Your entry ramp whines as it slowly opens, exposing the busy docking bay. It's clear that this station doesn't have the means to support this much traffic, as you spot a pair of haggard-looking dock workers struggling to race about and connect tethers and perform refueling and maintenance amidst a throng of loud travelers chatting with each other and excitedly exchanging greetings and gossip.

Provide the party with the chance to perform individual Perception checks (or a group check) at Average difficulty with a setback die for the crowded nature of the bay (◆◆◆). ✨ allows them to immediately recognize the ship of a major rival: *Beloche*. A slimy twi'lek professor turned tomb raider, known for his brutal tactics and mercenary manner, the party has had run-ins with him in the past as a frequent competitor. There is much animosity between the party and *Beloche*, and this could lead to a later conflict. (If the party is using the pre-generated player characters, *Jek Tassom* also has a personal history with *Beloche* that ties into his *Obligation*).

### Group Skill Checks

- When the party makes checks as a whole, the GM may call for a single check combining the highest relevant skill rank and characteristic in the party.
- For the Perception check (if using the pre-generated PCs), the group Perception check would be ◆◆◆ (using *Nukri's* Cunning of 3 and *Whistler's* Perception rank of 2).

Any amount of 🎲 on the check can also be spent to notice another unusual ship; a small news shuttle outfitted with numerous external transmitter dishes, and emblazoned with the logo for INN, the Imperial News Network. It appears that an INN reporter is probably aboard the station, as well. (This would be *Renee Wazertiz*, whose mission and motives are detailed in the Freefall section of the adventure.)

### Obligation Effect - Slussk

If *Slussk's* Obligation triggered at the start of the adventure:

- A group of Trandosha treasure hunters will recognize him in the bay, taking offense to his family's "heresy".
- With the party departed from their ship, they will attempt to sabotage it - leading to a necessary 1 hour of repair time before the ship can depart the station (which may become very problematic...)

## Exploring the Station

The Back Room is very old and very small (for a space station), with its only defensive capabilities being a magnetic shield to discourage stray asteroids and a pair of quad-laser turrets. Aside from the docking ring, the only structures built into the asteroid-façade of the station's bulk are a few cargo holding warehouses, a technical bay, a comm center, sparse living quarters for station personnel, and the Freefall Cantina – a watering hole for travelers, bartended by Navin Brody.

## And Now... a Special Report...

The party may be wary that there is an Imperial News Network correspondent on the station, but if they encounter her, or investigate the matter, several details should seem a bit "off". Renee Wazertiz is a beautiful human female and a noted field reporter and correspondent for the INN (some of the party might recognize her as a semi-famous face from the holonet). But she's in the Arah System on her own, with no production crew or other assistance.

In truth (due to the Imperial operation in the asteroid belt, which the PCs are yet unaware of), Renee's superiors at INN ordered her *not* to cover this story and leave it alone, but obviously didn't explain why. An idealistic and intrepid reporter, she couldn't let it be, and on her own took a broadcast shuttle and left to uncover the truth. She's an excellent reporter, and possesses a great amount of information which she's already uncovered.

### RENEE WAZERTIZ (INN CORRESPONDENT)

Brawn 2                      Cunning 3                      Presence 3  
Agility 2                    Intellect 3                    Willpower 2

Skills: Charm 2 (◆◆●●●), Computers 1 (◆◆●●●),  
Cool 2 (◆●●●●), Coordination 2 (◆●●●●),  
Negotiation 1 (◆◆●●●), Perception 2 (◆●●●●),  
Knowledge (Core Worlds) 2 (◆●●●●), Knowledge  
(Lore) 2 (◆●●●●)

Soak: 2                                      Defense: 0  
Wound Threshold: 12  
Strain Threshold: 12

Renee can quickly become an ally of the party, if they're willing "to give her an exclusive", and she'll happily share with them all of her knowledge and research (she already knows all the details the party could uncover onboard the station). But in return for this – she'll insist on accompanying them through their journey. She also represents the possibility of a threat, in terms of exposing

the PCs across the holonet. This may also manifest itself via triggered Obligation Effects for certain pre-generated PCs. (In truth, the Empire will *never* allow her story to be broadcast, but neither she nor the party knows that.)

Running the adventure as written, the party will first encounter Renee in the Freefall Cantina, but the GM should feel free to insert her as an interesting twist wherever appropriate in the adventure – especially if the party finds themselves stuck without any clues. Renee is dressed in a smart pantsuit, and is always accompanied by the broadcast shuttle's holorecorder droid.

## Going Freefall

The party is welcome to talk to familiar faces and gather rumors and information throughout the docking ring, but most folks will tell them that the major news and conversation is to be had at the Freefall Cantina, the only place on *The Back Room* to get a drink or a bite. At present, the party has very few details, and needs to know more about these "pirate attacks" so they can continue their mission. It should be stressed that this is probably the best place to do so.

The Freefall Cantina is in the center of the asteroid, and has very old and partially functional grav generators, which the owner has turned into feature of the bar. The entire cantina has very low gravity, which seems to add to its charm and allure. The cantina is packed with people, and immediately appears to be a good place to gather information. But it is also the setting for several potential encounters with Beloche, and the INN Reporter (or an angry ship captain and crew, if the party rolled a 🌀 on their influence check to board the station). Read the following to the party to set the scene:

The Freefall Cantina is like no place you've ever been, and you can immediately see where it got its name. The cantina's grav generators appear to be only partially functional. Whereas another owner might have had them fixed, the current owner seems to have incorporated them into the theme of the place.

A comically fat and grubby bartender smiles enthusiastically as he fills a high-lipped mug and flicks his wrist to smoothly propel it with a single bounce 3 meters down the bar for a waiting customer, while dozens of thirsty spacers hop lightly on the balls of their feet in the rarified gravity, jostling to order drinks. The place is packed, except for a disused dance floor that speaks of a former life in this drinking hole.

## My Kind of Place

Scores of fringers and other riffraff laugh raucously and conduct shadow trade in plain sight, while intensity blooms around a pair of sabacc tables which sit near the center of the establishment, but not far from a series of weapons lockers overseen by an armed, but lonely bouncer at the front door.

He looks at you briefly and then solemnly points to a sign on the wall, written in aurebesh and huttese, which reads:

*"All patrons are required to check their weapons. No exceptions. Please enjoy yourself."*

### Weapons Check

The only seeming rule in the cantina is pretty clear: no weapons. But the cantina does provide free weapons lockers for patrons to stow their gear, using a password security pad to lock away their weaponry. The bouncer will do his job and not allow anyone to proceed into the bar with open weapons, but there is ample opportunity for a PC to conceal a single weapon on their person.

Concealing a weapon requires an opposed Skulduggery check, with a difficulty increased by the encumbrance of the weapon:

Weapon Encumbrance	Difficulty
<u>Encumbrance 0-1</u>	
• vibroknife	◆ ◆
• blaster pistol	◆ ◆
<u>Encumbrance 2</u>	
• heavy blaster pistol	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
• truncheon	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
<u>Encumbrance 3</u>	
• blaster carbine	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
• vibrosword	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
<u>Encumbrance 4+</u>	
• vibro-ax	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
• blaster rifle	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

### Drawing a Concealed Weapon

The GM should feel free to constrain the easy drawing of a properly concealed weapon:

- Consider mandating that a concealed weapon requires a full action to draw it (or perhaps a full maneuver for a character with the Quick Draw talent).
- Multiple 🌀, or a 🌀 on the check to conceal the weapon may allow the character to draw it faster, or to conceal more than one weapon.

The numerous spacers and treasure hunters in the cantina are all here for the same reason: the *Dugan's Hand*. Some believe that the ghost stories are really true, but others think an enterprising group has found Dugan's ship and cache of treasure, and they want in. PCs are free to roam the cantina and gather information and rumors about the attacks and about *Dugan's Hand*.

This can be accomplished through an average (◆◆) Streetwise or Charm check, an easy (◆) Negotiation check with an expenditure of 50 credits, or other checks – as the GM warrants are appropriate. ✨ on a check will reveal one piece of information, as noted below, with each 🌀 revealing another detail (the GM may also provide any of the previously un-gathered info about the Arah System noted in the "Setting the Stage" section of the adventure):

- The owner of *The Back Room* station is Navin Brody, a human, who also owns and runs the Freefall Cantina (he's the fat man jovially tending bar).
- The pirate attacks started 8 weeks ago, and while at first they left no intentional survivors and took no plunder, the last 4 weeks have seen attacks that left numerous survivors – and the pirates eagerly looted the ships they were attacking.
- All the survivors tell the same story of a ship that "appeared out of thin air". Sensors didn't recognize anything, and no one saw anything, until the ship just "manifested" off the bow. After the attacks, the ghostly ship disappears in the same way.
- As far as specific data on the attacks (locations, patterns, etc.), the only concrete record of all the data would be with *The Back Room* station's sensor logs – in other words – with Navin.
- Some of the treasure hunters and explorers in the cantina are already planning expeditions into the vast asteroid belt to search for clues – but few people have any idea where to start.

Should the PCs generate a 🌀 on a successful check, they uncover from station workers that Navin Brody has wiped all the sensor data from the attacks off the station's computers, and there are rumors that he's compiled all of it for sale to an interested party.

If a 🌀 is generated on a check, the party's inquiries catch the immediate attention of INN Correspondent, Renee Wazertiz, who recognizes them as notable archeologists and begins to immediately pester them for interviews, providing ■ on subsequent influence checks in the cantina.

### Obligation Effect – Garner Rel

If Garner's Obligation triggered at the start of the adventure:

- Renee will *immediately* recognize him, and move to interview him, excited by such a famous explorer's presence in the Arah System.
- Her camera and immediate "familiarity" will end up ostracizing Garner (and possibly his team, if it's apparent they're "together") from any reasonable communication with Navin Brody. This will result in an *automatic* ■ to any influence check made by Garner or a clearly associated ally in the cantina.

### Hey, Barkeep!

Wise party members might immediately seek out Navin Brody, the bartender and owner of *The Back Room* station, for information. They might also learn that Navin has all the sensor details of the attacks ready for an interested buyer, and then decide to speak with him. Either way, Navin will be very reluctant to provide any useful information to the party – but he'll gladly share the rumors and conjecture which the other patrons are talking about. Navin's more interested in promoting the "legend" of these ghostly pirate attacks, as it's giving an obvious boom to his business.

What Navin does have on his person is a datapad with the accumulated station sensor data on all the pirate attacks over the last 8 weeks, along with interviews he's surreptitiously recorded with "survivors" and other patrons who've entered his cantina. It's a treasure trove of knowledge that could lead someone to the source of these attacks – and he's selling it to the highest bidder. In fact, he's already made arrangements to sell it to an interested party (Beloche) for 2000 credits; one of the reasons he's in such a good mood.

If the party can gain Navin's attention for a private conversation, they can attempt to find this out with an appropriate opposed influence check (◆◆■) with a setback die (due to Navin's elevated position in the conversation). If successful, he'll tell the party about the data, but not who the "interested party" is. He'll gleefully entertain counter-offers from the PCs (who have no hope of beating Beloche's offer in credits), though.

If the party continues to press for information, Navin will grow frustrated, and the GM can immediately insert the arrival of Beloche, or have Beloche insist on meeting with Navin at that point (if he's already arrived). Navin will then excuse himself and lead Beloche to the private room in the cantina, so they can conclude their business.

### The Arrival of Beloche

The party may already be aware that Beloche is aboard the station. He's arrived to unravel the mystery, as well, and has already arranged to purchase the cache of sensor data from Navin Brody.

Beloche is accompanied by 3 mercenary bodyguards (clearly from the same outfit). Unless the party is dealing with Jek's triggered Obligation, Beloche will not actively engage the team unless directly approached. He considers them to be amateurs beneath his abilities. When Beloche and his men enter the cantina, read the following to the party to set the scene:

You suddenly get a very bad feeling, and glance quickly to the door to see the slimy form of a male twi'lek saunter in with a devious smirk on his face. Beloche! A rival archeologist – some say plunderer – you've had run-ins with him in the past, and there's no love lost between you.

Beloche is backed up by a trio of helmeted mercenaries with matching armor. After sneering at the bouncer, Beloche and his men disappear behind the weapons lockers, then head into the cantina a few minutes later, their blaster holsters empty.

Beloche scans the place and eventually locks eyes with the bartender. Smiling broadly, he leads his men to a table in the center of the place and sits with a practiced flourish, snapping his fingers for a server.

### Obligation Effect – Jek Tassom

If Jek's Obligation triggered at the start of the adventure:

- Because of their past, Beloche is secretly terrified that Jek will one day expose him, and will try to violently deny him any opportunity at success.
- He will recognize Jek immediately and begin insulting him and the party – with the goal of forcing a physical confrontation. Beloche is counting on his Mercenary guards to take the party out of commission.
- This Obligation Effect will almost certainly lead to a violent encounter in the cantina.

### Aggressive Negotiation

There are many avenues for a confrontation in the cantina; with Navin or with Beloche and his goons. The party needs to get their hands on that data, and they can't hope to outbid Beloche. The GM should allow the party to decide their course of action. This could involve bargaining, a smash-and-grab, or simple theft. (The party



### BELOCHE (NEMESIS)

Brawn 2            Cunning 3            Presence 3  
Agility 3        Intellect 3            Willpower 2

Skills: Coerce 2 (●●), Cool 2 (◆●●),  
Deception 1 (◆◆●), Perception 1 (◆◆●),  
Skulduggery 2 (◆●●), Vigilance 1 (◆●),  
Knowledge (Lore) 1 (◆◆●), Knowledge  
(Underworld) 1 (◆◆●), Brawl 1 (◆●), Ranged  
(Light) 2 (◆●●)

Adversary 2: Upgrade incoming attack by 2  
Soak: 3                                  Defense: 0  
Wound Threshold: 14  
Strain Threshold: 15

Equipment: Heavy Blaster Pistol (Ranged [Light]  
[◆◆●]); Damage: 7; Critical: 3; Range: Medium;  
Stun Setting), Heavy Clothing

### Low Gravity

Inside of the Freefall Cantina, the very low gravity results in some interesting in-game effects:

- A character with leverage to propel them can attempt a hard (◆◆◆) Coordination check as a part of normal maneuver to move between ranges. If successful, they move as if they had spent 2 maneuvers to move between ranges. (This only works if the character is moving in a straight line.)
- Any character adds ■ to any Brawn-based skill checks (except Resilience) they make, and to any Coordination checks they make (including ones to move between ranged, detailed above).

Map of the Freefall Cantina  
(Designed by Dominic Crawford; map elements created by Chris Preska)



Aside from the Freefall Cantina's bouncer, Navin has precious few security personnel on the station, and simply isn't prepared for any real violence. If he believes the party has stolen his datapad after the fight is over, he'll demand its return – but the worst he can muster is a lockdown of the party's ship (which could be rather detrimental to the team's goals). Regardless, if the party obtains the data, the GM should encourage them to beat a hasty retreat off *The Back Room*. Their ship has the equipment and research materials to analyze the datapad better than anything on the station.

## Jinkies! A Clue!

Once the party has possession of the datapad, they face the task of analyzing the copious amounts of data Navin has compiled. This includes 8 weeks of sensor logs and hours of secretly recorded interviews and conversations with witnesses and survivors that he's had contact with in his cantina. Much of it is corrupted or badly distorted; requiring cleanup and adjustments, and there is a great deal of irrelevant information to be sifted through. But with solid checks, the party has the chance to piece together a more complete story of what's been going on in the Arah Asteroid Belt.

### Analysis Paralysis

Analysis of the datapad is a small, but very important part of the adventure, and is the chance for the characters to showcase their intellectual acumen. The GM should encourage varied skill usage by the PCs, and give everyone who wants to help the chance to make a check, or assist in another's check; but should discourage the use of the same skill more than once.

Good skill suggestions include: Astrogation, Computers, Knowledge (Education), and Knowledge (Outer Rim). Each check should be made against a difficulty of   , representing the inherent difficulty of the task, and the degradation and disarray of some of the data. A full analysis normally takes 6 hours of in-game time.

Basic success will allow the party to learn the primary piece of information buried in the data (each  beyond the first, whether provided in the same check or by another character's check, will reduce the total time needed to analyze the data by 30 minutes). Below are the details learned from the basic success:

- There are two *separate* patterns to these pirate attacks.
- When the attacks first started, there were no survivors (except one man, who shared his story before dying of his injuries in medbay). The ships were completely destroyed, and the sensor data from The Back Room's

array shows that all of these attacks occurred well inside the Arah Asteroid Belt.

- But 4 weeks ago, a new pattern emerged. The attacks began happening all over the belt, in a seemingly random fashion, and the attackers left most ships intact with many survivors, boarding to steal cargo and then depart.
- While the party can differentiate between the two attack patterns, only one (the first pattern) makes enough sense to triangulate a possible point of origin or area of operation for an attacking ship: a 1000km area deep inside the belt.

Each  generated by a character's check can be used to uncover an additional piece of data:

- The two attack patterns share even more differences. The one short-lived survivor of the first attacks was able to give a detailed description of the ship's silhouette, and this is a *completely different* description than the multiple survivors of the second attack pattern give. (Though all survivors still agree on the ship "appearing and disappearing out of thin air".)
- The silhouette and description of the ship given by the many survivors of the second set of attacks match all records for the *Dugan's Hand*, including size and markings, for the 300 year-old battleship.
- "Second Attack" survivors provide vivid descriptions of the pirates who invaded their vessels. They describe them as wearing tri-corn hats and wearing eye patches, constantly shouting "YAAAAARRRR!!!" and "AVAST MATEYS!!!"
- The description of the ship given by the lone survivor of the first attack pattern claim it had pirate markings, but the silhouette he describes seems to match an Incom X4 Gunship (a recently produced model of gunboat).

A  on a successful check allows the character to discover a piece of a transmission buried in the sensor data (even Navin failed to notice what he had). Originating from within the asteroid belt, it appears to be a simple automated request for supplies – but the encoding algorithm is one that the party recognizes is used by the Imperial Navy.

A  or at least    on a single check corrupts the datapad completely, rendering it useless without days (possibly weeks) of data reconstruction.

### A Good Reporter

It's possible that the party has enlisted the help of Renee Wazertiz at this point, or that she's foisted herself on them. She eagerly wants to be included the process of sifting through the data (it makes for a great story!) and will be happy to help. Renee's personal knowledge of the

events that have transpired here can add clarity to the party's analysis, granting a ■ to any check a PC makes.

If the party was unsuccessful in obtaining the datapad or corrupted it before discovering anything, the GM might insert Renee into the story at this point; seeking out the PCs for help. She recognizes them and their abilities, and offers to assist them with her knowledge in exchange for the party taking her with them into the belt. If this should occur, Renee won't be able to provide the party with all the details available from Navin's datapad, but should be able to guide them to the 1000km triangulated area of the first wave of attacks (and, inadvertently, to the destroyed mining facility).

### Sneaky, Sneaky...

If the party failed to get the datapad (meaning Beloche got away with it) *and* chose to rebuff Renee's assistance – they always have the option of surreptitiously tailing Beloche's ship into the asteroid belt; a less than honorable tactic, but enough for honor among thieves.

Following Beloche without being discovered will require an opposed (◆◆◆) Pilot (Space) or Stealth check by the character piloting *The Dark Raider*. However, Beloche's ability to pilot his ship and notice the PCs is reduced without his mercenary crew. If any of his mercenary goons were killed in the Freefall Cantina, add ■ to the PCs check for each missing mercenary.

## Inside the Arah Asteroid Belt

Eventually, the clues and information the party has gathered should lead them to only one course of action: heading into the Arah Asteroid Belt. Their mission is to discover the truth (and hopefully, the remains of an ancient and valuable pirate ship), and their investigation leads them to an area within the belt, where the first group of attacks seem to have originated from. At sub-light speeds, traveling to the triangulated coordinates will take the party three to four hours.

### To Rock or to Roll

Navigating an asteroid field is quite a hazardous venture, but the Arah belt is extremely large, and nowhere near as dense or wildly erratic as other asteroid fields (such as the infamous Anoat Asteroid Belt, which many experienced spacers consider suicide). Still, it's a risky trip that may not leave *The Dark Raider* unscathed.

The character piloting the ship will need to make a hard (◆◆◆) Pilot (Space) check to make it to their destination safely. Failure on the check will mean a few scrapes and minor collisions along the way, resulting

in 5 Hull Trauma to the ship. Each ☼ generated on the check represents extremely close calls, resulting in 1 System Strain to the ship.

Additionally, if ☹☹ (or more) are generated on the check, the pilot was able to skim expertly close to certain asteroids for better sensor readings, resulting in a ■ to future checks made to analyze the composition of the asteroids, as noted below.

### Adjusting the Antennae

As *The Dark Raider* gets closer to its destination inside the belt, the GM should make it clear that the ship's sensors are becoming increasingly erratic. There's some kind of ambient radiation or other particle field that's wreaking havoc with the sensor, making it impossible to perform long-range scans. A character may attempt to analyze the sensor data to determine just what is causing this disruption with a hard (◆◆◆) Computers or Knowledge (Education) check. ✨ reveals that the interference is due to an unusual mineral found in large quantities throughout the surrounding asteroids. The computers identify it as oridium.

A character can then attempt an average (◆◆) Knowledge (Education) or Knowledge (Outer Rim) check to ascertain that oridium is a rare mineral with strange photoelectric properties, and is sometimes used in the manufacture of cloaking devices.

### Digging for Trouble

After the party has had the opportunity to navigate to the triangulated coordinates and possibly learn more about the strange mineral composition of the asteroids, their search patterns will eventually lead them to the site of a rather large and newly destroyed asteroid mining facility.

They'll have the chance to perform sensor readings and "look around" to discover details, eventually learning that the facility was an Imperial Mining Station setup to harvest oridium from the belt and serve as a shipyard for prototype TIE Fighters with cloaking capabilities. The station is dead, with minimal power (enough to keep the magnetic shield going), no life support, and no life sign readings. The station was only recently destroyed, and the severity of the damage should be immediately apparent.

All hands on the station and all support ships were destroyed in the attack, save for a trio of prototype Phantom TIE's running drills in the belt. They've just returned to find their base destroyed, and are currently cloaked, attempting to discover what happened. Read the following to the party to set the scene:

After nearly an hour of search patterns within the target coordinates, and only finding more and more asteroids, you begin to lose heart – until, suddenly, the crackling sensors register a large mass of metal up ahead.

Carefully navigating your ship towards it, you soon enter a large area within the belt mysteriously free of asteroids, and your ship gently rocks with the telltale sign of passing through a magnetic shield – clearly keeping the asteroids at bay.

Ahead, you spy a massive facility; some kind of space station, but moored to a large asteroid. Even from this distance, you can see carbon scoring and serious damage to the facility, as bits of hull plating and other debris from the attacked station float aimlessly nearby.

The party should be encouraged to perform a slow sensor sweep of the area, or do a fly-by to ascertain any visual clues about the station. A successful average (◆◆■) Computers check (with a setback die due to the surrounding oridium) or a hard (◆◆◆) Perception check will reveal that the station is some type of mining facility, fairly new, clearly setup to mine oridium in the belt. Each additional ✨ or 🌀 on a successful check can be spent to uncover additional detail:

- There is another hulk of metal half a kilometer away from the mining facility, with the silhouette of a ship, but no power signs or life signs.
- The facility is clearly Imperial; not only in the construction, but the components are clearly of Imperial manufacture. There are also Imperial insignias on the station.
- The damage to the station appears recent, *very recent*, most likely within the last hour – and it appears to be damage from sustained turbolaser fire.
- Not only is the damaged station equipment clearly mining machinery, but also shipwright and construction equipment.

A 🌀 on the check will allow the party to notice the presence of the cloaked Phantom TIEs before they move to engage the PCs' ship.

The other reading half a kilometer away from the station is the remains of an Incom X4 Gunship. The party should be able to easily do a fly-by and examine it. This is the recently destroyed remnant of a "fake" pirate ship the Imperials running the facility cooked up to scare people away from the asteroid belt. When the station was

attacked, this ship didn't last long. Read the following to the party to set the scene:

The now-dead hulk of the gunship floats silently in front of your view port; no power or life signs. The ship took one hell of a beating, and you spy a hole blasted clear through it, from port to starboard. The computer registers its make and model as an Incom X4 Gunship – a recently manufactured boat.

You spy rudimentary and rather crude markings – pirate symbols – painted on the outside of the hull. Whatever happened to this ship, it appears to have happened at the same time the station was destroyed.

The PCs may suggest scanning the ship, or even boarding it (or the station), but the GM should give them little time for that. After they've had the chance to learn and deduce some possible facts – the Phantom TIE fighters will move to engage them.

### TIEd Down

When the station was attacked, three of its recently produced Phantom TIE prototypes were out doing drills in the asteroid belt. They returned only minutes before the party's ship arrived, and have remained cloaked, trying to ascertain what happened and watching *The Dark Raider* with great interest. Eventually, they'll note no Imperial code signals, and determine that the party's ship is an interloper – possibly even an attacker. Either way, they will follow protocol and try to destroy it immediately.

### Component Hits (Small Ships)

- A gunner can choose to attempt to directly target a ship's components with his attack by adding ■■ to his combat check.
- If the attack hits and deals damage, the character selects a single component hit from Table 7-9 (pg. 244, *Edge of the Empire*), which is knocked offline and rendered inoperable until the end of the following round. The attacker cannot generate an additional critical hit if one is rolled.
- The attacker may also spend 🌀🌀🌀 to render the component inoperable until properly repaired.

Even with the magnetic shield in place, there are several smaller asteroids in the area, as well as the hulk of the wrecked ship, to provide cover and maneuvering options for both *The Dark Raider* and the TIEs. The TIE's will de-cloak at long range from the party's ship and immediately accelerate to full attack speed. Their squadron leader will broadcast to *The Dark Raider* a simple threat that the ship is in a restricted area – and to drop their shields

immediately. In reality, they have no intention of handling the PCs peacefully, simply to make them an easier target once they get within weapons range. But still, the comm channel is open, and a clever party might try to bluff their way out of the situation or gain more information.

### Obligation Effect – Dr. Jessa Moro

If Dr. Moro's Obligation triggered at the start of the adventure:

- While cloaked, the TIE pilots have scanned the party's ship, and run it against the recently updated Imperial records they have. The computers identify *The Dark Raider* as a ship tied to a known criminal, Jessa Moro, wanted for crimes on several mid-rim worlds.
- The TIEs will immediately assume the PCs are criminal saboteurs – probably responsible for the destruction of the station. Their broadcast message will entail that they have a known criminal on board, wanted for crimes against the Empire; after that, they will ignore any communication attempt.
- They will attack immediately and begin the encounter one range band closer than normal when they de-cloak.

Should a space battle break out, the following are the details of the encounter scene:

- *The Dark Raider* should be within short range of the ruins of the Incom X4 Gunship, and at long range from the TIE Phantoms. The party ship will typically be at a speed of 1 when the encounter starts.
- The TIEs will keep in attack formation until within striking distance and then unleash an attack, then move into a practiced evasion pattern where they break apart in different directions, trying to flank the ship.
- If any of the TIEs take damage – or are destroyed – the others will take the PCs more seriously as a threat, and start aggressively using their cloaking devices to maneuver to a vulnerable attack point. (If the PCs use a weapon with an activated Guided quality, its second attack will automatically fail if it's target is cloaked.)
- Any attempt to remotely slice into the TIEs' systems will be met with require an opposed (◆◆◆◆◆) check with a setback die (for the surrounding oridium).
- The pilots are skilled, and will intelligently use Evasive Maneuvers and Stay on Target if the situation warrants it.
- The prototype TIEs don't have hyperdrives, and with no station to return to, they know it will be a miracle if they survive anyway. They'll fight to the last man, and will not flee.

### PROTOTYPE TIE PHANTOM

Silhouette: 3      Speed: 5      Handling: +3  
 Defense: 0      Armor: 2

Hull Trauma Threshold: 6  
 System Strain Threshold: 8

Weapons: Laser Cannons (Fire Arc Forward) (Gunnery [◆◆◆◆◆]; Damage: 6; Critical: 3; Range: Close; Linked 1)

Equipment: Prototype Cloaking Device (Maneuver to activate, renders ship invisible to sight and sensors; ship cannot attack while cloaked; effect ends if ship suffers trauma or strain; after de-cloaking, the device cannot be re-engaged for 2 rounds)



- A critical component (such as the prototype cloaking devices) are knocked out.
- One of the foes is pushed into a minor collision with debris, dealing strain and pushing it off-course.



- A ricocheted shot strikes a nearby asteroid, which begins careening into the battlefield.
- A missed attack hits the remains of the X4, spewing caustic fuel into a dangerous position.

If *The Dark Raider* gets into serious trouble, the GM might feel free to introduce *Dugan's Hand* right away, which will de-cloak and immediately destroy any remaining TIEs with powerful turbolaser fire. Seeing a "cargo ship", however, they will not fire upon the party until they've had a chance to plunder their ship. The pirates don't feel the same way about the TIE Fighter's, however. They consider these "interlopers" to be "rival pirates", and having just destroyed their station, they will have no issue immediately eradicating their smaller ships.

It should be made apparent by the GM that the party has no hope of taking on *Dugan's Hand* in a straight-up fight, even if they wanted to (their mission is to *capture* this ship, after all). It's a frigate-sized battle cruiser outfitted with numerous lethal weapons, ion cannons, tractor beams, and heavy armor. Still, if the party persists in trying to fight or escape from the pirate ship, the GM can use the ship stat block below. *Dugan's Hand* ultimately will use non-lethal tactics on the party's ship, until it is disabled. It can match it in speed, so there's little hope of the PCs easily getting away.

## DUGAN'S HAND

Silhouette: 6      Speed: 3      Handling: -1  
Defense: 2/2/2/2      Armor: 6

Hull Trauma Threshold: 75  
System Strain Threshold: 40

Weapons: 6 Port and 6 Starboard Turret Mounted Retractable Medium Turbolasers (Fire Arc Forward, Aft, and Port or Forward, Aft, and Starboard) (Gunnery [    ]; Damage: 10; Critical: 3; Range: Long; Breach 3, Slow-Firing 1)

Weapons: 2 Port, 2 Starboard, 2 Forward, and 2 Aft Turret Mounted Retractable Light Laser Cannons (Fire Arc Port or Starboard or Forward or Aft) (Gunnery [    ]; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range: Close)

Weapons: 2 Port, 2 Starboard, and 2 Forward Turret Mounted Retractable Medium Ion Cannons (Fire Arc Port or Starboard or Forward) (Gunnery [    ]; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range: Medium; Ion)

Weapons: 2 Forward Mounted Heavy Tractor Beam Emitters (Fire Arc Forward) (Gunnery [    ]; Damage -; Critical -; Range: Medium; Tractor 6)

Equipment: Cloaking Device (Maneuver to activate, renders ship invisible to sight and sensors; ship cannot attack while cloaked; effect ends if ship suffers trauma or strain; after de-cloaking, the device cannot be re-engaged for 1 round)

### Puh... Puh... PIRATE GHOSTS!

While the fight between the party and the TIE Phantoms has been going on, the *Dugan's Hand* has been cloaked in far orbit of the mining facility it just decimated, watching with interest. Recognizing *The Dark Raider* as a cargo ship, *Dugan's Hand* wants to capture it. Its droid "captain" has grown quite bored, and is interested in "playing" with the party before taking their cargo. At the moment, it is amused by the fight and wants to see how it plays out.

Regardless, *Dugan's Hand* won't allow the party's ship to be destroyed, and will aggressively de-cloak and decimate any TIE Phantom that seriously threatens the party. If the party defeats the TIEs, however, *Dugan's Hand* will immediately de-cloak and lock tractor beams onto *The Dark Raider*, firing its Ion Cannons if the ship resists. When the *Dugan's Hand* becomes visible, read the following to the party to set the scene:

Before you have a moment to rest, your sensors start bleeping wildly, and you stare out the viewport to see a massive battle cruiser the size of a small frigate materialize off the port bow!

Its hull still crackling with the tell-tale refracted light of a cloaking device, you spy stout defensive armaments across the hull, which is bristling with retractable gun emplacements and painted with a vicious pirate sigil. You immediately recognize the ship as the one and only *Dugan's Hand* – the *real* pirate ship – right out of archival records.

Your small freighter shudders and shakes as you feel the pull of a tractor beam as *The Dark Raider* is pulled strongly towards the larger ship.

Blaring over the comm, you hear a deep voice cry, "YAAAARGH, MATEYS! Avast! Ye booty is soon to be plundered! Yaaaar! ... Avast...! Yaaaaaargh... Yaaa-a-a-a ERROR. SYSCOM SUBROUTINE 17B. ERROR."

You stare at your companions in confusion and fear, and notice the comm channel is still open...

*Dugan's Hand* has locked both of its tractor beams onto the party's ship, and will begin towing them in to dock with it. The group may quickly surmise that they are speaking with a droid, and can attempt conversing with it, since the comm channel is still open. The droid is privately amused with the party, and will entertain conversation – unless they make it angry.

The droid controlling all of *Dugan's Hand* and its crew had its processor corrupted into complete insanity long ago. As such, it should never give any straight answers to their questions – and any answers it provides will always be in an overdone "pirate style" before trailing off into random gibberish or crazy side-conversations with itself. Below are some good responses to questions the party might ask of it, while it tows them in:

- Who or what are you?

*I be the CAPTAIN of the open seas! YAAAAARGH!!! Avast, me hardies... ERROR. WALK THROUGH STARS AND SIT ON FLOWER FENCES... Face the might of Dugan's Hand and face yer doom!*

- Are you a droid?

*[maniacal laughter] Yaaar, I be your doom, lest ye prove yourselves... THE HYDROSPANNER TASTES LIKE PURPLE THRUSTERS... ERROR...*

- What do you want?

*Yer ship is to be plundered! ...LITTLE FRAN SAT WITH A GRAN EATING ORDOLIAN STEW... ALONG CAME A GUNDARK AND GAVE HER QUITE A START SO SHE ATE HIM AND THE GRAN, TOOOOooooo.... [maniacal laughter]*

- You're not taking us! (Or any other form of defiance, threats, or attempts by the party to probe into the droid's situation.)

*No! NO!!! You dare?? YOU DARE??!! MUTINY WILL NOT BE SUFFERED! You will ALL walk the plank!!! I want you... to come and play... [maniacal laughter] ...ALL ALONG THE CORELLIAN SHORE THE RANCOR CHASED THE VOORPAK, HE STUMBLED AROUND AND BUSTED HIS CROWN, AND THE SEA DRAGGED HIM DOWN... Come and play... come and play... come and play...*

Any attempt to remotely connect with the pirate ship's systems can be accomplished with a successful opposed (◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆) Computers check. The check's extreme difficulty is due to a combination of factors: the skill of the droid intelligence controlling the ship, interference from the surrounding oridium, and long-established counter-intrusion measures Dugan had installed to prevent remote slicing of his ship. Should a PC be successful, they'll learn that there is a single machine intelligence controlling the main computer and the ship itself.

### Obligation Effect – R2-F4 “Whistler”

If Whistler's Obligation triggered at the start of the adventure:

- If Whistler attempts to remotely connect to *Dugan's Hand*, he will feel a powerful machine intelligence probing his memory banks, and immediately realize that his secret cache of data has been discovered. (Should Whistler not attempt to directly slice into the pirate ship's system, the GM can have the ship “scan” *The Dark Raider*, and remotely access Whistler's databanks to discover his secret.)
- The “captain” has now found new data that can alleviate his boredom: a “treasure map” (as he will put it) to great fortune and adventure.
- During the subsequent encounter, the pirate droids will make Whistler their top priority, attempting to disable him so they can take him up to the bridge. This includes the “krakens”, which will try to drag the little droid beneath the bulkhead to carry him along service conduits to the bridge.

In reality, the droid “captain” only has eight other droid crewmembers fully assembled, and each has a remote processor (it controls them all directly). Its success so far has been in the fear its stolen legend has inspired, and the extreme firepower of the battle ship at its command. But it's growing bored, and wants the PCs to enter its domain for a new experience. It won't invade their ship, but will firmly lock it down, waiting with insane patience for the PCs to come aboard and “play”.

## Avast, ye Scurvy Droids

Once the party's ship is towed fully along-side the *Dugan's Hand*, it will be locked down with magnetic clamps, sealing it to the hull. Disabling those clamps will require direct access from inside. The droid controlling this mechanical pirate menagerie wants this; in its boredom and insane glee over the situation, it's eager to lure the PCs inside to “play” in the trap it has set up for them. It secretly hopes the party will defeat it, as its programming schema considers that an “honorable defeat” – but it will still try as hard as it can to kill them.

Regardless of how long the party waits inside their ship, the droid intelligence will wait with the patience of the truly crazy, trying to draw the party out into one of the cargo bays where it has its “crew” waiting for them. The entire scene should be one of tension and fear. If the party persists or deliberates too long, the GM should feel free to have the droid remotely access their ship and shut off life support or cause the reactor to malfunction – as the droid tries to herd them off the ship and into the bay.

### Spooky Swashbuckling

The docking bay next to the party's ship is filled with debris and cargo crates. The “captain” is hiding six of his droid pirate crew in the bay to ambush the PCs, with his two “bosuns” on the deck below in turbolifts, waiting to enter the fight if things stop becoming interesting for the droid intelligence. All exits out of the bay are blocked with locked doors or active energy grids, but there is an active holo-terminal at the far end of the bay, which the party can use to attempt to control their situation.

The hidden droids will attempt to kill the party, first. The bosuns will only appear if half of the pirate droid minions go down. The GM should feel free to have them enter out of any of the 4 turbolifts in the bay (not just the recommended ones on the map), if it would make for a more interesting or dangerous scenario.

As the scene starts, the GM should focus on creating an atmosphere of fear and the unknown. Read the following to the party to set the scene:

You carefully step into a large cargo bay and feel a soft crunching under your feet as you make noticeable imprints in two to three centimeters of dust that covers the floor and about half of the copious cargo containers and junk which litter the area. It's dimly lit, with most of the light coming from the docking lamps that surround the bay door to your ship, a soft blue glow that seems to come from a holo-terminal at the far side of the bay, and a baleful red emanating from active laser security grids that seem to block off most every exit.

Most of the cargo and machinery appear extremely old; though you notice several new crates – some with power lights still blinking – have been dragged into various positions in the bay, leaving trails in the dust. As you look closer, you can also make out the faint traces of footprints in the dust ahead, and all you can hear is the buzzing of the security grids, and the soft thrum of engines far below you.

When the droid pirates are encountered, the GM should describe them accordingly. The pirate minions are clearly droids at closer glance – but didn't come off an assembly line. Their construction is "ramshackle" and they appear to be created (literally) out of spare parts. But they are also outfitted in pirate clothing – or a reasonable approximation. This includes pirate bandanas, eye-patches, and knee-high boots. The "Bosuns" are built in the same manner, but much heavier-duty, and nearly 2 meters tall. They wear genuine tri-corn hats, and their integrated carbines are mounted to their shoulders, with metallic beaks and wings attached to the exterior (to look like parrots). The droids should shout "pirate-style" battle cries and use appropriate nonsensical jargon.

This encounter is designed to be extremely difficult (the droid "captain" will throw everything he has at the party), and will involve environmental foes ("krakens") that can only be defeated through clever skill use. The following are the details of the encounter area:

- The PCs will enter the bay from their docking ship (marked **PC** on the map), and from that position will be at long range from the holo-terminal (marked **T** on the map).
- Two groups of 3 Minion Pirate Droids (marked **DP** on the map) are hiding amongst the cargo, waiting to ambush the PCs. Upon entering the bay, provide the party the opportunity for opposed (◆◆■) Perception checks to notice the droids. As soon as the PCs enter a firing line, the droids will shoot – with a free upgrade to their attack against any PC who failed to notice them.
- Two "bosun" pirate droids (marked with a **BP** on the map) are waiting one deck below in turbo-lifts, and will

be directed to enter the fight if over half of the minion droids are disabled.

- One to three "krakens" (bundles of hydraulic and power cabling snaking under the bay, remotely contorted into attacking constructs by the "captain") will erupt from the floor plating throughout the encounter – typically when a minion group of droids is completely disabled, or when both "bosuns" are disabled.
- The holo-terminal is the obvious way to control the scene and get out. Slicing into it is much easier than a remote attempt from the party's ship, as a hard-link to the main computer downgrades the difficulty and bypasses the setback dice of Dugan's anti-intrusion countermeasures and the oridium distortion. It requires an opposed (◆◆◆◆◆) Computers check. Success will allow the slicer to initiate one basic command from within the bay:
  - Disrupt the remote transmitters controlling the droids (giving a ■ to any check any of the pirate droids makes for 1 round).
  - Open any of the doors.
  - Bathe the bay in floodlights.
  - Kill the hydraulic pressure to the bay (this will immediately stop all of the "Krakens", which will fall inert).

- One of the aging cargo containers is filled with fuel and explodes, damaging every nearby foe!
- Nearby containers break open, creating difficult terrain for foes to navigate.
- One of the "Krakens" makes an early appearance – in the worst possible spot.
- Nearby containers tumble down for collateral damage to one or more PCs, or difficult terrain to their disadvantage.

When all eight of the pirate crew have been disabled, and the "krakens" shut down, the droid intelligence will consider himself "honorably defeated" and will await to surrender his vessel to the PCs.

### Cracking the Krakens

This encounter will have an unusual environmental threat in the "krakens" summoned up if the fight starts to go in the party's favor. They are massive constructs of machine parts, power conduits, and hydraulic cables wrenched from the bay machinery to swallow the PCs whole. They should appear, typically, where the last droid in a minion group fell – but the GM should feel free to have them appear anywhere in the bay, while making sure they don't

completely block the holo-terminal, at least not for a few rounds (that's just bad GMing, right there).

They are immobile, but each round will grow in size; first expanding within short range, then out to medium range the following round, and so on. Within 7 or 8 rounds, they will fill the bay. Not only can they attack all PCs within their reach, but moving through their areas is treated as moving through difficult terrain. However, the GM may allow a hard (◆◆◆) Coordination or Athletics check to ignore these effects. Any surviving droid allies can move through this difficult terrain without penalty.

When the first "kraken" appears, it's a hideous and dangerous sight that should fill the party with fear. Each PC will need to make a Fear Check after the first "kraken" rises from the floor. If they are deactivated, however, any negative effects of a Fear Check (except for Strain suffered from ☹️) are removed.



### Fear Checks

When making a fear check, the character can decide whether to use Cool or Discipline, with various effects, depending on the results:

- ▼: The character adds ■ to any check he makes during the encounter.
- ☹️: The character suffers Strain equal to the number of ▼. If the check generates ☹️☹️☹️ or more, the character can instead be staggered for his first turn (unable to take any actions).
- ☹️: The character is so frightened, all checks he makes have their difficulty upgraded by 1 until the end of the encounter.
- ☆ or multiple ☆: The character avoids any fear effects, except those triggered by ☹️.
- 🙏: Gain ■ on your next check in the encounter. Spend multiple 🙏 to grant ■ to other character's next checks.
- 🙏: Cancels all penalties from fear checks for the rest of the encounter – no matter the source.

The "kraken" constructs (due to their nature) shrug off most all personal weapons damage, and they will not attack or hinder any pirate droids. The only way to "stop them" is through obvious slicing of the holo-terminal to kill hydraulic pressure to the bay, or through creative uses of cargo or other skill checks. These creatures are tough – and the danger exists of the GM making them "too tough". As such, the GM should be very encouraging of the party's suggestions, and readily point out the holo-terminal if the players have failed to connect the dots.

Again, the GM shouldn't use these threats to destroy the party or make defeating them impossible by totally blocking the terminal, or appearing directly beneath an entire group of PCs. There is a danger in these constructs overwhelming the encounter; and while they are surely a major point of fear and concern, they shouldn't make the encounter "unbeatable". This will require active judgment on the part of the GM, and if one "kraken" has appeared and decimated the PCs, or is causing serious issues – the GM *probably shouldn't summon any more of them*.

Should their limited mobility make them a non-threat, however, the GM might consider using them in unexpected ways, such as allowing a droid ally to move "through" them completely as an incidental action.

### "KRAKEN" MECHANICAL CONSTRUCT

Brawn 5                      Cunning 1                      Presence 1  
 Agility 1                      Intellect 1                      Willpower 1

Skills: - (Has no ranks in any skills)

Soak: -                                      Defense: -  
 Wound Threshold: - (Cannot suffer direct damage)  
 Strain Threshold: - (Cannot suffer strain)

Equipment: Hydraulic Tentacles (Brawl [◆◆◆◆];  
 Damage: 5; Critical: 4; Range: Engaged; Disorient 1,  
 Ensnare 1, Sunder)

Special Abilities: Can attack any foe within range as a single Action and attack roll (this roll is against the highest difficulty of the targeted foes).

### "BOSUN" PIRATE DROID (RIVAL)

Brawn 4            Cunning 2            Presence 2  
 Agility 2           Intellect 1           Willpower 1

Skills: Brawl 1 (◆◆◆◆●), Coerce 1 (●), Cool 1 (◆●), Melee (●●), Ranged (Heavy) 2 (●●), Resilience 1 (◆◆◆◆●), Vigilance 1 (●)

Adversary 1: Upgrade incoming attack by 1  
 Soak: 5                                  Defense: 1

Wound Threshold: 15  
 Strain Threshold: – (Suffers wounds instead)

Equipment: Blaster Carbine - Integrated (Ranged [Heavy] [●●]); Damage: 9; Critical: 3; Range: Medium; Stun Setting), Grasping Claws (Brawl [◆◆◆◆●]); Damage: 4; Critical: 4; Range: Engaged; Disorient 1, Knockdown)

### DROID PIRATE MINIONS (3)

Brawn 2            Cunning 1            Presence 1  
 Agility 2           Intellect 1           Willpower 1

Skills: (for group of 3; downgrade by 1 for each dead minion): Cool (◆●), Melee (●●), Ranged (Light) (●●), Stealth (◆◆)

Soak: 3                                  Defense: 1  
 Wound Threshold: 15 (5 each) (Crit deals 5 wounds)  
 Strain Threshold: – (Suffers wounds instead)

Equipment: Blaster Pistol - Integrated (Ranged [Light] [●●]); Damage: 6; Critical: 3; Range: Medium; Stun Setting), Vibro-cutlass (Melee [●●]); Damage: 4; Critical: 2; Range: Engaged; Pierce 2, Vicious 1, Defensive 1)

Map of the *Dugan's Hand* Cargo Bay  
 (Maps of Mastery™ "Battle Stations II"© - Hangar Deck; modified with "Sci-Fi Cargo Tiles" ©)



## End Program

When the final threat has been eliminated, the party is free to use the computer terminal to disable any security grids still up, unlock any doors still closed, and explore the *Dugan's Hand*. With the resources available to it, the droid intelligence captaining this ship has only had time to construct a bare crew of droid scallywags, which the party has just defeated. In his twisted, insane sense of true piracy protocol, he awaits the party on the ship's bridge, to surrender the vessel.

The rest of the ship is deserted, and covered in the same rime of ancient dust found in the cargo bay. As the heroes make their way through the giant battle cruiser, they find no indication of any life, and discover the ship in extreme disrepair. Fried conduits and machinery ripped open for salvageable parts litter the passageways, and a few dozen mouse droids skitter about, racing away from the PCs as they approach the nearly completed bodies of more ramshackle droid pirates. If the party is curious, there are a dozen cargo bays on board, most of them filled with centuries of plunder: a real find for any archaeologist.

### An Honorable Surrender

Eventually, when the party makes their way to the bridge, they will find it clean and fully powered. No life is here, but the party will have the chance to finally uncover what has happened to this ship, its history, and the record of its actions against the Imperials. Much of this information can be conveyed narratively, but feel free to allow the party to discover it through Perception or Computers checks. Read the following to set the scene:

The ship's large bridge is meticulously clean – in stark contrast to the rest of the ship – and appears in good repair, fully powered up. Still... you see no signs of life anywhere, until you reach the captain's chair.

The desiccated, near-mummified corpse of a massive Tof dressed in expensive finery sits helplessly in the chair, its head held proud. A fancy sword still sits in a scabbard on his belt, next to an old blaster pistol. The long-dead pirate, Dugan, seems to stare at you with gruff silence.

A few meters away, the only other figure on the bridge is what looks like an ancient protocol droid, unmoving, but with light in its photo-receptors. About a dozen cables snake their way from the back of its head, across the floor, and into the main computer. As you approach, a familiar voice broadcasts over the comm:

*Avast me hardies... ye have defeated me in honorable combat, tis up to ye... what will be... STOP. COMMAND ERROR. PROTOCOLS CORRUPTED... YO HO! YO HO! A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR MEEEEEEEE....*

The voice trails off, and you stare at your companions who share concerned looks.

It's up to the party whether they leave the droid functional or not. After all this time, his processor is dependent on the ship's computer, and disconnecting him from it will result in his immediate "death". Keeping the droid functional is always an option, however, though the party may take issue with a clearly homicidal and thoroughly corrupted droid processor directly connected to a battle ship's main computer.

At this point, the party can access ship computer records, captain and crew logs, and sensor & navigation histories to come to a complete picture of what has transpired.

### History Lesson

Spending an hour or so searching through the records in the main computer and examining the captain's logs reveals the cause for Dugan's untimely demise and the "disappearance" of his ship. The party can learn the following:

- After a decade of plunder, Dugan's logs indicate that he knew of the rich oridium deposits in the Arah Belt, and finally had the wealth to mine them and crudely fashion a cloaking device for his ship, the *Dugan's Hand*. His own logs note his sense of pride, and how he looked forward to using this new capability.
- Later logs, however, express frustration from the Tof captain. The computing demands needed to effectively run the cloaking device were just too much for the ship. Maintenance records confirm this: every time they attempted to cloak the ship, the main computer would shut down or massive electrical components would fry. The only way to maintain the cloak was to regulate power away from life support or engines. Dugan expressed extreme regret and anger at this failure.
- Some of the last captain's log entries express a glimmer of hope. It seems Dugan's faithful protocol droid came up with a potential solution: 2 computers. Specifically, one computer and one droid brain. Dugan notes how his engineers agreed – if a droid were directly hardwired into the ship's systems, it could devote its processing to managing the power regulation for the cloaking device, leaving the main computer free to run the rest of the ship. With a small hint of trepidation, Dugan agreed to the plan.
- The next series of records are sporadic and frightening, but paint a vivid picture for the party. Shortly after

wiring his droid into the main computer, malfunctions began occurring all over the ship. Less than 2 hours later, all the airlocks and exterior hatches on the ship suddenly opened – venting the entire crew out into open space. Only the bridge remained sealed. This was followed by catastrophic system malfunctions, exploding power conduits, and power failures across the ship.

- Dugan's last log entry notes his despair; with no crew, and no way to repair his ship – he ponders his own life, and wonders how long he will last.

It should be clear to any PC with a rank or two in Computers or Mechanics that the action of linking the droid brain to a massive ship computer and exposing it to prototype technology (in the form of the cloaking device) horribly corrupted its processor, leading to an insane intelligence in full control of the ship.

After that, ship records are nearly non-existent, except for automated maintenance logs that piece together the silent story of the three centuries that followed Dugan's demise. His droid survived. And slowly, surely, repaired itself – This took centuries. Once fully active again (just a few short months ago), it used the tiny maintenance units aboard to begin repairing the ship and constructing a new "crew". And four weeks ago, the droid began making his *own* entries in the captain's log.

It's clear that it instated itself as "captain", now that it had a crew, with its corrupted processor desperately trying to fulfill his former master's desires: Piracy!

### **The Recent Attacks**

The new captain's logs explain that as soon as the ship was up and running, it began pirating again – but it encountered a problem. As the droid captain recorded it: "rival pirates". The sensor logs indicate that *Dugan's Hand* watched the Imperials attack ships "in our territory" and destroy them with no survivors; acts of "great dishonor" that "broke the pirate code".

The party should realize by now that the secret Imperial facility to mine oridium and produce prototype cloaked TIE fighters was using a dummy ship and the legend of *Dugan's Hand* to frighten away visitors in the system. The droid interpreted this as rival piracy (having no knowledge of the Empire), and set about destroying them. Eventually it discovered their base, and ended their threat permanently.

### **Fortune and Glory**

The party is now in full possession of an old, but still very powerful, battleship that is the archaeological find of a lifetime; filled with rich history and ancient valuables.

Despite the disrepair of the ship, the sub-light engines and hyperdrive are operational. The ship will need a few months of overhaul by a team of seriously trained technicians to get it back to the shape it was once in – but it's still space-worthy. As to whether the party decides to turn the full ship and its cargo over to their patron university, it's truly up to them. The legend of Dugan the pirate is strong and alluring, and few fringers in possession of such a powerful ship could cast off the dreams of piracy, fortune, and glory!

Regardless of their decision, the Empire has suffered a major blow in the Arah System. If the *Dugan's Hand* is linked to these events, life could become very difficult – not to mention short – for the party. Will the team expose the Empire's operations here? And if they don't, will the Empire take the risk and leave them alone? Tough decisions with heavy consequences await the crew of *The Dark Raider* – or perhaps now, the crew of the *Dugan's Hand*.

# Dead Man's Hand

## Player Characters

### Garner Rel



Growing up in the core worlds to a family of academics, Garner was a brilliant young student, but found tedium in school, only relishing the idea of seeking out and exploring the vast mysteries of galactic history and the unknown. As a part of his post-graduate studies, Garner took part in an expedition to Wild Space where his ship crash-landed and all hands were lost, except him. Rescued after 2 years, Garner not only survived, but had already established trading relations with the local natives and performed a one-man excavation of several ruins on the planet. His efforts and his rescue became quite a story, and garnered him fame, respect, and an immediate offer of tenure from his university. Garner refused, only agreeing to work on high-risk expeditions. And for the last 25 years, that's what he's been doing; having built a team that tackles impossible research and discovery every day.

### Nukri Sandor



Nukri teamed up with Garner Rel almost 10 years ago, when she smuggled herself aboard his ship as a stowaway, to escape an assassin tracking her for debts owed to Rowlo the Hutt. She had no idea Garner's ship was headed to the outer rim on a long-haul expedition. An experienced smuggler, Garner was impressed with her abilities – and the fact that she lasted a week in hyperspace before being discovered. She was offered the chance to join his team, and she jumped at the opportunity to use her skills in steady work, with a crew constantly on the move in unknown regions – far away from her pursuers. Though Rowlo no longer has assassin on her tail, she does have outstanding debts (and bounties) with the Hutt, and Garner has been helping her save enough to pay off Rowlo with interest when the time is right. Nukri is Garner's oldest and most trusted crewmate, and she is fiercely loyal to her crew and its captain.

### Slussk



As a hatchling, Slussk was sold into slavery for the crimes of his mother, a religious fanatic with a progressive view of the Trandoshan goddess, the Scorekeeper. Sold to a crime lord, Slussk was raised to compete in illegal gladiatorial fights, and gained quite a reputation – until the day Slussk lost a fight and his master ordered his death. But a human in attendance offered the crime lord a rare artifact in exchange for Slussk's life, took ownership of him, and then immediately freed him. In gratitude, Slussk swore a life debt to his new *ghrakhowsk* and now, captain, Garner Rel. Not having a predisposition for exploration, Slussk sometimes finds his *ghrakhowsk's* work tedious, but admits the danger of the work provides plenty of opportunity for much *jagannath*. And Garner seems to appreciate Slussk's talents – but annoyingly insists he broaden his mind and his views.

### Dr. Jessa Moro



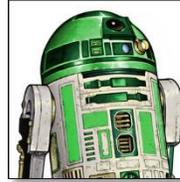
As a talented medical student, Jessa's beauty contrasted with her severely bookish and unflinching demeanor, which prompted the other students to dub her "The Princess of Hoth". After graduation, the young Dr. Moro's secret passion of medical research led her into activities that were not, strictly speaking, "legal". After being chased away from several mid-rim systems under allegations of experimentation on sentient beings, Garner Rel discovered her in the Rishi Maze, attempting (and failing) to put together a crew to steal cloning research from Kamino. Seeing within her a streak of raw intelligence and wonder at the unknown, he recruited her to his team. Her demeanor hasn't changed, and she is sometimes quite aloof with the rest of the crew; but her skills with a medkit are undeniable, and her knowledge of biology has proven invaluable to the team's efforts, making her someone the crew respects – even if she keeps trying to get them to take strange injections.

## Jek Tassom



As an eager scholar of history, Jek was always most comfortable with his nose in a datapad. Assigned to be the research assistant to a brilliant and dashing twi'lek professor named Beloche, Jek was setup to be the scape-goat when his professor blamed him for the theft of a valuable artifact found in Beloche's possession. Though no criminal charges were filed, Jek was expelled and brow-beaten out of the academic community. Destitute, and unable to find work, Jek was recruited by a rival of Beloche, Garner Rel, who valued Jek's immense knowledge and research acumen. Over the years, Jek has finally become used to extended travel, as it gives him more time for reading and research – and he has developed an exceptional facility with languages and historical connections. More than anything, he wants to be re-accepted by the academic world.

## R2-F4 “Whistler”



Gifted to Garner Rel by a primitive chieftan who'd discovered the deactivated droid in a crashed scout ship many decades before, R2-F4 (or “Whistler” to his friends) was an astromech droid used by the ExplorCorps during the days of the Old Republic, modified and re-programmed to double as a research droid and archivist. Once reactivated and getting up to speed on galactic events, Whistler immediately made himself a valuable addition to Garner's team. Decades of inactivity and processor corruption have given the droid an unusual sense of independence, which he desires to keep. For while he is unable to access many areas of his damaged memory, Whistler knows he stores a horde of data on far-flung Jedi Service Corp outposts where survivors of Order 66 may be hiding – information the Empire would surely want to get their hands on.