

# DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES

## THE STEALER OF LIGHT



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# THE STEALER OF LIGHT

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**SPECIAL THANKS: MARTA CASTELLANO (MY WIFE) FOR SUPPORTING ME ALL  
THE WAY AND FRANCESCA VIARENGO FOR SHE KNOWS EVEN MORE STUFF**



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# THE STEALER OF LIGHT

This book contains an adventure based around the exploits of four pregenerated, spacefaring heroes.

You can find the character sheets and details of their spaceship, the *Blazing Star*, on the Triple Ace Games website: [www.tripleacegames.com](http://www.tripleacegames.com). The heroes have no defined gender, thus the players can assign it as they wish.

The characters have all their leveling opportunities mapped out in advance from Seasoned (from which they start) to Legendary. Each adventure in this series earns the heroes a fixed five Experience Points, granting them advancement after every mission. The players only need to tick the appropriate box on the sheet to start making use of their advancements.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you will know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

You will also need some gaming stone counters or other markers and a copy of the Space Rules Supplement, which you can download free from the [www.tripleacegames.com](http://www.tripleacegames.com) website.

Finally, you will find it useful to have some extra copies of the standard Savage Worlds Burst templates to represent obstacles and terrain elements.

## BACKGROUND

The planet Khoras was once the home of two races: the Khors and the Rannites. Despite being very similar, the two peoples were bitter enemies. The Khors had bronze colored skin, while the Rannites were silvery, but that was the only true difference.

The symbols of this rivalry were their two royal families, both gifted with peculiar psionic powers — the

Khors royal family was able to control and bend light while the Rannites rulers mastered the power of shaping the dark.

An endless, cyclical war raged between the two races, but neither side was strong enough to utterly defeat the other.

This status quo was maintained until the rise of Salandra Sash, heir princess of the Khors. A beautiful girl and a skilled fighter, she left the planet in her youth to join the Mercenary Guild. Many stories were told of her deeds of bravery (some true, others patently false), making her a legend throughout the sector and a popular hero even to this day.

In the end, Salandra returned home to be crowned queen of the Khors.

The experience in the Mercenary Guild taught her many dirty tricks to win a war — and she used the foulest of these to destroy the Rannites.

The warrior queen discovered that the powers of the two royal families depended on a particular radiation produced by Gweo, the local sun. She ordered an ultra-powerful radiation cannon be built in total secret and fired against the sun, permanently changing its radiation pattern in a way that was harmless for the Khors royals, but deadly for the Rannites rulers.

Within a decade, all the Rannites rulers perished and their subjects had no choice but to pay homage to the Khors.

Finally, Khoras became a unified planet.

Ultimately, this was not a good thing: Salandra's descendants proved to be totally inept leaders — in only fifty years, the royal family ran up so much debt that it was forced to sell the entire planet to the Terraformers Guild.

The Guild used Khoras for their experiments and almost destroyed it.

Eventually, both races evacuated the planet, spreading throughout the galaxy and ceasing to exist as a distinct cultural entity.

Now, a century after Salandra Sash's reign, only a sin-

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gle member of the Khors royal family survives: a young woman named Salandra Sash (after her grandmother). She is quite popular, being a holomovie star.

She knows very little of the dark secrets of her family, but an ominous menace looms over her. Unknown to all, Hast, master scientist and last prince of the Rannites dynasty, survived the radiation change.

Thanks to a genetic mutation, Hast escaped with his life, but he was seriously disfigured. As a nice side effect, though, his lifespan was dramatically lengthened.

Via his scientific investigations, the prince discovered his family did not die by natural causes; they were murdered! He has spent many years in isolation, searching for a way to take revenge on Salandra's descendants and now that his life is finally coming to an end, he has found the means.

Hast has returned to Khoras, now an abandoned rock, and in the old Khorite royal palace, he has discovered Salandra's super cannon.

With the help of his robotic minions, Hast has transformed the device into an artifact capable of extracting the power of light from the body of a Khors through a terrible process that causes an agonizing death.

Transferring the stolen power to himself, Hast will be young again.

By doing so, with a single blow, he will destroy his enemies and lay the foundations of a new Rannites dynasty.

The madman plans to kidnap Salandra from the set of her latest holomovie — she is now shooting a film depicting the deeds of her popular ancestor.

Hast has sent one of his most faithful robotic minions (disguised as a clumsy assistant director) to join the movie crew. The droid is there to make kidnapping the girl possible. The plan cannot fail, but at this point, the heroes enter...

**Characters:** 50 XP

**Important Note:** To avoid confusion in the text, Salandra (the space heroine) is referred to as "old Salandra," while her granddaughter (the holomovie star) is called "young Salandra." The "Khors" are the race both Salandras belong to, while the "Rannites" are Host's race. The expression "Khorasite" refers to both races from the planet - Both Khors and Rannites together.

## ACT 1: ACTION!

### SCENE 1: A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS... OR NOT?

Read or paraphrase the following passage to the players:

*The life of a spacefarer is not always dodging blaster fire and piloting starships through asteroid fields. Sometimes, even heroes like you need*

*a little R&R, so this evening you enjoyed a lavish dinner to celebrate the lucrative outcome of a recent smuggling operation.*

*You are now leaving Phul Zho, the best restaurant in the sector, strangely placed on Wayland, a very polluted industrial world. The good wine and the delicious food make you wish for one thing only — your comfortable bunks on the Blazing Star.*

*However, tonight will end differently.*

*While you are waiting for a robotaxi on one of the high-level streets of the city, lazily looking at the chaotic traffic on the levels below, an incredible scene catches your attention.*

*Far below you, on the edge of a street platform, a beautiful girl is fighting for her life! She is wearing scant armor, and a sword made of pure light shimmers in her hands. She is surrounded by a group of ugly aliens of some unknown saurian race. To make things worse, a towering monster, as big as an Urk giant, emerges from the shadows and bellows in rage at her! There are too many opponents – if you don't do something, the girl is doomed!*

*Just then, the robotaxi arrives.*

*"Robotaxi X-231 at your service. What is your destination, please?"*

The party must save the girl, and must do it quickly. Before starting the combat, they have to reach her on the level below. There are two ways to accomplish this: either persuade the taxi driver to bring the party to the scene, or use the gravitic conducts nearby. The two solutions are detailed below.

### THE SHY TAXI DRIVER

The robotaxi is a standard hovertaxi piloted by a droid. Using its car is the safer solution, but Robotaxi X-231 is not at all happy about taking its precious vehicle into the middle of a fight! The heroes must accomplish a tight series of actions to reach Salandra with this vehicle. They have only six rounds of time, because the battle below is becoming more difficult with each passing minute. Each step requires a round and counts as an action.

\* **Persuade X-231 to Let Them Board the Taxi.** The droid is not too happy to have a group of danger seeking heroes in its taxi. It must be convinced with either good manners or bad ones. The heroes must accomplish a Persuasion or Intimidation roll. This roll can be cooperative.

\* **Taking the Driver's Seat.** The droid will not drive into peril, so control of the vehicle must be wrested from it and a hero must drive the hovertaxi in its place.

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In order to remove the droid, the heroes must win an opposed Strength roll versus the droid's Strength (d6). It is necessary to win the roll with a raise to drag the droid into the back seat; otherwise, the party must spend another action wrestling with it. Once removed, X-231 complains a lot, but remains calm. In addition, this roll can be cooperative.

**\* Understanding the Controls.** The heroes only have a few moments to become familiar with the hovern-taxi's controls. This requires a Smarts roll. If a hero (in DTSL #1) has already piloted a Wayland hovern-taxi, he does not need to roll, but a full round is still spent remembering the basics.

**\* Rushing to the Girl.** With seating positions taken and controls understood, now the heroes must rush to save the girl! This requires a Piloting roll.

If at the start of the seventh round the heroes have not yet reached Salandra, the girl suffers a Wound. She takes an additional Wound at both the ninth and eleventh round. At the thirteenth, she is Incapacitated. The droids' weapons are set to stun, so the damage is only temporary and she will be fit again at the start of the next scene, but in this case, she will be VERY enraged!

### THE GRAVITIC CONDUITS

The heroes are standing next to a gravitic conduit. It is a circular area with levitating platforms powered by an antigravitic force. No platform is available at the moment, so the heroes must jump into the area and enjoy a low gravity fall if they want to land near the spot where the fight is.

Any hero who chooses this path must make three Agility rolls, one for each round, which represent his ability to move in low gravity. If a hero fails a roll, give the player a gaming stone to represent a bad move in antigravity. At the third round, he suffers 1d6 damage for each gaming stone he has. The damage is considered dealt by an Extra. If a critical failure is rolled, it means the hero has moved so badly that he has been thrown out of the low gravity area! Thanks to his quick reflexes, he clings to a metal pillar, avoiding a terrible death. He needs a Strength (-4) roll to regain balance and a Climbing (-2) roll to reach the spot where the combat is taking place. A single roll can be tried each round.

### SAVING THE GIRL

*You finally reach the fight and are able to better assess the situation. The enemies are small but very quick bipedal reptiloids, armed with nasty metal whips charged with crackling energy. However, the biggest problem is their leader: A huge saurian, twice the size of a man and completely naked except for a full helm and a durasteel shield. He is also holding a very nasty looking weapon in his claws - an energy trident!*

*The girl is so focused on the combat that she does not seem to notice your arrival.*

The fighting area is a circular platform, 18" wide, used as an emergency landing pad for hovervehicles.

Looking at the area clockwise, there are four passageways, each 3" wide, at hour twelve, three, six, and nine.

Place Salandra Sash (the girl) in the center of the area. The enemies have surrounded her, and are 6" away.

Heroes arriving on the spot using the gravitic conduits are placed within 3" of a passageway of their choice (it must be the same for all the heroes).

Heroes in the hovern-taxi are not placed in the combat area. Instead, during his turn, the driver moves the vehicle into the combat area from a side of his choice, using the taxi's Pace (20"). Clever heroes can directly ram into the aliens (see below)!

The tactic of the opponents is simple; they want to render Salandra unconscious.

Salandra simply uses Full Defense or Tricks until an enemy is taken out. She is still convinced she is shooting a movie scene!

When the first enemy is dispatched (put out of action, not simply Shaken), read the following passage.

*Your blow is a solid one, killing the enemy on the spot. He falls apart revealing mechanical parts inside. It is not a living being, it is a droid!*

*"You fool!" The blonde girl shouts at you, "You've ruined it all!"*

*Just then, a stray enemy blow hits her, leaving a red mark on her bare legs.*

*"For all the galaxies!" She swears, with an astonished look in her eyes: "They are armed with real weapons!"*

From this point on, Salandra uses her Powers and tries to defend herself as best she can. The battle ends when all the enemies are eliminated. At this point, move on to the next scene. Salandra is on the party's side, so hand the players her stats and let them use her in the fight.

★ **Salandra Sash, holomovie actress:** See page 30.

★ **Kandaroon Centurion, stage droid:** See page 29.

★ **Kandaroon Raptors, stage droids ( 2 per hero):** See page 29.

### HOVERTAXI

Hovern-taxis are small and nimble, capable of weaving through traffic at breakneck speed.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 15/60; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+4

**Notes:** Max height 100".

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## TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Platform Edges:** The edge of the platform is slippery due the terrible pollution of the planet. Any character hit by a blow and standing within 3" of the edge (excluding the areas in front of the passageways) must make an Agility roll. With a failure, he falls! An Extra failing the roll is doomed to a tragic death after a minute long fall. A Wild Card manages somehow to cling to the edge of the platform. He needs a Strength (-4) roll to climb back up. This roll can be cooperative.

\* **Hovertaxi:** The heroes can enter the scene ramming the bad guys with the taxi! This makes X-231 complain even more, but it is a good tactic. The vehicle is 3" wide, 6" long, and moves 20" each round. All characters on its path must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 3d6 damage. After the ramming, the vehicle stops. The driver must a do Piloting (-2) roll. In case of success he arrests the taxi in a safe place, otherwise the vehicle stops exactly on the Platform Edges (see above)! Any hero that want to leave the car must now cross the slippery terrain. The pilot should receive a Bennie for this cool stunt.

The engine is jammed so the taxi cannot be moved again for the rest of the fight. The vehicle counts as Medium Cover (-2) and has Toughness 12.

\* **Emergency Energy Tower** The platform is equipped with an automated energy tower for vehicles that are out of power. It counts as difficult terrain, offers Light Cover (-1) and has Toughness 10. If the tower is damaged by an energy weapon, it explodes, dealing 2d6 damage from an Extra in a Large Burst Template. Place the tower somewhere on the northern side of the platform, using a Small Burst Template to represent it.

## SCENE 2: MOVIE STARS

*"Stop!" A voice shouts from outside the scene.*

*You recharge your weapons — all the droids may be destroyed, but you don't know if other enemies might show up.*

*A group of hovercars, loaded with people and strange devices, flies toward the platform, while several other people emerge from hiding nearby. They all carry cameras, lights and other movie production equipment. You suddenly realize that you are standing on a holomovie set!*

*"This joke will cost you dearly, I assure you!" An enraged voice says.*

*The man speaking is tall, with long hair, and his clothes and glittering jewelry stink of richness a parsec away.*

*"I am Silon Guy, executive producer on this picture. Your actions were--"*

*"--simply amazing! Astounding! Marvelous! Your acting is so realistic! So method! Silon, we absolutely must cast these guys in the film!"*

*The man talking now is short and balding. He has*

*a strange visor over his eyes and he wears wildly eccentric clothing.*

*"Guys," the short man continues, "you were absolutely fantastic! I'm Rollan Gan, the director of this motion picture and I simply must ask you: who trained you how to fight in such a realistic way?"*

*In the meantime, Silon Guy, the producer, seems distracted by a technician calling him over to one of the fallen droids. He gives you a cold stare and goes to look at the droid.*

*"Hello??? Is nobody thinking about me? These damned droids have hurt my leg and nobody cares!!! Holo Both! Holo Both! You stupid, incompetent man! A Braxian pig would be a better assistant than you! Move your fat ass and find me a doctor! A surgeon! Someone! Now!"*

*It's the girl you saved earlier. You take a better look and finally recognize her! She is Salandra Sash, the famous holomovie actress! All of you have seen at least one of her holomovies. She is clearly more beautiful in person than in her vids.*

*Just then, a fat, clumsy humanoid comes running in. His face is pig-like and his wet eyes are filled with adoration towards the enraged actress, who, in exchange, constantly complains to him.*

*A medic arrives and Salandra Sash steps into a hoverlimo. She doesn't even say goodbye.*

*What a bitch.*

After a few moments, Silon Guy comes back to the heroes. He looks a lot less angry, but very worried.

*"I must apologize for my rudeness earlier," the producer says, "The technician showed me that there is definitely something wrong with the stage droids. They aren't our droids at all, but a very similar model and they are all equipped with real weapons."*

*"You saved Salandra, and the movie, of course. Let me explain. We are filming 'The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash.' Yes, it is a holomovie based on the deeds of the popular heroine of a century ago. Our actress, Salandra Sash, is a direct descendant of the heroine, her granddaughter to be precise. She even has the same name."*

*"The fans will go mad for something like that. Salandra Sash playing Salandra Sash!"*

*"So, I would be very happy if you didn't tell anyone about this as it would be very bad publicity."*

*"For now, I'm very worried. It seems someone has made an attempt on Salandra's life. You look like quite worthy types and Silon Guy wants you in the cast. I cannot refuse that man anything; he is a genius in his field."*

*"So, I'll cast you all in the film, as bit players of course. You're lucky! Some folks would kill for the chance to appear in a film with Salandra Sash!"*

*"By the way, if, in the meantime you manage to quietly discover who's behind this attack, I'll pay you a generous extra fee."*

If the heroes accept, they are aboard! They can begin their investigation on the set. Examining the droids is the first step. A successful Repair roll will reveal that

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### HOLO KILLS THE VIDEO STARS

The players might ask why, in a future such as this, movies would still be made with real actors, extras, props, locations, and so on. This is the age of super-computers, isn't it?

There are two reasons for doing it the old-fashioned way.

First, it is tradition. Great holomovie makers like Rollan Gan are intrigued by the old media.

Second, holomovies are enjoyed not only by seeing them, but also through neural chips that allow for a first-person perspective. This experience is made possible only thanks to small impression recorders mounted in the heads of the actors during filming. Even in the far future, no known computer is capable of simulating such a rich sensory input.

they were made with a strange technology unknown even to the heroes. They will also find that the droids had built-in security devices in the form of acid injectors that physically destroyed their memory banks when they were terminated. Data retrieval is impossible.

Their weapons were real, but set to stun. Perhaps it was not a murder attempt, but an attempted kidnapping.

Speaking with the droids' technician reveals two important facts: these are not the production crew's droids and the droid master, a man named Kalo Sian, is not on set. He is personally responsible for all the stage droids. Someone in the crew saw him leave the set a few minutes before action was called.

There might be other clues on the set, but the heroes have no time to find them – a new danger is approaching.

*"We must get away! Go! They've discovered us!" One of the set security guards is shouting.*

*All the crewmembers race to their hovercars while a raging horde representing every known race invades the platform.*

*You find a place in Silon Guy's limousine.*

*Enemies? Murderers?*

*"Worse," explains the producer, "fans!"*

*You cast a startled look at the surging crowd behind you.*

*"All the crew is lodged at the Poulson Plaza. I have taken the liberty of reserving you a suite. You are in the cast now."*

*The Poulson Plaza is the best hotel on Wayland. This might well turn into a very interesting adventure!*

### SCENE 3: A VERY RICH (THOUGH VERY DEAD) DROID MASTER

*You reach the hotel after a thirty-minute flight. You*

*never thought that Wayland could host such a high-class place but, well, money can do many things, even on a rat hole like Wayland.*

Kalo Sian, the droid master, has a room in the hotel too. The next logical move is checking if he is there. If no player has this idea, Silon Guy suggests this course of action.

The party is lucky — the receptionist says Kalo Sian arrived at the hotel fifteen minutes ago and seemed to be in a real hurry. Maybe the good man is ready to run!

The characters dash to his room and find the door closed and locked. Before they can knock or do anything else, they hear the distinctive sound of a blaster shot and a low moan of pain coming from within the room.

Something terrible is happening inside! The party must break in as fast as they can!

The door can be forced with a Lockpicking roll, but a full minute is required for each attempt. Alternatively, the party can break down the door with brute force. This requires a successful Strength roll with a raise, which can be cooperative. Each attempt requires a round. Finally, there's the good old option of shooting the lock, which requires a Called Shot (–2). The lock has Toughness 7.

Whichever solution the party chooses is not important, but when they finally break in, they see the following:

*The room is swept by Wayland's polluted air. The reason is simple — the floor-to-ceiling windows that take up the entire southern wall are open wide.*

*A silver-skinned alien of an unknown humanoid race crouches on the windowsill, clutching a still smoking blaster in one hand.*

*On the floor lies a body, carbonized by a close range shot. It must be Kalo Sian, the droid master, and he is very dead.*

*The silver alien is holding Sian's wristcomputer – he is stealing important evidence!*

*Before you can do anything, the killer leaps into the void!*

*You rush to the windows. The room is on floor six hundred and the traffic of hovervehicles is very dense here. The mysterious assassin has landed safely on a hovercar that was waiting just below the window.*

*The hovercar dives deep into the traffic at top speed.*

*You must find a vehicle quickly if you want to catch the assassin.*

*Luckily, a hovertaxi is passing nearby.*

The hovertaxi is the only vehicle the players can find quickly. If they hail the vehicle, it stops at the window providing an amusing interlude.

*"Robotaxi X-231 at your service. What is your dest... No! Not you again!"*

*It's a small galaxy! What luck! It's the same taxi you flagged down earlier!*

*The droid driver tries to close the door, but you have already slipped inside.*

*"Please, get out of my taxi!" Pleads the droid.*

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A Chase is about to start. The robotaxi droid flatly refuses to do something as dangerous and illegal as a pursuit in high-speed traffic, so one of the heroes must take the controls. This time the droid offers no resistance, he is simply resigned to the situation, but his complaints and screams of terror are a great opportunity for the Game Master to do some fun roleplaying.

The Chase starts at Medium range (three Range Increments). The two vehicles are comparable; use the hovertaxi's stats from Scene 1 for the silver aliens' car.

Each Range Increment represents 5" on the tabletop.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules. Instead, when a driver draws a Club card as his first initiative card from the action deck, run the mini-scene described in the table below.

The assassin's hovercar carries four people in total, all silver-skinned aliens.

Their tactics consist of trying to shake the heroes while the two aliens in the backseat shoot at the party with their blasters.

When the aliens' vehicle suffers one or more Wounds, it is not destroyed, instead the driver manages to make an emergency landing on the top of a building, so the heroes can confront the enemies face-to-face (see Fighting with the aliens, below). The same happens if the aliens are forced to stop for whatever reason.

The group then has the chance to retrieve the droid master's wristcomputer.

If the aliens manage to get ahead of the party by more than ten Range Increments, they escape and the party loses the wristcomputer.

★ **Silver Aliens (2):** See page 30. Armed with blaster pistols.

★ **Enhanced silver Aliens (2):** See page 28. Armed with blaster pistols.

## OBSTACLES TABLE

**Deuce (-4) You're Going the Wrong Way!:** The traffic on Wayland is so chaotic that the driver has taken the wrong turn and now he's facing oncoming traffic! If the driver fails his Piloting roll, the taxi crashes head-on into another vehicle, which is disastrous at this speed! The vehicle and the passengers suffer 3d6 damage from an Extra and the vehicle loses two Range Increments. If a critical failure happens, the situation is catastrophic — both the vehicle and the passengers suffer 5d6 damage and the vehicle loses three Range Increments.

**Three (-2) Smokestacks:** A major contributor to Wayland's filthy atmosphere stands before you in the form of several huge, belching industrial smokestacks and the vehicle must slalom between them! If the Piloting roll fails, the vehicle slams into one of the stacks. The car and all crew suffer 2d8 damage from an Extra and they lose a Range Increment.

**Four (-2) Polluted Cloud:** The vehicle enters a cloud of thick smoke. For the rest of the round the vehicle is in Dark (-2) lighting conditions.

**Five (-2) Narrow Passage:** The Chase brings the

vehicle to a very narrow passage between two buildings. This round the driver has +2 to the use of a Force maneuver. If he wins, the enemy vehicle suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra, but if he loses, his own vehicle suffers the same damage. If no Force maneuver is attempted, run the Chase as usual.

**Six (-2) Mega Truck:** A mega hovertruck is approaching! The pilot must do his best to get out of the way. If the roll fails, the character barely avoids the truck with a wild maneuver. All the passengers must make a Spirit (-2) roll or be Shaken. Otherwise, run the Chase as normal.

**Seven (-1) Trespassers Will Be Shot!:** Crime bosses on Wayland keep their possessions secure, so their palaces are protected by a network of defensive turrets. The vehicle is passing too close to the Ash & Jatha Casino, so it gets shot at. Every passenger suffers the effects of suppressive fire. The turrets have Shooting d8 and a Wild die and deal 3d6 damage from an Extra.

**Eight (-1) Traffic Jam:** This area is so crowded that the traffic has slowed to a crawl. This round the vehicle can only gain a maximum of one Range Increment.

**Nine (-1) Huge Billboard:** A giant-sized, promotional hologram of Miner Clem rises in front of the vehicle, encouraging customers to buy Miners' Guild Syntho Fruit Snacks. Entering the hologram causes the Piloting roll to become more difficult (-1) but it also grants Medium Cover (-2) to the vehicle. If the character chooses to avoid the billboard, run the Chase as usual.

**Ten (0) Forcefield:** Important buildings on Wayland are protected by forcefields to prevent street gangs from entering them. A daring pilot can choose to willingly surf against the forcefield's surface to accumulate more energy in the thrusters. It is a delicate operation that requires a Repair (-4) roll. This roll can also be done by another passenger sitting near the controls. If the roll is successful, the vehicle gets +2 to Piloting rolls for the next three rounds. If it fails, the engine overcharges and the vehicle loses a Handling point for the rest of the Chase. Every hero with a pilot or starship mechanic background will know this feature (the GM must explain this thing to the player). If the hero avoids the forcefield, run the chase as usual.

**Jack (0) Street Market:** The vehicle has entered a street market built on an abandoned walkway. It is full of stalls and people now running to get out of the vehicle's way. If the Piloting roll fails, the vehicle automatically loses a Range Increment due to the great confusion in the area. If the Piloting roll scores a raise, each hero can attempt an Agility roll to grab an item from the market! He can pick up a useful prop (+2 to one Trick in the incoming fight) or an item of his choice worth \$50 or less.

**Queen (0) Fear Frenzy:** X-231 is so terrified by the last maneuver that he tries to grab the taxi's controls! It is an opposed Strength roll between the pilot and the droid (d6). If the droid grabs the controls, he slows the vehicle's pace down resulting in the loss of a Range Increment each round. Fighting with the droid counts as an additional action for the pilot. The droid continues harassing the pilot until stopped. He has the same stats

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as one of the silver aliens. If the aliens draw this card, they simply lose a Range Increment and skip the Piloting roll for this round.

**King (0) Under the Bridge:** There is a nearby tunnel that can be a shortcut if the pilot manages to navigate through the maze of subways on this level. Use Smarts as the Chase skill this round.

**Ace (0) Vertical Passage:** A vertical passage here takes the vehicle high in the sky and into a less congested area. From here, it is quite easy to find a good spot to pick up the Chase and get closer to the enemies, if you are able to spot them in the traffic! In this round, Notice is used as Chase skill. For every success and raise, a Range Increment is gained, with no limit. Only the players can use this entry, the aliens simply ignore the result.

### FIGHTING WITH THE ALIENS

The silver aliens land atop an abandoned skyscraper. They use the cover granted by their vehicle to start a furious shootout.

The fighting area is a square, 24" x 24". The aliens never surrender. Once they are eliminated, the heroes discover something important.

The aliens are all droids, built with the same technology as that of the stage droids. The same acidic security system prevents the recovery of the databanks. One of the droids does have the droid master's wristcomputer.

### TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Cars:** The party's and the aliens' cars are 6" long and 3" wide. They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 12.

\* **Duraglass Dome:** There is a big duraglass dome in the middle of the battlefield. It offers Heavy Cover (-4) and has Toughness 14. Use a Large Burst Template to represent it. The dome is 9" high and impassable.

### THE EVIDENCE

Once in possession of the wristcomputer, the heroes can examine it. There is a video message, received yesterday, that seems interesting.

*There is a fully hooded figure in the video.*

*He speaks with a deep, arresting voice.*

*"The plan is confirmed. The droids are on their way. Your task is to replace them with yours and then disappear. You will be paid by the customary agent."*

*"One last warning: Do not try to deceive me, or my revenge will be terrible!"*

*While saying this, the figure brandishes a dark armored fist to the camera.*

*The transmission ends.*

The wristcomputer holds no other information of note.

Examining Kalo Sian's room, the party finds all his luggage packed and ready, a clear sign that the man was ready to leave at once. They also find a bag containing \$3000!

The heroes likely have some questions now: Who is the mysterious hooded figure? And the agent?

All will be revealed in the next few scenes!

## ACT 2: THE SPACE ADVENTURES OF SALANDRA SASH

It seems that someone is behind the murder attempt. The party returns to the hotel. They have precious little time to do some investigating, because in two days' time the crew will move on to another location.

The players can make Streetwise and Investigation rolls to discover something useful. They can inquire about Salandra and her planet, or about the movie crew (see sidebar). They gather a lot of useful information, but something is a red herring. If the hero scores a raise, alongside with the Raise information, he also discovers the standard information listed in the Success entry.

The movie crew moves around on two starships: the *Kooga*, a medium-sized transport, carries all the crew, props, extras and Holo Both, while the *Calypso*, a luxury yacht piloted by the producer himself, accommodates Salandra, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan, the big names of the show.

The *Blazing Star* is the most heavily armed ship of the small flotilla.

The next location is the cloud world of Houlof.

### SCENE 1: HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL GUARDS

*You reach Houlof without any problems. It is one of the most amazing planets in the galaxy.*

*The planet is gaseous, for the most part, and its core is composed of helium, so life has evolved in a peculiar way here. The Houlos, huge aerial plants the size of small islands, float in all the layers of the planet except the deepest ones. Other parasitic plants live on the Houlos in a sort of symbiosis. Houlof is a very scarcely populated planet, due to its scant natural resources, but on the Houlos grow the most beautiful flowers in the entire galaxy, making this place an ideal location for filming.*

*The planet is a sort of "galactic preserve", heavily*

## THE STEALER OF LIGHT

*guarded by the Houlof Rangers, an internal security force with the double task of protecting the tourists and preserving this unique environment.*

*You are forced to leave the spaceships in Tofboo, the only city on the planet, and to take hoverbarges to reach a particularly nice Houlo in the middle layers of the planet, where you will shoot the next scene.*

*The scene is set in a clearing in front of a very strange and colorful forest, a very evocative location, with the intense fragrance of alien blossoms tickling your nose.*

*You will be playing Salandra's royal guards, a group of faithful, hardened soldiers and lieutenants.*

*You must admit, you feel a little stupid in these tight costumes they made you wear, but, well, the way to success is paved with such small inconveniences.*

*Rollan Gan shouts: "Lights... Camera... Action!"*

The heroes must act in the movie now!

Give the party the handout with their lines (see page 31). Every player *must* play his part.

As they are bit players, they have to say only a few lines, but this part can be fun if the players are in the right mood, otherwise you can skip it. You can even grant a benny for a very good performance.

Rollan Gan is very demanding and has the heroes repeat the scene three times, always asking for something different. In addition, Salandra is not at all patient with the heroes, whom she treats in a very condescending manner. This little scene can lead to some good role-playing.

### BIRDS OF PREY

*"Come on, boys, once more!" Rollan Gan asks for another shot. You are growing tired of this acting business.*

*"This time with a little more emphasis: 'enemies incoming!', understand?"*

*"Enemies incoming!" Shouts a security guard.*

*Rollan Gan smiles satisfied: "Yes, just like that!"*

*You don't smile at all — enemies really are incoming! A large group of silver aliens is emerging from the clouds. They are flying thanks to strange levitating bracers and they are heavily armed.*

### DATA: SALANDRA SASH & KHORAS

#### INVESTIGATION RESULTS

**Success:** The story of old Salandra is well known. She was a beautiful princess skilled in the arts of war. She left her planet to join the Mercenary Guild where she met with great success, culminating in the final victory of the Kanderoon Wars. After quitting the Guild, she returned home to be crowned queen of the Khors, one of the two dominant races on the planet. Using her great military and political skills she managed to peacefully unite her race and the Rannites, the second dominant race and traditional opponents of the Khors, forming one united reign for the first time in Khoras's history.

**Raise:** Young Salandra's parents were such inept rulers that they were forced to sell their world to the Terraformers Guild to settle their enormous debts. The Guild used Khoras for their experiments, almost destroying it. The last Khorasites left the planet fifty years ago. Today the Khorasites no longer exist as a cultural entity. Young Salandra's parents died in poverty and the actress has never set foot (or eyes) on her native world. She is the last of her dynasty.

#### STREETWISE RESULTS

**Success:** All the members of the Khors royal family are gifted with the psionic ability to manipulate light. The power is very strong in young Salandra as it was in her grandmother.

**Raise:** The Rannites rulers, the Khors' traditional opponents for control of the planet, had a similar power: they were able to shape darkness. This is only a theory because no Rannite royal is alive today. Their bloodline died out during the reign of old Salandra for unknown reasons.

### DATA: THE CREW

#### INVESTIGATION OR STREETWISE RESULTS

The player chooses which skill to use.

**Success:** All the crew agrees on one point: Salandra is a great actress but a loathsome individual. She treats everyone poorly, but has a particularly nasty disposition towards Holo Both, the assistant director. The poor sod accepts her abuse, because he is hopelessly in love with her. This is his first experience in the holomovie business.

**Raise:** Silon Guy, the producer, personally financed the movie. Lots of money is involved. A failure will ruin him. Rumor has it that he argued a lot with Rollan Gan about the script.

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

*To make matters worse, you realize you are armed only with stage weapons at the moment!*

Deal action cards!

The combat area is a rough square of 24" by 24". All the borders of the area, except for the western one, correspond to the ends of the Houlo. Only flying characters can enter this area. The western border represents the edge of the forest.

Place the heroes and Salandra within 6" of the western border, in the center of this side. The security guards are placed on the four corners of the area. Place the crewmembers, randomly, inside the area. The security guards are allies, so the players move them. The movie crew is not involved in the fight — they simply duck for cover and wait for the danger to pass.

The aliens are split into three groups, each one coming in from a different direction (north, south and east). During the first round, they move into the battlefield, using their full flying movement (see below). Their tactics are quite simple: First, they kill the security guards (their only armed opponents), second, they attack the

party and attempt to kidnap Salandra. They almost completely ignore the crew, but to add some flavor, when a shot misses one of the heroes, you can tell the players that it hits a crewmember instead, in order to show how ruthless the opponents are.

**Flying Bracers and Boots:** These devices use a mix of antigravity and the effects of the peculiar atmosphere of Houlof to grant the ability to fly with Pace 6, Climb 4, to a maximum height 10". No running is possible. Taking the equipment from a dead alien and using it requires two rounds. Unfortunately, the devices only work on Houlof.

The goons fight until half of them are killed. At this point, they flee into the deeper layers of the planet. Go on to the next scene.

★ **Silver Aliens (2 per hero):** See page 30.

★ **Enhanced Silver Aliens (1 per hero):** See page 28.

★ **Silver Alien Commander (1):** See page 28. A Wild Card Enhanced Silver Alien.

★ **Security Guards (1 per hero):** See page 30.



### TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Houlo Forest:** The Houlo, the island where the combat takes place, is a living being, strongly connected with the forest. When the forest is damaged, the Houlo reacts. For this fight, the Innocent By-stander rule is changed. Every time a 1 is rolled on the Shooting die and the missed shot is likely to hit the western boundary of the battlefield where the forest is (use common sense to decide if this event is possible), the Houlo reacts to the attack! A large pod near the forest's edge produces a Houlo Spawn, a vegetable monster. Place the monster on the western edge of the combat area where the missed shot struck the forest. The creature attacks the character responsible for the stray shot. After dispatching him, it continues picking targets armed with blasters, ignoring all non-shooting characters. The Houlo Spawn goes back into the woods when the shooting ends.

★ **Houlo Spawn (1):** See page 28.

\* **Stage Weapons:** The party starts the fight armed with stage weapons. They have a sword, which deals Str damage, and a blaster pistol (range 12/24/48), which emits a completely harmless ray of light that can, however, be used for Tricks.

\* **Party's Weapons:** The party's real weapons are stacked near a large camera. Picking a weapon counts as an action unless the hero has the Quick Draw Edge. Place the camera and the weapons rough-

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ly in the center of the battlefield. A Small Burst Template can represent the set of objects.

\* **Movie Equipment:** The battle area is scattered with movie equipment: lights, crates, microphones, cameras and so on. Generally they count as Light Cover (-1) and have Toughness 6. They can also act as useful props for Tricks. Use gaming stones to represent them. Place up to fifteen counters on the gaming table.

\* **Crew's Hoverbarges:** The crew came here aboard two hoverbarges that are now parked in the combat area. They count as Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 12. Place them wherever you want. Use Medium Burst Templates to represent them.

## SCENE 2: INTO THE DEPTHS OF HOULOF

*"They're running away!" Shouts Holo Both, improvising a dance of joy. "Hurray!"*

*"Shut up, you fool! Capture them before they escape!" Salandra spits, her eyes burning with rage. For a moment, you think that her famous ancestor is suddenly speaking through her.*

*The silver aliens are diving into the depths of Houlof, thanks to their flying bracers, but they won't get far! You need answers and this time you will get them!*

It is Chasing time again!

The first thing the heroes need to do is to find a suitable vehicle.

There are two possibilities:

The first is taking one of the hoverbarges (if it is still usable after the fight). In this case, the party will be slower than the enemies, subtracting -1 from their Chase roll. Only the driver rolls, using Piloting as his Chase skill.

The second option is taking some flying bracers and boots from the aliens. In this way, the characters have the same speed as the enemies (no modifier) and they use Agility as their Chase skill. They move independently from one another, so everyone gets a roll.

The initial distance of the Chase is Medium Range (three Range Increments), with each Range Increment representing 5" on the tabletop.

The aliens move as a group during the Chase. They make a single roll with an average Agility (d6) and get the Wild Die.

The goons do not attack the party until they are very close (one Range Increment). Their goal is to reach their master as fast as they can.

Do not use the standard obstacle rules in this chase. Instead, when a Club card is drawn as first initiative card, run the mini-scene from the following Obstacles Table. If the heroes are on the hoverbarge, this rule only applies to the pilot.

The Chase ends when the party reaches the aliens or after ten rounds. In the latter case, there are dire consequences for the characters.

Run the section 'The Face of the Enemy.'

## HOVERBARGE

This model hoverbarge, typical of Houlof, is slower but more maneuverable than the standard model.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 5/10; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Handling:** 0; **Crew:** 1+20

## OBSTACLES TABLE

**Deuce (-4) Nightmare Wyrms:** The characters have disturbed the most terrible predator of Houlof: the Nightmare Wyrms! Add him to the Chase, placed two Range Increments behind the characters. The beast hunts the nearest prey. He has Agility d6, Fighting d8 and deals 2d12 damage from an Extra with its saber-sized fangs. Having Heavy Armor, the only option the characters have is to flee! The monster eventually loses interest and drops the Chase if no target is available within four Range Increments.

**Three (-2) In the Nutcracker:** The smaller Houlos move following the winds. Sometimes they collide, as is happening now. One of the characters is about to be caught in the middle! If he fails the roll, he suffers 2d8 damage and cannot advance in the Chase until he makes an Agility (-2) roll. He can roll once per round.

**Four (-2) Headwind:** The wind is blowing against you. For this round, all the characters in this Range Increment can only advance up to one additional Range Increment. If they fail the roll, they are blown back one Range Increment or two in the case of a critical failure.

**Five (-2) Exhilarating Gas:** The gas in this area makes everyone laugh uncontrollably! This turn, every character in this Range Increment must use Vigor as the Chase skill. In case of failure, he also suffers a level of Fatigue until the end of the Scene.

**Six (-2) Flying Amoebas:** The character is caught up in a group of murky, fetid, floating amoebas. Until properly cleaned up (a process requiring a full round), he suffers -1 to all rolls. Run the chase as normal.

**Seven (-1) Tilakspore Bloom:** The Tilakspore is a typical Houlosian plant with a nasty method of reproduction. It drops floating spores that explode in proximity of living beings, projecting needle-like seeds capable of penetrating even the toughest skin. Every character in this Range Increment must make an additional Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d8 damage from an Extra. Run the chase as normal.

**Eight (-1) Vortex:** The character is caught up in a swirling vortex! This round, the relevant skill is Strength. Until he manages to score a success, he is stuck inside the vortex. He can try once per round. Count how many rounds the character stays in the vortex. When he manages to escape, bring him forward a number of Range Increments equal to the rounds he spent in the vortex

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

plus the standard ones gained with the Chase roll, due the great momentum gathered.

**Nine (-1) Fireflies:** A swarm of fireflies surrounds the character. They are not dangerous but they perfectly outline and illuminate the character's shape. Shooting attacks against him have a +1 modifier. This effect stops when the character is dealt another Club card.

**Ten (-1) Vacuum Bubble:** The character is caught in an airless bubble! The chase roll, this round, is made using Vigor. The aliens, being droids, do not breathe, so they are unaffected by this obstacle.

**Jack (0) Spiteful Monkeys:** As the character passes a Houlo, a group of nasty monkeys starts mocking and lobbing putrid fruits at him. It counts as a Test of Will. The monkeys have Taunt d10. After this roll, run the chase as normal.

**Queen (0) Singing Herbs:** A nearby Houlo is covered by a thick, six-foot-deep, layer of purple herbs. The herbs emit a hypnotic, lulling sound. The character uses Spirit as his Chase skill until he manages to leave this Range Increment.

**King (0) Favorable Winds:** The wind is blowing in the character's favor! This round he gains a Range Increment for each success and raise, plus one.

**Ace (0) Sailplant:** There is a Sailplant nearby, a floating vegetable with huge, incredibly aerodynamic, leaves. The character can quickly grab it with an Agility roll before using it. If successful, from the next round on, he gains +1 to Chase rolls until the end of the scene. Ignore this effect if the character is using a hoverbarge.

### THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

*You are deep in Houlof, where the air is very dense and thick. The clouds open a bit showing you a starship floating in the void. It is a very strange and old-looking model. There is a walkway on the upper deck, where you see a dark cloaked figure.*

*He is the same individual you saw on Kalo Sian's wristcomputer!*

*Beneath the cloak, he wears full body armor that reveals nothing of his true appearance. The surviving aliens fly toward the ship, sure of having reached safety, however, their master knows the truth.*

*You cannot hear his voice from this distance, but his gestures are unequivocal. He has ordered the ship's cannons to open fire! He is willing to destroy his minions if that means killing you!*

Treat this attack as a Battery attack (see the Space Rules).

If the party has reached the aliens in the Chase, they are at close range, otherwise count the number of Range Increments the heroes are behind the aliens and multiply this by five to get the tabletop distance.

If the heroes are on a hoverbarge, the pilot can make a Piloting roll to avoid being hit (it replaces the usual Spirit roll), otherwise the party uses Spirit as usual. If the heroes have reached the aliens in the chase, they are alerted by the terrified movements of their prey, so add +1 to this roll.

In case of damage, the hoverbarge protects the heroes with half its Toughness (6). If they have reached the aliens, the poor goons offer extra protection with their bodies, i.e. Toughness 4, which is added to the protection by the hoverbarge.

### HAST'S SHIP BATTERY

1 x Laser Cannon Battery (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d8; ROF 1; HW; AP 4)

The crew has Shooting d8.

*The blow is terrible!*

*Luckily, the silver aliens took the brunt of the attack otherwise, you would be dead.*

*Pieces of their artificial bodies scatter everywhere.*

*You hear the rumble of the starship's engines and then the exhaust from the thrusters sweeps you away in a terrible maelstrom of gas, plants and droid parts while the huge vehicle moves away.*

*You close your eyes, screaming in fear, certain that death is unavoidable, this time.*

*Suddenly someone grabs you firmly.*

*There are winged creatures all around, perfectly stable in the whirling air. They are the Houlof Rangers, resplendent in their colorful flying armor.*

*You are safe, but the evil one has escaped yet again.*

*The Rangers bring you back to the movie set.*

*They tell you that Silon Guy called them. Without their aid, pieces of you would be scattered all around the depths of Houlof.*

*The crew has almost finished packing the equipment that wasn't damaged during the fight. Only now, you notice the total mess reigning in the clearing you used to perform some minutes ago.*

*Salandra Sash, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan are not here. They have already returned to the city, beav-*

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*ily guarded. Salandra, in particular, was very shaken by the events and needed some rest.*

*Only Holo Both is still here, doing his best in coordinating the crew.*

*His attempts at giving orders are amusing, and nobody truly obeys him.*

*“Are you ok?” The fat man asks in a worried tone: “I must thank you. You have saved not only Salandra’s but all our lives.”*

*In the meantime, you notice a group of Rangers searching an area of the clearing littered with smashed alien parts.*

If the heroes approach the Rangers, one of them, Flockmaster Hyan, stops them with a gruff voice. They have just discovered the droids’ security device, which prevents their memory banks from being read, but luckily, one of the droids had its head severed so quickly that the device did not work properly. Perhaps something can still be recovered.

The Rangers are not very good with this type of technology, so they can be persuaded to let the heroes examine the head. It does require a Persuasion roll.

With a quick examination, the characters soon realize that only with the tech they have on the *Blazing Star* can they understand anything more. Flockmaster Hyan is not at all happy to give the heroes such important evidence. The party must convince him with another Persuasion (-2) roll.

Hyan is attracted to alien women, so a female character has a +2 bonus to the roll. Offering a bribe, instead, offends him deeply, causing a negative modifier of -2.

With a success, Hyan allows the heroes to bring the severed head to the *Blazing Star*, but he insists on being present for the data recovery process.

The droid’s memory is heavily damaged. It takes a Repair roll to recover the data and an Investigation roll to discover the following useful information. Different characters can make the two rolls. If the Repair roll scores a raise, the Investigation roll gets +2.

**Default:** The droid’s body features are based on a real alien species, the Rannites, of which all the life parameters are listed. With an additional Investigation roll and some research in the *Blazing Star*’s databanks, the party discovers that the Rannites were (along with the Khors) one of the two dominant races of Khoras, Salandra Sash’s native planet. The Rannites willingly submitted to old Salandra ten years after her coronation, making it possible to create one unified nation. After old Salandra’s death and the selling of the planet to pay the rulers’ debts, the Rannites scattered through the galaxy, losing their cultural identity. Nowadays, true Rannites no longer exist.

**Success:** The droid’s memory holds some planetary coordinates, but there is no additional information about the planet in question.

**Raise:** The combat routines are partially readable. The droid was ordered to use non-lethal force on one subject: Salandra, and to completely avoid physical contact with another. The identity of this second individual is unreadable. Might there be another traitor among the crew?

The party has the whole afternoon to rest, make suppositions and so on. In the evening, a grand dinner is organized in the best restaurant of the city, Silon Guy’s idea to raise the morale of the crew. The heroes are invited too. It is an occasion to do some more questioning among the crew as well as some roleplaying.

The dinner concludes with the following:

*The dinner was great, but the faces of the film’s cast and crew (even Salandra’s) look tired and concerned despite the many guards discreetly keeping watch over the room.*

*At the end of the evening, Silon Guy rises from his chair and speaks to the crew.*

*“We cannot allow today’s incident to stop our work. The movie is almost finished and it will be amazing, I promise you. I know many of you are frightened now, but, as a showman once said many years ago, the show must go on. And for all the galaxies, we’ll make it go on!”*

*“Salandra, our beautiful star, and Rollan Gan, our great director, both agree with me.”*

*“To encourage you to stick with it, I will arrange a pay raise for each of you that stays with us until the movie is in the can.”*

*“Now everyone to bed because tomorrow we need to get up early to reach our next location.”*

*All the crew enthusiastically applauds the speech. Only now, you realize Silon Guy hasn’t revealed the next destination.*

### SCENE 3: FAKE PIRATES, BUT CONVINCING NONETHELESS!

*You jump out of hyperspace at the coordinates Silon Guy gave you just a few moments before taking off.*

*The man must be getting paranoid if he doesn’t even trust you anymore, the people he hired to protect Salandra.*

*On the monitors, you see the image of a rocky, barren, planet. The *Blazing Star*’s computer re-*

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

*veals it is K-29, a very common, worthless, ball of rock.*

*There is a cruiser orbiting around it. It bears the scars of many battles and has a red skull painted on the hull.*

*Silon Guy is transmitting from the Calypso: "Holo Both, it seems you have done a good job this time."*

*The assistant director replies from the Kooga: "Thanks Mister Guy! I visited all the starports in the sector to find this old ship! I am glad you like it!"*

*"Holo? This is Rollan speaking. You have done an excellent job! It is exactly as I imagine a pirate ship should be! The red skull painted on the hull is a really nice touch. I hope the extras you engaged are of the same quality."*

*"They are even better than the ship, Sir!"*

*"I must admit it." Salandra is speaking now: "For once, you have done a good job, fat man".*

*Just then, a message comes in from the cruiser.*

*On the monitor, you see a tall, scarred humanoid with a mohawk and a bionic eye. He smiles, but this gesture doesn't improve his frightening appearance one bit. Behind him, you see a motley crew of other very dangerous looking pirates.*

*"Captain Mak Rannan speaking. My ship, the Red Doom, and my crew of, well..." he smiles once more "... 'pirates' are here at your service."*

*"Thank you Mister Rannan." Rollan Gan replies. "I should like to ask permission to board the Red Doom to personally meet the extras and to explain how I want the space battle sequence to be filmed..."*

*"Permission granted." the captain mutters.*

Ask all the heroes for a Common Knowledge roll. Characters with a pirate or bounty hunter background add +2 to this roll.

If no one scores a success, the party discovers the information below when it is far too late. The *Blazing Star's* and the *Kooga's* crews begin the battle Surprised (see below). Otherwise, they realize what's going on just in time to avoid being Surprised.

*The sensors detect something strange in the area. It is an active dampener field projector, a device that renders jumps into hyperspace impossible. It*

*is a trick used by pirates to prevent their quarry from escaping. The field is being generated by the Red Doom!*

*It's a trap! That fool Holo Both hired real pirates!*

In the meantime, the *Calypso* has broken formation and is approaching the *Red Doom*. The party could send them a warning, but it is too late.

*The Calypso attempts to turn around, but just then a ray of energy (a tractor beam), shot from the Red Doom, stops her in her tracks. A huge hangar bay door opens in the pirate ship's hull and the yacht is dragged into the innards of the cruiser.*

*You are ready to run in defense of the smaller ship, but you must face another problem first.*

*A squadron of interceptors approaches at battle speed. They are moving towards you and the Kooga, the movie crew's ship. You must deal with them before anything can be done for the Calypso!*

This is a space battle!

The fight takes place in an area 24 SU by 24 SU. Place the *Blazing Star* and the *Kooga* roughly in the center of the battleground, at least 6 SU from each other. The interceptors enter the battle area from the east side in a "V" formation. Each ship in the formation is at least 3 SU from the next.

The *Kooga* is an ally, so the players control it during the battle.

The interceptors' rules of engagement are simple. Two fighters will attack the *Blazing Star* (which is wrongly considered the weakest ship) while the others target the *Kooga*. The pirates are looking for booty, so they will try to disable the ships' engines and thrusters instead of destroying them. It is a called shot (-4). Each successful hit counts as an Engine Critical hit.

When all the enemies are destroyed, go on to the next section, 'Jumped Off!'

★ **Interceptors (5):** See below.

### INTERCEPTORS

Interceptors are superior space fighters with great speed and handling, but poor armor. The ones presented here are equipped with hyperdrive to make them independent from the mothership and to allow for brief hyper-space jumps.

**Top Speed:** 10; **Toughness:** 12 (4); **Handling:** +2; **Shields Pods:** 1; **Crew:** 1

**Abilities:** Piloting d8, Shields d6, Shooting d8

**Notes:** Atmospheric, Fixed Weapon, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

**Weapons:**

\* 1 x forward-firing laser (Range: 12/24/48; Damage:

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3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

- \* 1 x missile turret (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 4d8; ROF 1; AP 8, HW), no reloads

### KOOGA, MEDIUM-SIZE TRANSPORT SHIP

The *Kooga* is a transport ship of medium size, capable of hauling a fairly substantial cargo. It is not very well armed but it has good defenses.

**Top Speed:** 4; **Toughness:** 18 (6); **Handling:** +0; **Shields Pods:** 2; **Crew:** 4+40

**Abilities:** Piloting d6, Shields d6, Shooting d6

**Notes:** 2 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft

**Weapons:**

- \* 2 x laser turret (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

### TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Sun in the Eyes:** Every attack aimed at the eastern side suffers -1 to the Shooting roll due to the position of the sun. The pirates cunningly attack from that side to have an advantage, at least during the first round.

### JUMPED OFF!

*The explosion from the last enemy fighter has barely faded away and you are already rushing at top speed toward the Red Doom.*

*However, it is too late! The Calypso has been completely drawn inside the pirate ship.*

*You hear one last radio transmission from the yacht.*

*It is Silon Guy: "Help! Help! Please, help us!"*

*Just then, a secondary bangar of the pirate vessel spits out another squad of interceptors, directed toward you with weapons ready!*

*You have just enough time to start evasive maneuvers before the Red Doom lowers the dampener field and jumps into hyperspace.*

*They are gone, but they have left some deadly customers for you to deal with!*

This is the second part of the space battle.

The battlefield is 24 SU by 24 SU, as before. Place the *Blazing Star* within 3 SU of the southern border of the area, roughly in the middle of this side.

The interceptors are placed within 6 SU of the northern border, in a loose formation of your choice. This

time, their task is to destroy the party's ship, not simply disable it.

After three rounds, the *Kooga*, if still functional, joins the battle approaching from the middle of the southern border. The players can use it.

The battle ends when all the enemies are eliminated.

★ **Interceptors (3):** See above.

### TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Hyperdrive Distortion:** This area of space is still unstable due to the energy generated by the *Red Doom's* sudden jump. For the first three rounds of the battle, all Shooting and Shield rolls suffer a -2 modifier.

## ACT 3: NEEDLESPINE

*You have been duped — the pirates have snatched the Calypso from right under your nose.*

*You watch the space full of debris with anger and resignation.*

*But wait, you were so close to the pirate ship when it jumped off that maybe the hyperspace track is still readable! You start working frantically on the sensor logs, driven by this faint hope.*

*For all the galaxies, you have found it!*

*The pirate ship jumped off to the Xarbas system, give or take a light-year.*

*Xarbas means Needlespine, and Needlespine means trouble for your friends.*

*Starbase 101, formerly part of the defense network of the Braxian Star League, is better known as Needlespine, for its peculiar, elongated shape. The Star League was forced to abandon it many years ago, and now it is ruled by pirates, who use the place as shelter and a base for their operations. It is also a good place to buy or sell illegal goods, from exotic drugs to slaves.*

*If the Red Doom has gone to Xarbas, you can bet your last credit that her destination is Needlespine.*

The heroes cannot go to Needlespine immediately because the *Kooga* is damaged. Even if it was not involved in the actual battle, some stray shots have damaged the hyperspace navigator. It cannot jump until it is fixed. Luckily, the party has some spare parts on the *Blazing Star* that are compatible. The repairs take four hours and require the heroes to board the *Kooga*.

While on board, Holo Booth approaches the heroes,

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

### DATA: NEEDLESPINE

#### STREETWISE RESULTS

**Default:** The heroes know that Needlespine is a pirate-controlled starbase in the middle of a dark nebula.

**Success:** Needlespine is ruled by the Five, a council of the five most powerful pirate captains, each of them controlling a sector of the starbase. Only the Lighthouse Keeper, a retired captain that is chosen by the Five to run the day-to-day business, commands the defense network and the control tower. Except for him, there is no police or other internal security force. Every captain enforces the law in his sector as he wishes.

**Raise:** Sol Mak Rannan is one of the Five, elected some years ago. He is particularly well known for his cruelty and devious cunning. He has a bitter rivalry with Shaka Raja, the Killer of Suns, and another member of the Five. The two crews often clash.

in a state of total prostration. He is completely anguished by having been cheated by the pirates in such a stupid way. He asks to join the heroes in their quest.

*"Please, allow me to come with you! Helping you save our friends is the only way I can redeem myself! I can be useful in many ways. I could do the cooking, the laundry, even clean your weapons... well, maybe its best if I stay away from the weapons!"*

If the party refuses, Holo Both will find another way to follow them, for example, he will sneak into the *Blazing Star's* cargo bay and will come out only when the party reaches Needlespine. One way or another it is essential for Holo Both to be with the party on Needlespine.

This little scum is not at all worried about Salandra and the others; he just doesn't want to be left behind! According to his plan, the pirates should have captured all the ships, so now he desperately needs to reach Needlespine to join his comrades!

### SCENE 1: THE DREAMSMOKE SELLER

*You jump out of hyperspace and find yourself in murky darkness. Needlespine sits at the heart of a dark nebula, well concealed from all long-range sensors by the nebula's tiny particles. You proceed at low speed in the fog until you see the lights of the starbase.*

*It is worthy of its name.*

*It resembles a five-mile-high needle piercing a dark velvet cloth. Being a military base, the starport is situated in a large bay inside the base and the only way in is via a huge gate, laying wide open like the mouth of a giant Gatorian catfish.*

*Since yours is not a military ship, the control tower grants you access to the base.*

*Now the difficult part begins.*

Needlespine is a rowdy starbase full of brothels, bars, casinos and other places where the pirates can freely sell and spend their booty. Commerce is florid, and duels and thefts are commonplace. The party is armed and looks dangerous, so they have no nasty encounters, unless they explicitly go looking for trouble.

The players can do a Streetwise roll to obtain some general information about the starbase (see sidebar).

Asking around about Mak Rannan and the *Red Doom* requires another Streetwise roll. Greasing the wheels with at least \$20 grants +2 to the roll. With a success, the party discovers that Mak Rannan returned to the base yesterday (the time it took the party to reach Needlespine). A raise also reveals a rumor — Rannan has recently captured a nice ship and some very valuable prisoners.

Mak Rannan lives in a well-fortified palace in the southern sector of the base. It is easy to find.

At first glance, the party can see that the palace is very well protected. They will need a good plan or a major stroke of luck to break in.

Maybe they will have both.

*While you are surveying the heavily guarded palace, searching for a safe way to sneak in, you witness a peculiar scene.*

*A group of people is coming close. They are porters, carrying big crystal crates. From their appearance, they must be aliens, probably Mins, an insectoid race that breathes an exotic mixture of gases. In fact, all of them wear strangely shaped breathing masks and rough woven tunics that cover their bodies.*

*They are led by a human, dressed in a very colorful and flamboyant manner. He even wears a long feather in his extravagant hat.*

*You know him! It is Karoan Kan, a fellow smuggler. He is not exactly a friend, but is surely no enemy. He is ... well... a colleague.*

*The little group is making for Mak Rannan's mansion. They must have some important business to do, judging by their pace.*

*At that very moment, a group of space pirates emerges from the shadows, blocking their path.*

# THE STEALER OF LIGHT

*"It seems you are transporting important wares, fella." The foulest looking pirate says.*

*"They belong to Captain Mak Rannan." Replies Karoan Kan, with a worried look.*

*"You are mistaken," The pirate chief sneers, "They belong to Captain Shaka now!"*

*All the pirates unsheathe their weapons.*

*At this, the porters drop their crates and flee, shouting in their lilting, alien language.*

*Raising his sword, the pirate tells Karoan: "Your boys are smart. Do yourself a favor and follow their lead."*

It is precisely the opportunity the party was hoping for. Saving Karoan Kan and his wares can buy them a ticket to access Mak Rannan's palace!

Deal action cards as usual.

The alley where the fight occurs is 4" wide by 18" long. Place Karoan Kan at the center of the fighting area. The pirates are blocking his path, so place them 6" north of him.

At the start of the fight, the party is not present on the map. They come in through the northern entrance of the alley. Holo Both is with the party, but he is no fighter, so he stays out of trouble. Karoan Kan instead fights actively. Let the players control him.

All the pirates are facing south, so they do not initially see the party. The heroes can use Stealth to surprise them and eventually gain the Drop. Use the standard *Savage Worlds* rules for this. The pirates make a group Notice roll (d6 and Wild Dice) to spot the heroes.

The alley is poorly lit. It counts as Dim Light (-1).

The pirates fight until three-fourths of them are down. At this point, they flee, exiting the boundaries of the map. The party has no reason to pursue them, so the fight ends here.

★ **Space Pirate (1 per hero):** See page 31.

★ **Veteran Space Pirate (3):** See page 31.

★ **Space Pirate Boss (1):** See page 31. A Veteran Space Pirate Wildcard.

★ **Karoan Kan (1):** See page 29.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Crystal Crates:** The porters left their crates scattered in the area. Each crate counts as difficult ground. They are too small to offer any protection and are quite fragile too. For this fight, the Innocent Bystander rule is twisted. If a 1 is scored on the Shooting roll, the nearest crate is hit and shatters, letting loose the precious, concentrated Dreamsmoke gas! Place a Small Burst Template centered on the crate. Every character under the template must make a Vigor roll at the start of his round. If he fails the roll, he must roll on the Gas Effects Table (see sidebar)

## GAS EFFECT TABLE

| Roll (d8) | Effect                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1         | <b>Unstoppable Laughter.</b> The character starts laughing and cannot stop. He suffers -2 to Parry, but gets a +1 to Taunt rolls due to his unnerving behavior.                                                                                                |
| 2         | <b>Aimless Wandering.</b> Roll a d12 and read it clockwise. The character moves d4" in that direction if possible. He is also Shaken.                                                                                                                          |
| 3         | <b>Guilty!</b> The character is Shaken, begins sobbing uncontrollably and repents his sins aloud. A hero attacking an enemy in such a state loses a benny for non-heroic behavior. Pirates are not heroic at all, so they are not affected by this limitation. |
| 4         | <b>I am Immortal!</b> The character develops a false sense of invulnerability. He cannot use any cover and suffers -2 Parry, but gains +2 to Soak rolls.                                                                                                       |
| 5         | <b>I Hate You!</b> The character attacks his nearest ally.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 6         | <b>I Love You!</b> The character feels an incredible surge of love and admiration towards an enemy. He tries to embrace or kiss him. The action counts as a Smarts Trick.                                                                                      |
| 7         | <b>Rage!!!</b> Uncontrollable rage grips the character. He suffers the effects of the Berserker Hindrance.                                                                                                                                                     |
| 8         | <b>Anti-Psi.</b> A psionic character cannot use his powers this round. A non-psionic character gains the Arcane Resistance Edge.                                                                                                                               |

to see how it affects his behavior. The character can retry the roll at the start of each round. Once the Vigor roll is successful, the character is immune to the effects of the gas for the rest of the battle. The template remains in the area until the end of the combat.

## A SMUGGLER'S DEBT

*"For all the galaxies, it's you!" Karoan Kan is astonished when he recognizes you. "I haven't seen your faces from the times of the Wayland deal! Remember? You stole a customer from me that time!"*

*Karoan Kan refers to an old story involving a cargo of wine and a Wayland crime boss. It all happened months ago.*

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

*"Well, you did save my wares and my neck too back then. So what are you doing in this filthy place?"*

Karoan Kan is indebted to the group according to the smuggler's code of honor that the heroes know well.

Speaking with him, the players find out that he is going to deliver the crates to Mak Rannan. The pirate captain is very fond of this gas, one of his many vices.

He offers to help them sneak into the palace to payment for his debt.

Since Karoan has lost his porters, the heroes can stand in for them. In their urge to flee, the Mins porters dropped a backpack full of spare vests and backup breathing masks. Wearing them as a disguise, the party can enter Mak Rannan's palace unnoticed.

### SCENE 2: THE TRAITOR REVEALED

*The banquet hall of Mak Rannan's palace is thick with smoke. Gas lamps fill the room with their dancing lights along with a strong, bitter, smell that makes you dizzy. The lamps are burning Dreamsmoke gas.*

*The room is packed with space pirates eating, bolstering, and arguing with each other in a perpetual festival.*

*On a high dais sits Mak Rannan. He is an imposing presence. His bionic eye scans the room lazily, his mind dulled by the effect of the gas. You are safe for now; nobody can recognize you in your disguises.*

*Three people are chained near the dais, closely watched by guards. You recognize them! They are Salandra, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan. They look tired and worried, but at least they are unburnt.*

*Karoan Kan brings you up to the dais and starts bargaining about the price of his crates. You are very close to your friends now.*

*Just then, the door of the room opens and a delegation enters.*

*They are the silver aliens that you fought with earlier!*

The GM must make it clear to the players that the room is too full of pirates now to try anything.

*An imposing alien bows to the pirate captain and speaks in a courteous voice: "Captain Mak Rannan, my master is very pleased with your work. We bring the agreed payment for the girl."*

*At his command, a couple of aliens bring a small chest full of jewels to the feet of the dais. They must be worth a hefty sum.*

*Mak Rannan doesn't look very impressed and frowns: "Yeah, yeah, but I'm not sure the fee is high enough. You promised me the transport ship and some easy loot, too. Instead, I got no loot and I lost two squads of fighters to that damn light ship. For the Seven Demons of Kra! I'd give anything to get my hands on those bastards..." He concludes clenching his fist angrily.*

*At this point, something totally unexpected happens!*

*Holo Both, believed to be on your side, drops the camouflage revealing himself! What's more, he tears away his face, revealing a silver skin!*

*He is the traitor!*

*"Captain Mak Rannan! I bring you the smugglers!" Holo Both shouts.*

*In a few moments, you are surrounded by pirates that block your retreat.*

*You are too surprised to react in any way.*

*Captain Mak Rannan smiles sadistically: "You brought me such a precious gift, fat man. What do you ask in exchange?"*

*"Only the girl for my master, eminence. Their ship is at the docks now, and it is yours. The same goes for the lives of the movie director and manager. You could make quite a sum out of them."*

*A large grin opens in the pirate's scarred face: "You are impudent, little man, but you make me happy. The girl is yours."*

*Holo Both gloats: "Thank you! Finally, after all these years I can go back to home, to Khoras!"*

*"Shut up!" The chief of the aliens orders, but it is too late. Holo Both has just revealed too much.*

*You watch as Salandra is dragged out of the room, chained, but all the while, she keeps her head raised in strong defiance!*

*Holo Both waves you off with a mocking smile before going away with his silver companions.*

Make sure the players take note of the information revealed by Holo Both – they will definitely need it later.

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## SCENE 3: THE SKURA BEAST

*"So you are mine, now." Mak Rannan mocks you.*

*"Normally, I would ask a ransom for the movie men and send the rest of you to slave traders, but that would hardly compensate for the loss of my interceptors and the lives of my brave men."*

*"Please master pirate!" Silon Guy begs, "I am rich; I can pay a price, any price for our lives! Spare us!"*

*Mak Rannan pauses before continuing: "So I ask you, my brave crew. What should I do with the prisoners? Ask a ransom or throw them to the beast?"*

*The reply of the pirate crew is a chorus of shouts: "The beast! The beast! The beast!"*

*The pirate captain smiles and confidentially tells you: "Pirates! They are like children. They prefer a moment of pleasure over the perpetual thrill of cash."*

*The sound of huge mechanisms moving fills the air while part of the floor slides away to reveal a large pit several feet below.*

*"No Mercy!" cries Rollan Gan.*

*The pit is filled with trash, rusted metal piping and other discarded junk, but it is the smell that hits you hardest. It reeks of death.*

*In the center of the pit stands a great bipedal saurian, twice the size of a man, of a deep violet hue. The beast raises its head showing a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth. A single, impressive eye stares at you with deep hunger.*

*"She is a Skura beast," explains Mak Rannan "One of the most dangerous predators in the galaxy. I am sure you will become fast friends. Throw them in!!!"*

*The crowd cheers at this order, and you and your friends are pushed into the pit. Silon Guy and Rollan Gan cry out as they fall.*

You are in for quite a fight!

The pit of the Skura Beast is a rough square 18" by 18".

The walls of the room are too sheer and too high to climb (15 feet) and the pirates above surely would not let the characters exit the pit.

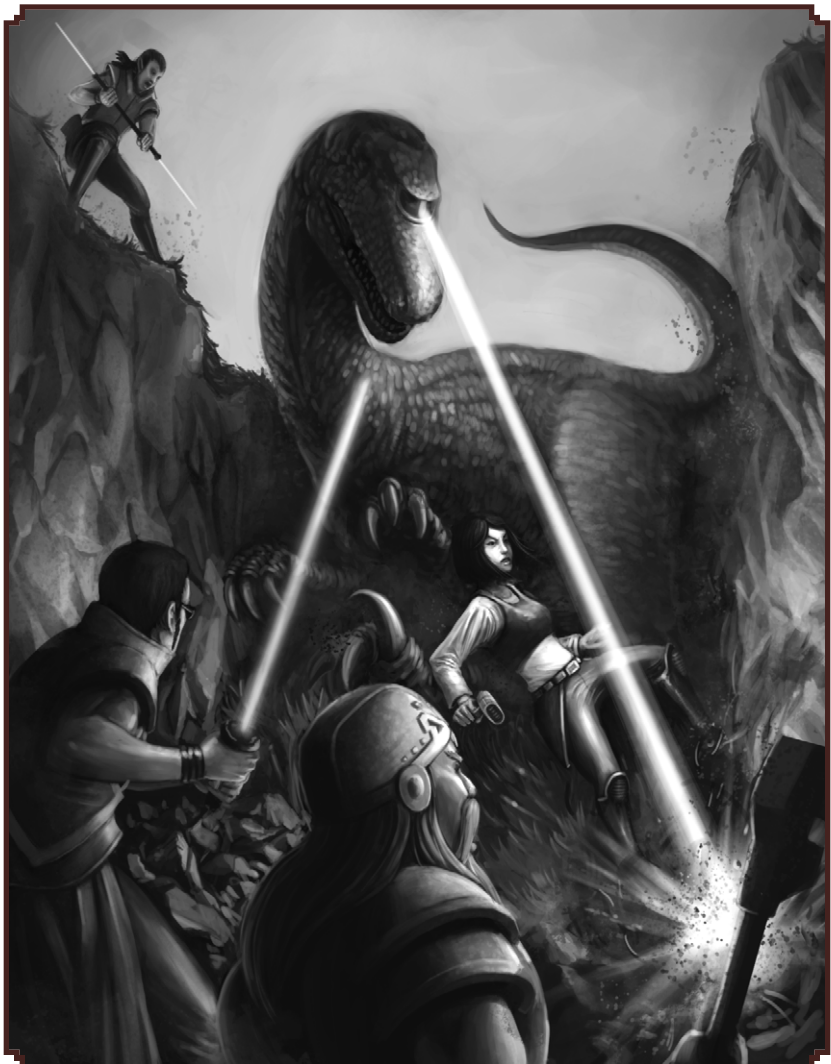
Place the Skura beast roughly in the center of the room. The heroes and their friends luckily land on a large pile of rubbish, so they are not damaged by the impact. Place them on a rubbish pile (see below) at least 8" from the Beast.

The party is unarmed. All their weapons and other valuable equipment were stolen by the pirates (don't worry, they'll recover them later), so they have to use Tricks and find improvised weapons to get out of this predicament.

Silon Guy and Rollan Gan are of no use in the fight. They cower in a corner, trembling in fear.

The first round the beast uses its psionic attack to hit the largest number of enemies it can, then it goes into melee.

During the fight, the pirates above shout their en-



## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

couragement to the beast, but they do not interfere with the battle in any way.

★ **Skura Beast (1):** See page 31.

### TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Rubbish Piles:** Mounds of filth, discarded scrap and other waste. They are treated as difficult ground and grant Light Cover (-1). They have Toughness 7. With a Notice roll, a hero can find an improvised weapon in the mounds (a jagged piece of metal, a rusty pipe, etc.). The object deals Str+d4 damage but causes -2 to Fighting rolls. With a raise, something better is uncovered (a sturdy metal bar or a length of chain). It is either deadlier than the previous entry (Str+d6 damage) or better balanced (-1 to Fighting rolls) – let the player choose. Use a Medium Burst Template to represent the Rubbish Piles. Place up to four piles on the battlefield.

\* **A Tight Squeeze:** There are many pipes and conduits in the room, even broken ones. Two of them rise up from the floor ten feet toward the ceiling. They are far enough apart to allow a man to pass between them but not a creature as large as the Skura Beast, which would get stuck. Entrapping the beast is a specific Trick, which must be attempted within 3" of the pipes. If the hero wins the Trick, the beast is restrained and suffers all the customary effects of the Trick. The beast must score at least three successes or raises on Strength rolls to get free. While restrained, it has Parry -2 and cannot move. If the hero wins the Trick with a raise, the beast suffers an additional -2 to the Strength rolls. Use a Small Burst Template to represent the two pipes. Place this prop at your discretion on the table.

\* **Hot Steam Valves:** Some of the pipes passing through the room have rusty valves that allow some steam out. A hero can open a valve to project a hot steam blast! It requires an Agility roll and works exactly like the *blast* Power, originating from the valve. Each valve can be used in that way only once, it then loses pressure. Use gaming stones to represent the valves. Place up to four valves in the room, at least 6" from one another.

\* **Polished Metal Panel:** A polished metal panel stands against a wall. It can reflect the terrible Eye Blast of the Skura Beast! If the Cone Template of the beast's *blast* power overlaps the metal panel, the beast suffers its effects! It is the heroes' task to lure her into the proper position. The metal panel is 3" long and 1" wide. Place it along the southern wall of the room.

### A WAY OUT

*The beast lies dead at your feet. It is incredible, but you managed to kill it almost barehanded, but this is no time for celebrating. The pirates above have not taken it very well— they expected to witness a greasy feast on your innards but instead, you slaughtered their precious puppy!*

*They immediately open fire with their blasters!*

*Being mostly drunk or half-stoned from the Dreamsmoke, they miss their target, but they would be unlikely to miss again.*

*"Look! A way out!" Silon Guy shouts, pointing at the mouth of a large tube, barred by a rusty grate.*

*You rush to the tube and pull at the grate, which comes away fairly easily.*

*You flee into the dark conduit, while the enraged shouts of the pirates echo in the pit behind you.*

### SCENE 4: ESCAPE FROM NEEDLESPINE

*You stink!*

*That's what you get after spending the last few hours wandering the labyrinthine sewers of the starbase, but eventually you managed to find a way out through a manhole not far from the starport.*

*You run towards the dock where your starship is moored. With a bit of luck, you'll be able to leave the base without any further issues.*

*But luck is a scarce commodity today!*

*When you get within sight of the Blazing Star, you see a group of pirates attempting to lockpick your ship's access ramp. You recognize them as Mak Rannan's men. They definitely don't waste any time when they have something to steal. Luckily, they haven't yet succeeded, but you must dispatch them quickly if you want to board your ship.*

The combat area is a space dock 12" long by 6" wide. It is a suspended platform, so the longer sides offer little protection from falling. The pirates are placed at the southern end of the dock, all facing south, where the *Blazing Star's* access ramp is located.

The party starts within 3" from the northern end of the dock.

The pirates are so focused on picking the ship's lock that they are considered Inactive. Also, their weapons are all holstered.

The heroes carry only the improvised weapons they used in the previous scene. When they defeat the pirates, they will get a pleasant surprise: On the bodies, they find all the important equipment they lost earlier. The pirates took it as booty. There is only one thing missing – the

# THE STEALER OF LIGHT

cash. Unfortunately, that is all now in Mak Rannan's coffers.

★ **Space Pirate (2):** See page 31.

★ **Veteran Space Pirate (2):** See page 31.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Crates and Barrels:** Crates and barrels are scattered around the dock. They offer Medium Cover (-2) and have Toughness 8. A hero can use an empty crate for tricks or can pick up a loaded one and throw it at a target. It requires a Strength roll to lift. A loaded crate is considered a ranged weapon (range: 2/4/8, damage: Str+d6). For every crate, roll a die the first time a character attempts to pick it up. An even result means it is empty while an odd number means it is full. Use gaming stones to represent the crates. Place up to ten crates around the area.

\* **The Void:** If an Extra is pushed off the platform, he meets with a horrible death. A Wild Card, instead, clings to the edge of the dock. He can regain solid ground only with a successful Strength (-4) roll.

## THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE

*You are boarding the Blazing Star when another group of pirates arrives at the dock. They carry plenty of equipment to force a starship's door and are excitedly talking about how to share the booty.*

*They stare at you in astonishment.*

*"Thieves! Alarm!" The pirates shout.*

*You close the ramp as they open fire and immediately take to the air. You're almost clear of the base, but suddenly the gates begin closing! Your only chance is to accelerate through the diminishing gap as fast as you can.*

*Now you'll see if the extra tuning you had done to the Blazing Star's engines was worth the money!*

It is a Chase, and a deadly one!

The heroes must escape from the base before they are trapped in the wolf's den.

Place twelve segment counters on the table, each representing a Range Increment. Use a different color counter for the twelfth as this represents the gates.

Each Range Increment is equivalent to 5 SU for weapon range.

You might also find it handy to place a d12 near the last counter to mark the number of rounds. The die starts on 1, and its value increases by one each round.

Place the *Blazing Star* on the first Range Increment. Do not use the standard obstacles rules in this chase, instead adopt the following changes. Every time the pilot of a vehicle draws a Club card as his first initiative card, it

means he has to face another ship moving in the crowded spaceport area. Check the value of the card against the table below. The Mod column gives a modifier to the Piloting roll for that round. In the event of a failure, the Damage column is used. Don't worry about the relative speed of the vehicles involved — just roll damage. All damage is dealt by a Wild Card.

| Card       | Mod | Damage |
|------------|-----|--------|
| Deuce      | -6  | 2d6    |
| 3-5        | -4  | 3d6    |
| 6-10       | -2  | 4d6    |
| Jack-Queen | -1  | 5d6    |
| King-Ace   | 0   | 6d6    |

There are also some scripted events that happen in certain rounds.

**Round Four - Incoming Fighters!** A squadron of fighters is hot on the trail of the *Blazing Star*! They begin the Chase on the counter representing the first Range Increment. The fighters are faster than the party's ship, so add +1 to their Chase rolls.

★ **Fighters (3):** Use the same stats as the Interceptors on page 15 however; these fighters are not equipped with missiles.

**Round Six - Turrets!** Two defensive turrets start blasting away at the *Blazing Star*. Place the turrets on the fifth counter. They cannot move and are treated as batteries.

## NEEDLESPINE'S INTERNAL TURRETS

2 x Light Laser Cannon (Range: 5/10/20; Damage: 3d6; Heavy Weapon; Heavy Armor; AP 3)

Shooting d6. Different from the standard battery rules as they can be destroyed. They have Toughness 12 (6).

**Round Eight - An Unexpected Ally!** Another ship joins the chase and begins firing at the enemy fighters. Place the new ship on the segment just behind the heroes. The party knows this ship; it is the Bootlegger Reverse, Karoan Kan's trader ship! The smuggler hails the party.

*"Need some help guys? Sorry I'm late, but I managed to escape from Mak Rannan's palace only a few minutes ago. Let's swat these annoying flies and get the hell out of here!"*

The Bootlegger Reverse is on the party's side, so hand the players its stats and let them use it in the Chase.

★ **Bootlegger Reverse (3):** See below.

**Round Ten - The Gates are Almost Shut!** If the heroes are on the last marker, they get away safely; otherwise, the pilot must make a Piloting roll with a -1 penalty for every round after the tenth (maximum -4). If he fails the roll, the ship manages to get out but suffers 3d6 damages from a Wild Card due to a collision with the closing gates.

# DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

## BOOTLEGGER REVERSE, LIGHT TRADER SHIP

This is a trader ship of medium size, capable of holding quite a substantial cargo. It is not very well armed but it does have good armor.

**Top Speed:** 6; **Toughness:** 17 (5); **Handling:** +0; **Shields Pods:** 3; **Crew:** 2+6

**Abilities:** Piloting d8, Shields d8, Shooting d6

**Notes:** 4 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizer, Spacecraft.

### Weapons:

\* 1 x double laser turret (+1 Shooting, Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

*You are outside, and safe!*

*"--and with that I consider my debt settled, my friends." Karoan says. "I'll jump off right now, and I strongly suggest you do the same. I swear, I'll never do business with pirates again. Well, until next time! See ya! Don't get yourselves fragged!"*

*The Bootlegger Reverse jumps into hyperspace. Maybe one day you'll have the chance to buy Karoan a drink to thank him for his assistance, but now it's time to set a course for Khoras if you want to save Salandra.*

## ACT 4: KING OF KHORAS

*You jump out of hyperspace near Khoras.*

*The planet is in a terrible state. There is almost continuous volcanic activity and frequent earthquakes. It is definitely not a safe environment to live in.*

*"Khoras is a devastated world." Rollan Gan whispers, "Young Salandra's parents were such inept leaders that they were forced to sell the entire planet to the Terraformers Guild to cover their massive debts.*

*"I know all this from the research I did for the movie." He explains.*

*The Blazing Star's sensors do not detect any signs of life.*

Thanks to Holo Both's clumsiness, the characters are almost certain their enemies are on the planet, but Khoras is a very big place to explore. Luckily, they do have a clue. Previously (Act 2, Scene 3), the heroes should have

discovered some planetary coordinates in a silver alien's memory. The coordinates correspond to the Khors royal palace (old Salandra's former residence, before she was crowned queen of the entire planet).

If the heroes did not acquire this information, they must thoroughly scan the planet. In the end, they will detect a masked energy emission leading to the same location.

## SCENE 1: THE DROID FACTORY

The Khors royal palace is in ruins, but a masked energy emission comes from this spot, suggesting that someone must be hiding inside. Cautious players may wish to land at a safe distance from the palace, and there is a hilly area nearby that is perfect for this. Rollan Gan and Silon Guy remain on board. They have had quite enough adventure of late, so their task will be to ensure the ship is ready for a hasty departure.

*You sneak into the ruins. The palace surely must have been marvelous many years ago, but now it is only a heap of rubble. You navigate ancient, crumbling halls and gardens, finding nothing useful.*

All the players must make a Notice (-4) roll. If at least one of them is successful, they spot a hidden sensor nearby. If no one succeeds or someone gets a critical failure, the sensor detects the party and the goons in the factory are alerted (see below).

The base is very big and complex, but there is little reason to fully explore it. Space pulp is built around exciting and fast action, not dungeon crawling in detailed mapping environments.

*In the end, you step into what you have been looking for – a modern looking flight of stairs descending deep into the palace's subterranean vaults. Without hesitation, you follow them down.*

*As you descend, you begin hearing a terrible din, as if some big machine were working. The stairs lead to a rather surprising room.*

*You have found the source of the energy emissions — huge machines, almost totally automated, assemble various parts creating new silver aliens. It is a droid factory! You also notice a series of long robotic arms extending from the ceiling, which pick up the various droid parts and distribute them among the machine's benches.*

*Only a genius could have built such a place, because each incomplete droid is clearly a little different from the next, as if their master had decided to render each of them unique, as living beings.*

# THE STEALER OF LIGHT

## SCENE 2: TRAPPED!

*There are some silver aliens here, inspecting and supervising the machines. They immediately draw their weapons and start firing at you!*

The battleground is a rectangular area 18" by 14". There are two doors, one in the middle of the north wall, and the other in the middle of the south. The doors are 3" wide.

The room is crammed with machines and robotic arms.

Place the heroes by the northern door.

The placement of the enemies changes whether they have been alerted or not. If they were, they have set an ambush for the party. They are all under cover, on Hold and aiming their blaster weapons at the door.

Otherwise, they are scattered randomly around in the room.

The silver aliens have a precise plan. They fight until reduced by half, and then they flee through the southern door. The heroes must hurry if they want to catch them!

★ **Enhanced Silver Alien (2):** See page 28.

★ **Silver Alien (1 per hero +2):** See page 30.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Workbenches:** The droid-producing machines are very big, 14" by 2". Each of them grants Medium Cover (-2), have Toughness 10 and count as difficult ground. On the benches, there are numerous components that can be useful as props for Tricks (see below). Place four benches so that the room is split into four corridors 2" wide.

\* **Droid Legs:** These can be used as improvised weapons (Str+d6).

\* **Droid Heads:** The silver aliens react with fear if a hero does something particularly nasty to a head, for example if he smashes it to pieces. Doing this grants +2 to Intimidation or Trick rolls.

\* **Droid Hearts:** These energized fuel cells explode when thrown against a hard surface. They count as small grenades (Range: 5/10/20; Damage 2d6; Small Burst Template). A Notice roll is required to find one of these among all the components.

\* **Robotic Arms:** A hero can try to catch a robotic arm to be transported to another area of the room. This requires an Agility or Smarts roll (player's choice). In case of success, the player can place his hero anywhere within 6" from his current position. He can also land in a square where an enemy is standing. In this case, consider the previous roll as a Trick against the enemy. In case of failure, roll 1d12 and 2d6. Read the first result clockwise to check in which direction the hero has moved and the second result to determine how many inches he has moved. If the movement takes the hero out of the room, he goes as far as he can and suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra. Catching a robotic arm counts as movement. The hero cannot run this round.

\* **Terrible Noise:** No heroes can talk to one another if they are more than 3" apart.

This scene supposes that the party is chasing the surviving aliens through the factory. If the events have gone in a different direction, for example if the party has eliminated all the enemies, alter the text accordingly.

*You run after the aliens in a maze of corridors with your weapons ready, but there is always a turn or a door that prevents you from shooting. Finally, you rush through a doorway and enter a big empty room. You see the goons leaving through another door on the opposite side of the room.*

Wait until all the heroes are in the room, then proceed.

*Suddenly the two doors slam! With a feeling of foreboding you run to the nearest one, but it is locked. The other one is too.*

*You are trapped!*

*A tiny holoprojector slides out from the wall. It displays a life-size image of your enemy, the dark armored man you saw on Houlof. Behind him, you see the fat figure of Holo Both, the traitor, with an evil grin on his porcine face.*

*"So, in the end you fell into my little trap. You are to be admired. So much dedication, but so undeserved."*

Hast, the evil mastermind, now speaks to the heroes and reveals his mad plans.

Below, you will find some of the questions the players are likely to ask. Hast's mind is slipping deep into madness. He does not clearly distinguish old Salandra, the space heroine, from her granddaughter, the actress. You can use the following hypothetical dialogue between Hast and the heroes to give depth to Hast's personality and to figure out answers to other questions the players may ask.

*Q: Where is Salandra?*

*A: Salandra, the so-called heroine? Or that puny, talentless actress? The first has been dead for a century, the second will be dead soon! Both will be dead soon!*

*Q: Who are you?*

*A: I am Hast, last heir of the Rannite royal family. We, the Rannites, are the true rulers of Kboras, not those damned Khors!*

*Q: Why do you hate Salandra so much?*

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06

*A: Because she is a murderer! You don't know what terrible crimes she committed! "Queen Salandra, with her political and military skills unified Khoras," so say the history books! It is false! Salandra's family has the inbred power of shaping light. My family has the power of doing the same, but with darkness. We have been opposing forces since the very beginning of the evolution; but Salandra discovered the origin of these powers. It is a peculiar radiation emitted by Gweo, Khoras's sun, which gives us this gift. So she constructed a weapon in this very palace, a super beam cannon that, when fired into the sun, changed its radiation matrix forever, making it deadly for my family. All the Rannite royals, my kin, died painfully in the following decade. The medics said it was a genetic disease, but that wasn't true, they were killed by Salandra herself! Only I, for a cruel trick of fate, have survived. Thanks to some strange mutation I did not die – even better, my lifespan was increased, but this was the price I paid:*

At this point Host removes his helm showing the party his horribly disfigured face.

*Q: But her ancestor's deeds are not young Salandra's fault! Why did you kidnap her?*

*A: She is the last heir of a foul race, and for that, alone she deserves to die, but there is more... I spent years in solitude preparing for a tremendous vendetta, and here I found the instruments to accomplish it! I repaired the old super cannon Salandra built and I modified it. Now it is no longer an energy projector, it is an absorber. Using Gweo's radiation it can distil from Salandra's body an essence containing her power. With this essence, I shall be young and healthy once again. I will lay the foundations of a new Rannite dynasty. And, of course, the process will kill Salandra, as she deserves.*

*Q: You are a madman! What will you do with us?*

*A: You chose the wrong side in this conflict, so you will die too. The room in which you now stand is one of the compensation chambers used to make the super cannon emerge from beneath the palace. Soon it will be full of water, used to balance the cannon. I will leave this projector on, so you will see the cannon rise, though once the weapon has completely emerged, I'm afraid you will all be dead.*

Hast's image disappears and the holoprojector switches to an external view of the palace. The ground is parting, revealing a huge subterranean cavity. A pointed structure, the size of a skyscraper, slowly rises up.

Just then, a porthole, placed at the top of a wall, opens

and a huge gush of water starts crashing in. It is only a matter of time before the entire room is filled!

The party must find a way to stop this death trap before the worst happens. They have six rounds to complete the following actions in the order described below.

1. **Locate the Water Level Sensor.** The room must have a sensor that signals when the chamber has reached maximum capacity. The first step is finding it, and this requires a Notice (–2) roll. The sensor is on the same wall where the water porthole is, at roughly the same height.
2. **Reach the Sensor.** The sensor is too high to be reached by a single man and there are no ladders in the room. A hero can reach it by standing on the shoulders of a comrade. This requires the character on the bottom to make a Strength roll and the one above to make an Agility roll. Both heroes must repeat their rolls (with a +2 bonus) each round to maintain that position. It counts as an extra action. From the fifth round, this is no longer necessary — the water is so high that the heroes can easily swim to the sensor.
3. **Open the Panel.** The sensor is protected by a panel that must be removed. Normally this would not require a roll, but the hero is in a high stress situation, so an Agility or Repair roll (player's choice) must be made.
4. **Fool the Sensor.** The sensor must be hacked in order to tell the balance system the room is now full. It requires a Lockpicking or a Repair (–4) roll. A hero with the McGyver or Thief Edge gains +2 to the roll. Once the sensor is deceived, the water stops flowing and, after a few moments, starts draining through hidden conduits in the floor. When the room is empty, the two doors open.

An alternative way to get out of this situation is by breaking through the doors. They are very strong (Toughness 10) and multilayered, so the party must deal three Wounds to destroy one of them.

If, at the end of the sixth round, the heroes have not escaped, they start drowning. There is no air, so no Swimming roll is possible. Each hero must make a Vigor roll each round or take a level of Fatigue. When Incapacitated, a hero dies, but he can be revived with a Healing (–4) roll if medical care is provided within three rounds.

Each round, draw a card from the action deck. If it is a Diamond, Silon Guy and Rollan Gan open the doors through which the party originally entered. They are overwhelmed by so much water that they are useless in the following scenes, but they have saved the heroes!

The two men are here because, ashamed of their cowardice, they followed the heroes' tracks through the palace.

Drowning Fatigue is recovered at a rate of one level per scene.

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Now the party must rush. The super cannon is now in position and will soon be activated!

## SCENE 3: DEATH OF A PRINCE

*You run down empty corridors. There is no one around, all the enemies must be gathered in the super cannon's main control room.*

*You rush past many rooms and hallways. The palace must have been amazingly beautiful once, but now it is in ruins and you have no time to explore it!*

*In the end, you find the control room.*

*It is a large hall, but it seems much smaller due to the huge technological devices crammed inside it. A big, inverted electronic cusp points toward the center of the room, where a single chair sits. Chained here, in a very uncomfortable position, is Salandra! The end of the cusp emits a ray of light pointed directly at her head. This must be very painful, because the girl is crying and groaning.*

*All around there are benches brimming with elaborators and computers of strange manufacture, tended by silver aliens. A huge holoprojection placed above one of the benches shows the super cannon outside. Its tip shimmers an intense white light.*

*Hast and Holo Both are shocked by your sudden arrival.*

*"It's not possible! You again!" the evil mastermind shouts. "Royal guards! Kill them all! The process is nearly finished!"*

*At this command, a group of heavily armored silver aliens draws their weapons and attacks. You must save Salandra, and you must do it before the terrible weapon sucks her life away!*

This is the final battle of the scenario!

The room is quite large, 18" by 18". There is a single door, 4" wide, in the center of the southern wall, through which the party entered.

The seat where Salandra is chained sits in the very center of the room. It is a 2" by 2" space.

Place the heroes within 3" of the door.

Hast is beside one of the northern computer benches (see below). He intently monitors the instruments and does not join in the fight until Salandra is set free. Until then, he only shouts orders (making use of his Leadership Edges). Holo Both, cowardly as ever, hides behind a computer bench until the end of the fight. The clumsy droid still has a part to play in this story.

The Royal guards are placed at the four corners of the room. They run as fast as they can toward the heroes to engage them in melee.

The other aliens are evenly divided along the computer benches. They are not ready to fight at this time, so they start the round with weapons sheathed.

**Salandra.** Freeing Salandra requires you to reach her seat and spend two rounds untying her bonds (reduced to one with a successful Agility (-2) roll). The party only has seven rounds to free Salandra. To make this clear, each round until set free, Salandra screams in pain and Hast gloats, encouraging his followers to resist a little more.

If at the start of the seventh round Salandra is still bound, she dies. At this point, even Hast joins the fight. Being galvanized by the success of his plan, he gains an extra benny.

Otherwise, when Salandra freed, she takes a weapon from a fallen enemy and joins the fight! Maybe the effect of being in her ancestors' palace or the idea of facing such a hated enemy rekindles her grandmother's spirit within her! She has the Command, Inspire and Hold the Line Edges until the end of the fight. Contrary to the standard rules, even the heroes are affected by these Edges for the duration of the battle. In addition, when she picks up a weapon for the first time, all enemies within 6" of her must make a Spirit roll or be panicked.

The fight ends when Hast is dispatched. At this point, go to the last scene (Scene 4).

★ **Silver Alien (1 per hero):** See page 30.

★ **Enhanced Silver Alien (2):** See page 28.

★ **Rannite Royal Guards (1 per hero):** See page 29.

★ **Hast, Last Rannite Prince:** See page 28.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

\* **Computer Benches:** These benches are full of technological instruments and similar objects. They count as Light Cover (-1), have Toughness 6, and are considered difficult terrain. An energy attack hitting one of them is very likely to produce a discharge. If a computer bench is damaged, any character within 1" suffers 2d6 damage from a voltaic arc. The damage is considered dealt by an Extra. Each computer bench is 6" long and 2" wide. Place eight of them on the map, to form a square perimeter around Salandra's seat. Leave a 2" gap between each bench.

\* **Salandra's Seat:** This uncomfortable seat has various constriction devices installed (handcuffs, straps and similar things). It is sturdy (Toughness 10) and grants Medium Cover (-2) to anyone near it. Place it at the center of the room.

\* **Cusp:** The cusp takes up almost the entire ceiling of the room with its tip dropping almost to the floor, so it can hinder shooting trajectories. The cusp has Toughness 6 and three Wounds. A hero can willingly shoot it (+2 due to its Large size) or it can be hit by stray shots. For this fight, tweak the Innocent Bystander rule so that

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a 1 scored on the Shooting die hits the Cusp instead of the proper target. When the cusp has suffered three Wounds, it breaks and falls to the ground. Place a Large Burst Template centered on Salandra's seat to represent the impact area. Any character under the template must make an Agility (-4) roll or suffer 2d8 damage dealt from a Wild Card. Place the successful characters just outside the template.

### SCENE 4: A FAITHFUL SERVANT

*Finally, when Hast (this mad, twisted creature) falls, a terrible shout of pain echoes throughout the room.*

*"Nooo! Master!" Holo Both leaves the safe place where he has been cowardly hiding during the fight and embraces his master's dead body.*

*Copious tears flow down his fat droid face.*

*"I was your first creation, master! You built me so long ago! I have been at your side throughout your life! I will do the same in death!"*

*At this point, the clumsy droid points a finger at you.*

*"You! You think you have won, but you are dead! Dead!"*

*Holo Both tears away his clothes revealing what his potbelly contains—a huge bomb!*

*"Yes," The servant continues, "it is a graviton bomb, powerful enough to destroy this whole accursed palace! My prince placed it inside me when he was only a boy, to spare us both the shame of defeat!"*

*"Now you are doomed! Doomed!" the droid laughs hysterically. It seems madness has passed from the master's mind to the minion's.*

*There is a display on the droid's belly. It flashes "00:05:00." Very little time if you had to leave the planet, but the droid doesn't know that your ship is very close to the palace.*

*"Come on!" Salandra encourages you "We can do it!"*

*"No! You will not leave! This palace will be your tomb!" Holo Both runs to the computers and starts frantically pushing buttons.*

Disabling the bomb is impossible. Holo Both will not fight the heroes, if they try to hack into his gut. The

droid cannot interfere with the bomb's timer (otherwise the party would be reduced to particles by now) and a security system built into the device will make it explode immediately if damaged. Finding the device requires a Lockpicking or Notice (-2) roll. Disarming the bomb requires specific tools the party does not have. Each attempt at inspecting or disarming the bomb costs a round. It is precious time that must be counted in regards to the imminent chase (see below).

When the players finally decide to run away, the chase begins.

As there are no real pursuers, the situation varies somewhat from the standard Chase rules. Place eight tokens on the table to represent Range Increments. Each Range Increment equates to 5" on the tabletop.

Use a different color token for the eighth increment to represent the *Blazing Star*.

Place the heroes and Salandra on the first Range Increment. Salandra is still in the peculiar state of mind of the previous scene so she encourages the heroes to do their best. Salandra, and each hero within two Range Increments of the actress, gain +1 to the Chase roll.

Take a d10 and place it near the chase markers, with the top face showing a 9. It represents the countdown. At the end of each round, reduce the die result by one until it reaches zero. At this point, run another round, and then remove the die from the table. The bomb then explodes. Consult the following table to determine the outcome of the chase. Check the Range Increment on which each hero is standing to discover his fate.

| Range Increment                  | Result                                                       |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> | Caught by the explosion. The hero is dead!                   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>                  | 2d10 damage from an Extra. Just outside the main blast area! |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>                  | 2d8 damage from an Extra. On the limit of the palace area!   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>                  | 2d6 damage from an Extra. Near the starship!                 |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>                  | Aboard the <i>Blazing Star</i> . The hero is safe!           |

Do not use the standard obstacles rules, instead, whenever a hero draws a Club card from the action deck as his first card, run the mini-scene below.

If the heroes survive the explosion and get onto the *Blazing Star*, go to The End.

### OBSTACLES TABLE

**Deuce (-4) Trap:** Prince Hast placed a deadly trap in the corridor where the hero is now passing. It is a death ray, scanning the corridor at fixed intervals. The hero must make a Notice (-2) roll to spot the danger and an Agility (-4) roll to avoid it. In case of

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failure, he suffers 2d8 damage from a Wildcard. The Agility roll also counts as Chase roll.

**Three (-2) Droid Patrol:** A small group of silver aliens (totally unaware of the bomb) spies the hero running down a corridor and starts shooting! They join in the chase, pursuing the party. Place them three Range Increments behind the hero. The aliens move as a whole group, using Agility (d6) and the Wild Die for the Chase roll. They shoot if within two Range Increments of a character.

★ **Silver Alien (3):** See page 30.

**Four (-2) Blocked Door:** Using the control room's computers, Holo Both remotely closes a door right in front of the hero! The mad laughter of the droid rings out over the loudspeakers. The door can be opened with a Lockpicking (-2) roll or smashed in with a Strength (-2) roll. Place a counter on this Range Increment. Until the door is opened (or destroyed), no one can advance further than this Range Increment. Once the door is open, the hero can do a standard Chase roll.

**Five (-2) Water Wave:** Holo Both deviates the water from another super cannon compensation room to the hero's location. A big wave of water is suddenly crashing over him! This round he uses Strength for the Chase roll. In case of failure, he is also Shaken.

**Six (-2) Wrong Turn:** The hero took a wrong turn at the last crossroads and the others followed! This round the hero uses Smarts for their Chase roll, as does every other player that is behind him.

**Seven (-1) Rollan Gan:** The absent-minded movie director could not resist the desire to see old Salandra's ancient palace. He got lost, of course. Luckily, the hero finds him in time! Add another counter to the Chase track to represent Rollan Gan. He joins the Chase on the Range Increment where the hero is currently. If Rollan Gan saved the party from the compensation chamber (see Act 4, scene 2), he is Fatigued. Immediately give a benny to the player for this display of heroism.

**Eight (-1) Slippery Stairs:** The old stairs are slippery. If the hero fails an Agility roll, he falls. This costs -2 to all rolls for the next round.

**Nine (-1) Poisonous Gas:** Colored smoke rises out from under the floor. The hero starts coughing as he hears Holo Both laughing through the speakers. The character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a Fatigue level for the remainder of the Chase. Roll as normal for the Chase.

**Ten (-1) Fleeing Aliens!:** A large group of Rannite droids, somehow warned of the incoming danger, is running away! They do not stop to bother the hero; they only flee, blocking the character's path. The hero can stop for a round (he does not advance this round) or he can try to move between them. This round, the Chase roll is based on Strength. In case of failure, the hero is knocked prone and is automatically Shaken.

**Jack (0) Hidden Guns:** Holo Both activates

another secret defense system, a series of blasters concealed in the very corridor the hero is currently running down! The guns have Shooting d8, deal 2d8 damage from an Extra and count as suppressive fire. Place a counter on this marker to remind you of the position of the guns. Every hero moving through here suffers that damage.

**Queen (0) Hoverbike!:** Someone left a hoverbike parked in a corridor! The hover vehicle can transport up to two people. From now on, use Piloting for the Chase roll with a +2 bonus due to the increased speed. Getting onto the bike and starting it requires a full round. Otherwise, run the Chase as usual.

**King (0) Shortcut:** The character finds a shortcut! It can be a side passage, a safety door or something else. This round he gains a Range Increment for each success and raise. Otherwise, if the Chase roll fails, he loses a Range Increment.

**Ace (0) Old Salandra's Statue:** The hero finds a huge statue of old Salandra. If young Salandra is within a Range Increment of the hero, she asks him to wait. The next round, Salandra examines the statue driven by some strange instinct and finds a secret passage! Roll a d4+1. This is the number of Range Increments Salandra, and all the heroes with her, immediately advance.

### THE END

The following text supposes that the heroes have reached their ship in time. Otherwise, you will have to tweak it to reflect the actual situation.

*You board the Blazing Star and take off just in time to see Salandra's old palace being destroyed by a massive explosion.*

*Neither Khors nor Rannites will rule this planet ever again.*

*Young Salandra winces at the sight, and then relaxes, as if an external spirit has finally released her.*

*A few minutes later, she starts complaining about the Blazing Star's bathrooms and the smallness of the staterooms.*

*She is back to the old Salandra you all know.*

*You jump into hyperspace, traveling on towards better pastures.*

Months later, "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash" is released, becoming an immediate blockbuster. Silon Guy pays for all the repairs to the *Blazing Star* and gives the party a conspicuous sum of cash: \$6,000.

The heroes do appear in a couple scenes in the movie, so they are now famous!

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Once in every future scenario, one of the players can claim his hero is recognized for his participation in the film, adding +2 to his Charisma for the remainder of the scene.

### THE CAST

#### ENHANCED SILVER ALIEN (DROID)

These droids are better versions of Hast's standard droids. The Rannite prince himself programmed each unit of this model, making them truly unique.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Loyal.

**Edges:** Block, Dodge.

**Gear:** Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, semi-auto), Rannite energy mace (Str+d6, AP 2).

**Special abilities:**

\* **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

#### HAST, LAST RANNITE PRINCE (WC)

Hast is the last surviving member of the Rannite royal family. His relatives were all killed by old Salandra via a lethal change to the radiation pattern of Khoras's sun. He survived thanks to a genetic mutation that also increased his lifespan, but it left him hideously scarred.

Hast is a genius in droid construction, an attitude enhanced by his solipsistic nature (his belief that no intelligence of note exists beyond his own mind). As there were no true Rannites anymore, because all of them had left the planet and abandoned their culture, Hast rebuilt them: a legion of faithful sophisticated droids perfectly rendered to resemble his former people.

Hast is armed with the Fist of Power, an energy weapon directly linked and powered by his armor. It works as a melee weapon, producing a fist-sized forcefield, and as a ranged one, shooting energy bolts.

**Rannite Royal Family:** Like all the members of the Rannite royal family, Hast possesses the psionic ability to manipulate darkness. He has no Power Points; instead, he can use his Powers a fixed number of times. Powers with a standard duration of (3/1) last three rounds.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Robotics) d12+2 Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Taunt d10.

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9(4)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Command, Dead shot, Level Headed, Master (Robotics), Trademark weapon (Fist of Power).

**Hindrances:** Delusional (major — sometimes he thinks he is living in the times of old Salandra), Ugly, Vow (major — rebuild the Rannite dynasty and destroy the Khors royal family).

**Gear:** Black enhanced body armor (+4), Fist of power (as melee weapon: Str+d10, ignores Strength requirements; as energy weapon: Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 2, AP 2), long mantle.

**Powers:** 1 x *obscure* (area of light negation), 1 x *lower trait* (engulf a target in darkness), 1 x *deflection* (shroud of darkness).



#### HOLO BOTH

Holo Both is the first creation of Hast, last prince of the Rannites, who built him in his teenage years. This droid is far from being perfect. He is fat, clumsy and not very smart, but he makes up for these faults with his total dedication. For the current mission, Hast has disguised his synthetic nature with artificial skin that renders him indistinguishable from a human.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d8.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Yellow, Obese.

**Gear:** Vests.

**Special abilities:**

\* **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

\* **Graviton bomb:** Holo Both's bloated appearance is caused by a graviton bomb, capable of destroying a rather vast area, hidden in his belly. Hast placed it there to spare them both the shame of defeat, since Holo will use the bomb only as a suicide weapon to avenge his master's death.

#### HOULO SPAWN

A Houlo Spawn is a vegetable being of vaguely humanoid shape. It is almost mindless, and lives only to eliminate any possible threat to the Houlo's safety.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

**Special abilities:**

\* **Claws:** Str+d4.

\* **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.

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- \* **Improved Frenzy:** The Houlo Spawn can make two attacks each round without penalty.
- \* **Spitting:** The Houlo Spawn spits a dangerous acidic substance (Range: 6/12/18; Damage: 2d6).

### KANDAROON CENTURION (DROID)

Kandaroon is a planet where the saurian races became dominant. Savage and bloodthirsty, the Centurions are bipedal lizards twice the size of a man, that act as leaders and shock troops of Kandaroon's inferior species. The Kandaroon Wars ended a century ago with the defeat of the saurians. From then on, they became isolationistic and xenophobic. Salandra Sash, the popular heroine, was the general of the Mercenary Guild who put an end to the Kandaroon threat.

This specimen is actually a droid, altered to be indistinguishable from a real Kandaroon Centurion.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

**Gear:** Energy trident (as a melee weapon: Str+d8; as a ranged weapon: range 10/20/40, damage: 2d6, ROF 1, non-lethal damage), shield (+1 Parry), full helm (+3).

**Special abilities:**

- \* **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.
- \* **Tail lash:** The Centurion has a long, strong tail. He can use this appendage to sweep all opponents behind him in a rectangle 3" wide and 6" long. This is a standard Fighting attack that deals Str damage.
- \* **Size +3:** The Centurion is over 9' tall and of very strong build.

### KANDAROON RAPTOR (DROID)

The Raptor is one of the smallest, but most cunning species on Kandaroon. Nimble and very quick, it is known for its excellent pack tactics.

This specimen is only an animatronic puppet, but it is very well made.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d8.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Gear:** Energy whip (Str+d4, reach 2, non-lethal damage).

**Special abilities:**

- \* **Construct:** It has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.
- \* **Pack tactic:** The Raptor is so good at fighting in a

pack that it adds +1 to the Gang Up bonus up to a maximum of +5.

- \* **Quick:** It discards and redraws all initiative cards below 5.
- \* **Size -1:** It is about the size of a dog.



### KAROAN KAN THE SMUGGLER

This strangely garbed fellow is one of the biggest smartasses of the honored smuggler category. He is perfectly capable of cheating his mother, but he respects the unwritten rules of his work. He knows the heroes fairly well.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Knowledge (Shields) d6, Streetwise d8.

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Level Headed, First Strike.

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor, Greedy.

**Gear:** Kamoran rapier (Str+d4, AP 1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), fancy clothes, \$ 2,000, starship (Bootlegger Reverse).

### RANNITE ROYAL GUARD (DROID)

This droid mimics the royal guards of the ancient Rannite nobility. In this case, its characteristic black ceremonial armor is mounted directly onto its body.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Throwing d8.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

**Hindrances:** Loyal.

**Edges:** Frenzy.

**Gear:** Rannite royal guard sword (Str+d8, AP 2), royal guard armor (+2).

**Special abilities:**

- \* **Construct:** He has +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. He is immune to called shots (except for his weakness described below), poisons and psychological effects.
- \* **Built-In Energy Shield:** The royal guard has a built-in energy shield in his left arm. It creates a field of energy capable of stopping blaster weapons. It grants +2 Toughness against this type of attack.
- \* **Fencer:** The royal guard is expertly programmed in sword fighting and is able to assess and exploit any gap in the defense of its enemies. Whenever an opponent rolls a 1 on his Fighting die when attacking, the royal guard gets an immediate free attack.
- \* **Weakness (Energy Projector):** The energy shield projector is quite fragile against melee weapon attacks. A Called Shot (-4) is required to hit this small part, but the blow ignores the armor, deals +4 damage and eliminates the energy shield special ability until the end of the scene.

## DARING TALES OF THE SPACE LANES #06



### ROLLAN GAN, HOLOMOVIE DIRECTOR

This short man is one of the most talented holomovie directors in this part of the galaxy. "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash" is his fifth film and will likely be another box-office smash. Off-set, Rollan is absent-minded and, being so immersed in his work, sometimes mistakes real life for a movie scene.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Knowledge (Film Production) d12, Persuasion d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

**Edges:** Luck.

**Hindrances:** Bad Eyes (Minor — he wears a correcting visor), Delusional (Minor — he sometimes mistakes reality for a movie), Small.

**Gear:** Vests, correcting visor, datapad.



### SALANDRA SASH, HOLOMOVIE ACTRESS

Salandra Sash is a gorgeous girl with gold-bronze skin and long blonde hair. She is quite popular as a holomovie actress, but she is of noble origins, as well— her parents once ruled Khoras, but they left her broke.

Salandra is the granddaughter of the famous galaxy heroine Salandra Sash, who fought in the Mercenary Guild a century ago and later became a popular historical figure.

Despite her young age, Salandra has used her connections and her appearance to build a rather impressive acting career. She is known for having a very bad temper, like many other movie stars.

**Khor's Royal Family:** Like all members of the Khors royal family, Salandra possesses the psionic ability to manipulate light. She has no Power Points; instead, she can use her Powers a fixed number of times. Powers with a standard duration of (3/1) last three rounds. The Light Power lasts one hour.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Persuasion d10, Taunt d6.

**Charisma:** +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Charismatic, Very Attractive.

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Mean.

**Gear:** Scant costume armor, prop lightsword (Str, breaks on 1 on the Fighting die).

**Powers:** 1 x *light* (light sphere), 1 x *raise trait* (light emanates from Salandra, only on herself), 1 x *stun* (flash of light).

### SECURITY GUARD

A hired guard. Very useful when the only threat is an enthusiastic fan, but not a real soldier.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Gear:** Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), armored vest (+1).



### SILON GUY, HOLOMOVIE PRODUCER

Tall, slender and attractive, Silon Guy uses his money to do what he can do best: make more money! He has invested a large portion of his personal funds to finance "The Space Adventures of Salandra Sash."

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Piloting d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Charismatic, Connections (holomovie sector), Rich.

**Hindrances:** Arrogant.

**Gear:** Expensive wardrobe, pocket blaster pistol (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d6-1, ROF 1, semi-auto), space yacht (Calypso).

### SILVER ALIEN (DROID)

This droid is a product of the genius of Hast, last prince of the Rannites. It is built with cutting edge technology and it physically resembles a Rannite. Hast made every droid look different depending on sex, appearance and behavior.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Loyal.

**Gear:** Blaster rifle (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 1, AP 1, semi-auto), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto), Stun Grenades (5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, MBT, non-lethal).

**Special abilities:**

\* **Construct:** It has a +2 to Toughness and to recovering from being Shaken. It is immune to called shots, poisons and psychological effects.



### SKURA BEAST

This fierce, cyclopean predator is a deep violet colored bipedal saurian. Some specimens also sport pink stripes. It has sharp teeth and claws, but it is feared mostly for its single, green eye. Luckily, the beast is not very smart.

## THE STEALER OF LIGHT

**Psionic:** The Skura Beast has the ability to deliver a terrible blast of psionic energy from its eye. In gaming terms, it is treated as a Power, and it is activated using Vigor as its arcane skill. The creature has no Power Points; instead, it can use the power a fixed number of times in each scene.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

**Powers:** 3 x *blast* (psionic energy ray – deals non-lethal damage).

### Special Abilities:

- \* **Armor+2:** Scaly hide.
- \* **Bite:** Str+d6 damage.
- \* **Claws:** Str+d4 damage.
- \* **Monocular Vision:** Having a single eye, the Skura Beast has -2 to any Trait roll for actions requiring deep perception (this applies even to Tricks).
- \* **Frenzy:** If the Skura Beast attacks with its claws, it can perform two attacks each round without penalties.
- \* **Size +3:** Skura Beasts are large creatures standing over 8' tall.

## SPACE PIRATE

A grizzled space buccaneer of the far future. He is ready and willing to perform any act of savagery.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6,

Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Gear:** Vibrocutlass (Str+d6, AP 1), space pirate armor (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto).

## VETERAN SPACE PIRATE

One of the foulest scumbags among the pirate crews in this sector of the galaxy. He is wanted by the space forces of many planets, and he is proud of it.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8.

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Edges:** Combat reflexes, Iron will.

**Hindrances:** Mean, Ugly.

**Gear:** Vibrocutlass (Str+d8, AP 1), space pirate armor (+1), blaster pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 1, semi-auto).

- \* **Tricky Bastard:** For a Veteran Space Pirate, there is no such thing as a fair fight. When using a Trick or a Test of Will he gets the Wild Die, even if he is an Extra. A Wild card pirate has his Wild Die raised to d8.

## THE SCRIPT

Player 1: Commander Salandra, enemies incoming!

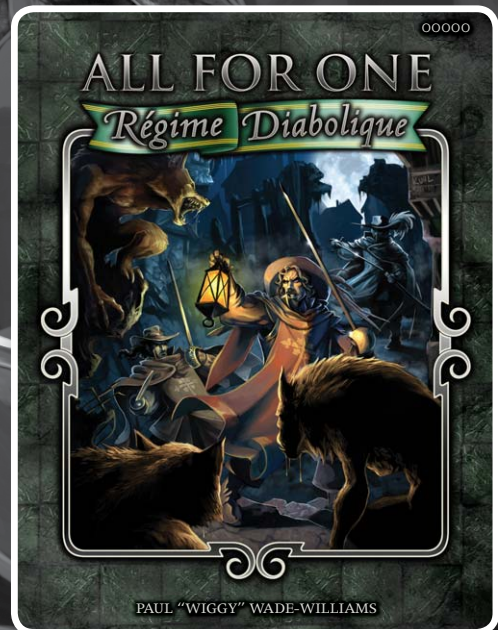
Player 2: It is true, ma'am. There are twelve battalions approaching. What are your orders?

Salandra: Do not worry, my friends, I have a plan! Captain Siros, Colonel Askeros! Are your troops ready?

Player 3: Yes, milady. They are prepared to die for you!

Player 4: As are mine!

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